

Vaughan Public Libraries

EARLY HARVEST 2011

ARTISTS PHOTOGRAPHERS WRITERS VIDEOGRAPHERS



From the Chair,

Vaughan Public Library Board



The Early Harvest Competition provides our City's teens with a wonderful opportunity to showcase their skills and recognizes their valuable contribution to the arts and to our community. On behalf of the Vaughan Public Library Board, I am pleased to introduce the winners of the 2011 Early Harvest Competition and invite the community to explore the winning entries featured in this magazine.

VPL is proud of the Early Harvest Competition. Originally launched as a short story contest in 1989, the Competition has continued to grow and evolve over the years. The additions have included the categories of poetry, sketching and painting, digital photography and video – areas that provide teens with a chance to express themselves, improve their literacy skills and tell stories using different mediums.

The success of Early Harvest is largely dependent on the collaborative efforts of Vaughan Public Libraries' supporters, volunteers and staff. On behalf of the competition organizers, I would like to extend a sincere thank you to our judges, Jacqueline Betterton, Deborah Kerbel, Mirella Tersigni, David West and Elana Wolff for their time and expertise in the selection of this year's winning entries. I would also like to acknowledge the generous support of our sponsors, Library Services Centre and Canadian Video Services Inc. for helping to ensure that the Early Harvest Competition continues to thrive.

The Vaughan Public Library Board would like to recognize the commitment and dedication of all staff. A lot of hard work and planning goes into the coordination of the Competition and the vast contribution of our staff is greatly appreciated.

Vaughan Public Libraries is proud to support the work of teen artists in our community by encouraging them to further enhance their artistic abilities and share their knowledge with others. As you browse through the pages of this magazine, please join me in recognizing the accomplishments of this year's winners. On behalf of the Board, I congratulate all the authors, photographers, artists, videographers, contributors, and participants who submitted entries this year. I warmly encourage them to continue pursuing their artistic passion and explore opportunities that help them further develop their talent.

A stylized black ink signature of Michael McKenzie.

Michael McKenzie

Chair, Vaughan Public Library Board



Vaughan Public Library Board:

Front Row (from L): Lorraine de Boer, Michael McKenzie (Chair), Grace Locilento.

Middle Row (from L): Suri Rosen, Rosanna DeFrancesca, Devender Sandhu (Vice-Chair), Marie Chiaromonte, Isabella Ferrara, Marilyn Iafrate.

Back Row (from L): Vivek Gupta, Gino Rosati, Margie Singleton (CEO), Steve Kerwin, Rocco Capone, Pradeep Puri, Michael Di Biase

Meet the Winners

SKETCHING & PAINTING

My World

1st Prize	Melissa Thompson	p. 4
2nd Prize	Leticia Cartagena	p. 4
3rd Prize	Amelia Singh	p. 4

The People Around Me

1st Prize	Wendy Xue	p. 5
2nd Prize	Michelle Su	p. 5
3rd Prize	Sue Chung	p. 5

VIDEO

1st Prize	Elisha Wielinga, Ryan Odenthal	p. 6
2nd Prize	Arkin Sampath	p. 6
3rd Prize	Roni Cantor	p. 6

POETRY

1st Prize	"The Moon" by Jordi Klein	p. 7
2nd Prize	"You don't know how water feels or how its thinking goes" by Yici Chang	p. 8
3rd Prize	"Burn Your Finger" by Aaron Sawczak	p. 9

PHOTOGRAPHY

My World

1st Prize	Erin Steckley	p. 10
2nd Prize	Kara Schuringa	p. 10
3rd Prize	Benjamin Dean Hiebert	p. 10

The People Around Me

1st Prize	Kevin Lass	p. 11
2nd Prize	Celene Tang	p. 11
3rd Prize	Semra Tibebe	p. 11

Digitally Manipulated

1st Prize	Sianica Ann G. Galzote	p. 12
2nd Prize	Kevin Kwong-Chip	p. 12
3rd Prize	Michela Carere	p. 12

SHORT STORY

1st Prize	"Rondo" by Inna Berditchevskaia	p. 14
2nd Prize	"Amnesia" by Jason J. Kim	p. 16
3rd Prize	"Tears You'll Never See" by Sabrina Sukhdeo	p. 18

Early Harvest is an annual competition of creative writing, drawing, painting, photography and video for teens 12 to 18 years of age who live or go to school in the City of Vaughan.

