



DIFFERENT
MINDS.
DIFFERENT
WORLDS.

THE 12TH GRADE AUTHORS OF
CLASS N, CLASS O, CLASS P, CLASS Q
AT INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

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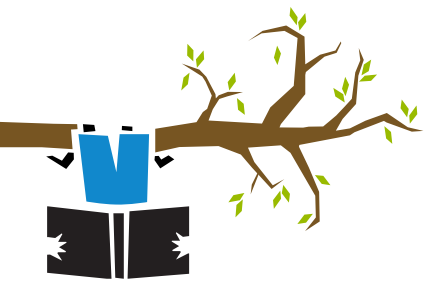


Behind the Book's mission is to develop engaged readers and writers in underserved NYC public schools by designing and delivering programs that are multi-disciplinary, culturally responsive, and promote deeper connections to books and their authors.

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Behind the Book · 216 West 135th Street · New York, NY 10030



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In the interest of honoring student voice, Behind the Book presents students' work as received from the teacher.

This book was made possible by a generous grant from The Korein Foundation.

DEDICATION

To our wonderful families.
To our future selves. To our
amazing teachers. To the new
generations as international
students and most importantly
to the kids that are forced into
an unexpected future.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Young people everywhere have faced two years of disruption, loss, and uncertainty. After navigating so many challenging and rapidly changing situations, the 12th graders of International Community High School were encouraged to slow down and reflect on the ways that they could thrive, not just survive, in these difficult times. To begin their exploration the students read *Concrete Kids* by Amyra León. The book is a poetic memoir of Amyra's childhood in Harlem, as she navigates the intricacies of foster care, mourning, self-love, and resilience.

Amyra visited the class where they experienced her dynamic energy and genuine love for the students. She answered many questions and shared how her experiences compelled her to find strength and beauty in herself and to appreciate many things that we may take for granted. Amyra led the students in a free-writing activity using brainstormed words, resulting in powerfully written expressions flowing from their imaginations.

Students worked with the Behind the Book Drama Teacher, Karen, on dramatizing scenarios to explore inequity and its impact. Using themes covered in their program, students wrote character-driven poems and stories, inspired by personal experiences that shaped them. Behind the Book writing coaches worked with the students to revise and refine their writing by adding expressive details and character development.

They also worked with Behind the Book teaching artist, Candice, to create sculptures that could reflect resiliency in the face of hardships. The sculptures were inspired by Kintsugi, the Japanese art of mending broken pottery with gold or silver. Kintsugi is based on the belief that repairing these broken pieces enhances their beauty and strength. The students made pinch pot sculptures that were intentionally altered then transformed with gold and silver outlines. Their work illustrated how through struggle, people transform and are made stronger, wiser, and more beautiful.

We hope that this collection of work presented by the 12th-grade authors and artists will demonstrate our appreciation of the resilience of the human spirit.



CONTENTS

6	CLASS N	All Humans, Different Lives
62	CLASS O	A Journey Across A Scary Road
112	CLASS P	Water Under The Bridge
162	CLASS Q	Untold Thought



ALL HUMANS. DIFFERENT LIVES.

CLASS N

Abimael	08	Madiop	34
Adama	10	Maireny	36
Angel	12	Malory	39
Ashlier	14	Maria	42
Daniela	16	Melany O.	44
Diana	18	Melany P.	46
Eduardo	20	Serigne	48
Enmanuel A.	22	Silvia	50
Enmanuel P.	24	Thanwer	52
Geika	26	Wilfred	54
Hatouma	28	Zabdy	56
Franco J.	30	Zama	58
Lisbeth	32	Zenab	60

THE STORY NO ONE WANTS TO TELL

CREATED BY ABIMAEEL

Mom Look at him and not being able to tell my son what is happening, and tell him why I feel afraid. Will be a big problem if I tell my son that the man who he is talking at the living room at this moment sexually abuses me, talk, talk, talk is the word that goes through my head when I see my son, but I need to tell what is happening to feel good. Everyday I try to tell him what's happening to me because I hardly talk to him and I know Mael feels sad, but I try and the words don't come out.

Mael "I need to tell you something, my mom said", but she always says that and stays silent until I go to work. Days later I asked my mom if she knew who the new neighbor was who moved across the street. She looked at me with a terrified face as if I was

pointing a gun at her and she just stayed silent looking out the window towards the neighbor's house for hours. One day I left work early and invited my mom to go meet the neighbor across the street. She was terrified and made the same face

when I asked her if she knew who the neighbor was. I felt strange and I asked myself, "Is something wrong with my mom?"

The next day I felt bad and I didn't want to go to work. I got up and walked towards the living room and I met a strong, big man sitting alone in my living room. I asked him, "Who are you?" I am the neighbor from the front, he said with a surprised face. My mom got up and goes to the living room and finds us in the living room. I

ask her what he is doing in our house. "Mom do you know what he is doing here?" I ask she just stays quiet and looks at me with the face she gets every

time I mention the neighbor. I pressed my mom to talk and she told me crying "the neighbor abused me sexually and he threatened me saying if you say something I will kill your son". It was a lot of things in mind at that moment and I was thinking of what I should do. The neighbor tried to escape, hitting me and throwing things at me, but I think that the fury that I had at that moment took over my body because I hit him, hit him, hit him, so many times that my entire clothes were covered in blood. The police arrived and pointed the gun at us saying "Stop Stop Stop".

Mom He is not to blame. He is my son. It was me who called the police, I said. Days later my son managed to get out of jail thanks to the policemen who collected all the necessary information to prove that the neighbor

was the culprit while he was still in the hospital.

Mael We will start a new life moving to another place that most of

"WILL BE A BIG PROBLEM IF I TELL MY SON THAT THE MAN WHO HE IS TALKING AT THE LIVING ROOM AT THIS MOMENT SEXUALLY ABUSES ME..."



the Latino love to enjoy, I will take care of my mother and spend the last years of life with her enjoying and learning new culture in the Dominican Republic.

CREATED BY ADAMA

Today I am me!
 Today I defend my society
 Today I made my dream come true!
 Today I can fly!
 I am important
 Today I found happiness
 Today I'm in my dream world
 Today I can touch the sky!
 Today I can scream and make the change
 I want
 Today I am the
 voice of the
 speechless
 The door
 slammed
 behind me.
 I just got back
 from school
 Excited!
 I rushed to the
 bathroom
 Took my
 ablution
 Left with my
 hands still
 dripping
 Knelt on my
 prayer mat
 I felt that peace of connection to God
 Then I heard a soft voice calling my name
 Khadija...!!
 Khadija...!!
 For a second I thought we had a guest
 While finishing my dhikr
 I replied "Naam" (yes).
 The moment I went Inside her room...,
 I realized it was maman



Here I am now standing with a surprise
 face
 Wondering if that's the woman I knew
 "I must have done something that made
 her happy," I thought.
 Her smile filled my life with happiness
 Until...
 Did she just pronounce the word
 "marriage"?
 It took only a second for my excitement
 to vanish
 I hate that word
 I grew up in
 a community
 where marriage
 is hindrance of
 education
 Where marriage
 means rights
 are no more
 Where marriage
 means the end
 of freedom
 Where marriage
 means
 responsibilities
 Where marriage
 means sacrifices
 Where marriage means dreams are no
 more
 Here I am wondering a bunch of things
 Me fifteen-years old
 Already being talked about marriage?
 Am I ready to know about this?
 Am I not too young for marriage?
 Or maybe she just wants to get rid of me
 already,

I looked at her with an indescribable
 feeling
 I was lost, confused, shocked
 I couldn't believe my ears
 Seconds passed,
 Then I heard her voice calling me again
 Her call brought me back,
 "Are you talking to me maman?" I said.
 Suddenly I ran straight in my room saying
 "I don't want to get married right now, I
 want to continue my education".
 Today was the fastest night I have ever
 had,
 It's a day I haven't closed either of my eyes
 Usually, I'm the first one to go to bed
 But today I stayed up all night long
 Today's night felt like a blink of an eye
 I thought about this stupid marriage
 thing all night
 But I had no choice but to get married
 I always dreamed to make my parents
 happy
 But this time I also needed to make
 myself happy and make my dreams
 come true
 Why early marriage??
 I'm still a delicate bud
 Let me growth
 I'm still a little flower
 So give me time to bloom
 I'm still learning and growing
 I'm still a little star
 So let me shine
 I have dreams
 So let me make them come true
 I have the right to make my life decision
 I just want to be a butterfly
 I want to be independent

So give me a chance
 I want to continue my education
 So let me study
 I'm still a little child
 So give me a chance to live my childhood
 At the end I had no choice but to obey
 my parents
 I ended getting married
 And now I'm a mom of two kids
 Did I want to have kids this young? No
 But I had no choice
 I know things are really hard for me
 right now
 Continuing my education is way harder
 for me now, since I became a mother
 But I want to make myself happy too
 I want to achieve my goals
 I want to be me and not like other girls in
 my community
 I was able to convince my husband and
 parents to continue my education after I
 got married
 It was hard
 But I made it
 I became who I wanted to be
 I didn't let the society control my life
 I wanted to be an independent woman
 And guess what?
 I am an independent woman
 I have been through a lot
 But all that matters is that today I have
 obtained my degrees
 Today I am a lawyer
 A mother
 A role model
 Today I am me!
 Today I am free!

CREATED BY ANGEL

“I don’t want to leave my son in here”. Those were the words the mother said before putting José in foster care due to her economic situation, Jose was just 2 weeks old. And it was cold, with temperatures below zero, the day his parents gave this baby to foster care but they left no trace of their names or who they were, just a paper with the baby’s name and their

from the high fever. Thanks to doctors Julio and María He was saved. When he was 7 years old, he made a wish to the director of foster care. His wish was, “I want to meet a songwriter to learn how to write my songs.”

The next day a person in a suit, tall and with chains, makes the night seem like because of diamonds on his neck. When Jose saw him, the expression on his face revealed the great impression the man-made on him. The songwriter quickly struck up a conversation and told Jose that he was a composer and that impressed him, and he taught him how to compose music. After that day Jose never stopped composing and

he has improved remarkably. However, When he turned 18, he traveled to Miami and met several producers who connected him with great artists to interpret his composition. However, he knew that there was a chance of finding

country of origin sewn into his blanket. Jose was taken to a foster home, but due to the low temperatures the child suffered damages in his body and was hospitalized for weeks. It was almost thought that the child was going to die

his parents. So he stayed for several years. He made a lot of money but never lost His main goal of being a singer. Also, he didn’t feel good or satisfied because his dream is to be famous as a singer, not as a songwriter. But he recorded and created music every day and stored it into his computer until February 13 when he received a call from Sony to sign me as a songwriter but he said no and explained my reasons. Months later he spoke again with another agent and the agent told him that they were going to affirm him as an artist so they reached an agreement that he was going to be the owner of his masters and they were going to be in charge of distributing his music in the playlists and radio.

At that moment he realized that a new stage was approaching for me. He spent two years creating a super album. He felt like he gave his best on this album. Everyone told him that he didn’t have the profile or the style to be an artist, but he’s always believed in himself. On June 23, his solo album was released. The first week was terrible in sales. A week later, at 4:37 am, the manager called Jose, giving him the news. The album was number 1 in the US. The truth is that He didn’t sleep that night and it stayed that way for 32 weeks.

So he founded a foundation to find lost people and support children in foster care. After several years of searching, he didn’t find his parents. But when he was 30 years old, the president of the foundation called him to surprise him. Without thinking he saw himself with the president. The news was that

his parents had been found in Kansas. He took a jet with a team of investigators and headed for Kansas. After weeks of tremendous searching, he found them. In a restaurant, his parents, seeing him, couldn’t stop crying and his son knelt because

his legs wouldn’t stop shaking. Jose told them “you don’t know how I dreamed about this moment. You don’t know how risky and frustrating the road was. But it was worth every step I took to reach success. Although my only success was meeting you.”

“I DON’T WANT TO LEAVE MY SON IN HERE.”



JUAN CARLOS

CREATED BY ASHLIER

This happened 3 years ago. I was a very happy, calm person until there were problems in my family. I didn't get along with my brothers because they were recognized for all the good they did. They were treated like kings on their birthdays. All their friends brought them gifts and our family always gave them what they wanted. So knowing that I was the least known, I tried with all my efforts to stand out. I decided to make my parents proud of me for my achievements, maybe that I would be their favorite. I did everything possible to make my family feel proud of me, but it was no longer because of what I had achieved, it was because of the preference. When I finally understood it I didn't want to live.

I felt too depressed and I asked myself why I was born. Why am I alive? Why is life unfair? With absurd thoughts,

“WITH ABSURD THOUGHTS, I WANTED A WAY TO FEEL LIBERATED, TO FEEL BETTER, TO GET EVERYTHING OUT...”

I wanted a way to feel liberated, to feel better, to get everything out, and I began to investigate how to feel more relaxed and free. So I started cutting. At first

it hurt me but then I didn't really feel it. It started with little cuts but it went on more and more and then I kept doing it. No one knew and I didn't let them see them either. They didn't care about my life until one day because of my mania for doing it I did it at school. Luckily I had a white coat where the blood stood out a little. My teacher told me, “You're cut! What happened to you?”

And I told her, “It's nothing serious.”

She told me, “Let me see.” She insisted and I showed her and she saw all the cuts. Her obligation was to report that, so she asked me if I did it to myself or what happened, if everything in my life was fine. And I, with all the nerves on top, told her that it was my parents, so

my teachers reported all that to the school.

So they entrusted a case to my parents who were too angry with me but I knew they couldn't do anything. Those from foster care went to investigate my house but they didn't find anything because I didn't leave any evidence. My mom would kill me if she found me doing what I was doing, so they found everything normal. But I was thinking that if I stayed, I didn't want to continue being treated like shit so they decided to take me to foster care where I thought it was going to be better, but I

found situations that were worse because they abused me mentally, someone else physically, and worse in every way. I always had the hope that a family was going to love me because I am a good person who has not good luck. Luck is something else for me. Finally when I was 14 I was lucky that a family adopted me, a woman and a man who wanted to have a family but they couldn't. And at that moment I started to think I was so lucky

because with that age I was considered old. There is always a second chance even if one doesn't see. I already had a very good mentality for my age but I understood that my previous parents



did not love me perhaps because of my simple form but there is another person who does appreciate it.

VOICES

CREATED BY DANIELA

“Hazlo” again that voice in my head. “No,” I responded. “es por tu propio bien.” Suddenly I can see a clear picture of a chaotic future, everything is falling like heavy rain right in front of my eyes. I’m in the middle of the disaster, alone. I see darkness, I can feel the emptiness within me. It’s all my fault, I don’t want that to happen. I need to listen to the voice in my head but I’m scared. It’s for my own good right? I will come back, right?



“Ellos no te van a ayudar,” said the voice in my head.

“No son quienes dicen ser. They will hurt you” I don’t want to be hurt, I don’t want to be here forever. It can’t be, I have to do something.

“¿Qué debo hacer?” I asked.

“Mátalos” the voice responded,

“si no lo haces tú they’ll do it.” I shake my head, kill them? Maybe the voice in my head is confused, maybe it is just playing.

“Tienes que hacerlo, no hay tiempo.” There’s no time left... I stood up from my bed, it was so silent I could hear my heart beating so fast. Everyone was sleeping. It was past midnight. I went straight up to the kitchen and stared at the

knives for a long minute.

“No hay más tiempo” I said, taking one of the knives in my hand.

“Hazlo” the voice responded.

“Do it.”

Living locked up for much of your childhood is not a very nice feeling. Having the fear of not knowing what

your life is going to bring, not having anyone to assure you that everything is fine is like floating in an endless void. It has been 4 years since these people took me away from my family and locked me up here without any information from them with the excuse that my parents were not trained to take care of a child like me. What do they mean by that? I know they only want to hurt me and my family. That’s what the voice in my head says. She has always been with me since I was 6 years old and she is the only one who has stayed with me. She knows the true purpose of people in foster care. They only want to harm me and my family. I can stop that and finally go back to my home. It is what I must do.

“No lo pienses” I heard the echo in my head. My hand was shaking as I was holding the knife. I started sweating, my breath was as fast as I had just finished a marathon.

“It’s now or never,” I said to myself and proceeded to walk upstairs until I heard some steps. I started to panic, the

voice in my head started talking to me again but I was so scared that I couldn’t understand a word. Finally, the steps stopped and I opened my eyes that I didn’t even notice were closed.

“Yakov, why are you awake this late?”

A woman with long hair asked me, I immediately knew who she was. “Water,” I said.

“You should go back to sleep now” she smiled at me, I just nodded my head and started walking to my room, except that I didn’t get to my room, instead I waited for her to turn around, I held the knife tight in my hand and stabbed her. “I did it,” I said.

“I’m free now.” But I didn’t know things were just going to

get worse from now on.

“HAVING THE FEAR OF NOT KNOWING WHAT YOUR LIFE IS GOING TO BRING, NOT HAVING ANYONE TO ASSURE YOU THAT EVERYTHING IS FINE IS LIKE FLOATING IN AN ENDLESS VOID.”

“I HAVE NO IDEA OF HOW LIFE IS GOING TO END UP FOR ME”

CREATED BY DIANA

“I have no idea of how life is going to end up for me” were the words that I told myself after realizing that life is a mix of emotions and things could change over and over again! My dream is to create a family with the person who

married and have my kid at a young age but early marriage it's not as cute as it seems on social media. Early marriage it's realizing that you have to learn new things each day. But after knowing the bad side of marriage and love, do I really

want it? I'm not sure now, I'm not ready to experience arguments with my partner. I'm not ready to hear a kid calling me mommy, I'm not ready to wake up next to someone every morning. But above all I'm not ready to say the truth about how I feel because I'm not ready to hear other people's opinion. My entire life I thought that I need someone's opinion in order to be happy, if someone doesn't tell me

what I want to hear I'm not sure about that thing anymore. The truth it's that I don't want to accept the reality of my life, I want to know that everything around me it's how I dreamed it but life is a world full of lies. And sometimes you have to take risks in order to live life how you want it. I have no idea how life it's going to be tomorrow but I do know how I wanted it to be today and accepting to

“BUT ABOVE ALL I'M NOT READY TO SAY THE TRUTH ABOUT HOW I FEEL BECAUSE I'M NOT READY TO HEAR OTHER PEOPLE'S OPINION.”

has been there for me, with the person who stood by me even when things were a little tough at first, the person that has been with me in the good and bad times of my life. I always thought that love was only happiness and giggles but the truth is that love is seeing the bad side of your partner and staying with that person because nobody is perfect in life. I always wanted to get

be in an early marriage will be having a best friend for life!

Alaysha, that's what they call me. I come from a family that always wants you to be perfect, I come from a family that judges you for no reason. But I come from a mother who taught me not to care about other people's opinions. Most of the time I want to express how sad it feels to have a partner that doesn't love you, how empty it feels to not feel loved by anybody. One day I realized that my family and partner conflicts affected me in such a bad way that I felt like I had no idea where life was going to end up for me and my inner self. Although I didn't know where I would end up, I decided to leave far away from everything that made me feel lost. I realized that thinking about taking my life away was the best thing that I could do but no that would be the end of my story but it keeps going. I

moved to a small town and met amazing people that made me feel that I have hope in my life. I also met this new guy that helped me to get through those dark moments that I had in my life, he



gave me hope and told me to talk to him anytime I would like to. And even though I did not feel ready for a new relationship, I gave him an opportunity. 5 years passed and we now have two kids, Dylan and Dairis. We moved in together and I am now good mentally.

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF ZOFIA

CREATED BY EDUARDO

The door slammed against the wall as the words “Zofia disappeared” came out. She never thought she would hear those words in my life. Everything went black and she could only think about how this could happen at such an important moment. Her daughter had gone shopping with her grandmother,

but only her grandmother returned. The grandmother explained, “When we went to get my bag and food for the party, I turned to see Zofia but she was not there. Zofia’s grandmother approached her mother and said “Scarlet, let’s go to the police station to report the case.”

While they were on the road Zofia’s grandmother could only say “We are going to look for her, don’t worry.”

Meanwhile, the people who took Zofia came to the place where they hid her. When Zofia was brought out, the first thing she saw was a small, messy room. When Zofia heard her uncle’s

voice, she thought that he would get her out of there but her expression on her face of happiness for having been rescued from her changed to concern when she knew that her uncle did not go to rescue her from that place. Zofia’s uncle approached while he whispered “No one will find you here.”

Zofia was in shock.

“Where am I? What am I doing here? Did you do this?”

“Yes, I did this because I want to get revenge on your father for what he has done to me!” Zofia’s uncle replied.

As Zofia and her uncle talked, the police began searching the

entire area to see if they could find any clues as to who might have done this. The family still hadn’t been able to get over what happened, the atmosphere became tense, nobody wanted to say a word about what happened. It’s a new day and the detective begins to interview some of the family in case he could get any clues. Time passed and almost

everyone gave their statement and the only one missing was Uncle’s statement, the detective arrived and started talking to Uncle.

“Well, where were you when Zofia’s disappearance happened?”

“I was at the party that we had as a family but the atmosphere suddenly changed when someone shouted that Zofia disappeared”

“And you were one of those who looked for Zofia when the news broke, right?”

“Yes, I was one of those who were looking for Zofia, we looked for her everywhere and we didn’t find her.” said the Uncle.

“Yes, but you stayed longer while the others had finished their search. Very suspicious, don’t you think?”

“I already told you my version, you will see if you want to believe it or not.” The Uncle replied to the detective.

Days gone by and all suspicions fall on Uncle because they saw him leave

resentfully many times to an abandoned house. Scarlet had been following him to see if there was a connection with Zofia’s disappearance and managed to find the abandoned house. But it wasn’t going

to be that easy for Scarlet to enter it. She approached the abandoned house to see a way to enter and she managed to hear about the revenge that Uncle had planned. Scarlet called the police as fast as she could

and they arrived in the blink of an eye. The abandoned house was quickly surrounded by police. After several warnings that the guy should come out, he turned himself in because he was sorry for his actions. The policemen took Uncle to the jury to give him his sentence and they managed to find Zofia inside a room. The days went by and the Uncle confessed what he did while explaining that everything he did was to get revenge because his father never gave him the same attention that he gave his brother and he just wanted his father to treat them the same.



“SHE NEVER THOUGHT SHE WOULD HEAR THOSE WORDS IN MY LIFE.”

DIFFERENT LIVES

CREATED BY ENMANUEL A.

Her name is Stephany, she's in a relationship but she doesn't love her boyfriend because she loves someone else. If she loves her boyfriend she wouldn't cheat on him, she would like to break up with her boyfriend but she doesn't. "She doesn't know how to do it, because she doesn't want to make him feel bad because he has been in her worst moments but she wants to be with the other person because she feels better in that relationship, she feels free." But she has to do it because some things cannot be silenced, she has to say things because later they get worse and worse and then there will be no time to look back, and she wants to have her family with the other person.

She says: I don't know if it's okay with what I'm doing in not telling my boyfriend that we end the relationship, I'll talk to him. I will tell him that we will

finish because I am beginning to meet another person who has better vibes, that with him I feel freer and that I want to have a family with him, I will look for my cell phone and call him. The phone rings and he answers: Hello!

I reply: "Hello! I hope you're fine, I'm calling you because I need to talk to you about our relationship, lately I don't feel comfortable with you, I think it's

better to put an end to it, besides, I'm meeting someone, I feel good when I'm with him, I feel that I have a better connection, he transmits good vibes to me, with him I can be me, I feel free, with him I would like to have a formal family, I just

wanted to tell you that, but I hope that you do well in your new life and that you are very happy.

(But I hope you do well in your new life, thanks for everything)

"I JUST WANTED TO TELL YOU THAT, BUT I HOPE THAT YOU DO WELL IN YOUR NEW LIFE AND THAT YOU ARE VERY HAPPY."

She told him good luck in his new life that awaited him, a new life with another person who valued him, that if they had problems they should solve it between partners, not that they should remain silent when they had some differences, that he could find a person that he loved him and that he wants to have a family with him, that they help each other financially, that he would not abandon him in his worst moments and that he would be with him at all times. I was wishing him the best of luck so that in his life he finds a woman who loves him as he is. But he doesn't want another woman other than sthephany, but she could only offer him a good friendship, although when they were together they had problems and they didn't talk about it or solve them, so she wanted that even if they weren't a couple, they wouldn't cut off their friendship for problems that were left behind, and that when one of them had a problem, they talk about it like the good friends they can be.



THE MIRAGE

CREATED BY ENMANUEL P.

Leave the past where it is ... behind, that's what people say but for me, it was my nightmare, after 10 years living with my wife. My wife's family finds out that my father was a criminal, this makes her family create a kind of idea about me, now they believe that I am a criminal like my father. This was one of my biggest secrets, yes, my father is imprisoned in federal prison. He was guilty of murder and was sentenced to 30 years, but now my wife's family believes that I was hiding this information because I did the same thing that my father did.

Now they want to convince my wife that I am a bad person. Days passed and I kept insisting that I am not like my father, I told them "I only hide this because I don't want the reflection of my father to take over my future." My wife began to investigate my father and discovered something that left her

speechless, my father was the one who saved her life years ago when someone tried to kill her with a knife, my wife

told me that she just ran and thought that they knew each other and that they had a problem and that's why they started fighting, but what in reality was my father saving his life. Hours passed and my wife looked at me with tears in her eyes saying "your father only saved my life". My father was sentenced to years of prison but after he did 10 years he can appeal the case, the first thing I said to my wife was "let's appeal my father's case, you were there when everything

happened!". The first thing I did was run to my father's lawyer and tell him the true story and that my father is innocent, he looked at me with a strange face and said with a passive voice "we need evidence to prove that what your wife says is right", when suddenly my wife remembered that in the place where

everything happened there were security cameras because it was close to many businesses. As the days went by, we went to the place where everything happened And with permission from the court they allow us to review all the cameras but there was a big problem, the cameras only had videos from 5 years ago and my father's case happened 10 years ago, so we couldn't find anything because it happened a long time ago, later After several months investigating in that place we realized that there was a damaged camera in a corner of a business, we approached the business and asked "how long has that camera been" and an older man with a snoring voice answered us "9 years ago It stopped working and we left it there hanging ". The first thing that came to mind was that if the camera stopped working 9 years ago and my father's

happened 10 years ago, that means that the videos could be there. I told the older man "we can take his camera and fix it" with a smiling face "sure!". Later, we fixed the camera and there was the video where my father defended my wife

"...NOW MY WIFE'S FAMILY BELIEVES THAT I WAS HIDING THIS INFORMATION BECAUSE I DID THE SAME THING THAT MY FATHER DID."



and showed that he killed him in self-defense. We showed the video to the judge and my father was released from jail and his case was eliminated.

ZARA

CREATED BY GEIKA

Zara was a charismatic and friendly girl who was born in Argentina, when she was 13 her mother took her to the United States to find better opportunities. But after a year in the United States, Zara's mother was still desperate to find a job to support herself and her daughter. The two of them spent a long time on the street without a roof over their heads or enough money to buy the things they needed. Her mother had problems with alcohol and drugs many years before, which she stopped when she found out that Zara would be born, but that addiction returned since the stress was making her feel vulnerable. Her mother used to talk with those men from the alleys, the ones with scary eyes and who made Zara tremble when they were near.

Those men looked at Zara's beauty and they knew it was wrong but

didn't care. One day in one of the alleys where she and her mother were staying, Zara came from the public school she attended. It was quite cold and dark since it was winter so she came shivering and with tears in her eyes. She was afraid to walk there because her mother was elsewhere trying her best to find food. She walked as fast as possible to get to where there were more people in order to feel safer. But suddenly she saw those

“THE TWO OF THEM SPENT A LONG TIME ON THE STREET WITHOUT A ROOF OVER THEIR HEADS...”

eyes that terrified her so much. those eyes that made her feel unsafe because she knew the intention behind that look of his. Then she heard his footsteps approaching her and she shivered as he saw him extend his hand to her. she backed away with fear in her eyes.

“don't walk away, I'm not going to do anything to you” he told her with an evil smile.

Tears began to come out of Zara's eyes. She began to back away, even more frightened, suddenly she began to scream desperately for help, “Help! Help me please!”.

The man was scared. He came to her with a quick step. “Be quiet!” he whispered next to her ears. She couldn't hold back the tears, she was disgusted. “Seriously, I just wanted to talk,” he said, breathing down her neck. He had a nauseating breath, a combination of mud and beer. Suddenly she was able to make a quick movement to get rid of that man and didn't doubt it twice before starting to run as fast as she could. Scared, she began to cry out for help. She could hear footsteps behind her, She ran further until she heard a gunshot behind her. The echo of the shot was the only thing that could be heard in the dark alley. Zara turned slowly and noticed the man who had threatened her was lying on the ground, totally covered in blood. She took her eyes away from that scene, her eyes caught a man in a police uniform holding a firearm.

“Are you okay?” he asked but she couldn't answer as everything went black around her. Zara opened her eyes, feeling a little dizzy, realizing she was at the hospital. Her mother was there crying, she felt guilty about what

happened to her daughter. Zara took her mother's hand and told her not to worry. Her mother promised her that

“...THE MAN WHO HAD THREATENED HER WAS LYING ON THE GROUND, TOTALLY COVERED IN BLOOD.”

she would never leave her alone again and that she would leave her additions. Minutes later the police arrived and told them, “Sorry for this horrible thing that has happened, I would like to inform you that we have seen your case and the mayor would like to help you find a home in which the government will help you with the first payments until you can recover.” Zara and her mother finally felt that they could breathe. They were able to find economic stability and a good education, and despite everything those problems did not define who they were.

WORDS OF CHANGE

CREATED BY HATOUMA

“Bow ka so!” yelled the father.
“Leave this house, I don’t want to see you around my house from this instant you useless human. You’re a shame to this family!”

These were the words that changed his life. Yimy was from a poor family in the country of Niagara. His dad, aged 56

worked as a carpenter 45 hours every week to sustain his family’s needs, but still earned very little. Yimy on his side didn’t care about anything in the house. He didn’t respect anyone nor had any

pity for his poor old parents who were struggling to pay his school fees for him to get educated and have opportunities knocking at his door. Soon after turning

18, he started hanging out with rich boys who owned expensive clothes, phones and had a lot of money. He wanted to conform and be like them, so he started missing school and going out more often. Not having a job or rich parents to provide him the same things as his friends, he started stealing his old

dad’s little earnings and selling belongings just to please and look interesting to his new friends. The dad on his side, did all he could to change his habits by taking him to work, letting Yimy explore his interests but still, he

was too lazy and over-confident to do any work. In his head, he was king. After trying everything in his ability, the dad figured out that the only solution to



change him and open his eyes to reality was to kick Yimy out and let him manage all alone. One fine afternoon, Yimmy came from his walk with his friends and was confused! To his surprise, his father and mother were at the gate, his belongings by their side. “Yimy, I don’t want to see you around this house from now on, take your stuff and go wherever you know”, ordered the desperate father.

Yimy being the only child of his parents was expecting anything but being kicked out. He looked at his mother’s eyes, full of tears like a river, then at his dad. Yimy dragged his belongings to the edge of the river thinking about his actions and everything his dad had done for him. He gradually started regretting his attitudes and made the ultimate decision of changing and making his parents proud. The next day, he went to Yorinda market looking for a job but was refused because everyone already knew about his stealing and bad habits. So he travelled to a nearby country where an old shoemaker hired him and let him stay at his house. Yimy woke up first every morning and went to open the shop before the boss himself was awake. Yimy worked really

hard and the shoemaker gradually felt appreciation towards him and considered him as his own son.

