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# New Beginnings

By: Vivian Lee

“Why does this have to happen?” I thought to myself as I heard my mom talking about the end. The night was crisp and cold in Alaska. Sleeping on the rough white bed, thinking negative and synthetic thoughts about the future that will soon come.

We boarded the airplane. I felt sorrow in the inside of my body. Colorful luggages, small wheels rolling everywhere, high-pitched and low-pitched beeping, chattering from people clustered together made little wisps of anxiety and fear fly around in my head. Trying to follow the family in the crowded airport was almost impossible at the time. Walking through the security check was nerve-racking, luckily nothing beeped so I was safe. Social distancing seemed to not exist to everybody else except for me. The flight attendant speaking through the intercom and the smell of laundry detergent on the cold plane was what you would normally experience.

As the plane took off I was wondering what I was going to do next. Trying to keep myself busy made it worse. I could hear music and the show 'Avatar the Last Airbender' playing on an i-pad coming from the seat behind me. The plane rumbling and shaking made me nauseous. Staring out the window, watching the entire scenery and lights in the night sky. The scraping of the wheels was blaring and deafening. The annoying voice screeching inside saying “What is going to happen next?” was making that day the worst day ever. Driving back home was both good and bad. Seeing Virginia once again was different than I had remembered. Big bright green trees and dark black birds in the light blue sky caught my eye. The car smelled like dust and old books. We got home at around 6:00 AM. The house was warm but empty, it was quiet.

I woke up all tired, hair tousled and sore everywhere. As I stumbled down the stairs, blazes of hot air struck me and caused me to be exhausted and worn-out. Packing my bag for the next day got me thinking, “Maybe it won't be so bad”. Mom gave me the schedule and the list of the kids who are in my class. I read the heading, 'Around the World: ASIA'. I skimmed through the list and unexpectedly in shock there was a familiar name. A good friend from my class's name in black words written on white paper. Eyes widened, the feel of excitement flushed through my body like a big, fresh, clean waterfall. I zipped up my bright red backpack with key-shaped zippers and quickly flipped through the other pages, and then saw how big the school was. Nervous again, “What if I get lost?” “Where will I go?”.

The bus was shaking dramatically. Children were talking over the music playing through the radio. The gray seats were oddly sticky and rough. The black rubber wheels suddenly screeched and the vehicle had stopped. I looked up at the building and read

'Robinson Secondary School'. Outside I could feel the sun burning my skin, but the inside was cold and crowded. My head was spinning, I frantically walked around the school trying to find my group. There were butterflies in my stomach as I heard kids chatting and screaming. It smelled like glue and brand new book pages. Every step was scary and I felt like jelly. A woman with a blue t-shirt, glasses, and black pants waving a blue sign that had 'Blue Travelers' written on it for the group I was in escorted me out of the hallways and into the loud cafeteria. I happily walked over and took a seat next to my friend on the long, grey and black outlined lunch table seat. She had black hair with a light blue t-shirt with a white face mask. We excitedly greeted each other and shared what we have been doing so far. As we lined up lines from other classes crowded around us shoving other kids out of their way. The cafeteria filled with yellow chairs was soon empty. There were paintings on the walls and doors all around us. We swerved left, right, and in all directions until we got to a carpet-floored room. I looked around and saw a smartboard, a wipe board, a file cabinet, a desk, and a few windows. The room had reminded me of the mystery book I had just finished reading. The blinds were open wide and the sunlight beamed brightly through the window. We put our backpacks against the bumpy white wall. The teacher introduced herself and said that the topic for this week was Asia. The class's attempt at making a circle looked more like a wavy misshapen oval. Everybody introduced ourselves by saying our names, what the first thing you thought of when you heard the word Asia and what we are looking forward to this summer. The closer it was for my chance to talk the more tense I felt, then of course it was my turn.

"Um..." I quickly thought of some words to say. "My name is Vivian Lee and this summer I'm looking forward to going outside and getting back together with family members and the first thing I think about when I hear the word Asia is South Korea and Japan".

As the other speeches went on I was thinking about how the camp was going to turn out. Next to us on the dark blue carpet were blue camp t-shirts that we were asked to put on. We did a couple of stretches and listened to different music such as jazz, K-pop, Indie rock and many others. During music we were paired up with a partner. A girl with black hair, bangs, thin round glasses, a white hat, and a light green jacket gave me a warm and friendly smile. We played the alto together and ate lunch. We sat together during art and made beautiful paper lanterns.

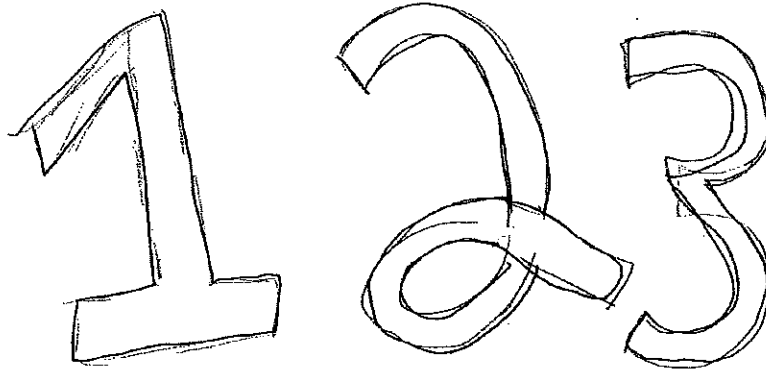
Four weeks later... On a yellow school bus going up and down up and down with a slightly crumpled note in my hand saying "See you next summer!" and an Email address brought back memories of good times.

Looking back, overall it was one of the finest chapters of my life so far. If you're reading this just remember that ends are new beginnings. Your life is similar to a book, every chapter has an end and a beginning.

# The Amazing Three

by Adam Ali

*NOTE: The names are correct but the characteristics are tinkered and tweaked.*



*To my brothers, for inspiring me.*

Today was a peaceful day. Or was it? Na, it was. Or was it? Na, it was. OR WAS IT!?!?!? And that's how you lose a lot of readers. Ok, but seriously, this is the story of the Amazing Tree! I mean the amazing 3, sorry, still working on it, amazing three. So you might be wondering: "what is the Amazing Three?" Well it's a superhero team name. Let me take you back two days ago. Today was a peaceful day. Or was it?

So I was getting ready for school. "Another day of boring school, another day wasted." I said. My mom drove me to school with my two boring brothers. My little brother, Ziad, was a tattle-tale (that's what my big brother calls him.) and whenever he gets in trouble, he runs. FAST. And my big brother, Omar. He is strong but gets in trouble a lot. And me? I draw. A LOT. I get in trouble for not focusing though. So we arrived at school. We are just going to skip the story until recess. So, me and my friends were playing when a bunch of teachers told us to go back. Then I thought of the rest of the day being boring and I resisted. "I will not go inside even if a meteor shot right through me!!!" I said, ignoring the fact that it's probably important. Then a meteor shot right next to me. It opened, holding a pen. IDK how THAT HAPPENED. I thought I fainted and this is a dream. Recklessly, I picked it up and drew to take my mind off of everything that just happened. Everyone looked at me. But I just continued drawing. Soon, the drawings came to life! I ran back to the teacher. "The stickman I drew came to life and is now waving at me!" And then I got an early dismissal.

Then someone riding on a dragon came! And then Ziad ran as fast as lightning past me while Omar picked up the dragon and threw him! Since they thought that I was the only one without powers, I drew an army of stickmen and told them to attack the dragon. "When did you power?" My little bro said. "Long story." I said. "When did you guys get your powers?" "Long story." They said at the same time. Then a dragon came, flying furiously with dead stickmen on him. "Oh. My. GOD!!!" I said. "That's an image that I will NOT get out of my head." said Ziad. "I need to draw a HUGE stickman." I said. "What's with you and stickmen?" Omar said. "Ziad, send me flying to make the legs!" I said, ignoring Omar's comment. So Ziad sent me flying and I made rainbow-shaped legs. "He is getting closer!" Omar shouted. "Omar, send me up in the sky! But not too far!" I said. "Okay." he said. He shot me up so then I made the head and then made the arms as I fell down. "The dragon's here!!!" Omar said as I crashed through the roof of the school. "FIGHT!!!" I yelled. Omar was wrestling the dragon while Ziad distracted the dragon.

Then my huge stickman tackled the dragon, killing it. "WHERE IS THE MAN WHO DID THIS!?!?" I yelled. "Dude, calm down." Omar said. "HE JUST KILLED INNOCENT STICKMAN!!! I AM NOT GOING TO CALM DOWN!!!!" I screamed. Then I saw someone. He had a ski mask and black clothing with back gloves and shoes like a robber. "Bobert!" I yelled. "Who's Bobert?" Ziad asked. "The giant stickman." I said. The giant stickman picked me up on his head. "CHARGE!!!" I said. I slid down the stickman and went to the guy. I drew up a bazooka while Omar and Ziad caught up. "WHY DID YOU DO THIS!?!?" I said, pointing the oversized bazooka at his head.

"You guys probably got your random powers at the meteor shower, right?." the person said. "Yeah." Me and my brothers said at the same time. "Well I got HIT by a meteor," he said. He took off the mask and his face was scarred and bruised. "Well I got an idea! Let's pay for your plastic surgery!" I said. "But how?" said Ziad. "It would cost a lot." "We can fight crime!" I said. "Okay let's do it!" Omar said.

And that's how The Amazing Three was born.

And the morale is... I actually have no idea what the morale is. I think the morale is don't stand outside In the middle of a meteor shower or else you will end up somehow getting a dragon and destroying everything for no reason at all. I hope that's somehow helpful.

# Into The Wild

by Lily Isner

Olivia is a twelve year old girl who lives in New York. But one day her life changes forever. She wanders into a strange world with magic. But her life gets even stanger when she discovers who the missing princess who sits on the Wilderness Throne really is...

## One

Before we start the story, let me introduce myself. I'm Olivia...something. I'm an orphan and don't really know my last name. I live in New York. But now, let's get started!

I walked along the streets of New York. The people around me didn't seem to notice me as I walked. I'm used to it. It's not unusual to see a kid around twelve walking around in New York. Suddenly the ground under my feet collapsed. Nobody around me noticed. They kept walking. I tried to scream but could not. Suddenly, I passed out.

My eyes snapped open. I scrambled up words and yelped. I looked around and realized I was in a strange room I had never seen in my life. A woman was standing next to me.

"Calm down." she told me. "You're safe."

"How did I get here?!" I cried. "Who are you?!"

"Don't worry Olivia," the woman said. "I'm Shanu, the nurse of Magicville."

"Ma-magicville?" I stuttered. "Uh... how do you know my name?"

Questions flooded through me.

"Calm down." Shanu said again.

Then I blacked out again.

To Be Continued...

## The Bad Truth

By Charlotte Smart

Once upon a time there was a little girl named Violet. When she was little she had no super power but her mom and dad did. They would take turns leaving and would be gone for a while. When she was old enough for kindergarten she went to her first day of school. She learned some of her ABC's and had lunch, recess and math!

