I am constantly amused by Mat calmly talking us through tasks whilst the class is in utter chaos. I am sitting here at my desk, listening to the gentle tap of pens against wooden tables, and writing in you, dear diary.

Through The Doorway...

Written by Jasmine Nolan-James
Through The Doorway...
The girl crept along the corridor, careful to avoid the golden patches of light illuminating the open door's pathways. She was tall for her age, and covered with a nearly transparent gown scarcely covering her body. Indeed, if anyone were to come across this figure, they would immediately turn around with utter amazement. The white blonde hair cascading down her slender back boasted a large, glittering diamond clip, engraved with the outline of a small bird and moon.
The girl reached a closed door and pulled a single, white, hand out from beneath her gown, and placed it just a over the shiny door handle. She appeared to place her head slightly to the right, as though listening for something. But when a metallic 'click' bounced around the room, the girl's head noodled with a satisfied approval.

The door swung open, and the figure glided in. The door silently swung back, any sound it made muffled by the dusty carpets and thick walls.
Birmingham State Police Station had never been known to the public as 'a nice place to state you troubles'. In fact, if anyone were to even bring up the subject of 'comfort' at Birmingham City Council, they would only receive a dirty look and a piece of cake shoved on a discarded piece of napkin. It was because of this such unwilling attitude to the near-derelict police station that had the Officers constantly moping around smoking or slurping watery masses of coffee.
The head Officer was Alistair Crabtree. A small, gnomish-looking man that could never be bothered to heave his great load out of his chair. Alistair had murky black hair, that parted in the exact centre of this flaky scalp. When he breathed, a low, rumbling, sound would escape from his nostrils. It was this reason that the Council refused to mention Alistair, and it was said that black-clad spies roamed the streets, but if this was true or not, no one could know.
Alistair Crabtree looked down at the thick sheets of paper neatly stacked atop his desk, and unhappily rubbed his temple, letting his stubborn thoughts wander back to his early childhood.

Alistair had been only four years old when he had dreamed of becoming a secret agent trekking through thick mud and killing crocodiles. But when the time came for recruiting soldiers to the army forces, Alistair had suffered from a rather violent attack of chickenpox, resulting in the miserable decline towards his desired career.
So Alistair sat, sighing heavily, and frowning crossly. He swore a single syllable, then looked down at the neat sheets of paper again, and then, making up his mind, Alistair snatched up the first sheet of paper.
The writing it displayed was bold and black, written in a stately manner. The letters formed the words:

BIRMINGHAM STATE REGIONAL MUSEUM
Alistair turned the page, and read the words on the next page.
To the Supreme leader of Birmingham State Police Station;

It has come to our unsatisfied attention that an important artefact of BIRMINGHAM STATE REGIONAL MUSEUM has been stolen.

We ask you to track down the object, and possibly the prosecutor. Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,
Robert Franklin,
Department of Artefacts,
Birmingham State Regional Museum
Alistair placed the letter on his desk, and gradually inched his way over to the grime-coated window. He looked out at the grey sky, the grey pavements, the grey houses, and the grey people.

Alistair thought about the letter. Should he accept the letter? Alistair thought hard. It was a wonderful opportunity, and after all, people had long since given up troubling Alistair with their worries.
A bird flew past the window. A light flickered inside Alistair's brain, and Alistair Crabtree suppressed an immediate want for wholesome adventure. He pushed himself over to his desk. Then something, just something that looked like the shadow of a smile crossed his face. But it went as quickly as it had appeared, and no one would know the truth.
The wind beat at her face, but still, she struggled on. The rain whipped at her skin, but still, she struggled on. The thunder pounded through the damp air, but still, she carried on.
It was urgent, she mustn't be distracted. She carried on, her golden silhouette bent forwards. Only a hair clip featuring an owl and moon visible through the haze.
The girl dodged the growing puddles of mud and rain, but when a large tower came into view, her head lifted up, and she squinted, happily, until her feet came to a halt, directly in front of two handsome young men. They were both dressed in tidy, identical guard outfits.
"Is that you, Aisling?" asked the guard on the left, peering at the girl in a puzzled way.
"Indeed it is, Roderick!" replied the girl, Aisling. The man looked at her again, then said;
"Aisling, forgive me for being rude, but what on earth are you doing in this weather?"
"None of your bees' wax!" Aisling cheekily teased Rodrick, but soon starting to tap her foot on the sodden ground impatiently.