After 2 years Yimy asked to go back to his country and the old man as recognition offered him a golden bracelet. He came back to his dad sick, laying on his bed, his mom by his

side. Without any hesitation, he sold the gold and used the money to take care of the dad. After his father’s recovery, he was so proud that his son finally shed his old skin. As Yimy’s dad felt he was now mature and responsible, he handed him the papers of a land he inherited from Yimy’s grandfather. Yimy used the money from

selling the land and opened a shoe store. He soon became a successful man. And remember, your actions will always come back to you! One day...

“WITHOUT ANY HESITATION, HE SOLD THE GOLD AND USED THE MONEY TO TAKE CARE OF THE DAD.”

CREATED BY FRANCO J.

“Reality”. After one year living with his stepmother and his father and 6 months of the death of his mother, he finally decided to leave because he knew his father would not do anything with his new wife and she would not change her behavior such as mistreatment and language behavior with him. Jason was worried because he just turned 16. He doesn't know where to go or what he can do for a living. After he goes to school his stepmother used to wake him up 4 hours before the hour Jason used to put on his phone at 6 A.M. Also make him do all the housework after school while she was having fun at parties. Things were getting him tired after his mother died, Jason sometimes thought about why he was stealing alive with a father like that and a stepmother like her. After all he remembered what his mother told him after she died “I will always be in your heart son do everything that can be best for you”. He began taking all he needed and started getting ready to leave. Once

“AFTER ONE YEAR LIVING WITH HIS STEPMOTHER AND HIS FATHER AND 6 MONTHS OF THE DEATH OF HIS MOTHER, HE FINALLY DECIDED TO LEAVE...”

he wake up and his stepmother was sleeping he got some clothing and some money and went out, he start looking for food for his breakfast then started asking at stores he there was space for someone more to work and all of them say not because he was just 16 years old and his parents have to permit him to work but he doesn't want to go back, the night came he was sitting down into a stool in the park, the security guard told him it was time to closed so he has to get out from it, Jason was hungry and without money, so he doesn't know what to do and where to go, Jason was walking outside the park and some police officers pass through him and start asking a question about what was he doing at that hour in the night, Jason was nervous because he doesn't know what to tell them so he tells them the truth and the reasons of what was happening to him. The police officers ask Jason if he was hungry or need something so they invite Jason to come with them and they told him they

will take him into a better place, ones they stop they start calling to the social workers ones they did that they take him to eat, 1 hours later the social worker take Jason into a foster care and they visit Jason Step mother who already moved to another place because she find out Jason was not at home that day so they look for his father who words were: “I want a better treat for my son even though I'm

don't want to lose her I already lose my wife and I will be depressed without her I know he is my son but I prefer her and I love him but I can not do anything just let him do what is best for him so for me it's okay if he want to stay and it would better for him to don't be with a father like me so I give permission and give im into adoption.” Once Jason heard the words of his father he felt depressed because he

was not having his father's support and love anymore so he began to decide to get to 18 to become someone or wait for a good family to adopt him or to get older to such a responsible man.

Choose or not this ending if you want



his father i can not give him the best opportunity or the best treatment I try to become a really good father but I can't his mother (my wife) is death I don't know what to do I meet a new woman I love her but I can not give her orders on how to treat him I'm a guilty man and I prefer to don't fight with her because I

One month has passed and his father start watching is girlfriend and thinking it would be better for him and his son to leave her because he don't want a woman like that to treat his child like a dog and if she can not change her attitude they would be leave her even though he love her but is their best decision.

CREATED BY LISBETH

Her name is Rosa. She is from Colombia, She is a 23-year-old woman and her closest allies are her friends and her mother. Her greatest dream is to have a baby to fill her life with joy, but in order to continue on the path to her dream, she must have a partner and put her trust in that person so that she can forget the past. Her biggest secret is that she was sexually abused in the past when she was only 12 years old.



One afternoon Rosa was on her way to a job interview and she met a boy named Melvin who was going to the same place as her. He was her supervisor (the person who was going to interview her)

but she didn't know it, he entered the elevator before her and the door closed and she said a profanity to him through the door. And the same moment he opened the door so that she could enter the elevator with him.

She said nervously: "I'm very sorry for what I just said, it's my first day at work and I'm very nervous and tense".

To which he replied very seriously." don't worry, I understand".

They get out of the elevator on the same floor, when she goes directly to the customer service lady and tells her. "Good morning, I'm here because I have a job interview".. the lady replies."Ok, wait and let the supervisor know"...

he lady picks up the phone and dials to let the supervisor know that Rosa was there.

"You can go to the office at the end of the hall" the lady says. Rosa replies. "Ok, thanks"

When Rosa goes to the office she knocks on the door and hears a voice that says. "Go ahead"... When she opens the door and sees the person she said rudeness to a few minutes ago, she is surprised and nervous. Melvin interviewed her and accepted her job application and showed her the office where she was supposed to work. As time passed, Rosa began to feel attracted to Melvin, but she was very afraid that what happened in the past would happen again. One afternoon after work Melvin invites her to go out to dinner and she accepts. After that outing they kept seeing each other and talking about their lives, they fell in love and began a relationship. Some time later she told him what happened to her in the past and he accepted her and helped her to trust him much more. With time, the dream of being able to have inside the little person who would fill his life even more with joy is finally fulfilled. Her family was very happy with this wonderful news and they always

supported her. When Rosa's day came to give birth, she was very happy and at the same time very nervous, but with the love of the people around her, she felt comfortable.

Rosa held her baby in her arms for the first time and said." With you my life will never be gray again!".

The lesson of this story is that no matter how afraid you are of taking the risk to achieve your dream, do it, do it with fear because we don't know if we will be victorious, but at the end of the road we will see if it was worth taking the risk.

"HER BIGGEST SECRET IS THAT SHE WAS SEXUALLY ABUSED IN THE PAST WHEN SHE WAS ONLY 12 YEARS OLD."

CREATED BY MADIOP

I am from Senegal. I am from my family. I am from the streets. Hopes, future, needs, given, by, god. Always help people if possible. I am the best runner from the place I live (TOUBA) little thing you know They even call me The Flash. There was a time a guy named Savitar had the same superpowers as Flash and he was trying to harm the people by going to the mosque, the biggest place in Senegal where everybody goes to pray, especially on Friday almost the whole city is gonna be there. So he waited till then and he went there, started destroying stuff, using his lightning speed to help him even more. But he was doing all that just to reach Flash because he knew that flash would stop anyone that was trying to harm his city. So flash got there as fast as possible, and little did you know the whole place was destroyed and he even killed some people. Flash got mad and the bad guy started running so is Flash. They kept fighting/ throwing their lightning at each other.

“HOPES,
FUTURE,
NEEDS,
GIVEN, BY,
GOD.”

The bad guy started beating flash so badly that he couldn't even move. After him remembering who he is and his braveness/ how much he loves the city helps him get up started circling around him, flash was running way faster than before even the guy couldn't believe it so the guy started feeling dizzy, so flash ended up finishing him up by throwing his speed after all the circle and the guy (Savitar) couldn't stand anymore so flash took him to a secure place where he can't use his power.



ESCAPING REALITY

CREATED BY MAIRENY

When you can't escape from your physical reality, at least you can let your soul and mind escape through your imagination. A girl named aurora with very short brunette hair, green eyes and a curiosity like no other, who oftentimes would be very bold and other times

creative, she would always imagine things due to her solitude, she would imagine living out in the city with her grandmother, she would imagine how things would be if she actually lived in the city. She lived in the depths of the forest with her

grandmother, her only friends, the many creatures living out there, her solitude, and her grandmother's that was rarely at home, usually she would wake up with leaves and sticks all over her hair, as she used to sleep in the floor in her cabin in the forest, she would start her days by opening all the windows and imagining a whole world she had never

been in and experienced, he days would normally consist staying inside of her house but that day she felt like doing something very impulsive and different, out of the usual and out of the blue, she went out in the forest by herself, but her grandmother always warned her and

prohibited her to go out in the woods by herself because it was too dangerous for her to go alone, she searched for a silent spot to enjoy, to be in peace by herself, all of a sudden after sometime of being out in the forest she felt like going home

to her grandmother, but it felt really, strange after getting up from the floor to get back home she tripped on a rock and all of a sudden she heard a small noise coming from the woods, at first she thought it was an animal, perhaps it was just a cat but cats don't make those weird sounds, she yelled. "hello!" "Who's in there" "is it you grandma?



after realizing it might not be just an animal or even her grandmother she decided to hide, because it was risky and she was too scared she might be noticed or gotten trapped, it would be too dangerous, she might thought it was a thief or a dangerous person, but a couple of minutes went by since she was hiding in there, and she had gotten tired of hiding and waiting around so she decided to be brave and to go out of the place she was hiding in, carefully she walked out of the bushes and before she got outside of it she grabbed a wooden stick she had found in the ground, when looked down and to her surprise there was a little girl, all dirty covered in blood and wounds all over her body, then she asked the little girl.

"Who are you?"

"What is your name?"

Then the little girl said " My name is Sofia"

" I'am stranded" " I was on my way home, I don't know the way back home" .then Aurora asked the little girl " where are your parents?" "Are they Okay!?" The

little girl responded aurora and told her. "my parents are probably looking for me" she claimed. " i'm pretty sure they're" she seemed hopeless, her face had an expression of worryness, as if her parents weren't actually looking for her, as if something really bad had happened to

them, aurora decided to take sofia to her house with her grandmother to clean her up and help her out, but when they arrived her grandmother was so angry because she had left the house specifically when her grandmother had warned her to never go out in the forest by herself, her grandmother then immediately asked her.

"what happened" " i was looking for you like crazy". they took sofia inside of the house, they cleaned her up and gave her food, and clean clothes for her to

wear, after sofia was calmed down and told them that in reality her parents were dead because they had a car accident on their way home and she kept it a secret as because it hurted her so much what happened to her parents that she always imagined that they were still alive, her

"WHEN YOU CAN'T ESCAPE FROM YOUR PHYSICAL REALITY, AT LEAST YOU CAN LET YOUR SOUL AND MIND ESCAPE THROUGH YOUR IMAGINATION."

imagination helped in that period of time, she always imagined her mom touching her hair like she would always do every night before she went to sleep, before the accident that took their lives, she told aurora. "I always imagine every night, my mom sitting on the side of the bed telling me how much she loves and misses me every night" "it really helps me.. it makes me feel like things aren't as bad as they truly were" she said.

At some point the fact that she imagined her parents even though they weren't truly there with her it helped her cope with her pain, with the great loss of not having her parents in there with her, she said that even though she always imagined them a part of them was inside of her at least in her mind. she never really wanted to admit that her parents were really dead so she kept it as a secret, because it hurt a lot, the importance of not keeping things as a secret and to tell the truth and how

her imagination really helped her get through her parents death because it was too much for her to deal with, at the end this story reflects how important is too try to find happiness even if is in our own imagination to just save us from

a bad reality, sometimes all we really have is our memories and imagination to be able to cope with the things we really don't want to admit to ourselves.

"AT SOME POINT THE FACT THAT SHE IMAGINED HER PARENTS EVEN THOUGH THEY WEREN'T TRULY THERE WITH HER IT HELPED HER COPE WITH HER PAIN"

FACE-TO-FACELESS

CREATED BY MALORY

"They escaped," said the security man watching the cameras. The whole foster house was concerned but not surprised of the escape of the Stilinski siblings. They knew that hiding Malia's history from her would have consequences because they didn't know if her amnesia was permanent or temporary. They didn't know why both kids didn't know each other when they met in foster care but surely those social workers knew they would find out later and they did.

7:54 AM marked the watch that Mitch stole from the home's main office. They still were in that public bus hoping to be as far as they could from that big brown building where they used to live. "How did you end up in that place, Mitch?" Malia asked. Mitch remembered the situation from years ago.

"Do not bring that thing you call daughter to my house" I heard my

mom scream on the phone. Who is she talking to? I went closer to her. "Mom, I'm hungry. I haven't eaten since last night," I said as I stopped in front of her with an empty plate, waiting for her to feed me. She looked at me as if I was the little plant of a science experiment that no one wants to deal with but has to keep alive to pass the class. That woman grabbed my arms and took me to the kitchen. "Here, don't bother me again,

okay?" she said straight in my face as she put the gallon of milk and the cereal box in front of me and left the room.

On a sunday night, dad was making dinner. I was sitting on the island in the kitchen drawing while he

cooked for us before leaving. "Here you go, son." He handed me the plate with my tasty dinner. "Dad, why don't you come back and live with us?" I was curious as to the reason he had left the house suddenly. "I can't." He looked at my mom who was upset for no reason. "There is something I have to take care



of, as soon as I can we will be back together," he explained. "Time to go, see you next Sunday. " Those were my father's words after he kissed my head and left.

The next Sunday came as slow as a snail. Mom told me that dad would come pick me up so I got ready. Four hours passed and my dad didn't show up. Did something happen to him? I went to ask my mom. When I opened her room's door I found her crying and as soon as she noticed me she stopped. Her eyes were filled with tears and anger. "It's your fault," she said and I was confused so I came closer to her "Mom, what's wro..." I couldn't complete the question because she started throwing things to me and at that moment I knew that that woman right there wasn't my mom anymore. I ran to my neighbor's house where the lovely lady living there let me get in. The lady explained that my dad died that Sunday in a car accident on his way to pick me up and that's why mom was blaming me.

"And that's how I ended up in the group home." said Mitch while looking at Malia eating the last piece of a cookie.

"So, our dad's name is Christopher Stilinski" she affirmed with her mouth full. "That's right. By the way, how did you end up in the group home?" Mitch asked, waiting for a story similar to his. But instead Malia said "I don't know, Mitch. That's what we have to find out." How did Malia end up in the group

home? Are they really siblings? How did they find out? Is her amnesia permanent?

"THOSE WERE MY FATHER'S WORDS AFTER HE KISSED MY HEAD AND LEFT."

“The worst mistake of your life”
Being a teenager with only 15 years she had her first child, her name is Emma, she is a girl who did not have the support of her family. there was a time when she was unwell because she had no support from anyone other

“BEING A TEENAGER WITH ONLY 15 YEARS SHE HAD HER FIRST CHILD, HER NAME IS EMMA, SHE IS A GIRL WHO DID NOT HAVE THE SUPPORT OF HER FAMILY.”

than her mother and she got pregnant but her mother didn't know and emma didn't want to say at that time that she was pregnant because her mother felt bad and being able to tell emma to his mother what was happening could feel worse knowing that his mother was wrong. there was a less expected moment for emma they told her that her illness was a disease that had no cure because her illness was cancer and when the doctors told emma that her mom had cancer she got depressed that she didn't want to know anything

and just left crying for her mother but there was a time when emma told her mother mom i'm pregnant and her mother the first thing emma told her was one of your biggest mistakes being able to get pregnant and emma told her mom that's just me i didn't even expect

she was pregnant and her mom told her, you know I'm very sick, daughter, the only thing I ask of you is that you be able to get ahead since you know you won't. You won't have any support from your father and now you're going to have even less. Because when your father finds out that you're pregnant he won't believe it. Emma said mom i'll try to talk to my father and Emma's

mom said try to talk to him but first of all let me talk to him. Emma's mom called her dad and told him and her dad said he couldn't believe that and he didn't accept it and Emma's mom She said she's going to talk to you. and that day came when Emma went to her father's house and talked to him and told him dad i want to talk to you can you give me a little of your time so i can talk to you. and he said of course tell me what you need to talk to me and emma told him dad i don't want you to feel bad and don't accept what i want to tell you and

his father replied and told him tell me she spoke dad i felt bad a month ago and I had to go to the hospital and they did a lot of tests and it came out that I was pregnant and that was something surprising for me because it was something unexpected. and the father replied that he could not believe that this was true and she showed him the proof and the father began to argue with him and tell him not to expect any help from him at all, if she wanted she should try to get out on her own to be able to raise your child. and she told him that the only help she could have was him but he did not accept that and Emma told him about her mother what was happening that she had cancer and he replied that

the only solution she had for her to be able to get ahead was to be able to work and keep herself. and she told him, dad, it's fine. Anyway, I thank you for what you did for me before I got pregnant. and he said well daughter I hope you do well in your new stage of being able to be a mother. and Emma replied thank you dad.



CREATED BY MELANY O.

My parents have always talked to me about the future of our kingdom. In those conversations I didn't usually pay attention since I always had this ignorant idea that my parents could last forever. Until that evening coming home from my classes. Our castle had this eerie atmosphere.

Just by looking at it from outside I could feel the vibes it was giving, just like when you see a haunted house. I didn't have anything in mind when I entered through since I was very tired and the only thing I could think

about was my bed. As I was walking through the big front door of the castle, I felt a weird liquid while holding the doorknob but I couldn't move my head to see what it was because a bizarre feeling of electricity caught me off guard.

I started hearing and seeing these voices saying "We are so sorry my

dear." My parents lamented. "Please kill them son. You know I have always talked about it since this kingdom was founded. Now is the time", my father demanded.

"Just keep moving forward, you are not ready yet. Treat yourself first. Love you", mom sadly said.

Everything happened so fast. I don't know how much time I was lost in thought holding the door. I let go and saw it was blood. I anxiously wanted it to be mine but tragically it

wasn't. I hopelessly dropped my bag and harshly went running inside the castle. I saw a group of soldiers dead on the floor, but one was luckily alive.

"Sir Amara please, are you ok?" he desperately said while trying his best to get up even though he was injured.

I quickly ran to him to help him. "What happened here? Where are my

parents? What about the servants? Where is the doctor? We need to find them! I'll go find them right now!" I impatiently said, but as I was getting up to do that, everything turned black.

I woke up with dizziness while getting up from the bed. I took a moment to see my surroundings. To see if I was kidnapped or something. I was in the doctor's room. I was safe but not internally. "Amara!!"

Julian and Juliette worryingly screamed. "No screaming in the palace" the soldier formally said. "We're so sorry sir", Julian and Juliette said, embarrassed. "We are sorry for your parents, Amara" they sadly said while hugging me. "Just know we are still here for you, not because you are now the king, but as your friends and family".

After a long day of medical exams, I finally got to be in my own bed. But I couldn't sleep. I was still so infuriated and baffled. Why were my parents assassinated? They hadn't done anything wrong. Why did they leave me this big responsibility to be in my father's shoes and my mom's crown? Finally soldiers came and told me it was the Kingdom

of Fire, the neighboring rival, who killed my parents. I got up and decided to

disguise myself as a soldier from the Fire kingdom. I planned to sneak into the castle, and kill them. I got lucky in stealing a soldier's uniform. I entered the castle and tried to follow the King and Queen as much as possible and find the right moment to kill them. I stealthily accompanied them to their bedroom. I opened the door, while carefully thinking how

I was going to kill them. But as I opened the door I saw a little girl.

"Daddy! Mommy! Come here to play!" the little innocent girl said cheerfully.

Both kings went to hug her daughter while also grabbing some of her toys.

"You can retreat now" the king said to me.

I closed the door. I got out of the castle and threw the uniform into the trash.

"WHY WERE MY PARENTS ASSASSINATED? THEY HADN'T DONE ANYTHING WRONG."



CREATED BY MELANY P.

TODAY
“TODAY IS A
GIFT, TODAY
IS A NEW DAY,
TODAY MEANS
BEING ALIVE,
TODAY IS A NEW
OPPORTUNITY
FOR YOU.”

DREAMS

Dreams that we have since we were children.

Of those who change until they are older and last until we die.

Those that are normally very difficult for us to reach.

Those which one day we fantasize about fulfilling.

Dreams which the people who come to fulfill them are not lucky, if not persevering.

I AM FROM

I am from my mom and my dad who always pushed me when I couldn't more. I am from my cousin who has part of my heart because she stayed with me at my worst.

I am from my little Ecuador where I was born and lived for a time.

I am from Madrid where I learned and discovered new things, where I became in love with the people and culture, where a small part of me remained when I moved here.

I am from everything I eat, especially the pizza that is eaten on a Friday night with the family.

I am from of the most repeated phrase in my life “the best inheritance your parents can give you is study.” or “studying is the most important thing if you want to have a good job or a good future.”

I am from every experience that I lived and learned.

SELF-LOVE

Self love is what is taken care of day by day.

self-love is loving, respecting and loving yourself as you are.

Self love is somewhat underrated.

Self love is what everyone should have.



MADRID

Madrid, a small part of me.

Madrid, a place where I learned to know. Madrid is where all my memories and dreams remained.

Madrid is where I can always return and find all those I had in my mind.

It is a place that will always have a place in a part of my heart.

FOSTER CARE

A place where children can find a refuge. However, a place very feared by children as well.

A place where one part of your life ends but another begins.

Where you only find fear but if you look closely you can also find hope.

A place full of questions and so few answers.

Where your life can change from one day to the next without having been your fault.

A place where the way you see life changes.

CREATED BY SERIGNE

In the winter it was so cold that day I saw snow. It was really exciting. I was in my house sitting on the couch facing the window and facetime with my true love. I remember that day when my parents told me I had to move to another state because they wanted to separate me from my true love. It was horrible. I didn't know what to do, they didn't even care if I wanted to go or not, they didn't even ask. I had no choice. All they said is this coming week you are moving out of this state.

And I said, "Why mama?
Why papa?"

"It's a secret," they said.

"What?" I said. "You should tell me. I have the right to know." I was so confused. As soon as I walked up to my room I saw my follower. It was my mother and she saw that I have tattoos on the side of my body. She was mad and disappointed. I thought that she would be ok with my tattoos. Now she knows. A week later I was in my true love's room. We were alone having sex or whatever and I kinda saw something like a tattoos on her body. It was exactly the

same as mine- a toy I used to play with as a child. And I turned around and saw my dad's picture hiding between the closet and the wall. I could barely see it. I asked her about it and she told me a story.

The story sounded familiar. "I remember growing up, about 5 years old, there was a toy I always played with and shared with a girl. We promised to each other to stick together and even get tattoos of that toy when we got old enough. After a year she was gone and when I was old enough I never asked my parents about it.

Family? Family is the most important thing to have in the world. Nowadays I know what family really means, family means love, trust, someone who is always beside you present whether it is something bad or good. Now I have realized the truth my mom was saying to me. My true love was my sister from another mother. We have the same dad!. I can't trust anyone, My life is f**cked!, I was sleeping with my sister. Now I don't know what to do.

"...THEY WANTED
TO SEPARATE ME
FROM MY TRUE
LOVE"



A 16-year-old teenager named Suri fell in love with a 22-year-old man named Luis and they began dating. She lived with her mother named Pilar Luis was a man who smokes and despite being a thief and having killed people, and has a wife with 2 small children. Suri knows that but she doesn't care because she is so in love with her.

Once the neighbor told Suri's mother that her daughter was Luis's girlfriend, the very confused mother replied to the neighbor But Suri knows that this boy is in bad steps and despite that he has a wife and children, thanks I'll talk to her Suri came to her house she tells her mother "Mom I'm already home". The mother replies Suri sit down I need to talk to you. Suri replies she's fine.

The mother tells Suri what the neighbor told her and tells Suri I want the truth that three neighbors have already told me but I didn't believe it



now if I just want you as my daughter to tell me what's going on, because they are talking about you. Suri replies, mother, what the neighbor told you is true, I'm with Luis, I'm in love with him, I'm sorry The mother replies that you cannot be with him, he has children and he is with

the mother of his children and you know it very well and in spite of that you know that he is not on the right path and they want to kill him, I do not want you to be with him anymore boy if they tell me again that you are still with him we will leave Colombia I only want the best for you so that you continue studying stop wasting time with that boy

who is not going to lead you to anything good. Suri replied mother I swear I'm not going to be with him anymore, I just ask you to let me talk to him to tell him everything. The mother replied that it is fine.

The next day Suri went to talk to Luis, her mother told him she already

knew about them and she doesn't want me to continue with you, we'd better leave this here. Luis answers but Suri I love you and I can't live without you. Give me another chance? we will not spend much time together we will be more discreet so that people do not notice and they do not say anything to your mother only you and I will know but please do not finish Suri replied we will not finish because I really love you and I want to be with you, Luis replied thank you Suri I love you.

Suri came to his house and told his mother that I had finished with Luis. I told her that you already knew and that you didn't want me to be with him. The mother replied that it's fine, I'm glad and I don't want them to tell me the same thing again, I really hope you're no longer with that boy. Suri tells him really mommy I'm not his thing anymore. The mother replied "I hope so".

One day Suri ran away from his house with Luis. The mother was looking for her everywhere and could not find her, she went to knock at Luis's house but no one came out "the mother was very worried about her daughter, she did not know what to do" a neighbor came

and told her that Luis had been killed and that someone was with him and that person ran away when he heard the shots.

The mother did not know what to do when she heard what the neighbor said, she began to scream crying because she knew that the person Luis was with was her daughter Suri the mother crying looking for her daughter everywhere she could not find her, until she saw that suri came running full of

blood screaming "Mama, Mama, they killed him, they killed him"

Suri goes to the mother and tells her that she was in front of a store with Luis and that a man dressed in black arrived on a motorcycle and that he shot Luis

when he heard the first shot, he ran to the store and then they heard more after four shots, I went to see and only saw that Luis was lying bleeding I ran to him and he was still alive he told me I LOVE YOU and died, I started to cry and yell at him that he left me alone I kissed him I hugged him when I saw my hands were full of blood and my clothes I also told him I will never leave you in love I promise.

"...HE IS NOT ON THE RIGHT PATH AND THEY WANT TO KILL HIM..."

UNTOLD EPISODE OF LIFE

CREATED BY THANWER

"I can't believe that you can accuse your stepbrother who is like your own brother for sexual assault". You should be ashamed, Baba's scream is breaking the wall of Mary's reliance and reassurance. "And you are accusing your stepmother of being impudent to you, she has the right to have a harsh voice on you". Mary's life turns around at this time when she fails to convince her father. She feels the thunderstorm is just a foot above her head. Mary lives in a small family with Baba, stepbrother (Baia), stepmother.

Mary has been sexually assaulted by her stepbrother. She failed to prove Baba that the people he believes are just disguised with nice people's masks in front of him. Mary is exhausted from being assaulted and mistreated by her own family who she lives with. The weekend morning she wakes up with an unknown power, a mysterious faith. She

is murmuring to herself, "no more.. I can't endure this anymore. I have the power.. I have to defend myself." She got up and quietly walked into Baba's room. After a few moments, the house blasted with Baba's Growling with anger and yelling

at Mary because she accused her stepmother of being harsh to her and the brother's ravishment.

The stepmother has decided to teach Mary a lesson for exposing them to Baba. Although Baba did not accept Mary's accusation as true, the

stepmother and the brother are strict and decided to mix toxic in Mary's food. The day Baba went outside of the state for business purposes. Mary was very afraid of her stepmother and the stepbrother to start the torture that they've stopped for the duration Baba was at home. But in the morning the stepmother's different behavior proved

"I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT YOU CAN ACCUSE YOUR STEPBROTHER WHO IS LIKE YOUR OWN BROTHER FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT."

Mary wrong. Even the stepbrother was being very nice to Mary. She could not believe that she lived with these people before. Mary was so astounded seeing the suspicious behavior and caring of the mother. She sat down with the stepbrother and mother imagining inside. "how a family I would have if these people were always nice to me like they are today!!!".

Mary felt choking. Her entire body started turning yellow. The breath is not coming out. Mary starts rubbing her neck but she is incapable of standing. Mary's world and the surface started spinning like a tsunami.

The next thing Mary could notice was the siren of the ambulance. Baba is rushing to get a stretcher. Yelling for help, Trying to get the attention of the nurses and the doctors. The father is sobbing sitting in the waiting room for his only one daughter and yearning he would not let this happen to her anymore. And

the stepmother and stepbrother are just pretending to be sad. This was the last stage of abuse.

Baba ran to the doctor when he came out of the operation theater, "Doctor, how is my baby... how is my Mary..." he asked repeatedly. "There is nothing to worry about, she just needs

some rest and relaxation," the doctor replied. Baba can't wait to see Mary, he keeps walking in front of the door and having a peek every moment he passes the door where Mary is at to see if she opens her eyes. Baba

walked into the room softly. He is very impatient to hear his girl's voice. His eyes are glazing like a marble full of tears and his chest is bursting with immense amounts of grief. Mary is muttering, "Baba I wasn't lying.. Baba, I wasn't lying".



CREATED BY WILFRED

Chasing them around the house with a knife was already a habit of mine when somehow I wanted to express how irritated I was. For some reason my siblings annoyed me by calling me nicknames I didn't like. They always made me feel like I was the unwanted child calling me "Adoptado" like I was someone else's son in my neighborhood.

act like a "real man" that doesn't care about emotional feelings. They did not believe that words actually hurt more than actions but someday a reaction is very likely to happen. I've been shown very well how to use my hands to defend myself and to demand respect. I get angry not just because it's part of my personality but I believe that I inherited

from my mother and she did from her father and it goes on and on. Whenever I wasn't treated respectfully I got really mad because I wasn't getting what I deserve as a human.

Once me and my older brother were sitting on the couch and he suddenly stood up and then threw himself on

top of me. Of course I didn't just stay there because he intentionally hurt me. I got into a fight with him. I was pulling out his hair and he was telling me to let him go but I was refusing. He was also

pulling out my hair and I didn't want to be defeated because I didn't want to show vulnerability. But he was too strong and taller than me. In some way this fight had to come to an end where one or the other would not tell the story. So I decided to stop and move away because I was hurt the most.

I always had to stand for myself because my family thought that I was always the one causing problems without asking. I thought that no one around me cared about me and Everytime that these issues happened that actually happened very frequently I got into my bed and cried myself to sleep. But before I got to sleep I had many thoughts in

my head like ending my life because if I didn't exist, problems would be gone. Hitting myself against the wall or getting lost in the woods to never see their faces again were many of those thoughts that I had very often, mostly when I heard people saying how disappointing I was. After all, I was a troublemaker and the "dumbest child" with the worst grades out of my siblings and my other cousins. I had to control my anger for my own good without even finding solutions to other older siblings' bad behavior when my parents were not at home.

Spending more time with people that didn't know my problems was a way to escape from the situations I experienced and couldn't forget. Sadly I still had to live with the people who would always judge me wherever I went. I got to a point where being

alone, choosing the people that I wanted to be surrounded by and talking to myself sometimes were the best ways to not be lonely. This way I could be away from people that make me feel that I was messed up in life. While growing up and getting older I understood that sometimes having problems is not the worst thing that could happen because my

mother once told me "cada problema tiene su solución" and everytime I am in problems or I feel "messed up" that phrase is stick to my mind that someday there would be a way out.

"CHASING THEM AROUND THE HOUSE WITH A KNIFE WAS ALREADY A HABIT OF MINE..."



Little actions were slowly getting worse and worse. As a child not knowing how to handle it, I always ended up crying. They treated me with mean jokes, expecting that someday I would

VOID

CREATED BY ZABDY

“One foot in front of the other, not looking up at the back of a woman wearing a dark as night suit, the cold had been with me for a few hours, the wind outside was hitting my skin, but it was my insides that were frozen, I turned to see Dylan who grimaced at me for seeing the cowardice in me, I could tell how small I was, that I didn’t have the answers or know the ways, the silence ceased for a few seconds when my mother stopped in the middle of the sidewalk, the shame I felt and the terror of what I had caused prevented me from straightening my body, I held back the tears I had held back for a while I couldn’t cry after being responsible for the accident that caused our father’s death, “I hope this is behind us” was the only thing our mother said on that dark and cold night. I was surprised when a hand patted my shoulder and brought me back to reality “Remembering that night again?” Dylan asked with a mischievous look, I got out of bed and

“CAN YOU SEE
WHAT WE CAUSED
TOGETHER...”

headed towards the small living room of our house, my mother was there sitting on a small couch in a corner covering her arms with the scars caused by said accident from approximately more than two years ago, I decided to ignore her and get out of there immediately, “Can you see what we caused together Deylen?” said Dylan with a mischievous expression, a disturbance that arose inside me was too powerful to contain it, but by dint of tenacity I managed it.

