In an effort to raise money for the Food Bank, Grafton High School’s National Honor Society put on a Powder Puff game! Kaitlyn Parker, the President of NHS, says, “Since the school hadn’t done a Powder Puff game in so long, it took a lot more work than expected. However, the senior class is a super school-spirited and fun class, and the willingness for everyone to participate and practice really helped NHS pull the event off.” The senior girls were split onto the Red Team or the Blue Team, and each team had their corresponding group of guy cheerleaders. After hours of practicing in the days leading up to the big game, both teams were hyped up and ready. The game took place in the evening, and the rest of the Grafton student body came dressed up in their patriotic gear to cheer on the teams. The girls did a great job playing on both teams, and the Red Team ended up with a great victory. Alyssa Talayumptewa- a player for the Red Team said, “Playing with the Red Team was special especially since we’ve never had a powderpuff game before. I had a great experience, especially since we won!” While the girls were on the field, the boys showed off their amazing cheerleading skills. Their halftime performance included flips and other impressive moves. Ryder Jackson, a cheerleader for the Blue Team, says, “I thought it was a really fun experience learning a cheer routine for the halftime show and being able to cheer on friends who were playing in the game.” Overall, the Powder Puff game was a huge success, raising over $1,200 in cash tickets alone, not to mention the hundreds of canned goods brought in for the Food Bank.

Senior Kaitlyn Parker says, “I plan to head to Africa with an organization called Love Africa where I will be serving at a refugee settlement in Uganda for 2 weeks. After working at the settlement, we will spend the last few days on a safari!”

Senior Jackson Zwirschitz says, “I am excited to go to Mexico to celebrate my parents 25th anniversary, it will be a fun time to spend with my family over the holidays.”

Senior Jacob Logan says, “I’m so happy to go to Chicago to see my family and witness a white Christmas.”

Interesting in submitting stories, art, or creative work to the Grafton Voyage Newspaper and Literary Magazine? Submissions here:
Remembering Katie

By: Faith Swindler

Katie and her mom on their trip to Key West.

Katie Rae Snyir was an inspiration to the Yorktown community. She was a junior at Grafton High School, an active participant at Liberty Baptist Church, a dedicated member of the school band, a talented artist, and a friend to many. Katie was a strong Christian and trusted in God throughout her battle with stage four brain cancer. Before her diagnosis, Katie, alongside her friend Taylor Memory, hosted a girl’s bible study. She was a cherished member of the Liberty Student Ministry, where she grew in her relationship with Christ. Katie felt at home among her Grafton family. As a beloved musician in the “pit,” she played the marimba in the award-winning Grafton High School band. Additionally, Katie Rae was a blossoming artist, using art as a release from the struggles of her daily life. She created beautiful artwork that portrayed her endless creativity and imagination. Above all, Katie showed God’s love to everyone. As stated by her lifelong friend, Junior Chloe Supplee, Katie “always put others before herself.” Although Katie has passed on to be with Christ, her story continues to be shared and encourages others to fight the good fight.

Katie’s Story

At four years old, Katie was diagnosed with leukemia. To recover, she needed a bone marrow transplant, yet this carried the risk of developing another cancer later in life. Katie’s brother, Jacob, donated his bone marrow at the age of two. After receiving this bone marrow transplant, Katie won her battle with cancer and went into remission when she was five years old.

Twelve years after her initial battle with leukemia, Katie was diagnosed with stage four brain cancer. After endless MRI scans, biopsies, and radiation treatments, she was told that her cancer was terminal and given a prognosis of a couple of months to live. According to Katie’s dad, “The doctors gave us no options, no hope.” Katie and her family turned to the one person they knew could give them hope—God. “But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength” (Isaiah 40:31). When asked what Katie would tell others with her condition, she said, “Don’t lose hope; be with the Lord because that’s the only way you can get through this.” According to Katie’s friend, Taylor Memory, Katie’s faith was an inspiration to those around her: “The way that Katie constantly walked with the Lord, it was so clear how faithful she was to him.” Despite Katie and her family facing the fight of a lifetime, they were able to find their strength in God.

