

**FIFTH PRIZE
HONORABLE MENTION**

**Natalia Turner
James Tippit Middle School**

THE LIFE OF THE STRANGE PEOPLE

By Natalia Turner

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 15, 2019,

I wake up to the sound of cars hocking, and dogs barking. I slowly opened my eyes to see that I was sleeping on the cold floor of an alleyway. "How did I get there?" I thought to myself, I tried to get up on my feet just to find myself covered in bruises and scars. I also felt blood dripping down from my four head, "I think I had a blackout again". I checked the time on my flip phone, it said it's 8:30 a.m, "I should be heading home now," I said to myself. Hopefully the boys are still asleep. I walked out of the alleyway to see that I was in the clean part of the town. You know, where the richer and nicely places are. I don't remember how or when I got there, but I can tell that it wasn't pretty. It took at least 30 minutes to get to the street that everyone in New York City called "The Poor Broke Land", it's where

the homeless go when they have nowhere to go. When I was only halfway to my 4 bedroom trailer where I live with three people, I was stopped by a gang that I fully knew. They were known as the "skull crackers", and I have to admit, that is a stupid name. "What's you up to, girl?" one of the men said. "Just going home." I said with a smile on my face. Here we go again.

When I arrived home, I slowly opened the door to see Esther already in the kitchen, making breakfast so early in the morning as always.

"Good morning, Ianira." Esther said as I sat at the table. she blinded, so I don't have to worry about her seeing the bruises and scars.

"Morning" I said. I smell blueberry pancakes. My favorite.

Eshter places a plate in front of me with two blueberry pancakes with eggs on the side, and hands me a frock.

"Eat up," she said with a smile. I started eating right away and in less than a minute I'm all really halfway by finishing the pancake.

"Slow down, child." Esther said with a chuckle. "You eat like a pig." a voice behind me said, I turned around to see the half-demon Benji standing there, I gave him a look. All of us soon sat down and ate like a normal family. Living and feeling like this is endless. Having to wake up in the morning with scars that you don't remember getting, at least it's not one of those days where I need to hide for a week or be chased by gangs. Sometimes, I really hate my life. If you can even

call it a life. After a shower, I end up just staying in my room playing video games and playing with my pets. Wish was a good idea, because the news said they found a whole gang dead. The same gang that tries to attack me.

It was midnight when I had a nightmare, this is the 6 time this week. There was no way I could go back to sleep after that, so I ended up going to the kitchen to get a glass of coffee or something that can keep me awake. But it turns out, Benji was also in the kitchen sitting at the binning table, with a glass in his hand and a bottle next to him. It looked like someone had a bad day. "Ok, what's wrong?" I ask, taking a seat at the table. "Nothing," he said with a deep voice, I already knew that he was lying. Me and Ayato have known him for so long, and in these times I know that when he's upset, he "Don't you dare!" he said, anger on his face, "then tell me," I said. Benji thought for a moment, then started to talk. "Eshter wants us to go to school together." I was speechless, "WHAT!! There's no way I'm going to a school" I shouted. "Why do we need to go school anyway?" I ask, angry myself. "She said that it will be good for us," he said, taking a sip of his drink.

"And why would it be good for us?" I ask him, "She said the police are trying to find out what has been causing such strange things around here for the last month," he said, taking another drink. He continued, "So, Esther thought it would help if the police didn't know that there're 3 teenagers who aren't related to a sweet old lady that they are living with, and not going to school like normal teenagers would

do.” After he finished talking, I thought about what he said. He was right about everything, about not going to school, living with a person who has been nothing but being nice to us even though she knows full well what we all are and what we are capable of. The three of us can only live on the run from the FBI or go to school and hope the police won’t get on us. And so I agreed....