



The following short stories were written by Brazilian high school students as part of the WAY American School program in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Learn more about this program at [waybrasil.net](http://waybrasil.net).



# 8 Letters

Julia Forggi

Laura Zanellato

Maya and Riley have been best friends since childhood. One day at school they were planning to have a pajama party with their friends, Jonah and Lucas.

“Do you wanna go to a pajama party at my house today?” asked Riley.

“Sure,” everybody said.

After the end of the classes, Maya went to Riley’s house to wait for the boys to arrive at night. While they waited, they sat on the window seat and they started to talk.

“When is Josh going back to the city?” Maya asked.

“He will arrive tomorrow,” Riley said, rolling her eyes. “And you are not my aunt.”

Josh was the younger brother of Riley's father. He was 17 years old and Maya had liked him forever.

Riley's mother made something to eat for them and after dinner they started to do their homework. When it was almost 8pm the boys arrived.

"Girls, we're here, now your night is better," said Jonah.

In the middle of many laughs, Riley asked, "Now can we start the party?"

After a little conversation they started to watch a horror movie with a large bowl of popcorn.

During the movie Josh quietly entered the house and hid behind the sofa. He screamed, giving them a fright. Everybody started screaming and threw the popcorn up in the air.

They stopped the movie and decided to play a game. They chose to play truth or dare.

They spun the bottle and stopped for Lucas to ask Jonah. "Truth or dare?" Lucas asked.

"Truth," Jonah said.

"Humm! Do you like or love someone?" Lucas asked

"I like a girl who is called Maggie," Jonah said

"Maggie? My neighbor?" Maya asked. "So that is why you don't leave my building? You want to spend more time with her, huh?"

Jonah flushed with embarrassment and hid his head under a pillow to avoid their laughter.

"Okay, okay, leave Jonah alone. Only I can tease him," Josh said

They stopped teasing Jonah and spun the bottle again to know who the next two people would be. The bottle stopped on Maya and Riley.

“Truth or dare?” Maya asked with a playful smile on her face.

“Dare,” Riley said, afraid.

“Describe your feelings for a person you like very much, but you do not have to say his name.”

Maya said, “When I see him my heart beats quickly. I feel something strange inside me, something I have never felt before. I want to speak those 8 letters, but they do not leave my mouth and I do not know if I will be answered,” said Riley

“Oh, this was very cute,” said Josh.

The friends stared at each other for a few moments. Then they turned the bottle again. The bottle stopped for Jonah to ask Josh.

“Dare,” Josh shouted hastily.

“Okay, I dare you to do something you have always wanted to do with someone in this room,” said Jonah smiling.

Josh got up from his chair, took a deep breath and walked slowly to Maya. He took her hands and lifted her off the floor. He took a deep breath again and said, “I’m sorry.” (He never really knew what Maya felt about him.) He approached and kissed Maya gently.

They parted and stared at each other for a few seconds. Maya ran off and went straight to her secret spot.

After Maya ran off, Josh did not understand what had just happened, then looked in Riley's direction. "She went to the fire escape," said Riley.

Josh ran to where Maya was and found her looking at the stars. He sat down beside her and looked at her for a few seconds.

"Why did you do that? Why did you kiss me?" asked Maya.

"Because I've always liked you Maya. I've always loved you and I always wanted to tell you these 8 letters. But when I said those words before, it was a lie, and you deserve to hear them a thousand times," Josh said. Maya started crying.

Josh hugged her and Maya laid her head on his shoulder.

"And now how will it be? Let's try to be together?" asked Maya.

"I like you, and you like me. Let's get together," said Josh.

Maya liked what Josh said and approached his face, starting a romantic kiss. They stopped the kiss and went back into Riley's apartment. When they arrived, Josh said, "Now we are a couple."

Their friends congratulated them and now they wait for what life will do with both of them. Will they marry at the end of it all?

Nobody knows.

# A Trip to Another World

João Antônio

Jeremy, a tall thin man, was driving in the middle of a very heavy rain, traveling back home after a long trip to Florida, where he was visiting his friends. Thanks to his bad luck he was not only caught in a very heavy rain, but he also forgot to fill up his car. Already used to things like this happening he started looking for a nearby gas station.

Thankfully, right before Jeremy ran out of gas, he was able to find one. It looked alright; the lights were on, there was a truck parked outside, but there was no signal of anyone around.

Not really bothering with that he decided to go inside and buy some food as well. However, there was absolutely no one inside - no customers, no cashiers - the place was empty.

Kinda scared, Jeremy decided to go back to his car and call for help. A weird noise came out of his phone. It sounded like the voice of something but he couldn't tell exactly what it was.

Suddenly, a really bright light started coming from the streets. Jeremy thought it was someone who could help him. Relieved, he left the car and started waving at the lights. To his surprise, the lights stopped and started to rise into the sky. Then a light blue beam started shining in Jeremy's direction like a spotlight, turning him into a bunch of flying orbs that went into the light's direction, entering something that looked like something out of a Sci-Fi movie.

Jeremy then reappeared at some weird place. It looked all metallic but also somewhat organic. It didn't take too long for him to realize what had happened. He was actually inside of an alien spaceship! But there was no time to celebrate. Jeremy could hear footsteps from one of the corridors and quickly ran behind a wall and watched silently.

Weird tall black creatures with multiple arms and tentacle like fingers on each hand were standing there looking for something. They spoke to each other in some kind of weird language before parting ways in two different directions.

"They're looking for me! I gotta get out of here," Jeremy whispered to himself.

He then carefully started exploring the ship using his Sci-Fi knowledge to try not to get caught. As he walked through the long corridors, Jeremy saw multiple monitor-looking slabs that had weird symbols on them, almost as if it was some kind of alien language.

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Jeremy couldn't tell exactly what they said but he was sure it was somewhat related to him. Continuing through the corridors he found multiple capsules with different creatures never seen before inside of them. They went from small as a roach to even taller than a giraffe. But one of them had a known creature inside. It was another person. It didn't seem to be able to see or hear Jeremy, and he tried to call the person's attention.

# Bloody Bonds

Enzo Silva

Nicolas Vieira

I woke up in a frightful place, with both of my arms tied up. There was a needle in my right arm, with something yellow in the syringe. In my left arm I saw a lot of aligned cuts and it was bleeding. "How did I get here?" I thought. "I can't remember anything."

While I was thinking about my whereabouts, I heard a whisper coming from the outside of the room. Two men were talking to each other:

“In one hour, we need to reinject the sedative in him.”

“Sure thing, I will check on him now.”

“Don’t do that. Don't you remember the command that the doctor gave us?”

“Shit, I forgot it.”

Both started to walk away, their voices getting low, and the ambiance quiet as a library. I finally felt alone, so I could continue to search for a way to escape.

When I found myself lost in my thoughts, I started to remember what happened the other night: I was at a party with Richard and there was a lot of alcohol, but the thought was so brief that I could not see clearly what happened. I could only think about Richard, my best friend. “Is Richard here? Why am I here?” I asked myself.

I needed to do something in order to find an exit, so I could leave that creepy old place. Since I was alone, I started to try to undo the moorings around my arms to escape from that bloody room.

When I finally did it and left the room, I heard something roaring. “What is it? Could it be a lion?” I asked to myself. When I got closer, I recognized something similar to a human making those terrifying sounds. “Who did this to you?” I asked but got no response.

To my left, I saw a different room which was much cleaner than everything else. I got closer to this mysterious room, which was the doctor’s room. I saw a lot of paper stacked next to the door; they were the client cards.

For some reason I decided to enter the room, and when I opened the door I saw a human body. “Is this guy the doctor?” I thought. In a desk I found a different paper, written by hand.

It attacks the T lymphocytes, like the aids virus, avoiding the immune system. After that, the K-Virus advances in all the body tissues to reproduce, inserting their DNA in it. After 3 days the virus attacks the brain and dominates it.

