

PEN NAME: MARMALADE

CLASS: A (Years 7 and 8)

Title: HE/SHE RIPPED OPEN THE ENVELOPE...

She woke with a startle flinging herself out of the bed, she had the worst nightmare, and the fear was setting in quickly, so she knelt on the cold floor, eyes closed gasping for breath, but it was like there was no air. She willed herself to open her eyes, even though deep down she was terrified of what she might see, the pain in her lungs was unbearable and the feeling that an icy hand was slowly raping itself around her throat preventing her to breathe, but, pushing through the fear she forced her eyes open which met with a big black square, then a white one, the another black one, and as she looked around everything was covered in big black and white squares like a giant chess board, the walls, floor, even the ceiling, the only things that weren't black and white squares were the metal framed bed (that she had thrown herself off) and a metal tray which as she approached it seemed to be laid with food on it, she slowly crawled towards it not taking her eyes off it like it was going to jump at her, but there was only a cup of water, some bread, a mysterious meat and a clock with slowly changing numbers on it going up in seconds. But what was it counting to? And what happens when it gets to that?

It had been 20 minutes, at least that's what the clock said, but nothing had happened, yet anyways, but she sat on the bed trying to work out her next move, when she suddenly got very interested in the decoration choice, because someone must have put her in here, it's not like she just spawned in here right? But the weirdest thing was that she didn't remember anything, she remembered how to read and write, but she didn't remember who she was, she didn't even know her own name, but still as her mind raced about her past, the clock kept ticking up, to what though, I guess that's the question.

Another 20 minutes past but still she had made no progress, but at least she had given up on thinking about her past, so she decided to have some food, after all she was getting quite hungry, so she slid off the bed and knelt down by the tray, then grabbing two slices of bread and several pieces of the mysterious meat, carefully made a sandwich, actually she was so hungry that after she ate that she made another still trying to work out what the meat was, it had the texture of turkey but it tasted like a mix of chicken and beef somehow, "huh, whatever" she said aloud but half way through a bite froze, 'is that what I sound like' she thought, she sat there thinking long and hard, it was fine to speak, obviously, but to her it seemed almost unnatural, and her throat went dry like it was already tired of being used. But still the timer kept going up, and what she didn't know was that it was nearing its set time...

Siren noises. An alarm. A voice. "Prepare, Be ready. Tee minus five minutes." Then silence, she sat there, scrunched up in a ball trying to calm her breathing, her lungs tightened, eyes darting around the room, she stumbled towards the clock and collapsed in front of it. Five minutes until it hit one hour, her whole body shook under the fear, she felt like she was going to faint. But she couldn't, she had to see what would happen even if it killed her.

Four minutes... three minutes... two minutes, her heart skipped a beat everytime it changed. One minute, by this time she was stood on her bed, pressed up against the wall, tray in hand like a weapon preparing for the worst, running the different possibilities through her head. "Time's up" the clock screamed, making her jump, but then something clicked in the rear corner then the gas came.

It wasn't much to start with, but after a couple of seconds it had covered the entire floor, she stuck her bare foot out into the gas but nothing happened, the only thing that was happening was the quickly rising gas, which was now up to her knees, but it kept rising and rising, and rising, she was now attempting to climb the wall but it was too slippery and everytime she got both feet off the bed she would slip and her lower body would plunge into the unknown. She couldn't do anything as it was now up to her neck. She tilted her head back to try and get away from the gas, but she could feel her eyes, slowly getting heavier and heavier. And the last thing she remembered was a feeble, "Please" escape from her mouth as she collapsed onto the bed, and everything went... Black.

She woke with a startle, flinging herself out of bed, she had the worst nightmare, but something felt familiar, she opened her eyes, but instead of a black square it was a white one, then a black one. She looked around, she was in the same spot as last time, but in a different room, it had the same bed and tray, but the squares had moved. She decided to get to work, she started by slapping, pressing, punching and kicking the different squares to try and get out, but she got tired very quickly, she collapsed onto the floor, exhausted, her head flopping to one side. But that's when she saw it, something white on the black square under the bed, she reached out and took out the several bits of paper, she started with the folded up bit of paper, it was a letter it said: *Dear Ella, I am sure you are confused about all of this but there is a valid reason and it is for the best. From the Master x x x*

What? Which was the master? Who was Ella? Was she Ella? She grabbed the spare bits of paper and turned them over, then froze, they were pictures of her the day before, sat on the bed and eating, but the last one made her breathing speed up, it was a picture of her kicking the wall that same day, but as she started to worry, the clock on the tray screamed at her, but not to tell her she had five minutes, it shouted, "It's coming, good luck." As the same click came from the far corner of the room again, but this time she didn't try and climb the walls, instead she calmly lay down on the bed and tried to relax, there was no point resisting. It was gas after all, so slowly but surely she felt her eyes get heavy and fell asleep.