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August 2011

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Print Post Approved
P.P. 334553/00001



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All entrants must be no older than 18 years of age or attending either a primary or secondary college. There are four categories: painting, drawing, photography or computer art. To enter, check out our website www.youngatart.com.au and request an entry form, then submit a digital copy of your artwork online. If you do not have access to digital imaging you may send your artwork to ACLB Ltd., P.O. Box 267 Lara, Victoria 3212. Further information available online.

Young Australian ART awards



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OZ KIDS IN PRINT

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Photo credits – 'Fear', p. 12: Vectorportal.com. 'Animal's View – My Mistress' Death', top p. 29: Maria Li, <http://www.sxc.hu/photo/1176401>; bottom p. 29: Jeremy Wrenn, <http://www.morguefile.com/archive/display/698577>. 'Moonlight Connection', p. 41: Lize Rixt, <http://www.sxc.hu/photo/945067>. 'In a Melbourne minute...', p. 20; 'Life Returning', p. 38; 'Daredevil', p. 40: Frank Jones, Desktop Dynamics, Geelong.

Published by:

Australian Children's Literary Board
(an initiative of the Children's Charity Network)
ABN 58 109 336 245
Phone: (03) 5282 8950
Fax: (03) 5282 8950
170 Forest Road, Lara, Victoria 3212
Postal Address:
PO Box 267, Lara, Victoria 3212

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Layout/Pre-press:.....Desktop Dynamics, Geelong
Website Production:.....The Media Warehouse
www.mediawarehouse.com.au

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

The colder weather is upon us, in some States anyway. What better way to pass the time than to sit snuggled up with a good book? An even better way to keep the fingers warm is to create your own work for others to read.

Keep sending those stories and poems in. We are fast approaching our 2011 Young Australian Writers' Awards in November. So get your entries in before September. Please don't leave it to the last minute or you could miss out.

ENTER ON-LINE
at
www.ozkids.com.au



**KEEP ON WRITING
(TYPING)!**

Carol Dick
Managing Editor

ANNOUNCEMENT *Changing Yesterday* by Sean McMullen

Published by FORD STREET

Sean has just been short-listed for the Hugo Award in the novella category for 'Eight Miles'.

<http://www.fordstreetpublishing.com>

Oz Kids in Print

BOOK REVIEW

MOLE HUNT

The Maximus Black Files: Mole Hunt by Paul Collins (Ford St. Publishers)
ISBN 9-781-921-665-2-64
PB RRP \$19.95
Young Adult Fiction – June 2011
Reviewed by Anastasia Gonis

Maximus Black is the youngest recruit to ace all areas of training in the spy agency RIM (Regis Imperium Mentatis), the galactic law enforcement agency. He is single-minded in his quest to uncover the co-ordinates to the weapon caches belonging to the Old Empire that have been hidden away for ages. At seventeen, the big plans for his life are supported by his exceptional intelligence and mastery of data collection and disguise. This will give him power and control over the Galaxy. Nothing and no one is getting in his way. A trail of dead bodies early in the book establishes his position and character in the story.

Maximus has been allocated the task of uncovering the mole in the company. The greatest irony is that he is the mole. But because of his unique skills, he is able to manipulate all information – coded and otherwise – to his benefit, shielding himself from suspicion by creating smoke screens.

The only threat to Maximus' ambition is Anneke Longshadow who has vowed to bring him down. Anneke is a warrior; courageous, capable, focused, and determined. She appears equally as intelligent as, and apparently more resourceful than Maximus. She has different things to prove.

Both characters have secrets and secret pasts; have experienced grief and loss of family. They

are action super-heroes similar to those of the comic books, warring against the good and evil inside and outside their selves. Their violence, energy and power are matched to the forces of nature that surrounds them in the Galaxy.

Mole Hunt is action-focused, vicious and bloody. The characters are constantly challenged by their fast-changing circumstances. This trilogy would make a terrific movie. Visual scenes are formed vividly in the reader's mind due to the extraordinary writing style, and the tension is palpable throughout the book.

A trailer for the book can be found at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3S-eKDYqpEs>



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Fictionalising History

By Goldie Alexander – goldie@goldiealexander.com

WHEN I write historical fiction I try to portray significant events as well as keep my audience reading. I'm careful to place my characters inside their environment. I'm careful to only use research as background where people move about in an everyday way. Convincing characters, plots and structure keep us reading. Show, don't tell can mean that instead of paragraphs of description, I use key phrases and relate them to the action. Characters must move about as if this is their 'today'.

In *My Australian Story: Surviving Sydney Cove* I had to become a thirteen year old girl convict in the Sydney of 1790 when terrible hardships prevailed and the First Fleet felt as if they were cut off from the rest of the world. In the YA *Body and Soul: Lilbet's Romance* I became a disabled eighteen year old living in Melbourne just before the outbreak of World War Two, threatened with being institutionalised.

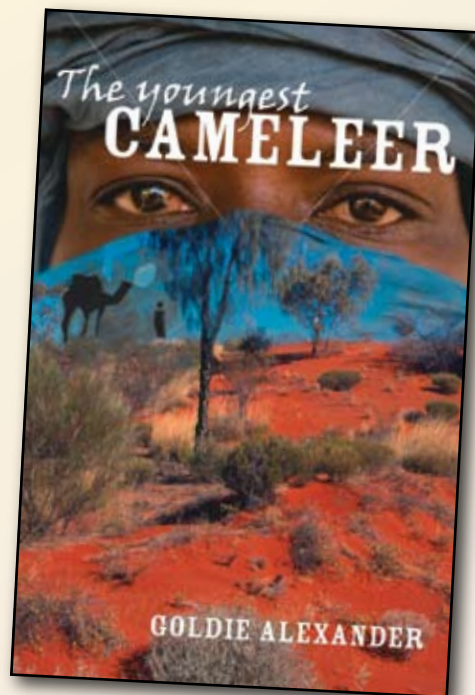
Gallipoli Medals is aimed at emerging readers, with the intention of giving context and background to the soldiers who died at Gallipoli Cove. I tried to bring 1915 up to date by having the story swing from the present to the past and back again. In it, Major Peter Romsey contacts Jaxson's dad to ask if some medals he found in an op shop could possibly belong to the Donoghue family. Intrigued by the story of his great, great uncle being part of the

Great War, and what happened to him after that, Jaxson reads about Gallipoli. As a result his close friendship with Turkish Abi wavers. Does this make Abi his enemy?

My other historical novel is YA. One of the lesser known explorations into the interior was led by William Gosse in 1873. The various members of this exploration (both European and Afghan) did exist and my story is based on Gosse's own day to day journal. This expedition was the first non-indigenous group to come across Uluru. Without the use of camels and Afghan cameleers they might not have survived the harsh conditions they encountered in the outback. Though it is the first time any cameleer was praised for helping open the interior, these facts are not well known. Nor that an aboriginal boy was an invaluable member of this party. Some cameleers even lent their name to landmarks, such as Kamran's Well and Alannah Hill. My intention was to bring this expedition to life by creating a fictional character that was part of it. Thus I came up with Ahmed Ackbar, a fourteen-year-old Afghan and my 'youngest cameleer'.

Dialogue and first person narrative help create characters, so Ahmed tells his story in fluent Pashtu, since his English is poor. He is the only surviving male in his immediate family. In late 1872 he sails into the prosperous city of Adelaide to help look after four camels. But he has other things on his mind. What if his uncle Kamran isn't as innocent of his brother's death as he seems? As the expedition treks into the interior, Ahmed must cope with Jemma Khan's enmity, his own homesickness, and the difficulties of exploring unknown territory.

You might like to track Ahmed's journey on a map and discover what has happened to these places since then. You could delve into how our Aboriginal people behaved when they came across these explorers, suggest reasons, and what their appearance was back then. You can research contemporary Uluru, both as an icon and tourist attraction and discover its original name. What route does the Ghan railway take? What was there before the railway? What is the climate and terrain around Alice Springs like?

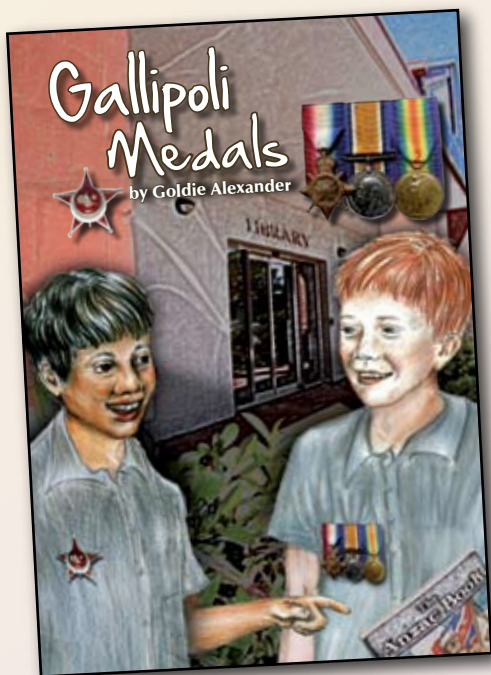


What happens to that land when it rains? The same for Gallipoli Cove.

If we don't have Aboriginal ancestors, we are all migrants. My parents arrived in Australia in the first part of the twentieth century and settled happily in Melbourne. Our great migrant waves have occurred at various times: during the gold rush, straight after World War Two, and in the seventies when the 'boat people' arrived. It's good to recall that Afghans have been responsible for opening up our vast continent and that without their camels the task would have been harder than it already was.

When I was young I always longed for a machine that would allow me to become part of a story. I always wanted to befriend some of the characters I read about. Then I could have had a fresh start with a whole new set of people. Back then as a somewhat solitary child who spent her life reading and imagining I was somewhere else with a 'nicer and far more sympathetic' family, I would have given anything to be assured that my loneliness would surely pass. I hope that maybe I can interest my readers into thinking the same way. I would like to help them look beyond the immediate present to see life as the continuum that it surely is. Because that's what literature is all about... isn't it?

www.goldiealexander.com



I COULD hear the ceiling fans twirl above my head. Today was the hottest day in summer. I could hear the radio blaring out the weather. Mum and Dad were at work as usual and I was left at home with my two dogs Darcy and Willow.

In the country it gets pretty hot, but I'm used to it. I remember on days like this dad would come with me to buy an ice cream from the ice cream van, now he's too busy with work.

Darcy and Willow pranced up and down, they could feel something. Suddenly the sky turned grey and the radio became clear. It blurted out something, it sounded like a warning! I walked outside to check if everything was okay but it just turned

foggy and no one could see. I moved through the fog and reached a place where I had never been before. It was a lake, a moon lit lake.

From up on the ground the lake looked dark and black. It was too hard to see if there were any signs of fish or something else! All I could see was the reflection of the moon.

The breeze was getting colder and colder as I walked closer to the lake. I circled the lake to see if it was okay to swim in. I took off my sandals and jumped in. The water was cold and refreshing as if it were drinkable. I gazed out to try and see home but the fog was still in the way. I put my head under water, was it a bad choice!

My eyes opened; I was still underneath. I felt as if my whole body got heavier as I sank to the bottom, and something was pulling me. I looked down to see if there was something holding my leg, but there was nothing. Why didn't I go up? Nothing was holding me. I soon felt like a bird as I flew up to gasp for breath. I quickly got out of the lake and stood to see what pulled me, but all I could see was the reflection of the moon.

By **Amelia Vine**

Year 6, Lauriston Girls' School

ARMADALE – VIC.

Teacher: Andrea Walter

The Moon Lit Lake

A dead twig snaps like a connection being broken
 It's funny how something dead can still remain,
 Lingering in one's mind like the puddles left from last night's rain
 Slowly evaporating when the sun begins to break through the clouds.
 In the disappearing puddles are blurry images
 Of sadness and loneliness
 Etching themselves into my brain
 Painful memories that have haunted me for years
 Leaving my heart scarred and heavy
 A teardrop falls,
 Causing ripples in the water
 And as quickly as they came,
 The images disappear
 Fading, to be forgotten forever.
 The sun suddenly disappears and again,
 I am surrounded by darkness that threatens to consume me –
 The thought of spending more endless nights alone bring fear into my eyes
 The cold wind blows like icy hands wrapping themselves around me
 Tightening their grip, suffocating me.
 I start losing my breath,
 As the cold darkness closes in on me.
 And I fail to see any light.
 I am happy knowing that when I pull out this dagger
 I will finally be welcomed into your warm arms again
 Where we will dance together forever
 In the sky.

By **Melissa Lay**

Year 9, St. John's Regional College

DANDENONG – VIC.

The Dance of Darkness

Some Dreams Are Deadly

THE ivy wrapped itself tightly around the trees making furrows on the trunks. "Abigail, Abigail wake up!" yelled Charity. "Someone's coming."

"Hmm", Abigail mumbled, not yet awake.

Charity stared at Abigail for a while. How tranquil and peaceful she looked in her sleep. Pity that was about to end. WHACK! She slapped Abigail hard against the face with her hand and she woke up with a start.

"What the yell did you do that for?" yelled Abigail, infuriated, her eyes almost red. "I was having the awesomest dream."

"Awesomest is not a word", snapped Charity.

"Is too."

"Is not."

"Is too."

"Shut up."

A rustling sound emerged from behind the ancient trees and a dark figure emerged. As suddenly as the figure came into view, the world they had come to know as home disappeared.

Abigail had been having the same dream for almost three nights in a row; it contained the same people, same surroundings, and same smells. But each time she'd dreamt it, one little detail would change. Whether it be the colour of one leaf on one of the trees, the colour of a flower or even the smell. Abigail realised this, but what she didn't know was that one day she'd be living her dream – in this case her nightmare.

"Where are we?" asked Charity anxiously, legs shaking.

"If I knew I'd tell you", Abigail replied sharply trying to hide her not so imperceptible fear. "This place does seem familiar."

"You mean you've been here?" Charity inquired looking at Abigail incredulously.

She didn't answer. Being a completely rational person, she was trying to locate their whereabouts and come up with a logical explanation for their circumstances. Numerous thoughts rushed through her head but after thoroughly thinking about it, they each didn't make much sense. Abigail concluded that only one thing could make sense at that moment: she and Charity were in her dream.

"Charity, we're in my dream", Abigail stated. Charity just looked at her like she had grown four more ears and continued looking around. "That is ludicrous, Abigail, how can we possibly be in your dream? Tell me how?"

"Charity, I'm not sure, but I promise you, that's where we are. I remember the surroundings, the smell, and the flow—" Charity interrupted her, "That's impossible. Get real Abi, I don't care what you say."

"I think you'd find that your friend is right." The girls both turned around and standing there was a dark figure. It didn't seem to have a mouth but somehow spoke. The figure looked like a skeleton wrapped in cling wrap covered in a dark cloth. For eyes he (?) had dark green acorn shaped things pushed into his head. For hands it had sharp claw like things, it looked terrifyingly menacing. Something neither of the girls wanted to get close to.

The figure moved closer to the girls and began to encircle them. His breath smelt of garlic – something familiar to Abigail. Well this is awkward, thought Charity, still trying to take in and digest thoroughly what had just happened. Some skeleton thing had just materialised behind them and is able to talk without moving his lips – he didn't have lips. Yep, this happens to everyone and I should not be one bit worried, Charity thought again sarcastically.

"No you're wrong girl", declared the 'thing' still encircling the girls in a green coloured substance. "This doesn't happen to many people and you should be worried".

"So you read minds too?" exclaimed Charity, exasperated, beginning to feel very uncomfortable. "This could be a problem."

Charity was right, for what the creature was doing could become a very big problem, because little did she or Abigail know that in exactly two minutes they'd be dead. Two minutes to find a way to defeat the creature. This could be a big problem, a very big one indeed.

Fifty seconds had already passed. A minute and fifty left to kill, or is it that the girls would perish? Twenty seconds more gone, surely they were going to die.

"One minute, thirty seconds. The back of neck. Now!" Abigail had a sudden realisation, all her dreams about this situation came back to her. Somehow in the next one and a half minutes they had to kill the 'thing'. It was the back of his neck that needed to be crushed, after that he'd be dead. It was like a game, and the prize was life. Such a dangerous game to play.

One minute left, thirty seconds had gone. Abigail somehow sent a telepathic message to Charity. While Charity distracted the abominable thing, she jumped onto his back and used a stick she'd carried to crush and jab into his neck. Blood oozed out rapidly. BANG! His neck cracked and he yelled in pain. BANG! He fell to the ground and quickly began to dissipate and evaporate.

"Abigail", yelled Charity, shaking Abigail back and forth. "Wake up!"

"What are you doing here in my room? I was having the awesomest dream."

"Me too."

"Was your dream about a weird skeleton thing that looked like it was wrapped in cling wrap and covered in a black cloth?"

"Is a lion carnivorous?"

And yes, a lion is carnivorous.

By **Prisca Ochan**
Year 8, Mansfield State High School
MANSFIELD – QLD.





SOMETIMES an author will write a novel to be the first in a trilogy or a series. Sometimes an author will write a novel and at the back of his mind, he'll be thinking, "I know where to take this if I ever write a sequel". And sometimes an author will write a novel, intending it to be a standalone book.

I wrote *Gamers' Quest*, a sci-fi, action/adventure, computer gaming novel, intending it to be a one-off. A standalone novel that people could read and then work out for themselves what the characters did after the ending.

So what do you do when your publisher rings you up and says "*Gamers' Quest* is really popular. Can you write a sequel?". Well, I thought about it for, like, two seconds before answering, "Sure thing!".

Now the problem was... what to write?

Well, I had a title — *Gamers' Challenge*. But now I had to give some serious thought to a storyline.

Once I stopped to actually think about it, it really wasn't that difficult. Even though I was not planning a sequel while writing *Gamers' Quest*, it was very clear in my mind what happened to the characters after the events of the novel.

Gamers' Quest follows the adventures of two teenage thieves, Tark and Zyra, as they embark on a quest to reach a place called Designers Paradise. It's fairly obvious to the reader from early on, that the world Tark and Zyra inhabit is inside a computer game. But Tark and Zyra do not know this.

The Challenge of a Computer Gaming Sequel

By George Ivanoff

To them, the world they live in is very real. Of course, during their adventures, revelations are made and by the end of the book, Tark and Zyra finally realise that they are actually in a game.

The ending of *Gamers' Quest* is deliberately ambiguous. I wanted readers to think about what had happened to Tark and Zyra. I wanted readers to ask questions. I wanted readers to work out for themselves what Tark and Zyra would do next.

