Dear Sir Lucas, the Guinea Pig

THE KIDS' CANCER PROJECT
WRITE A BOOK IN A DAY

Parameters Form

Team Details

STATE:	QLD
DIVISION:	Middle School (Required word count 3500 to 5000 words)
SCHOOL/GROUP:	King's Christian College - Pimpama
TEAM NAME:	King's Scribes
TEAM ID:	1177

Parameters and random words

Parameters		Random words
Primary character 1	Waiter	novel
Primary character 2	Shoemaker	gooey
Non-human character	Guinea pig	yarn
Setting	School	plunge
Issue	Missed the plane	homework

Instructions

- Start no earlier than **8am**
- Write an original story:
  - based on all **five parameters** (above)
  - including all **five random words** (above) as written, and in bold type
  - with some identifiable **Australian content** (in theme or setting or characters, etc)
  - keeping within the allowed word count (remember every word on every page counts)!
  - include this parameters form in your book **immediately after the front cover**
- Remember: **Every** word on **every** page counts. This includes your front cover, back cover, blurb, acknowledgements and copyright form.
- **Be sure to give yourself enough time to submit your book and complete the following checklist before 9pm**

Log on to the Team Coordinator Portal to:

- ☐ Check the spelling of your team name and team members' names (how these are spelt on submission will be how they are displayed on certificates)
- ☐ Complete the Declaration
- ☐ Submit your finished book in **both** PDF and plain text format by 9pm

The King's Scribes

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Part 1 – The Wall That Was Not a Wall

Mr Turner was babbling on about how our punctuation was appalling and how we should be ashamed for making mistakes like that in a prestigious university, but Ellie wasn't paying attention.

"For **homework** I expect you all to read the class **novel** *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald and analyse the book. You need to make notes of all the punctuation because you shouldn't be making mistakes like those in-"

The deafening shriek of Ellie's ringtone intruded Mr Turner's incessant rambling.

"Phones off, young lady!" he shrieked.

"B-b-but its urgent," Ellie hesitantly replied.

"Then out of my class!" he shouted, finger pointing towards the door.

She hastily collected all of her textbooks, barely fitting them into her hands as she feverishly escaped her university classroom.

She closed the door quietly behind her and answered the call. "Yes mum?" she answered shyly.

"Ellie, you need to come back to Italy now," came her mother's shaky voice. "Your Nonna is in the hospital, we don't know how much longer she has."

"Oh my gosh! Is she gonna be okay? I'll come home right now mum. Let me just call my boss and tell him I can't come in for a while."

"Okay darling but be quick."

"Ok, bye mum."

Ellie hung up the phone and searched for her boss to call him and tell the news.

"Hey boss, my grandma is in hospital in Italy, and I have to go home to see her."

"All good Ellie, I hope your grandmother gets better," her boss Michael replied,

"Have safe travels."

After a draining class and a definite even more draining journey ahead, Ellie decided a coffee was very necessary.

"Seven dollars left in the bank. Perfect!" She cheered

But as her hand dived into the depths of her bag, in hopes to find her wallet, a rather familiar feel brushed her fingertips.

"He better not have done it again!" She began searching frantically for him and then, "Gotcha!"

"Sir Lucas, how many times have I told you not to sneak into my bag?" She held him up in the air as if he was held captive.

"I couldn't help myself" he responded. "Did you really expect me to keep running in circles in that cage you left me in? Exactly!"

"Ugh! I could use some company, I guess. Just don't get up to any mischief," She commanded

"Hey, I'm not making any promises," Sir Lucas deviously responded, sinking back into the chaotic abyss of her backpack.

"Ok, focus!"

Ellie wandered towards the café and ordered her usual, a vanilla chai with oat milk.

"Please work. Please work," she whispered to her card, notorious for letting her down during checkouts.

A familiar beep came from the machine. The middle-aged barista giving her a rather sympathetic look as she lifted her card.

'Declined' the card machine read. Not a surprise.

