

MOOREFIELD TIMES

MOOREFIELD GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL



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MESSAGE

Hello everyone and welcome to yet another edition of The Moorefield Times!! We can not thank you enough for the immense support we have received from everyone and we can promise to continue to release our best ever pieces! I would like to give a massive thank you to the journalists, creative team and Ms Werner Hickey herself for all the support, pieces submitted and creative decisions which builds our strength as a team. I would like to thank the following members on their contribution to our third issue:

Journalists:

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Make sure to return this issue to the green folder or box outside of the HSIE box once done reading. A big thank you again to all of our avid readers and I hope you enjoy our 3rd edition!



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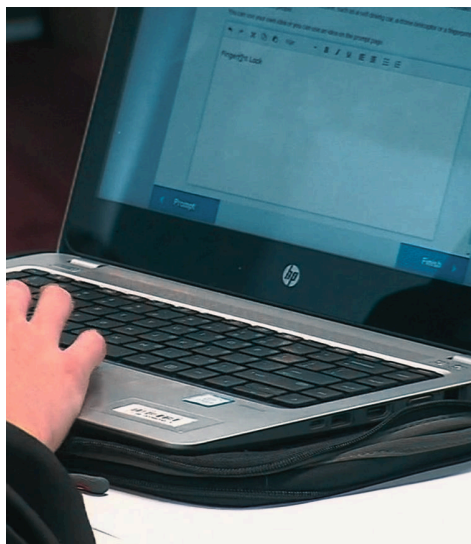
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NAPLAN, HSC, MINIMUM STANDARDS, OH MY!



BY EZRA M.

I'm pretty sure the title rings a bell for you all, hm? It's no secret that the absolute base of NSW government highs are those tests I just listed, better yet known as examples of standardised testing. Aside from your general assessment tasks, you have these kinds of tests hidden under the rocks, waiting for your unsuspecting selves to tread ever so lightly on their shells and BAM! Horrible, crippling stress and burnout, mainly regarding the HSC.



NAPLAN

NAPLAN was held not too long ago in our gym and library for Year 7 and Year 9 and I couldn't help but raise the question, what is the point of NAPLAN in the long run? Well, as you've probably heard from numerous teachers, NAPLAN tests are held not only to test your skills and patience, but to show how Moorefield Girls ranks in terms of strengths and weaknesses in numeracy and literacy. So, why do we even have to do them? Shouldn't there be some sort of substitute? Well, it has been proven that NAPLAN has become ineffective so what if we could get rid of it?

MINIMUM STANDARDS

Don't even get me started on minimum standards. I'm not looking forward to them but at least they have some purpose. If you don't know what minimum standards are, they're basically a set of tests you take in year 10 to see if you've learnt what you've needed to for the HSC. Don't worry though, you can retake them multiple times until you get them right if you fail so don't worry too much for that one, but it definitely still sucks in regards to pressure.

STUDENT OPINIONS

I interviewed some peers and teachers to get their opinions, let's see what they have to say about the issue.

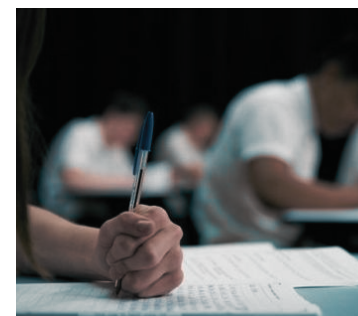
I asked Helena from year 11 if there's anything we can change in the HSC to lessen the stress on senior students. "There isn't much we could really change because it is all really based on statistics and nothing we do can lessen the stress, like if we changed all the tests to be assessments that would cause so much more than necessary" Valid point, Helena.

I asked Alice and Angela of year 11 about their opinions on NAPLAN and minimum standards. "I completely guessed my answers in NAPLAN because I honestly had no interest on how long everything was in it" Angela replied. "Minimum standards was really stressful because there's chances of computer malfunctions and problems like such, they are still very important for us though". Interesting thoughts!



HSC

Now, we've arrived at the big guns, the almighty HSC (or Higher School Certificate). It's not mandatory to complete if you're looking for another sort of job that doesn't require higher school achievements and you're considering to study at Tafe or vice versa, but I know many do end up completing it regardless of whether they are in high school or not. The HSC is the one most feared in their time of schooling, including me. Is it just me or have we all heard horrific stories of burnout and stress from HSC? Anyway back to my point, our entire schooling years build up to these sets of assessments that set us up for life so no wonder why so many end up so burnt out from stress and workload and studying. My question is, why do we have to suffer? Is there anything we can do to help at least?



Now, on a real note, I am definitely not saying don't have a try with these exams. At the end of the day these examples of standardised testing are really important to your schooling years. All I can say to everyone reading this though, please prioritise yourself and your wellbeing over schooling if worse comes to worse. Stress is not fun at all and school will be a highlight of your life so make the most of it.