"Oh, come on, Miss, tell us!" The other man had flaming red hair, which was matted down from the rain, along with dimples and a wide, beaming smile. "It can't be too hard, can it?"

"No, Phillip, and please let me in, I'm in rather a hurry." Aisling eyed Phillip for a while, until he gave in
"Right-o, Miss, we'll let you in!" Phillip and his mate, Roderick, tapped a long, silver stick against the wooden trapdoor, and the door opened with a loud *creak*.

Aisling walked in with a hurried "thank you!" And a quick smile.
Alistair sat beside his bed, thinking. He was in what one could only call a troublesome state. Jackets and underwear lay sprawled across any available surfaces like dead eagles.

Alistair Crabtree was in the sticky situation of trying to decide what to wear during his trip. He was leaving that very night. Eventually he decided on a grey tweed jacket, grey pants, and long, grey socks.
Alistair looked, satisfied, then, after a long, hazy glance at his beloved room, Alistair hobbled his way out of the room, (Alistair was still getting used to his feet) then hobbled his way across the landing, through the doorway, and into the purple of night.
The first thing Aisling noticed when she entered through the door, was a figure perched proudly on a small throne. When Aisling peered closer, the figure appeared female, yet unnervingly un-human. The thing wore a simple, modest and long white dress.

Yet, although the figure looked important, stately and charming, the setting was neither pleasant nor stately.

The walls were scratched and lumpy, the only light filtering the musty air traveling through a barred window, in which one could look out and see greyness. The floor was hardened stone, stuck together by peeling plaster.
"Eabha?" Aisling said, looking concerned towards the female on the throne. "Are you alright?"
There was silence.

"Is that you, Aisling?" The woman's voice was hoarse and husky, yet strangely deep as well.
Aisling answered almost immediately, as though she was relieved of the strange thing's speech.

"Yes, Eabha."

"Do you have it, child?" Eabha turned her head gracefully in the direction of Aisling. Her eyes were strangely blank, her pupils too wide, the eyelashes too long. Eabha was blind.
Alistair not know where to go. He trundled along the cracked pavement, acknowledging the gum wedged between the pavement for the first time. He thought about going to the museum, and doing some inspections, but something told Alistair there would be nothing in store for him there.
So Alistair took the path leading to the local park. He passed three burly-looking teenagers, tormenting a little girl with pigtails and dressed in a pink tutu and tiara. Her brother was trying to protect his sobbing two-year-old sister, but without success.
Alistair glared at the teenagers, then hurried along through the rubbish-strewn grass.

An elderly lady passed, walking a small dog and holding a gnarled-looking walking stick. Alistair nodded at the old lady. The lady turned her head, slowly, slowly and stared at Alistair. The sky was now darkening to a colossal orange and pink haze. A few birds sparked as they flew past through the sky, and a squirrel peered down at Alistair curiously, before scurrying away into the depths of leaves and tree branches.
As a pair of imperial, wrought-iron gates came into view, Alistair suddenly had a thought. He knew where to go. Alistair steeped out onto the other side of the gates. He turned, and limped his way into growing darkness.
The thing was quick and stealthy, it's darkness as piercing as a needle through flesh. It quickly swerved twice, then came to an abrupt stop in front of two guards. They looked suspiciously at the black thing, but obviously decided it wasn't worth questioning. One of the guards looked at the sky. The other stared straight ahead, his eyes fixed on some invisible object. The guard looking at the sky suddenly said to his red-haired companion, "Phil, I reckon we should get going." The man looked nervously at the sky again. "Right you are, Rod." The pair quickly hurried away, only pausing to tap their long sticks against the door. The door made a loud thump, then fell silent. The guards walked way. But still, the black thing hid in the growing shadows.
Alistair puffed loudly as he climbed up a set of shiny glass stairs. He groped around for the banister then climbed a step, groped around, climbed a step. By the time Alistair had reached the topmost landing, twenty minutes had passed and he felt like he could faint with exhaustion.
Alistair panted his way down the sleek corridor, until he reached a doorway reading '7' in big brass font. Alistair knocked on the door, twice. The door was opened by a young man with dimples and a beaming smile.

