

# The Bulldog Bark



Advisor: Mr. Barnes

Principal: Mrs. Chamberlain

Your Middle School News Unleashed!

Summer 2016

## 'Reflections' offer snapshots of middle school

**Well, that was fast.** I'm referring, of course, to your school year that has whirled by in the blink of a locker slam. Now it's time to prepare for the wonderful world of eighth-grade or the long journey across the

parking lot to the high school. In your hands, or on your desk, is the fourth and final copy of your student voice, *the Bulldog Bark*.



**Mr. Barnes**

Inside are a bunch of

"reflection" articles – some of my favorites to read, due to the rearview mirror theme in each. I enjoy learning how *you* think *you* have changed, both good and bad. That really is the main purpose of this middle school experience – to find a voice, discover your personality, become acquainted with your identity, reflect on it all and go from there. **So where do you go from here?** May I suggest the article to the right about balancing grades and grit. Then pages 2 through 22. (*Can you believe that? A middle school paper filling 22 pages! Astounding.*) Thank you all and I'll see you up the road.

## A Night on Broadway



National Junior Honor Society, once again, held its successful Senior Prom and turned the middle school gym into a theatrical paradise.

## Student athletes need to also advocate academics

**By Brianna Schuck**  
*Team 8 Barker Athlete*

You can be the best athlete in the entire world, but if your grades aren't right behind you, you won't get very far. If you're an athlete, both grades and sports should be top priorities. The question is, which one comes first? I believe academics should come first.

Without academics, how

far can you really get with athletics? Grades are far more important, honestly. No, that doesn't mean the only thing you can focus on is your grades, but it means your grades should come first.

Meaning, if you have a bunch of homework that is going to take you all night to complete and happen to have

**See Athletes, page 3**

# What emoji do you use most?

By Maggie Reitz  
Team 7 Barker

I was texting my friend and I thought to myself, “I think I’ll do an article on emojis.” So the real question is, what emoji do you use the most? Well, I can start off by telling you that I use a lot of emojis. Emojis are just animated emotions, which is a way to tell people how you’re feeling. It’s kind of hard to say which one I use the most. Anyway, I’ve been getting off topic. I think I use the *laughing* emoji the most.

I’m sure that all of us have heard the saying, “laughter is the best medicine.” So I think that’s why I use the laughing emoji the most. When I’m upset and people



text me something funny, I use that emoji. It makes me feel better. I interviewed some of my friends. Lots of them agreed, and said that they use the laughing emoji the most. So I’m sure if you asked your friends, they’d agree. However, there are emojis for *everything*.

Although, I do use other emojis, there are probably about 200 of them. If you ask people in our

school how much time they spend talking to their friends, they’ll probably tell you that they don’t have very much time. For all I know, you might not even know how your friends are feeling.

I think emojis are good for letting your friends know how you are feeling. Anyway, the real reason I decided to write this article is because I wanted to see who agreed with me. So, when it comes to texting your friends, I would use the laughing emoji.

Unless it isn’t funny. But laughing is a way to stay positive. Which, in my opinion, is something that is necessary. Don’t let life or people make you negative.



Earlier in the year, the middle school held a Pink Out for Breast Cancer Awareness. Pictured, Evan Zambo and Cade Hammer show their pink pride.

# RESPECT: *You give what you get*

By Brianna Schuck

*Team 8 Respectful Barker*

Of course we all know that famous saying “you give what you get,” but do we all know what it really means, and does it mean

what you give and what you get.

For example, you could be the nicest person one has ever met, probably because you have a good reputation and because you care for others, but that doesn’t show respect. Respect is when

So, what does that saying really mean? It means that you should be the bigger person and be true to everyone, as you want them to be true to you. If you want respect, you have to give respect. Never take anything for granted. You may work so hard for an amazing opportunity, and throughout this journey, you may push everything else out of the way and become rude or disrespectful.

At the same time, someone else may not forget about respect and all of their priorities while still working towards the same goal. They don’t let this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity get to them, because if they don’t get it, they are already happy with what they have.

That is *true* respect, and that is the difference between working hard towards success with respect and dignity, and working hard toward success by focusing on one priority. Stay true to who you are, even if something gets in the way. After all, you give what you get.



what we perceive it to mean?

A common error understood by many is that of this very quote. When I hear this quote, I picture respect, more specifically, giving respect and getting respect. However, there’s more to it than just

you know your limits, you go through with what you say, don’t argue, don’t complain, put others before yourself, and never give up. You listen to what others have to say and you’re that friend that everyone needs and longs to have.

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## Priorities must stay aligned always

**Athletes, from page 1**

practice that night, be the wise person and tell your coach that you can’t go to practice because you have a lot of homework that is due the next day. Your coach should respect that and understand, and if not, complete as

much work as you can before practice; that way, after practice, you won’t have as much to stress over. However, homework isn’t an excuse to miss practice every night, either. In order to be a good athlete, you constantly have to work at your goal and continue to stride forward. If you’re skip-

ping practice every week because of school, how will you be able to become a better athlete?

Don’t get too involved in one thing that you can’t keep up with another and keep your priorities straight.



# Random thoughts, one final time

By Sabrina Grabarits

*Team 8 Ponderer*

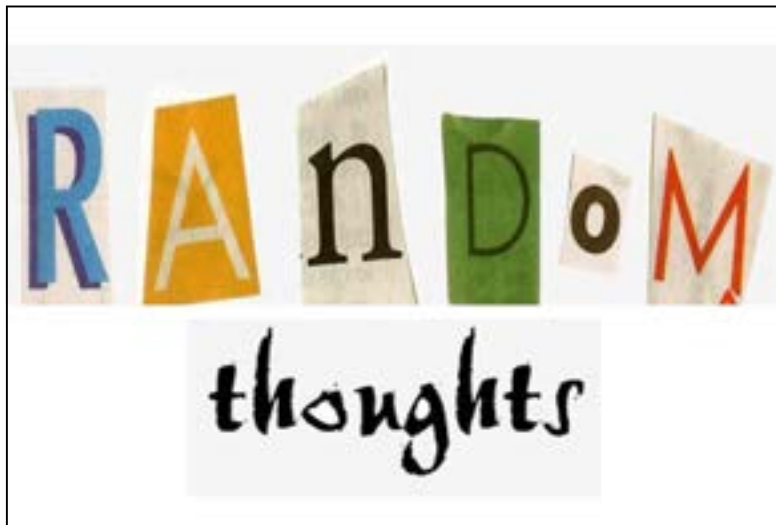
I promised that I'd do this one. So...random thoughts...well, when I think random thoughts, I always think about school. Or One Direction. Or my friends. So yeah. Anyway, I thought about maybe asking questions again but I don't know. I think I'll just make this...well, random thoughts by me. And heads up now, it'll most likely be all over the place so try and bear with me.

First, I'm going to...I don't know. When I'm forced to think, that's when my brain decided to die. So right now, I'm really drawing a blank. You know what? I'm going to complain. I'm going to be mean (not really) and complain. Alright, so some of the people at this school really rub me the wrong way. A few days ago, I walked into school and a group of boys made fun of my hair because it looked different than I normally have it. Like, excuse you. I'm sorry that I try new things because I like being different. Please, get a life. You are rude. And other people who talk about me behind my back. I know that when I'm talking on DNN, there are people laughing and talking about me. I know because they've told me and I've heard my friends tell me. News flash, people, that hurts. Maybe that's what you want to happen

and maybe you don't care about others' feelings but I think you'd care if that happened to you, I don't care what you say.

