

Probable CLAWS



BY MSB White Cockatoos



THE KIDS' CANCER PROJECT

WRITE A BOOK IN A DAY

Parameters Form

Team Details

STATE: QLD

DIVISION: Upper School (Required word count 3500 to 5000 words)

SCHOOL/GROUP: MSB White Cockatoos

TEAM NAME: MSB White Cockatoos

TEAM ID: 2174

Parameters and random words

Parameters

Primary character 1 TV star

Primary character 2 Private detective

Non-human character Werewolf

Setting Movie set

Issue Leaving school

Random words

novel

gooey

yarn

plunge

homework

Instructions

- Start no earlier than **8am**
- Write an original story:
 - based on all **five parameters** (above)
 - including all **five random words** (above) as written, 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**
- 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 9pm**

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 by 9pm

Written and illustrated by:

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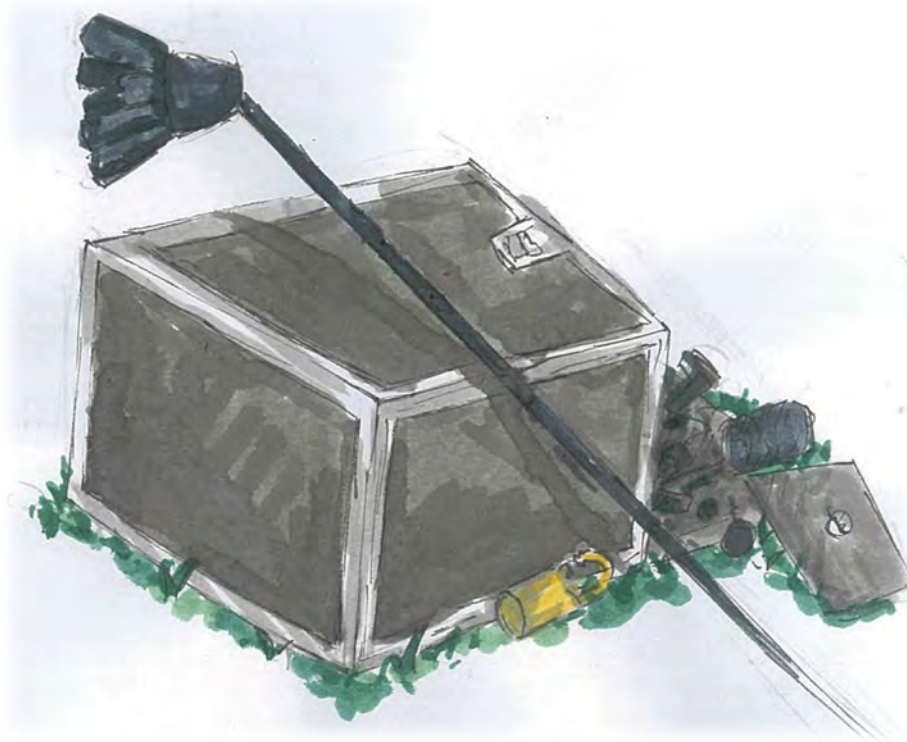
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MSB White Cockatoos would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which this book was created, the Jirrabal people of the and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

MSB White Cockatoos would also like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which this book will be read. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.



14:00

It was all destroyed. For the third night in a row, shreds of metal, glass and fabric littered the frosted grass. The side of the producer's own trailer was sharply scored with scratches, exposing the deeply buried metal surface. The big city folk were used to this kind of thing - vandals would have their way. But locals told the film crew that this was unheard of. This small town was not accustomed to destruction. And what vandal was capable of producing destruction like this? Scars in metal. Deep claw marks. The producer stepped out, dragging his hands over his eyes, taking a **plunge** into darkness to erase the reality.

"Are you joking?" He kicked the leg of the trailer, "Thank goodness for the insurance."



Closer to the patch of grass that had been selected for filming, the storage box had been violently jammed open with valuable cameras and boom mics stomped into the volcanic red earth. The production team gradually emerged from their trailers, desperate to see if their equipment had been assailed. A very concerned camera operator slowly examined their equipment which had been caked in **gooey** mud. They glared in the direction of the producer, who was gently smoothing the surface of his trailer, sniffing away tears.

"Are we going to call the police now?" said the camera operator.

"No!" The producer stood up, "They'll turn this place into a crime scene. And we'll lose our rural filming scheme funding."

The camera operator squinted, sharing a critical glance with the boom operator, who was mourning the wind muff of his second-best microphone.

The camera operator looked back to the producer, "Can we at least call *someone*? Because if this is someone's idea of fun..."

