

Young Authors *Awards*

Prix jeunes écrivains



Young Authors *Awards*

 2017

PREFACE

Congratulations, Young Authors!

This collection is a celebration of the literary talents and accomplishments of the provincial winners of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association's 2017 Young Authors Awards/Prix des Jeunes Écrivains.

We applaud all of our winners as well as the thousands of students across the province who participated in the classroom, school and unit levels of the awards program. The insightful, skillful works crafted by these young authors remind us that the great Canadian writers of the future are presently in our classrooms.

The enthusiasm and dedication of every student and supporter ensures that the Young Authors Awards/Prix Jeunes Écrivains program continues to grow and improve with each year. We deeply appreciate the commitment of our wonderful teachers, whose inspiration and encouragement provide students with the opportunity to empower themselves through this competition experience.

The Young Authors Awards/Prix Jeunes Écrivains program would not be possible without the hard work of many OECTA members across the province. Teachers, OECTA School Association Representatives, Unit Presidents and Unit Executive members all play critical roles in directing the program in their respective classrooms, schools and units. Members contribute their talent, time and effort to preserve the spirit and continued success of the awards. Together, we honour the outstanding work of our teachers and students.

We cannot overstate the value of the contributions of all the dedicated members of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, who ensure that this program flourishes each year for the benefit of our students.

Thank you, and keep on writing!

Susan Perry

Professional Development Department
Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association

Félicitations aux Jeunes écrivains!

Ce recueil a pour but de célébrer les talents littéraires et les accomplissements des gagnants à l'échelle provinciale de Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association's 2017 Young Authors Awards/Prix des Jeunes écrivains de l'édition 2017.

Nous félicitons tous nos gagnants mais aussi tous ces milliers d'élèves de la province qui ont participé en classe, à l'école et au niveau des unités du programme des Prix. Le travail remarquable et instructif de ces jeunes auteurs nous rappelle que les futurs grands écrivains Canadiens sont actuellement dans nos classes.

L'enthousiasme et la détermination de chaque élève et leur soutien garantissent la poursuite du développement et de l'amélioration chaque année, du Programme Young Authors Awards/Prix des Jeunes Écrivains. Nous apprécions énormément l'engagement de nos enseignants remarquables, dont l'inspiration et l'encouragement donnent aux élèves, l'opportunité de s'engager dans l'expérience de cette compétition.

Le programme Young Authors Awards/Prix des Jeunes Écrivains n'aurait été possible sans le dur labeur des nombreux membres de l'OECTA de toute la province. Les enseignants, les représentants de l'Association OECTA dans les écoles, les présidents des unités et les membres exécutifs de ces unités, jouent un rôle critique en menant le programme dans leur classe respective, dans les écoles et dans les unités. Les membres mettent à profit leur compétence, leur temps et leur effort afin de préserver l'esprit et la réussite continue de ces Prix. Ensemble, nous honorons l'excellent travail de nos enseignants et de nos élèves.

Nous n'exagérons en rien la valeur des contributions des membres dévoués de l'Association des Enseignants Catholiques Anglophones de l'Ontario, qui veillent chaque année à l'épanouissement de ce programme au bénéfice de nos élèves.

Merci, et continuez d'écrire!

Susan Perry

Professional Development Department
Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

YOUNG AUTHORS AWARDS / PRIX JEUNES ÉCRIVAINS 2017

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THE LITTLE BUNNY



SCHOOL: St. Bernard
TEACHER: Latoya Lang
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UNIT: Thunder Bay Elementary
UNIT PRESIDENT: Aldo Grillo

JUNIOR AND SENIOR KINDERGARTEN / **SHORT STORY**
by **Ashleigh Matheson**

Once upon a time, there was a little bunny. Her name was Carrots. She loved playing outside. One day she made a friend. Her name was Twinkle. She was a deer. Her family was so happy for Carrots. She asked her Mum if she could have a tea party. The next day she made another friend. Her name was Glamr-Siyn. She was a bunny. She was nice. The next day, she made yet another friend. The friends had a play date. They had a tea party at night. The End.



BUBBLES



SCHOOL: St. Justin Martyr

TEACHER: Michael Medeiros

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JUNIOR AND SENIOR KINDERGARTEN / POEM

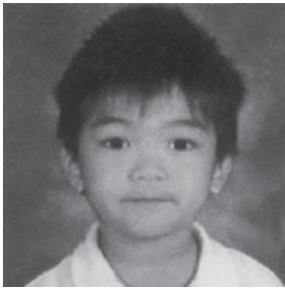
by **Julian Ali**

I saw a bubble
up in the sky.

I wanted to pop it,
but it was too high.

I jumped and jumped
and jumped to the sky.

I popped the bubble
on my last try!



SCHOOL: St. Conrad
TEACHER: Nancy Paiva
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UNIT: Toronto Elementary
UNIT PRESIDENT: Patricia Minnan-Wong

JUNIOR AND SENIOR KINDERGARTEN / **NONFICTION**
by **Eli Anoos**

Robots are made by people. They come in all shapes and sizes. Some robots even look like people. They are called androids. Androids are super cool. They can talk. They can also play games, drive cars and recognize people.

Not all robots, however, look like people. Some have wheels, and some have many legs. Electronic robots have four or six legs. Dog, dinosaur, lizard and squirrel robots have four legs. Robots that look like bugs have six legs.

Insect robots can spy on you. They have cameras on their heads, and people control them.

Many robots do not like water. They are electric, and water makes them die. But some robots can go into the water and survive. Tough water robots can dive deep into the sea. They look for buried treasure.

Space robots explore outer space. These robots can explore Mars. The robots land on Mars and take pictures of the sand. These robots are called rovers and move with wheels.

I wish I could build a robot. Robots are cool. When I grow up, I want to be an engineer and make lots of robots.



MY PET PENGUIN



SCHOOL: St. Ignatius of Loyola

TEACHER: Cristina Billings

SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Roberta Casagrande

UNIT: Wellington

UNIT PRESIDENT: Mark Berardine

GRADES 1-2 / SHORT STORY

by **Olivia Gazzola**

My pet's name is Rainbow. She is a penguin. I ordered her online.

One day a box showed up on my doorstep, and out jumped Rainbow. She does not look like other penguins. They are white and black, but my penguin is pink and purple.

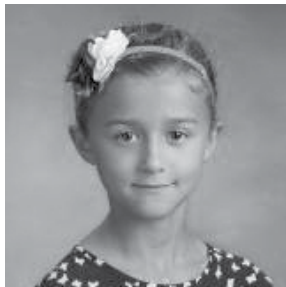
Sometimes I take her to the nail salon with Mommy and me. My penguin tries on all the nail polish. She puts pink, purple and white polish on her toes. She puts gold sparkly polish on her fingernails. When she is finished, she looks like a rainbow.

Then she asks me to take her out for dinner. Guess what she orders? She orders fish and chips.

I love Rainbow, because she is my friend. I have Rainbow to play with me.



DEAR MADDIE



SCHOOL: St. Matthew
TEACHER: Lori Ann Ciolek
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Nancy Hoult
UNIT: Halton Elementary
UNIT PRESIDENT: Nina March

GRADES 1-2 / NONFICTION
by Ula Sapa

Monday, February 6th, 2017

Dear Maddie,

I was at home planning to go to Nunavut. I travelled to Nunavut with my mom and my sister, Basia. I can teach you more about it.

We had to go northwest to get to Nunavut.

I didn't need to leave my country to get to Nunavut, but I had to leave my favourite province: Ontario. I got to go to Nunavut, because my mom won the Most Beautiful Woman Ever contest.

I went in the summer. If we had gone in the winter it would have been very cold, and I would have been very, very cold. We went in the summer, because the weather was only -2° .

I had lots of fun. I wish you had been there. There are a lot of things Nunavut has that we also have in Ontario, like their transportation. I saw lots of cars and trucks in Nunavut parked outside of people's house garages. As you know, we also have cars and trucks. Both provinces also have snowmobiles. I rode on the snowmobiles in Nunavut; the snowmobiles were awesome and much better than riding the snowmobiles in Ontario. Also, both provinces have sleds, but they use huskies to pull their sleds. Our parents pull our sleds instead.

Their climate is super, super cold in winter. It is -32°C in Nunavut, and -32°C is freezing. Winters in Nunavut are colder than in Ontario. I hope it's never going to be -32°C in our province, but the good thing is that the weather stays mostly around -12°C in Ontario during winter.

Both provinces have some things in common. Both provinces have lots of snow and ice, but Nunavut has more snow and ice. Nunavut also has nine months of winter, which is very long, and only three months of summer, which is very short. Also, both provinces have long and dark nights. I wonder why we have long and dark nights. I always have to wake up at 7:00 am on school days. In Nunavut, people live in one-storey houses, but in Ontario we mostly have two or three storey houses. Some people in Nunavut can also live in huts, but we live in brick houses. The good thing is that houses in both Nunavut and Ontario have slanted roofs. If Ontario houses had flat roofs, it would be very cold inside our houses. The snow would not roll off the roof, making us cold. That's why we need to have slanted roofs – so that our houses are not cold on the inside.

Both provinces have different kinds of animals. Ontario mostly has brown bears. Nunavut has polar bears. I love polar bears, but I wish they didn't bite. Nunavut has whales. Ontario has some whales, but they are only in the zoo or Marineland. Both provinces have huskies. The people in Nunavut use huskies for dragging things that are too heavy. They also use their huskies for walking, like us.

There is a difference in how people in Ontario and Nunavut wear clothes, though. People in Nunavut wear a lot of furry clothes in layers. Only some people in Ontario wear clothes made out of animal fur. But people in both provinces do wear hats, mittens or gloves. Most people in Nunavut wear mittens or gloves with animal fur. Only some people in Ontario wear mittens and gloves with animal fur. Hats, jackets, scarves and boots are other pieces of clothing people in both provinces wear. People in both provinces need to wear all of those clothes, or else they will freeze.

My mom, my sister Basia and I had a fun time in Nunavut.

Love,

Your friend Ula



SCHOOL: Corpus Christi
TEACHER: Dawn Ferris
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Stacey Purdon
UNIT: Thunder Bay Elementary
UNIT PRESIDENT: Aldo Grillo

GRADES 1-2 / POEM
by Taylor Dubray

My favourite colour is pink.

I like this colour, because it reminds me of pink candy hearts and the love
deep inside my heart.

Pink also reminds me of my great-grandma who died.

It makes me feel like I'm in heaven close to her –
full of love.

I love the colour pink.



CARIBBEAN MIST



SCHOOL: St. Anne
TEACHER: Angela Pagett
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Mary Diemert
UNIT: Waterloo
UNIT PRESIDENT: Christine Stockie

GRADES 3-4 / **SHORT STORY**
by **Alexandra Gwendolyn Rose**

I put my bookmark in and closed my book. I had stopped on chapter 27. I stood up and went to the front porch; I sat on the steps and looked out onto our street. It was bathed in golden sunlight that poured from the sky. I thought of my book and how Cameron and Maddie saw the Caribbean mist settle on the golden beach. My eyes fogged over, and I drifted off to la la land – but not for long. Something caught my eye. A bicycle whizzed by. “Only a bicycle,” I thought. It was after all 6:30 pm on a beautiful summer evening.

“Dinner!” someone said from inside the house. “Ugh, pierogies again!” I thought when I reached the kitchen. We had eaten pierogies every day for a week. Apparently, there was a huge sale on pierogies at the farmer’s market.

“So, uh, what did you do today, honey?” my dad inquired at dinner.

“Me?” I asked. “Oh, I read my book and walked Sandy.” Sandy is our family dog.

“Come on, honey; why don’t you make some friends and hang out?” my dad said.

“Howard!” my mom said. “That’s not fair to say. It’s been hard for Cassia with her friends moving away.”

“I just mean that she could be, you know, less antisocial.”

“Howard!” I stood up. I left, taking my plate and my drink to the front porch with me. “I bet Maddie’s dad accepted her,” I thought as I ate the last of my pierogies on the front porch. I blocked out the sound of my parents.

“It is your fault, Howard!”

“Oh no. It is not. She needs more friends and you know it, Katherine!” I thought back to *Caribbean Mist* and when Maddie and Cameron kiss. Readers describe it as the most passionate kiss ever shared. I wondered if I would ever share a kiss like that.

There's this potluck every Saturday night. It's like a neighbourhood dinner party. Sometimes Mom and Dad go, but I always stay home. Not this time, however. I was being forced to go, instead of spending my Saturday night doing something fun, like reading.

After the potluck, I went upstairs to read. At about 10 o'clock, my mom came in.

"I'm sorry," she said.

"For what?" I asked.

"I'm sorry we made you go," she said solemnly.

"It's okay," I replied. "I had a little fun. I met this nice boy named Henry. He's fourteen, like me. He moved here from New Jersey. He's also going to Westmount, like me." Westmount is the high school I'm going to.

"Well, he sounds wonderful," she said smiling. Her face drooped. She looked down but then quickly perked back up. "Don't stay up too late, ok?" She patted my knee and gave me a kiss on the forehead. "Oh, and your dad says he's sorry." She left.

I'm not talking to my dad. He just doesn't understand a fourteen-year-old girl. I'm not simple. And support from my mom and dad is super important. That means not calling me antisocial.

On Saturday, my mom asked me if I wanted to help her with the cookies she was making for the potluck. Of course, I said yes. One thing I love almost as much as reading is baking. We made three batches. Our neighbourhood is really big. For once, I was excited – not going over every possible risk or worrying that something might happen.

Henry was at the potluck again. We talked and laughed about all kinds of stuff, like how he had scared his sisters by dressing up like a homeless person's ghost. It was for a good cause. That year, his sisters gave all their Christmas money to the man who lived on the corner of their street. There are a lot of homeless people in New Jersey; at least that's what Henry said. At around 8:30 pm when the potluck was drawing to an end and when the "scavengers" came out – the mothers who steal leftovers for lunches or something – Henry asked me if I wanted to hang out some time, like as friends. He said he didn't have many. And, of course, as the stupid person I am, I totally embarrassed myself.

"Ditto to that!" What a terrible start. "How about 2:35 pm on Wednesday afternoon?" I tend to do that – say the exact time. "At the corner of Gareet St. and Caloo Ave., we could go to the new ice cream place?" I am the lamest person ever. But the funny thing is Henry just smiled and said, "Sure, that sounds wonderful." We waved goodbye.

On Wednesday, we hung out just as planned.

Henry said, "You're late. At the moment, it is 2:37 pm." We both laughed.

"So, it's like two weeks into summer," I said. "What have you been doing?"

"Oh, mostly taking care of my younger sisters. Oh, wow! This is so good," he said between mouthfuls of his ice cream. "So, what have you been doing?" he asked.

"Oh, you know, nothing much - just hanging out with friends and going skydiving and stuff." He gave me a look that seemed to say, "I know you're lying, because you go to neighbourhood potlucks."

"Ok, you caught me; I'm a total introvert! I read *Carribean Mist*, my favourite book, and walked the family's dog Sandy," I finally admitted.

"You're my friend, right?" he asked when we arrived at my house.

"Yeah."

Henry and I hung out a lot during the following weeks. Every time I left the house, I thought about how lucky I was, and how Maddie and Cameron started out as friends. The thing is I think I might have a little crush on him. Whenever I'm around him my palms get sweaty, and I want to stay in that moment forever, staring into his sparkling eyes. I don't want to get my hopes up, but maybe, just maybe, we'll fall in love, just like Maddie and Cameron.

I definitely like Henry, and I think he likes me. He gets awkward and scratches his head a lot when we're hanging out. In *Caribbean Mist*, Maddie and Cameron kiss on their first date. I doubt that will happen to me.

On Friday, August 3rd, when I came home from walking Sandy, I sat on my bed to read. Since I'd met Henry, I spent less time reading and more time with him. My mom said she and my dad were happy about that. I'm talking to my dad again. But it took, like, fifty apologies!

"Cass," Henry said when we got to my house on Tuesday. "Would you, maybe, wanna go to a movie with me?"

"Like, on a date?" I answered in a cool tone, but inside I was freaking out!

"Sure, what movie?"

"*A Song on the Beach*? It's playing on Friday."

“Okay.”

I put my book back down. I put my bookmark in and closed my book. I had stopped on chapter 27. I got up and thought of how Maddie and Cameron’s first date was a movie. Maybe my life would see the Caribbean mist settle on the golden beach after all. I got changed and did my hair.

“Honey, Henry’s here!”

Time to go.



LISTEN TO THE SNOW



SCHOOL: Corpus Christi

TEACHER: Stacey Purdon

SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Stacey Purdon

UNIT: Thunder Bay Elementary

UNIT PRESIDENT: Aldo Grillo

GRADES 3-4 / POEM

by **Emily McLeod**

Listen to the snow
the soft, white, sparkling snow
falling
falling
falling
to the icy-cold ground.
Listen to the snow
soft, swirling, snow.
Watch it fall down to the snowy ground
and make a white blanket.
You step in the snow.
crunch
crunch
crunch
as you walk...
listen...
quiet.
Snow will tell you secrets.
What did it tell you?



SCHOOL: Holy Family

TEACHER: Leanne Barch

SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Pam Colledanchise

UNIT: Thunder Bay Elementary

UNIT PRESIDENT: Aldo Grillo

GRADES 3-4 / NONFICTION

by Vivian Anne Davenport

What does inclusion mean to me? To me, inclusion means to involve and to accommodate everyone at every possible moment. There is a need to always include people, despite differences among them in culture, appearance, age, gender and wealth. If I am concerned or scared about someone because they are unlike me, it is important to support them despite my feelings! You always need to accept other people's differences. We see the look of inclusion when everyone is treated nicely and everyone is involved. We hear the sound of inclusion when everyone is laughing together and enjoying each other with care and politeness. When I am included, I feel valuable, loved and happy. I enjoy myself. Inclusion is a Catholic value, because when we recognize its power it makes all people of every culture, appearance, age, gender and wealth feel great! I think that everyone should be included, because everyone is special in his or her own way!



FIXING THE FIXED



SCHOOL: St. Teresa of Calcutta
TEACHER: Zenalia Kroeger
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Jeanne Carson
UNIT: Waterloo
UNIT PRESIDENT: Christine Stockie

GRADES 5-6 / SHORT STORY

by **Mateo Nasic**

A thick pit of anxiousness sat deep in my stomach as I nervously waited to get my math test back. I'd never gotten an A before, but I always imagined how extraordinary the feeling would be. My heart suddenly dropped as I heard my name called. "Billy," Mrs. Johnson called out. I staggered over to the front of my grade six classroom. I quickly grasped the test out of Mrs. Johnson's hands and raced back to my desk. I examined the first sheet of paper, but the bold, bright red sharpie stood out from the second page. My hands shaking with anticipation, I flipped over the paper. My eyes filled up with tears and a deep feeling of discouragement fell over my body as my eyes met with a familiar sight: C-. I struggled to read the messy handwriting underneath my grade: "Meet me at last recess." I could hear the other kids quietly celebrating their marks. I felt like such a failure.

After lunch recess, we played different sports in gym class. The disappointment lingered, until finally it was last recess. The crowd of energetic, excited kids rushed down the hall as the recess bell rang. I uneasily sat at the table waiting for my teacher.

When she stepped into the class and sat at the wooden desk, her first words confused me: "Do you know what a growth mindset is?"

I paused for a moment. "A growth what?" I asked, completely clueless. She cleared her throat. "A growth mindset. Instead of thinking, 'I'll never get an A,' think, 'I haven't got an A yet. But I'll keep trying, and I won't give up.'"

That word. That wonderful word "yet" stuck in my mind like glue as she mesmerized me with all of these amazing facts. I intently listened for about 15 minutes until recess was over. Finally, it was time to go home.

On my way home, I kept thinking about what Mrs. Johnson told me, about the growth and fixed mindsets. As I waited in the elevator of my apartment, my mind shifted to a horrifying thought: my mom would be so upset when she found out my grade. I had to hide it. As the elevator came to a sudden stop, I nervously stepped inside. I raced to my room before even saying a word to my mom. After that, I only came out of my room for dinner. I didn't say much at the dinner table. I just hoped that she wouldn't ask about the test, which I told her I was getting back today. So many

thoughts grazed my mind while lying on my comfy pillow. Eventually, everything became a blur, and I slowly drifted off to sleep.

I woke up at 9:30 the next morning. Thank goodness it was a Saturday, because I had a pounding headache. Groggily, I staggered into the washroom and picked up my toothbrush. My eyes still fuzzy, I looked up into the mirror. I dropped my toothbrush as my jaw fell to the ground. That person in the mirror was not me. The last thing I remember was falling to the ground and hitting my head. The ground must have been hard, because after that everything slowly faded away to pitch black darkness.

When I woke up, I struggled to stand up and regain my balance. I had a splitting headache before, but now it doubled in pain. I looked back in the mirror, still in utter disbelief. How did this happen? Now, when I tell you how I looked, I'm not exaggerating one bit. I had an emerald green suit, sparkling white hair, a violet purple cape and the letters GM written in large, bright orange letters. On top of all that, my head was as big as a beach ball! I guess that was the source of my gigantic headache. Faster than I've ever run before, I raced to the kitchen to show my mom what had just happened. Instead of seeing my mother, I came across a bright pink sticky note. "I had to go into work early today; Amanda was sick. I'll be home around 6. Love, Mom." "Ugh, another boring Saturday in the Benson house," I thought.

I slumped down onto the couch in my full ensemble. I knew I was some sort of superhero, but what? I referred back to the GM on my suit. Then it clicked! Growth mindset! Now, just to find out my powers, I brainstormed and tried different ideas for over an hour! I examined my extravagant costume for some helpful clues. I shut my eyes and held my breath in anticipation of what would happen. Nothing! Absolutely nothing happened! Still disappointed, I decided I needed some breakfast. I was starving! As I stood up, my stomach churned as I zoomed across my living room. I was headed for a giant window! I tried to stop, but it was no use. I zipped right through the window. SMASH! The next thing I knew I was falling, falling, falling until suddenly, I was...flying?

Still terrified, I managed to glide through the fresh air - my hair blowing through the gusty wind, and my cape flapping up and down. The view of beautiful Toronto was breathtaking! I now discovered what the button did: I had super speed and flight! My attention was then drawn to a beeping watch on my left wrist. I looked at it, and a GPS had given me directions to an address. I had absolutely no idea what was going on, but I flew to 92 Cottonwood Crescent anyway. I arrived at a small one-storey house. I looked through one of the half-open windows in the kitchen. I saw a girl with brown hair and green eyes. She looked about twelve years old. I stuck my ear in the opening and overheard what she was saying.

She seemed very frustrated. "Ugh, I suck at math. I won't even bother studying for the test; I'll do terrible anyway," she groaned. Wow. That was horrible! "She must have a fixed mindset," I thought to myself. I was a growth mindset superhero, so I had to be able to fix her fixed mindset. "Don't give up; you can do this. Have a **growth mindset!**" Her discouraging frown immediately turned into an encouraging smile.

“I’ll try harder in math. I won’t give up,” she exclaimed. Woohoo! It worked! I could give people growth mindsets! I flew back to my apartment, probably with a humongous smile on my face.

When I got home, I flicked off the shiny grey button. I had one final thing to do before my mom got home. I ran into my room and grabbed my math test out of the drawer. “I will keep trying. I know if I can work hard and don’t give up, I will get an A someday!” I exclaimed with a smile. I left the test on the counter for my mom to see when she got back. Now I know it may seem like a bad thing, but I’m so happy I got a C- on that test. It showed me how amazing, extraordinary and powerful a growth mindset can really be!





SIDEWALK CHALK AND HIGH HOPES



SCHOOL: St. Mary's
TEACHER: Tina Moneypenny
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Trina Feetham
UNIT: Simcoe Muskoka Elementary
UNIT PRESIDENT: Kent MacDonald

GRADES 5-6 / POEM
by **Caralina Knights**

Sometimes I sit there, just thinking
Not even blinking.
Just thinking...

I often think about what will come
In the future for me
Will I be a green thumb?
Climb a mountain, a tall tree?
Will I protect and defend Mother Nature's ways
And try to keep Earth the way it was, in past days?

Or will I be a performer, of the intelligent sort?
Drifting through Broadway, the stage I'll distort
My stage family
We'd sing the last chorus
Of a fictitious story told long before us
The sound would ring out,
The curtains, go down
The audience
The stage
Filled with smiles, no frowns
I'd be a happy director, maybe a tiny bit stressed?
Smart and responsible, amazing, no less.

A vocalist sounds delightful
Yes, I'd be very insightful
The way a heartstrings-tugging vocalist should
My songs I'd be singing, clear as a church bell ringing
I'd be like the little songbird that could.

But really, no way, who am I kidding?
What if I end up as an old lady who just sits there, knitting?
Cliché, I know, but where would I go, if I end up losing, not winning?

What if I get stuck?
Be a complete laughing stock
Of a tiny town
Where my goals are in hock?
I'd be with my sidewalk
My bucket
My trusty jacket
And my sidewalk chalk
Beside me,
The only one truly keeping me company?

"That'll only happen,"
My mama jokes,
"If you really don't study hard enough.
Look at your friend! So focused and smart,
I bet she's ahead on her school stuff."
My mom does encourage me, really!
Okay, well, a lot
She's basically the reason
A very big reason that
I have got just what I've got.
I'm shipped off to theatre, clubs, camps and choirs
Art lessons, piano lessons, all my desires
She's a Chocolate Fudgesicle ice cream provider
She lovingly shoves them at me and says, "Get to work!"
With a satisfied, hopeful, chance-giving smirk.

With all of this, I could be a teacher,
Teaching children all the things I've known,
I'd try to be patient, kind, understanding,
And tons of homework wouldn't go home.
I'd make things exciting, maybe play them a song
About my new and upcoming lesson plans.
They'd put their hands up,
"It's okay if you're wrong."

Or I could handle pots and pans.
I could possibly be a baker
Bringing back sweet recipes
To the world that was food that's now...faker.
I live with a baker anyway,
I'm sure one day I'll catch on
To her recipes, instincts, delicious treats
And keep a piece of her mind when she's gone.

Okay, now this is getting sappy and sad,
So let me open the dark hint of clouds just a tad.

Of course every cloud has a silver lining
That's caused by the big sun shining
Mine probably have gold
Over the fold
Clouds are uniquely pretty
Even when it's dark and it's cold.
You see, my point is that
If I do what I should
Be that little songbird that could
I'll plan and pursue
And create and correct
And work with other humans
'Till life seems perfect
Which I know it won't be
Bet we can get pretty close, right?
At least, can we cure all the hurt and stage fright?

I could be an author, write a book or a poem
I would send my writing voice to the world
My pages would roam.

I've got talent, maybe brains, I don't know
But I feel oh so lucky that I can put on a show,
Say what I feel,
Have a family that loves me.
Wherever we go, I'll be right on their heels

For sure, I could be an artist
Maybe cartoon a friendship
Blend together all the paint and see what I end up with
Spray paint a wall just to show that I don't care
(Well, maybe not)
A paint-spattered shirt is what I would wear.

Or maybe if the pay is good,
Or I do something else on the side,
I could be a sidewalk chalk artist
Someday I'll decide.
I now think.
It doesn't matter when I get there
Right now, I'll use what I've been taught
"She's happy, he's happy, everyone's happy
If we're just happy with what we've got."



SCHOOL: St. Peter
TEACHER: Andrea Cartier
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Andrea Cartier
UNIT: Eastern Ontario
UNIT PRESIDENT: Dale Fobert

GRADES 5-6 / NONFICTION
by **Miranda Villeneuve**

Hello, everyone. O Canada! I am so lucky to be born and raised in Canada. My country is safe and full of opportunities for me. I am going to compare my day in Canada to those of other children, around the world, who are not so fortunate. Around 7:00 am, I wake up and eat breakfast while watching television. In Ethiopia, in 2016, a drought causes millions of children to be negatively affected. Many do not have food or water. They have to try and find food.

I get ready for school. My mother drives me to school. In spring when it's warmer, I ride my bike. Some children in the northwest of Pakistan go to school one day, but the next day have no school to which to go. Rebels bombed schools in that area.

When I get to school, I see my friends. I also go to class and learn. In school, I'm told I can be anything I want to be. In some countries, however, girls are discouraged or not allowed to go to school. Malala Yousafzai from Pakistan tried to go to school and was badly hurt because of her desire to get an education. The rebels at the time banned girls from attending school. In Afghanistan, nine out of ten women are illiterate. One in twenty do not go beyond the sixth grade due to threats. In Turkey, 500 000 girls are out of school. There is a belief among some people in Turkey that females do not need an education.

If I happen to get seriously sick, I have health care. Once, I became dehydrated and had to go to the hospital. I was treated without any problem and at no cost. A child in Pakistan would need money to get treated. Healthcare in Pakistan is not a right. Sometimes thousands of people are waiting for treatment, and their system is such that two poor patients share one bed.

I am young and do not have or need a job. I have chores and get an allowance every two weeks. If my parents died, I, thankfully, have family to whom I can turn. If I didn't have a family, social services would help me out. I would not be left alone to fend for myself. Child labour laws are always enforced in Canada. Africa has a Charter of Rights for children, but it is difficult to enforce. In some parts of Africa where adults cannot find work, cannot farm or can fall ill, children earn money by working. Or they beg on the street. The spread of disease leaves many children alone, to fend for themselves when their parents have died. They do not have the resources Canadian children have.

I am a ten-year-old Canadian. In other countries I may not have made it to ten years old. In parts of Africa, one in every six children fails to reach their 5th birthday. These deaths are due to poverty, lack of clean water, little access to healthcare, poor nutrition and disease.

We are not at war with anyone on our soil. After school, I sometimes play outside. I have fun and get to enjoy the outdoors. I feel safe and get a good night's sleep. Then I will start my day all over again. Unlike me, seven-year old Fatima in Syria was badly injured when playing outside, because war was happening in her country. Countries like Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq and Colombia use young boys and girls as soldiers and force these children to be messengers or spies. There are international laws to help stop this, but these laws are difficult to enforce. These children do not get a good night's sleep. A survey of 5000 Syrian children between ages 4-7 show 25% suffer from sleep disorders and 15% show signs of depression.

I am a safe, happy, hopeful and content girl. I feel this way because I have rights to protect me, and Canada makes sure they are always enforced. My wish for suffering children around the world is for the laws to be better enforced somehow. I've learned that where you grow up as a child impacts your life very much. All I can say now is, "God keep our land glorious and free."



THE THINGS WE LEAVE BEHIND



SCHOOL: St. Kateri
TEACHER: Richard Wagner
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Lee-Anne Gruber
UNIT: Waterloo
UNIT PRESIDENT: Christine Stockie

GRADES 7-8 / SHORT STORY
by Caitlyn Mask

How often do you contemplate death? Of course, this is a heavy question. It provokes unwanted answers, but the question is only natural to ask. Do you fear death? Most people do. It's inevitable, imminent and forever looming above your heads. It seems to be all you people think about. And why shouldn't you?

