

The Viking News

SPRING BREAK CANCELLED!

Zoom Classes to Continue Next Semester

The Spring 2021 semester at Westchester Community College will be very different from any in its past history. Besides the fact that classes will continue to be held remotely via Zoom meetings—the new normal for schools across the nation—there will be no spring break.

The decision to cancel the spring vacation, which traditionally takes place in mid-March, was part of a package of changes to the academic schedule announced to the Faculty Senate in October. Many expected the news to be greeted with widespread

disappointment throughout the campus community.

In one of the scheduling changes, the start of the semester will be pushed back a week.

Normally the day after Martin Luther King Day marks the opening day of classes at WCC. In 2021, the semester will start the following week, on Monday, January 25. Regular full-semester classes that would normally be given on campus will start that day, as will the first of two 7.5-week sessions.

Classes that would normally be scheduled to meet at extension site campuses will start a

week later, on January 31.

The 12-week session will begin on February 15, while the second of the two 7.5-week sessions will start on March 22. Among the few students authorized to be on campus, no student will be allowed on campus before February 1. The semester will come to a close for all on Sunday, May 9.

As in the present semester, courses (with a few exceptions) will be taught remotely this spring, with plans beyond that still up in the air.

In higher education as in virtually every area of life, a big question looms: the future course of the Coronavirus epidemic,

and the role that one or more potential vaccines may play in bringing it to an end.

Two recent news stories from vaccine manufacturers have raised hopes. In the first, Pfizer Pharmaceuticals announced that their vaccine has been 95% effective in clinical trials; in the second, Moderna Therapeutics reported a

94.5% success rate.

These efficacy rates will be important in seeking early approval for these vaccines.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the chief infectious disease specialist in the Federal Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has cautioned that it will take some time to roll out vaccines after approval—perhaps by February 2021. This would

certainly not be soon enough to change plans for remote learning in the Spring semester.

It is unknown if the roll-out of the vaccine(s) will be early enough—or effective enough—to safely say that WCC could return to face-to-face learning by June of 2021. So far, no decision about the summer semester has been announced by the administration.



by Emily Moriarty & Mikali-Elon Wallace



Smart Arts Announce Talent Showcase on YouTube

The Smart Arts department will sponsor an online talent showcase for students, faculty, and staff to share their artistic expressions with other members of the WCC community. The department has issued a call for participants in a variety of talent categories, including the following:

Literary Arts: readings in poetry, essay, mini-fiction

Visual Arts: painting, drawing, graphic artwork, sculpture, mixed media, print making, photography

Performing Arts: solos, duets, ensemble (original material or existing material/content) for drama (scenes, monologues, short musical theater pieces, sketch comedy), music (vocals/singing or instrument playing), dance

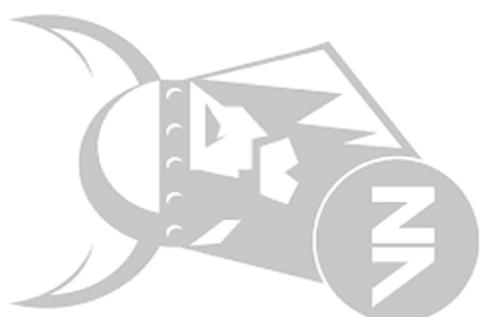
Fashion Design

Cinematic Arts (film shorts): narrative, documentary

According to the Smart arts announcement, the showcase will work this way:

Email your submissions to smartarts@gmail.com. The Smart Arts staff will curate and then upload the photos/video of your submissions in a showcase video on the Smart Arts YouTube channel. The WCC community will then be invited to view the showcase material.

The deadline for submitting material is FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4 BY MID-NIGHT. Email to smartarts@gmail.com.



NEWS

Environmental Club Hosts Political Action Panel

by Melissa Westfall

WCC's Environmental Club held an Environmental Policy and Political Action Panel event October 22 on Zoom. The event featured Westchester County Environmental Panel member David Kvinge, WCC Political Science Professor Nancy Reifer, and Director of Ecological Citizen's Project and community farmer (at Longhaul Farm in Garrison, N.Y.) Jason Angell.