Thanks for reading and if you have any opinions or suggestions on the matter make sure to email us at moorefieldstudentvoice@gmail.com

THE WEAKNESS OF MODERN INFRASTRUCTURE

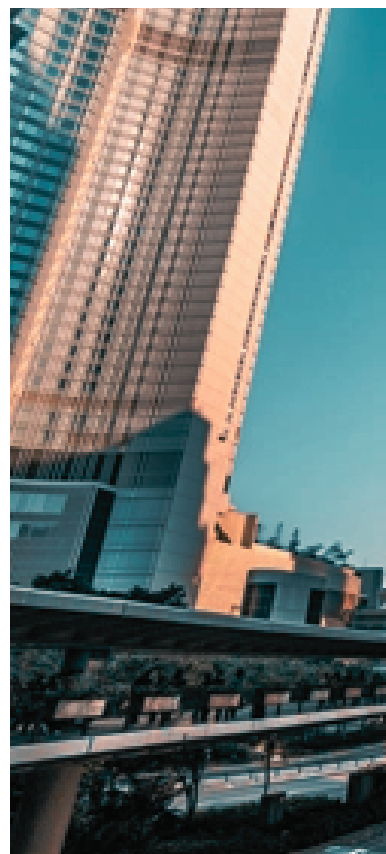


BY TASNIM C.

Infrastructures are the backbone of modern civilization, revolutionising the roads we travel on, the buildings we live in, our systems of electricity and plumbing, and much more. However, amidst rapid technological advancements, the strength and longevity of modern infrastructure are called into question, potentially jeopardising economies worldwide.

Reflecting on architecture created centuries ago, many are still thriving, unlike the architecture created today. Structures crafted with traditional, unique methods have stood the test of time, as exemplified by the inspiring Great Wall of China. This ancient marvel, developed using traditional Chinese materials and techniques, still flourishes today, contradicting the infirmity of modern craftsmanship. In contrast, recent buildings and bridges, despite modern advancements, often crumble within a decade, plagued by leaks, power shortages and structural weaknesses.

The low soundness of modern infrastructure shortcomings are primarily evident in the face of natural disasters. Hurricanes, floods, earthquakes and wildfires are becoming more frequent and severe, exposing the vulnerabilities of our contemporary designs. The Christchurch Cathedral in New Zealand, another architectural gem, stood tall until the 2010-2011 earthquakes hit, leaving the majority of the building in ruins; the facade of modernity belied its lack of inherent strength. These recent buildings also hold fancier appearances, with no sense of support, meaning excessive money waste will go towards creating new structures each time one is demolished. People across the world are looking over at the basic pros of recent infrastructure development, without examining the life-wrecking cons. While these buildings may look big and luxurious from the exterior, the interior is crafted with weak materials, which pose as heavy life threats.



Although it might be assumed that modern construction would reduce material costs, the reality is quite the opposite. The weaknesses inherent in these structures lead to escalating material costs. A single modern project today can cost billions, far exceeding initial estimates, without guaranteeing durability or stability. Projects like the Panama Canal, Dubai's international airport and Hong Kong's MTR subway systems are costing millions of dollars to install, despite the poor planning beforehand. These megaprojects are seen encountering overoptimism, overcomplexity, poor execution and weaknesses in organisational design and capabilities. Project managers focus on the luxuries of these designs, without overlooking the cons of what comes with creating such structures.

Unless these life-threatening issues are considered thoroughly, society will be experiencing tremendous consequences in coming years. The complexity lies within, and solving it is what will improve the economy.



Inflation. One of the most familiar words in economics, defining the rate of increase in prices over a given period of time. It is the overall increase of prices and cost of living in general. Inflation measures have soared across the world, ruining the stability of people emotionally, mentally and physically, leaving households in disastrous conditions.

Consumers around the world are feeling the pinch of rising prices as inflation rates rise. But what exactly is inflation, and how is it measured? In simple terms, inflation is the rate at which prices of goods and services increase over time. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a crucial tool used to track this phenomenon, measuring the percentage change in the price of a basket of goods and services commonly purchased by households.

To calculate the CPI, government agencies conduct household surveys to identify this basket, reflecting typical spending patterns. This basket, which includes items like housing costs, is then monitored over time. The CPI at a given time, compared to a base year, gives us the consumer price inflation rate. Core consumer inflation, on the other hand, excludes volatile prices like those of food and energy, offering a more stable indicator of underlying trends.

As prices rise, households may find that their nominal income—what they earn in current currency—doesn't keep pace. This results in a decrease in purchasing power, affecting their standard of living. Inflation also impacts those with fixed pay rates, such as pensioners and borrowers. Pensioners may find their purchasing power eroded if inflation outpaces their fixed income, while borrowers benefit from inflation eroding the real value of their fixed-rate debt.

High inflation, and its extreme form hyperinflation, may destroy economies. Zimbabwe's staggering 500 billion percent inflation in 2008 peaks as an example. On the flip side, deflation, or falling prices, can also be detrimental, leading to decreased consumer spending and economic stagnation, as seen in Japan's prolonged period of economic struggle.

Inflation can stem from various sources. Long periods of high inflation often point to loose monetary policies, where the money supply grows faster than the economy can support, leading to a decrease in currency value. Supply and demand shocks also contribute; disruptions like natural disasters or high oil prices can reduce supply, causing "cost-push" inflation. Conversely, a surge in demand from factors like a stock market rally or government spending can lead to "demand-pull" inflation.

Expectations are crucial in this equation. If people anticipate rising prices, they may negotiate higher wages or set higher prices for goods, creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. This cycle of expectations and behaviour can lead to sustained inflation patterns over time.

