



G I S E L L E

To all the beautiful children reading this,
It has been an absolute pleasure writing and drawing this book for you this year. We hope
you guys enjoy and have a few laughs along the way. Stay strong and continue to inspire
those around you.

From the boys of Team 99.95 at The King's School,

With the very best wishes and loads of love,

Edward, Luke, David, Daniel, Richard, Jonathan, Michael, Anthony and Eric.



Write a Book in a Day



**THE KIDS'
CANCER
PROJECT**

Science. Solutions. Survival.

PARAMETERS FORM 2019

TEAM DETAILS

STATE: NSW

DIVISION: Upper School

SCHOOL/GROUP: The King's School (PARRAMATTA)

TEAM NAME: 99.95

TEAM ID: 639

PARAMETERS AND RANDOM WORDS

Parameters

Primary character 1 Computer technician

Primary character 2 Acrobat

Non-human character Easter Bunny

Setting Kakadu National Park

Issue A burglary

Random words

Community

Skipped

Magic

Canvas

Sings

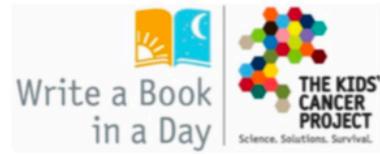
INSTRUCTIONS

- Start at 8am
- Write an original story:
 - based on all **five parameters** (above)
 - including all **five random words** (above), and in bold type
 - with some identifiable **Australian content** (in theme or setting or characters, etc)
 - keeping within the allowed word count (remember every word on every page counts)!
 - include this parameters form in your book **immediately after the front cover** in both the hard and soft copy.
- Remember: **Every** word on **every page** counts. This includes your front cover, back cover, blurb, acknowledgements and copyright form.
- **Be sure to give yourself enough time to submit your book and complete the following checklist before 8pm.**

Log on to the Team Coordinator Portal to:

- Check the spelling of your team name and team members' names (how these are spelt on submission will be how they are displayed on certificates)
- Complete the Declaration
- Submit your finished book in **both** PDF and plain text format
- Mail a hard copy of your book on the next business day to:

Write a Book in a Day, The Kids' Cancer Project, PO Box 6400, Alexandria NSW 2015



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Published by 95.95, The King's School, 87-129 Pennant Hills Road, North Parramatta NSW 2151, Michael Bai, Eric Chen, Daniel Gu, Luke Howell, Edward Kong, Anthony Lin, Richard Mills, David Oh, Jonathan Zhang.

