

2020 *Short Story Contest*





*The Future.
Starts Now.*

Produced by Innisfil ideaLAB & Library
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Seepe Walters was a well-respected and dedicated member of the Innisfil community until her death in 1995.

She was involved in many different facets of Innisfil life: the Historical Society, 4-H, the Women's Institute, her Church, her family and various political arenas.

It was her love of writing and all things literary which led her to journalism at the University of Toronto. She then worked as a freelance correspondent with the *Daily Construction News*, taught English to immigrant children, and worked with the Barrie Literacy Council, before helping to found the Innisfil Friends of the Library.

Seepe Walters' commitment to her community and specifically her legacy to the Library, which is now supported by two incredibly dynamic Friends of the Library groups, is being remembered through the Seepe Walter's Award.

The Innisfil IdeaLAB & Library would like to congratulate all the students who entered the 18th edition of the Innisfil ideaLAB & Library's Short Story Contest.

The contributions of many have made this contest and this publication a reality. The Innisfil ideaLAB & Library would like to thank the Friends of the Library for their ongoing sponsorship; the Ferraro family for their years of involvement; Judge and Canadian children's author Naseem Hrab for her time and thoughtfulness in reading the entries; and finally, the efforts of all the wonderful young writers. Although there is only one name on the Seepe Walters Award, you are all winners for having the courage to pursue your writing dreams.

Many thanks to all those involved. And to everyone else, we hope you enjoy the stories submitted to the 2020 edition of the Innisfil ideaLAB & Library's Short Story Contest.

Kathy Hammer
Manager, Programming & Outreach
Innisfil IdeaLAB & Library

DISCLAIMER

The viewpoints and opinions expressed in these stories are those of the individuals themselves and do not necessarily reflect the viewpoints and opinions of the Innisfil ideaLAB & Library or its staff. Some content may not be appropriate for all audiences. Parental discretion is advised.

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2020 Seepe Walters Short Story Winner

Falcon Feather

By: Nusaiba Limbada (Gr. 4)

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Hello, my name is Fall, and my story begins a long time ago, when feathers were used instead of pencils. I was born in the summer on a baby falcon. A few months of struggle and I took my first flight around the neighborhood with my parents.

I was a majestically beautiful shade. I was a deep brown with white lines. One day I was taking a flight and I slid off my home to the cold frosty ground. I was scared there was no one in sight as I started to look for somewhere warm. I wasn't used to being by myself but I quickly realized I couldn't move. I don't really know how long it was until I was awoken.

One day, I was being tugged out of the ground. I looked up and there it was a human! And it was pulling me out with incredible force! I looked at him and he looked at me, finally it was too much I had to let go. I had no idea what was going to happen, the next moment I was in a bag. I was next to a letter, a 100 power lighter, and some vegetable seeds. The letter said: For Nusaiba, A feather for you to sharpen into a quill and some ink to use on special holidays.

After reading that letter, I knew I was going to be used to write. I was scared. I had heard that my grandfather died because a young girl used him in the wrong way, but hey, look on the bright side, my new home could have a nice girl to take good care of me.

Once I had arrived I saw a young girl peeking into the bag. I was terrified.

Then I saw the girl picking me up alongside an ink pot and a strawberry plant. The first thing we wrote was a thank you card. I wrote many pages as the bottom of me skated and danced over pages and as I grew, my owner grew.

3 MONTHS LATER

My owner went on a trip, and did not return alone. She returned with a feather, a beautiful one. This feather was a dark brown at the bottom, the top was a light brown, and in the middle it was slightly blue.

This new feather would write with purple, golden, and green, and I would write with black. I made friends with the new feather, we laughed, we talked, we played, we had fun, and the two of us scribbled and danced on pages we were happy. We loved each other.

On one peculiar day there was going to be a big ceremony and my owner was scratching me on the paper. As she was writing, she drew with the other a pretty picture like normal, and ran off. I lived a long happy life. My home was a stationery holder with an ink fountain pen. I lived for many years in peace and harmony. I am in peace and I hope you are in peace too, here I lie without fear. Here is where I lie. I have reached my finish line. I hope you do so too.

Junior Division Grades 3-6

Toothy On The Loose
By: Dmitri Zakiev (Gr. 6)

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Long ago, on planet Mouth, a tooth named Toothy was born. This tooth was like no other. He was a GENIUS. He made many inventions including an electric toothbrush named Cleanse.

One night, Toothy noticed Cleanse was gone! He searched everywhere. He asked his parents, "Mom! Dad! Have you seen my toothbrush?" They kept walking into the walls. Clearly, Toothy was the smartest tooth in the family.

He ran out of the house and shouted "Cleanse! Cleanse!" Toothy thought to himself, "He's a toothbrush, he was cleaning!" He followed the trail of cleanliness, until it led him straight to a dead end. "I shouldn't have given him rocket boosters," said Toothy. "It would make more sense if I gave it to him after I knew he wasn't a menace." Toothy always wanted to fly away to someplace where there were more smart teeth like him.

Toothy pondered and pondered all night. Where could he have gone? Why did he go there? Toothy thought, until he got it. He likes to clean! Of course! He must have gone to a dirty planet. The question is, which one?

Toothy took out one of his old inventions called the "Tooth-a-scope." He was able to see new planets by looking into the eyepiece. He got a glance of a planet. "It.. it looks like an atom," he stammered. "It's... beautiful, but I must find that gross planet," Toothy thought. Hours later, Toothy felt mud dripping from nowhere. He looked up and saw a dirty, gross planet. "Eureka! I found it."

“Tonight,” thought Toothy, “I’ll find my toothbrush after this invention is finished. After I catch him I’ll go to the atom planet. I’ll show everyone my cool inventions.”

Later that night Toothy finished his newest invention, the jetpack. It had more powerful rocket boosters than Cleanse and it was easy to put on.

As Toothy flew through space he wondered why Cleanse left. He was lost thinking about him. He oiled him every day. He always let him clean something. He seemed so happy. What could be the reason?

Finally, Toothy arrived on the muddy planet. The whole planet was disgusting and none of it looked clean. He kept walking until he found a musty, slimy cave. “Could this be where my invention is?” Toothy walked in. It was very dark and creepy. His flashlight had run out of batteries. “What do I do now?” he thought. The wind was not helping. Woooosh. A chill went up and down his root (because teeth don’t have spines). From every corner there was something scurrying around. There was also a creepy old crate about the size of a toothbrush at the very back of the cave. Toothy slowly approached the crate. He carefully opened the lid with a long, squeeaaaakkkk and creeeeeeaaakkkk. Nothing was wrong. Just then a bunch of rats and bats started to attack. “Ahhhhhhhhhhh!” screamed Toothy. “Where are all of these pests coming from?!” Then it stopped. “What just happened?!” he yelled. The cave rumbled and started to collapse. Toothy flew out with his jetpack and headed home. “Where is my toothbrush?”

When he was home, Toothy wondered about Toothless Edison. “I bet it was hard with nobody to understand you,” said Toothy. “Nobody was as smart as you and other wisdom teeth. You made one of the greatest inventions of all time, the lightbulb.”

Wisdom teeth are the smartest of all teeth. Sadly, there had not been a wisdom tooth born on planet Mouth for over a century. After a bit, Toothy fell asleep.

"I made it to Atom. I'll be the greatest tooth that ever lived," Toothy said. "Even Cleanse is here to see me. All my inventions are here to see me. Hey guys! Over here!" His inventions walked over, as they grabbed a net. "Uhh, guys? What are you doing? Guys let me go! Ahhhhhhh!"

Toothy woke up. He looked around. The Tooth-a-scope was gone. "Where are all of my inventions?!" Toothy screamed.

Toothy thought long and hard about where his inventions were, but he couldn't think clearly after that dream. He knew that he had to calm down. He breathed in through his nose and out through his mouth. Then it clicked!

He always programmed his inventions to think like him. He did this so they would understand him. This meant that all of his inventions wanted the same thing, to go to planet Atom.

As Toothy flew through space, he was happy to finally travel to Atom. When he got there, all of his inventions were waiting for him.

"Took you long enough," said Cleanse. "The Atom is basically a science convention. You'll be able to tell others how we work and why you made us."

"And what our purpose is," said Tooth-a-scope.

"You must hurry," said Jetpack, "the convention starts in 15 minutes."

"You knew about this?" Toothy asked Jetpack.

"We all did. We just wanted to surprise you." said Jetpack "If you want to meet others like you, YOU BETTER GET MOVING!"

“Right.” said Toothy.

Toothy flew to the convention and made it in the nick of time. “We’ve been expecting you.” said many voices. The voices were coming from every corner.

“W..who are you?” asked Toothy.

“We are the wisdom teeth. It’s a pleasure to meet you Toothy. We also wanted to say that your inventions are amazing.” said Toothless Edison.

“Toothless Edison!” Toothy shouted.

“Yes, that’s me. We also know the pain of nobody understanding you. That's why we want you to live with us on Atom. It has been centuries, but we are glad that another wisdom tooth has finally arrived, and you just may be the smartest of all,” said Edison.

Suddenly, everything made sense. Toothy was not just a tooth, he was a wisdom tooth. After years on planet Mouth, and feeling alone, Toothy finally found where he was meant to be. Toothy went on to invent many more inventions to help and better tooth-kind.....like floss.

Junior Division Grades 3-6

The Cupcake Catastrophe
By: Emily James (Gr. 5)

more inside

One lovely morning, Alice was walking to her mother's bakery. It was tucked away on a quiet street beside a jewellery store. She always dreamed of taking over the business one day, but she wasn't off to a good start. Last month, when Alice was at the bakery, she decorated a cake to surprise her mom. Making a bowl of rainbow icing, Alice piped balloons and clowns all over, only to have her mom come in and tell her it was a wedding cake. She was not impressed. After that Alice was not allowed in the kitchen.

But today was different. She was going to show her mom that she was a responsible helper. Alice's mom had been invited to judge a baking competition out of town. Before she left, Alice had been given the responsibility of checking in on the bakery.

"I'm counting on you, Alice," her mom had said as she packed her suitcase. "I'll only be gone four days."

This was her chance to redeem herself.

Alice pushed open the bakery door and stepped inside. She walked to the counter and was pleased to see the cases full of delicious goodies. She thought to herself that it wouldn't hurt to test the cupcakes. Slipping behind the counter she pulled out a chocolate cupcake with swirly pink icing and a cherry on top.

"Hey Alice. What are you doing here?"

Alice jumped and the cupcake fell with a big smoosh onto the floor.

Turning quickly around Alice said “Hi, Jimmy. I was just cleaning up this cupcake someone dropped.” Jimmy was one of the employees. He was tall with blond hair and a bright pink streak in it. His apron was smeared with the same icing that was now decorating the bakery floor.

“How are things going?” Alice said in a cheery voice, trying to change the subject. At that moment Jerry walked in from the kitchen looking angry.

“Jimmy! I can’t fill all these cannoli by myself!” Jerry was Jimmy’s brother. He was also tall. He had brown hair with a purple streak. Alice referred to them as the ‘Pink and Purple Brothers’, which Jerry did not like.

“On my way, Jerry. Was there something you needed, Alice?”

“I was just checking in. Is everything going smoothly?”

Jimmy wiped his hands on his apron and said, “This is the last order. We’ll close up when we’re finished.

Alice smiled, and after Jimmy and Jerry left, she took her finger, dipped it in the icing on the floor and tasted the bright pink frosting. She wiped up the mess with a towel and made her way back home.

Zzzzzzzrrrrrrr Zzzzzzzrrrrrrr

“Goodness gracious!” Alice exclaimed.

She turned in her bed and reached towards her phone as the alarm buzzed repeatedly. It was an alert from the police. There had been a robbery at the jewellery store across town! The warning told business owners to make sure their stores were locked. Alice was startled and worried that something could happen to the bakery. She decided to go check the doors.

As she turned onto the road, she was surprised to see that the kitchen light was on.

“That doesn’t seem right,” Alice said quietly. She nervously walked to the window and peered inside. Relieved that there were no burglars staring back at her, she unlocked the door and stepped in. On the counter there were cakes covered in beads of buttercream, tarts with glistening berries, puff pastries with shimmering sugar and cannoli.

Alice headed back to the kitchen to turn off the light. As she reached to flick the switch, she stopped. The stove had been dragged into the centre of the kitchen and was casting a wide shadow where it used to stand. Something was wrong.

Suddenly, a faint noise came drifting from the dark shadow. Panic rising, Alice realized that someone was in the building. Frantically spinning to leave, Alice stumbled on a pair of shoes that she hadn’t noticed before. Trying to regain her balance, Alice reached out her hands and they squished into the beautiful desserts. Pain stabbed into her palms. Those glistening berries weren’t fruit - they were rubies! Alice leaned closer to find the beads of buttercream were actually pearls. Small diamonds dotted the puff pastries and the cannoli were filled with shimmering opals.

Just then Alice heard a vehicle pull up to the side of the bakery. She quickly hid behind the counter.

“Jerry!” a familiar voice hollered. Alice clapped her hands over her mouth. *It’s the Pink and Purple Brothers!* Alice thought to herself. “I got the truck. Hurry up! Jimmy yelled into the dark space behind the stove. All of a sudden Jerry’s head appeared. A passageway! Right through the wall straight into the jewellery store.

“I need your help to carry this!” Jerry said and Jimmy followed him into the back.

Alice had to think quickly. She had to stop the crooks. Grabbing eggs, she placed them all over the tiles. Opening the olive oil, she emptied it out on the floor. Alice filled all of the stand mixers with flour and propped a jug of vinegar over the door. Climbing up on the counter she reached up to the ceiling fan and poured cinnamon and black pepper all over the blades. Taking the roll of ribbon from the drawer, Alice hooked it to the power cord on the ceiling fan and the switches on the mixers. She turned off the lights and set her phone to record.

Alice heard Jimmy and Jerry climb through the passageway and their confusion turned to chaos as the phone recorded all of the cracks, slips and groans. Alice dialed 911 and kept her shirt pulled over her nose as clouds of spices spun down from the ceiling. Coughing, sticky, scratched and bruised the Pink and Purple Brothers were arrested by the police. Alice headed back home with a smile on her face. “This is definitely going to impress my mom!”

Junior Division Grades 3–6

Arcturus Supernova

By: Isabella Campagnolo (Gr. 6)

more inside

I was breathless.

King Koder's guards attempted to take me away. But they can't of course.

Chuckle they can't stop me. I'm 20-year-old Arcturus Supernova and here's my story.

When I was sixteen I ran into a forest and a guard took me away to another world and tried to drain my core. I'm a Sunsetonian. We look like giant suns with big hands and feet but fairly small bodies. Sunsetonians have a special power in our cores that causes supernovas and the King wants to use it for weapons. I'm working on a portal with my friend that could return me home. Now I live on the neon streets of Synth City and am trying to get home to see my family.

I also have a giant pet crocodile named Genie. She is light blue and pink. Her sharp spikes, long pupils and belly were pink and the rest of her body was light blue. Her legs and hands are very tiny. She's smooth as an apple and sweet as a donut. She floats so I ride her!

I own an apartment in a back alley of Synth City. I prefer nice smooth neon apartments at the top of a building. But since I'm on the run, I stay here.

I had just toasted two bagels "Genie! The food's ready! Genie ran in circles on the wall and knocked over a couple photos. Genie's pure look made me feel joyous. You can't deny her long tongue, huge mouth, her adorable long pink eyes and the slobber coming down her mouth. "Catch!" I cheered. I threw the bagel and she swallowed it like air.

I looked in the cupboard for snacks but nothing was seen. "Genie, do you wanna go to the bazaar? Yes, you do! Yes, you do!" We grabbed our jet black cloaks and left.

We were there. I made sure to get berries for Genie. We went to sit and then I saw Kudo! Kudo is my buddy who lives next door and helps me adapt to this world. He helps me with getaways too! Kudo has the body of a small, skinny, grey robot but you can see his two white eyes sticking out of his black head and below the cap I gave him.

"Hey stranger" I whispered to Kudo. "Ark!" he whispered in my ear. Genie licked him with her wet tongue. He glared at Genie and smiled then looked at me with his bright eyes. My eyes shot up and we started to talk.

"How's running away doing? Kudo asked softly.

"It's going well. How's the machine?" I whispered back.

"Uh, one of the king's guards kind of. How do I say this? Took it?" Kudo answered. I was shocked and angry. My fists clenched together.

"What do you mean took it?!" I uttered.

"I mean they stole it!" Kudo muttered.

"That was my one ticket to get HOME!" I yelled.

Everyone looked and saw me. King Koder's guards' saw me and started running towards me. I threw my tuque and jacket and all you could see was my full neon pink and blue bodysuit and my big smile. *Ding!* A light struck my teeth like an exploding yet calm star.

I jumped onto Genie and grabbed Kudo's hand. C'mon did you think I would leave Kudo behind with those guards? Genie flew through the air and her cloak flew onto a guard. The wind blew my flame in the wind. Kudo held on Genie's tail. One of the guards

stuck his thick hand out and nearly grabbed Kudo's ha-CHOMP. Genie bit his hand but luckily it didn't come off. Instead it created a giant mark.

Genie used her tail and shot up Kudo. "Alright drive Genie ok?" I loudly exclaimed. Kudo answered back. "Ok!" I gave Genie a kiss and pushed myself off her. I dived down onto a building and saw more guards. They had their paralyzing discs and were ready to throw but I dodged them one by one! They had their tasers out but I kicked them before they turned them on. They tried to punch me, but instead I punched them.

I was doing great with this and I couldn't be more confident! My smile grew until. THUD! I turned around and it was the worst possible thing to ever be behind me. It was King Koder.

My entire body collapsed.

"Well hello young star," the king whispered calmly. I tried to run but I was stuck. My hands were cuffed and I couldn't break out. His hand reached out to my face. I was worried and my flame grew and grew. Until I blew a supernova.

Koder stared. My breath went overboard. Koder started to freeze into stone from my blast. My eyes grew and his guards suffered the same fate. The war was over.

We found the portal machine in the king's fortress. It was time for me to go. I pulled the lever and the portal opened. I had to say goodbye.

I said brokenly, "You two really helped me on my journey home and it's sad that we have to part now." Genie licked my face and it was covered in saliva. I grabbed Genie and gave her a big old hug. She squeezed me until I turned tomato red.

“Well Kudo, thank you for showing me getaways so I wouldn’t get caught and for being a great buddy.” I quietly said while shaking his hand. Him and Genie broke down into tears that looked like a raging river.

Sigh I could see my hometown, the crisp orange leaves in the fall and my tiny, blue home. “Well goodbye.” I told them. My eyes had never felt so much agony. They waved bye and I walked through. The tears didn’t say goodbye though.

I woke up and I was in my room. I was...

Home.

Junior Division Grades 3-6

The Little Girl in the White Dress
By: Oliver Kielbiski (Gr. 6)

more inside

The floor creaked and violently shook with no explanation of who or what was making the sound. Zane stood there, he couldn't move. The noise got louder and louder, then it stopped for a split second. His breathing slowed down, but something was still there.

Just when he thought it had finally stopped something jettied towards his face with knife like fingers.

BEEP, BEEP, BEEP....

He stood up and sat there, as if he just saw a ghost. It was the seventh time Zane had this dream. He realized what time it was, he quickly rushed out the door and started to walk to school. Zane was a 12-year-old boy with brown hair and eyes. On the way to school, he saw a girl in a white dress standing there. He knew she wasn't real. She began to walk towards him. Just then he felt a tap on his shoulder. He turned around quickly and swung.

"OUCH" Owen said. Zane quickly said,

"I am so sorry."

"It's okay I am alright, how are you doing?" said Owen. Zane replied back with a sigh and looked straight at round. Owen looked at him with sympathy, "Oh it happened again". He tried to cheer him saying "At least you're as weird as my sister".

Owen had a twin sister May she was the same age as Zane and had black hair and dark eyes with pale ghostly skin colour. She was very quiet and barely spoke. She was always reading and wore a black scarf.

One time a kid said hi to her and she jumped out of her chair and fell off. She only has one friend; her name is Brooke. Unlike, May she has no problem sticking up for herself.

