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2016 International Booklet of Champions A collection of creative pieces from winners of the International Write On! Competition

Dear Readers and Writers,

The Write On! team wishes to congratulate all of this year's participants! We received submissions from children, university students and adults from 15 different countries across the globe. Thank you all for sharing your creative ideas with us!

The Write On! team extends a warm thank you to all of the participants, volunteers and educators out there that helped make this happen. Your support and dedication to creativity and English education is what makes competitions like Write On! possible and successful.

We present this *Internationl Booklet of Champions* as a celebratory record of this year's competition. It features 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place international winners' stories. Enjoy each other's creativity and share this *International Booklet of Champions* with teachers and friends and community members.

We look forward to your participation in the 2017 International Write On! Competition.

Write On!

Abbey Allen, Bronwen Callahan, Hannah Combe, Thaer Husien Grace Kelly, May Reese, Francisco Resto, Sarah Richardson Write On! Competition 2015-2016 writeoncompetition@gmail.com

#### We would like to extend a huge Thank You to each country's dedicated National Coordinators!

#### This year's participating countries:

Albania, Armenia, Cambodia, China, Ethiopia, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kosovo, Madagascar, Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, Philippines, Ukraine

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#### 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, First Place International *Shanadayne Garcia, Ifugao, Philippines*

Prompt: You can have a door in your room that opens anywhere. Where would it open and why?

#### Door of Happiness

Today is the summer season. As usual, my mom would go to malls or supermarkets to buy food, clothes or other things. My older sister would go to her friends and hang out with them, my older brother would go to school so he can play basketball, and my father is away from home to work. I'm always alone- I have no friends and my family could care less. I was thinking that they don't care about me, about anything I do or about me, always being alone.

I'm in my room, thinking about what to do since I'm alone, looking around, I noticed I have everything I want, phones, computer, television, laptop, shoes and other more things. Sure they gave me anything but not their love + attention.

I was lying on my purple bed when suddenly, I felt a cold wind rush through my body. I looked around, my windows are closed, the aircon was turned off, the ceiling fan wasn't moving and my door was closed. It was imposible for wind to enter my room. Soon, again I felt a cold wind and it was stronger than the previous one. I thought I was just imagining things so I decided to go downstairs.

Upon opening the door, a light appeared making my eyes closed. When I was sure the light was gone, I opened my eyes and was very surprised to find myself in a field of flowers. I looked to my left to see a river flowing straight. It was beautiful.

On second thought, why am I here? Is this a dream? Or am I imagining things again. Is this a trap? Many questions are running through my head. My emotion changed from calm to fear. Suddenly, the sky turned a dark shade. The river was running faster than it did. The flowers were slowly turning into fire. I was scared. It was more frightening. "Don't be scared," said a little angelic voice. The voice was coming from my back so I turned around surprised to see a little girl smiling at me. Her smile made me calm. The world I was in was calm once again.

"It's beautiful isn't it?" said the little girl dressed in a white simple robe.

"Yes indeed, but may I ask where am I?" I asked the girl. She smiled at me and take my hand leading me somewhere.

"You are in a magical world. The reason why you are here is because of the sadness you felt, and so the door of happiness sent you here. The way to get back is to become happy." The little girl stopped and I too stopped.

Infront of me is a grand piano. It was then I noticed that the girl left. I looked at the grand piano and thought, maybe I can play it alittle. It's always been music that makes me happy. I played and played until I found myself smiling.

In a blink of my eye, I was outside our house. My mom was pacing back and forth holding her phone. My sister was in view inside our house. I noticed that dad's car was here. Out of nowhere, my brothered shouted, "She's here! Mom! Dad!" I was suddenly engulfed in my family's embrace.

In that embrace, I felt love and care. I realised, maybe my family loved me after all.

"Oh, how we are worried about you. You have been gone for almost five hours!" my mom exclaimed. That worry made me smile.

"I am here now, mom."

#### 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Second Place International Srey on Peuy, Siem Reap, Cambodia

Prompt: You can have a door in your room that opens anywhere. Where would it open and why?

#### A Day In Mars

I can open a door in my room that opens anywhere and it would open to Mars. I always prepare a spacesuit beforehand so I could survive there. When I stepped on to Mars, I became the first human being to set foot on a completely different planet. It was a fabulous trip.

First, I made some preparations. I decided to wear a spacesuit to prevent me from the bittering cold climate on Mars and to protect me from any harmful celestial objects. I brought some shovels and scientific instruments to collect soil samples there. I also brought a chair so sit in and watch the sunshine. When I Was ready to go, I opened the magical door.

As I opened the door, I could feel the cold even through my secured spacesuit. When I set foot on Mars I was so elated. Isn't it wonderful to step on a completely different planet? Absolutely yes. I was a little disappointed when all I saw around me was only rocks and red dust. Even though I'm a little disappointed I'm still very very merry. I was floating! I understood why. There is less gravity on Mars. I was enjoying myself when I remembered I had to take some samples to take back home.

I took out my shovels and started to dig into the soil. After collecting some of the red soil, I continued to dig. I didn't know why. Then my shovel hit something hard. Clink! What was that? Is it gold or an emerald. I was so excited. Then, I saw what it was. It was no gold nor emerald, but a mammoth metal thing shaped like an egg. When I got it out of the ground I saw two buttons on it. A red button and a green button. I decided to press the green button. Nothing happened. I waited and waited but nothing happened at all.

After five incredibly long minutes I started to hear some noises from the circle. It was cracking. I attentively investigated it and coming out of the cracked open "egg" was a super weird creature. It had four eyes, a mouth that stretched to its tremendous ears. What an ugly creature! Ugghh! I panicked. I was afraid it would do something very terrible to me. I started to run, but my feet was stuck there. My whole body suddenly became cold with fear. I stood there and stared at the creature unable to move or speak.

Then the creature started to say, "Ih! Ohw era ouy"? What in the world is he saying. When I didn't respond the creature said, "Olleh! Olleh! Ohw era ouy? I ma tatin eht ecnirp." I still

couldn't understand it. Click! I remembered the movie Spy Kids. The toys were talking backwards .Ta da! I know what he meant now! I figured out that he said, "Hi! Who are you"? And the second time he said,

"Hello! Hello! Who are you? I am Tatin the Prince." After I understood that he didn't mean any harm I responded, "Hi! Um My name is Srey and I come from the planet Earth." After a moment of silence

Titan finally said, "Ho! Ih no Hers! Nac ouy llet emwoh ouy tog ereh!? The started to hitchat and told him how to stepped on to Mars through a door and how I got to meet him. We chit chatted until sunset and we sat to watch the glorious sunset together. I realized that I was very hungry and I had to go home now. I said goodbye to my new friend and promised that I would come back to meet him later. I couldn't wait to go to Mars again and meet Titan again.

The End!!

6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Third Place International *Ana Keratishvili, Sagarejo, Georgia* 

Prompt: Describe the everyday thoughts of a dog in your country.

I am a dog. I am in georgia, in sagarejos street, but I don't know the streets name. I don't know where I am. There are many dogs. They look like me because we have not got friends, we have not got our houses. I don't speak other dogs because I am scared. The people walk on the streets with their legs and with their strange maciens. The maciens are moving on the right and one the left in this street. I am hungry, very hungry. I drink whater but it is terrible. I eat some food. They are all in tall metal boxes and they are not delicious. This food is bad. But I eat them because I have not got other. I listen the strange sounds. I am cold, I am hot in the other seasons. I look people. They are angry for me. Yesterday I saw my brother. I know you think I must happy, but I am not happy, I am sad. my lovely brother was dead. I have not got anyone who can help me. Where is my mother? I have this question. but no one ask my question. I think my mother never come. all the time I am alone. I missed my big friend is not with me. The streets dogs scaring me because they are crazy. I am lost. I am crying but no one help me.

One day two boys helped me. They bought food for me. I ate food. It was delicious. I was not hungry. This day I drank delicious whater. I ate bred. I am very happy but I am exhausted. I have not got home. I am going to the kindergarten. I know I will sleap at the big tree. This night is raining. I see box where I can' sleep. z, z, z. In the morning walk on the street. people are not angry, they are lovely. I am happy. They boys wich I saw yesterday are here. They smiled. I lost my family but I know one day I see them. I will very happy. When I will see my lovely family.

The end.

7<sup>th</sup> Grade, First Place International *Frances Josetta Sulisyo, Indonesia* 

Prompt: Would you rather explore space or the oceans? Why?

"Neb! Wake up!" startled by the noise Nebula woke up with a start. In front of her was he little sister, Luna. Luna was jumping on the bed making it hard for Nebula to get up. "Luna! What's the matter? It's only eight o'clock! And on a Saturday!" asked Nebula going into the bathroom.

"Dad's back! And wer'e gonna go somewhere," Luna answered jumping off the bed. Nebula's dad was an astronaut, he was always at work, exploring different planets.

"Nebula, Luna! Come downstairs wer'e going on a family trip!" shouted Nebula's mum, Mrs. Smith.

"Where to?" asked Nebula going down the stairs, hand in hand with her sister.

"This time wev'e decided to have a breakfast picnic at the beach! We know how much you love swimming . . . and eating." Hearing this, Nebula ran back into her bedroom to get her swim gear.

Soon enough her family of four were singing along to the radio in the car. When the song ended her mum started talking about work. Mrs Smith was an astrologist who worked from home. Her whole family had always been interested in space. Grandparents, aunts, uncles and even cousins, were fascinated by the things, beyond the Earth. Although she would never admit to her family, but she hated the subject of space. She would always end up sleeping during astrology class or zoning out when her parents discussed about work. Unfortunately, Nebula had bigger problems, she was almost at the end of school and she had to start applying for universities. Her parents wanted her to to to the university of astrology, but she wanted to go to the Ocean Study University. Ever since her parents brought her to Indonesia, for a submarine ride she was intrigued in exploring the occan.

The next few days were a whirlwind of fun at the beach. Sadly it all ended once she was back at school. As she was about to zone out during class, Mr. Hills showed everyone the option trips in starting your career. There were trips to Japan about electronics and trips to Africa to learn about wildlife. Her eyes skimmed through the list. Finally she found a trip to Indonesia to explore the oceans, and learn about sealife.

Nebula went back home with two slips in her hand. One to study the ocean and one to go to a space observatory. She knew which one her family expected her to choose but she didn't have the heart to throw it away. As she walked through the front door, she saw her parents waiting for her at the dinner table. With grim faces. Rushing to the table she hurriedly asked, "What happened? What's wrong?"

"We found this," said Mr. Smith showing her a half filled out application to the Ocean Study University." The half that was filled had her personal information and the rest to be filled out was her accomplishments.

"I didn't fill that out," Nebula said with confusion.

"But do you want to apply?" asked her mum

"Honestly . . . yes I do, but I know you wouldn't want me to."

"Of course we would, Nebula Star Smith, why would you hide this from us? We will support you and I want you to go upstairs and fill it out right now. Also give me that slip to Indonesia we'll fill our for you. Now go."

As Nebula walked upstairs to her room she pondered to herself, "I wonder how they know, parents truly do know everything." Later that night she heard a knock on her door and Luna coming in. Still half a sleep, Luna whispered into her ear, "I filled it out and told mum and dad, you should do what you love. Good night." As quick as she entered she left without another word and id not see the loving smile that crept onto Nebula's face.

7<sup>th</sup> Grade, Second Place International *Ira Haluripska, Haisyn, Ukraine* 

Prompt: Would you rather explore space or the oceans? Why?

#### How I explore oceans

I jumped to the water. I can't swim and fall down. You can think that it is end of my travel (or life) but no. I am get up and seeing fish. They are like rainbow (blue, red...) I think that I sleep and it is only fairy tale.

I go to saw this place more. And I saw big town. There are homes and many buildings. People live here. But they were with 4 legs and they have green hairs. This people be without nose.

They were funny, but I not feel good and I run away.

Then I saw something like sun. It shine brightly, but it was blue. I come to it and it became red, then I smile and it became white.

I not stay at my place and went to other place. Here was big radio that can speak.

Who are you? – I said.

Badabadabada – it said.

Oh! – I think.

Badabadabada - it said again.

I can't stay here, I run away. Then I played with monster that named Oskar, ride a big fish, have new friend I named Alecorn, (he is big fish that speak English), then monster named Wind teach me how build real home.

I feel sleepy and go home to sleep. At next day I eat lobster. It was delicious. I went to water park with my friends, played funny games, had picnic. And I wait for next day.

7<sup>th</sup> Grade, Third Place International *Kristian Blido, Roskovec, Albania* 

Prompt: Would you rather explore space or the oceans? Why?

"Aren't you bored of living in a normal gravity and always stepping on something solid? Well, I am. I have to find a solution, the only two environments that does not have the normal gravity are space and oceans. But...my choice is... space. I like exploring too and space has a lot to be explored and I have already explored oceans, in fact just a lake near my house but anyway that doesn't matter." — That's what I said to my class three years ago.

After three years preparations which include:

-Finding the best and easiest way to go to moon

-Inventing and intergalactic tunnel

-Getting enough food for as long as someone can live

And now in 30th February, 1372, I Kristian Blido am going to explore space.

I entered my supersonic, flying motorbike in my astronaut outfit, ready to start my journey to... somewhere in space.