“We should make her disappear” he spoke again and I immediately had the same thought as him but I dismissed each scene as quickly as they had invaded me, you know what happened it was an impulse of rage was all I said to him, “stop kidding yourself she hasn’t stopped ignoring us since our father died”, “you know she only ignores you” I told him angrily after he tried to blackmail me, fury shone in his eyes and

you could see how he wanted to scream endless swear words, but none came out of his lips which he kept tight.

Dylan and I were in our room our laughter could be heard throughout the house, I heard a pair of high heels coming quickly towards us, mom stood in front of the door and started banging on it demanding that I open the door and I did immediately she looked at me from head to toe and looked at me as someone she considered inferior, “what do you think you’re doing? “ I didn’t answer for fear she would say something I didn’t want to hear and that seemed to upset her even more so she started screaming, word by word my insides were cracking a little more, history was repeating itself again like 2 years ago like a copy of the same script, it wasn’t the first time similar reproaches were thrown at me and it hurt me even more that mom did it, I ran out of the room straight to the living room next to

Dylan not caring about leaving mom behind, I screamed all over the place remembering again what it was like to laugh a long time ago.

We took some candles and threw them on the white curtains that were all over the place and as if they were gasoline



they started to catch fire quickly, I took Dylan by the hand and we ran in a hurry from there I couldn’t see mom leave, I turned to see Dylan who was smiling as he watched our house burn non-stop but after blinking he was no longer by my side then I remembered the night of that accident over 2 years ago how my father and brother had lost their lives together.

FORGETTING MY PERSON

CREATED BY ZAMA

The day everything changed when my innocence was taken. The day I stopped dreaming, I understood that my father's reputation is more important than my wishes and my mother's desires. The same day when I realized that my destiny was held and guided by the arrogance and the traditionalism of my father.

I am from a traditional father, a modern mother,

I am from a small village located in West Africa,

I am from enjoying candy made of sugar and coconut, playing with my friend in the school playgrounds,

I am from a community that values marriage, where young girls are given to their fathers' friends

I am from a suicide temptation, trying

to escape my situation, lack of agency, Blink,

Forced to drop out from school, letting my dreams behind, my dream to be one day a doctor, Blink,

Stopping dreaming, learning how to become a housewife,

Keep thinking,

Keep thinking,

Keep thinking

About how, how, to be liberated from this tragic situation.

Coming from vacation she was greeted by the announcement of her marriage. Alia had gone to spend her vacation in her aunt's house in the City. Her father called her up and said: "Alia it's time for you to have your own family, you are old enough to still live with your parents. I talked to my friends



and he accepted to marry you as his third wife. You have the adequate age of our community to become a wife."

"Are you serious daddy?" replied Alia. She continued by saying, "I still going to school, what about my dreams? , what about mom opinion?. I do not even know what it means to be a wife, to be married."

Her father just replied by saying, "I do not care about What you have to say. All, I know is that I want you to be married and respect the culture of our village. Why are you going to school? Dreams, dreams what are you talking about, girl did not need to be educated. Overall, it would not help you to take care of your family. The girl just needs to know how to cook, do house chores and take care of her child that's it."

"You can not be serious, I should have the right to rule my own life not you," replied Alia.

"Stop! I told you to stop! you will not dishonor me! I am respected by everyone in this village, so my reputation is more important than your desires", said Alia's dad.

In tears and desperation, she replied, " But..but..but how can you even say that to your own daughter, Why did you register me at school for?"

"I did it because of your mother, he acknowledged. Fanta, do you see now how your daughter becomes rude because of her bad frequentation at school? My final decision is that you will get married to my friend Ibrahim."

My head, spirit was desperate that I stopped fighting for my agency and finally agreed in tears to enter this unknown lifestyle. From the day I decided to honor my father to the detriment of my well-being. My life has been full of sadness. Regret, everything was about to regret, difficult to go back, everyone was in tears. when she decided to kill herself in order to escape from this miserable situation.

"I AM FROM A SUICIDE TEMPTATION, TRYING TO ESCAPE MY SITUATION..."

FORGIVENESS

CREATED BY ZENAB

I cried my eyes out, thinking that it may solve the problem but it just feels like I got a little bit of relief. I called the one only one I can comfy myself to and believe she can help me make good decisions. She came home because I got her worried. Knock... knock..., I hugged her crying. "What is wrong bestie?! tell me, every problem has a solution," Aisha said. "I think the only solution for this situation is to die," I responded. "Stop saying that, Nachi!" Aicha said. "What should I do Aicha? I can't take care of a baby and myself at this age. Having this child will remind me of their miserable act. I will abort, these people ruined my life, they made me a criminal. No no no no no noooooo Aisha," I screamed. "Calm down, stop saying this," Aicha said. "You don't know what the future

"HAVING THIS CHILD WILL REMIND ME OF THEIR MISERABLE ACT. I WILL ABORT, THESE PEOPLE RUINED MY LIFE, THEY MADE ME A CRIMINAL."

might be. Try to get it off your mind. I know it's hard but try to forgive them and have this child," Aisha advised.

I was close to Aicha's mom and she could understand me more. My own parents had not supported me and were furious when they heard the news. They made a hasty decision without thinking and were conforming to society because in their culture when a girl is pregnant out of wedlock they kick her out the house even though she was raped. Aisha and her family took care of me until I gave birth. After I gave birth, Aisha's mom went again to plead with my family to forgive me and

let me come back.

After my best friend's advice I decided to keep the child. I am now 23 and my friend got engaged. At the meeting when I walked in he was sitting

talking to Aisha. I entered and said Asalam Aleykoun, he raised his head and our four eyes fixated on each other for a long moment. That monster face looked at me. He put his head down. I started panicking. "Shut up, get down... His hand squeezing my neck" All these words and actions replaying in my head, from that horrible night so many years ago. My heart was beating faster. My stomach started being pulled in many different directions. I couldn't control my reaction in his presence, so I went to the bathroom to breathe. I felt cold and was trembling. I was thinking if I should forgive him because I didn't want to break my friend's heart. "Should I forgive him? What if he does the same thing to others?" I said to myself. He came to me because there was no way for him and me to avoid each other, so he came to me to seek forgiveness. Knock knock, surprisingly it's him. "What do you want, leave me alone!" I screamed.

"I am sorry Nachi but please hear me out," He said. I let him in and we talked. He made me understand that he really regretted what they did to me. He has repented to God but he still needs me to forgive him. Suddenly, Aisha walked in and started screaming at him. "You're a monster, a pervers, you destroy my friend's life" Aicha screamed.

"I am sorry, please forgive me" He regretfully said. "Sorry for yourself, and don't you ever dare approach us" Aicha yelled.


I believe that people can change. To err is human, to forgive is divine. After listening to him I was sure that he has changed so I decided to forgive him but Aisha broke up with him.






A JOURNEY ACROSS A SCARY ROAD

CLASS 0



Carolyn	64	Lidelis	88
Claribelisa	66	Makale	90
Derixander	68	Manuel	92
Deryl	70	Mel	94
Erick	72	Melanie	96
Gustavo	74	Michael	98
Hisham	76	Nayelin	100
Jairo	78	Pamela	102
Juan	80	Randy	104
Lady	82	Yancreilin	106
Leilany	84	Yenny	108
Lerins	86	Yovangely	110



FRUSTRATED DREAMS

CREATED BY CAROLYN

Jade was a 17 year old girl, whose passion was inventing stories and drawing. She had already finished her studies, so she no longer had anything else to do. Jade spent all day locked in her room, her parents thought she had no social life. Jade had 2 older sisters, Paula and Natalie. They both were typical shallow rich teens, they did nothing but humiliate Jade and make fun of her stories. But one night something unexpected happened. It was 3 in the morning, Jade got up to go to the kitchen for a glass of water when suddenly she saw all the stories she had written shattered around the dining room all over the kitchen. She went to her room furious and full of anger. The next day she ran to her room with her sisters. "Why did you do it?!" Jade demanded from her sister Paula, throwing a pillow at her.



"What are you talking about? I didn't do anything," said Paula. "I'm proud of the one who did it. They were just papers with letters, besides, they were useless," Natalie told her. Then she left her house

furious and stayed for several hours crying. She felt that her whole being had been broken into pieces and that there was nothing left.

The next day she woke up, leaving her room she realized that she was alone

in her house. She searched the whole house, walking around without finding anyone, that's when she decided to leave her house and got a big surprise. She realized that nothing was the same as there was no road before, everything was inside a forest as if she had gotten into one of her vague stories for several hours without finding a sign of life. When she was going back home she realized

that she had already passed through the same place several times. Desperately, she leaned on the thick trunk of a tree waiting to see something or someone that would take her back to her home. She waited for a short time, then she was led to the decision to wander around that place, already exhausted. Night was falling, it was a full moon, when suddenly something caught her attention. It was like a kind of music box that had a piece of paper on it. The strange thing was that the music box did not transmit any sound. It suddenly fell to the floor, then she heard a voice that constantly pronounced her name. When she woke up she was in front of her house and on the legs of her mother who had found her passed out at the entrance of her house.

She did not know how this had happened since the last thing she remembered was the music box. She ran away scared to his room after calming down and explained everything to his parents but they didn't believe her. They thought that she had had a dream or that she had seen that because of the fainting, so that's when she called her

2 best friends Christopher and Sofia. Christopher, Sofia and Jade were outside their house waiting for something to happen. Just as they were about to fall asleep Sofia heard something that caught her attention. It was a strange sound like a sweet and terrifying melody. when suddenly she realized that the house was no longer there and they were under a big tree, shocked. All three were very scared, they decided to hit the

road. It was a beautiful forest, its trees were big. The whole floor was covered by leaves and grass, the moonlight illuminated the path, no one knew where to go. Then they saw what changed their lives forever. It was a kind of valley. That place smelled rotten; millions of bodies thrown on the bloody grass; full of entrails and bones. In the distance you could see some people

walking, everyone was shocked until they saw the person do something weird and everyone got scared. This was just like the story she has written called The Magic Forest...

"SHE FELT THAT HER WHOLE BEING HAD BEEN BROKEN INTO PIECES AND THAT THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT."

THE PREGNANT GIRL

CREATED BY CLARIBELISA

“No one knows the outcome, so the only thing left for us is to make a decision that we won’t regret”. A girl went out secretly with her boyfriend without the permission of her parents. She stayed with her boyfriend without her parents finding out and that caused her to get pregnant at an early age. Days and weeks passed and she did not get her period, so she suspected that something was wrong. She call her friend dalia and tell her to accompany her to the pharmacy so that she could buy a pregnancy test. She took the test and it came out positive for which she scared. “No this can’t be true” she yelled and started to cry. Her friend Dalia told her no way she has to tell her boyfriend and her parents. And she said “no no no I won’t tell them”.

Why they won't go to me support and she had to silence her friend Dalia so that she would not tell anyone much less her family. And her friend Dalia

said that it is okay that she will not tell anyone. But what her friend Dalia did was tell the parents of the girl. The girl's parents asked her if it was true that she was pregnant and she was silent for a moment. Then she said “yes” I am pregnant then her parents got upset. They did not speak to her for a week but at the last they had no other options

“SHE STAYED WITH HER BOYFRIEND WITHOUT HER PARENTS FINDING OUT...”

but to accept the pregnancy of their daughter. However the girl's boyfriend did not want to support her pregnancy!! because he hadn't planned to be a father at an early age. So Dalia said “ahhh he hadn't planned to be a father at an early age but only to have sex with you and she just started crying saying”

“I was wrong when I looked at that crazy man but No way, I'm going to take care of my baby”. Days later, the girl's parents went to the boy's house to talk to his parents about the pregnancy and see if he would take responsibility for their daughter's pregnancy or not. And the girl's parents said “if the boy is not going

to take responsibility for our daughter and her baby”, we don't want him to go back to look for our daughter, much less their baby,” and the boy's parents remained silent as if the cat got their tongues. The boy couldn't stop feeling love for the girl and said. “I love her like never before and I have thought about it well and I will take care of my future wife and my baby who is on the way.”

Then the girl runs to him and hugs him saying “thank you for not leaving me because I really love you” said the girl and the two hugged each other saying “I LOVE YOU MY DEAR.” Their parents say it's fine for girls to have boyfriends but it's not ok that they are having sex with their boyfriends because sometimes some men only want to have sex with women. Parents, take care of your daughters, listen to your daughters

or sons when they need something because sometimes children need the advice of parents. Young people talk to your parents when you need the advice of your parents.



IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO CHASE A DREAM!

CREATED BY DERIXANDER

The day starts off like every other day, nothing changes. I'm 25 and I have gone nowhere in life. What if's always going through my mind especially when I'm on my way to work. Would my life be any different? Will it be a great life or will I have the worst life ever? I'm so scared of messing my life up that I didn't do anything to actually be successful and doing that I feel as if I already messed it up. Well that's the end of my thinking. I have to go to work and I'm already late. I work in an ice cream shop where kids always go after school and it gets so loud I honestly hate that so much. I hate my job. My name tag doesn't even have my name on it, It says Liam. My name is William I mean I guess they got some letters but I'm too lazy to tell them that I would like to change the name on my name tag. I hate my life so much I wish I could just change everything about it. "Will, Oh my god you're late you are never late do you have a fever today? Did you get hurt? Oh my god did Luna break up with you? Why are you so late? Don't answer that wait. I actually really want to know so bad so just tell me Will tell me" Daya is a bit crazy. Sometimes I hate how hyper she can be, it's literally 8 in the morning. "Daya stopped asking so many questions if there was just a bit of traffic, nothing too serious". Sometimes I feel like she thinks my life is the best of the best and I really don't

understand where she gets that. "Oh well how's you and Luna doing". Little does daya know luna does not exist. I just told her I had a girlfriend so she can leave me alone but clearly that didn't work. She literally always wants to talk about her and my "love life" that doesn't even actually exist. I have nothing and making it seem like I am living in a fake fantasy that someone believes in makes it all true to me. I have so much regret for being scared and now that I'm at this point in my life I believe it is just far too late for me. Maybe I should just do something different. If it was too late I wouldn't be thinking about a fantasy that doesn't exist. I would make it happen. If I wanted that ad I would do it. Tell daya " shut up, let me think' i think for a second and i have an amazing idea. I quit on the spot. " Today is my lucky day" " I QUIT, it's time I live my life the way I should and you should too come join me and let's try to make something of our lives together". She thinks for a minute, says " yes, I'm tired of being disappointed, it's time we reach for the stars" and that's the start of our adventures together. It was a hard journey for us to accomplish all that we wanted but it takes time. You have to work for what you want. I, Willam, am proud to say that I'm 35 and my life might not be exactly how I wanted but I'm happy with my own ice cream shop, my own business with my partner and wife Daya. We did it and there's so much more that we

can do and will do. The day starts off like every other day, nothing changes. I'm 25 and I have gone nowhere in life. What if's always going through my mind especially when I'm on my way to work. Would my life be any different? Will it be a great life or will I have the worst life ever? I'm so scared of messing my life up that I didn't do anything to actually be successful and doing that I feel as if I already messed it up. Well that's the end of my thinking. I have to go to work and I'm already late. I work in an ice cream shop where kids always go after school and it gets so loud I honestly hate that so much. I hate my job. My name tag doesn't even have my name on it, It says Liam. My name is William I mean I guess they got some letters but I'm too lazy to tell them that I would like to change the name on my name tag. I hate my life so much I wish I could just change everything about it. "Will, Oh my god you're late you are never late do you have a fever today? Did you get hurt? Oh my god did Luna break up with you? Why are you so late? Don't answer that wait. I actually really want to know so bad so just tell me Will tell me" Daya is a bit crazy. Sometimes I hate how hyper she can be, it's literally 8 in the morning. "Daya stopped asking so many questions if there was just a bit of traffic, nothing too serious". Sometimes I feel like she thinks my life is the best of the best and I really don't understand where she gets that. "Oh well

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"I'M SO SCARED OF MESSING MY LIFE..."

DOUBLE SIDE OF HIDDEN REASONS

CREATED BY DERYL

“Please stop!” I was exasperated by the blows I was receiving. I had no chance of convincing him to let me go. I fled to a damp spot under the old wooden stairs. I could hear the news that clearly said “Hall Orphanage is the #1 school, providing top role models for new founders of Orph...” Hall? You meant to say ‘hell’. I have been oppressed here because I am visually impaired. I’m Rubi. Everyone here makes me look fragile, stupid, and helpless. Being here makes me feel so incomplete that I can’t enjoy what I have. “Did you hear about Keily? She is trying to flirt with the principal. Eww!” said someone in the back of this silent room “I hate her. She always wants attention.” I turned to see Keily. She was on the verge of tears and scared. I approached her. “Help me. He will kill



me. Mr. Jase is a bad person. Don’t trust him or he will do something bad to you” Keily whispered crying. Weeks passed and Keily disappeared but apparently, I was the only one who noticed the same situation repeated over and over again: scared kids and then missing. Keily’s best friend told me that she stole a phone from the office so we made a plan to end the wickedness of this man. “Rubi, Come here for a second”. Said Mr. Jase, the principal. “Y-Yes” I stammered because I was warned that he was cruel. Phase 1: get his attention. “Rubi,” He said as we walked by. “I realized that most children here dream to have the perfect family, but this desire destinate them to failure because no matter how hard they try, they will never achieve it. Since most cannot change their mindset, they will

fail until they give up”. “What do you mean?”. I said with confusion.

“Do you want to know about Keily?” He told me as if it were a secret and I nodded “I know that although you are blind, you don’t realize many things that others do. I am trying to help. They believe that perfect families exist so they are not grateful. Here you all will learn what the real world is. It is normal for children to believe things like I am a bad person but that’s because you all still don’t know what disappointment is, the feeling of losing not only a loved one but your value, dignity, what you deserve. It’s not the things, it’s the meaning you give to them. In this environment, power is obtained by violence. You are punished for your reactions no matter how hard you try to be assertive. In conclusion...” He stopped because of the sound of something breaking. That is the sign that phase 2: Call the police, is complete. “I sold Keily to a ‘good’ family. She can learn to be realistic. Who expects much, receives little, so don’t think your plan is going to work” Mr. Jase, with his mocking tone, begins to laugh.

“BEING HERE
MAKES ME FEEL SO
INCOMPLETE THAT
I CAN’T ENJOY
WHAT I HAVE.”

I was shocked. Everything would be effective. Now everything is like a Rubik’s cube, trying to fix one side but the other side is exposed to errors. Will he kill me? Like a miracle, somebody knocked on the door and came in without waiting for a response. “Mr. Jase, we want to ask you a few questions about the scandal that you have been exposed to. You can explain yourself in court” said a police officer. Seeing his cowardly attitude I understood that nightmares are not scary without the support of darkness and...

I started to see. To see how vision is nothing compared to feeling. To see how a grief divided is made lighter. To see how the “I should” beat the “I would” And when the leader is the representation of a tree, The change of season comes and it is time for the Tree to be left alone by their leaves.

“Yes,” Mr. Jase whispered, “Let me explain myself”.

MONKEY GIRL

CREATED BY ERICK

Once on a normal day, there was a little girl named Victoria. She liked to play in the trees and so the other children called her Monkey Girl. Victoria was different from the other girls of that time because she did not play with dolls

“SHE LIKED TO PLAY IN THE TREES AND SO THE OTHER CHILDREN CALLED HER MONKEY GIRL.”

or with other girls. She liked spending time in the park and climbing trees. Every time she climbed to the top of the trees, children yelled at her, calling her “Monkey girl !! Monkey girl !!” With tears in her eyes, she quickly came down from the tree, jumped and cut her hands on a branch, and left with tears in her eyes. Victoria went home, where her mother gave her affection and said “Do not listen to what others say, you are special, you are not like the others”,

Victoria replied, “I’m sick of them calling me a monkey girl, mommy!.”

Her mom replied, “Don’t listen to them, you are just different from what they are used to seeing. They are not used to seeing a girl climbing very tall trees.” Victoria replied, “Mommy, I want to be normal, I want to have friends but the people who come up to me call me “monkey girl” and it bothers me.”

Victoria decided to talk to her father and tell him about her problems with the other children.

Her father only said, “If you were a man, you would not cry, you would not be weak”, saying goodbye with the words, “Nothing happened here.”

Victoria, saddened by the response of her father, decided not to go to school, but her mother encouraged her. When she went to school, she found several girls and boys saying and singing to her, “Monkey girl!! Monkey girl!!”. Victoria came out in front of the school. There

was a strong bridge with a nice structure that had been there for a long time; no cars or people passed by, it was abandoned, where Victoria sat down, began to think, and said crying, “I DON’T WANT TO BE A MONKEY GIRL!!”

Victoria went to the same bridge over and over after school to vent. She matured and went to the park and said to the wind, “Here my past began. The bridge is my future. My past is my teacher, the past is dead emotions “. When she was returning home she saw a man putting a sign on a light pole of a new school. The design of the sign was simple and it was not so flashy, it only had a logo of an open book and a phrase that read, “Knowledge is power as long as you’re patient. “ Victoria took it as a sign and decided to enter that school. Flowing new emotions like the current of water under the bridge, having tears in her eyes, she said goodbye to her past and entered a high school where nobody knew her. A very nice person approached her and said to Victoria “Hey, how are you? Why do you have such teary eyes?”

Victoria responded coldly, “Nothing important.”

As the days went by, she changed her attitude and opened up to the people that surrounded her with a sweet smile. It was the first time she had a friend of

hers, thus she closed a stage in her life because no one called her a Monkey Girl anymore. She was getting to know a new person, and Victoria felt a warmth inside her like the love of a mother, writing the stage of her life with new ink.

“IT WAS THE FIRST TIME SHE HAD A FRIEND...”

A SURPRISING CHANGE OF LIFE

CREATED BY GUSTAVO

"Do not live with falsehoods or fears, because you will end up hating yourself".

A boy named Matt had a very active life, he was happy, studious and athletic. He had everything, a family and friends who loved him very much.

He lived in a story full of happiness, but one day all that collapsed. Everything that he appreciated and loved so much vanished with ease, a great lesson in which Matt learned that being different turns everyone

against him. It was a beautiful day and he went to school. Everything was normal, but inside Matt did not feel complete because nobody knew about his secret. He could not bear to hide it for a long time at school. He thought things through and had a very quiet life and with people who loved and supported him, he said that it was time to tell them the truth. Determined, Matt

said to himself "Today, today is the big day when I will tell everyone about who I really am, no longer hiding behind the dark shadows of non-acceptance. I will shout loudly my identity with which I define myself." On Matt's face was a great decisive expression.

At school he approached his friends and told them. Matt "This is very important to me and it's time for me to hide and tell the truth, I'm gay." Some of them looked at him with revulsion and

disgust, walking away from him. Sofia and Emmanuel were the only ones who understood and stayed by his side. They both comforted Matt with words of support. They both hugged Matt for a long time. Sofia said,

"I know this wasn't easy to do. I don't understand how you feel right now either, but I'm your friend and I'll

be there for you no matter what." While Emmanuel said, "Bro. You are my friend and I don't care if you are gay. Just as Sofia said, I will be there through thick and thin. We are all the same after all, we are all human beings."

After a few days those other boys who did not accept Matt spread the gossip quickly. Matt went with his friends through the corridors and everyone stared at him as if he were a strange phenomenon.

When Matt approached those who were supposedly his friends, they walked away from him. Teachers alike distanced themselves from him, treating him in a bad way. At that moment Matt realized that he no longer had the support of anyone, only Sofia and Emmanuel. Matt felt in his own flesh the hypocrisy and injustice of all, what for him was a story of happiness that ended with a disastrous ending. That boy named Matt decided to close his heart, he was no longer that happy boy who was good at everything.

because of the treatment he was given, he became a cold and cruel person. Matt's family never found out about all that had happened and they never got to ask what made Matt change after a few years. Matt was never the same no matter how many times he would move from place to place. Matt realized that there are no good people, he lost all confidence, and was afraid of being rejected again. So he decided to live a life alone.

"DO NOT LIVE WITH FALSEHOODS OR FEARS, BECAUSE YOU WILL END UP HATING YOURSELF."



CREATED BY HISHAM

I am from a boy who lost hope in everything.
I am from everyone who looks at me as a failure.
I am from a person who wakes up every morning to start a new day.
I am from facing my problems, thinking about the future and responsibilities that push me to stay strong.
I am from never give up and determination until my last day.

Alejandro was poor, he lived with his family. His father was a smoker and drinker. Alejandro used to see his father coming late every night very drunk, yelling at his mom and screaming that he wanted to eat. His father never bought or gave his mom any money to buy food. He and his sibling got very scared. One day in the morning Alejandro woke up and saw his father crying. When he asked why he was crying his father told him that he is not a

good father. He told Alejandro to promise him to never be like him. Also he wanted him to be a successful man.

Alejandro wasn't doing well in school but he liked sports. He joined the soccer academy because he loved soccer very much. So his father provided support to him. One day when Alejandro was coming back from his soccer game he found out that his father had a stroke and that he was taken to the hospital. When he arrived at the hospital he saw his mom crying, he was so scared to ask. Before saying anything his mom yelled saying "Your father is gone, your father is dead." Then she threw herself on his shoulder and both started crying. A few months later, Alejandro left school, abandoned his football dream, and went looking for a job to provide rent and food for his family. Alejandro started to look for a job. It wasn't easy for him to get a job. A week later, he found a job in a restaurant. He started working the next day. He made bad friends at his job, he learned from them to smoke and drink and he forgot what he promised his father. After many months, Alejandro felt very sad about his wrong choices. He decided to stop smoking and drinking.

"YOUR FATHER IS GONE, YOUR FATHER IS DEAD."

His friend asked him, "Why did you stop smoking brother?" And Alejandro said, "This is not me, I want to go back to my normal life." They started making fun of him and laughing. Alejandro quit his job, he felt so down. However he never forgot his father's advice: "I want you to be a successful man".

Alejandro returned to the soccer club, he started to work very hard and learned more skills to be a good player. This helped him to join one of the teams of

the country. He became famous. One day he received a call from the manager of the Real Madrid team, it was his best day ever. They wanted him to join them. Real Madrid is one of the best well known teams in the world. He helped his family, he bought a house for his mom. He wanted to give her the best life after all the suffering. He also helped his siblings to continue with their education. He was proud because he fulfilled his promise to his father.



A NORMAL DAY

CREATED BY JAIRO

He opened his eyes and didn't know where he was, he just felt very cold and had a lump in his throat. He was confused about what had happened, but he could only think about his wife. Out of nowhere the sky began to turn dark, the trees began to move from one side to the other strongly. The breeze began to blow stronger and big rain drops began to fall from the sky which touched his face. With one arm broken and bleeding from his head, He started searching all over the place for his wife until he saw his wife on the other side of the street. He went quickly to his wife and drew strength from where he did not have, so he could help her. When he got to her, the first thing he did was check if she had a pulse. Seeing that she was alive the first thing he did was call the ambulance. He tried to wake her up but she didn't answer.

Max and Roxy had wanted to get

home before the storm began. But as much as they tried, it was already too late. Suddenly a trailer pops up and they just can't avoid it. Max braked as fast as he could but it was too late. The car that Max and his wife were driving

collided with the side of the trailer and the car overturned into the abyss. Max hears screams in his head calling out his name from Roxy. After being unconscious for a few minutes, he responded to Roxy and although he tried to figure out where the sound came from, Roxy stopped screaming.

On their way to the hospital she woke up. He spoke to her but she

was confused. After a few minutes she started to recognize her husband Max. When he saw her waking up, his hope came back and the next thing he asked her how she felt. After a few minutes they were separated. The nurse took Roxy to get an x-ray in her head because she hadn't gained consciousness. Max was

waiting in the other room to get his arm fixed.

Four hours later, Ana Maria, Roxy's mother, showed up with Komi, Max and Roxy's daughters. She asked the first nurse she saw where her daughter was. She was worried for her daughter because the prognosis that the doctor told her wasn't favorable. Ana Maria went to Max's room, she started asking

weeks passed, Roxy was discharged, and the doctors told her relatives that only a miracle could change her to how she was before the accident. But After a few months, Roxy started to gain her memory and the first thing she remembered was the accident and couldn't believe that she had survived. She told Max that it was a miracle that she was alive and that she had recovered her memory. Komi entered the room

and saw her mother was awake and jumped to the bed, giving her a big hug. Max and Ana Maria were happy because they did not imagine this moment would happen.

“WITH ONE
ARM BROKEN
AND BLEEDING
FROM HIS HEAD,
HE STARTED
SEARCHING
ALL OVER THE
PLACE FOR HIS
WIFE...”



Max how he was feeling, he told her that he was fine but that he was worried about Roxy. Ana Maria decided to tell Max the truth because the probability that she would recover her memory and return to doing as before, was low. A few

FIFTEEN YEARS IN, FIFTEEN YEARS OUT

CREATED BY JUAN

I was only a 13 year old boy who lived with my mother Cecilia. My father died when I was 9 years old. A shot to the head and everything could have ended at that moment. Where we came from, we didn't have many things to help us do good or many things that would encourage us to work towards having a good future. My mother always said "life is not always fair". I was just a child. I felt confused.

Many situations led me to do things that I should not have done because of necessity and not having much money. Mommy never had a good job.

I started to get together with people who weren't good for society. I thought about every bad thing that we did, but

at the time that I was doing it, I did not feel anything. The drugs surrounded me. At that same time I was already consuming drugs. Mommy always told me "Dario, let things go and don't stress yourself"

"MY FATHER DIED
WHEN I WAS 9
YEARS OLD. A SHOT
TO THE HEAD AND
EVERYTHING COULD
HAVE ENDED AT
THAT MOMENT."

"I can't wait any longer, I have no more time." I would answer,

"You have no more time? What do you mean by that?." She would tell me over time things would fix themselves."

I began to earn money on the streets at the age of 14. I was already supporting myself and my mommy. Many times she told me not to do bad things on the streets. That something bad could come to me. And that was exactly what happened. It happened on the corner of my building. It was 7 o'clock at night. There was a black car

at the corner. That was about the 5th time that I saw it pass in front of the building. I thought it was the police but it was people from the streets. What I saw surprised me. It was my friend Pedro in the car. As they were getting near me the car window rolled down and all I saw was my friend pull out a gun and point it at me. I heard someone yell "Dario watch out!." At this time I pulled out my gun and shot at the car. When I thought I had everything I wanted, in the blink of an eye the blood fell like rain and I lost it all. I saw my friend die and even worse, it had been my gun that killed him. I remembered what mommy said "Dario, think well of what you're doing". Everytime she said that to me I would tell her "Calm down, Mommy, everything has an end."

I ran home to my mother. The only person that I knew that cared about me. I told her "Mommy I did it."

Mommy asked, "What did you do?" I said to her, "I did what you told me not to do I killed someone that was after me" She asked "Who did you kill?" I told her everything that I had done. I was only 15 years old. The police already had my photos. With a knock on the door everything was over. At fifteen I was sentenced to spend 15 years in jail. What have I learned from all of this? that you must learn from your mistakes, that there is nothing good out in the streets and that you should always listen to your mother.



