

Innisfil Public Library
The Seepe Walters
Story Writing Contest
2008



Produced by Innisfil Public Library

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Seepe Walters



Seepe Walters was a well-respected and dedicated member of the Innisfil community until her death in 1995.

She was involved in many different facets of Innisfil life: the Historical Society, 4-H, the Women's Institute, her Church, her family and various political arenas.

It was her love of writing and all things literary which led her to journalism at the University of Toronto, to a job as a freelance correspondent with the *Daily Construction News*, to teach English to immigrant children, to work with the Barrie Literacy Council and to ultimately help found the Innisfil Friends of the Library.

Seepe Walters' commitment to her community and specifically her legacy to the Library, which is now supported by three incredibly dynamic Friends of the Library groups, is being remembered through the Innisfil Public Library's Seepe Walters Story Writing Contest.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Innisfil Public Library would like to congratulate all the students who entered the 7th edition of the Innisfil Public Library Story Writing Contest. This contest has been known as the Seepe Walters Story Writing Contest since 2004, in memory of the woman who was a driving force behind the creation of the original Friends of the Innisfil Public Library group.

The contributions of many have made this contest and this publication a reality. The Innisfil Public Library would like to thank the Friends of the Library and the Ferraro family for their ongoing support and sponsorship; the judging panel: Chris Simon – News Editor of the Innisfil Scope, Deirdre Fitzgerald of the Cookstown Friends of the Library, and Patsy Jackson of the Stroud Friends of the Library for accepting such a difficult job, and of course, the efforts of all the incredible young writers who submitted entries. Although there is only one name on the Seepe Walters Award plaque, you are all winners for having the courage to pursue your writing dreams.

Many thanks to all those involved. And to everyone else, we hope you enjoy the stories submitted to the 2008 edition of the Seepe Walters Story Writing Contest.

The Innisfil Public Library

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ZULONDENVIN

By Chantel Peters

Long ago, in the fair kingdom of Erenza, there lived a young girl named Zulondenvin. She was at the age of thirteen, had long black hair in ringlets, light blue eyes and lived alone with her mother, Sapphire. They were very poor. They lived in a part of the kingdom called Carissa.

One day while they were eating, a guard knocked on the door and demanded “In the name of the King, open this door!” Sapphire answered, “Coming”. She opened the door.

“Time for taxes” said the guard.

“But I don't have anything left! You need to give me more time, please I beg of you!”

“Sorry, no exceptions I'll just take your daughter then.” He grabbed Zulondenvin by the arm. “She will be a great slave.”

“No! Anything but that, please take me instead” pleaded Sapphire.

“Why would I take you? She will make a much better profit.”

“Please, take me, take me!”

“You're right. I'll take you both!”

“No, please!”

“Come on” said the guard.

As he went to grab Sapphire she grabbed her cutting knife and stabbed him in the arm. He let go of Zulondenvin who was struggling to get free from his grasp and she fell to the ground.

Sapphire yelled, “Run!” Zulondenvin stood up and ran.

When she got out of the house she looked back as the guard cut her mother's throat. Zulondenvin cried aloud and ran as fast as she could.

It was night and Zulondenvin was alone by a fountain. She was exhausted. She thought to her self, *I shall avenge you mother* and fell fast asleep.

The next morning a slave trader saw her and got two other slaves to carry her. When she awoke she was on a trailer with many other people. Zulondenvin asked a boy, "Where are we?"

"We are on a slave trader's trailer to be sold at the middle of Erenza, which is called Alia."

"What, we are slaves?"

"Yes I'm afraid so. My name is Jacob." Jacob was a redhead and he had a shag and green eyes.

"What's your name?" Asked Jacob.

"Zulondenvin. How old are you?" Answered Zulondenvin.

"Fourteen" Jacob said.

"I'm thirteen."

When they arrived at Alia there was a group of men there and slaves. All kinds of men and even some women examined them.

"I'll buy him" an old man said pointing at Jacob. He was completely covered but he sounded old. "How does ten pieces of silver sound?" Asked the man.

"Sold!" Said the trader.

"Here you go."

"Goodbye Zula"

"Bye Jacob."

So the trading continued. A tall bald man who had a black beard stood in front of Zulondenvin. "I'll buy this one," pointing at Zulondenvin, "and this one," pointing at a man. "For thirty Silver pieces" said the man.

"Deal" answered the trader.

He tied both of there hands together and tied it to his horse and climbed on it.

"Lets go."

Zulondenvin was yanked a bit but then she started walking.

After they walked for a while they saw a huge wall. Two guards opened the gate for them. It was a huge farm.

“My name is Fracias, but you can just call me Master. You will work on the farm according to schedule. We do not take any nonsense. If you do so you will go to the torture room. Any questions? Good. That will be all.”

A year passed and Zulondenvin was fourteen. One day, when it was night, Zulondenvin lay in bed and fell asleep. Zulondenvin awoke and there was a dark figure shaped like a boy. Before she screamed he put his hand over her mouth and said “Shh! Be quiet, it’s me.” When she stopped struggling he removed his hand.

Zulondenvin whispered, “Jacob?”

“The one and only” he replied, “Now come on.”

“Got it” said Zulondenvin.

They sneaked out of the hut and ran to the wall where there was a rope. They climbed the rope and were near the top. A guard was passing by and saw them and he was about to yell, but a man hit him from behind knocking him out and he fell off the wall. Then the man helped them up. They lowered themselves with great haste and ran towards two horses which they climbed on and then rode away as fast as they could until they saw a huge house. They got off their horses.

“My it’s good to be free! Why did you do it?” Asked Zulondenvin.

“Nobody deserves to be a slave,” answered the man. He took off the black mask and it was the old man that bought Jacob.

“It’s you, the old man,” said Zulondenvin.

“My name is Gazez. What’s yours young girl?” asked Gazez.

“Oh I’m sorry my name is Zulondenvin “but people call me Zula,” explained Zulondenvin.

“Well now that we are done introducing ourselves let’s get down to business, shall we?” Asked Jacob.

“Business?” asked Zulondenvin.

“About your training, of course,” replied Gazez.

“Training?” Zulondenvin said.

With a smirk, Gazez said "Follow me".

They went into the house and they opened a closet. They moved the clothes and there was a slide door. They slid it and there was a staircase which they went down and there was a training area.

"Wow! This is amazing" Zulondenvin said.

"Yup, and this is where I have been living," Jacob said.

"Now then, let's get started," replied Gazez. "Joshua, come here!" Said Gazez.

A young boy came forward; he was about twelve. He had brown hair and blue eyes. "Yes," said Joshua.

"Get the swords," answered Gazez.

"Got it," said Joshua when he returned with the weapons.

Gazez said, "Zula, pick your weapons." There were all kinds of weapons.

"Wow, what kind of daggers are these?" Asked Zulondenvin.

"Those are called reldas," answered Gazez. The dagger was extremely sharp.

"But before you pick anything you must choose what you want to be: a swordsman or an assassin?" Asked Gazez.

"Um, I pick assassin," said Zulondenvin.

"Good choice. Now pick your weapons."

Zulondenvin picked the reldas needles and all sorts of weapons, throwing knives, daggers.

"Very good. Now let's begin, shall we? We will first start on your aim. Throw your needles at the target," Said Gazez. "And Jacob you throw your samurai sword." They did so. They did their training till it was dusk. Jacob and Zulondenvin were on the porch.

"So Jacob, your leg healed nicely," said Zulondenvin.

"Mostly" answered Jacob.

"What do you mean?" asked Zulondenvin.

“Well, you see, when my leg got broken I forgot most of the details, but it did something to my knee and now it’s a sensitive spot and now my leg isn’t as capable as it used to be” replied Jacob.

“What happened to it, what happened to you?” asked Zulondenvin.

“Well, when I was fourteen I had a little sister who was three years younger than me, and an older brother who was fifteen. Her name was Sunny because she had strawberry blond hair and his name was George, after my father. One night it was my brother’s turn to watch the fireplace but he accidentally fell asleep and our house caught fire. I woke up and saw that it was on fire, but luckily my door wasn’t covered. I went out of my room and went to my parent’s room, but I was too late. I headed to my sister’s room, but the door was covered with fire. I yelled out to her, but she didn’t wake-up. The fire was so hot I turned away, but my sister’s door handle got so hot it exploded and part of the pieces flung out and hit my leg. I fell on my knees and removed it. I crawled trying to see what happened to George, but he was already dead. Then I saw a window. I went and opened it and climbed out, but I fell on my injured leg and broke it. I crawled to my sister’s window and banged on it as hard as I could and yelled out to her but she didn’t wake up. When fire covered all the ways of seeing in I crawled away from our house and waited.

People came running and they found me. I explained. So a man stood in front of the rest. He was a slave trader and that’s how I broke my leg and became a slave and that’s when I met you,” replied Jacob.

“Wow,” said Zulondenvin.

“What happened to you?” asked Jacob.

So Zulondenvin told him.

“I hate that guard so much some day I will avenge my mother. What about you, why are you training to fight?” asked Zulondenvin.

“Well me and Gazez want to some day free all the slaves that are in the kingdom and the first place I would go would be Fracias farm.”

“Will you help me?” asked Zulondenvin.

“Of course, will you help me?” answered Jacob.

“For sure. We’re a team,” replied Zulondenvin.

Jacob put his hand on hers. Zulondenvin blushed.

“All three of us” said Gazez.

They quickly took away their hands.

“Oh, hello Gazez,” said Jacob.

Gazez laughed.

“Hey...Gazez. So I was wondering why are you always wrapped up?” asked Zulondenvin.

“I have leprosy,” replied Gazez.

Gazez has leprosy! I wonder how long he has to live. That's so sad.

They practiced for a year and Zulondenvin was fifteen and Jacob was sixteen. One day Jacob and Zulondenvin went to their training like normal. They were both great fighters and were trained in speed and stealth by their master Gazez.

“Good morning Master Gazez,” said Zulondenvin.

“Good morning Zula and also to you Jacob,” replied Gazez. “I have some news. When I was getting supplies at the market I heard that the King is having a tournament for who will be the next knight and all the guards will be there except the ones guarding the outer walls.”

“And the one who killed your mother was a tax collector, right? So he will be there, right? asked Jacob.

“Really? I might be able to finally kill him?” asked Zulondenvin.

“That's correct, but it's only an eighty percent chance,” answered Gazez.

“Oh.....” Zulondenvin said

“But I guess we will find out,” said Gazez.

“Really? Oh Gazez, you're the best!” Zulondenvin said.

“Well then let's get ready.”

So they got their equipment. Zulondenvin got all her weapons. She put on a black robe and she wore a black mask and put her hood on. Jacob wore a gray robe, similar to Zulondenvin, but still different. He got all his swords. Gazez also wore a robe -- it was black as well but was a different kind. He brought both assassin equipment and swordsmen for he was a master at both.

When it was dusk they departed for the mountains for that's where they were being held. They climbed on their horses and left. Zulondenvin had a white horse, Jacob had a black one and Gazez had a brown one.

When they arrived at the mountains they tied their horses to a tree and climbed the mountain. They used great stealth and agility and avoided being seen. While they were watching, an arrow shot Gazez in the right arm, coming from a tree.

"Gazez!" yelled Jacob.

Zulondenvin threw a dagger where the arrow came from and a guard fell down. All the guards who were there took out their weapons and guards all over the mountain revealed themselves as archers and swordsmen.

They were waiting for us, but how?

Jacob helped Gazez up and they ran up the mountain. Zulondenvin threw a needle at an archer's throat and he fell and she continued to do so.

Jacob, to avoid being shot, ran into a cave that was in the mountain. He laid Gazez against the wall and ripped a part of his robe and wrapped it around his wound.

