

Annabella Kidd Gr10
The Detective
South Kamloops Secondary School

The Detective

I wake up to distant chatter, footsteps hitting the ground, beeping and buzzing from what sounds like nearby machines. I open my left eye, making out what seems to be a bed that I'm in. Not my bed. I open my right eye and immediately squint due to the lights shining down from above me. I close my eyes, then open again, scanning the empty room and find a tall stranger hovering over me. He is dressed in black from head to toe and stands empty-handed. *Who is he and what is he doing here?* I think to myself. He has a gun at his waist, must be a detective. I try to remember why I'm here, and how I got here. Until my eyes widen in shock.

I can remember it like it was minutes ago, yet all I want to do is forget it. I turn my head towards the man, analyzing his expression. He looks like a detective and I bet he is here to talk about me and my friend Cassie's experience. "I remember it like a regular Tuesday, a day like always when Cassie and I were *supposed* to walk to school." I start. The man jerks his head down at me and we make eye contact. "We usually meet up at the stop sign and walk two blocks to school together, as we have for the past year. Until Cassie didn't show up this time. I checked my phone and she was late. That wasn't like her so I knew something was up. I dialed her name into my phone to call her, until a man suddenly came out of a bush and grabbed me. I tried to resist but he overpowered me. He pulled me away to a lonely street full of nothing but a single car while another man in the front seat got out and opened the trunk. I tried to free myself, run, call for help but a hand was held over my mouth preventing me from screaming. I felt powerless and was completely consumed by fear. Before I was thrown into the trunk, I saw another girl tied up unconscious in the back. It was Cassie. When I was thrown in, and the trunk was closed, a

Annabella Kidd Gr10
The Detective
South Kamloops Secondary School

single tear rolled down my cheek before I started bawling as the engine turned on and I felt the car start to move. I tried screaming but it was useless, except for the fact that it woke Cassie up. She looked at me, fear in her eyes, pleading for help without making a sound. I quickly moved my hands behind her back, struggling because of how compact the trunk was, especially with two people crammed together. I untied her hands, then her feet, along with untying a cloth around her mouth. Cassie still didn't speak a word, but her eyes started to water, filling with tears. I cupped my hand over her mouth and whispered under my breath. She slowly started to put words together and explained that she had been taken just outside her house. I tried to tell her what happened to me, but was interrupted by the engine stopping and a door slamming. The trunk opened and light flooded through, exposing the two of us curled up together; waiting for what would happen next. We attempted to come up with a plan, yet weren't very successful. One of the men grabbed me by the arm, the hard grip he had on me sent goosebumps throughout my whole body. Cassie was picked up and carried over the shoulder by the other man. They took us to an abandoned looking building and-

“Do you remember anything about the whereabouts of this building, any details?” The man asked.

“No.” I respond harshly, as another strange man walks into my hospital room. The second guy closes my room door and joins the first man already questioning me. *Weird. Why does another guy need to be here and listen?* I think to myself before I continue telling my story. “As I was saying,” I start, trying to prove my point about being interrupted. “The two men opened a door and tied us up inside against separate poles. We were tied up facing each other, but too far

Annabella Kidd Gr10
The Detective
South Kamloops Secondary School

apart to reach one another. Cassie and I waited for the two men to leave us, in the dark, silent, empty building, alone. I was so scared and Cassie didn't speak a single word to me. We were left in there for what seemed to be hours and we both silently struggled to free ourselves."

"How did you untie the ropes around your wrists?" The second man that entered the room asks.

"H-h-how did you know we freed ourselves?!" I reply in confusion.

"Oh I guess he just assumed because you are here now." The first detective responded quickly for the other. Then it hits me. I have that gut feeling that something's off. *Where's my nurse? Why am I alone in this room with them? Why didn't they identify themselves?* I let out a quiet gasp. They never told me they were detectives. I just assumed that myself. I've been in this room with them for hours now and I couldn't even figure it out. I look up at the two men, standing shoulder to shoulder, staring me dead in the eye.

"Are you going to continue?" The first man demands.

"I don't feel good, I need a bathroom break." I lie, as I struggle to roll out of bed. I start to open the door while looking back. They know. They know I know. I pull the door wide open and make a run for it. They were the two men that kidnapped us, and I was with them this whole time.

Lauren Madsen
Grade 10
Kamloops School of the Arts
My awful favorite place

My awful favorite place

The music is loud. The band tonight sucks. I can hear the guitar is out of tune, and Lord knows if they're even playing the proper chords. It doesn't sound like it. The flute is squeaky and seems to be rusty from years of use. Are they the best this place could hire? I guess the old tavern has gone downhill since the last time I've been. Although, I suppose it's always been a bit of a dump. I doubt this place has changed at all in the past decade. The wooden walls are probably growing mold, and it's a miracle if the floors get cleaned.