She sighed and pulled out every last coin she could find in her bag, the seven dollars left to her name and slid them awkwardly onto the counter.

The coffee machine grumbled to life as the warm sugary scent of chai and spices filled the atmosphere.

She held the drink between her palms, allowing the warmth to relieve her quivering delicate hands. The spice, the sugar, might just be the only sense of normalcy of her day. She was calmed. At least for a second.

"That smells delightful." Sir Lucas poked his head out of the bag, his nose leading the way, "I would've demanded sip, if only I was able to consume hot liquids."

"You literally say that every single time," Ellie mumbled, eyes elsewhere, locked on the table near the window.

"Hey, I'm just saying," he continued, "plus you're not very good at making informed decisions while under stress. To be honest, I think I should take over. I do the strategizing, while you panic your whole life away."

Ellie took a prolonged sip whilst staring into the streets through the window. "You're literally a hamster."

"How rude. Hamsters don't even have luscious hair like us Guinea pigs. There is a very distinct difference." He responded, taken aback by her remark.

She scoffed playfully, her eyes still on the people bustling by the window. Ellie's head was practically spinning. Her very own Nonna was in the hospital. The sharp words continuously echoed like background music, faint but still present. She didn't even find the time to cry. It probably hadn't fully sunk in yet.

She endlessly looked down at her phone. No messages from Mum. No flight booked. No idea how she'd even afford one. Her chest started to tighten.

"You're doing the thing again" Sir Lucas nonchalantly mentioned, "you know where you practically stare off into space and forgot you're in the presence of star quality."

"I'm just deep in thought."

"Well, you, hurry up with the thinking. We've got a plane to catch. And definitely a wallet to fatten."

"I'll figure it out. Calm down," she murmured.

Sir Lucas teased. "Um, your definition of 'figuring it out' involves wailing in a PUBLIC restroom and calling your dad, which is definitely awkward for everyone involved."

"I promise, I'm not calling Dad."

"Ok fine, I'll take your word for it. But you need to do something very Ellie-ish. Spontaneous. Magnificent but still faintly chaotic."

She took another reassuring sip of her vanilla chai and confidently stood up in one swift, dramatic motion.

"You know what, you're right!" She exclaimed, placing her hand on her hip, whilst she raised her cup like a victory torch. A few side-eyes were shot at her, but she could care less in that moment.

"Now that's the spirit. But your kind of embarrassing me right now, you weirdo." He muttered trying to stay hidden from the humiliation.

"You're quite literally a talking hamster in my backpack. I think the bar for embarrassment passed a hot minute ago.

She flew to the café door, her shoes tapping simultaneously as if with purpose.

"Hey, we can't leave yet, you didn't even check the guinea pig menu." He squealed

"They don't have a guinea pig menu, now shut up!" She commanded squeezing him back into her backpack.

"W-Wait! Watch out!" Sir Lucas warned

She brushed her silky blonde hair out of her face, but then SMACK!

Part 2 – The Handmade Shoes

Ellie stumbled back, dropping her books onto the floor. She then looked up, gasping at the wall – scratch that – person. She hadn't run into a wall but instead a Korean man, taller than her, in a tight, black, expensive suit and professionally made shoes; and her coffee was all over them.

"Oh my gosh, I am so, so sorry," she apologised, staring at his now coffee-soaked shirt and suit jacket.

"You ruined my tailored suit and my German-imported leather Oxfords!" he spat. "It took me weeks to design and assemble these shoes! I have a big client waiting to see these!"

"I'm so, so, so, so sorry."

"Hundreds of hours and thousands and dollars just for you to ruin it in less than a second! Do you know who I am?!"

"No…? Should I?" she questioned.

"No? What do you mean *no*?"

“I’m sorry but I don’t know you.”

As if those words cursed his whole bloodline, he gasped, his ego shattered to pieces.

“Are you okay?” Ellie asked with concern.

