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OUR 2025 EDITION

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Our Grade 8 Initiation

Brainstormer: Unaysah Ismail
Media: Raeesa Khan
Writers: Faseeha Sooliman & Hassaanah Sooliman

From the grade 8:
On January 15th 2025, all the grade 8s were reborn - except this time, we came with ears and a tail. It was a hectic yet fun month for us Grade 8s: from arriving early at school, to losing our voices singing creeds, doing "Monkey" until we couldn't feel our legs and doing the craziest of things to get a signature. The most memorable part of course, was the camp. Running from "zombies" at 3am, swimming in the mud and throwing shaving cream at each other, it was DEFINITELY an experience we'll never forget.

I came to this school as a quiet, shy and nervous 7th grader hoping I'd make friends. Not only did I find my voice, I found my people, I found my sports, culture - I found my family. High school is definitely not what any of us were prepared for, but it definitely seems exciting... but mostly scary. The SRCs pushed us not to make our lives difficult, but so we could find ourselves, and find comfort outside of our comfort zones. I've done things I never would have had the courage to do on my own - tried out for sports I never thought I'd enjoy, found my confidence, and made lifelong memories. To the SRCs who have come to school early every day and sacrificed their time for us, you have truly inspired us and made initiation a fun experience.

The ringing of the bell marked the completion of our metamorphosis from a cub to a wolf. We are now apart of the Ferdie Family.

From the SRC:
It's one thing to go through the intense, yet necessary jump from a little kid to a high schooler, but it's a completely different experience to be apart of the process. Helping the Grade 8s change, grow and develop from strangers into a family was truly heart-warming. We see kids overcome their fears, climb out their shells, make friends and create bonds that are going to last a lifetime. And if not a life time? Well at least for the next 5 years of high school.

From nervous, wide eyed kids in cub ears who cling to the familiar, and are hesitant of stepping into the unknown, we watched them grow. We see the quiet ones find their voice, the unsure ones take their first bold steps and the hesitant ones dive into challenges. We see resilience build into team work, and those teammates turn into friends, and their second family they will have for the rest of high school. Singing creeds shoulder to shoulder, spirits rising together... they realise they belong.

As SRCs, we don't just "boss" them around, we create discipline, respect and we nurture the potential we see in each and every Grade 8 learner. In just a short two years they pick subjects, in just a short three years they will be seniors, in just a short four years they will be leading our school and in a surprisingly short five years, they will leave this school, ringing the bell once more - but this time, with more wisdom, more memories, lessons and a few less cub ears, ready to take on the big world. During this month we inspire, we encourage, we uplift. We get to be the ones who stand beside them, reminding them that they are stronger than they think, that they are capable, that this school is not just a place of learning, but a home. Initiation is by far the greatest time of high school, a core memory that I hope each Grade 8 cherishes forever.

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Ready, Set, Athletics!

Brainstormer: Amieke Farmer
Media: Luca Sale
Writer: Sané Middelberg

On your marks, set, go! The athletics season started with a bang. From track to field, the athletes wore their Ferdies clothes with pride.

Die Interhuis was op 16 Januarie by die skool gehou waar die leerders hul gate uit geniet het. Daarna was daar twee vriendskaplike byeenkomste. Die eerste een was die 24ste Januarie by Fochville en die tweede byeenkoms het die 31ste Januarie plaasgevind in Wolmaransstad.

The Interhigh was held on the 7th of February and the athletes performed exceptionally well while the sanggroep brought their gees! The Curro Podium Grand Finale was on 8 February, where the 2024 Top 30 team held the school's name high at Pilditch Stadium.
Dankie aan al die atlete wat hul tyd opgeoffer het om by die oefeninge te wees en deel te neem sowel as die onderwysers wat hul tyd en moeite gegee het om hierdie seisoen moontlik te maak.

The 2025 athletics season is one that won't be forgotten!

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The Big Brag

Brainstormer: Tasmiyah Hamid
Media: Bunny Davids
Writer: Pabatso Hlubi

The art of self-promotion is an essential skill of competitive drive. Welcome to the Big Brag of 2025, where flaunting athletic talent and exhibiting sing-song spirit is perceived as empowering rather than conceited. Presenting the pride of our school's athletics team was our head of Sports, Mr. Louw. The team announcement sent waves of enthusiasm in good faith that the athletes would do the school proud.

With her 'big-back' costume our MC, Mrs. Walstrand, opened the event, amusing the audience with two unique yet intriguing entrances, giving the microphone to Kwame Matlawe - our Pulse leader, to get the audience moving and the evening underway.

The 'Brag' began with a fun trip to the beach in the beige Ford Cortina with Mrs. Ford and her crew sashaying to the beat and Ms. Speedy bringing the party with her groovy moves.

The second act of the night brought back nostalgic memories of everyone's favourite childhood movie, The High-School Musical. Ms. Thaele, Mr. Louw, Mr. Fourie and the other Grade 12's brought the team spirit with the song "We're All in This Together".

The following act was a group of super heroes, with our principle, Mr. Smit as Batman succeeded by his entourage of legends.

The last act of the night was Mr. Serfontein and the masked, twirling ballerinas busting it down with an unforgettable showdown, ending the night of memorable performances with a bang!

The school's confidence in the sing-song group and the athletes was greatly influenced by the teachers' performances on behalf of our athletes and support from all the attending students from Ferdinand Postma.

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The Heartbeat of Interhigh: The Sing Songs

Brainstormer: Kwame Matlawe
Media: Bunny Davids
Writer: Amiely Mandungu

At the heart of every great athletic event lies an undeniable energy that fuels the competitors and the crowd. While the athletes push their limits on the track field, it's the cheerleaders who ensure the atmosphere is charged with enthusiasm, pride, and excitement. At the Interhigh, the cheerleaders are more than just an addition to the event -they are the driving force behind the event's electrifying spirit.

A Burst of Energy and Enthusiasm

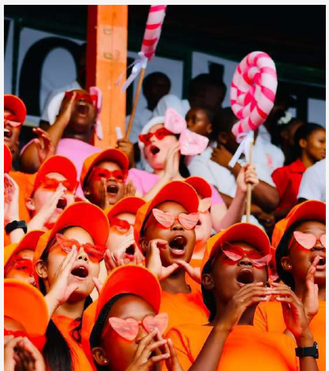
From the moment the cheerleaders took the stage, the energy shifted. Their colourful uniforms, bright smiles, and coordinated chants instantly grabbed the attention of the crowd, offering a powerful burst of energy that complemented the athleticism taking place on the field. With every chant they light up the event with their enthusiasm, ensuring no one in the audience feels left out of the excitement.

Support Beyond the Sidelines

While the athletes compete for the victory, the cheerleaders provide an essential role of emotional support at crucial moments, such as before the final race or a pivotal jump, the cheerleaders' chants can be the difference between nerves and confidence. They remind athletes that they are not alone in the competition, and their school's spirit is behind them every step of the way.

The Tradition of School Spirit

At its core, Interhigh is about school pride, and the cheerleaders embody that spirit perfectly. They represent our school with passion and loyalty, creating an atmosphere where competition is not just about individual achievements but about community, pride, and tradition. The cheerleaders help cultivate a sense of unity, leaving lasting memories for everyone involved.



In conclusion, the Interhigh Athletics event stands as a testament to the power of sports in uniting athletes, schools, and communities. Through its competitive spirit, the event not only showcases exceptional talent but also fosters camaraderie, discipline, and a sense of achievement. As athletes push their limits and strive for greatness, they inspire others to pursue their passions and challenge themselves. The Interhigh continues to be a significant platform for young athletes to shine, making lasting memories while contributing to the rich

tradition of school athletics.

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Valentine's Day

Brainstormer: Natalie Kaunda
Media: Marze Zabielski
Writer: Angelique Stapelberg

In a true Ferdies Family act of love and kindness, yet another successful Valentine's Day has passed and brought us closer while adding a little extra love into our lives.

The creative initiative to send an anonymous letter as well as a kissy stamp to a friend or even loved one has gathered the attention of many learners, creating fun and memorable moments between the learners of Ferdies. Decorated faces and sweet words getting spread around weren't just the only adventures shared. The raffle for the jar of sweets dragging the interest to participate in a once in a while experience was also successful.

As not everyone could win the tempting jar of sweets the canteen added a little sweet treat to the menu: a waffle ice-cream mix, which had an over flooding interest among everyone, one not seen everyday. A little extra sweetness for a little extra lovely day. With the chance to have worn colourful, love inspired clothing, has created the chance for fun photos with friends and silly moments shared has defiantly imprinted core memories amongst us, even if there may be little comment about it.

Our hearts had yet another eventful surprise as hand written motivational messages were thrown over from the roof by our lovely matric leaders, making the day even more memorable, each person rushing to the front for a beautiful letter. Friends share thoughtful quotes throughout the day handing them out while also taking in the words written on a small piece of paper having a big impact on the day and the mood that was set throughout the few hours we had to spend with each other.

What a day well spent it was, every moment worth it. Love with the different shades of pink and red, or if you are like me, blue has wonderfully been celebrated, carried uniquely by every person according to their own taste and style.

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Glitz, Glam and The Ferdies-Fam

Brainstormer: Tshimologo Maseng
Media: Molemo Masilela
Writer: Aimee Barrow

Ferdies' highly anticipated annual Valentine's Dance once again proved to be an evening brimming with excitement, music and memories that will be cherished for years to come. Held on the 13th of February, the event saw Ferdies learners dressed in their best and enjoying an unforgettable night of dancing, laughter and fun with friends - and perhaps even a special Valentine or two.

One of the highlights of the night was the surprise prize-giving ceremony! Where students were recognised for a variety of categories, including: the best-dressed individuals, the best couple and the best duo, among others. These awards added an extra layer of excitement and friendly competition to an already lively atmosphere.
Of course, no celebration would be complete without delicious food and refreshing drinks, and the Valentine's Dance certainly delivered on that front, satisfying the taste buds of every Ferdie.

For those fortunate enough to join in, the evening was a perfect blend of joy, music, and everything that makes Valentine's Day special. The Valentine's Dance has long been a beloved tradition at Ferdies, and this year's event certainly lived up to the grand expectations set by past celebrations. As the learners dive into the remainder of the school year, they will undoubtedly carry the sweet memories of this unforgettable night with them.

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A Cupcake, a Story, and a Full Heart.

Brainstormer: Tshepang Leokaoke
Media: Angela Ndakana
Writer: Hassaanah Sooliman

This Interact visit was like no other. The Interact team's favourite place to go to is definitely Huis Anna Viljoen, the place where we spread love to the wisdom of our community. The people that are placed into these old age homes are either abandoned, not physically well or have no family or friends to look after them in these later years of their lives. Interact tries to make them feel loved on special holidays and over all the visits, these elders have become our friends, and apart of the Ferdie Family.

It's incredibly beautiful to see the joy lighten up in their eyes as we hand them a cupcake and a warm smile. Our Interact team makes a big difference in the lives of these elders, by listening to stories of their younger days, or sharing some of our own. We have realised that they make an equal impact in our lives as students. When we arrived at the old age home on the the 20th of February, we eagerly rushed to see our favourite elders.

My favourite elder was one of them, and this completely broke me. She has shared some of the best advice about life that I will forever remember. This is when I realised the true purpose of charity, and of Interact. To care. Interact has impacted my life in ways I can't explain, and taught me the value of charity. It is the greatest joy to be able to make them smile as we give them a cupcake, take them for walks and keep them company. Ferdies is very proud of what Interact does for the old age home.

"When Ferdies visits, they brighten my day" -an elder at Huis Anna Viljoen

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Trots Geklee in Blou en Swart

Annaline Wepener

Beroepsbelofte verwys na die professionele eed of belofte wat individue in verskeie velde afgelê het, wat hul verbintenis tot etiese gedrag, uitnemendheid en verantwoordelikheid aandui. In onderwys is hierdie belofte 'n kragtige verklaring van 'n opvoeder se toewyding aan hul studente, hul beroep en die breër missie om toekomstige geslagte te vorm. Soortgelyk aan die Hippokratiese Eed in medisyne, dien die beroepsbelofte as 'n morele kompas, wat onderwysers lei om integriteit, regverdigheid en lewenslange leer te handhaaf.

Dinsdag oggend vergader al die Ferdies in die saal. Die atmosfeer in die saal is gevul met stille afwagting. 'n Koninklike wysie begin om te speel terwyl die onderwysers na vore stap met hulle seremonie kleed. Die sagte geruis van gesprekke vervaag soos die onderwysers op die verhoog stap en hulle plekke neem.

Die hoof, Mnr. Smit roep elke onderwyser voort. Hy lees uit woorde van die belofte, sorgvuldig saamgestel om die waardes van onderwys te weerspieël. Hierdie oomblik is nie net 'n seremoniële tradisie nie; dit is 'n oorgangsreg. Dit is die oomblik wanneer onderrig nie net 'n loopbaan is nie maar 'n lewenslange passie en belofte word. Aan die einde van die eed kyk elkeen van die onderwysers na hulle studente en met 'n eenvoudige ja het hulle die belofte aanvaar.

Die beroepsbelofte is meer as 'n stel gesproke woorde; dit is 'n belofte wat ontsaglike betekenis dra. Dit herinner onderwysers daaraan dat hul rol verder strek as handboeke en lesplanne. Hulle is mentors, rolmodelle en katalisators vir verandering. Om hierdie eed af te lê, dui op hul gereedheid om die uitdagings en belonings te aanvaar wat gepaard gaan met die vorming van jong gedagtes.

Hierdie belofte bevorder ook 'n gevoel van eenheid onder opvoeders. Terwyl hulle saamstaan en die woorde opsê wat hulle aan hul professionele plig bind, word hulle deel van 'n groter missie - een wat individuele klaskamers oorskry en die samelewing as 'n geheel beïnvloed. In 'n era waar onderwys ontwikkelende uitdagings in die gesig staar, van tegnologiese vooruitgang tot samelewingsverskuiwings, dien die beroepsbelofte as 'n grondkrag wat verseker dat onderwysers standvastig in hul doel bly.

Dit is dus vir ons 'n ongelooflike voorreg om te bevestig dar die eed deur die volgende onderwysers aanvaar is (links na regs) juffrou Jenna van Tonder, meneer Stephan Fourie, juffrou Sumari Delport, meneer Donnovan Serfontein, juffrou Marisa de Wet, meneer Willie Heyneke en meneer Charles Louw.

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Kindness Week: How the Ferdies Heart Committee is Spreading Kindness, One Small Act at a Time

Brainstormer: Miné Bronkhorst
Writer: Terrence Masupa

Every day we walk past students who may be struggling in ways we don't see. Some are our friends, others are just familiar faces in the hallway. We never truly know what someone is going through, but one thing is certain… kindness, no matter how small, always makes a difference.

That's why from the 17th to the 21st of February, the Ferdies Heart Committee dedicated Kindness Week to reminding us that kindness isn't just a word but it's something we live out in our everyday actions. The goal wasn't just to spread positivity for a few days, but it was to show how small moments of kindness come together to create a culture of support, respect and inclusivity at our school. Each day of Kindness Week was like a piece of a puzzle, showing us how little actions add up to something bigger.

Motivational Monday reminded us that words have power. A simple "You've got this" or "I believe in you" can be the encouragement someone needs to keep going. We all have the ability to lift each other up, and sometimes, even the smallest words of motivation can make a huge difference.

On Thankful Tuesday, we focused on gratitude. In our busy lives it's easy to forget to say "Thank you" to the people who support us. Whether it's a friend, a teacher, or even someone who simply makes our day a little better, appreciation strengthens connections and reminds us of the good in our lives.

Warm Hearted Wednesday was about action. Kindness isn't just in what we say it's in what we do. Holding the door open, including someone who feels left out, or simply smiling at someone in the hallway might seem small, but these actions bring warmth even on the coldest days.

On Thoughtful Thursday, we took a step back to reflect on how our words and actions affect those around us. Being thoughtful means choosing kindness, even when it's not the easiest option. It's in the moments where we listen and not judge, support instead of criticise and remind others that they are not alone.

Finally, Feel Good Friday wrapped up the week with an important reminder: kindness doesn't just make others feel good, it makes us feel good too. When we choose kindness, we create a space where positivity and compassion can thrive, not just for a week, but every day. A Message from the Heart Committee:

"As the Ferdies Heart Committee, we believe kindness isn't just an event, but a habit and a choice we make daily. As Kindness Week comes to an end, we challenge every Ferdie to keep this spirit alive. Because when we all choose kindness, we don't just change a day, we change a school, a community, and maybe even the world".

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The Adventures of Pi Day

Writer: Unaysah Ismail
Media: Adonee Swarts

Pi Day, celebrated on the 14th of March is a day all about maths or for some, like at our school, a day about food and fun.

For those of you who don't know, Pi Day is the annual celebration of the mathematical constant "pi". It is observed on the 14th of March, as this date written mathematically is 3/14 which is also significantly the first 3 digits of Pi (3.14...). This day is also Albert Einstein's birthday, as well as our very own Mr Odendaal's (a Math and Physics teacher at our school), which is quite ironic if you ask me.

This year, the Academic Committee took Pi Day to the next level at Ferdies with the following events:

Pie-a-Teacher
During break, everyone had a blast, including the teachers. Watching five of their fellow colleagues getting "pied" in the face by learners.

Pie-Eating Competition
Besides from being able to pie a teacher, you could also enter for the pie eating competition, where you were expected to be the first to eat 2 pies and drink an entire Coke in order to win. Our headboy, Armand Potgieter, won this with ease.

Pi-Digits Recitation
If you're a person who remembers things easily, this challenge was for you. Learners who entered had to memorize and recite as many digits of Pi as they could. The winner of this was Imaan Sooliman in Grade 8.

Pie-Food for Sale
You could've also pre-ordered Pizza-Pies or bought a bucket of Popcorn on the day.

On the behalf of Ferdies, we thank Deané and her committee for all their hard work put into making this day the enjoyable and memorable day that it was for our school.

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Trivia Aand 2025

Brainstormer: Laura van der Walt
Writer: Jordan Forbes
Media: Zakhele Damanyet

Op 19 Maart 2025 het 'n opwindende trivia-aand plaasgevind. 'n Aand vol slim vrae, skreeusnaakse oomblikke en 'n wonderlike gees van spanwerk. Dit was beslis die beste trivia-aand nóg!

Verskeie spanne het mekaar behoorlik uitgedaag met hul kennis en strategiese denke, maar slegs die bestes het bo uitgekom. Ná intense rondes van vrae en strategiese speletjies, het drie spanne uitgestaan as die topresteerders van die aand:

1. In die eerste plek het ons die **Notorious Outlaws**. Lyk vir my dat hul grootste misdaad was om al die regte antwoorde te steel.
2. In die tweede plek is **La Familia**. Toe hulle gevra is hoe hulle dit gedoen het, het hulle net gesê: "Dit is 'n familiegeheim."
3. In die derde plek was dit die **Ash kickers**, hulle het soos 'n veldbrand deur die kompetisie gevee.

Die vrae het 'n wye spektrum van onderwerpe gedek, insluitend algemene kennis, popkultuur en wetenskap, wat elke deelnemer se breinkrag en samewerking behoorlik op die proef gestel het.

Mini-Speletjies en almal se gunsteling springmielies!
Behalwe vir die hoof-trivia was daar ook verskeie kleiner speletjies gespeel, soos "Head or Tails," wat vir groot vermaak gesorg het. Hierdie vinnige en opwindende speletjies het die kompetisie nog meer opwindend gemaak en gesorg vir 'n vinnige lagkansie tussen die intense trivia-rondes.
Natuurlik sou geen trivia-aand volledig wees sonder heerlike peuselhappies nie. Die aand se ster was beslis die springmieliemasjien, wat die lekkerste, varsste springmielies gespring het. Sommiges het selfs gewonder of hulle 'n trivia-vraag moes beantwoord om 'n handjievol te kry.

So 'n **ongelooflike aand** gebeur nie sommer vanself nie. **Die Fundi-komitee,** bestaande uit Deané, Elrise, Karabo, Dylan, Unathi en Divan het hard gewerk om alles perfek te laat verloop. 'n **Spesiale dankie** ook aan Meneer Dejon en Juffrou Nirdé, wat ongelooflik baie gehelp het met die beplanning en uitvoering van die aand.
Verder was die **klankspan en Juffrou Labuschagne** onmisbaar om te verseker dat die aand glad verloop het. 'n Geleentheid soos hierdie gebeur nie net vanself nie, en dit is te danke aan 'n toegewyde span mense wat alles moontlik gemaak het. 'n Groot dankie aan almal wat hard gewerk het om die aand 'n sukses te maak. 'n **Spesiale dankie** gaan aan **Als**, wat die springmieliemasjien geborg het en dat almal iets lekkers gehad het om aan te peusel terwyl hulle die uitdagende vrae moes beantwoord. 'n Geskenkbewys vanaf Turkstra het die spanne gemotiveer om flink te dink.

Met hope lag, gesonde kompetisie en ongelooflike spanwerk was hierdie trivia-aand beslis een vir die boeke. Dit het nie net intelligensie getoets nie, maar ook gesorg vir 'n gevoel van samehorigheid en groot pret. Volgende jaar se trivia gaan nóg groter en beter wees, met moeiliker vrae en hope pret! Moenie dit misloop nie!

Die groot vraag bly egter: **Wie gaan volgende jaar se trivia-kampioene wees?**

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DEBATE THIS - Term 1

Brainstormer: Miné Bronkhorst
Writers: Dylan Kondos (Opposing) and Oliver de Sa (Proposing)

Should school uniforms exist?

Proposition:

1. Unity of the School

Unity is for us to be whole, to be one. Unity is what connects us, to have unity is to have order. It is what separates us from chaos and discourse. When you enter a school, you want to be accepted into it and uniforms are a way to show that. If I go to a school and see that kids are wearing completely different things it shows division in the school and its students, when a uniform shows unity and connection with the students. I am not saying that students shouldn't be able to express themselves, but I am saying that uniforms are an expression of unity.

2. To Have Uniforms is to Have Equality

In schools around the world and in South Africa there is bullying. Children who can't afford to buy the newest Nikes often get bullied. However, with a uniform you don't get bullied for your clothes because you all wear the same things. If children can't afford to go and buy new school clothes, old kids can donate their old clothes to the clothing bank for them. There are also organizations to help with costs specifically for schools and there are other cheaper options like a second-hand shop.

3. Civvies Sows' Discourse in Our Schools

When we wear civvies, our behaviour becomes more informal. Civvies is a privilege and should not get abused in schools, which is what some children do. Many schools only have a few days where uniform is not required for that exact reason: the children are less behaved. Now not all children misbehave when wearing civvies, but some do and that is why uniforms help keep order. The uniform doesn't make a student unhappy. Students also perform better when there is order in the classroom.

Opposing:

1. The Right to Self-Expression Through Clothes.

Clothes have come a long way from just wearing them for warmth. Now more than ever in our society, expression is deeply important to us. We express ourselves through the way we talk, our hairstyles or even our profile pictures, but an extremely important way of expression, is the way we dress. Whether it is your culture, religion, personality or a simple emotion you feel, your clothes are an excellent way of communicating and part of multiple learners' self-identity. Uniforms strip us of this basic form of expression and promotes the idea that everyone must look the same. Civvies supports the great diversity we have as a school and community. Having happy learners being able to show their personality or identity and feel connected to the school is more important than the school looking "unified" and having learners that feel foreign in their own skin. That is the true division, the division between student and school.

2. Improved Moods in Relation to Civvies Vs Uniform.

When comparing uniform to civvies, the happiness of the students is a key factor. This is one of the most important things in a school. The mood of a school's learners is not only vital to its public image but is also crucial to the academic ability of the students. If visitors, other schools or potential new learners see unhappy students tired in the same uniform day in and day out, then it will look bad on the schools' image. No matter how hard you study or try to focus on class, your mood will affect your academic and learning processes. An unhappy student is not a good learner. The behaviour is not "informal", but rather natural. Students can feel comfortable. There are a minority of kids who misbehave, but this does not mean that the entire school should be punished. The reason that behaviour happens in the first place is, because civvies is seen as this rare privilege instead of a basic right. This culture will only change when we change our minds and adopt civvies.

3. The Forever Increasing Costs of Uniforms.

Around the world, uniforms are expensive as is, but in South Africa we get the worst of it. Like clockwork, uniform prices go up every year. For financially burdened families, school uniforms are like a hit in the gut. Not only do you have to buy one full school uniform, but two because multiple schools have, "formal" and "PT" uniforms. Children do not stop growing so you constantly need to replace school shoes, shirts, and pants. Normal/civvies clothes are often less expensive than uniforms and, the versatility of these clothes is greater than uniforms. Adopting civvies will stop people from having to
deal with these costs.

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ferdiepostexco3 · Apr 16, 2025 · 1 min read

Fascinating Facts

Brainstomer: Miné Bronkhorst
Writer: Laaiqah Hassim
Artists: Mila Dengana (1), Natalie Kaunda (3), Shazana Abdul Gafar (5)

What lies beyond the edge of our everyday reality? What secrets lie or hide in the sha dows waiting to be uncovered?

Here are some rare and fascinating facts:

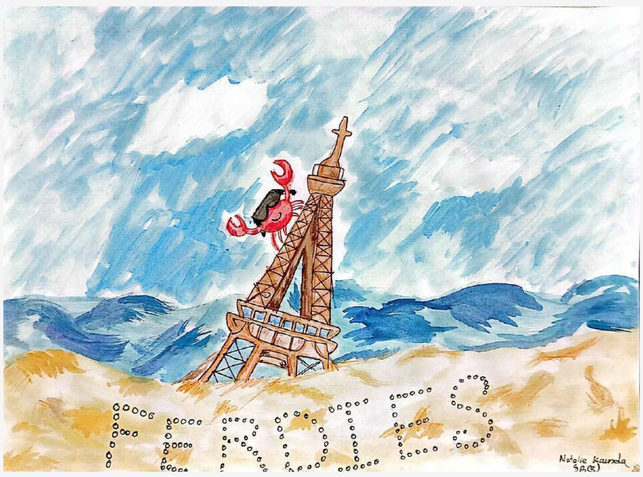
1. Ketchup was once used as a medicine.

2. The longest word in the English language is

pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis

- a lung disease.

3. The Eiffel tower grows in the summer.



4. Allodoxaphobia is the fear of opinions.

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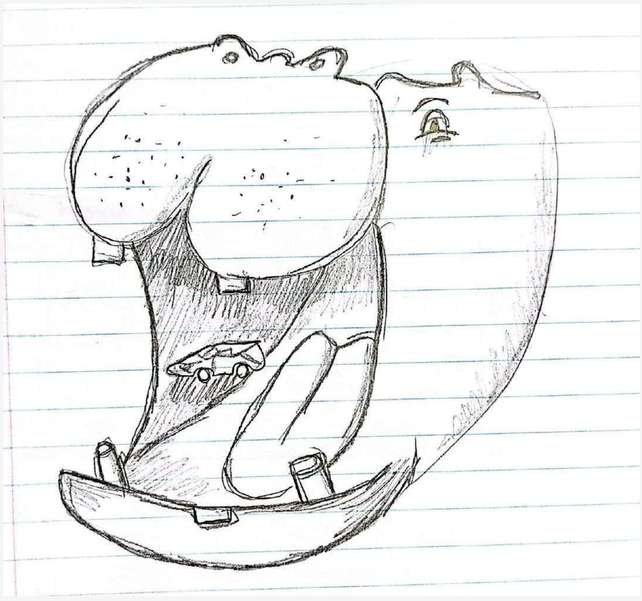
5. A hippo's jaw opens wide enough to fit a sports car inside



These facts showcase the beauty of our world!

It's the little things in life that are the most extraordinary.

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ferdiepostexco3 · May 11, 2025 · 2 min read

Goodbye Mrs Wika - We will miss you!

Brainstormers & Writers: Tasmiyah Hamid & Imaan Sooliman
Media: Luca Sale & John-Henry Palm

Today we say goodbye to a truly remarkable woman, Mrs Wika, as she moves on to new adventures beyond our school walls. While it is hard to see her go, we are filled with gratitude for all the memories and lessons she has left with us.

Mrs Wika has been more than just a maths teacher, she has been a guide, a mentor, and an inspiration to the Ferdie family.

Mrs Wika has been a vital part of our school community not only as a dedicated teacher, especially to our Grade 12s, but also as an energetic and passionate netball coach. In the classroom her patience and explanation of the most difficult problems, her encouragement when we felt discouraged and her belief in our abilities have made all the difference.

She taught us that mathematics is not just about numbers and formulas, but about thinking critically, solving problems and believing that every challenge has a solution if we work hard enough.

Beyond the classroom, she has taught us resilience, precision and the importance of never giving up. She guided our senior students through some of their most important years with wisdom, patience and unwavering support. Her ability to challenge her students while always believing in their potential made her a favourite among the learners.

Beyond academics, Mrs Wika made a lasting impact on the sports field. As the netball coach, she inspired teamwork, discipline and a fighting spirit in all her players. She celebrated every win with pride and taught resilience through every loss, showing that true success is measured not just by scores, but by growth and character.

Although it is difficult to imagine our school without her, we know her influence will continue to be felt in the hallways, classrooms and hearts of those she has touched. We wish Mrs Wika all the success and happiness as she begins this next exciting chapter. Our doors will always be open to her, and she will forever be a treasured part of our Ferdie family.

Thank you, Mrs. Wika, for everything. You will be deeply missed.

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Rain or Shine - Ferdies Fun Run Still Raises Spirits

Writer: Kieran Louw
Media: Luca Sale

The end-of-term Fun Run is a beloved tradition at our high school where students, teachers and staff come together to get their hearts pumping, their spirits soaring and their community supported. For years, this annual event has been a highlight of the school calendar, raising vital funds for those in need. But this term's Fun Run was different – it was a battle against the elements.

Heavy rain poured down on the school grounds, threatening to cancel the event. But as the skies began to clear, the determination and enthusiasm of the students, teachers and organisers shone through. The Fun Run went ahead, with participants taking to the course as the rain subsided.

As Mrs Rosin started the clock, the runners took off, splashing through puddles and dodging muddy patches. Some walkers brought their spirits and our sport teams their incredible determination to finish the race as one!

Despite the challenging conditions, the Fun Run was a resounding success. Students, teachers and staff showed remarkable spirit, with many participants completing their laps and earning their rewards and bragging rights.

The real winners, however, were the Interact Club that benefited from the funds raised. The Fun Run has a long history of supporting local causes, and this year's event was no exception. The money raised will go towards supporting those in need, bringing hope and assistance to those who require it.

The Fun Run may have been threatened by the rain but it ultimately proved that with determination, teamwork and a bit of mud, anything is possible. As the students, teachers and staff walked away with big smiles and tired legs, they knew that they had made a real difference – and that the Fun Run would be back again next term, rain or shine.

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Easter Extravaganza at Huis Anna Viljoen

Writer: Keamogetswe Ramohanoe
Media: Hassaanah Sooliman

As you all know Easter is the period of the year where everyone gets together with their families all in the spirit of gratitude, togetherness and celebration. We share some praise and worship with each other, be it at church or even at home. Some people don't have that luxury but every event can be made special to anyone with just the right people with the right intentions. As the Interact family, we were excited to bring some joy and cheer to the elderly as we visited them at the old age home. What was even more heart soothing were the smiles on their faces when we gave them some Easter eggs. The staff who were on duty were also super nice and so happy to see us. There is definitely nothing more heart warming than seeing someone smile because of your small deed. The handshakes, the small chit chats and the hugs to show how thankful they were was definitely the cherry on top of the lovely experience. As we were about to leave, one of the residents asked to pray for us, the most beautiful prayer ever. That's when we knew that our visit was a resounding success. We left feeling fulfilled and happy and as we walked back to school we couldn't stop talking about the wonderful time we had and how we couldn't wait to go back and visit again.

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Rugby Camp 2025

Writer: Tshepang Gaabue

Ferdies held a Rugby Camp from the 28th of March until the 30th, with the 1st team and U/15 rugby teams participating in intense drills and activities. This camp provided an opportunity for players to improve their skills. We asked some of the players what their favourite part of the camp was, and most of them said it was the braai event. The players' family members joined for an evening of fun and relaxation. This special moment allowed players to share their experiences with their loved ones.

Mr. Louw delivered an inspiring motivational talk to each player, telling them the importance of teamwork, discipline and perseverance.

We'd like to give a special thank you to our hostel staff for welcoming the players into their hostel with open arms, serving delicious meals and desserts throughout the camp.

The camps' success would not have been possible without the dedication and expertise of the coaching team, which includes Coaches: Mr Serfontein, Mr Weyers, Mr Rudy and Mr Heyneke. Their efforts and guidance played a significant role in shaping the players skills and team spirit.

The Ferdinand Postma rugby team extends its gratitude to everyone involved in making the camp a success. The experience will undoubtedly benefit the team in their future matches coming forward in their season.

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Curtains Up: Shakespeare Day at Ferdies

Writer & Media: Jayson Labuschagne

On April 23rd, Ferdies came together to celebrate Shakespeare Day with a series of performances that highlighted the creativity and talent of the students. Rainy weather moved the event indoors, creating a cozy and focused atmosphere in the school hall, where literature took centre stage.

The day began with Atlegile's thoughtful recitations of Sonnets 115 and 116, setting a reflective tone. Rozalynne and her team performed the iconic death scene involving one of Macduff's sons. This was followed by Shania and Zakhele's lively performance from Twelfth Night. Zakhele portrayed a confident and witty Senior Benedick, while Shania brought sharp energy to her role, giving the scene a vibrant, playful edge.

Short scenes from Romeo and Juliet and Hamlet were also performed, each bringing a different side of Shakespeare's writing to life. The performances were delivered with real effort and heart, creating a powerful sense of connection among the audience.
One of the most memorable moments came from Phenyo, who portrayed Lady Macbeth in the famous "out, damned spot" scene. Her chilling delivery captured the attention of everyone in the room, creating a powerful silence that few performances manage to achieve. Even Miss Roux, known for her deep passion for Shakespeare and literature, could not resist joining in with a playful comment from the audience, showing how much the staff enjoyed the experience alongside the students.

Adding to the atmosphere, teachers dressed as some of Shakespeare's most iconic characters, including Lady Macbeth, Macbeth, Mercutio, and Julius Caesar. Their enthusiasm added to the sense of fun and community throughout the afternoon.
Shakespeare Day at Ferdies was a celebration of storytelling, creativity, and shared appreciation for timeless works, made even more memorable by the warmth and energy that filled the hall.

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Ferdies Afrikaanse Opedag

Skrywer: Latorian Mora

'n Legende aand. Die opwindende opedag van Hoërskool Ferdinand Postma op 21 Mei 2025 was 'n opwindende ervaring wat 'n onuitwisbare stempel op die harte van almal wat dit bygewoon het, veral die graad 7-leerders, gelaat het. Die atmosfeer was lewendig van opgewondenheid terwyl die leerders gretig die verskillende stasies verken het wat die skool se uiteenlopende aanbiedinge ten toon gestel het.

Die SPORTSTASIES was 'n groot treffer, met leerders wat entoesiasties aan verskeie sportaktiwiteite deelgeneem het wat hul vaardighede getoets het. Die aansteeklike energie van die sportgeesdriftiges was tasbaar, en dit was duidelik dat die skool se sportkultuur iets is om mee rekening te hou.

Die leerders was gefassinieer deur die SETH-afdeling wat ons skool uniek maak. Die leerders het die geleentheid gehad om WETENSKAP-eksperimente te sien en dit was 'n ware wonderland van ontdekking, waar leerders getrakteer is op 'n skitterende verskeidenheid interaktiewe eksperimente wat die wonders van die wetenskap tot lewe gebring het .

Die KULTUURSTASIES het die skool se ryk kulturele erfenis bekend gestel, met leerders wat in verskeie kunsvorme presteer. Die kreatiwiteit en talent wat ten toon gestel is, was werklik inspirerend, en dit was duidelik dat die skool sterk klem gelê het op die bevordering van die artistieke sy van sy leerders. Die GEES van ons Skool was 'n kragtige herinnering aan die skool se waardes en etos. Die leerders was diep geraak deur die verhale van veerkragtigheid, spanwerk en deursettingsvermoë wat gedeel is, en dit was duidelik dat die skool se gees lewendig was.

Om alles te kroon, is die leerders bederf met 'n verskeidenheid heerlike Ferdie Freebies, wat hulle laat straal het van vreugde. En, in 'n spesiale bederf, het die skool gereël dat die talentvolle atleet Bradley Nkaona 'n gasverskyning maak, wat 'n ekstra laag opwinding tot die aand bygevoeg het. Sy teenwoordigheid was die kersie op die koek, wat die nag werklik onvergeetlik gemaak het.

Namate die aand ten einde geloop het, was dit duidelik dat die graad 7-leerders iets werklik besonders beleef het. Die Opedag het nie net die skool se akademiese en buitemuurse aktiwitwite bekend gestel nie, maar het die leerders ook 'n insig gegee in die lewendige gemeenskap wat Hoërskool Ferdinand Postma is . Die opgewondenheid en entoesiasme was tasbaar, en dit was duidelik dat die leerder altyd die herinneringe aan hierdie onvergeetlike aand sou koester.

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Ferdies English Open Night

Writer & Media: Chidi Okechukwu

What a night! Ferdies changed the whole script by hosting our very first Open Night and we definitely cooked! The lights made our art displays stand out and made our sports field look awesome.

The art students displayed their creative works, transforming the hall into a gallery with paintings and drawings that showed off their talents.

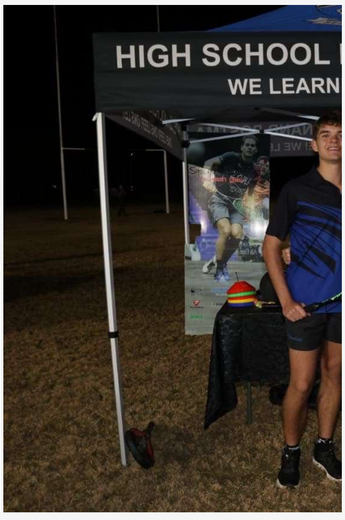
The Grade 7s were so excited when they saw the amazing elephant toothpaste experiments by the Seth station, or even trying to outsmart our chess players. And the amount of sweets they had definitely got them into a sugar rush.

Our hockey, rugby and netball teams showed off their skills by challenging the Grade 7s in mini games. And those grade 7s knew that they weren't going easy on them! We were even honoured to have Bradley Nkoana, a South African Olympic sprinter, who came by to our open night to share some inspiring words and maybe flexing on how fast he is.

A great moment came when all our teachers were introduced in the Paris walk ceremony. Each educator took their turn on stage, sharing their role at Ferdies and their passion for teaching.

The delicious food was the best part of the night, the Snoepie was filled with parents talking happily with the teachers and the good music that was played gave such a great vibe throughout the event.

It was a night to remember. And we get to do this again next year. And for those who missed out, you'll definitely not want to next year.



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The Choir Camp

Kaylan van Wyk

What happens when you bring together students, music and an afternoon away from home?

Following our success from last year, we had our first ever Choir Camp on the 11th of April, with so many unforgettable memories, organised by our chairperson Arlene De Lange and Leandro . We did tons of choir related activities such as karaoke, musical chairs and song association where Mrs. Carin gave us a word and we had to sing a song including it.

Throughout the camp we focused on improving our vocal techniques and practicing our songs for our upcoming performances for two hours with our lovely choir teacher Netanja Brink. In between rehearsals we also had time to bond with our fellow choir mates, shared meals and a lot of other fun moments together.

As we returned home it was clear that the camp brought us closer together as a group and made us better singers.

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Carnival Sports Day: A Day To Remember

Adoneé Swarts

On Wednesday, the 7th of May, 2025, the grounds of Ferdinand Postma were buzzing with energy and excitement, waiting for the clock to reach 11:30am. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of the Sports Committee and the support of Walt Esterhuysen (head of the sports committee) the school hosted its first ever Sports Carnival, an event that brought together students from all grades for a full day of athletic fun, friendly competition, and unforgettable memories.

The day was packed with a variety of sports challenges that tested both skill and spirit. One of the most popular events was the netball shooting competition. Participants had to see how many goals they could score in a limited amount of time. It was fast-paced, with students cheering each other on and giving it their all. Nearby, the cycling obstacle course drew a crowd of enthusiastic spectators. Cyclists raced through twists, turns, and tricky setups, all trying to finish with the fastest time.

Rugby had students attempting to score a goal & strategizing with intense focus, while the archery zone gave students a chance to show off their aim and precision. The squash, players battled it out, shot for shot. With colourful targets in different sizes.

What made the day even more special was the opportunity to win prizes through various games and challenges. Whether it was skill-based events or fun mini-competitions, there was something for everyone to enjoy.

The highlight of the day came at the very end- a thrilling seven-minute plank competition being juniors versus seniors, versus one teacher, Mrs Rosin. It had everyone on their feet. It was the perfect conclusion to an already action-packed day. After an intense battle, Rhodes, a senior student, claimed victory, earning applause and admiration from the crowd.

The Sports Carnival at Ferdinand Postma was not just about winning or competing; it was about unity, school spirit, and celebrating the talents of every student. Thank you to everyone who made this day a huge success, leaving everyone looking forward to next year's event.

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Exam Nerves

Shazana Abdul Gafar

Let's be honest: exams are stressful. One minute you're confidently flipping through your textbook, and the next you're staring at a random page thinking, *"Have I even been in class this whole year?"*

It's okay. You're not alone. Almost everyone feels a little panicky when exams start knocking. But here's the thing — you've already survived so much. Whether it was waking up at 6 AM for school, doing last-minute homework during break or surviving group projects (aka doing all the work yourself), you've made it through.

Exams might look scary, but they're just a temporary part of your journey. Think of them like a boss battle in a game. Sure, it might take a few tries but you've got the skills, you've got the heart and you've got snacks — probably the most important part.

This isn't about being perfect. It's about showing up and trying your best — even if your best today includes studying in pajamas with chips for dinner.

When the exams are over, you'll look back and realize you were stronger and more capable than you thought. So go on, smash those exams and don't forget to smile (even if it's through tears).

Good luck FERDIES!!

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Hockey at Camp Discovery: A Weekend of Growth and Competition

Mila Dengana

The Girls and Boys First Team Hockey squads attended an intensive training camp at Camp Discovery outside Gauteng, where they showcased their skills, built teamwork and competed in several challenging matches. The camp provided an excellent opportunity for players to develop their game under high-pressure situations while bonding as a team.

Both squads demonstrated impressive skill, determination and tactical growth throughout the camp. Each match was a chance to apply their training, adapt to different playing styles, and refine their strategies.

Girls Team Highlights:
The girls showed incredible resilience and teamwork, with great performances in both attack and defense. Their ability to communicate on the field and execute plays under pressure was exceptional.

Boys Team Highlights:
The boys displayed excellent coordination and tactical awareness, with strong performances in possession play and defensive structure. Their adaptability and composure in challenging situations were particularly impressive.

Beyond the matches, players participated in:
- Skill development drills (focusing on passing, shooting and defensive strategies).
- Team-building activities to strengthen teamwork.
- A wild safari drive around around the camp.

