

The Seahorse



*This Edition:
The Dark Side*



Letter from the Editors

Hello and welcome to...

The Seahorse!

For this edition's theme we have gone into the shadows and have written our stories and poems with theme of **THE DARK SIDE**. Some of our writers have taken this literally with settings about dark forests or creepy castles. Some have taken the dive and looked into the dark side of human beings, the duality of mankind. Some have looked what happens when we try to rid ourselves of the dark side and look into the light, the hopeful, the courageous.

We have a whole range of literature for you to feast on this time – short stories, poems, comics, loads of limericks, and the continuation of some of the students' upcoming novels!

We hope you enjoy reading this as much as we enjoyed watching it grow.

Happy Reading!

Miss Foster & Ms Frost



Milk

1903

"Hello, Karlson, welcome to Generic Milk Company Name," The room was dark and empty, with a strong smell of milk. Karlson wanted this milk, he wanted it badly; that perfect image of a milk carton floating through his brain. He can't remember what happened before that - he can't even remember his own name - all he could remember was milk, milk, milk...



"You want milk, right? I mean you are a milkman after all. Anyway, I am getting off track here. You are here to collect that beautiful carton of milk you can see floating in your brain. It is wonderful, right? There will be multiple courses for you to adventure through, progressively getting harder as they go on."



BOOM. the lights turned on. The room was dull, empty and silver with a large window high up, the top reaching the roof. "But don't fret, Karlson, you'll have a companion to go on this totally, definitely, a hundred billion percent safe journey. Meet Billy. He may not be the sharpest tool in the shed but he'll get the job done." Billy leapt his way over to Karlson; his digital face in a beaming smile.

"You can do what you want with him, he doesn't really care too much. Anyway, good luck escaping this room - you will need it! Oh, yeah, you can also use Billy to help if you want to. This is definitely a mistake on my part and not on the currently anonymous author. Anyway, go grab that milk - over and out."

Silence.

Karlson looked up at the window at the top of the large, tall room. How on earth was he going to get up there...?

By Josh Curd



The Six

The year is 2050. Half a decade ago, there was a mass extinction. Only six humans survived. Their names were Hiro, Akira, Karl, Jake, Mia and Antony. The five survivors of climate change.

Hiro

Hi, my name's Hiro. A few years ago, there was an earthquake. In Japan earthquakes were common; we could get up to 2000 earthquakes a year. So, we weren't worried. We expected it to be a minor tremor but we were wrong, extremely wrong. This was the worst earthquake Japan had ever faced. Japan went down in ruins along with its people, except me. That's how I ended up here, the wreckage that was once what I called home.

Akira

Hello, my name's Akira. How I ended up on this beach is quite the story. It started with a drought. The drought was the worst we'd ever had in the Philippines. People ate whatever they could to keep them and their families alive but it wasn't enough. In the end the people of the Philippines started dying one by one like flies in a spider web. Everyone except me, as soon as the drought started I ran away from urbanisation to a small, deserted beach that only I knew about.

Karl

Hey, my name's Karl. Once a long time ago I had a family. A family that I miss every day. My family and the population of Germany was killed in a flood. A monstrous flood. A flood that wrecked everything Germany had. I'm the only living survivor of the flood. I have no idea whether there's anyone else still alive in this world because I have no way to contact anyone. So, for all I know I could be the last human on the planet.

Jake

Hi my name is Jake. I grew up in Australia my entire life. That was until the age of twenty-four when I joined the army because I wanted to follow in the footsteps of basically every male in my family. After my year of training I got sent to fight in Taiwan meaning I had to leave my wife Mia behind. By the end of the war my entire troop was wiped out and then about a month later multiple mass floods hit Taiwan. Wiping out its entire population except me. I am the last one standing.

Mia

Hi, my name's Mia. I am so lucky to be alive. A few years ago, there was a wildfire. It started in Melbourne and then travelled to Sydney. This fire could not be put out. It was ferocious. The flames were so high that Australia's population weren't able to be evacuated and help wasn't brought. Some Australians just died on the spot and some tried to swim to New Zealand but died of exhaustion halfway there. I jumped into the ancient bunker in my garden and hoped for the fire to pass. That's the story of how I ended up being Australia's last citizen.

Hiro

I've had enough. After five years of moping around in a place once called Japan I've decided to go to a small island. The destination is a tiny island where I know for a fact the earthquake didn't hit so there should still be survivors. I live five minutes away from the sea so I'll set off at five in the morning tomorrow.



When I get up it's not even light. A breeze blows past me, making me shiver. The sky is a dull black as I walk down to the beach. After a few minutes of walking along the devastation. I arrive at the beach. I sit down on the silky, cool sand. As I let my mind prepare for this treacherous journey I watch the waves come in and out like the rhythmic beating of a heart. Eventually I get up and let my now bare feet pad along the sand to the water. I take off the last remaining things I have of my family. A blue woolly jumper knitted by my grandmother, the shirt I wore on my wedding day and a locket with a photo of my wife and the bracelet made for me by my daughter. As the memories I have fall to the floor, I say goodbye to what I once thought would be my forever home. I start to swim away from Japan but I have one last look at the place where I spent most of my life before setting off on a journey that will hopefully lead me to civilization.

Karl

I've lived in Germany for almost eight years now. In those eight years I never left to go on holiday. Eight years later I think it's time I left the country. I've decided to go back to the Philippines and see my wife and new son who I've never met but that is if either of them are still alive. For that, I need a car.

Luckily, next to the makeshift shelter I've been living in for the last five years is an old Volkswagen. Since I love cars I should be able to get it working again. This shouldn't be too hard. When the flooding happened, I grabbed the emergency backpack. Five years later I still have the backpack. When I was evacuated from my Mother's house inside the backpack were four granola bars, a pack of dried fruits and nuts, a screwdriver and a few engine parts (in case my car broke down) and a first aid kit. As I open the bag now the only thing still in there are the screwdriver and the engine parts. Who knew they would come in handy five years later?

Hiro

After three and a half hours I arrive on the tiny Island. I stumble onto a patch of sand. As I get my breath back I look around. Unfortunately, the island is deserted. The only thing here is a boat. Surprisingly it doesn't look to run down. Its exterior is a bunch of wooden panels stuck together and a coat of crimson red paint. Its interior is two wooden benches covered in bits of seaweed and whatever else is in the sea. Next to the wooden benches lies two wooden paddles. I pick one up to see whether they have any mould on them and as soon as I lift them I find a suitcase. There are stickers all over the suitcase. They're multi-coloured and all say Tokyo Olympics 2020. Cautiously, I open the suitcase. Inside is a blanket, some dried seaweed and some joggers with the English flag on them. This is absolutely brilliant!

I look up at the sky. It's now a pale grey and there's a cold breeze blowing at my face. I open the bag of dried seaweed and stuff some in my mouth. It tastes just like Japan. It's chewy but not too chewy and has a nice subtle touch of sea salt to it. I eat half the packet. After finishing what tasted like heaven I decided to go to sleep. I put on the joggers; which are as soft as sheep's fur. I curl up on the wooden bench with the woolly blanket covering me like a shield from the harsh breeze and doze off.

Akira

For the first time in years, there's been a really bad storm. It was absolutely awful. What I made out of my life in the last five years is now destroyed. The box I used to store dried fish is now broken with splinters of wood and dried fish everywhere. Luckily, my shelter is still standing, well apart from the roof. The tarpaulin roof blew off in the middle of the night and one of the four walls is gone. The interior of my now wrecked shelter was once a wooden table like thing over my fire pit with a clay pot on top of it. In the corner was a pile of logs that I stole and some sticks for roasting fish. My bed was a couple of logs tied together with rope and a layer of sand on top of it. But now there's



shards of clay and splinters of wood in my fire pit. The logs and flint are scattered around the floor and the bed is soaking wet.