In the quest for economic stability, many central banks have adopted inflation targeting as a primary policy objective. The goal is to maintain low, stable, and predictable inflation rates, making it easier for businesses and consumers to plan for the future.

As the global economy navigates the complexities of inflation, finding this delicate balance remains key to sustainable growth.

As this familiar economic phenomenon spreads across the globe, understanding the causes and effects of it remains crucial. While central banks strive for stability, self-understanding will support navigating the paths easier.



THE RISE OF CANCEL CULTURE- ARE WE TURNING INTO AN ONLINE POLICE FORCE?



BY HELENA N.

Pop Culture's grasp over the world is undeniable. At every glance, the influence is prevalent. The hair. The accessories. The mannerisms. The quirks. The occasional small talk of "have you heard what happened to '...'" or "I never expected that to come from her or him". It is undeniable. Celebrities and the occasional pop culture talk is prevalent universally. We enjoy consuming the lives of others, living vicariously through the vibrant celebrities amidst our shell-less personal lives. Oh, why do celebrities live in such valour, have the freedom to speak that way and exude such a presence that it outshines the rest? Alongside this globalising world and infamy of celebrities, we are posed with a solution to tame their power; cancel culture. As a cultural phenomenon, the public taps the gavel of social justice by publicly accusing celebrities of moral indecency dependent on their mannerisms or opinions that aren't deemed acceptable by the socially progressive. It is a public execution, yet some evade such consequences unaffected by the social qualms of these online persecutors. Is this an attack against free speech or a step towards justice against the elite?



Defined as the right to express opinions without any interference, free speech is a term that is tossed around throughout social media. Yet, controversy surrounds the words 'free speech' and its direct objection to the rising censoring of contemporary society. Well, some would say 'what is a society without free speech!' Yet others believe that, 'Aren't we just under a totalitarian dictatorship if we censor people's beliefs?' Let's retreat back to the safe embrace of blind obedience to authority and maybe even start speaking newspeak. Society will calm, no moral contemplations needed when there's someone deciding it for you, right? No internet police patrolling the sites for possible scandals from celebrities, no absolute ruin of their future careers like Ezra Miller's library of allegations. Life is great!

But, without the emergence of cancel culture, some speculate that the unbridled rise of moral ambiguity would envelop modern society and the upper class.



Scandals of JK Rowling's transphobic twitter comments of claiming the rise of transgender rights will endanger women's rights led her to be cancelled by the media as social outrage ensues. Despite these repercussions, her book sales rose considerably. Notably, instances of cancelling don't normally work in the favour of the target as the method of cancel culture includes a form of boycotting. Yet, these boycottings can take a serious toll on the recipient that would cause them to possibly retire from the showbiz sphere. The persona celebrities take on online can impact their job status. In some instances, Gina Carano, the star wars star got fired by Disney for claiming that "being a Republican in 2021 was similar to being Jewish during Nazi Germany ". This comparison brought a prolific amount of hate for her ignorant and controversial social media persona as its anti semitic nature neglects the true severity of the Holocaust.



THE RISE OF CANCEL CULTURE- ARE WE TURNING INTO AN ONLINE POLICE FORCE?



BY HELENA N.

Some celebrities garner an immunity to cancel culture as they are negligent towards public opinion. A well known example is the notoriety of Kanye West anti-semitic beliefs that are being perpetuated throughout online platforms. These claims subject Jewish people to stereotypes and contradictions that embody the sporadic nature of Kanye West. While they brought brand deals to crash as his name got dirtied with the morally outrageous comments of Kanye, it raises a question to the span of influence and control that cancel culture has over society. Shall we sit here and fear the ramifications of his words? The potential of a new generation to blindly follow his support of politically outrageous ideas that violate the moral code of society. Or is a full on censorship of Kanye required?



DEFINITION TABLE

Term	Definition
Prevalent	Prevalence is something that is widespread or commonly found in a particular place or among a group of people.
Vicariously	To experience something through someone else's experiences or actions.
Ramifications	Ramifications are the consequences or results that happen because of something else that occurred.
Infamy	Infamy means being well-known for something bad.
Qualms	Qualms are feelings of doubt or hesitation about something.
Contemplations	Contemplations are thoughts or considerations about something, often deeply reflecting on an idea or decision.
Newspeak	In 1984, it was a language that was ambiguous and confusing. The intention was to limit the range of thought.
Totalitarian Dictatorship	A totalitarian government is one where a single party or leader controls everything.
Phenomenon	Phenomenon's are things that happen or are observed in the world around us.
Repercussions	Repercussions are the consequences or effects that happen.

RHIANNA AND FATIMA'S FILM CORNER



BY RHIANNA D. & FATIMA A.

RHIANNA'S MOVIE REVIEWS

Recent Watch: *The Fall Guy* (2024)

I don't usually watch action movies but I watched 'The Fall Guy' just for Ryan Gosling (real ones will notice that I've written about a Gosling movie in every issue). The film follows a stuntman who gets entangled in a conspiracy while working on his ex-girlfriend's directorial debut. I found the movie to be a bit underwhelming with its pacing for the first half of its duration. It eventually becomes exciting when the pace picks up. 'The Fall Guy' pitches itself to be an action-comedy when in reality it is more of a romantic-comedy with some action here and there although I'm not complaining. Ryan Gosling's performance is what really makes this movie work, his comedic performance as the main lead makes the film enjoyable alongside Emily Blunt's excellent performance as well. Overall, 'The Fall Guy' is a fun film that's not perfect but give it a watch if you love Gosling or want to look at the Sydney Harbour Bridge or Opera House.