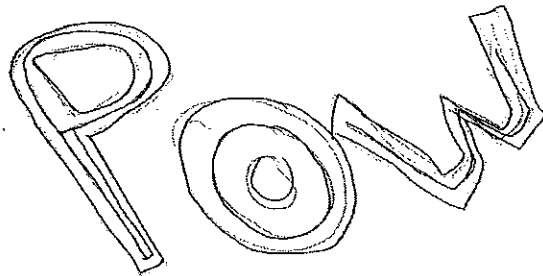
One boy in class asked her, "Are you a normal person?"

"Yes."

"Is your family normal?"

"Yes, ok then."

When she got older, she found out that her family had superpowers and she got hers - she can form a bubble around her. When her brother was born, he cried. A Lot. When her brother Dash got older, he found out too. He had super speed. And their family had another baby named Jack Jack. He was cute and had so many powers! Now their family fights crimes together.





## **When I Ran To The Woods**

**Ashley Shea**

The woods were the last thing I saw before I went blind. It was the middle of the night and the southern army had just invaded our village. My grandmother told me that they wanted our magic and that they were jealous. I knew our village had magic but it never really occurred to me that we were the only ones with living magic.

See, we all had magic but theres was asleep and it had been for hundreds of years. Our village magic gave us health, no one was ever sick, it also gave us unicorns and dragons that feasted on the beautiful flowers . But health That's what they wanted: not the flowers and the music, not the unicorns and dragons. They wanted to be safe from the war that they created. They knew they were losing so they wanted to be safe from the great attack that was being planned by the western village; they were the biggest and could easily defeat them. They had to find the tree of power, or so they thought.

The tree of power is our main food source so they thought that was where the magic was. But it is actually from the immortal dragon who brings magic to protect our land. He lives deep in the woods and no one has seen him but we have heard him calling to the unicorns; he only does this when it rains. So we call him Rainy the magic imortile dragon, yeah it's kind of a mouthful. When he is in a bad mood everyone gets nightmares of him calling your name. But for me he says this; "run to the woods Lynn you're safe here." It's not scary what he is saying, but it is scary that I don't know what he means. All of a sudden I heard a pounding on our door and a bang. They were inside our house.

I had no idea what to do but you know who did? Grandma, she knew exactly where they were going and when but that only worked for about a minute and then were

face to face with a southern soldier. Grandma punched him and told me to run in the woods till I see a unicorn named Luna. I kind of thought she was crazy but I just went along with it. I ran out the back door and almost made it to the woods but then I heard a loud bang and a piercing pain in my eyes and passed out.

When I woke up I could smell a fire burning and I was cuddled up in a nice warm blanket. But I could not see anything. Then someone who had a very sophisticated voice told me it was all fine and to drink the bowl of soup next to me. It tasted terrible but my eyes didn't hurt as bad, then out of the blue I got a huge headache and once again passed out.

When I woke up I could see, but not what was around me, what was in peoples heads. I could see the worry in the sophisticated woman's head but I wasn't fully seeing it was just kind of knowing and associating a picture with it. I know it sounds weird but it's not like this stuff is made up.

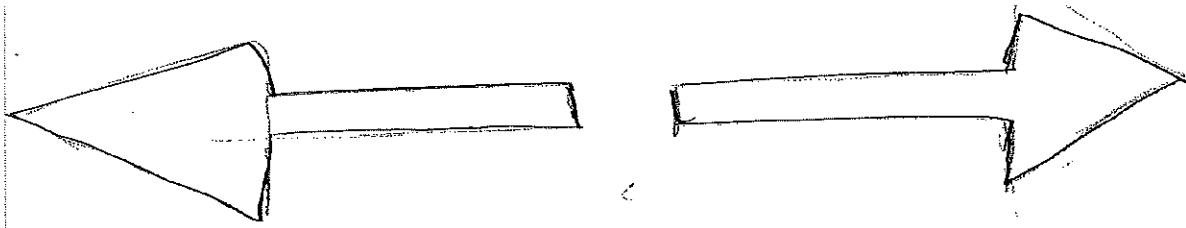
The sophisticated woman said she worked for Nala. She also told me that Nala would be coming to pick up soon. I was shocked and confused by this so I did the logical thing and started crying, but by the time I stopped I heard another woman's voice, this one a little less human, she said "I'm Here". It was Nala. Come on sugar we must be going and then you guessed it - I passed out.

When I awoke I was dangling from a tree branch over what seemed to be a giant out of nothingness and right when I thought I was getting dropped to my death I was released. " Finally I was waiting an hour for you to wake up". Me being reasonably scared asked her why she did that and she just "because I wanted to, now go get ready for training". What did I get myself into?

# The Betrayal

By Elina Shah

Many, many years ago there was a great battle in Atlantis. Not like the underwater realm you've heard of in stories but a kingdom for fairies! Everyone was happy and reunited until an argument occurred. The argument turned into a battle and the battle turned into a war! This was called the great battle of Atlantis. It was so ancient nobody even knew how it started. After the war Atlantis split up into two parts. One part was still called Atlantis and the other part was called Seaville. Atlantis was calm and everyone got along but Seaville was the complete opposite. You could say Atlantis was the good guy and Seaville was the bad guy. In Atlantis lived Sage and Midnight, two best friends who thought their friendship could never end. Well short story they were wrong. Do you want to hear the real story? Well let me tell you....



## Sage's Story

Sage's life had always been pretty awesome. I mean she was the princess of Atlantis and was pretty popular in school. Life only got better from there. Sage met her best friend in the entire world named Midnight. She and Midnight did everything together. Everything was awesome until one day... It was her first class in Atlantis High and she was getting something for Midnight from Midnight's locker. She opened the locker and noticed a mysterious note from the king of Seaville. Sage's head was spinning! I mean how would you react if you realized your best friend might have been working with the bad guy.

She instantly read the note and her jaw dropped. Apparently the whole time her best friend was behind an evil plan! Without thinking she ran home with the note to show her parents. Her parents read it and they

were starstruck. They agreed to help Sage and suggested they tell some people who could help them discover what Midnight was planning against Sage's back. Sage skipped school for a few days so she and her parents could figure things out. They warned the city more about the war so they could prepare for anything that could happen. The next day while Sage and her parents were home looking at the note more carefully for anything they missed they heard a knock coming from the front door. Sage answered it and saw Midnight with a mischievous grin on her face....

## Midnight's Story

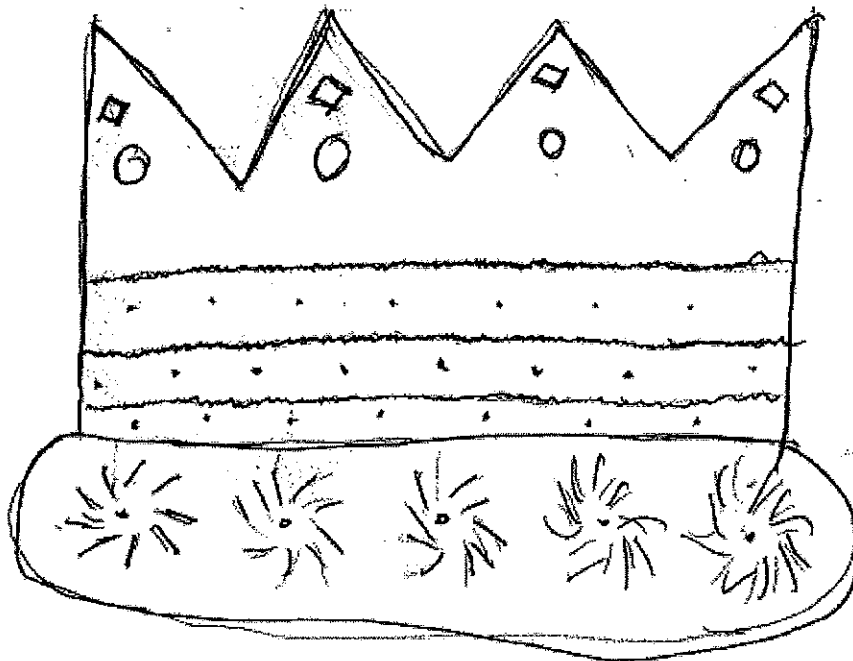
Midnight got on the bus and walked straight to her best friend Sage. Or at least that's what Sage thought. Midnight was never Sage's friend, She was working behind Sage's back with the king of Seaville to form a war. One of Midnight's biggest secrets was that she and her parents were evil fairies. Midnight was actually born in Seaville and her great-great-great grandparents started the ancient war. Some people would say this was evil but Midnight didn't care. She had always disliked Sage but still pretended to be friends with her. Midnight and Sage arrived at school and then Midnight asked Sage to get something for her from her locker. Sage never came back from the lockers to give it to her and she didn't see Sage at school for the rest of that week. Midnight then worried, did Sage see the note from the king of Seaville saying that they were going to destroy Atlantis?

A few days later Midnight had a meeting with the king of Seaville to discuss how they needed to start the war. After the meeting she decided to go over to Sage's house. She knocked on the door and Sage came shortly after to see who was there. Her jaw dropped when she saw Midnight and slammed the door in Midnight's face! The next day when Midnight was walking back home with the king of Seaville she saw a car outside her house. Midnight didn't think much of it until Sage and her parents walked out with the police of Atlantis. They walked up to Midnight and the king of Seaville and told them they were arrested. Midnight couldn't believe they found out her plan and arrested her! Anger boiled inside her! She understood why she was arrested but couldn't process the fact she would be in prison for years! Time passed by and Atlantis was safe and Sage and her parents lived happily ever after!

# The Princess Ninja

By Quinn Glad

Once upon a time, there was a kingdom. And in that kingdom there was a princess. She was not just any princess... she was a ninja! One day she looked out her window and saw a tiny spec in the distance. It was getting bigger and bigger. Soon she could see it. It was a dragon! "Hi," said the dragon. "Would you like to go on an adventure?" asked the dragon. "Yes," replied the princess. So off they went for an adventure. Until they came across a dragon with a person on it. As soon as they got close enough, the person jumped on the dragon! And then started fighting! It turned out that it was a thief and was trying to steal the dragon for his fur! But the princess fought back and saved the dragon! The dragon thanked the princess for saving him and flew her back home. He told everyone about her bravery. She became the protector of the town. Whenever anyone was in danger, she knew and her sidekick was ... the dragon! And no one else ever heard of the thief again!