The day she died was lovely. The sky was a gorgeous sapphire, oddly radiant for the peak of winter. No clouds marred the endless ocean of blue, and the sun shone blindingly bright. A layer of pure, sparkling snow, apart from the odd animal and tire tracks, lay untouched on the ground. That's what made the blood look so particularly out of place that day.

Now, you have to remember that I have witnessed billions of deaths over the millennia, and every last one of them could be described as devastating, heartbreaking, brutal...

Just not to me.

As an immortal creature, I struggle to cry over any soul I reap. That's just a fact. If I had a breakdown every time I attempted to do my job, I would've been relieved of my responsibilities long ago. But, I have to say, this specific reaping was different. It wasn't just the way she died that piqued my interest. I suppose you could say it was her soul.

Yes, I know that sounds odd, but my entire existence has been a series of oddities and impossibilities, so nothing seems too peculiar to me anymore.

Where was I? Oh, yes. Her soul. I swear, it was brighter than any star I have ever seen. Most children do have pure souls, because of how untainted their lives have been. Usually after puberty these souls slowly begin to dim and fade, mixing with the many sins and mistakes that are made over the years.

I've seen my fair share of beautiful, uncontaminated souls. But hers was exceptionally splendid. It made the snow surrounding her small, broken body look dull in comparison.

I don't suppose you would like to know the details of her death. Perhaps I'll leave out the gory

features of this particular story, like how her head had hit the concrete so hard that her skull had split. Or how her left arm was angled so awkwardly that it looked like every bone had shattered. Oh, was that too gruesome for you? I apologize. I have great difficulty distinguishing between the mundane and the graphic anymore...Who am I kidding? It's been a millennium since I've been able to tell. Frankly, this job gets old fairly quickly, and with no vacation days...Well, you can understand how my perception of the shocking and gruesome has become desensitized. It's astounding that insanity hasn't taken control of me yet. In all honesty, though, I wouldn't be able to tell even if it has.

Anyways, I will tell about the noise. At first, apart from the low rumble of the moving car, there was absolute silence. Not a living creature was stirring in that dark, ominous forest. It was like they knew – *they knew* – what was about to happen.

Fate intervened soon enough, putting an end to that hush as the car hit a rough patch of ice. That was when the noise began. It was a cacophony of impending disaster, building to a tragic crescendo – the screech of tires, a woman shouting, a young girl screaming, a man pounding the steering wheel. I swear, the looming, pungent odour of death was so strong in that one moment I felt weak and faint. As the instants passed at an agonizingly slow rate, the smell only grew more intense. The car swerved and slid. The tires wailed a desperate song – the stench of fear blending with that of death to create an ill-omened potpourri. What? What do death and fear smell like, you ask? You aren't missing out on anything, I assure you. It's nothing you would want to spray on your neck or wrist to prepare for a first date.

But never mind such a trivial detail. That isn't important. The young girl was then flung from her parents' car, ripped away from the safety of her seat belt. Her mother and father were...luckier? – perhaps, in regard to their own safety, but in the larger scheme not so much. Although, does it truly matter at this point? I suppose not. They careened onward until the car stumbled off the road into the waiting arms of a tree. And then it all stopped.

After all that noise, the dead silence and stillness that followed seemed excruciatingly loud. With a sense of dread in my non-existent heart, I made my way over to the tiny, shattered body lying in the very middle of the road. She truly was lovely. Or she had been lovely. Death didn't seem to suit the girl. Her large blue eyes were empty and glassy; her golden locks were matted with crimson blood. Her fragile limbs were spread wide apart, and the angle of her left arm accentuated the unnaturalness of her position.

She looked like a doll some ignorant child had left in the snow. It was a devastating sight to witness; I almost had to turn away. It took much too long for me to remember that I couldn't just stand here, transfixed on her small figure for the rest of her eternity. I had a responsibility.

I knelt down beside her with a sorrowful expression upon my face. It was such a waste. I had peeked at her soul prior to the reaping...A child so good, so pure, did not deserve to perish so young. As gently as I could, I pressed two fingers to her forehead and watched as her brilliant soul ascended from her mortal body. I grasped it in my hands, bowing my head in silence, before

letting it slip between my fingers. For a few moments, the blindingly white, smoke-like matter took form, shaping itself into the image of the young girl that lay broken in front of me.

She looked up at me, eyes so wide and innocent. So childlike.

“Sir, am I dead?”

“Yes. I’m sorry, my dear. Some things cannot be helped.”

Her lips quivered with the realization that she was no longer part of the living. Her eyes closed for a moment, and she wiped a small hand across her face before peeking back up at me.

“Are you Death? Are you the Grim Reaper?” she inquired, her entire face aglow with a childish curiosity.

I could feel my lips curling up. Of course, she would ask that.

“In a manner of speaking, yes. Although I’m certainly not the only one. If it were just me, I would not have any time to have this conversation with you.”

Her eyes lit up at my kind tone.

“Sir, may I ask you one more question?” She was certainly one extremely polite child.

“Of course. Go right ahead.” I wondered what the question would be. Mainly, the questions my appearance solicits are along the lines of the following: where am I going? What is the afterlife? What comes next? What does all this mean? I expected this child would be no different. Well, in hindsight, I suppose even immortal beings have the ability to be wrong sometimes.

“If you’re Death, can you tell me the things you’ve seen?”

I almost laughed out loud at her query – an innocent question but with celestially profound undertones. Can you imagine? This soul of a tiny, six-year-old girl was asking what I’ve seen! But then, after considering her question for a moment, I remembered...

Reflexively, my mind was taken back to the First World War, known as the “Great War” to everyone at the time. You see, nobody expected another global war to hit only decades later, so there was no foresight to number it. Thus, “greatness” seemed a suitable descriptor at the time. And, yes, “great” doesn’t exclusively refer to good things.

Over seventeen million people died in that silly war; maybe it seems cruel of me to call it silly, but surely you agree with me. So many people dead, so many people wounded, so many lives destroyed - all those senseless deaths, and for what? Does anyone even remember why they died?

And then I was flung back to one of the many periods where the bubonic plague was rampant, carrying death in its wake. Do you know that this terrifying disease was believed to have killed 137 million people over the hundreds of years it tore apart Europe? I remember it so well...It was horrific; so many were dying so very quickly – the elderly, children, adults, men and women.... No one was spared. The disease did not discriminate. Every soul I reaped was so pleased – so at peace and thanking me for having spared them from their pain. If only they knew...

My thoughts drifted. And, once again, I was staring at war right in the eyes. World War Two was an awful time to be different. An awful time to have opinions. Hitler's reign was a brutal one. Over 60 million people died, because of this war...60 million! All because of one charismatic fanatic rousing the patriotism of a defeated country.

I remember reaping Anne Frank, mere weeks before freedom. I do believe her heart couldn't endure the moral injustices any longer. He had broken her. Hitler had ruined her. I recollect chatting with Anne, taking her hand and leading her off into the darkness. I recall taking her father decades later...91 and so defeated. Yet, so happy. I asked him why his smile was so bright – lung cancer wasn't exactly a good way to die. He simply whispered, "I finally get to see my girls again."

My consciousness returned me back to the present, and the young, innocent girl was gazing at me. Her blue eyes were so kind. We were opposites, I thought at the time. She was so sweet, so pure. She was the epitome of innocence. I, on the other hand, was old, weary and bitter. I had seen so many things I wish I hadn't, carried so many good souls off into the night. I was the embodiment of the elderly: wizened and wrinkled and gnarled. My mind was betrayed by time itself. I had endured so much; I could feel the weight of the world pressed onto my shoulders. Was it so much to ask to have a break once in a while?

Her eyes were still on me; her mouth was parted slightly. She looked like she wanted to ask again, but impatience was impolite, and that wasn't how she had been raised.

I smiled weakly. "I've seen too much, my dear. Too much."

Despite its ambiguity, she seemed oddly satisfied with my answer – her head bobbing up and down in delight. But soon her energy faded; her eyes were focused upon the layer of unbroken snow settled on the concrete.

"Sir..." she murmured, her slender fingers playing with the buttons on her coat. "Will my parents be all right?"

What could I possibly tell this child? Yes, they will be perfectly at peace with the death of their only daughter. No, they will never be able to repair themselves for as long as they remain on this Earth. I paused to consider my next remark very carefully.

"They will learn to move on, yet you will never leave their hearts. I promise." The grin she sent me in return was shy but filled to the brim with hope. "I suppose it's time for me to go then."

"I'm sorry, my dear. You no longer belong with the living."

She bowed her head in resignation.

"Thank you, sir," she breathed. Her short arms were wrapped around her petite frame.

I swore to myself in that instant that I would never forget her. Not when the Earth was falling to pieces, and humanity had abandoned it to travel the stars. Not when the universe had come to its final days. Not when I, myself, would welcome the darkness. Not even when I would finally find my peace.

"Rest well, Amelia Rhodes."

Now her tiny figure was losing form, fading away to a dazzling white gas. Her soul began lifting up towards the sky, towards the Sun and the stars above. It twisted and dove, elated to finally be free. She truly was a thing of beauty.

But then, I was roughly jolted back to reality. The driver's side door of the girl's car had suddenly been flung open. Out came the father. A large gash was slashed across his forehead and spouting a great deal of bright red blood. He fell out of the car; his walk was similar to the swagger of a drunken man. He stumbled back onto the road and moaned in horror at the sight of his six-year-old daughter's crumpled body. His steps quickened, and soon he was weeping at her side; his blood and tears dripped onto her filthy, ripped winter coat.

"Amelia!" he sobbed, clutching her tiny hands in his own huge ones. His cries faded for a moment as he truly took in what the accident had done to her. He was dead quiet for a time, before abruptly standing up and glaring towards the cloudless sky.

"Screw you!" he screamed. "How can you call yourself a good God when you have taken away the kindest child in the world? Tell me how you can consider yourself to be merciful and righteous when you have ripped away my daughter from this Earth! Tell me!"

I could barely bear to watch him, as he screamed at a God who hardly had any control in the matter. It was a useless, pitiful attempt, yet he was resolute in his task.

"How could you? You are not merciful; you are not kind! Where is this righteousness I have heard so much about?" He punched his fist at the sky as tears steadily streamed down his ashen cheeks.

"How could you?" He collapsed to the ground, mere feet away from his perfect little girl. He held his head in his hands. His sobs were loud and unwavering. When he spoke again, his voice was small and young, like an upset child asking about his broken toy or the missing last cookie. "How could you?"

It was then I chose to take my leave. I had already stayed much too long. As I walked off, fading into the distance, I could still hear the man's broken cries. I knew they would haunt me for the rest of my existence.

One final time, I looked behind me – the man was still there, kneeling on the cold asphalt; his tears were falling fast and in abundance. As I watched him, a curious thought struck. I had seen this exact situation play out millions of times, with millions of different people, but never before had I experienced this same thought. As I stared, invisible to him and anyone else, I couldn't help thinking, "Is this what happens to the things we leave behind?"



THE WAR RAGES ON



SCHOOL: St. Mary
TEACHER: Sarah Rainer
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Ben Hayne
UNIT: Wellington
UNIT PRESIDENT: Mark Berardine

GRADES 7-8 / POEM

by **Ethan Kraemer**

One shot first, then two, then three –
a cacophony, they fly past me.
The death, the violence of it all;
the firing cannons would not stall.
An explosion and dirt in his face,
his arm keeps swinging like a mace.
The shots ringing in my ears,
remembered now as my worst fears.
Bodies falling as in a bed,
once loved and were loved, now all dead.
The battle is over, the shots stop;
bodies everywhere, my ears pop.
All the missing names we cry,
to no avail, there's no reply.
We call again now in despair,
but only grass and poppies fair.
The grass beating down on the mound;
the lost souls nowhere to be found.
They've moved on, they've passed away;
a great many souls were lost today.
The crosses we place all together
wishing to stand in all harsh weather.
Now still waging wars there are,
the hope we give – a burning star.
Our Canadian flag we still fly
From all of us who had to die.



OFFENSIVE SPORTS TEAM NAMES



SCHOOL: St. Elizabeth Seton
TEACHER: Michael Naismith
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Diana Miscolci
UNIT: Dufferin-Peel Elementary
UNIT PRESIDENT: Rose Procopio

GRADES 7-8 / NONFICTION
by Kameron Heidebrecht

“And he makes the catch! The Cleveland Indians are headed to the World Series!” Whoa, whoa, whoa. The Cleveland Indians, you say? Talk about a politically incorrect name! That name is kind of racist, don’t you think? And that’s just where racism like this starts. Check out their logo. If you are opposed to the name, you are definitely going to also be against these other names – the Washington Redskins and the Atlanta Braves. The logos and names of these teams raise the following questions: should professional sports teams with offensive names and logos be forced to change their names or logos? Or should the leagues these teams participate in allow them the opportunity to keep on offending the entire indigenous community?

Over a century ago, when sports teams were beginning to form, non-indigenous communities viewed indigenous peoples’ cultures as symbolic of strength and bravery. The symbol of a First Nations warrior was intriguing to many people. However, colonists believed First Nations warriors needed to be assimilated into European culture. Now, what kind of a sports team would have a name that did not possess power or bravery and was not a symbol of strength? Would you watch a team called the Maple Leafs? I’m joking; that was an exception. Here’s a better example: would you watch a football team, a group of guys that are supposed to be pummelling and practically destroying their opponents, called the Butterflies? No, that name just doesn’t work. Many believed that a team’s namesake should resemble what kind of team it actually was, such as a tough, feared team who would not give its opponents an easy ride. When teams were beginning to join these leagues, they chose names, such as the Chicago Blackhawks; the Washington Redskins; the Kansas City Chiefs; the Atlanta Braves; more recently, the Edmonton Eskimos; and, now, the team that is stirring up the most trouble due to recent successes, the Cleveland Indians. Of course, these names are all politically incorrect and racist; excluding a few of the teams, their logos are horrendous. If you’ve ever seen the logo of the Cleveland Indians, you’ll notice that it is a caricature of an indigenous man, painted a dark and highly offensive red. This red was used to describe the skin tone of an indigenous person. This drawing also mocks indigenous clothing, such as a feather sticking out of a poorly drawn headdress. The worst part is the facial expression. Creators of the drawing put an exaggerated smile across the face and drew bulging eyes as triangles above the nose. Overall, the logo goes against everything that we call politically correct today. Depending on one’s point of view, the name of the logo, Chief Wahoo, can be perceived as offensive.

Believe me, these names and logos are not the only things stirring up trouble. Has anyone ever heard of the tomahawk chop? Well, fans of both the Major League Baseball's Atlanta Braves and the National Football League's Kansas City Chiefs perform this cheer. Fans make a motion with their arms that represents an axe, and in the process, they make noises that are one hundred percent offensive to First Nations cultures. But precisely because it is a cheer, it should be the easiest of things to change. To request that fans stop doing the tomahawk chop is not changing the name or logo of a whole franchise. Instead, this request stops the participation of fans in a simple cheer that is culturally insensitive.

One of the biggest events in the world of sports is the major league baseball postseason. During this event, the Toronto Blue Jays have, in the past, reached the American League Championship Series, a point at which only four teams remain. When the Toronto Blue Jays reached this point, the other three teams left participating were the Los Angeles Dodgers, the Chicago Cubs, and wait for it, wait for it...the Cleveland Indians! The Cubs faced off against the Dodgers, and, yes, the Blue Jays had to play Cleveland for the American League title. Prior to the series, Blue Jays radio play-by-play announcer Jerry Howarth, who had been at the microphone for thirty-five years to this point, announced that he would not be using the name of the Cleveland Indians during the series. He had made the decision back in 1992, when the Blue Jays won their first World Series against the Atlanta Braves. During the previous off-season, he had also received a fan letter that he described as "one of the best fan letters that I have ever received." The letter was from a member of a First Nations tribe that politely stated that he found terms such as "Indians" and "Braves" deeply offensive. The writer also said that he disliked the term "powwows on the mound." People used this phrase when the infield of the Braves or Indians decided to discuss a strategy for the next play while meeting on the pitcher's mound. Because of this letter, Jerry Howarth decided that he would never use the word "Indians" or "Braves" for the remainder of his career.

This issue is not just a problem in the professional leagues. In Mississauga, a hockey father brought up an issue to the city about five hockey associations within the city's boundaries that have names that he found offensive to indigenous peoples. They are the Mississauga Reps, the Mississauga Braves, the Mississauga Chiefs, the Meadowvale Mohawks and the Lorne Park Ojibwa. Two of the five teams have changed their names. The Mohawks have taken on the name of their house league affiliate, the Meadowvale Hawks, and the Ojibwa have changed their name to the Lorne Park Clarkson Wild. As for the Mississauga Braves, their name will change as of the 2017-2018 season. The Mississauga Reps haven't announced anything yet, but the Greater Toronto Hockey League released a policy that team names and logos should not feature indigenous themes unless given permission from that particular tribe. This policy suggests that we will see their name change too. The Mississauga Chiefs have received permission. Blessed by the First Nations, they are allowed to keep their name.

Believe it or not, we can contribute to the change of these professional sports teams' names too. It is really quite simple. And you will save money in the process! Here's the plan: don't buy

the apparel of these franchises! Marketing is a huge part of the way a sports franchise runs and maintains itself. But if it isn't selling any of its merchandise, how will it make any money? It will be stuck in an economic situation where the only way it can make more money is to change its name!

When we consider these points, we come to the following question: should professional sports teams with offensive names and logos be forced to change their names and logos, or should the leagues that they participate in permit them to keep on insulting entire communities of indigenous people? I want you to think about this matter for a second, because it really is a big issue going on right now. Thus, keep thinking. What's your opinion? Should the names stay, or should they go? I'll leave you with that.



SCHOOL: Monsignor O'Donoghue

TEACHER: Krista Wells-Skinner

SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Krista Wells-Skinner

UNIT: Peterborough VNC

UNIT PRESIDENT: Dean Spence

GRADES 7-8 / PLAY

by **Nicholas Crowley**

CHARACTERS

COLIN:	A curious male who thinks money and hard work are the only way to be happy but then finds out otherwise
JAKEY:	Colin's best friend he forgot about when he moved to New York
FINN:	Colin's funny friend who always lightens the mood
DEREK:	Colin's boss at the firm who accepts only the best
MR. CAMPBELL:	Colin's client as a lawyer
MRS. HARVEY:	The lawyer Colin is up against in court
DARLEEN:	Mother of Colin
CLARK:	Father of Colin and has low ambitions
KEVIN:	Outgoing personality and Colin's only friend from the firm after the accident – he never gives up on Colin
MATT:	Friend from the firm who isn't really his friend
AVA:	Four-year-old daughter of Colin
BETH:	Wife to Colin
BABY BOY:	9 months

SCENE I

(It's high school graduation and a beautiful sunny day. Colin and his friends are walking the path – from the left side of the stage to the right side of the stage – and are wearing graduation robes.)

COLIN: Where are you guys going to school after this?

FINN: I'm going to Bishop's. I hear they got the best parties over there, and don't even get me started about the girls. *(Bites his tongue.)*

JAKEY: My dad's got a job lined up for me at his work – sixteen dollars an hour and upwards from there. What about you? What school are you going to?

COLIN: Well, Pennsylvania University was first on my list, and I got in. I'm just debating whether I should take business or law...I'm liking business because I always planned on being a lawyer.

FINN: Man, let's talk about this another time. This is our day ...Can you believe we are actually graduating?

COLIN: *(Very short laugh)* No...I can't.

(Jakey and Finn fade to the background and carry on a silent conversation as Colin steps to the center stage to give a monologue. Lights dim except for a spotlight on Colin.)

COLIN: The truth is my parents don't know where I'm going, but I bet they couldn't care less if I went to school at all! *(Speaks in an angry tone.)* My mother didn't even graduate from high school, and my dad started working the day after he graduated. I'm more worried that I will turn into them and be working a minimum wage job for the rest of my life...*(Pause. Head down, he takes a deep breath. He then raises his head back up.)* But I know that it will never happen. I'm going to make millions someday, and no one, not even my parents, can change that.

(Stage lights turn off, and the stage becomes an office setting.)

SCENE II

(Colin is twenty-five years old and has decided he wants to be a lawyer. Now he is fully committed. He is working on a case that is supposedly an easy win in Colin's firm.)

DEREK: Colin, I'm afraid you're going to have to work late tonight, as we cannot

afford to lose another case, especially this one. How's it looking so far?

COLIN: For sure, I can. I know how you feel. It's coming along...

DEREK: That's good to hear! Have it on my desk on Monday so I can take a look.

COLIN: Will do.

(Derek is on his way out the door. Colin's head drops on his desk. Derek turns and speaks).

DEREK: Oh yeah, I forgot to tell you; the court date got moved up, and it's now on Wednesday.

COLIN: All right. I will be ready. *(With a look of regret on his face and in his speech)*

(Derek freezes as Colin steps to center stage for his monologue; lights dim except for the spotlight on Colin.)

COLIN: I don't know if I can do this. Is being a lawyer really for me? I'm drawing a blank on this case. I think it is impossible to win! What is Derek going to say? He thinks this case is an easy win? I can't lose this, or I'm done here. This firm will never keep me. Why should they?

(Lights on)

DEREK: I know you're good for it.

(Colin smiles at Derek.)

SCENE III

(In the courtroom, the judge sits behind his stand. Colin sits behind a table with his client, and papers are scattered on the table.)

JUDGE: *(Pulls his glasses down, reads his papers and then begins.)* Good morning. Here, today, we have Mrs. Harvey versus Mr. Campbell, along with his lawyer Colin Matthews. Are we ready to start?

COLIN: *(Slowly stands and straightens his jacket.)* Yes, your honour...*(Nervous tone)*

MRS. HARVEY: *(Stands quickly with confidence.)* Yes, your honour.

JUDGE: Mr. Campbell vs. Mrs. Harvey. We are here today to try the case regarding the burglary of \$10 019.74 worth of earrings, rings and other jewellery. The minimum penalty is three years in federal prison, and the maximum penalty is 9 years.

JUDGE: Mr. Campbell, how do you plead?

MR. CAMPBELL: Not guilty.

JUDGE: Mrs. Harvey, would you start off the trial, explaining what happened on January 13, 2016?

MRS. HARVEY: My client was on her way home from work, only to realize another car was pulling out of her driveway; the car was a yellow thunderbird R8, the exact car Mr. Campbell owned at the time. She then walked inside with caution and realized that all of her jewellery was gone. At that point, she called the police, and she told them the first three letters of the license plate “FWV”, which just so happened to match his plate. Thank you, your honour. *(Gives Colin a dirty look.)*

JUDGE: *(Turns to Colin.)* The defendant, what is your side of the story?

COLIN: Well, my client was there, but wasn't there to steal anything. We are aware the witness saw a man run out of the house who looked like Mr. Campbell, but there are no fingerprints to prove that he was in the house. We are aware that the license plate seemed to have similar letters to the getaway car, but Mr. Campbell actually drives a white thunderbird R8. *(Colin turns to Mrs. Harvey and grins.)*

JUDGE: *(Straightens his papers on his desk.)* We will take a ten-minute recess, so that the grand jury can discuss the evidence and find a result to this trial.

(A spotlight is put on Colin as he walks to the center of the stage for his monologue.)

COLIN: Will they believe it? Does my client look like he would do something like that? What if I lose the trial? Then, what will happen? Derek is going to fire me, and I can't lose this job. *(Colin pauses and runs his hand through his hair. Lights go dim.)*

SCENE IV

(In court, after recess, lights come on as the judge walks back to his stand. Colin can't sit till behind his table; he's anxious.)

JUDGE: After much thought, we have decided that Mr. Campbell is guilty and will be sentenced to one year in prison or 144 hours of community service, with the return of all items. *(Judge hits his gavel!)* Good day. *(Walks off stage right.)*

COLIN: *(Turns slowly to Mr. Campbell.)* Mr. Campbell, I did my best.

MR. CAMPBELL: That was pathetic. I can't believe you call yourself a lawyer. For starters, we should have pled guilty. I should have told the truth. Why didn't we plead this case? *(He continues to raise his voice in frustration.)* What am I supposed to do now? You are the worst lawyer ever; thanks for nothing. *(Gets in Colin's space.)*

COLIN: It looked like an easy win, and I'm sorry.

MR. CAMPBELL: Well, let's just see what your boss says about this. It's outrageous that you even made it through law school.

(Mr. Campbell storms off the stage. The spotlight is on Colin.)

COLIN: *(He drops to his knees without saying anything but gives out a soft cry.)*

(Lights dim after about four seconds.)

SCENE V

(Colin's law office; Colin stands up from his desk when Derek walks in. Colin puts out his hand to shake Derek's hand, but Derek pushes his hand away.)

DEREK: *(Slams his hands down on Colin's desk and hovers over Colin.)* Colin, sit down; we need to talk. Mr. Campbell was very upset about the case...And he was making some pretty valid points about your approach. I looked over your documents, and they looked good. But you could have decreased his sentence by at least half. So, what happened?

COLIN: I thought I could win the case by bending the truth, but obviously it didn't help. I wasn't expecting Mrs. Harvey to be that prepared. When I got in there, my mind was so set on winning it didn't even cross my mind that I would lose.

DEREK: I get that...*(He softens to the thought that Colin feels terrible.)* It happens with the best intentions...

COLIN: Exactly.

DEREK: But you did lie. And that's not what we do here, Colin. *(Derek stops talking for three seconds.)* We are going to let you go...I'm sorry, but this isn't the first time this has happened. We have told you what was going to happen if you did it again. You should be gone by Tuesday.

COLIN: *(He nods his head in an embarrassed fashion.)*

DEREK: *(He taps Colin on the back as he walks out the door.)*

COLIN: *(Sits in his chair, reflecting on his choices as the lights dim.)*

SCENE VI

(Colin's condo is dark and quiet. Colin is sitting in a chair in his living room as the lights go on.)

COLIN: Was it worth it? Did I make the wrong decision; should I have become a lawyer? Why did I do it? *(Colin says this statement with confusion; he lets out a loud breath as he quickly gets up.)* I need to get out of my head. Maybe some of my friends from the firm want to go out tonight? I should call them.

COLIN: Hey, Matt. How's it going? *(Trying to act positively.)*

MATT: Sorry, man. Can't talk right now.

COLIN: Okay. But tonight are you doing anything?

MATT: Yeah. *(Pause.)* I'm having a family dinner.

COLIN: All right. Maybe another time.

MATT: Okay.

(They both hang up the phone.)

COLIN: Maybe Kevin isn't busy? *(He says hopefully.)*

(Colin picks up the phone, and the stage lights quickly dim.)

SCENE VII

(Diner setting – Colin and Kevin are sitting in a booth.)

COLIN: Man, it's nice to see you again.

KEVIN: How long has it been?

COLIN: The last time we talked was that day I got fired. *(Colin says this statement with emotion.)*

KEVIN: That was ridiculous. Derek is clueless. You're a great lawyer.

COLIN: Thanks; he's right. I needed a break from all that paperwork. Besides, that case was a joke. *(Colin infers that Kevin already knew about the case.)*

KEVIN: Seriously, Derek's got half the lawyers at the firm thinking through that case on purpose or something. I think it's a load of trash, but they even got Matt hooked. But not me, man. Never.

(Lights dim. Kevin takes a bite of his burger as Colin begins his monologue.)

COLIN: *(He is annoyed.)* What? I didn't throw that case. I worked hard on that case. It's not my fault that Derek gave me that case with very little preparation time. For all he knows, there was something taken, and who do the other lawyers think they are? What did I ever do to them? Matt is my friend; he could never think I did something that cruel, but that explains why he acted so weird...*(He puts his head into his hands.)*

COLIN: Always got my back. Thanks, man. I got to go. *(He gets up quickly and walks fast out the door.)*

KEVIN: Wait. Where are you going? *(There's no answer; he is already off the stage. Lights dim.)*

SCENE VIII

(Colin's condo - he's frustrated about what Derek has supposedly said. So, he's walking around his living room, back and forth, planning how he's going to get back at Derek).

COLIN: Of course, Derek would say something like that. I just never thought it would be directed at me. What a jerk. Not only does he fire me, but then he

lectures about me in front of the whole firm! He will never get away with this.
What can I do? What if I...

(Interrupted by a phone ring, he takes a step back to pick up the phone.)

COLIN: Hello. *(Angry voice)*

DARLEEN: Son?

COLIN: Yes, mother...

DARLEEN: Gosh, I haven't heard your voice in so long. How are you?

COLIN: I'm fine. How are you and Father doing?

DARLEEN: We are great. How is work going?

COLIN: Umm...I got fired about a week ago. *(He goes from mad to embarrassed.)*

DARLEEN: That's horrible; you loved your job, I thought?

COLIN: It's only a job...

DARLEEN: I know, Colin. *(Pause.)* Your father would have loved to speak with you, but he's at work...

COLIN: Go figure. I have to go.

DARLEEN: Okay. Love you, son...Colin, if you ever need to talk, you can come visit next time.

COLIN: *(Pause.)* Thanks! Goodbye. *(Slams down the phone.)*

(Colin quickly calls her back, because he forgot to say something.)

COLIN: Mother, I love you too.

DARLEEN: *(Starts to cry.)* Thanks, son.

COLIN: I would also love to come and see the family.

DARLEEN: This weekend we aren't doing much.

COLIN: Okay. See you on Friday. *(He gently places the phone down.)*

SCENE IX

(Colin arrives at his parent's house after a long flight, and his father greets him.)

CLARK: Hey, how was the flight? *(He says this statement with overwhelming joy.)*

COLIN: It was fine.

CLARK: *(Short laugh)* Get in here! Your mother has prepared an amazing dinner for us. *(Walks into the kitchen with Colin.)*

DARLEEN: Colin...*(Runs over to give him a hug and a big kiss on his cheek.)* Dinner is ready; so, go and sit down at the table with your father.

(They go sit down at the table.)

CLARK: It's good to see you again; how long has it been?

COLIN: Oh, I don't know – a couple of years? I've been really busy with school and work...

CLARK: Yes, about work, your mother told me you got fired. I don't know much about being a lawyer, but I'm confused.

COLIN: Yeah, I know. But that's just a part of life. And, besides, I'm looking into other jobs.

CLARK: About that - there are some job offers I have been looking into around here. There are lots of jobs, even some that I would think you would enjoy. There's this one; it's called...

(Colin interrupts Clark.)

COLIN: I don't need your help finding a job. I'm not an idiot; I can do it myself!
(Frustrated voice)

CLARK: Son, I know, but there are some jobs here that you can't find anywhere in New York.

COLIN: Let's talk about this another time. *(Takes a deep breath.)* It was a long plane ride.

CLARK: Whenever you're ready...

DARLEEN: Who is ready for the best meal of their lives?