Plus, people who are intentionally rude just...get me going. Excuse you, please go get a life and stop ruining my own. Like really. That really gets on my nerves.

Also, people who just don't



do their school work. I just can't understand that. I mean, I totally get it if you miss a problem or two here and there because you get busy but when you flat out don't do it...why? You normally get class time to do it and you can possibly do it in free time during other classes so...I don't get that. Then when they ask you for answers...ugh. That's the worst. Actually, there's a lot that bothers me and most of it has to do with people at school.

Ok...so let me see if I have certain things to complain about that others can relate to. Other than tests, teachers (sorry, but it's true sometimes), people I don't

like and certain homework assignments...not really anything is coming to my head, except the fact that I totally thought I paced myself out well enough but no. Here I am, at this stupid computer for four hours. *Four* hours people, you better enjoy this. I kid, I kid.

You do what you want. I don't care. My neck and back are killing me but this newspaper is so worth the pain. For some reason, I feel better seeing my name and work in a 'professional' newspaper, along with other people's work and with proper jumps and skips than seeing what I've typed on a few pages or have written in a few notebooks. I know it's not like anyone ever comments on the things and stuff but that's not important.

Even if I may not think my writings and articles are worth reading, I always feel better knowing that they're published and read by at least one person. I mean, yeah, it's his job to make sure nothing bad or whatever was put into here...but...still. It feels neat.

So sevens, if you didn't write this year, you need to write next year and those of you who *did* write this year, great! I'm proud. I read everything in that packet. Front to back because I love reading what other people come up with and write. What other people have to say fascinates me. Besides,

**See Sabrina, page 5**

# Random thoughts, one final time

## Sabrina, from page 4

it's something fun to do. Keeps you out of trouble. Gives you something to do when you're bored. I highly recommend that you do that for next year now, as this is the last article.

Annnnd speaking of *that*...that makes me sad. Even though I'm in pain and I'm tired because I had a busy day and it's 10 at night and I'm still not done, I'm still very upset. This is the last time I'll sit at the computer in my awkward positions. The last time I'll kill my neck and stay up a little too late finishing an article or story.

The last time that I'll be writing my story and having other people read it. The last time that I have to rack my brain on what to write. People, this is so sad. Does nobody realize that or does anyone care? Probably not but that's fine. All I know is that I'm going to miss writing for this paper. I get so excited when a new one comes out for reasons already stated. I loved new things to read and looking at my stories and writings.

What else that bothers me is the way I am. Well, parts of it. I will do anything for anyone, even the people that I can't stand and would rather never see again. But it's like, I say one thing wrong and everyone freaks out at me and I'm not allowed to say how I'm feeling or give my reasons on it because I'm always wrong all the time. No matter what I say, someone gets offended and it's frus-

trating because then I take that to heart and then I become quieter. It's stupid and I hate it. I also hate that I can't express myself and feelings because I'm too afraid that they'll offend someone and make them angry so I usually wait until I can't hold it in anymore.

Also, I hate how my emotions are wired. I'm a crier. That's just how it is. I cry when I'm sad and angry and frustrated with myself. I cry when I'm stressed and that's what people don't understand. They think I'm a crybaby and a sore loser because I'm almost in tears if we lose a game in gym. No, I'm actually happy for the team that won and I'm in tears because I could have done something better. That's what that comes from. I could go on about things I don't like about myself but I'm trying not to do that.

Now that I think about this and look back at this, I realize now that this is just like a giant venting machine. But I feel like that's exactly what I need. A venting machine with no face. A person with no voice. I sometimes feel like I can't go to the people I talk to and trust most because we don't see eye to eye on things and I always say something wrong.

Yes, I know people that read this are not going to agree with everything I say and will talk behind my back like many people already do. But that's fine. I just need to get these things off my chest to a voiceless and faceless listener. Ya know? Like sometimes it feels like you only have yourself and posters to talk to.

Sometimes even my One Direction posters can't help me as much as I wish they could. Sometimes I wish I could make friends, keep them and just not say anything to hurt them or lose them. Everything is just so stressful and... ugh.

Guys, this is really important. To all the people, girls and guys alike, who feel so stressed and pressured and alone, you're not. You're never alone. And trust me, self-harming isn't the right choice. Neither is anorexia or bulimia. Ask anyone who's struggled or is struggling with these things and they will tell you to never start. Please.

Well, I don't want to casually skip over that like it didn't happen because I really mean that but I really don't want to end this on such a depressing and sad note. So, everyone, can you believe the end of the year is so close? I can't...I really can't. I'm totally not ready for the high school.

Well, I believe that I'll end it there. To carry out my tradition for the very last time...I totally have to say something about One Direction or Zayn. Yes, people, I am aware that there's only four members left in One Direction. I also know that Zayn is doing very well in his music solo career so all y'all out there who make fun of me like that...yeah, not happening anymore.

Well, goodbye guys. Really, it's been a fun year writing for you. So long...and because I'm weird, over and out.

# Year-End Middle School Reflections

**Going into middle school was scary, I'll admit.** I barely knew the teachers or the school. On Orientation Day for my 7th grade year, I got lost going to Mr. Graver's room! So, yes, I was really scared to start my first day at middle school. Well, it was my first half-day of middle school because I went down to see my brother graduate boot camp that week. Back to school when I returned, though. First day back, I found out what the next 175 days were going to be like. I would have my Specials, then go to science, reading, English, Old World Cultures, and then math.

Starting off, I was scared of almost all the teachers, but then I wasn't so much. All the teachers in 7th grade were extremely nice. I had more than school to occupy me too. I was starting cross country and had practice after school every day. On top of that, I was trying to make enough time to get all my work done and talk to my friends. I knew that middle school was when a lot of things changed, especially friendships, and I really didn't want that to happen to me. I loved my group of friends. We had been together since the 4th or 5th grade and we knew each other really well. Then, though, we just changed. We would keep secrets from one another when we normally told each other everything and we were sitting at new lunch tables. Eventually, something happened I am not obliged to say, and it kind of just broke all of our

trust and relationship strands. It was a hard time and if I could go back and change it, I really would. It was a terrible time but it eventually led me to some of my good friends today. I started hanging out with Brianna "Schucky", Kathy, Catherine, Ava, and Dylan. Those people are some of my closest friends today. I still hung out with one or two of the people from my old group, but looking back I don't ever think it was the same.

That year I also started to play co-ed soccer for our school. There were only about five 7th graders, the rest were 8th graders. At first, we lost a lot of games, but then when we started to work together as a team, we started to win the games. We ended up beating all the teams, some more than once, too. I had a really good experience with soccer and I couldn't wait to do it again in 8th grade. The end of my 7th grade year came way too quickly. Even to this day I would *love* to spend one more day in 7th grade. Sad as it is though, you have to continue even if you don't want to. All I knew was that as of 2:11 on June 9th, 2015, I was going to be in 8th grade the next time I stepped foot in this school.

