

Introduction:

High school is a stressful time for everybody. As students get older, we accumulate more and more stress about what the future has in store for us. This photo essay is a representation of that feeling. In it, I explore going through the last years of high school and all that comes along with it including things like friends leaving and not feeling prepared enough for senior year. You may have also noticed that in every photo there is a line of subtitles. These subtitles are quotes from the movies "Into the Spider-Verse" and "Across the Spider-Verse." I used quotes from these movies because the biggest theme in those movies is growing up and fitting into other people's expectations. Another motif in this collection of photos is the inclusion of my car, (courtesy of my parents). Throughout the photos, my car is used as a symbol for growing up. I used my car as a symbol because our lives are marked by certain milestones; things like walking for the first time, your first day of high school, and getting your license and first car. To me, getting my first car is a reminder that my highschool years are almost over. So, although I love my car and am thankful for it everyday, it is a reminder that I have to start growing up. Together, the photos, the use of my car, and the subtitles/quotes come together to tell a coming of age story.

1. Naivety



"I just washed my car. that's why I'm wet. No other reason..."

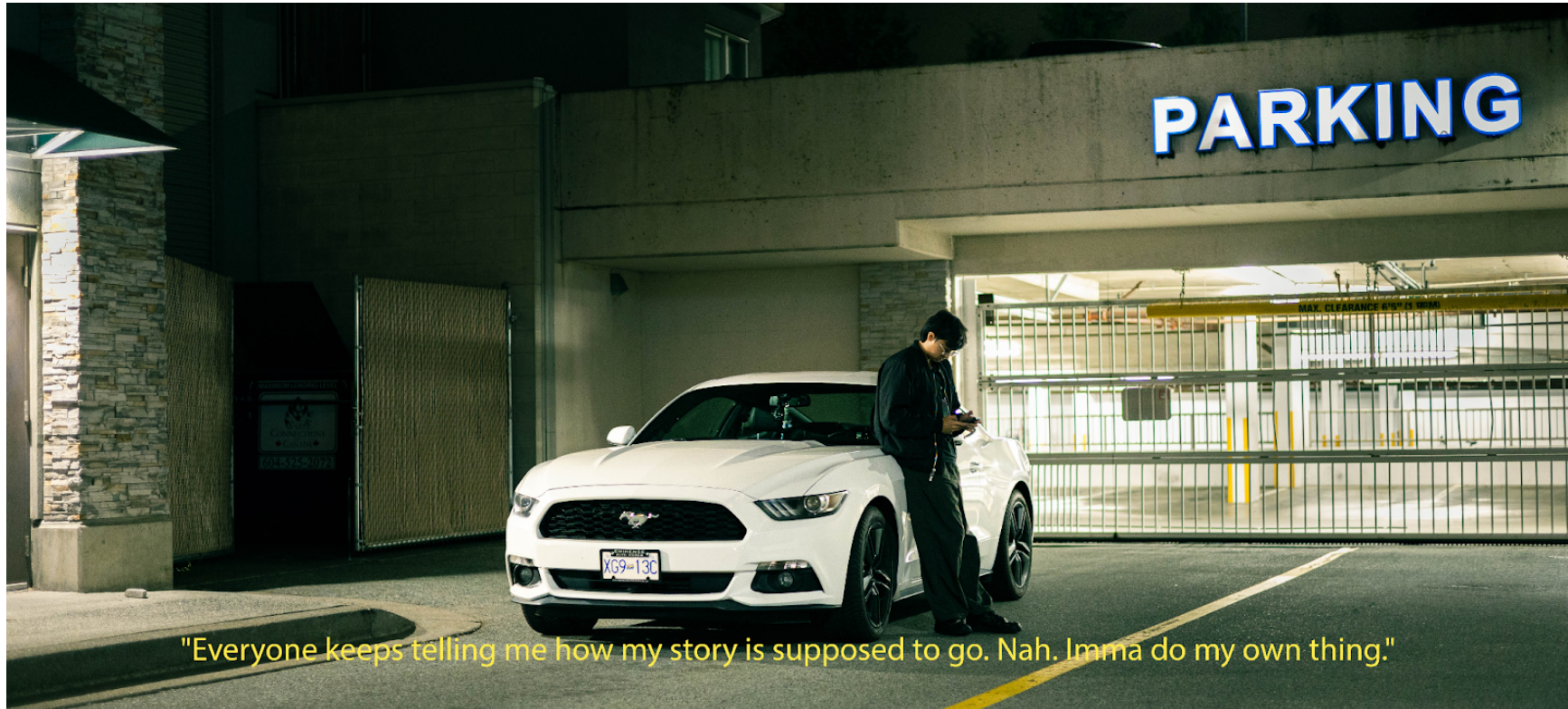
This photo serves as a light hearted introduction to the story. When I first got my car, I was overwhelmed with joy. All I could think about was driving everyday and taking it onto the highway for uhh... test drives. This car is my most prized possession and as a way of showing affection for it, I clean it myself. The quote is a slightly tweaked version of what Spider-Ham, a pig variant of the classic Spider-man, said when he first met Miles Morales. I used a quote from Spider-Ham because he is portrayed as a silly and juvenile character. This doesn't mean he should be underestimated however, because he is still a hero and a Spider-Man. The lighthearted quote and bright image is a gentle introduction into the story that I am telling.

