

GUILD OF YOUNG WRITERS

PITFALLS OF
PROCRASTINIATION

WRITING PROMPTS

SHORT
STORIES

READING
RECOMMENDATIONS

AND MORE!

VOLUME # 6
SUMMER
2022

Story Studio Writing Society is located on the traditional territories of the **WSÁNEĆ** and Lkwungen-speaking peoples. We respectfully acknowledge and thank the Lkwungen People, also known as the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations communities, for allowing us to live, work, learn, play and create on their lands.

Through the work we do on the territory, we are accountable to the following communities: Esquimalt, Songhees, **STÁUTW** (Tsawout), **WJOLELP** (Tsartlip), **BOKEĆEN** (Pauquachin), **MÁLEXEŁ** (Malahat), **WSÍKEM** (Tseycum), T'Sou-ke Nation, Scia'new Nation and Nuu-chah-nulth: Pacheedaht Nations.

We acknowledge that the historical relationship to the land and territories of these peoples continues to this day.

As an education based organization, we recognize that we have the responsibility to work towards truth and reconciliation, and to remain open to suggestions, consultations, and partnerships, especially with local Indigenous communities and organizations, on how our organization can continue to work towards reconciliation.

We hope that Story Studio's programing and publications create a safe, welcoming and engaging environment for all people, including Indigenous peoples.

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Editor's Note

It's been a busy season for both Story Studio, and our Guild of Young Writers! Over the past few months Story Studio has been back in classrooms across SD61 & SD62 with our StoryMaker program. This allowed our Guild members to further enhance their skills by assisting young students with their stories. It was wonderful to see the collaboration and abundance of creativity!

Collectively, we've been exploring topics of sensitive subject matter in our stories; topics that as young adults, are prevalent in their daily lives and experiences. Together, we've been sharing our knowledge, and additionally researching those tough topics that craft our characters and further develop the plot within our writing.

This month, following along with both World Oceans Day and World Environment Day, we've been diving into the way in which we connect with the environment in our stories - from the setting and worldbuilding, to the ways in which our characters interact and build relationships with the world around them. We welcome local author, Ann Eriksson this month for an author chat to help share some of her expertise with us!

Not a season goes by without astonishing recognition of these young writers and their commitment to the practice. I look forward to a summer of writing and reading. And the integration of new young writers in the fall, following our summer programs!

Rebecca Ruiter

PROGRAM COORDINATOR



Get to know the Authors

WOULD YOU RATHER BE ABLE TO CHANGE THE PAST OR CHANGE THE FUTURE?

The past has already passed, so I would not want to change that. If we could change every mistake we made in the past, we would not take responsibility for our actions. However, we can change our future just by changing our everyday actions. Every little action we do has an impact on our future.

- Cathy

I would rather be able to change the past so I could fix my mistakes and set myself on a better path in the future.

-Lola

I wouldn't want to change the past, because all of those experiences help us learn, and become who we are today. The thing is, we can already change the future. Each one of our actions today can have an impact tomorrow

-Raine

Time is like wax, dripping from a candle flame. In the moment, it is molten and falling, with the capability to transform into any shape. Then the moment passes, and the wax hits the table top and solidifies into the shape it will always be. It becomes the past, a solid single record of what happened, still holding in its wild curves and contours the potential of every shape it could have held."

-Welcome to Night Vale

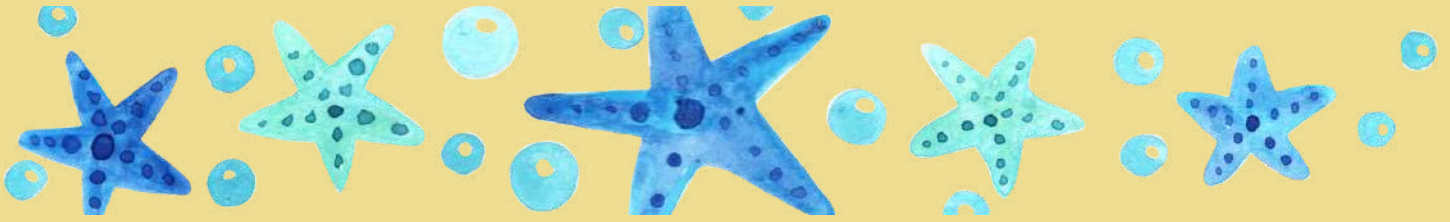
-Kahlan

I wouldn't change the future because that would mean that there's a preset future that needs to be changed, and I'd much rather we decide our own. If I were you, I wouldn't trust me 🤖 but since I'm not ;), it would be interesting to see what would happen if I could change the past

- Zlata



SUMMER READING RECOMMENDATIONS



- **All That's Left In The World**
by Erik J. Brown
- **She Drives Me Crazy**
by Kelly Quindlen
- **Isle of Blood and Stone**
by Makiia Lucier
- **Red Queen**
by Victoria Aveyard
- **Everything I Thought I Knew**
by Hilary T. Smith
- **Scars Like Wings**
by Erin Stewart
- **Extraordinaries**
by T.J Klune

- **The Cheerleaders**
by Kara Thomas
- **The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue**
by V.E Schwab
- **A Forgery of Roses**
by Jessica S. Olson
- **All These Bodies**
by Kendare Blake
- **Darling**
by K. Ancrum

- **You've Reached Sam**
by Dustin Thao
- **The Truth About Keeping Secrets**
by Savannah Brown



Sunset

BY RAINE



Every meter the train continued, the sun crept lower beneath the mountains. Ciel was comfortable in this darkness. It was the most natural state in the world. He was sitting with Indigo on a small bench in the back car of the train. Ciel's legs were curled up in the seat, Indigo's arms wrapped around him. The only thing that bothered him at night was the temperature. Even a warm summer day can turn bitter in the dark.

It had been a tiring few days, from discovering the communicator and the evocations, and starting their journey to bring technology back to the world. He could feel sleep creeping up on him and Indigo. Still, Ashley's words still echoed in Ciel's mind:

"Some things were meant to stay in the past, to stay with me. Why would you want the future to know of the failures of humanity..."

He didn't understand. The only way to learn from the past is to remember it. Even if it's painful. Nothing was gonna stop fate. Nothing was going to separate him from Indigo. In the midst of his recollection, Indigo let out a yawn.

"Are we there yet?" He said, his words slurring together.

"Hey, we'll be at the camp soon, just make sure you'll be up then." Ciel responded.

"Mmmm, alright thanks.."

Indigo sat up and adjusted himself a bit before laying his head in Ciel's lap. The sun was long gone now. Ciel undid Indigo's ponytail for him, and let his brown hair relax. Even after learning the truth, that it was us that caused society to crumble, not the gods of the sun who destroyed us, the world still felt slightly safer without the solar rays.

Finally, the train pulled to a stop. With nowhere to sleep in the passenger cars, a scheduled stop near the edge of logger's lake was where you camped for the night. Being in the middle of the

Strathcona wilderness, it was difficult to build facilities, and frankly, no one wanted to either. Exiting the car, Ciel and Indigo carried their bags with their tents and other supplies.

"Where are we headed?" Indigo asked. He was no longer tired, possessing that mysterious burst of energy you get after waking up in the middle of the night.

"Do you wanna be near the water?" Ciel asked.

"No no no too many mosquitos. Under a tree maybe?"

They walked through the forest, the only light being a torch Indigo carried. Eventually they settled for a small patch of grass next to a large boulder. Indigo and Ciel always set things together, one thing at a time.

When Ciel put out the last of the small fire they made, Indigo was already fast asleep in the tent. This was his chance. Indigo had never traveled this far before, and Ciel already missed his birthday last month, so all he needed to do was explore the dark forest a little bit.

Stepping on to the small main path, there was no sound coming from any of the other campsites. Ciel immediately began scanning the ground below, as well as the bushes around him. Flowers; no. Leaves; nope. A marmot? No way. He kept walking down the path until he made it to the lake.

Away from the trees, Ciel is bathed in the light of not just the moon, but the stars too shining down on him. It fills him with peace, that even though he's finally alone, he's not alone.

