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1

Gr 11

Machina

By Samina Dorazahi

Adult Young Fiction

Science Fiction

Synopsis

The year was 2150, and humanity had exhausted Earth's resources. The planet was dying, and the only hope for survival lay in the search for new worlds and resources. That's where Franco Morales and his team came in. They were a group of scientists and engineers tasked with finding unique elements and materials to help sustain life on Earth.

Franco Morales was the team's engineer and captain. He was a brilliant mind and had been in charge of developing the team's spaceship, Machina. He had a special connection to his colleague, Maria Rossi, the team's medical officer and biologist. Maria had always been impressed by Franco's intelligence and hard work, and the two had grown close during their time together on the mission. Santiago Rodriguez was the team's security and defence specialist, always ready to protect the team. And then there was Ethan Johnson, the team's head of security and protection. Ethan had a dark and unpredictable past, but Franco trusted him to keep the group safe.

The team was on a mission to a nearby planet discovered to contain an element that could revolutionize space travel. This element which they later called Pulvium, had never been seen before and was incredibly powerful. It could power spaceships for years, if not decades, without needing a refill. However, this planet was not uninhabited. Alien beings were living there, but the team didn't know much about them except that they were intelligent and could communicate. As the team landed on the planet, they were greeted by the aliens.

Franco was surprised to find that the aliens took a liking to him and his team, except for Ethan, who they seemed to dislike. The aliens showed the group where the element could be found, and they started mining it. As they were shovelling, the team realized this element was more than a potent fuel source. It had the potential for use in warfare. They knew that if VEGA,

a powerful corporation that controlled most of Earth's resources, found out about this element, they would stop at nothing to get their hands on it.

As the team became more aware of the potential use of the element in warfare, they knew that VEGA would stop at nothing to obtain it. VEGA was a powerful corporation that controlled most of Earth's resources. They had a history of exploiting other planets for their gain, leaving behind a trail of destruction and devastation. The team knew that if VEGA got their hands on the element, they would use it to further their interests, even if it meant risking the safety of Earth and its people. So the team had to find a way to prevent VEGA from obtaining the element, but it would be challenging.

VEGA had vast resources and connections, and they had shown that they would need more to achieve their goals. Franco and Santiago brainstormed how to protect the element and keep it out of VEGA's reach. They knew they needed to act quickly and devise a plan before VEGA could launch a full-scale attack. Maria joined the discussion, using her knowledge of the planet's ecology and the alien species to provide insights into how they could better defend themselves and the element.

Ethan, who had been distant from the rest of the team, suddenly became more engaged in the discussion. He had experience in covert operations and knew how VEGA worked. He suggested a plan to infiltrate VEGA's headquarters and sabotage their efforts to obtain the element. The team knew the plan was risky but only had a few options. They had to take a chance if they wanted to protect the element and Earth's future.

They worked tirelessly to prepare for the operation, and when the time came, they executed it flawlessly. Ethan's knowledge and skills were crucial to the mission's success, and the team realized they had misjudged him. One night, while the team was resting, they were attacked by VEGA's agents. They had found out about the element and were determined to take

it for themselves. The team fought back with all they had, but it wasn't enough. They were outnumbered and outgunned.

It seemed like all was lost until the aliens came to their aid. The aliens had seen the greed and destruction that VEGA had caused on other planets, and they wouldn't let that happen on their Earth. The team and the aliens defeated VEGA's agents, and the element was again safe. However, the team knew they couldn't stay on the planet forever.

They had to return to Earth and let the world know about this new element. They knew that the discovery of this element could change the course of humanity, but they also knew that it had the potential to be a weapon. As the team prepared to leave the planet with the newly discovered element, they knew they were responsible for sharing their findings with the world.

The implications of this discovery were immense, and they knew Pulvium could be used for good or evil. However, they also knew that not everyone would be happy about this discovery. Adverse governments and powerful entities might see this new element as a means to gain an advantage over others to exert power and control. So the team knew they had to be careful about sharing this knowledge. They had a long discussion about the political implications of this discovery and realized that they needed to approach this with caution. They decided to work with a small group of trusted individuals who shared their vision of using this element for the betterment of humanity. They also knew that they needed to protect the planet and its inhabitants from those who might seek to exploit them.

