

Table of Contents

Family and Friends

Basketball Buddies.....	Abigail Hopkins	2
A Lesson Learned	Jaici Rosi-Carney	2
A Private Getaway	Evan Silsbee.....	3
Winter	Baylee McClary	4
Peace	Kyryn Stickney	5
Thankful	Mackenzie Vigue	6
My Grandmother’s Brain Tumor.....	Aubrey Miller.....	6
Forever Camp.....	Aden Botting.....	7
In the Jungle.....	James Chowanski.....	8
First Win	Grace Qualey	9
Lost in the Forest	Emma Cooper	10
The Hurricane is Coming!	Caraline Elhoff.....	11
The Best Dad In the World	Rylee Kramer	12

Animal Tales

Horses	Abigail Siddiqui.....	15
Samson’s Story	Allison Bate	16
The Hedgehog and the Rabbit.....	Rebecca Hayes	17
The Dog Adventure.....	Lily Archer.....	19
Pug Tales.....	Jacob Edgecomb	19
My Grandparent’s Dog and Me	Brooke Caldwell	20
Izzy’s Snow Day	Cameron Casey	21
The Tiger of the Jungle.....	Gavin Gagnon	22
Lion in the Library	Zoey Shemkovitz	23
Never Again.....	Ada Cote	23

Seasonal Lore

My First Moose.....	Nathan Castonguay	26
The Hunnewells	Addison Chasse & Holly Blair	27
The Mystery.....	Will Morneault.....	29
I’m Sorry Mom	Allsion Fournier.....	31
The Mystery on Oak Street.....	Emma Cyr	32
Bear Scare	Alden Reardon	33
Memories	Emily Berube	35
Flavie’s Revenge.....	Sawyer Stoliker.....	36
Did You Hear That?.....	Madeleine Braun-Epp.....	41
Black Eyes	Tessa Bourgoïn	44
The Haunted Carnival.....	Dawson Jean	47
Don’t Question It	Rachel Wilson.....	48
One Winter Night.....	Abby Porter.....	49
A Christmas Miracle.....	Hannah McGary.....	50

Adventure

The Legend of Pamola	Tanner Marquis	53
Jake's Lost Family	Grant Caron	54
Stranded Alone.....	Jack Hentosh	55
The Rise of the Ice King	Griffin Holmes	56
The Trip	Camden Burby	57
The Crash.....	Kaydence Howes	59
Operation Save the Scientists.....	Cole Eastman	62
I Step on Something Soft.....	Lindsey Ouellette	64
Too Dark.....	Lydia Bragdon	66
The Doomed Kayak.....	Jacob Bennet	66
The Cyclone.....	Carrlyn Buck.....	67
Ben and Ruby: the Final Face-Off.....	Dakota Lynn Teschendorf.....	68
My Life As A Detective.....	Ciera Dignan	70
Storm.....	Ruth Green	71
A Gift's Curse	Aden Perry	73

Fantasy and Other Fiction

The Magic Rock.....	Molly Jane Cairns	76
The Battle of Ages	Collin Harvey.....	76
Stormy and the Castle of Witches.....	Katherine Michaud.....	78
The Last One Standing.....	Haidyn Saucier.....	80
The Corner of My Eye	Brandon Vandine	82
Survival Journal	Peyton Vaillancourt	83
The Original Hippie	Chloe Lento.....	84
1943.....	Haydan Keep.....	85
Halloween Night	James Desjardins.....	86
Alternate Reality	Katelyn Zetterman	88
The Magic Movie Theater	Jack Tate	89
The White Room.....	Sierra Jordan	91
Day by Day	Landan Albair	92
The Hunt	Grady Kinney.....	93
Danny's Life	Harlee Levesque.....	96
Abby and the Lucky Horse	Madison Thbiault.....	99
Detective McStern Part 2.....	Parker Ouellette	101
How Fast Time Flies.....	Hailey Emerson.....	102
King of the Hill	Coltin Hopkins	103
The Dream	Emerson Miller	105
We Fight Again.....	Emma Lausier	107
Antispace Book One Prologue.....	Owin Michaud	108
The Book of Astrophel.....	Kaeleigh Swanson.....	109
Discovery of Bruton.....	Eli Mosher.....	111
The Old Kingdom	Aubrey Ellsworth.....	112
Abyss	Olivia Buster	115
A World Returning	Olivia Levesque	117
How the Hurricane Was Made.....	Samson Hiltz.....	118
The Great Cookie Conundrum.....	Shakonnah Gilbert	118
Stuck	Abigail Reed	119
The Dragon Dagger.....	Marigan McBreairty.....	120
The Safe Haven.....	Madelynn Putnam	121
Gone and Never Returning	Madelyn Waugh.....	123
A Heart's Desire	Kolie Langley.....	124

Rusty's Rise to Power	Ashlyn York.....	126
A Sorceress of Sorts	Josiphine Tarr.....	127
The Castle and the Oak	Henry Robinson	129

Feelings, Dreams, and Reflections

Love	Ella Dubois.....	132
My Dairy.....	Zoë Daigle.....	132
Face the Truth	Halle Michaud.....	134
The Jump Scare.....	Finley Turner	136
A Marathon	Cody Guerrette.....	137
Dreams Are Weird	Gaige St. Peter	137
Just Do It.....	Madelynn Deprey.....	138
She.....	Grace Donovan	139
Ladder Slip.....	Ainsley Caron	140
Bad Luck Damien	Damien Reeves	140
Should Zoos Be Allowed?	Addison Young	141
PATRIOTISM	Maggie Bell.....	142
WHY 2020?	Brianna Buster	143
I Have a Dream	Grace Hilton.....	143
Can You See Me?	Wynonna Gockley	144
How to Use a Chainsaw.....	Raven Ward	145

Aroostook County Heritage

The Great Woods of Maine.....	Madeline Shaw.....	147
My First Time Cross Country Skiing	Agis Clark	147
An Aroostook Perspective	Caela Day.....	148
Hunting	Olivia Beaulieu	149
The MicMac Legend.....	Nicholas O'Neal.....	150
Aroostook County	Julia Daggett	151
Winter Wonderland.....	Mariah Silliboy	152
Ice Fishing Fun	Wyatt Oliver.....	153
Marvelous Maine Winters.....	Nolan Lorom.....	154
Lucky Catch.....	Hunter Sanford.....	154

**Friends
and
Family**

Basketball Buddies

One day when my friend Emma and I stayed after school, she asked me, “Do you want to shoot some hoops?”

“Sure!” I said. So we went off to the gym to play basketball.

When we got to the gym, I put my backpack down on the bleachers and ran to the rack to get a basketball. I shot so many hoops, but I missed most of them. I stomped over to the bleachers and sulked.

When I got to the bleachers, Emma said, “What’s the matter?”

I said, “Everytime I shoot a hoop, I miss! I knew I should’ve practiced instead of watching TV yesterday!”

“Well,” Emma said, “when you really want to be good at something, you have to keep trying until you’re confident.”

“Really?” I said.

“Of course!” She said, “You just have to do your best and have fun with the challenge!”

“Okay, so I should be out there being my best, right?”

“Yes!” Emma said excitedly.

The next game we had, I scored twelve out of twenty-two points and we won!

At the end I said, “Thanks for motivating me, Emma! Thanks to your advice, we won!”

Emma said, “You just tried your best, don’t thank me!”

After the game, I said to Emma, “Let’s be basketball buddies!”

“Sure!” Emma said gladly. “Basketball buddies it is!”

Abigail Hopkins

Easton Elementary School

Mrs. McQuade

Grade 4

A Lesson Learned

Have you ever fallen in a huge hole? Or even received injury and had to go to the emergency room? A giraffe was born in The Great Pride Lands. His parents thought he looked different, but in their eyes he was perfect. They decided to name their perfect, little giraffe Alexander.

Alexander wasn’t an ordinary giraffe; he looked quite a bit different from the rest. Whenever he went outside with the others he would always feel judged by them. They looked very different from him. It made him feel sad and not good about himself. His best friend, Elena, always made sure when they were with each other they would always have a good time together.

One day Elena and Alexander went down to the watering hole to play in the water with each other. They kept hearing big, crackling noises that almost sounded like branches breaking, except way louder and more violent. However, Alexander and Elena were just little, so they decided to ignore the terrifying noises and have fun. Suddenly, there was a stampede going by up on the mountainside where they had heard the cracking. They tried their hardest to get them to slow down so the stampede wouldn’t create a rockslide, but Alexander and Elena weren’t loud enough. They decided to take cover under a big tree at least 200 feet away from the stampede. Finally then the stampede was over. They came out from behind the tree, and Alexander and

Elena noticed the large rock above was still there so they continued playing. It looked a bit different than it did before, but as always they just ignored it and continued playing.

Suddenly the ground started to tremble and the rocks began to shake. Elephants were coming through to the water hole. All of a sudden because of that big movement a rockslide had occurred! So Alexander and Elena started running as fast as they could to try to beat the avalanche and not get hurt. Unfortunately, they kept getting tripped and trampled by the elephants. They thought they were going to make it to safety in time, but they weren't quick enough. A rock had fallen on Alexander's leg. Alexander, being the hero that he is, told Elena to go on without him and get help from their parents. Elena ran on. She ran as fast as she ever had before. She said, "Mom...Pa...come help Alexander! He's stuck under a rock from the avalanche!"

Elena and her family all got up and started heading to save Alexander. They all had to help push the huge rock off of him. Sadly, by the time they got him out he was knocked out and had bumps and bruises everywhere. They took him to someone they knew as the Great Healer. Hopefully, they could fix him. The healer tried and tried as hard as he could for hours, but at that point Alexander wasn't breathing anymore. He had sadly passed. They were all mourning and were very sad, especially Elena. Alexander had died a hero, saving her from the rock.

As time passed on, the unfriendly giraffes had realized that they shouldn't have treated Alexander the way they did. It wasn't very nice. So they all put in effort to do a little ceremony at the water hole knowing that it was his favorite place to go. Memories and fun times shared at the ceremony. Elena suddenly realized that she shouldn't be sad about his death, or continue to mourn. She realized that wasn't what Alexander would have wanted, so she decided to cherish and be happy about all of the good memories they had. Ever since that day Elena would make it her duty to go to the water hole and to tell his tombstone about her day. They all decided to make Elena the princess of their tower, a group of giraffes, in Alexander's honor, with Alexander watching over them everyday of course.

Jaici Rosi-Carney Washburn District Elementary School Miss Smith Grade 7

A Private Getaway

Over the summer my grandmother's house got hit with a hurricane, her house was located on the beach with the neighbor's house's touching hers. When the hurricane was over, we went to look at the house. When we got there was no house but surprisingly the neighbors' houses were still standing.

Gram was somewhat happy about the hurricane because she didn't want to live there anymore. She wanted to live in the country but didn't have enough money to move. When she got the check in the mail our eyes popped out of our heads at the amount the house was worth, \$2.5million!

My grandmother decided to take the money and buy a piece of property in the state of Maine and bought 275 acres of trees with multiple streams and rivers flowing across it. A week after she bought the land, she bought a huge log cabin with 4 bedrooms and 3 bathrooms and

huge glass windows in the ones front-facing to the rivers. The house was a mile off the road with a paved driveway to the 5-car garage.

At this point, my grandmother had only spent \$1.2 million, so she took some more money to buy some nice cars like a 2021 Ford f350, a 2021 Ford explorer, a 2021 Ford bronco, and a 1968 Chevy Chevelle. She also bought a tractor to take care of the land and a side by side to explore the land. We built a pasture on the land and got chickens, cows, pigs, and goats. In total, we have 50 animals with 2 dogs and 2 cats. My grandmother has lived there for a year and is loving every moment of it.

Evan Silsbee Caribou Community School Mrs. Keaton Grade

Winter

I stared at a paper that said, “Every snowflake is unique, I am unique because...”

“Ugh, I hate winter.”, I said under my breath so no one heard me.

Why do I have to do this stupid sheet, I’m a seventh grader, not a fourth grader! I don’t even feel motivated enough to even be here, let alone do a paper that’d be assigned to a lower grade standard. I flipped the paper and started drawing, not paying attention to anything or anyone around me.

“Amber! Are you even listening to me?”, my teacher said sighing while looking at me with her hand on her hip.

“What do you want?”, I said with a tone in my voice.

“Lose that attitude or I’ll have to write you up,” she started walking towards my desk, “Do you have anything written down at all?” she said before leaning over to view my paper.

“No, I’m not doing this thing.”

“Clavin, I’d like to partner you up with Amber.”

A boy that had black hair and glasses walked over, then sat beside me.

“Do you just not know what to put or something?”, he said whispering.

I snickered, and turned my head at him.

“Like I’d tell you.”

He just sighed and started writing on the sheet of paper. I glanced over to see what he was writing.

“I’m unique because when I have a goal I strive to achieve it.”

“Winter’s so boring, there’s nothing to even do anyway. All you can really do is sit inside or freeze.”

Calvin turned to look towards me.

“Are you free after school?”, he asked.

“Why do you ask? Not like it matters anyway, but yes, I am.”

“How about we go ice skating.”

“I don’t want to do that.”, I said stubbornly, trying to make a point.

“Maybe build a snowman? Go fishing? Or even sledding! We can also have a snowball fight, or we can see who can catch the most snowflakes with their tongue.”, he said daringly.

I sat there and thought about the offer for a minute.

“You have one chance to change my mind. After school, meet me in the office.”

Just then, the bell rang. I walked out the door, and to my next classes, patiently waiting for the end of the day.

Two hours later, school was over, I walked down the staircase that led to the office and saw him standing there.

“What size shoe do you wear? Just curious.”

“Uhm, that’s weird to ask but, 5.”

After he asked that we walked into a shop that smelt like cigarettes. Calvin told me to wait at the door though, so he could get something without me knowing.

Then we walked back out and went towards the back of the shop to an open lake that had trees all around it. Calvin opened his backpack and pulled out two pairs of skates. Outside smelt like candles burning in all different types of scents.

“You did not just buy two pairs of skates for this.”, I said laughing at him.

I grabbed the skates and sat down on a bench to tie my figure skates.

“I haven’t done this in awhile”, I thought to myself.

I stood up and went across the lake, not waiting up for him.

“Hold up I haven’t even finished tying my skates!” he said shouting.

He got up and skated towards me.

It felt like today would never end, but of course it did, even if I didn’t want it too. If I were to be honest with myself, I felt happier trying new things and thinking positive.

“Thanks for bringing me skating, even though I was being stubborn. It really did change my mind.”, I said while standing in front of my front door shivering from the cold wind.

“It’s nothing. Well, I’ll see you tomorrow at school, hopefully you’ll know what to put this time,” he said laughing while walking away, “Goodnight Amber.”

When I saw him leave I went straight to bed feeling exhausted by the long day.

“Every snowflake is unique, I am unique because-”, I stared at the same sheet from before. Except this time I knew what to put, and had different views on winter. It can be fun and time can pass fast if you're with your friends.

I started to write.

"I am unique because I'm able to change my perspective on things. Whether it be good or bad is up to me to decide in the end."

Baylee McClary

Van Buren District School

Mrs. Berube

Grade 8

Peace

If peace were a person, it would be my Lala.

She is calm. She is cool. She is nice.

She is nice to everyone.

I feel safe and understood.

When I’m with her, all my worries go away.

If the world acted like my Lala, it would be a peaceful place.

Kyryn Stickney

Zippel Elementary School

Ms. Watson

Grade 4

Thankful

There are many things to be thankful for this year. This has been a hard year for all of us because of the CoronaVirus. School was shut down last spring, and I couldn't go to Wintergreen or GT art. Everything changed. This is the story about what I'm thankful for like grandparents and art.

I am thankful for art because it gives me a way to express myself. When I'm bored, I go to art. When I'm painting a picture or coloring one in a coloring book, I feel relaxed. When I'm making art, my body feels peaceful and calm. Art is what I love to do.

I am also thankful for my grandparents. When my parents were at work in the summer and weren't home, it was just me and my older brother Carter. We would have our grandparents watch us in the afternoon. I would have my grandma to play cards, read, or watch a movie with me. We always made popcorn together. I love them so much!

The past year Covid 19 made me think about what I'm thankful for like grandparents and art. I wonder what I used to be thankful for?

Mackenzie Vigue

Mapleton Elementary

Mrs. Fox

Grade 4

My Grandmother's Brain Tumor

I'm Aubrey Nicole Miller, I have one sister and two dogs. I'm ten years old and I'm in the 5th grade. My birthday is on July 6th and it's really close to the Fourth of July, so if I'm lucky, I can have fireworks on my birthday! I had a special grandmother, she taught first grade at Mapleton Elementary, an amazing school.

My grandmother was diagnosed with a brain tumor, which is when you can't do things by yourself anymore. She was a first grade teacher, so she couldn't teach anymore, and she loved to teach. This really affects me, because I could have done so many things with my gram, and I could have seen her more, but she was in a nursing home. I was very little when she was diagnosed with her brain tumor, so I never knew what she was like before she got her brain tumor. Since Covid 19, my dad could only visit her in the nursing home for 45 minutes and only two people in the same household could go in her room at a time. I think this is one of my weaknesses because my dad gets emotional when he thinks about her brain tumor, and I get uncomfortable when my family, or when friends are upset. When my family or friends are feeling down, I get kind of down. My gram lived in a nursing home, so she could have help doing things she couldn't do by herself.

My life is affected by not being able to do anything active with my grandmother, or not seeing her, or going shopping, or even going to Bangor to see her sisters. I could have done so many things with her and it was really difficult to see her like that. I would like to help other people who are going through the same thing as me. I would help them by telling them it's okay, and you don't have to stress or worry about it. Maybe they would want to make a card for someone they know who has a brain tumor.

My grandmother was on my dad's side of the family and we loved her so much. My relationship with my grandmother makes me different because I really want to work somewhere like where my grandmother was, and comfort them and give them all my love and support. My mom and dad tell me wonderful stories, funny stories about her before she got sick. My parents have told me that sometimes they would have to tell my grandmother I couldn't go to see her sisters in Bangor, because she would have wanted to take me there all the time. I was very young, so I don't remember anything of what she was like and I just wish that I could have been a part of the fun family times she had and sadly, she passed away. Even though she passed and was sick, she will always be in my heart and she is in a better place now, not suffering.

Aubrey Miller

Mapleton Elementary

Mrs. Bernier

Grade 5

Forever Camp

I sat in the backseat, my nervous breathing was the only noise I could hear, besides the loud rumbling of tires against pavement. I looked out the window, street lights had begun to flicker on in the oncoming night. It hadn't been long since we left the office, but even so it felt like we had been going for hours. I heard Will stirring next to me, his eyes still shut as he lingered in a sleep like state. He had fallen asleep almost immediately when he entered the car. Though not sure why, I assumed he was exhausted from the long day. We came to a halt and the headlights flickered off. I perked up and looked at Jane, who was leaning back in the seat with her eyes half closed. "Will! Get up here and drive." Instantaneously he sat up and groaned, rubbing his eyes vigorously before looking in my direction. He smiled briefly, then got out of the car and switched places with her.

After they were situated, we got back on the road. Jane glanced over to me and waved. "Hey, Kaydence. How's it going?" I waved back, though there was no reason to.

"It's going, I guess. I think I might take a nap like Will did."

She laughed and patted my head gently. "Good idea, I'm with you on that one." And soon enough, both she and I fell into slumber, silently dreaming about the days to come.

I felt the car come to a stop, but it didn't occur to me that we were finally where we intended to travel until Will slapped my hand, though not hard, and whispered in my ear, "We're here sleepyhead." The whisper was mainly what woke me up, I didn't enjoy it much when people breathed on my ear. I grumbled slightly and gave Will a scowl, to which he smiled innocently and walked away from the door to let me out. I stepped outside to the smell of nature. Everything had a distinct smell, from the water to the grass, sand and the moss, seaweed and even the leaves. It was a wondrous smell, and it filled my senses up with excitement. Wandering around, fascinated like a little kid, I circled the area and studied everything in sight. Will and Jane laughed at me in a playful way. Knowing how much I loved the outdoors, they were used to this kind of behavior.

As I was walking, they began to talk about where we were going to set up our tents. As soon as they found a good spot, Jane called me over and directed my attention to the place. It was a small opening with moss filling the ground, and a few large rocks scattered around the sides of it. Next to it was an almost perfectly cut path to the sand and water. It was definitely the best place to make camp. We could see that there had been other people who had once camped

here, based on the stove-like structure made out of stones and a few leftover materials from when people forgot their things. Will seemed as equally excited as I was to go into the lake. And after what felt like an eternity, both Will and I stripped ourselves of clothing and hopped into the lake with our swim trunks on, which we had been wearing since before we got into the car. Jane stayed at the tents and watched us from afar, focused on making a place for a campfire.

We played a few games in the lake like Marco Polo and Tag before heading back to Jane. She ushered us away as soon as we came near due to our soaking bodies, and we gladly listened. Everyone who knew her knew that you shouldn't try and mess with her authority, and if you did then there would be consequences. Though she was not a violent person, she had OCD, and could be controlling at times. It wasn't anything new, we all said some kind of mental illness. Jane with OCD, Will with anxiety, and me with ADD. She went into her tent and grabbed us both towels out of her bag. We wrapped ourselves in them and laughed, attacking each other with the wet towels. Jane laughed as well and jokingly hit each of us.

I looked up at the sun and was shocked to see that it had already passed midday. Had we really been in the water that long? I kept track of the time and knew we were only in there for two hours at the most. I asked Will about it and he shrugged. "We got here rather late, at 10:30 maybe." I sighed and got bummed out. I thought that we were going to be able to have more time. Jane and Will grabbed one of my shoulders and shook me lightly, trying to calm me down. I smiled at them both, trying to stay positive. We decided to spend the rest of the day on the sand, talking and playing games.

Too soon the sun had gone down and peaked over the horizon, the rainbow like hues filling the skyline. Jane and I sat in our camping chairs around the campfire that Will had lit a few minutes before. Will had gone into his tent, claiming he was tuckered out from swimming and laughing. I didn't blame him, I was also tired and would have loved to go into my tent and lay down, but I wanted to keep Jane company for a while. She looked out at the water, her eyes reflecting the setting sun. I smiled and grabbed her arm, pulling her closer and saying in a low, quiet tone, "Should we go attack Will with pillows?" She nodded happily with a smirk growing on her face.

We went into our tents silently and grabbed pillows before unzipping Will's tent. The two of us counted to three and quickly slammed our pillows down onto Will. He awoke frightened, sat up, then looked at Jane and me with a pained expression, though we knew he was only faking it. We all had a pillow fight until we were gasping for air. It was hilarious to all of us, and at some point we had chosen to sleep in Will's tent that night, curling up into comfortable positions, and dozing off to sleep in our forever camp.

Aden Botting

Presque Isle Middle School

Mrs. Gardner

Grade 8

In the Jungle

We had just arrived in the hot, humid jungle. I still couldn't believe that we were finally there. After so much travel we could do something exciting. We would have so much fun.

First, we got our stuff out of the car and put it in the cabin. We were going to have tons of fun! Once we finished my Dad said, "We're done unpacking, let's explore!" We looked around the resort and saw some extremely colorful parrots. I thought they were amazing.

The next day, we went to the beach. When we got there I noticed something weird. The sand was black!! I asked my Mom why and she said it was because of volcanic rocks that had eroded. My parents lounged while my brother and I started swimming in the beautiful blue water. You could feel the cool breeze and hear the crashing of waves on the shore.

Early in the morning, the next day, I woke up to the sound of monkeys yelling in the distance. I couldn't stop thinking about the hike we were going to do. A couple of hours later, we started walking. Within a half hour my entire body was sweating. My younger brother saw the first animal. He exclaimed, "I see a monkey!!" The monkey was drinking coconut water. Everyone thought it was amazing. We saw many other animals including more monkeys, sloths, parrots and a few hawks.

Finally, the last day arrived. We drove for two hours to go on a boat ride in the ocean, which had many coral reefs and other interesting things to see. The first thing we saw were dolphins. There were hundreds of them around the boat. The coolest thing we saw was dolphins playing a game with coconuts. They were popping them up into the air. It was amazing!!

On the way back home all I wanted to do was stay. I thought the trip was awesome, so I really hope I get to go again. It was super exciting!!

James Chowanski

Katahdin Elementary

Ms. Mann

Grade 5

First Win

Have you ever jumped so high that you felt as if you were going to touch the clouds? If so, you'll understand how I felt after playing my first soccer game for my middle school team.

It was a nice, just right day in September. We were tied 3-3, and we had the ball. Jaden kicked to Joey. Then Joey took off with a player from Hodgdon following close behind. She passed the ball to Kenzie B. Kenzie B. dribbled down the field and passed the ball to Lizzie. BAM!...

Okay, so let's go back and start from the beginning...

It was our third game, and we were playing against Hodgdon. We thought we were going to win, so we got out on the nearly green--but kind of brown--crispy field. We started to practice and stretch, counting to fifteen for each stretch. Then the referees came out in their striped outfits. The game was about to start.

We started doing our four-corner drill. The referee asked Mrs. Schmidt for our captain, so Mrs. Schmidt hollered for Emma. She told us to keep doing the drill until they were done. So, we went and finished the four-corner shooting drill. There were two minutes left until the start of the game. Mrs. Schmidt went over our positions and told us who would be subbing for whom.

Okay, so now we're back. We had just finished our "hydration vacation." I was playing right half back in front of Kenzie B. I stayed behind Debbie (aka Makenzy D.), and then we went and did our thing. Jayden (the striker) passed the ball to Joey (the wing) who dribbled down and passed the ball to Kenzie B. She passed the ball to Lizzie. Lizzie suddenly kicked the ball and scored a goal!

Two minutes later, the game clock ran out. We had won! We were all very happy, but we knew that we still had three more games left to play. We took time to celebrate our big win, but were already looking ahead to those remaining three games.

Grace Qualey

Katahdin Middle School

Ms. Bouchard

Grade 6

Lost in the Forest

There I was standing in the forest, lost and no one else to help me.

Okay, let's back up. This was a normal summer at first, yearly camping trip and fireworks. I was excited for this year because we got to stay in a tent and not some log cabin. You might wonder how that is better, well my family is an outdoors family. We enjoy doing things like this; my dad and I did anyway. My mom and brother think otherwise. They would rather stay in the log cabin with power and an inside toilet.

When we got to where we were staying, it was not like camp or anything. It was a flat spot in the woods, with moss and grass, perfect for a tent and grill. My dad and I had no problem putting up our tents. My brother's tent was the easiest tent to put up but I did it for him.

When night came I crawled into my tent and turned on my flashlight to write in my summer journal about the day. I ended up dozing off with my pen and notebook in my hand. I woke up to the sound of my tent zipper being opened. To no surprise my brother had my notebook in his hand.

"Give that back!" I yelled.

"You have to get it first," he teased, holding the book up.

He ran into the woods. I quickly put on my sneakers and ran after him with my flashlight. I didn't realize it but he made a u-turn and I just kept running straight.

I tripped over a rock and fell face first in the cold dirt. I felt a stick jab my leg, I didn't think anything happened to my leg and just shook it off. I looked around, I couldn't see any light from the tents. I decided to walk the same way I ran. I walked over the rock and just kept walking the same direction. It was kind of hard to see so I reached for my flashlight in my pocket. It was gone. *Great, just my luck*, I thought. As I was walking, I realized that the woods were getting thicker, not like what I had run through earlier on. I was tired and didn't think too much about it. I decided to stop for the night. I was just getting deeper and deeper into the woods. *I should stop, remember when you get lost, stay where you are*, I reminded myself. I sat down with my back on a tree and realized I had some nasty cuts on my leg. I decided to just sleep for now.

When the sun started to come up, I walked along and tried not to think about how I was lost and hurt. To be honest, I was scared. I heard lots of noises that made me feel uneasy, like scratching on trees and the rustling leaves. I walked for what seemed like five hours. There were things like woodpeckers and other pretty things like flowers that made me feel better, but after a while my walk turned to a limp. I tried to see if I tried to listen for things that would remind me of my family; voices, laughs, but nothing. I felt tired and exhausted, on the verge of puking. Right then I fainted from the hot sun and no water.

I was out for a long time but I was awakened by my mother's tears crashing down on me and my whole family hugging me. I was kind of surprised, happy and confused all at the same time. My brother, I could tell, was the most upset. After all he was the one who led me into the woods in the first place. But after all that, I was happy to see him too.

"I am so sorry! I never should have taken your book," My brother said through tears.

"I am just happy that my girl's ok," my dad could hardly choke out.

I could tell my mom did not know what to say, but neither did I. I still don't know how they found me. I don't really need to know, I am just happy they did.

Emma Cooper

Southern Aroostook Community School

Mrs. Harbison

Grade 6

The Hurricane is Coming!

The noise was almost unbearable. Have you ever experienced a hurricane? I have. I experienced Hurricane Matthew in 2016. I remember being in my room and hearing the loud hurricane warning on the tv. It was so loud it hurt my ears; it sounded like I had my ear right up next to the speaker. I sat there for about five minutes, in horror. I knew what was about to happen. I finally got up and ran to the living room. My mom's eyes grew wide. I asked her what was going on and she told me a category four hurricane was coming. I was only nine but, I knew that category four was close to the worst it could get.

I grabbed our raincoats from the hall closet and ran to the living room. The coats felt smooth and glossy. I handed my mom her dark blue raincoat. I put my smooth red raincoat on. We slid our rain boots on that matched our rain coats and we went out to the car. The rain was blinding. It smelled like wet grass and rain. I could taste the rain as I yelled out to my mom, "I hope Nana and Papa are okay." She just nodded her head and said, "I do too."

After we got in the car I pulled my wet, slippery hood off my head. My mom started the car and I blasted the heat. I was so cold, I rubbed my ice cold hands together while the heater started to warm up. My mom put the car in drive and we slowly drove out of the driveway. My mom was hunched right over the steering wheel, being careful not to hit anything in the roads. From what I could see there were many trees that had already fallen down. The hurricane hadn't even really started yet.

Finally, we got to my nana and papa's to get the sand bags that we needed. As we walked in they looked relieved to see us and to know that we were ok. I ran to my nana and hugged her. She was warm and smelled like vanilla. Her shirt was soft and welcoming. They had the news on and, as usual, it was loud. What I saw terrified me. The storm was moving quickly and it was strong. My papa went to get us some of his extra sandbags. By the time he came back to the living room and opened the front door to bring the sandbags outside to the car, it wasn't safe to even go outside. He dropped the heavy white bags. A gust of wind blew papers all over the place. My papa slammed the door shut and blinked a few times. "You guys are not leaving. The weather is too bad to drive," Papa said.

We felt safe at my nana's. Her house smells like pumpkin spice and is really cozy. The house has been through some of the worst storms. We helped board the windows and doors from the outside, holding onto each other tightly. Once we finished we ran inside through the back door and boarded it up from the inside. The worst of the storm was about to hit our town, but I

felt safe sitting with my mom and my grandparents. We were all sitting together on their couch covered up with warm fuzzy blankets, watching the news. I looked through one of the cracks in the wood, it was pitch black outside. It looked like it was night time, but it was only 11 AM. I could hear the pool tarp flapping in the wind. We all huddled together, told stories, and just waited it out.

After the storm had passed, it was hard to breathe. When we looked outside we were terrified. There was debris everywhere. We put rain boots on and went to make sure the people in the neighborhood were okay. The road was flooded with at least two feet of water. I remember a little girl started swimming. The whole neighborhood came out and helped clean things up. Although this was a horrible experience, it brought my family together. We are lucky that we are all okay and healthy. *Wait! What's that noise on the TV?*

Caraline Elhoff

Southern Aroostook

Mrs. York

Grade 5

The Best Dad In The World

Have you ever had a dad that would do anything for you? Protect you, scare you to the point where you will have nightmares, but only if you deserve it. Who will DIE for you, or even hold you when you are questioning yourself your self-confidence? Well I have a dad that is just like that, but MY dad is the only dad of his kind in all the land. And I'm gonna prove it to you that my dad is one of a kind.

First, my dad is "Loyal, Brave, and True" just like Mulan but better. There is nothing he can't do. He can teach me anything in the world that I want to know. He taught me how to use a bow, some words in chinese, French, and German. He even taught me how to handle a knife correctly for self defense. He also taught me how to make some food that his parents taught him when he was my age. He taught me how to build a fort out of sticks and twigs, he even showed me how to have fun with everything, but mostly mud and trees. My dad also taught me how to widdle on my first camping trip, but of course he got me my own knife to use. Dad has taught me what feels like everything there is to learn in the world, but I know that there is a lot more to learn in the future. I just can't wait to learn everything from him.

Next, my dad is loyal because is always by my side, in sickness and in health, when I am feeling down he always makes me feel better about myself, he can always make me laugh my brains out. I remember when I was about 4 years old he would do a little voice that always got me to laugh so hard that my stomach hurt, he would make me laugh no matter how sad, or angry, I felt. He makes me feel like I can be myself around the house and everywhere else and he makes me feel like I can't be judged for who I am. I also remember that every time that mom sends my dad and I to the store to get groceries we always end up acting like goofballs. We would always bump each other back and forth through the halls and make goofy noises and make fun of one another, and do funny dances, to the point where the people in the store will look at us like we are really really strange people, but we don't care about the way they look at us, we just want to have a great time with each other, and when we are on our way home, dad will find a song we both know and turn the volume up to 20, and we both would sing together, and when we get home he settle down and watch "The Black List" with mom, then when we go into the kitchen we end up dancing with each other or end up practicing on my blocks and punches.

Also, my dad is brave because he makes it seem like he isn't afraid of anything even though he has fears just like anyone else he makes me feel like I can be that brave as well, I look up to him like an idol, I also believe that he can take on a bear if he wanted to as well. Even though he's scared of needles and has to get a shot at the doctors, he takes it like a champ. He will do anything for me even if it's facing his fears. I'm pretty sure that he can do anything in the world. In my world it feels like he is a superhero even though he has no superpowers he can still save the day. My dad is much better than superman, batman, he is better than all the other superheroes. I bet he can beat superman in a wrestling match. If my dad had a superhero name it would be Superdad. I'm sure it would be better than any other superhero name. My dad is the strongest man I know.

More or Less, my dad is also true, because he never breaks a promise, and if he can't commit to his promise that day he will make the promise come true the next day. He also hates breaking promises, and if he does he always make up for it by hanging out with us when he has a chance, playing video games, or even getting a new movie for all of us to watch as a family. He also never keeps secrets from mom, my siblings and I, he will always make sure that we know everything before it happens. He never attacks us with unexpected news. He always tells us everything we need to know. And if he can't explain at the time he always tells us when he thinks we are ready to face the good or bad news, but he always gives us a minute to process the bad, he knows we will understand everything that is going to happen, and he thinks that we deserve to know everything that happens in the world. He doesn't want us to feel like he doesn't tell us anything. He will never ever let us down. If anything starts to get out of hand, he will always be there to fix that problem. If there is something wrong with the way we are acting he will always take us into his open arm and talk it through with us and make us return to normal. My dad is the truest man in the world to me. He is always there for us and will never leave our side.

In conclusion, my dad is one of a kind, he will always do anything to protect me, will scare me to the point were I will have nightmares, if I deserve it, who will die for me, and even hold me when I'm questioning myself confidence, any like I said before just like Mulan my dad is "Loyal, Brave, and True" but he is much better than any superhero in the world. My dad is the greatest in the land.

Rylee Kramer

Hodgdon Middle/ High School

Mrs. Harris

Grade 8

Animal Tales

Horses

Do you know those four-legged furry animals galloping across the fields? That's right, horses! Have you ever stopped to wonder what these furry friends need? Horses are living things too! They need food, water, and some form of shelter. But what are the things you need to know in order to care for them? What supplies do you need? And how do you use the supplies?

What is The Horse?

To start off, the horse is a semi-domestic animal. Humans have tamed them, but some still run wild. To be able to tend to a horse, you need to know what the basic parts are called.

The foot is called the hoof. When you refer to more than one hoof, you say hooves. The area where their back seems to bump up is called the withers. The withers are towards the horse's neck. Their tail is attached to the dock, which is their rear end. Those are the basic parts of the horse.

Now, a horse moves at four basic gaits. The first one, the slowest, is a walk. The next gait, like jogging, is a trot. The gait similar to running is called the canter. The faster gait, just like sprinting, is a gallop. A walk and trot are basic gaits, while cantering and galloping are more advanced gaits.

The basic colors of a horse are what you need to know next. One basic color is a bay, which has a black mane and tail, and reddish-brown all over its body. A chestnut horse has reddish-brown all over its body and a similarly colored mane and tail. A palomino has golden-colored hair and a very pale, sometimes white, mane and tail. A pinto, or paint, has large areas of brown, or black, and white.

Horses have face and leg markings. Some face markings are a blaze, which is a wide, white line down the horse's face, a star, a marking of white in-between the horse's eyes, and a stripe, a line of white going down their face. Feet markings are socks or stockings, different lengths of color coming up from the horse's hoof. Knowing how to identify the horse's body parts, color, and gait are a very important key to taking care of them.

General Care

Domestic horses usually live in a fenced area and a stable, where they have a designated stall that they live in when they are not out in the field. But you can't just leave your horse in a dirty, empty, stall with messed up hair and raw cuts and scrapes. You have to care for them first.

A horse needs to eat and drink, especially when they have to stay in their stall for a long period of time. You should feed them hay, a mix of dried grass and other plants. You should also feed them some kind of grain, but make sure to pick the right kind for your horse. Make sure that in the winter, you have some kind of heat for the water so it doesn't freeze into ice.

You should also groom your horse when they are in the stall for a long period of time. To groom your horse, you need a curry comb, soft brush, hard brush, hoof pick, and mane and tail brush. To curry your horse, you need to rub the comb firmly in circles, but not too hard. For the soft and hard brush, you stroke the brush in the way the horse's hair grows. With the hoof pick, you dig dirt and pebbles out of the hoof firmly, but not too firm. Those are just the basic grooming tools.

When your horse is in the stall, the stall needs to be clean so the horse doesn't get sick. You should muck out the stall, which is taking out the droppings that the horse leaves when they use the bathroom. Use a pitchfork or shovel to remove the muck, and put it in a wheelbarrow to be dumped out into the muck pile. Then, after you muck out the stall, you put down shavings or another form of bedding on the stall floor, which should be rubber mats for cushion. You should

also put fresh hay and water in the stall so the horse can eat and drink. After the horse is brought to the stall, treat any wounds and make sure the horse is comfortable.

Tack: For You and Your Horse!

Tack is the equipment you put on the horse, like saddles and bridles. In order to ride the horse, you need a saddle, saddle pad, bridle, and reins. When the horse is being kept in an area, you can choose to put a halter on them. A halter is like a collar, but for a horse for designated periods of time. But you need tack to ride the horse and care for it too.

The most known types of tack are the saddle and bridle. But you don't just throw the saddle on the horse and then hop on. There are a lot of steps to getting your horse ready to ride. First, there are two types of saddles. English and Western. Western saddles have a horn, a part of the saddle coming up in front of you that you can hold on to. English saddles do not have a horn. First, you put a saddle pad on, then you gently set the saddle over the horse's back. Then you tighten the girth, or cinch, a piece of leather or cloth that goes under the horse's belly, so the saddle doesn't fall off. Then the bridle, which is what helps you control the horse. With a bit, a piece of metal that goes in a horse's mouth, you gently slide the bit into the horse's mouth and then the ear strap over the ears. With a bitless bridle, or a hackamore, you slide the noseband over the horse's muzzle and then the ear strap over its ears. Attach the reins, and the horse is ready to ride!

Another common piece of tack is a halter. You put the halter on the horse for a period of time in which you want to control the horse. If a horse is left in a stall for a fairly long time with a halter on, you want to put a breakaway halter on, which snaps apart if the horse gets caught in anything. To put on the halter, you slide the noseband over the horse's muzzle and put it over the ears. You also have to buckle a strap that goes under the horse's chin.

Finally, you should have some gear to ride the horse as well! What you should have is a pair of pants that are stretchy and comfortable, and a pair of boots that you can ride in, like rubber boots or even leather boots. You also need a special horse riding helmet so that if you fall off the horse, your head is protected.

Clearly, a lot of time, work, and money goes into caring for a horse. You need to know their basic parts, colors, and markings, how to care for them, what to feed them, and what tack that they need. Countless hours will go into caring for that horse, but it will all be worth it. Horses will love you, but only if you love them.

Abigail Siddiqui

Easton Jr/Sr High School

Mrs. Hill

Grade 7

Samson's Story

I was laying in my tree, taking a little nap and being good for once. When suddenly one of my owners with red hair came up and started talking nonsense. Then she started rubbing behind my ears. I hate it when she does that. Finally, after what seemed like five hours she stopped, but she just ended up picking me up. UGG! I didn't want to be held, so I kept biting her until she let go of me, then I ran like the wind to the only place she couldn't get me, under the couch. I knew I would be safe there.

Oh! How rude of me! My name is Samson Bigglesworth Bate. I know that middle name is weird, but I didn't get to pick it. I live with four owners. Some people think that I am so lucky,

but to me that is just too many. The biggest owner is called “Mom” by the three little ones. Whatever that means? I just moved here from my barn four weeks ago and these people have a lot of other pets. There are two dogs, a big and a small one. The little one has to wear a diaper and doesn't care about anything except when you get near his toys. The big one is scared of me, so I jump up on the couch and torment him. It is really fun, like I have him in my control. Also, there's this scaly thing with a long tail. It kind of freaks me out, but I don't show it. Plus all it does is lay on its log under a red light. But my favorite thing is this fat little white and black puff. It looks so tasty. I lay on its cage trying to stick my paw through the bars and dream of eating it. YUMM! The last pet, which I hate the most, is the cat. She is a grumpy, old, orange cat. She hates me, so I hate her. The red headed girl just gives her treats for sleeping, like come on. Maybe that is why I hate her so much too.

I also need to mention the other two little owners. There is another girl with red hair, but her hair is more orange, so I call her the orange haired girl. Every morning the red headed girl puts me on the orange haired girl's bed. I don't like the way her bed smells or how high it is, so I just jump right back off. There is also a brown haired girl. She is my favorite. We cuddle all the time and if she is standing I sleep on her shoulder or if she is laying down I sleep on her neck, her mouth, her face, or all of the above. What? It is comfy there!

Okay, so I guess it isn't too bad here and my four owners are kind of great. Overall, I love my family very much and wouldn't change a thing.

Sincerely, Samson Bigglesworth Bate.

Allison Bate

Easton Elementary School

Mrs. McQuade

Grade 6

The Hedgehog and the Rabbit

Once upon a time in a land not far away at all, there lived a Hedgehog named Jeffree. Jeffree didn't enjoy large crowds or noisy places all Jeffree ever wanted to do was live a quiet life.

Well, you see, that would be all fine and dandy if it weren't for the fact Jeffree was the unluckiest Hedgehog in the land. Every time he went anywhere, did anything, it always ended in chaos, all because of Jeffree.

This simple fact had made Jeffree quite the unhappy camper. He was usually grouchy and would snap at anyone who would try and get too close. Most of the time it was because he didn't want to hurt anyone, but because of his horrid mood, he always came across as being rude or, as the younger ones put it, an "Old Fart".

Now Quin on the other hand was a very hyper, very positive rabbit. Jeffree was annoyed by Quin and the prominent fact that Quin never left him alone. Quin was always chasing after him, trying to hang out, always being nice.

Jeffree for the life of him could never figure out why Quin was always around him. No one else ever wanted to be with Jeffree, yet Quin never went away.

“What are we doing today?” Quin would question.

“Nothing. Go away,” Jeffree would retort.

“That doesn't sound interesting,” Quin would continue.

“It’s not supposed to be,” Jeffree grumbled.

Their conversations usually went on as such until finally Jeffree would give in and let the rabbit follow.

Today Jeffree woke up to quite an annoying dripping sound. Huffing, the little hedgehog lifted himself to go check what had happened now, but just as he got to his feet, the beams in the ceiling collapsed!

The poor Hedgehog was trapped, and the room was now filling up with water.

“Help! Help!” Jeffree cried “Help me!”

He screamed at the top of his lungs, but no one came. He had scared them all off. Anyone who had ever cared about Jeffree was gone. He was alone.

Tears streamed down his face. The water was at his chest now, and time was running out. All hope seemed lost, but just when Jeffree was about to give up, there was a voice! Quiet at first but then louder.

“Jeffree?! Jeffree, where are you!?” The voice yelled through the rubble.

Quin! Jeffree thought with joy.

“Over here!! Quin, Help me!” Jeffree shouted. In no time, the beams were being lifted. Quin's face was revealed.

“Grab my hand. Quickly!” Quin reached out to Jeffree.

Jeffree grasped Quin. Quin pulled with all his might and, with a little luck and a lot of determination, Jeffree sprang free. The two dashed from the room right before the ceiling went out completely and water flooded everywhere.

Just like that, they had made it out. Quin, someone who Jeffree had always been angry toward, had just saved him.

They both huffed and puffed, trying to catch their breaths from what had just occurred.

“Quin!” Jeffree gasped, “You saved me!”

Quin looked at Jeffree with a smile “Of course. What are friends for?”

Jeffree was taken aback. Quin the rabbit. The same Quin who was always annoying him, the same Quin would follow Jeffree around and would never leave him alone. The same Quin who Jeffree was always mean to. The same Quin who despite all that had still saved Jeffree. That Quin had called Jeffree his friend. Jeffree had a friend.

“I agree, friend,” Jeffree smiled.

The rabbit laughed “So,” he said, “what are we doing today?”

Jeffree scoffed in disbelief. *All that and he’s still going?* Jeffree thought. But still, Jeffree got up and looked back at his house. “Well, for today, I think I’d better find a new place to stay. Wouldn’t you think?”

Quin chuckled, patting Jeffree on the back “Don't worry, we’ll find something. This time without water damage”

The two walked off. Jeffree had a little trouble now that the adrenaline had worn off and his foot was injured. However, that didn’t seem to bother him now. He had survived his house and was with his friend. Pretty lucky if he did say so himself.

Rebecca Hayes

Wisdom Middle/High school

Ms. Sonya Michaud

Grade 8

The Dog Adventure

Once, in a big city called Chicago, in the state of Illinois, there were 3 dogs, Coco, Millie, and Doug. All of the 3 dogs were neighbors, so they played every morning after their owners fed them. Coco was the boss of their puppy club. Doug and Millie were back up. When they opened the club, they all agreed they should name themselves The Spy Squad.