MY MEMOIR

CREATED BY LADY

Three years ago, my aunt told my mother that my grandfather was very sick. I started to cry while my mother was crying and fighting with my aunt because my mother wanted to see him alive but my aunt said no that he was ok.

to eat and only wants to die. Then my mom sent her money for her medicine to be best. My aunt gives food and takes him to the doctors to have a good life. I remember that I started talking with my grandfather telling him that he needs

to start eating and taking his medicine. I was terrified because i didn't want my grandfather to die. He said, "i promise you that i'm going to start eating and taking my medicine". In the end, my grandfather stopped eating and taking his medicine. He only lasted three days. But everyday i still remember his advice to be always

be the best in life and his smile. This changes me because my grandfather doesn't follow my advice so that is why he dies faster.

The three of us started talking about what we were going to do because he says that he does want to be alive. My mom starts talking with her that he is going to get sick very soon. But my grandfather says that he does not want

I am from esther, grandfather and sister, strong people that get me happiness.

I am from the dominican republic, a place i call home where i left all my childhood.

I am from family dinners, mangu, sancocho and cola real that give me memories.

I am from a mother that gives me lessons that help me to be a better person.

I am from opinion that help me to be best in school.

I am from my grandfather that past away from this world but i still remember her as he still life.

I am from a best friend, and sport that help me to best person in the life.

I am from a land that gets me power and rest to think about family.

L am from rice and beans that give me stongling.

I am from a best friend that help me all the time i nelp.

I am from spending time with her.

I am from grandfather and my country that i still remeber as today.

"IN THE END, MY GRANDFATHER STOPPED EATING AND TAKING HIS MEDICINE. HE ONLY LASTED THREE DAYS."



MY X'S AND O'S

CREATED BY LEILANY

10:00PM "Andrea is dead"

I hung up the call and headed out to her house. All I saw were blue and red lights, the sounds of sirens and the sound of my agitated breathing. Police cars and ambulances quickly drove away after a few minutes that felt eternal. Two weeks later, I'm at Andrea's funeral, my dear girlfriend. A gloomy, nostalgic vibe covered the whole garden. We spent the most beautiful moments during the last year. Everything happened so quickly, it almost felt surreal.

After the funeral, I was asked to go to the police station for questioning. Andrea was murdered in her house that afternoon, and for unknown reasons, she was shot in the chest. I walked in the interrogation room, sat down, looked at the detective in front of me and told him. "I'm ready Detective Baros." He proceeded to start. "State your name and the reason you are here."

"TWO WEEKS
LATER, I'M
AT ANDREA'S
FUNERAL,
MY DEAR
GIRLFRIEND."

"My name is Luna, I'm 24 years old, and I'm here for interrogation for the murder case of Andrea since I'm the last person she contacted."

"What was your relationship with the victim?" Baros asked.

"I was her girlfriend while she was alive sir." For about 2 hours the interrogation continued with questions like how I met her, the last time I saw her, how was our relationship and many things. However there was one question that was hard to answer.

"By our investigation we have predicted her death time was around 3:36 pm in the afternoon. You guys last phone call was at 2:50pm. What did you guys last talk about?" I stood there thinking about it for a while. I had to tell a little of the truth with some lies that the police couldn't know.

"We talked about if she was ready

to leave for the park, because earlier she told me she was going to go for a walk over the phone" I said.

The questioning was over. I said goodbye to the detective and headed home. The next day, I remembered all the walks we would go on together. That day I decided to go for a walk. I went out, I walked and walked. I ended up in a tree lined street. I looked up at the gaps of sunlight with teary eyes. I recall the last time Andrea and I met. "I don't know if I can do this to you. I know it's my duty to come for people whose time has come to be punished," I said in a distressed voice. "Luna, I'm ready, you don't have to make me an exception. I hope you get to stay longer on this earth. As you are not human, remember all the things we did together. I hope you enjoy the feeling of love, find the meaning of why you were brought to this earth besides your duty. I love you. I hope you remember me for as long as you are on this earth," Andrea said, as I killed her and she fell to the floor.



I continue walking on the street, brush the tears off my eyes and continue walking. I go closer to the park. I hear a voice calling me, or rather my telephone ringing. I get it out of my pocket and see it's an unknown number. With a bothered expression I answer the phone. "I know you killed her, your doings go unseen by the police and others but not me." I heard those words as a smirk formed on my face.

"Detective Baros, what a pleasure to hear from you so soon."

A TRAGEDY AND A TIME WITH FRIENDS

CREATED BY LERINS

When I was young, my father caught a terrible disease that made him stay in the hospital. Almost every day, my mother and I would visit so that he wouldn't feel alone or sad. Yesac came sometimes because he had school. Eventually, the doctors said he perished and I was devastated thinking I won't be able to see him again. When I was 11, we were grocery shopping, my mother got in a traffic accident. My brother and I cried over mom's body while people called for an ambulance. When I was alone with my brother I realized I wanted love from a family.



My name is Ion. I am now 18 years old. I have a brother, Yesac (24), and have three friends I get along with. We wanted to live alone in a house since our other family didn't support us, luckily I had my brother. When we had enough money I went to rent a house with my friends and my brother. My brother is handsome, tall, and good at sports. One of my friends, Cassandra (Cass in short), was worried and decided to come with us. We divided bills to make it easier to live while going to school. She accompanies me to the graveyard.

The other is Rocko (Rocky as nickname), he helps me with my studies and he's popular. My third friend is Cass' sister, Ur, she is nice, elegant, and popular in college.

I have a really good memory so part-time jobs like the small bookstore close to the school or the convenience store close to my house are easy to work in. At 19:00, my shift ended, and I went back home. I saw my friends waiting for me to go to my house. When we arrived home my brother was about to go out and told us he was buying something. 5 minutes later he came back with some snacks and drinks and with my friend's sister, Ur. We were all watching TV while Yesac and Ur went to the kitchen to grab some plates and cups for us.

"So, what do you want to watch?" I say while holding the remote control. "Do we watch a movie or a show?"

"What about some horror movies?" says Ur as she brings a bowl full of popcorn and some drinks. "I found some interesting ones in the book store horror section, what do you say?" Her voice sounds so kind that no one was afraid of what would happen with the movies but we were still in doubt of saying yes.

"A-agreed," we all say, with a little trace of hesitancy and excitement and gulping in curiosity to know what it is about.

"WHEN I WAS YOUNG,
MY FATHER CAUGHT A
TERRIBLE DISEASE..."

After the movies, it was pretty late and the news said there'd be a thunderstorm so I told them to stay over the night at our house. They agreed, but surprisingly my brother didn't stop me. In fact, he was ok with the idea. Then I remembered he has a crush on Ur. A sudden flash and a loud noise shouted the beginning of the thunderstorm.

FINDING LOVE IN AN UNEXPECTED PLACE

CREATED BY LIDELIS

It was a Tuesday morning, Paola was late for school. She ordered a taxi as usual to drive her to school. Once she got in the taxi, she quickly glanced at the driver and could not help to notice his beautiful brown eyes. He said good morning and she responded "good morning" revealing her beautiful smile. As he continued driving, he noticed that she was heading to the town's college. The driver introduced himself saying: Hi, my name is Steven, are you a student at Future University?

"Yes", she answered but didn't show any interest in continuing the conversation. Steven noticed it and answered "that's a great University", and continued driving. The following morning, she called the taxi company again and to their surprise Steven was the driver assigned to that call.

"Good morning, oh you again!" Paola said.

"Good morning, yes! We meet again. Heading to Future University?"

"Yes"

"That's a great university, especially the law department. Professor Vasquez is really good. Also the library is impressive, lots of resources"

She looked at him and did not answer. She said to herself "What does he know about the law department at the university? or the library?. He is a taxi driver and should stay in his lane.

Although Paola did not respond to what Steven had told her, she could not forget about what he said. She found herself thinking about this taxi driver, with beautiful brown eyes, but anything else still not a possibility. How could Paola be interested in a taxi driver? What future could he offer her?

One morning Paola went to the school's library to do some research, after being there for a while, she noticed a familiar face reading across from her. She was surprised to see him there. Paola walked over to where Steven was seated. Steven, probably motivated by her previous apparent lack of interest in talking to him, looked at her and casually said hi and quickly returned to his reading. Paola asked him "You don't remember me?"

"Yes I do, but I did not think that you cared to talk to me"

"Are you a student here?"

"Yes I'm. I'm a law student"

"But you are a taxi driver!"

He answered, "Yes, that's what I do, but it doesn't matter.

Everyone has the right to work for a better future"

"I apologize for making assumptions about you", Paola told Steven

She returned to her seat and continued doing her research. She learned not to judge people by their looks or by the type of jobs that they do, but instead to get to know the person before drawing any conclusions.



CREATED BY MAKALE

“I AM FROM ASHES, AND A SINGLE FATHER...”

I am from ashes, and a single father
who loves me dearly
I am from shadow, a girl who's lost
finding the light
I am from a girl who always dream to
show her real self but scared
I am from watermelon oh the sweetness
how I love to stay forever
I am from I want to see you but seem
impossible
I am from you "Must" it always the case

MOM

Reina? maya? Who Am I? "that's for
me to know and for you to find out."

On my 19th birthday I was in my room
feeling sad and angry because it was the
day I hate the most. The same day my
father gave me something that changed
me. It was an old diary. I looked at him
with a frown." what is it?" "Just read it,"
He said." I looked at him with confusion,

but when I opened the diary I was
shocked. "Wait, Mommy?" I felt numb.
I never had anything that belonged to
my mother. As I was reading it I found a
letter she wrote for me saying goodbye
and a song. I never knew my mom was
a singer. I was amazed because my dad
never told me. I started reading it. the
page I was on." Mi Reina" I started crying
"mommy."

JUNE 23,2002

Dear Reina, my baby I'm sorry for not
being there. I'm sorry for leaving but I do
know one thing is that your papa will love
you forever - Mi amor. *smile* I hope you
are listening to your father and not being
stubborn like me. Oh baby girl I love you
so much Mi Reina but Mommy is leaving.
sad I just hope you follow your dreams
and stay happy and I will always be with
you no matter where I am. Never give
up, Reina always be strong no matter
what. Be you, show you and just do you.
Mommy loves you very much, goodbye
"Mi Reina." Sincerely your Mother

MI AMOR I WROTE A SONG FOR YOU

If you dare to fly I will be on your wings
Because I believe in you and
your freedom

When the wall seems high, I can
accompany you Fly, fly, fly And don't
hesitate for a second
That, in you, dreams come true. Sincerely
your Mother

Reina was feeling all kinds of emotions
thrilled, shocked, free, all you can think
of. "I love you too Mommy." she said
I became a singer without knowing mom



was a famous singer. Yes I'm a singer but
I am known as Maya. You see I hide my
true Identity why? Because I want to live
like a normal girl but it is not easy. Well,
I'm Reina, known as Maya. I'm a famous
singer. You must be wondering her life
" must be perfect", well it is not. I was
never happy, even though I'm famous.
That didn't matter because something
in me was missing and that was my

mother's love. I'm thankful that I had my
dad but something was still missing.

Reina was in her room thinking about"
her mom"

"It's so hard *crying* s-so hard... Without
you mom... I really miss you, but I'll be
fine." Because I'm strong, I got this." *she
said proudly*

I AM WHO I AM

I am who I am, I am
going to fight Because
this life will be mine
and nothing more I
want to dream. I hear
my voice that tells me
that I can fly.
Reina was ready to
reveal her true self.
She stayed on this
stage at her concert
facing defeat, and she
said to her audience,
"I'm just like you, a girl
who always dreamed

to show her real self but was also scared."
"Well here I am You see, I'm Rienna, known
as Maya." "We are the same person." "We
all have a reason to stay." And mine is
my mother."

"Thank you Mommy."

A DREAM THAT CAME TRUE

CREATED BY MANUEL

Carlos was a boy whose father abandoned him, his mother and sister. He had a goal to take his family out of poverty and to become a professional baseball player. In the process he would find people who would not support him and people who would be with him to help him. Carlos told his mother that he wanted to enroll in a baseball academy but the conversation didn't go the way he wanted.

"I only have money to send you to school and to support us, but not for the baseball academy," his mother told him.

When his mother told him that, Carlos went to a community center by his house and began to cry. A man who volunteered at the center saw him cry and asked him, "What is wrong with

you? Why are you crying?"

"I want to go to a baseball academy, but I can't because my family is poor and we only have money to pay



for school and to pay the bills."

"I can help you get into the academy," the man told him.

Carlos was very happy and said goodbye to the man and ran to his mother and told her what the man said. "How is this man going to help you?"

and she continued saying, "You don't know him."

Carlos explained to his mother that he is a man who volunteers at the community center and he likes to help people.

Carlos did not pay attention to his mother and accepted the help of the man who said that he was going to help him achieve his dream.

When he went to the baseball academy for the first time, the children who were there began to bully him because they knew that he came from a poor family and that his father had abandoned him, his sister and mother. He left because he felt very bad because of what his peers had told him. When that happened, he went to the community center to speak to the man who was helping him and told him what was happening there. But the man answered, "You do not have to pay attention to the bad things that people say to you or what they talk about you because those people who speak badly

about you are envious of what you can do in the future."

He paid close attention to what the man told him and returned to the academy to continue playing. Although

his mother did not support him, he continued moving forward. The boy was very excited to continue playing baseball. He kept doing what he liked and was able to achieve his goal. He became a professional baseball player and was able to help his family. He didn't just help his family when he fulfilled his dream, he also helped the man who helped him when he needed help to achieve his dream.

"CARLOS WAS A BOY WHOSE FATHER ABANDONED HIM, HIS MOTHER AND SISTER. HE HAD A GOAL TO TAKE HIS FAMILY OUT OF POVERTY..."

A BETTER CHANGE

CREATED BY MEL

Once upon a time there was a girl named Alice. He was very smiling and happy while living in the Brooklyn neighborhood. He lived with his mother, his father and his brother.

His childhood was not the best because of his family problems, but he was happy because his innocence did not allow

him to realize and worry about it.

Alice was a very lucky girl because she had her brother who was her best friend; ia and support But all that changed when she grew up she became a very irresponsible, rebellious, bad at school, bitter teenager. All caused by his loneliness and his family problems.

One day Alice was at her school drinking alcohol with her friends when suddenly her father surprises her and punishes her for what happened. Alice

started having bad thoughts of hate and resentment towards herself and the people around her because she didn't want to change her lifestyle to become a right person.

Deep down Alice felt sadness and regret for the way she acted towards her

parents during her early teens as she always had problems at school and didn't like going to school which made her mother and father suffer. She really knew that he needed to change his attitude and behavior but she didn't think she could make the big change.

Consequently one

afternoon Alice was with her best friend when suddenly her brother calls her and says:

Alicie's brother said, " Alice?" Alicie responded, " Hello, what happened?"

Alice's brother said, " It's very painful but I have to tell you that our mother has just died" Alice responded, "ok..."

Alice hangs up the phone and is shocked. At that moment she begins to cry desperately and repent for not having valued her mother while he lived and to have shown her that she was capable of becoming responsible.

Alice spent many days of sadness and reflection. She was devastated but she still had the support of her family and friends. She felt so regretful as she remembered the time she spent with her mother in her childhood. Finally she finally learned the lesson and promised

herself and her family to improve as a person, try to be better.

Not make her father suffer since deep down Alice loved her family very much which helped her a lot. for her big change.

"...ALL THAT CHANGED WHEN SHE GREW UP SHE BECAME A VERY IRRESPONSIBLE, REBELLIOUS, BAD AT SCHOOL, BITTER TEENAGER."



OVERCOMING DIFFICULTIES

CREATED BY MELANIE

The members of the jury gave their verdict. They decided that “Samuel Rodriguez Soto be removed from the home of Juaquin Rodriguez and Fernanda Soto.” That day I felt like I won the lottery but what I didn’t know is that the suffering had only begun for me. As you know, my name is Samuel Rodriguez and I am 20 years old. I was born in California but I have visited so many places within the United States that I cannot say exactly where I am from.

When I was 10 years old, I was sent to a foster home because my biological parents were very abusive in every way. I thank God that I have not seen “them” and my “new” adoptive parents ever again. My life has always been a rollercoaster, from house to house. I got

to the point where I got tired of showing interest in being adopted by a good family. I’m tired of being just a check to my foster parents. I’m tired of being the dollar sign for everyone who took

me into their home. I got tired of people receiving benefits because of me.

I spent 8 years in my “house.” I have beautiful memories of the “house” because I did not feel that it was a foster home. I learned

that sometimes parents and siblings do not necessarily have to be connected by blood. I recognize that I was fortunate to have many parents and siblings in foster care. However, I also experienced a lot of depression and anxiety because the people who were my foster parents acted just like my biological parents they were also.



When I was 12 years old I met the one who is now my little angel and who takes care of me from heaven. His name was Tyler and he was 11 years old at the time (if he were alive he would be 19 years old). We were together for 5 years until one day I didn’t see him again until he came back in a box asleep, looking very handsome. He broke my heart because I hadn’t heard from him for 7 months and when I heard from him, he was no longer here.

I thought life had hit me pretty hard as I had been abused mentally, and physically. I had lost my best friend, I literally had nothing more to lose in this world. However, I hadn’t thought of a single thing until a social worker who was like a mother, told me, “Samuel we can no longer have you here in foster care.” I was like in the clouds, I was blank. I replied, “Why?” She said, “You’re almost 18 years old.” I kept quiet. I knew I had to get out of foster care but I was worried about my future.

I replied, “I understand.” I ran out of the office. I ran as fast as the wind. I went to my bed and let off steam crying like a child. My tears ran down my face like a waterfall.

I was exhausted from my life and as I lay down on my bed my first thought was Tyler.

And I thought to myself... What would Tyler do if he were in my shoes? He always helped me when I had problems and that’s why I call him my little angel. I set a goal for myself at that time. After a few months, I was out of foster care. The first thing I did was look for a job and study business administration as Tyler and I had planned to study. How I would love for my friend to be here with me to feel proud that we were able to move

forward together. This is for you, my dear Tyler.

“THE MEMBERS OF THE JURY GAVE THEIR VERDICT. THEY DECIDED THAT “SAMUEL RODRIGUEZ SOTO BE REMOVED FROM THE HOME...”

THE DARK SIDE OF A SAD REALITY

CREATED BY MICHAEL

My name is Azazel, I am 18 years old. My dream is to become very strong and change the world. My story is not very pleasant to tell, my parents died when I was 5 years old. Some bandits attacked the town where we lived and murdered everyone, my parents hid me under the bed. When I was a child, I couldn't do anything to save them. My whole body was paralyzed with tears in my eyes. I saw how my parents died. From that day on, I promised myself to be very strong and to end evil, even if it costs me my life. Some people from other towns came to the place, and they took me with them. They asked me about what happened, but I never said anything. My feelings had vanished. My face seemed as if I had lost myself in the darkest loneliness.

There was a person who had adopted me, his name was Isaac

Ezequiel. He helped me out of the darkness where I had fallen. He taught me to fight with the sword and the fists. By the time I was 10 years old, Isaac had already taught me to handle myself very well with the sword and my fists. Isaac was one of the knights who protected the king. Only the strongest can have the privilege of being in the royal guard. And Isaac complied with the requirements. I wanted to protect people, too, but every day that passed I felt a pain in my chest while little by little I weakened. I was confused, my head was full of thoughts. Maybe I was going crazy or maybe it was something temporary. I hit the wall a lot, I did everything in my power to find what I longed for. But I didn't find any results.

"Why do you think so much? Is the answer in your heart? It is not obvious?"

"MY STORY IS NOT VERY PLEASANT TO TELL, MY PARENTS DIED WHEN I WAS 5 YEARS OLD."

"Who are you?" I asked. "I am you." He responded. It's not possible, I think I'm going crazy now.

"There are things that are impossible to understand, but I have always been with you and I have been seeing everything that surrounds you. I am your dark side, the power that will change everything in this world," he said. "Calm down!! What is happening to me?" I said.

Time passed and I met a girl. At first I was cold with her, because all my emotions had disappeared. But over time, my emotions reappeared. Everything was perfect with her.

Until one day she was kidnapped and abused. I tried everything desperately to find her. Until one day I found her. Her gaze had vanished, what had once been in the depths of her heart, had disappeared. Her soul had faded; she was gone. I got down on my knees and said, "Is it a lie? Tell me it's a lie!" with tears in my eyes, I said, "Wake up! Please don't

leave me, not you. Please wake up!!!! It started. I could feel the power running through my veins, I could see my hands changing, my eyes turned red, my hair turned white, I could feel how little by little my body began to transform. The atmosphere got tighter. My feelings turned dark. I no longer had control of my body. The darkness blinded me.

"I laugh at the infinite and fret over the dream." the scary voice growled. "What the world desires. What the world rejects. I shall become the god of domination." He continued, "No matter the time,

I always choose the path to ruin. I will drown them in the depths of the afterlife of purgatory."

It seemed like it was all over, but that was never a reality.



A CHANCE AT LOVE

CREATED BY NAYELIN

It all started with an 18 year old girl named Josephine. Josephine's parents wanted her to be the perfect daughter. Her parents were so overprotective that she was home schooled. She had to have perfect grades, perfect behavior and perfect friends that were not a bad influence on her life. Josephine finished high school and it was time for her to attend college and interact with other people outside of her home.

Josephine's mother said to her father "I think it is better if Josephine dorms in college, so that she doesn't have to travel from school back home everyday."

"Yes! That is a great idea because the college is really far from us." Her parents told her about the conversation and Josephine agreed to it.

As agreed Josephine went away to college. She started her classes the very next day. Her first class was English. In English they were reading a book that students had to debate on. Josephine had already read the book. In this class she met a boy named Nick. Nick was the opposite from her. He came from a broken family and the experiences that he went through in life made him appear as a tough guy. His parents didn't care about what he did or the decisions that he made. He was very independant.

Nick also knew about the book they were reading in English class. Josephine and Nick had different points of view and it became a debate as the teacher wanted. The teacher was happy because Nick showed more interest in the class. Josephine was attracted by the fact that Nick had a different opinion from her. As time passed, they spent time together. Josephine started getting comfortable and enjoying Nick's company, she realized that such a tough looking guy in reality was soft and caring.

"Why are you so quiet? You are different from all the other girls, Nick asked. Yes, I know. It's just the way my parents raised me."

"You have such a beautiful smile and great points of view, but it's hard to know, because you hardly interact with other people."

"Thank you", she responded.

"I want you to do something for me", Nick asked Josephine. "Everyday I want you to do something that you would normally not do."

"Like what?"
"Tomorrow, let's go out to a party. I want to see you making

decisions for yourself, having fun and enjoying yourself," Nick told her. Josephine responded," Ok I need you to do something for me too, I need you to be more active in class and focus more on your studies."

A few weeks passed by and they would dare each other to do something different. Josephine was coming out of her shell, she was more outgoing and more independent. Nick was more responsible and more focused in class. Like a match made in heaven they brought the best out on each other . On the last day of college, they promised that they would stay in touch and potentially continue their lives together in the future.

"HER PARENTS WERE SO OVERPROTECTIVE THAT SHE WAS HOME SCHOOLED."



CREATED BY PAMELA

It's been a long time since your death, but I don't see it that way because there isn't a single day that I wake up and don't think about you, school days, parties, vacations, I miss all of that. How much I would like that to happen again, but we all know that it is impossible. I do everything that reminds me of you so that I don't feel alone, but it hurts me instead of making me feel better. I feel like I'm breaking down more and feel that I can no longer handle your death. We did everything together. There is no one like you. You left without saying goodbye. I couldn't give you a goodbye kiss and I still regret it. 2 years have passed since your death and I still love you like the first day. I never thought that that day a car accident would end the life of a person that I loved so much. I went crazy when I heard that news. Years have passed since you left and I think that at any moment I will find you walking on the streets. I was cheating myself and that was hurting me. For years I was looking for help with your loss and I couldn't find something or someone who could help me with that great pain.

"IT'S BEEN A
LONG TIME
SINCE YOUR
DEATH..."

Until one day it stopped hurting me. There are still days when I am down and I think about you, but I find a way so that it doesn't affect me. I realized that no matter how much help I was looking for, nothing would help me until I made the decision that I should think of myself. I remember that one day you asked me a question.

"What would happen if I died today?" I answered, "You're crazy Lulu. Nothing will happen. You die and everything is over."

I was lying, I could never love a person so much. How much I wish I had never said all that I said that day. I love you like no one else in this world. I needed to tell you all this, to unburden myself with the only person I could and to give you your last goodbye, my girl. Now I feel that I can move on, not to move on to forget the love of my life but to continue living even though life will never be the same.



OMIT THE TRUTH

CREATED BY RANDY

Mauricio loved his children, but he did not spend enough time with them. Mauricio received a phone call. He was speaking with Jose who only envied him, because Mauricio worked and earned a lot of money. Jose only wanted to take away the money that Mauricio earned from work. Jose pretended to be a good person in the eyes of Mauricio in order to plan Mauricio's kidnapping. With this kidnapping he would ask the family for money, so he could accumulate more wealth. He planned this without caring who would be hurt.

It was 7:30 p.m. Mauricio was leaving his job. Suddenly he felt someone pointing a gun at him. The person's face was masked. Mauricio received a blow to the head and was transferred to a car in an unconscious state. Mauricio was taken to an abandoned house. Jose tied Mauricio's hands and feet to a chair. He blindfolded his eyes and mouth so he does yell or

recognize him. It was 9:30 pm and Laura called Mauricio and left him a message because she was worried about him because he still hasn't come home. "Oh great, your wife is already worried about you" "I already know who I'm going to ask for the ransom" When she calls again I'll answer your cell phone and ask for money" said Jose.

"DON'T YOU DARE ASK MY FAMILY FOR MONEY"

"Don't you dare ask my family for money" "if money is what you are looking for I will tell you that I don't have enough" I don't have 1 million dollars unavailable " What Jose did not count on is that this abandoned

house was not abandoned. There was a homeless man inside the house who realized everything that was happening. He quietly left the house and went to the police station and reported what was happening. Suddenly red and blue lights and the sound of sirens flooded the house. Mauricio felt saved and Jose completely lost. "New York Police, put your hands up. Surrender yourself and come forward" the officers were heard shouting.

Helicopters were flying, fire trucks and reporters appeared on the scene. Each sound made Jose more tense. Jose made the decision to take Mauricio and bring him to the front of the house to give himself up. Arriving in front of the house, the masked Jose was blinded by all the lights and rifles pointed at him. "Walk slowly and give us the hostage" Jose walked slowly and gave himself up.

"I considered you my friends. How did you hurt me so much just answer me why. If you had some economic problem why didn't you tell me. I still don't understand it." said Mauricio. Jose replied "I did it out of greed, out of envy, I hope you can forgive me" Jose got up from his chair and called the guard to take him to his cell."Friend, if you had only told me that you had problems everything would have been easier. We would have worked it out like we always did. Communication is essential."

Mauricio yelled at Jose as the guard returned him to his cell.



The arrest was not complicated. Jose was taken to the police patrol and Mauricio was rescued. This whole event was seen on the news. Mauricio found out the next day that it was Jose who kidnapped him. Jose was prosecuted for various crimes and was imprisoned. After several months, Mauricio went to visit him in prison.

DRAWING FREEDOM

CREATED BY YANCREILIN

White lines, red lines, stars in a blue square are the beginning of a freedom that I did not want, even if it was torture. While I was painting my flag with crayon in the background I heard my parents and friends arguing, laughing and babbling.

My biggest hobby is painting. I paint joys, I paint sadness, tears, and everything that is real. It's the only thing that helps me communicate exactly

without stuttering. Even today, 15 years after that July 4th, I vividly remember when my freedom was taken away. In the midst of pipes, cigars, crayons, clothes everywhere, I spent my days with my parents. They ignored me, I thought it was okay. I also ignored them and spent my time painting.

When I did not like my drawings, I would throw them out the window. I liked to paint my parents and their

friends while they smoked their pipes. It was a lot of fun to see their stupid, sleepy faces. I also drew when they beat me or when they were hungry. I drew when my cat Misifu slept next to me after a long day or when she accompanied me to do my homework. My drawings never went to school. Nobody ever suspected what was happening in my house. Only I, my drawings, and my cat Misifu, were witnesses of what was happening.

I constantly saw the garbage collector from my window pick up my drawings and put them away. From below he greeted me and I responded to him through my window. Today I know that he counted the floors in order to know where I lived. July 4th Independence Day was the day when I was released from my parents.

After seeing my drawings several times, the garbage collector reported suspected abuse of a minor in my building. They moved me to a foster home. I say it was him since no one else paid attention to my drawings in the house, but he saw them every time I threw them out the window.

Today every July 4th I pass through my neighborhood and next to the garbage can I leave a drawing of the flag as a symbol of my freedom and new life. I hope he collects them in the same way that he collected the others.

“WHITE LINES,
RED LINES,
STARS IN A
BLUE SQUARE
ARE THE
BEGINNING OF
A FREEDOM
THAT I DID NOT
WANT...”



A LOVE STORY

CREATED BY YENNY

“Never leave a person you love just to please someone in your family”

Mary is a 17-year-old girl that falls in love with a boy that her father didn't

like. Her father lives in the United States while Mary lives in the Dominican Republic.

The father came to visit the country but Mary wanted to see Jack. Mary's father would not let her go, but she found a way to go see her boyfriend.

She asked her cousin's girlfriend, Eily, to find a way to take her out of the house. Eily made a plan and spoke with

Mr. Edwin, Mary's father. The plan was that she had to get money from her uncle so Eily asked if he could give permission for Mary to go with her and he said yes. When they left the father found out it was a lie and he suspected that they would join the boyfriend, so he sent Mary's two sisters to look for her. They know that she will do whatever she wants, even if it's not what her family wants, her father Edwin says “if

you don't break up with him I will send you to come live with me in the U.S until you realize that I'm doing what's right for you.” Mary doesn't want to leave Jack because she loves him very much and

she wants to be with him. Mary said “ I will leave my fathers home to go live with jack and be happy but i know my father will not like this i decided i'm not going to tell him but he will soon notice that i left his home.” As soon as he noticed that Mary was not home, he started to call Mary and ask her where she was. She picks up

the phone and tells him” I'm okay, since you didn't want me to be with Jack I decided to leave your house.” The father answered with “ You are making a big mistake. I'm trying to help you but you're just throwing your life away with his boy.” Mary's say “I just don't know why if I work why can't I do what I want basically. You embarrassed me saying I can't do things for myself or I can't take care of myself or make decisions it's sad because it just

“NEVER LEAVE
A PERSON YOU
LOVE JUST
TO PLEASE
SOMEONE IN
YOUR FAMILY”

the by the way you are say trowing your life away with this boy if i work for myslf why i can't be happy.

Mary's father kept insisting that he does not want that person with her and that he wants her to come back home. She ended up going back home but Mary refused to speak with her father. A month had passed and she still didn't talk to him. Mary wanted to talk to him because the time they had with one another in person was limited since he eventually had to go back to the U.S. Mary loves her father but she also loves Jack which is a major reason why she is torn on what she should do. Whether she should please her father or listen to her heart.

