

### **Cycle of Time**

The beautiful stars soaring high,

Light up the merciful sky.

I watch as the night sinks.

The sparks take, one final blink.

I'm left,

Afraid.

I try to persuade the day,

To stay away.

Far from the pitiful ray,

I sit in the shade.

Day will always fade.

A.Dillon  
Grade 8  
Brockhurst Middle School

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### **The Dice of Life**

A mighty forest stands behind,

Undefined with anything owed.

My trees may erode,

But they will always come, behold.

Soon the growth had slowed,

And the factory wealth showed.

Now I'm left with an empty plain

Little to no trees remain.

When I woke up the morning of the 29th of February, a day that only happened once every four years, I felt amazing. I practically jumped out of bed, made coffee, did some yoga, read, journalled, and all that fun stuff that I wish I did every morning.

After I had done some work and got ready for the day, I decided to go to the art museum that had opened a week ago. My name is Valerie Valdez, I am 20 years old, and I live in Devon, Alberta. I have long luscious brown hair, people always tell me I have beautiful hazel eyes but I'm not sure I believe them, and yes, I live alone if you were wondering. I grew up right in Edmonton with my family, but I knew I wasn't going to stay for long.

As I was riding the subway to the new museum, I had a feeling something amazing was going to happen, something that would shock me to my core. Today was a special day; it's not every day it was February 29th. I was going to do some good today. I was going to be happy today. So I walked into that museum like I owned it. (I swear I paid for my visit.)

The museum only had things from in town, young artists, not any big famous people like DaVinci or anything, but everything was still so gorgeous. I saw a lot of pottery and sculptures surprisingly, but I, the painter, still went straight for the paintings.

I've been doing art since before I can remember, finger paints being my first passion. As I was standing there admiring a beautiful painting of a girl on a bench someone approached me. I turned to look at this man who had come to speak to me for a reason unknown, and I saw a security guard. He was very good looking, his hair was dark brown, almost black, and his eyes were a striking blue but if he turned in the light a certain way, they changed to green.

"Um, h-hello, can I help you, officer?" I said meekly.

"Oh there's no need for the officer," he said, smirking.

I wasn't sure how to feel about that sentence but he moved past it very quickly, so I did too.

"Have you been here before?" He asked.

"No, it's my first time," I responded quickly.

"So, what's your name?" He asks again.

I still wasn't sure how I felt about this guy. He seemed nice, and there was no gut feeling to run, but he was asking the questions someone who had bad intentions would.

"Um, I'm Valerie Valdez. What about you?"

"Leonardo Ricci. Nice name there, Valdez."

"Thank you, I'm told it means fierce."

"Oh, nice. Do you live up to that expectation?"

"In some situations, yes, others not so much," I say laughing.

Then he laughs right back. I could've fallen on the floor; his laugh was so beautiful. His eyes would light up as his head went back. I could feel myself blushing.

"That seems accurate." he says.

Someone calls his name from across the museum.

"Okay, I have to go now. It was nice meeting you, Valdez, hope you enjoy the museum," he says walking away.

I was starstruck. I went through the rest of the museum thinking about that whole experience and replaying the conversation in my head.

After that day in the museum, I saw Leo all over town. Grocery shopping, cafes, in the park, McDonald's. Everywhere. I wanted to talk to him so badly, I wanted to see if I could get his number or something, and I wanted to keep in touch. One day I saw him in the park and decided

I was going to do it; I was going to talk to him. I started to muster up the courage, but instead, he came up to me.

“If we are going to keep seeing each other Valdez I’m gonna need your number.” He said with a smirk.

I could feel my face heat up. This man is a charmer.

“Yeah sure,” I said, trying to keep my cool.

I gave him my number then someone called his name. “I’ll call you okay, Valdez? Actually, I’ll text you; no one calls anymore.” He said walking away, shooting finger guns at me.

This man had once again left me starstruck.

After that we talked quite a bit, texting, FaceTiming. We even met up for coffee and walks every once and a while. We became really good friends really fast, but there was obviously no chance of any type of romance, no matter how badly I wanted it. He was such a great guy; he seemed perfect for me. When he got shot in a museum robbery attempt, I was so worried, but I doubt he thought about me at all. Don’t worry! He was okay, but it was still scary in the moment.

A few weeks after his accident, we decided to go for a drive. I was driving. We were driving on the highway, and then out of nowhere Leo told me to turn onto a gravel backroad, which I admit sparked a mini heart attack. We drove down that road for about ten minutes before we turned again. Then we pulled up to a lookout over a huge farming field. The sun was starting to set now. We sat down at the picnic table, and I was mesmerized by the view.

The sun went completely down and the stars were starting to come out.

“It gets you every time doesn’t it?” I said to him,

“Huh? Oh yeah, it’s great,” he said, zoned out.

“You know, I really like you, Valdez,” he said, leaning into me a little bit.

“Oh yeah, you’re not too bad yourself,” I responded, leaning in too.

“Good.” he said as he put his hand on my face. Then we kissed, and I noticed a shooting star go by.

Sophia Wong, Grade 8  
The Painted Nightmare  
South Kamloops Secondary School

## The Painted Nightmare

1

The first thing I noticed when I moved into the mansion that I inherited from my great-grandmother was the big, beautiful painting of her when she was young; long, dark hair and green eyes that were full of life. She was wearing a gorgeous white floor length dress with matching white gloves. I couldn't believe how pretty my great-grandmother was.

The nightmare begins when I am cleaning the mansion because my friend is going to come and see it. *DING DONG! DING DONG!* I rush down the stairs to answer the door.

"Wow! Your new mansion looks amazing from the outside! I can't wait to see the inside!" Ava, my friend, exclaims as soon as I open the door.

"Thank you! I'm glad that you like it. Come inside and I'll give you a tour!" I answer with a smile. Ava takes her shoes off and follows me up the stairs. I lead her to the living room. The living room has white, plush sofa and armchairs, arranged around a sleek coffee table. Vibrant photographs and paintings hang on the soft, cream coloured walls, adding color and personality to the place. A large, flat screen TV was mounted on the wall above the fireplace, which crackled with a warm, cozy fire. Large windows on both sides of the room flooded the space with natural light, offering a stunning view of the city.