Looking Ahead:
The camp was a fantastic experience for both teams, providing valuable lessons and match practice. The coaches praised the players' dedication and growth, emphasizing that the lessons learned at Camp Discovery will be crucial for the upcoming season.

Well done to all the players for their effort and sportsmanship.

The future looks bright for both teams!

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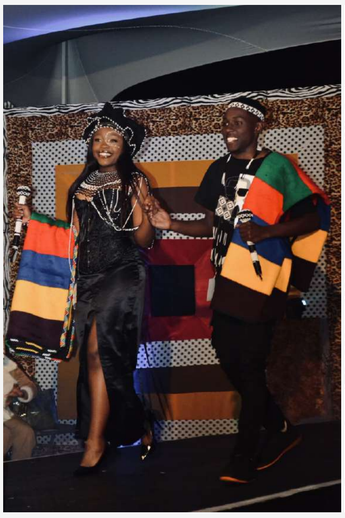
Under the African Sun: ‘n Aand Om Te Onthou

Jess Bezuidenhout

Mnr en Mej Ferdies was ‘n skouspelagtige gebeurtenis wat die gehoor in verwondering gelaat het. Die tema, "Under the African Sun," is perfek vasgevang deur die pragtige uitrustings, boeiende optredes en die stralende skoonheid van die deelnemers. Terwyl die son oor die horison sak, het die skool gegons van opgewondenheid. Ten spyte van die effense koue in die lug, was die atmosfeer elektries, met ‘n groot skare entoesiastiese toeskouers wat hul gunsteling-deelnemers aangemoedig het.

Die aand het afgeskop met ‘n groot optog van die deelnemers wat elkeen hul unieke styl en sjarme ten toon gestel het. Die uitrustings was ‘n lewendige weerspieëling van Afrika-kultuur, met gewaagde afdrukke, helder kleure en ingewikkelde ontwerpe wat onder die ligte geskitter het. Soos die kompetisie verhit het, het die deelnemers die verhoog betree en hul talente, intelligensie en charisma ten toon gestel. Van betowerende dansoptredes tot gedagteprikkelende antwoorde, elke deelnemer het hul A-wedstryd gebring, wat dit onmoontlik maak vir die beoordelaars om die wenners te kies.

Die gehoor was betower deur die skoonheid, talent en passie wat vertoon is, en die energie in die kamer was tasbaar. Dit was duidelik dat elke deelnemer nie net om ‘n titel meeding nie, maar ook die rykdom en diversiteit van Afrika-kultuur vier. Die "Under the African Sun" skoonheidskompetisies was ‘n aand om te onthou, ‘n viering van skoonheid, kultuur en talent wat die gehoor en deelnemers vir ‘n lang tyd sal bybly.



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Report Time!

Oaratwa Tshabadira

"Yoh" , is all one could say after seeing that report!

Who's been slacking? Who's being standing on business? The answer lies on one sheet of paper!

From Term 2 procrastinations to Term 3 repercussions. Our learners are finally back from their holidays after a long three weeks of fun and being stress free. Anxiety echoes through the corridors and one thought bangs in their heads-"how well did I pass ?".

Is the class silent, or silenced by the marks in front of them? As they receive their marks eyes open wide in shock of what's in front of their eyes . For some it's a good thing but for some...well, the tears in their eyes say it all.

Apart from the fact that their reports might not have turned out as they thought or might have been more than what they imagined, reports aren't only about your grades but rather about paving the path for the term ahead. They show us areas where more effort should be put into and show us areas where we've grown and progressed.

So , what's next you may ask. Well, let's start with setting new goals and working on your "weaknesses", realising that discipline is key to our academic success and that failure to prepare is actually just preparing for failure.

Overall, it is crucial to understand during these times that grades do not define you, they just reflect your understanding on certain topics. So, don't stress if you didn't ace every subject (yet!), but rather keep pushing for that academic comeback!

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The Legacy Clash at Ferdinand Postma – A Day of Unity and Passion

Edlynne Slambert and Omolemo Modise

The day of the clash arrived. From the early morning, students, teachers and alumni gathered in large numbers ready to support their teams. The learners of Ferdinand Postma wore their school uniform, a proud and visible symbol of unity and school spirit that set us apart from the visiting teams.

The crowd was alive with excitement and passion as they cheered on every match of the day. First up were the netball girls facing Stella and the girls' hockey team taking on Wollies. Both teams fought hard, demonstrating great skill and determination, even though the final results didn't go in their favor. Despite this, the crowd's support never wavered, with loud cheers and encouraging chants filling the air.

The boys' hockey team took to the field next, facing Wollies with fierce determination. Their energy was contagious and their effort paid off with a thrilling victory that lifted the spirits of everyone present.

The grand finale was the rugby match against De Wilge and our boys did not disappoint. With great teamwork they played a powerful game, ending the day with a bang by securing a well-deserved win. Every time the rugby boys came together for a scrum, the crowd erupted in a loud and unified shout of "Lemoene!" — a chant that became the heartbeat of the match and pumped up the players with unstoppable energy. The cheers that followed the final whistle were deafening, with students, teachers and alumni erupting in celebration. Voices grew hoarse from shouting but spirits soared higher than ever.

That day was about more than just wins and losses. It was a true demonstration of what it means to be part of Ferdinand Postma — united, proud and fiercely supportive. The clash brought us together as one family, reminding us all that school spirit is strongest when we stand together.

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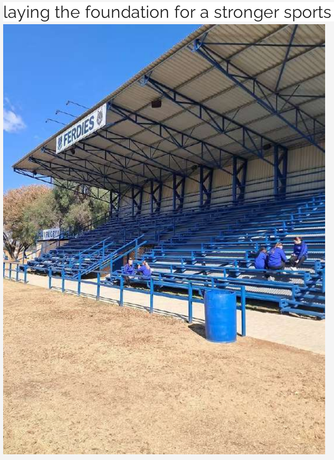
The Signs of Growth and What's Still to Come: More Than Just New Buildings and Upgrades.

Omphile Monaisa

When you walk around our school today, it's hard not to notice the changes which are the new spaces, upgraded areas and an undeniable sense that something is moving forward. However, what's here isn't just about fresh paint or new walls. It's about growth — in who we are as a school and what we're building towards.

This year marked a historic moment for our school as we hosted our first ever Classic Clash. This is a moment that brought pride, unity and a level of excitement we will never forget. But most importantly, it sparked a real and lasting development.

In preparation for this big moment, our school took big steps which included the upgrading of our pavilion to create a more fitting space for spectators and school supporters as well as the building of a dedicated changing room for our First Rugby Team. This wasn't just about one event. It was also about raising our standards and laying the foundation for a stronger sports culture.



BUT... not all developments and improvements were big and loud. Some were small but just as important. Like the new shelter at the main gate for the personnel who open and close it everyday. It might not stand out to everyone, but it shows something deeper — that we are growing into a school that values every role, every individual and every contribution that keeps things running.

We are also seeing more movement around the school and not just from the students. As our parking area expands further and further, more space is being made for our teachers, parents and visitors. This is also a small change but it shows that our school is growing in ways that are much more than one.

These additions are already proving their worth. The pavilion now serves as a vibrant space during major events, extra safety is now guaranteed for the main gate personnel and the school is now wider than ever.

All of these new developments and improvements at our school show that we are not just standing still. We are building, we are levelling up and most importantly we are showing that we are thinking ahead.

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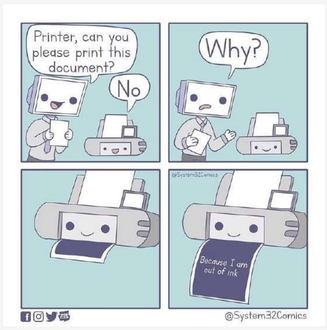
Rage Against The Machine: Printers vs. Teachers

Pabatso Hlubi & Oliver de Sa

Printers in the classroom: a blessing or a curse?
When some teachers might struggle with jammed paper and ink shortages, others have mastered the art of using the printers to create the most engaging educational material. From printing out worksheets that make schoolwork look easy, to even creative, vibrant and inspirational posters to motivate their learners or any passerby, teachers who can tame the beast called the printer are the real MVPs.



In reality, we have all been there, standing in front of the printer, watching in disappointment as your beloved art turns into another one of the printer's victims. What is the secret to a successful print job? Is it a special brand of paper? A magical print button or it is just a healthy dose of patience? Let's get to the bottom of it!

Juffrou Walstrand, a self-proclaimed 'Printer Warrior' says that the printer is no match for her printing skills, dealing with jammed printers is her forte. She is a hero who is called upon when the printers start acting up. She truly is the peanut butter to the jam.

Juffrou Delport, a printing veteran believes that life without a printer is incomplete. The printers may test her patience with the constant delays, but she always comes out on top with her documents printed to perfection.

All teachers have had their fair share of printer problems but there are always people there to help such as the 'Printer Warrior' who can tackle any printer problem imaginable. It seems as though the secret to conquering the printer is resilience and the commitment to work with utmost profiency. We are able to excel in school because our teachers can use these powerful tools.

I now realise what printers do for us and how much we rely on them. Our printers are the backbone of our education and are more important than we could ever realise. It is the superhero we didn't know existed or that we needed.

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The First Team Hockey Boys' Winning Streak.

Tshimologo Maseng

A team is rewriting the history books with an unbeatable winning streak that has left fans and opponents speechless. The boys who chant “The blue, black and white” with so much pride. The boys who became actual beasts on the field and had successfully vanquished all their rivals in the league. The team has remained undefeated, turning every game into a showcase of teamwork, strategy and raw talent.

Led to victory by Koketso as the captain and Eduan as the vice-captain, they were also guided by Coach Phemelo Moseki. The team has merged up the perfect formula for success: hard work, unity and a never-give-up attitude.

From the first face-off to the final whistle, they dominate the turf with confidence and class. Defense tight as a breakable brick wall, offence with unpredictable speed. Their incredible tactics had lead them to a great win in the league final, the game was tight, Ferdies taking it home by 3-2. This team had a stunning outcome.

Although the boys have had a brilliant season, pressure had caught up to them and had driven into a loss against Bergsig, just missing a grand opportunity to play in Noordvaal.

What truly makes this team special is their bond. Whether it’s late afternoon practices or post-game celebrations, The First Team Hockey Boys has become a brotherhood.

With each victory, their legacy grows and as they play on toward another victory: Ferdinand Postma's First Team Hockey Boys isn’t just winning — they’re making history.

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A Day in the Life of the Technical Team

Molemo Masilela

Have you ever wondered what goes on behind the scenes of school events or for the daily morning announcements? From setting up the microphones for the early morning announcements, school events or the assemblies in the school hall. The technical team is always on call. But what's it like to be part of this team? Let's take a peek into the daily life of a sound team member.

Our day starts early, around 06:45. One of the members arrive at school and head to the sound room to check the sound equipment and ensure everything is working smoothly. We test the microphones, speakers and audio interfaces to make sure they're ready for the morning announcements.

Not everything goes smoothly when working with the equipment and one of the most common issues we often face is unstable connections or distortion during the announcements or presentations in the hall. Being apart of the team often teaches you to troubleshoot problems quickly and effectively without having the quality of the sound sound suffer.

As the sound team, our tasks vary widely. One minute we're setting up a sound system for a school event and the next we're helping a teacher troubleshoot audio and visual issues with a presentation. We love the challenge of figuring out what's going on and finding a solution.

We are not alone in this role. Our technical team works closely with teachers, staff and presenters to ensure that everything runs smoothly. We communicate regularly, sharing knowledge and expertise to resolve issues quickly and efficiently.

Being part of the sound team has its perks. We get to work with amazing people, learn new skills, and make a real difference in the school community. Plus, we get to see the impact of our work first hand – whether it's a successful school event or a seamless presentation.

We may not always be in the spotlight but the sound team plays a vital role in keeping the school's events running smoothly. If you're interested in the sound team and want to make a difference, consider joining the team. It's a great way to develop new skills, build relationships and contribute to the school community.

So, the next time you're at a school event and the sound is pumping out perfectly and everything is going great always remember the sound team working behind the scenes to make it all happen!

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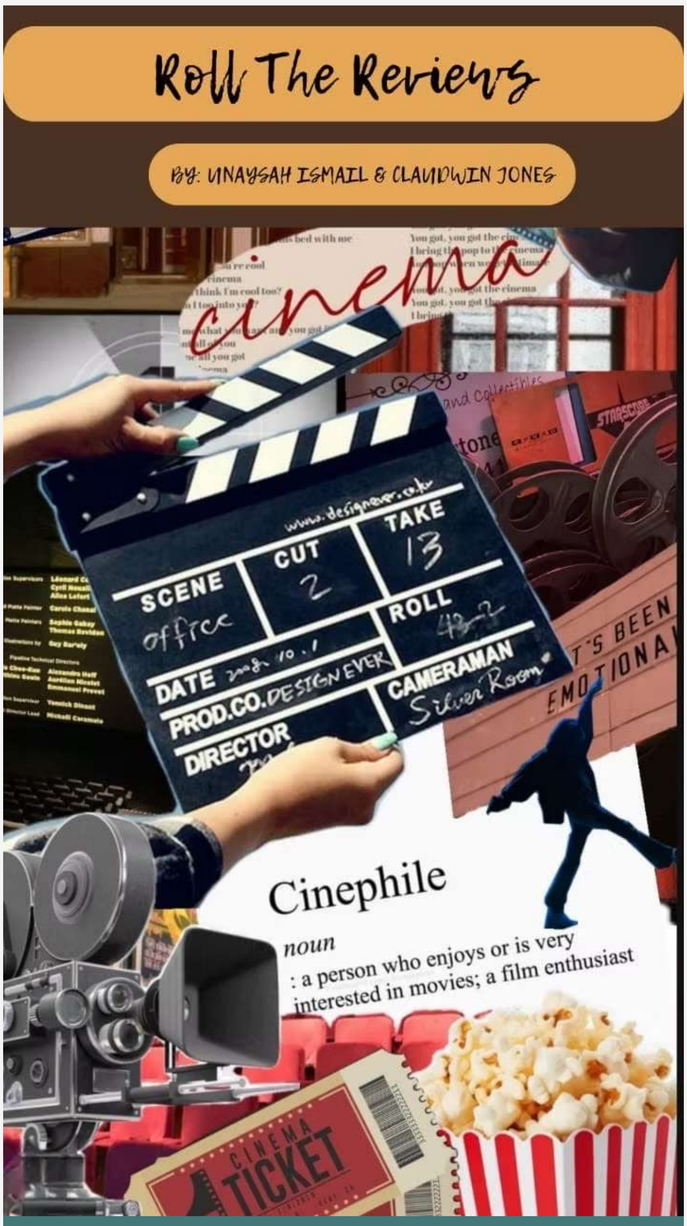
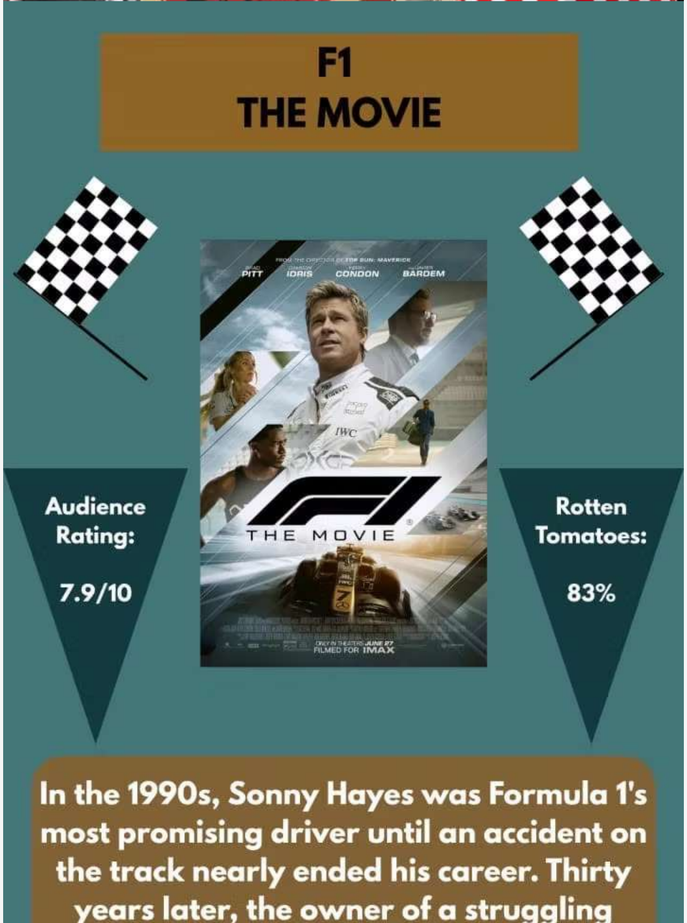
Movie Reviews

Unaysah Ismail & Claudwin Jones





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to racing and become the best in the world. Driving alongside the team's hotshot rookie, Sonny soon learns that the road to redemption is not something you can travel alone.

Madea's Destination Wedding

AUDIENCE RATING:

5/10

ROTTEN TOMATOES:

15%

Tyler Perry is best known for his hit Madea movies, but unfortunately, this film doesn't live up to that standard. While there are a few lighthearted moments and scattered laughs, the movie falls short in key areas. The plot feels underdeveloped, the structure is weak, and the ending comes across as rushed and unsatisfying. Overall, it lacks the charm and cohesion we've come to expect from Perry's work.

SUPERMAN

AUDIENCE RATING:

7.6/10

ROTTEN TOMATOES:

83%

No words except absolute cinema. James Gunn did an amazing job with this movie. The cast was astounding. It's everything

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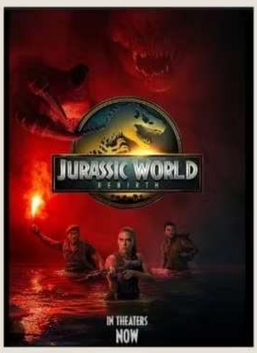
recommend this movie

JURASSIC WORLD REBIRTH



AUDIENCE RATING:

6.2/10

ROTTEN TOMATOES:

51%

This movie is a part of the iconic dinosaur franchise and follows up the last movie, Jurassic World Dominion from 2022. This film explores the post-chaos era where humans try to co-exist with dinosaurs. When it is discovered that the DNA of dinosaurs has life-saving benefits to mankind, a top secret, dangerous expedition is embarked by a group of skilled people to Isla Sorna to obtain the samples. This is a very entertaining movie for longtime fans of this franchise.

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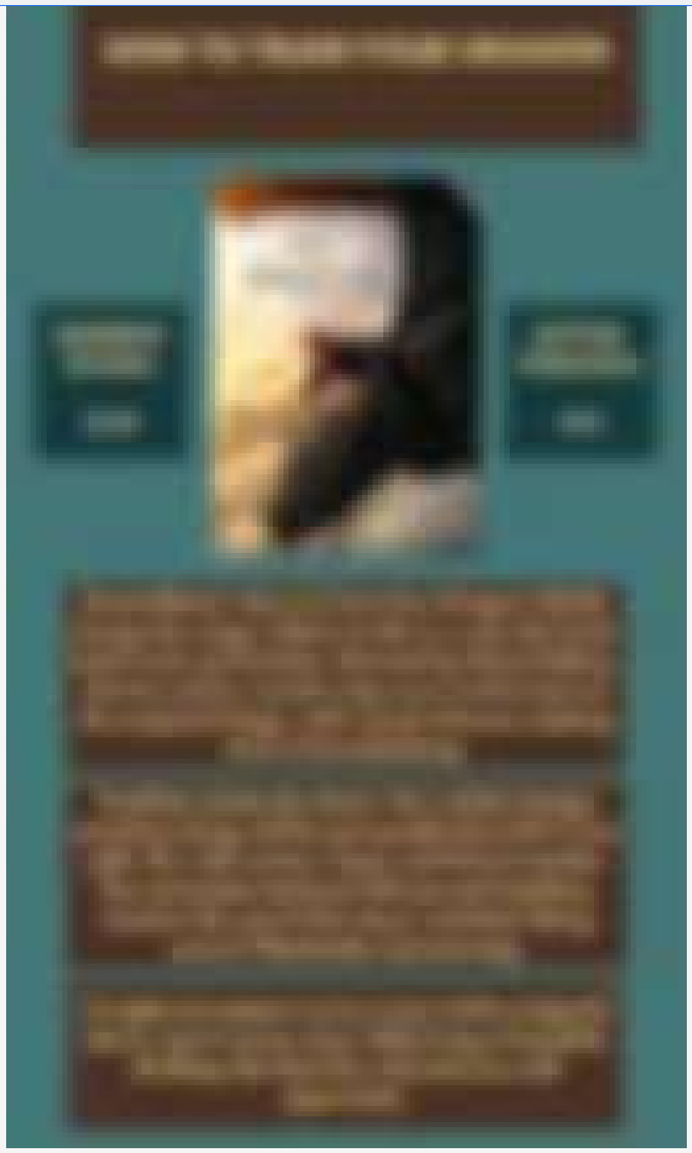

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Our Evening Outreach: A Night of Kindness and Care

Angela Ndakana

On the 23rd of July, we as a group of learners from Ferdinand Postma High School took part in a one-day outreach that truly touched our hearts. As the sun began to set and the winter chill set in, we gathered to distribute warm soup, fresh bread and blankets to people living on the streets and others who are struggling.

We had spent days preparing for this moment. Donations of bread and blankets were collected from learners, teachers and parents while the soup was made with care earlier in the day. When everything was packed and ready, we headed out just before sunset to areas where we knew help was needed most.

The streets were cold and quiet but as we approached with our care packages, we were met with tired yet hopeful faces. Handing out each cup of soup or blanket was a reminder that even small acts of kindness can bring warmth — not just to the body but to the heart.

The entire outreach lasted only one evening, but in that short time, we were able to connect with people who are often forgotten. We didn't just give them food or blankets; we gave them a moment of care and dignity.

As we packed up and returned home, we all felt changed. That one evening showed us how powerful compassion can be. It reminded us that making a difference doesn't require grand gestures — sometimes, it's just about showing up and caring, even for one night.

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Our Grade 8 Journey in Ferdies so Far

Tumisang Mamatela, Beryl-Daniella Ndagano, Ketshegofaditswe Ndlovu, & Thandolwethu Nhlangulela.

The 20th of January marked the start of something completely new — high school. For all four of us, walking through the gates of Ferdinand Postma felt like stepping into a different world. No parents, no old friends, no comfort zone… just a bunch of strangers and a school bag full of nerves, excitement and dreams. The weird thing is, even though we were all feeling different emotions, we were also all hoping for the same thing — to survive Grade 8 and maybe even enjoy it.

The first week? Chaos. Grade 8 initiation was no joke. From funky clothes to wild hairstyles, walking around with a board that had your name on it, doing random chants and trying not to mess up the school anthem — it felt like we were in a movie, a very confusing one. At hostel, it was just as intense. We were adjusting to new rules, new rooms, new people and somehow trying to be brave even when we were lowkey freaking out inside. There were moments when it felt like too much. But then someone would say something funny, help you with your stuff or just sit with you quietly. And you'd realise you're not alone.

What surprised most of us was how kind people actually were. We expected the classic "high school horror stories" — bullying, being ignored, feeling invisible. But instead, we were welcomed. Some of us had been bullied badly in primary school, so it felt weird (but good) to feel seen and supported. That kind of thing really sticks with you. It made Ferdies feel safer than we thought it would.

Of course, school isn't all sunshine. Academics hit hard. Some of us came from schools that didn't even use the same curriculum, so we felt behind from the start. Others were used to being top achievers, and now had to deal with being "just average." That messes with your confidence more than you expect. But over time, things started making sense. Term one was the struggle, but by term two, our marks were improving and we were finally adjusting. It's not about being perfect anymore — it's about progress.

But honestly, the best memories so far didn't come from books. They came from the moments in between. The weekend camp was like a reset. A chance to actually breathe, have fun, and be with people without the pressure of schoolwork. We danced, did team-building activities, stayed up late, and laughed so hard our stomachs hurt. It brought us together. And then came Valentine's Ball — where we dressed up, danced like no one was watching and just lived in the moment. It was such a vibe.

Hostel life is… interesting. You learn a lot. Like how to share space with people who are nothing like you. How to clean up after yourself (even when you don't feel like it). How to deal with homesickness when it randomly hits you at night. And also how to laugh so hard with your roommates that the matron has to come tell you to be quiet. Hostel teaches you how to grow up without rushing. It teaches you independence, but also the beauty of leaning on others when you need it.

Athletics Day was a big moment. As Grade 8s, we had to participate for LO marks, but honestly? We went from just doing it for school to actually having fun with it. Some of us even got selected to compete at different schools and those trips were unforgettable. Not because we always won but because of the chaos on the bus rides, the bonding, the feeling of being part of something bigger than yourself.

Ferdies is full of opportunities. You can join sports, culture, clubs — you name it. Hockey, rugby, debate, netball, Interact, choir, chess… the list goes on. The trick is balancing it all without burning out. That's something we're still learning. But the nice part is that no one expects you to be perfect — just to show up and try. That's what counts.

School events like the Talent Show and Mr. & Ms. Ferdies gave us chances to be seen in ways that aren't academic. Whether you're performing, cheering from the crowd or helping behind the scenes — it's a moment to just belong. And at the end of the day, that's what most of us want. To feel like we belong.

Looking back now, it's wild how much has changed in just a few months. We've all grown — some in small ways, some in big ones. We've learned how to take better care of ourselves. How to ask for help. How to bounce back after bad marks. How to stay close to God. How to let go of people who don't treat us right and hold on to the ones who really care. Some days still feel hard. But we've made it this far and that says a lot.

If we could go back and tell our January-selves one thing, it would probably be:

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Just hang in there."

There's still more ahead: exams, drama, events, challenges. But we're ready. Grade 8 at Ferdies has taught us that we're stronger than we thought. And that we're not walking this road alone.

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Cricket Tournament

Tshepang Gaabue

Ferdinand Postma's Cricket Team Plays at a Volkie-Gimmie Tournament sponsored by Mike's Kitchen

In a thrilling display of cricketing at its finest, Ferdinand Postma's 1st Team cricketers recently participated in the Volkie-Gimmie Cricket Tournament on short notice. Coached by the experienced Mr C. Louw, the team demonstrated remarkable skill and determination throughout the tournament.

Despite the short notice, the team performed well, showcasing their adaptability and teamwork. In their matches against Volkies' U/15 team, they played twice, emerging victorious in one of the games. This impressive display of cricketing talent was further highlighted by their win against Benoni High School's U/19 boys team.

However, their winning streak was brought to an end by Monument's U/15 A team, against whom they lost a closely contested match. Despite the loss, the team's overall performance in the tournament was respectable, and they gained valuable experience playing against strong opponents.

Under the guidance of Mr C. Louw, the team showed significant promise, and their participation in the Volkie-Gimmie Cricket Tournament will undoubtedly help them grow and improve as cricketers.

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Just a Little Reminder

Olebogeng Martins

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The Joy of Being a Netball Player

Shané Jooste

As a netball player, I'm constantly reminded of the thrill and excitement that comes with playing this fast-paced, strategic sport. From the rush of adrenaline as I sprint down the court to the sense of camaraderie with my teammates, netball has become a big part of my life.

Netball offers numerous benefits, both physical and mental. It's an excellent way to improve your fitness, agility and coordination. The game also requires strategic thinking, quick decision-making and effective communication skills that translate well beyond the court.

One of the most rewarding aspects of being a netball player is the sense of community that comes with it. From local clubs to national teams, netball fosters a spirit of teamwork, sportsmanship and mutual support. I've formed lasting friendships with my teammates and opponents alike, all united by our passion for the game.

Netball has taught me valuable lessons about perseverance, discipline and teamwork. It's helped me develop my confidence and ability to work under pressure. Whether I'm playing in a competitive match or a friendly game, I know that netball will continue to challenge and inspire me.

Being a netball player is more than just a hobby or a sport — it's a way of life. It brings me joy, excitement and a sense of purpose. If you're looking for a new challenge or a way to stay active, I highly recommend giving netball a try. You never know — you might just discover a new passion!

Being a netball player at Hoërskool Ferdinand Postma is an exhilarating experience. The school's netball team has shown remarkable skills and determination, earning victories in various levels of the game.

In 2024 the school's netball teams have achieved notable success, including The U/14 team won the Platinum tournament, defeating teams like: HTS Klerksdorp and Wollies. And in 2025 the 1st team was the North West platinum winners.

Being part of the Ferdinand Postma netball team is not just about playing a sport; it's about being part of a community that values teamwork, discipline and perseverance. As a netball player, you'll have the opportunity to develop your skills, build lasting relationships and represent your school with pride.

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The Psychology of Having a Mantra

Unathi Matlala

Have you ever heard of "New Year's Resolutions"? I don't think the concept of initiating supposedly life changing goals is anything foreign in modern times. The start of a new calendar has always embedded the idea of renewal in society for ages, but have you ever wondered why most people have already given up on their resolutions by the time the February air hits?

Aside from over-ambition, social comparison and societal pressure, there's plenty of factors that influence your psyche when it comes to sticking by a word. A "word" does not have to be a literal word that is composed of a handful of letters, it can be a mantra — a phrase that holds psychological meaning.

Everybody's different, not everyone is going to resonate with next person's personal mantra. And that's what I'm here for today, the psychology behind a mantra.

My classmates and I held a conference discussion on these personal mantras that some of them live by, but the fascinating part was that not everyone was consistently following their mantras. There's nothing wrong with that, it's human, but it does bring me up to my next point.

Motivation versus habit. In the same class discussion, a learner believed that motivation is an inferior aspect when it comes to appliance of having a mantra. This is where I'm going to refer back to the New Year's resolutions. Motivation is inconsistent due to the fact that it fluctuates all the time based on emotions, hormones and energy levels. It's easy to skip leg day when "I'm not feeling like it". Motivation is too inconsistent to be a reliable aspect.

Habits have a different story to tell, they keep you in line whether you like it or not. Repetition is the body's best friend, especially your mind's. Habits create these neural pathways that attach your mantra to results, eventually it's second nature. The same way you brush your teeth every morning after waking up, but only after blasting blue-light into your brain for a few hours. Those things are habits and in the same way, a mantra isn't just motivation but a reminder to act. Although, that's not to say you're not allowed to use motivation to build a habit. Teach yourself how to fish and don't rely on a fisherman.

There's also the personal alignment when regarding a mantra. Your beliefs matter, mantras are often affirmations of identity. It's not about who you are, that's not your identity, it's about who you want to become. The destination only matters in the post credits, the journey is tenfolds more valuable. There will be ups and downs. But living by a mantra, in my fully honest opinion, makes the highs sure worth living for.

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Ferdies is BUILT DIFFERENT

Natalie Kaunda

My experience in Ferdinand Postma Highschool has been a real challenge, from academics to extra curriculums to even friends. They all had their hardships but Ferdies makes sure that you are never alone while doing it.

Hello, I'm Natalie Kaunda, in Gr. 8, I'm here to share my experience of being a baby Ferdie. This school is really serious when it comes to academics alongside your health, they push you towards your goals but also understand when it becomes stressful. It is good to know that they treat you like a normal human being rather than working you to the bone. I can confidently say academics is not for everyone so you can always excel in many other things whether it is one subject, a few or something completely outside of the academic world. I am grateful that the teachers always encourage us even if you get the lowest mark, they still believe in your potential, which gives you a sense of hope.

The school's extra curriculums are really fun but only if you enjoy them. I am promising you, do not do an activity you do not enjoy if you just want a badge, it is not worth it. Rather do it because you have a passion for it or genuinely seems interesting, and who knows, you might excel in that one activity rather than struggling in multiple ones.

Finally, making friends. It has never been easy but once you find people you click with then your high school experience is not that bad. Just never fake being yourself to fit in, because if they really liked you then you would have not changed for them. I am really grateful for my friends and I do not know where I would be without them.

This is my experience at Ferdies, and maybe it could be yours too.

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Our Othello Theatre Trip

Kwame Matlawe

Our Othello trip was an experience that will stay with me for a long time. After spending months pouring over Shakespeare's words in the classroom —debating character motives, analysing themes and trying to grasp the full weight of the tragedy — finally watching it happen on stage felt like stepping into the heart of the play itself. The anticipation alone made the day feel special, but nothing could have prepared me for how powerful the live performance would be.

As the lights dimmed and the actors stepped into their roles, I found myself completely drawn in. It was no longer just a story we were studying for school — it was something much more real, something alive. Othello's torment, Iago's wickedness, Desdemona's grace — all the emotions we had only imagined came rushing to the surface. The actors' voices echoed with pain, anger and betrayal, and you could feel the tension in the theatre. I sat there, completely still, captivated by every movement, every pocket of silence, every dramatic twist. The way the production brought Shakespeare's language to life was nothing short of magical. The set design, the lighting, the costumes — it all came together in a way that made the 400-year-old play feel timeless.

But the day wasn't just about theatre and tragedy. One of the most exciting and memorable parts of the excursion was our stop at Rosebank Mall. After the emotional intensity of the performance, the shift in energy was refreshing. Rosebank was buzzing with life — colourful, loud and full of options. Whether it was hunting down the best milkshake, laughing over massive burgers or just walking through the shops with friends, that part of the day brought its own kind of joy. It gave us a chance to unwind, to talk about the play with fresh energy and to just be teenagers again after being swept into the world of Shakespeare.

What made the whole experience so special was the balance it offered — an enriching dive into literature and performance, paired with the light-hearted fun of hanging out in one of Joburg's most vibrant spots. The Othello excursion wasn't just another school outing. It was a moment where learning, friendship and culture came together to create a day that was as thought-provoking as it was enjoyable. I walked away with a deeper appreciation for Shakespeare, a stronger connection to my classmates and a memory I'll always look back on with a smile.

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Ferdies' Feral Food Drive

Laura van der Walt

The Ferdies Ferals is Ferdinand Postma's initiative to support and protect the feral cat population which has been given a home within our school grounds. They remain ever elusive to the student population, but can occasionally be spotted walking across roofs or napping beneath trees in quiet hours. Yet simply providing a safe home is not enough, the ferals must be fed as well.

To feed a group of 20 cats daily is a difficult and expensive task for the teachers who provide for the cats from their own savings. Due to this the Ferdies Feral Food Drive was held on the (add date) as the most recent in a line of charity event to provide for the cats.
The Food Drive sold many animal-themed paraphernalia including lanyards, keychains, enamel pins, socks, pens, stickers, calendars and even sweet treats such as brownies and fudge. Entry for a funko pop raffle was held, for which it seemed many aimed for the figurine of the dog from the Grinch film out of the Funko Pops. During the food drive quite a few generous souls were able to bring bags of cat food as donations.

All in all, the Ferdies Feral Food Drive ended in success with an overwhelming majority of stock sold and donations aplenty. For now, the cats will be remain fed thanks to the ongoing efforts of the Ferdies Ferals with kudos to the main teacher involved, Mrs Labuschagne, and all the students who spent their break helping to run the stall.

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Interact at PAWS

Tshepang Leokaoke

Visiting Paws is always a fun and exciting Interact excursion for Ferdies learners.

Giving back to animals that are in need is always a privilege that we are grateful for and will never take for granted. On the 27th of February we went to visit the animal shelter where we played with the animals; where some learners got over their fear of dogs; and the cats got the love that they deserved, which we could give only for that short amount of time. We brought dog and cat food along with blankets which were donated by some of the learners of the school. As we left Paws, hearts filled and spirits lifted, we knew our visit had sparked hope.

Every wagging tail and gentle purr reminded us of the love awaiting every home.

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Celebrating Philile Ziyane

I am Philile Ziyane - A pageant and modelling queen. I am the current title holder for Miss Face of Potchefstroom 2025 and the Public choice winner 2025. I am a part of the JannyDjan Models Academy in Potchefstroom. A young girl that advocate's for making the impossible possible, having done a lot of projects in 2025 that have left a positive impact in our community.

My journey does not end here, in fact it has only began.

**Philile matriculated from Ferdies in 2024*

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Ferdies Choir Shines at the Eisteddfod

Keletso Nyokong

On Monday, 29 July, Ferdies' choir performed exceptionally well at the Eisteddfod and scored an A+ grade for their exhibition. They performed so well that they even got officially invited to attend the provincial round, and that is richly deserved!

Our choir performed a beautiful montage of two Afrikaans songs, "Blouberg Strand" and "Victoria Baai" and ended with a heart-wrenching rendition of the African "Avulekile Amasango". Their harmonies, stage presence and passion really stood out.

We are thoroughly impressed with all the choir members for their work ethic, dedication and the way in which they represented our school with such grace and competence. Their angelic singing voices filled the atmosphere and left a lasting impression. Well done, Ferdies!

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Ferdies Movie Night: A Fiery Night with 'Playing With Fire'

Pearl Ndakana

The Ferdies Movie Night™ popped off like a firecracker (pun 100% intended), and let's just say… the vibes were IMMACULATE. The movie of the night? None other than "Playing with Fire" — the chaotic family comedy that had us all wheezing, face-palming, and yelling "bro, WHAT?" every 10 minutes.

Picture this: fairy lights strung like it's Pinterest-core, popcorn buckets overflowing and the squad piled on bean bags like a bunch of feral raccoons with snacks. Everyone showed up in their comfiest sets — think hoodie x blanket x fuzzy little pyjamas combo. Amazing, right?

Lights, Camera, Fire!

In case you missed the amazing evening, and know nothing about the movie, Playing with Fire stars John Cena as a tough-guy firefighter who ends up babysitting a trio of chaotic kids. It's basically The Pacifier meets Home Alone energy, and yes, there's a poop joke within the first 15 minutes. Classic cinema.

"Bro, Cena's face when the kid set off the fire hose — DEAD" Someone actually snorted soda through their nose. Worth it. "These kids are unhinged, I'd have just quit my job" Honestly, valid. They had more energy than a TikTok dance marathon.

Sue's Spaza had all the best snacks and delectable treats. From huge caramel doughnuts to refreshing fuzzy drinks.

The group sing-along during the chaotic bedtime scene (zero pitch, full volume).

A spontaneous debate about whether John Cena actually can be seen.

The emotional support plushie getting passed around during the heartfelt ending.

A tribute of gratitude to The Etos and Media Committees, for the amazing event! Can't wait to experience more fun and memorable moments next year!

Ferdies' Movie Night was a chaotic good time. Even if Playing with Fire might not win an Oscar anytime soon, it definitely won over our group chats! 10/10 would watch again, preferably with more snacks and fewer fire hose re-enactments.

Next week's lineup? TBD.

Until then, stay snack'd and stay cozy.

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Ferdies GOT Talent

Lumé Hartzenberg & Miné Bronkhorst

Ferdies se pols komitee het gesorg vir 'n onvergeetlike aand! Op 15 April het Hoërskool Ferdinand Postma se skoolsaal geborrel van talent en gegons van gees.

Die program was propvol opwindende optredes van sing en dans tot monoloë wat die gehoor sprakeloos gelaat het. Daar was nie net talent op die

verhoog nie, maar die gehoor het ons deur al die verskillende dekades geneem met hul kleurvolle en unieke uitrustings. Die beste kekleede leerder was die beeld van die 1980's, met haar neon hemp en groot boskaas.

Die aand het geopen op 'n hoë noot met engele stemme van die Villagers en Dinki Binkle sêr.

Ferdies het weereens bewys dat hulle nie net 'n akademiese gedrewe skool is nie, maar ook kultuur-sterk is. Die verhoog het 'n paar nuwe instrumente leer ken en die musikante het hul staal gewys.

Die laaste deel was defnitief die hoogtepunt van die aand. Die mengelmoes van komedie, onderwyssang en poppedans, dui op Ferdies se kultuur en houding. Almal wat braaf genoeg was om deel te neem het 'n kans gekry om hul talente vertoon en die kollig te deel.

As jy volgende jaar wil gaan vir 'n oudisie, maar dit voel asof die vrees jou wen, onthou net, almal is bang vir tandartse en die donker.

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Ferdinand Postma Matric Dance 2025: A Night To Remember

Hassaanah Sooliman & Gomolemo Malepe

The Ferdinand Postma Matric Dance of 2025 was a night full of style, joy and celebration. It took place at the stunning Lekwena Wildlife Estate and everything about the evening felt magical. From the moment the arrivals began, it was clear that this was going to be a night to remember.

The first thing that caught everyone's attention was the entrances. One by one, matrics arrived in the most beautiful and expensive cars. We saw Lamborghinis, Bentleys, BMWs, Mercedes etc; even some classic vintage cars. The engines roared, the lights shone bright and people couldn't stop watching. It was like something out of a movie. The entrances were truly amazing. As each car pulled up, the matrics stepped out with big smiles, waving at their friends and family. Music played in the background and people cheered loudly. Some matrics even arrived in boats, every arrival was special.

Now lets start with the girls because ladies first: The girls looked absolutely stunning and beautiful. They wore long majestic dresses in every colour you can think of — red, gold, blue, black and soft pink. Many of the dresses sparkled under the lights, some had diamonds and you could tell how much effort they had put into their hair and makeup. Each girl looked like a real life princess. The boys also looked sharp in their suits. Some wore classic black tuxedos, while others had bold colours or even wore custom suits. Many matched their ties or bow ties to their dates' dresses which added a nice touch. Everyone looked confident and proud.

This night was more than just pretty dresses and fast cars. It was a moment for the matrics to be celebrated. They had worked hard all year through tough exams, long nights of studying and all the ups and downs of school life. The class of 2025 truly earned this special evening. It was also a time for friends to laugh, take photos and make memories that will last forever. The atmosphere at Lekwena was peaceful and beautiful, with nature all around and the sky full of stars. It felt like the perfect place to say goodbye to their school years.

As the night went on, the dance floor came alive. Music played and everyone enjoyed themselves. There was a feeling of happiness, pride and hope for the future. The Ferdinand Postma 2025 Matric Dance wasn't just an event, it was a celebration of everything the matrics had achieved and everything they will become. A perfect ending to one chapter and the start of a new one.

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Ferdies Choir Shines at the Eisteddfod

Keletso Nyokong

On Monday, 29 July, Ferdies' choir performed exceptionally well at the Eisteddfod and scored an A+ grade for their exhibition. They performed so well that they even got officially invited to attend the provincial round, and that is richly deserved!

Our choir performed a beautiful montage of two Afrikaans songs, "Blouberg Strand" and "Victoria Baai" and ended with a heart-wrenching rendition of the African "Avulekile Amasango". Their harmonies, stage presence and passion really stood out.

We are thoroughly impressed with all the choir members for their work ethic, dedication and the way in which they represented our school with such grace and competence. Their angelic singing voices filled the atmosphere and left a lasting impression. Well done, Ferdies!

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Grade 9 Entrepreneurs Day

Nosipho Xhuma

"Great ideas don't live in textbooks, they live in people brave enough to bring them to life."_ These are the words that echoed in my mind as I walked around the school grounds on Entrepreneurs Day, hosted by the Grade 9s. The event was more than just a showcase — it was a celebration of creativity, resilience and determination.

