

Year 12 English Advanced 2016

Discovery Short Stories

Through Term 1 2016, Year 12 English Advanced have been studying “Discovery” as part of their HSC Area of Study. Students were given a stimulus as were asked to write a short story (between 200 – 350 words) that related to the stimulus in the context of “Discovery.”

Enjoy reading a selection of short stories as written by the Year 12 English Advanced class of 2016.

*- Mr M Abboud
(English KLA Coordinator/English Advanced Teacher)*

“Maybe I Should Change My Keychain...” by Jennifer Katrib

The scariest part was the take-off...

As the engine roared to life and the passengers practically dived into their seats, a familiar feeling of uneasiness washed over me. Ah, the take-off. A time where the pilot babbles on in his monotonous voice about safety precautions (which would probably be highly useful in the events of a crash) but I'm too busy fearing a crash to even listen.

They say overthinking highly exaggerates the circumstances of an event and causes majority of the fear. But after tirelessly researching plane crashes and air sickness weeks in advance, it's safe to say I am not overthinking right?

In the midst of my internal dilemma, I noticed the wings of the plane, as sharp as a knife, cutting through the fluffy clouds around me. Ah, what a sight.

Wait a minute! Clouds?

Due to my undying fear of the take-off, I missed the take-off!

In this moment I realized that fear is in the mind, rather than the actual events. I was no longer scared of the take-off!

"You've been staring at that chain for 10 minutes." This is when I snapped out of my victorious flashback and realized I found my keys.

Maybe I should change my keychain...

“A One Way Trip” by George El Bazouni

There was still a long way to go. The busy highlights and beeping of horns filled the streets of the old town, bound by ocean without ways to cross it. In the chaos, a faint cry of panic sounded through my ears, the clanging of the chain the smiling pilot burdened me with upon arrival, like a bell chime calling its followers to itself, back to where they once came.

After our momentary farewells, the plane lifted off again to seek its next passenger, to take them to a new journey, eventually giving the same reward, a ticket to the past, but without a way to get back there. Upon closer observance of the town, there was nothing to be seen, nothing to resemble the chain, one of a kind, leaving us only one way to go... forward.

Forward, past the bellowing of the bushes, the humming of the birds and the towering lampposts melodically leading the way to what I had come to find... to find “him.”

***“Lift Off”* by Jennifer Khoury**

I could feel my heart now. It played a slow rhythm of beats. Then the adrenaline kicked in. It made it difficult to climb the step that led to cockpit. It was a Cessna 172S VH-EDD, explained a tall, thin man who spoke in an Irish accent. He took a seat on the right hand side of the plane, and to my embarrassment, had no difficulties doing so. He put on a headset, and asked me to do the same before I heard the violent roar of the engine.

He spoke airman jargon to Air Traffic Control, while I hastily crossed myself. He chuckled, and asked if it covered him too. I shrugged shyly and explained that it is just a habit of mine. We shared a brief smile before he continued. "Okay, so I need you to steer the plane down this runway," he instructed. I wrapped my fingers around a steering device that was shaped like three-quarters of a doughnut. He told me it was called the 'yoke.' He had one on his side too.

We started rolling. It was just like driving a car...a very noisy car.... "Now I need you to pull back slowly on this throttle," he directed, whilst warning me to keep one hand on the yoke. I did as I was asked, and watched the nose of the plane rise higher and higher. I only stopped when I heard him say, "We have lift off."

I still remember that day. The clear blue sky, in which swam white clouds and sunrays. Every tree that towered above me now became a little speck beneath me. And the memory of it all still lives in a little silver keying, in the shape of a plane.

***“Home”* by Michael Nemer**

In the grey I sleep and spend countless hours with destinations that have no meaning and houses that are not home. I feel alone and segregated. The long hours on planes and the meetings in different cities has left me a robot rather than a person. The nights turn into nights and the days never end however it is time that this life leaves me. I must find myself again. It has pushed away my family and friends. Only to be greeted by sir and Mr has left me a hollow shell.

Yet it is time...

I wonder where I will start; the life I try to escape is the life I'm going to live, turning in a suit for a shirt, and a briefcase full of papers to a bagful of souvenirs. I will finally become a tourist rather than a one nights stand. At 70 years of age and retirement has finally come. The key chain still has no key yet the key chain finally has meaning. I will never have a house or a backyard to water my ever green garden. Yet my home will become the world yet again through tourism rather a suit. It is not the life I had intended though it is the life that is come.

