

HOW OR WHEN?



Chapter 1:

Maggie

September 11th:

Fear. That's the only word I can think of to describe the world we live in. It's the most powerful emotion we feel. It is constant and never ending. Fear for ourselves. Fear for the ones we care about and even the ones we don't know. But mainly fear of the unknown. The first thirteen years of life are said to be the easy part. But that's a lie. They are just as bad as the rest. I even think they are worse because the unknown is bigger than the known. Everytime my family leaves the house I feel my heart skip a beat and my limbs become heavy.

Tomorrow, September 12th, is my 13th birthday and I know it is supposed to be a good, happy, and exciting milestone. I am finally a teenager and one step closer to becoming an adult. I know that tomorrow everything I feel will just get worse because I will know how I die. I think the hardest part for me is not being able to tell my family. My brother, Marcus, has been acting out lately and it is starting to scare me. He's been skipping school and hanging out with the wrong crowd. He is becoming more distant, not only to me, but to my parents as well. I know my mom has been worrying about him and so has my dad. My dad's drinking is getting bad again and I don't know what the cause of it is. I hope it isn't my brother or I. I don't think they know what to do. I have been quiet today and have mainly stayed in my room. I've noticed about myself recently that I tend to want to be alone when things get hard. I assume my family understands why so they have been leaving me to my own thoughts. I don't understand why this has to happen to us. Why must we live in fear our whole childhood just for it to be amplified as we get older?

Chapter 2:

Marcus

I'm sitting on a boulder with Nia, right next to the ledge on the big hill outside the city. She rests her head on my shoulder as I wrap my arm around her and we watch the sun set. The sunsets are so beautiful here on the hill, yet it seems like no one else knows about it. I'm always up here though, either with Marlin and the boys, or with Nia. Whether we're skipping school during the day or sneaking out at night, it's better than the hustle and bustle of the city below us. I mean, what's the point of being down there working or studying when you could be up here, actually enjoying life.

Considering I'm fated to be dead before December, I've got to make the most of what's left of my life. Three months more of school isn't going to do me any good, and I wish Mom could just understand that. Unfortunately, she doesn't, and I can't just tell her that I'm dying on November 24th, so she's stuck thinking that I waste away my life up here, watching these sunsets.

Speaking of Mom, I have too many missed calls from her to be able to count. She probably got a call from my school earlier in the day, and has been wondering where I've been. She should honestly stop trying at this point; I'm not going to change. I skip almost every day now, going here or somewhere else.

Earlier today I went to the Burger Lounge to get some food, met with Marlin, Flint, and the others, then came up here to explore this new trail that we found by the lake the other day. It wasn't much; there was no good view, or anything else we hadn't seen before. Then we got back, and Nia came up, and here we are now.

This is all the adventure I have, confined in this stupid city. I wish I could live out the rest of my life fully, traveling the world, having fun, but unfortunately I have a family. And that family doesn't understand that I'm going to die soon. Though they all have their own problems too. It's Maggie's thirteenth birthday tomorrow, so she is going to the AI, where she will get a vision to learn of either how or when she dies. I'm afraid for her, not only for her death, but also the impact that knowing about her death will have on her. I don't want her to have to deal with the burden of knowing she only has so much time left to live, or with the constant fear of one certain way of death. But after all, she has to know, just like everyone else.

I don't even know why this system was created in the first place. One of those stupid old monarchs must have thought it was a good idea, and had the power to create an AI that could tell you when you die, so he did it. Then, some generations later, they decided to incorporate the 'how' into the system. They should have just ended the AI, not tried to make it better. While the monarchs and governors think their invention has helped so many people, it has done nothing but ruin many of our lives.

Chapter 3:

Moe

Grief. These phases represent our efforts to process change and protect ourselves as we adjust to a new reality. Denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. The dreary outlook for the future made it difficult to remain optimistic. Knowing how or when you will die makes you fear not only the ones you love but also the world we live in. When given the knowledge of how you will die, you start to deny your future. You are upset, enraged, and infuriated. You even think about telling others so that your fate changes. This information can have a tragic effect on your life. This leaves people sorrowful and isolated in their homes. Our only option is to accept these realities.