The school grounds had been transformed into a buzzing marketplace filled with excitement. Bright posters decorated the stalls, each proudly presenting a unique business idea. Some of the stalls were named: *Buzz & Bites, Snap & Stitch, The Game Square, Jimmy Cooks* and many more. Some learners sold mouth-watering treats: cupcakes, doughnuts, chicken wraps and burgers. Others displayed handmade crafts, while a few introduced unique games.

What fascinated me most was the effort behind the stalls. Every table whispered its own story, while each product stood as a testament to the dedication, late night and careful planning poured into its creation.

The Grade 9s didn't only focus on selling; they also explained how they had budgeted, marketed and planned every detail when I asked some of the groups. Some admitted to facing challenges such as limited resources, group disagreements or the pressure of deadlines, yet they spoke proudly about how they overcame these obstacles. Their resilience showed that entrepreneurship is not about avoiding problems, but about solving them.

As I watched the Grade 9s present with such passion and confidence, I realised that entrepreneurship is about far more than making money.

It is about transforming imagination into reality, having the bravery to take risks and finding the strength to embrace failure as a stepping stone rather than an ending.

Moving from stall to stall, I was struck by how creativity, teamwork and resilience breathed life into each idea. The Grade 9s showed that success is not measured by profit alone, but by determination and vision.

Their boldness did more than capture my attention — it ignited something within me: a belief that even the smallest dream can grow into something powerful if I have the courage to pursue it.

In essence, the passion and confidence displayed by the Grade 9s on Entrepreneurs Day serve as a powerful reminder that even the smallest dream can flourish into something extraordinary when met with courage, dedication and self-belief.

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Unity in Diversity: Celebrating Heritage Day at Ferdies

Mychaela Mogaki

In a land filled with diversity, Heritage Day allows us to reflect on our cultural heritage which is shaped by our country's complex history, and to celebrate who we are and where we come from.

On this day, Ferdie learners went all out with traditional attire and food. Thanks to the dedication of the Culture Committee, our school proudly showcased a recreation of a traditional wedding as well as a Paris walk.

The wedding showcase captured the beauty of African traditions, reminding us of the importance of preserving and sharing these customs. The Paris walk added some flair, with learners confidently presenting their cultural fashion on the runway.

An additional highlight of the celebration were the food stalls: from amagwinya to koeksisters, learners and teachers had the chance to enjoy flavours that reflected the diversity of our nation.

In short, Heritage Day at Ferdies was not just a celebration, but also a chance to unite us as a school by embracing our roots and appreciating one another's traditions.

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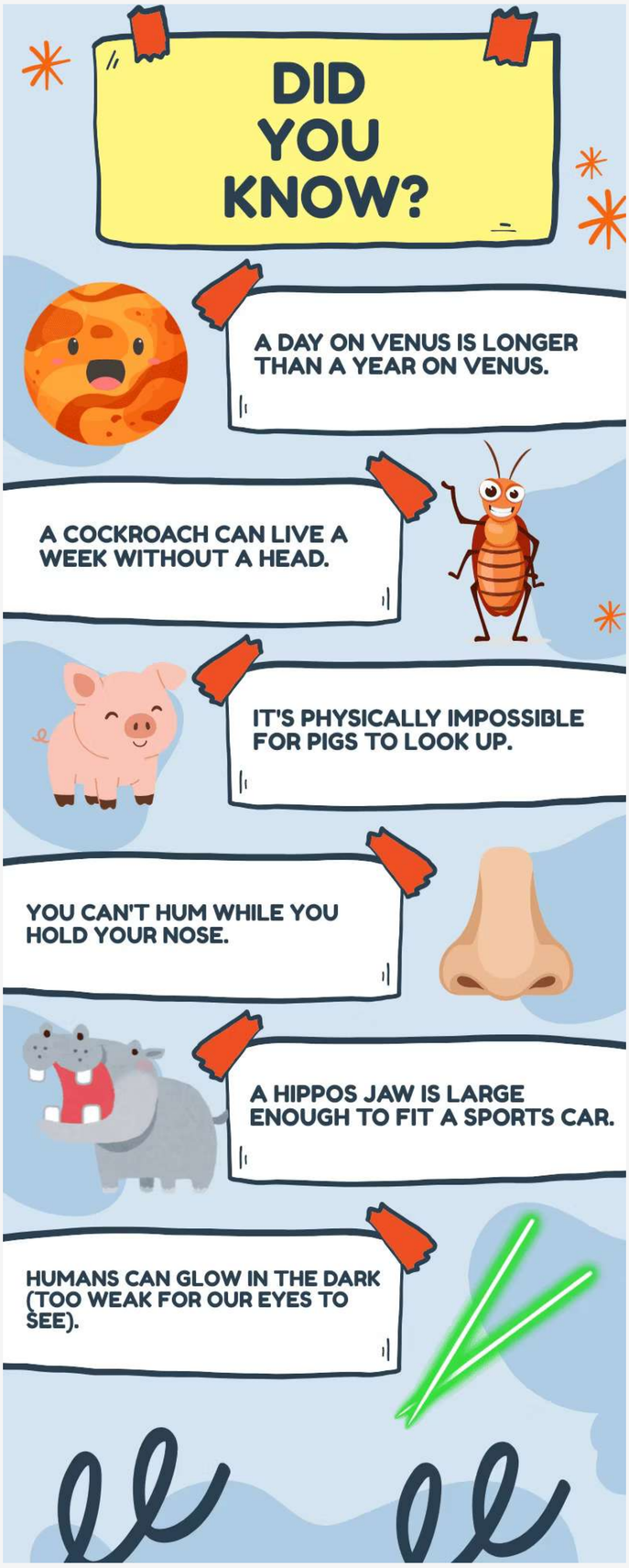
Did You Know?

Phenyo Mosenami



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Love Yourz

Nosipho Xhuma

In the beat of life's endless rhythm, there is a song that too many forget to hear — the melody of: *Love Yourz, by J. Cole.* It is not the loudest track on the playlist, yet it holds the deepest truth: *happiness is not found in chasing others' tune, but in embracing your own.*

The world may tempt you with glittering promises, persuasive voices and blinding spotlights but those shining moments often cast shadows of doubt and comparison. Contentment is not found in comparison. It is found in appreciation — for *there is beauty in the struggle and ugliness in the success.* Too often, our hearts grow restless whilst chasing the illusion of perfection crafted by others. Resulting in most swallowing a bitter lie in silence — that someone else's life is better than their own. *Cleaner. Fuller. Softer. Brighter.*
So we compare and ache.

And in that quiet aching we begin to abandon our own lives and stop seeing the sacred in what is ours. We end up forgetting the weight of the battles we have already survived.
To *"love yourz"* means accepting where you are. Even if it is not where you planned to be. Coherently, it means being able to find beauty in imperfections and realising that every life has its own battles, blessings and beauty!! Loving yourz is not a weakness — it's a bold chorus sung by those brave enough to stand in their own skin. It's finding rhythm in the struggle, harmony in the scars and power in simply being real.

There's no such thing as a life that's better than yours — only a life you haven't loved fully.

"Love Yourz" isn't a slogan or a caption under a selfie.

It is a rebellion.

It's saying: *I will not trade my truth for someone else's performance.* It is being able to look around at the mess in your life; the scars, the unfinished parts and choosing to have gratitude for what is. It also means having faith in what's yet to come and choosing to love your imperfect journey.

In essence, when the noise of envy and impatience rises — loving yourz is the steady reminder that will ground and lift your soul. View your story as one of a kind. A masterpiece unfolding note by note. The best life is not the one that looks good on the outside, it is rather the one that feels true to your heart.

There really is no such thing as a life that's better than yours.

*Love Yourz is the name of the song and thus the alternative spelling.

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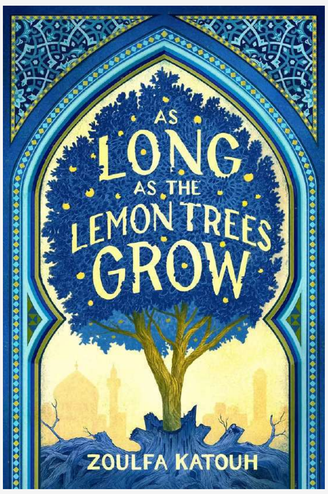
Book Reviews

Miné Bronkhorst & Khadijah Motara

AS LONG AS THE LEMON TREES GROW

★ ★ ★ ★ ★



By far the best and worst book I've ever read

This book was truly the saddest book I've ever read. Just starting the book's first few chapters already had me wishing to ball my eyes out, it was truly the most gut-wrenching and heartbreaking book I've every read. The descriptions about the conditions in Syria and the injuries sustained by the citizens (especially the children) were so descriptive and each word felt like a sword being plunged into my heart going deeper and deeper into each page and description.

What makes this so much worse is the fact that almost everything in this book was reality, it wasn't just some random book based of fiction, it was reality turned into fiction, a way to get a message across and a way to spread hope. This book focuses on the struggle of Syrians during the Assad regime, now while the Assad regime has fallen and some sanctions have been lifted, the country continues to face significant challenges. To me it's so difficult to fathom the fact that this is reality and that this happens to actual people. Just reading about it broke me so I can't fathom how those who actually lived these lives felt.

To start Salaama's trauma was truly something that shattered me, the things she saw while working at the hospital were unimaginable: mutated body parts everywhere, the smell of blood and sickness filling the air. She performed surgery with trembling hands, without proper tools, without anaesthesia to numb the pain and without clean water or medicine to help those in need and through it all, the suffering of the children broke me. The way their small bodies shook with fear and pain, losing their homes and families, being so small and expected to fend for themselves, their cries echoing in her mind showed just how deep the scars of war can run both on the body and on the soul.

This books highlights how death is the kindest thing shown to the citizens because of all that they have endured, imagine how horrible and disgusting the conditions they live in and the torture they live through for protesting or fighting for their culture and country is, that death comes across as "the kindest thing".

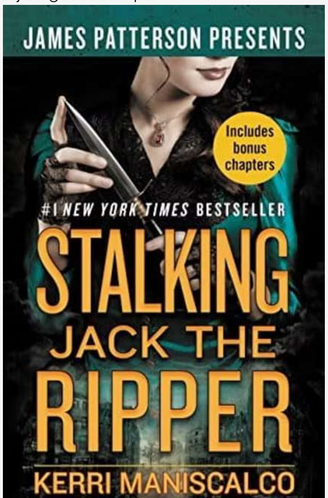
This book broke me in a way I feel it will stay with me forever, the writing was nothing but perfect. It captured the story of the Syrian Revolution so painfully perfectly, so firm and precise, and it was written in such a way that one's heart is bound to shift and break.Through this book you live what you have read: you live the experiences, the pain and the grief that these characters felt. You truly grasp the concept of what trauma is and how when it is mixed with grief it can break you, how it can shatter you and make your mind conjure up and create things as coping mechanisms. While the ending gave a small bit of hope and a kind of happily ever after, it still broke me because of everything that happened before it. The reality of that happiness felt fragile and bittersweet, a reminder that even when a story ends with hope the pain and the losses are still there.

In the end this story was not just something I read, it was something I felt deeply. I feel it will always linger in my heart and mind, always acting as a reminder of the strength of the human spirit and the devastating scars that trauma and loss can leave behind and imprint on a person.

Stalking Jack the Ripper by Kerri Maniscalco

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Is a gothic murder mystery that's bound to give you goosebumps.



It's set in 1888 London, during the time of the historical Jack the Ripper murderer. It follows the lead character and daughter of a lord, Audrey Rose Wadsworth. She's born into the life of wealth and privilege. Expected to attend dress fittings and host teas along with all the young women her age but Audrey Rose leads a debarred secret life. She goes against her father's wishes and societies expectations and studied forensic medicine under her uncle. Her work in forensic medicine pulls her into the mysterious investigation of the serial killer, Jack the Ripper. While reading you will not only follow along but you become Audrey: uncovering clues, performing autopsies and getting one step closer to solving the case. This book is filled with thrill, passion,

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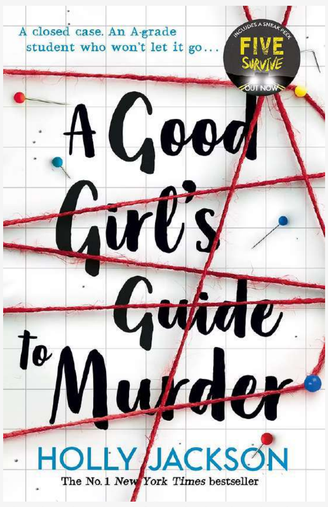
leaving you in the dark. It's truly a remarkable book and is most definitely worth 5 stars.

A GOOD GIRLS GUIDE TO MURDER - Holly Jackson

★ ★ ★ ★ ★



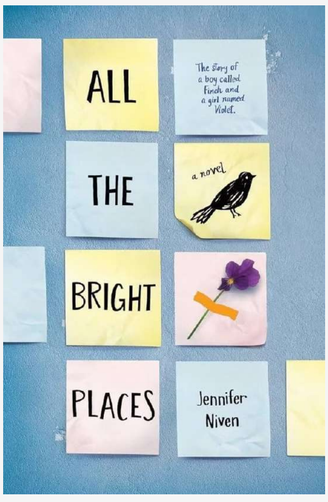
The whole of Fairview knows the tragedy. Five years ago a girl named Andie Bell was murdered by her highschool sweetheart and boyfriend, Sal Singh, who thereafter killed himself. Pip Fitzamobi (the protagonist) knew Sal when she was a kid, he was the kindest and most considerate person she knew, so him being a murderer? It didn't make sense, something wasn't adding up. For her senior capstone project she decided to investigate the "Andie Bell Case". Determined to prove Sal's innocence.

This book will send chills down your spine as you follow along as Pip adds suspects to her list and uncovers clues even the police couldn't. This was truly one of the best books I've ever read: the writing was incredible, leaving me absolutely dumbfounded, shocked and stunned once I uncovered what actually happened to Andie Bell.

This book was truly an emotional roller-coaster. The plot twists will fill you with relief, sadness, shock and intrigue. It was written by an incredible author and mastermind, Holly Jackson, and was without a doubt 5 starts

All The Bright Places - Jennifer Niven

★★★★★



This book is told from two perspectives: one from a teenage girl named Violet who lost her sister in a car accident and is struggling with grief, and another from a boy named Finch who is a bit of an oddball, but behind his mask of humour, struggles with depression. Together, they take on high school and grow a deeply intimate bond.

I loved this story, but I do deviate from the popular opinion. So lets cut this review into three parts: Finch, Violet, and their relationship.

Firstly, we have the anomaly of a character that is Finch. We all read about depression in our LO books, but with him, Niven cut into the core of what life looks like with the illness. Finch was a joyous character from Violet's perspective. He was adventurous and funny, and he kept her from that dark place. Even seeing glimpses of Finch's own thoughts, we thought of him as a joking philosopher. That was until we saw him counting days since he felt happy. Or pasted sticky notes around his room with fun facts and reasons to live. It served a meaningful perspective. As people, we see suicides as people giving up. This book changed that ideology completely. Every day that Finch woke up, he fought the dark corners in his minds, he kept himself occupied, and he tried everything to stay alive. In the end, even Violet was not enough to save Finch. He drowned, and in those last gulps of water, he found peace.

Secondly, Violet is a paler character who is struggling with grief. She had her strong relationship with her sister that bloomed out of a place of love, understanding, and sisterhood. It's why her death changed Violent from a popular party girl to a grief strucken loner. Whereas Violet and Finch's relationship started in shared pain. Violet was happy before her sister's death, she hadn't known sadness. So afterwards, she didn't believe that she could possibly live or be happy again. But Finch showed that there's light at the end of the tunnel. He made her feel joy when she couldn't dream about feeling anything other than sadness. So after Finch died, she didn't carry the hopelessness about never feeling happy again. He showed her that death is painful, but it can cultivate beautiful things. During their Wanderings, she realised that she did not want to be defined by the bad things that happened to her. Now she will live for her sister and for Finch.

They met on the ledge, he talked her off, yet still decided to take the jump. Their dynamic was raw, beautiful, and hopeful. Although a life was lost, for a time, there was a glimpse of a future with easy thoughts and a white picket fence built on love and understanding.

Although this book is not without flaws, it has a very powerful message and had me closing the book so I could dry my tears. Niven almost encourages the reader to try and understand minds, to see depth, and to save the lives of all the Finches out there. No matter how fine anyone looks, you don't know the demons they are fighting. Always remember to be kind.

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A Magical Night of Fairytales at Ferdies

Tshepang Leokaoke

Once upon a time, a group of students brought magic, laughter and a little chaos to the stage in a play: Sleeping Beauty & The Beast

The result? Pure entertainment! Imagine the Beast (Kwame) falling in love with Snow White (Minè)!

The show was filled with music, sparkly costumes and plenty of funny moments that had the audience laughing from start to finish.

From the sleeping beauty, or rather the sleeping family, to the Wicked Fairy (played by Shania Sheehan) and every interesting character, each learner embodied their characters: showcasing just how much potential, along with hard work, resulted in a passionate and wonderful work of art alongside Mrs Roux and Mrs Labascagne.

It was a night of magic, laughter and fairytale fun that left everyone smiling long after the final bow.

Culture weeks never fail to surprise us with how much talent we have in our school. We thank teachers like Mrs Roux & Mrs Labascagne, who go the extra mile for the learners and never fail to make them feel good about themselves and to do their best with their talent.

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Drama Takes Flight at Ferdies

Tshepang Leokaoke

The lights dimmed, the crowd hushed and Ferdies' stage came alive as The Culture Vultures Drama Club proudly presented Home to Roost. The production, turned the school hall into a world of secrets, sharp wit and surprising twists that had the audience hooked from the first line.

Filled with humour, tension and a touch of mystery, Home to Roost proved that the juniors know how to deliver a professional performance. From dramatic confrontations to perfectly timed comedic moments, every scene drew cheers and laughter from the crowd. The play's famous line, "Oh, 'snake in the grass' is too good for him!" became a school favourite by the end of the night.

The atmosphere was electric — applause echoed through the hall; parents, teachers and students all left impressed by the talent on display, reminding us of how much talent there is in our school. The juniors once again reminded everyone why Ferdinand Postma's drama department continues to soar to new heights.

With culture weeks' plays now officially wrapped, one thing's for sure: the audience can't wait to see what this talented troupe of young people will bring to the stage next!

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Afrikaanse Toneel Sukses

Amieke Farmer

Kyk uit, Hoërskool Ferdinand Postma het op 6 Augustus aan die ATKV-Tienertoneel deelgeneem. Die Bittersoet-produksie, geregisseur deur Juffrou Licolette Rossouw en Juffrou Marisa de Wet het 'n blink bronsseël verower. Die is verhaal geskryf deur Juffrou Ester Geldenhuis en dit voer ons na 1947 in Komatipoort waar aanvaarding, geheime en vergifnis soos spoke dans. Dit grawe diep in swye, met grafstene as stil getuies. Baie geluk, julle het ons skool se kultuur ń bittersoet blink oomblik gegee!

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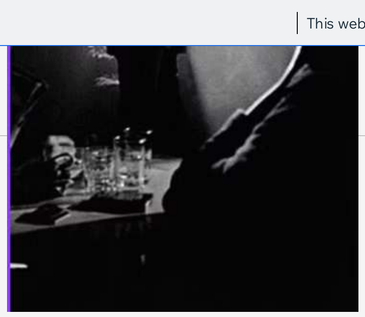

Noir

A MENTOS

HASSAANAH SOOLIMAN GR 11

I STOOD THERE, BLANKLY STARING. IT STARED BACK. MY TWO FINGERS CLUTCHED A MENTOS, THE TINY THING PULSING WITH A POWER IT SHOULDN'T HAVE. I PACED AROUND MY ROOM, EACH STEP FASTER THAN THE LAST, MY BREATH UNEVEN, MY MIND SCREAMING TOO MANY THINGS TO COMPREHEND. DROP IT. EAT IT. DROP IT. EAT IT. I COULDN'T DO EITHER. THE WALLS, TOO, WERE UNSURE OF THEIR PLACE—LEANING IN, TIGHTENING, WHISPERING THREATS, TRYING TO ENTRAP ME WITHIN. OR WAS THAT JUST IN MY HEAD? NO, IT HAD TO BE REAL. MY EARS WERE RINGING AGAIN. MY HEAD THROBBED, MY VISION BLURRED, EVERYTHING DID-BESIDES THE MENTOS. I REACHED FOR MY NAME SOMEWHERE IN THE MESS OF MY THOUGHTS, BUT IT SLIPPED THROUGH MY FINGERS LIKE DUST. IT WILL COME BACK. IT ALWAYS DOES.

THE MENTOS SAT IN MY PALM, SMALL, ROUND, PINK-OR MAYBE PURPLE. I COULDN'T REALLY REMEMBER. I HELD IT UP TO THE LIGHT, BRINGING IT CLOSE, CLOSER, INSPECTING IT. IT WASN'T PINK. IT WASN'T PURPLE. IT WASN'T FOOD. IT WAS TEN CALORIES. TEN.

I TRIED TO REASON WITH MYSELF. TEN CALORIES ISN'T MUCH, RIGHT? I COULD HAVE TWELVE SLICES OF CUCUMBER FOR THE SAME AMOUNT, AND THAT WOULD ACTUALLY FILL ME-AT LEAST ENOUGH TO LAST UNTIL TONIGHT. BUT THIS? THIS WAS JUST SUGAR. I HAVEN'T HAD SUGAR IN TWO WEEKS. THE THOUGHT MADE MY STOMACH TWIST, THOUGH I WASN'T SURE IF IT WAS HUNGER OR PANIC OR THE FEELING ACCOMPLISHMENT.

MY HAND TREMBLED, BUT I HELD THE MENTOS TIGHT. IF I LET GO, I'D LOSE. IF I ATE IT, I'D LOSE.

THE COLD CREPT UP MY SPINE, EVEN THOUGH I WAS WEARING TWO JERSEYS. NOT JUST COLD. FREEZING. IT WAS WORKING, THEN. MY BODY WAS BURNING ITSELF AWAY, AND WASN'T THAT THE POINT? THE SMALLER I GOT, THE LIGHTER I BECAME. I WAS SUPPOSED TO FEEL PROUD. BUT WHY DID IT FEEL LIKE I WAS DISAPPEARING?

I STARED AT THE MENTOS AGAIN.

IT WAS MY FAVOURITE ONCE, THOUGH I COULDN'T REMEMBER HOW IT TASTED. SWEET? WOULD IT MAKE MY TONGUE TINGLE LIKE BEFORE? OR WOULD IT TASTE LIKE GUILT, LIKE FAILURE?

JUST EAT IT. JUST PROVE YOU CAN DO IT.

I RAISED IT TO MY LIPS, FINGERS UNSTEADY. MY HEARTBEAT POUNDED IN MY EARS, DROWNING OUT EVERY THOUGHT EXCEPT ONE:

WHAT IF THIS TINY, HARMLESS MENTOS IS THE THING THAT BREAKS ME?

I LET IT HOVER THERE, THE SCENT OF ARTIFICIAL FRUIT BURNING IN MY NOSE. MY JAW CLENCHED. MY STOMACH FLIPPED. MY EYES STILL.

I LET IT FALL.

A SMALL, HOLLOW SOUND AS IT HIT THE WOODEN FLOOR, FINDING A SPACE NEXT TO THE LONG MIRROR. I STARED AT IT, MY BODY SUDDENLY TOO WEAK, TOO EMPTY, TOO TIRED. I WANTED TO CRY. I WANTED TO SCREAM. I WANTED TO PICK IT UP AND EAT IT.

I HAD MANY FEARS IN THE BIG WORLD, BUT RIGHT NOW? MY BIGGEST FEAR, AT THIS MOMENT LAID IN MY ROOM, IN MY HEAD, AND IT LAID IN THE REFLECTION IN MY MIRROR.

I STEPPED OVER IT, CRAWLED INTO BED, AND CURLED UP BENEATH THE WEIGHT OF MY OWN FEAR.

REJECTION

CHIDI OKECHUKWU GR 11

"REJECTION DOESN'T MEAN YOU AREN'T GOOD ENOUGH IT MEANS THE OTHER PERSON FAILED TO NOTICE WHAT YOU HAVE TO OFFER" - MARK AMEND.

REJECTION IS A STORM THAT LEAVES NO VISIBLE SCARS BUT RESHAPES THE HEART. IT'S THE FEAR THAT REMAINS IN EVERY UNSPOKEN CONFESSION, EVERY UNANSWERED TEXT, EVERY MOMENT WE HOLD BACK BECAUSE WE'RE AFRAID OF BEING TOLD 'NO.' FOR ME, REJECTION ISN'T JUST A WORD, IT'S A MIRROR REFLECTING EVERY INSECURITY I'VE EVER HAD. IT'S THE VOICE THAT WHISPERS, YOU'RE NOT GOOD ENOUGH. AND THE SHADOW THAT FOLLOWS ME, EVEN ON THE BRIGHTEST DAYS.

I REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME I TOLD SOMEONE I LOVED THEM. IT WAS IN A TEXT, BECAUSE I WAS TOO AFRAID TO SAY IT TO HER IN PERSON . THE SECONDS AFTER I PRESSED SEND FELT LIKE HOURS AND WHEN HER REPLY FINALLY CAME, IT WAS A SINGLE WORD, 'NO.' THAT WORD ECHOED IN MY MIND, LOUDER THAN ANY SCREAM, AND SUDDENLY I GOT REJECTED. IT WASN'T JUST ABOUT HER. IT WAS ABOUT ME. HER 'NO' BECAME A MIRROR, REFLECTING EVERY INSECURITY I'D EVER BURIED. WAS I NOT HANDSOME ENOUGH? NOT SMART ENOUGH? OR WAS I JUST NOT ENOUGH? THE TRUTH IS, HER REJECTION WASN'T THE FIRST. IT WAS JUST THE ONE THAT HURT THE MOST. I'D FELT THIS PAIN BEFORE, WHEN I WASN'T PICKED FOR THE TEAM, WHEN MY MESSAGES WERE LEFT ON READ, WHEN MY FRIENDS SLOWLY DRIFTED AWAY. EACH REJECTION LEFT A SCAR, A REMINDER THAT I WASN'T GOOD ENOUGH. AND NOW, STANDING IN THE SHADOW OF HER 'NO,' I FELT THEM ALL AT ONCE, A TON OF VOICES TELLING ME I'D NEVER BELONG. IT WASN'T JUST ABOUT LOVE, IT WAS ABOUT ME. WHO AM I IF NO ONE WANTS ME? WHO AM I IF I DON'T EVEN WANT MYSELF?

REJECTION IS LIKE A SHADOW, IT FOLLOWS YOU EVERYWHERE, EVEN ON THE BRIGHTEST DAYS. IT'S THE DARK SHAPE THAT REMAINS WHEN YOU'RE TRYING TO STEP INTO THE LIGHT, A CONSTANT REMINDER OF WHAT COULD GO WRONG. BUT SHADOWS ONLY EXIST BECAUSE THERE'S LIGHT SOMEWHERE. AND MAYBE THAT LIGHT IS WORTH CHASING, EVEN IF IT MEANS FACING THE DARKNESS.

THERE'S AN UPSIDE TO REJECTION, THOUGH IT'S HARD TO SEE IN THE MOMENT. REJECTION PUSHED ME TO EXPLORE OTHER OPPORTUNITIES, AND I ENDED UP DISCOVERING A PASSION I NEVER KNEW I HAD. SOMETIMES, REJECTION ISN'T A CLOSED DOOR, IT'S A REDIRECTION. AND AFTER MY FIRST BREAKUP, I SPENT MONTHS QUESTIONING MY WORTH. BUT OVER TIME, I REALISED THAT HER REJECTION DIDN'T DEFINE ME. IT TAUGHT ME TO VALUE MYSELF, NOT FOR WHO I WAS TO HER, BUT FOR WHO I AM TO MYSELF.

SO THE NEXT TIME REJECTION CASTS ITS SHADOW, I'LL TRY TO REMEMBER THAT SHADOWS CAN'T EXIST WITHOUT LIGHT. THAT LIGHT MIGHT BE HOPE, RESILIENCE, OR THE STRENGTH OF KNOWING I'M ENOUGH, NOT BECAUSE SOMEONE ELSE SAYS SO, BUT BECAUSE I'VE LEARNED TO SAY IT TO MYSELF. REJECTION ISN'T THE END, IT'S THE BEGINNING OF SOMETHING NEW.

DEATH

LATORIAN MORA GR 10

IMAGINE DEATH STANDING RIGHT BESIDE YOU

UNINVITED, YET ALWAYS WITHIN VIEW

THE THOUGHT OF IT'S PRESENCE , A CREEPY FEAR

A KNOCK ON THE DOOR , WITH NO WARNING AHEAD

NOT KNOWING WHEN OR WHERE IT WILL COME

FILLS MY HEART WITH FEAR , MY SOUL WITH SPEAR

ESPECIALLY NOT KNOWING WHEN I'LL BREATHE MY LAST BREATH

LEAVES ME EVEN MORE STRESSED AND SHAKEN

DEATH IS ELUSIVE, TAKING WHOM IT PLEASES

LEAVING LOVED ONES WITH SORROW AND UNEASE

IT IS MY GREATEST FEAR , A CONSTANT CONCERN

A FEAR OF LEAVING THIS WORLD, WITH DREAMS UNFULFILLED, AND LOVED ONES TO MOURN

THE THOUGHT OF LAYING LIFELESS WITH A CLUE

ABOUT THE AFTERLIFE, OR WHAT'S TO COME , IS TERRIFYING

OH , DEATH YOU FASCINATE YET TERRIFY ME

A SCARY CONCEPT THAT IS ALWAYS APART OF ME

BUT STILL I'LL CHERISH EVERY MOMENT ON EARTH

WITH LOVED ONES DEAR AND MEMORIES SO RARE

EVEN THOUGH DEATHS LOOMS NEAR , I'LL FACE IT WITH MIGHT

AND LIVE EACH DAY FULLY IN THE LIGHT OF LIFE

DEATH INDEED MY GREATEST FEAR

OH HOW SCARED YOU MAKE ME FEEL

FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN

MOLEMO MASILELA GR 11

WE ALL HAVE A FEAR THAT LURKS IN THE DEPTHS OF OUR MINDS, A FEAR THAT IS BOTH PRIMAL AND UNIVERSAL WHICH IS THE FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN. FOR ME, THIS IS A FEAR THAT OFTEN MANIFESTS AS A NAGGING SENSE OF UNCERTAINTY, A FEELING THAT I'M STANDING ON SHAKY GROUND, UNSURE OF WHAT LIES AHEAD AND WHAT WE ARE TO EXPERIENCE IN FUTURE.

THIS IS A FEAR THAT IS ROOTED IN OUR DESIRE FOR CONTROL, CERTAINTY, AND PREDICTABILITY. WHEN WE'RE FACED WITH AN UNKNOWN SITUATION OR OUTCOME, OUR MINDS AUTOMATICALLY THINK UP WORST-CASE SCENARIOS, WHICH TRIGGERS A FIGHT-OR-FLIGHT RESPONSE. THIS RESPONSE IS DESIGNED TO PROTECT US, BUT IT ALSO SUSTAINS THE CYCLE OF THOSE FEELINGS OF FEAR AND ANXIETY.

HOWEVER, I'VE COME TO REALIZE THAT THIS FEAR IS NOT UNCONQUERABLE. BY EMBRACING THE UNKNOWN AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH AND LEARNING, RATHER THAN A THREAT TO OUR SURVIVAL, WE CAN BEGIN TO BREAK FREE FROM THE CYCLE OF FEAR AND ANXIETY. THROUGH MINDFULNESS, SELF-COMPASSION, AND PROBLEM-FOCUSED THINKING, WE CAN ALL LEARN TO NAVIGATE THE UNKNOWN WITH GREATER CONFIDENCE AND CLARITY.

ULTIMATELY, THE FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN IS A FUNDAMENTAL ASPECT OF THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE. BUT BY ACKNOWLEDGING AND CONFRONTING THIS FEAR, WE CAN OVERCOME IT AND LIVE MORE FULFILLING , MEANINGFUL AND HAPPY LIFE.

AUTOPHOBIA

CLAUDWIN JONES GR 10

ONE MAN FEELING ISOLATED AND VULNERABLE. HE FOUND HIMSELF TRULY ALONE, WITH NO FAMILY TO COMFORT HIM NO FRIEND TO CHEER HIM UP OR TO LEAN ON. THE WORLD FELT COLD AND TWISTED IN ITS MARCH FORWARD WHILE HE REMAINED TRAPPED IN HIS THOUGHTS.

WITH EVERY PASSING MOMENT HE WONDERED IF ANYONE WOULD LIFT THE WEIGHT OF HIS SOLITUDE AND BOREDOM. HE LONGED FOR SOMEONE TO LEAN ON, SOMEONE TO LAUGH WITH, SOMEONE TO LISTEN AS HE VENTED HIS BOTTLED UP EMOTIONS. THERE WAS NO ONE. NO REASSURING VOICE ON THE OTHER END OF THE PHONE CALL. EVERYONE HE CHERISHED WAS GONE. THE ABSENCE OF A PARTNER GNAWED AT HIM. THE DREAMS HE ONCE HAD OF LOVE, MARRIAGE AND CHILDREN FADED.

ALL HE HAD WAS HIMSELF AND HIS THOUGHTS, BATTLING AGAINST A WORLD OF SILENCE THAT MOVED ON WITHOUT HIM

FEAR

SOMEONE ONLY FEW KNOW GR 12

MY GREATEST FEAR BECAME A REALITY.

THAT OVERWHELMING INDULGING FEELING

OF HOPELESSNESS, LOSS OF MENTALITY.

THE GAP, WIDENING

IT TEARS APART

WHATS MEANT TO BE

ITS AGAINST EVERY PART

IN ME

FROM ONE TO TWO

I FEEL THE PAIN

AS IF IT WAS I

YOU CAN'T PLAY ON BROKEN STRINGS

IT'S LIKE EVERYTHING

IS FALLING

APART

THREAD BY THREAD

PIECE BY PIECE

SEPARATION

CLAUSTROPHOBIA

EDLYNNE SLAMBERT GR 11

MY SILENT HOME

THE WALLS DRAW NEAR, THE AIR GROWS THICK.

THE MORE I TRY TO PUSH THESE WALLS AWAY FOR ME, THE MORE THEY MOVE CLOSER.

I TRY TO SCREAM, BUT EVERY BREATH I TAKE, MAKES THESE WALLS CREEP IN EVEN MORE.

I REACH FOR SPACE, BUT THERE IS NONE AT ALL.

I LONG FOR FREEDOM, BUT IN THIS SPACE, I'M TRAPPED.

AWAKE

ILDE GRICIUS GR 8

WEDNESDAY MORNING FEELING WRETCHED, AGAIN. NOTHING DIFFERENT, ALL THE SAME. “MOM! HAVE YOU SEEN MY BLUE SWEATER?” “DIDN’T YOU LEAVE IT ON THE DRYER?” SHE YELLED FROM THE KITCHEN. IZZIE CAME STORMING DOWN THE STAIRS, HALF DRESSED AND NO BACKPACK IN HAND. THE BLUE SWEATER WAS INDEED LEFT ON THE DRYER, BUT SHE WOULDN’T THANK HER MOM, WHY BOTHER? SHE’D ANYWAY BE TOO BUSY CAUGHT UP IN HER OWN HEAD.

LOUISE DROPPED HER DAUGHTER OF OUTSIDE THE GATE OF RIVER CREEK HIGH SCHOOL. “ENJOY YOUR DAY!” IZZIE CONTINUED FORWARD, NOT A GLANCE BACK. FIRST PERIOD WAS MATHS, LUCKY ME, SHE THOUGHT. THE NEXT PERIOD WAS ENGLISH, NATURAL SCIENCES AND SO ON. THE DAY LUCKILY FLEW BY AND SOON HER MOM’S RED HONDA PARKED AT THE GATE. NOT A WORD ON THE WAY HOME, JUST THE RANDOM LADY ON THE RADIO TALKING ABOUT SOME BORING FACIAL CREAM.

SHE WENT STRAIGHT TO HER BEDROOM, SHUT THE DOOR AND ONLY CAME DOWN WHEN DINNER WAS READY AND STEAMING HOT. SHE LAZILY CHOMPED THE PASTA DOWN, WILLING EVERY BITE TO BE THE LAST. AFTER PUTTING AWAY THE DISHES, SHE BRUSHED HER TEETH, SLIPPED INTO COMFY PJ’S AND SWITCHED OF THE LIGHT. SHUTTING HER HEAVY EYELIDS, HAPPY TO TAKE A BREAK FROM THE WORLD AND DISAPPEAR FOR A FEW HOURS.

IZZIE’S ALARM RANG AT 06:30 AM, LIKE EVERY MORNING. SHE RELUCTANTLY GOT OUT OF BED, NOT WANTING TO REPEAT YESTERDAY. SHE SLOWLY GOT DRESSED, WONDERING WHY SHE DIDN’T HEAR HER MOM. SHE’S USUALLY UP AT AROUND 05:15, GOODNESS KNOWS HOW. SHE HURRIED DOWN STAIRS; “MOM...MOM!?” NOTHING. SHE WASN’T IN HER BEDROOM, BATHROOM OR THE KITCHEN. WELL THAT’S WEIRD. SHE WENT NEXT DOOR’S, MAYBE MISSES DIKINS WILL KNOW WHERE HER MOM IS. SHE KNOCKED, NO ANSWER, SLOWLY OPENING THE DOOR TO A HOUSE OF SILENCE. WHAT WAS GOING ON?

NOW SHE STARTED TO PANIC. MISSES DIKINS NEVER LEFT HER HOME, AND I MEAN NEVER. BANGING ON EVERY DOOR, THERE WAS NOT A SINGLE PERSON IN SIGHT. IZZIE THOUGHT SHE MUST BE DREAMING, BUT A HARD, STUPID SLAP ACROSS HER FACE WRAPPED UP THAT LOGIC. SHE LEFT THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD ONLY TO WALK INTO A DESERT WORLD. ALL THE HOUSES CRUMBLED INTO SAND PARTICLES. SHE WAS ALONE. SUDDENLY HER HANDS STARTED SHAKING, TEARS FILLING HER EYES BLURRING HER VISION. HER KNEES HIT THE GROUND AS SHE LOST ALL CONTROL. POUNDING ON THE GROUND SCREAMING IN TERROR, SHE WAS ONLY SIXTEEN, THIS CAN'T BE IT.

OUT OF THE BLUE A TONGUE HIT HER ACROSS HER FACE, GLUING HER CURLY HAIR BACK. FREAKED OUT SHE BACKED UP, ONLY TO SEE A DARK BLUE CREATURE STARING WITH GOOGLY EYES UP AT HER. INSTEAD OF CALMING HER DOWN, THE CREATURE ONLY SCARED HER MORE. ON ALL SIX LIMBS IT CRAWLED CLOSER, WITH AMUSEMENT IN ITS EYES. SHE DIDN'T SCREAM SHE ONLY FROZE WHEN SHE REALIZED SHE WAS IN A DESERT WORLD, WITH NOBODY AROUND, JUST A GOOGLY-EYED, SIX LEGGED, BLUE-DOTTED CREATURE AS THE ONLY OTHER BEING. AS SHE STOOD UP SHE TRIPPED, STRIKING THE GROUND HARD, PAIN SHOOTING THROUGH HER SPINE. "DEFINITELY NOT A DREAM…"

SURROUNDED BY “NORMAL”

EUNICE CRONJE GR 10

FEAR IS SOMETHING THAT SHAPES THE WAY WE MOVE THROUGH LIFE. IT INFLUENCES OUR DECISIONS, LIMITS OUR EXPERIENCES, AND SOMETIMES MAKES US QUESTION OURSELVES. BUT WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A FEAR IS NOT SOMETHING EXTERNAL, LIKE HEIGHTS OR THE DARK, BUT SOMETHING DEEPLY PERSONAL? WHAT IF THE FEAR IS ABOUT NOT BEING ABLE TO MEET EXPECTATIONS THAT SEEM NATURAL TO EVERYONE ELSE?

ONE OF MY BIGGEST FEARS IS INTIMACY. THE IDEA OF BEING IN A SITUATION WHERE PHYSICAL CLOSENESS IS EXPECTED MAKES ME DEEPLY UNCOMFORTABLE. I DO NOT KNOW HOW I WOULD REACT, AND THAT UNCERTAINTY TERRIFIES ME. WILL I FREEZE? WILL I FEEL NOTHING AT ALL? OR WORSE—WILL I FEEL LIKE I AM FAILING AT SOMETHING THAT IS SUPPOSED TO BE NATURAL? THESE QUESTIONS FOLLOW ME, MAKING ME DOUBT WHETHER I CAN EVER HAVE THE KIND OF RELATIONSHIP THAT SOCIETY CONSIDERS NORMAL.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE IN A RELATIONSHIP IF INTIMACY IS SOMETHING THAT CAUSES ANXIETY INSTEAD OF EXCITEMENT? LOVE, AS IT IS OFTEN PORTRAYED, COMES WITH AN EXPECTATION OF PHYSICAL CLOSENESS. PEOPLE TALK ABOUT IT AS IF IT IS AN INSTINCT, SOMETHING THAT HAPPENS EFFORTLESSLY. BUT FOR ME, IT IS THE OPPOSITE. INSTEAD OF COMFORT, THE THOUGHT OF INTIMACY BRINGS UNEASE. IT MAKES ME FEEL EXPOSED, VULNERABLE, AND DIFFERENT.

THE FEAR OF BEING DIFFERENT IS PERHAPS THE HARDEST PART. WHEN SOMETHING IS SEEN AS A UNIVERSAL EXPERIENCE, NOT RELATING TO IT FEELS ISOLATING. AM I BROKEN? WILL I EVER CHANGE? OR WILL I ALWAYS FEEL LIKE AN OUTSIDER, WATCHING OTHERS FIND CONNECTION IN A WAY THAT I CANNOT? IT IS EXHAUSTING TO QUESTION WHETHER I WILL EVER FIT INTO WHAT THE WORLD SEES AS A “NORMAL” RELATIONSHIP.

BUT THE MORE I REFLECT ON THIS FEAR, THE MORE I REALIZE THAT THERE IS NO SINGLE DEFINITION OF A NORMAL RELATIONSHIP. SOCIETY MAY HAVE ITS EXPECTATIONS, BUT REAL CONNECTIONS ARE NOT ABOUT MEETING A CHECKLIST. THEY ARE ABOUT UNDERSTANDING, TRUST, AND RESPECT. MAYBE MY FEAR WILL ALWAYS BE THERE, BUT THAT DOES NOT MEAN I AM INCAPABLE OF LOVE.

IT JUST MEANS I NEED TO FIND RELATIONSHIPS THAT MAKE ME FEEL SAFE, WHERE I AM ACCEPTED AS I AM, WITHOUT PRESSURE OR EXPECTATION.

FEAR CAN BE OVERWHELMING, BUT IT DOES NOT HAVE TO DEFINE MY FUTURE. PERHAPS THE REAL CHALLENGE IS NOT OVERCOMING MY FEAR OF INTIMACY BUT LEARNING TO ACCEPT THAT MY VERSION OF LOVE DOES NOT HAVE TO LOOK LIKE EVERYONE ELSE'S.

