



D181 Young Writers Night

HOSTED BY THE DISTRICT 181 FOUNDATION

February 27, 2020

Hinsdale Middle School

"I kept always two books in my pocket, one to read, one to write in."

– Robert Louis Stevenson

"You can make anything by writing."

– C.S. Lewis

"Writing is perhaps the greatest of human inventions, binding together people, citizens of distant epochs, who never knew one another. Books break the shackles of time — proof that humans can work magic."

– Carl Sagan

"I can shake off everything as I write; my sorrows disappear, my courage is reborn."

– Anne Frank

"Ideas are like rabbits. You get a couple and learn how to handle them, and pretty soon you have a dozen."

– John Steinbeck

"Read, read, read. Read everything — trash, classics, good and bad, and see how they do it. Just like a carpenter who works as an apprentice and studies the master. Read! You'll absorb it. Then write. If it's good, you'll find out. If it's not, throw it out of the window."

– William Faulkner

"No tears in the writer, no tears in the reader. No surprise in the writer, no surprise in the reader."

– Robert Frost

"This is how you do it: you sit down at the keyboard and you put one word after another until its done. It's that easy, and that hard."

– Neil Gaiman

"A professional writer is an amateur who didn't quit."

– Richard Bach



February 27, 2020
6:00pm - 9:30pm
Hinsdale Middle School

6:00pm

Check In
Book Sales & Signing

6:25pm

Introductions
Keynote Speaker Mary Winn Heider

7:00pm

Breakout Session A

7:30pm

Breakout Session B

8:00pm

Breakout Session C

8:30pm

Open Mic Coffee House

Keynote Speaker – Mary Winn Heider



Mary Winn Heider is the author of *The Mortification of Fovea Munson*, loosely based on her time working in a real-life cadaver lab.

Her next novel, *The Losers at the Center of the Galaxy*, comes out March 2021, and her first picture book, *The Unicorns Who Saved Christmas*, will be out later this year.

These days, she is working on a play adaptation of FOVEA for the Kennedy Center and a secret graphic novel project that she can't wait to tell you all about.

Mary Winn has an MFA from Vermont College of Fine Arts, and she lives in Chicago, where she teaches creative writing residencies, performs at theaters around the city, and designs games for The Mystery League.

Thank You

The District 181 Foundation is thrilled to organize and fund the District 181 Young Writers Night, bringing together students, parents and teachers to celebrate the power of writing and to encourage students to share their writing with others. This evening would not be possible without the support of the following individuals:

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Special Thank You

Special thank you to Andrew Kudelka, graphic novelist and instructor at The Community House for joining us to lead learning sessions. Thank you also to Robin James for photography and to Quest for providing the refreshments.



District 181 FOUNDATION

About the District 181 Foundation

Strong public schools are one of our community's most valuable assets. The District 181 Foundation inspires community involvement, pride and support for the exceptional education provided to all District 181 students. Delivering enhanced educational resources to public schools requires financial support beyond what tax dollars can provide.

In our community, the District 181 Foundation is the main catalyst for funding innovative, first-rate enrichment programs for students, parents and educators from our schools, including Elm, Madison, Monroe, Oak, Prospect, The Lane, Walker, Hinsdale Middle School and Clarendon Hills Middle School.

Our programs, including Young Writers Night, D181 Student Art Exhibit, Got STEM 181? Science Night and KIDS Grants, enrich the minds of students. The Community Speaker Series delivers important education, child development and wellness information to parents. Our teacher grant programs support learning in the classroom and professional development for all District 181 educators.

Since its inception the District 181 Foundation has invested over \$1,000,000 in District 181 schools.

Help us Enrich D181 Students

The Foundation's goal is for D181 students to receive a high-quality education and live happy, fulfilled lives. The generosity of our donors help us enhance the number of educational and enrichment opportunities for students, parents and educators. To donate to the District 181 Foundation, visit www.d181foundation.org.

Follow us on Social Media and Help Spread the Word



Stay up to date on D181 Foundation events and news for students and parents on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter – @D181Foundation. And, we love seeing students and parents enjoying Foundation events. Please tag us in your photos and "Share" our posts with your network.



Breakout Learning Sessions

Nurturing the Writing Process vs. Becoming a Ghostwriter. (Parents Only)

Room 113

Led by: Dr. Kathleen Robinson, Dana Berghold, Tracey Miller

This session focuses on how parents can assist their child in developing personal writing skills instead of taking over the writing process. Learn about a wide variety of practical strategies parents can use to support their child's writing and love of writing.

Similes & Metaphors- led by Tiffany Egan

Room 105

Do you know the difference between similes and metaphors? Do you know how to include them in your writing to make your writing more descriptive? Whether your answer is yes or no to either question, come play a simile and metaphor game and leave with a poem or two.

Tell Your Story in a Ballad – Led by Cheryl Esparza

Room 219

Writing takes many forms. One of the oldest is called a ballad. Ballads were traditionally used as poems that told a story, usually of folklore or legends. Today, ballads have turned into poems or songs that tell our current-day stories. Many modern ballads are about love, but they don't have to be. Learn how to write a ballad. Leave the session with everything you need to start composing your own original ballad.

How to Fail at Everything! (Especially writing!) – Led by Mary Winn Heider

Room 102

The fear of failure is SO REAL. It can stop us in our tracks, sometimes even before we start. But what if it didn't? And what if we found a way to use those moments where we don't do as well as we hoped? Change the way you think about failure in this session with Mary Winn Heider! She'll talk about how failure and creativity are secretly best friends, she'll include strategies for when you write something truly terrible and feel like throwing it in the trash, and by the end, she'll get you excited for your next big failure!

Writing an If-Then Adventure Story – Led by Robin Ingstrup

Room 104

Want to write a story with your friends? Find out how to use the power of Google Slides to collaborate on a story where the reader can choose the story path based on the choices you provide. Work with your friends or come up with your own ideas for wacky settings, characters, problems, and solutions for your story. Then we'll learn how to link slides together to create a fun and different story each time.

Graphic Novel Brainstorming - Led by Andrew Kudelka

Room 101

Are you a fan of comics (aka graphic novels)? Do you enjoy the juxtaposition of words & pictures? Interested in creating something of your own but you don't know where to begin? Join Comic Art Creator & Instructor Mr. Andrew Kudelka for a brief breakdown of comic history, the creation process, and a quick brainstorming session to discover the wonderful world of visual storytelling. All genres welcome: from Superheroes, Fantasy, Horror, and Sci-Fi...to Auto-Biographical, Historical, Political, and Educational. Mix, twist, and shape them any way you want. Nothing is limited, everything permitted!

Six-Word Memoirs – Led by Danielle Scacco

Room 217

"Everyone has a story. What's Yours?" -Smith Magazine. Can you tell a whole story in just six words? This session will challenge you to be concise while still capturing the essence of a story. We will use a variety of images and characters to spark our own six-word memoirs.

Roll the Cubes – Led by Heather Scott

Room 213

Roll the character, setting, and situation cubes. Mix and match combinations to brainstorm a plot. Start a story. Pass your story on to a peer to be continued while you read and add on to someone else's! Who knows where we'll go?! Join HMS Language Arts teacher Mrs. Scott to let the roll of a cube guide your creativity. Come ready to brainstorm, try new ideas, as well as share work! All ages welcome!

How to Get Published – Led by Donna Vorreyer

Room 211

Have you ever wondered what the publishing process is like? It may not be as easy (or as difficult!) as you think. Ms. Vorreyer, an HMS teacher and published poet, will take you through the steps. You don't have to be an adult to be published. This session will share tips for getting started and a list of reputable places where students can submit their work for publication.



Student Writers

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My family is special because they take me to fun places like Disney World in Florida. It's so fun and I went to Florida with my cousin too. My family let's me invite my friends over at my birthday and house. My family is nice because they show me surprises. They surprised me when I found out my mom was having a baby. Once they surprised me when they take me to places like the water park or the pool with my cousin Ward. They best surprise would be if they told me that I can have a pet cat. I WILL BE SO HAPPY. I love my family because they make me feel happy and let me have fun. My family is the best family EVER!! MY FAMILY IS SO NICE!

THEY ARE THE BEST FAMILY EVER! DO YOU LIKE YOUR FAMILY OR YOU DON'T LIKE YOUR FAMILY? I LIKE MY FAMILY I HOPE YOU DO TO?

Maha Aldallal
Elm School Grade 3

My Christmas

Creek! I rushed to the tree
to see if there were any presents for me!
My mom was awake
so the coffee in bed I couldn't make.
The tantrum inside I couldn't keep,
so I ordered her to go to sleep.
The coffee was done,
time to have fun.
As she took a sip,
I had time to think.
What present will she open first
that will make her heart burst.
It was my turn at last
time went so fast!
I picked up my first gift
it was easy to lift.
It was a kit from my mom
to make a bath bomb.
I finally opened all of them,
my mom cleared her throat with an ahem.
Open the envelope
I hope it's not dope.
Room to Room the hunt was on,
I wondered what I'd come upon.
I knew what to do
as I read each clue.
In my home,
I heard jingle bells ring from my new phone.
I love my new hover-board,
Oh no! Where's the charging cord!
My balance beam will have to wait
because I need monkey bread on my plate.
I didn't need more,
everything I had I adored.

Audrey Bailey
Prospect School Grade 4

My Worst Nightmare

It was one of those days that started out like any other. I didn't think that my worst fear would have come to life today, until my 5th grade teacher, Ms. McGreal started speaking.

Ms. McGreal said, "Class, today I will be assigning a new project. You will have to give a presentation in front of the whole class about an animal of your choosing. You will make index cards, one for habitat, one for species, one for diet and one for interesting facts. This project is due next week on Thursday. We will be presenting Friday, Monday and Tuesday."

"Oh, no, not speaking in front of the whole class," I whispered to myself.

The students began to talk and I couldn't hear anything. I started to feel hot inside like fire was going through my veins. I could feel this pit in my gut. *Why did it have to be public speaking?*

The bell rang and school was over for the day. I walked home after school with my friends. When I got home, I couldn't stop thinking about that assignment. I couldn't shake the fear - *was I going to do well? Was I going to fail?* The idea of public speaking has always made my heart race, my stomach churn and my mind burn with thoughts that people are staring at me. I have never liked being the center of attention. I worry that when I open my mouth the wrong thing might come out or that people will laugh.

The next day, Ms. McGreal let us work in class. I had to figure out what animal I was going to present on. Gorillas always riveted me because of how unique they are but how similar they are to humans. I thought that if I picked a topic that I am interested in I would do better on the project. It still wouldn't change the fact I had to present in front of everyone though.

Later that night, my mom helped me organize my thoughts and practice presenting my notes each day for the full week. I was hoping the practice would help me feel less sick about this assignment.

"I feel weird and awkward," I said.

"This is how you practice presenting."

I read my index cards in front of the dog and she licked me after. Now, I knew I had the dog's approval. I wish speaking in front of class was as easy as speaking in front of the dog. I practiced speaking in front of my brothers, Shail and Milan. I was nervous to present in front of them.

"I'm nervous mom," I remarked.

"The only way that you are going to get an A on this assignment is if you push through it," Mom said.

"What if they pick on me or bother me?" I whined.

I was thinking to myself, *If I am nervous to speak in front of two people who know me best, how am I going to speak in front of 26 classmates?* After I finished practicing in front of my brothers, after some mild teasing, my mom wanted me to talk with her alone.

"Let me give you some advice," she said. "When it is your turn to present, before you start, take a deep breath and calm down," she responded. "When you are presenting, I want you to look at a friendly face and imagine you and him are somewhere else, having fun."

I thought for a minute about a few friends of mine in class. "I can do that. Thanks for the advice mom," I remarked.

The next day, I only had one thing on my mind, *today is the first day of presenting our ELA projects.* Mom told me to remember the advice she said and to do your best. She also reminded me that even if I didn't do well she still was proud of me. I went to class and sat in my chair waiting for the teacher, my anxiety building. I could feel myself getting to full panic mode. This was my worst nightmare. When the teacher was ready for presentations to begin, she explained how it would work.

Ms. McGreal said, "Class, here is how people are going to present. You are going to stand in the front of the class facing everyone behind the podium. I am going to draw sticks to see who goes first. After you are done you will get your grade back. Does everyone understand what we are doing?"

"Yes," the class said. The first person to present was Oliver.

"Oliver, tell the class what animal you are doing and explain why," Ms. McGreal said.

"The animal I did was a jellyfish, and the reason why is because jellyfish are my favorite animal," Oliver said. Oliver's presentation was amazing. He didn't look nervous and appeared confident. His presentation was met with thunderous applause and a winning smile from the teacher. As other students presented, I felt myself growing more anxious waiting for my turn.

Finally, my moment arrived. I walked up to the podium-so many faces! I could feel my hands tingling, my mouth go dry and I couldn't even swallow. I closed my eyes, remembering what my mom said about looking for just one friendly face.

When I opened my eyes I focused on David, my close friend. David's warm smile and friendly face was comforting. I began to speak. During my speech, my legs started to tremble and my heart started pounding like a drum. When my speech was over I could feel relief wash over me. I took a deep breath feeling like a winner. Even though I had no idea what I had scored, I was still glad about how I performed. Overcoming speaking in front of everyone was more fulfilling than whatever grade I got. I felt so elated that I accomplished something extremely hard and that was very well done. Later that night, my family was so proud of me. My mom told me that hard work pays off.

Aryan Bansal
HMS Grade 6

The Grey Wolf

Did you know that the grey wolf was removed from Yellowstone National park in 1926? Wolves are blind and deaf for the first ten months of their lives. To elaborate, the pup's family must really take care of them because the pup can't do anything for itself because it cannot see or hear. If the grey wolf was removed from its ecosystem it would cause disturbance in the balance of its nature without it.

Taking out the grey wolf from its ecosystem would be terrible. Wolves help keep the elk and deer population in check, this benefits the other animal species. When the wolves were gone, the elk population exploded in Yellowstone National Park. The elk and deer ate all the grass, then all the other animals such as birds and other animals that use grass for their homes died from the harsh weather without their home. When wolves hunt they leave remains of the prey, the **carcasses** of their prey help redistribute nutrients and provide food for other species in the wild. When the grey wolves got removed, the elk started to destroy other animals' homes and then they started to buck each other away to fight each other for food because there was hardly any grass left. Also, when the elk were overpopulated and they **consumed** all the space then the birds and the other tiny animals had to literally move to a different location. Without the grey wolves it's ecosystem would fall apart so for this reason they are vital in maintaining the health and balance of its ecosystem.

Grind! Chomp! Chomp! The grey wolf has sharp jaws that grind up their prey and leave the remains which provide food for other wildlife. Also if the wolves did not have good sharp jaws the grey wolves would not be able to keep the deer population in check. The grey wolf has physical features that help its ecosystem stay in balance. Their fur is also key because if they did not have their warm coat of fur during the winter time, they would not be able to kill their prey. They also use their fur to camouflage during the different seasons which helps the grey wolf blend into their surroundings. The wolves also have a great sense of smell and can track down their prey easily so their packs can eat. Also the grey wolves can run up to 40 miles per hour which is great for catching the deer and then the carcasses provide nutrients to the other animals. These characteristics of the wolf are important to keeping its ecosystem in good health.

Removing the grey wolf, a keystone species, from its ecosystem will have a negative impact on its habitat. Wolves help keep the elk and deer population in check, this benefits the other animal species. The grey wolf has many unique features that help them survive in the wild. Grey wolves are important to its ecosystem because it plays an important role in its home, by hunting their prey which keeps the other animals in check. Or else we will be lost without them.

Milan Bansal
The Lane School Grade 4

Beach Park Adventure!

In this book, you'll read about swimming frisbees, mysterious shoes, sand kitchens, and the author's last days of her 2019 summer! There are lots of mysterious things in this true story, but one thing is for sure, this is going to be a wild adventure! So sit back and relax because this story will surely bring you warmth on such a cold day in Chicago.

Chapter 1 - Failure to success

We decided to play in Eathan's tent. "So What should we do..." my voice trailed off.

I decided to start a conversation about the horrible failure that happened the day before. I failed in coding summer camp robot sumo wrestling. Then an idea sprouted. "That's it, sumo wrestling!" I said, "But who should do it?" asked Ella. Good question.

"How about Michael and Ethan?" I asked. They eagerly agreed. We chose other positions. I was the judge, Ella was my assistant, and Claire was a medicalist. We had loads of fun in our positions. Then we started getting bored watching only Michael and Ethan wrestle. I remembered my lanyards. So I said, "I have lanyards, let's play with them!"

I got them out. I got the role of Glimmer (her power is to control nature, I don't have her twin, Glamour, but she is second to oldest), Ella got Beauty (she's the oldest, her power is to control beauty, she's my favorite) and Michael got Queeny (the youngest back then, her power is leadership). Too bad I only owned part of the Coral Family. My friend Heather owned part, and so did Sophia. I told them the story of the family so far, but in the middle of my little "speech" Ella LOST BEAUTY!!!!!!!!!!!!!! I could write that (actually type it) a million more times and still cannot believe what I just typed.

We looked and looked and might as well have turned the whole tent upside down, but no luck, we still didn't find Beauty. "Let's look for her later." I sighed. Barely after I finished my sentence, I heard the parents yell "Beach Time!" We changed as fast as possible (we might have broken a record) and went in the cars. I went in Michael's car because it has a TV.

Chapter 2 - "Beach time!"

While the parents set the tent on the hot, soft sand, we dug a dark, deep hole. We dug the hole for a pretty long time. Then, we started burying people in sand designed. We first buried Michael, we pretended that he was an Egyptian Pharaoh who got shot in the nose, so we put the itchy, yellowish sand on his nose. Big mistake. The sand tickled his nose. He started wiggling like a worm. So our "mummy" structure didn't last very long. Next, we tried to turn Ethan into a merman. It worked!!
(Not really.)

Then, we decided to have some fun in the water. It wasn't the best choice because the second we got out of the water, it was cold as if I was standing on Pluto with nothing on but my swimsuit. So I let them bury me as a mermaid. (Another mistake, I had to get the sand out of my swimsuit in the water, and when I came out, I was cold again. It was a vicious cycle.)

Just then the parents called us over for a snack. We ate applesauce, popcorn, White Rabbit sugar candies, and fruit. We danced too! Though it was harder to dance in the soft, hot sand.

Then we decided to play the game Puppies. I was the mother, and all the others were the puppies. Then, I got out a frisbee. We played frisbee! The puppy who brought me the frisbee got a doggy treat (rocks). Once, I the frisbee sails itself into the water, but they all wanted the treats so much they swam to the frisbee, and I followed them in, and when I did, my Crocs floated off, and when that happened, Ella swam after my Crocs instead of the frisbee!! At the end of that round of frisbee, Ella got a golden water pass, and a treat. Michael got one too! It was hilarious.

Chapter 3 - Sand kitchen

Well, well, well if you read the little intro before the intro, you probably are really excited for this chapter, but here's a warning, if you do the same as we did DO NOT EAT IT, Ok I know you won't, dive in! We decided to make "doggie dinner". We mixed wet, goopy sand to make "oatmeal" for appetizers. We put that in the oven. "That should be ready by the time dinner starts." I say. Then, we made veeeeeeery goopy, soaked sand to make the dough. We took the "dough" and spread it on the bottom of the "plate", we put "filling" (tiny pebbles, rather big pebbles, and about a tablespoon of bottom-of-the-sea-sand.), and then we covered the sides, bottom and top in wet, goopy sand. "Well that's going to be ready by the time the oatmeal is all in our stomachs." I say. "Dessert!!!!!!" I exclaimed. We mixed wet and dry sand to make "pie", and put it in the oven. We "ate" everything and went to "clean the dishes" in the water. It was pretty fun (The sand that wasn't dry that we used was goopy as cement).

After all the excitement, my dad took us by surprise and took out our canoe. We took turns letting him take us out to the lake. While we waited for our turn, we ate some leftovers from the snack, buried Clair's dad's shoes, and studied the sand. I'm not going to bore you with the complaints of the kids about going last. But after the canoe trip, we got in trouble for burying Claire's dad's shoes. He found one of them, but not the other. We buried them together. How weird. So he let us bury the other shoe, it was worth the trouble.

Chapter 4 - A new invention

(And a Coral family hero)

We went to take our showers. After I was done with mine, I hoped I didn't smell like sulfa even though I took my shower in sulfur water. When everyone got back, we made lunch. Mainly barbecue barbecue by the camp fire. While the parents made lunch, I took a barbecue stick, a few marshmallows, and went to the fire. I put the marshmallows just on top of the metal covering the fire. The marshmallows started roasting. Soon, all the other kids joined in. Then, Michael started roasting FRUIT SNACKS on the fire too!!!!!! But the parents stopped the fun for most people.

Ethan finished eating before anyone else, and he went to look for Beauty. I was just about to get up and go help Ethan find Beauty, when he came racing out of his tent, yelling "I found Beauty!!I found Beauty!!!!!!!" We all cheered. "Where?!" I said excitedly. "On the side of the bed, you guys didn't find it because you didn't want to be cramped on the side of the mattress." "Oh, thank you, thank you, thank you a million times in a row!" I said, the mattress has probably been "holding Beauty for ransom" all this time. We talked and played in Ella's tent. I offered the reward I promised but he just said loudly and proudly "I just want to do the right thing."

It was time to celebrate Ella's birthday, it was one of the reasons we came here, and the reason that her family has been in New York the week before. Claire and I sang the modified birthday song again and again, we couldn't stop giggling while we sang! Again and again went the sound "Happy birthday to you, your 102, you smell like a monkey, and you're going to K2!" Again and again went the giggles. Again and again I told Claire that K2 means kindergarten. We ate frosty, chocolate and vanilla , 2-layered cake. The parents promised another the next day.

Chapter 5 - A different Beach

After we changed into our swimsuits, we went to the beach. We decided to play the game Puppies again. This time, Ella was the evil babysitter. We made "poisonous cake" because Ella was "evil". When we were done playing the game, we dug a big hole. But we weren't cackling like witches burying treasure (shoes).

Then, we went to the "Waves Show" which is actually sitting in the water getting splashed. We laughed as we found the perfect "splash zone" which depends on height. Then, we went ashore to dry off in the midday sun while my mom got us lunch.

Chapter 6 - The long goodbye

When we were dry and our hands were washed, we ate the delicious lunch. My mom's special steak burritos, watermelon, popcorn, and candy. After the meal, Eathan and Michael left for home. Me, Ella, and Claire dug a hole barely speaking, glum that the two day fun was almost over. Then, I said good-bye, and left. I took a shower in my RV the way home. I thought about the wonderful summer of 2019.

Chapter 7 - Afterthought

The next day, summer would be over, I'd be back in school. The stress free, no Chinese homework days were gone for a whole six months. When I got home, I took another shower and danced a little. Then we ate barbecue for dinner.

The next day, I found myself in Mrs. Egan's classroom writing this wonderful story about my adventure.

Charlotte Bao

Madison School Grade 4

Kit!

One day me and my mom went to do some errands. I saw a really, really pretty butterfly but its wing was broken. I was sad but I could not just let it die. So I kept it. I taught it how to fly. The next day Kit, the butterfly, knew how to fly, kinda. Kit was scared, she started to shake. My brother, Logan, said you should probably let it go. I said ok. Bye Kit.

Savie Barrios

The Lane School Grade 4

How the Parthenon Was Built

One of the greatest architectural wonders of the world was the Parthenon, at the Acropolis, in Athens, Greece. The Parthenon took nine years to build. The original purpose of the Parthenon was to serve as a temple to house the patron goddess Athena. Athena was the goddess of war and wisdom. The Parthenon was comprised of forty foot columns. Each

column was made up of eleven individual drums. The individual drums were held in place with pins that were placed in between the drums to hold them in place and keep them from moving. Although the columns of the Parthenon appear to be perfectly straight, there is not one ninety degree angle in the entire structure. In an attempt to make the Parthenon appear completely straight and perfect to the naked eye, the ancient Greeks created an optical illusion by tilting everything very slightly inward. By curving and tilting everything very slightly inward, they accomplished two objectives, they allowed the columns to support the weight of the roof and the entire structure, and they also made the columns and structure appear perfectly straight to the naked eye. There are over 70,000 pieces of marble used to construct the Parthenon. They used over 22,000 tons of marble to construct the marble. Never before had so much marble been used to construct a temple in the ancient world. Pentelic marble from nearby Mount Pentellicus was used to build the Parthenon. The Parthenon today remains as one of the most famous architectural wonders of the world.

Joanna Berbas
HMS Grade 6

Trust Memoir

Trust tastes sweet, but once it's broken it becomes bitter and sour, and you are terrified of trying it again so you can protect yourself from the terrible taste you last experienced. Trust is beautiful, and once it's gone, your mind goes insane trying to find it again, because the beauty was that of an angel's wings. Trust sound like a sweet harmony sung by the heavens above, each verse dripping like honey in a soprano melody. Trust smells so sweet, until it isn't, until it becomes that bitter and sour taste, and along with it, the smell of succulent daisies and lilacs turns the terrible stench of garbage that's been left out in the rain. Trust feels like a newborn baby's hand, soft and innocent, but that soft innocence goes away once the baby starts crying and flailing its limbs; all you are left with is the task of making it satisfied again.

Avery Cannan
HMS Grade 7

New Friends

It was moving day, and I was extremely excited to go to my new school. It was called Oak School, but when I walked in the school, I was starting to get nervous so I tried hard not to get called on.

Recess time struck so once I got outside, I ran to one of the benches, but then a kid named Kevin said, "Hey, do you want to play?" I simply said, "yes," and we were having so much fun it was extraordinary! He was really energetic. We were going down slides and on the swings. When we went back inside, we talked and played some more. "Where do you live?" he said, "maybe I can come over some time."

Jamie Cannan
Oak School Grade 3

Surfing

Crash! I hear the waves on the beach. Me and my cousin Caeden were about to try surfing for the first time. We get ready to go so we put our wet suits on and grab the boards. As we wait for the instructors our parents were so excited to see us try to surf, but I was so scared! I had butterflies in my stomach my legs were shaking with fear. I knew my mom was on the shore waiting to get a video. What if I fall off or worse what if I can't get back on my board!?

I hesitate before I go in the cold dark water. My cousin Caeden yells "come on!" The instructor takes me out and away from the shore "ready to surf!" he says. I reply back, "not really I'm a little scared." Just as a wave is coming I start to get even more scared than before. "3,2,1 Go!" the instructor says. I take off speeding through the waves. I think to myself I'm gonna make it! I'm gonna - Splash! I drop into the water. But that won't stop me. I try again.

Paddling back out to the instructor, "Good job!" he said. We waited a good 15 minutes before another good wave came. "This wave is really big," I say to myself. "Are you ready?" Caeden asked me. "Um no, I am terrified." "But it's time to get up and surf," I say to myself terrified.

All of a sudden I yell then slip off the board, a few feet away from the shore. The waves crashing over me, I can't get up. Finally I get a short breath. Oh no I think to myself another wave! Right before the wave crashes back over me, I get up and run to shore. Too scared to try again. "Oh come on Mason," Caeden says, "Try again." "But what if I fall into the gross salty tasting water," I say. "You won't," he says. "Fine but if I get hurt that's all your fault, Caeden."

Sitting on my board with my hand in the water, terrified. "A wave is coming," the instructor says. "Remember keep your balance. Ready and Go!" "I'm doing it," I scream! The shore is only felt away so close and...I made it. "Yes," I scream. I had made it. Later that night I fell asleep happy and hoping to do it again. I learned that you don't have to be afraid to try something new.

Mason Cannan
Oak School Grade 5

Hiders

There was a person outside the castle that night. Looked as if the strange and mysterious person was some sort of danger to those inside the stone walls of the castle. Normally the guards would ask who they were and all but they didn't. Johan was staying in the tallest thinnest tower on the East wing and castle. Only one room at small room the top and a gloomy spiral staircase leading to the bottom. One hour, Two hours, Three hours had passed and the person remained. Johan had no idea who it was because of the dark cloak he or she was wearing. Johan chose to stay up all night observing the person. Dawn had come and the peasants in the distance were out to till the fields. Smoke was billowing from the homes and businesses of the town nearby. The sun was only a small speck rising in the distance. Soon Johan decided to set down to go see who it was the guards were not up yet. He set down into the garden then past the main gate. He saw the person and the cloak. He or She had a sword. The person was running towards him! What was he going to do! He felt a thud as he fell and a sack went over his head. Then everything went blank. He passed out of the fall and fear, even if he was conscious, he still couldn't see because of the heavy woven dirty sack. (It smelled like old rotten wheat that had been sitting in there for months. He woke up and heard horses galloping. He was on a cart. "Where am I!" He demanded. No Answer. The cart stopped. He knew that the king's men would find him soon because he was a noble's son after all. The cart started again only he could smell some meat and bread as if this mysterious person had to do some grocery shopping. "Who are you" he yelled. "Stay quiet if ya don't want sleep with the pigs you spoiled child." barked the person. Johan could tell it was a good angry ogre, but the person was human as he knew. Soon after a few hours the cart stopped at a very large fortress by a cracked mountain and a mossy Gforest. The morteros was black with a large red castle in the Center. They carried him through their garden of dead plants and trees. The castle was dark and had lots of fire. They set him in a chained chair in the middle of their throne room. He had found out it was a man and a woman who had the form of one person. They sat in their thrones. "Who are You and Where are you from!" Asked the man. "I am the son of lord Cysrase and lady Cysrase from Groughtum in the isles." "You have been abducted you because you are in great danger." "You are also the most spoiled child in all on. This mystery assassin is loose in the area a killing nobles and their family." said the lady. We will take you to our large place on the ocean in the desert. It is very white so you must scrub all day to keep it clean." said the lord and lady." Soon He was into his bed quarter in the West tower looking at the cracked mountain and a purple glow was inside the crack of the mountain. He wondered what it was. He soon thought that was what the danger was. Johan decided to go to bed and find out tomorrow. Soon the red birds were singing and the pansys hid their heads. "Get Up!" Barked the lord. "We've got a big day ahead of us my fine fellow. A ship is going in Storugmt and I am sorry if the cabin is not good enough for you" the lord said sarcastically. Johan was worried about sailing on a ship to the desert. The lord said the journey was going to take about 3 weeks. Deserts were hot and sunny right next to the sea. They hopped on their cart to take them to the harbour town of Storugmt. "Look out!" said Johan. A knight was chasing them. A suspicious purple cape with a green scarf with a silver eagle on it. "That was the danger I was talking about." "He is an assassin trying to target and kill nobles with their hiders." "What's a hider?" Johan asked. "People or a group of people that hides nobles from the evil assassin group that tries to bring terror to the world." "Secretly your mother and father paid for us as your hiders. Your parents ran off to the foothills in Saylonavamia." "So you mean this was meant?" Asked Johan. "Yes" replied the lord. The cart turned up an alley and waited for the purple knight to pass. It did and their cart went on. "Storgumt is in these mountainous regions near the ocean. It's hidden in one of these fertile inlets." said the lady. "Or 'Fjord' as those nomadic northern

civilizations called it" said the lord. Soon they had arrived at the dock and they saw the ship that was awaiting them. They boarded and the hider couple went to their small cabin up top and Johan went to his cabin, the cheapest cabin of all but it had privacy and a straw bed to lay on. The cargo was at the bottom of the ship underwater, and the hull with all the poor and cheap travel. Johan stepped out on the deck the sea air was crisp and cool in the morning. He looked out in the distance, suspicious warships were following their ship. Johan had never seen one that looked like it. He knew what all of the warships from the surrounding countries looked like. After all he was the son of the naval general. None matched. Cannons appeared from the side of the ship and he could see many of those purple knights on deck of the ship. It was too far out to shoot cannons and arrows but it was following them at great speed. In a couple minutes the ship disappeared in some sort of abyss. Days passed and the ship went on. Johan had to help scrub the decks of the ship to pay. As the days passed on the ship, Johan was always working and cleaning. A woman named Mrs. Galvestronte told Johans Hiders that if he worked very hard, by the time the ship reached its destination, he would have half the spoiled mind in him. "He will be a good child when he is not spoiled anymore." said Mrs. Galvestronte in a very deep Ukrainian accent. "Where in the desert are we going?" Asked Johan. "Arash Shakiff. Your parent wants you to meet the king." responded the lord. "Land Ho" yelled the captain. "We will be in Arash Shakiff by tomorrow." "I can feel that hot desert air already" said Mrs. Galvestronte. After the last luxury dinner of Steak, Turkey, and Beans. Palm trees were in sight and everyone rejoiced. At noon their ship landed at the port. "This place is paradise!" said Johan. Beautiful tropical flowers and lush grass grew by the palm trees. "The looks are deceiving, tomorrow we will be in the hot sandy desert" said the lady. "Time to go on our carriage now." said the driver. "You do not want to be late meeting the king of Kairruft." They went on the carriage and the white royal sand horses took them to the palace. Soon they got to the palace and they got off at the royal garden. They all walked up the quartz stairs to the entrance. The guards let them in to the castle and a greeting from the king. "Hello" said the king in a very Arabian accent. "I hope you are good in the kingdom of Kairruft. Do you young man know why your hiders brought you here?" "No." said Johan. "The purple knights hunting you down to kill you. They live in a cracked mountain, each night a purple glow comes from the mountain when they brew their potion. It tracks nobles, and also they are called the *New World Order*. The reason why your hiders brought you here is because Kairruft is the safest and most heavily guarded kingdom in the world. Our kingdoms safest city is Calanpaturr. Its walls are made of the strongest stones in are mines." "Wow!" said Johan. "Yes" said the king. "Ok now, it's time to head to our palace." said the lord. There large 3 room chariot with white royal horses a lay on the beautiful avenue with flowers beads in the middle. "Get comfortable!" said the driver. "It will take three days and nights to get to Calanpaturr." The days and nights passed as they saw wonderful and horrible things as the chariot and the 30 horses went down the dirt road. They did not see any desert because they followed the river, the lifeblood of Kairruft. "This heat is killing me" said the driver, as he let the horses rest and he went into the river. "Gallop Gallop Gallop" went another horse. It was a knight with a purple cape and green scarf. The horses went running off with the chariot. The driver was still in the river but luckily they were still on the chariot. "Oh my!" said the lady as her Falafel and pita rolled off her plate and on the floor. Worst of the hummus spilled on the expensive rug and the bill grew. After a while the lost track of the knight and a day later they arrived. As soon as they got to the palace, Johan had to scrub all of the quartz floors, steam the lace linens and silk bedding, and dust the furniture. When he was done, he helped the chef. "This palace looks great again." said the lady over the dining table. Johan went to humble south wing 3rd floor and lie down in bed. Suddenly the house shudders a "bang". Outside people were screaming. Dynamite was used to blow up the city walls and a whole army of the purple knight, archers, cannon men, and mythical creatures came pouring in. "Hide" yelled the lord. But he couldn't. The royal soliders were taking care of the knights, but the great leader of the new world order came in on an elephant. Johan knew he had to defeat him. He grabbed the Golden sword on the hall and Jumped outside. "What are you doing!" Yelled the lord. But Johan could not here him. He slashed the leader and he blocked it with the sword. The leader had had many lessons but Johan had watched many tournaments and did the moves the knights did. The citizens watched. Johan had defeated the leader of *The New World Order*. The leader lay lifeless as a stone. Johan soon went back home to Slaylonavamia to his parents' castle. He was in a book and it said he had slain the The World Order. Johan and the world lived happily ever after.