To prevent the cancer from spreading, Katie wore an optune device. During her battle, this device stabilized her cancer and improved her prognosis. While undergoing this treatment, Katie and her family were able to experience a trip to Key West due to support from Toby’s Dream Team. During this trip, she was able to fulfill her dreams of seeing clear water and swimming with dolphins. During her fight with stage four brain cancer, Katie said, “I cherish all my moments with my friends and family.” The optune device gave Katie nine more months to make memories with her loved ones and share the word of God.

During her battle with cancer, Katie endured kidney stones, seizures, pain, and heartache, but through it all, she relied on Christ. She found peace and hope in Bible verses, like Psalm 31:24, Romans 15:13, and Luke 1:37. Also, Katie depended upon music, such as “New Today” by Micah Taylor to bring comfort and help her feel God’s presence. Above all, she relied on the support from her family, friends, and those around the world to encourage her to keep fighting. Not only was Katie embraced by those in her community, but she also received letters and prayers from all around the world. Katie’s battle was more than just her own, but a fight for all of those struggling to find hope amid their incurable diseases.

On November 25, 2021, Katie Snyir went to be with God in Heaven. Although she is no longer here with us, her legacy lives on in the minds of everyone who heard her story. Katie used her battle with cancer to shine Christ’s light and spread His love to others. Her story has reached the hearts of people all over the world, encouraging them to build and strengthen their relationships with God. Today, Katie is at peace, knowing she fought the good fight, finished the race, and kept the faith (2 Timothy 4:7).
Remembering Jonathan

Grafton High school lost a warm, tender spirit in junior Jonathan Jenkins this November. As a tribute to him, we offer some memories from friends and teachers about this young man. Despite his limited time at Grafton, Jonathan made an impact on everyone he met with his warmth and tenacity in his studies or his desire to care for others. It was his gentle nature and strong enthusiasm for anything that caught his interest that made him so memorable to his classmates and teachers.

Tina-Marie Hamilton, who had Jonathan in her English 11 class remembers him as an open young man who loved to share his interests. "Jonathan was a vibrant young man who loved being at Grafton. When he wasn't studying, he enjoyed woodworking. He felt the need to create something from nothing. Jonathan told me about saving a broken-down shed and redoing it with his father. It was as if he were creating a new beginning for that old shed, just like his new beginning at GHS. I already miss his talks with me before he went to lunch, and his enthusiasm for life will long remain with me."

Jonathan did not just make an impression on his teachers, but his classmates saw someone who was willing to tackle problems with perseverance. Sophomore Moana Jackson remembers their shared class and that Jonathan was unwilling to back down from a challenge. "I had algebra II with (Jonathan) and Mr. O'Regan. He was a really nice, hardworking student. He'd always stay in class until he finished his problem. Even when it was lunch, he'd stay and figure out the answer to the problem," Jackson said.

He used his desire to get it right to create a better class for his peers as well. "Jonathan was such a fun guy to be around. He definitely brought smiles to the whole class and he brought this happiness that made me enjoy being in that class. He was always making everyone laugh and he was such a great help when I had questions, definitely a guy I will never forget," said sophomore Addy Smagh.

It was through his positivity and quest to always learn more and explore the world around him that Jonathan managed to touch so many people. Science teacher Michael Bennett remembers the boundless enthusiasm Jonathan had. "Jonathan was immensely curious and enthusiastic about exploring the things that caught his interest, a trait we had in common and on which we could relate. I will miss Jonathan visiting me in my classroom before school to talk about whatever had sparked his curiosity and excitement at the time, to share a laugh over some off-the-wall joke or niche reference, or to simply deliver a friendly “hello” at the start of the day," Bennett said.

