



Artscape

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## Prologue

*“Is this the right way?” Gwen asked Rob.*

*“Of course it is!” he replied harshly.*

*“I don’t think it is,” she said nervously ignoring his usual jibes, as they continued rowing through the caves of Fremantle Prison.*

*“Alright then, Mr. Smart Ass if this is the right way, where’s the rest of the class?”*

*“I don’t know Gwendy!”*

*“Don’t call me that!”*

*“Oh shut up and listen to me for once! We’ll find them”*

*A loud yell came from somewhere nearby. The two of them looked at each other.*

*“Did you hear that?!” Gwen asked eyes wide in alarm. “I don’t think we’re going the right way.”*

*A distinct click came from the corner just meters a head.*

*“That was a gun!” Rob whispered in shock.*

*“How do you know?” Gwen asked, raising her eyebrows.*

*Rob glared and Gwen straightened her face, knowing he was losing his temper.*

*They rowed on briefly looking into the caves, searching for the owners of the voices and the gun. They were panicking, but enjoying the adventure, as they were eager to find the clues they needed. The whispers continued and they followed the voices.*

*“What did you hear?” a loud voice said from around the corner.*

*“Nothing!”*

*“TELL ME WHAT YOU HEARD!” he roared.*

*“...umm...something about the Bell Tower and a bomb...I won’t tell anyone, I swear!”*

*As they turned around the next bend in the tributary, they encountered a shocking scene: a*

*young man, wearing a black suit and holding a gun to a young woman's head, was yelling and making a fuss about not telling people something about what she saw.*

\*

*"What was that about?" asked Gwen, as they walked towards the exit, seeing their class mates up ahead.*

*"No idea" he answered*

*"You reckon we should tell someone?"*

*At that moment the lady who had been interrogated stumbled past, looking pale and shaken. The two of them watched as she exited the Fremantle prison.*

*"Nah, don't worry about it. Let her sort it out herself. It's none of our business,"*

*Gwen shrugged, "Whatever"*

*The two of them casually joined the back of the line as if none of it had ever happened...*

“Mel and Josh, go sit next to each other over there. Gwen, Rob go sit over there in the back row, and don’t talk!”

Rob and Gwen were not at all happy that they had to sit next each other.

*Out of every other person in the class I just have to sit next to Rob,* Gwen grumbled to herself. They slowly moved to their seats and sat down, staring unseeingly at the desks in front of them.

“Go get the paint Gwendy!” ordered Rob.

“No! I’m always doing things for you. Maybe you could do something for yourself for once, instead of ordering me around!”

“Fine then Gwendy! I’ll do it myself!”

Rob walked over to the paints and selected the colours he needed for his painting, while Gwen sat stewing over the way in which Rob had

spoken to her, but comforted by the thought that she had given him a piece of her mind.

“Remember to put newspaper underneath your paintings, students, so you don’t spill paint on the desks,” the teacher instructed the class.

Gwen collected the newspaper for her and Rob, and placed it neatly over the desks. When Rob came back a few minutes later with a variety of different colours for Gwen and himself to share, Gwen realised that he hadn’t brought over any red paint.

“Rob, you forgot the red! Go get it!”

“Which one do you want Gwendy?” he jeered, pointing at what he thought was a variety of different shades of red.

“The only one there Rob. Jeez!” Gwen said as she pointed at the bottle of red paint. Frustrated, Gwen stood up and walked over to the paint, showing Rob which was the red paint, and that there were no other bottles of that colour.

Rob glanced at the newspaper that Gwen had spread over the desk. The title of one of the articles caught his eye.

**‘Artist paints unbelievable visions of  
Perth’s icon in chaos’**

Not taking much notice, he placed his page over the paper and began to paint.

The siren rang and the students filed out of class, in the usual mad rush to get home. Gwen dodged her way through the crowd, flicking her long red hair over her shoulders. She pushed her way out the corridor and out into the court yard. The cool wind ripped into her, and she wrapped her jacket tightly around her. Towards the gate she saw Rob, talking and laughing with his friends. Her blood began to boil.

“Idiot” she muttered to her self. “Thinks he’s got it all!”

She stomped her way through a puddle, then cursed as the cold water splashed the flares on her jeans. He was always so stubborn! Always thought he was right, when most of the time he wasn’t!

Rob looked over and saw her walking past. His smile turned to an annoyed glare. Gwen thrust her jaw angrily, then kept walking.

Once out on the street Gwen finally found her self at piece. She hated being trapped in side the school. She hated being trapped inside anything. She was happiest when she was sitting out in the open, listening to her surroundings.

And Rob. The one name said it all. He got under her skin and irritated her more then a pathetic fly. And what made it worse, he was in almost all her classes, AND on top of that, her parents, and his were best friends, which meant the two of them had to see each other, not only in school but out as well. She kicked a can on the foot path and watched as it fell out onto the road, where it was crushed instantly under a car's wheel. She sighed. Apart from him, her life was great. Sometimes she'd sit and imagine what life would be like with out him. Another car rushed past and splashed a puddle up which drenched her already wet jeans. She moaned. The sky

above was a dull grey, which in her opinion, reflected her mood exactly.

A little boy with vivid red hair pushed past and into the crowd. Gwen's eyes slipped to the window beside her as she walked past. She could faintly see her reflection but her eyes were caught on a TV playing through the window. On the TV a news reporter stood talking about a painting which was in the back ground of the scene. The painting was a clear picture of the Perth Bell tower in flames. Gwen's mind instantly drifted back to the day in the Fremantle prison tunnels. She was surprised to see a painting of such a thing when it was only weeks ago she and Rob had over heard the plans. The news changed and began reporting on the latest bomb threat. She drew her eyes away and kept walking towards home.

Rob stepped up onto the bus and forced his way to the back where he found an empty space. He sat with his bag on his lap, as the bus filled with many loud students, chatting and laughing. Rob felt too angry to laugh with them.

That girl! Always thought she knew it all. She drove him crazy. Rob wrenched the zip on his bag in anger. How dare she! How dare she try to dominate him! His thoughts drifted to the art lesson they had had that day. She was sooo arrogant. Arrogant and stubborn. No body liked her, and that didn't surprise him one bit. He took a deep breath and sighed. The bus chugged into life and began its journey of dropping the kid's home. His house wasn't far from school, but he had to pass through a couple of places on the way. He looked out the window and subconsciously watched as buildings and parks past by. Again his mind drifted to Gwen. His parents and hers were planning a get together soon. Which meant he'd have to see her again!

“Fantastic” He grumbled to him self.  
“Another fun filled day spent with bossy little  
Gwendy!”