His bag buzzes. Ciel pulls out the communicator. A message appears.

{49836: How's the trip been?}

{74839: It's been alright}

Typing on the messenger still felt awkward, but he understood why these were so essential in the past.

{49836: Cool. Say hi to your bf for me. Can't wait to meet you two.}

He put away the device.

Even though it was late, he decided to undress and step in the lake for a bit. It was chilly, but he could bear it for a few minutes, just to feel something. Starting at his feet, the water slowly crept up his body, making him eek at the feeling, until his shoulders were submerged. Sitting there, Ciel could finally let it all out. It hurt. He was gonna have to leave his boyfriend eventually, and he didn't know when he was going to see him again. And seeing people trying to take away the technology that was gonna save them both, wake up the world even

"This needs to get out there"

What was he gonna do, when others tried to fight back. Fight back against them. What was gonna happen when he really leaves?

"Maybe, it's better if I just forget it all happened..."

~ ~ ~

The next morning, Indigo held Ciel gently as they lay in their tent together; blankets keeping them warm but holding them together. Ciel opened his eyes first, his eyes startled by the rays of sun shining through the tent walls. Indigo looked so relaxed and cozy.

"I know you're staring at me."

"What no way."

Indigo opened his eyes, moving his head closer to Ciel's. They kissed slowly.

"I have something for you," said Ciel.

"Whoa really?"

Ciel sat up and reached for his bag sitting near his feet, being careful not to knock over the fragile tent structure. Reaching inside, he pulled the sack they usually store food in.

"Nice wrapping job." Indigo said.

Ciel laughed. "Hey, what else was I gonna use?"

He handed the bag over to Indigo, who quickly opened the drawstring in excitement. Inside, he saw a White Marigold.

Just like the carvings at home.


"It's.. I love it."

"I know I missed your birthday and stuff but it's been busy. I never forgot though-"

Indigo wrapped his arms around Ciel in a big hug.

"I'll remember this forever"

...



Tree of Stars

A Short Story

By: Kira

The night sky was dark and empty, once. There was no moon, no stars to cast light after the sun had set. All was shadow, stark and black. This, however, is not a story of the darkness. It's a story of the lights that fill the sky tonight, the stars.

Once, there was a brother and a sister, Leo and Elara. They were as dear to each other as any two people can be; one could never be found without the other nearby. They were dear to the villagers they grew up around, too. Elara could often be found singing in the village square with her friends, or helping the younger children with their lessons. Leo preferred solitude, and so spent most of his days in the garden, quietly tending to the plants while his sister sang nearby.

The people of the village loved Elara for her brightness—she was always laughing or smiling, always bringing light to those around her. Leo often faded into the background when she was nearby, for he didn't shine like she did. He didn't resent her for this, however. He loved her all the more for her beauty, and was content to stay at her side.

As they grew older, Elara began to look for ways to help ever more people. She grew tired of their small village and its simple ways; she wanted to make an impact on the world she'd someday leave behind.

"There are cities out there, Leo, where there isn't enough food for half the people in them. There are families that can't afford to give their children clothes or schoolbooks, let alone new toys. I can't do anything from here- I can't do anything." She would punctuate this by kicking the nearest available object- typically a rock or a chair.

Her brother would nudge her, replying, "But you will, one day soon. Just give it time, Elara- the world isn't ready for you yet." She'd nod, and Leo would tug her over to the garden to distract her—a new plant he had grown, or a new irrigation technique. And they would spend the rest of the day together, all else forgotten.

There were whispers at the time that the Sun was growing lonely in their abode above the sky. That They were looking for a human partner to reflect Their light to the earth at night, someone who would be Their equal and Their friend. Nobody knew how the Sun was looking for that human, only that They were. And so, in the months after the murmurs started, everyone was looking to the sky, watchful for some sign of change.

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Now, everyone expected that the Sun would pick a person of great wealth, or knowledge, or strength. "How else," they asked, "Would a human be a match to the Sun's brilliance? How else could that human not be burned away?"

Because of this, everyone was astonished when the Sun came down to the humble village where the siblings lived. The village held no one truly of note, no wealthy merchants or powerful priests. Rather, there were farmers and herbalists, schoolteachers and blacksmiths. Still, everyone gathered in the village square, the Sun hovering just above the thatched rooftops, taking care not to set the village ablaze. All the villagers fell to their knees and looked away, unable to stare directly at Them. They had taken a human form, but only in shape, for their skin was like molten gold, and their eyes like depthless flames.

"I have come to this village to take the one I seek into the sky with me." Their voice was, though full of command, unexpectedly gentle. **"It is not to take them away from their life, but to live as a god and give light to all humanity at night. They will be my equal, my friend. Do you understand?"**

The sole scholar of the village was the only one brave enough to answer. "Yes, great Sun. We understand."

"Good. Now... which one of you is Elara?"

There was a gasp and a soft cry, as Elara stumbled forward. Her brother reached for her, tears in his eyes, but she couldn't look away from the Sun. She was trembling, whatever fire in her seemed to have been snuffed out. Her mother started crying, and her father looked down at the ground.

"You mean... me?" she asked quietly.

"Yes."

"Why?"

"You are like me, full of fire and life. Will you come?"

Elara looked from the Sun to Leo, then back again. "I..." Though she hesitated, she knew she could not refuse. Still, though, she asked, "May I ask for one thing?"

"If it is within my power to grant, yes."

"Can my brother come with me?" When she said this, she looked directly at the Sun, somehow both defiant and pleading.

There was a moment of perfect silence. No one had dreamed that the Sun would come to this humble village, let alone pick one of their own to be Their partner. Everyone was frozen, fearful of being struck down by Elara's audacity. How could she ask to have another come with her, when she was the one declared worthy? But the Sun seemed unfazed, and when They answered, there was no anger in Their voice.

"So long as he is willing, he may. But he may not be able to return to Earth if he comes."

Leo nodded, and walked to stand beside his sister. Elara took his hand, and she closed her eyes. "I'm more than willing." Leo rested his head on top of his sister's, and they stood like that for a moment. "But... I think there's another way," he replied. "I don't think I have to choose between my sister and my parents. If you give me a seed to a tree that will grow in any way I wish, I think I can have both."

"And how is that?" The Sun tilted Their head. Their voice was quizzical; They were unused to humans forging a path of their own.

"I want to grow a tree with lights for its flowers, a tree that can house Elara as she crosses the sky, a tree that is so large it grows past the edge of the world. Then, I can climb the tree to be with her. And I can climb down to be with my family."

The Sun smiled at the pair, impressed by their strength of will. This, of course, is why They had chosen Elara to be Their partner—she knew both loving fiercely, and being loved. The siblings would clearly do anything for each other.

"I grant both your and your sister's request. Elara will be called the Moon, and she will reflect my light to the rest of the world at night. And, this, Leo, is the seed to your tree. It is the Tree of Stars, and will grow at your command."

A small glowing light about the size of a walnut drifted down from the heavens, and landed at Leo's feet. He smiled as he knelt to pick it up, cradling it to his chest like the most delicate of crystals.

"It is time, Elara."

She ran to her parents, and embraced them both. Though there were tears in her eyes, there was an excitement that wasn't there before. "I love you, I love you. Take care of Leo, he's going to be lonely. And whenever you miss me, just look up. I'll be there, okay? I'm not leaving, really. I'm just up in the sky." They nodded, and held her to them for a moment, before letting her go.

She looked at Leo, and said, "Will I see you tonight?"

He smiled softly, and squeezed her hand. "You will."

It was late afternoon when Leo went to plant the seed that the Sun had given him. He had decided to walk to the meadow where he and Elara had spent hours gazing up at the sky. He was lonely there without her; it wasn't the same.

The seed was still glowing a soft silvery-white when he took the first spadeful of dirt from the earth. By the time he placed the seed in the ground, the clouds had streaks of rose-gold running through them. He glanced up at the sky, and began to work faster. He hurriedly scooped dirt overtop of it and patted it down as best he could.

Then, looking at the small patch of overturned earth, he whispered, "Grow."

