



The
Eccedentesiast⁽ⁿ⁾
Pain & Healer

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Preface

Covered in a big smile, the Eccendentesiast fakes all happiness in their faces. Deep inside, a bundle of pains and sorrows accompany them.

The Eccendentesiast is a collection of flash fictions. Written and embellished with such incredibly wild imaginations, dark thoughts, sadness and pain. Guided by Ms. Wedhowerti with her imagination-booster lecture, this book is successfully published in glory.

Our stories are the great victory to all thoughts which were jailed for so long in mind, and finally released in writing. This book may probably have a lot of flaws, any critic and suggestion for our improvement is highly appreciated.

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Guardian Angel

By Aulia Nur Halimah

Two brunette boys sat in a small white room with lots of drawing-filled paper stick on the walls. One boy—Sei—were doodling on a paper with crayons. Another boy—Wei—was staring at Sei’s drawing. A sound of loud horn blasted through the room and a small silver cup was put on a counter, rewarding a groan from Sei.

“Time for your meds, Sei,” Wei said with a sing-sang tone, “go and eat that useless meds.”

“It’s not useless, Wei,” Sei got up from his position, “It makes you healthier.”

Wei only scoffed at Sei’s word and rolled his eyes, “yeah, sure.”

Sei grabbed the small cup with two pills were inside it. He gulped down the pills and scrunched his nose.

“Urgh,” Sei stuck out his tongue, “it’s bitterer than the previous one.”

Wei laughed at Sei’s expression, “What are you even expecting from those useless medicines?”

“At least, they make the pain less painful.”

“Yet, they still make you feel the pain. So it’s useless.”

They continued their previous activities for a while until an older man entered their room with a needle in a tray.

“Sei, it’s your turn,” Sei rolled his right sleeve without being told to.

The man poked the needle to Sei’s arm and injected a yellow liquid, rewarding a hiss from both Sei and Wei.

“Done,” the older male took out the needle, “Let’s go. Dr. White is waiting.”

The man left the room first. Sei looked at Wei, fear was clearly shown on his eyes. Wei threw a comforting smile.

“Don’t worry, Sei. It’ll be alright,” Wei patted the other’s shoulder, “I’ll always be there when you need me.”

Sei nodded nervously and followed the man, exited the room.

Sei entered a room with many older people in white coat. A woman wearing the same coat approached him.

“Hello, Sei,” She greeted with a warm smile, “Let’s do this once again, just like the usual.”

Sei only nodded and followed the woman. The room he entered is a huge room with a bed in the middle of it. Sei laid himself on the bed. The woman strapped his arms tightly with leather belts and left Sei alone, feeling nervous.

"It'll be okay. It'll just like a bee sting. Everything's going to be alright," Sei repeated the words like a mantra.

Two men came into the room, bringing some sharp tools. Sei gulped hard.

"It'll be okay..."

The sound of blade clashing was heard. One of them was sharpening the tools.

"It'll be just like a bee sting..."

One of the men grabbed Sei's arm tightly and the man with the sharp blade approached. The cold blade touched his skin making him shiver.

"Everything's going to be alright..."

A loud shriek of agony resonated through the room. The sound of bones being cut and flesh being teared also heard on the room. Blood splattered from the teared meat.

Throwing the cut parts into a black plastic bag, the men left Sei alone. Sei bit his lower lips to quiet down his sobs.

"I've told ya," Wei stood beside Sei, "those meds didn't help anything. It still felt painful, right?"

"It-It h-hurts," Sei spoke through his sobs.

Wei patted Sei's head, "shush, shush. It's alright, Sei. It's alright. I'm here for you, just like what I promised."

"Now, just close your eyes," Sei looked at Wei with teary eyes, "Don't open it until I say so. By then, everything will be alright."

Sei did what Wei asked him to. He heard the sound of door opening, signaling that the men came again. There was no sound for a while except for the sound of the men sew something into his body. He heard someone screaming loudly before everything started to fade out.

"Sei," Wei called his name. Taking that is his signal, Sei opened his eyes.

He was no longer in the room where he was being tied up. He was inside the opposite room where the older people wearing white coat examining him. His—wait, probably it's not his anymore—body parts had been attached back.

But, he was too focused to care about that. The view in front of him made his stomach flip. The walls and windows were painted in red with the blood. The white coat of the older people were now colored red from their blood. Everything was terrifying. There were some having no heads, some that had a big hole on their stomach, and others had something stuck on their body.

Wei stood beside Sei while grabbing his left hand.

"Wei... are you... the one who... did... this?" Sei turned to Wei who was smiling at him.

"I just did what I had to do," Wei spoke up, "to stop your pain."

Sei opened his mouth to protest, but Wei cut him off.

"They are hurting you. They are the one who caused you pain. You are screaming and crying about how painful on what they've done to you-no, us- won't stop them to hurt you. They always say *once again*, but how many of *once agains* that you have to do to satisfy their greed. I've had enough."

Wei tightened his grip on Sei's hand.

"If they are gone, you won't be painful again. I don't want you to be hurt anymore."

Sei only stayed quietly on hearing Wei's words. He tightened the grip of Wei's hand.

"Wei, I appreciate that you concern me that much, but *this*—this is too much—"

"*This* is the *only* way," Wei pressed his tone, "If not, they will continue to hurt you and I don't want that."

Silence warped them. Wei walked off first, still grabbing Sei's hand. Sei followed Wei from the back.

"Let's go. We're getting out from this hellhole."

The Passenger

By Enggartiaso Satria Jati N.

It was almost midnight. The street was deserted. The night had become colder. Baka, a taxi driver was stopping by the edge of the road. There were only a few streetlights that made the night less dreary. He occasionally glanced at his watch. It was 23.47. He really felt tired after working all day. The weather outside was really cold, making no one dare to go out at that night. It was just Baka, the only one who was awake that night. There was no sign of life out there. He stepped on the gas pedal slowly. He decided to go home.

"Ah, shit. The wind is very cold now. I wanna get the hell out of here, take a shower, then sleep," said Baka.

Moments after he drove, he saw a young woman on the side of the road. She stood under a streetlight, just a few meters from a small crossroad in that area. The woman was just standing still. There was nothing strange about the woman before suddenly she waved her hand just before Baka passed her. She wanted to have a ride. Actually, Baka no longer wanted to carry passengers. He was very tired that day, but he eventually decided to take the woman. He thought it was not good to deny fortune. He stopped the car right in front of the woman. Baka saw her face. She was pale and her sight was empty. The woman opened the back door and entered.

"Where to go, Miss?" Baka asked the woman.

"Take me here," the woman dropped a piece of paper into the front seat. She pointed to a spot on the paper.

Baka looked at the paper she gave. Baka, who had been a taxi driver for years, was not sure if the address on the paper really existed. It was written: Upper Pine Residence, 285 Winston Road, CA. He tried to follow the path which he read, but he still had no idea where to go. However, he was afraid to ask the woman. Immediately he stepped on the gas pedal and left.

Second by second passed. She did not say any word. Not even looking to Baka. It's been a while since Baka drove, but the destination was really hard to find. When the car stopped at a traffic light, Baka took a time to check the existence of the woman's destination on his smartphone. Time and time again he typed the name of the place, but it was never found on the map. Baka was very sleepy. He almost hit a big rock on the side of the road. He

passed a big grassland, which had no inhabitants. He checked his watch again. It was 01.26. It was a long drive, but the destination seemed too far away. Suddenly, the temperature inside the cab became colder. The heater worked well, but Baka still felt cold. His heart was pounding. Now, he felt uncomfortable. He glanced at the rearview mirror to see the passengers.

"Hah! Where the hell is the woman? Why's she disappeared? She obviously was there. She's a ghost! Oh my God! I'm taking a ghost!"

Baka was petrified and didn't have the guts to look back. With trembling hands, Baka drove around the way he saw on the paper. Baka was really scared. He shuddered and he wanted to cry! However, Baka did not want to look frightened and keep driving to the woman's destination.

"Stop!" Suddenly the woman's voice startled him. He looked back at the rearview mirror and the woman was seen again in the back seat. Cold sweat ran down on Baka's forehead. He was very sure that the passengers was not a human.

"Is this the intended address?" Baka ventured to ask without looking at the woman.

"Yes, here is my home. Thank you for taking me," said the woman.

It's weird. Baka looked out the window and did not see any house standing. He found himself in a small street with lots of pine trees on his left and right. He just saw a high bush in that place.

"Thank you sir. This is the cost," she said to Baka. She reached out her hand to Baka.

Baka jolted! What she gave was not money, but a pair of human eyes! Baka was shocked and decided to look at her for the first time. The woman's face was covered with blood and her eyeballs toppled her face.

Unexpected Meeting

By Vatma Anggraini Putri

She was staring at me with a sad look, as if she was saying goodbye to me. Maybe it was a goodbye because she left right after she smiled. I admitted that her smile was so beautiful. Her laugh always sounded like a music in my ear. But when she turned around, I didn't stop her. I didn't have any reasons to do it. I just stood here, under the tree, and stared at her back with a vacant stare.

"I will stop now," that's her last words and I knew she meant it.

She was Sarah Lynch, my neighbor. I knew that she liked me. No. More than that, she loved me. She confessed her feeling to me years ago. I didn't really remember. All I remembered was she tried so hard to make me felt her love and to love her the way she loved me. She knew since the beginning that it was not easy, but still, she tried and tried. Minutes ago, she said she would stop it but strangely, I was *disappointed*.

I let her go not because I didn't like her. It was because of *me*. It was because of my fear. I was afraid that I would hurt her, just like *him*.

"*He lets her die,*" one sound in my head whispered.

I started to get my consciousness back and walked home. This time I chose to walk through the bridge, which was more far to get home. But I needed it. I needed the summer wind to freshen my chest. I tried to look around. From distance, I could see the sun had already set and left the sky with the orange and black color—my Mom's favorite color. She would have been so happy if she was here. I knew.

"*He lets her die,*" one sound in my head whispered again.

I touched my locket for I remembered the last time she stared at me. It was the time when she gave me this ring and I turned it into a locket for my necklace. But no one saw this ring as no one could see my dark time. The dark time when he killed my mom slowly and all I did was nothing. He killed her but my mom still loved him even until the last time. For me, my love for him had gone long time ago when he chose another woman rather than my mom, his wife. It was dead.

I looked at the sky that was completely dark. There was no one who passed this small bridge. Only some cars passed once in twenty or thirty minutes. Maybe it was because

there was no lamppost here or they preferred to pass the new big bridge two miles from here. I thought everyone always loved the new things.

No. I didn't want to be like them, like my dad. If I was him I would never let her break down and die alone. He let her in a great suffer that he himself couldn't understand. That was the thing that made me to be who I was. I didn't want to hurt anyone like I didn't want to hurt Sarah. I was just too afraid that I would turn to be a monster. A monster like him.

I stopped for a moment before I continued my walk. I tried to get over the thought about all the complicated things. Why didn't they just leave me alone? I didn't want to be haunted with all the memories, the fears, the thoughts. I just wanted to disappear from this crowded city and found a peaceful place where they couldn't see me. I just wanted a place like a beach: a small house near a small beach with no neighbors and far from people. That was what I needed. As simple as that.

I decided to continue my walk. When I was about to take my first step, I saw something moving in the dark, not far from where I stood. I took some steps closer. When an old car that was driven by an old man passed the bridge, the headlamp illuminated the thing that moved. My eyes rounded as the feeling of shocked and wondered mixed in one feeling after I saw it. It was Lucas Warrior, the one who gave me his last name. I knew, he also shocked when he saw me.

I was freezing as if the summer suddenly evaporated and replaced by a winter storm. I didn't have any idea what to do. He was just standing there and both his hands touched the bridge barrier. He didn't look at me. All he saw was the water below.

“If you think I didn't come to your mother's funeral, you're wrong.” Said Lucas after a long awkward moment. I didn't think I needed to speak. So I was just listening to him even though half of me wanted to run away.

“I did.” I knew he stared at me. I thanked to the dark so that I didn't have to see him clearly.

“I do love her. But regret is always stronger than gratitude—“

“You're not!” I couldn't stop myself to say it. “You never love her.”

Even in the dark, I could see his smile. I didn't know what kind of smile it was since I couldn't really see his face.

“I want to meet her.” He stared at me again. “You have been growing so well. I knew she was a good mother until the end.”

I felt sorrow in his voice. I didn’t know why but I heard ‘goodbye’ too in his voice. Just like Sarah. Did he want to commit suicide?

He touched his own finger and did something that couldn’t be seen by my eyes. Then his hand tried to reach me. I moved backward spontaneously. “I just want to give you this.” I tried to see the thing in his palm. It was a ring. The same ring that mom gave to me. It was their wedding ring.

“I don’t need it. And I don’t think this works.” Then I left.

Maybe he would jump and I didn’t really care. Or did I just pretend to feel so? All of me spoke louder in my head. There was one sound asking me to stop and turn around, but another sound asked me to walk away. All of them became so noisy. Then I decided to stop and turn around. I could see nothing. He was not there. I ran towards the place where he stood before and I looked down. All I could see was the ripple of the water. I saw the white froth slowly disappear. I was shocked. My body was shaking.

On the top of the bridge barrier, I saw something tiny that was shining. In one second, I knew it was the ring.

“You let him die!” one of the sounds in my head accused me.

Triggered

By Valensia Jasmine

Summer ... ahh, what a lovely season. Can you hear those running feet? I can't wait to play with them. This new apartment that I just moved in 2 months ago, have lots of children and we get along together pretty fast, neighborhoods are nice too. No drunken bastards, cozy environments, everything is just so great right here. It's just those names, those names that always bother me, and those names that I should have forgiven years ago but I don't know why it keeps on hunting me.

Winter – the first snow of the year, faster than I thought. What a night! I'm making *S'more*, playing *stacko*, laughing together, and blending along with the neighborhoods. It is all fine until... – 9th December – Tony, one of the children must be hospitalized for 11 days. His father whacked him down this morning, David, he was so drunk – too damn drunk and beat his own child. First time seeing drunkard in this neighborhood, it burns my chest. It's burning and I wish I could avoid it.

11th December – David screams so loud. He is in pain for sure. I am the first person to check him out. I am standing alone in the corner of the hallway, which I don't even know how. Grimacing in pain, he looks shocked and confused. In a split of a second, other neighbors also come in. There's an iron fireplace poker beside David and he is holding his right arm, it is broken, broken badly. And his eyes, he can't open his eyes, he says it burns him. Mr. Adam takes him to the hospital with his car. The next morning, as I go downstairs to get my newspaper, I hear Mr. Adam is talking to Mr. Raymond, the security, he says "David was sleeping in dark, he heard steps and when he was about to stand up, someone sprayed his eyes with the X eyes spray, blinded him for 3 damn days! He was sure it was someone among us, among our neighborhood. We must be careful and keep it in secret! Don't do anything until we sure about it!"

– Ah! Poor David! Since the suspect is in our neighborhood, I must tell all the children to stay still in their room for couple of days ahead. They must be protected, they must.

