This anthology is comprised of the winning and commended entries from the University of Adelaide’s Write Now writing competition.

Held for the first time in 2011, the competition was designed to give the students of Salisbury an opportunity to tell their stories and have their voices heard. The University of Adelaide is proud of this competition, which will be open once again in 2012 to students in the Salisbury area.

Encouraging writing talent is important to the University of Adelaide. We offer writing courses from undergraduate to postgraduate level. When undergraduate students choose a Bachelor of Arts with a major in Creative Writing, that have the opportunity to learn from leading academics; many who are also published authors. Students develop their writing skills and hone their craft amongst like-minded peers.

The university also offers postgraduate studies in Creative Writing at a PhD level. Students work alongside prominent, award winning writers to create a work of publishable standard. Many of our students have had their PhD work published as books.

Because we love all things writing, we hope that by staging the Write Now competition that we can ignite and foster the passion for writing in young students, share their talent and show that there are opportunities to pursue writing at a university level.

University of Adelaide, creating Life Impact.
This anthology has been illustrated and edited by Samantha Pinnington with assistance from Stephanie Hester and Mateo Szlapek-Sewillo.

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Brooke Lloyd  Alanis Wieckowski
Kathleen Mullen  Catherine Yacoumis
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The inaugural Write Now competition has been created by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Adelaide in partnership with the City of Salisbury, and its aim is to offer young adults who live, work, study or volunteer in the Salisbury region an opportunity to write about the realities and the possibilities of life in their area. Non-fiction writers were asked to write about ‘What life is like in the City of Salisbury’; fiction writers were asked to write about ‘What life could be like in the City of Salisbury’.

The competition judges were bowled over by the standard of the work submitted, and commented on the insight, the creativity and the liveliness of the writing. In all of the winning and commended entrants there was a freshness and originality of voice, and the judges noted that their work contained many sharp insights, witty one-liners and magical phrases. Fiction writers created an array of characters and situations, both lifelike and fantastic, using the streets and suburbs of Salisbury. Writers of non-fiction showed perception, insight and honesty in explaining what they like about their area, as well as what they would change – even if that is just how their city is perceived by others.

The judge’s comments prove that there is a wealth of talent among young people here; to share just a few of their remarks:

‘The honesty of the observations was refreshing and sharp.’

‘Great maturity in the writing. A very thorough rendering of the world he inhabits.’

‘A natural story-teller. Shows a great spirit of resilience.’

‘The author’s ability to “bring the story back” to a strong conclusion shows great skill as a writer.’

‘An excellent writer, who constructs beautiful sentences.’

I’ll return to the question of beautiful sentences, but wouldn’t any of us be proud to have those comments attached to something we’d written, particularly from judges who are not in the habit of bestowing praise lightly.

The Salisbury Writers’ Festival is a celebration of the power of the written word, and of those of us who love to fill the pages. But what motivates us? Why do we do it, and what is the purpose of it all? My own view is that it arises from a desire for permanence – the written word is more lasting than speech – but also from the quest for a special kind of enchantment. For me, the desire to write was sparked by reading. There is no simpler yet more mysterious activity than reading a book. I read on the bus, and once I open the book I am present to fellow passengers, yet also absent; I disappear into a world constructed entirely of words. The reader in the act of reading is under a kind of enchantment, and if you are in any way creative, you cannot help but want to be part of that magic.

The Canadian author, Margaret Atwood, once surveyed hundreds of writers for an answer to the question of why they write, and here are a few of the responses: ‘To record the world as it is…To produce order out of chaos…To satisfy my desire for revenge…To express myself…To express myself beautifully…To make money so that my children could have shoes…To make money so that I could sneer at those who formerly sneered at me…To attract the love of a beautiful woman…To attract the love of any woman at all…To attract the love of a beautiful man…To thwart my parents…To spin a fascinating tale…To amuse and please the reader…To please myself…Because to create is human.’ And there are many more than there is room to chronicle here.

At different times, I have shared nearly all of those sentiments, but I would also add a couple of my own: I write to make sense of everyday life; to understand where I have come from, where I am going and to understand the place where I live. Because of this, I was pleased when I saw the topics set for the Write Now competition, but I wondered what the young writers thought – did they relish the opportunity to express what they felt about Salisbury or did they inwardly groan and think that they could have been writing about somewhere or something more exciting?

We are said to have recovered from what was once known in Australia as the ‘cultural cringe’, that nasty suspicion that people elsewhere were better, brighter, smarter, yet we are still not fearless writers of our own geography. In the United States they are masters of it, with countless songs, books and films memorialising American place names. Through our saturation in the flow of American culture – a flow which isn’t very brisk in the opposite

Foreword
by Carol Lefevre
Author, Visiting Research Fellow, Discipline of English, University of Adelaide
direction, we must note – our memory banks hold images and impressions of places like Las Vegas and Louisiana, yet we can be hazy on the nature of our own state, our own city or suburb. This, strangely, can be caused by saturation, since the places we live in are so familiar that they become almost invisible. Writers have to learn to desaturate themselves so that they can really see what goes on around them.

Whoever chose the topic chose well, for a young writer living in Salisbury has a unique key, and that is the many-layered understanding of a place that arises out of everyday contact. It is not something you can find in a guide book, or on the Internet, and specialist knowledge is always worth recording. Although as individuals each of the young writers in this anthology share Salisbury with many others, you could say they exist in parallel worlds, because one take on life is never exactly the same as another’s. In high school you inhabit a micro-world, which you share with friends and classmates, but your experience of that world is still unique. It is also a world the authors in this anthology will soon leave. And here, then, is another reason for writing: to remember who we once were, what mattered to us and preoccupied us, after we have moved on.

Even once these writers have moved on, and it would be fantastic if they chose to develop their knowledge and skills further in the context of university – which is a new and exciting world to inhabit – they will find themselves returning again and again, in different ways, to this competition topic. Because the places where we live enter into us deeply; it’s as if they circulate in the blood. The American writer, Joan Didion, says: ‘A place belongs forever to whoever claims it hardest, remembers it most obsessively, wrenches it from itself, shapes it, renders it, loves it so radically that he remakes it in his own image.’

The City of Salisbury has already given these young writers much to write about; it has provided the seed corn for stories and characters which, if they keep writing, they will continue to draw on. And Salisbury is no less vibrant on the page than any other place, because places are made by the people who inhabit them, and in Salisbury people live and breathe, eat and sleep, dream, work, play, they come together to celebrate, just as in Paris, London, or LA. Salisbury has its history; it has its ghosts, its heroes and heroines, its characters, its moods, its dramas and problems and its hopes for the future. And these young writers, with their special insight into the layers of its daily life, are uniquely equipped to write about that.

Finally, in a time when, of all the arts, literature seems under threat and in the throes of a greater transformation than at any time since the invention of the printing press, a time when people are discussing the death of the book, and with bookshops closing and others struggling, writing might seem a futile pursuit. But I urge all writers, especially those just starting out, not to be discouraged but to keep on. Turmoil in the publishing industry is the concern of publishers; booksellers must fight their own corner. Of course, we can help out by supporting our local independent bookshop, and by using our local library, by making a point of reading Australian authors. In the meantime, all this upheaval in the way books are published, sold and read may simply result in a greater variety of places and formats in which a new generation of writers will be published. As humans we will never relinquish the enchantment of reading, and as readers we have an endless appetite for beautiful sentences, the crafting of which is the writer’s main task. On that note, here is a recent quote from the Irish writer, Colm Toibin.

"Our duty is to make good sentences, and that is our responsibility too. Beyond that, nothing much. But maybe good sentences stand for other things that are good, or might be improved; maybe the rhythms of words used well might matter in ways which are unexpected in a dark time."

Why did I begin writing? Halfway through year seven, my parents divorced and my whole world fell apart; it was like I’d just jumped off a cliff after a full sprint. I was so lost and didn’t know where to turn and the books I read would only let me escape while I was wrapped up in their words. I decided that I needed to keep the words with me where ever I went and so I started writing. At first it was just little things. A page or so of events and emotions with little bits of speech here and there; they weren’t the best pieces but as books seemed to harder to get and I’d already read the ones we had, I didn’t rely on books as much anymore. I tried to borrow new things from the library but soon, the source of new books was depleted and I needed something else.

Depression had swallowed me whole and chewed me all day and night. I was due to start high school in five or six months and I was panicking more and more about leaving everything I knew behind for something new, big and scary. I needed words. They were my drug. I was in the middle of a drought and they were my water. If I couldn’t get them in books, I’d write my own. I didn’t just want words or stories, I needed them. I was a vampire, words were blood. They ended up being as important to me as oxygen. So I started writing. I’d never thought much of writing competitions and hardly ever wrote about how I was feeling. What I wrote about was what I wanted to happen: happiness, true love, growing old and not being so afraid or anxious. Sometimes writing was bliss; other times I found myself envying my characters and their love, their bravery, and their happiness. Now I’m in Year Eleven, and I think, so far, I think I’ve handled it all right. But I must admit sometimes all these other characters and voices in my head make me feel like I’m losing my sanity.

Krystal is the overall winner of the Inaugural ‘Write Now’ Competition.

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Foreword
by Samantha Pinnington

People often think of writing as being the catalyst which frees us from the wear and tear of our everyday lives; routines and conflicts evaporate like morning mist when we indulge in the world of another - a world far more exciting than the one we currently inhabit. For me, writing isn’t as much a release as it is an adventure. Writing is my legacy; something that will remain behind even after I am long gone. I don’t write purely out of boredom or to escape the harsh realities of a personal life. Rather, I write to share my craft with others, to invite them into a world of my own fabrications and fantasies. I guess you could say literature is like Lewis Carol’s Wonderland to me. But I often find myself pondering: What are authors to readers?

When the infamous title ‘author’ falls into play, I immediately envision a middle-aged character hunched over a laptop, sipping a skinny latte whilst wearing a turtle-neck and listening to jazz in the darkest, farthest reaches of an antiquated society. In reality, authors - call them whatever you like - are as grounded as you or me. I often hear people telling me how good it is that I write instead of playing ludicrous video games, when in truth, every spare moment that isn’t occupied with writing one of three novels is blissfully spent drowning my senses in the world of a video game, a story brought to life by four dimensions of utter perfection. In a society enhancing technologically every day, we often fail to see the literature behind the movies, music and games we engage in; someone has taken the time and care to fabricate what we experience with mere words. They certainly do not grow on trees.

Writing is an art form; a culture I wish to see prosper in the years to come, and it is for this very reason that I treasure the magic of text. They say a picture is worth a thousand words, but doesn’t that mean a thousand words must also be worth a picture? Having seen both sides of that quarter, I, as both an artist and a writer, encourage all those who feel they have something to share with the world to write - to animate the secret world they so happily immerse themselves with and reach out to people all over the globe. One man’s words are another’s salvation. I have found that though I am fortunate enough to have a loving family and a respectable life, there are others out there in need of an escape; a world with which they can truly be at peace, whether it be for a few moments of several lifetimes.
Introduction
by Stephanie Hester
Faculty of HUMSS, University of Adelaide

About the ‘Write Now’ competition and anthology

It’s often said that story-telling is a gift. I’ve always taken this to mean that it’s a gift some people have; some individuals have the remarkable ability to be able to tell, and write, a story in a way that will really draw a reader in, pull him or her deep into the world of the person telling the tale. Recently, however, I have come to think of the phrase ‘the gift of story-telling’ as having a whole other meaning. Reading the pieces in this anthology has made me feel like I have myself been the recipient of dazzling gifts, presented with works that are rich and deep and rewarding to the soul.

