

Everything that ever happened

A young writers' anthology
from students at Penistone Grammar

Contributing writers

Hana Ready
Jake Fitzgerald
Rosie Morritt
Jake Fitzgerald
Nellie Webster
Rhianna Edwards
The Hidden War
Rosie Morritt
Hannah
Joshua Power
Erin Parkes
Holly Prew
Hannah Frank
Laura King
Urszula Zobczak
Jess Firth
Hollie Smith
Joshua Power
Rachel Ward
Billie Rose
Annabelle Widdows

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Everything that ever happened was supported by Penistone Grammar School & Hive South Yorkshire - the hub for young writers in the region, running groups in Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham & Sheffield.

Hive
South Yorkshire



Penistone Grammar School
Advanced Learning Centre

Never Stop Flying

Everything that ever happened

I had the enormous pleasure of working with two sets of incredible writers from Penistone Grammar – first in 2017 and then in 2018. We spent an hour together, after school, for four weeks each. And though four hours might not seem all that much time, it proved to be a wonderfully fertile time, because the young writers I worked with all had incredible ideas bursting out of their brilliant imaginations.

We looked at a variety in writings – for poetry to short story, and I like to think that, as well as introducing them to new writers we also discovered a beautiful freedom to create in a safe space where everyone’s work was shared and everyone felt supported.

And what a variety we’ve got in this fine anthology *Everything that ever happened*. There’s re-tellings of Cinderella and Hansel and Gretel; there are spies and the macabre. We’ve got talking crockery and creepy surveillance cameras. There are thrills, scares, and some absolute hilarity.

A huge thanks to all at Penistone Grammar for letting us all work together, to Hive South Yorkshire for supporting the project and, mostly, to Miss Stokes, who was wonderfully enthusiastic about getting this project off the ground, giving up her time and offered ongoing inspiration to everyone involved.

And, as much as it’s been a pleasure compiling the work, I think the real joy is from knowing that you are reading it. So, go on. Turn the page, get stuck in. I don’t think you’ll be disappointed.

Nik Perring, January 2019.

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THE LAST PIECE OF PAPER

Jake Fitzgerald

That was it. Every tree and every seed had been planted. The trees were used and harvested for their main purpose – paper. However, these trees no longer produced seeds. And seeds that existed could not grow. Trees could not be cloned. That was it. No more trees. I remember when the man on the news spoke of the dilemma.

One million trees left
Minor price increases,
People panicked and bought excessive amounts,
There were a few riots,
Several people panicked.

One thousand trees left,
Prices rocketed due to the shortage,
People panicked,
People worried,
Some even killed for paper.

One hundred trees left,
Paper had become an item to display,
Affordable only for the rich. They would hang,
It in fancy frames and put it on the mantelpiece,
It made diamond look disposable.

Ten trees left,
Somehow,
The black market had more listings for paper,
Than guns, drugs and body parts combined.
Stupidly, I had written so much on paper; I lost almost everything.
Writing on a metallic block,
With a light up face,
With keys representing each letter,
It just wasn't the same as my paper

One tree left,
Officials had made the decision,
To cut it down and make paper with it,
Why did they do it? Even
Bill Gates couldn't afford one lousy a4 sheet

One thousand sheets left,
Officials gave them out to people,
At random. Ironically, they came in a
Paper envelope.
They soon realised their mistake.

One hundred sheets
Museums featured entire exhibitions featuring paper,
Why was the number still decreasing?
They 'disappeared' – people wrote on them, and they
Did have other uses than just writing on, you know,
Some felt relieved when they blew their nose into a relic.

Ten sheets,
Wars had been fought.
The prime minister had a sheet of paper,
Which was confiscated from her due to
Misuse.
Or so the officials said

One sheet,
Somehow, this one was gifted to me,
I had beaten the odds! Eight billion to
One! Yes! My time to write on something physical
Arrived once again.
I grabbed my dear fountain pen,
“Sorry for neglecting you for all this time,”
I whispered to my pen.
I smashed it onto my piece of paper,

I scribbled.
Yes!
I had chosen my words wisely,
The last piece of paper in all existence, written by me,
I shall forever go down as the last of mankind to ever write on paper,
Had but two words written on it:

The End.

Nellie Webster
MAGGIE'S END

It came as a shock, really. Nobody and, I mean, nobody, expected it. Children grieved, cradling their confectionary close to their chests, salty tears streaming as if it was the end of the world. At least it was for them. For Maggie, however, this wasn't the case.

Maggie had briefly slumped in relief when the news had been broadcasted. Any sugary sweet production had been demolished entirely. Icky bars of oozy chocolate, long ribbons of chewy jelly. All of it! Gone!

Maggie, unlike most 10 year olds, preferred, as she said, the finer things in life. Escargot is one of these. Oh, and you can't forget frog legs.

She had discovered the news March 1st 2018. It had been a Thursday. A teal clock in her living room suggested it was 9:07am, but it had always been a little late. So it was more likely 9:10am.

Two steely eyed reporters popped up on the TV, exclaiming the news. She had almost chocked on fisheyes.

Hana Ready
WHAT IF...

people were perfect,
the earth was flat,
or there was no land on the earth,
and it never rained?

What if everyone died simultaneously.
Maybe no-one could eat food,
or you'd be allergic to everything except peas,
and you could only move when you sneezed.

What if you were the only real person
and everyone else were puppets?
What if someone wanted to kill you,
or no-one had any hair
and no-one died or had babies from now on,
or to drink you had to laugh?

What if you loved everything you hated
and hated everything you love,
and we didn't use money,
or everyone turned to dust when they sneezed?

Rosie Morritt
THE HIDDEN SOCIETY

The day I moved into his house was the day I began to be played. Yes of course the notes were slightly out of tune, but we learnt with time. I learnt his habits. I knew him best. I would notice how he would always seem to play too fast and how his wrists dropped when his teacher forgot to remind him; I learnt that he slumped and that he was dreadful at scales – especially D major. But I also learnt that he loved to play, he loved to improvise whether he should have been practising an exam piece or not.