As I attempt to drown out the music, I focus on the empty bottles across the table. I do what I can to make the room stop spinning. I look down and take another sip from the beverage in my hand. The bitter flavor forces me to cringe. I drink it nonetheless. I tilt my head back further and finish it off. A couple of drops spill from my lips onto my shirt. I shift my eyes down to the stained cloth. I rub my already filthy sleeve over my mouth, then down to my chest, where the warm liquid landed. There's not much else I can do to restore it. I begin to lift my head back upright. A disorganized black curl slips in front of my eyes. I attempt to blow it back to its place. When that proves to be unsuccessful, I raise my hand and gently brush it out of the way.

I pull in a deep breath, allowing the oxygen to fill my lungs to their capacity. It barely takes a second for the foul stench to hit me. The smell is a disturbing combination of sweat and what I must assume is blood. It catches me off guard. So thick in the air it chokes me, causing me to cough until I no longer have any oxygen left in my lungs. My chest is sore for a moment, but the pain soon passes. That has to be a sign I've been away from all this for far too long. I'm almost embarrassed I forgot one of the most basic rules of taverns. For the love of God, do not

Lauren Madsen
Grade 10
Kamloops School of the Arts
My awful favorite place

breathe the air. Regardless, I'm delighted to be back here. I wouldn't exchange this torment for anything less than triple my weight in gold.

Despite all that, I really should leave sooner than later. I'm not quite sure what time I arrived here. All I know is that the sun is beginning to rise. If I were to guess when I got my first drink, I would say around 3 am. I glance around the room, focusing on a table and moving on to the next. I take a moment to stare at the cascading vines making their way down the worn-in walls. I look at the lights flickering above my head. The bulbs are long overdue for an upgrade. Beams of gold colorfully forcing their way through any window or crack in the walls. Spotlights of sun rays dance over tables, shielding every face in the establishment.

The number of customers leads me to believe the time is nearly six or seven in the morning. I can't help but notice the folk surrounding me. Virtually everybody is with a party or at least one other individual. I can hear laughter and discussions from whoever's nearest to me. The unadulterated joy coming from those around me gnaws at a familiar pain. The feeling that I'll never experience that kind of happiness with others. That same feeling only ever means one thing. It's time for another drink.

I push my seat away from the table where I'm sitting. The oak legs scrape against the floor embarrassingly loudly. I quickly glanced left and then right. No one seemed to notice. The insane lack of cushions on the chairs messed up my back. I stretch my hands as far above my head as they go. I could swear I heard all of my bones crack at once. My leather boots mark the floor as I drag my feet to the bar. I rest my arms on the counter and try to grab the barkeep's attention. I put minimal effort into extending my right arm. Bending it upward at the elbow, only

Lauren Madsen
Grade 10
Kamloops School of the Arts
My awful favorite place

my forearm lifting from the slightly sticky surface. I wave over the attention of someone who can fetch me a drink.

It takes no more than a minute before a full glass is in my hand. I can hear the subtle fizz of the remaining carbonation in the beverage. I reach my unoccupied hand to the bottom of my jacket pocket. Cautious not to catch the intricate white lace along the stitchings. I draw my hand back up to the table from below my hips. I slide an extra battered silver coin across the counter in thanks. The currency makes a dull noise as I push it along the surface.

More folk are coming into the building than leaving. The longer I stay here, the louder it will get. It's time for me to go. I down the beverage in one swallow. The glass makes a delicate sound when I place it on the wood before me. The kind of sound that makes you think you can break it by simply looking at it for too long. I glance around the room, soaking in all the excitement and people. I take in the liveliness of the atmosphere once more before heading for the door. My hand lingers over the door handle, wavering for only a moment. I know I have to leave. I've been here far too long. I also know I'll be back soon. I could live worlds away, but this is the one place I know where I'll always come back. No matter what happens.

For Mary,

I'm scared. Mary. I'm so scared.

My lower leg has been blown off.

The battlefield, it would've been a fraction of the worst nightmare you have ever seen.

Everywhere you turned someone was dead. The smell took over your senses, clouded your eyes. I thought I was dead moments after arriving in the trenches.

I know it makes me less of a man to say this but you were, after all, the one who pushed me to go to war in the first place.

"James, it would be uncivil to not fight for our country. You expect me to stay with a man who would not put his life on the line for me?"

It's been the hardest two months of my life. The battlefield was a swamp. I watched people drown in the mud, watched them getting shot and running across the bridges we thought were safe. There's no worse feeling than watching someone in front of you get shot. The blank stare in their eyes as you know you can't do anything but try to slow their fall.

It's torture and I miss you. As much as we spat back and forth, it's awful not waking up next to you. I know the war is changing me, but I know I'll never lose my love for you.

For two weeks we were firing assaults across Passchendaele ridge. All four quadrants were working together. We had small wins, managing to gain a few hundred metres of land every attack. General Haig's plan was working, despite losing thousands each day.

I was told we lost almost all the junior soldiers in the battalion during one attack. 'Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry', if I'm writing that correctly.

We were huddled in small holes, puddles large enough to swallow our house scattered around us. The continuous sound of gunfire was the only thing to be heard, even in the dead of night. You'd be surprised how many times I nearly passed out from exhaustion. Men that I had trained with were lost to the blackened mud, literally disappearing moments after being right next to me. It guts me.