16th December – I am sitting on the stairs. I don't know, I just don't know. It confuses me so much to stay still or to go upstairs and check out for the man. So, here I am again being the first person. He is David, another David, he lives alone on the 4th floor, 2 floors above me. I just got to know him 2 days ago. He just got divorced, leaving his 3 children and a wife. And there he is screaming for help as he can sense it people have come. Someone has clearly punched his face hardly. With his swollen eyes, blood flows from his nose, the edge of the lips, and left ear. So, Mr. Adam once again takes the victim to the hospital.

20th December – 4 days have passed. All the men, including me, are given nighttime watch in turn. Many rumors have spread around. One of it is that David, the second David, he was blinded too with the X spray and someone covered his mouth to stop him from screaming and punched him until the man heard the clock rang showing 01.00 am, then the man ran away. That sounds scary, doesn't it? For the fact he is among us, he is doing it at night, before 1 am.

24th December – I think I hear something. The ticking sound of the clock, the fan, my heartbeat, and the heavy breath, but it's not mine. Who is it? Wait... I think I hear it again. It's my name, oh it's my name!

“Harry, stop it! You're hurting my dad. You're scaring me, Harry. Stop it, please!”

And there I am, standing there with an iron fireplace poker in my right hand, grabbing his hair in my left hand, not the child, but the father, and once again, another David. David Latovski, a single father who lives on the first floor. Well, I don't know, I swear I don't know. Someone set me up. David pushes me away and ran to the sound of his son, he hugs him and tells me not to hurt them. I tell them I won't hurt them, I am not the person who does this nasty evil thing to others. But I know in his child's eyes, he doesn't believe, and I break down in tears.

Mr. Adam and other men came in, I know in their eyes they wish it is not me but I can't help it. I don't know how to make them trust me. It's not me, it's just not me and I swear in tears.

24th January – after a month, I come back to the apartment. Well, I'm not alone, no one dares enough to leave me alone anymore. I went to jail, investigated and brought to the psychiatric to find out that I have this second personality in me. Here I am, in front of all of them, apologizing and start my story, a very old story. 24 years ago, I was 5. All I can remember is that my dad came home every night, 1 am, my mom always hid me somewhere to sleep. Why? Because my dad will beat us, hit us, punch us, and kick us. He hit us with an iron fireplace poker again and again and again, he wouldn't stop until he was tired and fell asleep or I called it fainted till the next noon. He seduced me for several times and finally killed my mom. He was the nastiest drunkest bastard and I hope not to meet him again and it came true. He killed himself in jail when I was 7. I was an orphan for years and I didn't tell anyone, and that was my huge mistake. I didn't believe in adult and as the result, all I need is cheerful friends, children. I need help for years but I keep quiet. Unknowingly, I develop this second personality in me that keeps on hating my father, David Gregor. It was all-fine until the fact that I saw a man beat his own son and the man's name was David too, it triggered my second personality to come out and controlled me. So, me, with all my heart, Harry Gregor, apologizing for everything that I have done and I am triggered again. Not to develop the third personality, but triggered to seek for help to get me through to this. One thing for sure, loneliness and silence will hold us but won't help us.

A Blink of a Man

By Bagaskara Gita Pradhana

My name is Raf, a 20 year-old man who lives in this demonic world. I'm 140 cm tall and 45 kg weigh. People always look down on me. It's not because of my physical appearance that looks like a kid, but my kindness. They say that I can't live by myself. That's why they always accompany me for my whole life.

24 hours in my life is very long, I have to do it in a certain arrangement. I should wake up at 5 AM, have breakfast at 6 AM, go to work at 7 AM, have lunch at 12 PM, come home at 4 PM, have dinner at 6 PM, and sleep at 7 PM. If I miss one thing in that schedule, I will instantly be warned by 60 calls in an hour.

I work in a gas station in the city as a helper. Usually I help elders, kids, and women when they need help. I don't want to help men. I think that they can do everything by themselves. I only have one friend in the place where I work, Cathy. She's so beautiful and charming for me, people say that she has six senses and it makes people scared of her. I always attempt to get into her, and every time I try, I fail.

I live in my parents' house. They are rich; my dad works as a doctor, and my mother works as a secretary. Sometimes I catch my mother with her boss in my home when my dad works overnight in the hospital. I don't have any sibling since they say I'm enough to fulfill their happiness, but what is enough when my mom and dad are still cheating each other.

Every day I live as what my parents tell me to. They never believe me that I want to be a man who can do everything by myself. But what have I got? Like a kitten in the hand of a little girl, I can't be free, like a bird in a cage, a bird that can sing but no one cares for a pitiful bird, as for me, who cares about me?

A line must have its end, and it must put back with other lines. When this line of me will come to an end, is it when I'm facing death? Even I can't enjoy the next line of my life because I will no longer exist in this world.

At the end of my 23rd birthday, finally my line has come to an end. Particularly, at the end of October, my parents meet their Maker in a flight accident. Both of their sovereigns come to me like an oasis in the middle of Sahara desert.

I buy a new house, spend my money on shopping, and buy all the things that I desire. I quit my job, because I believe that I can live the rest of my life with the money that my parents left. What I want to accomplish now is a girl. Money can buy everything though.

One day, I come to a shopping district and I see the prettiest girl I have ever seen. She comes up with a retro style look, vintage girl. I come to her and talk to her.

“How much is your price sweetie?”

“Take me for 3500 dollars boy, and I will be with you for the rest of my life.” She answer.

At the first night, I sleep with her. Sometimes I take a peek between my pillows, to see how she looks when the night is watching. My heart beats faster, I instantly close my eyes and the next morning, I woke up in other places.

“Fuck, what has happened!” I woke up instantly.

I feel blood covers some parts of my body and some parts of my skin are wounded.

“Shit, all this blood and pain, and it smells of gasoline, what is this!”

I come to my girl. She lies on the floor, naked. I don't know what happened with her. Was there any thief who comes to my house? I check my security camera and no one walked in except me. Okay, maybe because she had sex with me to fulfill her desire. Then I take her to a ride in my town to buy all the things that I desire.

It happens again in every two weeks, in the middle of the night, my heart beats fast and things happen exactly like before.

I always think that she does that to me every two weeks. It's her blunder. She is a girl who exchanges her life with 3500 dollars to me. She must intend to kill me and take all my wealth.

Even when I have a ride with her, she always brings me to accidents. I had a lot of near death experience with her.

It all happens again and again until the Valentine's Day the next following year, I fuck up.

“Fuck, I'm going to end this. What happens to me? Is this an attempt to kill me? I can't take this anymore.”

I tie her and bring her to my basement.

“You WHORE, SLUT, STUPID girl, want to take all my wealth, huh! I will finish you now.”

I cut her body into pieces, clean all of it, and put it on my basement wall with glass frames.

I rarely use my basement, because it's the most luxurious thing of my house and I don't want people or my friends to see it, so I hardly ever use it too.

My friend from the gas station who has six senses call me on the next day, “you cannot live by yourself, you must be accompanied by other people or other things, or you will show the real you. Poor life for the other people who accompanies you, they will have a bad luck, you will blame other people for stealing your wealth, you're also born with bad luck, your name is Raf, the same pronunciation with “Rough”, that's how you are. It's better for me to keep a distance from you. I don't want to be the next missing motorcycle of yours, the one that you put your dick in it. Where's she now? It's just a motorcycle that you thought was a girl, who will be your next victim? A real girl? Oh poor you.”

Unutterable

By Adelia Sianipar

They call me Lenny Firstika Kurnia. Lenny is my grandmother's name, she died a few minutes after my mom gave birth so my family thought that my grandmother was waiting for me. While Firstika, as you can see there is the word First and *Kurnia* that is derived from the Indonesian word, *Karunia*, which means gift. Therefore, Lenny Firstika Kurnia means I am the first gift. I am the one and only child because of that my parents are protective and strict. There are lots of things I cannot do for they don't allow me. Now, I am in the 6th semester and my college life is way more interesting for I have a little bit of freedom in joining any activities.

It is the holiday and there is a family gathering in my house. Yet, I find out that it is more like individual meeting, each of us is busy with our own thing. All of sudden, I miss the atmosphere of Heartstrings community, which is a community that I join in the campus. There, we do lots of social activities that make me meet new people and circumstances. My parents do not know about this community because if they do, they will absolutely ask me to get out of it for they think it's a waste of time. Yet, I want them know that I learn a lot from this community, they teach me things that are absent in my family, and most importantly, they accept me and my dreams.

Holiday is officially over. "Lenny?" Dean, my senior in Heartstrings community greets me. He says that I look so bad and ask what is wrong. "I feel so strange with my family. They are like unpaid professional actors and actresses playing a very boring old drama over and over again. They keep going on with their odd stories, I wish they would have some modern stories." Seems that Dean doesn't understand. I explain that my family somewhat competes with each other to be the richest or honored ones and I feel like all this time we share things, not feelings. He says that it is understandable and many do the same thing. However, my family is the worst, Dean.

It is 00.45 a.m. and my phone rings. It's quite surprising to see the number, Mom.

"Your father collapsed and now he is in the hospital."

Mom says it is because Gerry keeps rejecting to marry. Gerry lost his father since he was a kid, his mother just passed away two months ago, so that my father takes care of him the way his parents did. “Tell him to apologize to your father.” I am not sure Gerry will listen to me, but I guess my mom is not asking the wrong person, she knows that Gerry and I are closer to each other than anyone else in our family. “Okay.”

“You’re the one who comes to our first meeting with that look.” Dean comes up from Heartstrings room. He looks gorgeous but he has a girlfriend already. Wait, why I am thinking about this. Huh I don’t care. Gerry has ruined my day. I tried to call him but he keeps rejecting. Dean asks and I tell him everything. He says that perhaps this is the right time for some modern stories.

There is a family gathering today and seems like Gerry has prepared something.

“I won’t get married. Marriage is no longer on my list. If you all want me to be happy then this is the answer, I will not get married.” Hell, how dare he.

“You can’t decide it yourself. We are a family, you need to discuss it with us first.” My uncle answered quickly. All eyes start staring at Gerry but he remains silent. “I think Gerry needs time.” I said eventually. Gerry looks at me in wonder. “I guess I know what Gerry feels.” “What do you feel then?” Dad answered hastily. I tell them that there is something strange in the family, something that creates the absence of truth, perhaps something that isolates us from being ourselves, from what we wish we could be. I realize that the most important thing for an individual is the feeling of doing and getting what they want, not just simply about the thing. I am not sure with what I say, but my family seems to be taking this seriously.

I’m not saying that what they have given to me doesn’t make me happy, yet more than that, I want to share what I feel about it, but never have the chance for that. They only care about what they give and provide to me. I, therefore, unconsciously do the same thing, I give them what they want me to give instead of what I want to. I take Economics for that is what they want me to take, I take swimming course despite my disinterest because they think that it is important. I don’t have the opportunity to decide altogether. I have no room to share what I feel. I accept that though, but Gerry, I think he is not in the age to be treated that way again. “Lenny, stop it! You absolutely don’t understand what the problem is.” My aunt looks irritated. “But I know who creates the problem and that’s exactly what we need to discuss.”

I know that Gerry's decision is the result of what my family does. They show us that having a feeling towards something or someone is no longer important and what we can reach in life is the most important thing. They kind of insist that we become rich and be honor by everyone. They have such a huge ego and pride. Gerry stands and hugs me. He is crying. My family and I never see it before, not even in his parents' funeral. What an unutterable feeling. My family leaves the living room without a word.

Today is Gerry's engagement day. He is really full of surprise. Seven months after that day—Gerry says he will not get married—he comes to our family and introduces his girlfriend. They gladly welcome them and start discussing today. They are unutterably different. I eventually see some modern stories. All of sudden, I feel the need to tell someone, Dean. I have never seen him lately.

I text Dean because I heard that he has moved to Jakarta, where his girlfriend stays. Thinking about that really sucks, I don't care though, I just want to congratulate him on his graduation. Not long after it is sent, a call comes up on my screen, Dean. He says that the last time we met is actually the time he said goodbye to Heartstring community and he was looking for me but he found me messed up because of Gerry so he decided to say it next time. Then, I tell him everything including it—I think I'm in love with you—I know it is embarrassing but it is pretty wondrous to hear his response."See you on your graduation day."

My graduation day? It is next year, he may not come just for me.... there must be something.

My Life Path

By Tirza Gracia Sukendro

It was one of the summer day in London, Sanjeev walked through the side of the road and his sweat dripped into his brown skin. As he walked along the road, the traffic was busy and the cars were honking here and there. The wind blew his black hair while his right hand was bringing a flute. Rohan was a typical nerdy guy who always liked to read and study in his spare time, that was why he always put the glasses on.

As soon as he reached home, the family was gathering in the living room. This made him uncomfortable because the most favorite topic that the family discussed was about arranged marriage. Growing up in an Indian family, sometimes kind of making him anxious about his life in the future. Arranged marriage was a big deal for him. In fact, his family still followed this tradition. His eyes caught Nanna's face who gave the warmest smile to him. Nanna was about 70 years old and since he was a baby, Nanna always took care of him maybe more than his mother. Everyday Nanna never put off the *saree* which made her looked so pretty.

Nanna hugged his grandson and asked her where he had been and gave his favorite cake to him. Sanjeev decided to go to his room but Mama was concerned that her son was not okay.

As he walked through the room, he heard that Mama and Nanna were talking about him, especially Mama who seemed so worried if her son was not in a good condition. He opened the door and put the cake on the table. One of the best thing that he had to do was taking a shower. Finally, he took of his clothes and entered the bathroom. Warm water fell down from the shower and touched his dirty body from dust and any particles from outside of the house. He was thinking that now Mama and Nanna were talking about arranged marriage which had always been their main concern topic. Sometimes, he always thought that people needed to find their own path without an arranged marriage. Soon after he finished taking a bath, he began to study. This was one of the best escapes that he could do

because counting was better than talking, especially about useless things. He took Mathematics as his study program in Warwick University which also dealt with Physics. Although he was a silent person, he could make friends with anyone.

The phone was ringing and it was from his English friend, Mike. He was asked to come to a party at Luke's house. At first, he didn't want to join them but he decided that he would go after having dinner with family.

The dinner was ready. It was served so well by Mama and Nanna. Sanjeev was sitting next to Papa. After Sanjeev finished the dinner, he told his family that he would go out and stayed in Mike's house. At 9 p.m Mike took Sanjeev out to the party. There were a lot of people there and he greeted his friends, in fact the people there were all his friends. His eyes caught someone that he never saw before. She was not too tall, around 160cm, tan-skin, and she had a brown-curly-hair. At that time, that girl was wearing a grey shirt with tight trousers. He met Anita, his Indian girl friend, and asked about that girl. Then Anita told him that she was Sasha, a new student from Asia and she was taking English Literature. It seemed that Anita thought that Sanjeev was crushing on her. He left Anita as soon as she asked him about her. He came back to his friends and did not think about that curly girl.