Firstly I went to moon, where in a few days, as I had planned, built an intergalactic tunnel. After going through that tunnel, I arrived in a very strange part of space. I could see planets like bubbles, some others seemed to be made of glass and wood. In the 25th night I was sleeping in my motorbike that could be transformed into a very comfortable place to sleep, while suddenly I heard a noise. It was an alien spaceship, a very giant spaceship. They took me inside and started saying:

-Vorrk, warrrrok, wark?

I wouldn't have understood them, if I hadn't invented an alien translator.

And they had asked me where I was from.

After telling them my whole story, they told me their story, which unexpectedly was the same:

They also started exploring space. Seeing that we had the same achievement, alien Queen accepted me on their board.

After 15 years of exploring 27 different planets, I decided to go back to my home planet. That wouldn't be possible if I hadn't invented a teletransportater. But I had invented it so I went back home, of course after I thanked the alien crew of the alien spaceship.

When I arrived home I was prisoned for 10 years by the US government because the pretended I knew too much about space and refused to tell them about my experience.

Now, at the age of 96, I finally had the possibility to tell my story to the media and the whole world. But...because I did this, 1 day ago I got a warning from the alien crew and alien queen that if I do say even one more word I will be killed. I don't care, I'll tell everything.

#### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade, First Place International *Maria Abigail Effendi, Indonesia*

Prompt: You can go back to any time in history. What time would you go to? What would you do there?

Hospitals. The only place where the strong scent of alcohol and medicine would tangle with each other and suffocate you. The only place where people inject sharp objects into your body and cut you open. The only place in the world that I absolutely despised.

Ironically, as my eyes fluttered open and expected to see the familiar surroundings of my bedroom, I was greeted with the sight of nurses rushing around and patients on different devices instead. It was then that I had realized where I actually was. It was then that I had realized where I actually was. It was then that I had realized where I actually was. I was in a hospital.

Millions of questions flooded into my brain in that single moment. Why was I here? How did I get here? When did I get there? Who am I here for? Tense, I looked around desperately, but there was no one I knew. As a nurse in a spotless blue uniform passed by, I stood up.

"Excuse me," I called out to her, but was met with only silence.

"Excuse me!" this time, I strained my voice to become louder.

Confused at the lack of response and slightly frustrated, I stomped up to her and was about to tap her on the shoulder when something strange happened. My hand passed right through her body as if it was thin air. Immediately, I froze. With a trembling hand, I attempted to tap her again, but the same thing happened.

My heart started to beat against my chest furiously like a wild beast fighting against its cage. As the panic built up, I tried to touch several more people, grabbing their arms, shoving their shoulders, kicking their feet. Anything that would tell me that what I had seen was just my imagination, but I was wrong. This was real.

Giving up, I decided to wander aimlessly around the hospital. As I trudged through the clean hallways, I realized that people wore different clothes and had different hairstyles. A man even passed by with a phone as big as a block in his hand. Why were there no flat-screen TVs? Or smartphones?

I gazed around curiously at the people around me until a possibility appeared in my mind. Had a I gone back in time? Walking up to the stairs by the corner of the hospital, I realized that here were no modern elevators here either. A few minutes ago when I had tried to walk out of the

hospital through the doors, it had refused to budge at all. At first, I thought that there must have been a problem with the sensors, but there were no sensors.

As the different scenarios emerged in mu head, I tried to figure out the date. Entering a small waiting room, I noticed a mini calender on the table and picked it up. In the middle, there was a small, red circle around today's date. March 27th, 1994. My eyes widened at the familiar date. That was my birthday.

Without another thought, my feet moved on its own and I dashed through the hallways, remembering the particular hospital room that my mother had told me countless stories about. Panting, I pause din front of a door. Beside the door, there was a shiny, metallic plate that I scanned over quickly. Room 409. With a deep breath, I shut my eyes tightly and stepped right through the door.

"Wahhhh!"

My eyes opened, watching the scene before me in absolute amazement. There on the hospital bed, looking seaty and exhausted, was a beautiful, younger version of my mother. Beside her, I noticed my father with a head full of black hair that would turn bald later in the future. In his arms, there was a little creature wrapped delicately in a soft blanket as it wailed loudly.

With tears of joy streaming down her rosy cheeks, my mother smiled widely as the bundle was passed to her. She cradled it gently, staring at it with an overflowing amount of affection.

Gulping, I walked slowly to the couple. Placing my hand on the railing of the hospital bed, I looked down. Huge, black eyes gazed up at me curiously as a small head wriggled in the bundle. Its chest rose up and down as the little baby breathed the air of the outside world for the first time. It was during that moment that I had figured out who this fragile newborn baby was. I was staring straight down at myself.

# 8<sup>th</sup> Grade, Second Place International *Elda Basaj, Kosovo*

Prompt: You can go back to any time in history. What time would you go to? What would you do there?

I was searching through the old and dusty furniture that was setted next to the fireplace. That was the time my eye catched a strange book. It was for two reasons strange to see it on that place: it was a old brown very heavy book, placed near the brand new very light green ones. I got up carefully and walked past the table till I was there.

I got the books and once it was setted on my hands I realized it was much more different then others. And once I realized for what was it, my eyes shined bright and my face made a big smile. "Life through a Tudor."

Now reason two why it was strange: it was a history book. And ever since this library opened never had they once bought a history book. They were my favorite, but they never had them. "Flora, you finally bought a history book." I was the first to question the librarian about the strange book that was placed in my hands. "Oh dear that one is Mr. George's" Flora letted me know.

That was a very big surprise, to be honest. Mr. George is a very strange man from my town. He doesn't talk to people but even when he does he's always mean and rude, and makes sure your very hurt after that talk with him.

I just nodded to her and sat down on the nearest table around. Curiosity kills the cat. As I was reading I felt the gaze of everyone upon me, probably because I was smiling like a chesire cat. But I didn't mind. I was trapped in my own world.

After a while the world around me started to become blurry, words to slowly desapiar. I was hipnotized by the book. Each and every inch of me was into the book. My eyes on one corner to another, reading carefully the exucation of Anne Boleyn. And that was the time I noticed something strange. The portrait of Anne Boleyn, which was on the right page, changed its position. Before she was on the center, and her chocolate colored eyes were facing the floor. But now her body was more to the left, and her eyes deep into mines.

"Good evening" I saw her lips moving. She was talking to me! I wanted to scream but no voice came out of my mouth. It was like she wasn't letting me. "Oh my poor neck" she continued to talk. "In such a short time it will be leaving my body."

I was frozen.

"Ah?" for the first time my mouth decited to let a voice out of herself. It was a soft scream. It was more a confusing whisper to be honest.

"Shall you visit?" she asked me.

"What?" I was asking what is happening but she misunderstood it with "What to visit?"

"My execution" she answered me "It would be a lesson for you."

"Elda" once Flora called me the portrait froze again. Back on her previous position. I am a confusing person instead!

"The library will be closed soon" she was already preparing to leave. She made me realize I was the only customer left, and it was already pretty dark outside. I was once again turned to the strange book, unsure if to borrow it or not. But I founded myself doing soo. "I'm borrowing it" I letted Flora know, while she nodded her head. I was walking safely on street with the heavy book on my shoulder when a very angry and of course mad George appeared before me. I couldn't keep myself from letting a scream or two escape my mouth.

"Mr. George, you scared me" I stated the obvious.

"Who—" he started to directly yell at me. But stoped once he setted eyes upon my book. Well his book technically.

"Wh—Where did you get that?" he asked.

"Umm, from the library?" I was trying to ignore the fact that he suttered. He mumbled something under his breath before turning his addition to me.

"W—Would you like to visit it?" he once again mumbled, and note the fact that he was being creepy. Never has ever is his life, did George Spencer showed mercy or hope, ever. But somehow he was doing it now. "What?" he could be clearer next time. "The Tudors of course" now he was being very creepy. "Look I k—know I m—may"

"Sound creepy?" I finished his sentence for him. "Yes, yes your being creepy, very indeed. Now if you excuse me I have a bus to catch." I walked past him, when he turned to my direction and spoke.

"Believe it or not, when you arrive at the last page, a spell will appear. Read it out loud on the moonlight, and with a glance you shall be at the Tudors" and with that he vanished.

\*\*\*\*

"And with that he was never seen anymore" that was it. That was the last page of the book. The last words to be exact. But no spell appeared. I waited for a long time, until I decited to believe it was a prank. I shaked my head for believing in such thing. I was ready to close it when some words appeared. My smile became brighter, like those of a child on new years morning. I didn't wait a second and started to read them out loud.

"Shall the Queen's head separate from her body, take me to that party."

Everything around me started to get filled with glitter. Things being replaced. I was in the utter shock. My body was having an elecrity. Until those glitter touched my body as well. Changing me complitly. My hair that were down, were now made on a nice French braid. My pink pajamas replaced with a plain old dress. It was too much to protest. I was too busy checking myself out when I heard noises around me. My eyes were facing the floor. It was a dirty road instead.

Moving my head up, I realised immediatly I wasn't in my room. I was on a village instead. Pigs, chicken every sort of dirty animal going arond and making a mess. People dressed with plain clothes and dirty. Where was I?

"Good evening" I jumped from fear, turning my head towards the beautiful girl. My face full of horror. "Sorry to scare you" she apologized "I'm Maria" she introduced.

Maria was a very beautiful girl with a grey dress to match her magnificent cloudy eyes. She was tall, soo were her long hair of brown. She was pretty.

"I'm Elda" I said.

"Elda?" she said confused analyzing the name "Are you italian or french?"

"I'm albanian" I told her.

"Where is that place?" she asked once again confused.

"It's a small state on the Balkan" I told her some information.

"That is a lot clearer" I could tell she was confused still "soo, you came here to watch the poor Queen exucation?"

Exucation? Queen? Did the spell work?

"In what time are we? And where?" I asked immediatly.

"Erm the nineteenth day of the fifth month 1536, in Green Tower."

It worked it really did.

"What worked?" Maria's english accent made me realize I said those words out loud. I couldn't replay her, as right at that time the queen came.

Anne Boleyn herself.

All magnificent as always.

Right as she came the place fell silent. All of their gazes upon Anne, as she walked fearless. Making only the small noise her gown made, to hear.

I was lost too.

Lost in her deep eyes.

Lost on her voice that was a melody for ears.

I was too hipnotized by her grace to listen to her words. But then the time came. The time for her neck to leaves her body. And it did, faster than I thought. All, including me, were watching in terror. Some woman here and there were crying their eyes out, for their queen.

I found my vision blurry, I was crying also.

Who wouldn't.

Mens, was the question.

They continoud doing what they were as if nothing happened.

"The book" I screamed once I realized that I didn't have the book.

"Is that the one on Mr. George's hand?" Maria pointed toward the tall man dressed in nice clothes.

"Maria!" the women behind her snapped her "it's dissrespectful to point."

But I was already walking towards him. He fell my gaze, as he turned at my direction before I arrived. I met his ocean blue eyes. Those eyes I've seen them before.

"Sire, you have my book" I said to him right away. I didn't have enough time.

"Oh yes, I believe it's yours miss Elda." He returned the books to me and smiled "I hope you enjoyed your time here" with that he left.

I didn't have time to finish. I opened the last page to find yet another spell. I read it out loud immediatly.

"The Queen is set. Take me back."

I closed my eyes, to open them in my bedroom just like I left it.

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"Your sure you want that book?" asked Flora for the eleventh time.

"Yes" was still my answer.

The book was mine now, and soo were the future adventures. I left the library and walked past the house of George. The rumors say he left for a better living. I felt sad, I wanted to tell him about my adventure. But I guess fate wanted that. I sighed sadly and took the high road. Just to meet the same blue eyes of ocean. George!!

# 8<sup>th</sup> Grade, Third Place International *Abigeil Tabaku, Tirane, Albania*

Prompt: One day you wake up to find yourself to be the opposite gender. What is it like? How is *life different*?

Being a girl is great and fun, but sometimes I'd like to be a boy. I think all girls once in their lifetime have thought about that. Knowing that one day you could wake up as the opposite gender is terrifying, but also fun. It's seven in the morning and you're ready to get up for school only to find out that you're a boy. I mean looking at yourself in the mirror with your mouth wide open. Well you have nothing to do about it, so I'd go straight to my dad's closet to pick up some clothes. But what would my family say about it? They don't freak out and they look so casual. It's like I've been a boy all my lifetime. When I got to school, I wonder if my friends will notice. I'm about to greet them only when I'm greeted from some guys. Oh right, they're my classmates. I'm quite sad because now I can't talk too much to my girlfriends like I used to. One thing is for sure. If they loved girl version of me, they absolutely would love the boy version of me. Now I have P.E. I hate sports and what scares me is that as a boy, I'm expected to do so much better, especially in soccer. I'm now on the ground because someone pushed me while we were playing. How I hate soccer! In the cafeteria I'm sitting by some guys that yesterday I barely talked to. I'm starting to miss my old life so much. Well, I have to accept my destiny from now on. The good thing is that I can hang out tonight until 12 o'clock. As a girl, no one would have let me. Yeah, tell me about it. The other day is the same routine. Wake up, go to school, eat and then go to bed. But each day passinglife's becoming easier. I'm starting to enjoy being a guy. I'm getting to know my guy friends better, learning things and stuff about them, as a girl I'd never know. As days were passing, now becoming months, I was asking myself, "Is this the life I was supposed to have?" but I couldn't answer that. Being a guy is so much easier, trust me. No one says what you could and could not wear, no one judges your hairstyle, no boy harasses you, and it's so normal and used to be late at home. I hope other guys would understand what they put girls through. As a boy, I was very respectful. Well, the perks of experiencing both genders. One day I came home, go to my room and stare in my mirror. I started doubting myself. I may could have been a boy for my whole life. But staring at my mirror I realized that it doesn't matter. Girl or boy, I was still the same. I still loved comic books. I still was a movie and uneimatic fanatic. I still loved the same food and TV shows. I still got hurt easily. What I've learned is that even if we're in the 21st

century, society treated men and women so differently. Being a boy was sometimes hard, because you were supposed to be tough all the time. Only waking up as the opposite gender I realized in what sexist society we lived in. Maybe if that was what opened my eyes, wasn't it for the best experience what I did. Well it was getting late so I went to sleep. The other morning I was so ready to start my day. Only when I saw myself in the mirror, I couldn't believe it. A girl?! What happened! Was I dreaming the whole time? Well, it wasn't such a big deal. I mean, I got used to it now, right?