Coco knew she one day was going to be a puppy lawyer. Millie wanted to be a police dog, since she was a German shepherd anyway. Doug was determined he was going to be a dog race runner. Their owners were also very rude to them. They were weak and boring, and they never did anything to help them to survive. Coco called a meeting.

Coco called the meeting because she had a great plan. Her plan was very well thought out, and some of it was a little too much. “Ok guys, I have a great plan. While our owners do some work on their computer, we’ll sneak out and go on an adventure to the Goblin Forest.”

Doug was scared of everything, so he was very scared going into the Goblin Forest. Rumors say that if anyone enters the Goblin Forest, they will be turned into a goblin and come out of the forest as a monster, attacking the city of Chicago, Illinois.

Millie also didn’t like the idea of going in there because of the rumor. Millie spoke up while the plan was being said. She said. “Um nah, man. We are not going in there.”

Well, they did anyway. So they set off to find furry friends until they saw the golden cottage. They decided to live there and the adventure was worth it.

Gold filled the place. So, they stayed there and became rich. They lived in the house until they became old.

Lily Archer

Washburn District Elementary School

Ms. Silver

Grade 4

Pug Tales

One day in the life of a pug, Pugsley was running after his owner Jacob. They were going for a walk. They had to be careful because there was a new dog that moved in across the street, and he was mean. His name was Skull. All the dogs in the area were scared of Skull because one time they saw him bite the mailman. One time, Skull’s owner put him on a metal chain. He broke through the chain like nothing.

Pugsley and Jacob would walk all around the town. Then they would make their last stop at the ice cream shop. They both would always get the same thing; vanilla ice cream. Pugsley loved vanilla ice cream. That was his favorite kind. On their way back home, they met up with a pit bull. He was mean, rotten, smelly, and he was showing his large and nasty teeth. He tried running at Pugsley. But Jacob scooped Pugsley right up, so he wouldn’t get hurt.

Pugsley wasn’t like the pitbull. He was small, cute, fluffy and wouldn’t hurt a bug. After the pit bull was gone, Jacob let Pugsley down so he could stretch his legs. They jogged the rest of the way home. When they arrived, Pugsley realized that someone had taken his bone, and that wasn’t just any bone. That was his favorite bone in the whole wide world. Jacob told Pugsley, “We’re gonna find whoever stole your bone.”

Pugsley barked, “It must have been Skull the nasty pit bull.”

Jacob told Pugsley to get some rest because the next day, they would find whoever stole his bone. Pugsley was up early the next morning and was barking at Jacob to wake up. Jacob finally got up and dressed. Then, they took off. Pugsley loved the car, and he stuck his head out the window the whole way. He loved the nice morning breeze on his fur. They were searching all over town for that pit bull. When they finally found him, they couldn't miss his nasty stench roaming around the town park.

Pugsley ran up to him and asked him if he had taken his bone. The pit bull replied with "No I didn't take your bone." Then Pugsley saw something behind his back.

"What's that you got behind your back?" Pugsley asked.

"OK, fine, I took your bone," said the pitbull.

"Why though?" Pugsley said,

"Because I'm really hungry. I haven't eaten in two weeks, and I have no place to go. I once had an owner whose name was Bob, but I bit the mailman because I was really hungry. Bob didn't take care of me, so that's why I would steal all the other dogs' food because I was extremely hungry, and I had to do that mean stuff to survive. Bob would make me stay outside all of the time, and after that incident happened with the mailman he left me here all alone."

"Do you know what?" Pugsley said.

"What?"

"You can have my bone and you can come to our house and sleep there for the night and we can figure it out in the morning."

They went home and slept, and in the morning, they got up nice and early and got into the car. "Where are we going?" asked the pitbull. Pugsley and Jacob just winked. When the car finally stopped they were at a pet store. "Why are we here, are you giving me to a petstore?"

"No, silly we are here to get you some new stuff, because you're living with us." The pitbull started to cry.

"But why are you guys being so nice to me after everything I've done," Pugsley replied with, "a wise man once told me not to judge a book by its cover," and they lived happily ever after.

Jacob Edgecomb

Limestone Community School

Mr. Portera

Grade 6

My Grandparent's Dog and Me

It all started when he was a baby. One day my mom said, "We are going to pick up a surprise puppy for your grandparents." I was so excited. When we were at the shelter, we inside went to get him. When we walked into the room, he tried to jump into my arms. Then we left, and he sat on me the whole way home. When we got to my grandparents' house, he did not want to leave my arms, so I stayed the night.

The next morning, I went home, but my Memere called me and said, "You have to come back here because he is crying, like a little baby." I went to their house. He followed me the whole time. If I went to get water or sit on a different couch, he followed me. He has nothing to do with my grandparents. A few years later, he still does the same thing, but now, he lets me do

whatever I want to him. He has become a spoiled baby. I bought him bow ties, sweaters, treats, and I also bought him toothpaste to brush his teeth. He also only does tricks for me like high five and crawl.

Brooke Caldwell Limestone Community School.

Mr. Portera

Grade 5

Izzy's Snow Day

Izzy opened the door. It was the middle of winter and fresh snow was falling, shimmering like millions of diamonds. "Can I go out and play, Mama? Please Mama?" Izzy begged.

"Sure," her mother said. Izzy ran out the door, not paying attention to where she was going. Then she stopped and looked around.

"Mama?" Izzy yelled. She heard nothing as she started wandering around.

Then she heard, "Hoot, Hoot." Izzy looked around and in a tree, she saw an owl. "What's your name, little one?" the owl asked.

"I am Izzy," she said.

"My name is Cooper," said the owl. "What are you doing out here all alone?" Cooper asked.

"I'm lost in the snow," said Izzy.

"Oh dear," Cooper said in surprise.

"Can you help me find my way home?" said Izzy. The two set off to find Izzy's way home. "It's getting colder by the minute," Izzy said.

"I know," replied Cooper.

Just then they ran into a fox pup. "Joey" they heard.

"I think he is lost too," exclaimed Izzy. Cooper flew around trying to find the pup's mom.

"I found his mother!" Cooper yelled. So Izzy and the pup followed Cooper. As they followed the owl, a shadow appeared in the distance. They ran and met the pup's mom. She growled at first and then she saw her pup.

"Thank you," she said. "How can I ever repay you?" the mother said with relief.

"I am lost and I don't know my way home." Izzy said.

"Do you live in that barn on the hill?" the mother asked.

"Yes, that's the one!" said Izzy with joy.

"Follow me. I go there all the time," said the mother fox as they ran along.

"So, we never got to know each other," Izzy said. "I am Izzy and this is Cooper."

"I am Dona and this is Joey," the mother said.

"I am so happy you know my way home," said Izzy.

"We are almost there," Dona said.

"I can't wait to see my family," Izzy said.

"Here we are," Dona said.

"Thank you so much Dona, Cooper and Little Joey." Izzy said with joy. "Good bye, guys. I hope I see you again," Izzy said with both sadness and joy.

“Izzy?” they heard.

“Mom!” shouted Izzy.

“Izzy!” Mom shouted as they hugged each other. “Where were you, Izzy?” Mom asked. “It is a long story,” said Izzy as she drifted off to sleep.

Cameron Casey

Van Buren District School

Miss Theriault

Grade 4

The Tiger of the Jungle

There once was a tiger named Topaz. Topaz was a young tiger who lived in the Jungle, none of the other tigers would talk to him. All the other young tigers would hang out and hunt together, sometimes Topaz could hear them “trash” talking him, which made Topaz very sad.

Topaz always sat at his favorite tree and moped there, all day. One day he was at his favorite tree and a mouse came up and sat next to Topaz and said, “This is a great view, what is your name?”

Topaz answered, “My name is Topaz, what is your name?”

The mouse replied, “My name is PeanutBrittle.”

Topaz replied, “That is a great name.” Then the two of them got to know each other, and soon became great friends.

Topaz and PeanutBrittle set out on an adventure. They left the jungle and headed north. After a few days of traveling, they hit a Savanna. In the distance they saw something they had not seen before, as they got closer they discovered it was a building. Topaz had heard tales about buildings, but had never seen one. PeanutBrittle explained that it was a house. The duo approached the house slowly and entered it cautiously. They were surprised to see a cat. The cat lunged at PeanutBrittle, but just in the nick of time Topaz jumped in front of the cat and yelled “STOP!”

The cat froze, and replied in an unimpressed voice “Who do you think you are?”

Topaz answered, “I am Top...”

The cat interrupted, “No one cares, Tiger.”

Topaz was shocked, but replied “I am Topaz, and this is PeanutBrittle. Who are you cat?”

The cat answered “I am Pablo, and me and PeanutBrittle go way back.”

Topaz asked PeanutBrittle “Really?”

PeanutBrittle replied in shame “ Yes.”

Topaz asked PeanutBrittle “So are you two friends?”

Pablo responded “ We were until my person saw PeanutBrittle and I did not catch him, so she threw me out and he lifted me and now I am here.”

Topaz asked PeanutBrittle in shock “Is that true?”

“Yes.” PeanutBrittle said.

Topaz quickly asked “Can you two be friends again?”

Pablo answered “If he apologizes.”

Topaz asked PeanutBrittle “ Can you apologize?”

PeanutBrittle replied “Yes, I am sorry.”

Pablo said “I accept your apology. Can I join you two?”

Topaz hesitantly answered “Yes, you can join us.” So the two friends and Pablo set out on a new adventure together.

Gavin Gagnon

Van Buren District School

Mrs. Lapierre

Grade 6

Lion in the Library

It was a very humid day that was tremendously hot. My family and I decided to listen to the radio because we couldn’t step a toe outside without it being fried like an egg. Ironically, we were having bacon and eggs for breakfast. I had just finished slurping up my eggs, when my favorite channel came on. It was my favorite because it had the news and cartoons. Sometimes they even read stories.

Today, however, they were telling the news (Well, we thought they were). A reporter was saying that there has recently been animals escaping from their habitats at local zoos around Maine and telling us to stay inside, be careful, and don’t go monkeying around (See what I did there?). Oh, and I almost forgot, there’s a lion in the library! In a panic my parents turned off the radio and shut all the blinds, but before they did I caught a glimpse of the neighborhood. It looked like everyone in town had been listening to their radio too.

The next morning, I woke up with my mom at the foot of my bed, looking nervous. I asked her what the cause of this was and she replied, pointing a finger at me, “Your father and I are going to the store for some supplies and you’re the oldest.”

“Fine, I’ll watch my sisters,” I sighed.

“Great!” said Mom. I turned on the radio as soon as they left. With great relief I heard the news reporter say that yesterday they were reading a book called, There’s a Lion in the Library.

Zoey Shemkovitz

Zippel Elementary School

Mrs. York

Grade 5

Never Again

I was a shy girl who only talked when I needed to. And this was one of those times when I needed to talk.

“Hey Mac,” was the first thing I said as I walked into homeroom Monday morning. Her sun kissed hair swayed as she talked to Landon. Her lips moving, but her voice unheard. Boy did Mac have a loud voice, but today the classroom had turned into a herd of elephants that even she couldn’t talk over. Which was a good thing, because no one, not even Mac and Landon, my two best friends, could know what was in my backpack.

I scurried to my locker. “*Sophia Marcella, you can do this!*” I recited over and over in my head. “*No one will know.*” As the door of my locker swung open, a faint whimper came from my bag. “*No, not now,*” the small voice in my head said. Once the hallway was clear, and I was sure no one was watching, I ever so slowly unzipped my backpack.

Then I heard the deafening sound of our school bell. “Urg,” I said thinking only my thoughts could hear, but the short word came out of my mouth as a loud whisper. I quickly zipped up my bag and shoved it in my locker, then another peep came from my bag. I cringed and forced myself to close the locker door.

Before we were five minutes into class, I heard a whine coming from the hall, but this time it was as clear as the bubbly sea foam resting on the ocean. “What is that noise?” Mrs. Clark asked, trying not to sound irritated. “My . . . uh . . . ringtone.” I blurted out. “It’s a new setting.” I lied. “Sophia, you know you’re supposed t-” “It won’t happen again.” I interrupted. Before our teacher could say another word, I bolted out of the classroom. And I soon realized that I wasn’t alone.

“Landon, what are you doing out here?” I asked. “I wasn’t totally convinced that you changed your ringtone to a whining dog,” she said kindly and a bit proud. I smiled at her and said, “c’mon.” I punched in my locker combination, *clank*, the metal door swung open. As I lifted out my backpack, the soft whining grew louder and louder. “*I’ll only show Landon. Only Landon.*” I told myself. But one part of me knew that soon enough everybody would know.

I knelt down beside my locker, and slowly unzipped my backpack. A small curly-haired dog, the color of peanut butter, launched out of my bag, licking every inch of my face. I stroked the top of his head and pushed him back inside the backpack. I looked up expecting to see Landon beaming down on the adorable puppy, but instead I saw Principal Gary’s beady eyes.

“Young lady, what is in your bag?” he asked, clearly knowing the answer. Landon stood just a few feet away from our principle, but her fear had gotten the best of her causing her to go silent. “*Where was Mac when I needed her?*” I thought. She would always get in trouble standing up for me and Landon. But today I was on my own.

“Two folders, a binder, a few pencils, and my lunch. Speaking of lunch, I should head to the cafeteria,” I said, answering his question without giving away what he really wanted to know. “See me in my office,” he told me sternly. “Yes si,” I said shyly. Principal Gary marched off to his office, leaving me behind. Landon embraced me in a hug, trying to cheer me up. Mac, right on que, came running from the classroom adding to the group hug. I backed away from the hug and said, “I should get going.” They both smiled at me and in unison, nodded. I picked up my backpack and lingered towards our principal’s office.

“I’ll never again bring my little puppy, Luke, to school.” I said aloud.

Seasonal Lore

My First Moose

My heart is racing! I can barely breathe. I whisper, “Oh my gosh! Oh my gosh!” A bull moose comes lumbering out of the woods straight toward me. I have been on seven different moose hunts, but now it was my turn to pull the trigger.

It was the summer of 2020. My dad and I were heading home from our camp in the North Maine Woods, when he got a text from a buddy saying that my mom had won the moose lottery! Her name had been picked for a moose permit, and I was her subpermittee! This was my mom's second permit. Getting a second permit was very lucky. My mom was so excited. She told me that during the hunt, if everything worked out, she was going to let me shoot the moose. I was really thrilled, but I was even happier when I found out that my family from Georgia, who I don't get to see very often, would be coming up for the hunt, too.

October finally arrived. We packed up all of our gear, and my family headed off to camp. My Pappy came, too. We drove through town and up into Allagash. We passed Little Black Gate and headed to camp. My cousin Eli was so happy to stay at our new camp for the first time. I was happy to see him and also to get the chance to shoot a moose. This was going to be an awesome week!

10-12-2020, The First Day of the Hunt:

We woke up in the dark at 4:00 a.m. After eating a hearty breakfast, we headed out at 5:30 toward our hunting spot. We waited until legal shooting, the time when it is light enough to shoot. The plan was that my dad, my mom, my cousin, my uncle, and I would walk down the road in search of a moose. Meanwhile, my pappy and my sister would slowly follow behind us in my dad's pick-up, just out of sight. My father took out the funnel-shaped moose call to try to attract a bull. Uncle Chad heard something. Something was heading our way! We stepped into the ditch and scooped down. My dad radioed Pappy to stop the truck and turn off the engine. He then made some moose calls, but we didn't hear anything else.

We kept walking until we reached a bend in the road that led to some skidder trails. We sat down and called for a while. There was a brook farther in the woods, and it sounded like something was running through it. Then we heard what sounded like antlers being rubbed on some shrubs. We got up and walked toward the noises, but there wasn't a moose in sight. We radioed to meet back up with the rest of our family and decided to try a new game plan.

We drove around for the rest of the morning and early afternoon and shot some partridge. Later in the afternoon, we went back to our hunting spot but entered from a different direction this time. We trekked to a spot near a swampy section and sat down. We made more calls and raked some shrubs. Suddenly my dad saw a female moose, a cow. We continued our cow calls in case there was a bull with her. My dad and I made our way slowly toward it, but she eventually ran off.

Only twenty minutes remained of legal shooting. We returned to the truck and drove up a small hill. Just on the other side, my dad saw a huge bull standing in the road! We got out of the truck, and I loaded my gun and tried to get into position. Before I could get a shot, the bull bolted into the woods. My dad tried to stop the bull with cow calls, but it was too late. He was long gone.

We drove back to camp and had supper, relaxed, and then called it a day. As I drifted off to sleep, I was hopeful that we would see that bull again in the morning.

10-13-2020, The Second Day of the Hunt:

We woke up at 4:40 a.m. and ate our breakfast, then headed out for Day Two of the hunt. We returned to our hunting spot and drove the road instead of walking, to cover more ground. We came to the corner with the skidder trails that we had walked into the day before, and there were three moose standing there. One was a medium-sized bull.

We got out of the truck, and Mom and I loaded our guns. I saw the bull, but it ran off before I could get a shot. We went down the road and heard the moose crashing through the woods. We came to a fork in the road, and the cow crossed in front of us. My dad said to get ready because the bull would be right behind her. He was right. Suddenly the bull was standing in the road only twenty yards away. It stared at me. I picked up my gun and rested it on my shooting stick. I aimed right at the heart. I pulled the trigger and... *Click!* There was no bullet in the chamber! I reloaded my gun, but the bull followed the cow into the woods. We went down a side road to where the bull would come out next, but it just kept running and didn't stop.

After returning to the truck, we planned the rest of the morning out. Arriving to the back area of the swamp where the bull and cow had run in, we crept in as slowly and quietly as possible. One step after another, searching for the bull.

We continued along the edge of the swamp and suddenly, there he was! The bull stood about forty yards away—munching on raspberry bushes, not even aware we were there. I pulled up my gun, but I didn't have a clear shot. My dad made a call, and the bull started to walk toward us. "Oh my gosh! Oh my gosh!" I whispered. My heart was racing. My dad let out another call. The bull stopped... *Pooooowwww!!!* The bull fell down. It was a perfect shot right behind the shoulder. We were hugging and celebrating, but then we saw the bull get back up. My mom and I both took shots, and the bull fell again.

We waited a few minutes and then walked over to the moose to be sure it was dead. I had done it! I had gotten my first moose! I was so happy that I was shaking. I named the moose Chance because it was the same moose I had tried to shoot earlier that morning when my gun didn't fire. I'd been given a second chance.

Nathan Castonguay

Valley Rivers Middle School

Mr. Lynn. Grade 7

The Hunnewells

The Hunnewells had just moved into their new house in Michigan Settlement, Fort Kent, Maine. The year was 1868. Barnabas and Elizabeth Hunnewell had six children and one dog. Everything went smoothly for the first few days, except ever since they started sleeping there, all of the clocks would stop at 3:07 a.m. Elizabeth would also wake up with random bruises all over her body. Elizabeth's doctor put her on medication, but the meds didn't help, and the bruises would gradually get larger and larger. The family rewound the clocks to the correct time, but they kept stopping at exactly 3:07.

The Hunnewells would play hide and clap all the time, then something happened. Elizabeth was "it" one day and she heard clapping coming from the basement, but no one had been down there yet. Elizabeth creaked the door open. Someone grabbed her hand and harshly

dragged her down the stairs. She opened her eyes and nobody was around but the door was jammed very tight and wouldn't open.

"Help! Help me!" Elizabeth started shrieking.

Barnabas heard her scream and banged on the cellar door but it won't budge. He kept trying to bust the door open, but he couldn't. Barnabas went to grab a shovel in the shed to smash the door open. He looked around outside and saw something terrible. Barnabas shouted in misery, but he needed to save Elizabeth first. He ran inside and busted the door open. Elizabeth was alright but trembled with fear.

Meanwhile, the youngest child of the Hunnewell family, Linda, heard her father's scream and rushed outside only to see their dog Sadie dead alongside the house. Linda ran inside the house with tears dripping down her face. Her older brother Franklin saw her.

"Oh my goodness, what happened?" Franklin inquired.

"Sadie," was all she could say before her voice started to get hoarse.

"Linda... What about Sadie?" Franklin asked.

Linda took Franklin's hand and led him to Sadie's corpse. The rest of the family followed behind them. They had Sadie's funeral that day. All-day it was very sunny and warm but as soon as they started the funeral, the sky darkened as gloomy storm clouds lurked above.

Later that night, while the children were sleeping, Linda woke up to someone tickling her feet. "Fidelia, stop it!" Linda whined to her older sister.

"I'm not doing anything. Go back to sleep Linda," Fidelia says.

The tickling kept getting harsher and harsher until suddenly someone grabbed Linda's feet and pulled her to the end of the bed. She jolted awake and the door quickly slammed shut. Linda screamed when she saw the person standing behind the door. Barnabas and Elizabeth both came running in. They didn't see anything, but they still wanted to make them comfortable so the whole family slept together in the parents' room.

The next morning the family woke up to all of the crosses on the ground and every single picture that they had in their house was shattered. There was broken glass all over the stairs and floor where the pictures had been hanging.

The Hunnewells decided to play hide and clap again but this time downstairs was completely off-limits so they were only playing on the top floor. In this round, Josephine was 'it'. They started playing when something dreadful happened again.

Josephine heard claps coming from the closet in her room. At first, she had thought that it was Lydia, her younger sister because she was always attracted to the closet for some reason. Lydia would always walk there and start banging her head on the closet door in the middle of the night and at random times of the day.

Josephine walked up to the closet doors and tried to give a hug to her sister, but it wasn't Lydia. It wasn't anyone. She took off her blindfold, but there was no one there. They decided it was best to stop playing for the evening.

Josephine woke up that night to banging noises in her closet. Once again there was nothing there, but when she laid down on her bed to go back to sleep, there was someone on the top of her closet watching her. It was a woman. She had long black hair and wore a long white dress. Her skin looked as if it was dusted with charcoal. The woman's eyes were black as night. She had dried blood caked under her fingernails and scratch marks all over her face. The ghostly looking woman jumps off of the closet and onto Josephine.

"AHHHHH-," Josephine started to scream but the woman clamped her hand against Josephine's mouth to silence her.

The rest of the Hunnewell family were still able to hear her scream and they came sprinting into the room expecting to see something much worse than what they did. Not realizing what was going on, they went back to bed. Josephine couldn't fall asleep.

The next few days and nights were uneventful and nothing abnormal happened. It was Thursday, November 12, 1868. They knew the next morning it would be Friday the 13th and that is the date that everyone has bad luck.

That morning Elizabeth woke up but wouldn't talk to anyone. She seemed very moody and would only mumble to herself. Barnabas was concerned about his wife because he had to go for a job interview and would only be back late that night.

When Barnabas got home, he could hear blood-curdling screams coming from the basement. He grabbed a knife from the kitchen and slowly crept down the stairs. The screams that he had heard earlier were replaced with high-pitched laughter. Barnabas saw his wife with a porcelain doll. It wasn't an ordinary-looking doll though, she had a glossy silver face, rosy red cheeks, and had a long crack along her face. Barnabas was on the last step when he heard "Creeaak." Barnabas watched as both heads slowly turn towards him and stare at him in unison. Barnabas got chills down his spine. When he saw Elizabeth's face he gasped. Her bright blue eyes had turned dark and cloudy and she had veins bulging out of her ashen face.

"Elizabeth, are you alright?" Barnabas asked alarmingly.

She was silent. Barnabas slowly raised his weapon and almost threw it at Elizabeth, but it disappeared from his hands. He blinked. When he opened his eyes, the knife was in her hands. He started to run upstairs but the door slammed shut in his face. Elizabeth started slowly and haltingly walking towards him. Her head was slightly tilted with her eyes focused only on him. She held the knife raised aiming in his direction. Barnabas didn't have any time to think. She leaped towards him and stabbed him in the heart. He was dead.

"MOTHER!!!" Barnabas Jr. exclaimed, "WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU?!?"

He had been hiding behind an old rusty stove in the basement the whole time with his baseball bat. He didn't know what to do after he yelled but he reacted quickly. He ran up to his mother and swung his bat at her head from behind.

Elizabeth and Barnabas were both dead.

Addison Chasse & Holly Blair Valley Rivers Middle School Mrs. Jamie Pelletier Grade 7

The Mystery

This was the time when a baby went crazy. It was 1942 when a baby was born. The baby was like a normal baby. He was a boy who loved to cry and drink milk. He had brown eyes and black hair, but there was one thing different about this baby. It was one week old and the baby would always say some weird stuff like I will get you soon or I see you some stuff like that. But the parents did not know what to do. The parent had enough of the baby so they went to the doctors to get a check-up.

The parents left the baby at the hospital so they could run a few tests. Later that day there was a power outage. About half-hour, when the lights were back. A doctor went to see if everyone was all right but when the doctor got to the top floor where they keep all the special

chemicals he found a dead security guard. The parent of the baby got a call saying that there has been a murder. The parents rushed over to the hospital to get the baby and the parents were queries so they asked the doctors if they knew who had killed the security guard. The doctor said no. Later that day the other security guards had a brilliant idea to go and check the security cameras. "There it is", the security guard said. Another security guard said "what is that?" Both of them saw nothing but a knife and red eyes. It was a huge mystery.

It's been three years and now the baby is a kid and is going to pre k. He is a very smart kid and he loves building shows. His favorite subject is science and it was the only subject he would get perfect grades in. One day the parents went to go pick up the kid at school, but when they got to school the kid was not there. The parents were really worried so they called the cops to make a search party. Later that day the police got a call saying there has been a murder. It was at a factory. This factor was top-notch; it had great security because it had the biggest and strongest weapons. The police went to check it out and they found the kid there. The police called the parents saying that they had found the kid and they were bringing him back home.

The police went to check out the murder and saw no traces of evidence, so they went to check on the cameras. When they got to the cameras they were in shock because they saw absolutely nothing, but a knife and red eyes. When police went back to the police station and remembered the murder three years ago. They took out the files from that murder and recently murder and looked at the same murder to see if anything then they saw two things the same. The first thing was that both murders they couldn't see who murder and the second thing was the kid was there. The police thought that was strange so they went back to the kid's house and asked the parents where the kid was. They told the police that he was downstairs so the cops went down and saw the kid. The kid looked out and ran. The cops followed the kid, threw a door, and down even more steps then they came out of the door and saw a robot.

The kid took a chemical and injected himself with it. The chemical made him turn into an adult. He got the chemical from the hospital. He killed the security guard at the top floor and went into the room where all the chemicals. Then, earlier today he was at the factory and stole a robot. Now the kid is going to kill everyone. The cops called the military. The U.S military just finished world war 2 so the military came but they did not have a lot of men because a lot died. When the military got there the city was getting destroyed. The kid was in the robot shooting rockets and blowing up homes and buildings. The police and military worked together to make sure everyone was safe then they went to get the kid and robot. Both the military and the robot were now shooting missiles at each other. It was wild! The police and military could not get close to it so they were just hoping that the kid that is now a man. After about half an hour they stopped and the kid that is now an adult hopes out of the robot. He said you will never get me. Then he tried to use his invisible powers but he couldn't because the chemical that he used to turn into a man took his invisibility powers away, so the police got him. The man ended up serving the rest of his life in jail. When he died they buried him in Fort Kent. My class went to that cemetery and I saw the grave. On the grave, it says, baby, is not dead.

Will Morneault

Valley Rivers Middle School

Mrs. Jamie Pelletier

Grade 7

I'm Sorry Mom

It was a dark gloomy Monday morning, like always in Salem Massachusetts. My mom and I moved here to get away from her last boyfriend. Clearly it didn't play out right. I woke up to the sound of a glass being broken. Like always.

My mom was being yelled at by her boyfriend. I never liked him. I've seen him hit her, yell at her, and throw stuff at her but she never seems to leave. Don't get me wrong, I would do something if I could but being a short fourteen year old girl won't do me any good. I've always felt a strong hatred for Samuel. He made my blood boil. When I even hear him speak or even see him walk into a completely silent room I can feel my hands get tense and my vision get blurry. He's not good. For me or for my mom. He has to go.

I had walked down the stairs to where I had heard the fighting and I peaked my head around the corner of the stairs. He had put his hands on her. I ran up stairs and locked the door behind me and I started to cry. It makes me mad that I can't help her. I threw on my big oversized t-shirt and the same pants I wore yesterday. I wiped away my tears and put my hair in a ponytail. It was the best I could do. I stumbled down the stairs tripping over my own feet and said, "I'm heading to school mom." She didn't hear me.

I had only lived a block or two from school so I just walked. The tears were dried on my face and my vision was still blurry. I walked into school and everyone stared at me. I knew I looked bad but I didn't think that bad. I put my head down and headed to class. I got myself throughout the day and walked back home. I opened the door and saw my mom crying on the couch. She wiped the tears off her face and said "How was school?". I had sat on the couch next to her. We began talking about Samuel and life. It had lasted for hours. It was the type of conversation where you could just talk forever.

"Why do you stay with Samuel? Do you really love him?" I say

"Yes. I do. Even though he says rude things. I do," my mom said with a disappointed look on her face. Why would my mom put herself through something like this.

My mom had admitted to me that she loved Samuel. So even if he was a jerk, she still couldn't get mad. Which I guess I could understand but I don't get it at the same time. I don't think he loves her. I apologized to her because I have to understand that it doesn't matter what I think about him, she is happy.

The door swung open which meant Samuel was home. He kicked his shoes off and threw his jacket on the floor. Just like a child. As soon as he came home it started raining. It happens almost every time. He's like a bad luck charm.

I went upstairs because I don't like being around him. I opened my window and sat next to it. I always liked the rain. I sat just staring into another world when I heard, "Cynthia! Come downstairs and help me set the table."

Why couldn't Samuel just do it? Oh I know why because he couldn't peel his eyes off the college football game like always. I went down and placed forks down on the table. Three forks. The food was ready and my mom said, "Sam, come eat. The food is ready."

"I don't care, Salina. I'm watching the game. Bring me my food." Samuel said. She did as he pleased. Why is she doing this to herself? I sat and ate with my mom. Not a word was spoken. All you could hear was Samuel's game humming in the background.

I put my dishes in the dishwasher and went back to my room. I had showered and changed into pj's. My mom poked her head in and said "goodnight cynthia, sleep well." I was curious to see if Samuel was still down stairs. I walked to open my door but someone had opened

it before me. It was Samuel. He came in shouting, complaining about how he is treated poorly. “Your mother is carless. I do everything around here. She is so greedy and helpless.”

He walked in circles grabbing his head, and clenching his fists. I was ready to get hit. Finally, he stood next to the window, and that’s when I messed up. I pushed him out of the second floor. It was my chance to finally get rid of him. He fell flat on his back onto the tar sidewalk. I just ruined my life. I just ruined my *mom's* life.

My mom frantically opened the door after she had heard a loud bang. She saw me standing in front of my window looking down. She leaned over and saw, “the love of her life” on the ground. Pale, lifeless, and *dead*. My mom dropped to her knees. She broke into tears. I did this, I broke her heart. She looked up at me and said,

“What is wrong with you? Why would you do such a cruel thing?” The only words that could come out of my mouth were, “*I’m sorry mom.*”

Allison Fournier Valley Rivers Middle School Mrs. Jamie Pelletier Grade 7

The Mystery On Oak Street

When I opened the book that's when my life fell apart. But I will start when it all begins. It was my 16th birthday, I was opening presents from my friends.

“Oh I love it!” I say as I pull out a blanket from my friend Adriana.

“My turn” My mom says running to the table with my gift. I open the present. It was a book called *The Mystery On Oak Street*.

“I got this for you because we live on Oak Street. This year was hard finding a gift in the budget. I hope you like it.” My mom said. I could tell she wanted this to be a great day for me.

“I love it mom, thank you.” I really *did* love it.

I started reading it that night, I turn to the first page.

“Bailey wakes up and goes to school. On the way to school she trips over a rock, everyone laughs at her.” It was weird because on my way to school that morning I tripped on a rock.

“Bailey wakes up, it’s her birthday again. Her days are repeating”. I freaked out because my name was Bailey and it was my birthday. I throw the book in the trash hiding it under a bunch of papers so my mom won't find it. I go to bed.

When I wake up in the morning I see my mom standing over me.

“Happy birthday!” My mom says.

“Mom, my birthday was yesterday.”

“No your birthday is today, check the date.” I check the date on my phone. It is my birthday. What is going on. I get up and get ready. My mom made me french toast for my birthday just like yesterday. Later that day while I was opening my presents my mom once again came running to the table.

“My turn” She says. I play along like I don’t know what I am getting.

Once the party is over, I take the book out and finish reading it. Yet, this time the first page was not the same. It was a picture of me. Me, reading this book on my bed. Right now. I dropped the book on my bed and started pacing the room. I stand still for a moment then I hear a

page turn. I didn't have a window open, there wasn't a fan on, and I was standing still. I turned back to my bed and it was on page two. On page two it was a picture of me facing towards the wall, not moving. It's like the book is tracking everything I do, or did it already know?

I thought maybe if I went outside and burned the book it would all go away. So that's what I was going to do. I walked over to my door and it was locked. I didn't lock it, and you can't lock it from the outside. I kept pulling at the door no matter what way I turned the lock it was locked. Locked for good. I did the same thing as last night and put the book under a bunch of papers in my garbage. I tossed and turned for hours till I couldn't keep my eyes open.

I wake up and hear,

"Happy birthday!" Again. For the third time. My life is the book. My life is "*The Mystery on Oak Street.*"

Emma Cyr

Valley Rivers Middle School

Mrs. Jamie Pelletier

Grade 7

Bear Scare

We're going on a fishing trip in the middle of the woods of Alaska.

"Wow," I said when Joseph caught a big salmon. We were probably only fishing for an hour before we saw a bear 1000 feet down river. It wasn't too surprising because we knew that there were going to be bears here. We keep on catching fish. In that next hour we caught 10, 10-30 pound salmon. They were fighting pretty hard. There was a waterfall a quarter of a mile up river, we could just barely see it. We fished up to it but didn't catch anything. Once we got to the waterfall we could see all sorts of fish trying to get up the waterfall. We threw in a little baitfish imitation but we had no luck. Then we tried using a little mayfly imitation. Then not even a minute after we threw it in. POW! Something big was on my line. It was jumping all over the place so we knew it was a salmon. When we finally got it in, my arms were burning. When we measured it, it was three and a half feet long and 35 pounds. Then out of nowhere a massive shadow loomed over us. We couldn't see what it was, because we dropped everything and ran into the woods. A big branch hit my face but I didn't even feel it, we didn't stop running though. I saw the trees and branches flying past me but it didn't even feel like I was running, I felt like I was flying. As we ran through the forest I could smell the rotting leaves, but didn't look at the ground. The only thing I could think about was running as fast as I could and the only sound I heard was the beating of my heart.

We only stopped when we got into a little clearing in the woods with some moss on the ground. We both looked around, but luckily we didn't see anything. We looked around again to see if we could see where we came from so we could get back. I looked at Joseph and said "What was that?" I said

"I don't know, Probably a bear. Remember When we saw the bear down river,"

"Yeah," We laid down on the moss and I closed my eyes. The next thing I knew my eyes opened and it was almost dark and I figured that trying to get back to the river at night wasn't the best idea. I woke up Joseph and said, "So then, we should probably try to make a shelter of some sort,"

"Probably right," Joseph responded.

We saw a big pine tree next to some smaller sapling on the edge of the clearing. Luckily we still had our knives on us so we could cut some branches. It was hard to cut branches with just knives. We cut 15 branches that were around one inch big. Tree and sapling were kind of shaped in a V with the big tree at the end and five sapling leading up to it on both sides with moss in the middle. The little saplings were around three feet. We arranged the sticks almost like a teepee. They were leaning against the big pine. The sapling also helped because they kind of acted like little walls.

“Well at least we still have our backpacks,” I said

“Ya, so at least we can have some food and another thing do we have anything to make a fire with because that will probably be helpful to keep all the animals at bay,” Joseph said.

“I think I have some flint in my bag,”

“Ok, that's good,”

We set down our bags and got some birch bark to make a fire. When we got our fire started, we ate some granola bars and went to bed.

In the middle of the night we both woke up to the sound of something big walking on moss “shcosh, shcosh, shcosh, shcosh,” “what is that?” then as if on cue we heard “bpo, bpo, bpo, bpo,” of whatever it was running away.

When we woke we saw that our fire was out. We tried to find some sort of print or really anything to find out what we heard last night. “What do you think that was last night”

“I really don't know,” I responded.

We started to walk around to see if we could find the river again so we could go back. The woods were just getting thicker and thicker. “I don't think this is the way?” Joseph said

“Yay, I don't remember running through stuff this thick,” I said. So we took a left and continued walking. I turned my head to the left to see if I could catch a glimpse of the river. But I saw something way different.

“Do you see that?” I asked Joseph

“Where?”

“Right over there,”

“Oh,” Joseph said then he asked “What is that?”

“It looks like a cabin of some sort,” There was a little clearing that it was in, or a used to be clearing which is now just a moss and ferny opening.

We looked inside. As soon as we stuck our heads in we saw a round table, a couple chairs then a painting of a bear. We walked in a little farther then we saw an old map on the table. We looked at the map and saw that it was where we were. The map had a little dot where this cabin was. Then we saw the river we were at a couple days ago. We saw a scale and it said that inch was one mile. From the dot the river was a fourth of a inch. “Wow, we're almost there,” Joseph said. We took out a compass and found north on the compass and found north on the map. The river was about a quarter mile to the east. We went out of the cabin and went east. We were probably walking for only five minutes when something dark went over us. My heart raced But when I looked behind me I only saw a tree. I looked In through the trees, then I saw what made my blood stop. There was a massive bear twenty feet away, it was probably 2,000 pounds, but normal bears are just about 1,700. “Look behind you,” I whispered to Joseph

“.....” that all Joseph was able to say. I turned around one last time to see if it was still there but it was walking away, but then I saw the bear's fur shine in the sun . We saw the river only 30 feet away so just slowly walked to it. Once we got to the river and looked back and we

were both relieved that we didn't see the bear behind us. Then we walked down the river and back to the cabin we were first in.

That night we looked on maps and newspapers to see why there was a cabin there. We looked at one newspaper and the date was 1901. It said that a hunter built a cabin to hunt a mysterious and large bear. It said that he only came back in 1953 and did not look any older. Then on a foggy cold night, the hunter went missing. When they looked at his house the next morning it said that there was a paw track but only one they said that you could see the indentation of five claws.

Alden Reardon

Valley Rivers Middle School

Mrs. Jamie Pelletier

Grade 7

Memories

Pinkham was going for his regular grocery store trip, normally he would go on Friday. This time he went to the grocery store he went Tuesday and at 8 at night. He didn't think much of it since it wasn't too bad until he started hearing stuff, and he got a chill because he didn't know who it was, it almost sounded like spirits when he was walking into the grocery store again didn't think too much of it, until around 45 minutes into shopping when he kept hearing something that sounded like his best friend saying

"Are you okay?" And he heard a faint scream. He was getting very scared instead of telling someone he ignored it and drove home, although his house was around 45 minutes- 1 hour away, and while he was driving his car was swerving in the road, at this point he thought to call someone but he couldn't because his only phone was at his house. Pinkham eventually arrived home and just fell asleep because today was enough for him. The next day continued, nothing out of the ordinary happened so at this point Pinkham was just considering today was a normal day, until at 8 at night he was hearing his dad this time and at this point he told his son and his son thought it could be a spirit of his parents or his best friend talking to him. Now Pinkham tried to remain calm, while his son explained, he said

"Your best friend is just trying to scare you." And then he felt a chill, and there was something about it, just something he couldn't grasp but he knew, *knew*.

The next day Pinkham woke up as usual he completed daily tasks like dishes, sweeping and cleaning, afterwards he heard banging on his door and didn't know who it was, to his surprise it was his son, he was relieved since he had been hearing sounds from someone. Then the next night he heard something again instead of just hearing sounds he heard banging on the door and he opened the door no one was there, at this point he called his son, his son didn't answer so Pinkham just went to sleep. Around 3 days later he thought of who this could be and he thought it was his mom so he waited to hear a voice and the next time he heard a voice he asked the spirit if it was his mom and it went silent. He mostly gave up until around 3 weeks later, it was around 2 am, and the door opened and again there was no one there.

So it's now October 28th and his day is going on good, until October 31st he went to the store instead he went to a store that was 10 minutes away. After around 1 week and a half he knows who is spooking him, it's his... best friend because his best friend would always try to

scare him. He is kind of shocked to say the least. Afterwards when he hears sounds again he slowly ignores it. Around 3 hours later he is in the hospital and he didn't get a chance to call his son and they realized he had stage 1 cancer when his son heard the news he had felt so bad did he do enough for his dad? All those thoughts made him feel a little...stressed. The next night at 12:47 his best friend said goodbye and Pinkham unfortunately died. His son was in shock when he heard the news about this and was disappointed. He felt he could've done more, could've been there for him. Instead its memories, *memories*.

Emily Berube

Valley Rivers Middle School

Mrs. Jamie Pelletier

Grade 7

Flavie's Revenge

Mrs. Flavie was name to be scared of in Fort Kent. Known for being horribly ruthless. If you mess with her one and only daughter, she would bend you over and spank you with a belt. As a result of this, everyone chose to stay away from her daughter, Marie.

If you upset Marie, even a little bit, she would run home to her mother, Mrs. Flavie. So everything went on as normal, Flavie was feared, Marie was ignored, and halloween came. However, a crucial mistake was made.

Michael Jenkins was well known as the class clown, troublemaker, some would say bully, but he never meant harm, he only mourned for attention. He just couldn't resist.

MICHAEL

Some people hated me, that wasn't fair. No-good brownnoser Marie hated me, but that was only 'cause I liked having fun. She hated any fun, even if you were just messing with her, she'd still be the first to snitch on you for any little thing. And when she did that, you best hope it was at school, the teachers weren't usually too harsh. But if you upset her outside of school, she would cry home to Mommy. Marie's mum would leave you with bruise marks that stayed for a weeks.

Then one day, something happened, I truly didn't mean for it to happen, and even though Marie was a generally un-likable person, what happened still really bothered me.

I thought it would be funny to scare the living crap out of her, and it was... at first. I dressed up as the devil, not one of those cheesy headbands with horns, but like a really detailed one. It looked like I was straight from the set of *the exorcist*. I guess Marie thought so too, because she stopped dead in her tracks. She couldn't move. I was scared, so I called 911, hoping they would know what to do, they did know what to do, but it was too late. My prank had gone too far. Marie had died from a heart attack. I remember the EMT saying

“She's dead, kid”

Everything else is kind of a blur.

Mrs. Flavie was told by authorities later that day, that her daughter had passed. Flavie adored that girl a lot, Took me to court and everything. I was being tried for first degree murder (Flavie's request) I wasn't found guilty of murder, but manslaughter (not as bad but still really bad). And that is how at the age of 14, I was enrolled in prison, not Juvie, but the big time, the slammer, the place filled with big buff men, all who could very well be child predators and serial killers.

34 years later

TOKEN

It was halloween tradition to go visit the murder sight of Marie Flavie. I would always go with Mark and Harris. Harris thought he was so cool because he vapes, me and Mark thought it was funny because his orange-mango flavored toxins-in-a jar got yanked from his hands by the wind. He was all freaked out claiming it was some sort of supernatural thing. We all laughed it off and continued hanging out.

I should probably elaborate more, Marie Flavie was a kid about my age when she died. Died from a heart attack. Some kid named Michael Jenkins scared her so hard and went to prison for it too, must be about 50 years old now. I heard nowadays Michael only comes out of his house once every two months for groceries.

"Hey, dude take a hit, dude," Harris started. "It's like really tasty, dude." I couldn't believe Harris was roping Mark into this, that wasn't cool. What made me more shocked was Mark went along with it. I never took Mark as a guy that would give into peer pressure like that.

"So dude, what didya think of it dude?" Harris asked.

"Mhm, yup *cough cough* great stuff dude," Mark replied.

"Yo dude, Token, dude. You want some of this stuff dude?" Harris was trying to get me hooked now.

I missed when Harris wasn't like this. It's one thing to make your own bad decisions, but being a class-act jerk about it wasn't cool. I was gone before Harris could say another word, I decided it was best to stay away from that idiot. That meant having no friends and being all alone. Alone on Halloween. At a murder sight...

One could only expect what happened next to happen.

HARRIS

Token is so lame. Always following the laws. Always doing un-cool things. So un-cool.

MARK

I'm scared of Harris, I just do what he wants even if he was a dirtbag sometimes. I'd have no friends otherwise. Token was brave enough to walk away. I wish I were brave like Token, I truly feel responsible for what happened next. If I hadn't given into Harris, Token would not have walked away alone. This could have all been avoided. If only I had been brave.

HARRIS

Token may have been super un-cool and lame, but he was still my buddy. I wanted him to be alright so when me and Mark heard a scream coming from the direction Token ditched us and

left to, we ran over. It was Token's scream, but we were too late. There he was, with a knife sticking out of his chest. Dead on the ground. It had to have been that Flavie girl's spirit.

MARK

No way I could handle this. Token was dead on the ground, with a bloody knife sticking from his chest. When I got home Mum and Da were already fighting again. Not a good sign. I didn't tell them what happened to Token because Da wouldn't care, not when he's buzzed like this. A little part of me still couldn't believe it happened either. Mum was always too stressed with my "father" anyway, so I was on my own, in my room with no one but Eminem blasting from my speakers. That way, I couldn't hear all the horrible things Da was saying. The fact Token had died still hadn't sunk in yet. Every so often it would slip my mind.

JACOB

I wasn't popular, I didn't need friends, all the Neanderthals in my classes were more focused on Fifa and pointless gossip than their academics. I especially found Harris dis-tasteful, I had no clue why Mark and Token hung around that bad influence. Speaking of Token, he hasn't been in school today. I assume he has caught a cold from the three of them doing a yearly visit to a murder sight. Halloween is cold in Fort Kent and those dumb jocks don't wear coats. Guess soccer players don't get cold. Or they think they're "cool"

HARRIS

Token was so boring. He died though, so I probably shouldn't say that. It's like rude or something. Jacob could probably figure out just how it happened but I wasn't about to go ask that goody-two-shoes. He sucks, always thinking he's better than me 'cause he's good at smart stuff. I wasn't a bully, I'm still not, nobody's gonna tell me I am. Not Jacob, Mark, not the school system, not even my no good older sister.

MARK

My Da sucks. I don't even like calling him that. He decided that he could stop being a part of my life about 4 years ago, that's fine with me now, really messed me up back then though. I just wish that for once he would be proud of me. I couldn't tell Harris any of this, He would make fun of me. The only person I could talk to was Token, and he's no longer here, he's in a better place. But that's why I had to do this for him, for me, for Harris even though he was a dirtbag.

