

Here, five high school juniors, inspired by F. Scott Fitzgerald's writing style, created these scenes about original characters. Each sketch was designed to evoke a mood from its reader. As you read each scene, be prepared to discuss where each writer excels in **idea development**, and how each writer uses **word choice** to evoke a mood. The on-line assignment that inspired this writing can be found at: [Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.](#)

The Sweetest Story

by Missy, eleventh grade writer

"Click, click, click." I turned my head in agony, knowing the sort I would soon be facing. "Oh my gosh, hey girl hey!" And there it was: monstrous, terrifying, and wearing Coach high heels. "Oh hey. What's up?" The words were fighting to leave my mouth; I wanted to turn and walk away.

"Well, wanna hear the sweetest story? Okay. So I like passed out the other night, and like, when I woke up," her voice kept escalating, higher and higher, to the point that I was convinced a volcano would erupt right out of my ears, "Tom was like warming me up with a blanket and like trying to get me to drink some wata! He's like soooo sweet, huh?"

"Um, yeah. I guess that was pretty nice of him to do."

"I know, right? So what's new with you?"

"Uh, not a..." I didn't even get to finish my already too short response.

"Oh my Gaawwwdd!! Hiii Stacy! Wanna hear a super cute story?" I had never been so relieved to be ditched mid-sentence. I bravely made my way down the hallway, glancing from one mini skirt to another, finding out which designer was obviously in style, and hearing more stories similar to that of Molly's, being told in similar attention grabbing, suicide motivating tones.

Only two more periods, I told myself. I could surely make it through and maybe even learn something that didn't have to do with money, men, or Molly.



The Good Brother

by Micaela, eleventh grade writer

"Can anyone tell me why America won the war?"

Only one hand was raised, forcing Debbie Peterson, a US History teacher of 12 years, to call on the one student who has ever tested her patience: Matthew Longero. "Because America is the superior country. We might have won it faster if we didn't have to bail those damn frog-eaters out of their capitulation again." Some of the class laughed, others rolled their eyes. Debbie kicked herself because she knew it was coming, and Matthew looked proud of himself. This, the ninety-seventh day of school, was neither the first, nor the last, time Matthew would disrupt the class with his undiplomatic point of view.

The murmurs died down as the main opponent to Matthew in his verbal wars raised her hand—half Japanese, half Jewish, she was on both sides of the currently discussed war. "I don't think we should have dropped one bomb on Japan."

Matthew inserted—"I absolutely agree."

"You do?" The class was in shock.

"Hell yeah! We should've bombed the whole damn country! Damn Japs. Same thing with Vietnam. If I had any say, all those bastards would be lying face down in a rice patty about now."

At this point, Debbie knew she must do something in an attempt to take back control from her class, rather than under the vocal dictatorship of a teenager. "Matthew, please go to out to the hall."

As he rose, he warbled an off-key variation of the National Anthem, turning for just a moment to salute the mandatory American flag. He knew his classmates hated him. He knew they thought he was a bad person. He didn't care.



Three hours later Matthew arrived home from school. He opened the door to find his youngest sister on the floor crying.

"Charlie?" He inquired. At just six years of age, she knew right from wrong, but was unable to apply that logic when it came to her brother—the only adult who hadn't let her down. Matthew picked her up in his muscular arms, and as

his lips parted to ask why she was crying, his question was answered. There, passed out on the family room couch was his father. Matthew picked up the empty whiskey bottle and the drug paraphernalia and told his sister that everything would be okay. That daddy was just sleeping.

As his sister was eating the dinner Matthew had prepared, he hid his finds for today, knowing that there would be more tomorrow. He picked up the phone to call his mother—to tell her that things weren't going well and to beg her to come home. But the hotel she told him she would be at has never heard of her; she had never made a reservation. Sighing, Matthew opened the mail as he heard the front door open.

"Matt? I'm home." It was Rebecca, a vivacious thirteen-year-old who had lost her childhood, the foundation of what would make her an adult. Her cleavage overflowed, and her eyes were dark with black liner, and Matthew had never been more uncertain about their future. There, in the stack of mail, was a thick envelope from Yale. Matthew had applied on a whim, just to see if he could get in. He held his breath as he opened the envelope, but knew the answer wouldn't matter. They had accepted him, but he would never set foot there.

"Is that —" Rebecca started, but Matthew cut her off.

"Yale. I didn't get in." The lie slipped so easily from his mouth that he was surprised at himself. There was nothing he wanted more than to go to college, to put to use his years in advanced classes, but he knew that every dollar spent on tuition and books was food taken from his sisters' mouths -- his innocent, beautiful sisters.

The evening went quickly after that: he finished making dinner, and made sure Charlie got to bed alright. The last thing he did before he retired himself was cross the day off his calendar. Just six months now and he would be able to enlist. A job, he hoped, that could keep his family secure.

On April 12, 2010, April Coen, the Japanese-Jew who fought with Matthew so frequently, opened the newspaper to see his obituary. Matthew had died in the war; he had been survived by two sisters.

Crossroads

by Alexis, eleventh grade writer

Leaning on my apartment's windowsill, I gazed dreamily at the watercolor canvas that was the sky, splashes of crimson here and bits of amber there. Across the street from my nook in the wall was beginning a concert in the park, where people gathered like moths to a flame. Chic, elegant dresses swayed and glittered on those flouncing hourglasses of women, lightly grazing their skin like butterfly wings. The shimmer from the stage created such a glow—an aura of sorts—the astronauts above didn't miss a thing.