My 8th grade year is definitely



## Reagan Pender

busier than my 7th grade year. In addition to my extracurricular activities I did last year, I added two more to my list. I am glad I did because I really learned a lot from them: to be patient and work harder than I think I can work. Cross country and soccer have been the main factors in helping me push it to the limit (Corbin Bleu reference) and I am very grateful I have been able to have that.

The teachers in 8th grade are really nice and fun. They joke around a lot, some more than others, but you really learn a lot in their classes. During this year, friends of mine had come and

**See Pender, page 8**



# Year-End Middle School Reflections

**Many students look at school as a place where they are forced to go and think that they're learning useless stuff that they won't need for their futures.** However, I looked past that typical stereotype. To me, school is an opportunity, not a given.

As I look back and realize that my middle school years are coming to an end, I often think about all the memories I have made and all the things I wish I would have done differently. Although there are many, the one thing I wouldn't trade for the world was being able to find my inner-self and truly represent 'me' for who I am. None of this ever could have happened without the help and support from my teachers, friends, and even Mrs. Chamberlain.

Throughout the fun, depressing, exciting, and challenging times, my memories are endless. From the day I first stepped foot into the middle school until now, I have realized all that I have taken for granted, and every opportunity I should have capitalized on. But as I approached those opportunities, I didn't worry so much about making them great, but having fun, because that's what life is all about, especially in middle school.

One question I always ask myself is what exactly did I learn in middle school? Well, honestly, I

learned some very important life lessons that I will always hold onto. I learned about so many little things from so many different people that I found special and inspirational, like one of the first days of seventh grade. Immediately, one of my teachers noticed I lacked confidence and worked on it with me from the start. In eighth grade, there's that one teacher that is constantly pestering you to do your best and stay humble about it but never only give 90% effort, which oftentimes, that's exactly what I needed.

Of course there were many more things I learned and a lot more advice I have received, but that truly was my inspiration to keep going and I am extremely grateful for that and all the help, motivation, and support from all of my teachers.

Throughout this crazy, twisted, long ride, I have taken mainly one memory, one opportunity, and one place with me the whole time and I will always continue to do so. In order to be the best, you have to train like the best. I have



**Brianna Schuck**

learned to never get ahead of myself and always know my position in the situation. Never think of yourself as anything more than what you are, it's important to stay on top, but don't let yourself fall, and if you do, pick yourself back up.

At this age, we're too young to give up and drop out of school, we have to keep striding forward. And as I look back, I am glad I enjoyed my middle school years as much as I did. From the long softball seasons, to the short time the years come and go, middle school is where I found myself, and I wouldn't have wanted any other outcome.

# Year-End Middle School Reflections

## How was seventh and eighth grade, Aurora?

In all honesty, amazing. No, it was more than that. It was phenomenal. During the span of being in middle school, I've had such great times.

Great times when last year, Mr. Barnes's room was filled with Ross Lynch and R5 posters. When Sabrina, Chloe and I went to the same One Direction concert. Being in National Junior Honor Society. Everything was amazing.

Seventh grade was probably the best grade ever. I had so many great teachers and they could make you laugh. From Mr. Graver always playing awesome music, to Mr. Barnes making weird voices, showing awesome videos, and telling us about *slappy slap*. I made some of my best memories, and worst, in seventh grade. The best part was going to seventh period and loving it.

Then, the worst part would be that one day I went to seventh period and Mr. Barnes told the



## Aurora McGovern

class, this is dumb but true, that Zayn Malik left One Direction.

Eighth grade was just as amazing as seventh grade. In math, the boys would write things on the top of the board because they thought that Mrs. Orr couldn't reach it to erase it. Spending time with friends because you went to the pie ticket drawing, or you did all of your homework so you get out of fifth period for ice cream. Lauren Hoffman and Aaron Rudolph finally going out! Making T-shirts and making

movies for classes. Going on a cruise for a week in April and making new friends. Everything was great and I wouldn't change it. OK, yes, I'm writing this at 10 at night because I've been really busy ever since the beginning of April, but I got it done. Last year I wanted to be held back so I could stay in seventh grade just for Mr. Barnes's class along with Sabrina. And now I want to be held back again because high school, and calling yourself a high schooler, seems so intimidating.

I started to cry while writing this because I've loved being in the middle school and just being around friends and people I care about. I wouldn't change anything that I did in these two years of being in the middle school.

So, thank you to all of my friends and my teachers for helping me pass these two grades and getting me closer to high school. Only four more years of school left. Let's see if I can make it. Good-bye middle school. I'll miss you and all of the teachers.

## Remembrances from Reagan's Reflections

### Pender, from page 6

gone. Some moving and some changing. People I loved had been lost and it all just happened in an instant. Although through it all, I have never stopped talking to those people. It's hard to forgive and it's even harder to be forgiven but it is possible. Eighth grade isn't over yet; there are still a few more weeks until summer vacation. Until June 8th, though, I will

continue to work hard yet enjoy my last few weeks of being in this school. I can tell you for a fact that I will truly miss this school and all the people in it next year. I had a really fun two years at this school and I think I am definitely ready to be in the high school next year! Thank you to all of my teachers, family, and friends. Because of you, I am prepared for my future and I can't wait to see where it will take me.



# Year-End Middle School Reflections

**My 8th grade experience, overall, was a good one.** There were minimal problems regarding me and I have a stronger connection with a friend from last year and I can now call her my best friend.

So if we look at it that way, my year was probably one of the best since being in kindergarten and not having to do anything. But I would sort of like to make this a little guide for the 7th graders for your 8th grade year so that you can get out of middle school with ease.

When you get into 8th grade you'll really like the power of being either taller than the 7th grade or like the power of being older and the top of the school. I mean, for me, I could only enjoy one of those and if you know me, then you know which one I'm talking about. And as an 8th grader, since you think you're better than the 7th graders, it might be a good idea for you to be more mature than them. It will make life as an 8th grader a lot easier. Now all you need to know is that for the first two marking periods you'll enjoy your new-found power, some of you a little too much.

This also means that you can't slack off because you think you're mister big shot. In the beginning of the year it is probably the most crucial to get your good grades. You will need to do all homework assignments or at least only miss two per class if you want to be lazy, but homework is

a very big part of your grade that cannot be taken for granted. And, trust me, I am no exception to this rule. I still forget backsides of homework, which means no points. Even if you're not good at math or English, do the homework. It'll make a huge difference. In my opinion I actually think that classes are easier than in 7th grade. You might think differently but either way you can't take the classes lightly.

Now you need to do this throughout the whole year but you should really work hard to try to get out of the summer funk in the first marking period and the beginning-of-school funk in the second marking period. The rest will glide on by. Then around the 3rd to 4th marking period and even as late as the PSSA's, most of you will realize that next year you will be in high school.

For some that will excite you; for others it will frighten you. Some may be indifferent. Although I will say it's nice to get out of middle school, high school is a big new place that even I'm not prepared to go to. Oh, and since I mentioned PSSA's you'll be fine and you'll love the break from it all. I should also mention that 8th



**Madison Hoffman**

grade is not all work, so the work that you do better count for something. In 8th grade you will have many fun-filled days and for me there are still more fun-filled days to come as I'm writing this thing at the last possible moment.