The president of the Environmental Club, Chelsea Green, introduced the panelists. The panelists talked about current environmental projects in Westchester along with their future plans. The panelists stressed that people should work within their own communities to invoke change.

David Kvinge started the panel discussion by talking about past and current environmental projects in

Westchester.

Their main objective, he said, is the restoration and cleaning up of waterways. He said that Westchester County also hopes to acquire more land to protect and restore habitats.

The second speaker, Jason Angell, said that the goal of the non-profit environmental organization he runs is to move policies into action. He urged people to think creatively and work locally toward change. He encouraged private citizens to ask their local governments about public land that might be available for community farms. The final speaker was WCC professor Nancy Reifer, who discussed the theories of Hannah Arendt, the influential 20th-century political philosopher. Hannah Arendt would definitely have favored the take-charge initiatives suggested by the panelists, according to the speaker.

The Environmental Club meets virtually every Thursday at 4pm. Students who would like to join the club can contact them by emailing wccenvironmentalclub@gmail.com.



NEWS

Transfer Fair Goes Virtual

by Melissa Westfall

In Partnership with SUNY Oswego and the New York State Association for College Admission Counseling (NYSACAC), WCC held its annual Fall Transfer Fair virtually on October 28. Featuring over 100 different institutions, the Fair allowed community college students to meet with admissions counselors and advisers to ask questions and get more information on their potential transfer schools.

According to Robin Graff, Coordinator of Transfer Services for WCC, roughly 200 WCC students signed up for the virtual event, but only 81 attended. This is in contrast to previous years' in-person fairs, which ranged between

400-500 students. However, said Graff, "Believe it or not, we had the most students out of any of the other community colleges show up."

This reporter attended the Fair. I was particularly interested in one school, Cornell University. The sign-in process was simple and there was no waiting to get into the meeting. In this meeting, two advisors from Cornell were available to give out general information about applying as well as to answer any questions from students.

The Cornell advisors stressed the importance for applicants to research Cornell's individual schools before sending in their application.

They explained that they see a student's application as an example of how good a student they will be. The advisors said that if a student's application demonstrates that they did not research the school or the requirements, it would impact their eligibility.

One of the Cornell advisors, Ian Schachner, said "You can take this as a not at all subtle hint that we're really serious about it. You really have to look at the specific requirements for your program." He also later explained that students who may be lacking some of the requirements can still apply as long as they acknowledge what they are lacking. The Cornell advisors were able to answer all my other questions as well as to give me their contact information if I needed more information.

If you missed the Fall Transfer Fair, be sure to visit the Transfer Services events calendar on WCC's website. There are other information sessions and counseling events upcoming. WCC students who are planning to transfer to a 4-year college are encouraged to reach out to the transfer office for guidance at transfer@sunywcc.edu



Student Spotlight: Zeltzyn Sanchez

by Guadalupe Conde

WCC student Zeltzyn Sanchez had extra reason to be excited about returning to school this semester: She is a newly admitted student in the WCC Honors College. “I wanted to go to school to put the theory into my practice,” she says, meaning that even though she had been heavily involved in community organizations, she wanted to get a college education.

Her Honors College classes, she says, are helping her improve her critical thinking skills and allowing her to see different points of views. More than anything, she is grateful for this opportunity and the help she gets from WCC financially and academically.

Driven, dedicated and an active leader, Zeltzyn shows all of these traits through the many organizations she’s involved with, both in and outside of school. She is the president of WEB at WCC, a board member for Sustainable Port Chester Alliance, and a member of the New Guard (a local Port Chester political youth group). She recommends that students investigate ways to get involved. “People need to know there are resources out there,” she says. “Apply, ask a question.”

When asked what her proudest accomplishment is, she replied that it was purchasing her first car. “It’s being able to be mobile, being able to help people get to places, help deliver food, pick up groceries for people,” she says. “Most recently, I took people to vote,” she adds., “It’s really helpful to be mobile, especially when you work for the community.”