A week after, he was spending his spare time at the library which was so cold and quiet. Soon after he finished at the library, he went to the student center. He took out his flute and placed himself in a comfortable position. Playing an instrument which he had made since he was in the first semester and forgetting about the world around. He was shocked that there was a girl who listened and enjoyed his performance.

“Wow... that was really cool!” said the girl. She was wearing a white t-shirt and tight long jeans which made her look so casual.

“I did not know that you enjoyed my playing, thank you, by the way.”

“I’m Sasha and I’m a new student here. Nice to meet you.” she took her right hand as she wanted to shake hand.

Sanjeev finally met the girl that he saw at the party. Sasha looked happy to see him playing flute and told him that she also saw him at the party. Their conversation was not too long because Sasha had to go.

From their first meeting, they finally knew each other and always spent their time together. Sanjeev thought that by having Sasha as a girlfriend, his life could be happier and an arranged marriage would never happen. Remembering that he never followed the tradition, he told Sasha about this. Fortunately, Sasha understood and accepted about the difference between her and Sanjeev, but she didn’t really make this as a big deal.

Sanjeev told Mama and Papa that he had a girlfriend who was different from them. Mama wanted to see her and could imagine that this girl was so pretty, while Papa kept listening to Sanj’s story. The one thing that Sanjeev wanted to do was not telling Nanna about Sasha. Nanna was the only person who still followed the tradition. Sanjeev didn’t want to hurt her because he was sure that Nanna had prepared an arranged marriage for him. It was obvious when Nanna always talked about Narina and she told that Narina was a typical good wife as an Indian, she was also smart. He always thought that if Nanna knew it, she would be mad at him.

In one fine day, Nanna came to Sanjeev and talked with him. Nanna asked him about Narina, his childhood friend, and it seemed that Nanna actually wanted to talk about an arranged marriage. She also told him that she had found someone that deserved to be his wife. Sanjeev told her that he couldn't marry and live together with a person that he never knew before. He was trying to speak calmly with no emotion. For him, it was good to follow the tradition but an arranged marriage was not the best idea. He finally came to his room and locked the door. Playing flute was the best idea to refresh his mind.

Shortly, both Sanjeev and Sasha graduated from college. They finally had a job with the best position. It was in winter in December, Nanna got sick and it was quite serious.

Nanna told him to marry Narina the one that she had chosen for Sanjeev. At that time Sanjeev became a rebel and did not care about what Nanna said. Mama and Papa knew his condition, they tried to understand their son.

Mama and Papa met in arranged marriage and because of time they finally could understand and love each other. Sanjeev still held belief that he couldn't follow the tradition but it didn't mean that he was never proud of being Indian. He wanted to find his life path. He thought his family insisted to him to do an arranged marriage but he was wrong. How happy he was to know the truth. Sanjeev also knew the truth why Nanna always kept talking about an arranged marriage because she thought Sanjeev had no girlfriend and afraid if one day her grandson would be single like forever. Sanjeev also realized that the problem was not in his Nanna, but it was on himself. He always thought that Nanna wanted an arranged marriage for his grandson.

Having Sasha as his girlfriend had made him learn that living in diversity was not as bad as what people thought because some people worried if there would be so many barriers in life. Both Sanjeev and Sasha were not committed to marry yet, they wanted to work first and earned some money for their future.

He also learned one thing that it was great to keep the tradition from our ancestors. While following the tradition was also good but the important thing was that how people reacted to this matter wisely.

The Lamp

By Michela Sherly Babtista

I see him again today.

This evening, we decide to have a meet up in a small park near my boarding house. Such a blessing I have because it has been several months since the last time we met. Of course, this meeting is not just happen without any squabble before, still as usual. But, it makes me relieved that he does not change.

We are sitting next to each other on a brown wooden bench under a Maple tree – with our hands holding each other like usual. His fingers fit into mine that makes me feel like there is warm water flowing into my skin and enters inside my veins and finally follows the blood stream through my body.

I cannot hold myself not to look at him closely. His brown pupils are so steady in those wistful eyes as if they are floating Styrofoam on a calm river stream – looking straight into nowhere without any distraction but seem like holding a very complicated thing to be told. His pointed nose gets a little bit red on its tip because the weather starts getting cold lately. His wavy brown hair that always looks a bit messy is also still on its point. Both his cheeks are blushing into as red as his nose tip, and two very tiny moles are printed on the right side.

Everything is fine and nothing changes except his mouth. It does not open and there is no word comes out to create any conversation from beginning. Usually, when I am staring at him like now, he will automatically turn his face away and asks me to stop because it is embracing.

I lean my head on his shoulder slowly to make sure I would not disturb him or cause another misunderstanding. I know him better than himself. This man, I have known for 8 years since we were in Senior High School, does not like being investigated through a series of questions and repeated wise advices without any real solution as the follow up.

If someone dares cross the line, then the bomb will explode immediately. He will tell everything inside his head when he feels ready enough, and according to my experiences on a scale 1 to 10, 0,99 is the maximum, and you have to guess the rest accurately without any question or clue. What a work for 8 years.

He is still in his silent mode, with every crazy possible thing goes in his mind. I just cannot hold it anymore as my breath gradually turns into one heavy exhale. He moves a bit, and I see him looking at me. I can understand that gaze; pain mixes with tears being tied like a dam, a cracked dam.

“Let’s end all of these pains and tears of yours,” he says as he makes a rejection move from my leaning head.

My brain stops working for a second. “Now what?” I ask, trying to stabilize my voice and try not to blow up.

“Let’s have our life separately. I will take the right turn, and you will take the left. I can’t...,” he answers with his voice sounds like being held from its sharp and rising tone.

“Please be specific,” I cut his following words. My voice rises a bit and becomes beyond my control.

“Let’s break up. If you ask why, the answer will be...”, he turns his face away from me, “you are obstructing my life from freedom,” he finishes his words, without looking at me.

I feel everything skips a bit. Everything stops except us, and I can feel my own beating heart falls into the ground and all I can do only stare at it. My mouth is suddenly full and my eyes start to burn. A tear falls with soreness covers it. He does not even look at me.

“I hate to say this, but you are crossing your limit, Mr. Right! Make up your mind and say everything to me when you can finally look into my fucking face!” I almost yell at him, and leave him with anger imprints through my running steps.

“LUCYYYY!!!!”

“DEAN!!!!!!” I answer him as loud as possible to make sure he hears me.

His voice echoes inside me. Everything is dark, but his voice is too clear as if he is here.

“Annie! What happens?” A hand touches me gently.

My breath falls apart and I wildly wriggle. “Turn on the light, Mom! It’s too dark! I must see Dean!”

There are 10 seconds of silence as she suddenly hugs me and begins to sob. “What kind of lamp do I have to turn on, Sweetie? I... I... I can’t make anything brighter anymore,” Mom’s voice is trembling and I can feel her tears watering my shoulder.

I lift my shimmy hand and touch my right eye. It widely opens.

The *Real Me*

By Margaretha Nova Destiyanti

My name is Rekadavian Bagaskara. My nickname's Davi. I am 19 years old. My dream is to be a professional futsal player. Because I have two feet, I want to maximize the ability of them. Futsal is my world. Why? It is because I can meet with other people. Also, I can spend two-quarters of time playing Futsal that it can help me to relax my mind rather than being at home with all circumstances that can be spelled out 'not worthy' to be done. I believe that giving a smile is worship. Yeah, I know that it sounds so religious. I am a boy who has tan skin, 170 cm of height, black hair and also who likes to eat chicken noodle with rice. Crazy, right? For me, if I eat chicken noodle with rice, it will make me more excited and happier.

@ @ @

Today, Davi looks different. He becomes more silent and the cold impression is very attached to him right now. He doesn't even answer when people ask him something. Now, it's his training time and Davi is still silent, not communicating with others. His friends think that Davi is in bad mood. Suddenly, one of his friends unintentionally kicks him very hard. He is furious and then blows up. His friends try to explain to him, but it doesn't work. Then, one of them says, "You are not like this. You were just relaxed when you got an accidental kick." He stares coldly toward his friend who says that. He is angry. "Do you think I were *him*?" Answers Davi silently. Then, he is gone, leaving a lot of questions in the minds of his friends.

Day by day Davi's emotion becomes more severe. All the problems are getting worse, and fighting has been his favorite activity lately.

Three weeks have gone and now, suddenly Davi becomes Davi who always smiles and says hello to other people. Here's Davi now in the canteen while eating his favorite food, then a loud voice is heard.

"Davi," says Bibo.

"Yesterday, you were so crazy," says Malik.

"I just found that you are good at fighting," adds Bibo.

"What?" Asks Davi.

“You hit Dodit so badly,” says Rian.

“What do you mean? I would be very grateful if I can kick the ball into the hurdles, but this is a fight. How could I do that?” Answers Davi.

“Seriously Dav, yesterday the one who had scuffle was you,” says Mike.

“What the hell are you saying? Forget it, I’m going to my training place. Bye all!” Says Davi.

@ @ @

Today is Davi’s Futsal match, and everyone comes to watch it. However, it looks like Davi is not in his best condition. Although he still smiles, but it is undeniable that Davi looks different.

“Davi!! Why are you so handsome?”

“OMG!! Also, he is so kind.”

“That’s right! He is also friendly and genius!”

“I agree with you! He also likes to smile. And don’t forget that he is also an easy-going boy.”

“OH MY GOD, REKADAVIAN BAGASKARA!!”

Yeah, those are the kind of chatters for Davi, but suddenly some uncomfortable words are shouted by some bench players.

“Stupid boy!”

“Why are you so stupid Dav?!”

“What the hell are you doin’ Davi!”

“See? All of this happens because of you Dav! Where is Davi who always plays well? You’re so lame, stupid and useless Dav!”

To hear it instantly wakes the other *side* of Davi. He immediately yells, punches Rian who taunts him earlier very hard.

BUGH...

"I'm useful! I'm not weak, fuck you. You die!" Shouts Davi. The other friends, Malik and Bibo, who saw the incident, try to separate them, but Davi is too strong.

"Dav, let him go!" Says Malik.

"Dav, he's your friend!" Says Bibo and keeps repeating. And Malik, who understands well what happens to Davi, starts to shout out loud calling *his* name, "REKAA!"

Instantly, Davi wakes up, and says softly, "I'm sorry." Then he is leaving. Everyone in that place is speechless after that.

@ @ @

"YOU'RE THE UNWANTED CHILD,"

SMASH!

"Mom. Why?"

"WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS BE A LAME BOY?"

"I have always been an obedient child to you. I always do what you want!"

"What are you saying?" Then I was taken by my mother into the living room with my hair pulled. I was whipped and scolded by my mother. I was treated like this by my mother almost every day. I have been treated like this since I was six years old and I always heard or saw the fight between my parents. I never understand the reason behind it, but my mother always treats me like this. Sometimes I think, what mistakes I have made that I'm always punished, kicked, and scolded by my mother.

"HELP ME, DADDY. STOP IT, MOM!" My mother constantly tortured me. My father was silent to see that, even he also ignored me as if he didn't hear and see anything.

"Go on Reka,"

"I hate them! Where is love when a mother tortures her own child for years? Where is love when a father sees his son being humiliated, but just doesn't do anything? Is that a parent? Is it love? Is that a family? Even now, there are many people who vilify me! Why cannot I get the love? WHY? I REALLY HATE THEM KELIVIN!" I yell as I grab my own hair.

“ARGHHH!” I cry heavily. “I hate them! I hope that they will die soon, but,”

“Why is my face wet? Am I crying? Am I changing again?” Asks Davi.

“Hello Davi, a moment ago, Reka told me everything. Today, the counselling session went well. How do you feel Davi?” Asks Kelivin.

“I don’t know, but it feels strange. However, it is light. I feel like there are no more burdens in my back.”

“Well, the session today has been completed, thank you for sharing with me. Let’s meet again next week on the same day and same hour. See you Davi.”

“Thank you Kelivin,” I leave the room.

--*DID* THERAPY ROOM—

Lost

By Rosa Virginia D.

The wind blew against Alex's steps toward the church. It was in the middle of cold December where wind and rain were falling repeatedly kissing Alex's white pale skin. Christmas' song had started to sound faintly from the church. Everybody seemed happy, except Alex. Alex's red stockings, red mini skirt and red scarf felt strangled. In front of the church's door, Papa was waiting.

"Please be hurry, Alexandra," said Papa.

"Wait, it is the first me wearing stuffs like this. So tight, I cannot even breathe."

"You'll get used to it"

Everyone looked at Alex in a strange gaze, whispering to each other. Alex felt like a sinner who came to be prosecuted.

"Sit next to me, my little girl," said Papa.

Throughout the mass, Alex felt uncomfortable either because of both the clothes and the strange gaze of people toward Alex.

Because of what happened in the church on the Christmas Eve, people in the city looked like they had mercy on Alex.

"Pa, why do people out there see me like I am the most peculiar kid on earth?" ask Alex.

"There's nothing to worry about, my girl"

"But, I want to make friend with them," Alex started to cry.

"Sstt..sstt.. Don't cry, honey. There's nothing wrong about you. You are beautiful, courageous and kind just like your mother."

Alex started to cry, Alex remembered it all, when Mama was gone and Alex felt like the whole world fell down. Alex always wanted Mama's hug and kiss before the bed time. Alex missed her, so much.

BUGG!! Kids' laughter was heard. Bleeding, Alex's head was bleeding. Alex saw the rocks that the kids threw.

"WEIRD!" said Willy, the naughtiest among the kids.

"Fuck off, Willy!!"

"What do you say? Say it again! You are just a weird kid whose Mama and sissy are dead. So, what are you doing with that mini skirt and girl's clothes so that your leg looks like ladder? Ew, disgusting, Alex."

HAAAAAAAA! The kids left with a mocking laugh at Alex who fell down on the ground. Alex grunted all the way to the house thinking why and what's wrong.

As Alex arrived at home, Alex ran to Papa's hug, and said, "Pa, they threw rocks at me. Am I doing something wrong?"

"No, sweetheart, they just envy because you have a sweet Papa like me"

"But Pa, they said that my sissy was dead? Do I have a sister?"

"No honey, don't listen to them. It's just you and me who own the whole world. Do you understand?"

Alex nodded even though there was something in Alex's mind about what happened with Mama and probably sissy. Then, something was caught in Alex's eyes, a photo, an old photo at the top of drawer. There was something odd with the picture.

Alex kept thinking about the old picture that showed four happy people as a family. How Alex could did not know about what had happened to sissy? Or Willy just lied? Alex wanted to sweep the photo up but the drawer was too high for and 8 years-old-kid like Alex. How to take it? Alex's eyes wandered around looking for a tool that could be used to drop the photo from the drawer. There was nothing to be used. Alex just realized that the house did not have many properties, whereas as Alex recalled, the house was very crowded by the laughter of a child and filled with stuffs. Where were all those things? Why did Papa seem like he hid something? Why could not Alex remember the moment after Mama died? Alex's head was filled with questions of unknown answers until everything was getting darker, and Alex fainted.