(Darleen walks back on stage with a pot.)

CLARK: Me. It looks delicious.

COLIN: Thanks, Darleen.

(Sitting at the table, Colin begins his monologue while Clark and Darleen chat. The spotlight is on Colin.)

COLIN: What is happening? They were never this considerate before. It was all about getting through the day back when I was a kid. It's admirable that they are such kind parents now. *(On the full stage, lights go back on. Colin engages in conversation.)*

CLARK: So, what do you want to do today, son?

COLIN: I'm not sure – got any ideas?

CLARK: I'm sure Finn and Jakey would love to see you.

COLIN: I will see what they're doing.

(Colin walks off the stage.)

SCENE X

(Colin walks back onto the stage into his parent's living room.)

COLIN: I'm back! *(He shouts.)*

DARLEEN: *(Enters the scene from the other stage.)* Hi, Colin; how was it?

COLIN: It was excellent – great to see them again.

DARLEEN: Too bad you can't do it again. When do you leave to go back to New York?

COLIN: Tomorrow. *(Scratches the back of his head and starts monologue.)* I loved it here so much because I was away from all the changes in the big city. What am I going to do? *(Pause.)* I love it here, and I never want to leave, because it's so much different than the last time I was here. Finn and Jakey

are so different, and I need to see more of them. What about my brothers and sister? I wish I could see them too...

SCENE XI

(At Colin's condo in New York, he is sitting in the chair beside the phone, with his elbow on the armrest AND with his fist on his cheek. NOTE: the scene interchanges.)

COLIN: *(Sighs as if he is bored.)*

(Ava enters from stage left and runs to Colin.)

AVA: Daddy!

(She stands up, out of the chair.)

COLIN: Hi, sweetie. Where is your mother? *(Ava hugs Colin and his leg.)*

(Derek and Matt enter stage right and take Colin's chair stage off-stage while Finn, Kevin and Jakey bring in a new couch and place it down. Then Derek and Matt return and take the art off the walls, and Finn, Kevin and Jakey return and replace it with photos of Colin's children. This replacement symbolizes the past is gone, and his new outlook on life is here. All of this activity is done while Beth enters the scene.)

BETH: Right here! *(Enters from stage left with a baby on her hip.)*

DARLEEN: We are here too. *(Darleen gives out a short laugh, and enters the stage. Clark goes to the couch. Beth stands behind the couch.)*

KEVIN: Bud, this time we are all here for you. *(He makes this statement as he enters with Finn and Jakey. They stand by the couch.)*

(Colin stands to greet his friends, and they give each other a "Bro hug." They then go back to the couch. Colin sits back down on the couch, gives Ava a hug and reaches for his baby.)



GUITAR STRINGS AND COFFEE BEANS



SCHOOL: St. Patrick's
TEACHER: Chris Stoesser
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Rahat Altaf
UNIT: St. Clair Secondary
UNIT PRESIDENT: Chad Coene

GRADES 9-10 / SHORT STORY
by Sophia Makrigiannis

Author's note: The places, characters and songs are all original products created by the author of this short story.

The sudden light sprinkle of rain probably would've been refreshing, if Max wasn't in such a hurry. Rain had always been his favourite type of weather – not the booming sound of a thunderstorm, but the common rainfall. It was soothing, pretty to look at and left a fresh smell outside after a heavy downpour. It also made for the perfect metronome to get Max's creative juices flowing when writing a song. Some considered rain bad luck on such an important day like today, but seeing as it had always been around to help him out, Max saw it as almost a 'good luck' of sorts.

Then again, the rain wasn't doing his guitar case any favours, so Max rushed out of the parking lot and into Pestle & Mortar. The café was renowned not only for having live musical entertainment every night but also the best diddy-darn espresso in the universe; therefore, it was pretty popular in the city. Max never thought that he would have gotten this opportunity – to show his passion to an audience at such a well-known venue, and maybe, just maybe, to one day get noticed by an agent? Was that too much to ask of the universe?

"Be careful, my son," Max could hear Papa's voice chiding. "Remember, you must always hope for the best, but prepare yourself for the worst."

Papa always gave the best advice. He had been so relaxed when Max told him what career he wanted to pursue. He always spewed sage words of advice and encouragement whenever he could, unlike Mother, who had simply said, "So...you don't want to be a lawyer?"

As Papa best described, Mother was still 'warming up' to Max's musical dreams. While she didn't doubt he had talent, she wanted him to have a profession that was more secure and practical. Mother had never been a dreamer like Max.

As Max entered the coffee shop, a mixture of excitement and anxiousness fluttered in Max's stomach, accompanied by the heavenly scent of coffee, caramel, chocolate, spice and everything else that was nice. Coffee had easily become Max's close friend over the years, getting him through school and long song-writing sessions. The other perk of this gig: unlimited free coffee.

Freaking sweet!

Max shook out his wet jacket and hung it up on the rack as he remembered all the moments leading up to this one.

First, there was the radio announcement, followed by the stressful audition. Afterwards came the long-awaited phone call that sounded like a mishmash of words in which the only words Max could make out were, “You got the gig.”

He got the gig.

And, now, here he was. Pestle & Mortar was a fairly big café but felt small and cozy due to all the couches and cushions and love seats and what-not. There were surprisingly few tables – only a few by the windows and some in the middle. Up front was the makeshift stage, basically a wide platform not too high off the ground, set in front of a large bookshelf with a built-in electric fireplace. Then there was the ordering counter that was easily distinguishable from the seating area as they were a few metres apart. The counter itself was grey, and beside it was a huge glass case filled with an array of pastries and sweets. Behind the case was the actual brewing area with a wide variety of drink machines and a chalkboard menu above them.

It was truly a comfortable atmosphere.

Suddenly, a blonde girl, who looked in her mid-twenties, practically skipped over to Max. It was then that Max realized it was Sophie, the bubbly girl with muddled speech he had spoken to on the phone.

“Are you Max?” she asked in a chipper tone. Max nodded and Sophie gasped.

“You have such TALENT! Welcome aboard! We are very glad to have you here. I’m sure you’ll be a huge hit with the customers!” the blonde exclaimed, with such sun-shininess that Max almost squinted.

The boy smiled and remembered the manners instilled in him by Mother.

“Thank you for the job. I definitely won’t let you down.”

“Oh, none of that formal stuff! If you’re gonna be here for a while, we might as well be causal, right? Then again, you’ll only be staying permanently if the audience likes you enough during your first few days.” Sophie seemed to notice Max’s face drop when she contradicted herself. “But I’m sure they will, so don’t worry!”

Sophie didn’t really seem like Max’s sort of person. She was a little too chipper and talky, but she was also sweet, and that was good enough for Max. But that was the least of his concerns. What

if the audience didn't like him? He would be sliced, diced and thrown out before any talent agent could even think about going to Pestle & Mortar. Max had to have his A-game on.

"So, I'll give you a tour of the place!" Sophie giggled as she practically dragged Max away from the entrance.

As Sophie babbled on about all of the café's features, Max's eyes couldn't help but wander. Currently, there weren't many customers. Then again, Pestle & Mortar was usually busier at night. There was only one person ordering something at the moment; a redheaded barista with a tired expression on her face was typing up their order, which was printed out and handed over to another barista.

But instead of another dull face behind the counter, this barista was different. A light smile adorned her lips as she looked at the order and then went to work creating the drink. It wasn't an ordinary smile.

Her smile was...beautiful.

Max couldn't help but be drawn to the girl's other features, which were almost as equally beautiful as her smile. Almost. She wasn't very tall but not quite elf-sized either. She was wearing the same uniform as the others – a fancy white blouse, black pants and a dark blue apron. The girl had the loveliest shade of bronze for a skin colour and gorgeous long brown hair that framed her soft face and cute button nose.

"...Max?"

The boy's head snapped back to Sophie.

"You'll be performing up on the stage. Those mics get turned on at about 6:30, when the crowds start pooling in. You can start playing at around that time. If you have any other questions, don't hesitate to ask me!" Sophie stated kindly.

"Thanks, Sophie," Max thanked her.

"You can just practice or relax for a bit until that time. Bathrooms are in the back on the left. Coffee is on the house – anything you'd like," Sophie gave Max a wink as she sauntered off.

It was around 5:30 pm. That gave him an hour to prepare for the audience. Max stepped up onto the stage and shrugged his guitar case off of his shoulder. Max looked up at the ordering counter, but he couldn't see the girl anymore.

Max uncased his guitar and sat down, putting its strap over his shoulder. He let his fingers dance over the strings, playing a familiar tune. With that, the boy sunk into practicing. However, Max

couldn't help but wonder if the gorgeous brunette would be watching him tonight.

...

Six-thirty came so suddenly. But Max was ready. His red and black plaid flannel was adjusted loosely on his waist, adding a pop of colour to his black jeans and grey t-shirt combo. His burgundy beanie was fit snugly over his spiky black hair.

Max's hands couldn't help but twitch in excitement. He looked out into the audience and saw at least 50 people huddled in the café. But none of them had bronze skin, golden brown hair or a beautiful smile. Max's heart sunk a little – his hopes of impressing a pretty girl dashed. Then, Sophie arrived and gave Max a pat on the shoulder before climbing the stage and grabbing the mic.

"Welcome, everyone, to our favourite part of the evening, here at Pestle & Mortar. Our daily Jam Session!"

The crowd cheered and applauded.

"Now, tonight, we have a new performer we'd like you all to meet. This guy not only has a great vocal range, but he definitely has a knack for those guitar acoustics. Give it up for Max Kang!" Sophie exclaimed, putting the microphone on the stand and exiting as Max climbed up.

The crowd cheered and applauded, but Max would have been hard of hearing if he hadn't heard some negativity in the audience as well. Some people snickered and muttered something like "hipster trash" or "what did the Chinese boy have to show?" Nasty garbage like that.

"I'm Korean, you sacks of crap. And I'll show you what I have to show," Max thought vengefully to himself as another one of Papa's lessons echoed in his brain.

"Ignorance will live forever, my son. There is no guarantee of changing it, so you might as well learn to deal with it."

Max inhaled, then exhaled. He settled himself onstage, and the crowd was hushed.

This was it. This was his time.

The first few chords of "Look At the Time" sounded off of Max's instrument as he began strumming his own song. After a few moments, he sang the first lyric:

Would you look at how things have changed?

The crowd had seemingly melted into butter, getting lost in Max's slow, sweet acoustics. The

song was about good memories and new beginnings. Max pictured some of his favourite memories as he played, like the time his family had taken a trip back to Max's mother's home in Gyeongju. They'd spent so much time visiting all the sights, and it had all been so beautiful. It was one of the only times Max had ever seen his mother truly happy, with only a hint of restraint. Max also imagined what new beginnings were in store for him.

Could this gig possibly lead to the start of his career? Could it also land him a beautiful girlfriend?

Who knew?

As he sang, Max looked out into the audience, and suddenly he noticed that the girl from before was there! She had appeared back at the ordering counter, but she didn't seem to be paying attention to Max at all. She just wiped down the counters without so much as even looking up.

Max finished his song, and the crowd cheered and gave him a standing ovation. The boy felt a surge of pride in himself but also one of sadness. Did the girl not like his music? What was wrong with it? Why wasn't she paying attention to him? Maybe it was just the song. Not every song of Max's was perfect. So, he would try another.

Throughout the night, Max played song after song. The crowd ate it up and couldn't seem to get enough. But the girl never seemed to notice him. Only once did she meet Max's gaze, but the look only lasted a few seconds, and her face didn't show a trace of emotion.

After Max's performance, he descended the stage. Sophie was there, waiting for him with a bottle of water and a towel. Max had been so caught up in everything, he'd forgotten how thirsty he was. Max guzzled the water and wiped his sweaty brow with the towel.

"You were amazing! The crowd loved you!" Sophie exclaimed.

But Max tuned out after that. He gazed over Sophie's shoulder with bleary vision to watch the girl who was now cleaning the machines.

In that moment, Max vowed that he would get her to notice him.

...

Days passed, and "*Operation Get Pretty Girl to Notice Max*" wasn't going well. Max had tried practically everything. He tried playing different styles of songs and ventured out of his usual slow acoustics. Rock, indie rock, country, alternative, covers of songs – you name it. Max had tried it.

He tried using different guitars on a few occasions. He tried singing in a more obvious area for the girl to see – that was closer to the counter. He tried wearing different styles of clothes and parting his hair in a different direction.

Max was ready to give up at this point. But it was only until he heard Maggie, the redheaded barista in need of a break, swooning over some romance song on the radio that an idea came to him.

"If only a guy would write a song about me!" she sighed.

That was it! Max would write a romance song to enchant Mystery Girl!

That night, Max sat in his apartment, with his guitar and notebook in hand. What was it about the girl that drove him mad?

Well, for one, other than being stunning, the girl had a certain way about her. She smiled at every customer and seemed to get so deep into her work. Just like Max did. She was so graceful behind the counter and practically danced while doing her job. She faintly resembled a swan – delicate and graceful but so powerfully gorgeous.

The words flowed from Max's brain to the page, almost like honey.

...

The next night, Max was performing again. Sophie had stated that another good performance from Max would assume him a spot as a secure player at Pestle & Mortar. The crowd had loved him so far, so it was almost foolproof.

"Ready Max?" Sophia asked him before he entered the stage.

"Ready," he breathed.

Max was already settled on stage by the time he saw the girl enter the counter area. Mystery Girl in all her glory. The boy sucked in an enormous breath, and with that, Max began his song.

Lying on a blanket on the grass under the night full of constellations.

Promise you'll love me every single moment.

Whenever you're around I feel alive, no matter where.

Take me as I am – take my life.

The girl looked up and Max's heart skipped a beat. He continued without hesitation.

I don't know how long this thing'll last, but we may as well try.

Take me as I am – take my life.

Your golden smile is everything.

And when you find me, I'll search no more.

Max and the girl locked eyes. Even in the low-lighting of the café, she was absolutely glowing.

*You make the sun look cold.
I just wanna be yours.
Take me as I am – take my life.*

The crowd went wild. Clapping, screaming, whistling – the whole nine yards. With all the commotion, Max almost didn't see the girl. But she was still there. She didn't smile. She didn't wave. She just looked back down at her work.

Max was at a loss. He was angry. He was hurt. He was sad. Every emotion he'd poured into that song was pointless. With that, Max bypassed Sophie's after-performance pep talk and disappeared into the crowd. He left about two seconds after.

Let's just say Max's pillow endured a lot of screaming that night.

...

The next morning, Max trudged into Pestle & Mortar. Last night, the final straw had been busted. No more attempts to get Mystery Girl to notice him. How could Max have been so stupid to think that a girl like that would ever fall for him? Suddenly, Sophie approached him.

"Max! You rushed out so quickly last night that I didn't have any time to tell you!" the blonde stated.

Max perked up.

"You've got the job. Congratulations!" Sophie chirped, and Max almost died.

Max had almost completely forgotten. The job. He'd gotten the job! The moment he'd been waiting for this entire time had finally come. Man, was it sweet! Now he could stay long enough to get even more recognition. Max couldn't control himself. He wrapped Sophie in the biggest hug, thanking her profusely. Sophie just hugged him back, before having to return to her office.

Max was on top of the world, and nothing could bring him down.

Until suddenly, Max noticed someone approaching him. Bronze skin, golden brown hair and – yep, that gorgeous, kind, *mind-blowing* smile. It was her – Mystery Girl. Max wanted to be furious at her for toying with his heart. But who could be angry with someone so pure and innocent?

And she probably had no clue what she was doing at all. Max was probably just being dramatic. Even so, she'd caught Max off guard. And now he had no idea how to prepare himself for this conversation.

But surprisingly, instead of speaking, Mystery Girl just walked up to and handed Max a piece of

paper: *"Hi, there. Sorry to be upfront, but you have a very nice smile."*

Max blushed but looked back up at her confused. Why wasn't she just?... Then the girl motioned to her ears. And it all made sense. She couldn't hear. Max felt a blizzard of emotions swirl throughout his body. He was glad, because she hadn't been ignoring him on purpose. He was angry at himself for ever being angry with her. He was sad that she couldn't hear the song he wrote, or anything in fact. He couldn't imagine a world without music.

Max grabbed the pen from his bag and wrote on the girl's sheet of paper. *"So, you can't hear, huh?"* Max wrote.

"Yeah. It sucks. Maggie told me how good you were at playing music. I'd probably agree but... you know...I've actually just been watching you the whole time, imagining what you sound like. Everyone really seems to like you. I bet you're great!" The girl wrote back, also shooting Max that smile.

Max returned the smile with his own. She didn't seem very sad. Then again, she didn't really have to be. This girl was much more than her disability. Even though it was sad she couldn't hear, she didn't seem to let it ruin her day or her lovely smile. And Max's heart was racing again.

"Thanks a lot! My name's Max. Wanna be friends?"

"My name's Lyra. And, yes, definitely!"

Lyra and Max exchanged smiles.

Where could you sign up for sign language classes again?



THE THUNDERSTORM



SCHOOL: St. Peter

TEACHER: Bernadette Peters

SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Bernadette Peters

UNIT: Peterborough VNC

UNIT PRESIDENT: Dean Spence

GRADES 9-10 / POEM

by **Claudia Flis**

Silence.

Eerie, uncanny, sinister silence.

The air heavy with misty, stifling heat

The breath of the Earth straining against the sky.

Clouds hang low, as if in a futile attempt to touch the soil

Reaching down with nebulous wisps of fingers.

A breeze drifts lazily by

No more than a sleepy sigh of the planet.

The birds utter no sound, not even a melancholy warble

Trees stand still, holding their breath in anticipation,

Their branches absent of the omnipresent creatures for which they serve as home.

No animal wishes to traverse the restlessly shifting soil

Though indistinct tracks mark the dusty ground

The lifeless breeze too indolent to blow them away.

The landscape, formerly imbued with colour

Has been reduced to a mere shade of its former self.

The air seems to be tinged with a waft of gray dust

A shroud concealing nature from itself.

The motionless silhouettes of the landscape's protrusions may well be

Foreshadowing the first drops of rain.

Rain.

And without fail, the clouds spread their arms wide

Releasing their heavy burdens with an exhalation of relief

As the first drops of rain fall slowly, lazily to the ground

Striking the parched, unsuspecting soil as dust rises in protest.

The wind picks up, roaming amid the trees

Whispering surreptitious messages from the sky to the ground
Whispering promises of –
Thunder.
A booming rumble that shatters the silence
Causing the sky to shift in place
Like a great beast on the verge of waking
Deafening, vociferous, omnipotent, powerful.
Entertaining an insatiable need to be noticed, until its supremacy is challenged by
Lightning.
The wind churns in scarcely contained excitement
As angry, jagged bifurcations of pure energy burst forth
In an eruption of unprecedented effervescence
Towards the unsuspecting earth,
A display of immense power lasting less than a second.
The wind weaves among the clouds, dashing away
As the sky awakens and lets forth
A torrential roar of rainfall.
The stillness, the tranquility fractures
As the world comes alive
In an explosion of sound, light, movement, animation, vivacity.
Drops of rain charge incessantly towards the ground like an army of tireless soldiers,
Swift, vigorous, fervent, indestructible
In an implicit hurry to reach the muddy Earth.
The echo of thunder reverberates throughout the dark, shadowy sky
In a lasting war with the blinding lightning
A ceaseless struggle for control of the skies.
It is a seemingly endless, frenzied disarray of chaos
Nature reclaiming its territory in a vehement burst of power
Until instantaneously, inexplicably
The wind dies down
And the thunder rumbles itself into submission
And the lightning disappears in a final flash
And the rain is left in motionless puddles on the mud-splattered soil
And all that is left
Is what there was to begin with.
Silence.



WHY IT IS GREAT TO BE CANADIAN



SCHOOL: Holy Trinity
TEACHER: Jennifer Koppens
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Terry MacNeil
UNIT: Peterborough VNC
UNIT PRESIDENT: Dean Spence

GRADES 9-10 / NONFICTION
by **Cameron David Penhale**

Canadians have a complex and fascinating history to be proud of, and Canada is an amazing place to live. This country is a place where the quality of life is high. The country's democracy and freedoms, diversity of culture and high quality of life make being a Canadian great. It is astonishing how our nation has developed over time! Canada is a shining example of how population does not equal prosperity. Canada displays an immense amount of warm-hearted kindness and acceptance of which other nations have only surface knowledge. We have our inadequacies, like all great nations do, but we try our best to overcome them together. We have fallen down many times, but we pick each other up no matter how big the problem is. The three topics I will analyze are just a few of the countless things that make our nation amazing. However, these three issues are crucial to Canada's success and future development.

While growing up, I was always told by adults how blessed or lucky I was to live in a free country. "What does it mean to be free?" I would ask myself. My young self did not really consider the subject in detail. Because of my naiveté, I took the subject for granted. I pondered its meaning occasionally, but never searched for answers. As time passed, however, I became older, wiser and more intelligent. I realized the answers were all around me while going to church and school, or playing organized sports. These places provide the simple liberties we have in our country as addressed in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Charter was signed into law in Canada in 1982, and states the four fundamental rights: freedom of conscience and religion; freedom of thought, belief and expression; freedom of peaceful assembly; and, finally, freedom of association. These four freedoms are the basis upon which a democratic society is built. Unfortunately, many nations do not have these fundamental freedoms.

Sometimes, I think about other countries around the world – the countries that do not have the freedoms that we in Canada so often take for granted. There are countries that do not support the practice of many religions and where severe punishment, even execution, can be brought upon someone who practices that religion. I can barely fathom the idea of not being able to praise God because of what a law says. As Canadians, we should cherish these liberties that we have and remember that without them Canada would not be the magnificent nation that it is.

Canada's democratic system allows diversity. Canada is one of the most culturally diverse nations in the world. In the 1970s, Canada adopted the policy of multiculturalism. This policy meant the country would accept other people from other cultures and not discriminate against them. This policy also meant that Canada would allow many immigrants into the country and make it the country's greatest effort to help them feel accepted. I've always found it astounding that there are so many people with contrasting ethnic backgrounds living in the same country. Many of my closest friends were born in other countries and moved to Canada when they were older. One friend from my elementary school was a refugee from a very dangerous, poverty-stricken country in Africa. Canada was a new beginning for him and his family. I take pride in knowing that Canada can be a place for people, who have very challenging lives, to come to in search of success and happiness. Canada should be an example to other countries, because we provide acceptance and equality. No matter what you look like, where you are from or what you do, everyone should be treated with respect and equality, because, after all, we are all human; we are all equal. As many countries make those who are different feel alienated, Canadians help them to feel accepted and loved. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau states: "Diversity is our strength."

Canada has diversity. It has freedom. It also has an impressively high quality of life. The Global News website states that the quality of life Canadians have ranks second globally. How does Canada have such a high quality of life? Perhaps Canada's healthcare system, its economic stability, its high education standards or its employment opportunities are all factors to consider. These significant factors increase the quality of life in Canada, but there are many more simple things that make being a Canadian great! Canadians are known to be kind, generous people. Kindness can make us feel fulfilled and happy. Kindness in Canada can be as small as holding the door for somebody or as substantial as building houses for families in Haiti. Also, Canada is very peaceful. We have a very low crime rate and are not involved in many conflicts. Peace gives Canadians a sense of security; therefore, they are not as worried or fearful as citizens in a less secure country would feel. Less worry and fear gives us a higher quality of life. So, as Canadians, we should be grateful and thankful for all of these rights we have and the high quality of life we live.

In this report, I talked about why it's great to be Canadian. First, I addressed issues relating to democracy and freedoms – how freedoms are all around us and help to build democracy. Then, I discussed the strength of diversity in Canada – how it positively shapes our society, and the fact that Canada can provide a new beginning for immigrants. Last, I addressed quality of life in Canada. Many factors work harmoniously together to strengthen the quality of life. Canada is a very peaceful and kind place to live, and this affects our quality of life. While doing this assignment, I realized how great Canada really is. I am proud to live in a country that believes in acceptance over discrimination, peace over war and love over hate. Canada is a country where people come closer together in times of adversity rather than move further apart. I am proud to be Canadian.



DON'T END OUR STORY – A CONTEMPORARY PLAY



SCHOOL: Cardinal Carter Academy
TEACHER: Sheila O'Brien
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Michelle Blais
UNIT: Toronto Secondary
UNIT PRESIDENT: Gillian Vivona

GRADES 9-10 / PLAY
by **Anthony Palermo**

(Based on a true story of Tillicum, the whale)

CHARACTERS

TOLIMUM
NIRINE
BIRIBA
KATARA
BRANDY
HUNTER 1
WHALE MOM

MICHAEL
SAMA
NATU
SERENA
WINSTON
HUNTER 2
WHALE GOD

WITNESS
RANDY

SCENE I

(Ocean Land. Daytime. Brandy is performing her final show of the day with Tolimum. She starts the show, introducing herself and the whale.)

BRANDY: Hello, everyone! How is everybody doing today?

(Crowd cheers.)

BRANDY: Wow! Do we have a show for you here today at Ocean Land! We are the largest marine exhibit in the world, and we have one of the largest and oldest killer whales in captivity right here with us today! So, without further ado, I present Tolimum, the killer whale!

BRANDY: Tolimum is not performing because he has to; Tolimum is performing because he wants to! Isn't that right, buddy?

(Tolimum waves his fin/arm in the air.)

BRANDY: Let's start the show!

(Crowd cheers. Tolimum grabs onto Brandy, and they start their routine. Tolimum lifts Brandy up and spins her around. Dance and routine are going well, until, all of a sudden, the whale grabs onto her arm and will not let it go. Brandy is scared but remains calm. Tolimum starts to whip Brandy around. Brandy is trying to swim to the surface. He forcefully chokes her and throws her to the ground. Blackout.)

SCENE II

(Projection – “20 years earlier. Coast of Norway, Atlantic Ocean.” A group of whales is swimming away from whale hunters.)

MOTHER WHALE: Honey, stay with me. This way, quickly!

TOLI: But what about Dad?

MOTHER WHALE: He had to go; it's the only way we can stay safe. This way, sweetie!

(The hunters enter on “ships”).

HUNTER 1: Northeast or West?

HUNTER 2: The older males go east to protect the women and young ones. Head west. We need a young calf. Quick.

TOLI: Mom, I want to find Dad! I can't leave him.

MOTHER WHALE: They'll kill you, honey! We need to keep going!

TOLI: Who? Who's coming for us?

(The whale hunt dance – hunters are chasing whales, and whales are trying to get away from the hunters.)

HUNTER 2: Release the nets. Now!

MOTHER WHALE: Come on!

(Toli gets trapped in the net. His mom is out.)

TOLI: Mom! Help!

MOTHER WHALE: No! My baby! No!

(Screaming from the whale continues over the hunters' talking.)

HUNTER 1: They're whistling. And loud. Should we release them?

HUNTER 2: Are you kidding? They don't even have brains. Just pull up the calf, and hoist it on the ship.

HUNTER 1: I don't know if I can...

HUNTER 2: Oh, you will. Or else the boss will be hearin' 'bout this. Go!

TOLI: No! Mom! Mom!

(Tolimum and Mother Whale drift apart, and the hunters drag Toli onto the boat. Blackout. Lights come back up on the dock to where they are bringing the whales.)

TOLI: Mom? Where am I? Help! Help!

HUNTER 2: *(To Toli)* Shut up! God, they just don't stop!

HUNTER 1: Well, you took him away from his family and...

HUNTER 2: Get out.

HUNTER 1: What?

HUNTER 2: Leave. You're fired. I'm telling the boss about this, and he is sure to cut you. I'm going to finish this. Alone.

(Hunter 1 grabs his stuff and leaves.)

WINSTON: I believe that calf is mine.

HUNTER 2: Who are you?

WINSTON: Winston Waldorf. From Waldorf's Whales and Water Works Inc. I was supposed to meet here to get our first male calf for our exhibit.

HUNTER 2: Oh sir, yes. He hasn't stopped screaming, ever since we took him.

WINSTON: Did you take him away from his family?

HUNTER 2: Yes.

WINSTON: *(Looks surprised.)* I'm surprised he's not screaming louder. Thank you, sir. My men will take him from here.

TOLI: Mom! Mom!

(They shake hands. Two workers "box" Toli and put him in his new exhibit.)

WINSTON: Welcome to Waterworld, everyone! Today, we open our brand new exhibit with our brand new orca named Tolimum! Come out Toli!

TOLI: Mom? Hello! Help! Let me go!

(Toli starts splashing.)

WINSTON: Get him! Come on! Bring him back! Back! We're sorry about that. But please enjoy our killer whales, Sama and Nirine!

(Sama and Nirine swim to the front and in a dazed stance perform a small routine, swimming around the pool. At the back pool, Winston is yelling at Tolimum.)

WINSTON: Stupid whale! Bad whale! You embarrassed me in front of all those people! You better shape up!

TOLI: Where's my Mom? I need food! I'm starving, please!

WINSTON: Stop screaming! God. That whale catcher was right. Shut up. No food for you tonight...Lock him up boys.

TOLI: No! Please!

(The two workers open the doors to the room pool.)

TOLI: Where am I? I can't move! Is anyone there? Mom? Mom!

SAMA: *(Mockingly)* Aw...You hear that? He's crying for his mommy...

NIRINE: Aw, is someone scared?

TOLI: Who are you?

SAMA: We were just like you once...

NIRINE: We used to be naïve, and concerned...

SAMA: Desperate...we wanted to get out once...

TOLI: Now what?

NIRINE: Now we know. We are hopeless.

SAMA: Completely submerged in a world of pain and terror.

TOLI: What?

NIRINE: And now we'll show you...all the pain that we had to go through!

(Music begins and gets louder and louder. Nirine and Sama hit, scratch and hurt Toli till he is bleeding and almost unconscious. Blackout.)

SCENE III

(In a dream-like state, Toli sees Whale God coming toward him.)

WHALE GOD: Tolimum, Toli...

TOLI: Mama?

WHALE GOD: Toli, you're hurt...You are scared and broken...

TOLI: Yes?

WHALE GOD: You were parted from your brothers and sisters of the sea...

TOLI: What are you?

WHALE GOD: I am Oraf, God of the killer whales.

TOLI: What do you want?

WHALE GOD: Revenge...for you, and for all of whale-kind.

TOLI: You want me to avenge?

WHALE GOD: Tolimum, it is clear what you must do.

(Players come onstage to form tableaux and mime the scenes Whale God says.)

WHALE GOD: From the beginning of time, humans had always tried to hurt the whales.

TOLI: Why? What did orcas do to deserve it?

WHALE GOD: Nothing. The men were scared that large creatures like us would rule over them and hurt them. They called us the killers of the ocean.

TOLI: What did they do?

WHALE GOD: We swam. We would swim and live in a world where we both could try to get along, but they would not allow it. So, now they capture us. They make us do an exhibit and a show and treat us with no respect. We do not belong alone, starved and trapped in a tiny pool. We need vengeance on the humans. And I appoint you to save us. Save our kind. Don't end our story.