Teacher Antoinette Burnett, too was impacted by Jonathan's tireless approach to problem-solving and positive influence on his peers. "When I think of J.J., I think of someone who constantly worked hard and always tried to do the right thing. He had a brilliant mind and used it as he was on the road to excellence. I will always remember his work ethic and his willingness to help others. He was respectful and kind, possessed a unique sense of humor, and was a great conversationalist. Once you got to know him, it was as if you had known him for a lifetime. The one thing I admire about J.J. was if he started something, he was going to see it to its finish. He was meticulous and wouldn't settle for anything less than perfection. I know that somewhere down the road, he would have made a significant difference in our world," Burnett said.

Jonathan’s friends saw his kind heart and knew that he was steadfast and loyal, putting his care of others above his own needs. Junior Milo Caldwell became friends with Jonathan during the unusual school circumstances brought about by the pandemic, but even through distance was able to create a lasting connection thanks to Jonathan. "We met during online school last year because of covid. He was always a very friendly and talkative person who was interesting to listen to. He loved to call and text and always made a habit of checking up on the people he cared about. He honestly deserved a lot more in life than what he got," Caldwell said.

In moments like this, we look at our ship to bring us home and carry us through turbulent waters. Though his time with us was short, Jonathan's care, steadfast friendship, and drive will ripple on. We were all enriched by having this young man as part of our clipper family and we will carry him with us as we continue our journey. Fair winds and following seas.
BOY’S BASKETBALL

By Shauna Whipkey

This was my first time taking an actual Photography elective, but I’m liking it so far. Plus I’ve always enjoyed taking photos and I can always get some good shots at the games,” Hammock said.

Upcoming Schedule:

12/13 - Gloucester - Tabb - 2/2
12/15 - Tabb - New Kent - 2/4
12/17 - New Kent - Warhill - 2/9
12/18 - Granby - Smithfield - 2/11
1/5 - Warhill - Poquoson - 2/14
1/6 - Smithfield - Home
1/11 - Poquoson - Away
1/15 - Lafayette - Away
1/19 - Jamestown - Home
1/21 - York - Home
1/28 - Bruton - Home
1/29 - Norfolk Collegiate

WRESTLING SEASON BEGINS

by Abigail Stamper

Wrestling Season has officially started! Wrestling season started on November 8th with practices from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm. The GHS Wrestling team has multiple tournaments coming up in the month of December. The first tournament is the Hornet Holiday Invitational at Deep Creek Highschool on December 3-4. Weigh-ins on Friday begin at 4:30 pm and 12:30 pm on Saturday. The next tournament is on December 8th at Lafayette High school against Lafayette and Poquoson. The following tournament is the Trucker Invitational at Churchland Highschool. The last tournament in December is against Smithfield and Warhill at Warhill High School. Good luck with your upcoming tournaments GHS Wrestling team! Go Clippers!

GIRL’S BASKETBALL

By Parker Myer

It is officially basketball season for the clippers! The girls varsity basketball team has already started off on a strong foot and are currently 2nd in the bay's river district. Having a current record of 3-0, we can all agree that the girls are crushing the competition. Their most recent game against York was intense, but you can say the falcons were no match for our fellow clippers. They crushed York with a score of 58-20. But this isn't the only game they already showed their strong potential of having an amazing season, they won against Jamestown with a score of 65-31. If you are indeed looking for an enthralling, thrilling experience, I highly recommend coming out to watch them play. Here is the schedule for their upcoming games in January!