2. Realization and Fear



This photo is the real beginning of the story. It's all about the realization that I really don't have much time left in highschool and that many of my friends are practically already finished with school. After they leave, it'll be my turn except I don't know if I am ready for that yet. The quote I chose for this image is a conversation between Miles Morales and his mentor Peter B. Parker. I chose this quote because I felt that it reflected exactly what I was experiencing. Miles doesn't know if he is ready to be Spider-Man, just as I don't know if I am ready for highschool to end. And the best advice that anyone can give isn't really advice at all: "It's a leap of faith." There's no solution, no way to face the fear other than head on.

3. Hesitation



This photo represents the expectations that come with growing up. You're supposed to become more mature, more quiet, more civilized, and less of a child. But what if you don't want to be those things? What if you don't want to conform and be just like everybody else? That's the feeling that this image is supposed to give off. The car being outside the parking garage is a metaphor for being "outside the box." The quote I chose for this photo is from "Across the Spider-Verse" when Miles decides that he wants to create his own path and not follow the path that others set up for him. This directly relates to this photo as that is the theme I am trying to explore. Another theme I was trying to portray in this photo is the hesitation to grow up. I'm standing outside the car instead of being inside it, showing that I'm hesitant to accept that I am indeed growing up. Altogether, this photo serves as a gradual but also vital turning point in the journey growing up.

4. Facing the Fears



"It always fits... eventually."

This photo represents facing the fears of growing up, whether I am ready or not. The light trails in the image show movement onwards. The car starts in the back of the road and the light trails get closer and closer. The winding and twisting shows that life is not a straight path. Life's always gonna throw curveballs at you and you have to learn to navigate them. The quote I chose for this photo was said by Stan Lee (RIP). In the movie, Stan says this to Miles as he is selling a Spider-Man costume to him. On the surface, it just means that the costume is too big for Miles and that he will have to wait to grow into it eventually. But the quote is actually a metaphor. "Into the Spider-Verse" is a movie about self discovery and becoming who YOU want to become. What Stan really meant when he said this quote was that Miles would find his place in society and find out what kind of person he is eventually.

5. Learning the Ropes



This photo is supposed to represent a gradual acceptance. The sun setting is a metaphor for a chapter of my life closing. As my grade 11 year comes to an end, I have to accept that grade 12 is coming, and that I have to start preparing for life out of highschool. The quote I chose for this photo was said by Miles' dad, Jeff Morales. This is a twist on the iconic Uncle Ben quote "With great power comes great responsibility." I thought that this quote represented this photo well because what Jeff said is true. As I grow older I will have more freedom to do what I want to do, and there has to be accountability for whatever actions I choose.