Jacob Chen
Madison School Grade 5

Love, War, and Lost Limbs

"Man down! Man down!" I heard his voice echo in my mind. "Am I dead?" I wondered. My vision was blurred, my head hurt like crazy, but most of all there was a sharp pain in my leg that wouldn't go away. Suddenly everything went black.

I woke up to the beeping noise of the EKG. I tried to open my eyes, but it seemed as if they were glued shut. I dozed off, and tried to open my eyes a little more before two conversing doctors walked into my room.

"Thank god the operation went well," one said

"Yes, but there is a long road to recovery. Including physical therapy," the other responded

"Operation, Physical therapy! It seemed as if I was out on the deserted fields of Kabul Afghanistan with my partners in the US army just yesterday. Apparently I was wrong," I thought to myself.

"I'm going to take off the bandages," A doctor said

I remained quiet as I felt the warm, thick strips of gauze be lifted off my face. I tried to open my eyes again, and light filled the room.

"Oh!" One of the doctors shrieked

"What?" I said in a raspy voice that I barely recognized as my own

"You've been unconscious since the operation two day ago," The doctor told me

I was shocked, and what happened next would shock me even more. The doctor had called other doctors in my room to look at me, and take tests on me. Overall, I was okay, at least I thought I was okay.

"Can you see clearly?" A nurse asked me, shining a light in my eye

"I can see color, but everything is blurry," I responded

He then put a drop in my eye, and told me to rest. When I woke up I wanted to get some jello from the cafeteria. I could see clearer now and was ready to test my health. However, when I tried to move I felt a sharp pain in my leg. I screamed.

"Hey!" The doctor yelled

"What's happening to me!" I yelled back

The nurse lifted the blanket off my legs, then I saw it, half of my right leg was gone.

Weeks passed, at first I didn't move, I didn't want anyone to see me. As a 22 year old woman part of the first lieutenant army reserve I wasn't used to looking like I was giving up. Three weeks passed. Then my nurse came into my room with a determined look on her face.

"Up now! We better get started on physical therapy!" She cooed

"Leave me alone!" I responded

"Well no wonder you're in a bad mood, your stats are awful!" She said with a sly smile

"What lemme see that!" I grabbed at the clipboard she was holding, but she quickly dodged. My competitive spirit was coming back. Before I knew it I was up wobbly, and clinging to my bed, but up! The nurse then showed me the paper they were all great statistics.

"You tricked me!" I said angrily

"Come with me," she responded calmly, grabbing a wheelchair from the corner of the room.

We journeyed to the other side of the hospital where another woman greeted us. I liked her because she seemed athletic, and strong. Also stubborn, but I didn't mind. She might have been in the army before. We walked over to a small bench. "Walk to me," she said standing about three feet away from me. I wobbled and falled. "Come on now!" She yelled. This time I went hard, pushing until every ounce of energy was consumed by the flames of my determination. I wasn't going to give up.

Months passed. Day after day I got faster, and stronger. I kept saying I didn't want a prosthetic leg, I didn't need one, but my nurse insisted. The next week, my nurse came in with a smile on her face.

"What are you so happy about?" I asked

"You're going home" She said

When I got home the smell of fresh baked bread, and delicious sweets filled my nostrils. Then I saw my whole family. We greeted each other, and sat down to eat the delicious dinner I always longed for while on duty. Of course I was bombarded with questions. Once the party died down and we were saying our final goodbyes, then I fell asleep in my own bed, the first time in two years.

"Beep! Beep! Beep!" My alarm clock rang at 9:30 the next morning. I groaned and reached to tap the button on the top of the alarm, but my desk was empty. I scanned the perimeter trying to find a trace of where the horrible noise was coming from. There I saw it on the bedside chest. "Mom said she would be here at 10 o'clock to help me," I thought, "But that noise is killing me" I proceeded. I decided to reach over and turn it off. However, when I reached over I fell, I decided to do what anybody would do in this situation, scream. No one came though, so I brushed off my wounds and got up. I then hopped over and hit the button, victory was mine!

Unfortunately I had to go to the doctor again. This time they planned to put on my prosthetic leg. No matter how many times I tried to tell them I was fine, they insisted. Finally we came up with a compromise, I would get a flexible curved rod in my leg that I could walk on. Two weeks later we had a procedure.

I woke up feeling woozy, and tired. I knew what it felt like to be drugged up and boy I felt so strange. My family was waiting for me of course and my spirits were lifted. Months passed, and I was living on my own. On March 27th, I got a call from my doctor telling me I needed to come.

When I walked in my general was there. We greeted each other, and sat down to have a long winded conversation about my health.

"We know since your injury in May you have had a phenomenal recovery," The general said formally

"Yes, and I am ready to get back on duty" I spoke hesitantly

"Woah there! This is why we brought you here, to talk about your life going forward

"Well as your patient I think what's good for me is to head back to the reserve" I testified

"Well as your doctor I think we should talk about it" She snapped

"Well many of our wounded soldiers don't go back" The general said "And we have come up with a decision better for the patient, you are not to go back and serve,"

Was I hearing what I thought I was. Not going back. I couldn't do it. I ran home and called my family. I was immediately comforted, and it felt good, but I didn't get any better. I could never return to my real passion, out on the battlefield. Overall, I believe that change can be hard. However, with the help and support of family and friends things can improve. Determination is the key to success.

"Patience and perseverance have a magical effect before which difficulties disappear and obstacles vanish."

-John Quincy Adams

Maddie Chillo
HMS Grade 6

Seasons

Spring:

The sun returns,
Bringing light,
Brightly it burns,
Oh, what a sight!

Tulips wilted and decayed,
Living at the end of the rope,
Until rain saves the day,
Giving them renewed hope.

Summer:

Students can not sit still in their seats,
As they impatiently wait for the bell to ring.
Pupils ready to have a break that can't be beat,
What excitement the summer will bring!

Bathing suits are pulled on,
Sunscreen turns people white,
Water balloon battles are won,
Watch out for mosquito bites!

Fall:

School returns after a very long break,
People say what they are thankful for,
Every home has candy for kids to take,
In many ways, the fall season is not a bore!

As all of the leaves begin to slowly fall,
Rakes are pulled out, and chores are set.
Red and orange colors can be seen covering all,
And soon the cold of winter will be met.

Winter:

As cold, white snow falls fast,
The plants will slowly decay.
Wishing for more of the past,
When there were warm, rainy days.

Blankets and heavy jackets are taken out,
Christmas trees are decorated with lights,
“Ho, ho, ho!” old St. Nicholas will shout,
And presents will be left under the tree in the night.

**Jocelyn Chou
Elm School Grade 5**

Reginald Ooglevase liked to play a lot of video games. It was one of his defining traits. He didn't play sports, exercise, or even go outside. One of the games he played a lot was Snake, in which you make a line, or snake, move around trying to eat the food, while also trying not to bump into a wall or itself.

One day, while Reginald was playing Snake, he got sucked into the game. When Reginald landed in the game, he saw that he was in a flat, rectangular field with walls around all four sides of the field. Coming right at him was a large blue snake about 34 times the size of Reginald. It was the snake from the snake game.

It took Reginald a few seconds to realize what was about to happen to him before he ran away from the spot he was standing in. If he had stood there for even a second longer, the snake would have devoured him. “Oh no,” Reginald said. “The snake's trying to eat me!”

Just as Reginald said that, he had to run away from where he was standing, because the snake was coming at him again. “The only way I can avoid being eaten by the snake is if I keep running,” Reginald thought aloud. “I don't think I can keep on doing that. I'm going to have to try to make the snake hit a wall.”

Reginald stood in front of a wall, and the snake turned around and came at him. At the last second, Reginald jumped out of the way, but the snake turned its head at the last minute as well. “Come on!” Reginald screamed. Reginald tried to get the snake to smash into the wall again, but the snake was too quick, and every time Reginald jumped out of the way, the snake

continued to follow him. "I don't think that I can get this snake to smash into the wall by following me," Reginald said. "I'm going to have to try something different."

Reginald jumped on the snake, which he wouldn't normally be able to do in real life, but this was a video game. The snake, sensing Reginald was on its back, tried to shake him off its back, but Reginald wouldn't let go of the snake. Eventually, the snake decided it would knock off Reginald with his head. The snake turned its head, so that he was facing Reginald. The snake lunged at Reginald, but instead of hitting Reginald, the snake hit itself. The snake passed out.

Suddenly, Reginald was back in the real world. He looked at his computer, and it had crashed. Reginald thought about reloading the computer to play Snake again, but decided against it. Instead, he closed the computer, and went outside and played a sport for the first time in years. Reginald never played another video game again.

Rebecca Cortez
HMS Grade 7

Zoe: A pup

A white fluff ball
Hiding in the breeze
Her little nose
Makes a soft
Sneeze

A black spot Standing
out of her fur And that
waggity tail Is why I
love her.

She is already five And
growing indeed She will
always be a baby And
that is agreed

Yazmin Crisostomo
HMS Grade 6

Strings

My hand gently strums the strings.
The bow swooshing against the strings.
My cello putting together beautiful music.
My hand bumping the shoulders.
The thumb shifting to third position.

My head saying "play the cello!"
The Position Pieces notes telling me which half notes to play.
The music putting together Minuet in C Minor.
My feet stomping to the rhythm, "thump thump thump!"

My brain trying to figure out the song I've always wanted to play. The plucking of my hand painting a story from the song.
The base of the cello vibrating to push out the sound of music. Strings.

Lorenzo DaSilva
Walker School Grade 5

One day, Peter was invited to his friend's Birthday party.
 Fortunately, he was excited.
 Unfortunately, it was in Spain.
 Fortunately, they had a kayak.
 Unfortunately, there was a hole.
 Fortunately, there was a buoy.
 Unfortunately, it was surrounded by sharks.
 Fortunately, the boat's propellers scared them away.
 Unfortunately, the captain fell overboard.
 Fortunately, a coast guard ship rescued the captain.
 Unfortunately, the coast guard ship ran out of gas.
 Fortunately, the FBI came.
 Unfortunately, submarines shot all the ships and planes except for one.
 Fortunately, the one who survived shot all the submarines.
 Unfortunately, there were more coming.
 Fortunately, there were more planes coming.
 Unfortunately, planes were being shot down.
 Fortunately, I arrived to the party by a dynamite ship.
 Unfortunately, the party already ended.

Peter Demetis
Elm School Grade 4

My Prediction of a bug's trip

The black bug with six short legs on my bathroom window slowly climbed down. Down, down he went. He was on the tan colored wall above the toilet. Then Plop! The bug fell in the toilet. Someone rushed in to use the toilet. When the guy was done, he flushed the toilet! The bug went down the toilet and flowed with the stream in the pipe into the ocean. Soon a hungry blue whale came and ate the bug! The bug went down, down again. Finally, he got sprayed out by the whale. Then he saw something like a tube. The bug swam to the tube with the best he could. Guess what, the tube was the same sewer that he came from! The bug went up the sewer and ended up right back where it started, the tan colored wall above the toilet.

Andy Dong
The Lane School Grade 3

Just Ask For Pronunciation

An inky darkness spilled like paint onto the evening sky as if it were a canvas, as day gradually transitioned to night at the ongoing spelling bee. The fluorescent auditorium lights flickered, providing the only illumination for the auditorium in the darkness. I clutched my quivering hand with my other and pushed it back down to my side where it belonged. I could only hear my quick and sharp, anxious breathing.

"Here we have our top three finalists for the Maybeury Spelling Bee!" exclaimed the principle, Mr. Fernald. Instead of feeling proud and confident, I was relentlessly anxious. The three remaining were me, a fifth grader apparently named James, and Maya, a third grader. James looked tired; anyone could tell that from the dreary, grey bags that hung and almost obfuscated his dark-tawny brown eyes. Maya wore a brightly-colored, floral dress and she had her frail, third-grader hands properly crossed on her lap, jubilee from being announced a part of the final round spread like a wildfire on Maya's face--anyone could tell that by observing her proud, broad smile.

"Maya, your word. Myriad." Mr. Fernald declared.

"Myriad--alright. Myriad. M-.I— no, Y not I? M-Y-R-I-A-D. Myriad."

The noise of the golden bell resounding, alerting everyone that Maya spelled the word incorrectly.

"I'm sorry, but that's incorrect," a look of sympathy emerged onto Mr. Fernald's face as he told her. Mrs. McNamery, the assistant principal added, "The correct spelling is M-Y-R-I-A-D."

"That's what I said," Maya contradicted.

"Well, first you spelled it, 'M-I...'--then you corrected yourself. That's that allowed, as we explained in the Spelling Bee rules," Mr. Fernald explicated.

"But then I spelled it right the second time. So, I *clearly* know how to spell it," Maya contradicted, "But fine, I guess if you can't see that, I'll leave." she shrugged.

"But, Maya, you can't just--" I began. Mrs. McNamery is supposed to escort the contestants off the stage when they are eliminated.

"Leave it." ordered Mrs. McNamery, figuring that since Maya was already out she would have left, either way, "Shall we continue?" Mrs. McNamery turned to Mr. Fernald. He nodded his head in accordance with, "Yes. Rachel--fuchsia." Mr. Fernald said.

"Like the color?" I asked.

"There's fuchsia pink, yes," Mr. Fernald answered, "would you like the whole definition?"

"No thank you," I responded.

I looked down at my right finger, moving on its own, forming letters in the air--letters that made up the word 'fuchsia.' I suppose it's much easier for me to know the spelling of a word when I can see what I think the word looks like. In addition, the technique helps me in knowing exactly what letter I'm on, so I don't repeat a letter by accident.

"Fuchsia. F-U-C-H-S-I-A. Fuchsia."

"That is correct." replied Mr. Fernald.

"Oh--it is?" I asked forthrightly.

"James...", Mrs. McNamery began, adjusting the microphone then subsequently handing it to James, "pronunciation is your word."

"Pronunciation. P-R-O-N..." James stopped abruptly. He sounded it out then started back up again. "...U-O-N-C-I-A-T-I-O-N."

"So sorry, that is incorrect," Mr. Fernald responded, the golden bell ringing. I inhaled swiftly, thinking just maybe I had won.

"So, Rachel, if you can spell the word correctly--" Mr. Fernald started.

"--you'll win!" Mrs. McNamery exclaimed, interjecting herself. Mr. Fernald cleared his throat, "Yes, that's right. But if you spell it wrong, we'll bring out another word for you both."

I began, "Pronunciation. P-R-O-N...", I fiddled with my hand that was trembling too much for me to use to spell. It's not like it mattered, though, right? It wasn't my hand that was so close to victory that I could practically burst into tears that I had made it this far in the Bee. It was that new shimmering talent of mine. "...U-N-C-I-A-T-I-O-N. Pronunciation."

I stared into the bell that sat at the table where Mr. Fernald and Mrs. McNamery were sitting, it's like it was taunting me. The silence seemed relentless and unceasingly intense.

"And... we have our Spelling Bee winner!" A joyous Mrs. McNamery announced. The people sitting in the foldable, metal seats were cheering--the kids, adults, Mrs. McNamery and Mr. Fernald. But I was still completely silent. Unceasingly silent.

"Hey--good... Bee, I guess?" James remarked from my left, putting his hand out as a gesture of congratulation.

"Yeah; really good Bee." the blank, almost dismal, expression of mine hadn't wavered the entire duration of the bee. The exaltation I harbored on the inside crept onto my face and spread in the form of a smile. I suppose just because someone has a foreboding feeling, doesn't make their anticipation any more true. I turned to my left and shook his hand with not my right hand, but my left. Because I had won this. Not my instincts, not luck, not my 'magical' right hand. Me. Incredulous, blissful, fourth-grader me had won this; the Spelling Bee.

Rachel Fisher
HMS Grade 6

The Lady

It was a dark night and a man named Miguel was driving home from his work office. Miguel was stuck in traffic because there was an accident up ahead of him. It had been a couple of minutes later but Miguel was still stuck in a load of traffic. He put his left hand into his pocket to pull out his phone. He texted his wife that he would be home later than usual because of some accident. When he was done, he put his phone back in his left pocket. He turned on some music and decided to look around outside from the inside of his car.

There were a lot of the same houses. About 20 feet away from the road, but one was different. The lights of the odd house were flickering on and off. Suddenly, he saw a lady with dark black hair in one of the windows. Then all of the

lights in the house, that was flickering, turned off. The front door opened slowly. The Lady stepped out..... Miguel looked at her. He could only see one eye because the other eye was covered up with her long black hair. He looked at that one eye because Miguel was curious. It was staring right at him. His music turned off out of nowhere.

He suddenly felt chills shivering through him. He tried turning his music back on. It wouldn't work... Miguel looked back out his car window. This time The Lady was closer. Miguel could start to see what she was wearing. A long white dress with little stains that looked like blood. He felt frightened! He honked at the person in front of him to move. Suddenly Miguel heard a little ding from his phone. Somebody had texted him. He did not know who it was or why he had this person's number. The text said, "I'm coming." Miguel put his phone back in his pocket. He looked back out the window.

Miguel JUMPED out of his seat. The Lady had her hands and face pressed against the window. Miguel shouted at her. Miguel thought he was hallucinating. But when The Lady banged her hands on the window, he knew it was real. The window opened but Miguel was not pressing any buttons. The Lady put her hands on the seat next to the driver's seat. Miguel kicked her in the face with fear. The lady creepily smiled. Suddenly the traffic started moving. Miguel shoved his foot against the pedal. The Lady flew out the window. Miguel felt proud of protecting himself. He also felt bad because when the lady flew out of the window she might have gotten hurt. Miguel kept driving.

He got home at 2:00 a.m. The next morning Miguel woke up thinking the creepy lady with black hair was all just a scary dream. He got out of bed, but he stepped on something. It was long black hair. Suddenly a hand trapped Miguel and pulled him under his bed. It was The Lady..... and then she said: "I'M HERE NOW..." Miguel screamed, "You're A Creepy FrEaK!" Miguel blinked, The Lady was gone. Miguel's wife came running into the room and helped him out from under the bed. He got dressed and went to his bathroom to do his hair for work. But when he looked in the mirror..... he did not see himself. He saw... The Lady.

Kayla Freve

Walker School Grade 4

Bush Fire

As the sky burst into flames
Spreading to the tree leaves
Towering like one big red monster
It's goal to burn every soul to the crisp
After it demolishes town after town after town
After forest after forest
The fire loves its job
But decides to take a break
But it's only a fake
Cause as long as the sky is red
The air is dry
It comes back the next day
To put families and animals at risk
Of being burned to the crisp

Demetra Gatzulis

The Lane School Grade 5

Swimming: A Tale of Two Events

Swimming is a sport that is not for everyone. It requires discipline and hard work. Practices are grueling, but rewarding, especially if you can improve your time at the meets on the weekends. Swim meets usually occur at high schools like Lyons Township and Hinsdale Central. Two weeks ago, I had a meet at Naperville North. It was my third to last meet of the season. At that meet, I had one of the best swims of my life.

On deck, waiting to start my race, which was the 100 yard freestyle, I thought about what my dad had said to me the night before. "Get angry, leave it all out in the pool," he said. "Kick hard and sprint as hard as you

can through both 50 yard sets. Don't plan it out," he continued.

I stood there on deck and behind the starting blocks, looking stoic with my cap on and mirrored goggles. Finally, it was time. I heard the long whistle and climbed up onto the block. "Swimmers, take your mark," the official said. BEEP! I was off. I leapt off the block like a kangaroo.

Recently, I had been plagued by my goggles filling up with water whenever I dove in. Not this time. I felt the rush of adrenaline as I hit the freezing water. I did my six dolphin kicks, then I was off to the races. I hit the first of three turns in second place. Not holding back served me well. My lungs burned and my muscles ached as I kept sprinting into the second turn. With my first 50 completed, I left the second turn in first place. By now my breathing pattern was all over the place and my arms were hurting, but I kept pushing and it was during the third lap that I broke away from the pack. When I went into my final flipturn I did not hit the wall cleanly, and I barely got a push off the wall. However, my kick saved me. In practice, kick is usually my weakest drill, but thanks to my steady kick throughout the race, I took first place! When I hit the wall I felt dead. I looked up at the board and saw I won my heat with a time of 1:13.30 seconds. My previous fastest time was 1:16.70. My goal before the race was to drop two seconds. A goal I not only met, but exceeded by dropping three full seconds. All the hard work in the previous few weeks of practice had paid off.

After I got out of the pool I was reminded of another race where I dropped a lot of time. It was November 2018. I had high expectations. The highest of those was the 50 yard freestyle. The 50 free is one of the hardest events to drop time in. Especially when you get to 35 seconds or below. To drop time you have to swim a near-perfect two laps, perfect dive, perfect underwater kicks, stroke, and a perfect turn.

The meet before, I had dropped 5 seconds from my previous best time going from 40 seconds to 35 seconds, which is a huge drop. I felt that I could drop even more time and that I did. I had been working super hard in practice and working my way up the chain of great swimmers in my group. I wanted to prove that I belonged in that group. I also had my own expectations to fulfill, and those mattered more than anything else.

I stood on the deck heart pounding, sweating under my cap. I looked at my dad and he gave me the thumbs up. I took my Chewbacca sweatshirt off slowly. Then the fateful long whistle came, and I took my position on the block. "Take your mark," the official said. I tightened my grip on the handholds and curled my toes. I could feel my heartbeat on the side of my head. BEEP! I dove off and the cold water enveloped me. I came up for air and my arms were turning in an endless whirlwind. I kept this pace up until the first turn when I slowed down just a bit. I aggressively kicked off the turn. This is when all my hard work in practice paid off. My arms were fatigued, but I made up for that by strengthening my kick. I could hear the screams and cheers of the fans and my coaches pushing me on. I took one final breath and gave it all I had to the wall. I looked up at the scoreboard in shock as two numbers popped up next to my name: 1 for first place, and 33.55 seconds for my time. I had dropped two seconds and met my goal.

Swimming takes both physical and mental strength. If you work hard enough and you believe that you can drop time, then you will drop time. Swimming may be super exerting physically. But you need to have a hard-working attitude and a desire to succeed. For these reasons, swimming is my perfect sport.

William Gatzulis
HMS Grade 7

A Dude That Went Somewhere

Hi, my name is Sam. Here's a story that happened a few years ago.

One day I went to work and this happend. A bird pooped on my head, and I got splashed by a car, and I fell on my nose. Then I went to the store, and got tissue and bandages and food. Then I went home. Then I put the bandages on and put tissues on my nose. Then I went out to walk my dog. But he bit some people in the butt. Then I yelled: "bad Greg bad!" I was having such a horrible day. Then I went home and took a shower and was listning to the news when I hear Greg howle. I turned off the shower and put my clothes on. It was the mailman! I asked him what he was doing. He said he had a delivery for me. It was the dictnary I was looking for! I snatched it and went to get my wife. She was also surprised! Then I forgot about the bad things that happened and thought this was the best day ever!

Benjamin Gee
Madison School Grade 3

Maleficent

There are two sides
To every story.
Good vs evil.
Villain and hero.
Love and hate.
Princess and witch,
Who me?
Pure, young, innocent.
Benevolent, good.
Magical forest,
Enchanted place.
My home.
Wings my prize.
Flying high,
Soaring
to the heavens.
Evil lurking in the forest,

Betrayal.
Wings snipped and stolen.
Grieving, sadness.
A new person.
Hardened.
Cruel, evil.
Revenge is everything.
King Stefan will pay.
Creatures in the
Shadows,
Come to play.
Mistress of evil
Here to stay.
Princess Aurora
Grace, beauty, baby girl
Good in every way.
Cursed by evil

Maleficent.
Flora, Fauna, Merryweather,
Good fairies, flying about.
Magical creatures,
Opposite of
Maleficent.
Baby Aurora cursed,
Death like sleep.
Awakened by
True love's kiss.
Kiss by Maleficent.
Heart restored.
Pain in the past.
Happy once again.
There are two sides to every
story.
Happily ever after.

Ava Gerami
HMS Grade 6

Go Web! Fly!

A day at the science lab.
With friends Harry and MJ.
Ouch! Smack my hand.
Blood as red as I can see. Ugh!
Bug bite from a "super spider?"
Webs, spiders, webs, spiders.
Cursed.
My day is ruined, time to leave.
Home with Aunt and Uncle.
May and Ben.
My second parents,
Always with me. A family.
Feeling sleepy. (Yawn) Not myself.
Who am I?
Wake up next day.
A renewed person.
Stronger, faster, braver.
Metamorphosis.
Webs, spiders, webs, spiders.
Superhuman speed.
Sticking to surfaces,
Like slime.
Mind reader.

Red suit. Masked face.
Sixth sense, danger lurking?
Who am I?
Powerful and responsible.
Some say genius;
Here to save the day!
To honor and protect
Forever mantra,
With great power,
Comes great responsibility.
Love MJ, but can't risk
Enemies attack
Webs, spiders, webs, spiders
Green goblin,
Norman, evil.
So many enemies,
Swarm like buzzing bees
Ready to attack
This is my gift,
This is my curse.
Who am I?
I'm Spider-Man!

Charlie Gerami
HMS Grade 6

Within the Deep Woods

Within the deep woods
Across the flowing rivers
Above the swirling trees
Underneath the moist soil

Beyond the salty sea
Near the rabbits home
After the croaking frog
Past the scurrying deer

Toward whistling wind
Below the spiraling leaves
By the nest of chirping birds
Along the jumping fish
Inside the twinkling circle

To the place that no one knows
At the center of it all
Lies a beauty never seen before

**Caroline Giltner
CHMS Grade 7**

The Day the Kids Broke All the Rules

Do you ever feel like letting loose at school and not getting in trouble? Me too, although not on this day. It started out fun but then..... Just keep reading to find out why. Here's my story of what happened the day the kids broke all the rules.

Plan Day

It was a regular Monday lunch recess, although my best friend Katie had called an all grade recess meeting. I kept asking her all morning what it was about but she wouldn't tell me. She always had the coolest, craziest and dangerous ideas, so I was pretty excited. Everyone in the 4th grade gathered around the chair that Katie was standing on.

"Hello everyone and thank you for coming today." Katie said. Everyone clapped. I wasn't surprised because she was a popular girl (not a bad thing.) "I have called a grade meeting because, I have a really good idea," This is when I got super excited. "Do you ever get so tired of following the rules."

"YEAH!" Everyone cheered.

"Do you ever feel like walking out of class for no reason?"

"YEAH!" Everyone cheered even louder this time. I cheered with them.

"Don't you just hate when teachers tell you what to do?"

"Yeah!"

"Well then I think it's about time we all do what ever we want at school. If everyone does it what can the teachers do. If they yell at you to sit down just say "whatever"! Who's with me?"

"ME!" Everyone screamed except for the one teacher's pet who left running towards the swings.

"We can break the rules this Friday don't tell a soul especially not your teachers. Don't ruin it for all of us." Was this supposed to make me nervous?

**Julia Giltner
Monroe School Grade 5**

Every winter my cousins come to visit from South Haven, Michigan. One of our favorite things to do is go to Chinatown. Each year we go to Dim Sum, which is kind of like Chinese brunch. We fill up on sticky-rice, sui-mai, dumplings, egg tarts, and much more. The food comes steaming in traditional bamboo baskets staked up on each other. Each skyscraper of food is slowly devoured until our bellies can hold no more and our hands are so tired we drop our chopsticks. We are amazed at how little food is left on the Lazy Susan. Afterwards we walk down the streets of Chinatown and go into various shops. First we go into a Chinese bakery and purchase some sponge cakes. Then we enter the Apothecary which is filled with new smells and sights like colossal roots of ginger. Next we walk by a cute store filled with beautiful jewelry and souvenirs. Everyone picks something out and then we are on our way to our favorite Boba shop. It has exotic flavors of ice cream like durian fruit (which smells like stinky socks) and taro root. My favorite part is the Boba. There are two different kinds, tapioca and popping. The popping Boba is an explosion of flavor in your mouth because when you bite into it flavored juice squirts out. You can mix them into ice cream, tea, or a smoothie. There is even sherbet in every color of the rainbow! Going to Chinatown with my cousins is awesome!

Evangeline Gin
Prospect School Grade 4

Excerpt from “Faded”

Chapter 1 - Andrey

Nobody remembers anything from Before. Sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night from dreams of Before, drenched in sweat. I never remember the visions but I know they're enough to scare me awake. Those dreams haven't happened in a while. Perhaps I'm getting used to the living nightmare of my world. Lately I lay awake at night to my stomach growling with hunger pains. There is never enough food for us. Everyday there are too many fights over food. Nobody complains or whines about food they don't like anymore. We are lucky enough to even have food the majority of the time. Most of us don't even remember life before starvation. My breakfast today consisted of a rotten cucumber and one stale vitamin. If anything I'm eating the best out of the Outherside and perhaps the entire Hunt. Not like that's done much for me anyways. If I ever get out of here maybe I could sign a contract with a modeling agency. Being stick thin was never a defining characteristic of mine at the start of Now. The last time I looked in the mirror I hardly recognized myself. My blond, once golden hair was brittle and thin. My eyes were hollowed out and seemed haunted by what they've seen. Along with being a skeleton look alike, the long hikes have created strong, taut muscles on my somewhat bare arms and legs. However I look now doesn't matter. Nearly every girl has given up on their appearance. Occasionally you see someone wearing some expired makeup to cover a bruise or, possibly, a clean dress. Other than that we look like replicates of starving hobos. There's nobody to judge us here, at least not anymore.