Chief Executive Officer
Margie Singleton

Early Harvest Team

Elaine Barr
John Pichette
Farida Shaikh
Jennifer Stephen
Elyse Trojman
Terri Watman
Karen Yang

Vaughan Public Libraries' Annual Early Harvest Competition is administered by the Vaughan Public Library Board.

Cover Artwork:
Michela Carere

Special thanks to our sponsors:



Sketching & Painting

My World



1st PRIZE ~ Melissa Thompson, age 18



2nd PRIZE
Leticia Cartagena, age 12



3rd PRIZE
Amelia Singh, age 14

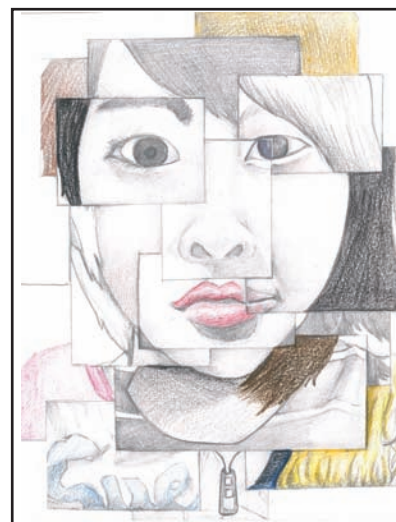


The People
Around Me

1st PRIZE ~ Wendy Xue, age 15



2nd PRIZE
Michelle Su, age 17



3rd PRIZE
Sue Chung, age 15

Video



1st PRIZE ~ Elisha Wielinga, age 18 & Ryan Odenthal, age 18
“Evolution of Emotion ”



2nd PRIZE ~ Arkin Sampath, age 14
“What is My World?”



3rd PRIZE ~ Roni Cantor, age 13
“Light a Way”

Poetry

1st PRIZE

by Jordi Klein, age 16

The Moon

It is a quiet place; grey, dry and dusty and devoid of emotion or thought, it is a dead man's desert paradise.

Once upon a time, it modestly resigned itself to a life of duty without a second thought. Now it is as scarred as a grizzled old war veteran, its face permanently marked by the passage of time. Free from humanity's grotesque disdain, it sits silently in the sky while the Earth screams below.

It represents the desire to dream, to innovate, to explore, to take the Universe by its throat and claim it as our own.

It not only belongs to the dreamers and explorers, but also to the meek and cowardly in hopes that they, too, may one day become the former. Every corrupt politician and Hollywood starlet, every tyrant and rebel, every professor of morals and propagator of evil entered and exited the world under its intelligent gaze. It represents our triumphs and our pitfalls, our joys and our sorrows. It is our perseverant protector and our constant companion.

Humankind, somewhat rudely, continues to find itself staring at the moon in slack-jawed, wide-eyed wonder.

It quietly tells us to get over ourselves.

2nd PRIZE

by Yici Chang, age 16

You don't know how water feels or how its thinking goes.

You do know that it is an invitation on a hot summer day, with its thousand gentle fingers pulling your body into its depths, like a comfortable mattress. It is a cool breath, as you plunge into it, its body grabbing hold, like the stem of a long- winding flower. And yet, as one surfaces, the Oceanid pulls back, laughing, its arms struggling to retain shape.

When one takes it in, it is a vital source for survival, and brings the simple relief that seems elusive. On spring days, it pelts you suddenly with icy little droplets, stinging yet refreshing. It laps and leaps across the ground, bouncing with the impact, a dog without reserve, leaving a soaked sight, a drenched world with blue skies and colourful lines.

Trickling through the earth, it curls up for a deep night slumber, already dissolving into an infinite number of particles. It leaps up through the clouds, rolling across the sky like a bundle of sawdust, dancing exotically, and then diving into the homes of its many twins, cousins, brothers, sisters. It flows across bizarre landscapes, through unknown tunnels, and into the source. On cold, frosty, bitter winter days, it yearns for the blessed heat, before it is frozen and dropped slowly to the ground, like the fluttering of leaves in fall. It melts against cheeks, hands, tongues, and the rare sunlight that sprays its paint against the pavement. In place that it meets its fellow element, earth, it twists, and beckons all who dare to come near. Entrancing, it flows past those that do, giggling, but for the bolder ones, the Siren presents delicious secrets. To those who are not careful, and have ventured in too deep, the waves turn alarming, daring to swallow all traces of their presence, erasing them forever, and burying them inside a watery grave.