Mud was in the guns, gumming them up, which is awful when you're being shot at with no way to defend yourself other than said gun. We waded waist deep, carrying wounded away, soldiers stepping over to help carry them off the field.

You want me to help our country, but I just want to be home with you.

I want this nightmare to be over.

I watched a man pour half a bottle of whale oil into his boots to prevent trench feet. I myself got it, before I lost my foot. My other one was treated and luckily the swelling went down.

We've lost so many people. Even if we win this war. I don't think things will ever be the same. I don't think I'm going to make it back, which is why I'm writing to you.

You have to move on, you need to be able to support yourself without me. I couldn't imagine something awful happening, and me not being able to care for you. Please take care of things if I don't make it, my love.

-Yours until my death, John Walters

Nicole A.Q. Labad

Grade 10

Viewpoints

Valleyview Secondary School

“Do you see these grades Emmanuel?! D’s and F’s! What has gotten into you?! You used to be top of your class! You have to keep your grades up! Your mother and I worked so hard to get you and your sister here to this country! Do you know the opportunities you have here?! Don’t waste it away!” Dad screams at me.

In the corner of my eye I see my mom covering her mouth with tears in her eyes. She can’t bear to look at me.

How did I get to this point? I ponder. I never thought I would become a disappointment to my family.

It was the beginning of the school year, I was the new kid. At first, everything was great. The kids around me were amazing! I had new friends who seemed so cool and they were everything I wasn’t. If Canada had a poster kid, they were the model. Blonde hair, blue eyes, a tall frame and bright smiles. Then, their influence started to take hold of me.

I see Adrian; he was one of my new friends and the most influential guy in the whole friend group. He throws an arm around my shoulders with a huge grin on his face.

“Em! Just the guy I wanted to see! So, listen, me and the guys wanted to go out. The thing is we can’t if we have all this homework that those stupid teachers give! What do you say? Help a guy out?”

The moment I said “yes,” everything changed. They started treating me differently. I became more of an unpaid worker than a friend. One day, I got fed up.

Nicole A.Q. Labad

Grade 10

Viewpoints

Valleyview Secondary School

I slam down the hefty stack of paperwork on the table. Huffing, I yell at them. “Stop dumping all your work onto me! I have other things to do rather than have to take care of a bunch of idiots who can’t even do their own homework!”

“Hahah! He finally caught on! Honestly it was great while it lasted. I thought all Asians were supposed to be smart?” Adrian smirked, while the others laughs.

“Excuse me?!”

“You heard me. The only reason we took you in is because we needed someone who was stupid enough to believe that we needed help, but smart enough to give us all good grades.”

I grit my teeth and walked away, tail between my legs. Their howls of laughter are that of hyenas.

After that day, I was never the same. To shake them off, I let my grades slip. I skipped my classes and didn’t hand in my assignments. They saw how I no longer tried and left me alone. But because of that, I was alone again. I went to school everyday, a hollow shell of myself. Eventually my parents caught on when my report card came in the mail.

“I really don’t know what has gotten into you Emmanuel. You used to be so smart, now you can’t even speak your native language! I just wanted the best for you! I don’t want you to become like your cowardly brother!” Dad seethes.

My mom pulls on his arm, tears streaming down her face. “Enough! You should rest!”

“Yeah dad, rest. Because we both know the reason why Kuya left is because of your unbearable standards for your kids!” I yell back at him.

Nicole A.Q. Labad

Grade 10

Viewpoints

Valleyview Secondary School

“You ungrateful little!-”

“Enough! Abel! Emmanuel! Leave it be!” My mom reprimands us both.

Dad glances at me one final time, shooting daggers into me. He stomps off, my mom following close behind. Silence fills the empty dining room until I heard a little snuffle behind me.

“Why are you and Papa fighting? Are you going to leave like Kuya did?” My little sister Chloe cries.

My gaze softens when I see her. She is the reason I endure everything.

“I am nothing like our big brother! Of course not! Why would I, when I have the world’s best little sister right here?” I say kneeling down to her level.

“I would never ever leave you, don’t you ever forget that. Dad and I are just having an argument about my schoolwork.”

“Then do you want my help? My teacher says I’m a really smart big girl!” She grins.

I chuckle to myself, “As much as I’d love that but you focus on you!”

“Okay! But pinky promise me you’ll try your best, so that Papa and you can stop fighting!” She holds out her little pinky towards me, without hesitation I locked mine with hers.

“I promise.”

I had to uphold my promise to Chloe. After a few months my grades started to pick up again. I attended my classes with her little smile in mind. Adrian and his crew tried to bother me, but everytime they dropped off their homework, I would immediately throw it in the recycling.

Nicole A.Q. Labad

Grade 10

Viewpoints

Valleyview Secondary School

Eventually I started to regain my parents' trust again. With it my dad earned his respect back.

"I was unreasonable Emmanuel. You are right, I put too much pressure on your brother, and now I'm doing the same to you. Your mom helped make me realize that your best is enough. That you son, are enough."