6. Acceptance

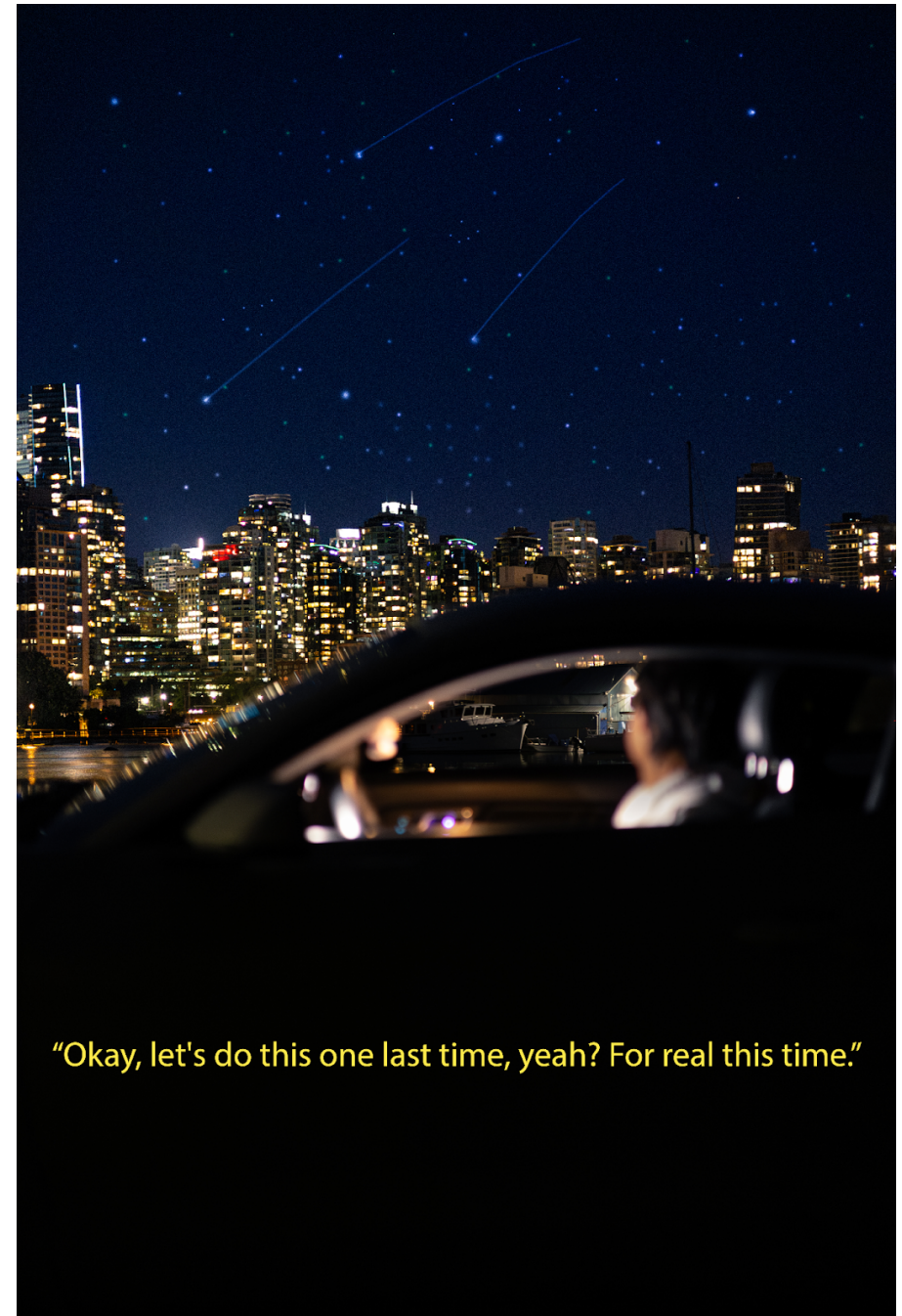


"Anyone can wear the mask. You could wear the mask. If you didn't know that before, I hope you know that now."

This photo represents, as you can see from the title, acceptance. It serves as basically the ending to the journey. I'm inside the car now because I've accepted that I need to grow up. The quote I chose is from the end of "Into the Spider-Verse." It's Miles' final monologue to the viewers as his story comes to a close. The quote is basically the entire ideology behind the Spider-Verse movies. Anybody can wear the mask. Anybody can be anything they want. To me, this is a key part of growing up because people will always tell you what they want you to be but you don't have to listen and can decide for yourself.

7. Anticipation

This is the last photo in this photo essay. It represents being excited for the future. As I sit in the car, I stare longingly at the stars which represent the future. The quote I chose is again from the ending of "Into the Spider-Verse." Miles's story is finally complete and he realizes who he is. He is also now fully embracing his role as Spider-Man just as I am embracing growing up.



"Okay, let's do this one last time, yeah? For real this time."