“Alexandra, my girl, now you are my cute little girl and will always be my daughter. Do you understand?” Papa's voice was heard faintly from afar. “No, Papa.” KLAM! Alex cried aloud. “Ssstt, don't cry my little star. Listen to Papa and you will not cry again, do you understand?” “Please, Papa.” KLAM!

DAGH! Alex woke up from fainting and surprised to see Papa smiling in front of the bedroom's door. Then, Papa approached and said, “What happened, my dear? I found you fainted on the floor”

“I'm fine, Pa”

This time Alex realized that Papa's gaze was so scary. It's like he was not Papa that Alex knew. Papa stroked Alex's long black hair.

“Papa, what happened to Mama and sissy?” asked Alex with a feeling of ungodly.

“Don't you dare to mention or ask about that, Alex” said Papa with raising his tone.

“Pa, do I have a sister? Willy said I used to have one, tell me, Pa”

KLAM! Papa left the bedroom with an angry face then, he locked the door.

“PA! Please open the door” BAM BAM BAM! Alex made a supreme effort to open the door. Alex threw all the stuffs in the bedroom. Then, suddenly the door was opened and Papa’s angry and odd face was seen.

KLAM! Alex fainted, again.

Lalala.... A song that was familiar in Alex’s ear sounded loudly. It came from the church. It was raining and the smell of Christmas felt chummy.

“Sander, don’t run too fast. Sandra cannot follow your steps,” said Mama.

“Run faster like a deer, run and run,” Sander said to Sandra wittily.

Sander arrived in front of the church first, giggling to Papa who had waited.

“Come faster, Sandra. You are so sluggish like a sloth,” Sander teased his sister until Sandra pouted her mouth, feeling annoyed. Sandra tried so hard to run as fast as she could.

BAM! Suddenly, Sander felt like the whole world was falling down. He felt hard to breathe. Mama was crying, Papa too. Sandra was gone, his little sister who was just celebrating her fifth birthday.

Alex awakened from his stupor. His heart was beating so fast and sweating a lot. He realized, he remembered it all, about Sandra and Mama, about what happened within a year. Alex ran and found Papa standing in front of the drawer.

“You killed my Mama!” Alex screamed as loud as he can.

“What did you say, my little daughter?”

“I’m not your daughter, I’m your son!” Alex felt frustrated. He remembered how Papa killed Mama because of Papa’s willingness to dress him as a girl because Papa loved Sandra so much. They argued almost every day, until Papa lost his control then stabbed Mama with a knife. Sander saw it all. Now, he knew why he couldn’t remember both the accident that happened with Mama and Sandra. His mind refused to remember.

“You killed my Mama” Sander’s voice shrinking.

“But, you killed your sister, Sander. YOU KILLED HER!!! And you deserve to die, Sander.”

Papa took a knife from his back. Sander stepped backward. He looked around searching for something to defend himself.

“Sander, I’m sorry. You killed my cute daughter, you killed Alexandra!!”

Papa swung his knife toward Sander’s chest, and BUG! Papa fainted. Sander’s right hand was holding a hammer he found on the couch. Papa’s head was bleeding. Sander ran out of the house and he never looked back.

Dear Mother

By Septi Putri Almadita

It is too late to go home, but I do. I am going home for my mother, my single mother. This night is so cold. I could touch the snow under my feet. My hands are shaking. I'm sure not because of the cold but something else that I can't explain. I hold my two shoulder straps tighter than before. All I know is that she would be angry, mother. Then, I am home. I am worried about my bag and what she's going to say about my bag.

"I am home, mother! Did you just wash the dishes?" I ask with a fake smile.

"You are late." She answers.

"Sorry, mother." I respond quickly.

"Don't repeat it again next time. Go to your bed, then. Good night, sweetheart." She kisses my cheeks and forehead as usual.

I go to my bedroom but still feel afraid. My pale hands are shaking. Sometimes, I feel they shake harder and harder. I look into my bedroom; it looks as messy as my hair, even my life perhaps. My life looks terrible. I only have a single mother without knowing where my father was even who he was. That was not really a matter. It is until I find out something about my father.

I sit on my bed. Freezing and being stiff. I don't know what I have to do next. I just think what is the inside of my bag. I take it, the precious one that I have to keep, mother's diary. I found it a month ago in a box called THIS IS MINE NOT YOURS. It is such a fancy book and quite my taste. I read every word inside over and over again. My most favorite part is this:

Dear Baby Calisda,
Love no one but your mother

I can remember those words clearly in my head without any hesitation. I don't know why she wrote that. That is my motivation now to be in here. She wrote it when I was just a little baby and she doesn't give it to me when I am older though. Well, if there is a favorite also there will be a hatred. There is a poem inside of it that I hate the most. It is ugly though. It only consists of four lines in one stanza only.

My Babe and Baby
Babe is the boar
Baby is the little piggy
You both steal my heart
yet are stolen.

My mood has extremely changed after that. I close it, throw it, think, and think again. I just can't stop thinking and my hands are shaking. Is it really a sin? Or only my heart that tells me so? I am not a liar, a burglar, a criminal, and even a heartbreaker. I just want to be someone I really want to be, Calisda not mother's Calisda.

Suddenly I realize my hair, as messy as my life. I decide to walk to the bathroom to take a bath and wash my hair. I know it is freezing though. I am an odd person, yes I know it too. After I finish taking a bath, I love talking to myself In front of a big mirror in my room. My hands are shaking and I can notice it from my reflection.

"Am I a sinner? Or going to be one?" I ask myself.

"Of course not, just go ahead Calisda" I answer my own question.

I look at mother's diary and go to get it on my bed. I don't know what I have to do with it. I just put it beside me. I decide to watch my favorite TV series show on my laptop. It is Vikings on History channel. I admire Ivar the Boneless so much. He is just a cool killer though. I love his way throwing small axes to his brother as a target in the training area. It is just a perfect one but it only hurts a little part of Sigurd Snake-In-The-Eye's forehead. Even though at the end of the season 4B he really ends up killing Sigurd with an axe. It is cool and why not?

After finish watching last 10 episodes of Vikings, I want to sleep but I can't. I check my clock and it's already 7 in the morning. I don't have to worry because I am already in my winter break. Also, mother will not bother me with the housework. I remember the diary, the old diary. It is not a pleasant thing but I have to keep even read it, for the sake of my mother. I open it randomly and I come to the horrible page. It contains the truth that is hidden from me. That's why this 15-year-old pretty old thing was in that box. It is almost as old as I am.

I am mad at it, I always am. I freeze for a little while and I decide something big in my life. Something I desire. I take my favorite thing that Ivar has from my bag. I leave my bedroom. I see the snow falls from the window. Mother prepares food for breakfast.

"Morning, mother!" I shout then I throw Ivar's thing right to her back head immediately before she even answers me.

She falls to the floor after that. I make sure of her breath. It is gone then I smile. I did it, yeah! I look into her eyes, those wide open and blood flows slow but sure from her head.

I open the horrible page once again and I think it will be the last one. I read it again the whole page.

Friday, December 13 2002

Dear Diary,

I know it's horrible that I did to that poor woman.

However, I am poor, too.

She killed our man.

My man was also hers.
The Baby Daddy.
She did it inhumanly.
She was mad at him and me.
She locked me in a room as it is her dungeon.
I could escape and was shocked finding out she skinning
my husband.
I tried to get a knife and I put it right into her throat.
I didn't know what I had to do with her body and my
husband's.
I ended up put them put them in the dungeon where I
was locked.
However, the baby is mine now, I want to have a baby
and I will take care of her.
I have adored her since she was in her mother's belly. I
want her, too, but I can't.
Only Calisda and I remain together.

It is horrible. I eat my soup imagining that I am R the zombie who can know things by eating his victims' brains. I know I can't be like him but only eating my victims' brains. Finally, I can revenge my biological mother. She loved and protected me so much by giving me this skill and courage. I add something in that page. My hands are still shaking.

December 13 2017

Dear Mother,
Yes I do love my mother. I do everything for her
life even though she couldn't back here again.
It is revenge,
my mother for mother.
A soul for a soul.
You end up dead,
And I end up with this disease, Kuru Disease

Epigraphy

By Gabriel Garda Hanggaradi

"Happy birthday Prasasti.. Happy birthday to you.." It sounded so loud in my ears as I just sat there awkwardly while my family sang it for me. "Sasti come here, lets open the gift your dad gave you." Said mom as she grabbed a small box that's probably the gift. I opened up the box and immediately put my hands into it, it's a necklace. I got a little disappointed at first cause I was expecting some kind of toys or whatever. Then my heart melted a little as my parents explained how they made the necklace themselves and how much effort they took to find the diamond locket for the necklace. My parents were archaeologists so I was sure they must have went places to find this very diamond just for me. "Thanks dad," I hugged him and he kissed me on the cheeks. "This necklace is a symbol of you, Prasasti. It took almost 10 months for your mom and I to find this diamond." Said dad as he put it on my neck. "It's extremely rare and beautiful just like you, we really hope you like it." Mom added. "If you ever feel low or sad, If anyone ever disrespects you, or underestimate you, just look at this diamond and remember your name, it doesn't matter how you walk, it doesn't matter. Cause you're precious to us, and this necklace is a symbol of how we adore you so much. Said mom as she went down on her knees to be as tall as me. "Prasasti" is an Indonesian word for "Epigraphy." My grandfather is an Indonesian and he's the one who gave me this name.

My phone alarm woke me up and I opened up my eyes. It's 3:30 AM. It was so quiet around my apartment's neighbourhood and the alarm woke me up pretty easily. "It's that dream again." I thought. A dream sequence that took me

back to 14 years ago, my 10th birthday party. Not even a dawn alarm set up stopped it. "Precious my ass." I thought. That was probably the last moments of my life where I really did feel precious. I got out of my bed to get myself a glass of water and turned on the desk lamp on my crippled walk to the kitchen. Thirst quenched, I went back to my room, I sat down and opened up my only family photo album. Yeah, my family wasn't much of a camera addict. We never took many pictures of us together, not even when my dad was still around. "Haha, that reminds me, happy anniversary you two." I thought as I stared at my parents' wedding picture. They were so happy back then and it was pretty surprising for me to see how things went down. Especially when I began to realize why I'm so "precious" in their eyes. How I began to remember that I was the only reason why they stayed together. "damn look how pretty I was, when was this?" asked myself as I looked at a photo of me when I was in my high-school years on the next page.

"Alright class, that's it for today, don't forget to read page 13 to 19 for next week's quiz. Have a great day and I'll see you next week." I remembered back when I was in high-school, every time my teacher said stuffs like that I was almost always ready and prepared to go home before the other kids even packed their belongings. Then I walked down the hall as fast as I can, despite the fact that I have to drag one of my legs pretty hard, just to leave the school immediately because there was this one bitch with her entourage I really hated. They always pushed me around and mocked me, giving me names like "creepy cripple" or "ms. Polio." Yeah, I wasn't born as perfect as the diamond necklace my parents gave me, I guess they thought it'll make me feel better about myself. But it worked though, I was never scared of any insults and bullies out there, and my mom's sayings about how precious I was stood still inside my mind and it kept me alive during my high-school years. My face suddenly turned glum as I swiped a page of

the album and there was this photo of me holding a diploma and a gold medal. I remembered that smile I did on the photo. It was on the day I graduated from high-school, the day that was supposed to be one of the most memorable days of my life, became the day where this desire - or more like - insanity came into my mind.

It was 11:00 pm. I just got back from a graduation party at my school. I walked slowly to my room and I saw mom crying at the dinner table with a cup of coffee on her hand. "What's wrong mom?" I asked. "It's okay baby, just go to bed, it's late." Said my mom sobbing, she wiped her eyes and turned her face away from me. I didn't have the courage to ask deeper about what was going on, so I did what she told me to do and went to my room. I saw dad packing things up as if he was going somewhere. That was the last time I saw him. I regretted it so much. "Why didn't I ask?" I thought. "Why didn't I stop him?" Since then I lived my life feeling guilty for I was so clueless and dumb that I didn't even ask dad where he was going or simply ask what the hell was happening back then. It's been years since dad left us and mom never told me why. Or maybe my mom herself didn't even know why. Well, it doesn't really matter now anyway. Things won't change. Since that day, and until this very second I can feel myself getting weaker and weaker. "It wasn't the necklace." I thought to myself as I took it off my neck and put it on the table right next to the album. I started to shed a tear a little bit.

I cried even harder as I swiped the page and my mom's last photo of herself was facing right to me. "I'm tired of walking mom." I said at the same time as I took that photograph to have a little closer look on it. Ever since dad left, mom started to redevelop this smoking and drinking habit that had been gone for a

long time. Years gone by, my mom eventually passed away suffering from lung cancer. I remembered NOT seeing my dad at her funeral. It was like as if he vanished. And since that day of her funeral I realized that I have no one to hold on to. And since the day of her funeral these "creepy cripple" and "ms. Polio" or "polio bitch" or whatever those names they called me got stuck inside my mind as even my friends in college called me by those names. I'm precious no more. The next page of the album was the last photo of me and my mom together. It was my 23rd birthday, which reminds me, I got myself a present. A necklace I made for myself for today, my 24th birthday.

Well, I guess the desire that I talked about earlier got stronger than I could bear. Or maybe it really was insanity after all, that's been knocking on my door for years. I wore the necklace and looked at the mirror at my desk. "Whoa, I actually look good in this." I thought to myself. I stood up, pulled my chair that I sat on to a perfect spot for me to stand on it. I kissed my mom's photograph, put it back on the album and closed it. I set my necklace to be a little tighter and tie em' up on the roof. "This is a much more powerful necklace mom." I said to my mom. "This necklace will help me walk normally, I won't be called "creepy cripple" no more." I took a deep breath and wiped all my tears. "precious my ass." I thought. Then I kicked the chair I stood on away from me.

"It's okay baby, you don't have to walk anymore, I know you're tired. Come here." said mom.

"It wasn't the necklace mom, it was you." I replied.

Let's Play

By Aloysius F. Bagas A.P.

It's 2 a.m. I'm still wide awake while the people in this house are already asleep. I'm currently listening to Mozart's Piano Sonata No. 16 from my iPod hoping to fall asleep sooner. It is my night time routine to listen to classical music before going to bed, but somehow tonight, this "sleeping pill" can't help, my mind wanders somewhere else. I don't know why, but it seems like I can't calm myself, not even Beethoven's Symphony No. 5. I close my eyes for a bit hoping to fall asleep.

SQUEAAAK

I hear a familiar squeaking sound. I plug out my headset from my ears and put it aside. I listen to that sound carefully. That sound's familiar. It's the sound of the wooden floor that squeaks every time someone steps on it.

"Perhaps my mom is doing something downstairs." I say to myself just to calm myself.

Now I'm wondering, what is my mom doing downstairs at this time? She never gets up this early except to clear some business in the bathroom. Perhaps she is clearing her business in the bathroom but wait, we don't have any bathroom downstairs. Shit! I start to think about worse possibilities.