BEYOND MY SMILE

ANONYMOUS GR 10

WALKING IN THE CORRIDORS EVERY DAY IS A STRUGGLE. "DO I LOOK FAT? DID THEY NOTICE MY STRETCH MARKS? ARE MY EYE BAGS DARK?" THESE THOUGHTS CONSTANTLY BATTER ME AS I TRY TO GO ABOUT MY DAILY LIFE. I KNOW THAT NOT EVERYONE IS STARING AT ME, AND THAT NOT EVERYONE NOTICES MY INSECURITIES, BUT I CAN'T HELP BUT FEEL SELF-CONSCIOUS. WHEN SOMEONE LOOKS AT MY LEGS OR LOOKS AT MY TEETH WHEN I SMILE, I GET EMBARRASSED. MY GREATEST FEAR IS THAT SOMEONE WILL SEE BEYOND MY SMILE AND THAT THEY WILL SEE ME AS I SEE MYSELF.

THE VOICES IN THE WALLS ARE MY BIGGEST FEAR

HASSAANAH SOOLIMAN GR 11

I LIVE IN A HOUSE, A HOUSE OF PAIN. EVERY BRICK, CEMENTED ON TEARS, TALENT, AND THE POTENTIAL WE EACH HAD WITHIN BUT WAS SNATCHED AWAY. AND NOW, IT LIES WITHIN THE WALLS, HAUNTING US IN THE SHADOWS AND EVER PRESENT IN EVERYTHING WE DO. IT WATCHES EACH ONE OF US, ALL DESTINED FOR GREAT THINGS YET DOOMED TO NEVER ACHIEVE ANYTHING WE EVER WANTED. BUT WE'LL GET CLOSE, AND I MEAN REALLY CLOSE BY PUTTING EVERY TEAR AND DROP OF BLOOD WE HAVE IN, ONLY FOR THE SHADOWS OF OUR FATE TO SNATCH IT AWAY, LEAVING US BEHIND.

IF IT WAS GOING TO TAKE MY FUTURE, MY DREAMS, AND MY LIFE AWAY, COULDN'T IT AT LEAST TAKE ME WITH? AND NOW I SIT HERE, THE WALLS OF PAIN CAVING IN ON ME, YET FEELING SO EVER DISTANT THAT THEY AREN'T EVEN THERE TO PROTECT ME, HIDE ME, SHELTER ME FROM THE EMBARRASSMENT OF MY EMPTY POTENTIAL AND MY DREAM BEING LIVED BY SOMEONE ELSE. I WONDER IF THEY AT LEAST CRIED AS MUCH AS I DID FOR IT, IF IT TOO GOT THEM BANGING THEIR HEAD AGAINST THE WALLS OF PAIN, BEGGING FOR THEM TO GIVE MY DREAMS BACK, OR TO AT LEAST GIVE ME THE SPARK OF MY POTENTIAL BACK. EVEN JUST A LITTLE BIT, JUST A LITTLE HELP BEFORE I DROWN IN MY OWN TEARS.

BUT THE WALLS DON'T LISTEN. THEY NEVER DO. THEY JUST STAND THERE, TOWERING, SUFFOCATING, WATCHING AS I SUFFOCATE IN THE WEIGHT OF WHAT I COULD HAVE BEEN. THE AIR IS FILLED WITH WHISPERS MOCKING ME, FILLED WITH ALL THE VERSIONS OF ME THAT SHOULD HAVE EXISTED BUT NEVER WILL. THEY LAUGH, AND THEY REMIND ME THAT NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRY, I WILL ALWAYS BE STANDING ON THE EDGE OF GREATNESS, I WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO BE THE GREATNESS

AND THAT'S THE PART THAT SCARES ME THE MOST. NOT FAILURE. NOT REJECTION. NOT EVEN PAIN. BUT THE IDEA THAT I WILL FOREVER BE NOTHING MORE THAN 'ALMOST' . THAT MY DREAMS WILL ALWAYS BE INCHES FROM MY GRASP, SLIPPING THROUGH MY FINGERS LIKE SAND, LEAVING BEHIND NOTHING BUT REGRET AND THE KNOWLEDGE THAT I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE MORE.

I CLAW AT THE WALLS, DESPERATE, FURIOUS. I ASK IT TO GIVE IT BACK TO ME. I WHISPER PLEADS, MY VOICE BECOMING ONE WITH THE ECHOES OF ALL THE OTHERS BEFORE ME.

BUT THE WALLS DO NOT BREAK. THE HOUSE DOES NOT FALL. AND I REALISE, WITH A SINKING HORROR, THAT MAYBE IT NEVER WILL. MAYBE I WAS NEVER MEANT TO ESCAPE. MAYBE I WAS ALWAYS MEANT TO BECOME A PART OF IT- JUST ANOTHER LOST VOICE IN THE WALLS.

MY GREATEST FEAR

MRS C. ROUX - EDUCATOR

WHEN THE SUN SETS DEEP AND MY JAW DRAWS TIGHT

WHEN THE THOUGHTS COME THRASHING

- JUST THEN. (AS ALWAYS.)

HOW DO I FIGHT?

WHEN A SINGLE THOUGHT IS TOO MUCH TO BEAR

THERE IS ALSO THE ECHO OF THE WHISPERS THAT I CAN'T REALLY HEAR...

THERE IS THE JOLTING, THE IRRATIONAL, THE PARALYSING

FEAR

NO MATTER WHAT I (YOU) DO -

YOU (I)

MIGHT

NOT

BE

HERE.

THERE'S NO RHYME, NO REASON, NO EARTHLY ESCAPE

DEATHLY, THE GRIP ON THE PSYCHE WITHOUT SHAPE

DRIED VOICES THAT WHISPER TOGETHER, SAID ELIOT, MY GUY.

HE SAID (ALSO I)

MY CELLAR IS DRY

SO LIKE RATS WE WALK ON OUR PIECES OF GLASS

SOFT AND SOUNDLESS

UNTIL WE WHISPER

I DIE.

~ WITH ACKNOWLEGMENT TO THE GREATEST POET OF ALL TIMES. T.S. ELIOT

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My Greatest Fear

March Artistique Photography

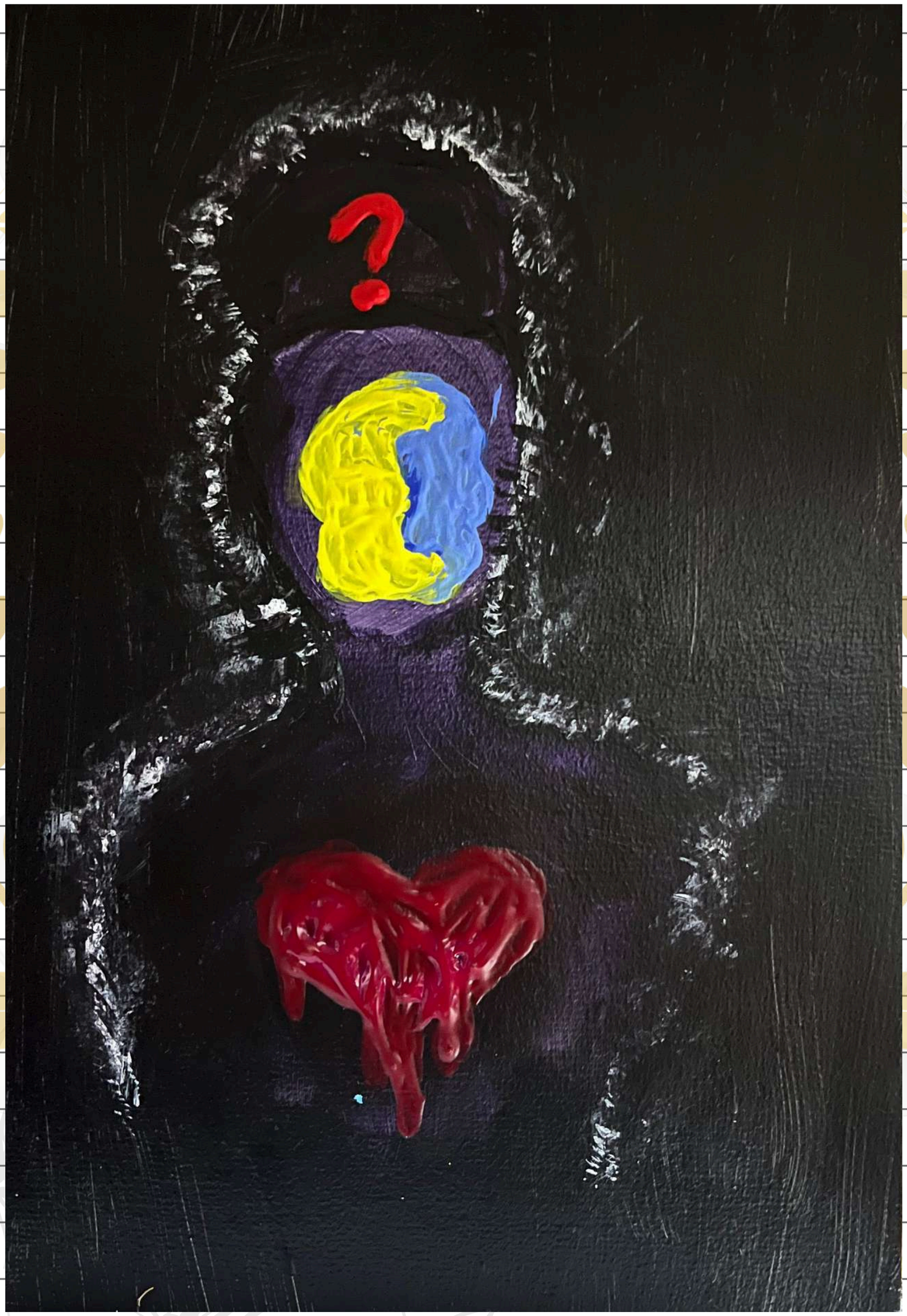
Spiders

Ilde Gricius
Grade 8

Forced Expression

Nico van der Merwe
Grade 10

LIRA OLIVER GR 8



SELF-LOATHING

ILDE GRICIUS GR 8

"I'M NOT GOOD ENOUGH…"

IMAGINE THAT RUNNING THROUGH YOUR HEAD A DOZEN TIMES

JUST PRETENDING TO SMILE LIKE THE STREET MIMES

LOOKING IN THE MIRROR WISHING THE IMAGE WOULD DISAPPEAR

HOLDING BACK THE COMING TEAR

A FEAR OF WALKING OUT THE DOOR

AFRAID EVERYONE WILL JUDGE ME EVEN MORE

THE CONFIDENCE SLIPPED AWAY

NO MORE COME IT MAY

EVERYONE ELSE HAS A TALENT OR LITTLE QUIRKS

SELF-DOUBT; IN THE BACK OF MY MIND IT LURKS

CAN'T TAKE A MOMENT TO TALK ABOUT MYSELF

MY BODY BREAKING DOWN ITSELF

HOW TO FIX IT, WHERE TO START?

WILL I EVER FIND IT DEEP DOWN IN MY HEART?

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS SELF-LOVE?

FORGETTING THE FAKING-HAPPY GLOVE

MAYBE THE MIRROR ISN'T A THING OF FEAR

BUT RATHER SOMETHING TO BRING SOME CHEER

A LITTLE SELF-CONFIDENCE GOES A LONG WAY

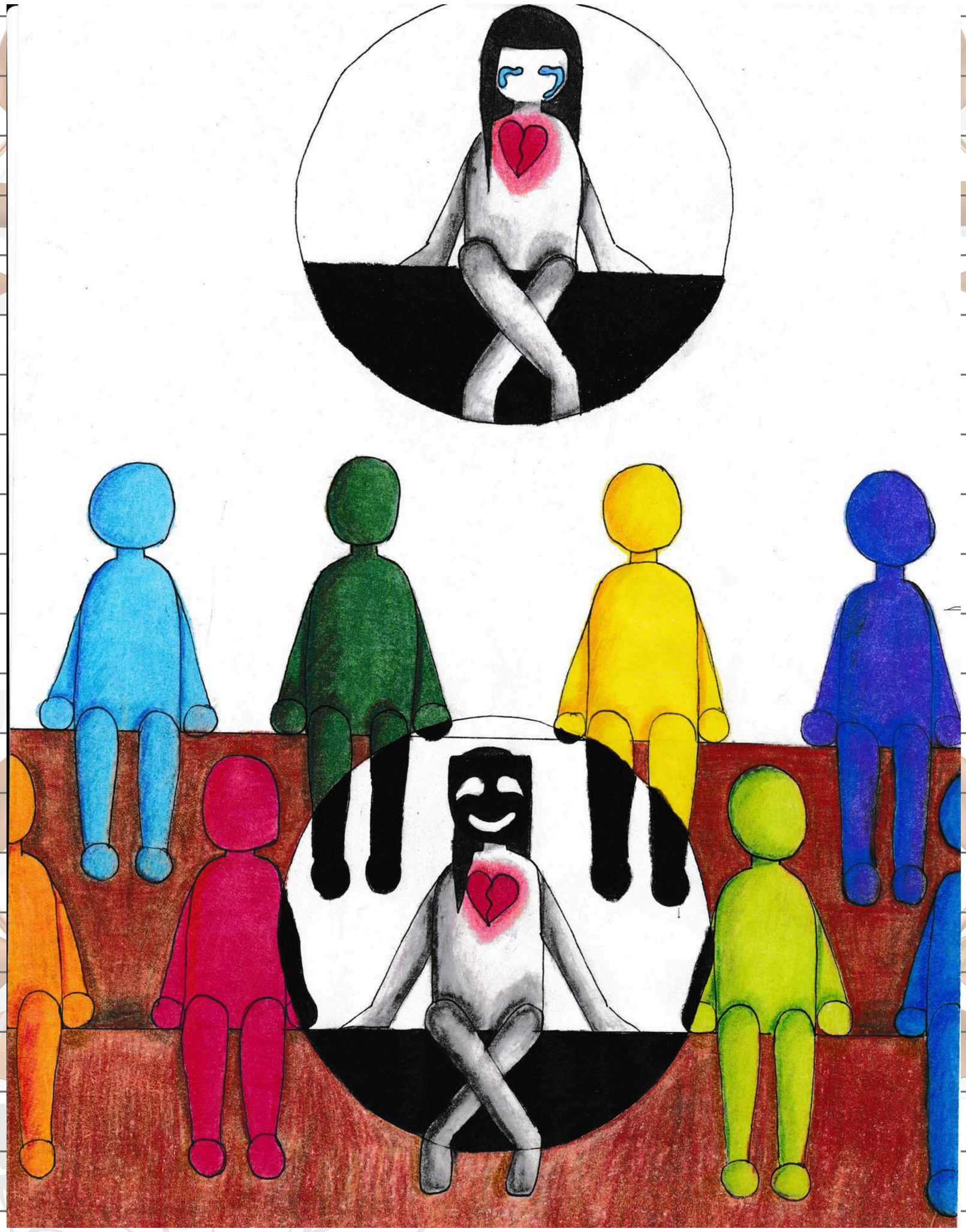
MAYBE THE DOUBT WOULD SLIP AWAY

A STRANGER TOLD ME I LOOK PRETTY TODAY

IT HELPFULLY KEPT THE HARM FAR AWAY…

EMOTIONAL-ISOLATION

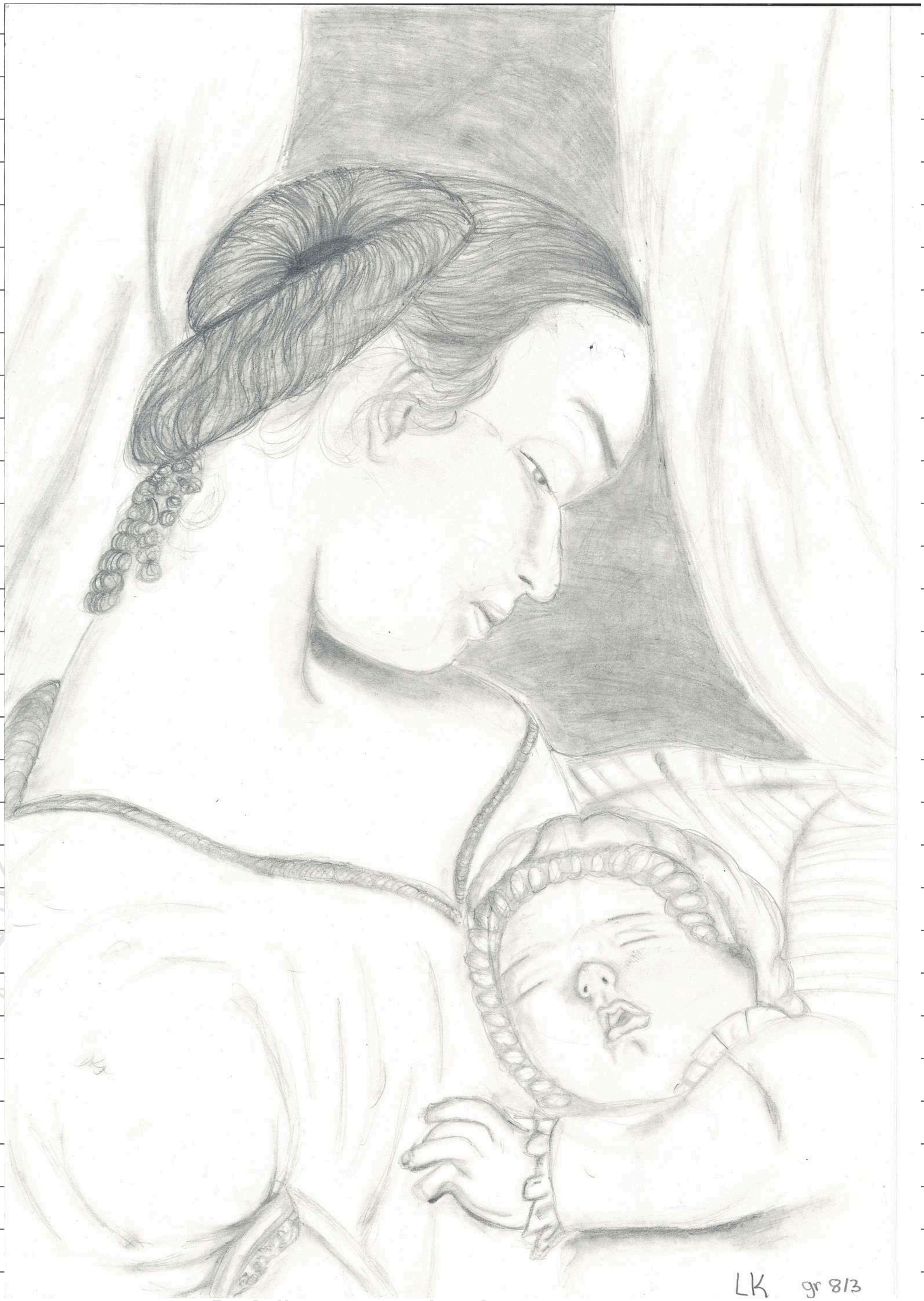
ANNELIEN VAN WYK GR 8



LIRA OLIVER GR 8

NATALIE KAUNDA GR 8

LIANA KRUGER GR 8



REGRET

CHIDI OKECHUKWU GR 11

SHE WAS MY FIRST CRUSH, AND MY FIRST LOVE, BUT I NEVER TOLD HER.
I WAS JUST THE BOY WHO SAT 3 SEATS NEXT TO HER, ALWAYS SEEING HOW
THE SUNLIGHT MADE HER HAIR GLOW, THE WAY HER BLUE EYES MADE ME
HAVE BUTTERFLIES IN MY STOMACH, HER LAUGH MADE ME ENJOY THE REST OF
MY DAY. EVERYDAY I PROMISED THAT TOMORROW I WOULD TELL HER, BUT I
NEVER FOUND THE COURAGE TO TELL HER, I DIDN'T EVEN HAVE THE COURAGE
TO TALK TO HER. TODAY I SAW HER HOLDING SOMEONE ELSE'S HAND.
SHE WAS HAPPIER THAN EVER WITH THE MAN I WISHED WAS ME.

I STILL BELIEVED I COULD WIN HER HEART, BUT IT WAS LIKE CHASING A
SHADOW AT A SUNSET, IT WAS POINTLESS TRYING, IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE
TO GET HER. I DIDN'T TRY TO FIGHT FOR HER, I JUST BROKE SILENTLY,
WHILE WATCHING HIM LIVE A LIFE I DREAMT FOR.

SHE'S EVEN MORE BEAUTIFUL NOW, NOT JUST IN THE WAY SHE LOOKS BUT IN
THE WAY SHE'S LOVED. AND I JUST STOOD THERE, IN HER EYES I WAS
JUST INVISIBLE. EVERY TIME I SEE HER, I'M JUST THE GUY IN THE CROWD
SMILING LIKE I'M NOT BREAKING INSIDE.

MAYBE IN ANOTHER LIFE I WAS THE BOY WHO WAS BRAVE ENOUGH TO SAY,
I LOVE YOU.

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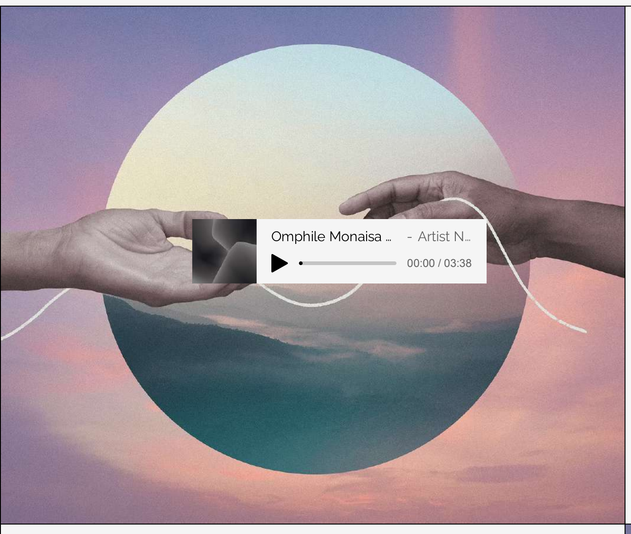
The Invisible String

April Artistique 1st & 3rd place Media Winners



The Invisible String

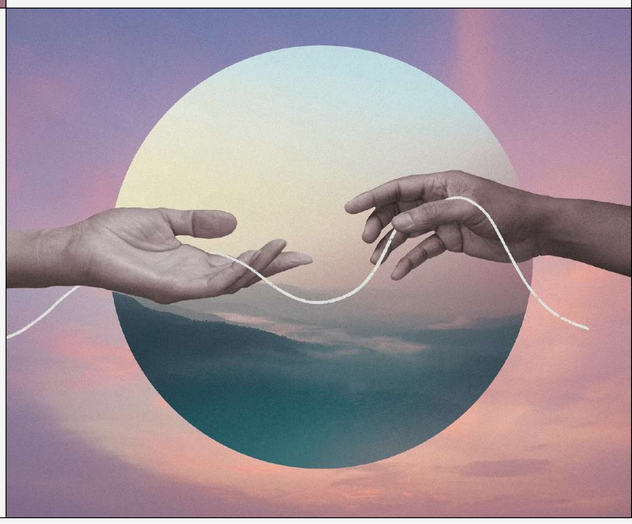
Omphile Monaisa
Grade 11
Song Composition & Compilation

1st Place Winner

The Invisible String

Zakhele Damanyet
Grade 11
Video Composition
TikTok Inspired

3rd Place Winner



THE INVISIBLE STRING

PHILIP GRICIUS GR 12

LONG BEFORE WE MET

SHE PLAYED A MELODY

ON THE STRINGS OF MY HEART

I ON THIS END

SHE THE OTHER

MEETING HER

UNCOVERING THE STRING

OUR STRING

INTERTWINED

NEVER MEANT TO PART

TANGLING OUR STORIES

WEAVING OUR LIVES

BONDING OURSELVES

LONG BEFORE WE MET

YOU PLAYED MELODIES

ON THE STRINGS OF MY HEART

THE INVISIBLE STRING

CHIWENDU OKECHUKWU GR 9

THE STRING TO LIFE FEELS WEAK AND THIN,
AN INVISIBLE STRING BENEATH MY SKIN.
IT HOLDS ME HERE, YET SLIPS AWAY,
AND LEAVES ME LOST ALMOST EVERY DAY.

THIS INVISIBLE STRING IT PULLS SO TIGHT,
THEN DISAPPEARS WITHIN THE NIGHT.
IT BINDS ME NOT WITH CHAIN OR ROPE,
BUT THREADS THROUGH EVERY STRING OF HOPE.

I REACH FOR SOMETHING I CAN'T SEE,
A LIFELINE STRETCHED TOO FAR TO SEEK.
EACH STEP I TAKE, IT PULLS ME AWAY,
THIS INVISIBLE STRING DECIDES MY WAY.

THOUGH I TRIED, IT JUST WON'T BREAK,
AS HOPES AND DREAMS BEGIN TO SHAKE.
STILL DEEP INSIDE, THERE'S SOME SMALL THING
THAT CLINGS ONTO THIS INVISIBLE STRING.

IT’S NOT A TIE THAT BRINGS ME GRACE,
BUT ONE I DRAG FROM PLACE TO PLACE.
NO PEACE, NO LIGHT, JUST WEIGHT I BEAR
AN INVISIBLE STRING THAT'S ALWAYS THERE.

PULLED BY FATE

EMMA REIBELING GR 9

I SIT AT MY DESK, ADMIRING YOUR BEAUTY FROM AFAR. I WOULDN'T DARE TRYING TO TALK TO YOU, BUT I FEEL LIKE I SHOULD. LIKE A STRING PULLING US CLOSER AND CLOSER. I'M THE ONLY GIRL WHO YOU DON'T TALK TO, MAYBE I'M NOT THE ONE.

I STAND BY MY BUDDY, BUT CAN'T CONTROL MY HEART AS I'M BEING STARED AT LIKE THAT. I HOPE YOU FIND THE COURAGE TO TALK TO ME ONE DAY, BECAUSE I CAN'T. BUT I FEEL LIKE I'M BEING PULLED TOWARDS YOU, LIKE A STRING ATTACHED TO US BY FATE.

BUT IT'S BETTER IF REALITY CUT THAT STRING.

THE INVISIBLE STRING

SPHESIHLE HLUBI GR 9

AN INVISIBLE STRING BINDS ME TO YOU.

A THREAD OF SHARED PAINS,

OF STRUGGLES TRUE,

OF COMMON ROOTS IN OUR VEINS.

TOGETHER TRAPPED IN DARKNESS,

UNWANTED, UNWORTHY, UNREAL.

A WEIGHTED SORROW IS ALL WE FEEL.

BOUND TO OUR WEAKNESS.

YOU BEGIN TO FORGE YOUR WAY.

A GOLDEN THREAD OF LIBERTY,

SETTING YOU FREE,

BUT STUCK IN THE SHADOWS I STAY.

AN INVISIBLE STRING BINDS ME TO YOU.

A THREAD OF SHARED PAINS,

OF STRUGGLES TRUE,

OF COMMON ROOTS IN OUR VEINS.

BUT YOU'RE BREAKING FREE.

WHILE I'M STILL TRAPPED, LOST IN MISERY.

ADDICTION

PHENYO MOSENAMI GR 11

THERE'S NOTHING QUITE LIKE IT, THE UNMATCHED CONNECTION ONE SHARES TO SOMETHING THEY FEEL DRAWN TO. WHEN ONE GAZE CAN CAUSE THE PERSON'S EMOTIONS TO USURP THEIR WHOLE BEING. WHEN IT FEELS AS THOUGH TIME ITSELF STOPS TO OBSERVE HOW THAT SPECIFIC ENCOUNTER WOULD PLAY OUT, AND GRAVITY SEEMS TO FAIL AT IT'S ONLY PURPOSE, OR AT LEAST THAT'S HOW HE'D FELT IN THAT MOMENT- FROZEN IN TIME AND RENDERED BREATHLESS AT THE SIGHT BEFORE HIM.

HE HAD TRIED TO IGNORE IT , BUT COULDN'T. HE SWEARS IT GLINTED AT HIM, THAT IT PULLED AT HIM, THAT IF IT HADN'T HE WOULD'VE WENT ABOUT HIS DAY LIKE AN UNSATISFIED BEAST, BUT AT LEAST HE WOULDN'T HAVE SURRENDERED TO THE NOW EMPTY BOTTLE BESIDE HIM.

EACH GULP HAD SOOTHED IT'S WAY DOWN HIS THROAT, AS A SENSE OF FAMILIARITY HAD ENVELOPED HIM. EACH DROP, MORE REFRESHING THAN THE LAST, AND WHILE HE KNEW THAT ALL GOOD THINGS CAME TO AN END, HE COULDN'T HELP BUT CLING TO THE BELIEF THAT THIS FEELING WOULDN'T.

EVENTUALLY GULPS HAD TURNED TO SLURPS AS HE'D TIPPED HIS HEAD BACK, THE BOTTLE IN HAND FOLLOWING THE MOVEMENT, WHILE HE TRIED TO EMPTY OUT THE NONEXISTENT LIQUID LEFT INSIDE, AND WHAT HAD FELT LIKE A FILLING EXPERIENCE THEN, NOW LEFT HIM HOLLOW AND EMPTY.

THE INVISIBLE STRING THEORY

MIEKE ROOTHMAN GR 9

THEY SAY THERE IS A STRING,

CREATED FROM SOMEWHERE BEYOND OUR KNOWLEDGE,

TYING ONE SOUL TO ANOTHER.

IT IS NOT CRAFTED OUT OF WOOL OR SILK,

BUT OF FATE.

NO MATTER HOW FAR TWO PEOPLE WANDER,

THE STRING HOLDS.

IT TANGLES THROUGH TIME,

THROUGH MISSED OPPORTUNITIES,

THROUGH DESPERATION AND THE HEARTS DESIRE,

THROUGH STORMS AND SILENCES.

SOMETIMES IT TUGS AT THE EDGES OF YOUR SOUL

IT DOES NOT WITHER AWAY.

IT DOES NOT SNAP.

BUT IT'S ALWAYS THERE

A SIGN THAT THERE IS SOMEONE,

SOMEWHERE,

WAITING AT THE OTHER END OF YOUR STRING.

NOT BY CHANCE.

NOT BY ACCIDENT.

BUT BY AN INVISIBLE STRING THAT WAS TIED,

LONG BEFORE YOU KNEW YOU ARE PART OF SOMETHING ENDLESS.

THE INVISIBLE STRINGS

CHIDI OKECHUKWU GR 11

"THE ONLY THING MORE EXHAUSTING THAN BEING DEPRESSED IS PRETENDING THAT YOU'RE NOT"

I SIT ON MY BEDROOM FLOOR, MY BACK AGAINST THE WALL, KNEES PULLED TO MY CHEST. AND THE STRINGS ARE THERE AGAIN. IT'S ALWAYS THERE. THE THIN, TIGHT WIRES WRAPPING AROUND MY WRISTS, MY LEGS, MY THROAT. BUT NO ONE ELSE SEES THEM.

ALL MY FAILURES, DISAPPOINTMENTS AND NOT BEING ENOUGH, MAKES THE STRINGS TIGHTER AND STRONGER, LIKE ADDING FUEL TO THE FIRE. I ALWAYS WEAR A MASK, I LAUGH WITH MY FRIENDS, I ACT AS IF EVERYTHING IS ALRIGHT. BUT THE STRINGS PULL TIGHTER WITH EVERY "I'M FINE" THAT TASTES LIKE A LIE IN MY MOUTH.

THE WORLD MOVES IN BRIGHT COLOURS OUTSIDE MY WINDOW, WHILE I SIT IN THIS QUIET, GREY SPACE, TRAPPED IN WHAT NO ONE ELSE CAN SEE.

THE STRINGS DON'T KILL ME. THEY JUST MAKE LIVING MORE DIFFICULT. BUT THE PAIN IS TOO MUCH TO HANDLE. BUT THE PROBLEM MIGHT JUST BE TEMPORARILY, A PART OF ME STILL BELIEVING SOMEONE WILL SEE THESE STRINGS AND SAVE ME FROM MY MISERIES.

MY BEST FRIEND

HASSAANAH SOOLIMAN GR 11

THEY SAY THE UNIVERSE IS STITCHED TOGETHER BY INVISIBLE STRINGS-THREADS SO FINE THEY EVADE THE EYE, YET STRONG ENOUGH TO PULL SOULS ACROSS SPACE AND TIME. SOME CALL IT FATE. OTHERS CALL IT COINCIDENCE. I CALL IT YOU.

I DON'T KNOW HOW OR WHY, BUT YOU AND I WERE ALWAYS ORBITING THE SAME WORLD, JUST SLIGHTLY OUT OF SYNC. TWO STORIES BEING WRITTEN IN THE SAME SETTING, BUT ON DIFFERENT PAGES. THE SAME THOUGHTS, MIRRORED IN TWO DIFFERENT MINDS .YOU SAT TWO SEATS AWAY IN PRESCHOOL. YOU WERE THERE IN MY EARLIEST MEMORIES, JUST OUT OF REACH, LIKE A WHISPER I COULD NEVER QUITE CATCH.YOU WERE TO ME JUST A FAMILIAR NAME,AND I WAS TO YOU A FACE THAT EXISTED SOMEWHERE IN THE BACKGROUND OF A OLD MEMORY.WE LAUGHED WITH THE SAME FRIENDS. SHOPPED AT THE SAME STORES. LIVED IN THE SAME SMALL TOWN. AND YET, SOMEHOW, OUR LIVES NEVER TOUCHED. WE ORBITED THE SAME SUN, BUT NEVER COLLIDED.

YEARS PASSED-QUIETLY, LIKE AUTUMN LEAVES DRIFTING PAST ONE ANOTHER ON THE SAME WIND. WE MUST'VE PASSED EACH OTHER A HUNDRED TIMES-BRUSHED SHOULDERS IN CORRIDORS, STOOD AN AISLE AWAY IN THE GROCERY STORE, LAUGHED FROM OPPOSITE ENDS OF THE SAME ROOM. ALWAYS CLOSE,YET OUT OF REACH.

UNTIL NOW.

I'VE ASKED MYSELF SO MANY TIMES WHY NOW,AND WHY NOT ALL THOSE YEARS AGO. BUT MAYBE SOME SOULS ARE ONLY MEANT TO FIND EACH OTHER ONLY WHEN THEY'RE READY. WHEN THE HEART IS BRUISED ENOUGH TO UNDERSTAND GENTLENESS. WHEN THE SOUL IS QUIET ENOUGH TO RECOGNIZE ITS REFLECTION AND ECHO OF ITS HEARTBEAT IN ANOTHER.

PEOPLE TALK ABOUT SOULMATES AS IF THEY'RE RESERVED FOR LOVERS. BUT THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND THE POWER OF OUR FRIENDSHIP,THE WAY OUR TWO HEARTS CAN BEAT TO THE SAME RHYTHM WITHOUT EVER TOUCHING, UNTIL ONE DAY THEY DO.

SOMETIMES, I FEEL AFRAID. NOT OF YOU, BUT OF TIME. OF HOW FRAGILE EVERYTHING GOOD CAN FEEL. LIKE WE'VE BEEN GIVEN SOMETHING RARE, BUT WITH AN EXPIRY DATE NO ONE CAN READ. BUT THEN I REMEMBER THAT SILENT, INVISIBLE THREAD CONNECTING MY HEART TO YOURS. UNSEEN. UNBREAKABLE. THE KIND THAT TIE HEARTS TOGETHER ACROSS LIFETIMES.

IF THE UNIVERSE WAS KIND ENOUGH TO PULL US TOGETHER ONCE, IT WILL DO IT AGAIN. AND AGAIN. AND AGAIN.

I'VE STOPPED BELIEVING IN COINCIDENCES. BECAUSE WE WEREN'T STITCHED TOGETHER BY CHANCE,WE WERE WOVEN BY DESTINY.

SO EVEN IF WE LOSE OUR WAY, EVEN IF THE WORLD CHANGES AND WE DRIFT LIKE STARS IN SEPARATE SKIES, I BELIEVE IN THE STRING. I BELIEVE IN THE PULL. I BELIEVE IN US.

YOU DIDN'T ENTER MY LIFE LOUD. A CONVERSATION THAT LASTED A LITTLE LONGER THAN EXPECTED. A LAUGH THAT FELT ODDLY FAMILIAR. AND SUDDENLY, YOU WERE EVERYWHERE. NOT IN A SUFFOCATING WAY, BUT LIKE SUNLIGHT THAT SIMPLY ARRIVES. GENTLE, CONSISTENT, WARM.

YOU DON'T JUST UNDERSTAND ME. YOU ARE ME.YOU ARE THE POEM MY SOUL HAD BEEN WRITING ALL ALONG. WE THINK THE SAME, FEEL THE SAME, DREAM THE SAME. IT'S AS THOUGH WE ARE TWO VERSIONS OF THE SAME SOUL-MINE IN BOLD, AND YOURS IN CURSIVE. YOU ARE ME IN A DIFFERENT FONT,DIFFERENT LETTERS, SAME MESSAGE. YOUR PRESENCE FEELS LIKE DEJA VU AND I NEVER FULLY UNDERSTOOD UNTIL NOW. YOU ECHO MY THOUGHTS BEFORE I VOICE THEM. YOU SEE THE VERSION OF ME I THOUGHT I'D LOST.

YOU ARRIVED WHEN THE WORLD FELT LOUD AND I FELT SMALL. WHEN EVERYTHING WAS SLIPPING, YOU WERE STEADY. FOR THE FIRST TIME,I DON'T FEEL ALONE IN MY MIND BECAUSE IN YOUR LAUGHTER,I FOUND MY OWN.

IT'S STRANGE, ISN'T IT? HOW TWO PEOPLE CAN EXIST SIDE BY SIDE FOR SO LONG, UNAWARE THAT THEY WERE MEANT TO FIND EACH OTHER WHEN IT MATTERED MOST. YOU ARE NOT JUST MY FIRST BEST FRIEND. YOU ARE MY FIRST BESTFRIEND . THE KIND OF PERSON POETS TRY TO DESCRIBE AND ALWAYS FALL SHORT. THE KIND OF PERSON THAT MAKES THE WORLD SEEM SOFTER, WARMER, BETTER.

YOU AND I ARE INTERLINKED. OUR THOUGHTS ECHO EACH OTHER. OUR JOKES OVERLAP. WHEN I'M WITH YOU,I DON'T FEEL THE NEED TO HIDE PARTS OF MYSELF TO BE UNDERSTOOD. YOU UNDERSTAND. WITHOUT ASKING. WITHOUT EFFORT.

SO HERE WE ARE. TIED TOGETHER BY A THOUSAND UNSEEN MOMENTS THAT BROUGHT US HERE. YOU, WHO TURNED MY DISBELIEF INTO CERTAINTY. YOU, WHO SHOWED ME THAT LOVE DOESN'T HAVE TO ARRIVE LOUDLY-IT CAN SLIP IN GENTLY, UNNOTICED AT FIRST, AND STILL CHANGE EVERYTHING.

I KNOW YOU'RE MY BEST FRIEND BECAUSE TIED AROUND MY HEART, IS A STRING. AND THE OTHER END IS KNOTTED FIRMLY AROUND YOURS.

YOU ARE MY INVISIBLE STRING-MY SOULMATE, MY BEST FRIEND, MY FOREVER.

CONNECTED BEYOND WHAT WE SEE

AMOGELO MONO GR 9

THEY SAY WE ARE ALL CONNECTED BY SOMETHING UNSEEN, SOMETHING FRAGILE

YET UNBREAKABLE. A THREAD SO FINE,YOU MIGHT MISS IT IN THE RUSH OF LIFE,

YET STRONG ENOUGH TO PULL AT YOUR HEART WHEN YOU FEEL ALONE.

THAT THREAD IS THE “INVISIBLE STRING”

IT CONNECTS MOTHERS TO CHILDREN, FRIENDS ACROSS OCEANS , SOULMATES WHO

HAVEN’T EVEN MET YET. IT TIES US TO THE PEOPLE WE’VE LOST , AND TO THE ONES

WE ARE STILL FINDING. YOU CAN’T SEE IT , BUT YOU FEEL IT , IN A MEMORY , IN A

SONG, IN A SUDDEN LAUGH THAT ESCAPES YOUR LIPS WHEN YOU THINK OF

SOMEONE FAR AWAY. THAT’S INVISIBLE STRING, TUGGING GENTLY,REMINDING

YOU: “YOU ARE NOT ALONE”

WHEN THE WORLD FEELS LOUD AND CHAOTIC, THE INVISIBLE STRING IS

QUIET AND STEADY. WHEN GOODBYES ARE PAINFUL , IT WHISPERS ,

“THIS IS NOT THE END.” AND WHEN FEAR CREEPS IN, IT REMINDS YOU

OF ALL THE HEARTS THAT BEAT IN THE RHYTHM WITH YOURS .

SOMETIMES, THE STRING STRETCHES SO FAR YOU WONDER IF IT’S STILL

THERE , BUT IT NEVER SNAPS . IT BENDS THROUGH DISTANCE , THROUGH

SILENCE, EVEN THROUGH DEATH. IT CARRIES LOVE FROM THE PAST,

STRENGTH FROM THE PRESENT, AND HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

SO WHEN YOU FEEL LOST , REMEMBER THE INVISIBLE STRING.

REACH FOR IT WITH YOUR HEART, AND YOU WILL ALWAYS FIND YOUR WAY

BACK TO THE ONES WHO MATTER . BECAUSE LOVE , NO MATTER HOW

FAR IT TRAVELS, ALWAYS LEAVES A THREAD BEHIND

THE INEVITABLE

GOMOLEMO MALEPE GR 11

THERE IS A QUIET BELIEF THAT ECHOES BENEATH THE NOISE OF EVERYDAY LIFE A BELIEF IN THE INVISIBLE STRING. IT IS NOT SEEN, ONLY FELT, AND IT TTAPS GENTLY AT THE SOUL, GUIDING PEOPLE, DECISIONS, AND MOMENTS TOWARD SOMETHING THEY WERE ALWAYS MEANT TO MEET: THE INEVITABLE.

THE INVISIBLE STRING REPRESENTS A FORCE THAT BINDS CERTAIN LIVES TOGETHER EVEN WHEN EVERYTHING ELSE TRIES TO PULL THEM APARTIT CONNECTS TWO STRANGERS IN A CROWDED ROOM. IT PULLS CHILDHOOD FRIENDS BACK INTO EACH OTHER'S ORBIT. IT BRINGS BACK MEMORIES WHEN THE HEART IS READY TO RECEIVE THEM AGAIN. AND IT DOES SO NOT BY ACCIDENT, BUT BY DESTINY.THE INEVITABLE IS NOT LOUD. IT DOESN’T KNOCK IT WAITS. IT IS PATIENT AND UNMOVED BY CHALLENGES OR DISTRACTIONS.YOU MAY LEAVE FORGET GROW OR HIDE BUT WHAT IS YOURS BY TRUTH OR FATE WILL FIND YOU AGAIN. THE INVISIBLE STRING MAY STRETCH FOR YEARS BUT IT DOES NOT BREAK. IT WAITS FOR THE RIGHT MOMENT TO PULL.