‡ Poetry entries have been reproduced as submitted.

3rd PRIZE

by Aaron Sawczak, age 16

Burn Your Finger

Her eyes shimmer like troubled water,
her lips are red like a secret lover's
that always leave marks on perfect white collars—
not that it's bothering me.

Her cold shoulder stands like a castle
her heart lives on her sleeve like a temple,
that builds you up and keeps you humble,
and reminds you to forgive.

And I am happy just to say
some stupid stumbling phrase to her.

Her hair turns like an ocean current,
her voice is warm like a welcome sunset
that as you admire grows ever more distant,
and all the more worth it to see.

Her tongue-in-cheek erupts into laughter,
her cold feet flicker like a dying ember
that's just hot enough to still burn your finger,
though I can never remember it is.

And I feel lucky just to share
the soft sweet autumn air with her.

Photography

My World



1st PRIZE ~ Erin Steckley, age 14



2nd PRIZE
Kara Schuringa, age 16



3rd PRIZE
Benjamin Dean Hiebert, age 16

The People
Around Me



1st PRIZE ~Kevin Lass, age 17



2nd PRIZE
Celene Tang, age 16



3rd PRIZE
Semra Tibebe, age 17

Digitally
Manipulated



1st PRIZE ~ Sianica Ann G. Galzote, age 17



2nd PRIZE
Kevin Kwong-Chip, age 16



3rd PRIZE
Michela Carere, age 16

Meet the Judges



Jacqueline Betterton ~ *Video*

Jacqueline Betterton, producer and host of Daytime York Region on Rogers TV has been hosting the show since it first aired in 2004. Currently, the show is in its eighth season and has aired over one thousand episodes. In 2009, Jacqueline received the Media Recognition Award from the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority's Conservation Awards. She was also honoured with the Rogers Impression Award for the Best On-Air Personality in 2006. Jacqueline was born and raised in York Region and continues to make it her home.



Deborah Kerbel ~ *Short Story*

Deborah Kerbel is an author of primarily young adult fiction. Her novels include *Lure*, *Mackenzie*, *Lost and Found*, and *Girl on the Other Side*. Her fourth young adult novel, *Under the Moon*, will be published by Dancing Cat Books in spring, 2012. She has also co-authored the Quizmas series of family Christmas trivia books and her personal essay, *The Curtain*, is included in the new young adult anthology, *Dear Bully: 70 Authors Tell Their Stories*, released in August 2011. Deborah was honoured with a 2011 Vaughan R.A.V.E Award in recognition of her work as a mentor and educator in the Literary Arts.



Mirella Tersigni ~ *Sketching & Painting*

Mirella Tersigni established A Stroke of Art – Progressive Art Studio in 1999, providing artistic programs for youth that motivate self expression through the visual arts. She has created resourceful visual art workshops for both York Region and Toronto school boards, as well as visual art programs for organizations that provide services to individuals with exceptional abilities. Mirella is an active member of the Vaughan and Toronto communities and sits on several boards and committees involved in promoting the arts. In 2009, she received the Vaughan R.A.V.E Award for Educator/Mentor in the Visual Arts. Mirella is a Fine Arts graduate of The Ontario College of Art & Design.



David West ~ *Photography*

David West is the owner of West Photo and has been the principal photographer at his studio for the past 25 years. David has received numerous national and international awards for his work, including twice winning Ontario Portrait Photographer of the Year. He has earned the prestigious Master of Photographic Arts Degree from the Professional Photographers of Canada, and received a Richmond Hill Chamber of Commerce Business Achievement Award. In the past, David has also served as the Chair of the Richmond Hill Chamber of Commerce. In 2010, David was the recipient of a Vaughan R.A.V.E Award for Educator/Mentor for Visual Arts. David's studio, West Photo, specializes in creative portrait, wedding and special event photography. It is located at 120 Newkirk Road in Richmond Hill.



Elana Wolff ~ *Poetry*

Elana Wolff's poems have appeared in journals and anthologies in Canada, the UK and the US. She's published five books with Guernica, including *You Speak to Me in Trees*, which was awarded the 2008 F.G. Bressani Prize for Poetry, and *Implicate Me*, a collection of short essays on individual poems by Toronto-area poets. Her fourth collection of poetry, *Startled Night*, has just been released. Elana currently lives in the City of Vaughan, where she writes, edits, and facilitates therapeutic community art.