"Perhaps it's dad watching football match." I calm myself once again.

Yeah, perhaps it is dad watching the football match but wait, Dad said that there will be no interesting match tonight, but if he eventually watches a match, I should have heard the TV. The only sound that I can hear is only that squeaking sound.

TAP TAP TAP

Now what? It's another sound. It's the sound of footsteps and it's getting closer. It's going upstairs, like seriously, upstairs. I look at the clock in my room. It's still 2.05 a.m. in the morning and I feel that it has been almost an hour.

TAP TAP TAP

The footsteps seem to be going to the opposite of my room. It's heading to my parents room. I dare myself to take a look outside of my room. SHIT! I see a huge silhouette of a human holding a machete going into my parents' room.

It's now inside my parents' room. I spontaneously take my *shinai*, a training blade I use at *kendo* training, and once again dare myself to follow that shadow.

I peek through the small gap of the entrance of the room. Shit! I just saw my mom being stabbed right through her chest while she is asleep and my dad got stabbed a few times. I keep my distance from the door to calm myself.

“OH SHIT! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! MOM AND DAD!” I whisper to my frightened-self.

I take a look one more time into the room. Then, I realize that that huge figure is aware of my presence since the start. Oh, shit! Now that figure is looking at me as if a hungry lion looks at a gazelle in the savannah. I run as fast as I can to my room and lock the door.

BAM BAM BAM

That figure punches the door of my room trying to break through the door. I dare myself to put myself on a stance, a ready one. The figure finally breaks into the room. My frightened state makes me fall upon my back.

That huge figure looks at me in the eyes and whispers,

”Now, since you have seen everything, let's play.”

Everything goes dark afterwards.

I open my eyes and see such a bright light. I'm confused on what just happened. All I can remember is when that huge figure hit me in the face with the back of that figure's machete.

“What just happened? Where am I? Is this heaven?” I ask to myself.

“Well, you can say that this is a sanctuary. My sanctuary.” A voice coming out from somewhere says.

Oh shit! That's that huge figure's voice. I'm trying to get up, but I just can't. I can't move my body. Shit! I just saw my mom and dad's dead body hanging on the wall.

“Don't even try to move. Your body will be paralyzed for a while. Thanks to the pancuronium bromide I injected into your body and later, you will be one of my precious wall decorations, haha!”

What is that huge figure going to do with my body? I just don't understand. I guess this is the end, I'm going to be a decoration in the wall. I hear the sound of an electric drill. Perhaps, that figure is going to make a hole out of my head so that that figure can hang me on the wall. I guess this is it. My life ends here.

“Perhaps I'm going to have such a horrible ending.”

Everything once again goes dark. Such a silent end without any struggle I made.

I hear a voice.

“Sora...”

That familiar voice.

“Sora...”

Someone is calling me.

“Sora, wake up!”

That’s my mom’s voice, but how?

“Sora, wake up! It’s already 8 a.m. You said that you have a class at 9 a.m. right?” My mom says with such a lovely voice.

“Mom! You’re alive?!” I spontaneously ask.

“What are you talking about? Get out of bed and go to bath!” My mom yells at me.

“Ah, okay mom.”

It was all just a dream. I’m glad that it was all just a dream. I get out of bed and take a look outside my room through the window just as usual. Shit! I just saw something. Something familiar. It’s that huge figure in my “dream” looking right into my eyes with its scarlet eyes.

That figure’s mouth seems to be whispering something.

That figure says, “Let’s play.”

The Girl of the Hallway

By Thomas Jordy Orno

Everyone in St. Paul High school was talking about it, even for those who didn't really know her personally. The seniors, who usually didn't care about what was happening to the juniors, started to search the information about her. The nerds, who rarely spoke to the girls who were gossiping in the hallway, were trying to blend in, so they knew what was going on. The boys, in their locker room, also talked about her. Even the teachers gathered in the office and talked about it. All of the Sudden, everyone knew who she was, on that day. "How could she do such a thing?" a girl in the hallway said to her friends.

--The bells ring--

It had been three days since the rumor spread to the whole school, but Theresa Kathrin Gabriela still didn't show up in school. Some of her close friends would also say that they didn't know where she was, when they were asked, just to avoid the trouble they might get because they know her. "I don't know where she is. And I don't wanna know, so stop asking me questions about that psycho." Alice, one of Thesa's friend in math club answered the girl from the school's newspaper. Neither permission letter nor call was sent to school leaving people to start speculating where Theresa Kathrin Gabriela was. Some students said she probably felt guilty for what she had done and she decided to run away from home and drowned herself to the river. Omi, the students from the 10th grade, who was her neighbor, said that Thesa's parents already reported to the police about their missing daughter. She said she knew it from her parents. "I heard my parents and

the other adults in my neighborhood were talking about it.” the girl, Omi said to some kids in the hallway. “They said she ran away from home at night when her parents were sleeping. It was about two days ago, the day when the video was online.” Omi said continuing her story. “If I were her mom I wouldn’t bother to look for her.” said the other kid.

--The bells ring--

Everyone in junior year knew who Thesa was. She was a pretty girl, with long wavy hair and brown eyes. She knew that she was pretty, so she always made sure that she would look on point every time she attended the school’s hallway. She would slide through the crowd as she was doing a runway for Victoria Secret, if only her bag was the angle’s wing lol. In the class, she was also a top student. Oh, she really good at math. She helped me once to pass my math exam, and I promised to help her if she needed. Well, unfortunately, her video of cutting herself with knife blew up the internet and shocked the entire school; the video that was uploaded on her Instagram account and she became the number one topic in school. Instead of feeling sorry for her, people were calling her psychopath. She didn’t said a word until she disappeared.

Around 10.30 am on that day, when I was heading to my history class, three police officers came to our school. There was not surprising at all for the students in the hallway. They knew exactly why they were here. “Where is the principal’s office?” one of the officers asked a boy in the hallway. As the boy explained where it was, the principal Fredrick came and led them to his office. The hallway started to be so loud with whispers. I heard from the other kids from my history class that Lean, Cody, Sasha and Gerry were seen going into the principal office. “Maybe they know where she is.” A girl whispered to her friend.

“or maybe they hide her, since she is so rude to them.” The other girl said. “Give me a break!!! Come on you guys. Can you please stop talking about her? She is an attention seeker, a drama queen. See! This is what she wants, and you guys are giving it to her.” The girl behind me spoke loudly to make sure everyone heard what she said. She looked angry and upset yet kind of regretting what she just said. Everyone stopped talking and looked at her. Then, she walked through the crowd for the exit door, with the head facing the ground.

That girl was Sasha who was known as one of Thesa's close friends. They had been together since the first year. However, their friendship didn't last long, because Thesa had been so jealous of the amount of followers Sasha had on her Instagram, so she, Thesa, deleted Sasha's Instagram account. Since then, Sasha tried to avoid Thesa. “I had nothing to do with that bit**. If she felt jealous of me, at least she could've told me first. And not just go through my Instagram and delete it.” Sasha said to her friend a couple months ago in the cafeteria.

--The bells ring--

A month passed by, Thesa never came back. The school started to make a tribute for her. The students, teachers and some of the parents were gathered in the hall; even for those who didn't know her personally and only heard about her from the rumor. They lighted the candles surrounded Thesa's photo with a big smile. This was what she wanted and she got it: the eyes of the entire school. All I knew was she was safe and sound lol.

PARENTS

By **Valentina Dhati P.**

The sun went to sleep and the beautiful things happened in the dark. The stars were twinkle in the sky with pride, the sound of the singing cickets dispelled the silence, and the gentle breeze blowing in to the window of a small vintage house in suburban area which many flower plants surrounding. There was a young girl, pretty, fair skin, and perfect body shape. Even though blind, she was very talented. When she was taking a rest in her favorite daybed sofa, suddenly her mother sang a happy birthday song and brought out a small birthday cake with candles on it. “Happy sweet seventeen my dear, I wish you always happy and still love me as your mother, always, always, and always. Amen.” Were the words that came out from the smooth lips of 44 year old who always looked younger than her age. The young girl lost her words and only showed her bright smile for her beloved mother. Then, they came out the house and set in front of the camp fire while roasting marshmallows.

“Tomorrow is the day that you are waiting for, right? Hopefully you can look more awesome and confident. Hemmm...” Said her mother hopefully.

“I know mom. If you are always beside me, I will be selected.” The young girl replied confidently.

“Don’t say that the audition is a competition, but...”

“Do it as a good experience. You said it for many times mom.” Interrupted the young girl.

“Please don’t interrupt me my dear. By the way what is your wish today?”

“I wish our man is here. I really miss him. Is father happy in heaven?”

“Oh... it’s already midnight. Let’s go to the house. I am starting to sneeze.” Said the mother as tried to extinguish the fire. They entered their house and left the quiet summer night.

The day was brighter than yesterday. The clockwise pointed at 13:13 when the young girl went to the singing audition. She was wearing a peach color dress and flat shoes. Her black long hair was braided and her makeup was natural. It was the audition of classical music contest held by the goverment in Jakarta and the selected contestant will be joining the Dream Opera Concert in London. In this audition, the young girl sang a song titled “Ave Maria”. A difficult song, but she could do it because she never gave up practicing it. After her audition ended, her mother immediately took her to the place where she didn’t know. She was really confused and always asked her mother where they were going. Her mother didn’t say anything.

“I hate this unpleasant and a medicine smell. Why are we here mom? Who is sick?” Asked the young girl in the unknown place while she kept sniffing.

“To meet someone who is suffering from Hepatic Cirrhosis.” Her mom briefly replied.

The mother grabbed her daughter’s hand to follow and still in silence. When they entered the room, someone enthusiastically welcomed both of them.

“Acelline, this beautiful girl is Chealsea our daughter?” asked a thin man who lay so weakly to the daughter’s mother who came more closer.

“Our daughter?” the young girl asked confused.

“Come here my lovely daughter, I am your father, Mark, a devil father who made you blind.”

“Father? My father was died. How can it be? You are still alive? But...but mother said...”

“It was my fault. I told your mom to not tell you. That night when you were seven years old. I lost my job and I was drunk because I depressed. I didn’t know that you were still in the car and the accident happend. I ran away from home because I didn’t want you to hate me. I was in prison and felt sorry.” Explained the sad man.

The young girl couldn’t say anything. Her hands were shaking and her tears dropped. She did not know whether she was angry, hateful, or happy to meet her father who was still alive. She hugged her father and said “ I am okay, please be healthy.” The young girl left the room and went out with difficulties.

It was a rainy day of December 1st. The young girl was playing piano of *Fur Elise* in the living room. Suddently, the piano which had been played gentle turned rough and ended with a loud bang. Her tears were unstoppable again and began to drop like the rain. Her mother came to her worried. She immediately hugged her daughter tightly. The young girl said sadly to her father’s picture “ Father, I don’t know anything at that time, I am a young girl who belived that you died. I didn’t know that you felt lonely and guilty. At the hospital, I smelt your body like *georgette* and now I realize that you were always with me. You guarded me as I walked alone on the sidewalk, you were the man who gave me the audition form, and you knew that I was accepted to join the concert. If I knew that it was you, father, I would say that I loved you and forgave you. However, now I am late. You really died and only left your eyes for me. Thank you for your regret and these experiences.”

The mother clamed her daughter and said that life is filled with hard and good times. Learnt from everything you can and she added “ You were born in our heart. Please always regard us as your parents, my dear.”

“Thank you mom. Both of you are my parents. My precious PARENTS.” Said the young girl.

-THE END-

The Wine

By Cornelia Celine S.

She was a standard of beauty, Stephanie Brown. She was the model of excellent student in her school, very smart and gentle. Many boys in her school were attracted to her. That her teacher also loved her made the other girls in her school were jealous.

That day was the last day of school before summer holiday. Everyone seemed so excited to talk about their following vacation. Stephanie, sitting on her chair in the classroom, calmly, read her book. Her father was a priest, so she never had a kind of summer party like the other students. Her holiday would be just at home or church, helping her parents for liturgy or religious meetings. She was all obsessed with the religious life which her family held, but besides all of that, she liked Peter Johnson, her classmate who in her eyes was so handsome and manly. Unfortunately, Peter was so famous among the girls and he was never interested with Stephanie. So, no one knew about her affection towards him.

Several days later, it was the first weekend of that summer. Stephanie had just prepared for the Sunday liturgy in the church. The church bell was ringing and the liturgy was begun. Stephanie sat in the middle of a bench then Peter came with three of his friends and sat behind Stephanie. She didn't recognize it all along, but after the liturgy was over, they, for the first time, met.

"Excuse me, are you Stephanie?" said Jake, one of Peter's friends. Then, Stephanie nodded her head and gave them a smile.

"Ah, that's you! You look so good with your white dress, isn't it Peter?" said Tommy, the other friend of Peter.

"Hmm.., hi Stephanie. Nice to see you here," said Peter with a gentle smile.

“Hi Peter, nice to see you too,” said Stephanie.

They had a good conversation. Then after that, they became close each other now that Peter came to the church every weekend. Stephanie’s family also began to know Peter. Once or twice, her parents invited Peter to have a dinner in their house. Stephanie was so pleased with this condition. She thought it would be the best summer she ever had.

Now was the third weekend of summer. Stephanie and Peter sat together in the long chair of the church, attending another liturgy. She now paid attention on how she looked. She put a red ribbon in her long black hair. Her dress, shoes and bag showed how lovely she was.

Peter looked at her and smiled. “How can you be so beautiful like this?” he said, holding her right hand while they walked outside the church. “Let’s go to my house, I want my parents to know you just like yours know me.”

“My parents will not allow me to go with you this late,” Stephanie answered.

“I will say to your parents that my parent invites you to have a dinner in my house.”

So they had a dinner in Peter’s house. His house was quite big, two times larger than Stephanie’s. They ate some delicious and luxurious menus with Peter’s parents. They had a small conversation and then Peter’s parents left after their dinner was over. “Don’t make any trouble, Peter,” said his father before he left.

“So, how was it? Delicious, isn’t it? You must try this,” said Peter, pouring some wine into Stephanie’s glass.

”What is that? Is that wine? I don’t drink wine,”

“It is just like grape juice, the one which we have in the church. You haven’t tried it? Oh man. I drink it every day,”

Stephanie took the wine and tasted it. "It's nice," she said.

"Good. You may take it some. I want to go to my room to change my clothes. It's so hot here. You can follow me after you finish,"

Peter then left her in the dining room. Stephanie looked around her and took another gulp of wine. She thought it was nice to live in that house with all the expensive stuffs every day. The wine, she liked it. It's tasted different with the grape juice in the church of course.

Several months later, Mr. Mike Brown died. Stephanie and all the family relatives were at the funeral to take her father to the final resting place. Peter was there too, waiting at a distance. After the funeral was over, Stephanie walked to where Peter stood.

"How comes?"

"Heart attack,"

"Oh gosh... I already told you to get rid of it! Don't you ...,"

Stephanie seemed speechless and depressed. Her tears began to fall again. Peter seemed to feel pity on her. He wanted to calm her, but his face couldn't hide his madness.