9<sup>th</sup> Grade, First Place International *Anxhela Doko, Fier, Albania* 

Prompt: What's behind the door? Why is it closed?

Mmmm...I'm so stiff... it's like my whole body is going to crumble despite the fact that I'm standing in front of a mirror looking carefully at my strong muscular sculptured chest... I don't remember well what happened...just some glimpses of light and a few bubbly giggles. I feel my throat sore and the worst part is that I can't express through my face muscles any emotion... My salty cheeks won't let that happen. I carefully touch them... they're so rough... no wonder why... sleepless nights, tearful morning, blurry days... that damned door is unmaningme... I recall the night I moved into this apartment... I was stunned... The brickywall, the old windows, the gothic fireplace and of course... a black ancient, rough, partly painted black door... I'm gonna be a little romantic "hearts & flowers" as others will me... that door was the one that really catched my eye, that really made me wanna buy this place... At the time I didn't know its secrets... I considered it as an ornament... shame on me. It was the third day in my new apartment when I first learned her secret. It was a lazy Monday and work has been exhausting... as I laid in bed and seconds later drifting to sleep, I heard this strange noise coming from the door... it was like little giggles and then pity screams, and when I just started believing it was a nightmare, the three thumping knocks on the ornament door made my heart stop... after that I heard some cracks, and as my eyes were adjusting to the darkness, I saw a white pale figure standing beside my bed... Before I even had time to move or even to feel the adrenaline rush, the pale woman threw a key at me and suddenly disappeared in the emptiness of my room. Thirsting for air, I got up... first disgusted by the key, I stood there like a fool waiting for a hint to tell me it was just a nightmare. I don't know how much time passed...seconds...minutes...hours, until I finally decided to give a second look at the key. I grabbed it in my hands and softly touched with my finger tips the letters on the key, "THROUGH THE BLACK DOOR TO THE BLACK WORLD." I would have laughed with the look on my face if that damned black door at the end of my bedroom wouldn't produce scary noises. I dress quickly... it's now or never... shaking hands put the key in the keyhole and after a 90 degree switch, the door is open before my very eyes... I see nothing but blurriness, fog, and a dim light bursting through the heavy air. Stunished I search with my eyes for any possible hint to where this door may lead... suddenly my eyes lock an embrace with some piercing blue marine eyes through the blurry air...It was a familiar blue a known one... and suddenly it hits me like a truck...

They're my eyes. I hear the little boys giggle and in absolute amusement. I look puzzled. The little boy runs to his mother, to hug her, to kiss and maybe even to play with her...No, this is too much for me... too much to bear, I haven't recalled her memory since her accident and the thought of being 5 steps away from her makes me burst into tears... I won't watch no longer, I know what's going to happen... the tall woman grabs the little kid and drags him further into darkness... I know what she did to him, I look at the scar in my right arm... This is no fair... no fair and there I go I burst like a tight through darkness and run full speed to the boy. I need to save him... I need to save ME. I manage to push away the woman, grab the little kid and say, "YOU'RE OK, YOU'RE GONNA BE OK, I CAN CHANGE THIS, I CAN CHANGE YOU FUTURE LITTLE BOY, HAVE FAITH PLEASE" And I burst in this sobby tearing that just turns my world upside down. The woman is back, she has a gun... NO NOPLEASE NO she points it at the little kid and pulls the trigger... blood...lots of it... lot of blood the poor child is bleeding... bleeding to death... and a giggling laugh vanishes through the air...it's another boy HE LOOKS HAPPY BUT WHY...WAIT he looks like the dead boy... he is his twin, no this won't be happening... the mother takes the boy in an embrace so huge it makes me cry, she says my name and I'm confused, she's talking with the boy... "OH JACK... JACK I HAD TO GET RID OF ONE OF YOU, I COULDN'T KEEP YOU BOTH." Then air shoots me out and the door closes in front of me. I HAD A BROTHER... A BROTHER and she murdered him. NOOO...why O God, why?... I remember going into the door again and again, still no matter how much I tried the boy never made it. I feel sick me... I'm still living while the other one is dead... his giggle...it still haunts me... I lost half my body half of my soul half of my heart I LOST MY TWIN. I START CRYING AGAIN ... why do I have to go over and over this again? I lay in bed sobbing and carefully drifting into sleep when I see the woman, the door crack, the key, the giggles O GOD here I go again... BEHIND THE DOOR...WHEN MY NIGHTMARE BEGINS WHEN I WAKE UP.

#### 9<sup>th</sup> Grade, Second Place International *Kened Cetai, Kosovo*

Prompt: The Evil Emperor must be stopped. You, the hero of the story, have the power to summon any mystical creature to help you fight him. Which mystical creature do you choose, and how do you two stop the Evil Emperor?

The evil Emperor Randor stole the 3 Mystic Orbs of Lania, and he used their magic to concur my world. I was the air to the throne but Randor killed my father the old Emperor and made himself leader. He also took all of the magic left in my world and used them for his purposes. I had only one power left in me. That was to summon a mystical creature to help me beat Randor. According to Legend there was only one creature that could beat the Orbs magic. Sophia the Witch, the creator of the orbs. She was very powerfull, and she couldn't controll her magic so she created the orbs to lower her power. But she wouldn't help me unless i gave her something. So we made a deal. I would make her ruler of another world and she would help me defeat. First we snuck in to the castle and went to the room where the orbs were and Sophia (the witch) tried to recapture the orbs magic but she couldn't cause she was weak. Randor spoted us, so he orderd his guard to take us to his dungeon. We were hopeless and very weak. We couldn't get free, but a maid helps us to get free and also she gaves us something to eat so we would gain strength. We tried again and snuck to the room were the orb were. But this time we had support of Laria's people and Sophia was alot concertrated and she recaptured the orbs magic. The magic was our side but Randor didn't gave up without a fight. Randor was alone on this fight and we had the people on ourside. We defeated Randor, I became Laria's Emperor, Sophia became ruler of another world and the people were very happy. I let the people to punish Randor and they showed mercy. They took away his magic and gave him a house to live. Everything was back to normal and we lived our life's like we used to in the first place.

The end.

#### 9<sup>th</sup> Grade, Third Place International *Mary Lee, Negros Occidental, Philippines*

Prompt: What's behind the door? Why is it closed?

Old Door, New Walls

I jolt to a sitting position. It is 3:00 AM in the morning & I suddenly wake for no reason. Somehow I remember something that I have once read. If you wake up for no reason at 3:00 AM, someone is watching you.

Something is.

I shake my head, thinking it as a rubbish thing for children to believe. My throat is dry from coughing all day & I forgot to drink my meds. I throw my blankets aside & stumble a bit in the dark. Not bothering to put on the lights so not to wake up my mom. Just because.

I am walking by the corridor as I pass this door. I don't know why its closed for like more than a decade. I reach & turn the knob. It is cold like ice candy in a windy night. I turn the knob to no avail. It is locked obviously. I shake the knob like crazy. Like a madwoman trying to escape the asylum. I stop & I giggle. What is wrong with me, I mutter & went down to the kitchen to take my meds & bring a jug of water to my room. As I was shuffling in the pantry in search of my cough meds, a thud was heard from above. Making my heart throw itself against my chest & dropping the water jug I had been holding.

I peek my head out of the pantry & call out Mom.

No answer.

I called out my brother's name & stop midway because Theodore was on a graduation trip. I start to shake & my palms are cold.

I drink my meds in a rush & take my jug upstairs.

I pass the door again. Perhaps the sound came from inside? Maybe if I 'll-"Maureen, sweetie?"

My mom calls me from her room. Maureen is short for Mavairneen or Mavareen or whatever. Its Irish for "my darling". I use Maureen & I think that my real Irish name as obsolete. I call out saying I am here. I am fine. But there is no answer. She must've fallen asleep again.

I shrug & swallow against the lump in my throat.

I place my water jug on the floor. I am going to bust this door open.

As I was positioning, the door swung open & a young woman peeked at me. A scream refuses to leave my open mouth.

Unknown person in here, my mind is telling me incoherently, unknown person-"

The woman grinned at me.

Who are you, I mouthed. What are you doing here?

She smiled until her eyes crinkled at the sides. She grabbed my arm & pulled me inside.

The imprisoned scream releases itself as two more palms made their on my arm. I wonder if my mother can hear me.

I squint against the bright light that fills the room. As the light went to normal brightness, I stared around.

Three pale faces look at me as I am sprawled on the floor.

All of the three faces are girls. Maybe. The one in stripes is probably a tomboy or just boyish.

I sit up & open my mouth to ask who they are, they started to say their names one by one.

The girl that peeked at me at the door is wearing a striped dress with no sleeves, the hem brushing the middle of her tan thighs.

"My name is Verona," she said & dimpled after.

The young girl my age (I am 17.), who is wearing a pink sweater that shows her midriff & shorts, reaches out & pinches my nose. I jerk away, causing their laughter.

"They call me Aisling," she said. "Its Irish for beautiful dream! I heard your name is Irish too?"

I am unable to answer. I am reeling from shock.

I look at the tomboy.

"Auburn." she said simply.

I look around & moan in melancholy.

Oh my, god.

There are trees in the room. There is a forest in the room.

I should not have been curious.

I just got my meds & I am in a strange new world.

"Oh shush shush," Verona said as she hugged my head.

"What are you people?" I asked. But it sounds like there's cotton in my mouth, so I repeated the question.

"We are your sisters, silly!" Pink sweater-Aisling said.

"Huh," I said. Auburn chuckled.

"Your mom," she said, pulling me up to a standing position.

"Your mom disposed us while we were still fetuses & kept us here."

I cringe. My mom would never do that.

"Look! She's not believing; lets show her our umbilical cords-"

"No, Aisling." Auburn grunted.

"Your mom– our mom– had us when she was a teenager. She aborted us & kept us in jars ever since. Thats why she never lets other people open this room." Verona explained while she's still on the soil.

I groan in disgust as I spot a red spot on Auburn's striped shirt. Blood?

"Oh be with us, Maureen, be with us," Aisling pleaded as she held onto my arm.

"NO!!" I yell & I jerk my arm from her grasp.

I stumble & ran to the door. Opened it & ran outside.

I ran out of the house because if I stay there any longer I might suffocate.

I am on this highway & a truck is rushing towards my direction.

And everything went black.

All I remember are ambulance sirens, my mom's voice. That's it.

I wake up, expecting to see a hospital room.

But if its a hospital room, why so bright?

I cry silently.

"She disposed you, silly." Aisling said.

I look around & I see the forest again.

I see Verona & Auburn.

"You're going to be our sister, truly." Aisling rejoiced.

I am stuck in this strange new walls.

I had the answers, but now I have nothing.

# 10<sup>th</sup> Grade, First Place International *Aletta Darmawan, Indonesia*

Prompt: You have invented something that will change the world. What is it? How does it work?

On a particularly humid, slow night in the suburban areas of Canada, a small, tiny firefly sluggishly flew through the air, as if swimming through a film of moisture. It settled down beside a window, and wrinkled its nose in disgust at the remains of other fireflies, scattered just beneath the window pane. Alas, it did not get a chance to properly settle down, as at that moment the window, squeaking loudly, flew open. A gust of wind blew the irritable firefly off to the ground.

A short, squat figure stood by the window, inhaling the moist, sticky air outside her home. The figure wore horribly mismatched pajamas, her favorite pair of fluffy rabbit slippers, and a disgruntled scowl. She sighed, and gazed up at the stars, winkling in all their brilliance, and felt a bit better. "Not once have I actually invented something useful," she muttered under her breath.

She stomped back to her workplace, scrutinizing her finished work with dissatisfaction. This was not her first invention, for she was a scientist. However, her work had never received international attention, or commanded admiration and respect. This is why, dear reader, you will not have recognized her name, which is insignificant in the story. Let us come back to the subject of her dissatisfaction, an invention sitting quite unassumingly on her desk.

The object was rather odd. It looked like a swirl of different colors that were encased in a metal shape. It looked like a moving picture of colors, like a child had melted his crayons, and and mixed them together. The inventor herself called it "The Mirror", but was of the opinion that the object was useless, although it looked beautiful with the mix of colors.

"The Mirror" was true to its name. It allowed you to look deep inside, and see a most unusual thing=your dreams. Dreams are a rather vague and mysterious subject. Scientists surmise that they are a product of your imagination and your thoughts. Through dreams, one is able to see the most bizarre and imaginative things. A walking hat, a lying dog; all sorts of stuff. "The Mirror" was rather peculiar in that it allowed a person to experience different worlds, different time periods, and different events; as long as it is in a dream.