THERE’S A KIND OF PEACE IN THIS BELIEF. IT QUIETS THE PANIC OF WHAT-IFS. IT REMINDS US THAT NOT EVERYTHING LOST IS MEANT TO BE FORGOTTEN. THAT NOT EVERY DELAY IS A DENIAL. THE INEVITABLE MAY COME SLOWLY, IN SILENCE, OR WRAPPED IN PAIN, BUT WHEN IT COMES, IT WILL MAKE SENSE. AND THOUGH THE STRING MAY BE INVISIBLE, WHEN IT PULLS IT FEELS LIKE HOME.

TIED TO WHAT I CANNOT TOUCH

AMARIAH JENYA GR 11

I THINK I TEND TO OVERANALYSE THINGS, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO FEELINGS OR EMOTIONS. I DON'T JUST FEEL SOMETHING AND MOVE ON. I BREAK IT DOWN, PICK IT APART, TRY TO MAKE SENSE OF IT LOGICALLY. IT'S LIKE THERE'S A WINDOW BETWEEN ME AND WHATEVER I'M FEELING. I CAN SEE IT, BUT I CAN'T TOUCH IT.

SOMETIMES, I CATCH MYSELF QUESTIONING WHY I FEEL A CERTAIN WAY, IS IT VALID, OR JUST A PHASE? OR WHETHER IT'S JUST A REACTION TO SOMETHING I HAVEN'T FULLY UNDERSTOOD YET. SOMETHING NEW. OTHER TIMES, I FIND MYSELF WONDERING WHY I DON'T FEEL WHAT OTHERS SEEM TO FEEL. IT'S LIKE STANDING IN FRONT OF A MATH PROBLEM FOR THE FIRST TIME, EVERYONE ELSE IS SOLVING IT INSTINCTIVELY, AND I'M STILL STARING AT THE FORMULA, TRYING TO UNDERSTAND THE CONCEPT.

LATELY, I'VE BEGUN TO WONDER IF THERE'S SOMETHING TYING ME TO THESE FEELINGS, EVEN IF I CAN'T ALWAYS REACH THEM. AN UNREACHABLE FORCE, AN INVISIBLE STRING. MAYBE I CAN'T FEEL IT TUGGING AT ME THE WAY OTHERS DO, BUT SOMEWHERE UNDERNEATH THE LOGIC AND ANALYSIS, IT'S STILL THERE.

THE MORE I ANALYSE, THE MORE DISTANT I FEEL FROM THE EMOTION ITSELF. IT'S AS IF I BECOME THE OBSERVER, STANDING BEHIND THE GLASS, WATCHING. EACH TIME I PULL AT THE STRING, TRYING TO BRING THE FEELING CLOSER, TRYING TO MOULD IT INTO SOMETHING I CAN UNDERSTAND, IT STRETCHES THINNER. HARDER TO SEE. HARDER TO HOLD.

MAYBE I'M JUST A LOGICAL PERSON. MAYBE EMOTIONS AREN'T MY STRONG SUIT. I STRUGGLE TO RELATE TO PEOPLE WHO ARE GOVERNED BY THEIR EMOTIONS, WHO FEEL BEFORE THEY THINK. I DON'T GET IT, HOW SOMEONE CAN BE DEVASTATED BY THE DEATH OF A PERSON THEY BARELY KNEW. TO ME, IT DOESN'T REGISTER. IT'S AS IF THE CONNECTION ISN'T STRONG ENOUGH, TO PULL AT ME THE WAY IT DOES FOR THEM.

SOMETIMES I WONDER IF A PART OF ME DID DIE THAT DAY. I DON’T IGNORE EMOTIONS, BUT I DISSECT THEM. ANALYSE THEM TO DEATH. AND IN DOING SO, MAYBE I’M KILLING THE VERY THING I’M TRYING SO HARD TO UNDERSTAND.

STILL, THE STRING REMAINS. EVEN IF IT’S FAINT, EVEN IF I CAN'T ALWAYS FEEL IT THE WAY OTHERS DO. EVEN IF ALL I CAN DO IS WATCH FROM A DISTANCE. SOME PART OF ME IS STILL TIED TO SOMETHING MEANINGFUL. SOME PART OF ME STILL REACHES FOR WHAT I CANNOT TOUCH.

MAYBE THAT’S ENOUGH.

INVISIBLE STRINGS

HASSAANAH SOOLIMAN GR 11

THERE ARE STRINGS THAT TIE US TO PEOPLE. INVISIBLE THREADS THAT STRETCH FROM THE HEART, PULLING US GENTLY TOWARD THOSE WHO MATTER. I'VE FELT THEM ALL MY LIFE. SOME THREADS ARE FILLED WITH LAUGHTER, SOME ARE WORN THIN BY TIME, AND OTHERS BREAK SO SILENTLY, YOU DON'T EVEN NOTICE UNTIL SOMETHING INSIDE YOU FEELS COLDER.

I'VE ALWAYS BELIEVED IN THESE INVISIBLE STRINGS. NOT BECAUSE SOMEONE TAUGHT ME TO, BUT BECAUSE I'VE EXPERIENCED THEIR PULL. THEY EXIST IN THE WAY YOU MISS SOMEONE BEFORE THEY'VE EVEN LEFT. IN HOW YOU AND YOUR FRIEND JUST CONNECT.THEY EXIST IN THE PULL OF BELONGING-AND SOMETIMES, IN THE ACHE OF NOT BELONGING.

THESE STRINGS ARE SUPPOSED TO PULL US TOGETHER,BUT THEY CAN ALSO TEAR US APART.

THE TRUTH IS, INVISIBLE STRINGS DON'T PROMISE TIME. THEY CONNECT US TO PEOPLE FOR MOMENTS OR LIFETIMES. THEY STRETCH ACROSS CITIES AND YEARS AND GOODBYES-BUT THEY ALSO TEAR, AND DISAPPEAR. SOME STRINGS ARE DELICATE. SOME ARE STRONG. SOME WERE NEVER TIED AT ALL,NO MATTER HOW BADLY YOU WISH FOR THEM.

GROWING UP, I USED TO SEARCH FOR A STRING BETWEEN ME AND MY MOTHER. I LOOKED FOR IT IN HER HARD EYES, IN HER BLUNT WORDS, AND IN THE PAUSES BETWEEN THEM. I THOUGHT MAYBE IF I WAS SOFTER, OR QUIETER, OR MORE LIKE SOMEONE SHE COULD UNDERSTAND, THE STRING WOULD FORM.I IMAGINED IT OFTEN-AN INVISIBLE THREAD, RUNNING FROM HER HEART TO MINE, HUMMING GENTLY WHEN I NEEDED HER, TIGHTENING WHEN I PULLED AWAY.

BUT I COULD NEVER FEEL IT.

AND MAYBE THAT'S WHAT I FIND HARDEST TO ADMIT,THAT SOMETIMES LOVE EXISTS WITHOUT CONNECTION. THAT YOU CAN CARE FOR SOMEONE DEEPLY AND STILL FEEL FAR AWAY. THAT A BOND CAN BE HOPED FOR, LONGED FOR, AND STILL REMAIN OUT OF REACH.

IT'S A STRANGE KIND OF GRIEF-TO MOURN SOMETHING THAT NEVER REALLY LIVED. NOT A DEATH, BUT THE ABSENCE OF SOMETHING I THOUGHT I WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE. A BOND. A MOTHER WHO COULD LOOK AT ME AND SEE ME. I WANT TO BELIEVE THAT MAYBE WE JUST DIFFER, THAT MAYBE HER SILENCE WAS HER VERSION OF LOVE. BUT LOVE, I THINK, IS SUPPOSED TO FEEL LIKE CONNECTION. LIKE A THREAD. LIKE SOMETHING HOLDING YOU EVEN WHEN YOU WANT TO FALL APART.

IT'S NOT HER FAULT, AND MAYBE IT'S NOT MINE EITHER. SOME PEOPLE SPEAK IN ACTIONS,OTHERS IN ABSENCE. MAYBE SHE HAS HER OWN INVISIBLE STRINGS-ONES I CAN'T SEE, ONES I WAS NEVER TAUGHT TO FEEL. MAYBE SHE LOVES IN A LANGUAGE I DON'T UNDERSTAND. MAYBE THERE WAS A STRING ONCE, AND LIFE JUST GENTLY WORE IT THIN.

I DON'T SAY THIS WITH ANGER. I SAY IT WITH QUIET SADNESS-THE KIND THAT SITS AT THE BOTTOM OF YOUR CHEST. THE SADNESS THAT WISHES THINGS HAD BEEN A LITTLE DIFFERENT, A LITTLE CLOSER, A LITTLE CLEARER. I'VE LEARNED NOT TO RESENT THE MISSING STRING, BUT TO RECOGNISE WHAT IT LEFT BEHIND. MAYBE THAT'S WHAT MAKES ME FEEL MOST HUMAN-THIS QUIET, UNRESOLVED SPACE IN MY HEART WHERE A STRING SHOULD BE. THIS WISH THAT, ONE DAY, I MIGHT REACH OUT AGAIN AND FEEL THE SLIGHTEST TUG IN RETURN.

MAYBE THAT'S WHAT INVISIBLE STRINGS REALLY TEACH US. NOT JUST HOW WE'RE HELD, BUT WHERE WE WISH WE WERE. WHO WE REACH FOR, AND WHO WE WISHED REACHED BACK. THEY SEE WHAT WE WANT,BUT GIVE US WHAT WE ACTUALLY NEED.

I MAY NEVER FEEL THE PULL FROM HER TO ME. BUT I'VE FELT IT IN OTHER PLACES, AND I'VE STARTED WEAVING MY OWN THREADS.

I CAN'T HELP BUT NOTICE HOW STEADY I'VE HAD TO BE FOR MYSELF. HOW, IN THE ABSENCE OF THAT STRING, I'VE TRIED TO BECOME A NET FOR EVERYONE ELSE. I HAVE TRIED TO BECOME THE KIND OF PERSON WHO HANDS OUT STRING FREELY. WHO NOTICES THE SMALL, INVISIBLE WAYS PEOPLE ASK TO BE LOVED. WHO PULLS GENTLY. WHO STAYS.

AND MAYBE, EVEN WITHOUT THAT ONE STRING I ALWAYS LONGED FOR, I CAN STILL BUILD A LIFE STITCHED TOGETHER WITH OTHER MEANINGFUL STRINGS. BECAUSE EVEN IF SOME STRINGS NEVER APPEAR, THE ONES WE CREATE ARE JUST AS REAL.

AND THEY'RE MORE THAN ENOUGH.

THE INVISIBLE STRINGS

SHAZANA ABDUL GAFAR GR 9

THE INVISIBLE STRING, ALSO THE MOST POWERFUL ONE. PEOPLE UNDERESTIMATE HOW STRONG SOMETHING MAY BE ESPECIALLY BECAUSE IT CANNOT BE PHYSICALLY CUT LIKE OTHER STRINGS.

THE STRING IS MADE UP OF FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS, MY FEELINGS FOR HIM WAS ALWAYS SO STRONG AND THAT'S WHY NO MATTER HOW MANY STRINGS I CUT THAT ONE STILL STAYED.

DURING THE RELATIONSHIP HE WAS ALWAYS SO DISTANT AND ALWAYS HURTING ME...WHILE I WAS THERE LOVING HIM MORE AND MORE EVERYDAY, BUT WHAT I DIDN'T KNOW IS THAT WHILE I WAS FALLING DEEPER IN THE RELATIONSHIP, HE WAS ALREADY LOOKING FOR MY REPLACEMENT, AND SO BY THE TIME THINGS ENDED I WAS LEFT THERE STRANDED WHILE HE WAS ALREADY ON WITH THE NEXT GIRL AND WHAT WAS WORSE IS THAT EVERYTIME I TRIED TO MOVE ON THAT STRING WOULD PULL ME BACK.

THERE CAME A TIME WHEN HE WANTED ME BACK, BUT HE HAD HURT ME SO MUCH THAT THE STRING THAT ALWAYS LED ME STRAIGHT TO HIS HEART HAD SNAPPED AND JUST LIKE THAT, I DIDN'T TAKE HIM BACK.

HOW I SAVED SCHOOL WITH HUGS (AND TEQUILA)

UNATHI MATLALA GR 11

HAVE YOU EVER WOKEN UP WITH SUPERPOWERS? LIKE BREATHING FIRE OR FLYING THROUGH THE AIR LIKE THE SUPERHEROS ON TV GROWING UP? MY FAMILY IS LIKE REALLY SUPERNATURAL, SO IT'S A HISTORICAL TRADITION THAT YOU FINALLY UNLOCK YOUR ABILITIES WHEN YOU TURN 17 YEARS OLD. MY "DIECISIETE AÑOS" IS TODAY AND I WAS REALLY EXCITED TO GET SUPER STRENGTH OR MAYBE EVEN TURNING INVISIBLE, I WOULD'VE BEEN HAPPY WITH ANYTHING, I'D EVEN SETTLE FOR TALKING TO ANIMALS FOR MY 17TH BIRTHDAY! THE LAST SUPERPOWER I HAD ON MY LIST WAS A COUPLES THERAPIST'S HOLY GRAIL.

SEEING THE STRENGTH OF CONNECTION BETWEEN TWO PEOPLE HAVE, HAS TO BE TOP 5 WORST ABILITIES IN THE BLOODLINE. HOW UNLUCKY DID I GET? MY DAD GOT TEMPERATURE HANDS ON HIS 17TH BIRTHDAY, HE CAN LITERALLY BOIL WATER AT HIS FINGERTIPS OR EVEN FREEZE IT IN THE SAME AMOUNT OF TIME YOU CAN SAY "WHAT OTHER SUPERPOWERS RUN IN THE FAMILY?" AND THE ANSWER TO THAT IS, QUITE A FEW. MY ABUELA HAS THE POWER TO PRODUCE LIGHTNING, WE CALL HER "LA POWERBANKA" DURING LOADSHEDDING.

MY FRIENDS AT SCHOOL? HYPED TO ASK ME WHAT POWER I GOT THE SECOND I STEPPED THROUGH THOSE GATES. THEY WERE PROBABLY MORE UPSET ABOUT MY TERRIBLE POWER THAN I AM! I DON'T BLAME THEM, WE ALL USED TO SCHEME HOW WE COULD CHEAT ON TESTS DEPENDING ON WHICH POWERS I GOT. MY PERSONAL FAVOURITE WAS INTERLINKING ALL OUR BODIES TO THE SMARTEST KID IN CLASS, WHATEVER THEY WROTE DOWN, SO DID I. BUT THIS POWER REALLY SUCKS, ALL I SEE IS A STRING THAT'S ATTACHED TO PEOPLE. THE STRONGER YOUR BOND IS WITH A PERSON, THE THICKER AND

MORE VISIBLE THE CONNECTION IS TO ME. I PRACTICALLY HAVE A ROPE BETWEEN MY CLOSE FRIENDS AND I, BUT THE STRINGS I HAVE WITH OTHER PEOPLE ARE BASICALLY INVISIBLE.

I CAN TELL WHICH SCHOOL COUPLES ARE ON THE BRINK OF BREAKING UP AND I CAN ALSO TELL WHICH TEACHES ARE PROBABLY CHEATING ON THEIR SPOUSES AT WORK, BUT YOU DON'T NEED MAGICAL POWERS TO SEE THE CHEMISTRY BETWEEN MRS. KIM AND MR. HOLLING.

ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN ONE THING THAT'S REALLY BEEN BOTHERING ME SINCE I GOT TO SCHOOL TODAY, JUSTIN. HE'S YOUR AVERAGE NERD THAT GETS BULLIED BY THE BIG KIDS, YOU KNOW, THE NORMAL HIGHSCHOOL ENVIRONMENT TROPE? BUT SOMETHING ABOUT HIM SEEMS LOCO TODAY. NORMALLY THE STRINGS I SEE BETWEEN PEOPLE ARE LIGHT BLUE OR EVEN DARKER SHADES FOR STRONGER CONNECTIONS, BUT JUSTIN IS RADIATING RED ROPES ALL AROUND

HIM. EVERY SINGLE PERSON IN THE SCHOOL IS ON WHATEVER LIST THAT KID HAS IN MIND, AND I WON'T HAVE MY FIRST LEGAL SHOT OF TEQUILA IF I DON'T DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT TODAY!

THANKFULLY MY FRIENDS ACTUALLY BELIEVE I HAVE POWERS BECAUSE THEY'VE SEEN MY RELATIVES DO NOT SO NORMAL THINGS WHEN I BROUGHT THEM TO ONE OF MY FAMILY FUNCTIONS. AT LEAST A HANDFUL OF PEOPLE BELIEVE ME, NOW IT'S UP TO EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US TO SAVE THE DAY BY SPREADING THE WORD. IN THEORY, IT WAS PRETTY SIMPLE: GO AROUND SCHOOL INFORMING INDIVIDUALS OR EVEN BETTER, LARGE FRIEND GROUPS, THAT WE GOT AN "ANONYMOUS TIP" ABOUT A POSSIBLE MASS SHOOTING TODAY, AND THE LIKELY CULPRIT WAS JUSTIN. THEY OBVIOUSLY DIDN'T BELIEVE US, SO WE HAD TO PLAY DIRTY AND BRIBE THEM. "WE'LL GIVE EVERYONE THAT PARTICIPATES FREE ALCOHOL AT MY DIECISIETE AÑOS PARTY!" I SAID. HOOK, LINE AND SINKER. TEENAGERS ARE

SO EASY.

WE ASKED EVERY GROUP WE ENGAGED WITH TO LET THE WHOLE SCHOOL KNOW BEFORE LUNCH, AND THE PLAN WAS SET IN MOTION WHEN THAT BELL FINALLY RANG. EVERY TWO MINUTES, SOMEONE WENT UP TO JUSTIN TO GIVE HIM A HUG. IT REALLY WAS THAT SIMPLE, A HUG FROM EACH PERSON IN THE SCHOOL. HIS BULLIES WERE THE HARDEST TO CONVINCE, BUT THE THE APOLOGIES THEY ADDED WERE PROBABLY THAT ICING ON THE CAKE.

NOW I WOULDN'T SAY THAT THE THREAT IS COMPLETELY NEUTRALISED, BUT AT LEAST HE ONLY HAS BRIGHT PINK STRINGS NOW WHICH I HOPE MEANS HE DOESN'T WANT TO KAMIKAZE THE SCHOOL FOR A WHILE. BUT IT'S STILL ALARMING ENOUGH TO CALL THE COPS FOR TOMORROW. EVEN THOUGH NOBODY BUT MYSELF HAD POWERS, WE WERE ALL SUPERHEROES TODAY. NOW I NEED TO EXPLAIN TO MY ANGRY MEXICAN MOTHER WHY A

MOB OF HIGHSCHOOLERS AT OUR FRONT DOOR IS DEMANDING FOR TEQUILA. NO BUENO.

NOIR

GRADE 11/5

THE RAIN HAD BEEN FALLING STEADY ALL NIGHT. SLICKING THE COBBLESTONES OF THE UPPER CITY WITH A SHEEN THAT CAUGHT THE GLOW OF STREETLAMPS LIKE OIL ON WATER. INSIDE A DIMLY LIT CAFE, THE DETECTIVE SAT ACROSS FROM A WOMAN WHOSE BEAUTY WAS AS BRITTLE AS IT WAS SAD.

SHE WORE HER GRIEF IN QUIET WAYS-FINGERS TREMBLING AROUND HER COFFEE CUP, LIPSTICK SMUDGED FROM BITING HER LIP RAW, EYES THAT HADN'T SEEN SLEEP IN DAYS. HER HUSBAND, SHE SAID, HAD BEEN MISSING NEARLY A WEEK. THE AUTHORITIES WEREN'T LIFTING A FINGER. TO THEM HE WAS JUST ANOTHER RICH MAN GONE ON A BENDER. DESTINED TO COME CRAWLING HOME. BUT SHE KNEW BETTER. HER VOICE BROKE WHEN SHE SAID HIS NAME. SHE WANTED ANSWERS, NOT EMPTY REASSURANCES. AND THAT'S WHEN THE DETECTIVE KNEW THIS WAS NO ROUTINE CASE, RATHER IT WAS A DISAPPEARANCE DRIPPING WITH ROT. THE KIND THAT BEGAN IN THE UPPER CITY WITH ITS POLISHED FACADES BUT ALWAYS, INEVITABLY, BLED DOWNWARD INTO THE SMOKE-FILLED BARS AND BACK-ALLEY SHADOWS WHERE MEN VANISHED, DEBTS WERE SETTLED, AND THE MUSIC NEVER STOPPED PLAYING.

THE DETECTIVE STEPPED OUT OF THE FLICKERING NEON GLOW OF THE DINER, THE HUM OF THE CITY WRAPPING AROUND HIM LIKE A WET BLANKET. NIGHT HAD DESCENDED WITH AN OPPRESSIVE WEIGHT, THE AIR THICK WITH THE TANG OF DIESEL AND THE ACRID SCENT OF STALE CIGARETTES, CLUNG TO HIS SKIN AS HE MADE HIS WAY THROUGH THE LABYRINTHINE STREETS.

HE SLIPPED INTO THE FIRST DIVE BAR HE CAME ACROSS, ITS ENTRANCE FRAMED BY A GAUDY RED AWNING THAT SAGGED UNDER THE WEIGHT OF YEARS AND NEGLECT. INSIDE, THE AIR WAS HEAVY WITH SMOKE, SWIRLING LIKE SECRETS IN THE DIM LIGHT. THE LOW MURMUR OF CONVERSATIONS BLENDED WITH THE CLINK OF GLASSES, CREATING A SYMPHONY OF INDIFFERENCE. HE LEANED AGAINST THE BAR, SCANNING THE FACES OF THE PATRONS-EACH ONE A MASK HIDING UNTOLD STORIES..

“ANOTHER WHISKEY, PLEASE,” HE MUTTERED. AS THE BARTENDER POURED, THE DETECTIVE'S EYES FLITTED OVER THE CROWD, SEEKING THAT SPARK OF RECOGNITION, THE GLIMMER OF KNOWLEDGE THAT WOULD LEAD HIM TO THE MISSING MAN. INSTEAD HE FOUND ONLY AVERTED GAZES AND DISMISSIVE SHRUGS.

"HAVE YOU HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT LEONARD? HE’S MY FRIEND AND HE USED TO COME TO BARS AROUND HERE, BUT WE HAVEN’T SEEN HIM IN A WHILE,” HE TRIED HIS WORDS HANGING IN THE AIR LIKE A DESPERATE PLEA. “HIS WIFE’S GETTING KIND OF WORRIED,” HE CONTINUED, “BUT I TOLD HER THERE’S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT RIGHT?” A FEW HEADS TURNED BUT THEIR EYES QUICKLY SHIFTED AWAY FOCUSING INSTEAD ON THEIR DRINKS OR THE JUKEBOX BELTING OUT AN OLD TUNE. IT WAS AS IF THE VERY WALLS CONSPIRED TO SWALLOW HIS INQUIRY, THE LAUGHTER AND CHATTER RISING UP TO DROWN OUT HIS SEARCH.

FRUSTRATION BUBBLED WITHIN HIM A TIGHT KNOT IN HIS STOMACH. IT GNAWED AT HIM WITH EACH PASSING MOMENT, AS HE MOVED FROM ONE BAR TO THE NEXT THROUGH SHADOWS CAST BY FLICKERING LIGHTS AND PEELING WALLPAPER THAT WHISPERED OF BETTER DAYS LONG GONE. AT EACH STOP, HE WAS MET WITH THE SAME WALL OF SILENCE, A DEAFENING ECHO OF COMPLICITY THAT WRAPPED AROUND THE CITY LIKE A NOOSE. EACH STEP ECHOED HIS GROWING FRUSTRATION, THE RHYTHMIC TAPPING OF HIS WORN-OUT SHOES A METRONOME TO HIS MOUNTING UNEASE.

THE MOMENT THE DETECTIVE CROSSED THE THRESHOLD OF THE MARROW ROOM, HE WAS ENVELOPED BY AN INTOXICATING HAZE OF SHARP SULTRY MUSIC THAT WRAPPED AROUND HIM LIKE A SHROUD OF SILK. THE AIR WAS THICK WITH THE SCENT OF AGED BOURBON AND THE FAINT SWEETNESS OF CIGAR SMOKE, SWIRLING TOGETHER IN A DANCE OF INDULGENCE. DEEP SHADOWS CARESSED THE CORNERS OF THE ROOM WHERE PLUSH VELVET BOOTHS BECKONED WITH THEIR INVITING OPULENCE, EACH ONE A SANCTUARY FOR WHISPERED SECRETS AND LINGERING GLANCES.

SOFT GLIMMERS OF LIGHT REFLECTED OFF POLISHED SURFACES, CASTING AN ALMOST ETHEREAL GLOW THAT ACCENTUATED THE RICH CRIMSON AND MIDNIGHT BLUE DECOR, THE COLOURS MERGING SEAMLESSLY IN THE DIMLY LIT SPACE. THE RHYTHMIC PULSE OF THE SAXOPHONE FLOATED THROUGH THE AIR EACH NOTE CURLING AND UNFURLING LIKE TENDRILS OF STEAM FROM A FRESHLY BREWED CUP OF COFFEE, CREATING A TAPESTRY OF SOUND THAT FELT BOTH INTIMATE AND EXHILARATING. IN THE MIDST OF THIS SENSORY SYMPHONY, HUSHED WHISPERS THREADED THEIR WAY THROUGH THE MUSIC, DELICATE AND CONSPIRATORIAL AS IF THE VERY WALLS HELD THEIR BREATH AWAITING THE REVELATION OF LONG-HELD SECRETS.

AS HE ADJUSTED TO THE AMBIENCE, A FLICKER OF SOMETHING AMISS CAUGHT HIS ATTENTION. IT WAS SUBTLE, ALMOST IMPERCEPTIBLE-YET THE DETECTIVE'S INSTINCTS WERE HONED TO PERCEIVE THE SLIGHTEST DEVIATIONS FROM THE NORM. PATRONS, DRAPED IN THEIR FINERY WERE SLIPPING OUT THROUGH THE UNASSUMING BACK DOOR, ONE BY ONE, THEIR MOVEMENTS FLUID AND UNHURRIED, AS IF CHOREOGRAPHED. EACH TIME THE DOOR CREAKED OPEN A FAINT RUSH OF COOL AIR SLIPPED IN. MINGLING WITH THE WARMTH OF THE BAR, BRINGING A HINT OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD THAT FELT DISTANT AND FOREIGN AMIDST THE ALLURE OF THE SETTING.

MOMENTS LATER, THEY WOULD RETURN, STEPPING BACK INTO THE FOLD LIKE SHADOWS RECLAIMING THEIR FORM THEIR EXPRESSIONS UNCHANGED, AS THOUGH THE BRIEF ABSENCES HAD BEEN NOTHING

MORE THAN A FLEETING DAYDREAM. THE DETECTIVE'S BROW FURROWED, SUSPICION CREEPING IN LIKE A SLOW TIDE. WHAT WAS HAPPENING BEHIND THE VELVET CURTAIN OF GLAMOUR? WHAT CLANDESTINE DEALINGS WERE ORCHESTRATING THIS BALLET OF SECRECY?

THE DETECTIVE STEPPED INTO THE SHADOWY EMBRACE OF THE ALLEY BEHIND THE BAR, HIS SENSES IGNITING WITH THE STORMY SYMPHONY OF THE NIGHT. THE AIR WAS THICK WITH THE DAMP SCENT OF RAIN-SOAKED ASPHALT,

A SICKLY SWEETNESS MINGLING WITH THE ACRID METALLIC TANG OF IRON. IT WAS A SMELL THAT CLUNG TO THE BACK OF HIS THROAT REMINISCENT OF SOMETHING FOREBODING SOMETHING THAT WHISPERED OF VIOLENCE AND DESPAIR LURKING JUST OUT OF SIGHT.

WITH EACH CAUTIOUS STEP THE DETECTIVE FELT THE UNEVEN PAVEMENT BENEATH HIS SHOES. THE SHARP CRUNCH OF SHATTERED GLASS CRUMBLED UNDERFOOT, EACH SHARD A REMNANT OF THE NIGHTLIFE THAT HAD SPILLED INTO CHAOS JUST HOURS BEFORE. HE PAUSED HIS BREATH HANGING IN THE COOL AIR AS HE SCANNED THE DIMLY LIT SPACE, SHADOWS DANCING LIKE PHANTOMS AGAINST THE BRICK WALLS. A FLICKERING NEON SIGN FROM THE BAR CAST AN OTHERWORLDLY GLOW, ILLUMINATING THE DANK CORNERS WHERE SECRETS FESTERED.

AMIDST THE LITTER OF FORGOTTEN BOTTLES AND STREWN DEBRIS, SOMETHING GLINTED-AN IRIDESCENT SHARD OF A BEER BOTTLE, JAGGED AND SHARP. HE ALMOST DISMISSED IT AS ANOTHER RELIC OF DRUNKEN REVELRY A CASUALTY OF THE NIGHT'S DEBAUCHERY, WHEN A FLASH OF CRIMSON CAUGHT HIS EYE. HIS HEART RACED AS HE CROUCHED CLOSER, THE GLIMMER OF BLOOD SOAKING INTO THE GLASS LIKE A VIVID PROMISE OF VIOLENCE. IT POOLED AND RAN A STARK CONTRAST AGAINST THE DULLNESS OF THE ALLEY'S GRIME.

HIS INSTINCTS PRICKLED, URGING HIM TO INVESTIGATE FURTHER. HE SHIFTED HIS GAZE TO THE NEARBY TRASH BIN, A METAL SENTINEL OF DECAY THAT BORE WITNESS TO THE CITY'S DARKEST SECRETS. THE LID HUNG ASKEW THE REFUSE SPILLING OVER LIKE AN AFTERTHOUGHT. AND HIS BREATH CAUGHT AS HE NOTICED THE UNMISTAKABLE OUTLINE OF A BODY HIDDEN AMONG THE REFUSE. A CHILL SLITHERED DOWN HIS SPINE AS HE APPROACHED, EACH HEARTBEAT ECHOING LOUDER IN THE SUFFOCATING SILENCE.

WITH TREMBLING HANDS, HE PULLED ASIDE A TATTERED BLANKET REVEALING THE CORPSE-A MAN WHOSE FEATURES WERE PALE AND DISTORTED, LIFELESS EYES

STARING INTO THE VOID. RECOGNITION WASHED OVER HIM LIKE ICY WATER: THIS WAS NO NAMELESS VICTIM. IT WAS THE MISSING HUSBAND, LEONARD, THE ONE WHOSE DISAPPEARANCE HAD CAST A SHADOW OVER THE SMALL COMMUNITY. THE DETECTIVE'S PULSE QUICKENED, THE GRAVITY OF THE MOMENT PRESSING DOWN LIKE A VICE.

AS HE EXAMINED THE BODY, A GLINT OF COLOUR SNAGGED HIS ATTENTION-A SMEAR OF LIPSTICK BRIGHT AND VIBRANT AGAINST THE PALLID SKIN OF THE MAN'S NECK. THE SHADE A BOLD RED WITH A HINT OF SOMETHING ELSE, STRUCK A CHORD DEEP WITHIN HIM, AN ECHO OF A MEMORY THAT WOULD COME RUSHING BACK LATER. IT WAS A DISTINCTIVE HUE, ONE HE KNEW WELL AND THE REALIZATION SENT A SHIVER OF DREAD SPIRALLING THROUGH HIS VEINS.

THE DETECTIVE STRAIGHTENED, HIS MIND RACING WITH POSSIBILITIES AS HE ABSORBED THE SCENE -THE RAIN THE BLOOD, THE SHATTERED GLASS AND THE INTIMATE BETRAYAL CAPTURED IN THE TRACE OF LIPSTICK. IT WAS THE BEGINNING OF A TANGLED WEB, A SINISTER NARRATIVE THAT WOULD PULL HIM DEEPER INTO A NIGHT HE WOULD NEVER FORGET. THE TENSION THICKENED AROUND HIM, WEAVING A TAPESTRY OF SUSPENSE AS HE PREPARED TO UNRAVEL THE DARK STORY LURKING BENEATH THE CITY'S VENEER, WHERE EVERY SHADOW HELD A CLUE AND EVERY HEARTBEAT ECHOED WITH THE PROMISE OF DANGER.

AS THE VELVET CURTAIN OF THE BAR SWUNG CLOSED BEHIND HIM, THE DETECTIVE TOOK A MOMENT TO STEADY HIS BREATHING, ALLOWING THE TUMULT OF EMOTIONS SWIRLING WITHIN HIM TO SETTLE. THE DIMLY LIT INTERIOR WELCOMED HIM BACK A STARK CONTRAST TO THE CHAOS HE HAD JUST WITNESSED. EVEN AMIDST THE CLINKING OF GLASSES AND DISTANT LAUGHTER, AN UNSETTLING TENSION LINGERED, A GHOSTLY ECHO OF THE HORROR HE HAD JUST UNCOVERED.

HIS GAZE WAS DRAWN TO THE STAGE, WHERE A SINGER BATHED IN THE SOFT GLOW OF A SOLITARY SPOTLIGHT CAPTIVATED THE CROWD. SHE WAS A VISION OF BRILLIANCE, HER PRESENCE MAGNETIC AS SHE MOVED EFFORTLESSLY WITH THE RHYTHM OF THE MUSIC.

HER LIPS, PAINTED A BOLD CRIMSON, SHIMMERED LIKE FRESH BLOOD UNDER THE LIGHT-AN EERIE REMINDER OF THE VIVID STAIN HE HAD SEEN ON THE LIFELESS BODY. THE JUXTAPOSITION OF HER VIBRANT ALLURE AGAINST THE STARK HORROR HE HAD JUST WITNESSED SENT A SHIVER COURSING THROUGH HIM AND HE FOUGHT TO SUPPRESS THE TREMOR THAT THREATENED TO REVEAL HIS INNER TURMOIL.

WITH CAREFUL STEPS HE APPROACHED HER, THE LIGHT OF THE STAGE ILLUMINATING HIS FACE AS HE BROKE INTO A SEMBLANCE OF CASUAL CONVERSATION. YOU'VE GOT QUITE A CAPTIVATING PERFORMANCE, HE BEGAN HIS VOICE STEADY BUT LACED WITH AN UNDERCURRENT OF TENSION. "THAT SHADE OF LIPSTICK SUITS YOU BEAUTIFULLY. MAY I ASK WHERE YOU FOUND IT?"

HER SMILE WAS SWEET AND DISARMING, AN ENCHANTING CURVE OF LIPS THAT SEEMED TO HOLD SECRETS OF THEIR OWN. "THANK YOU," SHE REPLIED, HER VOICE SMOOTH LIKE SILK. "BUT IT'S NOT MINE. I BORROWED IT FROM EVE." THE NAME HUNG IN THE AIR BETWEEN THEM LIKE A WHISPER OF INTRIGUE THAT PIQUED HIS INTEREST.

EVE. HE MENTALLY ETCHED THE NAME INTO HIS MEMORY, THE COOL DETACHMENT OF A DETECTIVE MASKING THE ANXIETY CLAWING AT HIS CHEST.

AS THE DIM GLOW OF THE BAR'S VINTAGE SCONCES FLICKERED AGAINST THE POLISHED MAHOGANY SURFACE, THE DETECTIVE MADE HIS WAY TOWARD THE ELEGANT FIGURE SEATED AT THE END OF THE BAR. THE AIR HUMMED WITH THE LOW MURMUR OF CONVERSATION, INTERSPERSED WITH THE CLINK OF GLASSES AND THE SOFT JAZZ PLAYING IN THE BACKGROUND CREATING AN ATMOSPHERE THICK WITH INTRIGUE. EVE, HER PRESENCE ILLUMINATED BY THE WARM LIGHT, WORE A SHADE OF CRIMSON LIPSTICK THAT SEEMED TO DANCE WITH EVERY FLICKER OF THE CANDLE FLAMES CATCHING HIS ATTENTION AS HE APPROACHED HER.

"NICE LIPSTICK," HE SAID, ALLOWING A CHARMING SMILE TO SLIP ONTO HIS LIPS, THE COMPLIMENT ROLLING OFF HIS TONGUE LIKE HONEY.

EVE LOOKED UP, HER EMERALD EYES SPARKLING WITH A MIX OF GRATITUDE AND PLAYFULNESS. "THANK YOU! THOMAS, THE BARTENDER, GOT IT FOR ME. SAYS IT MATCHES MY PERSONALITY. BOLD AND A LITTLE RISKY," SHE REPLIED, HER VOICE SMOOTH AND INVITING, LACED WITH A HINT OF MISCHIEF.

THEY FELL INTO AN EASY CONVERSATION, WHERE SMALL TALK FLOWED LIKE THE DRINKS THAT WERE SERVED AROUND THEM. THE DETECTIVE FEIGNED THE ROLE OF AN ORDINARY PATRON, BUT BENEATH THE CASUAL BANTER, HIS MIND WAS A WHIRLPOOL OF THOUGHTS PIECING TOGETHER FRAGMENTS OF CLUES LIKE A JIGSAW PUZZLE MISSING A FEW VITAL PIECES.

EVE WAS DISARMING HER LAUGHTER LIKE THE TINKLING OF WIND CHIMES, AND HE FOUND HIMSELF ENCHANTED. HER WIT DANCED AROUND HIM, WEAVING AN INVISIBLE THREAD THAT PULLED HIM CLOSER WITH EACH SHARED JOKE AND KNOWING GLANCE. YET BEHIND THAT CHARM, A FLICKER OF SUSPICION LINGERED IN HIS MIND. WHAT SECRETS LAY BEHIND HER SMILES?

THEIR MEETINGS BECAME A REGULAR OCCURRENCE: THE BAR TRANSFORMED INTO THEIR SANCTUARY, A WORLD CLOAKED IN SHADOWS AND WHISPERS. OVER THE SPAN OF SEVERAL VISITS, THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THEM DEEPENED.

THE DETECTIVE WOULD TELL HIMSELF IT WAS MERELY FOR THE SAKE OF HIS INVESTIGATION THAT HE WAS GATHERING INTEL ON A POSSIBLE SUSPECT. BUT WITH EVERY STORY SHE SHARED-EVERY SUBTLE SMILE AND FLEETING TOUCH-HE FELT THE LINES OF HIS CONVICTION BEGIN TO BLUR.

AS THE NIGHTS STRETCHED ON. EVE OPENED UP ABOUT HER LIFE WITH A HESITANT GRACE. SHE SPOKE OF A HEART ONCE SHATTERED, OF BETRAYAL THAT GNAWED AT HER TRUST LIKE A RELENTLESS TIDE ERODING THE SHORELINE. "I WAS CHEATED ON," SHE CONFESSED ONE EVENING, HER VOICE LOWERING AS IF AFRAID THE WALLS MIGHT OVERHEAR HER PAIN. "I DESPISE UNFAITHFUL MEN. IT'S HARD FOR ME TO LET ANYONE IN NOW."

HER VULNERABILITY HUNG IN THE AIR. HEAVY AND POIGNANT, AND THE DETECTIVE COULD FEEL THE WEIGHT OF HER WORDS SETTLE WITHIN HIM. EACH REVELATION TUGGED AT HIS HEARTSTRINGS. IGNITING A MIXTURE OF EMPATHY AND CONFUSION. WAS SHE TRULY A VICTIM, OR WAS THERE MORE TO HER STORY? THE QUESTION GNAWED AT HIM, BUT EACH GLANCE INTO HER EYES STEERED HIM AWAY FROM SUSPICION AND TOWARD A DESIRE TO PROTECT HER, TO SHIELD HER FROM THE WORLD THAT HAD WRONGED HER SO.

ONE NIGHT EVE LEANED AGAINST THE COOL GRAFFITI-STREAKED WALL OF THE BAR'S ALLEYWAY, THE DIM LIGHT FLICKERING OVERHEAD CASTING A WAVERING GLOW ACROSS HER FEATURES. THE AIR WAS THICK WITH THE SCENT OF DAMP ASPHALT AND THE FAINT RESIDUE OF LAST NIGHT'S RAIN, A LINGERING REMINDER OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE BAR'S CROWDED INTERIOR. AS SHE SPOKE TO THE DETECTIVE, HER VOICE HELD A CASUAL TONE, A STARK CONTRAST TO THE TENSION THAT WRAPPED ITSELF AROUND THEM LIKE A SHROUD.

"THOMAS, THE BARTENDER?" SHE REMARKED, A HINT OF ADMIRATION COLOURING HER WORDS. "HE ALWAYS CLEANS THIS ALLEY, EVEN THOUGH IT'S NOT HIS JOB. I DON’T KNOW WHY HE DOES IT. MAYBE HE JUST LIKES THINGS TIDY." HER EYES MOMENTARILY LOST FOCUS, AS IF SHE WERE ENVISIONING THE WAY THOMAS'S STRONG HANDS BUSILY SWEPT AWAY THE REMNANTS OF THE CITY'S NEGLECT.

THE DETECTIVE'S MIND, SHARP AS A BLADE, SNAPPED TO ATTENTION. HE HAD BEEN OBSERVING THOMAS FOR DAYS NOW, HIS DEMEANOUR SHIFTING FROM AFFABLE BARTENDER TO SOMETHING MORE COMPLEX, MORE SHADOWED. THE DETECTIVE COULDN'T HELP BUT NOTICE THE WAY THOMAS'S GAZE OFTEN DRIFTED TOWARD EVE WHEN HE THOUGHT NO ONE WAS WATCHING-A FLASH OF LONGING QUICKLY MASKED BY A VENEER OF PROFESSIONALISM.

"INTERESTING," HE REPLIED, HIS TONE CASUAL YET THREADED WITH A PROBING CURIOSITY. HE LEANED AGAINST THE BRICK WALL, MIRRORING EVE'S RELAXED POSTURE, ALLOWING THE SHADOWS TO VEIL THE INTENSITY BREWING BENEATH HIS SURFACE.

THOMAS'S NAME LINGERED IN THE AIR AS HE MADE HIS APPROACH, HANDS WIPING A NON-EXISTENT SPECK FROM HIS APRON. HARRIS CAUGHT HIS EYE, AND THE BARTENDER OFFERED A TIGHT SMILE HIS MOVEMENTS BETRAYING A SUBTLE TENSION.

"DID YOU KNOW THAT MAN THEY FOUND HERE, THE MISSING HUSBAND? THEY SAID HE CAME IN FOR A DRINK JUST BEFORE... WELL YOU KNOW." THE DETECTIVE STRUCK UP A CONVERSATION, INVITING THOMAS INTO THE FOLD OF THEIR DISCUSSION. "I USED TO KNOW HIM A BIT, YOU KNOW. SEEMED LIKE A DECENT FELLOW. ALWAYS HAD A FRIENDLY WORD FOR THE REGULARS." HIS WORDS, INNOCUOUS ON THE SURFACE WERE LACED WITH A CAREFUL INTENT, A DELIBERATE BAIT.