"Who else knows about that?"

"No one knows, but him,"

"Good... Now, don't be sad. Let's have some rest. I don't want you to be so depressed like this," Peter said, opening the door of his car and letting Stephanie in. They started to leave. On the way, the silence haunted them for hours. Stephanie cried in the silence, time after time she stopped and daydreamed then began to cry again. But now, she stopped crying and looked calmer. Knowing that, Peter turned his car on the way back home. Not long after that, they arrived at Peter's home.

“I will get rid of it,”

“Good then. Tomorrow I will go with you,”

“Of course. We all will be gone together,”

Two days after that day, Tommy and Jake, wearing black suits, went into a field. Three stones were placed side by side. The church bell's echoes were heard from a distance. They looked at the stones and closed their eyes, praying for mercy.

The Unexpected

By Cenintya Deany C.

Day 01:

Hi new book, it's the first day of school after the long holiday. I am so excited, and you know why? Because it's my senior year. I'm so happy that I finally become a senior student at East Bullemorf High School. What I like the most about being senior is I can do whatever I want which means I don't have to be afraid of the previous senior, because they are all gone now. I can't wait to start the day. Woohoo, see you later book!

That was what I felt before I finally entered the real 'senior' world. I like to imagine things wonderfully so I always have high expectations, but in the reality, senior sucks. All of the imagines or expectations are gone in a matter of second. It has been three months since I wrote that diary, yes the one and only diary that I've ever wrote in my teenage year. I haven't even touched the book again. Actually, I liked to write all of my thoughts in diary back in the time when I was in elementary school until junior year. I know it's a girly stuff but I didn't really care about it back then, it helped me to decrease my anxiety. Yes again, I have anxiety but I think that thing is gone now, thanks to my best friend, Josh. Josh and I have been best friends since in the third grade. It's such a miracle that I can have a real best friend for such a long term. It isn't an easy thing for me to socialize with and trust people. For a weird reason, I feel so comfortable talking and hanging out with Josh, it feels like I build a strong friendship with my own brother. He always stands for me when I got bullied a lot back in elementary school. Then, we always go to the same school afterward.

"How about you, Shawn Evans? Do you have or know the answer to this question?" Mrs. Tisdale suddenly calls me. "*Crap! I was just lost in my own thoughts.*" I

said it to myself. I look around the class and they are looking at me. Then I look back to Mrs. Tisdale smiling and shaking my head as an answer 'no'. Fortunately, she understands it and continues lecturing. "*Pfft, what a relief,*" I said it to myself, again. Not for a long time, I'm about to lose in my deep thoughts again, but the ringing bell interrupts me. It's time for lunch, finally!

After I put my books in my locker, I walk toward the canteen. As usual, I take my food with me and put it in the bag then heading to the library where I can eat peacefully. It's not that I don't have any friends or else, I just don't like the idea of talking with people and get judge or pity by some of them. When I arrived at the library, I sit in my usual spot then start to eat my lunch and read a book. I spend most of my lunchtime in there, with a help of books. I like to read books but I don't like talking to people because I'm not good at that. After I finishing my lunch, it's time for music class. I have never been good at music class, even though some people think that this is the simplest class. For me, this is the hardest class ever.

In the next Friday morning, I feel someone is tapping my cheeks. I wake up to see Shannon (my little sister), my mom, my dad, and my dog are standing in front of my bed with a huge grin on their faces. Shannon holds a big cake in her hands with a 'HAPPY 18 BIRTHDAY SHAWN THE SWAN' word on it. They start singing; I can see it through their lips, gestures, and expressions. My family always care for each other, they always surprise me. I like the way how they do the simplest things to make me feel much better and worth it to be in this world. Shannon, who is three years younger than me, always annoys me but deep down in my heart I love her to death, she's everything to me. My parents never stop to work hard just to make me better day by day. Whenever I got so emotional like this, I always regret all of the things that I did back then. I once made them worried sick because I was near death. I cut myself until I almost ran out of blood. That time I just felt so insecure about myself. Can I survive in this world with my condition like this? That question is always repeating inside my brain. They always support me no matter

what, never give up on cheering me up, and I got luckier after I become best friend with Josh.

After eating the birthday cake with my family, I am heading to school with my old bike. From afar, I see a group of people is running toward me. Turns out, they are my football mates. They hug and lift me up while singing happy birthday for me at the same time. Besides my family and Josh, they are also close to me. I thank them then heading to my locker, which now full of flowers and chocolates. It doesn't surprise me actually because the girls give me these every year for my birthday present. I'm not the type of a guy who got so cocky after I got a treat like this. Whenever I have the chance to meet them one by one, I always thank them for being so nice to me and they don't have to do it every year. I guess they don't obey me and keep giving me lots of gifts.

The day has passed so fast, and it's my last class for today, which is the history class. I get so excited for this class because Josh is in this class too so I can ask about his opinion on my plan of my birthday party that I will throw tomorrow. But I can't spot him anywhere, even inside the class. Suddenly everyone turns their heads at me. Some of them are crying, and I don't have any idea why they act like that. Zig, one of the members of football team comes up to me and shows me a short terrifying message. I read it over and over again, then I look up to Zig. His expression is blank while nodding his head. I run out of the class toward my car and drive it to the house. There are a lot of cars parked there. I open the door and see my best friend, the one and only, Josh, lying inside a coffin. I just stare at him silently and my eyes start to get blurry. Josh died in a car crash this morning when a drunk driver of a big truck hits his car just two blocks away from school.

A month has passed since Josh's funeral. I have never been in my good condition, again. I never come out from my room after school and in the school also, I always hide inside a small hall near the storeroom. It's so quiet there, no one can find me. There's an unused guitar which lays on top of a shelf full of dust. I start to want to cut myself again, but I don't want to disappoint Josh. I promised him that I could change forever. Death is what I fear the most actually. It's a funny thing when I want to cut or hurt

myself but I'm afraid of death, but it's true. That is what keeps me alive until now. Because of my fear, I succeed to fight the feeling to not cut myself again.

When I look at the unused guitar, I talk to myself, "*I wish that I could play music, or at least sing beautifully.*" I never thought that it was my motivational speech for me until I start to pick up the guitar and play it, even though I can't really play it. I play it again and again until I start to get upset. I almost throw the guitar away, but I won't destroy the guitar, yet. I start to cry, I realized something. It is the reason why I can't play music. It's because I was born deaf, I can't hear any sounds that come out from the guitar or any other instruments. I can't even hear my own voice because I'm mute, I can't talk. These are the reasons why I like to be alone and not socialize with people. These are the things that Josh knows about, but he's gone now. He can't help me anymore. The entire school knows that I'm deaf and mute, some of them have been supportive but some of them also judge and pity me. It will be different when I graduate and start to face the real world. The only question is; how am I supposed to socialize and survive in such a condition? Yeah, you guys know it now.

WITNESSED

By Rachmah Winetta

My name is Sarah, I'm 27 years old and work as a professional PR. I have a fiancée named Javi and today I will meet him after three weeks we never met because we were busy with our deadline. I decide to go to his office and then we can go together. When I get to the parking lot near the lobby, I can see from the outside that Javi and a woman are having a comfortable conversation, I can see their laugh. Suddenly, I turn my car through the streets. I know the woman who's Javi talks to. She is Nora Danish, my best friend. This is not the first time, I already saw them together four times.

Javi sits in front of me after ordering his favorite drink, a latte with less sugar. It really contrasts with me, who loves sweet so much.

"Sorry babe, you must be waiting so long," said Javi.

"It's okay," I nodded.

That night was spent with him telling me about his new project and I wasn't really interested because I was busy with my own mind. 'What happens actually in here?'

"Sarah, are you okay?" asked Javi.

"Hm..I'm fine."

I just slept for 4 hours when my bell keeps ringing, I woke up and forced my body to open the door.

"Hi, girl!"

"Just woke up?" said Nora and Kaka together and then they go straight into my house.

"What are you guys doing here?"

"It's been a long time, we have a great time together," said Kaka.

"Right, don't you miss both of us?" said Nora while she turns on the TV.

"Okay, but guys in this 8 AM? Seriously?"

"Sorry not sorry girl," said both of them while they are watching TV.

I just finish getting a shower when I find Nora and Kaka really busy in my kitchen. I look at Nora, she acts as usual. She looks like the Nora that I know. Should I ask her about Javi?

"Sarah, what are you doing there? Come here and help us make shrimp fettuccine carbonara," Kaka invites me while he is stirring the fettuccine.

"Sar, do you have basil leaves?" asked Nora.

"No, I run out of my basil."

"So different with Javi, he has complete fresh vegetables in his fridge," said Nora.

Well, indeed Javi is practically having a lot of talents. He is smart, he can play a lot of musical instruments, he is also good at cooking, but wait...what?! This is weird. How can she know about the vegetables in Javi's fridge?

"Nor, is this enough?" Kaka asks Nora about the pasta.

"Oh, it's great. Good job, Ka!"

I decide to join and forget all my suspicions about Nora Danish. We really have a good conversation and we laugh a lot. Nora and Kaka are my best friend since I was a child. Nora is pretty and very talkative, she often tells us about everything. This is very different from Kaka, who is expressive, but Kaka rarely tells his personal problems to us. I haven't even seen Kaka has a relationship with a woman even though Kaka is double handsome and has a good body proportion. He tells us that he wants to focus on his career first.

Today, I have an appointment with Javi, but right after I got home, Javi sent a message that he has to stay in his office because he has a lot of deadlines. This is not the first time he cancels our appointment. Javi just changed into another person. In the past, Javi was a very nimble person and if he knew that he had an appointment then he would finish his work quickly. I decided to call the office to make sure. I have never done this before and now I look like an overprotective person. However, Javi's secretary says that Javi has already come home since two hours ago. I'm shocked. Javi is lying to me. I decided to get ready quickly and immediately drive into Javi's apartment.

"Nora?! What the hell are you doing here?"

How surprised I am when I got to the parking lot of the Javi's apartment, I find Nora is coming out from the door. Nora is silent. I know from her face that she is also surprised.

"Answer me! Why are you here? Why are you guys doing this to me?"

"What do you mean?" asked Nora.

"You and Javi cheating on me," I try to control my voice.

Without realizing it, Nora laughs. She laughs so hard that people start looking at us.

"Stop laughing!"

"I haha never thought haha that you really haha stupid," said Nora in between her laugh.

Seeing that my expression doesn't change, Nora starts to control her laugh.

"There is nothing between me and Javi. Hey girl, I'm not that kind of girl who steals my friend's fiance," She explains to me.

"Why both of you are often going together lately?"

"My God, if I'm telling you now, our plan will fail." Said Sarah.

"I really don't care about any bullshit plans, I need an explanation."

"You're really stupid"

"I am." Yes, I don't care.

"Well, you'll be sorry to hear this. We are preparing a proposed plan for you."

"Proposed?" I try to control my emotion.

"Javi wants to marry you, Sarah."

Wow. I'm totally bad.

"I'm really...sorry," I meant it. "I want to see Javi"

"You better go home. I'm pretty sure that Javi and his friends are still discussing the plan."

"And you?"

"Oh, I have to go because I have another appointment."

I'm so obstinate. I still want to meet Javi and Nora follows me with a lot of protests. I press the bell and someone opens the door and I can see that Javi has a little party in his apartment. Marriage? Let's forget about it. That night, Nora and I become the part of homosexual's party. Nora and I also become the witnesses, Javi is really having an affair. Having an affair with one of our best friends, Kaka. Well, thank you, Ka.

Truth in Lies

By Eduardine Gayatri

“Do you have any friends in school, darling?” asks Mr. Hudson.

“No, Dad. Why should I have those people who called friend if they are always talking about how ugly I am when I am not around them? I don’t need all of them.” says Becky.

“But why? You are a teenager. You should find someone to accompany your day while in school or just hanging out around. Also, where did you know that your friends are always talking something bad behind you?” asks Mrs. Hudson in a shock expression.

“Because I know them and I don’t need anybody like them.”

“You’re wrong, Becky. They absolutely love you. Maybe they just don’t know how to start a conversation with you.” says Mr. Hudson by giving Becky another perception.

“NO! They don’t like me! They say I better have no teeth rather than I have teeth but it looks like disaster! The boy say I better move out from school because if they see me they want to throw up! Yes I know that the teachers have warned them, but they keep bullying and teasing me when teachers don’t see!”

Move her food away from her.

“I’m done with my food.” Becky leaves the table.

“Becky wait!” says Mr. Hudson.

In her room

“I hate my family who is always lying about me. I hate everyone. They’re fake!!!” Becky crying in front of mirror with her hands cover her face.

“Oh, my poor girl.... Yes, maybe you are a thin girl with the ugly face, but who says you need all of those people if you actually need someone just like me? You just as same as me,” says someone in her room.

“How do you know?” replies Becky

“Because you just need people like me,”

“But, who are you?” asks Becky.

“I’m just nobody. I just know you and I understand your feeling. You just want the truth. No white lie.”

“So, what do you think about me?” asks Becky again.

“You’re not interesting at all, everybody hates you and you just want to be a perfect girl. You don’t have to listen to people because you don’t need them.”

“Yes, I better live in my imagination than in a fake, cruel and stinky world.”

Few weeks later

Knock...knock...

“Honey, may I come in?” says Mr. Hudson.

“Come in, Dad...”

“Hey darling, I have seen you for past few weeks that you are more cheerful and you smile often. What happened?” asks Mr. Hudson.

“Oh really, Dad?”

“Yes. What happened? May I know about this one? Because if you are happy then I am happy too.”

“Because I have friends now.”

“Ah...I see. See right? If you have friends, your life will be happier. So, what are your friends’ names?”

“Beccah, Dad...”

“Oh...Becky and Beccah. Where does she live?”

“I’m sorry Dad but I have to finish my work.” replies Becky sensitively.

“Oh I’m sorry honey...I just want to know about your friends, but, if you won’t to tell me, it’s okay. Let me know if you need me.”

Mr. Hudson kisses Becky’s forehead. Then, he steps out and doesn’t forget to close the door.

“You don’t need him. He doesn’t know about your problems at all. Besides, you have one man who is better than him in here, Becky.” says someone in her room.

“Yes, you’re right. I don’t need him. He doesn’t know about my problems and he just tells me a lie.” says Becky. “Huh... just forget about him. What was the last thing we talk?”

The next day during the break class

“Hey, Becky! Would you come out with us?” says Rachel.

There is no reply.

“Becky?” she repeats.

“What?” answers Becky.

“Of course she didn’t hear me! Don’t you see that now she’s busy with her “friend”

Every girl around her are laughing.

“Oh I better don’t disturb her because if I do, her “friend” will be mad at me! Uh... it is so scary.”

Everyone laughs harder now.

“Such a stupid group. I don’t care at all.” says Becky as they are gone.

“Ignore them. They’re useless. They don’t deserve you.” says Beccah.