His mother never noticed. She couldn't tell the difference between Beethoven and Black Sabbath, - as long as he played piano, not the Play Station, which I had heard was in the next-door room, she didn't mind. She was just glad her son was different from the other boys, it gave her something to boast about at 50th birthday parties. However, as the years grew longer, I fell into disuse, his friends came over much more than they used to or maybe it was me who had never noticed them before. My old friend had found a new friendship with a louder instrument – the guitar, and every Friday and Saturday afternoon a cluster of teenage boys filled the rooms resting their feet on furniture specifically designed not to be foot stools and I became a kind of coffee table for Mum when she struggled to find the will power to take the mug back through to the kitchen. Today was a Sunday -traditionally peaceful - yet today I was waking from my slumber passing by rooms I had never seen before, I saw the Play Station that had been my biggest competition for so many years, even the art on the walls seemed to watch my departure from the household.

I moved to the hospital. Mum had always been a charitable character but this time she may have been a little too generous. The radiator was always far too hot, it felt like it melted my thick gloss coating that protected the dark brown, the sort of colour rich soil is straight out of the compost, underneath it.

At best, I would rest for a few hours each evening before the next

child wept in the company of strangers looking over them, observing their breathing pattern. I had heard chatter that some of the doctors were friendly, but I had never seen much of them myself and I too needed repairs, the note G became completely dead and my velvet stool ripped at the edges. The hospital became a lonely place and I soon began to realise that the children here were only temporary patients. They never cared enough to stay and the ones that did soon became too ill to randomly bash my notes. Although, I had become fond of one young girl, she would come every month for a week to sit through treatment, she was always a happy spirit and she always came with her mother; they were certainly alike both with deep brown hair with copper highlights and tanned skin with hazel eyes that would stare at my keys wishing they knew how to play. I looked forward to these visits. One afternoon, however, the mother walked in, without her younger self and she pressed her fingers over my keys before gently shutting my lid – that was the last I saw of the girl and her mother.

I had grown tiresome of these dull removal vans and even more tiresome of the grumpy men that drove them. Last time I had Barry, this time a similar looking man tugged at my sides whilst breaking a pedal or two. He had a thick beard, I felt sorry for the things that got lost in it and bushy eyebrows to match. His cheeks rosy, set against a pale face and his hands rough and dressed in cuts. Aside from his distinctive features, the man seemed kinder than his previous colleague. He was a good driver, careful over the bumps in the roads and always aware of the sporadic change in the traffic lights.

Arrival. 2.15pm. Was it another hospital? It had the same wide-spread windows and three large floors. A lady wearing royal blue nurse clothes shook the hand of the kindlier removal van driver as four men pushed me over the pavement, past the car park and through the sliding automatic doors. I felt the resistance of the carpet as we moved into the living room through wooden doors with glass openings to a communal area full of older people, wrinkly and weak. Taking a moment to observe my new surroundings, I noticed a few were reading in cushioned arm chairs, some quietly gossiping to their neighbour and others staring into space, consciously lost waiting for someone to pull them out of noth-

Jake Fitzgerald

WHAT IF SOMEBODY KNEW EVERYTHING

Everything. Everything that ever happened. Everyone who ever lived. Every language, past present and future. I knew it all. I discovered... everything I was ever knew previously was a lie. However, this 'gift' came at a cost – severe headaches, lack of sleep and an uncontrollably increasing body temperature! But I am worried for my life. People may, no, will use me, even hurt me for my knowledge. If anything, there is still one thing I do not know – why did I get this curse?

But that doesn't matter. I have it. I have visions of being a slave, a human computer and ripped apart due to my fountain of eternal knowledge. Am I a danger to humanity? I could not tell anyone, but it will escape sooner or later... I know.

I feel like I am invading everyone's privacy. I am simultaneously experiencing the lives of 7.6 billion people, my poor brain being stuffed with new knowledge. It couldn't take it. It was like a computer from the '90s trying to perform a modern game. It is impossible for you to comprehend.

I dipped my dear head into a sink full of icy water. Let's just say my head boiled away all of the water, instantaneously. I would give away all of my knowledge for the one thing I don't know – why do I know everything?

My conscience was screaming at me. It marched me all the way to Cambridge University, I pulled open the weak doors in the middle of a lecture. About the nuclear fission, or something else four year olds should know.

"No!" I yelled at the highly qualified professor, who was startled at my response. "That's completely wrong!" I marched towards the front and grabbed some chalk, whiter than paper. After a long hour, I had written across the chalkboard, the walls and even some students on the front row. Everybody's mouth was wide open, I proceeded to bow then collapsed from exhaustion.

I woke up in what appeared to be a hospital ward, and a man who certainly wasn't a doctor walked up to me. A president of a foreign nation stood there. "You, young man" he began. His accent was very thick but I understood him perfectly. "Are now my personal possession. You shall tell me what I want, when I want. Now, when will the war start?"

It left me.

"What's a war?" I asked. I honestly didn't know. His face had a sudden anger in it.

"You will tell me right now or you shall be tortured!" He demanded. I repeated my first answer. I had gone from the world's most intelligent human to the world's stupidest. "Guards!" He shrieked, hysterically. Two large built men entered. "Just dump him at his home!" The president yelled. "It looks like we picked up the wrong man,"

I woke up in my warm, cosy bed to the sound of a deafening alarm. I must have crashed, like and reset all of my files, like an old computer. I stirred my morning tea and started asking myself philosophical questions. Such as, what if I knew everything? I grinned at the idea. I was ready for work, got in the car and was halfway down the motorway when I realised I was wearing my pyjamas.

Jake Fitzgerald
A MODERN CINDERELLA

Cinderella was commonly abused at home by her stepsisters and stepmother. Unfortunately, her mother had died when she was young, and her father was killed a few years later while fighting in Afghanistan.