JACOB

Usually, Mark is hanging around Neandrathal Harris, if it weren't for his less than good judgment in friendship choices, I wouldn't mind the kid. That's why I was pleased that he approached me without Harris. He said he knew something about Token's death and was hoping that I could help figure out what happened. So he filled me in and we got to work finding out what happened. This park we were at was said to be sacred, holy almost. People had miraculously survived the unsurvivable here. I suspected we would be pretty safe here. It seemed like we had been fairly productive until Harris the bully came along. He ran into the gazebo Mark and I were in. (it was where we were solving the mystery.) He screamed at the top of his lungs,

“SOMETHING IS CHASING ME DUDE, LIKE YOU GOTTA HELP ME DUDE!”

I decided to rule it out and ignore him. Probably another typical prank. I wish I had taken it more seriously.

MARK

Harris was just playing, at least that's what I thought. Some hideous creature was chasing Harris .honestly this was most likely just karma at its finest. All I knew that Harris was gone. The hideous thing opened its mouth and out popped a ten foot long tongue, but this was no ordinary-extra long tongue. It was a huge spike that impaled Harris, he didn't have the strength to run away fast enough, my guess was those juul pods were taking a toll on him. The human-oid creature then got on all fours and crawled away faster then I've ever seen anything crawl in my life. I felt like I had just been stabbed myself, My stomach sunk, and I dropped to my knees.

JACOB

Harris was gone, I'm not going to say he didn't deserve it.

MARK

Everyone around me was dropping like flies. First Token, now Harris, I was seeing a pattern, all of my friends were dying. I knew what I had to do. I couldn't bring Jacob into this. I had to go find the man that started this, the man that was charged with murder almost half a century ago. MICHAEL Jenkins. I wasn't for sure, but I had a good idea of where he was. I had heard Harris talking about his house before.

JACOB

This was absurd. Mark said he couldn't be friends with me anymore, and gave no explanation. That was it, I knew something was wrong because later that day I saw him going to Jenkins' house.

MICHAEL

'Flavie was a name I thought I would never hear again. Until some kid knocked on my door askin' for answers about her. This kid was insane, I wasn't gonna help him, I was going to get myself killed if I messed with that haunted family.

MARK

When I knocked on the door nothing happened for a second. Then the door swung open. It was a dingy place with beat down furniture and chemicals on a counter top. The mere fact that there was a response gave me hope, but it turns out that old Jenkins was too scared. I guess I was on my own.

I went to the old murder sight. With a spell I had come up with overnight. It went like so: *witches and goblins cower out for fright, for Mother Flavie comes out tonight, come and take me if dare, just please let this town be spared.*

It worked, this was some freaky stuff, right now. Before me, was the creature I saw at the gazebo, Walks on all fours, Pig mask, White, flowy skirt. It tried to impale me with its tongue, like it had done to Harris, but missed and scraped my face. I was bleeding now, like not deathly, but the kind where you feel like laying down and doing nothing. I couldn't do nothing though, if

this thing killed me, it would move on to the rest of the town, and so I had to figure out a way to stop this thing. Flavie conjured a boulder out of seemingly thin air, must have weight at least twice as much as me.

MICHAEL

That kid that was at my doorway had ambition, if I didn't help, he would do it himself and get killed, I needed to help. I couldn't handle hearing another person died because of me, I needed to do everything in my power to make sure he didn't.

MARK

The boulder hit me right on the foot, probably broke it too, that was the least of my worries, however. The boulder was on my foot, meaning I was trapped. Two spikes grew out of the horrible creature's hand, slowly coming toward me. This thing was bloodthirsty. Just then, the man that started this all, MICHAEL Jenkins came to my rescue. Flavie turned its sights away from me, focusing on Jenkins. He had some potion things that I assume were made from all that time he spent locked up in his house. Threw a couple of potions, hurt the thing a little bit. But not nearly enough. Flavie impaled Jenkins, ruthlessly with the spikes on its hands. Those spikes were meant for me, not Jenkins, he was just trying to help a dumb kid, that dumb kid was me. That was the last straw. I had to exterminate this thing for good, like done-done. It lashed at me, with spikes now completely covering its body. I dodged, somehow. I ran. Ran to someone I promised wouldn't get involved.

JACOB

Mark approached me asking if Father had any guns available. I said he did, but I wasn't allowed to use them. Mark demanded I show him where they are, I did, just trying to be courteous. He broke the glass on the gun cabinet, loaded one for himself, and for me. Handed me a shotgun and told me to follow him. I already knew what this was about, so I didn't bother hesitating, even if it was breaking my father's rule.

MARK

I had Jacob follow me back to Flavie's murder sight. The creature was no longer there. That meant it was in downtown Fort Kent. It had summoned a hoard of zombies in the meantime. No, these weren't just zombies, it was the townspeople. The mailman, the butcher, the librarian, all here. This was some serious crap. Jacob and I both shot at the monstrosity that was terrorizing the town. I hit all my shots, Jacob hit none but he tried his best. It didn't matter anyway. The bullets barely even fazed it. Then Jacob had one of his smart ideas. The reason I needed him.

"Hey, Mark," He began. "I know this is going sound stupid, but the thing seems bent on revenge, I mean Token and Harris both disrespected it, you did too, MICHAEL was the reason this thing is mad anyway, so he definitely disrespected it. The mother was overprotective of her only daughter right?"

"Yeah," I said. "That's how the legend goes."

It just clicked after that. All this time I thought it was the daughter, but no. It was the mother, out to get all those who wronged her daughter. I did the only thing I could think of that may fix this.

“I AM SORRY!” I screamed. “HARRIS IS SORRY, TOKEN IS SORRY, MICHAEL IS SORRY, WE ARE ALL SORRY!”

Something happened just then. Everything went quiet, all the destruction was undone, but my friends, and the man that saved my life, were still gone. I had a feeling that this wouldn't be last I would see of Flavie, and I had a feeling Da didn't even notice I had just saved the town. If he did, he sure didn't care. But that was okay, I knew what I did. This mess was partly my fault, but I also fixed it, and that was good enough for me.

Sawyer Stoliker

Valley Rivers Middle School

Mrs. Jamie Pelletier

Grade 7

Did You Hear That?

Cora Dickey was a normal 17-year-old girl who never really believed in ghosts. The year was 1876 and she was just being told by her mother that they were going to move into a new house.

“Mother, please, I do not want to move into a new house,” she said pleading.

“Cora, this is not your decision, this is also needed, your father already bought it, I'm sorry, Cora.” They were standing in the kitchen and arguing. Cora was angry but knew that she couldn't say anything, all she could do was go up to her room and wait for dinner.

“Pack up your room, we are moving tomorrow.” Her mother yelled up the stairs. Cora ran back downstairs, almost falling halfway down,

“Tomorrow?!”

“Yes, Cora, I told you just a little bit ago.” Her mother said sternly. Cora stomped up the stairs. She entered her room, this was the house she had her entire life, she had an emotional connection to this house, she was sad and angry, mostly angry that she wasn't involved in the conversation. She started folding her clothes and packing them into crates. Once she finished she laid down on her bed, moments later her mother called her down for dinner. She sighed loudly, hoping her family could hear her distress, but went down and ate. At dinner, her mom said,

“So, I told Cora about the moving houses today.”

“Good, so are you excited?” Cora knew this question was pointed towards her but she didn't wanna say anything, she took a bite of her broccoli.

“Cora?” No response.

“Cora, I am your father, answer me right now.” She clenched her fists, gritted her teeth, and took a deep breath.

“No, I hate it and I don't want to move.” She yelled, she could feel tears stinging the corners of her eyes. Cora got up and left the dinner table, she could hear her chair slam on the ground once she left, she went into her room and just sat there, doing nothing, she then decided No one spoke of her outburst, ever. She lied down in her bed and enjoyed the silence, it was peaceful. She read her favorite book, “Little Women”, she got it for her ninth birthday after her mother convinced her father to let her read about independent women, her father didn't want her reading it because he didn't want her to get any ideas of becoming an independent woman

but she wanted to be like Jo, not needing a man and being by herself, she acted like Jo, not caring what people thought. She fell asleep with the book in her hands. She awoke the next day and put her crates in her family's carriage. The carriage wasn't big but it worked. She rode to her new house, her parents were of course already there, the house smelled like cinnamon and fresh apple pie, probably because her mother had just made one but that smell comforted her. She walked up the stairs and saw two rooms, she walked into the smaller one and instantly felt like the temperature dropped so she chose the larger one, she set up her room and met up with her friend, Annabeth Coraline, in the park Annabeth had a wealthy family so her dress was beautiful while Cora's dress was too short and had dirt on the knees.

"Cora! Your knees and your hair! Oh my goodness, how will you ever get a man to marry you?" Annabeth yelled while trying to avoid mud puddles. Annabeth had beautiful golden hair that was put in a bun with a braid around it and she had bright green eyes that looked like the color of emeralds, she also had freckles that looked like someone took a paintbrush and flicked it on her face while Cora had long brown hair that was also tied up in a bun but it was very messy, she had grey eyes that looked like a baby blue in some lighting and had naturally rosy cheeks like she was in the cold all year long.

"Oh, yes Anna, I know, that's exactly what I was going for," Cora said and then winked while wiping off her dress and pulling her hair into a tighter bun. Annabeth rolled her eyes. They walked side by side, arms linked with another. They talked for a while like how Cora broke her knee last summer when they were having a swinging competition, Annabeth, to this day, lectures her on how it was a terrible idea and Cora just sighed and listened. They talked for a little while longer the Cora brought up the moving of houses,

"So we moved today," Cora said glumly. She was about to say something rude about her father but Annabeth cut her off,

"Oooooooo, where?"

"The house on Forest Street. The one with yellow outlined windows." Annabeth stopped in her tracks. Cora's arm was linked with her so she stopped to

"Cora,"

"What's wrong Anna? Did you get mud on your dress," She teased.

"Cora, that place is heavily haunted," Annabeth said with fear in her voice. Cora rolled her eyes.

"Oh come on, Anna. Of course not, don't be silly."

"Fine don't believe me, it's your funeral." They continued to walk until they reached Cora's new house, which Annabeth stayed a solid one hundred feet away,

"Oh, Anna! Come on, I promise the house won't bite."

"There is NO way I am going in there."

Cora rolled her eyes and said goodbye. She walked in and said hello to her mother and father, her mother started talking about how no man will ever love her if she had messy hair and a muddy dress, Cora chuckled to herself and walked up into her room. She entered and laid down reading her other favorite book, "Pride and Prejudice". Instantly, she felt as if someone was watching her. She put the book down and sat up and looked around her room, she closed the curtains but still felt bad like how she felt wherever she had to read papers aloud in class, anxious. Her palms started to get sweaty and she got scared, then she was called down to dinner immediately after so she decided to brush it off. She and her family had their usual small talk at dinner about the weather and what not and went to bed. She laid down and went to sleep. She had a very strange dream, some family was sitting around her new dinner table. She said, "Hey

this is my house. Who are you?" The family just turned and smiled at Cora. She could only make out their smiles but not their faces.

"We've been waiting for you, Cora." Cora was backing away slowly now,

"Do I know you?" The family started walking towards her, she had gotten backed up into a wall, but before she could make out their faces, she woke up, sweating and heavy breathing, she could feel the sweat dripping from her forehead and her palms getting sweatier by the second. She couldn't go back to sleep so she stayed up all night reading about Jo and her adventure.

She waited for Annabeth to pick her up at her new house as she did every morning before school, she yawned and almost dropped because she was so tired, but, soon enough, Annabeth showed up with her carriage and took them to school. She told Annabeth about the dream. Annabeth said,

"It's the ghosts, Cor!" Cora thought about it for a moment but said,

"It was just a bad dream." So she hoped.

She walked home after school and was alone. She cleaned and made lunch for her family knowing they would be home in half an hour to an hour. She then went upstairs and changed from her school clothes to her home clothes. She was about to go downstairs when she heard whispering, she couldn't make it out though. The door slammed. She held her breath,

"Hello?" It was her father. She sighed a sigh of relief. They ate lunch and in the middle of lunch, Annabeth came over. Her father kissed her goodbye and it was just Annabeth and her. They went to Cora's new room and Annabeth was very interested in her books. Just then Cora heard a loud noise from downstairs.

"Anna." she didn't hear her and she thought she was hearing things but she had a bad feeling in her stomach so she tried again but yelled,

"ANNA." Annabeth snapped her head up.

"What is it, Cor?" Another loud bang.

"Did you hear that?" Anna nodded. No one was home. They crept downstairs and saw hanging pans swaying.

"Anna...." Annabeth nodded. They both now knew that there were ghosts in her house. As if on cue, they heard whispering upstairs. Annabeth jumped at the sound. Cora and she ran up the stairs as fast as they could. They saw two figures sitting on Cora's bed. They just smiled. That's when Cora knew, she knew they were the people from her dream.

"We've been waiting for you, Cora," Annabeth screamed and ran down the stairs. Cora was in shock but snapped out of it immediately after they started to walk towards her. She ran as fast as she could down the stairs, falling halfway down the stairs, she fell on her knee and it stung because of last summer's events. They both kept running out of the house onto the road, Cora could feel her knee giving out but couldn't stop. Annabeth's beautiful dress was getting mud all over it and all you could hear was shoes hitting the hard gravel. Their adrenaline was so high when they stopped they couldn't breathe, neither of them talked for at least two minutes, just heavy breathing and sometimes stumbling backward.

"Wow, now that is just out of something Edgar Allen Poe would write," Cora rambled on.

"Oh, shut up, Cor!" Annabeth screamed, "Are you thinking about poetry

right now?” Annabeth looked angry, “I mean Cora, we could have died,” Annabeth started to scream, “My beautiful dress is ruined, my hair is a mess, these beautiful shoes are just RUINED and we could have DIED, Cora. Stop thinking about stupid poetry and think about your own life, you could have died.” Cora stood in shock but then started to get angry,

“Oh, I’m sorry, Anna, your perfect little dress is ruined it’s not like you have fifteen more!” Cora started screaming, “I’m so sorry that your hair that is done by people that you don’t even know is messed up,” Cora was now yelling at the top of her lungs, “You don’t need all the things that you have, you are such a spoiled brat!” Cora yelled as she went over to Annabeth’s dress and ripped it down the side, “Oh Anna, I’m so sorry,” Cora started but immediately stopped

“CORA!” Annabeth screamed. Cora took a step back and realized that she just ripped a seventy-five dollar dress, “Oh Anna, I’m so sorry,” Cora started but immediately stopped because Annabeth ran at Cora and pinned her to the ground, “You are so rude! How dare you do that to my dress!” Annabeth screamed while tearing Cora’s dress. Cora pushed her off and stood up. Annabeth stood up too. They both stared at each other and their dresses. Cora smiled and Annabeth started laughing.

After that big fight Cora’s mind went back to the house, Cora was scared but intrigued and she didn’t want to go back but she did. Cora’s curiosity got the better of her and she said,

“I have to go back, it’s getting dark.” Annabeth looked at her in horror.

“You can’t be serious.”

“That’s my house, Anna.”

“Well, you were my best friend.” Cora rolled her eyes.

“I’m not gonna die, Anna. I’ll see you tomorrow.”

“Yeah, maybe.” Cora laughed and ran home, while she was running she got runner’s cramp but didn’t stop. She entered her room and lied on the bed. She heard her bedroom door close. She quickly sat up and saw a figure with a smile. Her jaw was wide open and she looked as if she was going to say something but she couldn’t put the words together.

“Hello, Cora.”

Madeleine Braun-Epp Valley Rivers Middle School Mrs. Jamie Pelletier Grade 7

Black Eyes

It was late 2014, and Asa Pinkham was living his best life. He was the popular kid in school with a ton of friends. Everyone liked him. He played some sports and was team captain of the soccer team. His grades were also very high! Asa was tall, about six foot two, with curly brown hair, and blue eyes. He had a beautiful girlfriend named, Ella Sears. She was a solid 5,4, long brown hair, and ocean blue eyes. They had been dating for 8 months now. It was October 3rd, and Asa was coming home from school.

“How was your day at school, Honey?” asked Asa’s mother, Mercy Pinkham. Mercy was a single mother, Asa was her only child.

“Boring, like always” replied Asa in an annoyed voice.

“Where’s your positive attitude?”

“Sorry mom, just in a rush. I’m going to Ella’s.”

“Okay, be safe. I love you”

Asa shouted I love you back as he headed out the door. He got into his horse carriage and signed for the horse to move. Asa had his own horse named Maximus. His horse was a brownish color, with a beautiful chocolate colored mane. Ella’s house was a few blocks away from Asa’s. It took him about 20 minutes to get there. He got to her house and greeted her with a hug and a kiss on her forehead.

“My dad grew pumpkins, so we’re going to carve some pumpkins and make jack o’ lanterns!”

Ella’s dad was famous worldwide for his garden. Asa happily agreed and they carved pumpkins and made pumpkin seeds. Asa left Ella’s house around 6:30pm and came home to the smell of his mother cooking.

“Dinner’s on the table waiting for you.” smiled Mercy.

She made Asa his favorite meal, steak and mashed potatoes. Asa ate and took a shower and got into his bed. It was October, spooky season, so Asa decided to watch a horror movie. Asa watched, *The Conjuring*. The movie is based on a true story of the hauntings that the Perron family experienced in their Rhode Island house in the 1970s. He had chills by the end of it and ended up falling asleep.

Asa woke up in the middle of the night and checked the time. It was about 3:02am. He tried falling back asleep and he couldn’t. So Asa got out of his bed and walked to the bathroom, that’s when he saw. The most eerie thing to see. Like in all the movies, it didn’t look real. Asa dropped to the floor in shock not knowing what to do. His mother heard him hit the floor and came to see what happened. At this moment, it was all silence. Black eyed, pale, Asa Pinkham, sitting on the floor almost in tears. His mother, in a panic, ran out of the room. That was the night, Asa doesn’t remember the rest he just blacked out after that.

The next morning, it all came back to Asa, he was laying on the bathroom floor and he got up to look in the bathroom mirror. There he was still, sick looking, with a demon inside of him. All of a sudden, Asa was out of control. His body was doing things he didn’t want to do. He screamed, ran to the window, smashed it, and then jumped out of the window to the ground. He was on the top floor of his house. His body jumped up and ran down the street and Asa didn’t know what was going on. Then it stopped. He didn’t know where he was laying on the side of the road. He got up and found his way back home. Asa’s mother was gone and Asa had no clue where she was. She was just gone. Confused, and worried, Asa walked to school because he didn’t want to stay home alone doing nothing, and not knowing where his mother was.

When he got to school, he walked in and everyone ran, everyone. Asa just stood there, in tears, and walked out. He couldn’t control himself again, his body was going crazy. He ran into the school screaming, and started chasing people. While he was still black eyed. Asa was so lost. Then all of a sudden, he was home. Everything is going through his head, confusion, chaos, everything. People were scared of him, he was a monster. Asa’s mother still wasn’t home, Asa started to get worried. There’s no use either way, he thought, she’s scared of me. Asa was hungry so he went to the supermarket to get food. Asa walked in and no one was in the store, no one. He took food and left the store. Asa thought it was considered stealing but there was absolutely no one there. Walking down the street there were no cars driving on the street. Asa felt alone. Asa got home and ate the food he got at the supermarket. After that he tried going to his girlfriends house, but she wasn’t there. Asa went home and went to bed.

The next morning Asa woke up to the smell of bacon. He got out of bed to see his mother cooking. He ran to his mother and hugged her so tight. "Where were you, where was everyone! I was so worried about you." Asa's mom had a terrified look.

"A-Asa is that you?"

"Yea mom..."

"Why are your eyes b-black...?"

Asa ran to the bathroom and still, his eyes were black. "I'm a monster." The mirror shattered. Asa's body was taking over again. His TV turned on to *The Conjuring*, his body took a baseball bat and hit the TV. Then he went down stairs and his body ran into the basement. Asa could see everything but he couldn't control his own body. Asa never went into the basement, it gave him the creeps. He couldn't hold back himself, his own body was moving and he didn't know what to do. He went to the basement and there were a bunch of old things. There were a bunch of random people down in his basement. They all weren't moving. "Did I do this...?" Then when Asa realized that one of the dead bodies was his girlfriend, Ella. Asa freaked out and went to her body, it was lifeless. Asa's body then walked to a cabinet. He opened it and there were a bunch of old clothes. There were about 5 people down there including Ella, none of them were moving. The first thought came into Asa's head. "I did this, didn't I" Asa's body walked up to one of them. The body had a black dress with glossy pointed toed heels. The body had a knife near it. He took it and stabbed the body 10 times. Asa was just a soul, sitting there in a demon's body. He turned around and then all of a sudden the body he stabbed came to life. It was grabbing him by the neck. Asa started screaming. The guy got a knife and then it blacked out.

Asa woke up in his bed, his heart beating, to Netflix on and the conjuring on the screen. He fell asleep watching it. He got up and turned off his TV. He went downstairs and his mother was sitting on the couch drinking coffee.

"Good morning sweetie."

"G-Good Morning mom."

"What's wrong?" his mother asked hearing the confusion in his voice.

"Nothing."

Asa was so confused. It was all a dream, Asa thought to himself relieved. It was Saturday, so Asa just chilled all day.

A week passed, everything had been back to normal. Asa had been thinking that it had just been a good ol nightmare. Asa hadn't told anyone about the strange things that he thought had happened because he thought it was useless. Also he didn't want to seem like a baby scared of his nightmares. Asa was at home doing homework on a Friday night. Then his mother called him down for dinner.

"Yeah one sec mom!"

Asa had loads of homework to turn in. After the nightmare it seemed to be affecting his grades. The nightmare had been on Asa's mind, but he *knew* it was just a nightmare, it had to be.

"Asa! Are you coming? Asa!?"

Asa snapped out of his daydream.

"Yea, I'm coming."

Asa hopped out of bed, and he sluggishly went down the stairs. Asa's mom made his favorite meal, steak and mashed potatoes.

"You like my outfit? It's new!" Asa's mom said while serving the food.

Mercy was wearing a black dress with glossy pointed toed shoes. Asa realized, she was the body who was downstairs that came alive. Asa looked up to his mother, all he saw was black

eyes staring back up at him. She took the steak knife from Asa's plate and stabbed him, 10 times. He got thrown in the basement.

"Asa died when he was only 18 years old. The cause was of a mysterious murder of him and 5 others, in the basement of Asa's house."

Asa's death was all over the news, and all over newspapers. He even had a book written about him! Everyone thought Asa killed himself. It was all wrong.

"Today we will be starting a new class book." said Mr. Hamilton

"What's it called?" asked one of the students.

"It's a novel on Asa Pinkham. He got mysteriously murdered when he was only 18."

All the kids were excited to start reading it. They all grabbed a copy of the book so Mr. Hamilton could start reading.

"It was late 2014, and Asa Pinkham was living his best life."...

Tessa Bourgoin

Valley Rivers Middle School

Mrs. Jamie Pelletier

Grade 7

The Haunted Carnival

Once upon a time, in 1879, there was a girl named Della. Della was at a carnival and she was just having fun riding the rides. The carnival closed at 12:00am every day. Everything was fine until she fell off a ride and landed on her head. She was rushed to the hospital. Later that day, at 2:00am, she died.

Every night, a lady named Hilaire Martin goes with her daughter, Claire, to see if everything at the carnival is shut down the right way and good to go. The two of them live in a camper on the fairgrounds during the season. This is their part-time job when the carnival comes to town. They don't mind being in a camper because it is so peaceful and quiet. They are right next to a lake. There are lots of animals that live there, bears and moose roam freely. Hilaire and her daughter love the outdoors. They also love all the smell that the carnival brings. Popcorn, cotton candy and doughboys are always a nice treat.

This one time, when Hilaire and Claire were checking the rides, they each went separate ways. Hilaire took off to the left and Claire went to the right. Claire was alone and decided to go play on the ferris wheel with her doll. It was now 2:00am. Della suddenly appeared and was making the doll talk and move. All of a sudden, the ride started to move and Claire got scared. Della turned all the rides on. She was trying to get their attention. Della had been very lonely for a long time and really wanted to play with Claire. She was longing for a friend.

Hilaire finished checking her side and went back to their camper. She noticed her daughter wasn't there yet, so she went back to check where she was. She heard Claire crying so she started running towards the sound. She didn't know what was wrong.

In the distance, she saw the ferris wheel moving so she ran faster towards the ride. As she got closer, the ride stopped and Claire got out. Hilaire asked Claire what had happened and how she had started the ride. The little girl told her mother that she hadn't touched anything at all. She told her mother that a ghost had popped up and then the ride started moving all by itself. Hilaire wasn't sure she believed her daughter.

Immediately, a song started playing. It kept getting louder and louder. This scared Hilaire and she started to run, grabbing her daughter's hand. Trees started falling right by them. Hilaire

tripped and rolled down the hill into a lake of hungry piranhas. They started biting on her leg. There was blood everywhere! She started to yell and scream. A bear was right next to her eating fish. When he smelled the blood, he came over and grabbed Hilaire and brought her to land. He started digging a hole and rolled Hilaire down into the hole. At the same time, a rock slide fell right on Claire. Claire died that day, on August 5, 1911. Hilaire suffocated and also died later that day at 2:00am. Della was devastated- all she'd wanted to have a friend around.

Dawson Jean

Valley Rivers Middle School

Mrs. Jamie Pelletier

Grade 7

Don't Question It

Living in the Hafford family, there's always been one rule... don't question it. Here's the story of how I broke that rule and ruined my life doing it.

It was a Friday afternoon and I was on the bus home with my cousin Abby. She often comes to my house on Fridays so we can do our homework and have a sleepover.

The bus screeched to a stop and we were there. My 75 year old house on 195 Spruce Street. It's always seemed a bit off to me, especially the old shed in my backyard. The wood of the walls is near rotting, and the shingles on the roof are barely holding on. I'd never actually been in it, probably because it's locked and the key wasn't anywhere around my house. I have seen a light flicker in there a few times. Mom says I'm just seeing things, and I never question it.

Abby and I walked off the bus and entered my house. There was the smell of apple pie lingering in the air as I walked to the mud room to put down my school bag.

"Gianna!" Abby shouted from my living room. "Look at this," she said looking spooked.

It was a picture of a missing man on the local news. He's pale and skinny. I've seen this man before, at my mother's office. Now that I think of it, I've heard my mom squabble with him a few times, and she always makes a big deal out of it.

"Okay? What am I supposed to do with this information?" I said sarcastically.

"I don't know, I guess I just thought you would be a bit more concerned. But whatever I guess. Anyways, wanna play some soccer in the backyard?" She asked me as I entered the living room.

"Sure, we have some daylight to spare," I said as I grabbed my soccer ball from the mud room. The second we stepped outside, the cold nipped at our faces.

"Here, I'll go in front of the shed, you can stay back there so we have lots of room to practice our shots." I said as I jogged to the shed.

"Try saving this!" Abby said as she kicked the ball with all of her might into the shed.

The ball hits the shed with a loud "*whapack*". In less than a second, we heard a blood curdling scream coming from the inside of the shed. We take a quick glance at each other before sprinting into the house.

"MOM! MOM! MOM!" I scream

"What's wrong?" my mom said with a concerned look on her face.

"I kicked the soccer ball into the shed and then- then there was a scream that came from inside of the shed and I-" Abby says before she was cut off by my mother.

"WHAT!? Tell me you two didn't go in there" my mom shouted while her face turned red like the ruby earrings she had on.

“No... we didn’t go in” I said confused.

“Good. Never go in there- promise me you won’t go in there ever.” She said sternly.

“Why not, Mom? Why is this shed off limits? Are you trying to hide something from me?” I scoffed.

“GIA! DON’T TALK TO ME LIKE THAT! GO TO YOUR ROOM!” she hissed.

I ran up the stairs with tears cascading down my face. Abby followed closely behind me.

It was 1:56am when I woke up to yet another blood curdling scream.

“Abby, I don’t care if you’re up or not but I’m going to the shed to investigate.”

After hearing no response for over three minutes, I finally decided that I needed to go while it’s still dark so no one will see me.

I start down the stairs. I walk close to the wall to prevent the stairs from creaking. After a minute or so of carefully walking down the stairs, I made it to the kitchen. I grabbed a frying pan as I headed to the back door. I opened the door and glanced outside. It’s pitch black, and the only thing I saw was an eerie light coming from the shed. I gained all of my courage and walked over to it and kicked the door until it creaked open. I look down only to see the corpse of an old, pale, scrawny man. His skin was crusted in dirt and his eyes were bloodshot. It was the man from the news. I scream in terror. Suddenly, my mother approaches me from behind with narrow eyes and a grim smirk.

“ I SAID DON’T GO IN THE SHED!!” she screamed as she dragged me into it with the old man.

I wish I never questioned it.

Rachel Wilson

Valley Rivers Middle School

Mrs. Jamie Pelletier

Grade 7

One Winter Night

One winter night the sky lit up. It looked like the Northern Lights. I walked outside with a lantern as the snow was glistening in the night sky. Then some caribou trudged through the snow. The snowbirds called as foxes yelped. The crisp air blew and trees shook.

It was time for the animals to find the first tree. I followed the foxes. They leaped over rocks and into bushes and ran through fields. Then dawn fell, shooting stars flew in the night sky. They were here. The pink and purple blossoms of the first tree were covered with snow. Butterflies came out of the hollows. The animals gathered round and sang. Flowers bloomed and spring came. The snow made a pond and that was how spring started.

Abby Porter

Easton Elementary School

Mrs. McQuade

Grade 4

A Christmas Miracle

“Buzz” went the bell meaning school was out for winter break for 4th grader Ruthie. “Alright everyone, I hope you all have a great winter break. Merry Christmas!” Mrs. Brisbane said as she waved goodbye to Ruthie and her classmates.

On the bus ride home Ruthie thought about how hard this Christmas was going to be without her dad. She was going to get her Christmas tree tomorrow, but with her dad being deployed overseas in the Marines, he wouldn’t be there to help pick out the perfect tree. He wouldn’t be there for their yearly tradition of going to the mall to find the perfect gift for her mom either. Even though she was really excited for Santa to come, there was still a place within her heart that was sad. Knowing that her father wasn’t going to be spending Christmas with her and her mother broke her heart. She and her dad had a tight bond; he was her best friend. She missed him.

“Jingle bells, jingle bells” her alarm played, as she woke up. Only two more days until Christmas she thought to herself, as she walked out to the kitchen and the smell of coffee filled her nose. Her mother stood at the stove making her and her dad's favorite breakfast, blueberry pancakes and bacon, which made her sad.

“Mom, are you sure dad won’t make it for Christmas?” Ruthie asked as she sat down at the little round table, even though she knew the answer was going to be no.

“No honey, he won’t be.” Her mother said with a frown. “Let's get the perfect Christmas tree and put pretty decorations on it that dad would like, okay honey.” Ruthie smiled, she knew her mother understood. As she took a bite of the fluffy blueberry pancakes coated with maple syrup, she thought of her dad. She remembered all the years she and her dad sat at the dinner table eating their favorite breakfast, wearing their matching pj's, and laughing. The thought of it made a lump in her throat.

They went to the tree farm and picked out the most perfect tree there was on the farm. Ruthie knew deep inside her heart that the tree that they picked out is the tree her dad would have wanted. It made her sad that her dad would be missing out on decorating the Christmas tree while singing Christmas carols. But she knew her dad wouldn’t want her to be sad, so she tried to keep a smile on her face.

As the days went by, Christmas got closer and closer, and Ruthie became sadder. She missed her dad and wanted him to be home for Christmas. She and her dad always opened presents together, but this year she would have to open them alone. Her heart broke for him. She thought about how he wouldn’t be opening presents this year, or sitting with family at church, instead he was alone with people he didn’t know for Christmas.

The next day Ruthie and her mom went to the park to see some of her friends for a Christmas Eve party. When she got there, she saw all of her friends over at the swings, so she walked over. They were all talking about what their families were doing for Christmas. Then Ruthie’s friend Jack asked,

“What are you and your mom and Dad doing for Christmas?” That made Ruthie sad.

“Well you see, my dad is overseas right now in the Marines so my mom and I are spending Christmas alone.” Ruthie looked down at the snow-covered grass.

“We’re very sorry.” Angelia said.

“Thanks, you guys!” Ruthie said looking up. Ruthie knew her friends were always looking out for her.

“Honey, it's time to go!” Ruthie's mother called. Ruthie and her mom were going to the mall to get gifts for kids in need for Christmas. It made Ruthie feel better to help kids in need during the holidays.

“Do you think dad will be proud?” She asked.

“Yes sweetie.” She said as she pulled Ruthie in for a hug. After shopping for the best toys and getting the basics such as pjs and toiletries they headed home. On the way they stopped at the “Toys for Tots” drop off station where they gave all the items they brought to the lady who ran the station.

“Merry Christmas!” She said with a smile, “And a Happy New Year”

“Same to you!” Ruthie and her mother said in sync.

It was late when they got home, so Ruthie set out Santa's cookies and milk and went to get ready for bed. She slipped on her fuzzy, warm pjs and slippers and went to the bathroom to brush her teeth. She went up to her room and got into bed.

“Goodnight honey!” her mother said before kissing her on the head. As Ruthie's mom shut the door Ruthie sat up in bed and said a little prayer for her dad. “Dear God, keep my dad safe tonight. Let him know that I love him and miss him and wish that he could be here to celebrate the birth of your Son. Amen.” She laid back down and slowly drifted asleep.

Ruthie yawned, and sat up in bed. “It's Christmas!” She said excitedly. She jumped out of bed and was just about to run down the stairs, when the smell of her favorite pancakes filled her nose. As she walked down the stairs, she saw someone sitting on the couch eating blueberry pancakes. She immediately knew who it was. Her heart skipped a beat.

“Da-dad!” She ran as fast as she possibly could. He sat his plate on the stand just before Ruthie dove into his lap.

“Merry Christmas!” He said as he kissed her on the head.

“I missed you so much.” Ruthie screamed, as she hugged him tight. “Thank you, Lord!” she said in her head. This truly was a Christmas miracle.

Hannah McGary

SACS

Mrs. Russell

Grade 7

Adventure

The Legend of Pamola

It all started on a nice summer day in 2018, when my family and I decided to go hike Mt. Katahdin in Millinocket. While driving down, my brother and I were playing video games on our tablets when my mom suggested we search up some stuff about Mt. Katahdin. While looking at facts about the mountain, a story popped up and looked very interesting. It was an article about this weird bird and moose looking thing called Pamola. It looked to be ten feet tall with the wings of an eagle and the head of a moose that could control the weather. Pamola controlled particularly colder weather and would curse and kill people that would climb through its path without permission from him.

After I showed it to my brother, we both got a little nervous to climb the mountain, in fear that we would climb through its path, but my mom said that it's fake. The Penobscots made it up to scare people who climb the mountain. After a couple of hours, we made it to the bottom of the mountain, where you could park and grab snacks and water before ascending the mountain. Before we did any of that, I decided to ask the park ranger if he'd seen or heard of Pamola before. He told me that he'd definitely heard of it, which made me feel a little nervous, considering my mom had told me Pamola wasn't real. He also told me that one time a couple had gone up, and all of a sudden it started to snow, but it was midsummer. So what could have done it? Then, about an hour later, the couple arrived back exhausted and told the ranger what had happened and what they saw. At first the ranger thought they saw a bear, which is common, especially in Maine, but to his surprise, they said they saw a 15 foot tall looking creature that looked like a cross between an eagle and a moose. Right away I thought, there's no way that the Pamola is not real. I told my brother about the story, and then we got really excited. So we decided to bolt up the hill, without telling our parents.

The trail was windy and steep, and it didn't take long for us to get tired. Along the way we saw some people coming down the trail, and they asked us if we were lost. We told them our parents were right behind us, so they wouldn't suspect anything. After about 2 hours we made it to Chimney Pond, and it was beautiful! The pond glistened in the morning sunlight as Knife's Edge made an appearance. By then we were exhausted, so we decided to take a break at one of the lean-tos. It was starting to get warmer as the sun rose, so I took off my jacket. After about another hour, we started to get our energy back and continued to ascend the trail, making our way to the Knife's Edge. We didn't have a map, but, luckily, the trails were well marked with signs, so we knew where we were going.

I had kind of forgotten that we had taken off without our parents. I decided to call them on my cell phone to tell them where we were. They said they were just getting to Chimney Pond. We were not far from each other. We decided to wait for them. After about 10 minutes, we saw them come up around the corner with not-so-pleasant faces. Luckily, we only got grounded for 2 days, but we still went up Knife's Edge and got to see the astonishing view of the mountain below us. We had to go to the Knife's Edge to get to Pamola's trail. Once we got to the edge between rock and forest, we said our prayers in hopes that we would be safe, and to meet Pamola.

From there, we went up and then down the edge, and then finally we found Pamola's trail. I was excited and nervous at the same time. As I got closer to the sign, it started to snow. Then, unexpectedly, a bolt of lightning came down with such force that I

had to reposition myself away from the wave of force. Then, out of all the chaos, I could see a figure walking toward me with wings. I couldn't make out what the head was, but as it got closer, I quickly realized it was a moose's head. As it came up to me I heard it say, "Why would you dare cross Pamola without my permission?" I looked back at my family and they didn't say anything, so I told it we wanted to meet the guardian of the mountain and just say hi. Then everything started calming down, and it came up to me and knelt down and introduced itself. It said its name was Pamola and that it ruled the mountain, so I introduced myself and my family. It was very nice to us and let me take a picture of it.

After that, it let us go across the path and down the mountain. When we got back to the car, my brother and I told the ranger that we saw Pamola and showed him the picture. He was in awe. He stared at the picture of the beast and asked us how it let us down. I told him what I said and that it was very nice to us. The ranger asked me if he could make a copy of the picture. I told him he could and that if everyone was nice to Pamola that they would be fine. That night I told my brother, "We made history today."

Tanner Marquis Dr. Levesque Elementary School Mrs. Vicki Deschaine Grade 6

Jake's Lost Family

Years ago in the Amazon rainforest lived a happy hybrid family. They were a mix of lizards and amphibians. The mom's name was Casandra, the dad's name was Dave; however, Jake called them Mom and Dad. One day, Jake stumbled out of bed to find his parents had mysteriously disappeared. "Mom? Dad?" Jake said in a groggy voice. Jake didn't know what to do or where they would be. He went to his neighbor's house, Mrs. Petunia's, to see if they were helping her to get over the death of her husband, Mr. Petunia. Her husband died during an investigation of poachers, but somehow they learned they were being watched. They sent someone to sneak up behind Mr. Petunia and BANG, and the rest was history or so they thought...

When Jake arrived, Mrs. Petunia said she hadn't seen his parents at all that day. In fact she was surprised that they hadn't been over to visit. At the time she didn't think anything of it, but now that Jake was wondering where they were she was starting to get worried. Mrs. Petunia said she would help him look for them and Jake wanted to accept her offer but knew he couldn't as she had already gone through so much at the time.

So he rounded up his friends to see if they could set out to help him on his adventure to find his parents. The friends he picked were Andrew and James. They both were exotic creatures.

Once everyone was rounded up, they were wondering if Jake had any clues. Jake said, "Unfortunately I only have one clue and that is a note that only says that their next target was Mr. Lawrence." Mr. Lawrence was a nice man who lived alone in his house and didn't open the door for anyone. Mr. Lawrence was the former money manager and he refused to give poachers money after he discovered that they caught endangered or exotic animals to sell on the black market. Andrew laughed at the fact that the poachers

were trying to go for Mr. Lawrence because they had tried just to meet him for two years straight and were never able to see even his face.”

James said, “Yeah true, but just because we tried for two years doesn’t mean they won’t have good luck now...remember they are professionals. They may have thought of things we didn’t.” They may be willing to do some things that are illegal, and we didn’t do anything of that sort. That is another reason we were not able to see his face. Some people even think he does not live in the house. “Should we split up, half of us warning Mr. Lawrence, and the other half would help you find your parents?” asked James.

“Sure it would be easier that way,” said Jake. Then right as they were about to split up a van rolled up alongside them, picked them up, and threw them in the van. Mr. Petunia and Mr. Lawrence were in the back of the van with them. “What’s happening?” asked Andrew. “How should we know?” said James. “Hey, Mr. Petunia I have a question. Do you know what we are doing here? Also, everyone thinks you were dead!” said Jake. “So everyone thought I was dead huh? Well if that’s true then the poachers will stop trying to hunt me down,” said Mr. Petunia in a gruff voice with a hint of awakening. “As for where we are? We are in this van, and look who is driving!”

When Jake looked up he saw his parents driving the van. They were planning to fake deaths and move away. But, maybe, just maybe they could create a plan to stay in their current homes and take the poachers down, together!

Grant Caron Washburn District Elementary School Miss Smith Grade 6

Stranded Alone

After World War II, the navy had ships still on the water just in case the Axis changed their minds. Casey Ataway was a crew member for the USS Boat, a naval ship, when it had a malfunction. All of a sudden the engines went up in flames, and the first thing that Casey did was sprint to the life rafts. He grabbed his bag full of stuff and went.

May 1, 1954

I dug out this journal from my bag. I’m thinking about writing in it every now and then. Maybe it will keep me sane. Even though I’ve only been on the water for a day, I’m still worried I won’t be found. There is not much out here. Nothing interesting.

June 8, 1954

It has been a few days since I last wrote, and I have been getting ideas on how to get off this raft. If I travel in one direction, sooner or later, I will find land. I was thinking about my friends and family all day and night yesterday. They probably think I, Casey Ataway, am dead. Every moment, I lose more sanity.

June 17, 1954

I have been looking for land non stop. I finally figured out what was wrong. I have been traveling deeper into the ocean! I am so dumb! How could I let this happen! I have decided to travel the other way in hopes to find another castaway or land. I got so mad that I ripped up a floor board. Good thing this raft is very thick. I don't want to be shark bait!

June 30, 1954

Nearing the end of the month now. I carved a face into that board. His name is Chip Boardman. He is the only one I have to talk to. I am losing my sanity fast!

July 4, 1954

Fireworks! I am saved! Fireworks, I LOVE FIREWORKS! Off in the distance there were fireworks. I'm saved! I'm heading there right now. Whoooooooooo!

On Independence day, Casey was saved. He rushed in that direction only to meet a fishing boat. They spotted the raft and hauled him up on deck. Then, they headed to shore. His journal was shared around, while he was in the hospital. Casey was reunited with his friends and family. Now he can tell this story for years. Casey has married and lives happily, no longer alone.

Jack Hentosh

Fort Street Elementary

Mrs. Bradbury

Grade 6

The Rise of the Ice King

One day there was a man named, Ryan. He was on a plane on his way to the islands of South America. He had been saving for months to go on vacation. All of the sudden the plane started to shake. People started to panic. Then there was a flash of light and a loud noise. Ryan woke up on an island, his head hurt. Fire all around him.

"Wha...what happened to th... the plane?" asked Ryan. He saw a man stuck under a piece of the plane. He lifted up the piece.

"Thank you so much," said the stranger.

"You're welcome," said Ryan.

"Oh, I'm Jacob," said the man.

"Nice to meet ya, I'm Ryan." Then Ryan saw two others.

"Hi I'm Megan and this is Max, my twin," said Megan.

"Our parents died and we were flying to an orphanage," said Max.

"Oh I'm so sorry, that's awful," said Jacob.

"Well, we need to explore the island" said Max.

"What's that in your pocket?" said Megan. She pointed at Ryan's pocket. Ryan pulled out a medallion with a snowflake on it. He shrugged and put it back in his pocket.

"Okay, Ryan and I will go explore and you two twinsies find food," said Jacob. Ryan and Jacob left and started to walk toward the woods. Jacob found sticks and a couple of caves he didn't want to go into. Ryan walked around. Then he saw a cauldron with a snowflake on it. He looked at it. He threw the medallion in the cauldron. The cauldron started to magically fill up with a blue liquid. Ryan stuck his finger in the liquid. He started to shake. He fell on the ground.

"You can be sooooo much more in life than a normal, small HUMAN," said a strange voice. "I'm the great soul of the elements," said the voice again.

Ryan's eyes turned a light shade of blue. He saw Jacob.

"Did you find anything?" asked Jacob.

"No," said Ryan. They both started to walk back to shore.

"Hey did you guys find anything," asked Max.

"No," said Jacob.

"We made a hot air balloon to get off the island," said Megan.

"That's great," said Jacob.

"It's getting late, we better get to sleep," said Ryan. So they all went to sleep. In the morning Ryan woke up. His arm was covered in ice up to his elbow. "Aaahhhh," said Ryan, "what has happened to me!"

"What's the matter?" asked Jacob. Everyone was staring at Ryan.

"Nothing, I'm fine," said Ryan.

"Well it's time to go home now," said Megan.

"NO, this my home now," said Ryan.

"Why don't you want to go home?" said Max

"NO!" said Ryan.

"Okay well good luck to ya," said Jacob. Everybody got on the hot air balloon. They started to leave. Jacob looked down to the ground. He saw the island they were just on and a tiny island just off the coast. Then a huge ice spike shot up through the floor of the hot air balloon.

"I AM THE GREAT ICE KING," said a deep voice.

Boom... the hot air balloon went down.

Griffin Holmes

Ashland District School

Mrs. Belanger

Grade 4

The Trip

It all started in 2020, California. Bailey Williams was getting ready for school. He put on his sneakers, grabbed his black bookbag, and his coat. He got in his mother's blazer and off they went. He wondered what it would be like to be stranded in the woods as they drove by the gray pine forest.

"How would you like to go see your grandfather in Brazil?" said Mom.

"Why are we going?" said Bailey in a questionable voice.

“To spend some time” said Mom in a happy voice.

“Sure! Will we see a jaguar?” asked Bailey.

“I don’t think so,” Mom said.

Bailey walked into Oakland Elementary School. The yells and screams of the school were loud, but he was used to it. Bailey only had one friend, he was his friend since kindergarten, his name was Tyler Gibson. They had been friends for a long time, and he was ready to ask him if he would like to go on the trip to Brazil.

“Tyler, I was going to ask you, do you want to go to Brazil with me and my family?” asked Bailey.

“WHAT?” said Tyler. Tyler’s face was so red it looked like a tomato. Bailey thought Tyler was going to say no but instead he said, “Sure! Would your parents let me come?”

“Sure,” said Bailey.