I tear up and pull him into a bear hug. At first he didn't know how to react, but hugged me back just as tight. I had been waiting for those three words for forever, "*you are enough.*"

Family dinners started to become more common, and home started to feel safe again. I started to get more in touch with my roots every time I spoke with my mom as she taught me all she could about our culture. Dad could look at me with pride again. Chloe is thriving in this new home, never having to worry about anything except to keep growing.

As I roll with the punches of life, I realize with each person there is a different viewpoint, and not one is ever the same.

Addysen Outerbridge, Grade Ten
Bulletproof Love
South Kamloops Secondary

Sept 14th 2021, 13:07 pm.

The whole warehouse was filled with scattered bullet casings, dark red blood smeared the cold concrete floor.

The light was dull, almost as if a dark shadow casted upon the room. Small hints of gunpowder lingered in the air, it was too quiet. Eerie almost.

The event had been a large shoot out that occurred due to the keeping of a hostage.

Darius lay there with blood streaming down his chin, bottom lip quivering. His body weak, He took a blow to the stomach. His eyes laid upon Astraea's unconscious body, breaking out into a loud wail.

All the energy he had left in him, he desperately tried to crawl over to her. Hand on the wound to his stomach, spitting the blood out that flooded his mouth. His face was pale, ghost like even.

"Astraea-," he choked out weakly, his heart pounding even as it was starting to slow. Wincing as he could only drag himself so far before his body started to give up.

Astraea, the only person he really truly loved and let into his life. She was merely supposed to just be his bodyguard, but in the time spent with her, Darius fell head over heels. He loved every aspect of her, the way she would do her hair, the way she would get so easily

Addysen Outerbridge, Grade Ten
Bulletproof Love
South Kamloops Secondary

flustered when he would compliment her skills. He couldn't leave her, and nor could she leave him.

"Astraea please wake up, for the dear love of god you are going to wake up!" he pleaded, guilt and regret beaming from his eyes.

Astraea slowly opened her eyes, it was blurry. Everything was blurry; she couldn't see a thing, all she could do was listen. "Darius?! I can't see where you are, please be okay." she stammered.

"Astraea you scared me, I'm right here don't worry," Darius bawled.

The sounds of Darius' voice made her want to turn her head, she couldn't move or feel anything. A lump forming in the back of her throat formed as she closed her eyes. Breaking out into a sob.

Darius' eyebrows drew together as he saw her break out into a sob, full of worry he tried to reach for her hand. "Hey, it's okay I'm right here," he laid at least ten feet away.

Astraea had been stripped of almost all her basic senses.

"I can't feel or move, oh god. Darius I'm so sorry this is all my fault, I'm sorry for ruining everything- I'm sorry for loving you," she choked out, swallowing her pride.

His eyes widened, 'she can't die on me,' is the only thought that ran through him. Quickly shaking his head, this couldn't be happening.

"Don't ever be sorry for loving someone okay, love? This wasn't your fault, it never was. Please don't blame yourself, ever. Just promise me you'll stay awake, okay?" a weak but warm

Addysen Outerbridge, Grade Ten
Bulletproof Love
South Kamloops Secondary

smile pulled at his lips, trying to give a sense of hope even if she couldn't see him. Watching as her clothes became more and more stained with her own blood, he bit down on his bottom lip with a slow shake to his head.

Astraea opened her eyes just to see the blurry light shine on her, she softly smiled. "I remember the first time I saw you in that Tuxedo you wore to the gala, it made me feel all... nervous and fuzzy," she muttered out, becoming weaker as every second passed.

Even with the blood loss, his cheeks became a soft red among the cuts and blood stains. "I remember watching you walk into that boardroom for the first time, and your cocky attitude. I knew you were going to be something special to me" his tone was dripping with tenderness. Tears rolling down his cheek. His nose scrunched up as he laid his head on the ground, the cold concrete felt refreshing against his cheek.

"Y'know I really love you... I've never told you before but I love you Darius Amery Briggs, okay? Don't you ever forget that," she choked out. Astraea knew she wasn't going to make it out of this alive. What was the point in fighting it even, there would be no quality of life after this.

Darius watched her, this was all such a mess. "I love you as well Astraea Smith Elin, and we'll make it out of this okay? you'll be okay. I'll be okay. After this we will move out to the countryside.. we can make a life together. No more violence."

Astraea gulped, she wanted that so badly. She wanted to love him for the rest of her life, but it wasn't going to happen.

Addysen Outerbridge, Grade Ten
Bulletproof Love
South Kamloops Secondary

“I would love that..I really would... but Darius I’m not making it out of this building alive. We both know I won’t.” Choking on her own words, tears fell from her eyes and onto the ground. Everything was becoming cold, the puddle of blood she laid in growing larger. Closing her eyes.

Darius screamed out, “No! Astraea you are not leaving me okay? Please, I can’t cope without you- Open Your eyes!” He couldn’t do anything, all he could do was lay there and watch her life slip away.

“You’ll be okay Darius, I promise. I love you.” Astraea said softly, she fell silent. Her chest had stopped moving, she was gone. That was it.

