

Snapshots of Time Well Spent

Alex Eagles

Oranges and pinks are painted across the sky like a modern art piece in the galleries that confuse you, but you think you understand this. As the sun drops lower and the orange and reds of the sky start to sink, the stars, pinpricks of bright light that feel more home to you than anything else. Next to you Nate is tracing constellations that you don't recognise. When you were a kid you dreamed of the stars; you still do, but it's all the sweeter with him by your side. Your favourite constellation is the Southern Cross, because you've been able to identify it since you were small. "Hey, there's the Southern Cross." you say, pointing at the brightest star. He looks up and then shuffles closer to you, ignoring the commotion all around you coming from your friends "Not as pretty as you, Lizi." After all this time you can still feel your cheeks go red, "Quiet, you." You crave moments like these, summertime sitting on the roof, your friends' chaos feeling like peace thanks to the familiarity. Cans of cheap soda cracking open, fresh air; it's the ideal way to spend a Friday, or Saturday, or any day really. You wish every night was like this. "Do you think the stars care about us?" He says, gaze locked on the sky, you look up. "I'd like to think they do."

After 10 hours of non-stop horror movie action, you're about ready to pass out on your boyfriend's floor, that said, your house is a block away and if you keep sleeping in jeans your legs are going to mark up. Besides, he looks tired too and the last thing you want to do is force him to search the house for blankets like last time. You will yourself off the couch and sling your bag across your shoulder. "We still on for tomorrow? Not that you have to leave, I can get you a blanket," he asks, voice muffled by his face pressed into the couch, you think back once again to the blanket incident; he sounds exhausted. The dull walk back is more than worth the extra sleep he'll get. "Course, see you then babe, night." He replies with a half-awake "Night" that comes out as more of a vague humming than anything else. You swing open the door and step into the cool night air. It's colder than you thought it would be out here, not cold enough that you can see your breath, but cold enough that the bumps on your arms are noticeable. Changing your mind, you open the door and walk back into the warmth of his house. "I think I'll just stay here tonight," you say, dropping your things on the floor. He mumbles something incoherent and gestures to a pile of blankets and pillows in the corner. You wish you'd noticed those earlier. As you lay out your bedding you notice your hoodie tucked under him like a pillow; you think you should just leave it there for him. Fumbling with the remote in the already dark room, you manage to hit the power button,

turning the tv off and sending the room into a near pitch black. Tucking yourself into the lazily made bed you set up, the floor's never been so comfortable.

Unlike the rest of your friends, skateboarding is not something you're good at, which is okay! You're happy as long as you're with them, but you would still like trying every now and then. Today is one of those 'now and then' moments. Nate and Sami stand at your sides, letting you hold onto their shoulders as you slide down the road at the slowest speed possible. "You could probably go a bit faster!" Yells Zero. "Last time I did this we spent four hours in the ER!" you tell back, totally casually without a single hint of nervousness, nope, none at all. The wheel makes a weird noise and you realise you lied, there's a lot of nervousness in your voice. You tighten your grip on your friends' shoulders, trying to steady yourself. You move ever so slightly faster and the board slips out from under you and you fall directly on your face, friends in tow. You're still not any good at skateboarding, but spending time with your friends is always worthwhile, even if half of that time spent involves holding an ice pack to your cheek, waiting for the stinging to subside.

The sun on your back is an uncomfortable warmth on an already humid day; the smell of chlorine and mosquito coils permeates the air. A typical summer day and yet everything's so sweet. Sami climbs onto your shoulders, splashing you as she moves, metres away. Síne climbs onto Nate's shoulders; significantly more water is thrown about. The struggles of being tall, never getting to fight during shoulder wars, you're more than content as long as you get to be with your friends, though. Sami and Síne shoving each other above you, Nate squinting through the water. Jeremy and Octavia arguing over music in the background, Zero taking advantage of the cd player while they're not looking. It's good, seeing your friends like this. With everyone's varying degrees of issues you're just really glad everyone's still together. The splash of Sami being unceremoniously shoved off your shoulders by Síne is what brings you back into the present, Nate high-fives Síne and smiles at you. Sami's initial response to start a water fight as payback is seconded by Zero, itching to prove himself the "water king" despite his many failed attempts. You're not sure how you got caught in the fray of it all, but you're glad you did. You're not sure what you'd do without your loveable pack of idiots, but it wouldn't be nearly as fun as what you do now. That's what makes all these moments so precious to you—your friends.

Alex Eagles is a year 11 student who dedicates herself to the arts and her writing work. She spends her time writing and expanding on her characters, and this is the first time that a piece of her work has been published. Alex hopes to pursue a future career in acting and

theatre, inspired by her year 9 drama teacher's passion for the subject. Alex's writing and portrayal of character relationships is inspired by the Persona series by Atlus, and her decision to start telling stories was inspired by Karen M. McManus's book, 'One Of Us Is Lying', one of Alex's favourite books.