His eyes flicked onto the passing building. It  
was the Perth Bell Tower. Instantly he thought of  
the conversation Gwen and he had over heard.

“I wonder if they will blow it up” He thought  
to him self. Visions of the tower in flames filled  
his mind.

‘So long as no one got hurt, that would be  
funny’ He smirked. The bus rushed past the  
tower and Rob didn’t think on it again.

Gwen turned her music up loud and fell onto her bed. Her day had been pretty uneventful, so she had nothing to sit and think about, apart from her hate for Rob. At that second the door slowly opened. Her little sister poked her head in and grinned.

“What you want Isabel” Gwen asked grumpily.

“Guess what!” teased Isabel.

“What?”

“Guess who we’re gonna see this weekend.”

Gwen caught the jeering in her sister’s voice.

“Oh god. You’re joking right?”

“Nope” she grinned. “We’re gonna spend a WHOLE day with him too! Bet ya like that don’t ya?”

Gwen moaned. “This cant be happening”

Isabel ran off giggling.

Gwen rolled over and stared at her ceiling.  
Her music blared away in the back ground.

Perfect.

Another weekend ruined by the presence of  
Rob.

\*

Rob switched on his television and plugged in  
his play station. With in minutes his mind was  
completely on the game and his thoughts of  
Gwen drifted away.

Half an hour passed quickly and Rob barely  
noticed his parents returning from work. After a  
while his mum came into the room.

“Rob” she said walking in and standing in  
front of the TV.

“Move!” he grumbled hitting the pause  
button.

“No” she said simply. “Make sure your room  
is tidy please. And also, put your black top out in  
the wash, so you can wear it this Saturday.”

“What’s this Sunday?” he grunted.

“We’re meeting Gwen and her parents down at Kings Park”

Rob moaned. “Mum do we have to? We saw them last week!”

“Well we’re seeing them again! Now stop complaining and go do what I told you”

Moaning Rob saved his game and began carrying out his mothers orders.

“Fantastic” he muttered to him self. “Another perfectly good weekend ruined by the presence of Gwen!”

On Sunday their parents dragged the two of them to King's Park. Rob was irritable and contorted his face into a permanent pout. Gwen decided to ignore everyone and busied herself by watching the cotton wool clouds gather in the sky. A storm was brewing.

They listened as their parents chatted happily and the two of them begrudgingly spread the old picnic blanket over the moist grass. The two of them gazed at the busy city that was stretched before them and saw the Bell Tower gleaming in the distance. The newspaper articles flashed before their eyes.

'Rob! Gwen!' Their parents' shouts abruptly punctured their reverie.

'Rob and Gwen, there's a lovely little cafeteria near the car park. Could you please wander over and fetch us a bite to eat?'

Rob rolled his eyes and Gwen shrugged. They both turned and started walking in the direction their parents pointed them, but making sure their heads were turned away from each other. It was bad enough being there in the first place, they didn't have to make it worse by talking to each other. But then Rob tripped over his untied shoelaces and bumped into Gwen.

'Get away from me!' Gwen squealed.

'Why would I want to be anywhere near you?' Rob spat. He bent over to tie his shoelace, trying to hide his scarlet face from Gwen.

Gwen tapped her feet impatiently. Rob cursed her under his breath and stood up. They continued walking towards the cafe. Gwen held the door open for Rob, who held his head high and walked through the doorway, promptly crashing into the woman in front of him. Gwen stifled a laugh as some onlookers sniggered and an elderly gentleman helped the woman to her feet. Gwen surveyed her. She looked oddly familiar.

The woman thanked the gentleman and stared at Rob, then walked out of the café.

“She looked familiar didn’t she?” Gwen said, reading Rob’s face.

“Yeah,” he answered. “Yeah she did”

“Common” said Gwen suddenly. “Let’s see where she goes.”

The two of them, forgetting their parent’s orders, followed the woman out onto a path. For about two minutes they followed her, casually stopping when it felt like she was watching them.

Finally the woman stopped next to an easel, where she picked up a brush and began studying her picture.

Without a second thought Gwen skipped up to the lady.

“What ya painting?” she asked as innocently as she could. Rob stared at her, then walked up to her side.

“Oh just um...uh, just the Bell Tower.”

“On fire?” Rob asked, with eyebrows raised. For the first time Gwen looked at the picture. A

strange sensation tingled her spine and it felt as though an ice cube slipped down her back. Her eyes roved over the painting, her brain processing the chaos, the smoke that choked the city, the bodies and the orange flames that licked the tower...she tore her eyes away and looked up at the lady, who was looking nervous, and avoiding Rob's eyes.

Gwen thought she was keeping something back, and, being a female, she couldn't bear not knowing all there was to know. So she asserted her femininity and tried to draw the information out of the artist.

'What are you trying to capture in your painting?' she asked, trying to appear innocently earnest.

Her trap had worked. The artist thought for a moment, then gushed, 'Oh, well, it was really odd, all of a sudden I just had this incredible overpowering impulse that a terrible tragedy was going to befall us, and I felt compelled to come here and paint.'

An odd sensation rippled down Rob's spine, and Gwen smiled sweetly, masking how she felt victorious like all girls do when they get a fellow female to confide in them.

"I'm not sure that it foreshadows anything. I just had a funny feeling, that's all." She repeated.

Gwen smiled sweetly hiding her disbelief.

‘It’s, ahem, very powerful,’ Gwen said hoarsely. Rob nodded in agreement.

‘Well, like I said, I don’t think it really means anything,’ the artist repeated. Rob and Gwen said nothing. They could not avert their gaze from the painting. The artist sensed that she might have upset them, so she covered the canvas with a sheet.

Gwen held out her hand. ‘Thank-you. It’s been, um... a pleasure.’

‘Likewise.’ The artist shook hands with both of them. At that moment a man with a trolley full of news papers walked past yelling ‘Come and get your newspaper!’ He waved a handful of newspapers in their faces as he passed.

‘Oh, sod off,’ snapped Rob irritably. He was still trying to recover from the painting shock.

‘Aw, come on, get a paper,’ the man drawled. ‘The headline’s a ripper.’

Gwen snatched a paper from him and looked at the headline. She gasped, and Rob looked over her shoulder at the black print which spelt the ominous words:

### **Bomb Threat at Bell Tower**

They looked at each other with wide eyes and heard the artist stifle a sob.

Gwen swung around. ‘What’s wrong?’ she asked searching the woman’s face for answers. Rob handed the trolley man a coin, and he walked off continuing his advertising.

The artist looked up at Gwen, tears streaming from her eyes. ‘It’s happening,’ she sobbed.