Guards came into the cave and Jacob and Gazez fought as hard as they could and they beat many men. A knight came and started fighting Gazez. Gazez stabbed his neck with his sword but four more knights came and two went against Gazez and two against Jacob.

Jacob tried to get through to help Gazez, but there were too many guards and knights; so he fought to get through. Gazez fought the two knights as hard as he could, but more guards went and fought him and more until there were twenty guys against him. Then, as he defended an attack from a guard, a knight stabbed him in the chest and he fell and died. Jacob was stunned. Furious he yelled and attacked the knights, killing them. He killed ten guards and kept doing so until they got ten knights to take care of him.

The knights came in and he was doing well in defending himself, but a guard behind him cut the back of his leg and he collapsed, for it was his injured leg and one of the knights took out their axe to cut off his head. He swung his axe up.

Meanwhile Zulondenvin finally killed all the archers. She was quite scratched up. When she heard Jacob scream like he was angry she headed towards him, but guards stopped her. After she attacked them and killed five she heard Jacob scream again, but in pain

Jacob! Gazez! Are they hurt? I hope not

She finally got through, but before she could get there the cave collapsed.

Jacob, Gazez. They're dead.

She started crying and turned around to the guards and started attacking them.

She returned to Gazez's house and went to the training room and sat down and wept.

"Zula!" yelled Joshua with joy, "I thought you were dead. Where's Gazez and Jacob?"

"They're dead," answered Zulondenvin.

"What?" he said with tears, "they got to you?"

There was a silence.

"What are you going to do now?" asked Joshua

"I'm gonna free the slaves from Fracias farm," answered Zulondenvin. "That was Jacob's and Gazez's dream."

"You're gonna do that for them?" asked Joshua

"That's correct, and you're coming with me" answered Zulondenvin. "What kind of weapon do you use?"

"A spiked iron ball flail," answered Joshua

"Good. Now go get it," said Zulondenvin

"Alright," said Joshua who left and came back with it.

"Good. Now let's go, you can use Jacob's horse."

So when they arrived they tied their horses about a mile away so they would not be harmed and they stepped forward.

Zulondenvin yelled "Fracias Fracias! Let all your slaves go or we will do it with force!"

Fracias showed himself on the wall and said "You think just because you have a few weapons we will let the slaves go? Forget it!"

Zulondenvin threw a needle and it hit his neck and fell and died.

"Guards, he can no longer pay you. You have no reason to stay."

The gates opened and all the guards left. They shut the gates and got ready to fight. Ten minutes later a group of guards came forward. The one in front yelled out saying, "Zulondenvin! I am the one who killed your mother. Let's settle this with a fight. Whoever wins gets the farm and who ever loses dies."

"Deal" yelled Zulondenvin

They opened the gates and Zulondenvin stepped forward and they fought. The guard was a skilled fighter, but Zulondenvin defeated him easily. She had him on the ground when a guard behind her was about to attack, but a samurai sword hit him in the chest.

Zulondenvin looked and it was Jacob and a girl.

Jacob he is alive she thought, with tears in her eyes.

The guard grabbed her arm then she stabbed him in the neck

I finally avenged you mother

The girl with Jacob shot four arrows at a time, killing many.

Joshua and the slaves came. Joshua swung his spiked iron ball flail and killed a guard. Zulondenvin yelled "We won! We killed him. Have some honour and keep your word."

The guards stopped attacking and then left.

We won! Zulondenvin ran to Jacob and hugged him. "I thought you were dead."

"I almost was until Sunny saved me," said Jacob.

"Your little sister?" asked Zulondenvin.

"That's the one. She shot an arrow at the guy's hand right before he killed me and we escaped before it caved in," said Jacob.

"I thought your sister was dead," said Zulondenvin.

"Nope. I escaped out of the downstairs window because the roof fell and broke the floor in my room and I fell downstairs and climbed out the window," said Sunny.

"I'm so glad you're alive Jacob." Zulondenvin blushed and they kissed

"Now what?" asked Jacob.

“Well, we need too get these people a home and after that we’re gonna free all the other slaves. Because this is just the beginning.”

The end

KATHY'S BIRTHDAY

By Kaila Tims

Once there was a girl named Kathy. She was 7 years old and had light brown hair. Kathy loved horses. She had books on horses and her walls were plastered with pictures of horses. Almost anything she had involved horses; even her *My Little Pony* slippers had horses.

Four days before Kathy's birthday her Grandma arrived at her house.

"Hello Grandma, I'm so glad you're here. I have to tell you something, I want a horse for my birthday!" Kathy blabbered on.

Then she stopped, her Grandma was carrying a gigantic bag.

"What's that for grandma?" she asked curiously.

"Nothing you need to worry your perdy little head 'bout" Grandma answered.

All through dinner that night Kathy told her Mom, Dad, and Grandma about the horse she wanted. It would be named Star and everyday Kathy would ride it to school. Kathy's parents listened.

After dinner Grandma said she was really tired and went to bed.

The next day Kathy went to visit her best friend Kaitlynn. She lived in an apartment. Kaitlynn was also crazy about horses.

"You are so lucky you have a backyard because if I had a horse I would have no where to put it," Kaitlynn complained.

"You could keep it in your bedroom," Kathy suggested, giggling.

That night at dinner Kathy had a better name for her horse. "Buttercup" she said.

Her parents exchanged glances.

After dinner Grandma complained that she had a headache and went to bed.

When Kathy lay in bed she made a plan. When she got her horse Daddy would build a stable in the backyard. Kaitlynn would come over every day and together they would take turns riding Buttercup. Kathy fell asleep.

Kathy had strawberry jam on toast for breakfast and a glass of chocolate milk.

“Honey, are you sure you don’t want that big horse poster you saw at the mall or something like that?” Kathy’s mother asked.

“Sure I’m sure Mother, nothing is better than a real live horse!” Kathy answered.

That afternoon Kathy read a new book called How to Care for Horses from her Aunt Martha in California. She was enjoying that very much. She saw a picture of a horse.

“Mommy, Mommy! This is the kind of horse I want, okay?”

“Okay, sweetie” replied her mom, who murmured something to her Grandma.

After a dinner of chicken, mashed potatoes and dumplings Grandma stood up.

“All right, I think I’m going to hit the sack now. Have a super-duper sleep tonight because it’s somebody’s birthday tomorrow” she said cheerfully.

“Yay! Me, me, me” exclaimed Kathy.

When Kathy went to bed she drifted off instantly.

In the morning Kathy woke up to the smell of French toast.

“Mmm... my favourite” she said, wandering into the kitchen.

“Yes siree” Kathy’s Dad called out, sipping his warm coffee.

“How many pieces do you want, munchkin?” asked Grandma.

“Six” answered Kathy, dragging herself to the table.

“Are you sure you can eat it all?” asked her Grandma.

“Yup” Kathy calmly answered, taking a seat beside her father.

“How many pieces would the parental and old parental units like?” Kathy asked giggling, nearly choking on her orange juice.

“Two” said her mother

“One” said her Grandma

“Six” said her father.

“Good, said Grandma, I’ve made fifteen pieces.”

As Grandma handed out the French toast, Kathy's mother said disapprovingly,

"George White, I can't believe you are having SIX pieces. WHY?"

"These things are amazing, so warm and delicious" Father said, stuffing down his fourth piece.

"Everyone get their towels and bathing suits if we are going swimming today"

Kathy's mom said hurriedly.

Swimming was Kathy's favourite thing to do besides riding a horse. Kathy always went swimming on her birthday.

When Kathy was swimming she did the doggy paddle, star jump, her own signature karate jump AND she even went into the deep end. The time passed so quickly.

When they came home it was almost dinner and it was time for presents. Grandma said, "Close your eyes."

Kathy did so and opened her eyes when she felt something being placed in her hand. Kathy looked at the quilt that was resting in her hands. On it was patches of all the colours of the rainbow, fabrics with designs on them, like hearts or flowers but, best of all in the very middle of that colourful quilt was a big patch and on it was the horse Kathy had wanted. The horse was in a field of buttercups and you could see the stars in the sky.

"Now we know it's not what you wanted" her mother said.

"That's okay, it's even better!" replied Kathy, with a smile a mile wide stretched across her face.

Her parents and Grandma beamed with delight.

Kathy's parents presented her with a dress and some pink barrettes.

"This is the best birthday ever!" Kathy exclaimed.

"I'd still like a horse though" Kathy added.

Everyone laughed.

"Now can you tell me what that bag was for grandma?"

THE END

THE THREE LITTLE PUPPIES AND THE BIG BAD CAT

By Nikolai Colletti

Once upon a time there were three little puppy-dogs. They lived in a little house on the edge of Inniskinz country in Innisfil World. The first puppy was a Basset Hound named Max. The second one was a Pug named Cookie and the third one was a Beagle-Cocker- Spaniel mix named Shiloh.

One day, a gray and white cat pulled up on a motorcycle. He jumped off and started banging on the puppies' front door. "Bam, Bam, Bam!!! Let me in, let me in!" screamed the cat.

Max ran over to the phone and dialed "911." He hurriedly talked for a few minutes then hung up. "The cops are on their way. We'll just have to lock every door and window and sit tight for a while," said Max. They all locked up the whole house and all found hiding spots. Suddenly Max jumped up! "The chain lock!" Max exclaimed. "I forgot to secure the chain lock!" Max and Cookie ran to the door and tried to put the chain lock on. Meanwhile, outside on the dogs' porch, the big bad cat lifted his gun and aimed. CRACK! The door broke and fell off its hinges. "Yikes!" screamed the three dogs. "Now I've gotcha!" the cat sneered. "Not so fast!" said a new voice. The police had finally come. The cat ran past the cops, revved up his motor bike and took off down the road. The cops followed close behind. The chase was on!!!

~2~

Just before the old bridge, the cat saw something up ahead. It was more cops! They had set up a spike strip to pop the cat's bike tires. "I'll be arrested for sure if I run over that strip," the cat thought. He tried to stop but he was too late! The bike spun out and hit the bridge which sent the cat flying through the air and right into the Inniskinz town swimming pool! Too bad for the cat, for he didn't have his bathing suit on! The police cruisers stopped, the cops got out, and they scrambled down the bridge. They got the cat out of the pool and took him to the police station. They found out that the big bad cat's name was "Squeak". They put an impound strike on his motorcycle and punished him by taking away his gun and making him put the puppies' door back up. Max and Cookie thanked Squeak for putting their door back up and ran back into the living room to find Shiloh hidden under the sofa. "Is it safe to come out now?" Shiloh asked. Everyone got a good laugh. It had been an exciting day. They all lived happily ever after.