The next morning in a class

“Hey guys, look! I think Becky’s getting worse. She’s murmuring by herself and now she nods her head like she’s talking with someone now. As I said before, she is crazy! I think that her friend is a ghost!!! Oh my God, she better goes to the mental hospital. Alaska is getting worse now.”

As Rachel finishes her words, suddenly Becky laughs without any reasons.

Two months later the rumor about Becky likes to talk by herself spreads fastly through the entire school. Everyone is getting busy to gossip about her.

“Good morning, Mr. Hudson. Please have a seat. I’m Ms. Santana, Becky’s teacher. Nice to meet you.” says Ms. Santana.

“Good morning, Ms. Santana. Nice to meet you too.” replies Mr. Hudson.

“So, firstly, I would like to apologize that I have been disturbing you to come to school when you’re busy.”

“It’s okay as long as my purpose to come to school is because of my daughter, Becky. So, what’s wrong with my daughter? Did she make a trouble?” asks Mr. Hudson.

“Oh no, Sir. But, I want to ask you about her while she’s in home. What is she doing at home?” says Ms. Santana.

“Mostly she spends her time in her room and she talks so little or maybe she doesn’t say a word at all when we spend our time together. Does she talk often in class?”

“Unfortunately, she responds in class so rare, like when she has to work in a group or do her presentation in front of class. Like she wants to finish it as soon as possible.” says Ms. Santana.

“Really? Oh my God what’s wrong with my girl. This is my fault. I barely talk with her. I’m not asking her about her daily life. I’m too busy with my work.” says Mr. Hudson.

“Oh, I feel sorry about that, Sir. But, I have to tell you and it’s worse than before, that your daughter likes to talk by herself. Firstly, I didn’t believe it. But, I’ve seen Becky talks by herself and laughs in toilet or in a quite place too often. Maybe you see it too at home or know about this one, Sir?”

His heart dies for several seconds because of it. Hardly Mr. Hudson says the word

“Re...really....ma’am? Tha....tha....thank...you.....
I...want...to...see...my...daughter.... Excuse... me...” says Mr. Hudson haltingly.

“Sir, wait, Sir!”

He slams the door and run as fast as he can to look for her daughter.

In a warm evening

Mr. Hudson couldn't find Becky in the entire school. He is confused and depressed about Becky because she couldn't be found in anywhere. Also he feels angry and blames himself after he heard what Ms. Santana said about her daughter. When he can't think clearly, suddenly the door is opened.

"Becky oh my God!!! Where have you been?" He hugs her so tight but Becky releases it roughly.

"Who are you?! How dare you for hugging me without any permission!" says Becky angrily.

"What are you saying, Becky?" asks Mr. Hudson in confused.

"I don't know you! Get away from my house!"

"Becky! It's me, your father!!" says Mr. Hudson in a higher pitch and in a red face.

His eyes are getting out because he can't believe what just he heard.

"NO! You're not my father! My father is behind me!"

THE END

Kindness

By Beata Benedikta Ligo

Before Ezra graduated, he knew he wanted to go to art school. He had calculated the cost, done his research on what the acceptant requirements were, and planned every single detail for that dream. It was a beautiful moment, when he could hope for the future and envision how things would be, but the truth was bittersweet. Ezra could go to art school if he applied for student loan, and that was exactly what he did. He had to start saving up money before the semesters started so he spent his summer volunteering at the hospital.

He hated the tangy smell of disinfectant and the putrid odor of sickness, but the hospital was his best bet. His mom was a nurse there and it was just convenient for him to work there. It was a very modern hospital, usually used by A-listers and wealthy people. The building was cased in glasses and it overlooked the skyline of the city. Inside, there were many makeshift gardens, mostly occupied by the therapy patients and the geriatric patients.

Ezra shifts were on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. On the day he's not working at the hospital, he worked at the coffee house four blocks away from it. Ezra was coping just fine, even though his weeks were always filled with activity he knew it's better if he did it now than later. The job at the hospital wasn't always good but the pay was worth it. Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday were his favorite day. He simply loved working at the coffee house. It's a nice and quaint two-story building, people came and went to grab a cup of coffee and those who stayed were usually quiet in their seat, busy with their task or whatever.

It was in his second week of his job when he started to encounter a problem. That problem came in the form of Gideon Summers. He was a patient, treated for a spinal injury that he got from a car accident. Gideon's room was at the VIP ward. That area had

their own garden, accessible only for the patients in that ward and the staffs placed there.

The first thing Gideon said to Ezra was “Look, I know you’re not a snitch cause if you are then I would have to get rid of you.” That happened because Ezra saw Gideon snorting coke. It was pure accident that Ezra caught Gideon in the act. He was supposed to deliver a food tray to room 105, but the kitchen staff wrote the 5 like it was a 6.

From that one accident, Ezra saw Gideon more and more. Then they started talking, they didn’t necessarily have a lot in common but Gideon was a pretty okay guy once you got to know him. One thing for sure, the guy was smart, very smart, but he also happened to be an asshole with a total lack of respect towards anyone. Beneath all of Gideon’s antics, Ezra could see that he’s neglected as a child, even till now. Ezra mom’s taught him to always try to be kind whatever the situations was, so he decided to befriend Gideon. Ever since they started being friends, Ezra caught a glimmer of what seemed to be happiness in Gideon’s eyes.

The more they became closer the more Gideon tried to make Ezra smoke and start to use. Every single time Gideon offered whatever he just got from his dealer Ezra always refused.

One of Ezra’s schoolmates who also worked at the hospital knew about Gideon penchant for drugs. As a matter of fact, she was his dealer. Her name was Mindy, she’s around five feet two inches tall and she had a short hair with a bob cut. She looked completely harmless, like a perfect daughter from a middle class family. She tried to persuade Ezra to work with her. She told Ezra, “You know, no matter how much work you take, you won’t be able to pay off your student loan that easily, but if you work with me, I guarantee you’ll be able to pay off that debt in 3 years.” Still, Ezra refused her offer.

The next day after his talk with Mindy, Ezra’s mom was sitting in the dining table with her head in her hands. There was a bunch of envelopes in the table and one of the envelopes was from their landlord. Apparently, the apartment rent had been raised by 40%. Ezra’s mom was saying sorry to Ezra, she might not be able to send him into the art

college he wanted, they didn't have enough money in their savings to pay for all of those things. Knowing that, Ezra decided to call Mindy and asked her if the offer still stood. Mindy said yes and that's how Ezra started dealing.

Gideon found out about Ezra's new job from Mindy and he was very delighted to know that. He said to Ezra, "Okay, fuck, this is just the greatest thing that could happened, now, I can just get my stuff from you rather than going out looking for that squeaky voiced midget." With Ezra's new job, Gideon was starting to take on heavier drugs, from LSD to meth. Ezra knew he should've stopped his friend before it got even worse, but Gideon's was Ezra's biggest source of income that summer.

Ezra remembered that his mom taught him to be kind and this was kindness he presented to Gideon, by letting him to be free from his miserable life, from the life he never learnt to appreciate and anyway, who could afford to give kindness freely when they had debts chasing after them.

Crest Fallen

By Lesi Anggrid

DRRRRTTT... DRRRTTT...

“I know! I am already late to meet Ms. Metis!”

It is 1 P.M. my phone keeps reminding me to my schedule. Thank God! Finally I can be free from the crazy traffic morning. If I keep in this traffic, I will be late to the opening of my conservation. But before that, I need to see Ms. Metis, my psychiatrist. I hate being like this. Why must I need to see her before an important event? I hate my social anxiety disorder.

“I am sorry I am so late, you know today traffic is so crazy!” I say it to Ms. Metis while I open the door.

“It’s ok, you can start our CBT now. Are you ready?”

“I hope I will be ok today.”

“I know you will be ok, so what do you want for today event?”

“I am not sure. I just want all of my schedule today will be success. But...”

“But, what? Are you afraid that your friend will come to you again?” ask Ms. Metis.

“That’s not my friend! It is a monster! And I hate this monster! And all of them will laugh at me! They will think that I am crazy!” My tears start dropping. I don’t know why I can’t handle it anymore.

“I am sorry, it’s ok. You can cry as much as you want.” Ms. Metis tries to calm me down. I feel so blessed to have her, to know her. I can tell all of my stories to her and she will be

there for me even when I need her in the middle of night. She is like my mother, but she is better than that woman.

I keep crying for thirty minutes. I feel better after crying in front of Ms. Metis.

“I am ok, I will attend the opening in two hours.”

“Yes, that’s true. You are ok and you will be ok. You are the famous dancer, the great dancer! Everyone knows you, and you will be ok!” Ms. Metis like always use that method.

“I know.”

“Don’t forget to have your medicine before the event.” She smile to me while take me out.

“It’s ok, I remember it miss.”

3 P.M., one hour more and my dream will come true. My mother says that to have a giraffe conservation is an impossible thing in my life. I never believe that woman. She always hates me since I start to be a dancer and ignore all her dreams. Even when I am already a great dancer and everyone in this country knows me, my mother still hates me so much. Huft! Why I keep thinking about that woman. Maybe because she will come tonight. Let’s focus on tonight performance. I need my antidepressant before that.

4 P.M. It’s the time. I am ready and I must keep smiling to all my guests. This will be a long night. I greet all of my guests and now I am ready to show my dancing and give speech. Inhale exhale. Walking through the stairs to the stage, I keep trying to calm myself down.

“Just imagine, you are in the room practice by yourself! You can do it Athena!” I keep saying it to myself. Then here we go, I am already in the stage and so many eyes looking at me. Sigh, I can do this and forget them! The music start to play on the background and with that my body start to follow the rhythm of the music. I love this music, this is so beautiful. I can feel myself brought with the music. I give all of my life to the music

tonight. The sound of clap hands start to be heard then I know that my performance is already over. I try to keep smiling and make myself ready to give the speech.

“Good night, thank you for coming to this opening of my giraffe conservation.” Finally I do it and I can do it. Wait, since when they look into my eyes? Is that my mother? It’s not good I start to lose my focus. I can feel my hands are trembling.

“Athena, are you ok?”

I can hear someone keeps asking me. But I can’t see them. Who is that? I asphyxiate. It’s hard to take a breath. Why does everyone start to come to me?! Please go away from me! I can’t do this anymore. I try to look at their faces but everything suddenly becomes fading. I can feel myself falling to a dark space. All I know is that I am all alone with this monster.

Ugh, my head hurts so much. I try to open my eyes slowly. It’s already 11 P.M. I remember all. I remember every second that happened that night. How can I collapse in the middle of my important event? And now, everyone will think that I am crazy. I want to cry. I hate it. It is all because of the monster inside my head. My tears keep falling down. My head starts to hurt again and again. I give up mentally and physically. I need my antidepressants right now. Oh there is it. I start to drink it. I know by drinking it more than one will make me feel better. I feel so tired. My head doesn’t hurt again. My eyes are so heavy, I will close my eyes now together with this world.

DRRRRTTT... DRRRTTT...

“I know! I am already late to meet Ms. Metis!”

It is 1 P.M., my phone keeps vibrating and wakes me up from my daydreaming. That’s such a crazy thought of mine. Finally I can meet Ms. Metis, my psychiatrist, this monster really disturbs me. I will have an opening of my conservation but before that, I need to see her and take my antidepressants. I hate my social anxiety disorder.

Twisted

By Bernadeta Kharisma Putri N.

As we arrive at my home, she looks astonished. I guide her walk in the house, and turn on all the lights. I hate darkness, even worse I am afraid of it. As I walk in to my gallery, my twelve masterpieces greet me in a good dimly light. It is sinful to build them all, I never sell one of them, but then I find peace and satisfaction every time I stare each sculpture. They are perfection to my desire. The sculptures are arranged in circle, and at the center is my sister's throne, where she usually spends her day. Alone.

It goes like usual; all of my stupid models will do the same when they see my home. The stupidity of human being, astonished to everything glamorous. Money is priority, glamorous is glorious.

I never think that human can be trusted. Since I found that the true cruelty was planted in human's brain, I would never ever trust human being. But there's some particular thing that I love in human, their stupidities. They always live and believe in systems, that's why I can buy any of them easily. For me, an artist, I learn not to deify money. I'm worshiping magnificence, beauty, fineness, and of course, myself.

“So, this is the famous twelve masterpieces of Ric Williams, what a tragic perfection of them all!”

“And, wait.” She says.

“They look the same, if I am not wrong. But then you give each statue a touch on different part. I'm sorry, I am too excited.” Well, she's not that stupid I guess. She recognizes something.

“It's a tribute, actually.” I say, calmly.

“Ah, but then, why did you get rid of their body part on each statue? I see, there’s only a perfect one. The center!” She’s so smart, oh, darling, I can’t wait any longer.

“Feet, leg, thigh, buttocks, stomach, back, breast, arm, hand, chin, and hair. How can you cut them all? But their postures are the same one another, beautiful.” Yes, yes, yes and you’re going to make it perfect with your eyes!

She enters the dining room, suspiciously like she is searching for something. The aroma of the schnitzel fulfills the room. I actually have dinner with one of my victims for the first time. All girls before thought, it was better to eat me instead of this delicious pork schnitzel, why? Well, because she’s going to be the complementary of my masterpiece, I will treat her once like a lady.

“So, your family comes from Germany? Schnitzel is a traditional course from Germany, if I’m not wrong.” Damn it, love. I can’t remember that you’re a smart ass. How can you know? But then I’m still eating, not giving her any responses.

“Ric, where does Ric come from? I mean, your full name?” She is so curious. Why are you asking me that?

“Ah, it’s just Ric. Ric Williams.” I respond.

“Well then, and I am sorry, but could you tell me where the rest room is?”

“Sure, you can go back to the gallery and see the brown wooden door in the north.” I’m sure that something goes so wrong.

The darkness is fulfilling the entire house in sudden. I can see nothing. My heart’s beating so fast as if I can hear the beats. Damn, I confusedly confuse. This should be the best day of my life, not the worst one. I am about to get flashlight while in sudden I hear foot step, slowly and gently.

“Ale, is that you?” My head is spinning, so hurt. Ah, the blackout. It begins. The memories are back. NO!

I should protect you, sister. I Love you. I love you so much. But how can I protect you if you're away? No. This is the rightest thing I've ever done, you'll always be with me as always, my love. You're safe now.

I groan, my head hurts so bad. No. Why? Why it's so hurt?

“Baldric Friedrich!” I hear a voice in sudden.

“Alessandra?” I hear she is laughing, so loud, but I can't see her. My head is still hurt, all I see is just darkness and blur.

“It was funny, don't you think? Incest. I feel you, I really do. Lilah, oh Lilah.”

“Stop! How could you know?” I fall down, I suddenly heard Lilah's voices.

Brother. Do you love me brother? Why are you killing me brother? Brother!

“No, No, No, Lilah, you're safe now.” I whisper. My body is trembling and it's hurt all over my head to my toe. The blackout. Now I can smell something I know so well.

“I appreciate you to make all this tributes for my dear, Lilah. You don't remember me, do you? Who the hell are you? Your dear, Lilah?”