One day he came to where I live and said, “I'll tell everyone in your family that you're with the person who took you away from me,” but he really didn't know why he said that. I asked him why he said that if he was the one who didn't like that person I'm with and he didn't give that person a chance. Jack said to Edwin “If you don't know who I am, why don't you want your daughter to be with me?” My

father said, “I really don't believe in you with my daughter.” I don't know who you are.” “I don't know if you are that type of man who does what he wants with the woman.” “But I don't know what you mean by that” Jack said ‘I treat your daughter well and I love her the way she is’. Mary said ‘Dad, if you come here just to find a problem, just leave my house’ “I really I don't want any trouble.” “My

father said you're going to kick me out of your house just because I told the truth,” Edwin said. “It's not that dad, it's that I think you don't want me to be happy because you see that I'm happy with Jack.” but there was a lot of conflict between Jack and my dad. Mary's father realized that Jack is the love

of her life and the person She wants to be with for the rest of her life. It's the person That makes her feel happy and safe. Her father realized this way too late. Even if jack has bad intentions towards me even though literally I don't believe that because jack really loves me and he fighting for my love.



MISERABLE BIT**

CREATED BY YOVANGELY

My mind still wanders to the speed of the car while being treated like a criminal in the police car. I can't believe that in a few days a year will have passed. Being a normal day while I woke up early to go to class, and Dorian was arguing about everything as usual. Then my other sister Jackeline made things worse, she went to tell Dorian that I had left the clothes on the clothesline and that she needed her. Dorian quickly became more upset and went to scold me.

I tried to control my anger while she told me "You're useless!" and constantly repeated, "You are a spoiled mommy's girl." I tried to ignore her as she continued but it was getting harder and harder to keep my anger in. Dorian was looking for my reaction. I had been

saying for months that the day I reacted would not be pleasant for anyone, but realizing that time passed and I did not react, she committed more injustices towards me. But what she wanted was

actually for me to keep my word, and react. When she decided to throw my clothes on the floor, I felt like my blood was running through my body and I said to myself "God give me the strength to endure this, take care of my actions,

and my thoughts." The minutes passed quickly and I was late for class.

I continued to get ready to leave when Dorian told me, "Stupid, you are not going to get anywhere. You should have been aborted when your mother was pregnant."

To which I quickly went to her



and said "Dorian I respect you, but I'm going to ask you to do the same please." However, it was becoming difficult for me to control myself, so I turned around and went back to the room. She replied "You're going to continue to respect me! What's wrong with this bitch?" Courage took over me and without realizing it I was holding a pen in my hand, I almost ran to the kitchen. She saw the anger that was inside me and wanted to run away but it was impossible for her since I had already stuck the pencil in her neck. However my purpose was not to release it until I saw it bleed.

She constantly repeated, "TAKE HER AWAY FROM ME!!!" while I punched and kicked her. Finally Jackeline called my dad because I was uncontrollable. "Vanessa, your dad wants to talk to you" she told me.

I replied "I don't want to talk to him. He did nothing when I asked him for help with Dorian so he can't tell me anything now. My brother tried to separate us but he couldn't and then he came with my uncle but they still couldn't. I fell to the ground because of a

painful hold that my uncle put my arms in. Then he put his knees into my back until I was immobile.

"Nooooooo-what's wrong with you?! Don't hit her!" my brother told my uncle. I got up and went to take a shower and I didn't last even three minutes in the bathroom when the police arrived.

"Vanessa, come out of there, the police are looking for you," my uncle

told me. I ran out of the shower to find out what was going on, I changed. The lieutenant told me "Unfortunately you have to come with us because you injured her with something in the neck and that is attempted murder." Those were the words of the lieutenant. Then I was handcuffed and treated like a criminal. I was taken to the police station and there I lived the worst seven hours of my life. At that moment I understood how

animals feel when they are restrained from their freedom.

"MY MIND STILL WANDERS TO THE SPEED OF THE CAR WHILE BEING TREATED LIKE A CRIMINAL IN THE POLICE CAR."



WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE

CLASS P

Amy	114	Lisbeth	140
Anabel	116	Martin	142
Babacar	117	Melany	143
Criss	120	Mirlemny	144
Danyeiris	122	Mouhamed	146
Fatoumata	124	Rafael	148
Habi	126	Rasel	150
Hasly	128	Renia	152
Jarison	130	Romaldo	154
Jean	132	Victor	156
Jensy	133	Wilber	158
Juana	136	Zakaria	160
Lesvi	138		

KARMA

CREATED BY AMY

My cousin Ana and I have always been super close and I would do anything to protect her. While she was in Paris for her studies, she found a drug addict. His name was Abdul. She helped him with his addiction. But as young people, they did things that they were not supposed to.

They slept together unprotected and then she returned to Senegal. Ana later found out that she was pregnant with twins. When Abdul's mother Sokhna found out, she invited Ana to come to her house

to discuss the pregnancy. With a warm and soft voice, Sokhna asked "So how have you been feeling lately? I mean with something new we don't always know what to do". She acted as if she cared about my cousin which was the opposite of her intentions. While Sokhna was offering a drink to Ana she added abortion medicine to her cup. Ana drank it all without knowing that this woman was capable of everything and worst. Ana later came home with extreme pain and bleeding. So I stepped up and

"SHE HELPED HIM WITH HIS ADDICTION."

took her to the hospital. The doctor then called because we were not grown. "You reinjected abortion pills and as a result, I'm so sorry to announce to you that she lost one of the babies," the doctor said disappointedly. Sokhna was so happy when she heard the news because she

thought that it was only one baby. Abdoul and Ana lost contact when she left. So he had no idea that any of this was happening and his mother made sure no one would tell him about anything that was going on.

Sadly Ana passes away

while giving birth the baby boy died and the girl survived. I promised to take care of her daughter as if she was my own. I named the baby after her. Ana Eva. I also promised myself to make sure that Aida pays for her crime. I was able to gather enough evidence from the hospital to show that Sokhna was responsible for Ana's death. A voice message of Sokhna telling her friend how she planned the abortion leaked to me. And without hesitation, I saved and sent it straight to my lawyer.



CREATED BY ANABEL

When I came to the United States it was something very sad because I left many things in my life behind like my families and my friends I thought that here it was difficult to make new friends but at the same time I felt happy because it was one more step of my life forward for succeed and achieve all my goals my family felt proud that I was here because I knew that I was going to change and be a very successful person because my hope has always been to be a successful person when I lived in DR since I was little I wanted to be a police officer because I did not have a very good childhood and thank God I am almost achieving my dream when I achieve all my goals I want to help my family so that we are all together even though some part of my family are no longer on earth it is sad because I miss that great part of my family.

“...I LEFT
MANY
THINGS IN
MY LIFE
BEHIND
LIKE MY
FAMILIES
AND MY
FRIENDS...”

Before when I was younger I did not have a good communication with my family because I was very complicated and they did not understand me but I changed a lot for my family and to have a good future because I was always in a bad mood and that was not good because it The only thing I did was get away from my family here I met new friends even people I love very much and I also met part of my family that I did not know like my grandfather.

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

CREATED BY BABACAR

The woman said, “ Just seeing you sleeping in the street and knowing all the risks and the danger of sleeping here is hurting me.”

Alpha responded, “ Thank you for your empathy, I appreciate it but I will be fine.”

The worried woman asked “ Can I know what brings you to this situation? Where are your parents? Why aren’t you home this late?”

“ I have no home, no parents, no one. My parents abandoned me when I was born, for that reason I don’t know them,” said Alpha.

The woman said, “ Sorry to hear that. Would you like to live with me in my house? My name is Anta Diouf and I am a lawyer. I can take care of you and pay for your education in the best schools in this country. I will take great care of you like the son that I never had.” Alpha said, “ Yes, of course. Thank you

for helping me and taking the initiative to take care of me without expecting anything in return. I appreciate it.”

The day that an old lady found me sleeping in the streets at night and took me to her home, my life changed. My name is Alpha and I am 13 years old. Since I was a baby I never felt loved, because I never knew my parents. I lived as a homeless person for 13 years. My daily routine was to go door to door and ask people to give me something to eat and ask for some money sometimes. That was how I was surviving.

The night that I met my adoptive mother everything changed. She took me out of the streets and brought me to her lovely big house.

I took a bath, she gave me nice clothes and delicious food to eat. She gave me one of the biggest bedrooms in her house. I slept until the next day. The next morning I ate breakfast and she took me shopping. We went to a school for me

to register. Now I have friends at school that I play soccer with and help me with my work when I need explanations or clarification. This is now my daily routine.

One day after my soccer game, I was walking back home and a woman approached me and said, "Excuse me, my son, can I please have five minutes to talk to you?" Her nose, blue eyes, her skin, everything looked "familiar.

I responded, "Yes, no problem, I am listening."

The woman started crying. "I don't even know where to start," she said.

Alpha said "What can I help you with? What happened? Tell me."

The old woman said "I am sorry Alpha for everything. It was not at all my intention to give you up, but I had no choice. It was a matter of life or death. My name is Fatou Kine. I have always loved you and I am your mother."

I was crying; I couldn't hold myself. I was mad at her, frustrated and I told

her, "Just like that you expect me to accept your apology? After everything, you did to me? I did not ask to be born after all. Since it was your choice, you and my so-called father, you could have taken care of me at least but you preferred to abandon me. I don't want to see you anymore."

She was hurt, crying. She said, "Take this card, that's my phone number and my address in case you change your mind and decide to allow me to give you my version of the story. Bye". I took her card and walked home. This story is just beginning.

"IT WAS NOT
AT ALL MY
INTENTION
TO GIVE YOU
UP, BUT I HAD
NO CHOICE. IT
WAS A MATTER
OF LIFE OR
DEATH."



WHERE THE LAWS OF A GAME CHANGED

CREATED BY CRISS

MY GOD! What is Aislay doing? I can't believe Aislay is cutting her arms ... Aislay was very depressed about the unfair things that were happening in her life that only she knew about. She had a very strong memory of the past about a rape that her uncle did to her when she was just a child. She didn't live with her uncle but her family liked to get together a lot so her uncle took advantage of those family gatherings to abuse her. Her uncle always said that it was a game so that was how she grew up with that imagination. She moved to another country where she lived with her brother and his family. She had to leave her father and mother on the other side of the world.

Day by day Aislay marked her life with cuts that meant more than gold to her as they had a very important value in her life. Aislay had fallen heavily into the nocturnal depression, a depression that

was most visible at night. In the daylight hours she was the happiest girl that we could find.

Unfortunately the love and warmth of father and mother, was like a treasure she no longer had. Most of the time she spent in her house was

sad and depressed as she thought that everyone was bringing her down. Aislay helped clean the house and leave it looking like a glass of glass, shiny and sparkling. Additionally, her brother made her take care of their children. So her father went to live with

them to give her the support that she so badly needed. Her father looked for work to save money and be able to move from that place that hurt his daughter so much.

A beautiful day came full of miracles. One of those miracles was that they had accepted Aislay to the university

where she wanted so much to be. Also they gave her a great scholarship. That big news made her happy. Aislay was about to move with her parents into a new home and she did not know it. That was the best moment of her life. That was the most surprising and curable thing for Aislay at the time.

"Daddy nooo !!! I can't believe it, I can't believe we're all going to live together happily like before." Aislay said joyfully to her father.

"Daughter, this is the most significant and honorable thing I have done in this life. Finally we will be together again and united as we have always dreamed of being with your mother because she will come to be with us as we have wanted." Chris David, Aislay's father, said.

Aislay went to therapy to control her anxiety and depression. She managed to move forward from that bad thing that her uncle did to her in the past. She also entered the university of her dreams, graduated ready for

what she wanted to be, a nurse. Her life had taken a 180 degree turn. Her bad thoughts and feelings had already changed them to the best thoughts anyone could have. Her cuts in the arm were no longer cuts. They were an old movie that no longer existed.

Just as Aislay's life took a great turn, the lives of her brother's family took a bad turn. They had gone bankrupt because someone broke into their house to rob them and

they did not have money to support all the things they had. They had nowhere to live. So they begged Aislay's parents to let them live with them because they didn't have a place to live and the only place they could live was in Aislay's house.

So what do you think happened? Did Aislay and her family turn their backs on them and mistreat them as they did in the past or did they sympathize with them and offer their home to form the family that they could not have?



MIKE

CREATED BY DANYEIRIS

Mike, honey Dad, Your Dad died.....
12 hours before.

It's six in the morning and my alarm has just sounded. I throw it on the ground to stop it. I get out of bed and go to the bathtub with cold water because summer is coming. When it falls on my skin I jump from the contact with my skin. After a few minutes, I brush my teeth and I dressed quickly in a basic outfit.

I run out of my room because it is already six fifty and I had to be at school at . When I go down I see my mom in the kitchen moving, She says "good morning honey, breakfast is on the table at 7:20. I already know I was going to fail to arrive early. ." Ohh by the way my

name is Mike and I am 17 years old. I am in my last year of high school. I am in the classroom talking with my friends and doing my work. When the school principal enters and calls me to go with

her to the office,
The principal tells me to sit down. Then she gives me the phone office and I say hello and my mom says Mike honey Dad... Your Dad died.

I drop the phone to the ground and I start to shake. Everything is in black and white,

my eyes fill with tears and suddenly I stand up quickly but my feet do not work and I collapse to the ground.

It's been a few months since my daddy passed away and I feel better because I understand that my father looks at me from the sky and he's proud

of the people that I am today. Also, it's almost my graduation with only two months left. I'm so happy about that. I want to graduate from high school because it's my time to study business and administration in one of the best colleges in New York.

I decide to study this career because I will become the new leader of a business company.

Five years later
Now I'm 22 years old and I am the leader of the most important and famous company on the continent. I'm so happy to make this happen and make it possible that my family is very proud of me. I just got engaged to the most beautiful woman, her name is Dina.

Today it's on my wedding day, and she does not stop saying that I am handsome. I'm nervous because who would not be with the woman that I am going to marry she is perfect. Suddenly the wedding music begins to play and everyone stops the doors will open and that is where I see the most beautiful angel in the whole world. It was when I understood that you

have to lose to win, my dad was looking at me from heaven, proud of the man I became.



“IT’S BEEN A FEW MONTHS SINCE MY DADDY PASSED AWAY AND I FEEL BETTER BECAUSE I UNDERSTAND THAT MY FATHER LOOKS AT ME FROM THE SKY...”

LOST IN LOVE

CREATED BY FATOUMATA

Have you ever felt betrayed by a loved one? Well it hurts to realize that the person you always loved and trusted was not worth it.

There was once a teenage girl named Katherine, she was so sweet and loving to her family and always made

“HAVE YOU EVER FELT BETRAYED BY A LOVED ONE? WELL IT HURTS TO REALIZE THAT THE PERSON YOU ALWAYS LOVED AND TRUSTED WAS NOT WORTH IT.”

sure that they had everything that they needed. She also had a boyfriend that she loved very deeply, she trusted him with her heart and soul but without knowing that he was just using her. They were planning to get engaged but her boyfriend was not interested because he knew that he was cheating on her the

whole time and never tried to be honest with her, he stayed silent until the day of the engagement. Katherine was so happy that day because she thought that she finally found the love of her life and her Prince Charming but little did she know that her day was going to end up being a complete disaster. On

the engagement day, Katherine was dancing a slow dance with her boyfriend and was enjoying it until it was time to exchange rings with each other. Then her boyfriend found an excuse to leave and said “Babe, I’ll be back soon, let me just make a phone call real quick.” Katherine replied “No problem,” with a smile on her face. She waited

for him for about one minute and said “Don’t panic, he’ll be back soon” because everyone was starting to get impatient and was wondering what could hold him back for so long on the day of his own engagement. They waited until the minute turned into hours and hours and everyone was looking at each

other’s face wondering what was going on. Katherine’s mom was so mad and disappointed that she left the party immediately and said “I should have known.” Katherine broke down in silence and was frozen . “I’m sorry, mom.” she said with tears running down her face. In a blink of an eye everyone left, leaving Katherine standing all alone and crying. She tried to call her boyfriend multiple times but the number was unreachable. She also tried to call his friends and she looked everywhere possible and still there was no trace of him to be found. He never came back to check on her, their love story ended before it even began. He was already gone with another girl, and that broke her heart into pieces when he left her all alone. Ever since that day, Katherine decided to let go of love because she didn’t believe in it anymore after what happened with her boyfriend, she decided to continue her studies and focused on her future. She hoped that one day she would find her true love and she understood that a relationship is based on trust and not just love. So be careful with who you choose

to be your life partner, make sure that you trust each other. This story teaches us that sometimes the people that we love the most or the people we think are close to us are the ones that are most likely to hurt us and turn their back on us when we need them the most.



EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

CREATED BY HABI

I can't get him off my mind. He's like one of those vessels in my brain and if they stop functioning so will I. My name is jayLee. I'm a girl that everyone wants who most guys would die for. I'm usually called the definition of beauty. The girl with the perfect height, fair skin, beautiful eyes, long curly hair, and

naturally rosy lips. One day walking in the park I met this handsome gentleman. I was buying ice cream from the ice cream truck and he came by to get himself one as well. Looking through my purse I realized I forgot my money and only had my card on me so I left. Unexpectedly he followed me and shouted "Hey, debo

jontado" meaning sweetie in Pulaar. I came and said, "Yes?" and he offered to get me an ice cream cone. I agreed and he walked with me all the way home. We had an amazing conversation. He took my number and that's where everything started.

We talked all night and day for months and I was head over heels in love with him. Everyone always wanted to know who I was talking to, but I decided to keep quiet and only tell one of my close friends to avoid problems. Next thing you knew we were engaged. He proposed to me at a beach at sunset. It was just me and him. It was so relaxing and joyful. We really loved each other. No one really knew about our relationship.

I decided to show a picture of him to one of my friends because she saw the engagement ring on my finger and of course I could not lie at that point. I showed her his picture and my heart skipped a beat. She said, "That's Mary's ex!" He was my best friend's ex! I was in complete shock and at the same time quite relieved because I had kept

it a secret for 2 years. But it was like a stab in the back. I was frustrated and confused. I certainly could not marry my best friend's ex. I called him that night and told him the unfortunate news.

But he was not shocked at all. He was completely aware I was friends with Mary. I dropped the phone and fainted.

"I CAN'T GET HIM OFF MY MIND. HE'S LIKE ONE OF THOSE VESSELS IN MY BRAIN AND IF THEY STOP FUNCTIONING SO WILL I."



CREATED BY HASLY

WRONG WORDS

"All the things that happen in your life as a child will make you stronger". The problem with these words is that a child should not be strong as a kid. What I mean by this is that a kid should be playing around and grow up in a safe environment. A kid should have someone who can care for them, someone who they can trust...

with yourself. Unfortunately, there are a lot of kids and teenagers who feel lonely at a very young age. That's bitter, don't you think?

The majority of those who feel that there is no one who they can trust are because they never have the opportunity to spend time with someone and trust them. Foster Care is sometimes a place where there is a lack of trust...

"ALL THE THINGS THAT HAPPEN IN YOUR LIFE AS A CHILD WILL MAKE YOU STRONGER."

TRUST

Trust is something that you develop with time. It is like a tree, you plant seeds and take care of it, so one **day you will have a tree**. Giving the time to meet someone and build a relationship with them and

NO PERMANENT PLACE

Kids in Foster Care don't stay in one place for a long time, they are always moving. This may cause them to not want to make any friends because they know that they will leave. It's understandable because there is not a permanent place for them inside foster care.

They do not even trust foster care workers because they know that some don't really care about them.

ADOLESCENT INDEPENDENCE

Most of the teenagers at this point are independent and are embarrassed to ask for help because that makes them



feel weak. It's understandable, when **you** grew up in a place where mom and dad were not present you kinda became independent and pushed yourself to the maximum because if it's not you, then who? When they learn that they just have themselves...

LOST SMILES

There are teenagers out there who suddenly become quiet, and lose their smile. When before their voices were the loudest and they smiled the brightest. It's understandable, when a lot of people tell them to be quiet because they seem so annoying, when people tell them that their smile is ugly or too loud. We can see the reason why they change.

TOO YOUNG FOR THIS WORLD

One day after rainy days the sun will rise, happiness will come. You will remember those dark and cold places that you have passed through during your childhood. And now that you are better, you will know that there is no rain that lasts forever. Be patient, and be ready for the change. Remember that you are too young to let this world break you.

JOSE'S LIFE

CREATED BY JARISON



Hello, my name is Jose I from Miami. I want to tell you a little about my story. When I was 13 years old I lived in an orphanage because my family said they didn't have time to take me out. but they lied. They only want the fortune of my parents. In the orphanage , I have a best friend. His name is Luis and he

is like a brother to me. I do everything with him. My biggest fear is leaving Luis alone and never seeing him again. I love to help people and my dream is to be a doctor. This morning my family called me and said that they want a good relationship with me so I talked to Luis. I say that I have a problem and I need his

help and his opinion said that my family called me and they want to talk to me and learn about who I am and they want an opportunity to be a better family for me Luis says that is okay every person deserves a second opportunity. But there is another problem that Luis you do not know is that my family wants me to go with them, I mean to live with them but I do not want to leave Luis or separate from them, But I proposed something to my family which was that if they wanted me to live with them they had to adopt Luis when I told my family that they said they needed time to think about it and that they would call me when they decided. Two weeks later my family called me and told me that they agreed that

Luis would stay with us, so I ran to Luis to tell him the news. He believed that this was happening. Five days later my family went to visit me and meet Luis. I liked Luis and they started the procedures to equip Luis. Two weeks later we were all together as a family. Luis and I went to the same school and my biggest dream of having a brother came true. Now I am 20 years old. I am going to university and

fulfilling my other dream, which is to be a doctor to help people. Luis also worked and he is studying education because he likes children and making them learn.

“...BUT THEY LIED. THEY ONLY WANT THE FORTUNE OF MY PARENTS.”

CREATED BY JEAN

My father Gabon, my mother country and I their son.

Of my will, I fight. I am fighting the creation of my stone. This stone would be added to the building of my motherland. This stone will honor my father Gabon. For the making of this stone I had to leave.

Go far from my father Gabon and my mother country. Leave, to be able to learn from others and have experience. But unfortunately, when we arrived in this welcoming land, everything did not go as planned. I find myself facing several realities of nature. But my determination for the manufacture of my stone takes

precedence over realities that have no place. From reality such as racism that has no place in this land welcomes. I remain faithful to the values of my father Gabon which are: unity, work and justice. These values which forge my determination and strengthen me to continue my mission have this

welcoming land. The making of a stone does not take place in a day or in a week. So, for the manufacture of this stone, I keep my determination. The time spent in this welcoming land allowed me to open my eyes and my mind. For this, I consider this land as my second homeland and for that I would like to

add value to this building. Through the history of this welcoming land, I feel at home and comfort the lack of my motherland. I would like to honor George Washington and Benjamin Franklin, through this added value to my host land. The years go by and the manufacture of stone progresses.

My motherland is getting older every year and so am I. The future is not an inheritance, it is an opportunity and an obligation. For that I force myself to add this stone to the edifice of my motherland. it will happen sooner or later.

“OF MY WILL, I FIGHT. I AM FIGHTING THE CREATION OF MY STONE.”

CREATED BY JENSY

I wish I could be a happy person. Hi, my name is Kim. I am 10 years old and I'm a new yorker girl. I always pray to god to bless me and find my family because I can't anymore. I live with a family that is not a real family. They treat me so badly. I always try to do everything good so they respect me, but they always have an excuse to hit me. Or abuse of me. Let me tell you a little bit of my history.

One day, I was with my mom that is not my mom and father and sister , so I was in the living room watching netflix and Camila my sister went there and start making fun of me I went to my mom's room and tell her what Camila was doing to me and she said. " don't come to my room to complain about insunelent things stupid black girl, I don't know why I'm taking care of you just becuase I need the money I am taking care of you if I had

not already killed you". I left her room and I started crying and I went to hide in my closet, so the next day I started making calls to know more about my real family. Let me tell you why I'm not living with my parents right now and why I'm here with these people.

One day I was with my parents in the Mall buying some stuff when we finish we went directly to the car my father was driving and two guys was was behind us follow us and then my

father stop the car to ask them what was happening they open the car and they take out of the car they took my parents I don't even know where

“I ALWAYS PRAY TO GOD TO BLESS ME AND FIND MY FAMILY BECAUSE I CAN'T ANYMORE.”

because i pass 5 day days out of house because have no idea where I was. But the police saw me wearing dirty clothes and they ask me what I was doing out of my house and by myself and they ask me

if I was lost and they ask me if they can take me home and i tell them yes and they ask me if they can call my parents so they know that i'm on my way and I start telling them my situation and they ask me for a picture of my parents in case they saw them and they can call

me to go back with them and where i'm going to be if my parents are not here and I don't have nobody who I can stay with.

They took me to a place called Foster Care a place to stay with others people that's why i'm here with this people that they don't even treat me well and I don't want to live with them anymore for one reason that's one of my biggest and scariest things that I don't want to say, but and and going to tell you

my biggest secret, one day I was in my room lying down watching Netflix , but suddenly my mother's husband arrived, entered my my room and raped me I was screaming for help and no one was helping, but that was not all. He started hitting me because he wouldn't let me.

“...MY BIGGEST SECRET, ONE DAY I WAS IN MY ROOM LYING DOWN WATCHING NETFLIX , BUT SUDDENLY MY MOTHER'S HUSBAND ARRIVED...”

The lady was watching what he was doing to me and she didn't do anything and then I started bleeding i went to the bathroom crying like a baby i couldn't even walk but i got up and i stay there crying at that moment i just wanted to stayed there crying and crying at the

moment i just wanted to die, life did not make sense to me but listen to voice a voice telling me you will get out of this daughter of mine i know it is something very difficult for you but promise that i will get you out of this”. But i receive a phone call from my parents and I was so happy to speak to them again and tell them everything i live during i was with those people.



CREATED BY JUANA

Hello her Juana Peña Vasquez, she is a native of the Dominican Republic but now lives in the United States. Her favorite hobby is sleeping , so she feels the best way in her life. If there is something that she is very interested in in her life, it is being able to become a professional and have a better life.

Hello, my name is Sofia. I was 11 years old when I came to the United States. When I arrived here my life changed a lot, because I lived alone with my father and my little brother was very difficult because he did not have the support of our mother. He had to stay in my country. My father worked and when he was working he left us at Grandma's house until he came back because he works a little late at night. Sometimes I felt sad because my father hardly ever had time for us. Things were



getting even more difficult because he was already creating a vice that he couldn't control on his own. When he was 14 years old he also smoked because that was what he saw in my father and that was what he was learning. My mother advised us but I didn't pay much

attention to her because my father supported me in that. Despite the time.

Hello, my name is Sofia and I am 19 years old. I live in the United States and I am of Dominican nationality. I was 11 years old when I came to the United States. I am 19

years old and I live in the United States and I am of Dominican nationality. I started talking to a guy on chat. He's from the Dominican Republic. We met until he became my boyfriend. My parents didn't know at first. Then I went on a trip to my country and I was able to meet the boy in person. I told my parents

about the situation and they accepted me with the child. At first my boyfriend was fine, but as the days went by things changed. He became jealous and also treated me badly. He didn't physically attack me, but verbally. But he always said that he's going to change when the time comes to return after all is well.

I continued to live with my father, my mother could not come to the United States. She was going to school and she is doing very well. It took me a year to return to the Dominican Republic and I was still with my boyfriend, I was already 15 years old when I went, I had sex with my boyfriend and I did not protect myself, I got pregnant when I was 15,16 at that moment I felt that the world was collapsing. I did not know whether or not to tell my parents until it lasted 5 months hiding my pregnancy. My boyfriend knew about it but he couldn't do much because he was out of the country. I spent a lot of moments of sadness and depression because I wanted to find someone to support me but at the same time I was scared. Finally one day I told my cousin what was happening to me. I was very nervous, I didn't know what to do. She told me, tell your mom. She's going to help you. I told her no because I know they're going to

talk about me because my family had me as the most holy.

One morning my cousin told my mom. My mom talked to me and ordered me to take a pregnancy test. She talked to me on facetime then I talked to my dad. He felt really bad because he didn't expect that from me and he told me that my boyfriend was bad because he should have protected himself and me because he was still a child. I felt guilty for everything that was happening. But later my parents

"I CONTINUED TO LIVE WITH MY FATHER, MY MOTHER COULD NOT COME TO THE UNITED STATES."

understood and gave me the necessary support until 9 months passed and I was able to have my baby with me and everything was fine. I do not recommend any underage girl to get pregnant because it is not easy, it is too much responsibility. The life of being a mother at a young age is very difficult. If you are a young girl, be careful not to get pregnant at a young age.

YOU ALWAYS CAME OUT TO SHINE

CREATED BY LESVI

One day we were in St. Mary's park and I noticed my parents were acting weird, but I didn't understand what happenin. But little by little that day I noticed that they disagreed about almost everything, we were together all that day but nothing was like before, there was no communication, and everything was very uncomfortable. I remember like it was yesterday the day my parents told me they were going to divorce. I was in shock because they had been together 25 years and it was difficult for me.

I was crying in my room because I didn't want to think my parents were getting separated . The next day I woke up at like 7 am and I saw my dad getting his stuff out. Three weeks later I was resting a bit and a woman knocked on the door and I opened and I saw she had a paper in her hands. She asked for my

mom and she said "My name is Myra I'M THE LAWYER OF MR.SANTOS. I'm here to explain to you how everything will be divided and to pedirte que firmes el divorcio sin tanto problema.

The months passed and the problems in the family were worse, and that affected me a lot emotionally. There

came a point where I did not find peace in anything until I decided to look for what I did not have elsewhere because my house was like hell. I started going out at night to places where there were drugs. And

alcohol and I started doing that because it made me feel better. I was creating a vice that later I could not stop. I got away from my parents and best friend. I felt alone because I told my best friend that I did not want to see her again and that she would never speak to me

"I DIDN'T WANT TO THINK MY PARENTS WERE GETTING SEPARATED."

again.I missed my best friend so much I hardly went to school. There came a time when I couldn't take it anymore. That day I decided to go to the house of my best friend Vicky to look for her and to apologize. She was a little disappointed but even so she forgave me. We spent the day in the beauty salon and restaurant talking. In the afternoon I told her that I had to tell her something.

Vicky said, " What happened?". Salma responded, "I don't know whether to tell you...."

"TELL ME WHAT'S HAPPENING!" Vicky demanded. Salma responded, "It's that all this time I've been taking drugs" Vicky asked, "What?! But why did you do that?!"

Salma responded, "I don't know, I just felt alone and I didn't find another way out". Vicky said, "Don't worry, I'll help you get out of this, that's what friends are for".

In the next few months, Vicky helped me with my rehab and helped me with my homework. We graduated together and went to college, and I felt good about myself. I accepted that my



parents had separated but that they both love me and now I have a better relationship with my parents.

CREATED BY LISBETH

“What the hell is this?” - He yelled at me throwing some photos. When I saw them it was Nicklaus and I kissing I looked at my father with terror. My body felt what would happen and I froze. At that moment he punched me so hard that I could not feel the blows that followed him. I knew this would happen one day but what I didn't know was that my father would make me feel so disappointed in myself and I shouldn't be because I always felt proud of who I am.

I spent a whole day lying in bed. On the second day I was still vomiting blood so my mother took me to the hospital with the excuse that I had been hit by a car. They gave her the option to report it but she refused. Of course because what hit me wasn't a car, it was my father.

At that moment the only thing that I have clearer than water is that I am an angel whose wings have been clipped. When my wounds healed my father beat me every day with more intensity than ever repeating like a mantra that he knew it was a bad idea to name me Noah, that I am not his son



and that a son of his would never be a disgusting gay so he took away the gay with blows. One day I literally heard my mental stability break. It didn't feel bad. Rather it was like listening to a cable

break and that cable caused other cables to break until there was nothing to hold me. I am what I am. That will not change even if it hits me until the end of my days. Nicklaus was no longer there to tell me everything It would be fine and my friends were no longer there to make me smile. There was no one.