Of course, I knew exactly what happened when I wrote the ending. I knew what Tark and Zyra would do next. To me it was obvious. Now that they knew they were inside a game, they would try to get out. But... I didn't know how they would go about it. And I didn't know who they would meet along the way. Or what their obstacles might be.

And the "how", "who" and "what" are very important. They are the things that will make a story interesting and exciting. So this was my challenge in writing the sequel — come up with some interesting and exciting "how's", "who's" and "what's".

One of the things I loved about writing *Gamers' Quest* was the ability to go over-the-top — to people the computer game world with a host of bizarre characters and creatures and to pitch Tark and Zyra against an array of way-out threats. In that first book they had to deal with a dragon, a cyborg, a giant robot spider, a gang of mutants, some warrior monks, a space battle, a magical rat, a finger-cracking thief, a couple of mages and even a legion of Roman soldiers.

So, with book two, I was again able to let my imagination run free. This time around we have prophetic cheat-codes, dinosaurs, zombies, homicidal balls of static, a unicorn, a super-human soldier, a pinball wizard, an insane computer virus and the Ultimate Gamer. And a few familiar faces from the first book also make appearances.

This time around, the big difference for me was that I was thinking about future possibilities as I was writing. So by the time I had finished writing book two, I had an outline in my mind for a third book. I

know what the characters will do after the end of book two... and I know how they will do it, who they will meet and what threats they will face.

Will book three ever actually get written and published? I don't know. But what I do know is that if my publisher rings me up to say that he wants a third book, I won't have to hesitate for even a second. I'll just say "YES!" straight away.

I had a lot of fun writing *Gamers' Challenge*!

I hope you have a lot of fun reading it!

Want to know more about *Gamers' Quest* and *Gamers' Challenge*? Check out the official website to download stories, music and a computer animated video: www.gamersquestbook.com or check out my website at www.georgeivanoff.com.au.





Lions Australia



Rob Eyton, Project Chairman,
and Council Chairman Bob Gilchrist

Supporting School Visits and Author Workshops

School visits by children's authors can be arranged by the schools through the Children's Charity Network. This provides an opportunity for children to participate in literary workshops with our patrons, including renowned children's book authors Hazel Edwards, Paul Collins, Anna Ciddor, Libby Hathorn and Lorraine Wilson. These workshops provide a wonderful experience for children.



A display of student work welcomed
Marjory Gardner to Minyip Primary
School



Artwork produced by a pupil during
Marjory Gardner's illustration workshops
at Minyip Primary School



Marjory Gardner shows some of her
collage artwork to pupils at Minyip
Primary School



Marjory Gardner shows pupils at Minyip
Primary School a drawing she did when she
was their age.

**Marjory
Gardner
visits Minyip
Primary
School**



Marjory Gardner shows Minyip Primary
School pupils artwork from her picture book
'Grandma's Place'.

A Big Lesson for Kings

ONCE upon a time long ago, there lived a Royal King. The King's name was King Gary Gilbert. King Gary was rude and selfish. The King would punish anyone and everyone if he or she would do or say something that would offend the King. He would shoot them out of a cannon or not let them sleep for a hundred hours. Once he even made someone eat boogers because he swore at the King.

As you can probably see, nobody liked the King. All the townspeople wished they could get rid of the King but they had no power over him. But just when all the townspeople had thought all hope had gone down the drain, a knight in shining armour (well not exactly a knight in shining armour – he actually had the most hideous green armour that you could ever think of with bright hot pink polka dots) came along. Everyone in the town just looked at the knight, shocked, but the king did exactly the opposite. He just started laughing like mad.

“Don’t laugh at me you rude little man because I challenge you to a duel”, said the knight.

But inside he was scared out of his wits.

“Next Friday is the duel”, said the King.

As the knight was walking around the town, searching for a hotel to stay in, he bumped into an old man. The old man said, “My hotel is nearby, you can stay there for free for the week if you get rid of the King”.

“OK”, agreed the knight.

The next day the old man told the knight that his name was Ted. Ted and the knight practised sword fighting. At the end of the session Ted told the knight, “Beware, the King never plays by the rules”.

On Sunday, Ted and the knight practised ducking.

“Perfect, just perfect”, congratulated Ted. “The King is violent, so be very careful.”

After Ted had finished talking, the knight heard an evil laugh behind him. The knight looked around and saw the King with a bow and arrow. The King shot the arrow and it struck Ted’s heart. The King gave one last look and walked calmly away. The knight looked sadly at Ted. He was bleeding profusely. The knight began to weep, then he started to cry a waterfall of tears.



After a few hours the knight stopped crying. He buried Ted in the backyard of his hotel.

The next day the knight pounded on the King’s door.

“What, what?” said the King, half asleep.

“Last night you killed my friend”, said the knight.

“So!” shrieked the King.

“I want the duel to happen NOW!” shouted the knight.

“Fine”, replied King Gary Gilbert.

A few minutes later, King Gary Gilbert and the knight were in the lounge room of the King’s palace.

“Once I say go”, said one of the King’s guards, “you can try to chop each other’s heads off”.

“GOOOO!” shouted the guard.

As quick as lightning, the King pulled a gun from his pocket. Just then, the knight remembered his old friend’s words that the King was a cheat.

“Bang!” went the King’s pistol.

But the knight’s quick reflexes allowed him to block the bullet with his sword.

The knight didn’t give up. Finally the knight said, “Look, an eagle is behind you”.

The king was never good at school and didn’t know that eagles don’t live in or near London. So, he turned around. The knight pushed the King to the ground and pointed his sword at King Gary’s chest.

“I want you to get out of this town and never return”, said the knight, pressing the sword more threateningly into the King’s chest.

But suddenly, the King’s guard pushed the knight over, away from the king.

As quick as a flash, the King got up off the ground.

“Bring it on”, said the knight.

And with a flick of his wrist the knight was able to strike the King in his heart with his sword, killing him instantly.

Just as the King’s guard was about to strangle the knight, they both heard an ear-piercing, terrifying, ghastly “ROAAAR”.

“What’s that?” asked the knight to the guard.

"It's the flying freak, also known as Gliderine. It's been terrorising the town for ages. We don't know why."

The knight and the guard went outside because the knight wanted to see the Flying Freak up close. Once they got outside, they both looked up into the sky. They saw the flying beast. It suddenly swooped down and grabbed the guard in its strong beak.

"HELP!" shrieked the guard.

He must be in real trouble, thought the knight because he sounded like a four year old girl. The brave knight didn't need to think twice. He ran as fast as he could and followed the beast to its cave. The knight hid behind a rock. He pulled out his sword and threw it. Unfortunately, it missed. Without stopping to think, the knight ran straight at the Gliderine. He picked up a

rock and threw it at the mighty beast's eyes. The flying freak fell down to the ground instantly. The strong knight pushed the monster's beak up to get the guard out.

"Thank you, oh thank you", said the guard.

"All in a day's work for a knight like me", boasted the knight.

The knight and the guard walked back to town. The told the townspeople that the King and the Gliderine were both dead. All the townspeople cheered.

The knight looked around and he saw a horse. He ran over to the horse, jumped on and said "Goodbye" to the townspeople. Then he rode over to the guard.

"Sorry about the King", said the knight. "He killed Ted so I had to."

"That's okay, I never really liked him", said the guard.

The knight waved goodbye for one last time and rode off into the horizon.

Every year in that little town near London, they have a celebration on that very day the King died. Now the knight is in Hong Kong or somewhere around the world helping other towns.

All the townspeople lived happily ever after, including the guard and the knight.

By Jack McGill

Year 4, Mountain Creek State School

MOUNTAIN CREEK – QLD.

Teacher: Doug Larsen

IT ALL began when I was on a boardwalk in the jungle at 3:00 in the morning. I was there so early in the morning because I loved the peace and quiet. The boardwalk was far from the ground and above all the spiky trees and bushes. I was all alone in a jungle and it was so dark. Then I heard this unusual noise. I looked down at my feet, then realised that the wood underneath me was cracking. I stared at the floor in terror. But it was too late to run, I was already falling.

But in a flash, I was lifted into the air. Hang on a second, who was lifting me up? Then I looked up and a dragon was carrying me up into the clouds. When the dragon stopped flying, we landed at a palace made of chocolate. When we got in to the palace the dragon told me her name. She was called Fairy Floss and she had pink and green triangles all over her body. I told her my name. She thought that my name, Lily, was the most beautiful name in the world. The dragon introduced me to the King and Queen of the chocolate palace. The King and Queen of

the palace were very kind. They said that they would send me home with 1,000 chocolates. When I heard that I said, "Well can I please have them now? I'd better go home because my mum and dad are probably looking for me".

"OK then", they said. The dragon offered me a ride home and I said, "Yes please". When I got home I told my mum and dad the whole story, but of course they didn't believe me. But that was only until they went up to my room and saw the

huge pile of chocolate wrappers on my bedroom floor.

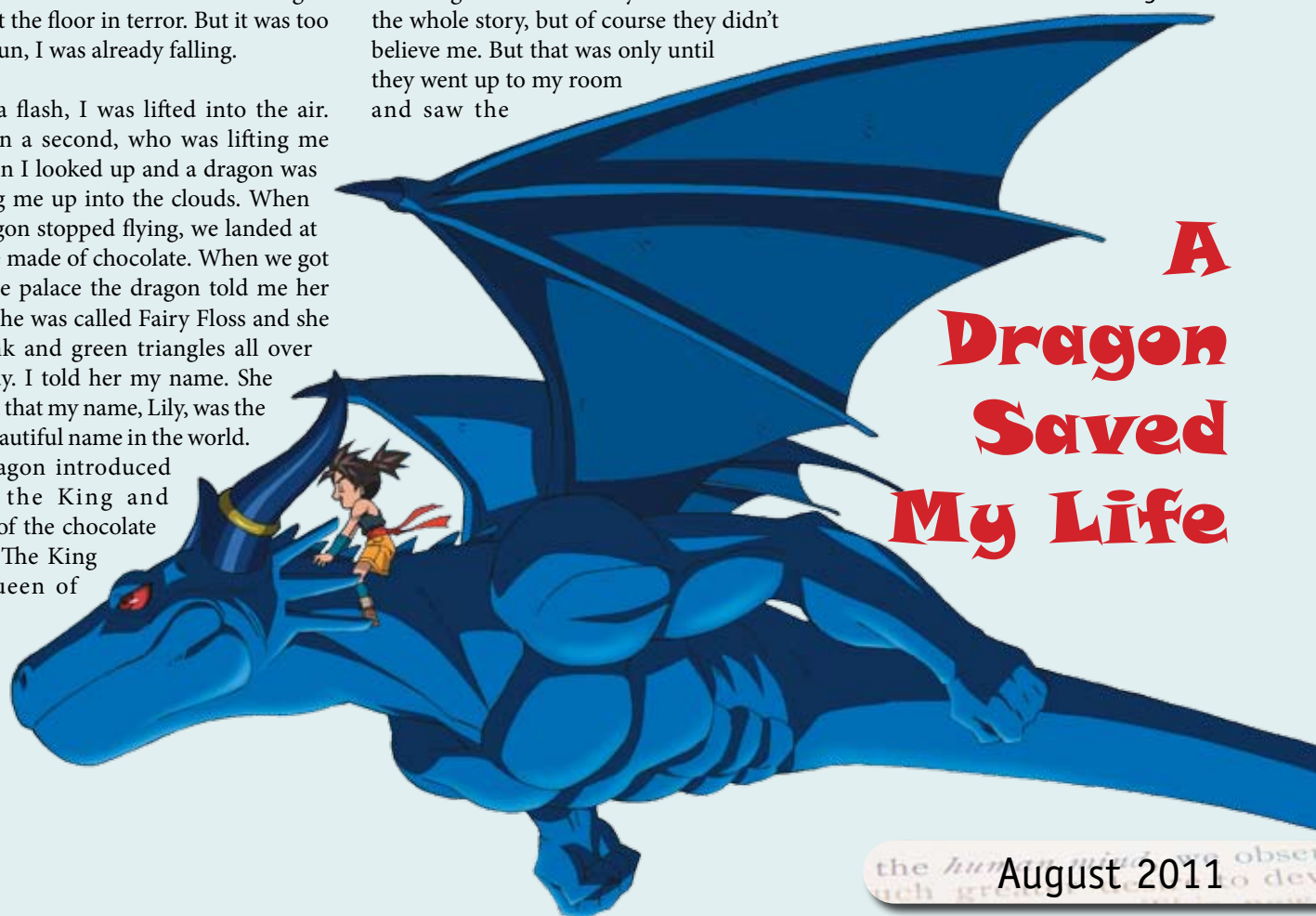
"How do I get to this chocolate palace?" my mum suddenly enquired.

By Lily Evans

Year 4, Mountain Creek State School

MOUNTAIN CREEK – QLD.

Teacher: Doug Larsen



A Dragon Saved My Life

Sunset Ride

WATCH from the sky as I gaze in wonder at the panoramic view. The summer sky was setting and the hue of the bright sun was slowly fading away. I felt the fresh autumn breeze brush my face as I slowly drift above Torquay beach.

I was tempted to grab my surfboard and catch some waves myself alongside the other surfers. I could notice every detail from here, like a canopy of trees about five kilometres away, covering Torquay road. Below there was a nice camping ground packed for the Easter holidays with children playing games. The winds blew me away from the herd of tents below and led me towards Bells Beach.

The surf at Bells Beach made Torquay look waveless. A few surfers were catching massive waves before sunset. They were hard waves to catch, but the locals mastered the waves and made it look simple. I decided I should come back to Torquay, so I steered against the wind.

I overlooked the horizon one more time, then sailed softly downwards and landed with a gentle thump in the giant basket and hopped out before the deflated balloon could squash me like a pancake.

*By James Burwood
Year 5, St. Mary's Primary School
HAMPTON – VIC.*

I CROUCHED on a battered cobblestone of what was once part of a road. A cold breeze picked up and my eyes searched the old ruins for any sign of life. My long hair matted with twigs and leaves fell in my eyes when I turned my head to check behind me. I irritably brushed it out of the way then tensed. Something in the shadows next to me had stirred at my sudden movement; the thing I had been dreading. The figure was hunched, and as I watched it started to rise. The creature might lunge if I moved suddenly and ran. I didn't want that, because from the size of that unfriendly dark smudge, it didn't look like I stood much of a chance.

It opened its eyes, and through the dense shadows I found myself staring into two large orange diamonds of fury. The shape moved forwards slowly and the sound of heavy feet snapping twigs rang loudly and clearly in the eerie quiet of this forgotten place. I rose slowly to my feet and backed away, being careful to not move too suddenly. Seven, eight, nine paces back... If I didn't get this right, it would be the death of me. I couldn't start running in

the openness of the road; it would catch me too easily. Taking a chance and hoping for the best, I spun round and ran straight into the cover of the ruins. A deep, bone rattling growl echoed through the ruins and I froze. I resisted the urge to turn my head, but stood horror struck to the ground as the creature thundered across the cobblestones towards me.

I darted to the nearest one and collapsed behind it. My breathing was ragged and heavy, and although I knew I should be breathing quietly, I couldn't help it. My back to the rough marble, my chest rapidly rising and falling, I listened for the sound of pursuit. There it was. The soft crunch of paws on grass. My fingers dug into the dirt. The sound grew louder and louder as the creature came closer and closer. Then the sound stopped, directly behind me, and the ground shook as the creature gave a roar and closed in on its prey.

My legs shook but I pushed myself forwards. There was a roar of anger alarmingly close behind me; the creature was mad at how its prey had chosen to run away instead of just standing and being caught. In and out of the pillars I darted, my eyes scanning desperately for somewhere I could go where it wouldn't be able to follow me. Even my swiftness in running

was no match for it; it was about ten metres behind now. I rounded a corner and to my right I saw a staircase, worn down after years in the bitter wind, but the ledges would still make good footholds.

I swerved towards it and leapt up two stairs at a time. I reached the top and looked around me, desperately looking for a place to hide. The stairs had led up the side of a hill and all around me was just fields and fields of grass. I couldn't run any more and there was nowhere to hide for miles except a few broken pillars.

*By Isabelle Messenger
Year 7, Ravenswood School for Girls
GORDON – NSW
Teacher: Sharon Shapiro*



Feral Pets

Dogs growl, Dogs bite,
They give my brother such a fright,
Cats spit, Cats scratch,
They eat the cookies baked batch by batch,
Fish splash, Fish swim around,
I'd rather have a pet that lives on the ground,
Mice nibble, Mice make me sneeze,
At the dead of night they'll steal your cheese,
Hamsters squeak, Hamsters look funny,
Hamsters cost us heaps of money,
Horses neigh, They leave stinky manure,
Their illnesses cost a fortune to cure,
Birds screech, Birds soar,
I'd rather have a dinosaur,
Just thinking about them gives me blisters,
But I'd rather have them all instead of my little sisters

By **Kimberley Keoh**

Year 4, Apollo Parkways Primary School
GREENSBOROUGH – VIC.

Laughter has gone
The feeling has returned
The patches of color fade
And the darkness of gloom takes its place.

Cold air hangs around you
The burden of weight is on your back
The echo of nature has been replaced
With the noises of man

There is no one around
Nothing moves
The memory of sound
Is a million miles away

Black, black and black
Is all you see
Pain and sorrow is all you feel
Today

Darkness is your only friend
There is no one else for you
You think you are all alone
There is nothing you can do

By **Kithma Kaluwitharana**

Year 9,
St. John's Regional College
DANDENONG – VIC.

Invasion

I saw them with my very own sight.
They were spirit people. They were white.
Some of them had a gun.
They didn't look like they were fun.

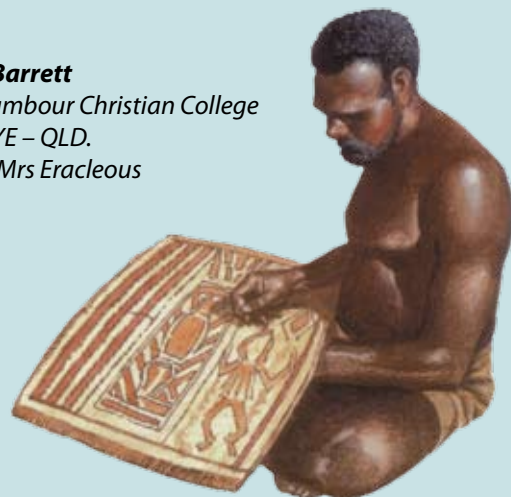
I didn't think they would stay.
I thought they would eventually go away.
They just caused plenty of trouble,
I need to get away quickly, by the double.