“No!” Cinderella cried as a pile of unbearably stinky clothes were thrown at her. When her father died he left no will. His family owned the most luxurious mansion and Marie, Cinderella’s stepmother, was unable to have a single penny of his fortune. Eventually, due to the excessive bills they could not pay, they were evicted and then lived in a council house. All four women were unemployed. Cinderella was eighteen and had just finished her A-levels, gaining fantastic results. But nobody cared. Despite wanting a job and eventually move out, Marie forced her to do housework.

Marie was once an international ballroom dancer, and had made a reasonable fortune herself. Yet, selfishly, she only bought her own ‘necessities.’ These were nothing more than excessive alcohol and cigarettes. This embarrassed Cinderella, and did not want any friends over. Well, she wasn’t allowed to anyway.

Her step ‘sisters’ were younger versions of their mother. They constantly squabbled over the tiniest things. The only time they didn’t was when they teamed up on Cinderella. They were both twenty, doing absolutely nothing with their lives.

A revolt against a country’s monarchy occurred some time back. The monarchy was abolished and replaced by a republic. However, the former king’s relatives live in this country now, still living like monarchy but somehow part of the general population. A descendent of the country’s last monarch, Nicolas, claimed he was the rightful leader. He was well over sixty. He wanted his son to get married, to produce an ‘heir.’ His son was called William, just over twenty-two. A little early, perhaps? Things were never too early for old Nick.

“Son,” proclaimed Nicolas, sporting numerous medals and half of a damaged crown. “I was thinking that you would like a party, and maybe choose a lady-friend?” William was reluctant, but Nicolas was not. “Okay then! Next Saturday, five o’clock sharp! Everyone is invited!” It was like something out of a fairy tale. Everyone in town planned to show up, but young, single women were targeted the most.

Washing, done. Lunch, done. Cleaning, done. What did she have left to do? Cinderella had done everything. Nobody else was in the kitchen. Look, an open window! A voice in Cinderella’s head called out. Marie kept the keys on her at all times. She was the only one allowed outside the house unannounced. Cinderella was escorted to school every day before she finished it. Run for it girl! She did. She was in the big wide world, free from captivity, alone for the first time in years. She had no money. Nothing. She walked into the town centre and saw a pamphlet for a party at Nicolas’ house. Oh yes, Nicolas. Crazy old Nick, claims he’s king of that one place nobody’s heard of. Saturday. Five o’clock. That was in a few hours!

She ran towards a friend’s house, and asked for a nice dress. Obviously she would give it back. Her friend was going too. She knew it was absurd for Cinderella to come here alone. Overprotective parent, and all that. They prepared and flicked the television on. Marie was on the screen, breaking news.

“Where has my dear Ella gone?” she sobbed and blew her nose into a handkerchief. “I’d give anything to have her back! I last saw her just before noon.” She sobbed some more. It was her home, and half a dozen police officers were also present. Her friend looked shocked. “I knew something was suspicious!” she yelled at her friend.

“But... I... Am abused at home. I work like a slave. I haven’t seen sunlight, breathed fresh air since I left college.” Cinderella replied; her eyes were a sponge filled with water.

Suddenly, a police officer smashed the door open. “Don’t worry, I’ve found her. Let’s take you home.”

She protested, yelling things like “I am abused! I am eighteen, I

can move out!” The police officer was having none of it. She was dropped off at home, with a somehow relieved Marie outside the door. As soon as the police went, Marie threw her into her room and locked the door from the outside.

Spontaneously, the window opened. A middle aged woman was on the other side and told Cinderella to come down. Reluctantly, she descended. “Now, I’m your Godmother, remember? When you were christened? Me! Julie, your Mother’s friend!” said this plump woman.

Cinderella was confused. “Now, with a bit of modern tech, let’s make you some shoes!” A blanket was covering something in the garden, and Julie pulled it off.

“A 3D printer!” exclaimed Cinderella.

“Yes my dear, top ‘uh range this ‘n.” Cinderella was still confused. Julie was busy, pressing buttons and gears and the like. It made a ‘ting’ sound, and out came transparent high heels. “Are... Are they glass?” asked Cinderella in sudden excitement.

“No, you numpty. Made a plastic these are,” Julie replied, and gave them to her. She out them on quickly, discarding her other shoes. A birthday present from her stepmother. Her old pair. “If you’re taking me to the party, how will I get there?”

“UBER!” She exclaimed in excitement. What is ‘UBER?’ Cinderella was curious. They got to the main road, and it was there. “Have a lovely time, dear.” Said Julie, sporting one last grin.

What happened after that was out of a fairy tale

Fifteen years later, Cinderella and William were happily married with three children. Marie was behind bars, for life, under numerous charges. They smiled at each other, with Cinderella knowing the last fifteen years have been the happiest.

Jake Fitzgerald CAMERAS

Staring. They just didn’t stop staring. A cold, glass covered lens, occasionally it made a click or a snap. We are watched all the time. My whole life has been recorded; though I am still not used to it.

The artificial sun was setting, making the sky have an orange-like hue. I walked away.

Everywhere I turn, a camera is there. What do they want from this? I can imagine an old security guard, robots or the Leader themselves observing my every move. Nobody durst defy the law. My friend questioned it once. I saw a car go past me, and he was never seen again.

Those who ‘defied’ would be captured on the never-forgetting eagle eyes. Observing. Never acting. The Leader must be overwhelmed with what they can see.

“Safety”, “protection”, “prevention,” they said. All that the cameras did was inflict fear on all.

“What do you want?!” I yelled to my unknown audience.

Spontaneously, a black – or at least it looked black in this light – car pulled up. Out stepped a muscular man in a black suit. Head shaved. Slight stubble. Sunglasses. A look of anger in him when what I presumed were his eyes locked onto mine. His pace quickened. He was getting closer to me.

