CAPSTONE PROJECT PRESENTATION

WRITING A SHORT NOVEL

WHY DID I CHOOSE TO DO THIS PROJECT?

HOW DOES THIS HELP PREPARE ME FOR MY FUTURE?

BECOMING AN AUTHOR!

• Creating compelling stories and narratives in an interesting setting with a well thought out plot and well-developed characters has always been a subject I've accelerated at, and I've dreamed about it being my career for a long time!

• I've always had a passionate spirit when it comes to social justice and equality for all people regardless of gender, sex, race, weight, class, etc. and I enjoy combining the two so everyone can find something they can relate to.
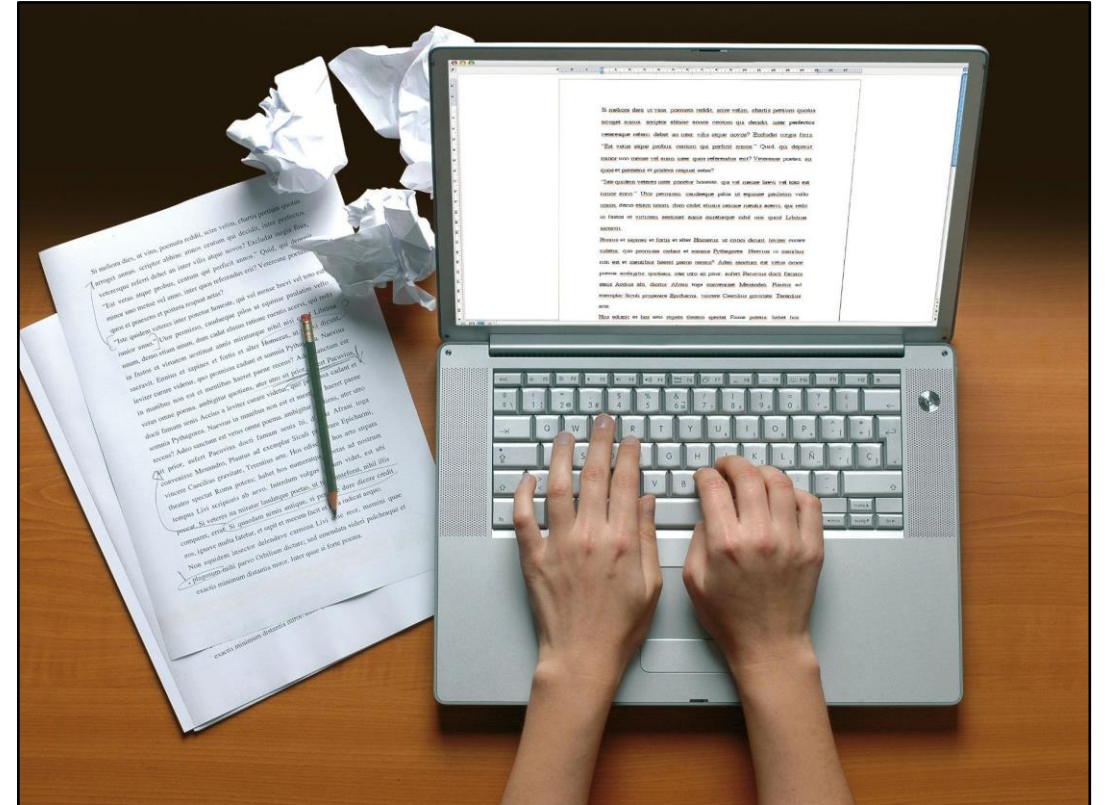
HOW DID I COME UP WITH THE STORY?

WHAT WERE MY INSPIRATIONS?

THE STORY OF HOW MY STORY CAME TO BE

I was playing a game on my computer one afternoon when suddenly, the song *Take Me to Church* by Hozier started playing and I remember imagining this couple in my head pondering about their appearances, environment and ultimately, how the events described within the song, came to be for these individuals. Which is how I developed Alluin and Ellgar's characters and arcs!