“Am I *okay*?” he seethed through his teeth as he tightened his jaw and his body stiffened. His eyes narrowed to become even slimmer than his thin almond-eyes. With every passing moment he clenched his fists harder and harder, and his breath became heavier and heavier until anger consumed his body from head to toe.

“The audacity,” he huffed, chuckling passively aggressively, “The absolute audacity.”

“Don’t worry. I’m sure that I’m probably the only person who doesn’t know you. And maybe when you remake the pair of shoes that I ruined it will turn out better than it did the first time!”

He shot her a look of complete hatred.

“This is why I do not fraternise with people like *you*. And, on another note, I cannot take you seriously with your obnoxious bob and colourful headband. The navy blue burns my eyes.”

“I’m very sorry but I’m running late to the airport and—did you just say that navy blue hurts your eyes?”

“You are paying. For every. Single. Dollar.”

Ellie blinked in confusion. “Sorry?”

“You are paying for the cost of the materials, my suit, my coffee and my therapy session.”

“Uh I don’t exactly have that money. I spent my last 7 bucks on my coffee.”

“Yet you have enough money for a flight?”

“My mum paid for it.”

He paused for a moment, as if he was thinking of ways to make her life a living hell.

Suddenly lighting up – a rare occurrence – he announced, “I have come up with a solution for our predicament. You are going to help me.”

“I am?”

“I have a very important client waiting for me and I cannot delay any longer. Since you cannot pay for the damages, this will be your way of making up for your outrageous coffee spill.”

“Again, I am truly sorry, but I don’t think that I have the excess time to help-”

“I have an Uber coming to pick us up and to go back to my hotel to fetch my bags. And then we are off to the airport.”

“What about my stuff?”

“Eh. I suppose we can get your belongings.”

“Um, sure, I guess. I’ll just check the time,” Ellie said as she reached for her backpack to grab her phone. But as soon as she touched it her heart sank. In a panic she immediately took off her bag, now soggy with her spilled chai, and unzipped the biggest pocket to scramble for her phone.

“Your coffee ruined my luscious coiffure!” Sir Lucas whined.

“Why does your backpack talk?” he asked.

“My phone!” she cried, holding a drenched iPhone X with a glitching screen.

Ignoring her dilemma, his body loosened as he began to walk off to buy another coffee until Ellie called out, “What’s your name? I’m Ellie.”

Turning around, he replied, “I am Aaron.”

Part 3 – He's How Old?

The drive was long, silent and very awkward. They hadn't spoken since they introduced themselves, and Aaron had forced her to help him make it to his flight. Ellie honestly didn't see the point in helping him. Something she'd learned over the years is that she is not very helpful… and honestly? She didn't even know why she tried anymore; maybe it was because she felt bad for him, or maybe she cared about him.

No. She couldn't. She'd literally just met him minutes ago.

"What university do you go to?" Ellie asked, hoping to break the awkwardness.

"Yours," Aaron replied.

"O-oh," Ellie should've guessed that. Why else would he be at her school? "That's embarrassing," she muttered under her breath. "How old are you?"

"21."

Ellie turned to look at him speechless. He legit looked older than her by at least two years.

"What?" she asked in disbelief.

"I am 21. What do you not get about it?"

"No. I get it, it's just that- I'm sorry this is gonna sound rude-"

"Just say it," he grumbled

"Um, I thought you were like two years older than me…"

He looked at her. "Really?" He looked slightly offended. "Wait-how old are you then?"

"25…"

"You are 25?" he asked gobsmacked. "You-you are-there is no way. Wait-you thought I was 27? I am so offended. You owe me even more now."

After a while they stopped at a massive house. It was so tall Ellie had never felt so small. It looked bigger than their university itself… and the gardens? Don't even get her started on the gardens. They were filled with luscious green grass, blooming flowers and extravagant waterfalls and rivers.

"Well, we are here. I will be back in a few minutes. Wait here," Aaron commanded.

"Yes sir," Ellie saluted.