I can’t remember anything else. All I saw were people passing by, fear in their eyes when they passed me. What was wrong with me? I turned my neck. I tried to walk away. Where were my legs? I was just a bunch of circuits and wires, a catalyst for stopping ‘crimes.’ Snap. Another day in the life of a camera.

Nellie Webster
CINDERELLA

Cinderella had a great life. Wait, no, not great. Magnificent! She had everything she desired, just at the snap of her newly manicured fingers. Velvet lined clothes, exotic fruits, all the riches in the land. There was just one small problem...

Her prince was a bit thick. Complete idiot. Somehow, he had an IQ lower than snow white and she skips around taking food off strangers in the middle of dark woods. How he wasn't able to identify poor Cinderella just by looking at her face is beyond belief and instead relied on a show. Twice. Twice the stepmothers attempted to trick him. Twice he believed the stepsisters as they hobbled in the dainty slippers. Twice he was fooled.

Also who throws a ball that goes past midnight? All that dancing and pretending to have a good time must be tiring.

Rhianna Edwards
THE HIDDEN WAR

Hidden beneath the crystal waters, a warzone lies. A place where at any moment any of my fellow merfolk's' lives could be taken without a seconds' notice. As we try and swim further away from the barricade of what the humans call nothing more than litter but to us it's our killers. Clinging to our throats, tangling and twisting our fins with bullet wound cages of plastic bags and can holders.

My loyal server Sebastian was taken into their clutches along with many of my loyal subjects who were all submerged into the sky. No one knows what lies above are waters, we only know that no one returns afterwards. Ever since my youngest daughter Ariel left these waters to join the humans and escape the apocalypse many others have begged me to use my powers to grant them legs so they can leave this fireless hell.

However my fire is limited... I can only transform six more of my merfolk. This power I've dedicated to my daughters all of which have left for the sanctuary the surface provided. Well, all but one, Attina, not only my eldest daughter but my strongest soldier and captain. And the day I leave th

ese waters to continue the rest of my life as sea foam she will continue my legacy to protect what remains of the city of Atlantica.

Hana Ready
PINK

Sitting rigidly on bright pink armchairs, the two grandparents stared at each other, frowning.

“Honestly you two, I made you two perfectly fine cups of tea in your favourite mugs and you haven’t touched them!” A young woman came marching into the room, presumably their daughter, and pointed to the two, now cold, china cups, painted with flowers.

“You mean Beatrice’s favourite cups. She’s replaced everything! I couldn’t even keep my giant chewing gum ball!” a weathered old man whined, just like a three-year-old. The girl sighed then, breathing deeply, crept out of the room and closed the door. CLICK.

Beatrice got out of her seat; glared at her husband and tried the door handle. Bad luck Beatrice! “This is all your fault you moody toad, Horace!” She quivered and shook with anger. “I thought you loved these beautiful flowers and lace tablecloths.”

Horace muttered under his breath, “That was until you threw away my motorbike!”

“WHAT?”

“Nothing!”

Beatrice started up again, “What don’t you like about pink? What’s wrong with peonies and primroses? Why can’t you see beauty? This place was getting cluttered up with your junk.”

Back came a swift argument. “Motorbikes aren’t junk!”

“As I was saying, this place was atrocious until I stepped in. You should thank me!” Suddenly her eyes glazed over and went glassy. She didn’t move. Before Horace could get to her, however, she came back to normal. Blinking slowly and turning her head, she looked dazed.

She then said, “Horace, why did you change everything to pink? I don’t like pink ...”

Hana Ready
SNOW

When it used to snow, I used to cry. I would slip and slide on the ice as if it was a banana skin. My family loved the snow. But I hated the way it looked, so ... clean. Every time I saw silvery icicles hanging from my front porch, like a gymnast training for a world record, I ran up to my bedroom and sobbed for hours and hours.

My brother (who was 18 at the time) came up every time this happened and saw me lying in my bed, supposedly asleep. Then my mum, then my little sister. One by one they came up to my bedroom wanting to know why I was not playing out with the other kids.

Sometimes I really did fall asleep and then I woke up to find ... It was still there. Then it happened again – I would cry, my brother would come up, then my mum, little sister et cetera. Then I would fall asleep again.

So, when my Dad announced we were moving to Australia I, overjoyed, sung, “NO MORE SNOW!”. Seriously, I don’t think my brother has recovered yet!

Three months later, on the radio: Heatwave! I cry. My brother comes, then my mum, then my sister! When will this stop!?!

Rhianna Edwards
IDENTITY

Different, but yet the same?
The feeling of familiarity is torturous.
Knowing there's something there you recognise is comforting, yes.
But, now...
This time, not so much.
I know who I am and my entire life story,
But today my memory is twisting and turning;
Mixing and merging,
Intertwining with another which isn't me.
But is me?
And my identity,
And what even is identity?
What's the point to identity if you wake up remembering yesterday as
another and today as me?
And who even is "me"?
The person I believe "me" to be,
Or they who I remember a different life of?
A different story,
Different words,
Voice,
Mind,
Persona,
Identity.
Me!
Who even is "me" identity...

Hana Ready
THE YEAR WHEN EVERYONE TURNED TO
DUST WHO SNEEZED

One cold January evening, someone made a decision. "Why do humans have to sneeze? It's annoying and I hate it." So, they plodded up to their cave and got to work – don't ask me why it was a cave; they were fashionable for evil psychopaths back then, I guess.

Anyway, the woman – who by the way, was a witch – got out her cauldron and sprinkled pepper, dust, a feather and a piece of paper saying, "TURN TO DUST!" and trotted off down the mountain.

The next day it was ready, so she flew to a nearby bean factory. "Beans are popular," she thought to herself. Anyway, to cut a long story short, she broke into the bean factory and poured the sloppy mixture into IBMs (Industrial Bean Makers), and off she went.

She was right; beans certainly were popular. The people turning into dust when they sneezed proved this. People began to catch on to what was happening. A warning even came out on the news. They got as far as, "Today there has been a new epidemic – people are turning to ..." before the news reporter sneezed and disappeared into a cloud of dust. That's one way to end a news report!