Girls aged twelve to eighteen. We are the only ones left in the Now. Not like anyone knows of other people. But it's what we think. Everyone has their own theory of what happened. What caused the Now. With every passing day, I see many girls losing hope. Hope and the will to live. The only thing that keeps us going is each other. Cliques still exist even after everything we've gone through together. Being a co-leader of the Outherside I myself have even formed a close posse. Me, Maia, and Brienne. Whenever we have spare time, which we usually don't, we watch the sunset. No talking, just watching the sun fade to nothing. Sometimes we joke about it happening to us. Fading to nothing. We all are aware that eventually food will run out, water will be gone, and insanity will take over. People call it the Ending Day.

Maya Gin
CHMS Grade 7

The Daredevil

The year was 1995. There was an inverter by the name of Jack. Now Jack loves to take challenges. One of his challenges was to be an inventor. He accepted the challenge as normal but this challenge was really hard to do. But he still tried and tried and then finally he got it. Now he is an inventor. The time is 1:30pm and his boss gave him assignment to make an easier way to put light on your head. In his time this was a something all inventing

company was trying to get their hands on. So Jack did make a light google. But what he did not know is that it did more things then he expected it to do.

The time right now is 10:30 am. Now all Jack had to do was show his invention to his boss. His boss said, “Nice work lad. Know we have light googles”. Jack was so pleased with himself. So he tried wearing the googles. Know he knew how it worked. So what he did is he put the googles on. He went back to his desk and then turned on the light but nothing happed. Then suddenly everything turned black.

Know what he saw next was shocking. He was in the middle of New York City. And his watch said it was 5:00pm. Then suddenly a car came strait toward him. And Jack put the googles back on. Now everyone New York heard about this and then thought it was a alien.

Now he was in a child bed room. This time his watch said 3:00am. Then he found out what was happening. He was time traveling. This was so hard to take in but hopping he could get back home he put on the googles again. Then he something terrifying.

Aarush Goel

Elm School Grade 5

The Chocolate Piñata

It was the night of my sister’s birthday. The waitress came up holding a platter with a silver hook attached to a gleaming sphere of chocolate with white frosted lines. Its guts were strawberries and pineapples with churros for the heart. She cracked it open and it came apart with a big splatter. There was chocolate lines saying “Happy Birthday” and strawberry sauce flowers with caramel lines and tuffs of whipped cream. It tasted even better than it looked. The fruit in the sauces, the churros in their special dip and the big chunks of chocolate – it was delicious. I marveled that it tasted even better than a piñata with candy. We left talking and full, for the chocolate piñata was gone.

Grant Goodwin

Madison School Grade 3

I am

I am the mite.

Microscopic, thriving, explosive.

I crawl and dive all while breathing through my tracheae.

Crawling, Diving, Pinching machine.

Swimming and crawling, let me live for a few more days.

In the winter the pond will freeze, but I will live with the reeds till spring.

Strong pinchers to snag my food.

I’ll swim and dive with my brothers and sisters.

When winter comes I will hide among the reeds with my friends.

This is me. I am.

Alex Green

Monroe School Grade 5

The Night of Horrors!

What would you do if you slammed your finger in the door?

One night, I came home from a soccer game, and I was getting my bag from the car. Right then, I realized that I left my ball in the car, so I reached back in and my dad accidentally closed the car door. Pain surged through my fingers and hand. It was hard to move it. It felt frozen solid.

“I’ll be right back!” said my dad. He must have told my mom to get in the car, while he got some ice from the freezer. He came back and asked, “Will!, Are you ok?!” I said, “Yes.” That was a lie, I just didn’t want my dad to

get all racked up a lot about it. My dad told me to get in the car with my mom. She was ready and waiting to drive us. I asked her where we were going? She said, "The E.R!"

We were already at the E.R. when I asked if we were there yet. We raced into the building and asked for an x-ray room. We got the x-ray and there were no fractures in the bones. To take the pain away from my attention, they ran fluids and put a splint on my fingers.. When they took the splint off, my hand felt numb, and it was blue. When we got in the car my finger was red. I had gone through the colors of the American flag! When we got home my dad and brother, Alex, were already asleep. I was about to crash too. My legs and arms were noodles.

The next morning, my finger was still numb. I wasn't surprised. "How are you doing, Will?" my dad asked. I said, "Ok." For the rest of the day I was in pain, but I got to watch movies the whole time. I wanted to play with Alex, but after all, I was hurt.

William Green
Monroe School Grade 3

The meaning of life is for god to take his power and make us. Each one of us that he makes is unique. We are created to develop a sense of purpose. We should spend time doing the things that we want to be known for. Whether it's playing trumpet, or playing a sport, cooking, you name it. We all have many talents that we are known for. We should take advantage of this as soon as possible and start to practice that talent. People will start to notice us performing our talents, and they will start to say "Hey, you're really good at that!" and we will start to make friends. There is a quote that states "Friendship always sparks joy" and that quote is very right. If you live life right, then you will be rewarded. It is also smart to make the best decisions possible. They may range from, "Do I need to eat this cookie?" to "Should I goof off in class?" Many decisions are very hard to make. As long as you know what is right, you will be a very good person. And, it is also good to know who to be around. There may be a group of people who are very popular, and fashionable, but aren't the best at decision making, that's where you don't want to go. There is another quote that also states "Surround yourself with who you want to be with." I think this quote is very right also because a true friend brings out the best in you, which means that when you play with them, you might be polite, or kind, it all varies. The point is that you need to know who is the best to be around. And, you should also set your footprint in your family. This means that you should take good care of your loved ones. Make them want to be around you. You should comfort them when they're feeling down. And, most importantly, complete your chores when you receive them. And, we make mistakes, all of us do, we shouldn't dwell on them, it only makes us feel worse. We always learn from our mistakes, and that is a good thing. This means that whenever we slip up, we always learn from it, which happens a lot. This is what I think the meaning of life is. I think it is knowing who to be around, making good decisions, setting your footprint, and spending time doing something that you want to be known for.

Mack Hamilton
CHMS Grade 6

World War II

Noses are red
My feet are blue
There's lice on my head
And rats ate the stew

Karter He
Elm School Grade 3

A Twist on Hansel and Gretel

Chapter 1: I woke to the fresh smell of newly baked gingerbread. My pillow felt like there was sugary syrup smeared on it, like gumdrops. “What in the world...” I thought? I jumped up, and touched my pillow. It was made of gumdrops!!?? I looked around the room. The walls were fresh smelling gingerbread cookies, and the door was a Mountain Mint! I continued examining the gingerbread room. The windows were not made of glass, but instead clear pressed jello! My bed was made out of delicious looking Jolly Ranchers. I decided to explore the candy gingerbread house. I opened the mint door, and gasped at the stairs! They were made of Lindor chocolates pressed tightly together, and the railing was made of sleek peppermint candy canes! I carefully stepped down the chocolate stairs, and into the gingerbread kitchen. A bowl of candy fruits lay on the kitchen table in a hardened caramel bowl. I bit into one. YUM! The candied orange tasted delicious! I reached out for a candied apple, then I saw my hand. My fingertips were slowly turning into hardened gingerbread!

Chapter 2: I screamed, and dropped the candied apple. I ran out the Mountain Mint front door, and into the gingerbread woods. As I ran, hoping to get out of this crazy world, my brain registered my least favorite fairy tale. In Hansel and Gretel, the witch bakes children into gingerbread boys and girls, and she lives in a GINGERBREAD HOUSE!!! I stopped and sat down. Ouch! The grass was pointy glass candy! The tree trunks were gingerbread, and the tree leaves were modeling chocolate. Then, I saw a way to the end of the woods! Goodbye gingerbread world! Only when I ran out the opening, I was in a dark alley way.

Chapter 3: There were dark gingerbread buildings, and gingerbread people coated in black and gray frosting that looked like cloaks. “Here girly girl,” screeched an old gingerbread woman, “do you want an apple?” I shook my head and ran off. Somebody grabbed my arm. “Help,” I screamed. The woman pulled me away. “Listen,” the woman puffed, “I’m a good guy. You are in Hansel and Gretel.” “What?” I asked confused. “Hansel and Gretel is a fairy tale and I can’t be in it.” “No! You are in the book. The witch didn’t really die; she is in the alley somewhere. Hansel and Gretel escaped with the other children hundreds of years ago, so the witch is getting her revenge. Any person who comes to the Gingerbread Forest will turn into a gingerbread person forever. That’s what happened to me.”

Chapter 4: “Is there any way to escape turning into one?” I asked timidly. “Well,” the gingerbread woman pondered, “you have to get out by sunset.” “How do you get out?” “You must kill the witch. She lives in the deepest, darkest part of Gingerbread Alley. Good luck.” The woman crept away slowly. I started my journey. A door caught my eye. It said: “Witch’s Goods of All Kinds.” I opened the shop door. “Hello, little child,” a screechy witch voice said. “Welcome to Gingerbread Land.” “Are you the witch from Hansel and Gretel?” I asked, a plan forming. “Yes, dearie, I am.” “Can I have a cookie?” I asked innocently. “Sure, dearie you may,” she said thinking it would turn me into a gingerbread girl. She walked over to the oven and ... I shoved her in, turned on the fire, and locked the door! “NOOOOOOOOO...,” she screamed. All of a sudden I felt sleepy. I laid down for a nap. When I woke up, I was back in my room. Wow, I thought, what a dream!

Sara Held
Elm School Grade 3

Getting Stuck in a Virtual Snow Globe!

Have you ever imagined getting stuck in a snow globe?!? If so, what would your imaginative snow globe be like? Warm and sunny? Tall city buildings? An island surrounded by an ocean? Well, in this twisty tale of adventure, you will hear about me and my dog getting stuck in a snow globe. Read on to see where my twisty tale takes you.

It all started on frigid, winter day when I was chillin’ by the tall brick fireplace, with my dog Lola. I was happily sipping my hot cocoa, while watching the final season of my favorite comedy, when all of a sudden Lola started to bark like crazy! It was so sudden, that it caused me spill my hot cocoa all over me.

“Lola,” I cried “What could be so important that you caused me to spill my cocoa?” I waltzed into the kitchen to see what all the commotion was about, but then I froze completely forgetting about the cocoa that I was covered in. Outside, there was a giant adorable fuzzy panda.

"Whoa," was all my speechless mouth could say. "How on earth did a panda get in OUR backyard, should we go say hi?"

"Grr," Lola replied.

"I'll take that as a yes," I quickly answered without questioning. I started bolting towards the mud room so I could get my coat, but I accidentally hit my head on the way over.

"OWWWWWWWWW," I yelped. Once I had my coat on, and Lola had hers on, I grabbed her leash and headed out the back door.

Once outside, I timidly inched towards the panda, feeling thrilled and terrified. Lola on the other hand, couldn't be more exhilarated. She was tugging the leash with all her might, like she was trying to tell me,

"get the move on sister!" Once we fully approached the panda, I was surprised to see that the panda wasn't even fazed, in fact it was standing as tall as a knight in the museum.

"Hey big guy," I softly remarked to the panda as I reached out to touch it, but as soon as my fingers brushed against the panda's fur, ZAP! I found myself in a large white dome, with snow lightly falling onto the almost virtual floor. Suddenly, I remembered that Lola was with me when this crazy thing began. I quickly darted my eyes toward where Lola should be standing, to find an equally confused Lola.

"Few," I sighed. As I was staring at Lola still relieved, then I questioned out loud, "where are we?"

"You are in my virtual snow globe," explained an emotionless computer voice, "I was that panda outside in your backyard."

"That doesn't make sense," I claimed, "why did YOU come into MY backyard."

"As a panda," I added.

"Because I know you like pandas, and I wanted you to come see my world," the computer replied.

"She's creepy," I whispered to Lola, "I don't even know her name, or if it's even a she."

"Moving on..." the computer started, but then stopped, turning the whole room into a dark black nothingness.

All of a sudden bright red letters appeared in front of Lola and I, reading "System Reboot, Please Hold." As soon as the message appeared, the lights turned on again, revealing the same white empty dome as before.

"I'm sorry for that," the emotionless computer claimed, but I wasn't sure if it was telling the truth or not. It isn't helpful when their tone has no emotion.

"Moving on once more," the computer recited, "Here in my snow globe, you can wish for something, and it will appear before your eyes."

You're joking," I claimed with a gleam in my eye, "What's the catch?"

"There is no catch," the computer explained, "in fact you get infinite amounts of wishes."

"Yessssssssssssssss," I shouted with glee.

"Bark! Woof," Lola yelped, and suddenly a ginormous brisket appeared out of nowhere, and Lola trotted towards it like it was the best day of her life, (which it was.) I on the other hand had to think about what I wanted.

"Can you make Lola talk?" I asked the computer.

"Yes I can" replied the computer, so in a zap of light I could hear Lola saying,

"This is soooooo tasty. Best day ever!!!!!!!"

"Silly Lola," I told myself. Next I told the computer, "I would like a big screen tv with a voice remote, the comfiest chair ever, with a table by its side with cinnamon pita chips on it." Then as fast as a millisecond, all of those things appeared. "Swwwwwwweet," I cried, "I could be here for hours!"

Several hours later...

"Yawwwwwwn, I'm tired." I told the computer. "I would like one door home please."

"No can do", replied the computer, "You are stuck here with me."

"Buub buub but I need to go home to my family, wuu wuu we can make a deal." I cried.

"What kind of deal?" the computer questioned.

"You have to set me free, but I could wish for something you would like," I replied with confidence.

"Can you set me free?" asked the computer.

"Of course," I replied, "but I need a door first please." Zap! A door appeared before my eyes. "Finally, I wish for you to be free," I told the computer. With one final zap, a little robot appeared at my feet.

"Thank you," the robot whispered.

"You are welcome," I told the robot. "Come on, Lola." As soon as Lola and I walked into the door, I could instantly hear a voice that sounded like my mom's saying,

"Wake up sleepy head, you've got school today."

"It was just a dream," I asked, climbing out of bed.

"Yes," my mother answered sounding confused, "just a dream."

"Oh, ok," was all I said.

A little later at school...

"Hey Mrs. Rigazio," I called, "Guess what?"

"What," Mrs. Rigazio asked.

"I had a crazy realistic dream about getting stuck in a virtual snow globe, just like what we are writing about in class," I replied.

"Cool," Mrs. Rigazio exclaimed, "You should write about it in your narrative!"

"Good idea," I called as I walked to my seat. Later in the day, I started to type the same twisty tale that I experienced.

Jill Hooten
Oak School Grade 5

A Stormy Trust

Seemingly moments after my head hit the ground, my vision flared back up and left me floundering in disorientation. The world slowly bled into focus, but it wasn't anything like I expected. No, there weren't dark tree trunks, nor the scent of autumn, as I last remembered. Instead, why did freedom look like...the inside of a house?

As I tried to stand, my legs collapsed. The shock sent electricity through my veins. Gritting my teeth, I twisted around to identify the problem: my back paw. It dangled uselessly, mangled but resting neatly on a pillow. With a jolt, I remembered the root, the sprawl, the snap, oncoming darkness as I hit the hard ground. Turning back, I glared warily at my surroundings. I was in a bed of fuzzy blankets, nestled on a worn couch. Sunlight, pale and dreamy, filtered in through slate-grey curtains opposite. The air spoke of tangy perfume and takeout. *Where was I?*

"You're awake!" I snarled at the unexpected voice. From across the room, a girl was climbing through the window, untangling leaf scraps from her glossy dark braid as she walked towards me.

I hissed, low and dangerous. *Stranger*. "Come closer, I dare you."

Though she didn't understand, the girl interpreted my message well. "Whoa. I'm not here to *hurt* you. I'm Lynn. I found you in my backyard, and I saved you a few hours ago, when you broke your back paw."

I swiped my dark limb, claws outstretched. Savior or not, this Lynn was human. I knew from experience that humans, no matter how loving they pretended to be, weren't trustworthy. Whenever we drew close enough for love, they'd slip away and shatter our trust into thousands of shards of glass. Trust was for those who spoke animal.

Lynn read my mind. "C'mon, kitty. I've had cats before. You can trust me."

After a pause with no response, she sighed. "Fine. Don't. But here's some food James made." Noticing my questioning emerald glare as she set down a bowl of mashed meat, she added, "James is my older brother."

That made sense. This Lynn looked decades younger than my last owners, far too young to own a house by herself. As she watched me eat, I hunched my shoulders and inched my good hind leg closer to my body. I didn't want this girl to know me more than she already did, or for me to know *her* enough to love her.

Weeks darted by with startling speed. Protecting my cracked heart, I refused Lynn and James's attempts of love. But, despite my calculated distance, Lynn still kept up the pretense of caring for me. She surprised me once by producing a leathery gold collar that read "STORM PILAR" on a shining piece of metal. Though I refused to let her fasten it, something in me was slightly touched by the thought of her brainstorming a name.

Lynn, though, was crushed by my rejections. “Why don’t you love me?” she asked. I wanted to love her, but I couldn’t. Life stole everyone I had trusted within the space of a heartbeat. Though I needed to defend the cracked barricade around my heart, my brain sang with the knowledge that I wished I could trust her. I just couldn’t.

But, even as these storm clouds gathered in my mind, I found myself drawing closer to the Pilars as a month passed and autumn leaves stiffened with snow. Currently, for the fifth time this week, Lynn was sitting by me as I flexed my paw. It was still healing, but was worlds away from the mangled mess it had been the day I met her.

As Lynn read, James peered through the curtains. “Seems alright outside. I think we’ll go find a tree today.”

“Ooooooh. Can I find some mistletoe for you and Ella?” Lynn wiggled her eyebrows suggestively.

“Gosh, you’re so immature. The trees are right outside, but bring Storm with you. I’ll go get the ax.”

As James left, Lynn turned and flashed a sly grin. “Ready to help Jamie with his pathetic love life?”

Within minutes, Lynn had bundled up so that only her electric ocean eyes were visible between the articles of clothing. She had also produced a hideous cat sweater that she claimed “brought Christmas spirit,” and--oh, joy--a reindeer headband. Though I yowled my protests, she still managed to fasten both things to my body.

Feeling utterly humiliated, I followed her out. The frigid air felt like the icy breath of heaven after all these days spent inside, but I kept my eyes on Lynn as we trotted across the snowy backyard and into the untamed woods.

The forest smelled faintly of flora and fauna, masked by the blanket of sparkling snow. The peaceful silence was shattered as Lynn’s shoes crunched over the snow and shook the ground. Watching as she unconsciously crushed plants underfoot, I knew I was growing to trust her, but I was seriously reconsidering if this kept up.

“Is this the key to love, Storm?” Lynn held up a little sprig of leaves, plucked from a nearby tree.

I sniffed it experimentally. Nope, not it. My previous owner’s mistletoe had smelled much stronger.

Sensing my disapproval, Lynn tossed it away and forged deeper into the woods. I wandered behind her, entranced by the towering walls of bark and branches. They spoke of the root I tripped over, that injured my paw but led me to the Pilar siblings. I vaguely registered Lynn’s whoop of triumph as she found the mistletoe. If only---

A pitiful yelp shattered my thoughts. I turned and saw that Lynn was on her back and clutching her ankle, which hung at an unnatural angle. The snow around a nearby root looked scuffed and disarranged.

Lynn’s eyes were shiny with tears as I came to comfort her. “Storm? Please--g-go find James. I need him.”

I paused. James? I didn’t know if I trusted myself enough to find him. I certainly didn’t think I was strong or smart enough to try. How did Lynn ever find the strength to trust a cat like me? But then she was sobbing, her voice so weak that I barely heard it. That settled it. I needed to at least try. With one last nudge, I turned and followed my pawprints back out of the woods. As I burst into the clear, limping as fast as I could across the snow, I didn’t even think of my hesitant trust with Lynn. All I thought of was getting her help, and nothing else.

I gradually sped up, feeling my paw adjust to my body’s rhythm. Nearing the house, I ducked under a stone bench and cleared a snow-capped tree stump. I rounded the house, but found neither James nor the tree ax. But I needed to try harder. *Lynn needs you.* I skidded around the next corner, panting and shaking on my unsteady foot. I practically burst with relief when I saw

James’s familiar back, standing by his car with his ax resting beside him. I mustered up all my courage. *You can do it.* Sprinting forward, I leapt into the air, finding holds in the pockmarked ice on the car hood. My paw slipped, but a warm hand shot out of nowhere and steadied me, followed by a “Storm? Whatcha doing here?”

“Lynn’s in trouble. She’s hurt!” I mewed, trying to resist the urge to nurse my aching paw.

James patted his ax. “What? Seriously, Storm, what do you need? And, hold on. Where’s Lynn?”

I rolled my eyes. Humans were so thickheaded. But every moment, Lynn was growing weaker. I needed to try harder. Rubbing against James, I nodded my head towards the woods, hoping he understood this one simple hint.

He did, thank God. “The woods? Lynn?” I purred a yes. “Well, let’s go! What are you waiting for?”

You. I snorted all the way into the woods, while James called Lynn’s name. We found her in minutes. Lynn was crying so quietly that I barely heard her enough to lead James over. James lifted his sister and carried her, bridal-style, back into the house. She tucked the mistletoe behind his ear as he set her down and called the doctor.

While James was gone, Lynn beckoned me over. Though she was weak from pain, she smiled as I limped over and curled on her lap. She whispered, "Thanks. Without you, I'd still be back there. I *knew* I could trust you."

A shiver ran down my spine at that. I snuggled with her, the first time I allowed myself to open up and completely, utterly trust Lynn Pilar. As the seasons changed and so did her second name, Lynn and I never forgot that day of stormy trials and trust, where I not only learned to trust her and the true friends around me, but my own unlimited capabilities. We'd cherish our trustworthy friendship past our graves and into the dawn of heaven.

Addi Hsieh
HMS Grade 6

Boston Time

"Are we there yet? Are we there yet? Are we there yet?" I questioned a billion times. I was so gleeful that we are almost to a cabin in Boston with my dad's side of the family. My two cousins, Ava and Ian, were there as well. "Yes, we are almost there," my dad said while rolling his eyes annoyed. "Ugg! You said that two hours ago," I said limping my face in the back part of my dad's leather seat. After 300 million hours later, we finally made it to the cabin. Screams as loud as thunder exploded the car that was trying to park. "We are here! We are here!" My sisters and I raved! Already in a couple seconds with our bags, we were in the wooden cabin that looked inside like a house, greeting our family members with hugs, and kisses. In the mammoth cabin my cousins, sisters, and I scanned the wooden cabin like a hawk. A few minutes later, Ava, Ian, Elia, Addie, and I dipped our cold legs then our top part of our bodies in the warm hot tub grinning that we found it before our parents. After a couple days, exploring Boston, and the freezing ocean, which felt like a dream, was fantastic. After a day, that flew by like falcon, we went to a warm sunny beach that was urging us to swim in it when we were on the balcony. But then suddenly, we saw these MAMMOTH waves pouncing on the sand that was trying to shield it's soaking body. "Oh my holy smokes! What the mint chocolate chip!!!!" I thundered "we have to swim in there, we need to swim in there or we will die!" Ian said dragging his hands down his face. "We came here to go to the Cape Cod Lighthouse," Uncle Ben said. "But if we don't go down there we will die. Do you what us to die?" Whined Ava. "Yeah!" Addie agreed with her face in a book. "No! We have to go." My mom said. "But the waves, but the beach, but the sand, but the waves!" All the kids said, like it was planned it. The adults thought about it which was my: dad, mom, uncle, and grandma. Finally after a hundred years, they agreed to go to the sunny beach for an hour ONLY!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

All of the kids darted to the beach, leaving the adults in the dust. But they caught up with us because it was crowded. When we got there, my sisters and Ava were being buried like treasure by my dad, and my uncle. Ian, and I were jumping in the waves like we are Avengers. The adults were of course tanning, not including my dad, and uncle. After that unforgettable time the hour had to come to an end. "No! NO! NO!" I thundered wiping tears from my cheeks, "We are leaving tomorrow!" "It's ok," my mom said hugging me tight like a tornado just hit. "Don't worry Ammie, we will see them again soon." My dad said walking in the room.

I guess the next day had to come, and it came alright because, everybody hugged each other saying "Good bye." Soon everybody was in their cars driving away from each other. "Sad days," I say with a wave, "We will see them soon, we will see them soon," I thought to myself. "Bye house." I say thinking the house was waving back.

Ammie Hsieh
Oak School Grade 4

Leaving for Colorado

Buzz! Buzz!

Maddie's sunburnt face popped up on the screen. She had her golden blond hair tied up in a messy bun.

"Hi Layla, I don't understand this problem."

Layla was two math classes up from Maddie, but she still helped her with her math homework. They talked for a bit about her homework, but then it was time for Layla to have dinner. She turned her phone off, set it on her desk, and headed downstairs for paninis.

Once she got downstairs, she grabbed her panini, filled with avocado, mushrooms, ham, and cheese. She thanked her parents for the food and started eating right away. Kasey, her little sister, came in the door and sat down at the table with her panini. The ten-year-old had been biking with their neighbor, Lily, and had a smudge of dirt on her chin.

"You look like you had fun out there, my little peanut," Mrs. Sawyer messed with Kasey's sandy blond hair. Everyone laughed.

After dinner, Layla asked who wanted ice cream, and no one said no. After she took her shower and got into her pajamas, she and her dad ate popcorn while they played cards. Kasey came down from her shower and sat down to watch them play cards, leaving every so often to get a handful of popcorn. That was what they did every Saturday.

Layla got out of bed and put on her Zella leggings and her Vanderbilt sweatshirt, where both her parents went. She took out her french braids. Her wavy hair fell on her shoulders. She dragged her suitcase down the stairs, Kasey close behind hauling hers. When they got in the car, Layla and Kasey both out their books and start reading.

Three hours later, the sawyers stop for lunch. When they get back in the car, Mrs. Sawyer pulled out her computer to work on her health research project, Kasey fell asleep, and Layla pulled out her summer math problems. The teachers had given the summer packet early, and Layla was already working on them. She loved doing math, probably because she was so good at it.

"We're here," Layla's dad stepped out of the car and unloaded the suitcases. They all walked into the hotel. The person at the desk greeted them with a smile and checked them in. They carried their suitcases and backpacks into the elevator.

Layla looked around at the small hotel room as she set her suitcase down. There were two twin beds, one bathroom, and a desk. There was a window on the opposite side of the door. The snow on the tip of the mountains looked like dollops of frosting on a sweet cupcake. She sat at the end of one of the beds and pulled out her sketchbook. She drew a super cute squirrel that almost looked real, its head cocked to the side, and its brown, fuzzy tail perked in the air. She put her sketchbook back in her backpack and leaned back onto the bed.

Layla and Kasey cannonballed into the pool at the same time. After five seconds of talking underwater, Layla and Kasey came up to breathe. This pool was *not* as fun as the Sheaville town pool. There was no diving board or slide. But at least there was a pool. Layla splashed Kasey, and in return, Kasey splashed Layla. They threw rings, but soon got bored and pulled themselves out of the pool.

They sat on a pool lounge chair, with towels wrapped around them, shivering.

"Let's go, Mom and Dad are probably wondering where we are," Kasey pointed out. They threw their towels into the bin, put on their clothes over their bathing suits, and headed out the door. When they got back to the room, they both went straight to the TV. Kasey found the remote. They searched for good shows that would be on later that evening.

Marin Hughes

Madison School Grade 4

Lightning Traveler

Usain Bolt is the fastest runner in the world. He started running when he went to school and forgot his lunch so he ran against a runner. He won so he got box lunch from a coach.

He made a world record for 200 meter in 19.19 seconds in 2009. Usain Bolt made a world record later in his life in the 100 meter, it was 9.58 seconds!

ZOO FIXER UPPERS!

Jumping, swinging, roaring, tackling- the friends played for hours. "OH OH AH AH", Lilah the monkey howled. She was playing with her friend Rory, an aggressive lion. The friendship of a monkey and lion is very unusual. Lilah and Rory had been best friends since they were just babies. Lilah would stand on Rory's back like she was surfing as she ran down the hills. Lilah would jump up onto a tree and come back down pouncing on her as she would roll around. When they were the same size they could wrestle, but now Rory gave Lilah a piggyback ride. They teach each other to do what their species do best. Rory taught Lilah to roar and be fierce while Lilah taught Rory to climb, and jump. They saw each other every day for eight hours showing charisma and playfulness. They couldn't trust each other any more, and couldn't imagine life without seeing each other.

The week after their second birthdays, they were put into their enclosure, to play when they overheard the zoologist talking to the owner of the zoo. "We aren't making enough money to fix up the zoo, and the visitors think it looks disgusting. The Mainbrook Zoo looks 10 times better than our Zoo. Look around, LowLight Zoo, it looks disgraceful. No one will visit here."

"Well what does that mean for the animals?"

"They will all be sent different places depending on their species, in a week or so." Then they walked away not noticing the animals stunned faces.

Lilah and Rory had tears in their eyes when they were separated for feeding time by the zoo keeper. As they sulked and sulked knowing what would happen to their relationship if the zoo closed. Their bright red eyes, and pale faces showed no excitement. Only a few days before closing, Lilah came up with an idea. "We could redo the zoo! Make it better than ever, no one will think its trash. We just need help!" One by one she asked a few of the animals.

"Hey hippos and horses what if we decorate the zoo?" Rory asked.

"Are you kidding they'll kill us lickidy split. No questions asked, I'm not doing that!"

"Elephants and snakes what about you?" Lilah questioned.

"Are you insane? If they catch us we're dead meat." The elephants declared.

"You're full of malarkey. You think I'm really going to believe that they are closing down the zoo. I think you just want attention." The snakes hissed. Not one animal believed them after that. Blazing hot tears were falling from Lilah's eyes like rain from the sky. Her eyes were glistening from the sultry sunny sky with the beaming hot sun from her tears. Her face was a thunder cloud with a frown plastered over the top. She was hopeless, and couldn't think of anything good that could happen from moving zoos. For the next few days, she poked at her food, and barely moved. The zookeepers couldn't understand what was wrong, but they only new once solution, Rory. She could make Lilah happy any day. Once she was forced inside the pen, they sat and talked. The news was devastating for both of them. They went on and on about how amazing this zoo was and how they needed to save it. But without help it was impossible in only two days. "We have no hope. We may as well start saying our goodbyes. We can't do it by ourselves." Sobbing hysterically, and heaving profusely. They hugged each other like if they let go they would fall off a cliff. The nearby gorillas yelled over the fence "HEY QUIET! We're tryna sleep here. BRO, why you crying?"

"Because we overheard the owner say yesterday the zoo's shutting down in 2 days!"

"REALLY, ARE YOU SERIOUS?" they cried.

"Yup, and we are all being separated." Rory said holding back tears. After that, the news spread like wildfire, from one species to the next. Now they all believed what Lilah and Rory told them before.

The news set in, and they knew something had to be done. They weren't going down so easy. No one knew what to do, except Lilah. She told the eagle to spread the news of a meeting, at 10 p.m. Everyone came not a minute late to the underground playground. It started immediately as they all agreed on how they were going to save the zoo. The giraffes would hang up lights, insects would clean the pathways, monkeys going around town for good food, and elephants to get new appliances. The zoo would go from rags to riches. As the night began, they waited for the visitors and workers to leave the zoo. They all broke open their cages and grabbed their hidden tools. Once the elephants came back from getting appliances from the nearby HomeZooPot, they helped raise up the smaller animals to help change the dull street lights. The fairy lights turned on, and it gave the zoo a mystical look. The lights glowed a fairy light blue, they laid gently across the fences and trees. They

were running out of time. As the sun began to rise, after a night of nonstop work the animals finished the sidewalks and walls. The elephants and monkeys got back and put the things in the sheds. The animals looked around at their work, and Lilah and Rory began to cry. They knew they saved the zoo. The zoo looked fabulous, better than ever. They all scurried back to their cages, and Lilah and Rory were proud of what they've done and that they worked hard even though they had many animals doubt them. They all quietly snuck back to their cages looking behind their shoulders after a few seconds or any sound.