"This view is amazing!" Ava says, looking out of the huge window.

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South Kamloops Secondary School

“Yeah, come over here,” I signal towards the hallway. “I’ll show you a beautiful painting of my great-grandmother.” The painting hung at the end of the hallway, where it could be seen from almost anywhere in the mansion. We both stare at the painting for a while.

“I love her earrings, they look like the ones that you wear all the time,” Ava says, breaking the awkward silence. *I don’t remember her wearing earrings. I think. Maybe I didn’t notice them. But I could’ve sworn there wasn’t—* “Lena? You ok?”

“Yeah, I’m fine, I’ll show you the kitchen.”

I show her the kitchen, the bedrooms, the library and the rest of the mansion, trying to act like everything’s normal and pretending that the earring thing never happened. But how could I? When I cannot find the pair of earrings that I always wear the next morning, the knots in my stomach tighten.

2

Everytime I look at the painting, I have to stare at it for a long time. I don’t want to, but it’s like my great-grandmother’s trying to pull me in the painting with her.

At that moment when I’m looking at the painting, I forget everything else. I can’t see or hear anything around me. Nothing else matters.

I wake up and my head is throbbing, my vision is blurry and I don’t remember anything. *How did I get here? Why am I on the floor? What happened?* The first thing I see when I look up is the painting of my great-grandmother, who’s staring down at me from the wall.



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The Painted Nightmare  
South Kamloops Secondary School

I stand up slowly and walk to the huge kitchen, where I make myself a warm cup of tea. I sit down in one of the six matching chairs arranged around the dining table.

The last thing I remember was that I was looking into the painting and I felt weird. I felt like I was in a trance, I guess. *Maybe I was mesmerized by the beauty of the painting?* Although the painting and my great-grandmother were beautiful, I don't think that I was mesmerized.

I close my eyes and try to remember more. I couldn't remember all the details on what happened next, but one thing I remember sent chills down my spine. I remember seeing my great-grandmother's face in the painting all twisted up and she looked at me with hunger written all over her face.

3

I go to bed early, feeling unusually tired. I get under the cozy covers, rest my head on the soft, silky pillow and close my eyes.

I wake up to a loud noise in the middle of the night. I quickly jump out of bed and try to figure out what made the noise. I walk down the hall and notice that the painting had fallen over face down, with shattered pieces of glass around it. Avoiding the glass, I flip the painting over. When I see what's on the other side of the painting, my heart leaps into my throat. My great-grandmother looks different. Her beautiful white dress and gloves were now covered in blood. She looks at me with red eyes and a tilted head as if saying, "you're next."

At that moment, I realized that I need to destroy the painting before the monster in the painting escapes into the real world. But how? The first thing that comes to mind is to burn the painting. I don't waste any time. I sprint to the kitchen and open the drawers, frantically

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The Painted Nightmare  
South Kamloops Secondary School

searching for a lighter. I hear a low growl and turn around. A bloodstained glove emerges from the painting. *Where is the lighter?* Another matching glove reaches out. *Forget about the lighter.* I reach over and grab the kitchen knife on the counter, run to the painting and begin to stab and rip it quickly. I hear the growling grow louder and louder.

Then it stops. I look at the painting, cut into hundreds of pieces just a few seconds ago. I sigh. The painted nightmare may be gone, but the memory of it will haunt me forever.

Ellianna Ross  
Grade 8  
Valleyview Secondary  
Why?

Why?

My heart beats faster staring at the words.

I Know What You Did!

The words red.

Dripping down the wall.

The boy slipped and fell off the bridge.

That's what we told everyone.

It was an accident.

It wasn't.

He was pushed.

The one to my left did it.

Matt.

He said he didn't know the boy would lose his balance.

He's still a murder.

We don't talk about it, so why would one of us bring it up?

Maybe to remind us of our sins.

Upstairs we go to bed, away from the words.

All 6 of us needing to forget that night.

We don't deserve to.

We are trapped in a cabin.

There is nowhere to run.

I close my eyes.

A shot rings out, I run.

Ellianna Ross  
Grade 8  
Valleyview Secondary  
Why?

I push through the crowd standing in front of the doorway.

I see Matt.

Dead.

Blood matted in his brown hair.

Why?

Screams erupt around me.

My heart skips a beat.

It's not safe.

Why?

Because we can't hide.

From our sins or the killer.

We need to stick together.

Sleeping bags are layed out.

Silence so strong it could be cut by a knife.

I close my eyes.

Screams wake me.

A girl this time and now with a knife.

Jessica.

Why?

She was the other ring leader.

She had changed since then.

Poor girl.

4 of us remain.

Ellianna Ross  
Grade 8  
Valleyview Secondary  
Why?  
Knife in her shoulder.

I should have made sure she died.

Rebecca, Bella, and Stan all survived.

“They don’t deserve to live.” I whispered.

“Why?” The detective asks across from me.

It’s simple.

“They killed someone, Johnathan. He didn’t slip. I am doing what is right. They spilled blood, so I spilled theirs. An eye for an eye,”

The detective sighed, “We know that now. If you had come to us the kids would have gotten what they deserved. Have this be a lesson to you.”

“The only lesson I learned from this detective is to make sure who I try to kill is dead. Dead, dead, dead.”