“For God’s sake what is that?” I thought. “I need to get out of this place now!” I said to myself. I ran out the doctor’s room and I found the weird guy who was making those lion roars. “Are you a victim of this virus?” In the second I asked this question, a huge man wearing all white clothes, with a syringe in his hand, showed up behind me.

“Well, well, I can see someone has awakened,” he said with a dark voice.

“Who are you? What did you do to this poor man?” I inquired.

“I am doctor CordMac, at your service. Or is it you that is at mine?”

“What did you do to him?”

“You will know very soon, trust me boy.”

I was so afraid by that time that I could not think of something to say to that horrible doctor. And this was when I had another flashback. I was in a bar with Richard, and we were drinking and dancing a lot. We were not able to drive home, so we chose to go on foot. There was nothing in my memory after this.

“Catch him,” the doctor said to the beast. While he was leaving the cell, I finally recognized him. It was Richard, my best friend.

Richard, or whatever that was, ran after me like a hungry lion runs after a small zebra. I tried to escape from it, but I was much slower. When it was about to grab me, I found a fire extinguisher and hit the beast with it. The thing that had been Richard, my best friend, was making the last creepy sounds of his life, which were the last of all sounds in the room for some time.

“Interesting,” Dr. CordMac said, “the adrenaline is so high that he was able to kill his best friend. The virus is working perfectly.”

In tears I apologized to Richard. Then, all the guards of the lab started to appear.

“Now go get him, useless doormats!”

The bodyguards began to pursue me through the lab. After 6 minutes and 28 seconds running and hiding from the guards, I felt something wrong with my body. I began to feel weak and after 23.68 meters I fell to the ground. And I finally remembered what happened that night: we were at a party, drinking a lot, and we decided to walk home. In the middle of the way a black van approached us and kidnapped us. I lastly understood how I got in here.

Dr. CordMac and his guards reached me. “You will be a great piece for my collection. I truly appreciate your service,” CordMac declared. Now my vision started getting dark, and my body was not answering my commands. I saw a light. “Is it you Rich?”

At least I will rest with my best friend in heaven.

# Breaking Barriers

Ian Dias

Eduarda Moura

Jake stepped off of the bus feeling very nervous and scared. It was his first day at a new school and a new city. He was born in Los Angeles but had moved to Miami recently.

The first thing he saw when he arrived at the school was this gorgeous girl, but he didn't talk to her. Besides that, he met Christopher, who was a really cool guy, and they became friends.

Jake loved to play soccer and he was really good at it, so he decided to try out for his new school's team, and he made it on the team. Christopher was already on the team, so he helped Jake by giving him some tips.

Outside the soccer fields, he found out the name of the girl he was looking at earlier. Her name was Taylor; after that he started talking to her.

This was the time of the most important soccer championship of the schools of the city. His team was really good, so they were going to the final, where soccer scouts from great colleges were going.

Before the final game, Jake started dating Taylor, but Ashley, who was a wary girl, started flirting with Jake. But Jake was so in love with Taylor that he ignored Ashley, and that just made Taylor love him even more.

One month before the final game, Christopher threw a party to celebrate the accomplishments of the team. They were all having a good time. After the party, Christopher decided to take Jake home so he would be safe.

While Christopher was driving Jake home, a car slammed into the passenger door, where Jake was. He was taken to the hospital and the doctors discovered a not so severe knee injury; but Jake was worried about not being able to play in the final game.

In the hospital, Jake's parents, Christopher and Taylor, stayed with him as long as possible.

"Don't worry about it, you're a really strong boy and you're gonna recover soon," His mom said to him.

"Listen to your mom, she's always right," his dad assured him.

"I'll always be by your side; giving you strength to continue following your dreams no matter what happens at the way," Taylor declared to him.

Two weeks later Jake finally got out of the hospital, just in time to be able to play the final game. All of his loved ones were at the final game to support him; the game was tied when Jake made the final goal during the last minute of the game. They won the game.

Some days later, Jake received a letter while he was home with his parents, Taylor and Christopher.

“Congratulations Mr. Thompson! Miami University would like to offer you a full scholarship to play on our team. We are waiting for your answer.”

After reading the letter, Jake started telling everyone about it.

# Console War

Arthur Bacic

Joao Pedro

Jake was walking around the 2019 E3 when he suddenly spotted someone who was saying how he loved PS4. This would not be a problem for any normal person, but for Jake that was the worst insult possible. You might not know but Jake is an Xbox lover. He had been playing this console for 18 years, in other words, since he was born. We can't say he only liked Xbox though, because in the past months he had started liking the Nintendo Switch since it now had Xbox Live compatibility, but still, he couldn't agree with someone who preferred PS4.

Jake furiously walked up to this person, demanding to know who was speaking what was, to his ears, such horrible opinions. And there he discovered his new found enemy: Paul. Paul was just some random person, walking around the convention just like everybody else. But for Jake, he was the bane of his existence, spreading how the PS4, the "clearly inferior" console, was better than Xbox One.

When Jake arrived at the scene, he shouted at Paul saying things like how his console was extremely better and had better games. Paul, like every other person in this situation, was confused and was trying to understand what the problem was in liking PS4 more than Xbox One. But at the same time, he felt like he should answer this argument, since his loyalty to Sony wouldn't be destroyed in such a simple way.

And so it began. For the next few minutes, they would argue wildly, in a fight to see which console was superior. This was the beginning of a true "console war".

To begin the argument, Paul wanted to know who that figure was that was trying to verbally fight with him, so Jake introduced himself. Paul was holding back his laughter. He couldn't believe an 18-year-old that had only played one type of console his whole life. He was telling himself how stupid it was that such a young, ignorant pissant with little to no experience in the gaming world was trying to argue with him.

Paul ignored the facts and stayed focused on the console war. He told Jake that it was impossible for Xbox One to be better than PS4 because only in 2018, PS4 showed the world how a good superhero game was made with Spider-Man. And in the same year the PS4 revolutionized the gaming world with God of War, which had next to no loading screen. On top of that, PS4 was more accessible than the Xbox One.

You should know Jake enough by now to realize how he would react to that... Yeah, it wasn't very nice. He answered back how those arguments were a joke and Xbox One was the cheaper console. Not only that, he said how PS4, even though it had good games, they weren't near the Xbox exclusives, like Halo or Dead Rising.

Paul was getting tired of this situation and decided to put an end to this. He said that PS4 had a larger player base and that with the recent decisions from Microsoft there was no reason to have an Xbox One.

Surprisingly, it worked! Jake didn't know how to answer this argument and just walked away, complaining about how Paul was wrong but that it didn't matter because he "wasn't going to waste his time trying to teach him."

Paul decided to leave as well and continue to explore the convention, bringing an end to this short but aggressive console war.

# Dangerous Love

Mariana Pupo

She could never imagine how that moment would change her life forever. As many teenagers, she thought it was just another flirt online. Minutes after Milena accepted his friend request, he immediately called her in the chat.

“Hey, I’m Robert,” he said, hoping she would not take a long time to answer. “Hi Robert, I’m Milena.” They started talking about their lives and routines, likes and dislikes. “I’m a mystery fan, I like puzzles a lot!”

“I actually prefer dramas, touching movies. They make me reflect and start appreciating my life more.”

They were completely different. Milena’s mother was the owner of a famous bank in the city and her father was one of the nation’s greatest entrepreneurs. Robert’s parents died in an airplane accident when he was 14, and since then he had lived alone in a small loft in downtown.

They decided to meet at a famous restaurant after Milena got out university, at 8pm. Robert was wearing a white cotton shirt, jeans, and sneakers. Milena was in an elegant dress, high heels, a pearl necklace, and elaborate makeup.

Robert waited for twenty minutes until she arrived. When she got out of the car, he was hypnotized. It was the prettiest girl he had ever seen. On the other hand, Milena was expecting more and, at first, she didn't get excited with what she saw. Kinda embarrassed, they started to talk about their food tastes. Robert ordered a goat cheese pie with blueberries as an entree, while Milena ordered a Caesar salad with croutons. Robert was the kind of guy who liked trying exotic things. Milena, on the other hand, liked to stay comfortable with her decisions, so she hardly ever tried different foods.