And as I hold the key chain in my hand and the final call is called for my name on the paging system, I will finally be at home and at peace as my journey commences where it all starts on the plane...

“Take Me Far Away” by Rochelle Elias

After several hours of dusting and sorting out my tiny bedroom, I finally reached the part that involved cleaning under my double single bed. I was shocked when I knelt down and observed how many different kinds of old shoes I had piled under my comfortable bed. All these years I was blaming my younger sister Sophia for stealing my shoes when I had them stored myself under my bed. Sadly all these different shoes but none of them had a pair.

I reached out my tired hand and caught sight of a box. A box that was full of grey dust covering it entirely. As I wiped down the rectangular box I realised it was the one which contained all the photos of my beautiful mother and me in Europe. As I opened out the box, tears started racing down my face. I found the key ring which had an airplane silvery charm attached. I recalled that day my beautiful mother gave it to me after having an unpleasant day. That day I lost my luggage bag at Sydney Departure airport. She gifted it to me and said, “Let your dreams fly high towards the sky just like this airplane. On the back of the airplane charm, the words engraved, “TAKE ME FAR AWAY!”

Airplanes were my favourite, especially the take off. I loved viewing things from an eagle’s perspective. Being between the fluffy white clouds in an airplane was amazing, because it gives me the feeling of being full of power. I wanted to explore newer foreign places, it helped me discover my inner self capabilities which were hidden. I admired staring out of the airplane windows because everything seemed so small and harmless.

After thinking so hard I wondered to myself, when will I book my airplane trip to Germany?

“The Real Adventure” by George Abou Antoun

I have always wanted to travel, to see new places and experience things people can only dream of. The best part about travelling and being in the plane, up so high with the clouds, When I’m up there, I forget about everything for a while and start to imagine how my destination will be, if I ever make it there, I know how dangerous flying can be from all the stories that go around. I haven’t been on a holiday for a while now. I enjoy being a tourist here, a stranger to the environment, that’s what’s great about travelling, half the time you have no idea where you are or what you are doing. It gives you time to explore these unfamiliar places and meet new people, but best of all you are left with memories of your experiences that were either good or bad, but hopefully mainly good.

As my plane starts to land, I look at my key ring, a key ring that was given to me by a friend who knew I had a thing for planes and flying. I don’t go anywhere without it as it reminds me of home and my family/friends, it too has travelled the world with me and will continue to.

Now that I’m walking off the plane, I’m now a tourist in an unknown place. This is where the real adventure starts...

***“Shoulders of Giants”* by George Sassine**

“The only journey is the one within...”

That was the last thing I was able to hear my first true love say to me before she left this earth with a directive knowing all the pain she had caused and unconsciously taken me to the depths of hell with her. I had lost myself. I was lost though all the torment. I was lost in all the arguments. I was lost in her just as she had lost herself in me and not a day goes past that I wouldn't go through all that pain to hear her heart beat just once more. Now I stand in the house where she left me holding her keys, the last remnant of her and her infamous aeroplane key-ring that was product of oh so much humour and memories.

There is nothing like returning to a place that remains unchanged to find the ways in which you, yourself have altered.

I was afraid, afraid after all these years to come back to this momentous location and have nothing to offer you more than that day you left me. They say people have different ways of grieving but truth is how am I meant to get over you. But that's when it hits me that in the eyes of you the simple sound of “beat, beat, beat” coinciding with my heartbeat was enough to make you proud and I apologize that after all these years I have been trying to fill a whole in my heart with the knife I unintentionally put in there. This is where my journey begins and through you I stand on the shoulders of a giant and see further...

...further than ever before.

***“3”* by Annalise Stanton**

Over my eighteen years of existence, I had participated in many conversations. Many spoke and many listened, but not many heard.

One piece of information I can really admit I ‘heard’ may surprise some and may enrage others, but to me, it was comforting. Over my eighteen years of existence, I was told to build a good reputation with good grades, to get a good job, to pay for a good house, to happily live in with my good family. However, despite how appealing this smooth road ahead seemed, it did not leave much room to be human and was completely unrealistic. Over my eighteen years’ worth of conversations, only one statement stuck: *“We are all perpetually flawed.”*

Hearing that statement was the modern day equivalent of a passage out of the Book of Revelations, for everything I once knew changed right before my eyes...