All over the world people began suggesting ways to keep you safe from this disease, but none of them worked. Nose clips; laws – people just kept sneezing. All of humanity died out in just two days. Except me – I have never sneezed in my life. Wait ... Ah Ah Achoo!

Rosie Morritt
SPY NUMBER 276

He brushed his fingertips across every inch of this place tracing the border of the box, following its shape clockwise. The curtains were a pale grey like paper waiting to be coloured, one was uneven, about a third of the blind next to it, as if someone had begun to lower it but had been distracted. Grains of carpet interlocked incorrectly like electricity unable to run through one wire to the next, pipes tried hard to blend in and each alternate slither of radiator pushed back.

This room, especially, had always been far too warm, the walls sweated, and their colour melted into several shades of dull. The shadows took the corners and the light, provided by too many windows for a such a small area, glowed, gathered in the centre. There were a few shelves to the left and two slightly off centred tables that stole most of the space and replaced it with clutter.

He stumbled through the door as if he shouldn't have been there. I had always thought he'd be taller, blonde is how I'd imagined him and although blue eyed, he was topped with woven locks, knotted with no hope of recovery. His hands were rough, and I assumed he had little experience due to his youthful looks. Was this his first project? I hoped not, the inexperienced always made little mistakes like that time Toby James accidentally set off the car alarm to Mr Archer's scarlet Porsche.

I remember that day, they weren't impressed. I was aching from the tips of my fingernails through to the back of my shoulders as I let myself dissolve into bubbles floating in the air that escaped through the slit in a needle. Toby James didn't come to the next project.

However, this stranger was not Toby James. This stranger had a placid expression, but I was nervous, dressed in black garments with my hair bundled in a ponytail letting loose strands escape at the back. He didn't seem worried; his lip wasn't half bitten, and his cheeks maintained a neutral colour.

As soon as he spoke every object in the room silenced until only my staggered breathing could be heard over the haunting wind bellowing through the vents in the ceiling. His voice was soft and muffled as if it was covered by a blanket, yet certain words were clear and sliced their way through the silk. His name for example. Noah. I immediately thought of Noah's Ark and several unkindly jokes to go with it.

Its not like I told him these jokes but for some reason I felt like he could hear them bouncing around in my head. By this point he had exhausted most of the words in his vocabulary and I guessed he was waiting for me to speak. I thought about speaking but I struggled to string my sentences together. After a painful minute and a half, he realised words weren't going to slide off my tongue and directed his eyes to the floor.

127. That was his number. Mine was 276.

Hours had been stolen and I shrank into my clothes. I had an English essay due the next day and so far, the only thing I had written was my name and the date three days earlier, this was going to be a great excuse to tell Sir. Neither suspect had turned up and I had grown tiresome of the unsettling silence. I was about to grab my denim jacket that I had painted a beautiful, deep black (I had lost my leather one at the laundrette earlier in the week) when the stranger asked for my name.

I told him my number, but he persisted to know the name my parents had given to me. Beth, I told him, well actually Elizabeth, but he didn't seem too interested in that. He was a blank book, hungry for information, mine especially, however he was not satisfied with my answer. I told him all I knew about myself whilst still edging towards the door. My fingers had tightened around the handle, but he tugged my hand away. He asked me where I was going. He told me we had an obligation to fulfil. I detached myself from his grip and he waited a few seconds before he signalled.

They came from all directions. Some faces familiar, some unknown. They slashed my hair, cutting with a knife, resisting my flailing arms. I had not been waiting to catch them, they had been waiting to catch me.

Noah delved into his pocket for a heavy metal object, I could hear it click like the sound of loading bullets. I braced myself. There were no bullets for a while. I opened the heavy shutters covering my eyes and saw what looked to be a radio. He passed through some of my personal information to a lady who politely acknowledged receipt, before pressing two or three buttons to release a symphony of classical music. The men drifted away, locked the doors and left the classical music circling the room.

Gosh that English homework really was going to be late. 276 days late.

Hannah PART 2 - ENDING

It all started when I was in bed – I woke and looked at the time: 7:30. I was late for school! I rushed to get ready and, just before I got there, I noticed a TV in a shop window. It was showing the news and guess what it said:

‘Welcome To Saturday Morning News!’

Oh shoot!

I carried on watching and was surprised – shocked – when the news guy said that the world was going to end in five years.

What? Was he messing around?

I knew he wasn’t, really, because of the tone of his voice. He sounded scared.

I ran home thinking I must spend as much time with family and friends as I can over this next five years.

The five years have passed now. They’ve been and gone so quickly. I said goodbye to my friend for the last time today, and my family. It killed me to think my life would be over in fifteen minutes.

I saw a meteor through my window, it was so close to the Earth’s atmosphere. I jolted away from my window in fear and the meteor crashed, and that was it... my ending.

Joshua Power
BYE

The walls were enclosed by tall, barbed-wire and metal fences. He stood in the concrete bunker, his arms frozen to his thighs. The silence stiffened his soul. Everyone felt the same; their minds waiting for the end. He had no idea of time, nobody did. The suspense was deadly.

The end always happens but he thought about the children surrounding him. They were too young. His pen scratched across the paper.

My love,

It's happening. I don't know when and I don't know how. I wish you could have survived. You wait – I'm coming and I will see you again, after all this time.

Bye,

With this, a single tear rolled down his dry cheek. He was ready – waiting for it to happen.

It didn't. He couldn't be certain. He felt his heart lift. He transformed, his tears disappeared, but then... something dropped from the ceiling. It was a package. It exploded on impact spraying powder everywhere. He thought his insides were burning, but they were not. Screaming surrounded him but he was painless.

Nothing hurt.

Was he immortal, or was his moustache blocking the gas?

