

Whitsunday Voices Short Story Competition

Grades 5-6

Highly Commended

Victoria Silman for

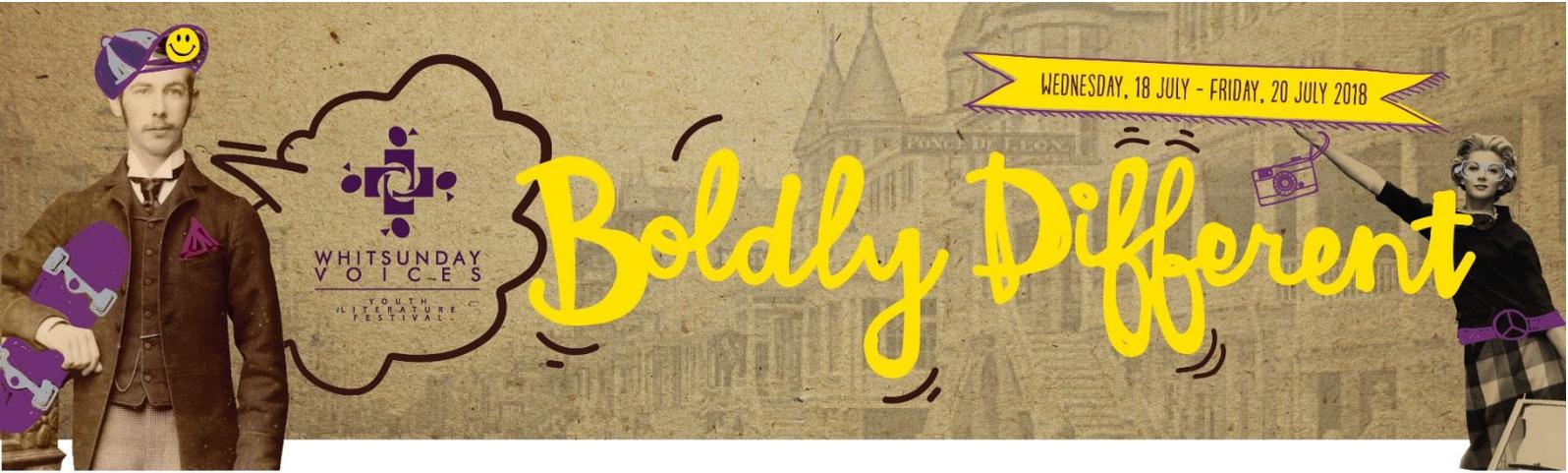
Dream Stars

“Hmmm... What shall I wear today, Rat?”

“You respected mother wishes to visit the King today, Miss.”

Danielle’s face was a mask. She showed no emotion. As her mother used to say, “A servant with no emotions is just a servant, but a servant who shows her emotions is trouble.” Used to.

A knot formed in the back of her throat, but she beat her feelings back. “Miss Isabelle, I believe the red velvet would be an appropriate choice.” Good. Better to believe than think. A servant’s only thoughts should be of cooking and cleaning.



“Fine. Dress me.” Blond hair now tied by Danielle, her pointed chin held high, Isabelle stood, her arms out waiting for her lowly servant to dress her.

As Danielle filled her mistress’s request, Isabelle suddenly demanded. “Rat, I need jewellery! The king’s court is fancy indeed.”

“Of course, Miss.”

Danielle pulled out a shining silver and gold necklace.

“Will this do, Miss?”