Upcoming Schedule:

1/4- Warhill- Away
1/8- Jamestown- Home
1/10- Smithfield- Home
1/15- York- Home
1/20- Poquoson- Away
1/26- Hanover- Home
1/30- Lafayette- Away
1/28- Bruton- Home
1/15- Woodside- Home
1/29- Deep Creek- Neutral
For this year’s fall play, Grafton High Drama performed “Almost, Maine” by John Cariani. Before the play started, Cindy H. Kreicar noted that this play is dedicated to Nathan Faison, who was an integral part of the drama program. “Almost, Maine” was a comedic heart-wrenching play that underlined short stories ranging from a widow, to a couple newly in love, to best friends turning to lovers, and to a fighting married couple. The reason behind it being called “Almost, Maine” was that the town is not fully formed by the law. The town is located near Canada and was extremely cold when the scenes took place. The short stories were filled with couples, and all were linked together by the various characters impacting each other and by the setting in the play takes place. Actors included the talents of Rowan Snipes, Carlos Campos, Aspen Burton, Colton Leverett, Jordan Campbell, Emmie Gentille, Eden Poteat, Joseph Bui, E. Lamprecht, Alex Behring, Oakly Lamprecht, Loki Hill, Aidan St. Peter, Kaia Henderson, Wyatt Caldwell, Samitha Pandit, and Kolby Hoge. They brought the play to life with minimal props. Their acting and presence in the scenes drew you in and made you feel and empathize with what each character was experiencing. If you missed the fall play, make sure you keep tabs for when their next play is! You won’t regret it.

November 8th, 2021: The last football game of the 2021 season and the last high school football game for the class of 2022. This last game was the end of a memorable season for the football team. The effort the entire team has put in day in and day out for their games this season has been immense. The themes for each game made these Friday Night Lights even more special for all the students that attended. Whether it was the neon, camo, or homecoming school spirit themes, the students of Grafton all seemed to enjoy these nights. The cheers and popping of the powder and confetti cannons all throughout every game are one of the essential parts of a high school football game. Those moments create the unforgettable Friday nights that students love. I’ll even miss huddling close during the cold Friday nights to keep warm. This made everyone feel closer to each other as they all enjoyed watching a game we love to watch. This entire season was definitely one to never forget, as it was the first season students could go to in over a year since the 2019 season. The season made everyone feel as if their school year was slowly returning back to normal. One thing is for sure, these nights and the memories everyone created will be moments that are treasured forever.
WINTER FASHION
BY: NATANYA BATH

Winter Wear: Additions to add to your winter wardrobe
Winter is the season when you can pull out your puffer jackets, turtlenecks, and layer beyond imagination. This is the best season for fashion. Using patterns and colors to create combinations and mix patterns that express yourself (without sweating). Here are some fashion pieces that are made for winter.

Puffer Jacket: This is a fashion piece that can easily elevate your look but will make you sweat a lot when it is not worn in cold weather.

Layering Turtleneck Top: The best layering piece in my opinion. Turtlenecks can easily be added under any type of top, for simply winter weather or for adding a splash of character.

Windbreakers: Windbreakers are a perfect winter piece to create a hip look but keep you warm in the cold. Windbreakers are another staple that comes in various colors and patterns each one adding something new to your outfit.

Big coats
Furry Jackets
Combinations for winter:
Turtlenecks and Button-down
Turtleneck, crop top, thin jacket, and coat
Turtleneck and crop top
Pattern coat, sweater, pant
Sheer top, cropped top, half unbuttoned button-down, jacket

You can layer anything with anything if you really think of it. If you want it to look good then, it all depends on the colors and patterns of the pieces.

HOLIDAY RECIPES

By: Isabel Lewis

Haley Berland, talented baker, and creator of the Kevin Berland Foundation shares her favorite family fudge recipe. This rocky road fudge has been a holiday staple for many generations. The creator of this recipe is my great-great-great-grandmother Helen. Of course, I never met this wonderful woman, but I can imagine she was just as sweet as her fudge! This recipe is by far my favorite thing to make with my mother during the holidays. It truly gets me in the yuletide spirit!