“We both love her, Ric. It was just different kind of love. I've been waiting for 10 years for her out of this prison, she's dying. You, you are the monster!” she screams.

“What do you want? I'll give you everything you want, help me.” I can't help myself, all I can feel is the hurts on my head, and another voice haunts me. I don't even remember where my meds is.

Mum screamed. I saw her naked, someone was trying to rape her. Daddy was sitting calmly, I could see blood all over his body with a dagger stuck on his chest. The guy took the dagger off of my daddy, he strangled mum's neck and smiling.

"You want to see this, buddy? Here you are." He slashed the dagger around mum's neck, she couldn't even cry. I saw her blood flowed and spurted everywhere. I saw them all.

"We got the money, let's go." Someone said. I was standing alone, not even blinked.

"No, No, my head, help me." The movie of my sister's death and my parents' death can't stop playing in my head. My body is trembling even worse. All I can hear is her laugh. She is so satisfied. She knows everything.

"Goodbye, Ric." She whispers, I can smell her perfume. Lilac.

Last Message

By Albert Hananto Hamonangan

Hello, my name is Luna Bam, and I'm a college student in Seoul National University. I have one secret that only my friend, Jang Woo, knows. My secret is I can see a future from my dream. It's very strange, but it really happens in my life. I knew that when I was 9 years old, after my parents died. My parents died when they helped me escape from our burning house. After that I always got a strange dream when I'm sleeping such as, I will get an accident if I go on such road, what the question for tomorrow exam and so on. I will tell about my secret, but first I have to go back 2 years backward from my memories. It happened at night when I was sleeping, I got a very strange dream. I have a girlfriend in my dream, but strangely, I didn't know who she was.

“What are you doing Luna? Let's go.”

“Huh? Who are you?”

“What are you talking about? I'm your girlfriend.”

After that little conversation, I got up from my sleep. I always write what happens in my dreams, every little detail, how the face of the person I will meet in the future. I can easily draw the face of the person to make me remember. After that, I take a bath and get ready to go to campus. There is a convenience store, not far from my rented house, that I usually stop by. I buy some bread and coffee and eat while I go to campus. I get into the classroom and sit beside my friend, Jang Woo. Jang Woo is really my best friend who can make me hate him. He is good at reading people's expression.

“What is wrong with you now?” said Jang Woo.

“Nothing. Just usual.”

“Were you dreaming about girl?”

“What!? No!”

“If it's no, why are you grinning like a fool?”

“Argh. Okay, you got me.”

“Tell me when we got into cafeteria.”

We go to the cafeteria after class and I tell him everything about my dream. He listens to it and laughs very hard, making me embarrassed. He says to me that I will not get a girlfriend until he gets one, so that's why I hate him. When we are eating, I see the girl from my dream. I want to ask Jang Woo if he knows her or not, but he gets a big mouth. After eating our food, we go back to the class and I find out that she is from my class.

“Hey, do you know that girl?” I asked.

“Which girl?” He searching which girl it is.

“The one who sitd in lest side of us, having black wavy hair.”

“Oh, she is Kang Su Jin. Do you like her?”

“No, just asking.”

After the class finishes, he catch my hand and drag me to meet Su Jin. Okay, he has done it, it is what I think when he drags me. He introduces me to Su Jin and he tells her that I like her. That's some bullshit comes from his big mouth and makes me confused how I should do in this awkward situation. He leaves me with Su Jin because he has a basketball match with his friends. So, I should think how I get out from this awkward situation.

“Sorry, my friend just said something so randomly.”

“It's okay, I know he is always like that. By the way, are you a foreigner?” she asked curiously.

“No, I was born in here. Why?”

“It's just your name that is unique, you have eyes with different color, and you don't resemble any Korean in your face.”

“Ah, it's because my mom is from Korea and my dad is from Spain. Um... where is your house?”

“I live in Mapo-Gu, how about you?”

“I live there too. Do you want to go home together?”

“Hmm, okay.”

We walk together to the bus station, while we talk about ourselves. It's interesting for me that I can talk much to stranger, because usually I am really cautious about stranger. We go out together after six months we meet. After that, I am dreaming something scary and I see Su Jin died in a hospital. I immediately get up from my sleeping and I cannot sleep again because of that dream. Next day, Su Jin and I go to an amusement park at afternoon until evening. Because of my dream last night, I decide to accompany her to her house. We get off together from the bus and I look her cross the road. When she crosses the road, there are some police chasing a car which comes so fast into Su Jin direction. I see that, so I run to her to make sure that she doesn't get hit by the car. But, she pushes me out of the road and she gets hit by the car. The police says that the driver is drunk. Scared, shocked, sad, that's what I feel that time. I calls an ambulance, and brings her to the hospital.

“I'm sorry that I didn't tell you about this because I love you and not because of a sympathy from me to you. I just want to say for you to live happily even though you will be suffering from the accident. I know that you will blame yourself, but it was my deepest wish for you to live. Don't cry too much, live and smile for me. I will be happy if you can do that and I trust you. Love you.”

That is the last thing I hear from her before she dies. Now, I try to live to her expectation from now out until then.

I WAS THERE

By Ruliana Meilala

I grew up in a fucked up family. My mother was a paranoid person, she often heard voices or was scared, or felt an extreme jealousy. My sister, she committed suicide two years ago, she was 24 year old back then, she suffered from depression for three years, but my mother thought it was the devil that made her crazy. My father, he was the neutron in my family, he was the grip that I held onto this long. Myself? I was no better than them. I was the genius one, in my big family, the problem was, I could not differentiate between dreams and reality. My childhood haunted me, I was a victim of sexual abuse, I could not forget the nightmare, even, it was getting stronger each time. I have never believed in god or relationship, or partner, those three were destructive, my whole family, or my father was destroyed by those three. I knew I could complete myself.

In the afternoon I spent my day at the park, I observed people, humans were the easiest and the most difficult creature in this world. I loved it, when I could not handle my thoughts I observed people from day to night. This habit put my nerves at ease. I thought that would be the same, I could end my suffering, but no, it was different, I was lost my grip, I lost.

01 march 2016, one week after I lost my father, he died. He left me just like how anybody else did. I thought my day would not be any different, I thought I would just keep moving on, but no, my time stopped here. Here i was sitting on a bench, was wondering, observing, tried to let my emotions out, I could not cry, I felt like I was out of breath, but this girl, this stranger just talked to me, into my deepest part, her name was Belladone. Life worked in a strange way, a stranger just helped me out of my deepest fear, she knew that I was scared of living, I was scared that I was the one that living, I was scared that I was the one that's left. From that moment I knew, I knew that she was the one who could replace my father's place, the grip that I could hold onto was her. The way she helped me

out, the way she talked to me, the way she pulled out my emotions, she was just being her, and that was more than enough to help me.

I feared that I was the only one who did not know her, I felt frightened that she knew too much about me, as I told you before, I have never believed in partnership, I was afraid that if she knew too much about me, I would rely on her, and I would be losing my grip again. So I asked her.

“I am afraid, if I did not know you as good as you know me”

“Cooley, we both are the same, we both are the sides of the coin, until someone flip it”

She was just being her, I was confused, I did not know what that meant, I did not know what was her intention by doing that. She was impulsive, and that helped her to play with people's mind. She knew exactly what she was doing, she knew exactly the consequences, as she believed in karma, she did what she could cope, and I, I was just another ratlab for her, she dealt me, with my insanity, and she played with it. I knew it, but that was not a problem, because, without her, I might end up in an asylum, she helped me that much, and yes, she meant that much for me. This was not about her, or us, but the affection she gave to me, that was a string for me to the outside world, she was the conscious of my unconscious mind.

As the day went by, her presence was getting more intense each day. This was sick, I have never let a person became so intimated to me, even I was afraid if she ever left me. I doubt myself. I knew that even though I try, I could not live without her.

It was one cloudy night, I could not hold myself any longer, I was with her, and the idea of her leaving me has been running on my head for too long, there was no way I could end my fear unless I asked her.

“bella, you said, the world is a circle, you said we always need someone as the reason, as our connection to live, so if I say you are my reason and connection, would you still be you?”

“Cooley, i was something you need but you don’t want, tell me, if i leave you would you go on? Move on?”

I knew, I could not, I could never, but I have to accept the fact that she would leave me, for the sake of me, her, and him, but still, it was such a horror to imagine her leaving me in this world of ours. She would leave me hanging with my chaos mind. She would leave me struggling alone, suffered. What should I do then? Should I end myself? Should I end everything that I have done? Should I really leave this place?

“Wake up mike”

I woke up to a strange room, I woke up to a lady, sitting by my side, as I saw the name on the table, written “dr. Lizzabelle Whinston”.

“Who are you? Where was I? Where are they?” asked her curiously.

“I’m your psychiatrist, you are at my office, they are gone. This is your last session, Mike. You are free now mike, by letting them go, you are free, you told me everything about them, you just let Belladone go first, then Cooley, now they are just your past, now you are free, go on, live, survive, this is the end of our session, you are cured”

I felt like the hole in me just filled, filled with a relief. Finally I could get it off from my chest. It felt like the weight was lifted from my shoulders. The pain might soak me to the bone, like the rain for grass in rainy sunday, but its dried up now. I felt like I was walking in sunny days, walked to the lights with no resistance, but freed. Dr.lizz soothed the fear in me. I smiled as I walked out of her office.

I walked to the park, there were only a few of people there. Many of them are kids with their mothers. The sun was shining bright in this Tuesday afternoon. The smell

of freshly cut grass filled the whole park. You could hear the laugh of children and the chirp of birds. The wind blew softly, the calm put my nerves at ease.

Here I was, sitting on the bench, the three of us shared this peaceful moment together. We've buried the hatchet. We looked at each other, smiled, in this Tuesday afternoon, 01 march 2016.

Death Box

By Julius Chandra

In the Medi city, there was a young girl named Alice. She and her family just moved to this city around two weeks ago because her father had to work in this city. They lived in a house that was not really big but enough for three of them. Her father was a Doctor who worked in one of the biggest hospitals and her mother was a housewife. Alice entered a new school that was not really far from her house. She didn't need so much time to adapt to her new environment, including making friends.

One day, when Alice was reading a novel in her room, her Mom called her for a help. Alice walked to the door but she couldn't open the door, it was locked.

“ Mom, the door is locked. Please help me.” Alice screamed loudly.

“ What? How can the door be locked?”, her Mom replied while trying to open the door.

Her Mom tried to look for someone who could help her and she found a gardener who was cutting the grass. With pleasure, the gardener was willing to help and they went in. The gardener checked and tried to find the cause of the locked door.

CCRRACKK !! The gardener broke the handle of the door. The gardener said that the handle was stucked and didn't work as usual so it should be changed. Alice and her mother thanked the gardener for the help. The gardener went out with the smile on his face and occasionally looking at Alice. Alice didn't think anything about his stare, just as a good bye perhaps.

At night around 2 o'clock, Alice and her parents were awakened by the ambulance sound. They came out to see what really happened. What a sad news! The police found a dead young man hanged by a rope in his room which was two blocks from my house. The police picked up a box from his room that was contained scalpels and intravenous fluids. People's assumptions about the death of the young man were

considered as suicide, but the police still investigated it. After finished with everything they needed, the police went out and brought along an old man that Alice and her parents didn't know well who he was. Alice thought that was the murderer or the witness.

In the morning, before the class started Alice heard all of her friends were talking about the death of the young man last night. There was a student said that the murderer was the man who was brought along by the police. Alice remembered that old man and became more curious about the murderer but she didn't do anything to prove it, just a big curiosity.

“ Hey, what are you doing?” someone patted her shoulder suddenly.

“ Oh my God, Tris, what the hell is going on? You shocked me!” Alice answered spontaneously.

“ Are you daydreaming? What are you thinking about?” Tris asked with a laugh.

“ Nothing,” Alice answered.

“ Oh, okay,” Tris answered as she went to her seat.

March to April, one month had passed without any incident. Alice also seemed like already forgot about what happened last month. Alice was in the garden with her Mom planted some flowers. The garden was not too big so they didn't need a gardener. Suddenly, Alice remembered about the gardener who helped her to open the door. Now, the gardener had been fired by his boss because his work became worst day after day. His boss also didn't like his behavior that loved to collect junk. People never saw him again, maybe he had moved to another city. Alice remembered that he was a kind person.

At night, the same incident happened again. A twenty-six years old woman was killed without any causes, no single clue could be found by the police except for the same box but it contained different things, injection and an unknown liquid. Same with the previous incident, it was assumed as a suicide. The old man who was in the previous

incident was brought back by the police. The old man was at both of the crime scenes and was brought twice by the police but strangely he was not jailed. The people didn't know what really happened. Alice felt curious about who the old man really was and she started to find some information about the old man.

Day after day, there was no information could be found and she gave up now. As she walked through the school's gate, Tris came and told her something.

“ Alice, you should be careful!” Tris said.

“ What? What do you mean? I don't understand,”Alice wondered.

“ The murderer, the old man's house is not far from yours' so...”Tris whispered.

“ Really? Let's go now!” Alice pulled Tris's hand and ran.

That was true. The old man's house was just four blocks from Alice's house. Alice never saw the house because the road was closed because of some badly damages. There were no activities in that house, just a green clothes that looked like a cloak was being dried and some medical objects. Because they didn't dare to enter the house, they decided to went home. Alice went home and found a box in front of her house. She opened the box and found a set of surgical tools, injection, and an unknown liquid. She thought that it might be a package from the hospital where her father worked, so she brought in the box.

At night, around 10 p.m., Alice was alone in the house. Her mother just went out to pick up her father at the hospital. Her phone rang, there was a message from Tris said that she wanted to do the homework in Alice's house and slept there. Alice replied yes and hung up her phone. Suddenly, she heard like someone was trying to open the door. Alice was scared and tried to call Tris but no answer. Alice covered herself with a blanket but kept trying to see the door. “ Clicck ..” The door was suddenly opened, Alice saw a man was wearing a green cloak, gloves in his hands, mask on his face, covered his head with green clothes and carrying a box like a doctor who was ready for a surgery. Alice was

scared and screamed loudly but soon the man closed her mouth and tied her with a rope. Alice rebelled with all her power, accidentally Alice opened his mask. Alice knew his face, it was the gardener but she couldn't do anything with her body tied tightly. Alice saw the gardener opened the box, took the injection and filled it with strange liquid. Then, the gardener walked toward Alice and wanted to inject the liquid into Alice. Suddenly, a gun fired was heard from the door. The police shot the gardener's foot. The police arrested the gardener immediately and released Alice. Tris came in with Alice's parents and hugged Alice while she was crying. Fortunately, the police came in at the right time, if not something horrible might be happened.

After did some investigation, finally the police found the motive for this murder. The gardener actually was a son of the mute old man. The gardener was a doctor and fired because of his failure in one surgery that made the patient die. He became frustrated and didn't have enough money for his life. By killing people, he planned to take their kidneys for sale. But everytime he did his action, the old man always stood silently outside the house to show there was a victim inside.