Izzy Filyk, grade 8  
*enough? The Storm; Letting Go...*  
South Kamloops Secondary School

*Enough?*

Life is emotionally abusive  
It can be like chocolate sweet and healing  
But it can also be like thunder screaming at you  
Telling you, you aren't enough  
But butterflies who are fragile still fly  
So you get up from the blow  
You try not to listen you try to ignore just as you're knocked off your feet again  
And then they'll shoot a thousand bullets at you saying  
Get up, grow up, shut up  
YOU'RE FINE  
But you're not  
How could you be?  
With your own voices screaming at you like a song stuck in your head  
Telling you "I won't succeed, it's impossible"  
But you also yell I HAVE TO SUCCEED... because you need to  
How could you be?  
When your so afraid of failure you can't even try  
How could you be when  
You've been torn down just to build yourself up again

Izzy Filyk, grade 8  
*enough? The Storm; Letting Go...*  
South Kamloops Secondary School

So you become an eccedentesiast, hiding pain behind a smile

Cause you can't show them, the hurt, the pain

Even though they grab and jab at you

Even though you feel like your being ripped apart

I am here to tell you

You can keep on getting up

Even though you struggle to climb out of your cocoon

You can soar in the wind

And

You can show them you are enough

Just like a monarch butterfly who will fly 2 000 miles and more even though it will be a rough

Journey

And most of all you will

Show yourself

That you are enough

Izzy Filyk, grade 8  
*enough? The Storm; Letting Go...*  
South Kamloops Secondary School

*The Storm*

As a kid thunder was my companion

As the rain poured down instead of hiding I would put on my pink rubber boots and my red knit

sweater and dance

Jumping in puddles and twirling around

Not anymore

Now I'm the kid who hides under the bedsheets waiting for the storm to roll over

I quiver as thunder yells at the lightning to strike another challenge at me

Because i'm to scared that I'll falter

That I won't succeed in the challenge it brings me

So the rain pours down each drop giving me anxiety and depression

Because I feel like I won't thrive

So I run for shelter

But the house will always leak

And

That is what the storm brings me



Izzy Filyk, grade 8  
*enough? The Storm; Letting Go...*  
South Kamloops Secondary School

*Letting Go...*

My heart screams

“Don’t go...”

But my brain wins

And my mouth says

“Goodbye”

*The Forgotten*

“My name is Jason Stone and I’m a blood runner for the Fallen Six Empire on the infected planet of Arrow.” Sixteen years ago, this once peaceful and colorful planet fell into a pit of darkness when the Rex-7 fungus was found on the Star Runner. From that day forward the planet fell into a state of decay.

“Hey Aaron, we got two runs today and we’re already ten minutes behind. Let’s go.”

“I got it, Jason, let me get my gear on first.”

“Fine, just meet me by the north gate, people’s lives are in our hands.”

“Jason, I’m here.” As the sound of heavy metal gates screamed open.

“You ready Aaron?”

“As ready as yesterday.”

“Let’s go,” yelled Jason as he ran into the decrepit and foggy remains of Arrow.

“Wait up Jason, I can’t keep up!”

“Come on, I’m not going to slow down when we got twenty pounds of medical supplies to deliver in two hours.”

“Where are we even delivering this stuff to anyway?”

“Yuri didn’t give you the rundown? We’re heading up there,” Jason pointed to the faint outline of a mountain in the decadents. Suddenly, a blood-curdling scream echoed from everywhere.

“Aaron, we need to move. Now!”

“Why is it always us? Harvey and Tommes never get chased by scrapers.”

“Just stay calm and keep running unless you want to look like that,” Jason

pointed at the outline of an infected running at them from the fog.

“You know what, I’m good, I’ll stop complaining.”

“Good. Then hurry up and help move this car.” As they pushed the car, the ever-approaching roar of the infected drew quiet, drowned out by the sound of pistons hissing and clanking steel plates. The looming shadow of a great machine towered over the two men.

“Hey Jason, do you know what that is?”

“Do I know what is-s-s-s-s?”

“Hey guys, I thought you might need some help.” As the front of the machine cracked open, the silhouette of a man stepped out.

“Identify yourself.”

“Name’s Gray and this big guy’s name is Sam.”

“One question: what is he?”

“Oh, old Sam here is a seventh-generation biohazard chassis.”

“So he’s a mech?”

“Exactly. He was what they used to section off infected areas of the planet before it started spreading too fast.”

“If you’re willing to help, can you help us to the Skull Falls Outpost?”

“Sure thing.”

“Let’s go then.” As they continued to the outpost, the sound of the infected chasing just moments ago, echoed out again.

“It’s just a couple more miles and we’re at their gates.”

“Thank God,” chuckled Aaron.

“We’re on the straightaway, come on!” as the metal gate emerged from the fog, almost like a ghost.

“Open the gates!” screamed Aaron, “We’re the bloodrunners you called for,” the sound of the metal gates roared open revealing a raided village.

“What happened here?”

“I don’t know, but I don’t like it.”

“I found something,” stated Sam.

“What is it?” asked Gray.

“I don’t know, I just saw something over there.”

“Over where?” Sam pointed at a set of glowing eyes in a burning hut.

“What is that?”

“Hold up, maybe it’s friendly.”

“Aaron, don’t do it.”

“It’s a harvester, run!”

“Can’t you just take it down with your mech?” asked Jason.

“Sorry, can’t. Weapon system’s missing,” as the empty sound of sloppily made armor echoed behind them.

“Turn left,” said Jason.

“You just ran us into a dead end! We’re trapped!”

“So... you thought you could outrun me?” roared the masked figure as he stepped closer and closer.

“Please, we’re harmless!”

“I don’t care.”

Brodie Rempel  
Grade 8  
Clearwater Secondary School

4

“Please! No!”

*Run. Keep running. Don't look behind you,* my brain told me. My long blonde hair whipped me in the face, but I didn't care. The streets were deserted, not a single car in sight. The crisp November air tickled my nose. The next block held the hotel I had to get to. Apparently, I could get help there.

A couple more minutes and I had made it to the hotel. The blinds were drawn, the door half open. I went to take a tentative step inside when a hand grabbed my arm. I screamed and kicked behind me.

"Ow! What was that for?" I recognized the voice behind me. It came from my childhood best friend, Charlie.

I turned around to see Charlie lying on the sidewalk. "Charlie! Why would you do that?"

Charlie got up and winced. "I didn't know you would've kicked me. Anyways, that's beside the point. The point is, we should be inside already!"

I looked back at the deserted hotel. "I don't think anyone's in there."

"The only way to know is if we go inside. Come on, it won't be that bad." Charlie grabbed my hand and pulled me inside. I was glad I hadn't eaten a lot for breakfast, because Charlie could not have been more wrong. The front desk had pools of blood over everything, and footprints went down a flight of stairs to our right.

"Charlie, we should leave. Now." I turned back to the door we entered through, only to see a mob of figures behind us. They had gray skin, bloodshot eyes. Most were limping and mumbling incoherently.