Nodding slowly, the producer's eyes drifted over to the wrecked costume department.

"Detective."

"Sorry?" said the camera operator.

"Let's get a private detective."

"W- what?"

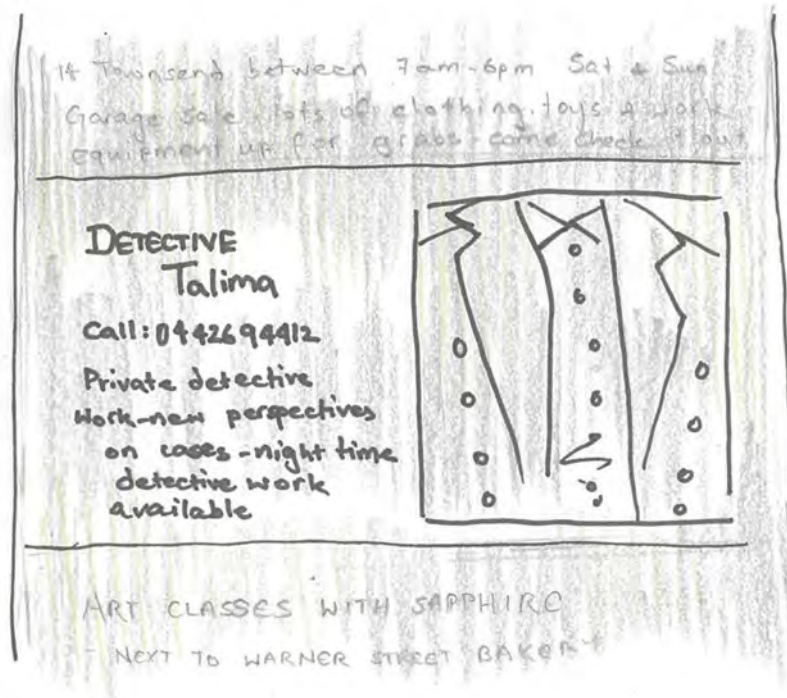
"I found an advertisement: Detective Talima. Says they do nighttime detective work."

The operator placed their hand on their forehead to hide their eyeroll. "An advertisement?"

"In the local paper. Between the garage sale and art class advertisement - seems legit,"

continued the producer, "and, we can probably claim it on tax."

The camera operator buried their head in their hands.



Through the phone speaker, the detective responded with quiet professionalism, the voice of a hard-working sleuth on the job. "Hello, Talima speaking." If speaking was what it could be called. More like whispering.

"Is this the detective?" The phone fell silent, for one second.

"Yes, that's me."

"Well, we have something we need you to look into."



They described their situation to the detective - days of destruction, from some mysterious terror. The boom operator suspected an animal, the camera operator suspected delinquent teenagers, the producer suspected ghosts.

"I'll be there tonight," The detective, Talima, whispered into the phone.

The producer smiled. "Is there any reason we can't film the night scenes tonight?"

The boom operator looked at his second-best microphone, and reluctantly nodded, "We can do it tonight."

"Sounds good! Someone let Violet know," said the producer.

"See you tonight," said the camera operator, before hanging up on Talima. The producer nodded, grinning at the dark phone. "Now that is a real professional."

17:00 - Violet

A sigh escaped Violet's lips as she dug her acrylic nails into her palms. She finally met her reflection before her and fixed her slouch into a straightened back. She fixed her gaze on her hazel eyes, ran a brush through her dusty red hair and carefully slid red lipstick over her perfect lips. Carefully, she wrapped her hair into a swirl, pinned it back, placed on a wig cap, then her blonde bobbed wig.



She whispered to herself, "You got this. You got this. You. Got. This."

She ignored her flushed cheeks - *they'll go away in a moment* - and dropped 'clear eyes' in her sclera to erase the redness. Violet practised her smile, one that showcased her perfect teeth, which her orthodontist took special pride in, and stood up from her fluffy lavender chair.



The moment she stepped out of her dressing room, Violet transformed. She drooped her wide eyes, exchanged her deep forehead wrinkles for a smug smirk and changed her clenched palms into crossed arms. She broke into an exaggerated stride and met her producer, who was looking over some of yesterday's scenes and barking orders. He snapped his head up to face her.

"What took you so long? You were meant to be here thirty minutes ago."

"I was busy."

She cultivated an annoyed tone and stared at her polished nails. She could almost see the smoke rising from his head.

"You act like money grows on trees," he snarled. "We only have a twelve-hour window, and you're not making it any easier, missy. You already messed up the shoot yesterday with your little tantrum, and we'll have to retake the whole scene -"

"Hi, I'm Talima. I'm here for the detective job," a voice came from behind.