As we died from getting sick.
They made more houses out of brick.
As the animals leave I feel sad.
My family begin to die, I am mad.

We are a family, our skin beautiful brown.
Our lives now change forever, we wear a frown.
They are the people with skin of white.
To keep our way of life we must fight!

By **Milla Barrett**

Year 4, Nambour Christian College
WOOMBYE – QLD.
Teacher: Mrs Eracleous



ESTELLA van Lockwood was a shy, quiet girl. Though her father was the richest man in all of town and lived in the infamous Van Lockwood Manor, she always preferred to stay within the tall, safe walls of the Linden Library.

The owner of the library, Mr. Linden, was very fond of the timid girl. He always suggested dozens of different books for Estella to read and together they would chat about the hundreds of thick volumes the library held.

On one particular day in late December, when the bitter English weather was chilling everybody to the bone and snow fell gently from the sky, Estella was rifling through the fiction section of the library. As her gloved hands pulled out book after book, a dusty old volume bound in blue silk caught her eyes.

Estella picked it up curiously and flipped through its yellowing sheets of paper. There were pages and pages of words written elegantly in violet ink with stunning illustrations painted on every third page. On the front cover, the title was written stylishly in curling silver letters:

The Book of Fairytales.

"I wouldn't read that", a low, scratchy voice whispered from behind her. Estella jumped, startled, and turned around to find old Mr. Linden stooping in front of her.

"Why?" she asked curiously, clutching the book tightly in her arms.

Mr. Linden looked steadily at her, his clear blue eyes revealing years of sorrow and

regret. "It is cursed", he said softly. The Book of Fairytales seemed to quiver in Estella's hands.

Estella gave a forced laugh, gripping the book even tighter to her chest. "You need to work more on your jokes, Mr. Linden." She smiled broadly, but it wasn't a true smile. "I'll take the book anyway."

Mr. Linden shook his head. "Take it if you must, child", he warned her. "But you will regret it."

★ ★ ★

As soon as Estella arrived at her home she sped into her bedroom and sat on her bed. Opening the *Book of Fairytales* on her lap, she flicked on the lamp and began reading.

She had already finished the first story, which was called *The Ebony Forest*, in less than twenty minutes. It told the gruesome story of two young children who entered an evil wood and were taught many lessons before being killed mercilessly.

The stories, though strange, entranced Estella and she read on and on until she was at the last fairytale. By then, moonlight was streaming through the open window and the Van Lockwood Manor was silent as its inhabitants slept peacefully.

Estella was only two pages of the book away from finishing the last fairytale,

The Vine Creeper. But she was just so, so tired...

She laid her head on her pillow sleepily, the book still open by her side. Gently closing her eyes, she fell into a deep slumber.

Just at that moment, a leafy vine snaked out of the book and wrapped itself around Estella's dainty gloved wrist. More vines followed and soon the ropes were surrounding the sleeping girl. If you were there at that time, you would've seen by the dim lamp light the sharp vine wrap around Estella's neck, and watch as it slowly leeched all the breath from her body. You would've seen as the vines engulfed her body and wrapped around her torso, crushing her.

Far away in the library, Mr. Linden sipped casually from a mug of steaming chamomile tea, in full knowledge that at that moment, Estella Van Lockwood was dead.

He shook his head sadly.

He had warned her about the book.

Now it was too late.

By Isabel Nakonieczny
Year 6, Lauriston Girls' School
ARMADALE – VIC.

Mr Linden's Library

(inspired by the illustration from 'Harris Burdick' by Chris van Alsborg)

TORN

A torn country of fighting and destruction;
Its people abused and afraid.
The screams of the hurt pierce the air,
Though they are drowned out by the air raid.

The soldiers flock to the battlefield
Fighting for a forgotten cause.
In the bloodshed and the hate,
There is not the slightest pause.

The heartache and the suffering,
The constant shedding of tears,
Are what the country has been known for
Throughout all these years.

Bombs fall on the weakened country,
Already poor and stricken with grief.
Too long the people have prayed and hoped,
Help is now beyond belief.

By **Talia Walker**
Year 11, Cerdon College
MERRYLANDS – NSW

THE ANZACS' FIGHT

As they stood, intrepid,
they fought, for they were loyal.
As they braved the warfare,
they fought, throughout the toil
Devoted to their country,
they fought, for they were fearless
Despite the death and the war,
they stood, and they were tearless.
In the aftermath they stood,
guns standing at their sides.
After the aftermath they stood,
respectful, for all those who died.
Now we remember,
throughout all the troubles.
how the men fought,
and fought in the rubble.
And the soldiers,
we honour them now
for they are the ANZACS.
And they survived, somehow.

By **Shannon Allas-Scott**
Year 6, Belgrave South Primary School
BELGRAVE SOUTH – VIC.

Beautiful Soul of a Fragile Mind

By **Adrian Harper-Gomm**
Year 9, Kambrya College
BERWICK – VIC.
Teacher: Mrs Leia Hands

A tune that is my cure,
A melody so sweet and pure,
With a harmony of joyful delight,
Has the world an abundance of beautiful sight.

Beautiful soul of a fragile mind,
Hearts are blessed with a love so kind,
All eyes twinkle with a special spark,
The brightest light amongst the shrouding dark.

In a world of forgotten tears and cries,
Of rights and wrongs and truth and lies,
In a world of happiness and unwanted demise,
One's dreams are filled only where one tries.

Failure is not part of a given routine,
But a chance to step away from where you've already been,
To venture the path where no one else will go,
To give an experience to those who don't know.

Where all the money in the world can't buy us love,
But for those greedy few who have never enough,
In times of despair we seek the truth,
In the absence of trust we find the proof.

Knowing a person and sharing their dreams,
Changing their life while mending the seams,
Taking advice and learning their mind,
Beautiful soul of a fragile mind.



The Battle at Eureka



The miners who worked at Ballarat,
Were fed up with the law.
They had to pay a licence fee,
It was making them all poor.

Governor Hotham told police
To search them every day.
If they didn't have their licenses,
He gave them hell to pay.

The miners were already seething,
When they eventually snapped.
A drunken miner murdered,
With a shovel he'd been whacked.

'Twas the seventh of November,
Eighteen fifty four.
When James Scobie and another friend,
Knocked on the Eureka Hotel's door.

The landlord told them both to leave,
With anger in his voice.
They kept on knocking anyway,
The landlord had no choice.

Creeping like a hunter,
He swung his shovel round.
He caught the side of Scobie's head
And knocked him to the ground.

Scobie's neck was broken,
Killed by this vicious blow.
Although the miners all complained,
Justice was being slow.

The police had all ignored,
Their justified demands.
So the angry miners took the law
From Governor Hotham's hands.

They marched upon the Eureka Hotel,
In kerosene it was drowned.
They all took up their torches
And burnt it to the ground.

The licence hunts continued
And they happened more and more.
For the very angry miners,
This was the final straw.

They found themselves some leaders,
Harris, Lalor and Vern.
They met one night on Bakery Hill
And said the licences should burn.

They made themselves a brilliant flag,
From the stars that light the night.
It was this flag that incited them,
That they should stand and fight.

The miners built a stockade,
As tall as any man.
The miners picked up weapons
And dropped their picks and pans.

On the second of December,
Eighteen fifty four,
Some miners left the stockade,
They would stay there no more.

They thought that Governor Hotham,
Being a leader and all,
Would not attack on a Sabbath day.
They'd be safe outside the wall.

But these miners were misguided,
The redcoats all advanced
On Sabbath day, at morning time.
To start the deadly dance.

The soldiers stormed the stockade
And beat it into the dirt.
The miners lost quickly,
Some died and most were hurt.

On the third day of December,
Eighteen fifty four.
Governor Hotham won the fight,
But badly lost the war.

Public sympathy was with the miners,
They were shocked by Hotham's gall.
They said he had no place to fight,
Against the miners in a war.

Scobie's killer was retrialled
And very quickly jailed.
There never is a perfect crime,
His escape attempt had failed.

The licences were scrapped
And never used again.
The miners' suffering had ended,
There would be no more pain.

Lalor made Parliament,
Harris and Vern, heroes they became.
And foolish Governor Hotham
Took all the public's blame.

The miners at Eureka,
Fought the unjust boss.
For the right to earn a living,
They died by the Southern Cross.

By **Daniel Gates**

Year 6, Huntingtower School

MT. WAVERLEY – VIC.

Teacher: Mrs Margaret Jones

Ambassadors



🍷 **Krista Bell** is an award-winning author of twenty-one books for young readers. Krista has been professionally involved in children's literature for over thirty years, as well as being the mother of three sons, all of whom are good readers and writers! Krista's middle son, Damien, is the illustrator of her junior novels. Having grown up in Sydney, Krista had her own bookshop, was a publicist for a publishing company, then a book reviewer on ABC Radio for fifteen years, and during that time moved to Melbourne with her family.

It was in Melbourne that her first book, *JEZZA*, a picture book illustrated by Kym Lardner, was published in 1991. Krista calls the way she writes FIBTION, because she takes real life experiences, embroiders them with fibs and turns them into stories.

Krista lives with her sons and transport planner husband next to a railway line so she can quickly catch a train to the MCG to watch a football match, or go to the theatre, a concert or the National Gallery in town, or visit South Bank or Federation Square where she can be a professional "stickybeak", collecting story ideas. Visit www.kristabell.com.

Paul Collins was born in England, raised in New Zealand and moved to Australia in 1972. In 1975 he launched *Void*, the first professional science fiction magazine Australia had seen since the demise of the joint Australian and British production *Vision of Tomorrow*. His first fantasy novel for younger readers was *The Wizard's Torment*. Paul then edited the young adult anthology *Dream Weavers*, Australia's first heroic fantasy anthology ever. This was followed by *Fantastic Worlds*, and *Tales from the Wasteland*. Paul's recent works include the highly successful fantasy series (co-edited with Michael Pryor), *The Quentaris Chronicles*, to which Paul also contributes titles (*Swords of Quentaris*, *Slaves of Quentaris*, *Princess of Shadows* and *Dragonlords of Quentaris*); *The Jelindel Chronicles*, in which *Dragonlinks* was the first title, and *The Earthborn Wars* trilogy, of which *The Earthborn* was the first title. Visit www.paulcollins.com.au for more. ➡



🍷 **Anna Ciddor** has always been fascinated by the question, 'What if I lived in another time or place?'. She changed career from maths teacher to author so she'd have the excuse to spend lots of time doing research. She has written and illustrated over fifty books, including the highly popular and exciting Viking Magic trilogy: *Runestone*, *Wolfspell* and *Stormriders*. Bravery, friendship, and a dash of magic are the keys to these adventure stories, which are based on real Viking history. *Runestone* was chosen as a Children's Book Council Notable Book in 2003 and has been shortlisted for many awards. You can find out more about Anna and her books at www.annaciddor.com.

Anna keeps in touch with her readers through school visits and her website, but she is also keen to encourage the writing efforts of budding young authors through the Young Australian Writers' Awards.

Meredith Costain lives in Melbourne with a menagerie of pets: five chooks, a cat, a kelpie and a red heeler, which often feature in her stories. Her work ranges from picture books through to popular fiction and non-fiction for older readers, and she is the literary editor of national children's magazines *Challenge*, *Explore* and *Comet*. Meredith's books include the series *A Year in Girl Hell*, *Dog Squad*, *Bed Tails* and *Musical Harriet*, which was adapted for television by the ABC. Her picture book *Doodledum Dancing*, illustrated by Pamela Allen, was an Honour Book in the 2007 Children's Book Council of Australia awards.

Meredith regularly presents writing workshops for kids and adults in libraries and schools, and enjoys helping writers create stories based on their own experiences. To find out more about her books, pets and early writing years, visit www.meredithcostain.com. ➡



🍷 **Jeni Mawter** (J.A. Mawter) is the best-selling children's author of the hilarious 'So' series: *So Gross!*, *So Feral!*, *So Sick!*, *So Festy!*, *So Grotty!* and *So Stinky!* (HarperCollins) as well as the Freewheelers adventure series: *Unleashed!*, *Launched!* and *Extreme!* (HarperCollins). Jeni's picture book *There's a Sun Fairy in Our Garden* was based on her family life with her three children. She has also published fiction, non-fiction, poetry and verse narrative for the education market.

Jeni's enthusiasm for words and books is infectious. She inspires both children and adults. With a Master of Arts in Children's Literature Jeni has taught creative writing at Macquarie University, the NSW Writer's Centre and the Sydney Writers Centre. She presents at numerous other schools, conferences and festivals and is a speaker for the Lateral Learning, Show & Tell and Speaker's Ink speaker's agencies.

If you'd like to find about Jeni's books or to get some hot writing tips please visit www.jenimawter.com

ROAD TO DESPERATION

I WAS panting. All the energy was taken out of me but yet I still must run. Yes run. As far away as possible. Memory glazed and head spinning. Everything is a great blur. What's wrong with me? I, I can't... feel my legs. I reach down and feel the warm blood trickling down mixing with the fresh sweat beads. There is a large gash piercing through the bone under the skin of my leg. When did this happen? My heart, it feels like a lump of steel being belted across my chest in each merciless second. How much longer will I last? My breaths are getting slower and yet I still must run. Run... run... faster. Ignore the desire to stop, something is after me! As I collapse to the ground my thoughts sing to me in a song of defeat. I can't breathe and there is no one to save me. I tried to free the world of war and regret but as each breath passes my life and livelihood drains away. A tear forms in my eye followed by another until my sight had been totally vanquished into sorrow. I try to yell with a distinctive

effort, but as I open my mouth I gasp for my final breath. One last word seemed to mimic death and that was desperation. My cold heart lay restlessly and my eyes are strained open looking into the distance of, let's say, reality.

I awaken with a stutter from the horrid image in disbelief. That seemed so realistic... Just a figment of my imagination I guess. But it's been happening so often lately it's not funny. The images are haunting me but why is it so hard to believe?... What was that? Must try getting back into focus, why must I be prone to headaches... Victoria?... huh... VICTORIA!!! Wake up, you good for nothing slacker! It was Mr Jones my... unusual biology teacher. What do you want sir? That's the third time this week you've drifted off during one of my lessons! I can't hel... And don't give me any of your excuses, I have had enough. But Sir... That's it you're going to see the school counsellor NOW. As he wiped the pool of sweat of his forehead I gathered myself up and stumbled towards the door. In the

corner of my eye I could see the amount of satisfaction he had achieved from that ordeal. With one last envious bit of effort, I slammed the door behind me and ran for the corridor.

As I walk down on the newly polished tiles, I think to myself. The school doesn't seem the same today. Its atmosphere feels denser and people seem really tight up. Maybe it's because it's a Monday, must be the reason. Ever since I moved into the city of London, my life has changed dramatically. Everyone is so different from the people in my home town of... of... Oh my Gosh I can't even remember where I was born! A tear falls from my eye and dribbles down to the tip of my nose. All of my memories have faded too far back into the past of my consciousness to recall. As I walk around the corner, I start to feel tenser. Something really seems peculiar around here. Almost there I thought to myself, just keep your head up and don't turn back. As I approach the counsellor's office I stop for a moment to peer at the door. It was an old wooden design, probably jarrah, and had a nice glazed glass through the middle. Very old

school if you asked me. But as I lurched forward my heart froze with fear. Through the glass I could make out two distinctive shadows. Shadows that resembled people. I just gazed at the door but couldn't move. I closed my eyes relaxingly and focused. Slowly voices were making their way through the crevices of the door seemingly whispering down the corridor. Their words became clear and apparent to me. So we have a new problem on our hands I see, how could she have hidden here for so long without anyone noticing? She doesn't even know what is happening; can't you give her some slack? No I have to take care of the problem before she remembers, do you want a law suit slung onto your backside? No I guess not... Just don't make a big deal about it OK, we don't want them to find out. Them? Who are they I thought to myself. My focus becomes disturbed from sudden silence. All of my reflexes start to panic. Small footsteps start proceeding their way up towards the door. As each agonising creak of the floor boards gets closer my muscles start aching. My leg takes one step to the side, followed by another but then paused for a moment. As soon as the doors' handle started moving and I heard the door make a dreadful moan, I ran for all that I was worth. This seemed to be a lot from what I had heard. I think by now they would have figured out that somebody was listening to their conversation. So I was in hot pursuit.

I ran for the closest turn off so they couldn't see me, if only they couldn't see me. I wouldn't dare look back in case I was to be conceived. Footsteps were pounding their way along the tiles, getting closer to me by the second. Before me I perceived to be a small corridor, one that I had never seen before. But of the position I was in, I was sort of forced to squeeze into the narrow opening and shuffle my way down the other end. Slowly I pushed and shoved forward getting myself almost stuck in between the two narrowing walls. My breaths were forced to slow down as I wait patiently for the people to find me. My heart rate is building up quickly as if I can almost hear it. A middle aged man runs past the corridor in great determination to find the offender. I try and waffle further down but in the process I manage to scrape my elbow just scuffing the skin. Soon after another man follows but stops dead in his tracks at the corridor opening. He looked to be slightly intrigued by the discovery he had made. This man was looking directly at me but somehow didn't see that I was

there. An expression, a priceless expression emerged from his effortless frown. This was the moment I knew I was found but strangely enough he just crinkled up his nose and closed his eyes to let out a... sneeze? After he had cleaned his nose on his sleeve he walked off without another word.

Giving myself one last push I had made it through the corridor into another room. I think this was the old principal's workroom until he got fired and they decided to knock it down, I guess they never actually got rid of it. It was almost pitch black apart from a dim light. Wait did I just see a dim light? I ran towards the light almost knocking a few things over. It was a window overlooking the fence into the grassland next door. This could be my escape out of here. I felt around for a light switch but couldn't find one; they must have taken out the power. A deep black object made itself present to my eye. I picked up this smooth heavy object and walked towards the window. I have to do it, either I make it out of here, or die trying. My arm reflexes back and lunges forward to hurtle the object straight at the glass. Within the time frame of flexing my arm I heard something unusual. Similar to a pin dropping. But as the glass shattered it speared my heart to think how could I have been so stupid. I was not alone in the room. What I threw must have been a motion sensor and the sound it had made was the silent alarm.