Rocky Road Fudge Recipe Ingredients:
• 3 cups sugar
• 3/4 cup unsalted butter
• 2/3 cup evaporated milk
• 12 oz. semi-sweet morsels
• 1 jar (7oz.) jet-puffed marshmallow creme
• 1 cup chopped walnuts
• 1 cup raisins
• 1 tsp vanilla
• 1/2 mini marshmallows

Directions:
1. Line 9 inch square pan with foil, with ends of tail extending over sides.
2. Bring sugar, butter, and evaporated milk to a full rolling boil in large saucepan on medium heat, stirring constantly.
3. Cook 4 min, or until candy thermometer reaches 234°F, stirring, constantly.
4. Remove from heat.
5. ADD chocolate and marshmallow creme stir until melted.
6. ADD nuts and POUR into a prepared pan, spread to cover the bottom of the pan.
7. Stir in raisins and mini marshmallows. Cool completely.
8. Use foil handles to lift fudge from the pan before cutting into squares.

Ms. Ayres, English teacher, and baker on the side shares a holiday favorite. “I started making the mini apple empanadas when my daughters were little to put in Christmas goody boxes. Apples and cinnamon always make me think of cool weather and family, so I wanted a way to share that warmth.”

Apple Empanadas

Recipe Ingredients:
• 1/2 cup butter, unsalted
• 1 (3 ounces) package cream cheese
• 1 cup sifted all-purpose flour
• 1 cup diced apple
• 1/3 cup brown sugar
• 1/2 cup white sugar
• 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

Directions:
1. DAY BEFORE: Cream butter and cream cheese together until smoothly blended. Beat in the flour. Shape dough into a smooth ball, wrap in foil or cling wrap, and refrigerate overnight or up to a week.
2. Peel and dice apples into half-inch pieces no thinner than 1/4 inch. Mix with brown sugar and 1 teaspoon of cinnamon. Set aside.
3. AT BAKING TIME: Remove dough from refrigerator 30 minutes before using. Start heating the oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C).
4. Roll chilled dough thin. Cut with 3 or 4 inches round cookie cutter. If you don’t have one, use a large glass dipped in flour. Place a small spoonful of diced apples and sugar in the center of each round, moisten edges with water.
5. Fold round over and use a fork to crimp down the edges to seal the empanada. Bake on a parchment-lined cookie sheet for 15 to 20 minutes. Immediately (while still warm) roll in sugar mixed with cinnamon (traditional) OR in confectioners’ sugar if preferred. Set on a cooling rack to cool. Can be served warm or refrigerated to give as gifts.

HOLIDAY MOVIE REVIEWS

HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS (2000)
BY ARIANA JIMENEZ

One of the most classic holiday family movies for all to watch. The Grinch Who Stole Christmas premiered in 2000 and it has become a holiday favorite amongst many. The story of an individual wanting to ruin Christmas because it was ruined for them in their childhood is a rather sad story. However, when you have a little girl help them overcome that hatred during the Christmas season makes the movie more cheerful. The main character, the Grinch, experiences the emotions of hating Christmas to learning how to love the season with the help of the little girl, Cindy Lou, and the others living in the town of Whoville. The whole story of hating to loving Christmas is a very heartfelt story that all love. In my personal opinion, this movie is always amongst some of my favorite movies for this holiday season. The costume, props, and makeup of all the characters brought this classic Dr. Seuss story to life. Even though the makeup of the Grinch is a little scary looking for young kids, it is like the wrapping and completion that made this film so memorable. Since the initial release of this film, an animated version of this story was released in 2018. It is a fantastic movie in its own way, however, I still prefer the version from 2000. Visually seeing the characters of the story in real life and not in animation allowed me to enjoy the story much more. Happy Holidays!
Secret Santa

By: Andy Whipkey

It's never too early to get into the Holiday spirit! Students have begun their holiday shopping early, and shared what they picked out for friends, or their own wish lists! As students get into the holiday spirit with gifts and decorations, senior Jamil Jordan gets ready for the holidays with music. “I got my cousin a new backpack last year, so this year I’m going to get her vinyl records,” Jordan said.