Aaron rushed inside his house and quickly packed a bag. Then he ran downstairs and walked out the door nonchalantly, trying to look like he was just running around the mansion because he was stressing that he might be late for his flight.

As he got inside the car he told the driver, "Let us go to the airport now. We do not have time; the flight is leaving soon."

"Wait. What about my stuff?" Ellie asked.

"We do not have time."

"Fine!" Ellie shouted, "But you better buy me new clothes!"

"Happily! That navy blue hairband is an utter disgrace."

The car ride to the airport was somehow even more awkward the first. The only thing that broke the silence was the muffled shouts from inside Ellie's backpack, as Sir Lucas demanded for a fresh groom and haircut. Not even Ellie tried to have some small talk.

Ten minutes later, the Uber arrived at the Brisbane International Airport. Of course, Aaron forced Ellie to carry all his bags. Not surprised, she opened the boot and

mentally prepared herself, expecting to carry 500 kilograms of suitcase, only to find two bags.

"Wow? Only two bags? That's impressive for a rich kid," Ellie sneered.

The pair walked inside. The high, raised ceilings could make anyone, even Aaron, feel tiny. As the holidays were drawing closer, hundreds of people were gathered at the check-in, desperate for a vacation. A massive screen that displayed the boarding times reminded the duo how little time they had left.

"Oh my! There are so many people," Ellie noticed.

"That's crazy," Sir Lucas responded.

"Shush."

"Your talking backpack is interrupting my train of thought," Aaron grumbled.

"How could I – the epitome of perfection – interrupt your thinking? Rather, I should be making your thoughts better," Sir Lucas retorted.

"My backpack doesn't talk; Sir Lucas the guinea pig does," Ellie explained

"A guinea pig – how does that even – never mind," a confused Aaron replied. "We need to focus on boarding my flight."

"I'm flying too."

"That's irrelevant."

Before Ellie had time to protest, Aaron bolted towards the check-in.

"Hey! Wait! I can't run that fast!" Ellie exclaimed, hobbling along with her backpack whilst dragging Aaron's luggage.

The race to the gate was treated as a game to Aaron, seeing people and waiting in line as obstacles to the final objective – getting on his flight. Ellie, on the other hand, was fighting for her life, having to put extra effort in to catch up to him. They sped through the check-in, ran down the escalator leading to the security check (much to Ellie's annoyance and Sir Lucas's complaints), went through the baggage check and ran down the halls of the International Airport as they looked for the gate.

Suddenly, Aaron stopped to catch a breath, as the PA system announced, '*This is the final boarding call for flight VA768 to Italy. Please proceed to gate 14 immediately. Boarding will close in 5 minutes.*'

"C'mon, we need," she paused to take a breath, "to hurry… to get… to the gate."

"You cannot be talking. You are literally pausing between every two words to take a breath," Aaron replied.

"You're… stopping… to take a breath… too."

"I am just merely stopping to ponder about my greatness."

"Sure," she said sceptically.

"Precisely. Now can I have just had a second to—what on Earth are you doing?" he screamed as Ellie grabbed his hand and ran.

"Let. Go. Right. NOW!" he ordered.

"We need to… get to… our… flights!"

"I hate you and your blue jeans. Colours make my eyes bleed."

"You are… literally… wearing a green… suit!"

"This suit is black," he frowned whilst looking down at his attire, only seeing a patch of green on his left sleeve, like his eyes hid the full scale of colours from him.

"Do you only see in black-and-white or something?"

“Well… anyways that is not important!” he yelled as he tried to yank himself from Ellie’s grip. Aaron continued to attempt to break free until finally, at the baggage claim, he broke loose.

“I thought that your coffee spill was absolutely ludicrous but *this*? You are on thin ice, Ellie.”

“I thought that your flight was extremely important. We can’t waste any more time. You’re lucky to have such an organised person like me, isn’t that right Sir Lucas?”

“Right? Sir Lucas?”

Ellie started shaking her bag, trying to force an answer out of her pet.

But what should’ve triggered an annoyed yelp resulted in no response.