As Zane and Owen were talking, Zane realized that the little girl was still there and was staring at him with tears falling from her eyes. He strained his eyes to look as he thought there was a shadow behind her. As he began to focus he could see a skinny tall like figure with knife-like fingers.

As sudden as they appeared, they had disappeared, before Zane could make out anything more, and they never returned that day.

When he got home, he ran up the stairs and tried to do his homework.

“Oh darn” just then he dropped his pencil, black fluid began to pour out of his pencil. Zane wanted to yell but nothing came out of his mouth. He began to panic, is this real? What is happening? He shut his eyes tightly and said, “This isn’t real”. He opened them slowly and saw that the pencil was not gushing black fluid and was fine. After that he decided that it was just from being overtired and went straight to bed.

BEEP, BEEP, BEEP....

When he woke up the next day Zane realized he did not have that dream from the other day. He was relieved, smiled and said, “This is going to be a great day”. This time he wasn’t late for school. But, as everybody was rushing to get into the classroom, Zane saw in the distance the skinny black figure standing over the small little girl. This time he noticed that her dress was ripped and torn like it got stuck in a blender. As he continued to stare at the black figured creature, a long and creepy smile started to grow on his face. Zane’s heart started beating faster and faster until it felt like it was coming out of his

chest. Zane had a horrified look on his face. He knew the only thing to do was to look away and stare at the ground. He pleaded to himself, "It's not real, it's not real". When he looked up to see if it was gone, it was standing right over him. Zane looked at his long smile and fainted. When Zane woke up he saw three people staring at him. Owen was standing over him,

"Are you okay?" Zane replied with a nod. Brooke, May's friend asked,

"What happened?"

Owen explained how they found Zane in the middle of the hallway unconscious. Just as May was about to say something, the school nurse came to help Owen up and take him to the nurse's office for observation.

"We have contacted your dad and she said he is on his way." Zane grabbed his backpack and walked with the nurse. He waited for his dad to pick him. Nurse Kay said that his dad said to walk home and he would meet him there soon.

On the way home, Zane avoided walking the routes where he had seen the little girl and dark figured creature. As Zane turned the corner he heard the wailing of the little girl. She appeared out of thin air. She started, her legs bleeding and her dress had blood stains on it. Zane stared at her and she met his eyes back with tears flowing from her eyes. Her eyes were so dark and seemed to hold so much terror in them as though she had witnessed a horrifying experience. It was the same look that Zane had when he found out his mother died.

He screamed hoping that it would jolt him out of the feeling that was coming over him. The little girl whispered,

"Help Me".

Zane ran home as fast as he could. He made it record time and shut the door behind him gasping for air. He dropped his backpack on the floor and went into the kitchen for a glass of water. He felt much better and felt that he escaped the horrors that he saw in the little girl's eyes. He was so hot from running home so he went to the bathroom to splash cold water on his face. Just as he was wiping his face off with the towel he saw the black skinny creature standing behind in the mirror. He turned quickly to look over his shoulder and saw nothing but when he looked back in the mirror the creature had a sinister smile. It looked straight into his eyes as it reached for him!

Zane went missing that day and was never seen again and so began the legend of the girl in the white dress.

Intermediate/Senior Division Grades 7-9

Stronger

By: Riley Ma (Grade 9)

more inside

“Are you ready?”

“Ready as I’ll ever be.”

I shut my eyes tight, and before I can think of a reason to hesitate, a flurry of blinding colours surrounds me, the floor underneath me vanishes, and I fall into the unknown.

A cool, smooth surface is beneath my cheek. I blearily open my eyes, only to be blinded by the brightness around me. Disorientated, I lift my head and try to adjust. My surroundings are hazy as if I were dreaming, and I’m sitting at a little desk. This room looks like... my second-grade classroom? From the Koning School of Elementary Magic? Desks and bright blue chairs are neatly in rows all around me, brightly coloured spell books line the bookshelves around the walls, bright sunlight spills in through the windows on my left, and I am facing a large blackboard. I am completely alone. My thick black hair is messy and tangled, and I pull it back into a ponytail. I try to listen for a sound.

Emptiness.

I look around, panicking. *Is- is this the right place? Did Grand Mage Zion make a mistake? Where’s my trial?*

“Solis!” A taunting voice of a little girl echoes around the classroom. My heart skips a beat, and I turn around frantically. A girl comes into focus, her blonde hair in

pigtails, dressed neatly in a clean Koning uniform. She scowls at me. *That's... Pura?*
Huh? She looks so young...

“Stay away from us!” Pura sneers, her expression full of spite. I recognize that face all too well. “Keep your little freak powers to yourself!” Loud laughter starts ringing in my ears, and I look around to see dozens of other children appearing and jeering at me. The laughter gets more and more deafening, my ears are pounding, my surroundings blur, the room starts spinning-

The laughter stops. I'm in the kingdom's Hall of Mages, a breathtaking vast, white room. There are beautiful windows along the walls, and the ceiling of the Hall is a huge stretch of decorated glass, letting sunlight stream in from the sky and sparkle on the marble floors. The Hall of Mages is where each Grand Mage, the leader of the Koning Kingdom, has their life preserved. Their legacies are scribed onto golden plates, along with pictures of them, and are accessible by the public to commemorate every Grand Mage that has ever served. My mother and father stand in front of me. They both in their official's Mage robes made with a shimmery, silky black fabric that flows down to their ankles. The Koning Kingdom emblem, a golden phoenix with spread wings, adorns the top of the robes. My father is tall, his curly brown hair neatly cut at his ears and his brown eyes shining in the brightness of the room. My mother is petite, her frizzy black hair contained in a hair tie, her blue eyes full of fondness. Oddly enough, my eyes are unlike either of my parents and are a fiery, orange-hazel colour. Grand Mage Zion stands next to my parents. He is an old but lively man. His long, silver beard is braided to his knees, and his grey eyes sparkle like the moon. He is wearing a magnificent cloak of a velvety

red, which is also marked by the Koning emblem. The Hall of Mages was temporarily closed today for maintenance, so we are alone.

This trial... it must be trying to get me to relive memories, hm? I wonder why...

“Your daughter has a truly extraordinary gift, Mister and Misses Lora,” Grand Mage Zion observes thoughtfully, his deep voice rumbling, “Her capability to draw power from the sun... remarkable. You will grow to be a strong mage and a great help to the kingdom, Solis.” My parents beam at me, and I give a timid smile. I feel safe and peaceful. I let the sunlight warm me, and I proudly produce small flames in my palms. My sun magic. But before I want to leave, I have been swept away from my parents, the scene blurring and smudging into a whirlpool of colours around me-

I feel cold rain against my skin, a chilly breeze causing me to shiver despite my heavy, black cloak. I stand on wet grass and there are graves scattered all around me. There are rows and rows of other mages behind me, sniffing, and I stand in the front with my Nana and Papa. Nana is quietly crying into her black handkerchief. Papa is silent. There are two caskets in front of us. I... I know who's inside. Numb, I watch as Grand Mage Zion stands at the front of the group, his face mournful and his bright eyes dim.

“-gathered here today to commemorate the loss of two treasured souls, Lumen and Somnus Lora... who selflessly defended Koning against an unprecedented attack in the Rogue War, and gave their lives for the prosperity of the kingdom-”

I bitterly wrench my head up to the overcast sky, shutting my eyes tightly. No matter who says them, no words could ever come close to expressing how wonderful my parents were.

What type of stupid trial is this? Why is it showing me this?

“-two gifted and irreplaceable lives, hearts full of pure courage and love. The Koning Kingdom honours your names. May you rest in peace-”

I have broken all over again. I force myself to watch as my parents’ caskets are lowered into the earth until the blur of my tears blinds me and my surroundings swirl around me again-

And I’m outside, leaning against the cool stone wall of the local library. The evening golden sunlight illuminates my fiery eyes, and my black Academy robe hangs on my shoulders. A copy of *Protective Spells Throughout the Ages* is open in my hands, as well as various other study books in my backpack beside my feet. I breathe a sigh of relief. I think I aced my dreaded, lengthy test today in my Advanced Elemental Magic class. It wasn’t nearly as bad as I thought it would be. I hear footsteps and I look up. A group of teens my age, surround me. I recognize Pura among them, and a few others from the school hallways. They’re snickering at me, and one of them kicks my backpack over, books sliding onto the wet ground. I look down.

“Freak,” a voice scoffs, “you think you’re better than us? Gonna save the world?” They spit insults and mock me as I bend over hastily to grab my books and backpack. One shoves me forcefully to the side, and the rest snicker. I feel tears welling up in my eyes, but I try to hold the rest back. I have to stay strong.

Is the trial to let go of my emotions? Do I have to forget?

“Aww, is someone gonna cry? Poor baby! You think you’re gonna end the war just by toasting them with your pathetic fire spurts?”

Their voices get louder and I get dizzy. My surroundings start swirling around me again, and I can’t see where I am. I faintly hear memories of Grand Mage Zion’s voice-

“-a prophecy from the stars foretells a child of fire...she is destined to lead our kingdom through the Rogue War...she must complete three trials-” the voice fades away, I hear taunting-

“-ha, you think you’re so special, so much better? Some peacemaking god? Just because you’re a freakish know-it-all doesn’t mean you have any real power.” I try to block it out, but I feel myself getting smaller, everything else louder. My parents’ casket flashes before me again-

How do I forget that? I can’t let go! I need to calm down-

The taunting is getting louder and louder until I can’t hear myself think-

“Oh, Solis! Great Grand Mage! I’m desperately in need of your assistance! As if. Keep dreaming. You’re not cut out for that!”

“Freak! Showoff!”

I need to focus on something else.

I take a deep breath, and I block the voices out. Stupid schoolyard taunting. Something new forms in front of me-

I stand in the throne room with Grand Mage Zion. I expect his face to be plagued with worry, but his bright eyes look reassured. My queasiness subsides, and I feel a bit better.

“Solis... it is time to cast the trial spell. I don’t know what awaits you, but I have faith in you. You’re a bright mage, and your parents would be so proud. I know that I am not able to end the Rogue War alone. So, no matter what happens, you must keep pushing through.”

I take a deep breath.

This is who I am.

I feel a tear roll down my cheek. *I can’t push this away, and that’s okay. It’s what made me grow. These memories are special. I am special.* The spinning stops. I open my eyes.

There is a wooden door in front of me with the words *Trial 2* engraved at the top. I look around. I’m surrounded by dark nothingness. *I...I passed the first trial.* I reach for the handle and determinedly pull the door open, and a wave of blinding white light swallows me whole.

My feet find solid ground, and I open my eyes.

Oh god.

I’m standing in the middle of an enormous dirt field. Towering bleachers surround me in a circle, filled with seemingly thousands of people. They're screaming with deafening cheers, and my ears throb with the noise. The sky is filled with golden evening

sunlight and colours of a sunset, but huge stadium lights above the bleachers flood the area with artificial brightness.

Am I... am I in an arena?

“Ladies and gentlemen!” I’m startled as a squeaky voice suddenly booms over hidden intercoms. “I’m your host, Tag Turner, welcoming you to Fight Night!” The arena explodes with excited cheers and whistles. “We welcome tonight’s Fighter, Solis Lora!” And the opponent she’ll face,” he pauses dramatically, and the crowd hushes with anticipation, “is none other than a Metus, straight from the mountains of Pavor!” The crowd gasps in shock. My blood runs stone cold and I freeze. *That can’t be true. A- a Metus? No. That’s- that’s impossible!*

A mythical creature lesson from my fifth-grade teacher flashes through my mind. “Metuses are legendary creatures that live exclusively in the Pavor Mountains. They have the lower body of a gargantuan snake and the upper body of a dragon, making them highly dangerous. They would never be approached by someone in their right mind. They are incredibly agile despite their size, can breathe fire at long ranges, and have monstrous power. Uniquely, they grow more powerful the more fearful their opponent is”, the teacher had warned. The class had been petrified until the teacher had taken noticed and consoled us. “However, unless you are Grand Mage Zion or his battalion, it is very unlikely that you will ever come across one.”

And here I am.

“The rules are simple: If our contestant can obtain the gold necklace on the horns of the Metus, victory is hers! Without further ado, let Fight Night begin!” Tag Turner

exclaims. The crowd goes wild. I bitterly wish for Tag Turner to fall into the arena and get burned to a crisp.

A gate at the side of the arena creaks and lifts open. I watch, frozen, as a great, blood-red beast slithers out, letting out a terrible roar as its angry eyes scan the stadium, I step back and ignite a bright white fire in my hands, powered by the sun's evening glow. The Metus' beady yellow eyes fall on me and my tiny flame. I feel my blood drain out of me, and I instinctively start backing away, my other hand balled tightly into a tense fist. My heart is pounding in my ears. The Metus open its mouth again to breathe a deadly spurt of fire, revealing sharp and yellow teeth. I can feel the heat against my cheek from across the arena, and my flame flickers pathetically in comparison to the Metus'.

I'm fine. I can't let myself get scared, or the Metus will feed off of it. Easier said than done. I desperately rack through my mind, searching for something that might help me. I recall a magic lesson from Grand Mage Zion.

"You must master the ability to find the shortcomings of your opponent. The place where their strength ends is where yours will begin", Grand Mage Zion had instructed as he trained me in a sunny field. "Even the thin grass overcomes the vast ground through the careful growth of roots."

I can't win against it with sheer force, that's for sure. But what do I have that it doesn't-

A colossal, scaled tail crashed down next to me as the Metus starts its first attack. The crowd shrieks with glee. I tremble. *I cannot be scared. Keep a cool head. Come on. It's fine.*

"And right off the bat, the Metus strikes with no mercy! What will Solis do?" Tag yells.

I snap out of my thoughts and run, my small white flame moulding into a sizable spinning disc to shield me. The Metus' head follows me, watching my every move, stalking its prey. It raises its head to the sky, taking a lengthy inhale. Despite my best efforts, I can feel myself trembling with terror. An angry, huge roar of flames comes hurtling towards me, and the crowd and Tag scream. I move my shield to block the fire, straining with the effort. Waves of heat flow against my skin, but I press on. A flame licks against my leg, leaving a searing burn. The fire ends, and I waste no time and sprint along the edge of the arena. I try to observe the Metus.

"What a huge burst of flames! The Metus is really feasting off Solis' fear!" Tag shouts.

Okay, take a deep breath and think of the Metus' vulnerability. Ignore Tag. The Metus has no arms... but it doesn't need them. The strength of its tail is way more than enough. No wings... maybe a flying spell? The Metus stops and becomes still with a deadly eeriness. It raises its head to the sky once again and breathes a deep breath in. I prepare my shield, surer this time, and watch it as it charges its attack once more.

Wait! The weakness-

A bloom of fire comes unfurling towards me, and I push against it, my sweat evaporating from the heat around me. And yet, it's much easier to push back this time. I block out the shocked commentary of Tag and I block against the last of the flames.

-it's the time it takes to charge up. If I hit a vulnerable point while it prepares itself, I could stop it mid-attack. Then fly up with a spell and grab the necklace.

But so many things could go wrong...

I look at the beast again, and its beady yellow eyes glare back into mine. *Its eyes.*

Here goes nothing.

"*Volante*" I cast the spell with a well-practiced flick of my hands, and I weightlessly float into the air. The crowd gasps.

"Ladies and gentlemen, what a twist of events!" Tag exclaims.

I can waste no time. I soar to the front of the Metus' head and glare it dead in the eye. It thrashes its head menacingly and, as I hoped, raises its head back to prepare its attack. I soak in the warmth of the setting sun and concentrate on directing the heat through my arms and out at my fingers, shooting a controlled and precise arrow of fire. It hits the Metus straight in the eye.

Everything slows down. I watch in a daze as the Metus falls to the ground, letting out a terrible roar. I watch myself dive towards the necklace and snatch it from the writhing beast, and tumble as I hit the ground. My surroundings unmute and I'm flooded with deafening screams and applause, with Tag Turner's excited squeals echoing around the stadium. I hear Tag snap his fingers, and the Metus disappears in a flash of

light. Standing up from the dirt, I dust myself off and fully realize the pounding of adrenaline in my chest and the rush of magic in my veins. I wipe my sweat-soaked forehead with my burnt Academy robe sleeves. *I did it.*

“SHE DID IT! SHE DID IT!” Ted screams over the audience. “Now, Solis! There is a locket on the necklace. Open it and your next doorway will appear. Ladies and gentlemen, let’s give it up one last time for our victor, Solis!” Ted squeaks, ecstatic.

I open the golden flame-shaped locket as the crowd booms with cheers. Light streams out of the locket and forms a bright-white archway, titled *Trial 3* with shining white letters floating above. Putting the gold necklace onto my neck, I let out a gleeful grin and walk through the doorway, leaving the audience’s shouts and applause behind me.

It’s dark. So very dark. And cold. I feel goosebumps on my arms. I’d better light a fire...

But there’s no sun. I gulp. *That’s alright, I can just use a warming charm.* I quietly recite the incantation for the charm.

No effect. I recite it a bit louder. Still nothing.

My powers are gone. A shiver runs down my spine. Glancing around, I try to make out anything that could help me. A tiny light catches my eye. There seems to be light far from me, at the end of what seems to be a tunnel. I turn to the opposite direction of the light and tentatively feel around. My hand is met with a cold, smooth wall. I guess there’s only one direction to go.

I shakily take a step to the light. I'm caught by surprise as my foot suddenly splashes into something. With no other options, I step forward again, and my foot lands in an even deeper puddle. Is it... water? I trek across the swampy ground. A faint, eerily familiar voice whispers in the tunnel and echoes around me. I can make out 3 words, "*never will be*". *What?* Unnerved, I take a deep breath. *Just some jitters*. The water has formed small waves and is almost up to my knees and is frigid, but I keep walking. I trudge further and further until I'm waist-deep in freezing water. Soon enough, I can no longer touch the ground. The voice in the tunnel sounds again, louder. "*I will never pass*". *Will I?* Waves in the water seem to grow with each little doubt in my mind until I struggle to keep my head above the water and towards the light. The voice is loud. "*I will never be qualified to be the next Grand Mage. I can't even do this.*" It echoes around the cave, deafening. "*How will I stop the Rogue War that not even Zion could fix?*" The waves start violently thrashing me around, and I sink below the surface. I try to scream, but I only get pulled deeper. *I- can't- drown*. I try to swim back up. My arms are too heavy. *Must- not- drown-* Desperately, I propel myself forward. *Almost*. I dimly see light above me, and I break through the surface and splash desperately through the water. I feel ground beneath me and I crawl forward onto a sandy shore, coughing out water. All of me is numb with the cold, but I only feel relieved. I lie here for a bit, listening to the pounding of my heart. *I made it*. When I tilt my head back up, I realize I'd reached the light. It had seemed so much farther away. Standing up, my drenched robes cling to me as I step into the blank white light, sure of myself.

My robes are completely dry, and my eyes focus on my surroundings. Small golden orbs of light float around me. They're breathtaking, and I watch, mesmerized, as

they twinkle and shine like stars in the sky. I feel the warmth of their soft glow flow through my veins, and I channel it into a bright orange flame. My magic's back. I smile.

"You have done well", a mystical, perky voice echoes in the air. I look around, surprised, seeing nobody. Tinkling laughter fills the air. "Silly. I'm the guardian of this realm, and I exist in each of these orbs." The orbs shine in sync with the Guardian's voice, and my eyes widen with awe. "You can relax. The time to return home is almost here! But first..." A door appears with a flash of golden sparkles, and three dim orbs float above it. The Guardian speaks up again.

"Though the ghosts of your traumas and scars plagued you, you learned to take control of what has shaped you. Thus, you have conquered your past." A dim orb above the door suddenly shines with a dazzling golden glow, and I watch in awe.

"You learned to keep a level head and take control of your fear when facing a powerful opponent who put your life on the line. Thus, you have conquered your present." A second orb flashes with light.

"When magic, your source of protection, was taken away, you drew power from having faith in yourself through the unknown, while the nightmares of your future surrounded you. Thus, you have conquered your future." The third orb flashes with light, and the doorway illuminates with a warm golden shimmer. "Your trials will come to an end when you walk through this doorway. You can stay here and rest for as long as you need to before you leave."

Several quiet minutes pass before I speak up. "I... I have a question," I ask, "why me?"