Students also shared Secret Santa ideas for those who haven't picked out their gifts yet! "I'd personally love to have handmade gifts. For me, it's the thought that counts. A simple gift for people is origami or handmade cards! Matching anything is typically pretty fun, too. Matching pajamas? Rings? Bags? All fun choices," senior Joseph Bui said. Secret Santa is also fun to do with friend groups! "One idea that me and my friends were thinking of doing were car accessories like lights and under glow to make our cars look funny, while adding style," senior Ryder Jackson said.

STUDENT OPINION: IS THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS A HALLOWEEN OR CHRISTMAS MOVIE?

Freshman Sophie Ehrlich says "It's a Christmas movie because it takes place somewhere during Halloween but the main plot was the main character wanting to be Santa."

Sophomore Leona Hedden says "Halloween movie because he ruins Christmas. It's not a happy Christmas movie because he ruins it. The main character is like I want this but he shouldn't have that."

Junior Oakley Lamprecht says "It's both movies. You can watch it on both Halloween and Christmas and still enjoy it."

Senior Hayley McCall says "It is 100% Halloween because it takes place in Halloween town and the characters are Halloween creatures. The main focus of the story is the Halloween characters and how they do not have to be creepy for 100% of the year."

Sophomore Leona Hedden says "Halloween movie because he ruins Christmas. It's not a happy Christmas movie because he ruins it. The main character is like I want this but he shouldn't have that."

I feel bored, like there's nothing to do around here. What are some things I can do to waste some time?

Living in a small town can be hard!! Some of my favorite things to do in Yorktown to kill time are driving down the Colonial Parkway while listening to music. The Parkway is so beautiful during all the times of the year, and it’s so relaxing to be able to enjoy all the nature around. Going on walks along Yorktown Beach or Colonial Williamsburg with friends is another great activity to do when bored! There are lots of good places to eat around here as well such as Persnickety Crane Café or Tipsy Beans Café! If you’re looking for something to do during the Holiday season, the Christmas Lights in Newport News Park are a fun way to kill time and embrace the festivities of this time of year!
“Excuse me. I am lost, can you help me?” I ask the thing in front of me. It turns to me, and immediately what seems to be its eyes widen as it quickly looks me up and down. The moment after that, its mouth opens wider than its eyes did and it lets out a horrid noise like a baby wailing as it hatches.

“Oh no, I did not mean to scare you. I am just a little lost,” I tell it in an attempt to calm it down. I am now realizing it was a poor attempt. Its screams become somewhat legible to me. I think it screams “Martian,” and once it does, every other little thing around it looks up from whatever it is they have their faces buried in and join it in its screams. They run around aimlessly, and I cannot deduce the reasoning.

“You seem to be mistaken; I am not from this place. Is ‘Martian’ the name of this world?”

Their screams continue.

Now I realize that they probably cannot hear me. Actually, that cannot be because the first one noticed me when I spoke to it. They cannot understand me. I guess that is obvious, I cannot understand them either; I can only hear the words they are yelling. It is a little rude, though, for them to scream at the sight of me. After all, they are the weird ones. These aliens are alarmingly small, they are easily the smallest life forms I’ve ever seen to be capable of creating their own language. If anyone should be screaming, it’s me. They are honestly quite gross to look at. They all wear white suits and they walk on two legs like me. Each one’s skin is a different shade much like my brethren’s, but then there are their ugly, smooth fingers, and some kind of oily fur that protrudes from the top of each of their heads.

I guess I can understand why they might be frightened at first, even at the sight of someone as handsome as myself. I am at least double their size; I mean I really do tower over them. Where their skin is smooth and different shades of tan, mine’s scaly and bright green. Their faces are round, and mine is long with a mouth full of sharp teeth. It is not unlike the tiny lizards of my home. Their ugly fingers pale in comparison to my glorious claws, and I am unregretfully hairless. They do not have tails either. Maybe they do not like my tail, which is a shame because it is beautiful and I love it. I cannot understand, though, why they won’t shut their freakish mouths. Firstly, it’s quite dirty for them to be running around with their mouths wide open, swallowing millions of different germs lurking in the air they float in. Secondly, they are civilized enough to have discovered clothing, so even if they make the initial mistake of being frightened of my gorgeous appearance, they should be polite enough to greet me. It seems no one has ever told them that they are not the only things in the universe.