Darius screamed out, sobbing so hard his body couldn’t keep up with it. Choking on his tears, full of regret and pain.

Building up all his strength he dragged himself over to her, sitting in the puddle of her blood. Looking over her wounds, her lifeless face. His tears fell onto her, carefully pulling her body close to his chest. Holding her, tucking strands of her hair behind her ear. Mumbling ‘I love you’ over and over again. Voice filled with pure sadness and distress, planting kisses on her face. Laying down, her head laid on his chest. His hand placed on the side of her head, cradling her. Slowly, his body gave up. Darius slipped away just like that. The two of their lifeless bodies laid together for the rest of eternity.

Two Lakes

Clashing like loud strikes of thunder, water had come down in a mudslide hitting the north mountains. Trees, rocks, plants, and cold water had covered the forest floor, replacing it with a thick layer of mud. Big streaks of missing forest had appeared on the mountain side looking like fall had come early. At this point people who lived on a neighboring lake called Spade Lake had come out from their homes to look at what was causing commotion. Some looked terrified and had gathered bags of their belongings in case they had to leave. Others had been taking photos and videos, just staring at the mountain they thought they knew.

On the other side of the mountain, another lake known as Tumbler Lake had been put on high alert since they were closer to the mountain. On their side the mud had reached the lake, polluting it with pine and fir trees that had been on the mountain for generations. Even though the mud had stopped, and people were still on high alert, they tried to go back to what they were doing, looking unbothered by the waterfall that could have suffocated them in an instant.

Nearby, two children lay outside in the grass, coming up with theories of what would have happened if the mud wave had hit the town. They were brothers who lived on a farm closest to the mountain and below the mud wave. The house was quite comforting with rows of flowers out front and windows lining the walls. They had completely rebuilt the old farm house into a colorful looking home. They really had to look after each other, for their parents were almost non-existent in their lives and did not care a inch about their kids. When the wave hit, instead of running out trying to look for the boys, they sat back and watched the daily news.

One of the boys named Avery got up and wandered towards the cloudy water that invaded the lake. The other boy named Chris stretched and followed his brother. As they got to the rusted colored lake, the mud was still flowing in, killing anything in its path. Drawing closer

they saw a dock just in front of the hurricane of trees. The dock made a loud creaking sound like it had been there for years but both the boys had never seen it before.

"I don't think we should be here, Avery. It looks very old".

"Chris, It's fine. See?"

Avery shot upwards with a leap and landed, shaking the whole dock like an earthquake. It rattled and scraped like they were under spikes or huge rocks. In an effort to try and protect Chris, Avery huddled close and yelled, "HOLD ON!"

Bright sun shone down, waking Avery up from slumber. As he looked around, he saw a vast ocean, a lot like the lake but bigger. No land was visible. Looking down he saw the splintered dock he had jumped on and his brother on his side looking dead asleep. Rushing over quickly, Avery checked his brother's heartbeat and breathing, waking him up in the process.

"What happened?" Chris said in a tired voice followed by a loud yawn.

"If I knew I would not be wondering the same thing," Avery said.

"We should figure out where we are first."

"HA! As if that's even possible."

They looked to the vast water trying to think of solutions or ideas of how and where they were. Chris reached his hand into the blueish water. He cupped his hands, picking it up and sipping some from his hands.

"It's salty! Disgusting!"

"Salty?"

"Ya. Want me to say it twice?" Chris replied, as he sat down and pouted.

"Isn't the ocean salty? But it would not make sense if our lake would be salty like the ocean."

Chris sat up quickly and jumped as high as he could, landing with a huge thud on the dock. The whole dock rumbled and shook violently. Both the brothers looked at each other before huddling again on the floor of the dock. Chris hoped that if they did the same thing as last time they could go home! When the dock stopped shaking like an earthquake the boys opened their eyes, excited and hopeful that they were magically back to land. Sadly their hope and excitement turned into frowns and disappointment. They were still on the oceans' vast salty waters.

"I thought that would work! Let me try again!"

"NO! Chris if you do that we could get knocked off the dock and into the water. Unless you plan on learning your first swimming lesson stay put"

Chris sighed and went back to sitting down, looking into the deep water. Avery ended up pacing back and forth trying to think of ideas as to how to get them out of the situation.

"AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH! WE ARE NEVER GETTING BACK!"

This made Chris jump as Avery yelled as loud as he could. Suddenly the dock rocked back and forth making Avery fall, landing on his face.

They both went silent looking at each other and all around rapidly to find out what had rocked the dock so suddenly. They were backed up to the right side of the dock huddling together as a huge snake-like creature rose from the infinite water of the ocean. Avery tried to speak but quickly closed his mouth as the creature moved closer and started to circle the dock at a rapid pace. Hugging each other in fright on the floor of the dock, they trembled as it started rocking like an earthquake was taking place.

BAM! A sound had woken up Chris and Avery from a deep sleep in the field of flowers in their own backyard. A large part of the mud slide had moved a tree and it had landed on the house beside them. They looked at each other in shock.

Avery fell back on his side and said, "Was that just me or did you just have the craziest dream?"