Where does she see herself in five years? She’s not sure exactly what her future holds, but she is optimistic and ready to see where her journey takes her. “If there is a possibility of a pathway to citizenship,” she says, “that will open up different doors for me.” She continued, “I am looking at schools in other countries because I’ve always wanted to travel.”

Asked what she would like WCC students to know about her, she replies, “I’m very professional in the way I carry myself, but I think I’d want people to know that I’m just a normal 22 year old.” Her hope is for young people to be able to express themselves creatively, as she does through her love of fashion. “We set the standards for the future generation,” she says.

She has a message for WCC students: “Always try to network with people, try to get to know different people and understand their point of view. Always try to ask for help and take advantage of everything that’s out there,” she says. “Surround yourself with people who have the same ambition or similar goals, but who are not the same as you.”

Zeltzyn’s organizations can be followed on Instagram: WEB @web_wcc; Sustainable Port Chester Alliance @sustainablepc; and New Guard @thenewguard914.



Westchester Community College
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 Follow @getinvolvedwcc on IG for how you can start

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OPINIONS

Thanksgiving or a Day of Mourning?

by Jazmin K. Morales Cisneros



Not every American is thankful on Thanksgiving Day. The day most of us think to give thanks is not how some remember it. To Native Americans, it is a time of remembrance of the oppression and genocide of their people. In fact, some of them have made this popular celebration a Day of Mourning.

In a Huffington Post report titled “Why

These Native Americans Observe A National Day Of Mourning Each Thanksgiving,” Sais Moonanum James of the Aquinnah Wampanoag tribe of Gay Head explains the reasons for it: “We see no reason to celebrate the arrival of the pilgrims. What the heck did they do for us? Ha! Nothing.”

James is the grandson of the man credited

with founding the Day of Mourning in 1970, the 350th anniversary of the (supposed) first Thanksgiving, following the refusal of the celebration organizers in Plymouth, Mass. to let him deliver a speech debunking the myths that have come to surround the story. He found another spot and delivered the speech there.

Every Thanksgiving Day since then, the National Day of Mourning has been observed in Plymouth. So on November 26, a group of Native Americans will gather once again to remember the loss and genocide of their ancestors.

James is one of the organizers of the event, along with other members of the United American Indians of New England (UAINE).

According to the UAINE web site, one of the purposes of the organization is to expose “the racism

of Pilgrim mythology perpetuated in Plymouth and the U.S. government’s assault on poor people.”

One of the myths is that the settlers and the Indians sat down in peace in 1620 at the first Thanksgiving meal. The real story, says James, is that the first thanksgiving was in 1637 when Governor Winthrop decided to show thanks for the safe return of his people who participated in a massacre that killed many of the Pequot peoples. “That was the real first Thanksgiving,” says James.

James invites all Americans to view Thanksgiving from a Native perspective. According to him, Thanksgiving Day means oppression, and it is not confined to the past: it continues. The National Day of Mourning brings people together in prayer, and attempts to remind us all that Native people have not vanished. The descendants of the first Americans are still here, and they deserve better than a fabricated history that fails to do their culture justice.

TRIO Offers Support to Students in Need

by Jazmin K. Morales

TRIO Student Support Service is a WCC department that offers help to students with special needs.

Funded by the U.S Department of Education, TRIO SSS helps low income, first generation, and disabled students who are motivated and committed to achieving success. Besides helping students during their time at WCC, TRIO also helps in the transfer process to a four-year school.

My personal experience with TRIO student support services has been positive. Their services are phenomenal. For one thing, they offer free one-on-one tutoring for any subject you’re having trouble with. For another, when it comes time to register for a new semester, you do not have to wait in line! Once you are accepted into TRIO, active

encouraged.

The program staff works actively with TRIO students and is sincerely dedicated to helping you pass all your classes. They also advise students in course selection and advancement through the curriculum. I believe this is key in an academic environment, and it may be challenging for some students to navigate on their own. Fortunately, TRIO SSS is there for their students. Staff members Tracy Adams, Noelle Bucci, and Virginia Falcone work with students regularly. With them TRIO SSS is possible.