‘What’s happening?’ Gwen asked softly.

‘My painting, look at what I’ve done. I knew something terrible was going to happen, but I couldn’t say...I couldn’t tell any one...,’ the artist wept.

“Why couldn’t you tell anyone” Rob asked, pretending he hadn’t heard.

Her eyes flashed in fear and she flushed. “He made me promise.”

“What do you mean? What cant you tell us?” Rob asked, in a deep, commanding voice. The artist bit her lip, obviously not wanting to say.

“He...he made me swear, so I can't say.”

“You can tell us, alright” Gwen said kindly, “maybe we can help you”

“But I can't, he said...he said he'll come after me, and he'll kill me. And besides you're only children, how would you cope?” the artist gushed through her sniffs.

‘Trust me, I can handle it,’ said Rob in his deep voice again. Gwen had to hide her smirk, although this seemed to reassure the artist.

“Well...I suppose you could help me”

Slowly she retold her encounter with the terrorists.

At the end she sobbed, “and then he gave me his terrible secret to guard.”

“The terrorist?”

“No, a friend of mine.”

“What’s the secret?” Rob asked.

“I can’t tell you where he got it, but he asked me to take care of it for him,” she said. This made absolutely no sense whatsoever.

“Can we help you?”

“Well...” she said slowly. “I suppose if you could take care of the secret for me I can keep my mind on my art work.”

“Err... Alright” Rob agreed.

The artist stuck her wet hand in her pocket and pulled out a lump the size of a piece of gravel. She handed it to Rob, who stared at it dubiously.

“Whatever you do, you cannot lose this,’ she said. “Nobody must know. Nobody.”

*The terrorist attached another black box to the metallic surface.*

*“This had better work this time,” he muttered, “If this doesn’t make a bang I’m done for.”*

*Dark, tyrannical storm clouds gathered overhead.*

“It might rain” Rob commented looking up into the sky.

“Shut up, shut up! We have more important things to worry about, than the weather.”

“Ok, ok settle down Gwendy, don’t bite my head off. What do you think we should do now?”

“I think...” she started, “We should search the tower for the bomb”

“How are we going to find it? You got any idea what a bomb looks like?” Rob asked.

Gwen thought to herself, and then said. “Why don’t we just climb to the top?”

“Good idea Gwendy”

“Stop calling me that!” she lunged forward.

Rob took a step back in shock and dropped the seed the artist had given him.

“Look, Gwen lets both just take a deep breath and settle down, alright? Let’s get on with the job.” Rob reasoned.

Gwen glared then began climbing the stairs.

As they climbed the tower it a dark rain begun to fall. The first floor appeared in front of them they entered the first room.

It was a security room, or what was left of one. Monitors littered the floor like trash, and there were obvious signs that a struggle had taken place there.

The two of them quickly searched the room in silence.

“There’s nothing here Rob, come on, let’s go.”

“There goes Gwen taking control as usual.” Rob muttered to himself, and then he said aloud, “Ok stuff it. Let’s just go to the top and work our way down”

Gwen nodded her head in silent agreement. They grabbed the rope and began climbing the stair again. After a while they hit the top and climbed onto the platform. “We’re here, come on start searching!”

“Uh Gwen...above you,” Rob said, his eyes on something above her.

“What is this some kind of jo-?” Gwen opened her mouth in shock.

They had found the bomb.

*“We should hit Kings Park next” the first terrorist argued*

*“No we should be more worried about that stupid artist if it wasn’t for her we would have already had our next three targets bombed”*

*“Both of you stop arguing now! In time our plans will be fulfilled and victory will be ours.”*

“How we gonna do this, come on Rob your dad’s an engineer! You disarm the bomb”

“Well I’m not my dad! I wouldn’t have a clue”

The ticking of the bomb filled the silence.

“Rob, try press the big red off button.”

“I’m colour blind!”

“What?...oh” That answered a lot.

“Press the big one”

“Fine” Rob pressed button he thought was the big red one. The ticking sped up.

“No you idiot press the one next to it” Gwen shrieked.

Rob pressed the one on the left. The ticking increased even more.

“Oh my god. NO! The other one!” Gwen cried.

Rob pressed the one on the Right and the ticking stopped.

The two of them cheered.

Lightning flashed, illuminating the angry face of a terrorist, standing in the door way.



The terrorist wiped back his greasy hair, glaring at the kids with his beady little eyes.

“You have ruined my plan” he snarled from between clenched teeth, “and little snivelling brats that interfere with other people’s plans get punished”. A cold sweat broke out on the back of Rob’s neck.

“Well...” he said in a wavering voice, his mind racing over his ways to escape.

“You’ll have to catch us first!”

Rob Darted from the room and down the stairs. The terrorist launched himself at Gwen, who hadn’t yet reacted to Rob’s fast movement. The terrorist pulled her into a lock and threw back his head and let out a bone chilling laugh.

“I have her” he almost purred, “I have your little friend, and I promise to make her death quick if you come back now”.

Rob groaned, then turned around and came back into the room.

“My plan was perfect” he whispered to himself, “but naturally Gwendy ruins it all. She’s always so slow...mentally and physical”.

“I’m growing impatient now, boy” he yelled down the tower. Rob groaned inwardly.

*It’s either now or never* he thought to himself and opened the door slowly to step out onto the cold steel steps.

“No” cried Gwen at the sight of Rob emerging into the room. Struggling hard, she kicked the terrorist in the shin. Crying out, his grip loosened on Gwen and she tore her self away and the two of them bolted down the stairs towards the exit. The panting sound of Rob’s breath right behind her some how calmed her down a little. Spiralling down the stairs she finally reached the main entrance to find to her horror that it was locked. A chilling laugh erupted from behind them.

“Did you really think I would be that stupid” he spat at them. The terrorist lunged at them grabbing Rob by the feet and tripping him up. Hitting the ground hard he attempted to free himself.

“Run Gwen, save yourself” Rob cried from between clenched teeth, while kicking at the crazy terrorist now frothing at the mouth in his desperation to finish his deadly work.

“You are not going to get him” Gwen yelled. She slammed her small body against the man. He stumbled and let go of Rob’s legs.

“Where do we go now”, Gwen asked Rob almost crying.

“Well the only way to go is up I guess” he replied in a shaky voice. Gwen ran over to the terrorist and kicked him solidly in the ribs. Rob looked in amazement at Gwen who grinned.

“Don’t ask” she said starting to scale the steel stairs back up the tower.

“Oh great” Gwen exclaimed opening the window at the top of the stairs, “I think we’re going to have to jump”.

“Jump! Are you insane?” Rob spluttered.