"OH, YEAH? HE WAS FRIENDLY ENOUGH." THOMAS REPLIED HIS TONE BETRAYING AN UNDERCURRENT OF BITTERNESS. THE WAY HE EMPHASISED FRIENDLY MADE HARRIS'S INSTINCTS FLARE: JEALOUSY DRIPPED FROM HIS WORDS LIKE VENOM .

EVE WATCHED THE EXCHANGE A SHIVER OF IMPATIENCE CREEPING UP HER SPINE. SHE SENSED THE ATMOSPHERE THICKENING THE BALANCE OF THEIR SMALL GATHERING SHIFTING WITH THE WEIGHT OF UNSPOKEN TRUTHS. "YOU KNEW HIM. THOMAS?" SHE VENTURED, ATTEMPTING TO BRIDGE THE WIDENING GAP THAT HAD BEGUN TO FORM.

"HE WAS-" THOMAS PAUSED HIS FISTS TIGHTENING AROUND THE RAG HE CLUTCHED. "HE WAS FRIENDLY WITH YOU WASN'T HE?" HIS GAZE FLICKERED TO EVE, A MIX OF HURT AND POSSESSIVENESS FLASHING ACROSS HIS FEATURES.

THE DETECTIVE'S MIND RACED, WEAVING A TAPESTRY OF POSSIBILITIES THAT FELT TOO NEAT TOO EASY. EVE'S SOFT LAUGHTER, THE WAY THE MISSING HUSBAND HAD LEANED INTO HER KISSED HER CHEEK PERHAPS, IGNITING SOMETHING FERAL WITHIN THOMAS. A FLASH OF IMAGES FORMED: THOMAS, SIMMERING WITH JEALOUSY, LOSING CONTROL THE ARGUMENT ESCALATING UNTIL IT TURNED VIOLENT.

IN HIS MIND, HE SAW IT ALL-THE CONFRONTATION IN THE ALLEY, THE BETRAYAL IGNITING AN UNQUENCHABLE RAGE. HE ENVISIONED THOMAS DRAGGING THE BODY INTO THE SHADOWS DISPOSING OF IT CARELESSLY, THE VERY ALLEY HE NOW KEPT SPOTLESS BEARING WITNESS TO THE HORROR THAT HAD UNFOLDED. THE PIECES CLICKED INTO PLACE WITH AN ALMOST SINISTER SATISFACTION.

YET BENEATH THE SURFACE, A GNAWING DOUBT LINGERED, BUT THE DETECTIVE SHOVED IT ASIDE. HIS BURGEONING FEELINGS FOR EVE CLOUDED HIS JUDGMENT, BLURRING THE LINES BETWEEN RIGHT AND WRONG. EACH GLANCE SHE CAST HIS WAY PULLED HIM DEEPER AND HE COULDN'T SHAKE THE FEELING THAT HE HAD UNCOVERED THE TRUTH, NO MATTER HOW GRIM.

AS THE SHADOWS DANCED AROUND THEM, THE ALLEYWAY FELT ALIVE WITH SECRETS, ITS BRICKS SOAKED IN STORIES OF LOVE, JEALOUSY, AND DEATH. THE DETECTIVE WAS DETERMINED TO CONFRONT THOMAS, TO PIECE TOGETHER THE MYSTERY THAT TIED THEM ALL-EVE THOMAS AND THE GHOST OF THE HUSBAND-INTO A WEB THAT THREATENED TO ENSNARE THEM ALL.

DAYS LATER, THE DIMLY LIT BAR PULSED WITH LIFE, EACH FLICKERING CANDLE CASTING ELONGATED SHADOWS THAT DANCED UPON THE WALLS, AS IF ECHOING THE RHYTHM OF THE SULTRY JAZZ THAT ENVELOPED THE AIR. THE MUSIC SWELLED, WRAPPING AROUND THE PATRONS LIKE A WARM EMBRACE, IGNITING THE VERY ATMOSPHERE WITH AN INTOXICATING ALLURE. AT THE CENTRE OF THIS VIBRANT WHIRLPOOL STOOD THE DETECTIVE AND EVE LOST IN A WORLD OF THEIR OWN-A UNIVERSE CRAFTED FROM SHARED GLANCES AND UNSPOKEN DESIRES.

EVE SWAYED GENTLY AGAINST HIM, HER MOVEMENTS FLUID AND GRACEFUL LIKE A LEAF CAUGHT IN A PLAYFUL BREEZE. THE FABRIC OF HER DRESS CLUNG TO HER CURVES, SHIMMERING UNDER THE SOFT GLOW OF OVERHEAD LIGHTS EACH TWIRL RELEASING A WHISPER OF JASMINE THAT SEEMED TO LINGER IN THE AIR LONG AFTER SHE PASSED. THE DETECTIVE FELT THE HEAT RADIATING FROM HER, IGNITING A FIRE DEEP WITHIN HIM. A YEARNING THAT TRANSCENDED MERE ATTRACTION. .

WITH EVERY STEP. EVERY SUBTLE BRUSH OF THEIR BODIES, THEIR GROWING BOND TOOK ROOT BLOSSOMING AMIDST THE VIBRANT CHAOS SURROUNDING THEM

AS THEY SPUN TOGETHER. EVE'S EYES SPARKLED WITH A MISCHIEVOUS GLIMMER. A SECRET DANCE OF THEIR OWN. IN A MOMENT BOTH TENDER AND FLEETING, SHE REACHED UP HER FINGERS DEFTLY SLIPPING A FOLDED NOTE INTO THE POCKET OF HIS JACKET-A GESTURE SO SUBTLE THAT IT FELT LIKE A PROMISE WHISPERED BENEATH THE CACOPHONY OF THE NIGHT. HER FACE WAS SERENE, AN ENIGMATIC BLEND OF VULNERABILITY AND STRENGTH THAT MADE THE DETECTIVE'S HEART RACE. THE WORLD AROUND THEM FADED, THE MUSIC DIMMING TO A MERE ECHO AS HE FOUND HIMSELF ENTRANCED BY THE GENTLE CURVE OF HER SMILE.

YET IN THE SHADOWS OF THIS BLISSFUL TABLEAU. THOMAS, THE BARTENDER, STOOD RESOLUTELY BEHIND THE COUNTER, HIS HEART A TEMPEST OF BITTER EMOTIONS. HE WIPED A GLASS WITH A CLOTH, BUT HIS GAZE REMAINED FIXED ON EVE AND THE DETECTIVE. JEALOUSY CLAWED AT HIM. A RELENTLESS SPECTRE THAT HAUNTED HIS THOUGHTS. HE HAD WATCHED EVE WITH A MIX OF ADMIRATION AND SORROW, KNOWING DEEP DOWN THAT THIS WOULD BE THE LAST TIME THEIR PATHS INTERTWINED. THE BITTERSWEET PANG OF REALISATION PIERCED HIM LIKE A SHARD OF GLASS: SHE WAS SLIPPING AWAY. LEAVING BEHIND THE GHOSTS OF A LIFE HE HAD IMAGINED WITH HER.

EVEN SO, AN UNEXPECTED WARMTH BLOOMED WITHIN HIM. THE THOUGHT OF HER ESCAPING THE TANGLED WEB OF MEN WHO HAD SOUGHT TO ENSNARE HER BROUGHT A BITTERSWEET SMILE TO HIS LIPS. HE WOULD TAKE THE BLAME IF IT MEANT SHE COULD FINALLY SOAR FREE, UNBURDENED BY THE CHAINS OF HER PAST. AS THE DETECTIVE PULLED AWAY MOMENTARILY. CAUGHT IN THE AFTERGLOW OF EVE'S INTOXICATING PRESENCE. THOMAS FELT A SURGE OF DETERMINATION COURSE THROUGH HIM. IT WAS A SMALL SACRIFICE, BUT ONE HE WAS WILLING TO MAKE.

THE DETECTIVE STILL RIDING THE THRILL OF HER NEARNESS, STEPPED AWAY, THE AMBIENT SOUNDS OF THE BAR ENVELOPING HIM IN A COCOON OF EXHILARATION. HE GLANCED BACK AT EVE, HIS HEART THRUMMING LIKE A DRUM IN HIS CHEST THE FOLDED NOTE IN HIS POCKET A TANGIBLE REMINDER OF THE CONNECTION THEY SHARED. EACH BEAT RESONATED WITH THE PROMISE OF WHAT COULD BE A TANTALISING MYSTERY WAITING TO BE UNRAVELLED IN THE DIM LIGHT OF THE BAR WHERE PASSION AND PAIN INTERTWINED CREATING A VIVID TAPESTRY OF EMOTIONS.

THE DETECTIVE HAD LEFT THE DANCE FLOOR ONLY FOR A MOMENT, A SMILE STILL ON HIS FACE WHEN HE STEPPED INTO THE BATHROOM.

THAT WAS WHEN HE FOUND IT-THE NOTE FOLDED NEATLY IN HIS POCKET, WORDS THAT CURLED AND CUT LIKE SMOKE. IN AN INSTANT, THE PUZZLE FELL TOGETHER: THE KISS ON THE DEAD MAN'S NECK, THE JEALOUSY HE HAD MISREAD, THE STRANGE MAGNETISM THAT HAD PULLED HIM TO HER FROM THE START. IT WAS HER. IT HAD ALWAYS BEEN HER. HEART POUNDING. HE TORE OUT INTO THE NIGHT JUST AS SHE SLIPPED THROUGH THE FRONT DOORS OF THE CLUB. FOR A MOMENT HE CAUGHT SIGHT OF HER DARK HAIR AND THE SWAY OF HER FIGURE IN THE CROWD, BUT THEN SHE WAS GONE-SWALLOWED BY THE CITY, BY THE RAIN, BY THE ENDLESS SHADOWS THAT SEEMED TO WELCOME HER HOME. HE SEARCHED, BUT THERE WAS NO TRACE, NO FOOTPRINT, NO LINGERING SCENT OF PERFUME. ONLY THE MEMORY OF HER HAND IN HIS AND THE ECHO OF HER LAUGHTER. SHE HAD VANISHED, AS IF SHE HAD NEVER BEEN THERE AT ALL-LIKE THE LAST CURL OF SMOKE RISING FROM A FORGOTTEN CIGARETTE, WARM FOR ONLY A HEARTBEAT BEFORE FADING INTO THE NIGHT.

GRADE 11/5:

ANNANDALE, ANESKA

CHITJA, DITEBOHO

DAMANEYT, ZAKHELE

DENGANA, MILA

DYOLISI, SIMNI

ENGELBRECHT, LU- JEAN

JENYA, AMARIAH

JENYA, UEL

LEOKAOKE, TSHEPANG

LUDWIG, JAMES

MASENG, TSHIMOLOGO

MASILELA, MOLEMO

MATLALA, UNATHI

MODISE, OMOLEMO

MONAISA, OMPHILE

MOSENAMI, PHENYO

MOSTERT, SARIKA

MOTHEI, CHRISTIAN

MULLER, CHRISTIAAN

OKECHUKWU, CHIDI

RAKOTSI, LERATO

ROOTMAN, LEONARD

SLAMBERT, EDLYNNE

VAN BELKUM, BEN

VAN STADEN, ALEX

MIDNIGHT RAMBLER

GRADE 11/4

WELL I'M A-TALKIN' BOUT THE MIDNIGHT RAMBLER

AND DID YOU SEE ME JUMP YOUR GARDEN WALL

AND IF YOU EVER CATCH THE MIDNIGHT RAMBLER

STEAL YOUR MISTRESS FROM UNDER YOUR NOSE

GO EASY WITH YOUR COLD FANGED ANGER

I'LL STICK MY KNIFE RIGHT DOWN YOUR THROAT BABY, AND IT HURTS

VICTORIA COULD HEAR THE SONG DANCE ALONG THE NARROW ALLEYWAY, ALMOST IN TUNE WITH THE CLICK OF HER HEELS AS SHE APPROACHED THE JAZZ CLUB, WHICH RESORTED TO ROCK 'N ROLLWHEN THEY WERE NOT BUSY OR CLOSED.

SHE ENTERED THE CLUB, IGNORED THE STARES AND HEADED STRAIGHT FOR THE BAR, SLAMMING A FILE DOWN ON THE COUNTER. "WE NEED TO TALK."

PHARMACEUTICAL CEO, TIM HAWKINS, FOUND DEAD IN A HOTEL NEAR MIRAGE JAZZ CLUB ON SUNDAY 23 NOVEMBER.

VICTORIA SIGHED, READING OVER THE ARTICLE. THE PUBLIC WAS A PROBLEM OF ITS OWN, ALWAYS STICKING ITS NOSE WHERE IT DID NOT BELONG. SHE TURNED ON THE RADIO, BODY RELAXING A BIT AS THE CHORUS TO CHERRY RED BLUES PICKED UP.

JUST THEN THE SHRILL OF THE PHONE DROWNED OUT THE ONLY PEACE AND QUIET SHE HAD HAD IN MONTHS. WITH A SIGH SHE PICKED UP THE PHONE AND A WOMAN'S VOICE IMMEDIATELY ANSWERED. "HELLO? IS THE LONDON POLICE DEPARTMENT? I AM LOOKING FOR VICTORIA WELLS", THE WOMAN'S HONEYED VOICE SEEPED THROUGH. "THIS IS HER", VICTORIA SIGHED, TRYING TO SOUND AS KIND AS POSSIBLE. "OH GOODIE! I HAVE SOME INFORMATION THAT MIGHT HELP WITH THE MURDER, TIM HAWKINS'S MURDER", THIS IMMEDIATELY MADE VICTORIA SIT UP STRAIGHT. "GO ON", SHE SAID, THAT FAMILIAR EXCITEMENT OF A CASE TUGGING AT HER NAVAL AS THE WOMAN RAMBLED ON.

VICTORIA GLANCED AT THE CLOCK. IT WAS ALMOST MIDNIGHT.

VICTORIA HAD GOTTEN A GREAT AMOUNT OF INFORMATION FROM THE WOMAN. ACCORDING TO HER, THE MAIN SUSPECT, EMMA LEWIS HAD A SISTER, NAMELY AVA LEWIS. THE WOMAN APPARENTLY KNEW THE TWO SISTERS ALONG WITH TIM, AND HIS WIFE. TIM HAD MARRIED TWO YEARS BACK, WHILST KEEPING UP WITH BOTH AVA AND EMMA, WHICH HE CLAIMED TO BE HIS MISTRESSES. AVA HAD A MENTAL BREAK AND WAS SENT TO A MENTAL INSTITUTE NEAR THE IRISH COAST. NO CONTACT WAS MADE WITH HER FROM THEN ON.

VICTORIA HAD MADE HER WAY TO THE COFFEE MACHINE, GETTING READY TO INTERROGATE EMMA, WHEN A WOMAN WITH A BRIGHT, RED LIP AND TIGHT CURLS ENTERED. "I HAVE INFORMATION". SHE SOUNDED EXACTLY LIKE THE WOMAN OVER THE PHONE, BUT NOT WANTING TO JUMP THE GUN, VICTORIA HEARD HER OUT, AS EMMA AND THE REST OF THE AUTHORITIES WERE ALREADY RUNNING LATE FOR THE INTERROGATION. THE WOMAN SAT DOWN ACROSS FROM HER AND STARTED, LETTING OUT A DRAMATIC SIGH. "I THINK THAT EMMA DID IT. SHE HAD REASON, CLAIMING THAT SHE WANTED TIM ALL TO HERSELF", THE WOMAN HUFFED AND VICTORIA HAD TO ADMIT THAT SHE WAS VERY SCEPTICAL. TIME SLOWLY WASTED BY AS THE TIGHT CURLED WOMAN KEPT ON RAMBLING ON ABOUT EMMA, NOT EVEN HINTING THAT SHE KNEW HER IN THE FIRST PLACE.

JUST THEN, THE WOMAN'S VOICE WAS INTERRUPTED BY A CALL. RELIEVED, VICTORIA TOOK IT. "VICTORIA, ABOUT EMMA, SHE WAS FOUND DEAD THIS MORNING BEFORE HER HEARING. THEY RULED IT OFF AS A SUICIDE EVEN THOUGH THERE IS EVIDENCE OF MURDER". STUNNED, VICTORIA TURNED, SEEKING OUT THE WOMAN SHE WAS LISTENING TO, BUT ONLY FOUND AN EMPTY COUCH AND LIPSTICK STAINED MUG IN HER ABSENCE. WHO WAS THAT WOMAN?

VICTORIA CALMED HERSELF, TAKING A DEEP BREATH IN. "ANY INFORMATION ON TIM'S DEATH?", SHE ASKED, WITH WHICH THE MAN IMMEDIATELY REPLIED, "YES, HE WAS POISONED. FROM WHAT WE GATHERED, A DIFFERENT WOMAN HAD COME UP FROM BEHIND TIM, SHE RAMBLED ON ABOUT SOMETHING AND OFFERED HIM A CIGAR. IT WAS LACED, A SLOW POISON, THAT IS WHY HE HAD ONLY DIED IN HIS SLEEP THAT NIGHT, RIGHT BEFORE MIDNIGHT, WITH EMMA WHO ISN'T OUR CRIMINAL. SOMEONE ELSE IS." JUST THEN, IT FELT AS IF IT ALL CLICKED INTO PLACE.

VICTORIA GRABBED HER KEYS, STUMBLING AS SHE PULLED HER COAT ON. SHE RUSHED OUT, SEARCHING FOR THE WOMAN. FINALLY, SHE SPOTTED HER, ABOUT TO GET INTO A CAB. "WAIT! WHO ARE YOU?", VICTORIA CALLED OUT. THE WOMAN SIMPLY GOT IN, ROLLED DOWN THE WINDOW AND ANSWERED, "AVA."

WEEKS PASSED BY AND VICTORIA WAS SLEEP DEPRIVED, AND IN SEARCH OF THE WOMAN, AVA, SHE HAD CALLED HERSELF. SHE THEN MADE ONE FINAL CALL. "RENEWAL COASTAL INSTITUTION, HOW MAY I HELP?", A WOMAN'S SMOKE DAMAGED VOICE RUNG THROUGH. "VICTORIA, DETECTIVE FROM LONDON POLICE DEPARTMENT. CAN YOU TELL ME IF YOU HAVE A PATIENT BY THE NAME OF AVA LEWIS?", VICTORIA ASKED, CHEWING HER BOTTOM LIP. "AVA? OH YES, BUT SHE WAS RELEASED, LET'S SEE...FOUR WEEKS AGO", THE WOMAN ANSWERED. FOUR WEEKS AGO...

VICTORIA PUT THE PHONE DOWN. SHE FELT AS THOUGH A DOUBLE DECKER BUS HAD HIT HER STRAIGHT BETWEEN THE EYES. TIM HAWKINS WAS KILLED NO LESS THAN FOUR WEEKS AGO, THE SAME TIME AROUND WHEN THIS MIDNIGHT RAMBLER OF A WOMAN, AVA LEWIS WAS RELEASED.

GRADE 11/4:

BLOEM, NOELLE

BOKVELDT, RACHEL

BOTHA, KEESHA

BOTHA, LETLOTLO

CALDER, CAMERON

DAMOYI, ZOLISWA

DU PLESSIS, MISCHA

GANI, ZAYYAAN

HASSIM, LAAIQAH

HOWARD, JAMY-LEIGH

JONES, LIZA

LOUW, KIERAN

MALEPE, GOMOLEMO

MANAMELA, WHANECIA

MOLAPO, BOIPELO

MOSELLA, OLERATO

MOSS, ROZALYNNE

MOTARA, KHADIJAH

MOTSHOANE, KGOSI

NDHLOVU, NKOKA

RAMOHANOE, KEA

SALE, LUCA

SEIPHEHLO, GOMOLEMO

SOOLIMAN, HASSAANAH

SOUTER, WILLIAM

STAPELBERG, ANGELIQUE

XHUMA, NOSIPHO

NOIR

PHILIP GRICIUS GR 12

BLOOD, SWEAT AND TEARS

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT ME?

I LOVE HOW SILK TEARS

HEARTS SHATTER, GLASS

OBSIDIAN INCISIONS

O SWEET, SWEET RED LOVE

A HEARTBREAK DEATH

SILKY SWEAT, SHINE

SUFFERING REGRET

DROP OF SWEAT

HARD TIMES

SALTY TEARS

BITTER BLOOD

PAINFUL REGRET

SECRETS LEFT UNTOLD

DO YOU REALLY KNOW ME?

LIRA OLIVER GR 8

Phase
When Submission Is Not An Option
Ruchel Reyneke

CHAPTER I

"Dianne! I need help changing!", a loud voice called out from down the hallway, demanding attention. My gaze lifted up from my studies, sighing before getting up and replying, "I'm coming, Jayden." *Can't he change himself?* Walking down the hallway of our house, I caught a glimpse of my sister packing her bag but searching for something else...Her tiny figure dashed around the room, almost wrecking everything, "What are you looking for?" Natashia stopped running around, turning to me with teary eyes, "I can't find my notebook for school and I can't remember where I last put it!" My gaze softened ever so slightly before stepping closer, "Did you look under your bed? In your drawers?" She quickly looked where I asked her if she looked and sure enough, she found it. *Just be patient with them.* Before she could thank me, Jayden yelled louder than before, "DIANNE!" My eyes narrowed slightly before calling out over my shoulder, "Yeah! I'm coming!" Natashia held back a giggle before shoving her notebook into her bag and tossing it over her shoulder. Quickly, I turned away, striding to his room with more tension than before and opened his door, seeing him on the bed, head and foot stuck in his shirt. *How is that even possible?!* A chuckle escaped my lips as I leaned against the door frame, crossing my arms, "Wow...You almost got it." my voice was tinged with sarcasm, getting a glare from him. "Can you just shut up and help me?!", demanded he, his face red with frustration. His gaze was still blazing with anger but that didn't bother me one bit. Instead, I kept teasing him as I helped him, him just quiet taking the tease.

After a few painful minutes, his head and foot was out, everything in place. *You're welcome.* Jayden hesitated for a few moments before muttering a thank you and pushing past me. *He's still a softie even if he doesn't want to admit it.* That just left me unfinished. I still had to pack everything up and get changed but I

could do it later, my class starts at 12:45 am, which leaves me with...five more hours to go. "Guys! You're going to be late!", a deep stern voice called out from down stairs, making Natashia and Jayden run down stairs with their bags. I followed them and saw mom in the kitchen, making waffles, the sweet aroma filling the air, making everyone's mouths water. *Oh my soul...Mom always makes the best waffles.* Dad sat in the dining room, reading a newspaper, his glasses on the tip of his nose, making him look as stern as always. His piercing blue eyes flickered up, glaring at all of us. "Do you have everything? I'm only driving once.", his voice sent shivers down all our spines and I saw Jayden tense up. Everyone frantically nodded, not wanting to get on dad's bad side whilst mom placed a gentle hand on dad's shoulder, trying to break the ice. "Honey, don't be so hard on them, they're just kids.", her voice was as gentle as a feather. His eyes softened a bit and he just tilted his head back to look at her, a small smile playing on his lips. Jayden's face scrunched up in disgust at their close faces whilst Natashia beamed with happiness. *Sometimes I just wonder on which side mom is. Our side or dad's side...* "Dad, can we just go? We're going to be late and you know how mean Mnr. Johnson can get!", Jayden's voice cut through the intimate air, causing dad's face to go stern again. *Way to go, Jayden...*

By the time dad and the others left, me and mom were the only ones home. The atmosphere was peaceful and light as we spoke. "How's the studying coming along?", asked she as she washed the dishes and leaving them for me to dry, "It's going alright, just a lot, but I'll pull through." Her soft green eyes met mine, making all my tension ease. *I still don't know how she does that...She just does...* My lips twitched up into a small smile and she smiled in response.

After cleaning the entire house, it was time for me to go to school. I threw on some classic clothes and pulled my hair back into a messy bun. "Notebooks, check. Pencil case, check. Text books, check. Alright, looks like I have everything..." my voice slowly cut off when I heard a scream...An ear-splitting sound, cutting

through the silence. "Mom? Are you alright?" A few minutes later, mom's voice came through, light and cheerful, "Of course! I'm just starting with the food! Why?". Confusion struck. *If it wasn't mom who screamed, then wo did?* I shrugged off the sense of unease before grabbing my bag and running down the stairs, yelling, "Bye mom! I'm off! Love you!" Mom yelled back and I left. As I walked, I still couldn't shake off the feeling that I was missing something...Instead, I took out my phone and headphones, playing some calming music. *Hopefully, I don't come home too late. I still have so much to do.*

CHAPTER II

The moment I step foot in the house, Natashia ran to me with open arms, clearly happy to see me. Jayden leaned against a wall, crossed arms as he stared at us, looking disgusted. *Rude.* Dad was in the kitchen with mom, helping with dinner whilst Natashia ran off to fetch something in her bag. When I closed the door, the same scream echoed in my ears, louder than before…My eyes narrowed ever so slightly, trying to silence the scream without making it obvious that something was wrong. “Mind setting the table?”, asked dad, making me jolt at the sudden voice. Mom looked at me with soft, concerned eyes before going back to cooking. I nodded and started setting the table. *The same scream? How is this possible? Same tone, only louder…* Natashia came running to me, waving her spelling paper up at me with a wide grin, “Look! I got another A+!”. Her energy was infectious. A big smile played on my lips, happy for her. That was until another scream echoed through my ears, the sound ear-splitting… My face scrunched up in pain but I instantly put on a forced smile, trying to keep my cool before I lose it.

After dinner was done, the table was filled with chatter and laughs. Mom talked about what happened at home, dad who ran meetings after meetings, Natashia who got another A+ and Jayden failing yet another one. I just talked about my boring High school life. *Heh. Some things never change.* Suddenly, Jayden blurted out,“Someone was watching me at school!” A pin drop silence fell across the table, everyone’s eyes on him. My eyes snapped to his face, searching for any fear but found nothing, no fear, no nothing… Dad looked furious whilst mom looked concerned, “Honey…Are you serious? When did this happen?” Jayden picked up a fork and took a bite, speaking with food in his mouth, “Just some random guy wearing black clothes and a weird clown mask. No big deal. He was probably just some cosplayer looking for attention.” *No big deal? No big deal?!* Dad finally spoke through gritted teeth, his jaw tight, “During recess or during class time?” It took a few seconds for him to reply and when he did, my

blood ran cold… “Both.”, said he, looking unbothered. Natashia was staring at him with wide eyes, looking scared whilst mom had her hands infront of her mouth. A sudden tension filled the air threatening to consume all of us… Jayden glanced up and offered a reassuring smile, adding, “I can protect myself, don’t worry about me.”. Everyone was quiet once again… *I sure hope he can protect himself…*

After dinner, I decided to help Jayden out with dishes. Jayden kept complaining and begging not to do it but the moment he heard that I was going to help, that mood turned upside down. I started washing and gave him the job to dry them. *Better than washing isn’t it?* Unfortunately he didn’t look too thrilled to dry off either… *What was going on with him?* Slowly, I looked at him and asked, “You sure you’re okay?…It’s not easy to…you know…” Jayden looked up, narrowing his eyes ever so slightly and kept quiet. *Seriously? I’m his sister, he should talk to me!* When I didn’t get an answer, I pressed for answers, “Talk to me, I’m here to listen, really. I can help with support or give advice-” He cut me off with a sharp and raised tone, making my heart break, “Shut up! I’m tired of being belittled! I’m tired of everyone thinking I’m weak and I that I can’t take care of myself! Just drop it! I’ll deal with it on my own!” With that, he threw the cloth down and stormed to his room, leaving me there, frozen. *What? We haven’t belittled him once… Does that mean he’s getting…No…He couldn’t possibly be getting bullied…* That thought made my blood run cold… *I have to tell mom and dad but…that isn’t what he wants…*

I layed in my bed, staring up into the ceiling as I recall the conversation in my mind. *What do I do? I can’t tell them but I also can’t leave him to get bullied…What kind of sister would I be if I let that happen?!* I screwed my eyes shut, trying to keep the negative thoughts out without forgetting about the conversation earlier. My gaze swept across my room, landing on a picture of all of us looking happy… *What went wrong?* I got up, rubbing my eyes before going to the shower. *Perhaps a nice warm shower will do it…I hope…*

A wave of relief washed over me when I stepped out of the shower, drying my hair. Just then, there was a knock on my bedroom door. “Come in!” I called out, trying to fix my hair. The

footsteps were light, signalling mom's arrival. She stood in the doorway, smiling a bit, "Need help?" I chuckle and nodded, "A lot of tangles." Mom instantly grabbed a brush and started working out the tangles gently but firmly. *Man… I missed moments like this..Just peaceful and no distractions*- My thoughts were cut short when I heard a faint humming sound…Sounds like a…woman… I strained my ears to hear if I could zoom in on that sound but it abruptly stopped… *That was weird…* I decided to let it go and just relaxed further, letting her work out the tangles. *I'll be here a while…*

Finally mom finished and kissed me goodnight, before leaving. *I hope Jayden's feeling better…* I got into bed and switched off my lamp. *Well…I can't keep worrying now..gotta sleep, big day tomorrow…*

CHAPTER III

The sound of my alarm blarring, made my eyes snap open in a start. Quickly, I looked over at my alarm only to see I'm late! *I'M LATE!* I threw off the covers, jumping up and running to get ready. *I can't be late!* I threw on some clothes before braiding my hair but looking at the time and deciding to just clip it up. *I don't have time for this!* Quickly, I ran down the stairs, greeting everyone and leaving. *I just hope I can still make it…*

Running down the streets, I couldn't shake off the feeling that someone was watching me…Everytime I looked behind me, I saw nothing nor no one…*What's going on?* Before I could think further, a car whizzed past me, missing me by hair's breath. My whole life flashed before my eyes as I stood there, feeling like my whole world turned upside down… *What. The-* My eyes followed the black car that's racing down the streets without a number plate. That's…weird…I quickly snapped out of it and when I turned around to return to running, I bumped into someone."I'm so sorry! I-I didn't hurt you, did I?" I asked, looking up at them and the moment I did, my heart skipped a beat…There he stood…The same man with the clown mask and black suit…A cold shiver slid down my spine, making every nerve in my body spike in place. He cocked his head slightly to the side, staring at me. *Run…Dammit. RUN!* That's when I ran. I ran for my life. His feet pounded on the pavement, echoing through the streets, people making way for us. *No, no, no..This is bad. This is really, really bad!* My eyes snapped behind me, trying to see how close he was and oh my- he was close… Panic struck and I pushed myself to run faster. My breath came in short, ragged gasps, trying to escape…

The moment I turned a corner, I was greeted by a dead end. *NOT NOW!* I instantly spun around, seeing him standing there, his chest heaving slightly. My eyes widened with fear as he came closer, slowly reaching into his pocket…He pulled out a dagger and approached me, his movements smooth and predatory…*My life can't end here!* My eyes scanned the alley for any escape route

but found nothing…I cautiously took a step back before my back hit the wall. The guy stopped infront of me, tilting his head a bit and raising the dagger to my cheek. My heart thumped against my ribs, threatening to pop out and as if he could hear it, he lowered his head to my ear and whispered, his voice deep and raspy, “Don’t tell anyone about this or you’ll be the next thing at your parent’s doorstep.” The threat hung in the air, making my breath catch in my throat. I frantically nodded and he stepped back, tucking his dagger away… Relief washed over me as I looked at him. He looked at me one more time before turning away and walking off. The sound of my heart was still beating in my ears… *What just happened?! I didn’t die, but I could’ve!*

By the time I stepped into the cafe, my boss stood behind the counter, his arms crossed over his broad chest…*Oh yeah…I’m late…* I lowered my head as I approached, knowing I would get the scold of my life. “You’re late.”, the sound of his deep voice giving me an instant migrane…*Okay…Let’s just get this over with…*

Finally, my lunch started… I went to the back door to quickly eat something and continue my shift. One thing I noticed, no one was outside… *What?* My eyes scanned each corner and each direction but saw no one else. *Strange, usually this place was crowded with other workers…* With the wind whipping through my hair, I sat down and started eating, checking for any new messages. *No new messages.* As I was eating, a strange smell filled the air…The stench of decay and blood made my nose scrunch up in disgust. *What the hell is that smell?* I stood up and tried to follow the smell to try and get rid of it, but when I approached the garbage bins, the smell got worse… Hesitation kept me in place, staring at the bins, debating weither I should look or not. Grabbing courage, I opened the lid and my heart dropped in horror… *No…* In the garbage, a body decayed and brutally killed with a message carved into it's head… *Never Wake Up.* Instantly dropping the lid, I stepped back in horror, my hands tightly over my mouth trying to stiffle a scream. My vision blurred with unshed tears when I turned away and screwed my eyes shut, trying to get the picture out of my mind. The moment I closed my eyes a second time, a vivid image flashed in my mind… *A knife. A..Knife?…* I quickly opened my eyes, trying to forget about the knife and muttered, “I’ve got to tell someone about this..” *Whatever it takes…*

CHAPTER IV

That night, I walked through the door, staring blankly at the floor. Dad sat in the living room, reading the latest newspaper whilst mom was making dinner. “Hey honey, how was work?”, asked dad, glancing up from his paper, his glasses sliding off slightly. I forced a small smile and replied, trying to hide the fact that I was crying, “It was good, made at least a hundred-dollar tip.” Dad looked at me, his expression shifting from friendly to a little more cold… “Were you crying?” My eyes widened, quickly shifting away, “What? No. I wasn’t crying..It’s just allergies.” *Way to go Dianne. The oldest trick in the book.* Before dad could sell me out, mom called out that dinner was ready… *Thanks for the distraction mom…*

At dinner, I was quiet. Answering no questions asked and not saying a single word. *How do I tell them without creating an argument?* “Dianne!”, the sudden call of my name, made me snap out of my thinking state. Glancing up, I saw Mom looking at me with her soft, concerned eyes whilst dad glared at me for not responding earlier. “Yeah? Sorry, I was just thinking about something..” Jayden poked his food as he made a witty remark, “Probably about something she saw but not wanting to tell us..” My gaze snapped to his, stunned. *How did he know?…* A billion question filled my mind, trying to make out how he knew I was hiding something. *Tell them, Dianne. It’s not so hard-* “Mom, Dad, I have something I…want to tell you-” I was cut short when mom’s phone rang and dad’s watched beeped. Mom instantly apologized and picked up, smiling brightly when she heard her friend. Dad sighed, rubbing his temples before getting up and going to the study. Devestation hit, making my heart clench. *Now? I-I wanted to tell them about the body…* Natashia got up as well, gathering all the plates and utensils, taking them to the kitchen, leaving me and Jayden alone. Jayden glanced at me with a wide, mishievous grin. “What?”, I asked him, trying to keep my cool but ended up failing miserably… “Come on, do tell”, replied he, folding his arms over

his chest. A sigh escaped my lips and admitted, “I…found something and…I..can’t forget about it…” Slowly, I glanced up but Jayden already left…*Why won’t anyone stay to listen to me? Maybe I should just…let it go…*

As I lay in bed, I couldn’t help but to replay the actions of the day. *The chase, the threat, the body…Who was this guy and why is this happening?* Closing my eyes, I let myself get lost in the dark of the night. *Perhaps I could…Figure everything out myself? Should I just let it go or try and find whatever is causing this madness?* My eyes opened again and I stared up at the ceiling. That’s when I heard an ear-splitting scream coming from Natashia’s room…Panic struck and I jumped up, sprinting to her room. *Please be okay…* I bargded through the door, glancing around for any sign of her but saw she was…*fine*? Natashia looked up from her studies, looking me up and down, “What’s wrong?” I stared at her with confused, worried eyes. “You..screamed?” She fully looked at me, looking just as confused as I did, maybe even more than me. “I didn’t scream, I didn’t even speak.” *If…she didn’t scream, then what was happening?* Slowly, I just stepped out of the room, quietly closing the door behind me. *“DIANNE!”* the brutal and devestating cry echoed through my mind once again, causing my face to twitch in pain. *Just ignore it, Dianne… Don’t give your mind the satisfaction it wants…*

Braiding my hair in my bedroom, Dad suddenly entered. “You busy, kiddo?” I kept quiet and just continued with my hair. He closed the door behind him before coming to sit on my bed. “Everything okay?” I slowly stopped braiding my hair and turned to him with puffy eyes. “No..” Dad’s expression changed instantly, opening his arms and inviting me for a tight and comforting embrace…That’s when the dam broke. Tears fell freely, gripping his shirt tightly as I cried into his shoulder. He held my hair with his left hand whilst rubbing my back with his right. *I shouldn’t be crying but…it makes me feel better…*Dad murmured, “It’s okay…Cry it out…I’m here..” Just those words made me feel lighter. Like the whole world was lifted off of my shoulders and onto his. Dad’s comforting words suddenly stopped and his whole body tensed up…I hesitantly pulled back and looked up at him only to see his gaze fixed on something behind me. Following his gaze, I saw nothing when looking at my closet. “Dad? What’s wrong?”, I asked carefully,

trying to grab his attention again. He snapped back into reality before answering, “Nothing, kiddo. Just thought I saw something. The sleep deprevation is finally getting to me.” Dad added a dry joke at the end, trying to lighten the mood and I couldn’t help but to crack a smile. Dad let out a light chuckle along with me before getting up and planting a soft kiss to the top of my head, “Good night, sweetie. Sleep tight.” his voice was soft and loving…*Why couldn’t he always be this loving?* I followed his movements all the way until he finally left, his posture slightly tense…*It’s just the lack of sleep, he’s been very busy the last few days…*I hope.

CHAPTER V

Logan

After my encounter with Dianne, my mind kept returning to what I saw. Seeing myself walk past us when I comforted her made my hair stand up…Wearing the exact same thing I was wearing with the same hairstyle…*It's just your imagination, Logan.* Walking down the stairs to the kitchen, Amy stood washing the dishes, looking as beautiful as always. The moment I started approaching, a faint voice made me stop, *"Don't"* The voice was hollow and raspy, causing me to question my own sanity. Amy turned around and looked at me with a questioning gaze. "How's Dianne?", asked she, her tone gentle and sweet. I pinched the bridge of my nose, admitting, "Not good…She started crying and she still doesn't want to tell me what's wrong…" She strode closer, her footsteps light and took my hand in hers, "Just give her space…She'll come around, I promise…" I gently squeezed her hand before letting go and asking, "Are Jayden and Natashia in bed? They're writing test tomorrow and I don't want them staying up too late." Amy nodded and relief washed over me. *At least someone's listening…Now…For the meeting…*

Sitting in the study, I kept my eyes on the laptop screen as the other members spoke. The sounds of their voices started to become distant as I replayed the conversation with Dianne. I stared blankly at the screen rarely focusing on the task at hand. A sudden giggled filled the room, childish and muffled. A shiver ran down my spine, making every hair on my body stand up. I looked up and the giggle abruptly stopped…*What the…*Slowly I returned to the meeting when the giggle came through again…Louder and louder…My gaze snapped up and the moment it did, I wish I hadn't seen what I just saw…There I stood…Staring at myself with a twisted smile…Anxiety and fear mixed together like oil and water, not knowing which one to feel…Trying to shift deeper into my chair, the guy came closer and the smile twisted more. *What the-* My thoughts were cut short when the guy suddenly spoke, "Admit it." I blinked and then…he was gone…Rubbing my eyes, I glanced back at the door again and still didn't see him again…*This sleep deprevation is seriously getting to me…*

Waking up with a massive headache, I glanced at the alarm. *07:30 am.* A groan escaped my lips when I sat up, rubbing my temples. *Another sleepless night…*Throwing off the covers, I got up and started getting ready for work. Combing my hair and adding gel, I glanced at the mirror, my eyes roaming across my own face. *Eye bags…Great..Now I look even more tired than usual…*Turning on the tap, I washed my face but when I dried my face, my heart almost stopped. There he stood again, behind me in the mirror with his twisted smile. His eyes were wider and his smile grew after last night…*What's going on?!* I closed my eyes and took a deep, opening them again, he was gone…*I think it's time to get a sleep therapist to get some serious help. I'm going insane.*

On my way to the therapist, I couldn't shake off the feeling that I was being watched. Everytime I turned around, there was no one. Turning a corner, I was caught in traffic…Slamming my head against the steeringwheel, a heavy sigh escaped my lips. *Just the perfect day to get stuck in traffic…* A black car pulled up beside me, also getting stuck, the windows tinted darkly. I couldn't help but to glance at it when the window rolled down. *What does this guy want now-* The driver was wearing a clown mask with a black suit…Wait…The guy slowly looked at me, making me tense slightly. *Isn't that the same guy Jayden said was watching him?…* Quickly avoiding eye contact, I returned my gaze to the road up ahead. *Act cool, act normal.* The moment traffic got better, the black car sped off, leaving everyone else in the dust.

"Yes, an appointment for 12 pm is fine," I said, as the receptionist wrote down in her book. "Alright, sir. You can come back later for your appointment." She gave a friendly smile and I smiled back, thanking her. *Good riddance. Now I can get my sanity back. Hopefully.* Walking out of the phsyciatric hospital, I glanced at my watch. *Still got an hour before my appointment, might as well make the best of it. Coffee shop, here I come.* As I was walking, I saw that the streets were more crowded than usual…A sense of unease washed over me the moment I heard a woman speak, "Did you hear about the incident?" Pushing past them, I just decided to ignore them, thinking they were just being paranoid but when I came to the crossing, the whole world turned upside down… *What…happened…* On the pavement before me, laid a man, crooked and broken, blood pooling around his head…My eyes were

frozen in place, staring at the man…*Who…would do such a thing?…* Before I could turn away, something caught my eye. In the corner of my eye, I spotted the same man with the clown mask earlier, staring at me as if I was his next target…Fear finally gripped me, feeling like a hand was pushing down onto my chest. It's getting harder to breathe. *Get out of there, Logan…Get out of there!* Even though I wanted to run, my legs wouldn't cooperate…The sound of people screaming finally came through and that was my key to run. So, I ran. I ran for my life. *Coward. You're being such a coward!*

Bardging through the coffee shop's doors, everyone's gaze landed on me, staring at my trembling and exhausted figure. *I'm not used to running like this anymore…*I flashed my best 'Don't worry about me' smile before going to the counter to order a caramel latte. *That should take my mind off of things.*

Waiting in the waiting room of my new therapist, I couldn't help but to bounce my leg with anxiety. *What if I'm too crazy? What if he can't help me? What if it's just the lack of sleep? What if-* The 'what if' thoughts were cut short when the assistant called my name, "Mr. Logan, he's ready for you." Slowly standing up, I followed her, trying to keep my anxiety to a minimum. The halls seemed longer than before…More quiet…

"I've been seeing myself walk around and…having a weird, twisted smile…I've never seen that and I think I might be losing my mind..", I admitted, staring up at the ceiling whilst the therapist was taking notes. "Where have you seen it?", asked he, looking up to get my reaction. "In my study, in the mirror…", I trailed off, trying to recall all my encounters with myself. *Why does all of this feel like a lie?* "It's just the sleep deprevation that's getting to you. I'll give you some better sleep medication and a new eating schedule. You'll be good as new after a week." John helped me sit up and handed me the perscription.