I used a similar method to create the rest of the characters as well, listening to a song that randomly sparked some type of inspiration and eventually, I had a whole arsenal of characters and scenes I wanted to write about! Originally, I had the idea of having each chapter be completely related to a specific song which would've been displayed at the top of the chapter alongside the characters name, but I decided against it to make the story more concise. I still love the concept though and may do it for a shorter story.

FURTHER INTO CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

WHAT DO MY CHARACTERS LOOK LIKE IN *MY* HEAD

AJAX

Here's a photo recreating Ajax created using a program called "Artbreeder", I'll be using this to show off other characters in my book as well.

Ajax was one of the characters I originally developed the summer after I had finished grade eleven. I believe I was listening to *Montero* by Lil Nas X when I developed him.

I imagined him in his crown, flashing his blue regalia proudly with striking brown hair that always appeared silky in my head.
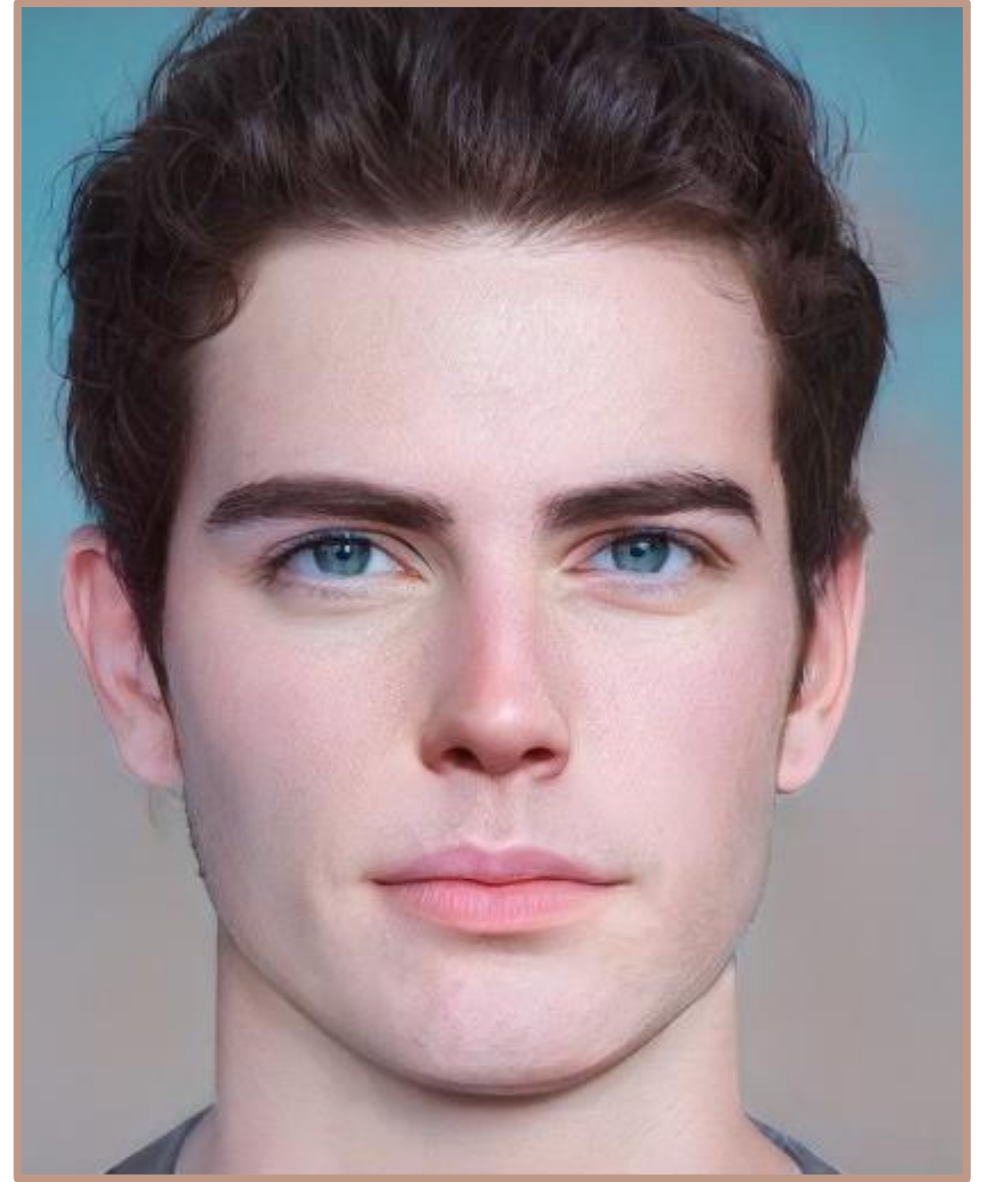
DALIA