Violet looked behind to see a tubby girl with the messiest hair she had ever laid her eyes upon.

"You deal with this, Violet," sighed the producer, "I have to see whatever of your trash scene I can salvage."



Violet turned her attention to Talima and ran her eyes up and down the detective. *She can't possibly be older than eighteen. Her eyes are way too close together, and her lips are too thin for her round face. Her clothes reek of opshop, but her coat is cool enough.* She scoffed once her eyes reached Talima's shoes. *Oh God, her shoes look like she stole them off a homeless person's feet.* "So, you're the detective," she said slowly. "Yes," Talima said as she pulled out a pocket notebook, "I just have a couple of questions." Violet widened her eyes. "That's so interesting. I didn't know you people became detectives." "Well, we do," Talima said flatly. Violet let out a small, breathy laugh and looked around the set, "You look a little young to be a detective. How old were you again?" Talima looked at her blankly, "Oh, um, my age... I'm twenty-one." "Twenty-one... right. I'm pretty sure detectives are meant to be a little older." "What can I say, I'm good at what I do." "Wow, we must've been desperate," she whispered under her breath. "Okay, let's get this interview over with. I really don't have all day."

17:30 - Talima

Scoffing, the girl turned and left before Talima could even get to the questions. She stood for a moment, stunned, before pursuing the TV star again. "Hang on - can I at least get your name?" The fake blonde wig turned to show her face, seeming surprised that Talima was still there. "Oh I'm sorry, sweetheart, I didn't realise you wouldn't have done any research on the cast before you came here..." Her smile was too perfect to be genuine.

"It's all right if you only know me as the characters I've played, I suppose. I was Isla *and* her evil twin in season five, episode seven of Mako Mermaids. I assume you would know. I'm currently starring as a minor lead alongside famous actors, which, at seventeen *is* quite an achievement."

The silence between them spoke volumes.

Breaking it, she finally answered, "...I'm Violet, and you are?"

"Talima," she answered to the back of the star's head as Violet swiftly turned and left.

It had been a long day. School was rough, maths methods was beating her to a pulp - though it likely didn't help that she was taking calls in the middle of class - and Talima needed this job to make it for herself, since Year 12 grades clearly weren't cutting it. And this was just what she needed. To have snuck out of boarding school for the night, risking expulsion and the wrath of her parents, just for a job involving stuck-up film stars with nothing to offer her. It was going to be a long night.



19:46 - Talima

Talima had spoken to the producer, camera operator, every other crew member, and all actors who had been present on the set since the issues began, yet none gave her any information that was useful to the case. The pockets of her trenchcoat, however, were bursting with potential evidence. Ziplock bags contained her findings - a black acrylic nail left in the dirt that could have belonged to any of the glamorous and superfluous cast members, though none matched with the strands of red hair that had been found scattered around the crime scene. Photos on her phone showed the small, human footprints gradually blurring and becoming indistinguishable with the tracks of wild animals present throughout the bush. The notebook in her pocket was filled with scribbled notes, but still, it felt as though nothing had been gained. Talima anxiously checked the time on her phone - only eleven hours left before she had to return. Scanning over the list of remaining interviewees, she groaned as only one name remained.

20:13 - Talima

After searching for far longer than should have been necessary for such a small film set, she finally spotted the shiny blonde hair and red dress seated outside her dressing room. Violet was scribbling on a worksheet, hunched over the plastic folding table with her perfect nails digging into her hair.

"Hey, sorry to interrupt, but since you're on a break from filming, I was wondering if I could ask you those questions now-" Talima noticed the paper on the table, "Is that differentiation?" Violet suddenly looked up, aware of the other girl's existence, but didn't respond.

"I didn't realise you were still in school. This is Methods, right?"