## Problems with VR

By Ashvin Saini

Once upon a time there was a soccer player. A soccer player named Jota who was good but did not practice. So his coach said that he should practice if he wanted to stay in the team. He had a big game coming up too! He went over to his friend's house after soccer practice. One thing to know about Jota's friend - he was smart! He asked his friend for help. His friend said "I have a VR (virtual reality) device that can help you. When you pretend to kick a ball, it actually kicks it on the screen". So, Jota practiced and practiced. When his next soccer practice came, he was the star of the show! His teammates were so impressed that they wanted to try it out too! Next practice, everyone was doing well! The next day, Jota asked, "Does your VR device have any other games?" His friend replied, "It does!" and showed them other games that they could play. Jota and his teammates were overjoyed! There were Space invaders from Jupiter, Martians from Mars, and best of all they got pizza after that! Next practice, the coach was shocked! Everyone was back to their miserable form again! "Oh well, I never could have expected them to have two great practices in a row!" said the coach, shaking his head. Worst of all, their big game was coming up against Barca academy and they were undefeated! Jota and his team kept playing their video games and eating pizza. Finally, it was game day! Turns out the game wasn't fun at all for Jota's team! They lost 12-0 and they were so sweaty! From then on Jota practiced the old fashioned way. He earned respect from his teammates and finally he became team captain!

# The Book

by Ani Nishanian

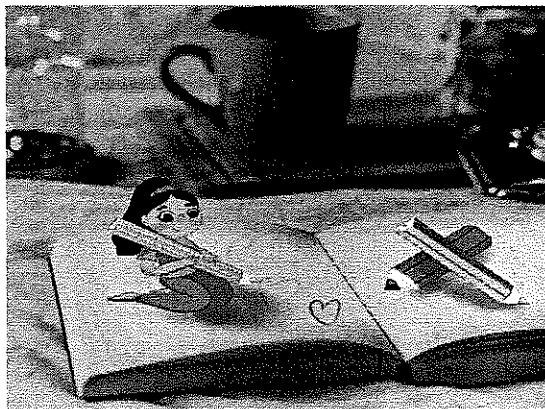
I put my fingers on the computer  
Ready to write up a brand new world  
But what was awaiting in this story's future  
Would it fit in the "book mold"?

I wanted my story to be the best  
I wanted it to inspire  
But writing this story makes me stressed  
Will it be bright like fire?

I thought to myself "They say the sky's the limit"  
When I heard my mom's voice from the hall  
"Honey, dinner is ready in 5 minutes!  
Get here soon or we'll eat it all!"

I told myself to do this fast  
And just write what came to mind  
And just like that, the time had passed  
The heart of the story is all I have to find

My story's not a work of art  
Its greatness isn't guaranteed  
But it came from my heart  
And that's all that mattered to me



# *What should I do?*

*By Natalie Axelrod*

What should I do, oh what should I do?

My temperature is too high, and

My throat is turning a murky

Pale blue,

Oh what should, what should I do?

I can't feel my feet, and I have the

Mumps and the

Measles, the

Chicken pox,

And the flu.

Oh what should I do, what should I do?

I could call the doctor, but he'd say I'm

Lying.

I could tell my my mom, but she'd start

Crying.

Oh what should I do, what should I do?



# White Crawlers

By Rhett Byers

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Myron Keys and his best friend, Terra King, were walking through the woods. There was no sound except for the chirp of a bird and maybe the running of a squirrel. But soon, they were playing tag and screaming and yelling all over the place! "Got ya!" Yelled Myron. "Nuh uh!" Replied Terra.

Soon, Terra was itching. She had red blotches all over her beautiful skin. "Err, Myron?" She asked. "I think I touched poison ivy. Can you get my mom?" Myron responded with, "Wow! It looks pretty bad. I'll go get your mom." And so he did...

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Terra: When He was out of sight, she noticed she had big blisters all over her skin! Now, it looked like she jumped into a pool of poison ivy! Terra tried not to itch, but the irritation was too strong!

A little later, she found out her blisters were popping, leaving behind small, fluffy white spots. Terra screamed, "Myron! Hurry! Please!" But no sound came back. With all her strength she cried out, "I'm coming!" So, Terra hobbled over towards the house. She only covered 2 feet a minute when all the sudden, her white spots were spreading! Soon, the white spots turned into patches. Those patches turned into sheets. Lastly, those sheets were like her new skin. Now it has spread all over her body! It spread to her head and

covered it. Terra could open her eyes but she could barely see. She's able to breathe. She can smell. But, something's wrong. She has a tingling sensation, she has a low-grade fever that's slowly rising. She barely had any energy. But Terra could run, even leap now! She spotted a familiar woman and boy, but could not remember them...

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Myron ran as fast as he could back into the neighborhood. His heart was thumping out of his chest because of Terra. "This is all your fault Myron. THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT!" A hoarse voice in Myron's head whispered. At last, panting, he saw the house. Not bothering to knock on the door, he barged into the house and cried, "Mrs.King! Help! - Terra-poison ivy-my" - "Now shut it boy and talk normally! What happened?" Mrs.King interrupted. "Ok, so you won't like this, but Terra touched poison ivy and needs help.

I think we'll need the first aid kit." He said. "Ok, you have a good reason." Mrs.Kings replied. Her face softened. "Let's go..."

Far into the forest where Myron left Terra, she was missing. "I don't get it! She was here!" He shouted. Mrs. Kings responded with a rude "Are you messing with me boy? Are you? Answer me!" When they heard heavy breathing behind them. "Did you do that?" Mrs.King whispered. "No." Replied Myron. They turned to see something that looked like Terra, yet it didn't.

The thing was growing hair at a superfast rate. So fast you could see it getting longer. It has the same color of hair as Terra, blonde. Its nails were growing too. They were 5 inches long. "HISSSSS!" It hissed. "Terra, sweetie, calm down please." "Mrs.King! Is it even Terra?!" Myron yelled. "It's covered in white stuff, has very long hair, and nails!" "I know it's Terra. Her s-shirt." Mrs.King replied. Sure enough, there were shreds of her shirt and

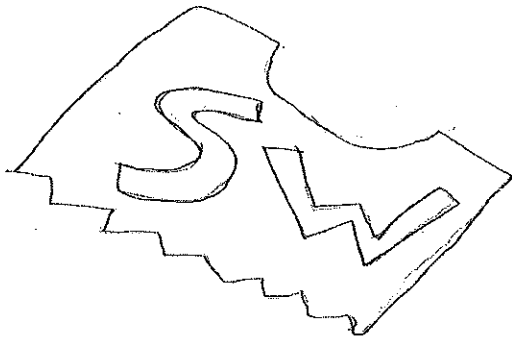
pants along her body. “Terra! It’s- He was interrupted when “Terra” screamed. Its legs grew 3 more feet. Her arms were more bent. She had two small arms coming out of her other legs.

“AHHHH!!! TERRA! STOP! I'm your mo-AIIIIEEEE!” Mrs.King screamed. “Myron, help! It bit me, it bit me!” Myron tried pulling the thing off of Mrs.Kings but he too was bit. The thing used its nails to knock them unconscious and dragged them away. They were never heard from again. As for the original Terra, she was just presumed dead. The thing made multiple attacks in California, so now it’s known as the white wraith. What they didn't know was that the thing was Terra, just infected by a fungus. People now call this kind of fungi, the crawler. It was only a matter of time before the whole neighborhood was infected. Now you can only hear the sound of a bird chirping, and maybe the running of a squirrel.

## SuperDog and the Amazing Fight!

by Samantha Trent

Bruce is an ordinary dog in the day, but at night he is a **SuperDog!** Every night SuperDog watches over New York City, and every night there is no crime. But tonight is different. SuperDog heard screaming down in the city. SuperDog flew down to see what was going on. There is a villain putting people to sleep, so he could steal things from them. When the villain saw SuperDog he said. "Hey dog, my name is Green Goblin, are you trying to stop me? Because if you are, you will have to catch me first." Green Goblin hopped on his glider and took off. SuperDog has a big problem, because SuperDog can't fight. He never learned. All he could do was break up a small fight that people were having. So all SuperDog could do is go with the flow.



SuperDog caught up with Green Goblin. Then all of a sudden lasers shot out of SuperDog's eyes. Green Goblin's Glider broke and flipped out, and crashed to the ground."Did I do that?" said SuperDog. "YES YOU DID!" "You broke my glider!" said Green Goblin. "Now how can I fly around and make people fall asleep?" "That was my plan." said SuperDog, but in SuperDog's head he had done that by accident. Then SuperDog tied Green Goblin up. SuperDog asked Green Goblin a question. "How long till the people wake up?" "About 10 minutes." "Good, now the cops can lock you up for good." "Ahh man!" said Green Goblin. Then SuperDog flew away to watch over New York City. When SuperDog had his back to Green Goblin, Green Goblin untied himself and ran away. "He He He He He!" said Green Goblin. Then SuperDog realized Green Goblin was missing.....

Story by Arsema Tafari

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## The End

Bang!! The dome fell down with the ball vent. This was it. I survived far longer than I thought I would. The waves crashed against the shore. I was definitely laying out my pros and cons.

Pros : possibly surviving

Cons:

- Dying
- Suffocating myself to death
- Dying of fear
- 

" Well this is the end of me," I said.

I closed my eyes to my death until I heard something... it sounded like the whirring of some sort of engine. I opened my eyes to a helicopter that had the United States seal on it. But what would they be doing here in Ireland? A ladder was hanging below. I grasped on as the Lighthouse began to collapse.

As I got into the engine, I was shocked. I saw President Kennedy. He was smiling in my presence.

" Hello there, my name is John. Nice to meet you." I was startled as I reached my shaking hand out to greet him.

" Why me?" I asked impatiently.

"Excuse me?" said Mr. President.

" Why did you save me out of all the people who died in the flood?"

"Oh... I was hoping you would not ask that," said Mr. President.

"Well, when me and your dad were younger-"

"My dad?" I asked. "How do you know about my dad?" I asked curiously.

"I still pray for him," I said as I shed a tear.

"What do you mean?" Mr. President asked, confused.

"He died," I said, stating the obvious.

"Oh... about that. He faked his death to save you."

"Me?" I said, confused.

"Yeah, we will talk about this more in the White house."

"Summary, you will be my son from now on because our dad did not want to take care of you for safety reasons and your mom died," Mr. President said.

"Oh...Ok," I stammered.

Although I seemed shy on the outside, I was celebrating that I could finally get a good education and not eat expired or canned food. After I had my celebrations, I just thought about how lucky I am to be having this moment to be standing right now, to be alive.

## 2

As we transferred from helicopter to limosine, I was still thinking. In fact, I was so focused I barely noticed all the people taking pictures of me. I was quite embarrassed because I was in overalls with an "American Dream" shirt soaking wet in mud.

When I got into the White House, I was shocked. The gray sandstone floors were polished so well that I could see my reflection.

"Wow! I looked quite poor against all of this!" I said a bit disappointed

"Oh yeah! I almost forgot that if you are going to be my son you have to look like my son too. What type of clothing brand do you like?"

"Uhhh... I do not know any"

He clapped then said, "Alice, please get him a couple suits and Levi jeans."

"Yes sir," said the maid.

"If you don't mind me asking, what are jeans?" I asked.

"You will see," said Mr. President.

"It is getting late right now you should probably start changing into your pj's"

"What are PJs?!"

"Mary, get him some Pj's."

"Yes Sir," said Mary as she walked away.