As the sun shone brightly, the owners and workers walked in to start their normal routine before the last day of the zoo the next day. As they looked up from their devices, they all gasped and gaped at what the zoo looked like. They ran around excited as a dog getting a treat, they were quite dumbfounded and flabbergasted at the transformation of the zoo. The signs were bright and fun, the lights made it cheery, the new equipment made it professional, and the happy animals made it interesting. Once they finished exploring, they went to the owner and he could only make out the words "This zoo is staying". The animals howled and leapt in excitement. Once they figured out the animals did it, the news made a story about it, and it went viral. The zoo was more popular than ever, and no one could say anything but good things about the ever so perfect zoo.

A few years later, the zoo was still popular and well-maintained. Lilah and Rory had a pen together until they died. The two animals will always be remembered for their perseverance through doubters and naysayers, and changed the lives of every animal and saved the zoo. The story was even made into a book about their lives, and it became a New York Times best seller. They will always be remembered as the hard working zoo fixer uppers!

Nicole James
HMS Grade 6

Storm Tree

Storm Tree
A mystery, unsolved
A cloud of cotton candy,
Soon an angry sea.

Joyous laughter,
Turned to distant cries
Matching the sound,
Of thunder rumbling above

Leaves flowing,
As if they were ballerinas,
Dancing in the spotlight.

Unaccompanied,
As the creatures run away,
The storm growls down,
And the scent of wet earth fills the air.

Lightning bursts in the sky,
Making my world glow
Lighting up the hidden secrets

Alone,
Waiting,
For a storm to pass

Elle Jashnani
HMS Grade 6

The Dog Days

The cool spring air filled my lungs. A very subtle breeze blew through my hair. My patience was on its last ounce after over a year and a half of waiting. It was finally May 16th when I ran inside my house. I saw a dog, my dog, the cutest puppy I have ever seen. It was the perfect day.

For years, my sister and I had been begging for a dog. We would always just say “Pleaseeeee” but then my little brother came along and my Mom kept saying, “Your brother is too little, we need to wait for him to get older to get a dog.” Both of my parents grew up with dogs. My Mom had a Cairn Terrier named Digger and my Dad had so many dogs as a kid that I barely know half their names. Also, both my parents said, “Dogs are a lot of work and you would need to take a lot of care of it.” My sister and I had always said we could do it, but as we had no experience, we did not really know if we could handle a dog and all of its responsibilities. Even though we kept saying “Pleaseeee”, my parents still said no.

A few years passed and my parents finally gave the okay to start doing research for a dog. My sister and I begged every day to go to the library to get books on dogs. We looked online for breeders and searched for specific breeds we were considering. We researched exercise requirements for certain dogs, how big the breed expected to be full grown, and if they were a good dog for a family. Although my sister and I claim we did the research, it was mostly my parents. Through our research, we learned what breeds were good with kids, strangers and even other animals. Finally, after about a year, we agreed on what kind of dog we were going to get and the name of the dog. It was going to be a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel with name Rookie “Mistake” Jessopp. I knew even before we got him that I would love him right from the start.

We were going to get Rookie from a breeder in northern Michigan. After his mom got pregnant, we had to wait another sixty one days for him to be born. In addition to that time, we then had to wait another nine weeks for Rookie to be ready to leave his mom and come live with us. Since Rookie was from northern Michigan, we never had the chance to see him in person before we got him. With the help of modern technology, we were able to see him through frequent FaceTime’s and texting.

It was May 16, 2016, a perfect spring day. The sun burned down on the concrete, the sweet smell of flowers filled the air. The day was so great, but there was still one key part missing. I was sitting in Ms. Weglarz’s second grade class and the clock read 3:00. The classroom was buzzing with chatter, the blue glass windows seemed to vibrate. The class was ready for school to end, but I had to wait five more minutes until my life changed forever. A minute passed, which felt like the longest minute in my life. Another minute passed. It seemed that every minute would get longer each time. Finally, the clock read 3:04. One minute till school got out. Now only thirty seconds until the bell rang. I waited, starting to count down 5, 4, 3, 2, 1...the bell rang. I sprinted as fast as I could down out of school, then down The Lane street. My legs were burning with pain carrying my body and heavy backpack. I turned on Oak street and raced down my street. Finally, I was in my driveway running faster than I ever have before and I burst through the door. My brain was swirling with thoughts, but the one I was most focused on was, *I had a dog*. Sitting in my family room was my Mom. I threw my backpack on the ground and raced to her. On a blanket in front of her was the cutest, littlest, tiniest dog I had ever seen. At that moment when I saw my dog, Rookie, my life changed.

I could not believe the day had finally come. I sat down on the blanket, the cute little dog rolled over and crawled over to me. I put my arm out to pet him, but my Mom said, “Let him smell you first so he gets used to you.” as much as I just wanted to snuggle with him, I had to let him smell me first. He put his tiny little nose right by hand, then he licked it. I assumed that meant he liked me, so I pet him. His fur was so soft. I could not believe that I finally had a dog. My life just seemed so perfect at the moment I finally pet him. A few minutes later, my sister came barreling through the door and let out a scream of joy.

My family finally had their dog after years of campaigning from my sister and I. After over a year of research, months of waiting for Rookie to be born, weeks until he could come home, sitting through the longest school day of my life, and letting Rookie smell me before I could pet him, I learned that if you slow down and be patient, good things will eventually come. Rookie was well worth the wait.

Chase Jessopp
HMS Grade 6

I Know a Girl Named Molly

I know a girl named Molly. She's a pretty exceptional girl. She also has a very loving and caring family. Her parents, Maggie and Chip, are very friendly and always willing to help. Maggie loves to cook, go shopping, read, play tennis and paddle, and have the kids be quiet. Chip loves to golf, grill, camp, dogs, hockey, and go to concerts. She also has some great siblings. Mac, her younger brother, loves baseball, soccer, football, karate, and playing on his iPad. Her older brother, Chase, loves baseball, golf, and cross country. You can't forget her fun-loving dog, Rookie, who on a normal day you could find walking up and down the streets, sleeping, chasing squirrels, and attacking his family with hugs and kisses.

Molly said over the summer she did tons of fun stuff! One of the things she did over the summer was go to a concert. She went to the Florida Georgia Line concert featuring Dan+Shay, Morgan Wallen, and Hardy. I saw her cool pictures from the concert and it looks like she had a ton of fun. She said the stage was huge and the lights were so bright. She even said they got home at midnight. A couple of the other things she did over the summer include getting her best time in the IM in swimming and going to sleep away camp. She said the food at camp was delicious and they had so many fun activities. One of the final things she did over the summer was the awesome cousin sleepover she had with all the cousins on her mom's side sleeping at her grandparents' house. Some of the activities they did at the sleepover were play a game of baseball, eat a delicious dinner, watch a hysterical movie, and eat breakfast at a place with the best smoothies ever.

One of Molly's friends told me that she does a really amazing cooking class and has so much fun. Some of the things she has cooked are chicken fried rice with delicious roasted vegetables, blondies made of warm brown butter which smelled like heaven, beautiful funfetti birthday cake, and the best cheese burger sliders you have ever had in your life. She also does a really fun art class. She has made a dream catcher and a painting of a cat and her art teacher also has two actual cats that she got to play with. One other hobby Molly does is she loves to scooter around and go to the skate park to try to learn new tricks.

The funniest thing that happened over the summer was when Molly was at camp. Molly and all of her cabin mates were on a boat together and once they were far enough out, they all crawled onto a banana boat. Molly was sitting in the front bouncing up and down in the choppy water. Her boat driver had been taking nice wide turns, but all of the sudden, she took a very sharp turn and the banana boat tilted sideways. Then, two of Molly's friends jumped off and that made the whole boat flip and everyone fell off into Lake Geneva.

In conclusion, I personally think Molly is an awesome, sporty, and kind girl. Also if you ever see her tell her that Susie Q says hello.

Molly Jessopp

The Lane School Grade 5

Christmas Vacation

The second day, we were in St. Maarten. I heard that they had a French side and a Dutch side. We called a taxi to take us to the French side first. We went to two beaches called Oriental beach and Maho beach. Maho beach was a beach that was very close to an airport. Every five minutes or so a plane would come right above the beach. After we had some fun at the beaches it was time to go back to the cruise. We called an Uber to take us back. The Uber driver had lived his whole life here so he gave us a really good tour. We saw our very first cashew and walnut tree. He told us a lot of celebrities come here for vacations too. When we got on our cruise again we were just in time to have lunch and I had some yummy pizza.

The third day I was in St. Kitts. I was getting a little homesick....

The fourth day we were in St. Johns, Antigua. I loved it. I loved it. I loved it. I got to ride a horse in the sea!! It was a beautiful horse but was a little thin though. After I rode the horse trail and splashed in the sea, I went to my mom to change and get some water. I noticed that there was a black dog laying right behind my mom and me. We both noticed that she was hot and pregnant! Luckily, there was still some water left in my bottle so my mom found a bowl, poured the rest of the water in the bowl and gave it to the dog. She was so thirsty and drank it all in 10 seconds!

Kate Ji

Madison School Grade 3

A Speaker of Chinese

So was I once a speaker of Chinese,
All of the sounds dancing on my tongue, swirling, whirling,
Stories of the characters flash on my brain,
ups and downs, flowing like music.
Rising above many others with my bilingual background.
Scratch, scratch, the pencil creates a line of spiraling words
frolicking like children in the snow.
Curves and bends, lines and angles, curving every which way.
It has survived war and peace, flame and flood,
one of the oldest languages in the world.
One could do worse than be a speaker of Chinese.

Natalie Jiang
Prospect School Grade 4

Pure Chicago

Come to a place where sirens scream and
shops say "come in."
To a place where Lake Michigan's waves play with you
and the sand at North Avenue Beach greets you.
Where friendly families can visit the United Center to
dance to Hugh Jackmans song,
And eat the best deep dish pizza around.
Where you can explore, dream, shop, and play.
Do all of this and more...in Pure Chicago.

Charlotte Jones
Oak School Grade 3

Run Like the Wind

Cendra was running as fast as she could go. She was in the middle of a track meet. She was never looking back, not ever. Because as far as she could tell, her arch enemy, Jennie was right on her tail. If Cendra looked into Jennie's eyes then she would freak out and never win this race. If Cendra did not win it would be the end of it, like for good. Cendra could not let that happen.

She pushed herself to run faster and then just like that, Cendra had made it. She had crossed the finish line! Now Cendra was awarded with a gold trophy and a photo of Cendra was put on the high school's wall of fame. But in all the joy, Cendra looked back at Jennie. Jennie was crying. Her face was as red as a tomato. Tears were running down Jennie's face like a huge rain storm. Cendra knew she had to do something, but with all the pain that Jennie had put Cendra through, Cendra did not want to do anything. Cendra decided to go tell Jennie that she had a great run. Just then something weird happened....

Lucy Kapcar
CHMS Grade 6

Three Special Mementos

If you had to bring in three things, what would they be? I brought in three things that describe me. First, I brought in a picture of my dog. I brought in a picture of my dog because he means a lot to me. Second, I brought in my old soccer ball. Soccer means a lot to me because I have been doing it for a long time. Third, I brought in a toy microphone. I brought in a toy microphone because I love singing and I have been doing it for a long time. Finally, these are my three mementos.

Vivian Kapcar
Monroe School Grade 3

Chicago

Beep, Beep! Vroom! It's rush hour and zooming cars are flying by. Illuminating signs read, Hot Dogs! And Hamburgers! And skyscrapers touch clouds! You're in beautiful Chicago where creative plays good as gold and nice places are everywhere.

Famous Places

Chicago wouldn't be what it is without the famous places from the theaters to the biggest skyscrapers. Famous places are the heart of Chicago. One of the most famous places in Chicago is the Willis Tower. The Willis Tower is the tallest building in the U.S. at 108 floors and an astonishing 1,451 feet! Back when it was built in 1973 it was called the Sears Tower, but that changed in 2001. Another favorite famous place is Cloud Gate, also known as "The Bean," is a metal structure shaped like a bean. It was made by the British-Indian born artist, Anish Kapoor. Cloud Gate was built between 2004 and 2006 and is the centerpiece of AT&T Plaza at Millennium Park. Navy Pier is another famous place. Did you know the first Ferris Wheel was made there in 1893! It was first used as trading for World War II and reopened as a park in 1995. More than 180 million people have visited the park since its reopening and most have loved it. It has about 50 acres of attractions you will find nowhere else. As Navy Pier passes its 2nd century, it is still a great park. The best was saved for last – Lincoln Park Zoo. The zoo started with a gift of two swans from Central Park in New York. The zoo is known for helping endangered species and in 1874, they bought a bear cub for \$10. They now have about 160 different animal species!

Historic Events

The historic events are another huge part of Chicago, from huge fires to shows of jets. One of the most well known historic event of Chicago is the Chicago Fire. At the time, over 30,000 people lived in Chicago and everything was made of wood. At the time, there was a drought and things easily ignited. Nobody really knows how it started. A boy said Mrs. O'Leary chased him out of the barn and he made the lantern topple. Others blamed "Peg leg" Sullivan, a neighbor. A newspaper said Mrs. O'Leary's cow knocked it over. The fire department didn't end up finding out there was a fire for 40 minutes. And then they were sent to the wrong place. Soon after the fire cut out the city water supply other cities' fire departments were called, but by the time they arrived, it was too late to stop it. The fire killed 300 or more people and destroyed 17,500 buildings. The fire is by far the worst fire in the U.S.A. Another historic event was the Columbian Exposition in 1893. It had new food, big attractions and people everywhere. The Columbian Exposition had everything. One new food was Quaker Oats, which were heated up and eaten as oatmeal. Also, there was a 264 ft high Ferris Wheel that had 36 cars!

Experiencing Chicago for the first time is like going down a road filled with things that nobody has ever seen before. You never know what to expect. Chicago has been through a lot from fires that burn down the whole city to fairs that the whole world comes to, a lot has happened there. And it's still standing strong. The vibrant forest preserves glow at night. Mammoth skyscrapers tall as Mt. Everest. There is an abundance of sports teams and a variety of museums. All in the sweet home city of Chicago.

Bailey Knoll
Prospect School Grade 5

Evie

I love Evie,
She likes to brush up against me,
But whether it's rain or snow,
You always know,
She likes it better outside,
But she will always be by your side

Kendall Krause
Elm School Grade 5

Peekaboo.. the Cat

Around the house he runs,
And litter he tracks,
And one of his hacks,
To mew for food,
Which he knows is very rude,
He uses his kitty-eyes,
Very large in size,
For a scratch on his ears,
But the biggest of his fears,
Is if you wanna see him zoom,
Get out that vacuum!

Kaelyn Krause
Elm School Grade 5

The Way Out

The day had come for me and my family to move. I didn't understand why I had to move to a different place when nothing was wrong with living in Germany. But I have heard on the news that war might be just around the corner. Mom told me it was okay, that nothing horrible was going to happen, but inside, I knew she was as worried as me. Everyone took their luggage and got onto the train. We rode the train for hours, and I was homesick. America, my big sister, pulled me close and told me a few things that were great about San Francisco while I stared out the window, still hoping to stop, turn around, and head back. But we didn't.

And finally, we were there. We were in San Francisco. Dad drove onto the driveway of our new house and unloaded the luggage with the moving truck with us behind. I didn't have as much things to bring unlike America, so it didn't take long to unload what I owned. "Sylvia, you can go and explore our new house while you're waiting, okay?" Mom said.

"Okay." I sighed. Maybe this new house has some interesting things, I thought. I opened the door and stepped inside. The house was ancient, like the ones in the movies where ghosts live. The cherry-red rugs that had seen better days were torn and ripped. They were dirty, too. The house looked abandoned. I walked up the spiral staircase that led to the second floor and looked around. Nothing too interesting, except for the patterns on the cobwebs that were on all this furniture. The rest of my family came in and I gave America a tour around the house even though I hadn't had time to even explore the rooms. "Bye guys! I'm going to work now!" Dad called.

"Bye!" I shouted back. Dad had been hired to a job as an engineer, and the company was in San Francisco. He closed the door and Mom went to the grocery store to buy some food to cook for lunch.

"Mom, can I watch TV?" I asked.

"Sure," Mom replied. Then she walked out the door and closed it behind her. I pressed the ON button on the remote control and the TV screen flicked on.

"Breaking news! A man dressed in a white shirt was seen hijacking a truck and driving it into Rhonda Riley's house, then jumping out and running away before anyone could catch him. He was also wearing a pair of blue jeans and Nike shoes when this disaster happened. San Francisco's greatest detectives and the National Policemen of San Francisco also known as the NPSF, are currently investigating the crime scene and looking for clues," a reporter said. The reporter kept on saying something on the TV, but I wasn't listening anymore. A man in a white shirt? Blue jeans? Nike shoes? These characteristics were getting very familiar to me all of a sudden. Then I knew why these details were so familiar to me. I knew the person who had hijacked the car.

It was my dad. To Be Continued...

Annabelle Lan
Madison School Grade 3

Siriously?

Steve stood in his garage, on the workbench his father made him, and looked at his masterpiece. It looked gangly, the old pots and pans making up the body hiding the machinery, which clicked and whirred noisily inside. He had gotten the parts from an old junkyard behind his school, which had an old disposed computer he took apart. He smiled, and grinned as he stuck the USB into the port on the chest of the robot. There was a small humming sound, and on the screen stuck to its chest, "How can I help you?" in bright white letters flashed.

He cheered in his mind, but of course he still had to test it. So he asked the bot a few questions, his heart beating fast when she started to answer, and he finally decided he had done it. He had created a robot that could talk to him, be his friend, his only, and best. Steve had no friends, no besties, no BFFs his age, except for the engineers in his neighborhood, and they were adults.

His adoptive mother yelled from the inside of the house. "Steve, it's time for dinner!" He groaned and switched the robot off. Then, he ran inside the house, leaving the robot in the garage.

A shady guy walked toward Steve's house and looked around suspiciously, as if he thought someone or something was watching him. Then, satisfied with his sneaky approach, he grabbed the Jobs' garage door and yanked it up, finding it was incredibly easy to open the door. He looked around once again, his eyes searching, and found it. He grabbed the robot, slipped the USB in his pocket, and left, closing the garage door.

Steve, at school, always being bored by the classes, thought of a new name for his robot. But suddenly, "Steve! Pay attention!" the teacher said, glaring at him. He rolled his eyes when she wasn't looking and kept on thinking. But after awhile he just couldn't think of one and he asked his classmate Alex during lunch, "I need to name a robot I made. Any-"

"Seriously? You made a robot?" Alex said, his eyebrows raised, cutting Steve off in the middle of his sentence. But Steve didn't care. He had found a name: Seri.

When Steve got home, and opened the garage door, his expression turned from happiness to shock as he scanned the garage for his robot. But it wasn't there. At least, not anymore. To Be Continued...

Vincent Lan
Madison School Grade 5

One of the most inspiring people I knew was my grandpa Lolo. Even though his life was being pulled out of him, he somehow had the biggest heart of all. He would care for the family and always tried to make my cousins and me happy. Sometimes I would wonder how Lolo kept persevering and staying optimistic even though he was suffering from diabetes. And when I asked my mother why he kept going, she said that it was because he believed God thought his story wasn't done yet.

One day, when Lolo was babysitting my brother and I, I saw him stabbing a needle in his humongous belly. A drop of blood would stumble down his belly, but he wiped it off as if it was nothing. His eyes seemed tired and mournful, but also determined. When he saw me, he suddenly lit up in delight.

Confused, I asked, "Why are you doing that?"

Lolo would respond, "It's for my diabetes. It's fine because I'll be alright. God will protect me" Slowly, he would take out the shot from his dark body, and gave a sigh of relief. He would make a weak grin and I would smile back at him. Trying to forget about the terrifying needle, I would get back to eating my dinner and reading my book.

Lolo was one of the most selfless people I knew. He went to many of my piano recitals despite the fact that his diabetes was getting worse and worse. My cousins, brother, and I were always spoiled by him with all kinds of toys and money. Not only was he selfless to my family, but he also did many charities for the poor. He was like a saint to us.

When I was in elementary school, me and my brother wanted this super expensive toy hoverboards for Christmas. When Christmas came, and we tore the gigantic and heavy presents from Lolo and Lola, there were two hoverboards. Ethan and I were so overcome with joy that we forgot about the other presents. I hugged Lola and Lolo tightly, holding onto their soft red, blue and green sweaters.

I questioned, "Why would you give me such an expensive present?"

Quietly Lolo would answer, "Because we wanted to see you and Ethan happy."

When I look back to these moments, I sometimes wish that I could be with my inspiring grandfather again. He was filled with compassion and I wish I knew that. To my regret, I was blind from the pain he was in, and didn't pay as much attention to him as I should have. In my eyes, he was one of the greatest people ever. And when he died, I

realized that his dedication to help and love others had brought so many people together.

Nate Lin
HMS Grade 7

Home Sweet Home

Whoosh! Wash! It was a pretty normal day at a small beach in California. Well, in my perspective the beach is ginormous! But suddenly, a clap of thunder shook the whole earth. Then, the sun hid behind the clouds. Rain started to pour down. Where was it coming from? The ocean started to swallow me up. I kicked and shook my shell with all my might, but it was no use. I even tried to use my claws to grip the sand and fight off the angry tide. But it was too late, the ocean swallowed me up. The light started to drift away. So I just gave up.

Ouch! I woke up to the sight of a net draped over me. I was so helpless I didn't bother to move. But then, a big scary human stood upon me. As the human came closer, I held out my claws. But then I realized he was untangling me from the net. But why? Then he gently pushed me into the water and waved. But where should I go? Where was my home?

The big human stared for a minute, but then left. I sat in the shallow sea for about an hour until I smelled something. Food! Not just any food, shrimp! I quickly ran to a small empty fishing boat. Inside the ship, I saw a nice, slimy shrimp. Without hesitation, I gobbled it up. After that, the same man that saved me got onto the boat and started to paddle with me on board! Maybe he was taking me to find my home. Soon we came upon a small island. Though beautiful, it was not my home. We traveled for a while until I finally smelled the California beach. My beach. My home. We came to a halt by the sand and I hopped off. I looked at the tall, kind man as he waved to me once again. I guess every cloud has a silver lining.

Hannah Lindenmeyer
Prospect School Grade 4

Going To Chapel Rock

One time my family decided to go to Chapel Rock in Michigan which was a six mile hike to see a pretty view that some people said was one of the prettiest things they had ever seen. When we got there I started having second thoughts when I saw bear signs that read bear in the area and the bear traps all over the parking lot. But we kept on walking until we reached the beginning of the trail. All around us we could see the green trees towering over our heads.

Then all of the sudden we came to this tree with lots of scratches on it from bears so we knew that they were somewhere nearby. We kept on walking but still there was no sign of the lake. But we knew it had to be somewhere close by since we saw pictures of it on the signs next to the ones about bears. We walked a little until we were at one mile out of six and found a beautiful waterfall a lock away. It was big and long and dripping fast we watched for a while but then kept on walking because we were not spending the whole day there cause later we were driving to Traverse City. So we walked and walked and walked until we had walked a mile and a half. Then we came to another beat up tree but this time it wasn't scratches and instead it looked more like an animal rubbing against it and it was also too high to be a bear so it probably was a moose. We walked even more until we had walked three miles so we had three more miles to go. Then we got really bored so my sister started telling bad dad jokes. Her favorite one was, what do you call a snake with no legs? A snake. Then I pointed out to her that snakes don't have legs but she didn't want to hear it. Then we heard something like a sink. We rushed ahead and I saw one of the biggest water falls that I had ever seen rushing onto the pretty black rocks. Then we walked some more and finally we were at a huge clearing where there was a giant cliff and my dad said that it meant we were close to chapel rock.

The trees were slowly dancing in the cold air. That day was very cold and rainy so that meant it also was muddy. Then we saw something up ahead and had realized it was the whole reason we had come, chapel rock. It was this really old rock and over time from waves hitting it, it became an arch shape. And the strange thing was that there was no dirt on the rock and a huge two hundred year old tree. It was a really beautiful sight because in the background there were mountains and the ocean blue lake. You could also see the forest and the white sky that smelled good like pine trees. The waves of the lake were crashing to then shore as they left marks. The lake stretched out so far it almost looked endless.

After a long time we started walking the other way. We had to walk three more miles to get back to the parking lot. Then we heard something, a stick cracked but it was just my sister and sometimes I don't know about her. But at first we thought it might have been a bear. Then we walked more until we came to this huge tree with many scratches on it then all of the sudden we heard sticks cracking and the bushes started rustling then we heard a loud low grumbling grrrrrrrrr! We rushed as fast as we could away from the bear until finally we couldn't hear it anymore. Our hearts were thumping as the cold air hit our skin. It was way muddier than before so our legs were splattered with mud. But we still all really creeped out by the animal. We were pretty far from chapel rock and all we could see were the trees and the trail. We came to a clearing and all of the sudden we saw the lake again. Then we saw the mountains reaching up toward the sky. We looked around and still couldn't see the end of the trail. We only had a mile and a half to go so we kept on walking. By now the trees were huge and way taller than they were before.

We came to yet another beat up tree and it was kind of getting ridiculous. But this one was even higher than all of the others and it was much lower on the tree and they were deep scratch marks from claws. We really wanted to get out of there since clearly there were a lot of bears.

We walked even more until we came to a little pond and we had to cross over a bridge to get to the other side. There were many mosquitos in the air so we got away. Then we couldn't believe what we saw, at the turn there in the distance was the parking lot. We walked as fast as we could, and now we could see our car. Then all of the sudden we were finally back where we started.

We were really glad to be out of the bear infested area, then we washed our hands and got in the car. When we got in the car we started listening to bear noises and moose noises, then when we listened to angry bear noises and it sounded exactly like what we heard earlier on in the day. Then my dad said, "let's get going so we can get to the lake."

So we started to drive to the lake. We drove for about an hour until finally we were at Fisherman's Bay. We went

there to look for shells and old fossils of coral called Petoskey stones. Then when I was looking through the waist deep water, I found something and I yelled out to my dad, "I found a Petoskey! Then my dad came over to look at the huge Petoskey I had just found.

Then after a while the waves got higher so I got out onto the burning sand. After that we had to get to the hotel so we dried off and got in the car to start heading to the hotel. That day was pretty cool for me and I don't think I'll forget it any time soon.

Megan Lipman
Madison School Grade 4

Fred's Journey

an excerpt

His eyes looked red and water was coming out of them. It made me sad to see him that way, so I immediately licked the water away. But it kept coming out. I continued to lick his face trying to comfort him, and he hugged me very tightly. Then he put my leash on and helped me onto his big metal moving box. We sat in silence together until we arrived at a medium-sized building that smelled like dogs and cats. There, he handed my leash to an older woman with a smiling face who led me to a room filled with dogs and locked me in a cell. Although I barked and whimpered as my owner walked away, he never turned around. He left me there.

Resigned, I looked around the crate and noticed that there was a bed. I tried lying down on it, but all I could feel was the hard floor. I noticed that there was a bowl with water and tried to take a sip but spit it out because it tasted like rust. It didn't matter. I knew that my owner would pick me up and that we would go home to a tasty dinner. The night passed and my owner did not come to get me. "He must've run into traffic... right?" I thought, trying to comfort myself. I paced around the cell to keep myself busy. "Where was my owner? Was he in trouble? Did he need me?" I was thinking of a way to escape the cell when another thought came to me, "Is he leaving me here forever? Was this what abandon meant?" All these questions were racing through my head when I saw a couple of humans walk into the room. They looked around as all the other dogs barked. But I didn't want to bark. I wanted my owner. The couple walked closer to me. "Look!" said the girl. "This one's not barking! He seems sweet. He's the one!" she cooed. "I politely barked at them trying to tell them that they must have the wrong dog. Instead, encouraged, the man walked over, inspected a piece of paper on my cell and said, "This says that his name is Fred. He's a one year old black lab and new to the shelter. He seems like a great dog. Nice find sweetie." The girl beamed at the man while I silently panicked on the inside.

The couple left the room and came back a few minutes later. The girl had a leash... my leash... in her hands. "How did she get my leash?" The woman with the smiling face opened up the cell and the man leashed me up, took me out of the cell, and brought me to another moving box. "I won't go inside the moving box," I half barked, half whimpered. "I'm not leaving here. My owner left me here. He's coming back for me. Don't put me in the moving box! Please! My owner won't be able to find me!" The man just picked me up and told me, "Don't worry buddy. We're your new owners and we're going to take you to a new home." He put me in the backseat of the moving box, next to the girl, and started moving the box. "New owners? These can't be my owners. My owner couldn't have left...or... abandoned me. Did he? I couldn't wrap my head around it. I sat quietly in the moving box, my mind numb. I needed to rest.

The sunlight shone on my face as I opened my eyes. My vision was fuzzy but it looked like I was back home! "My owner was here! It had been just a dream!" I went to lick his face but realized that I was licking a foreign face. I quickly pulled back. The girl who had chosen me said, "Mark! He licked me!" She hooked up my leash, took me out of the moving box and led me to a house. I looked around the house. "This was not my house," I lamented. A slick looking older dog hobbled towards me. He seemed to be a schnauzer. "What's your name?" he asked. "Mine's Sausage."

"My name? I-i-it's Fred." I muttered. "What is this place?" I asked.

"It's your new home. You'll get used to it, kid."

"My new home?" It couldn't be, and it definitely wouldn't get better. "NO, IT WON'T GET BETTER!" I bolted away from the older dog. I needed to get out of there. I needed to find my owner. I didn't know any of these people. They were not my people. As I ran away from Sausage, I saw my path for es-cape, a doggie door. I

dashed out the door and saw a fence looming over me. I heard Sausage calling me. "That fence won't stop me," I thought. I braced myself and popped into the air, sailing over the fence. I felt the wind in my fur and then, *Crack!* "What was that noise?" It didn't matter. All I knew was that I had to run. My heart was beating hard. As I ran, my left front leg buckled. It felt as if someone had lit it on fire. I looked down at my paw and it was covered in a red liquid. I tried to lick it off, but it kept coming out. I needed to find shelter. I limped towards an alley where I could hide and rest. My stomach growled. My last meal had been the treats that my owner had given me when he left me with the lady with the smiling face. A dog couldn't live off of the treats that he ate 3 days ago, and a dog couldn't live off of old memories of a man who abandoned him. I needed to go back. I didn't have to forget my old memories, but I needed to make new ones. I needed to move on.

Mia LoDuca
HMS Grade 6

Abandoned

I live on a farm house. I am a dog. I get good food. There are good people. I'm happy. But it didn't used to be this way. Life started out pretty good. I had a mom, I was happy. I had food. Everything was great. Just perfect! Then one day, when I was about 8 weeks old, they plopped me and my brothers and sisters into a box and wrote "free puppies" in the front. As time went by, boys and girls picked up my brothers and sisters. And, when it was evening, I was the last one in the box. I waited all day and when it became really, really dark, they put me in a bed and I slept. In the morning, I woke up really early and crept down the stairs, only to find someone say, "We need to let her go. No one picked her out of the box. She's useless. We need to let her go into the woods." Well, that was surprising. I actually didn't know what that meant, but I was really happy that we all got in a car. I usually get really excited when we go for a ride. But it wasn't the same without my brothers and sisters there. When we got out, they took off my leash, he took off my collar and said, "Why don't you run? When you come back, we will be here and take you home." So, I ran off into the trees when I saw a squirrel. I broke through the trees when the squirrel disappeared into a log, because, of course, I couldn't catch it. But, when I returned, my owners or mother weren't sitting on the bench where they normally sat when I chased squirrels with my brothers and sisters. I knew that they would come back so I sat and waited. All day, all night, and all day, all day, all day. I was tired of waiting. I was hungry. I was wet from the rain. I needed to find some shelter. So, I trotted off, hoping that they would come back.