"Or not. Run!" I screamed as I bolted up the flight of stairs to our left. Charlie followed a second later.

We raced past the second floor, reaching the third and topmost floor of the hotel. No more stairs went up, so we turned down the corridor.

The lights flickered on and off, casting shadows along the walls. Shadows frightened me, but I didn't notice them much as my life was on the line.

"We shouldn't have gone farther up!" I screamed at Charlie. "Let's try for the other flight of stairs down." The end of the hallway was in sight, but it soon became obvious we weren't going to get out through the stairs. More figures emerged from the stairs, charging at us.

I stopped running and Charlie crashed into me. In the panic of trying to get up, I voiced the thought in my mind. "We're going to die," I told Charlie.

Charlie looked around as I leaned against the wall, bracing for the impact of zombies upon me. The footsteps were coming closer, voices becoming louder. A large crash had me moving to cover my ears.

Charlie grabbed my wrist and pulled me up, his hand dripping with blood. "I've got an idea, and you're not going to like it." He pointed to one of the many stained glass windows which overlooked the parking lot. It had a crack in the center, which explained the crash I had heard moments before.

"No no no," I said as I tried backing away. I didn't care if the zombies got me now. I was too afraid of heights.

Charlie tightened his grip on my wrist, pulling me closer. "I don't care. I'm not going to let you die." He punched the glass with his free hand again. The window shattered into thousands of glittering pieces, reflecting off the sunlight and onto the wall. It would have been a breathtaking sight if we weren't being cornered by zombies.

"This is the only way, Skylar," he said as we took a step onto the outside ledge. I had to close my eyes, trusting him to guide me.

"We've got to jump Skylar. NOW!" Charlie tried to take me closer to the edge, but I didn't budge.

I finally opened my eyes. "We might die from this height," I screamed back. The figures had reached the window.

"Skylar, we have to. *Right now.*" I looked behind us, and made my decision.

I took a deep breath. "Okay." It was one small word, but it was the key word for the next step of our journey.

Charlie pulled me closer to the ledge. I chanced a glance downwards and instantly regretted it. "Jump!" Charlie yelled as he pulled me over the edge with him.

I couldn't help screaming. The ground was becoming increasingly closer by the second. Luckily, Charlie had picked the area where the fallen leaves had been swept into a pile. We landed in that and rolled into the parking lot.

My head hurts. I hit it on one of the cement blocks. I felt something wet and sticky trickle down my forehead. *Blood.* My vision started to go blurry.

Hands grabbed my shoulders. "Skylar? Skylar, we need to go." I couldn't focus on the face, but the voice sounded familiar.

"Charlie?" I managed to ask. I tried to focus my eyes.

"Yes, it's me. Get up, we have to go."

"I—I can't. I won't make it." My head was spinning too fast to think anymore, but I knew those words were true. I *wouldn't* make it. I could feel myself slipping away from reality.



The sound of wheels screeching to a halt gave me enough courage to lift my head. It was a vehicle. Or I guess I should say more of a military truck by the looks of it.

Voices followed, but I couldn't see more than a few inches in front of me. I became more tired as the seconds wore on. I could make out one voice in the mix, Charlie's. And gunshots.

Someone picked me up, and I went limp. My limbs had gone dead, my eyes stayed half open.

"It's going to be okay. Hang in there," a strange voice said. I wanted to, tried to, but I knew I couldn't.

*Charlie will be safe*, I thought as I closed my eyes for the last time.

Aaliyah Quassim

Grade 8

Brocklehurst Middle School

### PROSE- MY NIGHT UNDER THE SKY

It was another night, another breathtaking night to be exact. I remember laying on a hilltop, feeling the soft blades of grass brush against my back and the cool wind blowing on my face as I bathed in the light of the bright full moon. I looked up admiring the beautiful night sky, then I drifted into wonder.

“That enormous blue pale of magnificence, showing us so much beauty and yet no sign of brawl,” I sleepily said to myself. But then, something woke me from my doze. It was as if being slapped by fantasy.

“I may not show a single sign of brawl, but that does not mean I hold no pain”, a deep husky voice said to me. That voice was like nothing ever heard or spoken by any mortal. It sounded godly.

“A..are you the s..sky?” I asked in response to the shock that felt like a blow to my gut. I was still in a pool of stupor when the words,

“Yes, I am” confirmed by the deep husky voice. It hit me, the SKY was talking to me. I was amazed. What a miracle. What a phenomenon. To have such a thing withholding so much power, talk to me, a mere human. The shock had left me, leaving behind only excitement.

“You gigantic overseer , watching over all living and nonliving, all existing and nonexistent , all breathing and non breathing, why choose to hold a conversation with a mere mortal?” I asked. In that same deep husky voice, She replied,

Aaliyah Quassim

Grade 8

Brocklehurst Middle School

“Because it is with a mere mortal that my actions would be known.” That reply strangely felt like something I’ve been yearning for.

“As you said, I watch over all, but some still foolishly try to hide. Still unknown to them that I peer through all secrets they hold,” she said with a scoff, leading me to memory lane. I then recalled all those actions I made under the pretense that no one was watching, and now I find out about this eternal overseer. It made me restless and resentful for all my actions.

As time passed and the night grew more quiet, I grew to understand Her more and more. With all this knowledge of Her, I thought,

“This gigantic overseer, She who is as wise as the ocean is endless, for with age comes wisdom. She holds as much beauty as a peacock holds pride.” I couldn’t help but burst out.

“Eternal Overseer! You, and you alone withhold so many admirable qualities, and yet you are left forsaken. Despite this, you choose to abstain from punishing those who have abandoned you.”

I was still battling with confusion until she calmly said,

“Yes, it is true that you mortals seem to never take into account my true purpose and instead tend to worship that which holds a goal to obliterate you, but despite this, despite all the power I hold, I am still not permitted to punish you humans. It is simply what has been foretold, and no one, not even I, have the power to change that.” Her words left me stunned. All She said held nothing but ambiguous truth.

