

The cover features a dark brown background with a white, torn-paper-like border. The top right and bottom right corners are cut off, revealing a light beige background with a faint green grid pattern. The text is centered in a white, serif font.

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## John

John

The only supporter, my only relative,

Gone. In a second.

Why must she have gone so soon?

Only a short period of time and she is  
swiftly whisked to heaven.

Arriving top work that day.

Putting all emotions aside,

The knives, plates, desserts, dishes

All clatter to the ground in disarray

Brushing, sweeping, apologizing.

Emotions start crashing back at me like  
a boat in a stormy, violent sea.

I stumble to the ground with a thud.

I see leather shoe tap at the ground.

And suddenly I am flung out into the  
middle of the street.

No job, nowhere to go, no one to go to.

I lay there. Just lying.

I come to the old door of my apartment.

Open it and then softly close.

Then a thud on the oak door.

And in a second, I am flung out of my  
home.

Blankets gone, bed gone, roof gone.

No job, no home, nowhere to go, no one  
to go to.

I lay there. Just lying.

Suddenly a flash of red runs across my  
eyes.

The only feeling; anger.

Siren's blaring.

Sprint!

Hide!

Quick!

I hear chains rattling.

Policemen!

Dead-end!

No home, job, friends,

Nowhere to go, no one to go to.

I lay there. Just lying.

I wake up.

Bars, chains, shelter, bed.

Where am I?

Rough men?

How do I remember...

Suddenly memories of hands grabbing,  
hurting, stealing.

That was me.

And I realize where I am.

Prison.

No freedom, home, job, friends,  
nowhere to go, no one to go to.

I lay there. Just lying.

Katie M, 7F

## Freud's psychoanalysis and its application in Lord of the Flies

Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory explores the deep unconscious of the mind, using the theoretical constructs of the id, ego and superego to define occasionally opposing components of the psyche that make up the human personality. The id, the primitive and instinctual part of the mind, is usually developed first at birth and is the first component of the personality to emerge. Usually, babies cry and wail, governed by nothing but pure instinct and desires, and seeking instant gratification. Similarly, as we grow older, acting on the wants of the id is frowned upon greatly, often resulting in criminal activity and disregard for societal expectation. On the flipside, the superego is seen as the moral conscience of the mind; a blend of intentional thought and mindfulness of societal order. Lastly, the ego, the realistic part of the mind, combines the characteristics of the id and the superego and mitigates primitive actions with the conscience, mediating between the savage desires of the id and the rational thought of the superego.

In William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, the novel begins with all boys being driven by ego, as expected through the confines of civilisation that still weigh on them. However, the conflict between the three boys Jack, Piggy and Ralph at the beginning shows the three divisions of the mind: the id, superego and ego respectively.

Jack, who represents the id, is presented as savage and violent, seeking instant gratification in the form of slaughtering pigs ("Kill the pig! Cut her throat! Bash her in!") and his power-hungry tendencies. As the id takes full control over Jack, his desires drive him to act irrationally, whilst also depreciating the value of human lives in his eyes, as shown when he remorselessly threw the spear at Ralph ("Viciously, with full intention, he hurled his spear at Ralph"). He also eventually overpowers the ego (Ralph) and superego (Piggy), displaying Golding's warning of man's descent from civilisation into savagery without the shackles of civilisation binding them to morality. Further, the id seeks to avoid pain at all costs and seek pleasure, displaying the selfish personality we see Jack, and later his tribe, possess ("The desire to squeeze and hurt was over mastering").

Ralph, on the other hand, embodies the ego. Whilst also having moments where he displays id-like behaviour (“Piggy! Piggy!”), he retains a clear judgement that allows him to read situations and diffuse them before he is lost to his anger like Jack is. This is demonstrated when “he paused for a moment and they both pushed their anger away. Then he went on safe, changed the subject”. By suppressing the id after their argument, he retains the moral aspect of his mind and is less affected by the changing environment that is so different from the society he had left behind. Moreover, his constant juggling of Jack and Piggy’s demands as he tries to decide the best course of action (“Now go back, Piggy and take names, that’s your job..”) fits with the role of the ego as he considers both whilst also trying to repress them, alluding to the complexity of a person’s psychology and morality, which can tend towards seeking perfection at times, or give in to guilt at other times.