I've decided I'm going to walk into town to try and get some new supplies to rebuild my home. I walk down the sandy road passing my grandparents' house, the playground I loved as a kid, the comic shop I spent most of my childhood in and then I reach my home.

It's just as I remember it. I walk up the steps and open the door. Before the drought I used to work as a builder and I was a pretty good one. That's why the house is still standing. As I step inside a wave of nostalgia hits me like a ton of bricks and I realize how much I miss my husband. The front entrance is cluttered with my old trainers and my husband's huge business shoes. I walk along the corridor and enter the dining room/kitchen/living room. My husband's certificates for his chain of restaurants line the walls. I smile at them full of pride. My husband left for Germany almost a decade ago. Klaus left because his mum was dreadfully ill and on her deathbed. At the time Klaus's restaurant business had only just started so we only had enough money for one of us to go to Germany. So, on November 18th 2042 Klaus went to Germany. He had promised he'd be back within a month but then on a stormy day he called me. He told me that some C.E.O had approached him and told him that he'd found out about his business and that if they worked together they could expand the chain restaurants to countries all around the world, starting with Germany. Klaus agreed. The news that I wouldn't be seeing my husband for at least a year crushed me. The only thing that kept me going was the fact that when Klaus earned enough money he would come home and we could be together for our first child Anthony's birthday. Every time Klaus got a cooking certificate he would send them to me and I would hang them up so he could see them the minute he got home. Then a huge flood happened in Germany. It was all over the news. So, for all I know he could be dead.

When Klaus left for Germany I was six months pregnant. When I got the call that Klaus would not be coming home for at least another year I realized he would not be here for the birth of our son Anthony and that news was soul crushing. I gave birth to Anthony who I named after Klaus's father on February the 22nd 2043. Unfortunately, at the age of six he went missing and was never found. So, in the last decade I've lost not only my whole Filipino family but also my husband and son. Whom I miss dearly and would do anything to see them just one last time.

Anthony

Hi my name's Anthony, and I don't know this for sure but I think I'm an orphan. I was born in the Philippines to Akira Reinhardt. In the six years I lived at home my dad never showed up. I never saw him once; not even a glimpse. I'm not sure why. Maybe he died before I was born or my parent's divorced. Who knows? Like I've already mentioned I lived in the Philippines with mum for six years before I went missing. The first six years of my life were heaven. My mum got multiple promotions as a builder and she was getting money from some secret person every month. My mum never mentioned this secret guy and even though I pestered her regularly she never opened up. Then one day I'd come back from a kickabout in the park and I found her slouched in the corner of the dining room crying. Tears streamed down her face like a river. When she realized I was watching her she told me that she'd lost communication with the secret money guy and believed he was dead. I've never seen my mum cry that hard so I guessed she and him were close.

I was born and raised in a small town where gangs were prone. Gangs are the reason I went missing actually. The most famous gang in my town, if not the whole of the Philippines, was called 'demonyo' which is Filipino for devil. They were called this because they were literal devils. Their initiation was to stab someone with a knife. They've probably broken loads of laws. From drug trafficking to Arson. They would target young kids around the ages of five



or six to deliver drugs all across town. If the child said no they would chase them down and stab them to death. Everybody in the Philippines knew this but I didn't get the memo. So, when I was targeted and declined the offer they handed me I ran. The conversation had taken place behind the bike shed at school. When I ran after declining the offer I had to jump over at least five bikes as if they were hurdles. Three strong teenage boys chasing one screaming six-year-old must have looked odd to other pedestrians. I eventually arrived at the beach panting like a dog on a hot day, knee's wobbling and tears running down my face. The boys weren't far behind so I did what I had to do and I swam to the nearest Island. The nearest island wasn't too far away. I've been swimming in the sea every day since the age of two so I'm a strong swimmer but to the boys I must look because they didn't follow and that's how I ended up here.

Hiro

As I wake up early the next morning I am befuddled. The sky is now a bright scarlet. Darkness surrounds me like an unwanted shield. I desperately look for a beacon of hope but don't find one. All I see is darkness. I have no idea where I am and the realization of that terrifies me. The waves shove the boat making it unbalanced. It's as if the waves want me to capsize. I pick up the paddles and paddle with all my effort in a random direction. Finally, paddling through what I expect hell to be like I arrive on dry land. The feeling of land under my feet makes me feel over the moon.

I look around this place is in ruins. A few trawlers sit lopsided in the middle of the sandy stretch of coastal land. Cautiously, I walk over to them. There is not a single part of the boats that aren't covered in mould. All four have huge holes on the sides of the now rusty metal walls. I gently let my finger skimming the ancient, frail hull but as soon as my finger comes in contact with the boat my vision starts to blur, my legs fail me and I stumble to the floor. My head hitting a sharp knife-like object. I scream, the pain that now pierces through my head is excruciating. A pool of crimson red starts to form and darkness engulfs me.

Jake

I have been living in a small, ancient army tent for the last five years with the same daily routine. My life is slowly becoming boring. I need some form of human interaction or my cause of death will be boredom.

Today marks a thousand days since my troop was wiped out in the Taiwan war so long ago. I lean against the grave of my fallen ex-soldier Mike Hutt who also happened to be one of my closest friends if not my closest friend. I ponder What would my life have been like if I hadn't enlisted in the army or if I'd managed to get on one of the evacuations planes out of Taiwan? Would I have had the life I'd always dreamed I'd have after the Army? When I married Mia, my dream changed. It went from wanting to be the best of the best in the army to wanting to live in a suburban bungalow with my beautiful wife and two future kids. One of which I so desperately wanted to call Tom. But of course, none of that ever happened instead I've been stuck here. That changes today. I'm making it my life's mission to get back to Australia. Whether it's the last thing I do or not. How I will do that I have no idea.

Mia

Ever since the wildfire I've lived in this underground bunker. It was made for a war many years ago. But I guess I got lucky, the interior of this bunker is better than my one roped mouldy, disgusting flat. In the corner of this spacious bunker is a surprisingly comfy couples' airbed but since I haven't seen my husband in years and I have no idea where he is, the couples' bed has turned into my double bed. Anyway, enough about my dating life. In the corner is a small wooden table covered in soot and way too many burn patches. On top lies a Bunsen burner which I stole after being expelled from the local high school all those years ago. On the back wall are a bunch of wooden shelves full of food



that lasts for quite a bit and the one saucepan I use for cooking. To cook I put whatever I'm cooking that day (last night's dinner was homemade pasta shapes coated in soy sauce with a pint of homemade beer) in the pan. I then turn on the Bunsen burner and hold the sauce pan over it until it's cooked. It takes a while but it works.

Apart from that there's a bookshelf full of dusty old classics and a bass guitar. I hate reading since I never manage to sit still or fully concentrate on one thing and the guitar isn't tuned and one of the strings has popped off.

Karl

Almost a month ago I set off on a journey from Germany to the Philippines. I travelled through many countries and every single one was deserted. There were no humans anywhere. It was like a ghost world. Anyway, I am now in Hongkong. I'm driving to the final stretch of land before it's just the ocean and I have no way of getting across millions of miles of crystal-clear ocean. Suddenly, I hear a terrifying scream. It makes my blood turn cold and the hairs on the back of my neck stand up.

I step on the accelerator and speed off in the direction of the scream. I arrive at what appears to be a beach with three or four stranded, rusty trawlers. I step out of the car and hear a gruff sort of panting before it goes silent. I run across the beach, my old sneakers making mini sandstorms as I frantically try to find the cause of the scream. Eventually, just as I pass the last trawler I see something. It's a man. He's unconscious. It looks like he hit the back of his head on a sharp rock a few centimetres away from him. There's an ever-growing pool of crimson blood underneath his head.