I realised there is no satisfaction in striving for an impossible result. I realised there is no satisfaction in hiding behind masks as if life was one grand masquerade ball. I realised there is no satisfaction in trying to be superhuman. I realised there is no satisfaction in trying to be anyone other than myself. But most importantly, and above all, I realised that I am only human.

I am every mistake I have ever made. I am every person I have ever hurt. I am every hurtful word I have ever said. I am every fear that makes me tremble. I am every regret that weighs me down.

However, each of those mistakes has taught a lesson. Each of those people has taught me to be empathetic. Each of those words has taught me to be kind. Each of those fears has taught me to be dauntless. Each of those regrets has taught me to take the risk and be free.

I am human, and consequently I am perpetually flawed.

However, the impact of these flaws have done nothing but good on my overall character, so can I really consider them flaws at all?

“The Known Unknown” by Christopher Kendirijan

The persistent pop-ups, warned me of the need to close the webpage. A unprecedented result was something of which my mind would be gratified, however the realization of the need of one’s parents to know every facet of their child’s life was somewhat the drive to open it. It could conclude in two ways: I become the pride of which upholds my family’s reputation or I simply go about my life tolerating the shrill ramifications of my mother’s plea of forgiveness from the Virgin Mary, on my behalf. Either way it will be something never to be forgotten, especially considering the immense significance of one’s intellectual ability in this overbearing culture.

The Black Plague with an Italian twist was soon to be transpiring as I sub-consciously reveal to myself the true essence of my future of which my mother’s sorrow and my father’s disillusionment would make an effort to rid me of any guiltlessness I had in the past. My mother will want to know about this before I do, so perhaps I should get on with it before I think of an excuse as to why I lost my login. The mouse moved itself upwards towards the formalities of the page and mystically clicked on the large writing in order for me to discover my predestined future...

“Everything I once knew, changed right before my eyes.”

“Involuntary” by Murielle Abou Karam

“Melanie? Melanie can you hear me? Melanie!”

“I’m, I’m sorry Doctor, I just got a little bit carried away...”

“Is it okay if you told me by what exactly...did you have a memory? Or a thought you could share?” He should have understood by now though. The hand, slumped over the arm rest of the chair, the legs, sprawled out in front of the body, the eyes that stared along the yellowed walls and into the corner of the room where they remained for the majority of the hour, were not in her control. Her mind had been abducted for a while now. She did not feel it being lured away. But she remembered when it was.

The events of that day were etched in the recesses of her mind, painted so intricately that it replayed them every night, in vivid detail. That was its tactic. It worked almost like how a vaccine builds bodily immunity against a disease by the injection of its resemblance into the veins, to give the body an idea of how it would react. However, unlike a vaccine it would not result in the strengthening of her body, but in the loss of her composure and the rapid unsteady shake of her hands.

Until her mind fled willingly.

"Melanie, please let it go. Let something, anything go." He urged. Her head snapped from its tilted position to allow her eyes to stare right at his. Her features slowly relaxed and her eyes softened as her arms wrapped tightly around her chest.

"Everything I once knew changed right before my eyes..." She whispered quietly, permitting the one tear to roll down the length of her pale cheek and drop onto the cotton sleeves of her shirt.

Grief was now in control. All her actions were involuntary. Though she would not resign to the pain. She would not lose hold of herself completely. Her tactic this time around, was numbness.

"Gone for Good" by Rita Hatem

Six minutes to six, the clock over the information booth read. My stomach twisted and churned with excitement, nerves and joy. In exactly six minutes I was to finally meet with the man who has filled such a special place in my life for the past 4 years. As a swarm of troops began to flood into the airport platforms, my legs immediately jerk with adrenaline, eager to reunite with the one person I have longed to see. The tall figures of the men nearing me began to overshadow my comparatively shorter frame as I desperately try to search for my fiancé in the seemingly endless flood of several shades of green, black and brown.