Christina Douglass, grade 10
Blue Heart and What do you want me to be?
South Kamloops Secondary School

Blue Heart

My heart is bloody and open to you
You can see every gory detail every ounce of blue
I am waiting for your answer
Making me your dancer
My heart is being stretched apart by very your hands
I am allowing you to for my love still stands
I hear your whispers of hints
Making my face color redden in all sorts of tints
I give you all my vulnerability
In return you are one with tranquility
I have feelings so vast wide in all sorts of size
You take your time to ponder the workings of my hearts cries
For we are in simplicity so youthful, and young
But my heart beats as if my head is to be hung
The gory details of my heart are open to you
There is sight of every vain and every blue

Christina Douglass, grade 10.
Blue Heart and What do you want me to be?
South Kamloops Secondary School

What do you want me to be?

How I look is abstract yet forward

I have my limits but they are awkward

They bend depending on who sees me

In what new box will they make me flee?

To them I am gray

In which identity do I lay?

And who is to say?

Which box makes the masses comfortable?

What Label will they make, so that I am governable?

It is push and pull between mexican, and white

Does my whiteness define me, and to which height?

I am deep within my identity but who sees me?

I know who I am, and how I feel but when will it be free?

I am not a binary race

But society wants me to have a brace

It gives me a privileged placement

I am knowledgeable of what privilege I hold, but I am more than my casement

I am a canadian mexican

In this identity I am

genuine

So how I am abstract yet forward

The lines of the binary awkward

It is me.

Ryder Dobson, Grade 10
Amari's Perfect Apocalypse
South Kamloops Secondary School

Amari's Perfect Apocalypse

The iridescent, stringy vines wrapped around Amari's childhood home like tentacles. They suffocated the light streaming into the basement making a kaleidoscope-like pattern that lay softly on her sleeping face. It had been three years since the invasion started. Three years since hell fell from space. First, it was subtle. It was a mess of information at first, the day the world saw a comet fall from the sky. It landed right in the middle of the ocean, at Point Nemo, the point farthest away from land. After a while everyone slowly forgot, as the officials covered it up and flushed it away more each day. That was, until, the spores floated across Amari's secluded town. She thought that it was pollen, at first, but that was before she noticed the small changes all around her. For example, the hazy lavender filter that developed in the following weeks. The strange plants that started to bloom. It wasn't long before small unnoticeable patches turned into whole vegetation. Otherworldly hues slowly snuck their way into every corner of the small town, and the world. Amari wasn't stupid. She knew this wasn't a coincidence. This was *alien*.

Amari woke up. The vines were at it again. Her basement was dimly lit and filled to the brim with chemicals she had stolen from her school's lab. It had been five months since schools were nationally closed. The general advice was to stay home and to stock up. The environment was rapidly changing and evolving everyday. Amari was confused by one thing only: all they had seen so far was plants... but no predators.

Before the invasion, Amari loved science. She purposely skipped her other classes to conduct her own experiments. She was at the *very* top of her class in chemistry.

Ryder Dobson, Grade 10
Amari's Perfect Apocalypse
South Kamloops Secondary School

Amari wasn't too worried about the lockdowns or alerts they received constantly. In fact, she enjoyed locking herself in the musty basement for hours on end mixing and experimenting. While she excelled in all of her scientific work, she felt that she was still miles away from making any scientific discovery that would add to the world.

"At least I have time," she muttered to herself, "I have lots of it."

In the past week, Amari had her focus whipped away from what she had been learning, to something more bothersome. The vines outside her window. The vines that were on the brink of swallowing her house. She didn't have simple chores anymore. What her parents tasked her to do now was to cut and snip through the relentless plants outside her safe haven. This had prompted an unusual discovery. These weren't vines: in fact, they were all types of fungi. She had learned this in biology, and while it wasn't her favourite, it had proven to be helpful. After making that strange discovery, Amari noticed that almost every other alien plant was also a type of fungi. The unknown forces were swallowing her city with *mushrooms*.

The plants and flora she extracted from around her small town she kept in a small blue cooler. She brought them home everyday, not knowing what to do with them, until one amazing idea sprung into her head. There *must* have been a reason that she had raided her school chemistry lab, other than greed. She was going to make a *breakthrough*.

It was almost three in the morning by the time Amari turned off the dusty, analog computer. She had searched blogs, videos, and everything under the internet's fluorescent sun. There were many people talking online about how this fungi takeover started. What she wanted was how to stop it. Amari grabbed as many containers of chemicals as she could and spread them

Ryder Dobson, Grade 10
Amari's Perfect Apocalypse
South Kamloops Secondary School

out on the floor. She grabbed the cooler and carefully threw the vines into the bowl. First, she tried killing it with salt. Nothing happened. She tried bleach next. The vine stayed still. She repeated this process with a multitude of different chemicals and compounds but absolutely nothing worked. It was dawn by the time she finally got up. She was frustrated, at this point, so she went for a walk to clear her head. She passed what used to be a vibrant city centre, but the stores were now completely ransacked and raided. All that was left were the strange plants growing through the concrete. She walked to the very edge of the city and peered into the dense, dark forest. She sat down by the old gas station and stared at the vegetation. It was all so still and peaceful. That was until she heard a rustling in the bushes.