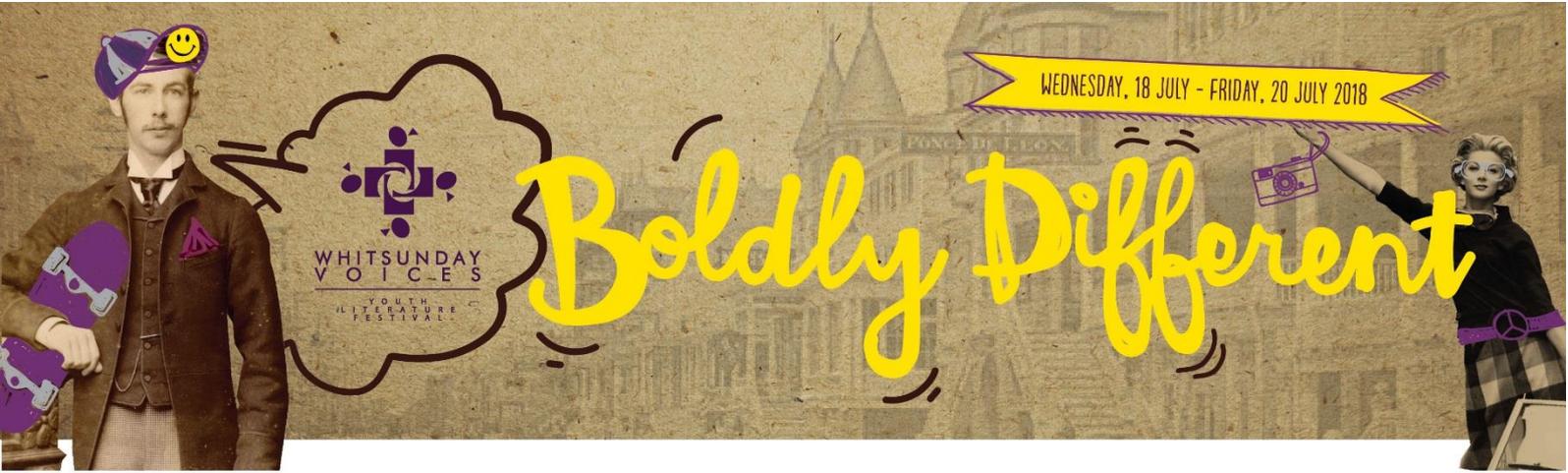
“No Rat. Too cheap! I need something stunning!”

Inside Danielle was shocked. That necklace cost her years wages ten times over! Gold and silver, inlaid with diamonds, it was good enough if a peasant were to visit the King. So, they went on searching. After a few more rejections they came to a suitable candidate. A necklace was chosen, so was a bracelet and earrings to match. Isabelle looked stunning. “You look beautiful, Miss.” Isabelle ignored this.

“Go alert my mother that I am ready.”

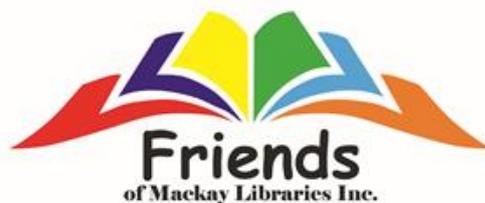
“Yes, Miss Isabelle.” Danielle hurried off to do her bidding.

18 hours later



Her neck and back aching, Danielle trudged up the 1000 dirty, bare wooden stairs to her attic room. As she soldiered on, the day's events replaying in her head. The visit. The King. The feeling of cold steel against her neck. The stinging of the multiple cuts on her back. Speaking out of turn. A stupid mistake. The guards had thrown her against the wall. Their knives at her throat. When they returned the mistress had beaten her hard. After doing extra jobs for punishment, Danielle was finally allowed to go to her room. By now it was almost 12 o'clock at night and she was tired. So, so tired. Must keep going. Must keep Danielle's whole body relaxed, as she stumbled for her bed. At last she closed her eyes, settling back. She could sleep now, even if the room was cold and damp. Even if her only covering was sewn together pillowcases. Even if she would have to wake up in five hours. She could sleep, could dream. She could dream about the dream stars overhead, each holding one's soul dream, their greatest hopes and achievements. She could hope her star fell that night, releasing that dream, making the dream happen.

God bless the dream stars that shine so brightly overhead, and God bless those poor aching souls in the cold, hard beds. Shining bright and high, give them salvation in the sky.



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