The pieces in this volume are the winning and commended entries from the ‘Write Now’ competition that was run in 2011 for high school students living, working, volunteering or studying in the City of Salisbury. It was organised by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Adelaide, in conjunction with the City of Salisbury. Our faculty is focussed on teaching and studying ‘stories’, whether they are fictitious, historical or related to current events; we wanted to encourage the next generation of authors to tell us what mattered to them, and to share their worlds, both real and imagined, with us.

Nothing prepared us for the response we would receive to our inaugural competition. We were overwhelmed by the quality of stories and poems that came to us, the wealth of tales that immediately drew us into worlds that were magical and sinister, hilarious and haunting. The authors shared something of themselves with us; their works are not just exercises in writing but in story-telling, that magical art-form where spells are cast and readers are transported, even as they sit mesmerized, to other realms and realities. Selecting winners from the entries was a nigh-impossible task. It is one of our hopes that all of the entrants in this anthology can see, in the inclusion of their pieces, a reflection of how truly talented they are, and how excited we are about their abilities as writers. We are confident you will be reading a lot more by many of these writers in the future.

A few thanks before I stop and allow the writers to begin to speak to you. We organised the competition in partnership with the City of Salisbury, and were fortunate enough for it to be promoted as part of the Salisbury Writers’ Festival in 2011. The festival plays a key role in the encouragement and support of aspiring South Australian writers in their development and we are proud to be associated with it. Sincere thanks to our wonderful panel of judges: Amanda Pepe, Editor of The Adelaide Review, Author and Salisbury Writers’ Festival Working Party Member Jeff Harris, and author and lecturer Shannon Burns of the University of Adelaide. Thanks must also go to Carol Lefevre for her lovely and moving address at the presentation of the prizes during the opening night of the 2011 Festival. The competition and anthology could not have happened without Nichola Kapitza, Manager at the City of Salisbury, Barbara Wiesner and Jude Aquilina at the SA Writers’ Centre, and Stephanie Bryant, Mateo Szlapek-Sewillo and Robert Ewers at the University of Adelaide.

A very, very, big thank you must go to Samantha Pinnington who illustrated, edited and provided creative design input into the work that you are holding in your hands. And, finally, extra special thanks goes to the writers who have shared with us their thoughts, their words and their stories. We are all indebted to you for the precious gifts you have given us.
1. Salisbury

“...well and truly a great suburb to live in.”
Salisbury acrostic poem
Written by Paul Nguyen
Thomas More College, Year 9

Site to been seen,
A place to be,
Living the life.

It’s a place to visit once in a while,
So why not come to see for yourselves?

Billions of things to do with friends and family so...

- Turn back around it’s the...

Right place to shop, watch, play and hang out,
You just got to see this for yourselves
There once was a place called Salisbury
Founded by a man named Harvey
Named after the town
Where his wife could be found
It did start off quite tiny

It had a bit of a wait
From 1848
And then slowly it grew
And by mid ‘42
It had boomed and was doing just great

This mid-sized explosion
Caused a bit of commotion
For the cause of the boom
With all available room
A place of detonation

That’s right, boys and girls,
It’s where they made some small shells
Grenades and mines too
That’s the reason it grew
Into something that was quite substantial

But now things have changed
Since those quite long-gone days
It’s now just a suburb
Which can seem quite absurd
When you think what it’s been ’long the way

A history of Salisbury in verse
The City of Salisbury

The City of Salisbury is a beautiful place.
Here is where everything happens.
Everyone loves what goes on in the area.

Come and join in the fun and games that are held in the parks.
In the City of Salisbury there is a wonderful Christmas Pageant.
There are lots of dog parks for your dogs.
Young and old people live here.

Offices, buildings and schools are all found in this one city.
Fairs are held at least twice a year at the Rec. Centre.

So many places where you can go shopping.
A lot of people everywhere.
Learning happening in lots of schools in the City of Salisbury.
I see lots of friendly faces smiling at each other and talking.
Smiles and waves as parents drop their children at school.
Buying and selling at fairs, shops and garage sales.
Uncovering new places to go and things to see and do.
Racing to the train and buses after going out for a scrumptious lunch.
You and your family going out for a fun filled day at St Kilda Adventure Playground.

Written by Sophie Eberhard
Thomas More College, Year 9
Salisbury

A place to live
A place to shop
A place to walk the dog

A place to work
A place to relax
A place to spend some cash

A place like any other
A place like no other
A place to grow older

A place to build
A place to own
A place to call your own

A place that’s friendly
A place that’s kind
A place where the sun shines

A place to improve
A place to grow
A place to learn
More and more

A place called Salisbury

Written by Catherine Yacoumis
Thomas More College, Year 9
What a blast!

Now Salisbury is a blast
And it has been since the past
It gives a thrill
Like if you will
Standing up high on a ship’s mast

That prospect of seein’ something new
Just within this small view
It’ll keep you busy
In this fair city
To many things you’ll say ‘Woohoo’

From Bolivar to Salisbury Plain
The population shows no shame
To quickly say
A Hip-hip-hooray
To their proud Salisbury name

Over great land it does span
And it holds many a man
One’ fifty-eight to be exact
And that is a fact
That includes that place called Cavan

I reckon it’s been great
Since 1848
It’s a ‘you beaut’ place
Not close to a waste
It can still pull its own weight

After all these years
You think it’d grown a beard
But it’s still clean
Still pristine
Salisbury makes us cheer

So for the future we do wish
Served to us on a silver dish
All the best
And all the rest
Like a perpetual meal of fish
2. The living city

“Uncovering new places to go... things to see and do.”
What is life like in Salisbury? I’ve never really thought about it before, maybe because I’ve lived here my whole life. Now I wonder what life is like in another district. I wonder if I’ll like it or enjoy living in it as much as I enjoy living in Salisbury. I wonder if I’ll feel as though everything I need is within reach - places I can go to, things I can do. But most of all I wonder if there is another person in another city who feels the same way I feel about Salisbury, because it makes me ponder the question: Is there another city like Salisbury?

I admit - quite ruefully - that I’ve never questioned Salisbury as a city; never asked about the places where I can enjoy myself, or if there were places where I could lend a helping hand. Nope, never have I wanted to become involved in the community or sign up for something I have not yet done before. That is, until I became a Youth Council member of the City of Salisbury.

Applying for a position on the Youth Council was undoubtedly one of the smartest things I’ve ever done. In becoming a Youth Council member, countless doors have been opened for me, invitingly wide for my own exploration. Slowly, I have been taught to open my eyes and see Salisbury how I’ve never seen it before. The facilities available for our use at any time, the sport and recreational centres with sporting programs for all ages, the libraries with our history and numerous resources at our feet.

I went to primary school in Salisbury, and I now attend secondary school in North Adelaide. As a younger student, I did not see the need - or want - to make new friends with other kids my age or join the chess club at the library. I was, well, not really that type of kid as a twelve year old. Moving up to high school and travelling into North Adelaide every day in year eight made me feel older and more experienced, yet it took me away from Salisbury. Seeing the flyer advertising the chance to become a Youth Council member wasn’t anything exciting. I was not expecting a lot from Youth Council and, quite frankly, a year ago I had no idea what the Youth Council did and what it involved. Maybe if I had known that I would be volunteering my time to help local organisations I wouldn’t have applied. Maybe if someone had told me earlier that I would be running workshops for teenagers my age I would’ve felt out of my depth and backed out. Or, maybe if I did not apply, I would never have gotten to experience and actually live in Salisbury.

Discovering Salisbury has been – I kid you not – a whirlwind of activity. Launches to attend, people to help, and photos to smile in, yeah, it’s been amazing. I’ve made acquaintances and formed friendships with so many new people who now play a big part in my life.

I now know why Salisbury is called The Living City – when in a city such as Salisbury, you cannot help but feel alive and buzzing with energy everyday.

Written by Yen-Nhi Nguyen
St. Dominic’s Priory School, Year 9

Living in Salisbury

I went to primary school in Salisbury, and I now attend secondary school in North Adelaide. As a younger student, I did not see the need - or want - to make new friends with other kids my age or join the chess club at the library. I was, well, not really that type of kid as a twelve year old. Moving up to high school and travelling into North Adelaide every day in year eight made me feel older and more experienced, yet it took me away from Salisbury. Seeing the flyer advertising the chance to become a Youth Council member wasn’t anything exciting. I was not expecting a lot from Youth Council and, quite frankly, a year ago I had no idea what the Youth Council did and what it involved. Maybe if I had known that I would be volunteering my time to help local organisations I wouldn’t have applied. Maybe if someone had told me earlier that I would be running workshops for teenagers my age I would’ve felt out of my depth and backed out. Or, maybe if I did not apply, I would never have gotten to experience and actually live in Salisbury.

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Written by Yen-Nhi Nguyen
St. Dominic’s Priory School, Year 9
Salisbury, I believe, is a very up and down area. It may be called ‘The Living City’, but it is anything but that.

I think all the signs you see when going through Salisbury, which try and make the area look nicer than what it is, are very deceiving. They are deceiving because they show the area as being pleasant and safe, when in reality they’re not.

Personally, I would not feel one bit safe standing at Salisbury Interchange, whether it is day or night, sunshine, rain or hail. Overall, safety in Salisbury is a concern. Parks need to be better lit at night. This will not only improve safety, but reduce vandalism as well.

I’m not saying that all of Salisbury is bad, but there are a lot of problem areas. On the other hand, there are a few nice areas in Salisbury, such as Mawson Lakes and Salisbury Heights. These areas have a lot of large and nice houses.

If you are going to go to a school in the Salisbury area think wisely. Compared to other schools in the area (which I’m not going to name), well, there really is no comparison. The safety and good vibe you feel when you walk into our school is indescribable.

The facilities in Salisbury are very substandard, compared to the facilities in other municipalities. This includes the library. In Salisbury, there are multiple libraries, not just the one main one. The main one, which is the Salisbury Library, is lacking because in my opinion it just doesn’t have enough resources that other libraries do, such as enough books and DVD’s.

Even the swimming centre is lacking. Compared to the one in Modbury, which has been recently renovated, this swimming pool needs renovations.

In my opinion, even though I don’t venture into the centre of Salisbury often (except for school), I find that life is really not all that pleasant in Salisbury. The reason being there is not enough facilities, and the facilities that are there are average.

I believe that there are only a minority of good suburbs in Salisbury.

The sporting facilities in Salisbury, such as the football ovals are good enough, because they are large, and the grounds have good surfaces.

I believe that Salisbury is an area that is in dire need for a makeover. There needs to be a bigger library. A lot of buildings in the Salisbury area are “calling out” for a renovation. Facilities like parks and skate parks need to be cleared of graffiti, as this makes the area look bad, and gives it a bad impression. Skate parks are meant to be a place for recreational fun, and exercise, not for graffiti artists to label their turf.
A good thing about Salisbury is the public transport. There are not only buses, but trains as well; Salisbury is also good because it is not that far away from the city.

Another good thing about Salisbury is that there is a sufficient amount of shopping centres in Salisbury. There is a mixture of small shopping centres and large ones such as Parabanks.

The roads in Salisbury, such as Salisbury Highway and Main North Road, are well kept.

