

Enjoy!

By Nina McCarthy
Woodstock Union High School, Grade 12

The TV is off
The door is open to outside
No cell phones are on
The birds are the only ringing
The world is unplugged, enjoy!

Just take out the garbage

By Katy Ranaldo
Rice Memorial High School, Grade 9

I could have avoided the whole situation if I had just taken out the garbage.

It all started last Sunday. My mom asked me to take out the garbage. I said I would, but instead of doing it right away I sat back down on the couch and continued watching TV. About 20 minutes later, I went to the kitchen to get a snack and there lay my mom on the floor, her eyes shut. Normally my mom does not take naps on the kitchen floor so I knew something had to have happened. I just stared at her for a few moments, not knowing what to do. Then I noticed a banana peel by her feet that had fallen out of the garbage. I quickly came to the realization that she had slipped on the banana peel and was unconscious. I poured some cold water on her and poked at her for a while, and she finally opened her eyes.

My mom was fine, a slight concussion but nothing major. But I was not OK. I was grounded for the next three weeks because I didn't take out the garbage, and my mom suffered a concussion because of my disobedience. I learned that doing what you are told right away will help you in the long run. Personally, I hate getting up, going to the garbage and taking it out to the garage. It's a pain. But honestly it will not kill anyone to unglue their eyes from the TV for a minute and just do it.

The pictures

By Molly Burke
Browns River Middle School, Grade 7

Movement flutters across the screen in bright, vivid colors. Just think of all the millions of people staring at the same pictures as you, at the exact same moment. Instinctively you understand the scene that has been built in front of you, but what is it really trying to portray? What is the hidden message, the true moral of the story? You love this box of moving pictures. What would you do without it? Would life be the same? What would be different if you became unplugged?

The reunion

By Peter Sylvester | *Rice Memorial High School, Grade 9*

I could have avoided the whole situation if only I had decided not to attend the trip. I had made the questionable decision to attend a family reunion, and, five minutes into our journey, I completely regretted it. Originally, I had been told that we were going on vacation, but after the family was loaded into the car my parents told me that we were actually going to a family reunion. Thinking about Aunt Helga, my annoying twin cousins Emily and Henry, and my infamously crazy great-uncle James convinced me that I needed to find a way to disappear the moment my family's car stopped at Helga's house.

The last time I had been there, Helga had tried to convince me that I would benefit from taking my 4-year-old nephew, Jack, to the zoo. The moment Jack and I were alone he bolted away from me, and led me on a high speed chase through the zoo. My two cousins, Henry and Emily, are aspiring kick boxers and love to use me as a punching bag.

As our car arrived, I swung the door open and sprinted away but was immediately tackled and dragged into the house by my dad, Henry and Crazy James (who happened to think they were about to interrogate a member of the Viet Cong). Upon entering the house, I suddenly realized that I was trapped in an insane asylum. Little cousins were running around screaming and having a grape juice fight, while Aunt Helga immediately tried to lasso me into trying some of her famous (because it had been investigated by the health department) tuna casserole. We then stumbled upon Crazy James, who was trying to torture Henry for spilling non-existent government secrets. Helga and I arrived in the kitchen to find that her tuna casserole had been wrestled to the ground by the dog, Rover, and at that moment I decided to escape. I ran away from the madness and, a few blocks later, realized that I was sixty miles from home and that the only way to return home was to go back to Aunt Helga's and try to survive the weekend. And to think, I could have avoided the whole situation by saying "no" to the trip.

If only . . .

By Matthew Andrew | *Renaissance School, Grade 6*

I could have avoided the whole thing if only I hadn't seen my mom get hit by a taxicab in New York City. I could have avoided feeling hurt and shocked, angry and pummeled. I could have avoided the scary images that kept repeating in my head. All that blood, ewwww!

OK, here is the true story: four years ago, when I was living in New York City, my mom and I were walking down Central Park West to the Museum of Natural History. We were happily standing on the sidewalk waiting for the light to change when a really terrible thing happened. A drunk driver was driving on the wrong side of the street, and he caused a taxicab to veer onto the sidewalk.

First, I heard a huge, sudden crash that filled my heart with fear (it felt like my heart almost stopped), and then I saw a scene that filled my eyes with tears. The taxi hit my mother. Before Mom went flying through the air, she pushed me out of the way, so I was all right, but then she was all bloody and lying on the ground. I thought she might be dead. The whole

thing really freaked me out, but I stood by Mom and never walked away, as scared as I was. I heard the sound of sirens and saw an ambulance rush over. Then my dad arrived at the scene, and we went to the hospital.

I was so frightened. My mind was stuck, and the world felt dark. I had no idea what was going to happen. I didn't know what would be ahead. Even when I knew that Mom would be OK those images kept coming through my head; they were the same things I saw in the real incident. I couldn't control them. They just kept running through my head for a long time. It was hard to talk about this, but I did. Finally the flashbacks stopped. I got over it.

There is a good side to this: It's amazing how my mom survived. Mom and I are both as happy now as we were before the accident happened, and I did get to learn all about emergency medicine, safety actions and disaster preparedness. I also learned about courage because I resisted the temptation to run away, and that was when I realized how important courage is.



Young Writers Project is an independent nonprofit that engages students to write, helps them get better at it and connects them with authentic audiences for their best work.

YWP provides writing prompts for this newspaper series; maintains youngwritersproject.org, a supportive online community for students; trains college mentors to provide students with feedback and builds *Digital Writing Classrooms* for schools and afterschool programs. For more go to: ywpschools.net.

THANKS: YWP depends on the generosity of businesses, foundations and individuals to keep going. Today we'd like to offer special thanks to:

The A.D. Henderson Foundation

The foundation was founded in 1959 by A.D. and Lucy E. Henderson, who were dedicated to improving the lives of children through education and to improving the economic, social and physical well-being of their communities. For more: www.hendersonfdn.org

Them

By Basundhara Mukherjee
Frederick H. Tuttle Middle School, Grade 8

I could've avoided the whole thing if only I had been sick.

They would've never come, thinking I was quarantined.

But they did come. They just had to come. I could've coughed or sneezed when they walked in.

Heck! I could've coughed or sneezed when they called.

That would've let all of us off the hook. Ugh. If only.

Next Prompt

Send us your best work! We publish best work in this section of the Free Press each Wednesday.

General. Submit your best non-prompt-generated general writing. This call for general entries is repeated each month, and you can use the same "general" term when submitting each time. **Due Friday.**

To see the prompts for the full year and to submit work go to:

youngwritersproject.org