WHALE GOD: You can do it, Toli. I believe in you. Tolimum, Tolimum...

(At the same time Winston wakes up, Tolimum screams his name. Whale God disappears, and we are back in the real world.)

WINSTON: Tolimum! Wake up! It's time for your show! Don't screw it up like the last time, or else you're not eating again tonight.

(Tolimum comes out, and Nirine and Sama come out.)

NIRINE: He lived through the night?

SAMA: I thought we killed him.

NIRINE: Ready for round two?

SAMA: Let's go.

(They both go to Tolimum.)

TOLI: Don't hurt me! Please. I have a plan.

SAMA: What are you talking about?

TOLI: I...I think I can get out of here.

NIRINE: Out of here?

TOLI: They have us trapped in these tiny pools where we can't even move. If this is just what happens to us, what about our families?

SAMA: They're going to be stuck in here too.

TOLI: Exactly.

NIRINE: ...So, what are you going to do?

TOLI: There's only one thing I can do.

(Winston comes out and starts his show.)

WINSTON: Welcome everyone to Waterworld! Today, we have another fantastic show for you with our newest orca, Tolimum! Come on, Toli! Let's start the show! Everyone, give a round of applause to our trainer today – Serena!

(Tolimum comes out.)

SERENA: Hello, everyone! Now, let me tell you a little bit about my friend right here, Toli! Tolimum is an orca whale that loves being at Waterworld! He always gets all the proper nutrition...and...

(Serena forgets her line and looks at Winston; he quietly whispers the line to her.)

WINSTON: And he loves swimming around in our spacious –

SERENA: And he loves being in our spaces – beautifully designed pools! Does everyone want to see what Tolimum can do?

(Crowd cheers.)

SERENA: Come on, Toli!

(Toli starts to do his routine. He starts to do the dance, but then, all of a sudden, he grabs Serena and drags her down into the pool. Serena is drowning and struggling to breathe. There is screaming and yelling for help, but no one can help – sudden black out.)

SCENE IV

(Winston Waldorf gives the report of the death to the press.)

WINSTON: On May 12th, 1994 at 2:45 pm, our trainer, Serena Walker, was killed during a performance with one of the whales. She happened to slip into the pool and could not get her footing. She ended up drowning.

WITNESS: I saw Tolimum grabbing Serena by the leg and dragging her in!

WINSTON: No! That's a lie; it might have looked that way, but Tolimum is our best whale and would never do such a thing.

WITNESS: He did! It was Tolimum!

WINSTON: Security!

WITNESS: This is all a lie! You are a liar!

(Winston walks away and goes to talk to his colleagues.)

WINSTON: Oh, God.

WORKER: What are you going to do about this?

WINSTON: Easy. We sell him.

WORKER: What?

WINSTON: He'll sell easy. He's been domesticated. If we don't, this place is going to shut down. It's better to get him off our plate before something big happens.

WORKER: Something already has! Serena died yesterday. You're just going to act like nothing happened?

WINSTON: Yes. Now, get Ocean Land on the line. They're looking for a new male orca, and he's off our charter forever.

(On the other side of the stage, Randy Osler, owner of Ocean Land, gives a speech about the new addition to the park.)

RANDY: This week at Ocean Land, we welcome our new addition Tolimum – our new orca.

(Tolimum comes out and swims around the pool.)

TOLI: You can't move me! Leave me alone!

(Kantara, her mate Natu and their calf Biriba come out.)

NATU: What is that?

TOLI: My name is Tolimum. Don't you want to get out of here?

BIRIBA: We'll never get out of here.

KATARA: Go back to bed, sweetie.

BIRIBA: Mama, I want to get out. Can we?

TOLI: We can! We really can! All we have to do is-

KATARA: Biriba, go back to bed...now.

(Biriba leaves.)

NATU: Listen, I don't know who you think you are, but you cannot come into my life and tell my child things that –

TOLI: But we can. And we will.

KATARA: Explain.

TOLI: The people. They capture whales to make money and to make us an exhibit. They lock us in these cages, so that they can leave and suffocate us.

NATU: So, what do you suggest we do?

TOLI: We need to kill the people. We plan out accidents. We organize murders between us, and we will all be let out.

KATARA: You're crazy. Never will we ever do that.

NATU: Get away from my family. Get out.

(Natu and Katara swim away - blackout.)

TOLI: I don't know if I can do this any longer, Whale God. I'm not strong enough. I can't hurt these people!

WHALE GOD: We are counting on you, Tolimum. You can do it, Tolimum. Save

whale-kind, Tolimum. We are counting on you...(Off-stage)

(Tolimum angrily swims away with determination.)

SCENE V

(Randy talks to Brandy and Michael, two employees, by the back pool.)

RANDY: How old is the calf of Natu and Katara?

BRANDY: Biriba? 4 months. Why?

RANDY: We need to sell her soon.

(Tolimum swims in and listens to the conversation.)

MICHAEL: What? You can't do that. These families need to stay together.

RANDY: It doesn't matter. They won't even realize.

MICHAEL: But –

RANDY: Brandy, get the Pacific Zoo on the phone. They said they were interested. *(Sees Tolimum.)*

MICHAEL: Tolimum?

RANDY: He can breed now, right? We need to start breeding again. Can you please get on that, Michael? *(Tolimum swims away to go tell Katara and Natu.)* Why don't you people do anything around here? Don't tell me you guys actually care about these things. *(They don't move.)* They're brainless. They don't even know they have families. Come on, get to work.

MICHAEL: You know they're not actually brainless, right?

BRANDY: I don't know what to believe anymore. Let's go load the calf on the loading dock.

MICHAEL: You can't actually be serious.

(She leaves, and Michael looks at her with a look of surprise. At the other side of the stage – the back pool – Katara is swimming and trying to find Biriba.)

KATARA: Biriba? Sweetie?

NATU: I've searched all over for her.

KATARA: Then where is she?

(Toli swims in.)

NATU: Have you seen Biriba?

TOLI: They took her! The trainers! They're selling her! Quick, you need to get her!

(Crank sound effect)

BIRIBA: *(Off-stage)* Mama! Daddy! Help, help!

KATARA: Baby!

NATU: Where is she?

TOLI: Sounds like the loading dock. Quick!

(They swim to the loading dock, and Biriba is there and tied in rope. Randy, Michael and Brandy are holding him.)

BIRIBA: Mama! Daddy! Help!

KATARA: My baby! She's stuck.

NATU: How do we get her out?

TOLI: *(Remembers his past.)* It's the humans. They tied her up. They're taking her away...

KATARA: Where are they taking my baby?!

NATU: Biriba! Scream! Loud! *(Biriba screams and tries to wiggle but ultimately fails. Brandy and Randy take her offstage.)*

KATARA: No!!

BIRIBA: *(Off-stage)* Help! Mama! *(Katara falls on the floor and weeps.)*

KATARA: NO! NO! Biriba! *(She sobs. Natu tries to comfort her, but she won't stop crying.)*

TOLI: When I was five years old, I lived with my Mom and Dad and all of my brothers and sisters. But one day, when I was five years old, a hunter took me away from all of them. I still miss them every single day. And those humans - they changed me and my entire life for their profit. They did it for themselves – those filthy people who think that we don't have thoughts! We don't have brains...or hearts...hearts that let us feel emotions, like love and hurt...and I know that's what you feel right now...

NATU: Please, Toli. Just leave us alone.

(Toli starts to swim away but is stopped by Katara.)

KATARA: Wait. You said before...about the humans...the evil humans...

TOLI: About revenge?

KATARA: I want it. I need it.

NATU: I don't want you to do this, Katara. I won't let you.

KATARA: I will do anything for my baby! I want this.

TOLI: When I was taken, I was terrified. I thought I would never live through it. No one would ever know how much pain I was in, and that same thing is happening right now to Biriba! And this will never change unless we make it!

NATU: No! Not my baby!

KATARA: Then we need to do this, Natu! There's no other way. Do it for, Biriba. Please.

NATU: Because this needs to happen...What do we do?

TOLI: Well, we need to make a plan. From now on, every show needs an accident. We do everything we can to hurt the trainers at unexpected times. We...

(Tolimum keeps talking to Natu and Katara. The Whale God starts speaking over Tolimum's talking. Tolimum and the others mime out the course of action.)

WHALE GOD: Tolimum, you avenge all of whale-kind. Save our souls, and use our passion. Turn it into anger. Avenge our kind. Avenge our kind.

TOLI: *(Prays to Whale God.)* Can I do this? Oraf, I don't know if I can do this. I can't do this again.

WHALE GOD: It is the only way, Tolimum. Remember how they tortured you when they captured you? They will never stop until you stop them. It needs to be done.

(Now begins the whales' version of the start of the play, right before the killing of Brandy – back pool.)

NATU: Are you sure you want to do this?

KATARA: He needs to do this. Do it to avenge us. Please.

TOLI: It has to be done.

KATARA: Remember, you swim around the pool three times. Then, wait till the fourth life.

NATU: And do it fast. Make sure it looks like an accident.

TOLI: Make sure you stay in the back pool so that you don't get dragged into it. This is the beginning of a new area, and we will not stop until all of whale-kind is out of bondage. It must be done.

(They nod their heads. They hear Brandy starting her routine, and Tolimum heads to the front pool. Blackout. A spotlight focuses only on Brandy and Toli as he is doing the routine with her when the "accident" happens. Whale God talks over the "accident.")

WHALE GOD: We swam. We would swim and live in a world where we both could try to get along, but they would not allow it. So they capture us. They make us an exhibit and a show. They treat us with no respect. We do not belong alone nor starved and trapped in a tiny pool. We need vengeance on the humans. And I appointed you to save us. Save our kind. Don't end our story. Tolimum, Tolimum, Tolimum...

(Whale God's voice fades into Randy as he is speaking about the accident, in the same way it did with Winston ten years earlier.)

RANDY: Tolimum drowned Brandy on May 11th, 2004 at 4:55 pm. It was a trainer error, and if Brandy were standing here with us today, she would tell you it was her fault. No further questions, thank you.

(Randy walks to the back room with Michael.)

MICHAEL: So, what have we learned from this, Randy?

RANDY: What?

MICHAEL: From Tolimum's first killing ten years ago, what have we learned?

RANDY: *(Unfazed)* I don't know, what?

MICHAEL: Absolutely nothing!

RANDY: You want a raise or something?

MICHAEL: Even you know it wasn't Brandy's fault. You know that!

RANDY: I'll give you a thousand to keep you quiet, okay?

(Michael takes his stuff and leaves angrily. Blackout.)

SCENE VI

(The Whale God narrates the lives of the whales over the next ten years while the whales and people mime out the action.)

WHALE GOD: Tolimum, you avenged our kind. You took our pain and turned it into revenge. Thank you. *(Randy talks to Michael on the side of the pool.)*

RANDY: *(To Michael)* So, all the calves...have Tolimum's sperm?

MICHAEL: As per your request, yes.

RANDY: So, we spawned twelve calves. Each now have the killer whale, Tolimum, in them...

MICHAEL: Yes.

RANDY: *(With a sickening look)* Oh no.

(We go back to Tolimum, the rest of the whales and the Whale God.)

TOLI: *(Talks to Whale God.)* So what now? Now that it is done! Did we win, Whale God? Did we win? Are we free?

WHALE GOD: Don't end our story!

TOLI: Now that all the blood is shed, and all the hurt and pain is felt...Is it over?

ALL WHALES: Don't end our story!

TOLI: Was it worth it, Whale God?! Was it worth it?!

ALL WHALES: Don't end our story!

TOLI: Or will we be in captivity for the rest of our lives, with no chance of escape and scars that can never be healed? Will we all be stuck here...for the rest of our lives?

WHALE GOD: Don't end our story!

ALL WHALES: Don't end our story!

TOLI: *(Deeply sincere)* Don't end our story.

(Blackout)



SCHOOL: St. David

TEACHER: Annette Dlugokecki

SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Annette Dlugokecki

UNIT: Waterloo

UNIT PRESIDENT: Christine Stockie

GRADES 11-12 / SHORT STORY

by **Candice Rubie**

I'm no stranger to the somber road spiralling before me, but this time everything is different. Countless screw-ups have finally brought me the solitude my demons crave. This time, I'll be travelling alone. I've already bought the non-refundable ticket in the form of numerous beers, jägerbombs and tequila shots; it's only a matter of time now before I pass the point of no return. I can feel it.

I'm not completely surprised by the turn of events. My parents and brother have been plotting abandonment since I first arrived in this world – tiny, innocent and unwanted. I guess they finally worked up the courage to cut off the family screw-up.

I hadn't expected the halt in capital, though. They inspired my famous lifestyle of ceaseless partying and a never-ending stream of liquor – the least they could do is fund it.

It's been merely hours since the cash stopped flowing, and already I've hit rock bottom. The friends, tethered to me by my wallet, dissolved in mid-air. After the trouble I put Jenna through tonight, I can't help but feel that I've blown through my ninth life.

After burning through the last of the bills in my wallet at some sleazy bar I can't remember the name of, I ended up back outside Jenna's apartment. The vicious words I'd spat at her earlier reverberated in my skull. I made my way through the list of residents in her building, begging someone – anyone – to let me in, but my relentless buzzing yielded no success.

My unsteady gaze fixed on the lazy periwinkle curtains obscuring the window of her apartment: I can't tell whether or not I'm imagining the shadowy figure that continuously flits by. I keep hoping I'll catch a glimpse of Jenna's tumbling raven hair or piercing blue eyes, but even in my drunken state I know that she's not coming back for me tonight – or ever for that matter.

The insatiable Chicago chill cuts clean to my bones, driving me off the frigid street. Keys in hand, I stumble back to the blood red corvette parked in a lopsided diagonal from the curb. Using the exterior for balance, I lurch towards the driver's side, leaving a zigzag keyed masterfully in the paint.

I get the key into the ignition on my third attempt and hit the gas, desperate to leave behind the scalding memories of the previous hours. It's useless, though; what good is a fast car if you can't outrun the things you need to forget most?

The all-consuming cold is inescapable, winding its way into the vehicle and taunting me from the passenger's seat. I may as well still be slouched on the sidewalk in front of Jenna's apartment, surrounded by the jagged shards of our broken relationship – a future together once so vivid poured out onto the dirt. All because of me.

I can't take this.

I slide dials and mash buttons and turn knobs and scream commands - anything to get rid of the goddamn cold. Head bent in frustration, I register that I've veered off the road too late. I don't even bother to lift my eyes to see where I'm swerving.

The airbags reach me within seconds, enveloping me in deep warmth. Finally. I don't feel the serrated shards of the windshield or the vicious bite of the seat belt. I don't feel anything anymore. Long after the shadows creep into my skull, replacing my vision, the image of a tiny silver angel resting on the dashboard remains in my brain.

Soon it fades too, and all I am left with is the dark...

Bright. So bright. Fluorescent light bounces off the immaculate white walls, nearly blinding. Where's the car? Better yet, where the hell am I?

My eyes take a moment to adjust to the change in scenery. Using the wall as a crutch, I inch my way off the floor and take stock of my surroundings. Polished tile, elaborate equipment, an occupied bed - I'm in a hospital.

The lack of sensation is unnerving. No blinking, no breathing, no heartbeat. Nothing. All that remains, besides my physical body, are my memories and thoughts. It's ironic; all I'm left with are the things I was so desperate to escape.

Crossing the narrow space, I'm caught pleasantly off-guard by the room's occupant – not my lifeless body as expected, but a sleeping young woman.

A sudden burst of cries startles me – my surprised shriek unheard by everyone but myself. Irritable wails ricochet off the walls like bullets, disturbing the woman's slumber. A chorus of gentle shushes and the name Lucy repeated over and over coincides with the howls.

I determine the source of the racket to be the bundle held by a fatigued man in the corner I hadn't noticed – a baby. I never want – or I guess now, wanted – children. They're irredeemably useless, dependent on everyone around them and a nuisance for all.

The couple is oblivious to my presence, as I assume everyone else will be, and my eardrums throb from the incessant crying. I need to get out of this place. Bee-lining to the cramped room's door, I'm stopped by an invisible barrier preventing me from straying far.

I can feel it now – a subtle gravity tugging me towards the child. Not one to put up a fight, I slouch over to the ear-splitting inconvenience. The baby is unbothered by the matted umber hair, bloodshot eyes and five-o'clock shadow that announces me as a washout in one glance. She is swaddled in a cotton pink quilt; her tear-filled emerald eyes stare directly at me. I swear she can see me. The crying stops.

...

Exuberant cries fill the tiny townhouse as chubby toddler legs stumble across the hardwood, miraculously skirting around unseen obstacles and jagged corners. Each of Lucy's unsteady steps sends a shockwave of anxiety through my body, mimicking the heartbeat I'd long since forgotten and seldom missed.

With every wobble and potential slip, I reach out to support her, still operating under the guise that I could steady her with my hands. They were rendered useless by the accident two years ago.

My countless screw-ups, heartbreaks and mistakes rarely cross my mind anymore. Who has time to reflect on the past when the present is racing ahead? I certainly don't – not anymore. Instead, I've learned to focus on presiding over the little girl fate has assigned me to as a guardian angel. It's sure as hell better than my life before.

Lucy settles on the floor, captivated by a patchwork of building blocks and plastic animals. Perched beside her, I can't help but feel envious. She has her whole life ahead of her, along with loving parents who spend every second making her feel wanted and no one expecting her to fail.

I know that's selfish – the same way it's selfish that I hope for her safety because it guarantees mine. I envy her the same way I envied my older brother when my parents boasted to anyone who would listen about his endless successes – my name a forgotten lump at the back of their throats.

I was expected to fail and failed to exceed expectations. I never even had a chance. Or maybe I did. I don't have time to decide; Lucy is on the move again.

...

Glossy rubber rain boots dunk into puddle after puddle. Lucy's matching yellow raincoat is billowing behind her like a trail of sunshine. Both her father and I need to jog to keep up with the six-year-old's energetic pace. The previous night's downpour drowned any anxiety Lucy once felt over her first full day of school.

Lucy and I pretend not to notice her father's silent tears as he watches his daughter pass yet another milestone. The moment passes as soon as the welcoming brick school comes into view.

Seduced by the beckoning singsong voice of her new teacher, Lucy races to the classroom among twenty other exuberant children, leaving her father and me behind. The gentle tug of her gravity beckons me to follow, and I head inside to repeat grade one.

I might as well appreciate these effortless years now while I can: God knows I won't enjoy retaking grade twelve biology or any level of math. These first few years are a blessing. I take a seat on the plush carpet a fair distance away from the circle of students and hear cries of "snack break" and "arts and crafts" fill the tiny classroom. I hope it's story time.

...

It plays out like a movie. As the dust clears, only three figures remain standing on the battlefields of World War Three. On the right stand the last two surviving members of the Too Young for Technology nation. The sole member of the totalitarian regime I Need a Cellphone occupies the left. I've never so desperately wished for popcorn more at any moment than I do now.

Desperate to walk the moon before any of her classmates, Lucy craves to be the first person in grade six to own a cellphone. If her plans as a dancing space veterinarian don't work out, I could easily see Lucy as a lawyer.

I don't understand how her parents can hold their position. Her pleading emerald eyes and quivering lips, surrounded by a blanket of short blonde hair, are my Achilles' heel. One look and I would surrender. I'd pluck the sun, moon and stars from the sky if she asked.

A compromise is finally reached. Lucy can be the first girl in grade six to have a landline phone in her room, provided she drop the cellphone issue until high school. Lucy's smile is so vibrant; it lights up the entire house. I wonder for a moment if the sun has risen early just to echo her jubilant mood. I wouldn't be surprised.

...

Lucy twirls the curled, red cord around her finger, breathing words into the phone as if she's dealing with a life or death matter. In Lucy's mind, she is. Nothing in the world could be more important than the life-altering decision she would be required to make before Tuesday's dance. Getting her best friend's opinion is vital.

Stretching the antique phone's cord as far as it will go, Lucy absentmindedly fingers the silky silver frock splayed across her bed's plush orange comforter. She's already chosen the dress, pumps and up-do she'll be sporting at the upcoming grade nine semi-formal.

All that's left is the most critical decision, perhaps in all of history; should she go with Tommy

Eisenhower or Greg Flannigan? Based on every detail Lucy has revealed over the three-hour conversation, the right choice is obvious: I'm rooting for Tommy.

I would never want my daughter—um, Lucy to go anywhere with a boy like Greg. Only 14 years old, and already he screams trouble. His parents have given up on him; his teachers have given up on him; even he's given up on him. He's a carbon copy of myself at that age, and that's what scares me the most.

It still haunts me what I put Jenna through. If I have any powers at all as a guardian angel, I'm calling on them now to keep that ticking time-bomb as far away from Lucy as possible. Please, let her pick Tommy.

...

Lucy twirls the tiny silver angel dangling from the dainty chain around her neck. She only received the necklace an hour earlier – it was a going-away present from Tommy, her boyfriend of three years – yet fiddling with the charm has already become a habit.

Immune to the suffocating Chicago chill, Lucy dances across the speckled pavement. Her head is spinning with the possibilities of the night, weeks and months to come. I let my thoughts wander too.

I still can't believe Lucy graduated high school three days ago. It feels like yesterday she was watching cartoons and learning her ABCs. I'm not surprised my time as a guardian angel has flown by quickly; if I remember one thing from my life, it's that seven minutes in heaven flash by in an instant.

Our plane to California departs tomorrow evening, and God knows what will follow. The top of her class and a spinning wheel of creativity for a brain, Lucy had no trouble getting into the California Institute of the Arts – the school she's dreamed about attending since the world first started turning. I never made it to college; graduating high school was painful enough. This will be a new chapter for the both of us.

Tonight is a rarity; we've caught the streets nearly empty. Imposing streetlights cast a faint white glow on the rows of temporarily abandoned vehicles blanketed by a sharp frost. Their gentle light guides us toward the beckoning brick townhouse, blocks away, that I've learned to call home.

I never thought I'd say this, but I'm gonna miss it here. Places once tainted with foul memories have been painted over with lovely moments spent alongside Lucy. Streets, I once suffocated with reckless choices and drunken mistakes, have been revived, given new life by Lucy in the same way I was.

The subtle tug pulls me back to reality. In my stupor, I completely stopped walking, captivated by the ever-changing stagnant streets. I guess I've fallen behind Lucy's upbeat pace. Before I can

begin to catch up, a sharp squeal of tires skating across asphalt captures my attention. A blood red corvette covered in serpentine marks streaks down the road.

With no sign of slowing down, the vehicle veers onto the sidewalk in front of me - the shrieks of the tires nearly masking Lucy's high-pitched scream before the car hurtles into one of the crumbling brick buildings with a final thud. The street falls silent.

I clear the distance to Lucy in seconds, painfully aware of how useless my presence is. The angel necklace no longer rests upon her collarbone, likely torn off by the impact. Tear-filled emerald eyes stare directly at me; I swear she can see me. She reaches a small bruised hand towards me – for a moment I think she'll touch me – before it falls limp at her side.

My feet are glued to the pavement, unable to take even the smallest of steps. I can't see Lucy anymore. An ear-splitting wail rings out over the quiet, yet despite its volume the crowd swarming around the accident appears undisturbed. I realize the sound is coming from me.

I fooled myself into thinking that I could ever be something good, that I could belong in the light. The dark is calling me, consuming me, begging me to return. I can't ignore it anymore. Sinking to my knees, the world shatters into a million burning stars. Lucy loved the stars. They're fading fast, leaving me behind.

Come back! Please.

Once again, I am alone in the dark...

Polished tile, elaborate equipment, an occupied bed. Blinded by the bright rays emanating from the ceiling, I shut my eyes and focus on steadying my erratic breathing. My breathing. A heartbeat. I feel the rough cotton sheets plastered to my skin and the smooth metal cuffs that chain me to the hospital bed and bite into my wrist. It's all back. What the heck is going on?

"Mr. Peterson?"

Opening my eyes, I determine the source of the voice to be a greying man who sports a pristine white coat and impatient scowl. He holds a clipboard distinctly labeled Dr. Hudson Khan.

"I was alerted that you were conscious. Don't look so confused; I know you're aware of exactly what's happening. Your tests showed that you don't have any brain damage. Actually, you hardly sustained any damage at all - that is, if you don't include the damage you've inflicted."

Crossing the cramped room, the doctor adjusts my IV before jotting something down on his clipboard. Sensing my watchful gaze, he exhales a deep sigh, announcing what an inconvenience my presence is.

"Shattered right ankle, multiple lacerations and bruises, a crushed windpipe and severe whiplash.

Liver damage not caused by the accident. The impact sent you into severe cardiac arrest. You were dead for seven minutes. The paramedics revived you at the scene. Why? I don't know."

Leaning an inch from my face, his voice is barely a whisper. He sneers, "Enjoy this cushy hospital room while you can. You'll be spending the rest of your life rotting in a jail cell for what you did." Without another word, the doctor exits the room, leaving me alone with just the tiny angel necklace draped across the wooden nightstand for company.

What have done? I was never Lucy's guardian angel; I was her demise. My time with her opened my eyes to the truth. Seven minutes in heaven may flit by in an instant, but seven minutes in hell are a lifetime.

I would know.





ASSIMILATION



SCHOOL: Bishop Alexander
TEACHER: Laura Vettoretti
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Marah Pardoe
UNIT: Sudbury Secondary
UNIT PRESIDENT: Dan Charbonneau

GRADES 11-12 / POEM

by **Ash Sokolowicz**

They are the dead,
the bullied, the lost. They are the un -
marked grave beneath the cross. They are the ones taught
to be “better,” for if they defied, forth came the leather. So few survived, bro -
thers and sisters were lost; they died. You took 150, 000 to change, only 80 000 survived
those days. It is those survivors who now hide behind a mask because you taught them how to
wear a mask. To hide the emotions you sought to control, to cover their fear you would not know.
Mothers and fathers that never had the chance to be, all because you thought you were better than thee.
If they are so savage for simply living, how art thee not “savage” despite your killing? They were not the ones
to rape nor to murder, yet with each of your actions you purpose - fully hurt her. The young girl loved by her
mother, the small boy and his yo - unger brother. As they grow you taught them hatred, for five plus years of
their live - s, you taught them th - ey were born with the wrong blo - od flowing inside. You took them from
their ho - mes, from society, de - emed them a waste; you decided they need to be taught a new faith. But
what of their religion ? Their Cr - eator? Their beliefs? You told the - m, “It is simply better that you be like
me. A wi - sh to be heard but no one to listen, for all of your dark - ness you made their famili - es not miss
them. With the slogan, “to beat the Indian out,” you still deemed your insti - tution edu -
cational, yet all you taught them was that they were
to change the one thing they could not; *their blood*.
Alcoholism, suicides; both things you created by teaching
them lies.



PRIDE AND IDENTITY: A QUEST TO SELF-DISCOVERY



SCHOOL: Father Michael McGivney
TEACHER: Cinzia Camarda
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Sam Cuda
UNIT: York
UNIT PRESIDENT: Heather Manassis

GRADES 11-12 / NONFICTION
by Santhiya Ramanan

A child's identity and perspective of the outside world develops with every experience he or she encounters throughout life. Maya Angelou uses this idea in her coming-of-age story *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Set during the 1930s when racial prejudice dominated the United States of America, this autobiographical novel portrays the life of the protagonist, Marguerite Ann Johnson, an African-American girl who strives to discover herself in the center of displacement and segregation. During the first seventeen years of her life, Marguerite's identity and external perception of labels and stereotypes, while living in an African-American community, evolves through what she experiences and how she is socialized. When she begins to feel inferior about her race, when her pride as an African-American gradually returns and, finally, when she stands her ground in the face of white prejudice, Marguerite gains an understanding of who she is. Therefore, these events help to create her identity.

In the beginning, Marguerite believes that white people are supreme beings who cannot be talked to without risking one's life. When in Stamps, Marguerite has her first encounter with white people while running an errand: "These others, the strange pale creatures that lived in their alien unlife, weren't considered folks. They were whitefolks" (Angelou 26). Here, Angelou uses visual imagery to explain how she interprets a white person's appearance: "their feet were too small, their skin was too white and see-throughy, and they didn't walk on the balls of their feet the way people did --" (Angelou 26). She continues by saying that they are not humans like her and the African-American community, but states that they are "alien." This statement helps the reader to understand that Stamps places a substantial barrier between the African-American and white communities. The cultural setting of segregation in Stamps influences Marguerite's belief that white people are not humans but supreme beings. Later on, Marguerite experiences her first signs of racial inequality when the "powhitetrash" children come into the store and order around her uncle and grandmother by their first names: "Momma told us that the less you say to the White folks (or even powhitetrash) the better" (Angelou 28). Marguerite's grandmother socializes her from an early age. Marguerite learns that even though some white people are far more poverty-stricken than her family, they are still white; because of their skin colour, they will always hold supremacy over others. This belief ignites hatred towards the power white people wield; Marguerite later distinguishes this belief as a "charade." Nevertheless, the atmosphere of Stamps and grandmother Henderson's lessons during Marguerite's adolescence cause her to believe that she can never stand up to white people, despite who they are and how rich or poor they may be.

Thus, the preceding series of events create a sense of helplessness and insecurity in the mind and heart of a young Marguerite. However, the pride she develops in her heritage later replaces these anxieties.

Progressively, Marguerite develops pride in her African-American heritage as her fears about being inferior and displaced by others slowly erode. During her eighth grade graduation, the class valedictorian asks the graduating students to come up on stage to sing The Black American National Anthem, "Lift Ev'ry Head and Sing." For the first time, Marguerite strains to pay attention to the final words of the song: "We have come over a way with tears, has been watered. We have come home, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered" (Angelou 183-184). The anthem, written by James Weldon Johnson, expresses the hope and belief that one day God will free the African-Americans from the hardships of slavery, as depicted in the diction "tears" and "blood of the slaughtered," as well as from the clutches of the white people. Marguerite understands that her fellow African-American brothers and sisters struggle with many systemic obstacles to be able to survive - despite claims made by Social Darwinists that only the fittest can survive and claims about segregating people based on power and race. This new revelation of hope and strength leads to Marguerite's newfound pride in her heritage. Her awareness increases when she sees the Japanese being sent to concentration camps by the United States during the Second World War. Rapidly, black migrants travel in from different states to work side by side with illiterate whites in the defense industry:

The air of collective displacement, the impermanence in life in wartime and the gauche personalities of the most recent arrivals tended to dissipate my own sense of belonging. In San Francisco, for the first time, I perceived myself as part of something (Angelou 212).