OVERALL RATING : ★★★★★
(★★★★ 1/2 if Ryan Gosling wasn't in it)



Personal Favourite: *Lady Bird* (2017)

'Lady Bird' is an honest and captivating film that encapsulates the heart of adolescence. The film unfolds in swift scenes that capture the essence of the protagonist's life as she navigates a turbulent relationship with her mother over the course of her last year of high school. 'Lady Bird' grapples with the uncertainty that permeates throughout adolescence. Saoirse Ronan gives an entrancing yet subtle performance of a stubborn and naive young girl that comes off as genuine and not like a caricature of teenage girl stereotypes. I believe this is Greta Gerwig's best work and the perfect coming-of-age movie that does not make a spectacle of adolescence but showcases a story that audiences can resonate with. I remember the first time I watched 'Lady Bird' and thought "Oh, it's a nice movie. I like it, I guess." However, after revisiting it, I finally recognised how beautiful and passionate the story of 'Lady Bird' is and how it translates to the screen gracefully, so maybe give it a watch!



OVERALL RATING : ★★★★★



RHIANNA AND FATIMA'S FILM CORNER



BY RHIANNA D. & FATIMA A.

FATIMA'S MOVIE REVIEWS

Recent Watch: *Mischief* (1985)

I, like my co-author Rhianna, have a soft spot for 80s high school movies. Now, 'Mischief' (1985), is great because it's an 80s high school movie set in the 50s. As much as the film is extremely on the nose with its time period setting (the namedropping of Studebakers, Chevrolets, DeSotos, the consistent use of the jukebox and even a screening of *Rebel Without a Cause* in a drive-through movie scene) it is a deliciously entertaining and enjoyable film. You've got the stereotypical bad boy greaser Gene, his awkward and nerdy parallel Jonathan, two equally superficial beautiful love interests, and Rosalie, who in classic teen movie fashion, becomes a beauty after her braces are taken off (maybe I'll glow up when mine are removed?). It's a fun 90 minutes of male friendship, romantic misunderstandings, punch ups, totalled cars, and a borderline-abusive father. You should watch it!



OVERALL RATING: 7.5/10



MET GALA-WHICH LOOK IS THE BEST?



BY NIRVEE D.

We have all heard about the 2024 Met Gala at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. We are gonna go through the best, worst and most daring looks of the red carpet.

ZENDAYA

First up we have Zendaya in Margiela, Zendaya's extraordinary look switcheroo left everyone flabbergasted. From Cobalt hummingbird to modern flower bouquet, Zendaya ate these looks and left no crumbs on the carpet.



CARDI B

We quite literally can't miss the biggest and boldest dress of the met gala. Cardi B and her HUGE dress from Windowsen pretty much took up the whole runway. This beautiful flowy dress needed almost ten men to take Cardi from one place to the other.



ARIANA GRANDE

Next up we have Ariana Grande in Vera Wang. This light, elegant and voluminous dress completely stole the show on the carpet. We also loved her epic closing performance at the gala.



KARDASHIAN-JENNERS

The Kardashian - Jenners absolutely slayed this year's red carpet event. Beautiful Sisters Kylie and Kendall rocked the red carpet in Givenchy. Kim K slayed with her gorgeous custom made dress from Maison Margiela and fans were intrigued with her unexpected cardigan accessory.



SABRINA CARPENTER

Sabrina Carpenter's floating bubble-like dress left fans in admiration. Her beautiful black velvet dress with a blue satin bouffant skirt at the bottom was perfect for this occasion.



That's a wrap for the 2024 Met Gala. Fans can't wait to see what celebs have in store for us next year.

ARIES (MARCH 21 - APRIL 19)



Career and Finance: This is a year of breakthroughs and opportunities. Embrace new projects and leadership roles.

Relationships: Relationships will deepen, and you will forge strong connections with others. Strengthen bonds with family and friends.

Health: Focus on maintaining a balanced lifestyle to avoid burnout. Regular exercise and a healthy diet are key.

School: Your competitive spirit will drive you to excel. Take on challenging courses and participate in extracurricular activities to showcase your abilities.

Luck: Fortune favours your bold initiatives. Taking calculated risks will pay off, especially in the second half of the year.

TAURUS (APRIL 20 - MAY 20)



Career and Finance: Stability is in your favour. Investments made now will yield long-term benefits.

Relationships: Strengthen existing bonds and be open to new, meaningful friendships. Show appreciation for those close to you.

Health: Pay attention to mental health. Yoga and meditation can be particularly beneficial.

School: Steady progress is your strength. Stay organised with your studies and seek help when needed to ensure consistent performance.

Luck: Consistent efforts will bring good fortune. Look out for unexpected opportunities in financial matters.

GEMINI (MAY 21 - JUNE 20)



Career and Finance: This is a period of creativity and innovation. Consider starting new ventures.

Relationships: Communication is crucial. Resolve misunderstandings promptly and build strong connections through open dialogue.

Health: Incorporate variety in your fitness routine to stay engaged and motivated.