"Mrs Kennedy, am I right?" A formal and sophisticated voice bellows from behind me. I turn around to be greeted by who seemed to be the General Army Officer - Lieutenant Blandford - if I remember correctly from William's writings. *"Oh Mr Blandford, how do you do?"* I state, half-heartedly greeting the man who had interrupted my searchings for William. *"Not too well I'm afraid..."* His voice fades as his eyes dart away from mine and down to his intertwined hands. My heart immediately begins to pound as his sunburnt face disappears from my immediate vision. *"W-what is it Lieutenant?"* I anxiously stutter, as the fear of what was yet to be said dominated my emotions.

"Mrs Kennedy, William passed away on the 17th last week, I'm so sorry. He was a very lovely soul." He sorrowfully proclaimed while handing me a photograph of the grave where his deceased body lay. My bottom lip quivered at the sight of the photograph that was clutched within my trembling hands. A man whom I loved and cherished so dearly had been so effortlessly stripped away from me through the dreadful horrors of war. A warm tear rolled down my face and over the hills of my cheeks... everything I once knew has changed right before my eyes.

"Dumpsterdam" By James Fares

"If I was to be honest this is not the ideal way I want to spend my break."

Josline closed the old, worn out copy of her teenage fiction story and shut her eyes in hope of catching some sleep before her long tiresome trip to in her opinion the boring city of Amsterdam which was the epitome of sadness and disgust.

It wasn't the first time she visited this place, and it wasn't the second time either, she had been to 'Dumpsterdam' as she liked to call it over ten times... ten times! After packing, her usual itinerary of have as least fun possible, and maybe scavenge through an old history textbook to cure her

boredom.

The yelling out of her mum sounded familiar *'Jos! , Jos! Don't forget... early wake up tomorrow!* This phrase has become so familiar to her and as per usual hurried off to bed and took one last glance at her phone before ultimately dozing off.

The main thing to remember here is that Josline hates visiting Amsterdam... why? It's the place where *'summer lovin'* is not applicable, where *'fun in the sun'* is an unknown concept, where *'family days'* are almost apocalyptic... it's the place where Josline's family exists.

The doors of the house are shut for the families last night for a month or so, and the lights officially go out. The last of the bags were lined up along the hallway, and were all locked using a small key attached to a funny looking key ring, which was accompanied by a large silver airplane, with the words inscribed *'made in Amsterdam'*.

"Just My Luck" by Sharon Hatem

I lay there in shock still trying to comprehend and absorb the news I have just received, continuously repeating the words "We crashed" in my head. I feel as though someone had punched me in my lungs and all the breath just got knocked out of my body. How could this happen I thought to myself, I thought he was in control. I am with a few other survivors on a boat floating to nowhere. With the strong, deadly sun beating down on my severely sunburnt shoulders. Trying to use every last bit of energy I have left just to do the simple daily task of sitting up. My lips are dry and chapped, and I feel as though someone had stuck a cactus down my throat. As I look around to the other survivors, my heart is pumping out of my chest, not knowing what I am about to see. I feel a sense of relief that I am not here alone. Jasmine has a bloody bandage around her head, John has a broken leg, Emma keeps wincing about her arm and I've broken a few fingers. We have already used all of our water as we didn't think help would take this long to arrive.

I grabbed the only bag I brought with me and tried to search through it one more time, praying that there is something I could have missed before, clearly I was mistaken. All I found was some sand, an empty water bottle, my useless phone, some wet gum and a stupid aeroplane key ring that seemed to follow me everywhere I went. I always seemed to have a near death experience with this keychain and I couldn't help but think that maybe it was bad luck. I stare back at myself in the reflection of the key ring, tears start to fill my eyes as I lose the last piece of hope I have left. As the tears fell down my cheeks, only then did I realise how many cuts I had on my face. I look closer and something is moving in the reflection of the key ring. I'm starting to hallucinate; I thought to myself, I'm going crazy. But I wasn't, the reflection was getting bigger and bigger. It took me a few seconds to realise that help has finally arrived.

As I sit in the hospital with minor injuries, I realise myself still clasp on to the aeroplane key ring. I got up to throw it away when a helicopter pilot stopped me and said *"Lucky you had that keychain when you did, it was the reflection that caught our eye and made us see you"*. It only took those few words to make me discover that this key ring may actually be good luck, as it has always been a 'near' death experience and not actual death.