“Please calm down. I need your help; I do not know where I am.” I try again. I believe that my crew crashed here after getting too close to the atmosphere of this planet called “Martian.” I think that’s what they called it. The planet is much warmer than I am used to, the air is dry, and the entire planet is a reddish-orange. The ground, hills, and everything else are the same color and I hate it. These creatures have built a great establishment, though. It consists of little, white huts and a few larger buildings, so either they are incapable of creating anything grander or they are new here too. I would really like their help finding my colleagues and getting home, but they refuse to calm down.

Their intelligible screams continue as men in black suits arrive at the scene and yell something at me.

“I clearly cannot understand you either,” I say to them, pointing at my ear holes. They are quick to act, though, and pull out these tiny, black devices that fire a projectile straight at my chest. The little metal shard bounces right off my rough skin.

“Hey. That hurt,” I tell them.

At this point, I have no hope for their undeveloped minds. Also, I think that the things they keep firing at me are meant to kill me, so I have to leave before they figure out, they are not doing any damage.

I run through the crowd of screeching, infant-like creatures, I have no reason to stay with the annoying things. I must search for my coworkers. If they’re alive, they cannot be too far. They are much younger and weaker than I am, so they might actually be hurt by the weapons. As their captain, it is my duty to keep them safe.

I climb to the top of the nearest hill to take a look around and maybe spot our ship or another civilization. I do not see the ship, but I do see another set of tents not too far from me. It is starting to get dark, and there is light coming from the new area. I head in its direction; chances are it is the same species, but I do not have many other options.

I arrive at the establishment, but this time I will not be as open about my presence. I hide behind their tents in the shadows, searching around the campus and peering inside each one to see if one of my own is in there. I find one of our compasses in the ground behind one of the tents, so one of us has been here already. Maybe he is still around. I keep searching around the edges of the complex, but I do not find anything else. I begin to make my way towards the middle of the area that holds the light I now realize is a large fire.

The creatures are now apparent, so this is, indeed, another one of their bases. They indulge in more idle chatter than the others, and the atmosphere of this group is a lot more jovial. None of the more central tents contain any of my crew, so I walk as close to the middle as I can without them seeing me.

My jaw drops with my heart as the contents of the fire cross my field of vision. I fall to my knees because, inside the fire, I spot two tails, just like my own, attached to bodies of roasted flesh. Two of the animals sport a pole that boasts my people’s heads, one at the end of each. I could not save them. I have failed as their captain.

“I’m sorry,” I mutter as I rise to my feet, and I approach this rabid pack of animals. “How dare you?” My voice shakes the air as I yell at them, and they all notice me. The look of shock on their faces is intoxicating, they have only become acquainted with my younger, small, weak brethren. They did not know that men of my caliber existed, and I can smell the regret and the fear that has taken over their hearts. A few of them who are not petrified with fear fire their weapons at me, and these ones are still incapable of harming me. The sun sets completely, and all traces of light leave the planet except for the flames that illuminate my eyes. I protract my claws, letting them bask in the fire’s light that amplifies their glory, and I begin my new mission: avenging my crew.
“I’m Lost” by Hayley McCall

“I’m lost, can you help me?”

Hakne sighed as yet another human ignored her plea for help. For a space mall that was supposed to service members of every species, she was the only Martian she had seen all day. To make matters worse, she was hopelessly lost in the behemoth of a shopping center, and not a single human could speak her language. For the people who touted themselves as kind, charitable, and wise, they seemed awfully ignorant right about now.

She spied what looked like a customer service desk in the distance. If anyone in this mall could help her, surely it would be them.

“I’m trying to find the parking lot. Where is it? Can you help me?” She asked politely.