I think the best thing about Salisbury would have to be Mawson Lakes. It is such a new, vibrant area. There is a railway station there which links to the city.

The housing in Mawson Lakes is amazing. All of the houses are modern, and a lot of the houses are two storeys. The one bad thing about Mawson Lakes is the land is flat, so it doesn’t offer any views.

There are lovely parks located throughout Mawson Lakes. Sitting at the lake on the lush, green lawns, feeding the ducks, gives a unique feel to the area.

Salisbury also offers many factories, mostly in the Dry Creek area.

The community of Salisbury offers a wide range of people who come from many different countries, and have a wide range of religious beliefs. There is also a wide variety of age groups in Salisbury. Just like any area there will be friendly people who will offer you help if you are looking for directions on getting somewhere. Then there will be people who will totally ignore you.

Salisbury probably isn’t the most ideal place to live, and doesn’t offer the greatest range of facilities, but at the end of the day, it is still an alright place to call home. All in all, I think with Salisbury, the bad suburbs outweigh the good suburbs. This is unfortunate, but I guess that’s just the way it is.

The best facility in Salisbury would have to be Globe Derby Park racecourse, but then again this is starting to age and is in need of renovations.

So as I said before, I think Salisbury is in big need of a facelift, to make it live up to its name of ‘The Living City’
Salisbury isn’t exactly what I’d call ‘upper class’, but then I’ve had my share of unfortunate scenarios, what with Mum’s and my house having been broken into three times in a matter of two years. Yeah, it hasn’t been exactly easy. The worst part of having someone come inside your house isn’t when they steal or trash your house; no, it’s knowing that it’s been violated. Scary thoughts like, ‘What if they’re still here?’, or even more crazy thoughts like, ‘Is there a camera in here, are they watching me?’, cross your mind.

Knowing someone was in your home, where you felt safe and could relax at the end of the day... well, it means it doesn’t feel like much of a safe haven anymore.

The first time our house was broken into was, well, when we didn’t expect it, to say the least. Mum and I were looking after a friend’s two young boys, who were going to sleep over that night, and their friend came over for a play. Whilst going inside I let the cat out; after about five or ten minutes, she wanted to come back inside, so I let her in and locked the fly screen door. I then went back to the lounge room and proceeded to argue about what movies to watch, and to tell the kids to stop jumping on the lounge.

In the meantime Mum was in the backyard, having a coffee, when she heard the front door click. At first she thought that it was the cat, Karsha, but then she saw her walk past and remembered me bringing her back inside. She went to the front door and heard something coming up the hall-way. She didn’t think anything of it at first, just that we were playing hide and seek in her bedroom, until she heard all of us talking in the lounge room. She knew something was off and walked quietly to her bedroom at the end of the hall way; unfortunately, the floor had to creak and alert whoever was there.

When Mum walked into her bedroom, she saw something in beige hiding beside her bed. Yet again, she thought that it was me playing in her room. She recalled that I was going to wear a beige jumper that day, but decided against it. Now knowing that someone was in the house with one woman, a teenager and three kids, things got serious. Mum took her first step into her room and walked around the side of her bed, when the man sprang up and tried to push past Mum.

I wasn’t exaggerating when I said ‘It got serious’. Mum got up in his face and went off her head like a banshee! She yelled and said a number of profanities at him. He was so shocked by this; he was just coming down from a high and wanted nothing more than to get away from the house and Mum!

I was still in the lounge when I heard A LOT of yelling (which was all Mum); I went to check on her, leaving the kids in the lounge. I saw Mum going off her nut at a man who was trying to push past her and head for the door. But Mum knew that the mother of the boys in our lounge room was coming back so she was trying to keep him here as long as possible so she could call the police.
He ended up getting outside and ran, but we called the police and he was caught within a couple of hours. Turns out he didn’t get a chance to take anything and he’s been in the system and in and out of jail since he was a teenager. When they found him he was still shaken up from the encounter with Mum! He went to jail for a few years, and we eventually got over it.

The day after my fourteenth birthday, Mum and I were coming home from her work (which I had to attend also). When we pulled up we saw our big hessian rubbish bin covering the door, which happens to have a glass panel beside it. I laughed and thought a friend of ours was playing a joke on us. I got out of the car and went to the front door to see if there was anything left there, like a letter or something.

There weren’t any prints found inside the house and no one was caught.

Maybe six or seven weeks later after a relaxing holiday in Bali, we came home at eight thirty or nine-ish. Mum had the night shift again. Everything was normal, just like any other night. Of course the house had lost a lot of comfort and warmth to it considering all the break-ins we’ve had as of late.

We walked inside to find the stereo in the dinning room gone and an ornament knocked over. I was in my room and didn’t notice anything unusual. Mum did, and called out to me. I came to her and saw what had happened to the dining room; the stereo was gone, dresser open and clothes strewn everywhere. I was shocked; surely this couldn’t be happening again? We checked the house and found out they came inside through the lounge room window, which is about two or three meters high. Our cameras that we took to Bali, with photos which we hadn’t had printed yet, were taken. Yet again, the people responsible weren’t caught; the only prints that were found happened to be on wood. Because of the wood polish, and the wood itself, no clear finger prints were found.

All of this has been a very horrible experience; the house doesn’t feel safe. It makes you realize how insignificant a simple brick wall or door is. A house doesn’t always keep them out and us in, safe where we are supposed to be. It’s a very scary and confronting thought, and to come to terms with it is something else. Mum and I hope that after our third time we’d be lucky and have no more break-ins; you know what they say, third time lucky.
Salisbury

When I was a little kid, when I heard the word ‘Salisbury’ all I ever thought about were sail boats or strawberries or my Nonna taking me down there on a bus, then walking to the continental shop and buying ham and cheese for my Nonna’s lunch the next day, and never knowing how to spell it, well until I was 11. But now when I hear the word ‘Salisbury’ I think of John St. and where all my friends and family live and all of the lovely people that go there to shop. To me Salisbury is a place where all the old people go and have nothing to do all day besides either having a cup of coffee with friends or just sitting there reading the newspaper all day long. Some parts of Salisbury are old and disgusting, whereas other places there actually are nice-looking. Whenever I am in Salisbury shopping, the people there are always lovely and are always happy to see you. Oh and I know how to spell Salisbury too.
Let's just say there are many words that come to mind when the word ‘Salisbury’ comes up. There are a vast range of descriptive, and some may say offensive, words to put to the City of Salisbury. A few may be feral, poor, dero, dodgy, or a dump maybe?

But the City of Salisbury is not what people portray it to be.

Like every city, suburb, or state, Salisbury has its fair share of ferals, bogans and people supported by Centrelink. Amongst all of that nonsense people describe or claim the City of Salisbury to be, we have a thriving and friendly community.

The world is full of many stereotypes. Salisbury is commonly stereotyped; for example, Salisbury High is frequently stereotyped. Everyone portrays it as one of the worst public high schools in Adelaide, but it is in fact one of the best public schools in the area. Salisbury High is knows for its controversy from being on television and from the fights that happen, which are caused by other members of the public, not by the students themselves, but Salisbury High offers many opportunities and pathways for students who are willing to achieve to the best of their abilities. Salisbury High sets up students for the future and their aspirations. All in all, Salisbury High is a good successful school that gets judged a lot by the things that happen and not by all the positive and successful achievements made by the students and teachers.

Imagine a chocolate Magnum ice-cream, with chocolate on the outside and an ice-cream centre. As the chocolate layer is slowly bitten into and breaks away, it reveals the ice-cream centre. Salisbury is like that chocolate magnum ice-cream. Everyone tends to judge it on that chocolate layer of coating, not look deeper for the soft ice-cream that slowly reveals what truly lies beneath that layer of chocolate. The City of Salisbury is well and truly a great suburb to live in, if only people would just listen to all the great things and listen to all of the success that comes from within the community and people of Salisbury.

Glossary

**Bogan:** A term used for lower-class white Australians, similar to the meaning of the U.S. term ‘trailer trash’.

**Community:** A social group of any size whose members reside in a specific locality, share government, and often have a common cultural and historical heritage.

**Feral:** Someone who supports the environment movement and who chooses to live close to nature in simple conditions without taking any notice of normal social customs with regards to clothing, cleanliness, etc.

**Stereotypes:** An oversimplified and conventional idea or image, used to label or define people.

**Successful:** A good or desired result.
Volunteering in Salisbury

My name is Rebecca Conole and I have lived, worked, studied and played in the City of Salisbury all my life (so far). I am 17 years old, I work at Coles, I attend Thomas More College (where I am currently studying year 12) and I volunteer for Salisbury Youth Council; I have also volunteered with Midnight Basketball for the past three tournaments (and soon to be the fourth) and I am on the Elizabeth Blue Light Committee.

During my time with Salisbury Youth Council I have been involved in all nine project teams: the ‘Safety at the Salisbury Interchange’ project, an arts exhibition, year 11 and 12 study groups, youth road safety, youth mental health, the youth homelessness backpack project, cyber safety, safe partying and the youth homelessness book. I plan to be involved with the upcoming projects as well.

I was the project team leader of the very successful backpack project team and also the mental health project team which took place last year. The backpack project team’s outcome was providing six agencies in the northern suburbs with backpacks filled with essential items that would then be distributed to homeless young people in the northern suburbs. In total two hundred backpacks were distributed between the agencies. The project took approximately one year to complete and a lot of hard work was put into sourcing funding and products to go into the backpacks. All together there was 24 items put in each backpack. These items include: toiletries, notebook and pen, wallet, towel, face washer and other items. The backpack project was launched in December 2010 and it was a good day with speeches from myself, the Mayor of Salisbury and Dr Lynn Arnold.

The mental health project, on the other hand, distributed seven canvases to the local agencies in Salisbury that deal with people who suffer mental health issues. Youth council was responsible for painting a canvas as well. Our canvas was themed a bit differently to the other agencies; ours was more focused on what love is and what we believe the meaning of love is. All of the canvases were displayed in the John Harvey Gallery for a period of time after the launch in November 2010.

In my role with the Elizabeth Blue Light I have catered events for a range of things such as the defence force, youth awards and youth events. I also work at the discos held by the BlueLight each month and I am also a qualified camp supervisor, and I went on the Duke of Edinburgh camp as a supervisor.
For Midnight Basketball I have done many different things over the past three tournaments. I have done catering, scoring and supervising, led workshops and also run the Green Lightning team in Tournament 3. The best thing was that the Green Lightning team were the first team that I had coached in basketball ever and we managed to get to the grand final and then win. It was the happiest day for them and me.

I do all the volunteer work that I do because it is more fun then paid work and I enjoy the fact that I am able to give something back to the community that I grew up in. Volunteering is a worthwhile experience and it has been the best three years of my life, and I can’t wait to see what I can get involved in during 2012.

Well that’s pretty much it from me, so have fun and live life to the fullest.
3. An intersection of realities

“nothing but a ghost of a memory of Salisbury’s former glory.”
Lightness surrounds me, bathing my skin with a warm, unearthly glow. It is pleasant; it always had been. Glancing toward the sky, I smile at the endless expanse of azure; today it seems brighter than usual. Traipsing across the grass, I close my eyes as a gentle breeze rushes past, stirring my hair and caressing my face. Very rarely do I get moments like these. “Hey, Arcadia. Are you coming?” Turning to face the source of the noise, my eyes fall quickly upon the grinning faces of my friends.