Which reminds me, hand in your stuff on time and start early! A lot of teachers give you the end of class or maybe even multiple class periods to do stuff so I suggest you use that time wisely instead of talking with your friends because trust me it's not worth it. There is no reason that if you are given an assignment on Monday and it's due on Friday and you have the whole week to finish it in class and also at home if you did-

**See Madison, page 10**



Jason Check, Nate Green and Noah Myers, members of National Junior Honor Society, helped organize this year's Senior Prom.

## **Eighth grade is right up the road**

### **Madison, from page 9**

n't finish it in class that you shouldn't have it done. Gosh...I sound like Mr. Herzog.

Well, a little word of advice, he's right when he says stuff and so are all the other teachers when they say something. Just listen to the teacher, take their advice even if it's not directed toward you, just listen because that might just help your whole entire year. I would also suggest to take my advice but I know that most people who will need this advice will probably never even read my article so for the people who do read this, HI!

I would also suggest to not try anything fishy. Don't take the teachers' niceness for granted. If you try to pull anything with them they will know, they are teachers, they've seen and heard it all. Like an elf coming and taking their

homework out of their binder during the night...yeah. Well that's a pretty good list of things that you'll need for next year. I probably missed something but I'm sure you'll be fine. I know I'm forgetting something.

Think Madison, think. Oh, that's it, remember when I said that the rest of the year would "glide" on by after the first semester? Well, that doesn't mean that you cannot do any work or start slacking off. You need all of your marking period grades to be good so when you're picking your courses for high school, if you want to choose honors courses, which I hope all of you at least try, it looks great for college. You can get into those honors courses because they base it off of your overall score, not just for that marking period. If I would have known that, then I wouldn't be

cutting it so close just to get into honors classes next year. Oh, also you've probably heard a lot of yelling coming from Mr. Meixsell's room. Don't worry about it. It'll make sense when you're older...or next year.

Ok then, I think I've covered all the basics. Well, good luck next year, you'll need it! And as for me...8th grade you have treated me fair and have taught me many great things — life lessons, how to love math, or how to deal with everyone you hate at the same time all in one room, but I hope the next student to come and sit in the seats that the class of 2020 have sat in treat you well.

If anything, I'd say that you're the ones who need good luck with your new class. Sorry seivies. Enjoy 8th grade!



# Year-End Middle School Reflections

## **To my friends and fellow classmates:**

**Thank you.** You've contributed to my problems, sorrow, happiness and joy. Without you, even the ones who hate me, I wouldn't be here without you. Regardless, some of the places I am may not be that great but I have good places, too.

Anyhow, here I am sitting in my usual positions at my computer, thinking of things to say for this for the last time. I'm not a very happy camper right now. I've lost friends and made friends, but that sounds so basic. Things like that happen a lot to many people, but it really gets to me.

But I made friends, lost them, struggled, failed, maybe succeeded...so basically had life. And it wasn't easy. I'm not going into the big details or whatever but I'd like to talk about things for a bit, obviously. So I guess, for the final time, my voice shall be heard, sit back and learn what happened throughout my 8<sup>th</sup> grade school year...

So, honestly, I cannot give a valid story from the beginning because I can't remember everything from the beginning. But to be fully honest, I was scared. I'm in the same school, yes, but I experienced the same fear as I did last year. What if I forgot my locker combination? People, I have things to worry about like, if Zayn was going to leave One Direction. What if my teachers don't like me? What if I give a wrong

answer and they think I'm stupid? What if they heard things about me and they're dreading me?

Ok, maybe some of these fears were irrational, but nonetheless, I still thought them. But soon enough, it was September 1<sup>st</sup> and I was eagerly waiting the phone call that happened in science class. I won't forget it. Mr. Meixsell looked at me and said, "You knew you were getting that, didn't you?"

Of course I did. I'd been staring at the clock. But I only nodded with a stupid grin on my face. Ok, a bit forward, I lost my best friend in the very beginning of the school year. It was December but it was also during this month that I made my best guy friend and, later, learned that some of the people you trusted most will talk about you behind your back. The beginning of the school year was when I had a lot of problems. I felt more lonely, had to find out who my real friends were and had to deal with everyday school bullying.

Let's fast-forward a bit, I think. If I am remembering cor-



## **Sabrina Grabarits**

rectly, this would be around the second marking period. Anyhow, I had started to get the hang of this locker thing and the teachers not totally hating me and I wasn't doing really bad in school. Things were...OK, I guess. I'd strengthened my relationships with two of my best friends, Piper and Quinton. I'd learned who my true, true friends really are. Of course, I have others but I always seem to tell them things second, not that I love them any less. I don't really

**See Sabrina, page 12**



# Year-End Middle School Reflections

## Sabrina, from page 11

know what happened here...

Now it's the fourth marking period. Honestly, the second, third and fourth marking periods have blended together so my time lines may be off or not many things happened for me to remember. My apologies but it's because they were in the middle and I don't have the best memory.

Anyhow, I had a lot of family problems during this marking period. I mean, yes, I had a lot over the school year and I'm not getting into detail but it's been very stressful this marking period because everything seemed to have heightened and zoomed in on the problem. So now the marking period is almost over and Piper's all like, "I'm moving to Virginia." What?

No. How about nah...but obviously, she had to and she's gone now. I've lost my best girl-friend. Yes, she had been talking about it sometime in the third marking period but it was just an idea, not a real option.

Now that I look back on it, I realize that I did stupid things, even if I still want to do them, smart things and things that hurt and helped others. I did good things and bad but they got me to where I am today. I don't know how my 8<sup>th</sup> grade year really went, as dumb as that sounds, but this is what I pulled from it. And obviously the lessons too but you know what I mean.

And that's it. That's done. My

8<sup>th</sup> grade school year, or as close to it as I could get it. We complained about homework, laughing at the teacher's silly mistakes, grumbled over quizzes, laughed in classes.

As one of the last things I want to say, I want to thank my teachers who put up with me this year. This also means I am going to also thank all the other teachers, the ones who teach gym and health, music, art, family consumer science, PSSA prep, and computer classes, who put up with me for two years. Thank you to those people. *Ok, my 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers:*

**Mrs. Orr**, thank you for teaching me math and sometimes having patience with your noisy and immature (me included) Algebra 1 class. I learned a lot in math this year, a lot more than I thought I could. It's nice that you can relate and talk with your students, sometimes, and help them along with their work. Thank you for a fun year and a wonderful, laughter-filled 7<sup>th</sup> period class.

**Mr. Meixsell**, thank you for teaching me science and being able to joke with the class. I enjoyed how you taught some of these things to help us remember. I won't ever forget about convection or how it's all about the tilt, not the distance or that AU is the chemical compound for gold. It's awesome that you can joke with the kids. Thank you for an interesting and great 5<sup>th</sup> period class.

**Mr. Herzog**, thank you for teaching me history. I remember back when you taught 6<sup>th</sup> grade

and had me for reading, you'd always get some sort of history lesson in there so I'm glad you're finally teaching it. I really enjoyed the Fun Fact Fridays and other times when you would joke around with us. Now that 8<sup>th</sup> grade is over, you don't have to teach me again...unless you go to the high school. That'd be a nightmare for you, to teach me a third time, right? Thank you for a wonderful 2<sup>nd</sup> period history class.