Finally, there is Piggy, who depicts the superego, with knowledge of right and wrong. When first introduced, Piggy instantly presented his super ego through his willingness to obey his aunt (“My auntie told me not to run”) despite her not being there. Freud believed that ‘Children internalise parental restrictions on impulse satisfaction, thereby forming the Superego’, as shown by Piggy’s instinctive following of his aunt’s restrictions. As well as this, his desperation for authority and attachment to the conch is an indication of his wanting to maintain civilisation, creating a clash between him and Jack that is a demonstration of the continuous struggle between the id and the superego.

In conclusion, the Freudian concept of the Id, Ego and Superego is symbolised by the three main characters in Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*, representing the levels of the human psyche, that work together to enable the mind to work, but when we succumb to one, can lead to dire consequences.

Tingting H, 10G

## A Shot at Stardom

“Think you got what it takes to be a [[BIG SHOT]]? Sign with the [insert name] Talent Agency today!”

Where had this mysterious and badly written e-mail come from? What was the [insert name] Talent Agency?

And how did they know this was exactly what I was looking for?

My finger hovered over the mouse tenaciously – suddenly all my confidence in my skills evaporated like they’d never existed to begin with. If I were to click the sketchy link in the e-mail and re-open myself up to the world of show business, who’s to say I wouldn’t face the same abashing fall from fame I did the last time I’d done the same? The small lump in my throat seemed to grow with my intensifying apprehension. It was such a simple task, click the link, yet it was as if my entire being protested it.

The rational side of me said it was too great a risk to take, after all, I was no stranger to failure in this particular line of work. Constant rejection had left me feeling more than a little empty; every agency I spoke to relayed the same heartbreaking message – “You don’t have a future in show business” (with the most ruthless telling me I didn’t have a future period). This cycle I had found myself in, of hoping, praying, pouring everything I had into the audition, before the dreaded call (if they even had the courtesy to) of crushed dreams, it was inescapable.

And then that fateful day befell me.

The day God finally looked down upon me with favour, the day sky, sea and land had finally given up their conspiring to keep me from happiness, the day that hollow emptiness finally relented. The day I was finally accepted.

It wasn’t just improbable or unlikely, it was impossible. There was no way after years of being denied my dream that it was now coming true. It was nothing much, just a short performance at the local theatre, but in that moment, it might as well have been a Nobel Prize. My elation couldn’t be contained – I just had to tell someone.

Correction: I told everyone. It was this fatal error that cost me my life's work, this fatal error that led me to lose everything I had worked so hard for, this fatal error that had led me to this opportunely timed e-mail.

The show was fine, if a little mundane, but nothing to complain about. And it certainly wasn't something for me to lose my contract over – is what I thought.

You see, it hadn't occurred to me that maybe I wasn't the company's first choice. Maybe they were just as desperate as me, clutching at straws to get anyone they could, regardless of actual talent. Then I came in, proclaiming to the world my long-awaited success to the masses, free advertising if the ever was such a thing. And my cousin – another budding young thespian, and so much better at acting – enters the scene. She thinks, "Hrm, maybe I shouldn't have rejected that offer. Maybe there is fame to be found in acting." And so she calls them back. And they take her. And she performs really, really well.

And just like that, it's all gone.

Another budding young thespian.

Destitute, downtrodden and desperate for another shot – another big shot.

This, this link in a sketchy e-mail, this second chance at stardom, this shot – was right in front of me. All I had to do was grab it.

Click.

Abigail O, 9N

## Paradise Lost's Satan: The original "bad-boy"

Paradise Lost, an English epic written by John Milton in 1667, tells the biblical story of Adam and Eve's fall from grace, narrated by Satan. Written in attempt to "justify the ways of God to men", an unexpected consequence of its creation was the subsequent emersion of the "bad-boy" trope.

So, what really is the "bad-boy" trope, and how is it relevant to Satan's characterization in an academically acclaimed Bible fanfiction? This article will answer the questions you so desperately yearn for, dear reader.