“Trapped are we?” the terrorist said with a devilish smile on his face, as he entered.

“I think I’m tired of our little cat and mouse game. It’s time to finish my work.”

“No, you can’t!” Gwen yelled at the terrorist, struggling with her ropes.

“Oh yes I can, and I will” the terrorist purred to them. “The bomb is set again and now I’ll leave you to watch the charming little show in front row seats”.

“But what if we get free and disarm it?” Rob queried, attempting to trick the terrorist into freaking out at the last second and disarming the bomb.

“Nice try kid, but I’m out of here” the terrorist said waving good-bye as a final insult to Rob and Gwen.

“You won’t get away with this” Gwen screamed at the terrorist, who was making final adjustments on the bomb.

“You like repeating yourself don’t you, because you’ve already said that” the terrorist snapped back. Rob felt the stress mount with the terrorist, so he decided to exploit it by making a noise with his foot against the wall.

“What was that?” the terrorist snapped at them angrily, having to look up from the bomb that was ticking down to its exploding finale.

“I don’t know” Rob answered slowly, “maybe it’s the police”

“I’ve about had enough out of you boy. If you speak once more I’m going to have to do something about you” he snarled reaching for his pistol.

“Alright we’ll be quiet” snapped back Gwen sensing the seriousness in the terrorist’s voice.

“What are you doing” Rob whispered to her,  
“I can make him...”

“No talking!” the terrorist snapped,  
interrupting Rob.

“What is it?!” some one screamed from out  
side the tower. A small roar echoed throughout  
the bell tower. “It’s a monster!”

“What now!” the terrorist yelled, obviously  
annoyed that he is being interrupted with his  
adjustments to the bomb and that the timer was  
getting close to only five minutes left.

“It’s coming this way! Run!” the screaming  
this time had came from very close to the bell  
tower.

“What could it be to cause such a racket  
down there?” the terrorist asked, a sweat broke  
out on his forehead.

Suddenly an ear splitting roar rocked the bell  
tower, blasting all of the windows out with its  
power. The terrorist stood back from the door as  
the roar came from just the other side of it.

“What is that thing?!” Rob shouted over the ringing in his ears. But his question was soon to be answered as the thing blew the door inwards along with a cloud of dust that swept in through the empty doorway.

As the dust settled, everyone stared in shock as a vague outline of a plant shaped creature slowly hobbled through the mutilated door. The Plant was about one meter tall and stood on roots scattered everywhere. Its head was a large daisy shape with petals all around the main bud shape. Its hands were leaves that were attached to the stem, which looking liked a body, but a lot slimmer. The terrorist was so shocked at the sight of the plant, that he totally forgot that two children were sitting tied up right beside him. He pulled out his pistol and loaded it. The mutated plant growled as the terrorist directed the gun at it. As the terrorist stood with his eyes transfixed on the mutant plant, the children silently tried to undo the rope that held their hands together, but failed. Disappointedly, they looked up and watched as the terrorist took a step towards the

plant.

The Terrorist said, “What’s this?” He turned on



the children, “This some idea of a joke?” Rob shook his head quickly. “You think I’m scared of a plant? What’s it gonna do...squirt its pollen in my eyes?”

The plant growled. The terrorist continued. “This freak of nature will not stop my ultimate plan of world domination. Prepare to die, you insignificant flower!” The plant growled again.

The terrorist fired his gun to the right of the daisy, in hope to scare it off. To his amazement instead of wilting in fear, the flower began firing seeds at what looked like 100km/ph. The terrorist stumbled over; dropping his pistol .The children saw two large red stains on his leg and chest. Gwen flinched.

The terrorist was stunned by the brute strength of this plant but slowly got up, gasping for breath. He picked up his pistol, aimed and fired. This time the bullet pierced one of the plant’s leaves.

The creature screeched, and both the children shuddered. The creature straightened itself up and began firing seeds around the room at random. Gwen screamed and hid her head in Robs shoulder. At that moment rob managed to free one of his hands, with out a second thought he wrapped an arm around her, covering her from the fire of seeds. When the firing stopped the two of them looked up and saw the terrorist stumbling around in pain. His face was covered in small cuts where the seeds had hit is face. The terrorist fell and hit the ground with a tremendous thud! The rattled as it fell.

The terrorist rolled around the floor, in agony crying out in his country's language. With out a second thought the daisy, pleased with its efforts scattered over and gobbled up the terrorist whole.



Rob and Gwen looked over in shock at the smallish creature. They suddenly realised they were still holding each other, and quickly let go.

“Hem...uh...sorry bout that” Rob stuttered as Gwen said “sorry, I..I”

The two of them stopped, and then smiled. The creature gurgled beside them, shocking them back into reality.

The man eating plant was making a weird hacking noise from the back of its throat and then began to convulse.

A very loud noise that sounded like grumbling erupted from the dark caverns inside the plant creature. The noise was becoming deafening; the walls began to shake, and then nothing. The Terrorist emerged from the mouth of the plant and flew across the room.

The terrorist was crouched on the floor, shaking in fear; he didn't know what had happened to him. His whole body, from head to toe, was covered in a slimy yellowish sap. His once slicked back hair was now greased together in a combination of hair, gel, sap and smelly mucus. His once well-fitting elegant black suit was now ripped and torn into shreds, with threads of the Italian cotton hanging off. His shiny black leather shoes had the soles ripped off, revealing his bare feet. Instead of smelling of sweet Italian cologne, he reeked of decomposed matter, the previous meals of the man eating daisy. As he trembled and stuttered anxiously, he picked himself up off the floor he glanced evilly at Rob and Gwen thinking *you're next*.

“Rob he's gone, what do we do now? We're sitting here inside the bell tower tied up in ropes and no way to get free, and to add to the chaos I have man eating daisy sitting beside me scaring the absolute crap out of me.”

“Gwen calm down, it’s ok, seriously. I know your scared, and to be honest so am I. But being frightened isn’t going to help the situation. Try talking to it”, Rob said suggested.

“Talking to it? Are you serious?! Dude that’s even more ridiculous than anything you have ever said to me!”

There was an awkward silence for ten minutes as they both laid there on the ground, struggling awkwardly with their hands tied behind their back. The creature sat as if waiting for them to make a move. Gwen cried with a nervous fear, not knowing what to expect from the daisy. Rob, in his attempt to comfort her, reached over with his free hand and took one of hers.

“It’s ok Gwen, everything is going to be alright, I will look after you...”

“...But...the daisy....might...eat...us..,” Gwen stammered, trying to hold back tears and at the same time her stomach flipping in shock of his affection.