I seriously just hope this will work…
Don't let this just be a damn lie…

CHAPTER VI

“Dad, is everything okay? I heard you were at the phsyciatric hospital.”, asked Natashia, her eyes big with curiousity and confusion. Mom was next to him, hand on his back whilst Jayden was fuming with rage. I tried to calm him down but ended up starting an argument instead… “You can’t expect me to calm down if there’s something wrong with dad!” growled he, his dark eyes sharp. My eyes narrowed to slits and I retorted, “It’s hard enough to struggle and put up with your complaining all day! Why can’t you just, be normal for once? Stop being such a disgrace!” The whole room went quiet, even Jayden…For once in my life, he looked…hurt… *Dianne…What have you done?…*Jayden balled up his fists and fought back tears as he turned away and stormed to his room. The sound of the door slamming shut made the house sound emptier…I turned to Natashia and she stared at me with shock and disbelief, questioning my own thoughts…*I…didn’t mean to say that…I…* My gaze shifted to mom’s and dad’s but…they couldn’t even look me in the eye.

Softly knocking on the door of Jayden’s room, he called out, “Go away..” *Had he been crying?…* “Listen, Jay…I’m…sorry…I didn’t mean to be so crude…I..I’m just worried about you and dad, and sis…” I trailed off, hesitating to push further…Before I could continue, the door opened and he stood there, gaze down, trying to fight back tears. Slowly I lowered to my hunches and took his face in my hands, “Jayden…Look at me…I’m sorry..” Jayden finally lifted his gaze to look at me, his eyes shining with unshed tears. “I’m sorry if I’m making it hard for you to stay focused…” Those words made my heart to break into more pieces than it should’ve. Without thinking twice, I pulled him into a tight hug, trying to comfort him as much as I could. His hands balled up in my shirt, finally crying infront of me. *He never cried infront of me or us before…* I murmured into his hair, “Better?” Jayden nodded his head slowly and I let go. “You’re never a disgrace okay? You’re the strongest person I know…Don’t let anyone tell you otherwise.” He nodded with a little more confidence, showing that his heart was lighter.

The next day, I sat in the living room, reading my newest book. It's a little more empty at home since dad was out of town for a business trip, Jayden at a sleepover and Natashia at a school fare. Which meant it was just me and mom at home. *Finally, some peace and quiet.* As I was reading, a sudden image of a fire filled my mind…*Strange…There was no fire scene in my book…* Confusion filled my thoughts but I pushed it aside and kept reading. Minutes after that image, mom got a sudden phone call from Jayden's best friend's mom… "Hello? Yes, this is me. Is everything okay?" , asked mom but what she heard next, made her drop her phone. I instantly sat up and asked, "Mom, what happened? Is everything okay?" Mom was too shocked with grief that she couldn't speak…The sudden feeling of unease filled the air causing my stomach to turn. "Jayden's dead…" mom's whisper hung in the air like a cold reality… My pupils dialated instantly, feeling my whole body going numb. "He…burned to death…" Realization crossed the moment she had said that…*The fire…The fire in my mind…No…No, no, no, no, no…* A cry of grief escaped my mouth and I fell to the ground, crying my heart out. Mom joined me, holding me tightly but not even her hugs helped to get the feeling of guilt and pain out of me. *This is all my fault…If I hadn't started that argument, none of this would've happened…*

Sitting in his room, eyes puffy and red, I stared at our family picture. My eyes roamed over his face, taking in each freckle and each mark on his face…*What went wrong?…*My vision started blurring with unshed tears once again the moment I stared too long at the picture. It was hard to except reality, to except that he was gone…*He was still so young…*I quickly wiped the tears away when mom walked in, trying to appear strong but she could see through my facade. "Oh honey…I know it's hard…", mom's voice cracked with sadness and I looked away, afraid to let her see my true pain. "What happened? How did he…", I trailed off, struggling to find the right words. Mom looked away, her tone dropping to a sad whisper, "They..were in the kitchen, baking some cookies when one of the gas bottles exploded…The friend's okay but Jayden…" Mom sniffled, crying again… "Call dad…Tell him to come home and tell Natashia to come home as well…We can't keep this from them.."

Hell broke out when the others heard the news…Dad almost had a heart attack of anger and grief whilst Natashia kept denying reality. I couldn't bare to see my whole family fall apart like this so I ran upstairs to my room, slamming my door shut.

After what felt like hours of crying, I finally found the courage to continue with my studies. Grabbing my books out of my bookshelf, I looked at myself in the mirror, but the moment I did, I saw something that made me freeze… *I saw you…*A cold shiver ran up my spine into my neck. *Saw what?…* Quickly looking away, I brushed it off and sat at my desk, opening my math book. *Just shut out all the distractions and focus.*

CHAPTER VII

A few months after Jayden's death, things were never the same…Mom was more protective over us whilst dad grew more strict. Natashia was never allowed to sleep over with her friends nor go to late night events at school. As for me, I wasn't allowed to go to the library alone anymore. Either dad would take me or I wasn't allowed to go.

"Mom, can I please go to that science fare? It starts at twelve. Please mom…", begged Natashia, trying every trick up her sleeve…The puppy eyes, the jutting lip, everything. Mom let out a long sigh and reluctantly agreed. Natashia was beaming with joy and pride, knowing she got to her. I couldn't help but to let out a light chuckle at her silly nature. The atmosphere was lighter and more fun when mom also started laughing. *This was what I was used to…The light atmosphere, the jokes…*Natashia suddenly grabbed my hand and dragged me to her room. "Help me pack for the science fare!", she didn't ask, she just assumed I would help. "Hey, where's the please?" , I asked, raising an eyebrow. She gave a sheepish grin and answered, " 'Please' can you help me?", there was a way she emphasized the 'please' that made me raise my eyebrow even more. *Was that sarcasm?* Before I could return the sarcastic remark, the sound of shattering glass suddenly filled the air. Loud and clear. *What the-* My head whipped behind me but I saw nothing, the windows weren't broken, the pictures were intact, vases weren't broken…*What…Where…* She must've seen my shook up body language because she asked, "Are you okay? You just whipped your head as if you heard something.." Putting on a brave face, I brushed off her concern and replied, "I'm okay, just heard something. Our neighbours are greek, remember? They're probably having a party." Natashia chuckled and I grabbed her hand, "Come on, let's join the party."

Running down the stairs with her hand in mine, I grabbed two plates in the kitchen without mom knowing and handed her one, "Let's smash these to bits." We both ran outside to the backyard and on the count of three we smashed the plates whilst chiming together, "WHOMPA!"

Our laughter mixed together that filled the air, creating a much lighter atmosphere.

By the time we arrived at her school, we were a bit late. *Most likely 10 minutes late.* Natashia ran to her stall and packed everything out. “Go, Natashia! Show them your big brain!”, I beamed, throwing my hands in the air. She shot back a bright smile and stretched her arms before doing her new experiment. *Wait…Why isn’t she wearing the safety gear?…* Slight anxiety pushed up to the surface but I decided to push it back down, telling myself I was just being delusional. That’s when disaster struck…

As she was mixing up the substances, a bird suddenly sat on the table and she got the scare of her life…With that scare, she mixed too much of one substance that the base exploded…*NATASHIA!* Each shard shot into her neck, cutting the main pulse and she fell down… “NATASHIA!”, the desperate cry got ripped out of my throat, sprinting to her as fast as I could. The air was filled with gasps and screams but I couldn’t care less about them. The moment I turned to look behind the stall, a gasp escaped my lips. I could feel my eyes shake with horror as I stared down at her…Her chest wasn’t rising, nor falling..She was just…still…
No…No…What…How…Why… I dropped to my knees beside her, reaching out with trembling hands. Brushing a strand of hair out of her face, my finger tips brushed against her cold skin…Blood pooled around her neck, the shards lodged deep into her skin…*It’s…too…late…She’s dead…*A strong pair of hands grabbed my arms, pulling me away from her and I cried out in anguish. I tried to dig my heels into the ground to try and stop them from dragging me away but they wouldn’t budge. *WHY WAS THIS HAPPENING?!* My whole body strained against their grip, trying to get out, but no luck…They just kept dragging me away from the scene and into the empty school.

Looking up at the person, my heart almost stopped. The…clown man…Just when I wanted to scream, he clamped my mouth shut with a gloved hand, staring at me. I swear he must’ve heard the speed of my heart beating because he asked in a hollow voice, “Scared?” A frantic nod made him let go of me and I scrambled back. The guy was on his hunches, staring at me as I tried to get

away from him. Without breaking eye contact, I bumped into someone behind me…Turning around I jolt from the sudden appearance of dad. “Where’s Natashia…” asked he, barely containing his fury. I didn’t answer, instead, I turned around only to see the guy was gone…*How does the guy keep dissapearing like that?!* Dad grabbed my shoulder and turned me to him, his eyes piercing into my soul. “She…died…”, I admitted, shrinking away, afraid of the real dad I could see…

At home, dad was shaking with anger, blaming me for the incident…Just standing there, I took the blame, staring at the floor. *It’s all my fault…I shouldn’t have taken her to the science fare.* Guilt filled me completely and I could feel my heart breaking with each blame.

I’m so sorry dad…I didn’t know…

CHAPTER VIII

Logan

It's been a week since Natashia's death…Things are getting worse…I think I'm starting to lose my mind completely…The grief and anger was starting to take me over…*Stay strong, Logan…*

"I can't eat breakfast now, I'm going to be late for work.", Amy looked at me with her beautiful green eyes and a tinge of guilt crossed my face. "Fine…I'll only eat a toast on my way to work." Her smile grew once again and she handed me a strawberry jam toast. Taking the toast, I kissed her cheek and called out, "Bye, Dianne! I'm heading off to work-" I was cut off when Dianne suddenly ran down the stairs and asked, "Dad, don't go…Can't you just stay home? We…need you.." Hesitation kept me from replying instantly and after a few minutes, I finally replied, "Listen, kiddo, I've got to get to work. I can't take off.." The dissapointment that crossed her face tugged at my heart…*Don't get guilt tripped.*

Turning my car keys, the car wouldn't start…*Not now…I can't be late…*A long sigh escaped my lips and I got out of the car, slamming my door shut. *Gotta call a car repairer, but now, I'm going to have to take the subway.*

Walking down the busy streets of New York, I couldn't ignore the fact that it was a beautiful day. The sun was shining and there were no clouds in the sky. As I was waiting for the traffic light to go red, I tried to come up with a good enough excuse of why I'm going to be late but nothing came to me. Yet. Just then my phone went off and when I picked it up, I saw Amy's name on the screen. "Yes, love? Did I forget something?" The moment I asked that, her voice came through, panicked and cautious, "Just…be careful. Dianne admitted of something she saw." Unease slowly krept up my back but I pushed it aside, "Nothing bad is going to happen. I'm fine. Just tell her she's being paranoid." With that, I hung up, completely ignoring the warning.

At the subway, it was crowded. More crowded than usual. I looked around at the people around me, remembering everything. To the things I've lost and to the things I still have. Seeing a family

nearby, I was reminded of my own. Jayden, Natashia, Dianne, Amy…Well…Only Amy and Dianne are left…I've lost my only son and my youngest daughter…Tears pricked at the corner of my eyes as I recall all our happy and fun memories…Looking to my right, I saw a rich man wearing an expensive suit with his hair combed back perfectly. Two years ago, I've lost my job as a CEO at this big company called 'Phase corporation'. I was accused of fraud and blackmail…*Damn company…* Looking up ahead, I saw this old woman with what seemed like her son, scolding him. *Heh.* Reminds me of my mom…She would scold the hell out of me…

Thinking about my whole life, I heard a sudden scream echoing through the subway…*What the…*A guy fell into the railway and everyone just stood and watched as he fell. *What's wrong with these people?! Aren't they going to do something?! Where's the security?!* Without hesitating once, I sprint forward to the rails and looked down, seeing a guy laying flat on his face. Quickly, I looked left and right for any sign of the train and when I didn't see it, I dropped down. The rocks crunched under my polished shoes when I landed and I shook the guy, "Hey, buddy. Get up, we can't stay here for much longer. Get up!" No response. *Don't tell me this guy is unconcious…*With my patience running out, I shook the guy harder whilst almost screaming, "Get up! We can't stay here!" When there wasn't a response, I decided to turn him around but when I did, my whole body froze…I laid there, with a twisted smile and wide eyes, following my every move…

Before I could get up, a sudden yell snapped me out of it, "HEY! GET OUT OF THERE NOW!", Looking up, I saw a security guy, yelling at me to respond. Confusion hit since the train was no where to be seen and I looked down at myself but I was gone? I looked up again at the guard, not responding or moving but when I wanted to get up, the guard let out a desperate yell, "GET OUT NOW!" Slowly, I looked to my right but when I did, every muscle in my body spiked into place…There was the train…Speeding towards me with unnatural speed. *Move, you idiot. MOVE! NOW-*

The train cut off every thought…The last sounds ringing in my ears were the astonished, horrifying screams of the surrounding crowd.

CHAPTER IX

It's been four hours since we got the news of dad…Mom was a crying mess whilst I bared too much grief to even cry…Mom wouldn't stop crying and she clung to me as I stared blankly at the wall. *Why was this happening to me?…I'm losing everyone I love…* "Honey, I'm so sorry…Dad's gone…My husband's gone…" I didn't have a response to that at all…All I could think of was…

Dad's dead.

Laying in bed, I stared blankly at the ceiling of my once bright room…*First Jayden died, then Natashia…Now dad…What's happening?…Why did they die like that?…It's like they were being targeted…*A massive headache started consuming my mind with a searing pain and I sat up. *Maybe I'm thinking about this too much…*I sat up and decided to go make some coffee. Walking down the stairs, a strange cold breeze hit my face. *The windows aren't open…*I turned to the kitchen and there stood mom, staring at something through the window… "Mom?…Is everything okay? Is there something outside?", I asked, trying to figure out what she was seeing but when I looked in the same direction she was looking, fear gripped my heart. There he stood, holding a knife. The same knife that flashed through my mind… Slowly I reached for mom's hand and she looked at me, confused. "Honey, is everything okay? What do you see?", her tone was soft and cautious. *Wait, so…she..didn't see what I saw?…What's going on?!*

Looking at her, I forced a smile and teased, "Just the most beautiful woman in the world." She let out a sad chuckle and weakly squeezed my hand. *Don't show the fear…*Mom's tears started falling again, "Your father would always say that…" My smile slowly dropped and I just consolled her, trying to take most of the tears I could.

That noon, I was busy cleaning my room when a piercing scream filled the house…*It's just your mind…Don't listen to it…*The scream got louder and more desperate which made me snap back to my senses. *Mom's screaming…MOM'S SCREAMING!* Panic build up and

I sprint down stairs, trying to get to her as fast as I could. “Mom! Mom, are you okay? Where are you?!,” I asked with a desperate tone, searching the bathroom, dining room and finally the bedrooms. *No sign of her…Wait…The kitchen!* Stopping in my tracks, I saw mom standing there, frozen in fear…*Mom?…* “Mom…Why are you screaming?…There’s nothing-”, I was cut off when I saw the guy behind her, gripping a knife tightly but not moving… “Mom…Don’t. Move.” Before she could move, the guy wrapped his arm tightly around her neck, keeping her in place with the knife pressed to her side… “Woah, wait…P-Put the knife down…”, my lips quivered with each word, clearly fearful. The guy slowly tilted his head to the side, staring at me as if waiting for something. Something I didn’t know he wanted. “She…She’s all I have left…Please…I’ll give anything you want…I…I didn’t tell anyone about you…” I was desperate, trying to buy me some time to figure something out. A sudden knock made me jump and I looked at the door with a weird feeling. Looking back at mom, the guy was gone… “Honey…Are you okay?..Who were you talking to?..You scared me for a second there…”, asked mom, tilting her head a bit. I completely ignored her question and went to the front door, openig it only to see our neighbours standing there, holding a box of pastries.

“We heard about your family and…we made this for you.”, The woman held out the box with a gentle smile. I reached out with a shaking hand, taking the box with a slight nod, “T-Thanks, that was…really nice of you…” Her husband smiled and replied, “It’s the least we could do. Take care of your mom and yourself, okay?” I nodded once again and they offered one last smile before leaving. My eyes followed them as they walked away, wondering why they brought things now when they didn’t bring anything the day we moved here. Mom placed a hand on my shoulder and I just handed her the pastries. *I…feel like I don’t know where to go or where to be anymore…*

Opening the door to my room, I got the scare of my life. There sat the guy on my chair, staring at me. “What…are you doing in my room?…How did you-” He cut me off with a raised hand and gestured to the open window. *Well, that explains it…*I slowly closed my door and sat down on my bed, his head following my movements. “What…are you doing here?…”, my tone was hesitant

and tinged with fear. He turned to my family picture and picked it up with a steady hand, staring at it…*Don't ask anything…Just…go with it…* "Look what we could've had…", his tone was hinting at something deeper, something more sinister…"What…do you mean?", I slowly lowered my head before continuing, "…I…had that family…They..died-", he didn't give me a chance to finish my sentence when I heard mom's devestating cry of pain… My head whipped up to look at him but he was already gone…The first thing that came into my mind was that he hurt her…

Time stopped the moment I saw mom on the floor, bleeding out with a deep hole in her chest…I couldn't think anymore…Tears filled my eyes and I dropped to my knees beside her, applying pressure to her wound. "M-Mom, please, hold on. I-I'll get you out of here…", my voice cracked as I tried to ignore the blood on my hands, staining my pale skin. The guy stood over us, the knife loosely in his hand, blood dripping from the tip…*Ignore the blood, Dianne…Just ignore it…* Mom looked at me with wide eyes, her voice strained with pain, "D-Don't worry about me, I'm okay…You'll be…okay…" A single tear rolled down my cheek as the colour drained from her face…Her skin took a more pale colour and the life slowly drained from her eyes. *No..No..No..Mom please…Hang in there…* "None of this would've happened if you just admitted…", his bitter voice came through, staring down at me. Sudden screams and cries forced their way into my mind, causing a raw pain…Driving my blood stained hands into my hair, I tried to make the cries and screams stop with words like, 'stop' or 'no' but it made it worse…

'Admit it' 'Admit it' 'Admit it'

The voices were silenced when he touched my shoulder and my first reflex was to hit. My fist connected with his mask, cracking it slightly. *Wait…It's…glass?…*His head jerked aside, still. The sound of sirens pierced through the silence…*Someone called the cops…Someone called the ambulance…The neighbours.* Staring at mom's body, all I could think about was mom's death…*Why did this happen?…Why is this happening to me?…*The police bardged through the door and pulled me away, assesing the damage, ignoring me completely. *What was going to happen now?…*

CHAPTER X

The sounds of beeping machines were all I could hear as I stared at the hospital's bedding. *What went wrong?* I slowly lifted my gaze to look around, taking in all the decorations. A gentle nurse suddenly entered my room with a clip board, saying, "Welcome back, miss Dianne…" I just stared at her, my eyes weak and my face pale. She walked closer and placed down her clip board, getting a glass with water. "I'm glad you're awake.", her tone was soft and soothing, almost getting to me. She offered me the glass of water but I didn't take it.

"Tell me what happened, maybe I can help.", she offered, giving me a gentle smile but I just stared at her with lifeless eyes. Her smile slowly faded and concern crossed her face. My gaze shifted away and I stared at a girl who skipped past my room, holding a…clown balloon?! Everything came rushing back…The man, my siblings' death, mom and dad's death…My whole body switched into panic mode. My screams echoed through the quiet room, causing the nurse to jump with fright. Uncontrollable tears rolled down my cheeks and I thrashed voilently… The nurse instantly pressed the 'help' button and tried to calm me down with soft words of comfort. *It's not working…I-I can't control myself…*Moments after, a professional doctor came running in with back up nurses. "Calm her down, her blood rate is too high! She's going to have a heart attack!" the doctor sounded worried but stern.

It took at least an hour to calm me down fully. The doctor's chest was heaving with exhaustion, staring at me like I was crazy. "I think it's time to send her to a therapist…We can't keep her…", his voice was quiet as he whispered to the nurse who nodded. *No…I…I don't want to go there…I want to go home…*A single tear rolled down my cheek as I stared at them with a desperate gaze. "Don't…" I whispered, trying to make them change their mind but I couldn't… *It's too late…*

On my way to the phsyciatric hospital, I sat in the backseat of the doctor's car, staring at my blood stained hands. *The blood still didn't come off…*The doctor looked in the rear view mirror and

asked, “You alright? You’ve been staring at your hands for at least fifhteen minutes.”, I deliberately looked up, staring at him with empty eyes before looking down again. *I can’t believe I’m going to the phsyciatric hospital…I’m not going insane…I’m fine…*

Laying on the couch, my eyes were glued to the lights built into the ceiling. *How did this happen?* Looking to my left, I saw the guy sitting on a chair next to the couch, the crack in his mask still visible… *He…didn’t bother to fix it?…* “Who are you?…”, I asked with a sad and miserable voice, my eyes roaming over the mask. The guy just kept staring at me for a few more seconds before letting his hand rise to the mask, hesitantly pulling it off…My eyes widened with shock as I stared at…her?…*That’s…me…*I looked at myself sitting next to me with a somber expression…Confusion was the only thing on my mind…*How…can I be there whilst I’m here laying down?…*I tried to look for answers in her eyes but she showed nothing, only deep sadness and recognition. *Recognition of what?.. “Dianne.”*, called a voice. Soft and muffled. Looking away from myself, the voice came again, a little louder than before. My eyes narrowed slightly until I heard the same voice again, “Dianne…” *Who’s calling me?…* Before I could look at myself again, the voice came through, louder, “DIANNE!”

I snapped out of it.

“Dianne, do you remember?…”, asked my therapist, looking at me with deep concerned eyes…My whole world dissappeared when I realized the therapist was talking to me. “Do you know why you’re here?” It took me a minute to figure out why he asked me that but when I did, I answered, “No…” Doctor Braidy let out a soft sigh and asked, “Do you atleast remember her?” *Her?…He meant mom?…*Tears filled my eyes and I looked down, “The..man..killed my mom…A…guy with a clown mask…” my voice trailed off, letting him know what happened but when I looked up again, he admitted, “There wasn’t a man with a mask, Dianne…” I looked at him with sadness and confusion, trying to figure out why he would say that. *What do you mean there wasn’t a man with a mask?…I saw it…I saw him…* “I-I’m not lying…I’m telling the truth…”, Doctor Braidy cut in gently, “You’re lying to yourself…” My gaze fell down to the floor, not believing him until he had to tell me the truth…

“You were five years old when someone broke into your home. Your father got killed infront of you by the robbers, because of that, you developed significant trauma which caused night terrors and hallucinations. The trauma worsent over the years…One day when you turned fourteen, you had a terrible night terror which caused you to hallucinate…Your mother tried to console you but you saw the robber and killed your own mother. She… unfortunately didn’t make it and you’ve been here ever since. It’s been three years, Dianne…The shock was so big that your mind couldn’t process what you did so you relived this life, acting like you still had a mother and a father with siblings…Everytime your siblings and family died, it was your subconsious who tries to bring you back to reality and accept what you did.”, he stopped for a moment to let those words sink in before adding, “I’m sorry, Dianne…” Everything came rushing back like a flood. Everything started making sense and my memories finally came back. *I…killed my mom…* The words felt bitter even in my own mind. “It’s time to move on, Dianne…You can’t keep living like this…It’s not good for your mental or physical health…” he trailed off when I looked at him and tears filled my eyes once more.

“Do you think she can forgive me for what I’ve done?…”, my question hung in the air, making the atmosphere feel heavy with guilt and uncertainty. He gave a soft smile, “You’re her daughter, she already did…” My heart burst with acceptance and guilt that tears started falling. Doctor Braidy offered me a tissue but I didn’t take it, instead I hugged him. “I’m so sorry…”, I whispered, repeating the same words over and over again. He rubbed my back and replied, “It’s okay, Dianne. You’re okay. We’ll try our best to help you remember and forget about what you’ve done. I promise.” Those words were all I needed to hear. My heart was feeling lighter than before and I felt better, knowing I can grow from what I’ve done and accept the past.

I’m so sorry for what I’ve done mom…I promise to grow and forgive myself for what I’ve done.

Phase 1 : Acceptance : Complete
Phase 2: Try And Move On : …

The End

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xxx

LIRA OLIVER GR 8

THE NIGHT

MILA DENGANA GR 11

THE NIGHT WAS COLD, AND THE STREETS WERE EMPTY. A MAN WALKED SLOWLY, HIS COAT DRAGGING IN THE DIRT. HIS EYES HAD NO LIGHT IN THEM, ONLY SHADOWS. HE CARRIED A SMALL BOX IN HIS HAND.

EVERY HOUSE HE PASSED LOOKED SAFE, WITH WARM LIGHTS IN THE WINDOWS. BUT HE HATED THAT. HE HATED SEEING PEOPLE HAPPY, WHILE HE FELT NOTHING. HE WANTED THE QUIET STREETS TO FEEL THE SAME EMPTINESS HE CARRIED INSIDE.

HE STOPPED AT AN OLD HOUSE WHERE AN OLD WOMAN LIVED ALONE. SHE ALWAYS SMILED AT HIM DURING THE DAY, BUT HE NEVER SMILED BACK. TONIGHT, HE OPENED THE BOX. INSIDE WAS A CANDLE AND A MATCH. HE LIT THE CANDLE, PLACED IT AT HER DOOR, AND WALKED AWAY.

AT FIRST, IT SEEMED HARMLESS. JUST A CANDLE IN THE NIGHT. BUT HE KNEW WHAT WOULD HAPPEN. THE WIND PUSHED THE FLAME, THE DOOR CAUGHT FIRE, AND SOON THE WHOLE HOUSE BURNED.

FROM FAR AWAY, HE WATCHED THE FLAMES RISE. HE DIDN'T LAUGH. HE DIDN'T CRY. HE ONLY WHISPERED TO HIMSELF, "NOW THE NIGHT IS AS DARK AS ME."

A VINTAGE MOVIE SCENE

PHILIP GRICIUS GR 12

LIFE FLICKERS BY

A VINTAGE MOVIE SCENE

MEMORY FOR MEMORY

TREASURE THESE WITH YOUR HEART

FOR WITHIN A FLASH YEARS PASS

CHAPTERS TOO SHORT

STORIES LONG GONE

BE AWARE THEY SAID

FOR LIFE FLICKERS BY

LIKE A VINTAGE MOVIE SCENE

NOIR

CHIDI OKECHUKWU GR 11

THE CITY WAS A NIGHTMARE, FULL OF CORRUPTION FROM EVERY CORNER, AND SMOKE THAT HAS FOREVER STAINED THE AIR. OUR DETECTIVE KNEW IT BETTER THAN MOST, AFTER ALL HE HAS BEEN THROWN INTO THE STREETS AS A CHILD, SOLD OFF BY PARENTS WHO VALUED MONEY MORE THAN THEIR OWN BLOOD. THE STREETS RAISED HIM, TURNED HIM INTO A MAN WHO TRUSTED NOTHING BUT HIS GUN, HIS INSTINCTS AND IN HIS WHISKEY.

THE BAR DOOR OPENED. AND A WOMAN WITH A RED DRESS ENTERED, IT WAS THE ONLY COLOUR OUR DETECTIVE SAW IN HIS BLACK AND WHITE WORLD. HER PERFUME CUT THROUGH THE STINK OF WHISKEY AND SMOKE. SHE DIDN'T LOOK AT THE BARTENDER OR STARED AT THE MEN THAT GLARED AT HER. SHE WALKED STRAIGHT TO OUR DETECTIVE, STOOD THERE AND WAITED UNTIL HE HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO LOOK UP.

SHE CALLED HERSELF EVELYN. THE DETECTIVE KNEW SOMETHING WAS DIFFERENT ABOUT HER, SHE WAS NOTHING LIKE ANYONE HERE, NOT CORRUPTED BY THE FILTH OF THE CITY. LIKE AN ANGEL IN HELL, THE ONLY CLEAN THING IN THIS DIRTY CITY.

HER STORY WAS SIMPLE A GANG CALLED THE IRON KNUCKLES HAD KILLED HER HUSBAND. SHE WANTED REVENGE. SHE WANTED JUSTICE. JACK KNEW THEM HE PUT PLENTY OF THEIR MEMBERS BEHIND BARS. HE KNEW IT WAS A BAD IDEA BUT HE LOOKED AT HER, SAW THE PAIN IN HER EYES. HE GAVE A SINGLE NOD, AND AGREED TO TAKE THE CASE.

THE CLUES WERE SLIPPING THROUGH HIS FINGERS LIKE SMOKE. THE FRUSTRATION WAS A BITTER TASTE IN HIS MOUTH. THAT'S WHEN SHE'D APPEAR. HER HAND WOULD REST ON HIS SHOULDER, SHE BELIEVED IN HIM, SHE SUPPORTED HIM WHEN NO ONE ELSE DID.

IT WAS THE FAITH HE SAW IN HER EYES THAT MADE THE CLUES FINALLY ALIGN, LEADING HIM TO AN ABANDONED WAREHOUSE. HE WAS SUPPOSED TO WAIT FOR BACKUP, BUT THEN HE SAW HER, THE FLASH OF A RED DRESS, A KNIFE AT HER THROAT.

THE LEADER’S ARM WAS RAISED, READY TO STRIKE. HE BURST INSIDE, WEAPON DRAWN, READY TO SHOOT. BANG! HE NEVER SAW THE GUN IN HER HAND; HER BULLET TORE INTO HIS SHOULDER. SHE WAS NEVER THE VICTIM. SHE WAS THE TRAP.

“PROVING MY LOYALTY HAS A PRICE, SORRY DETECTIVE.” THE IRON KNUCKLES SURROUNDED OUR DETECTIVE; THEY WERE READY TO KILL HIM. SIRENS WAILED, THE GANG VANISHED INTO THE DARK, SHE GAVE HIM A FINAL SMILE BEFORE LEAVING, THIS LEFT HIM WITH THE BITTER TRUTH, SHE WAS NO ANGEL, BUT A DEVIL IN A RED DRESS. AND HIS HEART, NOW AS COLD AND HARD AS THE BULLET IN HIS SHOULDER, WILL NEVER TRUST AGAIN.

NOIR

GRADE 9/3 ENGLISH HL

MARCH 18 1946

TODAY I ARRIVED ON THE SCENE. THE CITY WAS AND GLOOMY AS USUAL, I COULD STILL SMELL THE UNMISTAKABLE SCENT OF A CIGAR AS I PASSED THROUGH THE POLICE TAPE. SHE WAS DEAD, THE "LADY IN RED", SOME POPULAR SINGER IN THE INNER-CITY APPARENTLY, THOUGH OF COURSE HOW COULD I KNOW, I NEVER LEAVE THE OFFICE. SHE WAS FACE UP LAYING IN AN OLD RAIN PUDDLE. HER PALE, BLUE EYES WERE WIDE OPEN AS IF THEY WERE GRASPING FOR SUNLIGHT BEFORE SHE WAS SHOT, RIGHT BETWEEN THE EYES. FROM WHAT I COULD GATHER THIS WAS ANOTHER MOB KILLING. THERE WERE RUMOURS SHE HAD TIES WITH SOME.....UNFAVOURABLE PEOPLE. THE FEDS ARE SICK OF THESE, AND WELL WANT TO PUT ME AND CHARLIE UNDERCOVER TO,"CRACK OPEN THE CASE" AS THE COMMISSIONER SAID. HOPEFULLY IT GOES WELL, BUT WHEN DOES IT EVER GO WELL IN THIS CITY?

MARCH 30 1946

I CAN FEEL MYSELF GETTING CLOSER TO THE TRUTH, EVERY CRUMMY WAREHOUSE, LATE-NIGHT DISCUSSION WITH THUGS. I CAN FEEL THAT I'M GETTING CLOSE TO....SOMETHING.

APRIL 2 1946

I FOUND IT. THE EXACT THING TO TIE SOMEONE TO THE CRIME, A MURDER WEAPON. AN OLD 45. CALIBER REVOLVER BELONGING TO THE "GIOVANNI BROTHERS." FROM WHAT I, "ADREIN", FIGURED OUT WAS THAT THESE TWO RUN MOST OF THE MOB CRIME IN THE CITY. ALL THE HUSH, HUSH EXECUTIONS, MONEY LAUNDERING, DRUG TRAFFICKING YOU NAME IT, THEY RUN IT. ME AND CHARLIE ARE GONNA SET A TRAP TO LURE THEM OUT, AND TAKE THE SCUMBAGS TO THE FEET OF LADY JUSTICE. "ADREIN", WHOEVER IS IN CHARGE OF COVER NAMES NEEDS TO BE FIRED.

APRIL 3 1946

I'M SUCH AN IDIOT. I COULDN'T SEE WHAT WAS RIGHT INFRONT OF MY FACE. WE AMBUSHED THE BROTHERS, BUT ONLY ONE OF THEM WERE THERE. I THOUGHT IT WAS THE STRANGEST THING EVER, LIKE SOMETHING WAS OFF. IT'S LIKE WHEN YOU SEE BEAR CUBS WITHOUT A MOTHER, A SPIDER WEB WITH NO SPIDER, A MAN WITHOUT HIS BROTHER.... THAT'S WHEN I HEARD A CLICK BEHIND ME. THE CLICK I'VE HEARD A THOUSAND TIMES BEFORE, A CLICK I'VE DONE MYSELF, BUT THIS TIME I WAS ON THE OTHER END.

A LOUD BANG, RINGING IN THE EARS, AND I COLLAPSED ONTO THE FLOOR. CHARLIE, MY ONLY "FRIEND", HE SHOT ME IN THE BACK WITHOUT A SECOND THOUGHT. IT WAS COLD, CALCULATED AND RUTHLESS. 10 YEARS I WORKED WITH THE MAN. I SHOULD'VE KNOWN I COULDN'T TRUST ANYONE IN THIS CITY. THIS PLACE IS JUST A DARK, CRIME RIDDEN PIT THAT BREEDS SADNESS,HOPELESSNESS AND DEATH. I LAYED THERE STUNNED AS IF THOUGH I JUST SAW A GHOST. EYES WIDE I COULD SEE THEM BOTH, CHUCKING TO EACHOTHER. THE BROTHERS WERE A UNIQUE PAIR. ONE RUTHLESS CRIME MOBSTER, AND ONE EQUALLY HORRIBLE CORRUPT COP. IN THE KNICK OF TIME SOMEONE SAVED ME. SOMEONE I THOUGHT WAS DEAD.

SHE APPEARED AND SHOT THEM BOTH. A LADY WITH PALE, BLUE EYES STEPPED FROM SHADOWS WITH AN EXQUISITE, BLOOD RED DRESS. TURNS OUT THE LADY IN RED HAD A PRETTY VENGEFUL TWIN WITH SOME GOOD TIMING. THE BROTHERS RULE WAS ENDED, BUT NOW THERE WILL BE A POWER STRUGGLE AMONG THE FAMILIES FOR THE TOP SPOT. MOST SURPRISINGLY YOURS TRULY, DETECTIVE RAY KNOX, LIVES TO SEE ANOTHER DAY. I SHOULD BE OUT OF THE HOSPITAL AND BACK OUT ON THE STREET IN A WEEK. I REALLY DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH I CAN DO THIS ANYMORE. NEXT TIME THERE WON'T BE SOME LOTTERY WINNING LUCK TO BAIL ME OUT OF SOME SITUATION, BUT I'LL CROSS THAT BRIDGE WHEN I COME TO IT. IF THIS CITY TAUGHT ME ANYTHING IT WOULD BE THAT, ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN IN NOIR.

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Waar die Onderwysers deelneem

Baby Pictures (2023)

Theme Songs (2024)

Troeteldier(e) (2025)

Die Yskas Saga (2025)

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Dis net diere waar jy kyk

Raai wie se troeteldier(e) is wie sin

Kliek hier om te raai

Antwoorde

Lilly

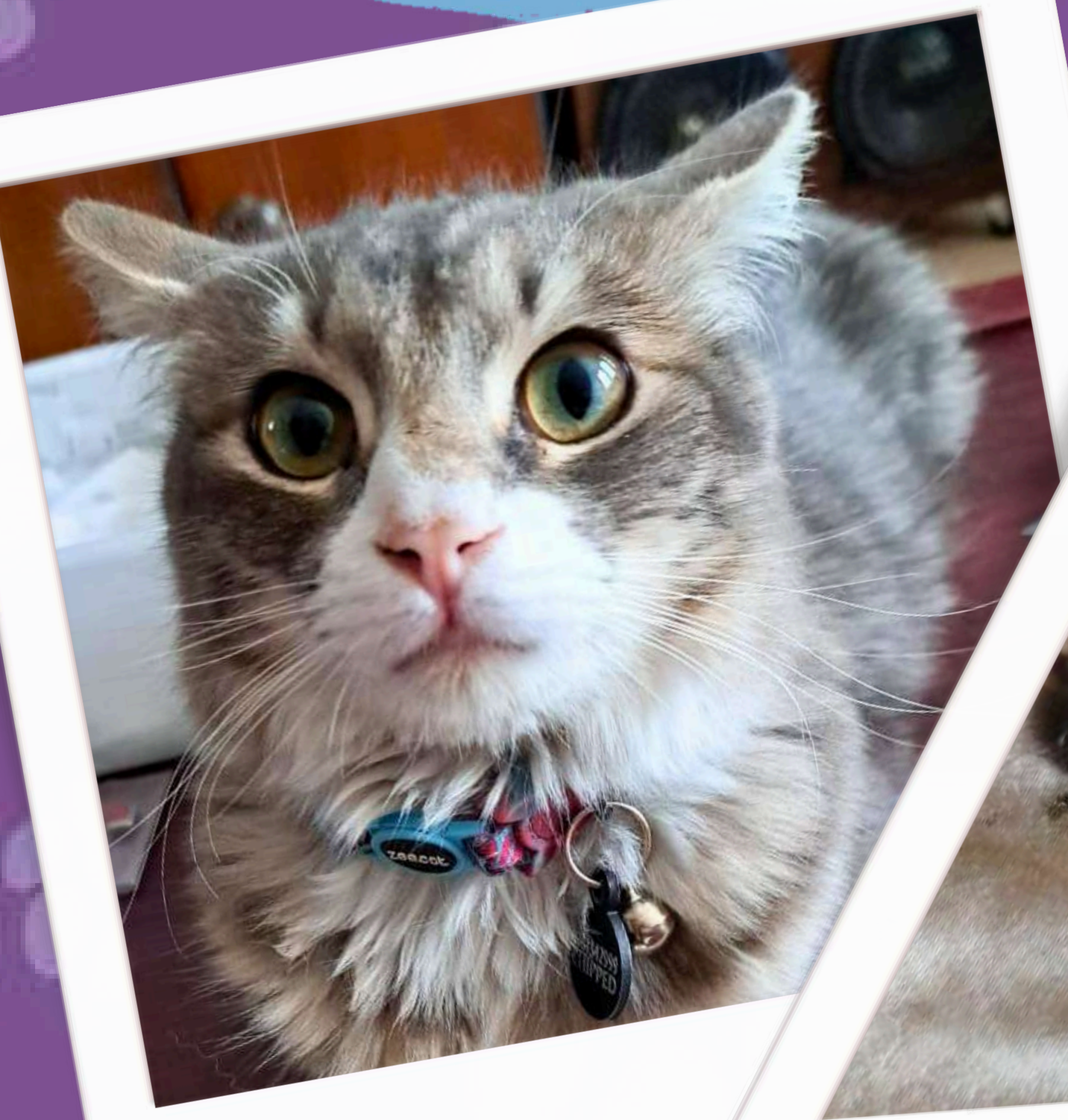
Magha

Nusta & Benji

Plagie

Shadow

Merlin & Nyx



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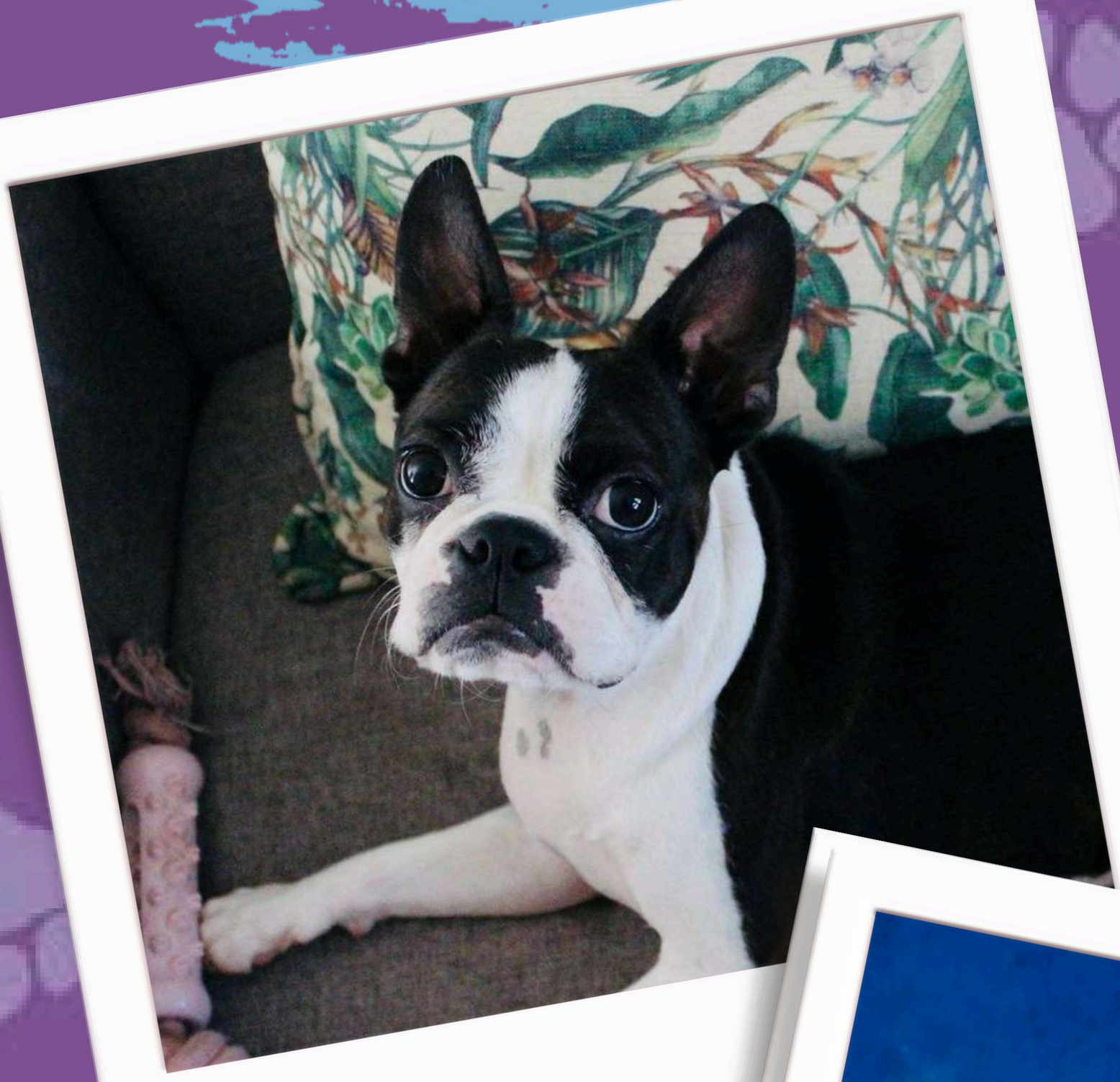