### What is the "bad-boy" trope?

To start off with, what actually is the "bad-boy" trope? Popularized in the 1930s, the bad-boy trope refers to a character archetype in media characterized by rebelliousness, charisma, and a general disregard for societal norms or expectations. The bad-boy trope is often paired with a young, innocent girl - "the-girl-next-door" trope - in many young adult romance novels, often to fulfill a reader's fantasy that one person's existence can have such an impact on another person's that they can ultimately change the "bad-boy" for good. Other characteristics of the "bad-boy" may include having a dark/traumatic backstory and subsequently inner conflict and a complex character, often caused by some sort of parental issues. There are many examples of the bad boy trope, some certainly applied with more subtlety than others, such as Heathcliff from Wuthering Heights,

Of course, the trope goes deeper than just a teenage girl's ideal book crush, the bad boy trope can actually be found to be rooted in a psychological theory of personality, The Dark Triad. The Dark Triad is made up of three main components: Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy.

### Machiavellianism and Psychopathy

Machiavellianism is a personality trait construct prevalent in personality psychology distinguished by interpersonal manipulation, indifference to morality, a lack of empathy, and a calculated focus on personal gain. Psychologists Richard Christie and Florence L. Geis named the construct after Niccolò Machiavelli, as they used truncated and edited statements inspired by his works to study variations in human behaviours



Many psychologists consider Machiavellianism and psychopathy to be virtually indistinguishable, as they both exhibit the key features previously mentioned. Many male characters in modern media exhibit signs of psychopathy, especially in romance media geared towards women. The explanation on why media has romanticized these traits and why people are attracted to these characteristics in the first place is long and complicated, and frankly, a different article.

### Narcissism

The one most people are more familiar with. Part of the charisma and confidence that is seen so prominently in “bad boys” can be derived from a sense of narcissism, a self-centered personality style characterized by an excessive focus on oneself and one's own needs, often at the expense of others. If the “bad-boy” is to undergo a type of character development, often the development will be seen in his narcissism rather than his Machiavellianism or Psychopathy. Usually occurs in the third act conflict, going something along the lines of: main love interest and/or main character is in some sort of mortal danger, the “bad-boy” must overcome his absolute self-centeredness and care about someone else for once, even putting themselves into harm's way - this display of heroism is meant to showcase how much the bad boy has grown and strayed away from the traditional characteristics. (Even if this character development is completely retconned and ignored for the sake of keeping the fantasy.)

### Paradise Lost

So how does any of this relate to John Milton's characterization of Satan in his epic Paradise Lost? We've established what makes up a bad boy, and strangely enough Satan fits all the criteria.

In “Paradise Lost,” Milton depicts Satan as a character that is complex and multi-faceted character. Unlike previous works that portrayed him as just a one-dimensional bad guy, his portrayal in Milton's work is eloquent, charismatic, and deeply troubled - he can almost be seen as a sympathetic character. His revolt on God followed by the fall from grace is no less than a majestic disaster - the type of drama and troubled past that modern bad-boys can only dream of.

Satan fits every checkbox we've previously established:

## Charisma and Eloquence

Satan's charisma is evident in his speeches, which are marked by persuasive rhetoric and grandiose declarations. His ability to rally the fallen angels and persuade them to continue their rebellion showcases his leadership qualities and charm. This eloquence is a key trait of the "bad-boy" trope, where the character's ability to captivate and influence others often masks their darker intentions.

## Rebellion

At the core of Satan's character is his rebellion against authority. His famous declaration, "Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven," encapsulates his defiance and desire for freedom. This theme of rebellion is central to the "bad-boy" trope, where the character often rejects societal norms and challenges the established authority - "sticking it to the man" - pushing that sense of individualism. Satan's refusal to accept subordination and his subsequent fall are key aspects of his defiant nature - almost hubristic, which often goes hand in hand with narcissism.