They drove off to the airport, while Tyler and Bailey were playing on their phones. They arrived at the airport, grabbed their bags out of the car, and went in. The airport had nice furniture and there were a lot of people there. They found the Brazil plane and got on it. It had nice leather seats with cool zig zag lines on the seats. They ordered food and they all thought it was good. They looked out the window and saw swamp land. As they got closer to the Brazil airport, Bailey thought about what he was going to do.

When they got to Brazil, Bailey’s family rented an apartment and Bailey and Tyler had their own room. The boys put all of their stuff away and headed out.

Once outside they got on a boat and went into a river where they saw many crocodiles. They saw one that looked very mean. As they drove away, they saw him following. He bit the boat and ran into the boat then made them crash into the land. They ran onto the land and ran into somebody. They looked up and it was a man, a man they didn’t know. He said, “Follow me.”

Mom said, “I’m not so sure.”

Dad said, “Let’s go.”

They followed the man and were led to a village. There was a tribe of a lot of people.

The man said, “Look around, you might find something you like.” The family looked around and they saw a little shop, they walked up to it and saw a man who looked like he owned the shop. They looked inside and there was a bow, a spear, and some string. For some reason the man said the string was special so, of course, Bailey bought it. They looked around more and saw nothing else, so they said goodbye and left.

The woods around the village were a cool place. The air was warm, and they saw a lot of animals. They found a man to guide them through the jungle and were led to a house that was made out of oak. It was like a lodge, and it had rooms you could rent. They all opened the door, decided they thought it was fine, and rented a room.

The next morning Bailey and Tyler got up and went outside. It was a nice morning, so they went to the trees and saw a butterfly. They followed it. It was black and white with a little bit of blue. They followed it to a bunch of trees. Bailey turned around and screamed, “AAH!” Tyler looked and it was a jaguar. Tyler ran and so did Bailey. They were close to the lodge, so they ran in and sat down on the bed in the room.

Dad and Mom came into Bailey and Tyler’s room.

“What happened?” asked Mom frantically.

“I-it was a jaguar, in the woods. It chased us and we ran into here.”

“Okay, that’s weird.” said Dad.

They went and had breakfast. All of them went outside this time, but nothing out of the ordinary was out there. They all walked back to the village where the tribe was talking about the jaguar. They said that the curse of the jaguar was coming.

The family decided they were ready to go, so they walked to the airport. What they didn’t know was that they were going the wrong way.

They walked to a bridge that had a sign that said, “Be careful, it could save your life.” They walked straight and went forward. There was a clearing that had a little bit of shade, but all the trees brightened the place up. They went a little further and heard a growl. It was the jaguar. They looked up, and it pounced. The jaguar had hit Mr. Williams in the back, but he ran. The whole family ran farther and farther into the jungle. They hid in the grass, so the jaguar ran right past them. They thought they had lost him, but he turned around. The jaguar just looked them in the eye and walked away.

The family ran far away from that place. Everybody had run out of breath, so they sat for a moment to rest. Bailey saw a stick that had a curve to it and remembered the string he had gotten from the tribe. He pulled it from his pocket and said, “I have an idea.”

The family gathered around while Bailey made a hole into the stick with his dad’s pocket knife. He stuck the string into the stick, tied the sides of the string onto the stick, and made a bow. “I guess it is lucky,” everybody said.

They stood up and walked in another direction, the direction was north. They were walking through the woods and saw a man on the ground. They stopped. Dad touched him, but he didn’t move one bit. He was dead. The family turned around and there was the jaguar.

Bailey ran, grabbed a stick, quickly sharpened the end, and shot. The arrow shot right through the jaguar’s chest. But it wasn’t Bailey that shot it. They turned around again and saw another mysterious man. He had on a black hood and had a bow too which had the same strings on it. He pulled his hood back and the only people that recognized him was Mom and Dad. It was Grandpa.

Grandpa led them to his house where they talked a little bit and slept. In the morning the family got up, said their goodbyes, and left. Left to the airport, left back to California where they had a place to call home. That year the family had a name for the horrible, awful place. They named it The Trip.

Camden Burby

Ashland District School

Mrs. Beaulier

Grade 5

The Crash

On Saturday mid-January 2009, Kaydence South and Jacob Underwood were headed to Alaska from Florida. The pilot was showing them how to maneuver the plane in the sky. That is when the weather forecast came on the radio. “*Later today 20 degrees in Alaska, Sunday low 30s.*”

Kaydence and Jacob looked at each other and screamed, “Why did we choose to live there?!”

The pilot then said, “Because it is beautiful out here! Well I think it is, anyway. I have never been out here!”

“You have never been out here?” Kaydence questioned.

“No, I have not!” exclaimed the pilot.

That is so cool Kaydence and Jacob thought. That is when they heard a..... BOOM! Kaydence and Jacob looked at each other and screamed. The pilot looked at them and screamed, “Another plane just hit our wing!”

“What does that mean? What do we need to do? Are we going to crash?” questioned Kaydence.

“We might crash!” replied the pilot.

They were flying over a large lake, so the pilot tried extra hard not to crash and to move away from the water. That didn’t happen; they crashed right into the water, with the pilot side up. They were all so scared. Within minutes, they both immediately felt the extreme cold! Jacob thought they landed in Alaska's water. Come to find out they were in the middle of Alaska’s lakes.

Jacob and Kaydence were very scared about what was going to happen later in the day. They were also wondering about the pilot. Fearfully, Jacob went to check on the pilot. "He's dead," Jacob reported to Kaydence. “How do you know?” replied Kaydence.

“When we were getting your leg unstuck, I saw him and went to check if his pulse was still going, of course it wasn’t,” answered Jacob.

“So that is why you wandered off,” said Kaydence.

“Yes,” replied Jacob.

Kaydence’s leg was stuck in one of the seats, so Jacob had to go help her. It took them about ten minutes to free her leg. Once her leg was unstuck, they swam to shore, which took about fifteen minutes. They had landed in the middle of the lake, so it was a long swim. When they got to shore, both of their bodies hurt. Kaydence’s leg especially hurt, and it felt like she broke it. That was a problem. Kaydence said, “We start hiking tomorrow.”

“Are you sure you want to leave with your leg like that?” replied Jacob.

“Yes, I am sure. You just might have to carry me. Would that be ok?” asked Kaydence.

“Yes, that would be ok, but I wouldn’t be able to carry you the entire way,” answered Jacob. After their conversation they went to bed, to get some rest for tomorrow.

“Ok. Goodnight,” Kaydence said.

“Goodnight,” Jacob said back.

The next morning Jacob got up earlier than Kaydence so he could go get what was left over for the supplies that they had brought in the plane. What was left was water, some clothes, a little pile of snacks, one plaid blanket, and a lighter. Jacob swam to go get them, and things, while he was looking for all of the things he stepped on something. He was shocked and didn't know what it was. That is when he saw the pilot’s hand. He almost threw up... he was absolutely disgusted. It was so disgusting. Jacob quickly grabbed all of the supplies and swam to the land as fast as a cheetah would run.

When he got back to land, he made a fire and cooked dinner for Kaydence. When Kaydence woke up, she said Jacob's name over and over again. Jacob then came to Kaydence and said, "I am right here," he comforted her.

Sleepily, Kaydence replied, "I had a dream that you drowned in the plane with the pilot, and that I was here all by myself."

"Well I am right here. You do not need to worry about anything."

The two of them decided they would head out today at 1:00 pm. Till then the both of them ate breakfast and went back to sleep.

Before they knew it, 12:30 when they woke up they started packing things. Then it became 1:00, and they headed out. As they headed out, they saw the beautiful powdered sugar mountains. When it finally became dark outside, they stopped out somewhere near another pond, so they could fill up their water bottles before they leave to go find somewhere.

The next day they started up again. A few miles down the road, they found this little cottage. The cottage looked old and granny like. They were both so excited to have a real meal. They knocked on the door, and then someone answered it! The lady who answered was a granny, and she said, "You guys look cold and hurt. Do you want to come in?"

"Yes, please!" answered Jacob and Kaydence.

As they entered the house, all they saw were cats and more cats. The granny's name was Amy. *Amy..Amy..Amy* thought Kaydence. That name sounded familiar to her.

"Grammy Amy!!!" Kaydence finally yelled out. "You are my grandmother. I have not seen you forever!"

"W-w-what are you talking about?!?" questioned Amy, looking confused.

"I am Kaydence. Kaydence Howes!" said Kaydence.

"Oh, I didn't even recognize you!" Amy shouted.

They lived together for five years before Amy died. When Amy died, Jacob and Kaydence moved away to Ashland, Maine. That is where they settled down.

Later that year, Jacob asked Kaydence to marry her, and Kaydence said yes. That is when Kaydence had to tell Jacob that they were expecting a baby.

.....

Later next year, the baby was born. They had a baby girl they named Carrie Underwood.

Then six years later, they had a ghost haunting them for at least four months. That is when they had enough and packed their bags and left to go to Alaska. That is where they stayed to live forever and have two more kids. They named their second baby boy Oliver Underwood. They named their next girl Olivia Underwood.

When Carrie was 20 years old, she moved out of her mom and dad's house and went to an apartment next to them. When Carrie moved in, she bought a Huskie. Her children stayed in Alaska until they were 20 years old and moved away to live in the same apartment as Carrie. None of them went on a plane again...they always decided to drive in a car because of the incident that their parents went through.

Kaydence Howes Ashland District School Mrs. Merrill Grade 6

Operation Save the Scientists

Operation Arctic was the name of the mission. The job was to take down the yeti that had been eating the scientists studying the weather in the Arctic before any more damage could be done. The Yeti has already claimed three other research centers in the Arctic, and it was the army's job to stop them. The team consisted of thirty members. The team would be separated into six teams of five and would land at six different labs. From that point on, they would watch for any strange sounds or movement along the mountains and coastline. Each soldier was equipped with a flamethrower and the helicopter that brought the teams in had a fish turret. The plan was to lure the yeti into an icy spot with the fish turret, and while the yeti was eating the fish, the soldiers would shoot flames at the ice, causing the yeti to fall into the icy water and turn into an ice cube. When the teams were finished, they would all regroup at the main base on the coastline of the Arctic and have hot cocoa. The mission would not be easy though.

After the mission briefing, all of the teams got onto their helicopters and rolled out. Their outfits were white and dark blue to keep them camouflaged in the snow. The canisters that held all of the gasoline for the flamethrowers were also painted the same colors. All of the teams were suited up. While the teams were flying toward the center of the Arctic, one man from each helicopter filled the turrets with raw fish. The fish were already prepared to go into the gun; they were all stuffed in big metal shells that would launch the fish miles and miles if they aimed high enough. Little talking happened on the ride because of how frightening the mission was to think about. The occasional snuffle would be sent around throughout the helicopter, but that was it.

It was time to land. Team one landed at a lab near a frozen lake. The scientists praised them when they arrived. The scientists there all had thick white hair that stuck up about 6 ft tall and they all wore glasses. None of them had taken off their lab coats, and none of them had any eyebrows. The soldiers quickly set up camp on the roof, and the fish were test fired to make sure they would shoot well. Team two landed in the middle of nowhere. There was no frozen lake, just thick ice below their feet that would take forever to melt, even with 5 flamethrowers. The scientists did the same as the others, which was thanking the soldiers and saying how grateful they were. However, this time the scientists had short white hair and were in their twenties. Their scientist hair was just starting to sprout. The crew set up on the roof and waited quietly like the others. Miles from team two's frozen lake and across the snowy fields of the arctic, team three was located near a big crack in the ice that led hundreds of feet down, and team four was on a mountain. Instead of waiting to attack the yeti from the mountains, team four took out their binoculars and scouted the other teams. Yetis were petrified of avalanches. Each lab was only a few miles apart. Team five was set up on the coast.

It was 5:00 pm and nothing had happened yet. No noises echoed through the mountains, and team four didn't see any movement from the mountain. Then, the labs all started shaking. The soldiers could hear glasses being broken in the labs, so they told the scientists to get outside where they didn't have the risk of getting hit by falling glass and forgetting all of the research they have collected over the past few weeks. Team one scurried around outside to see if they could make anything out but nothing came; the snow blew in their faces. Team two did the same and also saw nothing across the open

field of thick ice heading in all directions. Team three trudges through the thick snow in a hurry to see if anything was in the crack in the ground. They looked down, and there it was...the yeti. The Yeti's rugged white fur was long and covered its blue face and black beady eyes. The blue skin went down to the yeti's belly-button, where white fur took over for the rest of its body. It's feet looked, instead of white, black and smelled awful, even from one-hundred feet above where the Yeti was standing. They reeked like rotten fish and smelly socks, even worse, socks that nobody has washed for years. The team plugged their noses and all made groaning sounds from the awful smell, and the Yeti looked up at team three. The fur that dangled down in its face was flipped back and showed the creature's scary eyes. It looked up at the team and growled; it was mad that the team was judging its smell.

Then, the yeti kicked the wall, and all of the men fell to their knees, almost all of them slipping in the crack. The yeti kicked yet again, and again until the ice wall cracked and fell! Team three screamed as they fell to what they thought was their demise, but since the hole the yeti lived in was so narrow, the ice chunk just slammed into the other wall. Team two heard the screaming and ran over. Codewords rang through all of the walkie-talkies while team two ran to help. Soon, team one fired up the helicopter, as did team four and five and were all there to help in seconds.

The yeti slammed his hands into the ice and got a good grip; then, he used his hands and pulled himself high, where he stabbed his feet and hands into the walls of the hole. He made his way closer to where team three was stuck near the top of the hole. He repeated the same movements again and again until, suddenly, a crackling sound from the bottom of the hole startled the creature. Ice water was leaking in from the yeti's holes that he climbed with. The yeti growled but kept climbing up the hole. All of the members from each team rushed out of their helicopters and threw ropes down for team three to grab. They climbed and made it to safety, but not for long. The yeti's head poked out of the hole just as team three got some footing on the ice. The creature quickly leaped out of the ice hole. It landed and slowly stood up. The fifteen foot monster was huge and stinky. The soldiers all retreated back to their helicopters and started them up. Two members of each team attended a helicopter. The pilot was maneuvering the plane for his partner who was arming the fish turret. The helicopters swarmed around the yeti to make sure it didn't get close to the labs, but that angered the beast. It took a few swings at them all but missed.

Then, the fish started flying. They were supposed to be used as a luring-in tool, but the helicopters shot the fish at the yeti. It quickly opened its mouth to eat them all, and so the turrets aimed in its mouth. One by one, the fish went into the creature's belly. Almost immediately, a lump started to form at its stomach. It got bigger and bigger with each fish. and the yeti eventually fell to the ground. Its belly stood at least two feet tall as the beast laid on the ground in a deep sleep.

The mission was not over just yet, though; the yeti was still a threat...it was just napping at the moment. Quickly, all of the men got out of their helicopters and put down their flamethrowers to push the yeti in the hole. The water that started leaking in the bottom had raised all the way to the top of the hole now, and if they pushed the yeti in it, it would freeze. All of the men pushed and pushed, staying away from the feet. The ice made it easier to move, but it was still super heavy. While the men pushed, the yeti dreamed. *Fish, fish, and more fish circled around. Uh oh, the yeti is starting to get scared*

of all of the fish. They all look at him with their big slimy eyes. The yeti screams and wakes up!

The men back away slowly as the yeti also backs away. They all back away some more and splash! The yeti backed right into the hole! The beast went down in the water for a few seconds and came back up in an ice cube. It's hair was out of its face and its black eyes were showing. Its white eyebrows looked surprised, and the yeti's mouth was wide open. The yeti then sank back down in the water; the scientists were now safe. The men quickly informed the scientists who were still outside at all of the labs, and then they ran back to their helicopters in a hurry. This was because some hot cocoa was waiting for them back at the Head Quarters.

Cole Eastman

Ashland District School

Mrs. Merrill

Grade 8

I step on something soft. It moans, it's whining. I dig in the snow and find...

My name is Valerie Davis, you might have heard stories where people are hiking and find some weird treasure, but this is a little different. This is how I met my best friend. So, I was walking with my dad. We were walking a little path in our town. It's a nice little town with around 200 people.

The path is the most beautiful path I have ever seen!! It has pretty flowers in the summer with birds chirping and bees buzzing!! In the winter, it's snowed so deep my shoe came off one time. In spring, it's really muddy so I bring my little cousin and we hop in the puddles. In fall, leaves are falling everywhere, pretty colors like red, orange, and yellow.

The town calls it "Pick Pike Cove." I like the name, I feel it suits it perfectly. The person who named it "Pick Pike Cove" her name was Amanda Thomas. She was alive back in the 80s but died in her late 20s from a bad car crash. I feel so bad for her, she was 27 and lost her whole life. Well at least she became famous before she died. Almost everybody in this town knows the name "Amanda Thomas." My mom was, sadly, also in that car crash. She got really badly injured but survived to have me. After she had me, two days later, she died.

No one really knew how she died, my dad thought because she had so much hurt and pain she wanted to have me then just leave I guess. Amanda was her best friend. At least that's the story I heard. I'm really sad I never got to meet her but I guess everything happens for a reason.

My dad and I were getting ready to go for a little walk in Pick Pike Cove. I called him and told him I would meet him in the parking lot. I locked up my dog Charlie so he would not get my chocolate cake on the kitchen counter. I grabbed my coffee and my car keys and headed out. I met my dad in the parking lot. Before we go walking we always talk on the park bench about how our day or the past week has been. But since it was winter we went right in.

My dad is my best friend, he is always there for me and I love him so so much!! We didn't pass any people. Most people don't come in the winter even though it's open

365 days a year. My dad and I try to go once a week to spend time together because we both have busy lives.

I hear something, I thought it might just be a little rodent or something looking for some nuts or berries. But it sounds bigger than just a little animal. I go to tell my dad but I can tell he heard it too. We look down and see a pair of eyes, and a nose. Whatever this thing is has been in the snow for a while because it's whole body is covered in snow. My dad and I dig and dig. We finally see a mouth, and hands. It's a human girl!! We got her out of the snow, her face almost right froze off. We ask her, her name and age. Her name is Darling Roberts, and just like me she is 21 years old.

We take her back to the start of the path and sit her down in my dad's car. We drive her to the hospital. Still we saw no one going in or out of the path. I thought it was weird but at the same time it was a really cold day. My mind was all over the place, but the one question that kept coming back, like when you throw a boomerang and it comes back again was, "How did she get covered with snow?" I wanted to ask her but she might be too cold to answer. We put her in the back of the car laying down with a blanket.

I felt brave enough to ask, so I did. My dad looked at me like "good I wanted to know, but I was too scared to ask" she didn't answer at first just a "huh?" so I asked again. She answered with a moan in her voice. She told us that she was playing truth or dare with her friends. She was dared to get covered in snow and scare people when they came by. I paused her, I saw no one when my dad and I were walking. She told me that she got covered and scared people and her friends laughed. They were having fun. Until, she tried getting up because it was time for her friend Molly to do her dare.

But when she tried getting up, she felt stuck. When she looked over her friends were running away calling for help because they knew she had gotten stuck. Everybody got off the path and police came to get her, but they couldn't find her. They told everybody to stay off the path until she was found. I felt scared because my dad and I went on the path because we didn't know. I mean there was no police there when we got there so how were we supposed to know. She said she was stuck for three and a half hours until we found her.

We were at the hospital. She had number three hypothermia. Which means it's pretty severe. The doctors told us if we would not have found her 35 minutes later, she would have been dead. I was so glad we didn't stop at the bench and talk because we usually talk for around 20 minutes and it takes about 20 minutes to go a mile. We went two miles before we found her. So if we would have stopped at the bench and talked we would have found her dead. We left the hospital a day later. I let her stay at my house, I made sure to keep it really warm and keep an eye on her to make sure she was doing ok.

A year later and we walk Pick Pike Cove almost every day with my dad. I had found a new best friend. Don't get me wrong I love my dad but, it's nice having a friend my age! Sometimes we bring my dog Charlie, he loves the trail. I have a really great life and I am so thankful I found Darling!

THE END

Lindsey Ouellette Caribou Community School Ms. Crawford Grade 6

Too Dark...

It was dark! Too dark to see and I don't dare to move. I don't have any options but to sit here and wait for someone to save me. No one knows where I am, though. Everyone is thinking, "She's up in her room sound asleep dreaming about her favorite TV show." Little do they know that I'm stuck in this cold and empty room, or shack, or whatever I'm in right now. I want to scream for help, but my body won't let me. I feel like I'm drowning but I know that I'm not. I can't see! Can't move! Can't scream! Nothing that I do works because I am trapped. There is nowhere to go! There is nothing I can do!

I feel a hand on my shoulder and hear some whispers. Soon they take the blindfold off and it's bright again. I have to squint to see anything but it's nice to see the light. When I am able to see who it is, I'm not sure what to think. I thought I was kidnapped! I thought I might die!

Yet, it was all my friends and family surrounding me with the biggest smiles I had ever seen. Then they all yelled, "SURPRISE! Happy Birthday Lucy!" Nothing could have ever made me more relieved to be with my friends enjoying all the time we have together.

Lydia Bragdon

Presque Isle Middle School

Mrs. Bragg Grade 6

The Doomed Kayak

The waves seemed ten feet tall, slamming down on my kayak, a pea in the vast, cruel sea of waves. As a wave slammed down on me, the kayak flipped, sending me down with it.

An hour earlier, though, all I could think of was how sick I was as my lunch went up and down and up and down as our truck bounced down the rocky dirt road. After what seemed like hours, we finally arrived at our destination - the family camp on Madawaska Lake! As soon as the truck lurched to a stop, I ran out to see my cousins whom I hadn't seen in a few months. After we embraced, I headed to the rocky shore to get in one of the kayaks, my sister Annabelle trailing me into the lake, neither of us noticing the dark clouds that were looming on the horizon.

The kayaks rocked vigorously as Annabelle and I paddled out into the lake, the waves stronger than usual. Having successfully fought bigger waves before, I thought that these waves would be no different, therefore staying in the lake. Today, though, it was really a water body of uncertain danger. As we headed farther into the lake, I could tell that Annabelle was feeling nauseous because of the waves.

"You can go back if you want to," I said.

She nodded her head and headed back to the shore. Distracted by my sister, I didn't notice the sunlight slowly being replaced by the dark shadows coming from the overhead clouds. Meanwhile, the waves were getting choppy, so I decided to head back. A motorboat zoomed past, sending waves higher than I was onto my paddle. My eyes

stung as water sprayed into them. As I was blinded by pain in my eyes, a wave slammed down on my paddle again, this time sending it under for the water to consume.

Castaway. A person cast adrift. Now, like the many others before me, I found myself one, too. The safety of the shore seemed miles away. It was hopeless. Wave after wave hit me. But they were just babies compared to the wave I saw heading toward me, arching up like a hand ready to pull me under. And where the others had failed, this one did not. The kayak rocked and flipped. As I was in mid-air, I looked at the camp, knowing it might be the last thing I ever saw. I then slammed down on the very wave that had flipped me. I frantically tried to get to the surface, but my foot was stuck inside the kayak! My lungs felt like they would burst, and I could feel my pulse getting weaker. With my last burst of strength, I pushed forward, and the boat-shoe that had been stuck ripped off. I surged upward, finally reaching the surface, gasping for air. I coughed and sputtered as I tried to take in as much air as I could, fearing that I might go under again. Then I just floated, taking in all that had just happened. Finally, after convincing myself to move, I started to swim back to shore, and even though I was a good swimmer, it was still the hardest swim that I had ever experienced. Finally, half dead, I flopped onto the shore, the only sound I could hear was my heavy breathing and the thumping of my heart. I heard Annabelle run out of the camp, toward my limp body.

“Are you ok?!” she said. “Where is the kayak?”

“If you could breathe underwater, you might be able to find it,” I said in barely a whisper, which was as loud as I could have been then.

“I’ll go get help!”

As she ran towards the camp, I thought, *next time, check the sky*. That was my last thought as I drifted off to the darkness that is sleep.

Jacob Bennet

Presque Isle Middle School

Mrs. Blake

Grade 6

The Cyclone

My hands were sweaty, and my legs felt like they were going to collapse from under me. There was no going back now.

Let’s start from the beginning-not the very beginning; that would take millions of years! Let’s start from the question.

“Carrlyn, do you want to ride The Cyclone?” Jack asked.

In my head, NO! Out loud, “Maybe later.” My friend Lydia and her family had coincidentally been in Prince Edward Island the same week we were. They also had been at Sandspit (the amusement park) the same time we were!

“Come on! It’s fun! I just went a few hours ago,” Lydia said, “It’s fun, not scary!” *That’s what everyone says!* I exclaimed in my whirl of thoughts. *This thing looks extremely hazardous. Hear that? That’s the sound of danger, I can smell it. Just look at that wooden creaky roller coaster of a thing!*

We went on some other rides, and I was having fun. Then...“Look at the Cyclone! There’s no line!” *Now is later. It’s time to go on my very first roller coaster*

ride! Hear the screams of the petrified people held hostage in that box of unstable metal. Look at how their fingers are nailed to the safety bar. Feel the ground shake as it makes that sharp turn. Taste my unsureness.

“Make sure to fasten your seatbelts securely!” said the enthusiastic carnival worker. *Clu clu clu clu* sounded The Cyclone. *Hey, this isn't so bad! This will be fun!* Quickly we reached the top. *Time to go down*, I thought nervously. My stomach did a front flip as well as a 360. We went down the deep gorge, the San Andreas fault! Then up like a rocket. A blur of swirls and we came to a harsh stop. My teeth were clattering so bad, as if I were playing with penguins in their native climate in shorts and a t-shirt. *I did it- I survived The Cyclone!*

“Let's go again!” Jack exclaimed.

“Yes!” I agreed. My sister, Rossalyn came out of nowhere.

“Mama called. They're here.” We said goodbye to Lydia and her family. The Cyclone taught me an important lesson: Even if you are scared of something doesn't mean you shouldn't try; it means you *should*. You may enjoy it!

Carrlyn Buck

Presque Isle Middle School

Mrs. Blake

Grade 6

Ben and Ruby: the Final Face-Off

Episode 9: The Last Phase (Part 1)

When we last saw our heroes, Ben and Ruby, their phones had blown up. But now their new phones are lighting up too, so let's find out what happens in the next adventure of Ben and Ruby!

As we all looked at each other, Ben's phone spit up smoke and knocked out the whole classroom!...

Ben and I woke up in a strange room. Then, all of a sudden, he yelled like a madman and screamed, “We're going to die!”

I had to snap him out of it. Luckily, I had his favorite candy in my pocket.

“Who wants a vanilla strawberry swirl?” I asked.

“I do!” Ben said. The distraction had worked. He apologized for freaking out, but we were in an unknown area. We didn't know how far we were from our house. All we knew about our surroundings was that we were in a tightly sealed space. All of a sudden, Ben heard an engine and we both realized something. We were in a truck!

We both knew we had to find a way out of there. So, we looked around for a little while. Then we found three things that were useful: a laptop, some wires, and a short

circuit device. But there was a problem: Neither of us knew how to code. Nevertheless, I tried to figure it out for a little while.

Then Ben said, “I wish Arno was here. He's been getting straight A's in computer class for three years now.”

“Ben, you're a genius!” I cried. His words had suddenly reminded me how to finish the short circuit and had given me an idea as well.

As I finished rerouting the wires into the short circuit device, I told Ben exactly what to do. I told him the words we needed to code this correctly. Then, when all was done, we put our plan into action.

Ben watched as I placed a short circuit device on the door.

“How is this supposed to work?” Ben asked.

“I don't have time to explain. Just trust me,” I replied.

Then I got the laptop from Ben. I told him to hide in the back of the truck. I pressed “enter” on the laptop. It started its three-second countdown, and I prepared to run like a gazelle. The countdown ended and the front door of the truck blew off!

“Run for it!” I yelled.

“I'm way ahead of you!” Ben answered back.

But when we got out of the truck, we were surprised to see the man from the museum who had started all this mayhem.

I was right behind him. He was standing over a couple of kids, tying a knot. Suddenly I saw who it was that he had tied up. It was our friends, Eureka and Arno!

All of a sudden, he laughed maniacally saying, “I've waited a long time for this...”

“Who *is* this guy?” I asked, looking at Ben in disbelief.

What will happen to our brave heroes and their newfound friends? Find out in the next installment of Ben and Ruby.

To be continued...

Dakota Lynn Teschendorf Katahdin Middle School Ms. Bouchard Grade 6

My Life As A Detective

Hi! My name is Violet Hearthstone. I always thought nothing ever happened in my town, up until two weeks ago that is... School had just gotten out and I was heading to the cafeteria for a snack when Tommy and Drake stepped in my way.

"We know it was you who told the teacher we stole that money from her desk last night Violet." Tommy said

"Get that closet door open Tommy!" Drake shouted I turned to run away, but Drake grabbed my wrists and held them tightly behind my back while Tommy picked the lock on the door. "Let go of me!" I yelled. Just then Tommy opened the door and they shoved me into the closet. Drake unzipped his backpack and pulled out an apple and some rope.

"What are you going to do with that?" I asked.

"I'm gonna gag you with it." he said curtly as he tied my hands together and shoved the apple in my mouth. Afterwards, they walked out the door and slammed it shut. I could hear the door lock behind them. I was trapped. I sat there a moment trying to think of something I could do when I remembered this show I used to watch. In one episode the girl learned how to free herself from the ropes bonding her hands together, maybe I could do that too? Yay! I did it. I was free and unscathed minus a bit of rope burn on my wrists, but that was nothing. I pulled the apple out of my mouth and put it in my bag along with the rope. I attempted to open the door, but it was definitely locked and I wasn't as skilled at picking locks as Tommy.

I sat back down in one of the many plastic chairs in the closet. Rumor had it that Mr. Tiger locked kids in here forever, but I don't believe in rumors unless there's physical proof showing the rumor is true. I guessed I'd be stuck there a little while since I was late for ASP and everyone else was already outside when I'd gotten to the cafeteria. I leaned back thinking I could get a quick nap in, but then the chair started to fall until it just stopped and I heard a clicking noise coming from the wall behind me. I slowly turned around to see the wall had opened. "A secret room!" I exclaimed as I got out of the chair. After grabbing my bag, I pulled out my flashlight and turned it on. I cautiously walked into the secret room. "I wonder why this place is so hidden?" My flashlight was a really good one and I had found it useful in bad situations. There were computers over by the back wall. I went over to them and realized there was security cam footage of the school on their screens. As I suspected everyone was outside playing in the snow. Looking around some more, I noticed a ladder on the wall and decided to climb it. The ladder went about 10 yards high before it stopped at a peephole. I looked out into the cafeteria, but it was still empty. I turned to the right and maneuvered onto a foot wide pole a few feet away and climbed another ladder until I reached a small tunnel about the size of two or three air vents stuck together. Although it was moderately dark in the room a few hundred feet below me, the tunnel was surprisingly very bright inside. I decided to crawl through it, after all I had nothing better to do anyway.

After a few yards, I came to a slight turn and then a slated vent. Peeking through the cracks in the grating, I could see the cafeteria but still no people, so I trudged on. After crawling for a while, I reached a drop point and hopped down it. I now knew where I was at; on top of the lights in the cafeteria! I knew I couldn't stop now, but I was scared and wanted to turn back, *No, I have to do this! Be brave and you can do anything, at least*

that's what mom always says to me. Okay, I can do this, I thought to myself. I ran along the swaying wooden board holding the light and leaped across to the next one and the next until I made it to the last light. Now only a few pipes led the way to safety. I was terrified of heights, but I couldn't stop now. I had to make it across, and I did. I grabbed the pipes and stepped on others and then leapt across the small gap to victory. "Yes I did it!" I cheered. Ok, now all I need to do is walk through this dark creepy hidden-ish hallway, of course it wouldn't be that easy though. There was money filled briefcases everywhere with newspapers that had robberies as headlines. Now that was weird. I turned a corner and went down the stairs where I found a list of places Mr. Tiger and his quilting club had gone in the past year. They were the same places the robberies were. It all made sense. They went to all the places and robbed them. Now that I knew who had been robbing those banks, I could bust them. Suddenly, I saw a shadowy figure standing in the corner of the room. It must have felt my stare bearing into it because it started running towards me and lunged itself at me. I slid out of the way and it fell to the ground, but he or she was already getting up again. Almost instantly Mr. Tiger grabbed me from behind. The figure came up to me and pulled off their mask.

"Hello Miss Hearthstone." she said in a sweet voice.

"Ms. Dasher!" I shouted. "But I thought Mr. Tiger was the one behind it all, the banks, the hidden rooms, everything!"

"Not everything. You see, he's my accomplice." "He's also my fiancé." she added.

"But why would you do this?" I asked.

"Because we need money for our retirement." Ms. Dasher said coolly.

Oh, ok so now that she told me their plan, all I need to do is escape and call the cops. I heard the ASP kids coming into the cafeteria and knew it was time to make my move. I lunged into Ms. Dasher before I ran towards the cardboard that covered the old window above the scoreboard and crashed through it. As I fell to the ground I spun wildly through the air while I pulled a home-made grappling hook out of my bag. Next, I threw the hook at the window and was able to just barely make it on the windowsill. My body stopped just short of the ground and I let go from exhaustion. Five minutes later the police were called. Thirty minutes after that, the crooks were in custody and the money was where it belonged. Everything was back to normal, or as much as it could be anyway. Around two weeks later It was Christmas and that's how I realized my town and my life were the best!

Ciera Dignan

SACS

Mrs. Russell

Grade 8

Storm

Once there was a girl named Storm in a small town called Yumai Village, China. Storm was a tall girl with black hair that went to her chin. She had pretty light blue eyes that made her look like a white wolf. She was an 11-year-old girl that had a dream that she would fight in the war with her brother. Of course, she couldn't because she was too young. But she still dreamed. She works all day at her Zumu's (grandmother) restaurant.

Storm lived with her Zumu, her Zufu (grandfather), her brother, her mother, and her uncle. Her brother, Bao didn't come home that much because he was in the war. Her mom, Jun, was small, skinny, and not very kind. Her Zufu didn't do much but meditate all day. Her uncle, Wang Lei, was rude to Boa all the time. He was tall, so skinny that you could see his ribs, and looked drunk all the time. But one night on her birthday, she didn't know that she was going to have the best birthday.

The whole family was sitting at the table eating Hotpot, when all of a sudden Bao kicked down the door as if he were the FBI. Everyone stopped eating except Wang Lei who didn't care about Bao. Storm ran to her brother as fast as if a hurricane was coming. She hugged him as if she hadn't seen him in 150 years and everyone except for Wang Lei, hugged Bao. Boa looked down at his little sister as if she was his own daughter and crouched down. He said in a kind voice, "Hey little sis, happy birthday.... oh ya!" He took a letter out of his worn-out pocket. He gave it to her and smiled. He got up and went to say "Hi" to everyone. Storm opened the letter and read, 'Storm Chen we would love you to join us in defeating the group, The Wuns, and I know that you are too young but we need you. General Zhang Wei.' She showed her mother the letter, her mother looked at Storm with a, "ok yes you can go", look on her face.

In two months, she was on the battlefield ready for war. Her armor of steel looked like dragon scales. She had a steel sword that shone in the sun. The whole army was standing straight, waiting for The Wuns to attack. They were waiting under the Great Wall of China in the darkness of the shadows. All of a sudden, a horn blew from a tower from above them. The Wuns were coming. There was a shout from Jaing Zhang Wei, "Arms to the ready men!" Everyone readied their weapons. Coming over the hill, you could see a heavy cloud of dust. The Wuns were charging toward the army with their spears. Suddenly, all you could hear were shouts and metal on metal. Zhang Wei and Boa went straight to the Wuns leader, Chang. Storm went to the most favored warrior of Chang. She helped her warriors until she stopped to find Boa and all she could find was his last move. Chang was battling Zhang Wei and knocked his sword out of his hand. Zhang Wei suddenly fell to the ground, unarmed. Boa did the one thing he had to do. He moved in front of Zhang Wei right when Chang swung his sword. All that Storm could hear were her tears of anger. She suddenly ran to Chang with her sword that looked too big for her. She suddenly had a feeling that she had never felt before, she felt powerful. She jumped onto bodies of the enemy and jumped straight to Chang who laughed at Zhang Wei. Chang held his sword up to kill Zhang Wei until Storm jumped and swung her sword so that it hit Chang's. Suddenly, **BOOM** and the whole world stopped. A light wiped the whole world and the Wuns were never to be seen again or so they thought.....

Ruth Greene

SACS

Mrs. Toothaker

Grade 6

A Gift's Curse

Jacob woke with a start. He had dreamt of a singing voice luring a little girl into the forest, to the woman inside the little house. He was six, and afraid of everything, including his own shadow. He was small for his age too.

Jacob got out of the bed and ran as fast as possible towards the light switch and flipped it up with a "click". He then stuck his hand out of the door, and ran his hand on the wall to find the next light switch. He found it and turned the light on. Jacob then turned to his left to go to the kitchen so he could microwave some milk to help him fall asleep.

Jacob got to the kitchen, but then realized that the light was on the other side of the room. He had to decide between running into the dark or not getting warm milk, which meant sacrificing his sleep. He almost decided to sacrifice his sleep when he realized that sacrificing his sleep meant hiding under his blanket in the middle of summer, hoping that nothing would hurt him. He gathered all his courage, and ran as fast as he could, tripping over things and hitting the wall. He turned on the light switch as quickly as possible, relief washing over him as the blanket of darkness went away.

Jacob started walking to the cabinet, when he heard a noise. It sounded soft and sweet, and Jacob felt an urge to go find what is making the noise. Jacob started to walk towards it, when he remembered his dream he had with the voice luring the little girl away, and he stopped himself from going towards the voice, and he went to the cabinet instead.

Jacob grabbed a glass cup, got the milk from the fridge, poured it, and started to grab it - but oh how beautiful the voice was, he just couldn't resist it anymore, and he walked towards it. He went up some stairs, through the hallway all the way to the stick with the hook on one end that his parents use to pull down part of the ceiling to get to the attic. He didn't turn on a single light this entire time.

Jacob grabbed the stick and got the hook in the ring on the ceiling, and pulled as hard as he could. He pulled a little too hard, so the ladder made a loud noise when it hit the floor. Jacob cringed at this loud noise, and waited to make sure no one had woken up.

When he decided that no one had heard the noise, Jacob climbed the ladder to find the voice. He saw a little box with some light emitting out of it, and he knew that that had to be it. He walked towards it, his heart beating fast, his legs moving faster with each step towards it. When he reached the box, he sat down, and had to decide whether he should open the box or not. He chose to open the box.

Jacob's hands were shaking, he didn't know whether it was because he was excited or scared. He grabbed the box, and lifted the lid slowly, knowing this was his last chance to leave it alone and walk away. When the box was open, the attic door slammed shut, which made him yelp. He felt something inside him, he didn't know what it was, until his insides became his outsides.

His parents found him dead in the attic three days later. No one suspected that a little box did this.

Part Two

Two hundred and fifty years ago, there was a little girl. This little girl was special, she could see and hear things others couldn't. Everyone thought she was lying when she

said she saw or heard something, even though no one else could see or hear it. They thought she was lying until something terrible happened.

One day, there was a feast, and the little girl attended it, and she was excited because it was her first feast ever. The little girl had lots of meat and desserts and tried some wine (she didn't like it one bit). She had so much fun during the feast, and she wished it would last forever.

The little girl saw a weird looking man whom she had never seen before, so she went up to him, and asked him who he was. The man told her that he was a messenger, and he had a message for the entire village. The only problem was that no one could see him. No one except her.

The little girl said that she can tell the village the message, and the man agreed to do that. During her talk with the man, most of the people there were watching her, and thought that this was all an act to make people believe that she was special.

"I have a message from a messenger," she said. Anyone who wasn't watching her before was watching her by then.

"The witch in the woods is demanding the youngest child from each and every family, and if the witch doesn't get the children, she will kill everyone in the village." Everyone laughed at this, and the little girl felt sad because she was being laughed at.

The little girl decided that she would save any child like her from the humility she felt, and she made a little wooden box that sings, but only children like her can hear it, and it will kill them, saving that special child from humility.

The witch did steal the children though, and the little girl happened to be an only child, so she was the youngest in her family.

No one ever made fun of the little girl who got lured to the woman in the little house because of a singing voice, even after her death.

Aden Perry

Hodgdon Middle/High School

Mrs. Harris

Grade 7

**Fantasy
And Other
Fiction**

The Magic Rock

One day, I was going to the park. It was a sunny day with bright green trees. When I arrived at the park, I saw an orange rock with a yellow sun. I thought to myself, “*Why is that there?*”. It caught my eye because it was really bright shining right under the sun. I decided to pick up the rock and it felt powerful in my hands. It was so hot that I dropped it back on the ground. The rock rolled away so I carefully followed it down the hill. It rolled right into the trees. I slowly walked into the woods and there it was shining. It was as bright as burning fire! I went closer and closer. When I got close enough, I grabbed it, turned around, and I was lost in the woods. With the rock still in my hand, I closed my eyes and whispered a wish so hard that I was out of the woods and 5 seconds later I was in the park where I started. It felt very strange! That's when I realised that the rock was magic.

I was so excited and I thought that I should tell my parents. I ran home as fast I could with the rock in my pocket. I told them all about it and they didn't believe me. I was frustrated that my parents wouldn't believe me. The only way I could get them to believe me was if I showed them the rock. I pulled the rock out of my pocket, closed my eyes, and whispered a wish. My parents were watching, but nothing happened! I thought it was because I had to hold it, but no, it was because I must be the only one who could know about it.

Since my parents couldn't know about it, I went to go try again in my bedroom. I closed the door and pulled the rock back out. I could do anything! I thought and I thought, but I couldn't think of anything. Finally, something popped in my mind! I wished so hard this time that my face turned red. It turned as red as a chili pepper! It worked! I now have 10 monkey slaves...AND THEY'RE PURPLE!!!! “Go make me some sandwiches!”, I told them. All the monkey's went down to the kitchen to start making me some salami and pepperoni sandwiches.

I continued to make more wishes. “I wish that I had vanilla ice cream!” I whispered. Poof! I now had a nice, vanilla ice cream in my hand. The rock is still doing it's magic! I wished I was a queen and it worked again! I was so happy, I could scream! I wished I had a billion dollars and it worked for the fourth time. The weather changed outside and became windy and cold. So, I wished it was warm like I was on a beach. Then, this is when the malfunction came. The rock was shaking in my hand and next thing you know, I WAS ON A BEACH! I was so far from my home and I didn't know where I was. I didn't even know what city I was in. I threw the rock in the ocean and then suddenly I was back at home!

When I got back home, everything I wished for was gone. Even the monkeys! That means, I didn't get to try those salami and pepperoni sandwiches. My parents had no idea what happened. They didn't even know I was at the beach. My life was back to normal! I hope that someone finds the magic rock and can have as much fun as I did.

Molly Jane Cairns Fort Kent Elementary School Miss Amber Devoe Grade 5

The Battle of Ages

It started out as a normal day, watching the birds peck at the seeds in his backyard, then disaster struck. Zorlan picked something up on the radar. It was something big, something he's never seen before. Zorlan immediately flipped through the book of Beasts and Hunters,

skimming the pages as fast as he could. He eventually found it and they were called Cobra Hunters. It said they try to take over small towns and villages and try to claim it as their own. As soon as he saw that, he knew that he and the whole village was in mortal danger! Zorlan dashed out of his house and headed to Eve's house.

He ran straight in and shouted, "The village is in danger!"

"What?" Eve responded, alarmed.

Sprinting into the room where he was, Gor heard that from outside where he was picking mushrooms for lunch. He raced in and said, "What's happening to the village?"

"There are Cobra Hunters coming to take our village!" Zorlan responded.

"Oh when I get my hands on them, I'll show them not to mess with us!" shouted Gor.

"Oh no! My sword's still getting fixed from when we had that fight with the tiki gods. I might need to use one of those training swords that doesn't have any powers," Eve said, sighing.

"I will get suited up for battle," said Gor.

"Before we do anything we have to make a wall of dirt around the village so if they come when we aren't ready, it will stop them for a little while for us to get ready and fight back," announced Zorlan.

"I don't have my sword, remember?" replied Eve.

"I can use my sword," said Gor.

"I never knew you had a sword! I thought you always had a hammer," said Zorlan.

"Nope," replied Gor. So they went outside. Gor got his sword and they went to the center of the village. He swung his sword around his head, whipping air at their faces. He mumbled a few words, then BOOM! A big bolt of lightning flew out of the sword, crackling as loud as a car alarm. Then a flash of light blinded them. When they opened their eyes again, there were mounds of dirt all around them. "Ok, now we can suit up," Zorlan said.

"Hey Gor, can I use your sword for the battle?"

"Sure, just don't break it," Gor said.

"Ok, thanks," Eve replied. In about ten minutes, they were ready for battle. As they were walking to the mound of dirt, they were talking about what powers and spells to use. They climbed the dirt wall and were waiting at the top till they came. Thirty minutes passed by, and Gor was dozing off. Another ten minutes passed by, and Gor was sound asleep! The radar still said another twenty minutes. Fifteen minutes later, Zorlan woke up Gor and sat up searching for them. Four minutes passed by and they were in their fighting stance.

They finally saw them at the crest of the hill and they started shooting, but they kept duplicating. It almost was like they were splitting apart and making others in seconds. As they got closer, they looked like the head of a snake and the body of a human with razor sharp fangs and vicious venom. The three of them kept on shooting whatever they had - fireballs, ice balls, lightning bolts, but it didn't do anything. The creatures just duplicated and duplicated.

The crowd got bigger and they knew they had to do something quick or they would get trampled and lose their village. Zorlan started thinking like crazy while Gor and Eve were still shooting. He thought about if there was a mastermind that controls all of them, or if there is a computer chip in all of them getting controlled.

So he flicked up his wrist band and a screen popped up. Zorlan quickly programmed a scanner to scan for any hot blooded cobras. As he was scanning, Eve asked, "What are you doing?"

"I'm searching for any hot blooded cobras."

"Why, aren't all cobras cold blooded?" Eve replied, confused.

“Yes, but a snake couldn’t have a big enough brain to think of all this, so it would have to be more human than snake.”

“Oh, I see what you're doing!” said Eve.

Zorlan found the mastermind and it was in the middle of the crowd. He told Gor and Eve where it was and told them to shoot all at once on the count of three.

Three...two... one!

They all shot at the same time, making a big red ball of fire plummeting towards the cobra. It hit him right in the chest and the rest of them fell down, and faded away. They celebrated and the rest of the village did too. Even though this happens once a month, that’s how they beat the Cobra Hunters.