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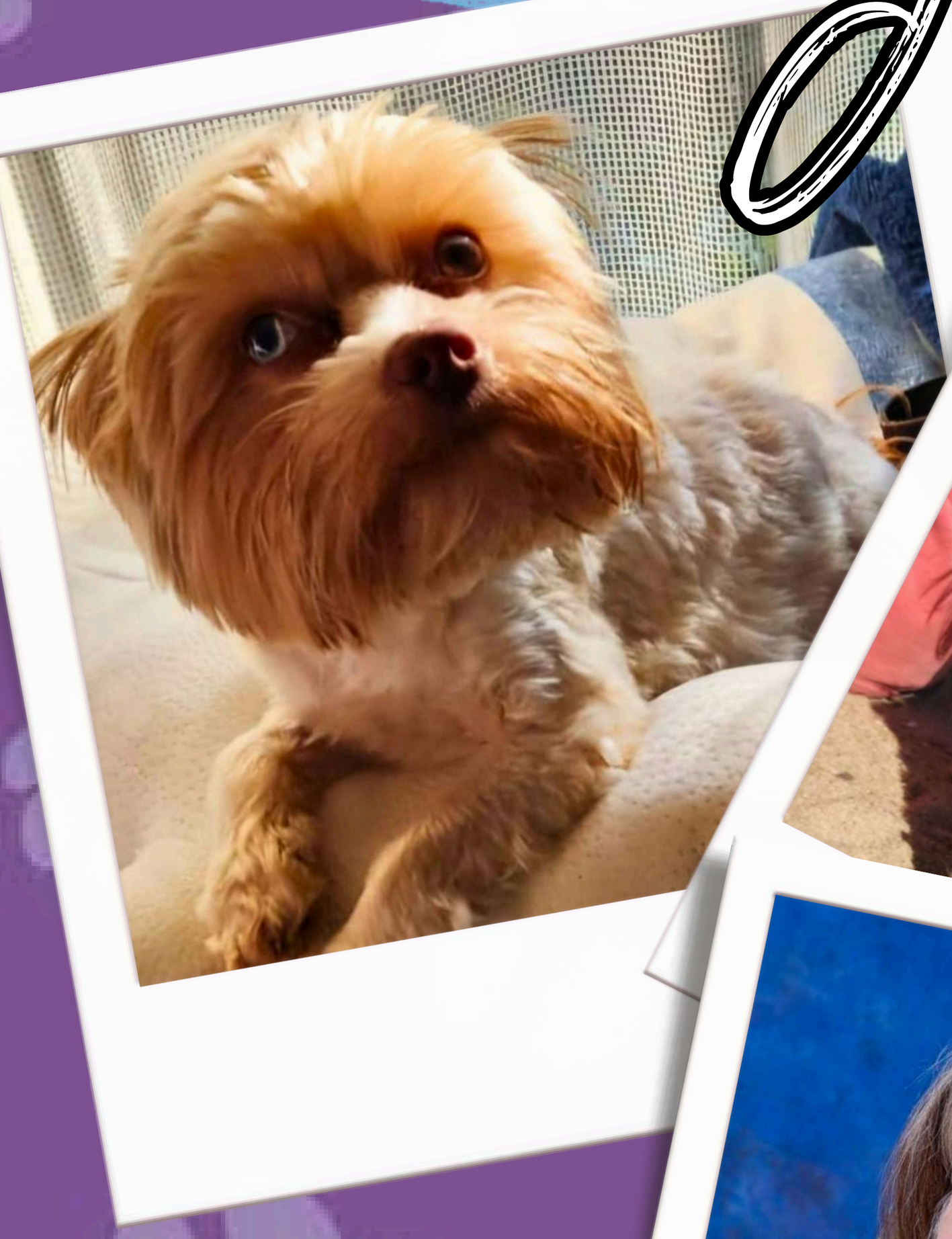
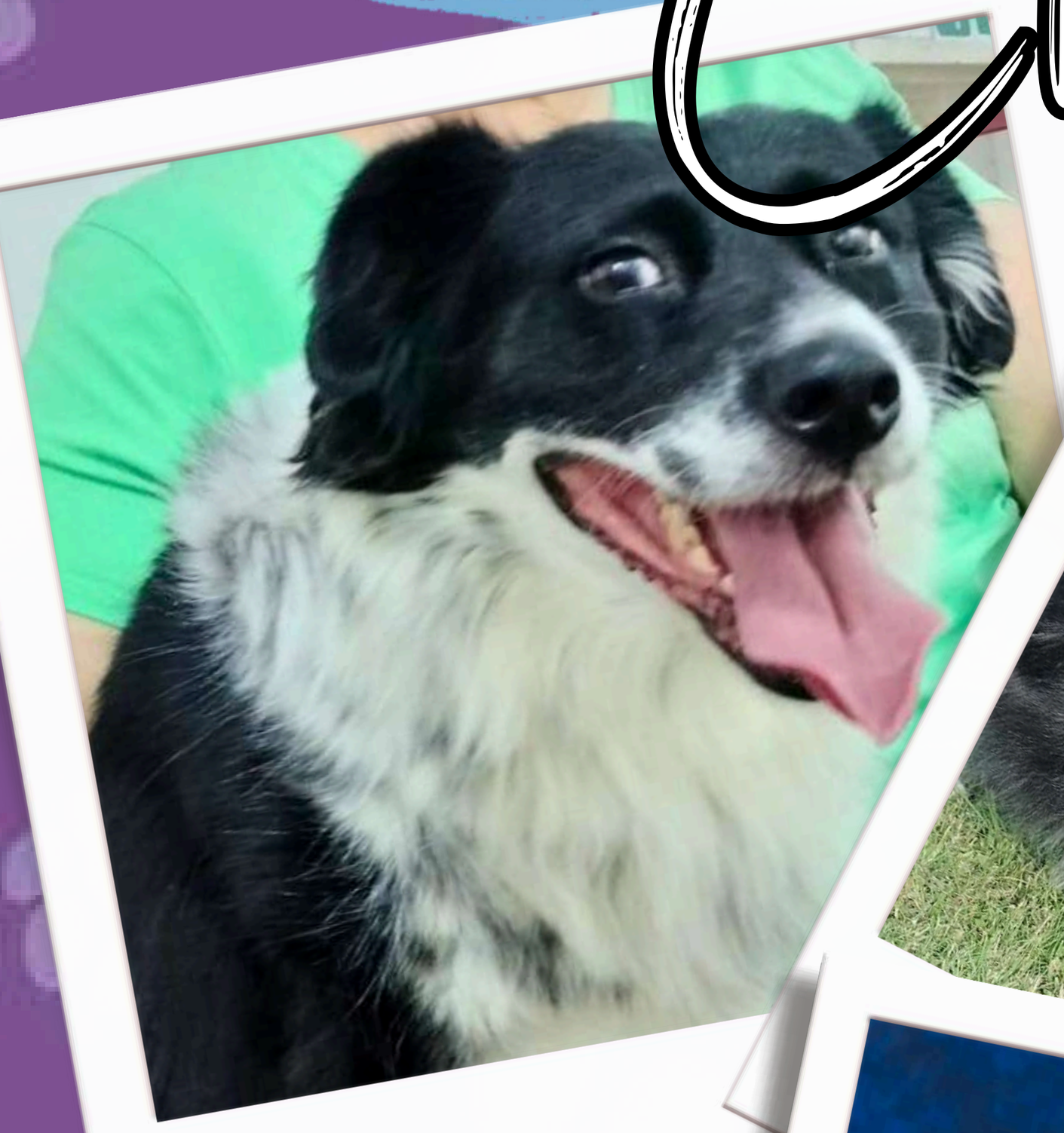


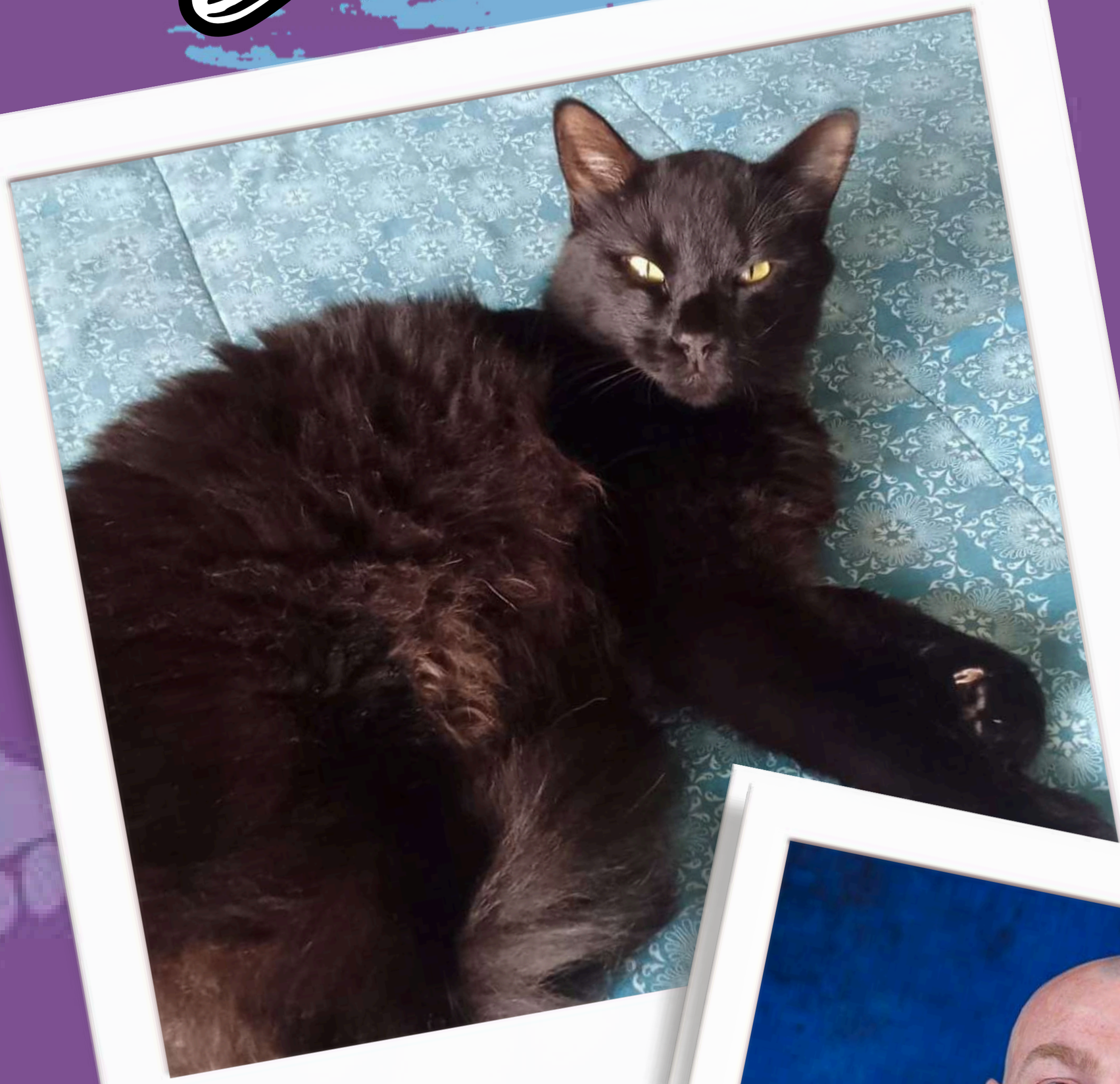
Pumpkin

Ruby & Chloe



Luna

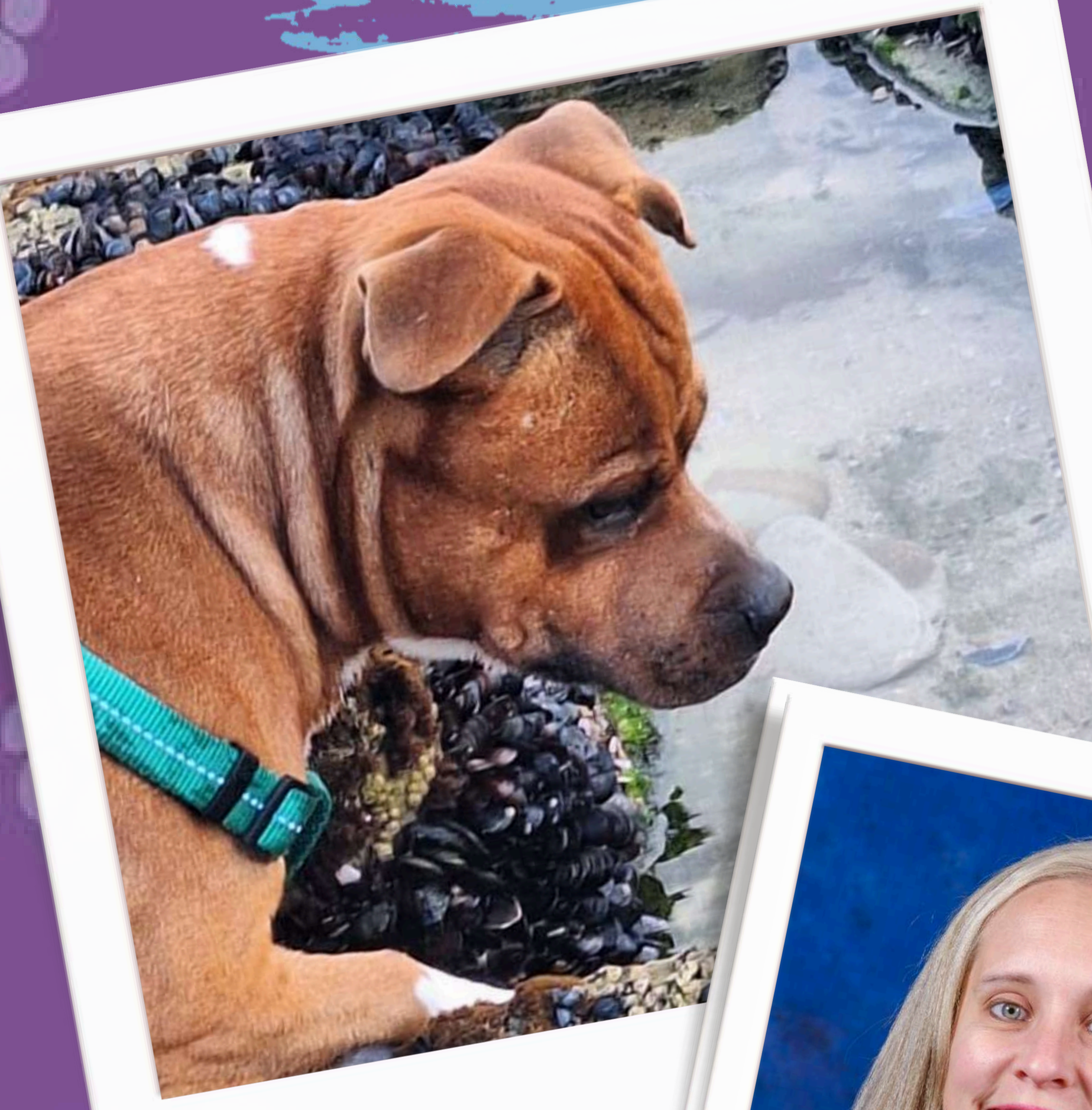
Shadow



Pixie

Lucifer & Pretzel

Cruizer



Bakkies & Tinkerbell

Veelgie

Chicky & Pixie

Mila

Tippie & Eugenie

Kommel

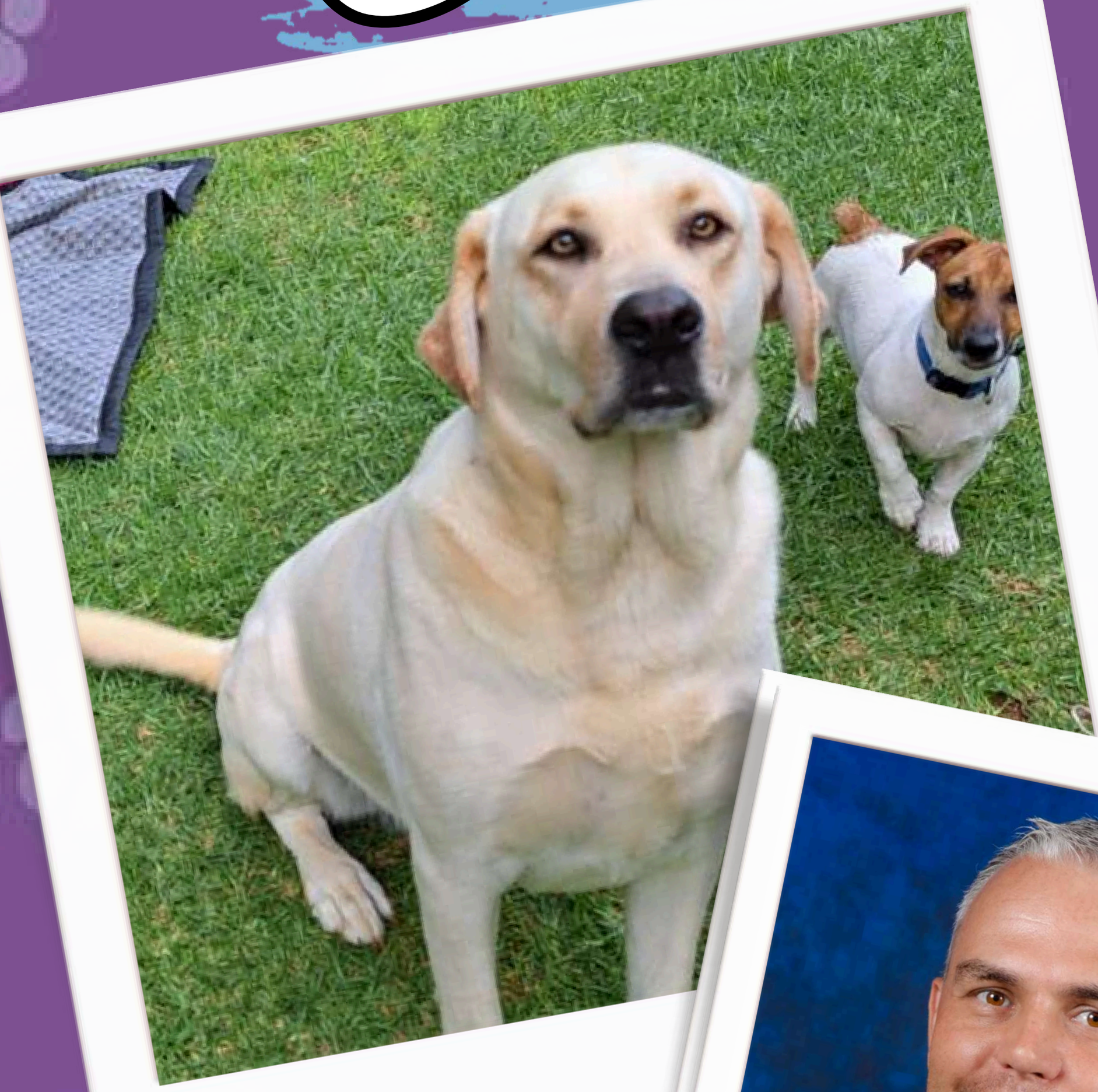
Zeeva & Orca

Odin

Jonachie & Joey

Nala

Ellie



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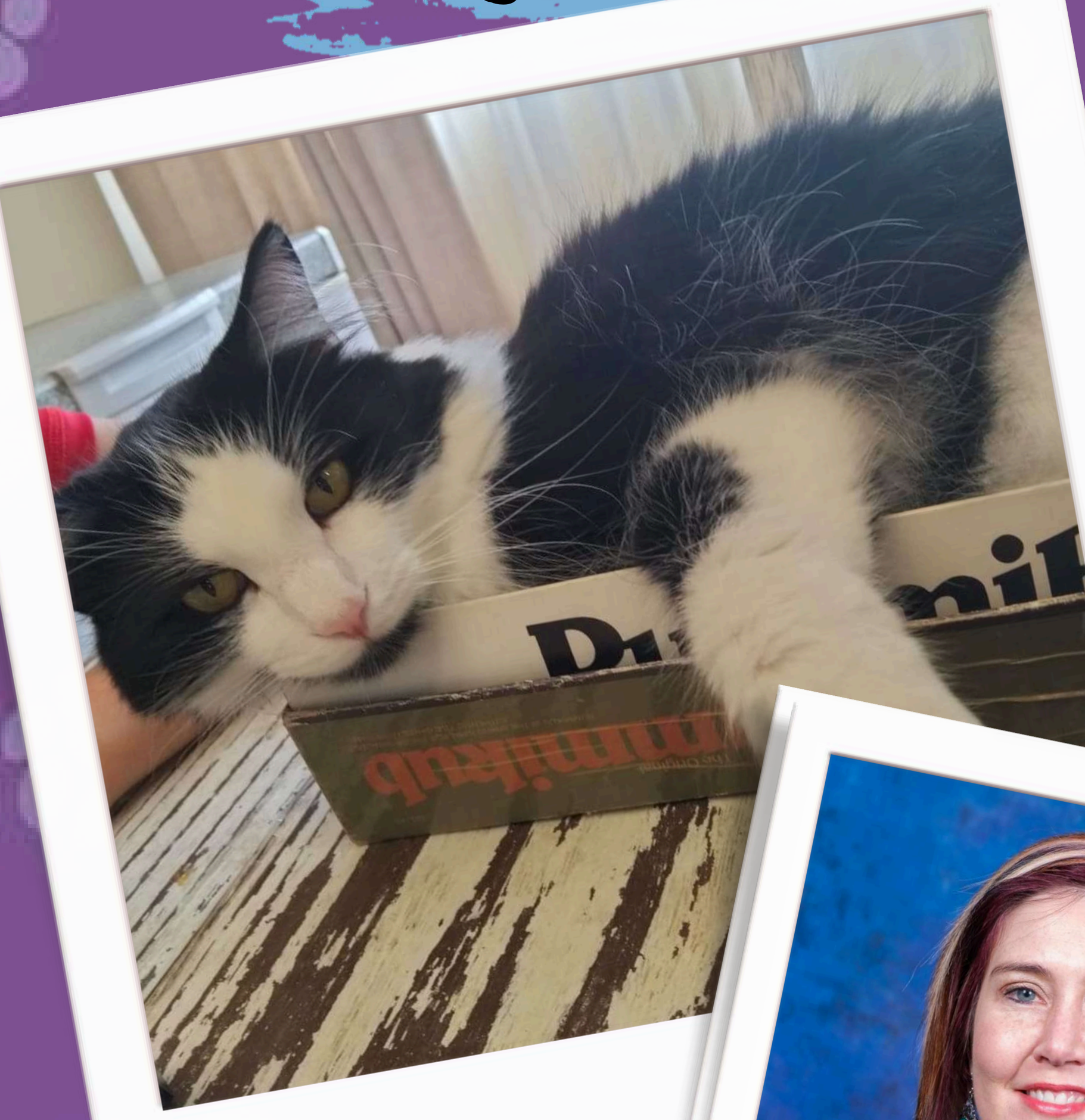
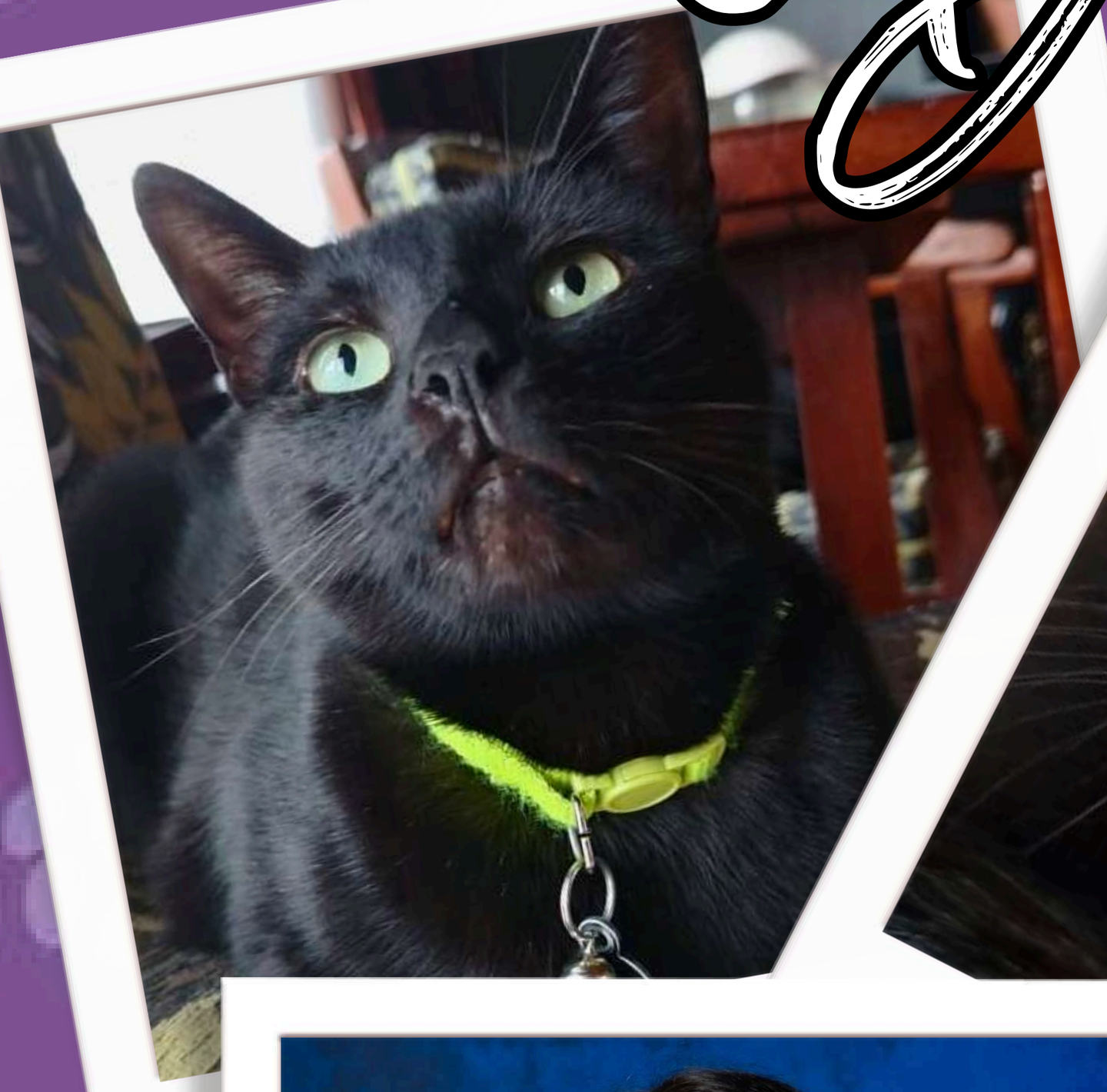


Leviathan & Dante



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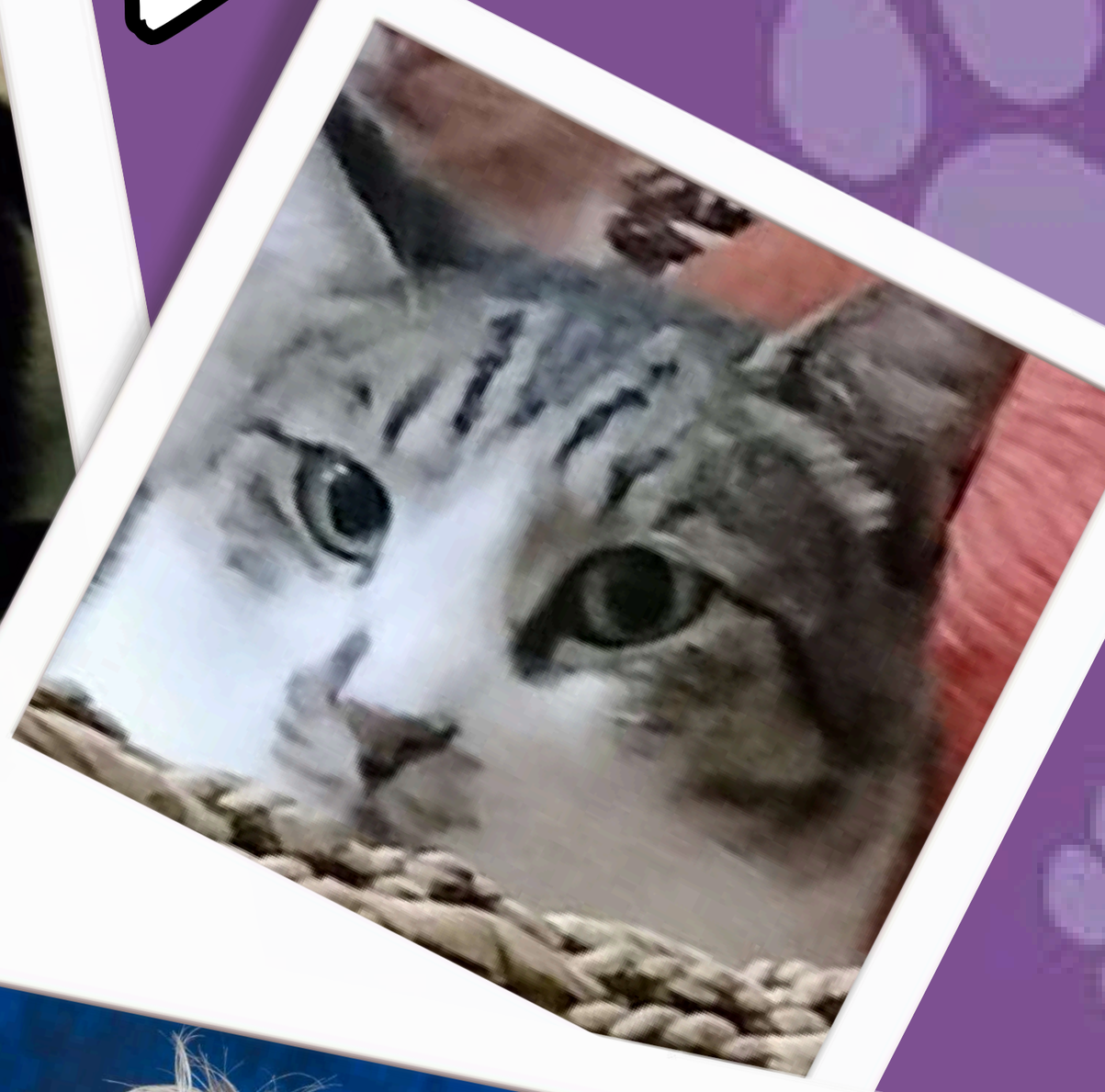
Beauty & Zorro



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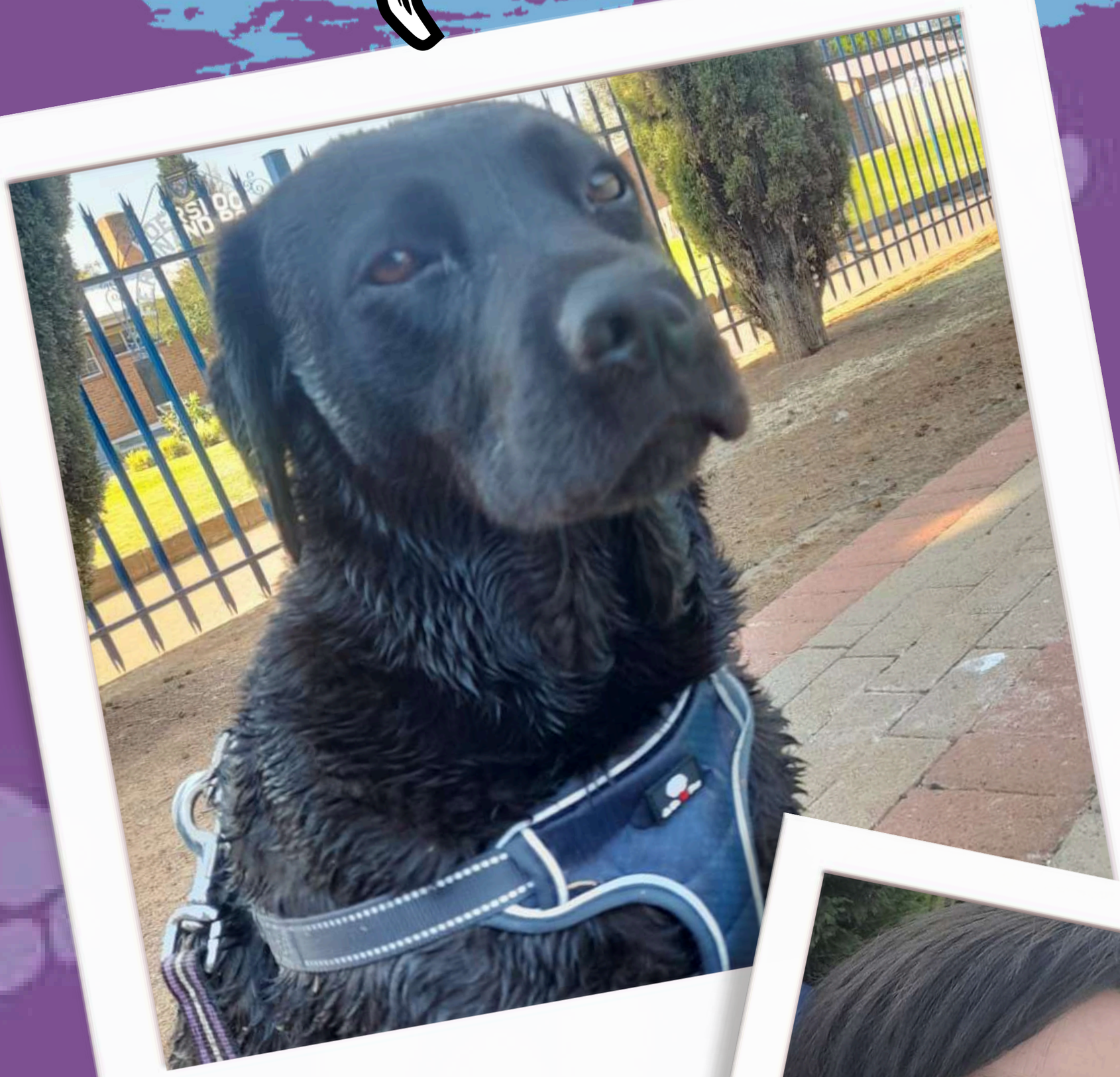
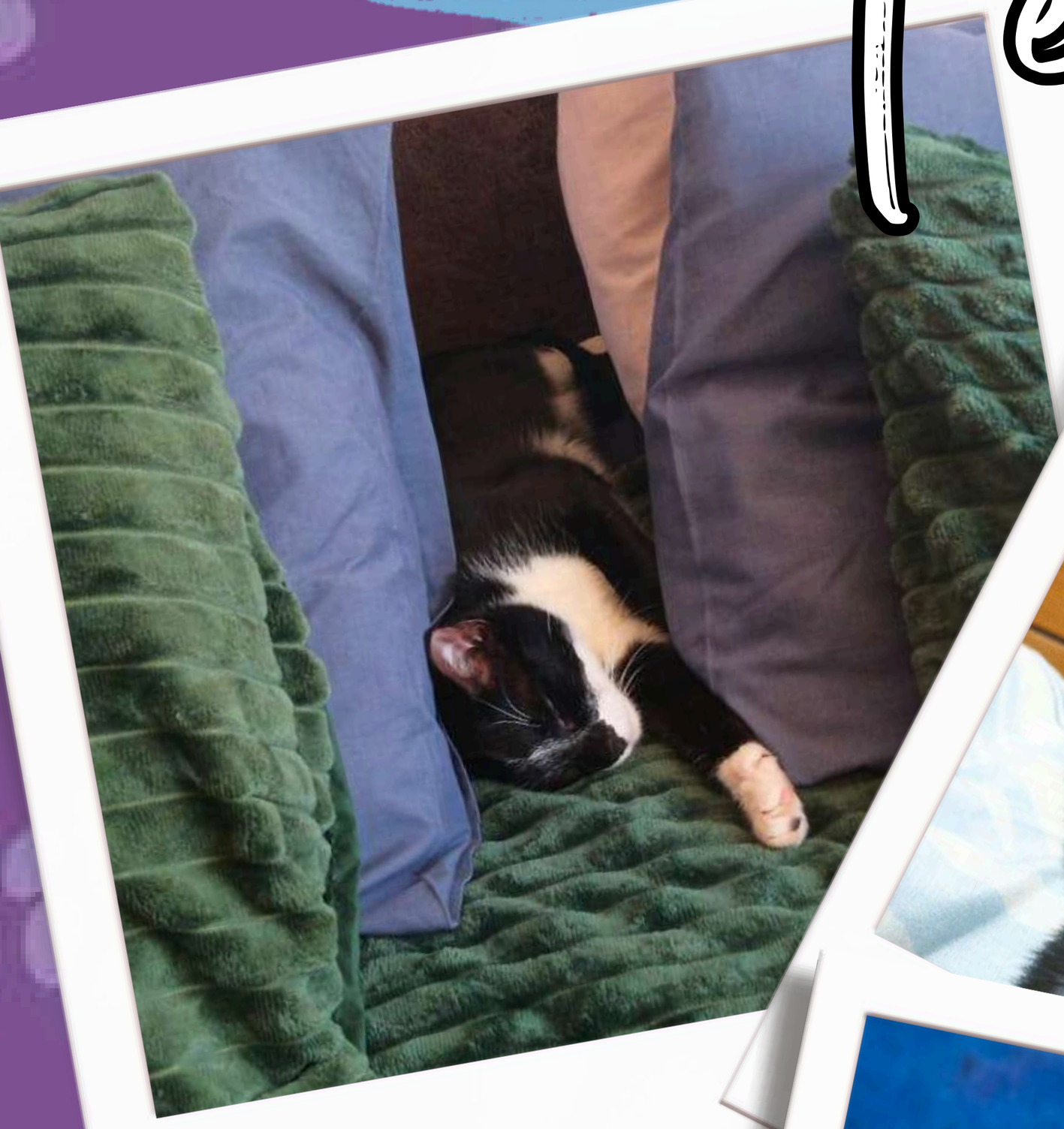
Kiki



Kitty Terror



Dexter

Gustavo Chino

Kerneels

Fiela

Chandler & Joey

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Die Yskas Saga

Kan jy raai wie se yskas hierdie is?

Kliek hier om te raai

Antwoorde

DIE
KSKAS
SAGA

Multi Airflow
GREEK
SOUTH AFRICA
FETA
Basil Pesto
PARMESAN STYLE CHEESE

Fruits forest
Stork

MEZE
PARMESAN STYLE CHEESE
Clover
SMOOTH
Bonnita
SALTED BUTTER
JALAPEÑO CHILLIES

Multi Airflow

BOVRIL
NutriDay
ULTRA MEL
Fruits Forez

Multi Airflow
Multi Airflow
Stork

Butro
Butro

Willow Creek
Cabernet Sauvignon
Balsamic Vinegar
200 ml
Olive Oil
kleinkaroo
TABASCO
JanBraai
BASTING SAUCE
DOUBLE CREAM
PLAIN YOGHURT
ALMOND FLOUR
MIAMI
Feta Style

Stork

MELROSE

Feta
Style
Plain
RICHS

Multi Air Flow

Hot dog
TANGY

Stork
LITA

Flora
Cake Wheat
Flour

NuTriDay
d'lite

7up

LG
TOMATO
Everyday
Albany
POWER STATION
parmalat
VELLO

SUNBAKE
BROWN
SUNBAKE
WHITE

FANTA

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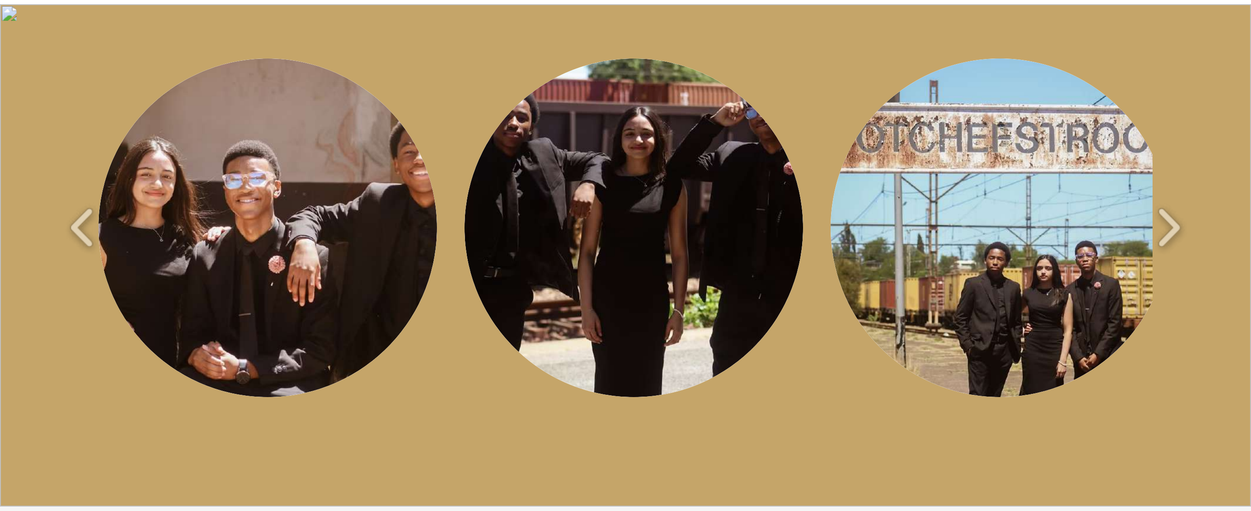

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

The Ferdie Post is a student-led publication run for, and by,
the learners of Ferdinand Postma High School.
We are inspired by the voices of our students, more specifically, of the multitude of voices that are contained within our tight-knit family.

Our mission is to bring the Ferdies community thoughtful and engaging commentary on what is happening within our school and even our community, while also displaying the school's creative side through the arts, literary and otherwise.

As a publication, we do not advocate for any specific political ideology, but we have set standards regarding the posting of harmful and degenerating pieces as it relates to minority groups. We see our platform as a sacred space of student voices, and thus, view that it is our responsibility to highlight the diversity in Ferdies and to use our platform as a space of learning and expression.

We look forward to hear your voice and your stories.

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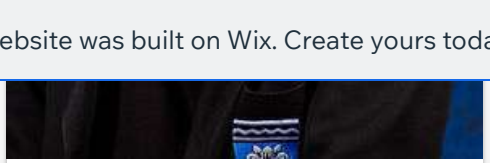

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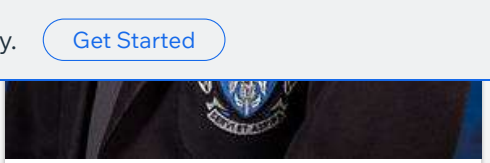

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