I developed Dalia's character using the colour I assigned her, I concluded previously that I wanted to do colour factions as a system in my novel and therefore, I needed their rulers once I determined the colours I wanted to use.

Dalia was what I envisioned when I imagined a strong female leader and I knew I wanted to include as many POC characters as I could because I'm tired of seeing only one or maybe two that end up getting killed in the first few chapters of a book.
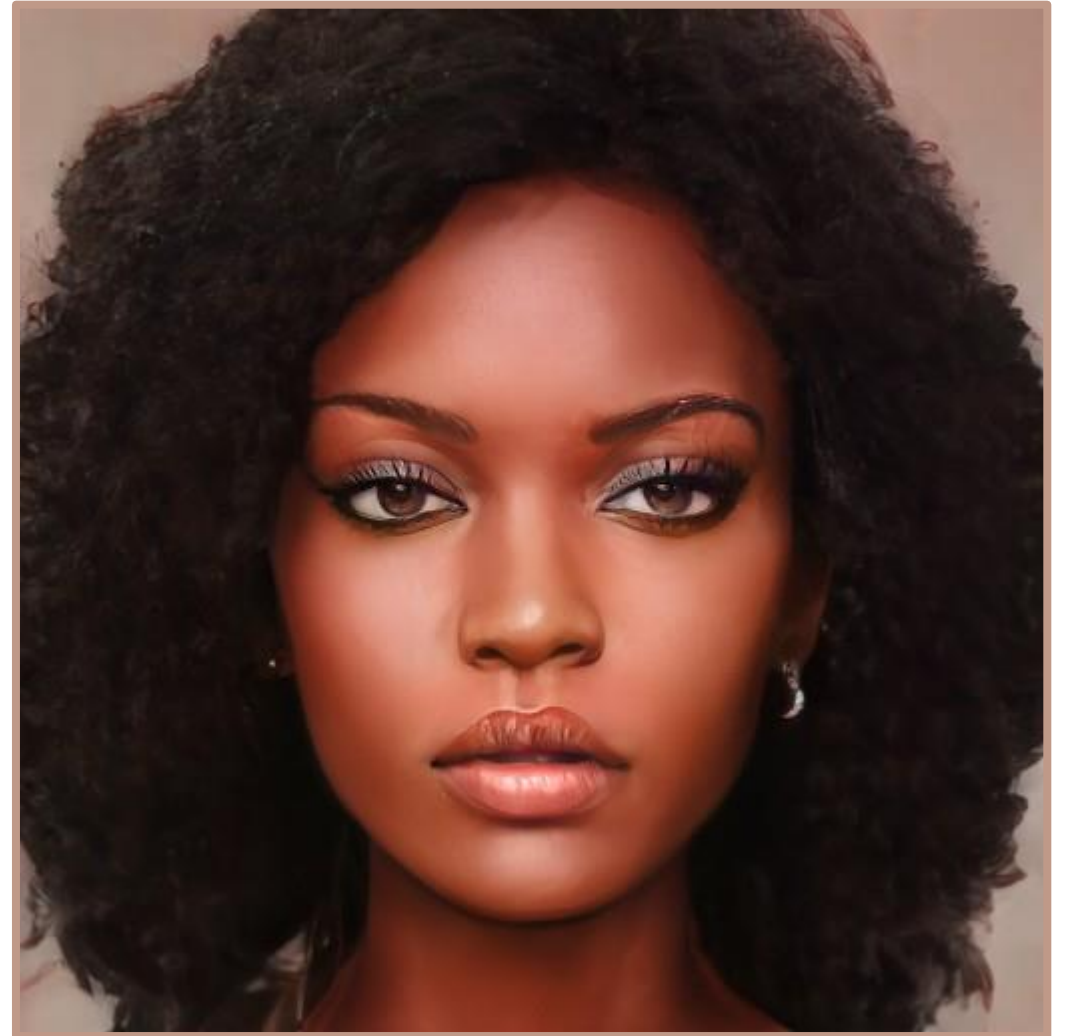
ERADYN