My biggest mistake was having children. Making children decide how or when they die has to be the worst thing you can do in life. Only the evil have children. It's been known for most parents to abandon their kids right before they turn 13, because that's when they start to look at this world as real humans. I've even known people who died right when their kid turned 13 so they didn't have to deal with the stress for themselves. If new life being born into this world gives us happiness, why don't we just die happy?

In this world, it's also impossible to know someone's true emotions. I got married in such a manner. The most amazing woman you could ever meet would treat you like a king. The following day, you learn she has passed away. This is exactly how my life has always been. I have never had a true friend. The beer bottles were the only thing that I could ever rely on. They genuinely uplift and relax me. The only way I can escape the sadness I feel from working in a children's mental hospital is to drink.

Many people who discover how they pass away begin to develop slight phobias. However, those who are aware of the timing begin acting in unexpected ways since they are aware that their time is running out. In simpler terms, knowing how gives you "safety" whereas knowing when is more akin to crossing items off a bucket list before you pass away. making everything in this world unexpected.

I made the decision to learn how I die. I wanted to pass away when I wanted to. and I still continue to. My method of death is suicide. I've tried everything to end my life. But I simply can't. I took a break from drinking and married Melissa, a nice woman I had met at a restaurant. She insisted that I maintain my sobriety indefinitely, so I did. Life was wonderful for us because we had two children. Until I noticed that my son was consuming alcohol with his friends. I reasoned that one drink might not be harmful. I have therefore resumed drinking after a five-month hiatus.

I've even been cheating on Melissa. My coworker Carla enjoys having drinks with me on occasion. We've shared beds a couple times and talk every night at 12:06 (which is the price of the beer pack we get) to check in on one another. Melissa is lovely, serene, and secure. Carla, though, is stunning, fascinating, and brave. They are undoubtedly the yin to each other's yang, yet to me, they are equally amazing. All of this is to indicate that I still desire death. I've always been a jerk, and I'm unable to change.

Chapter 4:

Melissa

Recklessness. I despise this word. It has been running through my mind for the last 6 months, everytime i think of this the thought of my precious Marcus comes to mind. He was never a reckless boy until now. Over the last few months I've seen the most drastic change in the way he has been acting out and the things that he has been doing. Last week his report card was sent to our house. As I looked through his grades I was in complete disappointment. I was expecting good grades as usual but I was wrong. He had all D's and 1 A. I glanced over at the attendance and realized that there were lots of absences from multiple different classes so I instantly thought that he was skipping class.

In addition, his school called me while I was at work to tell me how he wasn't in school today so now I could see why his attendance was so bad. I was furious and grounded him for a week but it's like nothing got through to him. Then come to find out he's been hanging around with the wrong people in school. His sister discussed this with me yesterday that these are some bad kids, the bullies of the school. This was very surprising to see because Marcus is a bright young man, usually quiet, focused in school, and never gets in trouble. Me and his father are trying our best to make sure that he becomes a good man, not too many out there nowadays.

Recently, I caught him trying to sneak out of the house and I tried letting his father handle the situation, you know since he is a boy so I thought his dad could knock some sense into him but nothing seems to be working. I even tried talking with him, taking his phone, grounding him but he doesn't seem to be making any changes to be better himself and I don't want to continue letting my son be someone he's not!! It's like anything I do he just shows how much he doesn't care, each and every time i took something away he didn't complain or anything he just took it to the chin. Everytime we spoke he just sat on the couch quietly, not a word came out of his mouth. I thought if i took away things that were precious to him then he would try and make a change, cause who would like there most precious thing such as their

phone being taken away all the time, i thought it would force a change on him to be better so that wouldn't happen but everything i tried just doesn't get through to him. I even tried talking to him without taking anything away and things just went through one ear and out the other.