The Guardian giggles. “The age-old question. So simple, and yet none of you humans seem to be able to agree on an answer! I don’t think I can tell you a fool-proof response, but I think we can agree on this: what’s done is done. We may stress about why’s and how’s, but at the end of the day, the world still goes on and we do what we can.” I smile. *Just keep pushing through.* I walk towards the doorway, but I pause just before I go through. I look back at the orbs of light.

“Thank you.” The orbs glow in response. Mind at peace, I step through the doorway.

The Hall of Mages. It’s a busy day today, and the spacious room is full of excited citizens of Koning, young and old. The gold plates of the Grand Mages of the past shine on the walls, each inscribed with a Mage’s tales. Here, the memory of each Mage lives on. Next to the gold plate of Grand Mage Zion is the newest addition to the Hall. She has thick, black hair and fiery orange-hazel eyes. A witty smile adorns her face. The plate reads:

The Legacy of Grand Mage Solis.

A determined and quick-minded mage, Grand Mage Solis fearlessly led Koning through the dark Rogue War at a young age along with Grand Mage Zion, bringing it to an end with their combined strength and wits. She revolutionized the Kingdom’s military strategizing and threat response. Despite misfortunes in her youth, her caring heart established the support of student wellbeing in education and rewrote the Koning curriculum, improving the Koning education system immeasurably and producing skilled

and confident Mages. Grand Mage Solis' courageous character and outstanding contributions are honoured by Koning on this plate.

"For we will be changed and shaped, but never diminished." ~ Grand Mage Solis.

Intermediate/Senior Division Grades 7-9

The Frigid

By: Aisha Akinade (Gr. 8)

more inside

I stare at the lake. I watch as the clear water moves softly. The trees sway against the wind with a faint rustling sound. Leaves fall around me, creating a beautiful scene; red, yellow and orange colours splatter across the ground. It's cold, but I'm not bothered. It's quiet and peaceful, I barely get peace nowadays. It's always another pity greeting. People who've never talked to me before are now apparently my new best friends. My brother was always the center of attention, I was just there, acknowledged occasionally, Mason Payne was loved by everyone. He was **perfect**. I cringe at my use of the word 'was', he's not dead, I hope at least.

"God, do you do anything interesting Liam?" his voice rings in my head, an echo lingers on each word. It hurts. Crazy bastard. If you're wondering, it's my not-dead twin brother following me. Not exactly sure why, but he is. His presence is cold and icy, and his words sting. You can feel him but never see him. Weird how Mason was the complete opposite of all those things. I start walking, because I know I'm going to be late for school. I want to go home. I hate it here. Not exactly sure where 'here' is, but I hate it. "You know, you could at least make the effort to go to school. I would *kill* to be able to go to school," He whispers in my ear. I walk faster, guilt running through me. *Why am I letting him dictate my life?*

"Because you-"

I stop in my tracks and look behind me. I almost laugh at my stupidity. The autumn air howls in my ear leaving me with an eerie feeling. I run through my sandy blonde hair

and sigh. I can feel the bags under my eyes. I haven't slept for days. He's always there, but never at the same time. I miss him.

"Hey Liam!" a person says slapping my back.

I look at him tired. He backs up and looks away awkwardly.

"You look terrible," he says, his hazel eyes averted.

"Thanks." I sigh.

"Not like- Never mind. Anyways party at mine, you down?" He says finger-gunning.

I roll my eyes, "Party's aren't my thing." I mumble. I don't want his pity invite. I don't want to be Mason 2.0. I'm not him.

"Damn right you're not," Mason whispers in my ear. I shudder.

"Just come! It'll be fun," He says smiling slightly. I shrug and he grins and walks away.

Kevin Aston. My brother's friend. He's talked to me like once before Mason disappeared, and too many times after he was gone. I don't know if I'm supposed to be Mason's replacement, but I won't be. I can't be.

"Pretty big of you to assume that you could replace me," Mason laughs. It hurts. I speed walk through the hallways and wait for the bell to ring. I don't want interaction. Leave me alone. Please.

"Oh, Liam," A soft-sounding female voice says to me. I look up and see a slender girl with auburn hair and a smile so sincere.

"Hey Sara," I say smiling. She and Mason were the power couple last year. Both attractive, both with a great personality, and both popular. She's been a mess since Mason went missing.

"It's taking forever for the bell to ring." She says with a small laugh. The silence soon grows between us. She purses her small lips and looks at me. I stare at her, studying her blue eyes.

"Liam, do you think he's coming back?" She says, her voice cracking.

Mason's ghost laughs next to me. I feel a lump in my throat. I don't know what to say. Do I comfort her? What do I say?

"How 'bout you tell her the truth?" Mason giggles grabbing on to me. *What truth? I can't tell anyone the truth.*

I can't look her in the eyes anymore, so I look at her bracelet.

"I gave that to her you know," the voice says again. My headaches. He has to make everything so difficult.

"I don't know." I finally say. She lets out a sob and I stand there. I hate it here. I try to comfort her, but eventually, she stops, smiles and walks away.

"You're a great person, you know that Liam?" Mason grins.

I curse under my breath and let the bell ring.

"Mason, we're stuck!" Liam yells frantically at his brother. They both try to push the rocks but they are, indeed, stuck. A distressed look appears on Mason's face.

"Why the HELL did I agree to this?" Liam says panicking. He can't breathe anymore. He's trying to but he can't. 'NOT NOW, PLEASE NOT NOW,' Liam thinks panicking even more.

"Hey calm down," Mason says grabbing his brother. "You're having a panic attack again, breathe."

Liam looks straight into Mason's emerald green eyes and starts to breathe, shakily, but breathing. He nods.

"We'll get out here, I promise," Mason says with no doubt whatsoever.

Today is October 6th. Mason Payne has been missing for 3 days. He went out on October 3rd and hasn't been home since. Traces of blood were found in a forest nearby, and most hope of finding him is lost. I haven't lost hope though.

"Haven't you?" Mason mutters. I want him to leave me alone. *I'm sorry.*

I have no idea what we're doing in class. I had goodish grades before, but now I don't care. What's the point? Nobody expects much of me anyways. Not even my parents. I let a long breath and stare at my worn-out Nike's. My parents have been trying too hard ever since my brother's disappearance, knocking on my door every minute, asking me questions they never asked before, hugging me at random, bugging me to take my medication. They even got me a therapist, though they should've done that sooner. I walk down the stairs of my house, observing the pictures on the wall. Most of them have Mason in them. In every one of them, he wears the biggest smile. I envy him.

"How can you envy a dead person." His icy voice mumbles. Dead. He's not dead. Right?

"Liam, I didn't know you were home." My mother says smiling. Her green eyes have seemed to fade, not shining half as bright as they once did. Her skin looks tired, and her hair is messy. She doesn't seem like she's getting much sleep either. She tries to start a

conversation but it just leads to tense silence. This would never happen with Mason; he was my parent's best friend. Eventually, she tries speaking again.

"So any plans for tonight." She smiles. I appreciate her, I do, but this is tiring. I'll just along with it for her sake.

"There's a party at Kevin's," I say staring at a fruit bowl. I don't know why I told her that.

"You should go." My mom says upbeat. "You could interact more, make some friends."

I shrug. After a moment of silence, she speaks again.

"Liam, we're thinking about funeral plans," she speaks, her tone changing completely. I stare at her.

"Why? He's not dead," I say with a hint of anger in my tone.

"What if he is? It's been three days and there has been no sign of him," she trembles, her voice cracking now, "There's a chance he's not coming back."

I get up. I don't want to hear it. I start making my way upstairs when my mom calls my name once more.

"Liam, I don't blame you. No one does," she says, her voice kind. I turn and continue walking.

"I do," Mason chuckles. *I do too*, I think.

Mason's hands are bleeding. So are Liam's but neither of them cares. They just need to get out. The growling from behind them grows. They are both desperately pushing the rocks. 'I'm not dying here', Mason thinks, 'Neither of us are.'

Liam starts kicking and Mason joins. The rock finally gets loose, and they push together. An exit opens and is quickly closed as Liam escapes. Liam watches as the blood on his hands trickles down to his feet. And heard Mason's trembling voice as the exit point closed.

I'm at a party. It's loud and rowdy, but I can't leave now. Why I came is a mystery, but there's no turning back now.

"Looky here!" I hear a loud voice say, "Didn't expect to find you here."

I smile and shrug, "I tend to surprise people."

Kevin sits next to me and passes me a drink. I take it and smile. We sat and talked for a while. I laugh a bit. It's been ages since I've laughed. I needed it.

"How vain," the ghost whispers, pricking my ears. Kevin sees me flinch and asks if I'm fine.

"Yeah, just need the washroom," I reassure him while getting up.

"Taking the drink with you?" Kevin smirks. I roll my eyes, enter the washroom and lock the door.

Screams echo through the woods. They are not Mason's, but Liam's.

"MASON! MASON!" He screams repeatedly. Word a stream through his head.

'Why did I say that?', 'I didn't mean it!', 'Where is he?'

Flashbacks from a few hours ago play through his mind. He's yelling at Mason.

"We'll get out I promise," Mason says trying to reassure Liam, but it doesn't work.

*"I BET THEY'RE NOT EVEN LOOKING FOR ME," Liam shouts, "THEY'RE
LOOKING FOR **YOU!**"*

Mason stares at his brother.

"Did you bring me here on purpose?" Liam says, his words still bitter. Mason looks at his brother and his eyes show fury.

"How could you say that?" He says riled. Liam laughed sarcastically.

"I don't know. All I know is that you couldn't give 2 craps about me," Liam spits, his voice rising again.

"You're joking," Mason looked with a slightly pained expression.

"Nope," Liam grumbles, "And you know what, I couldn't give two craps about you either.

Mason looks at Liam, smiles sadly, then walks away. He doesn't come back. It's been 3 hours. Liam is frantically trying to move the rocks, calling out. No responses. Nothing. Mason is gone, not heard or seen. Liam stops and sobs. Regret, guilt, and sadness floods through him. He hears his name but is met with disappointment. Instead of his brother, he is greeted by a flashlight. He sighs and falls.

I rub my temple and pour my drink down the sink. Didn't like it that much anyway. My head still hurts and my body is freezing. I look in the mirror. My eyes are puffy. I didn't even know I was crying until the tears couldn't stop pouring.

I lied. Mason Payne didn't go missing on October 3rd. We **both** did. Mason thought it would be fun to explore the forest together and I agreed. We didn't know there was a cliff until it was too late. I stare at the cut on my forehead. Didn't mention that before, did I? We were lost, and injured. We tried searching for help but ended up getting trapped in a cave with a coyote. All the while, Mason was determined to get us out. *If I hadn't said what I said then maybe-*

Instead of speaking, Mason's ghost just breathes, and like that, it's gone. I don't know if I should be relieved, but I'm not, and emptiness fills me once again.

I'm at the park, watching the lake move once again. Still beautiful. It's warmer today, but fall colours still surround me. I still hate it here and don't think anything will change that, but maybe coming to the lake makes it bearable. I feel a breath and an embrace, and instead of frost, I feel warmth. I return the embrace and smile, while my cheeks go hot. The lake really is pretty.

"It's cold today, huh?" Mason's warm voice beams. I smile at my alive brother.

Intermediate/Senior Division Grades 7-9

Nothing and Everything

By: Camden Cryderman (Gr. 8)

more inside

The light was radiant. It was confused. It hasn't seen light in so many years; it felt like forever. Its eyes adjusted to the sudden blaze of light. Where was this coming from? The last thing it remembered was shutting its eyes in the cold, dark basement. Whose basement was it? It couldn't remember. It couldn't remember anything.

It tried to get up, but its limbs wouldn't budge. It seemed as though the weight of a thousand worlds was holding him down. No matter what it did, it couldn't escape. It didn't know what it was supposed to do. It gave up and decided to just lie there. Escape. That word rang a bell in its mind. It didn't know where it came from.

It started to panic. It flailed around, not moving an inch. This bothered it. What was going on? It tried to scream, but nothing came out but silence. Silence. That word awakened a distant memory. An image popped into its mind. A gorgeous teenage girl. Luscious red lips, vibrant dirty blonde hair, illuminating soulful amber eyes. She held her finger up to her lips. Silence.

This image made it feel unstable. It felt as though it couldn't control its mind. Many emotions flooded its body. Sadness. Anger. Happiness. These emotions overwhelmed it. They weren't related at all. Another emotion appeared in its mind. This made it afraid. It was almost like he lost someone he didn't know. An unknown person that was close to it. Shared a deep connection beyond love. But this feeling, this person was gone. Despair rushed through its body. Despair.

Escape. Silence. Despair. These three words grew into something that only more than words could explain. An unforgettable memory locked in an unknown chamber, hidden somewhere in the valleys, mountains, oceans, and plains of its mind. Where was the key? Where was the chamber? What was in the chamber? Pondering these questions made it wonder about its emotions. It lied there. Thinking about nothing and everything. Questioning its place, its memories. All of this made it extremely tired.

The light got dimmer. Its eyelids slowly closed. No! This couldn't happen again. It couldn't slip away again. This was its only chance to escape from; from what? It knew it needed to stay on task. It decided to take a break. It focused on the light.

When it first came to its senses, all it could see was a warm light. Now, the light comforted it. The light was its friend. Its thoughts travelled to a distant place. It was talking to the light. The light spoke words that it couldn't comprehend. The light was worried. This had meaning. It needed answers. It needed to know what was going on.

It started to hear something over the dead silence. It sounded like quiet conversations. The voices sounded close, but yet so far. It wanted to reach towards them, ask them for help. But it knew that nothing could be done.

It began to cry. This was very stressful for it. Its head tossed and turned as it wailed. Wait! It could move its head! It looked around. The light was dim, but it could faintly see where he was. It was in a room, some unsettling laboratory.

It looked to its left and saw an odd computer. It had a bright red screen, with nothing on it. It looked to its right. It saw a hospital bed, with someone in it! It grew very excited! Could this be the girl from its vision? Could she help it figure out what happened? It tried to talk to her, but nothing came out.

It kept looking around. It figured that it was in a hospital at twilight. It looked outside a window and saw the sun disappearing on the horizon. Breathtaking colours of pink, red, orange filled its eyes. This was the most beautiful thing it has ever seen.

This view distracted it. It didn't notice the person in the hospital bed beside it getting out of bed. It was startled when the girl put her soft hand on its body. It turned its head. This was the girl! The one from the picture!

It had so many questions, but nothing could come out. She seemed to know what was going on. She put her finger up to her lips. Silence. This definitely was her now! But who was she? She spoke softly, "It's okay, Charles." Who was Charles? It desperately wanted to ask her. It desperately wanted to ask her everything.

She untied the ropes that were holding it down. She linked eyes with it. Her amber eyes glowed in the light. Her face was flawless. She gave a look of comfort, turned around, and walked out of the room. She walked back into the room and waved her hand, meaning she wanted it to come with her. It got up out of bed and immediately fell to the ground. She helped it up. It took a few minutes to get the hang of walking again. When it was able to move on its own, the two of them walked into the hallway. It was now sure that they were in the hospital. But why? It didn't feel injured.

She brought it to a door. She tried to open it, but the door wouldn't budge. She shook the door, like a lunatic trying to escape a mental hospital. Escape. Silence. This was all coming back to it. Like it was reliving a memory. Like the chamber was unlocked. While it was thinking about this, it was shoved into an open door. She held her finger up to her lips. This was the exact memory it had. It began to get worried.

The next few minutes were a blur of police, blood, and despair. As it and the girl hid, three police officers ran past them. She started to run after them and told it to get out of there. It didn't know why, but it obeyed her orders. It ran down the stairs, and out the door. While it was sprinting away, it heard two gunshots. It fell to his knees.

It woke back up in the darkroom, with the light. Nothing meant anything. She was gone. She was the answer to nothing, and everything. The key to the chamber. The one who it was in love with. But she was gone. Nothing mattered anymore. It was flustered with sadness, woe, tears. It was done.

It closed its eyes. Wished for the pain to go away. The light dimmed even more. It said goodbye to the light. It said goodbye to the girl. Its eyelids closed. It was gone.

EPILOGUE:

It was a teenage boy named Charles Tannerson. Charles was in love with a girl named Elizabeth Haughton. They would do anything for each other. But when they were caught doing illegal drugs, they were forced to go to a juvenile detention center. In this center, they were separated but were fighting to see each other again. But the guards caught them and beat them. They went to the infirmary together and were strapped to their beds. While Elizabeth was getting tied, she knocked out the guard and untied Charles. The guards gave Charles a concussion, causing him to forget who he was, and what was going on. He referred to himself as it. They went into the hallway to escape the juvie, but Elizabeth was caught escaping with a weapon and was shot dead. Charles suffered from a broken heart and couldn't escape his own mind of mental illness and sadness. That was until he went missing.

Intermediate/Senior Division Grades 7-9

Captured

By: Maya Riel (Gr. 7)

more inside

I looked down at my small plate of food. One singular bean was all that was left for this week. I sighed, my stomach screaming at me. I looked down at my hands. A thick layer of brown mud covered each hand. I ate the bean on my plate and cried. I covered my mouth and shut my eyes. I couldn't let them hear me.

Chapter 1

I watched the Toronto airport slowly enter my peripheral vision. It always amazed me how big the airport was. As we pulled up to departures, a smile came across my face. It quickly disappeared when I realized I was leaving my mom, all alone. I started panicking, hardly knowing how to make myself dinner, never mind leaving the continent without her.

"Guess this is goodbye," She smiled at me and I ran and hugged her. We exchanged our goodbyes and I walked into the airport dragging my bags behind me. Turning around, I waved one last goodbye. While walking through security, I kept an eye out for my friends. I continued through the airport and boarded the plane.

"Hi, may I see your boarding pass?" I looked up and saw a thin young lady with bright red lipstick. Her blonde hair was pulled into a tight bun. Shuffling through my small backpack I pulled it out and handed it to her. She quickly examined it, her eyes darting from side to side.

“Alright, you can go right ahead”. I smiled at her and she pulled the curtain back so I could see all the passengers. I looked around and found my friends. As I walked to go sit beside them, I noticed a strong scent of an earthy cologne. To my left was Kate. She had dark brown hair and green eyes. Ellen was on my right. She was blonde with similar green eyes. When I first met them, I thought they were sisters. At the time Kate's hair was also blonde, but their eyes were so similar, and their facial features were identical. I went and sat beside them, the seat crunching beneath me. I ignored it and continued to talk to my friends until I was cut off by the intercom.

“Attention all passengers, welcome aboard Air Canada, we hope you have a safe flight to Venezuela!”

Chapter 2

Ever since my first year of high school, when I met Kate and Ellen, we wanted to travel the world together. It was a stereotypical dream, but we saved money for years; just after our nineteenth birthdays we had saved enough. Our original plan was to start in Punjab, India but we decided to start in Venezuela. I hopped off the plane, the intense heat and blazing sun hitting my face. I could feel my body starting to sweat. I took off my jacket and ran to the bathroom to change out of my pants and into shorts. I could hear my stomach growling at me, in need of food.

“Hey, I found this place near our hotel, apparently they have really good food there, want to go check it out?” I could tell that Kate was also hungry, though I wasn't so sure about Ellen. She looked nauseous.

“Hey, are you okay?” I asked.

“Yeah, let’s just go grab some food,” Ellen said. We hailed a cab and drove to the restaurant. Once we got out of the cab, I could see Ellen’s pale face, she almost looked blue. We got an outdoor table, and I smelled the same earthy cologne at the restaurant, as I did on the plane. We admired a beautiful sunset view. The sunsets here had a warm hue and were redder than the ones in PEI. It was beautiful.

Once we arrived at our hotel, I changed out of my clothes and put on pajamas. Our room was fairly small. We had two twin beds and a small T.V. that looked like it had been around for a while. I wanted to go to bed early, so I could recharge. We were supposed to see a couple of tourist attractions today, but leaving the airport took longer than expected. I pulled the brown sheets over my head and said goodnight to Kate. Ellen decided she wanted her own room. I was worried about Ellen and wanted to check on her, but my body was so exhausted I couldn't move. I slowly drifted off into a light sleep.