The inventor herself had, in fact, used this strange tool. The other night, she had looked deep into the mirror. The mirror, responding to her gaze, vibrated and started to hum, like a car engine coming alive. Tendrils of color from the mirror snaked their way towards her head, and wound themselves around her head, like snakes slithering around the boughs of a tree. These

tendrils probed the inventor's thought, bringing them to life in the mirror. As the inventor looked into the mirror, flashes of her dream from that night streaked through the mirror. The colors in the mirror assembled themselves into curious looking shapes. A flying horse with wings the color of the night; a headless spider on the grass. These were indeed very odd things to dream about, but we should remember that the scientist was no ordinary person; she had the potent imagination and mental creativity to dream up these things.

Anyways, let us return to the present. As previously mentions, the inventor was surveying the 'mirror' with more than just a touch of annoyance. Grumbling under her breath, she picked up the mirror and tossed it into the small, grey dustbin right next to her desk. Blearily, for it was in the dead of night, she rubbed her eyes, yawned sleepily like a young child would do, and padded upstairs to go to bed. Little did she know, the object now sitting in the dustbin would be picked up by a garbage collector the next morning. He would bring it with him, and discover the fascinating powers of the object. Little did she know, the next generations of her world would use that curious object, to imaging things of great power, and to invent things out of the ordinary.

However, that is yet in the future. Let us return to the comfortable bed of the inventor, where she is now snoozing in peace. Let us return to her quiet ordinary life, and forget about that one bizarre invention sitting in the trash.

#### 10<sup>th</sup> Grade, Second Place International *Diellza Hasani, Kosovo*

Prompt: You have invented something that will change the world. What is it? How does it work?

I have always wanted to invent something that would help the world, but I didn't realize that what I meant to do for good, would go and destroy lives.

I was 24 at that time, had a job that paid me well and a family that loved me. One thing that I knew surely and a family that loved me. One thing I knew surely about myself is that I was very ambitious. My ambitions knew no limitations. If I set my mind up for something, I would do it. But as a quote says "Everything that's too much brings trouble". I used to follow rules back in my early years. I was a good kid, straight A's, never snuck out, two or three real friends (other just acquintances). So when the time came I said to myself "Jane Elizabeth Sanders, it looks like your time has come and what you always wanted to achieve, you will do so". I went off to work, to build one thing that people wanted desperately and children saw only on cartoons, a time machine. My family laughed, my friends thought I was weird but said they'd support me. I was very glad to hear that, gave me a boost of excitement, until I overheard one of them telling the others that I was going insane and that I had no capacity to do such a thing. Many people would have thought that I'd go around depressed and leave it behind, but I did the complete opposite. I want to show people that they could do whatever they want and was going to be an example. I worked day and night. My little sister came to check up on me. She was the only one that was at least helping me and supporting me, even though she may have just put on a façade. I didn't want to disappoint.

Six years passed and I was slowly losing faith in myself. I had dark circles under my eyes, that no makeup could hide. Oh and my boss fired me a year ago. I was living by my parents' money. I felt ashamed of myself. The whole "time machine thing" seemed stupid and pointless to everybody, even me. But every time I tried to leave it behind, it kind a called me, kept pulling me like a magnet. I started working again secretey and by the age of 36 I had done what I always wanted to do. I knew it wasn't safe to bring it up all of a sudden so I kept it hidden. The first time I went on it, I went back to high school, grade 10, Mr. Turner's physics class. I'd done a test that day and miserably failed, so when I turned back time I did it and didn't go back to check to see if I had gotten the grade I was expecting. I mean if I could build a time machine, why couldn't I get an A in elementary physics? There was slight defect that I hadn't thought about. The time

machine worked only if the power was cut off. Interesting right? I met with a physicist a week after and told him about my invention. He seemed to not believe it at first but I convinced him to, at least, come and take a look at it. He agreed and the next morning I was the most nervous I had ever been. I felt like I was about to pass out. When he came he said that he wanted to try it himself, and so he did. The machine had a keyboard where you could write the place and year. He didn't tell me where he was going, and to be quite frank about it, I didn't care. Silly me! Being all so preoccupied to tell the world, but not even think about the possibilities. The man I had underestimated was smart, and I was stupid to compare with his level. Why you may ask? Because when he got into the time machine, he went back to when I had discovered it and stole it! Now we were both stuck in the past when I had been secretly working. We were eye to eye. He couldn't move the machine himself, it was pretty big. Yet, I had made another mistake. The man carried a gun, but not your usual ones. The ones that have those injections and out you to sleep and with my luck, he shot me in my right arm. After about 3 minutes I was falling asleep. The last thing I saw was him pulling the machine towards the back exit. I had no choice but to watch my biggest dream being carried away by my non chalantness.

When I woke up, I was on the ground, still and all the memories come flooding back to me. I was mad, more mad at myself than that person. I got to my feet and decided that I could go back to his place and take my machine back, but this time I had loaded myself. And no, I didn't take any guns or any dangerous stuff like that. I didn't like to hurt people and I wasn't planning on going to jail anytime soon. I had gotten a bag and put some tomatoes, eggs, some pepper spray and stuff like this, when I went to his place, he had closed it. The windows were locked so I couldn't break in. I could only see the chimney and smoke coming out of it. What I was going to do was dangerous, but I didn't care. I waited until night came and was planning to go inside it. What surprised me most, is that, at about 2:30 am, the friend I had overheard calling me insane came in. I tried to eavesdrop, but it was pointless I couldn't hear anything over these bricks. At about 4 am I went through the chimney and burnt my knee in the process. I had no idea where the time machine was. When I went up to the third floor I saw this metallic door and this wooden one. I knew I should have gone through the metallic one, but that was too expected, wasn't it? So I went through the wooden one and I couldn't believe my eyes. My family were all handcuffed with their eyes opened, as if they were dead. I saw my little sister and burst into to tears, and suddenly my friend came in. He must have heard me crying. I'd have been scared, but I had nobody now, so I had nothing to lose. I threw him the eggs and tomatoes and had enough time to lock him inside the door. Now was the time to go through the metallic one, it had a passcode, a four digits one. I put the year it was invented and I was correct. I went in and he had been waiting for me. But this time I was pranked again, my friend and my family were all alive and he was putting them through the time machine and locked them inside it, while he was destroying my

time machine. I through the pepper spray but pointless, because he had my sister in his hands, the only one who was still alive. I was amazed how he tricked my before with these dolls who looked exactly like my family. I hadn't forgiven him for making me feel so stupid. He wanted to make a deal if I got my time machine back, he'd have my sister and if I wanted my sister he'd have the t.m. I, of course, chose the time machine, but I wasn't one to be taken for a fool. I through the last egg and hit him in the eye and grabbed my sister and went back to the present. The first thing I did was destroy all that was left and start a new life. What I learned was not to do much, but to do what makes you happy

#### 10<sup>th</sup> Grade, Third Place International Napoleon Beduya, Catalabalogan City, Philippines

Prompt: You get onto a spaceship- where is it going? Why?

I approached the space ship carefully, marvelling at its own beautiful glory. Its intricate design and machinery are right off the bat. Some may even say that this craft wasn't created by the hand of a common man. The fact that this ship could travel twice the speed of light is awesome, no doubt about it. And this'll make my job much quicker.

I walked up to the ramp and I glanced back to see the already-setting sun, that was calling out to me, to remind me that I'll come back soon before it rises again. It reminded also of my own family, whom I'll be coming back home to after this mission is done, and that mission: to bring back our lost contact, my own brother.

Which brings me to my main objective, to locate and rescue my brother and his team back to Earth from a far and unknown galaxy, which was speculated to harbor a planet that's similar to our home planet. Unfortunately, we lost contact with the team 3 years ago, and has caused turmoil inside NASA ever since. Theywere off the radar like a speck of dust. And that's when I come in. Miraculously, after we've lost contact, we received an unknown message from their craft, saying they've had difficulty w/in the ship and crashed, they were alive.

I enter the craft and sat down in the pilots seat. It was quite spacious for a space ship, but nevertheless, a spaceship. I gathered all of my courage and started prepping up, making sure everything's fine.

"3...2...1... we have lift off! Approaching the atmosphere– oh there he goes" the main control said.

I gripped tight and proceeded to control the ship on my own towards Galaxy 1522-BB-8. Moments later, I near the spiral galaxy and enter its wormhole, towards its own solar system.

What I saw was a single, but large planet revolving around a familiar star. But I wasn't getting any signal from the planet, it seemed to have no inhabitants whatsoever. I tried contacting the frequency we received on earth, but it was unresponsive.

I saw a flash coming from the planet, like a beacon. Then I realized it was heading towards me—

CRASH

The craft was demolished into smithereens. I floated into space, luckily. But I was not prepared for this turn of events.

I have failed. We have been fooled. By a much smarter species. They were dead all along. And soon I'll be joining them. Unfortunately for one, I'm left alone. In the dark, the brood of fear. The fear of the unknown. For I have fallen into a trap. For a lone lost contact.

#### 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, First Place International *Daniela Kuka, Tirane, Albania*

Prompt: You can spend your whole life traveling anywhere you want to go, but you can never stay in one place for more than three months OR you can spend your whole life in your hometown, but you can never leave. Which would you choose and why?

I was sitting in the dark corner of my library. The scent of old books and humid warmth was so known to my skin. The stories I have seen so many times were standing there silent in their slumber. My old and tired bones were resting in my old and tired chair. The wrinkles on my face were sending sharp strokes of pain into my soul. I still don't understand the need of that. Years can still be felt even without them... But to forget my pity, I want to tell you my situation. Today, in the doorsteps of my home, the one I have not left for 80 years, came a young man. He was standing silent and looked at me with tired eyes. He was tanned, different from my pale face. But an old and tired skin (I have said tired too many times but forgive this old man) cannot compare with his youth. He said he wanted to ask me something. I in puzzlement let him in. Know he was standing before my sight, with a look that begged to break the silence. I gave him my most warm look to tell him to continue. He took a deep breath and began,

-I...am...cursed...Not from magic of witches or the hate of some god...from life itself. I can't stay in one place. I can never find home. I travel from one place to another. I move like a shadow into the darks of the night and walk carefree in the mornings. I have seen so many things, so many lifes. I have been in movement like the wave of oceans of the air that save breath in our lungs... but as they are powerful, they never stay, never seen...And so am I...

He stopped tear falling from his face. He cried and cried and moved in anger, pity and rage.

-I have never had a HOME, he screamed in his tears. NEVER HAVE I HAD A PLACE OF MY OWN. I HAVE BEEN A SHADOW OF THIS WORLD FOR I HAVE FORGOTTEN HOW TO BE HUMA...human...human.

He started to calm down. He stopped his screaming and stared at me like a child who has done wrong.

-I am sorry... for my voice... he said in a low voice. I laughed and stared back into his tearful eyes.

-As an old man, I have seen many things. Pain and hope, lust and desire. A screaming of a young man can not bring me fear... but why did you come to me my child...

-I was walking again... he said in pain... And I heard of you. A man who has never left his hometown. A man who has stayed in the place he was born, has lived his life in a small and destroyed town... he stopped. I saw pain in his eyes and understood what he wanted to say.

-And will probably die there...?

-Yes... he said in a weak voice. Thought that maybe you could tell me something of what is like...to have a home you do not need to leave... A place of peace...

"Ah young and hopeful," I thought. For youth always craved for what they did not have. You now would asked me and say to me wasn't this strange. Wasn't this an absurd situation. Yes, but why ask and defy fate. So I answered:

-I am cursed as you are. We both are. For one who can not leave his home is as cursed as the one who cannot find one. Do not think of me as better than you. Do not think of me as better than your fate. We did not choose this path. Nobody in their right mind would. Life cursed us. It cursed us to have to choose (or in this case an essay!) a path. To have to choose between home and world.But my child whichever we have chosen, we should take it as a blessing and a dream. For our life is our own in both cases. I long for your life as you long for mine. We will both die of regret, but we will both have lived. That is all that we can ask. So do not cry, my son, for we have lived, we have seen. You the world, me my soul. And if we are not human in our deaths, then we have becomedgouls.

#### 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, Second Place International Asmae Saguer, Morocco

Prompt: You can become a character in any television show, but you can never come back to the real world. Would you do it? What show would you enter? Why?

On a friday, I prepared myself to eat my diner as usual and brosh my theets and head up straight to my favorite anime show it's about a group of girls that have special powers and they use it to fight bad and evil people they were so beautiful and strong and rich beside they live together in one house and they share beautiful memories, I always loved to watched them. I couldn't miss any of their adventures, but in that friday something weird happened, as I opened the TV I started to look for channels using the remote control, until I found it but the strange thing is that the screen was block, I thought the problem was in the receiver or in the TV but all the other channels were working, I turned it off and then on but still nothing had worked.