Trying not to think about the worst, Ellie took a few deep breaths.

“Organised? I would regard your coffee spill as the complete opposite of being organised. If anything, you should—”

But Aaron’s voice faded into the distance as Ellie zipped open her bag. She blinked back tears. She tried not to **plunge** into despair as she realised the devastating truth. Sir Lucas was gone.

Part 4 – Just A Hamster!?

Ellie rummaged through her bag, throwing all the stuff on the floor. Where was Sir Lucas?

"Hey, you are making a mess. What are you—"

"He's not here! Where is he?! He's not—" she gasped, panic could be clearly heard in her voice.

"Who is not?"

"Sir Lucas! He's not here! Where is he?!" She flipped her bag upside down, pouring the rest of the contents on the ground.

"Why are you freaking out? It is just a hamster, you can always buy another one," he scoffed. She whipped her head up, her wild eyes boring into him.

"Just a hamster!? JUST A HAMSTER!? Sir Lucas is not a filthy hamster,"

Scene4

she looked disgusted just saying the word. "He is a glorious Guinea Pig with luscious hair."

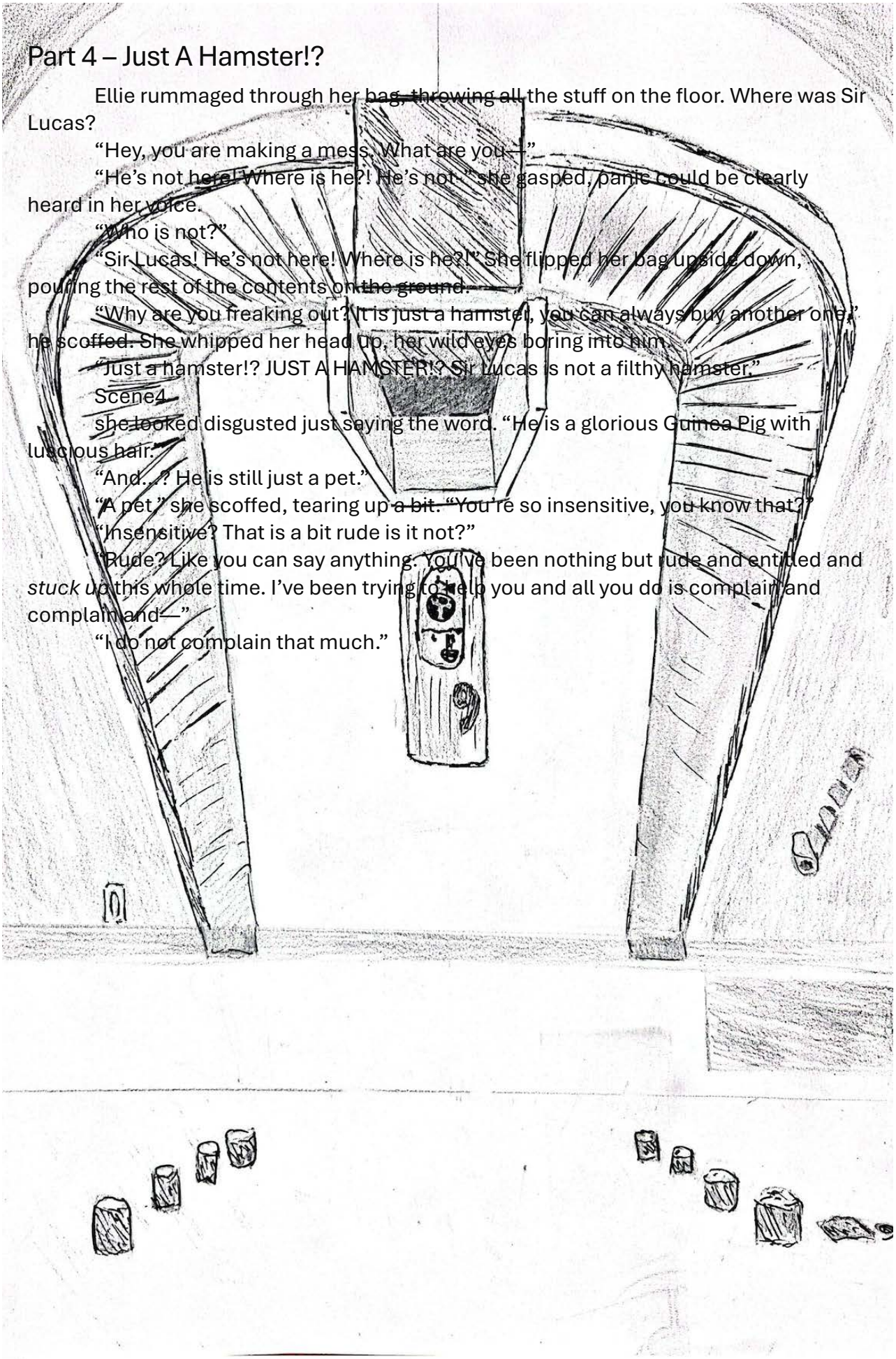
"And...? He is still just a pet."