The plant stared curiously at Gwen and Rob, looking as though it had been listening to their conversation. "...Rob..." Gwen said, watching the daisy turn to face them. "We're going to be next Rob...we are going to be next...I know it"

Rob tried to distract Gwen, asking her questions like, "...What did you get up to yesterday?"

Gwen, seeing straight through Rob's agenda, said, "Rob, stop it, let's just concentrate on getting out of here, ok,"

"Okay ..." he said softly, tightening his grip of her hand.

Gwen closed her eyes, fighting back tears, "God help us... please"



Slowly the Daisy began to creep closer to Gwen. She screamed in fright.

“Rob it’s getting closer.” Gwen continued praying silently. “Please God...please.”

“Gwen I don’t know what we are going to do, I’m sorry to be so brutally honest, but I don’t have any idea how will get out of here. There’s no way.”

“Just have some faith...”

“Faith in what, Gwen?”

“Luck maybe...”

The daisy slowly moved closer, and came to a stand still right in front of Gwen’s face. Gwen squealed like the girl she never knew she was, as Daisy licked her face up and down with its soft, furry tongue, covering Gwen’s face in white mucus. Gwen was amazed at this and didn’t know what to think...she just turned to Rob whose jaw had dropped to the floor. Now facing

Rob, Daisy began to untie the yarn ropes that were tied tightly around Gwen's hands. She turned to face Daisy who smiled kindly down at her. It was at this moment that she and Rob knew Daisy was on there side. Smiling back, Gwen thanked Daisy for untying her hands and she stood up and freed Rob from the rope that remained around his hand.

“How do we do it?” Rob asked Gwen in his desperation as the bomb ticked away.

“Have you tried pushing the ‘off’ button again?” she asked in reply.

“Of course I have” he snapped at her, as the rate of the bomb’s ticking increased.

“Well what else do we do?” she asked, ignoring his tone of voice. “After all you are the son of an engineer”.

“Yeah, a civil engineer, which, mind you has nothing to do with bombs,” he said panicking.

“I didn’t know that” she said urgently.

“What are we going to do” he moaned, kicking the bomb.

“Don’t do that” Gwen shrieked.

Rob slumped onto the ground and buried his face in his hands. Gwen ran her eyes over the room and to her amazement, saw a manual lying on the ground nearby.

‘Arming and defusing the bomb’

“Oh my god, you can’t be serious.”

Gwen bent forward and picked up the manual, flicking to the back.

“Look,” she said.

Rob looked up and opened his mouth in amazement.

“Wow, that’s a bit dumb isn’t it?” he said laughing nervously.

“I’ve found it!” Gwen squealed; as Rob tried to hack open the back of the bomb with a piece of glass.

“Good” he said “don’t wanna panic you but, we have thirty second left”

“Quick, cut the green wire then the red wire, and don’t cut the blue one!” she told him hurriedly.

“Great, except I’m colour blind!” He shouted urgently, while opening the case to expose the wires.

“Then I’ll have to do it” She said as she grabbed the glass off of Rob, who was now profusely sweating. She cut the green wire and the ticking increased... 10

“What have you done” Rob yelled... 9

“I don’t know!” she yelled back... 8

“Well fix it!” he yelled back... 7

“And hurry!” he added... 6. She isolated the red wire... 5. She began to cut the wire... 4. She slipped... 3.

“Hurry!” Rob yelled at her... 2

“I’m trying!” she yelled back... 1. She closed her eyes and pulled... 0. But nothing happened.

“It worked!” Rob yelled throwing his arms around her. For a second she flinched then wrapped her arms around his neck.



*'I don't understand. What did I do?'*

*'You failed. Your services are no longer required.'*

*'I didn't do anything!'*

*'That's why I am dismissing you.'*

*'Give me another chance. I will succeed, I promise.'*

*'Your services are no longer required. That is final.'*

*'But-' The phone call was ended. The man grunted in anger and threw his phone on to the floor, massaging his knuckles menacingly. Tick. Tick. Tick. Thoughts turned over in his mind. He had a plan. He would show them how useful he could be.*

*'That was a lucky escape,' Gwen said breathlessly.*

‘Yep.’ Rob didn’t seem to be able to say much.

‘What do you think we should do now?’

‘Um... do you think the artist would be safe?’

Gwen gasped, ‘I forgot about her! We have to find her! They might try to hurt her!’

‘Yes... where would she be?’ Rob asked.

‘Probably still at the park painting,’ Gwen said. ‘Let’s go.’ The two of them got up and ran towards the exit, through the crowds towards Kings Park. They could see the artist standing in front of an easel on the hill with her paintbrush poised in her hand. They heard sirens in the distance and ran faster.

‘She should be somewhere around here?’ Rob panted as they clambered up the hill.’

‘Yeah-look, there’s her easel,’ Gwen gasped.

But there was no sign of the artist.

‘Look,’ said Gwen, pointing at a paintbrush lying on the ground about three metres from the easel.

‘Yeah, and look at this.’ Rob gestured to the ground where an upturned palette and a trail of paint was splattered. ‘It looks like there’s been a struggle.’

‘He must have got here first.’

Gwen and Rob stood in a horrified silence. The thundering clouds overhead seemed to darken their momentary glory. The plant next to them seemed to whimper like a puppy and sunk down at the foot of the easel. The artist was gone. Their only clue was the painting of Fremantle Prison which was now becoming blurred as large raindrops dribbled down the canvas. Gwen sat down in disappointment.

“You okay?” Rob asked crouching down next to her and placing a hand on her shoulder.

“We have to save her,” Gwen looked at him sadly, “They’ll kill her if we don’t. You heard what they said in the tunnels.”

“Yeah, I know,” he comforted settling down next to her, “but there’s not a lot we can do.”

“Of course we can do something Rob!” Gwen cried, “We just disarmed a bomb for God sake. If we can do that we can save her.”

“In case you didn’t notice,” he pouted, “we would be dead if it weren’t for this weird plant which, may I remind you, we have no idea where it came from. Not only that but this thing is potentially dangerous.”

“Don’t say that,” Gwen rounded on him, “He just saved our lives.”

“He ate that terrorist!” Rob exclaimed.

“But she didn’t eat us,” Gwen fought, “Can’t you see that she knows good from bad.”

“How do you know it’s a she?” Rob shot at her.

“Because it’s a *man* eater!” Gwen said ignoring Rob’s groan.

“I still think we should be careful,” Rob turned away.

“We shouldn’t be fighting over such a thing at the moment anyway,” Gwen shook her head, “I think we should be figuring out a way to save the Artist.”