~The End~

HOW HANNAH BAY CHANGED MY LIFE

By Devyn Shields

The day I met Hannah Bay was a day like no other. I was outside on my driveway, playing basketball with my friend Amy Lee, when I saw Hannah come along. It was a sweltering summer day, and most people were in their icy cold pools, but since we didn't own one, we were out of luck. I glanced at Hannah. She was tall and skinny with bleach blonde hair. Hannah was wearing a pink American Eagle top and short-shorts. She wore thick, dark eyeliner and bright blue eye shadow. "*Probably a designer snob.*" I thought to myself, sliding past Amy Lee and hitting the basketball against the backboard, making the basket. "Woo! I'm the champion! UNDEFEATED!" I yelled. "Yeah, yeah. Ms. Big Shot won again." Amy Lee said smiling and taking a swig from the lemonade mom had brought out. Hannah finally passed her driveway, and then she stopped. "Probably to make fun of us." Amy Lee whispered to me, as she too had seen Hannah's clothes and makeup. Hannah walked up the driveway. I rolled my eyes and said, "Look if you are here to diss us you can leave." She looked at me in surprise. "What? I just wanted to play basketball with you, but if you want me to leave, I'll go." She said with a sad look on her face. She turned around and started walking slowly. Amy Lee looked at me with her "don't-you-feel-guilty?" look. It always gets me! I ran after Hannah. "Hey?" I said. She turned around and looked at me, and started walking towards me. "I mean...I'm sorry...but I just...I mean..." She stuttered. I smiled at her. "Would you like to play basketball with us?" I interrupted. Hannah nodded her head excitedly. She was amazingly good for someone who looked like a girly girl. Amy Lee, Hannah and I played basketball until 9 o'clock that night. "Well I had better get going. Mom's gonna be worried sick." Hannah said, starting to walk down the sidewalk. I immediately remembered something I hadn't done and I ran to her side. "What's your name?" She looked at me and smiled. "Hannah Bay." She replied. "It's nice to meet you Hannah Bay. I'm Stephanie Bonnet." We shook hands and I waved goodbye to Hannah. And from then on, Hannah, Amy Lee and I were the best of friends. Hannah taught me the lesson not to judge a book by its cover. I have realized that she's right, what's important is what's on the inside. A lesson I didn't learn from Buddha or the Dalai Lama, but from a girl wearing red high heels named Hannah Bay.

KITASHI'S STORY

By Kate Fuller

I used to live far away from here. Farther then I think even the strongest of warriors could travel without regretting even starting on the journey. But it was worth moving from, I never really enjoyed living there, it was either too cold or too hot, it never seemed to settle in the middle. But it was peaceful there, houses neatly lined row on row and set behind small green gardens, each with a huge oak sprouting out at the side. But the best part was the ocean. Salty sea air so fresh and healing on a long day's work of sitting stiffly inside all day. Waves crashing against huge boulders erupting out from the shore and a fine mist pelting everything in sight. It was heaven.

I never really remembered anything before that, though I know I was once wild when I was much younger. I was a housecat, or kittypet as the wild cat in the forest call them. My housefolk fed me small pellets tasting of salt and hints of fish if I was lucky. Usually, they fed me stuff that tasted similar to nothing, only a bitter aroma left in my mouth. They sometimes gave me tiny, moist pellets, but they tasted so good. I slept in a small nest-like thing, made of fur or something similar, with a dangling bird sprouting out the back and arching out, over the top and just above my head. It wasn't luxury, but they treated me fair enough so I stayed with them.

But I was bored with it after a while, I couldn't concentrate, my girth was bulged out from not enough time to run and play and I felt like one of the cushions that they kept on sofa. Sure, I was aloud outside, or I would never know what it felt like to have the cool spray flatten my fur, or the feeling of seaweed scented air sliding through my lungs. I had all that, but only in a small, wire cage attached to the house, only accessible when the twolegs brought me out in it, and only a wobbly fake branch for me to perch on, with plastic containers for my food and water.

I didn't even feel like I was treated fairly now. I wanted out, to climb the towering trees, run among my species, to dart between the granite stones, and feel the water run through my fur. And most of all, to feel the wind run under my chin without the tight necklace blocking it. I wanted all that. And one day, I got it.

My twolegs had left the door open one day, for it was sweltering hot and even the grass bent down without a beadlet of dew on the side. I was overweight, but I could still run. I pushed my pudgy legs under my body and darted down the steps of the staircase. Raising my neck feebly, I stared out over the garden and pathway. Out! I could be wild once more! I darted for the doorway at a startling speed for such an obese cat, but just as I prepared to leap out and into the wild, a gigantic trunk rumbled in front of me. "**Stay in here kitty!**" A gruff voice growled. I snapped my head upward to see a wrinkled face glowering down at me. I couldn't be stopped now! Not after being so close!

With a hiss of anger, I unsheathed my claws and ripped at the giant's leg, yowling with rage. Out! Out! OUT!! I can't stay in here! I feel the vibrations of the air and a

shriek of pain as I leave claw marks red with blood. The twoleg grapples its clumsy hands for me, but I dodge with a flash and I'm out the door, out in the wild!

The upwalkers stumble out after me, but I can do anything now that I'm out, now that I'm free! I let out an ecstatic caterwaul of joy, and fly down the slick marble path, enjoying the wind running through my fur. I'm gone. After a few short moments, the twolegs wail in anguish and lumber back towards the building. Yes, that's right! Kitashi has left the building!

I lived out a moon or so alone, no one at my side. It felt awkward, having no one rushing to my needs or fussing over my fur. I wasn't used to it. Since I wasn't used to hunting, I lost quite a few pounds in the next few days, but gained plenty of muscle. In no time, I regained my ability to catch prey, and was soon back to my sleek, beautiful self, my fur sleek and well kept, and my skin well toned and pink under my tortoiseshell pelt.

That all changed one day, when I was wandering near the shore where the forest meets the dunes. And for quite awhile, I wasn't lonely again. I don't often talk about it, but I'll tell you this time....

The sand felt warm under my paws and I let my body fall closer to the heat. It calmed me, relaxed my soul. The splotches of colour on my pelt matched the colour of the sand, a light, soft beige. My eyelids fluttered and I felt myself drift off suddenly. It was like a little angel was carrying my off.....off somewhere where I could be with others.....

I woke with a start, shivering cold and my pelt slick against my body, showing the impressions of ribs against skin. I wasn't sure what had awakened me, but I was turning to look at the hills in the distance now, which were covered with a blanket of fog, floating peacefully through the deep green forests and over the dark grey rocks lodged right through the towering sides of the hills, making the impression of faces looking out over the ocean. I must have turned while I slept, for I had been facing toward the woods. It didn't much matter, but I was hypnotized....it was like the mountains were calling for me....telling me to come to them....go beyond them an- stop! I couldn't. This was my home! I can't leave it.

But it felt so good to imagine racing over the rocky mounds, cutting through the long grasses. Maybe just for a little....I let my mind go, way out in the distance, even more to the wild than I had first thought when I was still a kittypet. Over the gurgling brooks with the icy cool water sliding over jumbles of small rocks, made up of ancient boulder once broken down by the current of a deep black river. Old stumps from hundred year old trees....now covered in moss that stretched across it like a spider and it web across the dew covered grass. And...the view! I could see everything from up here! The ocean and its mystique! It was all in an eyeful.

When I awoke once more, it was night, and the calm waves shimmered with the sliver blue light of the moon. White crests edged the tops of them like icing on one of the

twolegs' desserts. The huge sea rocks also glistened, like a crystal once it is found by a ray of pure sunlight. I sighed and tossed my paws out, feeling my muscles, tense from laying down the whole time, scream with pleasure. I let a yawn tumble from over my tongue, bubbling like the creek in my dream.

*I saw a flash of grey fur pelt past me over the shore, just out of the corner of my eye. **“Hey!”** I called out, squinting my deep blue eyes, groping to find the figure who had whizzed my whiskers. I in took a deep breath, the scent of cat hitting my nostrils. A distinct scent, like nothing I had smelled before. And a feeling....of salty and warmth....it drew me in, I couldn't resist.*

I tensioned my muscles like springs that lashed out like a bullet. This cat wasn't going to get away....there was something to special about how my stomach turned in circles at the odor....joy and freedom, strength and happiness. Everything I had craved as a housecat, that's what I smelt. But I had become distracted, pondering on the scent for too long. The mysterious figure was out of sight. I lagged out on my paws, pouting to myself and whipping myself with cruel words that I had become a dreamy little kit chasing after something out of my reach.

I was just about to turn around and stalk back up the beach when I heard a voice calling out to me. Was it the mountains again? No, this time it was a wonderful sound, melodic to my large, triangular ears. Like song bird trilling with a rhyme along with the splashing of the waves. I craned my neck forward, gazing through an over hang of vine tendrils curled up like sleeping serpents. To piercing amber eyes stared out at me, like small lanterns in the pitch black of the night.

“ Hey,”

It was that voice again.

“ Want to see something?”

Afraid I would startle the other cat, I nodded in reply.

“ Then hurry up.”

I saw the small lantern eyes dim as the cat went farther back into the trees. Afraid to lose sight of him again, I stumbled forward along the winding ragged path.

As I reached the end of the meandering tunnel, a bright blast of moonlight clouded my vision and I gave a mrreow! of surprise. I could make out a slim figure flinching as I talked. I blinked the spots from my eyes and gasped in surprise.

A huge clump of vine circled overhead, and the trees around us were so thick that not even darkness could get in-between them. The thick vines that hung from the trees and reaching out to the next formed a dome, they also reached down to form the tunnel I

had blindly walked through. The vines were thick on the outside among the trees, yet when the tangled plants reached the middle, it was so thin you could look right out. And that was one of the most spectacular things. The moon was right above it, like a gigantic eye was staring into the secret nest. It felt so secure, I would never had seen the tunnel to enter if the cat hadn't shown me.

I glance round the place, searching for the tomcat. My gaze flittered across the tunnel entrance, and I saw him.

He had one of the most strange, yet enticing pelts I have ever seen. It was like the waves over the sea, curving and hollowing out the water. It rippled over and over in layers. The fur was thick in the layers, yet each fur was very thin. It was easy to see the outline of his body, his jaw line, it was amazing. And he stared down at me with the most gorgeous amber eyes I have ever seen, it was like looking at the sunrise on a rainy day as his pelt was almost as blue as the water.

He had a smug look stretched out across his face like plastic wrap. “Like it?” He purred in his amazing voice.

“Like it?” I took in gasp of air. “I love it! It’s amazing!”

He nodded, looking satisfied. “Good.”

As soon as I met Dinir, it was the beginning of an unbreakable bond. We were together through thick and thin. His name was Dinir, which I think suited him. He told me about his history, and that his kin were originally normal coated like I was, with smooth pelts. All of them were supposed to live lives as show kittypets or expensive cats, for the pelt mutation was rare, and all the twolegs wanted to have unique and expensive stuff to show off. Like, me, he escaped from his housefolk when one of their kits left a bedroom window open. Seeing his chance, he had leaped from it onto the roof, and from that, sliding down the shingles onto the large oak everyone around here has in their yard.

Dinir was a gentleman, always taking measures to make sure I was comfortable and healthy, catching my prey when I was sick or injured, showing me his secret hide outs and treasure troves. In return, I became his best friend, and he became mine, and I returned the treatment back to him.

We shared the vine dome together, sleeping peacefully on the two grass beds that we had placed side by side, without even the thought of trouble in our minds. He gave me much in the way of present of earth, but he did give me knowledge of the world, about history and how to survive in the wild. He was constantly on the move, and he was jittery and jumpy if he sat still for too long. He often went on long walks, which I frequently accompanied him on, but when I didn't, and would sit back in the dome, I would worry about him, each time hoping he would come back alright. And each time he would come back, fine and dandy as when he had left. He taught me much, and one thing I always

remember of him is how he used to laugh and say, “Live a life worth living” I wasn’t quite sure what he meant by it, but I went along and agreed with him.

It was like that for a while, I’m not quite sure how long, until one night something dreadful happened.

I was used to his long walks, he would always come back over the night and wake me with a playful flick of his long five point tail across my nose. But then, on one chilling night I had my tail wrapped tightly around me, trying to keep warm without the still shape of Dinir beside me with his curving grey pelt. He had left early that afternoon, yet it was around midnight and he hadn’t returned yet. I tossed and turned, my dreams filled with worry and fright. I woke breathing deeply, sweat rolling over my forehead and matting my fur. Something was wrong.

I pummeled through the tunnel fast as my lanky legs could go, calling out frantically for him, my voice choked with fear. I could feel it in the air, the way it sunk its claws into me and clogged my lungs. Even the salty wash of the ocean over my mouth didn’t awaken the joy I had known. I wanted to find him, and as I raced along the shore, sand flying away from my paws in a lightning fast motion, I suddenly knew where he was.

