



River  
Through  
Time



## Parameters Form

### Team Details

STATE: VIC

DIVISION: Middle School (Required word count 3500 to 5000 words)

SCHOOL/GROUP: St Francis Catholic College

TEAM NAME: SFCC Cobblebank 3

TEAM ID: 1478

### Parameters and random words

#### Parameters

Primary character 1: Driving instructor

Primary character 2: Watchmaker

Non-human character: Chalkboard

Setting: River

Issue: Growing up

#### Random words

novel

goosey

yarn

plunge

homework

### Instructions

- Start no earlier than **8am**
- Write an original story:
  - based on all **five parameters** (above)
  - including all **five random words** (above) as written, and in bold type
  - with some identifiable **Australian content** (in theme or setting or characters, etc)
  - keeping within the allowed word count (remember every word on every page counts!)
  - include this parameters form in your book **immediately after the front cover**
- Remember: **Every** word on **every** page counts. This includes your front cover, back cover, blurb, acknowledgements and copyright form.
- **Be sure to give yourself enough time to submit your book and complete the following checklist before 9pm**

Log on to the Team Coordinator Portal to:

- ☐ Check the spelling of your team name and team members' names  
(how these are spelt on submission will be how they are displayed on certificates)
- ☐ Complete the Declaration
- ☐ Submit your finished book in **both** PDF and plain text format by 9pm

## **Acknowledgement of Country**

Team 3 would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which this book was created, the people of the nation and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

Team 3 would also like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which this book will be read. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

## **Copyright**

Published by Team 3 St Francis catholic college Cobblebank.

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## **List of Authors and Illustrators**

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## **Chapter 1:**

The river's rushing water was calming in a way that was unexplainable for me. Even though my mind was spiralling with the regrets of my past – choices made, words left unsaid, moments I wish I could rewind. It was one of the only things that

could silence my thoughts. I do not know how long I sit here. Minutes? Hours? Time feels fluid when I am alone.

The soft, slightly damp grass between my fingers that I pull from the ground beneath me has my other hand throws small, smooth pebbles into the river. The bright electric blue painted sky above illuminate's the world. A dark crow flies overhead, casting a shadow, into one of the trees on the other side of the wide long muted grey river. There are several leaves, twigs and logs just floating around on the surface. The sound of the subtle plop of rocks meeting the water is barley audible, it's not the only thing that's quiet though, the wind has died down since this morning. Leaving the trees and currents still. It is all frozen in a moment of stillness.

One of the many reasons I come here is because I enjoy being alone. My father once told me that talking to yourself is one of the wisest people you can talk to. But that changes as I heard a rustle of leaves and someone walking near.



around to see a young, aged boy standing right behind me. His ruffled black hair was covering part of his eyes. He then went ahead to yell.

“Are you ok?”

I smiled thinking about the thought that there were still people in this small world who cared about others. “Yes, I am ok.”

“I’m going to come over there.”

“ok”

“Have I seen you around school?”

“Yeah, maybe. I am one of those girls who walk around by themselves.”

We looked at each other and giggled. I knew he could sense the negative energy lunging around me, so I decided to break off the strong tension between us.

“Hey, you’re probably wondering why I sit here all by myself. Well, it’s actually a connection I have to the water, specifically this one. It brings great comfort. I don’t know if it’s just me, but it’s a magical feeling.”

“You know what, I understand that feeling, but instead with watches I feel like they hold the time. You know you can control anything with a watch. It may seem silly, but it’s a feeling I got—the magical feeling. He turned and looked at me, smiling. The thought that I had to go ahead and be a driving instructor for my friend struck, but I did not get up.

“Hey, before you go, can I catch your name?”

“Sure, my name is Alara.”

“Mine is Noah. I work with my dad at a shop for watches; you won’t miss it. Make sure to visit!”

Then there was no more awkwardness, and we looked at each other and smiled; after a long time, I was finally connecting to someone, a friend.

## Chapter 3:

The bell chimes as I walk through the door; a waft of dust flies at me. As I'm greeted by silence and an empty old-looking space filled with watches old and new, from tiny watches to giant decorative clocks. Curious, I decide to look around and try to find something interesting while I wait for Noah to appear from wherever he is. As I'm walking around, all I can hear are a bunch of clock hands turning and the soft ticks they make. Soon enough I stumble across an ancient pocket watch shaped as a hexagon with an owl on the front and a name engraved into it, but it's too tiny, so I can't read it. Being my bizarre self, I pick it up and flick the cover, revealing a glowing shiny surface.

"Wow," I whisper to myself while being awestruck.

"Oh, you're here," Noah says as he walks in and behind the counter simultaneously; he wipes his face, which is covered in grease from checking out a broken clock in the back of the store.