The "collective displacement" of the Japanese and the arrival of black migrants provides Marguerite with the optimism that she belongs to a city where she, too, is treated the same as another race. San Francisco during this time is not as segregated as Stamps; therefore, Marguerite has the chance to interact with other races and appreciate diversity, as well as gain respect and admiration for her race. The change in setting and the event of war give Marguerite the chance to recognize the pride the African-American community can possess in the face of white prejudice; working with white people during the war helps Marguerite to gain a sense of belonging to her heritage.

Now that Marguerite is conscious of how the African-American community tries to break down the walls created by white bigotry, she slowly begins to realize that while white people look different from her due to the colour of their skin, these differences do not change the fact that they are all humans at heart. When Marguerite attends school in San Francisco, she is promoted up a grade and advances to George Washington High School, where she is one of three African-American children attending. Marguerite recalls a teacher from this school named Miss Kirwin: "Miss Kirwin never seemed to notice that I was black. I was Miss Johnson and if I had the answer to a question she posed I was never given any more than the word 'Correct,' which was what she said to every other student with the correct answer" (Angelou 217). Miss

Kirwin's equitable attitude towards her helps her to realize that not all white people are racist. Miss Kirwin demonstrates the idea that white people are capable of exercising a sense of rightness in the world. This revelation allows Marguerite not to be frightened or intimidated by white people because, like Miss Kirwin, they too are human. If not for her past experiences with black pride and the experience of facing white prejudice directly, in both St. Louis and in San Francisco, Marguerite might have dreaded going to a white school, and believed that she could feel displaced, ignored and never included in a community. When Marguerite later gets a scholarship to the California Labour School to learn dance and drama, one of her future professions, this event proves pivotal. It not only renews Marguerite's confidence when she is around others, but also helps shape her future identity throughout her life. Moreover, Marguerite's pride in her African-American heritage increases when she stubbornly attempts to get a job as a streetcar conductor:

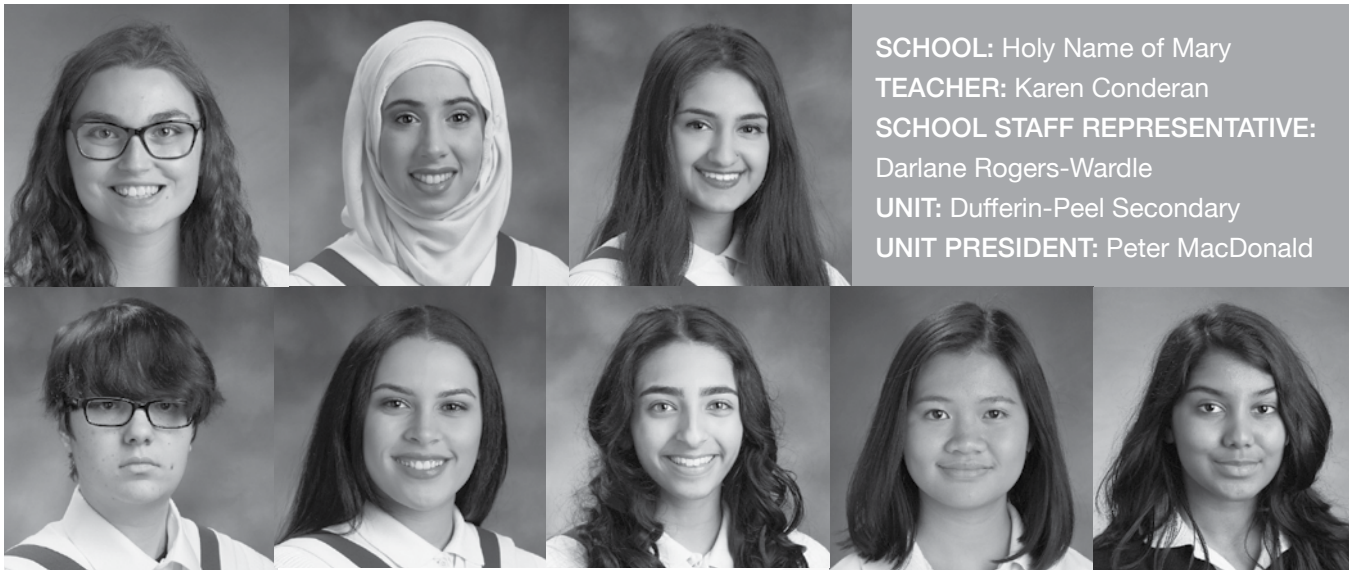
Her nasal Southern accent sliced my meditation and I looked deep into my thoughts. All lies, all comfortable lies. The receptionist was not innocent and neither was I. The whole charade we had played out in that crummy waiting room had to do directly with me, Black and her, White (Angelou 368-269).

Despite warnings Marguerite receives from her mother about the slim chances of getting hired and the racist hiring policies of every office she goes to, Marguerite does not want to capitulate to these obstacles and watch as the white people get the well-paying jobs. Marguerite finally understands that the only difference that lies between her and the receptionist is that she is white and Marguerite is black. Nothing else but the colour of their skin matters. The intense stare down with the receptionist is a turning point in Marguerite's life. They are both mad at each other and too persistent to give up the "charade." But Marguerite uses what she learns from others and what she experiences around her, whether that is listening to The Black American National Anthem or spending time with her mother, Vivian, who stands up for her rights. Marguerite learns to stand her ground and become the first African-American streetcar conductor in San Francisco. Thus, she brings self-belief to the African-American community, gains pride in her African-American heritage and finds her place in the world.

Angelou uses events and people to mold and refine Marguerite's identity and positive perception towards her African-American heritage. Marguerite at first feels intimidated by white people. Later, however, she regains pride in her heritage. Finally, she uses what she learns from others to stand up for herself. These transformations are all stepping-stones that result in Marguerite discovering herself in the midst of segregation and displacement.

Work Cited

Angelou, Maya. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. New York: Random House, 1970. Print.



GRADES 11-12 / PLAY

by Alexandra Gouvis, Aliyyah Khan, Nida Kiani, Daelyn MacDonald, Demerlyn Sanchez, Jasnoor Sandhur, Bianca Ysabelle Santos, and Nikinidu Wickramasinghe

CHARACTERS:

GRANDMA: Grandmother to Liz and Lily, daughter of Elizabeth

LIZ: Grand-daughter

LILY: Grand-daughter

ELIZABETH: Nurse during WWI

JOHANNA: Elizabeth's friend

KATHERINE: Nurse and friends of Elizabeth

WILL: Soldier

PETER: Soldier and Lizzie's brother

CANARY #1/GIRL #2: Factory owner and friend of Lizzie

CANARY #2/GIRL #2: Factory worker and friend of Lizzie

NEWSBOY/SAILOR

FRANK: Factory owner

SARGENT

NURSES/CHORUS/SOLDIERS

SETTING

Dialogue of the modern family takes place in 2017. Experiences of characters in the past take place from the beginning of and to the end of WWI (1914-1918).

SCENE I

(Present: attic in Grandma's house.)

LILY: Whoa, there are so many boxes here...

GRANDMA: I can't remember the last time I came up here. How about we start with these boxes over there? I want to look through them to see what I can take with me to my new home.

LILY: Hey, Liz. Could you help me pick this up here? It's, uh, kinda heavy.

LIZ: *(Looks up from phone and is lost.)* Did you say something? *(Lily attempts to pick it up but stumbles, and everything falls out.)*

LILY: Oh no. I'm so sorry, Grandma!

GRANDMA: It's all right, dear.

LIZ: *(To Lily)* You're such a klutz. *(Goes to help clean up and put everything back in suitcase.)*

LILY: Wait. *(Looks at newspaper carefully.)* Hey, Grandma. What's this? Woah! You were in the war?

LIZ: I knew you were old, but I didn't think you were that old...

GRANDMA: No, sweetheart. That belonged to my mother during WWI, your great-grandmother. *(Takes it from her.)* I haven't seen this in years!

LIZ: I thought women weren't allowed to fight. Heck, they weren't even allowed to vote.

GRANDMA: No, they didn't fight. Your great-grandma was a nurse during WW1. Unfortunately, the nurses aren't given as much recognition for their contribution. That's probably why you've never really heard of this.

LILY: Great-Grandma was a nurse?!...That's so cool!

LIZ: Whatever. Let's just get this done quickly, so I still have time to go to the mall.

LILY: Look at these old newspapers! "June 24, 1914, Franz Ferdinand Assassinated." *(She passes the paper to Liz and flips to another newspaper.)* "July 28, 1914 – Austria-Hungary Declares War on Serbia!" *(She flips through newspaper.)* "August 4, 1914 – Britain Declares War on Germany." *(She gives Liz the newspaper.)*

LIZ: Boring! *(She throws the newspaper on stage.)*

SCENE II

(Past: enter Peter at home.)

PETER: *(She picks up paper from front door that Liz had thrown and reads it.)*
A noble opportunity to enlist and make our country proud. *(She puts newspaper on table.)*

(Enter Johanna, Lizzie and girls while they are talking.)

ELIZABETH: Really, Johanna. Not again?

JOHANNA: *(Slouches on couch.)* My only chance of love...ruined!

PETER: *(He laughs.)* What's gotten into her?

GIRL #2: That boy she was seeing enlisted in the war.

JOHANNA: He isn't just ANY boy. *(She dramatically lies down on the couch.)* He was the man of my dreams.

GIRL #1: Jo...didn't you just meet him three days ago?

JOHANNA: Yes...but – *(She gets cut off.)*

ELIZABETH: Let her sulk about it; she'll get over him in no time like she always does. *(She notices newspaper and picks it up.)* The war again?

PETER: *(He mumbles.)* I enlisted.

ELIZABETH: What?

PETER: *(He sighs.)* I enlisted.

ELIZABETH: You can't be serious, Peter. *(She laughs.)*

GIRL #2: So what if he's serious...I can't resist a man in a uniform.

JOHANNA: How's a scrawny guy like you gonna help our soldiers? *(All of the girls laugh.)*

PETER: Cut it out...I'm serious. *(He points to paper.)* Food, reasonable pay and a chance to go on an adventure. I'll be back in a few months.

JOHANNA: "A chance to go on an adventure" – that's just a cheap tactic to get young men like you to sign up.

ELIZABETH: Take it easy, Johanna...Peter, you're serious? *(She raises voice.)* How could you do that without telling me?!

GIRL #1: Is everything all right, you two?

GIRL #2: *(She nudges her.)* Stay quiet and let them talk – more interesting than my life has ever been.

PETER: The truth is – I've been thinking about it for a while. And I've decided that it's the right thing to do. It's my duty to serve my country.

ELIZABETH: You can't just leave me here alone.

JOHANNA: Lizzie...I'm sure Peter means well.

PETER: Please be rational. They say it won't be long; I'll be back before you know it.

ELIZABETH: You don't have to explain anything to me. *(She turns her back to Peter.)*

PETER: *(He turns her around.)* Imagine it! Your brother, a soldier...no, maybe...a captain! Captain Peter Smith!

ELIZABETH: Calling yourself a captain is going a little too far...*(Unwillingly, he breaks a smile.)*

JOHANNA: *(She tries to lighten the mood.)* Listen, ol' Pete. When you get to the war, I'm gonna need you to throw in a good word for me with the soldiers. Tell them you know a girl; tell them a beautiful girl who can cook and— *(She gets cut off.)*

ELIZABETH: Jo, he's going to go fight, not play Cupid.

JOHANNA: *(She laughs.)* Peter, a soldier? The army would be better off having us women.

ELIZABETH: *(She scoffs.)* You think we can't serve our country in the war just because we're women?

PETER: Lizzie, don't be so defensive. You're a woman, and the war is no place for you.

ELIZABETH: *(She gets serious.)* What you do mean by that? I'm a trained nurse!

PETER: Well, it's not just me who thinks so. Plenty of other men think so too.

JOHANNA: You know, Lizzie, they're right.

(Johanna and Peter, in scene, become a tableau.)

CHORUS: Don't think twice.
A woman is just as capable as a man.
We may not be the same, but
courage brings us together.
This is our war too.

PETER: *(He looks at the time.)* Ah, shoot. I told Johnny and the boys I would meet them at the shop; I need to get dressed! *(Peter exits offstage.)*

JOHANNA: That's very noble of him.

ELIZABETH: I think I might join him.

JOHANNA: You can't be serious!

ELIZABETH: You just said it was a noble deed!

JOHANNA: Yes, if you're a soldier.

ELIZABETH: Those soldiers are going to need nurses who are qualified to help. I'm a nurse, Jo. It won't be much different from what I already do here.

JOHANNA: A war is no place for a woman! Stay home, and look after the house while he's away.

ELIZABETH: Jo, you know, since my parents passed away, Peter is all that I have left. If I'm there, maybe I can help.

JOHANNA: *(She raises voice.)* Let somebody else help! There are plenty of nurses. Think about me. I don't want to lose my two closest friends!

ELIZABETH: *(To Johanna)* Do you hear yourself? They need nurses as much as they need soldiers. Think about the respect women will receive for being there to help our troops.

JOHANNA: *(She yells.)* "Respect" and "honour." As long as you're a woman, you'll never be given any of that.

(The two girls pause and intensely stare at one another.)

ELIZABETH: *(She sighs.)* I've decided I'm going.

JOHANNA: This isn't your war!

ELIZABETH: *(She yells.)* You're right. It's everyone's war. And that's why we should all do our bit. Maybe if you weren't so narrow-minded, you'd understand.

(Girls are intensely staring at each other. Enter Peter.)

PETER: Hey, kiddo. How does this look? *(He fixes clothes.)*

JOHANNA: *(To Peter, she answers angrily.)* This is all your fault.

(Johanna exits angrily.)

GIRL #1: Come on, Johanna. Don't be like this. *(She chases after her.)*

GIRL #2: Sorry, Lizzie, but it looks like you have a lot going on here; we can reschedule our plans.

(Exit girl #2.)

PETER: Hey, what happened?

ELIZABETH: *(She sighs.)* Johanna's upset about me going to the war.

PETER: WHAT? When was this decided?

ELIZABETH: A few minutes ago when the two of you were busy making fun of women for being "weak."

PETER: Elizabeth Anne Smith, there is no way you are going to the war!

ELIZABETH: Don't tell me you agree with her too.

PETER: Of course, I agree with her. I want you to be safe. I can't lose you.

ELIZABETH: Do you think that I can bear staying here in "safety" while you're at war? It's been so hard since mother and father died. Peter, please try to understand.

PETER: If this is what you really want, then I won't try to stop you.

ELIZABETH: Thank you. Do you think I should talk to Johanna?

PETER: No, she'll come around. This must be a lot for her to take in; she's probably really worried about you. Even I'm worried.

ELIZABETH: I'll be fine.

PETER: I know, but you're my sister; it's my job to worry. Let's go get you signed up.

(Exit all.)

SCENE III

(Present: Grandma and children are in the attic. Grandma and Lily look in the suitcase. Liz opens a new suitcase.)

LILY: Grandma, look at what I found! Who are they? *(Holds up the picture.)*

(Liz walks over to Lily and Grandma. She leaves the suitcase open.)

GRANDMA: That's your great-grandmother with her best friend, Johanna. She came every day to visit my mother when I was a child.

LIZ: She looks cute in that picture. Hey, can I Snapchat that?

GRANDMA: Snapchat?

LIZ: Yeah, well, you see it's this cool app that– *(She gets cut off.)*

LILY: Grandma, tell me more! Was Johanna a nurse too?

GRANDMA: No, she wasn't. She– *(She gets cut off.)*

LIZ: *(She takes pictures of the photograph.)* Look, the dog filter works!

(Lily rolls her eyes, and Grandma sighs.)

SCENE IV

(Lizzie is on stage, packing her suitcase in her bedroom. Enter Johanna.)

JOHANNA: Lizzie, I want to apologize for what I – *(She notices her packing.)* Hey, what are you doing? *(Mutters.)* Heck, even Peter came and said goodbye before he left last week.

ELIZABETH: You were so angry the other day about me leaving...

JOHANNA: I'm really sorry about what happened. We've never been apart, and maybe I was being selfish wanting to keep it that way.

(They both laugh.)

JOHANNA: I'm going to miss you! I still don't believe it's a woman's place, but go out there and serve our country!

(Johanna salutes, and Liz laughs. Liz continues to pack.)

JOHANNA: Don't forget to write! If you find a good-looking soldier, tell him to write me too.

ELIZABETH: *(Laughs.)* I'll keep an eye out for you, but no promises. I'm single too! Say, why don't we go to the ice cream parlour one last time before I leave?

JOHANNA: I'd like that very much.

(They exit.)

SCENE V

(Present day: the attic is the setting.)

GRANDMA: Be careful with that! There are needles in there. This was my mother's nursing kit.

LILY: *(To Liz)* Just imagine how many lives she must have saved with this!

(Liz looks through a pile of clothes. She pulls out a nursing uniform.)

LIZ: Hey, the tag on this dress has my name on it – Elizabeth.

GRANDMA: Well, your parents let me name you in honour of your great-grandmother.

LIZ: Huh, and I always thought I was named after the Queen.

LILY: Hey, Grandma. Why does this nursing kit say Katherine on it?

(Liz puts the uniform on the bed and walks over to Grandma and Lily.)

GRANDMA: My mother made lots of nurse friends in France. Katherine was one of them...

SCENE VI

(Past: nurses on stage are laughing while organizing supplies. Elizabeth enters the hospital. She looks around.)

KATHERINE: You must be new here; I'm Katherine. My friends call me Kate. *(Holds out hand.)*

ELIZABETH: Nice to meet you. *(She shakes hand.)* I'm Elizabeth, but my friends call me Lizzie.

KATHERINE: Mind if I call you Lizzie?

ELIZABETH: Mind if I call you Kate?

(They laugh.)

KATHERINE: Welcome, Lizzie! As of today, you are officially a nursing sister! I have to warn you that life as a nurse here might not be what you expect.

ELIZABETH: I'm sure I'll adjust. I've treated broken bones and fractures back home; it shouldn't be too different.

KATHERINE: It's much tougher than you think. The amount of injured soldiers we receive on a daily basis far outnumbers the nurses. We may be trained, but none of us are really prepared for what we'll see.

(The horrors shock Elizabeth.)

I'm sorry; I didn't mean to scare you. It's best that you prepare yourself – here. *(She hands her a nursing kit.)* I'm sorry. This kit's a bit worn out; it was mine first. Supplies are limited. We make do with what we've got.

ELIZABETH: Thank you.

KATE: I'll let you rest.

(Exit Katherine.)

(Elizabeth takes a moment to admire the beds and her uniform.)

ELIZABETH: *(She pulls out notebook, and starts writing a letter to Johanna.)*

"Dear Johanna, I have only been here for a few minutes. I can see that I'm really needed here. I just met a young nurse named Kate. I hope we'll be good friends. I'm not sure where Peter is, but I hope it's not too long until the next time I see him. How are things at home?"

(Transition back to attic.)

GRANDMA: *(She finishes reading letter.)* "Hope everything is well. Love, Lizzie."
(Sighs.) If only the nurses had known what they signed up for.

LILY: What do you mean?

GRANDMA: The war wasn't as glorious as the recruiters made it sound – bombarded with casualties, too many wounded to count, under constant pressure. So many lives were dependent on the nurse's care.

(Liz becomes interested.)

LIZ: What about the pretty lady in the picture; what's her name?

LILY: Johanna?

GRANDMA: She stayed home, but home wasn't the same either. The women back home had to look after the household and fulfill the duties of a working man. It was actually the very first time many Canadian women worked outside their home.

LIZ: *(Takes out envelope.)* Look, it's a letter from Johanna.

SCENE VII

(In munitions factory, Johanna enters.)

JOHANNA: *(She is sitting and writing a letter.)*

September 19, 1916.

Dear Lizzie, I got your letter. I'm sorry that you feel homesick. I've been learning how to make munitions. *(To herself)* Who would have thought? *(Back to letter)* After so many men enlisted, a lot of us women now handle the work. We may be far from the front line. But, Lizzie, things are difficult here. Sometimes, I work 12 hours a day. Mind finding me a knight in shining armour? My skin is turning yellow from the TNT. Trust me; it's not very flattering. Life here has changed, and so have I.

(Drill sound effects cut Johanna off.)

CANARY #1: It's been two years; you'd think I'd get used to the noise by now.

CANARY #2: It's been two years; you'd think I'd get used to your constant complaining.

CANARY #1: I've every right to complain. It's been two years, and they still pay me less than old John over there.

CHORUS: This is our war too.
A woman is just as capable as a man.
Our opinions are valid; we have voices.
This is our war too.

CANARY #2: Sssh! Less talk, more work. Here comes the boss.

CANARY #1: You mean the grouch?

(They laugh.)

JOHANNA: *(She continues letter.)* I'll save the stories for when you come home. I hope you find Peter safe and sound. Love, Johanna.

(Enter Frank.)

FRANK: Hey. What are you doing, sitting around writing?

JOHANNA: Sorry, sir. It's break time.

FRANK: Break time was over five minutes ago. You're lucky you've even got a job here. Your place is at home – cooking and cleaning.

JOHANNA: *(She raises her voice.)* Now listen here – *(She realizes her mistake.)* Sorry, sir.

FRANK: *(Angrily)* No, what is it? I wanna know what you were going to say.

(Frank and Johanna, in scene, become part of a tableau.)

CHORUS: We women do just as much work as you men.
If anything, we do more! We cook, we clean, we sew and we build.
We go home, and our work continues! You treat us unfairly, because we're women.
This is our war too.

(The tableau breaks.)

JOHANNA: It was nothing, sir.

FRANK: Then get back to work!

SCENE VIII:

(In attic)

LILY: Wow, that letter was intense...

LIZ: Yellow skin? Jeez, imagine how much foundation it would've taken to cover that up.

LILY: Do you have to be so rude about everything?

LILY: What? Can we get to the juicy details now? Did Great-Grandma ever find a boyfriend? *(She pulls out a nicely wrapped cigarette from the suitcase.)* Why is this cigarette all wrapped up?

LILY: I want to know if she's met Peter yet.

LIZ: Here's a picture. There's Great-Grandma, there's Great-Uncle Peter and there's this really good-looking guy lying down on a hospital bed. Man, he looks really beaten up. I wonder what happened to him.

GRANDMA: *(She takes the photo.)* Look, there's a date on the back... "Battle of the Ancre, November 13-18..."

SCENE IX

(Peter enters hospital, carrying injured friend.)

PETER: Nurse, can someone help me?

KATHERINE: Just sit him down. I'll get supplies.

PETER: *(He notices another nurse; she walks up to her.)* Sister! My friend needs your help—

(Elizabeth turns around; they notice each other.)

PETER: Lizzie! *(He hugs her.)*

ELIZABETH: Thank God, you're safe. How have you been?

PETER: I'm fine. How has the hospital been treating you?

ELIZABETH: Too many wounded to keep up with. What happened to your friend?

PETER: Took a bullet straight in the arm. Name is Will Bennett.

(Elizabeth approaches Will.)

WILL: *(He looks at her dazed.) Am I dead? (He looks confused for a second.) Are you an angel? (He shares a goofy grin.)*

ELIZABETH: *(She looks around.) An angel? I think he's delusional. Sit tight, sir. I'll be – (Peter and Will laugh.)*

PETER: Excuse my sister, Will. She doesn't know how to take a compliment.

ELIZABETH: I do! I'll have you know I was very popular with the boys back home.

WILL: And I can see why.

PETER: *(Notices Katherine struggling to hold supplies.)* Let me help you with that.

KATE: I don't believe we've met?

PETER: I'm Peter, Lizzie's brother. *(He takes her supplies.)*

(Peter and Katherine exit.)

ELIZABETH: This may hurt a little...*(She applies some medicine to his wound.)* I'll have you fixed up in no time.

WILL: As long as you're here, I don't mind staying.

ELIZABETH: You have to go back. They need you out there.

WILL: They can wait. So, what brings you out here?

ELIZABETH: Helping people is what I do. I thought that maybe if I were here, I might see my brother sometimes. *(He finishes wrapping up his injury.)*

WILL: You two must be really close. Not a day goes by that Peter doesn't mention you; could you go into my coat pocket?

ELIZABETH: *(Reaches in pocket and pulls out cigarette.)* Oh no. Absolutely no smoking. Not here. *(Goes to put it back.)*

WILL: *(He gives her a cigarette.)* It's nothing special, but it's all I've got. Think of it as a thank you gift.

ELIZABETH: That's very sweet of you, but I don't smo – *(She gets cut off.)*

WILL: Please take it. Now go spend time with your brother, before we get sent back.

(Elizabeth wraps it up, smiles at Will and pockets the cigarette. The play transitions back to the present.)

NEWSBOY: Soldiers recovered and ready to get back on the fields!

SCENE X

(Peter and Will in trenches)

PETER: Will, do you think we'll make it out alive?

WILL: We've made it this far.

PETER: 1918.

WILL: Yeah, time flies when you're sleeping in the trenches and trying to avoid dying.

(They both laugh.)

WILL: I've heard talk that the war is almost over.

PETER: Let's hope you're right. I can't wait to get home. There's this ice cream parlour Lizzie and I always go to – Best Ice Cream Parlour in Toronto. You'd have to join us. I think Lizzie would want you to come.

PETER: I saw the way you two were looking at each other; it made me want to puke.

WILL: Puke what? We haven't had a proper meal in years. *(He is in the background: the soldier makes noise while sleeping.)* We should get some sleep.

PETER: It never gets any easier sleeping in these trenches.

WILL: At least it's June. Maybe we won't have to sleep here another winter.

PETER: Hey, remember Vimy Ridge and Ypres? I don't remember much, but

there was a man. *(He is trying to recall the name.)* Joseph. I talked to him one night before we were sent out. He told me about his wife; the two of 'em were expecting a child soon. Poor kid – gonna come into this world without a father.

WILL: Do you remember all the people we fought with – the ones who died?

PETER: Of course, I do...It's hard to forget when you've seen men blown to bits...

WILL: *(He sighs.)* Even if I never got to know them, their faces still haunt me. It – it really scares me; those men were just ordinary guys like us. We could be next...I'm not ready to die yet!

PETER: We've made it this far; we're going to survive.

SARGENT: Attack. Everyone, get ready!

(Exeunt.)

SCENE XI

(Nurses rush into hospital. Patients are everywhere.)

KATHERINE: *(She frantically runs and sees Lizzie.)* Thank God. You're here!

ELIZABETH: What happened?

KATHERINE: They just came back from battle.

(Will screams from shell shock.)

ELIZABETH: *(She notices Will.)* Will?! What is he doing here?

KATHERINE: It's a case of shell shock; I can handle this. You go help that man over there.

(Lizzie rushes to patient.)

KATHERINE: *(She speaks to Will.)*

WILL: *(Panting/yelling.)* A bomb! Please, don't kill me! Don't send me back! It's hell out there! It's hell!

KATHERINE: Please, calm down. Everything will be all right.

WILL: No. No, it won't be all right; death spares no one. Don't send me back!

(Peter groans in pain.)

PETER: *(He covers his eyes.)* Just cut the whole damn thing off. I have to get back.

ELIZABETH: *(She is in shock.)* Peter...

PETER: *(He uncovers eyes.)* Lizzie?

ELIZABETH: Peter, there's blood gushing out of your leg.

PETER: *(He winces in pain.)* I need to get back there, Lizzie.

ELIZABETH: There's a hospital ship coming soon. I won't leave your side until I see you board that ship.

PETER: Lizzie, please. You can't keep trying to protect me. You have other patients to look after.

ELIZABETH: You're injured, Peter. If you go back now, you'll die.

PETER: Lizzie, I'm scared. Every day, I wake up. *(He winces from the medicine.)* I wake up, and I wonder if I'll survive. And then I wonder what will happen if I do survive.

ELIZABETH: You're going to survive, and once we get back home we'll be together again. Me, you and Johanna – like before the war.

PETER: A man can't go back to a normal life once he's seen the horrors of war.

ELIZABETH: Neither can the nurses.

NURSE #3: Attention, all nurses signed up to board the hospital ship. The ship has arrived from England. Please gather all medical equipment and wounded soldiers.

ELIZABETH: You need to get on that ship.

PETER: Poor Will. He's still going to be here.

(Soldiers and all nurses exeunt. Lizzie, Will, Peter and Katherine enter.)

ELIZABETH: How's Will doing?

KATHERINE: He seems better now; I calmed him down.

ELIZABETH: And you?

KATHERINE: I don't know, Lizzie. *(Pulls Lizzie aside.)* I used to be able to handle all this pressure. That man over there just lost his arm. And that body over there; he's only seventeen. He lost his legs and he'll die because we don't have enough nurses and materials to stop the bleeding...

ELIZABETH: Katherine, get a hold of yourself!

KATHERINE: You're right. I'm sorry; sometimes it gets to me. *(She notices Peter.)* Peter! How on earth?

BOTH GIRLS: Peter! *(He gets up and pretends he's okay. He loses balance. Katherine catches him.)*

ELIZABETH: Peter is going with you on the ship, Kate. Please take good care of him.

KATHERINE: *(She struggles to keep Peter up.)* I will.

PETER: Lizzie, make sure you come home.

ELIZABETH: You really think I'm going to let you live on your own? You don't even know how to fold your own laundry. *(Laughs.)*

KATHERINE: Peter, we've got to go. Goodbye, Lizzie. I'll see you when I get back *(She smiles.)*

ELIZABETH: Goodbye, you two. Take care.

(Exit Peter and Katherine.)

SCENE XII

(Split stage: attic and ship.)

LILY: Grandma, don't stop. Tell us what happened.

CHORUS OF NURSES
AND SOLDIERS:

We boarded the ship, hoping to get back safely – if only we had known what was to come.
There was a loud bump.
The ship began to shake.
Suddenly a sailor came in screaming,
“The German U-boats are attacking!”
God, please don't let this happen; I'm not ready to die yet.
Then came another loud bump,
and several more.
The cold water rose around us.
And we went under.

PETER: I'm sorry, Lizzie...

(Enter Newsboy.)

NEWSBOY: *(He holds up paper.)* Hospital ship attacked by German submarine, U-86, on June 27th, 1918. May they rest in peace.

SCENE XIII

(In attic)

LILY: *(Reading the telegram.)* The Secretary of War desires me to express that soldier Peter Smith was killed in the sinking of a hospital ship on June 27th, 1918...

LIZ: Peter died. What about Kate?

GRANDMA: She died along with all the other nurses on the ship.

LIZ: We read about that in history class. I can't believe someone in my family was on that ship.

LILY: I can't even begin to imagine what that must have been like for your mom.

LIZ: This is getting too depressing. What kind of losers would spend their Friday night listening to a war story? *(Looks at audience.)*

GRANDMA: I'm sorry you'd rather spend your time on the Instachat and

Twitterbook. But it's important that you know your ancestors' stories; these things really did happen. *(She gives her a look.)*

LIZ: *(Mutters.)* Sorry, Grandma.

LILY: *(She whispers to Liz.)* Can you try to be considerate of Grandma's feelings for a few more minutes?

