



The Rotary Club of Richmond

presents

The Slade Literary Award

Sponsored by Mark Slade, Managing Director
Slade Knitwear (Australia) Pty Ltd
in memory of his uncle, Rotarian Henry Slade

Winning Entries 2010

Winning Entry: **'The Big Game'**

by Simone Pakavakis, Melbourne Girls' College

Runner-up: **'Integrity'**

by Martin Ditmann, Northcote High School



The Winners with President Jo Cowling and AG Henry Drury

Welcome to the Slade Literary Awards 2010

The Rotary Club of Richmond has the pleasure of partnering with Mark Slade Knitwear (Australia) P/L to sponsor the 18th Annual Slade Literary Awards. The Slade Awards are named in honour of the late Henry Slade who founded the competition in 1993 and sponsored it until his death in 2005. These awards aim to encourage the literary skills and offer the opportunity to showcase the creative talents of students in Years 9 and 10 within the City of Yarra and neighbouring municipalities.

All participants are required to submit a piece of original prose or poetry up to 1000 words on a topic of their choice. This work is then read and evaluated by a panel of judges who are looking for creativity, originality, fluency, enthusiasm and appeal.

The winning entry receives a \$200 cash prize and books to the value of \$60, the runner up receives a cash prize of \$150 and books to the value of \$60 and all other finalists receive a Certificate of Encouragement.

This year the calibre of entries has been exceptional and all the participants are to be congratulated on their efforts. The Rotary Club of Richmond and Mark Slade Knitwear are very proud to have sponsored these Awards.

The Slade Criteria

We use five main criteria to reach our conclusions. These are:

Creativity - the treatment of the subject in a fresh, lively and interesting way. The subject itself does not need to be novel.

Originality - the novelty of the subject. Is the work about an unusual subject or new idea?

Fluency - how well was the English language handled? How well was the piece structured? A good writer has to have a grasp of grammar and vocabulary that raises the text above the tedious, jumbled and mundane. The author must also have a good grasp of the importance of structure and variety of style.

Conviction - did it sound convincing? Did the author make the reader believe in them? If the author is talking about their emotions, the reader needs to be convinced the emotion is genuine to be swept along.

Appeal - more than an enjoyable experience: did it hook the judges? Did we want to keep reading? We don't mean just a feel-good experience: the writer had to keep us wanting to know what is coming next. This is the most difficult criterion to deal with as it is so subjective for the individual reader

The Big Game

by Simone Pakavakis

Melbourne Girls' College Winner

The big game is tonight. Melbourne versus Collingwood, 7:10pm at the MCG. I memorised it, just so Dad doesn't forget. He's a forgetful person, my dad. Once he forgot to pick me up from school, and I waited for him until Mrs Rodgers found me and called him up. Then there he was, his big green truck roaring down the street, promising I could choose a take-away for dinner. But no way would he forget the game. He loves football. We're real footy blokes, Dad and me.

Mum doesn't live with us anymore. She left when I was five. Sometimes, I wish she was still with us. Maybe she'll come back one day. Dad would be happy again, and I'd have a mum. And, Daniel wouldn't tease me no more. He knows about Mum leaving me. Last week he said I couldn't play footy with them at lunch. I didn't cry, I just walked away, and he yelled after me.

"Why don't you go and tell your Mummy? Oh, I forgot — you don't have a mum!" I kept walking. Like Dad says to me, every night before I get into bed, "you're such a tough kid, aren't you mate?" So I am.

I practiced my football playing with Charlie out the back last night. We had a real good contest, too. Charlie's my dog. He's a Labrador and he's good at footy, but not very good at sharing. After I kicked a goal - through the rusty paint tins - Charlie barked madly, grabbed bouncing Sherrin and ran around the backyard. I chased him all the way too, and tackled him right down into the dirt, pulling the ball as hard as I could away. Mum named him Charlie.

Before the big game, I have my own footy for inter-school sport. It's Claremont Valley Primary versus Claremont East, and we're big rivals. Daniel's captain. I heard him tell Ben on the bus there that I sucked at football, just like my Dees, but I didn't care. I'm tough, just like Dad says I am. Mr Thomas sat next to me. He's our PE teacher. He said how good it was to have some nice company and asked if I was nervous. I told him no, Charlie and I had practised every night this week. He smiled. I think he was impressed.

Aunty Mai came over last night while Dad was out. I was surprised to see her; she normally just comes to do our washing because Dad forgets. But it was good. She made me pasta for dinner and asked about footy and everything, Dad never talks so much! Dad and her had a fight when he got back. I think she saw his bottles piling up big in the bin. It was hard not to listen. I could hear them screaming, Aunty Mai telling him he was a bad father, that just because Susan had left didn't mean he should throw away his life and forget about me. He

told her to butt out of our lives because we didn't need her trying to tell us what to do, so she said that he needed to grow up then and start taking responsibility as a father.