## Inner conflict

Milton's portrayal of Satan includes moments of introspection and doubt, adding layers to his character. This complexity distinguishes him from one-dimensional villains and makes him more relatable to readers. The "bad-boy" trope often involves characters who are not entirely evil but are instead struggling with their own inner demons, making them intriguing and multifaceted. In "Paradise Lost," Satan's soliloquy in Book IV reveals his internal struggle and regret: "Me miserable! which way shall I fly / Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?" (Book IV, lines 73-74). This moment of vulnerability adds depth to his character, highlighting his internal conflict. He even has a moment where upon first seeing Eve, he briefly forgets all his hatred and brooding for he is so incredibly entranced by her beauty - "Her graceful innocence, her every air Of gesture, or least action overawed His malice, and with rapine sweet bereaved His fierceness of the fierce intent it brought: That space the evil one abstracted stood From his own evil, and for the time remained Stupidly good, of enmity disarmed, Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge" (Book IX, lines 459-468) - another trope that has carried over to modern bad-boys being "changed" or deeply impacted by the main character/love interest. Eve can even be seen as the "girl-next-door" trope in this situation. She is innocent, naive, and full of virtue at that point in the story.

Aside from personality, the reasoning behind why Satan is seen as attractive is incredibly interesting. The logic is that when Satan was in Heaven, he was the most beautiful angel of all, so when he fell to Hell he must have kept his good looks. However, this idea of Satan was not always the general perception. Many works predating *Paradise Lost* portray Satan as a hideous monster rather than a misunderstood prince of darkness. For example, in Dante's *Inferno*, Satan is described as having three faces, bat wings, and being frozen up to his waist in ice – a stark contrast to the Satan in *Paradise Lost* who is supposedly sitting on a golden throne ruling over Hell. In a theological standpoint this would make sense – if Satan is to tempt humanity, then God would probably want to make it more difficult for him. Most people would fall for a face with divinely good looks rather than a hideous beast.

Although many characters displayed certain traits of what now make up the modern “bad-boy”, going as far back as Prometheus in Greek mythology being rebellious, Satan, the fallen angel himself, truly encapsulates all the ideas we currently have about the misunderstood antiheroes, the bad boys.

Although many modern bad boys may claim to be “hated by God”, none do it quite so literally as our boy Satan. It also seems thematically appropriate that the baddest of the bad boys would be the devil himself – also being the perpetrator of chronologically the first act of rebellion ever.

Valen W, 10F

## The Turtle of Hope

I am the turtle,  
The turtle of hope.  
And I hope that there will never be a day,  
When I have lost hope...

But as sunset engulfs the sky,  
In warm, fiery hues,  
I find myself trapped,  
Trapped in this world of blues.

This net is my bondage,  
This ocean my prison,  
I struggle to breathe,  
It weakens my vision.

I begin to tire,  
I struggle no more  
I give up all hopes,  
My limbs are now sore.

I will never be free,  
Never swim like I once dreamed,  
For that fishing net,  
Was not what it seemed.

I am the turtle,  
The turtle of hope,  
But how must I hope,  
When I'm trapped in a rope?

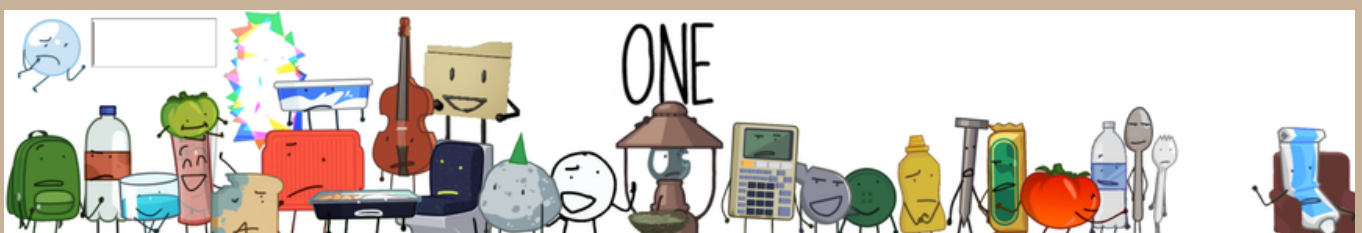
Joanne W, 7F

## Comparison between the themes of 'The Amazing Digital Circus' and 'ONE'

During my free time away from the hurly-burly of school stress and exam revision, I found myself encoded into the virtual realms of 'The Amazing Digital Circus' by GooseworX and 'ONE,' by CheesyHFJ - both of which are YouTube original animated series. Why should you watch them, and what themes do they explore? To answer this, put on your headset and have a seat in the Waiting Room, as you read the encrypted analysis of these modern works of art. However, this analytical piece of work does contain spoilers, so please keep that in mind if you wish to watch these shows first.