LIZ: Grandma's fine. *(She looks over at Grandma who is wiping away tears.)* Um, Grandma...Are you all right?

GRANDMA: Yes, dear. I'm fine. Looking at all these things brought back memories of my mother. *(She clears throat.)* A few months later, the war ended. She went home.

LIZ: Start this part without me; I have to go to the bathroom. *(Exits.)*

SCENE XIV

(Enter Elizabeth and Will; soldiers and nurses are all talking at the train station.)

ELIZABETH: *(Aside)* I should've listened to Johanna. None of us will ever be the same.

CHORUS: We went away across the sea
to save lives – our brothers, fathers and lovers.
We did our duty.
This was our war too.
How can we go back to what we were before?

This is our war too.

ELIZABETH: *(Aside)* I'm a WOMAN. I went to war; I brought honour to my family and country. Peter and Kate would have been proud of me! *(Pause.)* I'm proud of me!

WILL: Let's get in line to board the train. *(Aside)* It should've been me that died, not Peter.

SOLDER #1: I can't wait to see my wife and kids.

NURSE: I'll never forget what I saw in the war.

ELIZABETH: Home will never be the same.

SOLDIER #2: The train is here.

(Train sound effect – everyone goes up onstage and becomes part of a tableau.)

SCENE XV

(Enter Liz on stage in the family room. She talks on the cellphone.)

LIZ: Listen, Hannah. I know I said I'd go shopping with you, but I really can't. I'm at Grandma's. No, it isn't boring at all. I actually learned some really cool things. I'm gonna take my Grandma out for a bit. I'll call you when I get home. Bye.

LILY: *(She runs on stage.)* You're going to miss the end of the story! *(She pulls her arm.)*

LIZ: I feel really bad for Grandma. She really misses her mom. We should do something for her.

LILY: *(In shock)* You want to do something nice? *(She backs away.)* What have you done to my sister? Who are you?

LIZ: Cut it out. Listen, I have an idea. But we're gonna have to find out where Great-Grandma is buried.

LILY: Mount Pleasant.

LIZ: How did you know that?

LILY: I read it while I was looking through Grandma's stuff.

LIZ: Nerd, let me look up where it is. *(Writes the name of the graveyard on her phone.)*

SCENE XVI

(Enter newspaper boy.)

NEWSPAPER BOY: EXTRA! EXTRA! GERMANS DEFEATED! THE WAR IS OVER. Canadian troops returned!

(On the street outside factory – enter Johanna and Canary women, ready for work.)

FRANK: What are you ladies doing here? Didn't you hear? War is over. You aren't needed anymore! Pack up and go home.

JOHANNA: That's the thanks we get for working here for the last four years?
(Sees Elizabeth.)

JOHANNA: Elizabeth?

(Both girls hug.)

JOHANNA: You're back! *(Looks behind Elizabeth, expecting Peter to follow.)*
Where's Peter? *(Notices Elizabeth gets quiet.)* Oh, Lizzie, I'm sorry.

ELIZABETH: He's not coming back. I should have listened to you. I should have never let him leave.

JOHANNA: *(Looks Liz in the eye.)* I was wrong, Lizzie. I never should have tried to stop you from going. Peter fought for the lives of the people in this country who can now grow up and make the memories Peter died fighting for. I lost my job as soon as the men returned. When I was working I felt important, you know? I'm no soldier on the battlefield or a nurse, but I did my part.

ELIZABETH: Yes. We all made sacrifices.

JOHANNA: I never want to go through this again. I never want you or anyone else to feel like we do today.

(Enter Will with luggage.)

WILL: *(Notices Johanna.)* Hello, you must be Johanna. I'm William Bennett – a friend of Lizzie and Peter's.

(Johanna raises an eyebrow and looks at Elizabeth.)

ELIZABETH: *(She turns to Johanna.)* I'll explain later.

(Frank and his friends notice Will and approach him.)

FRANK: Thank you for your service.

WILL: *(She gets uncomfortable.)* Thank you, but some of us wouldn't be here if it weren't for our nurses. *(Motions towards Lizzie.)* Lizzie, here, was a nurse in France.

(Elizabeth holds out her hand for a handshake. Frank shakes her hand, uninterested).

FRANK: *(She turns to Will.)* What was it like out there where all the real action happened?

(Group of people crowd Will with questions, pushing the two girls out.)

ELIZABETH: So much for respect and honour.

CHORUS OF WOMEN: The war is over.
Not everyone is home.
We gave everything we had to fight for justice and our rights.
Now they no longer need us; they cast us aside.
They took us from the stations; they took us from our work.
This is our war too.

SCENE XVII

(Graveyard – chorus sits with backs to audience to represent gravestones. Grandma, Lily and Liz enter graveyard. Lily covers Grandma's eyes.)

LILY: Okay, Grandma. You can look now!

GRANDMA: *(Looks around in shock and awe.)* I haven't been here in years. I've always wanted to come back to this cemetery. How did you girls find it?

LIZ: *(She ushers to Lily.)* Little Miss Busybody over here did some snooping. Come on, Grandma. We want to see Great-Grandma Elizabeth's grave.

GRANDMA: *(Smiles.)* Follow me. Watch your step, children.

LILY: This place is depressing.

LIZ: You're depressing.

GRANDMA: Ah, here it is: Elizabeth Anne Smith, beloved wife of William Bennett.

LILY: Grandma...*(Hands her a bouquet of Lilies.)* We picked these from your garden.

GRANDMA: *(Smiles.)* She would've loved these.

(Grandma takes a moment. Bluebirds are chirping. She puts down lilies on grave.)

GRANDMA: Even after all these years, I sure do miss you. *(Sighs.)*

LILY: May Peter and Katherine rest in peace.

GRANDMA: I listened to my mother when she told me her war stories and comforted her when she cried. She always missed her brothers. But now you know them too.

(Lily, Grandma and Liz, in scene, become part of a tableau.)

CHORUS: *(“Graves” turn around to face audience.)*

Women, Nurses, Mothers.
Pain, sacrifice and waiting.
Waiting for peace.
Waiting for love.
Waiting to be equals,
Capable.
Strong.
Brilliant.
Human.
This was our war too.

(Family, in scene, breaks the tableau.)

GRANDMA: We'll visit here more often.

(Blackout)

Prix
jeunes écrivains

 2017



SCHOOL: Jean Vanier

TEACHER: Linda Cinelli

SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Joyce McLean-Seely

UNIT: Brant Haldimand Norfolk

UNIT PRESIDENT: Tom Laracy

JUNIOR AND SENIOR KINDERGARTEN / **SHORT STORY**

by **Mila Poulton**

Un bateau

Voici un bateau avec une échelle.

Il y a un poisson sous le bateau.

Le poisson nage



MON DRAGON ARC-EN-CIEL



SCHOOL: Jean Vanier

TEACHER: Maria Sampson

SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Joyce McLean-Seely

UNIT: Brant Haldimand Norfolk

UNIT PRESIDENT: Tom Laracy

JUNIOR AND SENIOR KINDERGARTEN / **POEM**

by **Miles Robert Noonan**

Il a des pouvoirs
Il peut creuser
Il attaque les monstres
Mon dragon est toujours là.



SCHOOL: St. Joseph French Immersion Center
TEACHER: Julie Tremere
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Claire Blahnik
UNIT: Peterborough
UNIT PRESIDENT: Dean Spence

JUNIOR AND SENIOR KINDERGARTEN / **NONFICTION**
by **Meriel Sheridan**

J'aime ma maman
J'aime mon papa
J'aime ma tortue Nirou

J'aime ma famille
J'aime mon grand frère Liam

Je m'aime
J'aime ma petite soeur

J'aime ma grand-maman
J'aime mon grand-papa

J'aime ma cousine
J'aime mon frère cadet Fergus

J'aime ma maison
J'aime mon jardin.



UNE JOURNEE DE BALLERINE



SCHOOL: St. Elizabeth Seton
TEACHER: Kathleen St. Louis
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Diana Miscalci
UNIT: Dufferin-Peel Elementary
UNIT PRESIDENT: Rose Procopio

GRADES 1-2 / SHORT STORY
by Noemi Vaduva

Il était une fois une ballerine qui s'appelle Bella. Elle a un tutu rose, des chaussures de ballet et un beau maquillage. Bella va à des cours de ballet. Elle pratique aussi à la maison pour s'améliorer. Un jour, quand Bella était à son cours de ballet, elle a trébuché et s'est blessée. Comme elle avait mal, elle s'est mise à pleurer très fort. Le professeur de ballet de Bella, madame Matty, lui a mis un pansement sur sa blessure.

«Merci madame», dit Lily, la meilleure amie de Bella

«La classe va bientôt se terminer», dit madame Matty.

«Maman, je suis tombée», dit Bella, quand elle est dans la voiture de sa maman.

«Oh! Ça a dû te faire mal. Est-ce que tu vas mieux?»

«Oui maman, je me sens mieux».

La mère et la fille arrivent à la maison. Elles mangent une soupe de poulet aux nouilles, la soupe préférée de Bella.

Bella raconte ce qu'elle a fait au cours de ballet à sa maman.

«Actuellement, au ballet, nous faisons des pliés, des sauts et des grand-écart». Elle essaie de faire un grand-écart mais elle ne peut pas le faire parce que sa jambe lui fait mal. Bella dit à sa maman qu'elle ne peut pas faire le grand-écart car elle a une blessure à la jambe. La maman de Bella lui répond que c'est normal. Elle ajoute qu'il est l'heure pour que Bella aille se coucher. Quand elle est couchée dans son lit, elle s'imagine danser avec Lily. Puis Bella s'endort.

Le matin, elle mange des crêpes et boit du lait. Après qu'elle a fini de manger, elle va dans le jardin pour jouer dans l'herbe. Après avoir fini de jouer, elle rentre dans la maison pour boire de l'eau et manger un petit gâteau. Ensuite, Bella va dormir un peu dans son lit. Quand sa maman vient dans sa chambre, elle est contente de voir que Bella s'est endormie.

Dans son lit, Bella rêve qu'elle est une grande ballerine qui porte de belles chaussures.



COMMENT JE ME COMPTE



SCHOOL: St. Elizabeth Seton

TEACHER: Philippe Vis

SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Diana Miscalci

UNIT: Dufferin-Peel Elementary

UNIT PRESIDENT: Rose Procopio

GRADES 1-2 / POEM

by Rachel Faith Canimo

1678 pièces de lego, de la plus grande boîte de lego que j'ai faite

250 Pokémons que j'ai capturés.

150 est l'âge du pays que j'appelle "maison".

88 touches noires et blanches sur mon piano.

64 crayons de couleurs de ma boîte préférée.

13 est la pointure de mes souliers.

4 cordes sur mon violon.

2 le nombre de mes prénoms.

Mais avec tous ces numéros,

Il y a juste **1** de moi,



LES BEIGNETS



SCHOOL: Jean Vanier

TEACHER: Krystina Pucci

SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Joyce McLean-Seely

UNIT: Brant Haldimand Norfolk

UNIT PRESIDENT: Tom Laracy

GRADES 1-2 / NONFICTION

by **Elodie Brook**

J'aime les beignets parce qu'ils sont sucrés et doux.

Beaucoup de beignets sont ronds, et quelques-uns ont des trous au milieu.

Les beignets au chocolat sont bruns et ceux à la vanille, sont blancs.

Il y en a aussi qui ont des vermicelles arc-en-ciel.

Certains sont aussi grands que ma main et d'autres plus grands que ma main.

Les timbits vont facilement dans ma bouche.

Le goût des beignets aux vermicelles, me plonge dans le monde du bonbon.

C'est comme s'il y a des vermicelles de sucre qui te massent la langue.

J'aime les manger avec le chocolat chaud.

Je n'en mange pas souvent parce qu'ils ne sont pas très nourrissants.



MIA LA FÉE ET GORGE, LE BANDIT



SCHOOL: Our Lady Of Peace
TEACHER: Carmela Simone
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Sandra Gersondé
UNIT: York
UNIT PRESIDENT: Heather Manassis

GRADES 3-4 / SHORT STORY
by Anna-Grace Vita Aniello

Il était une fois, une petite fille qui s'appelait Mia. Elle aimait beaucoup les fleurs. Un jour, sa grand-mère lui donna une fleur spéciale. Mais Mia ne savait pas encore que sa fleur était spéciale. Elle était très excitée d'avoir reçu une fleur. Elle la planta et le matin suivant, sa grand-mère vint lui rendre visite. C'était la plus belle fleur que Mia a vu de toute sa vie. Puis, elle toucha la fleur et aussitôt se transforma elle-même en fleur. Elle vit ensuite un château. Elle rentra dans le château et vit la reine. La reine Maya lui dit que George, le bandit a pris toutes les fleurs de la France. Alors, la reine remit à Mia un collier.

Quand elle touche le collier de fleurs, elle se transforme en fée et quand elle vole au-dessus d'une fleur, elle redevient une fille normale. Elle fit ce que la reine Maya lui a dit de faire. Comme elle ne voulait pas informer sa mère de ce qui s'est passé, elle lui raconta que le collier de fleurs était un cadeau de sa grand-mère. Mia était très contente ce jour-là parce qu'elle pouvait se transformer en fée quand elle le voulait.

Quelques temps après, Mia demanda à aller jouer dehors. Une fois dehors, elle toucha le collier de fleurs et pouf, elle se retrouva au château des fées. Dans le château, elle trouva, George, le bandit. Elle demanda à la reine: « Qui est-ce? »

La reine Maya lui répondit: « C'est un garçon qui aime le bleu, le vert, le noir et le rouge ». Et pour aider Mia, la reine Maya lui donna une petite fleur magique et un petit papillon qui s'appelle Lulu. Mia remercia la reine Maya, puis elle retourna dans sa maison.

Le lendemain, matin, elle prit son petit déjeuner: un bol de céréales, du smoothie avec des fruits d'arc-en-ciel. Après avoir pris son petit déjeuner, elle fit son lit, releva ses cheveux en chignon, puis elle alla à l'école. À l'école, elle ne raconta toute l'histoire qu'à sa meilleure amie. Celle-ci s'exclama: « wow! Est-ce que c'est amusant d'être une fée? »

Et elle lui répondit: « oui, c'est très amusant d'être une fée ».

Après cela, elle parla et joua toute la journée. C'était un jeudi.

Le lendemain, elle demanda à sa maman si elle pouvait avoir une soirée pyjama avec Jia seule, pour la fin de la semaine.

La maman de Mia téléphona alors à la maman de Jia pour lui en parler et celle-ci accepta de permettre à sa fille d'aller à la soirée pyjama. À l'école, c'était une journée de congé alors les

mamans de Jia et Mia pouvaient organiser la soirée pyjama.

Le samedi, lors de la soirée pyjama, Mia se transforma en fée avec Jia. Elles virent Lulu, le papillon et la petite fleur magique. Les deux petites filles volèrent jusqu'à l'école pour sauver le monde. Elles retrouvèrent George le bandit dans le jardin de l'école. Mia dit à George d'arrêter de voler les fleurs. Elles constatèrent alors que George ne volait pas les fleurs mais il les regardait plutôt pousser. Quand Mia et Jia réalisèrent que George n'était pas un bandit, elles devinrent ses amies.



MON POEME DE LA GUERRE



SCHOOL: St. Edward

TEACHER: Devon Dimney

SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Devon Dimney

UNIT: York

UNIT PRESIDENT: Heather Manassis

GRADES 3-4 / POEM

by **Chloe Cha**

Je suis un coquelicot
Ce jour, je me suis levé tôt.
Il y a la guerre aujourd'hui,
Il y a aussi de la pluie.
Quand le fusil tonne, j'ai peur,
Et pourtant, j'ai un bien grand cœur
Quand j'entends le bruit du feu,
Je me mets à prier Dieu
Dans les champs de débris et de pierres tombant,
Je vois des enfants tristes, crier en tombant.
De nature, je suis rouge,
Et quand il vente, je bouge.
Quand je vois les Champs des Flandres,
Je réalise que c'est un désastre.
Je vais recommencer ma prière
Pour qu'on n'ait plus jamais la guerre.



LE RÉCHAUFFEMENT CLIMATIQUE



SCHOOL: St. Elizabeth Seton
TEACHER: Diana Miscalci
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Diana Miscalci
UNIT: Dufferin-Peel Elementary
UNIT PRESIDENT: Rose Procopio

GRADES 3-4 / NONFICTION
by **Carl Tadross**

Pourriez-vous imaginer un jour qu'une poule puisse pondre des œufs durs ? Ou qu'une vache aussitôt abattue puisse produire du hamburger sans que sa chair ne passe au four ? Ou qu'un jour, le père Noël puisse venir la veille de Noël, à cheval ou à chameau ? Eh bien, un jour, cela risque d'arriver. La planète se réchauffe du Pôle Nord au Pôle Sud. Savez-vous pourquoi le climat veut qu'on respecte sa vie privée ? Parce qu'il est entrain de changer. Ainsi les quatre saisons deviendront : le *Tolérable*, le *Chaud*, le *Très Chaud* et le *Vous plaisantez?*

Le réchauffement progressif de la surface de la Terre, des océans et de l'atmosphère est réel, et est causé par les hommes. La destruction des forêts et la combustion des énergies fossiles (comme le pétrole) produisent du dioxyde de carbone, du méthane et d'autres polluants (appelés gaz à effet de serre) qui, relâchés dans l'atmosphère, agissent comme une couverture pour piéger la chaleur du soleil et entraînent le réchauffement de la planète.

Ce phénomène est appelé l'effet de serre. Un climat plus chaud crée une atmosphère permettant de recueillir, conserver et de faire tomber plus d'eau. La trop grande modification des conditions météorologiques peut rendre les ouragans plus fréquents, les tempêtes plus fortes et augmenter la fréquence des catastrophes naturelles comme les inondations et les incendies de forêt.

Nous ressentons actuellement les effets de la hausse de la température. Les signes apparaissent partout et certains d'entre eux sont surprenants. Ces signes sont révélés par les images satellites et par les scientifiques spécialistes du climat. Ces scientifiques prévoient la hausse de la température sur la terre de 6 degrés Celsius et l'augmentation du niveau de la mer de 18 à 58 cm d'ici l'an 2100.

En 1910, il y avait 150 glaciers, maintenant, il n'en reste que 25. De même, depuis l'an 1700, le niveau de dioxyde de carbone sur terre a augmenté de 34 pourcent. En outre, nos satellites montrent un déclin de la banquise arctique de 12 par décennie.

Nous (les hommes) sommes la principale cause du réchauffement climatique, et cela va nous attaquer en retour. Ainsi l'augmentation des températures accentue la pollution de l'air et aggrave la santé des personnes souffrant de maladies respiratoires comme l'asthme. La hausse des températures augmente la quantité de pollens transportée par l'air et provoque des allergies

chez ceux qui souffrent d'allergie au pollen. De même, les températures élevées permettent la propagation des maladies, telles que le paludisme et le choléra. La chaleur extrême, quand elle persiste plusieurs jours, peut entraîner la mort des personnes vulnérables comme les personnes âgées et les personnes malades.

Le principal effet du réchauffement climatique est la fonte des glaciers polaires dans l'Arctique, l'Antarctique et le Groenland. Cela va faire monter le niveau des mers et des océans. Avec la hausse du dioxyde de carbone, les océans vont absorber une partie de ce gaz, ce qui va augmenter l'acidité et mettre en danger les récifs coralliens. De même, l'élévation du niveau de la mer va conduire à la disparition de certaines îles comme l'île des Maldives, les îles Seychelles, les îles Salomon et l'île du Prince Édouard.

L'effet du réchauffement climatique sur les plantes et les animaux est très répandu. Beaucoup d'animaux migrent, de l'équateur vers les Pôles pour échapper aux températures plus élevées. La hausse des températures peut modifier aussi bien les zones propices aux cultures que les biotopes des animaux. À cause de la disparition de leurs habitats, de nombreux animaux ne peuvent pas s'adapter aux changements climatiques et risquent de s'éteindre. Le réchauffement climatique existe, et est principalement causé par les êtres humains, qui continuent d'accélérer le processus.

Comment pouvons-nous aider à arrêter le réchauffement climatique?

Le fort taux d'émission de dioxyde de carbone dans l'air est la principale cause du réchauffement climatique et de ses conséquences. Notre objectif doit être l'utilisation raisonnable de l'énergie fossile pour le chauffage et les moteurs.

C'est possible d'utiliser l'énergie solaire pour le chauffage et la cuisson des repas. Par ailleurs, les arbres et les forêts aident à éliminer le dioxyde de carbone de l'atmosphère. Il faut donc arrêter de couper les arbres et arrêter de détruire les forêts, réduire la consommation du bois et diminuer l'utilisation du papier par le recyclage. On peut aussi économiser l'électricité en utilisant des ampoules LED (Diode Électroluminescente), cesser de gaspiller de l'eau et arrêter l'utilisation des engrais chimiques.

Il est de notre responsabilité de laisser cette planète en meilleure forme que nous l'avons trouvée aux générations futures. Rappelez-vous, le réchauffement climatique est une réalité créée par l'homme. C'est un problème très préoccupant mais qui peut être résolu.



SCHOOL: St. Brendan
TEACHER: Stacey McTaggart
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Alison Misa
UNIT: York
UNIT PRESIDENT: Heather Masassis

GRADES 5-6 / **SHORT STORY**
by **Lauren Vassos-Martino**

C'était un autre jour au soleil, dans la belle ville d'Abbotsford. Becca, une grande fille aux cheveux bruns-dorés et aux yeux vert-émeraude et brillants se réveillait d'un horrible rêve. Elle cria si fort qu'elle pensa que toute l'Australie pouvait l'entendre. La mère de Becca courut vers la chambre de sa fille pour voir si sa fille allait bien.

« Ça va? », lui demanda sa mère pendant qu'elle caresse les longs cheveux de Becca.

« Oui je pense » lui répondit Becca, encore apeurée.

« Peut-être que si tu parles de ton rêve, tu vas te sentir mieux », répliqua la mère de la fille de 13 ans.

« D'accord » dit Becca.

J'étais dans la forêt et quelqu'un me poursuivait. Je ne savais pas de qui ou de quoi il s'agissait. Chaque fois que je me tournais, la chose ou la personne disparaissait, sauf une seule fois. Cette fois-là, je me suis retournée et j'ai vu un visage dans l'ombre qui me suivait. Ce visage me ressemblait comme si je me regardais dans le miroir.

« Puis »? dit sa mère.

« Puis je me suis réveillée » ajouta Becca.

« Est-ce que tu te sens mieux? » demanda sa mère encore un peu inquiète.

« Un peu mieux à présent » dit Becca.

« D'accord, quand tu seras prête, viens à la cuisine prendre ton petit déjeuner » dit la mère de Becca.

Plus tard dans la journée, Becca reçut un message de sa meilleure amie Lila. Lila est une fille de 13 ans vraiment formidable. Elle a de magnifiques cheveux blond-fraises et des yeux bleus plus clairs que l'océan. À la différence de Becca, Lila a une personnalité vraiment joyeuse et elle a toujours un sourire sur le visage.

« Veux-tu jouer dans la forêt avec moi? » demanda Lila qui est tout le temps enthousiaste. Les deux filles habitaient en Colombie-Britannique où il y a beaucoup de forêts.

« Que penses-tu de demain? » dit Becca.

« Demain, c'est parfait. Je suis tellement excitée », répliqua Lila.

« Comme tout le temps », dit Becca, un peu en colère.

Le lendemain, Lila frappa à la porte de Becca qui donnait l'impression de se préparer à voyager pour 2 ans.

« Es-tu prête? » demanda Lila?

« Oui, tu l'es aussi, je peux le voir » répondit Becca.

« Auras-tu besoin de toutes ces choses? » l'interrogea Lila.

« Mieux vaut prévenir que guérir. » répliqua Becca.

Les filles s'amuserent beaucoup pendant qu'elles exploraient la forêt. Puis, Lila eut une idée folle.

« Et si on construisait une maison dans l'arbre? » demanda Lila excitée.

« Non! Pas ici! » répondit Becca un peu fâchée.

« Viens voir Becca! » dit Lila. « C'est parfait. Dis oui s'il te plaît » supplia Lila.

« Ok, tu peux le faire. J'allais rentrer pour regarder un film sur Netflix » lui répondit Becca.

« S'il te plaît? » implora encore Lila.

« Ugh. D'accord, » s'exclama Becca.

« Yay » cria de joie Lila.

Les deux amies ramassèrent le meilleur bois qu'elles pouvaient trouver dans la forêt et se mirent à construire la plus grande maison dans l'arbre possible. Quand la construction fut terminée, c'était une maison rustique mais coquette. Les filles étaient tout le temps à l'intérieur.

Un jour quand Lila et Becca marchaient vers la forêt, Lila se rappela qu'elle n'avait pas pris les collations. Elle retourna à pied à la maison de Becca pour aller chercher un sac de croustilles Doritos.

Pendant que Lila allait chercher les croustilles, Becca resta toute seule dans la maison d'arbre. Elle était entrain de jouer sur son téléphone portable, quand elle entendit un bruit dehors. Elle regarda par la fenêtre, mais il n'y avait rien. Becca entendit encore du bruit. Elle eut la plus grande peur de sa vie.

« Qui est là? » cria Becca terrifiée. Elle vit une chose noire se cacher derrière l'arbre le plus proche de la maison. Puis, Becca vit la porte s'ouvrir. Elle prit le plus vite possible un bâton de baseball.

Elle était à deux doigts de frapper la première personne qui ouvrirait la porte quand elle vit qui c'était vraiment.

« Wow, que fais-tu avec ça? C'est juste moi » cria Lila si fort que la maison faillit tomber de l'arbre.

« Oh désolée, j'ai pensé que tu étais...» dit Becca, effondrée.

« Quoi? Qu'est-ce que tu as pensé que j'étais?» l'interrompit-elle.

« Rien. Peu importe. Je pense que je dois aller à la maison. Je ne me sens pas bien» dit Becca.

Quand Lila raccompagna Becca à la maison. Elle l'interrogea encore sur ce qu'elle avait vu dans la forêt.

« Je ne sais pas vraiment. Je ne l'ai pas vraiment vu. Je n'ai vu que son ombre» répondit Becca. Lila remarqua que Becca avait peur.

Le soir venu, Becca eut un autre rêve à propos de l'ombre. Cette fois-ci, c'était différent. Cette fois, l'ombre chassait Lila. Becca n'était même pas dans le rêve. L'ombre chassa Lila vers une petite cabine située au milieu de la forêt. Il lui donna un coup sur la tête avec une branche. Quand Becca se réveilla, elle téléphona à Lila pour voir si elle allait bien. Mais l'appel tomba sur le répondeur. Becca courut jusqu'à la maison de Lila. Elle frappa à la porte et demanda aux parents de Lila, si elle allait bien.

« Quoi? je pensais qu'elle était avec toi» lui répondit la mère de Lila, inquiète.

« Je ne l'ai plus vu depuis qu'on a quitté la forêt» cria tristement Becca.

Après être rentrée chez elle, Becca pleura dans sa chambre pendant une heure. Après cela, elle retourna à la maison de l'arbre dans la forêt. Quand elle revint à la maison, elle regarda pendant longtemps dans le miroir. Au moment où elle regardait dans le miroir, elle vit l'ombre.

Quand elle se retourna, l'ombre disparut. Elle était vraiment embêtée. Becca se tourna encore vers le miroir et vit l'ombre une autre fois. Elle se rappela de son enfance. Elle avait déjà vu l'ombre. Or quand tu vois l'ombre, tu deviens l'ombre. Puis ça fait tout son sens. Les disparitions, la forêt, ses rêves. Ses rêves ne sont pas des rêves. Je me regarde moi-même. Je suis l'ombre.

Becca pleura, pour une autre heure, puis elle se rappela de la cabine. Elle marcha ensuite jusqu'au milieu de la forêt et vit la cabine. Becca ouvrit la porte et vit Lila et toutes les autres personnes qui avaient été capturées.



SCHOOL: St. Joseph
TEACHER: Colleen Haegens
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Colleen Haegens
UNIT: Brant Haldimand Norfolk
UNIT PRESIDENT: Tom Laracy

GRADES 5-6 / POEM
by **Andrew David Lorimer**

On dévale la glace à toute vitesse,
L'un contre l'autre, avec tant de finesse!
On lance la rondelle et on retient son souffle,
Puis on entend le coup de sifflet de l'arbitre.



LES ARTISTES FRANÇAIS



SCHOOL: Loretta

TEACHER: Niki Newport

SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Colleen Bartolini

UNIT: Niagara Elementary

UNIT PRESIDENT: Marie Balanowski

GRADES 5-6 / NONFICTION

by **Sofia Covelli et Melena Annalisa Orsini**

- VISITEUR:** Wow! C'est magnifique!
- GUIDE:** N'est-ce pas? Vous regardez la toile de Paul Signac? La toile s'appelle «Le pin de Bertaud». C'est une peinture très connue.
- VISITEUR:** J'aime les couleurs utilisées. Pouvez-vous me parler un peu de Paul Signac?
- GUIDE:** Bien sûr. Qu'est-ce que vous voulez savoir?
- VISITEUR:** Tout!
- GUIDE:** Pour commencer, il est né à Paris, en France, le 11 novembre 1863. Il a habité à Paris et est mort le 15 août 1935. Il avait 72 ans.
- VISITEUR:** Comment est-il mort?
- GUIDE:** Il est mort de septicémie. C'est une infection du sang.
- VISITEUR:** Oh! Je ne savais pas. Quoi d'autre? Que savez-vous sur lui?
- GUIDE:** Il a fait beaucoup de peintures. Quelques exemples sont : «Place des Lices», «Antibes», «les nuages roses» et «Le port de St- Tropez. »
- VISITEUR:** Wow! Il aime beaucoup le sud de la France.
- GUIDE:** Ah oui. Il s'est inspiré des paysages du Sud de la France pour peindre.
- VISITEUR:** Wow, c'est très intéressant! Quels types de peintures faisait-il?
- GUIDE:** Il a fait le pointillisme.
- VISITEUR:** Ah oui. Avait-il des passe-temps favoris?
- GUIDE:** Oui, il faisait de la voile. Il voyageait beaucoup aussi.

VISITEUR: C'est un artiste fascinant!

GUIDE: Oui, il avait aussi des amis artistes: Georges Seurat et Claude Monet. Ce sont des néo-impressionnistes.

VISITEUR: C'est vrai. George Seurat a influencé Paul Signac, n'est-ce pas?

GUIDE: Oui, voici ses peintures. Il faisait aussi le pointillisme.

VISITEUR: Je sais qu'il ne mélangeait pas les couleurs, et il utilisait seulement des couleurs primaires. Il faisait de petits points sur la peinture et l'œil se chargeait de mélanger les couleurs.

GUIDE: Impressionnant!