Guess what? I forgot to bring my runners to the inter-school football game. Mr Thomas said I wasn't allowed to play. He said he was sorry, it was too dangerous without proper shoes, and he couldn't let me off just because I'd been practising really hard. Daniel was pretty happy. He told everybody that "four-eyes is so poor he can't even afford shoes!" and laughed. I wanted to cry, but I didn't. I just went down and sat by myself. It's hard being tough all the time.

A girl, Sarah from Claremont East sat with me when I was watching the game. She was nice. She said, don't listen to that mean boy; next time, I should go up and 'Barry Hall' him. I think we might be friends.

The bus trip back to school went badly. The boys threw a photo of Mum out the window and a truck ran over it. I was only looking at it because of what Sarah said about Mum. She'd said that Mum had pretty eyes. Then, the next thing, Ben had snatched it away. I had to try really hard only think about Dad and me going to the football. I had to be tough.

"I'm going soon," Dad said when I got home. But aren't I coming too? But he'd forgotten. He was watching it with his mates at the pub instead. He said next time, we would definitely go. But I don't think it's true. Then he asked, how was your game? I told him it was great.

I have a special box under my bed. It's got 7 photos in it - now. There's ones of Mum and Dad and me, as a toddler, when I didn't have glasses. Dad looks different too. His looks happier and he didn't have stubble. I tip all the photos out and lay them on my bed. My favourite one is at the beach. Mum is holding me, with her pretty eyes, and I'm laughing. Dad's got his arm around Mum.

"Son?"

Dad knocked on my door, and came inside before I could hide the photos. He stared at them for a while. I didn't move. Then he came over and picked one up. Eventually Dad looked up at me and I braced myself for the usual yelling and screaming, but nothing happened. Then a tear fell from his eye, and I couldn't believe what I was seeing. My Dad was crying. He leaned forward and put his arms around me, then pulled back and smiled.

"Get your jumper. We're going to the footy tonight."

Without wiping his tears, he winked.

We're really going. And I don't need to be tough. I might even cry if we win. The big game is tonight.

Integrity

By Martin Ditmann

Northcote High School
Runner-up

On the outskirts of old Pimberly town, the children of Pollyville played, secure and sound. In the warm autumn air they were comfortable, assured and round.

Autumn rolled on, winter approached, and the children of Pollyville crowded around the rooms of the tailor, waiting for their new winter clothes. "Here, young children" the tailor crooned, producing bundles of clothes, each identical. The children unwrapped the shimmering parcels, trying the clothes on.

The tailor, a man in his fifties, had arrived in Pollyville at the start of last autumn, for tailors usually spent only one season in the village before moving on; they arrived in the night with official-looking "Tailor Area Allocation" letters from the North Coat- and Clothes-Makers Union. But, it was known to all, that the real power behind the clothing was not the tailors but the Victoria-Edde & Yukayshon Cloth Union and its local division, the North Coat- and Clothes-Makers Union. The Union was strict in its ideas, and never noticed its children's individuality; its motto was "ONE AGE -ONE STYLE-ONE SIZE".

Winter was well on its way when the children came to the conclusion that their new red scarves were itchy, uncomfortable, ghastly and ugly, with the texture of sandpaper and the beauty of a warthog. They complained, but their complaints went unheeded, with absolutely no sway on the tailors' agenda. One day a child called Mark whinged especially hard. With grace and clemency, the tailor agreed to let him think of alternatives.

Mark decided to give it a go, but first he wanted to organise a consultation with the other children of Pollyville. "Oh, very well" said the tailor. But when he looked at the first item on Mark's agenda, he became quite a sight, for the first question was one of rebellious might. It, very simply, stated: "What do you think of the red scarves?"

"Oh no" said the tailor. "That will not do. My union, the North Coat- and Clothes-makers Union, will undoubtedly not permit it. Your parents have paid, and that is what you will wear; I will hear no argument, neither here nor there".

"Oh please Mr Tailor" pleaded the child. "Even the scraps of blue fabric from the big roll in your workshop will do fine". The tailor said one word, harshly and simply.

"No".

"You will wear the scarves", said the tailor; "that is what has been decided. But if you insist, you may design for all the children a beanie. I will make a list of questions to be asked of the

children at the meeting. They will tell me and maybe, just maybe, I might heed their ideas. You, of course, will get a copy of the questions in advance".

The days rolled by. The children continued with their lives. They played at the sports club, ate at the deli, read at the library and attended the local theatre. Suddenly, a most strange announcement came.

"Children" the tailor announced, with jolly glee; "you will now be wearing the scarves inside out, with the green lining on the outside".

The children wore green; the scarves still itched, though not quite as much. Life went on for the children, from Musti to Jonas; each wore the uncomfortable scarf and the large beige jumper; too small for Musti and too big for Jonas, but perfectly fitting to the idea of "ONE AGE - ONE STYLE -ONE SIZE").

The idea of the beanie was never mentioned again. And the children wore what their parents had paid for and the Union had designed.

For of course, the system, the Union, the "ONE AGE - ONE STYLE - ONE SIZE" philosophy, must come above everyone's welfare.