"My God! Is that you Alistair?"
The man seemed genuinely surprised with Alistair's appearance.
"Yes, Phillip, it's me."
The young man's eyes twinkled brightly, but seemed to fade slightly at the look on Alistair's face.
"Yes, well...I suppose you'd like to come in..?"
A minute later, and the young man had lead Alistair into a cozy living room. It bore an odd assortment of objects; picture frames and ornaments dotted the many tables and mantelpieces like expired foxes. Scarves and rugs were strewn around also, and overall the room felt homely. Phillip offered Alistair a wooden chair, who nearly cried with the relief of sitting down again.
"You look as though you just ran a marathon, Alistair!" Phillip laughed, offering to pour some tea into an expensive-looking floral teacup.
"Or did you?" Phillip looked at Alistair with mock suspicion, then burst into whoops of laughter. "Alistair-Crabtree-running-a-marathon...Who would ever suggest such a thing!"
Phillip was aware that Alistair was merely grimacing. It looked painful. Phillip quieted down after a while.
"So Alistair, may I ask why you are here?"
There was a small pause.
"I want to go to the other side."
The sentence was simple, not using a lot of exceptional vocabulary of sort, but the affect on Phillip was not expected.
"What? You want to go to the other side? Alistair, do you know what this means?"
"I am aware of the circumstances, of course." replied Alistair carelessly. Phillip was starting to look annoyed. "Alistair, really, you know your sort aren't supposed to go there, it's quite the unthinkable." Alistair stared at Phillip, and Phillip stared back. "Alright, I'll allow you to go in, but I'm telling you, any tricky business, and you're out of this deal." Alistair was looking delighted. "Well, come on, what are you waiting for?" Phillip took off down the corridor, his red hair glinting in the moonlight.
The wind rattled the barred windows imprisoning Eabha and Aisling. The sky was slowly turning to a black wash, and Aisling was consistently glancing at the silver wristband watch clasped around her thin wrist.
Suddenly, an even larger blast of wind rattled the room, and the door guarding the prisoner and her companion swung open. Eabha, who could not see anything, whispered in Aisling's ear, "What is happening, child? Are we safe?"

Aisling replied with a frightened squeak, probably meant to say yes, but was cut short when another blast of wind rebounded through the hardy cell.

The door swung open again, then, suddenly, the black thing burst into the threshold. It zoomed around the room, then came to a halt in front of Aisling. Eabha, sensing danger, spoke in loud, clear words, despite the fear lingering in her feeble, gnarled body.
"Is that you, Maeve?"
The black thing was silent. Aisling glanced at the black swirl, then at Eabha.
"It is, isn't it, Maeve?"

Still the swirl was silent.
Aisling decided to break the silence by coughing loudly, and shifting her weight as though it was normal for a random, possibly dangerous, black swirl, to appear in the middle of the night, right in a jail cell.

The thing turned a part of it's body towards Aisling. Aisling nervously licked her lips, and swallowed.

"You've grown, Aisling."

The thing had a soft, calm voice, like melted marshmallow. It portrayed complete control and wisdom.

"Maeve."
"What have you got yourself into?" It was Eabha. Her voice was mournful, similar to one that might be adopted at a sickbed. "I'm sorry, Eabha." Maeve's clear voice penetrated the walls of both the cell and betrayal easily. Aisling gawped at the strange couple.
"Aisling, promise me you'll listen to Maeve."