I turned around to see the watch that was ahnged on the wall it was 22:10 that means that the program has started 10 minutes ago and that also ment that I missed 10 minutes of fun I took a deep breath trying to not feel angry and I started from the beggining but in vain, I started to hit the tV with my legs because I was so angry and sad, but as I lyed on my coutch after I gave up I heard a strange sound inside the TV, then the TV turned on by itself I was scared but curious I came with small steps until I reached it I turned it off and I came back to my coutch, suddenly I heard my voice rigning it was 1 message I was trying to reach my phone with my fingers because I was too lasy to get up when the tV has turned on again I stoop open-mouthed scared, I took my phone and I opened the message "Spooky, isn't it" the message said, I felt that I couldn't move my legs again from fear but I had a hope that it was just a joke from my friends, so I replied "Who is this?" after 3 seconds another message appeared "turn on the tV and you'll see, I'm sure you will be happy" even though I was sure that it wasn't a joke

I turned on my tV and then I saw them, I step few steps backward speechless, chocked scared, hte three girls the three tV show caracters they were all waving to mee and looking at me and they were coming forward like they wanted to came out of the screen but they hit their faces with the screen in a funny way and then Sonia said: "I told you, we can't do it" then Kamilia answered her "shut up! would you we are not here to blame each others" as she finished her words they were all looking at me and then Latichia spoke "Hi! Julia I hope we didn't scared, I'm so sorry for this dramatic entry, wow it really looked like horror movie" she laughed. the words

couldn't come out of my mouth until I hardly said "hhow how do you know my name, and how can you see me", and then Sonia spoke again "I told you, she isn't ready, look at she doesn't even know why we are here" after 1 short silence Latichia talked again "Julia, you really don't have to know the answers of your questions, all you have to know is that we are real and we are here to take you with us, I mean to our world, you can live with us, and here's the ecxiting part "We can give you a power so that you can fight with the evil guys, your life will because a superhero just like us, we can be like sisters all of us you will live exiting adventures.

But..." she stopped and looked at me like she was gonna tell me a hard condition that I would accept, suddenly Kamilia took a deep breath "I'am going to tell her for you. if you accepted to come with us you can go back to your boring world again, wich is something great, isn't it?" she looked at me like she was expecting to say yes, but for me I was only trying to grasp what was going on around until I finnally said "but why me?" "There she is, asking stupid questions again" Sonia said, "because you are special and you are the only one who is going to help us, plus you are a big fan" Latichia said, "think of it, this is your life opportunnity, you will never die, never get old, always young" Kamilia said, and then a deep silence filled the air again "I can't, I just can't" I said "that was something I told you before, she will refuse because she is stupid she can't make a good decision" Sonia said with an anger in her eyes, "why, Julia?" Latichia said softly, "because I can't leave forever, I can't leave my job, I can't leave my family who will be so worry for me leaving without a sign, plus I can't live forever in an animated world with people I don't know, I absolutly would love to live beautiful, young and such but I love my life too, I mean I'm a doctor, I love helping people everyday, and see their smiles full with hope, the hope that I can cure them but sometimes I do, I do help them a lot, I love being inside my family and the people that I know, I live adventures too everyday is a new adventure for me, it can be problems, sad news, good news but this is the life at least a normal life" an I finished my words, I looked up at the tV, the three girls were shocked they couldn't talk anymore, "Wow, this girl changed my opinion about being a human girl with a normal life" Latichia said with a chock, "As you like, Julia, I'm sorry for disturbing, I see that you are happy with your life, bye, and I hope I can see you again" Latichia said with a smile full with sadness in her face, "I'm sorry for disappointing you girls" as I finished my sentence the TV turned off, the girls disappeared I found myself sitting on the floor and trying to understand why me, months and years gone and I was never able to see them again but I still watch their tV show as usual with fun but I can never forget that day.

# 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, Third Place International *Anri Abuladze, Baghdati, Georgia*

Prompt: You can become a character in any television show, but you can never come back to the real world. Would you do it? What show would you enter? Why?

First of all I want to say that there are loads of TV shows in the world. When I'am bored at home I often turn on my computer and watch different TV shows. Their characters are famous singers, actors, artists and writers. Sometimes I think, "Oh, their life is as colorful as a rainbow on the sky" and also I say myself, "I am just watching the world go by." To be honest, I've never thought about my participation on any TV show but let's make creativity active!

My world is black and white. It looks like a river which doesn't move and I am a fish in this river. The river is going to be a swamp which has bad smell and filthy water. Because of this fish are going to die, so I need to live in another river like the Nile and Amazon. This means that I am ready to leave my real world and become character on a new TV show which'd be on the Mars.

Everyone knows that Ellen's show is the most famous TV show on the Earth. The new TV show's name would be: "Alien's Show" because this'd be in the space. The studio'd be an undentifying flying object where there'd be a lot of cameras from all of the planets, so the whole universe would be able to watch me in tellies. I'd talk about discrimination, violance, stigma and humans' rights. There I'd say that the people's hearts on my planet are as frozen as icebearge. I'd say: "The earth is a melting pot of different people and cultures. Because of this people fight, yell and scream each other. I want everyone to be happy, delighted and pleased but because of diversity we have plenty of problems. Aliens, I need your help. Could you please teach me how to make the earth better place to live?" So my purpose on "Alien's Show" would be learning new ways how to make the world a peaceful place. It's true I'd never come back to the real world but as I have written people are watching this show from the earth, so they'd understand everything about new ways.

The presenter of this show would be Kateness Everdin because she won hunger games and her purpose was as same as mine; happiness and peace.

Georgllywood'd be the name of the area on the Mars where this TV show'd take place, because I'd be from Georgia.

Let's do it! We can Change the World! everything changes.

#### 12<sup>th</sup> Grade, First Place International *Cojacazi Andreia, Chisinau, Moldova*

Prompt: For one year, you can do anything you want. Money is not a problem and you will not get in trouble for anything you do. But at the end of the year, you forget everything that happened. What do you do?

Hello my lovely reader. I hope you are staying comfortable on a sofa now, and you have enough time to take part in my story, because, you, my darling reader, are the main character here. If you are a human, a dog or a flower, a boy or a pencil, you'll take part in my story.

I forgot to say my name... I am the air that you breath, and I'll be with you all this time. So, we got the chance to live a year as we want, imagine, how cool is to live without rules, without limits, as long as you want. Sounds great, but at the same time sounds sad, because till the end you'll forget about what we have done, but I wont. So, If you want to get in adventures with me, my darling, let's get it started. We have 365 days under our feets, and 365 chances to get a crazy life my dear!

My darling, we are on the first day of our unbelievable experience, let's go crazy! Do you want to eat something that you didn't eat before or you want to jump from a plane? Or, you want to known in someone's door and run fast not to be catched? Sounds good and funny, but I give you an advice. Be careful of your wishes, my darling, because as they are good enough, they can damage your life. I hope you are a major and you are on the years of your craziness my lovely, if you are a girl, I suppose your name is Cathy.

So, my dear Cathy, take your wishes in a bag and go outside! Do you decide to buy a plane and travel? That's perfect, because I love planes, even though they hurt me with those grey toxic clouds.

So here we are on the 3rd day of our path, and we feel comfortable together here at the top of Rio de Janeiro. There are so many people here, they are singing, dancing, playing, or even kissing. But here's too hot for m, so let's go further.

We are already on the 7th day of our trip, and we just arrived here, in Antarctica. It's cold, but, you said that you always wanted to give a warm hug to a pinguin. I was very interested on how can a cold bird give you a warm hug, so that's why I agreed. It's already 10 o'clock in the morning, my dear Cathy, you need to get up and go, because we need to go! It's just the 50th day of our crazy life, and we have achieved many beautiful things, my darling. We travelled around the world in 50 day, that's so COOL!!! You told me that you want to have superpowers and that's

exciting, because today it can be true! Do you want to read human's mind, or talk with animals or just to fly as I do? Let's combine them all and make you a Super Powered Girl or SuperCathy, my darling.

As long as we are on the 309th day of our year, I want to say that I love your new hairstyle, the green colour fits you well. As long as we bought a dog, 3 cats, 5 parrots, and 10 hamsters, you know what? I love them all!

We are already on the 320th day of our success, dar Cathy, and you know, I am very excited that we painted the Tour Eiffel in pink sparkled colour, It stays more beautiful and chic!

We are on the edge of our year, Cathy, and we have done all what you wanted to do. We sang song on the top of Everest, we talked with American president about balloon, and I hope that you are excited as well as I am.

I hope that in the sky, near the angels, you'll feel yourself free as well as it was on this year. I will always remember, my darling, as a healthy girl, that forgot about her cancer, and just lived her life. Goodbye my love...

With love, God

# 12<sup>th</sup> Grade, Second Place International *Albiona Marku, Lezhe, Albania*

Prompt: You, the captain of a large ship, are heading towards an island. On your ship is a crew of eight sailors. Once you are a hundred miles from the island, your ship hits a rock and can now only support you and two other sailors. How do you convince six sailors to jump ship?

All these years, all my life I have never felt like my heart is about to explode like this. Yes I've had millions of problems, millions of times when my life has been in danger but now... it's not just my life, it's our life.

Being a captain has taught me to be strong and to always know what to do but now... I'm the most clueless one. But why though? Why did this ship had to hit that rock? Why now? I had finally gone through the lost of my mother and I had finally started to love life again, to not feel responsible for what had happened. Now... I'm the one who has to decide who is gonna live or not. Every single minute millions and millions of thoughts run through my mind and I feel like I'm going to die, not because the ship is drowning but because of my thoughts. I opened the door since I had to face the situation sooner or later. "Captain, we're all gonna die." I hear Simon's voice. "No, we're not. Please calm down and tell everyone to come here, we need to talk." Almost six minutes later everyone comes Simon, Danielle, Jack, Harry, Lisa, Niall, Liam and Ed. When I say them all I couldn't help myself but let some tears fall. "I'm sorry I'm a bad captain, I shouldn't have let this happen. All of you have supported me since day one, since when Lisa was 19 and Simon had his first child, Harry didn't know what to do with his life and now he does, Niall loved playing cards and now he loves the sea." I try to smile through the tears but somehow it makes me cry harder. "I'm sorry that in this trip of finding myself, I had to bring all of you with me and now... I just don't know." We all noticed something crash and the water level rising. "But now I have to say that our lives are over, it doesn't really matter who lives and who dies, we will all die because of the pain and the memories. Only two of you can live, and I'm no one to say who those people are gonna be, I'm not a captain anymore, since the moment the ship hit that rock, I'm just a person who is trying to live." I don't even know at this moment what I'm doing or saying and my legs have gotten so weak and I feel like I'm gonna fall any minute. "Danielle, you are the youngest, smartest of all of us, and I think you will have so many great moments in your life, you have to live, please just make us all proud, okay?" Danielle was crying all the time, but now she fell in the floor, sobbing, I had to go on through: "Jack, you have two wonderful kids and

your wife died one year ago, I can't take you away from them, you have to stay." Jack couldn't even look at me this whole time and I could notice the other six sailors had lost their hope. Before I could say anything, Harry spoke: "I want to say that we understand, life is hard and if this was it, we will accept it, we will jump, just please take care of my mother. You know she only has me and I have always loved her more than anything, tell her not to cry about me because I'm leaving happy." Simon, Harry, Lisa, Niall, Liam and Ed all turned around and got ready to jump, and at the last minute I managed to push Harry back and instead of him, I jumped. Yes, I knew I was gonna die I just couldn't see his mother cry, it would break my heart. Now that I'm surrounded by cold and can't breathe, I get this flashback and you know what, my life is difficult but the fact that I managed to go through all of this is great and I feel proud. I always had this feeling like I never made my mother feel proud of me. She taught me to be selfless, but I had never really done anything selfless until now. I think I finally understood what selfless means in that ship.

You know, life is great but sometimes death can bring you so much peace and I just want to say that now I'm in peace, with myself and others so I let the stream take me away and close my eyes.

#### 12<sup>th</sup> Grade, Third Place International *Ikram Fadil, Morocco*

Prompt: For one year, you can do anything you want. Money is not a problem and you will not get in trouble for anything you do. By the end of the year, you forget everything that happened. What do you do?

It was just a week ago that a "jinn" appeared in my bedroom right before I was about to sleep. It was in the shape of a very handsome guy with tattoos all overhis body. I was shocked and yet dazzled by the look of it. But wait till you hear it because this was far away from being the strange part. The really weird part is that it offered me a captivating chance to do whatever I want for an entire year! This is not something you see everyday but I was unable to refuse it despite the fact that I had to forget this whole year and what happens during it after its over. To my surprise, the first time I tried to cheat in my math test, the teacher saw me and smiled, not even telling me to stop and behave. I'd forgotten what the jinn said and only recalled it after my teacher caught me cheating the second time and kept his mouth shut. I had to give it another shot. I moved towards him and slapped him so hard in the face that everyone laughed, yet he only said "thank you"! I realized I was to do anything I want for real. I hugged him and in total excitement and came here...where I sit....to write, which brings me to why...now writing is the best way for me to know at least what happens after.

I have so many things to do this year. I'll first make my family allow me to travel all over the world, I long to see other people and discover thins that will help me in my writings, which brings me to my next goal! I'll obviously finish my book writing before the year's over and publish it, for it is my ultimate dream. To add the fun factor! My most hated teachers are to be my servants throughout my days. They hardly do their job so it wouldn't be much of a problem. Wars! Syria and Palestine are deserted places. Money seems to solve al nowadays, so I'll help those countries along with others in order to get their freedom at last. Poor children make my heart sink down...mercy...For the sake of the universe, I'll start a competition in which contestants must come up with ideas to save the environment and cure cancer, and may the best win. I'll give as much as I possible can to turn those ideas into reality. It's about time we stop being selfish and use our brains. I'll have to set my priorities but I'll also travel to the moon. Astronomy has always been so fascinating to me! A world yet to be discovered, stars, planets, the mesmerising sun and the scary black holes. I'll see all of that by going up there to space, of course

I'll take my family with me there, but they CANNOT go anywhere else (international travel).. I need to count on myself foronce!