I encourage others who may be eligible to apply to TRIO. I have benefited from this program tremendously and could not be more thankful for its help in my academic and career pursuit.



photo credit Cnm.edu



TRIO

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Megan Thee Stallion Tells The New York Times Why She Speaks Out for Black Women

by Guadalupe Conde

Megan Thee Stallion--entertainer, entrepreneur, and activist--turned op-ed writer last month in an opinion piece in defense of black women published by The New York Times.

In the essay, called "Why I Speak Out for Black Women," the celebrated rapper talked about what it's like being a black woman in a society where such women are constantly scrutinized for anything they

do. In a video made in support of the essay, we hear the words of Malcolm X from 1962: "The most disrespected person in America is the black woman." These words were spoken more than half a century ago, yet they still speak an existing, but unfortunately not surprising, truth.

The op-ed article was published October 24, ten days before the Presidential election. It begins by speaking out about the election and how black women are expected to show up and vote for the Democratic party. "She marches for everyone else," complains Megan, "riots for everyone else, dies for everyone else, loves everyone else, lives for everyone else, but when it comes down to her, there isn't anybody in sight."

She continues by talking about the significant violence endured by black women as she recounts her own story of a violent act and subsequent backlash she personally experienced. On July 12, 2020 she was shot by rapper Tory Lanez while leaving a party. At first she did not report it. Her initial silence, she says, had been "out of fear for myself and my friends."

After deciding to speak out about what had happened to her, she reports, "Even as a victim, I have been met with skepticism and judgment." The negative backlash that followed her reporting the incident didn't seem to come as a surprise to Meghan.

She explains that in society, men tend to see women as objects. So when a woman, especially a black woman, speaks up about violence she's experienced, people tend to look the other way. According to statistics from the American

Bar Association's Commission on Domestic Violence, "black females experienced intimate partner violence at a rate 35% higher than that of white females, and about 22 times the rate of women of other races."

Continuing, the popular performer recognizes that while every woman from a young age faces scrutiny, Black women tend to be looked at more closely than other women. She notes the prevailing belief that Black

women can endure more pain than anyone else, a racist myth that likely helps explain why Black women's mortality rates are much higher than other women.

Meghan also spoke out about how in the LGBTQ+ community, Black transgender or nonconforming-gender people have the highest fatality rates, a harsh reality that should concern not just the Black members of the community, but

the non-Black members as well. She argues it seems that there should be more action taken to protect these predominantly targeted people.

Megan wishes that in school, we would learn more about great Black American women, from the NASA research mathematician Katherine Johnson to the founders of Black Lives Matter: Patrisse Cullors, Alicia Garza, and Opal Tometi.

On October 24, Megan Thee Stallion took an important step. Ten days later, the American people took another, even more historic step. Now that Kamala Harris has become our new Vice-President-Elect, hopefully we will make progress toward the protection of Black women. They have worked to protect us and our rights for so long; it's time we did the same for them.

A link to the article and accompanying video can be found in the online version of The Viking News: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/13/opinion/megan-thee-stallion-black-women.html>



FEATURES

An Interview with Poet Roya Marsh

by Vanessa Gonçalves



Photo by LaQuann Dawson

From her roots in the Bronx, Roya Marsh has risen to a position of prominence as a poet, a performance artist, and an activist. She is currently the Poet in Residence with Urban Word NYC. Her first book of poetry, *dayliGht*, was published earlier this year. In a self-description, she says she “works feverishly toward LGBTQIA justice and dismantling white supremacy.” In October 2020, she briefly became WCC’s poet in residence as she conducted four online sessions in which she read her poems and spoke to students. I had an opportunity to ask Roya Marsh some questions about her career; a transcript of the interview follows.

What inspires you to create?

I am forever and consistently inspired by the perseverance of Black women. I strive to create work that shares our stories and all of its complexities. I am driven to tell the truth as I know it & pray it inspires others to share their unabridged truths.