Without a second thought I turned to my right and saw my reflection looking at me through the many pieces of glass. My head starts spinning and my mind wonders off. Words whisper themselves into the nothingness. Desperation and the desire to live. I think I'm having another nightmare, Images flow but the people have no voices. There is a large factory and I see myself hiding in one of the air vents above what was probably a consolation meeting. These people were seemingly up to nothing good grinning and smiling at draft plans held in their possession. For some reason I was taking photos and was being very cautious to whether I had been perceived or not. All so suddenly all the people went quiet and stopped looking so up themselves. An alert message came through on the big wide screen at the front. All that I could make out was that something had gone wrong in their power and the source was somewhere nearby. This was my getaway time, to retreat and have concealed all of

the evidence. Somehow they had spotted me and were trying with all of their effort to stop me in my tracks. Suddenly a loud gunshot breaks the silence in my nightmare and I am stunned awake. In this it was an opening back into my memory, I reach down and feel the scare along my lower leg where once had been a bullet wound. They are after me; they will kill me with any chance. I have the evidence, which could in fact send them to jail and ruin their lives. The blank expression on my face turns eager when I realise I have the power to do something for the world.

My only chance to do so was to get the photos to the police services so they could contact the government straight away and give an end to this operation. Before making any drastic decisions I knew that if I were to jump out the window, I wouldn't be able to jump the fence because it had electric currents running through it. Killing myself would be the least of my problems at this stage but wouldn't help anyone in anyway. By now the people would be getting closer to me as I did set off the trigger. Wait I think I have an idea. My only chance now was to feel around and try and find something to save my evidence. What's this? I feel a machine... and not any machine, a fax machine. A high-pitched noise I hear coming from the wall, they are drilling their way in! Quickly I must try and turn it on. Feeling around I discover an on switch, luckily this machine was still connected to the power and started up in a jiffy. Looking at the wall it is starting to form a crack with plaster falling off of the interior. I empty my pockets and find a PIN number and a photo to yet be processed. I stuffed them into the machine and wrote "Government Property, please fax ASAP to the police if found", pressed "send" and hoped that wherever they went they would get to authority urgently. Suddenly the wall crashed down and I heard footsteps rush into the room yelling in another language, I think Japanese. I ran to the window and stood on the ledge having these many eyes gaze at me and pointed guns. Without a second word I had stopped breathing and fell to my knees in disbelief. My eyes closed and I saw nothing, for a change in my life. A grin was left on my face for I had no more to despair. My road to desperation was no more.


By Jessica Carpenter

Year 10, Kelmscott Senior High School

KELMSCOTT – WA

Teacher: Mrs Gwyne

In a Melbourne minute...



I ALWAYS loved Melbourne in the autumn. It's the time of year that signals the transition from the vibrancy of summer into the bleakness of an icy winter. The occasionally bleak concrete jungle is engulfed in a cocoon of burnt crimson leaves and there's something about the wind that's hard to explain. I must admit, I'm one of the only people I know who shares this lovely (if not slightly clichéd) opinion of my home town. My friends think I'm a nutter. Especially Caitlyn. She may be the kind of girl who makes her own clothes, dyes her hair with some Indian forest gunk and is always talking about 'chakras', yet if I even mention my love of this city she looks at me as if I'm just a sad teenage girl. Which, quite rightly, I am. That girl is one of the strongest people I've ever encountered. It's not a surprise really, when you think about what she's been through.

When Caitlyn was eleven, her Grandmother got really sick. I'm not just talking a cold with some minor flu symptoms; I mean that she got so sick that she was admitted into intensive care. Caitlyn kind of turned into a hermit for the worst weeks of the episode. My bubbly, hippy, slightly eccentric best friend was an emotional mess who slept in her clothes each night because she was waiting for 'the call', the call that would inevitably mean the loss of her favourite person in the whole world, the person who had practically raised her. The call did come eventually, but it wasn't at night, and Caitlyn was most certainly not prepared. Chemistry class is generally not the place people expect, or for that matter,

like to be told that their only living relative has passed on. Sadly though, life has a habit of dealing some people continual bad hands. I've never seen her like that before. Caitlyn isn't exactly the kind of girl who is lost for words and truthfully I don't think she ever thought it was possible for her to be speechless. Yet, in the middle of helping me measure out a sodium chloride suspension, I saw my best friend look as vulnerable as some of the homeless that line the city streets each day, begging for a second chance. She looked as if a part of her had died.

They say that it was a heart attack that took Mrs. Kale's life. It seems so strange to me that a person's heart can be so weak that it just doesn't want to function any more. That's what I thought was happening to Caitlyn too. She became like a ghost of her former self: her usually confident stride seemed to droop, her vibrant and occasionally startling hair slowly faded and she wasn't reading as much any more. This was the part that scared me the most about what was happening to her, because the girl loved to read. She had a habit of bumping into people in the corridor at school because she would be so absorbed in the papery world of her favourite books. The fact was though, that every time I tried to get her to open up to me, to talk so that I could try and understand what was going on in that amazing head of hers, she would somehow manage to give me nothing. I felt like a journalist that was trying to publish a story with all the wrong sources. Scrap that, I felt like I was failing at being a best friend.

The saying that 'time heals all wounds' is, quite frankly, a rather deceptive phrase. Sure, wounds may heal, but how long it will take for the scars to fade is never specified. I think that everyone needs some sort of way to let their emotions out and allow their wounds to heal. Otherwise they just get smothered and sometimes end up cutting even deeper. Some people paint, some dance, some eat large amounts of premade chocolate cake frosting, but for Caitlyn it was writing. Caitlyn blamed herself internally for a very long time after her grandmother's death, but slowly she came to realise that not only it wasn't her fault, but it was up to her to deal with the roller coaster of life in the best possible way.

There's one thing I will always remember about this girl, even when we're old and grey. One autumn day in the bustling beauty of one of the greatest cities on earth, she looked me in the eye and explained: "We are all authors in some way. Our lives are our novels, our masterpieces, and as the writers of our own lives, it is our job to set the plot, cast the characters, choose the scene and paint the picture for our readers. Life can't be perfect, just like a book can't be perfect; it would bore its readers to death. But at the same time, we need to be the ones in control. My life is a book, and this was just a complicated chapter".

By Sarah Jenkin-Hall
Year 11, Eynesbury Senior College
ADELAIDE – SA
Teacher: Bronwen Dohnt

Jackson's Last Stand

I COULDN'T believe it had been a year already. Time couldn't have passed this quickly. I remember speaking to him just the other day. I can still remember every little detail about him: his Mohawk that flowed into a rat's tail, skin tight jeans, button up shirt with his tie hanging slightly left and flannelette on top. He was your typical young metro-sexual male, full of joy and passion with an excitement for life! Or so we thought.

We were an up-and-coming house/electronica band out of Perth who were starting to become a household name. There were Jackson, Sam and me, just three of us, our trio. We had the silly idea of making a name for our band before we had even decided what genre we were going to play. We had regretted that decision ever since but the name stuck. We were known as Muis Crowd, Muis meaning mouse in Dutch.

We arrived in Adelaide on the 13th of March, a day before the finale of the Future Music Festival. It was the biggest gig of our band's short career. So that night we decided to go out clubbing as we did the night before every gig. We went to all the clubs in town and were treated like royalty. It was our normal routine before every show that we performed, big or small, except that this was the biggest show of our careers. We would start with line after line of the purest stuff available to us then move onto popping the party pill all night. We did this the night before every gig, our excuse being it 'helps to calm us down' but I think we thought we were the kings of the world when we were out of it. Except this time Jackson hit it harder than usual.

With a heavy yawn I woke the next day to find that it was already 5:00pm. Our show was scheduled for 8:00pm. I looked around the bombed wreckage that was our hotel room. It bore not a single resemblance to the hotel room we'd arrived to except for the number on the door. Staggering out of bed, I managed to crawl myself to the toilet before the fire hydrant that was my mouth exploded in a projectile manner all over the back of Sam, whom I had not noticed had beaten me to the throne. Heads down, backs arched we did not move from the bowl for almost an hour. When we finally came to we knew we had no time at all to

get to Rundle Park, and we still had to find Jackson. We searched the entire room, top to bottom, back to front and could not even find a clue as to his whereabouts. We rang reception, our manager who was already at the festival, our party organiser, everyone we knew in Adelaide and got nothing. It was 7:00pm when we knew we could wait no longer.

We arrived at the festival in the nick of time. Sam and I were wearing sunglasses and hats to cover our bloodshot eyes and flared nostrils. We were preparing to play minus one when out of nowhere Jackson appeared handing us a riff sheet. Its title was 'Jackson's last stand' and he told us that he would like us to play it last. At first Sam and I were a little uneasy about the

decision but we could see how much he wanted it so we reluctantly agreed.

It was the best show we had performed for the entire festival and 'Jackson's last stand' was an instant hit. They even asked us to play it again, but Jackson said, 'No'. We then had to do all the publicity and sponsor things.

It was 2:00am when I decided that I was time to call it a night. I knew Jackson was still there so I went to his caravan to say good night. The air was still that night and everything seemed calm. Too calm. I walked through the stage area and let out a piercing screech. That's where I found it. That motionless mass just hanging carelessly from the ceiling. His skin was as white as a ghost. I let out a horrible weep as the wind turned the body to face me. I looked up at the face and realised who it was. After all the years

that we had known each other, that is the image that I will always remember of him. Jackson, eyes wide open, mouth gasping for air, pale white skin as though every last ounce of life had been sucked from him. That is the image of my best friend that I will take to the grave.

It was at that point when a crumpled piece of paper fell from his pocket. I opened the piece of paper and saw written as the title 'Jackson's last stand'.

By **Andrew Holland**
Year 11,
Eynesbury Senior College
ADELAIDE – SA
Teacher: Bronwen Dohnt

Shellshock

I DIED last night.

When I asked him if it would hurt, being shot, he just shook his head. However like so many times before, he was wrong.

I was officially told that what I was suffering from shellshock less than a week ago. I knew something was wrong, headaches and dizziness had plagued my every move, so it wasn't a big surprise when I was told. But the thing that really bothered me was how people looked at me after that. It was like I was the enemy, every one of their manipulating eyes glaring into mine, like I was unwelcome, isolated, alone.

Shellshock was seen as a sign of cowardice, almost as if you were trying to get out of fighting. So I was always treated 'differently' from the other soldiers.

I was one of the first to be diagnosed with shellshock; therefore no one really understood what I was going through. How the bombs would echo throughout my skull, making a deafening roar in my head. How my dreams would turn to nightmares as quickly as my life was ended. How with every passing moment, I was slowly slipping into eternal madness.

Darkness engulfed the small forest once again, in which was our camp was located. The constant sounds of bombs exploding and gunshots firing had subsided for the night, leaving the chorus of crickets to take its place, however the smell of artificial smoke still lingered in the air.

My memory had begun to fade as the effects of the shell shock began to worsen. Everyday I would run the simplest things through my head, and slowly begin to work my way through to the harder memories.

My name is Bennett Elijah. I am 29 years of age. I am married to Greta Coral. I have three children, Cameron, Jarrod and Josh. It is July in 1916. I am fighting in the First World War. I have shell shock. I am slowly going insa-

My mind always goes blank at that point. A wall in my mind that no matter how hard I try I can't seem to break through it.

It had been weeks since I'd actually slept through a whole night. So I felt no need

to go to bed when the others decided to. We had been told that we were heading into battle the next day. Just the thought of being in the midst of all the death and killing almost sent me into another panic attack. I could feel my heart beat increase, and I took a few deep breaths. I trudged back to my damp and eerily quiet tent, fell into my bed and almost instantaneously slipped out of consciousness.

Agitated images of helpless soldiers being shot down like flies haunted my dreams. The next thing I knew I was falling, falling into eternal darkness. My heart was beating out of my chest; it hurt so much, so much. Then I was plunged into a sea of blood, I was drowning, sinking to the bottom. Just as I was about to black out I awoke from my disturbed sleep, drenched in sweat.

Out the small window in my tent I could see the first signs of light painted across the sky. I got dressed and went outside to find everyone else had already dressed and was ready.

"Bout time", mocked the sergeant while the other soldiers sniggered.

I didn't reply and simply stood in line as we marched towards the battlefield. We collected our guns, loaded with ammunition. The closer we got, the more afraid I become, the quicker my heartbeat went, the more I felt like I was about to break down. An overwhelming sense of self doubt surged through me, my mind started racing.

I can't do this. I'm not ready.

I started to feel dizzy, my legs began to shake. The sergeant blew the whistle and suddenly everyone began to sprint. Firing aimlessly in front of them. I was frozen, I couldn't move. I could feel myself beginning to black out; I turned around and ran back. Something was wrong with me, the shell shock.

Something grabbed onto me, the sergeant. A wave of pain hit me as his fist met my stomach. I

had deserted the battlefield; I knew what the penalty was. Death.

I was dragged back to camp and charged with desertion. What the sergeant didn't understand was that I couldn't help it. Shell shock is not something I can control. It's like a demon, controlling my every move, terrifying me, horrifying me.

I hadn't thought about how much I had to lose. My wife, my children, my life. But I didn't have time to think about the value of life. I was thrown against a tree, already in so much pain, I knew this was the end.

I died last night.

When I asked him if it would hurt, being shot, he just shook his head. However like so many times before, he was wrong.

By Blake Lovely

Year 8, Mosman High School

MOSMAN – NSW

Teacher: Mrs Robinson



To Survive in War

THE thing about life is that you can live it and breathe it, but it would have to be one of the only things you can never really own. No one can control what happens, it just does.

It can be taken from you without a second thought. I just didn't think mine would end so quickly.

Heat radiated through the thick brick wall that my back was pressed against, noise shuddered around the area, travelling in an almost visible barrier and light boomed out, lighting up the whole area between the buildings.

Lidijia, my younger sister, huddled close to my side and Droil, my younger brother, was huddled on my lap.

My name is Anjera, and I am eight years old. Lidijia is four and Droil six. Ten minutes before we had been huddling close in a gutter, enjoying a loaf of bread

Lidijia had managed to steal from a nearby vendor.

There was a rush of noise and suddenly many men surrounded the area, guns shooting, dressed in the army clothes of the foreign people who had supposedly come here to help us. Our nation's troops were fighting back. We fled behind the solid brick wall.

Not long after that had we heard the first of the explosions that were to go on through the night. It made the Earth below us shudder before another loud crack boomed and another blew up more of the surrounding buildings.

Flying machines zoomed over, guns shooting from the sides. Airplanes they called them, scary machines we called them.

A startled cry filled the air and I looked to my side, knowing already what had happened. Lidijia fell from my arm, blood pouring from her chest, which no longer moved steadily up and down. Her black hair, dirty from the weeks on the streets was drenched with blood.

Droil cried loudly, scared by the noise and by the suddenness of Lidijia's death, and I wrapped my arms around him protectively, guarding his small, frail body with my own.

We had become so thin over the last few months while the war was going and our parents has been shot, leaving me, as the oldest, to look after them.

Everywhere I looked someone was getting shot or blown up but that was just what was expected from war. We knew death would come upon us sooner than the children in other countries. Older ladies were crying, men were shouting and children were screaming.

One shot rang out in particular and I knew it came from someone not very far from behind me. My back was facing the open as I was covering Droil. A searing pain spread up my arm and Droil let out a squeal of terror. I had fallen to the side, leaving Droil unprotected, breaking my promise to Mama and Papa. Another explosion, more deaths, and I looked down to my arm, trying to grasp what happened.

Blood poured from a small hole in my arm and upon closer inspection I saw the faint metallic colour of a tiny bullet lodged in my arm. I looked closer; watching it like it would do something. Although I was very aware of both the old and new tears that had been on my dirt streaked face I hardly felt the pain.

I looked over to Droil, to hold him close once again, to see that he was gone. He had been right next to me. I scampered from the wall, crawling from hiding spot to hiding spot. I looked around for Droil, constantly aware of the spots appearing in my vision. I had to get to Droil! There was no way I would leave him. They would have to kill me first.

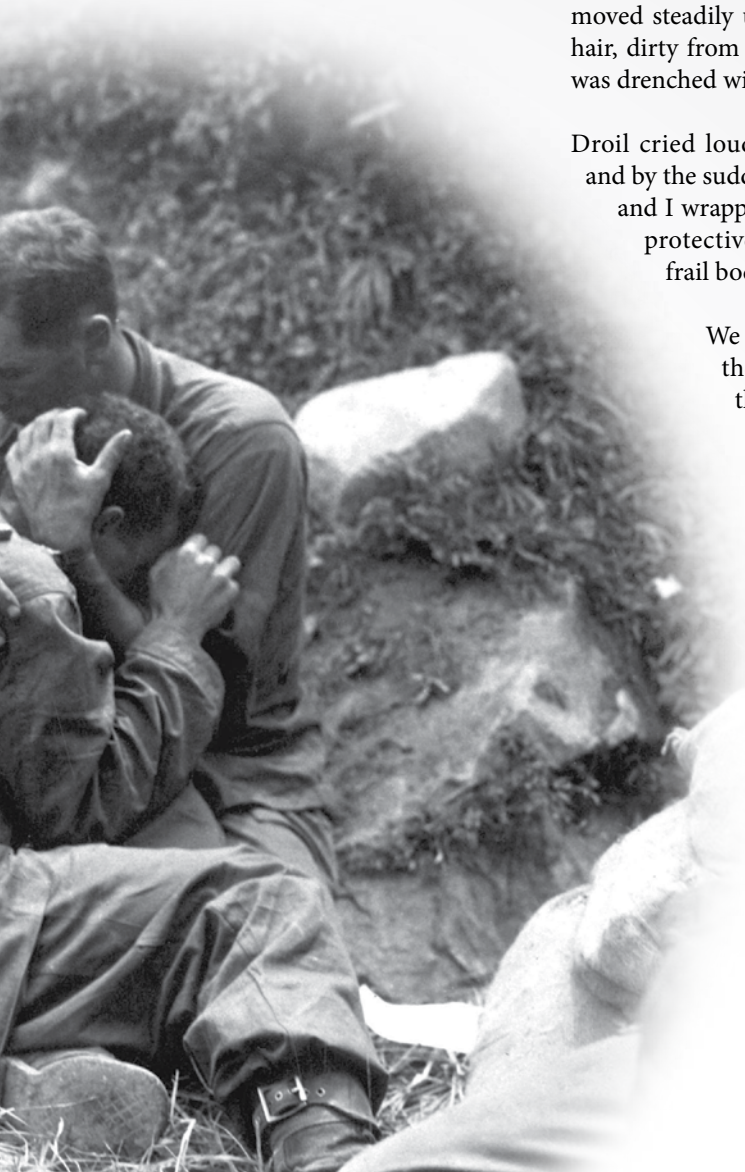
I peeked out of a gap seeing Droil standing in the middle of the dusty street, looking scared and helpless. I stood up and ran to him. A piercing explosion filled the air and the Droil standing before me was blown to pieces. I stopped in my tracks, frozen, finally feeling the terror of where I was. More were dying, just another day in the war, but my two remaining family had been taken.