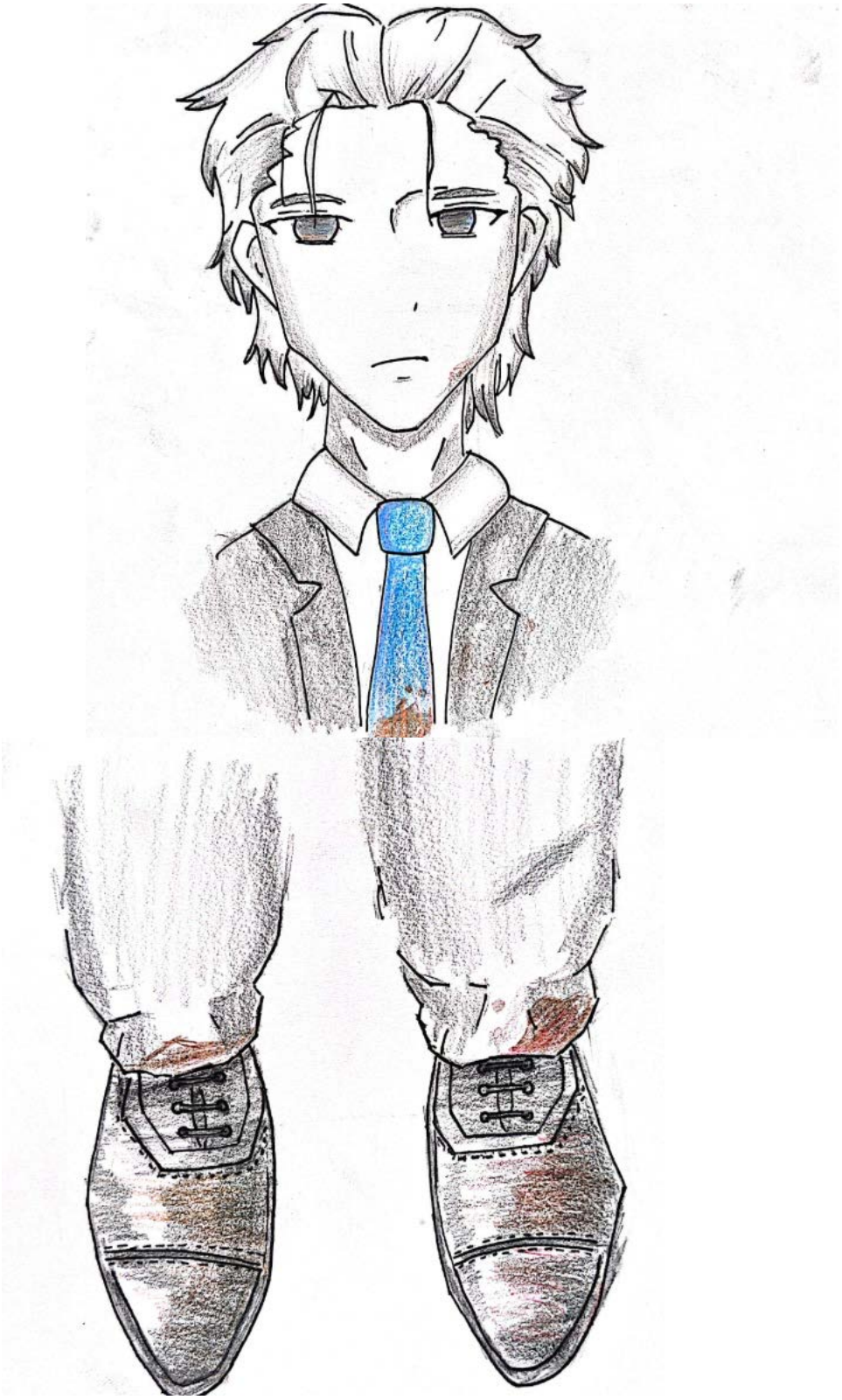
"A pet," she scoffed, tearing up a bit. "You're so insensitive, you know that?"

