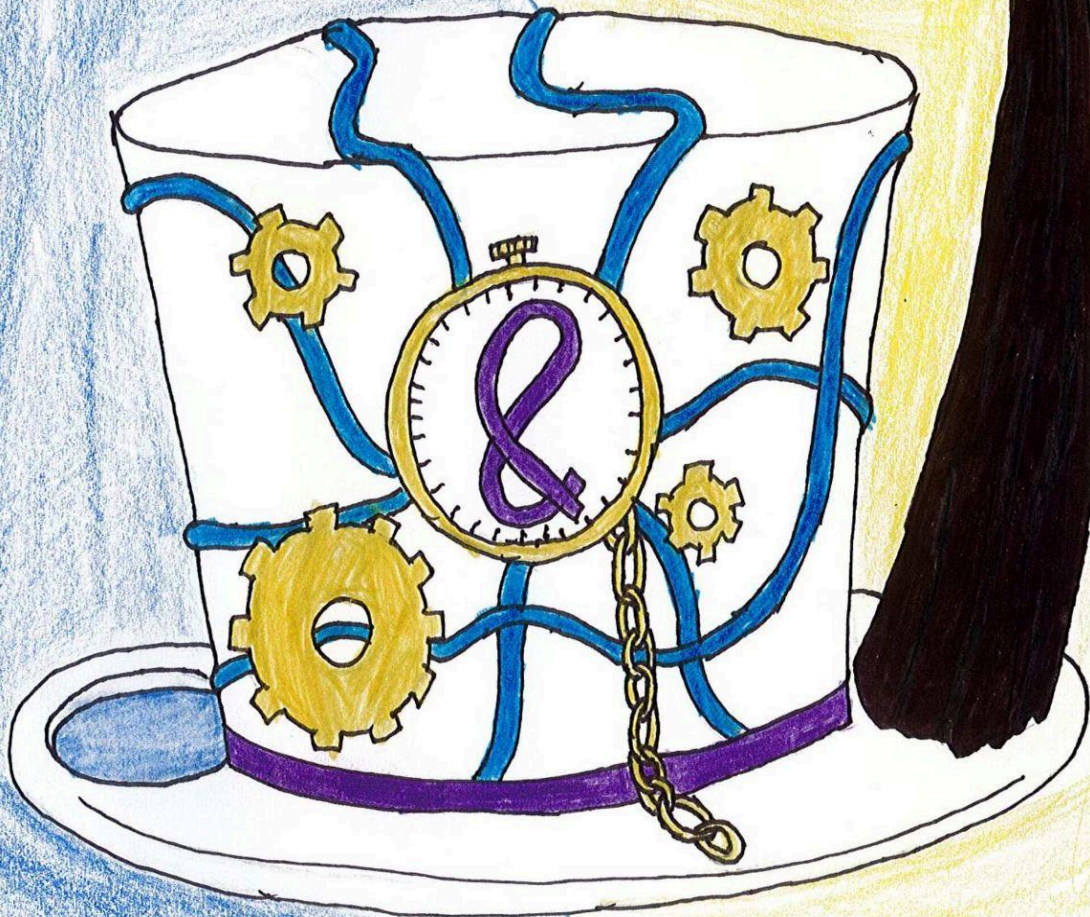


FAME,
SHAME



VIRTUES



THE KIDS' CANCER PROJECT
WRITE A BOOK IN A DAY

Parameters Form

Team Details

STATE: VIC

DIVISION: Middle School

SCHOOL/GROUP: Star of the Sea College (BRIGHTON)

TEAM NAME: Star Writers' Collective 2

TEAM ID: 628

Parameters and random words

Parameters

Primary character 1: Dancer

Primary character 2: Hat maker

Non-human character: Bull

Setting: Cricket pitch

Issue: Lost in the theme park

Random words

swept

dazzling

faded

wrinkled

quirky

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Prologue hey alexis anderson its me annabelle

Children dashed about, their laughter and screams filling the air. Grownups pursued them playfully while couples observed with feigned happiness, silently assessing. Meanwhile, workers mechanically went through the motions of operating the rollercoasters.

“Mum, look at the animal in the cage!” shouted a child no older than ten, running up excitedly.

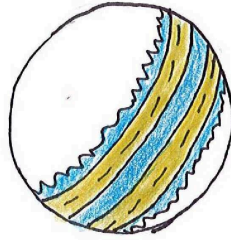
“I see it, sweetie. It looks...” The mother hesitated with a slight expression on her face. “...interesting.”