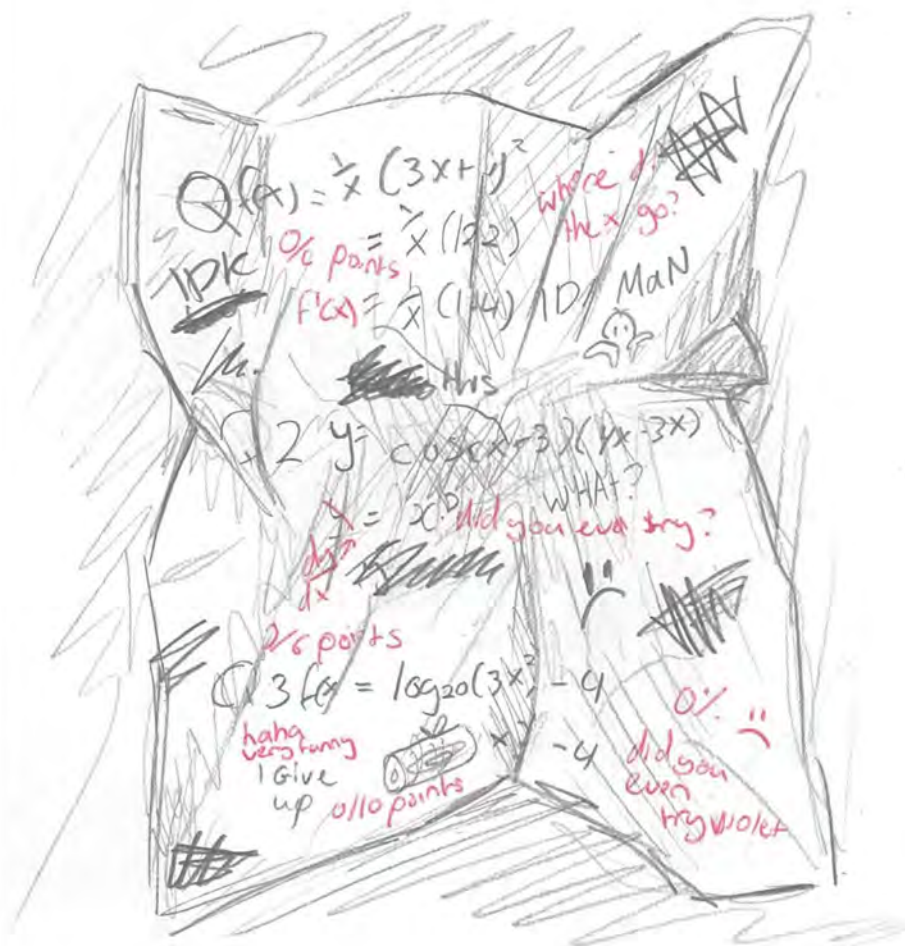
Violet raised a perfect eyebrow at the observation.

"Yeah."

Talima suddenly noticed the faint tear stains on the girl's face and angrily scribbled notes covering the page.

"How about we go for a walk and you take a break? I still have some questions to ask you, if you've got the time."

"Sure."



20:21 - Violet

"The unit three exam was pretty rough, huh?"

"What does that have to do with your little investigation?"

Violet wasn't in the mood to discuss her **homework** with a stranger. The girl sighed and pulled out a small notebook from her pocket, and read aloud what was written.

"So, did you notice anything out of the ordinary last night? Have any animals been spotted near the set?"

Violet answered each of her questions, though so much of her memory was foggy.

Everything from this past week had been stress: over lines, over school, over the mysterious destruction of equipment, and it was all a blur. She dug her nails into her palms, grounding herself in the pain.

After a full lap around the film set, questions and questions, dragging on, Talima slipped the notebook back into her pocket.

"So, Violet, what was it like on the set of Mako Mermaids?"

"I mean... I didn't notice anything as bizarre as *this* happening there, but maybe-"

"Oh, no," The detective cut her off. "I meant, what was it like to act there?"

"The set of Mako? The best. They had great food, excellent people, ugh, and the beach! What I wouldn't give to be back there."

Talima smiled, dimples denting softly near the corner of her lips. "Sounds like Mua."

"Mua?"

"My island. Heh, what I wouldn't give to be back there."

Violet raised an eyebrow, intrigued to find some emotion from the stiff girl.

"Then why are you here?"

Talima stopped, silent for a moment. She turned, deep brown eyes meeting hers.

"School, I suppose."

"School? You mean like Uni or..."

"No. School, like... high school."

Violet smirked. "Twenty-one, huh? Well, who's surprised."

"That obvious, was I?"

"Talima, darling, you couldn't act if you tried."

Talima's smile erupted, a laugh escaped her lips, and Violet laughed with her. It was contagious.

"What about mermaids, then?" Violet chuckled.

"Mermaids? What do you mean?"

"On your island."

"Mua?!" Talima chuckles, "Maybe no mermaids on Mua. But we have stories. We have our stories there. Not that you'd really care to-".

"Maybe you should tell me about them sometime?" Violet interrupted her, she wanted Talima to keep going. "Maybe it'd make a good TV series."

"And what, you'd play someone's evil twin?"

"Who else could!?"

21:30 - Talima

The two girls sat, talking, laughing, surrounded by film crew, bustling, packing up what undamaged supplies they had spent the evening filming with.

"So, what do you get up to when you're not filming? Find anything cool around here?"

"To be honest, I don't get a lot of breaks. And when I do, it's always spent fixing this stupid wig."