“Well what are we going to do?” Rob’s mind was boggled with the events of the day. It had all

seemed so unreal...and Gwen. She had been really good. Okay so she'd bickered and fought and just refused to except that he was the leader, but she'd been a great help. For some reason he felt compelled to settle her now and if that meant risking their lives to save this weird artist then so be it.

"I don't know," she muttered.

He faced her momentarily before looking out over the Swan River.

"Well then let's think. She left us a picture of the Fremantle Prison so maybe our next move should be to go there. Maybe she's there or maybe we'll find another clue to lead us to her."

Gwen thought hard for a moment, "How are we gonna slip away from our parents?"

"Leave that to me," Rob jumped up and held out his hand. She took it and for the first time in her life felt shy around him. They walked towards their parents who were enjoying a very badly played game of Auzzie Rules Football. Gwen had to laugh as her mother nearly flattened

Rob's dad. Rob shook his head. There was a funny groaning noise behind them that sounded a little like laughter. They turned and remembered Daisy as she looked up at them. They looked at each other.

"Wait here Daisy," Gwen knelt down, "We'll be back in a minute for you okay?"

Daisy nodded in a strange way and then shook herself like a dog to rid herself of the water that had just hit her on the head. The dribbling rain was starting to thicken into a steady drizzle. Daisy moved under a tree as the two of them ran over to their parents who had seised their game of football and were desperately trying to pack away the picnic and get undercover.

"Mum, Dad," Rob called, "Gwen and I want to have a look around the city. We've got money so we'll catch a bus home. We'll seeya later."

"Excuse me," his Mum stopped them, "Don't you mean to ask if we mind you going?"

Rob sighed and rolled his eyes, "Do you mind if we go into the city?"

“Yes you may,” his Dad said cheerfully.

Rob thanked them with a frown before turning around to roll his eyes at Gwen. She didn't see what was so bad about it but smiled all the same, thanked her parents and ran back to pick up Daisy.

“How are we going to hide her?” Rob looked at the plant with an eyebrow raised. Daisy, who was a meter high and not at all inconspicuous was green, white and yellow just like a real Daisy except much bigger. It would not be easy to get to Fremantle with her and not draw attention to themselves. Daisy's large white leaves gleamed even without the sun. She looked somehow excited as if she knew that she was going to help.

“Just like you had a plan, so do I,” Gwen took off her jumper and slipped it around the stem of the flower, curling Daisy's leaves into the sleeves. Rob frowned as Gwen ran to her family's car and took out a rain jacket. The jacket flattened the leaves around her head so that she looked possibly more ridiculous than ever.

However it did disguise her enough from the back to allow them some sort of privacy. All they needed was a way to disguise the legs, or perhaps better described as roots. Rob suddenly ran off and came back with a pair of daggy trackies. Gwen laughed but they helped Daisy into the trackies. She now looked farcical and the two had to laugh. Even Daisy seemed bemused by the outfit she was now wearing. They set off to the bus stop discussing a plan to rescue the Artist.

“Okay, I say we just go in and have a look around,” Rob said dramatically, “No doubt there’ll be something in the tunnels.”

“We’ll see Rob,” Gwen said carefully, “We don’t want to get ourselves killed down there. We already know that they are willing to kill us if we stand in their way.”

Rob nodded. The bus pulled up and they boarded desperately trying to hide Daisy’s rooted feet and leafy hands.



Eerily lit by a single street light, Fremantle prison appeared a daunting, almost unnatural structure. Sharp pieces of stone jutted out at strange angles casting long shadows of darkness across the chilly expanses of the path leading up to the prison itself. Rob and Gwen weren't daunted. They had a mission and a friend to save. Plus they also had a very cuddly, but frightfully dangerous Daisy for a companion. They stopped by the entrance where the light from the streetlight cast them in shadow but also allowed them to see each other. First they removed Daisy ridiculous costume. "Right, I think we should set the alarm off and then the police will come and get the terrorists." suggested Rob.

"First I want to go and find The Artist. I'm sure that the terrorists would be keeping her in one of the cells on this level." said Gwen.

Rob replied, “Ok, then I’ll take our little plant friend here and go down to the cells and find the terrorists!” the daisy groaned at the gleeful thought of confronting the terrorist’s who had captured its creator and the same one who had threatened it’s new masters.

“There is probably a guard with the artist, so I think he will need to be distracted. Do you think that you could lead him away from their so that I can rescue the artist?” asked Gwen.

“Of course I can.” replied Rob, who followed this comment with a hug that Gwen quickly returned. They released each other and Gwen said “Good luck, be safe.”

“Right back at you, Gwendy.” replied Rob, she blushed, no longer irked by this childish hate. With that they followed their instincts and decided to take the corridor to their left.

After a few minutes of painfully quiet jogging they spied a faint light emanating from the cell at the very end of the corridor. Rob signalled to

Gwen to hide in an empty cell while he waited in the corridor to put his diversion into action. Rob stooped and retrieved some large rocks off the dusty floor. It was almost pitch black so he fumbled around making some noise. He saw a shadow in the cell move, the guard's suspicions having been roused. Rob started throwing rocks, with Daisy joining in, firing her seeds at the wall to create enough noise to reach the terrorists ears. He called out

“Hello! Who’s there?” When there was no reply he poked his head out of the cell and illuminated the corridor. When the beam of light rested on the smiling boy and his mutant, man-eating daisy the terrorist jumped a little. He quickly regained his composure and lumbered out of the cell. Rob was beginning to wonder what he had gotten himself into when this giant of a man revealed himself to the boy. He started down the hall-way, building up his pace to chase off this pesky problem. Rob quickly turned and run as fast as he could down the hall, away from this

giant of a man. Rob turned down a corridor and waited, leg outstretched. The terrorist came barrelling around the corner and the next thing he knew he was face first, sliding along the rough ground. Daisy jumped on the man and clobbered him with his deceptively powerful arms. "I hope Gwen is alright thought" Rob, thought to himself, slightly confused why he felt so strongly for her. It doesn't matter, concentrate on what you're doing! Rob ordered himself. He turned down a familiar corridor and began his decent down into the depths of the black unknown of the caves beneath.....



Gwen was scared. *Why does HE get Daisy, he's the boy, he's supposed to be tough! Still I'm glad that he's safe with Daisy.* Gwen shook her head, clearing her mind of all her fears. She went down to the now empty cell and found the artist gagged and tied up, but otherwise safe and healthy. "Don't worry, you're going to be fine." stated Gwen, as she undid the artist's bounds. "Thank you for coming," replied the Artist "Where is she, where's the man-eater seed!" said the artist, a sudden sense of urgency filling her voice.

"Who? Daisy?" asked Gwen, not used to hearing Daisy referred to as a man-eater.