Another loud explosion, followed by another, and another, but none reached me. A bullet flew through the air, its intended destination unknown, but the destination it would end up in, I knew, though no one else did.

Smashing through my small body it had hit. If someone were to find my body later, beneath the rubble, they would not know why I had a smile spread across my face. Finally there was black, exactly what I wanted.

By **Alana Lambert**

Year 10, Redcliffs Secondary College
REDCLIFFS – VIC.



Nothing Really Ends

BARBARA wrote in her secret blog daily. It contained her thoughts, the thoughts she never shared with anyone else. It wasn't a public blog, just one on her own computer she shared with no-one. It was password protected especially from her annoying little brother. One day after sharing what had happened yesterday and how shocked she had been, writing began to appear on the page in reply, her blog was talking back!

Barbara didn't read the writing that was making the page scroll down, instead she reached under the desk and yanked out the power cord, staring in shock at the computer screen as it went black and the computer stopped humming.

"I'm imagining things. I've had a long day, and I'm tired, and I'm imagining things", Barbara's mind desperately repeated, trying to rationalise the situation.

"Need to sleep", Barbara muttered before walking to her bed and sliding under the covers, oblivious to the fact she was still in her school uniform.

Her eyes landed on the computer sleepily and something seemed off, but everything was a sleep-addled haze in her mind. She fell asleep quickly and only in the morning realised what was wrong. She had unplugged the computer, the tower wasn't making any noise, and yet one question was written on the screen.

Barbara, are you there?

The next day Barbara sat in front of her computer tapping her foot nervously as she moved the mouse to hover over the icon that would take her to her blog. Steeling her nerves she clicked on it and waited for the writing to start appearing on the page. When none happened Barbara breathed a sigh of relief and reached for the keyboard to type.

Suddenly, before her fingers even brushed the keys words started to appear on the page looking like someone was typing it. She jerked her hands back quickly and watched as the letters stopped, words written in a curling script she'd never use.

You were very rude yesterday. I was just trying to help, the writing said.

Barbara scrubbed her eyes before looking back at the page and reaching to type a reply.

"I'm sorry", she muttered as she hit the corresponding letters before waiting for a reply.

Just try not to run off like that. I was worried that you'd gotten in trouble. Always have been a little trouble-maker.

Barbara felt a swell of confusion. How did whoever or whatever it was known she was a trouble-maker?

"How do you know I'm a trouble maker?" Barbara typed, changing the font to help make sure she didn't get the reply confused with her sentences.

It's me, dummy. Don't tell me you've forgotten me. Your first blog entry was all about me.

The page changed to Barbara's first blog entry and she felt her heart tighten.

"You're lying. She's been dead for two years!" Barbara typed quickly with one hand, scrubbing her eyes furiously with the other.

It's me, okay? I told you that ghosts were real and you never believed me. Well, I've showed you, haven't I?

NO! It can't be! I won't believe it! Now, I want the truth. Who are you??

The tooth fairy! Who do you think?!

"Marishka?" Barbara typed, hands shaking.

The answer came quickly but it seemed like an age to Barbara. It was simple, a one-word answer, yet it made no sense.

Yes.

Barbara stared at the computer in shock, heart tightening and hot salty tears running down her face. A memory flashed through her mind, the car going off the bridge, followed quickly by another. Marishka smashing the glass and shoving Barbara out, oblivious to the fact that the car was about to hit the bottom of the river and rocks were going to slam through her window, more concerned about her friend.

"You died. Drowned, hit your head on a rock at the same time, you're dead", Barbara typed quickly, trying to block the image of Marishka lying in her coffin.

No, don't cry, you're meant to be happy. I'm back, we can talk again, the letters



spelled out quickly, faster than any other sentence.

Barbara shook her head roughly and slammed her hands into the desk, pushing the chair backwards with a grating sound.

NO! Stay! Please???

Barbara hesitated before dragging the chair forward again reluctantly.

Thank you. I missed you and saw you were upset and I couldn't stand it, and this was the only way I could reach you. Please don't go. I just wanna talk, like old times, and be here for you.

"Oh Ris, it's not the same and you know it."

Barbara waited for the reply nervously, trying to figure out if it could be true, if it really could be Marishka.

Urgh! Don't call me that! You know I hate it. It's the best I can do.

"It's really you! Oh God, Ris I missed you and I'm calling you that! Don't like it, too bad. What about at school? I can't carry a computer with me all day, genius."

Really? I thought you could. Then again I always was stronger. Look, I'll try and use the school ones, or your phone to talk to you, you're allowed that as long as you work.

Barbara thought for a second before realising something.

"What about Dan? Can I tell him??"

The reply didn't come for ten minutes and Barbara was scared the Marishka couldn't stay, that she had been torn away. When it came it was jumbled, like she didn't know how to reply.

Dan? Oh, I, I, don't think you should. I wish I could tell him I still love him but I-I-I have to go, sorry honey.

Barbara stared at the computer as the blog closed itself, choosing not to save changes. The wolf that was her background picture stared back at her.

"Coward", she mumbled as she stood and stretched, muscles screaming in protest to the movement.

Barbara stared at the screen again before walking out of her room and grabbing the keys to Marishka's bike she'd kept.

"I'm going out, mum!" she yelled before slipping her phone in her pocket and running outside to the garage.

Barbara had never liked motorbikes, but this one was different. It was Marishka's. Barbara had no helmet, no bike licence, but she still rode it, mainly on the dirt tracks behind Dan's house. This time she was going to try to drive there in the rain when the bike and her normally ended up on different sides of the dirt track.

"Dan's isn't too far down the road", Barbara reasoned as she shoved the keys into the ignition.

Her phone buzzed in her pocket and she grabbed it angrily. Someone was texting her? Wow, after avoiding her like the plague people want to talk suddenly.

Writing scrolled down the screen, writing that should've been impossible to have on a phone.

Don't you dare! I will murder you!

Barbara scowled and jumped off the bike reluctantly, still wanting to drive to Dan's place and tell him about Marishka. It was only fair, they were dating for about six, seven months before the accident.

I don't want to get his hopes up only to destroy them! I'm living in your phone and computer. Bar, there is no way I'll be able to corporealise for a few more years, and I won't really be there then! I can never be with him again.

Barbara sighed before dropping the phone as an electric shock travelled into her hand. Sparks danced across the screen, exactly like some water had got into the casing. Marishka was upset, and if she was alive would be crying and it was affecting the phone.

"Ris get a grip!" Barbara growled as she snatched the phone.

The sparks danced across the screen for a few more minutes and more shocks hit Barbara's body but she kept a grip on the phone until Marishka had calmed down.

"I won't tell him, I promise", Barbara reassured, realising she must look like a crazy person talking to the phone.

Go ahead, I don't care. Do whatever you want.

Barbara started to retaliate but the phone screen went black, and she sighed.

"I guess I didn't realise how much this hurts her", Barbara thought numbly as she walked inside.

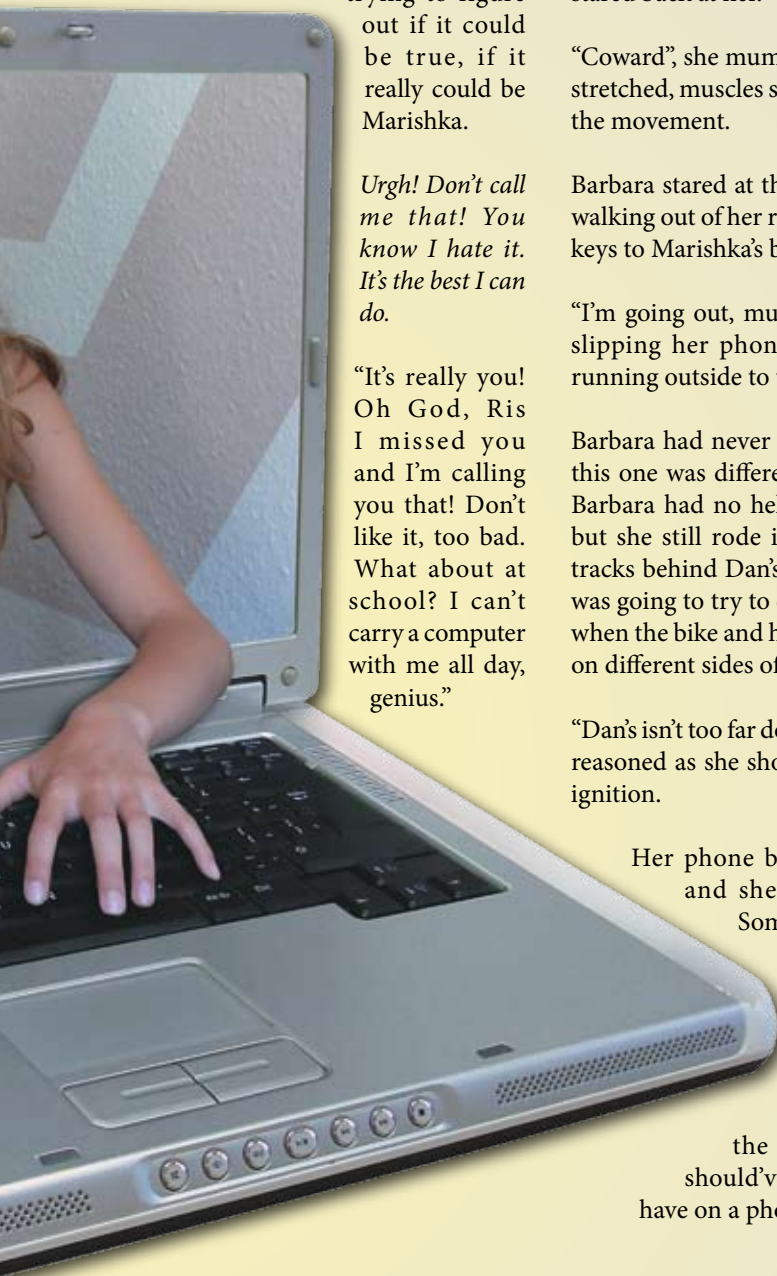
Her mother Mia called out, "You had a phone call honey, it was Dan again".

Barbara's eyes widened in fear and she mumbled her thanks before running upstairs and locking her door behind her. She hesitantly picked up the phone in her room and dialled his number slowly, finger hesitating over the green button.

Sorry Ris, Barbara thought before hitting the call button and listening to the dial tone.

"Hey, Dan here", Dan answered groggily.

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Continued from page 25

"Dan, are you asleep again? It's only four in the afternoon!" Barbara scolded as she watched her computer turn on and a Word document open.

"Shut up, just because I actually work and you just lounge around that bomb zone you call a room", he teased, oblivious to the fact Barbara was distracted.

"Uh, yeah, right", Barbara agreed as she watched the words repeat over and over on the screen.

YOU PROMISED! was appearing over and over and over in about font twenty, and Barbara could almost see Marishka's hurt face.

"You just agreed that you're lazy and do nothing productive in life. You okay?" Dan asked.

"Fine", Barbara lied, wincing as she heard his sigh of relief.

"Good. You've been a big help since the accident and I need my friends. You're the last one", Dan admitted sadly.

Barbara choked out, "I'll always be here for you. Dan, I need to tell you something".

The computer died and the lonely girl could almost feel her friend's presence leave the room.

Half an hour later Dan still didn't believe her. Barbara had explained over and over, thinking he would react better as he and Marishka both had deep-rooted beliefs in the supernatural but no! It was impossible because she had no unfinished business, she would've just moved on.

"But Dan, no one else could have done that. No one!" Barbara protested as she booted up her computer.

"Barbara, look, I get it, I really do, you want Marishka back as well, but she's gone. She wasn't in the middle of a huge job, there's no reason for her to have lingered", Dan argued wearily.

Barbara scowled as she opened Firefox and Googled 'unfinished business ghosts'. As she trawled through the results she listened impatiently to Dan's lecture, waiting for the chance to intervene and say something.

"Dan! She had unfinished business. You and school and the rest of her life were unfinished! And here you are meant to be the supernatural expert", Barbara fumed.

Dan didn't reply for a few minutes and she waited for his voice to sound but instead the dull dial tone rang in her ears.

"He hung up on me", Barbara scowled as she slammed the phone into its cradle.

Marishka didn't come back for nearly a week and when she finally did Barbara had a plan. Invite Dan over at school, not tell Marishka, force her to reveal herself. It was brilliant when she first came up with it but when she started thinking holes started to show in the plan.

Marishka had her weird ghost senses. She'd know he was coming and kill the computer. Then again, when Josef had got the phone off her earlier, Marishka had kept writing the message, unaware Barbara had lost the phone.

"Are you here Marishka?" Barbara asked the room at large as she grabbed her phone.

The phone buzzed before starting to play *The Four Horsemen* by Metallica, a song Marishka loved but Barbara hated.

"No need to be a smart aleck, a simple yes would suffice", she muttered as she opened a blank text.

When have I ever made things simple? And DON'T answer that.

"Never have, and even as a ghost you're not helping things. Dan didn't believe me, you win again."

You say that like I planned the whole thing. It's not like I possessed him or anything.

Barbara checked her watch as she thought of a reply for that, only a few more minutes until Dan got there.

"I have a brilliant idea for you. Possess the person who played Jordan on Scrubs and then come back to Dan. Ghost possession he will believe."

Oh yeah, I really want to possess some Barbie with so much liposuction and chemicals pumped into her that God knows if she still has internal organs and if they are

there, that they're still like internal organs, not shrivelled husks.

Barbara heard a knock on the front door and grinned.

"EW!! Ris I did not need the mental image of internal organ husks dancing through my mind!!"

There was a worrying pause but Marishka didn't seem to sense Dan in the house.

Don't be ridiculous Bar, husks don't dance. They float, clumsily flying around your head, eating all your brainwaves and that's why you said dance!! The zombie husks are eating your brain!!!!

"Zombie husks are the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard since you planned to tunnel into the boy's gym change room and throw in a match to see what happened. If the built up gas had exploded the resulting fireball would have followed the path of least resistance, directly after us, idiotule."

Dan had finished exchanging pleasantries with her mum and was climbing the stairs, about to open the door without knocking as usual. Barbara placed the phone on the end of the bed so she could see what Marishka said but couldn't be accused of touching it. Letters started to appear on the screen slowly and Barbara waved Dan over quickly, pointing at the phone.

Don't use Romanian against Marishka Balescu!! I will kick your butt with my awesome Transylvanian skills, girl!

"Is it really Marishka?" Dan breathed as he snatched up the phone.

"Ask her yourself Danny boy", Barbara replied as she grinned widely.

BARBARA VIOLET, WHATEVER YOUR LAST NAME IS, I TOLD YOU NOT TO TELL HIM!! I WILL POSSESS YOU THEN I'M JUMPING OFF A FREEWAY OVERPASS!!!!!!

Barbara gulped and looked pleadingly at Dan.

"I'm not getting in the middle of this", Dan replied. "Did once, got a lovely assortment of bruises for my efforts."

Dan I didn't want to tell you because, well,

I'm dead. I'm a ghost and you're alive and I couldn't build up your hopes only to dash them again! I couldn't do that to you!

Barbara sighed and walked to the computer giving the pair some room. Not that it did much good, the phone blacked out before Dan could reply.

"What happened?" Dan asked panicked.

"She left, Dan; she did it the other day when I mentioned you. Ah, and you owe me an apology", Barbara said as she sat on the edge of the computer desk.

Dan smiled weakly as he added "And a block of Top Deck chocolate, I said that too".

Barbara grinned and laughed "You're a good boy. You could've said nothing and I wouldn't have known".

The cheerful moment quickly died as the realisation finally hit Dan.

"She can't come back, can she?" he asked quietly.

"Not yet. I'll find a way to bring her back Dan, I promise."

Almost a month later Barbara found a way to fulfil that promise. Well, really, a way that might fulfil that promise.

"Mum, I'm going to the shop!" Barbara yelled as she ran outside, not heading for the shop as she said, but Marishka's favourite place.

"Ris, this'll work OK? Just trust me for once", Barbara muttered to the still air, hoping Marishka was there and listening.

A sudden warm breeze blew away the cold for a second and Barbara smiled before skidding to a stop and sneaking into Dan's backyard.

"Time to start", she mumbled as she started pulling different things out of her bag that would return Marishka to a body.

At the moment it was just a dummy from her mum's shop but if the spell worked it would transform itself into Marishka.

"Crap", Barbara mumbled as a curtain twitched to the side.

Dan lived here by himself, so he must've seen what she was doing. Knowing him he'd try to stop her. Barbara couldn't let that happen.

"Powers of all kinds, reaching out through realms and times, whether she's far or whether she's near, bring the spirit of Marishka here", Barbara recited as she poured water into the bowl with the other ingredients.

A bright hot light shone from the mannequin and when it cleared Marishka was huddled there, in the clothes Barbara had quickly shoved on the dummy.

"What happened?" Marishka asked shakily as she looked at Barbara in confusion.

"I did it! I brought you back!" Barbara laughed as she hugged the confused girl.

Dan knelt next to the pair and hesitantly reached out to run his hands through Marishka's dark curly hair.

"It's really you", he breathed before wrapping them both in a tight hug.

Marishka looked confused for a few more seconds before laughing.

I'm home.

Barbara hummed as she skipped down the stairs to go to meet with Dan and Marishka, blonde hair falling in her eyes. Marishka was waiting outside, trying to avoid being seen by the people passing by, using Dan as a shield from the prying eyes.

Explaining a dead person coming back is a hard thing to do, so Barbara put a simple glamour spell on Marishka to hide who she really was. She had the same name but it didn't really matter.

"Oi, losers! We're going to be late!" Barbara scolded mockingly before running away as Marishka lunged at her, yelling "If YOU had hurried up we'd already be there!"

Dan laughed as he watched the girls chase each other around the street before following them at a walk. Everything was as it should be now.

By Nerys Brown

Year 9, Deloraine High School
DELORAINÉ – TAS.



Sunflower grow grow!

Sunflower, sunflower I
Watch you grow tall
And bright. You watch
The sun and follow
His light.

Sunflower how I would
Love to be like you.
How you do good in everything
You do. Sunflower you shine
Brightly watching the
Sun and following him in
All you do.
I would love to be you!!