At first, nothing happened. But, after a moment, a slender silver trunk rose from the ground. In a matter of seconds; it had grown to be as tall as Leo, with the trunk the width of his forearm. It grew taller and taller, reaching for the sky, hundreds of branches sprouting and intertwining with each other. Soon, he couldn't see the top of it, only the barest outline of the ever-expanding network above his head.

Only minutes later, the tree stopped growing upwards. To Leo's amazement, a thousand twinkling lights appeared in the sky all at once—the stars.

It was then that the Moon appeared in the sky for the first time. She glowed a beautiful silver, the same shade as the tree's trunk, casting light into the sky as the Sun dipped below the horizon. Leo smiled widely to see her so beautiful, crying openly, all alone.

For the first time in the young world's existence, the arrival of night didn't mean true darkness. There was a moon, there were stars.

Suddenly, Leo started laughing, from sheer joy as seeing the night sky filled with light. He ran over to the tree, and began climbing up and up, fueled by the knowledge that he would soon see his sister. There was some kind of magic in the tree that let him reach the edges of the sky far sooner than he could on his own, for it was only a matter of minutes until he reached the top.

And there was Elara, dancing and dressed in silver, smiling like she couldn't believe she was standing among the stars. He ran to his sister, and they held each other for what felt like forever.

"You're glowing, Elara." His voice was soft and joyful. She squeezed him tighter, feeling as if she never wanted to let him go.

"You gave us stars, Leo!"

"They shine for you, you know." The corner of his mouth quirked up as she laughed. "You're finally helping people, just like you wanted. I told you that you would."

She laughed, and held him tighter. "You were right, just like always."

They let go of each other, and simply watched the tree slowly tread across the Earth. White clouds swirled beneath them, lit up by the light of a thousand stars.

"I..." Elara's voice trailed off as she looked around her in wonder. "I'm glad you're with me, here among the stars."

Leo reached out and touched the star-flower nearest to him, and smiled contentedly. "The Sun made the right choice in picking you. You're brighter than anything, even Them. This tree... I'm glad it's now your home."

"No, home is with you, Leo. Home is with you."

Some time later, Leo was lying on his back in the meadow, watching the Tree of Stars make its way around the sky. Dawn was coming, and soon the tree's light would be gone from the sky.

But only until tonight, he thought. Once the Sun leaves, I'll be able to see the stars again. They never leave, only are masked by the Sun's brightness. And Elara will be there, too.

The stars were twinkling joyfully. They looked like jewels strewn across a dark canvas, one both vast and endless, yet never empty.

In that moment, lying among the flowers with the stars above him, Leo felt at one with the world. He had grown the stars from a seed. His sister was living among them, as a friend and partner to the Sun. And there would never be pure darkness at night ever again. There was a moon to give light, there were stars.

SASHA & BLAIR

*A Short Story
by Sylvie*

Sasha adopted darkness, but everyone knew Blair was born into it. She had shown up to the town to live with her grandmother. Nana (She insisted that everyone called her this) had loved Blair unconditionally, and we could all tell why. Blair looked almost exactly like her mother, Nana's only daughter Lisa. Everyone had loved Lisa, but she had left as soon as she graduated, leaving Nana broken-hearted. No one understood Sasha and Blair's relationship. Sasha had been very straight-laced up until then, but looking at them in the police station, Sasha swearing that Blair hadn't meant to kill anyone, Blair glaring at anyone who came too close to the pair of them, well, let's just say we all want that kind of love. The kind of love given without questions, the love that doesn't hide from the darkness, but rather embraces it.

To this day only four living souls know what really went down that night. Gladesdale likes to forget about it. They call it moving on. We call it smothering the truth. We never understood Blair, at least not until it was too late. Everyone loved Sasha in some way. She was someone you noticed, someone you were drawn to. Blair tried to blend in. She faded into the shadows, waiting to pounce, some said. But they loved each other. Enough to kill. We all expected it from Blair, not from Sasha. Blair's childhood was rough, her mother was never around, her father left when she was young. Sasha's was relatively easy. She wasn't well off, but she also wasn't the type to complain about anything, she never fought back.

To explain what happened that night we have to explain something to you. Love is powerful. Find a way to manipulate it, and you can control almost anyone. What happened that night wasn't an accident, but it wasn't on purpose either. Now, keep in mind what we are about to tell you happened years ago. Most of the people involved have moved on.

No one has been to the spot of murders since they happened, but on the off chance you happen to wander by you'll see that the hidden glade is long overgrown, there's sadness in the air as if it's missing the happiness that was once there. You'll find no evidence of a murder or any wrongdoing. Sasha and Blair spent many days here. Nobody even knew it existed until the police found them, covered in blood, Sasha sobbing, Blair rubbing gentle circles on her back. There were two bodies in front of them, lying motionless. The bodies would later be identified as two students who attended school with Blair and Sasha.

The first was Elizabeth James. Elizabeth, or, Liz, as she preferred, was not a nice person. Sometimes people whisper that she deserved it. Liz liked to think she was Queen Bee. Most were just scared of her. She used her words as swords, and those swords were often pointed at those she thought were beneath her, those who threatened her throne, those like Sasha. Liz was constantly jabbing at Sasha's armour, looking for weak spots, and when Blair came along, it only worsened. Sasha was the kind to bow her head and take it. Blair fought back, and we can only guess she finally convinced Sasha to do something about it. The second body was Landon Coulson. We know that the girls hadn't meant to murder Landon. That he was simply in the wrong place at the wrong time, because neither girl had anything against Landon. Nobody did. He was a background character, even in his own life. He was the kind that could be a heartbreaker if he wanted to, but he was too kind for it. He was also a main target of Liz. Some people said Landon had finally snapped and killed Liz before the girls showed up and faked his death. Others believe that the girls are innocent that Landon and Liz were secretly in love and had faked their murders before framing Sasha and Blair. Let us tell you right off the bat. This is not what happened. Blair and Sasha murdered people that night. It was a horrid tragedy, and the people who go to grieving families giving them hope that their son or daughter is still alive are almost as bad as the people who killed them. No one has seen either girl in a long time, both of them fleeing as soon as possible. We hope they're together somewhere in the world, moving on with their lives. You see, we knew them. We knew the reason Liv teased them. We watched and did nothing, but we hope they found happiness out of Gladesdale. We hope they found happiness with each other.

There's one thing about the night that no one besides Blair and Sasha about that night (No one living at least). Sasha wasn't supposed to be there that night. Blair was going to murder Liz and run., but, nothing ever goes according to plan. Sasha had shown up in the clearing, only to see her best friend bloody standing over a very familiar body. Blair was sitting her hands together pleading with someone in the shadows. She was begging, please don't tell anyone, they'd send her away, far from Sasha. The figure stepped into the light, shaking his head, his eyes wide in horror. There was a knife at Sasha's feet, and she acted on impulse. She didn't see the face of the person, all she saw was her best friend being taken away. The police found them 20 minutes later. Nobody knows, because someone gave them to each other, someone gave Blair Sasha, not to chase the darkness away but to make it less lonely, and someone gave Sasha Blair to show Sasha that certain things need to be fought for. Do you understand now?

Sasha and Blair's story isn't about what happened that night, or the people who died, it's about love. It's about how we need someone who will sit in the darkness with us. It's about how love makes us do things. It's about how you have to fight. Sasha and Blair both did horrible things. We know for a fact that they feel guilty. We know it eats away at Sasha. We know Blair can't forget what she did to Liz. To Landon. To Sasha. But we know they still love each other.



ZLATA



YELLOW MACHINE

Vivid memory?
Me, 6 years old: Nightmare;
yellow headmachine.
Me, Lea, Eleana. Queue.
Headmachine.
Me, in the line.
Lea, in the line.
Eleana, in the line.
People in line- heads on machine-
headmachine.
Cutting machine.
Yellow headcutting machine.
People with heads;
Headmachine.
On my sidewalk.
Verdant: green shrubs, green grass.
Yellow headcutting machine,
on my sidewalk.
Cut.