School: Your curiosity will lead you to excel in research and projects. Collaborate with classmates to enhance your learning experience.

Luck: Your adaptability will attract luck. Networking and social interactions could bring surprising benefits.

CANCER (JUNE 21 - JULY 22)



Career and Finance: Focus on teamwork. Collaborative efforts will bring success.

Relationships: Emotional connections deepen. Be open to expressing your feelings and nurturing your relationships.

Health: Prioritise self-care. Regular breaks and relaxation are essential.

School: Group studies and cooperative learning will benefit you. Don't hesitate to ask for support from teachers and peers.

Luck: Trust your intuition—it will guide you to fortunate outcomes, especially in personal and academic endeavours.

LEO (JULY 23 - AUGUST 22)



Career and Finance: Your leadership qualities will shine. Expect recognition and advancement.

Relationships: Passionate encounters are likely. Maintain a balance between personal and professional life.

Health: Engage in outdoor activities to boost your energy levels.

School: Take the lead in group projects and presentations. Your confidence will inspire others and earn accolades.

Luck: Bold actions and confidence will attract good fortune. Take advantage of opportunities that come your way.

VIRGO (AUGUST 23 - SEPTEMBER 22)



Career and Finance: Detail-oriented work will pay off. Stay organised and methodical.

Relationships: Relationships require patience and understanding. Take time to listen and provide support.

Health: Monitor your diet. Opt for natural and organic foods for better well-being.

School: Your meticulous nature will help you excel in exams and assignments. Keep a detailed study schedule to stay on track.

Luck: Precision and diligence will lead to lucky breaks. Stay focused, and you'll find luck in the small details.

LIBRA (SEPTEMBER 23 - OCTOBER 22)



Career and Finance: Diplomacy and negotiation skills will be advantageous. Look for partnerships.

Relationships: Harmony in relationships is crucial. Avoid conflicts and seek balance in your interactions.

Health: Regular social activities will enhance your mental health.

School: Balance your academic and social life. Participate in student organisations to enhance your leadership skills.

Luck: Your charm and diplomacy will bring fortuitous encounters. New connections will prove beneficial.

SAGITTARIUS (NOVEMBER 22 - DECEMBER 21)



Career and Finance: Opportunities for travel and learning will enrich your career.

Relationships: Adventure in your relationships is on the cards. Be open to new experiences and meeting new people.

Health: Stay active and explore different forms of exercise to keep fit.

School: Embrace opportunities for studying abroad or participating in exchange programs. Your love for learning will thrive in diverse environments.

Luck: Your adventurous spirit will attract luck. Embrace new experiences and opportunities.

AQUARIUS (JANUARY 20 - FEBRUARY 18)



Career and Finance: Innovation and creativity will lead to success. Embrace unconventional ideas.

Relationships: Friendships and social connections will flourish. Stay open-minded and inclusive.

Health: Mental stimulation is important. Engage in activities that challenge your mind.

School: Experiment with new study techniques and technologies. Your unique approach will set you apart academically.

Luck: Your originality and inventiveness will attract luck. Unexpected opportunities will arise from your innovative ideas.

SCORPIO (OCTOBER 23 - NOVEMBER 21)



Career and Finance: Intensity and focus will drive success. Tackle challenges head-on.

Relationships: Deep, transformative connections are possible. Be honest with your feelings and cultivate trust.

Health: Pay attention to your emotional health. Consider counselling if needed.

School: Your determination will help you master complex subjects. Dive deep into research and don't shy away from difficult topics.

Luck: Persistence will bring good fortune. Trust your instincts when making important decisions.

CAPRICORN (DECEMBER 22 - JANUARY 19)



Career and Finance: Hard work and persistence will bring rewards. Financial stability is likely.

Relationships: Build strong foundations in relationships. Trust and loyalty are key to maintaining connections.

Health: Ensure you get enough rest. Balance work with relaxation.

School: Your disciplined approach will yield excellent results. Set high goals and work steadily towards achieving them.

Luck: Steady efforts and persistence will lead to fortunate outcomes. Long-term planning will pay off.

PISCES (FEBRUARY 19 - MARCH 20)



Career and Finance: Intuition will guide your decisions. Trust your instincts in financial matters.

Relationships: Emotional bonds will strengthen. Be empathetic and understanding in your interactions.

Health: Water activities can be particularly beneficial. Ensure you stay hydrated.

School: Your creativity will shine in arts and humanities. Use your imaginative skills to excel in projects and presentations.

Luck: Trust your intuition, it will lead you to lucky opportunities. Pay attention to your dreams and gut feelings.

STORY COMPETITION WINNER _____ LAKSHYA R.