I woke up to a sharp pain on my cheekbone. I touched my face and felt something warm and wet. I quickly sat up and turned the light on. Crimson red blood dripped from my face and onto my bed. I felt something cold and sharp pushing against my throat. Panic rose inside of me. My breathing quickened. I slowly turned my head to the side. A large man was holding a knife to my throat. I looked around the room, trying to keep my neck from being cut. I saw about five large figures standing around my bed. I tried to see Kate, but a sharp sting kept me from turning my head towards where she lay. A few people started speaking in Spanish, which prevented me from having a clue about what was going on. I was hoping they were looking for money, but the stiff body language said otherwise.

“Kate” I whispered. No response. *Had they killed her?* I wondered. I tried to see what these people looked like. The moon was my only source of light and my eyes hadn’t fully adjusted yet. There was that same earthy cologne in my room.

“Let’s go,” one man said in a thick accent. My heart was racing. I stood up and walked out of the building. I saw a black SUV pull up and they shoved me into it.

“I have money. Lots of it. You can have i-”

“Shut up,” said one man. Tears poured down my cheeks and fell on the seat. I couldn’t tell if Kate was with me. I didn’t even know if Ellen was okay.

Chapter 3

I was pushed into a small room, the size of a small walk-in closet. My hands were tied with a rope, as well as my feet. They shut the door and left me in there. I looked around for Kate and Ellen, but I did not see anyone. The room was pitch black. I was all alone. My cheek stung and my neck had cuts from the knife. They left me in the room for hours. Occasionally I heard heavy footsteps outside of my room. My body was exhausted, but I wouldn’t let myself sleep. I heard the door open. I sat perfectly still trying to move as little as possible.

“Where is the money?” It was the man that I recognized. He held up my bag and dumped it on the floor. I watched as all my clothes and toiletries fell out, but my phone and camera had been taken.

“WHERE IS THE MONEY” he yelled. I started crying as he kicked me in the ribs. A sharp pain arose, and I started crying even more.

"I- I lef- I left it in- my room" I stuttered. He kicked me again. Suddenly I remembered who he was. He was the man that was on the plane with me and followed us to the restaurant. He grunted and left the room slamming the door behind him. I remained there crying for what seemed like forever. I heard the door open again and I closed my eyes. I heard something heavy dropped on the floor. I resisted the urge to look until I heard somebody crying. I looked beside me and saw that Kate had been thrown to the ground.

"Kate?" I asked. She continued to cry.

"It's going to be okay. I promise". I tried not to cry as we lay there for hours.

Chapter 4

It had been weeks. We had been given little to no food. The cuts on my throat and face had started to become infected. Kate and I had been losing a lot of weight. I hadn't heard from my family or Ellen. I wondered if they knew if anything was wrong or if they had worried about me. We were both tied up and hadn't moved in in at least 3 weeks. We hadn't talked or said a word to each other since the first day of being here. I started to wonder if it was even Kate with me. I still had no idea where we were or why we were being held against our will. I heard a faint whisper.

"Michelle? Is that you?" Her voice sounded frail.

"Kate? Are you okay? Do you know what is going on? I'm scared, what are we going to do?" I didn't even let Kate respond. I started to panic again.

“I don't know what's happening.” She sounded like she was in pain. I was stunned. I wanted to reassure her, but I couldn't. I heard her start to cry. I fell silent. Unable to move or speak.

Chapter 5

We had been in the same room for five weeks. I was given a small plate of food that was supposed to last me a week. It consisted of half of a small potato, a spoonful of canned black beans and a small amount of unidentified meat. The cuts on my neck and cheek started to leak pus. I could feel burning heat coming from the wounds. I was full of dirt and had not showered in weeks. I hadn't heard from anybody. I saw light slowly enter my room. I shut my eyes and curled into a ball.

“Your mother is on the phone,” he said in a thick accent. I didn't believe him. I thought it was a trick.

“GET UP” he yelled. He kicked me in the lower back. I slowly sat up as he handed me a small phone. It was a little bit bigger than an iPod. I wondered where my phone went.

“Hello?” I said. I heard crying.

“Michelle? Is that you?” it was my mother. Her voice sounded raspy.

“Yes, mother you must believe me, they locked me up! HELP” I started to panic as tears trickled down my cheeks. My mother was crying even harder. She fell silent.

“Mom please help me” I whispered. The man pulled the phone away. I screamed at him and tried to stand up. I was stuck. My body had forgotten how to move. I fell onto the floor and landed something long and sharp. It went right into the left side of my knee,

just missing the bone. I screamed, tears flooding down my face. The warm blood slowly trickled down my leg. I tried to remove the object, but it wouldn't budge.

I looked down at my small plate of food. One singular bean was all that was left from this week. I sighed, my stomach screaming at me. I looked down at my hands. A thick layer of brown mud covered each hand. I ate the bean on my plate and cried. I covered my mouth and shut my eyes. I couldn't let them hear me.

Chapter 6

I had been captured for about one and a half months. I hadn't been fed since the day I talked to my mom. My stomach yelled and screamed. I shut my eyes. I saw the light and ran towards it, trying to escape. My breathing stopped. I couldn't move. I felt my heart stop beating.

Intermediate/Senior Division Grades 7–9

The Magical Moment

By: Laura Forgrave (Gr. 7)

more inside

“Category 5 Hurricane rages for the fifth day in the Bahamas!”

“Donate to the disaster relief fund today!”

“Nuclear explosion makes large areas inhabitable!”

“Rough waves flood Miami due to rising sea levels!”

April waved her hand, and the small band on her finger sent a signal to the TV. to change the channel. The serious voices were instantly replaced with cute lion cubs. Her younger sister, Olivia, sat next to her. “Happy now?” April asked.

“You bet!” Olivia loved cute animals. She had liked doing a project on animals in her grade 4 class this year. April was more into mathematical equations, and enjoyed learning algebra in her seventh grade math class. The sisters usually got along pretty well, especially when their parents were still at work, and the girls didn’t really have anything else to do but watch TV.

While a man rambled on about the lion cubs, April’s mind drifted to what she had heard on the news. The hurricane was the third one this week, and she knew that the melting icebergs were not only rising sea levels, but making it harder for polar bears and other arctic animals to survive. It had been 20 years since the 2030 World Action Meeting, and 15 years since the Stop Climate Change Conference. At both gatherings, action plans had been put in place to make the world a peaceful and environmentally friendly place to live by 2050. It now was 2050. Somebody really had to do something, but who?

“Where am I?” Olivia asked. She saw crystal clear waters, huge forests, and lots of fresh air. There were no wars or conflicts. It was nothing like the bustling, polluted city of Toronto where she lived, and it was beautiful.

Suddenly she woke up. It had just been a dream. She opened her eyes, but instead of seeing her sister sleeping next to her, she saw the strange world from the dream. The only difference? There was a glittering alarm clock and a sheet of paper hovering over her head. She reached out to touch them, and FLASH! Suddenly all she could see was bright light. When it cleared, she was back in her bedroom, clutching the clock and the piece of paper in her hands.

That same night, April also had a strange dream. She saw polar bears, and others animals, like the Asian Elephant and the Bengal Tiger, that had become extinct long ago. Then she realized that she was flying! She was soaring around the earth, seeing the world in all its natural beauty, and it was amazing.

She woke up. It had just been a dream. She opened her eyes, only to find that she was hovering way above the ground, in the world she had seen in the dream. There was a glittering key and an old sheet of paper directly above her head. She extended her arm to grab the objects, and FLASH! She was surrounded in bright light. Suddenly, she was back in her bedroom, clutching the key and the paper in her hands. She looked at the paper:

*Align the sunlight with the key,
To signal all the other Leapee.*

*Use the key to turn the clock,
Make sure it never, ever stops.
Just so you know,
The central mound
Is the highest
point in town.*

She had probably been sleep-walking, she told herself. The strange poem was just a work of her imagination. Content with her theory, she went back to bed.

The next morning, while April was in the shower, Olivia read her own sheet of paper. She had to be careful that it didn't fall apart as she read it, as the message on the paper had been written long ago.

*Use the clock and use the key.
Listen, listen, very closely.
If by 2050, the world's in despair,
The Leapee must come together in pairs,
While each group stands on their central mound,
Turn the clock handle round and round.*

Well, it was 2050, and the world sure needed some help. Maybe she should follow this poem. It couldn't make anything worse, could it? It would be difficult, though. How would she get a key, when everybody used fingerprint and iris scans nowadays? Who were the Leapee? Where were the central mounds? Olivia sighed. She needed to talk to someone

who was good at riddles. “Oh!” Olivia exclaimed. April was amazing at solving puzzles like this. She would talk to her sister.

When April came back into their bedroom, Olivia described her dream and showed April the poem. “Really?” April replied, surprised. “I had a similar dream, and also woke up with paper and an object, but we were probably both just sleep-walking.”

“My poem mentions Leapee, and I don’t even know what that word means,” Olivia protested. “Besides, I never sleep-walk. I couldn’t have written the poem I got.”

April ran to get her poem. “You’re right. My poem also mentions Leapee, and of course I haven’t heard of them either. We couldn’t have written these poems.” The two girls decided to try to solve the puzzle. There wasn’t anything to lose, and it sounded like a fun challenge. They sat down with the poems and objects to figure out what to do first.

“It sounds like we need to signal the Leapee by holding my key at such an angle that the sunlight glints off it,” April said.

“I think we’re actually one of the pairs of Leapee!” Olivia exclaimed.

“That would mean that we would get sunlight to reflect off the key while on our central mound, which must be the highest point in Toronto.”

“Billionaire’s Stick!” they shouted together. This was the nickname for the tallest building in Toronto, where the extremely rich lived.

“Right,” April continued. “Next, while still standing on our central mound, we have to turn the clock using the key.”

They examined the clock. There was a small keyhole in the side, and the hole matched the shape of the key. “I guess we put the key in there,” Olivia said.

“The hands of the clock aren’t turning right now, but it sounds like they will when we rotate the key,” April replied.

“We know what we are supposed to do, but how will we get to the top of Billionaire’s Stick?” Olivia asked. The sisters thought for a moment.

“I know!” Olivia exclaimed. If we dress up in our nicest clothes, we could pass for a billionaire’s grand-children.”

“We can try,” April agreed. “We can say that we are from the countryside and are visiting Mr. Spencer. You know, the guy who invented the self driving cars named Spencer Speeders.”

“Let’s do it today after school. The poems don’t say to wait between doing the signal and turning the clock, so we can do both things at once.”

“We can meet at the Flow Zone, and go to Billionaire’s Stick from there,” April decided. The Flow Zone was a drink station at the school where children could buy super smoothies that gave them enough nutrients to last the whole day.

“See you then,” Olivia replied.

That afternoon, the girls boarded a public self driving car. Billionaire’s Stick loomed overhead as the car zoomed along the busy streets. When they arrived, they strode up to the towering building, but were stopped by a doorman. “Whatcha doing he over here?” he grumbled.

“Hello sir, we are here to see our grandfather, Mr. Spencer,” Olivia answered politely.

“He didn’t tell me you were coming, so I can’t let you in,” the doorman explained. The look on his face showed that he had to do this about one thousand times a day.

“Pretty please?” April begged.

“Get out of here!” he yelled.

“Well, well, what’s going on here?” Mr. Spencer had come out of the lobby to see the commotion.

Luckily for the girls, Mr. Spencer had dementia, and thought April and Olivia were actually his grandkids. He eventually convinced the doorman to let them in. Once they were inside, April and Olivia muttered an excuse about having to use the bathroom, and raced off to the elevators heading for the roof.

After a bit of work, April got sunlight to shine on the key. She held the key in that position for a few seconds, and then put it down. “Hopefully we are good to go.”

Olivia grabbed the clock out of her backpack and passed it to April, who put the key in the clock and turned it. After a few minutes, she stopped, and the hands of the clock stopped turning as well. She tried again, with the same result.

“The hands aren’t supposed to stop!” April cried. “The poem says, ‘Make sure it never, ever stops...’”

“It might work if we both hold it,” Olivia suggested.

“It’s worth a shot,” April replied.

This time, they each had one hand on the clock and one on the key, but when they stopped turning the key, the hands of the clock also stopped. Olivia sighed. “I don’t know what we’re doing wrong, but these papers are so old, maybe this is just a joke someone wrote when 2050 was still a long time away.”

“That’s it!” April screamed. “Billionaire’s Stick has only been around for a few years. It probably wasn’t the tallest building when these riddles were written. We can find out how old the paper is at the library.”

“Let’s go!” Olivia exclaimed.

After a couple minutes of furious scanning on the Paper-Dater and some quick Googling, the girls had their answer. The poems were from 1917, and back then, the tallest building in Toronto was the 20-story Royal Bank Building. They inputted the address into a self-driving car and zoomed off.

April and Olivia had no problems getting into the old abandoned building. It seemed tiny compared to the skyscrapers around them. They hurried to the top floor, and carefully climbed out onto the roof. April quickly held the key up to the sun, and a huge flash of sunlight burst out of the key and spread out to the corners of the earth. “Seems promising,” Olivia said with a smile.

She grabbed the clock and held it steady while April inserted the key into the slot. They both put one hand on each object. “Ready?” April asked. Olivia nodded, and they started turning the key. The hands on the clock started moving backwards, faster and faster until you couldn’t even see them! The sisters stopped turning the key, but the hands kept going. The girls looked up and were shocked to see their world changing around them. The tall skyscrapers faded away as if they had never been built. Cement had covered the space outside the buildings, but now there were big grassy areas, and lots of trees. The plastic water bottles in the window sill of a nearby store had been

replaced with reusable ones. The carrot sticks in April's backpack had been in a disposable plastic container, but now her snack was in a glass reusable container. Suddenly, the clock switched direction. The buildings flickered back into existence. However, solar panels now covered their sides, and wind turbines spun on the roofs. Self-driving cars were replaced with enormous self-driving buses, which ran on the power generated from built-in wind turbines. Olivia went to grab her cell phone to take a picture of this amazing moment, but her phone had gotten an update - it had a screen time limit of 1 hour a day, was made of more reusable materials, and had a 20-year warranty to encourage her to use it for a long time. Finally, the clock slowed down. After a few minutes, the hands turned at a normal speed, and the clock was nothing more than a time-telling device. The changes stopped, and people looked around in confusion, trying to figure out what was going on.

April and Olivia were about to slip back into the building, but a voice behind them said, "Wait."

They turned around to see a group of people hovering just above the roof. "Ahh!" they screamed.

"It's okay," a woman said with a smile. "We come in peace."

"Who are you?" Olivia asked.

"We are the Leapee," a man answered. "We are here to thank you for your work. When you got sunlight to glint off the key, our keys immediately lit up, and we hurried to our mounds. Time is magically altered to ensure everyone winds their clocks at exactly the same time. Turning the clocks moves time back, getting rid of inventions that were harmful to our world. Then, the hands switch and move forward, turning time forward to

replace items with more advanced versions that are better for us and the environment. This gives the world another chance. It has been done before, and each time, another pair of Leapee must be recruited. They must be resourceful, determined and willing to make the world a better place. By solving the riddles we gave you, you have proven yourselves worthy of being Leapee. Congratulations.”

“Thank you,” April said appreciatively. “Just let us know how we can help.”

“Yes,” Olivia continued. “We want to help you.”

“Thank you,” responded an older man. “You can start by making little changes to your lives that help make the world a better place, and encouraging others to do the same. It can be something as simple as always using a reusable water bottle instead of a disposable one, but if everyone works together, the world will be a better place for us all.” The Leapee faded into the darkness with a glimmer of magic.

Junior Division Grades 3-6

Free

By: Aleema Akinade (Gr. 6)

more inside

It's not easy being home alone for 2 months, the only ones I have with family. But yet, my Millionaire parents decided to go to Cuba instead of spending time with me or taking me with them. Me, going to a boarding school makes it hard for me to spend time with them. And the worst part is, I don't have any siblings to play with either.

I walk over onto our private beach, soft sand underneath my bare toes, the warm breeze across my face. I hug my white bunny, Snowball, and start to sob with the amethyst I found on the beach in hand.

W-why don't m-my parents spend time with me?

Keep it together, Angel. No point in crying now.

I lay in the sand with Snowball for a few minutes before heading inside. Feeling the soft and hard grains, I smile.

I returned to my room and met the housekeeper cleaning it. I greet her and kindly offer her \$50. She takes it, says thank you, and leaves quickly.

I headed downstairs to get lunch. I thanked the maid then took me and Snowball's food to the beach. She was busy playing with an empty toilet paper roll, so I left her carrot beside her.

When we had finished eating, we headed inside to rest. About an hour later, my Mom Face timed me.

Hey honey! How are you doing at home? My mom said.

Fine. I replied

Why haven't you brushed your hair yet?

I look at my rough, long, messy brown hair, that a comb hasn't touched in weeks.

Anyways... I bought you a new purple hair dye! It's in the bathroom cupboard.

Thanks.

You should try it!

I will.

Your Dad is... busy... right now so he will call again later. Love you!

Love you too mom.

Also, Brush that hair of yours!

I will.

The call cut.

Snowball and I went to my study to read a few books before dinner. I was intrigued by a book called “ ***The Forgotten Girl*** ” until I saw that there was a glowing, purple book in the corner of the bookshelf. I knew there was something strange about it, so I picked up Snowball and my amethyst before touching it. The second I moved the book, nothing happened. I was so confused. In every cliché, there is supposed to be a secret door! Then I finally noticed that there was a slot in the book. I looked around me and tried to look for things that would fit.

Books, tables, pens, pencils, bottles, Snowball, my amethyst, my knapsack...

wait...

My amethyst!

I grabbed my knapsack and dashed down the stairs, stopping at the kitchen and my room to grab snacks, money, and tools (or weapons, if you prefer). I head back to my study, grab Snowball, and put the amethyst through the slot.

My breath was shaky, full of excitement and fear, head hot, and full of unrest.

A tall door opens, with a cool, purple mist coming out.

I gasp at the clear, crystal purple colour coming out of the door as I slowly step in. As I take a step, I slowly start to levitate and squeal out of delight. My hair flows around my shoulders, turning a beautiful light purple. Snowball looks like a pastel bunny in my hands. And the thing that I least expected, me wearing a divine, Cinderella-like, long, silky, light purple dress.

The purple mist is finally gone, and I am revealed to a pastel town, with the name ***“Hazelberry”***. It looks like a city made of baby pink clouds, and every breath I take tastes like cotton candy.

I take a step on the clouds, and start to twirl of the delight of walking without shoes on. I see a bunch of nymphs like Oreads, Naiads, Nereids, Dryads, and Leimoniads. The rivers are Violet, and full of beautiful Hydriads and Naiads.

I bump into a beautiful Oread and nearly scream!

Oh my gosh! I'm so sorry!

It's okay! Welcome to Hazelberry, Angelina!

My name is Oriana!

I was shocked the second that she said my full name.

How do you know my name? I asked, with a nervous tone in my voice.

Your Mother used to come here all the time. It was her special place. She told me all about you. She does love you, you know.

How come I never knew?

She wanted to keep it a secret from her husband, Xavier. If he knew, he might run away. He has been terrified of mythical creatures since he was a child.

I pondered and remembered that he would cringe while reading my 'Unicorn At Heart' books as a toddler.

One more thing then, what exactly is this place? I questioned.

*Angelina, this is a place for you to stay whenever you want, a place to stop time, to have fun. A place to meet new friends, or even a special someone. A place to live, like a 10-star hotel, but you can stay for free. Angelina, this is a place for you to **be** free.*

This was my chance, the thing I've been waiting for.

Now, I can finally be **free**.

Junior Division Grades 3-6

The Little Kids

By: Kenzie Anderson (Gr. 6)

more inside

There was a little girl her name was Elle. She is 7 years old and loves to play with her dolls but one day when she was playing in her room with her dolls two girls appeared in her room. She looked up and she screamed as the two little girls told her 'Don't worry, we won't hurt you'. The two little girls told Elle their names and Elle told them her name. The little girls' names were Mary and Sarah. Every day they would play together and they were best friends. But one day Elle, Mary and Sarah got into a big fight over something so stupid and Mary and Sarah left. Elle was so sad and she wished she never got mad at them; she thought she would never see her friends again.