A COLOUR ONLY MY SOUL CAN UNDERSTAND

It moves like the ebbs and flows of the wind and sea.
It's like my emotions that come and go,
that feel big or small and is always leaving me wondering
if there's more to life than what I feel there is.
It could be any season,
its shade would be light in the Spring,
but darker by Fall.

It always ponders the things it cannot be,
like how moss can grow, or how fish can breathe.
Or even how humans survive.
But it values the things that it is to be,
because without it, moss wouldn't grow,
the fish couldn't breathe
and humans would never survive.

Blue is important to life and my soul cherishes that.

-After the prompt by Karen Benke,
What Blue Feels Like



BETRAYED

An excerpt by Lola

Chapter Four

I have been pacing my room for half an hour and have no ideas. Knife and Dagger are lying on big pillows and looking at me like I am insane.

“Ugh stupid, why did I fall for his tricks? I thought I was tricking him, but he was tricking me.”

I realize I am rambling. I walk to my desk and accidentally bang my arm on the chair. “Ouch, who put that there? It hurts.”

My body is still warding off the effects of the sleep drought.

Knife comes over to me and I pat his head.

“Sorry for being so loud and angry. I am very mad.”

His tongue lolls out of his mouth as I pet the spots he likes best. He loves to be pet.

“I don’t know what to do. I have to get to the museum. I am not going to be kept in this house my entire life. This is a stealing and spy company, so why is uncle so soft on me?”

Knife looks up at me.

“Yeah I think he is just afraid for me. I just don’t understand why. I’m just his niece, not his daughter.”

A knock on the door brings me back from insanity.

“Miss, I have your lunch. I will slide it in through the slot in the bottom of the door.”

I grin, uncle failed to mention that there is a small slot. Even the smallest slot is good. He probably realized all the tricks that would work if someone actually came in to deliver it. “Oh yes, slide it in please.”

He doesn’t pick up the fake cheeriness. He just unlocks 4 bolts and slides through a tray with 2 big slices of pizza and a glass of chocolate milk. Wow, uncle is spoiling me.

“There you go miss, just knock when you are done with it, okay?”

“Sure.”

I finish the lunch very fast since I have not eaten for a long while. I am about to knock when I hear a shout. I slowly make my way to the window and see a girl dragging a leg and bleeding from more than 4 different places. I realize with a start that it is Terre, one of the girls sent on the mission. There is no one following her. What could have happened to the others? I see a servant run up to them and then call for help. Medics come running into the gardens to help Terra. They bring her inside and I can't see her anymore. This must mean they failed the mission. What will uncle do now?

I continue pacing around the room trying to decide what uncle will do. This time Dagger paces with me, keeping in time with my steps. There is lots of noise in the hallways and yelling. I jump with a start as uncle bursts into the room, demanding that the guards keep watch and to let no one in. I open my mouth and am about to ask when he starts to ramble, maybe that is where I get it from.

"Why is everyone failing me? I need someone to succeed. Two dead, one barely alive. How am I meant to have a company that keeps failing me? Terra is in the medical building barely holding on to her life."

"So I suppose I could-"

He cuts me off, "I don't know what to do. I am so stressed and I badly need this to work. We have lots of money and information on the line."

I pat the man who drugged me earlier on the back.

"Calm down uncle, everything will be fine. I have a great idea, you should send me. I would be great at this mission. Please." I put my hands in my pockets and cross my fingers. The inside of my pocket feels weird, I realize that there is some sleep stuff that must have dropped from the bag. I smile.

"Uncle, are you drunk? Cause you are never this open to me and you are rambling."

"I don't think, maybe I mean I am so stressed that I could have taken a few drinks but...."

"Are you thirsty? I have a drink for you."

He nods eagerly and I grab the leftover chocolate milk I was saving for later and slip in the sleep stuff. He is so out of it he does not realize what I have done till he takes a big sip.

"How could you? No, this was for your own good and..." He drops out cold on my bed.

"Sorry uncle, but this is for the best."

I cover him up with blankets and gently set his head on the pillow. I motion for Knife and Dagger to lie next to him. They cuddle up with him as I write a quick note to him. Once I am done, I grab my tools, pick the lock and sneak out the door knocking out the guard. Too easy. I get out easily since it is chaos in the house because of the deaths. Then I am outside and heading to the museum, alone.





The Sirens Sing for Odysseus

BY CAMERON

Chapter Five

After a bit of running and a long time spent trying to climb over the fence, we were finally out of the fairgrounds. Devon flopped down on the soft grass, panting, and I didn't hesitate to join him.

"Feel better now?" he asked.

"Much, thanks."

We lay in silence for a minute, enjoying the blue, cloudless sky and the feeling of warm sunlight on our faces.

"How did you know?"

Devon looked over at me, bewildered. "P- pardon me?"

"How did you know about modern technological advancements? I mean, there weren't any rollercoasters in 1837, so weren't you confused?"

He laughed. "Oh, I understand now! Well, I can assure you, the first time I came here I was very confused."

I squinted at him. "What do you mean, 'first time'? You've been here before?"

He shrugged. "Mm-hm. I've come out of my rock quite a few times before, never for very long though."

I snapped my fingers, remembering. "Oh, yes, the stone you came in! I forgot to ask you, how does that work? Are you stuck inside of it? Do I need to rescue you?"

Devon laughed and shook his head. "No, no! I'm perfectly alright. It's just that my spirit was bound to the rock when I died, so I'm linked to it. It's sort of like my house."

"Why was your spirit bound to it?"

He stared at me. "Er- I'm not quite sure. My brother gave me the rock before he went off to work in the factory, but it didn't seem all that special at the time. Just another trinket."

My tone hardened and I rolled over to face him. "So you mean to tell me that you didn't care about why you were living in a rock? You were just- completely okay with it?"

He squinted at me in an expression that was half concerned and half bewildered. "Well, yes. I don't see why it matters, honestly."

I sat straight up. "You don't see why it matters? You don't see how it matters? I've wondered after the mysteries of death for years and you don't care?"

He put his hands up in a placating gesture, his face fearful.

"Hey there, calm down, it's alright. If you really want to know, I tried to find out why, but couldn't really. No information on the dead in the land of the living," he said, letting out a short, humourless laugh. "Now, can we stop talking about this?"

I scratched my neck, twisting my finger around one of my curls. "Er- of course. Sorry," I said, laying back down into the grass.

"Can I touch your hair?"

I raised an eyebrow. "What?"

Devon grinned at me, his tooth gap clearly visible. "Well, I didn't want to just jump straight in and touch it, but it looks so fluffy! Like a little black sheep!

I gave a bitter laugh. "That's me, all right. The little black sheep." Clapping my hand over my mouth, my stomach sunk to the pit of my chest. No, no, no, didn't mean to say that out loud, no, shoot, go back, shoot, shoot-

Devon's smile was gone, a sad, concerned look replacing it. "I'm sorry about that. Do you wanna-" he hesitated, fidgeting with his hands, "-talk about it?"

Sighing, I relaxed my shoulders, which I had just realized I had been tensing. "I guess. It's just- I'm so sick and tired of having to pretend all the time. My mum is always just- she acts as if she knows, and she cares, but she doesn't! I know she doesn't. I'm not out to her, either, so I get deadnamed and misgendered on top of that! And I wish she knew, so maybe I wouldn't feel so terrible all the time, I just wish someone else could tell her, because God knows I'm too much of a coward to come out and say it. And school is pretty much the same, but at least there I'm not demeaned and my intelligence insulted. Also, there's a piano."

I ran my fingers through my hair. "That's another thing! She hates me playing the piano, because she wants me to "focus on school", but school just forces me to talk to kids with perfect lives and loving parents all day and spend all my time working on subjects I don't care about, then get me in trouble when I hand in sub-quality work. Everyone, everyone I meet tells me "You're such a smart girl, you shouldn't be wasting your talents on this. You know, very few piano players make money off of it-" and blah, blah, blah. It- it's just all so much, and I'm starting to think it's too much. You know what, why am I lying to you? It is too much, and I can't keep holding myself together like this. I may be a slow-burning fuse, but a slow-burning fuse is still burning, after all."