I filled the bathtub, I entered it and I submerged myself in the cold water and relaxed. I had finally cut what was binding me to life and the last thing I have to do is wait patiently for the peace and freedom that the mors gave me. Everything was so quiet. I opened my eyes and found myself surrounded by white.

I had hoped hell was hotter and less cold. “Hello.” I turned to see who it was and I met a completely unknown person “I am here to explain some things that have happened while you were away. Do you know about Foster Care?” - I wonder. I think this is what they call hell on earth. The person next to me is a social worker who told me that the hospital had called

the social workers to investigate a bit, when they arrived at my house they found me almost dead. That was the idea. In the week that I was unconscious, a trial was held in which my father went to prison and my mother to a psychiatric clinic. My destiny is a new family, mother, father and a brother my age.

I was scared. Scared but at the same time intrigued, scared because I didn't know what kind of people would be in charge of me from now on, but intrigued because in my heart I told myself that no one could hurt me more than I had already received. I closed my eyes and let the air fill my lungs. “Everything will be fine,” I told myself. “Everything

will be fine because I will make it so”.

I am the reincarnation of control. I am loving and I love to give my love to the world but I am also weird although I do not like to see people suffer rather I like sadism in books. After all, books are for exploring the unexplored.

“AT THAT MOMENT THE ONLY THING THAT I HAVE CLEARER THAN WATER IS THAT I AM AN ANGEL WHOSE WINGS HAVE BEEN CLIPPED.”

CREATED BY MARTIN



SAMANTHA

CREATED BY MELANY

“Why do you always get into your family’s life?! stop you do not decide with whom each person has to join or what they have to do”. “Focus on your life and that of your children that others focus on theirs so your family does not want to know about you because you always think you are the greatest in everything!”

Today I saw my controlling uncle. He is controlling to me because he thinks that all the family has to do what he says. On This day I saw my cousin and my auntie that I haven’t seen in a long time. Hadn’t seen them nor had I spent good moments with them. Also when it has been a long time that you didn’t see your family and that you get to have a day to spend a day that you will be seeing all of your family members it makes you feel good. I will never forget those moments spent with the family because these moments are what keep me motivated.

I went to visit my family, it was one of the moments that I will always have memories of because I no longer do it for a long time. I miss my old family now. It is as if we were

all strangers. My uncle only wants them to do what he says. He is an enemy of almost the whole family. He only says do this and speaks badly of the family. He always wants to try to look for problems. In the end, we are all family but we do not share. For me, it is as if I only had my sister and my family godmother here.

“How can you change your behavior? You can change the way that you express your opinion about other people and don’t go into the life of other people”. It is not your business to try to be a better person!! “Your life is going to be better”.



MY LIFE

CREATED BY MIRLEMNY

Hi, I'm a girl who grew up without her father's love. I have two brothers, Maik and Felipe. I'm depressed from time to time, but I'm always fine again, and my name is Charlotte, I am Colombian, I am 10 years old. My mom and dad separated when I was 6 years old and then my mom had to go live in the United States due to economic situations. She left me and my brother with our grandmother. Then 2 years passed and she met a person and finally she was able to do her papers so she could take us to live with her. At 14 years old I went to live with my mom in New York. (The Bronx) Then I started taking an English course so that when I start school it wouldn't be so difficult for me being able to do homework and talk to my teachers I worked hard to

“MY MOM AND DAD SEPARATED WHEN I WAS 6 YEARS OLD AND THEN MY MOM HAD TO GO LIVE IN THE UNITED STATES DUE TO ECONOMIC SITUATIONS.”

learn to speak English at 18, I graduated from high school and applied to several universities and was accepted at Hostos and John Jay the career, I have always wanted to study is law because my mom and my aunt studied that career and they inspired me to want to be a lawyer but, there was a problem because at that time my mom didn't have enough money to pay for college and it was a bit financially for me to go to college. Then at 25 I graduated from university at 28, I was already a lawyer and I no longer lived with my mom, I bought my first car and I already had a steady job and loved my job, then I met the father of my two girls, we had a twins, then at 32 I married my husband



it is a very nice man. He is Dominican and he is an English teacher. He bought me a vacation house in Miami and every year we go on a family trip and we have a great time. And we had a lot of experiences together because we travel a lot. We went to Cancun, Italy and we had a great time. We went to the Dominican Republic because I had never

been. I took him to Colombia because he hadn't been there either. We have a lot of good times. We go to the park a lot and we have a lot of good times.

CREATED BY MOUHAMED

“Hahahaha loser you are never gonna be a good player. Just a loser as always,” the others start laughing at the boy. The first time Lucas played basketball he was so bad at it. So he decided to go play with the squad that was there so they could help him get better. They let him play and then they passed the ball to Lucas then he threw the ball at the basket but the ball was not even close to going into the basket. So he kept trying to make a shot. But also the way he was shooting was not good.

Someone stepped up and said, “Yoo be nice to stop telling him that. He’s just a new player, probably he doesn’t know how to play.”

“How would you feel if someone was treating you that way?”

He asked the boy what his name was. The boy said, “My name is Lucas and what is your name?”
“My name is John.”

Then a random guy said “Hahahaha loser you are never gonna be a good player. Just a loser as always,” the others started laughing at the boy that time.



Then Lucas said, “Maybe he’s right, I will never be a good basketball player.” “I don’t know what I was thinking.”

John said, “No, don’t say that. You know the beginning always can be hard but keep on training hard and you will get better and better. “Come on, let’s go to the other side. I will show you how to play basketball.” John started showing Lucas how to shoot, how to dribble, and how to lay up. John was helping him to get better.

Lucas asked John, “Why are you helping me?”

John replied, “Well you see I was just like you the time I started playing basketball. They used to bully me, people usually did not let me play with them so you see I know how it feels to be bullied.” Lucas said, “Okay let’s keep playing.”

“Alright here shoot the ball”. After they finished they got to rest and talk about life.

John said “Lucas, promise me that from now on you will work harder and keep on moving forward no matter what and one more thing don’t ever let anybody get to you.”

“YOU KNOW THE BEGINNING ALWAYS CAN BE HARD BUT KEEP ON TRAINING HARD AND YOU WILL GET BETTER AND BETTER.”

So from then on, Lucas kept training and kept getting better and better. One day he got a letter that would change his life. The letter was from UCLA college, one of the top basketball colleges. Lucas made it to the NBA; he was the first pick to win the NBA championship three times. One time Lucas happened to run into a homeless

guy that looked familiar to him and the homeless man turned out to be Jay, the guy who told him, “Hahahaha loser you are never gonna be a good player. Just a loser as always.” Jay was about to run and Lucas said, “Don’t run. I will not hurt you.” Lucas teaches him a lesson that you should always be kind to others.

ASTRO BOY

CREATED BY RAFAEL

I am from the future, the time traveler. I come from the universe, escape enemies and travel to another planet where there are more time travelers and I was created as a robot. I didn't believe my parents that I am a normal human at first. Everything was different, my parents didn't tell me the truth about what was happening.

I didn't understand what was happening for

a few days, the guard went looking for me to get to where we came from, so I decided to hide so they wouldn't see me and I jumped into a boat. I saw a boy just like me. Then I walked in front of the boy and the boy ran away and so I went after that boy to talk to him but I couldn't find him.

"Where did he go?" Then I went to look for him to talk about what was going on and again the guardians passed almost in front of me and we



hid inside a barrel together so that the guardians couldn't catch us. So later when the guardian passed by, we decided to go to another place to talk about the problem we have with our families and the boy said, "How come we have to run away from home to be safe?"

And 6 days later my friend and I went looking for a spaceship to go back home to our planet.

But on the way to find the spaceship, they saw the evil enemies! I said, "We are the heroes who can fix this whole problem so that our parents are proud of us.

The boy replied, "Reward me that everything would be fine and I don't want this to go wrong again. I'll stay out all the time. I just want to be with my family."

I answered, "I promise you, but come on we have to go where the spaceship is to confront the enemies. We don't have to give up." We go together and when we get to where the spaceship is, the spaceship has broken down!

"Oh no! The spaceship is damaged."

But the boy says, "Don't worry, let's make arrangements to go to our houses. Then I decide to go get something to fix the spaceship so we can go home and fight the enemies. Everything is now back to normal.

I smile and say, "We'll be together after all this and always save everyone. I promise we'll be together and be friends."

"EVERYTHING WAS DIFFERENT, MY PARENTS DIDN'T TELL ME THE TRUTH ABOUT WHAT WAS HAPPENING."

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

CREATED BY RASEL

"I can't afford anymore. I am paying from my savings" these are the words I hear from my parents. I was breaking inside already! Everything was fine, why did everything suddenly

change and make things worse?! I was not happy to move because my parents wanted to move from this house that we currently live in! It is a beautiful house with a nice living room, nice bathrooms, nice bedrooms, and a kitchen. But they still want to move because they "can't afford it". I was already having nostalgia. All the memories in my home would soon become distant!

When you are used to living in a beautiful perfect house, going to a new house that's not as big or as beautiful as this house would be very hard to live there happily. I would remember these sleepovers, my cousins

would come and we would be laughing till late night with joy and humor. Sometimes they would come for parties as well because of the bigger space we have in our house, particularly that living

room. That all came with a cost, but the owner is so friendly he really does take care of the house and is always there to fix things we ask for.

It's October 28th and it's a Friday and we are moving in a few days. Friday as always is a happy day. I am always excited and delighted for the weekend off from school! But as we get closer to moving day I get upset

every time I think about it. I think about the memories again. School ended. I am heading out of school and thinking about our house, the memories, etc. I am getting overwhelmed. At this point

"AT THIS POINT I WISH I HAD THE POWER TO VANISH ALL MY DELIGHTFUL MEMORIES SO THAT I DIDN'T HAVE TO GO THROUGH THIS DEPRESSION."

I wish I had the power to vanish all my delightful memories so that I didn't have to go through this depression.

But the next morning I go for a walk outside to get some fresh air and that's when I meet the unexpected! I hear this guy asking a neighbor for a

roommate because his house caught fire and burnt and he needs a room. That's when I started wondering what if my dad rented him a room since he urgently needs it. And since I also don't want to move from this beautiful house. So I approach him and tell him that I

have a room and want to rent it out but I didn't tell him for sure because I don't know if my parents will agree to rent out a room. So I rush and tell him to follow me to my house with both of us fingers crossed and I can hear from his voice saying "hopefully I get it this time" as if he desperately needs it and has been

looking elsewhere but couldn't get one yet! I get home and slowly ask my dad "This guy wants a room for rent. His house caught fire the other day and he really needs it," adding "I also love this house and don't wanna move" with a sad voice from the kitchen I saw my mom coming and after hearing that my mom

agreed so did my dad and the next thing I did was hugged my dad and this stranger without who it wouldn't be possible. I was as pleased and joyful as I can be.



DON'T STOP DREAMING, AND SHOW WHO YOU ARE

CREATED BY RENIA

My name is Renia Bonifacio, I am a native and raised in my country Honduras, Central America. About 5 years ago, I came to the United States. And start my new life. I arrived in that country, with the purpose of being able

to continue dreaming, and growing, perhaps emotionally, and mentally.

But I, and many people with our use of conscience, we start dreaming about many things since we were little, of course. I came to think and perhaps in yourself

you came to think, What will I be in life? Who am I to be someone better in life? How will I achieve that in life? What will people say about me.? And personally I have been through that situation in my time, and



still from time to time witnessed it in situation mentally. To think and observe myself, thinking a lot when I was still in my country, even when I am in that country. I used to think about a lot of things. How would I become the person

I am now and how will I be the person I will be one day? But one of my mottos is, trusting in God and in myself, and I still trust in myself, because if God gives me the opportunity to be, I have to do it and not give up, nor think about what

the other people around me will say . One of my battles to grow with myself is not to stop dreaming. And run after my dreams, never stop ringing, no matter how much you feel or witness a negative

mentality, or rumors of people that don't matter. That is one of the paths to happiness. And don't listen to what others say, what they think, what they do, just try to be happy, or stay happy. Because there are people who come to tell you that you will not be that person you want to be, or that you will not reach

that goal of your dreams. Because unsuccessful people don't want to see one succeed, grow and achieve what they want most in life. That's why 90% of unsuccessful people only cling to the reality of their mind, and the rumor of the people around them. We as young people, children, dreamers and fighters, do not let ourselves be carried away by those people

who make our lives impossible to follow, making us feel blinded. I'm brunette, with Afro hair, I speak another language, I have a different skin color, and I'm not ashamed of it. That makes me stronger And he advised them that one of the points, to go far in life, Just be yourself, and Believing in yourself, even if people throw salt at you, so as not to continue advancing, Let that gossip alien to

people , be a shield for you, an energy to continue in the midst of the storm. Although it doesn't look easy, because many struggling people begin to feel despair, discouragement, depression. Practically alone, without direction, it is not easy to think about believing in yourself again, but I encourage you to

keep going, to try again. No matter how many times you fall down, get up, face reality, and the negative gossip of the people around you. And you will see the fruit of your struggle, and your suffering, no matter how old you are, your character, religion, color, etc. May that be an encouragement to move forward and achieve your dreams, and be

happy in life. And silence the mouths of many who do not trust you or who do not trust me. Because to achieve something in life, it is loving what you do and not giving up.

"...WHAT WILL I BE
IN LIFE? WHO AM
I TO BE SOMEONE
BETTER IN LIFE?
HOW WILL I
ACHIEVE THAT IN
LIFE? WHAT WILL
PEOPLE SAY
ABOUT ME?"

THE OLD MAN MYSTERY

CREATED BY ROMALDO

One night a little kid was going to the store. Suddenly a car approached him and 4 men got down from the car and took him with them to a mansion on the hill. To talk to an old man. The old man gave him something to drink.

McClovín was a kid who was 14 years old and liked to play with his only friend Rubius; he also had a lovely family that consisted of his parents and his little sister. McClovín lived in a small town where not many people lived there so it was a very chill place but the one thing that bothered everyone was a huge mansion on a hill where an evil old man lived there with his workers. Many people were scared of him due to all the rumors everyone said about him. Rumors such as that he experimented with people and similar things like that. McClovín was a very curious kid who liked to explore. The small town really loved him. In the monthly celebration

"MCCLOVIN WAS A KID WHO WAS 14 YEARS OLD AND LIKED TO PLAY WITH HIS ONLY FRIEND RUBIUS..."

of the town the old man went to a party located in the square of the town and he sat down in the middle of the plaza. Many people kept as far away as possible except for McClovín. This surprised the old man and he asked him "Why didn't you get away from me?"

McClovín answered, "Because I don't really think you are a bad person".

The old man got up, got in his car, and left for his mansion. The party continued as if nothing had happened. A month went by and it was the night before the monthly celebration of the town. McClovín's dad sent him to the store to get some milk for his little sister. While he was on his way a car approached him and 4 men got down from the car and took him with them. They covered his vision while they were driving to the destination.

McClovín was scared and he asked them "Where are you taking me?" Silence nobody answered. The car stopped and the men escorted him to a table where they sat him down. Everything was quiet and he heard the old man from the plaza say "Take his cover off".



McClovín was surprised and asked him to let him go.

The old man said, " No, I'm going to show you that I'm not a bad person as everyone says."

McClovín had nothing to say. While all of this was happening in the mansion, McClovín's parents were worried that he didn't get home so they went out to look for him and they also told Rubius . In the

mansion, the old man had presents for McClovín and they also did many fun activities. Rubius made the journey up the hill to the mansion and saw McClovín having fun with the old man, He screamed at McClovín "Ey can I join you guys? "

The old man screamed back "yes come". The three of them had fun in the morning McClovín and Rubius went to their house and their family was relieved that they were okay. It was time for the celebration when everyone was reunited. McClovín and

Rubius saw the old man coming and they decided to say something about him. They said " he is a good man who is not as the people think he is "

Everyone was surprised but McClovín explained why they said that. In the end, everyone clapped and they all celebrated together. This is the Reason why we should never judge someone by what other people think or say.



Long time ago in a small village on top of a mountain in the middle of nowhere, there was a warrior called Atreus. His village was at war with another village. The village wanted to take their land because according to the mythology the land was supposed to be blessed with the blood of the gods, and for that they wanted it for them. His story began like this.....

One time Atreus was eating his favorite meal, ramen, but something felt strange in the taste of the soup. He

said, "Something important is about to happen soon. I can feel it," he said. At this time his village was at war, so as soon as he finished his meal, he grabbed his axe. The main general called him to fight and also the rest of them. Because the enemy begins to attack, he lives in a small village in the mountains, so he jumps right into the fight. For a warrior to die in battle is an honor because they think that if you die in battle you will go to valhalla. And so he fought like a god killing everyone of the enemy but he was hallucinating at the same time.

He started to see weird things that he couldn't explain and then he thought that the gods were calling him, so he did his best and fought like he never did before with blood on his face and on the axe. He yelled "I WANT MOREE!!! COME TO ME EVERYONE NO ONE CAN STOP ME!!" but he remained alive, injured but breathing and he questioned why he felt like that once he ended the war, why he was alive and with this weird feeling inside of him. "Did I do something wrong?" he said..... and after a few days he got sick, and he knew that something was different in his ramen.

"THE VILLAGE WANTED TO TAKE THEIR LAND BECAUSE ACCORDING TO THE MYTHOLOGY THE LAND WAS SUPPOSED TO BE BLESSED WITH THE BLOOD OF THE GODS."

So what happened was when he ate the expired ramen he got intoxicated but he didn't know. So he thought that the gods were calling him but wasn't the case so what happened was that he got just sick because of the expired soup that was because when you eat something expired it give you stomach pain an you can get fever and with fever, maybe you can have hallucination and see things that are not in there and because of that he thought that was a call from the gods but all was in his head all along.

A STORY OF MY LIFE

CREATED BY WILBER

In April 2021 I traveled with my mother to our country of origin, which is the Dominican Republic and the reason for the flight was that my grandfather had died in our country for one year and we were going to make a memorable one for the whole family; When we arrived at our destination we had little transport and it was very uncomfortable to be without transport since we could not go to places more remote from our area, so I made the decision to rent a car to be more comfortable and leave without any problem then when I got to home in that car my mom got pretty mad at me because she didn't want me to drive but she was that way because she never knew me driving a car. But a few hours later, after having talked a lot about the

"BUT FOR THE RECORD, I AM NOT IN CHARGE OF THE PROBLEMS OR MISTAKES THAT YOU MAKE FOR BEING DISOBEDIENT AND REMEMBER THAT..."

subject, I told her to trust me, she would ride with me so that she could see that I did have the ability to drive and that I could do it without any problem.

She realized that I knew and had the domain of the situation. She was surprised then she told me, ok you already showed me that you can do it but for the record, I am not in charge of the problems or mistakes that you make for being disobedient and remember that they mother's advice one day you will miss it But even though those words touched my heart

and I was a little worried, I continued to hold it because I was sure of myself. after I talked to her I felt good when she realized that what I wished her was

true because it is an achievement for me and a pride for her as a mother that I am achieving many things without the support of some people specifies I always tried to drive carefully because I did not want to disappoint her , but one day I went to Santiago and it is a long trip , I came in the middle of the night and it was raining and I crashed into another car and I did not know who to call because my friends did not they answered and I was worried because I didn't know what to do, and I didn't want to call my mom because I knew she was going to scold me, but I had no other choice.

I called her and she was very upset because of what had happened. My mom arrived with my family, and we went to the hospital because she had an injury, but in the end I was fine, it was nothing serious, we went to see the other person but he was fine, only the car had damage, we called the insurance, and in the end everything It went well and my mom talked to me and told me that was the

reason why she didn't want me to drive because she was afraid that something would happen to me, but that she would be more careful next time, and she told me that she thanked God that I was okay.



SECOND CLASS CITIZEN

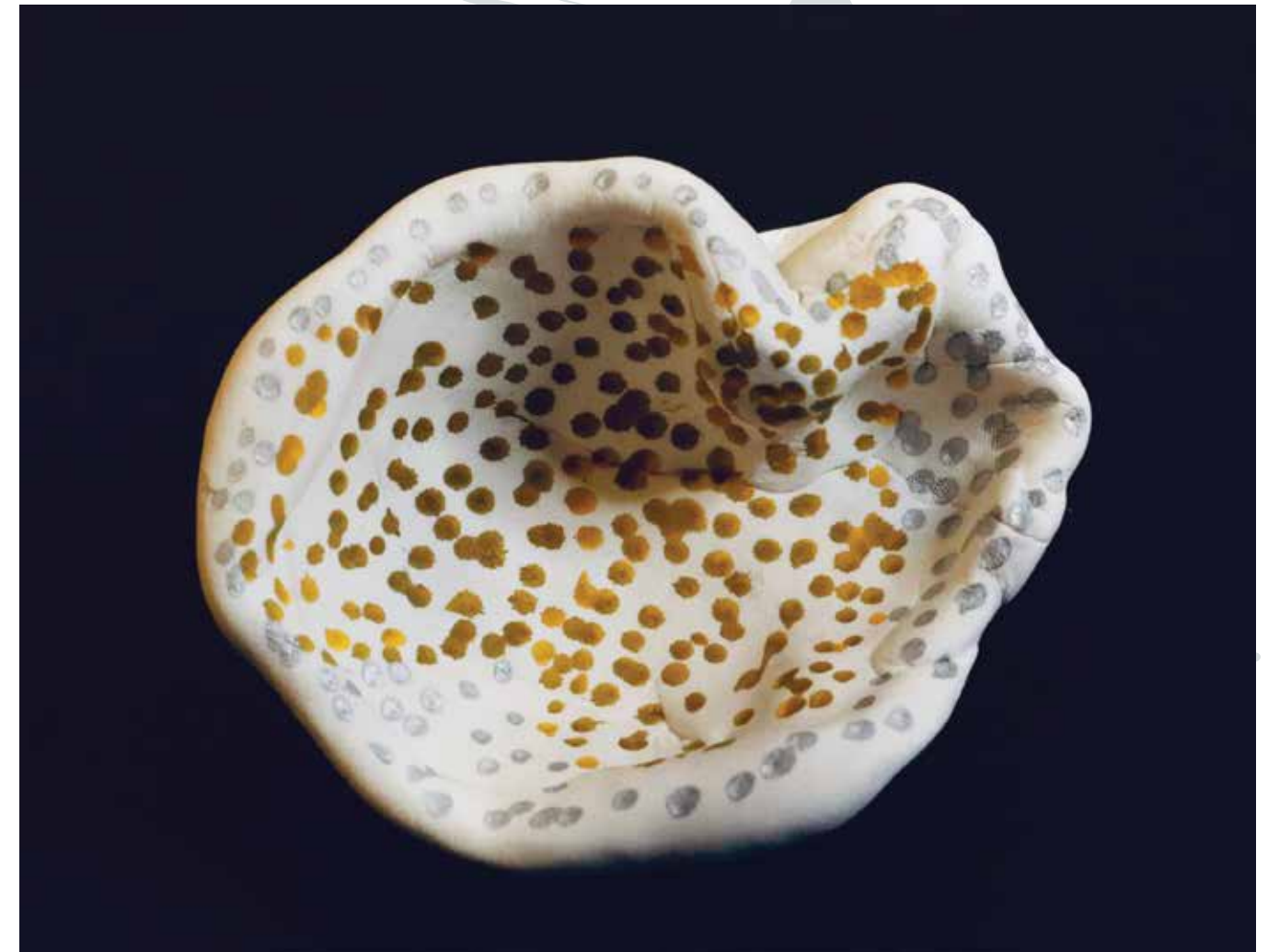
CREATED BY ZAKARIA

"I AM FROM MY MOM, GRANDMA AND FATHER AND BROTHER , BECAUSE THESE ARE THE PEOPLE THAT RAISE ME AND SHOW ME WAYS TO STAY MOTIVATED IN MY LIFE AND ALSO LEARN LESSONS FROM THEM AND TO USE THOSE LESSONS TO STAY INSPIRED IN MOMENTS OF HARD TIMES."

"Mo bre sepes co maka away" I am not cooking for you and you brother. Home feels like a strange place to them as they try not to go inside the house to prevent themselves from these feelings . Them always being the last people to sleep and the first to wake up in the morning , while the other family members are enjoying their sleep and their beautiful dreams.

My name im 15 and my brother name isand he is 20. I am Zompale, a village located in Burkina

Faso in west Africa. Zompale where I was born and I grew up with my grandma and my brother . My brother and I used to take care of the animal because we were the one that didn't have powerful people on our back to give strong speeches or strong enough to defeat the family to win debates We did not ADVOCATE to defend other families member in front of the elder so that we get to be able fit in or get treated like other member of the family or to go to school at a young age as the children or to be like other children of the family. We had to be accused of the negative thing going on around us as stealing , hitting little kids doing all the bad things because why not we were powerless . We have to face poverty and being second class citizens to our own family members because our mother wasn't near to pick our side because mom was in New York in America so that she could know about any of these that where happen to us or all that we were going through with the family member as they talk sweet on the phone with mom so that mom couldn't know what's really going on, but we had our sweet grandma on our side even though she had no power as others she will and stick beside



us . One morning before school the two brother wanted break so they went to the Auntie to ask for food and she reply to them "Mo bre sepes co maka away" ..Words coming out her mouth showing that she really meant them, them looking as if they were strangers to their auntie. Grandma hears her grandkids while tears are falling free from her eyes with unbelieving. As Mom find out that we was doing really bad at school she had to most us to the city which make no difference because we had to live there by ourselves because dad was busy with work so its was basically like we were

living on our own So mom have decided to bring us near her even though she was alone she was still the Hero of our lives as she have always been by giving all she have to be able to bring near her . And now guess who is surprising them.

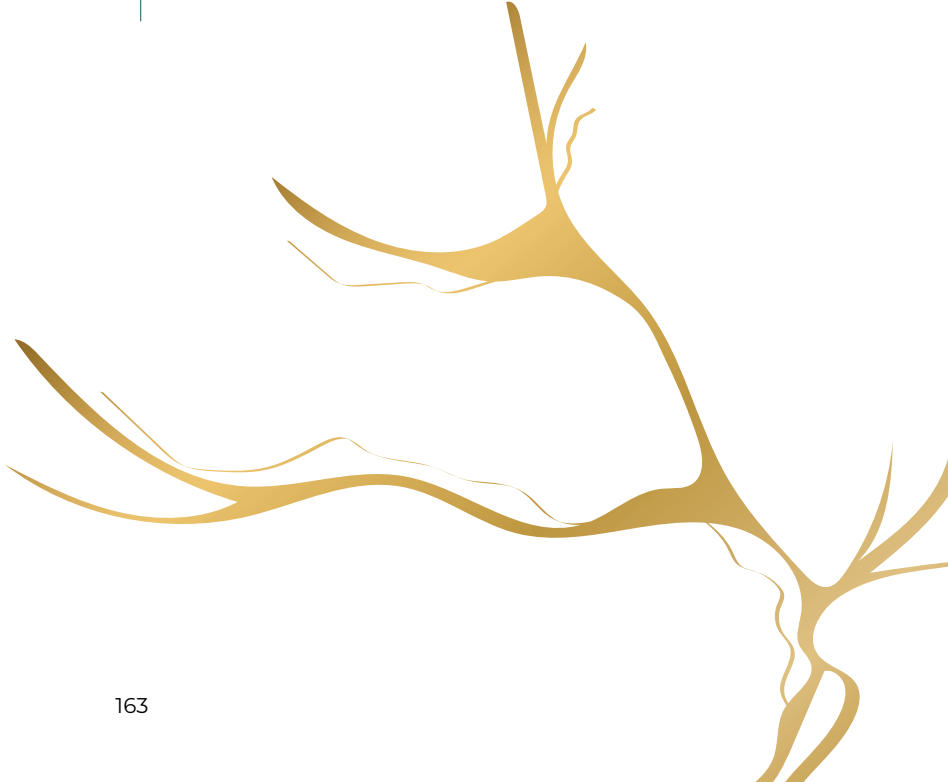
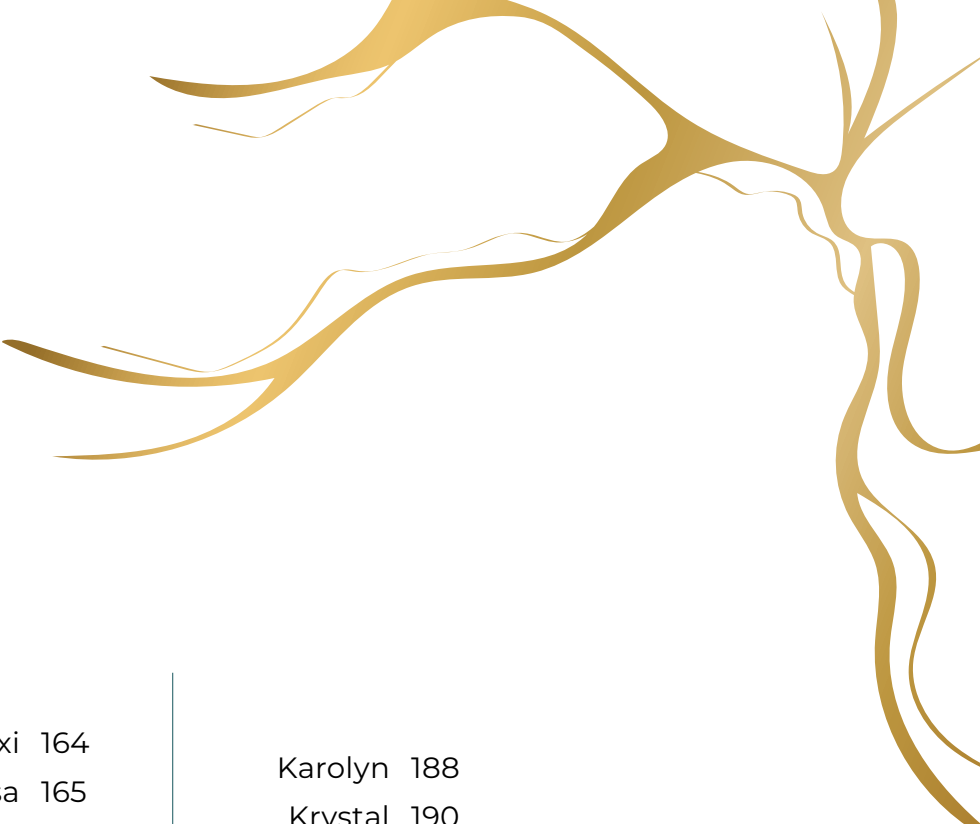


UNTOLD THOUGHTS

CLASS Q



Alexi	164	Karolyn	188
Anarosa	165	Krystal	190
Bass	168	Lauriany	192
Cheikh Ka	169	Magby	194
Crismeiry	172	Ouleye	196
Danny	174	Oumaru	197
Esperanza	176	Oumou	200
Heily	178	Rafael	202
Herlin	180	Willybert	204
Houlaimatou	182	Winston	206
Jonnathan	184	Yeuri	207
Joselyn	186		



CREATED BY ALEXI

The story is about a teenager who dreams of one day playing in the NBA.

The teenager's name is Johan he lives with his uncle his name is Joel and his cousin's name is Alex since he was young because he lost his parents in a car accident that's why he moved in with his uncle Joel liked basketball so he taught him to his niece how to play eventually came to school with the dream that he wanted to get into the NBA basketball but they despised him for his short stature but when he started playing everyone was surprised at how well he played but they still wouldn't let him play they put him on the reserve team so he couldn't play and they harassed him for being small and that dream stupid

"...THEY HARASSED HIM FOR BEING SMALL..."