I have to remember to write my diaries everyday, I hope I don't forget at least. I'll turn my life upside down, for the better obviously, and will not forget others. The first thing I'll do though will be confessing my love to Adam. Oh just thinking about him gives me the chills. I really want him to love me bac but...its out my control. "May the odds be ever in your favour" It's getting late, how sad I need to go to bed...I'll never forget you dear Jinn, I would've never guessed a supernatural creature would actually help me...nor appear! Anyways, dear diary....sleep tight!

#### University Year 1, First Place International Dmitri Uzun, Chisinau, Moldova

Prompt: There are two boxes in a room. Inside one box is the best thing in life, inside the other box, the worst. What is in each of the two boxes? Describe them.

Thomas was walking down the street drinking hot tea and enjoying his life. The sky was clear, the sun was shining, birds were singing and nobody knew that Thomas put some liquior in his cup.

But suddenly a strange looking guy with a huge beard appeared from the corner. He was dressed like a magicial, had that weird had on his head and was holding two black boxes in his hands.

-No spare change, man – said Thomas and tried to walk away, but was stopped by the bearded freak.

-Wait, I've got something for you! See those boxes? Inside one box is the worst thing in human's life, but inside the other one is the best thing. Which box do you want to open first?

-The only thing I was to open now is a bottle of beer. And I've got one in my kitchen, It waits for me. So...

-I'll kill you with a lightning if you'll go away.

-Sorry?

-I'm a magician and I do what I want.

-Yeah, I see. Stop using drugs. – said Thomas and started to walk away, but, as he did a couple of steps, a lightning hit the ground right in front of him and left a huge smoking black hole.

-All right, you are serious. –Said Thomas. He was afraid so he had drunk all his liquior – tea at once. –So, what's in the box with the best thing in life?

-Open it up and you'll see. -answered Magician.

-Is it a bill for a million dollars?

-You'll never know until you open it.

-Oh! I know! It's a cure from all diseases!

-Open it and stop guessing!

-Maybe it's something that could bring back to life my dog in the box? I miss him...

-OPEN IT!- Yelled Magician

Thomas took a box. His knees were shaking, he was sweating. He opened the box and... -It's empty. – said Thomas –Is it a joke?

-Only you decide what is the best thing in your life –said magician with notes of wisdom in his voice.

-It would be better if you resurrected my dog. -Thomas was disappointed

-Are you listening to me? –asked Magician –God, why you're sended this fool to me? How shall I teach him the truth of life?

-Yeah, God, and how shall I bring back to life my dog! –Said Thomas and raised his hands to the sky.

-Stop joking! - Magician seemed to be angry. - Open up another box.

-Oh, is it a...

-Just open it, please.

-Yeah, all right.

The other box was empty too.

-You can't surprise a man twice with the same thing.

-You're an idiot! I am trying to teach you the right thing! All I was trying to say is that there is no such thing as "the best thing in your life" or "the worst". Your life is like these two boxes and only you decide how to fill them. And you can change your mind in any second...

-But my dog...

-God, that's unbelievable. –Said Magician and disappeared in a cloud of dust and ashes with a sound that can only be described with the word "magic". He left his boxes on the ground.

Thomas was staying there for a couple of moments, thinking. Then he took both boxes home.

He opened up the box, that should contain the best thing in life and put a picture of his dog there. But the box with the worst thing in life Thomas left empty.

### University Year 1, Second Place International *Ana Doko, Fier, Albania*

Prompt: There are two boxes in a room. Inside one box is the best thing in life, inside the other box, the worst. What is in each of the two boxes? Describe them.

White, everything that surrounded me was white. Nothing else. Then there was this bright light blinding me. And there a pair of stairs right in front of me. As there was nothing else around me, I started climbing the stairs. Stairway to heaven I thought; praying that they weren't actually taking me there. It would be a shame to die at such a young age. Ugh, these stairs didn't really seem to lead to anywhere. I was starting to get exhausted. I was really considering going back, but back where? It all seemed pointless. Then, the stairs finally were beginning to come to an end. About time! The end was a bit bizarre, I dare say. It looked like a large balcony, the floor was marble white and shining also. I got to the end of this huge, large, strange balcony and I glanced down only to look at the ocean. Yes, the ocean. Massive deep blue water. That was what was going down under my feet. I heard a booming noise behind me and looked back. A few meters behind me large smoke was coming from the floor and was beginning to slowly fade. A very beautiful woman; blonde hair caught in a messy bun behind her head and wearing a robe like the ancient Greeks. She nodded at me in greeting and I slowly approached her. 'Hello' she greeted me in a melodious voice, and I stammered back 'hello who are you?'- I wondered. 'I come by many names,' she said. 'Some may call me an angel, some fate and some spirit.' I was really confused. I asked her what did she want from me. Suddenly she clapped her hands and held her palms out and two boxes appeared in each hand floating a couple of inches above her hand with slowpulsive movements. She started talking in her sweet voice: 'These two boxes contain all the things of life; everything there is to it. But they are divided into good and bad. You are chosen to give some good or bad to the people of the world and you get to choose what to give and who to give.' I was very surprised. I wanted to look at the boxes. She gently pushed one, which slowly started floating and stopped in front of me. I slowly opened up the lid and stared. It was marvelous. Nothing, not had I ever seen so much light and brightness in a place. That kind of place made this crystal clear white room look like a dump. It was marvelous. A sweet melody which sounded like a violin playing coming from the box. And a second later I could see some spheres in there floating which read: gratitude, kindness, and all the best qualities of life. I noticed that the other box had approached me. I opened that one, leaving the first one opened. At first I didn't see or better say, I couldn't see anything because it was all dark. And then I could firstly hear a metallic strong noise coming from that box which started giving me a headache. And then these small

black spheres started shooting from the box. They read poverty, misery, greed, crime and all the terrible stuff in life that no one wants to hear. Something, a small movement under my feet, caught my eye. It was New York City. It was populated but the people were numb, were not moving, were not doing anything. Then the view changed to London, to Tokyo, to Lisbon, Moscow, Paris, Istanbul, and so many other cities. But the people looked like they didn't feel anything at all. They were just standing; like muppets waiting for someone to pull the strings. The blonde angel started talking to me: "Choose now. Give the people good or evil." I didn't know what to do. I was exasperated. I went down to the balcony to look at the ocean in the hope that it would calm me. It didn't help. How could I choose to give to someone good or bad qualities. I couldn't possibly do that. Then a thought, a small idea came across my mind. "You know what," I said to the blonde- "they are people, not muppets. They can think and they can make their own decisions on what to follow good or bad. I'm not going to be like Pandora!" I grabbed the two boxes and threw them down to the ocean. That action got the beautiful blonde really mad. "You little insolent child!" she yelled at me. "Do you have any idea of what you have done?" She came at me running and I started backing down really quickly and then I fell. I could feel the smell, taste the salt in the air of the ocean as I suddenly opened my eyes, startled. I was in my bed, my sister standing above me with a big bottle of water. "Come on, wake up" she told me. "We gotta get to school." I was so relieved that I had been dreaming. And I really hoped I had done the right thing.

## University Year 1, Third Place International *Pang Xiojia, Sichuan, China*

Prompt: There are two boxes in a room. Inside one box is the best thing in life, inside the other box, the worst. What is in each of the two boxes? Describe them.

Major Tom to Ground Control, arrive in the earth successfully over." Tom put down his talking phone and stepped out the spacecraft. It's a small-sized one, transferring one person a time.

This is earth, nobody lives here now. The tall buildings are empty, streets are empty, everything seems to be experienced a great disaster. The air is yellow and dusty. Tom have to put his helmet on. "Welcome to the earth, I'm the visitors' leading robot." The woman robot says, with a sweety voice. By her, visitors could learn about the long history of the earth. But Tom's already known it he's an earth man! He grows up with the stories toldby his grandma. There's an ancient tale in his family and that's why he came to the earth.

The tale says that there was time when the earth is the home of billions of people. Tom's great-great...grandfather is on of them. He had two beautiful boxes, and he put two unusual things in them. And the two boxes as family treasures are kept for many generations but they are lost in a great disaster, that's the disaster made the earth became the earth now. It's about two hundred and five years ago, the earth broke out the biggest world war that ever had. Refugees took spacecraft to the another planet to live. The war continued for years. Finally, the earth was completely destroyed and nobody lived. People run away started another life on the new planet called the Earth II. Tom came here to find the boxes.

He was in the land called Europe. His great-great-great...grandfather lived in a country called Britain (at his time, Britain was an island). Tom looked at the wreckages around him. The buildings were just like what his grandpa told him. He took out a device by this he can locate the address his grandma told him that's the house before his grandma's grandma's grandma lived. Through the manmade wings, he found the house quickly. The house just like the picture he had seen before.

He step in the house, searched through another high-technology device for a while. Then he found the boxes. It's not very hard. But he had looked forward to it for so long. His parents don't want him to be an astronaut is a nor job, but its also a not very safety job. So Tom's very excited now to find the boxes.

Both of the box are small, made by metal. One of it says the best thing. One of it says the worst thing. He opened the best one. There's a little bottle in it. In the bottle there's a small brown seed. Wow, Tom thought. He only sees it on books. And then he opened the other box. It's a gun, a black heavy gun, he thought. Then he found a note saying, "oh my child I hope earth will always be green and peaceful. I hope you could try your best to achieve it Tom". Tom fold the note, put away it and the bottle, take a final look at the earth, then stepped in his spacecraft.

## University Year 2, First Place International *Tamar Narimanishvili, Kutaisi, Georgia*

Prompt: You find a book in the library that has no writing in it. But when you speak, writing appears on the pages to reply to you. What do you talk about?

As we live in the century of technologies, I rarely visit libraries, but when I do I have unusual feeling of cosiness and security. One day, when I was walking along huge bookshelves a book with white, glistering cover cought my eye. It was stuck between the other books, so it was hard to get it as if the book didn't want to be bothered. When I opened it I saw nothing but empty pages. But strangely some papers were worn out and some of them were torn. I suddenly exclaimed: "it must be a joke." Imagine my surprise when some words appeared on the page: "Every person who is born is Tabula Rosa, the same it true for books." I cried out: "Wow, this must be a dream." The book answered that our whole life is a dream and we are waiting for good morrow". Than I asked why were some of it's pages damaged. The book aswered that sometimes it's answeres were to rough to accept. I thought what kind of answer could make a person so furious to torn the pages. The book said: "What if I said that you're not in library and this women aren't librarians." I thought that the book was just kidding. But it said what kind of librarians wore white uniforms. I glanced at them and they were all dressed in white. "No way" – I cried. I was in the clinic and it was the time to take my pills.

## University Year 2, Second Place International *Marina Nichita, Chisinau, Moldova*

Prompt: You find a book in the library that has no writing in it. But when you speak, writing appears on the pages to reply to you. What do you talk about?

When I think about my childhood I always think of books, old ones with brown pages, smelling of duest, but having extraordinary stories of adventure and magic. I grew up around them, always searching for new libraries, new stories in which I could emerse myself.

It was many years later that I found myself in a new library, searching as always for the warm comfort of the books. An old dark blue cover draw my attention, it was made of leaver and had no writing on it. Because I was curious I took the book out of the shelf and opened it, but to my surprise, the book was completely empty; without realizing I said out loud: "so this is a notebook?!"

I was astonished, thinking firstly that I was hallucinating, but a sentence appeared on the blank pages of the 'notebook': 'I am a book. The most important book of them all.' Bewildered and not believing my own eyes I let a nervous laughter and asked: 'And why are you the most important book of them all?'

I was not expecting an answer, but the book wrote one: 'because I know all the answers. I know all your past and I know your future. But you can ask me only one question.'

As I was standing alone, in the room filled with books and quietness it seemed that the air was filled with magic. In that moment all the impossible seemed possible and my head was filled with questions. But what was the most important question? What was I desperate to know? After moments which seeed ages I finally asked: 'Will I be happy?' The book which knew all the answers to everything wrote: 'Aren't you happy already?!' In that moment the magic broke, someone entered the library and was asking for a book. The pages were empty again, so I just closed it and put the book back on the shelf. I walked around the library and chose some books that had writing on them and while the librarian was searching and asking me questions I realized I was happy, I really wall. As long as there were books in the world, everything will be all right.

### University Year 2, Third Place International *Anush Hakobyan, Armenia*

Prompt: A group of tall aliens appears in the United Nations building claiming they have the technology to solve world hunger and end war. They say they come in peace. Do you trust them? What happens next?

We all know that there a lot of storys about aliens and no one knows weather it is true or not. But here is a story that for you might be unbelievable, but you know it is true.

My story began two or three million years ago in a far-far country called "United Nations". Of cours you will say that it's not a country, but trust me I know better than you do. So two or tree million years ago it was country.

That time I was a person who could do everything. I was the one who had iphone, though, nobady knew that there would be such thing. That time I was trying to answer the question, which still has no answer. So the question was: "Wheater there are aliens or not!" I believed that there were.