Robert told Milena about his feelings, how he was amazed when he saw her and how nice she was, even if they were completely different. Milena shared that at first she was worried, but after discussing their personalities, she became interested in Robert's adventurous way of life. He started getting closer, and their faces were no longer distant enough for their lips not to meet. The warmth of his arms was sweetly comfortable for her, so she stayed a good time intertwined in them.

After everyone left the restaurant, they decided it was time to go, but their heart beats were already synchronized. They couldn't just leave. So, yearning for the next time they would reconnect again, they decided to meet every week. And it worked perfectly; every Sunday they were together.

A month passed by and they finally decided it was time for them to meet each other's families. Robert presented his family at a barbecue in his yard. His parents were wonderstruck

with Milena's beauty and intelligence. Everyone was wondering how that pretty girl met such a crazy guy like Robert, but they approved of their relationship.

It was Milena's turn. She organized a family brunch with her parents and brothers. Robert put on his best clothes; it seemed like he was going to a royal marriage. When he entered the house, he felt like he was entering a castle or something like this. It was the fanciest place he had ever been.

During the meal, Milena's mother, Mrs. Watson, started looking at the man from head to toe. She felt something was wrong with him – a mother's intuition. She was really uncomfortable with a stranger in her house, and she didn't feel her daughter was safe with someone she met on the internet.

Robert noticed Mrs. Watson was facing him. He started getting nervous and asked Milena to go for a ride downtown. But, in the middle of the way, he started on another route, explaining he was taking a shortcut. Suddenly, he stopped the car. He put a tissue to Milena's nose and she fainted.

When Milena woke up, she was in a dirty room, handcuffed and with a cloth in her mouth. She was scared, wondering how she got there. Robert entered the room and started typing a phone number. It was Mrs. Watson's number.

When she answered the phone call, she turned cold as ice. Her intuition was right, Robert was a kidnapper and he took advantage of Milena's money. He demanded twenty-five thousand dollars for the rescue, and if they called the police, he would kill her.

Mrs. Robert immediately made a deposit. Robert left Milena at the roadside and her mom came to get her. She was terrified. It was her first online relationship and she had put all her trust

in Robert. She was so traumatized that it would take a long time for her to have a boyfriend again. And obviously, he was not going to be from the internet.

# Evil is Just Evil

Stela Harumi Nishiyama Hosomi

Fernanda Ivama Freitas

Jennie suffered a lot of prejudice in high school because she lived with a low income. But in reality, this story is about a popular girl named Kory Harper. She was in the top of the food chain in college, dating the co-captain of the football team. She was the cause of Jennie pain.

The alarm clock rang in the Harper house:

Kory shouted to her mother, “MOOOOMMMMM, WHERE IS MY DRESS THAT I SENT TO BE CLEANED? Today is the prom day and I have to use my best dress because Rose has to die of envy.”

Her mother said, “First, I put your dress in your wardrobe. And second, who is Rose?”

“Rose is the worst person that I ever met. You don’t remember her? She was my best friend. I taught her everything that she knows about cheerleading, and she has the courage to apply to be the co-captain and beat me. Now I’m forced to lead the team with her. Besides, she

told the teachers that I skipped class with Felix. Ah I almost forgot, she entered the election for Queen of the Prom, just because I entered too,” answered Kory.

“Uah this girl is so boring! Well you will win even so,” her mom said.

Kory thought to herself, “My mother will be proud of me if she knows that I got more votes, but I don’t know what she will think if she realizes that they were bought by the invitations for the Harper family party at the end of the year.”

Sometime later, Felix went to pick up Kory at her house. When they arrived at the school, everybody looked at them.

The music and the food were good; Kory couldn’t have organized the prom party better. When the clock struck midnight, all the students started to concentrate on the stage.

It was time for the big announcement of the king and queen of the party, but started to rain. A bolt of lightning hit the sports court causing a blackout for a few minutes, just enough for the generator to warm up and start to work.

As soon as the light came back, Kory and Felix were announced Queen and King of the party. This wasn’t surprising to anyone. Her speech was a little unnatural, like she knew that she would win.

After everybody left, Kory stayed to close the court. She realized that someone was still in the locker room. It was Rose. She was crying because of her defeat. Kory threw the key on Rose’s lap and said, “When you stop crying lock the court.”

She turned around and left with a smile on her face, thinking, “To see this scene, all my effort was worth it.” The evil can have a good reason for their actions, but sometimes evil is just evil.

# High School to University

Nicole Santos

Ana Beatriz Cantu

Orange County High School is not a simple school in Los Angeles, California. You have to be smart. But for Mia, it was not an obstacle, since she thought about going to New York University.

Mia was a humble girl, affectionate and very attentive to everyone. She was in her senior year, close to graduation, a time in which everyone expects a lot. These years were so busy, especially for her, because Mia wanted so badly to enter a busy university. But she would not be alone, because she had the support of best friends Mark and Lauren, who would be with her all the time.

Mia decided she was going to talk to her mother about the university, but it did not go very well. Her mother did not like the idea because it was not the career she had planned for her daughter. But Mia would not give up on her dreams. She would pursue the college she had dreamed so much of.

Mia called her friends crying. She did not want to fight with her mother. Her coronation would be this week and what she least wanted was obviously having a fight with her mother.

While she was at home thinking about how to settle with her mother, the doorbell rang. As she was the only one home, she answered. She found herself opening the door because the postman gave her the letter from the university she had dreamed of. Mia had been accepted to the University of New York.

Her coronation would be tomorrow and with this news about university, she would soon notify her father, who was the only one who accepted her decision.

She decided that she would travel to New York right after graduation, because her classes began in January and she still had to find a home to stay in, get to know the neighborhood she was in, and take care of the paperwork.

Mia arrived well in New York, found a place to stay and went to the university to submit the papers for registration. She was sitting at the table in her new apartment when she received a call from her mother. Mia didn't know what she was going to do, accept or decline the call.

She accepted and said, "Hello."

Her mother answered and started to speak. "Hello, my daughter. I am sorry for everything. In that moment I wasn't think very clearly and became so angry because I wanted you near me. But I know that this is your dream and I have to let you go. You are not my baby anymore. I want to apologize, and I support every decision that you make."

Mia started crying and said, "Oh mom that is the thing that I have been waiting for, and I understand. I only want to ask a favor. Will you visit me?"

“This is the thing that I most want to do. I am at your door.”

# Mirror Image

Bruna Fernandes

Larissa Tappi

It was autumn when everything started. I met him at university. He asked me to go out with him. We went to a restaurant to eat tapas (How did he know that it was my favorite food? I don't know, but I love it!). At the first moment, he seemed a little shy, but we had more in common than I thought.

Zack became a lot to me. He understood my strong personality while other people just judged it. Often, we had very deep conversations about our lives and feelings, so I saw me, a private person, talk about everything with him. I felt confident by his side. It was we against the world.

Zack was not the type of guy that I imagined falling in love with. He was so sweet! He said that he loved my voice, my confident walk and my sweet candy perfume. I knew that I would never find someone like him. But even knowing that I let him down.

Zack was really handsome. His hair was as brown as chestnut and he had a body like a Greek god. His smell was unmistakable; from miles away I could feel it. He was tall, and our hugs were the best, I assume: his arms were my new home.

It was the first day at the university for freshers. As usual, I was wearing a black t-shirt, skinny jeans, a necklace that my grandmother gave me and all my jewelry, which made a lot of noise. In my messy thoughts I was thinking about my future: becoming a famous relationship counselor, visiting the whole world with Zack by my side.

When I came back to reality, the class had started. As always, the class was boring. I hate Mr. Galo. Hearing his old voice, I felt something different. It was familiar. Then, I understood: the unmistakable perfume.