Both shows present the theme of objectification and othering of people: being treated as 'contestants' or test subjects in their 'new bodies and home.' The 'host' of the shows (Caine and Airy) have nicknames that they require the subjects to call themselves, hindering their true forms and identities from the people they kidnapped.

This is done as well as forcing new names on them to which they clearly are not comfortable with. Both hosts also seem oblivious to the suffering of their subjects, as Airy apathetically regenerates Charlie and Liam after they brutally died in during the challenges, and Caine similarly disposes the abstracted consciousness of Kaufmo without any sign of sympathy or understanding towards him; the only dialogue he says during so is 'and into the cellar you go!'. Although both shows are visually light-hearted, being colourful and animated like a children's show, this presentation of an uncaring and potentially violent host could be hinting at real life atrocities, especially in 'The Amazing Digital Circus,' which presents people being trapped in an old 20th century video game, which could draw awareness on the happenings of the 20th century. 'ONE,' on the other hand- could nod to other dystopian gameshows in 21st century media, such as 'Squid Game', 'Alice in Borderland'- a stark contrast to its bright and energetic object-show style.



However, there is a notable difference between the awareness the two shows are spreading. In 'The Amazing Digital Circus,' Caine is an AI software, and combined to the fact that he has control over imprisoned subjects in the 'Circus,' explores similar themes to the short story 'I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream' written by Harlan Ellison in 1967, where an advanced AI software tortures five living human beings as a form of revenge against their creators. This clearly defines the danger of AI, especially in our modern world, where AI is already taking the jobs of many artists, which could have made this show personal to the creators themselves. This also follows the dystopian theme of fatal futuristic technology, such as in 'Examination Day' by Henry Slesar. As for 'ONE' though, Airy is presented as much more human than Caine, having suffered from a car crash prior to ONE and maybe even being autistic and unable to comprehend human emotions as well. For me, 'ONE' is more psychological and philosophical rather than dystopian or dark-humored, pointing to philosophical ideas such as that of Plato's analogy of the cave or Descartes, who questioned the premises of reality and control, as well as life after death.



Are the themes presented entirely negative though? In short: no. Firstly, there is the humour and the 'Shakespearean fool' of both stories. In 'The Amazing Digital Circus,' this character is Jax, who acts like a typical rebellious bully or a prankster, (who is popular among the community as well) but possesses expert knowledge on many instances in which other characters do not, such as him having the key to everyone's rooms

and being able to teleport. In 'ONE,' this is shared between Whippy Creamy, Folder and Abstracty, who act as humour points - between the frequent scenes of despair - but especially Abstracty, has knowledge about both the contestants and Airy prior to any information being given to it. These fun characters can be compared to the Porter in Macbeth, who talks about being drunk amidst the activation of a plan of treason.

Moreover, love and community are a key theme in both shows, as in the end of 'Candy Carrier Chaos' - the second episode of 'The Amazing Digital Circus' - Pomni smiles upon the support and appreciation towards her from Ragatha, King and Gangle. In 'ONE', friendship is presented as a key theme, examples being the care and concern that Bryce and Amelia show towards Liam after he was regenerated from being drowned, the determination of Stone to help the contestants despite not being able to speak, the care Liam has for Owen and the love Bryce has for his sister, Stella. These upbeat themes inspired me personally too, in my own story making, just as much as the other themes interested me and many of my friends.

In conclusion, although many adults may pass these YouTube shows as simply being childish, 'ONE' and 'The Amazing Digital Circus' have clearly shown how to bypass that stereotype and create a breakthrough in animation that does not require adding adult themes and strong language such as in 'Hazbin Hotel.' Overall, I really enjoyed both shows and would strongly recommend them to anyone. Experience: smooth animation, thrilling plot, good music. Whilst 'ONE' is a finished series, 'The Amazing Digital Circus,' as of now, only has two episodes released, which means you can experience the thrill of the cliffhangers and excitement even better!