“You’re going to play with us, right?” the blonde beams, his cerulean eyes sparkling with excitement.

“Of course she is! Come on Arcadia!” the hazel-eyed girl sings, a melodious chuckle escaping her rosy lips. But something wet suddenly grasps my ankle, plunging me into a cold, dark abyss. I open my mouth to scream, but no words come out. I am being swallowed by the shadows, their dark wings encompassing me almost protectively. The next thing I know, soft light is filtering through my closed lids, banishing the darkness that tormented me only moments ago…

Jolting awake I gasp breathlessly, wiping at my sweat-soaked forehead whilst muttering curses at the clothing that sticks stubbornly to my heated skin. Rubbing idly at my tired eyes, I exhale sharply, almost hissing at the throbbing sensation that now occupies my head. “Arcadia? Are you alright?” calls a familiar voice from behind the bedroom door, almost startling me as the speaker knocked softly upon its surface. Creaking slightly, the door swings open to reveal a bedraggled, weary boy. Shuffling clumsily toward the bed the blonde flops wordlessly onto the mattress, causing it to squeak and flatten beneath his weight, sending an array of newspaper clippings tumbling toward the carpet. Each word printed upon the paper reflects nothing but the destruction and chaos surrounding the city.

“I’m fine Lucis,” I mutter irritably, feigning a bored expression as the teen eyes me curiously.

“We’ve been friends for four years Arcadia. Do you honestly think you can still lie to me?” he smirks, narrowing his sapphire orbs as his voice lowers several octaves, becoming noticeably more serious. “It was that dream, wasn’t it?”.

Swallowing hard, I glance down at the bed sheets, refusing to meet the male’s troubled expression. I remember the war as if it were yesterday. The planet was ravaged, its ethereal beauty stolen along with any chance at a hopeful life. No-one foresaw the devastation and misery; like the minute hand on a clock, it crept upon us silently. It all started with man’s curiosity of the unknown. We wanted to know more; had to know more. It was through this mistake that the vampire race was created. Soon after, hostilities arose between the two species, spawning a war the world would never forget. People fear what they do not understand, it’s natural. But as the vampire’s numbers increased, so too did the creation of weapons to fight them; It was an endless cycle of sorrow and bloodshed. It is now the year 2146 – four years since the war came and went.
Society has slowly begun to heal, but scars of that fateful day still linger upon the Earth’s damaged surface. Salisbury will never be the same again; our hearts have grown bitter with regret. The places we once knew and loved have been reduced to mere ash, nothing but a ghost of a memory of Salisbury’s former glory. Gone are the days of warmth, optimism and solace; wintry nights now rule those forgotten times.

Snapping from my inner musings, I meet Lucis’ pained gaze as his fingers close deftly around my own. Once again I’d managed to fall out of reality and into a trance-like state. “Let’s go for a walk. It will take your mind off of things,” he whispers soothingly, his eyes a sea of unreadable emotions as he strokes my hand lightly.

“I’ll be fine, you need to get some sleep. I’ve been keeping you up all week,” I murmur guiltily, bowing my head like a kicked puppy. It was quite obvious that the boy was sleep deprived.

“Arcadia, what matters is your well-being, not mine,” Lucis retorts sharply, a palpable sense of authority lacing his words. Running a hand through tousled locks, a faint sigh escapes the blonde’s lips as he watches me anxiously.

“Fine” I groan, regretting my decision when the teen nudges me elatedly in the ribs with an amorous smirk. Sliding unceremoniously off the bed, Lucis pads bare-foot across the timber flooring, his footsteps echoing softly down the hall.

Seizing the opportunity of momentary privacy, I rummage through my wardrobe in search of my usual attire, retrieving a pair of worn jeans, battered Converse and a lavender sweatshirt. Slipping gracefully into my close-fitting denim, I tug the lilac jumper over my head with a smile; these garments are my only mementos that survived the war and beyond intact. Just as I begin to lace up my sneakers, Lucis re-enters the room. “Ready to go?” he questions meekly, blinking his pale blue eyes. Nodding incredulously, I follow Lucis to the front door, my heavy lids already beginning to flutter shut.

Stepping out onto the damp pavement, I watch as Lucis closes the front door, locking it behind us with the swift turn of a key. Inhaling deeply, I glance up at what use to be the sky. A dark, sagging cloud blankets its remains, blotting out the sun as rain and snow spew violently from its centre. There was no sky; there hadn’t been for years. Eras of neglect and abuse destroyed most of the atmosphere; we are solely to blame. All that remains as a source of light are the street lamps, reminiscent of the golden sphere that once adorned our skies. Even the snow is nothing like its original; It is grey, filthy from the lingering pollution in the air. It can no longer be called snow. It is something else entirely; an after-effect of the war. Looking back at Lucis, I notice the dark scowl creasing his lips; he hates the sky too. It is nothing but a cruel reminder of humanity’s misdeeds.

Placing a hand firmly on the male’s shoulder, I squeeze it lightly in an attempt to heal the deep void in his stony, tormented heart. The war has always had this effect on people. They shut themselves away from everyone else, bottling their emotions inside and suffering silently. Slipping his hands placidly into the pockets of his jacket, Lucis strode ahead in an effort to dispel the lingering tension, his eyes trained on the trees as they moaned grievously in the wind. They were decrepit; dead like everything else. Hurrying after the blonde, I keep his pace as we cross into the heart of the city, mingling with the crowds of pedestrians that line the streets. Clasping my hand tightly, Lucis guides me through the masses, his lanky figure gliding passed each person
with a polite apology. Very few acknowledge the boy’s existence, but some recognise his ominous aura immediately and respond with a chilling glare. They knew.

“Going somewhere?” a sultry voice snickers, intimidation oozing from the male’s words as he saunters towards us. Shrinking behind my companion, I recoil as the raven-haired boy shoots me a menacing glare, his gold eyes boring maliciously into my green ones.

“Something to hide, have we?” a female hisses, her black glossed lips twisting into a repulsive glower as she emerges from the throng of bystanders. Tapping the heel of her boot boredly against the asphalt, she watches as the teen ambles closer, his red bangs shifting from his cadaverous face to reveal two piercings and an unsightly scar.

“Back off!” Baring sharp, salient fangs, Lucis eyes the alien before me with an almost predatory intent, his incisors gleaming eerily in the moonlight as they gape from behind his parted lips.

“It seems we do have something to hide.” The goth smirks narcissistically, his auric orbs glittering with sadistic pleasure as the blonde sinks to his knees, visibly struggling to repress his undeniable thirst.

Within moments, the crowd erupts with numerous screams at the knowledge of a vampire lurking among them. “Sylvan, stay back! I’ve seen what those things can do,” a sandy-haired thug barks, his jade green eyes hazing with visible fear as he leers at Lucis anxiously, his many earrings jingling softly in the breeze as he grips the elder’s shoulder.

“Come now, Nero. What could he possibly do? He can barely stan-”. Lurching at the distracted male, Lucis clamps a hand around the teen’s neck, a murderous desire burning nefariously in the depths of his unrecognisable gaze.

“Let go of me freak!” the goth splutters, pure terror accentuating each of his quaking breaths as he squirms powerlessly in Lucis’ grip, his metallic orbs wide with fear.

Loosening his hold on the boy, Lucis drops him curtly, a look of bewilderment creasing his delicate features as he watches the teen scamper away. Gripping Sylvan’s sleeve, the female embraces him adoringly, her purple dyed bangs falling into her smoky eyes. Clasping his wrist with polished black nails, she hurriedly leads him away, the third thug hastily in tow. By now the street is empty; no-one is willing to stand within three feet of a vampire, especially after the war. I don’t blame them, but Lucis is different; he wasn’t always this way.

“Lucis, I-”
“Don’t speak” he hushes, placing a gelid digit to my frost-bitten lips as he releases several ragged breaths. Using his abilities always tired him out. Leaning against my shoulder, the male clutches weakly at the fabric of my shirt, visible fatigue ravishing his youthful looks.

“I’m sorry” he drawls, his lower lip quivering as his eyes drain of their crimson hue. “I’m sorry”. Brushing the boy’s honey bangs aside, I caress his cheek gently as a raindrop lands in my hair. Glancing up at the clouds, I grumble numerous threats at the lifeless entities as the teen in my arms shifts abruptly, wriggling from my grasp. “I’ll be okay”.

Sighing vehemently, Lucis veils his fangs once more, a look of shame and embarrassment shattering his demeanor. “Arcadia, I...I never meant to. It was an accident, I swear,” he pleads guiltily, his eyes desperately seeking forgiveness as he stands ignorantly in the unrelenting downpour that now spews across the city. Dragging the vampire unwillingly under partial shelter, I wring my sodden clothes as he observes me blankly, his expression an emotionless guise. Sneaking a quick peek at the male’s soaked garments, an ephemeral smirk dances across my lips as I note the way his clothes cling to his toned figure. Much to his chagrin, Lucis’ hair has also been flattened by the rain; his rebellious locks are now saturated and unkempt.

“It wasn’t your fault”, I smile softly, only to shake my head in disgust as the boy shrugs apathetically, his eyes vacant and impassive. “You haven’t done anything wrong. Stop searching for blind forgiveness!” I bark, slapping the blonde’s arm harder than intended as I bury my face in his jacket, absorbing the warmth and comfort it offers. Pressing an ear to his chest, I listen to the soft pulse of his heart as it thrums faintly against my skin, letting myself believe that it is beating slightly faster than normal.

“Arcadia-”

“You think you’ve got it so hard. Well guess what? So do I! Our homes, friends and family were destroyed in the war; they’re gone. How do you think I feel? And then there’s you”.

How could I forget? It’s a day that is forever imprinted on my soul; scene for scene; line for line. Lucis had told me to run and hide; he’d promised to protect me, but at the cost of his life. The vampires found him, made him one of their own; a worthless pawn in their game of chess. They didn’t care who he was; he was weak, expendable in their eyes. But what pained me most were the hours that followed. Delirious, semi-conscious and blood shod, Lucis whimpered helplessly, gripping the bed sheets as he pleaded for me to end the pain. It was horrific; I couldn’t watch. But no matter how tightly I bandaged his wounds or whispered soothing nothings to the boy, his frail body continued to convulse with each spluttered gasp as the transformation begun.

“Not a day goes by that I don’t wish they’d taken me instead of you,” I whisper quietly, gasping at Lucis’ sudden movement. His arms had wound tightly around my waist, holding me as close to his frame as humanly possible.

“Don’t ever say that,” he growls coldly, his electric blue orbs boring fiercely into my own as he draws a finger beneath my chin, forcing me to look up into his stormy gaze. “Why would you wish for such things?” Placing an icy hand to my cheek, he cups my face gently in his palm, instantly spreading warmth across my skin. “I’d never let them take you,” he confesses, his lips lightly brushing my cheek with each word that slips gracefully from his mouth. Tracing a finger along the...continued
length of my exposed neck, Lucis’ eyes widen at the sight of the two circular scars he has grown so accustomed to seeing. “It does have its flaws though,” the blonde admits, his hands slipping from my throat to take my hand.

Shielding my eyes from the unrelenting precipitation, I peer over at a patch of weeds poking out from the gutter, noticing something rather unusual. Tugging Lucis in the direction of the lustrous road, after much complaint, I kneel down to observe the mysterious entity. Nestled between the grates of the drain pipe was a yellow flower, its surface coated in a thick layer of ash and mud. Pausing to gather the fragile flora in my palms, I trace a finger along its velveteen exterior, frowning slightly at its frayed, wilted edges. “Lucis, look!” I exclaim, placing the blossom gently in the male’s wiry hand as several water droplets moisten its petals. To my astonishment, the blonde marvels the treasure as though it were gold.