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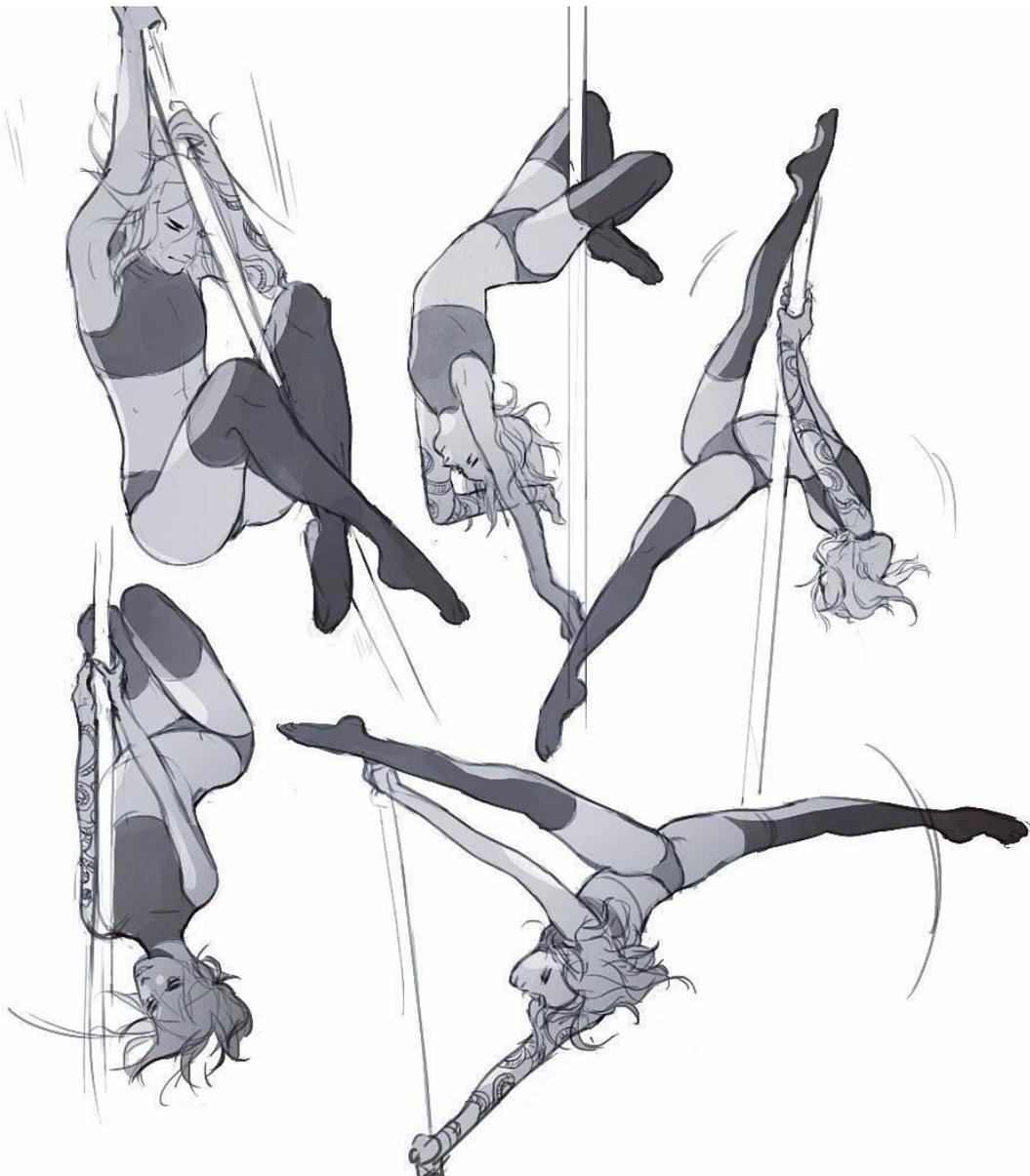
Chapter 1

An ominous purple shade of light crept onto the stage, casting down onto her slim figure as her shadow gently enlarged. The rings above the stage slowed, rotating in sync to the elegant beat of the music. Grabbing two, she fastened the ribbons in her hands, pulling herself up to form a peerless aerial trapeze. The other dancers stood underneath her in their poses, welcoming her character to join them. Giselle's head dipped momentarily, coming close to those beneath her before she quickly re-positioned, balancing her body flawlessly on the ring. Her body moved gracefully, her every move a balance of poise and reckless ambition. With each alluring twist of her body, her limbs flourished in harmony to the music. On this stage, she was absolute. Each sway of her frame, each manoeuvre purposefully efficient as she executed the hardest move with ease. It was like **magic**. Perfection.

My lips formed an innocent smile as my eyes focused on her. Momentarily, I was allowed to forget the pains of reality as I was consumed wholly by her performance.

One by one in succession of each other the dancers paused, drawing to a stop to allow the final act to begin. It would end like it started; raised to the peak of the skies as Giselle would finally descend. But she didn't. Instead, a scream silenced the conservatorium.

In the blink of an eye, Giselle was on the floor.





Chapter 2

Entering the creaking sliding doors of the community exhibit were the manager and an unfamiliar face followed by a breeze of hot, arid Kakadu air. The girl's white blouse was browned by the red dust, her old, tattered gym tights revealing the wears and tears that were inevitable in her profession. Her dainty legs reminded me of the acrobat show I saw some months prior, but I couldn't quite place where I had seen her before.

Walking timidly behind the manager, the girl observed her new surroundings whilst absorbing the necessary rules and regulations of her new job. Make sure you smile, be friendly with all the guests and don't go wandering off... Just the same old do's and don'ts that everyone has to go through, but it seemed pointless as the museum was emptier than the barren desert itself.

Soon, their attention was directed towards me. I was fixing the only security camera in the museum as the wires had burnt out when the manager introduced her to me.

Sunny, I scoffed secretly. What a name.

Her slouched shoulders engulfed her low hanging head, her eyes glued to the dusty floor. She was like a distressed ragdoll more than anything else.