Once I decided to make a machin, which would help me to contact with aliens. As you understood I wasn't living in 21st centuary, so I didn't have anything that could help me, ,so I made my super modern machin, of cours for that time, from what I called "Apchoc". You are asking me what it is. Well it was a mixture of a fruit, which is now called apple and a sweet, called: chocolate. These two have unbelievable small and taste, and I new that aliens loved "Apchoc". So one day, or as it is clear to say one night, when there was no one in the streets and only I was not sleeping, happened something strang. On the building of my labocave (which is a synonim to laboratory) I saw a strang, tall figure. By the way my labocave was called 'UN', it means United Nation. The figure was trying to enter the labocave and at the same time was singing a strange song.

"Hunger....and....war"

He sung this song again and again, and as I didn't knew words by alien, I just understood these two: "hunger and war". I was too afraid, but decided to go there and see what he was doing.

I took all my aliend understanding tools, my apchoc, because I didn't know how much I was going to stay there. So I also had a cloths in which I looked like a real alien, so I put on my cloths and went to the cave.

And what do you think, what happened next?

The alien noticed me. To tell the truth he was really beautiful alien of my age. So as I didn't know what to do I just ofered him one of my apchochs.

He looked at me with a strange eyes and I was just thinking where to run, when he took the apchoc from my hands and swallowed. Than he took something from his pocket and put it into my hair. It was a little shining rose, which helped me to understand all the words that he was saying. And I understood that he had come to help me to solve different problems, such as hunger, death and wars. He showed me the world in which we live now and said that by the time it would become better and better, if I'll trust him. I didn't know what to do, but his eyes told me that I can trust him, so I trusted... And now all of us can see the results. We live, we breath, we have iphones and other modern staffs. And if you want to know how I could live so long, I would answer. My meeting with an alien gave me something more than just new world. He gave me new life, new thoughts, he made me undeathable which means that I will live forever and besides I felt in love with a qute, smart and kind alien and I'm still living with him.

I would never forget the night of our meeting, his eyes and his scarying breath. I would never forget the red rose, which he gave me...

You think that is not true? Than you don't have fantasy and trust, because I believe in what I write... I hope you too.

## University Year 3, First Place International *Xiang Jing, Sichuan, China*

Prompt: You are a professional salesperson advertising a highly improbable product. What is the product and how do you convince people to buy it? Write the advertisement.

Half nuts, half genius! Are you still living a dumb life? Are you tired of worring about some things day after day? Wanna try a brand new supper different life? Come on, just use our new invention TD which means Think Deeply! Think Differently! Think Disorderedly!

1. The new drug whose ingredients are from the genes of people who have schizophrenia and whose life is beyond normal people's imagination.

In order to make the world – a big factory work, we each, as machines, must follow rules, care about others and do our own work. What a boring life!

There are a group of people, in fact, special people, They can let their minds fly, out of Earth, in a paralleled world, deep in the ocean. They're considered crazy, hardly understandable. After scientists did some research on their thoughts, some of them were treated as genius like Hawking. It's well-known that only his two fingers can physically more while his minds have already gone far.

So, based on the theory that most people with schizophrenia are having excellent ideas that normal people can not get, we create TD to walk into their world. Here are some examples.

 Li Yan, 26, teacher in a middle school in China. Under much pressure from Gaokao (The entrance examination to colleges in China). Students in Li Yan's class are like study machines, doing papers the whole time. A few years, when Li Yan stopped in to school as a teacher. She wanted to be friends with students, wanted to live a interesting life. But it turned out to be totally different from what she thought.

Then she took TD. Magic happened.

The classroom changed into a zoo in her eyes. That no smiling girl was a butterfly. Showing her beauty and even smiling at her. That big boy was a dragon blowing out fires. Pigs are running, dogs are barking, frogs are jumping. Her life became colorful again and she become happy again. Nobody knew why.

Shh...Try TD. Then your world would change.

1. Wang Hai, 37, engineer

Lost in his work, he spent the whole week thinking about one math problem. But no result. After taking TD, he thought he was from the future for a secret assignment. In that future, people have sovlved the problems about block he is. have known how to transmit people from one period to another. Take him for example. He is sucked by light and travel with it to come here to another him. He enjoyed being in his own world even though some people thought he was crazy.

Why not try a new life if you are sucked in one (More examples http://www.TD.com) People with schizophrenia are always regarded crazy.

University Year 3, Second Place International *Claudia Bomediano, Siquijor, Philippines* 

Prompt: Respond to the quote: "Comparison is the death of joy"

The world before was filled with darkness. Nothing could be seen, but then, a Creator of all living things existed and the first thing that He made was–light. What did He felt about it? Joy. He made us by His own image and He was more than joyful.

There's the boy who has everything that the world can offer. Luxurious house, cars, buildings name a thing and he has it. But, when you look into his dark almond eyes and dig deeper into his soul then you'll find the emptiness in his heart. He was perfect in the eyes of those people who adore his gold. He was the type of man who never knew the meaning of failure or defeat. He pulls of everything, he gets what he wants.

This man went to a coffee shop to relax himself after a long day he was in the office he owned. He flipped his hand on the steam kind of smoke coming out from his cup of coffee. He felt its warmth and it gave him a soothing comfort. He took a sip closing his eyes enjoying the sweet aroma of the coffee. It's all he ever wanted– comfort.

He tapped his foot and gave a glance at the glass window on his right. It was raining and colors filled the path by those people wearing thick jackets, those who ran fast not to get soaked by the rain and some got their multi-colored umbrellas. It was chaos in his eyes to see different types of people with different expressions on their faces. It just annoyed him too much and so decided to take the scene away from his sight. When he diversed his sight to the entrance door he saw a familiar figure, almost the same eyes and face structure as he got, then he realized it was his–father. He shivered by the scenery that caught his eyes. He started to breath faster. It was obvious that he was so uncomfortable most especially that the man was likewise staring straight to his eyes. His father went closer to him.

"Can I have this seat?" he humbly asked. He didn't give an answer so the old man decided to sat down. The old man talked casual conversations he didn't mind for he was caught up by the memory burning in the back of his mind.

He recalled his brother. He excels at everything. A consistent hon student, straight A's and kind– only on the eyes of his parents. His mom would praise all of his brother's achievements, and when he hears it his heart breaks into pieces. "Why can't you be like your brother!" that's the same old line that he always heard from his dad. He was close to him and he expected much from

his father. It's not as it he's a total failure, he excels too but only for the thought that he's just second at everything. He was bullied by his brother and he never complained. He lived in hell, burning hell, every time he walks somewhere he'd look on the ground rather than witness the judgment of the eyes that looked down at him. Every single day he was slowly and slowly broken.

Despite the horrible experiences he had, he pursued his dream– the dream to escape the place he would not have called a home. And now he succeeded in life, his father just talked to him as if nothing ever happened.

"Son, why are you so far away from us?"

It took him a moment before he could respond.

"I wasn't pap. It's just that you're too high and I can't reach you. If you only did something better to me, I wouldn't be a rebel. If only you knew that comparison is the death of joy, then you should've known that you were already killing me."

### University Year 3, Third Place National *Oganisean Diana, Moldova*

Prompt: Respond to the quote: "Comparison is the death of joy."

Humans are contradictory by nature. We always strive for more, for something better and bigger. When we have no choices before us, we complain. But, when we have a multitude of choices, we are lost in this maze of the consumer market and love some of the excitement and enjoyment that a new item brings us.

It's self-explanatory that a comparison is made between at least two different things. But, what do we compare? We look at the singularities and then at the differences. Meaning, we start to pay more attention at all the flaws, at the bad sides more than at the good sides. So, in the chase of a better deal all the positive sides escape our view. And, it's never enough. There will always be a better option. A prettier bag, a newer smartphone, a better man or woman out there in the world.

So, comparison is the beginning of the death of joy. Sure, this phenomenon is and always will be part of human society. It's something that people do, even unconsciously. But learn to say 'STOP!'. Don't look at things or people as sets of advantages and disadvantages. Learn to accept and be grateful for the things you have and look at them as a whole.

You cannot compare a lush and green spring day and a bountiful, warm-coloured autumn one without taking some of their charms away. They are both needed and all we have to do is enjoy them with all our hearts because the same day won't come again.

It's normal to look for a better life, but we mustn't forget to enjoy the present, the one we have now. Life is meant to be enjoyed!

So, don't spend your time analyzing and comparing. More importantly, don't agonize over past decisions which cannot be undone. Regret over something like that will only bring you more frustration and damper your mood.

All in all, I think that not comparison is the guilty party but the regret that comes afterwards. Comparison is only the first step. We must be careful not to get to lost in the dark woods of choices that life puts in our way.

## University Year 4, First Place International *Marialynn Nagsila, Capiz, Philippines*

Prompt: A new invention enables people to remember their dreams with absolute clarity. It turns out people were forgetting them for a very good reason. What is the reason?

Mia is a very young scientist whose ambition is to create a machine that could make people remember their dreams with absolute clarity. After years of studying and experimenting she had completed it. She was overjoyed. Lots of people came to congratulate her achievement, and to try out the machine. Due to her excitement never did she notice a pair of dead looking eyes watching her every move.

Then it came at night. Mia called for her little brother Zein. The small boy was the first person who used the machine after its completion. Mia told her little brother that the boy would sleep with the machine on. The boy tried to decline.

"Why won't you wear it?" Mia growled earning a flinched from Zein.

"I don't want to remember my dream," said Zein in a pitiful voice. "Please, I could still remember the last dream I had. I don't-." Zein was cut off by a fierce glare from his older sister.

"This is for your own good! If you dream of our parents then that could be your most precious memory. You could still be with them even if they're gone." Mia reason out. The little boy could not do a thing but obeyed his older sister.

Ever since that night Mia would make Zein wear the machine. The little boy would not say a thing knowing that its futile. Zein resign to the fact that his sister will never listen to him.

Mia continue to have her fame. The beautiful critics given to her as well as the money that she earned from the sale of each machine. Unknown to her the very person, the very reason why she work so hard wither into nothing.

On a snowy day, Mia went to her brother's room but what greeted her is a sight she would never forget. Her beloved little brother hanging in the ceiling. Dead eyes looking at her as if she was being accused. Then the neighborhood heard a wailing screamed of a woman in agony. Few days after the burial of Zein, the councilor of Mia's school came. Mia was so devastated about what she had learned.

The councilor told Mia that Zein was having a nightmare of the day their parents were killed: How their parents were brutally murder by their godfather. The councilor also confide that Zein had a dream were the man came back to kill him.

Mia fall into her knees and cry as she heard that the dream started the very first time she forced her brother to used her machine. She killed her brother Mia realized. Every night she made

her brother wore the machine, she made him remember the trauma her brother wanted to forget. She could still remember the day her brother plead not to wear the machine yet she refuse. Stating that it would be good for him. Her ignorance cause her to lose the only person she loved. Her arrogance causes the suicide of her brother. Now she is alone. Now she has no one. Because of the thing she had created, she is alone.

Few days later, a news was spread. All the machine created by Mia was recalled and destroyed. Not a single machine was spared. No one knows the reason why. No one know where Mia had gone to. She just disappear.

Dream is something that everyone treasured but it could be categorize into two division, the good and the bad. So, not all the dreams is pleasant to remember so could cause harm thus our mind automatically forget it. What if we could remember the pleasure of our dream. What's important is the feeling that we could get from it.

### University Year 4, Second Place International *Jihane Lammate, Morocco*

Prompt: A new invention enables people to remember their dreams with absolute clarity. It turns out people were forgetting them for a very good reason. What is the reason?

have you ever asked yourself about why nobody remembers their dreams, and if they Do it why turns out they have been partially consious, and most of the time don't remember the whole thing? if so, scientists found the answer and more...

scientists created a new invention called "dream\_recall" that enables people to remember what they dreamed about clearly, this invention made A revolution not only because of it's functions, but because it also uncovered the reason why people actually forget their dreams. "d\_2" the groupe that was working on this project, tried several times to record the patients dreams while they where sleeping, but they always ended up with an unclear record, "d\_2" thought there was a problem with the machine "dream\_recall", so they kept improving it, andmaking changes but nothing seemed to fix the bug, until one day Mr. Smith had the brilliant Idea of fetching insid the patient's brain after sleeping instead of trying to record his dream during the dreaming process. He struglled to convince his teamates, but since they had no other solution they accepted to try.

At the first attempt everybody was surprised that they found a clear vido of the dream, in the "dream recall" along with a weird sound trak. The big surprise was what they found on the sound track, they could hear littel voices calling each other, and communicating, they could hear sentences like:

-"miro bring memory munnet 332"

-"This is a good memory to work with; today's movie will be really fun to watch".

-"today was a long day, we was locked for a long time, at least we will have some fun"

After listening to that the "d\_2" continued their reaserch to discover what the sound trak was all about.

They found out, there are creatures inside the human brain they called "neruosenses" who gets locked inside a small area of the brain as long as they person is awake. once the person falls asleep they get out of their prison and try to enjoy themselves by playing around with memories and making a movie with It, they put it in a another area in the brain that functions like a computer ram – temporary memory – and they watch the movie by projecting it as a dream beforethe person wakes up. Assuming these creatures spended a long time doing this process,

maybe since the person is born, they figured exactelly how much time they had to make the movie an then watch it.