**Mrs. Grega**, thank you for teaching me reading. You made us laugh, and grumble, with some of the things that were said and the tests that were given. We made sure we knew how many beds were in the book of Anthem and what a limerick was. Even though we sometimes had good and bad times, it was still a good class. Thank you for a great 1<sup>st</sup> period reading class.

**Mrs. Flip**, thank you for teaching me English. I loved the short story unit and "The Giver" book. I won't forget about the cute little Flocabulary videos that always seemed to make me laugh. I enjoyed the private class jokes and the laughs on some of the argumentative essay PowerPoints. I'll make sure to add details to my writings and to use different kinds of sentences. Thank you for a great 6<sup>th</sup> period English class.

And, unlike I did last year, I'd like to also thank my 7<sup>th</sup> grade teachers as well because I won't get a chance to thank them again

**See More Sabrina, page 13**

# Year-End Middle School Reflections

## More Sabrina, from page 12

really.

**Mr. Graver**, thank you for teaching me Old World Cultures. I loved learning about Egypt and the places like that. I liked how coloring sheets was extra credit and I liked that we did current events to stay up-to-date with the news. Unfortunately, I remember how awful it was leaving that class to go to lunch but it was alright because I got to stay in the classroom longer. I loved the laughs and the jokes made by Mr. Graver himself about his lack of hair. Thank you for a wonderful 5<sup>th</sup> period Old World Cultures class.

**Mrs. Walter**, thank you for teaching me reading as well. I remember sitting in the back of the room, reading about mythology and how the Greek gods 'married' each other and how faithful they stayed. (That's sarcasm... something Mrs. Walter does a lot.) I remember how our class would have little jokes and how everyone would go, 'Walter!' I even liked the book reports because they make more sense than the ones we get now. Thank you for a wonderful 4<sup>th</sup> period reading class.

**Mrs. Becker**, thank you for teaching me science, too. It was a great year, learning about the punnett squares and how the animal and plant cells worked. Long tests and packets, yes, but I liked them because it taught us how to manage our time. I had fun in your class, when the kids

weren't being bad. Thank you for a great 3<sup>rd</sup> period science class.

**Mr. Hluschak**, thank you for teaching me math. I remember how we had to keep track of our own grades, which was very helpful, and how we had those big workbooks. I remember some of the jokes that were told sometimes and the way we used to talk about what we did on the week-ends on Mondays. Thank you for a great 6<sup>th</sup> period math class.

I cannot forget my favorite teacher, **Mr. Barnes**. (Honestly, I have nothing against anyone else, just a lot of things happened in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and Mr. Barnes was always there to help me along or to shove me hard to get me going.) So, Mr. Barnes, thank you for teaching me English. You really helped me both years. You helped to keep me going, pushed me along, kept reassuring me of myself and talked to me on a few things on a personal level. For that, I don't know if I can ever repay you. Even though I wasn't directly your student this year, I was still your student. I still heard from you and I still learned from you. You still make me laugh and you can still change my day for the better. You also taught me how to remember words, like *stealthily*. You pushed creativity in that classroom by having the students do Figments, the Scary Story project and the Mystery Story project. Your class, by far, was one that I learned and laughed the most in. Hail and farewell, Mr. Barnes, and thank you for the

best 7<sup>th</sup> period English class.

That's it, guys. This is the last from me in the Bulldog Bark, for those of you who care. No more thoughts from my mind or four-part stories or music things or One Direction things, which some are happy about.

I can only say thank you, to all of you. Teachers, classmates and friends alike. Thank you for where you have put me because without you, I wouldn't be where I am today.



# Year-End Middle School Reflections

**Seventh grade was way better than I expected.** I was surprised that I could actually open my locker on the first day of school. This year was also more challenging than last year. I learned that studying more can help you get better grades.

This may sound bizarre, but I used to never study. But, thankfully I still got good grades. Another thing is that science and math class were way more difficult than last year.

I had a fairly good year. We all have our ups and downs in school and in life. I kept things positive when things were going

wrong. I didn't worry about things because why worry about things you can't change? Basically, what I'm trying to say is that if you try your best, don't give up, and keep a positive attitude on everything, you won't worry as much and you'll have less stress.

I also did all of my homework and tried to get good grades. If you don't try or do your homework, things are going to be rough. Thankfully, I did try and did all my homework and never experienced that. Anything can happen if you let it. You control what and how you do in school. Looking back on the year, I had a pretty good year. I'm not going to lie and say that everything was



**Trent Herman**

"Skittles and Rainbows" because it wasn't always fun or exciting. But when it was, it was fun and enjoyable.

**Reflecting on this past school year, I can say that I really enjoyed 7th grade this year.** It has been fun and exciting, yet academically challenging. The teachers were all nice and helpful. There have been some challenges in some of my classes throughout the marking periods but I pushed through them. Some of the challenges included tests and quizzes, though studying after soccer practice certainly helped.

Also, becoming familiar with using the lockers and classroom locations came with ease after a few days. There have been tons of upsides to my 7th grade career.

I have made some new friends. On the first day of 7th grade, I was really nervous because I didn't know what to expect, but as the year progressed, I lightened up and became comfortable with the middle school flow.

The first few weeks, I was hesitant about raising my hand and answering questions or reading aloud to the class, but after a few weeks I started to participate more. I had a negative feeling about going from the elementary school to middle school. I thought it was going to be awful. It turns out that I was wrong as it has been a rewarding year. In addition, joining school activities, such as soccer and intramurals, has allowed me to get in shape



**Evan Horninger**

and have fun with my friends while becoming more competitive. I'm really looking forward to 8th grade next year!



# Year-End Middle School Reflections

**My 7<sup>th</sup> grade year was my favorite year I've had so far in my school career.** It was full of laughter, drama, happiness and basically everything in between. I felt weird coming from the elementary school to the middle school, but in a good way. I feel like I have so much more freedom here but at the elementary level, they honestly treat you like babies.

It was a big step to take but I'm glad I'm here now. At the beginning of the year, I was actually pretty nervous for what was to come, but after the first day was over, I knew it was going to be a fun ride.

My favorite part of the year was anytime I was playing a sport. This year I started to do two more sports I've never played before: cross country and basketball. I had so much fun doing cross country with all of my friends and absolutely can't wait to play next year.

Basketball was very exciting this year. We had a fantastic year and even though it was my first year, I improved so much. I am currently playing spring soccer now. It is so much fun sharing secrets on the bus on the way to away games. We blast some music on the bus and have a great time. Those have been the best times this year and would be lucky to have half the fun next year.

Honestly, one thing I hated about this year was having to go

eight people at a table at lunch. I absolutely hated the lunches in the elementary schools because the lunch ladies always yelled at us (most of the time just because of a few people) and we had a lot of silent lunches. We also had assigned seats which had us going boy-girl and it got pretty annoying. That was one reason that I was so excited to come over to the middle school but then a few weeks into the year they came up with the rule that only eight people could sit at a table.

At that moment I realized that lunch wasn't going to be that much better here. It turned out not being too bad but sometimes I wish we could have just a few more people allowed to sit at our table.

My favorite classes were art, FCS, and my overall favorite, English. Next year I'm going to miss ending my day with some laughs in his class. My favorite part of FCS was making the pillow. It was so much fun trying to figure out to work the sewing machine and it was quite humorous at times. The cinnamon rolls we



**Kristen Guelcher**

made in that class were the best, and I make them a lot at home now. I'm sad that Mrs. Bowser isn't going to be here next year and I hope we have a good new teacher.