"Haha, fair enough!"

"It's awful, I hate having to wear all this." Violet chuckled, reaching up to take it off. The blonde facade was stripped away, and Violet's red hair fell limply about her shoulders. Recognisably red. "What about you?"

"When I can get out of boarding, I like going to the creek. The water's nice. When it's flowing, at least."

"Boarding?"

"Boarding school."

"Oh..." Violet trailed off, looking at Talima. "I like water too. It's calming. Where is it?"

"Just down the hill, we should go together sometime. "

Violet smiled, looking into the sparse gums. "I'd like that."

The girls sat in silence for a second, moonlight spilling through the trees.

"I like your nails!" Talima smiled, taking Violet's long, elegant hand in hers.

"Thank you!" She held her other hand up for Talima to see. "I lost one in my sleep last night, it's a bit sad really."

"Oh no... they're so pretty though."



22:50 - Violet

"Violet!?" The director's voice thundered, disrupting the girls. "What are you even doing?" She turned, looking up into his face. "I was talking to the detective."

"Distracting the detective? God, Violet, go to your caravan, put that wig back on. We've still got stuff we need to film."

Violet stood up frantically, brushing leaf matter off her perfect dress.

"Sorry, I'll get there now."

He turned, threatening to walk away.

"Oh, and Violet, if I get another email from Distance Ed Brisbane about your grades, I swear..."

She looked to the ground, eyes wide. Clamping her hands violently shut.

"I'm. Trying." She said, presumably to herself.

Talima looked at her, standing, slowly. She rested her hand on Violet's shoulder.

"I'm fine." She shrugged her off. "It's fine."

Talima frowned at the back of Violet's head.

"Do you want some help with-"

"No!" She fell silent, breathing heavily into the cold air. "You should get back to work."

Violet walked off, fast, across the frozen ground, rubbing her arm against her face.

23:15 - Talima

The bustling crowd of cast and crew dispersed. Fading away into trailers of makeup, cameras and costumes. Facade, pretension and sleep. Silence. Finally, Talima could get to work, scanning photographs of scattered tables, of the torn marquee, cataloguing dispersed props. She took her notebook from her pocket, pressing it to the scratched trailer, rubbing blue crayon into the imprint. This was an eye-opening experience for Talima; she never realised how toxic the film industry was.

No wonder them people matha stress ya, n Violet act like em sabe everything. Ay where this Violet, noh noh I think em there stress.

Talima searched the set and walked over to the caravan designated as Violet's dressing room; however, no Violet in sight. Talima now knew better than to assume she quit and went home. She thought back to her **yarn** with Violet and remembered where she might be.

Branches crunched below her feet as she approached the creek. Something about the cold breeze that sliced her skin or the bright moon that illuminated the bush created an eerie atmosphere that was somewhat calming. A noise interrupted her peace. She snapped to attention, grasping her torch, a weapon against the dark. The light caught on a pair of eyes, piercing through the dark.

"Watch it!!" Violet's voice echoed in a strained, rough tone.

Her eyes had a red tinge that was slightly fluorescent. The redness in her eyes faded, and Talima could clearly see the tears pooling in Violet's eyes, and her fingers twisted in her scalp. Talima turned the torch off, dropping her arm to her side.

"Oh, it's you."