That being said, "d\_2" could explain why they was anable to record the dream while the person is asleep it is clearly because the "neurosenes" was still active and working on the movie, they also explained that the reason why we don't remember our dreams is because once It gets projected, the area in the brain where the dream AKA movie retains it only for 15 minutes after waking up before It clears itself making room of another movie to get stored, an This also give us an idea about why we are able to recall some flashes from our dream in the minutes after we wake up.

After discovering This fascinating truth and revealing it to the public, the "d\_2" said they where not going to stop there, the are still going to do reaserches to find out what happens if people wake up at the middle of a dream, or if they don't sleep at all, they also want to find out if There is a relationship between the changes in human body when deprived of sleep and the "neurosenses". waiting for the next discoveries, people in the whole world are getting their copies of the "dream\_recall" and enjoying watching the art work of the "neurosenses".

## University Year 4, Third Place International *Purevdolgor Renchintogtokh, Mongolia*

Prompt: One day you were driving your car when you avoided hitting a squirrel on the road. Unknown to you, the squirrel pledged to save your life. Now, in your time of need, the squirrel arrives. What happens?

I'm going to tell you a wonderful story for you! You can believe it or can't! I don't care. In 2030, there was getting lack of animals. Everyday, animals were dying...not just bears, wolves which live in the Land, sea animals too... Many people died because of lack of food, that time human understood. Animals are the most important thing for our life. Why we killed them? We we hunted them? Whey we couldn't protect our environment? Why? Why? It was terrible time. That time I working as a teacher in the countryside. Generally countryside without grass, green colours, flowers and fresh air. So sad... One day I was driving my car to go to my school. You don't believe it! I saw many squirrels on the way. Maybe they went to somewhere for live safety! I tried to avoid hitting that squirrels and gave them biscuits that I had. But I saw one squirrel was really special. When I looked her she was looking me, too. Soon, that squirrel came to me. And started to talk! I was shocked. Exactly that time I didn't say nothing! Actually I didn't believe it! But It was real. She was the queen of the squirrels. She said to me, 1 day I will save your life. Suddenly I heard Ring, Ring! Ring! Unfortunately that was my alarm's sound. I woke up on my bed. Time was 7:00 am. I was feeling down. It was a dream. Just dream. But I remembered it clearly like a real! In the morning, I had eaten just chips and cola. I really missed milk and meat. It's common breakfast for all people. Then I went to my job. I tried to see everywhere! Because I thought maybe squirrels were here. But there was nothing. 1 day later, I heard bad news from everywhere. There was a earthquake all over the world. That time I understood, it was time to end of the world. World wanted to clean us, then start again! Generally all people knew when will they die. Then I decided to go my hometown for see my parents. Actually die with them, together. In the city, the situation was worse than countryside. I saw the people who had a fears. There was a bridge to the way to my home. But it was destroyed. I was afraid. Because I might be die couldn't see my parents. Then I decided to cross the river. Exactly that time I heard Puujee, Puujee. Someone was calling me. I saw the back. There were my father and mother. I run to them. And hugged them. I said what are you doing here, outside is dangerous. They said to me we just wanted to die with you, my girl. That time I thought now I'm ready to die. I'm not afraid of death! We 3 sit my car then decided to go my home. That time we saw 2 poor children about 3 or 4 years old. They didn't wear clothes. We wented to help them.

We gave tie food and clothes. But I wanted to take care of them. So, we would be 5. After 2 hours, the Land was vibrated. We knew it was earthquake. We stopped. And hugged each other. I've just said I love you parents, and you 2 children. The land was divided into 2 sides. There was a big hole. We falled fast to that hole. That time I was just close my eyes. Now, I was diving I thought like that. But I didn't feel death. Opened my eyes, there was a sun, clear sky, high mountains, rivers, clourful flowers... That was another world covered by green. We 5 didn't believe it what we saw! We thought we died. We were good people. So, the god took us here. But there was no other people. Only we 5 there. Suddenly I saw the squirrel which is I looked in my dream. She was coming... And said I told you. I will save your life one day. But I will save your parents and that 2 children. Because you really love them. If I save only your life you won't live alone. That wasn't dream. That squirrel save my life. I asked from her, what place is it? She answered it's the happiest world for animals. It's the world of squirrels. You 5 are the special. I knew you don't do bad things for us. Actually human is the animal. Right now, I'm writing my story to future. Maybe someone will find my letter. I put my paper under the ground. 10, 20, or more years later someone will read it! I hope.... Don't hunt animals... Maybe one day they will save your life.

Sincerely, Pujee 1st of July. In 2070.

#### Professional, First Place International Hazel Villa, Iloilo, Philippines

Prompt: Instead of the oceans covering the earth, forests are in their place, making it possible to walk from continent to continent. Like oceans, they get deeper, darker, and more dangerous the further you go. You travel through one of these "oceans." What do you see?

#### Ganaea

The world did not end with huge balls of fire engulfing the damaged Earth as the doomsday experts of 2016 insisted. To everyone's surprise and to some people's consternation, the oceans gave themselves up to huge swaths of forests that made it possible to travel by foot from the deeper part of the Earth. The remaining scientists who survived the cataclysm of year 2050 called the deeper part of the Earth as Ganaea in what we used to know as Asia. The continent that used to be the Middle East they called Lower Ganaea for here, the life forms took on a fiercer nature and the most dangerous they called Pit Ganaea for the unspeakable happened here.

I am a person who loves my creature comforts and when I was invited to do one of these "Forest Continent Tours" I thought twice. Ten years after the Great Cataclysm the Emperor of All Continents declared that all of his subjects must take these tours. He was smart; he knew very few survived Pit Ganaea and if you didn't take his tours you are simply injected with serum that made sure you never again saw the light of day.

From memory, I can tell you that Ganaea must have been what the Garden of Eden was like before the fall of Adam and Eve. Ferns covered trees as tall as the concrete towers prior to the Great Cataclysm and vanda sanderianas and cattleyas- my favorite orchids- hung like chandeliers from the branches of huge acacia trees. But further down Lower Ganaea, things began to move. Human legs flitted from tree to tree, interspersed with glimpses of baboons and dinosaur-like creatures. A blood-curling scream would then come and then I knew: the competition for food is still like that of the pre-Cataclysm days. Then, I couldn't tell night from the dark foliage. They were one and the same that fateful "day" I first stepped on Pit Ganaea where adventurers came for the huge diamonds they could hardly see. Up to this day, I am a prisoner of Pit Ganaea and I can only dream of pre-Cataclysm days.

#### Professional, Second Place International Abdelmohsine El Hallouati, Morocco

Prompt: As you die, you travel down the bright tunnel and then everything turns black. That's when you hear it: "Greetings, Prisoner 11384. You have served your sentence. You are free to go." What happens next?

I realized that life can be crual sometimes, as I read that in numerous books that I read of the movies I watched. However, I would never have expected my harsh life to have only turned into a prison sentence.

What is the cause of death? I'm not quite sure what it was. Why even bother to know? All I can assure you, dear reader, that my death has been an incredible relief from the life I endured. "Prisonner 11384, greetings you have served your sentence," said the strangest voice I've ever heard after having travelled for days and nights through the scariest, most perilous trips I've ever had in my life. "My life?" I thought. "But my life has just ended and…wait a moment, it wasn't a life, but a mere horrible prison sentence."

The trip, based on the few details I could recall, took me through a long tunnel as brigh as nobody would have ever imagined. My transportation mode? Well, again from what I recall, was on board of an infnitely long, huge snake. Some of you, my dear readers, would have trouble imagining what would a "infinitely: long thing resemble. If you can't fathom what the infinity I am talking about is, then I shouldn't blame you. You haven't died yet to see what it is like. On the trip, it wasn't only myself. I was kept company by an infinitely big number of human beings and other creatures. Some of whom were European looking, some were Asian looking, American looking, and African looking. My surprise of such scene went further, and what struck me most was to notice that none of them spoke a different language from mine. like me, All the crowd was relieved when hearing the strange voice. And I could hear everyone chanting and dancing to the advent of freedom. Dear reader, if you, like me, don't believe in god or in after life, you better start to. Because yes! this is what happened to me, I am just sharing my experience with you in order to enlighten your paths and give you advice. 11384 was my number.

"what would have happened with my real name then," I thought. Am I going to have a new name now, and after-life name maybe. A new name that can render to me my precious dignity that was taken away from me after "they" sentenced me to life. "they"? who? and who was the judge9s) who convicted me, and what crime have I committed?. Those questions and other I didn't bother to seek answers to. I was free to go & that's all what matters. Curious, I observed those who were around me, and even tried to speak to some of them.

"hey!" said I to a chinese looking old lady, "do you know how ended up here?" She directed her eyes toward me, I could see a sign of joy on her face. "We are free! We are free!", she shouted and walked away toward the stage on which was standing still the silhouette whose the strange voice belonged

"Get ready guys." The strange voice repeated. "Now you'll go get some rest, the trip must have been long and exausting for most of you."

I saw a person aproaching, she was good looking and wearing a male outfit, red suit, red pants, and yellow tie. with a smile she suggested to accompany me to my castle, like the strange voice ordered. I glanced left and right and saw the massive crowd of former prisonners guided by other people. One person guiding each former prisoner. Nobody was talking. Everyone marched silently in different directions. It so strangely quiete I couldn't even hear any foot steps. That's when I realized we were walking on a pink cloud. I cleared my throat and collected my thoughts. "Madame," I asked my guider naively, "madame! What was my crime?" "Can't you just be happy for being free now?" she answered

"where are you taking me" I asked again.

"have you ever had a wish during your life-time?" she asked back.

"Uh"

"Well, I'm taking you to where your dreams will become...reality"

But I paused, I slowed they pace of my walking, and realized I missed my family and friends, and the ultimate wish I have is to return and even If I had to serve the prison sentense again twice but to meet them again and do what I promised them.

## Professional, Third Place International *Bakolinirina Vonimanitra, Madagascar*

Prompt: As you die, you travel down the bright tunnel and then everything turns black. That's when you hear it: "Greetings, Prisoner 11384. You have served your sentence. You are free to go." What happens next?

It was dark, and everything was, and everything was quiet. I was on my way But I heard someone crying all of his tears, I couldn't understand why. So, I left him behind my back and I was determined to travel my way, alone.

Words couldn't describe how nice this new road was. It was a tunnel but it was so bright; I didn't see any light bulbs, there were no traffic lights; The sun didn't shine and I didn't think the moon was out, there was no single star, but, oh my God, It was so bright. I checked out if by chance it was Christmas and streets were decorated, but it was not the case. Was there a fire? – No, there wasn't any fire at all. It was incomparable and I was speechless. But the urge to go on farther and farther pushed me to come on. I couldn't help traveling.

I was enjoying it when, all of a sudden, everything turned black. It looked like we called in our country "délestage". It was horrible- I stopped alone in the middle of a dark tunnel like a blind person- I felt I had no choice but to escape but I couldn't, my feet seemed to be tied. I wanted to scream but my mouth was covered and wrapped with a bandage!

Then, I heard a voice; clear enough to be understood, it said: "Greetings Prisoner 11384." I looked around and discovered none but me was in the tunnel, so it was certain, I was the Prisoner 11384. I had no chance to wonder where that 11384 come from, but I accepted I was a Prisoner as I couldn't find my ways and, in addition, I couldn't make a move. All I could do was to stop and listened carefully: "Greetings, Prisoner 11384. You have served your sentence. You are free to go".

"Free to go, How nice it was to hear such sentence! When you were feeling glued somewhere you couldn't recognize, you heard a voice saying "you are free to go".

Since my childhood, I've always appreciated the word "free "and its meanings. I am free now, how long it has been since I wanted those words being spoken to me? As a result, I shouldn't have waited for a minute. I saw I was untied, I was really free, free to go and I could go. I wondered why I hadn't had the idea of asking what sentence I have served to make me free. But one thing was for sure: I was free I had my wings and the sky was waiting for me to fly on it. So, there I was, traveling happily back from the tunnel.

I didn't care much about where I should go. But the words "free to go" were rooted in my heart, mind and soul, therefore I took them litterally. I was free to go so I went wherever I wanted to go.

But, I just set one goal (I was free and having a goal was a must): I would set everyone free.

Next, I met a crowd which didn't know they are prisoners, because they were not in jail. Consequently, I had to explain to them what "free" means. I saw a group of workers, working so hard with a very bad pay without a minute of rest and I spent hours convincing them they might ask for their freedom. I entered in a society with wives had to serve their husbands. There was a small village where children, especially girls, were not allowed to go to school. I also met a group of men tied and slaved by alcoholic beverages and drug abuse. I visited a country where some people had no right to vote. I talked with many intelligent people who couldn't express themselves. And there were even people, forced to practice religions they were not keen on.

Obviously, I helped all of them to be free. Free from their worries, free from their troubles and free from their burdens, and truly, I helped them to be free to achieve their goals in life. And, no one, nothing could ban me from doing it, it was my main duty.

I felt really sorry for people who didn't know who are "prisoners" and what "free" means.

Although, I made them sure being free didn't mean you were without any rules or disciplines. But, as well, I made them feel free to set their own rules. And, they felt free to agree with me.

Finally, I taught people the song "Freedom is coming", and, to my surprise, the song was well-known all through the world in a very short moment.

However, I want to know if people would be free before it's too late. Could anyone tell me people would live freely in this world? Without any fears, no pressions or dictatorships? I also wondered if people, I mean free people, would work on their freedom wisely?

I wish everyone would hear the sentence "you are free to go" before they die.