Amari immediately leapt to her feet. She slowly backed away from the gas station. The last thing she saw was three pairs of glowing, blinking eyes in the dark wood. Amari sped home. She spiralled down the stairs to their dusty basement and grabbed everything she could, dropping it in the kitchen sink. The containers of stolen chemicals and lab supplies she had already tested. While she was frantically pacing in the kitchen, she accidentally tripped and flailed onto the counter, pushing a small box of *baking soda* over. It landed gracefully on the vine, flooding the bowl. The fungi started to squeal as it spewed spores into the dusty air. This was it. The solution.

Amari ran to the gas station. Standing there, was a horrific creature. Humanoid, but covered in the same vines that wrapped her house like a present. The creature extended a fungi covered hand and started warbling slowly. Amari shuddered and backed away. It started to open its mouth and speak in shattered english.

"... You... come... with Taio," The creature stuttered.

Ryder Dobson, Grade 10
Amari's Perfect Apocalypse
South Kamloops Secondary School

"This better work," Amari whispered.

She lunged at the being, whipping out the baking soda. It hit the creature and started to sizzle, burning its skin. It wailed and screamed in pain, as it melted and spewed out gunk.

This was her perfect breakthrough. She was going to be... famous!

Madisen Fehst, grade 10
Diversification of the proliferation
South Kamloops Secondary School

Diversification of the proliferation

Day one.

'Hi, my name is Taio Quan. Today is day one of my leadership training, we are planning and prepping the troops for our final attempt at expanding our species. I am of a species that derives from the Kaiju, Japanese monsters. We are specifically descended from a mushroom Kaiju called 'The Matango'. We are parasitic fungi that have unfortunately reached the brink of the possible population on our current residing planet. We are invasive creatures but don't enjoy unnecessary violence, so our tactic when we exceed population limitations is to simply grow our habitat by taking over any unused planets around us. This exercise has worked for us over the past few millenniums as we have taken the entire galaxy filled with uninhabited planets. But recently we've noticed our numbers are growing bigger, and bigger and we are running out of space to expand. Initially, we tried pretending nothing was amiss, so we just moved a few more people to different parts of the globe, but now it's gotten so hectic, people are fighting over the land. After much debate and although we are a usually gentle species, we have decided to invade... planet Earth.'

After writing down his first entry explaining the pre-decision events, Kaio made his way to the lower deck of the ship. All the level 5s and up started forming lines while they received instructions on how to behave during this invasion process. They were taught how to function in this new environment, and how to deal with an emergency if things didn't go as planned, which wasn't predicted. This would be one of their first creature VS creature interactions ever, and they'd be going in with high hopes.

Madisen Fehst, grade 10
Diversification of the proliferation
South Kamloops Secondary School

Day Thirty-Four.

'As of today, we are commencing to put our plan to use. We truly come in peace and simply wish to share the land with homo-sapiens to avoid a civil war. To properly send this message our level 10 Matangos were sent to break the possible tension of our introduction. Meanwhile, we are finishing getting ready the families that are to move. I am one of the lucky 9 million of us to be the first to introduce our kind to these welcoming beings. We are to exit our ship and lay low while we spread throughout our new home. We have selected a place to land: Nemo's Point, an open ocean area near a perfect living space. The town that we are to come into first contact with is a very secluded, quiet place, perfect for our discreet attempt at invasion. It's go time.'

The Mantago had a concrete plan, once the ship had landed its plummet to the selected part of the ocean, they released their spore-like selves into the air. It was easy for them to adjust, and only took a few days to reach solid ground. They floated around the city, covering all with a slight lavender aura and musky smell.

Day Five Hundred and Sixty-Eight

'Our new neighbors seemed to be taking our intrusion well, they've barely batted an eye towards our growing population. It's been almost 2 years, and most of us had left the ship and were now settling into the native vegetation. We infect their plant life, killing its source of nutrition just enough to become the sole provider, then it becomes part of us. We've created new ways of spreading using these dead flower's seeds to move around the land. By this point, it's become

Madisen Fehst, grade 10
Diversification of the proliferation
South Kamloops Secondary School

obvious to our friends that we are here permanently and they have started reacting and attempting to fight back. Of course, we are a strong breed and only got stronger during their attempts at cutting us off which eventually scared most away. Soon we became a dominating species in town. We had grown over much of the now uninhabited settlement and infrastructure and decided it was time to continue further across our new home.'

Originally starting near Nemo's Point, the Mantago had traveled throughout the rest of our dearest planet Earth. After infecting major tourist points over the globe and forcing humans to hide, the mushroom people set their new lives deep into the roots of the earth. Eventually, as initially promised, they lessened their violent acts and created a space of community safe enough for some humans to return. Of course many were still scared, there was an unstable certainty of trust in these newly formed relationships, but it had now been years since the earliest contact and they were becoming comfortable.