I was so excited until I noticed something: where am I going to sleep? What bathroom will I use to take a shower? Does Mr. President have any more kids? Will I sleep with them? I guess the President was thinking the same thing when Alice came back.

" Alice, please escort our friend here to his room, there is a full bath in the room."

When I got into my room, I was stunned. There was a library sized shelf and games like a poker table, ice hockey - you name it, they have it. I am so lucky but the lady said this was not your whole room. I was confused. She walked towards the shelf of books when I noticed something about two specific books: one book on the spine had my name on it! I pulled out the book and the shelf opened up to a room. In the room was my bed! Inside I saw a door which led to the bathroom. Even the bathroom was fancy; there were marble floors and a tub+shower. I closed my eyes and went to sleep.

" Good night," Alice said as she gently closed the door.

"Good night," I said.

I woke up. I saw her get out of the game room so I could go outside. I crept outside, making sure each step was quiet. I saw the book shelf again and I saw a book that looked familiar. I knew what was so familiar about it: on the lighthouse there is a little boat molded on the metal of the lighthouse and my grandpa would tell me outside of the lighthouse that the boat symbol had a special meaning and he needed to tell me when I was 21 but now that he died of the flood, I don't know the meaning. But, I know that there was that boat symbol on a necklace my grandma gave to me when I was twelve. I still have it on my neck to this day. I pull the book and a different door opens. When I went in, it seemed like some sort of office. I knew it was not Mr. President's because I already saw his office. I notice newspapers with pins and string papers everywhere, but I also noticed all the string leads to a picture of my grandpa. Was the president not friends with my dad and just got me because I am the closest to my grandpa?

I had so many theories but it was getting late and this mystery was too much for me to handle so school will distract me tomorrow, I hope.

# **Go after the Stuck One**

**By: Ani Nishanian**

**Once there were 2 friends  
Who were playing near the forest ends**

**But then a bear was found  
Standing right on the mound!**

**The first one ran up the tree  
Of the count of one, two, three.**

**Now the 2nd one was left on the ground.  
Oh, what to do not to be found.**

**But then he got an idea,  
That was better than running to North Korea**

**He pretended he was dead,  
And stopped thinking of being fed.  
The bear came and gave the 2nd friend a sniff  
And then gave him another whiff**

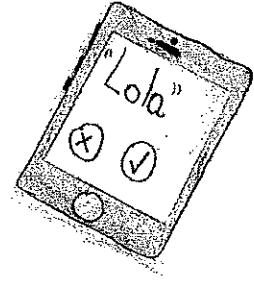
**After he went away  
And on that same day..**

**The first friend climbed down the tree  
And asked his friend with curiosity**

**"Oh tell me, what did the bear say?"  
He pleaded that way**

**The other responded and begun.  
"A true friend will always come after the stuck one."**





# A New Beginning

By Cailyn Lackey

Gina ran into the girls bathroom with a ripped dress, ruined makeup, and one shoe. Everything was ruined. But before you know what happened you should start from where it all began. Gina was on the phone with her best friend Lola.

"Hey Lola, do you have your prom dress ready yet?" Gina asked.

"No, I'm going shopping tomorrow to buy a dress." Lola replied.

"Oh, thank you so, so much! I haven't even decided what makeup I'm going to wear!"

Gina replied in relief. "Hey, maybe we could go together!" Gina continued.

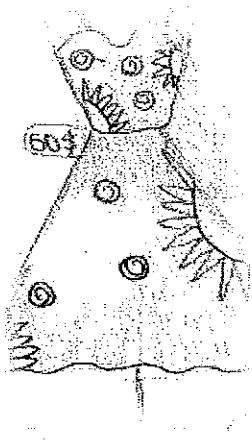
"Yea, that would be so fun!" Lola said with excitement. The girls talked for hours.

"Hey, I have to go eat dinner." Gina said with disappointment that she had to leave her friend.

"Okay, I should probably go too." Lola said. "I'll see you tomorrow, 3

o'clock sharp!" Gina said as she hung up. Lola went over to her bed and started

doodling, while Gina had her dinner.



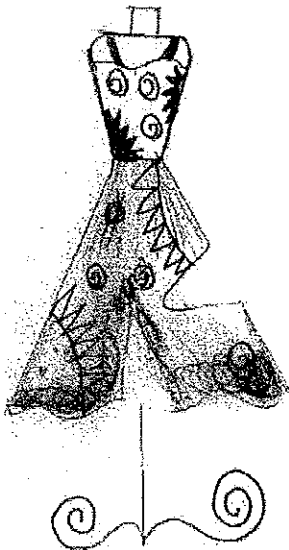
The next day Gina and Lola went shopping and got all their stuff for prom. Gina got a blue dress, while Lola got a purple dress. The girls got their shoes and jewelry too. They already had their dates, Gina was going with her boyfriend Ben, and Lola was going with her boyfriend John. The girls were so excited for tomorrow night's prom.

Lola went over to Gina's house for pictures just before the prom. Gina's dad was taking them. "I can't believe my baby girl is all grown up!" Gina's dad whimpered. "Oh, stop being such a big baby!" Gina's mom yelled. The girls giggled. When Gina and Lola got to prom John showed up immediately. Gina went inside to wait for Ben, she danced with Lola and John for a bit then went outside to look for him.

After a few minutes of waiting for Ben his car pulled up, Gina was so happy to see him she screamed. But once Ben got out she saw something was on his arm. Once she looked closer she realized it was her arch enemy Jessica. Gina was now so mad she screamed again but not happily. Ben saw Gina and ran over, he begged for forgiveness, but Gina was so mad she did the first thing she could think of... She wacked him with her shoe.



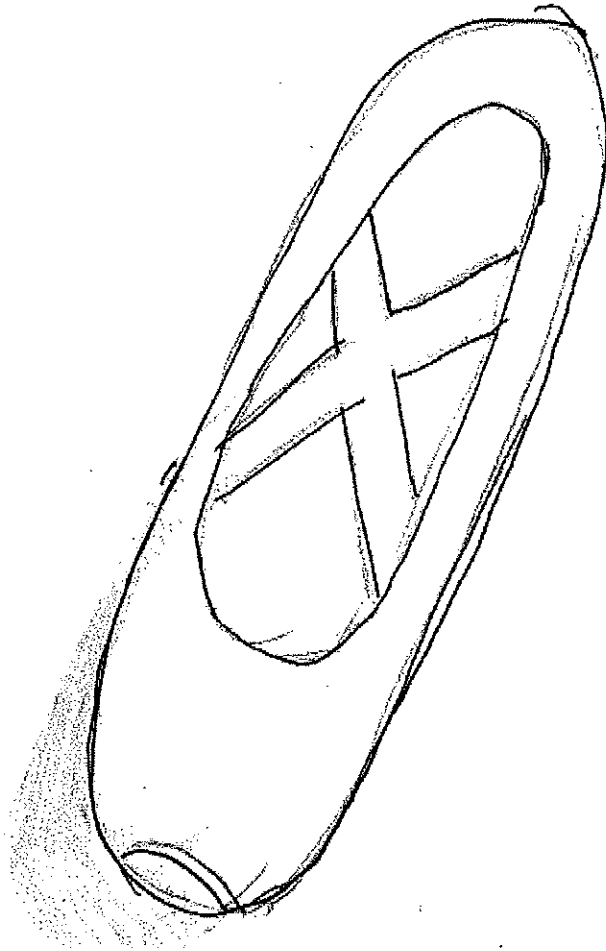
Gina started to run but tripped and fell. Her brand new dress was ruined. Tears started to stream down her eyes, her makeup started to run, she ran into the girls bathroom and cried. She cried so long she couldn't stand up. A few minutes later Lola ran into the bathroom looking for Gina. "Gina, are you in here?" she shouted until she saw Gina's shoe poking out from under the stall. "There you are! John told me everything. You don't need him, he's a worthless liar. He doesn't deserve you!" Lola said proudly. Gina walked out and Lola gasped. "I mean it's not that bad." Lola said sarcastically. "Really?"



*Gina asked. "Really." Lola said. After a couple of minutes of putting on makeup, finding new shoes, and fixing Gina's dress Gina looked way better than she did before. "Come on!" Lola said while hugging Gina. Lola and Gina went back to the gym and danced all night. Gina was lucky to have a friend like Lola.*

# Lily and the Dance Competition

by Maia Kirkbride



One morning, 12 year old Lily Henry stumbled downstairs to the usual morning sight, Saturday morning pancakes, a family tradition that had been going since Lily was a baby. Mom frying bacon, dad making pancakes, her brother Jacob cutting strawberries and her little sister Julia clanging spoons. She quickly took her spot using the air fryer to make tater tots.

"Well someone's a sleepy bird" dad says with a big hearty laugh like always. Mom caught the dad laughing and laughed as she sat down for breakfast and we all had stacks of pancakes, and as Lily was going to wash the dishes, the phone rang.

"Lily, can you get the phone?" mom asked as she picked up Julia to get her changed for church."

"Okay," Lily replied. She went into the living room and answered the phone.

"Hello," she said shyly.

"Hello, is this Lily Henry?" the voice replied.

"Yes it is. What can I do for you?" Lily said.

"I'm Charlotte Campbell and I'm the director of a show called Lost in Motion and I was wondering if you would like to do a dance routine? Oh, and do you dance?" Mrs. Campbell asked.

"Yes I do. I do ballet, tap jazz, Irish step dancing and contemporary dance."

"Oh, great, but I'll need to file out some details," Charlotte said. "Can I talk to your mom or dad?"

"Sure, I'll go get her," Lily replied.

**Escape**  
**-by Jo Forlai**

*\*This is an excerpt from a longer work in progress.*

I start to wonder why the world is the way it is. I look at my friend, Robert. He is sitting on the roof with me, staring at the breathtaking sunset. With its red, gold and pink colors. I want more people to be out here. But it's just us, like always. Everyone else evacuated years ago because of a bombing. My family, and Roberts stayed. Somehow, we knew it was fake and thankfully it was. The government thinks everyone evacuated. I guess they didn't count right. We still watch the broadcastings they send to all the country. Most of the time there stupid like a cat trying to fit its head into a sock. Once, when we were watching, they gave a warning, several cities were being evacuated. Wildfires were spreading. In our direction too. My father did the calculations with his bug-eyed glasses and thought they were going to die out at the edge of town. He was very wrong.

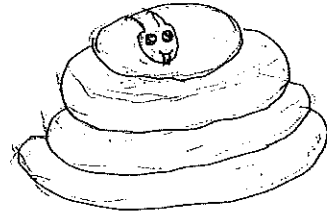
They went about a mile in and burnt our house down! Thankfully, my mom had a gut feeling to move down a couple houses. Robert's father said that it would be better to move down a couple houses, but they resisted. A day or so later, we saw the dancing flames devour my house and the vacant houses down the street. As it hit each house, the flames went up a couple feet. My little brother was in tears because he left his favorite bunny in the house. Apparently, a couple of his friends pitched in to buy it for him. I'm surprised that he left it too. But when it reached its stopping point, it died as soon as it started. Now, it's just peace.