Our eyes met. The swift glimpse allowed me to look past her expressionless face and a little into her past. This young girl was Giselle.

A spray bottle in one hand and a cloth in the other, Sunny began wiping the few fingerprints on the glass case that encased some of the indigenous artefacts. Her blank gaze reflected against the glass, staring right back at her.



Chapter 3

“You can do this”

I have never heard such an overused phrase.

“You can do this Sunny,” exclaimed my teacher as my stubbed toes squelched in inextricable torment.

“You can do this Sunny,” cried my parents as my instructor pushed my legs further out of their sockets, burning every fiber of my body.

“You can do this Sunny,” whispered my consciousness as I flailed my arms desperately to keep in time after the three hundredth repetition.

Day in, day out. My life revolved around a simple routine. Every loose shoelace. Every sweaty towel. And every compliment lost in the struggle followed my tedious existence until one day I came to realise...

I couldn't.

It was a lonely street.

Its deceiving symmetrical profile was a cover up for the chaos that plagued its darker corners. Broken whiskey bottles, butts of cigarettes put out in the rain, and the occasional shrill of a homeless man who sought the refuge of a home.

It was a weary street.

The chimneys' heavy exhales of smoke sighed at the corruption which had become reality. It had seen many pasts and presents, lives made and broken, tears shed and laughs shared. It wanted to close its eyes, just for a moment, a minute, a second.

This street housed a very special, very loyal but most intriguingly, a very quiet resident. He didn't speak much and spent most of his hours with his back slouched against pillars, carelessly sipping away at his allotted beverage. But today was different. Today was special. Today our masked friend had business to attend to.

The superficial rainbow of urban neon outlined the sunken silhouette of the figure as it paced in quickstep across the hard unforgiving concrete, bracing its battered bag. Under intermittent beams you can catch wisps of her existence; a straggled gait, a conservative ponytail, a lost gaze of a person devoid of all hope and sunshine.

Her figure betrayed her.

Her long coat draped her slouched shoulder as she struggled to walk and resist the weight of her shoulder bag, a safe that stored every treasured memory that she could bear to hold onto, like the final twilight refusing to give in to the inevitable darkness.

“Sunny,” she thought to herself as she rounded the final bend which stretched to her humble abode. How ironic it was that the one thing my parents desired for me was the one that I could never seem to grasp. I was trapped, like a hapless fly, in this twilight.

As she trudged hastily up the steady incline, a subtle breeze lifted her unease.

“Tap. Tap. Tap.” sounded the metallic harbinger of danger. A stocky figure emerged from the mercurial background to greet the girl. In one hand he clutched a slick, black cane and in the other he held an aluminum money case which swung steadily with each step the collector took.

A bunny, the middle of the night, an empty street. It meant only one thing.

It was the debt collector.

“I don’t have any money, please leave me alone,” Sunny exclaimed at the furry fiend, her eyes watering with the fear and regret of a past relationship.

“I am sorry, Miss, but I’m afraid this is not a negotiable cause,” replied the Bunny in a calm voice. Its footsteps slowed but did not stop as he took off his top hat in one flush motion.

In desperation, Sunny looked for a means of help or escape. The walls of the street remained stubborn, but they didn’t budge one bit.

“Well seeing as you have nothing to give me, I’m going to have to indulge in a peek of your bag Miss,” the Bunny continued as he quickened his advance.

“No please, anything but the bag, please!”

The bunny did not stop.

“No!”

He was closer now.

“Please!”

It was the end.

“I’ll do anything you want! Please not the bag. It’s all I have.”

The bunny froze mid-grasp and the pair locked eyes, each praying for the other to look away first.

Sunny refused to budge.

After several long seconds, the Bunny sighed as he backed away slowly.

“I’ll do this for you then. You get one week, dear Miss, to obtain something of equivalent value to the debt you owe, or the misfortunes you have been sentenced to will not be as kind as I.”

And with that, the figure melted into the night.

Sunny was frozen in motion as she took in the Bunny’s words. Gulping, she grappled her shoulder bag with a sinister confidence.

She had a plan.



Chapter 4

The sweet scent of coffee wafted through the air. Her long, brown hair taut in a ponytail, catching his attention immediately.

A mug of water in her hands, her eyes nervously darted left and right, before swiping a packet of instant coffee. Then, she took another, quickly sliding it inside her pocket. Then another. And another. Until she had taken half the box.