But despite their best efforts, news of the discovery leaked to the world. Adverse governments immediately saw the potential of this new element as a weapon, and they began to vie for control of it. As a result, the team found themselves in the middle of a political firestorm as they tried to navigate the dangerous waters of international diplomacy. They quickly realized they needed to act fast to prevent this new element from falling into the wrong hands. So they

worked tirelessly to promote their vision of using this element for the betterment of humanity, and they convinced many governments to support their cause. Ultimately, the team succeeded in its mission, and the new element benefitted humankind in countless ways. However, their journey was a stark reminder of the power of knowledge and the responsibility that comes with it.

THE END

Samaya Lidder
Westsyde Secondary
Grade 11

I do not possess your conscious hours

But I haunt your dreams

When the moon cleanses your mind of the daily frights

Only I remain

You do not laugh at my jokes

Because I'm not a laughing matter

Something caught between your loathing and fervour

Twisting out as a regretful form of pity

I am not something to be spoken of

I won't give you that youthful thrill you so deeply desire

But I will always feel like home

Slashed into the deepest roots of your human-hood

Like a malicious childhood accident

The feeling you never seemed to shake

The girl you could never hate

The good you wish you never saw

The innocence that turned to claws

A hurt that isn't explainable

Will we ever be free?

Samaya Lidder
Westsyde Secondary
Grade 11
- Aftertaste

Take my voice, while it's still healing

Crush it into the small remnants of a hoarse morning scratch

No one will notice at all once it's completely gone

Take my eyes, while they're still opening

Show me the spring world around me just to trap it in eternal winter

And maybe then my arms will be too frozen to fight back

You may have pressed straight collars, while I stretched the belt too tight

But I have a beating in my chest, and fear, and hope, and love

And so many words you can roll off your tongue but will never hear the echos of in your skull

When I go to sleep at night, I dream

But when you close your eyes there is nothing, not even a rhythmic beat in the hollowness

You observe the world, pull and pick apart but I create

The only fear you have is that of the unknown

Of crooked frame, a chipped tile

Because when you see the blood splatter, and the children scream

You know that to you, it doesn't matter

- Big Brother

Jenna Kidner

Grade 11

Valleyview Secondary

Dead End

“Breaking news: the police are searching for the individual responsible for the murder of local real estate agent Julien Barlowe. Around 11:30 last night neighbours reported hearing yelling and arguing from the victim’s apartment just moments before hearing a loud crash. The detectives discovered a large gash on Mr. Barlowe’s skull and bruises on his face. Police are inquiring with friends and family to help solve the case. Should anyone have information regarding this case, they are asked to speak up as soon as possible. Thank you, and goodnight.”

Sebastian hops onto the trawler before the rest of his crew, quietly trotting down the skinny stairs to check his locker. With a sigh of relief after confirming he returned his equipment successfully, he loads up his plastic tackle box. He takes notice to wipe off the dried black blood stain on its usually-green corner as well as the drop of sweat that rolls down his pulsing temple when he spots it. Footsteps crash down the metal stairs behind him, indicating the rest of his crew’s presence. They stop abruptly upon seeing Sebastian, and whispers begin to fill the tight space.

“Hey, Sebastian. We’re sorry about your brother. He was a good man. A successful one at that,” Sebastian’s boss, Glenn, regards as he steps forward, speaking for the crowd. If Sebastian had to hear the words *successful* and *brother* in the same sequence one more time, he might lose his mind. He never liked people who rubbed their success in his face.

Jenna Kidner

Grade 11

Valleyview Secondary

Dead End

“Thank you for your sincerity, Glenn,” Sebastian responds, collecting his temper. “Can we use this day as a distraction? You know, to take my mind off things.” Glenn nods silently.