My whole family were doctors so of course it was tradition that I follow in my parents and older brothers' footsteps. After finishing med school, I got a job as a surgeon at Berlin hospital. My Mum and dad both had high authority there so that's how I was given such a high ranked job for the first time. Less than a week after accepting the job I was fired by my own Father. He caught me smoking in the backroom whilst I was on my shift. He told me I was too dumb for this job and I would never get good at this. After that I stole some of his money and bought a one-way flight to the Philippines where I met my beautiful wife Akira and started a now multi-millionaire chain of restaurants.

One of things I do remember from my years at med school is to put pressure on a wound to stop it bleeding. Gently, I roll the guy onto his stomach and take a closer look at the head wound. There's too much blood to make anything out so I whip off my shirt and press onto his head. As I wait for the bleeding to stop I put him into a sitting position and lean him against the nearest trawler. For the first time since arriving to his aid I take a look at this unconscious man. He has extremely tanned skin as if he's been on holiday somewhere tropical like the Caribbean and an overgrown mess of black hair on his head. I take a look at my surroundings and realise that I will have to stay with this man for at least three weeks until he's healthy again so whilst he's getting fit again I can restore one of these old trawlers and then use it to go to the Philippines and maybe this guy wants to come with me.

Anthony

I live on a small island not far off from the Philippines that was once an all-boys youth military camp. The island was home to two military veterans (our leaders) and six young boys desperate to go on a mission. On the island there was a dining hall / kitchen where we ate our meals, a barren bit of land built to look like a war ground used to train us, fruit, and veg plantations, two huts and three huts for us cadets. The huts were tiny. They were around the size of a garden shed. Inside was a bunk bed and a kitchen cabinet filled with bathroom items and a wardrobe for our uniform. There were two cadets in each hut. My hut partner was Billy.



Billy was 8 when he came to the camp. A year earlier both his parents died fighting in a war in the middle east. Billy at the time was already training as a youth cadet but when his parents died he got sent off to the youth cadet camp. The camp was made to give future military people a place to stay. Despite our two-year age gap, me and Billy grew inseparable. We were more like siblings than best friends.

A few months after my seventh birthday the camp received some shocking news from the English military. There was a war going on in a country not far from the island and even though our two leaders had already done their fair share of fighting and the other six people living on the island hadn't lived even a decade yet they wanted us all to go fight.

Us young boys had no idea what was going on and we were just excited to fight in a real war. Not knowing what horrors, we would witness. Around a week after we received the news we arrived on the battle ground. Army tanks were everywhere. The land was barren apart from a few empty warehouses used as HQs. The war lasted for just under a year. In the end 50,000 people lost their lives. Some hadn't even lived to their 18th birthday. My closest companion, my best friend, the reason why I got up in the morning was gone. Billy died on the battle ground with a shot to the head. When I saw his dead body, covered in blood I couldn't do it. Tears came shattering down creating a pool at my feet. Grief overwhelmed me. The guy who taught me everything I knew was dead. When the officers saw me covered in a veil of grief they sent me back to camp and the doctors diagnosed me with PTSD. I went back to a now deserted camp stricken with grief.

Mia

I've been living in this bunker for years now and I'm getting restless. I'm going to leave Australia once and for all. My father was a volunteer firefighter and I remember he once told me that at the HQ they had an underground garage where they kept the helicopters so that they wouldn't be burnt in a small fire. I spent the majority of my childhood in that garage whilst my dad was out fighting wildfires and risking his life.

For the first time in years I climbed out of the bunker. My eyes squinting in the sunlight. I run through the pile of bricks that were once a home. My home. I run along my feet burning as they hit the boiling hot tarmac. As I run I try to remember the route I haven't gone on since I was fifteen. As I pass the local playground which is now demolished I see it. Straight ahead is a pile of rubble but on top of it lies a navy-blue rust covered sign with the words volunteer fire department. I run towards it with as much as much energy as I can. My muscles are not used to running after lounging around underground for five years.

I arrive on this rubble covered plot of land and start digging through the rubble. Eventually when I'm dirt stricken I realize the underground garage had a back entrance which was located in a small wooden hut. I get up and scan the land. Then I see a small pile of bits of wood and hinges. This is my last chance to find an escape. I start to lift the surprisingly light pieces of wood and already I see the hatch. I sit on the boiling hot tarmac and start to prise the hatch open with my finger nails.

I slide down the pole and enter the place I spent so much of my childhood. The place is desolate except for one helicopter. Its blades look really rundown and as if they haven't been cleaned in years but the rest of the exterior looks fine. The side door squeaks as I open it. I climb in and sit on the pilot's seat. As I lean back my head I feel something. Slowly I turn around terrified about what I will find. In the end it's just a pilot's jacket hanging from the seat. I pick it up and brush off the dust. The name badge says Pilot Griffin. This jacket belonged to my dad. I cover



myself with it and inhale the smell of my dad. Then tears start to stream down my face. For the Motherly love I never had and the fatherly figure gone too soon.

Jake

Not so long ago I was complaining about my life being boring and how I hated being stuck in Taiwan. But a mere forty-eight hours later my life has become very exciting and I'm no longer in Taiwan. Instead, I'm on an island halfway between Australia and Taiwan.

I also finally have another human to talk to. His name is Anthony and he told me he's been living at this army cadet camp for the majority of his life. Despite the fact there's nearly a thirty-year age gap between the two of us I would say we've been getting along well and seem to have a lot in common. But saying that we've only known each other for about four years and after five years of isolation and loneliness I think I could get along well with anyone.

"Jake" Anthony screams, interrupting my thoughts. "Come help me with my barbecue" he yells from the temporary barbecue stand in the garden. Apparently, Anthony has been eating all his meals of a barbecue he builds and rebuilds every day. I have to admit it's pretty cool how he does it though.

"Jake" he screams this time sounding a lot more impatient. "Coming" I yell back hoping he's heard me. I sit up in my bunk and reluctantly leave the cosy cabin to help me.

Karl

My journey to be reunited with my family has been cut short since I have no way of crossing the endless ocean and I am now stuck helping Hiro recover.

Hiro is the man whose life I saved after finding him unconscious on the beach. During this time, Hiro and I have become closer than ever. We've shared our past and what we hope will be our future. I've learned many things about Hiro including that before what felt like the end of the world he was a trawler driver and he knows enough to get us off the beach.

Unfortunately, none of the engines on the trawlers actually work so we have to make use of a blow-up lifeboat we found in the hull of one of the trawlers. The boat is surprisingly big so tomorrow we're going to stock up on supplies we find inland.

Hiro

I'm still stuck on this beach but I'm alive which is something. Thank goodness Karl saved me. My head wound has healed up massively as well which is great. Karl and I are both in search of civilization and we both have families we miss so I guess we're pretty similar in some ways. On this beach there are three incredibly run-down trawlers which I guess washed up here after some form of accident. I thought this was a way for us to continue our quest so Karl started to fix up the trawler and it went well. We managed to fix up the whole exterior. A few days ago, we went inside. At first glance the place looked good enough to drive. Yes, it was very old and certainly needed some TLC but everything was where it should be and nothing was broken. That was until we got to the engine. All my hopes of seeing civilization crashed when I saw the engine. The engine lay on the floor, all bent out of shape and covered in some sort of slime. On a more positive note though we did find a large blow up lifeboat with zero holes in. It's not exactly safe but may be our only way off this beach. Karl thinks that we should go inland to stock up on a few supplies because who knows how long this journey will be. We're going into town tomorrow morning.