My meeting with the sky opened my eyes to so much, but there was something I had to ask:

Aaliyah Quassim

Grade 8

Brocklehurst Middle School

“Why do You fight? Why protect those that do nothing but neglect you? Why show them your beauty but not your brawl and agony? For it is even obvious to the blindest of eyes, that a miracle like yourself, must also hold the guilt of End and Death. Let those who abandon you perish and those who acknowledge you bathe in your eternal beauty.”

She simply said, “For every single question, an infinite possibility of answers follows,”she replied, leaving me in a world of confusion.

“Make sure to uncover that Answer which you seek. Goodbye, young mortal.” She left . It was no longer that deep husky godly voice but instead a fading one.

Then surprisingly, I opened my eyes. Most would conclude that this occurrence was a dream, but I believed it occurred for a reason and refused to make it out of something as a mere dream. I was about to leave, but there was something else I had to say.

“You Enormous holder of magnificence and eternal gigantic overseer, I hold reverence for you”, I whispered. I left with one thing on my mind , I would never forget this, my night under the sky.

Emma Kristjanson  
Grade 8  
Westsyde Secondary  
The Shutdown

## The Shutdown

The streets seemed so full. Jessie worked at the Hub and usually the streets were quiet but today she got off early.

All of the buildings had digital billboards on them displaying all different types of commercials. Jessie noticed that the billboards were shutting off. She touched the emergency chip in her wrist to alert the Hub that the billboards were turning off. All of a sudden an alert popped up and everyone stopped in their tracks. The alert told everyone to get to their houses, lock all of their doors and not let anyone in. People were running everywhere. It was pure chaos. Soon, a man showed up on the screen. He was wearing all black with just his mouth and eyes showing.

A robotic voice started talking, "RUN WHILE YOU CAN. YOU HAVE 48 HOURS. GOOD LUCK...."

All of the robot workers looked as though they were having a seizure. Their eyes went black. Jessie almost peed herself; she was so scared. She thought she would be safer if she went to a nearby bunker so she slipped into it quickly. Only workers knew about the bunkers and the bunker codes so she knew she would be safe. However, Jessie was surprised when she heard a code being put in. She hid behind one of the food crates. The bunker door opened and slammed closed.

"Hello! Is anyone here?" a voice called.

She peeked over the crate and saw it was a young girl.

Jessie popped up behind the crates and screamed, "WHO ARE YOU!"

The young girl said, "My name is Livy."

Jessie replied, "HOW DO YOU KNOW THE CODE? ONLY WORKERS KNOW THE CODE!"

Emma Kristjanson  
Grade 8  
Westside Secondary  
The Shutdown

"I know how to stop this I just need someone to help me into the Hub,"  
Livy exclaimed

Jessie replied calmly, trying not to seem nervous, "How do I know I can trust you?"

"I swear you can. I'm just trying to help fix this," Livy stammered. "I know the code"

"How do you know the code? Don't make me ask again!" Jessie yelled.

"Do you want to die or do you want to live?!" Livy screeched

"Fine, I'll help you. But I swear if anything goes wrong..."

"Nothing will go wrong, Don't worry," Livy implied. "We just need to find a way into the Hub."

"We need to get to the tunnel. Once we're in the tunnel it's a straight shot to the Hub, then we will be safe." Jessie told Livy.

Livy sighed, "Let's do this."

Jessie still wasn't convinced she could trust Livy but she knew she would have to take the chance. Jessie typed in the code. The bunker door opened and the scene was horrendous.

The streets seemed so empty. The only thing in the streets were discombobulated bodies and robot parts strewn everywhere. It was so dark. They heard the sound of metal rubbing together.

"Over by the television store in the alley!" Jessie screamed, noticing a way to escape.

Livy entered the same code she did for the bunkers and they both jumped into the tunnel. They could hear the robots walking above.

"The elevator is just over there." Jessie told Livy. "Once we get there we need to go to the 12th floor."

They scrambled to the elevator but it wasn't open.

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“Oh shoot, it's not working, ” Jessie exclaimed. “I’m pretty sure there's some stairs that take us straight to the twelfth floor by the reception desks.”

“How far away is that?” Livy questioned.

“It's two floors up. There are usually six guard robots stationed on each floor,” Jessie murmured. “But on the reception floor, there's usually 12 guards stationed”

“I’ll follow after you. It seems you know where you are going.” Livy said

Jessie took a deep breath and started her way up the ladder. Livy followed quickly behind. Once they got to the basement floor they noticed there were no guards. They both stayed silent anyway. They ran to the other side of the basement and continued climbing up the ladder. Once they got to the reception floor, Jessie peaked up from the ladder.

“There are only four robot guards,” Jessie whispered. “We will need to bolt to the stair doors and quickly put in the code. Hopefully they will not notice. However, once they took a single step the robots turned their heads.

A robot was right on their tail. When they got close to the door, the robot's sensors opened the door. The girls slipped in and closed the door, while the robot was brutally squished by the door. They bolted up the stairs. It looked like there were no robots around.

“I’ll run to the computer station and fix whatever is happening out there. You stay and stand guard,” Livy demanded.

Livy ran to the computer station and started to put in codes. Jessie nervously stood guard but two robot guards scurried in.

“Ahhhhh Livy!” Jessie screamed.

Livy jumped into action. Jessie ran to the back of the room, watching in fear as Livy fought with the robots. Jessie stayed at the back of the room

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watching the door nervously. After what seemed like forever, Livy finally finished putting in the code.

“Done!” Livy screeched.

Both girls ran out of the Hub. They watched as the robot guards fell to their death. When they got outside, the streets seemed so empty.

“Is anyone out there?” Jessie screamed. “Please, is anyone out there? We’re safe now.”

Silence was the only word to describe the city. Pure silence.

“It’s safe now.” Jessie sobbed as she fell to the ground.

“Jessie. I think we should, uhm, go.” Livy said.

“I CAN’T JUST GO.” Jessie sobbed. “THIS IS MY HOME.”

“I’m sorry Jessie. I’m so sorry.” Livy exclaimed. “We did everything we could.”

Jessie curled up into a ball in the middle of the street, sobbing, as Livy sauntered away slowly without looking back.

“I’m sorry Jessie.” Livy whispered under her breath, “I’m sorry.”