Soon, everyone crowded around the captivating creature, unaware of the grim situation looming ahead. Every teenager, child, and parent stared in amazement at the half-bull, half-human creature as it aimlessly turned in its cramped cage, two steel katanas hanging from its belt.

The massive Ferris wheel groaned and turned at a sluggish pace. Cracks began to snake across the ground, yet the bystanders remained oblivious. Over time the cracks widened and the ground started to break apart. It felt as though an enormous dam had burst, submerging the area. Only a handful of people began to realise a sinkhole had been forming. They fled desperately, but no one escaped far enough before the sinkhole swallowed the exits and surroundings. People began to tumble into the void, screaming for help, their cries unheard.

But alas, one being did not care. The minotaur, half-bull, half-human, was somewhat happy. The dirt had begun to collapse into the hole and it created a labyrinth of sorts. The minotaur was back, he was finally back. Soon the screams stopped and the only thing left was him... the loneliest creature ever.

After growing weary of his dirt-filled cage, the minotaur attempted to break free. He struggled until exhaustion finally caught up to him, so he dozed off. Witnessing this, the remaining captives believed they could follow suit. They shut their eyes, succumbing to their enveloping darkness, drifting into eternal sleep.



Chapter 1 “Game Day”

The crowd's loud atmosphere came to a hold as the commentator approached the speaker. “Now that I have your attention,” the commentator stated, “I would like to thank you all for coming to this very special day, the Grand Final of the best of the best cricket teams!” The crowd’s presence soared with increasing excitement, as the commentator was about to announce the teams. “Now, please welcome, The Minotaurs and The Phoenixs!” The crowd's energy let loose, and cheers were thrown from both sides of the pitch.

“Let’s begin with a warm welcome, shall we?” This made the mass of people impatient, because simultaneously they were only there for the game.

“We’d love to give our warmest welcome to our finalists!” The swarm of people screamed, passing on motivation to one another.

Then all a sudden, silence broke out amongst everyone as a booming screech rang throughout the pitch.

“Excuse me, we are very sorry about that interruption, it seems as though a

gust of wind rattled the Ferris wheel just outside the pitch”, the commentator added, while he held his ear, listening to a person inform them about the issue.

Everyone whispered and people got out of their seats, looking curiously.

“What ferris wheel?” a little boy muttered to his mother, who looked as confused as him.

Much time passed by, and the game was still waiting to begin, some people even started to leave. The Minotaurs were planning their attack, and The Phoenix were planning their effective defence. Everyone was chatting among themselves, until someone in the crowd spotted something unusual.

“Hey, do you see that shadowy figure in one of the carriages in the Ferris wheel?” said the concerned lady to her unbothered partner.

“What? There’s nothing there! I think you’ve had too much cotton candy,” her partner replied. The lady rotated her head back to the carriage, seeing that the **faded** figure had vanished...

“We are sorry to say but our mascot has mysteriously gone missing!” announced the commentator.

Disappointment was smeared all over the innocent children's faces.

“GO MINOTAURS!” roared one-half of the crowd.

“PLAY WELL PHOENIXS!” bombed the other half.

“Are our teams ready?” The crowd immediately yelled in agreement, making the commentator nod in relief. “Well, let the game begin!”



Chapter 2 “The Awakening”

The minotaur awakened to darkness. It loomed in every direction. He felt as though he hadn't moved in millions of years. Maybe he hadn't. He swung his head around erratically, hitting his horns against the top of what felt like the cage he had been in so long ago.

He reached out to feel what was around him and felt bars surrounding him. The bars felt worn and rusted; easily breakable.

The minotaur reached down to his belt and thankfully still felt his two katanas. He gripped the hilt of them both, his arms steady with familiarity at the sturdy feeling of them and in one swift action, slashed down the already decaying bars. With a grunt he slipped out of the cage he was in, bumping his head on the bars on his way out. He growled in frustration as he stalked the dark void surrounding him.

Not a single source of light reached the darkness swallowing him whole. Crouching down on the ground revealed a rocky terrain. He thought back to the last moments of memory he had. An echo of panic circled his head as he began to recall. People were staring, watching, laughing. Then they were screaming. Lower and lower they had gone. The minotaur could not remember why. He just remembered sinking. As the screams increased, they all descended, deeper and deeper into the soil. He'd waited for someone to come and release him, to save him, but nobody came.