Art class was my favorite Special this year. I loved the new creative ideas Mrs. Frank thought of this year. I was always so excited to see what the next project was because they were always so different from projects we did in

**See Guelcher, page 17**

# doghouse fiction



## Guest Submission: The Final Ending

By Cydney Krause

6th Grade Future Barker

My breath hitched as I approached the wooden doors, not prepared for what would be behind them. "Be brave," I thought. I pulled the heavy latches on the door. They squeaked and creaked open like they were ancient. I closed my eyes and opened the doors fully. Dirt. Just a big pile of dirt. I did all this just for dirt. "What's behind the wall?" I thought. Like the metaphor *curiosity killed the cat*, curiosity killed me too. I studied the wall unable to predict how I would get up there. However, my eyes had different plans.

They spotted a gold looking coin in the dirt. Little did I know this was *not* and I repeat *not* a gold coin like I imagined. I tried pulling the coin out of the dirt. "Geez!" I mumbled to myself. I wiped the dried up dirt trying to get closer to getting it out. This was unbelievable! I kicked the pile of old dirt, aggravated. "This would never have happened if I had never come back!" I shrieked. The doors slammed shut, the ground rumbled, and for the last and final part, I was stuck and couldn't go back. Anger was soon replaced with fear. *I'm going to die!* rushed through my head. The ground had enough and broke apart. That "coin" was just a trap.

A trap about 99.9% of people don't make out alive. It was like falling in an endless, pitch-black hole. No light. Barely any air left. Almost like a dream, but it was far from it. This was supposedly average, real life for you. Yeah, it totally is! (Sarcasm intended. I'm not being optimistic about this.) The floating-ish falling was over. Now it was just plummeting. I screamed in horror, but my breath was swept away by the wind. My body was now free falling into the storming ocean below. My body hit the water painlessly somehow, but I couldn't breathe. My lungs were desperately in need of O2. The scenery light-



ened.

My lungs didn't taste air anymore. My eyes cleared. I took in the scenery that I fell into. My first thought was: I'm dead. Trust me, I was definitely dead... and hoping I'm hallucinating, but I was far beyond dead. Far beyond the afterlife. The thing was that I didn't seem to get was the great white sharks in the deep green...forest? They were gliding in the water, harmlessly. The tree branches swayed while the leaves danced happily. Water nymphs stared at my soul. I couldn't tell what they were thinking because their faces were blank with expression.

A great white shark decided to take a look at what was going on. Its body swerved and curved gracefully around the trees looking at the new item in its territory. This is absolute nuts what I'm going to say, but the shark finally passed my personal bubble, nudging my non-existent body. I was debating if it couldn't see me or it was really friendly.

### SHARK'S D.O.V.

I saw my dinner. Plastic wrap! Yes, I

eat plastic, get over it. We're not typical sharks in *your* world. We don't eat meat at all. Water nymphs mostly inhabited us as pets. Unlike your world where animals live longer in care, that's the exact opposite in *this* world. We live way shorter lives in this world when taken into care. Very short lives. Anyway, back to the plastic wrap. I look closer at my dinner, but my dinner isn't dinner anymore. My plastic wrap appeared almost as if it were human. It couldn't be possible because humans can't breathe underwater, and I do believe that they float because of the air inside them. The "human" or... OH! plastic human (sorry I'm hungry) was almost transparent, blending in with almost everything around it.

### CHARACTER D.O.V.

"I'm transparent?" I question. The shark nods I guess because that's probably really complex for a shark. "Wait, you understand me?" the shark thought. "Yes... I guess... I don't know." I doubt myself.

See Cydney, page 17

# doghouse fiction



## Guest submission: The Final Ending

### Cydney, from page 16

"Hm," the shark hummed. "Not a surprise," it retorts. "Stupid Goddess! Oh, sorry. What I meant to say was stupid nemesis!" It yells, enraged. "What happened?" I blurted out of curiosity. "Well, about 1,000 years ago, Narcissus, the son of a river god and a nymph, hunter from Thespiæ in Boeotia known for his beauty, had only one reflective source left, a bronze lost hero's shield. We preferably eat bronze, valuable metals/valuable elements, and emerald. The food was scarce, so we took the shield. Narcissus wasn't exactly Mr. Sunshine when we devoured it.

He begged Nemesis, the goddess of revenge, had no problem with getting revenge on the Olympian sharks, so that's how the story ends," it finished. "Wow" was all I was able to get out of my mouth. "Yeah," the shark said partially mocking

me. "Sarcastic humor much?" I question the shark, cheekily. "Matter of fact, yes!" He tries to cross his fins like crossing arms, but he fails miserably. I crack a smile at his attempt, but my face darkens. "Where am I?" I ask suddenly. "In-" the great white was cut off. The beautiful ocean forest was now erupting in black, and it was spreading rapidly.

Everything was enveloped in black. "Hello?" I say worried. Yellow eyes appear in a flash and go in the same amount of time. "W-who's ever t-there show yourself!" I yelled scared. "Why?" it sneered. "SHOW YOURSELF!" I boomed making my throat burn. "Fine, you silly mortal," it spat. Razor-sharp teeth. Slick black body. The same ablaze, yellow eyes.

This was escalating into a complete nightmare very quickly! My breathing quickened as it approached cautiously with care like I was its prey. "Hmm. What are

you?" it uttered. "Well..." I started. "I really don't know... I kinda died and came here," I stated startled. "Died?" it inquires as making me uncomfortable while it's trying to search for more information than it needed. "Yes, exactly. Died," I mumbled annoyed. "Just like the rest of us," it laughs psychotically. "What do you mean?" I ask. "This story, mortal, will have no happily-ever-after!" it boomed in triumph. Every detail was now fading away. My eyes shot open. The shark I was talking to before was trying to get my attention. "Hello? You there? Anybody home?" I really am dead. For good this time.

*Advisor's Note: Cydney Krause is a sixth-grader at Slatington Elementary School getting a head-start at her middle school writing career. We look forward to more cool submissions next year.*

## Waking up, excited for school, is a good thing

### Guelcher, from page 15

the past. I'm so thankful to have had these classes this year.

The extracurricular activities I did this year were Student Council and Yearbook Club. I've had a lot of fun on Student Council this year. A lot of my friends are in it and Ms. Case makes it very enjoyable. My favorite part of it was preparing for the Winter Dance. It was a blast helping put it together and the result was great. That night, we danced like crazy. Yearbook was very interesting. We learned how to put the pages together and I

can't wait to see the final Yearbook.

Overall, I love 7<sup>th</sup> grade. It's my favorite year yet because I have so many opportunities and everyone is so supportive. I love the teachers I have this year because they make me want to learn. I can't wait to wake up in the morning and see all of my friends. Truthfully, I don't want this year to end. I wish I could come back to 7<sup>th</sup> grade next year but I know that next year is going to be great too. I'm so excited for the new middle schoolers coming up from 6<sup>th</sup> grade because they get to experience the same great year I had. Good-bye 7<sup>th</sup> grade! I'm going to miss you lots.