Before the evacuation, Robert, and I didn't really communicate with each other. But here right now, we are sitting side by side watching the sunset fade into a beautiful array of stars. I went into deep thought and must have dozed off because when I opened my eyes, Robert was standing over me screaming.

"Julia, Julia, Julia! Wake up! They found us!"

# Snake Island

by Samantha Trent



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Level 1: The Wolves

### Level 1: The Wolves

There was a boy named James and a girl named Jessie. They were both in high school. Both at age 17. They were also in love with each other. Soon, they started dating. James and Jessie want to have an adventure together on an island. They wanted to have their alone time so they got a boat trip to a stranded island. It was \$100 for both of them. Little did they know they were about to have the worst adventure of their lives on Snake Island.

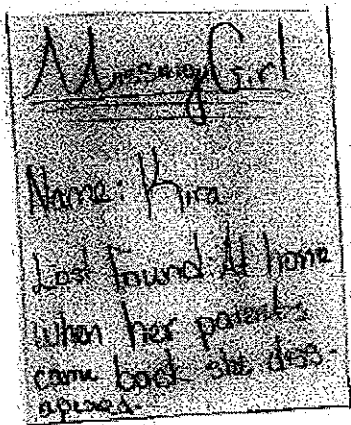
They boarded their boat and took off. They arrived at Snake Island around 12:00 am. They set up their tents, They got their pj's on and got comfortable. All of a sudden, they heard a deep growl. It was two gray wolves ready to attack! James went out to see what was going on. The wolves attacked James, but he fought them off bravely.

A wounded James went back into the tent. He said in a panicked voice, "get the boat driver to pick us up!" Jessie tried but the driver said he would pick them up in four days. Not knowing what to do, they held each other close, not knowing what was in store for them.

The next day they went to look for some food for breakfast. They were walking through the woods when they came upon a guy named Jake. He says he has been here for 5 years. He has been trying to get off the island before he gets killed by the snakes. "Snakes?! We only saw wolves". Jessie said. "Then you're still on stage 1." Jake said. "What do you mean stage 1?" James asked. Well you see- SNATCH!! A ten foot long anaconda ate him whole. "RUN!" James said. They ran as fast as a cheetah but the snake caught up with both of them. The snake was about to eat them, then the same two wolves that attacked James the night before, attacked the snake. The vicious anaconda slithered away. The wolves have become friends. James, Jessie, and their wolf friends, Luna and Lupin, walked home terrified.

# Missing Girl

by Kiyani Shelat



One day in the year of 2025 an eleven year old girl named Kira disappeared. No one knew how or why but she was alone at her house. Her parents had gone to watch a movie and once her parents came back she disappeared...

\*\*\*\*\*

3 years later...

Freya and her family moved. Freya now goes to the same school as Kira did a few years ago, but she didn't know that.

"Class, settle down now." Ms. Murley said. The class now settled down and was finally ready to learn.

"Okay, class today we have a new student, and her name is..."

Freya came into the classroom. Freya introduced herself and then went to an empty desk somewhere in the middle.

"Okay, let's get started, first remember your projects are due soon." Ms. Murley said.

"Freya?"

"Yes?" Freya said.

"Since you weren't here when we were doing the project, don't worry about that. Also Madilyn will show you around the school and answer any questions you have," Ms. Murley said, about to pick up her water bottle. Freya nodded.

It was around two o'clock now. Time for recess. Freya made a couple of friends. They were all gonna play tag.

"Hey, Freya?" Carlos said.

"Yeah?" said Freya, really confused.

"Nevermind..." Carlos said.

Then, Carlos whispered to Madilyn if he should tell Freya the secret.

After school they all went to Freya's house.

"Freya, so me and Carlos have a secret to tell you..." Madilyn said.

"Well, what is it?" Freya asked

"Umm... I'll just show you..." All of the sudden, Madilyn had made everything turn to ice.

"Woah, how'd you do that?" Freya said.

"So I have had this power ever since I was young, same with Carlos, I mean we don't have the same power but he does have powers. Madilyn said.

"Why are you telling me exactly?" Freya questioned.

"Because you also have a super power," Carlos and Madilyn said at the same time.

"What power do I have?" Freya asked.

"Well it depends, do you see visions every now and then and then they happen a little later?" Carlos asked.

"Yeah," Freya asked why?

"So okay I'm gonna say this really fast okay?" Madilyn said.

"So your superpower is that you can see the future and we need you on a mission but you need to learn how to control your powers, but somehow you already know."

"Okay, so what's the mission?" Freya asked.

"Wow you acted more calmly than I thought," Carlos said.

Freya smiled.

"So first, I need to tell you the story. Have you ever heard of the mystery of Kira?" Madilyn asked.

"No, I haven't. Can you tell me?" Freya asked.

"Sure I can, it goes like this. One day a girl named Kira was at her house doing some homework and her parents went to go see a movie. A couple hours later, when her parents came back, she disappeared and no one has found her ever since."

"Oh, so we have to find her?" Freya asked, a little confused.

"Yes, but there is more to the story. So Kira had powers like us. Also we know that someone did it on purpose, we just don't know who. So we actually know where to go because our agency that we work with gave us the mission figured out," Madilyn said.



A little later, they went to where Kira disappeared. It was a cave but a very dangerous one, but they had no idea..

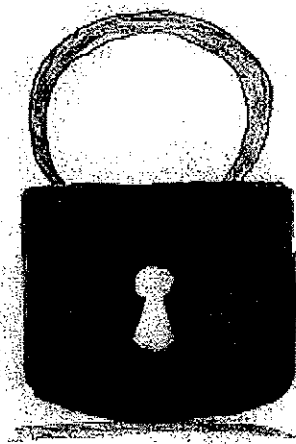
“Okay, let's go here, follow me,” Carlos said. Then they heard something and they started to get a little scared, but they kept going. Then Madilyn knew something was up and she kept quiet.

“Let's stop here and take a quick break.” Carlos said. They took a quick break but then Freya heard some noises and saw a girl...

“Guys can you help me push this rock?” Freya asked.

Carlos and Madilyn got up and helped Freya push the rock. Then... just then a magical barrier moved and they all found...

They all yelled. “KIRA”!!



Freya and Madilyn immediately help her and Carlos goes to get something out of his backpack. But then it seemed that Freya and Madilyn got locked up in the magical barrier with Kira...

“Well, well, well... Carlos said.

“Carlos, what are you doing? Come on, get us out of here. Freya said. Without saying a word Carlos trapped them all...

“Good luck,” Carlos said and, “yes, I am the one that trapped Kira.” Carlos left.

“You girls will have to solve a code but I haven't solved it in years.

Also the reason why Carlos trapped you is because he wants to take your powers... he already took mine... “ said Kira.

And with that more and more kids just started to appear but their powers started to fade and Carlos never came back. Now Madilyn and Freya remember that Carlos never told the girls what his power was. Well they found out, it was the worst one of all, he was able to steal other people's power...

Freya just had a vision of the future and... poof her and Madilyn's powers were gone...

# Students Should be Taught Financial Literacy in School

By: Vivian Lee

Would you let someone drive a car without a license? What about sending athletes to the Olympics without any training? The same goes for budgeting and finances. Students should be taught financial literacy for numerous reasons. The challenging obstacle of finances and budgeting will come later in a student's life. Teaching students about financial literacy early helps build up a strong foundation.

Sending students off into the financial system without any information can be stressful for them. Research proves students who are taught financial literacy are less likely to struggle with debts and loans. If students get sent off without any knowledge, they will have issues with bills and default. Preparing students can reduce stress in the future since they know how to handle financial issues.

Every day in adulthood will require money and finances since our economy revolves around money. Practicing financial literacy helps students to become more self-sufficient in many ways. It helps them become more independent, responsible, and self-reliant. "Financial literacy not only involves the ability to count your money, but it also tests your ability to evaluate the cost and benefit associated with each decision you make" - Wayne Chirisa. When you teach about financial literacy, it allows students to become more self-sufficient and responsible. It helps articulate their future expectations with knowledge equipped to their prepared minds.

School is where students go to learn. Financial literacy most likely will not be taught anywhere else. It is better to use the opportunity when you're a kid to learn new things, rather than having to face the fearful consequences later on. Kids generally don't rely on themselves to learn, instead, they rely on schools to teach them. Many teachers have experience dealing with financial issues, therefore they can share their experience with students and help them learn.

Financial literacy consists of the majority of a student's life. Electricity and water bills, house/apartment payments, budgeting for food, and basic supplies all go into the regularity of the financial world. Financial education benefits 100% of students. Only about 33% of adults globally are financially literate. 71% of Americans struggle with loan defaults and budgeting issues.

Saving, budgeting, earning, and spending are all aspects of the financial world. We must prepare students for those by focusing particularly on financial education. Therefore when students grow up they will be able to face the regularity of the world and how to deal with finances easily and responsibly.

## **Selected Poems**

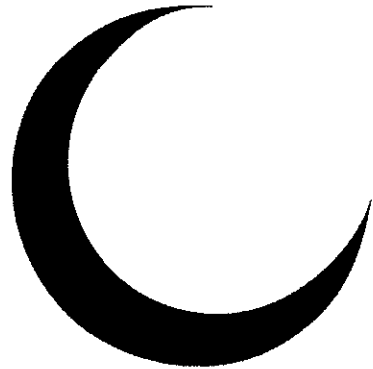
There once was a shoe who grew  
In the middle of a canoe  
He went berserk when he  
Turned into homework  
And found out he was not a shoe!

I have a bunny named Clerk  
Who once came with me to work  
The paper he ate  
Was turned in late  
So then my classmates called him  
a jerk

***by Saisha Kulkarni***

### **Bumblebee by Riya Prabhu**

A small bumblebee  
Sits on a turquoise flower  
Buzz... It's gone again



**Roses are blooming  
They blossom so prettily  
Shines under the moon  
-Haiku by Alyna Nguyen**

## **Selected Poems**

by Vivian Lee

### **Dark Forest**

**(Haiku)**

An old dark forest  
Owls swooping in the air  
In the midnight sky

### **Color Poem**

Green is Spring, nature, and growth  
And feels like green leaves  
Green is the taste of spinach  
Cut cucumber and the fresh mint smell green  
A breezy nature walk makes me feel green  
Green is the sound of lawn mowers  
Green is a swamp, a bright forest, and a garden  
Gardening is green  
Growing is also green  
Green is peace and prosperity.