"They say I'm crazy. That's not true is it?" I asked.

Through all the people, all I could see was... **them**. No one ever mattered to me..but them. I had to do this... I didn't want to but that was the deal

"Hello. Are you the wonderful daughter of Mr. Walton?" I felt the words fall out of my mouth. I didn't want to do this.

"Yes, but I have a name," they said in that voice that I always loved

"Oh, well, what is it, love?" I said as I twirled them around.

"Well...", they paused.

"It's Darreth," they mumbled. I knew they hated their name. I knew what it meant. It meant 'rich pearl of wisdom' but their parents never told them that.

"You hesitated. Is there a name you like more?" I smiled as I asked them

"Amadeus but my dad doesn't like it when people call me that, so only you can."

They replied with a smirk, "Amadeus."

I gave them that name, it means lover of God, but in this story it is the lover of Satan.

"My name is Clay but if we are using names we like ... I'm Bile"

"Bile? My Bile?" you asked quietly.

"Yes," I responded just as quietly.

### **Amadeus....**

"Bile. You're back. But why now? Why not years ago?" I asked.

"Come with me," I said before pulling him out of the room and into the closest room with a lock. I locked the door and threw myself at him.

"Where have you been? Why did you leave? Why are you back now?" I practically screamed at him.

"Hell, I made a deal with someone," Bile answered.

"So you made a deal with Satan, and now you have to kill me?" I rolled my eyes.

"Well, I don't *have* to kill you," he said quietly.

"I WAS JOKING" I screamed. "What kind of deal did you make?"

"Just trust me. Come with me" he added.

"I can't. There is no way to sneak me out. I tried, there's guards everywhere," I sighed.

"I know, but we're not going the normal way. Just take my hand," replied Bile.

"Only if-"

"I already bought you chocolate," Bile interrupted me. Without any hesitation, I grabbed his hand.

### **Bile...**

Amadeus pulled themselves closer as a black mist swallowed us. This was so confusing for them. I watched as their eyes started to dart back and forth, trying to figure out where they were.

"Where are we and how did we get here? And can I have the chocolate?" Amadeus asked, breaking the silence.

"Magic. And we are in Hell. And yes, here is your chocolate," I answered

"Hell? So like where is the Devil?" they asked, tearing into the chocolate.

"That's the thing... I should probably explain the deal," I answered.

I watched as a confused smile came across their face, which they were stuffing with chocolate. It was so cute.

"So the deal is: I will technically die. I was murdered and when I got here the devil offered me something. He would make me immortal and let me take revenge on the one that murdered me as long as I took his place," I stammered.

"So, what you're saying is... you are Satan... you are the... Devil," they muttered.

"Yes, but that's not it... I told him that I would do it as long as I could make one more person immortal. I want that person to be you but there's a problem," I answered

"I love that! To spend forever with you!"

"The person that murdered me was... your dad."

### **Amadeus...**

The words stung.

"My dad killed you... My Dad... Killed... you. MY DAD MURDERED YOU," I screamed. This was the worst pain I had ever felt. I wanted to cry. I wanted to scream. But through all my emotions, all I wanted was to kill **my own dad**. Why would he do that? I love Bile. I decided on the spot. "You're going to let me help you with your revenge. Right?"

"Wow, that's not what I was expecting. But if you want to, who am I to stop you?" said Bile as a mysterious smile crossed his face .

"So what is our plan?" I answered with the same smile.

### **Bile...**

Our army was built. Our plan was set.

"Are you sure you want to do this? You don't have to," I said.

"Yes! I am not the kind of person to get revenge but my dad killed you. I can't just sit here," they replied.

A glimpse of pain crossed their eyes.

"Do you understand the plan? I know that you do but I just wanted to make sure."

"Yes. Our army makes sure that my dad's army will not intervene and I go and **kill him**," they said.

"Well let's go," I said, extending my arm towards them. The same black mist swallowed us again but this time they didn't seem as scared. This time they looked at peace.

### **Amadeus...**

As soon as the mist disappeared, my dad was standing in front of me. I was holding a sword though.

"That man-"

I didn't let him finish. The sword went through his neck. I watched as my dad hit the floor. The whole castle shook.

Bile grabbed me into a hug and said, "When I let go, run as fast as you can and do not look back. Ok?" He put something in my hand and let go.

I ran, not sure where or why. I just ran. When I got far enough, I sat by a tree. I looked at where the castle was supposed to be. It wasn't there.

"No!" I cried out. I looked at what he gave me. It was a witch amulet. As long as it was intact I knew he was alive

A glimpse of power crossed Amadeus's eye. They were going to get Bile back no matter what they had to do...

Kamloops is known as the Tournament Capital of Canada. It hosts more than 100 sporting tournaments each year. Kamloops has amazing trails to do biking and hiking and amazing skiing hills. Kamloops is also known for Tranquille which is classified in the top 10 most haunted places in Canada. Tranquille is a small community just outside the city of Kamloops B.C. There was always a different story about the old hospital going around but the newest story being told was the story about “Freddy.” Freddy was supposedly an old patient at the mental hospital when it was up and running. He ended up going missing in 1962 and was never found. Everyone thought he ran away but I don’t think so.

Hi, my name is Laila and this is my story.

I live on Village Ave in Tranquille which is only a 5-minute walk from the mental hospital. My dad passed when I was 2 so I've been living alone with my mom (Jackie) for the last 12 years. My mom and I have to stay in Tranquille for a while because she just got a job as a caretaker for the old abandoned mental hospital. She makes sure that there are no trespassers on the property. I go to a school in the city and take a bus ride every morning at 7:40 am. Today was like any other day, I hopped on the bus and had a great day at school looking forward to the weekend since it was Friday and my friends were coming to my house for a sleepover. I brought 4 friends back home with me, Ally, Emma, Hope, and Jocelyn. After we all ate dinner we went to my bedroom which was the closest to the backdoor.

We all sat down and started playing truth or dare in a circle on my bedroom floor. It was now my turn. I was asked “truth or dare” by Emma. I wanted to be brave so I said, “Dare”. I got dared to go to the haunted hospital. No one ever dares to go into the haunted hospital because of all the stories people tell about it.