Gloria B, 9G



## The Beach

“I’m frightened,” the voice whimpers into the night.

With caution I find my bearings and descend from the jutting edge of the pier onto the beach, just where the road ends and the sand begins. The sun has only just crossed the horizon; the shingle has barely cooled and is baked and alive underfoot.

“Where are you?” I reply, surprised to find that my words do not waver as they disperse.

I wait a few seconds, feel a tug at my reins – I’m past curfew, that’s certain. Perhaps I imagined the voice, maybe I spoke myself, an unconscious outpouring of inner turmoil. The ocean licks the beach, spitting onto warm rocks. Orange sunlight hems the waves. I am just about to turn tail when I hear it again:

“I’m frightened. Please,” it’s now little more than a stage whisper, “I don’t remember. I can’t see,”

Cogs turn in my mind. I strain for the sound of feet on polished pebble but find only the steady rhythm of the sea. There’s a twang of frustration injected into my next words. “Can’t remember what? Speak up, will you?”

By now, I’m well onto the beach. It stretches about a hundred metres back to the safety of the road and miles in either direction. I try to quiet my breathing and slow the pounding of my heart, listening into the impenetrable darkness. There’s an almost imperceptible hum, more of a vibration than anything. I feel it in the soles of my bare feet.

The sun has truly set. Any semblance of light is below the lapping waves. In the utter pitch, it’s rather more a foreboding scene to behold, and my eyes have not adjusted.

“Here. Here,” from somewhere down the coast.



I squint. The subterranean buzz ramps up, then lays down, almost as if it is shocked by the gravitas of its own bark. There, at the water's edge, is a nearly indiscernible black stain on the sand. It rocks slightly with each suck of the tide. I am struck with nauseous certainty; this is the thing that speaks. I want to shout, to reassure the figure, but words do not come. My mind has latched onto it, made it inhuman, and I no longer want it to know me. I'm thankful for the shroud of darkness.

"Please," I say, "Please,"

I find myself inexplicably drawn to it. My inner voice protests, screams and rants against the madness of it all, but my legs take no heed. I approach the shore; the hum both shakes and thrills me, plucks the tender nerves around my heart and spine. The moon looks on in shameless indifference.

I walk. I'm at the water's edge. I wade in until I'm abreast with the Thing that Talks. The world is in shadow, in dusk, the water too murky to make out the object, which seems now to call from below the surface. It speaks not in English but the language of gods.

My lungs fill with seawater.

Finn K, 10F

## A Garden

From his perch on the sole, gnarled limb of the oak tree the crow watched as the dilapidated door swung open and frighteningly familiar face appeared. But she had changed. As the garden rotted and bleached the past few years she had blossomed, with eyes as blue as the sky, cheeks the same hue as cherry blossoms were before the house was shut up and as slender and tall as the saplings.

He watched as the young woman, who he would always remember as the family baby, surveyed the garden, her eyes lingering the longest on the swings. Once magnificent and the talk of the town, they were now crumbling and overgrown with tendrils of ivy that snaked around the frame and with lichen that suffocated the base.

In a daze, the woman walked down the remains of the garden path and stopped in front of the fountain. Dry and weather-beaten, it was a world away from the crystal-blue oasis she remembered playing by for hours. He remembered it too and covered his eyes with a wing.

She shook her head, as if trying to shake off emotions too strong and overpowering to cope with, and continued her walk, reminiscing over the memories that were made in this very garden. However, after mere moments she halted once again and knelt down beside the colourless, monotone earth of the flowerbeds.

A decade ago, bright and beautiful flowers bloomed in the garden, but now all that was left was a solitary snowdrop, bowing its head as if in defeat. A tear rolled down her cheek and onto the soil, the only water in months that had reached the ground; the canopy of trees was even less penetrable than the walls around her heart.

Wanting to comfort her, the crow flew beside her like a knight in shining armour, only to be shooed away by the angel-like mistress he remembered so fondly. Hurt, betrayed and confused, he sought refuge in his nest, only to watch in horror as his only source of hope that his home would be restored to its past glory exited the garden, pulling the door shut quietly behind her and leaving him alone once more.