I finally reach the end of the shore, my heart pounding painfully against my chest and my breath coming out in ragged wheezes. My eyes searched over the shortly cropped grass right to the edge of the woods, flickering with fatigue after the long run. A dark red stain splotched the sand in front of me. Large prints blotched out beside paw prints that by comparison were like pebbles to a boulder. The scarlet splatters made a path through the trees, and you could almost hear them hiss with rage at what had happened. The trail twisted and turned through the trees, over a small silver creek winding through the mossy ground. I could feel tears coming steadily now, in small sobs of hate and sorrow. The scent, Dinir’s wonderful scent of happiness, I could taste it, but now mixed with fear, my own.

I finally came out at the shore on the other side, glad to be out in the open again. I sucked in the salty wonderful air, calming down quietly. A light drizzle rained down from the heavens, and I knew, whatever happened, Dinir would be with me. Forever. I slipped through the sheets of fog that rolled in like the waves crashing into the boulders, suddenly violent and full of malice.

I blinked and reeled back in horror. My eyes must have faltered, because to me it looked like the sparkling blue waves were blood red, stains sticking to the granite boulder and an awful reek wrenching my nose. I wrinkled my snout and stalked forward through the fog, feeling brave. But I wasn’t prepared for the sight in front of me.

A limp body lay on the wet sand, the waves pushing and pulling continuously at the cat, dragging it further and further into the current. I squinted my eyes and gasped with recognition. “**No! Dinir!**” I took off, sending a shower of sand in the opposite direction. The cat twitched, but said nothing as it was pulled in with the waves. I wadded

through the water, it stuck uncomfortably to my belly but I hardly noticed. He flinched and looked up at me with those amber eyes, and tore through my pelt with his gaze, relishing me while he could I would guess. He smiled meekly and tried to move but deep wounds stopped him and he groaned in a pain. **“Hey, Kitashi.”** He purred, his voice deep and wonderful. I bent down my head to gently groom his fur, tears brimming my eyes. He craned his neck and brushed my cheek with his tongue, giving me a weak nudge. **“You remember me ok?”** He mewed quietly. I shook my head. **“No, you’re fine, you’re going to get better.”** He chuckled softly and just stared sadly at me. **“Always so stubborn....”** A distant look over came him for a moment. **“That badger....I never saw it coming....”** He blinked and limpened. Afraid that he might go, I vigorously groomed his forehead. **“Shh.”** I murmured to him. **“You’ll be fine.”** He moaned as I cleaned the deep wound on his flank that was covered with blood and dirt, fraying the soft fur around his stomach. Patches of his shoulder lay bare with trickles of blood leaking down. He looked up at me and in a very quiet voice, almost below a whisper mewed, **“Will you remember me Kitashi?”** I nodded feebly, overcome with emotion. **“I’ll always remember you, Dinir.”** He smiled. **“Good”**.

And an ominous looks washed over his face he let his eyelids flop closed over his amber eyes, took a long rasping breath and lay very still, mangled among the shore. That was how he passed away, I thought I could feel a pelt brush mine just then, a soft word in my ear, then it was gone.

I’ll always remember that tom. He was about as perfect as a cat could get. I often felt like a mortal among an angel around him, and his presence still is around me, supporting me in times of need. For his sake, I try to act cheerful and not break down in sorrow, I know he wouldn’t want me to suffer, but it’s so hard not to wish I had gone on the walk with him. I took his corpse back to the vine dome, and buried him right under the moon highlight. I found two flowers and flat stone and I placed them on his grave. I carved with my claw, which was hardly a stump after, a few words on the stone. Then, I left that place. I journeyed on to the hills, and found refuge among the many branches of the trees. I then ventured out, where no one in my old home could have reached. I met few friends along my journey through the land, but one of the few ones that stick close to me, yet not quite as much as Dinir, was a small terrier named Pip.

He was a lively little thing, and through I didn’t play with him much, we had long chats in the snow, gathering memories from each other when he wasn’t leaping and dashing around cheering me up.

A deep chill engulfed my as I trudged through the snow, but I couldn’t just sit by myself pouting all day. My tail hung behind me in the snow, leaving a small winding trail along with my paw tracks.

I finally reached a tall wooden fence, painted white with the gently falling snow, I had to constantly quiver my pelt to keep it from melting through to my downy fur. I gathered my legs under me and hurtled myself to the top, shaking the snow off the top of the posts. I gazed intently at the old green house, and let out a yowl.

*In few moments, a small black terrier leapt from under the porch and plowed through the snow towards me. It looked up at me with large brown eyes and whined with joy. “**Kit, Kit, Kit! You came came came!**” Dogs have a curious way of talking, repeating one word over and over, dragging it across your ears.*

*I purred in delight as I dropped down beside the energetic canine. “**Of course I came you beetlebrain!**” I mocked teasingly. He yipped excitedly and spun in circles. “**What shall we talk talk talk about?**” He barked joyfully.*

*I scrunched my brow thoughtfully. “**How about past comrades?**” I mewed suggestively leaning to give the terrier a good hearted head butt.....*

But as I had to go on to find the place that I truly belonged, I said goodbye to my old friend and went on with my journey.

I wasn't too soon after that I came across a beach, like the one that I had once inhabited. And once again, I breathed in the salty sweet air, and wandered over the sandy shore, watching the waves foam and smash against the large, smooth boulders that lined the water's edge, gathering in clumps of sharp pointed stones, clipped neatly by the endless slamming of water against their thick, grey and black sides. Never ending, never lessening by much, only listening to the wind and the sky.

It is here I rest my story, and I hope you will take note of what had happened over this time. Joy and sorrow, wisdom and strength is all put to a test at one time, an though I have had all this happen to me, I will live to see much more of it, and I hope, if I may, that one day, I will find someone like Dinir again, someone I can rely on.

SALLY THE SILLY SPARROW

By Abagayil Hatt

There once was a sparrow named Sally, but everyone called her Sally the Silly Sparrow.

Everyday, she would fly by Fred the Fierce Falcon and she would try to fly faster than him.

One night, Sally was at her best friend's house, Wilma the Wise Wren. Wilma said to her, "One day you will regret flying by Fred the Fierce Falcon". Sally though didn't listen.

The next day Sally was trying to fly faster than Fred. Sally was being so silly and looking behind her and not looking ahead because of that Sally flew straight into a window.

When she came to, Sally got scared and regretted being so silly for trying to fly faster than Fred. She was so weak that she couldn't get up; all she could do was chirp as loud as she could chirp.

Fred was closing in on her and he looked really annoyed. When all of a sudden the door opened and out came a girl named Kimberly the Kind. Fred flew away, afraid that he might get hurt and he flew straight into a tree.

When Kimberly saw Sally, she ran inside to find some seeds, but she didn't have any. So she asked her neighbour Olivia the Obedient to go and get some for her since her bike was in the shop. Olivia hopped on her bike and rode to the supermarket. She picked up some sunflower seeds and rode back. When she got home she went next door and gave the seeds to Kimberly who gave them to Sally. Then after a couple minutes Sally started to feel better. Then Sally flew up and did a loop and gave Kimberly and Olivia a peck on the cheek which is her way of saying thank you. From that day on Sally never flew by Fred the Fierce Falcon again. She never could anyway because, when Fred hit his head on the tree he lost his fierceness and meanness and became Fred the Friendly Falcon.

So all ended well for Sally and she lived happily ever after.

The End

FOREVER FIGHTING

By Mady Imboden

The fire licked my arm. The way it burned I could never forget, the man, he held me, pushing me closer, my feet slid on the concrete below as I hopelessly tried to push away. He whispered into my ear, "One last chance."

I spat into his twisted, ugly face, and said, "Never", using the same tone of voice he used with me. To be honest I was scared out of my wits, and he was mad because I already, um, how do I put this gently? I peed on him. Last resort, I assure you, and at least I didn't go with the old saying, scared poopless. Back to the moment, I wasn't sure what to do, my face was getting closer to the scorching fire, embers were spat out and made boils appear on my arm. Hair was being painfully licked off by flames; I knew that I couldn't give him any satisfaction. But, I screamed as he grabbed the back of my head with a fistful of hair as he wrenched me up, "Had enough?" he asked, with an awful grin.

His face contorted into ugly swirls as he smiled. "I won't ever tell you." I said.

The man's face turned more ugly if it was even possible. He turned sideways, so that only half of his face glowed orange. He whipped his head back quickly with an evil smirk that went ear to ear. "Shame...." he said as he made a clicking noise with his wretched forked tongue, "Such a shame to lose a boy."

His evil smile returned for a moment. He turned his head then fell face first into the gritty concrete. "Move away from that vile man," she said.

She lowered her pistol slowly, then ran towards me. Tears welled up in her eyes. She knew I hated it when she cried but she couldn't help it. Tamerasia threw her dark arms around me and squeezed me in a gigantic hug. Her dark brown hair covered me completely, we stood there for what seemed to be an eternity wrapped in each others arms. "Stay here." She warned.

Tamerasia walked slowly to the insane devil that had me only moments before. She put her hand to its (the fowl fiend does not deserve to be treated as an equal) neck then counted his pulse. As if reading my mind she said, "'It' is still alive."

We waited together for back-up to come. Tamerasia and I are a team, a great one. We work so well together; it seems that we are brother and sister the way we act and the way we know if something is wrong with the other. She always gets worried about me. I know that whatever happens was meant to happen, and I will always fight to make it safer at whatever cost, defying Tamerasia, even death.

Our story started only a few years ago. Tamerasia was an investigator then, but she had simple cases because the man in charge discriminated her because of her race. She is Pakistani, it doesn't bother me, but because of schooling and work she has

developed a tough skin, and doesn't want to let anyone in, including me. She was finally given a real case, one that involved a brutal double murder, the murder of my parents. I was the witness of it all, we were once a wealthy normal family, now only a shard of that exists; me. I hid in the closet the entire time, I buried myself in a blanket of clothes trying to muffle the noises, I could of helped, but I was too scared, we could have been a family still; but were aren't, because of me.

After the case was solved I was adopted by the person that now knew me best; Tamerasia. She is now my family, and she knows what it is like to lose family. Both of her parents have died as well, her father died of a heart attack, sadly, shortly after her mother committed suicide. Tamerasia is convinced that there was more to be examined and that her mother would never do what she did. No one believed her, except me. She spends every waking moment of every day trying to comprehend what happened. A deep void is there in both of our hearts, a bottomless pit, and what seemed to be never ending agony, has become a life of possibilities. Together we are mending each others hearts, together we will someday make a difference in society.

After the man was put in cuffs and taken away Tamerasia drove us to the station. We were called to the supervisor's office immediately. "Where is that blond boy, and the Pakistani women?!" he yelled out furiously. The sound traveled through his office and into the hallway. We gave each other a small smile then went into his office. His cheeks flushed red, then his forehead wrinkled as he gave us a horrible look. "Do you know what you have just done?!" he yelled as if we were in another room. I wiped his saliva off my cheek with the back of my hand. "Well," I began, "I believe we just incarcerated a dangerous criminal that was known for drug use, armed robbery, assual" He cut me off. "You two know to always have back up! He could of gotten the better hand of the situation and BOTH of you could have been KILLED! I should have both of you fired for your behavior!" "Excuse me sir." I retorted, "but, you do know us better than that, 1, he wouldn't have gotten the upper hand; and 2, you wouldn't fire us, we are the best you have."

Tamerasia gave me a little kick in the leg.

"Leave please..... But, thank you for apprehending that criminal." He said.

We gave a phony little salute with a straight face then turned in one quick motion out the door. As soon as we were out of sight we giggled maniacally.

"I can't seem to understand that man, no matter what we do he yells then says thank you anyway, I mean what is with him?" Tamerasia asked.