He buried the sadness he felt inside and started wandering around the dark, sunken theme park. The hum of bugs engulfed him as he growled at them, though that hadn't deterred them. They continued to buzz as the minotaur continued walking around. He walked and walked through the

endless amounts of rubble. The only sound that echoed around the sunken park was the heavy footsteps of the minotaur and the light buzzing of bugs. He could feel the shapes of crushed and worn pieces of rollercoasters and carousels, as they were to dim for his vision. Looking up he could make out a flat, stone roof as though someone had placed it above the sunken theme park to cover it. To cover the tragedy.

He continued his walk, trying to find any sign of an escape or any life that wasn't a pest. He walked for hours, or it could have been days, weeks, or years. The minotaur wasn't sure. He was so exhausted it felt like a wave constantly crashing into him and pushing him to the ground. He fell into a deep sleep again after the draining he experienced.

The cavern shook and the sound of soft chants and cheers filled the space, waking up the minotaur. The minotaur growled in annoyance as he began to continue his search for an escape. His patience began to shrink as this search seemed just the same as the last one. He tripped over a rock and this just made his frustration grow. The minotaur continued to stumble blindly, his eyes barely seeming to adjust to the never-ending darkness.

Chapter 3 “The Grand Entrance”

While the minotaur was stumbling blindly, he thought to himself, “I wonder what happened to everyone, I can’t remember much. Also, what happened here? Why is there a roof above me?”

While the minotaur was thinking to himself, he accidentally slipped on a decomposing, mouldy banana peel that someone had thrown on the floor. He slipped and skidded across the floor until a ramp was visible. He tried to stop but he was going so fast that his attempts in trying to stop made him go even faster.

He reached the ramp and when take-off happened, he accidentally did a jolly decuple somersault, then a triple festive cartwheel in the air, and he finished with a quadruple backflip. He thought he was going to crash into the floor head first, but no, he managed to perfectly land on the floor and he bowed elegantly, as if people were observing.

Once he had finished his unbelievably incredible gymnast routine, he saw that in the midst of doing a jolly decuple somersault, he had created a hole in the roof. It shined down a light the minotaur hadn't seen for a long time.

He was so excited that he jumped in the air and did a cartwheel. After his cartwheel, he did the splits. The minotaur cried in agony for a moment before he got up and went to investigate the newly made hole.

He carefully walked to the light source, looking out for any more banana peels, but since his eyes had not adjusted very well to the new light, he again slipped on the same banana peel from earlier. He skidded across the floor again and he was going to slam right into the ramp from earlier.

The minotaur knew the consequences of him bashing into the ramp so he decided to jump with all his might. Following the jump, the minotaur performed a deluxe arial, followed by a merry frontflip and finishing in a **dazzling** handstand on the ramp.

The minotaur turned himself upright. He took a while to comprehend what had just happened. After a while, he decided to continue his investigation about the hole he had made himself. He got off the ramp and he walked closer to the hole.

Since he could now concentrate on the hole, he heard cheering from the crowd, and a commentator saying what was happening. He listened to the commentator.

“What is going on right now?” the minotaur thought to himself. “I think I should jump out of here through the hole I made.”

The minotaur jumped through the hole he had made earlier and he then proceeded to perform a joyous front tuck jump, a nonuple jumping jack spin, and a graceful superman glide by accident onto the field, landing with a headstand.

Chapter 4 “The Mistake”

It was another scorching day; the sun was pounding down on the cricket ground. Among the crowd, dressed in clothes and straw hats, among the joyful buzz of spectators and the echoing cheers from the stands, stood a figure that drew immediate attention: the minotaur.

In this environment of sports anticipation and energetic conversation, the minotaur suddenly realised he was in an abnormal position. The sun shone against his skin and a warm feeling **swept** across his body. Standing tall and broad-shouldered, with a face that looked more suited to a bull than a man, he transformed from a menacing presence to the newest craze.

With a mischievous glint in his eye, the minotaur decided to play along with the

festive spirit. He raised his arms high and let out a deep, rumbling roar, startling nearby spectators who turned to see him. But instead of fear, they were met with laughter and applause.

"Look, it's a minotaur mascot!" someone exclaimed, pointing at him with excitement.

Grinning beneath his horned face, the minotaur began to mimic the playful antics of a mascot, as was always watching them while enclosed in his cage. He danced with exaggerated movements, stomping his hooves and waving his arms in the air. His deep voice boomed with enthusiasm as he encouraged the crowd to cheer louder for their favourite team.