"It grew?"

"Err...yeah" Gwen answered feeling guilty.

"Her names daisy"

"Is she ok?" queried the Artist.

“She’s fine. She has quite a temper though. She’s with my... um... friend, I suppose.” replied Gwen.

“I lied to you” the artist said. “The seed was mine”

“Why did you give it to us?”

“I could see the look in your eyes. You were going to be brave and try and stop these terrorist’s, so I provided you with a body-gardener.” The artist chuckled; the personal joke seemed to be wasted on Gwen. “Anyway, I got the seed genetically modified so that it had a more advanced, more powerful body structure and so that it was self aware. It was an experiment that seems to have worked. Did she prove useful?” asked the Artist.

“Yeah, she got us out of a few sticky situations. I guess I’ll have to thank you for giving us her then.” said Gwen. “We better get out of here, help me up.” said the artist.

“Wait one moment.” With that Gwen ran over and pressed the button labelled ALARM. It

didn't work, or didn't appear to have. "I'm sorry, I have to go down to the caves, if I can't raise the alarm then I'll have to go and help Rob myself." An ear splitting scream pierced the gloomy silence. Gwen and the artist both snapped their heads around in the direction of the scream. It had come from the caves...

The body landed against the damp rock-face, hard. The unsuspecting guard had been happily guarding his little section of patchy darkness when he was suddenly bludgeoned from behind by what appeared to be a giant leaf.

“I must be insane” the guard mumbled to himself.

Daisy had lived up to her reputation as a man eater by dropping her head and gobbling up the terrorist. Apparently he didn't taste that good either, so his fate was not in Daisy's stomach but on the cold, wet floor of the caverns beneath Fremantle prison. Daisy continued to spit and then let out a huge belch, after which she comfortably smiled. Rob patted her on the head and Daisy let out a little purr. Rob looked around and found a boat moored on the rocky shore. He climbed in and Daisy followed. With the help of Daisy he cast off and tried to navigate the small

canoe through the dark tunnel. After about ten or so minutes of silent travel down the gloomy tunnel he could see a dim light reflecting off the icy water of the cavern. He steered the boat nearer the wall, so as to avoid detection. Rob could hear hushed whispers from around the next bend. He strained his ears, trying to perceive their conversation.

“Why aren’t either of the sentry’s answering their radio’s! Go, take a boat and find out what the hell is going on!” ordered, what sounded like the leader. A minute of suspenseful silence followed, which was broken by the sound a boat gliding past. Rob held his breath until he was purple. The boat holding the terrorist disappeared from sight. He slowly and quietly paddled the boat as close to the corner as he could. He peeked around the corner and saw only one terrorist, the same terrorist who had tried to blow up the bell tower. *O, he is going to get it!* Thought Rob. The man was standing on a small island that was littered with various desks and workbench’s,

which in turn had things strewn across them. The terrorist leader seemed to be pre-occupied with something on a desk on the far-side of the island, his back turned towards where Rob was hiding.

Rob paddled forward silently on the small boat. When he reached the shore he moored the boat as best he could. He signalled Daisy forward to sneak up on the terrorist leader. Then the alarm suddenly went off at the critical moment, when Daisy was positioned right behind the leader. The leader jerked away from his work and was quick enough to duck a brutal swing from Daisy. The leader delivered a hard punch to daisy's frail form and sent her flying across the island, eventually crumpling up, unconscious, on the hard rocks. Rob took a step back in alarm and fright. The terrorist leader picked up a knife and menacingly walked sideways, much like a wild cat would. "So you think that your abomination could defeat me a second time? Foolish child. You will pay for your mistake." With that he

lunged at Rob. Rob leapt to the right, desperately trying to avoid this evil man's attacks. The leader made another attack and then another and another. Finally, Rob's legs gave way and he stumbled onto his back. In a second the terrorist was on him. "No one to rescue you now. Enjoy the after life, my young friend." Rob watched, terrified as the terrorist slowly raised the knife above his chest.

Rob closed his eyes ready to feel the knife plunge into his chest. There was a crash and he felt the body above him slump heavily. He opened his eyes. Gwen stood above him, one of the old waste buckets in her hand. The terrorist was groaning next to him holding his head unaware that Daisy was slowly edging towards him. Gwen dropped the bucket in disgust and knelt down next to him.

Rob sighed with relief but felt the pain in the back of his head and shoulders considerably. He felt Gwen's hand on his and clutched it.

“Are you okay?” she asked breathlessly, “Did he hurt you? Is anything broken?”

“I'm fine Gwen,” he replied bravely, “Honestly, I'm just a little sore.” He tried to sit up. Gwen took his arm as he put a hand to his head to steady his spinning mind. His eyes

focussed and his stomach settled. Gwen held his shoulders tightly.

There was a roar next to them as the terrorist drew himself back to his feet and his face darkened. Gwen jumped up quickly grabbing the bucket once more as she did so. She shoved the bucket on his head sharply and kicked him in the chest. He stumbled backwards before desperately trying to remove the bucket. Realising that it was stuck he began running forward. She jumped out of the way and he hit the wall with a sickening crunch. There was a loud clang as he hit the floor obviously unconscious.

“Aren’t you gonna take that thing off his head,” Rob looked at the bucket in disgust.

“Why?” Gwen grinned cheekily, “I think it’ll suit him well.”

Rob looked as if he could’ve puked at the thought of having a bucket that had once been filled with the pee and waste of numerous prisoners, stuck on his head. Gwen knelt back down next to him until he could look at her

without his head thumping. She smiled fondly and brushed his hair out of his eyes subconsciously. He shook his head but stopped quickly as he felt himself spinning out.

Without thinking Gwen grasped him again seeing his eyes cross, “You’ll hurt your eyes keeping your hair in it,” she said looking out the door as they heard the sound of feet thumping on the floor over the sound of the alarm. Police burst into the room and saw the two of them on the floor. They looked around and spotted the terrorist unconscious with the bucket on his head. Then Daisy joined the children groggily finally waking up and the cops shouted out in alarm. They took aim but Gwen and Rob jumped up.

“NO,” they both shouted, “Don’t hurt her,” Rob added, “she helped us,” Gwen continued. The cops raised an eyebrow but lowered their weapons. They grabbed up the terrorist and led him, Gwen, Rob and Daisy out into the courtyard where a police car was waiting along with an ambulance and a whole lot of news crews. Rob

and Gwen looked at each other and although both of them were natural leaders, the idea of TV crews and police interviewing them was absolutely terrifying.

“It can’t be as bad as what we’ve been through today,” he whispered. Gwen laughed nervously.