The sun shines bright as myself and Karl head into town. Unlike Japan, the buildings here stand tall. Blue surgical masks swath the pavement and every communal place we pass and posters in the windows that say things like stay two metres apart and wear a mask. Like every place I've seen in the last five years this place is deserted. It's a ghost town. Suddenly Karl tugs at my arm like an impatient toddler "look over there. It's a supermarket" he exclaims. Already Karl has run off towards the sliding doors of the jackpot.

Akira

Life out here is so lonely so when I come in contact with another human being after years of being by myself I can't quite believe it. We eat a dinner of fish and rice (food I haven't had in so long) and she tells me about herself. When all that's left of our dinner is a pile of crumbs we lie on the sand and share our hopes and dreams and tears for those we miss.

She tells me she's called Mia and she's come from Australia. Apparently, there was a huge forest fire that spread across the whole country in a matter of days. The Australian government declared it a national emergency and people fled the country; not many people made it out alive. In the end it was just Mia hiding in her World War one bunker with no clue what was happening outside of her tiny underground room.

Karl

I'm standing in this supermarket and it's nothing like I expected I thought there'd be loads of food and all the shelves would be stocked with everything we'd need but instead it's barren it looks as if no one's been here in years which shouldn't surprise me considering what's happened in other parts of the world but it still shocks me.

As I leave the supermarket Hiro looks up from where he's sitting and a brown bag lies next to him "find anything?" his voice overflowing with desperation. I show him the pack of dried seaweed and the bottle of coke. "Just this. What's in the bag? I ask hoping he has some good news. At the mention of the bag Hiro is the happiest I've seen him since we met. "Well" he begins. "Whilst you were in there I did a bit of exploring and found this bag lying against the wall of a nearby house. I think it might have been someone's emergency escape bag" I shudder at the thought of what might have happened to them. I turn my attention back to Hiro who has emptied the bag into his lap. I sit down next to him and take a closer look at the bag's contents. Laid out are two oversized men's hoodies, an orange, a pack of crisps, a lighter and a little card with an almost unreadable address scribbled on it. According to Hiro, the address is for some island not far from the shore. He thinks it might be some sort of safe house. We're going back to my car for the night and then tomorrow we're going to brace the waves and try and locate this island.

Karl

The next morning, Hiro and I get up and prepare for our next adventure. One I would prefer not to take. Hiro begins to pack our gear up into the brown bag he found yesterday and the bag I brought with me. That bag is the last remaining piece I have of my past life. The life I had before that flood hit Germany.

As I get out of the car I blink and squint that the fact it's already this bright at six in the morning astounds me. I close the car door and just look at it. I look at the clutter beginning to pile on the front dashboard and I smile. From the ancient Mr Bean statue, I found on holiday in London to the panda soft toy I found yesterday. They all have memories and I wish I could take them but unfortunately, I can't so here they stay within the car I've known my whole life. From the age of three to the present day this car has been a part of me. It holds so many memories. It's taken me from point A to B countless times but now I must leave it. "Let's go Karl. Before the waves begin to thrash." I look over at Hiro and sit in the blow-up boat with two bags lying next to him and a wave of realization hits



me like a tonne of bricks. I could die out at sea on this piece of orange plastic that is currently swaying from side to side waiting for Hiro to shove the boat into the sea. He looks at me with those innocent blue eyes and asks "Are you ready for this?" I nod my head and were off.

It's been three days and we still haven't found this sodding island. I'm frustrated, tired and starving. We got through all the supplies within a day so I haven't eaten or drunk anything in the last two days much to my stomach's delight. Me and Hiro worked out this system where we'd take shifts rowing whilst the other sleeps or rests. I look at Hiro who's curled up in the extra-large hoodies fast asleep. Unlike Hiro I can't sleep on a rubber boat in the middle of the ocean.

I feel a few drops of water hit me on the back of my neck and I panic. I look up and see dozens of storm clouds decorating the sky and hear a bolt of lightning in the distance. I crawl over to the snoring Hiro who's oblivious to the bad weather and I start shaking him, desperate for him to wake up. "Hiro, Hiro, HIRO" I scream but he still doesn't wake up. I look over the side of the boat and see a humongous waving heading towards us and in that moment, I know it's over. When I met Hiro, I thought that the last eight years of pain and suffering that I'd experienced would be over. I thought that me and him could build a new civilization and my life would change for the better but I guess I should have realized that that would have been too good to be true. I take the hand of my best friend as death opens its doors to its two newest victims.

Mia

Life is so much better now, I managed to make it to the coast of the Philippines where I met a lovely lady called Akira. It's amazing not to be hiding that tiny WW1 bunker anymore but instead to be spending every day on the beach. Not in a million years would I have thought any of this would happen but then again who would?

The last couple of days I've been spending as much time in the sea as possible and on one of my morning expeditions I decide to swim out even further than I usually would. As I look up to take a breath I see a glimpse of orange floating towards me. A sense of curiosity kicks in and I swim towards what I expect will be a floating piece of rubbish but how wrong I am.

What I thought was a piece of rubbish is actually a lifeboat and cocooned within it is a body. I gasp and swim closer with the hope that I can save this poor man's life. I grab onto the lifeboat and pull it towards me. I pull the man of this orange raft and I untangle the seaweed from him before pulling his soaking wet clothes off him so all he has on is a pair of speedos and I put him on my back and swim as fast as I possibly can desperate to get this man to safety.

I arrive back at the shore and pull the man off my back and start screaming for Akira who comes out of the tent half asleep. "What do you want? It's only just gone seven for Christ's sake" She says but then she lies on the unconscious man or maybe even dead man lying at my feet. At the sight of him she begins to ask a question "Don't ask, just help. We have to save him." I interrupt. I start doing CPR but still this familiar looking man is unresponsive. "He's probably dead," Akira says. "NO, he can't be" I shout desperate for this man's life not to be lost. I know that my only option is to perform mouth to mouth. I prise his lips open and begin to blow air in. Suddenly his eyes flicker open and he coughs up what must be about a litre of water all over my face. I'm so happy that I've saved this man's life to be disgusted about his bodily fluids dripping down my face. "Mi, Mia?" the man says and in that moment a sense of recognition flows through me and I realise that this man is my ex-boyfriend Hiro.



Hiro

These last few days have been hell. I've completely lost my concept of time but I think it's been about a week since me and Karl set out on our journey to find civilisation. Both of us full of hope and excitement. We'd both expected to find civilisation but instead it was only me who made it to civilisation. I can't seem to get my head around the fact that Karl is most likely dead and that his corpse is rotting away at the bottom of the ocean.

I'm now living in a tent on the coast of the Philippines with two other women. One of which is my ex-girlfriend Mia.

My great grandparents immigrated from Japan to Australia during World War Two because they didn't agree with Japans role in the war. They built up a life for the future generations of our family. They arrived in Australia with just the clothes on their back but by the time I went to University my great-grandad was unfortunately dead but my great-grandma owned a multi-millionaire business. She was the richest woman in Australia. When she died my dad inherited all the money which he used to travel the world with my mum. Whilst my parents were off exploring every nook and cranny of Earth I stayed behind to go to University. Which was where I met Mia.

When I met Mia, I thought she was a complete and utter weirdo with her baby blue Mohawk, hippie style clothes and a body full of tattoos. Then through our shared classes I began to get to know her and I realised she was an incredible, independent woman who couldn't give a shit about what people thought of her. As the days went by me and Mia became really close. Eventually the late-night video calls and regular cinema visits turned into Mia moving in with me.

But then disaster struck, back in Japan my aunt and uncle both died in a car crash making my cousins officially orphans. On my aunts will it clearly stated that were my aunt and uncle to die my mum and dad would become my cousins' new guardians. My parents did something I will never forgive them for. When asked by social services whether they would become my two nine-year-old cousins' new guardians they said no. So not wanting my cousins whose life had just been turned upside down to be sent into foster care I agreed to become their guardian.