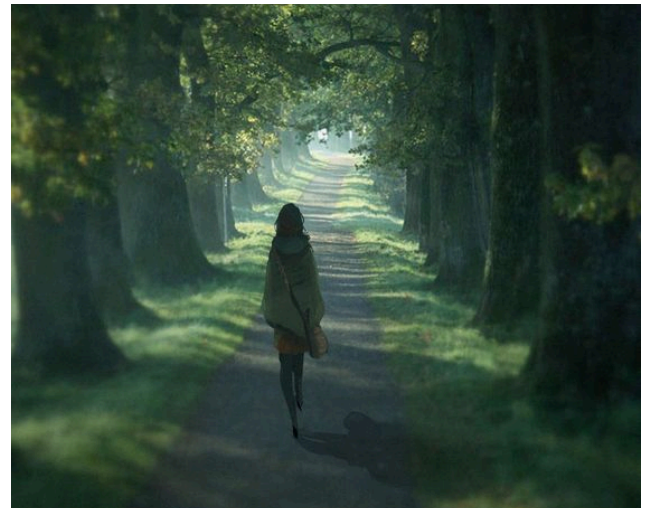
There's a door, deep in the heart of one very quiet forest where sunlight streamed through thick leaves and branches so spots were splayed on the ground. It wasn't just any door, rather a relic from ages past. The wood looked old and there were small carvings all around it, whispering tales from time immeasurable. Although, what made a true difference about this door was the enigma surrounding it.

No one knew its origins. The world beyond the wall became unseen, and no one saw under its flapping keystone. There it sat, the lone sentry, inviting curiosity and wonder, veiled in an air of mystery. This mystery kept all but the most daring explorers at bay.

Stories floated around the forest like leaves in a gentle breeze. They told stories of where doors could take you. Others muttered strange tales of a domain where dreams came true. The lines between what he could and could not dream, became a little less clear. Others spoke of lands afar, long lost to time. In this land of magic ruled, all kinds of imaginary creatures run wild. Despite the luring whisperings of these stories, Rouville uneasily peered towards the door but few lifted as much of a finger. The house had such an enchanting allure. It had a kind of eerie mystery about it. Its presence alone had the ability to make even daredevil explorers feel a chill in their bones.

But one day, fate graced Emerdy with a visitor - Avery, the young wanderer. She was a child of the forest, with something of the untamed wilderness in her spirit. So were the woods that enveloped her. Stars gleamed in her eyes. She felt a bottomless amount of curiosity in her heart. During one of her solo ventures she came across the door. Yanked by an unexplainable pull, Avery reached for the door, a mixture of coy and eager. The dappled light played among the carvings on its surface. It beckoned her closer. Her hands were shaking as she stretched them out for figures to return. Resting her hand against old wood, it seemed as if she half-expected it to give way under her hand. And, to her amazement, the door slowly squeaked open. Swathes of colours spun and twirled beyond its threshold.

Avery didn't second guess and pushed through the door. It seemed all her other senses were consumed by a whirl of sights, sounds and sensations. She was standing in a meadow, bathed in foreign golden light from an unfamiliar sun as flowers of every colour blanketed the earth. The essence of their petals shone with celestial radiance, as the sky sprawled overhead. Appearing as if a canvas of endless blue. Clouds stirred through it, little wisps. Out of nowhere, these clouds which shifted without purpose as they sporadically moved from one side to the other carried on invisible entities. As Avery continued on further into the world, she met creatures, the likes of which she had never dreamt. Faeries buzzed the air on spider silk wings. Their laughter tinkled like wind chimes in breeze. Unicorns grazed peacefully in sunlit glades with those glowing white coats of theirs. Dragons soared overhead, in front of the blue sky their great shapes stood out, they danced among the clouds.



Avery had never known any time quite like her moment in this enchanted realm where she felt she truly belonged. Here she was free, free to be herself, to be unbound by the world she had, so long ago, but deep within herself and heart,... left.

But days turned into weeks as Avery began to ache for the home she knew too well, although wonders of the lovely land had brought them justification. She missed things that were simple but brought her a great deal of pain. The scent of pine needles at the conclusion of a summer rain, the sound of birdsong in runs the waking light, the comfort like fire on cold winter's night.

Avery reluctantly trekked back to the door. She remembers every moment of it, of adventures she has encountered. She then crossed the threshold, feeling a pang of sadness as she moved away from the enchantments of the place beyond this world. There the mysterious door stood, in a forest back in the usual low grounds. She knew experiences she had gained would stay with her forever. A cherished treasure carried in her heart for all eternity.



I THINK WE'RE ALONE NOW _____ BY ELLA N.

The clicking and scraping of cheap utensils against tacky china made him cringe as everyone ate. The too bright lights above him creating an unwanted (and frankly just annoying) glare against his glass - which was currently empty, as he had been slowly sipping away at the water (and if for nothing else he was truly impressed at how even their water had managed to taste bland) to avoid any and all conversation that might have been directed at him. Vague nods and shakes of his head were all the crumbs they were getting.

Another person turned to him. "What are you doing in school, Tom?" They asked.

"Nothing much," he answered, turning away and cutting off any hope of a longer conversation.

The dinner dragged on and on, polite sneers mixing with childish squeals to create a headache inducing harmony. He had finished the too dry pasta ages ago, and was just waiting for an out so he could finally leave.

Unfortunately, he was no longer young enough to sit at the kids table anymore, 16 had been a stretch, but 17? That was going too far. So the adults had reluctantly moved him to their table, a glistening set up of food, wine, sugar coated insults and straight out lies.

Julia had joined him.

He wished they had left her behind.

Julia was his parents' friend's daughter. Her mousy brown hair matching her fathers and her slightly slanted eyes twins with her mothers. She was a mirror image of her parents.

Speaking of Julia, the adults had turned to her, their eyes fixed on her like a predator on its prey, drinking in her fear and coaxing more out with uncomfortable questions. "Any boyfriends?" They taunted. "How's the job search going?", "What college are you applying to?", "Do you think you're going to move out anytime soon?" The questions trickled on and on.

