



PRESS RELEASE

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THE HON ALBERT ISOLA MP PRESENTS THE PRIZES TO THE WINNERS OF THE LOCAL LEG OF THE UNITED NATIONS' UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION (UN UPU) LETTER-WRITING COMPETITION - 2018

The Hon Albert Isola MP presented the prizes to the winners of the local leg of the UN's UPU Letter-Writing Competition at a ceremony held at his offices on Thursday 4th October 2018.

This was the sixth consecutive year that Gibraltar has participated in the competition. The theme for 2018 was:

"Imagine you are a letter travelling through time. What message do you wish to convey to your readers?"

Five local schools represented by 144 pupils took part in the competition. The winners were as follows:

1st	Casey Torres (13)	Bayside Comprehensive	Trophy & £300
2nd	James Scott (14)	Prior Park Gibraltar	Certificate & £200
3rd	Emily Poole (12)	St Joseph's Middle	Certificate & £100

The following were the first, second and third placed entries by school. All are awarded commemorative certificates.

School	Names		
	1st	2nd	3rd
Bayside Comprehensive (66)	Casey Torres (13)	Gabriel Devincenzi (14)	Nikolaj Forrester (14)
Bishop's Fitzgerald (22)	Nicholas Escumalha (12)	Sarah Popham (11)	David Connor (12)
Loreto Convent (17)	Jack Steddy (9)	Sophia Povedand (9)	Caitríona McGrath (9)
Prior Park School (13)	James Scott (14)	Katie Soobiah (13)	Tomas Novotny (13)
St Joseph's Middle (26)	Emily Poole	Max Cruz	Claudia Costa



	(12)	(11)	(11)
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The Minister thanked all the participants for their efforts in promoting the important art of letter writing and particularly Casey Torres, who was also last year's winner.

Thanks also go to the volunteer judges, Mrs Vivien Dawson, Ms Rosemarie Bruzon and Mrs Carol Brooks (retired teachers) assisted by Mrs Christine Loddó, Mrs Chloe Loddó & Mr Anthony Loddó.

Casey's letter is currently representing Gibraltar in the main, international competition at UN UPU Headquarters in Berne, Switzerland. His entry has already received high praise on the UN UPU's Twitter website.

ENDS.

Note to Editors

Casey's Winning Entry.

Jamie Hayward
Purgatory lane

6th April 3000

Bullies
Yesterday's Earth

To all the bullies on Earth,

This is the voice of a fifteen-year-old dead guy talking to you from my cold dark grave. I am the voice of what once was a lonely dude sitting at the back of the classroom. Yes, the nerd with his head buried behind books. Yes, the poor guy with a hole in his shoe or the wimp that always got picked last in the team.

What I did to deserve the punches, knocks and bruises I still do not know. Was it all a punishment for something I had no control of? Was it because I was poor? Because my mum worked two jobs to still scrape the barrel at the end of the month? Because my dad left us to fend for ourselves when I was four? Was it because I never wore the trendy clothes? I do not know.

Yes, I was the bookworm but the books replaced friends and I would have given anything in the world to have a single friend to share in my frustrations. I was a lonely guy with only stories for company. My books were the only escape I got from the dark cruel world in which I lived in – a solace or haven perhaps. In my books I fought dragons and married princesses, I flew around the world and travelled to many places. In my books I was the hero, in my books I was free.



When are people going to comprehend that words kill, words are powerful and they can destroy and incinerate a human being with one sentence? The phrase 'sticks and stones will break my bones but words can never hurt me,' is not true. Words are deadly too! Your words were used to harm me. All you said was, 'I wish you were dead.' I guess you got your wish.

I will always remember the day I died. My head was pounding, my cheeks wet with streams of tears, my heart racing as I attempted to stop hyperventilating. The brain in my skull was overthinking, thinking of ways I could easily hurt myself in the lonely house in which I lived in. I could not stop thinking 'I'm going to do it,' so I did, I dragged myself out of bed, my eyes losing sight for a minute from the lack of food I consumed that day. The rivers of tears stopped as I reached the gleaming blade. One cut. Two cut. Three cut. The pills were opened. I took them, thirty at least, and then I filled the bath and got in fully clothed. Fourteen cuts later, my eyes were getting heavier as I fell into a never-ending sleep. My clothes were soaked, my eyes were shut and the blood from my wrists was mixing with the cold water. No one would know, because no one cared enough to read the signs and figure it out. Then I saw him. Death.

He held me in his cold embrace. A face I was taught to loathe, hate and fear brought me comfort. I did not dread him but I feared not knowing, what he might do and where he might take me. He was not avaricious, he was not rude, or violent. He merely brought me, my sweltering soul, to a calm state, where I rest benumbed of the greed, rudeness, and hatred of the living world in purgatory.

From this atrabilious place I saw the Facebook posts, the tweets – the lies or guilt:

- Rest in peace bro.
- An angel taken away too soon.
- You will be missed.

Did you do it for the likes? What good are the messages now? You should have made an effort to talk to me when I was alive. I urge you all to stop and listen. Take note and let it seep into your mushy brains. Everyone has a name and dork isn't one of them. Every person is a book, a story with many chapters. Do not judge by the chapter you happen to walk into. In my prologue, I had a wild ride. Maybe my story could have ended well, maybe not, perhaps a few smiles here and there or even a single hello would have shaped me into another person, a man with courage, a man strong enough to face the world and its adversaries.

The Grim Reaper took my soul to the pearly gates where a guy in a white suit awaited and I was introduced to the man himself – God.



God gave me a mission. I was tasked with writing a letter to yesterday, to try and get you all to listen. I will have to fulfil it in order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, suicide is a sin you see, therefore all you have to do is listen and change your violent ways.

Before you take the time to stuff someone in a locker, give them a wedgie or stick their head down the toilet please stop. Allow yourself to think that the person is someone's brother or sister, someone's son or daughter.

The girl you may have called a slut may have been raped.
The boy you shook awake in class may have nursed his sick mum all night.
The girl you called a baby for crying may have buried a loved one.

There are more scenarios with circumstances to consider so, my dearest bullies, maybe next time you'll think. Maybe?

Yours sincerely,

Jamie, the voice of a Victim.