# doghouse fiction



## Step Out of My Comfort Zone

By Madison Desh

Team 7

A light breeze blew over the sunken-in building, its strange shape giving it a depressing expression. The rain fell heavy; however, the four strangers ventured in without another thought. As they cautiously approached the saddened school, aged with time and overrun with vegetation, the sky darkened as night drew near without any compassion for the four travelers. The first of the four set a shivering hand on the rusty handle, though the others moved in unaccompanied by the first male. He quickly turned and hurried to catch up with his friends, a feeling of bitter loneliness washing over him but soon being overcome by fear. Fear the dark? Possibly. But nobody is truly afraid of the dark. Just what lurks in its shadows.

The group stopped in the foyer. "Remind me again why we came here," said 14-year-old Leila Jax, her strawberry-blonde hair falling in her bright, blue eyes. She scrunched up her nose at the aroma that surrounded the building. "I heard this place is c-" began the 15-year-old Matthew Charles, but was interrupted by the 14-year-old Andrea Reed's sneeze. Matthew sent a glare to the female, she retaliated back with a punch in the arm. "Ow!" complained Matthew as he rubbed the spot her fist had come in contact with his arm. Back near the door, 15-year-old Micah Cazden rolled his dark blue eyes at his fellow friends.

"Hey! What do you think of this, Micah?" yelled Matthew, holding up a glimmering object covered in inky goop, he'd spotted near the gymnasium entrance mere minutes from their first encounter with the decayed school. Micah narrowed his eyes and moved toward his friend and the mysterious object. "What did you find?" he commented once he reached Matthew, who just responded with a shrug and handed him the item. Micah rolled it

around in his fingers when a high-pitched scream made the boy jump 3 feet in the air. He wearily surveyed the room. "Leila!! Andrea!!" He yelled the names of the missing bodies, racing in the scream's direction.

Matthew stopped Micah with a hand on his shoulder, "Where are you going?" he questioned, sending the other male a confused expression and famous eyebrow-

trance and corners. Andrea let out a quiet laugh as a thought wandered past her head. "I bet the mold now is better than the food then." She quipped to the imaginary audience behind her. Andrea blew out a breath, remembering she was alone. Then, gathering courage, she rummaged through her bag for a flashlight. "Welp. Guess it's now or never?"



raise. Micah stopped and turned his head to Matthew. "After the girls! They might be hurt!" He urged, but Matthew just seemed to get more lost. Micah gaped at him, "Didn't you hear that scream?!" He questioned, but Matthew shook his head. "What scream?" Micah turned toward him. "The- ....." The male stopped, "I d-don't remember....." He trailed off.

Andrea had wandered a few rooms from the group's position, into the kitchen. Mold stains dotted the floor near the en-

As Andrea began taking her first step into the darkness, a faint "hello" made her jump. She spun around, expecting a monster, but only found Leila's strawberry-blonde hair. Andrea laughed, though not able to see Leila's expression. Leila smirked and came closer to the girl, as she backed away. "Leila?" Andrea spoke with a shaky voice. She turned the flashlight upward so she could see Leila's face. She was met

**See Desh, page 19**

# doghouse fiction



## A Terrible Turn: The Conclusion

By Sabrina Grabarits  
Team 8 Fictionator

Derek's face twisted in pain and he fell to his knees. "DEREK!" I ran up to him and knelt in front of him with the black haired boy on my heels. "Not today Derek...please," I mumbled. My voice was so soft, barely audible. His reactions were slow and his eyes trailed up to mine. "L-Lacy..." I brushed hair from his face and he pulled me down to his face and mumbled through barely-parted lips, "Run..."

His hand fell lifeless and I felt the fabric of my knees soak with blood. Tears rolled down my cheeks and the boy took my hand. "We need to go," he said in a soft voice. He seemed to know what my brother was trying to tell me. In an instant, he'd pulled me to my feet and was dragging me along as another gunshot rang out. Jeez, this kid is fast for a nerd.

A few hours later, we were deep in

the woods, running and scared. I kept running. This is terrible. Why is this happening to me? I was panting heavily. He didn't seem to be as winded as me though. "Who are you?" I panted as we came to a stop.

He was breathing heavily but not nearly as bad as I was. "Lukas Waters." That's all he said. Great, the dude is one of those people. Only answering what was asked. "What's going on, Lukas?" "A lot you don't know." He tugged my arm. "We need to keep going." "Going?!?" My eyes widened. "We were running for hours on end, barely stopping that I could take a breath!" I think adrenaline and sadness were pushing me on. Though I was still



sad, I knew how tired I really felt was showing through. Lukas's face softened and looked at me with his kind, pale blue eyes. "Lacy, you need to understand..."

He knew my name? But no one ever

**See Turn, page 20**

## Step out of my comfort zone... continued

**Desh, from page 18**

with a bruised and bleeding one. Half of the girl's head had collapsed in on itself, causing one eye to pop out and brain to be visible. Andrea hit a wall, but it was too late.

The two boys still wandered, though now separately. Matthew drifted into a mysterious dark room, a faint glimmer could be seen from inside. The boy moved closer to a shiny object, cautious not to trip. He had left his flashlight with Micah, so he had no source of light.

He stumbled closer and closer. As he finally approached the item he reached a

hand out to touch it. He stroked the cold object. It felt like metal, but he wasn't sure. A sudden, loud buzzing made him glance behind him. Right then the object began spinning vigorously. Matthew bellowed in agony while the sharp blade cut into his skin.

Micah trekked through the halls. He spotted an open door amongst the closed ones. He ventured inside. A puddle stood in the middle of the dark room. He shone his light in its direction, but it soon fell to the floor. The puddle came to life. The creature reached out to Micah with a dripping black hand. Micah jumped back as the hand splashed onto the floor. Black, tarry remnants sprained from the puddle and

stuck to the male's skin. A sharp pain jetted through Micah's body, causing an agonizing screech erupting from his throat.

He fell to his knees and clutched his left arm with his right hand. Spines grew from the blotches and sank into his hand. He yelped again in pain.

A single black tear rained down from the boy's blackening eye, it ran down his cheek and splashed onto the ground. He took one last, gentle breath as his life flashed before his eyes. Another tear formed in his eye and landed on the floor. The boy's cold body collapsed onto the ground.

# doghouse fiction



## Turn, from page 19

talked to him and he never talked to me... "That...James kid is bad news. Really bad news. Sweetheart, he's a vampire." My face paled. *Vampire?! What?* My head was still spinning from a lot of things now. A scream was heard and Lukas's eyes quickly locked onto mine. "And vampires move faster and can go longer without needing rest which means we need to find a place to hide still further way. *Now.*" This was urgent and we took off again.

I didn't know how much later it was but my back was pressed against a cold cave wall and I was shivering. Lukas didn't know if James's sense of smell was heightened and he made us run through a river to get rid of our scent. He gingerly sat next to me and looked at me with the small amount of light coming from the entrance of the cave.

His arms wrapped around me and he pulled me to his wet chest, which was surprisingly warm. "L-Lukas?" His eyes turned down and met mine. "Yeah?" "What's happening?" He took a deep breath and let it out slowly. He slowly and hesitantly started to explain that James was a vampire. Somewhere along the lines, he turned on me and Derek. He told me that James was the one who'd shot Derek and he was the one that had hit my mom with his car. Lukas went on to describe a blonde girl that was sounding oddly familiar and I felt stupid. "My dad up and left with her...I can't believe that I didn't know she was related to him..." I let James get close to me, get inside a few of my walls and he was a killer. A murderer. A thief. "Lukas, what's going to happen to us?" He fell

silent again and the silence grew and grew. I was almost going to drop it because I didn't think he was going to answer but he whispered, "I don't know Lacy..."