“Today, we’re on the Hectate Strait for any salmon we can find. They’re in season, so we can sell boatloads, pun intended. You boys can meet me up on deck when you’re ready,” Glenn affirms, stomping back up the stairs. Sebastian turns around, his eye twitching. His crew mates join him, lined up at their lockers, each eyeing Sebastian carefully. He pretends not to notice.

“How are you feeling, Seb?” One mate, Daniel, asks with a hint of sarcasm. Sebastian ignores him, slamming his locker shut, throwing his tackle box on the metal bench in the center of the room.

“You were the last person to see Julien, right?” Daniel starts, releasing a scoff. “You don’t want to talk because you did it?”

“Are you suggesting that I murdered my brother?” Sebastian accuses, his words stinging his tongue like poison. He takes a step toward Daniel, hand enclosed in a fist.

“It was just a joke, Seb,” Daniel trembles, stepping back. Sebastian continues forward, placing a firm hand on Daniel's tense shoulder, squeezing just enough to provide discomfort.

“Just a joke, huh?” Sebastian hisses before recoiling. He removes his hand and steps far back. “I’m sorry, I don’t know what that was. Let’s just... do our work.” Daniel holds his breath as he watches Sebastian nervously comb his fingers through his short, brown hair. Sebastian grabs his tackle box and rushes up the stairs.

Jenna Kidner

Grade 11

Valleyview Secondary

Dead End

They're going to know. Everyone will, because it was an accident, and Sebastian was too terrified at that moment to cover his tracks. It's funny, feeling guilty for something. You want to take responsibility until there are consequences. Especially when the consequence is life in jail, and it's staring into your eyes, nearly prying the confession out of you. And because a man like Sebastian is too prideful to admit to his crime, he would rather run away and hide than face the reality of losing everything he once loved because of a stupid mistake that cannot be undone.

As the salty air of the warm ocean consumes him, Sebastian sails farther and farther away from the launch which shrinks with every passing second. He studies the little ocean waves, noticing every speck of dust or flash of light that sparkles like a star. As he watches, he sees the sparkles flash many colours. White, yellow, red, blue...

Red and blue?

Sebastian whips his head up at the boat launch, counting the many white cars that screech on the concrete as they come to a harsh stop, the lights on top flashing vibrant red and blue. He can no longer see the delicate sparkle of those stars, just the blaring flick of the fire they are made of.

The officers hop out of their vehicles, clutching their guns. After confirming no threat, the officers wave a familiar figure out of a car.

Daniel.

Jenna Kidner

Grade 11

Valleyview Secondary

Dead End

They search the area together, checking inside every ship and under every dock. Sebastian observes them, some officers continually discussing details with Daniel. Sebastian sees one officer stop in his tracks, looking his way. The rest of the officers stop, all coming to gather on the wide wooden dock Sebastian departed from. One officer looks down at the rope his ship was tied to just minutes ago. The remaining officers look up at Sebastian, a speck of white on the blue horizon.

Ignoring the sirens and blaring lights of the police cars that race away, Sebastian lays down on his back, letting the musical trickle of the water overtake his hearing. The white, flapping sail above interrupts a completely baby blue sky, free of clouds and passing birds. Nearly falling asleep, he wakes to a whirring sound, an unmistakable crackle in the quiet atmosphere. Sebastian's eyes come back to notice the blue sky, seeing circling dots of black carve through. Closer they fly, their propellers more clearly coming into view, the sputter growing louder. As he lets out a deep sigh, he watches the sun glitter over the blue horizon. Although laying down felt comfortable for his sore ankles, he sits up and places his clasped hands on the back of his head, looking down at the wooden base of his ship, admitting defeat. He had done enough running.

Ever since I could stand my brother has taught me how to fight. He's given me bows and arrows, daggers, swords, staffs. As soon as I was old enough to understand he was doing it for my own good, he stopped going easy on me. He started knocking me down, bruising me, to make me stronger. To make me understand that if I ever have to use this arsenal of punches, kicks, jabs- it will be life or death. My opponent won't go easy on me so I better fight dirty.