I was looking for food. I scooted my black claws along the dirt. When I popped my head out of the trees, I was able to find a small town. I walked into the town. If there were dogs there, then maybe they would be willing to share their food. That's when I heard barking. I ran over to the fence. There was a small hole. I poked my head through and, sure enough, there was a large dog lounging in the sun on a pile of dirt. I asked him, "Hey do you got any food?" The dog woke up. He barely opened one eye, then he bared his shining white teeth and said, "Get out of here you pup!" I backed away and ran to the next house. There was a tall, skinny man there and, from the looks of it, he had a bag of dog food on him. I barked at him to get his attention. The man said, "Go on! Shoo! Get out of here!" I just sat down and whimpered. Maybe, if I looked cute, he would give me at least one scoop. "Oh, I see how it is," he sneered and scowled. He dropped the bag and stomped inside the house. "I wonder if he is going for some food?" I thought. He came back out with a shiny metal stick. "Is there food in there?" I just had to find out. But there was no food. Instead, he tried to spank me with it. I ran and the metal rod just barely missed my tail.

I hit the road once again. I slept in a trash can, in a dumpster, next to a fried chicken place. I ate dinner out of the trash bags in the dumpster. Cold and lonely, I tried to get some sleep. The next day, I roamed the streets like the stray dog I was. I tried a few more houses and just cowered away as usual. So, I ended up curling up under the porch of an old broken down shack. Tired, hungry, and lonely, I trudged back on the road with my head hanging low and my hopes as well. Then, I saw a poorly treated sneaker out of the corner of my eye. Then a boy with a pale face and red hair said, "Dad! There's a dog! Look!" A man with brown hair crouched down to my level. "She has no collar. She has to be a stray." The boy picked me up gently and hugged me softly. He said, "Can we keep him dad?" The tall man sighed heavily, "Here's a deal. We will keep him IF we don't find his owner. If we do, you will have to say your goodbyes. "Fine, but she looks bruised. Can we get her to a vet?" "Of course we can, Timmy!" the man said. "But don't forget, you have Tball practice today!" Timmy and his dad gave me food, water and rubs. They were gentle when they touched my bruises. I felt wanted again. I felt loved. And, once again, I felt like I belonged.

One day, we were walking to the town park. I didn't like the town park. The water was icky, the grass was dry and drab, and that's where I got dumped. When we got there, I smelled something familiar. In fact so familiar I tugged on my leash. When we got there, my brother Shadow was playing in the pond. I immediately ran over to him and the two of us were happy to be reunited.

Storm Tree

Guinevere Loftus
The Lane School Grade 5

48

Anne thought she was in a dream. She looked around for Mrs. Jade, but she didn't see anybody except for the young girl who seemed a lot like.... Helen Keller! Which meant the other woman had to be... Anne Sullivan!

Anne Sullivan turned and saw Anne Marie on the ground.

"Oh!" Anne Sullivan exclaimed in surprise. "Who are you? And where did you come from?"

"I...I don't know."

"You don't know who you are?"

"No.. I mean.. yes! I'm Anne Marie but I don't know how I got here."

"Well, now that you're here, do you mind helping me with Helen? I'm Anne Sullivan, her teacher."

Anne Marie walked over to where Helen was standing. She turned the pump on, and Anne Sullivan gently put Helen's hand underneath the water.

"W-A-T-E-R." Anne Sullivan spelled into Helen's hand.

It took a few tries for Helen to understand, but she eventually learned what Anne meant.

"I really should be going now." said Anne Marie.

"Before you go, would you like to learn your name in sign language?"

Anne Sullivan held Anne Marie's hand and spelled A-N-N-E into her hand.

Anne Marie gently took Helen's hand. Helen spelled N-E-C-K-L-A-C-E into Anne Marie's hand. Anne Marie pulled the necklace out of her pocket. But before she could drop it into Helen's hand, she felt herself being pulled away. Anne landed right next to a fluffy bean bag chair. Her grandma was standing by the table, waiting for Anne.

"Let me show you my book." Anne flipped the page. "Wait... Anne Sullivan is wearing my necklace in the picture!" Anne exclaimed.

"I want to tell you something." her grandma whispered. "That's Helen and me in that picture."

"Grandma, why didn't you ever tell me?"

Her grandma smiled and took Anne's hand as they walked out the doors together.

Kate Lowe

Walker School Grade 3

Firefighters

Introduction

In a fire, the wind's pressing power can push the already existing flame into brand new fuel. This would mean that with a consistent, strong wind, fire could go indefinitely! To help put out those fires, the world has firefighters that need special equipment to keep them safe, have to know how the wind will spread the flames, and need to constantly get better ways of putting out fires and catching them. Firefighters need things such as different types of protection and ways to put out the spreading fire. They also need to have acute knowledge of how the wind will help the fire move and grow. Lastly, there are several new ways of catching and putting out fires that firefighters have used. By combining safety, knowledge, and equipment, firefighters can put out fires easier.

Fireproof?

A way that firefighters stay safe is that they wear enough equipment and protection for anything, in every scenario. This means that the firefighters must have a lot of weight on them when they go into rescues, with blast protection, burn protection, etc. To be safe, firefighters have to have safe equipment to work with, so firefighters make sure they have just that. This shows that firefighters might even have equipment such as ladders specially made for them. In fact, whenever new technology can be used to increase the level of safety for firefighters, it is used. This seemingly means that firefighters are taking every upgrade they can, in every area of survival that they can get. Firefighters must use ladder hooks to keep their ladders secure on the unstable sides of buildings.

Furthermore, firefighters can stop unsafe ways of doing things if they feel it puts them in danger. This obviously shows that firefighters have a lot of control of their own safety. The firefighting community has created protocols for when disaster strikes, and a fire suddenly breaks out. This is good because if the firefighters are all running around and yelling at each other to do things, the fire might not be put out! Whenever a bad event occurs, such as a near-miss or a death, the firefighters investigate the "crime scene" very thoroughly for future purposes. This is probably done so that the firefighters don't make the same mistake twice. Another couple of things that the

fire department wants people to do are to get more fire prevention devices in their homes, and also to read and learn the codes for fires.

Firefighters use a lot of energy every time they go into a fire, so their managers make sure they take shifts, to prevent overexertion. If they got tired they could let their guard down or not hear people's calls for help! Firefighters should use the right alert systems on every rescue, to hear anything they might need to hear. This could mean that the alert systems are ways for firefighters to hear their leaders voices inside of burning buildings, or maybe to detect gases or radioactive substances. Firefighter's safety is very important, and they can also stay safe by memorizing what way the fire will go depending on the wind.

Gusts of Flame

Wind removes the moisture from the surface of fuel, which will make it more flammable. Wind takes the moist air by the fuel, and replaces it with drier air from elsewhere in the atmosphere. So the wind brings more helpful air to the fire, and takes away the air that could help put out the fire.

Fire does many things, but it can also make wind, too! Wind from fire can be up to 10 times stronger than natural winds. It can also "spot" by throwing embers in the air on these winds, making MORE fire! Eddies are winds that twirl around large things such as rocks or trees. Eddies can change how the fire spreads greatly, hurling it along roads and down fields. Wind can raise the flames and sparks into trees in large gusts, creating the terrifying fires known as crown fires. The wind can also make the front line of the fire be pushed farther forward, making the twigs, items or trees there catch fire too! More fuel equals more fire.

The force of wind changes intensity and direction daily, redirecting the path of destruction the fire will take, when fanned from place to place. Fire needs oxygen, which wind brings in a surplus, intensifying and spreading the fire. The wind might not even matter, because if all goes well, then the fire won't ever get near the wind as it has already been caught and put out.

Like it Never Happened

The technology known as Video Image Smoke Detection determines the exact place where a fire begins by looking for it visually. A high-tech computer analyzes whether the pictures caught resemble flames or smoke. The Video Image Smoke Detection system can cover very large areas in places with abundant fuels, such as oil fields or warehouses, and in them, it could save the people inside as well as the items stored there. The VISD could keep workers safe, getting them out, and firefighters in before it gets out of hand at all!

One successful company, called SignalONE, made a machine that records vocal instructions that can be recorded by a parent, so that if a fire were to break out, the kid could escape their room by their parent's instruction. The Integrated Voice Evacuation and Messaging System or the IVEMS tells the occupants of a building a location specific message on how to get out quickly and efficiently. This must help people greatly, a voice saying what they need to hear in their panic.

The machine called Birdi is known for how fast it can catch slow, medium, or quickly burning fires 24/7 over your whole house. To make sure that it is an actual emergency, Birdi will call the person it belongs to on the phone, which is perfect for senior citizens that need to keep their house safe. The machine asks if it is a false alarm or a real fire, proceeding to call the police and fire department if it is real.

Water mist sprinklers use a very fine mist to put out even the largest fires, making a lot of mist instead of a handful of water droplets. A larger area of droplets is a lot more effective than a more powerful but smaller area. This is probably a smart way to put out fires more efficiently. The WM system is a much better choice for people with valuable equipment, as it decreases water damage a lot! It is even better at saving property than the dry chemical systems!

ESFR systems are a very powerful set of sprinkler heads that let loose 100 gallons of water per minute! They don't just control a fire, they shrink it straight back to its starting point!

A brand new form of firefighting is the Sound Wave Fire Extinguisher, which uses sound as a way to put out fires. This outstanding machine's sound waves separate fire from its fuel!

Firefighters are important because they keep the world sheltered from the flames with safety, knowledge, and their incredible equipment. These different aspects of firefighting make it safer and more effective. For the reasons above, firefighters are irreplaceable members of society.

**Nathan Makstenieks
HMS Grade 6**

Notes

The notes fly around us like birds in the air
Swoosh!
Swoop!
They sing high
They sign low
Your brain shuts down and then it goes into
Nothing

All of your worries float away
Mouths open and close
It's where you can feel...

Free

If you are nervous
All you have to do is feel the notes
The gracefulness, or the energy
One thing, yet so many ways to do it

The noises spring out of everyone's mouths.
They jump in the air, the wind in their faces
And they soar down to the ground
Then up to the sky

Glancing at the papers, even though the words are clearly memorized
One voice stands above the rest
Never alone
Never afraid
Never stressed
When you have the feeling of being...

Free

Mary Malham
Walker School Grade 5

Snowflake

I am a snowflake, as delicate as a flower floating through the dark night sky. I am thrilled knowing that when I reach my destination, I will bring joy to the people living below me. Surrounding me are more of my snowflake friends that are also very anxious to get to their target. I am cold, white and soft yet when I reach the ground and it turns warm I will transform into a pile of slush. Whoosh! Swoosh! I am flying to the ground as fast as a missile. When I reach the ground, I will become part of a big pile of snow covering the ground like a thick, frigid blanket waiting for kids to come and play with me.

Abby Matricaria
Prospect School Grade 4

This story follows Artecacia, an escape artist at Salvador circus. The circus is mainly comprised of runaways, fugitives, and former mendicants. Tired of being tossed into the oblivion from the ex cathedra of society, they've banded together to form an intriguing and almost numinous circus. Enjoy the show of the Salvador Circus.

I rush to pin up the rest of my hair underneath the braided white wig of mine. Estelle, our ringmaster, was just starting her introduction for me but my hair wouldn't stay up. I was vacuous on how to keep my hair in place so I ripped out the wig and zipped up the rest of my costume.

Before I go on stage, I spot Rafel, a fatuous acrobat around my age, unlock the ax from its case on the wall. This was necessary for my last trick, in case I didn't make it out of the tank in time. I beam as Estelle introduces me and I walk onstage. I feel the spotlights heating my skin and barely make out the faces of the audience from the blinding light. I flawlessly execute my first two tricks but my nerves spike when I see the tank being rolled on from backstage. Estelle ties a knot around my wrists and I'm hoisted in the air before being dropped in the tank. The curtains close around me and I work fast to untie the knot at my wrists. I use my motivation to not have to requite Rafel if he had to use that ax to save my life.

Breaking through the trick lock, I jump out of the cage and signal the crew to pull the curtains back. The audience is in an aphasia at first, then burst into applause. The only people who aren't clapping are the nullifidians who have no faith in magic. I smile and thank the audience as I walk off stage, quickly getting out of the way of the crew who reset the stage for the acrobat performances.

I find myself entranced, watching the three acrobats soar through the air. When I was younger, my favorite part of a show were the acrobats because their agility and flexibility left me in awe. My friend Rio, a trick rider for the circus, catches up with me. She stands next to me as we watch the acrobats start their next act. As we're watching, my eyes follow every twist and flip and my blood drains when I see Rafel miss the metal bar by a few inches. I was ready to bolt from my spot but he latches on to a lower bar that I didn't see before. I breathe out slowly, realizing I've been holding my breath. Rio gives me a concerned glance which is very risible.

After the show is finished, I walk back to the trailer Rio and I share and greet my pet bulldog, Speck. Rio walks in a few minutes later and goes straight to her room, grabs her riding jacket, and walks back out. She must be going to the stables before we start traveling tonight. Most of us don't know where we're going yet, but Estelle says it's somewhere very saturnine. I fall asleep easily to the sounds of the train moving across the countryside.

I wake up the next morning to Speck licking my face. I turn away from him but he climbs on top and continues. One thing's for sure, he's assiduous, I'll give him that. I scratch his head and stretch before crossing my room to pour him some food and water. Rubbing my eyes, I look over and see what time it is on my clock. I groan when I see it's only 8:30. I knock on Rio's door to wake her up because if I don't now, she'll be asleep until eleven and find some way to blame it on me.

A few seconds later, a very disgruntled Rio opens the door aggressively and stares me down. I hold in a laugh at her disheveled appearance. Her long black hair is flying upwards and her brown eyes are filled with anger. One thing we're both propitious on is what time to get up in the morning. I open my mouth to say good morning but she's already returned to her cave. I chuckle and get dressed before opening our trailer door to find the train has stopped. I hop out of the car and spy the rest of the crew arguing with each other like they've all heard something from eclectics. I walked over to Adalicia and Rafel, two of our best acrobats and asked them where we were. Rafel shrugged and Adalicia shook her head, neither of them knowing the answer. Rafel asked where Rio was and I explained she was holed up in her cave for another hour or two. Adalicia snickered, we all knew how pusillanimous Rio was on getting up early.

Soon we were called over to help set up the tent in a large field. I went back to our trailer and dragged Rio out, which took a large amount of effort since she kept trying to turn around. It takes all day for us to set up the tents and props. By the time we're done, we're all exhausted. I sigh as we can finally return to our trailers before tomorrow's grand show.

By the time the next morning rolls around, I'm excited for another performance and go to knock on Rio's door before thinking better of it. I dress myself in my costume and wig, giving her an extra thirty minutes. Then I scoop up Speck and set him loose in her room so he can wake her up. I hear her yell my name just as I'm running down the steps. I head toward the big top which is alive with people running in every direction.

In the evening, all of us watch the crowds pour into the tent with excitement lighting up their faces in the dark of the night. Estelle starts her intro and the show flies by.

At the end, we're all standing in a line by the order of our acts. Rio to the left of me and Rafel to the right. He gives me a winning smile as we all step in line. Grasping hands, we all raise them high above us as the audience showers us with praise and applause. Under the bright spotlights, I realize that outcasts and all, this is where we're meant to be.

Claire May
HMS Grade 8

I was waiting for so long, then I heard knocking on the door and Madelyn came in. I took her bags and I showed her my room. I asked her what she wanted to do. She didn't know what to do.

So I told her that she had to get a swimsuit on because we were going to get wet. She asked "are we going to the pool." I said "no we are going to my front yard, right outside. She was surprised when she saw what we were doing. I turned on the hose filled water balloons and started throwing them at her. She started running to get water balloons and started throwing them at me. My brother ran in, and we didn't even notice until HE grabbed a water balloon. When we were done we went inside and dried off we also changed into our clothes. We played with LEGOS and built amazing things. They were so cool still some of them are on display in our house.

When we finished it was about lunch time. We ate and then went to the musical The Lion King. It was about 2 hours long including the space between. When we came back it was time to go back home. We went home, and ate pizza for dinner. Madelyn and I watched a movie then ended the day sleeping.

Olivia McEwen
Prospect School Grade 3

My triple doubles

AHHH LET'S GO AND 1!!! I just scored a basket with a foul. "Nice job Liam!!", Coach said. I was in Romeoville with all my teammates and friends. We were playing in our travel basketball tournament. I missed the free throw and I felt embarrassed. I had red cheeks. "It's fine Liam" Jack said. We got the ball back. Jackson got me the ball. I had a really tough defender on me. I felt so nervous that I felt butterflies in my stomach. I looked him right in the eye and stepped back shot it an....swisssssshhhhhhhhhh. My defender did not look happy. "Let's go Liam" Charlie said. Now we're gonna wait an hour til our next game. At the start of the game I took the ball up because I am point guard. I got the ball to Austin. He made a nice jumper. "Nice shot" I said. We were on defense. I was guarding their point guard. I stole the ball. And we did our primary offense Wolverines speed ball. I got the ball to Reon. He scored. "Nice" said Reon's dad. When I saw when Reon made such a good shot I felt like my eyes were gonna fall out. Then I went on the bench because I had 3 fouls. Me and the shooting guards were talking about how to get it to the left side. Because I was mostly passing to the right cause I take the ball out and I'm a good shooter and dribbler. We were about to sub in now. I was so nervous again it felt like my heart was gonna pop out of my chest. I'm not the best at getting the ball to the left. I subbed in. I got the ball to the left. Three two one...Logan missed. "It's ok Logan" I said. I felt bad for him. Now we have to shake hands. I think we're gonna have a good season this year for travel.

Liam McFarland
Walker School Grade 4

Relative of the Year

Not to brag, but I have the best aunt ever. Give a little clap for Aunt Julie! She always gives the best hugs and when she says she can do something she will not stop or give up. I want something, she will not stop or give up. She makes me the greatest pancakes ever! My 2019-2020 Relative of the Year is Aunt Julie!!

My Aunt Julie is the most caring person ever. She loves me to the moon and back and I know that for a fact, because I tried telling her I love her more, but she says I love you more. She says it more times. But I know I love her more. We arranged a whole family cookie decorating cook off. We made 100 cookies one morning! She let me eat 2 of the cookies before the cook off. Yum! Yum! That was good. We looked on Pinterest and we put so much sugar in the cookies. I like the doughy cookies best! And she loves lime chips like me and she lets me have some. Yum Yum those are good. We have so much fun together. Anywhere we go, I am safe with her. She puts fun music on in the car and we head to one of my favorite restaurants, Chipotle. I beg my mom to go to Aunt Julie's because she is so fun to be with. She cares about my learning and progress in school. She's always willing to help me with my math. She gives me problems because she is a math teacher. My aunt cares for everyone who is nice to me and my aunt cares for all of her relatives. My Aunt Julie always lets me come over for a sleepover and we take bubble baths in her big jacuzzi, play Polly Pockets with my aunt, they have a lot of Polly Pockets. One night when we had a sleepover she stayed up and watched high school musical with me. That was a good moving and singing.

I will love her for my whole life. Cannot imagine how much I love my Aunt Julie. We're a perfect match. I could not even put how much times I love her because I will make a whole book. Me and my aunt are both so different but there is a big connection in love. My Aunt Julie deserves to be my Relative of the Year. I still love her to the moon and back and she is still the best aunt ever.

Maura McFarland
Walker School Grade 3

Pure Chicago

Come to a place where taxis shout and skyscrapers smile.
To a place where buildings stand tall and greet you,
And museums bring the best out of their visitors.
Where cheerful families can shop in busy stores, eat the deep dish pizza,
And be convinced to keep eating more.
Where you can play, shop, run, and cheer.
Do all of this and more...in Pure Chicago.

Andrew Meyer
Oak School Grade 3

Who Is The Best Two Sport Athlete of All Time in the U.S.A.?

There are three athletes I have chosen to pick from. Bo Jackson, Michael Jordan, and Deion Sanders.

The most athletic person to play the game of football was Bo Jackson. He also played baseball. He was voted in to the National Football League (NFL) hall of fame. He also was voted into the Major League Baseball (MLB) hall of fame. He played for the Raiders for football. He played baseball for the Royals, the White Sox, and the Angels.

Michael Jordan played basketball and baseball. In the National Basketball Association (NBA), he had six championship rings when he played for the Bulls. He only played baseball in the MLB for a few games. He played for the Detroit Tigers in the majors. He played for the White Sox in the minors.

Deion Sanders was an MLB outfielder and NFL cornerback and was inducted into the Pro football hall of fame. He is considered one of the most versatile athletes in all of history to play two sports and at most of the positions. He is one of the most athletic people in the world.

Of these three players I think that Bo Jackson is the best because he got voted in to the hall of fame in baseball and in football. It is not Michael Jordan because he barely played in the MLB but Bo Jackson is in the hall of fame in two sports. It is not Deion Sander because he played baseball and football, but he is only in the hall of fame for football. Bo Jackson made it to both hall of fames because he was such an amazing athlete in both baseball and football. Bo Jackson was into all of his games. He was passionate about both sports.

Aaron Mikhail
Madison School Grade 4

Fun in the Dark

Candy, Jack O'Lanterns, Friends, Costumes, and scary things. That's when you know it's Halloween!! Y-A-Y! Halloween is one of the best times of the year because you get candy, you dress up, and you are with friends. I love Halloween for all of those reasons. Now I'm going to tell you a story.

"When will we go trick or treating?" I asked my mom impatiently.

"Soon," she said. I was so excited. I was dressed up as Dizzy from Descendants

My friends, Senna, Elisa, and Ava were coming to my house to go trick-or-treating. When they got there, Senna gave me fake glasses, and my friends helped me with my hair by putting messy buns and I had hair spray to color my hair. Finally, it was time to go

When we were about to leave I was so so so excited to get candy and to be with my friends. My friend and I started going to houses in our neighborhood. Trick or treat, we said, and got candy, it was so fun. We walked so far to get candy and sometimes we would see friends who were walking. Some decorations were kind of creepy when they moved. When we came back it was really late and we ate some of our candy. Well, I ate a lot. Halloween is a very fun holiday for me, but it's even better when I'm with friends.

Happy spooky Halloween everyone. Hee-he-heee.

Megan Monteleone
Elm School Grade 4

What would life be as a tree? What would it be like living in the life cycle of the giant plant that dances in the wind and dresses in white in the winter? Well, imagine in the summer, the bright sun shines through your fresh green leaves as bright as the glimmering sand on the beach. The squirrels leap and hop and sprint around on your branches playing in the sun. The birds gently *whoosh* by and chirp their homemade songs. The graceful lovely butterfly delightfully flaps its wings and drifts in the air as it lands on flowers down beneath in the pretty gleaming mint-colored grass as the rays of the sun shimmer through the blades. Enjoy it once a year, because fall is coming soon! The breeze will come, your leaves will turn different colors, you'll start dancing in the wind! Well, that's what other people think. You're actually shivering and shaking because of the freezing, cold, windy air! Each gust you lose more and more leaves. Soon, you have nothing to bare. The leaves turn from green, to yellow, to orange, to red, to purple, to brown, and from there the colors fade. Some of your twigs dry out and drop to the ground. But the grass is not fresh anymore, and the sun is not shining any more and the sky is not so bright any more. It's not blue. It is gray and white. Listen to the leaves crunch and observe the colors while you can, because winter is coming soon! The leaves are gone both on land and on you. But instead of leaves giving you shade from the hot, sweaty summer days, the cold, mushy, sticky, clean white snow layers upon your branches, sticks, and half of your trunk. You can now stay warm in the freezy, icy, cold, snowy, breezy winter nights. The bark on your trunk dries out just like your twigs and sticks. But it hasn't fallen off yet, because spring is here! The sun comes out, the sky is blue and bright. The squirrels start leaping and the birds start chirping. But there's one problem... the snow hasn't melted yet! But it did change. It feels more like mashed potatoes and looks more like white sparkly sand and not snow. Your branches grew long and brand new, so did your bark. But boy, it sure does take a while for your leaves to grow back! Soon, the snow does melt, and your leaves do grow back their brand new fresh green color back. The grass is fresh green, and summer is back. But man, oh, man how many more times will you have to go through that!

Valerie Nabokov
Elm School Grade 3

ZZZZ-CHURNNNNN! Wayne heard the generator sputter to a halt just before the TV flickered and turned off. *Just great*, Wayne thought. *Now there really is nothing to do.* Wayne was bored and desperate for something to do. He had school off that day but there was no one to play with. It was times like these that he wished he wasn't an only child and had a brother or sister to play with. He decided to go to the forest and take a jog on the nature path. The wildlife there was as beautiful as a beach sunset. After all, his parents wouldn't be home from the market for dinner for another hour or so. They wouldn't even know he was gone. He put on a light jacket, tied his shoes, grabbed a flashlight and set off to the forest.

The way to the forest was straight except for a detour through the market. He would have to watch out for his parents. If they saw him out of the house by himself, he would for sure be grounded. He swept his flashlight back and forth along his route, and soon arrived at the market. He walked swiftly through the food stands—sushi, grilled food, ramen, and seafood. He spotted his parents, and before he could react, they made eye contact.

"Wayne, is that you?" his mother called out.

Swift as a ninja, Wayne ducked under stands, over food crates, and around other people coming for dinner. He breathed heavily as he finally made it out.

After what felt like a thousand more years of walking, Wayne arrived at the forest. The trees danced in the strong wind, and the birds were making a party of chirps. *The forest is surprisingly lively tonight*, Wayne thought to himself. Then suddenly, all fell silent. No birds singing, no wind, no swaying trees. Wayne quickly felt paranoia set in on him, it was a paralyzing ice surrounding him. *Maybe I should just go home*, Wayne said to himself, despite the fact that he knew, or at least hoped, that no one else was there. He looked to backtrack his steps out of the forest, but things seemed suddenly unfamiliar, as he appears to be completely lost. He began to get cold feet. *Pull yourself together*, he thought to himself. He then heard some voices...calming voices. Wayne knew he shouldn't go up to strangers in a dark forest at night, but he couldn't stop himself. His body had a mind of its own! He finally arrived at the voice, a task the most likely took only ten seconds, but felt like an hour. It turned out that the voices were from other children like him!

"We have gotten lost in this forest, too. Now you are one of us!" The other children spoke all at once, like an eerie chorus. He suddenly sat down with them, he couldn't move!

"Now we wait for the next child to get lost." He spoke without trying to. *Oh no! Am I really stuck here?!* Wayne thought, as the realization of his adverse fate set in.

William Newlin
The Lane School Grade 5

The Disappearance of Shirley Dover

On October 13, 1943, I was at the front steps of my house. My mother was murdered at 12 am that very day, and my brother and I were waiting for our cousin. He received the terrible news, and we wanted to see each other before Stephen and I had to leave our neighborhood for good.

No one knew why my mother faced her fate, and how Stephen and I were still alive. All we knew from the police was that it was a murder, and it had been done with gloves on. There was not a single trace of the murderer.

An old red Jeep parked outside of our house with the rickety old steps. Meet Lucifer and Eleanor Nightingale, my new guardians. They arrived earlier than expected.

Lucifer was the brother of my mother, Lucillia. The cousin, whom we were supposed to see before we left, had never showed up. Earlier that day, Stephen and I first saw that man's black leather jacket and that woman's expensive furs. Eleanor, Lucifer's wife, wore white gloves, with a tint of pink on her left hand. As our uncle and aunt welcomed me and Stephen with open arms, I noticed something: that was a stain of blood on Eleanor Nightingale's white glove.

The ride to Maple Street was long, and awfully quiet compared to the quick screaming death of our beloved mother. As we sat in silence, Eleanor tried to talk to us, so she started to ask Lucifer...

"Honey! What do children like? Wine? Beer? Coffee?"

"Honey, they are CHILDREN. Children don't drink."

Technically, they were both wrong. Stephen was 17, and I was 14.

"Who cares anyway. So, Sally-"

"Her name is-", my brother failed to correct.

"Do you like to do your hair? Oh, how I would love to style your golden hair into buns and pigtails."

"She doesn't. And I am 18 in 10 days. Why can't I be her guardian?"

"Frisky guy, isn't he, Luci." Eleanor said while trying to whisper.

"Stephen, you remind me of your mother. What a brave soul she was. And you, Shirley, seem just like your father", Lucifer noted.

"That's what people always say. Father and I used to talk about everything all the time, then the war started.", I answered.

"It must be so terrible to hear the news. Your parents were amazing people."

While Stephen, Lucifer, and I were having such a lively talk, Eleanor just sat in silence with the widest sneer plastered on her face.

When we pulled up into the five-floor house, Eleanor was kicking away everything she saw in her path. Lucifer rang the doorbell, and the butler appeared. He took all of our things and headed upstairs.

"Follow that man, children. Head to your rooms, and you ought to dress better for dinner."

When we reached the third floor of the incredibly skinny house, a maid helped us unpack immediately, while another maid handed us a dress and a tux. She nods toward the end of the hallway, and Stephen cautiously walked down first.

At dinner, Eleanor notices my necklace.

"Well, what a pretty necklace. Your mother wore it all of the time. She loved that necklace."

She was mentioning the long gold necklace with a spiral pendant dangling on my neck.

"Yes, it was given to me after she died. Apparently, it is a very valuable item. But, I never knew why."

For the rest of the dinner, we all sat in silence.

One week later, May 20, 1949

Living with the Nightingales felt very different than at home: there were more stairs to climb, more chores to do, more dresses and tuxes, and many, many more deadly nights. It was the middle of the night, the time when no one was awake, and everyone could hear everything. Feeling the need to go to the bathroom, I started to head for the door of my room. But she would not want me to be awake right now. Oh, how I wish that I wasn't in such need of going to the bathroom.

I quickly, but quietly, dashed through the halls of the five-floor house and suddenly stopped. Why, you might ask? I stopped right in front of the open door that led to Eleanor's room. However, my heart nearly stopped. Usually, she would be asleep whenever I passed by her room to go to the bathroom, but not that night. There was a phone call.

Thinking I was sane, Stephen walked out of our room and quickly rushed over.

"What happened?"

"Shh!", I replied. Carefully, we both listened to Eleanor.

"Hello, is it Roger? Yes. Remember, there are two kids in my house, Sally and Steve."

Stephen and I cringed so bad when hearing her say our names wrong.

"Yes. Play your part well Roger, and we will finally get rid of the last generation of the Dover and Nightingale families. I can't believe we pulled off two murders in one day! That little kid and Lucillia are long gone! Good thing Sally's and Steve's father had already died. At least he made our lives easier. Did you bring your things? Do not be hasty, Roger. Always expect the unexpected."

I fainted and fell crashing to the ground.

"Oh, I need to get back to you. A certain little girl came to see me."

When I opened my eyes, Eleanor Nightingale stood before me.

"Well, well, well. I should probably get back to my call. Ugh, you ruined everything!"

Eleanor went back to her room and quickly told Roger to come to the house.

"I guess this is a lot easier when your death comes sooner."

Tom, being the witty, but intelligent, guy I knew, shouted "We know your real identity, we know you murdered our mother, and we will not die in the hands of Hecate Keres."

Hecate Keres was our family's worst enemy. She committed many crimes under various identities, such as being Eleanor, and always managed to escape.

"So quick to speak, young man. Well, since you're so smart, let's settle this the hard way. I'm getting my knife."

"Wait! Please don't. You don't understand how much you ruined our lives. You killed our mom. You kidnapped our cousin. Please, please don't do this to us, and you can have my necklace if you don't do this." To this day, I still don't know how I managed to say those words.

"You kids are just like your parents. Always too quick to speak. What're you going to do now? There's nowhere to go. I will accept your precious necklace, but this only saves one soul. Who is it going to be?"

"Stephen, run!"

"But I won't see you again."

"Just run!"

Following my final command, my brother ran down the last few flights of stairs and quickly escaped, tears falling down from our faces. I, knowing this will be the last face I will ever see before my fate, stepped towards Hecate Keres. Roger appeared from upstairs.

"Roger! Hand me the knife!"

"I thought there were two left! I got rid of their cousin and this other kid already!"

"Shut up! Stupid little Sally let her brother go and gave us her mother's precious necklace. We could be rich! She gave up the necklace with all of the diamonds and jewels. I can't believe she did that. You children really act like your parents."