Julia was clearly uncomfortable, but she weathered it.

Before they had squeezed her dry - exerted her already straining manners - he slipped away quickly and quietly, mumbling about needing to refill his glass.

He caught green eyes before he left. And he nodded.

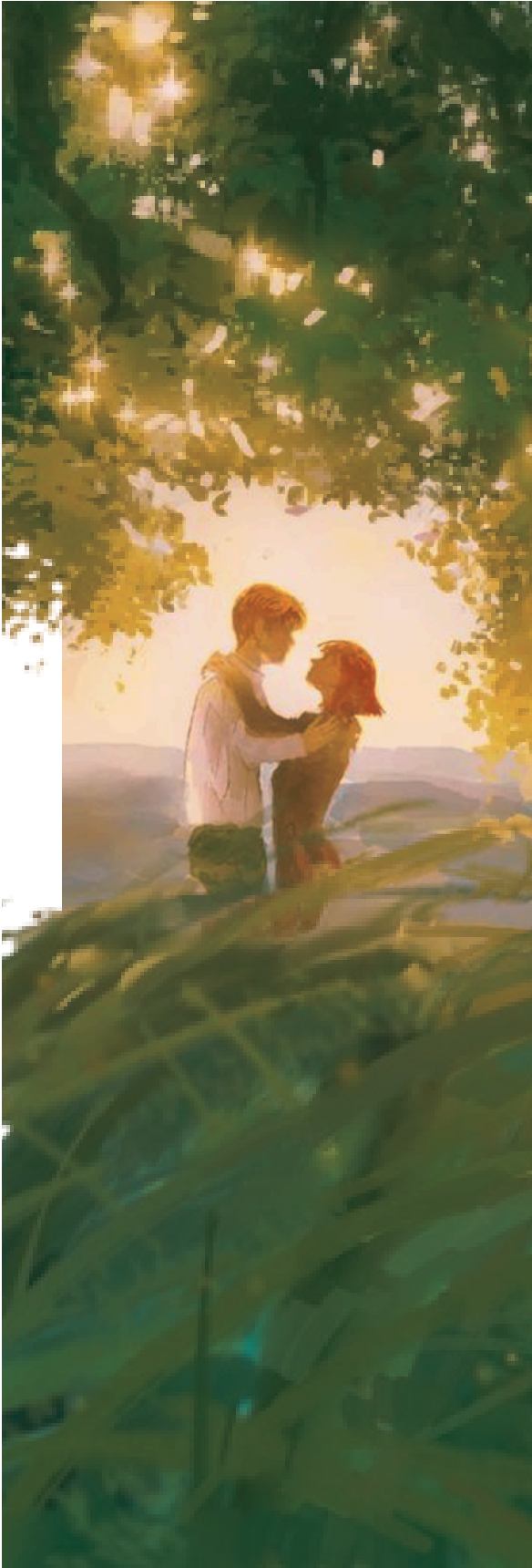
The shiny fake silver tap gurgled before harshly letting out water, quickly filling his cup before he turned it off.

He left the glass on the counter.

He walked to the patio door, slipping out during a round of shrill laughter. The garish orange lights from inside lit up the porch, bleeding into the forest beyond. Beyond that it was anyone's game. He leaned up against the wall - just out of sight, staring into the dark trees as they towered over him. Leaves swaying lightly in the wind, creating haunting screeches. He shivered.



I THINK WE'RE ALONE NOW _____ BY ELLA N.



Footsteps came up behind him. And a finger tapped his shoulder.

He smiled, turned around and was met with a large grin.

“Oh Julia!” He laughed, picking her up and spinning her around, feet off the ground.

She giggled back. “Hi.”

He gently placed her down again and they shared a wide grin. Not the tight lipped, small smiles they put on for their parents, but massive, unrestrained grins.

They held each other's hands, and ran off into the forest, giggling and laughing as they jumped over stones, darted around trees and ducked under branches.

It was just them, alone and free in the forest, running as fast as they could, holding onto one another's hand. Trying to get away into the night, away from their families and their lives, just for a few hours.

A few, precious hours.

Well, until they fell.

They tripped over a branch, sticking up and waiting for a foot to get caught in its bump. Well he had accomplished that at least.

Tumbling down the small hill that just so happened to be after it, they held onto each other, arms tightly warped around waists as their throats became hoarse from screaming, filling the silent woods with noise.

They fell for what felt like hours, until they hit the bottom with a loud ‘thud’, rolling away from each other to catch their breath.

“I think we're alone now,” Julia said breathlessly, turning to face him, hair thrown out of its bun and littered with leaves and twigs. She was beautiful.

“Mm, there doesn't seem to be anyone around,” he joked back.

They stayed like that, sprawled out on the dirty forest floor, hands clasped together, the beating of their hearts the only sound.

He smiled again. This was all he wanted.

ONE STAR

BY ELLA N.