Of all people, I had to go in the hospital and let me tell you, I absolutely didn't want to. But in the end, I did not want to seem scared, so I grabbed a flashlight from my room and my mom's keys to the mental hospital on my way out the door with my friends following behind me. When we arrived at the hospital my friends said they would wait outside. With my hands shaking in fear, I slowly unlocked the front doors.

As I open the doors to the hospital the first thing that I could smell was sewage water, but it was so dark I couldn't figure out where it was coming from. I went to turn on my flashlight, but it was only flickering so I smacked the flashlight and it started to work. I started to look around and all the walls were ripped to shreds, pipes were leaking brown water and glass shattered all over the floors. I walked down a long, narrow hallway and looked in one room and saw a flipped hospital bed with old blood splattered all over it. I yelled back to my friends and asked if I could come out now but there was no answer... I waited..... Still no answer...

All of the sudden the front doors swung closed and locked by themselves or was it? I ran to the door and looked at the lock. It was jammed. I started running looking for a different way out but there was nothing. That was the only way in and out that I could see. I looked in each room desperately trying to find a crowbar to get the doors open but there was nothing in any of the rooms. I suddenly heard a loud BANG! I yelled and ran into the closest room to me which was the old cafeteria. I couldn't hear anything other than glass crunching under my feet so I stopped moving.

I heard a muffled "hey" in my right ear. I quickly turned around, but no one was there. I started to get more worried, but then a needle came flying at me. I quickly dodged the needle and ran out of the room grabbing something that looked like flour on the way out.

I ran to a nursing room across the hall. I could hear footsteps quickly chasing after me so I shut the door quickly behind me. The door to the room started to open so slowly I threw the flour-like powder at the door entrance and a large male figure about 6'2" appeared in front of me. But I couldn't see him, only the silhouette of his figure. I asked myself does that mean he's a ghost?! Now that I could see the male figure, I asked him "what's your name?" and I heard a muffled

"Freddy." Wait isn't that the Freddy I heard about in all the stories I thought to myself. "What do you want from me?" I asked. "I want to be alive again, I still have so much I need to do," Freddy says. I was confused and asked, "How can I do that since I'm only a 14-year-old girl?" ...

"Freddy are you ok?" I asked. Freddy raised his left arm and pointed down the long hallway.

"At the end of the hall, there is a book. This book is called a revival book, only humans can touch it. Whenever a spirit tries we get burned. Just read everything on the page."

The lights leading to the room at the end of the hall lit up leading a path and started to flicker. I ran and got the revival book and asked, "What's next?" Freddy said, "Turn to page 189 and read out loud." I slowly read each word on the page. All of a sudden the floor started shaking and the lights started to shatter above me. I turned to look behind me and saw the male figure begin to appear starting with the boots up to his pants but then the front doors burst open and I heard

"Police stop everything you are doing!"

I stopped reading the book with only 10 words left and the male figure started to fade away. I was met with my mom crying and hugging me. My friends explained that when the doors.

slammed they went to my house and told my mom everything. Then my mom quickly called the police and ran to the mental hospital.

We all went outside and I got into the car. My mom told me that we would talk when we got home. As we started to head home, I looked out the car window and saw the same male figure staring at me from the top-floor window.

That day I learned that monsters don't sleep under your beds, they sleep everywhere outside of your head.

The end.

Chapter 1.

*My name is Cress Thatcher. I'm fifteen and three quarters, 5'7, I have blond hair and green eyes with physiologic anisocoria. Physiological anisocoria is when one of your pupils is really large and one really small. If I don't wear my contacts I get some pretty weird stares. I have five cats and live sorta alone. Most orphans do. We fake IDs, tie blame to our parents's accounts and barely scrape by with our lives. Or maybe it's just me. Orphans are pretty common nowadays, since unmarried people over 18 get free cryptophones and food supplies every month from the government if they give the government full support in all decisions. My friend Alden is seventeen and a half and he's holding out for the deal. I don't think I'll take it. I told him this once and he asked me if I was on drugs, I wasn't. (Never have been.) I disapprove of the deal because it's a bribe, and I refuse to be bribed into being a zombie. The effects of a cryptophone are addicting and mind-dulling. A cryptophone is a chip embedded in your forehead, faintly touching your brain, and it simulates a fake happy-world that you can live happily in. But you become as dumb as a zombie and can't do anything yourself, the computers tricking your brain into thinking you're exercising as you slowly waste away. It also distracts you from your children, your actual life, and your country.*

*I sit on the tiny bed in my trailer with two of my cats, Maylee and Cinder. Maylee (May) is a tabby kitten I found in an alley and Cinder was my mom's old ragdoll cat. "Cats are lucky." I say watching my cats fuss over my socks. "You don't have to worry about being arrested or having a corrupt government." Cinder flashed me a; yeah right, look. "You don't believe me?" I ask her. "You're literally eating my sock." She clawed my foot and made me wince. "Cats are so judgemental." I mutter, brushing her off my bed. Then 12:00 hits and the bells started. Everytime there's an official sweep of the area, the bells ring to alert the homeless to hide. I*



*could be arrested for living alone without parental supervision, but Alden's been crashing at my place recently so I should be covered. Besides, the sweeps happen so often now it's basically a routine. I walk into the strip of walkway that is the rest of the trailer and locate Alden on the hide-a-bed, littered in beer cans, some not all empty. Alden is probably 6'2. So really tall compared to me, he has brown hair and brown eyes. Pretty average these days. But I can see neither traits from the mess he's sleeping on. "Alden." He doesn't stir. I shake him violently. "Alden!" He doesn't budge and I notice my cat Lale acting as his pillow, also asleep, also probably drunk. "Hopeless. That's what the both of you are. Hopeless." The bells ring again and I start to feel annoyed. I fill up a cup of water from the trailer tap and throw it on them. "Basil! What the heck do you think you're doing you idiot!?" Alden splutters and sits up as Lale hisses and jets off somewhere. "The bells have rung twice already and you're sitting around like you have no life." I snap at him, picking up the stray bottles and stuffing them in a garbage can. Not that it was making anything cleaner. Alden sighs and gets up, sluggishly walking to the sink. "I don't have a life Kid, Melissa dumped me." I roll my eyes. "Oh I'm sorry, I didn't realize you were suffering from heartbreak. Allow me to dramatically pretend I give a--" "Census Patrol." A muffled voice shouts from outside, cutting me off. Alden staggers to the door and fumbles with the latch. "What the heck do you want?" He asks the men in blue uniforms. "Are you Alden Whikestcher?" I clench my jaw, do not laugh, do not laugh. "Yes." "How many people reside in your residence?" The one man says in a choked accent. "Two. Can't ya count?" The man outside leans forward slightly and notices me. I get the urge to look down at my clothes. I'm only wearing a white shirt and gray sweatpants but I already feel self-conscious. "Are you this child's guardian?" He asks. I resist the urge to say, Yes, I am. "Yeah. This is Basil Robbins. He's fifteen." Alden says in a bored voice. "We done*