“It’s beautiful” he beams, his sapphire orbs sparkling with hidden delight as he hesitantly hands the flower back, his eyes narrowing suddenly as a ray of sunlight broke through the clouds above, illuminating his soft features as morning arose.

Smiling as the beam of light warms my numb cheeks, a glimmer of hope ignites within me, burning with newly found vigour as I picture the limitless possibilities for Salisbury; there was hope after all. This flower was a symbol that the world may just return to its former greatness, but with time and care. We had been given a second chance at a hopeful life – something I thought we would never see again. With this gift comes great responsibility, I know. But if it means that our children will live in a happier time, I am willing to try; Salisbury’s future and prosperity depends on it.
The sunshine feels strange on my back. Normally, I would right now be trying to live through the coldness of a winter’s night. I guess things are different on the other side of the world. There aren’t so many people bumping into each other here as there were in England. Instead they stroll at a casual pace, stopping to talk every once in a while.

Yes, the City of Salisbury is peculiar, but in a good way. The street I’m walking down, Johns Street, is an excellent example of this. Everyone here appears to know each other; the toddlers in their strollers never seem to cry and the birds chirp together. It feels perfect. Too perfect.

I lose my train of thought as I step on a piece of glass. The piece of glass is reasonably small. The way the sun shone on this thin piece makes it look marvellous, as if it had some sort of pattern.

Curious, I pick up the piece of glass. The texture of it is nice and smooth, although the tip of the glass gives the impression that it could cut deeply. Thin black swirls are scattered across it and the dark purple tint make these swirls stand out more.

Seeing it is so small, I manage to fit it into my jeans pocket. It doesn’t dig in as I continue to walk. I think the piece would look better if the swirls were joined together, but all artists have different tastes. I’m not an official artist yet. Once I manage to sell some of my work, I’ll be able to get other people to call me Anastasia Skye: The Artistic Genius. Too much? I’m working on it.

I notice a clock tower. The bricks are a lightish brown which look as if they shoot all the way into the sky. A separate clock is on three of the four sides. The fourth one looks as if it has been broken; why is nobody trying to fix it right now?

Under Salisbury’s clock tower I see a set of stairs locked away above me. The view would be lovely as well as interesting. I jump as a mysterious woman is suddenly standing in front of me.

“No need to be afraid.”

She is old, but that is not what scared me. It was her thick, long red robe and that silky green cloth thing wrapped around over her head, making it look like some sort of shrub that creeped me out. All this woman needs is a crystal ball and she would seem like a fortune teller.

“I’m sorry.”

“That’s okay. Do you want to hear a story? It’s about this clock tower.”

A story about this clock tower couldn’t be woeful, especially seeing it’s still standing. “Okay.”

“Follow me.”

Physic lady doesn’t seem to be harmful, so I follow her into the Salisbury Library.
The smell of books hit me the moment I walk through the door. This library almost reminds me of home.

Physic lady strolls into the staff only section and begins searching for a book on the biggest shelf in the room. “You can come in. You look like a lost child standing in that doorway.”

If I get kicked out, it’s her fault. I see a sketch of the clock tower that stands outside in a magnificent golden frame. From the smooth texture of the bricks to the somewhat gloomy sky above, the artist of this sketch had everything perfect.

“Over here!” She was in front of the wooden desk. On the desk there is a thick book that is tattered. It’s a miracle the frail woman manages to pick the book up.

I walk over to the desk.

“Let me tell you a story.”

********

“Timestones are essential in every clock tower. Without them, the time in the town it’s placed in repeats itself, with no one remembering the previous day.”

“You mean, every day is always the same?”

“Yes dear. They’re kept secret because there are people out there who would steal these timestones.”

“Wouldn’t the person forget they stole a testone the next day?”

“The person who has it doesn’t get affected; they are the ones who remember. I think those who are born the moment a tystone is stolen or broken also remember the previous day.”

“Even if they weren’t in that particular town?”

“Yes. Salisbury’s tystone was supposedly broken twenty-one years ago. But I don’t believe it.”

I raise my eyebrow. “Why did you bring that oversized book out?”

She begins flipping through its tattered pages. “I wanted to show you this. It’s the tystone.” My hand reaches into my pocket. It looks so similar to the glass I’d found. I nearly took my glass out when she suddenly shut the book. “You have to leave now. My break’s nearly over.”

“Who are you?” I asked.

“Call me Richelle.”

********
Could it be possible that Richelle’s myth is in fact true? The timestone looks exactly like the glass in my pocket. Taking it out, I hold it up to the sun. I didn’t exactly know what it was going to do. Maybe I thought it was going to explode or turn into a time portal. Instead the glass just heats up.

That is when I hear it.

The roaring sound of a motorcycle, its tires screeching as the person parks it right beside the clock tower. The roar of the engine is so loud that I drop the tystone.

I pick up the tystone before anybody else can and tuck it away. It is the person on the motorcycle, his short ash blonde hair shining in the sunlight against his creamy complexion. A slight smile is curved on this man’s lips, the look of amusement glittering in his piecing green eyes. “Are you just going to sit there admiring my beauty or are you getting up?”

I smile awkwardly as I reach my hand out to him.

Up close he is...handsome. He has high cheekbones that go perfectly with his sharp jaw line, which really is every artist’s dream. His nose is fine and pointed, not in the least bit crooked. It is like I am standing next to a model, one that knows how to dress in a decent way.

“Let’s see, who have I picked up from the pavement today?” he asks.

“Anastasia. And you are...?”

His smirk has turned into a 500 kilo-watt smile. “Joseph.”

“Thanks for helping me.”

“That’s alright. Why was a lovely lady on her knees?”

How do I explain this? “My coin slipped out of my hand.”

“Can I walk with you?”

Temptation is what this is. His lips have curved into a twisted smile. Go! A voice screams in my head. An urge is telling me to run, that he isn’t right. Cold fear sweeps through me as I stare into his vivid green eyes. They seem to see through me like glass, slowly exploring all my weaknesses without consideration. Today I will not run; I don’t care if I fail to know what I’m truly playing with. But this is my battle; I will not stop fighting until I have claimed victory.

“You can walk with me.”

The clock reads twelve, but no bell has rung.

Joseph led me through all the markets, telling me about each one in great detail.

“So, what do you want to do with your life?” Joseph asked once we were out of the crowd.

“I want to be an artist.”

Joseph thought hard for a moment, looking into the distance. His gaze suddenly turned back on me. “Can I show you something? Or are you afraid?”
I studied Joseph. “I’m not afraid of what’s out there.” Yes you are. This town scares you with its exotic beauty.

“In that case - ” He came closer. “Come.”

Before I managed to take one step, Joseph covered my eyes with his hand. “I want it to be a surprise,” he whispered, his warm breath ticklish against my ear.

Joseph took hold of my hand and guided me through the crowd. Eventually, we stopped walking.

“Ready?” Joseph’s warm breath came again.

“Ready.”

Joseph removed his hands from my sight.

“Wow.”

We were at a park. The grass was glossy and green between our feet. Tall, skinny trees surrounded us. The dark green leaves creating some sort of force field for us. I wanted to sketch this scene so badly that my fingers began to twitch.

“It’s just so….”

“Superb?”

“Yeah. “

Joseph stroked my cheek. His hand felt smooth and incredibly warm. “No matter what I may do or say, I still care for you.”

His green eyes bored into mine. Joseph’s thumb moved down my cheekbone. I closed my eyes and brought myself closer. Then….

“Joseph!”

I opened my eyes to realize that Joseph had turned away; a middle-aged woman had called his name. Her black curly hair had been tied into a neat bun, showing her rounded face clearly.

“Yes Grace?”

“Sorry to bother you, but have you seen Marissa?”

I quickly glanced back at Joseph, who had appeared to have gone grim faced. “No I haven’t.”

Grace looked around, confused. “I thought she would be with you.”

“She isn’t.” Joseph replied coldly.

“I’ll check Parabanks again. See you.”

Joseph was looking at Grace fiercely. “Why were you rude to her?”

“She interrupted us.”

I stepped away from him. “Who is Marissa?” I eyed him skeptically.
“Marissa isn’t anyone!” Joseph’s voice boomed.

Suddenly, tears danced in my eyes. “Stay away.”

I ran, not caring where I was going. I could hear him behind me, telling me to slow down. I found myself in the middle of the park; my hands shook and I saw a piece of paper at my feet. I picked it up; it read:

Salisbury Circus!!

18/08/90

The myth, it’s true. Every day in Salisbury actually repeats itself. I’m the only one who is aware of this. I need to stop this.

Goosebumps appeared on my flesh. I wrapped my arms around myself as a shiver went down my spine.

At that moment I sensed it.

Someone was watching me.

I stepped on a twig. The snap seemed to echo forever before the noise had finally ceased. Stay still; my muscles had tightened. Tears no longer cascaded down my face. I heard something rustle in the bushes. I quickly snapped my head around. Nothing. I was too frightened to speak, let alone actually understand what was going on. Silence had officially become deafening to my ears.

“Surprise.”

I tried to quickly whirl around, but was too late. Blackness surrounded me.

The smell of blood was sickening. I opened my eyes and found nothing but darkness. A huge cut had been made into my leg; the sting caught up with me.

A mysterious figure stood in front of me. Their arms were crossed over their chest, making them look stronger than I.

Joseph was standing in front of me.

Finally, I screamed.

“Shut-up!”

Joseph acting cruel? It was like I was staring at a different person. There had to be an explanation.

“I have some questions.”

Joseph moved closer. For a second I thought he was going to hit me. Instead he sat on the wooden floorboards beside me. “Fire away.”

I met his gaze steadily. “Where are we?”

Joseph smirked. “Where do you think?”
I thought deeply for a moment. What places in Salisbury have no windows? “The clock tower.”

Joseph’s vivid green eyes seemed to widen. “And Anastasia gets the medal!”

I was still skeptical. “Why though?”

Joseph sighed heavily. “This is where you’re going to die.”

How lovely. Joseph kidnaps me, hurts me, and then plans to kill me in a historic piece of Salisbury.

“What’s this about? Kidnapping me is one thing, but to threaten me is another!”

Joseph raised his eyebrow. “I didn’t threaten you. I told you our agenda for tonight. When midnight comes, you’ll forget everything, meaning I’ll kill you.”

“Why are you so calm?! I found a piece of glass on the ground that happened to be a piece of the timestone. I’m only trying to protect Salisbury from causing its own suicide.”

“I might as well tell you, you’re about to forget.”

“Tell me what?”

“Twenty-one years ago, my girlfriend, Marissa, and I snuck up to the clock tower. When we were here, she left her bag on the ledge. Her bag was about to topple over. I picked it up and found out that Marissa had been seeing another man. Love notes, written in her hand. Immediately, I demanded an explanation.

“She believed I had neglected her and broke her heart. Marissa had picked up the timestone and smashed it into two pieces. Marissa went at me with the sharpest half of the timestone. I had no choice; she was going to kill me. I pushed Marissa away. She tripped over the remaining half of the timestone.

“Marissa landed and fell through a glass clock. Her screams were piercing; I rushed over to the gaping hole but I knew it was already too late. Marissa’s body landed on the pavement.”

