

YEAR 10 RUNNER-UP Kayleigh M

Dear Journal,

Am I different? I don't feel different, I am just like everyone else. But I'm not. If I wasn't different, I wouldn't be here, stuck behind these sterns, steel bars. They think I'm different because of my skin; because it's darker. I remember it all.

Those people, those nasty, awful, cruel people, who came flooding in like a river. All carnage broke free. One of them stared straight through my eyes, which were slowly being blinded by my tears of fear. He pushed me. He pulled me. He grabbed me. I felt hopeless.

Once I broke free from his grasp, I ran for my life. Tears were rushing down my panicked face whilst my legs tried as hard as they could to escape this nightmare I was living. The more I ran, the less faith I had that I would be free from this chaos.

My family. My friends. Where were they? I remember the reality of life hitting me. My heart felt like it had dropped through my body. I had to find them, but it was too late. Around me, houses had been left in pieces, but not like a jigsaw, for they could never be put back together. Blazes of fire spread like a pandemic, infecting anything it touched to perish. Above me, the sky became a graveyard; lifeless, dismal, and gloomy.

Something got me. The next thing I knew, my hands were being squeezed between the clutch of a rope, holding me so tight, I knew I could never break free. These two men shot themselves at me like cannonballs, holding their baton up high and in my direction. They hit me hard. It all went black.

And now, I'm here. Stuck within these walls for as long as they keep me. All the pain and harm I've been through because of my skin. Why me?