### **Cinquain**

Mushroom  
Bright, Colorful  
Sprouting, Expanding, Enlarging  
Growing like a weed  
Fungi

# The Forbidden Secret

by Marisa Shah

Leanna and Aaliyah were two very different girls. Aaliyah was a devil like her whole family, and Leanna was a perfect little angel like her family. Angels have blonde hair, glittering halos, and the ability to fly. Devils on the other hand had either black or dark brown hair, red horns, and the ability to read minds. But Leanna and Aaliyah were born different. Instead Leanna had white hair and a light blue halo and Aaliyah had red hair and orange horns. Their parents always compared them and treated them differently, unlike their other siblings. But they still had the same powers their family has. One night Aaliyah and Leanna snuck out and met each other. They found a lot in common and the next day they met up again. After just a few weeks they were best friends. One day when they met up they had an idea. Their idea was to find The Sirpoint Master. The Sirpoint Master is the master of both devils and angels. The Sirpoint Master knows everything about everyone. But finding The Sirpoint Master was forbidden. But that couldn't stop them. This is how it went.

Leanna flew as fast as a cheetah to where she and Aaliyah met. She hoped Aaliyah remembered to bring the map to find the Sirpoint Master's castle. Once she got there she saw a figure, she walked closer and there Aaliyah was. "Aaliyah!" Leanna said. Aaliyah ran up to her and gave her a hug. "Don't worry I have the map." Aaliyah said. "Oh thank gosh! So where do we start?" Leanna asked. "Um, from where we are I think the easiest way is to cross the Blight sea, go past the Manticore Cove and on the map it says that once you pass the cove, the castle is right there." Aaliyah replied. "Ok well what are we waiting for! Let's go!" Leanna said as her hand was already out. Aaliyah firmly held Leanna's hand and they set off to the Blight sea. A few minutes later they arrived at the Blight Sea. "Ok, it is really windy here so we have to be careful," Aaliyah shouted. Suddenly, there was a loud noise. SPLASH! "Look out!" Leanna screamed. A sea serpent slashed its tail straight at the girl's chests. The two girls were just about seconds away from death, but they moved out of the way just in time. "Ok, maybe we should go?" Aaliyah said. "Um, yeah!" Leanna screamed. The girls passed the sea serpent and continued their journey.

They arrived at the Manticore Cove. Blood was dripping down the walls. "Um, Is that supposed to be there?" Aaliyah asked as she was pointing to a shadow on the ground. "I don't know, what even is that anyway?" Leanna replied. Aaliyah gulped. "A dead body." Aaliyah whispered. Leanna took a step forward. The boards creaked. She quickly stepped back and screamed. Suddenly, they heard a flapping noise. "Um, what was that?" Leanna asked. "Run." Aaliyah said. They ran forward and bats flew out of the walls and knives were falling from the roof. "We're going to die!" Leanna screamed. "Don't jinx it!" Aaliyah screamed. The girls made it just in time. A voice echoed through the air. Die. Die. Die. the voice said. "Hey, um do you mind flying out of here with me?" Aaliyah asked. "Sure, but what is that echoing noise?" Leanna replied. "A manticore." Aaliyah whispered. "Uh, yeah lets go." Leanna said. Just as they were about to get out of the cove, there was a noise. Thud. Thud. Thud. BANG! CRASH! A manticore smashed through the walls and shot up into the air. The manticore's teeth and claws had blood on them, and the manticore's mane was stained. The girls looked behind, their eyes wide. "Go!" Aaliyah screamed. The manticore whipped its wing near the girls heads. "Duck!" Leanna screamed. Suddenly, Aaliyah whipped her hand backwards and the manticore was on fire. Seconds later the manticore burned to ashes. "Um, what just happened?" Aaliyah said. "I think you have the control of fire! Uh, try concentrating and using hand movement," Leanna replied. Aaliyah did as she said and there was a fireball that appeared in her hand. "Whoa!" Both girls said in amazement. "I want to try!" Leanna said. She did the same thing as Aaliyah and a little water speck turned into a mini wave. "Wait, so I control fire and you control water?" Aaliyah said. "I think so!" Leanna said. "That is so cool! But let's keep walking," Aaliyah said. "Um, I don't think there is much more walking." Leanna said. "Whoa," Aaliyah said as she turned around to see a ginormous castle in front of her.

The girls started walking toward the castle when suddenly Leanna stopped and put her hand in front of Aaliyah. "Hey, why did you do that!" Aaliyah shouted. "Shhhhhh! There are guards in front of the castle. How are we going to get past them because they are definitely going to notice us," Leanna whispered. "Oh, um maybe I can try to set the ground on fire and since it will spread maybe you could fly us over the fire and then we make it to the doors?" Aaliyah suggested. "Ok, um sure. Well you're up so go ahead." Leanna said. Aaliyah bent down

and lit the ground on fire. Both girls watched in amazement as the fire made its way to the guards. "Ok, let's go." Aaliyah said. Leanna and Aaliyah flew right over the guards and landed right in front of the door. They entered the castle and all the lights went out. "Um, mind making a torch or something?" Leanna asked. "That is just what I was thinking!" Aaliyah replied. Aaliyah made a torch and they went upstairs. The boards creaked every step they took. "This place seems kind of old," Leanna whispered. Suddenly, another light appeared across the hall. "Wait, why is there another light?" Aaliyah asked.

"Aaliyah Lynn Bell, Leanna Dina Cadfull..." a voice said.

"Freeze," Leanna whispered quickly. "How do you know our names?" Aaliyah said bravely. "Oh girls, you should have been taught that the Sirpoint Master knows everything about every single soul in our universe," the voice said again as he removed his cloak to reveal his face. "You're the Sirpoint Master?" Leanna asked. "Yes, but you may call me Elias," the Master replied. "Ok, Elias, we need to talk to you," Aaliyah said. "Follow me," Elias said. The girls followed him into a room where a big throne lay in the middle of the room. Elias sat on the throne. "So, why did you exactly come here?" Elias asked. "Well, me and Leanna were wondering why we are so different from our - "

"Leav," Elias interrupted. "Sir we just got here. Please, we want to know why. You are our only option," Aaliyah begged. "I am forbidden to tell you, but you girls must know. You are adopted," Elias said. "What?" both girls said. "I - I don't believe you, but fine then. Who is mine and Aaliyah's father, then?" Leanna said, shocked. "Girls you must know, you two are sisters," Elias said. Leanna and Aaliyah turned to each other in shock. "And - and I am your father." Elias said.

# A Rocky House

by Baya Ben Yahia

Hi I am Samuel. I live in a house with three sisters, three brothers, my parents, and a dog. It gets very noisy in our house. It's super messy too. Clothes are everywhere. Rocky, my dog, pees everywhere. It's a mess. I am always late to school because of them. Daisy, my oldest sister, has to do makeup in the morning and fix herself up. One day I woke up 30 minutes after her and when I finished she was still sobbing about what she should wear. My parents have to take care of six kids plus a baby, so seven kids and a dog. I don't know how they do it. I can barely take care of a plant, let alone eight moving things. Anyway, I was almost late to school today because of this house. It was pretty big before we moved in but seemed to have shrunk ten times.

Back to the story. Daisy was doing her makeup, Rocky was outside peeing in our backyard, my mom and dad were busy talking about bills, Timothy, my older brother, and Max, my younger brother, were wrestling. Tommy, my baby brother, was crying. Dorothy, my older sister, was playing basketball outside. Lilly, my younger sister, was wearing her whole entire closet and took makeup from Daisy's makeup bag so you could say she was mini-Daisy. Eventually, I went to school and I was 15 minutes late.

"You guys have your homework right?" my teacher said.

Ugh.

Rocky ate it, I thought.

"My dog ate my homework!" I exclaimed.

"Samuel, don't make up lies," my teacher responded.

"It's not," I said. My teacher looked at me.

Ugh. ROCKY!!!!



# Guardian of Sastellia

by Norah Kim

Once upon a time, there lived a beautiful land full of beautiful, but vain fairies. There was only one fairy who was not interested in lounging around, or staring into a mirror all day.

And her name was Holly. Holly loved to play sports and go exploring in the woods nearby. She was also really brave.

Ok, I'll take it from here, Person Who Is Narrating. Ahem... Today started like any other day, blah blah blah. Magic lessons and whatnot. But then something strange happened. I-----



Hi, again. Sorry! Someone scared me. I think her name was Luna Star, and she told me I was a magic guardian of the mythical land, Sastellia. I wasn't listening for one second! That nerve of a girl! I've seen magic before, but this took the cake!!!! Sastellia isn't even real! I just wanted to sit back, and relax. HOW DO I DEAL WITH ALL THIS NONSENSE????!! I'm going to scream. Be right back.

Ok, I'm back. My mom says I should get some rest. Should I take her advice? Yes? Okay, I'm off to bed. Mmmhmm. Good Night.

**AAAAAAAARGH!!!!** The girl--Luna Star won't leave me alone!!! She bothers me every second! She insisted I AM the guardian Sastellia needed. She wanted me to come with her on her flying sleigh, so I kicked her out of my room. She pleaded with me to let her in, but I refused. Wow. That was mean of me, diary! I'm letting her talk, but as soon as she's done, she's out!

Luna Star showed me her flying sleigh, and I have got to say, it was awesome. I could go on and on and on about how pretty, neat, and cool it was, but I have to leave. Now. Luna Star is waiting for me outside. EEEEEEEEE!!! I'm about to travel to mythical land in a flying sleigh like a beautiful princess guardian!!! Because that's who I am!!!! Maybe Luna Star isn't the liar I expected her to be. I'm off!!! Yes. I'll tell you all about it when I get back, diary. But for now, wish me luck!

## ***Pep Talk About Life***

by Laya Abou Alkir

Young and old are like yin and yang,  
Total opposites and yet related.  
You can be young while still being old.  
You can love it, or hate it.

When you are young you have the traits below,  
It might be now or long ago.  
Anyway, keep reading along  
So you can finish this poem-like song.

You are a baby and freshly hatched.  
Your cuteness can not be matched.  
Your skin is as soft as a rose.  
You can't live on your own I suppose.  
In your mind there are no words  
Every time you fall you see birds.  
When you sleep you have wild dreams.  
You have friends, groups of teams.  
You are saying "I can't wait to grow up!"  
To have your glow up.  
But it's not worth it, let me tell you.  
You don't want to grow up too.

And when you're old you have the traits below.  
It might be clear or hard to show.  
If you keep reading you're almost to the end,  
Keep going my friend.

Your friends are gone.  
In your life you have done many wrong.  
You have trouble remembering.  
You don't have sight or hearing.  
You are all wrinkly, old, and gray.  
You are so tired so you sit in your bed all day.  
You are gone too.  
Sorry to hear that from you.

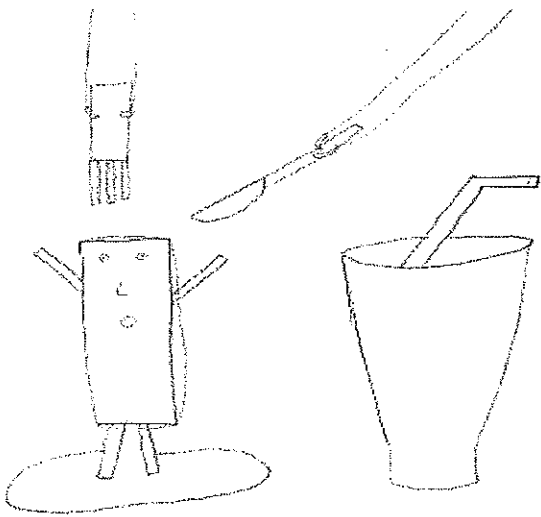
As you can see from the above,  
The traits might fit you like a glove.  
Or they might not fit you perfectly,  
And that is what I wanted you to see.