"Yeah," I say with a small smile, which makes its way across my face.

"So, what are you up to?" Noah says as he flicks a light switch, which illuminates the dimly lit room.

“Nothing much, just popped in to see you,” I reply, looking around once again only to see a huge board with **yarn** that has been pinned onto pictures.

“What’s that?” I question him; he rotates his head to face the board.

“Oh, that is just some investigating I was doing about a family heirloom.” He whispers.

“Do you want to see it?” He asks, intrigued to hear my answer.

“Yes, please,” I say politely since he’s already walking over to go find it.

“Where is it?” I hear him say in fear as he shuffles things around trying to find it, frantically dropping other things along with it to

“Maybe I can help,” I say.

“What does it look like?” I ask.

“It’s a gold hexagonal pocket watch with an owl on the front and my great-great-grandfather’s name engraved into it,” he says, getting up and off the floor.

“Does it look like this?” I ask, pulling out the pocket watch I found earlier.

“Yes, that is the one. Where did you find it?” He questions me.

“Oh, it was just sitting here; you must have missed it.” I lied, as I didn’t want him to think of me as a thief.

“Well then.” He continued walking back to the counter.

“This pocket watch was found by my great-great-grandfather, and he has passed it on ever since.” He replies before saying



“They all said that it had some special power that could change someone, and I want to know what it is, so I’m investigating.” He concludes with a grin, like he’s said something very smart.

“Can I see it?” I ask him. He passes the watch into my hands, and I run my hands over the owl and the engraved name, feeling every groove on the watch.

I flick it open and rub my fingers around the dial five times creating a whirlwind of glitter. Without knowing that I had just figured out the secret power of the watch. As we land in soft lush grass, I have a flashback of my past this is the exact playground I would play in when I was four

“It’s time travel!” I shout out loud I circle my fingers around the dial five times again and we land back in the shop.

## Chapter 4:

“Thud” we fall onto either side of the room onto the floorboard

“That was insane” I squeal getting up and jumping

“Woah” Noah dramatically gasps staring at the wooden ceiling fan

“Please can we go back in time?” I beg Noah while staring into his soul hoping that he would say yes

“No” he says with a sigh

“Why not” I ask practically ready to cry on the spot because of his answer

“Fine” he says giving up and finally letting in on my plan

“So where do you want to travel to first?” he asks looking at me seriously

“Listen to me though cause time travel is not a game and can alter the present within a matter of seconds.” He pauses then continues

“And if you don’t like it you will have to stick to it as it is very hard to reverse what you have fixed in time travel” he said

“One final thing be careful no one can know that we are from the future as it will affect the future a lot” he said passing the watch onto me. I tightly clutch it in my trembling hand and draw circles on its dial once again just like last time I see glitter fly around and I’m sucked into the watch

## Chapter 5:

The room is filled with quietness, and I was back at school. I was a bit confused and had this **gooey** feeling going on. I did not know how I got here and what I was doing here so I decided to take a walk. The air felt different, the atmosphere felt off, everything felt peculiar. So instead of me continuously walking for the world to click on me I decided to find something, something that could help me find out what the unusual feeling is, inside me. I went to the bathroom just to have a little break; I walked faster and faster than I entered the bathroom to see that they had been difference in me. The size, the height, the haircut That's when it clicked to me, I was in the past, right back to year 7. The first thought I had was kind of off. was back here it had worked Noah had done it. I had smiled with happiness and a bit of overwhelmingness because I had to do something. Before it got suspicious, I ran to my classroom.

## Chapter 6:

It takes a while for the thought to sink in. I can finally change my past.

I look around my classroom from grade 7, five years I travelled back in time. I had **plunged** into the past and now I have free rein to change anything.

The teacher's words snap me from my thoughts. "Alara, what is  $75a$  divided by  $5a$ ?"

I forget how to breathe, I know what the answer is, it's just that I remember last time I got this so wrong and the embarrassment of the after math was unbearable. Then I realised that I hadn't answered and the whole class was staring at me... awkward.

"Uh,  $15a$ ?"

At least I got it correct, but I could have sworn that seconds before I walked in, the room was empty... well guess that the pocket watch was lagging a bit, right? It had to be that.

I hear the bell ringing in the background, its break. At least now I won't be known as the not-so-know-it-all, as well as depressed girl or principal's daughter. Feeling a rush of cautious hope, I slip out of the classroom and wander down the hallway I used to dread. The walls still smell like old paint and chalk dust, and my footsteps echo softly as I pass the rows of lockers that once seemed like impossible obstacles. As I reach the doorway of my old classroom, a sudden flick of something hits my arm. I yelp and turn quickly—only to see a small piece of chalk tumbling to the floor. I glance up at the blackboard and freeze.