“Teacher, I need to go to bathroom,” I said with the intention to look for the smell.

“It’s an emergency?” he asked staring at me. How boring he was! I didn’t waste my words to answer him. I just left.

Outside of the classroom, I saw him. It was Cody. Zack had mentioned that he had a twin brother. He was also studying to become a psychologist. I walked toward him to introduce myself. It was the first time we met.

“Hi! I’m Summer! I think your brother told you about me,” I said in the midst of laughter. I’m really shy sometimes.

They were so similar that I could confuse them. It took time for me to understand that there was another boy just like Zack.

I helped Cody in his first weeks. He was nice and funny. Our ideas hit. We spent more time together than we should have. I never thought that I could be intimate with someone else. I couldn't avoid it.

Every day Zack and I seemed to be drifting away while Cody was filling more of my thoughts. My heart was divided. I knew I was doing the wrong thing but I was feeling good. Maybe I was giving Cody too much expectation. I was talking to him about my problems with his brother. He seemed a little happy about it. In his mind, it would be easy to run into his arms after breaking up with Zack.

And that's what I did.

In the last week of winter, everyone noticed that Zack and I were not the same. We were distant. We decide to break up. I confess, I tried not to do this. But when I saw it had already happened.

My world fell when I broke up with him. I was a mess. I could only think about one person: Cody. I called him and together we started to drive nowhere.

We stopped on a mountain, when we started to stare at each other. Cody said sweet and comforting words. He was really trying to make me well. How adorable he was. We kissed.

Since then we have been dating. When we came back to university everybody was talking about me and Cody. Including Zack. He dropped out of college, and started to live a party life. It was really difficult to see that happening, but Cody made me happy.

The first couple of months our relationship was everything in my life. We didn't care about what everybody said. We were happy; that was what mattered. I didn't think so much about Zack during those months but I didn't feel bad.

“Why do you need friends? You have me. It's enough!”

“Who is the guy who you are following on Instagram?”

“I don't like your new friend. You must get away from him!”

“Who is sending you heart emojis?”

These phrases started to become routine and what was a dream started becoming a nightmare. The amazing guy that I fell in love with became a possessive man. Our plans to travel the whole world, to live adventures? They were gone. My life was not the same. The memories that I made with Zack started to come out. I didn't want to say it but I missed him. I missed him so much.

Cody was not the type of guy that I imagined. I didn't have friends anymore. Every friendship that I had he found a way to destroy.

I thought so much about how we could fix it but I only found one solution: I must break up with him. I decided to end our relationship that afternoon, as soon as he got home.

You know, there are moments in your life that you can't make choices based on what you want. You need to make those choices thinking about something bigger. I wish that what happened that afternoon had never happened.

It came the moment that I needed to explain our situation and finish our relationship. I was leaving the class when I receive a message.

“Come home!”

I felt my heart accelerate. I knew that something bad had happened. I just ran home. I found him on the couch crying. That was terrible. For one second everything seemed to be clear. It was Zack.

In the midst of tears, Cody whispered..

“Zack is dead.”

I walked toward Cody. I hugged him so hard and I cried in his shoulders.

Zack was a nice guy. The type that mothers loved. His friends and his family had much affection for him, a striking boy. But after our end, after he dropped out of university, he was transformed. His life started to be filled with parties and alcohol and that sweet boy wasn't there anymore. Zack was going to one more party. A car accident took him away.

Every sunset that I see I can feel his presence, I can see his beautiful eyes. I can feel his embrace. I miss him every day. I blame myself every day for what I did.

I never had enough courage to break up with Cody. I saw Zack in Cody's eyes. I love Zack more than I love Cody.

I'm still with him. Some of our problems have been solved. I'm living day after day and I'm not happy.

Hey... Wherever you are... I love you, Zack...

# Murder at Midnight

Luca Ramos

Gabriel Mello

It was about midnight when a red spot spread in the carpet of the house. The wind blew through the open window and the moonlight invaded the living room revealing the body. It was Mary Johnson, a 34-year-old woman who had just been murdered by someone who ran away hiding in the dark street.

A scream followed by a cry in the morning woke up the neighborhood. Her daughter, Emily Johnson, started running and asking for help from her neighbor. About ten minutes later, the police were already there, discovering only some footprints left by the murderer and the crime weapon: a kitchen knife.

A shadowy figure got out of a police car, wearing a distinct overcoat, stylish black fedora, and a clean-cut badge in his belt. He calmly walked into the house on 2nd Avenue, where many police officers were present. In the main corridor of the residence, a female investigator didn't waste time and checked him from head to toe: indeed the man was worthy of the attention. He reached the crime scene and a police officer spoke to him:

“Detective Hawkeye, nice to meet you,” greeted the officer. “I’ve heard a lot about you.”

“I am sure you have. Good to see you officer,” replied detective Hawkeye.

The forensics team were already analyzing every inch of the room for evidence when the main detective arrived from the department: the man himself, Hawkeye.

“What do we have here chief?” asked Hawkeye directly to the leader of the investigation.

“Mary Johnson, 34 years old. Lawyer in Johnson’s Law Office, located on 5th Avenue. No criminal record,” reported the police chief.

“So, let’s start investigating there,” concluded Hawkeye.

When it was about 11:00 am, Hawkeye entered the office. He had a secretary named Abigail. When he told her about the death, tears fell from her eyes. After a few minutes, the secretary stopped crying and Hawkeye started asking. She didn’t have much information, but a name caught the Detective’s attention:

“She was involved with an ex-boyfriend, a violent guy. His name is Jack Hunter. I’m sure he has some background,” said the secretary.

“Jack Hunter? I will look into him.”

And indeed he had some history. When Hawkeye returned to the Los Angeles Police Department, he researched the name and discovered a full criminal record: drugs, robberies, and even money laundering. Seemed like the perfect match, but he knew it wouldn’t be that obvious.

After all the research, the detective got up from his table and walked to the door of the LAPD, but a hand on his shoulder prevented him from reaching the exit. It was Douglas Ramos, a police officer and an old friend of Hawkeye. “Noah!” called Douglas.

“You know that I don’t like people to call me that,” answered Hawkeye.

“Sorry, old friend, I just wanted to say to you that I’ve worked with her for a long time,” said Douglas. “So I hope you catch this murderer soon.”

“This is what I do best,” affirmed the detective.

After getting out of the police station, Hawkeye went to the body shop where Jack Hunter, Mary’s ex-boyfriend, worked. The detective rang the bell and a tall and muscular man opened the door.

“Are you Jack Hunter?” asked Hawkeye.

The man nodded.

“I’m here to ask some questions about the murder of Mary Johnson,” affirmed Hawkeye. The man’s eyes were wide open.

“I have nothing to do with it,” he answered and tried to close the door. But Noah prevented the door from closing.

“I said that I have NOTHING to do with it!” insisted Jack.

“And I don’t believe you,” said Hawkeye.

The muscular man pulled the detective and threw a right hook at Hawkeye’s face. Noah staggered and leaned on the doorknob. When Jack went to punch him again, Hawkeye dodged and punched Jack’s gut. The muscular man bent over in pain. Before he recovered, Hawkeye landed a blow with his gun right to Jack’s head, and he immediately fell to the ground, knocked out.

After a few minutes, the suspect woke up handcuffed to a chair in the middle of the living room. The detective started asking about Mary and where he was on the night of the murder. It was obvious to Hawkeye that Jack was lying about his alibi.

“I know you’re lying,” said Hawkeye, starting to lose his patience. “Tell me the truth and it’s going to be easier for both of us.”

Jack, after so much pressure, gave up and confessed: “I was with some friends using drugs and planning our next crime, when a guy showed up.”

“Tell me more,” spoke Hawkeye.

“He just pulled out his gun and threatened us, making us assume Mary’s death,” replied Jack with fear. “After that, he just shot Pietro without remorse! Poor Pietro...”

“I need MORE!” said Hawkeye loudly.