"Not sure, but I think I owe you something," I poked her stomach.

"What was that for?!?" Tamerasia demanded.

"Wa-it; thank you for helping me earlier; but," I said

“But what?” She interrupted

I continued as if she didn't say anything, “Well, I could of done it by myself! He would have been easy enough to take on.” I said with a sarcastic tone.

She laughed, “You? Fight?! Were you going to try those kung-fu moves you saw in the movies? High-YA!” she did a little kick, then started laughing again.

“No;” I said my cheeks burned red. “It would have been like this!” I jumped up in the air and kicked I yelled “HU-AH!” just like they do in the movies.

We laughed together the whole way home. We made jokes about fighting movies (especially the lip syncing). She opened the door to our cozy apartment. It has two rooms plus a bathroom and a kitchen. The wallpaper has peeled edges that rise from the wall. It is small but nice. I rushed into the door to write in my journal, I like to write poems daily, it is usually my feelings, life or the things that I did earlier during the day. It just helps me to not freak on everyone around me, as you know I have a tough job.

July 1st/08

State of Mind

Her heart cracks,

As it slowly turns black,

From the realization of the pain,

What was there to gain?

Tears of sorrow fill her eyes,

Now everyday she cries.

She screams as memories come,

Chances that were left untaken, make her glum.

She cannot see that she is not alone,

She is locked inside, never to atone,

Her mind is out of her heart,

Will she ever start?

Start to love, start to trust,

Again start to feel lust?

Lust for someone?

She holds the trigger to the gun,

That can save or destroy a life,

She raises it wearily as if it were a knife.

As she debates what seems to be a worthless being,

I rush in telling her to begin seeing,

Seeing the truth of every precious moment.

July 2nd/08

I want to scream I want to cry,

Why at this moment may I not die?

The reason for living is no longer there,

*I can now see how life isn't fair.
Children scream it out loud,
As if it were a threat, they say it proud.
But they cannot begin to comprehend,
The evil their parents are ready to defend.*

Today was July 2nd, I know what I say may sound peculiar, but it is the entire truth. The poem that I wrote today was about the man, he had left scars, and wounds that will never heal on so many people, life isn't fair, it never will be, nothing is always black and white, there isn't anything that can be completely justified.

I lay in bed unable to get rest with thoughts running through my head. I always think of a poem when we apprehend a criminal, it completely releases all my feelings, and makes me realize how precious life is, and how much you did by helping the community during the day. That is what it feels like to me, but for other people it's different. Tameraasia wrote this one, she revealed it to me the day that we caught our first criminal together, she said that it makes the day worth living knowing that there are less people like this because of her, it makes her; without a doubt, know that she did good today.

*I can now finally see
What we can be
I gave you my heart
And from the very start,
You protected me
Now finally
I see the horrors outside your protection.
I'm avoiding their detection,
Of those who have the hearts of stone
And those who wish to be all alone.
I'm trying to comprehend their twisted tales,
But when everything fails.
All I can know is that I'm safe with you,
Your smile fends off all evil, tell me who
Who can resist the loving smile of you?
Not a soul can defy,
But all can lie,
Lie that they can pass without looking back.
But we know that those jealous will plan an attack,
But there is a bond between you and I,
The lonely souls don't understand, some seem to die.
Because they do not try,
Try to find their true love,
The love that only two pure and true people may have.*

I say this to criminals that need to know that they have done wrong, people that have no sense of direction, people who have no conscience. Well... sometimes I leave out the last part, (I can't go around telling everyone that I love them, it would hurt my tough guy image) it's still utterly moving. It is a poem that makes you look inside of yourself and try to make yourself a better person. I know in my heart that I will never be that person, to cause pain; it would be the death of me.

Tamerasia did the same thing that she did every day, search for her mothers name. Look for criminals, any clue she could find. I felt sorry for her, she can't let go, if information stops coming, I fear that she will die inside. I tiptoed to her side. She sat illuminated by the light on the thick wood desk. I didn't think that she had noticed me, but she silently and stealthily took out a strange object, she whipped it out and shot me directly in the center of my chest; without even a glance to me. It felt strange, was I in a nightmare? How could she even breathe after what she did, I took a deep inhale, I stood there stunned, appalled, what did I do to deserve this fate? I tried relentlessly to get to my bed as she chased me, trying to recover from the ruthless blow that sent pulses of fear down my spine. I searched under my pillow frantically. My brain was trying to understand events that had happened only seconds before. I found my last defense.

"Tamerasia, I don't want to hurt you." I pleaded hopelessly.

"Puh-lease, this time it will be different. I will get you this time!" she riposted.

Memories flooded back to last time it happened. Without another moment of hesitation, without a single thought she shot me again, and again. I felt... cheated, I flew back onto the bed as a red stream came darting toward me, she didn't let me have a chance, I always had pepper spray and a something rarely brought out under my pillow, thank god I found the rarely used one, silly string. We shot each other gleefully as we play fought, I ran and hid under her desk, she ran past me, I was about to grab her ankle. But she stopped in her tracks, she stumbled backwards as she dropped the can, that noise seemed to echo around the room a million fold, she and the can landed onto the hard, unforgiving laminate floors. She slowly, wearily backed up to our green couch. Tamerasia was at a loss for words, she breathed heavily; she heaved in and out, tears flooded her dark face, they ran down her soft cheeks and dry lips so fast, as if they too were scared. I heard heavy footsteps, big black boots clunked against the floor. A black clothed figure inched forward, my sight became blurry as tears formed in my blue eyes. I sat there under there desk huddled, frozen with fear. "No; n-o, please." Tamerasia begged quick short breaths filled the spaces between the words. "I checked you out. You're dead. It can't be."

"Money makes this world goes round, anything you dream can be made into real life with a-little cash." The voice was gruff and husky. Dare I look? The intruder continued, "You are a tough little fighter, never gonna give in are ya? Aint it a shame, I'm gonna have to kill two of ya. Tell me where the boy is and I'll cut him a break, you're done for anyway, you went too deep this time. Don even think of foolin me, I saw

the both of yas together.” His words were all blended into one, he slurred as if intoxicated. Tamerasia shot me a quick glance then buried her head into her hands. “Please sir. He ran out when he saw you.” Tamerasia stuttered. ‘Sir’ was one of our words she was going to try and take him on, give me just enough time to get away, but she and I both knew that she wouldn’t live through that. We had safe words. When either of us would say a certain word we know to trust each other. But; I couldn’t let the same thing that happened before happen again. I was going to save her.

He had a sway in his step, every stride he was off-balance for just a moment. I counted the time between his steps and distance between his strides. I looked for my opening. I dashed out from under the desk headfirst. My head shot between his legs. I hit him at exactly the right moment. But I was foolish, I acted in the spur of the moment, I didn’t know what to do next. I turned off my brain and let my instincts do some work. I looked around the room desperately trying to think of something quickly. He began to get up, the imposter angrily grabbed one of my legs, I caught a glance of Tamerasia huddled in shock. I threw the desk and papers at his face, he gave a quick jerk of his arm and I fell to the floor with a loud bang. Everything in my sight was spinning and blurry. I flailed my arms and legs mindlessly, I couldn’t see him, his sweaty palms were no longer on my calf. Where was he? Noises answered my question; I heard a clunk of big boots running and a pat of bare feet. He was chasing Tamerasia.

I ran into my room and searched again under my pillow frantically, I couldn’t find it. I threw the pillow off of my beige bed. I searched again under another pillow its cream case was lumpy, I ripped out the pillow out. I finally found it. My firearm. I quickly grabbed the pepper spray off my stained mattress. I peaked around the corner of our wallpapered walls, a peeled edge blocked my view, I ripped it off in one quick movement. He had a gun to her head. He half dragged half walked her to the desk. He kicked the papers across the room.

He came closer to my bedroom, he shouted at Tamerasia and told her to stay by the couch and not to move. He turned his back for a moment as he faced Tamerasia. I sprinted a few meters before I was able to jump on his back. I sprayed him, and as he went to the floor, I showed him no mercy. I hit him as hard as I could with the handle of the gun. He lay there unconscious, Tamerasia ran over to me.

“He killed her.” We were wrapped in each others arms, forever fighting for justice. We tied the assailant to a bedpost and laid together; we were there for days until someone finally noticed. Now nothing is left without contemplation, every movement is thought through, through our partnership, through her entire life.

August 1st 09

You were lost in your tears,

Caught in this world full of fears.

No more chances taken,

Her life forsaken.

SNOW DAY

By Griffin Toplitsky

Let me introduce myself. I'm a Grade 9 student. My name's James. You can call me Jim. Or James. It doesn't really matter. Most people don't know my name either way. I like it that way. I like being able to just blend into the background and watch. It can be very entertaining that way.

It's how I lived my life every day except for December 13th. Every day other than December 13th, I just blended, just went about life doing my own thing, and letting other people do theirs. Every day other than December 13th I didn't have to be a leader, or control anybody, or be anybody's friend.

In case you haven't figured it out already, I'm going to be telling you the story of December 13th.

SNOW DAY

On the 12th, it still hadn't snowed yet. Not even a little bit. Well, there's global warming for you, I thought to myself. When I woke up the next morning, I realized Mother Nature had just been saving it for one big dumping.

And when I say big dumping, I'm talking HUGE. Like, a Chuck Norris sized snowfall. A Hulk sized blizzard. A Godzilla sized hurricane of snow. Sorry, I'm losing track of where I was.

Since this Fat Albert of a flurry hit, the buses were cancelled.

I was a minor 9'er. And since this was my first year of high school, it was also my first snow day of high school. I was definitely going to stay home.

"You're definitely not going to stay home," my mom said to me as I ate my breakfast.

"What!? I don't want to go to school!!!!" I pleaded, "there's going to be no one else there!" (Actually, as it turns out, there were 6 other Grade 9's there)

"You have two choices: stay home and clean your room all day, because lord knows it needs it, or go to school," said my mom.

So 15 minutes later I was at school. I walked inside. I had never seen the halls so empty. I was the only person there, except for some creepy janitor guy in a corner holding a mop and staring at me. And when I say creepy, I mean CREEPY. So I turned left down the first hallway I came to. It too was empty.

"Good morning!" said a voice.

“OH MY GOD!” I swung around violently, thinking the creepy janitor had followed me. It was just an announcement.

“We would please ask any students who actually came to go to room 415 A.S.A.P, thank you.”

The room was a math room. I had never been inside it before. No one else was inside other than me, and some teacher at the back. I hoped I wasn't the only person there. You know that saying: “Be careful what you wish for?” Well, whoever said it is a freaking genius.

In walked a kid I had never seen before. He had a goofy grin on his face, like he didn't have a clue about anything, but didn't care. Turns out, this description fit his personality to a tee. He was shorter than me, and was a little bit pudgy. Not all the way circular but still.....round.

And he sat down right next to me.

“Hi, my name's Mark,” he said opening up his binder (in which all the notes had doodles all over them).

“Hi Mark,” I said glumly.

“There's another Mark?” he asked, turning around, looking at the teacher, “you're name's Mark?”

You know that scene in *Forrest Gump*, where the principal is explaining to Forrest's mom about his level of intelligence? You know with that chart? Where the principal says “This is average” and then lowers his hand on the chart and says “This is Forrest”. Well that was Mark. Right off the bat, I could tell he probably had the IQ of somewhere between a can of tuna and an alarm clock.

Although, not being smart enough is a lot better than being too smart, which is exactly what walked in next.

I had actually seen this kid before. He was in my math class, and was kind of hard to miss.

Now, I guess I myself am a little bit of a nerd, but this guy takes the cake.

Takes the cake and then finds its volume, area and density.