What fans during the day happily greeted the minotaur with bright, delighted smiles, wishing to have a photo session. Everyone was very happy and cheerful, they happily posed with the minotaur, expressing their excitement with their smiles. Children hugged the minotaur and their big round eyes full of wonder made it very beautiful and amazing to watch. The adults couldn't help but capture the moment on their phones. Couples walked around, taking turns to have their pictures made with the mascot. Laughter and caring infused the scene of people coming together, which remained imprinted in the observers' minds as the joyous sight that perked up the spirits of the day.

As the day went on, the sunset painted the field a lovely shade of orange, the happiness of spirits which enveloped the stadium did not disappear. Giggles filled the stands and it was good to see the cricket fans enjoying both the game and this extra bonus of glee that the day had dealt them.

Little did they know the truth behind the minotaur.



Chapter 5 “Cheer Captain”

As the Cheer Captain for the Minotaurs, Ena, watched the second half of the game begin, she couldn't help but feel as though something wasn't quite right. Ena continued to watch the game but she couldn't shake the feeling that something was off. As she looked around the field and stands, she saw something that shouldn't be there. Ena was sure that her mind was playing tricks on her, but she knew what she was seeing was true, she saw it with her own eyes. The minotaur, staring right at her.

'This can't be possible,' she thought to herself. 'The mascot suit went missing, right??' She went through her recent messages and saw it to be true. If the mascot person was at home, then who was that dressed up as a minotaur? She slowly crept closer, trying to get a better look at the minotaur, her heart pounding as fast as a cheetah. The 'minotaur-impersonator', as one would call it, was standing awkwardly at the edge of the Cricket field, as if he didn't belong. As she snuck closer, she saw the minotaur looming over the field. He had to be at least seven feet tall.

As she discreetly hid behind a nearby tree, she took in the minotaur's huge **quirky** features. The fur looked remarkably real, his horns as black as obsidian and his eyes. His eyes were so deeply purple and so intense that they seemed inhuman. The minotaur's head began to turn around so Ena quickly hid behind the tree, her heart beating out of her chest. After a few minutes she slowly looked back again and saw that the minotaur's attention was back on the game so she ran back to where all of the cheerleaders were.

"Guys, listen to me. There is a real life minotaur on the field. It is not a mascot and it is NOT fake!" Ena told her teammates with a shivering voice.

Slowly, the puzzled cheerleaders began to understand what Ena was saying. "Ena, are you sure that you saw that you saw a real minotaur and you're not just hallucinating?" one of Ena's teammates asked, fear flooding her eyes.

"Yes I'm certain," Ena confirmed. "We need to warn the crowd!"

Ena and her teammates dashed over to the crowd who were surrounding the minotaur, trying to take photos with him. They began to disperse around the crowd, trying to tell them the truth. “Sir, ma’am, this creature here is not a mascot but a real minotaur!” Ena told a couple trying to get a glimpse of the minotaur, but they ignored her.

She tried again with a group of children but they just wouldn’t listen. “Stop trying to push in, pentagon lady,” one of the kids told her. “Go to the back of the line and wait your turn!”

She tried to tell them she was not lying but they just ignored her. Ena and her team kept on.



Chapter 6 “SNAP”

The air was alive and chirping with hundreds of thousands of people the stadium contained. As his blue festive hat cast a shadow over his eyes and darkened his **wrinkled** skin, Ronald sat near the boundary rope hoping to sell some of his brilliant hats while watching the game unfold with mild interest. As he nibbled on a cricket ball-shaped cookie from a nearby vendor, his attention was drawn to a nearby commotion close to the pitch.

A massive frame and imposing horns stood at the centre of the field where many eyes gazed towards the magnificent beast. The spectators gasped and whispered to one another, marvelling at the creature which seemed to them as a new and improved costume for the mascot of the team, ‘The Minotaurs’ but Ronald knew that wasn't the case at all!

On the field was definitely not a costume - it was a real minotaur. The fur on him was glistening, his nose was twitching and his body proportions definitely could not match a human. There was no human in the skin of the minotaur. The hatter's eyes locked onto another being in the field. A cheerleader with bright blue and yellow skin split vertically. She's running across the field towards the other side, to warn the other half of the spectators. On the way, she trips on the Hatter's foot. She reaches out to grab something, anything, so she doesn't fall, and ends up grabbing the minotaur's horn.