She turned, embarrassed, to look behind her. He turned the other direction. She ripped a packet open in her hand, quietly spooning it into the mug, then wordlessly pouring her coffee. The steady stream of boiling water found its way into the cup, leaving behind a trail of steam. The sugar and milk went in last. Finally, she glanced around her again, and shuffled out, making no eye contact.

He watched all of this, taking it all in, but not understanding any of it.

The next day, he lined up to get coffee again, but this time she was behind him. His coffee ready, he left and sat down with the other technicians, his eyes still locked onto her as she poured her coffee. This time she only slightly hesitated before snatching up the coffee packets. His eyes followed her as she sat down, all alone. On her table, there's nothing. No food. No people. Just her and the coffee. Still warm. No eye contact.

Was she selfish? Greedy? Desperate? But for what? It made no sense. He shot a glance at her again. His eyes shifted to the bulge in her pockets. What was she doing with all the coffee packets? What use could she possibly have for them?

He sighed and stopped musing about her enigma, turning to have some of his delicious chicken fettuccine that lay out in front of him, ready to be devoured.

The bell rung and it was lunch again. The crowds of happy technicians, all marching to the cafeteria at the same time, in harmony. But he noticed her again, this time her hair in a tangled mess, falling onto her shoulders.

His bloodshot eyes met hers, glowing with a faint incandescent glitter, but masked by her weariness. It was an undying radiance that shone with life, through her fluttering shutters, even as the windows to her incredulous soul close briefly.

She blinked and quickly looked away. But he kept staring, his eyes unwavering. She took the whole box of instant coffee packets, and wove her way into the crowd, disappearing into the mass of people. Something was definitely wrong.

Chapter 5

Kakadu is always deserted around Easter. The museum closes, people go overseas and it becomes as silent as a churchyard. The falls quieten. The rainbow lorikeet **sings** no more. The tourists leave the bush paths to themselves for a day. One could see it as depressing, but I think it brings an unexplored beauty to it. Is that weird? It gives me more time to think. To comprehend the trudge that is life.

It's made all the more easier by the empty CCTV. No one is preoccupying me. No one is demanding my attention. It's just Kakadu, and me watching it silently from behind the screen. Watching it in admiration. In awe. Undisturbed.

But suddenly, a harsh call to reality reminded me; I was just an IT guy, behind the screen. My phone buzzed loudly, the harsh electronic tune replaced the dulcet silence, forcing me from my chair to deal with the annoyance.

"Hello," I asked, still unsure who it was.

"Ahhh, hello?" a quiet, timid voice quivered on the other end of the line.

"Yes, yes? What is it?" I asked, frustrated at this interruption.

"Ahhh. I'm sick today. Feeling pretty ill. Can't work. Gotta go, though," she said, rushing, unable to finish her sentences. I didn't know who it was, but they didn't sound sick at all.

"Wait. Wait! Who is it?" I questioned.

"Sunny. From cleaning. The museum. But I gotta go!" she quickly hung up, leaving me sitting there pondering the confusing call.

Who on Earth rings up sounding so rushed like that? Surely she's was just chilling at home all day; she had nothing else do to, right? But then again, she was a strange one. All those coffee packets at lunch? And sitting alone? I'm sure she isn't alright. I'm kinda worried about her, but she's very secluded. And any attempts to help her were pushed away with a cold shoulder that I couldn't understand. She was like an enigma; how could a pro acrobat be so distant? The IT guys were meant to be the geeks huddled in the corner, not the performer...

A few hours of quiet reflection passed; I returned to my admiration of Kakadu's great beauty, its great forests and winding rivers seemed so majestic from behind the CCTV screen, but once again, it was interrupted by an unexpected blight on the beauty of the park. A lone stranger wandering towards the museum as the sun slowly set caught my eye; the figure was definitely a young woman, but she looked agitated. Playing with the zip on her black leather jacket, she constantly checked behind her, watching for any followers. And she most definitely didn't want to be watched; she kept in the shadows, and seemed to have a pretty good idea of how to stick to the cameras' blind spots, but she had somehow missed this one. I watched as she continued on in the distance, before she popped up on another one screen. Maybe her anxiousness had made her careless? But what did she have to hide from anyway? It's not as if walking in the park was illegal, so why was she hiding?