On top of the whole son situation, my daughter Maggie's 13th birthday is tomorrow and this is a very concerning day, this is the day that she finds out how and when she is going to die. My son Marcus and I found out how we were going to die. All I can remember from that moment was a dream, a horrifying dream. All that could be heard was a crash, two cars colliding into each other at top speed, that's when I awoke from my sleep drenched in sweat. I then start to shiver as I think about that moment. It haunts me till this day and I still don't know when that day is coming. From that day forward I dread the word death. It makes me think if my life was pointless. It makes me fear the non-existence, and the unknown after death. It makes me wonder if my children feel the same way. We all find out at the age of 13, a dream has happened to all of us besides maggie but I don't know how or when these terrible things are going to happen and it hurts me so much because there are my beautiful children, the ones who I gave birth to and I cannot see them banish from this earth. I feel like I am no help, like I can't prevent any of this from happening. It sucks because I wanna feel like I am able to be there for my children but since I don't know how or when any of this is going to happen I can't be the mom I need to be. Problems never stop occurring in my life. It's like I can never get a break.

My husband recently started messing with the bottles again. His drinking problem relapsed but this time around it's gotten even worse from before. I started realizing that he was coming home from work drunk and I could notice because of the way he would walk into the door knocking over things on the dining room table, slurring his words, or not being able to walk straight. I tried asking if he was okay but all he kept saying was "Im fine, Im fine." That was all I could really ask or say because when he gets drunk and I try arguing with him he gets extremely angry like furious. So I just don't do anything about it. I try to let him handle his own problems since I've already tried before. It was hard for me to see this since the last time he went through this it was just a constant cycle that he couldn't get himself out of. But when we finally got him the help that he needed everything became better. I want to ask him why he started

drinking again but I don't want him to try and deny his awful actions. I don't wanna let him handle it on his own but his emotions are all over the place but it's too much for me at the moment. He's a grown man and has to learn how to get through his problems instead of using the bottles as his way out.

Chapter 5:

Maggie

I begin to get ready for bed when my mind really begins to spiral. I am not ready to find out what I am going to be afraid of for the rest of my life. I just wish I could live without being scared. I start to feel myself drift off after hours of staring at the ceiling.

I feel myself jump awake but I am not in my bed. I am sitting in a car that I don't recognize. I peer to my left towards the driver's seat and then to the backseats. There is no one else in the car, but I am moving. I am on a road that I recognize. My family does not drive on it often, only when we are going to visit family. All of a sudden the car begins to swerve left and right. I quickly grab onto the upper handle. I try to pry the door open but it won't budge. I feel my heart rate rise and my limbs begin to shake. I see headlights approach me straight on and then next thing I know I am lying on the cold concrete of the street. My vision is blurry and my hearing is muffled. I can faintly hear voices I don't recognize yelling. I soon realized that I am not close to them. I feel my eyes begin to water and I get the sudden awareness that I can't feel my limbs. My eyesight drifts into static like a tv missing a channel. I want to go home. I want to see my mom, my dad, and my brother. I don't know what's happening to me I can no longer see. Suddenly my world goes black. I can't see. I can't hear, I can't feel my body. My brain swells in fear. I can't even feel the pain. My vision goes black again and I feel like I am falling into a black hole.

My eyes snap open faster than they ever have. They are full of tears as I stare up at the ceiling that I know by heart. The same one that I see every morning. My limbs are shaking and I begin to sob in fear. I want to talk about it. I need to talk about it. To my parents, my friends, my brother even. But I

can't- that's not how our world, our society works. I draw myself in worlds that I wish I existed in. I read books and watch movies of other kids living lives that I could only describe as my greatest dream. A life where they can carry on without fear and fret. A life where people can plan their futures without thinking about the what ifs. I jump out of bed and pull out my sketchbook frantically. I hurriedly and rushingly draw out everything I can remember as quickly as possible. I find myself flipping page after page replaying the scenes of my dream in my mind over and over again. Sketching as much detail as I can remember. My brain is moving far too fast for my hand to keep up but it is trying its best. My tears stain the papers and cloud my vision. I don't want to forget. I can't forget. I want to forget. I never want to experience what I did last night ever again. Deep down I know I will. That is what hurts me the most. The known. I wish I didn't know. My head feels heavy with the anxiety of what's to come and what mine and my family's future holds.