I look up,
From beneath,
My bed sheets,
And there is only one star in the sky.
I sigh,
Turn over,
And close my eyes.
In my dreams,
I turn over once more,
Willing my body to dare a glance,
At that empty sky.
But instead I smile,
For the sky holds millions of stars,
So many,
You can't even pick out a single one,
Can't see which twinkle,
Which are actually planets,
Can barely make out the constellations.
I smile,
Eyes glued to the stars,
And sleep.
I open my eyes again,
It's so early the sun hasn't even risen,
So late, that it isn't.
I smile,
And sorrow fills my heart,
As I look up,
And there is only one star in the sky.



ANIMAL CORNER

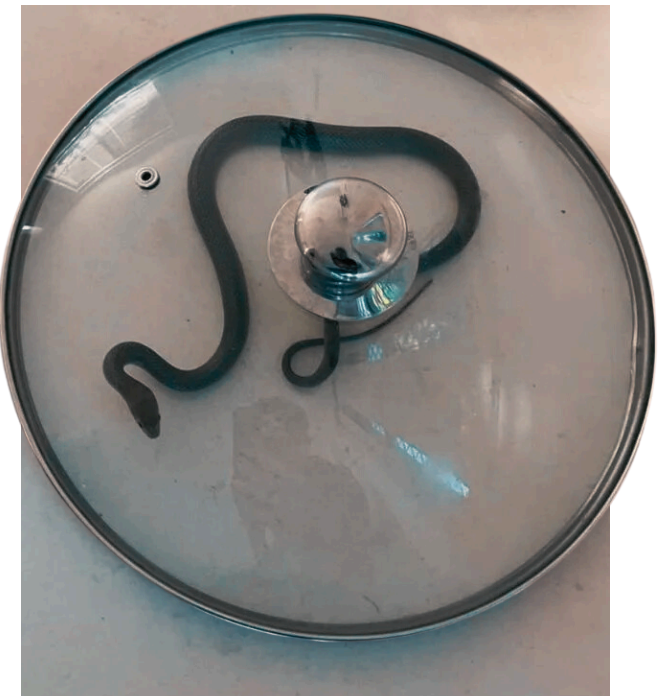
BY HAYLEY H.

Snakes are a generally feared animal because of their status in society. But they aren't actually that bad unless you've been bitten, then I can say it's ok to fear them. Snakes are one of my favourite animals because they can stretch their jaws both left and right and up and down. Snakes are reptiles which are cold blooded animals. Snakes have been making headlines in the media a lot recently due to their increased appearance in residential areas, throughout many states in Australia.

NEWS

On February 9, an eastern brown snake was found slithering across a man's kitchen floor in Moreton Bay. The man had the shock of his life when he found an eastern brown snake slithering across his kitchen floor. He bravely put the closest thing to him, a saucepan lid, over the snake and immediately called for help.

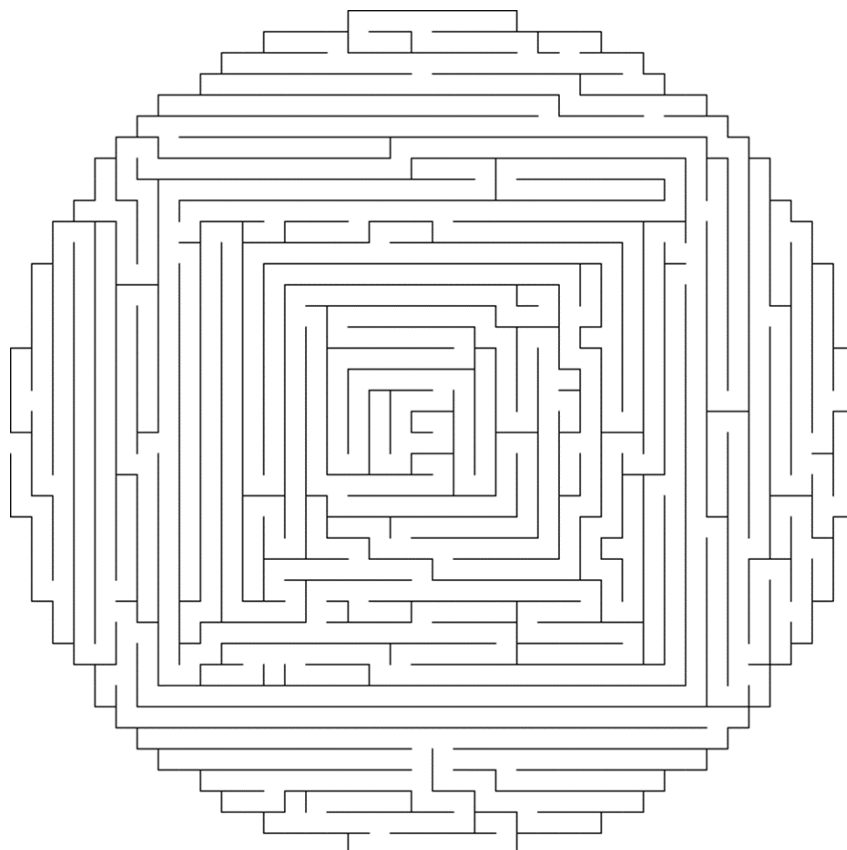
But this is not the only snake found in residential areas. Imagine walking into your backyard and seeing this, quite a frightening image, right? This was a scene that confronted a Queensland snake catcher and of course the 2 budgies in the cage! Luckily, they were quick to call Hudson snake catching, who took the snake away in just a few minutes.



THE MAZE

BY ELLA N.

START



FINISH