At that moment, an alarm sounded from the ceiling above me; my mind immediately turned to that suspicious woman creeping around the park. I scanned the CCTV camera screens, looking for anything suspicious. The museum! Someone was sneaking in to it, the distinctive black leather jacket confirming it was that woman from before. But before she closed the museum door, before she committed to the act, she turned back allowing me a glimpse at that innocent face framed by stress. It was Sunny. It was that innocent, quiet girl from the cafeteria. It was last person I would expect. Yet, it somehow was her.

I couldn't let her do it. I couldn't let her taint that innocent aura.

The door slammed behind me as I ran out the door, the cool air shocking me as I sprinted towards the museum. It was a good ten-minute run, but I reckoned I could do it in five. I had to stop her.

I should have known. I should have known something was wrong. She was taking more coffee packets than normal this week. And that phone call? Who does that? Something was seriously wrong.

It seemed like an age before I saw the familiar façade of that museum; I could only hope she was still there, that she hadn't done anything. I slipped in the still ajar door, flicking on my phone's flashlight to search the vast foyer of the museum. There she was, standing in the centre of the hall, holding the centrepiece of the whole collection; a beautiful Aboriginal artwork from ancestors of Kakadu natives. It was the museum's most prized artwork, yet here it was, the **canvas** in her hands...

"Sunny? What's going on?"

"Who? What? What are you doing?" she stammered, her hand trembling beside her as she hid the artwork behind her.

"What're you doing with that?" I asked, advancing towards her, peering to the artwork behind her.

"Ahhh. You wouldn't understand. Just go! Please!" she whispered, her voice quavering as she shuffled backwards, eventually hitting the wall behind her.

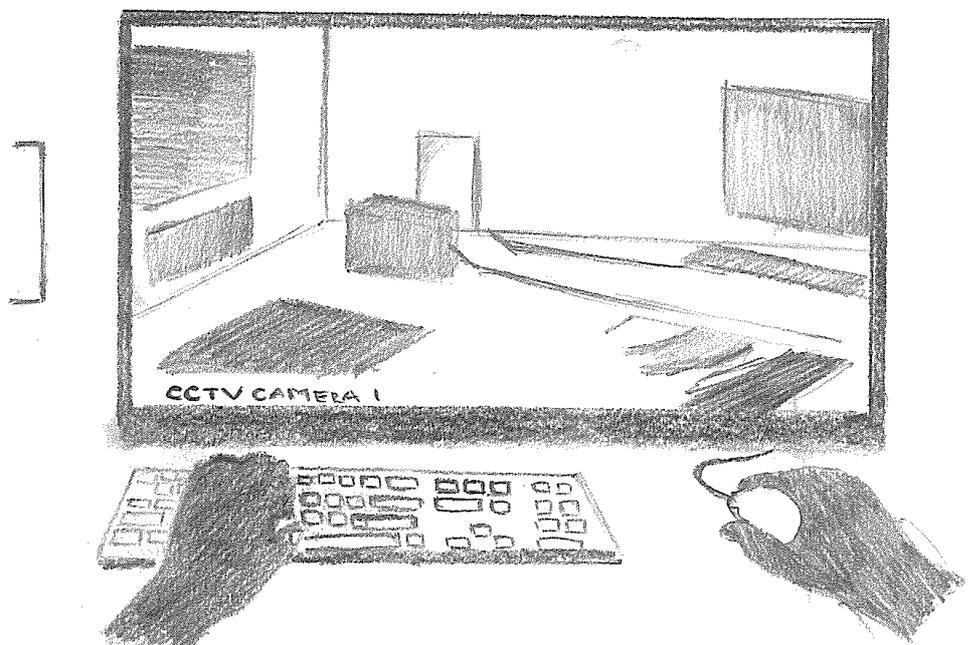
"Sunny. Just tell me. What's going on?" I asked, stopping before her and taking the artwork from her hands, "Why are you taking this?"

"I need it. It's for a debt. It's the only thing I can do," she pleaded, looking directly into my eyes. I could see the desperation playing across her face, her eyes a sea of trouble brimming with fear.

"Tell me what's going on. We can fix this," I reassured her, taking her hand. She tensed up, her rigid, unnatural form from work smothering all emotion.