Nobody knows, of course. Women are expected to cook. Clean. Sew. We are expected to be gentle where a man is hard. We are expected to be kind where a man is cruel. We are expected to cower. To let a man see us as a pretty face and no more. My mom cowered every day of her life, I'll be damned if I do the same.

"Adaline!" Darrius's voice pulls me from my thoughts. We are at the town quarter selling my father's daggers. My father's a blacksmith. In fact, he's one of the best in all of Idria. The King himself once travelled seven days on horseback just to purchase one of my father's daggers. Father still boasts about it although 12 moons have passed since it happened.

I look up to my brother waving me over. I smile at him. Darrius has always been my favourite person. I can't imagine anyone else I would rather spend my time with.

"What is it?" I inquire as Darrius looks at me like I just grew another head.

"Oh, nothing" he says, waving his hand as if my worries are right there and he can wave them away, "Your hair looks lighter and your freckles are showing. It's always odd after the snow months to see that glow back"

Of course he notices. I noticed this morning while I was getting ready. I smile at him again.

“Why thank you, dear brother of mine,” I say, being slightly dramatic but he grins nonetheless.

“You’re welcome dear sister of mine” He chuckles. I laugh as I see him look over my shoulder. His grin drops and my stomach drops with it.

I glance over my shoulder and see a young man walking up to me. I groan and roll my eyes internally, not daring to do so out loud. The man is objectively handsome, though something about him makes me uneasy. He looks familiar.

As he approaches, I turn around fully, ensuring none of my scorn appears on my face.

“Why hello pretty lady.” he grins and winks at me. Gross.

“Hello. How may I help you?” I say, striving to keep this interaction as indifferent as possible.

His charm lessens slightly. I want to grin. He’s clearly a man who’s used to getting what he wants when he wants it and no later. He must be enraged that I’m not throwing myself at his feet.

“I was wondering if you would like to enjoy a picnic with me tomorrow?” He says. Yeah, he’s mad.

“I’m sorry, I’m unavailable.”

Darrius cuts in and says, “Our father has arranged a marriage for her. She mustn’t frolic about or that arrangement may become abolished.”

The man glares at my brother. Darrius gives him a cold look in return.

“How unfortunate for a beauty such as you,” he says, looking me up and down.

“How unfortunate indeed,” I say coldly.

He walks away and I shudder.

“He appeared displeased. Does Father really have an arranged marriage set up?” I ask, slightly scared for the answer. If he does... I almost shudder again.

“No. I lied. He seemed arrogant.”

I nod and begin to pack up. Something about this interaction doesn't quite feel finished.

I'm walking to the market. It's been two nights since I last went. After the interaction with that man, I feel oily. I've been avoiding the market but Father will be displeased if I don't go today.

I gasp as I'm flung out of my thoughts and into a wall. I look up and see the man from two days ago with a dagger in hand.

“You disrespected me. I am going to put you where you belong, but first I will have my fun.” He spits out.

Oh. No. I grab the dagger hidden underneath my skirt and fling it at his shoulder before he can register I have something in my hand. My aim marks true- as it always does- and he swears, dropping his dagger. I pick his dagger up, tackle him to the ground and hold the dagger to his throat. The last thing he sees is me looking down at him with pity in my eyes and an awful feeling in my stomach.

After dragging his body to the docks through the sewers, I go home, taking alleyways and grabbing a cloak off of a drunk to make sure his blood is not seen. That would warrant unwanted questions.

“This dress is ruined,” I say, bemoaning the state of my favourite dress, which is now bloody. It was beautiful- short fluffy sleeves, a square neckline, long and flowy with beautiful yellow and purple flowers covering it.

“Why is there blood on your dress, Addy?” I hear Darrius whisper from behind me. I turn around to see him leaning against the doorframe of the bathing room with his arms crossed.

“The man from the market two days ago cornered me in the alley and tried to ‘have fun’ with me. I had no choice.”

He nods and jerks his hand towards the dress. I hand it to him and he walks away, presumably to burn it.

I think back to the interaction. I think about his face and I realize why he looked so familiar. Why his eyes and hair were so familiar. Those features. They were the features of the King. I just killed the King’s only son, Erric. And now? I’m screwed.