With my choice of making an inclusive story, I knew I needed to add a non-binary character into my story some where. In my head Eradyn is a masculine presenting non-binary person who uses they/them pronouns; however, I wanted any person to see Eradyn as who ever they wanted using the description I included in the book. Their presentation is fluid and can be all encompassing if ones desires it to be so, or it can be more encompassing of one gender if one desires as well.

I was a little worried that the constant use of "them" as their singular pronoun would become jarring and hard to read, however, in the grand scheme of things I feel it isn't as noticeable as I thought and actually worked quite well.

SIOFRA

Mental illness is a hard topic to write about. Especially if you aren't diagnosed with the particular disorder you're portraying in a certain character. Research and accurate representation is very important especially in this day and age where mental health is as important as ever. Siofra was a character I thought of and developed, and I knew I wanted her to have more of a struggle with her mental health, but I didn't necessarily want it specified as to be easily applicable to anyone's current struggles.

I wanted to portray someone with power and strength that has struggled and has gotten through it and is still able to be successful regardless of it and its debilitations.

ZEPHYR

Out of every book I've ever read, I have yet to see a character be portrayed as Asian.

Knowing how to describe a character as Asian properly and without upholding stereotypes was a challenge. I ended up using their eyes to describe their ethnicities, however, I had to learn how to do this without simply stating that they had "Asian eyes" as this is very problematic because every Asian person look incredibly different--obviously.

I wanted a character that screamed poise and power but also had an edge of humour and wit to them as well. That's where Zephyr came in!

TAKARI

Takari's character design turned out to be one of my favourites out of them all. I wish I had more time to interact with her character a bit more, however, because of the way the story was laid out she was a bit on the back burner which was unfortunate.

I developed her design and character when I decided her colour, same as I did for Dalia. I wanted her to embody her faction and their colour loudly and proudly, while also maintaining a strong female character that doesn't need a male's assistance with running her faction.

CARNAK

I know it may be hard to believe, however, I did not name this character after the city in Egypt, Karnak. I figured out this coincidence many weeks after I had decided that this would be his name. I'm an Egyptology nerd so there is no surprise to me that this has happened, however, it *was* unplanned.

Ajax and Carnak I knew would be blue and red right off the bat and I decided this while I developed Ajax's character while listening to *Montero* by Lil Nas X. I felt bad making the two main people in the story white because I was shooting for inclusivity therefore, I knew I had to make everyone else stand out in their own rights just as much and make sure to keep them heavily involved as much as possible.

ALLUIN

I developed Alluin's arcs and motivations, as well as his violence against Ajax, the same day while thinking up both Ajax and Carnak's characters: while listening to *Montero* by Lil Nas X. That song has some serious creativity wounded into the mere fibres of its existence I swear.

I knew he'd somehow end up working for Carnak and end up betraying someone, I just needed to hash out the details of that once I got to writing the story many months later.

I wanted some representation for black queer folk, and I knew I needed to make his story one on its own which is why I had the perspectives of the story switch on and off from many different people.