"I ... I just need to pay a debt. I've got nothing, and this is my only hope. And there's this bunny. And I'm scared. What else can I do? I need this. Please!" she quivered, tears streaming from those worried eyes as she fell into me, sobbing, clutching at me as she broke down begging.

"Don't worry. I've got an idea."



Chapter 6

The plan would be a joint effort. A perfect execution on both our parts if it were to be successful. I was in charge of turning off the CCTV cameras and she would retrieve the painting. The problem was that the museum would be open again on Monday and that the deadline was tomorrow. We only had this one shot. Every so often throughout the day I would catch him glancing over. Perhaps I was just paranoid but it seemed as if he watched my every move. As if he looked right through me, understanding exactly what I was about to do.

The plan was set for 6:00; the time between security guard shifts would allow Sunny time to slip in unnoticed. I sat at my desk, my stomach, a churning mess. I watched the clock above me, its hands slowly making its way around the face; time seemed to pass so slowly, as if stuck in eternity. But at the strike of six, I pulled the plug, ending the constant CCTV vision of the museum's most prized possession. It was all up to Sunny now.

Ten minutes later, we met on the woodland track. Under her arm, the prized painting that was her key to escaping the confines of her debt. We ran to my car, uncertain of our footing in the dark, but desperate to get it done as soon as possible.

"We're going to take it to a guy I know; a forger" I told her, climbing into the car and beginning to drive.

"Ahhh, you know a forger? Not dodgy at all... but who am I to judge? How far away is he?" She asked, the exhilaration of the break in still obvious on her face.

"Ten minutes max. He'll be quick. He'll take a few hours to do it; I'm sure we'll have it done in time. I think..." I said, trying to reassure her, but still worried it wouldn't be done in time.

We reached my friend's house soon later, but I could see her obvious worry. Well, who wouldn't be? It was kinda shady; a dark alleyway led to the shack, and a rusted old Toyota sat on bricks out the front. We walked slowly up the path, careful not to disturb the sleeping bulldog lying on the porch. The porch door creaked as I opened it, Sunny peered from behind me, her hand once again shaking beside her. The forger peered from a room down the hallway, ushering us towards him. We shuffled up the hall and left the painting in his hands, eager to leave the dodgy house as quickly as possible.

Hours later, I got a call from an unknown caller ID, someone I could only expect to be him.

"Hello?" I asked, desperate to hear some good news.

"It's done. I've left it on the porch. And don't disturb the dog!" he commanded down the phone, the deep, growling voice edged with a sinister tone.

"Ahhh, yes. Thank you," I stammered before the line was cut on the other end.

After returning the painting to the museum, repeating the CCTV trope, there was only one thing left to do; the bunny needed the painting, and we needed to get the hell away from it as possible...

Chapter 7

Knock knock.

Her heart **skipped** a beat. She forced herself up, and brought herself to the door. Each step was harder than the last. Trepidation inundated her from head to toe, as she felt her hand tighten around the grip of the cold handle.

Her heart jackhammered against her ribcage at a million times a minute, ready to burst out. She turned the doorknob, and the freezing winter cold instantly assaulted her naked skin. Goosebumps spread across her like a wildfire, and the hairs on the back of her neck stood erect on end. But not from the cold.