Chapter 6:

Marcus

I always loved visiting Grandma's house when I was little. She lived alone, in a nice cabin a good hour away from the city. This is gonna be my last time here, and I'm sure gonna miss it. I'll miss the smell, sparking all those great childhood memories back into my mind, and all the space outside in the woods that Maggie and I used to play in and explore all the time, so different from the city life. Grandma's house was always a second home for me, being a place for me to relax when times were tough, and it'll always be part of me, even after my imminent death. But most importantly what I'll miss is my family there: Grandma, Aunt Sarah, the twin cousins Bill and Kevin, and everyone else that I saw and ate with at Thanksgiving dinner and all the other gatherings.

As I leave what will be my last Thanksgiving dinner, I hug everyone goodbye, and I'm probably acting way too sad, because everyone's giving a weird look. I understand that though; none of them know

that I'm going to die tomorrow. Only Grandma seems to not care, almost like she knows that it is my last time seeing everyone and everything here. Grandma always knew. She would find the solution to all my small little problems, back when I was a kid, but she would never be able to solve this problem.

* * *

Maggie seemed a little nervous as we were getting into the car to drive home. She has been nervous around cars ever since she visited the AI a few months ago, so I have a feeling she must have gotten a 'how', and it is something related to cars. I wonder if Mom and Dad sense the same thing.

That's the thing about everyone knowing one of the aspects of their death. Even though they can't say it to anyone else, it slowly becomes obvious, especially if it's a 'how' like Maggie's. That makes me wonder what Mom and Dad learned about their deaths when they were kids. Neither of them has ever shown even a small sign about fear, though I just think it's because they don't want to scare Maggie and I.

As Dad starts the car, I notice the time is 11:30, so by the time we get home it will be tomorrow, my death day. Hopefully, I'll be able to make it home, and get some rest, so that I can be ready to face my death headfirst. I really wish I knew how too, because although I have lived all other days calmly, now I'm jumping at every slight danger. On the other hand, I don't think I could stand only knowing how I die, because I would be forever paranoid, just like Maggie probably is.

I guess it doesn't matter if I'm afraid anymore at this point, I might as well just embrace my death. As we drive, I look outside, towards the tall looming trees, blocking out the moonlight with their stretched out branches. I take in all the nostalgia for the last time, and start to doze off.

Chapter 7:

Melissa

It's Thanksgiving Day and we are having dinner at my family's house and we are about to leave. I have. I feel an argument is about to occur between Moe and I. He has been drinking all night and I fear the drive home. I have never been a good driver so Moe takes that role most of the time. I think my fate scares me from the action. Although I never drive under the influence I am still scared to do it at all. I suggest to Moe that I should drive us home tougher for ours and our kids' safety. After going back and forth for a while I let it go and let him drive. I sit tensely in my seat. My muscles begin to hurt due to their stressed state. I look back at my kids; my reason for living. They have both dozed off against the doors. Moe is driving slightly unsteady. Jerking side to side occasionally. It caused fear and dread to stir in my stomach. I hope this isn't the end. I still have things to see. My kids still have lives to live. I hope this ain't the end. I then take a quick look at Moe in the driver's seat. I start to see his eyes roll to the back of his head, the car starts drifting into the other lane. All I can see is the headlights of another car coming straight at us all I can feel is my heart beating out my chest. Next thing you know I'm lying inside of the car upside down, my vision is blurry, and my hearing is muffled. As much as I can't feel my body I try forcing my arm to unbuckle the seatbelt. Finally, the seatbelt budes. I forced my body to turn over. I wanted to see my kids, the only people on my mind at the moment. All I can see is my kids' faces towards the concrete floor. That's when I start to feel my soul leave my body. My eyes slowly shut, and my hearing starts to fade. My body then completely shuts down. I fall into this black hole and my brain is only thinking "My time has come".

Chapter 8:

Moe

She's just a schizophrenic piece of sh*t. She knows nothing about me and never did. So what gives her the authority to conceal MY ALCOHOL?

“So are you just going to sit there and look all angry and mad?” Melissa stated with a wide grin and her eyes wide open. “You know I don’t like when you drive so recklessly.” “Speak to me.”

I put a smile on my face and said, “I am very sorry for my decisions. I now know how much drinking could affect me, and I think you should just give the drinks back, please. You are making a fuss in front of the kids. They don’t deserve this.”