Taylor Gray
Grade 11
Valleyview Secondary
The grand mystery of Silas Quinn

The Grand Mystery of Silas Quinn

1 **INT. BOY'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON** 1

INSERT:

On a child's messy bed lay a weathered navy bomber jacket with the name "Silas" embroidered over the heart. A lock cutter is seen poking out from under it.

CUT TO:

A boy frantically runs into the room. He is Silas. He grabs the jacket and forces it on, catching it on his arm. Once he gets the jacket on, he grabs the lock cutter, shoves it under his coat, and runs out the door.

2 **INT. COTTAGE HALLWAY - AFTERNOON** 2

Silas runs down a hallway, meeting his brother at the end. They shake the dust from their boots, put them on, and exit the cottage.

3 **EXT. COTTAGE BACKYARD/FIELD - AFTERNOON** 3

The brothers run outside towards a dark forest. Silas Quinn's brother is Jax Quinn. He has a yellow rain jacket on. They both have choppy brown hair, ripped jeans, and black boots. Silas is 13 and Jax is 9.

Silas starts to laugh as he runs, and Jax breathes heavily, trying to keep up.

SILAS

I can believe we made it out without them noticing!

JAX

(out of breath)

Yeah, b-but are you s-sure about

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The grand mystery of Silas Quinn

this? Remember what they (cont'd)
said about the door?

SILAS
(accusatory)
Doesn't that make you want to know
what's behind it more though? I
think it's like reverse
psychology. Why else would they
show us where it is?

Jax sighs and shrugs.

SILAS
They want us to know. There's
something they're hiding.

JAX
(unsure tone)
I suppose you're right...

4 **EXT. DARK FOREST - AFTERNOON**

4

The two boys saunter down a beaten and overgrown dirt path,
approaching a grand ivied door with a chain and lock around
it.

CUT TO:

The boys stand directly in front of the door in silence.
Jax shivers and Silas rolls his eyes, lifting the lock
cutters towards the door.

SILAS
Prepare to meet your biggest
desires! I bet they're hiding all
sorts of treasures behind here.

JAX
(nervously)
Are you sure about this Silas?
What if the elves were right?

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The grand mystery of Silas Quinn

SILAS

You're being such a baby, I never
said you had to come with me! Feel
free to run on back to your mommy.
Whatever's behind here (cont'd)
will be all mine!

Jax stomps his boots and crosses his arms. He reluctantly
holds the lock cutters with Silas, and they collectively
cut the lock and chain on the door. Silas' face homes a wry
smirk.

SILAS

How could they believe we were so
foolish as to believe their lies?

JAX

(annoyed)

So are you going to open the door
or not?

CUT TO:

Silas' quivering hand grips the door handle and turns it
slowly, revealing an endless dark cavern before them. As
soon as he opens the door, he swings out, still holding
onto the handle, above the cavern.

JAX

(wailing)

SILAS!!! I TOLD YOU WE SHOULD HAVE
LISTENED TO THE ELVES. HOLD ON! I
CAN SWING THE DOOR BACK!

INSERT:

A tear forms on Silas' face and falls into the abyss.

Jax desperately attempts to help his brother, trying to
hold the door and turn it back to safety.

JAX

COME ON! Silas, you can do it,

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Grade 11
Valleyview Secondary
The grand mystery of Silas Quinn

just hold on for me!

Sweat forms on Silas' hands, and the door handle begins to crack, releasing him. He screams at the top of his lungs, and his voice fades away as he falls.

CUT TO:

Jax crashes to the ground in front of the ivied door and lets out a sob.

JAX (V.O.)

This is all my fault. I (cont'd)
knew it and I should've dragged
him back! Silas is dead! How am I
going to explain this?

5 **EXT. CAVERN FLOOR - NIGHT**

5

Silas lay on the wet cavern floor. Blood drips from his forehead and his clothes are tattered. He appears lifeless.

INSERT:

Silas' eyes twitch and slowly open, revealing his green eyes.