Devon set his hand on mine, gently pulling it away from my head, and as he did chunks of hair came with it. I hadn't realized I was doing that again. I thought I had stopped pulling my hair years ago. I stared at them for a bit, then stood up, threw the black locks to the wind, and laughed. Unlike most things I did, this wasn't at all serious or well thought through. The laughing fit was long, hard, and perhaps even a bit maniacal. Scratch that, it was definitely maniacal.

After what felt like hours, I was completely exhausted, only able to choke out some strangled noises that couldn't pass as laughter by any stretch of the imagination. I stood there for a few minutes, unable to express myself further.

"I have nothing else to give," I whispered.

Tears sprang to my eyes and I rubbed them as hard as I could, like I thought it would stop them from betraying me. It didn't, and I fell back on my haunches, still trying to pound the tears back into my eyes. Why would I say that? I hadn't cried in years, but I had to ruin that streak now? And in front of someone, who'd I'd only just met? The thought only made me cry harder. Devon placed his hand around my shoulder and squeezed it a little. "Hey, hey, it'll be alright," he said.

"No, it won't be! What am I doing? How can I be this way? My mum and dad work themselves to the bone every day, and I can't even make them happy? Mum alone sacrificed so much for me just to be here, and I'm tired out? I'm tired out? If I can't give anyone anything anymore, what else can I do?"

Devon played with his lips. "You could try making yourself happy for a change."

I shook my head. "If I wanted to make myself happy, then what was that outburst back there?"

"You said you had nothing else to do if you couldn't make people happy, right, nothing else to give?" I nodded.

"Well, maybe, crying was your way of giving something back to yourself. Catharsis, I think it's called." He adjusted his position on the grass and started bouncing his leg. "But hey, that's just my dumb little ghost boy idea, so-" Devon burst out into nervous laughter.

I shifted myself and put my arm around his shoulder to match his on mine. "No, no, that's actually- very helpful." I shook my head, impressed. "Thank you."

He made a dismissive gesture and grinned toothily at me. "Don't mention it," he said, flopping back onto the grass.

"No, seriously, that was-" The sound of snoring cut me off as I turned back to see Devon sleeping on the grass. I gave a small smile and took off my coat, covering us with it like a blanket. Laying down next to him, I placed my hands behind my head and closed my eyes.

For the second time since I left my mum's, there weren't any pestering thoughts keeping me awake, and I fell asleep easily, comfortable and warm beneath the summer sun.

- - - -

"Boys! Boys!" my grandad cried out, his voice ringing through the forest. Devon and I shot up from the grass where we were sleeping and ran toward the sound of it. Turning the corner, we saw him and immediately ran into his arms. "Thank god you're here, I was worried sick! All the carnival workers are looking for you!"

I clenched my fist. "At least it's a better pastime than running those glorified torture devices."

Grandad laughed and ruffled my hair playfully. "Well, I know you weren't kidnapped and secretly replaced with a replica now. Devon, though, you're on thin ice."

Devon let out a small chuckle as well. I laughed along with the two, even though I didn't quite understand.

"Let's go home now," my grandad said, putting his arms around me and Devon and steering us out of the forest.



From where do you come, sorrowful
wanderer?

-Kira

Procrastination

An essay

By Cathy

Students procrastinate due to distractions and fears which both lead to negative outcomes. According to Oxford Languages, “Procrastination is the act of delaying or postponing something.” The reason that many students procrastinate is because of the abundance of distractions. Researchers have found that when the subconscious mind delays tasks, which causes one to lose control of their thoughts or even actions. Therefore, students are subconsciously drawn to distractions because of this unique brain system in humans.

When students are distracted, they cannot finish assignments and feel extremely overwhelmed and stressed. For instance, a student comments that, “I feel super stressed when I procrastinate, so I don’t do my best,” which demonstrates that procrastination has negative impacts on our lives.

However, procrastination is not only caused by distractions, it is also caused by fear, particularly Atychiphobia, more commonly known as the fear of failing. Students often procrastinate to avoid a task in fear, but as a result, they not only will feel more mentally drained and will also lose precious time to complete the task, which results in receiving a lower mark. Having discussed the factors that cause procrastination, there are numerous effects that not only affect our personal life, but are also habits that are difficult to overcome.

“Procrastination is the beast which grasps me between the eternal jaws of stress and guilt before digesting and throwing me out the other side,” a student describes. Another student states that they felt physically tired, emotionally drained, dead inside, depressed, and worthless. Although these quotes only give us a glimpse at the terrible mental health impacts, it is clear that procrastination affects students negatively, leaving them with fatigue, stress, regret and sadness. In addition to weaker academic performance and negative emotions, these are not the only effects. Additionally, one might develop an addiction for procrastination.

(continued on the next page)

As mentioned above, procrastination is a bad habit where the mind may not know it is performing. In doing so, the brain repeats delaying a task over again, until it becomes an addiction. Being addicted to procrastination is a long term consequence which may lead to academic dropout and mental health issues. Distractions and fears initially cause procrastination, but negative emotions and academic consequences will turn it into an addiction. Overall, procrastination leads to negative consequences.

However, you are not completely doomed. Here are some tips to overcome your procrastination:

- It's not going to be an easy process; and it will take a lot of time and self discipline. It's okay if you still procrastinate, after all, it's a bad habit that is very easy to fall for, yet extremely difficult to grasp away
- Embrace it. Learn to use this as your advantage. Be aware that you procrastinate will make things easier in the long term, as you know how you act
- Find out what makes you procrastinate. Observe your actions, impulses, and reactions to certain things. What tasks do you actually delay and why do you do so?
- Get support. Friends, family, even professional help if you need it.

But most importantly, you can do this.



THE WEIGHTLESS

PART 1

BY KAHLAN

“Em, you should totally come over this weekend!” My friend Natalie smiles at me hopefully as we walk home after school. The cool Scottish breeze tugs at my long brown braid, lush with the salty ocean scent.

I kick at a pebble on the sidewalk. I want to go, just this once, but—“You know my parents don’t like me going over to other people’s houses.”

She crosses her arms and pouts. That’s Natalie for you. Big and loud, never hiding her feelings. My parents hate her. “So?”

“So I can’t?”

“Emmett, my dear girl, let me teach you something important: You don’t have to do what your parents tell you all the time.”

I roll my eyes. As much as I love Nat, sometimes she just doesn’t understand. Me, my family, The Weightless, any of it. “It doesn’t work like that,” I say quietly.

“And anyway,” she continues, ignoring my comment. “Your mom used to let you come over. She used to let you do whatever you wanted. It’s just since your whole lives started revolving around that weird cult thing—what is it, The Heartless or something?—that she started being so intense.”

“It’s The Weightless. And it’s not a cult.” I check my watch, and realize that I’m late for afternoon prayers.

Natalie sighs. “I’m worried about you. I really don’t think—”



“—I have to go, Natalie. I’ll see you on Monday.”
Before she can start on another of her rants about The Weightless, I turn down my street, leaving her to continue on alone.

I live in a big apartment building at the end of the street in our quiet suburban neighborhood. It’s mostly Weightless members who live there, because Welania, the landlady, was the one who started the group. She was the one who took us in when we moved here three years ago, and she’s been supporting us ever since dad died.

When I get there, I find my mom outside the apartment, talking with Welania. I watch them as they speak. Though they are very different, they have a strange, almost sisterly bond. Mom is tall and thin, with her blond-grey hair in a tight bun. She’s wearing a peasant top and a pair of jeans— usual Weightless garb, but they look lackluster, far more like a uniform on her. Welania, in comparison, wears her loose clothing and blue jay feather necklace like a second skin. Her golden brown eyes are full of light, and her smile shines as bright as the sun. They both turn to me when I arrive. “Sorry,” I begin, but my mom interrupts me.

“May the Birds be with you,” she says, holding out the blue-black raven feather on a string around her throat.

I blush, dropping my bag and awkwardly holding out my own feather. The feathers were given to us when we joined The Weightless. We all have a different kind, and the bird it comes from becomes sacred to us. A patron saint, of sorts. Mine is a small robin feather, brown nearest to the shaft, but becoming a light orange at the tip.