Short Stories

1st PRIZE

by Inna Berdichevskaya, age 15

Rondo

I've been dreaming of this moment for just about as long as I can remember. This is what I've been training for my whole life. This is what will decide whether or not I'm the best, and whether or not I'll find my way into the top universities out there. The real deal: the international competition.

And believe me, I'm ready.

I step out into the blinding light to roaring applause, coming from an audience invisible to me, surrounded by too much darkness for my light-adjusted eyes to see. Before I know it, I'm sitting on that sweat-stained stool, sweeping my fingers over the keys, indulging the audience with one of my patented jazz re-arrangements. Today's piece: Mozart's famous Rondo alla Turca.

Unlike all the previous, and likely following, contenders, I was actually thoroughly enjoying myself at first. My fingers knew these passages without my brain having to contribute the least, so all I had to do was infuse a little bit of me into the song, and no thinking was necessary.

Until, of course, it was. And that wasn't good news.

A chill ran up my back as I hit that note, a quiet one that only comes up once, in a run of my own invention. With that chill came a memory...

He was the first to whom I had shown this song, unsure of myself in altering such a classic. Since then, most runs had been changed, but this one remained unmodified. I remember his reaction as though it had happened yesterday; his ringing laugh of pure delight, his arms coming around my waist, his whisper in my ear telling me there was no one better. My shoulders relaxing with the knowledge that, even though I wasn't really worried that he wouldn't, at least someone believed in me.

All at once, I wasn't so sure I could do this after all. I started to shake, yet my runs remained constant. They were all staring, expectant, hopeful. I drew a hesitant breath, and brought myself back to the here, to the now. *He's not here. He won't be. You need to win.* I danced with my fingers, those world-renowned fingers. I was playing the song, and I was doing it well.

Remember the change of key. That's the one. Now, don't forget that dissonance you had carefully worked out. They told you you can do it. Don't let them down.

But still the memories flowed. That first moment I had really noticed him, sitting in the corner of the tutoring room, headphones in his ears, indifferent to all the dirty looks constantly thrown, to all the hopeless calls that he wasn't ever going to be good enough. I wasn't happy that this was the one I had been assigned to fix, but to my great surprise, he grew on me. Even now, I remember the way the light fell on his dark hair, and the way my breath caught the first time his piercing green eyes met mine.

Here and now, Anita. You have to do this.

My dad was sitting out in the audience, so failure was not an option. He had forced me to do this, and he might as well disown me if I mess this up. He had ignored Dr. Norton when she had said I needed time to recover. But then again, he had never liked Jaime.

"But Dad! He's changing! He's off the alcohol, and his math mark's up to a 70! Just trust me, please!"

"I don't care, Anita. I don't approve of you seeing that boy."

I had, of course, ignored my dad's disapproval. And I haven't regretted it for a minute since. Jaime took me out that very same night, and we sat by the pier and watched the sunset. *I love you, Anita. Nothing in the world can keep us apart.* Really, it's the kind of stuff they make movies out of. No one, however, can imagine that feeling, those butterflies of being in love, until they had felt them for themselves. And every time I recall those eyes, those very ones that make the summer grass look dull, the butterflies are back.

The music flowing from my fingers was getting faster. They were moving completely of their own accord, effortlessly moulding the classic march notes with bluesy rhythms, leaving me once more to fall into the deep chasm that was my own mind.

That high note hit by my ring finger: the shrill ring of the phone. That low note reached for by my left hand: the serious voice of the police officer, asking me if I knew anything about Jaime's whereabouts and who he was with the previous night. The dramatic final chord: my scream as I learned that my one and only love had been stabbed to death by a rival of his former gang.

Anita Miller, everybody! The only girl capable of turning such a light march into a sorrowful, jazzy ballad! Great work, Anita, great work!

It was all a blur, all mixed together. The announcer. The cheers. The suddenly too-bright lights that I knew so well.

I tried to bow, but the room started to spin.

And with a tear in my eye, in front of hundreds of people, I fell.

‡ *Short story entries have been reproduced as submitted.*

2nd PRIZE

by Jason J. Kim, age 18

Amnesia

I remember this song.

Oh, do you? The lady responded to the clipboard. *What's it called?*

I have no idea, his eyes wandered.

Then you don't remember, do you, Mr. Shelby? Her glasses loosely sat on her button nose, arresting his attention with her cold shackles; two sharp blue eyes.