By Hannah King

Year 3, Age 8
Regent College
VICTORIA PARK – WA

OWN IT

TODAY sitting in class, I was off in my own little world, daydreaming about the weird and wonderful, when suddenly something the teacher said captured my attention.

‘Where will you be in 10 years?’

Everybody was making comments about owning a big fancy luxury house and being a superstar and all sorts of out there fancy dreams that everyone has but not me.

Those few words that the teacher had just said played over in my mind like a song on repeat.

Three years ago my sister was diagnosed with breast cancer.

My sister Kristy was a beautiful, kind-hearted girl. She had such a strong impact on the community. She always did whatever she could to help out and always achieved to the best of her ability. She believed in always going for your dreams and when you think you’ve done the best you can, do even better!

Tragically she died at 21.

She was on life support for 3 weeks before one day her body shut down and her heart stopped beating.

I will never forget her last day. I had been sitting in the hospital with her for 3 days and every passing minute was like a ticking time bomb.

She sank further and further into this other world, a world I could never be a part of. A place you could almost compare to Hell. It was controlling my sister and her health and there wasn’t a thing I could do to stop it. The heartache that came with seeing her deteriorating more and more every day was too much for me, her body was becoming weaker and her skin was turning a sickening pale colour.

It hurt so much to see her like this. It hurt everyone. But unfortunately there was nothing anybody could do. It was unstoppable. Every day tears were flowing down my face. I didn’t want to cry, I wanted to stay strong for my sister but I couldn’t

control my emotions. Not only was I angry but it frustrated me that something like this could happen to Kristy and I couldn’t do anything to stop it. I even felt a sense of guilt, why did it have to be her? Why not me? She deserved life more than anybody I know.

My sister and I had a special bond. It was unique. She was my all, but now she’s gone. I have no one, nothing. I never really got along with my parents very well and I never really had many friends. After all I had my sister, my best friend. I didn’t need anyone else. She promised she would never leave me.

Kristy always encouraged me to set goals, have dreams, that sort of thing. I guess that’s the only thing we didn’t have in common. I never really knew where I wanted to go in life or what I wanted to be when I’m older.

Kristy had her whole life planned out and it wasn’t just silly ideas that were going to change the next week. She really knew what she wanted out of life. She wanted to be a youth worker. She had always been passionate about kids. She even planned to open her own youth centre for homeless youth. A place for young people to come to hang out, feel wanted and more importantly somewhere for them to feel safe.

But one day her dreams were shattered. She had been sick for quite a while, we both knew this, but Kristy didn’t want to say anything. She never liked the attention on her and she didn’t want to make a fuss. We both just thought she had some sort of virus but we had no idea what was really in store.

Day by day this thing was eating her insides, sucking out the goodness in her. Her hair was becoming thinner and thinner and her weight was decreasing rapidly. She was even becoming really moody. I knew something was seriously wrong when I found her in the bathroom one day coughing up blood. That’s when I made her go to the doctor. The doctor looked really concerned when Kristy was informing him of all her symptoms. He made her have all sorts of tests and we had to wait two weeks for the results.

When we got the results back everything changed. It was like my whole world just

collapsed. I can’t even begin to imagine how my sister must have felt. The doctor told us that the cancer would completely take over her body. It had developed in her breast and had already spread to other parts of her body. She was deteriorating quickly.

Kristy would never get to open her youth centre. But somehow she had this new outlook on life. She would make the most of the time she had left. It was if she had this new fire burning inside her. Even though she was really sick, she didn’t give up on anything. It really had an impact on everyone. Doctors were stunned on how strong she was, fighting for her life and still being the happy spirit that everyone knew her to be.

I will never forget when one night after sitting down for tea, Mum had asked Kristy how she was feeling. We were all very shocked by Kristy’s answer. ‘I feel good. I’m living my life to the best I can, the way I can. It’s my life. I’m not going to let some disease take over.’

She was someone who was dying on the inside but seemed to be just born on the outside.

Ever since Kristy had made that comment, I too have had a new outlook on life. I decided in her honour that I would open up a youth centre just the way she wanted. I under-estimated the feeling of having a plan in life. It was really fulfilling, it gave me a sense of satisfaction.

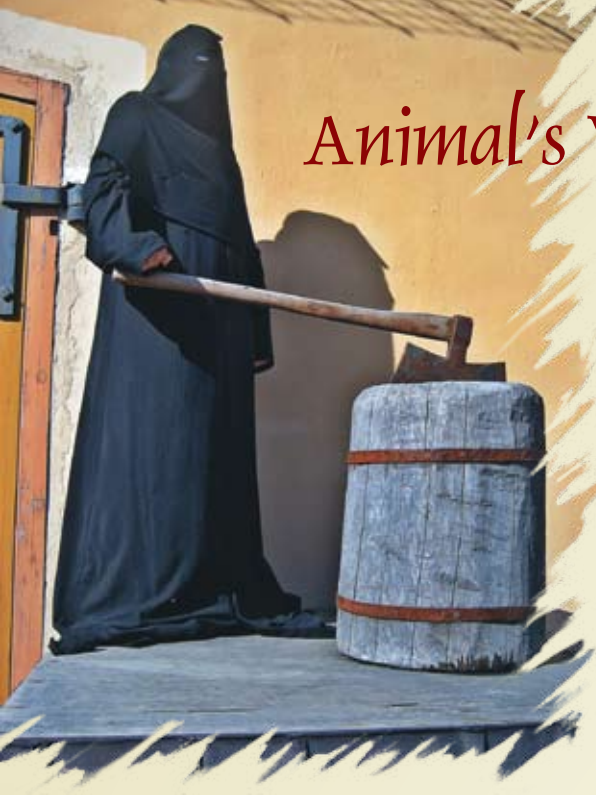
‘Where will you be in ten years?’ the teacher asked.

I put my hand up and said, ‘In ten years I will have opened a youth centre in honour of my sister. I will have lived every day from here on in as though it’s my last and make it the best it can be, because this is my life and I will own it.’

By Amelia McInnes
Year 10,
Merbein College
MERBEIN – VIC.



Animal's View – My Mistress' Death



of England, Ireland and France to take you to the Tower on charges of incest and treason.” A guard said motioning to the two at his sides to grab her. One cold, rough hand touched me and I reacted by scratching him. He yelped and jumped backwards.

“If I am charged of treason and it is the king’s wish for me to be sent to the tower, then so be it. Madge help me get changed–” Anne began before she was cut off by a grim voice. “No, you have no time to change. You must go to the traitor’s gate. Master Kingston will be awaiting you at the steps.”

Anne looked at Nan and Madge, then to me. Her dark eyes burned into mine, “Little girl come here please. We must go as the king wishes. Come now.” I jumped up into her arms again and she walked out of her chambers. Madge, Nan and the guards followed, I heard sobs and turned to see Madge and Nan crying. They were whispering words that only my ears could hear. “No, she mustn’t go. She’s done nothing, wrongly accused.”

Anne moved one of her hands once we were at the steps and took it to wipe away her tears.

One of the guards, the one whom I had scratched, held out his hand and Anne took it. She put me down once she was seated in between Madge and Nan. Someone stepped on my tail and I meowed in pain, Anne grabbed me and swore an oath to the guards.

The ride to the Tower of London was a long and agonising one. I had not had my milk so I was starving, my little tummy grumbling.

★ ★ ★

When we had arrived at the Tower, Master Kingston took Anne’s hand and led her to the room which would be her prison. She thanked him, and a shiver escaped. “Your Grace is cold here, let me give you this”, Master Kingston said, shrugging off his coat and handing it to her. Anne threw it over her shoulders and thanked him again.

I looked up at her and waited till she met my gaze. Nodding, she picked me up and cuddled me up to her. “Master Kingston, if it is all right, can you please deliver some food or milk for my little kitten here. She has not had anything for a few hours now and she is starving.”

Master Kingston looked at me, then nodded, “Of course Madam”. Then he left. The door to Anne’s prison opened and out stepped two maids. “Your Majesty”, they both said before turning to leave. Anne walked into the room, saw the crucifix and immediately knelt down in prayer. Madge and Nan followed suit.

The days were long, the food was rotten, the clothes were wrongly washed, the maids entered at inappropriate times and the times were hard. The days flew by without us even knowing it. Soon enough the day arrived...

8 o’clock May 19th 1536

Master Kingston came for my mistress today. Madge and Nan were crying as they got Anne dressed, their hands were shaking and they didn’t know what was going to happen. Anne left once they were ready, placing me into her arms. We walked out into the crowds, some were booing, others were crying and the rest were just standing there, waiting to watch their Queen die.

Once Anne was on the scaffold, she spoke, telling everyone how much the King was loyal and loving to her, before she apparently betrayed him. After a prayer for her soul, Anne kissed my head and handed me to Nan. She then knelt down and the executioner raised his sword. Everyone held their breath, till the blade came down onto her neck. Anne’s head rolled away, and my mistress, Annamaria Boleyn, Queen of England, was finally deceased.

By Savarnah Wilkie
Year 7, Bothwell District High School
BOTHWELL – TAS.
Teacher: Miss Oldham



THE smell of milk from the kitchen wafted through my nose. I opened one eye and then the other, hoping to find out if I was dreaming or not. My mistress, Queen Anne Boleyn, knelt down a few metres away and held out her hand. Her golden gown glittered in the early morning sun, I got up and stretched. One black paw in front of the other and I walked over to her.

Anne laughed as I meowed impatiently for the milk. “There now little girl. You shall have your milk shortly, just let me–” she began before she picked me up and moved towards the tub she keeps close by. I immediately jumped down, there was no way I was going to let Anne bathe me. I had sensed it as soon as she had picked me up.

Anne put her hands on her hips and laughed at me. I went to the little table in the corner and hid in the shadows. I heard footsteps and then loud voices. Madge Shelton, one of Anne’s ladies, rushed in looking very upset. “Majesty, the guards are coming! They wouldn’t stop even when Nan spoke harshly to them.” Anne looked at me; I looked back staring into those same dark eyes like mine. I took a few steps forward and saw the red and gold uniformed men come into Anne’s chambers. I meowed loudly and Anne came and picked me up. I nestled into her arms, not knowing what was going to happen.

“Madam, we have come here by order of his most humble majesty, Henry VIII, king

Sitting by the window,
Day by day,
Month by month,
Year by year.

I'm grey and old as I watch through the glass,
Reminiscing of the years that pass
I see my daughter dancing there,
The morning sun shining on her bright red hair.
Oh so gracefully she can dance,
When she leaps and jumps and does her prance
Although of course it cannot be,
She's far away, where I can't see.
As I sit by the window,
Day by day,
Month by month,
Year by year.

As I look through the frame
My son is there, playing a game.
Oh, how I long to be just there,
To play without a single care.
He's kicking around his beloved ball,
To his team mates he gives a call,
With no response, as he's gone
Far away from where he was born.
As I sit by the window,
Day by day,
Month by month,
Year by year.

My beautiful wife, picking a rose,
Breathing in the scent, through her red nose.
I know she's not there; she's long gone,
In her grave, though her smile's not worn.
Where I'm bound to be,
God, you wait and see.

As I sit, by the window,
Day by day,
Month by month,
Year by year

I gaze longingly, out the window all cracked,
I see the milk van being unpacked.
Life doesn't wait, to say goodbye,
When I'm gone, no one will cry.
A lifelong sleep seems the very best,
To put my racing mind, for once, at rest.

By **Owen Small**

Year 6, Crescent Head Public

CRESCENT HEAD – NSW

Teacher: Mrs Cosette Black

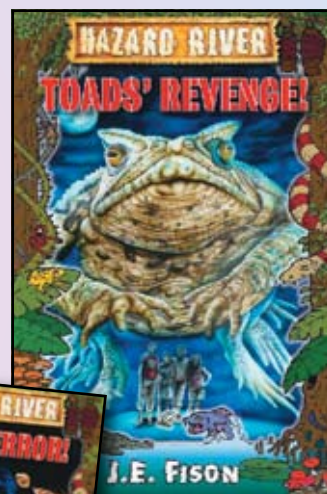
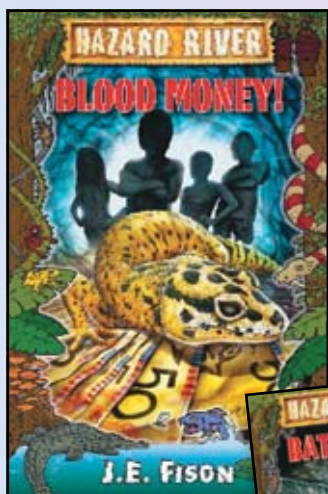
Sitting by the Window

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At Bright Kids, our focus is on those Aussie children who have been left behind for two or more years at school. We understand the hardships faced by these Bright Kids and their well-being is our primary concern. We know that unless their specific educational needs are addressed, they inevitably slip through the cracks and this can affect them for their entire lives. We also know that it doesn't have to be this way. Bright Kids offers hope to those caught up in this all-too-common scenario.

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The Inaugural 2010 Bright Kids Teachers Award was created for those teachers who recognised a child has significant learning difficulties and did something about it. They made that extra effort and opened the door of learning for that special child. Too often, they are unsung heroes. We don't believe they should be. We congratulate:

**Mr. Matt Green,
St. Bede's College,
Mentone, VIC**

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The children we deal with all have normal or above normal intelligence. To that end, we are developing a bank of literacy and numeracy resources to access via the web. We're also establishing a network of parents and teachers who are willing to share their positive experiences, inspiring and empowering other parents and teachers to do the same.

We invite you to visit our website and become a member

If you're the parent or teacher of a child in need of our help, are interested in more information about us, or becoming a Bright Kids member, we invite you to visit our website: www.brightkids.org.au

Waiting

MY DAILY life was mundane. I was just waiting for something, anything, to happen. But the only remotely amusing thing that ever did was when the postman came every morning to deliver the mail, only to trip over the steps of my apartment building. It was like he had some innate ability to always fall on that last step. It was eight o'clock in the morning and time to head off to work, but before that, a rather large mouse problem needed to be taken care of. There was actually only one, but the stupid thing was extremely annoying. It would run hastily around my bedroom floor like it was telling me to get up, and when I did, it gave me this condescending look as if it had better things to do now that I was awake and giving it my full attention. It was finally the day where I would be rid of the little rodent. I stood still and waited until it came strolling nonchalantly out of the small hole in my wall, carrying something in its mouth. I ran after it, hoping to catch it with a cardboard box, but it was too fast. It escaped, leaving behind a small red object. I walked over and picked it up. A scarlet pinwheel. I threw it in the trash and headed off to work, past the other pedestrians and into one of the many monotonous grey buildings that seemed to pierce the sky.

When I arrived home, a most peculiar event had occurred. The pinwheel was on my desk. I held it in my hands, spinning it round and round, until I noticed the small black letters that had been scrawled on the inner flaps of the pinwheel. They spelt 'Bell Street'. I threw it back into the trash can and went to sleep. The next morning the scarlet pinwheel had found its way back to my desk. Again and again I tried to dispose of it, but each time it reappeared on my desk. And so I sat, staring at the pinwheel. "Bell Street, Bell Street"; I thought aloud, "The Bell Street Festival".

I dressed myself hastily and walked the two blocks to Bell Street where I could see hanging lights and bunting flags. The entrance was lined with pinwheels. I walked through the crowds and sat myself down in front of a small stage. It was empty. But I still I sat, because I didn't know what else to do. "What are you waiting for?" It was an unfamiliar voice. Surprised, I turned to the seat next to me, now occupied by a young girl. She stared at me for a moment. Her eyes were a light shade of green and her hair was the colour of sunshine. "Sorry, didn't mean to surprise you. I was just wondering if you were waiting for a live performance or something."

"No", I replied, "I guess I'm just waiting".

Suddenly, numerous loud shouts caught our attention. Two men yelled at one of the workers at the sandwich stall for supposedly writing down the wrong order. They seemed like the types who would use any excuse to start a fight. I figured that if nothing aggravated them further, they would just get tired and leave. But a certain young girl did not share the same sentiments. She walked towards the two men shouting, "Why don't you just leave her alone! It's not like she got your order wrong on purpose you stupid thugs!"

In a bout of anger, one of the men clenched his fist and directed a blow at the small girl in front of him. Of course the punch landed on me because I had somehow gotten between them just in time to be punched in the stomach. Before they could do any more damage I grabbed the girl's hand and ran. We ran until we ended up on the corner of some unknown street. "I think they stopped chasing us a while ago", she said, still gasping for air.

Still angry I shouted, "What were you thinking?! If you had just left them alone, they would have just left on their own!"

"But what if I hadn't said anything and they hit her instead?!"

Calmer now, I said, "You don't know that".

"But you can't just wait for things to happen. Waiting's no good, you have to do something."

I was silent, because I knew she was right.

"Oh, and it may be a bit late but my name's Sophie."

"Mark."

And so I walked Sophie home and then back to my apartment, wrote my letter of resignation and went to bed. The next morning I woke up early to go for a jog and at the door I warned the postman about that last step. He still fell over, but it was worth a try. After that I began to run. I wasn't quite sure where I was going, but I kept running towards that orange tinge in the sky. It felt like I was chasing the sun.

By **Huyen Nguyen**

Year 11, Eynesbury Senior College

ADELAIDE – SA

Teacher: Bronwen Dohnt

New Year's Eve Mouse



IT WAS a Friday night. The sun disappeared behind the horizon and people started running around finding a place to sit. Small boats were launched onto the harbour, carrying crowds of jovial people who laughed and joked. The big eskies were full of beer and the revellers sat around eating and drinking with an air of eager anticipation.

Just outside the harbour, marooned on a small white sandy beach, sat a medium sized boat shadowed by a mighty bridge. The craft was made of wood and had been there for as long as the locals could remember. No-one dared go onto the ship for fear they might fall through the rotting timbers and break a leg, or worse. However the ship was not deserted completely. It was actually a haven for small critters that lived and thrived off a large collection of bits and pieces they had collected in the day. They lived a happy life and all went well for the small population of little grey and white mice.

Tonight, however, something was different. Too many people were out and about on the water. Thousands had gathered around the big harbour all shouting and laughing. Huge crates were being carted onto the great bridge and, according to scouts that had been sent out, more of these strange packages had been placed at various locations around the harbour. One of the older mice had said he vaguely remembered a similar event back when he was a "strapping young fella" but it was

too long ago to remember the particulars. Something strange was afoot and no-one was quite sure whether to go to bed or to stay up and watch.