*here?" The men look at each other and talk telepathically for a few moments. I can't help but wonder if they'll take me away to some cryptophone orphanage where they'll stick a chip in my head. I quietly shudder as Cinder rubs against my ankles, my sweatpants are hiked up to my calves for some reason. "Yes, be alerted that the next census will be in two months." The men nod and leave. What a census was like when I lived with my mom was much different. The men would come inside, take notes on the condition of the house, the kid (me), and the finances. I don't think they were actually censuses more than spying on people's lives. I sigh in relief when the door slams closed and set off in search of a jacket. "What you doing Basil?" Alden asks me as he sits back down on the intoxicated pullout-bed, brushing off some of the cans. "I'm going to walk around for a while, clear my head whatever." Alden removes clumps of cat hair from his black shirt and insanely wrinkled blue jeans. "Take that cat May with you. She sheds like crazy. Besides, she likes you enough, she'll follow you around." "That's why I don't wear black clothing." I tell him. "But sure, I'll take her." "Crazy cat person." He mutters. "I live with a crazy cat person."*

Taming The Beast  
By: Chace McLellan

I couldn't run. I couldn't move. I couldn't even see straight. About 200 yards away from me, a large orange monster emerged from a cave in the rocky cliffs. It stood up on its hind legs, flexing its wings after a long nap, and let out a deafening roar.

Terrified, I couldn't think. In the distance I heard Randolph's battle cry, signaling his army to charge. People yelled and ran towards the dragon. Everyone except me charged. I stood, paralyzed in horror, as the dragon heaved and spewed fire across half of the clearing. Hundreds were already dead. Warriors stabbed at its legs with weapons the equivalent to twigs in this particular situation. The dragon stomped its foot and they all fell to the ground.

The beast heaved again, preparing to shoot flames across the other half of the army, as my senses returned. I dove behind a boulder, just in time for a giant stream of fire to shoot overhead and hit the wave of people behind me.

Sitting there, at that moment, hearing the screams and roars of the battle in the back of my mind, I thought to myself, *I'm going to die today.*

A surge of emotions clouded my head and anger surged through my veins, turning my skin hot. I hated Randolph for bringing us into battle, just for a few stolen gems. I hated my father for forcing me into joining the army. But most of all, I hated myself for being a coward.

I yelled and slapped myself in the face. *Pull it together, Aden, you can't quit now,* I told myself. I stood, holding a firm grip on my ax, and ran to the front of the boulder, ready for the fight of my life. I skidded to a halt, my blood running cold as I saw the clearing. No one was left standing. Lifeless bodies littered the stone ground. Fire crackled in the distance. The dragon, still standing out in the clearing, snorted, obviously satisfied.

*That could've been me*, I realized. Hundreds of other people had lost their lives in a pointless battle. A pointless battle they were forced into. By Randolph. He just needed his precious gems back, he was willing to risk hundreds of people for it. And now he lay on the ground, paying the price. This wasn't my fault, so why had I felt so guilty?

Standing there, I didn't even realize that the dragon had come closer until it lowered its head to see me face-to-face. My heart pounded in my chest as I woke from my thoughts. I was staring into the electric yellow eyes of a beast that had just killed hundreds of people within minutes. If I'd managed to barely survive before, I was surely going to die now, right?

There I was, standing roughly ten feet away from a huge, murderous beast. My heart pounded in my chest as I choked on each breath I took. What would I do? I sure as heck couldn't kill the thing, as it just destroyed an entire army. I couldn't run, it would outrun me with ease. I was stuck in this awful position. This is where I would die.

I would never see my hometown again. I couldn't even say goodbye. I was utterly alone. I let my ax fall miserably to the ground, letting out an unpleasant noise as it hit the stone by my feet. I took off the metal helmet that shielded my face and threw it, barely hearing it bash against a rock in the distance. I sank to my knees, hoping for a clean, quick death. There was nothing I could do. I buried my face in my hands and let the tears flow down my face. Of course, I didn't want to die. I wanted to live, to see the world, to smack my dad in the face for forcing me into the army. But my fate was chosen. I would die here, alone.

I could hear the beast come closer and flinched, but nothing happened. A few seconds later, a large, warm snout nudged my face out of my hands. I let out a shrill squeal, squinting my eyes shut. I could feel the warm breath of the dragon on my face, as if it were taunting me by keeping me alive longer.

I hesitantly opened my eyes, which were burning with tears. The dragon sat close in front of me, leaning its head down to meet me only inches away. I sat in awe as the sunlight passed from behind a cloud, lighting up the beast's scales. It was beautiful. How could Randolph have wanted to kill this thing? It inched closer and I sucked in a breath, making it pause. Time stood still for a few moments before it softly came closer and leaned its head against my stomach.

I gasped, breathless, as the beast looked up at me with large yellow eyes. It softly let its eyelids drop and leaned more against me with a sigh, sending me to the ground. I sat up, pushing the weight of the dragon's head onto my legs. It cooed in my lap, slightly rocking its head back and forth.

I reached out a hand and cautiously stroked the dragon's cheek. Its eyes cracked open slightly, looking directly at me, before closing again. I softly leaned into its head. I was tired too. As I slowly closed my eyes, realization hit. I had tamed the beast.