To start off, he looked like Red Green's nephew Harold. He had the glasses, and the greased back hair, and the tucked in shirt. He even had a pocket protector! I thought those things only existed in movies to help you *recognize* the nerd right off the bat. He sat in the front, all by himself.

Next walked in Little Miss Sunshine. I'm not talking Abigail Breslin. I mean Mrs. Optimistic – Cheerleader-Ray of sunshine. Not to mention Mrs. Teacher's Pet 3 years running. I think her name was Daffodil or Tulip. Some kind of flower.

The first day you knew her, she was likeable. Then she got on your nerves, more so everyday. She had gone to my public school (yet I still couldn't remember her name), so this would probably have been over day #700.

The Seagull was next. It wasn't his actual name (in case you hadn't noticed, I didn't know many people's names). I had seen The Seagull a few times before. Everyone in the school had. All he did at lunch time was go table to table mooching food and money. But the big mistake would be letting him have some. Because he will just keep coming back. Hence "The Seagull."

Then the bell rang. Me and the 3 others in the room stood up and began to sing *Oh Canada*. Well, lip sink to the words to *Oh Canada*. Except Mark. Mark belted it out at the top of his lungs, and had a blast doing it. The nerd kid (To this day, I still don't know his name) turned around and shot a look at Mark that said something to the lines of: Shut up, you Neanderthal ape idiot.

The flower girl just kept looking ahead.

Right after the song ended, in rushed Margot DiFiru. She was another person in that room who I knew. And I hated her with a passion. She was just that stereotypical drama queen, who probably spent 2 hours choosing her outfit. And another hour to do her hair. She looked at me and shot a look that said: Eww, If I knew *you* were coming I would have stayed home.

She took a desk in the middle.

Then the teacher at the back stood up. I had forgotten he was there until that point.

"Hello. Today you guys will be together all day and....hello there"

The boy who had just walked into the room just grunted. He threw his binder onto his desk and plopped down in a seat.

He had a leather jacket and torn blue jeans. And he was wearing sunglasses. Mark raised his hand.

"Yes?" asked the teacher.

"Why is he wearing sunglasses? It's wintertime." I put my head into my hands. As I said earlier, I just like to blend. And I was sitting beside Mark, who was not trying to blend in the least bit.

“Why don’t you just shut your mouth,” said the kid. Taking off his sunglasses and shoving them into his knapsack. This kid had several piercings and a Mohawk. Need I say more?

“Alrighty then,” said the teacher “my name is Mr. Stein. Let’s do some attendance. Raise your hand if you’re here.”

I think only me and the nerd kid actually realized there was something wrong with the statement “Raise your hand if you’re here”.

“Alrighty then,” said the teacher again “You and you take the attendance down”

“You and you” was me and Mark.

“All right,” I said, getting up slowly.

“Cool!” said Mark.

The school is big. It takes awhile to get from Point A (in this case, room 415) to Point B (in this case, the office). It takes much, much longer when you have someone with you who is about as smart as a dump truck.

“What’s the weirdest thing you ever ate?” asked Mark.

“I don’t know, probably sushi,” I said.

“Wow! That’s raw fish you know!” said Mark.

“I know,” I said.

“I once ate a plastic army guy,” he must have noticed my shocked face because he added “don’t worry...I cooked him first.”

We walked in silence for a few more minutes.

“Would you ever eat poo?” asked Mark.

“What did you just ask me?”

“I mean, if someone gave you, like, a million dollars, would you eat poo?”

“How....” I looked around to make sure no one saw me actually participate in this conversation, “how much poo are we talking?”

“A pound of poo,” said Mark.

I couldn't continue this highly intelligent conversation anymore unfortunately, because the kid with the Mohawk and piercings and the torn jeans had come out from behind a corner, taken me by the shirt collar, and thrown me into the janitor's closet.

I really didn't have much time to think. One minute, I was talking to Mr. Eat-Poo, the next I was sitting in a recycling bin.

"You," said the kid (let's call him "Mohawk") as he pointed at me.

"Yes?" I asked.

"You're going to come with me," said Mohawk.

There was no mistaking this for a question. It wasn't "Would you like to come with please?" It was "You're going to come with me." It was a fact. And against this guy, I really didn't want to argue the facts.

"Okay," I said, climbing out of the recycling bin where I had landed.

"Where are you going?" asked Mark as I walked back into the hallway, following Mohawk.

"You," said Mohawk, pointing at Mark "chubby. You come too."

"Alright!" said Mark, "this is going to be an adventure!"

"Yes," said Mohawk, "yes it is."

"Sorry to interrupt," I said nervously, "but where *are* we going?"

Mohawk shot me a look that made me sorry for interrupting.

"Outside," he said.

We were at the front doors, attendance still in Mark's hand, when the nerd ran up to us. "I've broke into the lab and got all the supplies," said the nerd, holding up a plastic Sobeys bag full of something.

"Great. Mr. Stein taken care of?" said Mohawk.

"Mitch tied him to the chair," said the nerd.

Mitch must have been The Seagull. Ha-ha. Mitch the Mooch. I chuckled silently to myself. Then I realized the rest of the sentence.

"Who got tied to a chair!?" I blurted out.

“Mr. Stein,” said the nerd and Mohawk at the same time.

“If you replaced the “T” in “Tin” with a “G”, it would be gin!” laughed Mark.

I really did not get anything that was going on here. And neither did Mark apparently.

“Wow, wow, wow...you guys tied a *teacher* to a *chair*?!” I asked.

“Nope,” said the nerd.

“But Mitch did though,” said Mohawk.

Just then Mitch, Little Miss Sunshine and Margot (Eww) walked down the stairs. I turned to Mitch, “you tied a *teacher* to a *chair*!?”

“Yup,” said Mitch.

“Anyone want a mint?” asked Marigold.

“Are we going to blow up the bleachers yet?” asked Margot.

You ever have those moments where your brain takes in so much confusing information at once that you just can’t think at all?

“Yea, sure, I’ll have a mint,” said Mark.

“Everybody shut up,” I said, “except for you (I pointed at the nerd) who is going to tell me exactly what is going on.”

“We’re blowing up the football stand,” said the nerd, “I stole all the stuff we needed from the science lab. Mitch tied the teacher up. We need someone as stupid as Mark to actually detonate it. Greg (he motioned to Mohawk) will take all the blame if we get caught, it’s the kind of thing he would do. Marigold was more than happy to help. Margot threatened to blackmail us if she didn’t get to watch. And you’re our leader.”

“Why am I your leader!?” I asked.

“Because you have the most control over everybody, and you stay calm,” said the nerd. “What makes you think I have control over *anybody*?” I asked.

The nerd turned to Mark.

“Hey Mark! If all of us told you to do different things, who would you listen to?”

“That guy,” said Mark, as he pointed at me.

The nerd smiled.

The only reason I actually walked out those doors into the waist-deep snow was the fact that “Greg” (the Mohawk guy) was walking right behind me, and he seemed to agree with the nerd.

I wanted to protest. I really did. But how do you weave that into a conversation? Um guys, ha-ha, maybe, um, could you not blow up the football stands? I don’t think so. I can honestly say I’ve never had to persuade someone (let alone a group of loonies) not to blow up football bleachers before.

We were halfway to the snow-covered stands when I finally spoke up.

“You guys sure you’ve absolutely thought this through?” was all I could manage.

“We can’t stop now,” said Mitch the Mooch (or Seagull, take your pick), “I already tied the teacher to the chair.”

“Listen to me,” said Greg, “life isn’t about thinking. It’s about doing.”

“I agree,” said Marigold.

“I have to disagree,” said the nerd.

“I agree with that disagree,” I replied.

“What’s a gree? And why are you dissing them?” asked Mark.

“Neanderthal,” said the nerd.

“Everyone just shut up,” said Margot, “I wanna see an explosion.”

“Agree,” said the nerd.

“WHAT’S A GREE?” yelled Mark.

“Shut your face Mark!” I yelled, “listen guys, you just can’t blow up a football stand!”

“And why not?” said Greg.

“Do I seriously need to go over all the reasons!? Blowing up the football stands could be the worst possible thing you decide to do,” I was getting desperate, “I have 700 dollars in my bank account. I will give you each 50 bucks if you turn around and go back inside!”

Bribery is a horrible thing. The bad guys are the only ones who ever seem to use it. But hey, it works, and everyone stopped for a second.

“You could actually give us \$116 dollars each and still have four left over,” said the nerd.

“I would settle for that,” said Margot.

“No,” I had a school trip I really wanted to go on, and my parents pay for nothing. I wanted *some* money left (and by some I mean more than four dollars).

“Your money means nothing,” said the nerd.

“I can steal ten times that in a single convenient store robbery,” said Greg.

“Damn it!” I yelled, “you guys just don’t get the picture, do you!? You’re all mental!”

“No,” said Greg, “*you* don’t get the picture. All of us here are outcasts. This is about making a statement, not thinking about consequences.”

“Excuse me?” said Margot, taken aback, “I am *not* a loser.”

“Okay Mrs. PMS, we’ll save this conversation for some other time,” said Greg, “right now we’ve got some football stands to blow up.”

“No you don’t,” I said, stepping in front of him.”

Thinking back on it now, it was a *really* dumb thing to do. But hey, I though it showed a lot of, what would you call it, character development? Anyhow, they said I was their leader, so lead I did. That is, until Greg punched my lights out. Then I just kind of laid on the ground and watched.

I watched the nerd kid set up the explosives with the help of Marigold.

I watched Mark standing there with a not-so-bright look on his face.

I watched Margot complain about something.

I watched them begin the countdown from ten backwards.

And when they were at five, I watched the football stadiums collapse. Not blow up, but collapse.

Remember that Hulk of a snowfall? Well, the designers of the stands must not have expected that to happen. Maybe Indiana Jones. Possibly Bruce Willis. But a *Hulk* sized snowfall? Apparently not.

The noise was horrible. The metal on metal scraping. Kind of like fingernails on chalkboard. But the relief I felt was outweighed the horridness of the noise.

I must have been the luckiest dude on the face of the world right there.

We stood there in the snow for a few seconds in silence.

“That was cool,” said Margot.

“Let’s go back inside,” said the nerd.

“I’m a gree,” said Mark.

“I’m probably in a lot of trouble,” said Mitch.

“Probably,” said Greg.

“Anyone want a mint?” asked Marigold.

“Yea,” said Mark.

The bag full of explosives was returned to the science lab without incident. The nerd kid wasn’t caught. Mitch on the other hand, well, did, and I don’t see him at lunchtime asking for fries anymore.

Other than that life is back to usual. I’m back to blending into the crowd. Back to my life of nothingness. Hoping there’s no more Snow Days.

R. I. P.
By Melissa Peters

Here lies Ted who's better off dead

The Huntson's family of four seemed to be a nice family.

All with white blond hair, the mother, son, and daughter had thick curly hair. They didn't have a lot of money, small house, almost no yard. But they seemed to have a good life.

Well, that is how it would seem. But nobody really knew what Mr. Max Huntson really did for a living. He would stay in his basement most of the time.

When their son, Ted turned eight, and their daughter, Winnifred turned six, Mrs. Kate Huntson just took off. Nobody knew why, she seemed to be a very loving mother. No one ever would've thought she would just leave them, but she did.

Ten years later, Ted was now eighteen, and Winnifred was sixteen. Winnifred was very popular in school, because she was very pretty, and very stylish, and loved to talk a lot. But Ted, well, he was cute and everything, but he was very quiet, dressed very much like a nerd. He was very unsocial, with no friends. But there was a girl he worked with that he was very fond of. Her name was Sasha, she had dark skin, short black straight hair, light brown eyes and full lips. She was beautiful.

He never really talked to her much, he mostly just watched her from afar. Little did he know, that she noticed him too, and he wasn't the only one watching. So since she was a little more brave than him, one day when it was both their lunch breaks, she asked him to eat with her. Once they started talking, they both found out that they had a lot in common.