You can be old while still being young.  
You should enjoy your life while you can.  
You don't want to rush this step,  
Your new life has just began.

# Fish Sticks!

by Adam Ali

One pleasant afternoon, a fish stick was born. Fish cut into sticks and then rolled around bread crumbs. He was in a shipment along with 20,000 brothers and sisters. Frozen, then sent around the world. One of the fish sticks was named Tim. Tim loved his life cruising around the world. Then, a bright light shined on Tim and his siblings' invisible eyes as they departed elsewhere. Then, they found themselves in a shop. To



the fishsticks, this is unusual territory. They had never seen a shop before. All of the fishsticks were afraid. Except little Tim. They settled down and all was calm until a customer walked in. They usually came in but this one was different. He had a hat that said: I ♥ fish sticks. Everyone except Tim found this ominous. "Hello," said the cashier. "What would you like to buy?" "Fish sticks. ALL OF THEM." he said. "Do you have the money?" said the cashier with a raised eyebrow. "YES." said the odd customer. He slammed a bunch of 100 dollar bills on the counter. "I will get them for you." the cashier said.

"WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DOOOOOOOOOO!?!?!?" said one of Tim's brothers. 20,000 fish sticks were loaded onto a truck and shipped off to the man's house.

Then, they arrived at the man's house. His house was ragged, with wallpaper peeling off at an expressive rate, the only nice thing the man had was a table. It was shiny and looked like it was polished 10 times a day. The chair was not as nice but compared to the rest of the house, the chair is suddenly 2nd place. "Home, sweet home." the man grumbled along with something about taxes. Tim didn't know how fish sticks died but he was about to figure it out. The man brought out a plate, a fork and a knife. THEY looked like they were polished every minute. "Time to eat!" said the man. Tim grew curious. He hopped off to the man and said "Eat what?" The man screamed in terror. "A TALKING FISH STICK!!!" The man screamed. "Tim, don't TALK to the man!" one of his brothers told him. "But what IS he going to eat?" Tim said. All of the fish sticks except Tim were looking around guilty.

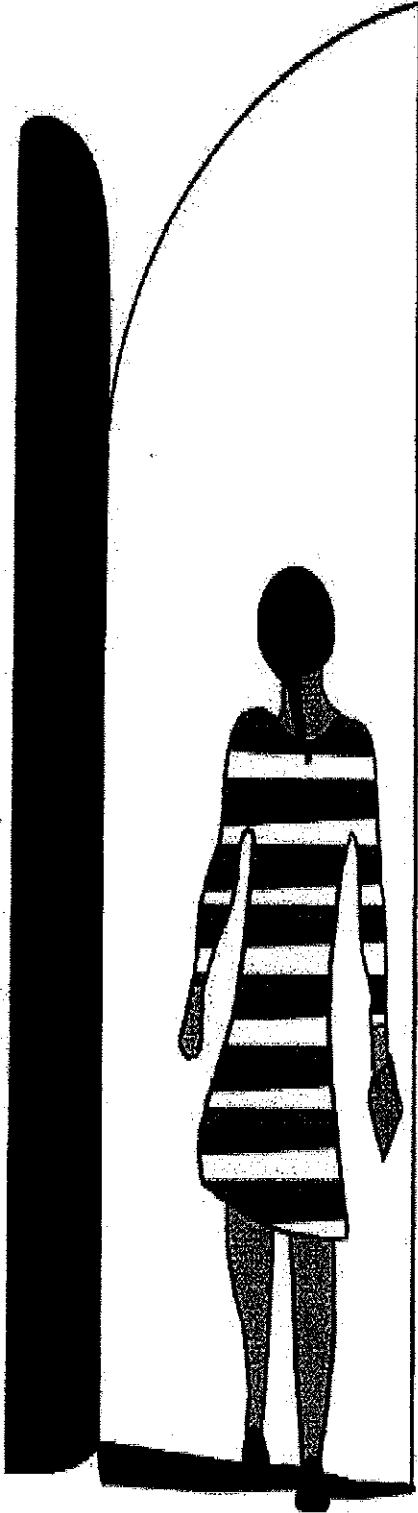
They haven't told him what happens to fish sticks like him. He is too little. Just then, all of the fish sticks ran. Including Tim, who followed his brothers and sisters.

"COME BACK HERE!!!" The man yelled. Just then, the man went in his truck and started driving to the fish sticks. "Why are we running?" Tim finally said. "That man wants to EAT you." One of his brothers said. "Why?" Tim said. "You are a piece of fish rolled around in breadcrumbs and then roasted." Said one of Tim's sisters. "What's a fish?" Tim said. "I give up trying." said Tim's sister. "I PAID GOOD MONEY FOR YOU ANNOYING FISH STICKS!" said the man. "LET'S GO HIDE BEHIND THAT CAR!" One of Tim's sisters said. "You know, you are not supposed to yell your plans out loud." said one of Tim's brothers. "JUST GO!" said Tim's sister.

Just then, all of the sweaty fish sticks went behind the car. "Wait a minute... I have an IDEA!" said one of Tim's brothers. "Oh no..." one of Tim's sisters said. The fish sticks went IN the car and started DRIVING! They were heading straight towards the man that was chasing them. "JUMP!" said one of Tim's siblings. They all jumped, and just in time, because one second later the cars crashed into each other. "I WILL GET YOU FOR THIS FISH STICKS!" said the man as he was blown up. "Why is that guy sleeping on the floor?" said Tim. All of the fish sticks except Tim were looking around guilty. "Let's just go." said one of Tim's brothers.

# **One Day**

*By: Ani Nishanian*



**I don't know why it is like this**

**But I will always miss**

**That lovely aroma of the flower's branches**

**And of him thinking of his chances**

**Of winning the lottery**

**And of her making pottery**

**I will miss her amazing intelligence**

**And his talking of irrelevance**

**Of your kind act**

**And helping people develop what they lacked**

**And why she helped that fox?**

**I think it was to get rid of the box.**

**I wish it wasn't this way,**

**But life always has its price to pay.**

**If I could go back I would change**

**Not to ditch you because you were strange.**

**Even though I have to go away,**

**I hope that I will be back one day.**

# **I Meet Bella**

**by Mia Baily**

One day I was walking in the forest with my dog Max, when I heard something in the bushes. We stopped to see what it was, and then I heard it run away. We continued our walk and I kept hearing animal sounds. Max and I stopped to look around. I was looking in circles when suddenly a baby bunny came from behind me. Max started barking and I got scared. The bunny looked lost. I tried to help her but she was scared. I thought about keeping her, but I knew my mom wouldn't let me. We started walking away when I started thinking she needs a name, but what should it be? That's perfect! I thought - Bella should be her new name. "Bella!" I said. She looked confused. "Bella!" I said again. She still didn't come. "Bella!" I said for the last time and she started moving. I got excited and she started jumping. Max and I went home for the day.

The next morning I got some carrots and lettuce, which I thought she might like, and a bowl of water. I quickly told mom that I was going to take Max for a walk. I got Max and went outside on the same path as yesterday, hoping that I would see Bella. We were walking when Bella popped out of the bushes. I gave her the food and water and then we finished our walk. That night I made a house for her and wrote Bella on it. When I placed her house on the ground she hopped in it. From that day on I started feeding her and giving her water. It was like I had a pet but she lived in her own home.



# Tom and the Magical Hole

by Arsema Tafari

It was a normal Sunday afternoon. Tom's mom was applying for a job at the pancake warehouse after her diner went up in flames. Tom convinced his mom to get a job to help both of them especially with Tom's dad gone. It was hard for the two of them.

"Okay honey, you know where the spare keys are and toast is in the oven and don't forget-"

"Mom, it's okay! Just go and get that job! Good luck!"

"Thanks honey!"

Slam! This was it. The house was all to himself. All of a sudden, it was raining and Tom was bored because most of the stuff in his house was sold to support him and his mom, so he decided to go on a walk. Apparently, a new shop opened and the sidewalk was crowded.

"Guess I have to walk on the road," muttered Tom, walking slowly but with purpose.

Tom's Mom hated it when Tom walked on the road, especially if it was raining, but he had no choice this time. Tom walked cautiously, he looked down just to make sure he wouldn't slip. After a while, Tom seemed to be comfortable walking like this so he started to walk a little faster with his eyes looking up. All of a sudden he slips into a huge sinkhole. Tom was completely knocked unconscious.

Everything happened so fast. Eventually Tom woke up in an 18 ft deep hole. Tom was surprised because it didn't seem like this was here yesterday. Was this magic? No, that would be crazy.

Tom tries to escape and he screams at the top of his lungs. He tries climbing and falls back down into the muddy pit. He thought, "What if I can't get out, is this it for me?"

Meanwhile at Tom's house, Tom's mom was wondering where Tom was. She was scared that someone kidnapped him. Even worse, Tom's mom wondered if Tom fell into the same sinkhole Tom's father died in. They said that Tom's father, Nicholas, fell in a sinkhole and when they called paramedics to get him out, no one was in the hole. Everyone thinks he time traveled and could never come back. They searched everywhere far and wide but they never found him.

Desperate, Tom decided to look around for a way to get out. He noticed that the hole is covered with thin vines but he couldn't use them to climb up because they would

snap quickly. As he was looking at the vines he noticed a hand engraved in stone that was on the wall. Tom wonders if this can be his way out.

As Tom reaches for the stone it glows in the dark. He touched it and he couldn't see anything. Once the brightness faded away he saw that he seemed to be in some sort of village. He thought it was some sort of display until he saw a man in front of him standing in an open field. The person was wearing old style clothes from the colonial era and looked like a farmer. He asked the person where he was and what the date was. The man responded,

" It is the 8th of April 1775"

Tom thanked the farmer and kept walking. A second later, before Tom could even move another step, the stranger asked Tom, "Is your name Tom?" Tom freaked out because he had never seen this man before. The farmer said, "My name is Nicholas. Nice to meet you. I would love to show you around the village". They walked for a few minutes but then a man on a horse comes riding and saying,

**"THE BRITISH ARE COMING!!!! THE BRITISH ARE COMING!!!!!!!!!!!!"**

The farmer then said, " There goes crazy Paul!" As soon as this happened, Tom thought to himself, wait is that Paul Revere?!? He remembered learning about him from school. But if that was Paul Revere, that means he is stuck in the Revolutionary War. Will Tom find his way out of the war? Will he figure out Nicholas is his father?

# A Week at the Beach

by Bahar Anli

One day I was sleeping when the noise from downstairs woke me up. I went to the kitchen only to find my mom making a smoothie with the noisiest thing in the house, the blender. She started talking about how we haven't been on a family vacation and how it would be good if we did.