This meant that I had to leave Australia and the life built up there to go to a country I'd never been to and the only link I had to the country was my heritage but I did it. The day I said goodbye to Mia at the airport was the last time I spoke to her and that was thirty years ago.

Anthony

I'm going for my early morning jog along the shore thinking about how my life has turned so boring when I see something just bobbing its head out of the water rhythmically. When I'm about a metre away from the object I realise the object is a human. As soon as my brain processes the information I sprint towards what I believe is a corpse.

I arrive at the human and desperately pull it from the slimy grips of the ocean and despite thinking it's a corpse I hurriedly begin CPR like we learned at army camp. Eventually I realise that there is no hope for this poor soul whoever he is. I decided instead of laying him to rest in his murderers arms I will lay him in a grave at the top of the beach as far away from the sea as possible. I pull the corpse away from the waves that seem to come ever closer and run back to camp to grab my shovel.



I jog back to the spot I left the corpse, a mud-covered shovel slung over my shoulder like a sack. I get to the spot and without looking around I begin to dig the sandy grave. "Are you setting up a barbecue there? I'm starving." A gruff voice says behind me. Out of fear I drop my shovel on my foot and scream.

Mia

I've only known Akira for a month but we've become so close and seem to laugh together daily. She's like the best friend I never had.

Despite the fact I haven't talked to Hiro in years and the last time we saw each other face to face we were both in tears it feels like me and him have slipped right into the relationship we used to have that is excluding the romantic part of our relationship that we used to have.

So, it's been really nice living on the beach with two people I'm really close with but I think Akira needs some change. I've caught sitting on the lone rock at the corner of our sandy strip of land multiple times. Every time I caught doing that she seems to be staring out at an island which she informed when I first arrived here was a military base camp for buddying soldiers. It's as if she's desperate to visit the island. I caught her staring again this morning. I think its time we left the Philippines and headed for the island.

I rounded up the group and sat them down ready to discuss my plan. "I think we should travel to the island." I said pointing to the island. Immediately Akira's eyes filled with glee "Yes, we definitely should" she said, her voice dripping with excitement and joy. I looked over too Hiro. His face said the complete opposite of everything Akira had just said. His face was as white as freshly fallen snow and his eyes were overflowing with fear. Seconds later, his eyes glazed over and gained a faraway look. It was as if he was somewhere miles away and then all of a sudden, his breathing became rigid and he began to sound like he was running a marathon.

I decided that the best thing to do was too take him into our shelter and get him too calm down a bit. I grabbed his hand and immediately pulled away. His hands were drenched in sweat and felt stickier than maple syrup. It took me a minute to get over his sticky hands. Once I did I pulled the still fast breathing Hiro up to his feet and slowly led him into the tarpaulin shelter. It felt like I was leading an elderly person and he seemed to be in some sort of trance.

Eventually we entered the shelter and I led him to his bed. Once he was next to his bunk he plummeted onto it and curled himself up into a ball. A second later he began to rock side to side rhythmically. I stared at him increasingly concerned. What had happened to Hiro?

Jake

I'm sitting on the steps of the wooden porch reading one of the dusty, old Shakespeare's that Anthony had spent the last five years using as a footstool. It felt amazing to just be able to relax and enjoy a book after nearly six years of fighting and devastation.

Suddenly my little bubble of peace popped when I heard repeated blood-curdling screams coming in my direction. Quickly I dropped the book as if it's on fire and look up ready to do whatever is needed to stop those screams.



As I look up I see a man who I estimate is in his late thirties maybe early forties. The man is incredibly scruffy with his mane of greasy, blond locks and dark blonde stubble that layered his chin like icing on a cake.

The man rushes toward me and only now do I see what the man has in his arms. It's not a what it's a who. It's Anthony. The kid is wriggling around in the rather muscular arms of the scruffy man. Anthony clutches his foot which I now see is swelling at an alarming rate. "Help, I accidentally scared this poor boy to death whilst he was digging and he dropped a metal shovel on his foot. Please help me." The man urges. Before he had even finished speaking I'm up on my feet clearing a path so he can bring Anthony inside.

I sprint up the few, wooden stairs and tug open the wooden door. I turn back to the man and beckon for him to enter. For a split second he looks unsure about whether to follow me but then he looks at Anthony whose screams have become even louder and follows me in. I let the door bang behind us as I slip into the role of leader and start making a space for the man whose name I later find out is Karl to lay Anthony. I make a space on the couch for Anthony and get Karl to lay him down.

As I adjust Anthony's position so that his foot is raised. I scream at Karl to grab some morphine from the medicine cupboard in the neighbouring room. Without a moment's thought he sprints into the other room like an Olympic athlete and I hear him rifle through the cupboard. Moments later he screams a triumphant "hab dich! "Whatever the hell that means and comes back into the room holding a plastic syringe and a little glass bottle with the word morphine scribbled along the top in black marker. "Give it here! "I scream desperate for the screaming to stop and for Anthony's pain to disappear. He hands me the holy grail of the situation and watches as I give Anthony some of the morphine. Suddenly his head flops back and the screaming stops. „He's going to be out for hours "I tell Karl.

Akira

Mia looks absolutely terrified when she appears out of the shelter. She looked at me with visible fear in her eyes and said nothing. Instead of sitting back down next to me so we can continue our conversation she walks straight past me and sits on a rock that lies at the far side of the beach just staring out at the ocean. That's where I left her. It's been almost an hour now and she hasn't moved an inch. I look up and watch the sky turn from a baby blue to a beautiful mix of orange, yellow and lilac. The sun is slowly fading, signalling the day is coming to an end.

I decide to grill some fish and roast the squid Mia caught this morning for our dinner. I take one last look at the statue sitting on the rocks before heading to the homemade barbecue which is slowly falling to pieces. I grab the last remaining lumps of wood that I'd recently collected and dump them in the hole I dug with my bare hands.

After a good five minutes of cursing and frustration the lighter finally decides it wants to cooperate and I light my little hole filled to the brim with dried pieces of washed up wood and throw on top the homemade grilling tray Mia made with random pieces of rubbish.

I toss the freshly caught seafood on top and watch the flames engulf it like a warm hug. A hug I so desperately need right now.

Jake

I watch as the boy who was a stranger to me yesterday quietly snores to himself on the couch next to me and then I look up at Karl. The man looks at me, opens his mouth and then closes it again as if he doesn't know what to say. „How do I repay you? "he says. „Well "I say. „It's nearly dinner time and I can't cook to save my life. Do you think you



could make dinner? "immediately his face lights up. „I'd love to cook dinner. Where is the kitchen and what ingredients do you have? "he says in broken English. I laugh. It's nice to see someone truly happy for once. I get up from the armchair I'm nestled in and tell him to follow him. I lead him through the winding corridors.

It's a pretty average kitchen with the usual appliances yet Karl looks extremely happy about it. I point to the back corner of the room where the larder is and tell him that's where the ingredients are kept. It's as if I've just told him there's a thousand pounds for him in the cupboard because he sprints towards it faster than Usain Bolt. He tugs open the cupboard and rifles through the mess of ingredients located within. Apart from the occasional pleased grunt he doesn't say anything. I'm in awe at how skilfully he moves around the kitchen. He's frying veg with one hand and filleting fish with the other. It's incredible. He knows where everything is despite never being here before. He was literally the kitchen whisperer.

Akira

I plate up dinner and decide to see if Hiro 's awake and well enough to eat. I walk in there readying myself for the worst. I'm not sure what I expected to see but Hiro snoring and tangled up in a dozen blankets was not it. I leave the food on the wooden table and head out to see how Mia is. She's still sitting as still as a pebble. I walk up to her and she takes the food as I climb onto the rock to join her. „You okay? "I ask through a mouthful of food. „I'm fine, "she says. „Anyone who says their fine is not fine. "I reply as she looks at me with those innocent eyes of hers and finally begins to open up.