Roger handed the knife with glee. Hecate Keres's hideous sneer appeared again as she raised the knife, there was a high pitched scream, and the rest was all a blur. I, Shirley Dover, was killed that night. My brother was never seen again. My whole family is gone. Luckily, I was given a chance to warn you about what happens to ordinary people, and the world will never be a safe place.

Yicole Ng
HMS Grade 7

The Disappointment of Vacation

Prologue

In a car somewhere, in probably Indiana.(That means desolate farmland.)

"Louis?"

"Yes mam."

"You promi-",

"Oh the car is out of gas! Let me fill-up."

My brother said, "You mean petrol right?"

5 Minutes later. "Ok, the gas is ready. You promise to take care of your brother and be responsible for him?"

"Yes mam."

"Oh good we're here grandma is waiting to see you two. Be good!"

"Best behavior", said Dad.

The Vacation

"I did not realize you were walking over here from yonder, but you ignored my path as I was treading so pleasantly from the automobile. Therefore, you stepped on my foot and thus I am in discomfort from the agony in my foot!", said my little brother with fire in his eyes.

"You need to look where your walking!", I said.

Then grandma came over and said, "5 Minutes out of the car, and you are already fighting! Louis you need to pay attention to your younger brother! And Jason I hope you're okay sweetie."

At the house Grandpa was waiting for us. "Hey Louis. Hey Jason! Breakfast's ready. It's pancakes", Grandpa said.

My grandparent's house looked very gothic like. It was a towering church. Like the Lutheran church in Speyer (Spey-er) Germany. Straight out of the Middle Ages. Inside, the pancakes were golden with syrup. It was a

beautiful sight. When I took a bite it was only okay. It was so like Grandpa to make a work of art, and yet have it not achieve its purpose, to taste good.

During breakfast, Jason asked, "When will mom and dad have the preferred action in which they intended to pick us up?"

Grandma said, "Calm down they'll pick you up when their vacation is over."

Jason starts complaining about the pancakes essentially saying that I should just eat his.

So I say, "I am not about to eat your food!"

Jason then tries to stomp on my foot. So, I stomp back hard. In fact too hard. He starts crying.

Grandma says "Louis go to your room this instant!"

My brother's and my room had blue walls, an old desk, two twin beds, and a bad light. By the time I was allowed out, my brother was pleading for me to play with him although he had that sinister smile of his when he was up to no good. However, I had made a promise with my mom to watch Jason. Therefore, I went. Jason was waiting right next to a toy chest, and pretended that it was 100 pounds saying, "This is so very remarkably and unusually burdensome!" So sarcastically, he wasn't even trying to disguise it. He then started playing and making a mess. I got bored. I just sat in the corner and slept. I was asleep for 5 minutes, and then I heard a CRASH!!! My brother started "crying" that I had pushed the toy chest over, on him! In exactly 13.3964 seconds (I had a watch, and I was dead meat so why not time it), my grandparents came in. They came in like they were the FBI raiding a building. When they got there, I was trying to pull the chest back up. I should have realized holding the chest or murder weapon, and being close to the victim did not help me in the punishment.

At dinner all went smoothly, it was the most relaxing part of the trip. No feet were smashed, no feelings were hurt. Just a good steak. At the end of dinner, it was dessert. There was a large, no huge chocolate cake (my brother would have said that thou who made it, made it of immeasurable size.) My brother got served first. It was almost like it would go well. However, when I got mine it was slightly bigger than his so he complained, "Louis has a humongous piece of considerably larger proportions than what I have been unthoughtfully provided!"

"No," I said. "I don't. Period!"

"Cool it Louis! And Jason, your's is not a smaller piece!" said grandma, trying to calm us down.

Later when it was the middle of the night and not a creature was stirring (except my brother), my brother decided to wake me up and say, "I can't go back to sleep I feel... I feel as if I am in an internal struggle to go to sleep will you help me?" in a pleading voice.

I said, "Fine." Making an unnecessarily loud sigh (At the time I was thinking why would my own 6 year old brother want to wake me at his own expense?) We had the same conversation 3 times. Some how I managed to go back to sleep. Early in the morning, I woke up sleepy. For a second it felt like a earthquake. I was confused because how could a earthquake happen in the middle of Indiana. I realized that it was my brother shaking my bed.

He screamed at me, "TIME TO WAKE UP!!!!!"

I replied by saying, "Chill Out!!!"

We then heard from down stairs, "Cut it out won't you!" Grandma said. She said it like the volcano she is, when she is woken up.

"We will." I said. When I bent down to grab a cup of orange juice, I noticed something peculiar. Jason was on the fridge pushing the cookie jar. That was when I realized what he was intending. He was going to push the cookie jar onto the floor next to me, and frame me for shaking the fridge so much that it had fallen off. Then it was really falling. I caught it. Grandma walked in at that exact moment and saw what had happened. 1 hour later I was basking in my glory of innocence, when my brother came in begging for forgiveness.

I replied, "If you see me as thou serene highness." He groaned and walked away.

Elliot Nystedt

Monroe School Grade 5

The Apple Tree

Sometimes I wonder what my purpose is. I am just an apple on a tree. But at least I had family: my mom Red Delicious, my dad Big Macintosh, my little sister Goldie Delicious, and my gramma Grannie Smith. Then there is me, Fuji. We all live in a tree in Blossom Orchard. I love it here!

Pluck my stem was picked but I fell. Worms and ants surrounded me. I was going to be eaten. Suddenly my mom came. She slingshoted me away. They devoured her. When I landed I turned brown, got holes and a sad

frown. I had become a rotten apple. I was like that for 2 years. One day the owners found me. They picked me up and took me back. I looked around. Other apples and crust surrounded me. Then it came to me – Pie.

But a little girl found me and picked me up. She put me in a wooden box. Other rotten apples were around me. A red delicious apple almost eaten was over in the corner.

“Mom?” I said.

“Fiji?” she said.

I hugged her. We turned red again. The little girl found us and threw us out. We landed on our tree and lived happily ever after.

Charlotte Olson

Madison School Grade 3

If the Playground was our Kingdom

Work was all that mattered. The cold was like a warrior, a battle we had to fight. Tirelessly we rolled snow into tiny mountains of glory and used slush as the glue. Day in and day out we built upon our fortress, smiles growing as the mound of lumpy snow began to form. The walls grew higher and higher, and we took turns sitting in the icy throne. Everyone had a job, a role they played in our massive fantasy. We had slush gatherers, ice harvesters, snow builders, even guardians. The slush and ice harvesters dutifully brought supplies for the snow builders to add on to the wonder we had created. Guardians protected the fragile walls from foreign invaders who were eager to steal our precious ice. The playground was our kingdom - the snow, our castle. The joy that the castle brought poured out of our bodies; our excitement could barely be contained. We laughed as we fought off attacks, squealed when we had found a “jackpot” of ice, and giggled as we played in the snow that covered the ground. Recess was a marvelous game, a friend we returned to each day to build upon our greatest glory. When the snow began to melt, our castle did too. Slowly our mystical world began to drip away, like the icicles on the edge of the rooftops. The snow was gone, but the fun remained. I will never forget the time we had building our fortress right in the middle of Madison park. It is a memory I continue to revisit, as it reminds me that we were, and still are, just kids. Kids are meant to have fun. And no matter the age, we can all still become immersed in incredible kingdoms built of the little pieces of fluffy delight that fall out of the sky.

Leah Packer

HMS Grade7

Traveling

In a world of one in a million in a place much bigger than your home,
the place where Multi million dollar companies establish the wings
When you walk in you are graded by hordes of passengers waiting in line,
with the feeling in the back of the head a feeling you cannot describe
A mix of happiness and fullness with a tad of sadness and that feeling that
tells you to hurry up and enjoy the flight.

The unsurpassed competence the attendants offer, it makes you feel that
moment of relief from the world.

While you wait for your travels to commence you embrace the terminal
the place where you feel both accost and unpretentious.

When you hear that announcement you realize you dozed off and gather your gear,
do you feel rushed and feel anger at yourself for feeling bombastic,
when you were supposed to wait.

You reassemble your thoughts and realize all that matters at this point is
that you need to get on with the journey.

Jashn Pande

Walker School Grade 5

Chapter 2 The Land Down Under

I walked up to a small building that said Channel 6 news station. It was my town's local news station. I opened the door and walked inside. A receptionist asked me in monotone "Do you have an appointment." "Yes," I said. She typed something on her computer. "7th door to the left," she told me. I walked in that room. Inside was a tall middle aged man sitting in a chair. "My name is James Wheeler," he said in a calm voice. "Why don't you tell me what happened."

I started to state my story. We were going to Mammoth Cave, the largest cave in the world for our Boy Scout trip this year. When we got there our scoutmaster Mr. Stanley told us to go in groups so that if one of us got lost we would know. I went in a group with my best friends Jake and Marsh. When we got in groups we put on some gear like flashlight helmets and vest with many things in it to help us if we come into any trouble. When we were ready, we were led into the cave. We went into the cave and we explored it for about 10 minutes. At this point we were about half a mile into the cave. This is when something caught Jake's eye. "What's that?" he said pointing in the corner at something shiny. The three of us went towards it straying from the rest of the group. "I think it's a gold nugget," I said. "And a pretty big one at that!" Jake responded. Marsh started yelling "I'M RICH, I'M RICH, I'M RICH!" We looked at him. He quietly said "I mean we're rich." Jake reached for the nugget and tried to pull it out. We all tried to pull it out but it wouldn't budge. We then pulled as hard as we could and with one final heave we ripped it out of the ground.

"You might want to write this part down," I told James who seemed to have lost interest. I continued telling the story. Well the nugget was pretty big and I think it might have been a part of the structure of this small part of the cave because when we pulled it out, the area around the three of us started to rumble and shake. Underneath us the ground cracked and broke open around with the three of us falling in. The rest of the group didn't notice as they were far ahead. We screamed as we fell for what may have been a thousand feet. Then, THUD! We hit the ground, but there was something different about it. Luckily we landed in soft mud but it was odd. The ground was moist with flowers and plants growing out of it unlike the cave which was almost pure rock. We got up from the mud and looked around. There were plants and trees all around us. It seemed like a whole new world. "Where are we?" Jake asked. There was a small bird or lizard in front of me jumping around. I tried to grab it but it jumped around this way and that. Then it ran away. The three of us ran after it to see what it was when suddenly it stopped and we looked up in horror. In front of us was a 5 ton beast. Its horns curved up towards the sky and one stub was protruding from the tip of its nose. ROAR! Its primal cry shook the earth. "RUN," I yelled. The 3 of us bolted away from the beast frantically running in every direction. Luckily it had no interest in attacking us and stayed in the same spot gnawing at some ferns so we stopped running. "We almost died," I said out of breath. "Well at least we still got the gold nugget," Marsh said optimistically. "You and that stupid gold nugget," Jake sneered. "How do we get out of here?" I asked. "Well first where are we," Jake said? Marsh responded "That was a dinosaur..dinosaurs are supposed to be EXTINCT!" "We fell through the cave, we have to climb out of here through that hole" I said. I turned around and pointed to the Hole in the dome of this underground land. "How do we get there," Jake asked "I don't know but we'll try to escape tomorrow" Marsh said drowsily. We all sat down on the ground and fell asleep.

"Wait, you're telling me that you saw ...a dinosaur?" James asked skeptically. "Yes," I said. "Continue," James said with a amused smile on his face. In the morning we woke up and came up with a plan to escape. We were going to climb up one of the sequoia trees close to the opening in the ground above us that we fell through. The trees grew tall after growing for 65 million years untouched by humans. We started our trek through the unknown land coming across many things from the ancient world. Then we were almost there when suddenly the ground shook. THUMP! THUMP! THUMP! We turned around and rising in the horizon was the silhouette of a beast so large and powerful it shook the earth with every step it took. In the distance a Tyrannosaurus Rex stood looking in our direction with every muscle in its body twitching. "Back away slowly," I said. It slowly raised its head. ROAR! It started stomping towards us. We all ran as fast as we could with every muscle in our body aching. The T rex opened its mouth wide enough to swallow a gorilla whole and closed it lightning fast causing us all to jump in fear. We ran harder towards the giant tree. Then we reached it with the T rex far behind giving us time to escape. We climbed scraping our hands and legs clawing at the bark to get away from the T-rex. It was now trying to attack us from the foot of the tree. We climbed through the hole we fell through and took one last look at this amazing, unbelievable world. The T rex was trying to climb up the tree but its weight caused the tree to collapse and it fell

sustaining major injuries. We all pushed a small boulder with all our strength over the hole so this underground world would remain hidden from all people for their safety and the dinosaurs. We then found our boy scout group who were busy searching for us. Then we were driven home just in case we were injured.

"So you're telling me you found an underground world with living dinosaurs," James scoffed in disbelief. "Yes," I said. "Well there is no evidence to support your claim, you don't even have the gold nugget you say you found," James said. "Marsh has it," I said. "Well then it's not here is it....I am sorry but there is insufficient evidence for such a wild story to get published," James said "Goodbye," and he walked out of the room. I walked out of the room shortly after him and walked home disappointed. My friends were waiting at my house when I reached home. "How'd it go?" they asked. "He didn't believe me," I said. "Well that could be good, look on the bright side now no one will harm the dinosaurs," Jake said. "Yeah, they were pretty cool when you weren't being chased by one," I said. We all laughed. It was true, that experience is one I will never forget.

Arya Pandian
HMS Grade 6

What are the "Blues?"

Have you ever heard guitars, harmonicas, pianos, trumpets, or drums in one song? If so, you might be listening to Blues music. Blues music is important and has been around for hundreds of years.

Blues began and was made in the southern U.S. It spread around the country soon after. Many people think of the Blues as a mixture of African and European music. Blues' singers were often African American men and women. They sang about struggles in their lives, such as living in an unfair world or a lost love. Blue's scales are called worried notes, and the notes create sadness in Blues music. Blues music became important to African American culture. It was a way to share their issues in daily life.

Blues music is very important and has been loved by many people, that is what makes it so popular. Many types of styles such as jazz and rock came from the Blues. The history of the Blues will never be forgotten.

Jemma Patel
Oak School Grade 4

THE NEED FOR PAID MATERNITY LEAVE

The USA is the most powerful country in the world and we are growing more powerful by the day. The US needs mothers to continue future generations in America? Nothing. The current maternity leave law, FMLA, gives only twelve weeks of unpaid maternity leave.

88% of women in the US do NOT have access to paid maternity leave. As a result, many of these women are not having second children because of the traumatic things that they faced with their first child. In fact, the USA needs 2.1 live births per women to sustain a healthy population, but currently, we are at 1.86.

In countries like Norway where maternity leave is required and paid, there have been many surveys conducted and it has been shown that paid ante its leave is linked to higher birth weight, lower infant mortality, and happier mothers when returning to work.

Breastfeeding also has a role in this. It has been proven that breastfeeding has many health benefits for the baby. This requires care and time. Paid maternity leave would give them the time they need without having to worry about a financial crisis, especially if the mother is the breadwinner for e family. Another thing that requires time is parents relationships with their babies. A baby's early relationships can really shape their brains and how they grow up.

For those of you out there who think that the payroll tax will rise and maternity leave shouldn't be a thing, you are probably not a mother and the families are either paying thousands of dollars for nannies when maternity leave isn't a thing versus all rather employees paying a payroll tax of just a couple hundred.

This isn't only a issue for mothers, this is an American issue.

Shreemann Patel
HMS Grade 7

The Fear of the Mind

Fear is just a state of mind. Although, it can control our actions, puts us into a trauma that can be undone only once we're settled. Our eyes widen, our mouths freeze, sounds escape us without thought, and that's when we realize ourselves.

Happiness though, causes the opposite. We smile, we forget to realize all the bad, and just live with what we have. But, happiness and fear are not opposites.

Happiness opposes anger, and sometimes even sadness. Fear opposes confidence or even calmness. Yet, when we have these feelings all at once, our bodies and minds just let go, and we are stuck in an unexplainable awe!

Dwan was stuck in this awe for the past five minutes. The second he heard something come from upstairs, he knew something was up. Reaching his parents' bedroom, he didn't know what to do. For, Dwan was staring at his mother and father, laying on their stomachs in a puddle of dark crimson blood.

It had been a normal day, Dwan went to school, enjoyed his favorite class, and walked home. Nothing about today seemed odd; the wind blew, the birds chirped and best of all his parents were back in the house together.

They had gotten into a fight two months ago, and Dwan decided that he would to stay with his mother. So, his father left, traveled the world, and came back two months later after he realized that Grace, Dwan's mother, was his one and only true love.

When he left that morning, they both seemed perfectly at ease and content with each other. But now, they both lay dead, in their own cold blood.

Dwan sobbed, it came from a sudden outbreak of realization. His parents were dead.

He quickly ran up to them, remembering how to check a pulse. First his mother and then his father, both without one. Curiosity took him over and he wanted to check for the death source.

He quickly rolled his mother over to check for anything, her middle area, a knife. He carefully pulled the knife out, wanting to know exactly how it looked. As he slowly and carefully grasped it out; the design of the knife started to reveal itself.

The blade was a twisted metal, with designs of flowers and symbols plastered on its handle. At the very end, the sharpest blade Dwan had ever seen traveled a foot a shining silver. He gently ran it along his finger, and a deep tissue cut appeared as a result. Dwan was horrified, but he wanted to keep looking for clues.

As Dwan searched his father, he realized that something was off. His father's whole face had been burned off. It looked like someone had melted him down with the iron that lay blazing hot in the corner of the room. Dwan thought of the awful, inhumane murder who did this! Why?

Then he realized that he had heard something on his way up. Frantically searching, Dwan searched his parents' room for anything that might say what had happened. He found nothing, leaving him with the question of; What?

But then he heard it, sirens. The police! He strained to hear them come barring in, but another thought comes to mind: Who called them?

The police start to climb the stairs, opening every door, they finally reach the end of the hall. That's when Dwan realizes it, but a second too late.

The police barged in, pointing their heavy guns at Dwan's chest, "Drop your weapon!" Dwan hadn't realized he still possessed the knife, he quickly dropped it.

"It's not what it looks like," he pleads, "they were like this when I found them, the real murderer is still out there."

"Stop talking, and stand up slowly." Dwan did as instructed. "Dwan Herbert Pelish, you are hereby under arrest for the murder of both Grace Pelish and George Pelish." The cops grab him by the wrist and hand-cuff Dwan.

Taken out of his house harshly, Dwan couldn't do anything about it. He sat and waited for his future to unravel.

Riyana Rajput
HMS Grade 7

Candy

A small ball of a sweet treat
It makes my stomach skip to a beat
It makes me want to prance in joy
That yummy sensation I praise like a toy
Although this happiness comes with a feat
I love that sugary ball of sweet.

Tanzil Rajput
Elm School Grade 5

PONGAL

My family is from South India and I'm happy to share with a very sweet fascinating Indian festival from this region called 'Pongal'. I have reasons to call this festival sweet because its name is derived from the sweet delicious traditional dish 'Pongal' prepared during the celebration. Pongal is celebrated in the middle of the month of January and is a harvest festival. It is very similar to Thanksgiving. During Pongal festival, we offer our thanks to Mother Nature and the Sun God. Newly harvested rice, fruits, sugarcane, pulses and vegetables are offered to the Sun God. We thank Him for the wonderful gifts of rain, crops and energy. Pongal is celebrated very grandly, especially, by the people in the South Indian states of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.

The festival is celebrated over 3 to 4 days.

On the first day which we call 'Bhogi' we get up early in the morning and light a bonfire of old worn out clothes. Elders and the family will sit in the warmth around the bonfire. When the fire dies, everyone will shower and dress up in new clothes and enjoy good and tasty food – an assortment of cookies, sweets and spicy Indian food.

On the second day, which is the most important day of the festival is called the Pongal. According to the Indian calendar, the Sun enters the zodiac sign of Capricorn on this day of the year. Capricorn is called 'Makara' in Sanskrit and hence, Pongal is also known as Makara Sankranti. This literally means 'transition of Sun to Capricorn. Women decorate the inside and outside of the house with beautiful geometrical patterns in color powder called Kolam or Rangoli. A beautiful drawing of the Sun is done on the floor of the yard and decorated. Children take part in this fun art activity. The kitchen is cleaned and decorated before lighting up the oven to cook the Pongal. A large decorated brass pot is placed on the oven. Mom pours rice, milk and fresh jiggery into the pot. When the pot gets heated with the contents and the milk overflows, everyone in the house cheers, chanting 'Pongal o Pongal'. This means let the wealth overflow. The Pongal is then cooked well and garnished with butter, cashew nuts, raisins, saffron and cardamom powder. The Sweet Pongal along with many other yummy dishes are first offered to the Sun God. Into the pot, the lady of the house throws a gold coin. Whoever gets that gold coin in the plate is considered to be the most lucky for the entire year. Families visit each other to celebrate this special festival.

The third day of the festival is called Maattu Pongal and mainly celebrated in villages. Farmers decorate their cows and cattle on this day. They offer their thanks to the cows and oxen by feeding freshly harvested bananas, sugarcane, paddy and specially cooked meals. They hold cattle races and traditional folk dances on this day in the villages of South India.

The fourth day is called Kanu Pongal when women offer newly cooked yoghurt rice and left ver Pongal on turmeric leaves to birds. Brothers offer gifts to sisters. Youngsters visit elders among the family and friends and seek their blessings. Fairs, concerts and plenty of entertainments will be held on that day.

Nowadays, people from South India, especially the Tamils, celebrate Pongal very elaborately all over the world. Interestingly in the USA, the State of Virginia has designated Pongal as state holiday for the people celebrating the festival. I'm hoping this wonderful example will be followed soon nationwide in all the schools.

In our house we celebrate the traditional festival every year and I eagerly look forward to the delicious Pongal, the new clothes and gifts from my parents and grandparents.

Srinidhi Rao
The Lane School Grade 4

An Ode

As I cross the River Ther out of Hardrax, a chill goes up my spine. Not because the ancient cedar bridge groans and threatens to turn to dust beneath my horse's hooves, not because a dark beady eye watches me from the birch trees with whispers of wind in their gnarled talons, not even because of the sour grey fog that sets in as soon as I am on the other side. I am leaving the land of the gods and their blessings. Will their gifts extend to this land where the only religion is a sham? Will I be alone for the first time?

No. I brush away my thoughts, locking them in some hidden corner of my mind. I cannot afford to be distracted now. I release my unconscious grip on my sword, looking for a second at where the frigid metal pressed its ornate knots into my skin. Distracted, I don't notice the man until it is almost too late.

"Stop!" he calls in an unfamiliar guttural accent. I yank back on the reins, my horse screeching at the sudden stop. His hooves skid on the icy path, flinging a haze of crystals into the air as I grab wildly for control. A sickening crack sounds through the frozen air as Halberd's leg gives out from beneath him and hits the ground. He screams, a noise that I cannot forget. I manage to throw myself out of the saddle as the beast crumples to the earth.

I rush to his side and wince as I confirm my worst fear. The fall broke Halberd's leg. He will not be able to recover from this. I glance away and see the man, still in the same position. "Sir! What do you mean by your actions? You have crippled my horse!" I glare at him, yet he still does not even blink.

"I suppose you'll have to kill him now." He stares back, unflinchingly. Did he even notice what I said?

"Y-yes, I will." This is not to my advantage. I am close enough to Fehvor to walk, but Halberd was my method of getting home. "Sir, I will ask you one more time. Who are you and why are you here?" My fingers play on the hilt of my blade, tapping out an anxious symphony.

"I am your escort into Fehvor, sent by the Coalition." How did they know I was coming? I told no one that I was going to Fehvor. My father would have stopped me. I may not be Wensley's heir, but I am still important. This must be the work of dark mages, scrying and spying on my approach. Could this man be one of them? "Your Highness, please carry on with your business. The gates of Fehvor close in approximately one hour."

"Yes, yes, of course." I unsheath my sword, the edge scoring the leather covering. My mind flashes back to all I have done with this blade. With Halberd. We've done great things.

Germ thought for days, thinking and thinking. Finally, Grayson finally thought of an ingenious idea! "Germ! I've got an idea! what if we lived in the acids of the stomach! we could go swimming every day and always come back up to our friends! it's perfect!" he yelled.

Germ thought before he said anything. finally, he replied, "you are..... absolutely 100% right! It's perfect! you thought of common sense that was right in front of our noses for days (human hours)! you've just blew my mind that neither of us thought of that in a lot of time."

So, they packed what they needed, aware that it would always hail human food as big as mansions every few days, but they didn't care. After they were packed, they said goodbye to their friends for the next few days because even if they wanted to come back up, it was a long climb. After their last goodbyes, they set off to a wonderous adventure that would take *hours* (human minutes). Once they set off, they lived happily ever after (except every few days because of the hail).

Rutger Ronaldson
Madison School Grade 4

Outside the seaport of Avane is a merchant town called Grimlore. There on the bustling streets merchants call out their wares as they wave rich fabrics and juicy fruit in the air catching the attention of highly decorated Lords and Ladies.

No one notices the mousy twig boy named Sherman, dangling a brass key on a frayed string in front of the face of two girls. These freckled blonde haired girls are named Syria and Loa. He speaks in a squeaky and annoying voice clearly trying to give the girls the key. Sherman nervously looks over his shoulders as he quietly speaks to the girls. The taller one named Syria snatches the key in frustration and storms away holding Loa, the little one's hand.

Sherman's shoulder slumps in relief as the girls stomp away twisting through the crowd. Once the girls are out of his sight Sherman tucks his hands in his pockets and turns around disappearing into the inner part of the city. The girls, Syria and Loa are sisters and are heading in the opposite direction towards the Forest of Sherlock where the girls live temporarily.

Syria and Loa's mother was killed in the war between the rebels and the king. She served the king loyally not taking a second before carrying out his orders. But now she was dead and Syria and Loa were on their own. Syria loathed all people except Loa her sister who she protected fiercely. Loa loved Syria but just couldn't understand why her sister was so angry! They had each other! But Syria knew better. It was the king and rebel's fault. They could never stop fighting!

Syria was a thief and stole to keep her and Loa alive. She had stolen everything they had and would continue to the day she died. The girls were walking through a peaceful and tropical forest full of exotic birds and poisonous fruits.

An arrow whizzed by them nearly hitting Loa. A few men charge towards them with swords of Ice and armor of fire. Syria lifts up her hands twirling her fingers around almost like she is tickling a harp. She ferociously strums then stops when a landslide of mud and stone tumbles down knocking the armored men off of their feet and suffocating them in the tidal wave.

Syria grabs Loa's hand and they start to run away from the men and the landslide. Rebel fighters with the symbol of the snake inked onto their foreheads block the sister's path and roughly grab Loa's arm. The four year old howls throwing a tantrum as the man slings her over his shoulder.

"LOA!" Syria screams in rage as she writhes in another rebel's arms. Loa closes her eyes unconsciously in the man's arms. She looks like a little rag doll with her hair dangling from her head thinly. Syria stares in frozen horror at Loa's limp body. The men stop too still and solemnly. A white frost explodes from the little girl's head turning the forest icy. Ice spreads out from beneath her freezing the men in their spot and slowly snaking up their spines turning their bodies a cold ice blue.

Loa's eyes flare open and meet her sister's violet eyes. Syria slips out of the ice man's grasp and slides her way over to Loa who she helps climb down onto the slippery frozen forest floor. Syria whispers softly.

"Loa," she starts to cry, "I've been thinking about this for a while, we have to go. We will never be safe here as long as anyone is alive."

"Okay," Loa sighs in sadness "what about the key the boy gave us?"

"We'll figure it out. Don't you worry," Syria kisses the top of her sister's head and hoists her up on her back piggyback style.

Syria and Loa start to head back toward the city's bustling marketplace wearily eyeing the people surrounding them. Once they arrive in the center of town Syria starts to scan the crowd for Sherman and when she sees him shrieks and starts hurtling towards him with Loa on her back.

Syria barrels into Sherman knocking him over and sending his thin wire frame glasses tumbling into the road. He snatches them just before they get crushed by a merchant's foot.

"What do you want now!" Sherman snarkily replies.

"We want your men not to attack us, you reek of rebel," She shrivels up her nose in disgust.

"Look, I don't know what that was about but I can give you safe passage to another world called America. For your service to the rebellion that is" He stands up and start to brush himself off, "Go to the ship called The Blue Sea Dog and ask for Fernido. Tell him Sherm is redeeming his favor and wants him to take you guys to America."

"Alright, fine. But now we are NOT doing this for the rebels, but for US We're going now Loa."

Syria bends down and Loa hops off onto the cobblestone of the marketplace. The girls start to run after a cart loaded with nets and hooks. Syria leaps on pulling Loa up with her then arranging nets over them. The Man driving the cart doesn't seem to notice the extra weight. Loa giggles and Syria smiles and puts a finger to her lips. The sun starts to go down as the girls are lulled asleep by the rocking of the cart.

When the girls wake up they smell the sea salt air of Avane that floats on the breeze. Loa starts to hop down and Syria follows her. The cart is rolling through a rocky stone path and in the distance you can see big giant hulking ships sitting in the harbor. The girls scan the sides of the ships to find The Blue Sea Dog. Walking through the shipyard, they see many burly men and women. Some have horrible scars and others are missing limbs or wear an eye patch. Syria reads the name of each ship out loud and Loa points to different pirates that would have that ship. She giggles and grabs Syria's leg sitting on her shoe. Syria smiles and pretends to be Frankenstein. The girls laugh and smile until they see the last ship, there is no Blue Sea Dog.

"That liar," Syria's eyes are furious with a surging glow. She only gets more angry when she sees guards dressed with the seal of the king, The Embryo Worm glows a dark purple against its silver background. One of the guards grabs Loa by the scruff of her neck lifting her up into the air. Another grabs Syria's arm and tries to keep her from squirming.

Syria thrashes biting the guard and kicking his shins and then kneeing him in the chin. The guard cripples as blood pours down his nose. Faster than Syria escaped a guard with cold blue eyes, the king in disguise strikes Syria down. His Silver sword encrusted with gems flashing in the sun.

Loa's scream penetrates the air watching in horror sobbing at Syria's lifeless body. Loa finally knew where her sister's anger came from. She knew because Syria's last word was a raspy croak that died down almost immediately, "Father"

Summer Ryan
CHMS Grade 6

Seasons

Peep, feep, peep, feep, peep
Goes the little sparrow feet
Then he peeps goodbye

Spreads out his big wings
He goes to another tree
Then looks at the sky

Then out with the old
And in with the new again
Until a new flower blooms

You grow on a vine
So delicate and Devine
My dear, dear flower

The air turns briskly
Watching the flower petals
Falling down, down, down

Slushy snow on ground
With snow balls through the air
Snow is everywhere

The children come soon
Screams and awes, laughter and fun
Snowball fall fight will begin
Mom calling for kids
They say no but mom has a trick
Hot coco anyone?

The icy snow melts
The air starts turning warmer
The sun starts to show

There's no more laughter
There's only muddy grass
A new flower forms

Days become longer
Temperature becomes hotter
Little flower grows

The Kids start to play
Sunny days make it wonderful
The flower then blooms

Days get more hotter
Once more there's screams and laughter
Awws and lots of fun

Water, popsicles
Pools with beach balls with slushy
Oh how great it is

Now the days are done
Then the sun shall set at dawn
Doing it all again

**Fiona Duffy Schimpf
Prospect School Grade 4**

SIX FLAGS THRILL RIDE

"Are we there yet?" I ask my mom. We are going to Six Flags Great America. "Thirty minutes," she says. (By the way, I'm Keane.) "Why so long!!!!?" I yell. I'm with my mom and my BROTHERS.

FINALLY, after an hour in the car I yell, "We made it!" We get our stamps at the gate. "Ouch!" I shout. (They dig the stamp in your hand). Next, we get our membership scan, "Beep!" And after that, we get to the main gate. "I'm so excited!" I say to my mom. "Just a couple more minutes and we'll be on Joker!"

"There it is!" I say as we are walking towards Joker. "First time riding Joker!!!!" My older brother said. Then, we get in line. (Guess how long the wait is!). "A one hour wait!?" I shout. "Chill out Keane," my bother Will says "It'll be quicker than you think."