I do, the young man repositioned himself in a more formal manner. *I just don't remember its name.*

The lady grinned. She stopped the music, and words were insincerely penned onto the clipboard. She did not once look at the young man.

Silence echoed off the walls, and the young man lightly drummed his two index fingers on his thigh. The heartbeat of the song was faintly breathing in his head, as he tried to beat it back to life. The lady coughed in discomfort.

The room was decorated with dusty books on wooden bookshelves, ventilating a familiar scent which he could not name. Her pencil scribbles filled the room, whispering words the young man could not understand.

He closed his eyes, and tried to mentally scribble the name of the song that he could not remember. It remained a blank slate.

Mr. Shelby, this song is called - the lady's voice rang in the young man's ears in dissonance. *Now, can you repeat back to me, the name of the song please, Mr. Shelby?*

His thoughts were disconnected. White curtains fell in his mental theatre.

Mr. Shelby? Mr. Shelby? The lady's voice slowly faded; muted.

* * *

Okay Mr. Shelby, does this sound familiar? Tell me what you remember. The young man looked blankly at the smiling lady; into cold blue eyes. He felt waves of shivers down his back. The young man coughed in discomfort.

The music was wet in his mind; reassuring.

I remember this song.

Oh, do you? The lady responded, looking directly into his eyes. *What's it called?*

I have no idea, his eyes wandered. The lady began writing on her clipboard once more.

‡ Short story entries have been reproduced as submitted.

A Brief History of Early Harvest

The City of Vaughan is home to many talented teens. In 1989, Vaughan Public Libraries developed a short story competition to foster their creativity, and the winning entries were published in the Early Harvest Magazine which was made available throughout the community.

Building on the success of the inaugural Competition, the Poetry category was added to the Early Harvest Competition the following year.

Next came “Perspectives”, a photography competition for teens, created in 1996. For three years, the two competitions ran concurrently.

From the outset, the Early Harvest Competition drew on the support of local professionals in the community, who volunteered as judges and offered their insight and expertise to the Competition. When Early Harvest celebrated its 10th anniversary in 1999, “Perspectives” was integrated into Early Harvest and the category of Drawing was also added, transforming Early Harvest into a fully-faceted celebration of creativity.

The 2001 Early Harvest Competition expanded the category of Drawing to include full colour submissions of Sketching and Painting. The winning entries of the visual arts categories were honoured with the opportunity to be displayed at the prestigious McMichael Canadian Art Collection for much of the year.

The 2002 Competition welcomed the new category of Digital Photography, introduced in response to the growing interest in digital cameras.

In 2006, the Sketching and Painting category was expanded to include Street Art and entries received were done in collage, stencil, spray paint and on articles of clothing.

In 2010, a Video category was added to the Competition in place of Street Art. The addition of this new category responded to the increasing interest in videography and provided teens with an opportunity to showcase their videography skills.

The Early Harvest winning entries are beautifully reproduced in VPL's Early Harvest Magazine, which is available in all branches of Vaughan Public Libraries. The Early Harvest Magazine is also electronically published on VPL's website at www.vaughanpl.info.

Early Harvest remains Vaughan Public Libraries' annual flagship event. The Vaughan Public Library Board, staff and City at large watch as young artists develop their skills in this public forum, entering year by year, often returning to win prizes more than once, as their confidence and talents flourish.

The Libraries, sponsors and judges all look forward to next year's Competition and eagerly await another year of exciting submissions from the talented youth of the City of Vaughan.



3rd PRIZE

by Sabrina Sukhdeo, age 14

Tears You'll Never See

The leaves crackled crisply in the quietness of the night. *How long have I been lying here...* My eyes felt heavy as I forced them open. A stream of loose tears ran down my cheeks; I brushed them away. I was never one for crying. Carefully, I propped myself up on my elbow allowing my vision to refocus. My eyes met a bouquet of vibrant rubies and golds glistening in the clouded moonlight. *What a beautiful tree*, I thought dully peering up at the great oak.

I marveled at its unseasonably full and strong body. Suddenly, a strong gust of sharp autumn air whipped the strong branches making each leaf suddenly flitter feverishly; its tiny stems tugging urgently on the limb...