ELLGAR

At the beginning of my story, I honestly didn't know this man would end up leading a whole rebellion but I'm glad it ended that way.

I knew I wanted someone to die by fire in this book because it's one of the coolest ways to go in my personal opinion.

I knew he'd be Alluin's partner, and I knew I wanted another Asian character included in my book. Specifying ethnicities isn't entirely important as they aren't vital to the plot of the story, the important part for me to get across was the fact that they aren't white—that's my only goal.

I knew he'd end up dead in the early stages of writing my book, however, getting the story there was a bit of a struggle as I was free writing and didn't write anything down, in hindsight not a very good idea but it turned out fine and was pretty fun.

WHY CHOOSE ELEMENTS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE?

HOW DID I PICK CERTAIN SUBJECTS TO INCLUDE VERSUS NOT TO INCLUDE?

SOCIAL JUSTICE

As a person, I am a part of a few specific groups that are disproportionately discriminated against such as, the LGBTQ+ community, polytheism and being neurodivergent. Because of this, I have personal experience with these topics which would mean less research would be required alongside this project to include into my story. It was for this reason that I decided I wanted to include a scene involving homophobia.

Since I am a white person, I'll never experience racism therefore I didn't feel right including it in my story and decided I didn't want race to be an issue in the book seeing as each faction is ruled by a deity which could be one of many different races. I believe that including racism is completely fine when it has relevance to the story and isn't forced for the sake of it. A topic *that* heavy deserves no time limit and the ability to be fully debunked and fleshed out, which wasn't this project.

Because of my religious identity, I've grown up disliking authority and government officials of our modern world and I wanted to portray this through the people of the red faction being disregarded and neglected by an oppressive government. This was more of an issue with class, however, than religion in my story. I didn't want to bombard my story any further, so I only picked a few topics to focus on.

TIME MANAGEMENT

HOW DID I MANAGE TO FINISH IN TIME?

TIME MANAGEMENT

Deadlines have never really been that much of an issue for me. Since I love to write and I chose a passion driven project, getting myself to keep working on it wasn't all that hard. The struggle lied in my need and want to write more but not having the room from the chapter limitations I'd set myself.

The constant screenshotting of my work and posting it to my website was the most annoying part of this project as I just kept forgetting to do it and there wasn't much to post because I was just creating a story.

Every lunch I'd pull out my computer and write. Whenever there was significant downtime in another class, I'd pull out my computer and write some more. Posting to my website became hard because the only time I would stop writing, was when our downtime was over in my class and I'd immediately have to continue with different work from another class, or lunch would end, and I'd have to walk the retched paths of the crowded school hallways to get to my next period.

I had these characters stuck in my head for months prior to this project and I was saving them this opportunity to the point that I was excited to work on it and working on it wasn't something I dreaded. Only writers block was the bad part of writing, but I got over that after a break every now and then.

WILL I USE THIS STORY IN THE FUTURE?

WILL THIS BE PUBLISHED?

WILL I USE THIS MANUSCRIPT AGAIN?

Don't get me wrong, I loved this story and its characters, however, since this was a story written for school and as a school project, there were many aspects of my original story that I had to omit since this had to be school appropriate to a certain extent.

If I decided to use this story, I'd need to rewrite essentially all of it and make it significantly longer and more explained. Going back and reworking my plot and redeveloping my story would be significantly harder and more tedious than if I started from scratch on something entirely new.

I used this opportunity for growth and as a taste as to what my future could hold. Not to literally utilize in my near future. Once I've written a few more fleshed out stories that are of topics that I want to be known for, I may return to this story and hash it out a bit better.

This story is not going to be forgotten and I may even use it in university, who knows!

I feel I've grown significantly as a writer from writing this book and growth isn't something to pass up, ever. Therefore, I'll be taking the lessons it taught me and bringing them to the next story I plan to develop and hopefully the next after that as well.

HOW DID I PUT IT ALL TOGETHER?