I stayed silent and nodded, closing my eyes like nothing would bother me anymore if I wasn't looking. "Try and get some sleep. We'll be safe here," I heard him say in my ear. I curled against his chest and he stroked my wet hair. His head was leaning on the cave wall and he was muttering to himself. I opened my



eyes and looked up at him. "Lukas, what's wrong?" He was startled and he looked down at me. "W-what? Oh..." A light red dusted his cheeks. "I was just thinking about you," he told me honestly. My eyebrows furrowed. "Me?" Lukas nodded. "Yes you. I-I was thinking about how much I've grown to like you over the years...and how James wasn't ever going to treat you right, even if he wasn't a monster."

Wow...I leaned up and kissed his cheek softly, realizing that I liked him too. "How did you know what James was?" Lukas gave me a slight, shy grin. "When no one notices you, you get to do

things without being noticed." I felt sorry for him as I curled back into his chest. "I'm sorry," I mumbled and drifted off to sleep.

When I woke, our clothes were still damp from the now-early-morning dew and from the fact they were soaked last night and we're in a damp cave. I shifted very slightly and tilted my head up to see that Lukas had finally fallen asleep. He looked so peaceful. I took in the series of events that happened in less than a week. Wow...like...wow. So much sadness and

pain and my boyfriend...no, he's my ex. I decided right then and there that we were over and through. He never loved me. I was angry with myself that I had allowed myself to fall for James. And my best friend, Kayla...what would happen to her? I was too wrapped up in my thoughts to realize that Lukas had woken. "Hey...hey, are you crying?" His voice, though soft and gentle, had startled me. I guess I was...but I didn't realize that either. "I'm sorry...I was just thinking," I said with a sigh. He nodded and we stayed like that for a while. "Come on Lacy...we should probably get going, especially while the morning dew is still laying

down on the grass." I wasn't even surprised that I'd woken up way earlier than I ever have. There was too much going on in my head, too many thoughts that haven't been processed. Lukas moved me, stood, then pulled me to my feet as well. His arm slipped around my waist and we slowly made our way out of the cave. I was tired, sad and just...I didn't know. I just kind of wanted to end everything. "I'll keep you safe," Lukas whispered as if he knew what I was thinking. We kept walking for a while, silent.

**See Sabrina, page 21**



# doghouse fiction



## Sabrina, from page 20

"Lacy, tell me what you're thinking...you're too quiet..." I was. He seemed to pick up on me quickly. When I'm not talking or quiet, I'm thinking deeply about something. I sighed softly. "I'm just thinking about my mom and Derek. I'm worried about Kayla and...and you..." I mumbled softly, trailing off. Really, I was worried about him. He was putting himself at risk to help me. He could just let me die, just let me on my own to figure it out when it was finally too late. But he didn't. This was putting him in danger. "I miss them..." Lukas nodded, knowing I was talking about my mom and brother. "I know...I didn't really know your mother but I knew your brother. He'd stick up for me when I was bullied. He was a good man." I teared up at these words. "Thank you Lukas." He nodded and we continued to walk in silence before he nudged me. "Sweetie, we better start running again..." I nodded but hated the fact that we had to. We both picked up into a jog, sprint, then run.

Eventually, we made it into a large clearing with trees surrounding us. It was like a lake with surrounding trees, but the 'lake' was grass. Soft grass. We both were breathing heavily and laid in the soft, green grass. Lukas's hand found mine and laced his fingers through it. "Hey Lacy?" His voice was shy and quiet. "Yeah?" "W-would you maybe...be my girlfriend?" I smiled a bit, the first time since Derek died. I could tell he loved me from the way he treated me and from how gentle and sweet he was with me. "I would."

His hand squeezed mine and his smile was wide. "I love you," he murmured out quietly. "I love you too," I said without hesitation. I believed I really did. Call me stupid or crazy, I don't care. I needed some happiness in my life right

now. My eyes slipped shut as the sun shone down on us. It wasn't hot even though it was around midday. It was a pretty cloudy day. We laid like this for a few minutes.

"So...what do we have here?" A voice rang out after a while and I'd almost fallen asleep, Lukas's hand still in mine. I gasped and shot up, causing Lukas to do the same. The voice laughed. "How cute..." This time, the voice registered in my head as James's. No. Anyone but him...Lukas seemed to know who it was as well because he pulled me closer and tightened his grip on my hand.

Faster than I'd ever seen anyone stand, he pulled me to my feet and buried me in his chest. "Go away James," he snarled, which shocked me coming from him. James chuckled. "Aww, how cute...you got the nerd of the school to stand up for you!" My head peeked out from Lukas's chest to watch the conversation and see if there was anything I could do. A gun dangled in James's right hand. I bit my lip. "Shut up James...you've no business here and no one wants you."

James snarled, baring his fangs which made me whimper softly. "Aw, the girl is scared...why aren't you scared too Markus? You're a girl too." "It's Lukas," I muttered through gritted teeth. I was scared, yes, but I was sick of everything. I pulled myself from Lukas's grasp and I stepped between him and James. "James, I'm sick of you."

A smirk was dancing on his lips. "But you were willing to do anything to get my attention." "Yeah, hear the word 'were' in there? You made me sick." My voice was rising. "You killed my mother and then you killed my brother right in front of me!" I didn't know how he managed to do that. "And you're a big bully!" Ok, so that wasn't very intelligent of me, but it was true. He kept his smirk. "I'm DONE with you James, do you hear me?" I was up in his face, tears running

down my face. "You took away EVERYTHING! Everything I loved and cared for! And you want to kill me now?" I stepped back and held my arms open. "Do it."

James stared at me and blinked. He didn't expect something like that from such a meek and shy girl. He stood and raised his gun. I quickly did a few moves I learned from books and movies and was now holding the gun facing him. I'd kicked and gotten him down on his knees. A low chuckle emitted from his throat. "Clever girl..."

My grip tightened on the gun and I aimed where it needed to go. "Any last words?" James stayed silent and something crossed his face. He looked slightly scared, for the first time since he found me and Lukas again. "Yeah, I don't regret any of the pain I caused you. You deserved it. You deserve so much more. Sadly, it seems I won't be the one delivering that to you but someone else will. Count on it."

His smirk reappeared and with an angry scream, I shot him five times in the chest to make sure he died and stayed dead. "H-hey..." Lukas's hands wrapped around my waist and angry and sad tears rolled down my cheeks. I turned around to face him. The now empty gun fell from my fingers. "L-L-Lukas..." He hugged me tightly before pulling away to kiss me softly. I kissed him back lightly, savoring one of the last moments of happiness I thought I'd get.

"Someone else is coming Lukas..." He nodded weakly, hating the new information learned. "We'll never be safe..." Lukas hugged me tightly. "Oh sweetheart, I'm sorry but I love you and I'll do my best to protect you." "I love you too," I mumbled out and wrapped my arms around his neck. We'd have to live the rest of our lives on the run and, worse, in fear.



**KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
ENJOY  
SUMMER**