Scrawled in hurried, messy handwriting is a message: *"To change what's lost, you must first solve the cost."*

I squint, trying to decipher the strange riddle. It puzzles me, but somehow it feels important. I stare for a long moment, then shake my head as if to clear the fog. Maybe it's just a prank or a leftover note from some forgotten student. After all, I have bigger things to focus on now.

With one last glance, I step away from the classroom and slip back through the school doors, clutching the pocket watch tightly in my hand.

Back in my own time, I wait. I wait for the shift, the change, something, anything to prove that the past I altered has rewritten my present.

But nothing happens. The same grey walls of my room stare back at me. The same faded photographs hang crooked on the wall. The same whispers follow me in the hallways. No one looks at me differently. I'm still just the girl everyone ignored, or worse, pitied. A heavy disappointment settles in my chest as I collapse onto my bed, the weight of failure pressing down harder than ever. Was the riddle a clue I missed? Or is changing the past not as simple as I thought?

I close my eyes, determination flickering in the dark.

Tomorrow, I'll go back. I must.



## Chapter 7:

I gripped the watch in my hand, my fingers trembling as I prepared to go back again, yesterday's attempt hadn't worked, nothing I changed in the past had made a difference. But maybe I hadn't been thinking big enough, maybe it wasn't just about academics, I had focused so much on grades that I'd ignored everything else, and I let that shape who I was. When the world folded around me, the familiar dizzying sensation washed over me then, suddenly, I was my past self. Smaller, younger, the weight of my old schoolbag pressing against my shoulder. My reflection in the hallway mirror was unmistakable. It was me, years ago, and I could feel all my younger thoughts buzzing like electricity. I hurried through the crowded halls, feeling the awkwardness of being my old self all over again. Memories of loneliness and anxiety hit me like waves, and I realized how differently I could act this time. I could stop obsessing over academics, smile at people, start conversations, be someone more social, more approachable. I tried it immediately, stopping by a group of students I had ignored before, attempting a small joke. I laughed at my own

awkwardness, feeling lighter, but just as I turned a corner, a rubber band snapped against my ankle. My heart jumped into my throat. I glanced around to see who had thrown it, no one, the hall was empty. Panic surged through me. I didn't understand what was happening, but a shiver ran down my spine. Something about this felt wrong. I speedwalked down the corridor, ignoring my own trembling. Every instinct told me to get out of there before anyone saw me, before I made another mistake. But I decided to enter an empty classroom, I looked around and saw there were words written on the chalkboard. There was a riddle 'Every mistake is an opportunity—to learn, to adapt, and to evolve'. I wondered it what was about but then the clock above the hallway blurred and I returned to the present. Within seconds, I was back in my own room and clutching the watch. But when I looked around, nothing had changed. My life, my friendships, my sense of belonging, everything was the same. The loneliness I'd been trying to erase pressed down on me harder than ever. I sank onto my bed, staring at the ceiling, my stomach twisting with frustration and despair. I had tried to change myself, to be braver, to be more social, but maybe I had been looking in the wrong place all along. Maybe it wasn't me who needed fixing. Maybe it was something much bigger something tied to my family, to my dad, to the way the world saw me because of him.

## Chapter 8:

I sat on my bed, chewing the end of my pen as my thoughts spiralled. I had gone back twice, changed my past twice, yet nothing in my present had shifted. The laughter I hoped for, the friendships, the sense of belonging, it was all still missing, and I didn't know why. I flipped through an old notebook of **homework** assignments, that's when it struck me; maybe the problem had never been how hard I studied, or how little I socialized. The truth surfaced like a bitter memory; people hadn't disliked me; they disliked my dad. He had been the principal, the one who enforced rules and handed out detentions. And I, by being his daughter, had carried the weight of his authority everywhere I went. My throat tightened. It wasn't me. It was him.

The thought festered in my mind, if my father had never become principal, maybe everything would have been different. Maybe I could go back one last time, not to change myself but to change my dad. The next morning, I marched to Noah's shop, the ticking of clocks filled the silence as he looked up from his workbench.

"You shouldn't be here again," Noah said, his tone disappointed

"This time it will work," I insisted, though my voice shook. "Take me back to when my dad had his interview. If he never gets the job, then my life will finally change." Noah's eyes were full of warning, but after a long pause, he slid the ancient clock across the counter.



“You’re chasing illusions,” he muttered.