9 years later Elle is now 16 in high school she made some new friends. Their names are Lilly, Jacob, and Alex. She hasn't seen Mary and Sarah in 9 years and she hasn't told anyone about them, not even her parents. But one day she was walking home with Jacob when all of a sudden Jacob was thrown backwards but they were the only ones there. It got way weirder the next week. Elle was home alone on a Saturday night as it started to rain lightning and thunder boomed and crashed. Elle could barely sleep but then she heard something coming from down stairs she thought it was just her dog but it got louder and louder so she yelled Cookie! Cookie! But Cookie was asleep right beside her and her parents said they would not be back from work till 1:00 in the morning so who was in her house. Elle closed her eyes tight but something touched her leg. Her dog cookie woke up and started to growl and bark at the mysterious creature that Elle could not see what it was then she was ripped out of her bed and she screamed.

Something said 'Don't worry we won't hurt you' they said. Elle recognized that voice it was Mary, and Sarah then they said something else that Elle couldn't quite hear what they said but they said it a bit louder 'WE'RE COMING FOR YOU ELLE' but then the voice disappeared. Elle was so confused; she didn't know if they were really there or what they said was true but she was scared, very scared.

The next day when she woke up she was too nervous to go anywhere even outside her room. Her mom came into her room and said there are some very special people here to see you. Her mom left the room and her friend walked in her room and Lilly ran over to her and hugged her tight and said 'What's wrong what happened?' Lilly said. Elle thought in her head 'I can't keep it a secret forever' then Elle explained to them what was happening and how and why Mary and Sarah were coming for her. But then Alex said to them 'I have a plan. My uncle knows everything about ghost's. Thankfully he gave me some advice about what you should do and it was the perfect plan to get rid of Mary and Sarah'. 'We will make a ghost circle'. Alex explained Jacob asked 'What's a ghost circle?' "It's something where you would pull the demon or ghost in the circle and they would die from the power. We have to do it on a Sunday night". Ell hugged Alex and said, "Thank you so much". "Isn't that what friends are for?" he said. The next day they went out for breakfast.

While one of the waiters was bringing someone their food the plate of food was thrown into her face she screamed as the hot coffee went down her shirt as it burned her and everyone ran over to help Mary and Sarah were there. Elle and her friends finished their breakfast and left as soon as possible then the day went on as they got ready for the plan Ell was gonna go outside at 3:00 am she would go in the circle. The clock hit

3:00 it was time Elle went outside and stepped in the circle Mary and Sarah appeared and came running at her as Elle stepped out of the circle as Mary and Sarah stepped in the gods came down and said some words Elle didn't understand Lilly, Alex, and Jacob ran over to Elle and hugged her as for Mary and Sarah they disappeared and they were safe Elle cried as she said, "Thank you guys so much I probably wouldn't have been alive if it wasn't for you guys" and they all lived a happy rest of their life.

Junior Division Grades 3-6

House

By: Nathaniel Colucci (Gr. 6)

more inside

Chapter 1

The first house was built in a 3500bc home in oldupai gorge were made of mud, papyrus reeds [a local plant]. Since the Nile River would flood every year, it would wash away the mud huts. They decided to start using the mud to create bricks, which were stronger than just plain mud.

Chapter 2

In ancient Egypt dwellings were complexes of regularly arranged rooms. The most common type of houses consisted of three living rooms, one kitchen and one pantry. Some buildings also included a basement, used as a pantry. stairs were built to access the roof or the basement. [{The first ladder came out in 1862.}]

Chapter 3

In 326 B.C. Alexander met king Porus of Paurava at the Hydaspes River. Porus's army was less experienced than Alexander's but they had a secret weapon: elephants. Even so, after a fierce battle in a raging thunderstorm, Porus was defeated. {Later in 30bc ancient Egypt ended with the death of Cleopatra VII}

Chapter 4

In the 10th century the Vikings sailed to America. Although most of the buildings constructed during the middle ages were made of malleable materials like straw, wattle and daub, cob and sometimes wood, stone buildings were the only buildings that could survive nowadays.

In the history of Europe, the Middle Ages or medieval Period lasted from the 5th to the late 15th century. It began with the fall of the Western Roman Empire and merged into the Renaissance and the Age of Discovery.

Chapter 5

Medieval houses had a timber frame. Panels that did not carry loads were filled with wattle and daub Bricks were also very costly and in the Middle Ages they were only used to build houses for the very costly and in the Middle Ages they were only used to build houses for the very rich. In the early Middle Ages most roofs were thatched.

The end.

Junior Division Grades 3-6

Kids Rule the World

By: Olivia Downton (Gr. 4)

more inside

Once there were two little girls named Lily and Ellie. They were the bestest of friends in the world. All Lily wanted for her birthday was to be twins with Ellie. Later that week, two days before Lily's birthday they received a phone call. A husky voice came on the line, "You have been chosen as the world's best friends". Lily interrupted, "What do you mean?" The strange voice continued, "That means that we have been watching you two, if you speak of this you will be cursed for life! You need to go to the house of the meanest most powerful witch. Her name is Witch Julia. Witch Julia possesses a great and powerful bow. You need to place this bow on your heads and repeat a chant. If you are unable to fulfill your mission and say the chant by midnight, then you will be turned to stone. If you are successful, then you will both become each other's twins." The two girls were stunned. The voice continued "I cannot tell you the quote. All I can tell you is that it must come from your heart. Goodbye."

Ellie and Lily were excited and scared. They quickly made a plan.

The following day they set off for the witch's house. They walked for what seemed like forever and arrived at Witch Julia's house at 9:00pm. They peered through the windows. "It looked like she had some friends over," said Ellie. "The Scary Sisters!!" they both exclaimed at the same time. Lily and Ellie had heard that witches could smell children, so they poured some pickle juice on each other. Looking through the window again, they noticed the magical bow. It was on Witch Julia's head! Their first attempt was to make a noise and hope that she would take the bow off and go see what it was. They

did it but she didn't take the bow off of her head. Lily and Ellie ran to a nearby cemetery to regroup. Witches can't set foot in cemeteries.

After some time, they returned to Witch Julia's house. Agatha immediately said "I smell a child" and Laura sang, "Come little children" over and over, Ellie started to walk towards the front door. Lily said under her breath "she's hypnotised by the song!" Lily had brought her iPad and quickly blasted Ellie's favourite heavy metal music. Witches hate rock music. Ellie awoke and the two girls ran for their lives! Each witch yelled "BROOM NOW!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" And they flew after the kids. The girls ran back to the cemetery. Just in the nick of time. The witches knew that they would not be able to get them so they left. Ellie and Lily were running out of time. "We only have an hour to get the bow and become twins!" Lily said. They went to Julia's house once again. Ellie crept behind Julia and just snatched the bow right out of Julia's hair. The witches yelled "CHILDREN!!" and once again squealed "BROOM NOW!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" And their brooms came.

The girls ran to the nearest house and hid in the yard. They noticed a dog approaching them. "Please don't bark!" Lily whispered. Instead of barking, the old English pug began to speak! "Hello brave girls." The girls were scared and confused. "Can you give us a way to get to 1679 Lakers Lane without getting us caught by witches?" said Ellie. The dog replied, "You are already on Lockers Lane. The house is 6 houses' down from here. Did you receive a strange call?" Lily interrupted the speaking dog "Wait, how do you know that?" her eyes narrowed. The dog responded "I know a lot of things, it's simple, now say the chant in the attic of the house and make sure to put something heavy on the door so that they can't get in. Make a circle of salt for protection and say the chant from your heart you have 10 minutes so GO! Ooo one more thing, if

your successful, the witches will be good again aside from the whole twin thing.” The girls waved goodbye to the pug and ran to the house. “Lily you grab the salt. I’ll run to the attic and open the door” said Ellie. So Lily ran as fast as she could and grabbed the salt out of her knapsack. The two girls met just in time at the attic door.

“HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA” the witches screamed outside. The girls slammed the attic door shut. Ellie pushed a dusty desk blocking the door. Lily grabbed the bow and placed it on her head. She quickly said “I wish I could be a twin. I want to be Ellie’s twin and defeat the evil inside the WITCHES!” Then she gave the bow to Ellie. Just as Ellie was placing the bow on her head, they overheard the witches right behind the door!! “We have to make a ball of powers with all of our powers combined” said the witches. Ellie became nervous “I wish I could be a twin I want to be Lily’s twin and defeat the...”

Suddenly the door burst open with a huge power ball. Ellie fell over. Lily quickly grabbed the salt and made a protection circle around them. Ellie started the chant. “I wish I could be a twin. I want to be Lily’s twin and defeat the evil inside the witches!!” It was 11:59 when Ellie had finished her chant. The witches howled and flew away. The girls transformed to twins each looking like a mirror image of one another, they looked at each other and squealed out of happiness. Giving each other a big hug.

One year later everything returned back to normal except for the fact that they had a new dog, an old English pug that spoke! Ellie and Lily’s mothers now lived with each other because they now had twins so it only made sense. They all lived happily ever after.

THE END

Junior Division Grades 3-6

100 Thousand Million Friends
By: Henry Galea (Gr. 6)

more inside

Once upon a time there was a star. This star's name was Nova. Nova had just moved into the solar system, and wanted to make some friends. Nova thought that if she joined a constellation, it would be really fun! So she looked for constellations. Aquarius said "no, what else could we need, more water?" then she asked Aries. Aries said "what, you want to be an extra horn? No thanks, we already have two." Canis Major and Canis Minor both said "a longer tail would be nice, but... no, it would get in the way of our hunting."

Nova was feeling a bit down, but she still had more Constellations to go. Orion said "we don't have enough space for another weapon, but why don't you try making your own constellation? I bet it would be fun!"

"That's it!" said Nova. "If I found a ton of other stars, we could make our own constellation!"

She found a few other stars that were interested in joining her constellation, but they couldn't decide on a shape! Nova suggested a cookie, a fish, a cat, a pencil, a bear, a spoon and a block. But the others wanted to do superheroes, princesses, robots and monsters. After a long day of planning with no success, one of them asked, "why do we have to be in a constellation?" Nova answered "because they're cool and fun and we will always be together!" and the other one argued "but why be in a constellation when you have the whole galaxy? We're in The Milky Way! There's over **One Hundred Thousand**

Million friends to play with!” Nova realized that she doesn't have to be in a constellation to have fun! She can just play all day with her new star friends!

Junior Division Grades 3-6

Don't Eat My...

By: Maeve Galea (Gr. 3)

more inside

It was the end of the school day when best friends Alex and May heard, "Ginger, Bread and Cookie are here," said Mom. "Oh, cool, wanna go get some cookies?" said Alex. "Okay," said May.

The girls ran to Alex's mom, but when they arrived, they remembered that Alex's dogs were named Ginger, Bread and Cookie and there weren't any real cookies. May and Alex were disappointed.

Mom said, "Come on, girls, we picked up May's cat for the sleepover."

Vroom! Vroom! Vroom!

"This is going to be the best sleepover ever," said Alex.

"So, when we get home, we are going to have dinner," said Mom.

"Ah! Don't eat my cat!" screamed May.

"Mom, May's cat's name is Dinner!" said Alex.

"Sorry, May, I didn't know," said Mom.

When the girls got home, they played dolls in Alex's bedroom. After a little while, they heard:

"Ginger! Bread! Cookies!"

“Cookies!” yelled Alex.

“Girls, why are you down here in the kitchen?” said Mom.

“Because you said there were cookies,” said May.

Mom groans. “Our dogs are named Ginger, Bread and Cookies,” said Mom. “It’s just their walk time.”

“Dad is home, so I’m going to ask him to take them on the walk,” she said.

Mom had made the most amazing burgers. “These burgers are really nice, but I’ve been craving fish,” said Mom. “It’s my favourite food, you know?”

Alex and May got very full and went back up to the bedroom. “Let’s go to bed,” said May. “Okay,” said Alex.

The next morning, Alex woke up and said, “Good morning, May.”

Mom came into the room. “Time for breakfast!” said Mom. “We’re having eggs and bacon!”

“Don’t eat my hamsters!” said May.

“Mom! May’s hamsters are named Eggs and Bacon!” explained Alex.

“I would never eat your hamsters, May!” said Mom. “I don’t like eggs and bacon. I’m just going to have toast.”

“Ha, ha! Mrs. Smith!” said May. “I know you would never eat my goldfish, Toast!”

“Well, fish is my favourite food, you know!” replied Mom.

Junior Division Grades 3-6

The Killer Clown
By: Brock Gidden (Gr. 6)

more inside

So one night it was about 10ish. Rebecca was walking her dog to the dog park and then all of the sudden her dog started barking. Rebecca thought it was a squirrel but it was not....

It was a clown. She called over her dog but he did not come. The clown killed the dog Rebecca screamed for help but no one came...

Rebecca ran. She went to the closest house and knocked a million times, no one answered. Then she kept running. It was hard to breathe. She was panting like crazy and then she saw the clown in front of her. She screamed at the top of her lungs and then the clown killed Rebecca and someone saw and called the cops.

In not even a second and it was gone into hiding the police got a whole search team to look around the whole area they got choppers in the air, police cars all over the town someone found it he got killed, stabbed to death. So they got swat involved, they were allowed to use lethal force, but they still died so they got military and they were allowed to use extreme force. So they got tanks, but they lost again so they got national guard, but this time they were allowed using airstrikes, but it wasn't one clown it was hundreds, thousands, millions. One was a leader but the airstrike only took out thousands but there was one thing how could they survive?

They weren't normal clowns they were from a different planet called Clownitron it had more clowns then people on planet earth so they had to use a secret organization that has been in the making for weeks in case of something that the national guard couldn't handle the highest ranked police unit. So they made the organization in case it's not national guard its international guard its an organization that has every single police unit the best of the best from each country. All 195 countries and they found the clowns base there were ready but the international guard finally beat the clowns, but there was one clown that couldn't be defeated. So ninjas swoop in and throw shurikens at the clown, they were not normal shurikens they were poisoned and some taser shurikens and air force was called to attack the base, but it got shot down! By ... some clown fighter jets they had missiles to attack they shot down the airforce so they got a mega turret ready to fire. One shot a missiles and then the others shot bullets but they were emp bullets and electromagnetic pulse to take out anything that needs power and stop it so let's just fall to the ground AND EXPLODE!

Caused a chain reaction and all of them exploded one after another and the clowns were defeated or were they no they weren't more came to earth and raided so all countries decided to take all of there people too another island and tried to take out the clowns first and they did not take them out yet they sent tons of air strike air forces they were allowed to use extreme lethal force so every police unit would go and attack but the regular cops were allowed using anything they even sent secret service to attack...

The end!

Junior Division Grades 3-6

I Couldn't Move

By: Farina Hassan (Gr. 6)

more inside

I was biking by the graveyard that we buried my grandfather in. It was the shortest way and I was getting late. I was getting a shiver down my spine. I silently shrieked when I felt a touch of evilness on my shoulder. I felt like I was being followed.

I brushed it off like it was nothing. But it was something. The next day I was going the same way and I fell off my bike and suddenly I felt an evil pull. I went bumping into my grandfathers grave I couldn't move it was hard to even breathe and blink. I looked up and saw a black shadow hovering above me and then tried to move with all my force but I wouldn't budge then I felt a wise voice whispering in my ear. It sounded familiar, it was my grandfather he said to remember your good deeds. I remembered when I asked my father why the birds opened their mouths like that my father told me they were thirsty so I put a pail of water outside in front of the tree then I went inside with my father. And watched them drink the water.

My arm was free, yes! But my other arm wasn't so then I remembered when I helped the old lady with her groceries. My other arm was also free. Then I was freeing my legs but didn't have another good deed. What!!!! I have only done 2 good deeds in my whole 13 years of life!! Then I remembered I could make promises.

So I made a promise remembering my legs I will do a race and I will win and with the prize money I will donate to the refugee camps and donate my old baby toys to the orphanage and I was free. Both of my legs were free. And I ran to my bike and biked

home, and told my mom and she hugged me and told me to do my deeds. That night I gathered my toys. And tomorrow I went to the orphanage and dropped it off. Then I donated my piggy bank to the refugee camps.

Junior Division Grades 3-6

Anella's Halloween
By: Indy Hiltz (Gr. 6)

more inside

On Halloween night in the woods Bill there were a group of friends. Delilah, Anella, Scotty and RJ we're all excited for Halloween. In Woodsville Halloween isn't just a holiday. Every year the mayor of Woodsville throws a huge Halloween parade. In the house there is float's fireworks, people throwing candy and lots more.

They are getting ready for Halloween. Delilah was a dancer. Anella, was a soccer player. Scotty was a vampire and RJ was a rapper. When they were going to the Halloween parade they decided to stop at a couple houses for candy.

Then they came across this really spooky scary house. Then Scotty says, "Come on guys It can't be that scary". Then when Scotty comes up to the door and rings the doorbell he steps into a trap door and falls into a hole.

When the rest of the group tries to escape from this creepy house they all fall into holes and go unconscious. When they wake up there in a dark room.

When the lights come on Scotty is nowhere to be seen. Now Delilah said, "Let's split up to find Scotty". So everyone went to find Scotty when all of a sudden they heard a scream AAAAAAAAAA!

So they rushed to where RJ was and RJ was nowhere to be seen. Then Delilah says, "Let's stick together to Anella".

When Anella went to go check the closet that has been checked yet and she turns back to Delilah and she's disappeared. When Anella questioned where Delilah was Scotty RJ and Delilah all jumped up out of the closet and screamed we pranked you.

Anella jumped up and screamed, "What the heck you guys could have gave me a heart attack".

"Well you have been scaring us for the past year so we wanted to get you back" said RJ.

"Okay fine let's just go to the parade so I can get my heart rate back to normal" said Anella. So they all went to the parade together and they all had fun!

Junior Division Grades 3-6

Nick's Dragon Problem
By: Rebecca Jeffery (Gr. 5)

more inside

Queen Oceania was just chillin' on her throne underwater, when her lieutenant came in. "My lady, King Nick of the Fire Kingdom, needs your help. He has lost control of his dragons, and they are now destroying the Earth Kingdom and burning homes. He needs you to put out the fires." "OH NICK" was the reply Oceania gave. "Someone fetch Aqua..." her lieutenant eyed her. "Please." Oceania's lieutenant went to get Aqua, Oceania's seahorse. The lieutenant came back with Aqua. Oceania saddled up and flew away.

It took three whole days to fly to the fire kingdom. As they were passing over the Earth Kingdom, they saw how bad the dragons were. There were 12-foot flames everywhere, including the palace. Oceania really wanted to check on her brother, King Mark of the Earth Kingdom, but she knew she had a job to do.

She arrived at Nick's Palace and the first thing she heard was "Finally, I need your water to put out the fire! Signal when you're done. I'll send my right-hand lieutenant to harness the dragons." "Okay, okay! Can I eat first?" she asked. Nick agreed. Oceania had a bite to eat, then flew off.

They hovered over the Earth Kingdom. "Wow." Oceania muttered. Now there were 24-foot flames. They had doubled from when she had first saw them. Oceania thought she should get to work. Still in the air, Oceania held her amulet in her palm. It started to glow, like usual. She thought of her best memories: meeting her siblings, learning magic, and most of all, the water. Water poured from her amulet. The water was

glistening with the color blue. It was like a rainbow of blues; an arc of teal, turquoise, and the colour aqua shimmered through the sky. Oceania's seahorse, Aqua, moved side to side so that the kingdom got enough water to put out the monstrous flames.

After twenty-five minutes, it finally stopped. Oceania signaled Nick, and a knight came on a fire chariot. Oceania watched the knight wrestle and harness the dragons. Finally, it was done. They both flew back to the Fire palace, the dragons thrashing, and landed close to the front entrance.

Nick burst through the palace doors. The wind from the door made the fire trees shake. "You caught them?" he asked, a little surprised as the smell of fire reached his nostrils. He coughed. "Good, if you didn't then I would owe Mark and the Earth Kingdom SO much." He thought for a moment; it was silent except for the quiet whisper of the breeze. "Wait, he would be dead," he corrected himself. "I would owe Mom SO MUCH then! Thanks!"

"Anytime." replied Oceania. "Another great day. Can't wait to see *you* again!" she said sarcastically. The dragons roared as Oceania left.