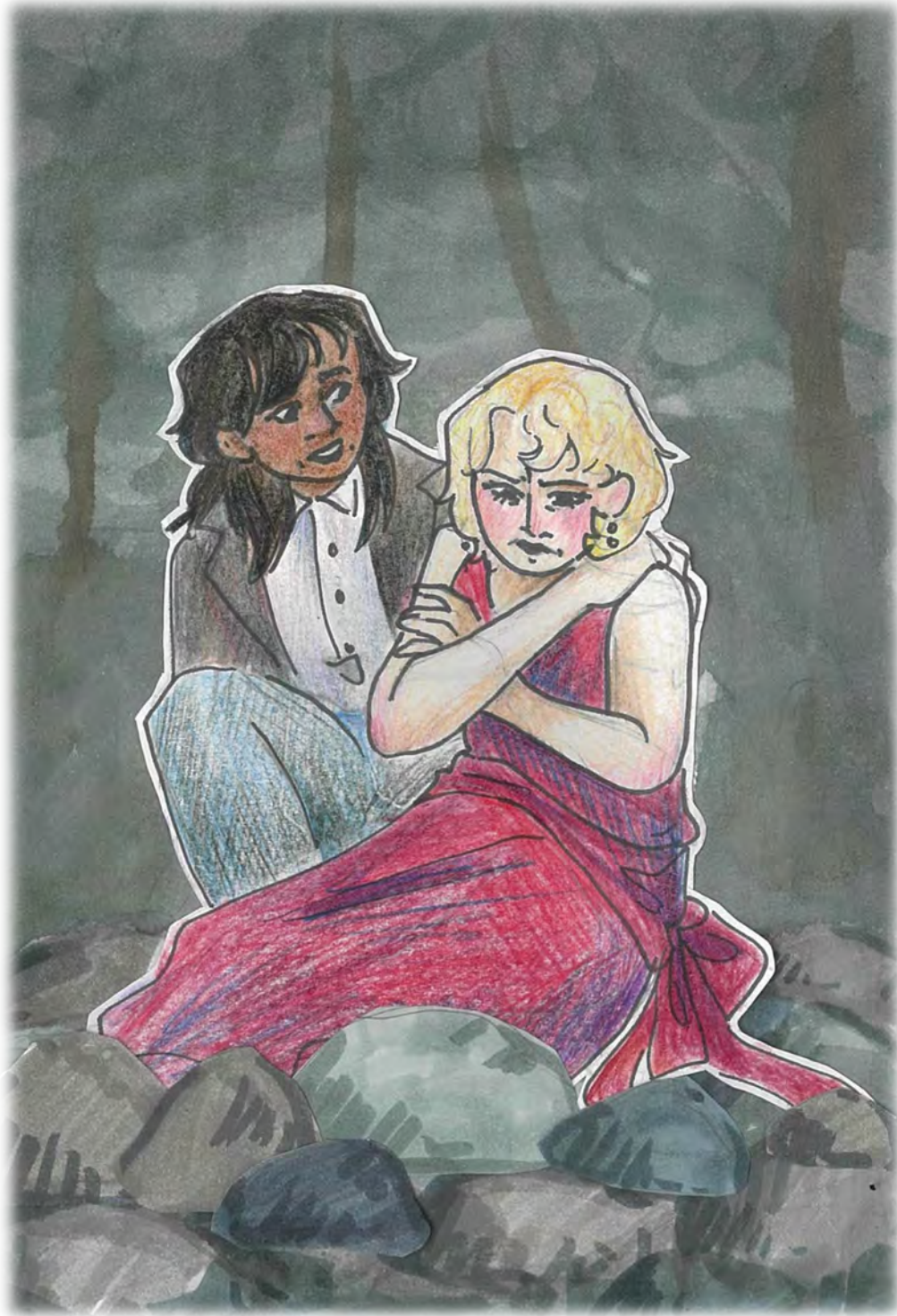
"Wow, don't be too happy to see me."

Blonde wig, polyester dress. Violet stepped out from the dark, rubbing her eye with the heel of her palm.

"I see you found the creek! It's a bit scary down here. These howling winds and all sorts of spirits in the forest. Someone, or something, could steal your soul, you know."

"I don't care about spirits, and I don't care about stupid forests, okay!" Violet's voice cracked and started to return to that strained tone. "I care about factual things, not your stupid Island fairytales. The fact that my grades are slipping. The fact that I can't seem to get this dumb scene right. The fact that-" Violet's breathing became shallow and more rapid, "the fact that I might not even graduate."

Talima could see Violet battling with her body; to breathe, to talk, to express her raw emotions. Talima watched her tear the wig off her head and clench onto a handful of locks. Twisting her fingers deep into her skull as she violently gnawed on her lower lip.



Talima never thought she would ever see her this way. Certainly, a **novel** experience.

"Violet. Breathe."

Violet's cheeks flushed, and Talima could hear her teeth grinding.

"Don't. Tell. Me. To. Breathe."

She seemed to let out every molecule of oxygen left in her system as she yelled her last word. Her nails ran down her arms, leaving a red streak and blotches of blood leaking from her skin like her reason leaving her brain.

23:37 - Violet

Her skin was cracking, her eyes burning. Nothing was real anymore, not through the tears drooling streaks of mascara down her cheeks, her artificial disposition smeared crudely against the polyester skirt. The combination of grit and tears against her hands stung when she wiped her eyes, causing more tears to well up alongside an animalistic scream from her throat.

Violet cradled herself as Talima stepped closer. The girl placed a hand on her shoulder, and Violet tensed up, unable to make out her words. The fire got brighter, her skin rougher, her nails dug deep into the flesh of her shoulders, and another cry escaped from her lips, unable to maintain the facade she had kept so well. Talima had come to the one place Violet felt safe. Talima was doing her job. Talima was about to see the monster she had tried so hard to suppress. Talima listened when no one else ever had. Talima was here.

Talima doesn't care about you.

"Go away."