“And be with you also,” I respond, then repeat the customary greeting with Welania, adding an “Our Lady Welania” for maximum respect. Formalities over with, I continue my apology. “Sorry I’m late for prayers, I was talking with Nat...” I trail off, realising my mistake. As far as Mom is concerned, I don’t hang out with her anymore. In fact, I don’t hang out with any kids other than the couple other Weightless members in our school. If mom knew that I barely know the Weightless kids’ names, I would be in so much trouble.

My mom shoots me a surprised glare, but Welania speaks before she can. “It’s fine, Emmett dear,” Welania says.

It’s... fine? Afternoon prayers are a huge deal, as is consorting with outsiders. Most days it’s bad enough that I still go to public school, as opposed to most of the other, homeschooled kids. “With all due respect, Lady Welania, what do you mean?”

“Afternoon prayers have been canceled.” Mom says. “Though you should not be talking with Natalie. She knows nothing of faith, and will only lead you astray. I am extremely disappointed in you.”

“I agree,” Welania says, “But now is hardly the time.”

I can feel Mom’s angry gaze on me, but I ignore her, grateful for Welania’s intervention and still confused. “What’s going on, Lady Welania?”

She smiles, a glint of excitement in her eyes. “I can’t tell you now, but it’s something wonderful. The rest of the day and this night will be dedicated to solitary prayer and reflection. We will meet at dawn at the ridge.”

I can’t help but be excited. We only meet on the ridge on Holy Days, and never at dawn, which is the Holy Hour of the Phoenix. I can’t think of anything that could be taking place. I want to ask more, but Welania has the cryptic look in her eyes that makes me think that she won’t say anything more.

“But Lady Welania, shouldn’t Emmitt be punished for her sins?” Mom asks, a little annoyed.

“She will apologize to the Birds, and if she is sincere, they will bless her soul. That is all that matters now. Please don’t question me again.”

Mom bows low. “I’m sorry. I will not.”

“Go, both of you. Confess to the Birds and wipe your souls clean. I will see you at dawn.”

“May you fly far on weightless wings,” Mom and I murmur, which is the customary goodbye. Welania nods her dismissal, and we both escape.

"I spend the afternoon in the forest. Solitary prayer means an excuse to go wherever, no questions asked. I stroll between the oaks until I find my favourite tree—giant and spiraling, with strong branches stretching up to the sky. It's when I climb the tree that I feel closest to the heavens, as near to flying as my human body will go.

The Weightless believe that birds have power. They are a gift from the heavens, and have come to lead us to freedom as well. One day, when we are pure, the Phoenix will bless us with wings of our own, and we will fly into heaven.

Or that's what Welania says. Her words are spellbinding, and I want to believe her so much. After all, she's been so nice to us. Why on earth would she make this up?

I'm still not sure, though. Welania says that her door is always open, that she's there if we ever want to talk about our faith, but I couldn't imagine telling her. Or anyone, really. What would Mom say if she knew I didn't believe? What would Welania say?

I can't let them be disappointed in me. Not when they've all done so much.

My dad died three years ago. Car accident. Mom did what she could, but her part-time waitressing position wasn't enough to pay for everything. Soon enough, we had to sell our house and move. For a while, we went from apartment to apartment, struggling to pay the rent. But then we met Welania. She was sympathetic and kind, and owned an apartment for low-income families down on their luck.

My mom was eager to take advantage of such an opportunity—it sounded like a fairy tale. We moved in right away, and immediately felt welcome in a community of others. We attended get-togethers with the others, and with Welania as our guide, we started to figure things out. And we didn't just go back to how we were before—no, we flourished like flowers, growing into new people. Mom started helping with meals, which we often ate together. We became a community, the people we could turn to for anything and everything.

And when Welania told us about the Birds, we embraced it, welcoming the truth and using her teachings to grow further. Soon our days were filled with prayers and singing, feather necklaces and services on the ridge. Despite my doubts, the rituals soothed me, and I participated whole-heartedly. But I am beginning to think that tomorrow, when dawn comes, I may need more than just a love of rituals. I will need real, true belief.

Hands shaking, I light the candle I keep in my bag. The orange glow of the flame dances in the breeze, reminding me of the Phoenix, swirling through the sky. I've never seen the Phoenix, no one has, but Welania whispers tales of them when we gather in the evenings. Huge and soaring, with feathers like fire and a song so beautiful that it brings every living thing to tears.

"Great Phoenix," I whisper to the flame, "Mother of all winged creatures, creator of this world, may your feathers guide us. Phoenix, I confess to you. I have taken you lightly, and my faith has been weak. I mean, I don't even know what to believe!" I find myself crying, hating that I haven't had the courage to believe. Hating that I still don't, no matter what I tell myself, no matter what prayers I speak. "I don't want to disappoint my parents, or Our Lady Welania, or you, but... How do I know you're real?"

A noise from the tree above my head startles me out of my thoughts. I glance up.

It's a robin. My bird.

I fall to my knees, terrified and short of breath. This has to be a sign from the Great Phoenix. The robin chirps kindly, like it's pardoning me for my doubt, my fear, my everything. Then it leaps from the tree, extending its wings and soaring upward and away.

There is nothing I can do but sob.

Even if ever I leave this
place, I will always be
haunted by the depth
of silence of infinity.

-Kira



JUNIPER & FINELLA

PART I

BY ZOE

Juniper Temesstra could be perceived as an ordinary girl. She goes to a small highschool near her house, and has normal friends. She's your everyday cheese-loving almost-vegan feminist who can turn even the most enthusiastic meat-eater. Maybe she's a bit odd, but who isn't? As far as eccentricity goes, she's more than normal to the naked eye.

The thing is, she obviously isn't normal.

She stays with her "parents" in a more than decent neighbourhood, yet her real home is in the shadows of a nightmare. Juniper goes to school every day but the hols, yet she sleeps barely a wink most nights. Her facial features are human, yet she never eats in public, and therefore never reveals her over-large, sharp canines.

And, of course, when she does eat, it's almost always a tincture involving blood. Otherwise, it's cheese.

* * *

Juniper had been like this her whole life and had never told anybody. As a baby, she'd escaped the house and found the nearest victim through instinct. They'd picked her up, concerned yet unwary, and she'd bite them and suck. Her parents, observant as they were, never caught on.

* * *

When Juniper had been nine, she'd been stalking her prey for a few minutes, and had been about to pounce. She'd crouched down behind her bushes, preparing, when, all of a sudden, her prey fell down, dead. Juniper had been astonished. Had she done that? But just as she'd convinced herself she was even more than a long-toothed, blood-sucking monstrosity, someone who looked around her age sauntered along, and began to sup in her lunch.



Juniper had been confused. Then she'd been mad. Who did this creature think it was, stealing her meal? As a nine year old whatever-she-was, Juniper had been bold, enough so to demand the answer.

She had jumped out, hissing in a manner she was sure only catkind could replicate. The other creature had jumped away, baring fangs identical to hers. The human did not move, as it was dead. This was yet another thing Juniper couldn't understand. Why would any creature kill prey before eating it? She brushed away her confusion over such things in order to fully focus on the other creature.

Baring her own teeth, Juniper had asked her question. The other creature had tilted it's head, before responding in a high-pitched voice so similar to Juniper's she was startled. How many people sounded exactly like her in this world?

"Your lunch?" the other creature asked incredulously. "I've killed the human, not you. What claim do you have over them?"

Juniper replied calmly as she could, "I've been tracking them for a little while." She paused. "Longer than you."

The other creature snorted, "How would you know how long I've been tracking this one?"

"Because I would have noticed you sooner if you'd been here as long as I have."

“Why didn’t you kill them earlier, then?”

Juniper hesitated, unsure of how to continue. This was turning into one of the arguments her peers at school got into, the ones she always thought herself better than. Of course, those were always about topics such as snacks and toys. Mainly glue sticks. She felt silly, yet didn’t want to stop. Plus, she was incessantly curious.