Collin Harvey

Fort Kent Elementary School

Mrs. Jandreau

Grade 5

Stormy and the Castle of Witches

Stormy, with two French braids in her auburn hair, wearing a blue denim shirt and tan overalls, was picking potatoes on a gloomy Thursday afternoon. All the other kids were also picking potatoes that harvest break, either for their uncle or cousin or anyone else who could pay them. Stormy and her siblings had to work because otherwise they wouldn’t have enough money to buy groceries or patch up their clothes. She was 10 and had two older brothers named Grayson and Jack, an older sister named Violet, and two twin baby brothers, Elliot and Zach. Their father had died in a fire when the twins were 2, so their mom had a full-time job working at the hospital. That left Stormy to take care of her little baby brothers because Grayson and Jack were always partying, and Violet was always hanging out with the jocks.

“Jackie!” yelled Stormy at a distance. They had been best friends since anyone could remember. Jackie was always too obsessed with boys to ever get anything done.

It took her a couple seconds to respond. “Yea, what?” she asked.

“Stop daydreaming. We gotta get extra money to buy candy,” said Stormy.

“Yea, totally.” replied Jackie. Stormy didn’t even try to get her to listen. She knew that once Jackie was preoccupied, there was no getting through to her.

It came time for Stormy’s shift to end, so she picked up her barrels to load onto the potato truck. Stormy was the last one to hop on because she would always pick up everyone else’s loose potatoes so she could earn more money. “Hurry up, sis, or we’ll leave you behind!” shouted Jack.

“We can’t be late for the party,” said Grayson. Grayson jumped out of the truck and sprinted to grab her and put her on the truck. Just then, Stormy was snatched up like an eagle catching its prey by what looked like a portal. The portal looked like a spinning black hole. It had purple sparkles at the edges, and once it picked up Stormy, it didn't stop moving until it got to the witch’s castle.

“Stormy!” shouted everyone on the truck. She was gone.

Violet was sobbing. “It’s OK, Violet. Everything’s gonna be ok. Don’t worry we’ll find her,” said Jack.

The driver of the potato truck, Harry, had seen it happen to his very own brother, Niall, when Harry was just eight years old and Niall was ten. They were playing in their front yard

when Niall was taken away to the same castle by the same black hole tornado. He had told his parents about it, but they thought that Harry was lying and didn't believe him. After two days, their parents finally believed Harry, but it was too late and Niall had already been transformed into a powerful, evil wizard. Harry didn't want that to happen to Stormy. Harry was an old, lonely guy with a long white beard with food stuck in it, but he had a good heart.

"Grayson, come on boy. Hop on. We're gonna go find your sister," said Harry in his scratchy voice.

"Where are we going?" asked Violet softly in between sobs.

"We're going to the witches' castle to get your sister," replied Harry. Stormy's mom had told them stories of how when kids were out in the open without an adult, a witch would take them to the witch's castle on top of Magic Hill at the edge of town and turn them into a witch or wizard.

"What just happened to Stormy?" asked Jack.

"Your sister was taken up to Magic Hill by the witches who live there. They took my brother when I was eight and I've haven't seen him since. They turn the young kids that they snatch up into wizards and witches who then steal more and more kids to form an empire of witches and wizards," responded Harry.

"So you mean to say to me that she could be turned into a witch forever?" asked Jackie. She didn't want to lose her best friend. Like the saying goes, they were like two peas in a pod. They did everything together and without Stormy, Jackie had no one.

It was silent the rest of the way to the witches' castle. The castle had a dirt road that curved all around. The castle was built out of bricks that were painted gray.

"We're here," whispered Harry. "Everyone come in and stick together. Be quiet so they don't hear you." Harry led the group with Grayson, Violet, Jackie, and Jack following. They could hear the cackling of the witches and the student wizards who were conjuring potions. The potions smelled of rotten eggs and smelly feet.

When they reached the top of the stairs, they could see the witches and wizards. Their skin had turned green from mixing so many potions. Stormy was in the far corner of the room watching them. She was tied to a chair and looked terrified. Just looking at the witches and wizards made everyone terrified. "Grayson and Jack, you are going to knock them out while Jackie, Violet, and I will get Stormy and meet you back at the truck," said Harry quietly.

Grayson knocked out one of the wizards with a chair, but for the rest, it was not so easy. Harry untied Stormy from the hard wooden chair and set her free, following her down the stairs.

"Jack, get them!" shouted Grayson.

"Use that broomstick!" yelled Jack.

"What do you think you're doing boys?" said the head witch in her raspy voice. By then all of the witches and wizards were knocked out. Jack eyed a pail of water in the corner of the room closest to him. He ran to it and chucked the water pail at her. The head witch then collapsed.

Grayson and Jack scurried down the stairs following Violet, Jackie, Stormy, and Harry. The wizards and witches hadn't even noticed that she escaped. "Nice work with the water," Grayson said to Jack.

"Thanks, I remembered it from the Wizard of Oz," replied Jack. The two brothers met the rest of the group at the truck. From driving up the twisty road, about half of the potatoes had fallen out, but it was worth it because they had saved Stormy.

"Stormy, are you ok? Did they hurt you?" asked Jackie eagerly.

“I’m fine. They just tied me to a chair and told me to watch. It was pretty scary riding up here though through that black hole. It was pretty cold,” said Stormy.

“I’m glad you’re okay,” said Violet as she gave her a tight hug. It then turned into a group hug. Harry had saved the day.

Katherine Michaud

Valley Rivers Middle School

Mr. Lynn

Grade 7

The Last Ones Standing

I could see the faint glow of the light from downstairs under the crack of my door, and I could hear the light hum of voices. They sounded familiar but I couldn’t recognize who they were. Feet trudged up the stairs, and they were getting closer. My gut was telling me to run, but I couldn’t. It felt like my body was stuck to my mattress. Finally, after three deep breaths I got up and sprinted to my window. The cold air hit my face when I jammed the window open, taking me by surprise. *How could I forget that it was winter outside?* I was still in my pajamas, but I didn’t care. All I cared about was getting away from this place. My room was on the second floor so it was a pretty far jump, but I took the risk. Thankfully, the soft, powdery snow broke my fall. My parents window was right below mine, so I ran over to see if they were still asleep in their bed. But how could they be? I felt like I was being hunted down by a bunch of maniacs, so how could they be peacefully sleeping in their bed as if nothing was happening. I took a deep breath and stole a quick peek through the window. Through the window, the room was black, but there was a dark, thick fog drifting in the air. I had no clue what could have caused that, but I knew I had to get out of there.

I was so caught up in what caused the fog that whoever was trying to catch me was getting closer. I knew they were men by their deep voices, and their dark silhouettes showed me there were two of them. As I climbed my treehouse ladder, I heard them say, “Find the kid! We need her!” *Why were they trying to find me? Why were my parents in that fog? What is so special about me? Why was I all alone?*

As I sat on the cold, wooden planks of the treehouse floor, planning my escape, I was thinking about all of the things they could know about me. *Did they know my name? What would I say if they caught me? Would I tell them who I was and where I lived?* Well I guess they already knew those things since they had found me in my house. All of these questions were popping into my head, but I needed to stop thinking and just act. I needed to find out what was going on.

The next morning I decided to go outside; I was starving because I hadn’t eaten or drank anything all night. I dropped down to the ground, my head spinning since I was so dehydrated. I had to be careful where I was going because I didn’t want to get caught in case they were camping out somewhere. I decided to go to my neighbors’ house to get something to drink and eat. As I walked across the yard, the sun blinded my eyes. At one point I just thought about sitting there and letting them take me because I was so desperate for some water, but I kept walking anyway because I didn’t know if I would make it out alive.

When I finally got there, I knocked on the door, but no one answered. I knocked again, but still no answer. I knew that they had kids; one was around my age and the other was eight years old. We used to hang out together when we were younger. Our family used to be close

until their dad got a job that required him to go to Maryland every month, and his family always ended up going with him. Nobody had been more of a sibling to me than they had been. I had thought that they might be in Maryland this week, but I decided to still go take a peek in the window just in case. To my surprise, there was a thick fog lingering inside the house and I could see my friends laying on the floor.

And that's when I thought, *Why haven't I passed out from the fog yet?* I then saw the reflection in the window; there were two men behind me. They were wearing hazmat suits and facemasks. *Was this for real? Was I immune to whatever fog this was? Is that why they are chasing me?* My head was spinning with all of this new information. I didn't know what to do, so I ran. I ran until I couldn't anymore. I dropped into a ditch on the side of the road and hid there. The men had followed me when I was running, and they caught up with me within two minutes. I could hear them talking on the phone.

"Well, I'm sorry we can't find her." They were talking about me. "She took off running." *Yup, definitely me.* "We couldn't keep up with her in all of this equipment." There was a long pause. "Yes, I know. We need her for the medicine, but you can't expect us to stay out here while the world is ending. We want to be in the bunker with all of you guys."

Did I just hear what I think I heard? The world was ending! The men hung up the phone and started calling my name, "Luna! Luna! We are going to help you!"

Pssh they think I'm going to fall for that? I just heard that they are going to make me into medicine! I needed to do something and fast. I jumped out of the ditch and ran straight towards the men with the hazmat suits. Little did they know, I had taken karate for six years. I kicked them to the ground and took the phone from their hands. I threw the phone on the ground and stomped on it until it was smashed into little tiny pieces. I couldn't risk those people tracking me down with that phone. The men were still unconscious on the ground so I knew that was my time to get away.

I ran all throughout town hoping to find some sign of life. I saw a flag sticking out of the ground; it was in the middle of the potato field. It had the same sign on it as the men had on their hazmat suits. The sign had a big orange circle on it with a radioactive chemical sign in the middle, all around the image it had sayings. Most of them said stuff like "The future of the world" and "Vaccines for everyone". I figured the flag marked an underground bunker that the men were talking about so I searched around for an entrance, but I couldn't find one. As I was searching, I could hear someone yelling in the distance. *Were people still looking for me?* The voices were getting closer and I could hear that they weren't calling my name; they were calling someone else's. A boy. Someone that goes by the name of Luke. Suddenly, it came to me. I wasn't the only one immune! But as I said that I passed out on the ground.

I woke up to the sound of feet running on gravel. I opened my eyes, and to my surprise I was in the arms of a boy, who I was guessing was Luke. "You're finally awake," he said. I didn't answer. I was too surprised and I didn't know what was happening. The boy put me down and said to me, "You need to run, we need to get out of here."

The Corner of My Eye

As I ran into the dark and beautiful Redwoods, I saw a strange man. He gave me a glare and disappeared into the dark. I immediately ignored him, thinking he was poor and trying to find shelter in the Redwoods. I walked down the shady path of stone and rubble. At the end of the path there was a small pond with some fish swimming around. I noticed the man sitting on a rock, staring into the pond. As I approached him, I noticed a big scar on the back of his long and skinny neck. I tapped the man on his back, but no response. I tapped him on the shoulder, but again, no response. Then I gave him a slow push that knocked him off the rock. He got up and looked around like he just got out of a coma.

“Sir, are you alright?” I asked.

“I- I shouldn't be here,” the man said with a shaky voice. “WHERE IS HE? YOU GOTTA TELL ME KID!”

He freaked me out too much, so I ran as fast as I could back the way I came. As I exited the forest I ran back inside the house and went straight to mother. “Mom! Mom!” I shouted. “There's a crazy man in the woods!”

“Now how many times do I have to tell you: stay out of the woods!” she demanded.

“But Mom! There really was somebody there! He was asking me where somebody was. I don't know who it is. He really scared me.” She ignored me and continued making dinner. I sat down at the kitchen table, still shocked by that moment. Mother took the apple pie out of the oven and cut a slice for me and my dad.

“Eat up, sport. You got a game tomorrow don't you?”

“Yes,” I mumbled. I took my apple pie and ate it without tasting it. I was still upset that my mother didn't believe me.

I heard the front door open. “Dad? I saw a man in the woods today, he was tall and skinny, and he was freaking out about something.”

“What's his name?” he asked.

“I didn't ask, he scared me so I ran away,” I said.

Dad grabbed his rifle, and said he'd be back. He was going to check the woods just in case some criminal wasn't there.

“Can I come?”

“No. Stay put in the house,” Father said.

I really wanted to go with him. When I was done eating, I went upstairs to my room. I looked out the window and waited for Father to disappear into the woods. I opened my window and jumped down into the flower bed in the front yard. I hurt my foot a little, but that wasn't going to stop me. I ran into the woods. When I reached the pond, Father was pointing his rifle at the tall skinny man.

“State your business,” Father shouted.

“Hmmm, Hm, Hmmm, Hmmmmmm,” the man hummed by the pond.

Father walked closer to the man and touched the tip of the man's head with his gun.

“I'm gonna have to ask you to leave this property at once.”

“He he he.”

Father noticed me looking at him from behind a tree.

“Son, go back to the house, you don't want to see this.”

Before I could talk, the ground started shaking, and the pond started bubbling like it was boiling hot. The man started laughing hysterically at the pond. The ground finally stopped

shaking, but the pond started screaming. It sounded like a bunch of kids wailing. It started getting so loud that I had to plug my ears; so did Father. We tried to run out of the forest, but we both fell to the ground. We started yelling in pain. Next, everything went black. We both blacked out.

I woke up in the morning, and I ran downstairs as fast as I could, only to see the whole family eating breakfast at the dining table, even Father. I went over to the table and sat down.

“You OK, kid?” Father asked.

“Yeah, just a bad dream, I guess.”

I picked up my fork and ate my bacon and eggs. I looked out the window, and out of the corner of my eye I saw a tall, skinny man walking into the woods, humming a strange tune.

Brandon Vandine

Valley Rivers Middle School

Mr. Lynn

Grade 7

Survival Journal

Day 1: So... the Aurora crashed on planet 4546B, an alien ocean planet. I ejected out of the Aurora from a drop pod. This is all I know so far. End of entry.

Day 2: I gathered enough resources to make a Sea Glide. Also, I got the blueprints for the builder tool, made a scanner, and scanned some fish called the peeper, bladderfish, boomerang, and the rabbit ray. I had a run-in with a fish, which nearly bit my finger off. I think it was called a staker. I built a small base, sadly it has no power. End of entry.

Day 3: I added some solar panels to the base, at least the base has power now. End of entry.

Day 4: I wish I had a bed. I got the blueprints for a Sea Moth. Probably going to build it tomorrow. End of entry.

Day 5: Built the Sea Moth and I'm planning to go to the Aurora tomorrow. I found a huge fish. Should I even call this thing a fish? Anyway... it's called a reef back. End of entry.

Day 6: It's like a maze in the Aurora, I nearly got lost in there. I got the blueprints for a mech suit called a prawn. End of entry.

Day 7: A spaceship called the “Sun Beam” is probably going to come here. I tried to say I am stranded here... no answer... the outgoing com system must be broken. End of entry.

Day 8: The prawn suit is kind of fun. Sun Beam is coming in 2 hours and 27 minutes. Some of my entries have to be short. End of entry.

Day 9: Finally, I built a bed, so now I can sleep. End of entry.

Day 10: Today someone on the radio gave me a code. It was 2648. At least I think it was? Might check it out tomorrow. End of entry.

Day 11: Turns out what was behind the code door was blueprints to a... wait a second... IT'S A ROCKET SHIP?!?!? OH MY! How much material do I need? THAT'S a LOT of materials! I'll try to get all of them. End of entry.

Day 12: I found prawn suit arms, so now I can mine big deposits. I found a hole in the sea floor. I don't know how deep it goes, so I'm going to make a depth module for the prawn suit tomorrow. End of entry.

Day 13: Well, it's day 13. It may not be lucky. I made the depth module, time to go exploring! Turns out I need a second depth module. End of entry.

Day 14: Made the next depth module. The hole goes down pretty far, so far I need to make the last depth module. Wow! This thing goes down so far. End of entry.

Day 15: I went down so far that I found this crystal called kyanite five materials down. Only six more to go. End of entry.

Day 16: I explored some more and found some weird alien pads. Hmmm? End of entry.

Peyton Vaillancourt

Easton Elementary School Mrs. McQuade

Grade 5

The Original Hippie

As I was walking back to my class, rocking the sticker on my shirt I chose for getting a shot at the doctors, I noticed that none of my classmates were inside the room I was about to walk into.

Oh no wrong subject, I thought to myself. How on earth did I manage to, not only go to the wrong classroom, but the wrong hallway! Well, I am talented aren't I? *Okay now I just need to turn around and find my class without anyone spotting me*, but that's where I hear the teacher's voice boom out from inside the classroom.

"Hey, Chloe do you have a minute?"

Oh great. Out the window goes that plan. I thought nobody could see me! Even if none of the students spotted me, they sure had now.

I finally answered with the obvious, "Uh, I guess so," and continued to walk slightly inside the classroom. It was dimly lit and the teacher was sitting on a table holding up one of the history posters, which led me to assume they were in History class. I could see that it was fourth grade, the grade above mine, and they all looked just as confused as I was.

"Come in, come in! Your outfit goes perfectly with our lesson! You see her right there? She is a perfect example of a hippie."

I froze. *A hippie?* Okay I am NOT a hippie. I'm the opposite, actually, even though I just want everyone to be happy and have world peace- *uh oh*.

"Her free flowing hair, peace sign shirt, flowery pants, even the flower on her shirt!"

She was right. I hadn't realized it before. I don't really think it's a bad thing though is it? I looked around the room. I saw a few kids nodding, a few cocking their heads in confusion. *Everyones looking at you! Don't just stand there; do something! No, that's a bad idea. Well I mean it might make it less awkward! Nope, no, no, no, bad idea. Well-*

Mind racing, I continued to just stand there looking like an idiot while ignoring the arguments going through my head, continuing to awkwardly look around waiting for some miracle to happen; to let me leave this terrible situation.

"Thanks Chloe! That is all I needed. Do you need to know where your class is?"

Aha! I told her yes and she directed me to reading.

I went to class and tried to pretend that nothing had happened. Later at lunch I met up with my friends. We shared some small talk then one of them finally asked, "Why were you down at our hall? You definitely walked by at the wrong time." No kidding, I giggled to myself.

"I was just coming back from a doctors appointment; I had no clue that *that* was going to happen." We all laughed and went back to eating. Even though it was one of my more embarrassing moments I was happy to have my friends support me through anything.

A few months later one of my friends thought hippies were really cool and decided to make a hippie club with her sisters and some close friends. The “leader” of the Hippie Club wanted to give recognition to me for giving her the idea even though I didn't mean to. That's where the nickname “The original hippie” came from.

Wow! That's such a cool name I love it! I did love it. Emphasis on the “did.” Now if someone called me that I would shut it down immediately. I have changed a lot since then. I've grown up. People will still bring it up though, “Hey Chloe,” they say, “remember when you were a hippie?” *Oh no here we go again.*

Chloe Lento

Easton Jr/Sr High School

Mrs. Hill

Grade 8

1943

The War had started a few years ago, things we loved were long gone now. Families, friends, and even strangers are gone. Everything was lost. Only a few of my family members are left. I never really go out anymore. All I do is go to school, come home, read, and go to bed. Once in a while Father brings something home, like a pair of shoes, but that's all. No shiny toys or new board games. Our life was so bland now. My best friend Amelia went missing three months ago after not obeying a Nazi officer. I cried for days. She was the only thing I could look forward to. I could tell her secrets that no one else ever knew. We didn't have much in common though. She was serious all the time and all I wanted to do was have fun. But one thing we shared was that our mothers died a few years ago. Father always told me my mother died in a crash, that she hit a bump and swerved off the road, but I've always felt there was more to the story. He keeps her records upstairs in a wooden box with her name on the side. Father tells me never to go in, not unless it is an emergency. So I swore that I wouldn't step inside

I feel a sharp pain when I walk by that room, as if I can still hear her voice speaking to me on those late summer nights. Father was to be home at 6:00, so I was in charge of making supper. I got out all that we had left, some fish and bread. I set the food on the rusted old table in the kitchen. It was 6:30, surely father should be home now? Father wouldn't want me to worry, so I sat down and stared at my meal. It was cold and smelled fishy, but that was all we had. Suddenly, I heard my father walk in and saw a worried look on his bearded face. He pointed up the stairs to the room in which mother's old wooden chest was lying. “Go, Norah. The Nazis are after me. There's a note in the chest that will tell you what to do. Now go!”

I ran up the stairs as fast as I could go, almost stumbling on the steps. As I neared the room, I felt the same familiar feeling, a sharp achy pain on the left side of my body. Then I come face to face with the door. I touched the cold metal handle. Then I opened the door quickly. In the room I find her chest lying next to the beautiful glass window. I rushed to the chest, opened the door, and saw a note placed at the bottom.

I quickly opened the note. I realize that it was written in my father's handwriting. The note read, “You must take this journal to Betty.” Betty? Who was Betty? Could she be a relative? Maybe a friend? Why did father tell me to come into the room? It's only for emergencies. What could be happening? All these thoughts were rushing into my head all at one time. I read some more. “Go to the detour, cross the old bridge by the river, then follow the river to the right of the forest. You'll find a small house at the edge of the clearing, that's Betty's house. Don't be

scared, she'll tell you what to do next." Tears fill my eyes. Is father going to die? I must go find Betty quickly.

I rush out the back door and peek around the corner. I see three Nazi soldiers yelling and pushing my father. I rush to the forest, but quietly enough so they couldn't hear me. I then hear a gunshot, which seems so loud that it could be a bomb. I fall to my knees and tears stream out of my eyes. This can't bring me down. Father wouldn't want me to be upset, father wouldn't want me to stop this mission. Quickly I ran to the first place he told me in the note, the old detour. As I approach, I see someone lurking around singing a song so familiar I could almost place it in my mind. *Oh Holy Night* was something my mother would sing to me when I wasn't able to sleep. I cry some more, but I can't let this stop me. I have to keep going, but on another path. This person can't see me.

A few hours later, I near the old, worn bridge. I stop and take a quick drink of water, but as I get up to go, I see someone coming. I try to run but my shoe gets stuck on a rock under the water. He runs over to me, "Are you ok?" he says.

"Yes!" I say in my meanest voice. "I'm fine." He grabs my arm and picks me up.

"Who are you and what are you doing here?" He asks.

"I'm Norah," I say, "and it's none of your business what I'm doing here."

"Sorry," he says. "My name is Jonothan. I work for a lady named Betty. She lives just..."

"Across the old bridge to the right of the forest," I say.

"Yes, how did you know that?"

"My father knows her, I think."

"Well, I'll be willing to take you there, if you want," Jonothan says.

"Ok," I said.

We stayed right of the forest the whole time, and then after what seemed like an eternity we were there. A small house at the edge of the clearing was standing before me. As we stepped inside the small house I was greeted by Betty. "Hello young girl. You must be Norah." I nodded my head. She looked at me as if she had something secret to tell me. "Your father and mother worked for the Resistance," she spoke. How could they have kept this a secret from me? Suddenly, I heard a sound. It was getting louder... closer. It sounded as if someone was walking in the forest and the leaves were crunching underneath them.

I ran and hid underneath the table. Nazi soldiers walked in. I almost screamed, but I knew I had to keep quiet. The Nazi soldier walked toward me and laughed and spoke something in his language. Then he cleared his voice and started to count "1...2...3..."

Haydan Keep

Easton Elementary School

Mrs. McQuade

Grade 6

Halloween Night

THUMP! THUMP! THUMP! One Halloween night, Dr. Banana and his assistant, Dr. Blueberry, both came storming through the door. Dr. Banana was no ordinary scientist, although he and Dr. Blueberry were both wearing white lab coats.

One day there was a terrible accident and Dr. Banana turned into this weird mutated wolf. There were no shoes on his feet because his feet were huge furry feet with big long sharp nails.

Shoes would not fit. Dr. Blueberry, a short plump man who was bald and wore glasses, helped Dr. Banana with all his projects.

“Wee...oooh... wee... oooh ...wee... oooh!” rang sirens. The two scientists were trying to find the emergency elevator, for the police had found out that they used people in their weird science experiments. They both heard police sirens outside the door.

Then a few moments later they heard the police banging at the door! BANG! BANG! BANG!! Then Dr. Banana found a red and white lever. As the scientist pulled the lever, he realized it was not going to move because it was rusted in place. Dr. Blueberry found a crowbar. He took the crowbar, and with all his strength, he swung at the rusted lever. It moved, but barely. He swung at it twelve more times to do some damage. He finally hit it one more time, and the elevator door opened up. He told Dr. Banana to come. They both rushed over into the elevator.

Dr. Blueberry pressed a button. Right as he pressed the button, the police knocked down the door. The police saw the both of them standing there in the elevator. The door started to close. The police started running toward the elevator, but the elevator door closed before the police could get to it. The elevator went down into the ground, super fast.

In the ground there was a little lab, smaller than their usual one. “It’s very messy down here,” Dr. Blueberry said.

Dr. Banana said, “We should build a teleporter to a different universe.”

Dr. Blueberry said, “That’s crazy! We can’t do that!”

Dr. Banana said, “If we work together, we could do it.” Dr. Banana suggested that with all of the pieces of tools and metal they had in the lab, they would not have to buy anything. Dr. Blueberry agreed with him. Then they started building with him. Then they started building at 2:00 p.m.

10 HOURS later, at 12:00 a.m., it was finished. After that they built a little remote to turn the teleporter off and on. With blistered hands, they decided to take a break.

A few minutes later the ground started to shake, and dust started to fall from the ceiling. Parts of the ceiling started falling. Eventually there was no more ceiling left. It was just dust. Then they saw bright lights that blinded them. Then they both hid. Suddenly, they saw three big tall men with yellow hard hats holding flashlights jump down from a big yellow machine. Then Dr. Blueberry noticed they all had police badges on their shirts. They were trying to find both scientists. Dr. Banana said, “We should turn on the portal to distract the police.” Dr. Blueberry thought that was a great idea but then realized that the remote was on the table... 5 feet away from them. Dr. Blueberry decided he would go get it, so he quietly tiptoed over to the table. *Tap, tap, tap*. He successfully grabbed the remote and turned the teleporter on. The men all looked towards the teleporter. Now was their chance to escape. They both quickly went on the side of the men, pushed them all to the ground, and stepped into the teleporter. However, it turned out it was not where they thought they would be. Guess where they were? Instead of being in the teleporter, they landed right in the middle of the police department. All of the policemen pulled out their guns, handcuffed them, and took both Dr. Banana and Dr. Blueberry right to jail.

(You do the crime, you pay the time.)

James Desjardins

DLES

Ms. Liza

Grade 5

Alternate Reality

Sprinting through the woods, swiftly jumping over branches and rocks, as Ash picks up speed, it gets harder for him to control his direction and his balance, which leads to him plummeting to the ground. Turning around, he sees a black figure closing in on him.

“Ash look out!” Aura calls, but before she knows it she gets swooped up from behind. A black shadow tightening around her waist, making it harder for her to breathe. Restlessly as she struggles against the mysterious figure, everything goes black.

Waking up to an ear-piercing scream, Ash jumps up and hits his head. Looking up, it looked to be a cage of some sort. Mind racing, he started taking in his surroundings. It was a black room. Looking to his side, he spotted Aura shaking uncontrollably. Looking ahead, there was a dull light. Getting up, he crawled over to Aura. He took one look at her and startled back. Her face streaming down with tears, a massive cut along her cheek. She was gushing blood and her shirt was all torn at the bottom. She reached out her arms and pulled him in. Putting the back of his trembling hand on her cheek, her face was hot, the blood pooling down at the ground. As he wraps his arms around her he asks, “Aura what happened to you?” As she looks up, her eyes are pitch black. No white in her eyes, nor the chocolaty brown of her iris. Tears that were originally streaming from her face disappear and the black from her eyes consumes the rest of her body. Her face turns into a black... monster? Startled, Ash scrambles back to the other end of the cage that they are trapped inside.

“Come on, Ash. Aren’t we best friends forever?” The voice cries, “I thought we’d be together forever.” The voice sounds like a haunted doll. The voice echoes through the eerie room. Terrified as Ash struggles against the black figure, it swallows him into the abyss of nothingness. Further and further, then there was nothing.

Waking up drenched in a puddle of sweat, Ash was back in his bed. Looking around frantically, there was no sign of a black figure. He was back in his bedroom where he had been before. Just a nightmare. He felt so weird though. It felt so realistic like he could feel it and was living it. Getting up, Ash headed to the bathroom, looking back every few seconds with the feeling someone or something was watching him. Rinsing his face off with cold water from the faucet, he heard footsteps from downstairs. In a panic, he ran to his bedroom and locked the door. Ash sat in his bed and stared at the door. Whipping his head around, he heard a banging on his window. Paralyzed, he stared at the window unable to move. His heart started pounding in his chest like it was going to explode. His phone buzzes and his attention leaves away from the window. Picking it up, he sees a message from Aura. *I had a weird dream I want to talk to you about. Heading over now.* His shoulders became less tense and he unclenched his jaw. *Yeah, I want to talk to you as well.*

Aura was on her way. Although there was no one in his room, he still sensed the presence of someone. Shaking the thought away from his head, he headed downstairs and waited for Aura to come. He took a glimpse at the time, which read 11:11 PM. Rubbing his eyes, Ash looks again. It reads 3:37 AM. Just his mind playing tricks on him, he thought. Finally, Aura walks in. “Sorry it took so long! I took a shortcut and got lost,” she says while putting her hand on her head and laughing nervously. As Ash thinks nothing of it, he takes her up to his bedroom and tells her about his dream. After them discussing their dreams together, they realized they had the exact same dream.

“So what does this mean? It must be a sign of some sort, right? We wouldn’t just have the same dream for no reason. Something must be connected to this,” Aura remarks while pacing around the room.

“I don’t know. I want to say that it was just a coincidence.” As he says that, he knows he’s lying to himself. As his stomach churns, he looks up at her. “There was something that neither of us mentioned. What the black figure was,” as he talks Aura nods along. “I don’t know if you saw it too, but there was a candle in that room. I saw a figure. Like a shadow. It didn’t look like us though,” He says this while looking her down. “It looked like a little girl. She looked six or seven years old,” Aura looks at him. “Listen, I know what I saw. I saw a shadow of a six- or seven-year-old kid. Remember the black things that took us? She had those attached to her. It was a part of her. The place looked like the alleyway in the next town over. I’m going there, with or without you,” Ash says as he brushes past her, knocking her off her balance.

Catching herself she says, “You’re really stupid sometimes. Someone’s got to keep you in check, right?” She smiles at him as he smiles back. They both nod at each other and start heading down the road.

A few hours later, they arrived at the alleyway. Looking at each other and nodding, they walk down it. Hearing sounds from behind them, they both brush it off like it’s nothing. As they turn to look toward the alleyway, they were in the forest. Lost. Aura starts sprinting, as Ash picks up speed chasing after her. Ash stops mid-run and thinks, *I’ve done this before*. The same sentence keeps repeating through his head. Turning around, he sees the same figure that was chasing them. Running faster and faster, his adrenaline is keeping him going. The blood starts coursing in his veins, and his heart beats just as fast as it did before. Slowing down a bit, he stares at Aura. Looking closer, it wasn’t Aura. It was him. Looking behind again, he saw Aura.

“Aura!” He shouts, but she didn’t respond. As she gets closer, she runs right through him. As this happens she stops in a heartbeat, chills. Turning around she starts yelling. Ash’s mind is racing with thousands of possibilities. Looking at them, they are talking to each other. Ash trips, Aura calls out for him, she gets taken from behind. *I’ve done this before. But it isn’t me doing it. Well, it is, but it’s not.* Watching as they get taken, he blacks out. When they awaken, they are in the same cage-like thing in the alley. They are talking, but he can’t hear them. Confused, he gets up and walks over to the figure. He isn’t tied up like he was previously, and the figure doesn’t seem to notice him. Looking closer, it was a kid. It needed help, just like him. Waving over to the kid, its eyes looked over to him. Without saying anything, it held out its hand. As Ash puts his hand into the kid’s, his stomach gets queasy and he starts seeing colors. It went black.

Katelyn Zetterman

Wisdom Middle School

Ms. Sonya Michaud

Grade 7

The Magic Movie Theater

As we are settling into our seats I notice all the spilled popcorn and the stained seats. *This is why I hate going to the movies*. My mom always makes me go though. Maybe if there were new movies I would enjoy myself, but my mom only watches the oldies. My mom even named me Dorothy after the girl from “*Wizard of Oz*.” However, when I do go to the movies I get food, so I am usually half satisfied.

As I sit down the movie is starting, and my brown hair gets caught in the side of the seat and it starts to slowly pull my hair out. I trip on some spilled popcorn. As I am falling, I feel the agonizing pain of hair being ripped from my scalp. A knot begins to form in my throat as I smash my hand into the ground where the carpet should be, but instead I hit sand. My anger suddenly turns into confusion so I turn my head back and forth slowly. To my surprise there is desert sand all around me.

I hear a loud noise like western music playing. A man in a cowboy getup on a horse gallops right past me. I get up still in shock of what just happened. It must be a dream. As I think about it I ponder, "*Maybe I never went to the movies, maybe I'm still at home.*" As I am finishing my thought, I hear a thud behind me. I twist around and I am in awe as I see huge letters in cowboy print. There is a W, I, L, D, W, E, S, and a T. "Wild West," I say and I remember that the movie my mom and I were going to watch was about a cowboy and his town.

I realize I must have somehow teleported from the movie theater into the movie. I look around and I see a shabby little town with some broken houses. There were some people moving around; everyone was wearing clothes from the nineteenth century. There was a stable, a saloon, and a store that looked as if it was hit by a tornado, and it smelled like it was a dumpster that had been left in the sun for too long.

I was looking at a wanted poster when an older lady tapped my shoulder and said, "You don't look like you belong here."

I responded with, "No I definitely do not, but do you know how I could get back to the movie theater?" For a second she looked at me with confusion and then just walked away. Now this made me mad. I clench my fists and yell, "I hate the movies!" It makes me feel better to get my anger out.

I feel weightless. I breathe in, but I can't breathe out. I open my eyes and everything is dark and cold. I realize I am weightless. I'm in space, I look at my hands and they are literally blue. I try to breathe in again, but it's just like a knife being driven into my neck. My eyes start to close. The last thing I see is bright lights, and then my eyes just shut.

Three days later.

When I open my eyes, I see a weird glowing thing and an egg the size of my face. As I am staring at the egg, I hear a man saying, "Oh, you're awake." I look up and I see a man wearing a strange blue outfit, but he feels cold like an icicle shaped into a man. As he turns around, I almost scream. His ears aren't like a humans but more like an elf or an imp. I'm tempted to ask about it when I remember that I don't know this man. He suddenly looks at me and says, "Hello," but it sounds robotic with all emotion drained from it.

I say hello back to him, but he doesn't smile or even move. He just looks at me as if he was judging my soul and it starts to make me uncomfortable. So I ask, "Do you know how I could get back to the movie theater?"

He stares at me in confusion. I start thinking he is just going to walk away, like the woman did, but instead he just says, "Non crew members are not allowed in the holodeck." Now I'm confused on what a holo doohickey is.

So I ask, "What's a holo...whatever you said?"

He starts talking about phaser coupling and wires when a loud voice cuts in and says that they were under attack by the Borg.

The man tells me with a stern voice, “Stay there.” He darts out the room and red lights start flashing all around me. I hear everyone running around outside in the halls. I start to panic, my throat dries up, I close my eyes, and I start to cry. I whisper to myself, “I want to go home.”

All the noise and commotion stops, and I open my eyes to see my mom leaning over me rubbing my head. She says, “Are you okay, honey?” I wrap my arms around her neck and say, “There’s no place like home.”

Jack Tate

Washburn District Elementary School

Mrs. Worcester

Grade 8

The White Room

As she opened her eyes, she felt cold, hungry, and nauseous. She didn’t know where she was or what to do, as she laid on the floor of a white room with no windows and one door. The girl couldn’t remember anything, not even her name. She thought she’d been kidnapped or even in a mental institution. As she sat up, she saw what looked like a key dangling from the ceiling. She grabbed it and went to the door. She thought maybe it went to the big white door in front of her. The key slipped perfectly into the hole. As she opened the door, she had seen another white room, but this time with two doors and a small pillar with a note waxed shut. When she opened the mysterious note from someone far from unknown, she read: *In front of you are two doors. One leads to the next room; the other leaves you drowning in a toxic mist that will put you on death’s doorstep. So if you want to make it out alive, choose the right door.* ~The Griffin King

Frightened with despair, she went with her gut and chose door #1. When she opens the door, she looks away. She doesn’t want to know what’s waiting for her on the other side. Praying that she chose the right door, she looked back and saw a boy. At first, she was frightened, but then he asked if she had remembered her name. The girl told him no. He had given himself a name. Jack was his name. The girl wanted to name herself so she did. She struggled to find one that fit, but remembering when she was just in despair, she named herself Regina. It was perfect!

Jack told her about the levels. He had been stuck on this one forever. He didn’t know how long it was; there were no clocks or windows, so he couldn’t tell if it was night or day. He also told her there had been other people who passed his level. A couple of them didn’t make it past level one, he said. They went crazy before they could figure out anything, so the king came and got them and sentenced them to death. Regina thought to herself, *King? What king? The one in the note?* Jack told her only the worthy get to meet the king. *How do you become worthy?* Jack told her to finish all the levels. So let’s do it already! They rushed to the next note. This note read: *To get to the next level, take the wooden letters and rearrange them to spell out a word. Once the word is spelled out, type the word into the keypad by the door. You have 60 seconds to do so before the floor collapses. Good luck!* ~The Griffin King

A timer started to count down. Regina and Jack grabbed the letters and started to put them in order. The letters that they had to work with were: U F R E N A L. By the time they had finished, they had *real fun*. Twenty seconds left! Jack typed it in, but it was wrong! The timer started counting faster. Regina realized that it wasn’t *real fun*, but *funeral*. Jack typed it in, and the timer paused at the last second. The door swung open once again, a white room with no windows and one door. This time there was no note. The door started to open. They just stood

there in shock. There was nothing behind the door except a long dirt path. They followed the path to another door with a note taped to the middle of it; the note read: *This is the last level. You are almost done. You're probably wondering why you are here. That is a secret I will never tell. In this challenge, you have to find the right key. There are 7 keys. The right one is buried in the walls. Once you find all 7 keys, you have to pick 3, and if one of them is the right one, the door will open. If not, you are trapped in this place and you will never find your way out.* ~The Griffin King
To be continued...

Sierra Jordan Woodland Consolidated Elementary School Ms. Swan Grade 6

Day by Day

Let me set the scene. It's 10:30, it's a school day, and you're in English class, arguably the worst class to ever exist. The same thing happens day by day, every day. The teacher is talking, but you're kinda just in your thoughts, not really paying attention, but listening to the emphasized parts. All of a sudden she calls your name.

"Tiernan."

I start panicking. She was talking about the Mocking Jay; that's all I know.

I say, "I think The Mocking Jay was a great poem, and I would suggest it."

In the nastiest voice possible, she says, "Two things - one, the Mocking Jay is not a poem. Two, we are talking about conjunctions, one of the easiest things out there." Finally, the bell rings. However, she's one of the teachers that says, "The bell doesn't dismiss you. I do." I get up and walk out.

I'm walking down the hall to go to my civics class, and I see my friend. I go up to him and we start talking, and he mentioned playing Xbox tonight, so I agreed and left because I had to get to class. Yeah, we got five minutes, but I like to get to civics early because it's one of the best teachers possible.

I walk in, and he's correcting his papers. He has glasses on, and they are like Harry Potter glasses, so as I joke I say, "You're a wizard, Harry." He looks up and chuckles. We talk for a bit and then other people come in. I sit down where I always sit. The middle row is the best row, other than the back, but Tyler sits back there and eats very loudly and always smells like burnt toast. I'm listening to him. I usually don't listen to classes, but I like civics and right now he is doing a financial unit, so I should probably listen to this. The bell rings and I walk out and say, "Have a good day, Harry."

It's lunch, the best time of the day. I'm a senior so I get to leave. I'm walking out and this group of people walk up to me and ask if I want to donate to help give dogs homes or to The Children's Cancer Society. I feel terrible because I don't have any money. I just got a new job and haven't gotten my first paycheck yet. So I act like I have earbuds in and nod my head and don't say anything.

I get home. Because I have twenty minutes to have lunch, I make the lunch of champions: peanut butter and fluff sandwich, an orange, and all-dressed chips. No one can tell me that they aren't the best chips ever made. I ask my mom how her day was, she said it was good. I go eat lunch and watch tv. I finish lunch and realize it's been forty-five minutes and that I'm late for calculus.

I run out to my car and start it up and then go very fast down the road. Suddenly I see a cop behind me and I pull over, as you should, and try to calm down, but I can't because of two things: my parents are going to be super mad, and I'm going to be late for class. He does the usual and gives me a warning because this is the first time I have ever been pulled over.

I'm at school and the class is basically over, so I just go to my study hall which is my next class, and it goes by very fast. I can go home for study hall, but I won't get any work done that way. I'm done, I do not have any more classes, so I leave.

I'm not asked why I'm home early (I think my mom knows why). With the day over, I go to my room and take a nap. I was super tired.

I end up sleeping till ten at night, I can't go back to sleep, but it's three so I need to go to bed. I just play on my phone for an hour then become tired and fall asleep.

I wake up, and it's snowing out, so I get very happy because it is a snow day. We don't usually get snow, so when we do they call it a snow day because they just don't want to go to school.

I went to go outside to get breakfast. Yeah, it's a snow day, but who says no to McDonald's hotcakes? I go outside and get in the car and drive off. As I am driving, I look around and see a tree down. I think it must have been the wind. I see that there is a caution sign, but I ignore it. I start spinning; the back end of the car is going in circles. I think I'm screwed. It stops spinning, but I don't notice at first, because my mind is still spinning. I stop and look at everything and realize my leg is crushed. I can't move my foot or toes.

I'm stunned, and I think nothing like this ever happens - not to me, not to my family. We are so normal nothing ever happens at all. I start screaming. I'm so mad, just angry at everything. I'm starting to calm down and think I need to call for help so I call 911. She, or at least I think it's she, tells me to stay on the call, and I ask if my mom can join the call or if I can call her. She says I can call her.

I call my mom, and she tells me everything is going to be ok. I talk to her like normal and I ask the usual questions like what's for supper and how's Dad. The sirens are ringing in the background. I see an ambulance and a cop car coming down the road. I start shouting. Maybe they will hear me and help me.

They get here. Gas spilled out on the road and a live wire is hanging just above it. I hear distant shouting and people saying it will be fine. All of a sudden everything is black. I can still hear, but I can't see. I try opening my eyes but I just can't. My hearing is fading away. I still can't see. I don't know what is happening.

Everything stops.

Landan Albair

Woodland Consolidated School

Miss Craig

Grade 8

The Hunt

Once upon a time, there was a thief, an inventor, and a princess. Now, The Thief wanted money simply because he was greedy. He loved money more than anything on earth. He thinks that stealing money is the only way to get it. The Inventor wanted money because he had blown all of his money on a failed product.

He needs money for his work, but he blew it on something that didn't even work. The Princess wanted money to get back to her father. You see, when she was very young, she was kidnapped from her family. One night, at the kidnapper's house, the door was left open. She cut her hair and hid in the midst of people. All three if them were in early adulthood.

But all of this money simply could not be given nor made in one lifetime. Or so they thought. An ancient myth said that in the nest of The Four Headed Beast, were riches beyond your wildest dreams. No one knew if it was true, but if it was they could all have a large sum of money. So they dug through piles and piles of ancient scrolls, looking for any clues of the legendary treasure. Finally, they found maps that had ancient landmarks to the treasure!

The treasure contained gold, rubies, diamonds, silver, jewelry, emerald, and other precious metals. So off they went to find the treasure. They had never met and were from separate kingdoms. Little did they know they would meet unexpectedly. The first landmark was a large cornfield. They all entered it from different spots. When they got to the middle they were all startled. "Who are you?" yelled The Princess, reading herself to fight.

"Who are you?" The Thief echoed.

"Whoever you two are, you need to watch where you're going." said The Inventor. All three of them were prepared to fight. The Inventor revealed a sword, The Thief, a crossbow, and The Princess, a dagger. "If we all put our weapons down we can go our separate ways." I myself am looking for the treasure of the four headed beast."

"That's what I'm doing." said The Princess.

"As am I." exclaimed The Thief.

"We could split the money." said The Inventor

"Agreed." said The Princess. The Thief stood responseless, his crossbow still raised. He was the only one with a weapon. Why he didn't take the shot, no one knew. But most thought that deep, deep in his heart was an ounce of kindness and decency. He lowered his crossbow and gave an affirmative nod.

They had no horses. They traveled by foot. So off they went from their grassy kingdom to a jungle of vines and trees. The air was thick and humid, making it foggy and wet and hard to see in. About half way through the jungle, they stopped to set up camp for the night. They ate whatever was edible, which wasn't much. The jungle was full of poisonous plants and animals. They ate mostly berries and fruit.

When they woke up, the ground was dewy and wet. "It must have rained." said The Thief. When they made it to the end of the thick jungle, a man was in the fog. The Thief, The Princess, and The Inventor drew their weapons. The man wore a black cloak, only showing his face. The Inventor turned to a tree to see a wanted sign with the face of the cloaked man. His name was Dave Beck. They charged him with their weapons in hand.

He dodged them and reflected their attacks with a shield. As The Thief's arrows stuck out the man's shield, The Princess swiped the legs, sending him to the ground unconscious. With the reward money from Dave and the treasure, they could increase their portions. The Thief took the liberty of carrying Dave. Now, outside of the jungle, they found a small village. There, they bought two horses, and a carriage. The Thief was relieved of duty and Dave was put in the back.

Then, a gang on horseback came charging into the town. Some armed with muskets. Others with crossbows, swords, spears, daggers, and knives. "Where is Beck?" shouted one of the men at a villager. The villager pointed at the carriage that the three had just gotten into. The Inventor knew who the man was. He was a bandit in Dave's gang. They took off in the carriage trying to lose the gang.

Smoke from muskets filled the air, bullets tearing at the silk cover of the carriage. The Inventor gave the reins to The Thief. Out of his big pack he pulled a musket and a bundle of TNT. But it was no ordinary musket. Its barrel was huge. The Inventor loaded the odd gun but instead of using a musket ball, he loaded it with a lit stick of dynamite.

He shot quick and the TNT went blazing out of the gun. It rolled on the ground and then bang! The TNT exploded! He took out at least seven men, several others slowing down their horses. They were now in the desert. A cloud of sand was kicked up by the horses. No one could be seen in the cloud of sand and smoke. The Thief whipped the reins and they took off, the gang not even knowing,

The Thief yelled, "What's the next landmark on the map?" Nothing could be heard due to the horse's hooves.