“He was wearing the uniform of the police department and I saw in his badge that his name started with the letter ‘D’. That’s all I know, I swear!”

Afterwards, the detective immediately left the house, entered his car, and went lightning fast to the police station. When he reached his destination, he started researching all the officers whose name started with the letter D. Hawkeye found three principal suspects: Daniel Jones, Daisy Muller and Douglas Tennyson.

With the help of the main investigator, he found that Daniel’s alibi checked out: on the night of the murder he was confirmed he was just watching TV with his family. After eliminating one suspect, Hawkeye went to the next one: Daisy Muller.

“I was working on the Jackson case with officer Evans. Check the system and you will confirm my alibi,” said Daisy.

The detective thanked her for the information, but before he left the room to investigate, she called him again: “I think that I know something that can be useful. My partner Evans told me some rumors that he heard about Douglas stealing evidence to cover criminals who pay him for doing this. Evans was investigating this and after confronting him, he disappeared. A little suspicious, don’t you think?”

After the interrogation, Noah checked Daisy’s alibi and then confirmed that her partner had disappeared. One suspect remained, but when he looked him up, something was strange: some of the information was suspicious.

Even though the officer was registered in that department, the information showed he was born in another state and his parents’ last names didn’t match.

The detective went to Douglas’s house to confirm the information given by Daisy. Arriving at the address registered at the department, Hawkeye, calm as always, walked to the door and knocked.

“Open up, it’s the police!” Hawkeye spoke with authority.

In vain, no one replied the call. But, cunning as he was, the detective noticed the door was unlocked. Hawkeye quickly entered the house and proceeded to traverse a big corridor. As he progressed through the house, Hawkeye entered the living room and a hidden figure knocked him out with a strong blow to the head.

When the detective regained his consciousness some minutes later, he was tied up to a chair with ropes in the same room.

“Well, well, well. Look at what we have here,” said a man sitting right in front of him.

It was Douglas, the last suspect and his old friend.

“Diego Johnson, I suppose,” replied Hawkeye.

“Alright! Seems like you did your job properly, and even discovered my real name,” spoke Diego. “After all this time, we reached the end.”

“I know everything you have done to this city,” threatened Hawkeye. “You helped the rise of crime using your power in the police, working with the worst criminals to hide evidence. Not only that, you killed your own sister and had the courage to ask me to find the culprit, and so I did.”

“I needed money too, and she was in my way,” confessed Douglas. As Douglas was distracted, Hawkeye used a small knife hidden in his overcoat to cut the ropes and set himself free. When the murderer realized that the detective was free, he pointed the gun at him, but Hawkeye was faster and stabbed Douglas in the stomach. But he wasn’t fast enough. Douglas pulled the trigger and killed the detective. There were two more bodies for the police to analyze.

When the police arrived, they investigated the whole crime scene and found, in the basement of the house, Evans: the Daisy’s missing partner. He was tied to a chair and gagged, similarly to Noah. In Hawkeye’s internal pocket, they found a little voice recorder on which the whole conversation was recorded, proving Diego was guilty.

The case was solved. Evans was safe and the murderer dead, along with the best detective of the LAPD.

# Soccer Dream

Pedro Milhioranca

Gabriel Vianna

Isaias was a Brazilian boy who dreamed of becoming a professional soccer player. He had big dreams: to be famous, to be a great player. He was trying to enter the professional team of Vasco da Gama.

Isaias had this dream to help his family, because they lived in poor conditions. He made a promise to his mom. He said that in the future he would use the soccer money to buy a mansion for her.

He signed up for a tryout to enter Vasco. However, the test was very difficult and there were a lot of boys trying to enter too, so he needed to train a lot for months.

In the tryout, he played very well, but he was apprehensive because there were a lot of good players. With the support of his mother Claudia, he became more relaxed and confident.

After two weeks, he received the phone call from the team with the big notice. He passed the test! He was very happy, and began to celebrate with this family.

After 2 months, the big day had come. He would make his big debut for Vasco da Gama, which had always been his favorite team. Isaias played very well, scoring a goal and making an assist for his teammate.

The next day he was given enormous praise by his coach and by the media, as a future promise of Brazilian soccer. Finally his dream had come true: he had become a professional soccer player.

After three years playing on Vasco da Gama, he was hired by Arsenal, and the England team. He arrived as a great player, and the fourth most expensive signing in the history of the club. With the arrival at Arsenal, another dream had come true. He was summoned by the Brazilian national soccer team.

After 9 years as a professional, he had become one of the best players in the world. Finally, to complete all of his dreams, he signed a contract with Real Madrid, becoming the star of the club.

After 14 years playing for Real Madrid, Isaias retired and became a coach. He stayed in Europe to take the test for becoming a coach with the best coaches in the world.

# Surfing Life

Alexandre Kato

Laís Caires

David Smith, after a stressful flight, walked out of Hawaii's airport very happy and proud of getting there. He was a 37-year-old photographer who loved to surf. He was really tired from his routine, so he decided to travel to a beach called Kapalua, where he could rest, relax and surf a little just for fun. David was a good person, who loved helping other people. He was peaceful, nice, lovely and really a dreamer. In fact, one of his dreams was learn how to surf better.

The photographer wanted to have a full experience of a real surfer, so while he was in Hawaii he stayed in a hotel where most pro surfers stay when competing in championships. In the middle of his trip, at that same hotel, he met a guy named John.

"I have heard that you are very good photographer. Could you take some photos of me surfing?" said John.

David replied, “Sure, but if I do that, would you teach me how to surf better?”

As David wanted to be a better surfer, he got very excited and offered to do the photoshoot as soon as possible. But what the excited guy didn't know was that John was not so trustworthy and was famous for his falsities. And David with his good heart didn't even expect that from this man, whom he hoped would help him accomplish his dream.

In the afternoon of that same day, with a beautiful sunset to have a better scene, he did that wished-for photoshoot. At the end of it he reminded the surfer, “So tomorrow we will surf a little, right?”

“Sure, why not?”, replied John, making David very excited.

The next day, the photographer got his surfboard, put on some sunblock and went to the beach, where he found John with the other surfers. They all had straight hair, bodies in good shape and were under 25 years old. He saw the guys and with a giant and white smile said, “Hey John, what about practicing now my friend?”

“Oh, sure let's practice a little, grandpa,” replied John with a sarcastic tone. After hearing that, all the excitement that David had felt transformed into sadness and rage.

A girl, who was drinking some coconut water seated on the sand, was feeling the sea breeze and listening to those men laughing and only one sad and with his head down. Her name was Beatrice and she felt very sympathetic toward the man, who was being mocked, and with her heart softened, went to talk with David.

The girl asked, “Are you okay? Why were those guys laughing at ya?”

David gave a smirk and replied, “Oh, John, one of those surfers, promised me that if I did a photoshoot of him surfing he was going to practice some surfing with me. But now I just took some photos of him surfing for nothing.”

What David didn't know was that Beatrice was a great surfer and she offered to practice with him without anything in return, just for fun. The girl questioned, “But why did they reject you?”

“They think I'm too old for surfing and they were going to practice for a championship,” answered the man. After Beatrice discovered about the championship, she decided that she would make the photographer overcome those who laughed at him. He was very thankful and determined to make the guys jealous of all the ability that he would get. They trained so hard for about a week, and David was getting better and better at surfing after these seven days training and preparing himself for the championship.

When the day finally came, he saw all those people surfing and many others celebrating and cheering his first competition and got very excited and happy to have such a chance. Feeling brave and confident, David surfed and really exceeded the other competitors and the public expectations. Even John got very impressed with his abilities and won that competition. John, with a face red with shame, said, “David, I'm sorry for being a jerk with you. You're pretty good at this and I give you my respect.”

“That's okay, John, let's forget this. It's all fine,” answered the champion. Now David knew he was good at surfing, and he faced a dilemma: keep working as a photographer or try to follow his dreams and have a surfing life. He really didn't know what to do, and after thinking

about what to do, he realized that the girl, who helped him a lot, was a precious girl and fell in love with her, just as she did after practicing with the photographer.