"Sorry, but just seeing Hiro the way he was shook me. He's so different now than he was back in uni all those years ago. He used to be to be a confident, loud and fun guy but now he seems really shy and fearful and I just miss my husband "she says. „Wait, you're married "? I ask. „Yeah, nearly ten years "she replies.

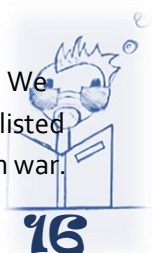
She holds up her hand and I see one-line ring nestled on her finger. It's a small, gold wedding ring with the words M+J forever engraved on it. I look at her other hand and am bombarded with six or seven rings. Each one is like her wedding ring but silver and they're all engraved with something different.

„Before the bushfire and before Jake enlisted in the Army we lived together in a suburban bungalow with our two cats. I wanted a piece of jewellery to remind me of them so Jake bought me these Cat hoop earrings from a company called Jana Reinhardt.

„They're lovely I say but what happened to Jake? "I ask curiosity taking over me. „ It was tradition in Jakes Family that all men once they reached the age of twenty-three they would enlist in the army for two years. When I asked his father about the tradition he just said enlisting in the army helps the men to become more macho and stronger like men should be. Just saying that now I realise how much toxic masculinity Jake had to deal with and awful his situation was. Had I realised that sooner I could have told him that men don't have to be macho and he didn't have to risk his life just to make his dad happy. Maybe he'd still be here now "She begins to sob.

„Oh god Mia, I'm so sorry. Did he die? "I ask. Through tears and sobs she says „ No for all I know he could be on some island somewhere but he could also have died fighting. I never received the pain so I don't know "

„What do you mean received the pain? "I ask. „Me and Jake were best friends since we could both remember. We had our little friend group me and Jake plus two others that later became a couple themselves. When Jake enlisted in the army he enlisted with the other guy in our friend group. They were both deported to fight in the Taiwan war.



That was the last time I saw him. „ In his army uniform, cap and everything. I would kill to kiss him like we kissed on that day just one more time.

After a few months of silence, a letter came addressed to my best friend. Since we were neighbours I went around hers straight away and gave it to her “Mia stops and just stares out to sea before continuing. „She opened the letter, read it and sank to the floor. It was a letter stating that her husband had died fighting in battle. The pain she must have felt is something I wouldn't wish on my worst enemy. I never received one of those letters yet I never saw Jake again “. She gets up and hands me her now empty plate. “Thanks for the food but I can't do this anymore” She climbs off the rock and runs into the shelter crying.

Hiro

I wake up the next morning and the memories from yesterday flood my brain. I feel so guilty for everything Mia said when she was talking to Akira yesterday.

When me and Mia split up I naively thought life would be brilliant for both of us. Well it was brilliant for me but by the sounds of it, it was the opposite for Mia. I mean she lost her husband for Pete's sake!

Suddenly I have the best idea ever. Back before all this bad stuff Mia was a professional cliff diver. She was bloody amazing at it. So, when Mia and Akira get back from their walk I suggest we go cliff diving. I expected Mia to be ecstatic about the idea but instead she just shrugs her shoulders and walks away from us. Akira on the other hand seems really excited about it. Straight away she hands out towels, swim costumes and swim trunks for us all. We manage to make Mia change her mind and we're off!

So, there we all are on a hot, summer afternoon hiking up a cliff so we can jump off into the freezing, cold ocean. After a lot of huffing and puffing and the occasional moan from me about how steep it is we arrive at the top. Mia looks at me “You're the one that suggested this, do you want to go first?” “Professionals first” I reply.

Mia walks up to the edge of the chalk cliff and jumps. You know that feeling when you watch someone do something and you think how the hell can they do that so amazingly well? Well, that's exactly how I felt watching Mia perform some of the most incredible flips I have seen as she gracefully landed in the water without a splash. Seconds later her head popped up through the surface of the ocean and she yelled at the top of her lungs “Come join me, Hiro!”. So, I jumped ...

Karl

I have no clue what happened to Hiro but wherever he is I hope he's living the best life he possibly can. I'm now staying at this military base camp with two other people. One of them is a kid named Anthony and the other is a guy around my age named Jake.

I wake up early the morning after arriving here and because I can see Anthony curled up in the bed opposite mine and I can hear Jake's ridiculously loud snores in the bunk above mine. I decided to make a surprise breakfast for the two of them.

With the oven and stove on it's absolutely boiling in this tiny kitchen so I head over to the window on the back wall of the kitchen and twist it open. In the process of doing so I manage to knock off the window sill a pair of teal glasses and a tiny silver thing. As I hold the silver thing in my hands and I see that it's a rather dented, chainless



locket shaped like a heart. Not wanting to break it I cautiously prise it open to see what's inside. Inside it's a small passport size photo of a woman who I miss dearly. My wife. It takes me a minute to process that this ten-year-old stranger who I met yesterday has a photo of my wife in a locket. Once my brain processes the confusing piece of information all thoughts of making breakfast go out of my head as I storm through the corridors towards the bunk room desperate for answers.

Anthony

The second I open my eyes there filled with the very angry face of Karl. "What is this?" he screams into my half-asleep face. "I can't tell. You're too close to my face." I reply hoping to diffuse whatever situation this Karl pulls the object away from my face and I realise that what he's holding between those two sausage fingers of his is locket that has a picture of my mum inside "Hey, what are you doing with that?" I shout as I snatch, it of his hand. "All I want to know is why you have a picture of my wife in your locket?"

he says in a serious tone. I look at the angry man standing at the foot of my bed "What do you mean your wife that's my mum?" "Karl's jaw literally dropped. He kneels down beside my bed "Hey son. "

Akira

I lean the over the edge of the cliff to see Hiro jump but instead I see a sight I never wanted to see. Hiro flies majestically through the air but as he does a front flip it all goes wrong. As he's flipped about two hundred and seventy degrees round his head contacts a particularly sharp cliff bit and he lets out a blood curdling scream. After the contact is made his limp and heavy bleeding body flop into the water. Mia dives after his limp body seconds later I see her lift Hiro onto her shoulders and gets him onto the beach where she frantically tries to stop the bleeding.

Mia

As Hiro's eyes flicker I whimper „Hiro, stay with me. Please Hiro don't go! "He opens his emerald green eyes that I was once so in love with and says "There's no hope Mia. It's over "He looks up at me and asks „will you stay with me for these last few moments? "Through the sobs I answer „Yes, of course I will. "Using all the strength left his weak, frail body can muster. He pulls me into him and like that we stay for the last few minutes of Hiro's life. Two best friends, side by side, just watching the beginnings of the evening sunset. "I love you Mia and I always will "Hiro whispers with his last breath.

I need to get away from here. I don't think I could do my day to day activities next to Hiro's grave so that's why me and Akira are going to go out to that military basecamp island. We agreed I would bury Hiro since Akira and him were never really that close. Akira left to find supplies for our trip so I begin the heart wrenching task of burying my ex-boyfriend who was also my best friend.

I dig the hole next to the cliff he jumped off and gently lower Hiro's corpse but then I see his hand and stop. I inspect Hiro's hand and gasp. The thing that caught my eye was the little silver ring Hiro had for years and used to joke that he was going to use that ring to propose to me with. It's a small engagement ring that's engraved with the words marry me. I slip the ring off his finger and add it to the collection on my own hand. I lower his body into the grave and take last look into those beautiful eyes of his before burying him.

Just when I think I'm all cried out Akira appears upon seeing me and drops her stuff as I cling to her as if she were my life support. She then pulls something out from her back.