It was delightful to watch the people from my bird's nest, cozy and comforting—and lonely. Scanning the crowd apathetically, I was drawn to a break in the trees, past the clearing chock full of uptowners. Peeking from the darkness was a set of weary, forlorn eyes, looking as misplaced as candy corn at Christmas. The ducts of these eyes had long ago dried, leaving no tears behind, no escape to the innocence of childhood. These eyes had explored the depths of the world's shadows and were tainted with fear and longing; longing to live a life of dollhouses and play dates, of dress up trunks and tea parties.

A feeble, fleshy hand reached up and swept a lock of matted hair aside. Looking up, the child noticed me, perched on my branch in the warmth of my haven. I felt the color deepen in my cheeks, like a schoolboy working up ample courage to smile at his crush. Silence graced the little one's lips, but I heard—rather saw—the cries for help from within. For within those caverns of its mind, the child knew not of cool, crisp sheets or home-cooked meals. Nor did it know of the solace of a coat, like the hominess of an old friend's embrace. The child's mind raced with worry, fearing things even grown people avoid.

Gradually, the child receded into the darkness, the light from its presence fading and consuming itself in the steady mass of obscurity and gloom.



Night Terrors

by Jasmine, eleventh grade

She wakes up crying.

Heart racing, mouth gaping, hands fumbling for purchase on a bedside table and the empty pillow beside her, Sasha opens her eyes, tentatively, blearily, as if reluctant to see anything but darkness. As the stuccoed ceiling of her bedroom swims into focus, she reaches a well-manicured left hand farther along the side table toward her alarm clock, while the right hand, battered by tension, anxiety, and *teeth*, forms a vice-like grip on the pillow cover.

Sasha brings the clock to her face, but even as she mouths "Four AM," all she can think is *It's cold, I'm cold*, and then, *I'm alone*. Eventually, she summons the effort to lift herself into a sitting position against the hard



surface of her maple headboard. A few errant strands of frizzy, unkempt hair fall out of her ponytail and into her face. She chooses to ignore them, chooses to stay stock still in her bed, duvet covered knees drawn tightly to her chest.

She is in a state of purgatory, unable to fall back asleep and unwilling to skulk into the master bathroom, to crawl out of the oversized sweatshirt that's become her second skin the past five days, to face the sunken eyes and sallow skin of Mirror Sasha.

She inhales. Exhales. In, out, in, *ring, ring, ring*.

The telephone's mechanical melody is like a foreign language to her, but after the fifth chime, a connecting is made, and Sasha dives for the handset she had set--just in case--on the empty expanse of mattress beside her.

She clicks the ON button and clutches the receiver to her ear. A voice greets her from the other side, and suddenly five days of prayers and curses and *fear* are lodged in Sasha's throat.

She chokes out, sobs out, "But the doctor said--"

The voice stops her, soothes her, calls her a name that makes Sasha smile so wide, a torrent of pain spills out and away from her before she can even notice.

"So then you're okay. You're going to be okay. Oh thank God, oh thank God, oh--" She repeats the mantra over and over to herself, all the while planning and replanning the next day, the next week, the next month. Tomorrow she will call her mother, Wednesday she will redo her nails and clean every surface in the house, the Sunday after next they will take a stroll through the park and watch the sun set.

Sasha feels ten pounds lighter as she all but skips to the bathroom. She takes off her sweatshirt. She lets down her hair. She looks in the mirror.

She wakes up screaming.

To Live Again

by Emily, eleventh grade writer

"The greatest weakness of most humans is their hesitancy to tell others how much they love them while they are alive," (Battista).

"You are weak."

"Absolutely pathetic."

He pulled the young physician to his feet, strong, thick hands rooted in the earthen lapels of the Victorian coat.

"You come here- here!- wanting to help, wanting to serve your goddamn country, forcing witches' brew down our throats and calling it salvation?!"

He cast the delicate man at the bowl of a moss-laden fig.

He fell, silent as a leaf. His once black coat, now laden with earth, hung limp around his slight frame. Months of hard living had begun to take their toll: his cream face was pallid, the heat of the jungle never intoning itself upon his skin. Fever had set in the first week and stayed, sickly pink in soft cheeks. He was feminine compared to the soldiers, an effeminate Victorian to their bronze-warrior class. He peered up from beneath glinting silver wire and heavy, dark waves at the man-god who had thrown him back to the earth.

Blue and white comprised his uniform, gold buttons and braids shining even under the dark canopy. Dark bronze and silver hair was pulled back from stolid features. Strong, rough-hewn features, made sharp by military life, were brought alive by dark fiery eyes burning dominantly back into obsequious hazel.

He pulled his eyes away, omega from alpha, cradling the carving hurt the all too human words brought to the social animal inside himself. He would keep his wounds close to his heart, as caresses from a lover. He flicked his eyes to the rest of the pack, some sneering as jackals, cackling, the others as neutral and empty as wolves.

"Finally putting the bitch down?" shrieked a soldier from the lowest ranks.

He flinched and curled back, falling deeper into himself and the cool emptiness offered by his mind. He could barely hear the barked orders of the man above him, eyes unseeingly scanning the purgatory laid before him, searching for the similar hollowness in the minds of his former fellows.

"Please, you have to let me help them."

"Please, they're going to die," He searched up, eyes awash, beseechingly for the final time, as a warm, comforting hand,

turned hard,

wrapped around his throat.

And his face was turned up into emotive, sanguine eyes.

Am I weak?

