WINNER

YEAR 11 AND 12 CATEGORY

A story IN Miniature

Tidal

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The date is the 16th of May, 2059. In Melbourne, Victoria, there is a chance of rain. Today's high tide is at 6:41 and will reach 2.4 metres. Have a lovely morning.

The mechanical voice faded away as the blinds lifted from the easterly windows, allowing the sea to look in as the sun rose over the horizon.

The sea had been looking in for a while now, but fortunately the glass had held. The house had been built to outlast weather, not water, and so the blinds lifted each day as the sun came up and came down the second the sun completely set.

The house still put the kettle to boil, drawing water that was brackish and carried a tinge of green. It still warmed the water to 94 degrees. That had always been for a mug of black tea, though no one was left to drink it.

Today's high tide is at 7:04 and will reach 2.5 metres.

The tide crept up in tenths of a metre; within weeks, a small crustacean had settled itself in the submerged mailbox. By the first winter, barnacles had crusted on the skirting boards, climbing higher with each new tide.

Today's high tide is at 8:02 and will reach 2.9 metres.

By the second winter, clumps of carpet would often detach and drift away. In their place grew a faint fur of algae, though it would take years for the carpet to be replaced entirely.

Today's high tide is at 9:15 and will reach 3.3 metres.

By the fourth year, small silver fish had made a thoroughfare of the hallway, moving in loose, unbothered schools, nosing at the plaster.

Today's high tide is at 10:47 and will reach 4.6 metres.

The blinds had stopped rising with the sun. They couldn't; the sensor was too deep in the water to reach the sun. The house wasn't designed for this and there wasn't a contingency plan for complete submersion. The mug still sat by the sink, its handle chipped and green.

The kettle had kept filling year in, year out, the water turning a deeper shade of green each time, until some kind of moss eventually moved in and blocked the input valve.

'*Have a lovely morning,*' the voice said, endlessly repeating it to the swarms of fish, the sounds struggling to carry as far as it once had through air. The fish swam on regardless, unbothered by this strange greeting.

By now the barnacles had climbed up higher still, past the skirting boards and up the walls themselves, following the tide as they always had.

Today's high tide is at 6:52 and will reach 5 metres. Have a lovely morning. Today's high tide is at 6:52 and will reach 5 metr-

The speaker gave out somewhere in the last word, swallowed completely by moss, fish, and the sheer number of mornings it had announced to no one.

The barnacles had reached the ceiling.

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