She stares at me in complete confusion. I think she was just given a glimpse of what I used to be like before the alcohol. “You know they aren’t kids anymore, Mo,” she said. “But I agree with what you just said. It really shows me how much — she’s talking, and I don’t even hear her anymore. I see my Knob Creek whiskey cap in the side pocket of the door.

I slowly grab my bottle opener from my pocket while she’s talking. I’m suddenly focused. I opened it at the red light. She takes a look out the window for a couple of seconds, and I chug most of it. If she knew why I’m the way I am, she’d understand.

I don't really have a drinking problem; my issues only arise when I don't drink. I begin to think back to the day I first started drinking. When I was little, my father already saw that I would make a great soccer player. Every day we would play. I vividly recall how it made me feel to know that he was supporting me during my playoff games. Everything went wrong with me later in life.

It’s 12:06 and my phone starts ringing at the worst possible moment. Before I could even reach to grab it, Melissa had it gripped tight in her hands. If it’s Carla calling, then this may be the last time I’m going to see Melissa.

“She’s a coworker”, I said

“Ok we’ll I’ll just answer the phone then”, Melissa said.

“WAIT! I know that I was the one who destroyed everything beautiful that we built. I also want to be the one to make everything like it was before, if that’s possible. I have no excuses for my actions. I know that things have not been working out for us lately, and a major part of it has been caused by my cheating. Now that I know how wrong I was to hurt you, I will never do it again. I can promise you this. Next time I am going to discuss everything going on in my mind so that we can communicate in a better way. This way, things never have to go this far again.”

She stares at me and says, “We are getting divorced.” Carla this, Carla that. None of this matters to me anymore. We ate dinner together as a family for the last time today. “And there are no second chances.”

“Oh, damn it, Melissa! YOU ARE SUCH A HEATHEN!”

I begin to feel the same way I did when my grandparents died, unable to process it. All I did was play soccer to make me feel like I was making them proud. My dad was in the crowd supporting me while I played my playoff game for them. I begin to experience the wonderful feeling of kicking the ball down the field. However, my foot is now on the pedal.

Dear Reader: The following chapters happen simultaneously, and are narrated from two different perspectives: that of Marcus and that of Maggie. You can choose to read whichever one, or you can read both, but the ending remains the same.

Chapter 9.1:

Maggie

Everyday has been harder and harder. Marcus has been getting worse as well as my mom and dad. The days seem to be going by quicker now that my mind only focuses on one thing constantly. Everytime I get into a car an immediate sense of fear runs through my body. As the year progresses more and more of my friends' birthdays pass and they find out what their future holds. I see their personality change. Everyone around me is becoming more sad and heartbreaking. It makes it harder and harder to not worry about what is going to happen to me and when.

It is now Thanksgiving and we are heading to my grandparents house to eat and see other family members. Marcus has been acting strange and on edge today. He gets mad and snaps at us for very small things. I am starting to really worry about him. Maybe it is something that I don't understand since he is older than me. Once we are all in the car and on our way I feel my heart go from racing to a steady beat. It always takes me a second to get comfortable in cars. After about 30 minutes into our drive I realize that we are on the same road that was in my dream. I begin to panic and my breathing picks up. I feel nauseous and dizzy. I try to conceal my emotions as much as I can so my family won't notice. I have learned to cope with my fate and I do not need it to be changed. I would have to start from scratch with the progress I have made and the outcome may be worse than what it is now. I notice my dad flick on the turn signal and turn off of the road. I feel safe. I feel calm. After dinner we say goodbye to everyone. My parents have been arguing silently for a few minutes now. My dad has had a lot to drink tonight but thinks

he is fine to drive. My mother disagrees though. My dad ends up driving because he usually always gets his way.