Sadness filled Joseph’s eyes. “I’ve had to kill every single girl who has come close to figuring out Salisbury’s secret.”

“They didn’t do anything to you, so why do they deserve to die?”

“The world works in a strange way; every day, someone new comes along. They try replacing Marissa, and fail. I kept killing them because I wanted her to come back in a different life form.”

“That’s impossible.”

“You don’t know that! Close your eyes.”

I did so.

********
Joseph

I look at Anastasia. I don’t actually want to kill her. She’s....unique. She may be better for me than Marissa, which really says something.

Anastasia opens her eyes; her gaze finds mine. “Who are you?”

The innocence in Anastasia’s tone is strangely heartbreaking. “I’m Joseph.”

“I’m Anastasia. Where am I?”

“I saw you trip. I brought you up here to help you heal.”

She looks down at her leg. “It’s stopped bleeding. That’s a start.”

Anastasia stands up; winces slightly from her cut. She walks straight towards me and....hugs me. This isn’t normal, but having her arms around me makes me feel as if I am finally safe from all that I have done.

“I really like you.”

She giggles. “Joseph, I know.”

I know? Wait, know?! How does she know?! Anastasia isn’t meant to remember me!

“Believe me.” Her voice is like silk. “I know.”

She is cupping my face. Suddenly, I feel a sudden sharp pain in my back. I push Anastasia away. In her hand is half of the timestone. “I got this,” she says, holding up the timestone. “Yesterday.”

I feel my back and realized that she has put a deep scratch through it.

“How?!” I croak.

“Figure it out.” There is nothing but darkness in Anastasia’s eyes.

How does she remember?! She didn’t know about it until yesterday! That means, the only way she way she remembers is -

“I can’t believe this!”

“Can’t believe what? That I was born the moment the tystone was broken? That you were seduced then attacked? Or you can’t believe that you have wasted twenty-one years of your life making others miserable?”

“I can’t believe you managed to pull off a massive scratch.”

“Turn around. It’s gross.”

I turn back around. “Then you shouldn’t have made the cut so deep!”

The coldness in her eyes instantly changes to anger. Anastasia moves so fast that I don’t even see her push me onto the floorboards. I hear my head crack. The pain is excruciating.

“If you don’t shut-up, or if you try anything on me, my half of the tystone will meet your face!”
I try to sit up, but my head just falls back on the wood. It echoed a loud thump through the room. “I might let you live if you’re willing to negotiate.”

“What do you want?”

“The rest of the timestone so Salisbury can be restored.”

“Or what?”

“Or else I’ll ensure you approach death slowly.”

“That’s unfair.”

“I never got a choice.”

“Up my shirt is where the other half of the timestone is.”

Anastasia sighs. “You don’t like to make things easy, do you?”

I laugh. “I’m the villain; I’m simply doing my job.”

Anastasia sighs and then quickly put her hand up my shirt. Her fingers are gentle as she grasps the timestone that was around my neck. “Say sorry.”

“What you’ve done hurts you. I want to help you, but I’m unsure if I can trust you. You’ve killed innocent people and getting past that is going to be tricky.”

“Then let’s leave the past behind.”

Anastasia connects the timestone pieces together. The timestone lights up, and then is back to normal.

“Joseph, welcome to the future.”

Five years later……

The city of Salisbury has grown into a lovely place. Time moves at a rapid pace. Salisbury is my home now, and it always will be. This place no longer scares me, but is an influence to all who enter. We all age and become better people; we live life as it comes to us.

I taught Joseph how to let go. That hiding your feelings isn’t the answer. I eventually saw a different side to him; a side that was happy. He learnt to listen, to laugh, and to express himself. Joseph taught me something too, a lesson that will stay with me for the rest of my life. He taught me how to love.

THE END
Year 12 had finished for Alex. He got his SACE, spent about two hundred and fifty bucks on booze, got so drunk that he passed out before midnight, and woke up with the worst hangover. A shrill, annoying noise rang through the air and woke him up. Clutching his throbbing head, Alex looked for the noise so he could stop it. When he found his phone, the source, he saw his boss’s name flash up on the screen - ‘Murphy’ - and panicked. Crap! He was so late for work. He finally worked up the courage to answer the phone and immediately held it away from his ear. The voice coming from the speaker was louder than the ring tone of the phone. Even as Alex held it an arm’s length away, he still heard the voice clearly.

“Alex, you were supposed to be here an hour ago!” it screamed. Oh joy, Alex thought, he’s in a happy mood today. The voice went to a quiet snarl as Alex tried to hear it properly. Knowing Murphy, there’d be more yelling. “Be in my office before eleven thirty and I’ll consider not firing you!” He hit the disconnect button. With his heart suddenly racing like a horse at the Melbourne Cup, Alex raced to his wardrobe and stood staring at its contents. It was empty. His clothes must be in the drier. Nearly slipping on his socks on the tile floor, he ran to the drier and found that empty as well, except for a blue shirt that was three sizes too small.

Groaning, he took it out, tried to fit it over his head and tried to find a jacket and jeans to wear with it. Failing to find both, he got out some shorts and slipped them on quickly. “Stupid clothes.” he muttered to himself. Once he was dressed and had brushed away the smell of alcohol and vomit, he raced out the door to his car. He shoved the key in the ignition and turned it a few times. The car stalled and on the fifth turn Alex gave up. Desperate to get to work so he could keep his job, he threw open the car door and sprinted to the Salvation Army store instead. It took him less than fifteen minutes to get there and he had thirty seconds to spare. He burst through Murphy’s door and apologised several times before taking a seat and apologising again.

Once he was quiet Murphy began the whole lecture-thing about why he should fire Alex, why he wouldn’t fire Alex and why Alex should beg for Jasmine’s forgiveness, and apologise for taking up so much of her free time when he had been late or unable to come in. Which in recent weeks had become more often because of school, family and other job applications. Once it was finished, Alex apologised again and backed out slowly as if he were up against a dangerous animal. The very next thing Alex swore to do was find Jasmine, get down on his knees, maybe kiss her feet, and beg for her forgiveness. She, of course, was behind the counter, smiling as she gave an old man his change for the brown and pale yellow jacket he just bought.

“Hey, Jasmine.” Alex really did try his best to act smooth around her. But today just wasn’t his day. He couldn’t stop his heart from beating fast, he couldn’t stop his palms from getting sweaty and he couldn’t stop his hand from slipping across the counter. He landed face first into a box of little dolls for little girls. Jasmine smirked as he lifted himself out of the box and stood upright again. Grimacing with a face burning with humiliation, Alex felt his headache come back again.
“Hey, slick, don’t let it happen again. Next time, I might just be busy.” She spoke with a tone of annoyance and for some reason Alex loved it.

“Thank you. Really, thank you. I promise it won’t happen again. I swear. Thank you Jasmine, you’re a life saver.” He rambled. She smirked again and walked into Murphy’s office. Alex looked for Panadol or something to stop the headache that pounded in his skull. Unfortunately, he couldn’t find any so the headache raged on.

After a few people had come in, had a look, maybe bought something and gone, Alex’s hearing seemed to get more sensitive. His headache got worse every time a car went past, a bird chirped, a door closed or when a coat hanger was dropped and it clattered on the ground. Jasmine came in and out a few times, carrying in boxes and smirking as he tried to hide the grimace and look cool. A few moments came and went and Alex heard a faint wailing noise that seemed to get louder as each second passed. As soon as the noise came through the door, Alex’s headache spiked and rage prickled under his skin. A young mother walked in, trying to calm the screaming child to no avail; it didn’t want to sit still. She stood in front of him for a minute, trying to put a pacifier in its mouth. The stupid kid kept spitting it out and screaming louder with every attempt to silence it. Alex couldn’t take it anymore.

“WOULD YOU SHUT THAT FUCKING SCREAMER UP?” he roared. “I MEAN FOR CHRI$T’S SAKE! IT’S NOT A LIBRARY BUT SOME QUIET WOULD BE APPRECIATED!” That shut the stupid thing up.

The woman, looking completely shocked and totally furious, stormed out and took the wailer with her, silent but still sobbing as she tried to comfort it. Jasmine, Henry—another employee—and Murphy came out to see what all the fuss was about. Jasmine sniggered and led Henry away as Alex huffed behind the counter; Murphy stomped his way over, glaring at a grimacing Alex, and muttering something under his breath. “Alex Russell,” he growled. “My office, now.”

When Alex closed the door behind him, his boss was still glaring as he walked to the chair he sat in only hours ago. Alex mentally kicked himself for drinking so much last night as he waited for the flood of complaints that were sure to be screamed at him. “Alex, I have put up with your lateness, your attitude and your pathetic attempt at working here, for me. I’m glad to finally be saying this.” He took a deep breath as if he were excited for something huge. “Oh, how I’ve been waiting for this.”

“But—,” Alex tried.

“I don’t care.” Murphy shouted over him.

“I can expl—,” he began but he was silenced by Murphy’s bellow.

“YOU’RE FIRED!”
Salisbury would make a good city for creatures of the dark and the light.

The cinema would be a good place for vampires to furtively feed on un-expecting victims, by simply sitting with people who are alone and hypnotising them to fall asleep. It would be too dark for anyone to see what the vampires were really up to, and if anyone were to actually see, it would look like the vampires were making out with the humans.

The Salisbury Council would be run secretly by wise wizards and wicked witches that would help keep all the creatures of the dark unknown to humans. The wizards and witches would also make a good Council because they could use their powers to help the City of Salisbury financially by duplicating money and food as well. Every four years, all of the wizards and witches would have a tournament to see who was the most powerful, and the winner would become the mayor of the town.

The Salisbury Council would have the help of their familiars, pets with super intelligence, who would keep an eye out for trouble within the city.

The Youth Council would be made up of eighteen teenage vampires who would be forever on the Youth Council unless killed by Vamp Hunters or for other reasons. To go out for events in the daytime they would drink a potion made by the witches on the Salisbury Council called “Vamp Screen” which would enable them to go forth in the sun for exactly six hours without burning up. Each year, Youth Members would change their names and guises so that humans wouldn’t get apprehensive about why the Youth Members appeared the same for decades.

The best part of Salisbury being a city made up of creatures of the dark would be protection. The inhabitants of Salisbury would be protected by a pack of werewolves who ran around at night for night-time protection. The werewolves would be trained not to hurt humans or any creatures inside the City of Salisbury’s boundaries and would provide maximum security because of their body build and fast-healing techniques. All male cubs would be trained to be protectors and would become part of the pack after ten years of training, which would mean they would be twenty-one when they started protecting after training from the age of eleven; werewolves age slower than humans. Females would still be able to protect, but only at special events and/or functions.

The trees in Salisbury would be greatly cared for by Dryads, feminine spirits of nature that would reside in the trees surrounding and within Salisbury. The trees would be nurtured by the Dryads who would be born in one tree that they would protect for the rest of their life. They would make Salisbury picturesque with flourishing trees and blossoming flowers.

Written by Faith Blake
Paralowie R-12 School, Year 9

The Creepers of Salisbury
The leaders of the Dryads would be the Earth Elementals, forces of nature or spirits of nature. The Earth Elementals are like humans in appearance but have leaves and tree branches for hair. If there was to be a war descending upon Salisbury then the Earth Elementals would be able to direct earthquakes at the enemies as it is in their power to do so. However, they would have to clear it with the Mayor.