There was a loud 'SNAP!' and the minotaur's horn landed on the ground with a thud. Ena landed on her side and slowly stood up. Her eyes landed on the horn and widened, shocked even herself about the events that had unfolded. Her pom-poms dropped and she walked towards the horn. She picked it up, meaning to return it to the minotaur when a thought snaked into her mind.

'They'll love you for saving them. They'll think you're a hero!'

It took her a second to realise what was happening before she was stuck between choosing the right thing and something she had craved for years. Being a mere cheerleader meant barely any recognition for the huge amount of strength and talent she had to offer. She had to choose something, but what?

Her mind raced as she turned to look back at the minotaur, guilty but feeling seen for once. A few seconds later, her mind was made up. She held the horn up as her mind screamed at her for not following her values she had always kept her entire life. It was all worth it to her, though. She had gotten something she never thought she'd ever receive in her whole dull, pathetic life. Though her heart hurt since she was feeling guilty, the single selfish act pushed the thought to the back of her mind.



Chapter 7 “A gift”

A swift silence swept over the whole stadium and in seconds the fans went into an uproar. One falling on top of another they couldn't believe their eyes. The minotaur winced in pain as he clutched the spot where his horn had been forcefully ripped off. His cry of agony reverberated throughout the stadium.

The false sense of peace that came with pretending to be a harmless figure among humans had been shattered, replaced by intense suffering. Blood ran down his forehead, mixing with the sweat of exertion. No longer a symbol of strength and terror, he felt exposed and defenceless, the unbearable absence of his horn a harsh reminder of his monstrous nature, now fully revealed to the unsuspecting onlookers.

Amongst the bustling cricket crowd, a person with a purposeful walk weaved through groups of excited onlookers. Driven by a combination of curiosity and determination, he headed towards the middle of the field where the hurt minotaur loomed, its powerful presence creating a silhouette against the cloudy blue sky.

Unperturbed by the astonished whispers around him, he approached the legendary creature with calm assurance, prepared to partake in an extraordinary encounter that would challenge his determination and ingenuity. He was holding a hat - a beautiful, hand-crafted steampunk top hat with golden gears, a purple ribbon around it, blue cords, a golden pocket watch on the front and a white base. A gentle 'tik, tik, tik' came from the watch as the hands clicked and inched along. A chain hung from the watch. But it wasn't the watch, the gold or the colours that drew the minotaur's attention. It was the black horn on the right side to replace his missing one. Functional and stylish, for sure.

"Minotaur," Ronald initiated, his manner gentle yet firm. "I am the owner of Tip Top Hats and I couldn't help but notice that Ena's choice was wrong. I have decided to make you this special hat that I hope you will accept as a token of our new friendship."

The minotaur paused before snatching the hat from Ronald's stretched out hand.

As he placed it upon his one horned head, a wave of warmth washed over him. With resolve, he faced Ronald with cloudy eyes.

"Thank you," he snarled, his voice echoing in the stadium.

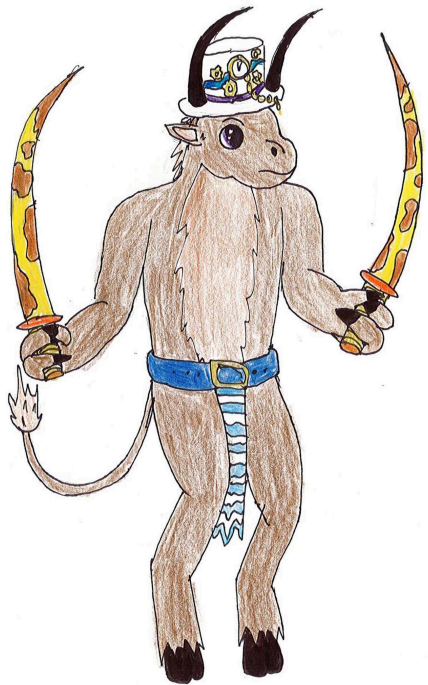
Ena looked down. She dropped her arms, turning away from the crowd and towards the minotaur.