I am extremely tired after all of the food and socializing that I did tonight. I feel myself begin to drift off against the car door when all of a sudden the car begins to swerve left and right. I feel a sense of familiarity wash over me for a short moment. I quickly grab onto the upper handle. I try to pry the door open but it won't budge. I feel my heart rate rise and my limbs begin to shake when I realize what street we are on. I hear my mom yelling when I see headlights approach us straight on. The next thing I know I am lying on the cold concrete of the street. My vision is blurry and my hearing is muffled. I can faintly hear voices I don't recognize yelling. I soon realized that I am not close to them. I feel my eyes begin to water and I get the sudden awareness that I can't feel my limbs. All I want right now is my parents. I want to feel the safety and security that my mothers hugs make me feel. My eyesight drifts into static like a TV missing a channel. I want to go home. I don't know what's happening to me I can no longer see. Suddenly my world goes black. I can't see. I can't hear, I can't feel my body. My brain swells in fear. I can't even feel the pain. My vision goes black again and I feel like I am falling into a black hole. The only thought my brain can conjure up is, "This is it."

Chapter 9.2:

Marcus

I wake up to hear my parents arguing about something. I'm still half asleep; everything is hazy, and all I hear is a mumble. Mom seems as angry as I have ever heard her. She can't stop yelling at Dad, but I'm too tired to be able to understand. All I hear is fragments of her tirade:

"Carla this, Carla that", except who's Carla?

"For the last time today." I don't know what she's talking about, but it's probably going to be the last time for me no matter what.

I look over at Maggie to see if she's hearing what I'm hearing. She seems to have dozed off the same way I had earlier. It's good for her that she doesn't have to hear this titanic argument between our parents, she's probably stressed enough. I look out the window to see a clear night sky, as the moon looms over everything. We're out of the denser forest, so we should be pretty close to the city, not too far from home.

I start to doze off again, but then my dad yells "Dammit!" as loud as I have ever heard him yell. It was so loud that it woke up Maggie too. Immediately, I hear everyone else scream in pure fear. I look out through the windshield to see another car only thirty or so feet away coming right at us. As I join in with the screaming, Dad tries to swerve to the right, but it's too late. The incoming car hits us in the side, and the door next to Maggie gets hit hard and falls right off. Maggie, who was holding onto the door, gets pulled by the door, and can barely stay in the car.

"Maggie!!" Mom and I yell. Unfortunately, this yelling distracts Dad, who already seemed pretty roughed up before, and makes him swerve to the left this time. The car goes all the way across the road, then we go off of it again.

"Watch out!!" Mom yells, but it doesn't matter. The car is headed right for a tree, and within a few seconds, we crash. I see how Maggie's seatbelt gets ripped, and she is thrown into Dad's seat. She falls back and out through where her door used to be. I'm also simultaneously thrown into the seat in front of me, though not as violently, but then I feel the back of my head hit, and shatter the glass of my window, as I fall back into the seat.

"Mom? Dad? Maggie?" I say a few moments later, with no response. I feel blood run down my forehead, as my head, back and legs hurt more than I've ever felt before. As I feel all of my energy leaving me, I nudge my head down to look at my watch, which is somehow still undamaged. The time is

12:12, and I take my last look at the beautiful night sky as the cool November breeze runs down my bloody face.

So this is how I die.

Annotations:

Bash:

#1- One technique that me and my group chose to use was first person point of view. I chose this because I wanted the reader to see what is going on in my character's thoughts because there are a lot of things running through her head. I think it lets the story unfold a little better since you can see what the character is thinking.

#2-The next technique I chose to use was commas because I needed them a lot to separate certain ideas from one and other so that the reader could understand what's happening much clearer. This is also very useful because when the reader reads it aloud they are able to pause and say the next idea or phrase so that it makes sense. "This was very surprising to see because Marcus is a bright young man, usually quiet, focused in school, and never gets in trouble."- quote from my text

Sam:

#1-In our stories we decided as a group that we would write in the first person. We chose to do this because we wanted the reader to have a strong understanding of what was going on in the characters' heads. We wanted them to be able to know what they are thinking and what may cause them to make certain decisions. A moment in my story where I feel this is demonstrated well is when Maggie says, "I never want to experience what I did last night ever again. Deep down I know I will. That is what hurts me the most." It demonstrates how she was feeling after her dream and how she feels after she knows what her future holds.

#2- In my story I made the decision to use no dialogue. I chose to do this because I wanted the story to only include my character and her experience. I feel that if there were to be dialogue it would draw the reader's attention away from Maggie and her feelings about this moment in her life. I wanted to really put the reader into her shoes and her head without being distracted.