„Mia, I understand if you don't want this for Hiro. I mean he was your best friend after all but I made this for you either way “she hands me the prettiest thing I have ever seen. It's a tall plank of wood that has Hiro Tobayoshi painted along in Japanese and a background of the most detailed cherry blossoms possible. I thank her Akira and put it on Hiro's grave before we set off in our little boat for our new home.

Hiro

My second chance at a life with Mia came to an end too soon but as I look down at the five figures who have crossed land and sea to finally be reunited I can see why I was never destined for Mia. Her and Jake were meant to be. Even the blindest people would be able to tell how in love the two of them were.

I smile as I see two sets of husband and wife kiss passionately after nearly six years of no intimacy at all and I watch as son is reunited with his mother and a family becomes whole again like it should always have been.

My heart warms watching the people below who have gone through some of the hardest thing's life can throw at us finally receive the gift they've so desperately been wanting.



Silent Whisper

My squad, heads down, patrol Vine Lane, looking for the Crime Syndicates that operate the night; the drugs traded litter the floor. We headed towards the Gasstoof Hotel as we heard reports of gunshots in room 29 and it being locked from the inside. Suspected murder. Nothing more to say. As we passed the desolate square, we found a man exiting an alleyway. His hood concealed his hair and face but a clean revolver shines in the moonlight.

"..." I slowly move to my gun, staring at him with daring eyes,

"I don't think that is necessary, trooper," he spits with a viper-like tone, rearing his ugly face towards me. I'd unholster my gun and point it at his head.

"STAND DOWN CHARLIE!"

"YOU KNOW WHO THAT IS!"

I look confused at the man after the radio call, it was Gore.

By Freddie Page

Land Siren

I opened a cracked door with moss growing inside. There, at the end of the hall, was a figure. Tall and skinny. The moon shone through the blood glass and landed onto the face of the figure. Big, ruby, hypnotic eyes, a button nose and thin, red lips. It was a girl. She opened her mouth: rows of shark teeth flash a pearly white. Then she sang. My body froze, I felt stuck in a stone statue. Her singing stopped. I turned my back to her.

"Where are you going Edward?" She called out, her voice was posh, and she looked beautiful, but I knew who she truly was. A monster. I sprinted out of the room. The further I ran, the louder her song became. I needed an exit. Where was the exit? There were no windows, no doors, no out, nowhere to go.

After, what felt like hours of running, I found a small room with a window. I saw freedom. I tasted freedom. I froze. The singing stopped. What happened? I felt scared, full of worry, full of hate, full of fear. I saw her reflection in the mirror. Long, black hair, her hypnotic eyes and ruby red dress. I froze again. She grabbed the back of my neck. "Play times over, Edward", she whispered in my ear. Pain shot through me. And suddenly... it was dark.

By Olivia Yard



The crows squawked in the trees, the ground was shrouded in a thick fog and I could only see a few meters ahead of me. The leathery, dead grass moved around in the mist and my feet trampled on hard, crunchy leaves. Everything had lost colour, not even the brightest flowers. I could even taste the dullness of the atmosphere around me, it was like everything was the opposite of what it should be.

Apparently, this was the forest where many have been reported missing. It was just a forest I thought. So, I kept moving forward, somehow it felt as if this forest never ended. I started to panic, breathing heavily, taking small steps. When all of a sudden, I heard a whistle. It sounded as if it was coming from the tree behind me. I kept quiet, not knowing what to do. But I was curious to see what the noise was. With my mouth still shut, I moved around the tree, but there was nothing. There was another whistle, then another, and then a final one. It sounded as if it had moved away when all of a sudden, there was a loud thump causing the ground to shake.

I jumped, unsure about what had just happened. I leapt back from the tree with extreme precaution. I felt my body becoming intoxicated by fear. But I kept silent, not wanting whatever that thing was to hear me. But all of a sudden, I heard a word from behind me, "Peak-a-boo", I quickly turned around letting out a loud shriek. The creature lifted up its claws and proceeded to stab me in my torso. It started ripping my leg to bits. I yelled and screamed for it to stop, but it kept cutting me. I took one glance down to see my leg lying in a pool of blood. The creature then cut open my stomach and clawed out my intestines, consuming them as if it were some predator and I was its prey. I was coughing up blood, the pressure in my throat was intense. All of my limbs were gone, and I was still wondering why I was alive. But that's when I realised, the creature did not want to kill. It wanted to inflict immense pain upon anything that entered the forest. It would not let me die. I was bleeding severely and losing lots of blood. But I was still alive. It lifted up its arms one last time and pushed them deep into my chest, it squeezed my heart and pulled it out with ease like a fish from the water.

I am now one of them, want to inflict pain on those who enter the forest. I am no longer who I used to be. I am now... it.

By Tom



The crows cried as the trees stirred. Misty and dry, the ground shivered in fear once again. The night sky, dark and full, yet the full moon brightened the sky. He felt like all eyes were on him. He wasn't wrong. Looking around at the crumbling lumps of stone that were meant to portray a gravestone, he noticed every single one had an unknown death. Every step closer in the more of a graveyard, the more the temperature rose, the more it burnt. After a while a large church appeared swathed in a coat of black paint, yet shocked wasn't the word, for inside was breath-taking. Full of golden and red sculptures, full of creepy pictures that followed his every move, full of mysterious red splatters. It was extremely hot, so much so, that they both shredded a drop of sweat.

In the middle of the large hall, a throne stood full of power. Her soft skin glowed under the chandeliers light as she opened her arms to show her church. In an up-do flourishes hair so golden as his home, as yellow as the sun. The pink, oracle corset-dress swathed her petite body, yet revealed the most exciting parts. Her chest was covered in very thin lace but decorated with a heart locket. She spoke in an airy voice that was able to lure any man. Covered in a brown ash, her cheekbone copied her eyes. Her eyes. Anyone could lose their mind in her eyes. She was a respected girl, quiet and loved. Loved by everyone. Some may say she is irresistible.

As Florence held out her hand to John, she grinned. Grinned, teeth bearing. Then all of a sudden, blood poured down her canines, as they grew larger and larger into blood sucking, demon teeth. John gasped! He tried to turn and run but Florence grabbed his arm and when he turned back, she had a red slit dress. Long black hair pouring down her back and blood red eyes.

"You're a demon!" John cried.

"Oh, John, this is karma for all those girls you hurt before" Florence said calmly. She clicked and John was tied down to a hospital bed, laying before Florence, who was perched on her throne. "Just remember all this could have been avoided John. If only you weren't so stupid," she said, "let's go!" From a grave in her yard, a body came from beneath the grass and started to push John in his new bed to 'Room One'. "Welcome" said Florence "this is the bone room."

He looked around to see hundreds of jars filled with broken bones. Each jar had a label with a name and a date. "Get me out of here!" yelled John.

"Okay" Florence clicked, and they appeared in a room that contained more jars but this time they were filled with livers and intestines.

"Oh god" once again yelled by John.

"Had enough? That's a shame because we have one more stop." A click was heard and again they were in a room of jars, but this time John was told not to say a word.

"What is the..." John stopped. The two eyes in every jar turned to look at him. "I am sorry, please get me out!!" he yelled.



"Of course." Florence laughed.

They were now in a room with knives all over the walls. Everything was white. "Now," Florence started "this will only take a second. If you don't scream." But John screamed as loud as he could. She dragged a knife from his heart to his stomach. She emptied the body and placed everything in separate jars. Blood stained the white walls as she put the eyes, still dripping with blood and veins, into a jar. She labelled them.

"Bye, bye, no good John" she cried.