Final Entry

'I am happy. I'm happy with the outcome of our mission. I'm happy to have found such a beautiful place, but most of all I'm happy that the humans are coming to their senses and finally returning our recognition and affection. We have come to a harmony that allows us to live amongst each other. Although they can be timid, they have been spotted at beaches, playgrounds, stores, almost everywhere. I had decided to stay in the little town that hosted our arrival. I've met very few people here, and the ones I get to have more than a minute with are good, welcoming faces. There has been one particular face that I have yet to convince to trust me, a young girl who resides here in Nemo's Point. She isn't too important to my story but I've decided,

Madisen Fehst, grade 10
Diversification of the proliferation
South Kamloops Secondary School

after seeing her at the local gas station, that I'm going to seek her out and become friends. There aren't many other young souls here and I would enjoy the company. This is the end dear readers, please know this journal isn't for studying but merely gave me the opportunity to bring you along our journey, I will now retire my journal to someplace more useful. Thank you and Goodbye.'

The kaiju may be known now as a common fungi species. They cause no harm and have become one with the people.

Elizabeth Clark - Grade 10
The Sealed Library
South Kamloops Secondary School

The Sealed Library

Day 1 after the fall of the outer walls. The diary of junior librarian Eris. This morning the outer walls of my city were attacked and conquered. The inner walls still stand and what's left of our army defends them but they say we don't have long before they fall as well. I am safe inside of the library left behind to save what I can of our priceless literature. The screams of my friends and family still ring in my ears, everybody left me. I don't know if they even made it out and if they did will they even be able to find shelter before they are hunted down and slaughtered. There is supposed to be a vault somewhere in the catacombs of the library. I just have to find it, the only problem is that nobody remembers where it is. I need to find the vault and save as many books as I can before I too am taken hostage and killed in cold blood.

Day 2 after the fall of the outer walls. The diary of junior librarian Eris. I woke up this morning still feeling the sting of smoke in my lungs and the adrenaline in my veins. I can't believe I volunteered to stay behind, they almost got me. I can hear the invaders building the ramp outside the second wall, I don't have long. I start in the room I'm in, I stand in the middle of it for a few minutes not knowing where to start. I start towards a bookcase that holds texts on geography and population, now I have to pick what to save. My father used to say the decision was always the hardest part. I wonder where he is, last I saw he was running, leaving me behind, it didn't seem like that decision was too hard for him. I look at the books filling the shelves. I need to make my decision. I pick to save a book on geography, the natural world to be specific. I imagine being outside again, the birds chirping the smell of the ocean and the cool breeze on my

Elizabeth Clark - Grade 10
The Sealed Library
South Kamloops Secondary School

arms. I want people to know about it. I want people to know about the world that is being destroyed in front of my own eyes. I bring it down to the basement where it will soon be safe and locked away in the vault. While I'm down there I spot some scrolls in the corner. To my surprise they are records on how they built the vault, too bad it doesn't say where it is or what the code is to open it but it's better than nothing I guess. I stupidly let my mind wander and I start thinking about what the invaders will do to me when they get in. When they got into the city I saw them grabbing people and putting them in cages. I looked out the window on my first day in the library and I saw them eating those people. They didn't even have the decency to kill them first, they ate the people alive. It was a terrible sight, I don't know if it will ever leave my mind. I shake myself out of my trance of fear and go searching for more books. I see something very interesting on one of the shelves, a giant scroll that seems to be the travel diary of Carowak the wanderer. I remember this one. I read it when I first started at the library. It is an interesting thing to read, not completely useful but it was quite funny. I decided not to keep it, Carowaks work is not always very accurate and I don't wish to waste time on hauling it down to the basement if it's not even correct. I continue to look for more books but what I find is even better. I found smoked bacon in an office in the library. I can finally eat something that's not the army's sad excuse for rations. While I'm eating I think about my life before the siege. That leads me to thinking about my girlfriend and how she died. I remember it as if it just happened even though it's been days. I was running away from an invader with her and she fell, tripped on an uneven stone. The invader got to her before I could help her up, he dragged her away as she screamed and flailed. They didn't even put her in a cage like the others, they just started eating her right there, I guess

Elizabeth Clark - Grade 10
The Sealed Library
South Kamloops Secondary School

they were hungry. I was looking into her eyes as her soul left her body. It's another sight that will never leave my mind.

Day 3 after the fall of the outer walls. Diary of junior librarian Eris. This morning I woke up to the feeling of complete hopelessness. I know it's over, I stand no chance of surviving this. The invaders have blocked every exit from the city and overnight they blocked our only water supply. We are all going to die horrible deaths here, I see no point in trying anymore. At noon today when the sun is at its highest I will say goodbye to this world and wish goodbye to all my family as I will be leaving and never coming back. So now to you dear diary, may the next reader's life be prosperous and full of laughter, all the laughter that I will never get to feel again. Goodbye world, goodbye air, goodbye to the warm hugs of all who have ever loved me, goodbye.

This diary was later discovered buried with the body of a boy we suspect to be about 17 years old. His remnants date back to when Athens fell. We suspect from his diary he sadly ended his life and his body was later discovered and buried.

The End