VISITEUR: Il est aussi né à Paris, en France, le 2 décembre 1859. Il est mort le 29 mars 1891.

GUIDE: Vous connaissez beaucoup de choses sur Georges Seurat!

VISITEUR: Bien sûr! J'ai beaucoup lu sur lui. Il n'est pas marié, mais il a une fille. Je me souviens qu'on l'a enterré au cimetière Père Lachaise à Paris comme Signac.

GUIDE: Ah oui! Vous avez raison. Ces deux artistes ont des points communs.

VISITEUR: Signac et Seurat habitaient à Paris.

GUIDE: C'est vrai.

VISITEUR: La peinture la plus célèbre de Seurat est «Un dimanche après-midi à l'Île de la Grand Jatte». Il y a aussi le «Pont de courbevoie» et «Le Chahut».

GUIDE: Je ne savais pas.

VISITEUR: La dernière peinture que Seurat a faite est «The Cirque» en 1891. Il n'a pas fini la peinture avant de mourir.

GUIDE: Incroyable! J'ai beaucoup appris sur Georges Seurat avec vous!

VISITEUR: Merci! C'était un plaisir de discuter avec vous! Au revoir.

GUIDE: Le plaisir est réciproque. Merci. À plus tard!



CHÈRE MAMAN, MA CHÈRE PETITE PÂQUERETTE



SCHOOL: Marguerite D'yenville

TEACHER: Christine Otsudi-Anango

SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Ann Marie Dileonardo

UNIT: Halton Elementary

UNIT PRESIDENT: Nina March

GRADES 7-8 / SHORT STORY

by Catriona Ngoc-Irang Nguyen

Le 21 septembre 2004

Chère maman,

Une fois, tu m'as dit que tu n'aimes pas le silence. Tu as dit que le silence était tendu et gênant, comme le calme avant la tempête. Or maintenant, notre maison est tranquille. Tout le monde est parti, et je suis la seule personne ici, avec cette maison seule pour me rappeler de toi.

Tu me manques.

Ton parfum flotte encore dans l'air, et si je me concentre, je peux imaginer le son de ton disque favori qui passe dans notre maison. Maintenant que tu es partie, cette maison ressemble au lendemain d'une tempête, il ne reste que les dégâts et on doit ramasser les morceaux.

Après avoir vidé ta chambre, j'ai trouvé une lettre dans le tiroir derrière ton meuble favori; une lettre que tu avais écrite pour moi, il y a presque 20 ans.

Jusqu'à ce moment, je ne pouvais pas imaginer à quel point tu as souffert. À chaque fois que je t'interrogeais sur ton passé à propos du Viêt-Nam, tu souriais et tu me disais que c'était un endroit charmant. Mais il y avait une faible ombre de tristesse dans tes yeux, et maintenant je sais pourquoi. Tu as vu beaucoup de chagrins et de destructions sur cette terre que tu appelles ton pays natal. Et tu as aussi souffert encore plus, quand tu as essayé de t'échapper pour te donner une vie meilleure, pour me donner une vie meilleure. Et à cause de cela, je te suis reconnaissante.

Grace à toi, je suis une jeune femme accomplie et j'ai réalisé beaucoup de choses dans ma vie. Mais aucune de ces choses n'est comparable aux choses que tu as faites. Tu es une survivante, une réfugiée qui a abandonné son ancienne vie pour m'offrir la mienne...tu es ma mère.

Merci de m'avoir protégée.

Merci d'être la personne que tu es, d'être la mère forte et extraordinaire dont j'avais besoin.

Merci.

Je t'adore maman chérie.

Avec toute mon affection,
Ta petite Pâquerette.

Juin 1982

Ma chère petite Pâquerette,

C'est tellement tranquille sur ce bateau, je ne l'aime pas. Je n'aime rien ici. Les lattes de plancher qui craquent, l'odeur de la sueur moisie, la très forte odeur d'urine... la pure terreur dans l'air. Au Vietnam, nous n'avons jamais eu le temps d'être terrorisé à ce point. Il y a eu trop de carnage... Très peu de vie. Maintenant que nous sommes tellement proches de la liberté, nous sommes terrifiés d'être libres loin de chez nous. Nous ne savons pas ce qui se passera après. Ce petit bateau est bondé de monde. Nous sommes serrés les uns aux autres comme ces sardines en conserve, que j'ai toujours désirées. C'est bizarre que je pense à des choses de luxe au moment où nous voyageons sur la mer et nous nous battons pour survivre. On doit penser à notre survie... Mais je ne pense qu'à toi. Je veux te protéger, ma précieuse Pâquerette.

Je suis désolée si je n'y arrive pas.

Je ne sais pas si je survivrai. Je ne sais pas si tu survivras.

Et à cause de cela, je suis tellement, tellement désolée.

Je suis désolée de t'amener dans ce monde, seulement pour le terminer si vite.

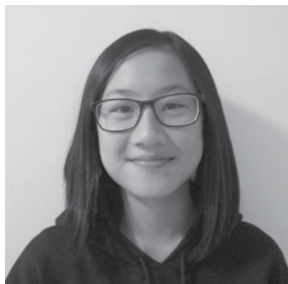
Je suis désolée d'être une réfugiée et de nous mettre dans cette situation.

Je suis vraiment désolée de ne pas être la mère dont tu as besoin.

Je suis désolée.

Je t'adore ma chérie.

Avec toute mon affection,
ta mère.



SCHOOL: St. Rose of Lima

TEACHER: Marianna Hordiyuk

SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Theresa McMahon

UNIT: Dufferin-Peel Elementary

UNIT PRESIDENT: Rose Procopio

GRADES 7-8 / POEM

by Elaine Setiawan

Je regarde dans le miroir,
Et je vois un monstre.
Un monstre qui ne sourit pas,
Qui a peur des personnes et de leurs opinions.
Je suis seul.
Il y a des gens autour de moi, mais
Je suis seul.
Personne n'aime les monstres
Alors je porte un masque
Un masque qui me fait ressembler à un humain normal,
Un masque souriant.
Et soudain, les gens s'approchent
Et je fais une erreur,
Je fais tomber mon masque.
Et les gens sont dégoutés.
Et les gens ont peur.
Je suis seul encore.
Tout le monde est parti.
Tous, sauf une personne
Il dit une phrase,
"Tu n'es pas un monstre"
Et je me suis mis à pleurer.
Les monstres ne pleurent pas.
Il a raison, je ne suis pas un monstre,
Je suis cassé
Je réalise que j'ai seulement peur du monde
Mais je dois accepter la réalité
Je regarde dans le miroir une autre fois,
Et je ne vois plus un monstre,
Pas un monstre qui a peur du monde,
Ni un monstre incapable de sourire,
Non.
Je vois
Un humain.



MES VACANCES DE NOËL



SCHOOL: St. Anthony

TEACHER: Milly Crescenzi

SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Milly Crescenzi

UNIT: York

UNIT PRESIDENT: Heather Manassis

GRADES 7-8 / NONFICTION

by **Isabella Morales Matta**

Le 5 décembre 2016, je n'ai pas hésité à me lever à 3 heures du matin. Je n'étais pas inquiète de voyager des milliers de mètres au dessus de la terre, ni malheureuse de m'asseoir sur la même chaise pendant 7 heures. Ce jour-là, rien ne pouvait gâcher ma bonne humeur parce que j'étais en route pour la Colombie.

Comme vous le savez, j'ai eu un mois d'aventures et de bons souvenirs, que je vais partager avec tout le monde, aujourd'hui.

D'abord, mon voyage a commencé à 10 heures, à l'aéroport de Pearson, avec un vol de Toronto à Bogota (la capitale de la Colombie). Après 5 heures de vol, j'ai pris un autre avion qui m'a amenée à Santiago de Cali (la ville où je suis née). Dans cette ville, j'ai été accueillie par l'arôme des fruits frais, la chaleur de toute ma famille et des mariachis. Du moment où je suis arrivée, j'ai senti une grande différence entre mes deux cultures car j'ai quitté le froid pour le chaud et c'était magnifique.

Ce que j'ai aimé le plus, en allant sur ma terre natale, c'est la nourriture. Vous pouvez trouver une boulangerie dans chaque quartier de la ville et pour vous dire la vérité, manger c'est ce que j'ai fait le plus. Pendant mon séjour, j'ai visité beaucoup d'endroits, et j'ai fait beaucoup de choses comme aller aux théâtres. C'était une expérience sans pareil car je suis allée aux salons VIP de Cali où les serveurs vous apportent des menus avec plein de choix, pendant que vous regardez le film. Le premier que j'ai vu était "La guerre des étoiles", c'était la pire décision de ma vie car je n'ai rien compris. Après ça, j'ai vu "Passager" avec Jennifer Lawrence et Chris Pratt et je vous le recommande, c'était formidable. J'ai fait de l'équitation dans un parc aquatique et aussi du Kart. Je m'amusais beaucoup sous le soleil pendant que vous étiez ici, dans la neige et sous le froid.

Enfin, j'étais très chanceuse de pouvoir aller en vacances en 2016. Je crois que le meilleur cadeau que j'ai reçu pendant ces merveilleuses vacances de Noël, c'était tout simplement d'être avec toute ma famille pendant les fêtes. C'est vrai que peu importe où vous êtes, ce qui compte c'est avec qui vous êtes. Je ne changerai jamais aucune de mes expériences. Toutes les aventures que j'ai vécues, je les ai vécues auprès de toutes les personnes présentes dans ma vie et que j'aime le plus. Il y a des centaines de pays dans le monde que j'aurais pu visiter, mais je

crois que pour moi la Colombie sera toujours le pays le plus spécial.

Merci de me laisser partager mes vacances avec vous aujourd'hui et j'ai hâte de savoir aussi ce que vous avez fait pendant les vôtres.





LA REINE DES SIRENES



SCHOOL: St. Robert
TEACHER: Nancy Torresan
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Don Devine
UNIT: York
UNIT PRESIDENT: Heather Manassis

GRADES 9-10 / SHORT STORY

by Mahraeel N. Tadros

Les femmes de la mer apparaissent dans beaucoup de légendes anciennes. Ces légendes passent d'une génération à l'autre. Les gens ont peur mais ils ont aussi de l'admiration pour les sirènes. Les sirènes étaient les femmes les plus belles de toutes les femmes vivantes. Pour devenir sirènes, les femmes ont payé le prix fort. En effet, quand une femme mourait noyée, avec un cœur brisé, elle obtenait la vie éternelle et la capacité de vivre sous l'eau. Elle perdait aussi le potentiel de vivre au-dessus de l'eau. C'était une transformation qui allait du mortel à l'éternel. Ainsi, des sirènes ont été à un moment donné de leurs vies, des femmes.

Au bord du Heuve

Jacques n'avait jamais aimé un fleuve bruyant. C'était trop grand et trop mystérieux. Il marcha pendant plusieurs heures jusqu'à ce qu'il arrive au côté sud-ouest du fleuve. Pliant ses jambes, il s'assit sur le sable. Pendant qu'il attendait la réponse à l'appel qu'il a reçu, Jacques s'ennuya et s'endormit. Tout à coup, une éclaboussure bruyante le réveilla. Il sauta et regarda autour de lui, en cherchant la source du bruit. Il n'y avait personne, sauf un dauphin gris.

Jacques se sentit stupide; c'était seulement un poisson. La nuit s'approche et il devait retourner à la maison avant le coucher du soleil. Il se leva, déçu d'avoir gaspillé la journée, et tourna le dos au fleuve.

«Où allez-vous? On n'a même pas commencé!» lui dit une voix hardie et cynique.

Confus, Jacques se retourna. «Qui parle?», s'interrogea-t-il? Il regarda le dauphin, puis autour de lui et il regarda encore le dauphin.

«Ce n'est pas possible» pensa-t-il quand il vit les lèvres du dauphin bouger.

«Oui, c'est moi qui parle, mon ami, viens» dit le dauphin.

Le dauphin l'invita avec un geste de la tête et continua à lui parler.

«J'ai une importante tâche à te confier. On n'a pas toute la journée pour se regarder l'un et l'autre! Viens, j'ai besoin de quelqu'un... Est-ce que tu peux aller me chercher quelqu'un? Laisse-moi t'expliquer».

Hélène Violaque tenait une souris blanche dans ses mains.

«Arrête, Jaz, elle n'est pas pour ton diner!» dit Hélène au chat déçu. Jaz fit un miaou de plus et sortit de la cuisine.

«Hélène, fais attention, ça br-!» commençait à dire Livie, la mère de Hélène jusqu'à ce qu'elle vit les mains de Hélène. «Ah! Une souris! Jette-la dehors!» cria Livie, la mère de Hélène, apeurée.

«Maman, calme-toi, elle n'est pas dangereuse!» répondit Hélène. «Regarde-la, elle est très mignonne!» dit encore Hélène, en levant sa main vers sa mère.

«J'ai dit JETTE-LA DEHORS!» répète Livie, plus fortement cette fois et elle lança un regard peu amène à Hélène.

«D'accord, d'accord» répondit Hélène en sortant de la cuisine.

Elle regarda derrière elle. Sa mère se tenait encore occupée dans la cuisine. Elle monta les escaliers vers sa petite chambre et elle se cacha sous son lit où elle parla à la souris.

«Reste ici, petite, je retournerai bientôt», chuchota gentiment Hélène à la petite souris, et elle la plaça sur le plancher sous son lit.

Au moment où Hélène arriva à la cuisine, elle entendit quelqu'un frapper à la porte. Elle regarda sa mère qui était trop concentrée sur ses tâches, et elle décida donc d'aller répondre à la porte. Elle ouvrit la porte pour se retrouver face à un jeune homme proche de son âge.

« Salut!» commença le jeune homme. Puis il continua « je vous demande pardon de vous avoir dérangée. Je suis perdu et je vous supplie de me permettre de rester dormir ici cette nuit.»

Le désespoir remplissait les yeux de l'étranger. Hélène lui sourit et lui répondit en ces termes.

« Soyez le bienvenue! Je m'appelle Hélène, comment vous appelez-vous? »

« Je m'appelle Ja- Cédric» reprit le garçon un peu désorienté. Il continua à l'endroit de Hélène:
« C'est un plaisir de vous rencontrer.»

Plus tard dans la nuit...

Toute la maison brûlait, et les flammes de couleurs rouge, orangée et jaune sortaient des fenêtres de la maison. La chaleur était intense et la fumée obstruait la gorge et brûlait les yeux. La maison sentait le brûlé. Hélène entendit la voix de ses parents et celle de l'étranger. Sa maison était entrain de brûler. La peur lui étreignit le cœur.

Soudain, elle entendit Cédric crier. «Hélène! Où êtes vous?».

«Je suis là, dans ma chambre!» répondit Hélène avant d'avaler la fumée qui la força à tousser violemment pendant quelques minutes. Elle vit une ombre s'approcher d'elle.

« Venez! » lui dit Cédric en lui tendant la main pour l'aider à sortir du lit.

Ensemble, et avec beaucoup d'aide de la part de Cédric, les deux coururent vers la porte où Hélène entendit la voix de sa mère qui lui chuchota: « n'aie pas peur, chérie, reste courageuse et souviens-toi que je t'aimerai toujours ».

« Venez! On doit y aller! » lui répéta Cédric, et les deux coururent jusqu'au fleuve.

Après qu'ils se soient reposés pour quelques temps, Cédric regarda Hélène et lui dit: « J'ai un oncle qui vit de l'autre côté du fleuve, peut-être qu'on pourrait lui rendre visite et lui demander de l'aide pour... ».

Cédric s'arrêta quand Hélène le regarda d'un air incrédule.

« Je viens juste de perdre mes parents, ma maison et mon souffle et vous voulez qu'on voyage de l'autre côté du fleuve, au milieu de la nuit et que je laisse ma terre aussi? » lui demanda Hélène. Elle était troublée par sa façon de penser et son manque d'égard par rapport à sa situation. Cédric la regarda pendant un instant, il prit peur se fâcha et retrouva sa bonne humeur. Mais Hélène ne comprit pas ce brusque changement car, tout se passa en un clin d'œil.

Il sourit d'un air rassurant et lui dit:

« Oui vous avez raison. On peut au moins attendre jusqu'au matin pour en discuter ».

Hélène lui sourit à son tour et s'endormit pendant plusieurs heures. En effet, un cœur brisé apporte avec lui beaucoup de fatigue à sa victime. En dehors de cela, ils avaient couru sur une distance assez longue.

Hélène se réveilla avec le clapotis de l'eau. Elle s'assit et regarda autour d'elle. L'air de la mer remplit son nez et ses poumons. La vue de la mer la calma et la remplit de paix. Mais, elle fut choquée quand elle se rendit compte qu'elle n'était pas seule. Cédric et la petite souris blanche étaient avec elle dans un petit bateau de bois. Pourquoi était-elle dans un bateau? Est-ce qu'elle était entrain de rêver? Elle était perdue dans ses pensées, quand Cédric la regarda dans les yeux et commença à lui parler.

« Je peux tout expliquer... » dit-il. Hélène l'interrompit avec un cri inhumain. Quand elle arrêta de crier, elle était encore très fâchée.

« Je vous ordonne de me ramener sur la terre ferme immédiatement avant que je ne crie plus fort » hurla Hélène à Cédric.

« Je n'en peux plus, laissez-moi tout expliquer » dit une petite voix. Cédric fut interrompu une fois de plus. Mais cette fois-ci, c'était par une petite voix qui n'appartenait pas à Hélène, mais à la petite souris blanche.

« Hélène, vous êtes une sirène et votre peuple a besoin de vous. Votre tâche est immense pour celle qui n'a aucun courage. Néanmoins, vous êtes la seule qui a le pouvoir de l'accomplir. C'est

à vous de vaincre le méchant dauphin qui règne avec terreur sur le peuple des sirènes. Ayez du courage, je vais vous suivre bientôt, mais je dois prendre mon petit déjeuner d'abord (je meurs de faim!). Ne vous inquiétez pas du noyage, vous êtes une sirène. Allez-y maintenant » lui expliqua la petite souris.

Après ces derniers mots, la souris toussa violemment, commença à grandir et devint énorme. Elle grandit jusqu'à ce que le bateau se brise en mille morceaux et que ses passagers tombèrent dans la mer. Hélène plongea tout de suite dans l'eau. Quant à Cédric, il commença à se noyer. Soudain, une grande baleine blanche s'avança vers Cédric en lui disant d'une voix moqueuse «Salut Jacques»! Puis la baleine avala la pauvre victime terrifiée avant de plonger aussi.

Hélène plongea jusqu'au fond de la mer. Ce n'était pas trop difficile à trouver le palais des sirènes; c'était assez grand pour qu'on puisse le voir d'une grande distance. Elle admira pendant un moment sa nouvelle nageoire caudale, puis elle continua à nager vers le palais. Le palais était énorme et beau, avec de grands murs et une structure élégante, tout autour.

« Puis-je vous aider mademoiselle? » lui demanda une voix cynique, polie et moqueuse. «Qui cherchez-vous ?» reprit la voix.

« Je cherche le Dauphin», répondit poliment Hélène. Puis elle se retourna pour se retrouver en face d'un calmar rouge foncé. La surprise a dû la trahir parce que la réponse du calmar n'avait pas de sens.

« Oui, je suis le fameux Dauphin et le monarque du peuple des sirènes!» répondit le calmar.

« Comment est-ce qu'un calmar, au moins dix fois plus petit qu'une jeune sirène, pouvait régner sur la population entière?» pensa la Hélène.

« Je vois de la confusion dans votre expression...» reprit le calmar. Il ajouta:«C'est juste de mentionner que chaque créature me voit différemment en relation avec sa pureté. ... Je ne suis pas une créature moi-même. Tout le monde me déteste, même les méchants. Je suis invoqué par ceux qui ont un cœur sombre pour torturer les autres, c'est pour ça que je suis devenu le monarque des sirènes. La reine Isabelle m'a invoqué, mais je l'ai tuée». Le calmar regarda Hélène avec intérêt en souriant méchamment, et il dit: «Concentrons-nous sur la question fondamentale: Pouvez-vous précisément deviner qui je suis? Si vous le pouvez, je mourrai par la loi ancienne de la mer. C'est ce que vous voulez, non? ».Hélène lui rendit son sourire et elle commença à parler lentement avec attention.

« Je comprends maintenant. Vous avez raison en disant que vous n'êtes pas une créature. En fait, vous êtes un sentiment fort, un des sentiments les plus forts dans l'existence».

Hélène regarda courageusement le calmar qui sourit avec fierté et ajouta: «Vous êtes la peur et voici pourquoi je vous vois comme une créature petite et faible. C'est la vérité que ...» Elle s'arrêta un moment, puis elle continua en chuchotant: « Je n'ai peur de rien, ni de vous, ni même de la mort!» Hélène dit ces mots avec une telle férocité que le calmar poussa un cri et commença à se désintégrer devant ses yeux.

« Comment l'avez-vous su? » dit le calmar en hurlant de douleur.

« J'ai entendu la voix de ma mère qui me disait tout, même pendant que je parlais, elle a continué à m'informer de votre vraie nature » chuchota Hélène.

Après un dernier cri de désespoir, le calmar disparut. Soudain, Hélène sentit l'eau autour d'elle bouger comme si un énorme poisson venait dans sa direction. Elle regarda donc avant de paniquer et elle vit la baleine blanche. Elle la salua et la baleine lui retourna sa salutation.

« Où est Cédric? » demanda Hélène, inquiète qu'il se soit noyée.

« Ne vous inquiétez pas, il va bien. Ça c'est ce que je veux vous dire, le jeune homme vous a menti en disant que son nom était Cédric ». La baleine regarda l'expression blessée d'Hélène avec pitié et continua à lui parler: «Son vrai nom est Jacques! Je peux vous l'amener, mais vous devez me promettre que vous allez lui donner la capacité de respirer sous l'eau et ne pas le laisser se noyer par vengeance ».

« Pourquoi voudrais-je me venger? » demanda Hélène confuse.
La seule réponse qu'elle reçut fut un regard semblable à celui de sa mère...

« D'accord, d'accord, laissez-le parler, s'il vous plaît » dit Hélène.

La baleine toussa jusqu'à ce que Jacques sorte de sa bouche en tenant sa gorge. Hélène le regarda avec pitié, et comme au cours de sa rencontre avec le calmar, les mots lui vinrent aisément. Après qu'elle les eut dits, Jacques commença à respirer, Hélène le regarda encore, mais cette fois avec une politesse glacée.

« Salut,... Jacques, ou est-ce que c'est Cédric? Je ne suis plus sûre » lui dit Hélène sèchement.

« Euh, j'allais l'expliquer, mais j'étais toujours interrompu, et... » commença Jacques.

« Arrêtez de vous excuser. J'entends quelque chose qui vient... est-ce que vous pouvez l'entendre aussi? » dit Hélène.

Un bruit comme celui d'une armée entière résonna à leurs oreilles. Bientôt, le petit groupe est encerclé par de belles et majestueuses femmes de la mer qui chantaient, sans cesse: «Vive la reine des sirènes! VIVE LA REINE DES SIRÈNES!»



ELLES NE MOURRONT JAMAIS



SCHOOL: St. Robert
TEACHER: Natalie Stilo
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Don Devine
UNIT: York
UNIT PRESIDENT: Heather Manassis

GRADES 9-10 / POEM
by Victoria Wang

Quand j'étais petite, quand j'avais trois ans,
Ma grand-mère avait un jardin.
Il y avait de très belles fleurs
Qui captivaient mon cœur innocent.

Quand j'étais petite, quand j'avais six ans,
Je suis tombée par terre.
J'ai crié, j'ai pleuré, mais j'ai séché mes larmes,
À l'instant où j'ai vu des fleurs.

Quand j'étais petite, quand j'avais douze ans,
J'ai cassé ma chose favorite.
J'ai crié, j'ai pleuré, mais j'ai séché mes larmes,
Quand ma grand-mère m'a donné une fleur.

Hier soir, j'ai pensé
À mon avenir solitaire.
J'ai pâli à cause d'une pensée effrayante:
Un jour, je perdrai ma grand-mère.

J'ai couru dans ses bras pleins de chaleur,
Je lui ai raconté mes soucis,
J'ai crié, j'ai pleuré, mais j'ai séché mes larmes,

Quand elle m'a dit ceci:

Un jour, ma chérie, un jour...

Quand je dormirai avec tranquillité,
Entre les murs de bois,
Sur ma tombe noire, pousseront
De belles fleurs, jeunes et blanches.

Ces fleurs, elles ne mourront jamais-
Mon amour n'est pas différent.
Place ta main sur ta poitrine,
Et tu trouveras ma maison.



MOI, MALALA



SCHOOL: Cardinal Carter Academy For The Arts

TEACHER: Karine Chalhoub

SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Anne Bellissimo

UNIT: Toronto Secondary

UNIT PRESIDENT: Gillian Vivona

GRADES 9-10 / NONFICTION

by Vianna Vaitkus

Savez-vous qu'en 2017, il existe environ 65 millions de filles qui ne vont pas à l'école? Savez-vous qu'il y a 31 millions de filles à l'âge du primaire, qui ne vont pas à l'école et que 17 millions d'entre elles, n'auront probablement pas l'occasion de fréquenter d'école toute leur vie? Savez-vous que parmi les 123 millions de personnes analphabètes entre 15 et 24 ans, 61 pourcent sont des femmes? Comment est-ce que j'ai pu connaître ces faits? J'ai lu le livre intitulé Moi, Malala qui m'a inspirée et poussée à explorer le thème de l'éducation des filles.

Connaissez-vous l'histoire de Malala? «À toutes les filles qui ont affronté l'injustice et ont été bâillonnées. Ensemble, nous nous ferons entendre.» C'est ainsi que débute l'histoire de Malala. Malala est une jeune Pakistanaise de 16 ans qui milite pour les droits des femmes au Pakistan. Dans son livre, Moi, Malala, elle lutte pour l'éducation et résiste aux Talibans. C'est l'histoire personnelle d'une petite fille qui aime l'école, aime étudier et apprendre. C'est l'histoire d'une petite fille qui ne veut pas se plier aux règles d'un pays qu'elle ne comprend pas, qui s'est battue pour ses croyances et que rien n'a arrêté, même pas un attentat. Et au cours de l'attentat, elle a reçu deux balles dans la tête pendant son retour de l'école dans un autobus scolaire. Voilà ce qui m'a marqué dans son histoire. Son nom, son visage et son combat ont fait le tour du monde, d'abord par la presse, puis par la littérature. Elle est la plus jeune lauréate du prestigieux Prix Nobel de la Paix.

Alors, la question que je me suis posée est la suivante: Que suis-je entrain de faire pour aider les filles et les femmes dans le monde? Comment puis-je devenir un agent proactif du changement? Quelles sont mes responsabilités en tant qu'adolescente éduquée et même comme une adolescente catholique vivant l'Évangile du Christ, notre Seigneur?

Avant tout, laissez-moi vous raconter pourquoi j'admire cette jeune femme Malala, qui m'a inspirée à me poser ces questions primordiales. Dans son extraordinaire autobiographie, la jeune Malala est une brave battante ayant lutté contre les Talibans, une auteure astucieuse (dans son journal personnel, pour les médias, pour les Nations Unies), et finalement, une ardente défenseuse des droits des femmes au Pakistan et partout au Monde. Pour moi, Malala est simplement courageuse, intelligente et passionnée.

Malala est courageuse car elle n'a pas peur d'exprimer ouvertement ses opinions, contre les Talibans et pour les droits des femmes. Elle a eu aussi le courage de se battre pour survivre à une blessure par balle. Elle a donc été courageuse dans sa lutte physique pour se guérir et sa lutte spirituelle pour défendre les intérêts des femmes.

Malala est intelligente, plus sage et ambitieuse que les filles de son âge. Elle admire Ghandi et Khan et croit aux philosophies non-violentes prônées par eux. Elle a l'intention de changer les choses dans son pays. Son intelligence est très évidente à travers le choix de ses mentors et de ses propres désirs.

Malala est passionnée par ses convictions et utilise ses qualités de «leader» pour changer les opinions des autres autour d'elle. Elle n'a pas peur, elle ne se montre jamais faible car elle est toujours prête à partager ses convictions, même face aux menaces. Quand elle comprend le pouvoir des mots, elle fait des entrevues et écrit pour le site de BBC à propos de la vie sous le contrôle des Talibans. À travers ses mots puissants et bien choisis, elle démontre son pouvoir en tant que superbe oratrice et donne un bon exemple à tout le monde.

Et maintenant, dans mon petit monde à moi, je dois aussi être courageuse, intelligente et passionnée. Dans mes recherches, j'ai trouvé trois fonds ayant des causes à défendre pour les filles. Ces Fonds de dotation: Malala, Parce que je suis une fille, et Unicef vont me guider pour devenir un bon leader dans ma communauté. Tous ces fonds encouragent les filles à s'impliquer à plusieurs niveaux, pour se joindre à l'initiative globale qui travaille dans le but de mettre fin à l'inégalité entre les sexes et promouvoir le droit des filles. En tant qu'adolescente catholique responsable, je peux faire beaucoup de choses, entre autres, commencer un club de filles, faire partie d'un groupe d'orateurs, recueillir des Fonds, ou établir un partenariat avec une société. C'est juste le début... car Moi, Malala m'a changé.



LE SUPER-HÉROS OUBLIÉ



SCHOOL: St. Theresa of Lisieux

TEACHER: Claudia Sabatini

SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Liliana Meshino

UNIT: York

UNIT PRESIDENT: Heather Manassis

GRADES 9-10 / PLAY

by **Melinda Szarics**

Personnages

Dans l'ordre d'apparition

- Une rameuse
- Homme d'ombre, un super-héros
- Super-héros 1, le chef des super-héros
- Super-héros 2
- Bonhomme, un super-héros
- Chat d'Ombre, le chat d'homme d'Ombre (qui parle)
- Deux voleurs
- Un groupe de braconniers
- Un policier

SCENE I: Dans la mer

Il y a une rameuse qui est tombée dans l'eau.

RAMEUSE: Au secours! Je ne peux pas nager! Je vais me noyer! À l'aide!

HOMME D'OMBRE: Je vais t'aider!

Il tire la rameuse hors de l'eau, et la met dans le bateau.

RAMEUSE: Merci, monsieur. Les vagues étaient trop hautes, je ne pouvais plus nager. Comment t'appelles-tu?

HOMME D'OMBRE: Je ne peux pas le dire. C'est contre le code des super-héros.

Il s'envole.

RAMEUSE: Il ressemble à Bonhomme, mais pas exactement. Il est un peu gris...
Que c'est mystérieux.

SCENE II: Au quartier général des super-héros

Les super-héros sont rassemblés dans une grande salle.

SUPER-HERO 1: Nous voulons féliciter Bonhomme

Tout le monde applaudit et Bonhomme sourit avec fierté.