“Ignore them,” a police officer said, “You’ll talk to us first.” They nodded and followed the officer through the crowd. Cameras swung around to face them as reporters desperately tried to get them to answer questions like ‘How did you get involved in this?’ and ‘How did you defeat the terrorist?’ The most popular question though was ‘What is that thing?’ as they referred to Daisy. Daisy self consciously slipped between Rob and Gwen to hide. They laughed at her and put their hands on the back of her stem. They were directed into a police car. Gwen squished in between Daisy and Rob feeling incredibly nervous. It must have shown because Rob took her hand and squeezed it tightly.

They were interviewed at the local police station and for a long time they were interrogated before the Artist finally turned around in a huff and said, “These poor children have had quite enough for today I think. They’re barely able to keep their eyes open. Let them go home.”

“I’ll take them back,” an officer offered. Rob and Glen farewelled the Artist and piled once again into the car with Daisy.

It was a long trip back home. Gwen was exhausted and unable to keep her eyes open. She felt herself being lightly shaken awake.

“Gwen,” Rob whispered, “Wake up, we’re at your house.”

She stirred and suddenly realised she’d fallen asleep on his shoulder still gripping his hand. He smiled and helped her out of the car.



# The West Australian

## TERRORISTS FOILED BY TEENAGERS AND THEIR PET PLANT

Police were shocked yesterday when Fremantle Prison alarms were set off. The police rushed to the scene to find teenagers Robert Reeson and Gwendolyn Grant on the floor along with a man eating plant called Daisy and a terrorist who has, for months, been on the most wanted list.

George Nianders is being held prisoner for committing violent acts against the local population of Perth and attempted bomb attacks on Belltower. He is also being charged with kidnapping Julia Vintal who now pleads that the latest of her outrageous paintings was a plea of warning to Perth citizens. Julia was being threatened not to tell anyone of what she had overheard but was desperate to warn us.

“It was lucky that Rob and Gwen stumbled across me when they did,” Julia commented, “They were able to stop the explosion at the Belltower and then able to save me from the terrorists who were planning on killing me.” Gwendolyn and Robert will be awarded with medals of service next week by the Prime Minister.

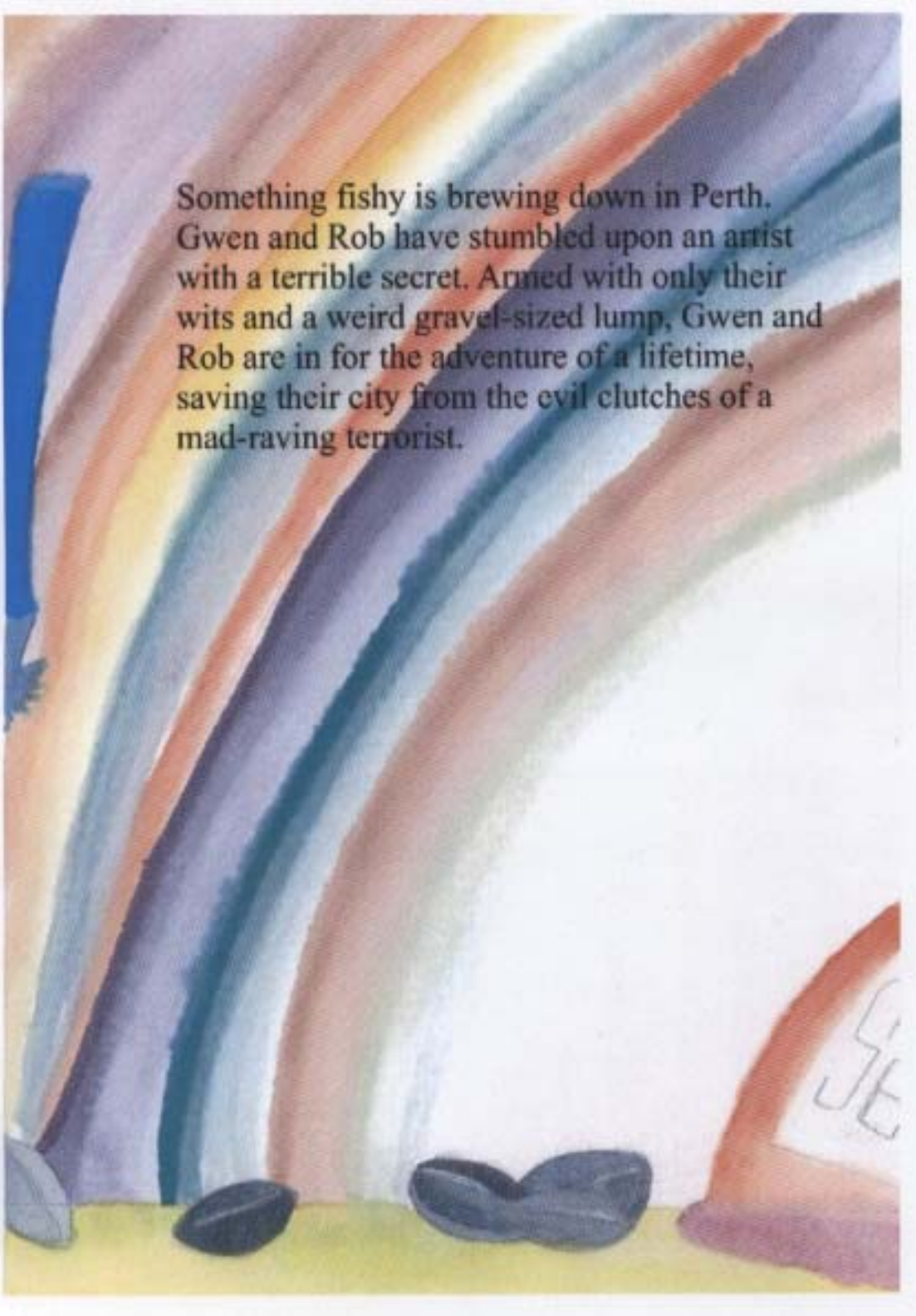


Robert Reeson, Daisy and Gwendolyn Grant first exiting Fremantle Prison yesterday evening.

The two teenagers will be appropriately interviewed when the police see fit and information is soon to follow on George Nianders' trial. More information and photos on pg 4.

Your weekly forecast and lotto numbers as well as this week's special addition of Cartoon Specials.





Something fishy is brewing down in Perth. Gwen and Rob have stumbled upon an artist with a terrible secret. Armed with only their wits and a weird gravel-sized lump, Gwen and Rob are in for the adventure of a lifetime, saving their city from the evil clutches of a mad-raving terrorist.