WHAT WAS MY PROCESS

STEP 1: DEVELOP MY STORY

SECURED MY PROJECT STRAND, BUILD THE CHARACTERS IN MY HEAD, RESEARCH FORMATTING

STEP 2:MAKE TWO WORD DOCUMENTS AND START DESIGNING MY CHARACTERS

FIND SETTING APPROPRIATE NAMES, CREATE DIVERSE CAST OF COMPELLING CHARACTERS, DECIDE ON RELATIONSHIPS, ONE DOC FOR THE BOOK AND THE OTHER FOR MY IDEAS

STEP 3: PICK A STARTING POINT FOR THE FIRST CHAPTER

START WORLD-BUILDING, INTRODUCE CHARACTERS, CREATE AND PLACE READERS IN MY WORLD, PRACTICE DETAILS AND HONE MY WRITING SKILLS

STEP 4: WRITE, WRITE, RESEARCH

WRITE MY THOUGHTS AND IDEAS OUT, RESEARCH HOW TO DESCRIBE CERTAIN DETAILS AS I WENT ALONG, CONTINUE WRITING, GIVE DRAFTS TO PEOPLE TO EDIT AND CRITIQUE

STEP 5: FLOW

WRITE SO MUCH THAT WORDS BECOME MUSH AND FLOW RIGHT OUT OF YOU, LOSE A BIT OF SANITY, TRY TO SET UP KEY PLOT POINTS IN WAYS THAT THEY CAN DEVELOP PROPERLY

STEP 6: MORE WRITING

CONTINUE WRITING OUT MY IDEAS AND LET THE STORY CREATE A MIND OF ITS OWN UNTIL YOU REACH THE FINISH LINE, ADDING WEBSITE POSTS ONCE A DAY IF WORK WAS DONE

STEP 7: HAND IT IN

AFTER FINISHING ALL THE OTHER WORK REQUIRED FOR THE COURSE AND PROJECT, I HANDED IN MY PROJECT AND HOPE FOR A GOOD MARK!

CHALLENGES

HOW MUCH OF MY SANITY WAS LOST
DURING THIS PROCESS?

CHALLENGES

Writing has never been that hard for me. I'm a natural born writer with a knack for creating stories. The physical writing of the stories wasn't necessarily the hard part of this project, the issues of continuity and plot holes quickly became apparent because I was free-writing. Free-writing is essentially exactly as it sounds; you write and don't stop. Every idea you have gets put into words on the spot, you don't create a timeline of your story before hand, you essentially wing it the whole time. This leaves room for ideas to not seem cohesive and to lack flow and continuity. An idea you had could potentially oppose that character's motivations or previously discussed backstory, and since you didn't write anything down, you need to go back and reread the backstory you had already created for that character to make sure it makes sense.

Writer's block is a common phenomenon experienced by those that write, it describes the feeling you get when you have absolutely no clue of what to write next and you feel quite literally blocked off from your creative juices. At this point you want to take a break and search for new inspiration and new perspectives.

I experienced this a few times since I had various and sporadic scenes, I wanted to accomplish throughout the book but having to mend my way to making them happen, was harder than I expected.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I'm decently pleased with how the book came out, it's not as long as I wanted it to be or as concise, however, with the time I had I feel I did the best I could.

I created a wide and diverse cast of characters with their own flair and personal elements that added to the story in meaningful ways.

My story touched on social justice and the aspects of social justice I feel personal connection with.

I managed my time well and got my project in on time, including the other assignments within the course.

Will I use this in the future? The lessons yes, however, this particular manuscript, probably not for a while.

My process was simple and easy to do for me, however, there were many challenges and draw backs regarding the writing technique I preferably used.

This project has taught me a lot and I feel more confident in my abilities as a writer having written in a more traditional manner and I'll take these skills with me the next time I do any kind of writing in any aspect of my life.

QUESTIONS, ELABORATIONS OR COMMENTS?

DID I MISS ANYTHING?