What do you feel are your responsibilities as a poet?

My responsibilities as a poet are to tell the truth, over and over again. To avoid perpetuating harm onto my audiences and to further the message and impacts of the women writers whose shoulders I stand on. I am in every way indebted to Sonia Sanchez, Audre Lorde, Nikki Giovanni, Gwendolyn Brooks, Toni Morrison, June Jordan, Lucille Clifton, and, and, and! There’s a long list of powerful Black women that push my pen even when I feel I’ve said enough. I have a responsibility to honor this gift I’ve been given.

When did you know you that you wanted to do this work? Is there a story behind that moment?

I have to say 2015 was a truly pivotal year in my career. I had ceased steady work at a preschool and committed to life as a full-time artist. It was daring and not something that I’d ever imagined, but was truly (and still is) the best decision I’ve made. I found mentors in Mahogany L. Browne, Jive Poetic and Jennifer Falú, who have all played an instrumental roll in my success. Greater than the gift are the people that give you the tools to access your full potential.

How does your identity shape your work?

My work and my identity are very much intertwined. As a Black butch woman, I center the community that my work closely relates to. I spent a great deal of my life longing to see someone who looked like me in literature, film and the like. I write for Black people, Black women, survivors, the LGBT+ community, folks living with mental health issues and those finding themselves living within the margins of my pages. My hope is to offer a sense of belonging to those feeling underrepresented.

Who has been your greatest inspiration? How have they influenced you as an artist?

I have been inspired by so many people over time, but my greatest inspiration is myself. A lot of people would be hesitant to admit that, but I know better than anyone who I am and what I have overcome. When looking back on what I’ve accomplished, I am determined to press on and see what more opportunities exist and how many folks I can help with my work. I am driven to collaborate with other artists and mediums and attempt to push the genre forward.

What does your creative process look like?

As an artist, I try to hold myself to a minimum of 40 writing minutes a day. Sometimes a thought can come at a random moment, like in the shower, and there’s no immediate way to jot it down, so I’ll have to repeat it continuously.

How did *dayliGht* come together as a collection?

The manuscript started as my thesis in a grad program. I knew the work was bigger than any institution and wanted to give it a larger platform. I, somewhat jokingly, posted a Facebook status asking who would publish my manuscript. I got a ton of responses from folks that were asking to read it and promising to buy it whenever it was out in the world. One friend, Danny Vazquez, was moved to share my work with his colleagues and changed my life forever! I am ever grateful for his belief and support.

What was your thought process behind the cover art of *dayliGht*?

The cover art for *dayliGht* is the work of a phenomenal collagist named Deborah Roberts. It speaks to who I am and the many facets of my make-up. Artists are generally good at more than one medium.

Can you tell us about any other forms of expression you may have?

My favorite art forms are music and fashion. I am particularly enthused with streetwear and hip hop culture. I have a vast sneaker collection and am up for friendly competition at any time!

What advice do you have for aspiring artists who want to pursue a career in writing?

My advice is to write and to read as much as you write.
Nourish your mind and it will continue to be fruitful!