"A bunch of broken pillars!" yelled The Inventor. The Thief looked for anything like that and to his appeal, there were ruins of a temple with lots of broken pillars. They stopped there. There was a large arrow that pointed to a mountain. "What is the next clue on the map?" asked The Princess.

"A mountain of silver." said The Inventor. The trail went cold from there. But as The Thief scoured the ruins, he saw a shine of silver in the mountain that the arrow was pointing at.

"Hey!" yelled The Thief, "A mountain of silver." They left the carriage at the bottom of the hill as they hiked the mountain. When they reached the top, they discovered an ancient battle scene. Skeletons scoured the ground. The silver glow was the sun reflecting off of swords.

"It looks like they were protecting something." "But what?" They walked into a cave and on the walls there were inscriptions. It showed warriors fighting The Four Headed Beast. Under a pile of sand was a shield with writing, but the writing was coded. But in normal writing it said Claroot. In ancient times, Claroot was a magic decoder who helped knights on quests.

Suddenly, the sound of hooves on the ground echoed into the cave. They looked down the mountain to investigate and Dave's gang was taking Dave back! The Inventor shot his

TNT gun to clear the crowd. They returned fire with musket balls and arrows. They dove for cover. The Thief grabbed a stick of dynamite and a rope. He tied the rope to a rock formation, held it tight and jumped off the ledge.

He swung with the rope, positioning his body with his feet. When he got really low, he let go of the rope, and signaled The Inventor to unhook the rope. So he did. The Thief used the rope as a lasso and swung it around Dave's leg. He tugged on the rope. Dave fell down and The Thief pulled him in.

He ran with the rope, Dave's leg still tied to one end of the rope. He tossed his end of the rope up to The Inventor. A gang member was about to grab Dave when The Inventor pulled him up. The member went crashing to the ground.

They went to Claroot and he said that on the shield was a location. Claroot was also a giant. It was the location of The Four Headed Beast's den. He told them that they would need The Ruby Arrow to defeat The Four Headed Beast. You also needed The Golden Bow to shoot it. Only the purest in heart could fire the bow. Claroot had both of them. He gently gave them to The Thief.

The Ruby Arrow was beautiful. The arrowhead was ruby, the stick was replaced by pure gold, and the feather was decorated with shimmering diamonds. They walked to the cave because it wasn't too far away. A roar filled the cave. They saw two things. The Four Headed Beast, and its nest. The Inventor drew his sword and attacked as a distraction. The Thief reached for the golden bow, but he could not pick it up,

Embarrassed, he took out his crossbow and attacked along with The Inventor. The Inventor swung his sword at its paw, and then it hit him, sending him into the air. His head bashed into the stone wall. "Fwoof!" A swift sound was heard and then silence. The princess had fired the arrow!

So, in the end, The Thief changed from his wicked ways and used his share to build a school. The Princess used her portion to get back to and reclaim her kingdom. After using some of his share to pay the doctors, The Inventor became one of the most successful inventors of his time.

Grady Kinney

Fort Street Elementary

Mrs. Lagasse

Grade 5

Danny's Life

For as long as Danny Marrs could remember, he would sit on his back porch at night and look at the beautiful stars and wonder. That's all a fifteen year old could do was wonder (well maybe not all that a fifteen year old could do). He would wonder what it would be like to grow up and have a family. He would wonder what it would be like to live in the olden days and fall in love with the smartest, prettiest and nicest girl in school. Today, Danny Marrs was sitting on his

back porch, wondering what it would be like to have a nice pretty wife and sit on a swing in the nice morning sun. He sighed and decided it was time to go on inside and go to sleep. Danny sat up and checked his dark blue watch. Wow! 11:30! Danny was supposed to be inside by ten.

“Oh, boy. I hope mom didn’t lock the door. Please don’t let the door be locked,” Danny whispered to himself as he got up and ran to the door. Danny grabbed the knob and jiggled it.

“Come on! Seriously?” The door was locked. Danny looked for any way to get inside. He looked at the door. Up and down the door. Danny looked at the bottom of the door and thought for a second.

“No. I couldn’t. Besides, I wouldn’t fit.” Danny looked at the doggy door one more time. He got down on his knees and looked through it. He started to crawl in head first. He wiggled into the house. Halfway through the small door, he noticed his mother standing in the kitchen, watching. He stuck his hands out toward her.

“Help?” He looked at her with helpful eyes. She sighed and rolled her eyes and walked toward him, her robe striding behind her. She bent down and grabbed his hands. Luckily, Danny was a tall, skinny boy. With the help of his mother, he slid through the doggy door without any troubles. When Danny stood up and dusted himself off, he looked up at his mother who was all thorns and rattles (she was mad).

“You were supposed to be inside by ten. Ten o’clock Danny! It’s...” she quickly glanced at the clock on the stove. “Eleven-thirty. Eleven-thirty Danny!” His mother had the tendency to repeat herself when she got mad. She looked at him with fiery eyes.

“Mom, I know you’re mad but I...”

“No! You may know I’m mad. But you have no idea *how mad I am*. And I don’t want to hear any excuses. Go to your room and go to bed.” Danny’s mother pointed to the stairs that led up to Danny’s room, looking him straight in the eyes.

“But mom I,” Danny started.

“GO NOW! Just... go.” Danny’s mom didn’t mean to yell; she was just so mad at him that she lost her temper. Danny looked at her and walked over to the stairs.

“I love you and good night,” He said.

“Love you, too. Goodnight.” Danny walked up the stairs and went to his room.

Meanwhile, his mother was down in the kitchen, wishing she hadn’t yelled. Danny’s mother was born under the name Alice Courtney Dan. Dan is where Danny’s name had come from, but she decided to change her name once she turned nineteen. Now her name was Alicia Marie Marrs. She married her husband at the age of thirty-two. She had Danny at the age of twenty-two. She had another son, Max, who was eight. She was now thirty-seven and widowed. Her husband, Dexter, had died in a car crash about two years ago. He was supposed to go to work late at night, but he was hit by a drunk driver. Everyone in the crash had died. When Danny heard the news, it was like getting hit with the car that his father was hit with. Danny and his father were best friends. They did everything together. They watched football together, they went on jogs together, they were inseparable. When Danny found out that his father had died, he was crushed.

When Danny got to his room, he turned on his lamp beside his bed and grabbed his book he had been reading. Danny knew he wasn’t supposed to be reading right now and was supposed to be getting ready for bed, but he was almost done with the book, and he had only one chapter left. Danny was halfway through the chapter when his mother started to walk up the stairs. He knew that she would come in his room and check on him, but he didn’t care. It was a Friday night. He had no school tomorrow, he could sleep in tomorrow. He heard his door squeak open a

crack. He looked over, and sure enough, his mother was standing there, peeking through the crack. She opened the door farther, walked in, and sat on the bed. She looked at Danny with sad eyes.

“You need to go to sleep. I know you have barely slept at all this week. Go to bed, really. I mean it.” Danny loved to read, and she knew what he was going to say next.

“Can I just finish this last chapter? Please?” Danny had put in his bookmark and got ready for the lecture that would come. Alicia sighed.

“Hon, I know you miss your father, but that doesn’t mean you can start coming in at random times in the night and stay up way past when you’re supposed to be asleep. You know that your father loved you.”

“Mom. Don’t start. I know about dad, and I know that you have been going out on dates. Don’t try and hide it. You come back at random times in the night, too. So don’t start.” Danny knew that his mother had started to go out on dates again. He knew she wanted to get back out there, but she was scared. Alicia looked at him.

“How do you know that?” Alicia asked. She had never told him that she had gone on a dating site and started to meet new people.

“You went to the bathroom one day. Me and Max came inside from basketball, and I saw your phone on the counter. You had a message from some random dude on a dating site. I didn’t tell you because I didn’t want to get in trouble for looking at your phone.” Alicia sighed and rubbed her forehead.

“Crap. I’m sorry. I didn’t tell you because I didn’t want you to get mad at me for starting to date someone else.” Alicia was honest with Danny. Danny nodded and hugged his mother. Alicia left, and Danny went back to reading his book.

After he had finished his last chapter, Danny walked down the hall to see if his mother was still awake. He put his ear as close to her door as he possibly could and listened with everything he had.

Danny could hear the deep breaths of his mother’s labored breathing. Danny crept back down the hall to his brother, Max’s, room and listened to his labored breathing. Danny went back into his room and closed the door quietly. He flicked on his light and went into the bathroom. About thirty minutes later, he came out with a new clean shirt, shorts, and he had showered. Summers in California were extremely hot. The weather had cooled down, but it was still eighty-five degrees outside. Danny looked at his clock and realized it was almost one in the morning.

“Holy cow,” Danny whispered to himself. “It’s almost one, and it’s still sweating hot outside.” Danny sighed and went to his window. Danny knew if he was caught, he would suffer from two months of grounding with no electronics, and he would not be able to go on the porch and think any more. Danny climbed out his window onto the big tree right outside of it. He had done this a couple of times before, so he knew the drill. Danny climbed down the tree carefully onto the last branch, somehow managing not to scratch himself on a branch. Danny sat down on it and swung his feet so he would land on the ground safely. Danny looked up the tree to make sure his window was still open enough so he could climb back in. Luckily for Danny, he was tall, skinny, could climb well, and weighed just about nothing so he was quiet.

Danny had started to sneak out once his dad died. Some nights, Danny would go over to Jack’s house. Jack was Danny’s best friend, and hung out with him until he had to go back. On other nights, Danny would find a party to go to, and he would hang out there until he had to leave.

Danny had never dared to sneak out when his father was still alive. His father may have been the fun one, but he did not like the rules to be broken. What parent did like the rules broken? Once his father died, Danny started to do things he wouldn't think twice about before. Danny had started to sneak out, go to parties, stay up late, talk back, and much more. Once Danny's father died, Danny didn't know how to handle it. For a couple of weeks Danny didn't move from his room (luckily he had a bathroom in there). Danny didn't leave his room, felt numb on the inside, barely slept, barely ate, cried all the time, and all he could think about was about how much pain his father must have felt. Then he started to sneak out.

As Danny walked down the road toward Jack's house, he thought about the pain his father must have felt. Danny was only a few houses away from Jack's place when he stopped. He hadn't realized he was crying until now. Danny ran to Jack's window and knocked on it, knowing Jack was awake. He was still crying and knew that Jack was the only person who would put up with his crying, at least at this time. Jack walked quickly over to his window and opened it for Danny. He screamed as loud as he could when he saw who was standing behind Jack.

Harlee Levesque

Ashland District School

Mrs. Merrill

Grade 7

Abby and the Lucky Horse

Abby stared out the window of the bus, watching as rain hit the window. The sky was filled with dark, gloomy clouds, the road was filled with mud. She sighed, and stared at the seat in front of her. Being the new girl at the Oaks Middle School, she didn't really have any friends. The bus stopped, and she grabbed her backpack and walked down the long, small, walkway, until she got to the front of the bus.

Once her boots hit the muddy ground, she sprinted to her house. She smiled and thought about how people never want to get wet. She reached the steps to her front door, and walked up them, trying not to slip. She opened the front door, ran in, and closed the door behind her. Soaked from the rain, her Mom walked up to her.

"How was your day?" She asked. It was the same answer every day:

"Good." Abby said, walking to her room. After she dropped her heavy backpack on the ground, she walked down the hallway to her living room, and her mother stopped her.

"I have something for you." She handed Abby a horseshoe.

"A, uh... horseshoe?" Abby almost questioned.

"Your Dad and I have been talking, since you've been doing so much hard work, we decided to get you an early birthday present," she said, turning around and walking to the front door.

Abby was about fifteen, her birthday was on Sunday. Abby followed her, still wondering what it was. They walked outside, and got in their car. Abby quivered in excitement. After about ten minutes, they pulled into a yard; it was a horse stable. Abby had been volunteering and taking riding lessons there for a while. She always wanted a horse, but she knew it was expensive. She had been saving up since she was about six, and she had saved up quite a lot, from birthdays, and other special events or holidays.

"Riding lessons?" She guessed, as the car stopped. Her heart raced, as she was almost quivering with anticipation.

“The stables wanted to thank you for your hard work. They’re letting you keep a horse here for free, and they’re letting you have one of their newest arrivals who has been rescued. His previous owner had abused him, and it’s your job to make him the friendliest, most spoiled horse in the universe.” As her mother was saying this, she opened the barn door. The horse was scared as she expected.

“H-He’s... really mine?” She questioned, looking at the horse. Her mother responded with yes. Abby stepped into the horse stall, and the horse retreated to the back corner. She knew it was dangerous to be inside a stall with a scared horse in it, so she stepped back, and closed the door.

“Does he have a name?” She asked, still looking at him. “And where is everyone?” She looked around.

“He doesn’t have a name, and everyone is home. They already did their work today, and decided to let you have the night to try to befriend the horse.” Her mom said, walking away, going to pet one of the other horses. Abby took the night to try to bond with the horse, and she made some progress. She then went home for the night, did her nightly routine, and went to sleep.

Her phone buzzed, as she sat up. She looked out her window to see the sun rising, the sky close to the sun was a beautiful yellow, and faded into a more red color. She got out of her bed, did her morning routine, and headed out the door. She rushed onto the bus waiting for her outside, and she sat in the second row seat. A girl that was in her class, that she didn’t know the name of, walked down the aisle of the moving bus, and sat down on the seat behind her.

“Hey, what are you a second grader? Are you *scared* to come to the back of the bus where the *‘big kids’* are?” The girl chuckled tauntingly. She decided to laugh with her, instead of be mad.

“Yeah, I’m a second grader alright.” Abby said with a playful tone, the girl looked almost disgusted.

“Well... well, you’re as short as one!” The girl wanted to try to insult Abby.

“I’ve been called a second grader before because of my size, it was quite funny!” Abby joyfully said, she knew the girl was trying to insult her, but maybe if she stayed joyful, she could make a new friend. The girl huffed with frustration, and went back to the back of the bus.

When Abby got to school, she was early, so she had to be outside. There was mud everywhere, but she had boots on. Then, the girl walked up to her again.

“Y’know, it’d be bad if someone tripped out here.” Her voice had a sound that she knew sounded rehearsed, this wasn’t going to end well. The girl shoved her, causing her to trip, and fall into the mud. She heard laughing coming from everywhere, other students had already come to see what had happened. Tears formed in her eyes, as the girl’s taunting voice came from behind you.

“What are you gonna do? *Cry?*” The girl continued laughing. Everyone made fun of her for the rest of the day. They pointed at her, or called her names, the teachers were the only ones concerned for her.

When the day ended, she told her mom what had happened, and she decided to let her stay at the horse stables for a while. She sat down by her new horse’s stable and tears ran down her face. She then heard hooves from behind her, and she slowly stood up. After wiping her face to take away the tears, her horse was chasing his own tail. He must have been trying to make her feel better. She took a video of him on her phone, and decided to post it. The weekend went by, and she and her horse, who she had decided to name Clover, became better companions. She

woke up Monday morning to notifications on her phone. She quickly sat up, her video of her horse went viral. Speechless, she told her Mom, and she was happy for her. When she arrived at school that day, she heard a voice.

“Look! It’s Abby!” There was suddenly a crowd of people around her, they were apologizing, or asking what the name of the horse was. The bell rang, and everyone ran inside, not wanting to be late for their class. The girl walked up to her, with a guilty look on her face, Abby could also tell she had been crying.

“I’m sorry... I’m sorry...” She said. “I don’t have any more friends... they all are mad at me... I’m sorry-” She was cut off by Abby.

“I forgive you.” Abby suddenly said.

“Y-you do?” The girl slowly asked. “Will you be my friend?” She asked.

“Yeah!” Abby forgivingly said, she thinks that everyone deserves a second chance, even bullies.

Madison Thibault

Caribou Community School

Ms. McDonough Grade 7

Detective McStern Part 2

One fine day Detective McStern, the town detective, was doing a crossword puzzle, when his new partner, Wally Schroeder stormed into the office. Wally explained to the detective that there was a dead body found near the junkyard. So the detective put on his hat, went to his car, and drove off.

Upon arrival, Detective McStern searched the crime scene looking for any clues as to how this man had died. He looked at the body, and found a gunshot wound. So it was obvious the man was shot, but why? Looking at the man's I.D, it said the name Donny Smith. So the detective took the ID to his office to search for more information about the victim.

Searching in his files, Detective McStern found out the victim had done some time, and had been in some well-known gangs. The last gang he was in was led by Clyde McCain, who just escaped the slammer one month ago. Detective McStern returned to the crime scene to inspect the scene again. While there, he found a bullet shell near where the body was found. It appeared to belong to a tommy gun. The shell looked new, and he saw the company name RAMSEY on it. Ramsey was an old gun manufacturing company that had many stores. The closest one was on Wellington Street, 11 miles away. So off Detective McStern went to the gun store. Detective McStern approached the clerk at the front and asked how long he had been working there. The clerk said that he had been working there every day for the last 20 years. Now the detective knew that this must be the guy who sold the gun.

Detective McStern started to question the clerk for information. The questioning was so intense, the clerk snapped and told the detective everything. About a month ago, he said Clyde McCain, dressed in an orange jumpsuit, came into the store asking for a gun. McCain said that he would kill him if he told anyone that he was there. Detective McStern asked the clerk if he knew where Clyde went. The clerk said no, but he might have an idea.

Then the clerk said that McCain may have gone to a local businessman, Wayne Douglas’ farm. He said that his car was then stolen off of West Avenue. West Avenue was known for

small businesses that were successful, but after 1923 they started to go downhill. Wayne Douglas went missing not long after and that the farm could not manage to stay afloat. Because of this, the stores did not have any food to sell, the bakeries had no wheat to make bread with, and within a year only two stores were still open. After a while, all the stores were gone and the street had been abandoned ever since.

Now Detective McStern knew that the farm was big enough to hold all of the gang members and weapons, so that is where Detective McStern was headed. On his way, McStern walked through the alley of West Avenue that was completely deserted. Thinking of the old times he had there as a kid, he sighed. Looking around, he checked to see if anyone had been there in the past 10 years, but it did not look like it. As he turned to go to his car, he remembered that there was an old trail that was used to get to the farm nearby. Tire tracks on the trail may tell him if his hunch was correct, that they were using the farm as a hideout.

Sure enough there were tire tracks on the road. Detective McStern followed the tracks to the farm, where he hid behind a bush. He saw some gangsters around the house. McStern left and went to the police station to tell them what he saw.

Police Chief, Buck Howard, sent some people to investigate the farm. After 3 days, the people who went to the farm had not returned, so the entire police force went to the farm. When they got there, the officers went straight to the barn where they saw the police officers were captured and tied up. The first shot was by Clyde McCain himself. Multiple officers were getting shot, with a couple of them dying on both sides, until Clyde McCain was shot in the leg. McStern, the cops, and the gang members all stopped after that. Soon the gang surrendered and the cops arrested them. Clyde McCain received medical treatment, and then after hours of interrogation he finally admitted that he murdered Donny Smith.

So, after a long week, Detective McStern could finally go home and rest on the couch taking a long nap. Another case solved.

Parker Ouellette

Caribou Community School

Mrs. Pelletier

Grade 6

How Fast Time Flies

Time flies fast. Incredibly fast. It's astonishing. And I can't believe that it was just a month ago, I met my friends in person. I feel like it was yesterday. There's a saying "time flies when you're having fun," but it's not always true. Sometimes time goes by when we're just simply sitting there.

I was humming along to a song, it was 5 pm. And I was reading while listening to music. October of 2019 was sure fun...but not always. There were days when I was in *self isolation*. I just missed Lily. I met her at the beginning of fifth grade. The last time I saw her...we were arguing, and I never apologized after that face-to-face, but I did over a call. She and I wanted to run away together due to events at home, but never did. After she disappeared, we lost touch. And I don't think she would like it if I said why she went away, but I can say this. She was sent to her grandparents house to live there in a different city.

Then time passed. It was New Years. Still. Nothing. She didn't come back to the school. I missed her dearly.

More time passed. May 2020. I heard one thing. My friend Ayden had her number.

"Really? You do? What is it?" I cried out, on a call with Ayden.

"Yeah! I'll give it to you! I just need her permission," He said, "Its 478-***-****."

"Thank you so much!" I cheered, while adding the contact into my phone.

After the call with Ayden, I texted Lily, "Hey Lily...it's me, Hailey, please respond. I need to know you're still okay. Please, just tell me one thing to know you're okay,"

Hours later I get a message back. "Hailey? Wait, Hailey Emerson? My school best friend? I can't believe it's you. Where did you go?"

"I moved to Florida, I've been waiting to get your number. Luckily Ayden had it," I texted.

Everything had been alright after that, I got a hold of my other friends. Jaina, Cash, and Isla. Everything...was perfect. Yeah, me and my friends had fights but we just accepted we had differences. Everything was perfect...at least to me.

Hailey Emerson

Caribou Community School

Ms. Crawford

Grade 6

King of the Hill

A very long time ago, when there were knights in shining armor and swordsmen battling it out, there were wars between kingdoms. There was a secret behind that time period about a certain species who had obtained the power to think like us. It might not be the strongest species, but they moved in groups, lived in their own small kingdoms; they were the ants.

Just like us, ants had a king, queen, knights, archers and many more types of soldiers. One day, great harm came to the ants that could extinguish them forever. The anteaters are powerful demons that devour ants, they were also the ants' worst enemy, far worse than the humans. That didn't stop the ants from growing their kingdom and becoming the most powerful species. The ants worked from day to night trying to become more superior than the anteaters. The ants will still always be little fragile bugs though. They will be beaten and bruised until they don't want to fight anymore, but one ant will rise up to greatness and become the strongest ant to ever exist. He will lead the ant species to greatness and this is a story of how he did it.

Ere woke up and went downstairs for breakfast of leaves and apple bits. He hated when his parents kept food in the dirt hole to keep it from rotting as fast, because it gets all dirty. Ere liked breakfast fresh, so he would hunt for picnic leftovers to get some nice food from. He set out to find some food, he grabbed his grass coat because it usually gets pretty cold in the morning. He made his way to the door and was greeted by a big gust of wind. It was freezing, Ere just wanted some nice fruit, but nobody would have a picnic in this kind of weather. There was only one other solution, to go to the human kingdom.

Ere left his house. He set off with nothing but a will and himself. Five, six, seven, Ere was counting the steps he took, because he needed to keep track of what he was doing. He had never been to the human kingdom before, so he didn't know if it was dangerous or not. After the

fiftieth step he marked an arrow heading back to the hill. This way he would know his way back, and hopefully nothing else will see it.

Ere saw his first house. It was pretty big and made of wood. He walked up to it and he didn't hear anyone inside. Ere found a small hole in the wall and walked through it. He saw shelves full of bread. He walked up to the bread and nibbled small pieces off, then carried a bunch of crumbs on his back. He was an ant, so he could carry a lot. When he was getting down from the shelf, he heard footsteps coming up to the door. Ere freaked out and ran to the hole, but it was too late, the human stepped in and picked up a broom. She started swinging it at Ere, dust was flying everywhere and Ere could barely breathe. Little did Ere know, the dust made the perfect smokescreen to escape.

Ere had never run so fast before. He dropped all of the bread and ran for it. Ere was still running, but he noticed animal footprints heading towards the hill. 150 steps away, 100 steps away and finally when he got home the entire hill was destroyed. Dead ants everywhere. Ere searched for survivors, or maybe his parents, but there were no survivors and his parents laid still outside of his destroyed home. He screamed at the top of his lungs in sadness and frustration. Ere knew who did this, it was the anteaters. Just one anteater could destroy an entire colony. Ere's colony was the strongest in the area, they wiped it out that easily and he was the only survivor.

Ere had nothing, no home, no family, no friends. He was broken and full of hatred. He searched the area, but nothing was to be found. Ere had also buried most of the fallen ant warriors, along with their belongings. Ere had found an ant cross, it symbolized the god they worshipped. Ere had never got involved with any of that stuff, but he did believe there was something guiding him. After he had buried his family and the soldiers, he had made his way in the direction of the anteaters' kingdom. I don't know if Ere had a death wish, just walking into the number one ant predator's kingdom. He wanted revenge, even though Ere couldn't even harm a fly. He still walked though, now getting thirsty, but he still walked. Ere had no clue of where the anteater kingdom was, He just followed the footprints of the anteaters. After one whole hour of walking, Ere still didn't see their kingdom He slowly fell to the ground and looked up at the sky in sadness. His eyes started to get heavy and then he fell asleep.

Ere didn't dream about anything, no nightmares, nothing. Ere opened his eyes and to his surprise he was inside of an ant hill. He jumped up quickly and three ants were guarding him. They had grass spears and mud armour and they looked really surprised.

"I really didn't think you were going to wake up," said one of the ants. Ere looked around.

"How long have I been asleep?" Ere asked, still waking up.

"3 days," a different ant replied

"I'm Hooga, this is Tobi, and the other one is Pocky." Hooga said.

Ere got up, they weren't letting their guards down.

"Can you help me out? I need to take down the anteaters and avenge my family." Ere said, all of the ants just laughed.

"You won't be able to defeat them, well not without the proper training at least." Tobi offered. Ere wanted to train, he wanted to fight and avenge his whole colony.

"Yes!" Ere said in a really happy voice.

Two days had passed since Ere agreed and he made some progress on the training. He had learned how to use a spear and dodge some attacks. He wasn't the only ant training, apparently, he was in an ant warrior training facility. Ere needed to become a warrior to defeat the anteaters.

Three months had passed and Ere thought he was ready. Ere mastered the sword, along with a little spear knowledge. He didn't take time to make friends because his only goal was vengeance, but he also wanted to rebuild his colony. Ere picked up his sword and proudly walked out the door to be greeted not by a gust of wind, but three anteaters. Ere had to surrender along with the rest of the warriors that were there. His training was all for nothing and now he is going to be taken by the people he hates most. The anteaters took everyone and locked them in cells, Ere was alone. Now he wanted revenge even more. When he gets that revenge, they will be the ones surrendering.

Coltin Hopkins

Caribou Community School

Ms. McDonough

Grade 7

The Dream

I think I'm normal. I mean, I'm not rich but not poor. I guess you could say I'm like everybody else. I go to a public school, I have some friends...I think? You know how people talk about their dreams? I haven't really had any. Well, maybe I have but I don't remember a lot of things. My name is Amilee and I'm 14. I live in this small town and not much happens here. My days usually go by pretty fast. I go to school and come back. Sometimes when I get done school, I pet my dog or go outside. There isn't much to do outside, but in the summer, I like to lay in the grass and just look up at the sky. I wonder if there are other places with other people, far away from Earth. My mom thinks that's not possible, but I think it is.

My family isn't that big, I guess. I have a mom and a baby sister. My baby sister is four, and she's very annoying in my opinion. My mom and I are best friends. Nobody could break our relationship.

Today's date is February 10th, 2032. I close my journal after writing my "daily thoughts," which is what my mom calls them.

"Time for bed, Amilee!" I hear my mother say from the kitchen.

"I know!" I yell back.

I lay down on my bed and close my eyes. I think I'm hearing sirens...? Suddenly I sit up, and I'm not in my room. I look around at my surroundings. I'm in an alleyway. Is this a dream? I get up off the ground and start walking out. It smells awful here, I know I'm definitely not home anymore. I see a woman with long, blonde hair. What is on her face? Why does her phone look so old? Like it was made in the 20s...

"Excuse me!" I yell while running towards her.

Why is she looking at me like that? Did I do something wrong? Suddenly I realized I was screaming at her, I couldn't hear anything with the loud traffic. I'm pretty sure this is a city. I've never actually been to a city before, I didn't know it would be this loud.

"What?" she says while inching her way away from me.

"Where am I? How did I get here?" I say while looking around.

She just chuckled and walked away from me. When did people get this rude? Maybe I could find a store that I could ask somebody. I looked around and found a little shop. It kind of looked like some sort of pharmacy. I pushed the door open and looked up. Everybody was looking at me, some man started walking towards me.

"No mask, no entry!" he says.

“Mask? What? How can I get one?” I say in confusion.

He pointed to a little bin by my feet. I bent down and took one out. It looked like the one that woman was wearing. They were all still looking at me.

“Are you gonna put it on? If not, leave,” the man said with a frown.

“Oh..” I stood there in my dirty sweater and jeans looking at the blue thing in my hand.

I put the little string things around my ears like how the man had his. I put the top part over my nose so they would stop staring, which when I looked up, they had stopped. I decided to walk around and see what they had here. I looked through the aisles but then I sensed something staring at me. I turned my head to see a girl standing there. She had long brown hair and a very cute outfit. I wish I had cool clothes but my mom buys all mine.

“Uh hello, I’m Amilee,” I said putting my hand out.

“Hello! I’m Marice.” she said.

My hand was still out, I was waiting for a handshake or something.

“We really shouldn't handshake you know,” she said, looking at my hand.

“Well why not?” I said.

“Ha! That’s a good one.” She said in a chuckle.

I just stood there staring at her. I was so confused. Why couldn't we handshake?

“Oh, you really don't know?” she said.

“Know what? What happened?” I said in question.

“Are you not from here?” she asked.

“I don't think so,” I said.

“Where are you from?” she asked.

“Definitely not here..” I mumbled.

I glanced over to see somebody reading a newspaper. I haven't seen a newspaper in so long. I could barely make out the words that were on it. “2020 has been the WORST year.”

“What year is it?” I asked looking back at her.

“Still the same old 2020.” She said with a sigh.

I was breathing heavily, looking around. Why am I here? How do I get back? Suddenly, I was running out of the store. I'm pretty sure she was following me out. I stopped, tears were running down my face.

“Hey, you okay?” she said breathing heavily.

“I want to go home..” I said shaking.

“Hey, it's alright I’ll get you home. Do you know where you live?” She asked.

“Not this year,” I said.

“What do you mean?” She said looking at me.

She grabbed my hand and started running. I don't know where she was taking me but I was glad I could be with somebody. We were at a house, probably hers. It was nice but small like mine. Her room was pretty, she had little plants around her room.

“Y-you can stay here with me!” she stuttered.

“What?” I asked.

“You can do online school with me and you can sleep downstairs,” she said.

I wanted my real home.. My real family.

“I don't want you to be alone, we can find your family.”

I decided to stay. I had no way home. I learned about the pandemic and how to deal with it.

Her family treated me like family and I had a great life there. Sometimes I still lay out in the grass and wonder where my family is. I wonder if I will ever get back, if I will ever get to see them again...

Emerson Miller

Caribou Community School

Mr. Russell

Grade 7

We Fight Again

Two young teen males named Katsuki and Shoto were up against each other in the last battle of the Sports Festival. They live in a world with super powers, which are referred to as quirks.

Shoto Todoroki's quirk is called Half Cold - Half Hot. His right side emits ice and his left side emits fire. His appearance works with his quirk. The right side of his hair is snow white and the left side of his hair is red. He has heterochromia eyes, his right eye is grey and his left eye is light blue which has a scar around it. Katsuki Bakugou's quirk is called explosion. He sweats nitroglycerin and blows stuff up from his palms. He has spiky blond hair with red ruby eyes. This was their second time in the Sports Festival, where students compete against each other to make it to the top. Just like last year they were the last two to go against each other.

"Up next is Katsuki Bakugou against Shoto Todoroki!" Midnight announced. Midnight is a Pro-Hero that also works at U.A high. She's tall with long purple hair, her quirk allows her to let out a sleepy gas. Both boys walked up to the arena on their own sides.

"You boys know the rules! If your opponent knocks you out cold or you step out of bounds you lose!" She yelled, cheers emitting from the crowd of pro heroes and agencies. "Start!"

Both boys ran at each other. Todoroki shot a huge amount of ice in his opponent's direction, Katsuki launching himself up at him with his explosions. "You better give it your all IcyHot!" Bakugou yelled, firing multiple explosions in Todoroki's direction. The boy dodging and shooting back fired at him. "I most certainly will." He responded, now shooting ice at him. Katsuki dodged, then ran straight at him, launching into the air and throwing an explosion in front of him. Doing a quick maneuver, getting behind Todoroki, and throwing an explosion directly at his back. Todoroki stumbled but quickly got back in a stance, shooting ice at Bakugou. Katsuki kept trying to get closer to the other boy, but only to shoot himself away as fire was thrown at him. But his mistake was when he landed.

Todoroki had already used his ice to make the whole arena slippery, knowing Bakugou couldn't stay in the air forever. Katsuki's arms were surely getting sore and if he had to suspend himself too long he might be too weak to properly land. Most likely crashing to the ground with no stamina left. Although the ice gave Katsuki a problem, Todoroki was perfectly fine. He's trained with his ice powers way more than his fire, so it's only natural that he would know how to stay balanced. He kept throwing fire at Bakugou, and replacing the melted ice with more.

Bakugou was getting restless and tired of dodging, not wanting to lose but having a hard time winning. Katsuki finally pushed himself, launching into the air. "Get ready to lose IcyHot!" He said as he started plummeting down with his quirk, spinning in circles, making a tornado just as he did last festival. Todoroki tried to prepare himself, making as much ice as he could around

him. Surprised that Bakugou still had enough stamina to do this, then remembering that he forced Katsuki to push himself, he made him sweat...

Sweat is how Katsuki is able to use his quirk. Then Katsuki did the biggest explosion he could directed at Todoroki, the protectful ice around him was no match to the explosion. Ice shards went everywhere, Todoroki was shot backwards, out of bounds...

"Katsuki Bakugou wins!!!" Midnight yelled out, the crowd going wild. Katsuki had his classic smug grin on knowing he won fairly. Todoroki was now heading over to where Bakugou and Midnight were standing. "Good job IcyHot. Maybe you'll win next year." He said aloud, then whispered to Shoto, "You actually did good." Katsuki was usually rude, but Todoroki gave him a fair fight and he respected that.

Emma Lausier

Van Buren District School

Mrs. Hartvisgen

Grade 7

Antispace Book One Prologue

My name is Jonathan Harvard. I'm the narrator of this story, and I'd like to tell you the story of George Smith and his family. This story is full of adventure, happiness, discovery, humor, and mystery (and I don't know about you, but that sounds like a good book to me).

George Smith's first log entry, September 12, 3009: Everyone's time here on earth is limited; we will be going to a new planet. Our world is dying and we are at war for resources. We have discovered a new planet named Sperlev. Since I am a researcher, I will be one of the first people to leave. My son, Fortem (who is a journalist) and wife Jane (who is an engineer) will be coming to the new world with me. We will be leaving for the International Space Station (ISS) in the morning. End of entry.

"We're going to be late," said George,

"Almost done," said Jane and Fortem.

"Are you guys ready for an adventure?"

"Dad, you've asked us this a million times! Yes, we're ready."

"I wonder if our friends will be at Sperlev? You know I've always wondered what the name Sperlev meant?" asked Jane.

"Sperlev is the Latin root for "light" and the Latin root for "hope" put together."

Twenty minutes later, the Smiths arrived at NASA. "We're finally here!" exclaimed Fortem.

"Hello my name is Dr. Mac, I will be your guide for today. You will be the first people to go to Sperlev, which means there are certain risks."

"We understand," said George.

"All right then, you should probably prepare for liftoff." About ten minutes later, the Smiths were prepared to take off to the station. "Three, Two, One, Liftoff!"

"I don't wanna die!" screamed Fortem.

"Landing in three, two, one."

"Alright guys, it says we have the Apollo Two. Excuse me sir, where is Apollo Two," said Jane.

"You're standing right in front of it," said the janitor.

“Wow! This ship is huge,” they exclaimed.

“Smiths, prepare for launch,” said the captain over the intercom.

“Since I’m the one who read the launch guide, I’ll go prepare us,” said Jane. A few moments later a piece of debris from an old space shuttle hit the ISS and it crashed. There was debris, blood, and supplies everywhere. The Smiths were the only survivors.

“Mom? Dad? Are you alright?”

“Ya, we’re fine. Ow!”

“Mom! Dad! You gotta come see this! I don’t think we’re in the solar system anymore!”

“Wow!” exclaimed George and Jane. It was one of the most beautiful things they had ever seen, but at the same time the most terrifying thing they had ever seen. They were on some strange planet scattered with lush land and alien animals. This meant two things, they would have plenty of resources, but there would be many dangerous animals.

“George, we have to search for some supplies.” That’s when everything and everyone started to levitate.

“What just happened?”

“Uh Mom, Dad, I think we have worse problems than that, look!” There was a pack of wolves and not just any wolves, but wolves that looked to have two venomous fangs like a snake. They ran and ran but for some reason they never tired out. A few moments later they stopped at a giant structure. It was gold and at least 50 feet high. And when they stopped the dogs backed away, as if something evil was there.

Owin Michaud

Van Buren District School

Mrs. Levasseur

Grade 5

The Book of Astrophel

Stood. A figure stood at the end of the grey, cracked, vintage road. Stood, looking around, cane in hand. He adjusted his hat on his head as he glanced around, as if searching for something. He pulled his wrist out from his trench coat, and glanced at his watch. “11:59 p.m.” it read. The branches of the trees swayed and rustled in the cool night breeze. The houses looked lifeless; every lantern out. The figure turned his head up to the bright, crescent moon. The town clock struck twelve o’clock. The figure lowered his head, and started pacing toward the darkened palace. He seemed to have a package wrapped in beige cloth tucked away in his long, black coat. He came to a halt at the gate guards. They rose. The man took something out of his pocket. He pointed it in front of the guards, snapped his fingers, and stared as they tumbled down, almost as if in an enchanted sleep. He tucked the black and white twisting object back away in his pocket. He made his way creeping toward the palace doors. As this man reached the doors, he began muttering something in an odd language. The doors creaked wide open as he quickly strutted down the hall. The corridor was filled with different floating droplets that looked as if they had glowing shapes of constellations or planets in them. The walls had different flags hanging down, flooded with astrology symbols. For this man, it gave him joyful memories, for he had spent many of his days here. Another figure glided out of the shadows and met him. She wore a long, flowing, chiffon, silver dress. The top of the dress was off the shoulder, which a dark, black,

hooded shawl covered, along with most of her chestnut colored hair in which olympic blue streaks were appeared faintly in it. Her eyes many mentioned looked grayish - blue

“Hello Sparrow,” her soft, but genuine voice spoke.

“Do you have it? Also, wasn’t Juniper supposed to meet us here?”

“I think she’s supposed to be here any minute now, and yes I do in fact have it.” Sparrow’s firm voice said.

“What’s with the cane? So much for a sixteen year old, you look sixty.” Autora commented on, holding back a laugh, unlike the noise from behind the two of them.

“Pfft, a sixty-year old? He looks ninety!” Juniper snickered, as she had just appeared floating behind them, her third eye blinking in sync with the other two. Autora almost tripped from the startlement of Juniper’s appearance. “And Tora, call me Jun, you have since we were younger,” Juniper muttered smiling. Sparrow had tried to look annoyed at the two of them, but ended cracking a smile.

“It added to the effect,” he chuckled.

“We should go up to my room. We need to look through this book.” Autora commented, breaking the laughter.

“Meet you two up there.” Juniper snickered as she faded out of thin air.

The world seems as it has paused for a moment. The story decides to shift its gears to take a trip down memory lane. For centuries, Autora’s family and the people of the kingdom Astrophel have been ones about Astrology. Each being is similar to their Zodiac Sign in extraordinary ways. There is magic taught to teenagers coming of age at seventeen years old. It is more powerful than what they have been taught before. It is said in the Kingdom Astrophel that many years ago, a great book had been hidden away. It held the secrets and magic taught to those coming of age. Many spoke of how this coming of age magic helped them find who they were, guide them, and it merged perfectly for them and their usage. Some of these people were curious, or confused. They wanted to learn this magic before the age of seventeen. Students became more eager the year they turned sixteen when their hair would begin changing to its new color. This had gone on for centuries, and always the year before a person turned seventeen. Many attempted to find the book but were unsuccessful. This puts a halt to the trip down memory lane and brings us back to present time. Autora, Juniper, and Sparrow have searched for years together since they were young to find this book. They used to talk in awe when they were just children, wondering what mysteries it held.

“Well, open it!” Autora whisper-shouted at Sparrow.

“Patience is key, Tora.”

“I’ve had patience since I heard about the book, hurry up!”

“Yeah, Dude, open it, or Miss “patient” is going to lose her cool.” Juniper whispered giggling at which Tora sent her a jokingly glare. Sparrow unlatched the mud colored leather book. He stared in awe. Leaves and flower petals swayed and whooshed around him almost if a drift of air had blown into the room.

“It’s brilliant,” he said as the pieces of nature flowed around his head and landed gently on his dark brown hair, streaks appearing in which you couldn’t exactly tell the color yet. The girls peered over his shoulder, nothing appearing.

“I don’t see anything?” Autora mentioned, sounding confused.

“I don’t either.” Juniper sighed.

“Wait, what if the magic only appears to what the reader holds inside? Maybe both of you should take turns opening it back up.” Sparrow noted.

“Pass it over here.” Juniper commanded as Sparrow lightly tossed the book over to her. Juniper opened it and a smile became more pronounced on her face. Small waves of water with tiny silver glistening fish flowed out and circled around Juniper, as if gravity weren’t real.

“Woah, that is one cool book!” Juniper exclaimed.

Autora tugged the book away from Juniper. As she stared at it thoughts whirled around in her head. She’d been waiting for this moment for such a long time. She yanked open the cover and stared in disbelief. Gushes of wind swept through her hair.

”This book really is wonderful.” She expressed.

They all started laughing, forgetting that the rest of Autora’s family had been sleeping.

Footsteps.

“What was that?”

“Erm, I’m not sure.”

“Huh, wai- get in the closet and take the book! There’s that tunnel you both know about in the back with the teleport-“

“ Tora we know, say where you want to go and It will work, where do you want us to teleport to?”

“Hm, oh! Our spot in North Tower, nobody ever goes there besides you guys and I.”

“Alright, I’ll meet you there Sparrow, I can teleport myself.”

“Go!” Autora whispered anxiously to Juniper and Sparrow, not wanting to make much noise.

Autora scrambled into her bed, the thoughts now racing in her mind. Her

heart was pounding. Thump. Another sound of steps. Thump. Step. Thump. Closer steps.

Thump. Stop. They were outside her door.

Kaeleigh Swanson

PIMS

Mrs. Cheney

Grade 7

Discovery of Bruton

Jameson was very excited for the school trip to the Gateway Arch in Missouri. He was packing all afternoon.

The bus was going to leave in half an hour and Jameson was not packed yet. He has been running around his house looking for his lucky underwear for the past hour. Finally, he decides he just has to go without them today.

On the bus, Jameson sits across from Piper and Noah, his best friends.

“This is going to be fun!” Piper said. “I can’t wait to get to the top and look over onto the Mississippi River.”

“Yeah, well it won’t be fun for some people,” Noah said, putting his head against the window.

“Noah, your fear of heights is taking the fun out of a lot of things for you,” Piper replied.

They arrived in a parking lot near the gateway arch and walked over to the entrance with the rest of their class. They passed through a security system that reminded Jameson of an airport.

Finally, they got into the arch and started ascending the elevator to the top. Going up elevators always tickled Jameson's feet. The doors made the ding sound they always made, and contracted.

Outside of the doors was a gleaming bright hallway crowded with tourists looking out small, shining windows. Jameson could see big muscular guys dressed in white, with guns at their side, and gadgets that were too small to understand what they were.

They exited the elevator and they began to stride down the center aisle until they found a few windows that were empty. The class scattered to the windows, which left Jameson, Noah, and Piper in the middle with nothing to do. As much as they wanted to see the Mississippi River, every time that they tried to, there wasn't enough room for them to see. So, they decided to look around a bit.

At the end of the hall, there was a janitor's closet with a sort of buzzing noise coming from it. Jameson was concerned, and he could tell that from the looks on their faces, Piper and Noah felt the same.

"What do you think it is?" Noah asked.

"If we had any idea of what it is, do you really think that we would've been standing here awestruck for the past forty-five seconds?" Piper replied.

The door started to rumble and shook open. A gleaming green light shown upon them making Noah fall over. Nobody seemed to notice the light and weird sound going on and Jameson didn't understand.

Whatever was in there seemed to be dragging Piper in. Jameson grabbed her hand and pulled with all of his strength. Still, nobody seemed to notice them. The buzzing sound started to change into a sucking noise. Piper's right arm and right cheek began to dissolve into ashes. Those ashes were sucked into the room.

"Help me!" Piper cried.

Suddenly Jameson was in a pitch-black cave. He looked to his side and saw Piper. The right side of her face was all scratched up, but she was still in one piece. Then, he glanced to his left. Noah wasn't there! He heard a slurping noise and looked up. Noah was there, sucking in the water from a bird bath.

Ruffling sounds came from the tall grassy plain outside. It became louder. A green man on a horse emerged out of the field.

"Oh great, you're awake," the green man said.

"Wh—Who are you, and where are we?" Jameson asked the man.

"Welcome to Bruton my friends, a place of many wonders a little past Pluto. I am Zorgan, your personal guide today. We've installed a radioactive microchip in your heel, that's what's helping you to breath here."

Jameson looked down at the back of foot, he hadn't noticed it before but a tiny green sliver injected had been into him. He didn't dare touch it, because what the man said could be true. He took a look over to Noah, and he didn't feel the same way. Noah whipped the microchip out of his heel and started to suffocate.

"Noah!" Jameson yelled.

Jameson grabbed Noah's foot but now there was nothing to grab. Noah dissolved into thin air and was gone. "What happened to him!?" Jameson shouted at Zorgan.

"He has been sent back to earth," Zorgan said. "He decided that he didn't want a tour of Bruton before he left."

Jameson was relieved that Noah was alright. He crawled up the wall until he was standing, and he helped Piper up. "Let's do the tour then," Jameson finalized.

They walked through a glimmering bright village, Zorgan described every single building like it was a castle.

“Well, this is the end of the tour,” Zorgan said. “Have you two made your decision?”

“About what?” Piper asked.

“Well, if you’re going to stay of course.”

“Why would we stay?” Piper questioned.

Piper started to reach for her heel, and right when her fingers grasped the chip—“STOP” Jameson exclaimed. “Piper, at least think this through. This is revolutionary. I mean come on, another planet? Can we at least take some things with us? Like pictures, or samples?”

They both grabbed a few samples and pictures.

Piper said, “thank you for the tour Mr. Zorgan, but we really should get going. We’ll make sure that the Earth finds Bruton.”

“No!” Zorgan interrupted. “The outside world must not know about this place.”

“But we know about this place,” Piper returned.