“Because...” she started, before realising she had no good reason. “Why don’t you just go get your own? You can kill them faster than I can, however you do it.” An excuse for lack of words if there ever was one.

The other creature stared at her funnily. “You mean flowcutting? Can’t you...?”

Juniper tilted her head in further confusion. “Flowcutting? What’s that? And why would I be able to do it?” She felt rather defensive of her inabilities, as if the other creature was attacking her, poking at everything wrong. Something like that didn’t happen often, and it felt highly awkward for Juniper.

“Flowcutting,” the other creature replied, apparently oblivious to Juniper’s discomfort. “You know, pausing the blood’s movement? Also called Vampyric Methods of Death-Delivering, by me. And you should be able to do it easily. And know about it. And not be surprised by —”

“I get it,” Juniper cut it off. “Why?”

“Because you’re a Bloodling?” The other creature replied. “Like me?”

Juniper had stared at it for a few seconds, even more confused. “But I’m a human... who sometimes drinks blood. I’m not a Bloodling, whatever that is. I’m...” there was an awkward pause as Juniper groped for words. “I’m a... Juniper.”

The other creature—Bloodling, apparently—laughed. “You’re a Juniper tree, hm? You don’t look like it.” “No,” Juniper corrected. “I’m called Juniper. Like the tree, but I’m not actually one.” She paused again. “Who’re you?”

The Bloodling replied haughtily, “I’m Fenella, not that you have any business knowing. Are you going to leave now? Or do I have to make you?”

Juniper considered all of the mind-boggling information revealed to her in the past few minutes, and replied, “I have a deal. You teach me flowcutting, and I’ll get myself another lunch. You can also tell me about Bloodlings. What are you—I mean, we? Why don’t I know any of this... stuff?”

Juniper continued a stream of questions, only interrupted by Fenella’s impatient shushing. “Hush! Alright, I’ll teach you. But not now. I have to go back soon, so let me eat my lunch in peace. See, they’re bleeding out now that the flowcut’s worn off!”

Fenella looked fearsome, and Juniper began to note down it’s features in an imaginary notebook, noting how alike they looked. It had wine-red hair and fair skin, it’s blue eyes streaked with both caramel and garnet lines and specks. It’s face was still round with baby fat, and full of freckles. It had extremely long nails, painted a deep cherry. Even so, it had to be younger than ten.

“Shoo!” Fenella exclaimed after a second. “I’ll find you later.”

Juniper had scurried off, head spinning with excitement and bewilderment. There were more like her, for starters. And she had a new friend who she could share secrets with—not that Fenella was actually a friend. Also, she was hungry as she’d never been before—for knowledge.

She began to wonder when, exactly, later was.

[Find the next chapter in our Fall 2022 Zine Release](#)



THE MOBILIZATION

The Adelaide Invasion Part Two

By Jakob

Darwin Johnnyman was sick and tired of the Australian stereotypes- it was why he left New York. Whenever he mentioned he was originally from Australia, some New Yorker would say: “Oi, mate, put the shrimp on the barbie!”

He laughed at first, but it was constant. It was never-ending. He hopped in a taxi. “Oi, mate, put the shrimp on the barbie!”

And if he didn’t laugh, “Ah, fugheddaboudit.”

So he moved back to Australia. Adelaide, to be precise. And the first thing he saw when he got back was... A penguin invasion?

Okay, let’s go back a little. I hear you wondering, “Ah, of course, there’s always one bad story along with a bunch of good ones, maybe I should just skip.”

I also hear you wondering: “What the hell kind of a name is Darwin Johnnyman?”

But maybe, just maybe, you’re wondering: “Why did I read this far if I wondered the first question?”

My answer to those questions is A. this is not a question. Study grammar. B. It sounded like an interesting name. C. I don’t know either.

Now that we’ve gotten those questions out of the way, let’s go back a little for real this time. Bartholomew Zeppelin and his penguin armada began swimming through the ocean. Bartholomew Zeppelin inspired legendary courage in his penguin armada, and the Adelie penguins moved fast through first the southern ocean, then the Indian ocean, then the Atlantic ocean (they got a little lost near Albuquerque), and finally they arrived on the shores of Adelaide.

The penguin armada was nervous, but in their hearts they knew Bartholomew Zeppelin would lead them to victory. Unfortunately, Bartholomew Zeppelin was a tad on the chubby side and had passed out from exhaustion. The penguins were so excited they did not notice until they approached the shores of Adelaide.

“Now what do we do?” a penguin asked.

“We have to continue the invasion without him,” a penguin named Horatio responded.

"No," a penguin named Frederick replied.

"Dang," Crazy Carl replied to the reply,
"but why?"

"Because your name is Crazy Carl,"
Frederick replied to the reply of the reply.

"That's discriminatory," Crazy Carl replied
to the reply of the reply of the reply.

"He's right," a penguin named Susan
remarked. "Maybe he should lead the
mission."

"But he doesn't know anything about
Adelaide!" Frederick protested.

"Did any of us know anything about
Adelaide- even Bartholomew Zeppelin-
rest his soul and hopefully he's in a place
with tons of those ice mushrooms?" Susan
asked wistfully, carefully, singsongally,
bigwordsally, and somethingelseally.

"No, I don't think so," Frederick replied,
starting to see sense.
(#CrazyCarllsDaBomb) "but what's the
plan?"

"We just randomly start biting people,"
Crazy Carl replied to the reply of the -this
has been interrupted by the society of
disgruntled readers who are also against
jazz music (SODRWAAAJM), we think that
the whole replied to the reply is annoying
to read, not funny, and we would like it to
stop.-

"Sounds good to me," said Susan, Horatio,
and Frederick in unision.

And they did just that. It worked at first,
but they failed to distinguish Aussies from
Kangaroos and Dingoes, and that's when
things got a little messy.

Wings were ripped off in bloody fights
with dingoes. Horatio was knocked off a
cliff. And Susan was grilled like a shrimp
on the barbie.

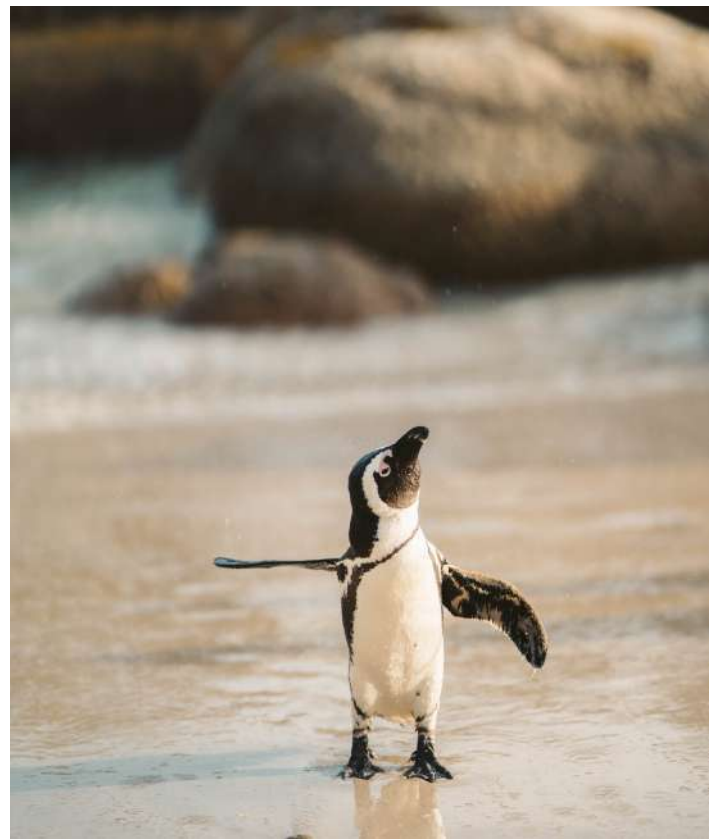
They only succeeded in capturing one
Australian, Darwin Johnnyman. After
being tied up by penguins who squawked
angrily at him, he kept shouting: "Is this
your revenge, New York? Well, you can't
break me that easily!!!"