Getting to places would be easy in Salisbury because it would have at least fifty Griffons. Although humans wouldn’t be able to go on them, magical creatures would be able to. Griffons would also be good for any wars because of their sharp talons and their scorpion tails. Additionally, they can be as fierce as a lion.

Each year on the 12th of July, there would be a festival in the heart of Salisbury to celebrate creatures and their hard work (of course the humans would celebrate, but they would think it was because of something else). At the festival, bright, colourful decorations would be hung up around the place and would glitter like fairies (actually, some of the decorations would be real fairies, but nobody would be able to look too closely because of a blurring spell cast by the Council). Lots of sweets, pastries and cakes would be handed out and baking contests would be held. Different types of bands would be playing and prizes would be given out.

Therefore, I think that Salisbury would make a good city for creatures of the dark and the light.
What would life in Salisbury be like if Salisbury High School was a spy school?

Salisbury High School. Everyone in South Australia should know this school. It’s the school with all of those fights that ended up on YouTube and the news. Well, little does anyone know that those fights aren’t just fights, they are students trying to show off their spy skills (mainly silly Year Eights). I know what you’re thinking: ‘spy skills?’ Well, Salisbury High is not what you think; it’s really a school for spies (well, on the brochure is says for exceptional students or geniuses). And it’s perfectly covered up because nobody knows, well, except the person reading this, but I trust you not to tell anybody. Anyway, here is a story of something that happened not too long ago…

Everybody was standing outside under the leafless trees where we always hang out before school, when somebody bounced up behind me.

“OMG, did you hear the rumour?” asked Willow, excitedly bouncing up and down, making her shoulder-length red hair bounce along with her. Before we even had a chance to respond, Willow kept going. “Well I’m gonna tell you anyway, I heard from Nick who heard from Mandy who heard from her older brother who heard some teachers talking about it.” She finally stopped and took a breath.

“And...it is...” said Kristy.

“Huh? Oh yeah, the rumour is that Mr. Simmons, you know, our old and cranky Cove. Ops teacher, well, yeah, apparently he got sick of dealing with teenagers, quit, went crazy and went on a murderous rampage through Elizabeth dressed as Lady Gaga!” said Willow.

Everything went dead silent and we all stared at Willow.

“Ummm...That doesn’t sound right...” I said.

“Yer, and Nick isn’t the most reliable source”, said Benjamin. The bell rang, signifying the start of care class. We all walked off to our classes.

Ten minutes later the bell rang again, telling us it was the end of care and the beginning of our first lesson. Most of the students have all of their classes above ground in the classrooms that anybody driving by can see. But there is more than meets the eye in Salisbury High; there are underground classrooms. Year Elevens are only allowed to go down to sub-level one, but I’ve heard there are many more.

Everyone in the upper level covert operations class met at the elevator on level 1. There are only eight of us in this class as we are the best of the best at Salisbury High. There’s my best friend Kristy and my other friends Willow, Amy, Benjamin, Joseph, Jacob and myself, Katerina. Four girls, four guys; I guess they thought it would be fair that way.

The elevator scanned us to make sure we are Year Elevens, not Year Eights trying to pull a prank or something. Its true – Year Eights are always trying to sneak down to sub-level one and I’ve
heard that the teachers can get really creative with consequences. The elevator opened and we got in. The inside doors of the elevator were covered in a mirror, just like the outside.

“AHH!” Everyone in the elevator almost jumped out of their skin.

“What, OMG, what happened?” asked Amy while catching her breath.

“Look at my hair, it’s not in place! It was in place this morning and now its not!” Willow practically screamed.

“Really, just really,” said Chris. The elevator opened and we all jumped out. The covert operations class is different to all the classrooms on the above levels. This classroom has tiled floors instead of carpet, stark white walls instead of the coloured walls, and instead of the blue chairs there are tall stools like they have in the labs upstairs. We have gotten used to this room, but this time something was different; instead of Mr. Simmons, the old and grumpy Cove. Ops. teacher we always have, there was a guy leaning on the front of the teacher’s desk, in his mid-twenties, with shaggy brown hair and wearing a leather jacket. He was nothing like Mr. Simmons.

We sat down and wondered what was going on.

“My name is Mr. Padalecki and I am your new Covert Operations teacher.”

“Umm…what happened to Mr. Simmons?” asked Benjamin.

“I heard that he got sick of dealing with teenagers and quit,” said Mr. Padalecki.

“Told you so,” whispered Willow.

“But, I highly doubt that he went on a murderous rampage through Elizabeth dressed as Lady Gaga,” I whispered back.

“Ok, let’s get straight to it, let’s see what you have learnt,” said Mr. Padalecki. He rambled off a bunch of questions about history, languages and a bit about self-defense, which we all answered perfectly.

“Pretty smart I see, but what about these?” asked Mr. Padalecki. “How many times have I tapped the desk this lesson?” Silence.

“Since the start of the lesson I have left my fingerprints on three places; where?” More silence.

“What are the letters sewn onto my shoes?” He hid his shoes from us and, once again, more silence.

“What has that teacher been teaching you these first few weeks?”

Everyone was still for a moment.
“He mostly told us stories about his time in the field,” replied Amy quietly.

“Really...well I am nothing like Mr. Simmons. Class dismissed.”

Class dismissed? The teachers never let us out ten minutes early. We all slowly left, wondering what was up with this teacher. The rest of the day went pretty much like normal; we went to our classes and our main group met up after school at Ben’s house.

“Ow, I got a killer of a bruise today in training from Greg,” complained Chris, showing us a bruise on his leg that was about the size of a fifty cent coin.

“Toughen up Princess, that’s nothing compared to this wicked bruise I got, no idea where it came from though and it looks like a carrot!” said Kristy, showing us a bruise that was about three times the size of Chris’s, and more purple, on her arm. Chris was annoyed that he had got shown up by a girl, and his girlfriend no less.

“Ouch, that looks like it hurts, where do you keep getting these bruises?” I asked.

“I have no idea.”

“So, OMG, right, did you see the new Cove. Ops. ops teacher today?” asked Willow.

“Well yeah, we are in the same Cove. Ops class,” replied Amy.

“Right, well anyway, he seems awesome,” said Willow.

“Didn’t he seem just a bit weird to you guys?” asked Benjamin.

“Somebody's jealous,” I said in a sing-song voice.

“Whatever.” We talked for hours, raided the kitchen multiple times, and the girls kicked the guys’ asses in COD.

The rest of the week went by pretty normally. We went to school, attended lessons, picked on the Year Eights who practically drooled over Mr. Padalecki and hung out after school. On Friday we met up at the elevators like we do, but today there was a sticky-note stuck to the door.

Year 11 Cove.Ops cancelled, meet at front gate 7pm tonight. Wear Black.

“Ummm...OK,” I said. There was a silence and then we were squealing our heads off.

“Girls, calm down, were only going on a mission,” said Jacob. “We’re going on a mission!” he said again excitedly. Going on a mission was the most exciting thing that can happen to spies-in-training. We spent the rest of the day in suspense about that night. After school us four girls went to Kristy’s house and spent hours getting ready. There were clothes flying everywhere, straightners and curlers burning hair, make-up being passed around; it all looked and sounded like a big mess. But in the end we all looked awesome.

Kristy’s platinum blonde hair was dead straight just down past her shoulders and went well with her baby pink lips. She was wearing black jeggings, a black tank-top, a black cardigan and her favourite black sneakers. Willow wore her black leggings, a black t-shirt, a long black cardigan and also wore black sneakers. Amy and I took a short course over the summer in ‘how to wear heels and still kick-ass’ (our feet hurt like hell after that), so instead of wearing sneakers like the other girls Amy wore her 4-inch black heels and I wore my high-heel ankle boots. Amy matched...continued
her heels with black short-shorts, a black tank-top and a mini black hoodie. I made my long brown hair wavy, and matched my ankle boots with black skinny jeans, a black tank-top and my new black leather jacket. I repeat: We. Looked. Awesome.

The guys showed up at Kristy’s house and told us to get a move on, and when they saw us they picked on us for taking so long just to look good. They guys were just wearing black t-shirts, black jeans, black shoes and the odd black leather jacket. We drove to school, the girls in Kristy’s car and the guys in Jacob’s.

When we got to school we stood at the front gate, but there was nobody in sight except for us.

“Well, hello.”

We all jumped and turned to see it was just Mr. Padalecki with Mr. Grecian, the history teacher who hates going on missions and fears that he will stuff up.

“Don’t you all look just...nice,” said Mr. Grecian, and Mr. Padalecki just smiled.

“Our ride is just over there,” said Mr. Padalecki, and pointed a little bit down the road to a black unmarked van. We walked down to it and he opened the back double doors. “In you get.”

I wasn’t sure what we were expecting but it definitely wasn’t this; the back of the van was bare except for a small box tucked into a corner. Mr. Grecian jumped into the driver’s seat and Mr. Padalecki jumped in behind us. He closed the doors and the van started moving.

“So does anyone have any idea of why I have brought you out here?” asked Mr. Padalecki. We responded with silence, as we actually had no idea what to expect.

“Ok then, well, you are going to be tailing somebody and that somebody is...” He picked up a picture from the small box and we gasped when we saw it.

“You expect us to tail Mr. Smith?” I asked, and the others agreed with me that it might be an impossible task. Mr. Smith was the Year 10 Fight Training teacher. He used to be one of the top spies in Australia, and he definitely knows how not to get seen if he suspects someone is following him.

“Yes, you have to find out what drink he buys for himself,” said Mr. Padalecki. He handed us an ear-piece each to communicate with each other and accessories with cameras in them just so the teachers could see how we were going. The van jerked to a stop and we all fell on each other. We got up and Mr. Padalecki opened the back doors.

“You have until 10:00pm; don’t get seen.”

“That’s it?” asked Kristy.

“Yes, off you go,” replied Mr. Padalecki. We hopped out of the van and spilt off into pairs. Kristy and Chris walked off first, Willow and I followed them in back up, Amy and Joseph were back up to us and Ben and Jacob brought up the rear. By the time we had left the van had already taken off.

There was a fair going on in Salisbury that night so it wasn’t that hard to blend in, but it definitely was hard to spot somebody. We spent about twenty minutes looking for Mr. Smith; finally Willow and I spotted him.

“Hey, Kristy and Chris, we’ve spotted Smith over by the dunk tank,” I said through the ear-piece.
“Ok, got him,” replied Kristy.

“Don’t get seen,” said Willow. Mr. Smith turned around and almost looked right at me and Willow, but we ducked behind a sign for a psychic before he could spot us.

“Close one,” said Willow. We kept Kristy and Chris in our sight and Amy and Joseph kept us in their sight. After about ten minutes we switched positions so that Willow and I kept an eye on Smith and Kristy and Chris brought up the rear.

A little while later Chris spoke to us; it sounded like something wasn’t right.

“Hey, guys umm...there’s this guy on the fringe of the events that looks like he’s setting some sort of timer or something, oh, he’s walking towards the cinema now”.

“Are you sure? We’ll come over and check it out with you, keep him in your sights and the rest of you stay on Smith,” said Ben over the ear-pieces. Ben and Jacob walked over to the cinema and Kristy sounded kind of startled.

“OMG, there’s more of them and, OMG, are they holding bombs!?” asked Kristy.

“What! You’re kidding me, is there any way to get in touch with Padalecki?” I asked.