A sharp pang in my head jolted me upright, and I tiredly staggered onto my feet. I groaned softly, cradling my aching head. The wind had strengthened and the icy bitterness ran through my thin sweater. Shivering, I glanced up at the tree— it was now gently swaying in the winds, its strong branches leaning towards the house. Impulsively, I bolted across the barren field towards the house... "Scarlett!" Kailey panted, "Scarlett, slow down!" *I turned back, without slowing my sprints. There she was, barreling against the warm rolling winds. Her eyes peeked open the tiniest bit, and the determined glimmer in her sparkling blue eyes shone through. "Oh Kailey," I giggled, "just give up! You can't catch me and you never w—" Suddenly, I was sent tumbling down the grassy hills. Gasping wildly, I rolled over to see her panting harder than ever and tears trickle down the soft creases of her tiny face. "I ca—" she choked, "I caught you, Scarlett."* Fresh tears now stinging my eyes, I ran through the empty streets, and across thinning patches of what used to be lush, green grass. The harsh winds dried my sorrow, urging me onwards, and so I quickened my strides. Passing the beckoning trees and the flickering lampposts, I ran to the house. My heart pounded as I approached the shadowy driveway. I stared curiously up at the house; the ominous moon perched right atop the roof illuminated the worn building.

A wave of fatigue suddenly overcame my body, but determinedly, I dragged my feet along the pavement to the door. Reaching over to wrap my hands around the doorknob, a fresh, new pain gnawed at my thoughts... *Kailey tugged at my shirt. "Scarlett, I don't want to go in." Perplexed, I squat down, examining her worried face. Her tiny, pink lips quivered in a small pout, and peering into her eyes I saw the hurt. Blinking fiercely, the tears melted away. I grabbed her wrists. "Scarlett, no!" Kailey wailed, her eyes wide... a small smile beginning to form. Grinning, I spun. I spun until my head became dizzy. Tumbling down to the floor wrung with laughter, she turned to me. Her deep, ocean eyes glittering, she wrapped her tiny arms around my waist. The tears trickled down. "I love you, Scarlett"...* I turned the knob and shoved the door open. A cloud of musty, warm air hugged me as I entered the house.

"Hello?" I called into the darkness. Silence. I walked further into my home. A sudden blanket of dread cast over me; it was just how I remembered it. My damp socks stuck to the smooth floorboards, creaking with every timid step. As I looked around, the furniture, the walls and our belongings stood still as the world around me swirled. A wave of hot then cold suddenly swept over me as my eyes landed on our grand piano with its glossy case and its elegant, slender keys. I slid myself across the piano bench splaying my fingers across the keys... "You have to stretch your fingers— like this— across the keys to play in two octaves. You try." An odd tone of low B and F rattled my ears. "Farther, Kailey..." I coaxed. "She doing it again?" he scowled, "What's the goddamn problem with her? Huh? She can't do anything right, can she?" The sickeningly sweet, heavy scent of alcohol burned my nose as he approached the bench. Kailey began to whimper. I wrapped my arms around her reassuringly, but I knew it would only worsen if I didn't leave. "Dad..." I choked hopelessly. My voice cracked and tears stung my eyes, but I had to be strong. For me. For Kailey. I promptly stood up and walked out the room. The strike of his hand echoed sharply through the hallways, and the heart-wrenching sounds of my sister crying for help tore my heart. A wave of terror flooded my thoughts.

Not in h— I shouldn't be in h— My surroundings flashed in a sea of red, my own hidden thoughts disturbed. I couldn't think— I didn't know. The hurt now throbbed thickly, and so I ran... Kailey's sobs had quieted. Her breathing had slowed to deep, quivering pants... No... No, that wasn't Kailey. I stood up and steadily walked towards the door. I gripped the doorknob and pushed it the tiniest bit. Peeking through the opening I saw him holding her. Sobbing. Her lifeless body streaked with his disgusting, worthless tears. A small sigh of relief escaped my lips; a smile crept up on my face. My baby sister was free. I closed the door and sat back on the bed, waiting... A steady stream of sorrow, remorse, and solace flooded down my cheeks. I stopped running, and there she was. It was the end of a dusty sunlit street. She stood there, a certain whiteness illuminating her very essence. Her soft, beautiful face cradled with peace made me soar. I stared into her glinting blue eyes. They were no longer afraid; they were filled with something else, something I had never seen before. Pure happiness. "Scarlett..." she breathed. Blinking away warm tears of joy, I took her hand and we ran, freely, into the light.



Vaughan
Public Libraries

www.vaughanpl.info • 905-653-READ(7323)