I clutched the clock, my pulse hammering. When the world folded around me, I found myself standing in front of the school office, years in the past. Through the glass, I saw my father straightening his tie, ready to step inside for the interview that would set everything in motion. My fists curled at my sides, all the hours of **homework**, the **novels** I had buried myself in to escape, it had all led back to him. Once I stop this, I thought to myself, everything will finally be different. I stepped into the room; it was almost too easy. I ‘accidentally’ spilled water over my dad’s notes, stammering an apology while the ink bled into nothing. His face fell, the confidence slipping as the interviewers exchanged doubtful glances, and I left before he could recover. I told myself it was for the best, that without this job, my life would finally change for the better. But even as I walked away, a knot of guilt formed in my chest.

## Chapter 9:

The second I landed back in the present; my heart was pounding so hard I almost believed this time it had worked. The room felt colder than usual, but I told myself that was just nerves. I'd done it, I'd finally gone far enough back to fix everything. At least, that's what I thought. When I walked into the kitchen, the hope drained out of me in an instant. My dad was pacing back and forth, his brow furrowed and his jaw tight. A stack of unopened envelopes sat on the counter. Bills and work Rejections. he seemed so frustrated. I freeze up while walking through the doorway. My stomach is twisting. This wasn't what was supposed to happen. Without the principal's job, he looked... smaller somehow. Beaten down. I'd never seen him like this before. I'd taken away his stability, his purpose, all because I was desperate to stop people from judging me.

"What have I done?" I whispered, though he didn't hear me.

I sink into a chair at the table, watching as he takes deep breathes of anger. Every step he took across the floor was like an echo that would never stop. I thought changing his past would change how people saw me. I thought it would free me from everything. But all that i had done was make things worse, for him, for us. I'd been so focused on rewriting my own story that I hadn't stopped to think about how it would rewrite his. And now, instead of fixing anything, I'd broken more than I ever intended. Maybe that's why none of my other changes worked. Maybe the past isn't meant to be played with. Every shift I made only twisted into something worse, leaving me more lost than before. For the first time, it wasn't my own pain that I wanted to erase. It was his. I couldn't stand to see him like this, restless, powerless, hurting because of me. I pushed back from the table, grabbed my jacket, and bolted for the door. I had to find Noah. I had to beg him to help me undo everything, before it was too late.



## Chapter 10:

The bell above the shop door gave a tired ring as I burst inside without any breath left to spare. Noah looked up from his workbench where he was working on a new project, but his face filled with concern the moment he saw me.

“Noah,” I gasped

“I need to undo everything. I messed up. I messed up badly. It’s my dad. I ruined everything for him.”

He stood there as quiet as a library for a few seconds, then slowly walked toward the counter, with frustration on his face.

“I warned you, Alara. Time is not a game. Every moment you change shifts another one and then goes on and on.”

A Tear stung my eyes falling down my face. “I know. I know that now. I’m not asking to fix my life anymore. I just want to put things back the way they were before like as if I never touched that watch.”

Noah looked at me, like he was waiting for me to say something. After what felt like forever, he finally nodded. Pulling that evil watch from the shelf, he placed it gently in my hands.

“If you mean what you said, like you truly mean it, this is the last chance. One final reset. You go back to the very beginning... before everything. But once you come back, the past will be locked. No more fixing, no more changing. You’ll have to live with it.”

I swallowed hard and reached for the watch. “I understand.”

The glow began to return. It was soft at but light at first and then fully blinding. When I opened my eyes, I was back by the river. The same quiet but still water. The same smell of the murky water and the fresh smell of grass. The sky was that same electric blue with a hint of gray. But this time, I wasn’t weighed down by regret or confusion. I didn’t feel lost. I just felt at piece I heard footsteps behind me. I didn’t need to turn around because I knew exactly who it was.

“Are you okay?” came a familiar voice said with a soft tone.

I turn my head to see Noah standing just a few steps away, looking exactly like he did the very first day we met. And for the first time in a long time, I smiled not because I wanted to escape something, but because I finally understood everything.

“Yes,” I said softly. “I am okay now.” while smiling

He nodded and sat beside me, just like before. We didn’t talk much. We didn’t need to. The moment was real but different. I stared at the river, watching the way the sunlight shined on its surface. I could hear my heartbeat, steady and calm. The past would stay the past. And maybe the present wasn’t perfect, but it was mine and I need to make it my own. And now I am ready to live it, fully, honestly, without wishing it in any other way. For the first time in a long time, that felt like enough to me. Growing up is meant to be hectic and that's okay.

What if you had the power to turn back time? A chance to re-live your childhood? What if it was all that power came from a single pocket watch??

That's what Alara did. After facing problems in her teenage years Alara met Noah and together they went back in time to save her from her teenage years. Along the way they learn many things and realise that it's okay to make mistakes while growing up.

THE END