Violet found the voice unfamiliar, though it came from her own throat. It was too scratchy, too deep, too loud. She could feel every muscle tensing as her breath became ragged and shaky. "Please..." She pleaded, anchoring her hands in the rough soil.





23:59 - Talima

Talima turned to face Violet, the moonlight seeming to capture the warmth of her natural hair slipping from the blonde wig, highlighting the cool tones of midnight.

"Violet?" She asked, stepping forward with a nurturing stance.

"I said, go away!" Violet cried while trying to hide her tearful face behind her hair.

"It's oka-"



00:00 - Talima

Talima was cut off by what seemed to be the shriek of Violet's bones rupturing beneath her.

"Please!" Violet cried, backing into a tall tree.

Each step was another crunch of bones against the gravel.

"What's happening to you!?"

Talima's voice grew smaller as Violet's frame pushed against her skin, flesh becoming visible to the eye and her skin splitting in ways Talima didn't know was possible. Violet stumbled to the side, her clothes tightening around her growing, mutated body.

"Violet!" Talima shouted, although keeping her distance from the creature unfolding in front of her.

"Leave!"



Violet choked before her body lurched forward, the vertebrae in her spine revealing one by one as they tore through flesh, skin and clothing. Talima screamed and covered her mouth with her shaken hands as Violet struggled to hold the weight of her new form.



Fur - the colour of Violet's hair appeared through the wreckage of what used to be a beautiful girl. Talima watched as Violet turned towards her, no longer a human but a muscled, tawny animal. Violet took a breath and closed her eyes, as if she was accepting the transformation. One more crack sounded in front of Talima before she was met with a dingo-like creature with the eyes of Violet.



"V-Violet?" Talima gulped, unsure of how to process what she had just seen. The werewolf stared back at her, a fierce look deep within her irises. She didn't move, she didn't growl, she just stared right back into the depths of Talima's eyes. Fear and admiration crossed her as she unknowingly crouched before the beast. What had been Violet stepped forward, meeting Talima in the middle.

"Beautiful..." Talima murmured as she observed the creature.