Junior Division Grades 3-6

Weiner Loves Candy
By: Mark MacNeil (Gr. 4)

more inside

There was a Weiner who was trick or treating and he wanted a lot of ketchup mustard and relish. He went to a house and got a KitKat and said what is this I wanted ketchup? He went to another house and got chips so he picked my ketchup chips. He said to our friends Jelly and Little whip, "Shouldn't Halloween be fun and you be happy?"

"Yes," said Jelly.

So Weiner said, "Easy for you to say. You're made of candy."

So Jelly said, "Oh for crying out loud just eat the thing."

"No, I only eat ketchup," said Weiner.

Little Whip said, "Enough with the chit chat".

"Ok ok I will eat it," said Weiner. It took five minutes but he ate it and said, "I love candy". So he went around the block and came home and said, "I only have one more bag". So he went to another house and got ketchup too!

"All right let's go home and eat candy before something bad happens," said Weiner.

So we went home to eat candy and saved candy for when Jack the skeleton comes. But he did not come because there was a lot of noise so they found out there is a ghost in our neighbourhood.

We went to go get candy and there was no candy so we started to think if there was a ghost in our house. We were hearing it in are neighbourhood, so we looked outside and our whole neighbourhood was awake. We called the ghost team and they

did not answer so they called Iron Man because he knows all about ghosts. He came over and when he did he had a bogey boom weapon and got one ghost out of a block. Then he said, "I can't do that anymore I can't catch more ghosts".

So Weiner said, "Yes you can".

Iron Man said, "Ok, but you give me five hundred dollars".

"Ok here you go," said Weiner.

"Thank you," said Iron Man and he grabbed the big pumpkin and carved it and went around the block and threw a pumpkin seed at each ghost and there were no ghost anymore. The only thing was the candy so we will deal with it tomorrow morning.

In the morning we saw a lot of toys. The toys were a small car and hockey cards so in the morning it was sad because everyone was taking down all their Halloween materials. We went in our grammas car and drove around the neighbourhood. When we came home there was really nothing to do so I play with my little car that I was having playing fun with it.

THE END

Junior Division Grades 3-6

Adventures of Logan and Johnny
By: Michael MacNeil (Gr. 4)

more inside

One beautiful fall morning the leaves are falling off the trees and frost is on the ground. There were two little boys named Johnny and Logan outside raking the leaves in a big pile.

Eventually the pile started to get big. It was bigger than them! Logan wanted to play in it but Johnny did not so they just played hide and go seek. Johnny was it and Logan hid in a tree. It took forever to find him. Johnny says he gives up so Logan comes down the tree and he says, "Here I am!"

Johnny then started giggling as they went inside to have some hot chocolate. They drink it so fast then they run to watch TV. They watch Spongebob Square Pants and they eat chips. While they watch their show after that Johnny says, "Do you want to play with RC cars?"

Logan says yes so they grab the RC cars and the battery died. "We need to put new ones in". They grab them and put three in each. They ride them outside until they get too cold and they play on their tablet.

They need a Kleenex to blow the nose and then they have a apple slices .They went to play with their dog named Max.

The next day was Halloween so they went to the mall to get their costume for Halloween. Johnny got Scooby doo and Logan got Superman. Then it was 8:00 and they needed to go to sleep. They had a hard time going to sleep because they were really excited.

It was Halloween morning Logan was watching TV and Johnny was on his tablet playing games. Then they are playing sports. Johnny is goalie and Logan is a player. Logan has 21 goals Johnny has 15 saves they switch spots and Johnny scored a really cool goal. He bounced it on his stick 7 times and hit it off his stick in the corner of the net, then they got tired and play on Nintendo Switch. They played Mario Kart and they had lots of fun. Logan chose Donkey Kong, Johnny chose Mario, they had lots of fun. Logan got third place and Johnny got first place. They played five more times and Logan got seven places. Every time Johnny got five or six.

Now it is time to go trick or treating. They only went to a couple houses because it was cold and rainy but they still had fun and they came home with so much candy. They ate half of the candy in the living room and saved some to eat later in the year. Logan and Johnny were so happy they got so much candy.

The next day they both were sick so they laid in bed all day on there tablets and Nintendo. They wanted to play outside but they could not have because they are sick. The next day they felt better. It was too cold outside so they played a bunch of other cool games and they started to draw animal pictures.

After that they put all the pictures they made on the wall, they made 11 all together. They had so much fun. Then they had a nap on their bed. After their nap Logan and Johnny went to their friends named Nick. They were so bored.

The end

Junior Division Grades 3-6

The Unknown

By: Izabela Michorowski (Gr. 6)

more inside

Hi my name is Vaga and my parents died in a shooting at the mall. Ever since I have been feeling watched...yeah it's pretty weird to think of but I've felt ever since they died someone's been watching me.

It's gotten weirder and weirder everyday. Me and my nana don't know what to do. Last month I put a camera up well my uncle did, nothing weird has happened yet but we are still waiting to see if anything will happen.

My nana called me downstairs still rubbing my eyes. I walked downstairs to see what she was talking about. And what I saw...My eyes were stuck to the screen and I couldn't move. I needed to see more, still in shock I let my eyes focus on something else. It felt better to get my eyes off of that screen. What I saw was a tall black figure standing right at my bedroom door. He paused and continued walking in my room. I couldn't keep looking. I had to check my room, nothing was there.

My nana called my uncle and he let us go stay there for a while we needed to leave that place. We got there and right when I walked in my whole mood changed and the place felt comfy and didn't feel like I was being watched. Safe, I finally felt safe, safe was a word I haven't used in a long time, I forgot what being safe felt like. Well I felt safe for a little while until now there was a note at the door for me, how did someone know I live here?

The note said, "Hello Vaga, you thought you could get rid of me so easy? Check the basement. See you soon Vaga..."

Terrified I walked downstairs to the basement. The floorboards creaked as I tiptoed down the dark hallway there it was! It was the only way I could describe it. I shut my eyes trying to block out all of the noises trying to block out what I had just seen slowly.

I opened them, I felt breathing down my neck and felt cold fingers. I turned around slowly. And saw a figure far but I could tell who it was. It was my momma! I asked where's dad? She didn't answer she was the one who was watching me then I saw my dad come up to me and I walked to my room they both followed me then I turned around and they were gone.

I felt like I had nothing to worry about, that it was my mom and dad. I saw my uncle's dog digging up something I went to check. What I saw was deadly, so deadly I couldn't look anymore I burst out crying. I couldn't handle this life anymore.

I ran to my room and my nana asked me what was wrong. I told her to get my uncle. She got him for me and I told him to go to the backyard. He saw what his dog bonny had dug up. I was scared I couldn't handle this anymore. I needed to find out who did it. I tried to remember what I saw on the cameras at Nana's old house. It was THE BLACK FIGURE HAD DONE IT! He also probably wrote the note to and my parents were down there hm? I told my aunt to call the cops and check the house so she did. The cops came and I showed the cops the black figure that I had seen in my old house! They were in shock but I couldn't watch it again so I didn't watch it. The cops checked the house and under my bed found him there with a knife and a camera. They took him away then I felt like it was all going to be ok. And it was.

Junior Division Grades 3-6

Disaster Strikes
By: Maritsa Pani (Gr. 6)

more inside

Hi! You may ask yourself, 'What is it like to be a girl, straight out of collage, living alone in New York City?' Well the answers are right here! I'm Maya and I just graduated collage and trying to pursue my dreams on my own in the small apartment I live in.

Well right now its Wednesday December 10 2019 and I leave for my first trip on Friday! You may be wondering what this trip is all about and I will answer that for you right now.

My dream is to travel the world its been my biggest dream ever since I was a kid.my first stop is going to be Hong Kong which is located in China because what is travelling the world with out going to China? I'm also going to slowly travel around the world. Since I'm leaving in two days I needed to start packing cause its going to be a long trip.

So I started packing some clothes, toiletries and etc.it was starting to get late so I decided to go shower and get ready for bed. So I zipped up my suitcase, grabbed some pajamas and head to my washroom. So I showered and I made a late night snack and I had some nacho dip with some tortilla chips. While I was eating I turned on the TV and grabbed a blanket and started watching Christmas movies cause Christmas is around the corner and I wanted to get in Christmas spirit. I got the last little bit of dip and ate all my chips then I went to the kitchen and put my plate in the dishwasher and put the chip bag away. Then I walked to my room.

As soon as I got in my room I was getting really excited about my trip. I got under my blankets and fixed my pillows and went to sleep.

It was the next morning I got up made my bed and put on my cozy slippers. I put my hair in a bun and head to the kitchen to make some coffee and breakfast.

First I made a coffee and since I was feeling so good today I made my favourite French vanilla coffee and I made French toast with strawberries and whipped cream on top. After I made all of that I went to my living room and placed my food on the coffee table, turned on the fire place and the TV, and put on a movie on Netflix. I sat down and started to eat my breakfast.

After I ate I put my mug, plate and fork in the dish washer and turned it on the apartment was spotless which made me feel double the happier then I already was.

I did some final packing and then I took a quick stop at the grocery store to get some small snacks for the flight. I picked out some chocolate bars and little trail mix and I was done! I paid for my items and left the store I got in my car and thought I need a few more sweaters and etc for my trip. So I decided to go to the mall. I got to the mall and it was super busy I could barley find a parking spot so I got out of the car and locked it and went inside the mall.

First place I went to was H&M to get some sweaters then I went to Bluenotes for some nice tops and a few other stores. On the way out I saw a bubble tea place so I went and got a strawberry slush with strawberry popping tapioca. I took a sip then grabbed my keys from my pocket and pressed the unlock button open the car door and got in put my keys in and went in reverse. I pulled out of the parking lot and drove back to my apartment when I got home I went to go watched news in Hong Kong because I

was interested what was happening there since I leave for there tomorrow. I saw there was something called the coronavirus I was really confused and concerned but it would not let it stop me from going. It's starting to get late I need to do final packing and head to my wash room to shower.

After I got out of the shower I changed into my pjs and brushed my teeth and did my skin care put on lotion and went to bed.

The next morning, I woke up SO happy I wish I could explain how happy I was so got dressed did my hair and did not even make a coffee. I was so energized I have some eggs with fruit and toast for breakfast and I ran to my kitchen grabbed my keys and suitcase and ran out the door but I did make sure to lock the door and close the blinds. I ran to the elevator out of breath and went to the lobby and ran to the uber and put all my bags in the trunk and got in the back seat and then I got to the airport.

I was running really late so I went threw my gate and security and got on the plane it was a 15-hour flight so I had to keep patient.

I finally made it to Hong Kong so I got off the plane and went to go get my bag I was waiting there for a good 10 minuets and my bag still wasn't there. I was getting worried so I went and asked a worker and they said it should be here soon so I waited for another 3 minutes and I finally got it.

So then I checked in and all the stuff I had to do and then I called a uber to take me to my hotel. The uber finally came and I got in a couldn't wait to get to my hotel. I got to the hotel and it was so nice I started unpacking and they left me some snacks on the coffee table so I just grabbed some and made myself at home. I turned on the TV and I saw that Coronavirus thing again and the cases were going up really fast so I started to

panic and stores were closing. I could not believe it but I brushed it off my shoulders turned off the TV and went to enjoy my vacation.

I went to beaches, restaurants and etc. it was getting late so I hopped in to my pjs and went to bed.

Three weeks later, I've been in Hong Kong for three weeks now I absolutely love it here. I'm going to look on the news on my phone cause I have not looked at the news since I first got here so I kept scrolling and scrolling and it said anyone in the country can not leave the borders a closing my jaw dropped I'm going to be stuck in Hong Kong no noooooo what am I going to do now?

I called my mom and told her the terrible news and she was shocked we were both very upset about it.

A few months later, it's now quarantine and I can't go anywhere except the grocery store and now you had to wear masks and it felt so weird but I was getting some coughs and sniffles and I could not taste or smell anything. I thought I just had the flu but NO I didn't. I was getting really worried so I went to the doctors to get tested but I would have to wait 3 days for the results back. I got tested and went back to the hotel and laid in bed and ate some soup to try to get this sickness go away. Nothing was working so I decided just to go to sleep.

The next day I woke up feeling EVEN worse I checked my phone and I already got the results back that's was a little weird but I tested....POSITIVE I was freaking out crying not knowing what to do so I had to get rushed to the hospital to get treated and stuff.

I called my mom and told her I sadly tested positive we were both getting really emotional but I had to hang up cause my first treatment was about to start so I went into treatment. 3 weeks later today I find out if I still have covid or not I really hope I don't cause then I can go back to being a normal person.

I BEAT COVID I was so happy no one would understand how happy I was I could finally go back to the hotel.

But there were so many other people that had it that I felt really bad for them cause they have to suffer to. hmm maybe I could find a way to cure this Coronavirus. I went back to the hotel with a big smile on my face. I did some research to see if there was anyway I could cure this but nothing was popping up so I could not do anything so I guess we're all stuck like this.

Two months later I can finally go back home to New York City. I packed up as fast as I could cause at this point I wanted to get out of this Country. So as soon as I got to the airport I got on my plane and flew back home.

As soon as I got home I called my mom and she was so happy I beat the coronavirus. It was exciting but strange experience. Now I have tons of stories to tell my future kids one day.

The end

Junior Division Grades 3-6

The Play

By: Lucas Pearson (Gr. 6)

more inside

There once was a girl whose name was Isabella and she was a very happy person. Isabella had a sister named Emma and she was a gloomy person.

Isabella left home and started to walk down the street and she saw a poster for a play called the girl in the forest. Isabella had always wanted to be an actor, and she thought the play sounded interesting.

She started to walk to where the audition was being held and when she got there she saw her sister Emma. Isabella came over to talk to her and Emma said she saw the same poster and came to check it out.

Isabella found it odd that her sister would be interested in auditioning in a play as she had never shown an interest in acting before. *She's never going to get it* Isabella thought, her sister had as much emotion as the red stage curtains. They both auditioned, and when casting was announced, Isabella was shocked to see that she didn't get the lead, Emma did, in fact, Isabella didn't even get a role at all, she was Emma's understudy. *That's odd* Isabella thought *surely this must be a mistake*. But it wasn't. She had gone to speak with the director, and all he said was that he'd never seen anyone play the role as Emma did.

"Can you believe it," Emma had said startling her, "I got the lead! I thought for sure you'd get it". Not wanting to seem rude, she congratulated her, smiled and even gave her a hug. Deep down, she felt a pit growing in her stomach that she would later realise as jealousy.

Emma got happier and Isabella got gloomier. This one day Emma was getting ready backstage. There was a monster costume for the play Emma was playing. Emma saw the monster and thought that the actor playing the monster better start getting ready for the play, then the monster jumped out at her

The stage person came up to say to get ready because the play was going to start but Emma wasn't there.

The next day Emma was still missing. The cop looked everywhere in the town but nothing. Isabella was very sad about what happened and wouldn't come out of her room for weeks.

Then, Isabella got a call from the manager of the play and the manager told her she could have Emma's part in the play since she was the understudy and told her he was so sorry about what happened and that she didn't have to do the play if she didn't want to. Isabella immediately said yes and went off to become a world-famous actor. Her sister Emma was never found.

Junior Division Grades 3-6

Matter of Time

By: Maya Pejanovic (Gr. 6)

more inside

The vivid morning light shined lightly down on my face. Giving a slight groan, I, without even thinking about it, reach for a blanket. I stretched my arm around for it. Nothing. I open my eyes and all I see is the morning sun. It blinded me so I sat up to see a large quantity of trees that surrounded me.

I shook my head in disbelief and closed my eyes, opened them and did it twice more, hoping it was a dream. But the turnout was the same, the large trees that's branches swung side to side even at the lightest breeze, made it feel like they were about to topple over.

The patches of dark green grass that scratched under my fingertips and the mist of rain that brushed on my face.

That's when a bunch of questions shot into my mind.

'How did I get here?' 'WHY am I here?' 'Where am I?' At that moment, I wished more than anything that I'd wake up from this nightmare, to hear the sweet sound of my mother's voice again. I wish I still had even a pinch of that hope. But it's hard to, I mean two months into this seemingly endless nightmare and you still wonder if you're ever going to see the faces of your relatives again. Most people in my situation would give up but I was determined to find my family, and I WILL find them... only a matter of time.

I've never been much of a planner but in the time of being out here,

I've developed a system. I would get up at dawn and eat the leftovers of the food I'd made for my so called 'dinner' then I would grab my spear I had made with a large branch and some rocks and trek through the trees until sunset. Then I would settle down and make camp in the area I am in.

Since being in here, I've adjusted and learned to make do with what I have. I mean, I really didn't have anything, I basically woke up with clothes and shoes. That's it. I had to learn how to hunt my food and filter pond water into clean water, or at least drinkable.

I sat down on the cold damp ground, mind running a mile a minute. "I feel like I'm getting closer" I mutter to myself.

It's easier for me to process new information if I say it out loud. "I keep hearing strange sounds... new sounds." I would reach over and grab a fresh berry from a nearby bush. "It should be a days walk from here...-"

I'd take another berry and plop it into my mouth. "I need to rest..." I'd lay down and close my eyes. The idea got me so nervous, I felt like I couldn't sleep. The next morning took off to a rough start. I had barely got sleep the night before, when I did sleep I woke up to a bird eating some of the leftover berries so I was hungry and it rained. Great.

The breeze blew my hair around, getting caught in every branch as I walked. The strange sound was so close, I felt I was next to it

Whirrrrrrr!

My heart pounded... as I looked down... cement?

I looked around. "What is that strange thing people have?"

I'd look at a phone...and these people...

I'd walk up to a tall brown-haired guy that was looking down at his phone.

“Ahem excuse me, erm sir?” he’d look up, confused

“What year is it.. If I may ask?” I would shake a bit

“2020,” He said as he walked away. My heart pounded... I felt short-breathed.

It was 1985 the last time I checked... have I..? No... I couldn’t have...“*Did I time travel?*”

I guess it really is a... matter of time.

Junior Division Grades 3-6

Zatzu and the Dependent of the Hidden Peak Village

By: Cole Pelley (Gr. 6)

more inside

One day a rather nice day in the hidden peak village Zatzu and Chichiru were training with Sasaki-Sensei well Zatzu was trying to learn a new skill Chichiru had got called on a mission Zatzu wanted to come but Sasaki said he could go along once he had mastered his new skill. Chichiru went along on the mission with her team of four.

Zatzu practiced all day all night. Eventually he mastered it Zatzu was now able to make a lightning blade that could slice through steel walls of concrete! Zatzu's dream was to be キング that means king. Anyway Zatzu was ready to take on that mission Sasaki came with him. They made it and they finally were there but it wasn't all that exciting.

On the face of the battlefield laid Chichiru and her team of four all trapped in ice Zatzu was in despair his shadow followed him as he walked up to Chichiru's frozen body and started banging on the ice it didn't do much. his shadow gazed upon him quickly. Zatzu run yelled at Sasaki Zatzu ran in confusion?

Sasaki was left fighting the enemy Zatzu realized it was an illusion much after Sasaki. Zatzu thought to himself so they had tried to lure me into a trap. They were trying to trap me in a shadow prism. If Sasaki sensei hadn't told me to get out of there I'd be cooked.

Zatzu went back to help Sasaki and the others. He arrived. "Are you ok?" asked Chichiru. Zatzu said yes in a quiet voice. The enemy was wearing a black cloak with red fire on it this could only mean one thing the enemy was in the 灰の順序 the 灰の順序 ment the order of ash wen translated to English. We have heard of them before and never came face to face with them. They are a very powerful group of shinobi. Nothing good comes from them.

Sasaki informed me that this particular shinobi used something called shadow style jutsu Zatzu charged at the enemy with his new lightning blade. The enemy didn't even get touched. "It was almost like he had a force field around him," whispered Zatzu. Sasaki came up with a strategy to break the field. The strategy was to get behind the enemy as the shadow of the enemy is being used as a force field at the front of his body. Ok said Chichiru they charged toward the enemy Chichiru was attacking from above Zatzu from the right and Chichiru's team was commanded to go back to the village and tell the others the information they've found out Sasaki managed to get behind he broke the field and got blasted back along with the others. Now it was time to destroy the enemy, Chichiru held the enemy still and now it was time Zatzu and Sasaki both ran at the enemy and sliced him in half with their lightning blades. A shadow casted over the sky grew darker and darker as if his soul got pulled out of him. "We should return to the village and get some rest", said Zatzu.