Of course I agreed, but my dad hates the beach so it took us a hot minute to convince him. But before we knew it, we were on the plane on our way to Miami. After we got off the plane and while my parents were unpacking, I just chilled in the water! After my parents came we had a picnic. After I ate, I went back to the water. There I made some friends and I started playing with them. The same routine repeated that whole week.

I love the beach. I hope you do too.



# Pink

by Betty Chu

Pink is the feeling after drinking lemonade.  
Pink is the feeling after eating yogurt.  
Pink is the feeling of friendship.  
And pink is the feeling of the sun during a late August day.

Pink is the sound of laughing  
Pink is the sound of splashing cold drinks.  
Pink is the sound of the breeze.  
And pink is the sound of giggling.

Pink is the taste of pink lemonade.  
Pink is the taste of sugar cookies.  
Pink is the taste of milkshakes  
And pink is the taste of cotton candy.

Pink is the smell of a fresh lemon.  
Pink is the smell of an early September day.  
Pink is the smell of fresh cookies with sprinkles.  
And pink is the smell of freshly baked bread from the oven.

Pink is the color of clouds at sunset.  
Pink is the color of flowers.  
Pink is the color of icing on a freshly baked Birthday Cake.  
And pink is the color of soft ballet shoes.

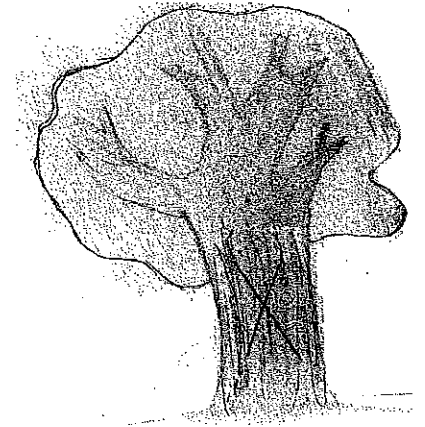
Pink is the flowers dancing under the breeze of the sunset.  
Pink is the birthday party on an early September day.  
Pink is the kids that are on the playground at the end of the school year.  
And pink is the sunset with the blends of colors.

Pink is a color that is happy.  
Pink is a color that is kind.  
Pink is a color that is bright.  
And pink is a color that is soft and warm.

# Because Of The Soup

by Gailyn Lackey

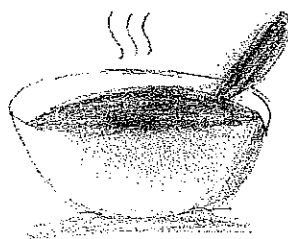
Luna went down the curved path like she does every day to her favorite spot in the forest, the forest is not that big. But it's like a second home to her. When she got there that day there were X's on the tree's. Luna didn't know what that meant so, when she got home she went to her room and opened up her laptop. Luna was there for hours trying to figure out what it meant. After a while she found out what it meant, she was shocked. The forest was getting cut down.



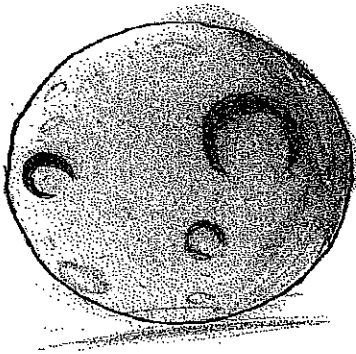
Luna couldn't let that happen, she had to do something. Luna told her mom all about it, her mom didn't know what to do, the two of them were brainstorming different ideas, but none of them would work. Until Luna's mom had a brilliant idea. She had said that she should protest. Luna worked on poster's for day's. They all said the same thing, "Save the Forest!"

When Luna went to the forest the next day she saw a elderly man sitting on the floor next to the tree. Luna didn't know what to say, she had never seen that man there before. The old man noticed Luna and said, "Hello there, I'm Mr. Grann." in a crackly voice. Luna was frightened at first but eventually had a smile on her face and said, "Hi! I'm Luna!"

Mr. Grann and Luna talked for a long time. Mr. Grann offered Luna some soup, Luna thought about that for a minute or so. Her mother always told her not to take something from a stranger, but Mr. Grann didn't quite feel like a stranger anymore. So she took the soup and enjoyed every drop of it. Luna had this weird feeling like she was finally complete while she drank the soup. But she got over it and went back home.



After a few days Luna felt really strange. She hadn't seen Mr. Grann in the forest lately. Luna started to get nervous, she still had a weird feeling about that soup and to top that off she was worried about Mr. Grann. The next day when she went to the forest she looked for Mr. Grann, he was nowhere to be seen. Luna looked for him everyday when she went to the forest, until she realized that he wasn't coming back.



Luna was annoyed that she couldn't find Mr. Grann, she threw a rock at the tree but when she threw the rock it went right through the middle. Luna didn't know what had just happened. She automatically assumed that the tree was really old and she was really, really strong. But she knew that wasn't true, because when her mom asked her to bring a bag of apples to the kitchen she couldn't pick it up, and that tree was not really, really old.

Luna pretended she was writing a book and that happened to the main character. Luna asked her mom why that happened to the character. Luna's mom said that her book character probably should have super powers. Luna thought about that for a second and realized how much that made sense but then realized how much that didn't make sense at the same time.

Luna decided to try these new "Powers" of hers so, she went to the forest. The first thing she did was a strength test, then a throwing test, after that she tried to make a fireball. She passed all of them. Luna didn't know what to do, she was shocked. But the only thing she could think of was the tree and how there getting cut down.

Luna was sad about the forest getting cut down and how her protest didn't work so, she decided to keep practicing her new powers; she hoped that they might help with the forest. Luna kept discovering new powers, but none of them would help the forest. But all was not lost yet, because Luna had an idea.

Luna thought that if she could find a way to put a protection spell on the trees that maybe it would make it so that the trees wouldn't get cut down. Luna knew that this would be a harder thing to do than the easy stuff like fireballs so she got to work. Day after day Luna would work on the protection spell until she finally mastered it.

Luna couldn't wait for the next day to put the spell on the trees. Luna got up extra early the next morning to go to the forest, but when she got there, there were construction workers

everywhere getting ready to destroy the forest. Luna couldn't let that happen so she ran as fast as she could to a spot where there was nobody there. Luna was so nervous that she forgot the spell! But once she took some deep breaths she remembered everything. Once she did the spell Luna hid in the bushes.

When the construction workers were all set up they started to cut down the trees. But when they tried to cut them all of their equipment broke as it touched the bark. Every single tree deflected the tools. The construction workers tried everything but everything broke. People started to leave and Luna started to jump with excitement. The forest wasn't getting cut down, she had powers, and everything was amazing. Luna was truly complete.

# Kraken

by Alyna Nguyen



One day, I was swimming peacefully in the sea outside of my summer home. “Maria!” yelled my dad. Technically, he is my stepdad. “Watch out for those krakens!!!”

There he goes again. Ever since Mom and Dan married, we moved to our beach mansion. Dan is crazy about underwater mythical creatures. “They’re not real!” I yell back.

“You’ll never know!”, he yells back, while dragging *another* harpoon.

I sighed. He’s been buying harpoons and weird thingy-ma-bobs to capture the kraken or another legendary creature. Suddenly a GIGANTIC splash toppled me over. “IVAN!” I screamed.

“What?” he said ‘innocently. Ivan is my annoying stepbrother. “Stop splashing me! If anything, splash Amanda! She- “

“I did what now, Maria?” This voice interrupting me is my snobby stepsister, Amanda. “You were sitting there- “I was pointing to her outdoor cabana. “While you saw him splash me. You watched all of it and didn’t bother to help! You also, stole my new purse to use it for a fashion shoot, used my new dress for the fashion shoot, and used my new lip stick for the fashion shoot!” I finished.

“So?” she shrugged. “It was kind of funny if you ask me. And also, I think I liked the dress I borrowed for the fashion shoot. I’m going to keep it!” She declared.

“What?! I’m not giving you my Rose Gold Une Robe Du Soir!” I cried. Amanda just smirked and sashayed away. Ivan followed close behind.

Dan walked over and put his hand on my shoulder to cool me down, but I pushed it off.

“Why did you marry my mom for, Dan?” I whispered.

“I married her because I love her, of course,” he replied.

“Are you sure you didn’t marry her for her money?” I whispered angrily. My mom is rich, *really* rich. She won the 1# lottery after she and my dad divorced.



Dan got taken aback with my sudden anger. He gently pushed a float to me. I cracked a smile and sat on it. "Well," he said. "Don't stay out too long Maria. This is the krakens' perfect time to strike." *Great* I thought. *Just when he was getting better.*

I sighed and looked at the golden setting sun. I saw a weirdly shaped blob in the distance. "Hi," said Amanda. I turned to see that she was wading towards me. I scowled and turned my head the other way. "Hey," she started. "What?" I replied harshly. Here's what I thought she was going to do: 1. Gloat; 2. Flip my float over. 3. Sashay away.

Apparently, none of those things happened. Instead, she sat next to me and apologized for this evening. I was shocked. Amanda never apologizes for anything. "I came out here because Ivan made fun of my favorite skirt." She mumbled. "That showed me how much I'm lucky to have a sister. Even if it's a stepsister." I broke out into a huge grin after I heard that. It felt good when she did the same thing.

"Do you see that blob in the distance?" I asked while tilting my head into the direction from which I last seen it. "Do you m-m-mean *that* blob?!" She looked a little pale. I whipped my head around to see the commotion. I couldn't believe my eyes. In front of our float, was indeed a kraken. The krakens' one good eye looked between us like it was inspecting us. Suddenly two tentacles jerked out of the water and grabbed us.

"DAN!!!" I cried as I rose upon the water stuck in the krakens' tight grasp. From my point of view, I can see Amanda desperately calling Dan as well. Two more tentacles rose up with a sword in each one. Before we could figure out what going on, the kraken shrieked, tightening its grip on us.

From this point, I could see the ground a bit. I saw a harpoon stuck on the side of the kraken. I immediately recognized it. "Amanda!" I yelled. She looked over to me. I pointed down. She also got it quickly because she started cheering. The kraken didn't like the pain and the noise, so it threw me and Amanda down to the beach, then disappeared underneath the water.

Then we hit the water. I was underwater. I opened my eyes to look for Amanda. I saw a buoy reaching for me outside of the water. I jumped up, grabbed the buoy, and gasped for air as the buoy dragged me towards the boat. "Thanks," I said when Amanda pulled me in.

I saw Dan sitting at the far end looking at where the kraken had been. "I guess I owe you an apology," I said, shuffling my feet. He looked up at me and nodded twice. But before I could open my mouth to apologize, he said "Don't worry. It's a joke, Maria. I just can't get that kraken out of my mind." I smiled and gave him a hug. When we rowed back, mom and Ivan rushed outside to give us a hug. I learned to ALWAYS trust Dan when it comes to mythical creatures and to love Amanda and Ivan from this event. Get kraken soon!