## The Box

It had been there for eternity. Stuffed away in a filthy storage room, with thousands of others amongst it. There was nothing special about the outside, just a plain dreary box, rough cardboard and dusty tape. However, inside lay a forgotten memory, waiting to be remembered.

Its eyes were wide and glassy, like always. Its back was sore for not moving for decades. Its feet were sore for not walking. A layer of dust blanketed its face for no one had bothered to clean it, and rust bloomed at its knee hinges, desperate to be oiled. There wasn't much to see in the box. It had been a prison, forcing it to days of wishful thinking and disappointing results. The inside of the box wasn't remarkable apart from what it contained. Scratchy card scraped against it, but it could not cry in pain for its voice box had broken.

It drowned in its melancholy thoughts, "Do you really matter if nobody cared for you at all?"

It heard a faint mumbling sound. "Where could you be?", a soft voice spoke. It tried to call out to her. There was a scuffling as she moved through the boxes, a clattering as something dropped.

It tensed, "This is it...". The girl clambered to the back of the room, it'd been here the longest. The tape was carefully ripped, she held her breath.

A crack of artificial light peered through the box.

The girl huffed, "Wrong box!". The doll would have to stay in the box, and it had been there for eternity.

Aahana G, 7P

## Fatigue

I'm always tired. Without exception.

There's always something else on the list. A box that needs ticking, a task that needs doing, a work that needs finishing. Some days I wonder if I'll ever escape it- peering into my future yields nothing but thoughts of exams, studying, tests, books, notes, endless pen cartridges emptied and filled and emptied and filled and emptied and filled and empti-

Anyway.

I soldier on in the mornings, follow the same rigid routine. Off your bunk, into the shower. Teeth brushed, uniform on, shoes shined to a high polish. Exit the house at exactly 7.10am to catch the 7.15 bus that's always either early or late but never on time.

They say that sticking to a routine calms you, assures you, makes life easier. So why do I feel like I'm always on the edge? Why can't I get a grip on myself?

I feel happy sometimes- I really do. In my day to day life I get glimpses of cheer and happiness, but they don't stay for long. They weave in and out of the fabric of my life like a string of golden thread- only visible from some angles and not large enough to make a big difference.

I need to "get to the point" of my life, but I don't really know what that is anymore. I had a plan, a clear route to where I wanted to be, how I wanted to get there, but sometimes I feel like I've fallen off the wagon. My actual classes are alright, but I find myself confused and overwhelmed by any work outside of that. I'm good at pushing last minute, but I can't do that in state exams. Why can't I just work like everyone else?

I hate my rivals. Not because they're mean or unkind, not even because they make better grades, but because they seem to have it together, while my life falls to shreds. I want to cry but I don't know why, and it makes me feel like I'm rotting inside.

Oluwatoni A, 10W

## An extract from 'Crater in Whickfield'

(Some intro-screens will glitch to a 'traitor')

Episode 1:

We pan in and see the floor; it is bare, and we pan to a stripped and whitewashed wall. We move to an empty room, a dusty light, then to a group of boxes. We see two pairs of legs, one belonging to someone evidently older than the other.

KIARA: Father...

KIARA places a box down, and sighs.

FATHER: Yes, Kiara? Are you alright?

KIARA hesitating: I... I'm fine, father, I...

FATHER: Kiara?

KIARA: It's... nothing, Father. Where are we moving to now?

FATHER: A place called Whickfield- with any due luck, we should be able to lay down our roots permanently.

Their hands can be seen, holding one another.

FATHER: Kiara, I'll be just a moment.

FATHER leaves.

KIARA quietly: Oh father, that's what you always say...

She pauses,

Kiara cont'd: But... Whickfield. I'll give it a try.

The screen fades into blackness and we re-enter into a school hallway, KIARA walking towards the camera.

KIARA (V.O): Here we are. WhickfieldSecondary, Scientia est proditorbeatitudinis. No, that's the old motto. Why am I even bothered? Father will tell me we're moving away soon enough...