After that WHOLE HOUR, we got on. Tick, tick, tick, the chain lift went. As we got higher and higher, I got more horrified and more traumatized. Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! "We're flipping!" I yell. "Flippy-flip, flippy-flip-flip!!" My brother Finn shouts. "Stop Finn!" I yell. SSSSHHHH, the ride goes. "We're done!" I felt relieved, but hungry. "Can we eat?" (I was SO hungry.) I was relieved to get off the ride but it was fun, because it was my first time riding Joker.

"Sure," my mom says. We get our food, go to the membership lounge, and the, I shout, "What ride should we go on next?!"

Keane Schmeltz
Prospect School Grade 3

Pigsalot's Adventure

What is half cow half pig, but actually a pig? Pigsalot! Out in the tall bright green grass there was a cottage.

In the cottage there lived a pig named Pigsalot. She loved more than anything is to tell jokes, because she was sooo funny. Here was one of her jokes. Oink oink oink oink oink {why did the pig cross the road? Because the chicken was sick.} Pigsalot's snout was like a cup with 2 holes. Her best friend Pinkie was very nice to Pigsalot. Pigsalot hated her name, but her mom loved it. Pigsalot has 3 sisters and 3 brothers. Pigsalot had her very own treehouse where she would meet Pinkie. There were no stairs so she would have to use her stubby legs like pillows to climb up and down the tree. She had the best smooth pumpkin orange ears like little orange mountains. Her dusky black deep eyes were like really really tiny galaxies. Pigsalot lived in a cozy warm cottage like a tiny mansion made out of nut brown logs as heavy as bowling balls. Inside there was a burning hot copper red and orange tie-die shirt fire. In her room there were comfy bunk beds like clouds floating in the sky. There were also grizzled gray stones like huge bricks. Pigsalot loved her cottage.

"Pigsalot looks fine," her mom always would say, but Pigsalot did not look fine. She looked awful! Other pigs would always say "HA! HA!" "You look like a half cow half pig." "HA! HA! HA!" Pigsalot would cry and cry and cry. Then they would say "You're such a crybaby." There were just mean to Pigsalot. Pinkie was the only one who would stand up for Pigsalot. Pigsalot would dash home and tell her parents but her dad was no help at all. He would say, "Well you do." Her mom said, "You are beautiful the way you are, and I don't care what they say."

One day, Pigsalot, her sisters, and brothers went on a hike. When they were walking everyone made fun of her sooo much that Pigsalot got really upset. She felt like she could burst. She ran as fast as her stubby legs could go. She ran up all the way to the to the top of her cozy's warm treehouse and cried. Pinkie saw Pigsalot and said, "What's wrong?" "Go away," Pigsalot replied. "Ok, if you say so," said Pinkie. Pigsalot was kind of bored from sitting in her treehouse all day, so Pigsalot got up and went to her cozy, warm, cottage room. Then she got bored again, so she went to the bouncy, brown couch, and...got bored again.

As time past s-l-o-w-l-y, Pigsalot got really bored and this time she did not want to just sit around all day. She wanted to go outside and explore. So Pigsalot went out to the forest. The forest looked sooo creepy that when a bird flies in, it turns around completely even when it's going somewhere special. The trees were shaped like monsters. The bushes had rotten berries. There was mud everywhere. There were human bones in the river. Pigsalot turned from upset to terrified. When Pigsalot was wandering around she tripped on a rock, and fell into a tree. The tree teleported her to dinosaur times. Pigsalot was 100,000,000 years ago.

In a blink of an eye, a dinosaur was strangely right in her face. Pigsalot was scared to death! It turned out that he was actually nice and looked weird just like Pigsalot. Before Pigsalot knew it she dashed away. Then she was feeling brave so she walked up and said, "Who who who are you?" "I'm Scare the dinosaur." Pigsalot thought he looks weird like me. Pigsalot wasn't scared anymore. Scare said, "The dinosaurs also made fun of me and my name." "Me too," said Pigsalot. "Back at home pigs and other animals make fun of me by how I look and my name." They sat down. Pigsalot was grossed out. There was sooo much blood! The T-Rex was creeping Pigsalot to death! The other dinosaurs weren't so scary, but the T-Rex was ahh! Just ahh! Scare looked pretty lonely, so Pigsalot wanted to be his friend. She asked him.

Faster than you could say, "Pigs roll around in mud 3 times," Pigsalot and the Scare were friends, but Pigsalot still felt gloom, like a cloudy gray day. Pigsalot wanted to play with the dinosaurs but she was too sad. She wanted to see her family and Pinkie. She wanted to snuggle in her bed. Pigsalot wished she was home in her cottage. She wanted to play in her tree house with Pinkie. How is Pigsalot going to get home. Pigsalot said to Scare, "Why am I so ugly?" "You are not ugly" said Scare. "My mom always says don't judge a book by its cover." Pigsalot thought about what he said, and thought, and thought until she figured it out. "Does it mean don't judge animals by their looks?" said Pigsalot. "Yes!" said Scare.

Pigsalot thought how she could get back to her warm cozy cottage. The way she got here. Trip over a rock and fall into a tree. Pigsalot did that many times. Finally she found the right tree and went back home. Everyone asked where she was, but she would never tell them it was her secret. Pigsalot learned you are beautiful the way you are and don't care what others think of you.

Addison Schreiber
Madison School Grade 4

The Jewish Dancer

Arianna stared out the window of the dance studio. Outside was another Nazi gathering, they were burning books. Arianna looked away as tears came to her eyes. With every passing day, the world she had known and loved crumbled and slipped between her fingers. Dance was her only escape and she let all the sadness go. She sighed and picked up her pointe shoes and walked outside into the chaos. In the center of the square was a crackling fire, it was a deep orange and the embers were flying everywhere. Arianna quickly ran home to her loving parents.

"Arianna, are you home?"

"Yes Mamma."

"Thank the gods, I was afraid that they would catch you,"

"Why?"

"Haven't you seen? Hitler has made a new proclamation that dancing is to be banned."

Arianna was speechless. Hitler had stolen her friends, family members, books, toys, food, and fun. Now, he was stealing the one thing she had loved, the one thing that gave her hope.

"Mamma, what do I do now?"

"The one thing you can, dream and pray."

Mamma looked away, she was praying not only for her daughter to dance again, but that her secret had not yet been revealed.

Arianna was dismayed and she wondered if this day could get any worse.

"Aria, time for dinner." her father suddenly called

"Coming!" she shouted back

"How was your day Aria?"

"Horrific, they banned dancing." The mention of this engulfed Arianna into a state of depression. Tears sprang to her eyes and her body started shivering.

"Darling, it is going to be okay"

"How do you know Papa?"

"We are leaving the country."

Arianna looked at her father's face to observe a hint of a smile, to signal he was joking.

He wasn't.

"Why?"

"Well, Aria, this may be a bad time to tell you this, but your mother is half Jewish which makes you Jewish as well. You can never tell anyone this secret, not even your closest friends. Times are desperate, and people will do anything to make sure their families do not come to any harm.

Arianna turned as pale as a ghost. She thought that everything was going to be okay, because she was not Jewish. She had seen how all her Jewish friends slowly disappeared from school one at a time.

"Where will we go, what about your job, how will you make money in a new place, how will we survive?"

"I have a friend in the United States who is willing to sponsor our trip there. We will be fine, I will find a job."

Arianna knew there was no way she could stop her father's decision. His mind was made up. So she sighed and gave in.

"Fine, I guess."

2 Weeks Later...

Arianna was given a suitcase to fit all her stuff in. The plan was to wear as many clothes as possible. They were leaving on a frigid February morning, so hopefully it did not look too out of the ordinary. She packed all of her dance stuff, her favorite books, all the clothes she wasn't wearing, the last of her candy and chocolates, and her favorite stuffed bear. What was going to happen to her and her family? They couldn't stay with her dad's friend forever. Papa was such a distinguished and respected character in society here, in Germany, in the US he would have to start from nothing. She decided as punishment to her father, she would barely talk to him and when she would it would be tight, clipped, and short one-word answers. There was tension brewing in the air and one could tell that a big fight was going to break out. One day it finally did...

"Aria, how was your day?" Papa asked

"Absolutely terrific. I just sat in the house all day staring at the wall." Arianna sarcastically said.

"ARIANNA ROSYLN BECKER, I have had enough of your sarcastic and sly remarks. You are being selfish and rude. I am giving up my whole life here, from my reputation to leaving my elderly parents for your safety. So, you are going to show some respect and be grateful for this opportunity. There are many who would give anything to be in your position. Would you rather leave the country or be in a death camp?"

Arianna was speechless, she had rarely seen her father get mad. He was a loving and joking man. When he did say that Arianna did something wrong, he was never mad, just disappointed. Arianna's eyes filled with tears and she ran to her room. She lay her head on her pillow. It was tear-soaked from many nights of crying herself to sleep. She sat in her room, and glanced around. Her aqua walls which she and Mama painted together, her quilt which Grandma had knitted for her when she was a baby. How could she leave all of this? This had been her home for so long, she couldn't imagine living anywhere else. She looked around and sighed. Suddenly, something caught her eye. Something she hadn't seen in a long time. Her photo album. She picked up and the memories comforted and covered her like a blanket. This was too hard. She couldn't leave for reasons Papa would never understand. But what could she do staying here was like asking to be killed. With a heavy sigh, Arianna put down the album and stared out the window, thinking of what she could do. She could not stay with Großmutter and Großvater, they were too old and it was asking too much of them. Mamma's parents had died when Arianna was just four years old. She had not seen her aunts, uncles, and cousins in years, she sadly regretted this. *Well I guess there is nothing to do*, Arianna thought. I will have to go to America. She told herself, "Tomorrow I will tell Annabelle we are fleeing the country. I know Papa said not to tell anyone, but I have to tell Annabelle," The next day, Arianna told Mamma that she was going to visit Annabelle one last time. Mama skeptically agreed. Mama warned her to keep her mouth shut. Arianna then ran down to Annabelle's house. She knocked three times per custom of their secret code. Arianna heard a shuffling of footsteps and then the door opened. But before Aria could say anything she was being pulled by Annabelle into a great. Big, bear hug.

"Oh, Aria, it's been too long. I have missed you!" Annabelle shrieked with excitement.

"I have missed you as well, Anna. I've just been so busy with my studies and dance," Arianna replied with a solemn look on her face.

"Well, no worries! You're here now," Annabelle answered with a huge grin. "Come inside!" Anna beckoned her inside. They walked into Anna's room.

"Anna, there is no easy way to tell you this, but my family and I are fleeing the country."

"What? Are you serious? You have an amazing life here, why would you want to leave?"

"Tell my father that. Apparently, my mother is Jewish, so that makes me Jewish. If we don't leave, I could risk getting killed. But I really don't want to go. Could you do something for me?"

"Oh my gosh, Aria! What can I do to help?"

"Enjoy your final days with me, I guess," Arianna answered sadly.

"I definitely will! Why don't we have a sleepover? I already asked my mother and she agreed. She said that she would tell your mom," Annabelle said.

"Okay!"

The sleepover was a lot of fun and laughter could be heard from every corner in the house. Yet, there was a sad feeling about it. It was a bittersweet ending to so many years of friendship and both girls were sorry it was coming to an end. Both repeatedly thought about how everything they did at the sleepover would be the last things they did together. All their plans about being roommates in college and being next door neighbors were shattered. With tears in their eyes, they said goodbye for the very last time.

"I still don't want to go to America," Arianna sighed.

"Aria, have you thought about all the sacrifices your family is making? You are not the only one having to leave your life. You know you will be dead unless you leave. Think positive, there are so many opportunities in America and you know deep down, this is for the best," Annabelle wisely answered.

"You're right as usual," Aria admitted.

"Promise if you can you will write me letters," Annabelle sniffled.

"Of course!" Arianna answered with a small smile. They hugged goodbye.

The days became a blur and before Arianna knew it, she was saying goodbye to her life as she knew it. Everything would change when she arrived in America. When she started climbing aboard the enormous ship, she knew that this was for the best. Arianna did not know what would happen to her in America, but for right now, she felt she made the right decision.

Aanya Shah
HMS Grade 6

The Travels of a Leaf

A
Single leaf
Traveling across the world
From corner to corner
On the hood of a car
The story begins
Autumn arrives
And the leaf
Falls
Off of his tree
Away from home
And all he had ever known
The car drove by just then
And caught the leaf
From doom
Travelling
On The Road
Away from home
And all he'd known
On top of an enormous car
With no one to guide him
Freedom, was all to say

He did what he wanted
And nobody said "Hey!"

Adventures

From

California

To

New York

From

Washington

To Florida

The leaf had traveled

On the hood of a car

Away from all he'd known

From corner to corner

Of our nation

Until one sad day,

He was far from home

When he heard a little yellow garden gnome

Say "hey, Leaf, you are heading back"

And so to the highway

And down the path

They'd go

All

With a leaf

On the hood of a car

Trying not to go to home

When they passed his tree,

A strong wind picked him up

And brought him to the ground

Where he met a leaf named Red

A beautiful color and shade

He was no longer nostalgic

For his days on the road

But he would always think

Ah, alas,

Now I am home

And when he did miss the road

Which he did from time to time

The cars passing by

Would always remind

Red would take them

Away on a trip

Now Leaf

Was

Content

Happy with his life

And he longed for nothing anymore

(except occasionally for a new door)

Leaf, Red, Goldie, and Green

A happy family

But then a strong autumn wind
Picked up the family
On top of a
Truck
"Here we go!"
Cried Leaf
Back on the road once more.

Arielle Shah
HMS Grade 6

Alien Invasion!!!

It was the year 2920 and Earth was the place where all the aliens from every part of the galaxy went because of Earth's four seasons. Soon Earth was the most populated place in the galaxy but people were worried that if someone started fighting then Earth and everyone on it would die. So the citizens of Earth tried to keep the aliens who came in order, but one evil alien named Norbert Evil, who was a part of the evil alien species Umirt broke the peace and brought millions of ships and spacecrafts to take Earth under his rule. Earth's militaries were outnumbered by thousands of ships and spacecrafts, but other friendly alien species wanted to help the militaries of earth so they called on their planet's military and joined earth's side to help fight Norbert Evil. Norbert started to fire on the main bases where all of Earth's and other planet's planes and spacecrafts were. He then saw that all of those were fake but then billions of ships fired on him and he yelled to the other ships, AMBUSH!! Earth's best stealth people snuck aboard all of the enemy ships and put bombs in them and when they blew the triggers all the ships except for Norbert's ship blew up. Norbert gasped in fear as his ships blew up...

"OH NO!" he shrieked.

"Did you guys put bombs on the engines of Norbert's command ship?" the president of the world asked the stealth group.

"Yes, we did. We just have to press the trigger and BOOOOM," said the leader of the stealth group.

"Okay then do it", said the president of the world,

"Okay I will". BOOOOOOOOOOOOM!!!

Norbert Evil looked up from his desk and asked his captain, "What was that sound? "

His captain replied saying the engines have been hit and we are going down.

Norbert asked where are the escape pods?

"Has the command ship exploded yet?" asked the president.

"Yes," said the Captain, "And also our radar has picked up an escape pod crashing in a field."

"Okay, go after it," said the president.

The best soldiers from earth and other planets went and opened the escape pod. They found an unconscious Norbert Evil. The people who had handcuffs used them to arrest Norbert Evil. After that the people of earth started rebuilding and in a couple of weeks earth was back to normal.

Rishaan Shah
Elm School Grade 3

The Escape

"Oh no! Where's Maggie?!"

Tdp, tdp, I could hear my dog's paws scraping the tile like someone moving a checker piece across the board. My dog Maggie was running and was sniffing our suitcases. I have two dogs, Amigo and Maggie. It was a windy and sunny winter Saturday morning and we were finishing packing the car so we could start planning our trailer. The dogs were still out of their cages, and just when dad went inside Maggie pounced on the screen door and started to run like the wind and she was so fast. This was the first time Maggie had gotten out of the house, and also the first time we knew she could run so fast for so long.

"Oh no!" I shouted. "Maggie, got out of the house."

"Go, go, go" I said frantically pointing to the door. I was now trembling with fear. "Where was Maggie going to end up?"

Dad snatched some treats, while me, my mom, and my younger sister Livy got into the car. Mom was backing out of the driveway barley missing the branches of the trees. My sister and I were on the edge of our seats looking out the window praying we would find her.

We saw a pink blur from the car. Mom stopped the car and got out she told me and Olivia to stick together. I said we should head to the park so that we could see if she went to run in Stevie's park. I saw Maggie fly past us again and then stopped put her paw up and then started running again. Then my heart started beating really fast and not until then, did thoughts took over my mind. I had so many inquiries like what if we never see her again, or what if she was hit by a car. I knew mom and dad couldn't answer any of these questions until we find her. I was hoping that I would hear Maggie panting and see her right next to me. Then, I pinched myself just to see if I was dreaming and that this was a nightmare, but it wasn't this was real life and we had to find her. I looked up to see mom but she wasn't there I called her name but she never answered. I kept calling her name but louder each time.

"Mom! Mom!" I would call each time.

Finally mom came out from the side of the house. I was relieved to see mom.

"Where were you?" I asked my mom.

"I was looking into backyards to see if Maggie was there."

"Oh, you scared me". I said to mom.

Maggie was at my friend's house. She went behind the houses, and probably around the block too. She was wicked fast. I was calling her name whenever I saw her, but she kept running away. Mom put her hand on my shoulder, and said "She thinks you're playing a game."

"Oh," I sighed.

Dad said that she started to eat the treats but never followed them. Dad went back to cross the street. When Maggie came to the park, and stopped I was so happy that I told myself "that's when I can grab her." My heart was pounding as Loud as drums. I knew I had to act fast, so slowly I went to grab Maggie's leash. I paused a little just because I didn't want to scare her. Then when I felt her leash I tried to find the loop. When I found the loop I got hold of it, and held a strong grip. Then I yelled, "got her!"

We were all excited when I got her. I gave the leash to dad, so that she doesn't pull to hard and rom free again. When we walked home we had to whip down her paws, get her some water, drop them off at Hinsdale Hospital Animal Shelter, then head for the road to Indianapolis.

**Madison Shum
Walker School Grade 4**

Soar

I take
The risk of jumping
Off the cliff
of darkness
And I jump

I expect myself
To fall
But instead
I fly

I slowly reach
For the sky
And I touch the sun
I feel its warmth
And I feel its glow

Suddenly
I drift away back
Onto the cliff
But
Instead of falling

I feel myself soaring

Jaania Singh
Monroe School Grade 5

THE BIG SUPER BROCCOLI

Chapter 1 INTRO

There are many broccoli's in the world. There are normal broccolis, Super broccolis, and there are mega broccolis. Which are technically big super broccolis. And they are very rare. That is where I leave you and start the story. So one day Colee was eating some scrambled eggs and broccoli for breakfast. He thought that breakfast was as mouthwatering as a gummy bear. Then he found a really big broccoli. "Mom", Colee said. "I found a really big broccoli!". "Oh my gosh, that is a nuclear radioactive super broccoli", Mom said in a surprised voice.

Chapter 2 Backstory

So the big super broccoli's name was bob. Bob was always like any other broccoli until one day no one ate him. He got thrown in the nuclear waste can. He grew and grew and grew. Until he became a super broccoli. On the other hand he also became supersized. But somehow he got shipped to the grocery store. And then Colee's mom bought the bunch and then crunch crunch Colee had breakfast.

Chapter 3 Bob Comes To life

After breakfast Colee threw bob into the garbage and then spit on him! It turned out that the spit was magical so then Bob came to life. He could talk and walk and even he could fly. So then Bob flew out of the garbage can and then out of the house. To find Colee. 2 minutes later he found Colee walking to school. "What are you doing and how can you fly?", asked Colee. "Cause you spit magically on me", said Bob. "Oh", said Colee. After that they trotted along peacefully. And heard the sound of cars coming by, WHOOSH. But the little did they know that a evil villan named Mr. star was watching from a nearby building. And that nearby building was his top secret lab! And inside the lab it had so much air conditioning that it was as cool as an iceberg. Back where Colee and Super broccoli it was as hot as the sun. Also Mr.star was plotting a super evil nuclear plan that would destroy the world. The plan might even destroy the world! His evil plan was that he would make 1,000,000,000 nuclear bomb and get into a airplane and drop bombs all over the world. Especially the city of New York. Which was as famous as Louis Armstrong. He thought that bombs won't be enough so he thought of creating a huge army. And people would see boom boom the sound of bombs.

Chapter 4 Super broccoli's perspective

Super broccoli thought that Mr. Star was a worthy opponent. But he could use a little work on his creations. Super broccoli was not going to tell Colee about Mr. Star cause Colee would totally freak out. He would yell ahhhh. So he decided to keep his mouth shut. When they trotted along they heard a big boom. They were terrified so they

sprinted to a warm dry shelter. When Superbroccoli found out that the person who made the big boom was Mr. star, he was surprised because he never saw a invention that was a new old invention. Then Colee heard Haw Haw Haw. But then Super broccoli flew up to Mr. star and killed him. Mr. New Old guy was gone forever.

Rohan Singh
Madison School Grade 4

The Whale Story

Once upon a time, there was an outpost called Coke. It was 200 miles off the coast of Hawaii and the strongest and best defended outpost in the Pacific. It had 200 planes and 29 ships! It also had 462 gun emplacements and 32 anti-sub whales patrolling the island for subs. It was manned by 2400 of the army's best troops. The whales who were defending the island were the best in the Navy. They hadn't had a massive battle in at least 12 hours. Sixteen whales were just swimming around looking for submarines. The ones who were off duty were playing cards, snoozing, or working out. The whales of A Company had not seen any subs since the 3rd battle of Coke Atoll.

Suddenly A3 heard a faint whirring sound! He turned on his sonar radar and picked up this object moving toward the island. Could this be a sub? He turned his lights on and went towards the object. When he got on top of it, on his radar he couldn't see anything! Yet! He went a little farther and then he found it! A sub was trying to sneak in and sink ships so the whale set the charge on the hull then swam away. Then Kaboom! the sub had been blown up. The whale celebrated the kill but he had no more charges and had to go back to the yard to reload on charges.

15 minutes later....as docked at the dockyard just as the whale gets tied up, one of the dock men yells, "the Fufenherfurs are attacking!" WEOOO WEOOO WEOOO "Everybody get down!" Someone said BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM. As soon as the attack started, it was over, but the damage was done. Eighteen ships were sunk, 6 damaged, 29 planes damaged on the runway and 1 whale from company B died. So they wanted to launch an attack of their own. They started to gear up ships, planes, and attack whales.

March 10, 1942, Coke Atoll forces started their long journey to Faunenn, the island where Fufenherfurs were based. It wasn't the best defended island, as it had only 10 ships, 110 planes, 160 gun emplacements, and 12 anti-sub whales. They had 4 companies of whales, A, B, X, Y. they are ranked in that order. Anyway, they had 2 generals in charge, General Wantz and General Fhur. Usually they got in fights on what stuff should go where, like the whales. Because the subs from Coke were arriving at the island and firing on the...1 ship down! 2...3...4...5...6....All sunk 62 planes torched, 3 whales, and half of their gun implacemets. It was devastating to the Fufenherfurs as they had only 4 ships, 9 whales, 48 planes, an gun emplacements. When the squad got back to Coke, they celebrated with beer and whiskey, but they had to go to sleep because they had plans for tomorrow.

March 13, 1942 The plans for today were to finish off the Fufenherfurs. At 0600 the forces of ke Atoll had captured the island of Faunen and started building mines, fields, ga plants, factories and anything a country at war would need. Life on Faunen was good, they had food, water and a lot of time off.Foe 2 month they hung out on their new island until one day they were called into anti. The transmission on May 16, 1130pm was "They are attacking!" "It's the Wanos!" "Everyone man your battle station and get back to Coke Atoll and stop that attack!" "GO GO GO"

Two days later.... BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM Yeah we stopped with only 1 ship lost. "Good fight guys, get some rest, we'll be attacking them tomorrow." The next day at the briefing...They are not well defended, they only have 2 ships, 6 whales, and 60 gun emplacements. We will attack at 0100 to make sure that we don't get spotted. Be there search whales.

Two days later...on the raid of the task force..."most of their whales are on the skirts of reef so we send patrol subs to find their pattern of movement" said the captain. "Send in the subs in the control room of the Wanos." "There is an attack force just north of the entrance, what shall we do?" Send the whales to that location and tell them to search the surface really well. Oh, and make their target ships. But the Coke Atoll captain had anticipated the action so he sent all his whale from A and B Company to the ships. The captain of the Wanos decided that he had been too predictable so he made a move that the captain of Coke would not expect. He sent

his whole surface fleet to meet the whales and ships. Meanwhile, the ships are preparing to fight, the radar of the closest ship to A3 said ping...ping...ping...The radio operator looked over and saw a whole fleet of red dots on the screen. Then he calls the captain and says "sir there are a bunch of either ships, whales, or subs headed this way". "Alright battle stations everyone!" Gunners run to the guns. Ammo crates are stocked by the guns. Spotters take your posts. Everyone was waiting for one of the ships blow up but it never came. Then the cages a message from the radars back at Coke. "You on the wrong island! There is a heavily defended island just north of the one you are at now! Get there as quick as you can!" "They have a super weapon that can fire on Coke, hurry!" "Full speed to that island, 3 clicks north!", said the captain. "And don't let them fire that weapon!" "All he ships of Coke Atoll speed full speed to the Island of Shadiow!" "On the island, the weapon is fully charged in 15 minutes" "The ships are closing in, sir" "Let them come, they can't get in."

Charlie Smith
CHMS Grade 6

It was 2,000 BC and the Romans ruled most of Europe and parts of Asia. Eastern Europe is in a war. The Romans had 4,000 people and Asia had 6,000 people. The first battle was in Germany and it lasted for 3 weeks. The Romans lost 1,569 people and the Asians lost 4,000 and surrendered. The Russians ransacked houses. The Romans ruled Asia, Africa, and Europe. After the Germany and the Roman Empire's economy was wrecked.

But in 3,000 BC a new war started. Germany had 8 billion people and the United States had 7 billion people. General Smith led the US and Queen Regnery led the Germans. The first battle was in Afghanistan. The US lost 4 billion people and the Germans lost 3000 and America surrendered. The Americans started a rebellion and General Smith was in charge. They attempted an attack and it worked! Queen Regnery surrendered and the world was in shock. A government called Five Eyes and General Smith were in charge and in 1776 a new war started. The first battle was in Afghanistan headed by a new queen, Payton of the UK.

William was the new general of the US and Jack was a king of the UK. Due to bad weather, they couldn't invade America, but France sent its biggest battleship to intercept the British fleet and the s sent 69 ships, and sunk 24 ships. The British didn't make it to America!

William Smith
Monroe School Grade 3

My Autobiography: Steps in Size Five Shoes

Chapter One: "The Breakout"

I was panicking and didn't know what to do. Jack was screaming and calling the older cousins over. I flicked the lights on to see my blood splattered on the floor and wall tiles of the bathroom. *How could a simple knock on the door be so vile?* My arms quickly tensed as I erupted into tears. Flashes of anger and fear surged through me as I started to shake. Overwhelmed with guilt, I realized what I had done.

* * *

The day was Thanksgiving, and I could have been better. My bed is my safe place. The warm blue sheets covering my fuzzy blanket, all hidden by an underwater themed comforter. I'm a kid, so Thanksgiving is just a day where I eat and nothing more. The only other things we do are play in our grandparent's attic and talk to old relatives. But there always ends up being some sort of fight, or breakout. *I did not need that then.* That is why I didn't want to leave my bed.

Hours passed and I was still in my bed. I laid with my ipad turned on to my favorite shows. So comfortable. I never wanted to leave.

"Get up!" I threw my head up to find my mom's snake eyes. I felt like a turtle slowly pulling my head back into the covers as if it were my shell. "It's 10:30. How are you not dressed?" She interrogated.

"I was just resting. Ten more minutes. Please," I begged, "Please!" Mom's eyes said no as they widened. She started picking out my outfit.

She opened the armoire saying, "What shirt do you want to wear?"

"White collared with the gray sweater." I replied, maneuvering around to face the wall.

"You're wearing the red corduroys though." She said before I could beg not to wear them.

"Wait, but Mom, those are way too big on me. I am not wearing those," I yelled arrogantly. She gave me the same glaring look. I rolled my eyes.

In the car, my brother was not too happy either about his pants. We were wearing the same ones. Mom said that would look cute for pictures. We all sat cramped in my dad's Honda with the food and pastries we made. Everyone was feeling fine except me. I sat pouting in the back. I had my arms crossed with a puckered lip for no good reason. Once we arrived and settled in our belongings, all of the kids ran upstairs to the attic. We had already taken pictures and had been forced to talk to people we didn't know. Everything was normal for Thanksgiving.

In the attic, the place where all our parent's old toys were stored, was where the kids (me) play games. The attic was spacious and filled with room to play in. It had brown carpeting, overwhelming amounts of closet space, and a big open area. The worn leather sofa was set in the corner next to the TV, and the karaoke machine was in the playroom. My grandpa's office was in the back, and the tiny, but convenient, bathroom was in the bottom right corner of the big space. The bathroom fit all the essentials, including a hand sewn rug, and beautiful window design.

We all were on the couch, no ideas of what to do. We really liked making up games that all the cousins could play. Other times we'd make movies on an iPad or play a game on the Sackley's Wii they left at the house. But today was different. People just sat watching TV with a device in hand. Two of my close cousins, Dillon and Jack, were bored out of their minds. They wanted to do anything else than just sit on the couch and watch TV. Nobody had a strong opinion except those two. I had a slight change of mind and agreed to play. *It seemed like this would be a great Thanksgiving. Everything is all calm so far.* Jack and Dillon rallied me, Fred, and Henry up. Olivia was stuck talking with adults and Riley was in the playroom with her Barbies.

The five of us all started tossing out ideas of what to do. If ideas were baseballs, we'd be hitting fouls, because we could not think of anything.

Dillon spoke first, "Let's play the best Thanksgiving game! Hound Dog!" That was another game we made that barely anyone remembered how to play.

Fred screamed, "Yeah!" Everyone looked at him strange except Dillon. It was strange to see him not doing exactly as Henry.

Henry said excitedly, "Why don't we make another movie. Herman Seven anyone?" He suggested. Henry was the lead role of Herman in our other six productions of it.

"Well, I still think Hound Dog would be fun, but why not Cat and Mouse?" Dillon spoke as she plopped back onto the couch.

Jack complained with a tilted head, "We do that every time!" Jack turned to Fred to see if he had any ideas, but he had no idea what was going on. Fred was trying to tackle Henry, when Jack tried to talk to him.

Jack grabbed Fred and put him on the couch, "Stop wrestling and tell us what we should play."

Fred responded frustrated, "I was playing football."

"Why don't we just play that?" I said to annoy Fred. Dillon and Jack shared a strange look and then a smile.

Ten minutes later, we had teams of Henry and Fred, against me, Jack, and Dillon. The tournament was going great until it was time to eat. Nobody was really hurt, and everyone was having fun. Everyone was red in the face, and the parents just assumed we were playing pets, another game we made up. We looked at the huge mass of Costco mac and cheese, golden turkey slices, cheesy potatoes, and greasy gravy, to slather it all with. The dessert was even better; skyscrapers of angel food cake, warm oatmeal chocolate chip cookies, and the homemade brownies my family made.

When dinner was officially over, and nobody wanted anymore food, we set off back to the attic. A puff of cushions sounded as all of us sat down on the couch. Nobody wanted to do anything except watch a movie. Looking back, I wish I decided to watch the movie, but I was bored and wanted to play some more football.

Dillon noticed me and said, "Hey Charles, Jack said he wanted to keep playing as well. Why don't you go one on one?" And so Jack and I went against each other, while Dillon cheered on a mat we called the sidelines. Jack was going all out. I was a little caught off guard when he tackled me because I thought we were playing two hand touch. I tried so hard to win, but I couldn't. It ended with me slightly banged up, and Jack victorious. I pitied myself for that.

I felt thrown down as I ran to the bathroom for privacy. In the bathtub, I hid crying. All the cousins, one by one, came in to try to get me out. Even the youngest cousin, Riley, tried to persuade me with a turkey cookie. Everyone tried, but it was no use.