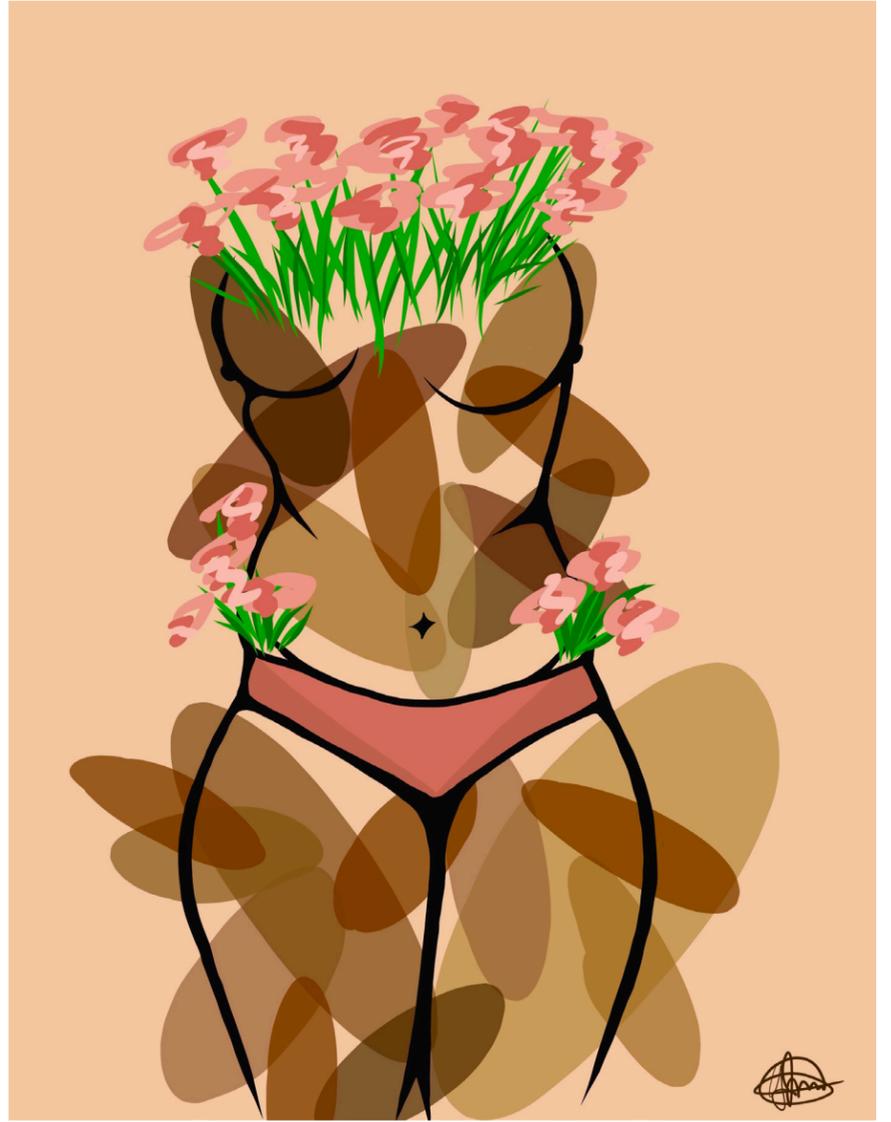


Cover art by Deborah Roberts

A Love Letter to Myself

by Anonymous

Brown skin, so soft, so supple Compliments
- can't seem to take a couple He destroyed
every bit of confidence
All because he wanted to have dominance
Your tiger stripes that are all over you lead
to treasure You are more beautiful than his
need for pleasure Because a man who is a
man loves you unconditionally And focuses
on far more than your anatomy
The temple that encompasses your curves
is at a crossroads Because it requires a love
so deep that it almost implodes Look with-
in baby girl, the love has to start with you
Because that's the only way that you'll know
what's true
Treat your body
Be kind to your body Cherish your body
Nourish your body Love your body
"Love Letter to Myself" -Anonymous



They Don't Need to Tell You That You're Beautiful

by Anonymous

Scars that mark the life you've lived and how hard you've loved
They hold you, squeeze you, it's almost too hard to bear
It's hard to breathe - but you don't even try to come up for air
Is this all okay because they love you? Is this what we're taught?
That love can be so easily bought?
Remember, they don't need to tell you that you're beautiful
Do all the diamonds and pearls make this all okay?
Broken rib cage, but he tells you he loves you so you stay?
Breathe baby breathe, I just want you to make it out alive
After all the madness, how do you even plan to revive?
Remember, they don't need to tell you that you're beautiful
The feelings - they submerge you because you without him
Is like a fish without water
But how can I explain babygirl - that love doesn't require self
Sacrifice and that love isn't nights in an ICU and that love
Is healing and you are just hurting and that love is beautiful and
That love is not this..
Remember, they don't need to tell you that you're beautiful.