#3- Another technique that my group decided on was to switch between characters in each chapter. We wanted the reader to see the entire family's experience at the same time during the same time period. We chose to do this to show how the dystopia affects people of different ages in a family. My main

inspiration for this was Station Eleven by Emily St. John Mandel. In her book she switched between characters' perspectives to show each individual experience.

Lyeve:

Annotation #1 - In 50-100 words, describe a technique you use in this piece. Why did you make that choice, and what impact does it have on the reader's understanding of the story? Make sure to quote a phrase or sentence from your writing. Bonus points for explaining how another author influenced your choice!

As a group, we decided to use a first person point of view, while alternating between four different characters, each narrated by a different author. This allowed us to each write with our own style and twist on the story, without harming the overall structure too much. An example of how this affects the story is in Chapter 6: *"She [Maggie] has been nervous around cars ever since she visited the AI a few months ago, so I have a feeling she must have gotten a 'how', and it is something related to cars. I wonder if Mom and Dad sense the same thing."* In this quote, my character, Marcus, wonders about how the others feel, which shows how his limited point of view creates dramatic irony, since the reader also knows how the other characters feel.

Annotation #2 - In 50-100 words, describe a technique you use in this piece. Why did you make that choice, and what impact does it have on the reader's understanding of the story? Make sure to quote a phrase or sentence from your writing. Bonus points for explaining how another author influenced your choice!

Despite the grave situation that my character was put in, I decided to sometimes keep the tone of the story lighthearted. This starts in Chapter 2, when Marcus starts off by casually giving a daily overview of his life, almost pretending like the dystopia doesn't exist and he's just a normal kid. I decided to use these light, casual moments to reflect against the deep, important scenes and thoughts in the story. It makes the important parts, like leaving Grandma's house or the car crash seem a lot more important. Finally, I end Chapter 10, and the entire story overall with *"So this is how I die."* This can be interpreted as either deep or light by the reader, but I wrote it to be a casual, light ending to a grave final scene.

Annotation #3 - In 50-100 words, describe a technique you use in this piece. Why did you make that choice, and what impact does it have on the reader's understanding of the story? Make sure to quote a phrase or sentence from your writing. Bonus points for explaining how another author influenced your choice!

I chose to use the idea of time as a symbol in my story. In my final chapter, and in Justin's as well, we both mention the time that we see on our different devices. *"As I feel all of my energy leaving me, I nudge my head down to look at my watch, which is somehow still undamaged. The time is 12:12"*. As the only person in the family who knows when they are going to die, time for me is like a countdown to my eventual death. For me, checking my watch in my final moments symbolizes that the clock has hit zero, and my time is up.

Justin:

Annotation #1: In 50-100 words, describe a technique you use in this piece. Why did you make that choice, and what impact does it have on the reader's understanding of the story? Make sure to quote a phrase or sentence from your writing. Bonus points for explaining how another author influenced your choice!

One technique we chose was to use the first-person point of view. We chose this because we wanted the readers to truly know what all of the family members were thinking during the story. We felt that if they got to see their true thoughts on the world they lived in, they'd start to see what a horrible place it is.

Annotation #2: In 50-100 words, describe a technique you use in this piece. Why did you make that choice, and what impact does it have on the reader's understanding of the story? Make sure to quote a phrase or sentence from your writing. Bonus points for explaining how another author influenced your choice!

One technique I chose was to write long, descriptive sentences with a lot of commas. I chose this because telling the story of a dark place through the eyes of an alcoholic can be confusing. He knows what he's talking about, but he's an alcoholic, so he speaks a lot. I also put a lot of commas in the beginning because that's when he's happy with life, meaning he has a lot more to say, but not in the end when he's arguing with his wife.

Annotation #3: In 50-100 words, describe a technique you use in this piece. Why did you make that choice, and what impact does it have on the reader's understanding of the story? Make sure to quote a phrase or sentence from your writing. Bonus points for explaining how another author influenced your choice!

One technique I used was to represent the time as 12:06 a.m. I chose this because the beer pack that Moe gets with Carla is \$12.06, and that's when they call each other every night. This also happens at the same time as the car crash, making Carla the reason for their deaths.