The human revelling continued for some time but all of a sudden, when the moon was at its height, all fell silent. Not a soul stirred. And then with no warning at all the huge crowds began to chant a weird and raucous beat. It lasted about ten seconds and then the whole bridge and the harbour exploded. The mice scuttled for their lives as streaks of fire shot up into the sky where they exploded into an array of different colours. All around the water the humans screamed with all their might as the mice tried to console their petrified young. The banging and popping continued for several long minutes. The mice squashed themselves into every nook and cranny desperately trying to escape the terrible ordeal. The older ones among the group stood out in the open and flung their tiny paws to the skies, pleading with the gods to spare their innocent lives. A strange whistling filled the air and a large object crashed through the deck of the ship. Within an instant the deck was clear and the mice had fled.

The horrific commotion finally stopped. Silence. Not a sound. Every now and then a shout was heard from a drunken man but other than that, complete silence. A strange cloud hung over the harbour as the mice stayed motionless in their hidey holes. The moon was obscured and nothing moved

on board the ship till early the next day.

The sun peeped cautiously over the horizon, but below deck everything was dark. One particularly brave mouse lit himself a candle and carefully went to investigate the damage done to the upper deck. As he crept slowly along the rotting timbers he smelt a strange smell. It smelt like something was burning. He quickly snuffed out his candle and pushed on. The odour grew ever stronger as he made his way into the bowels of the rotting vessel. Suddenly, as he rounded a corner, he saw a light escaping from under a door. By now the smell of burning timber was so strong that he had to wrap his pointy nose in a piece of newspaper that he had found. Summoning up all his courage he peeped under the door and saw a large orange object lying in the corner of the room. It had little black stars all over it and from one end hung a tail. A small fire crackled near it and the little mouse watched the little tail swing back and forth over the flames. He couldn't understand why the little tailed creature did not run or move away from the fire. He quickly hid behind a piece of timber from which he could see the fire creep closer and closer to the little orange and black creature. What would it do when its tail caught on fire? There was only one way to find out.

By **Daniel Hillan**
Year 11, Eynesbury College
ADELAIDE – SA
Teacher: Bronwen Dohnt

And the Sky Bled



THORNY briars scratch Tom's skin and cling to his shirt, holding him back. Uneven ground rushes by, overrun with unmaintained weeds. He shoves at the plants looming out at him, with creeping tendrils for fingers and shadowy green faces. Tom can tell this is a malignant place. Though he doesn't realise it, his mind detects the smell of death hanging in the air. The landscape looks different, somehow dark and menacing.

'Why, of all places, did the ball have to land here?' thinks Tom. 'And why do I have to fetch it? I'm smaller than them, more vulnerable.' Having always been slight for his age, Tom is scrawny next to Josh and

Alex, his best friends, who, after a brief argument, had come to a decision. They had towered over him, arms crossed, minds made up. Tom thinks they were just scared – the house is apparently haunted.

After a few minutes of frantically searching for the ball, Tom looks up and realises he has absolutely no idea where he is. Evening is coming and, terrifying as it may be, the house is shelter. An enormous cobweb sticks to him like some kind of grim fairy floss, while he pushes through a prickly bush and stands before the empty shell of the manor.

As he climbs the stairs, Tom catches a glimpse of something red. 'The cricket ball!' he thinks with relief. But relief turns to dismay as more red comes into view. Bloodstains, fading with age and sun, are splattered across the landing. Tom tiptoes closer, wanting only to grab the ball and be gone. Something shiny throws flashes of silver-gold light into his eyes. He creeps forward, forcing thoughts of blood out of his mind, and picks it up. It's a heart-shaped locket, gold and still lustrous, despite years of neglect. Tom lets it dangle from his closed fist, watching it glint in the light from the dying sunset. Overcome by

curiosity, he slowly unfastens the catch. The cover is barely open before THUD! It falls from his shaking hand. Inside is a photograph of him.

Eyes beginning to well up, Tom bends down and again grasps the locket. With the photo is a note:

My dearest Tom,

I am sorry it has to be like this. I know it will be hard for you, but I feel it is the only way. Until you are old enough to know the truth, your father will tell you I died in an accident. I hope you can find it in your heart to forgive me. Since your sister died, I feel that my life has no point. I beg you not to think badly of me if ever you read this note. Know that I will love you forever. We shall meet again in heaven, if that is where I will go after this ordeal.

Goodbye. Love Mum.

Tom glances out the window, a single tear rolling down his cheek. In the red glow of sunset, the sky bleeds.

By Hannah Nugent

Age 14, Fairholme College
TOOWOOMBA – QLD.

Friendship



I've got a friend, who is there for me
Who listens to my troubles
No matter how troubled they may be.

She'll be my best friend through thick and thin
Our friendship is pure and it's within.

She stands with me through
Troubling times
With comforting hugs all the time.

She is my true friend
Tries to make me smile
Even though I take a while.

I'll always keep her near my heart
She and I will never be apart.
We will always stay together
Through good and bad
That's what makes our friendship true.

By Simone Fritchley

Year 7, Kolbe Catholic Secondary College
CRAIGIEBURN – VIC.

Yellow,
Shining stars
Warm sun drops
Butter
Drops, sun warm
Stars shining
Yellow

Red,
Loud noise,
Red ruby
Strawberries
Ruby red,
noise-loud
Red

Brown,
Chocolate mousse,
Rough tree
Bark
tree-rough,
mousse-chocolate,
brown

Blue
Wind rushing
Rustling paper
Ocean
Paper-rustling
Rushing wind,
Blue

White
Soft snow,
Bubbling water
Clouds
Water bubbling,
snow-soft
White

Green,
Fresh grapes
Mint ice-cream.
Grass
Cream-ice mint,
Grapes-fresh
Green

Black
Dogs' fur,
Smoke,
Hair,
Smoke,
Fur-dogs
Black

Rainbow,
Finger tapping sounds,
Coloured air
Pencils
Air-coloured
Sounds-tapping finger,
Rainbow

By **Jemma Curran**
Year 3, Essington School
NIGHTCLIFF – NT
Teacher: Kia Flecher

The Colour Poem

Yellow like the sun.
It feels hot.
Hot feels like burning.
Hot it feels hot
Sun like yellow.

Red tastes like bricks,
hard and crunchy.
Red feels like touching a tree.
Bricks like red tastes.

Brown tastes like chocolate.
Brown like a tree trunk.
Leaf brown
Tree trunk like brown.
Chocolate like brown tastes.

Blue feels soft.
Noisy like waves.
Sky like
Waves like noisy
Soft feels blue.

White looks like nothing.
But
The Rainbow is colourful.

By **James Kearney**
Year 3, The Essington School
NIGHTCLIFF – NT

My Imagination

My room is silent
Pitch dark yet I'm at peace
A quiet mind filled with colour
Images moving across my brain
Alone in a world I create.
My emotion overwhelms me
I can feel the wind whip me
As I stand on top of the cliff
I can smell the leaping waves
Below me they turn white, frothy
Wild horses running forward
Rearing, bucking, racing each other
They jump over me, flying like angels
I soar with them above the world
Where everything is small.



By **Jennafer Milne**
Year 10, Eynesbury Senior College
ADELAIDE – SA
Teacher: Shelda Rathmann

School

A place where you try,
Try to aim high
Learn the subjects that you need to know for a lifetime
Before you run out of valuable time
English and maths are the main themes
In sport, you may be the best team!
You will learn heaps at school
That is why school is your only tool
To make you success
And be one of the best!
School is the key to follow your dreams of what you want to be
when you grow up
One day, you may even win the world cup
You can't jig school
Because then you aren't following the rules
Always go to school no matter what
Because you will always learn a lot!

By **Olivia Chum**
Year 6, Mt. Pritchard Public School
MT. PRITCHARD – NSW



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Verfrumdungseffekt: Estranging the Audience

Distaste curls your lips
As you view the strangers

The little old ladies
With umbrella frames
And chicken-bone hands;

The too fat and too thin,
Who warp the landscape
Smiles sickly as treacle;

The gossips and gawkers,
A cascade of whispers –
Rumour by rote;

Your own self, for being,
Deep down,
Past the layers
That mar the progress of sympathy,

Repulsed.

Disgusted by:

The homeless who huddle –
Compassion is required,
But they reek;

Recoil from;

The apologies, which really,
When stripped of all glamour,
Really say –
“I know you were wrong”;

The disciplinarians who shape your expectations
But wind up your conscience
And ruin relationships –

mothers and judges, doctors and teachers, policemen and
sports coaches, lawyers –

Lawyers that quibble over “thou shalt not”;
Women who compulsively root out people’s failings;

Your own self for not being open-minded enough to keep from
categorising people
To not quietly sneer
In disgust, in fear,
At –

lesbians, gays, the disabled, the homeless, the elderly, women,
children, teenagers, yourself –

Your own self.

By **Elizabeth Waldron**

Year 9, Newtown High School of the Performing Arts
NEWTOWN – NSW
Teacher: Ms Garnsey



My Amazing Grandpa

You were the only grandpa I ever had
You never got angry or mad
I wish you didn't have to die
When I heard the news I just had to cry
You taught me how to build things
You were like one of the best kings
You loved to do crosswords
And climb up trees and look at the birds
You loved to play a game of dodge ball
And you would always be there whenever we call

I am going to miss you so much
I wish we could still talk and keep in touch
But this is how life goes
This is the way God chose
I will never forget you
This comes from my heart it's true,
Your life is an example for me to live
Not to receive but to give
I enjoyed living with you and grandma
Thank you for being my amazing grandpa

By **Francois Kruger**

Year 4, Nambour Christian College
WOOMBYE – QLD.

Life Returning

A YEAR and a half ago, flames licked through Cardinia Park, mercilessly scorching trees. Birds, kangaroos, all creatures were forced to leave their homes and weaker fellows behind to escape the fire on Black Saturday. Months ago, I visited the bushland, to see that trees had been blackened and killed as far as the eye could see. It was clear that the bush had suffered much on that fateful weekend. Almost nothing had survived.

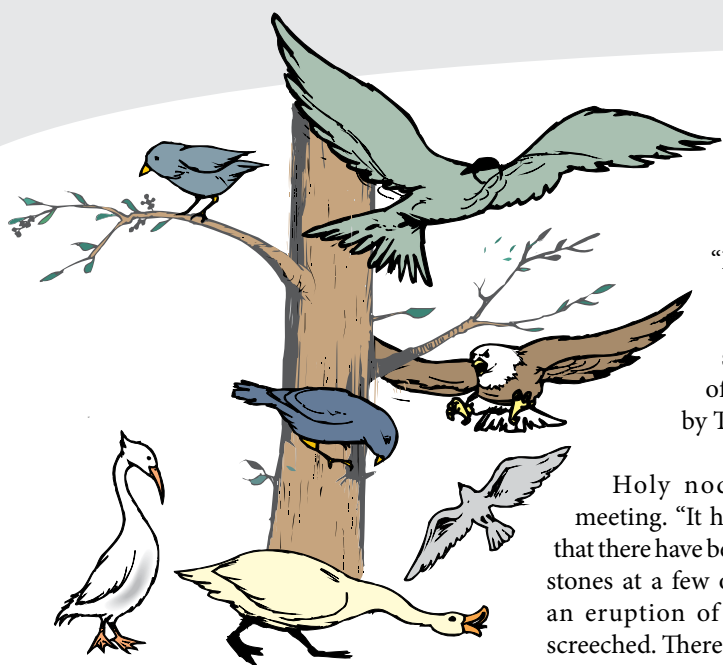
Now as I walk along a wombat trail, the bush is almost unrecognisable. The ground is covered with a green carpet of native grasses and leaves flutter in the trees. Kangaroos stare at me from the hillside, joeys standing with them, and Yellow

Robins, Lorikeets, and Cockatoos happily sing from the trees. Their calls block out almost all sound of civilisation.

But from under the greenery, blackness peers out from the trees. The trees have not forgotten. No matter how many layers of bark, fur or feathers the forest sheds, it will never forget. Neither should we. We cannot forget Black Saturday or the effect it had on our community and the bush.

Life is returning to the bush.

By **Gemma Randall**
Year 8, Caulfield Grammar School
WHEELERS HILL – VIC.
Teacher: Mr Hartley



THE eight birds from Fruit Valley were all going to a bird meeting. Rosie the Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove was flying through the valley. She was going to a bird meeting. Turtle the Spotted Turtle Dove was going too. He saw Rosie and glided to her and they flew together to the bird meeting.

Greet the Welcome Swallow, Cheeky the Willie-wagtail, Muskie the Black-faced Cuckoo-strike, Holy the Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Merry the Laughing Kookaburra and Brag the Torresian Crow were waiting for Rosie and Turtle in the old gum tree in the centre of the valley.

Holy screeched loudly and everyone stopped speaking and looked at him.

Greet's Big Plan

"I guess we should start the meeting" said Holy. "Wait" yelled Rosie who swooped down onto one of the branches, followed by Turtle, "we're here!"

Holy nodded and started the meeting. "It has come to my attention that there have been human boys throwing stones at a few of us." At that there was an eruption of chatter. "Quiet", Holy screeched. There was silence. "Thank you, does anyone have a solution?" Everyone looked at each other. No one knew what to do until Greet piped up, "We could scare them". Everyone looked at him.

Holy smiled, "How?"

Greet looked embarrassed, but explained his plan. As no one else had a better idea the birds agreed to use Greet's plan.

The next day Brag was flying through the city and he saw the boys walking through the streets. He quickly turned and raced back to the others. He let out a high-pitched honk and hundreds of birds rose from the trees and followed him to the city. Brag led them further down the street where the boys were so they could get ready to put Greet's plan into action.

The boys walked towards them, one of them looked up and saw hundreds of birds staring at him, he yelled and ran back down the streets, the others looked at the birds and laughed nervously. The birds moved forward a bit and the other boys screamed and followed the first boy. Those boys wouldn't dare throw stones at them again.

Later that day the birds held a party and they were all talking about what had happened. No one thought to say something to Greet about how good his plan was, but a few minutes later, Cheeky, Muskie, Holy, Merry, Brag, Rosie and Turtle flew over and start patting him and thanking him. Greet smiled and blushed as Cheeky, Muskie and Merry started shouting out for everyone else to stop talking and listen. "Everyone", Holy said, "Greet was the one to come up with the brilliant plan and I would like to thank him on behalf of all of us as I am sure those naughty boys won't bother us again". He turned to Greet, "Thank you". Greet blushed as all the birds cheered. From that day on the boys never annoyed them again, thanks to Greet.

By **Jasmine Menzies**
Year 7, Middle Park State School
MIDDLE PARK – QLD.

The Wetland

The song of the magpie
 The leap of the frog
 The slither of the snake as it hides in the log
 The flutter of a dragonfly as it moves through the air
 The scatter of a spider without any care
 This is the wetland.

The chatter of birds, the humming of a bee,
 The swishing of leaves on a gumnut tree,
 The stillness of a lizard as it basks in the sun,
 The scuttle of an ant, when its work is done,
 This is the wetland.

By **Cassandra Thaller**
 Year 6, Oxley College
 CHIRNSIDE PARK – VIC.
 Teacher: Sharon Sandison



The crow does croon tenderly
 The piercing cry of death.
 The maid starts as she hears it
 And draws a shuddering breath.
 She glances out her window
 At the bare land on which they live.
 It is arid and unfruitful –
 Rain, the sky cannot give
 To the plains of Enfer.

A cloaked traveller treads carefully
 Across the desolate heath.
 His staff quietly thumps the grass,
 Which bends, crushed, beneath.
 The maid looks on curiously
 As the traveller passes the gate.
 His stride is purposeful,
 He intends to continue straight
 Across the plains of Enfer.

The maid wonders if she should,
 Warn him of the danger.
 The plains are infested with beasts
 And many creatures much stranger.
 She knows not if he will listen –
 The determined rarely do.
 She remembers the last traveller,
 Who brought the gale that blew
 Over the plains of Enfer.

He pauses, then looks up
 And his raven eyes catch hers.
 She shivers at that moment
 Her eyes drop to the rug of furs
 That lies along the floorboards
 Of the humble home in which she lives.
 She is the mistress of this place,
 Yet through service her time she gives
 To the plains of Enfer.

The traveller lowers his head
 And continues his measured walk.
 “How lonely”, thinks the maid,
 “Without others to share and talk.
 Perhaps I should give him something –
 Some drink or maybe food.
 Anything at all, really,
 To help him not to brood
 On the plains of Enfer”.

Polaroid

Sometimes I am like a Polaroid
 Occasionally negative
 Often unfocused
 Trying to find my purpose
 In the snapshot of my life

By **Sarah Jenkin-Hall**
 Year 10, Eynesbury Senior College
 ADELAIDE – SA
 Teacher: Shelda Rathmann

Yet as she opens her door,
 She realises that he is gone.
 The traveller is lost from sight
 The maid can hardly mourn.
 She wonders regretfully,
 “Can the lad be followed?”
 But the truth gnaws at her heart –
 He has been swallowed
 By the plains of Enfer.

The maid rushes back inside
 The small little home.
 She crosses furtively to the shelf
 And grasps the leather-bound tome.
 The scrawled pages tell of those
 Travellers out yonder.
 This traveller joined the lost ones,
 The souls that perpetually wander
 The plains of Enfer.

By **Talia Walker**
 Year 11, Cerdon College
 MERRYLANDS – NSW

The Plains of Enfer

LET'S be honest. Everyone's scared sometimes and today it seems to be my turn. I've been dared to make my way up to the old abandoned lighthouse at 7:00pm tonight. All day warnings have been blaring out of radios about Cyclone Yasi heading directly to our town at 7:00pm. Any intelligent person might ask why I am doing something so stupid. Performing outrageous dares seems the only way to prevent yourself from becoming a complete social reject. So at 6:30pm, I leave our home and its comforting snugness and set out to become cool.

There really is no calm before the storm tonight. Although it's too dark to make out shapes, I can sense the heavy clouds around me, muffling our small village. My hair is being whipped onto my face, like I have a tiny, impatient jockey perched on my head. The rain is coming at me horizontally, like a million shards of glass. I plough through, trying to stay upright against the howling racket. I see palm trees bending over backwards, their branches snapping. The true force of nature. As I reach the lonely cliff I see the old lighthouse looming up in the distance, still standing tall, if a bit battered. I sense its age and wisdom, feel the many stories it has to tell, for it has seen everything, from its precarious position on the cliff top. My foot touches the front step, my hand reaches for the brass handle with the number 7 engraved, at the exact moment the storm hits.