"Insensitive? That is a bit rude is it not?"

"Rude? Like you can say anything. You've been nothing but rude and entitled and *stuck up* this whole time. I've been trying to help you and all you do is complain and complain and—"

"I do not complain that much."





“—complain and complain.” She ignored him. “And while you worry about your plane, Sir Lucas can be anywhere by now, he-he could, he could be in someone else’s bag, or-or on a plane, or-” she started sobbing, falling down on her knees and covering her face.

While she cried, Aaron is in a state of shock. Rude? Insensitive? Him? How? It is her who is crying over something so trivial as a pet hamster—sorry—Guinea Pig. But he

could not help but wonder if perhaps if she was correct. He could see why someone would say that. He sighed, looking back down at her shaking form.

"Look," he mumbled, sighing when she didn't respond. He crouched down.

"I am sorry. I did not mean to be insolent. You are having a reasonable reaction, and I am sorry I discouraged that."

"You're s–so bad at this," she sniffled.

"Give me a break, this is my first time."

"That's so sad," she giggled, wiping away the tears with her palms. His phone then dinged, causing him to blanch. He scrambled into his pocket, pulling out his phone and took a sharp inhale.

"What's wrong?" She worried, noticing the fear in his eyes.

"I am going to miss my flight," he said quietly, staring at nothing, his eyes unfocused.

"It's alright, you can always buy a new ticket."

"But I missed my flight." His voice grew tight, rough, like he couldn't believe it and it hurt to even think it. She grimaced at the pain in his voice.

"Let's go buy a new ticket to—wait, where were you even going?" She wondered, looking at him with a tilt of her head.

"Italy." He muttered, doing what looked like deep breath exercises.

"Really?!" She jumped up, scaring him and the people around.

"What? What is wrong? Why are we yelling?"

"You were going to Italy???" She got into his face, her noise inches from his.

"Yes, why…?"

"I was going to Italy!"

His jaw dropped slightly, which was his version of surprise and shock. She then gasped and her whole face dropped.

"Nonna," she whimpered to herself.

"Who?"

"My Nonna is in the hospital, that's why I was on my flight, well, trying to get on my flight."

Suddenly determination lit up his eyes, "I'm gonna buy tickets."

Part 5 – It's Called Common Sense

"Wait give me your phone," she commanded.

"Why do you nee-"

Ellie recklessly tapped on his phone, "How do you work this thing?"

"You just need to–"

"There! Got it!" she interrupted.

"Except the tickets for the next flight cost $2847!!" She shouted in a distressed voice, "that so expensive, that's way too expensive, I'm never going to see–"

Before she could finish her sentence, Aaron frantically snatched his phone back.

"Hey, what do you think you're doing? Now's not the time" she pleaded.

He didn't answer.