FEATURES

Visionary Viking Star Life

Part 2

By Rafael Yuro

Arriving at the Infinity Mines, things did not seem right to Annie. A lot of the miners were above ground, pacing around. "Excuse me. What happened here?" Annie asked.

"Hello young lady. Ten days ago, our boss, Sandy Stone, disappeared into the mine without a trace. After three days had passed, we decided to call Captain Dragon for help" said the miner. Dad. Annie said to herself.

"The team went down there and they haven't returned. They can starve if they don't find their way out."

Annie thought, why do they need to 'find' their way out?" She hid behind some trees and changed into turquoise full-body armor, her father's shoulder armor, and her headset. Using her sorceress powers from her mother and Aunt Amara, she created two pickaxes, sharper than any gem. "Star Life! Star Adventure!" Annie said as she started digging once she was out of sight of the miners.

Once in the mines, it was an ever-changing maze with tunnel after tunnel with no end to them. There were also infinite rails of minecart tracks, like an endless roller coaster.

"Infinity Mines' is a perfect name. This place is beautiful" Annie

walked through the mines. She was completely alone. There were no noises, no activity. It seemed strange. Trying not to think about it, Annie walked, admiring the sights. There were many different ores that had not been mined. They sparkled and lit up the caves and Annie enjoyed this part of the adventure. Eventually, she discovered an ominous dark tunnel. She hesitated then her headset started beeping. Mom? Dad? Annie said to herself. She turned on her headlight and headed down.

Some time later, she made her way into a dimly-lit clearing.

"Annie?" said a male voice.

Annie looked and saw her family with the head-miner.

"Mom! Dad! Everyone!" said Annie. Rocky and Gabriella rushed over to hug their daughter.

"What are you doing here?" asked Rocky.

"Looking for you" said Annie.

"What!? Young lady, that was pretty risky... but also great" said Gabriella.

"Yes, a very good thing. It's like all the exits were cut off" said Rocky.

"They were," said another voice.

Someone came through the tunnel.

"Lyki!" exclaimed Annie. "You stalked me all the way down

here?!"

"Yeah. I figured if I buried your family, you'd be mine. That's why I nabbed Stone down here".

"You did this just to harass our daughter?!" said Rocky.

"Yes, and to steal valuables from here, so it's a win-win," said Lyki. Annie scoffed.

"I'll distract him, get Sandy out of here" Annie whispered to her father.

"First you'll have to catch me!" taunted Annie, running off.

Annie jumped into a minecart and rode off. Lyki caught up on another track with a pickaxe. Annie jumped on top of the minecart and turned around holding her axe. They swung at each other. CLANG!

They kept at it, neither giving an inch, then the two tracks split apart. Gaining distance, she had an advantage. Using her sorceress powers with the dragon's life force, she shot energy beams. Lyki threw knives at her.

"Running out of track, we have to stop!" said Annie.

"No way! If I'm going down, you're coming with me" said Lyki.

"I'm trying to save you!"

"Too late! The way you rejected me years ago and you've only humiliated me since. Nobody has

"I'm an independent girl. You need to let go."

"I died that day. Once I'm done with you, I'll kill your family!"

Annie noticed the tracks were coming to an end. She shot some beams to distract Lyki then jumped from the minecart. She threw the minecart, knocking Lyki, making him fall out. Still in the air, Annie reached out. Her parents flew by and she grabbed on and flew out. The rest of her family saved Lyki from his fall and everyone got out of the Infinity Mines.

When they all returned, the miners cheered. Their boss was saved. Lyki was hauled off by the police, and Annie and her family returned home.

"We're so proud of you. You truly are a Life Sorceress" said Rocky.

"Thanks Dad. I'm just glad we're back together. I now see why you love adventure" Annie said, giving back her father's shoulder armor. Her parents looked at each other and nodded.

"It's yours now, 'Star Life'" said Rocky.

"Wear it as a symbol of family," said Gabriella.

"Star Life! Star Ann-Venture!" shouted Annie.

The End

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*Part 1 can be found in Issue 2 October 16, 2020 and on the Viking News website