The sea erupts with a howl of fury, it explodes its gizzards all over the cliff, it spews all over the ground above the steep embankment, showering me with seawater. I lunge into the stairwell of the lighthouse, trying to summon every spare ounce of strength in order to heave the door shut. With all this going on all around me, it seems a strange moment to realise that I haven't brought my camera, to prove I've been here, that I've done the dare, that I am worth talking to, I am cool! I manage to heave the door shut, slamming Cyclone

Yasi out. When it thuds shut, the storm is instantly silent. What was previously a raucous banging and crashing is now a muffled sense of claustrophobia.

As I place my foot on the first cracked step of the dizzying spiral, I hear the sound of crows above me squawking softly. I keep pushing upwards, growing tired. The walls seem to be moving inwards, trying to swallow me up. At last I reach the top, and as I look down, on those steps I've spent the last half hour climbing, I see only seven.

At the top of the lighthouse, I look out at the wild, raging water, suddenly rising so high, the waves exceed the cliff, and wash back again, over the cliff. I turn around, and notice six crows, with jet black eyes, staring at me expectantly. It feels like the lighthouse is swaying now, side to side, to and fro, like a mother with a crying baby. When I look out of the glass again, and down, at the base of the lighthouse, I notice something odd.

A little boy is standing at the door of the lighthouse, his hand on the brass knocker with 7 engraved, wearing exactly the same clothes as me. He doesn't seem to be moving, not even looking around to see the monster of a wave rearing up over the cliff behind him, sweeping over the grass, rising and rising, then receding with him too, over the cliff, down the saltwater waterfall, back into the raging ocean. With my heart in my mouth I look around at the six crows, then down at my shoes. But my shoes aren't there, only two black scaly feet with sharp black claws jutting out. I look at my face in the reflection of the glass window, and see only a small black head, with tiny black beady eyes, staring sorrowfully back at me. I look at us all, perched around the room, a group of jet-black crows. All seven of us....

By Owen Small

Year 6, Crescent Head Public School

CRESCENT HEAD – NSW

Teacher: Mrs Cosette Black

DAREDEVIL

Moonlight Connection

The rain falls slowly.
Icy cold, it drips from her hair, runs into her jacket, soaks her jeans.
It cascades like a million diamonds,
Catching the light of the street lamps,
And throwing it back out again as a shimmer.
She doesn't feel it.

The radio plays softly.
A stifled mumble of incomprehensible sound, just audible.
The rumble of a sports commentator
Drifts to where a man sits at his desk,
Still, silent, staring.
He doesn't notice it.

She lifts her head.
Rivulets of rain wash into her eyes, causing her mascara to run
Down her face as thin, black tendrils.
She blinks as her eyes sting,
But her gaze remains fixated
On the light bulb of the night.

He tilts his head.
Craning his neck to see better, he leans forward across his desk.
His elbow knocks his open water bottle and
Water erupts across the desk,
Drenching paper covered in his tight, black scrawl.
He only sees the lamp of the night.

She smiles to herself.
As the smile reaches her eyes, they are set alight with twinkling,
More mesmerising than the stars.
The rising moon bathes the empty street
In a pale ivory light that penetrates all darkness.
The light that they both share.

He grins broadly,
Eyes glued to the sphere of creamy luminescence.
It will be the same for her, he knows.
The same full disk against a raven backdrop.
Momentarily bathed in the disk's glow,
He is forever connected with her.

By **Talia Walker**
Year 11, Cerdon College
MERRYLANDS – NSW



"SARAH, wake up!" Joseph prodded Sarah, his voice urgent. Sarah woke up annoyed, still half asleep.

"What's wrong now? Why did you have to wake me up?" she mumbled.

"This isn't a joke OK, there's a fire!" His voice was becoming more frantic.

"Ha, ha, go away."

Joseph opened the curtains revealing the bright red flames outside.

"Look it's true, we have to go now!"

Now that Sarah saw that it was true she jumped out of her bed, her hazel eyes staring with terror. Her brown hair flew behind her as she dragged her brother down the stairs. Joseph pulled away and ran to the front door quickly. He turned the handle but the door was locked. They had to get out for the fire had already started to rip through the kitchen.

Joseph's calm green eyes had now filled with fright as he grabbed Sarah's arm and pulled her through the house to the back door. The door was open and they rushed out. They ran out onto the street with no idea where to go. The smoke filled the air and began to close in on them until all they saw was grey.

Sarah felt lost; she tried to call out but her mouth filled with smoke and she began to cough and splutter. Joseph found his way to Sarah and they tried to run on. They had to make it as far away as they could. Sarah

tripped and then felt warm blood as red as the fire, blossoming from the cuts on her arms and legs.

"Sarah get up, we've nearly made it!" Joseph shouted as he tried to help Sarah up but he knew it was too late. Sarah couldn't get up... she could hardly breathe. Joseph sat beside her trying to help and tears welled in his eyes as he heard her say, "It's OK, leave without me... you tried..." With every word her voice was fading. "I love you brother." Then Sarah collapsed, her body slumped to the ground.

"No!" Joseph screamed then lay down next to Sarah crying, his face blotchy red with tears streaming down his cheeks. Now he wanted to die with her. All he wanted was to be with Sarah forever. As he lay there he thought of Sarah's last words...

"I love you brother."

By **Abbie Sayce**
Year 6

Woodleigh Junior School – Minimbah
FRANKSTON SOUTH – VIC.
Teacher: Mr Boundy

Smell the fragrant short stemmed flowers,
See the mature trees resembling gigantic towers,
Watch the brilliantly graceful butterflies fly,
Up, up and away into the wide open sky.

Admire the formal hedges all planted in rows,
Hear the trickling of water and the cawing of the crows,
See the rays of sunlight paint uneven stepping stones,
Through the leaves of the mature trees with various tones.

Explore the intriguing winding gravel path,
Beyond the garden gnomes to the provincial bird bath,
Adore the colourful roses in full glorious bloom,
As yellow as the sun to as white as the moon.

Strolling endlessly amongst the lush green grass,
The sun that's shining brilliantly is soon to pass,
See your way through the disappearing haze,
All within the glory of a tranquil morning maze.

By **Matthew Harper-Gomm**
Year 7, Kambrya College
BERWICK – VIC.
Teacher: Miss Rebecca Manuel

Morning Maze



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JOURNEY THROUGH SPACE

“WOOOF, woof”, barked a dog as Sally passed the junkyard. When Sally reached the gate on the fence around the junkyard it was broken. “How unusual”, thought Sally.

Suddenly a twinkle of light appeared through the gate. Sally turned around quickly and peered through the gate. Slowly she entered the junkyard through the gate with a sparkle of light. Sally walked towards the light. She was almost at the beam of light when the metal and junk around started to rattle and shake. Sally stepped backwards when she realized what it was.

It was a round, silver spaceship. Then all of a sudden a thick, slimy vine struck out from the space ship. It gradually wrapped around Sally’s ankle and bit by bit worked its way up Sally’s leg. “Arrgghh” screamed Sally. Sally started to get pulled towards the space ship. Unexpectedly, a boy called Joe from Sally’s class was passing by the junkyard on the way to school and heard Sally screaming. Joe quickly climbed over the gate.

“Sally, I’m coming”, cried Joe.

“Joe is that you? Help!” yelled Sally.

Joe rushed over to Sally. He quickly thought what to do. Meanwhile Sally was screaming and slowly being pulled in.

“Joe, hurry up”, shouted Sally.

“I’m thinking, I’m thinking”, replied Joe.

Suddenly Joe reached into his pocket and pulled out his pocket knife.

“Hurry up”, screamed Sally. Sally had almost reached the spaceship when Joe stabbed the vine with his knife. Ear-piercing screams filled the air as the vine reluctantly unwrapped itself from Sally’s leg and scrambled back into the spaceship. As soon as the vine got back into the ship there was absolute silence. After what felt like an eternity Joe spoke.

“What just happened?”

“Um, I don’t know”, replied Sally. She got up and walked over to Joe. “Ehhh, thanks”, said Sally.

“Don’t mention it”, added Joe. Joe looked at the spaceship and slowly walked over with his knife ready.

“Joe, be careful”, said Sally cautiously.

“I will”, said Joe. Joe reached the spaceship and lifted the hatch. Smoke started steaming out and lights and buttons started shimmering and flashing. “Wow”, Joe whispered to himself. He hadn’t noticed that Sally had run up to him.

“Do you want to go in?” she asked.

“Sure”, replied Joe nervously. Joe and Sally climbed in. Once they had sat down in their seats and got comfortable Sally spoke. “Don’t touch anything, OK” Sally snapped.

“Just one”, Joe groaned.

“No!” yelled Sally. Then they started fighting about not pressing buttons. Suddenly Sally fell against a big red button. She froze for a second, “Oh, oh” sighed Sally.

“Hey, how come you got to press a button?” grumbled Joe. Just then the hatch closed, the light dimmed and the spaceship started to rumble. Sally started pushing different buttons frantically as the spaceship started to count down.

“10,9,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1,0 we have lift off”, shouted the machine.

“Arrrgghhh!” screamed Sally and Joe together. All the G-forces were rushing into their heads and they soon fell to sleep.

When Sally and Joe woke up they had found that the ship had stopped moving. Joe quickly got out his phone and tried to turn it on. “Oh, no signal”, sighed Joe.

“Help me try and open this hatch so we can get out of here”, said Sally. So Joe tried to open the hatch with Sally. “It’s no use”, groaned Sally.

“We’re trapped” added Joe. Then out of nowhere there came a faint buzzing sound.

“Hey what’s that?” asked Sally. Slowly the hatch from the spaceship creaked open and there in front of them were two green human looking creatures.

“Alo” cried one of the creatures.

Sally and Joe just stared with their mouths wide open. Finally, Sally closed her mouth and spoke. “Uhhh, I am Sally and this is my friend Joe, we come in peace”, said Sally. Joe stood up and walked over to the creature. “Are you Aliens?” said Joe. Sally jabbed Joe in his stomach with her elbow.

“Let me do all the talking, OK” whispered Sally to Joe. “Where are we?” asked Sally to the creatures.

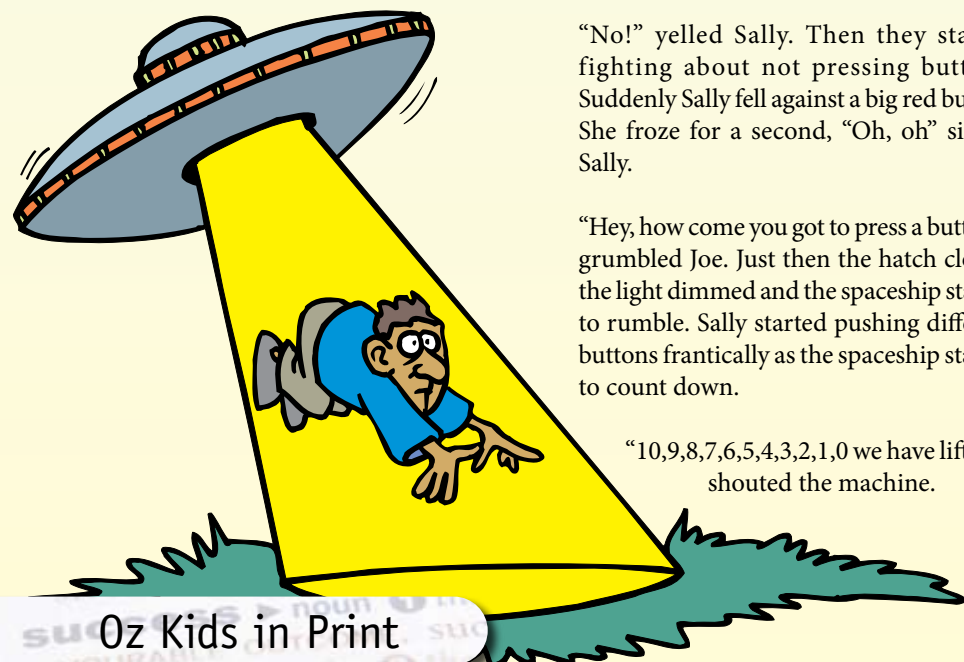
“You are in space on the Neptune 2000, and by the way I am Yip and this is Yap”, replied Yip. Suddenly a voice appeared and told Yip and Yap to come back into the Neptune 2000.

“Sorry we have to go now, come on Yap” said Yip.

“Wait”, shouted Joe. “How are we meant to get out of space and back to our planet?”

Yip and Yap whispered together and then Yip put out his slimy fingers. “I guess you’ll have to come with us to the lift off room”, said Yip.

Sally and Joe looked at each other and nodded their heads then they walked forwards.





A door opened and they all walked through. They had a look inside and gasped in amazement. The place was filled with other creatures like Yip and Yap. They walked inside further and stood in the middle of the floor and looked around. Suddenly a curious looking creature snuck up behind Joe and grabbed him and then ran away into the crowd.

"Hey Joe, don't you think this is cool?" chirped Sally. Sally turned around quickly and Joe had disappeared. "Joe!" Shouted Sally repeatedly.

"What's wrong?" Yap said.

"Don't you see it? Joe's gone", cried Sally to Yip.

"Don't worry, it's OK, we'll find him."

Sally started running around calling out Joe's name again and again. She saw a brown door in a corner. "Yip, Yap, over here", screamed Sally. Yip and Yap quickly waddled over to her. "It's a secret staircase leading down to somewhere", exclaimed Sally. She took a step down then another. Yip and Yap waddled down a few steps to follow Sally.

"OK, how about we go to the end to see what's down there", said Sally. Yip and Yap agreed. They walked down for a while then the stairs came to an end. Suddenly some lights flickered on and everything was visible.

"Wow, this must be the old escape spaceship room", mumbled Yap.

"Good, and this is how we can escape from space", said Sally before adding "but first we have to find Joe". They walked

back up the stairs and started looking for Joe again.

Just then Yap heard a weak cry coming from somewhere. Yap walked over to a room and peaked in. "Guys over here" cried Yap. Sally and Yip scrambled in to the room. "I think there's someone in that box", said Yap mysteriously. Sally walked over to the trunk.

"Helloooo?" she tapped on the lid.

Suddenly the box started shaking then the lid popped open.

"Joe", screamed Sally.

"Mmmm-mmm", groaned Joe with a scarf around his mouth. Sally quickly untied the scarf around his mouth, arms and feet. Joe immediately jumped up, stepped out and hugged Sally.

"Oh, I can't believe you found me", he cried.

"Well, actually, Yap found you", said Sally.

"Oh, thank you Yap."

After Joe had explained what had happened to him they walked back over to the door where the staircase was.

"So this is where we can escape", sighed Joe.

"Well, it's down the stairs", moaned Yap.

So Yip opened the door and they all walked down. When they reached the end of the staircase Yap walked over to the light switch and pushed the button. Suddenly the lights flickered on and everything was clear.

"Wow", gasped Joe.

"So which one are we going to take?" Sally wondered.

Yap walked over to a small, grey shuttle which would be perfect for Joe and Sally.

"This one is the only one we are allowed to use when there is not an emergency", said Yap.

Sally and Joe walked over to Yap.

"So this is where we say goodbye", sighed Joe.

"Unfortunately it is", replied Yip. "All you have to do to work the shuttle, is to press the big blue button. The computer and the shuttle will then turn on and the computer will ask you for your destination. Then you state your destination and push the small green button," Yap told them.

So Yap unlocked the door and Sally and Joe hugged and thanked Yip and Yap and then slowly they walked into the shuttle. Just after Joe tucked his last foot in the shuttle the hatch closed with a bang. Sally and Joe sat down on the seats, put their seat belts on, then Sally looked at Joe and gave him a little nod. Then Sally pressed the big blue button and then everything lit up and a voice asked for Sally and Joe's destination.

"Umm... Earth please", said Joe. Sally pressed the small green button and the shuttle started to shake. It flew out of the open roof and then they were flying through space again. Then, in an instant, they were back where they had started.

"Did that really happen?" Sally said.

Joe nodded his head in silence and looked at his watch.

"9.00am", he said in shock.

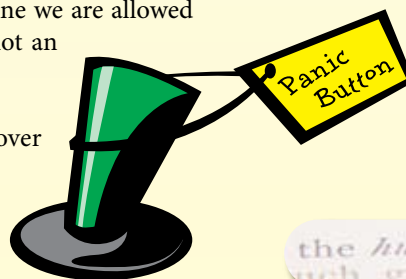
Sally pushed Joe's arm up to her face to see the watch. "The time must have stopped while we were up in space", cried Sally in shock. "Come on, we can still make it to school!"

So Joe and Sally ran quickly off to school and just made it in time for the roll.

"Phew", puffed Sally, "that was a tough adventure".

"Yeah, it totally was", replied Joe.

After school finished Joe and Sally walked over to the junkyard and went in. They went over to the place where the rocket was. Suddenly a big monster shot up from the ground. "Argghhhhhhhhh!"



By **Grace Blanch**
Year 5, The Essington
School Darwin
NIGHTCLIFF – NT
Teacher: Mrs Fletcher

The Never Ending Journey

By **Victoria Toh**
Year 5,
Oxley College,
CHIRNSIDE PARK – VIC.
Teacher:
Sharon Sandison

I can do it,
I will make it,
I will reach the finish line.
The destination is not what matters,
It's the journey.
But when you think you are at the finish line,
You're at the starting line too.
This is the never ending journey,
A never ending journey of life.

Waiting

Winter is nigh
frost covers the sky.
Everything is cold and wet,
fish shiver inside the net.
Leaves drift to the floor
and gather slowly inside the door.

The baby birds have left the nest,
and travelled quickly towards the west,
for the leaves have fallen into the snow
that was why they had to go.

We all wait shivering through the hush
until we hear the call of the happy lark,
then we know that spring has begun
to make her welcome mark.

By **Amy Blackshaw**
Year 5DB,
St. Louis de Montfort Primary School
ASPENDALE – VIC.

Deaf and Blind

You can hear the birds sing,
You can hear the waves crash against the shore.
You can hear all the wonderful things,
But to me, it's all like the hum of a refrigerator.

You can see the people dancing,
You can see the page of a book,
You can see all the wonderful things,
But for me, it's the same as when I'm asleep.

This is what it might be like to be deaf and blind,
You could not hear,
You could not see,
But you would still deserve respect.

By **Nina Lee**
Year 5, Mt. Martha Primary School, MT. MARTHA – VIC.
Teacher: Mr. Antoniou



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