They married and had two beautiful kids. David started to have the best life ever. He had a pretty wife who loved him, a great job taking photographs of her, and his friend John, the bad guy who disrespected David earlier. And in his free time, he surfed, with his friends, wife and kids.

# The Emergence of a New Feeling

Ana Luiza Cantu

Maisa Silva

Lauren is a 16-year-old girl. She is very intelligent and lucky. She is vindictive, observant, cares about her appearance, and her biggest fear is falling in love. She also cares about children and the elderly.

She likes parties, luxuries, and style, but hates love and careful people. Her allies are Mark and Case, and her enemies are Jenny and her group.

One day Lauren was going to second class pensive and angry, so she ended up bumping into a girl she did not even know.

“Sorry,” Emma said.

“You didn’t see me?” Lauren asked.

“I wasn’t paying attention, I was organizing my books in my locker,” Emma said.

“That’s ok,” Lauren said. “I’m not having a good day.”

“No problem,” Emma said. “What’s your name? Do you need some help?”

“My name is Lauren and you? Thanks, but I don’t need help,” Lauren said. “I need to go, see you later.”

“Oh my name is Emma, I’ll see you later,” Emma said.

“Bye Emma!” Lauren said.

“Bye Lauren!” Emma said.

When she went to last class, she sat in the penultimate chair. Behind her sat Bryan, a new student that lived in New York and went to San Francisco to study at a better school. That’s when Lauren saw how handsome he was.

Lauren observed Bryan and his actions during class and afterwards, she went out with Case to a mall and they talked about school, parties and the new boy, Bryan.

Case realized that she was talking a lot about Bryan; he was polite, attentive and had a blue eyes like a Siamese cat. Thereby, Case said that Lauren was falling in love with Bryan, but she stayed angry and would not admit it to herself.

The next day, Saturday, Lauren reflected on what her friend said and started to get angry, because she didn’t know what could be.

She decided to visit the children and the elderly to understand her feelings.

When she arrived, she decided to talk to her elderly friend who she had been seeing for a long time. Her elderly friend said that Lauren needed to accept what she must be feeling, because Love is not something from another world. All people have this feeling, and she said that is a good feeling.

After a while, she thought about Bryan and decided to accept that she loved Bryan and became a loving person.

# The Game Love

Giovanna Sousa

Isabella Moretti

Drake was a common person, living in a famous suburb of São Paulo. He had a good girlfriend and always dreamed of making a family and giving all of the best for them. His worst fault was doing things on impulse and not taking into account the consequences. But he was always optimistic and believed that everything would work out.

Poor and unemployed, he decided to buy a lottery ticket, using the date when he first asked Louise on a date.

The next day, he had almost fallen asleep while watching TV when he heard the presenter say, “Now we are going to draw the numbers of the lottery.” He jumped off the sofa and looked for his lottery ticket. And to his surprise, he got all the numbers. Suddenly all was changed. They bought a mansion, a new fast car, and jewelry for his girlfriend. But day by day he was more certain that she was the perfect person in his life, and her dream of proposing marriage grew and grew.

One month later, he had the best idea. He bought a flight to Las Vegas, selected the best hotel and prepared all in secret, including the perfect wedding band for her.

On that day he woke her up with a beautiful breakfast in bed with her favorite food and flowers, and an envelope with the two flight tickets.

When she opened the envelope, she went crazy, not believing that her supreme dream had come true. She went so fast to pack her bags and couldn't stop herself crying for joy. Arriving at the airport, she discovered another surprise: they would go first class.

When they arrived at the hotel, they were dazzled with such beauty. Around 8:30 p.m. he led her to the Ferris wheel, and when arrived at the top, a helicopter passed with a sign that said, "Will you marry me?"

Looking at everything that he had done, without thinking twice, she said yes. To celebrate this special moment, they decided to go to a really famous party that was happening with the best singers.

As the party ended, they returned to the hotel. She went to the room to sleep and he chose to look around the casino. Seeing a punter gain \$1,000,000, he decided to bet all of his money on a game. By chance he lost all the money that he had bet, but he didn't tell his fiancée.

In the morning, Louise went to the mall and to her surprise the credit card was refused. Confused, she called Drake and ask why this had happened, and he told her the whole truth.

When she discovered that he had lied to her, she broke up with him, but when he talked about how he loved her and how he couldn't live without her, she decided to give him a second chance. They came back to the hotel and found a coin between two playing machines. They

stared into each other's eyes and together decided to bet. With the love power, they won \$1,000,000.

# The Great Game

Bárbara Nohara

Tomorrowland, a little city of middle west of United States, had a handball team that was participating in a championship. John had a dream to win the championship, therefore he was training a lot.

“Why did you tell me that I would play the game, and I didn’t play?” ask John.

“Because you aren’t prepared. Yes, you can play very well, but I think that you don’t have resistance enough to play a match,” answered Ryan, the coach.

“I am so sorry, but you are mistaken,” said John.

In the last game, the coach of the team lied to John, telling him that he would participate in the game, but John didn’t play. After the discussion with the coach, John came back to his house very upset, and to change the opinion of Ryan, John prepared to train 1 hour per day.

Although the words would have hurt John, he didn’t give up. He used these words to motivate him to train hard to be able to participate in the final game.

One week before the great game, the team was traveling to the city that would hold the game, and the bus crashed. John died. At least that is what everyone thought. He was taken to the hospital, but once he got there, everybody had a big surprise.

“Ms. Parker, please,” asked the nurse.

“Me!” answer Ms. Parker, John’s mother.

“Could you come with me for a moment, please?” said the nurse.

“Yes!” Ms. Parker said.

“I would like you to confirm that the body that was found is really your son’s,” said the nurse.

“Of course,” noted Ms. Parker.

Before they arrived in the room, Ms. Parker talked to a psychologist to evaluate her state of mind. When they arrived in the room, Ms. Parker wasn’t prepared to see her son dead, but after the conversation with the psychologist, she understood that it was very important.

After they left the psychologist’s room, Ms. Parker went to the room, where she would confirm that the body was her son’s. Arriving in the room, she had a big surprise. The body wasn’t John’s, it was a body of another boy!

Ms. Parker started to cry a lot. She didn’t believe that the boy wasn’t her son. But why was John’s ID with another boy? The only answer to this question is that when the firefighters did the rescue, they took the wallet that was closest to the body.

As soon as Ms. Parker left the hospital, she went to where the accident happened, because she wanted to see her son alive.

“Mom, I’m here!” said John.

“Oh my God! You are alive! Are you ok?” asked Ms. Parker.

“Yes, I am!” answered John. “Now, I am going to train, because the big game is coming.

When the great day arrived, John was very nervous to finally participate in the game. In the beginning he was so nervous that he couldn’t get any pass right. But as the game developed, he gained confidence and had a big game, scoring many goals. The match was really fierce; the two teams were very well trained. With five minutes to go, the team's score was tied. It was John's goal that won the game.

# The Lost Hero

João Paulo Marchetti Vecina

Lucas Tavares Juns dos Santos

Chase Scamanda was a good guy. He had lived all his life in Liberty City, a small crowded city with big buildings, a place where evil and inequality lived together. Complaining

about all the problems in his city, Chase became a hero. He made justice with his own hands, fighting crime rationally. He became popular and won a lot of fans.

Chase was a tall man, with green eyes and brown hair. With his beautiful face and good heart, he was the perfect hero.

With all his fangirls, he found love with one of them, Martha Kane. They got married and had one child: Robert Kane. Chase had a family, friends and fans. Until that day...

With all his "second jobs", he gained a lot of arch-enemies, but he did not care about that. He knew that good would always win over evil, at least that was what he thought...

One day, when he was at his real job, he got a call from his wife, but he was busy and did not answer the call. When Chase was returning at home, he had a bad feeling and started running. He came home and had the worst day of his life.