Erin Parkes
THE DAY I FOUND LOVE

It was Wednesday the 5th of September, 2018 – my first day back at secondary school since Year 8. I was roaming the corridors when I felt someone brushing against my shoulder. I turned to look and I thought my eyes deceived me – I saw a small girl, with icy blue eyes, wearing a short, purple dress, and grey, scuffed Uggs – her short, ginger hair lay on her pale shoulders.

'Hey!' she screamed, waiting for some sort of apology.

'What – oh, sorry,' I stuttered; I had purposefully ignored her.

She walked off with her two mates, laughing.

I couldn't stop thinking about her, and the moment, all day. It was constantly bugging me. I lost my focus in class, because of it I lost three lines that day.

It was the end of the day... at last! I was walking up the slope to catch the bus when my eyes caught notice of the girl. I ran up with excitement and tapped her on the shoulder and she glared at me in confusion.

'What?' she howled, walking in a hurry so she didn't miss the bus.

'I... I was wondering...er... if you wanted to go on a date with me,' I stuttered. I was so shy! I couldn't help but wonder why I'd said that.

She answered with a: 'Sure. What time?'

I was shaken with surprise.

'Friday at six?'

Holly Prew
DEPRESSION

I was not waiting for anyone, not waiting for anything. I was just sitting there in my corner watching the happy world go by.

‘Are you all right there?’ It was a kind woman.

I snapped, ‘What do you think?’ My temper was short; I didn’t want anything to do with her and I looked down at the street, covered in litter.

‘Well, you don’t look all right. Can I help?’ That voice was so sweet – like the honey I used to crave when I was smaller.

‘You can’t help. No one can.’ Tears slipped down my face as I recounted the horrible darkness I face every. Single. Day.

‘At least come to my house. It’s out of the cold,’ she offered.

‘It’s not cold, I can’t feel it,’ I said even though there were goosebumps on every inch of my covered skin.

The woman looked at me as if to say: You are cold, come on.

‘No,’ I muttered. I just couldn’t.

She held out a hand; she must have had the patience of a saint. When I grasped her hand it was as soft as a warm, fluffy blanket.

I looked away. ‘No,’ I said.

‘Why?’ she whispered.

I looked up at her and saw her in all her glory. I swear she glowed with positivity.

We went to her house where we chatted, but when I was alone in her spare room the darkness encased me, like it always did.

Hannah Frank
I AM AMIA ROBERTS

I, am Amia Roberts, had the most boring, ordinary. Normal life in the UNIVERSE. I go to an ordinary school that has its ordinary corridors filled with the most annoying people ever. I am absolutely boring and a bit dumb.

Yesterday, my life completely changed (and not in a finally getting 10/10 in a maths quiz kind of way). This was truly magical.

I woke up yesterday morning, got ready, had breakfast, and went to school as usual. At school, somebody said I had a fox’s tail and they saw me with it walking home. I paused, and laughed. The girl looked at me like she was extremely confused.

‘Why would I have a fox tail if I’m a plain ordinary human? Plus, Fox-Girls don’t exist – it’s all those fantasy stories you’ve been reading that must have got into your head...’

Laura King
ROSE

My name is Rose and I was born to a poor family in Xiang Hai. I'd describe myself as sensitive with a lack of confidence. And I just bought an illegal book off the street.

I don't trust street stores any more.

I got snitched by the store owner and was told by the police they sent my dad to jail for a year and a half, even though it wasn't our fault. But we had no proof to show them the truth.

Now, I need your help. What should I do to save my father?

Jake Fitzgerald
THE DAY TIME STOPPED

I opened my eyes; it was time to start another day. But something felt different. I dragged myself out of my place of slumber and into the bathroom, stepping into the shower

I froze.

Metaphorically, I mean.

There was a drop of water floating, still, in mid-air. Foolishly, I dismissed it as my eyes playing a game on me and reached to turn the handle...

Stuck.

Staying positive, I dressed myself in the same school uniform I wore every day and went downstairs. In the kitchen, my mum had a shocked expression – her arms were outstretched, as though she was about to catch something. There was a bowl of my favourite cereal (Corn Flakes) floating. Milk had started to leave the bowl but none was on the tiled floor. I hesitated, unsure if to touch it or not.

I did.

Words cannot describe the sensation I felt. My hand had both gone through it and not. It wobbled until I moved my hand.

Okay. I was sure something was wrong. I checked the time: 6:30 – the same time as when I'd awoken. Worried, I grabbed my phone...

No! The horror! It wouldn't turn on. What was I to do? I looked to my mother and she was still frozen and wearing the exact same expression as before.

There was an open window, which I climbed through to get out of my house. The street was similarly frozen: An elderly woman, walking her dog; dozens of cars on the road; a man jogging. And they were all completely still.

Urszula Zobczak
CURTAINS

She fingered the curtains. The sun was shining and all her friends were outside. Yet, she did not move. She stared into the trees outside, pressing herself against the cold glass. Still, she did not move. She let the curtains cover her, wrapping herself in their white, flowery patterns.

'Avocado!' she yelled suddenly. The glass bent like melting metal, surrounding her until she was trapped. Her friends crowded around her, wondering what had happened.

The curtains pressed into her, tightening until she could not breathe. There was yelling as hands shook her but she just let it all go. Suddenly, there was a scream. More yelling and shoving. No one wanted to be left with it...

'Avocado!' Those were Serpi Ente's last words. She'd strangled herself using the curtains. But, when they came back for the body, hours later, they found only a small, green snake.

The funeral took place at St Albert's Hall. Serpi's best friend was there, staring at her feet. What had made her friend want to do that? She sighed, glancing at the detective beside her; she was being taken in for questioning.

'Do you have any idea why she killed herself?' the inspector asked.

'I don't know, okay! She didn't tell me everything!'

The inspector merely flinched.

'What was the last thing you heard her say?'

Victoria Wolf sighed. What was the point of this again?

'I heard her say "avocado".'

'Right. At Serpi Ente's suicide spot all we found was a green grass snake. Any ideas?'