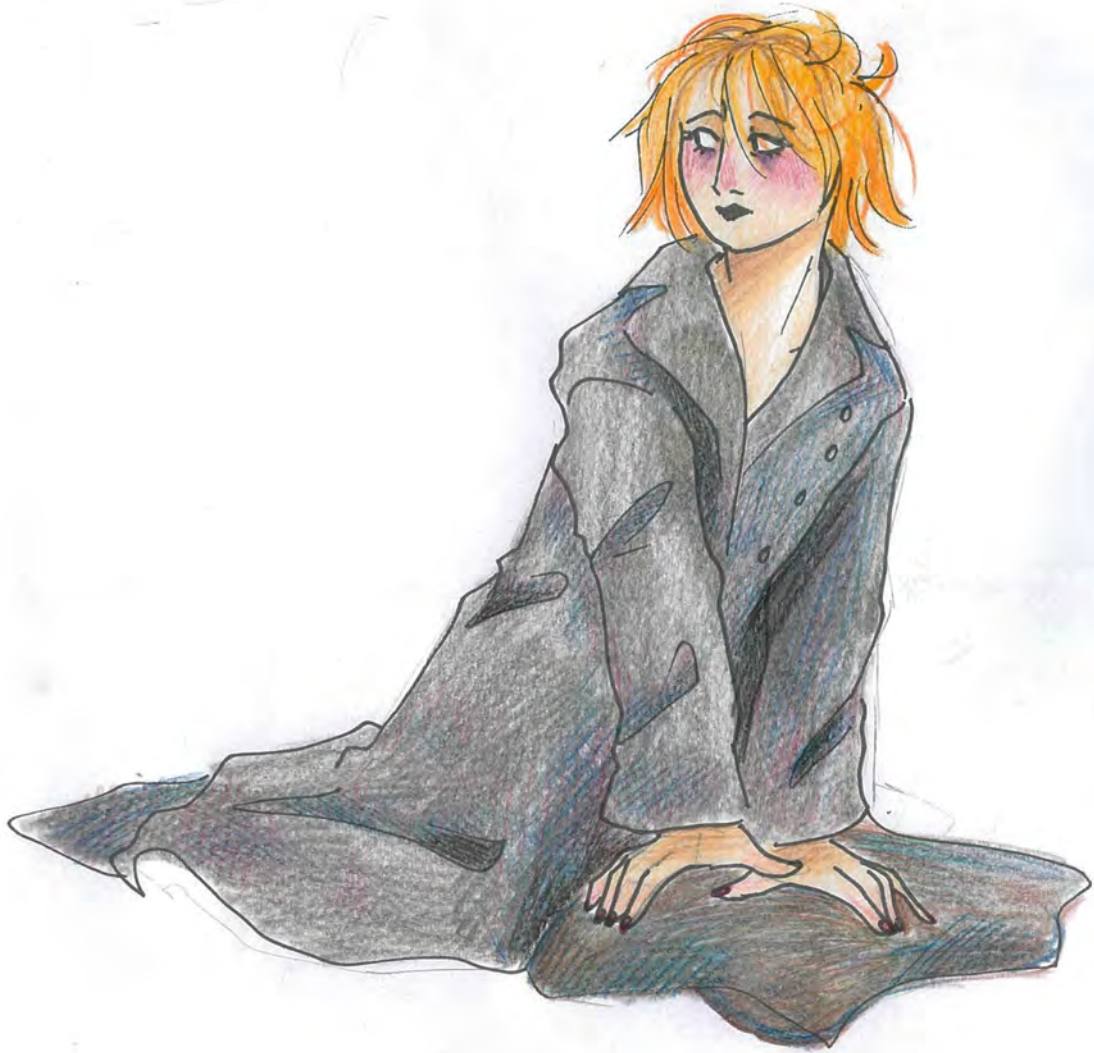


The same midnight glow which once illuminated Violet's hair now weaved through her fur with ease, different shades of ginger and red trailing the canine's body. But before Talima could reach her palm in the air to stroke the animal's fur, she leaped away - over the dry creek bed and bounded through thick, dark gum trees. And in the blink of an eye, she disappeared into the night, leaving nothing but her shredded clothes before Talima.

05:30 - Violet

Violet yawned, turned over, and smelled it - worn clothing. The distinct stench of a coat that could only be found at a local op shop or a dumpster nearby. Despite every nerve in her brain yelling to take the thing off, it was warm. She didn't hate the soft, heavy wool against her skin... Her *bare* skin. Suddenly aware of the trees overhead, Violet sat up and saw the detective, sitting idly on her phone, facing the other direction.

"How did..." she started to mutter, confused, and yet feeling more well-rested than she had in weeks.



Talima turned and got up, walking over to Violet and sitting beside her.

"I like your hair." She noted, and Violet immediately brought an insecure hand up to the mess of tangled red on her head, recalling the events of last night as she ran her fingers down through it.

Her mind was filled with images of what had happened, and what she had become. She shrunk a little, bringing her knees to her chest before a comforting hand landed on her shoulder.

"I won't tell anyone."

Talima was met with Violet's big, tear-stained eyes, as she whispered, "Why not?"

"I don't think you need much more on your plate right now. But you'll figure this out."



Talima removed her hand and reached into a reusable shopping bag she had been carrying. "I snuck into your trailer and found a similar dress you can wear," she said, pulling out a sequined red dress and passing it over. Despite her inner protests, more tears began to well up in Violet's eyes. "Thank you, Talima. What can I do in return? You've finished the case." Talima smirked to herself. Violet continued, "Surely I can get one of the crew to drive you home at least?" Talima's eyes widened and she anxiously checked her watch. "You know, I may need to take you up on that lift..."



Outside the brick building, Violet stood watch for any staff members nearby.

"I can't believe you snuck out of here!" She whispered to a shifty-looking Talima, who was ducking away from the nearest security camera.

"You're welcome," She rolled her eyes, but smiled. "You have my Insta. Text me if you need to talk, or if you ever want to complain about calculus."

She paused, unsure of how to respond.

"I mean, all good if you never want to see me again!"

She cut off the detective by wrapping her arms around her. Violet hugged her only friend, and Talima hugged her back.

"I will," Violet whispered, as Talima let go and slipped back through the window of her dorm. Before closing the window, the detective leaned out.

"But please, Violet... go to therapy. I want you to talk to someone about these issues," she laughed, and Violet nodded.

"I will."

Against the slowly rising sun, the TV star walked back down to the boarding school's car park, running a hand through her loose, red hair.





Pride, privilege and paws. A young movie star and a high school detective cross paths in a case examining the mysterious destruction of a movie set.

Set in rural Queensland, Violet is an overworked and stressed-out teenage girl just learning how to manage her emotions while simultaneously starring in a tense filming environment.

With a heartless director barking orders and the piling homework, Violet's careful facade begins to crack.

Talima, a Torres-Strait Islander girl with a dream of being a detective, deceives her way into the mysterious case of the broken equipment. With only her wit and a pocket notebook, she works hard to seal her name as a professional. Will she be able to uncover the mystery, or will she fail miserably and give up on a silly dream?

For ages 12-16