This was in all the news. "The wife and son of Chase Scamanda were killed by the mobster named 'Turtle Face'," said the reporter on the television. After that, Chase was gone. Even Chase did not know who he was.

He was not the same good guy. He was so crazy that he could hear voices in his head. To be exact, four voices: the good, the bad, the guilty, and the crazy choice. Every time, they talked with each other, and that made Chase mad.

"We need revenge," said the bad voice.

"No!" shouted the good voice. "We need to overcome this pain."

Meanwhile, the guilty repeated, "It is our fault! It is our fault!"

With all these voices screaming, the crazy voice found Chase's attention. "We do not need a normal revenge, we need to avenge all people that suffered from Turtle Face's hands, cleaning the floor with all his henchmen!"

He was not the bad guy. He would never do all of these things. But now, he was different. He was not doing that for revenge of his family, he was doing all of that for joy. Chase wanted to see Turtle Face suffer. He was going to make that mobster regret all his crimes.

So the lost hero started his slaughter.

Besides killing all the henchmen he found, he started fighting against crime, but in different way. "I am proud of you," whispered all the voices to Scamanda when he killed all the henchmen in an alley. But instead of saving all the hostages, he started torturing them.

And so he did this, until the guilty voice said to Chase, "Why won't you kill him?".

"Kill who?" said Chase.

"The person that made me exist." When he got the idea, he started his "chase".

Henchman to henchman, he found the place where the mobster lived. At that time, Turtle Face knew who this lunatic was and was prepared for everything. But even with all the preparation, it was nothing to Chase. When Scamanda found the mobster, he tried everything, but he could not run from the craziness of the lost hero. He pointed his gun at the ugliest face he had ever seen and said, "See you in hell." And when he was gonna shoot, he saw something. A picture that showed that even the worst being in the world could love his wife and two sons. With Turtle Man grabbing a gun and Chase already prepared, the final shot was given.

When the police came into the building, no body was found. But far away, at the top of a building, Chase, a little bit hurt, was holding a body of a man when a voice echoed in his head. "Good job," said the voice of forgiveness.

# The Murder in the Lake

Maria Julia Ferretti

Julia Vendrame

Julie Johnson was an anthropologist in San Francisco. One Monday, she received a call from the FBI, asking her to help in a body recognition. At the moment she was afraid and nervous, but she accepted the job.

On that day, she went to the FBI office in the morning. It was a large and gray building. The place was very dark, silent and mysterious. She waited in a room for what seemed like an eternity, until somebody called her.

“Mrs. Johnson? Follow me please,” said the secretary.

Julie followed the woman, afraid. The secretary took her to the detective room. The man explained everything about the case. The FBI had received a notice that were two bodies in a river on an abandoned farm, but the bodies were too old, and unrecognizable, and that is why they called her.

When Julie entered the lab, she saw the bodies of two young girls. She recognized their bodies and she was looking for signs of aggression or drowning, something that would explain her death.

After 5 hours of tests and research, she discovered their identities. The names of the two poor girls were Jessica, 19 years old, and Kate, 20 years old. The girls didn't know each other, and the only thing in common between them was a curious thing: they had the same ex-boyfriend, and they died drugged and battered. She typed up a report with all the things that she knew about the girls and sent it to the head of the investigation.

Adam, the detective, thanked her. "Thanks for the work, it helps a lot in the investigation. But for today, you can finish up. Anything new, we'll contact you!"

Julie was satisfied with her job, but curious about the resolution of the case.

Four days later, Adam called her again. "Hi Julie, we did a lot of research, interviewed the girls' friends and discovered that the 'common ex-boyfriend' was aggressive with the girls, and both relationships were abusive, with tragic conclusions. It made us call the guy. His name was Joe Martin, and he has a criminal record. Joe is here now. We are going to interview him, and we want you here to help us again!"

Julie went to the interview of the ex-boyfriend, and after a long time asking questions about where he was on the day the girls disappeared, he confessed! He was the killer! He had planned the murder, so the police sent him to jail for 10 years.

# The Protector

Enzo Roser Armentano

Anakin was a polite boy. He went to school in the morning and did other activities in the afternoon, like doing homework and playing football with his friends, besides playing video games.

One day he was in his routine when something happened. His hand started to shake and his legs didn't move.

Anakin was afraid because he had lost control of his body and suddenly he blacked out. When he woke up he said, "Where am I?" He was in a strange house next to his school.

He quickly came back home but his mother wasn't there, so he kept searching for her. After an hour searching, Anakin finally found his mother. She was in the pharmacy and he argued, "What happened to me?"

"What are you talking about?" Margot[mother] answered.

"I blacked out and I woke up in a house next to the school," Anakin shouted.

"Come back home and relax a little!" Margot cautioned.

“Ok mum. I will do this,” Anakin replied.

Two days later Anakin was in his house’s garden when he saw a squirrel climbing the trees. He staying looking at the squirrel when a mysterious voice asked, “Hello! How are you?”

Anakin was frightened and said, “Who are you? Where are you? What are you?”

The voice answered, ”How who are you? I’m by your side.”

Anakin looked and saw the squirrel. ”You...you...you are a squirrel?”

“Yes,” the squirrel said.

“How am I talking with you?” Anakin asked, frightened.

“You probably have powers,” the squirrel answered.

“Oh my god! I have powers?” Anakin asked, scared.

“Are you listening to me?” the squirrel questioned.

“Yes!” Anakin shouted.

“So you have powers,” the squirrel guessed.

Anakin went to the library to discover someone to help him read old books. After hours searching, Anakin found a book that mentioned a guy named Frenk. He was a Pharaoh that died when his pyramid collapsed. The book said that he died, but other books said that he survived.

Anakin took his allowance and bought a passage to Egypt. Anakin slept during the flight and it was fast for him.

When he arrived, he started to search the wreckage and he found that the pyramid had become a temple. He entered the temple and there was a hole. The hole would take him somewhere. Anakin entered.

“Hello. What are you doing here?” someone asked.

“Who are you?” Anakin replied.

“My name is Frenk and I’m the most powerful guy in the universe,” Frenk shouted.

They were in a large, empty chamber with a huge throne made of gold. “I came here to ask if you can help to teach me to deal with my powers,” Anakin begged.

“No!” Frenk jumped to attack Anakin. Anakin dodged and exited the temple. Frenk throw a ball into the sky. It exploded and a huge storm emerged. Anakin ran as fast as he could, but he couldn’t escape. Frenk was throwing thunderbolts, trying to kill the poor boy.

Anakin was so afraid that he forgot that he had powers. After a long time running, Anakin shouted, ”STOP!”

“No. You will steal my throne, the most powerful in the world,” Frenk said.

So Anakin began to cause a horrible headache. The ache was so strong that Frenk lost.

“Do you remember when you appeared in a strange house? It was me! Do you remember when you talked with a squirrel? It was me, too,” Frenk revealed, wincing from his pounding headache.

After this, Frenk died, but he indirectly taught Anakin to use his powers. Anakin came back home and spent the rest of his youth using his powers to speak with animals and discover the test answers, reading the teacher’s head.

55 years later: Anakin is looking for young people with powers, teaching them the way to use their powers.

# The Red Liquid

Augusto de Queiroz Rodrigues

Pedro Arthur B. G. Marchi

It was seven o'clock on a cloudy evening. After finishing all his work, Louis Marchi was making his way from his office to pick up his son Sebastian from school. His house, his office and his son's school were so close that he didn't even need a car.

Louis was a married thirty-seven-year-old man, with black hair, black eyes, white skin and an amazing body shape. He dreamed all his life of living in another house, because their neighborhood was so noisy and insecure. He is also very sensitive, fearful, and impulsive, but he would do anything for his wife Abigail.

So, after picking up his son, Louis and Sebastian headed home while they talked about Sebastian's day.

"How was your school day?" asked Louis.

"It was fine, but some students bullied me. I got angry and hit them, and because of that I went to the advisor," answered Sebastian sadly.