MY HOPES

CREATED BY ANAROSA

"Why are you taking more if you know you can only take one bag ? " My teacher says with a confused face because I took more than one bag of food. " I'm sorry Ms. Rodriguez , but I'm really hungry right now" I said ashamed, looking at the floor. I was scared she found out that the extra bag of food is for my siblings. Right now I'm just a kid but I'm the older of 3 siblings. In 10 years I will be strong enough to finally defend my mom. We live with our mom and her boyfriend in a very small house with only one bedroom. My mom is always with different men so we don't see her often. I don't remember a day she brought food for us, it was always me

that needed to steal food either from the school or a bodega. Stich "I'm hungry" those words break my heart hearing my sisters telling me that knowing that

I don't have a cent to at least buy pan con salami. I went to the bodega but immediately I saw a poster that said " Hoy no fiamos mañana si" which means that they are not going to give me food and I could pay later. I had to steal the food, they saw me and immediately called the police. and I spent the night at the police station.

My mind wasn't quiet

because I knew that I left my sisters at home and hungry. A police officer gave me cookies with cheese and an orange

"I DON'T REMEMBER A DAY SHE BROUGHT FOOD FOR US, IT WAS ALWAYS ME THAT NEEDED TO STEAL FOOD EITHER FROM THE SCHOOL OR A BODEGA."

juice I didn't eat. I immediately took the food and hid so in the morning I could give it to my sisters. But when I arrived home I saw a man beating my mom so I immediately reacted and I grabbed a baseball bat and started to hit him. He started running but my mom needed a doctor but we couldn't afford it so we went to my school nurse. The school is right in the corner. The school nurse called a counselor so I started telling her everything while they took care of my mom. She started crying because she knew me since I was born but I didn't know that that was my biggest mistake ever. She called ACS and they took me and my sisters. I

was scared that they would separate us because they are all I have and I have been taking care of them since they were born.

My biggest fear happened, they sent my sister to a girls orphanage in

another state and they sent me to a boy orphanage. I just wanted to see my sisters but I couldn't because I didn't know where I could find them. But something that gave me a little bit of peace was that at least I knew

that they were eating better. Months later I was watching the news and I saw two little girls that died in a river drowning. I was shocked, and when they presented the girls' photo I immediately noticed that the girls were my sisters. My heart broke like a glass plate falling from a big building. I couldn't believe it until I saw my social worker coming to me crying. I ran as fast as I could.

I didn't want to hear what I already knew, so I ran to my room and I locked the door. I start crying telling myself "Everything was your fault". Now I'm alone in this cruel world without my hopes.

"I WAS SHOCKED, AND WHEN THEY PRESENTED THE GIRLS' PHOTO I IMMEDIATELY NOTICED THAT THE GIRLS WERE MY SISTERS."



CREATED BY BASS



MR. BLACK

CREATED BY CHEIKH KA

I can't sleep. I can't sleep knowing the things I did to my family and everything I put them through. My life doesn't have meaning and also, I have evil spirits that live inside and will follow me for the rest of my life. Everything I came in contact with is destroyed. In the eyes of my family, there's love but no trust. A manipulative, lying, deadbeat dad, cruel, evil, and careless. Those are the words by which my family and friends describe me. Some say it already, and some want to say it. But I can't blame them for feeling that way like I used to. I chose alcohol over the wellness of my family. My name is Mr. Black, and I'm a recovering alcoholic. What started out as fun ended as a living hell. When I first started drinking, I didn't notice the effect I had on my family until I was sober. Afterwards I felt bad, I cried and swore up and down that this was

"I CAN'T SLEEP.
I CAN'T SLEEP
KNOWING THE
THINGS I DID TO
MY FAMILY AND
EVERYTHING
I PUT THEM
THROUGH."

my last time. Do you believe it? I don't, but my wife and children do. From there everything became a game to me. One or two weeks without drinking and being the best father and husband I know I can be. The next day, the same old habit was back. A week sober then it became a day sober, then never sober. Easy to say to myself that there was nothing wrong with the way I drank. Easy to say to myself again that I had it under control. Unlike my father who blacked out the whole day.

Excuse after excuse, I woke up in the middle of the night, no wife, no kids. Just a piece of paper basically saying that she and the kids can't take any more. Same old me thinking she will be back with the kids if she really loves me. A week went by with no wife, no kids. Months went by the same thing and more problems. No more job, no

more house, no more money, no more car, most of all no more family. I sold everything I had just to support my addiction. That escalated from alcohol to cocaine use or any other drugs I could get my hands on the street. This sad face might look familiar to you because I was that stranger that stayed outside of the store or restaurants asking you for change. Also, I might look familiar again because I was that guy who slept on the train, people looked disgusted when

"MY FIRST WEEK IN JAIL WAS HORRIBLE. IT FELT LIKE MY BODY WAS FIGHTING AGAINST MY MIND."

they saw me, and some of them even ran away from me. It didn't bother me at all because my family felt the same. Years in the street doing drugs and being drunk. All I cared about was how to get it.

One day I went to the store where I usually go to steal food and sell outside but this time wasn't my lucky day. I was caught and a few minutes later the police came and they took me to jail. I will never forget that night was the longest night I ever had. One thing that was in my mind was, I NEED A FIX, I

NEED A FIX. The next day, I pled guilty to a six-month sentence for petty theft.

My first week in jail was horrible. It felt like my body was fighting against my mind. I felt sick and also threw up every day. Being in jail is another level of crazy where everything changes and you have no control over it. That place will make you lose sight of humanity. People who face murder or attempted murder are kings and. Even the guards were scared

of them. I was trying to survive without drugs, and to stay alive. Unlike the 2 unlucky guys I witnessed getting

stabbed to death. Now I no longer think of drugs, I just wanted to get the hell out of there. It was time for me to face the reality and finally admit that I had alcohol and drugs problems. I remember one day one of the guards in jail said I should be proud of myself for being months sober. I looked at him and smiled and silently said to myself does it look like I have a choice? I'm in jail, I'm in jail.

A day here feels longer than a year. Had a lot of time to think on how I would start over, and also wrote lots of apology letters to my wife and kids with

no possibility of forgiveness. Or even any chance of getting a response back. But I don't have the right to be mad at them. In my last month in jail, I was in my tiny bed thinking about what I was going to do when I got out. That made me think twice if I ever wanted to get out because there were lots of responsibilities, and problems out there waiting for me. After I fell asleep for a second. The mail-man came and said "mr.black, mr. black you got a letter here"

" This must be a mistake", I say. Then he showed me the name and said that's you right?

Yes ,Yes, Yes that's me", with a big smile on my face. Two days went by and I hadn't opened it yet because I was scared that this letter would have a lot of nasty words. I deserve all of it. I took a moment and breathed deeply. My eyes could

not believe what I saw. Two tiny photos of the most beautiful newborn Baby girl I had ever seen. I read the letter. Surprisingly, it came from my son, stating that his daughter's name is Aby. Also he wants her daughter to know her grandfather and to fix our relationship.

Since then we speak daily and my son even helped me get an apartment and also helped me find a job. Now I am seven year sober, and the relationship of my children has gotten better.



CREATED BY CRISMEIRY

So many reasons but love is the real reason...

How will I die? I wonder. How that voice inside my head tells me to do it..

"Take that knife and stab yourself, jump from that

bridge that you

see everyday

on your way

to take the

therapy or

instead of

that, one day I

will be valiant

enough to

swallow every

single pill

that is in that

bottle in my

bathroom

room which

the doctor

recommends to keep my mind as a

normal individual. That will be epic, die

with something that it's supposed to

keep my head in the right place. But

for now I know one thing, something

works against me in my head. I Used

to be a normal girl from Phoenix. If we

erase those ghosts that I used to play

as a child. Those 7 times that I killed my

pets just to see how their souls flew out

of their tiny bodies. So easy to destroy.

I will be normal I guess. Since I have

memories I remember everyone being

scared of being around me or me being

around their children. I have to do home

school, and the only people that I used

to see beside

my mom and

dad was my

psychologist

April, she was

a beautiful

girl. But even

though we

were good

friends she

never will

understand

my way of

seeing the

world. It was

fun to have

her around. I

remember being so happy when I was

10 years old because during wednesday

she would come to my house and play

with and talk about me. I was priority. But

one day I invited one of my other friends

and he told me to stab her in her left eye.

She never came over again. That's sad I

guess. Next week I'm turning 21 and I'm

about to give a big surprise to those who

have always been there for me, especially



Marseus. He is the funny one. We are in love now. He is 100 years older than me.

He died when he was 17 years old ,but his soul has been in this house 87 years

as a suffering soul. He has followed me since I was a kid since I was the only

one who can see him. But now he talks to me. He is the second boy that I have

met in my whole life. The first one was that boy that

I threw down stairs during

christmas dinner. It was hilarious

everybody saw that. They were terrified but for

me it was the funniest thing ever. But that

poor boy was beaten and in pain. That is not

how I want to look. So I have to find a less painful

way to die.

Today is my birthday. Since

I'm not normal,

no one does normal things for me any

more. Instead of giving me a gift for

my birthday I will give me a gift for my

birthday. Dying for love will be the best

reason why. I want to be with Merseus

now that I'm already 21. So we decided to

take a walk to the river in my backyard

to jump in the same water swirl where his body had been all this time. He told

me that when two people die in the same place they stay together. I will

finally be able to see and give him a kiss in my human form for the first and last

time. Those were my thoughts last week.

Today I'm 21 and still alive. My nosy

neighbor saved me. Anyways, I will try again

next week.

"DYING FOR LOVE WILL BE THE BEST REASON WHY. I WANT TO BE WITH MERSEUS NOW THAT I'M ALREADY 21. SO WE DECIDED TO TAKE A WALK TO THE RIVER IN MY BACKYARD TO JUMP IN THE SAME WATER SWIRL..."

CREATED BY DANNY

My character is a child who has no family. He is alone because his parents died when he was born. A demon that was inside his mother came out and killed his father and mother leaving Naruto alone. But his father loved him. He told the leader of his area to take care of Naruto but he did not say anything about putting him in an orphanage where they did not want him because he thought he was a demon

They think that he is a demon because when Naruto was born the demon fox that killed his parents and then fell into Naruto's body. But his father before he died to protect the village but he was not the demon that is inside him but as he kiera the The people of the village thought that he was a demon just because he had the fox inside the people they

hated the fox because he killed many people in the village, many families, sons, daughters, and that is why the people hate the fox so much and therefore They hate Naruto because he thinks he was the fox and they mistreated him.

When they thought that naruto was a demon they did not help him at all they gave him damaged food or other products that were hardly useful anymore they sold them at a higher price if he wanted to buy something they mistreated

him for anything they gave him an apartment in a building five stories when he moved to the building the people who lived in the building moved out of the building and the people of the village attacked his house many times and the

"THEY THINK THAT HE IS A DEMON BECAUSE WHEN NARUTO WAS BORN THE DEMON FOX THAT KILLED HIS PARENTS AND THEN FELL INTO NARUTO'S BODY."

village leader never did anything to stop what was happening with naruto.

He doesn't do anything for the people who mistreat Naruto, the only thing that helped him was that he gave him some money that wasn't enough to keep him until the next month, he was hungry and there was never hot water. in his apartment naruto of him could never take a shower with hot water it was always with cold water at night when he was very cold he had to take a shower because it was very cold Naruto was growing up with the people around him hating him. for something that he never wanted but people did not understand

that he was just a boy who did not hurt anyone he was still good with the people of his village he never treated anyone different always when he grew up he became stronger and enpeso to protect the people of his village.

If people hate you, you are going to continue to improve, no matter what the people are saying.



I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU

CREATED BY ESPERANZA

My grandmother always said "in life you have to be happy, not perfect." Since my father died from cancer, my family and I have had some difficulties because my mother works all day and we hardly see her anymore, my grandmother comes a few times a year and we don't see her as before. My family is separated but still some day I think we'll be together like before. I am Sofia and I am 15 years old. I lived in Venezuela but my mother was offered a job in another country and we moved to the United States in 2012. This has been a bit difficult for my mother, my brother and me. But despite everything

I love this city because the school is so beautiful with a huge library. My 10 year old brother Carlos has been very good with sports, while my mother continues working hours and hours to be able to support this family of three. My mother does not know that I hear her cry at night for the death of my father, she cries and cries and I understand it because we all need my father back. Two years have passed after that tragedy, but it seems like a few months ago. , I am strong for her and my brother, and I try to help her in whatever way I can. We have been in the United States for a year and my mother met a man and he seems very

happy. I like that she shares time with him so that she no longer thinks about my father's death.

After a few months, my mother says that she is going to marry this man. What she did not know was that he was on drugs. I did not want my mother to fall for this, but it has been about

two months and she is always smoking, I do not know what to do. I have to do something as the older sister, take care of my brother. I want him to have a happy and healthy life. I can no longer hide things, everything gets out of control! I need help, I am about to give up, I can't, I can't!

My mother got lost in this vice and stopped going to work. I thought that this did not affect me but I lowered my grades, my brother is depressed, and my mother does not leave the room. Finally, the neighbors called Child Services. Everything became complicated and they said that we cannot be with people like that and that they will do everything possible to separate us from my mother. Several months and we are in an orphanage, my brother and I. This is

a difficult process for both but hopefully we will be adopted together. We haven't seen mom, I don't know what happened to her, they don't give information here.

This is a nightmare. My brother, Carlos left with a family, I hope that he will be fine. They will take care of him and give him love as he deserves it. When I get out of here I will look for him, I will tell him how much I love him and I will not let him suffer again.

It has been a year and my adoption process is almost ready, I turned 17 and I continue studying. When I leave here I will ask permission to go visit my brother, I want to be with him.

My head is full of memories, like when I was in Venezuela with my grandmother and brother. She prepared for us delicious cookies with chocolate and we watched a movie together. I want to go back in time.

I already left, I'm very happy, I can finally be with Carlos, he is already very old, 12 now, and I told him that for the next time we meet we will go to our favorite place, for an ice cream sitting in front of the fountain talking and recording our happy moments. For now I will study so that when I grow

up I can have my brother with me and not far away, live in the same house, no longer separate. I have no grudges with my mother, maybe she wanted the best for us but despite everything we love her, we hope to meet again. So take away from life, sigh, smile and move on, if you fight to move on you will achieve it and sooner or later arrive.

"IN LIFE YOU HAVE TO BE HAPPY, NOT PERFECT."



LIFE CRAZY WITH ADDICTIONS

CREATED BY HEILY

I remember the day in the park I was alone with my marijuana. After one hour my sister called me and I said, "Hi, how are you?"

And she said, "Where are you?" "In the park with my friend," I replied. She said, "Ok I will go to the park and I want to see you there!"

I was scared because at the moment I was high and my eyes were red for the marijuana and she didn't know that I smoked marijuana. I said, "No, please, I want to stay alone for one hour because you know that sometimes I like to stay alone in the street." But at the moment my sister was already in the park and I was in shock, because I was so high and I just put my head down. My sister said where are your friends? I just stayed silent.

Well, after a few minutes my sister told me that It's time to go home. "I know what you are doing. Don't be scared, I won't tell our parents anything about this," my sister said.

I just said, "Thank you." After a few days, I was very sure that my sister was going to tell my parents. Something led me to marijuana. I'm not sure what it is but when I'm consuming it makes my

mind calmer. I have been consuming it for 5 years. The truth is, I started using it after a year of arriving in the United States. I am 20 years old and I work in a clothing factory 8 hours a day. Sometimes there are problems at work and

marijuana helps me. I do not get along very well with my brothers. I live my life totally alone and I feel fortunate to have my job today. I like marijuana but I know

that in the future I will leave it. I am clear that this addiction will soon bring consequences. That is why I have decided to change soon, not for other people only for me.

One day in the afternoon an elderly person saw me on the street with my very red eyes. She said to me, "Baby, do you accept that I give you very great advice?"

I immediately thought, I know you are going to insult me, but I stopped thinking like that and I said, "Yes of course."

Then that person told me, "Baby you are beautiful, young man. I know you have a problem with marijuana." I said yes.

She told me, "Do you hear how my voice sounds?" I said yes. "What happened to you?" She answered, "When I was about your age, I used a lot of marijuana and today I have many

problems which are going to end my life soon due to cancer, based on all the years that I last consumed marijuana."

I stayed in SHOCK !!! She told me, "I want you to change the life you have so that you have a great future and you have no harm." I said, "Thank you very much. I promise you that I will try to change." Today I continue with my marijuana because it is a vice but little by little I have been leaving it, my parents still do not realize. I know that I can leave it and move on and get a lot of things in my future.

"NO, PLEASE, I WANT TO STAY ALONE FOR ONE HOUR BECAUSE YOU KNOW THAT SOMETIMES I LIKE TO STAY ALONE IN THE STREET."



NO ONE KNOWS WHAT HE HAS UNTIL HE SEES IT LOST

CREATED BY HERLIN



“A person cannot be happy and sad at the same time.”

My name is Edgar. I was born in El Salvador.

I love going to the park to buy ice cream or cotton candy and think about my past and how beautiful my family is. But when you are a kid there are things that you don't understand. I remember when my mother called me and told me that she and my dad were going to

divorce. My father no longer came home, the same day my mother told me about her illness, that she had a complicated disease. I did not know how to act. I felt an emptiness in my chest, I could not believe that my mother was the most important person in my life or the reason why I wanted to be someone in life. She is simply not dead anymore. Lately my mother didn't eat anymore and I didn't feel like doing skinny swims too much, there came a point where I didn't recognize her anymore, sometimes

she called me but I didn't answer because I knew I didn't have good news, sometimes I even felt sorry for how she looked .

I came to this country just to look for a better future for me, but above all to get a job and get money for the medicines for my mother. Time passed while I kept looking for work and money when they gave me the news that my

mother died, I could never be anything for her. I feel that same day I also die. After all that I had depression I wanted to take my life. I felt that life had no meaning. I felt I that I was responsible for her death because I promised her things that she

can never achieve or never connect. I'm already an adult, I'm doing better. I just shout at the 4 winds. "Mom, I already have money for medicines." Four months later and too late. I received a call from my dad blatantly asking "How are you? What happened to your mom?"

I automatically told him that he had no right to know about me, much

less about my deceased mother. Upset, I started yelling at him WHY DID YOU LEAVE US ALONE IN A DIFFICULT TIME for her? I cried and told him he was the worst father in the world, that I hated her and that I never want to see him again.

My dad told me that he wanted to see me give him another chance to show that he can improve. I told him that despite everything he was my dad

no matter what. No one chooses where to be born. No one chooses who he wants as a father. No one is born knowing his destiny.

You can buy medicines but not health. You can buy a watch but not the time.

You try to buy

the bed but sleep. You can buy a position but not respect. You can buy a book but not the knowledge.

"I CAME TO THIS COUNTRY JUST TO LOOK FOR A BETTER FUTURE FOR ME, BUT ABOVE ALL TO GET A JOB AND GET MONEY FOR THE MEDICINES FOR MY MOTHER."

STRONGER THAN BEFORE

CREATED BY HOULAIMATOU

I am depression. My heart feels like ice that is melting. I am a person who is always isolated.... just like a cat. I was forced to respect choices without reasons or explanation. I hide what I feel, always smiling at people but when I'm alone it seems like the mountains will collapse on me. One day, I was in my room chilling, and watching movies, when my best friend called. She started to ask me about my day. I replied to her but wasn't feeling her as usual.

"I need to tell you something," whined my BFF to me.

"What's up?" I exclaimed.

"I don't know where to start or how to tell you but anyway I heard my mom saying that your dad got married again. I know it's hard to believe but

that's the case and your dad didn't want you to know yet," She said

Tears fell from my eyes like a waterfall.
"Are you here my love,? Are you crying?"
She pleaded.

"Why is my dad doing this to me? I hate him!" I said.

" Maybe he has his reasons," she answered .

"I don't care what his reasons are but that's unfair!" I replied.

"Babe you know I'll always be here for you and listen to you right no matter what, right." She assured me.

"Why did he marry a second wife? He just divorced from my mom, this shows that he didn't love my

mom and was just pretending."
I hollered.

"I AM
DEPRESSION.
MY HEART
FEELS LIKE
ICE THAT IS
MELTING. I
AM A PERSON
WHO IS
ALWAYS
ISOLATED...
JUST LIKE
A CAT."

The pain I felt was real. It felt like my heart was stabbed multiple times. Broken promises, I felt destroyed, my world fell apart. From there I made it my mission that I'll take care of myself and try to forget all about it. But, I started to write down my feelings and I was so at peace with my heart. Everything I had in my heart I wrote it down and it allowed me to move forward. My pain completely changed into loving writings. I spent like one hour per day writing. My anger flew away like a bird that flew for the first time in the sky and those feelings made me feel good.

One year later I wrote my first book named "Who Am I". The day I published my book, I saw sunshine with blue eyes, curly hair and long lashes. My eyes started to shine right away and my heart was beating millions of times. Time passed and we started to get closer and closer. I felt comfortable with him. He called me all the time to give me advice. He managed to change

my mood from sad to good. Meanwhile the scars that I had in my heart disappeared little by little. He was my better half and filled me with joy. Since then I have become a better version of me. I will never let a man hurt me because I know my worth and my values. Two years later he made me his wife and now I'm the brightest star in the sky.



ACS TOOK AWAY MY HAPPINESS

CREATED BY JONNATHAN

My name is John. I remember that day when I came home after school, I didn't see anyone in my house, because usually my parents used to be there, but that day I couldn't find them. I started eating and after a few minutes, finally my parents arrived home but they didn't come alone, there were more people behind them. Then I saw my parents start crying and at the same time hug me and those people who were behind said "It's time!". Those people took me. I didn't know what was happening and at that moment my mother told me "Sorry son".

I said "sorry about what?". But my parents didn't tell me anything and those people took me away from my parents and my house, and I said to myself probably it's a vacations but

why are my parents crying. Well, when those people and I arrived in their car, there was complete silence and I felt shy because I didn't know who those people were and what was happening. After ten minutes we got out of the car in front of a big building, when we entered I saw a



lot of children. I just stayed silent all the time and those people that were with me told me "this room will be your bedroom". And I said "Oh THANK YOU!". I was so happy because I never had a bedroom only for me.

After a couple of days I made

some friends and they told me their story and at that moment I knew what was happening. Definitely it was not a vacations. And what they told me left me speechless because some of them never saw their parents again. So that caused something in me to change completely. More than ever I wanted to see my

parents but unfortunately I couldn't. So I went to talk to some people who took care of us. The first thing I asked was, "will I see my parents again? Why am I here? What am I doing here? Where are my parents?". They told me to calm down and told me that I was there because my parents didn't have enough food for good health and money to give me what I needed. But I told them that I was happy, that although I didn't have the things that other children had I enjoyed being with my parents, and that for me just being with my parents I already had everything. After listening to everything they told me, I just went to my room. Well, the days passed but I realized

that I was not happy at all. I missed my parents, my house and everything in my neighborhood. I actually thought that I was wasting my time there because I did not have a normal life like other children.

After a couple of weeks my parents finally came to see me. Honestly I was very happy because I could see them again, something that some of my friends couldn't. So I saw them and ran towards them, hugged them and they

hugged me. I told them they had taken a long time to come and see me but I told my parents to put that aside and that I wanted to go home. So I told my parents that I was going to pick up my things and go home once and for all. But my parents told me that I still couldn't go home and I asked why?. They told me it was for my good and my parents left my room. And I was just sad, amazed

and at the same time angry because they were supposed to be my parents and they had to take care of me. However, After that day I saw my parents once a month until I was of legal age. After a while I noticed that my parents no longer came to see me

together but that one came one day and the other another day. Finally that day arrived, I was able to leave that place but when I got home I only found my mother and she told me that my father had abandoned her, so I told myself that ACS instead of helping us, ruined my family and took away my happiness.

"THOSE PEOPLE WHO WERE BEHIND SAID "IT'S TIME!". THOSE PEOPLE TOOK ME."

DEPRESSION IS MY FRIEND?

CREATED BY JOSELYN

After having a bad day, on the way home I ran into my old friend Depression. He invited me to the seashore, out of nowhere the thoughts of what could happen if I ended my life. Time went slowly, my eyes filled with tears, determined to end my life. "MEOW" the sound caught my attention. I turned to see but I didn't see anything. I started walking to find where the sound was coming from. My eyes saw a lonely kitten who was afraid. "I won't leave you alone," I told her.

On the way home I didn't know how they would react and how to tell my parents that I found a kitten because my parents tell me I'm a mess. I have so many insecurities that I'm not strong enough to take care of the kitten. At night my parents arrived in a bad mood. I went down to greet them with a big smile and the moment they saw me the only thing they said was "Can't you see we're tired?"

They didn't let me say anything but I took a deep breath and asked them if I could have a pet?

They told me "What do you want? Don't bother us". So much indifference towards me hurt my feelings. I went up

to my room crying. At that moment I remembered the conversation I had with Depression, "Why don't you end your suffering?" Depression said. "Who are you to say that? I said. "I've always been with you, giving you solutions so you don't suffer, right? I

am giving you the ultimate solution right now. End your life, end your suffering," He said. "You're right, my parents don't even care anyway," I said.

I thought about that conversation many times while the kitten cried in my bed. I felt a slight warmth coming from the kitten towards me. When I saw her, I decided to call her Hope because that's how she makes me feel.

"...OUT OF NOWHERE THE THOUGHTS OF WHAT COULD HAPPEN IF I ENDED MY LIFE."

After school, I ran home as fast as I could and saw the church youth group on the way. I always wondered "Why do they like to go to church?" The more I ran, the happier I felt. I knew that now someone was waiting for me and would be happy to see me. I got home, and as I had imagined, Hope was waiting for me. With her, I feel strong, loved in a way I've never felt before. Days later my confidence grew, but one night my mother received a call informing her that my father had died. My mother was devastated and she unloaded all her anger on me. I yelled at her "It wasn't my fault that my father is dead" and I went to the room. In my room, I felt a heavy weight on my chest. I was short of breath and that's when Depression came back, I didn't know what to do to stop that pain and those suicidal thoughts. I grabbed a knife about to end my life, when all of

sudden I received an unknown text message.

"Hello, I wanted to tell you that God is with you and that whatever happens in your life will never leave you alone. We invite you to church this Sunday."

Those words filled my heart, I didn't understand why. That night my whole life changed. I decided to start going to church. I wanted to know more about God. A girl approached me and said, "I've seen you these days, I sent you a message. I'm glad you read it and that you came."

Time after "Gaia, today we have an event. Will you come?" yelled my new friend I looked at her and said.....



MURDER MOST UNLADYLIKE

CREATED BY KAROLYN

The very first day I learned how to love I realized that there's also a lot to lose. I didn't know this until now that I've spent half of my life in jail for a crime that I didn't commit. I'm innocent for now, after I go back to the streets I may not be. Elias will be the reason why. In the past he used to be the love of my life. He is now the person that I hate the most in this cruel world. Fun fact is that he used to be my other half. I've always viewed myself as being successful in life and having a future together just to get him off the streets for good. I know he's got potential and wants to improve but his friends are a bad influence and are always getting him into trouble.

My school offered me a trip to the USA which was very important to me because it showed me that all my

hard work and dedication was worth it. I saw an opportunity for Elias and told him to come with me. I wanted to show him that by working hard you can achieve anything in life without having



to take a wrong path. He was never the jealous type, until he saw a conversation between me and my counselor. My counselor was just sending me pictures of places that I had visited, and telling me that I should go there too since I had never been to the country. Elias decided to ruin my life by putting drugs in my

backpack during that trip just because of jealousy.

I've spent my whole time in jail planning my revenge and with 3 hours left until my release my game starts. Elias' time ends in 22 hours when I get back to my country and our love story becomes a revenge game. I want to take from him what he took from me. Half of my life. He is in his 40s now. Killing him will be too easy for all the time that I suffered. I have something different in mind since he is a good looking man who loves to play football. I will take from him what he loves the most. His legs. I'm back home in Turkey now and I have been studying his morning routine. So today on Valentine's Day, February 14th I will give him the type of love that I received from him. PAIN and SUFFERING!!!!. Today I'm here for revenge. 7 AM is when his day starts. He always jogs around the park where I get my breakfast. He goes around it 3 times.

It's time to let him know I'm back. He is in his last lap and I'm in my car ready to make him pay. But life has never put things in my favor. I start my car on the way to him and right out of nowhere a big white truck wrecks my car in half displacing my body in 3 different parts. Legs, arms and head. At that moment

I realized that no one can take from me more than what I took from myself. But it was too late. I realize that it is better to let things go than hold hatred our whole entire life.

"THE VERY FIRST DAY I LEARNED HOW TO LOVE I REALIZED THAT THERE'S ALSO A LOT TO LOSE. I DIDN'T KNOW THIS UNTIL NOW THAT I'VE SPENT HALF OF MY LIFE IN JAIL FOR A CRIME THAT I DIDN'T COMMIT."

ISAAC'S POV

CREATED BY KRYSTAL

Family, family, family, some people feel hurt because of them. Some people feel fulfilled. Some people feel lonely when they hear the word "Family". I arrived home from the skate park for dinner. My family and I were eating and suddenly we heard a "Knock knock knock". Dad opened the door. A man and a woman greeted him and said "We are social workers". They went in and checked the bedrooms, our refrigerator. Then, my arms and legs, and took my sister and I away. Our parents were left in distress.

In a week, we were in a different home living with two strangers. 16 year old me felt uncomfortable in this home. You know when you get your clothes wet from rain and you just can't wait to

remove them and replace them with a cozy and dry sweater? I felt just like that. My parents always gave their best for us, and lots of love. However, our parents had low income, they didn't have enough money to buy us food and clothes. But they always had us as a priority. "This

is your new home!" said our foster mother with excitement. That didn't feel like home. Don't misunderstand me. The house, food, and the things they provided us with were awesome. But, we didn't consider it home regardless of

the material things. Those 16 months with our foster parents were bittersweet. I missed my parents, I talked to them every week but that was not enough. The journey was long, but our parents were

"...FAMILY, SOME PEOPLE FEEL HURT BECAUSE OF THEM. SOME PEOPLE FEEL FULFILLED. SOME PEOPLE FEEL LONELY WHEN THEY HEAR THE WORD "FAMILY."



perseverant and able to get economic stability. Finally, my sister and I were able to come back home. We were able to again feel the warm hugs of our parents. Catch up with each other, eat, and laugh. Words cannot describe the encounter. It was like a hot summer day, and you get your face splashed with fresh water. Those 16 months helped my parents to get financially strong. They both found a good paying jobs. A new house and

a car. Now, when I walk into my home I see my mother's beautiful smile. Her smile washes away all the sadness and loneliness that reigned in my heart. Again I lived, I laughed, I cried, I smiled, I dreamed, again.

WHY ME?

CREATED BY LAURIANY

“You are a worthless piece of shit I wish you never were born, it’s your fault that he has left us! I hope you die!” My mom says that while she is beating on me and drinking from her vodka bottle. She thinks it’s my fault that my dad lefts us because I’m gay.

I just stand there asking myself why me? Why is my life so miserable? I crie while she was hitting me and insulting me. After a while, she got tired of hitting me and went to the living room and passed out drunk on the couch. I try to move upstairs to my room but my whole body hurts like hell. When I finally made it to my room I went to my bed to peek out my cat from the floor and fell asleep while crying. The next morning I woke up to get ready for school, I entered my bathroom then I took off my clothes. I look myself in the front of the mirror and

“YOU ARE A
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start crying as I see my body covered in bruises, I can take anymore so I reach out my drawer and pull out one of the many razors that I have and cut myself. This helps me to smooth my anxiety. I

wait until the blood dries out and take a shower. When I get out of the shower I put makeup on my eye bag then put on my uniform and go downstairs.