“She’s not kidding, there’s...eight of them, I’ve tried Padalecki’s phone but it’s not on, I think we should abandon Smith and you should all come down here,” said Chris. I thought it over for a bit.

“Ok, we’re on our way.” We all met up at the front of the cinema; the sign ‘Salisbury 8 Cinemas’ illuminated the ground in different colours.

“The eight of them just walked in, all guys,” said Ben. We talked it over for a little while and then decided we should follow them in.

“Ooh, popcorn!” exclaimed Joseph as he tried to walk over to the counter, but Chris pulled him back.

“Now is not the time for popcorn, we just saw a bunch of guys walk into the cinema ready to make it explode!” said Chris. As we turned the corner to the theatres, we saw each guy walk into a different cinema. Eight theatres, eight bad guys and eight of us, how weird is that?

“Ok then, I guess we take a theatre each,” said Kristy.

“I’ll take Pirates of the Caribbean 4,” I said.

“I’ve got Fast and Furious 5,” said Ben. Luckily there was no usher standing at the podium so we could just walk straight through. We each took a cinema and entered at the same time. It was dark inside as the ads had just started; I saw a guy wearing a black hoodie walk up the stairs to the back and start fiddling with something. There was only ten other people in this theatre. I followed him up the stairs and was about to sit down when I saw this hand about to grab for me and ducked out of the way.

The guy was a bit bigger than me, but I had speed on my side. We fought for a little bit, him trying to hit me, but me always dodging out of the way in time. We almost fell down the stairs together, but we made it safely to the bottom. It didn’t seem like this guy had a bomb on him, luckily. Somehow we ended up in the corridor and I saw that some of the others had come out as well. I looked over to Kristy for a second and that was enough for the bad guy. Whack! I ended up on the floor.
The fighting kept going for a little while and I wondered where the hell Mr. Padalecki was. Chris had managed to knock out his opponent and went to help Kristy.

Suddenly two other figures appeared in the corridor; it looked like Mr. Padalecki and Mr. Grecian, finally. They joined in, helping take down the bad guys. I then saw something fly towards the end of the corridor; it turned out to be a bomb.

“There is only one minute remaining on the bomb!” Ben practically yelled. And everyone froze. It was like those moments in movies when everyone just stops what they are doing and then everything speeds up again into super speed. Ben and Mr. Grecian ran over to the bomb. Two more of the bad guys had been knocked out, including the guy I was fighting with help from Mr. Padalecki.

Ten seconds were remaining on the bomb and Ben and Mr. Grecian had no idea how to stop it. Everyone was confused and then we all looked up and saw Amy holding a pair of nail scissors. We had the bad guys pinned then.

“Wait, Amy, how did you know what wire to cut?” asked Ben.

“I didn’t,” replied Amy.

“Wow.”

“I guess my amazing teaching works now, doesn’t it?” asked Mr. Padalecki.

We stood around and waited for the government to pick up the bad guys, who turned out to be a gang from Elizabeth with an ex-spy leading them. We never found out why they wanted to blow up the cinemas; apparently we don’t have enough ‘clearance’ or something.

“Hey, where were you guys when we tried calling anyway?” I asked Mr. Padalecki.

“We were busy in a meeting with some people,” replied Padalecki.

“Meeting…right, I bet you were at that bar next to the train station,” said Joseph.

“What, wait, how did you know?” asked Padalecki.

“A spy never reveals his secrets”.

“He heard you talking at lunch,” blurted out Amy.

“Hey!” said Joseph. We talked for a little bit and Mr. Padalecki gave the ushers some tea to make them forget about anything they had seen; we can’t have the people of Salisbury knowing about the spy school, now can we?

“So what are we gonna do now? I think Mr. Smith has already left,” said Kristy.

“Well, the Pirates movie looks pretty good,” I said. We sat down at the back of the theatre and watched the movie.

“Hey, where did Joe go?” asked Amy. Then we saw him coming up the steps holding something.

“Popcorn!” exclaimed Joe. We all laughed and settled in to watch the movie. Salisbury had just been saved from being blown up into pieces by some students from the local high school and they didn’t even know it. Well I guess that’s a good thing, as nobody knows the secret of Salisbury High School, yet.
Faith Anabel-May Blake: My name is Faith Anabel-May Blake and I am 16 years old. I live within the Salisbury Council Area and am currently studying Year 11 at Paralowie R-12 School. I have had a passion for writing since I was in Year 8 and we were told to write a narrative. My teacher, Mrs. Searson, at the time commented on my vision and creativity. This inspired me to do more. I am currently working on a novel with the help of Mrs. Murphy, my Year 7 teacher. The theme I usually focus on in my writing is the supernatural because it is what I read. When I joined the Salisbury Youth Council in 2011, I was able to find out things that I had never known before, such as details about the Salisbury Writers’ Festival. The Salisbury Youth Council is a group of young people, mentors and elected members focusing on youth related issues. I had never been part of something so big before and I gained great experiences from it. I can now talk more confidently to people. In the future, I hope that I will become a well-known and loved author.

Justin Brown was born in Adelaide and is the youngest of three boys. He is interested in following all sports and is also passionate about travel. He has visited all Australian states and he had the opportunity to travel to Phuket, Thailand, earlier in the year. Justin is keen to follow in his father’s footsteps by pursuing a career in the police force. This pathway has been the focus of his Year 12 Research Project.

Rebecca Conole: My name is Rebecca and I volunteer in the City of Salisbury. I actually got into my volunteer work because I was bored, it was my first summer holidays of high school and I had nothing to do. I do not regret deciding to volunteer. In fact it has been one of the best things I have ever done. I do all the volunteer work that I do because it is more fun than paid work and I enjoy the fact that I am able to give something back to the community that I grew up in. Volunteering is a worthwhile experience and it has been the best three years of my life, and I can’t wait to see what I can get involved in during 2012.

Sophie Eberhard: I’ve lived in the Salisbury area my whole life. I’ve also attended both primary school, at Para Hills West Primary, and high school, at Thomas More College, in the Salisbury area. It has been great! As a young girl, I began writing small stories about how I was a princess or how something magical would happen to me, but as I’ve begun to get older and busier I’ve sort of stopped writing and I only really do it for school work. When I leave school and go to University, though, I hope to become a midwife and nurse because I love working with children, especially babies.

Krystal Humm: When I’m not writing I like to read fiction/fantasy books, hang out with my friends, listen to music and watch movies, and I absolutely love ice skating. Considering my favourite genre is fiction/fantasy I also prefer to write it. A lot of my internet time is spent on ‘Fan fiction’, a website where anyone can post their stories and receive reviews, and although I haven’t posted any of my stories on there I am constantly reading others stories. When I’m not on ‘Fan fiction’ I like to go on Tumblr, a lot of people give me disapproving looks when they ask what I do on the internet and I tell them. Only really because none of those interests is Facebook!

Brooke Lloyd: Brooke has been a resident in Salisbury since 1996. She grew up being passionate about reading; her favourite genres are fantasy and horror. Brooke enjoys reading because every novel is an opportunity to enter a world unlike her own. In year eight, she was faced with a question about her future in her English assignment. She had a pleasant time for the duration of writing this assignment. Brooke, with little debate, decided that she wanted to be a writer. Encouraged by those around her, she entered the 2011 Write Now competition. Brooke is now in Year Ten at Salisbury High School and still holds a strong devotion for both reading and writing.

Kathleen Mullen: I’ve lived in Salisbury my whole life. I work here and go to school at Salisbury High. I started writing short stories when I was eight. The teacher asked the class to write a short story about a shrinking ray and I’ve loved writing ever since. This is my last year of high school and I plan to continue onto university and then do something that involves writing and acting.
Jessie Murray: I am currently studying Year 10 at Salisbury High School. I play netball four times a week and work three to four times a week as well as going to school five days a week. My life is very busy and I find it hard fitting everything in; although it can be difficult at times, I always make time to complete my school work. It is important to me that I do my best with my schoolwork and my grades reflect all the hard work I put in. My future goals are to go to university and to get a degree in childcare or social work.

Paul Nguyen: With a Vietnamese cultural background, my name is Khang Manh Nguyen; however I go by the name Paul Nguyen. I was born in 1996 on October 31st. I am currently studying at Thomas More College, planning to be a psychiatrist when I grow up, to help those of need in help. During primary school I did not enjoy much of my English lessons, however I did enjoy writing narratives that convey my beliefs and my imagination, I also enjoyed writing poems that express my emotions and what I think. Another way I express myself is through drawing, however, they usually doesn’t show my emotions, just fantasy images from watching anime and cartoons.

Yen-Nhi Nguyen
3 Things You Need To Know About Me: (1) I’m a year 10 student this year at St Dominic’s Priory College, North Adelaide. My school is wonderfully small and is renowned for its uniform (with fawn-coloured socks) which our principal ensures we wear correctly day and night, and this includes our distinctive but pointless berets. (2) I love reading 24/7 and writing poetry. Creative Writing is what I enjoy the most because I hate being confined by facts. (3) Lastly, I love playing sports, especially soccer and basketball. I like to keep active but a lot of the time I feel dead after training so that’s when chocolate cheers me up and motivates me to exercise more next time round.

Samantha Pinnington: Finding solace in the magic of writing, Samantha pursues interests in all forms of the arts, including visual art, music and the often understated practices behind the creation of video games. Having lived within the Salisbury locale the entirety of her life, she is well attuned to the district’s pace and attitude, particularly with her current residence of education; Parafield Gardens High School. Her ambitions for a future pathway include studying a degree in multimedia and entertainment development, publishing several fantasy novels and spreading her artistic talents across the glove as a dabbler in multiple media and techniques. She dreams of one day contributing collaboratively with an illustrious gaming and entertainment corporation in producing works for some of her most esteemed franchises.

Nathan Quadrio: I have lived in the City of Salisbury for my whole life and participate in many activities in the area including my passion of theatre, which I enjoy writing for. English has always been my strongest subject and my ability has been fostered by many of the teachers at Thomas More College, where I am currently completing Year 10. After High School I look forwards to becoming an English and Drama teacher and, ultimately, working in the theatre as a director or actor.

Madeline Van kleef: Madeline is my birth name, but I’m usually called Maddy. I am currently studying Year 10 at Salisbury High School and just starting to decide which career pathway I want to take. My studies are important to me, as I want to achieve the results I work so hard for. I am still undecided with what I want to do with my life, but I think the most important thing is that I live my life with no regrets and that I make the most of every moment. The one thing I am 100% sure about is that I want to continue dancing. It helps express who I am, and helps with my emotions if I have a bad day. It’s one thing I know will always make me happy.

Alanis Wieckowski: I am 15, turning 16 this year in July. My connection with Salisbury is that I used to attend St. Augustine’s Primary school, and occasionally shop in the complex. My favourite subjects at school are Italian (as I am Italian), home economics and sometimes Physical Education. I have never been good at English and it was a surprise to me when I received a letter saying I was a runner-up in the Write Now competition. When I finish school I would like to become a Pastry Chef and possibly open my own business.

Catherine Yacoumis: I am 15 and I write, I write a lot. I wrote the poem in this anthology as a homework challenge for my English teacher, who told me to enter. Before that and even more so now writing has become more than a hobby. I write poems and short stories. Writing is an escape to another world, another life. I get lost in what I write. I write short stories for my friends who seem to enjoy my writing. I am looking into becoming a teacher when I leave school but being an author has always been on my mind.