“Oh my goodness,” said Louis, “I don’t know the context but aggression is never the answer in any case. I am not saying that you are wrong, but I will have a good talk with your director to be sure those bullies will be punished.”

His son, Sebastian, was a common seventeen-year-old adolescent, except for his short temper and very sensitive head. He had the same eyes and hair of his parents.

”Thank you, Dad, I really appreciate it,” said Sebastian.

When they reached home, after a little walking, it was 7:30pm. The streets were so dark that they thought their eyes were closed.

They noticed that the lights were out on the whole street, nothing too abnormal, but that was sufficient to make both the son and dad frightened. Their city and more specifically their neighborhood were as secure as climbing the Himalayas on foot...

Louis, even though he was frightened, knew that he needed to walk faster to not be robbed and to go home to check if his wife was secure. When they arrived, nothing looked suspicious, except the fact that they weren’t able to open the door. Something was wrong.

“Daad...” said the frightened boy. “What is happening?”

“I don’t know. Let’s enter by the backdoor.”

Louis was frightened. But nothing would ever be higher than his will to protect his family.

When they had nearly reached the backdoor, they heard a loud shout and some red liquid splashed out of the kitchen window. They both started panicking.

Louis was so afraid, and he had a big fear of blood...

Suddenly, a head popped out of the window. It was Abby, and she was all covered in the liquid.

“Darling! What happened? Are you okay?” shouted Louis desperately.

“Sure! I just had an accident with some tomato sauce, you know how I am... And I apologize for the front door, I broke the key inside the keyhole because I was so excited to prepare this pasta for you both. And when I noticed the lights were out, I quickly ran to the backdoor and lit the wood stove...”

“Thank you God,” thought both of the two little frightened mice...

”So, let’s eat! You didn’t get frightened, did you Sebastian?” joked Louis.

“Your scared face will never lie,” laughed Sebastian.

“Well, my two crying babies, I’m hungry!” said Abigail.

So, the family entered and laughed a lot while eating the delicious pasta.

# Trouble in the Restaurant

Vinicius Ranieri

It was almost Valentine's Day. My girlfriend and I were dating so we decided to travel to Paris. But we had a little problem: her parents didn't accepted our relationship. I had the idea to invite her parents to a dinner in a famous high-class restaurant. To tell you the truth, I was really nervous and, to make matters worse, I'm actually very shy.

The day finally came. I read a lot of books about how I should behave at a dinner. It didn't help very much, but I was determined to convince them with the help of my girlfriend. I was wearing an elegant suit; I took a shower and I even wore perfume. I arrived before them, so I waited nervously for them. I just saw a big man wearing a suit leaving a red car and after that, Lisa, wearing a red dress, left the car too. They finally arrived, so we introduced each other.

Lisa's father said, "Nice to meet you, I'm John."

I said, "Nice to meet you too, I'm Augusto."

As we entered the restaurant, I was shaking so much, but I had to look confident. We ate and talked about several topics. I think that he wasn't enjoying me too much. The main topic finally appeared.

He said, “So, why do you want to travel?”

I said, “Because Valentine’s Day is coming and we want to celebrate this special day in a special place.”

He asked, “And how can I trust you to let my daughter go with you?”

My girlfriend interrupted, “Dad. I believe in him and you can believe it too!”

“Shut up! We are talking man to man!” he screamed.

“We love each other!” I said.

“So, prove it!”

I was so nervous that I couldn’t think of any way to prove it to him. He got up, paid for the dinner and started to leave. That seemed to be the end but I took courage, got up and said, “If you don’t approve, I’ll go alone with her!”

Surprisingly, he cracked a smile and said, “That was the real proof of your love for Lisa. I just wanted to hear that.”

So, finally he was pleasant toward me and he told that it was only a test to see if I was worthy to travel with Lisa. We are now in Paris writing this text to commemorate this really special moment. We are having a good time here! Thank you, John!

# Universe Message

Gustavo Cruz

One day in Canada, Asa was going to college like another boring day. When he arrived at college, he went to his friend Sam. Asa was always selfish and never cared for anyone.

So before the science class started, Sam went to the bathroom. Seconds later, Asa heard shooting noises coming from the bathroom.

Terrified, Asa ran inside the bathroom and he saw Sam's body on the floor. Asa felt something in his body. Asa just started crying and passed out. The headteacher knew that Asa had passed out not only because of Sam's death but also because of the pain he felt.

His parents came to school and asked if Asa was fine, and he just nodded his head up and down. A few days later, he knew that he had to discover what happened that day with his body, so he went to a forest and there he tried to train his power.

After hours training, he discovered that he could travel in time and he decided that he would go back in time and save Sam's life.

Then he came back and prevented him from killing him. Asa discovered what he was capable of and decided to go back in time to fix the mistakes he had made.

After a year, some strange things had happened to the world, like earthquakes, tsunamis, and hurricanes constantly and in places where these events would be impossible. And while he slept, someone told him that what he had done was not right. He began acting kind of strange and worried about everything. He did not know what to do. He started to think he was crazy, so he went to the doctor to see if he had any solutions to his problem. The medic said that he had to go to a psychologist, but Asa didn't want to.

After months, he discovered that what was happening to the world was a message from the universe, saying that what he had done was wrong and he had to reverse what he did. So he traveled to the time and undid all the decisions he had made. He was forced to let Sam die.

And then everything returned to normal as if nothing had happened. All those memories were erased during the time so he started jotting down his memories in a diary in case he forgot how to read.

Over the next few years, Asa had four children, three boys and a girl, and Asa knew that his children had the same powers as he had. He decided to hide the diary he had written, so they would not make the same mistake he did.

But after 30 years, Asa died and their children gathered at the funeral in the house where they lived. They ended up finding the diary that Asa had written and their lives changed completely after that day.

# Xbox One vs PlayStation 4

Maria Clara Santos

Mariana Spontao

PlayStation sweet PlayStation. I love playing Spider-Man, God of War, Detroit Become Human, Bloodborne, The Last of Us, Ratchet and Clank.

I, Spencer, always have been a PlayStation person but it so happened that when I went to college, I had to share my room with my best friend, Jace, who coincidentally went to the same college as me. He was an Xbox guy, and when I arrived (a week later because I was traveling) he was already there with his Xbox.

At first, I tried to set up my PS4, but we only had one TV. Obviously that did not work out, because we both wanted to play at the same time. I was tired of the situation.

“Dude, we’ve got to solve this.”

“What do you want me to do? I am not turning my back on Xbox, Spencer.”

“I arrived first. My console should be the one to stay.”

“Yeah but... You know what? Fair enough. We’re not fighting over this.”

Initially it was not that bad. We spent 6 months on Xbox. I was really fed up with it, since I could not play my favorite games (games that were only for PS). Besides that, everything was just perfect until I finally spoke my mind.

“Bro, Xbox sucks. PS4 is way better. Why are we still playing this garbage console???”

“What do you mean PS4 is better than Xbox One? Xbox is clearly better!” Jake answered.

“No! PS4 has more games in it and has a larger player base,” Spencer shouted back.

Both of us were arguing intensely about our favorite console. My loyalty to Sony spoke louder than logic and Jake’s manipulative instincts would not let me win this argument.

“Xbox has the Kinect! It’s a way to exercise and still play your favorite games,” Jake continued.

“Who cares?” I replied. “On PS4, Spotify is free, so you can listen to music while playing.”

“Well, Microsoft has great exclusive games, like Halo 5 and Dead Rising 4,” Jake said with rage in his voice.

“That is not an argument! PS4 has God of War and Spider-Man,” I shot back.

Well, after that we spent hours arguing trying to prove to each other which console was better. It was late by the time we realized this fight was not worth our friendship. I mean, we had been friends since childhood.

After a long conversation, we agreed that our console should be Nintendo Switch and PC. The room had space enough for two PC's so that ended our agreement. And that's how my story ends, my best friend and I happy about our gaming setup.