'No!'

Serpi Ente. The name seemed strange. Victoria had never felt thought about it before. But... when she joined her late friend's two names together it made the word: serpiente – which was the Spanish for serpent and serpent meant snake. Could it be that avocado, Serpi, and snake, were connected somehow?

Yep, it was a very odd kind of ritual. If your name was associated with an animal and you said avocado you came back as that animal. Serpi hadn't died – she'd become a snake.

Victoria stared at cars whizzing below her on a road. The bridge above the road was old. And unsafe. Victoria stood at the edge, peering down.

'Victoria! What are you doing?' her friend yelled.

'Avocado,' said Victoria.

Then jumped.

Jess Firth
HELLO

'Hello,' said a voice, quietly, whispering. She slowly appeared from behind a painting called 'Sadness.'

Her hair was a pale pink – so pale it was almost white. Her light blue eyes blinked once more. She looked down at her feet and noticed she was still wearing her long socks that reached her knees and then turned to the painting and took a long glance at it.

'I'm sadness.'

I looked at the painting and then back at her. The painting was of a ship, sailing on a rough sea. It did not remind me of her. It was a different sort of sadness, it was more scary.

She began to shiver and pulled her jumper sleeves to cover her pale, small hands. Her voice was so sweet and quiet but it was easy to understand. A cold wind drifted into the art gallery and her cheeks turned pink and her nose did the same.

She moved over to the steps, her footsteps almost silent, even though she wasn't wearing shoes, and I imagined they would still be silent even if she was...

Hollie Smith
THE MAN IN THE SUIT

It was a dark night as I walked slowly through the streets, my heart beating like a drum inside my ribcage. Every time I turned down another tight alley I felt like I was being dipped into icy, cold water chilling me down to the bone.

After half an hour I was nearly home and turning down the final, unlit alley when I felt a shaky hand land gently on my shoulder. I slowly turned around, expecting at any second to feel a cloth gag my mouth. But it didn't.

When I turned there stood a man, smiling at me, with two dark, piercing green eyes, which, when he looked at me, felt as though were staring into my soul, reading all of my deepest, darkest secrets.

'Who are you?' I asked, my words talking on their own account.

'I am Anger,' the man replied, his voice barely more than a whisper.

I let him lead me under a street lamp where I could see him properly. He didn't look like anything you'd expect, dressed-up smartly in a neat shirt and tie. His hair was a fiery red, combed into some sort of shape.

Half an hour later we were sat in my kitchen sipping hot chocolates. When I accidentally spilled some on Anger. He suddenly stood up, his hot drink flying.

'What was that for?' he screamed, with a surprisingly loud, low-pitched voice that echoed around the house.

'Come back,' I pleaded. 'I didn't mean to!'

But he didn't listen and soon I saw him disappearing into the darkness.

Joshua Power
TICK, TOCK

A soft whimper could be heard through the cracks in the decrepit hut. The linen soaked up the red liquor. His eyes peaking from the bed sheets. A man, his face hidden by his dark clothes and mask, his fingers wielding a small pocket knife. Whimpering in the darkness, his quilt stabbing him in the back. His final mission downed.

Nobody knew of that long hut, with long shafts, beneath the woods would hold the deadly president's secrets. All the press knew was he'd been taken, along with his associates, but little was known about the whereabouts.

The many other dead bodies were stashed behind the plaster walls. But, out in the open, the knife could be seen, poking out of the bedsheets – it was wrapped in cloth.

'Sorry,' an enormous voice whispered on the wind.

A loud ticking could be heard.

Tick, tock.

Tick tock.

Then silence, so deadly it could kill.

Rachel Ward
The CURSE OF LIFE

As I looked into the murky water I could see the good and bad of me. Everything was clear – what I had done. Was this my fate? Can't I see a clearer, better fate, for my future? I heard Ghandi was here a few weeks ago and it worked for him. So why is it now that my life is a blur – a curse if death and doom?

A worthless life. An unneeded one. One that is unbearable to man. My talents wasted, my life a mess.

How can my life be such a riddle?

If I do destroy the whole wizarding world, how do I stop it? How do I make myself known as good? How do I go back and make this right? How do obtain life and control death?

Part of me wants to change, and the other: control. I must find something to control life. I must find an alternative. I must find the real me.

Tom Riddle.

Voldermort.

Billie Rose
SHUSH!

One morning I was pouring a cuppa to go with my bananas on toast with cherries when the cup went...

'I'm not having that in me! It's boiling!'

I was shocked! Had my mug just spoken to me? I ignored it as I thought it was just my brain playing tricks on me but when I poured more in I heard a deafening scream.

'What did I just say! If I recall I said to not pour that boiling water in me! It BURNS!' said the mug.

'Oh, shut up. That's why you were made!' I replied and I finished pouring in the water. 'Not that bad, is it?' I said. The mug did not reply. 'Are you sulking, or am I imaging everything?' I said. Nothing happened. I slammed my mug down to start eating.

'Are you mad? You could have smashed me! That wouldn't exactly have been smashing, would it?' the mug screamed.

'Oh, jam it, or else I will! You shouldn't have kept complaining, should ya?'

It shut up.

I picked up my knife and fork and started eating when the mug went...

'Na-Na Na-Na-Na.'

I slammed my knife and fork down.

'That's it!'

I was about to start arguing with it again when my knife and fork went, 'Do you mind!'

I was shocked, even though I shouldn't have been. But I was. And then my plate said...

'Will everyone just shut up?' and my place mat said, 'Yeah.'

And soon all of my cutlery and crockery were chattering and I went to my front door and after ten seconds I went back to the kitchen and everything was quiet. I wondered if I'd imagined it.

'Your decision, you horrible scolder and smasher,' said my mug. I think...

HANSEL AND GRETAL

(1000 years before, except Hansel & Gretel is in 5020...)