At last it was a new day in the hidden peak village. Zatzu had just woke up. It was about time to eat breakfast. He went downstairs and got some cereal. Sasaki sensei threw a pebble at Zatzus window. Zatzu ran to the door. He had come to tell Zatzu there was a new mission that him Chichiru and Sasaki were informed to. "What's the mission

about?" said Zatzu. "Well I guess we'll have to wait and see," said Sasaki. "Alright let's go," said Zatzu. They didn't really know what they were looking for something along the lines of すべての幽霊の幽霊. "But how are going to fight a 幽霊?" said Zatzu. "We will have to banish it back into the shadow realm," said sensei. "Well how do we do that?" said Zatzu. "We have to channel or power together once we've got it still and open the portal," said Sasaki. "Ok," said Chichiru and Zatzu. But finally they made it they've found what they've been looking for the すべての幽霊の幽霊 was right in front of them.

They stood behind a bush and thought of a plan. "Ok Zatzu you be the diversion you distract it Chichiru you stay back and jump in if things get bad. Once I trap it with a cursed chain you guys channel your power and open the portal," said Sasaki. Zatzu jumped in and was a good distraction.

Sensei jumped in and wrapped the すべての幽霊の幽霊 in the cursed chain then jumped in Chichiru they started to try to channel the power into a portal. It was open and screamed Chichiru. sensei pushed it in. the portal closed before the whole thing could go in its arm got chopped off by the portal closing. They took the arm off to the lab.

To be continued

Junior Division Grades 3-6

Nightmare Daycare

By: Hailey Schuchardt (Gr. 6)

more inside

#1 Ms. Karen

It was a normal morning in our house. Me and my parents were gonna take my little brother Cyril to his first day of daycare at the school I go to.

When we got there we met the daycare lady Ms. Karen, "Hi you must be Cyril's older brother" Ms. Karen asked. "Yes" I answered "My name is Aergie" then I gave Ms. Karen my mom's number and left to go to class.

When I left Cyril started sobbing and another little boy named Elias came and tried to calm Cyril down. Elias told my brother, "This is not daycare...THIS IS JAIL". Cyril stopped crying after that. Yet this is what Ms. Karen said, "Was that crying we don't cry here I don't want to punish you on your first day Cyril".

Some time after that other kids were running around in the daycare center. Ms. Karen yelled loudly at the kids to stop running but the kids did not listen instead they whined so loudly. Ms. Crazy daycare lady/Karen decided to give the kids (not my brother or his friend) a sleep needle that will make them sleep for 5 hours.

After at story time Ms. Karen grabbed my little brother's stuffed bunny name Bubba away from him Cyril started to wail so Ms. Karen HIT CYRIL IN THE HEAD WITH A HARDCOVER STORY BOOK. The only problem is that know one knew that Ms. Karen is a PSYCHOPATH!

We picked up my brother once the school called my parents and went to talk to Ms. Psycho/Karen. Ms. Karen lied to us about my brother's toy and blamed my brother's friend for stealing it. My dad and my sister thanked Ms. Karen like she says thank you to a crazy lady. Oh I totally forgot that we did not know Ms. Karen was crazy yet.

Till that day forward my brother was afraid of daycare!!

My brother was afraid of Karen because...SHE IS SUPER PSYCHO!

Junior Division Grades 3-6

Asylum

By: Aveleigh Sloan (Gr. 6)

more inside

Ellie and Courtney woke up in a room with no knowledge of who each other were or where they were. The only thing they could remember was their names. The room they had woken up in smelled of something rotten. When the nauseating smell reached their noses, they felt sick. The smell was putrid; it smelled of death.

The two girls rushed out of the room, only to find a long hallway. It was clear it was night by how dark it was. The hall was clean but clearly abandoned, like a hospital of some sort. That would explain the smell of rotten flesh. Ellie felt a ghostly presence beside the girls. Thinking nothing of it they started to walk around.

The hallway, in less than a minute, got freezing cold. The girls in a rush ran into a room. The room reeked. Ellie and Courtney just had to deal with it considering how cold it was in the hall. The two girls sat on the floor, it was warmer in the room than in the hall.

When the girls sat down they sat in a black-ish brown substance. It was gooey, slimy and sticky. Ellie looked for the source of the goo. She traced it back to the corner of the room where there were a bunch of dead bodies piled up. The goo was their blood slowly leaking out of them. Why was it gooey? The blood was rotting.

Ellie and Courtney were disgusted, and ran out of the room to go to a new one. When the two got to the new room, it was clean. Courtney had a sigh of relief. Ellie sat on the ground tired. Courtney stayed standing up. She noticed a cloaked figure in the corner. Holding her breath, she walked slowly toward the figure.

"Hello...?" Courtney said in a shaky voice. As soon as she reached the corner, the cloaked figure turned around, revealing a shadowy face with black beady eyes, and sharp bloody teeth. It let out a horrifying screech, and the two girls ran out to the hall as their life depended on it. They ran till they almost fell off the building. They looked over at the other half of the building which was burnt down. The creature wasn't far behind. They ran for what felt like hours.

The two got away from the creature but got separated. Ellie was walking slow so it wouldn't hear her. She held her breath. Every step she took she could hear someone close behind her. Then she heard it, the blood curdling scream of Courtney. Ellie ran to where she heard the scream. There it was, Courtney's dead body. Crying, she saw a book beside her head.

It was titled "The history". It read that this place she was in used to be a mental institution. Patients got chemicals put in their bodies for experiments. But one day, it all went wrong. They put the wrong chemicals in a man's body, turning him into the cloaked creature. He ate the souls of others turning them into one of him. The cloaked figure planted that book there so Ellie would be distracted so he could kill her. The plan worked. Ellie was killed. She was one of them now. Now, the building is filled with cloaked creatures waiting for something to eat; and be careful. You might be next.

Junior Division Grades 3-6

The Ending is Coming
By: Torrie Toddish (Gr. 6)

more inside

Chapter 1

The beginning of a bad ending

I woke up one morning felt sick and queasy, my head hurt, my bones felt numb. I ate breakfast my breakfast was pancakes, it was delightful. It was 12:09 my friends came over Mike, Luke, Harrison and Olivia but 'where is Emma?' I say. 'She in the sewer,' Mike answers. 'The haunted ONE!!' I say. "Yup," they all say.

"We need to go and get her". So we left when we go there they said I should go get her. 'BY MYSELF' I said. "Yes" Luke said. "FINE" so I left. The darkness was fast approaching. While in the sewer it was just me in the sewer looking for Emma then I heard a loud whale like there was a real whale or something. I put in my earbuds. I listened to Melanie Martinez for some reason there was water in the abandon sewer and it was RISING. The further down I got the higher the sewer water got.

Then I found Emma. She was bleeding? But I thought I tried to ask her but she only said 'be quiet'. I was wondering why? She said that we are not alone. "What?" I said I could tell she was numb and in pain she had a big cut on her arm it wasn't from her she was slowly dying. I was crying my bff was leaving me I try to call 911 no service. Her eyes were drifting out of consciousness I didn't know what I should do. There was blood pouring out of eyes like a river.

You could tell she was dead from head to toe she was pale as heck she was once my best friend. I felt like the world was ending because it was I need her I wanting to be like her she was my world my best friend from day one and she was gone but I wasn't going to sit here and cry before I die I had to find who kill her so I could kill them no really just ruin they life like they ruin mine.

So I looked everywhere but I'm thinking how come I went by myself. They could come so I went to get my friends. Like did they know that there was a killer in the sewer? I went to grab my friends they are not there but their bikes were there? I looked everywhere but no sight of them so I went to a house and told them to call 911. They ask, "Why?" "Because someone is dying in the SEWER," I say while shaking. They thought it was a joke or a prank so it looks like I'm on my own...

Chapter 2

911 "WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM"

I looked everywhere in the sewer for a dumb killer I thought is maybe a prank from my friends. But like always I'm wrong. Now what do I do? I decided to go home it was like at least 7:00ish and it was raining and dark then I remember that I was going to sleepover at Harrison but I was so close to my house I kept walking forward the was a turn the corner. I looked behind me and there was someone they said my name a couple of times I couldn't see there face they a ski mask on them then there was like 6 people they had bats in their hand. Like they are going to play baseball or something one had a helmet in their hand. Then they said, 'get her'. I ran down 3 streets.

I was out of breath I kept running to a store it was now probably 9:00 then I saw Harrison's house there were cops outside their house I ran down the street to see what was happening. HARRISON WAS FOUND DEAD. All I'm thinking is how did he die? I ask someone if they knew what happened. No one knew but then I asked the cops they said a little kid found Harrison in the sewer bleeding so the kid call 911 apparently someone call earlier about someone dying in the sewer so we came and check it out we found 7 bodies and 3 weapons we know who the killer is but we can't seem to find him. So I told them that people were chasing me a couple of minutes ago. The cop give me a ride home but then this happened!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Chapter 3

The sad not happy ending

When I got home my mom was laying there on the ground unconscious couldn't speak my dad laying right beside my mom the whole house look like a killing ground scene the cop call for backup there was like 19 cops in MY home they finally found the killer it was MIKE'S PARENTS BUT WHY? They didn't say anything they killed Emma, my mom and dad, my sister. Harrison, Mike, Olivia and Luke then was me but why? 9 years later I never really found out why Mike's parents kill all those kids I'm finally 21, Mike's parents are still in jail but after all I learned nothing at all.

THE END

Intermediate/Senior Division Grades 7–9

A Girl Named Penna
By: Daniel James (Grade 8)

more inside

A teenage girl stares out of the car window mesmerized by the multitude of trees on the side of the road. She hears her parents singing along to the radio and she waits for them to announce the ‘nearly there’ mark to her aunt and uncles. Her parents said they were going so they could make something right.

She felt it before anything. The car crashed into a deer and spun out of control. The airbag smashed the girl’s left cheek. Time itself seemed to slow as the car rolled into the wet and dirty ditch. Shattered glass was everywhere, blood covered the leather seats.

The action stopped as fast as it started. The girl looked at her parents.

They’re just unconscious. She tried to persuade herself. She stumbled toward the driver’s seat.

“Daddy?”

“He’s gone.”

The girl looked at her mother and hugged her tight.

“I don’t have much time.” Her mother said, fighting for every breath.

“Mom.” The girl stared into her mother’s eyes, tears streaming down her face.

“Be smart, make things right.” The girl suddenly felt lonelier than she ever had in her life.

And with that a fourteen-year-old girl was left alone, crying on her knees in a wet ditch.

Two Months Later

A boy, thirteen or so, walked under a vast canopy of trees in a forest on a calm late afternoon. His old film camera in hand, trying to find some peace.

“Robert?!”

The boy jumped back. “Who’s there, I know karate!” He started to wave his arms aimlessly, ironically displaying that he didn’t know a thing about the martial art.

“Robert - up here in the tree.”

The boy looked up to see a girl with black hair tied back in a braid to her waist. She wore tattered jeans, worn-out sneakers and a Star Wars t-shirt. She was sitting on a branch in a well-aged maple tree.

“Penna - is that you? It’s been years, and *what the heck are you doing in a tree ?!*”

“Oh just hangin’ around...” Penna replied in a cheeky tone. “Come on, get up here.”

“Excuse me?”

“Use the log over there to get up onto that branch, climb on the branches with orange markings for an easy way up,” said Penna as she pointed to different places in the tree.

“Wow, Penna you’ve been here all this time?” Robert said astoundedly as he worked his way up the first few branches.

“Yep, my pa and I used to build tree forts. I used some wood and parts of the old car to make a little me-shack.”

“How come you haven’t tried to enter civilization yet?”

“Your dad is my godfather,” Penna said “and my mother’s last words were to ‘make things right’. If anybody finds out I’m an orphan he’ll be the first person they send me to. I wanna find out what she means before I make a move.”

“Her last words; must be really serious then. Kinda cryptic though - I wonder what she meant.” Robert muttered as he swung his leg over the next branch. “What about your dad - can’t you live with him?”

“He died in the car crash on the way to your house for a ‘surprise visit’. Penna pointed down towards two big rocks next to each other covered in flowers.

“But they were divorced, right?”

“What? No.”

“This isn’t making *any* sense,” Robert said, rubbing his head trying to figure it all out.

“Amen to that, and my butt hurts from sitting on this branch, so bye,” Penna said with a smile.

She slipped off the branch and fell out of the tree about thirteen feet. Robert heard a big THUD and then looked down to see her wrestling her way out of a massive pile of leaves.

“Hey, Robert get down here!” Penna yelled.

“What! No way! I’m not that stupid.” Robert argued back from the tree.

“Come on you big chicken, jump already! The leaves will break your fall - You saw them do it for me!”

“Fine.” Robert said, “but only to make you happy.”

And with that, Robert slid down off the branch. He felt weightless as he dropped toward the massive pile of leaves.

“Woah, that was exciting,” Robert announced as he emerged from the pile.

“Well, I should go find something to eat for din-din, so, see you tomorrow?” Penna asked.

“Uh, sure,” Robert said as he started off to his house.

The next day Robert and his family were sitting down to breakfast. Robert began,

“Dad, what do you know about uncle Daniel?”

Robert's dad was so startled by the name of his least favourite human, he tipped his chair over backwards and fainted on the spot.

“Oh-my, here we go again” Robert’s mom exclaimed. “Places everyone!” Robert’s little sister Grace rushed to the bathroom for the towels.

“Robert. What were you thinking bringing up your uncle Daniel like that? You know your father is touchy about the subject.” Robert's mom, Megan commented disappointedly.

“Why?”

Just at that moment Grace returned with the wet towels and laid one on her father's forehead.

“Record time girlfriend - extra waffles for you!” Megan announced.

“Come on, I deserve to know, he's my uncle as much as he's your brother-in-law” Robert continued.

Megan hesitated, then spoke,

"Your father despises your uncle with all his heart and soul. He thinks that uncle Daniel married your aunt in order to get some of the family money. Your father is furious because he feels his sister could have married a much better man.

"What happened to their daughter?" Robert smirked subtly. He knew if he kept playing his cards right he might make his mom say too much.

"Well, early on, before anybody knew of Nick's hatred, he offered to be Penna's Godfather. Nick knows that if Penna's parents die he could take some of the money your aunt and uncle left Penna -just enough to get back what your uncle 'stole'."

Megan paused to get a drink of water then continued, "Of course, I don't believe any of this, I think it's absolutely ludicrous but Nick won't let go of the idea."

"Did you try reasoning with dad?" Robert asked.

"Of course I did. But sometimes he gets quite angry about the subject, and I didn't need you or your sister to hear curse words yet."

"Mom, Penna's parents died in a car crash." Robert said, "I know where Penna is, but you CAN'T tell Dad, she is living in the forest in a tree fort by the biking trail."

"Oh, the poor thing!" Megan said.

"I'm going to see her now, I'll bring her some bread."

And with that Robert stole out of the kitchen before Grace decided she was going to tag along.

When Robert arrived at the tree fort he told Penna all he had learned. She grabbed an emergency suitcase out from under a bench and told him to show her the way to his house.

Suddenly the front door was kicked open by a girl with jet black hair and a clueless boy by her side.

“She came to make something right,” Robert told his mother.

“Hey, Nick, you little slug come out here!” Penna yelled at the top of her lungs.

“What! Is everything ok?” Nick jolted awake from his chair and spotted Penna.

“Where are your parents?”

“Dead” Penna said sourly. “I heard that you think my dad was a crook.”

“Penna, your dad married your mother for money.”

“Heck yeah, he did! You would too if you came from a family who couldn’t afford medication for your dying parents! And my mum knew that from the start, so back off Nick! I know you think she could have married a better man but coming from a line of poor farming folk, my dad was the hardest working man she had ever known.”

“I had no idea,” Nick answered quite befuddled.

Robert looked at his mom, “Penna can’t live in the woods forever and we do have a guest room...”

“I think it might be fun to have a sister to drive crazy,” Grace said innocently.

Everybody looked at Nick. “Why not, my sister would’ve wanted it.” He said sadly.

Then everybody's eyes turned to Penna. “If I get free food then sure.” She joked.

“Group hug!” Grace yelled and everyone closed in on the newest member of the family.

The leaves fall off the trees slowly as the afternoon sun pours into the living room illuminating a picture frame. Inside the frame stands a photo with Nick on the right,

Megan on the left, Robert beside his dad, Grace in front of their mom and in the middle of the portrait stands a girl named Penna.

Intermediate/Senior Division Grades 7-9

Bunker

By: Austin Lavigne (Grade 7)

more inside

It was a fine summer afternoon, the sun was nice and bright, the sky was blue as day, there was no wind to be heard, kids were playing along the dirt road on Fox Road. But Christie wasn't outside, matter of fact she never was outside. She was occupied by reading and going on walks. She never really had too many friends growing up. Her best friend is Jodie. The two have known each other for ten years. They met in first grade when Jodie was new.

Jodie is the one who forces Christie to go outside, nobody knows how he manages to do so.

Christie hears a knock at her door.

Knock Knock Knock

She places her unicorn bookmark in her book and walks down the set of stairs,

Creak, creak, Creak

Christie opens the door..... It's Jodie

"Hi!" Christie said in excitement, "I've been waiting for you all day. Where were you?" "Sorry I got caught up with chores," Jodie replied.

Christie moved out of the way to allow Jodie into the house.

Little does Jodie know, Christie has had a crush on him for the past seven years. "Man I can't believe we are going into the eleventh grade," Jodie said leaning on the worn-down striped wallpaper by the kitchen, "Are you ready to go?" Jodie asked,

"Where?" Christie replied in confusion, "We're going on a walk. It's a beautiful day out," Jodie said "Ok? I suppose," Christie replied, and the two walked out the front door.

"Where was your dad?" Jodie asked, "He's usually always around, "He went with a couple of his friends to go fishing." "Classic" Jodie said with a chuckle. As the two were on their walk Jodie looked over to his right and stopped right where he was. "What is it, knucklehead?" Christie asked, "There is a bunker," Jodie said slowly word by word, Christie looked puzzled. "Let's check it out," Christie said, "Shouldn't we think before we do," Jodie replied, but by the time he let out the sentence, Christie was already running. "Oh, Christie you better not be leading us into trouble," Jodie said under his breath, and he started to run towards Christie.

Jodie caught up to Christie and started to wonder whether or they should go in or not. Christie being the determined person she is, it wouldn't matter what Jodie thought she would till go in the bunker. Christie opened the hatch to the bunker. They both glanced at the bunker and back at each other than both walked in.

As they walked down the echoing stairway,

Tap, Tap, Tap

All of a sudden there was a be creak from down the stairs. Christie's and Jodie's eyes beamed open.

"What on earth was that!" Jodie whispered in a high pitch tone wanting to scream, "I don't know I just discovered this place too you know," Christie replied. She shook her head and continued to walk. As they hit the final step they heard a bark.

“HOLY CRAP” Jodie screamed, “Good job genius if we die it’s your fault,” Christie said as she continued to walk. Jodie pulled a flashlight out of his pocket.

“If we weren’t in a weird bunker I’d ask you why you have a flashlight in your pocket but right now it’s helpful so,” Christie said as Jodie gave her the flashlight.

Christie continued to walk forward until she found the dog. A beautiful bright white Siberian Husky, sitting there with a name tag on her collar said: **‘Zeena’**

“So your Zeena I see,” Christie said in a high tone.

“CHRISTIE GET HERE NOW!” Jodie screamed, “I’ll be right back Zeena,” Christie said Zeena stopped wagging her tail and Christie got up and ran over to Jodie.

Christie’s eyes peeled open. “Ok, what in the world..... I thought the dog was bad but this, this is way worse,” Christie said

Jodie walked over to the right and observed the area beside the chair there was a name tag the name tag read: **‘Jackie’**

“So let’s get this straight, there is a HUMAN BEING along with a DOG in an UNDERGROUND bunker!” Christie yelled” “Oddly enough, yes Jodie replied, “Ok well you get her off this chair and unstrap her.” Christie said, Jodie nodded his head, and away he went. Christie went toward the dog cage.