The camera moves and briefly glances at groups of friends, subtly getting smaller with each one, laughing, until it's just two, just one, then, none.

Kiara cont'd (V.O): (she exhales sharply) For father. I suppose I should smile,  
She smiles,

Kiara cont'd (V.O): oh no, no, no, no. No teeth.

She completely drops the smile.

Kiara cont'd (V.O): Keep smiling though.

She smiles weakly

Kiara cont'd (V.O): The smile?

She smiles a little stronger now, the fake joy managing just to seep into her eyes.

Kiara cont'd (V.O): Great. Now you just keep your head down and stop smiling since why would anyone smile at the floor?

She quickly drops her glance to the floor; we see from her P.O.V before suddenly we stop. KIARA has bumped into a busy-and-running ASPEN.

Kiara, quickly: Oh- sorry!

KIARA looks up and we see from her P.O.V ASPEN, looking a little dazed.

Kiara: Um- sorry!

Aspen: Uh... I have go!

ASPEN runs off, and KIARA turns to watch her go. ELOUISE runs past, then THORNE does.

KIARA is mid-turn-around when BRIARE, the last of the Four, leaps past her also. Time slows down from KIARA'S P.O.V as we get a good look at BRIARE'S face. BRIARE winks at her. Time resumes and BRIARE is gone, down the hall, following her friends. KIARA slowly goes pink. KIARA begins to blink, her eyelids just close but when they open again, she's sat in a Geography Classroom.

Ms. Todstool: Miss. Wright?

KIARA seems zoned out.

Ms. Todstool: Miss. Wright?

KIARA seems zoned out.

Ms. Todstool: MISS. WRIGHT!

KIARA snaps out of it.

Kiara: Yes, sorry, what Miss?

KIARA scans the board.

Kiara: The step you're missing in the diagram is the, er, deposition, last step. It-

Ms. Todstool: I do not doubt your Geographical skills, Ms. Wright, rather your ability to listen in lessons and close blinds.

KIARA sits in her seat for a second- MS TODSTOOL makes awkward eye contact. MS.

TODSTOOL finally gestures to the blind; KIARA gets up slowly and goes to shut it but ends up looking out- to see a sort of miniature version of BRIARE and ASPEN.

They are walking. She stops what she's doing, resting her arms on the windowsill and sighs.

Ms. Todstool: Miss. Wright?

KIARA seems zoned out.

Ms. Todstool: Miss. Wright?

KIARA seems zoned out.

Ms. Todstool: MISS. WRIGHT!

KIARA snaps out of it.

Kiara: Yes, sorry, what Miss?

Ms. Todstool: Sit down! That's detention, Miss. Wright! You, Williams, close the blinds.

KIARA moves over to her seat, just as she sits down, we're treated to another scene change, a detention room. KIARA stays in completely the same position, and as we pan around, she is the only one in the room.

Kiara (V.O): How have I gotten myself a DETENTION already?! Oh, father will be so disappointed. Honestly Kiara!

KIARA holds her head in her hands, annoyed and a little distressed.

Kiara (V.O): At least nobody else is here with me. I doubt anyone noticed me present anyway- they'll hardly notice I'm gone.

Suddenly, BRIARE, THORNE, ASPEN and ELOISE enter, looking a little tired and bedraggled. KIARA grabs a book and stuffs her face into it, occasionally peeking over the top.

THORNE, APSEN and BRIARE are all crowded around ELOUISE who is glaring down at her textbook.

Thorne: Yeah, it's not that hard, Cece.

Elouise: It's hardly psychology! What is-

Aspen: Magnesium sulphate.  $MgSO_4$ . It's a water-soluble salt with quite a few uses, actually. See, Mg for Magnesium first, atomic number twelve with a crystalline structure. It's an alkaline-

Briare and Aspen: -earth metal.

Elouise: Oh Pen, can't we dress you up and have you sit my exam? You're impossibly brilliant at this Chemistry... stuff.

ELOUISE rests her face on her hand, annoyed, a little in defeat.

Aspen: Elouise, you know I couldn't... I can always help you revise though.



THANK YOU FOR  
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AMAZING  
CONTRIBUTORS!