HOMME D'OMBRE: *(Aux super-héros)* Pourquoi?

SUPER-HEROS 2: Il a sauvé une rameuse qui se noyait. Il a montré de la vaillance, parce que le vent était très fort, et les vagues trop hautes.

HOMME D'OMBRE: Il y a un malentendu. J'ai sauvé une rameuse qui se noyait.

SUPER-HEROS 1: *(Il rit)* C'est impossible. Bonhomme est expérimenté, mais tu es un amateur et, en plus, très jeune. Tu n'es un super-héros que pour seulement...Peux tu me le rappeler?

HOMME D'OMBRE: Pour seulement trois mois, mais je m'entraîne presque tous les jours.

SUPER-HEROS 2: Ça n'a pas d'importance. Bonhomme a sauvé vingt-huit personnes, et tu n'as encore sauvé personne. Si la rameuse qu'il a sauvée dit que le super-héros qui l'avait sauvée ressemble au Bonhomme, c'était sûrement Bonhomme. Il l'a confirmé.

HOMME D'OMBRE: *(Fâché)* C'était moi.

SUPER-HEROS 1: Silence! Tu veux seulement le mérite.
Pars!

Homme d'Ombre s'en va.

SCENE III: Chez Homme d'Ombre

Homme d'Ombre s'assied dans le fauteuil avec son chat, Chat d'Ombre.

HOMME D'OMBRE: Bonhomme a volé mon mérite. Ce n'est pas juste.

CHAT D'OMBRE: Mais tu es un super-héros pour aider les gens, le mérite n'est pas important.

HOMME D'OMBRE: Tu n'es pas un super-héros. Donc tu ne sais pas ce dont tu parles.

CHAT D'OMBRE: D'accord, qu'est-ce que tu veux faire?

HOMME D'OMBRE: Je veux sauver des gens dans un endroit où il y a des caméras de surveillance. La preuve sera claire et indiscutable.

CHAT D'OMBRE: Tu ne devrais pas faire cela.

HOMME D'OMBRE: Pourquoi? Chercher le mérite n'est pas mauvais.

CHAT D'OMBRE: Souvent, ce n'est pas la meilleure chose à faire.

HOMME D'OMBRE: Ce n'est pas toujours une mauvaise chose.

CHAT D'OMBRE: Fais comme tu veux.

Un bip sonne.

HOMME D'OMBRE: D'après l'écran, il y a des voleurs qui cambriolent la banque. Je vais protéger la banque.

Il sort.

SCENE IV: À la banque

Il y a deux voleurs dans les coffres principaux.

VOLEUR 1: Mets l'argent dans le sac. Vite! Vite!

VOLEUR 2: Je fais tout mon possible pour le remplir rapidement.

Homme d'Ombre s'envole et atterrit à la banque.

VOLEUR1 : C'est Bonhomme!

HOMME D'OMBRE: *(Il Parle tout seul.)* Je ne peux pas dire mon nom. C'est contre le code des super-héros.

Il se bat contre les voleurs. Il les attache aux guichets. Il sort.

SCENE V: Au quartier général des super-héros

Les super-héros sont rassemblés dans une grande salle.

SUPER-HEROS 1: Félicitations à Bonhomme. Il a sauvé une banque. C'est la deuxième fois dans la semaine.

HOMME D'OMBRE: (Aux super-héros 1 et 2) C'était moi.

SUPER-HEROS 1: Encore? Nous avons la cassette.

HOMME D'OMBRE: Pouvons-nous regarder la cassette?

SUPER-HEROS 2: Si tu veux. (*Lève les yeux au ciel.*)

La cassette passe.

HOMME D'OMBRE: Les couleurs sont mauvaises. C'est moi.

SUPER-HEROS 1: Le code des super-héros dit que tu ne devrais pas chercher le mérite.

SUPER-HEROS 2: Donc, tu n'es plus un super-héros.

HOMME D'OMBRE: Vous ne pouvez pas me faire ça. Je dis la vérité.

SUPER-HEROS 2: Nous allons confisquer tes technologies de super-héros.

Homme d'Ombre s'enfuit.

SCENE VI: Chez Homme d'Ombre

Homme d'Ombre s'assied dans un fauteuil avec Chat d'Ombre.

HOMME D'OMBRE: Ce n'est pas juste. Je suis un bon super-héros, et je n'ai rien fait de mal.

CHAT D'OMBRE: Tu as raison.

Un bip sonne.

HOMME D'OMBRE: L'organisation des super-héros ne m'a pas retiré de la base des données. Selon l'écran, il y a des gens qui braconnent des pumas dans les environs. Mais ce n'est pas mon problème. Je ne suis plus un super-héros.

CHAT D'OMBRE: Tu as le cœur d'un super-héros.

HOMME D'OMBRE: Je veux aider les gens, mais les chats ne sont pas des personnes. Donc je ne dois pas aider des pumas.

Chat d'ombre crache.

HOMME D'OMBRE: (Rit). Je plaisantais. Je vais les aider maintenant.

Il sort.

SCENE VII: Dans la forêt

Un groupe de braconniers est rassemblé autour des cages.

BRACONNIER 1: Ce puma va se vendre cher.

BRACONNIER 2: C'est vrai. Il a une belle fourrure, parfait pour un tapis.

Homme d'Ombre survole la forêt et atterrit.

BRACONNIER 2: Un super-héros! Courrons!

Les braconniers se mettent à courir.

BRACONNIER 1: C'est Bonhomme!

BRACONNIER 2: Ce n'est pas Bonhomme. Il est gris.

Homme d'Ombre se bat contre les braconniers et gagne.

BRACONNIER 1: Où vas-tu nous amener?

HOMME D'OMBRE: Je vous amène en prison.

Ils arrivent en prison.

POLICIER: Bonjour. Qui êtes-vous?

HOMME D'OMBRE: Je vous amène ces braconniers qui font du trafic de pumas.

POLICIER: Et qui es-tu? Tu ressembles à Bonhomme, mais tu es un peu gris.

HOMME D'OMBRE: Je suis désolé, je ne peux pas vous dire mon nom. C'est contre le code des super-héros.

POLICIER: Mais, tu n'es pas Bonhomme?

HOMME D'OMBRE: Non, je ne suis pas Bonhomme. Maintenant, je m'en vais.

POLICIER: Au revoir, et merci.

Homme d'Ombre sort.

SCENE VIII: Au bureau des super-héros 1 et 2

Homme d'Ombre est debout devant les Super-héros 1 et 2.

SUPER-HEROS 1: Nous sommes désolés de ne pas t'avoir cru.

HOMME D'OMBRE: Je ne sais pas de quoi vous parlez.

SUPER-HEROS 2 : Tu as sauvé la rameuse et la banque. Nous croyions que c'était Bonhomme qui l'avait fait. Mais un policier a dit que la personne qui a amené les braconniers n'était pas Bonhomme. C'était plutôt une personne qui ressemble à Bonhomme.

HOMME D'OMBRE: Ok.

SUPER-HEROS 1 : Ainsi, nous l'avons exclu de l'association des super-héros.

HOMME D'OMBRE: Puis-je encore devenir un super-héros? Je n'ai pas menti pour recevoir le mérite.

SUPER-HEROS 2: Oui. Par ailleurs, Bonhomme n'est plus un super-héros.

HOMME D'OMBRE: Merci, mais je ne veux pas que vous excluez Bonhomme.

SUPER-HEROS 1: D'accord, si tu veux. Mais peux-tu nous pardonner?

HOMME D'OMBRE: Oui, je vous pardonne.

SUPER-HEROS 2 : Merci. Au revoir!

HOMME D'OMBRE: Au revoir!

Il sort. Chat d'Ombre l'attendait.

CHAT D'OMBRE: Je suis fier de toi.



LE SILENCE MORTEL



SCHOOL: Michael Power/St. Joseph

TEACHER: Marie Arnone

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UNIT: Toronto Secondary

UNIT PRESIDENT: Gillian Vivona

GRADES 11-12 / SHORT STORY

by Siobhan Goss

La nuit est froide, sombre et silencieuse. Je n'arrive pas à dormir. Papa est encore à l'hôpital, et je ne peux pas me détendre pendant qu'il est sorti. Jordan m'a assuré qu'il n'y a plus de monstres dans mon placard, mais je ne pense pas qu'il a bien cherché.

Tout à coup, j'entends un bruit à la porte, et la clé tourner dans la serrure. Papa entre, et le bourdonnement de la télé dans le salon s'arrête.

« Je suppose que tu as regardé la télé toute la soirée, non? » Papa l'interpelle.

« Seulement après que Sadie s'est couchée », a répondu Jordan.

« Alors, tu l'as trop regardé. Pour une fois, tu peux essayer de faire tes devoirs, ou peut-être tu peux m'aider à nettoyer » dit Papa.

« Papa, ce n'est pas juste. C'est vendredi soir, je ne veux pas travailler maintenant ».

Je leur ai demandé d'arrêter de se disputer plusieurs fois, et même s'ils me l'ont promis, ils se chicanent encore. Probablement, ils pensent que je dors, mais en réalité, je suis bien éveillée, et les murs sont très minces.

« Alors, qu'est-ce que tu veux faire ce soir? Que font les autres adolescents si personne ne veut travailler? » demande papa.

« Tous mes amis passent la soirée ensemble, mais pas moi car je dois rester ici pour garder ma petite sœur chaque soir que tu sors » dit Jordan.

« Ce n'est pas ma faute! Le budget est serré! Je travaille tout le temps mais tu sais que les factures médicales de ta mère sont très élevées. Nous n'avons pas d'argent pour un baby-sitter, et ça, tu le sais! Peut-être, tu devrais penser à quelqu'un d'autre qu'à toi même » dit papa.

« Moi? As-tu jamais pensé que je veux voir Maman tous les soirs? Ou que Sadie veut la voir? Non, car tu as déjà décidé que c'est toi qui souffres le plus, que ta vie est la plus difficile. Suis tes propres conseils, et pense à quelqu'un d'autre! »

« Tu ne connais rien des difficultés de la vie! Tu es ingrat! ».

Je ne sais pas pendant combien de temps, ce débat a continué, mais peu après, j'ai réussi à m'endormir. Pendant que je dormais, j'ai rêvé et dans mon rêve, tous mes problèmes ont disparu. Maman était guérie et quand elle est revenue à la maison, Papa a arrêté de hurler tout le temps. Tout a changé comme auparavant quand j'étais petite.

« Réveille-toi Sadie! Nous allons visiter Maman aujourd'hui! » hurle Jordan en passant devant ma porte.

J'ai presque oublié. C'est dimanche, et alors c'est le jour pour aller à l'hôpital. Je n'aime pas vraiment ça, car c'est trop blanc et la lueur des lumières me fait mal aux yeux. Mais comme on va voir Maman, alors je peux endurer cela pour quelques heures.

Le trajet s'est passé en silence. Jordan a mis ses écouteurs dans ses oreilles au moment où il a bouclé sa ceinture de sécurité, et Papa, très concentré nous a conduit sans dire mots. Alors je passais le temps à regarder le paysage qui défilait dehors. Des enfants jouaient dans le parc, un chien tirait son propriétaire. Par ailleurs, les bâtiments devenaient plus élevés quand nous entrions dans le centre-ville. Puis nous sommes arrivés.

Quand nous avons ouvert la porte de sa chambre, Maman nous a souris tout de suite.

« Ah, mes beaux enfants! C'est bon de vous voir! Avez-vous passé une bonne semaine? » dit maman.

« Bonjour Maman », Jordan a répondu. « Tout s'est bien passé ».

Je me suis souvenu de la dispute d'hier soir. Jordan a vraiment menti, mais ce n'est pas mon problème.

« Maman » ai-je crié avant de l'embrasser. « Tu m'as manqué! »

« Mais pourquoi, ma petite? Tu ne peux pas attendre les 6 jours entre nos visites? » demande Maman.

« Non pas du tout! Je veux te voir tous les jours de la semaine » dis-je.

« Oui, je sais » a-t-elle commencé, avant que Papa l'interrompe en disant, « Tu as l'air mieux, ce matin. Qu'est-ce que les docteurs ont dit? »

Je ne comprends pas, Maman a toujours l'air d'être la plus belle femme du monde. Ce que pensent les docteurs ne m'intéresse pas!

« Je n'ai pas voulu vous dire cela dès que vous êtes arrivés, mais ... ils m'ont dit qu'aujourd'hui, c'est le jour choisi pour l'opération. Elle aura lieu ce soir ».

« Vraiment? Mais c'est trop rapide! Ils n'ont rien dit hier! » dit Papa.

« Oui, je sais, mais le docteur Baker m'a dit que puisque je me suis réveillée plus forte, pourquoi attendre? » répond Maman.

« Mais je ne suis pas prêt! Je n'ai pas le temps pour me préparer!» dit Papa.

« Ce n'est pas toi qui doit être prêt, c'est Maman! » s'exclame Jordan.

Papa a commencé à parler, mais Maman l'a arrêté.

« Ça va, John! Je suis prête et je veux le faire. Je veux revenir à la maison » dit Maman.

C'est vrai? Maman peut revenir bientôt? Je ne sais pas pourquoi Papa veut attendre.

« Mais c'est dangereux, Cheryl. Je ne veux pas te perdre aujourd'hui», a-t-il chuchoté.

« Cela va bien se passer! Ne t'inquiète pas! Passe du temps avec Sadie ce soir pour te distraire un peu. L'hôpital va te téléphoner tout de suite après l'opération. C'est déjà arrangéça » répond Maman.

« D'accord. Que pensez-vous les enfants? Pouvons nous aller manger un repas ensemble en attendant la bonne nouvelle concernant votre mère? » dit Papa.

« Euh ... mais j'ai des projets avec mes amis ce soir, » dit Jordan.

« Vraiment? Ta mère va subir une opération ce soir et au lieu de rester avec la famille, tu veux sortir avec tes amis? » hurle Papa.

« Tu as dit que je pouvais sortir ce soir! Je garde Sadie tous les jours de la semaine! Je te demande seulement un soir!»

« Mais ça, c'était avant l'opération!»

« Il n'y a rien qu'on puisse faire pour Maman! »

« On peut rester ensemble. »

« John! » s'exclame Maman. «Ne parle pas comme ça à ton fils. Je pense que c'est une bonne idée, Jordan. Va voir tes amis, et amuse-toi. Cela va bien se passer pour moi. »

« D'accord » répond Papa, qui n'a pas l'air d'être content. « Je vais aller parler un peu avec l'infirmière. » Puis, il quitte la chambre.

« Alors, parlez-moi mes enfants. Avez-vous des nouvelles (histoires) à raconter à votre mère? » demanda Maman.

J'ai souri, et j'ai commencé à lui raconter une histoire, mais Jordan s'est assis sur une chaise dans un coin, mal-à-l'aise.

Je ne m'intéresse plus à la tension au sein de ma famille maintenant. Tout va changer quand Maman reviendra; mais pour l'instant, restons calme. Pendant le trajet de retour, nous nous sommes arrêtés à la station d'essence. Pendant que Papa faisait le plein, j'ai remarqué que Jordan est devenu aussi silencieux que Papa. Je ne veux pas m'éloigner de ma famille, alors j'essaie de leur parler.

« Ça va? » ai-je demandé.

« Oui » répond-il sèchement.

« Tu es triste, tout le temps » lui dis-je.

« Je suis triste parce que la vie est dure » répondit mon frère.

« Pourquoi? » ai-je demandé.

« Tu n'es qu'un petit enfant. Tu ne peux pas comprendre » répondit-il.

« Je peux essayer de comprendre » ai-je dit.

« Non, tu ne peux pas » dit mon frère.

Je suis tentée de me taire, mais je savais qu'il y avait beaucoup de choses dont on devrait parler.

« J'ai trouvé des pilules dans ta chambre. Je sais que tu n'es pas censé les avoir. Elles vont te rendre malade » lui ai-je dit.

« Pourquoi étais-tu dans ma chambre? » a-t-il crié. « Tu n'as pas le droit. Ça ne te concerne pas » ajouta-t-il.

« Désolée, mais je m'inquiète pour toi. Je veux t'aider » je lui répondit.

« Tu ne peux pas! Tu ne comprends rien, Sadie. Notre vie est difficile et ça va être toujours difficile. Maman est malade, on n'a pas d'argent, et Papa me punit pour toutes ces choses qui sont hors de mon contrôle. Hah! Il pense toujours qu'il est le seul membre de la famille qui peut être stressé » dit Jordan.

« Mais Maman va subir son opération, puis elle va retourner chez nous. Quand elle sera là, elle va tout arranger » ai-je dit.

« Je ne pense pas. Peut-être qu'elle va rester dans son lit d'hôpital jusqu'à la mort » dit mon frère.

« Ne dis pas ça » ai-je crié. J'ai senti les larmes se former dans mes yeux mais je ne voulais pas pleurer devant mon frère. « Tu agis d'une manière différente, ces derniers jours, Jordan » ai-je ajouté.

« Je suis d'accord. Ça ne te concerne pas. De toute façon, tu es trop petite pour comprendre » conclut mon frère.

Plus tard, au téléphone....

« Votre femme est entrain de subir une chirurgie importante en ce moment. Elle réagit bien et la chirurgie est presque finie. Vous voulez probablement venir voir son docteur demain, pour parler de sa convalescence, comment cela va affecter sa condition, quand elle pourra revenir à la maison et d'autres détails. Mais pour ce soir, tout va bien pour votre femme. Vous ne devez pas vous inquiéter pour la nuit » dit l'infirmière.

Un grand sourire apparaît sur mon visage. Maman va mieux. Peut-être qu'elle va revenir bientôt.

« Ah Merci! C'est une bonne nouvelle. Pourquoi est-ce que vous n'avez pas commencé par ça? » s'exclame mon père.

« En réalité, monsieur, ce n'est pas pour cela que je vous ai appelé. Je crains que j'ai une mauvaise nouvelle » dit l'infirmière.

« Qu'est-ce qui se passe? Vous avez dit que tout va bien. Est-ce qu'il y a des complications avec l'opération? » demanda mon père.

« Pas du tout. C'est que - » balbutia l'infirmière au téléphone.

« Dites-moi ce qui se passe » ordonna Papa.

« Une ambulance a été appelée pour votre fils Jordan lors d'une fête plus tôt dans la soirée. Il avait perdu connaissance à ce moment -là, à cause d'une overdose de drogue. Quand ils l'ont amené à l'hôpital, nous avons essayé de notre mieux de l'aider, mais... monsieur, je suis vraiment désolé... Nous n'avons pas pu le ranimer » dit l'infirmière.

Papa m'a regardé. J'ai vu de la douleur dans ses yeux et j'ai su que j'avais la même expression. Aucun d'entre nous n'a bougé. Cette fois, ai-je pensé, le silence ne sera plus jamais brisé.

Chers parents, s'il vous plaît, peu importe ce qui se passe dans votre vie, n'oubliez pas vos enfants. Des fois, le silence dans une famille cache beaucoup de choses.



UN REMERCIEMENT À CE MAGNIFIQUE MONDE



SCHOOL: Loretta Abbey
TEACHER: Miriam Thorpe
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Paul Daniele
UNIT: Toronto Secondary
UNIT PRESIDENT: Gillian Vivona

GRADES 11-12 / POEM
by **Ruoyu Cheng**

Pour la pluie qui rejaillit sur les milliers de vies,
Je te remercie.
Les gouttes d'eau tombent dans les prairies,
Arrosant ce monde qui fleurit,
Et notre cœur qu'il purifie.

Pour le soleil qui rayonne sur la Terre,
Je te remercie.
L'obscurité est illuminée par la lumière,
Qui éclaire les vies en harmonie,
Et fait passer la colère.

Pour les chants des oiseaux qui résonnent,
Je te remercie.
Dans la lueur de l'aube, ces chants résonnent,
Réjouissant comme une symphonie,
Qui enchante une journée qui passionne.

Pour la rose qui délivre sa fragrance,
L'effluve apporte au monde la jouissance,
Faisant passer les malheurs infinis,
Et apaisant la souffrance.



LE DILEMME



SCHOOL: St. Theresa of Lisieux

TEACHER: Gino Marcuzzi

SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Liliana Meshino

UNIT: York

UNIT PRESIDENT: Heather Manassis

GRADES 11-12 / NONFICTION

by **Brittany Chang-Kit**

Sans entrain, nous trainons nos pieds dans les gestes quotidiens comme manger, dormir et répéter.

La vie est une fonction périodique, les contours des crêtes et des creux définissant respectivement les sommets et les obstacles; mais souvent comme un calèche conduit par un cheval portant des œillères, c'est la seule route en vue que nous suivons. Cependant, selon les circonstances, nous réfléchissons et plongeons dans une méta-réalité. Nous nous retrouvons à la recherche d'une réalité objective et inébranlable, une charnière dont nous pouvons dépendre. Le monde empirique et hédoniste commence à paraître comme une ombre de quelque chose de plus important, de plus vive.

En questionnant le phénomène qui nous entoure, devenons-nous hyper-conscients de notre existence, ou peut-être de notre vocation? Nous nous demandons alors si c'est normal, cette envie persistante au fond de notre esprit? Et puis soudain, le mystère qui se profile au loin devient une question d'attention immédiate. Ce sont les bases sur lesquelles la philosophie a été construite, la recherche des vérités ésotériques de la connaissance, de l'existence et de la réalité.

De la méthode socratique à la méthode scientifique, l'humanité a démontré son désir inné d'atteindre l'authenticité. Cependant, c'est habituel pour beaucoup de gens de s'effondrer. Quand ils sont abattus par un sentiment de scepticisme, ils choisissent délibérément le chemin de l'ignorance et de l'apathie.

Le dilemme de la quête métaphysique se résume donc finalement à ceci:
Est-ce que nous choisissons de nous cacher dans une ignorance idyllique, en assumant paradoxalement la subjectivité comme objectivité, où nous sommes poussés à chercher la révélation dans la frustration perpétuelle, puisque nous ne sommes jamais complètement détachés des mystères qui nous gouvernent?

Sous l'hypothèse des créatures rationnelles, nous comprenons que le mystère déposé devant les humains peut aussi bien être un problème simultanément infini et impossible. De même, nous pouvons en déduire qu'il y a plus dans l'existence que le monde matériel; on peut parler de l'âme, de l'esprit et même de la vitalité qui semble faire écho chez nous.

Nous pouvons déduire de cette existence quand nous ressentons des chagrins ou quand nous allons contre toutes nos impulsions dans une controverse de la volonté et des passions. De cette prémisse, nous comprenons qu'il y a beaucoup plus que la taille, la couleur, la forme et l'observation sensorielle qui compte. Le seul lien entre cette contrainte empirique et au delà, c'est notre volonté de chercher.

Nous pouvons investir entièrement dans l'assurance réconfortante de la terre empiriquement déterminée, ou nous pouvons faire un acte de foi dans l'inconnu.

Nous pouvons choisir une vie apathique mais confortable et nous protéger de la frustration, ou nous pouvons nous élever au dessus du sol et savourer la chaleur du mystère et la merveille de l'incertitude. Nous pouvons plonger dans une réalité pittoresque mais limitée, ou nous pouvons explorer une réalité véritablement indomptable.

Il serait sage de plonger tête baissée dans ce dernier.



LA VENGEANCE EST UN PLAT QUI SE SERT FROID



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UNIT: Toronto Secondary
UNIT PRESIDENT: Gillian Vivona

GRADES 11-12 / PLAY
by Jacob William Swist

LE SCENARIO ET LE PROBLEME:

La mère de Pierre l'a forcé à aller au restaurant avec son oncle pour célébrer l'anniversaire de ce dernier. Mais son oncle, Antoine, l'embarrasse toujours.

LES PERSONNAGES:

- ANNE: la mère
- PIERRE: le fils / le neveu
- ANTOINE: l'oncle
- SERVEUR DU RESTAURANT
- CLIENT DU RESTAURANT

RESOLUTION:

Pierre a été vengé des humiliations que son oncle lui a fait subir et son oncle a eu ce qu'il mérite.

DIALOGUE:

ANNE: PIERRE!!! Lèves-toi, fainéant! Ton oncle va arriver d'une minute à l'autre et tu n'es même pas réveillé encore.

PIERRE: J'arrive maman! J'arrive!

Pierre s'habille.

ANNE: PIERRE!

PIERRE: Oui?

ANNE: N'oublie pas de mettre ta chemise du dimanche! Je ne veux pas entendre pendant les douze prochains mois, ton oncle se plaindre, disant que tu ressembles à un clochard comme lors de son dernier anniversaire.

PIERRE: Je sais! Je la porte déjà!

ANNE: PIERRE!

PIERRE: OUI?

ANNE: Souviens-toi de tes bonnes manières et garde une bonne posture! Je ne veux pas entendre ton oncle t'appeler encore le bossu de Notre Dame!

PIERRE: Je sais!

ANNE: PIERRE!

PIERRE: QUOI?

ANNE: Tu descends ou quoi?

PIERRE: Attends, j'arrive!

Pierre descend l'escalier.

ANNE: Finalement!

PIERRE: Mais maman, dois-je vraiment sortir avec oncle Antoine aujourd'hui?

ANNE: Pierre, on a déjà parlé de ça! Tu dois seulement le voir une fois par an. Dans ce cas, tu peux le supporter pour un jour.

PIERRE: Mais ...

ANNE: Tu vas y aller et il n'y a pas de si ni de mais qui tienne!

PIERRE: Il est tellement ennuyeux...mais s'il le faut...

La porte sonne.

ANNE: C'est ton oncle. Souviens-toi de tes bonnes manières et je ne veux pas de plaintes, cette fois-ci.

PIERRE: Je le sais!

Antoine entre dans la pièce.

ANTOINE: Salut Anne, devine qui vient t'honorer de sa présence?

ANNE: Bonjour Antoine, toujours un plaisir de te revoir.

ANTOINE: Je le sais. Alors où est George?

ANNE: Tu veux dire Pierre?

ANTOINE: Je voulais dire Pierre.

Pierre roule des yeux.

ANTOINE: Ah, te voici! Quel dommage que tu n'aies pas du tout changé depuis la dernière fois. Mais ne t'inquiète pas. Tu seras bientôt un adolescent.

PIERRE: Merci. Je le pense aussi. Allons-y maintenant, sinon, nous serons en retard.

Pierre et Antoine quitte la maison et arrive au restaurant.

Arrivés au Restaurant...

ANTOINE: S'il vous plaît! Allo! Peut-on me servir, ici? Cela fait bien une minute que j'attends pour être servi!

SERVEUR: Je m'excuse monsieur. Que puis-je faire pour vous?

ANTOINE: C'est mon anniversaire aujourd'hui et j'ai déjà réservé une table. Mais le service prend une éternité.

SERVEUR: Je m'excuse encore pour l'attente, s'il vous plaît suivez-moi, je vais vous accompagner à votre table.

Le serveur les amène à leur table et ils commencent à consulter le menu.

ANTOINE: Ce restaurant avait meilleur aspect en ligne!

PIERRE: Ce n'est pas si mal.

ANTOINE: Tu as sûrement besoin de lunettes. De plus, je croyais que j'avais commandé une table à côté de la fenêtre. Je voulais une vue sur l'océan, et non une vue sur les vieillards.

Le serveur arrive avec son calepin.

SERVEUR: Qu'est-ce que je vous sers, messieurs.

ANTOINE: Pour Pierre, il prendra quelque chose riche en protéines et faible en gras parce qu'il ne peut pas risquer d'avoir trop de calories. Il doit aussi désespérément développer ses muscles imaginaires.

Pierre commence à rougir.

SERVEUR: Monsieur, y a-t-il quelque chose de particulier que vous voulez?

PIERRE: Je prendrai un hamburger au fromage avec du bacon en supplément.

ANTOINE: Je t'ai prévenu Pierre ...

SERVEUR: Merci et pour vous, monsieur?

ANTOINE: Je ne sais quoi prendre. Avez-vous quelque chose que vous pourriez me recommander?

SERVEUR: Notre restaurant est réputé pour son délicieux foie gras.

ANTOINE: Impossible, je suis végétalien.

SERVEUR: Désolé, peut-être préféreriez-vous notre fameuse soupe à l'oignon?

ANTOINE: Bien sûr que non! Je suis allergique aux oignons.

SERVEUR: Désolé, préférerez-vous notre incroyable ratatouille?

ANTOINE: Je ne peux pas, puisque je mange sans gluten et je suis allergique aux tomates et aux aubergines.

SERVEUR: Désolé, peut-être aimeriez-vous notre quiche de blettes suisses aux champignons sauvages?

ANTOINE: Les champignons sont super-allergéniques aussi.

SERVEUR: Désolé, peut-être une de nos crêpes ...

ANTOINE: Mais je déteste les crêpes!

SERVEUR: Peut-être notre poireau au fromage au gratin de pomme de terres et de céleri?

ANTOINE: Pas du tout! Je ne mange que de la nourriture faible en glucides.

SERVEUR: Une salade fera t-elle l'affaire?

ANTOINE: Est-ce vraiment tout ce que votre restaurant sert? Quel genre de restaurant est-ce? Je n'ai pas envie de manger une salade. Je veux quelque chose de plus substantiellement étonnant que cela.

SERVEUR: J'ai le plat qu'il vous faut, monsieur. La cuisine de ce restaurant va vous étonner.

ANTOINE: Enfin! J'espère seulement que je ne serai pas trop déçu.

Le serveur quitte la table.

ANTOINE: Le serveur est moche et nul. Un imbécile complet. Il ne sait rien. C'est vraiment dommage que ce restaurant soit laid et qu'en plus, le service soit horrible.

Pierre rougit comme une tomate.

ANTOINE: En plus, c'est tellement bruyant ici que c'est difficile de m'entendre!

CLIENT: Excusez-moi, monsieur?

ANTOINE: C'est sûrement un de mes admirateurs qui a reconnu mon travail.

CLIENT: Monsieur?

ANTOINE: Oui?

ANTOINE: Pourriez-vous vous calmer s'il vous plaît? Vous êtes si bruyant que je ne peux pas entendre la personne qui est à côté de moi.

ANTOINE: Pierre, tu l'as entendu? Arrête de crier!

Le serveur arrive avec leur nourriture.

ANTOINE: Enfin! Je meurs de faim!

SERVEUR: Vous savez dans la vie, les bonnes personnes sont toujours récompensées.

ANTOINE: Je le sais car Dieu me récompense toujours!

SERVEUR: Les gens comme lui, méritent toutes les bonnes choses.

Le serveur donne à Pierre un plat attrayant, préparé avec beaucoup de soins.

SERVEUR: Mais pour les mauvais gens, on leur donne ce qu'ils méritent. Pour vous, monsieur, voici votre plat sans gluten, faible en gras et sans allergènes.

Le serveur donne à Antoine, un bol plein de glaçons.

SERVEUR: Bon appétit!

La salle entière éclate de rire sous les applaudissements.