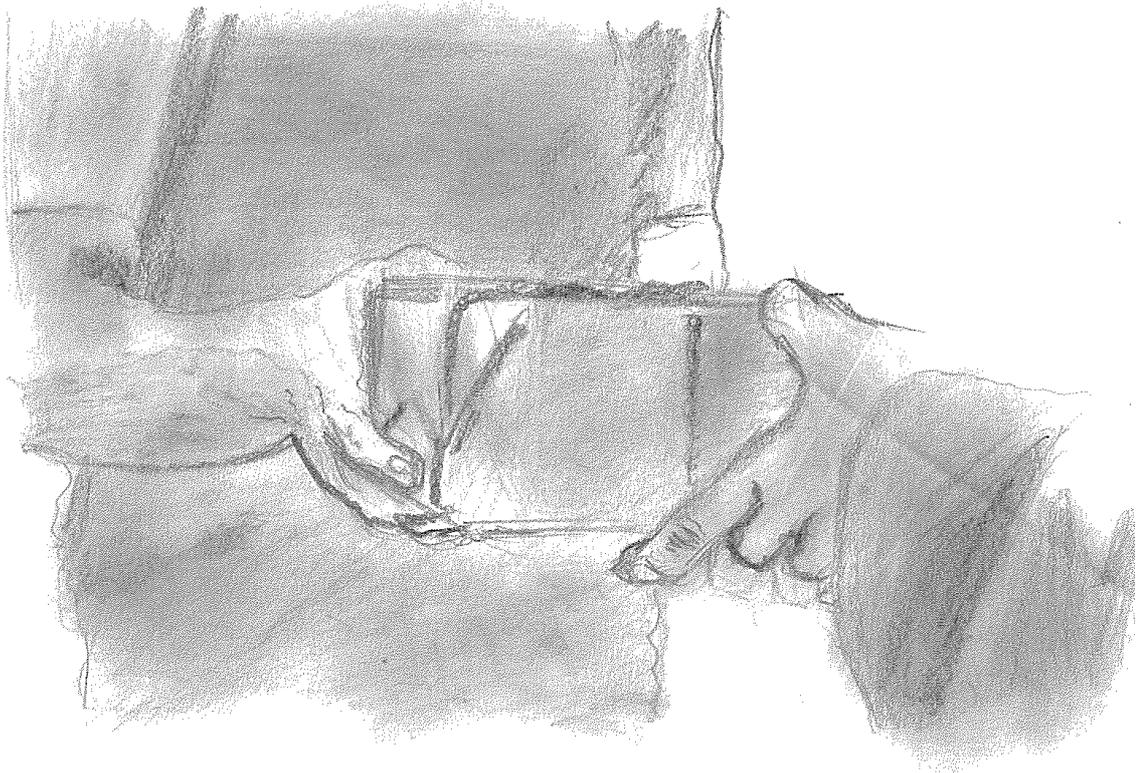
It was him. Menacing, abscessed canine teeth the size of daggers shot into her soul, freezing her to the ground on her doorstep. Absolute terror coursed through her veins, bringing her senses to a standstill. The bunny's crimson eyes had no pupils -- they radiated pure evil, staring into the depths of her soul.

"The painting..." he purrs, then crackles, his laugh reverberated across the thin night air. Her hands fumbled for the forgery, almost dropping it in the process. She felt it being snatched away in his claws of death.

"Oh... it's beautiful." Indeed it is, the brilliant reds and browns blended perfectly with the blacks and greys, and its complex perfection of dots and circles entranced him.

"My master will be very pleased."

She blinked as he disappeared into the bleak night.



Chapter 8

Eating together at the cafeteria. She talks about how she wishes to be able to perform again. He says he would love to watch it.

The tranquil music echoed through the cafeteria as the pungent scent of coffee beans wafted through the air. The bell tinkled in response to another worker entering and the sound of the cash machine resonated in perfect harmony with the coffee machine.

Sunny sipped her camomile tea as she sat by the window, enjoying the rays of sunlight that shone through, illuminating her presence. On the opposite side of the table, Harry too, sat savouring his hot chocolate.

‘You’re free now’.

Sunny turned from staring at the sidewalk to Harry. She smiled.

‘Yes, I think so’.

Sunny lifted her cup steadily to her lips and took a sip before steadily placing it back on the table.

‘Your hand seems to be getting better. Are you going to dance again?’

Sunny momentarily stared at the sidewalk outside the window. Turning back, she lifted her cup, mindlessly tracing her fingertips along the rim of her tea cup.

‘I don’t know, I’ve been out of dance for too long, and I’m not sure if I can handle being back in that environment’ she replied.

Sighing out of sympathy, Harry remembered for a mere moment his regrets. His dream now lost and not another opportunity in sight.

‘Sunny, you’ve got another opportunity to pursue your dream. Acrobat is your dream isn’t it? Isn’t that what makes you happy?’

‘And, I saw your Giselle... it was amazing. I would love to see it again’.