The employee at the desk simply looked at her, confused, and her heart sank. He waved dismissively and turned back to his computer. Hakne felt as if she might scream. Why could nobody in this interplanetary mall speak Martian, for god’s sake?

She wandered a bit before trying her luck with a random store clerk. Since she had given up on finding someone who understood her words, she was going to give pantomime a try. The confused clerk watched her mime revving an engine, and make car noises with her mouth. After a few seconds, they seemed to connect the dots. They pointed her left and signaled to continue that direction.

Hakne felt like screaming again, but out of joy this time. She pointed her left and signaled to continue that direction.

After a few seconds, they seemed to connect the dots. They pointed her left and signaled to continue in that direction. Hakne felt like screaming again, but out of joy this time. She finally had hope after being lost in this mall for a week.

Caught up in her euphoria, she started skipping down the mall.

In twenty minutes the news would be abuzz with a story of a female Martian causing a huge commotion in front of a space car store.

Lost Story by Marley Ricciarelli

The thick jungle vines were getting harder and harder to cut through and the sun was going down. My walkie-talkie was dead and the rest of my explore team was MIA. This happens on almost every research trip; I always see something shiny and wander off, but it’s never taken them this long to find me and I was going to need to make shelter soon.

I cut through some more vines to a decent clearing where I could build a fire and a small shelter. I took my long hair out of its ponytail and tried to find as many sticks as I could. We were in a thick rainforest off the coast of Brazil and very very far from home and I was stranded in the middle of a jungle without my team or any way to contact anyone. I could be thousands of miles away from any populated area. So, all I have to do now is wait and hope there is nothing sinister in these woods. I have wrestled alligators and been captured by hostile people, but I am still nervous about what lurks in the darkness of these woods. I used my pocket tools to create a small fire to sit around to warm up. Although it was the dead of summer, the night air was cool. I built a small mattress of jungle scraps and laid near the fire and shut my tired eyes.

I jerked awake at a faraway noise. I rubbed my eyes and saw my fire dwindling. I sat around it, nursing it back to a large flame. I heard the noise again, a roar coming closer and closer. My heart dropped to my feet in fear, we had no idea what could be in these woods. The sound was closer and closer, and I heard stomps and a growl.

I instinctually reached for my pocketknife in my back pocket, just touching it for reassurance. The sound was closer and closer until finally, a rustle came from the edge of the clearing. I tensed up preparing myself for the worst.

A small reptile popped out of the brush and came slowly towards me. I relaxed my shoulders, there was no way this small creature made that big noise, maybe it was being chased here.

As the reptile came closer, I realized this was no reptile we know about. It almost appeared to be a baby dinosaur. Not an alligator or crocodile. A baby triceratops, which is impossible but here he was.

“Hey little guy,” I beckoned to the scared dinosaur. He slowly walked towards me, obviously scared and skeptical.

“I won’t hurt you,” I said as I knelt down and reached out my hand to the little creature. He slowly came over to me until he was within arm’s reach. I reached into my back pocket and grabbed the last piece of beef jerky.

I reached out to him. He backed away a couple of steps and gave it a little sniff and gracefully took it into his mouth and ate it all up. A gentle creature, that was very cute. But an impossible anomaly, how was there a baby dinosaur in these woods when dinosaurs as we know them have been extinct for 65 million years?

I reached out to pet the dinosaur. He seemed to take a liking to me and came closer almost into my lap and I pet his head. He let out a little growl, but it seemed like a happy one.

“You need a name,” I said as I looked at him. “You look like you could be a Dirt,” I said as I patted his head softly. He started to pull my hand in the opposite direction.

“You got something you wanna show me bud?” and he gently guided my hand and I stood up and followed him out of the clearing with my torch. The journey in the flickering dark was hard and my new friend Dirt was leading me through. Minus the tripping over the occasional vine, it was a nice journey. Dirt lead me out of the woods and back to my research team!

We then took Dirt away and he helped us with our research for the rest of our lives. The end.