"Done" He proclaimed, showing Ellie the retrieved tickets on his phone.

"Dude, you actually paid for it?" Ellie asked in disbelief,

"Do not sweat it, you will pay me back in espresso," he replied nonchalantly.

In her thoughts, she knew she should be protesting, at least reminding him she doesn't owe him anything, but her brain short–circuited. A stranger just booked two tickets to Italy.

"Why—Who even does that?" she mumbled to herself.

He shrugged casually.

"Apparently, I do." he replied, overhearing her murmurs. "Let's go. We've got a plane to get on," he insisted, Ellie tentatively followed behind him.

They hastily rushed towards the gate as Ellie clutched the boarding passes in her hand, still startled by the fact that this was all happening. He tossed his carry–on over his shoulder and gave Ellie a side glance as they dashed through the terminal.

"You do not strike me as the type to hesitate when it comes to adventure," he implied.

She glared. "It's definitely not hesitation. It's called common sense."

"Yeah sure! Because Sir Lucas definitely got that from you." he mocked, gaining a glare from Ellie which definitely shut him up.

Hearing Sir Lucas' name reminded her. She grabbed Aaron's phone again and frantically started calling Animal Patrol.

"Gosh. They're not picking up." she scoffed.

Busy.

Busy.

Busy.

"I guess you are not the only one who's lost a hams-I mean Guinea Pig." He reassured, "Ellie I am sure he's fine. We're about to board and we can't miss another flight."

She was reluctant at first. The thought of her companionship with Sir Lucas fought with the reality that she might miss her second flight to Italy.

"Let's focus on what we can do right now," Aaron reassured now convincing her.

She replied with a weak nod, lips pressing firmly into a thin line. "Okay. But the minute we land we're finding him." she demanded.

They quickly scanned their boarding passes and walked onto the jet bridge. Ellie quickly looked back at and browsed around in hopes to see him appear. No luck.

As they glided over the Atlantic, Aaron tapped her arm, "There is this place in Florence" he started, eyes twinkling. "Only the locals know about it. Let me tell you,

best espresso. It does not just stop there. Their signature **gooey** chocolate cake. Delectable."

"I am rather convinced. Count myself in," she replied mocking his posh accent. "And remember you're paying," he reminded.

They landed in Florence during its quiet hours of the dusk. The airport practically buzzing with swarms of a mix of locals and tourists.

Aaron rushed through to the bathroom like it was his destiny. "I will come back in a few." he excused himself.

Inside, he didn't expect to see anyone familiar. But at that moment, right at the sink, a furry friend was spotted. He was brushing off his luscious fur in the mirror. Also wearing a very particular trench coat, seemingly dusting it off. "Sir Lucas!" Aaron squealed.

"Shh! Are you trying to blow my cover or what?" Sir Lucas snapped, his focus shifting from the tiny piece of yarn hanging on his sleeve which seemingly put him off.

The tiny creature gestured for him to come closer pulling his miniature glasses down to give Aaron a flat look.

"Hey! Listen here buddy, I'm embarking on a new destiny."

"Ellie's worried sick about you. I cannot wait to tell her-"

"Hey! Hey! You my friend are not uttering a word of this" he commanded, "You tell Ellie and you've quite literally destroyed what little remains of my glory. Come on, I've got my whole life ahead of me. Just imagine, mascot deals, commercials" he continued, staring into the ceiling as if he could see his future.

"Anyways, us boys must stick together,"

He gave a salute, climbed the wall then disappeared into the air vent.

Aaron stunned by what he had just seen, stood frozen. The hand dryer still blowing at his side like an exhale of disbelief.

As he exited the bathroom, Ellie noticed Aaron's perplexed expression. "Did you see anything?"

Aaron blinked bemusedly, "Oh no! I didn't see anything. We should go."

Ellie was having a normal school day until the phone call. Now she finds herself with a stranger in an airport trying to get home. Between spilt coffee and a talking backpack, Ellie's day is far from normal. Will she get home, or will she be too late?