“That is why you cannot leave,” Zorgan said with a devilish grin on his face. He snapped his fingers and they were surrounded by bulky, rugged green men. They reminded Jameson of Shrek.

Jameson was obviously thinking the same thing as Piper. The simplest thing ever. They both reached for their heels and grabbed their chips. They yanked them out and the ground beneath them flashed green, and they dropped through.

They formed back at the Gateway Arch and Noah was in the closet that they went into, and so were they. They flung open the door and stepped out.

“Campbell, O’Donnell, Greeves, there you three are.” Our teacher Mr. Powers yells. “What were you doing in the janitor’s closet?”

“Funny story actually,” Piper said.

“You’ve all got time in detention tomorrow. I’ll see you there.” He left them with a little smirk of satisfaction.

From then on, Jameson would always keep the rocks and pics of Bruton locked up in a safe in the ground, where they would never be touched again.

Eli Mosher

PIMS

Mr. Blackstone

Grade 7

The Old Kingdom

“Why is he automatically going to be king when you’re dead! I am just as deserving as Abubakar, he is just the older of your children.”

“It is a rule you follow as a royal.”

“Why can’t we change that. I want a chance to rule!”

“Menes! We are thought of as gods by civilians. We can’t be doing things a different way. Things are good right now. We don’t need to change our traditions. I will not have this conversation again!”

“We are going to continue having this discussion until something changes and I get my chance!”

“Go practice archery, Menes”

He is always telling me what to do. I know he is my father, but I am eleven now. I should have some freedom. By the time Abubakar was eleven he could do whatever he wanted. My brother is the favorite. He soaks it up every waking hour. He just loves the attention. King Djoser's older son, Abubakar. He is going to run the kingdom one day. Not the younger son Menes, who is smart and handsome and an astonishing archer. The one studying the meanings of names and where they originated from. He is just so smart. Menes; he who endures, how appropriate.

I wasn't lying when I said I was good at archery. Maybe if I get good enough my dad will actually notice. I could become famous and travel Egypt. I doubt father would ever let me do that. He is very strict, but loves me and Abubakar and wants us to thrive. He just isn't good at expressing.

Djoser; divine of body. People love his appearance. Strong, attractive, the face of an extraordinary army, that is father.

"Father, I noticed the new pyramid. What is this one going to be?"

"I appreciate you asking. It is going to be the body of a lion and the head of a human. I hope for it to last an eternity."

"I am sure it will. That is a very interesting pairing, man and lion. What does it symbolize?"

"It symbolizes the great himself, the sun god Ra. He means so much to our people. This monument will represent him. He is such a big part of our culture.

In the ancient city Iwn, the creation of the universe was witnessed. Before creation, only darkness embraced the Primeval Ocean. When everything was set and ready, the entity, Atum, decided that it was time for creation to begin. An island emerged from the sea to hold creation. It took form as Ra. Ra created all other primary gods. He also created humans from the tears of his eyes. He always has been the major god."

He has told me that story before but I wasn't going to stop him. That story always fascinates me but seems unrealistic. How can everything be created by one divinity? Everyone following this belief seems unreasonable. I may believe there is a higher power, but I have never been a follower. I think I should have a chance at king. This hasn't ever happened, the younger of children being leader. I think that my father always ends the conversation about me becoming king one day because he knows deep down it is a good idea. Deep down I am sure people question our beliefs. Mother thinks it would be fair for me to get the chance to rule.

"Mother, have you ever questioned Ra and if our belief is true?"

"I've wondered if you would ever bring this up. You are smart and have always been one to question. I am glad that you are different. Questioning is good."

"The only way I could really make change is if I ruled, and we know that will probably never happen."

"Menes, you cannot have that mindset. Now I know that your father disagrees with me about this matter but I believe it shouldn't be up to just age when it comes to ruling the kingdom. You should be chosen by your abilities. I know that could possibly put you and your brother in compromising positions, but both king and head of the army are important and respected positions."

"What can I do to change the rule? Father isn't willing to talk about the topic."

Make him talk. Ask him to listen. Start with that. This will shock your father. He should listen to his son. Also, I may believe in the higher power. I would like to believe that there is someone up there looking over me and my family."

My mother, Fukayra; wise, intelligent. Maybe things do happen for a reason.

“This duck is delicious. Juicy and flavorful. One of my favorites.”

“One of my favorites also. Abubakar won his wrestling match today. I went and watched the end of it.”

“Oh, that is wonderful, I am so upset that I couldn’t see it. I was preparing for the neighboring kingdom's queen to come for a visit.”

As usual my brother sits soaking it all in, loving it.

“Father I have to talk to you about the problem with who gets to rule when you pass away”.

“Menes, we have talked about this. There is no problem about the rule.”

Father, I know there is a fair way. Please hear me out. We should be chosen by our abilities to rule or to lead the military.”

“Menes, it has been like this for as long as we have been a civilization. It will take a lot to change this rule but if you really believe in it keep trying to convince me.”

Maybe it won’t happen in my lifetime but I got Father to listen to me and that is a step in the right direction. If not, Mother is right, military leader is a noble position but king would be a whole lot better. I do always have traveling around Egypt and impressing the people with my archery in the back of my mind.

Aubrey Ellsworth

PIMS

Mr. Blackstone

Grade 7

Abyss

It’s too freaking cold out for this.

The city lights gleam in the darkness of the night, and the freezing temperatures bite at my face as I briskly make my way down the empty streets. My boots threaten to slip on the ice with every step I take. It’s about seven o’ clock at night right now, and I haven’t done any laundry for two weeks. Luckily, the laundromat doesn’t close until midnight, which means I have five hours to clean at least two weeks worth of clothes. I wish I’d come sooner in the day because at this time of day in the winter, this far north, it’s way too dark and way too cold to be dragging around a duffel bag of clothes while trying my best not to slip on the icy sidewalks. Unfortunately, managing two to three part-time jobs a day to make enough money to afford my apartment and food expenses takes too long for me to take time out of my schedule once a week during daylight hours to do laundry. However, I’m here now.

I step inside the—thankfully—heated room full of washers and dryers, and walk to the very back of the narrow space where a small table and chair sit. I set my black and orange duffel bag on the table and start throwing clothes from it into a washer next to me. After adjusting the settings to my liking, I hit start and sit down in the wooden chair. A long look around the room allows me to examine the coziness of the place. Of course, the chair isn’t very comfortable, but the coral-ish paint on the walls and black washers and dryers with silver lining the edges distract me from that. The floors are tiled, and the smell of pomegranate and a hint of something I can’t quite figure out reminds me of home, for some reason. It’s like this place was *made* to give you a sense of serenity— like it was made to make you never want to leave. I shake the thought out of my head and take my old, cracked phone out of my jeans pocket.

About four hours pass before I'm able to finally leave. I take the final load of laundry out of a dryer, stuff it into my duffel bag, and begin to walk out. I put my hand on the door before the lights begin to flicker. I don't think about it too much as it's probably been a while since the light bulbs have been changed. I shrug my shoulders and walk outside into the harsh wintry night.

After unlocking the door to my apartment, I take my mucky black boots off at the doorway. A small stand sits next to the door, where I set my keys. The other side of the door allows just enough room to put a coat rack, where I hang my jacket. I look at my bed in the back of the apartment, where a decently large window looks out at the city. A light gray color engulfs the walls decorated in photos and paintings I brought with me when I moved. The apartment is completely covered in dark wooden floors, aside from the tiled flooring in the bathroom. On the left side of the room is a little kitchen area with just enough space to cook, then the bathroom. I start to walk towards the bathroom in a rush to shower and sleep in the comfort of my bed.

I look at myself in the mirror that hangs above the sink. My dark brown hair is disheveled, and my fair skin looks even paler in the fluorescent lights. I quickly shower, dress myself in comfortable pajamas, brush my teeth, then leave the room to sleep.

It's around three in the morning when I wake up to the sound of something in my kitchen. I sit up and try to rub the tiredness from my eyes and look in the direction of the noise. It sounds like glass shattering. My feet lead me to the kitchen and I look down at the floor where the supposed broken glass lay.

There's nothing there.

My eyebrows furrow in confusion, as I clearly remember jolting awake from a clamor. Maybe I was just hearing things. I mean, it's late in the night and I'm exhausted, so it's very likely that my mind was just playing tricks on me. But those thoughts get dismissed when I hear more glass shattering behind me. My eyes widen and my body jerks in the opposite direction I was currently facing. The floors are still bare of any glass, but instead the wall I stare at is completely swallowed in pitch darkness. I back up to where the light switch for the kitchen is and flick it on. The wall is still an abyss of black.

Why? I take a step towards it, then another. When I'm merely a foot away, I reach my arm out and touch the wall.

The black abyss is now slowly but surely swallowing my arm into its embrace. I don't know what to do. How do I stop it? Then, the smell of pomegranate and something I can't quite figure out erupts from the void. It's the same smell from the laundromat.

Darkness continues to eat at me until it fully immerses my arm in its shadowy depths. It reaches for my neck, and down my side, causing me to panic. I try to manage a scream but nothing comes out. At this point the abyss is moving faster, enveloping all of me until all that is left is my face. But that's gone in a moment's notice after one final sound of glass shattering.

Now nothing remains.

A World Returning

Chapter 1 : mending moonlight

With rapid footsteps and beating wings, lifting off into the furious updraft, soared a young, rather dense boy, his deep brown hair working its way from the tip of his tail to his broad head, where large horns stood. His gaze was focused and dark, masking his childish heart. The wind clashed against him and his enormous, scaly wings. It never crossed his mind of the peculiar and unnatural appearance that made up his identity, him being half-human and half-dragon.

Having little memory of civilization, this boy, Kedawa, or rather, Keda, lacked any acquaintance nor relative that he could recall, creating a sense of desperation. All he longed for was a mellow, loving household, peaceful and tranquil, to call home. A family to care for him would complete this goal. Nearly settling with giving up on said dream landed Keda, having lost an immense amount of altitude whilst daydreaming.

For as long as he could remember, he called this vast land his own, taking the liberty of dubbing it as Odais. For miles and miles stretched out breath-taking horizons, each nook and cranny filled with wonder and beauty. The one thing this magnificent land unfortunately lacked was population. Keda was the only organism, as far as he knew, that occupied this planet of wonder, other than a few insects that he had discovered scuttling about in the underbrush of the western side of the terrain. He knew Odais like the back of his hand.

Though he had settled with the knowledge that he was indeed alone, something occurred to him that puzzled him far beyond his understanding. He had rather exquisite memory, and could remember, almost as though read from a textbook, each and every day since about a decade before the present day, but he lacked the memory of anyone or anything that could have raised him, yet he was educated, being able to speak, at least what he thought, fluently.

A disoriented and befuddled Keda staggered off to the dense tree line, knowing that varieties of plants and luscious fruits lie here, for he felt that he needed a snack to clear his cluttered mind. It was rather challenging to make sense of his current situation, or how to fulfill his wistful desire.

Just then, with a mouthful of all sorts of colorful berries, Keda's attention was brought upwards, his gaze settling on the formerly calm moon-lit night. It was as though a gaping hole were ripped into the sky, letting out a rather deafening sound, causing him to clasp his hands over his sound-sensitive ears.

Even through his racking pain, curiosity lingered in the dumb-founded dragon. Though the ear-piercing sound subsided, he could still hear an extremely high-pitched ringing. Wincing, Keda focused on the wounded sky above him, identifying the fact that he could see what looked like a sunny sky through the rip, and debated on what he should do in this predicament, and, even more so, trying to process the event that had just occurred.

Unfolding his immense wingspan, with his wings catching the air like a cloth, rocketed Keda towards the tear, keeping a safe distance, but investigating thoroughly. With Keda suddenly glancing at a silhouette who remained on the opposite side of the rip, returning his gaze

through the hole in the dark, gloomy sky. This piqued Keda's naive interest. Out of nowhere, he could feel his body being pulled forward.

He couldn't fight it. The sky was swallowing him whole. After what seemed to be an eternity of flailing and struggling, his cries for help proved to be in vain. Giving in, being completely aware of the inevitability of the situation, flew a limp Keda. He was powerless. His fate rested solely in the hands of the whirlwind of sky.

It's only the matter of whether this is the beginning or the end...

Olivia Levesque

PIMS

Mr. Boone

Grade 8

How the Hurricane Was Made

There once was a dragon that had a big tail. He wanted to see the clouds, so he flew up to them. He said, "I like it up here this can be my home." So he stayed up there. The next morning he woke up, and he found himself on a cloud. He said, "It's boring up here. I'm going down." He tried to go down, but he couldn't. He tried as hard as he could, and he still could not get down. He was going to try to use his tail to get down, and that is what he did. He used his tail, and it swung and swung until a huge gust of wind went down and made a hurricane. And that is how a hurricane was made.

Samson Hiltz

Mill Pond School

Mrs. Drew

Grade 4

The Great Cookie Conundrum

We trudge into Mirielle's house, our snot dried to our faces from the hours of sledding out in the cold. After we take off what seems like a million layers of clothes, we sit down and think about what we want to do next.

"How about we draw something oooh...like fairies!" Mireille's youngest sister Analise exclaims.

But no one, except for Analise of course, is particularly fond of that idea.

It was Mireille who came up with a brilliant idea.

"I think we should make some delicious cookies with some hot chocolate," she replies.

So we race down to the kitchen where Mirielle's parents sit. Since I am the guest, we think that they would be more inclined to say yes to me. And that is exactly what happens.

"So what do you want to do for a recipe?" Mirielle asks.

"Why don't we try to make it from scratch by ourselves," I reply.

I jump up onto the counter and scour the cupboard for the ingredients that I think we need--flour, baking soda, white sugar, mini semi-sweet chocolate chips. While I am doing that, Mireille grabs the eggs and milk out of their gigantic fridge that is as big as the Empire State Building. Arielle, Mireille's first youngest sister, gets the big red electric mixer out along with the bowl and whisk attachment. I take the initiative and start tediously measuring out the ingredients. We take turns pouring in the different ingredients. Merielle starts out by putting 5 cups of flour and two cups of milk into the mixing bowl. We have to stop Annalise from putting chocolate chips into the batter. I mean we all love chocolate chips, but pretty soon there was going to be more chocolate chips than batter. The batter starts to get a thick, sludge-like consistency, so Marinna flicks the switch of the mixer off and brings over the not greased or floured pans. I grab the half cup and scoop the batter onto the pans. Plop! Plop! Ploop! Once we're done, there is a little bit of batter left so I stick my finger into the batter. It tastes a bit floury, but I dismiss it thinking that that taste might cook out or something. Mirielle slides them into the oven and sets the timer for 40 minutes.

We go to the living room and mindlessly crochet and knit anxiously waiting for the timer to go off. Ding! We rush once again back into the kitchen and take the cookies out and put them on the stained potholders. Annalise snakes her way around us and tries to take one, but we say no because it is too hot. Once the cookies are cool enough to grab, we each take one and stuff it in our mouths. We all simultaneously spit them out. They were as hard as a rock, maybe even harder. They taste like floury, eggy lumps and looked more like dried mud balls than cookies.

I sigh and say, "We probably should have just followed the recipe, huh?"

The girls, defeated, nod their heads in agreement. Merielle places the cookies on a plate and puts them on the counter. Usually, whenever you put any food on the counter or table, something like 3 million cats will come up and devour it. But this time, one curious cat jumps up, sniffs it, and runs back to where it was napping. We thought maybe one of the girls' brothers might want to try one, but they knew better and stay clear of our cooking when we say we made it without a recipe. It is probably smart of them to do so.... We don't want anybody going to E.R. from food poisoning. We grudgingly start our next task--the mountain of dishes stacked up in their sink. We start scrubbing and rinsing and repeating that over and over again until finally the last dish is left.

We slump down on the couch and think about what we want to do next. We finally decide to paint. We paint all sorts of things, nature scenes, people, abstracts, and even fairies (Annalise did). Soon it was time for me to go home.

"I wonder what we'll bake next time?" Annalise says, and we all give her a dirty look.

So I set off on my bike to home, thinking about how baking cookies could possibly go so wrong.

Shakonnah Gilbert

Hodgdon Middle/High School

Mrs. Harris

Grade 8

Stuck

One cold November day Emily, Olivia, and I were walking through the woods by my house. We were looking for pine cones for a project that we were doing. After we had been walking for

thirty minutes we started to hear strange noises like footsteps and trees moving. We kind of shrugged it off though. Then we saw a little cabin and of course we went to explore it. So we ran to it and what was inside will haunt us forever.

We opened the door and there was a witch! She was really old and hunched over. She turned and moved her hand in a weird manner and the door slammed shut! Then we realized it was really warm all of a sudden. Like I mentioned before, it was really cold that November day. Also that witch was gone. We were really confused so we decided to leave the little cabin. When we walked out it looked like we were at the beach. There was water and sand everywhere. Then I heard from a distance, “Guys, come here there is a wall of glass!” So we all ran over to Emily and sure enough there was glass surrounding us. Then I said, “I know this sounds impossible, but is there any chance we are in a snow globe?” We all looked at each other and screamed!

We had had to plan our great escape. So we started to explore and realized we were in the snow globe that was on my desk! So what we decided to do was we were going to try to knock the globe off the shelf. So we all went to one side and ran to the other, on 3... “1.....2....3!” Then we all ran. We went flipping off my desk. We hit the ground and it shattered into hundreds of tiny little pieces.

Next thing we knew we were on the floor in my bedroom. We all looked at each other for a second and then Olivia said, “We will never ever speak of this to anyone, not even one another.” But sadly, after that we never spoke again. They left my house and never came back. So take my advice, do not go in the little cabin in the woods.

Abigail Reed

PIMS

Mrs. Bates

Grade 6

The Dragon Dagger

Crimson lines the coat of the guard assigned to me. Gold buttons line the front of his coat. As we walk through the crowded marketplace thoughts of civilians swirl through my head. “What is *she* doing here?” “Doesn’t she know her parents will find her?”. I do know my parents will find me but even a brief reprieve from the royal court is a luxury.

The thoughts of the people in the court are cruel and filled with greed. No one knows I can hear their thoughts as that would cause a panic. Though it’s extremely amusing to respond to my peoples thoughts and see the confusion in their eyes. But today I’m on a mission. Today I’m going to find my thief.

I lost my prized dagger two moons ago and today I escaped the palace to find it. I browse through the thoughts of my people until I see my dagger in the hands of a woman with hair that shines red in the sunlight. I see her step into the shadows and her hair turns brown, her eyes seem filled with aggression. She is wearing assassins clothing and I can tell she’s standing by the inner wall on the outskirts of the city. I send my guard to shop for a bow and arrows that I don’t need while I run off to find the girl who stole my dragon dagger.

As I reach the spot at the wall where she stood in the shadows a rock falls from the top of the wall. I draw my sword and face the woman standing on the wall. As I face her she contorts her

face into what I realize is a sickeningly sweet grin then she begins to laugh. “What could possibly be funny to you?” I yell to the woman.

She drops to the ground in front of me and doesn’t even wince on impact. My sword drops in my surprise. She smiles wider at my confusion and begins to speak, “Oh princess, I didn’t believe you’d be dumb enough to come here.” She looks at me and I see a flash of pity and regret in her eyes. Then I hear someone running towards me and then I feel a flash of pain. Then it all goes black.

Sometime later I regain some consciousness and I hear the woman sigh. She speaks to me with true sadness in her voice, “Oh princess, I’m truly sorry but I can’t help you yet. If I don’t bring you to them they’ll wage war on the kingdom,” I hear her stand and prepare to exit what I think is the carriage we’re in. Then she says something I can’t forget, “And we can’t have that, can we Tempest?” She says this with a laugh and I wonder how she knew my real name.

Marigan McBreairty

PIMS

Ms. Henne

Grade 7

The Safe Haven

Adeline had just finally slipped into unconsciousness, after a long night of staring at the ceiling, when she started to stir.

She squinted as she blinked awake to the bright boiling light of the flames a few feet from her face. Bolting upright, she reached down for her leg, as the flames had licked at it just seconds before. Adeline cried out in pain, trying to not look at the blister infected gash on her calve.

“MOM! DAD!” She screamed in agony, but there was no response.

The flames threatened her; inching closer by the second.

“MO-!” She tried again, but was cut off when a large black figure emerged from the flames.

Adeline still pushed and rubbed around her blistered leg, still not taking her eyes off of the figure. She honestly and truthfully didn’t care who it was, if he was her savior she would be thankful.

The figure dressed in a black fire-proof suit, reached through the flames, carefully preserving her leg, picked her up and trudged back through the fire. She remembered where the safe place was in case there was *another* massive wildfire; just like there was ten years or so ago, but she had no idea if she could make it there or not.

“Where’s my...mom?” The little girl huffed between breaths.

He handed her off to another person, which then started walking her to the shore. There seemed to be an extensive ship that had docked right off the pier.

The night sky was pitch black, and stars were fogged over by the wildfires that engulfed the sea side town.

With every step her savior took, her calve seemed to throb more and more. Every single cell of her leg aching, and it felt like she was still on fire; slowly burning.

After it felt like minutes of walking through the ship, the man laid her down softly.

“Look, we are gonna be sailing shortly. Once everyone has been evacuated from their homes, and moved into this ship we are going to sail to the safe place. We’ll get a nurse to look at that

leg of your's." "Ok." She winced. The tears slowed a little, but not by much. Every part of her leg was burning, and she couldn't stand it.

A lady walked in with a tray that contained a series of syringes.

Adeline squinted her eyes open to get a good look at the girl, but soon closed them, remembering her gravely injured leg. Her eyelids began to feel heavy, and her breathing slowed, she so dearly wanted to go to sleep; at least then it wouldn't hurt anymore.

"That's right. Just go to sleep." Those were the last words she heard before her breathing slowed, and she slipped into a light sleep.

The next time she opened her eyes, the room was slightly brighter than before. Through the windows, a misty morning sunshine crept through the fog. Adeline's leg felt slightly less painful than before. It was wrapped in a cast-like white cloth.

She slowly sat up, really examining the room now. It was somewhat big, but she was startled by the amount of people that were in the room with her. Almost everyone that laid on a bed was injured in some way. Everyone was still in a deep sleep.

The same lady who had taken care of her before, had just re-entered the room, with a tray full of food in her hand. A few slices of bread, and pieces of a cut up apple.

"Would you like to go on a walk? I'll do the walking of course, I can push you in this wheelchair." She motioned to a nice black wheelchair over in the corner.

"Um...I guess." Adeline wryly answered, and the nurse carried her to the chair.

It was a chilly, yet still morning. The waves were quiet, the sun just barely peeked through the clouds, there was a little moisture in the air. It felt like a summer morning.

"Are my parents on board?" Adeline wondered aloud. She could not help but worry for them, and worry for herself.

"Oh, well if I'm right...and your name is Adeline...I believe your parents...didn't make it out in time." The lady spoke slowly, in a calm voice. Yet you could tell she felt despair for the poor little girl.

Adeline didn't respond, she just looked down at her own trembling soot covered hands, and tried to realize and get over the fact that she was indeed now alone. She felt tears rising to her eyes, and blinked them away before she created a scene. The little girl was only ten years old, did she really have to go through life being referred to as...*orphan*? She found the word repulsive.

The nurse pushed her around the deck for a few more minutes, and then eventually found a comfortable spot to sit with Adeline beside her.

"So-" The lady was cut off when a man in some sort of army uniform appeared from around the corner.

"Miss! I have news from the captain, he tells me we have been searching for hours. There is no sign of the safe place!" He paused taking in a few breaths from his run. The lady stared at him, no expression on her face. Adeline was confused by this man's words.

"The island...it's gone." The soldier glanced out at the never ending ocean. Adeline felt her heart drop to her stomach. *No island?* She thought.

It took her a few moments to realize why the nurse had just left her on the deck alone, but she came to realize it.

There was *no* safe haven. There probably *never* was.

Gone and Never Returning

Gone. Everything, I mean. Destroyed. I take a few steps forward and I am in what used to be my home. I swallow hard and take a deep breath in and out, quiet enough so that no one can hear. I try not to show how scared I am. Scared about what is going to happen to us. But, I have to be strong for Tilly.

Tilly is my everything. She is my little sister after all. Tilly is the sweetest person you will ever meet. She gets that from my mother. You can tell it's her from behind because of her light blond hair. I have never seen anything like it. Her walk is a dead give away too. It's like she is strutting, but also walking with confidence and beauty. She doesn't walk like that anymore.

I feel Tilly's hand tighten its grip on mine as we walk to our now destroyed dining room. I am suddenly taken back to the Thanksgiving dinners. You could smell the roast beef and cookies for miles. We had people lining up at our door every year. My mother was a kindhearted person, so every person left with some roast beef, a roll, and a cookie. That's why we never had any leftovers. In fact, most people got their Thanksgiving dinners from us.

Now the only thing you could smell was the smoke coming from the ashes. I turn and look at our old living room. I quickly imagine it the way it used to be and imagine my mother sitting there on the couch reading her favorite book, *How to Catch a Mockingbird*.

They say she is dead. My mom. Me and Tilly were out at the market getting food for the night's dinner when the fire happened. One of my old teachers, Mrs. Belsh, came rushing into the store yelling our names. When she found us she told us what had happened and hurried us to her car. When we arrived at our house it was destroyed and the doctors were carrying away my mother's body.

I carry my eyes from my mother to the new bookshelf she had just bought. I look at where the floor used to be. Where our 20 year old rug lay. Then I see a light. There can't be a light, everything in the house was destroyed and burned.

I rush towards the light, forgetting Tilly's hand is still latched to mine. "Ow!" She screams from behind me. I turn around and see her sitting down on a burnt piece of wood, balling.

"Oh Tilly...I am so sorry." I say wiping her tears away. "Why did this have to happen to us Margie." She says. All of a sudden I feel warm inside when she says my name. It gives me a sense of how things used to be. When Tilly was three she started calling me Margie instead of Margaret. The feeling has been a stranger to me since the fire.

"I don't know why this happened to us." I say. "Mom always said everything happens for a reason. We should try to look on the bright side right?"

"What bright side?! What is going to happen to us Margie? Mom is gone." She cries. I never thought about what my 6 year old little sister would be thinking of what was going to happen to us.

"I don't know what is going to happen to us Tilly...I can't predict the future." I say wanting all the answers, but again coming up empty handed. Finally, Tilly stops crying now and stands up.

"I just have one more thing to ask." She says. "What was it that you needed to go to?" She suddenly reminds me of the shiny thing I saw near the old bookshelf.

"Uhhh...I am not exactly sure. Just wait here for a second." I say as I start toward the broken, burnt, and now demolished bookshelf. I look around the spot where I saw the flashy thing. When I get there all I can see is burnt wood and ashes. I probably just saw something weird and with

everything going on I am probably going a little crazy. I turn thinking that I am completely crazy when I see the shiny object again. I hurry toward it and send my hand to the ground not looking where it is going. I move my hand from left to right until I find the object. Once I touch it and feel it, I never want to let go of it until I find out what It is.

I grab a hold of the item and pull my hand out with it. As soon as I see it I want to scream and yell and cry. I swallow hard again.

It is a lighter.

Madelyn Waugh

PIMS

Mrs. Cheney

Grade 7

A Heart's Desire

Ciara and Klare are walking home after a long and exhausting day at school and basketball practice. Their backs are at the point of breaking from all the work and stress put on them. It feels like they are holding the world on their shoulders but little do they know life is about to get a lot more complicated.

“Hi there, I’m Ciara and this is my partner in crime Klare.” Both girls giggle with excitement as they are about to shoot their new basketball tutorial that they are doing for a school project.

“We are about to show you some of our favorite ball handling drills...” says Klare, although Ciara didn’t hear anything else Klare was saying because she suddenly became oddly dizzy and then all of a sudden all she could see was black.

She didn’t know what was happening until she heard Klare talking. It was less like talking and more of a mumble because she was sobbing her eyes out. Although Ciara could only make out a little of what her best friend was saying, all she understood was that she had passed out and hit her head on the crystal orb that was in Klare’s bedroom. “Klare,” whispered Ciara in such a small voice it sounded like it was a mile away. “Klare” repeated Ciara from the hard hospital bed. Next thing she knew her best friend was right beside her.

As she was laying there in her best friend’s arms for what seemed like an hour, she finally asked “where am I... what happened”? She reached to rub her head because she had a splitting headache. As she touched, all she felt was a bandage wrapped around her head. Her parents were next to her explaining what happened. “Sweetheart” they said, “You passed out while you were doing your video and you hit your head in the glass orb that was next to you” said her mom through sobs.

As long days passed in the hospital she began to feel better. With her best friend by her side she knew she could get through anything. When all the tests were done, and she was finally ready to leave the hospital the doctors told her her biggest fear. She wouldn’t be able to play basketball for a while due to her concussion. This was one of the worst parts about being injured she thought. She began to complain to her best friend how unfair it was that she wasn’t able to participate, but she quickly realized that something was a little bit off. She was able to come up with new plays and new strategies in her head for the team. It seemed as though basketball was the easiest thing in the world and only thing that made sense to her. Basketball has been her

escape from life and all her problems, but now it just seemed somehow easier. She could see the plays all playing out without even being on the court.

As the weeks went on she was finally cleared to play again. This was a big relief for her because she had missed the game and her passion. When she was back on the court one day at practice she blew everybody's mind with her new found skill. Now it was just her and the defender and it was as if all her problems drifted away. Her first game back they were playing their rival team. This is very stressful for Ciara and she was extremely nervous, but from the first moment she stepped on the court all her worries drifted away and she knew it would be okay.

As she played the game, it just seemed so much easier than she had remembered. She was able to handle the ball better, shoot better and she somehow knew exactly what the other team was going to do and always found a way around it. Because of her new found talent she led her team to victory. After the game as she was talking to Klare she explained this new phenomenon. Ciara realized that this was exactly what she had always wanted. To be better at seeing the court and understanding the other teams moves. She thought of this as her heart's greatest desire, but, Klare being Klare and joking around said "maybe when you fell on the orb, it gave you "magical powers". This made a lot of sense to Ciara, and actually thought of it as the truth. So this became her answer to her new found powers.

As the next few games passed she knew exactly what was going to happen and always had the answer. By this time Klare had become a believer of Ciara's powers. As she led her team to victory many more times she found herself getting ready for the championship games. Her newfound skills had all the opposing teams worrying about having to face her. This feeling was like nothing she had ever experienced before. It's like everything was going her way and there was no way she could be happier. Until something unexpected happened.

Ciara was in her championship game when she got blocked unexpectedly. She fell and hit her head hard on the floor. She blacked out for a little bit, and when she woke up she was in the locker room with her team all around her. She had that same splitting headache as before and now it was as if all her powers were gone. Out of frustration she got up, it hurt but she didn't care. She grabbed a basketball and went out to the court. She tried all her new fancy hanging moves but she couldn't do any of it anymore. She realized she had lost her powers that the orb had given her. This really took some time to sink in, that she wasn't the best anymore and she's normal again. Then one of the most heartbreaking things happened, she realized they had lost the championship game.

The next day at school, she was like another regular teenager, so much stress and insecurities. The next day at school, she was like another regular teenager, so much stress and insecurities. She felt as if she wasn't special anymore, but at least she still had her best friend. That is one thing she knew she knew she would never lose.

Rusty's Rise to Power

100,500,000 million years ago, I was clawing my way out of my eggshell; one of the toughest challenges any dinosaur ever faces. Some never make it. Finally, the sunlight split my eyelids open and the smell of dirt entered my nose as the tough shell of my egg cracked open. We were all named something easy based on our feather tint. My oldest brother, Dune, got his name from his pale yellow protofeathers on his body. My oldest sibling, Sunbeam, got her name from her arm and tail feathers that were only slightly brighter than her protofeathers. The rusty red feathers on my arms and tip of my tail and rusty red protofeathers running down my neck and back gave me my name. I was Rusty.

The only rule that we had to abide by: you were born with teeth, you were born able to hunt on your own. It was awful. Lucky for me, I was just old enough to be accepted by Sunbeam and Dune. We hunted little mammals together, play-fought, and bossed around our younger siblings. However, I had to learn to deal with the bad. I was the youngest of our group, so I was bossed around almost as much as the younger Velociraptors. Even if I was the one to bring down the prey, Sunbeam ate first because she was the oldest. Then Dune, and if there was enough left, me.

In a few short weeks, we were expected to learn everything from hunting by catching small bugs and mammals, to attack and defense by play-fighting. Our mother only looked after us for a little while before her maternal instincts wore off. Then, we were food for everyone. If you refused to leave the nest, that's what you were: food. My older siblings took play-fighting too seriously, in my opinion. They would leave wounds on me, that during the fights they would kick sand into.

"Toughen up! It's a little sand, Rusty!" They would say, without remorse. "Do you want to be a snack for Tarbosaurus?" But I couldn't beat them, no matter how hard I tried, I wasn't as strong as them. It was after one of those fights that a thought popped into my head. A thought that was so good it could womp both of them and leave them regretting calling me lunch! I wasn't tougher than them, but I was definitely smarter.

"Alright, come at me," Dune taunted. Sunbeam snapped at him and gave him a "*think, Stupid!*" look. I wasn't going to move until one of them came after me. Without warning, Dune sprang into action. I sidestepped out of the way and quickly grappled onto his back with my three inch long retractable claws. He brainlessly charged and squirmed as I latched on tighter. He grabbed me and threw me to the hard ground. He charged me as I jumped to the side of the towering conifer I'd been standing in front of. BONK! Immediately he hit the massive tree and was out. I secured his jaw with my foot in case he was faking.

"Now you, Sunbeam," I antagonized. Sunbeam was a bit smarter than Dune, but reacted the same way to defeat. She charged and I dodged and clawed her. That's how it was for a long time. It took a while, but she caught on and jumped to the side with me and just like that, I was pinned. She raised her foot to give me a good kick to the face with her sharp sickle claw, but this time, she got it right back!

"Rrrrrsss," she grumbled in defeat as Dune stood beside her. From that day forth, they looked at me with expressions somewhat of power and respect and now there was always a little food left for me.

Several weeks later and having nearly doubled in size, it was our first time hunting bigger prey. "Flatten your feathers, Rusty," Dune whispered to me. We'd been tracking another small dinosaur for a while now and finally, we saw it; a Shuvuuia. It wasn't much smaller than me, but

bigger than the mammals that we hunted in our youth. The oblivious dino had no idea that we were stalking it. Soon, it perked its head in our direction and ran away.

“DUNE! KEEP YOUR FEATHERS DOWN!” Sunbeam screeched.

“They’ve been down the whole time!” he roared back. Suddenly, a sound arose from camp, like a really deep, loud cry.

“GUYS, OUR SIBLINGS!” I yelled, having realized what was going on. We were taking care of our younger siblings for one more feeding before they would leave us, but they were being attacked. We hurried, but by the time we got to the nest, it was too late. A Tarbosaurus blundered off, leaving a little blood trail behind it. Footprints, a lot of little ones and some really big ones, were scattered everywhere. The three of us gazed upon the evidence in the sand that indicated that our younger siblings were chased and ripped apart by the wretched Tarbosaurus.

“Predators know we’re here now. We can’t stay here,” Sunbeam stated. “Wait. *Sniff! Sniff!* I smell something.” We followed her to the edge of a valley where a Protoceratops was casually grazing. Despite being an herbivore, it’s very dangerous. It would be hard to bring him down.

“What are we going to do?” Dune asked with a confused look.

“Take it down and kill it, obviously,” Sunbeam remarked. “Alright, lead the way, Rusty.” The sound of my name being called in that sentence was unreal. *Me? No, there was no way.*

“No, this is a mistake! Why not you-or-or m-m-maybe Dune,” I stammered.

“You’ve outsmarted us time and time again. We’re gonna need you against that beastie!” she said. Dune lashed out at her for saying that I did something better than them. “DUNE!” she quickly snapped as he backed away. “To be a coordinated pack, we need a good plan. For a good plan, we need a smart leader,” she announced as a proud smile cracked upon her face. Not only was I leading this hunt, but I was chosen as alpha! Keeping a humble face through this was hard, but I had to. “Rusty, *you* will lead us in this hunt and in all others to come. Rusty, *you* are our new alpha!” Even Dune’s anger seemed to melt away as Sunbeam lowered her head and let me pass her. I let go of my emotionless expression and let a smile creep up onto my face. I was alpha. I was in charge. It was now my responsibility to lead and protect them.

Ashlyn York

SACS

Mrs. Russell

Grade 7

A Sorceress of Sorts

I laughed, pushing his arm a little. He smiled, pulling me back in. He grabbed my hand and we continued to walk. My other best friend groaned.

“Will you two just get a room already?” She said, hitting Jay’s back. He laughed, grabbing her fist and pulling her into a hug.

“Come one, Soph. You know it’s not like that.” He pulled her chin up, looking straight into her eyes to get the message across. She pulled back, shoving him away. He smirks, using his magic to pull her closer.

“Oh come on Jay! That’s not fair!” She cries out, pretending to pout. I laugh and push him away from her.

“Come on guys, I don’t want to third wheel today.” I flick Sophie’s forehead, sticking my tongue out at her. She rolls her eyes, linking her arm through mine. I pulled her forward, grabbing Jay’s hand. I drag them into school, laughing as they groan.

“What if we just... skipped school today?” Jay asks, turning back around.

“Not so fast!” I call, stopping him with a quick spell. “If I have to suffer through Mr. Alfhid’s monologues, so do you!”

“Come on Lia, just for today?” Jay gives me his best puppy eyes, using his nickname for me. I smirk, wordlessly pulling him to class. I wave as Sophie heads to her Divination class. She’s a seer, while Jay is a mage, and I am... a sorceress of sorts. I have the qualities of a mage, a warlock, and a sorcerer. While these terms were usually used for male wizards, they were more like... *specialties*. A mage is more elemental. Fire, water, plants, and sometimes even electricity. A warlock is usually used as a “male witch”, but it is more... dark. Hence *war*-lock. Dark magic, shadows, and demons. A sorcerer is known for their power and knowledge. I was somewhat lacking in the second part, so they couldn’t really call me a sorceress *yet*. I was the first one in *years*, so they just decided to put me through *all* the classes... fun.

As we took our seats, Mr. Alfhid called my name for attendance.

“Cerelia Asger?” He looked around, expecting me to be late.

“Here!” I raised my hand, and he raised an eyebrow. Heh. He was no doubt shocked that I was here (somewhat) on time.

“Ah, I see that Mr. Cicero has decided to join us as well.” He commented, erasing the “absent” mark under Jay’s name. Jay rolled his eyes, propping his feet up on my desk. I shoved them off, smacking his arm. Mr. Alfhid gave us another once-over, and then turned around to his whiteboard. Yes. A school of magic, and they *still* chose to use whiteboards and textbooks. As Mr. Alfhid began telling the same story for the millionth time, I noticed something outside the window. I nudged Jay, pointing at it. It was a black cat with shocking green eyes. It seemed to wink, before disappearing again.

Just then, Mrs. Auspex burst through the door.

“Cerelia! I need you for a second.” She huffed, out of breath. I frowned, walking out of the classroom. As I came out in the hall, I saw Cate. Ugh, *Cate*. Her parents were *so sure* that she was going to be *such* an amazing sorceress, they named her after Hecate. All they *actually* did was give her an ego the size of Olympus. I left the door open in case I needed to escape.

“What do you want?” I asked Cate, knowing that she was the reason I was here. Mrs. Auspex frowned.

“Well, Cerelia, Cate had a vision...” She trailed off, looking at Cate for permission. She nodded, looking down. “I just wanted to warn you-”

She was interrupted by the classroom’s wall exploding, the glass and bricks flying towards us. A man with dark hair, and the same electrifying eyes as the cat, waltzed in. He smirks, walking towards us. He steps over students, not paying any attention to them. Mrs. Auspex pushes me farther down the hall. She closes the classroom door, looking me straight in the eyes.

“Run.” She whispered, blocking the door. I shook my head, trying to push her out of the way.

“Jay’s in there.” I couldn’t just leave him to whatever Mrs. Auspex wanted to warn me about. I opened the door. Stepping in, I closed the door behind me. I got ready to fight, assuming an offensive stance. The guy laughed, his eyes flashing with amusement. He went to step over another student, but they grabbed his ankle. He stopped for a second, looking down. Jay. I

gasped. If this guy was as dangerous as Mrs. Auspex thought, Jay *really* shouldn't have done that. He yanked his ankle away, his smirk gone. He turned Jay's face with his foot, looking into his eyes. He scoffed, deciding that Jay wasn't worth it. He continued towards me. I prepared a bolt of electricity, getting ready to hit him with it. He just laughed and... bowed?

"Are you that happy to see me...?" He started, his voice deep and intimidating. "Little sister."

Josiphine Tarr

SACS

Mrs. Russell

Grade 8

The Castle and the Oak

A cold wind blew, the trees swaying and creaking. Freezing air leaked through the stone castle walls. The moon had a pure white glow that night, giving off a strong eeriness through the darkness. The only warmth that I could notice was coming from my best friend, Peter, who was sleeping next to me. Suddenly, I heard a loud crack, and then crumbling stone, "We're under attack! Awake! Attackers! ". I quickly jumped to my feet. I shook Peter awake and told him what was happening, "We need to go! We have to help!". Peter blinked a few times and whispered groggily, "Okay, I'm up, James. Where do we go?"

A man then came crashing toward me saying, "Quick! You must get out there and fight!" the man said, "Their army is ten thousand strong!"

"Who is attacking? The men from the east?"

"No," the man whispered, "The Wild Men." When I reached the top, only then did I realize how much ten thousand really was. Peter grabbed a sword and helmet, then came to stand beside me, "Don't you dare think of going down with the foot soldiers!" I said. But then, a new wave of archers came to our aid, separating me from Peter, "Peter! Peter! Where are you?" I screamed. Desperate, I climbed up a rack of weapons and jumped over to the side of the lookout tower. I shimmied up until I was slightly higher than all of the men, and then jumped over all of them, landing and rolling unsuccessfully, twisting my ankle, and smashing my elbow into my hip. But, I got up, unfazed by the land, only thinking of Peter. I dashed to the edge of the wall on the castle and saw a group of foot soldiers, and in that group of soldiers was Peter. Arrows from the goblins shot into the group, not missing one shot. The last one standing was my best friend, as I stood there unable to help, I watched a goblin pull back the bowstring and fire. And as the arrow pierced his chest, I thought of all of the memories we had shared together. Tears ran down my cheeks and mixed with the blood, sweat, and dust everywhere else, as Peter fell to his knees, and then on his back, I saw him look past the arrow, past the fighting, and just at me. He mouthed four words before he closed his eyes and his head fell to the ground, and then he was motionless, as if he were sleeping, just like an hour ago in that old bedroom.

"I love you too, Peter."

What happened next was a blur. I remember thousands of riders coming in from behind the Wild Men and destroying nearly the entire army before the goblins retreated, and left our kingdom forever. Before anyone could take Peter's body, I slowly and gently lifted him from the ground. I walked for many miles carrying him over my shoulders, tears running down my cheeks. An hour later, I came to the largest oak in the forest. We had spent most of our days

climbing that tree, laughing and talking, not a care in the world. There was no better place to bury him. I started digging through the silky, moist dirt with my bare hands, my fingernails soon stuffed with the soil. After hours of digging, I laid Peter's head down to rest forever in that place. Then, on the ground, I realized what was there. Hundreds of acorns. I searched through them trying to find the perfect one. I soon found a small one, just like Peter. I set it gently in his open palm, and closed his fingers over it. I buried him and left, telling myself that I would visit that place once every year on the day he died.

When I returned the next year, a tree sprout was in the place I laid Peter to rest, and the next year it was a little bit bigger. That tree went on to be the biggest in the forest, the one that my best friend lay under. And as long as that tree lived, so did Peter.

Henry Robinson

Mapleton Elementary

Ms. Black

Grade 5

**Feelings,
Dreams and
Reflections**

Love

Do you think the world needs more love right now? I do. Sometimes we forget how much those little things mean like opening a door or just smiling at someone. Remember those little things are acts of love, and love can change the world! I know I am just one person, but together we can make the world a better place. I am important to a lot of people, I bet you are, too.

We can think of love as a noun or a verb. The feeling of love is the noun. The action of showing love is the verb. They are both very important to everyone. Here is how the verbs go in my life.

I am a daughter who offers to make supper when I know my mom is tired. I am a granddaughter who bakes, sews and scrapbooks with a Mem who loves to teach. I am a niece who loves to spend time with faraway aunts and uncles, because I know our visits don't happen often. I am a cat owner told in "meow" that I give the best belly rubs. I am a citizen of the world who picks up trash and doesn't litter. I am a cousin who shares outgrown toys, snuggles, and reads. I am a friend who laughs at jokes, gives compliments and is always there to help. I am a great granddaughter who visits and listens to French even if I do not understand. I am a student who is engaged and invested, honest, and responsible. Finally, I am a child of God. Showing love as a child of God means that I do all of these things.

Showing love is more than saying "I love you". Sure that means something, but when you show love it means a LOT more. Like I said before, the world needs more love and you are just the start of it!

Ella Dubois

Fort Kent Elementary School

Mrs. O'Clair

Grade 4

My Diary

Hi I'm Lila. I am 14, and I go to a fancy school called Good Haven. You might be wondering why I am telling you all of this. Well, there is this girl and she hates me. Jessie and I used to be best friends until sixth grade. We got into a huge fight, and my mom and dad had just divorced so I was going through a hard time. She was very supportive until she met Chloe, the new girl. I had not been spending a lot of time with Jessie because of what was happening in my life. She assumed I did not like her anymore so she started to hang out with Chloe. Later that year she and Jessie started bullying me.

Now it's the first day of freshman year and right off the bat Jessie comes up to me.

"Hey," Jessie said.

"Hi, what do you want?"

"Ugh, I hate you," Jessie said.

OK that was awkward. At least this year she did not humiliate me in front of the whole school. Last year she dumped her lunch on me in the cafeteria in front of everyone. I was so embarrassed. Anyway, after a weird start to the day I had to find my best friend as soon as I could. Kaylie is usually with me but today I had my first period class without her, and during gym I found her in the locker room snacking on the teachers' donuts.

"What the heck are you doing?"

"What does it look like I'm doing," she said.

“Eating the donuts AGAIN. You know they're going to catch you at one point and you are going to get in trouble,” I said.

“Whatever they're good, and I can't resist myself OK.”

“Well, anyway guess what Jesse did today,” I asked.

“Humiliate you in front of the whole class?”

“No, she came up to me and said I hate you. It was so weird.”

“That is not an insult, so what did you say.”