Aisling stared at the sad woman slumped on her throne.

Aisling had always followed her ageing mother's wishes, but now, as she stood watching Eabha, she knew that this would be the last wish she would be asked.
Aisling choked, salt water falling down from her eyes onto the stone floor.
It happened quickly, a last smile from Eabha, a scream from Aisling, and then a blast of light, and all that was left of Eabha was her crumpled white dress.

Eabha was dead.
Alistair stared at the cupboard. "This is it?" He said blankly. "Yep, this's the one!" replied Phillip, looking at the shabby cupboard as though it was his first trophy. Alistair looked at Phillip and sighed. Phillip looked at Alistair and sighed. "Well then, let's get going, I suppose." said Phillip with a mournful air about him. Alistair opened the cupboard and he and Phillip stopped. Then they walked in.
Tears dripped down Aisling’s pale cheeks like raindrops. Maeve quietly sobbed too, but tried not to express her feelings too much for fear of dropping down completely.
After the flashy murder of Eabha, Maeve had carried Aisling out of the jail cell and into the windy blackness of the night. Aisling had kicked and cried and screamed and shouted, but Maeve's calm voice had eventually reduced the violence to a quiet shudder of sobs.
Maeve stopped soon, and huddled in a derelict heap beside a small tree. Aisling scurried away to a nearby pond, and attempted to tear her hair out in grief. After a while however, Aisling wandered away back to the tower where her mother had expired.
As Aisling approached the door in which Phillip and Roderick had guarded, she placed her hand on the door. Immediately Aisling recalled the time when she had so bravely crept through the corridors of Birmingham State Regional Museum, and stole that precious artefact. Then she remembered how she had never bought the object with her when she had left the death bed of her mother.
Curious, Aisling steadily stepped over the steps of the tower's entrance. The room came into view, grey light flooding over the grimy stone floors. She reached down to the white dress of her mother. The door plunged open, and Aisling's head jerked up. Two men stood in the doorway. One was oldish with a grey tweed-jacket, along with matching grey pants. The other was Phillip. Aisling squealed at the sight of Phillip, but faltered when the tweed-jacket man glared at her.

"My god, Aisling, where is Eabha?"
Phillip looked frightened and confused.
"She's dead Phil."
Aisling scrambled backwards, trying not to draw too much attention to what she was doing. Her hand fumbled around the white dress she had been studying before, and she picked it up. Alistair looked suspiciously behind Aisling's back, and Phillip remained tearful. Aisling unraveled the bundle of snowy material. Inside, was a large silver, ring. On the ring, there was an engraving of a door. Something stirred, and Aisling looked up. She stared at Alistair and Phillip. Something strange was unwinding Aisling's mind into knots. Her eyes narrowed, her lips puckered, and then, she stood. She placed the ring over her thin fore finger, and the room collapsed.
"My gosh, what just happened?"
"Are you ok?"
"Where's Aisling?"
"Phillip, is that you? Who was that man?"

Voices rose into the dust, then vaporised into the distance. Alistair got up, and swiped his hands over his pants, trying to get rid of rubble and dust. Phillip tried to communicate with Aisling, and in turn Alistair. Aisling was stuck under a brilliant amount of roof and rubble. Outside, the greyness of yesterday's skies were turning slowly to an accountable purple as the sun gingerly made it's way up into the sky. The ring that Aisling had worn was no where to be seen. Aisling had failed her mother's wish. Alistair had failed his duty, the ring was gone, and even if Aisling was ready to be arrested, Alistair knew that deep down, it wasn't all Aisling's fault.
The ring floated in a collection of dust, cackling to its self. The ring had succeeded, all it needed now was a swig of Sherman Nogpea's Dry Whiskey and he'd be flaming. Yet, the ring still felt a slight twinge of guilt whenever he looked back down at the chops of rock, tiles and rubble. After all, it wasn't as though that girl had tried to kill his existence or anything. "Oh well," the key said out loud in a husky, high voice. "I can't be nice to everyone."
So the ring floated away into the early morning light.