By Daisy

The cleaning job

As I walked around the woods for hours, I stumbled across a dock. The dock led to a boat, that led to another dock, that connected to a little island in the middle of the lake. The boat was covered in mould and blood. The blood was leaking into the water... drop by drop. The fog cleared and a black, crooked, overgrown house appeared. As I rowed towards the island for a split second, I thought I saw a huge man. And as I got closer, I would see him more frequently. The water was stained brown. The man was tall with battered clothes and looked grey and pale. As I reached the house, he greeted me at the door for my new cleaning job. He was towering over me and I could see that his face was stitched up and he had clumps of metal under his skin.

Day 1: I was walking round the house cleaning it up. I kept hearing faint noises. During the night, I couldn't sleep due to a creaking of the hinges on my door and the scratches. Oh! I hate the scratches.

Day 2: continuing with my cleaning, instead of noises I saw something over and over. When I went to bed, all I could see was a dark figure watching me while I slept.

Day 3: I finally finished cleaning. It stared at me dead in the eye. It looked human, but not human enough. He had grey eyes as if it was blind. Finally, I went to bed in peace and slept like a baby.

Day 4: I woke up and it was there again. I don't know why, but I walked past it thinking it was blind but no... it tried to punch me, but its arm got caught in the curtain. When it pulled itself off, the arm split and all you could hear were agonising screams. I'd never run so fast in my life. I jumped out of the window into the boat. I rowed as fast as I could, but it was there, and it hit me this time.

Day 5: it was there again. I could see it clearly. Its tattered clothes, grey eyes, and torn off arm still bleeding from yesterday. Looking closely though, you could see the spilt already regenerating. This time it said something. In a crooked expression, with his gruesome, rotten teeth spilling from its mouth, it said "thank you".

By Archie



Poetry Anthology

Christmas – *Matty Cutting*

Christmas is excitedly polishing shoes for St Nick and watching a Christmas flick.
It's yet again having no snow and making biscuit dough.
It's decorating the Christmas tree and being carefree.
It's staying awake for hours
And watching shows where people have special powers.
It's eating an obscene amount of food and waiting for the fat, mince pie loving dude.
It's singing songs about a reindeer with a red nose and tying presents with pretty, little bows.
And finally, it's reading Christmas books in cosy nooks.
That's what Christmas means to me.

The Dark Side – by *FMH*

It's midday and everyone is happy; the five of us are having lunch.
It's now late afternoon and you can hear an actual scream.
It's now midnight, it has turned into because houses are on fire and blood floods the streets.
Finally, it's morning everything has calmed down but now we are two men down.

Are we on the dark side of the planet?

It's midday outside and everyone is jolly, the five are having fun.
It's late afternoon now you can hear an occasional scream.
It's midnight, it has transformed into a horror film houses on fire blood oozes out of houses into the street.
Finally, it's morning everything is fine. One gap is empty. Where's Jill?

The Brain – by *FMH*

There is a dark side to your brain
at the back in the shadows always criticising
and yelling at people
but never heard creeping and crawling
knowing it can't take down the good in your brain.
But some brains are different
their dark side is much larger
than the good
it laughs and triumphs over it
as the good struggles in the evil's grip.

Everyone – by *FMG*

Everyone in a line not a toe in or out
the bond is strong hands are joined together
no one above no one below
all here is different but are all made of flesh, blood and bones
we are all equal so treat people the same even if they are strange.



The dark side of a person – by *Olivia Yard*

There's always a dark side of a person. Just waiting to be let out.

It can be let out because of an argument, family death, traumatic accident, bullies, loud noise, confusion or could be born with it. The Dark side to a person can be angry, psychotic, sad, mentally unstable, most are just dark minded. People say that just because of a traumatic accident they can't have a dark side. They can't be psychotic. They can't complain about their issues. Most say that they are just grieving over a loss. They don't realise that they walk past 5-6 murderers in their lifetime. Most say that movies create psychopaths, but movies make psychopaths more creative. They say murderers are born that way. Little do they know that everyone's a killer if you push them far enough.

A Pirate for Christmas – by *Joseph Waterer*

Twas the night before Christmas
And all through the ship
Not a creature was stirring
Not nothing
But quick
If you look closely
Just over the mast
A green furry figure
All lanky and masked
The Grinch? Oh Surely? But alas not so
It's Blackbeard the pirate
With a beard black as crow
He's slinking and sliding all over the rigging
Hiding and hoping that no-one would see him
But I can still see his bedraggled frame
Stood like a tree
Like a bird
Like a crane
His oversized jumper is where the myth began
That the Grinch steals presents from the kids of
The land
But Ed would never do that
Or would he? Ha
At least when he's sober he wouldn't dream that
He can
But whenever the eggnog is flowing fast
Or the rum and coke is running aghast
Then hide your toys, your food, your tree
Because bonnie wee Blackbeard is coming to tea



The Light of Equality – by Joseph Waterer

Equality is a right, we all should claim
No matter race, religion, wealth, or fame
It means we stand together, hand in hand
With equal voice, equal power in the land.

No one above, no one below
Just equal treatment, equal glow
For every soul is unique and bright
And in equality, shines with all its might.

So, let us strive for this ideal true
And build a world, where equality shines through
Where everyone is free to be
And live with dignity, for all to see

Love – by Matty Cutting

Love is a strange and wondrous thing
It can make you weak, as if your made of glass
And yet, it can make you strong, like a rock
It can fill you with happiness, or make you feel like you're going to cry
Love is a mystery, and yet, it's the one thing that we all seek
It's the one thing that can make us feel complete
And yet, it's the one thing that can tear us apart
Love is a strange and wondrous thing
And yet, we can't help but crave it
It's one thing that makes us who we are
And yet, it's the one thing that can destroy us
Love is a strange and wondrous thing
And yet, we can't help but love it.

A set of limericks by Erin Spicer

There was a man named John
Who hated to be wrong
But every time he was right
He would take flight
And then sings a song
There was a girl called Isla
Who is she? I don't know either
When she did art
She let out a fart
She asked me who she was and I told her I know neither!
There was a girl named Erin
When she saw a herring
It was covered in snot
And it will soon rot
Now it lives in Ferring

Hope – by Joseph Waterer

Hope springs eternal
A bright and shining light
But as and when it fades and darkness leaps
in flight
Depression settles in
A heavy cloak of sorrow
Wrapping tight around you
As a never-ending horror
But turn the page and you shall see a very
different tale
Hope returns
The sunlight shines
As a gentle, soothing veil
Lifting the weight and banishing the cold and
dingy night
Bringing joy and peace as a brand new
shining light
For hope and hate
They are but two sides of the same gold coin
Flipping, turning, spinning
As a never-ending join
But hold on tight
And keep on tight
And keep on fighting
For hope will always come
The sunlight always shining
A new day still inviting
...now read up...

A Gambling Games – by George Grover

Time of which constrains us all is the best dealer
Always the best hand
Always the best bet
Yet us a player
A night to forget
You see life is a gamble
A spring of some cards
And your life flashes before your eyes
Faster than a game of darts
A burn and a sip calms and allows us to see down a glass tunnel to success
Yet that same glass tunnel kaleidoscopes our life into a warped reality
Soon we become a shattered chip; fractured Porcelain
Our value of life worth a dime
And that bet we started so long ago seems fruitless
Whether we cash it all in to come back and buy a new chip if we can buy one at all if it's even still there
Yet we still play that card
Yet we still walk to the table
Yet we still step through those doors
Maybe it wasn't worth nothing at all
Or maybe you just fold

The Seahorse



Thank you for reading!

Do you want to feature in our next magazine?! If you would like to be a part of this amazing, creative experience please come and join.

We meet every Thursday after school until 4pm in G38E.
If you have any questions just ask Miss Foster, Miss Pritchard or Ms Frost.

We look forward to seeing you soon :D

Editors: Miss Foster, Ms Frost

Writing: Members of the Creative Writing Club