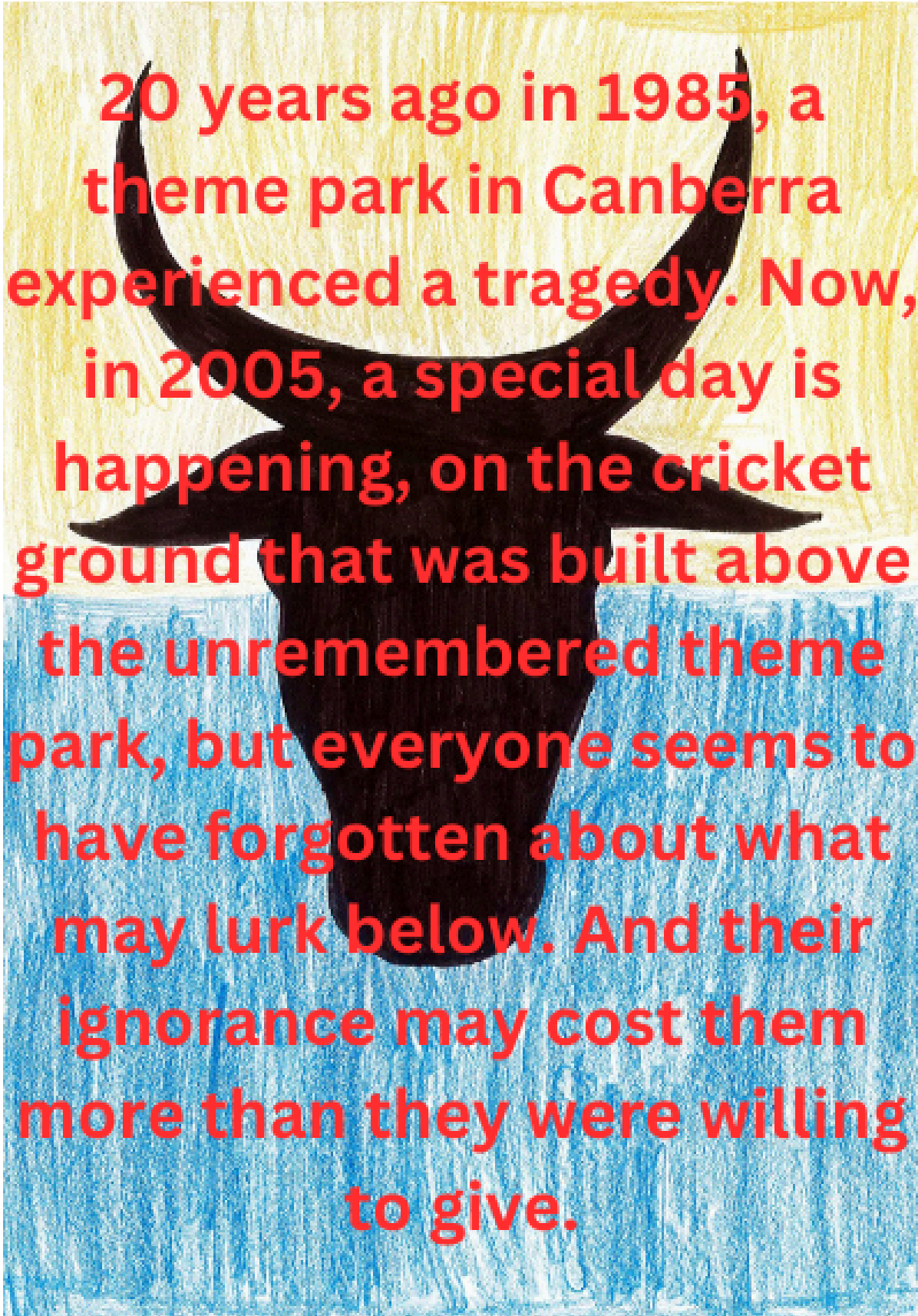
"I'm sorry. It was an accident, and the wrong choice. I don't expect you to forgive me. Hold a grudge if you want... I'm expecting it."

Ena held the horn out to the minotaur. The minotaur stared for a long few seconds before giving her a dismissive yet friendly grunt and turning back to Ronald. Ena sighed in relief - she had expected to be flung into the next universe by a creature as powerful as the minotaur.

"What shall this hat be called?" The minotaur questioned as he picked up the horn.

Ronald smiled at the minotaur, his eyes reflecting the knowledge gained from the scene that had just happened only seconds ago. "It's called Fame, Shame, and Virtues, to commemorate significant and inspirational moments and events," he replied. "And remember don't change who you are, you're perfect in your own way."





20 years ago in 1985, a theme park in Canberra experienced a tragedy. Now, in 2005, a special day is happening, on the cricket ground that was built above the unremembered theme park, but everyone seems to have forgotten about what may lurk below. And their ignorance may cost them more than they were willing to give.