While I was in the tub and overheard Dillon and Jack say something softly, "The only way to get him out, is to make him do it himself."

"Has to come out once we close it."

I knew exactly what they were going to do.

The lock on the door sticks and that is why I have been afraid of it closing. The door also had translucent windows, engraved with angels and flowers. It had faded over the years. Back in the tub, I peeked my head out of the curtains. Dillon and Jack ran out as the lights flickered off. The door slammed behind them. I sprang from the tub and saw Jack and Dillon waiting outside the bathroom for me. They waited patiently for me to just open the door and walk out. It was like giving a monkey a key, and locking him in a box. The monkey might panic and forget about the keys. I started to bang on the door. My loud moans and screams broke the calm holiday. Right away I assumed the door was stuck, even though I didn't try to open it. I was screaming even louder now.

"Get me out!" I belted louder than the TV in the back. Dillon scurried but Jack stayed.

He didn't say anything to me, but to the older cousins, "Oh my god, Henry and Olivia, Charles broke the window!"

He was screaming now, too. All shocked, Olivia busted open the door. The lights turned on. The brightness erased all the people surrounding me. My eyes widened at the beautiful angels had broken into shard of worthless glass. The chipped angel on the floor stared at me like I had just committed murder. My adrenaline rush eliminated all pain from my hand, but started to hurt my head. Aunt Steph gasped as she saw what happened. She tried to get me out of my panic. She disinfected my cut and bandaged it tight. I planned to tell everyone tomorrow about what happened in the attic. During goodbyes, I tried to keep a straight face. I tried getting out of there as quickly as possible.

The car ride home was even more tense than the car ride there. Everyone was upset, or at least acting strange. My mom was worried about what was happening upstairs because she heard people screaming and she saw Olivia come get her mom. I tried to hold it in, but I just couldn't. Guilt rushed through as I knew there would be consequences if I told. That is why the guilt spoke what had been on my mind the whole night. Tears rushed down my face like two chaotic rivers. I confessed. My Mom was silent on the drive home. That made me feel even worse.

She told me I needed to pull myself together and listen to her unspoken thoughts. Mom said things about how she was disappointed. She said it was not because of the window, but because of not asking her for help. She needed me to realize that she will always be there to help, and that I don't have to worry about her getting angry at me. This important Thanksgiving is one I will always remember. The one where I caused the breakout.

Charles Stach
CHMS Grade 6

Busy Days

When my friend and I went to school we had a field trip to the museum, but the school bus had a flat tire so we ended up being late, so we made a quick stop in the school cafeteria to bring ham sandwiches and jelly donuts with us.

However when we arrived, there was a big explosion in the front of the museum; it was so grand that the columns started to shake and tumble; the explosion was so frighteningly huge that we ended up in Florida.

The whole class was in shock. The money that we were going to use for the museum tickets instead had to be used for our flight tickets back home.

The airport was far away, so we had to call for a lot of taxis. The taxis zoomed quickly and sooner than later we were at the airport.

We quickly got on the plane so we ended up not having any homework for the day, but when we came back to school, there was a virus at school and almost everyone was sick, so I had to stay home. I was forced to stay home with the babysitter, but he ended up being a burglar; I caught him stealing my mom's purse because it

contained all of her money, but since I was so frightened, I ran away. After that I waited at the school for mom to come, but it was so boring that I wanted to leave.

I had to wait for a long time, but soon enough, a bus came and I was able to go home safely. However, on the bus everyone was screaming at the top of their lungs. It annoyed me.

I had just faced the most dangerous and eventful few days of my school career.

Kevin Su

Elm School Grade 3

Winter Wonderland

It was dawn when the beauty really came out. The red leaves turning on the trees were sunset kissed, the tall sticklike trees were planted in such a beautiful arrangement as slivers of sunlight peered through the gaps. The strong, great evergreens stood still while wisps of snow were brushed atop their branches. Sparking smooth hills of white with winding rivers, signs of wilderness' tracks were planted here and there. One wooden cabin sat high above the trees, guarding its home.

What a world, I thought as we drove through the winding roads of Manton, Michigan. I wanted to look out the frosted window of our old Suburban for the entire time that we were in this wonderland. And, as the moon started to peek out of its hiding, I felt a feeling of comfort so warm that I settled in my seat and watched. I watched the trees, the wind, the snow as the road took us down a path of complete wonder; through the turning hills. It's so beautiful, I thought, overcome and inspired. I then took out my phone to try to capture the moment and keep it with me so I could remember the true awe of these woods. But, no camera could ever quite catch the wonder in these photos, so I planted an image in my brain to keep it with me forever.

Kieran Sullivan

CHMS Grade 7

Visiting My Aunt in China

I will never forget my visit to China with my dad! We were exiting off the plane and dad was waiting for us. I was so excited that I jumped up and down! When we got outside of the airport, there were a lot of cars. The cars were honking and people were talking. It was as busy as a city outside!! Dad went to get a car and asked us to wait near the parking lot. The drive from the airport to the home was about four hours! But it was worth the wait. When we got to our home in China it was about 10:00 p.m. so we went straight to bed.

The next day we took a train to my aunt's house. We took a high speed train. If you tried to look outside it was very blurry because it is going at about 400km an hour. When we got off the train we went straight to the subway station. My aunt's house is about five subway stops.

One of the best parts of my visit to China was going to my grandpa's glass factory. My grandpa's factory makes glass and machinery. I saw a huge plastic machine that made plastic car locks. My grandpa was very proud of the factory. Each worker gets about 3-2 breaks a day. The workers are working very hard every day and they show a lot of grit. All of the workers know me.

There were a lot of machines and the noise was loud as a fire alarm so we had to wear earmuffs. My grandpa makes sandpaper for glass. The machine would turn a block of hard sand into sandpaper. Then we went to a bread factory that rented space inside my grandpa's factory.

My Grandpa is very proud of the factory. He works in the factory just about every day. When I saw the factory I was immediately inspired by all the machinery and the people. I was thinking "the factory is a lot of hard work, maybe I'll build one someday." He asked me if I liked the factory and I said "yes." The factory was very big and there were a lot of storage rooms. We went to see a storage room filled with Concrete powder and sand blocks.

Then it was time to go back home to have dinner. For dinner we had chicken, potato and rice. We were also watching TV while we were eating dinner. After dinner my aunt and I were cleaning the dishes. After we were done, it was time to go to bed. I will always remember this trip to my aunt's house.

Mark Tang

The Lane School Grade 4

Great Lakes

One day, in the middle of the great Lake Michigan, there was a humongous rustic red and white striped boat, sailing across the waves. There were three kids crammed under the old fashioned deck, hoping not to get sick with the waves crashing against them every second. There were also fifteen kids up at the top of the boat, feet dangling off the side, arms clinging onto the thin rope running around the side. They were feeling the frigid breeze and cold splashes of water hitting them, hearing the birds chirping about the fish they had just found in the water. It was a great feeling to be on the ship at that time, out in the middle of the lake, going vigorously fast as the boat swayed side to side, rocking you back and forth. The water was not at all clear. At least not until it hit its peak point, where the waves were so high and went over your head, covering you with what seemed to be a tsunami of freezing cold water. As everyone on that boat was starting to get tired, the waves were starting to grow even bigger, and bigger by the second. Everyone was focusing on the incredibly large amounts of water coming in around the boat. You couldn't keep track of the minutes or the time. It seemed as if the boat was rapidly sinking. The kids were knee high in water, the tide sweeping them under. Then, everything went black. Cold and dark as the night - they were lost. Would anyone find them again? Their fears subsided as they woke up in the murky waters. The kids awoke to the vast lake, touching the sand, fish, and other treasures that they had found. Five hours later, all eighteen - including the ones under the deck - were found by the Coast Guard, and taken safely back home. None were injured, but they did learn one thing...they definitely will return for yet another amazing sailing adventure.

Madeline Temple
HMS Grade 6

After Stranger Things 3...What Really Happened

Hopper

Drip! Drip! Drip! I looked around. I sat in an old ramshackle dungeon. The walls were stricken with an eternal rust. Or at least, I hoped it was just rust. It was hard to tell as I watched the black ooze meet the brownish-orange stain which stretched down the entire wall of the space-restricted cage. "God, my head hurts!" I exclaimed as I rubbed my head furiously. *Where the heck am I?* I wondered.

Then, I heard it.

And that's when I knew.

"Podozhdi, a ne amerikanets." I heard.

Russians. They said: "Wait, not the American."

"Let me out of here you insulant Russian jerks!" I yelled as loudly as I could.

But they couldn't hear me.

Something was happening.

The sound was so horrifying, you could hear it from miles away. I covered my ears as I heard the most awful noises. It sounded like something out of a nightmare. Muffled, yet blaring. Familiar, yet strange. Ringing. Bleeding. Calling. Dying. The growls and shrieks blended to create a chorus which may have come from a horror movie. But this wasn't a horror movie...it was real. As I realized this, I felt my skin crawl. It was as if a thousand beetles had wriggled their way up my arms and legs, and began to tickle me with evermost force. These noises were not human-made sounds. They were not that of a regular animal either. And instantly, I knew that these sounds could only be coming from one thing...a demogorgan.

Eleven

I sat on the rug of my new living room. The television made a static-crackling noise as a cluster of black and white pixels danced about the screen. It was just the way I liked it. I put on my black satin blindfold. I let my thoughts come to me. I was thinking about the math lessons Joyce had told me to work on. I was thinking about my friends Max, Mike, Dustin, and Lucas, and I wondered how they were doing back in Hawkins. I was thinking about my sick mother, Terry Ives, and how my real name was Jane. I thought about the tattoo which read 011 on my wrist. And I thought about the delectable treats I loved so dearly...Eggos. But I knew that wasn't it. There was something else I

was thinking about. A thought that I had tried to push to the back of my mind. I allowed my mind to embrace this thought. It was like dusting off the cobwebs of some ancient relic which had been tucked away in a Pharaoh's tomb or something. This thought was about Hopper...my dad. It had been said he was dead. But I felt something. I felt a presence. I felt *him*. Then, blindfold still on, I opened my eyes and there he was. He was sitting across from me, covering his ears. He looked so sad. So confused. So alone. I wanted so badly to reach my hand out towards him, and pull him out of his coma of sadness. I wanted so badly to fall into his muscular arms. For him to hold me, and never let go. I took a step forward. And I saw him look up. He looked right into my eyes. He smiled the slightest grin. His eyes had a glimmer of hope in them. Then, he opened his mouth and whispered, "El." He was with me. And not just in spirit. He was real. He was really there. He was *alive*. Then I shouted as tears rolled down my cheeks, "Don't worry, Dad! I'll find you! I know you're out there! I can feel it! And I will bring you here. And you can live a wonderful life along with Joyce, Jonathan, Will, and I. We'll be together. I promise. And I mean it. Because..." Then, together we both said, "because friends don't lie." Then, Hopper disappeared. I yanked off my blindfold and threw it to the ground. Then I sobbed uncontrollably. I promised my dad I would save him from whatever danger he was in. But how could I do that if I didn't know where to begin. I was only a kid. A fourteen-year-old girl. I had power, but I couldn't save Hopper with just my powers. I would need the whole crew. Mike, Max, Lucas, Dustin, Will, Joyce, Jonathan, Nancy, Steve, Robin, Erica...everyone! As I stood up, I wiped the crimson stream of blood from my nostril. Then, I ran to the phone.

"El?" Joyce stood in the hallway.

"Yes?" I asked, a bit annoyed to be interrupted.

"Whatcha' doing?"

"Making a phone call."

"To who?"

"Mike. I need to get everyone over here!"

"Everyone? Who's everyone?" Joyce asked.

"You know, Mike, Will, Lucas, Dustin, you, Jonathan, Steve, Nancy, Robin, Max, Erica and I!"

"Oh no! What's wrong! We don't usually get the whole crew together unless something is terribly wrong."

"It's Hopper...he's alive."

And just like that everything came pouring out. I told Joyce about what I saw, I told her that Hopper was in trouble, and how Hopper had talked to me, and how I had talked to him.

"Oh my god, El. Is Hopper really alive?" She asked as her eyes began to fill with tears.

"Yes."

"I believe you El. I really do. You've never steered us wrong."

And so she gave me permission to call up my friends.

Within an hour, everyone was rushing to our home. Everyone sat around the small wooden coffee table as we bounced ideas around like crazy. Everyone was waiting for the moment. That instant where we knew we had the perfect plan. Eventually, that instant came, and we knew that we had the perfect plan...perfect, yet dangerous. This was how our adventures always went. We knew that we would go into our adventure feeling brave...yet we may not even come out alive.

to be continued...

Erin Tribe

HMS Grade 6

Rejection of the Century

Characters

Woman: Dolabella

Men: Agamemnon

"My dear Dolabella, your words are Delphian oracles and your words like music please me. Shalt thou feast with me this night?" Agamemnon stated.

"Thou think I shalt dine with thee? Ha! Thou is a lumpish, ill - breeding, hedge - pig!" Dolabella scoffed.

"Thou shall dine with me, for thou are the star I reach for. After I shall bathe my lips rosy dewes of kisses," Agamemnon exclaimed as he reached for Dolabella's hand.

"I shall not dine with no venomed, pox-marked, measle!" She screamed as she swatted his hand away.

"But, I tis not a venomed, pox-marked, measle! I tis a beautiful man that is perfect for thy," exclaimed Agamemnon.

"No, thou is a puny, half-faced, maggot pie. That is the opposite of what is perfect for me! How dare you even suggest this!" Dolabella said in disgust.

"But I tis the greatest man on this Earth, and there is no treasure like you," Agamemnon begged while on his knees with his hands clasped together.

"Thy is right about one thing, there is no treasure like me yet thy is wrong about being the best man on this Earth. Thou is still a villainous, sheep-biting, giglet," she replied in disgust.

"But why, what have I done to deserve this? Why can't thou just love me!" Agamemnon screamed as he started grabbing Dolabella's shoes.

"Get off me, thou fobbing, clay-brained, barnacle!" Dolabella screamed as she started kicking Agamemnon in the face.

"Stop it! Just take me as thys husband! I will be the best husband thy will ever have," Agamemnon replied, clinging onto Dolabella even harder than before.

"No, I would rather marry a rat than thou," Dolabella answered as she struggled to get Agamemnon off her.

"I shall not let go until I hear thy accept my date. I shall bathe my lips in rosy dewes of kisses," Agamemnon exclaimed, clinging even harder.

"Bleh, thou is a craven, doghearted, flap-dragon. I will never allow thy to do that!" She screamed as she continued to struggle in the grip of Agamemnon.

"Nope I think that I am the greatest man alive, I am the perfect fit for you, I would play kisses with you," Agamemnon said with desperation in his voice.

"NO! How many times do I have to tell you that I do not want you!" she screamed as she finally kicked off Agamemnon.

"Please, you are a flame of beauty, please dine with me," he blurted.

"As I said before, I will never date a craven, doghearted, flap-dragon," she replied as she stormed off into the darkness.

"May I at least know where you live? I'll pay the tribute of my love to you," he asked with more desperation than ever.

"No!" Was all she replied, and Agamemnon never saw her again.

Jacob Truong
HMS Grade 7

Golden Sun Tree

Peaceful
 Calm
 Winter is fading as spring is entering
 The angelic light breaking the clouds
 defrosting everything in sight
 Snow on the grass
 A slick sheet of thin ice over the river
 A serene tree sits in the spotlight
 feeling lonely and solitary
 Tick tock went nature's clock
 Waiting, waiting, waiting,

For everything to melt
It's as if angels appeared and turned
on the light for life to rejuvenate again
The soil is soaking in the melted nutrients from
the white snow like a sponge
Slowly melting
Waiting, waiting, waiting,
The silent song of the warm breeze soothed the tree's branches
Excitement from animals so they can
finally stretch out their legs
Spring is coming soon!

Kelsey Van
HMS Grade 6

Goalkeeping

Did you know one of the best goalkeepers ever has a net worth of over 17 million dollars. His name is David De Gea. Goalkeeping is a fantastic hobby that helps you be more athletic and have better reflexes. An amateur goalkeeper needs to know the rules, how to dive, and how to catch the ball properly.

Knowing the rules can help you get a better understanding of the position of goalkeeper. First, one of the biggest rules is not going out of the box. If you run outside of the box and catch the ball you could possibly get a red card. Also, if you go out of the box you can't use your hands. If you want to attack the ball out of the box make sure that you only use your feet. Another important rule is receiving a ball from a teammate. If a teammate passes you the ball and you pick it up with your hands it is a penalty. It is only ok if your teammate deflects the ball and then, you pick it up. Also, if a teammate passes you the ball but the other team touches it you can pick it up. Finally, you need to know the rules of a penalty and a free kick. The rules of a penalty are easy but are commonly broken. First, the referee will put the ball on the penalty spot as the crowd screams to try and mess you up. The penalty spot is 12 yards away from the goal line in major league soccer. In travel soccer it is usually cut down to 8 yards. The first rule is don't go off the line. The referee will blow the whistle and the kicker will run up to the ball. Once the kicker makes contact with the ball that's when you can get off your line. If you do go off your line before the shot taker makes contact with the ball the penalty will be retaken or sometimes count as a for sure goal. Make sure you follow these rules closely so your teammates won't blame you for a goal.

Diving is another very important ability you need to have. There are three types of dives. A low dive, a high dive, and a forward dive. We will begin with a high dive. For a high dive you need to focus on your jump, landing, and run up. When you run up you need to shuffle until you think you can reach the ball with a jump. Next, you jump to get to the ball. For this jump you need to have all your weight on one leg and use the other leg only to balance. Now you need to push off with the leg that has all the weight on it, and reach out with your arms. Your hand needs to be spaced out like if there's a ball in your hands. For the landing, make sure your elbows aren't bent and that your arms are straight. When you are about to hit the ground make sure that you are parallel to the ground. Once you hit make sure to get right back up for any rebounds. Another type of dive is the low dive. For a low dive the steps are the same but you do them differently. For the run up, we take small side steps until you can reach the ball. Next, put all the weight on the leg closest to the ball. Use your other foot only to balance. Finally, push off your foot and reach for the ball. When you are diving make sure you slide instead of hitting the ground. Try to catch the ball, if you can't catch it, try to make a fist and punch it. Lastly, we have the forward dive. The forward dive is hard because it requires a lot of courage. Most people think it is easier but it is not. For the forward dive you might need to practice onto a cushion to get over the fear. Now that you are over the fear practice keeping the ball on the ground and going for it. If you are confident enough grab a friend and let them toss it up to you. For the jump make sure you have lots of forward momentum to stop the ball. Diving is a very important skill that you need to know to make sure you are being the best player you can be.

Catching is one of the most critical skills you need to obtain. There are different types of catches. First, we will focus on the dive catch. For this catch you will need to pretend you have a ball in your hands. Remember you will be doing this while you are diving. Having a fake ball in your hand can help you get a better grip because the ball will fall into your hands instead of crashing into your hands. When the ball crashes into your hands it will have more probability that it will slip through your hands, which will then cause a goal. The next catch is a low ground catch or rolling catch. This catch is used when the ball is coming at your feet on the ground. It might also be used when the ball is slightly to the side. In that case you would move your feet so you're behind the ball and then do the catch. To catch the ball your pinkies will be connected and your elbows should be touching. Next, make a ramp to have the ball roll up. Lastly, when the ball is crashing towards the end of the ramp, pull your arms in so that the ball is pushing against your chest. Lastly, form this a super important for when you catch. Form is hard to get perfect at first, but once you have done it lots of times it will come instantly. For your form, your fingers should be spread apart as far as you can spread them. Your thumbs should be a couple centimeters apart. And like before pretend you have a ball in your hand. This is how to catch properly. When you are having a competitive match with your friends or in a game situation, make sure you focus on the rules, diving, and catching. Goalkeeping is a great hobby because it can make you stronger and get you to be a better athlete. Now grab a friend and start training.

Leonardo Villone
The Lane School Grade 5

95 Degrees in Winter

Imagine a perfect vacation day. The sun is up high and the wind is blowing slightly. I knew it was the ideal day to go swimming in the pool. My mom and I were at the Mayan Palace resort in Cancun for winter break. This place was a tourist area, and it had so many other resorts. You could travel from one place to another if you ride the golf cart tram. Room service was open to anyone in the area. There are two public pools connected to each other, the giant pool and a small pool. I wanted to jump in them right away.

I met a girl named Hui, she came from Canada. One day we went to the small pool together. We met another girl, her name was Alice. She was swimming laps. There were a lot of iguanas everywhere. After a while the three of us swam to the giant pool.

"Look at those prairie dogs! They are walking like penguins," Hui told us.

We weren't sure what animal they were. There were different layers in the pool connecting so we jumped up and down. It was really fun. After we walked by the big pool to the really close beach to find some crabs to play with.

We did not find any crabs so we swam back to the small pool. After we went back I played in the pool with Hui. When we went up the deck Alice left.

"Bye guys," she said and went back to her room. Hui and I saw more iguanas in the bush close to the pool. Some turtles were swimming in the pool nearby. After a while we got hungry and ordered some food.

"Slurp this lemonade is so delicious". We ate cheesy nachos and talked about our fun morning. This day in Cancun was the best day ever!

Heather Wang
Elm School Grade 4

King Wrion's Fate

The air was sharp and crisp, like a knife piercing the air, autumn leaves swirling through the air like ethereal wisps of golden mist. The soft mud squelched beneath heavy steel-clad hooves, droplets of water golden in the waning afternoon light. The wind whipped about like a sword, lashing at the convoy who dared enter the land of fallen leaves. Dark shapes broke the golden mist like silent guardians, like witnesses waiting for the inevitable. A single mare burst through the dense undergrowth, golden hooves clattering against pebbled gravel. A waxed bronze coat was saturated with rain, but the horse held a high head and inspected the area with a critical eye. A clearing cut through with a bubbling brook and a gravel road, the ashes of a campfire already set where she

had planned to make her camp. Sniffing, she trotted forward with care and lowered her head into the river, tossing droplets of water from her mane as she refreshed herself.

"Come along," King Wrion Canaelgon snarled, "This place ain't safe." The king shook his luxurious mane of white-blond hair and twitched his pointed ears, but his brilliant violet eyes were still firmly fixed on the target in the distance. The mountain spiraled out of a dense forest many miles away, a mountain that needed him.

"Aesmon is less than a day away," a fresh-faced captain declared as he consulted a map, "With luck, we'll make it by sundown. Cervan's army is approaching fast, and the Drangau have made their way past the Contested Crumbs. Our army is stretched thin, the lords are divided and weak. No help will come from the high elves, they're busy defending Dycwru as is. Caernen still stands, but Virens is under siege. Soon, you may not have a tir to rule." Wrion nodded, waving for the rest of his convoy to catch up. Pointing a stern finger at his grand-nephew, he ordered Hanson to find help.

"Contact the Barsus, find Barwyn," he ordered, snatching the map from the captain's grasp, "If the Blatrus still stand, call for their aid. Tell them that I will reinstate them as true Canaelgons and annul their bastard heritage if they aid me." Hanson nodded and spurred his horse onward, but he turned back with a slight smirk on his face.

"Why don't you check on Guardian?" he asked, nodded towards the mare, "She doesn't look well." Wrion whipped his head around, his gaze fierce. His hand twitched to the silver mace and chain at his leather belt, while his other moved up in a gesture of silence. Several guards clad in velvet cloaks and chainmail hoods clenched their silver halberds, tensing but not daring to move forward. Hanson's smirk grew into a grin and he raised two fingers to his mouth, a sharp whistle piercing the clearing. At Wrion's command, the warck guard surged forward and raised their silver bucklers, trying to shield their king. A forest of ash shafts sprouted from their cloaks and their fingers loosened, their weapons falling to the ground in unison with their bodies. They uttered not a sound, but green fluid poured from their wounds and the light drained from their throats. Though mighty, they were nothing against the strength of ash. Wrion snarled and whipped his famous mace from his belt, his eyes flitting back and forth and his throat glowing with the magic stored in his grilaefae. He turned back to the others, but they were already down, mere courtiers were nothing against the might of the Andrangaue. The ancient warriors strode forward, ferocious in their rusted iron armor. Their fingers tightened around the bronze scales inset in the hilts of their obsidian blades, while cloaks of velvets swept over their tracks as though they were never there. Their eyes swirled like empty pits of endless darkness, just like those of their master.

"Cervan," Wrion hissed, "You treacherous, conniving, sly serpent!" A dark figure prowled through the trees, a dark cloak of black silk draped over his slender shoulders. His face was thin and pinched, the skin yellowed and pale with age. A skull was visible beneath the hood, but eyes of swirling light seemed to mesmerize his prey. Wrion the Wrathful swayed, trying to keep his mind from being assaulted by all the magic that threatened to engulf him. Though he had faced many a foe before, and had even beaten back the forces of the djinn king Arvigweir, his centuries of experience on the deserts of the Riewgivra left him unprepared for the ambushes of woodland warfare. He fell to his knees, mace tumbling from slack fingers. Cervan advanced, a shaft of darkness appearing in his hand. His silver scimitar shot up from his black leather belt and attached itself to the tip. His fingers twitched with unholy fire that licked his long yellow fingernails, but his eyes were fixed upon those of Wrion.

"Wrathful they called you," he hissed, his voice smooth yet cold, "Yet they said the same of Canaelgon. He fell to my blade. Wrion raised his head up one last time, his silver goatee swaying in the wind before he turned to the bodies behind him, to the brook soaked green with blood.

"No," he whispered, unable to accept the truth. His armies were fallen, his court slain, only the Royal Peninsula remained. Yet he felt an odd sense of peace as death itself approached, a force more ancient than any other that existed in the land of Cwrth. The high ones could wage their war on Dycwru, his lords could fight to keep his Metallic Tir intact, the wood elves of Virens could hold the Drangau back. No, his time was up. He raised a trembling hand, wishing that he could stroke the face of his son and daughter once more.

"Erus," he murmured, "You are king now." Then, his eyelids flickered and the last thing he saw was the silvery slash of a scythe.

Carson Wang
HMS Grade 7

A Story About Earth

This story begins a little while back when Life was just starting her job. Light was helping her with all the simple stuff and guiding her the right way. Everything was great until Dark Matter (or just Dark) came along. He had a different idea for Life. Life became contaminated by his evil ways. Dark guided her to creating mayhem and destruction. Light told Life to stay away from him, but she didn't listen. More monsters were made and Light had to do some things she didn't want to do. She with the help of Heat, Cold, and their mother Temperature all went out and rounded up all the monsters, put Dark in prison, and put Life into contamination until she could become normal and un hypnotized. Every thing was fine except she had to help Life. The only problem was none of them were powerful enough to un hypnotize Life from Dark's evil tricks. They didn't know what to do, but then all of the sudden a new goddess was brought to them be the heavens called Love. With her sweet and kind ways she saved Life and everything was back to normal.

Light helps Life create a new thing they called planets. Life then had a daughter she named Earth. Life felt Earth was special. She took great care of her and watched her grow up. She started out young and grew older. Then, when she grew to an age similar to the human teenagers age she started to feel much pain. She would push away anyone who tried to help. It hurt Life to see her like this. The news spread about Earth's pain and Dark quickly heard about it. He was ready for it so, when Life was doing her weekly routine, she happened to pass by the prison and heard a voice call out to her and say "hey!" It was Dark she quickly recognized. She went over to him.

"What do you want?!" She called out in response.

"I heard about Earth and I know someone who can help you" he said.

Life, interested, listened in and he told her about his daughter Hate. She set out to visit Hate and got to her in no time. Dark had told Hate that Life was coming, but Life didn't know that. In fact, Life didn't even know that Hate was bad. Hate told her she would help and in the morning they headed for Earth, and very coincidentally passed by Love.

"What are you doing with that monster Hate?" Love asked Life.

"She is coming to help Earth."

"Well you shouldn't trust her, plus you can't rush Earth. Eventually she will get over it" said Love.

"Don't worry, I can help her get over them quicker" Hate said.

And with that Life was convinced. They continued their journey to Earth. At first, Earth wouldn't let Hate help her, but eventually she gave up. Hate did what you might expect her to do, create chaos. She gave Earth more pain by creating something known by many names, sad times, dark ages, sinpo, imp, and climate change. Every one rushed to help. Light, Temperature, Heat, Cold, their kids Fire and Ice and Lover all came to help Earth.

"I told you you can't rush it, but don't worry she will get over it if every one just helps her a little bit."

Kaylie Wolowick

Walker School Grade 5

Just A Typical Haunted House

As I cautiously entered the haunted house, the door slammed behind me and I was left alone in the dark except for a glimpse of the full moon through an old, cracked-glass window. Where was I going? I tried walking forward. Suddenly, I heard scratching and squeaking inside the vent at the top of the wall. I thought I saw some eyes in there. "I must be seeing things" I thought. Just then, SCREEECH!!! BAM!!! The vent cover slid off and fell on the ground revealing a colony of bats. They flew out to the other side of the room leaving me screaming. I was seeing eyes! When the bats were gone, I stood up and ran the other direction. I saw a wall, so I turned left. BAM!!! I had run into something. I took out my flashlight from my backpack. Suddenly, I heard a WHOOOSH!!! I turned around. "Is there someone there? Hello?" Just then, I felt a hand on my back. It pushed me. I landed on my back, but I didn't stay that way. I was sliding down on a diagonal. "AAAAHHHH!!!" I screamed. As the tunnel twisted and turned, my stomach churned and I felt very sick indeed. Could I take any more of this? Suddenly, I skidded to a halt. "Few" I exclaimed. Just then, a shadow loomed over me. "Frankenstein!!!" I pulled out my knife.

I sliced off his hand, but it dropped and crawled away. Just then, an idea came to me. A glorious idea came to me. I started chopping off as many body parts as I could. When all of them were off, I yanked out my net and gathered them up. Left arm, right arm, left leg, right leg, left foot, right foot, and the right hand. Since the left hand crawled away, I took out my flashlight and searched, but came upon it trying to carry the neck, body and head. I caught them all in one swing. I took all of the parts to the museum. They stitched it all back together, and kept it in a secure, strong cage.

Leena Wong
Elm School Grade 3

“Is this going to be fun?” That’s what I asked myself when our plane flew off to Cancún Mexico.

I was sitting with my family on the flying plane. I was so excited. I asked my mom and dad a lot of questions, like, “How long is the plane ride?” And “What is the temperature there?” I could not sit still.

Finally we arrived in Cancún, Mexico. It was hot there, almost 90 degrees f.! We went to get our suitcases from the baggage claim. After that, mom and dad called a taxi to take us to the hotel. On the way, I wondered to myself “What will we do for the next few days?” I was overjoyed.

Half an hour later, we arrived at our hotel. When we walked in, someone immediately came to greet us. She said, “Welcome! Please take a towel and wipe your hands!” so we did. There was a huge hall with lots of sculptures.

The highlight of the trip was when we went to Chichén Itzá. We rode a bus for 2 hours. When we got off, a guide came to greet us. The guide took us to a step pyramid that made a chirping noise when you clapped in front of it, a stool that decapitated ballcoachs if their team won, and a field that had ball games played on it. We brought back 3 souvenirs from the trip. 2 were colorful traditional masks, the other one was a step pyramid.

When we got back, I thought to myself “Good thing my mom and dad didn’t choose to stay home!”

Henry Xu
Prospect School Grade 3

The Knights

In darkest nights I cannot see,
The knights of chaos ride through the city,
Their horses rear with blackened hooves,
The armor is of darkest stone,
With swords of obsidian and bone,
They bring shadows in their wake,
On their heads are great snakes,
That coil around their helms of steel,
And poison thoughts that are bright and true,
They are made of iron too,
With strong enchantment upon their skulls,
They curl around the knights of blood and bone.

The knights of light gallop through the day,
They run through the fields of grain,
They go through villages and towns
They are brighter than the sun,
On their helms of lightest stone
On their shields of silver,
There is a sliver of white fire,
Deeply entrenched into the metal,
Is a carving of a lion,
Glowing with a greatest light,
Is a diamond of purity,
Into the darkness they go and clear it.

Aaron Zapol
CHMS Grade 6

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