“Zeena!” She called, Zeena stood up as soon as she heard her voice her tail was wagging like Christie has been her owner for years. “Hi, how are you doing?” Christie said while having her face licked by the husky. From the distance, there was a scream, “AHHHHHHHH!” Zeena’s head went up immediately. “What the hell?” Christie mumbled under her breath. Christie ran over to the wooden chair and there she was, Jackie the woman who for some reason is strapped to a wooden chair, wide awake.

"Hey there Jackie" Christie said in a soft tone voice as if she was talking to her as a baby." Jackie remained quiet.

"Maybe she's in shock?" Jodie said, "I'm not sure," Christie said,

"YOU GUYS ARE MONSTERS!" Jackie screamed, "What is she saying?" Jodie asked, "I don't know, I don't know everything," Christie said, "While it sure seems like it," Jodie said with a smirk on his face. Christie rolled her eyes.

"How on earth do I like this man?" Christie thought to herself, "Alright back on track," Jodie said, "Jackie, what do you mean by, you guys are monsters?" Jodie asked, "You, you put me here and I've been rotting for ages.... All because I saw what I wasn't supposed to." She replied, Christie and Jodie, glanced at each other and back at Jackie. "Ok Jackie, you got us mixed up, we're not who you think we are, but we can't trust you yet, for all we know you can be a kidnapper," Christie said, Jackie nodded, both Jodie and Christie helped her up. "You help her out of here, I'll go grab the dog," Christie said, Jodie nodded, and away they went.

While walking Christie and Jodie were trying to figure out how on earth they're going to hide Jackie and Zeena.

"You got anything?" Christie asked, "Yeah, but we're gonna have to hide them with you." Jodie replied,

"What do you mean?" Jackie asked, "Because nobody knows anything about you, at least that we know of." Christie replied.

“Ok Christie I’m going to need you to hide them in your house somewhere until tomorrow, my parents are leaving town for a month so I got the house to myself.” Christie nodded her head.

“I have to go home and help my parents pack, you get her to your house it’s almost dark which means your dad might be home, and if he isn’t he will be any time now so I’d get back to your place in a jiffy,” Jodie said, “Agreed,” Christie said nodding her head, and the two split up when leaving the forest.

An alarm started going off in the **Facility of Human and K9 Technology**.

“Breach in bunker 2818, this is not a drill.” A speaker AI send from the speakers at the **FHK9T** (Facility of Human and K9 Technology)

A slim lady picks up the phone and dials a set of numbers and says, “Get me, Joey, in here STAT.” Then places the phone back in the cradle.

“Good evening ma’am,” Joey said, “No times for good evenings Joey, we go to get this situated.” Joey took a deep breath in and out.

“Ok, Madame Director,” Joey said, “So what’s your status, on the situation as of right now?” Madame Director asked, “I know bunker 2818 has been breached by civilians, and we’re getting face scans on the two. As of right now, we know the two are a boy and a girl.”

Madame Director grinned

“This is why you hear Joey, to keep us steady.” Joey smiled at Madame Director, “You are dismissed,” “Go catch these pests and get what’s ours,” Madame Director said. Joey nodded, turned his back to Madame Director and started walking, “Keep us steady

because that's why you think I'm here." Joey said under his breath walking away from Madame Director shaking his head.

"Sir!" A voice came from the distance, "You got anything Sandals?" Strangely enough, Sandals was the name of the man who was the head of the technology side of the FHK9T and got SUV's prepared on agents to go on the field, choppers to be available for air travelling.

"I have two names for you," Said Sandals, "Great, what are they?" Joey asked in determination, Christie LeClair and Jodie Lavigne, both the age of sixteen. Their images have been sent to your work phones and the tablets, the SUV's are good to go, sir." Sandals said, "Thanks Sandals, you're the man!" Joey said as he walked away from Sandals desk.

Joey pulled out his phone and made a phone call, "Get me Harris, Beak, and Boykins now!" he said through the phone "*On it sir,*" A lady said over the phone. Joey hung up. Waiting in the car Joey sees his partners. Harris, Beak, and Boykins. They all get in the car and Soykins says, "Let's do this shall we fellas," Joey said, "Yes sir," said Boykins.

After an hour of driving the squad arrived at the location of the bunker.

'Where can have they gone' Joey thought, The squad observed,

"There's nowhere to go unless they went this way but that wouldn't be logical,"

Boykins said, the squad kept observing the area

Joey's phone started to ring. It's Sandals.

Joey picks up the phone "It's Joey," "Hey Joey it's Sandals. I got some information about your suspects," Sandals said, "I like the sound of that!" Joey replied,

“Ok, you male is Jodie Lavigne a sixteen-year-old who lives on 32 Franklin Drive and stands at 6,5, and your female is a sixteen-year-old as well living on 48 Fox Road.”

“Thanks, Sandals keep me posted if anything new pops up,”

“Will do sir” Sandals replied. Joey hung up the phone.

Alright fellas we have a road trip, first, stop is, 32 Franklin Drive.

Once arrived, Joey told everyone but Boykins to stay in the car. The two walk up to the house

Knock, Knock, Knock

Jodie hears the knock at his door. He places his cheap fast food wrapper in the garbage and walks up to the door and opens it.

“Good morning sir, are you Jodie Lavigne?” Joey asked, “Yes... Who’s asking?” Jodie asked tentatively, “My name is Joey Warner, and this is my partner do you mind if we come in?”

Jodie, very confused, nods his head and allows the men in the house.

“Jodie! Who’s in the house?” Jodie’s dad yelled from upstairs, “Just some people.....” Jodie gives them a facial depression of what he should say, “Ask you some questions, and we would like the room.” Joey whispered. “They want to ask me some questions and they want the room!” Jodie said to his dad, he walked down the stairs and exited the house.

“Ok kid listen up, we know you have Jackie and Zeena, but don’t worry, we’re here to help but we need you to keep quiet for now,”, Joey said. Jodie was sitting there in confusion. “We can’ tell you much but we can tell you that we want all of the prisoners

out of the bunkers they're being wrongfully held. We can't tell you much because a lot of our work is classified but you can help save someone from potential death.

"So I'm assuming you know about Christie?" Jodie asked, "Yes, we're going to need her here with the dog and woman. I can't say why but I can say they're both in great danger," Boykins said, "You talk too?" Jodie asked sarcastically.

"Alright I'll make that call now," Jodie said.

Jodie had made some phone calls to Christie telling her to get to his house immediately. Now they're waiting for her, Jackie, and Zeena.

Shortly after Jackie and Zeena arrived. "What's going on?" Christie asked tentatively, "Good evening Madame Christie, I am Joey, and this is Agent Boykin." Joey said. "Hello?" Christie replied.

"Ok, so we don't have much time to talk, they might be listening to us right now. We have a jet scheduled to take our friends Jackie and Christie to Russia where they will protect them." Jodie and Christie are confused, "They can be trusted." Jodie said, "Alright, I guess we can take them." Joey and Boykins stood up, followed by Jodie and Christie then, Jackie, then Zeena.

The three entered the SUV, Joey started the automobile and they left.

After about twenty-five-minutes of driving, the SUV finally arrived at their destination. An airstrip.

"Why are we here sir?" Agent Harris asked, "Madame Director has ordered us to bring these two to an airstrip so they can be locked up at the facility." Joey replied.

Joey exited the SUV got Zeena and Jackie out of the car. Walked the two up to the jet. "Once you arrive in Russia you will receive further instructions. This is classified. Am I clear?" Joey said, Jackie nodded. Then the two entered the jet.

Joey walked back to the SUV entered it and drove away.

After another twenty-five minutes of driving, Joey had finally made it to Jodie's house. Joey, Christie, and Jodie exited the SUV.

"Thank you for your help. But this must stay classified." The two nodded. "Hey, Joey? Why don't you go by 'agent'?" Jodie asked, "Kid, my names Joey, it's a word for a baby kangaroo. I'm not an agent." Christie chuckled and Joey entered the SUV and drove off.

Intermediate/Senior Division Grades 7-9

The Prolonged Fear

By: Mackenzie Rocks (Grade 9)

more inside

There once was a girl named Kya who lived deep in the town of Blackcastle, constantly living in fear. Many tragic incidents occurred when she was younger so that it terrified her even more even to do just the slightest thing such as going for a walk outside or using an oven or toaster oven to cook. She wasn't even able to go to school, she would panic, flip her desk and run away not knowing who or what she would face.

She didn't live with her actual parents, placed in an orphanage at 3 years of age, growing up with no one, siblings were taken, \$1.00 a day to get something to eat to feed the orphanage children and a kitty so the strategy is necessary for the McBaker's. Birthdays are saved up for as they all have months like January, April, July, and October. Kya knows she isn't as wealthy as most orphanage children who get like \$5.00 a day but appreciates anything and everything she can get.

It had just become the summer when she had a dream to face the fears, overcome her difficulties knowing there were going to be some stiff burdensome challenges coming her way. So off she went, down the road of Glasscastle street. Suddenly, a black cat crossed in front of the road and Kya goes Ballistic, remembering the myth of if a black cat crosses your path you will have bad luck. Running in anxiety, panicking, sweating and paws shacking, making it back but realizing the gates are locked and struggling to find the watch to check the time.

Not knowing what will happen and what will arrive in the coming days, Kya always tried her best to help keep the children in order, maintain the cleanliness and her well-being socially and emotionally.

My parents had always told me about this thing called a dollark, a dolphin and shark mixed together but it's a terrifying mixture when storms come. Huge anxiety attacks start happening, Kya doing her best to stay calm to help the children. The children hearing constant bang after the crash to another bang, not understanding as they are so young. Suddenly, a huge alarm went off not knowing the alarm meant another natural disaster coming, they just didn't know what. Running into a baby, Kya grabbing her by the shirt and bolting her to safety. Barley making it to safety and panicking, out of breath and ready for a nap, Kya gets many lovings and passes out the nice soft squared bed.

A COUPLE OF DAYS LATER....

Everything started to calm down, people starting to help clean up the messes of all the tragic disasters and nothing but happiness was spread around. Being so close to Christmas, the garlands were strung on the lit-up tree with the guard, in hopes the dogs won't destroy them too hard. Man oh man nothing was done with the buns in the oven and the children all screaming, let's go get our tree.

Oh no! It's the attack of the dollark, let's get down to our underground tunnel where we are safe! Knowing the fact, that more damage could be done was even scarier for Kya and the children. Kya laid down to help keep the children warm and comfy while waiting for the alarm to sound telling them that they are safe to return to there home. Being 2, 4, 6 and maybe 7 not understanding they prepared for this to happen was

scarier even more nerve wracking when they had some sort of warning. Finally, the alarm went off and the thundering sound of cheering, footsteps and running to be the first to claim the blue swing that reclines and is the favourite out of all the children in the town of Oakwood.

Cleaning up the town once again finding the most mysterious, strangest and bizarre things not knowing if we should keep, donate or get rid of it they found a huge stone, a small tiny sharks tooth and maybe it was half a mermaid tail or a unicorn horn like who knows! We kept that object to have a further investigation about it maybe with a scientist or the forensic investigators, haha! We spent approximately the sunrise to sunset helping clean up after the multiple attacks that had arose the past few days, it was a sight to see the different things all over the town to make it a complete new place!

So overall, we had figured out the dollarks attacks were seemingly bad when awoken from the hibernation or disturbed when scavenging for food. Kya enjoyed the leftover meat on the stick and had leftovers for quite a few weeks!

Intermediate/Senior Division Grades 7–9

The Year 2050

By: Hannah Wang (Grade 7)

more inside

“Liam! The door is locked, what do we do?!” I whispered, I started panicking, “the robots will catch up!”

Liam grabbed a small twig from the ground and started poking at the lock. I started panicking more, this was taking forever.

“LIAM HURRY UP!” I whispered even louder. I heard the soft whirring of the robots come up the long corridor.

CLICK

The big, thick metal doors started to open, and we slowly crawled out of the underground tunnel. How this all started you ask? Well everything was going great, until it wasn't.

(May 1st, 2050)

‘It is official. The technology is being built as we speak, and it is mandatory that everyone on earth books a place in an underground bunker near you, where you will be put to sleep for the next 10 centuries. By May 8th at midnight, exactly a week from now you have to be in an underground bunker.’

I froze. Was this really happening? My sister, Sydney turned off the TV. The government had made it mandatory that everyone on earth will be put to sleep for the next 1000 years, whether we wanted to or not.

“W-what's gonna happen? Are we just going to skip the next 10 centuries?!” I stuttered, I wanted to cry. We all knew it was going to happen, but not this soon.

“They’ve decided, we can’t do anything about it. It’s gonna be fine, they’ve been preparing for this and it’s better for the earth.” Sydney said, “I think it’s going to be great.”

I went up to my room with my eyes watering. I didn’t want to sleep for the next 10 centuries. Who knows what would happen to earth in 1000 years. I couldn’t even think about it. I got out my phone and called my friend Liam.

“Hey Liam, did you watch the news this morning.” I asked.

“Yeah, I did.” he said, he was also in shock.

That night, I laid on my bed and couldn’t believe that this whole thing was true. Why would it randomly be mandatory for everybody to skip the next 1 thousand years. I didn’t understand.

(May 8th, 2050)

‘Today is the last day to get into a bunker. Everybody will board the nearest bus to you at 12:00 am. You will not need to pack anything as everything has been prepared for you.’

I called Liam over to stay at my house, we decided to go together.

“Well, today is the day.” I said. I didn’t know what to feel, I was excited, but also really sad at the same time. I was also nervous and anxious, just a whole mix of feelings.

“I guess.” Liam sighed, “I’m not that worried about it, I think it’ll be great! I mean, what could possibly go wrong?”

I gulped. A lot of things could go wrong. The machines could break, the earth could get destroyed, plus, who knows what the government is actually planning on doing.

Worrying is not going to help, Lily. I told myself. *You just have to trust them.* Liam and I spent the rest of the day cleaning up the house, and playing video games. Before we knew it, it was midnight. A huge bus pulled up in front of our house. It was black, with bright neon words on it. The bus driver kindly told us to get in. Sydney, Liam and I all walked into the bus slowly. We still couldn't believe this was happening.

In the bus, there were many families, going together to their bunkers. The bus suddenly stopped. We we're already at the bunker, it felt so fast. We all stepped out of the bus and watched as the big heavy metal doors opened. Inside, was a tunnel. We all slowly crawled through the tunnel, until we saw it. We went into the big room filled with advanced technology, then, two men walked in and grabbed all of the kids to be put in a separate room. They grabbed me by the arm and threw me into the dark room. I didn't like this. I knew something was wrong. I started examining the walls, and there, right in front of me was a long narrow tunnel that led to a hallway. As I started crawling through, Liam followed behind me.

We froze. We heard footsteps coming from the end of the hallway.

"Yes, I do agree, this plan was brilliant." a male voice said.

"Do you think the people will notice?" another voice said. We looked at each other with fear. What were they talking about?

"They won't! The whole earth will be put to sleep in just a few minutes, it's going to be okay."

Me and Liam quickly crawled back to the chamber. They were already giving people the pills. As we took the pills, the world went black and we dozed off.

(10 years later)

This was weird. It didn't feel like a real sleep, I knew I was sleeping. It was like I was awake in my own head. I couldn't see anything, everything was just black. I didn't know the time, I couldn't move. All I could do was think. I don't know how long it has been since I've been put to sleep. I feel like it was just 10 minutes ago.

ZAP!

Suddenly I jerked awake. I opened my eyes. I could see, and I could move. Has it already been 10 centuries? I looked around me and everyone was still in their beds except Liam. Where was he? I got out, and as soon as my feet touched the floor, a robot looked at me.

"ERROR, ERROR" They started shouting. Two robots came and grabbed my wrists and dragged me into a dark room.

"WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! LET ME GO!" I yelled. As I looked up, I saw the same two men that I saw the day I was put to sleep. They were running frantically with the robots. I crawled to the corner of the room. And there was Liam.

"Liam!" I gasped and gave him a big hug. "What is happening? How long has it been?" I had so many questions.

"Well, it's been about 10 years since we were put to sleep." I blinked. What? 10 years already?

"Wait then how did we- weren't we supposed to be woken up at 10 cent-"

“Yes. I learned that something was wrong. They aren’t trying to do anything to help the earth, they just want it for themselves. Before we got put to sleep, I overheard them talking about when we woke up, everyone would have to listen to them, and they wanted to become ‘king of the world’” he explained. “So I set up a little alarm at 10 years.” Liam said.

“Oh.” I was still trying to comprehend what was happening. “How are we going to get out of here?”

“I haven’t exactly planned that out yet,” he said, “but it’s ok, I’ll figure a way to get all of us out of here.”

The next few weeks were the worst weeks of my life. They barely gave us any food. Just a slice of bread and a juice box for the whole day. At night, our arms and legs were zip tied. It was almost as if we were prisoners. After about a month, Liam finally decided it was time to escape.

“Listen, we are going to escape tonight. You have to stick with me and don’t get lost or else we’re both in big trouble, okay?” Liam said, I nodded.

He tightened the zip tie, slammed his wrists on his knees, and the zip ties broke. As he got out of his zip ties, I tried doing the same. And to my surprise, it worked! I was free, no zip ties, I could actually move now.

We quietly crawled out and *BAM!*

We froze. I had already messed up. My phone slipped out of my pocket.

“RUN!” Liam shouted, as the robots chased us, we quickly crawled up the long tunnel, until we could see the big metal doors. And that is where we left off. The robots

were getting closer, I panicked. Liam snatched a twig on the floor and started picking at the lock. I could hear the whirring get closer.

Click!

The lock finally opened. The big metal doors slowly started to open. Outside, it was completely dark. Liam and I ran outside. We were free! But now, we have to save the other people, before the world gets destroyed.

“What do we do now?” I asked, Liam looked at me, he was clearly thinking of another plan.

“See that tower?” He pointed to a huge tower with many lights on it. “That’s where they control everybody’s sleep. If we can break into the tower and turn everything off, everybody will wake up and we’ll be free.”

I looked up at the huge tower. Drones were circling around it. Lasers, all the top security. But we didn’t have a choice.

“What are we waiting for?” I smiled. “Come on! Let’s break into a tower!”

Liam found a car parked nearby, “Get in!” he said.

“You know how to drive?” I asked, confused.

“Video games are pretty realistic these days.” I hopped in as he started the car. We quietly drove through the forest. The car came to a stop.

“The tower is right behind those trees.” Liam told me. I peeked behind the trees. There were two men guarding the door. I threw a rock to the other side of the tower. The both guards ran in that direction.

“Let’s go!” Liam said, we ran to the door. Liam typed in a code into the lock, the doors opened. Inside, there were flights of stairs, all the way to top. We quietly ran up the

stairs. After what seemed like hours, we finally got to the top. Liam entered in a passcode and the door opened.

“You stay over there, we’re gonna escape from the balcony.” Liam said, as he turned off the system.”

The security alarms went off in the building.

“LILY RUN TO THE BALCONY.” he yelled as he finished turning off everything. He locked the doors and pushed the sofa to block the door. I ran to the balcony, I could hear all the security guards running up the stairs. Liam came out.

“I’m gonna climb down first okay? Then you can go down.” Liam said, I nodded, Liam started climbing down the tower. He climbed super fast down and then,

“LIAM!” I screamed as his hand slipped from one of the bars. He was holding on with one hand.

“Lily! Pass me that rope from that wall!” He yelled. I quickly ran over and threw the rope down. Liam had gone down safely.

“Now you have to climb down! You can do it, just don’t look down.” Liam yelled from the bottom of the tower, he hid in a bush. I quickly climbed down the cold metal poles of the tower. I was scared, as I saw all the drones in the sky hovering over the tower. I quickly climbed down the last few poles and I was on the ground again. I saw the security guards turn on the lights.

“We did it!” I whispered happily to Liam.

“Now we just have to open the doors back at the bunker!” Liam said, as he opened the doors to the car. I hopped in. Liam drove back to the entrance, and we saw the big metal doors. Liam took out a key.

“I also stole a key from the building.” He smirked. I giggled a little as he unlocked the big metal doors. We climbed through the tunnel back to the chambers. The robots had powered off. Everyone was awake and confused. Liam and I sat down and explained to everyone what had happened. They listened in shock and were relieved to be free.

The End.