Hana Ready

CRASH! Down came the tree. Fatty McBigHead was leading his army of robotic axes through the forest. Everywhere he turned, menacing robots stared back at him. He grinned to himself. Soon he would have enough wood to make a beautiful mansion in New York – the most amazing place on earth. He would have it all to himself. And no-one knew!

Suddenly he saw ...

"Sweets?!?" he yelled. If there was one thing Fatty McBigHead loved more than chopping down trees it was sweets. And here was a huge cube of the stuff. As he got closer he realised it was a house. He grabbed his remote control and pressed the big red button. Creeeeek. It all stopped, the robots, the luxury ten million pound car (oh yeah, by t

he way, he was too fat to move without help), even the walking fan that hadn't installed yet stopped racing around Fatty's room at top speed, smashing into his diamond encrusted 80 inch TV. It all stopped.

Driving his car over to the melted chocolate river, he flew towards the house, his huge gob ready to devour sugar. Then a door opened and out came a ... witch? It cackled. She clicked her fingers and ...

That is the last anyone has heard of Fatty McBigHead.

Annabelle Widdows
5 YEARS TILL THE END

Hannah stared at the smashed phone on the café floor.

'Oh, no!' she yelled.

'It's not the end of the world, Hannah. It's only a phone. You can get a new one,' said Amy, her best friend.

The TV in the corner said, 'We interrupt this showing of The Big Bang Theory for an urgent news report.' A reporter was suddenly on the screen. 'Urgent news,' she said, tears rolling down her face. Her eyes were red and puffy from crying. 'The Earth will implode in five years. I repeat: five years left to live on this planet.' Then the screen went black.

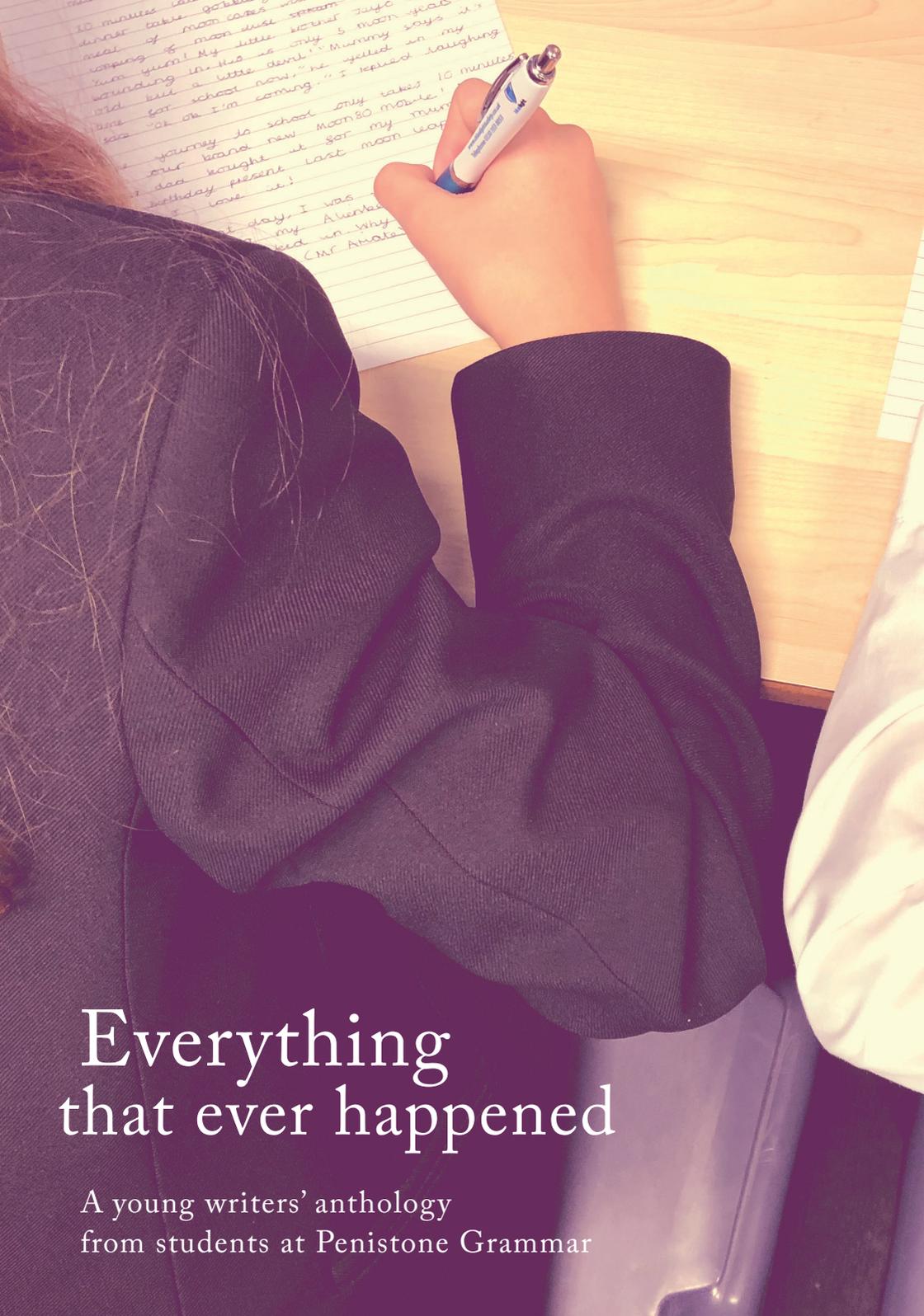
No one moved. The café was silent. People outside stopped and stared. Hannah fell to her knees.

'Noooooooooooo!' she screamed.

People ran out of the café. Hannah ran outside and remembered all the things she wanted to do. She found a piece of paper blowing around in the wind. On it, she wrote all the things she wanted to do before she died.

She completed the first one. She climbed to the highest branch of the tallest tree in town. And she realised she could do whatever she wanted now, with no consequences.

THE END



Everything that ever happened

A young writers' anthology
from students at Penistone Grammar