After that day she broke the ice he wasn't too shy to ask her out. So after weeks went by, they really started to fall in love.

"Eh Teddy," Winnifred said with a big grin on her face. "Tell me about your lady friend!"

"What? Ted has a girl friend?" asked Winnifred's best friend Link.

"Go away!" Ted said, "You guys are going to be late for school!"

"Fine!" Winnifred said, "But I will meet her, I won't give up that easy!" So they headed out the door.

Winnifred snapped on her Rollerblades, and Link got her skateboard, and they headed to school. At their school, there was a seventeen year old boy named, Burt, who had a sister named Michelle.

Burt's best friend was Tyler and he also hung out with them. One day Mr. Huntson told Winnifred she should have her friends over for dinner. She found it a little weird that her dad would suggest that, but she was happy to agree. So she invited Link, Burt, Tyler, Michelle, and Sasha.

When they all arrived at the Huntson's, they talked for a bit, then ate, and Ted served them all drinks. Sasha thought that Ted was acting a little weird. Then they all headed home.

When Tyler got home he smiled at his parents, and said good night to them. He kissed his six year old sister who was already in bed on the head. Then he went to his room in the basement, then went to bed, and fell asleep right away. In the middle of the night, he woke up, and smelt smoke. He jumped out of his bed, and started to go up the stairs. He could barely see since there was smoke everywhere. So he started to crawl up. He reached the top, and put his hand on the door. But as soon as he put it on, he took it right off. It was burning hot. He had his arm covering his mouth, but it didn't help.

He could feel the smoke go through his lungs. He couldn't stop coughing. Then he heard his sister's voice screaming in pain. Tears went down Tyler's eyes, and he yelled, at the top of his voice, and started to bang on the door. He could see the light from the fire outside the door. When it started to burn through, he crawled down the stairs, and he just laid on the floor. Then he slowly lost consciousness.

The firemen got to the house and put the fire out, but there weren't any survivors. In the basement of the burnt house was Tyler's body, partially burnt, nothing but his bones with burnt flesh on top. The rest of the family's bodies were burnt to ashes.

The next day they buried Tyler's body. Winnie, Link, and Burt, were all there. Link felt awful sorry for his crying family, but she wouldn't cry. Winnie was crying - she just couldn't hold it in. She wasn't close to him, but not only did he die, but so did his whole family. Tyler's closest friend, Burt, could barely hold in the pain. His eyes did water, but he tried as hard as he could to hold it in. He didn't want Link to think he was a suck.

The body was buried, and everyone headed home.

On the tombstone it said, **HERE LIES TYLER WHO DIED IN A HOUSE FIRE.**

The next morning Winnie got up, ate, and stepped in the shower, closed the shower curtains, then started to shower. Then someone walked in. "Uh, someone's in here!" She said. Then from the side of the shower curtains,

someone slipped in a plugged in straightener. The electricity touched the water by her feet. She felt a strong shock, then she was gone.

Her body was buried the next day, there were many tears. Even Link cried. On her tombstone it said, HERE LIES WINNIFRED WHO WAS ELECTROCUTED.

“Now,” Private Investigator Markus Pierce said to Mr. Huntson. “So what you're telling me, is that the morning your daughter was murdered, you were down stairs, in the basement, and you didn't hear anything?”

“Yes,” said Mr. Huntson, “I was working in my basement. Then Link came to the door.”

“Wait, wait,” Pierce said, “who is Link, and why was she at your door?” So Mr. Huntson answered and said, “She was my daughters closest friend. She comes by every week day to go to school with Winnie.”

“Alright” Pierce said, “Go on.”

“So Link rang the doorbell a few times, and I didn't get it right away, because I figured Winnie would answer it. After a while I got up, and answered the door. Of course it was Link. So I called for Winnie, but she didn't answer. I went up stairs and noticed the shower was still running. I banged on the door and called her name, but she didn't answer. After a while I just opened the door and looked in the shower and she was just lying there - dead and naked, with the straightener by her feet.”

Then Mr. Huntson started to cry. “I'm sorry for your loss.” Pierce said, “There is just one more thing I need to ask. Where is Ted?”

“I don't know, he didn't show up at work that day and he never did come home.”

“Thank you Sir.” Pierce said, “That is all.” Then he walked out the door.

Pierce was on his way to question Link, when he got a call, telling him that Link was found dead in her kitchen. There was no damage to her body, no sign of a struggle whatsoever. They suspected that she was poisoned. “Thank you for informing me.” Then he hung up his phone.

“I... I shouldn't be doing this!” Ted said, as he walked towards Michelle's, and Burt's house, while dragging on the ground. “*Why am I doing this? I don't want to kill them!*”

He walked around the house to the back yard. He saw Michelle sitting by an old wishing well, drawing. Ted started to walk towards her, but she didn't notice, she was paying to much attention to her drawing.

As he got closer, she noticed him, and asked, "What are you doing here?" He just smiled and said, "What are you drawing?" Then he sat beside her. Feeling uncomfortable, she stood up and said again, "What are you doing here?"

He stood up, grabbed her, swung her around, and slammed her against the stone well. She screamed, and started to struggle, but he over-powered her, picked her up, as she was still struggling and threw her into the well.

"Why did I do that?" He thought. Then he looked back at the house and saw the up stairs light on. So he went for the back door. He opened the door, walked in, and started up the stairs. When he was reached the top, he looked around, and saw Burt in his room with headphones in his ears playing on the computer.

Ted sneaked up behind, with the shovel stiff in his hands. He swung the shovel at Burt's head and knocked him out.

"Ah, my head hurts!" Burt thought. *"What happened, where am I?"* Then he opened his eyes and saw that his arms and legs were tied up. He was in a hole and someone was trying to bury him alive. He started to yell as Ted shoveled dirt on him. When Ted started to shovel the dirt onto his face Burt started to panic, swinging his head side to side, trying to get the dirt off his head. But Ted just kept shoveling more and more, until Burt couldn't move his head at all. Burt tried to gasp for air, but he couldn't breathe. The dirt started to go up his nose and as he tried to take big breaths, he choked on chunks of dirt. He kept trying to get air but all he got was mouths full of dirt.

Ted finished burying Burt, still wondering why he did it. He headed to Sasha's house, and when he got there, he just hugged her.

"Where am I, what happened? I, I thought I died. Was it all a dream?" Tyler thought. It was pitch black, he couldn't see a thing. He felt all around him, *"I'm in some sort of box."* Then he started banging the top and yelling for help. *"If I'm in here for much longer I'll run out of air!"* So he panicked and yelled at the top of his voice. Then all of a sudden, he burst into flames. The fire grew, then the box and the ground around it exploded. The coffin he was in was destroyed, and the dirt on top, and beside it was blown away. He climbed out of the hole made from the explosion. He looked around and saw that he was in a cemetery. He looked at the tombstones next to the rubble that was his tombstone and he saw his parents' and little sister's tombstones.

Then he started to cry and thought, *"What's happening, why am I still alive? I, I just want to be dead with them!"*

Then he looked at his hands, and saw that there was only bone, and black burnt flesh. *"I am supposed to be dead!"* He ran to the closest place where people he knew lived and that was the Huntson's house.

On that same day Burt also woke up, confused and scared, but he was happy to be alive. Ted didn't dig him too deep, so he lifted himself up out of the dirt.

He didn't know how he did it, cause his hands were tied up, and he wondered why he didn't have trouble breathing when he did. But he didn't bother trying to figure it out, he just wanted to see if Michelle was safe. He lifted his tied up hands towards his mouth and tried to untie himself with his teeth. It took him a while, but eventually he pulled the right things to untie himself. Then he untied his feet and ran to his house.

When he got there his sister was just sitting on the couch. She looked pale and shocked. Then the phone rang and he answered it. It was Mr. Huntson telling them both to come straight to his house right away.

When they arrived at the Huntson's, they sat down in the living room where Tyler, Link, and Winnifred were already sitting. "Okay kids, I know you're all confused, but I can explain everything. But just to warn you, you might not like what you hear. You hear I've been working on this drug, that can make a man have amazing powers. It could give a man the power to control the things around him, like fire. But for that drug to work well it would have to be taken, then the man who took it would have to be put with fire. So you see, my son Ted, well, he was a troubled boy and he started to go mad. He broke into my lab and grabbed that drug. He must have hoped it was some kind of poison. When he served your drinks that night, well, he put those drugs in your drinks. And I guess, when you guys didn't die from that, he went out to kill you."

"Wait!" Michelle said, "You're saying we all have powers? I drowned does that mean I can control water?"

"Yes!" he answered.

"And Ted, he's still out there, free?" Tyler asked.

"Well, yes."

Tyler stood up and started to walk away and then Mr. Huntson said, "Where are you going?"

"I'm going to kill that crazed son of yours that you did a horrible job raising!" Then he walked out the door and Winnifred followed him. He walked towards Sasha's house and as he walked, he was so angry that he was in flames. Winnifred followed close behind him. When they got to Sasha's house Winnie rang the door bell and Sasha answered.

When Sasha saw them she froze and said, "I thought you were dead!"

Then Winnifred explained what happened then begged her to tell them where Ted was. It took a while but Sasha knew that he was crazy, and that he shouldn't run free.

So she told them with tears in her eyes where he said he was. He was hiding out in an old abandoned school. When they got there Tyler's flames got stronger and he didn't bother looking for Ted. He just shot flames out from his arms at the old school and he didn't stop until the whole school was in flames. Ted was in one of the old classrooms and the whole room was filled with smoke. He didn't die by the flames but by the smoke.

Then Tyler said as he walked back, "Here lies Ted, who's better off dead!"

"I'm still alive and I'll be coming for you, father!" Those were the thoughts that went through Ted's head as he got up in a gray ghost looking figure. He didn't just give them the drug, but he took them himself. This was only the beginning of Ted's terror.

THE END

THE MAN WHO LOST HIMSELF

By Megan Marshall

He knew instantly from the moment he stepped into the cafe that something was wrong. The whole room seemed to be staring at him; no one dared to move. He walked up to the counter to face a nervous cashier and mumbled quietly for a large latte. He turned around, aware of the stares burning through him. The cashier returned with his drink and after thanking the cashier, he walked towards an empty seat. He glanced out the window, taking in the scene outside and his face in the reflection. He could feel the anxiety burning right through him, so to set his mind on something else, he picked up the newspaper on the table. The headline immediately caught his attention. So they had found out. Suddenly his life didn't feel so private anymore and he felt so alone. He tightened his hand into a fist staring at the wooden table. The press always gave him a hard time and today was no exception. He looked up to see a young boy standing in front of him.

"I'm sorry," the boy said with complete innocence in his eyes.

He nodded, taking in the boy. "Thank you," he replied. The boy smiled, pulling out a bracelet from his pocket and placing it on the table before leaving.

He picked up the bracelet running his fingers along the letters that spelt out one single word.

Hope.

The halibut arrived fifteen minutes later from when he ordered it and the waiter had placed it nicely in front of him, a polite smile on her face. So, as he learned from past experiences, he thanked her for the order, leaving a good tip. He stared at the fish for a few minutes before glancing up to watch a father and daughter laughing over who was going to steal the other one's fries first. Of course he knew there was most definitely something missing at his table; a sense of laughter and hope.

After finishing his meal, he rose from the table and made his way out the door. The sidewalk and street on which he was walking was fairly busy. The air was slightly foggy and a small breeze of wind had begun to pick up. Pedestrians walking by were too distracted by their daily lives that they hadn't noticed the familiar man pass by them. This is why he loved living on the outskirts of New York; no one knew him. He had no daily schedule at the moment, but a strict reminder to stop at a local suit shop for a tuxedo. He was expected to attend a formal event on Thursday and would need it then. So, as told, he walked towards the next store on his right and went in.