The penguins attempted to tape his
mouth shut but it was one of those tape
dispensers that was infuriatingly hard to
get tape out of.

Few survived the fiasco. Only Crazy Carl
survived, and as he swam home he
realised something.

He'd forgotten to return Happy Feet to
the video store, and now there was a
crap-ton of late fees.

He swam faster.



FAVOURITE MUSICAL SONGS

By Sylvie

10

Halloween - Be More Chill
Original music and lyrics by Joe Iconis

09

Requiem - Dear Evan Hansen
Original music and lyrics by Benj Pasek & Justin Paul

08

The Squip song - Be More Chill
Original music and lyrics by Joe Iconis

07

All You Wanna Do - Six
Original music and lyrics by Toby Marlow and Lucy Moss

06

For Forever - Dear Evan Hansen
Original music and lyrics by Benj Pasek & Justin Paul

05

Seventeen - Heathers
Original music and lyrics by Kevin Murphy & Laurence O'Keefe

04

The World Will Know - Newsies
Original music and lyrics by Alan Menken

03

I am Damaged - Heathers
Original music and lyrics by Kevin Murphy & Laurence O'Keefe

02

Micheal In The Bathroom - Be More Chill
Original music and lyrics by Joe Iconis

01

Freeze Your Brain - Heathers
Original music and lyrics by Kevin Murphy & Laurence O'Keefe

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COMMUTING AND TRAVELLING

BY RAINE

When I'm sitting in a car, a bus, a train, a boat, or a plane, I'm on my way somewhere. The modern transportation technology we have today lets us live our lives never seen before in previous generations. We are no longer confined to our homes, our towns, or even our countries. However, we are now faced with more decisions than before about how to plan our work, where we live, and how to plan our cities.

I love to travel. I love to travel for learning, fun, inspiration, to see other people. I don't like staying at home all day. Yet I hate commuting. I hate spending an hour going to school. I hate being in crowded buses, traffic jams, waiting outside. I hate having to go through the same, exhausting journey every morning and every night. But why is that? What makes me go through all the effort for a far away trip, yet whine at the relatively short distance to school?

Both commuting and "traveling" involve moving somewhere. Sometimes, you are in charge of your transportation; driving a car, riding a bike, walking. Other times, flying on planes, taking the bus, you have to spend time in transit, waiting. Other people are in control of your trip. You may also have to wait in bus stops and airports. Regardless of your mode of transport, you are leaving some of this trip up to luck and risk. You can't control the traffic, weather, delays, crowds, no matter how far you're traveling.

In a commute, all that matters is getting to your destination on time. Your mind is trying its best to distract itself within itself: listening to music, watching videos, playing games, using your phone. You're not paying attention to your current surroundings, all you're worrying about is what comes next. In that state of exhaustion and diversion, you also isolate yourself. You may be commuting alone; crowds only get in your way. With how hectic it is, you're probably not in the mood to socialize anyway.



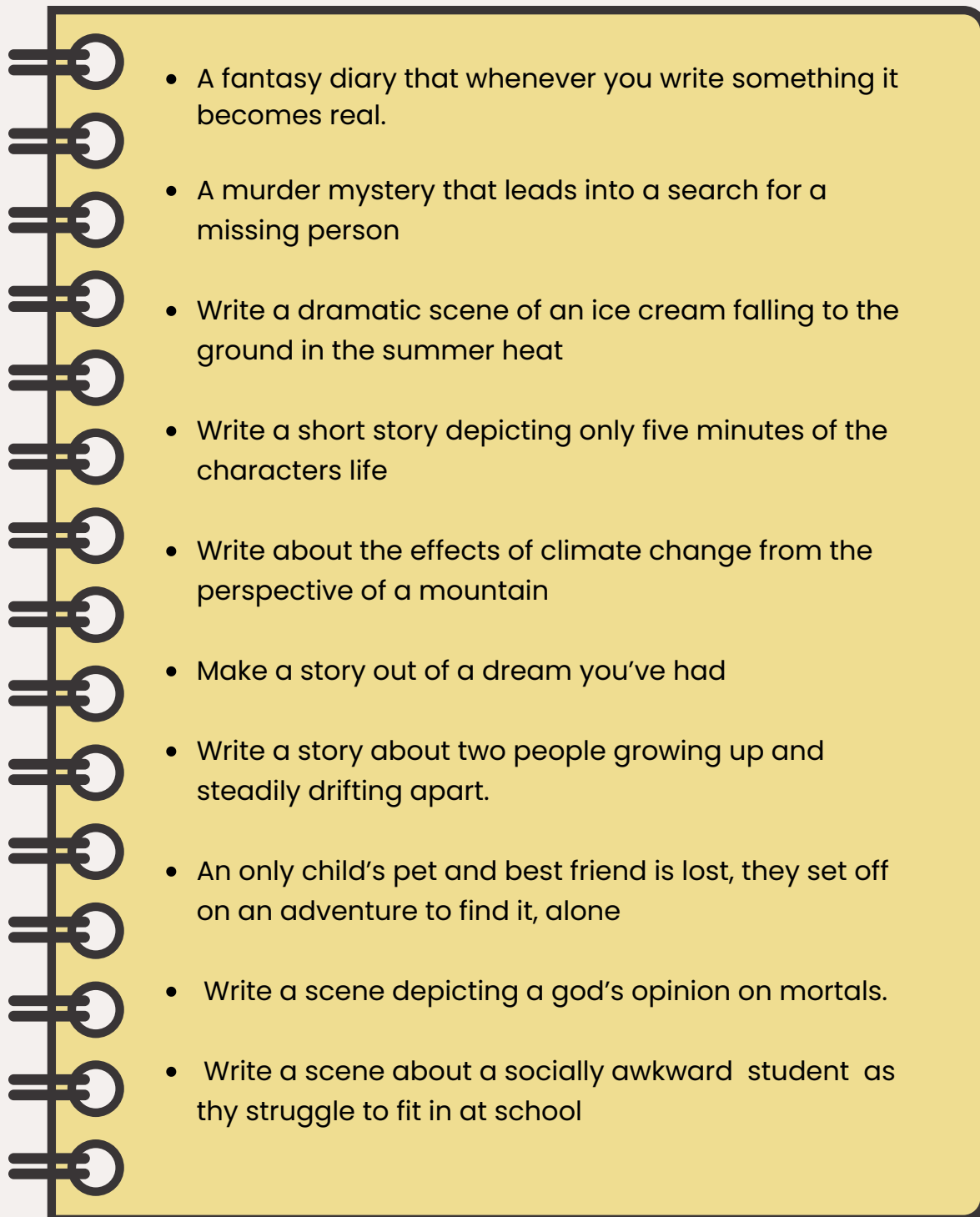
When traveling, the journey is equally important as the destination. All along your way, views, sounds, foods are grabbing your attention. Your intention is to notice everything. Unlike commuting, where all those distractions get in your way, you now have the opportunity to try new things and be in the present. Often, you will be sharing your trip with others. This is a time where all that matters is what's happening right now, and who's with you right now. You'll make some of the fondest memories abroad.

Try to reflect. Is it worth spending all the energy getting to and from work, school? Sitting in cars and crowded train cars only to do it all again coming home and the next day. Or is it better to spend more time outside, moving; having more control over your time. Maybe that energy would be better spent going somewhere new, shared with people that matter. In my opinion, that's worth it.



A Summer of Writing

PROMPTS FROM THE GUILD TO BUILD
INSPIRATION



SHARE YOUR WRITING

Submission
Opportunity!
Ages 13-18

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Submission are open to all Canadian residents ages 13-18.
Submit your piece of writing by emailing info@storystudio.ca by
September 12th 2022.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Submit a poem, scene, short story, comic or other piece of writing of a maximum of 2000 words.

Submit your writing, along with any illustrations to info@storystudio.ca

Deadline: September 12, 2022

WINNERS FEATURED IN OUR WINTER EDITION

Our panel of judges will include members of the Guild of Young Writers, Story Studio professionals and visiting authors. The top two pieces of writing selected will be shared in the next zine release along with any illustrations and short author biographies to recognize the new authors.



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