“Well, I didn't say anything”

“Why not?” Kaylie asked.

“I don't know, I just didn't want to make her angry”

Later that night I came home and was silent. I started to write in my diary, and I always start out with, *Hi I'm Lila*. I hope that maybe someday someone will find this and make it into a movie or something, my document of what I have done in this life.

Hi I'm Lila. Today I headed to the library bright and early. As I walked over, the sun woke up and started shining on my face. The wind started to twirl around the trees and the yellow tulips in front of my neighbors' house started to peek their little heads out. Today was the perfect day. Hopefully I won't run into Jessie and the day really will be perfect. When I got to the library I saw Jessie. Great, the one person who could ruin my perfect day is here. I tried to sneak away but Jessie stopped me.

“Where are you going little one - daycare?”

“Really that's the best you got?” I said.

“Whatever, stupid it's the morning and I haven't had coffee yet.”

“Lame excuse,” I said.

“Whatever, I don't want to hang with you, bye. Ugh.” Jessie said.

After that conversation all I could think was something must be wrong with Jessie. I had to get to the bottom of it. I followed her trail by the smell of expensive perfume and her Louis Vuitton shoe prints on the new pavement. When I turned the corner, I saw her texting. I turned around for a second to see the mailman riding by. When I looked back, she was gone. While heading back home I had the brilliant idea to look at her location on Snapchat. We were still friends. I guess she forgot to delete me. She was at the old mall. I called Kaylie and told her to meet me there.

When I got there I saw Kaylie hiding behind a parked car. Even though the mall is old, people still come to shop. It has turned into a kind of thrift shop. It's where I get most of my clothing. No Louis Vuitton shoes for me. We walked a little closer to the store and saw Jessie arguing with her parents. While walking by she made a mean face towards Jessie and placed her phone somewhere so it could listen in on Jessie's conversation.

“You can't get a divorce, how am I gonna see Dad if you do?”

“Sweetie look, it's what's best for the family. Your dad and I just aren't compatible anymore and you'll get to see your dad plenty. You can visit him over the holidays and we're not going to split the three of you up ok. Only your dad is leaving.”

“It's just not fair. I should get some say in this.”

“Look honey the decision has been made I'm sorry but you're just going to have to figure out how to accept the fact that your father and I are splitting up.”

“Ugh, I hate you both. I can't believe you're doing this to me.”

When both Jessie and her parents left Kaylie ran out of her hiding spot and grabbed her phone. She brought it back to me and we listened to Jessie's augment. After they finished speaking, we could hear Jessie stomp off angrily.

"I don't know what to say. I feel so bad for her. Should we say something to her or not?"

"Are you kidding, you went through the exact same thing and what did she do? Nothing - that's what."

"Well she did not know how it felt now she does and I have gone through it. Maybe I can coach her through it I guess," I said.

"Lila, she literally ended your friendship because of this situation. Do you seriously think that she would let you talk to her?"

"I don't know but I'm gonna try."

Later that week I approached Jesasie and asked her how she was. I did not want to just come up and say, "I heard that your parents are divorcing." If I did she would know I was following her.

When I asked she actually answered and said, "Not too good actually. Look, I know we are not the best of friends and I am mean to you, but I really need to talk to you. Is that ok?"

"Sure I can do that," I responded. "So what's up?" I asked

At this point Jessie told me all about the divorce and how she felt. Then I gave her tips and told her what to do and how to act. I also told her how I felt when it happened to me.

Since then Jessie and I have rebuilt our friendship. Kaylie hangs out with us and we have even started our own club at Good Haven called the Support Club for any students that need help. I run the emotional aspect and try to help students when they are going through a hard time. I am pretty good at it, too. Kaylie is in charge of snacks and setting up meetings, and Jessie helps people figure out how to dress better. I don't know how people thought they could come here for that, but Jessie loves it so I'm not complaining. My life is perfect now. We're all friends and we are happy. That is until the new bully, Ella, arrived. Well that story is for another time.

Zoë Daigle

Valley Rivers Middle School

Mr. Lynn Grade 7

Face The Truth

Our lives seem to have infinite possibilities, the choices limitless, but the truth is that our path lies one way or the other. We'll either go down the path of life or the path of despair. Whatever happens, life will still go on. And the cold bitter truth of it all is that the path of despair wasn't the reason your life was wasted. It was you who did this to yourself.

I awaken abruptly by the sound of my phone going off. *Did my alarm go off? Is it really 7 A.M. already?*

I check the time. *It's 2:15 in the morning!?*

On my phone I see a missed call from Brad. *That must have been what I heard...*

He then calls again, and I answer.

"H-" my voice sounds shriveled. I clear my throat and start again. "Hello?"

"Hey Mia, it's me Brad..."

"Brad, do you know what time it is?!" I knew he was an early bird, but this is too early.

“Yeah, yeah I know. Listen. Something happened. Something bad.” His voice sounds frightened. My heart sinks. Brad is known to cause trouble.

“Okay, calm down. Tell me what happened.”

“Well, I was with some guys and w-” he pauses. “We robbed a convenience store...and-”

“And what Brad!”

“We set it on fire!” He cries.

“What the heck, Brad! What were you thinking?” I couldn’t believe he did that. I’m just disgusted by him!

“I know, but that’s not the worst part. There was someone inside. We saw a man through the window, screaming. He couldn’t get out...he died in the fire...” I felt numb. I didn’t know what to say! Brad killed someone! Not on purpose, but still! My teeth started to chatter.

“Mia. Listen. Please. Don’t tell a living soul. For me, okay?” I didn’t know what to say, but I definitely didn’t want to lose my friend.

“Okay.” I reluctantly agreed.

After that call with Brad, I couldn’t fall back asleep. Thoughts kept running through my mind. *I can’t tell anyone, or they’ll take Brad away. It was just a mistake! No one has to know...*

It was finally morning. It seemed to take forever for the night to pass.

I did my usual morning routine: ate breakfast, got dressed, brushed my teeth, that kind of stuff.

When I got to school, I think my heart stopped. There were policemen surrounding the entire school. Everywhere I went, I felt like I was being watched. *I should just fess up while the police are here. No! I can’t. I’m doing this for Brad.*

Speak of the devil; I pass by Brad in the hall. He looks at me and gives me a friendly wink. He mouths something to me. I make out the words, “Thank you!”

Brad is an amazing person. He’s sweet to me and really funny. He’s a big jokester who teases me alot. But most of all, he cares for me. I’ve known him since forever. When we met, we were instantly drawn to each other. He always had a band-aid on his knee complimented by his messy, curly hair.

As kids, we’d always swung on the creaky old swings on the playground. We were just happy, blissful kids without a single care in the world. All we knew at the time was that we were having fun.

But now look where we are. Brad is a criminal. Where did things go wrong for us?

I feel a light tap on my shoulders. I turn around to see a police officer. Tall and piercing.

“Hello, miss. I am Officer Evans. May I speak with you?” I nod my head. Officer Evans leads me to an empty classroom. I sit down as he closes the door. *Does he know it’s Brad? I can’t let him take him away from me!*

As standard protocol, I am asked to answer personal information. He then looks at me with his sharp, hurtful eyes.

“Do you know anything about what happened last night, on April 17?”

“No.” I answer quickly. I’m lying through my teeth. I wonder if he can tell.

“Are you sure? Maybe you know something about it? From a *friend*?” Officer Evans looks at me intensely, like he’s trying to read my mind.

“I know nothing at all.” That was not true at all. I knew everything.

He probably suspects Brad already. Evans must have asked the principal who Brad is friends with. Looks like Officer Evans is trying to get information from me.

“Look, Miss Mia. If you do know something, you should tell me. When somebody commits a crime, they should atone for their sins.

“Last night an innocent man was killed. That was not fair, he did nothing wrong. The people who caused the fire that killed him are currently walking away free. That's not what justice is. Everyone's actions have consequences no matter who they are. It's their fault for committing the crime in the first place.

“We must face the truth, no matter how painful it may be. Face the truth, Mia and prove justice for all!”

I stay silent and fiddle with my bracelet.

“Call me, when you're ready to talk.” Evans hands me his card. On it is his number. I shove the card in my jean pocket.

The rest of that day is just a blur. I couldn't stop thinking about what happened.

Brad seems very relaxed and does not once mention the crime. I guess he trusts me enough to keep it a secret.

After school I ruminate in my bedroom. *Should I tell the truth? Oh, I don't know what to do! It's one or the other. Tell the truth or protect my friend.*

Officer Evans was right, though. It's not fair that an innocent man died and the killers go away free. But it was an accident. *Oh! What should I choose?*

I took a deep breath in and realized, *This doesn't concern you. This is Brad's problem. I shouldn't have to keep this a secret. Brad did this to himself. Like Evans said - face the truth.*

The truth is, Brad robbed a store, committed arson, and killed a man who had his own life. Everyone's actions have consequences, even though I knew Brad for a long time and I love him with all my heart, he has to learn his lesson. I'm sorry, Brad. I can't carry your burden anymore.

I look in my pocket to find Evans' number. I dial it. Every ring, my heart skips a beat.

“Hello? This is Officer Evans.” *Goodbye Brad, you're going to hate me for this, but I'm facing the brutal honest truth.* I take a deep breath and say:

“I'm ready to tell the truth.”

Halle Michaud

Valley Rivers Middle School

Mr. Lynn

Grade 8

The Jump Scare

Once upon a time there was a little girl named Aubrey. She was 6 years old. It happened to be the night before the first day of 1st grade, and she was so excited for what was to come the next morning. Her parents tucked her into bed and said, “Good night Aubrey, don't let the bed bugs bite!” She was out like a light, and soon, she fell into a deep sleep. AHHHHH!!! She was jumped and it scared her. She wondered who had jumped her. She looked behind, and beside herself, but no one was there. She kept doing what she had been doing and BOOM, she got jumped again and it was even worse this time. She was home alone and she was soooo scared! She didn't have a phone or a tablet or any device. Aubrey came up with a plan to just spin around super fast so that the person couldn't scare her. Soon enough, she got “jumped” again. Ahhhh, it was so much scarier. She thought to herself, “Is this a ghost?” She said aloud, “Hello, is anybody here?” “Yes,” the voice said. “Who are you?” Aubrey

asked. "My name is Fredrik Oskar. I died when I was only 2 years old," he said. "Awww," Aubrey said. "I like to go around and jump scare people," he said. "Aubrey, Aubrey wake up! It's the first day of 1st grade," her Dad said, shaking her. "Wait, wait!" "Wait what, silly?" "I met a guy," Aubrey said. "What guy?" asked her father. "His name is Fredrik Oskar." said Aubrey. "Hey, I know a guy named that same name!" said her Dad. They looked up the name on the internet and it said that Fredrik Oskar was a person who scared people until they died. Aubrey and her Dad were spooked, but she still went to school and told all of her friends about her night before first grade.

Finley Turner

Washburn District Elementary School

Mrs. Good

Grade 5

A Marathon

A man told me
If he ran fast enough
His loneliness couldn't catch up to him.
The best reason I ever heard
For running a marathon.

What I wonder tonight is
If running down main street
Washes the worries away.

A victory!
To leave the loneliness and the worries behind you on main street as you cross the finish line
surrounded by supporters.
A free feeling like all of your worries and loneliness were left behind.

Cody Guerrette

Dr. Levesque Elementary School

Mrs. Pelletier

Grade 4

Dreams Are Weird

It was snowing when he looked out the window. Aiden sat at his bed silently mesmerized by the snow slowly piling up outside his window. He put down his phone, then turned to get off his bed and walked to his light switch and turned it off. He blindly walked back to his bed to lay back down. Aiden rested on his mattress with his blanket up to his neck. It felt like forever staring at the ceiling until he drifted to sleep.

He stood up, feeling like something hit him so hard he was knocked out. Still dizzy he looked over the edge of the cliff. He wasn't high up, he could see the ground clearly but no one was walking on it.

"How did I get here?" questioned Aiden. He turned around only to see a standing door, all by itself. "It's so lonely up here." He slowly walks up to the door while examining his surroundings. There was a small wooden bench to the left of him, and a cairn, or a stack of rocks. The bottom ones were big and they got smaller the higher they were.

"One, two, three, four, five rocks," Aiden counted, "how is that possible?" He takes another look at the door. It was a dark wooden door, with a shiny gold spherical handle. Nothing was surrounding the door. He puts his hand on the handles and carefully turns it, as if terrified of what might be on the other side. Aiden lets go of the handle and the door creaks open.

The other side wasn't scary at all, but instead a beautiful place. There was a waterfall and people sitting on tables with very distinct umbrellas over them. They were laughing, eating, dancing, although no music was being played. There was also a big building and a trail leading to a town. As Aiden walked to the overwhelming crowd of people, he saw two familiar faces.

"What are you doing here mom and dad?" Aiden asked, but the only response he got was, "Why don't you go play? It's been a long day." "Ok." Aiden replied. He walked down to a flat green field, where children were playing tag, soccer, football, all sorts of games. Aiden still had a headache and didn't want to play with the other children. So instead he sat on a rock by the waterfall, and listened, as he slowly drifted to sleep.

Aiden woke up in bed. He sat up tiredly and said to himself, "Why are my dreams so weird? Do they possibly have meanings?" He pressed his back to the wall and sighed. "I'm hungry."

Gaige St. Peter

Limestone Community School

Mrs. Dillion

Grade 8

Just Do It

I take a deep breath and I "pull the trigger". The whole soccer game I'm struggling and not really playing to my best abilities; that is until we go into double overtime with 20 seconds left, Bri crosses me a remarkable pass through two defenders! Dribbling the ball down the field I look into the goalies eyes and see the most intimidating look. In my head I'm telling myself "Don't mess this up!". I take a deep breath and I "pull the trigger". My teammates and I watch the ball go past the goalie and my teammates sprint onto the field to high five me.

Madelynn Deprey

Caribou Community School

Mrs. Barnes

Grade 8

She

She is pretty kind,
And she cares about the people in mind.
She has a sense of humor,
And she laughs forever.
She cares.
She makes fun for others,
But no one knows how she always covers.
Feels weird and doesn't know what's wrong,
Makes her feel like she has to stay strong.

She stares away and looks to her right,
Always feels like she might never see the light.
And yes, she'll go to sleep,
But her mind travels to the deep,
Where no one is there to see her tears,
She doesn't know why she's been like this for years.
She starts to lose herself again,
But still pretending she's still your old friend.
Of course you will start to see something wrong,
But when you ask, "What's up?" she just moves along.

So when you see that she's all alone,
She is a different person, lost is her throne.
So why is she like this, what do you do?
She seems different, depressed, or invisible to you.
Then you don't see that happy side anymore.
It's like she's stop trying,
or maybe she's just bored.
So the next thing you know she won't talk,
She won't even go to school anymore.

Now we are in the last semester,
She isn't around until later.
You see that sad look in her eyes,
And, right then and there, she's going to cry.

The next year she's back to herself.
She explained everything to you that she always locked up.
She said that she was going through a horrid state,
And she had to be in therapy to find her fate.
She said she was sorry and really meant it.
She didn't know what to do, so she always manded it.

So what was this problem?
Did I do something wrong?
Is she mad at me?
Maybe just the stress or the madness,
This year has been filled with boredom and sadness.
It is in the past as well,
So maybe she's better and feeling swell.
She talks to you once again,
Almost summer vacation when she sees you,
Filled with questions.
It always seems things are getting better.

Grace Donovan Woodland Consolidated School Mrs. Landeen Grade 7

Ladder Slip

“Ahhhhhhhh!!!!” I screamed as I fell down the ladder. Blood was everywhere! I was in the first grade and I had just finished playing hide and seek at camp at Portage Lake with my brother and best friend. Suddenly, I slipped and fell down the ladder that leads to our loft. My mom and I raced to the car and rushed to the hospital while I had to apply pressure on my chin to stop the bleeding. When we arrived at the hospital I laid in the emergency room while waiting for the doctor to come in.”I just have to numb your chin, it’s only going to feel like a bee sting.” Ten stitches later my mom and I drove back to camp.

Ainsley Caron Caribou Community School Mrs.Barnes Grade 8

Bad Luck Damien

When was the last time you were really scared? Was it during a fun fair ride, watching a really scary movie, or maybe someone jumped out at you? Well, let me tell you about the last time I was really scared, and I mean wet-your-pants scared.

It was a cold winter night. The sky was black, but everything else was lit up from all the cars parked next door at T N S. I could hear the sound of car engines and people chatting when I walked outside. The smell of fresh air and pizza filled my nostrils. I was supposed to be going to the store to grab a couple of items, but it turned out I was really going for a fast trip to the bottom of my 14 steps.

I had had really bad luck with my stairs that winter. I had fallen down them like six times already, so just to be cautious I checked the first step for ice. I felt nothing so I started my way down them. Wasn’t I surprised when the next step was glare ice. As soon as I stepped foot onto

that step, everything turned slow motion. Now I'm not sure if you've ever had a moment where everything seemed it was going two centimeters per hour, but it is not fun. I could feel and see my brown dirty boot slide from under me. My heart was going faster than a cheetah when I fell backward onto the old rickety steps. When I landed, then proceeded to glide down the steps. I bashed my tailbone on every tread. As I was falling, my legs were both in the air, like I was trying to fly with them. I looked in horror as I looked over to see that I wasn't going straight down. I was heading for one of the bottom rails, and it was fixing to hit me where the sun don't shine.

As all of this was happening, a million thoughts were going through my head. Such as, am I going to make it through this alive, this bruise better look cool, what's that smell, and my butt hurts. Dread overtook me as I got closer to the rail, m. My butt hurting worse every step hit. As I hit the final step before the rail, m... My life flashed before my eyes, and I realized that I need to stop sleeping so much. Then it happened.

That rail did to me what Moses did to the Red Sea. I was a stick of butter and that rail was a hot knife. I sat there in pain for a good minute, and then I pulled myself out of the mess I put myself in. I could tell my thighs and back were instantly bruised. Every little bit I moved I felt increasing pain. My mom rushed out to see if I was ok. I hesitantly said yes and limped to the store.

After I grabbed and bought the groceries, I walked back to the house. I stopped at the bottom of my rickety staircase. I gazed up at it with a glare of spite and anger. Even though I knew they weren't a living breathing thing, but I couldn't help but feel like they purposely put the ice on that one step. I staggered up the stairs and put away the food, then I sat down on the grey reclining couch that has pillows all over it so you can't feel the metal bars. I looked at where I fell and I already had light bruises all over my body.

The next time you are in a wet-your-pants situation, remember, don't panic.

Damien Reeves

Hodgdon Middle/High School

Mrs. Harris

Grade 8

Should Zoos Be Allowed?

Do you think that animals in zoos are healthy and happy? They are probably not taken care of as well as people think. There are several reasons why zoos are not great environments for animals. Animals in zoos are taken from their natural environments. They are forced to live in much smaller spaces. Often, they are also fed an improper diet. These are all reasons why zoos should not be allowed to exist.

One reason why zoos are a bad idea is because animals don't get to live in their natural environments. When they are taken from their natural habitats, they don't learn the skills they need to survive. For example, they don't learn how to hunt for their own food. They will get fed in the zoos. However, if they become dependent on humans, they become fat and lazy. They won't ever be able to return to the wild and survive on their own. This is one reason why zoos are a bad idea.

Another reason why zoos are a bad idea is because the animals are often fed an improper diet. For example, in the wild, these predators chase down prey and eat fresh meat from

gazelles, zebras, etc. In the zoos, however, the animals are often fed meat, but it isn't as fresh. Also, they often eat beef, which is something they don't usually eat in the wild. Zoo animals don't get the same vitamins and minerals. Many of these animals become unhealthy and don't live as long as they would if they were still in the wild. An improper diet is just one more reason why zoos are a bad idea.

One final reason why zoos are such a bad idea is because animals can suffer psychological damage. These animals become depressed after sitting around in confined spaces all the time. This may cause some of them to act out. These emotional problems are so common in zoo animals that there is even a special name for the problem: "zoochosis." Causing animals to suffer emotionally is wrong, so zoos are usually a very bad idea.

As you can see, it is a bad idea for most animals to live in zoos. They don't have enough space to roam and get exercise, their diets aren't usually very healthy, and many animals develop "zoochosis." Some people say that endangered animals need to be put in zoos for their protection. This may be true. However, in general, zoos are not the best places for most animals to live. There need to be more wildlife sanctuaries where animals can roam freely and hunt their own food. If you agree, please share your opinion with friends and family. Maybe then these animals can get better homes.

Addison Young

Katahdin Middle School

Ms. Bouchard

Grade 6

PATRIOTISM

Promise and pledge

Allegiance

To my town, to my state, to my country, to my *home*.

Remembering and obeying the dreams of others, now *and* then,

Instead of drowning them in the storm

Of politics and warfare and squabbles of leaders, who say

They know what's "*best*" for us and what we "*need*" to do

In order to strive and survive in the world of today. But is it *that* different than that of yesteryears?

Should we be making these choices, even in the land of the *free*? Well, if you are asking me, for Most, "*patriotism*" is, perhaps, a concept, or a lifestyle, or a choice made to be free...

... But for us - the *citizens* of the *land* of the free - "*patriotism*" is inarguably a creed.

Maggie Bell

Caribou Community School

Mrs. Keaton

Grade 7

WHY 2020?

I ask you world,
Why 2020?
Why the bad?
There was killing.
There was missing.
COVID was the cause of it.
I lost my grandfather.
He is gone.
2020 was the cause of it.
But don't take it back, because there was good.
I found my favorite people.
I got rid of fake friends.
2020 was the blessing of it.
BUT...
500 million animals in Australia are gone.
Bushfires were the cause of it.
People were killed for the color of their skin.
Racism was the cause of it.
BUT...
I learned to hold on tight to friends and family.
2020 was the blessing of it.
There was good. There was bad.
Don't take it back.

Brianna Buster

PIMS

Mrs. Bragg

Grade 6

I Have a Dream

I have big dreams! I dream that there will be less pollution. Another dream I have is that there will be more homes for the homeless. I also dream that wars will stop.

My first dream is that there will be less pollution. Stop using plastic products, like plastic bottles and plastic bags. Do we really need those? We should use paper bags instead of plastic. We should walk more or ride a bike. Cars give off a lot of pollution. Bikes do not. Walk to close places.

Another dream I have is that there would be more homes for the homeless. There are not enough homes, and they're way too expensive. We should lower the cost of homes. People should work together and build more homes for the homeless.

I also dream there wouldn't be wars, little or big. There are tons of ways to solve conflicts, like try to just talk it over. There's no need to be violent.

Like Martin Luther King, Jr. and many other people, I have dreams. My dreams are to have less pollution, more homes for the homeless, and to stop wars. I really hope these dreams come true.

Grace Hilton

Mapleton Elementary

Mrs. Wright

Grade 4

Can You See Me?

Money, wealth, and power,
All things strived for in what we call society.
It matters what you do with every single hour,
For nothing is a choice anymore, but a priority.

The rich fight amongst each other,
To determine who is better, and who will thrive.
The poor are simply lucky to have one another,
And struggle just to survive.

It's a never ending rat race,
With no one going to become a victor.
It's a restless and continuous chase,
With no happiness, the results being poorer or richer.

People fight for something bigger,
Not caring who gets hurt.
People are no longer people, only usable figures,
And it doesn't matter who ends up in the dirt.

People don't realize one simple fact,
And that's that we are all created equal,
That we are all human beings.
It doesn't matter color, gender, or race,
For we all deserve the same love and warm embrace.

Wynonna Gockley

Katahdin Middle School

Mrs. DeTour

Grade 8

How to Use a Chainsaw

It all started when one day my dad was cutting down a tree, and I thought that was cool. So I asked if he could teach me and he said yes. I was so excited that I jumped in the air screaming in my mind, “thank you, thank you!” I felt like I was going to faint but I didn't.

Eventually he taught me how to sharpen a chainsaw.

He said, “To sharpen a chainsaw you need a special tool that can sharpen your chainsaw’s blade.”

It looked like a little pole that was bumpy and it felt like sandpaper. That makes sense because you would want it to get sharp so you can cut through the wood.

After, he taught me how to hold it.

He said, “Hold the top handle and when you start it up press the two buttons on the handle to get it to start. But you have to have a big enough hand to use it.

Next, I had to see if my hand was even big enough to use it. So I put my hand around the handle. My hand was just the right size!

Then, he taught me how to put the oil in the chainsaw.

He said, “Fill the chainsaw to the top. Well, that's what I do. You want to do that because it will make it go longer, if you fill it halfway it won't go as long.”

That made sense to me so I said, “ok.”

I watched him do it so I would know how to do it next time.

After, he told me that I should keep my face away from it's blade and I agreed with him.

I agreed because I would get my face hurt really badly and that would not be good. Either that or I could get sawdust in my eye and that would hurt so I listened to him. So be careful!

The next thing he said was that if you're just cutting wood and not cutting down a tree you want someone to hold down the other side of the branch or wood. That's because the branch can come up and hit you! Then the chainsaw can cut your leg!! So when you are cutting wood you should have someone hold down the other side.

The next thing he said was that you often want to have safety glasses on because a lot of pieces of wood and wood chips go flying. Then the wood chips and the pieces of wood will get in my eyes. That would be bad because that would hurt really badly. So I listened to him because I didn't want sawdust in my eyes.

To rap it up, the last thing he said was, “Now if you got all that Let's get cutting!!!”

Aroostook County

The Great Woods of Maine

One day I was snowshoeing with my mom in the woods on a secret trail and I happened to notice this interesting trail that went off from another trail and we wanted to see where it went. I said, “This is pretty cool!” and I thought, “Where does this even go?” I noticed that there were no snowshoe tracks leading down the interesting trail. So, I said to my mom, “I think we should go down this trail!”

My mom said, “Let’s see where it leads.” We went down the trail and there was one path leading towards more in the woods and the other was leading more into a field.

I said, “Which path do we go in?”

My mom thought for a second then said, “Why don’t we try both?!”

The first trail we went down was the one heading into the woods. The trees were swaying and there was a river flowing. I thought, “This is a beautiful place! We should come here more often.” Then when I was thinking to myself, I saw some animal prints, they looked like just a squirrel, but then I saw coyote tracks. The tracks looked like they were fresh from this morning.

Mom and I decided to go to the other trail near the field. We were pretty tired out, but this place was so beautiful. We walked 20 minutes and we were there! My mom and I loved this place.

It was great snowshoeing to see how pretty everything is in the snowy woods of Maine.

Madeline Shaw

Fort Street Elementary

Mrs. Lagasse

Grade 5

My First Time Cross Country Skiing

“Let’s go cross country skiing!” said my mom with lots of enthusiasm. “It’s very fun but not like downhill skiing at all.”

Now mind you I am an excellent downhill skier and I can confirm it’s **NOTHING** like downhill skiing.

“Yeah sure sounds like a lot of fun” I said with curiosity.

“Okay get your boots on. I’ll show you how to put your skis on. They are quite different from normal skis.” my mom said as I got my boots on. Once I got into my boots she helped me get my skis on. They didn’t fit me well but they would hopefully work. You see, cross country skis are long and skinny. Your heel doesn’t lock in like a normal downhill ski and the poles are also longer too.

“Are you sure they're gonna work?” I was a little bit skeptical. “It seems like they are quite unbalanced.”

“Lets just test them out.”

“Fine by me.” I said.

I started out ahead of my mom and I was quite slow. She caught up fast but she kept the same pace as me (which was extremely slow) and I was on the ground more times than I was actually standing up.

The first hill that I came to, (That's a massive exaggeration. It was like a 1.5 foot drop.) I leaned forward just a little bit and next thing I know I was on the ground again! Skis in the air and flat on my back. *OH BROTHER!* I thought. *I am never going to do this again!*

“If you fall off a horse get back on!” my mom said in between her laughter.

Now I had to figure out how to untangle my legs and get back up.

That wasn't so bad. I thought as I sprung up and shook myself off. When mum falls on the other hand, it's like watching a beached baby whale floundering around in the snow.

The further I went the better I got, I could eventually navigate around corners and somewhat go down hills without wiping out, but I still fell on the common occasion. I learned that day that I enjoy cross country skiing, breathing the fresh air, watching the snow glisten under the sunlight, and seeing nature at its finest makes it a very enjoyable experience.

When we got back to the house I asked my mom, “Hey, when can we do that again?”

Agis Clark

Fort Street Elementary

Mr. Boudreau

Grade 6

An Aroostook Perspective

I gaze at the sky as the sun sinks, leaving behind the fading orange glow that dimly lights the clouds that gather around. The serene setting gives me a calm security, a pleasant warmth that tingles my limbs. The lavender tipped mountains are distant, tenebrous and looming yet fitting the scene as the moon peeks out from the graying clouds. The pine trees surround me completing the landscape, as pretty as a picture. Their leaves are singed orange at the tips, symbolizing the upcoming Fall that will soon be upon us. Aroostook County is as beautiful as a scene from Paris itself. I breathe in the sweet ginger air and smile. The small critters settle in their places within the forests, few birds break the silence with the occasional chirp. As the sun sets and the stars start to light the sky, I am certain. There is no place I'd rather be then sitting in the grass watching the light fade, sucking in the sweet air watching the scene displayed in front

of me. The purple glow sets in as the sun finally sinks out of sight, the orange dissipating, leaving a sliver of light in its trail. My home is right here, Aroostook County itself, as I bask in its glory every day. It can be quite overlooked by so many people but they have never seen its alluring magnificence. The everyday scenes and the views are breathtaking. If you wake up early enough, you can see the golden sunrise as it pours light over the entire scene before you. The sun beams rays of light and for a second everything is gold, new and young. It makes you appreciate the brevity of everyday life, cherishing every beautiful moment. The lush forests are filled with life, filled with such soothing tranquility and the bright light shines through the gaps, bathing the space in its warm glow. Just close your eyes and breath the fresh air, scented with the hint of greenery and maple. As overlooked it may be, it is one of the most gorgeous and serene places I have ever seen. It gives you a calm sense of peace, a satisfying gratification fills you up and all you can do is smile. A slow breeze wafts past, gently lifting the leaves and lazily swaying the branches. I watch the moon emerge from the flurry of clouds, surrounded by the bright flecks of stars. The darkness overtakes the forests and obscures the mountains until all I see are outlines as the moon shines bright and fills my space with silver. As I stand to leave, a speck of light dashes across the sky until it passes the edge of my vision. I breathe in the crisp air one last time, and set for my house with a smile.

Caela Day

Caribou Community School

Mr. Russell

Grade 7

Hunting

Have you ever gone hunting before? Well, I have. My dad and I were going hunting for birds and we had to walk a long way! We had to walk with guns which made it even harder. When I got back home, I was tired! First, we heard a bird walking so we went after it, but we could not find it. Then we walked a little longer and then all of a sudden, we thought we found the bird. It was standing right in the middle of the woods so I shot at it, but it was a branch! It was pretty funny! Since I did not actually shoot a bird, we wanted to go hunting a little more. We have a lot of woods in our backyard so we decided to hunt in our woods. Next, we went to the pond to see if there were birds there and it was not that far from the woods. When we got there, there were no birds. So, then we went to the sand pit. There were no birds there either. We climbed up the sand pit and there was no water in the pond, so we had to find a different place. Then we went on the trail to my gram & gramp's house because there's a little river on the way there. So, we were going to check there. I didn't think that any birds would be there, but we went anyway. When we got there, we didn't see any birds, so we went home. I was frustrated but I had fun! I was happy that at least I got to shoot at something. Next time I go hunting. I hope that I shoot at a bird instead of a branch!

Olivia Beaulieu

Limestone Community School

Mrs. Branscom

Grade 4

The MicMac Legend

On a cold Northern Maine winter night, in a wigwam atop of Mt. Katahdin, a legend was about to be born. In that wigwam surrounded by the bright white of the snow, a strong yet kind and respectable MicMac warrior, named Sai, was getting ready for the biggest challenge of his life, revenge.

About a month prior, the Maliseet hom are the mortal enemy of the MicMac's, sent their strongest and fastest warriors. Their job was to hide in the fake trees they crafted from bark and twigs from only the tallest and mightiest birch trees. When the local MicMac hunters would go hunting to feed their tribe, the Maliseets would hop out of the blinds and slaughter the MicMacs. They then proceeded to raid the villages and kidnap the women and children from the villages and be brought back the next night dead.

Sai watched as his wife and two children got taken away by his people's enemy. The village was engulfed by the orange and yellow flames. He tried everything he could to protect them but it was too late. The next morning Sai watched as the men who killed his family lay the body outside his wigwam. Their lifeless still bodies with gashes and bruises with blood rolling down like a waterfall.

As Sai got his gear and fellow men ready, he still had to come up with a plan. He knew only one thing and one thing only about the Maliseet's village. He knew they were always on alert and that they had more warriors and man power than he had. All of this didn't stop him though. Before Sai left into the black darkness of the night he stopped to visit his wife and kids corpses. He told them that he was going to get revenge on the Maliseets and that he would join them soon.

He and his fellow men marched down and around the tall jagged mountain, all through the forests surrounding them, and lastly they trekked through the long dark yellow and green fields. Before they entered the woods Sai rallied his men getting them ready for battle. "Men," He shouted, "This might be our last night. But it is for their last night. When we fight, think of them... Alive, or dead. For them we put our life on line, for them we fight. Now let's go get revenge!"

Sai and all his men stormed carefully into the woods with their formations and tactics in mind. As they went through the dark forest with their spear men in the front and archers in the back. With every step they took Sai knew what might happen, and he was ready for it.

All of a sudden, Sai and his men were surrounded by Maliseet warriors. Sai looked around and eyed all the warriors. He noticed that some had well crafted and balanced spears and armor, and that some had poor and weak armor. He could tell with a single glance where they're strongest men were and where the decoys were. He knew that he had to act now. With a blink of an eye he threw his spear into the strongest looking warrior and his fellow men soon took on the others. They picked up the signals on when to make a move because he knew and all the men knew that their loved ones weren't coming back.

All the Maliseet archers were taken out by Sai's spear men and the spear men of the Maliseet were shot at with dozens of waves of sharp finely crafted arrows. Soon the bloodbath of a fight was down to Sai and his two closest and strongest men and five Maliseet warriors. The Maliseet had an archer on the sides and three spear men in the middle. Sai looked at the remaining Maliseet men one by one.

Sai caught a sudden flashback to that day and saw his family dead. He thought about the bright red blood pouring down his kids cheeks, and the gashes and bruises on his wife. He

remembered the men dropping them off and taking them away. But most importantly, he remembered that feeling of solitude and loneliness. He remembered feeling like he died too and he felt that wave of fear and sadness crash over him like the deep blue waves of the Atlantic.

He took one step closer and said to the Maliseet men, “ You’re going to pay.” He then ducked down as his fellow men launched their spears into the Maliseet archers. Sai then swept the remaining three warrior’s legs. As they crashed to the ground like a house with no foundation, Sai then broke the head off of two spears from his deceased men and pushed it into two of the warriors chests.

He then threw all his weapons into the night and got on his feet. He waited for the last Maliseet who was alive to rise to his feet. Sai knew the second he saw his men’s corpses that he was the only one left. With a single kick Sai knocked down the Maliseet man and looked down on him. Sai whispered to the warrior “ This is for them!” He grabbed a leftover spear and drove it through the Maliseet man’s heart.

Sai knew when he finished the Maliseet that he couldn’t live without his family. He then took the sharpest arrow laying in the giant forest of corpses and marched back to his village. When he got back all the MicMac villagers gathered near him. He knew they were asking where their loved ones were but he couldn’t hear them. The only thing he could hear was the voices of his children and wife. He then shouted to quiet the people. He then preached to them “ We won. But I lost. We all did.” He then drove the arrow through himself and knew where he was going and what he did. The End.

Nicholas O’Neal

Limestone Community School

Mrs. Dillon

Grade 7

Aroostook County

We live in a beautiful place. Though after a while of living here, one may take advantage of this beauty. In Maine, we can turn around and see a mountain. I believe that it’s quite special that we can see a nice view as we walk down the street. Sunsets are easily seen through our dining room windows. I know that doesn’t seem that odd, but from a city person’s point of view, I think they would see that as quite spectacular. However, our panoramic views are not the only thing that make Maine a special place to be.

As someone who hasn’t always lived in Aroostook County, I know that this is a place you know everyone. Where I used to live (In Gardiner, Maine) things are a little different. I can say from experience, coming here for the first time makes many realize just how closely intertwined our community is. This is probably because we live so close together. You know everyone here, from your next door neighbor to that guy who lives across town.

Another important asset to us is our position. We have luscious forests all around us, close enough that one could spend hours out in the woods alone, then come out of the woods into the street. Plus, Canada is close by when we need it. We can basically take a short drive and we’re in another country. Those of us in Maine spend our summers in the woods. Hunting, fishing, and just hanging out at our camps. You name it, we probably do it.

Potato blossoms surround us all through the summer. In the fall, many head to the woods for some hunting. But winter is a big thing here as well. During some winters, snow can

reach up to our windows. Personally, I think anyone from the more southern places in North America would see that as unrealistic. So, because of our relationship with snow, we spend lots of our time skiing, ice fishing, and using skidoos. Sometimes in the winter, we do sit down by the fire and drink hot chocolate.

One of my favorite things is hearing the old stories about Maine. I know that loggers used to believe that the twigs and sticks all bunched together in a tree were made by a giant bird. Of course, these are just a couple reasons Aroostook County is a special place in Maine.

Julia Daggett

PIMS

Mrs. Bate

Grade 6

Winter Wonderland

The temperature is below freezing but there are so many things to do, both inside and outside. Outdoors there is sledding down smooth hills, snowshoeing through gorgeous scenery, gliding through snow on cross country skis, and even ice skating on slippery ice. Inside, you can bake up a storm, paint a beautiful picture, maybe even curl up on the couch to read a good book within the warmth of your home. The possibilities are endless, but these are all fun activities I enjoy doing during the long and chilly winter season in Maine.

Time to bundle up, because we're going snowshoeing. My favorite place to go snowshoeing is behind the Hodgdon Elementary School on Hawk's Trail, a trail in the woods that my classmates and I built at the beginning of the school year. The scenery is breathtaking in this winter wonderland. The trees are heavy with snow and the river has a thin layer of ice on it. The woods are filled with the sound of snow crunching beneath snowshoes as my classmates and I explore our trail. Looking at the ground, animal tracks are everywhere. The tiny tracks of a squirrel, paw prints of a fox, hooves of a deer, a rabbit's hopping footprints. No matter the animal, it is always fun to discover the diverse prints in the snow and figure out what animal has been there recently. Sitting down on a tree stump by the river to take a little break is the one of the most peaceful things as I listen to the water gently flowing and look for any wildlife that could be roaming around the woods. Snowshoeing is my favorite winter activity for all of these reasons. There's nothing better than an adventure on a snowy winter day.

After coming in from a snowshoe, I enjoy drinking a rich chocolatey cup of hot cocoa with marshmallows and then painting a picture. Whether I'm painting a snowman or a picture of the northern lights that looks as good as *The Starry Night*, I have fun expressing myself through a paintbrush. There are so many different colors to choose from it is almost impossible to decide which ones to use. An immense variety of paintbrushes, small and pointed, stubby and round, large and edged. All kinds of ideas are swimming around in my head that I can make come to life on canvas. There is no right or wrong, just you and the paintbrush painting whatever your heart desires.

There are so many things to do in Maine's winter wonderland of adventures. There is an activity for anyone and everyone during the coldest season of the year, indoors or outdoors. Winter being my favorite season, I mostly enjoy being outside whether I'm sledding down a snowy hill, ice skating on the thick ice of Deering Lake with my friend, snowshoeing with my classmates, or gliding across the snow with cross country skis. I also enjoy being in the warmth

of my house on a freezing winter day reading a book, baking in the kitchen, and painting a picture. Doing all of these activities is how I enjoy the long and cold season in Maine's winter wonderland.

Mariah Silliboy

Mill Pond School

Mrs. Oliver

Grade 6

Ice Fishing Fun

On a Sunday morning my dad, my uncle, Rosie (my uncle's dog), and I ventured off to Nickerson Lake to participate in the ice fishing derby for Moosestompers Weekend. When we arrived at the lake, I dragged my mom's sled loaded with the portable ice shack, and my dad carried the traps and the auger to our fishing spot near my grandparent's home.

First, we drilled holes into the ice and set the traps. (I slipped on the ice about four times.) The first hole we drilled was near the shore, but my uncle claimed the ice was fourteen inches thick! Then we drilled six more about forty feet away from each other. Rosie was running wild with the other dogs on the ice, and she wasn't listening to my uncle, so he had to take her home.

Although the sun decided to peek through the clouds it became pretty cold so we put up the "Ice Shack". My dad received a portable-mini-wood stove from my uncle for Christmas so he could ice fish without freezing off his bald head. We assembled it and situated it inside the ice shack. It took about ten minutes for the ice shack to heat up and thaw out my cold, frozen bones. We cut a small hole about the size of a tennis ball on the top of the tent so the smoke wouldn't build up inside. We brought red hotdogs to fry on the mini portable stove. As the red hotdogs were cooking one of the flags on the ice traps went up! I ran as fast as a hungry Wyatt could run. I checked the trap and... there were no fish. I was heart broken and sad so I slowly walked back to the tent to discover that most of the hotdogs were burnt! It was a double whammy. We still had some hot dogs left over because my uncle bought a twenty pack. We gobbled down the ones that weren't too badly burnt. I have to say those hotdogs were scrumptious!

While we dined on our five star meal consisting of hotdogs, cookies, and a cup of hot cocoa, another flag shot up into the air on the ice fishing trap! I thought that maybe, just maybe this wouldn't be a false alarm. I ran to the trap and you will never guess what happened next. It was another false alarm. Discouraged, I dragged myself to the tent and moped around for a while. No more flags popped up for the rest of the time, so my dad and I packed up the auger, all the fish traps, the tent, and stuffed all the equipment into the truck like a can of sardines.

Although "Pro Fisher Wyatt" came home with no fish, I still had a grand time eating up all of the snacks and wolfing down all of the drinks! Even though, slowly but surely I lost all hope of catching a humongous fish, I still had a great time telling stories and drinking hot cocoa around the fire.

Wyatt Oliver

Mill Pond School

Mrs. Oliver

Grade 6

Marvelous Maine Winters

Have you enjoyed a Maine winter? Well if you live in Maine than you probably have but then again they are long, cold, dark, and sometimes frustrating if you're an adult. However if you are a kid (or adult who likes to have fun) then you most likely enjoy sliding. I particularly enjoy it when the hills are especially steep and crusted over with ice, but I do not like it when there are large clumps of ice. During gym class one Thursday morning, I encountered large clumps of ice. Although I did not go down this hill with a slide, I still ended up hurting someone when I slid down on my bottom and crashed into my good friend, Hunter. I imagine this was incredibly painful for him, however, for me it was just incredibly fun. Another time I had a really great time sliding was during another gym class at my school where we slid down a huge hill, and I almost always hit a divot. My friend ,Wyatt Oliver, named the divot because he was the first one to hit it. The fact that it was a very large divot contributed to the name THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA. When you hit THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA, you fly into the air off your sled like it picks you up and tosses you as far as it can until you crash back down.

After sliding down hills and climbing back up them all day, I enjoy a nice steaming cup of hot cocoa. Every time I take a drink after sliding it feels like an angel swoops me up and lets me rest on a cloud. On one particular day, I had gotten ready for school and then realized it was a snow day, so I immediately put on my ski pants, gloves, hat, mittens, and winter boots. Then I grabbed my huge sled and went outside. I immediately realized the hills were small but still super icy. I slid down and my reaction was OH MY GOODNESS because when you went down the hill you zoomed past everything because it was just that icy. In fact I even convinced my sister to come outside, and so we stayed out all day.

One day at recess, all my classmates and I were speeding down a hill that is located behind the boys' soccer field at our school. We almost hit the tree line multiple times which I had never done before. After a little bit my classmates went to a different part of the hill. The hill was separated by a very large tree so they couldn't really see me. I decided to take one more ride on the side that I was on, and I quickly started zooming faster and faster. I hit the tree line which I had been trying to do for a very long time, but no one believed me because they couldn't see me. Sliding is definitely one of my favorite activities to do during Maine's long winter months.

Nolan Lorom

Mill Pond School

Mrs. Oliver

Grade 5

Lucky Catch

Moosestompers weekend, the weekend when all kids go outside and act like cheetahs sliding down Derby Hill or trudge through fields with snowshoes and skis. All of the adults drive to the ice waiting to catch the monster fish that will win them money. I spent this weekend with my dad waiting in the pop up shack for that monster fish. We snowmobiled onto the ice at six thirty in the morning to set down ice fishing traps and make jigging holes. We popped up our shack and started the heater, ready to be out there all morning so we could catch a humongous

fish. We had ten shiners which are small-to-medium sized freshwater minnows as our bait. We set the traps a couple feet under water right where the trout swim.

Early in our expedition my feet were so cold I felt like a glacier, so I had to sit down by the heater to warm them up. After they were warm, my dad and I jigged for a few minutes catching nothing. We were about to give up when my dad looked outside, and the flag on one of the traps was up which meant there was a fish! We trampled through the snow and ice, but when we finally arrived the bait was gone and there was nothing on the line. There was one good thing about this though, since the fish took the bait and left, it meant it was a trout, which was exactly what we were looking for. After resetting the trap we were sure it would come back, but after thirty minutes of waiting it never returned.

To pass the time, my dad and I played catch with ice. Then I made snow angels. After I was done we started talking about football when we heard a flag flip up. We ran over to it, and I pulled it up and found an eighteen inch pickerel! After an hour of impatiently waiting, my dad checked every trap to see if there was still bait on them. The second trap he checked had a splake which is a mix between a male brook trout and a female lake trout. This surprised us because the flag didn't flip up. My dad easily pulled it up, and we discovered it was seventeen inches. This was going to be a yummy meal.

A couple hours later my dad and I became hungry, and we hadn't caught anything for a while so we packed up all the equipment. We started picking up traps. I drove the snowsled to the next trap and laid down acting like a sloth as I waited for dad. Then I heard him yell. The flag on a trap was up, so I walked over to it and hauled up another pickerel. This one was a little smaller. It was the last catch of the day.

In total we caught three fish: two pickerel and one splake. While we were at the lake, I drove the snowsled and discovered the beauty of Maine's winter. Though I was exhausted after all the running around and excitement, I had lots of fun. I look forward to ice fishing again and next time I go, the fishes better be ready to be caught.

Hunter Sanford

Mill Pond School

Mrs. Oliver

Grade 5