"Can I help you with anything?" asked the professional looking woman to his right. He usual was served by an elderly man named Thomas, so clearly this woman with the dark auburn hair was new.

“Yeah, I’m looking for an employee named Thomas,” he replied.

“Oh, I’m sorry but Thomas only works on Mondays now, so you’ll have to come by then.

However, in the meantime, would you like me to help you with anything?” replied the auburn haired woman.

“Okay, well I’m looking for a slightly loose fitting tux.”

The tuxedo the auburn haired woman picked out for him was not his favourite, but luckily the woman had expensive taste and it would be expected of him to pick this type. So he paid with his credit card, thanking both the cashier and the woman and headed towards home.

At first, the house seemed to be empty, but after hearing the clanking of dishes and the sound of the news on the television, he realised he was not alone. He slipped in quietly, trying not to disturb the person in the kitchen and walked down the hall, towards his office. He made his way to his computer sitting on top of the grand desk and shook the mouse to turn it on before taking a seat. An exhausted sigh escaped from his mouth and while leaning back in his chair, pushed a button on his answering machine for any missed calls. The different voices poured from his machine in boatloads and he slammed down the stop button in frustration. Work was definitely taking a toll. Or was it the lack of work? He wasn’t sure.

He remembered his current boss telling him that he seemed to have a lack of inspiration lately and had told him to take a day or two off to rediscover it. His reply was that the lack of talented writers and underpaid cast was making him ‘not really inspired’. However, there was still one more pair of shoes to fill, and his boss had told him to be patient and wait. Just watching the two people at the restaurant had made him more miserable, sick inside that he wondered what his first day back at work would be like.

“Robert, I told you specifically to tell me when you arrive home!” sternly said the woman who had just barged in the door. “I almost had a heart attack wondering where you were.”

“I was out,” Robert replied, “Buying a tux for Thursday.”

“Oh.”

The word lingered in the air.

He nodded slowly, with his eyes fixed on the wooden floor.

“I guess I better get going then,” the woman replied. He nodded.

“I guess you should.” The woman turned and left.

At exactly eleven o'clock, he stepped out of his office to stretch his legs. The lights were out and he had to frantically search the walls for a switch. As if by routine, he fixed himself a peanut butter sandwich from the kitchen and took a seat on the living room couch to briefly watch the news before settling on a late night talk show. He sighed before glancing down the hallway. There were better days than this.

Early morning woke him from his sleep and after glancing at the clock, he got ready for a slow and steady walk. The fog had seemed to clear up and was replaced with a slow rising sun peeking from behind the city. He crossed the street towards an old cafe that had been his early morning go-to spot for years. It was when he was ordering his morning latte that an elderly woman approached him.

"You're that guy," she replied pointing to him.

"What guy?" he asked before paying and thanking the cashier. He took a sip of his latte and left without another word.

He was just an ordinary guy, he told himself. One who drank way too many lattes, owned way too many suits, and questioned for too many years if this was his right path. Sure he was a little disconnected at times, indulged in food and well, other things for comfort and had an awkward yet comfortable stance when being greeted by people. But, none of that mattered to most people, although the chauffeur did tell him one more stunt and he might just quit. However, his life was draining on him. He felt the need for frequent outbreaks even if the outbreaks made news headlines or not, or were for the better or worse.

He never really understood himself and who he was. He had a strong sense of morals and values, had an opinion on everything, but felt stuck between what he wanted and what he *thought* he wanted. So, when he returned to work the next day, he was even more confused and surprised about the person standing across from him.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"Anna," she replied, "Your boss hired me."

"But why?"

"I'm your last pair of shoes," Anna replied with a smile.

He never thought about it in that way. Of course he knew he was dealing with someone younger than him but she was just...too young. He wasn't sure if she had even made it through college yet.

"Would you excuse me for one moment?" he asked...

The coffee tasted warm and pure, calming to him. He had asked for an extra large so the server knew immediately it had to be bad. He had also chosen a seat next to the window

to sit and reflect, letting all of his problems escape and vanish into thin air. But after taking a sip, he could taste the regret on his tongue, thinking to himself to give everything a second chance. After all, he had gotten one. He needed to clear his mind and think. It was Thursday, the day of the event. The tuxedo was probably set out on his bed right now, ready for him when he came home from work. He didn't even want to think about the questions he was going to be asked, or what he might answer.

"So did you plan on coming back anytime soon?" a voice asked from behind him. He looked up. Anna.

"Oh, uh... yeah. I just needed a break for a few minutes," he replied.

"You've been gone for half an hour," she said.

"Or a few hours," he replied. They laughed.

"I thought you loved your work."

"I did," he said, "Well I do. Just lately I've been not that into it."

"Got a lot on your mind?"

"Too much."

There was a silence.

"Well if I were you, I would turn all that anger and confusion into your art," Anna suggested, breaking the silence.

"I should."

The two stood in silence again. The only movement came from the steam of his coffee and the rustling of the wind outside. He focused his gaze on the wood of the table, not wanting to look up.

"Well, good luck at that thing tonight," Anna stated.

"Thanks," he finally mumbled. Anna turned to leave. "No, really thanks."

A few months had passed and he was already feeling a little bit better. He had stepped outside, leaning his head back to take in the fresh air and look out at his surroundings. The beaten down road looked long and tiresome, surrounded by freshly dug up dirt and dying grass. He could hear production inside, but ignored it, focusing on the view ahead.

“Hey! You!” a voice shouted from behind him. He turned around to see a mother and daughter frantically running up to him with huge smiles on their faces.

“Hi,” he replied to them.

“I know you,” said the mother, “You are amazingly talented.”

“Why thank you,” he said with a warm smile.

“Can you sign my poster?” the daughter asked.

“Absolutely,” he replied pulling out a pen.

“Well it was nice meeting you,” said the mother calmly, “We wish you the best in everything you do.”

“Thank you. I hope the same for you.”

He watched them leave, taking in what had happened, and smiled to himself proud of how he had handled it. He was most definitely feeling better. He thought to himself for a moment, and began to walk. A feeling of déjà vu caught him, but he ignored it and kept walking for quite some time...

“Can I help you with anything, sir?” asked the elderly, but well dressed man to his left.

“Nice to see you again, Thomas.”

“Nice to see you too, sir. Looking for anything in particular?”

“Pick me out something nice.”

“So do you always order fish when you come here?” she asked.

“Always,” he replied, “And every morning I always order a large latte to drink.”

“Why don’t you try something different?” she asked.

He took a sip of his water and thought for a moment. “I’m afraid of change,” he replied.

“Well if you don’t mind me being frank, you don’t look quite happy,” she replied.

“So?” he asked.

“So let’s get you a burger,” she replied. “Two burgers,” she said to the waiter.

“You have a guest this time sir?”

“Unfortunately.”

It only took ten minutes for two half-a-pound cheeseburgers and fries to arrive at the table. He turned to his left and couldn't help noticing a man that looked just like him sitting at his old table, staring envious at him.

“You know,” Robert said, “I bet you that I can steal one of your fries before you can steal one of mine.”

“Not if I steal one of yours first,” Anna replied laughing.

Next morning Robert woke up late for work. He ordered a small cold drink, wore a plain T-shirt with jeans and all was well.

STRATEGIES

By Sarah McLean

Sometimes on a sunny autumn afternoon shortly after a short but sweet match of wits, with plastic cheaply bought chess pieces, the players would shake hands and walk away from their chess table in a very noble fashion. As a gentle wind blew through the trees in the local park, the chess pieces still stood and waited for their surroundings to be safe.

The first piece to move was a white rook. It bounced across the table knocking over a couple of happy pawns. The rest of the white pieces cheered, happily toppling back and forth in excitement.

The black pieces sulked unhappily glaring at the celebrating pieces. The black knight sniffed in disgust and whispered to the jack beside it and they both snickered.

A white pawn approached the other side of the chessboard and began to taunt the black pawns.

“Ha! We won, our play won over your over-thought strategy! Huzzah! Nothing can defeat us!” The white pawn taunted triumphantly.

The knight that snickered before growled at the pawn. It moved in its L shaped fashion, forward past the snarling row of pawns and then towered over the small white pawn.

“Disgrace us a moment longer and I will knock you to the ground where hungry squirrels wait to chew on your plastic base.” The knight threatened.

The white Queen moved forward up behind the white pawn that cowered in the black knight’s presence. She sneered at the knight, who grew wary of her superior ability and stature.

She raised her brow in question, and then shrugged leading away her pawn. She paused then turned to the knight and said, “It is no use spending any of our time on the dreary black pieces. They are only a jealous smudge that resents us for being victorious.” She smiled and left the shocked knight behind.

The knight fumed and boiled with anger as it began to move toward the white Queen in rage. The jack stopped the knight short and whispered words of comfort to its ally. The black Queen and King watched this solemnly also growing tired of the white pieces’ smugness and disrespect to their subjects.

“My King,” the black Queen whispered to the King. “We must put those terrible white pieces in their place with our own wit and words.”

The King nodded stiffly and whispered words of revenge to the other jack that stood stiffly at his side. The jack nodded and passed on the words of the King to the knight beside it. Soon to come the words and ideas spread to the all of the black King and Queen's subjects. They gathered in a tight circle, the white pieces oblivious to their scheming rivals.

The tight circle broke after whispers were passed around, for a change the black pieces smiled and broke their gloomy expressions. Their smiles were of not genuine happiness but of clever evil. Three black pawns shuffled forward, snickering all the while.

They composed themselves and then shouted in obscure tones "oh my, I have never seen such large and round white pieces in all my life." One pawn shouted dramatically, a few white pieces heard of the black pawn's gossiping and stopped their own celebrations to warn the other white pieces.

The next pawn mock giggled and went on "I wonder what they have been eating?"

The celebration of the white pieces soon took a decline as more listened to what the black pawns spoke of.

"Possibly those leaves I saw floating around, they seemed to be as green as ever. I suppose the white pieces can't resist indulging in the tasteful but glutinous green maple leaves. I am proud to eat only the dead and brown leafy foods." The black pawn discussed in a loud whisper.

As the black pawns gossiped the white pieces grew in dismay, they stared around looking shy and insecure at the pawn's thoughts. The black knight that nearly challenged the white Queen moved forward.

"Well I hope I wasn't the only one who noticed of the difficulties it was to move or take the white pieces during today's match. No wonder we lost, we couldn't knock them over for their weight challenged our strength! My, but how could they let themselves go like they have?" The black knight said in mock concern, it then laughed in turn as the black pawns snickered.

The white pieces could take it no longer; the knight's words were the icing on the cake of insult. They began to sigh miserably, their happy chatter turned to the worst as it declined into chaotic cries.

The black pieces watched merrily, their trick worked for the best; the sweet sounds of revenge played its wonderful harmony. The black pieces twittered, chortled, and howled in laughter. The Queen moved forward in tears of hilarity.

“We have deceived you white pieces! As bubbly your personalities are, your insecurities run deep! Easy to trick and play this witty prank. You may have won the battle but we have won the war!” She said with shining pride that gave her subjects inspiration.

The white King ceased his own gloom and drank in what the black Queen had said; his sad thoughts were quickly replaced by rage. He said in a commanding voice “My subjects! The black Queen has so told us that they have played us for fools! We will not stand for this trickery! Pull yourselves together and prepare for a fight!”

The white pieces listened intently to their King’s words and did as he said. They formed up and prepared for battle. The black pieces also took the white King’s words in account, and they also assumed their battle positions taking on his challenge without hesitation. The pieces both black and white remained still as two elderly men sat down and began to play a relaxing game of chess.

The End