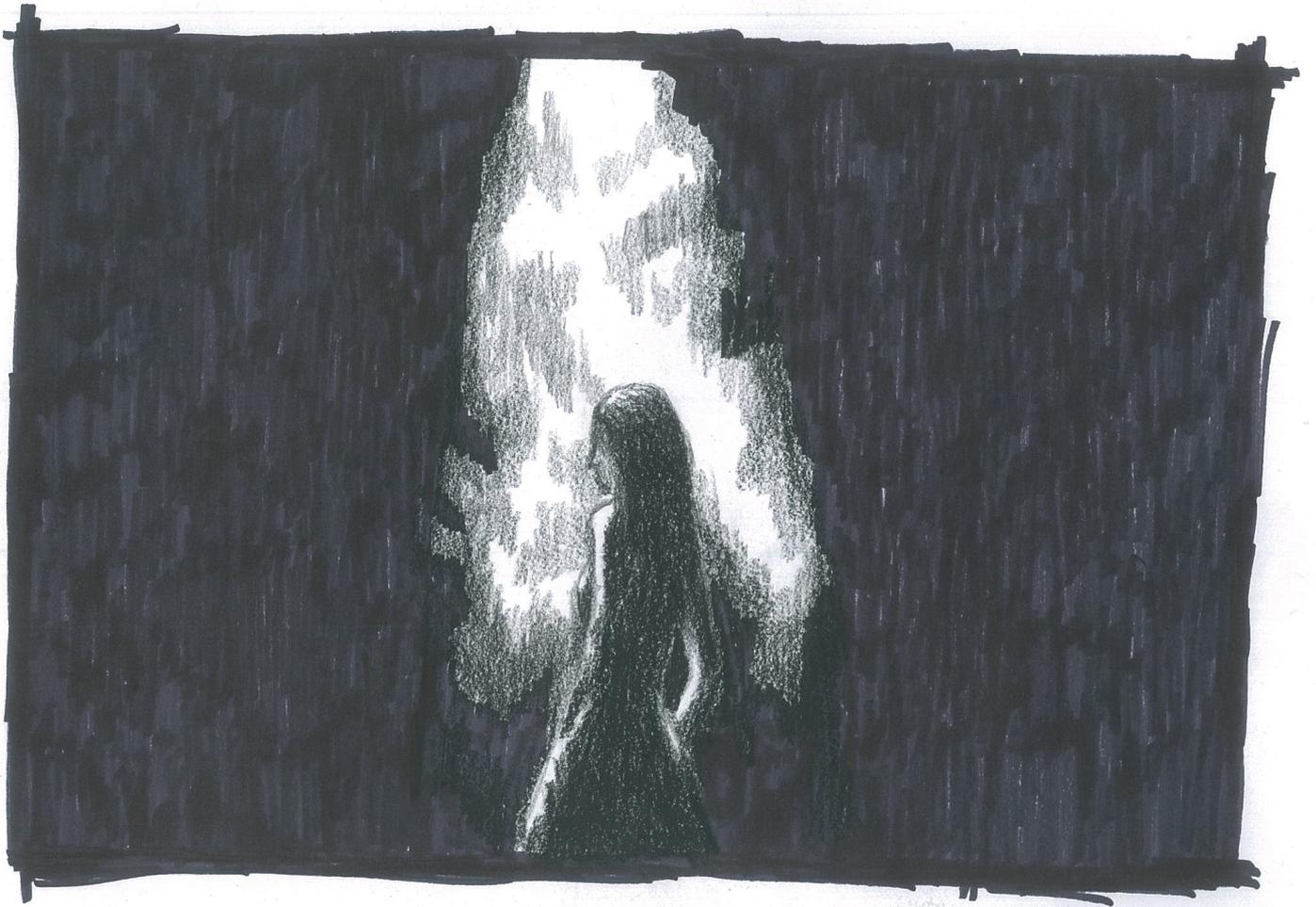
Suddenly, Sunny’s face lit up in joy before her hands began to shake once more. Her sunny face replaced with a sunken, sombre expression.

Harry took hold of her hand, steadying her hand with his own.

‘You can do it’.

Sunny looked into Harry’s eyes and the once scared, once fearful, once lost child was immediately replaced. Her eyes were replaced with vigour and determination. Her expression broke. Sunny smiled.

‘Do you want to see my Giselle again?’



Synopsis

A once successful acrobat; Sunny is traumatised after her career ending injury. Unable to pursue acrobatics, her past torments her with debt collectors constantly harassing her present self. As a means of finding a new purpose in her life, she moves to the Northern Territory and starts working in Kakadu National Park. Unbeknownst to her, this change and fateful encounter with Harry, a computer technician would play a pivotal role in re-orienting and bringing happiness to her life.