As I thought, my mom was still passed out on the couch, so I went to the kitchen to put food in Kuro plates until I returned from school. I saw Kuro on the floor. I didn't want to leave my beloved cat. I left for school. When I was entering my classroom, 5 minutes later everybody took their seats as the teacher was coming. The teacher says “morning everyone” then the class starts. The next period is lunch and I sit by myself listening to music, thinking about why

this is happening to me. I feel hot so I lift my sweater for a moment forgetting the cuts in my arms.

I see Luca, our eyes connect. I rapidly turn my head getting embarrassed. I have always liked Luca but I don’t think he would like me back. I feel someone grabbing my arm. “ Haru, why do you have cuts in your arms?”



I start to panic. “It’s nothing,” I say while pulling my arm and start running to an old classroom. Tears start running uncontrollably as I feel so ashamed that the person I like has seen me like this. “ Haru, can you please open the door? I promise you that I will not look down on you, I just want to talk to you”. After 5

minutes I decided to trust him and open the door. He hugs me and I hug him back so hard and the tears start to flow. “Hey, can you tell me what's happening? You are an important person to me. I would like to help you” This was the first time that I decided to trust someone. Calmly I told him everything. “Umm ok we are going to the teacher's office and get you to help” I accepted and we went to my teacher and told him everything.

It's been five months since I was living with my teacher and starting a new life. My mom got arrested. I got the help that I need. Even though sometimes things are not perfect or I don't feel comfortable with myself I try to live

the best I can with Luca and Kuro. If it wasn't for them I don't know what could have happened to me, I'm happy that I decided to trust someone.

LIFE AFTER LIFE

CREATED BY MAGBY

Just like that night, the rain hitting the floor and the smell of wet sand filled Mr. Allen's nose. He was arguing about what decision was better for him and after two hours he decided.

"Hello? This is Axel Allen. I would like to turn myself into the police." That late night changed everything. "The Boss of the Drakarys Mafia Turned Himself to the Police" "10 Years of Prison to Axel Allen, the notorious gemstone dealer is now behind bars." they said. The newspapers wouldn't stop talking about him for a month but they would never know the reason for his decision. He was destroyed, after the murder of his wife



and his son and his kidnaped daughter. He knew having a family in the mafia world wouldn't be easy and look how he ended. That's the real reason he wanted to be free, hoping that when he came out of prison he could at least forgive himself. 10 years later he was free. "Allen is free again, will he go back to those businesses?" "The old Drakarys mafia boss came out of prison" "Was 10 years enough for Mr. Allen?" and just like that, the reporters wouldn't stop talking about him for a month. This man with sapphire eyes is now out of any illegal business. He had made up his mind while he was in prison

and decided to live a normal life. He opened a jewelry store with the name of his kidnaped daughter, hoping she would appear one day and run the store.

Allen decided to visit his son Jasper's grave. It was his birthday The closer he got, the more clear became the shadow standing right in front of Jasper Allen's grave, it was a girl, wearing a black cropped top, inappropriately short pants and high black heels.

"Excuse me?" Allen said, as soon as she turned, he recognized that face, those aquamarine eyes, those three moles forming an upside down triangle. "Ruby?" he asked, "Excuse me, who are you?" This time it was Ruby who talked. "I'm Allen, your dad."

She couldn't believe it. It was her dad after all this time. Ruby told her dad that she was living in a foster home since she was kidnaped. However, the man that kidnaped her also had 5 more kids kidnaped and since that time he has been selling them, getting the money and then taking the kids back to the foster homes and so on. What Ruby was wearing that night was inappropriate for a sixteen year old girl but she had no choice.

That night the ex-boss of the Drakarys mafia decided to bring back his past. There were three elegant men and the Miller sisters, two breathtaking women in that luxurious living room

"SHE COULDN'T BELIEVE IT. IT WAS HER DAD AFTER ALL THIS TIME."

waiting for Allen to explain the plan. Those six powerful people decided to end the horrible business in that foster home. Their plan was to make a deal to buy the 5 kids in order to return them to their families and capture the man in charge of that crime. On a dark night the plan went ahead. Everyone did their part and they succeeded. The kids were safe and the man was in jail.

Allen was with his daughter again. He announced publicly that his daughter was found and that she would be the CEO of "Ruby Gemstone". "The Missing Daughter of the Ex Mafia Boss Axel Allen is Back as a CEO" "How Did Allen Find Ruby After 10 Years In Jail?" "Ruby Allen is Back After 11 Years". You know they won't stop.

HATEFUL MOTHER-LAW

CREATED BY OULEYE

Hate, Hate, Hate that's what my mother-in-law is. Her mission is to make sure that me and her son get divorce. I LOVE my husband and I don't want to leave him but I feel helpless, unsupported by him. The bond he has with his mom is stronger than anything we ever had. I don't want to destroy their relationship but in her eyes, I am every name in the book. She thinks that I am with him because of his money. In reality, I made more money than him. I got married to a man who loves me and who I love too. I decided to spend the rest of my life with him and build a family that I never had. Just him and I. We were the perfect couple for about a few months. Then later, ring, ring the phones ring and here we go again. The devil needs help from her son. Sometimes she lies just to get him away from me.

Making my life with him despite his mother not loving me, having to live with her was difficult but I accepted it because I love her son. She hated me so much that she made things up so that I had problems with my husband. "You don't love my son, you are with him for just his money and not for love," says my mother-in-law. And here I am now, not even 3 months after marriage and I started to have problems with

my husband. He no longer calls me because he believes everything his mother tells him. He listens so much that he forgot what we experienced before getting married. Now he's asking me for a divorce so he can marry the girl his mother wants him to marry. I thought it was over between us because his mother doesn't love me and she often asks him to leave me or to choose between him and me so I told myself that he was going to do what his mother says. but no I was wrong he said yes honey it's true I love you and I also love my mother said my husband, but also our love is stronger than anything and I'm never going to leave you for the things my mother says. I was crying because I knew he loved me but to the point of leaving everything and fighting for me it really surprised me. so you see love is greater than anything we can always save it if we believe in it.



CREATED BY OUMARU

Justin went to an old warehouse, with no one around it. He went late at night. Justin was sweating because it was hot and he was wearing black sweatpants and a hoodie, like drug dealers do, he thought. Justin was feeling scared as he approached the door, because the whole place seemed strange. Justin entered and immediately a tall and big bodyguard started searching him for weapons or worse, cameras. They didn't want any undercover police in there. They checked his ears for mics, and took his phone and smashed it to destroy any possibilities of a GPS connection.

"Yo, that's my phone!" he screamed. "I coulda smashed your head," the bodyguard replied menacingly.

"Right. My bad" lowering his head. The bodyguard then took him to another room to meet the Boss. He saw two

people, but it was obvious which one was in charge... "So do you know how to move this stuff?"

"Yeah, of course. I used to do this all the time" he lied. "I'm gonna give you 5 kilos. Let's see how much you pull in a week. If you make more than Shawn here, you got his spot, and he's

out. If you don't make more, you'll be visiting the graveyard."

"Aight, man, bet," he said, trying to show as much confidence as possible. But inside, he was terrified.

So, he went with the drugs and went to the

cold streets of Philadelphia to sell the drugs that were given to him. He was on the corner selling the drugs that were given to him and things were going really good. He was making his money and he even built a strong team around him.

"HE WENT WITH THE DRUGS AND WENT TO THE COLD STREETS OF PHILADELPHIA TO SELL THE DRUGS THAT WERE GIVEN TO HIM."

The boss who gave him the drugs came to see him and he asked, "How are things going with the kilos?"

He replied "it's going good, I sold about 2 kilos." The boss replied to him "okay continue moving the stuff and make sure to bring back the money to me".

He continued selling the drugs with his team and he got into a situation where there were people trying to take over his corner. He and his team had no choice but to defend themselves and so they decided to go and purchase weapons such as guns. They purchased these illegal guns and used them to scare off the people who were trying to take them out. The other dudes were also equipped with guns and it turned into a gun battle. He and his friends were shooting at the others and even though they were able to hold off the other team for awhile, they lost two members of their own team.

At this point he realized that things were very much real and he wanted out

of the drug game. He went back to the boss having sold 4 kilos but the boss told him that he did not want him out of the game because he was so valuable. He went back to the streets and continued

to sell drugs with his team. One day he was selling and he sold to a man who was very suspicious but Justin still decided to sell to him. The guy turned out to be a cop, and Justin was arrested with kilos of drugs and a pile of guns. He fought the case but he lost and had to do 7 years in prison. While in prison he changed his life because he understood that the drug life was horrible. He became a devout

Muslim and changed, devoting his life to learning his religion and staying to himself.

He came home and surrounded himself with family. He eventually died, peacefully, leaving behind 2 children and his wife.

"HAVING SOLD
4 KILOS BUT
THE BOSS TOLD
HIM THAT HE
DID NOT WANT
HIM OUT OF THE
GAME BECAUSE
HE WAS SO
VALUABLE."



CREATED BY OUMOU

"What kind of mother am I? Is this the same person who wanted to prepare her daughter future, is the same who had dreamed of realizing, is this the same who wanted to graduate from my dream collège " "Je suis déçu de moi" she said. Once after the second birthday of Marie daughter , everything changed with problems everywhere, losing work, hope not to have the financial aid of the government, domestic violence. She was condemned to find a job to take care of her daughter. A few days later her boyfriend has started to becoming violent. He beat her everyday even if is not a big dills.

So one she decide to go away with her daughter because the man she knows has changed a lot, he has lost his reasons. She did not know where to go, to hope she decided to go to her friend's house but the poor girl thing could not do anything for her husband because her husband was against it and

"SHE WAS
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did not want any problems. Homeless Marie thought it best to sleep in her car. In the morning she began to look everywhere for work but no work for her because she does not have a diploma. In just two years of relationship, Marie is lost. Lost of what she want, less believe, less dreamed, less hopeful, happyless, sadness. "qu'est ce que j'ai fait pour mériter ça" hopelessly she returns to her boyfriend's house after threats he made to take the child (childsport). Since that days Marie could go to bed but cannot sleep because her boyfriend has started to bring the prostitutes to his house and he

spends all nights drinking and yelling. Oh yes, history is repeating itself. The girl's father did the same to her mother who unfortunately went mad. My family curse follows me "she screamed". A few day later she was called in for a cleaning job. But according to her "the curse of my family follows me". After two days of work

she was free from the service because her boss gave her some bad feedback to the companion she was working with through her appearance. I am a loser, a loser, less than nothing "she said. To hope she went back to her boyfriend who abused her. A few days later, Marie's ex-boss was looking for her after finding Marie's diary and reading it. But Marie's boyfriend said she's not home, but the lady didn't believe her through her reaction. One day Marie was fed up with all this and decided to go to a company that helps abused women with the help of her ex boss of course. From that day Marie decided to look for a job to take care of her daughter and started applying for financial help from different colleges. And who's done finding one that can cover two years of college classes. Marie is free now, and has even started looking for a house in another state to start her life in zero (0). "Une mère doit toujours être une combattante et non une paresseuse."

"THE CURSE OF MY
FAMILY FOLLOWS ME."

THE STRONGEST ONES

CREATED BY RAFAEL

A couple of months has passed after the tournament of power which dates back to the year 750. We see our protagonists facing each other to improve even more and continue to evolve. At one point Whis, Goku's master, asks Goku why he wants more power. Then Goku tells him that at the tournament of power there were many incredibly strong people and he does not want to continue at the same level like his training buddy Vegeta. Later that day, they realize that their enemy Frieza is still alive and seeks

revenge because he has already been defeated more than 3 times when trying to destroy planet Earth. Goku and Vegeta feel a power greater and overwhelming than theirs.

When Frieza's ship lands everyone leaves the ship including two others who are of the same race as Goku and Vegeta. A new opponent and his father who are called Broly and Paragus. They start to fight but Vegeta has more experience in fighting. But Broly learns very quickly and gives him a fight which makes this

fight even. Vegeta gets tired of this and punches him by sending him away in order to transform into a super saiyan (a more powerful being). Now Vegeta has the advantage in the fight and Broly

is cornered but he increases his energy more, surpassing Vegeta. It is Goku's turn and without thinking twice he now transforms into super saiyan blue. This is the strongest transformation so far. While the fight is getting more intense, Goku is about to beat Broly but Frieza asks Paragus if that is all the power that Broly has and Paragus tells him yes. Then suddenly, Frieza killed Paragus! When Broly sees this he becomes enraged and transforms into super saiyan for the first time, becoming more powerful than Goku. Goku and Vegeta work together to stop him but they cannot so they go to a far away place. Goku tells Vegeta the only way to defeat Broly is to merge into a single warrior which they do. Gogeta appears, the fusion of Goku and Vegeta. Gogeta is the combination of Goku and Vegeta into a single warrior and reaches where Broly is waiting to beat a new enemy. But Gogeta did not realize that Broly was out of control. He is only a warrior with a pure heart who does not know what to do.

Goku makes a wish to Shenron, the dragon, saying to send Broly to the planet where they found him. Everything was over but Goku was on an inhospitable planet where he felt enormous power. When he approaches he sees Broly and Goku tells him calmly, "I came to bring you things like food and that. I also want to train you, Broly. You have a huge power and it can be of help if a new enemy appears and we become allies."

"...WITHOUT THINKING TWICE HE NOW TRANSFORMS INTO SUPER SAIYAN BLUE. THIS IS THE STRONGEST TRANSFORMATION SO FAR."



TEENAGE LIFE

CREATED BY WILLYBERT

"Te voy a matar" Those were the words that I heard when my school called my mother to tell her that i'm not doing well in school. We all know how parents are, they always want the best for us, but what they believe is best for their children, we see them quite the opposite.

In the world there must be a successful and unsuccessful person, maybe I am designed not to be successful sometimes that's all that goes through my head. The truth is that nothing really motivates me to focus on doing the things that I need to do, the only thing I do is go to school and come straight back home. Except on the weekends, I stay in the apartment all day. I wish I had friends to hang out with and have fun with. The problem is that I'm afraid to talk to the other boys

in school, not even in class I like to talk. I feel that if I try to talk to others I will be rejected. That's why I better not try. Well at least I have my brothers who always make my day. Since the day my school called my mother I have started doing

the work in my classes because now she is always asking me about homework and classes, and I don't want her to get angry because if she got mad with me she would hit me in the face. Now my reason for doing the class is so that she does not hit me. The story of how I graduated

from high school is going to be called surviving my mother because that's what I'm doing. My graduation is only 3 months away and I'm not sure if I'm going to college or not.

"WE ALL KNOW HOW PARENTS ARE, THEY ALWAYS WANT THE BEST FOR US, BUT WHAT THEY BELIEVE IS BEST FOR THEIR CHILDREN, WE SEE THEM QUITE THE OPPOSITE."



Today on my way home I saw that they installed a skating rink in the park. Since I was a child I have always wanted to learn to ice skate. Maybe this is my opportunity to start doing something different. Tomorrow after school I'm going to go there to see how it goes. A lot of people go there to ice skate. The ticket costs 20 dollars. Luckily, I have a little money that I have been saving over time. Well, today is the day to go. I bought my ticket and went inside. It's not easy as you can see, I was shaking because I couldn't even stand up without having to hold on to the railing. While I was almost falling

on the floor this boy from my school stopped and was telling me how to do it so I could learn. I was scared because I had never talked to someone from my school but at the same time I felt good because he was very friendly. When it was time to leave the ice rink he told me that he always goes to the corner park so that I could go with him any day. I don't know why but I felt it was one of the best days of my life.

CREATED BY WINSTON

Hello, my name is Spencer. I am 17 years old, I am from Argentina and I like to play American football. My mother does not like me to play because I could end up badly beaten and hospitalized. My dream is to play in the

"THE REASON WHY I WANT TO GET TO THE NFL IS TO SEE IF THERE IS THE POSSIBILITY OF MEETING MY FATHER TO SHOW HIM WHAT I ACHIEVED IN LIFE WITHOUT HIS HELP..."

NFL when I grow up. I never knew my father because since he is the coach of an NFL team he is always traveling. The reason why I want to get to the NFL is to see if there is the possibility of meeting my father to show him what I achieved in life without his help, and although I would have liked him to be there when I was little, I never needed him.

LOSE MEMORIES

CREATED BY YEURI

There are no scars or any bruises but I can still feel the pain on my whole body, like I was getting destroyed from the inside. The only friends I had where depression, pain, suicide thoughts and a family that was coming apart more and more every day the passes. School didn't help a lot either. It was the same routine everyday, parents fighting everyday for no reason. If this is what people call love, I don't want it. I'm over it. I was fighting with myself everyday. It felt like I had a warzone in my head. I could run away from home but that was not going to solve anything in my life. I would still have this pain inside of me.

The Next Morning
It's 7:00 in the morning and it is so bright outside but it feels like the sun hasn't come out yet. I feel like there's a thunderstorm outside but I think that it's

just my body. Everytime I try to sleep it feels like a warzone. My dreams become nightmares. "Wake up you A** up it time for school!" Hate is a big word to say but this woman got on my last nerve

I wish my dad never met her, we would be a better family without her. I can't sit with her not even for a moment he is always working. I'm also tired of school. It is always the same thing everyday. There is nobody that can bring my dark days to a happy ending. Sometimes I am scared of myself

because of the things my own mind is saying. Those are the things that don't let me sleep at night, ideas like if you end your life, nobody is going to miss you and all is going to get better. I don't want to agree with most of the things it is saying. It is making me do things that I don't want to like. I feel like I am a slave in my one mind. I want to be everywhere

"THERE ARE NO SCARS OR ANY BRUISES BUT I CAN STILL FEEL THE PAIN ON MY WHOLE BODY..."



except at home. I want to have a happy place too.

When the night comes I hate every time I hate to come back to this place, because dad is never home. I am holding a plate in the kitchen and it drops with a CHASH! "Arghhh!" I scream in agony because my stepmother has stabbed me on my arm with the knife she was making dinner with. I was used to this pain but when it comes from another person it feels totally different. Everything got darker and darker.

The last thing I remember is my dad coming in from work and seeing me on the floor. I wake on a very strange place it feels like I have been here before, it feels so warm like I have been sleeping on a marshmallow, i got a closer look and i was in the hospital my dad was next to me, it been while since i had his this closes to me for that long, because everytime the he come home he was so tired that he just when straight to bed and did had time for me, i was enjoying it but i could hold to ask him." Hey dad.. Is everything okay? ". " Thank god you

are awake, Dhafnet." I haven't seen him this happy since mom died. "I promise you that you are not going to live with the women again, and sorry for making you go through all this a arelly take her out of the house and send her to jail". "And dad I'm going to look for a job so I can help you with the house."Thanks Dhafnet with a big smile.

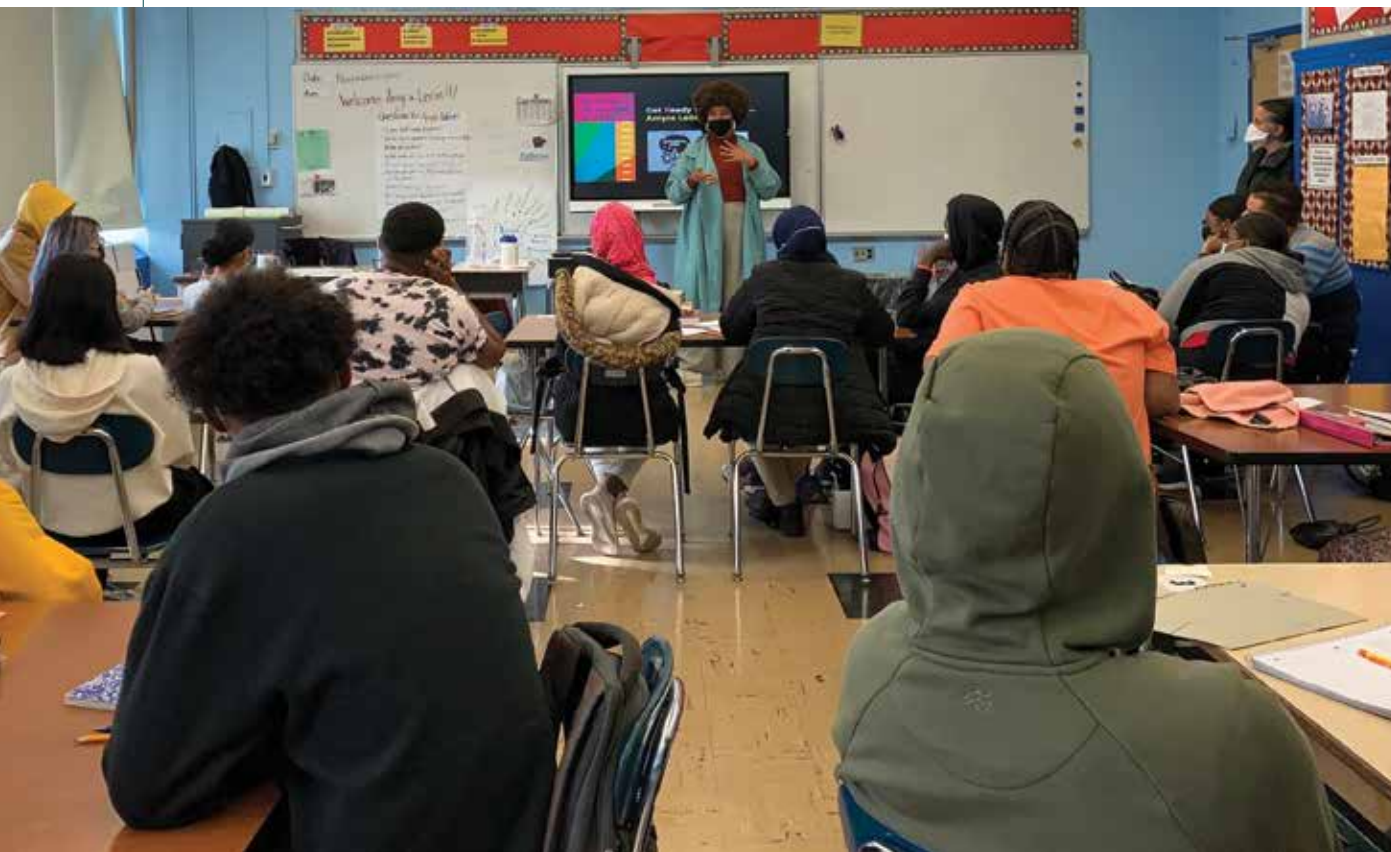
"...I SCREAM IN AGONY BECAUSE MY STEPMOTHER HAS STABBED ME ON MY ARM WITH THE KNIFE SHE WAS MAKING DINNER WITH."

ABOUT THE VISITING AUTHOR



Amyra León is a musician, author, director and Harlem native. Amyra studied Experimental Theatre at NYU Tisch School of the Arts with a keen focus on Art Therapy and Social Work. An Alumni of the famed Nuyorican Slam Team, Amyra is no stranger to the stage. She has toured her poetry and music consistently throughout the US, UK and Europe. Her work, often autobiographical, tends to generational trauma, Black liberation and communal healing. *Concrete Kids* is an exploration of love and loss, melody and bloodshed. Amyra takes us on a poetic journey through her childhood in Harlem, adoption, mourning, self-love, and resilience.

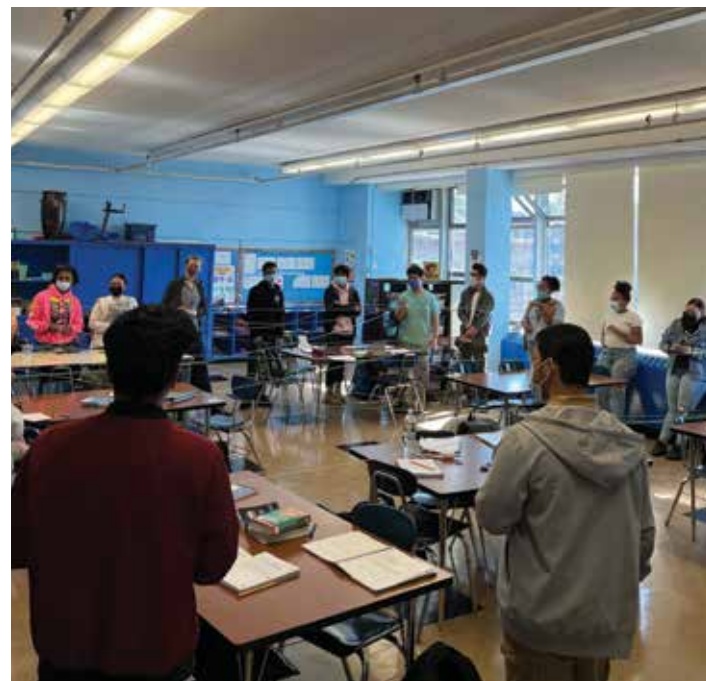
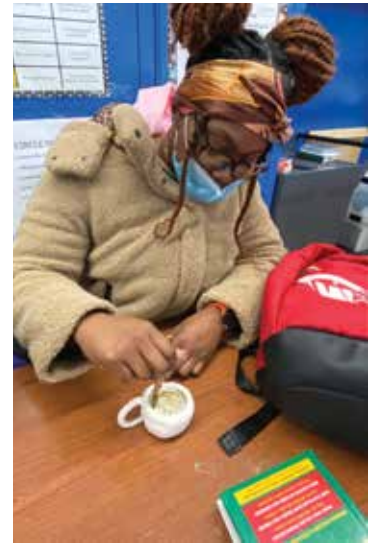
Amyra currently splits her time between New York and London.



ABOUT THE STUDENT AUTHORS

Simply put, they are the nicest group of students. Patient, helpful and compassionate, this year's 12th grade class repeatedly showed their dedication to learning amidst uncertain and evolving circumstances. They welcomed the fabulous Amyra León with curiosity and admiration, then delved fearlessly into the creation of character-driven poems and stories. Over the course of a few short weeks, these students developed tales of intrigue, betrayal, love and friendship. They depicted the sorrows and joys of life using beautiful imagery, humor and once in a while gave us an ending with a surprising twist! Be ready for serious stories, scary stories, strange stories and silly stories. Their characters enrage, shock, and inspire hope and joy. A range of protagonists take the stage, from teenagers to superheroes and even robots! And through it all, many of our student authors were able to somehow incorporate the themes of separation from family and thriving in a difficult situation. These students cared about the characters they created, carefully molding their stories into a wonderful collection that is sure to delight. Please enjoy.

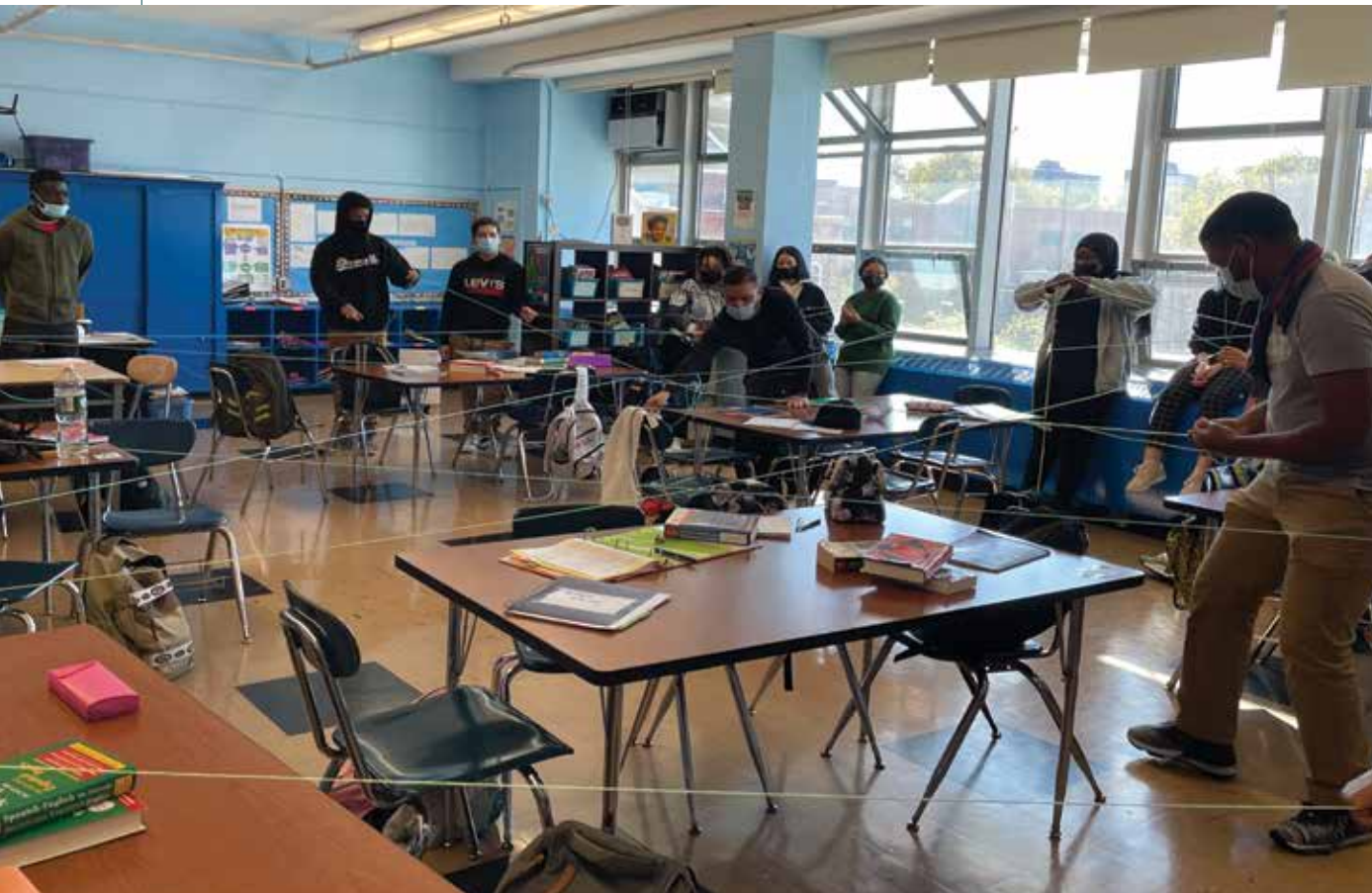




ABOUT BEHIND THE BOOK



Behind the Book brings authors and their books into classrooms to build literacy skills and foster a community of lifelong readers and writers. Working with classes from Pre-K through 12th grade, our series of workshops is designed to bring books to life and inspire students to reach their full potential. Behind the Book is embedded in the class curriculum, nurtures critical thinking, creativity, and self-confidence in New York City public school students. All programs meet the Next Generation Learning Standards.



NEXT GENERATION LEARNING STANDARDS

STANDARD 1

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly/implicitly and make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

STANDARD 2

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

STANDARD 3

Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

WHST3

Write narratives to understand an event or topic, appropriate to discipline-specific norms, conventions, and tasks.

WHST4

Write responses to texts and to events (past and present), ideas, and theories that include personal, cultural, and thematic connections.

BTB EMPOWERS THE NEXT GENERATION OF READERS AND
WRITERS BY NURTURING CRITICAL THINKING, CREATIVITY,
AND SELF-CONFIDENCE IN OUR STUDENTS.

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