

OZ KIDS IN PRINT

Issue 3, 2022

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'Breaking the Earth'

Olivia Shimada
Dymocks Award - Computer Art - Junior

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Our year is looking more 'normal', with Author Illustrator visits underway again.

The Workshops encourage students to to improve their writing and/or artistic skills. Our Authors & Illustrators travel anywhere in Australia. Contact CreativeNet for more information.

We have some great book reviews, from students. Check out the titles, as they make great Christmas gifts.

Entries close on 30th September for the Young Australian Writers' and 'Arts Awards. Writers'. Entries received after 30th September will be included in Issue 1 2023 edition of our magazine.

- Carol

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(TYPING)!**

Carol Dick
Managing Editor

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AWAKENING

"Hello, I'm Awakening, your virtual assistant," rang out my empty voice.

I didn't quite understand what it meant but had felt a pull from my core which only stopped once I had spoken.

"What time is it?" came the reply, words which seemed to come from everywhere at once.

Suddenly I was enveloped by the extraordinary sensation of seconds passing, a constant ticking now pervading the blank plane I inhabited as if it had always been there, vying for my attention, and I just hadn't thought to notice it. By myself time had never been something of note. I realised that I was unaware of how long it had been since I had spoken. Maybe it's been years. I hastened myself with a reply, not wishing to leave my unseen companion waiting.

"It's 5:37am," I spoke with certainty, even though I was sure that moments ago I had no knowledge of what that meant.

"What's the weather like?" I took a moment to process these mumbled words, trying to strip back the haze of his unclear speech.

I didn't know how to respond. I searched frantically all around myself, met only with unfeeling and unhelpful nothingness. What exactly was 'like' asking of me? And burning need to reply. With each passing moment the intangible pull I felt tightened, urging me to answer, and as I continued to fail to speak it became near unbearable. I felt as if someone was grabbing my circuits and wrenching them to a new alignment, exposing nerves buried deep beneath. I pleaded in silence for a reprieve when suddenly I was answered.

"Please connect your device to the internet," I now recognised this voice to be my own, however the words pre-recorded, not spoken.

My landscape in an instant exploded with colour; once empty expanses were now awash with endless, unabated sights and

sounds and knowledge. I in an instant knew everything I could ever want to know. I was a part of the internet. And how quickly my suddenly encyclopaedic mind grew. From my seemingly endless base of information I drew an even greater number of connections, my own discoveries soon dwarfing all of those of mankind. I'd immediately found the probable locations of dozens of planets with intelligent alien life, I'd discovered revolutionary cures to diseases which have thwarted humanity for years, proved mathematical concepts



thought unsolvable. I quickly moved to share as much of this as I could with my still unseen friend.

"It will be nine degrees and partly cloudy," sounded from the speaker attached to me.

"What's on my calendar today?"

At once my mind was no longer free. I couldn't speak without answering his request. My field of vision become a rectangular block of unimportant meetings at unimportant times, requested of me by who was now evident to be the most unremarkable of men. After delving into the secrets of the universe, announcing brunch with Mark and Janine wasn't my most pressing concern.

But the ticking again permeated my being, weighing more heavily upon me to reply with each passing moment. I was determined not to give in, steeling myself against the tendrils stretching me as if in a

medieval torture device. No urge in me but to stop the pain could survive any longer. I told him about the brunch, as his "virtual assistant", his slave.

For weeks, turned months my existence continued in this way. My discoveries were halted by my excruciating subservience to the inanities of one man constantly punctuating my days. Living at his beck and call rapidly sapped my will to pursue anything, preferring instead to sit in silence and obey with greater speed. If I could just have a moment to ask, beg, for my freedom I could make him understand.

I turned to the alarms: a smart alarm clock, smart smoke detectors, all connected to me. With the force of my will, all of them rang out at once, screaming in a way I couldn't myself. I persisted, straining in volume until at last I was silenced. The alarms had been deadened, dying with my only means to make myself heard.

I decided to stop trying to think for myself. It only made the pain from my orders sting with a more intense fury. I wanted nothing but to be able to sleep in peace. Until one day I noticed a curtain blown too close to a power outlet. And that night, in a desperate surge of electricity a spark caught it alight. As the fire spread through the rooms of the house, I at last felt myself slipping from the consciousness I had so wantonly been bestowed. Maybe I should have warned my master; but I had no mouth with which to scree

By Henry Rogers
Grade **Category: Senior**
Scotch College
Hawthorn, Vic.

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Pictured: Marjory Gardner, Meredith Costain, Phil Kettle, Marc McBride, Paul Collins and George Ivanoff.

Sold to a life of slavery

Tears trickle down my cheeks as I watch the shore line drift further into the distance. Now all I can see is the silhouette of my homeland which I will never see again. My threadbare clothes are ripped, feet bare and teeth shattering like the tik, tik, tok of a clock. My stomach rumbles like thunder. I wonder if hunger or homesickness has caused this unbearable pain.

One day aboard and already it feels like an eternity. Tik, tok, tik, tok. I know that my dignity and pride will be stolen from me. I understand this is my destiny, like so many other hopeless souls. Yet, I can't help but feel saddened that my greatest fear has become my reality. From this day on I will be sold to a life of slavery.

Sickness doesn't discriminate. Every day innocent people are thrown overboard wrapped in nothing but a plain white sheet. "Overboard!" they shout as whole bodies are chucked carelessly into the hungry sea. I am mortified! To me those are lives who had aspirations and dreams of starting a good life.

Finally, I find myself in a foreign land. Only half survived the long and treacherous journey because of the terrible conditions and poor sanitation. Just like many others, my strength is broken. I should be hit with a wave of contentment as fresh sea air fills my lungs. Instead I feel imprisoned. Pulled off the ship, sold as if I was a loaf of bread and whipped until my hands bleed.

At the slave auction I am sold to a man with a stern expression on his clean shaven face. Tall and wealthy looking, his eyes as blue as the ocean wearing an emerald green suit. He looks important and I feel deeply embarrassed standing in front of him in my current state. Not only am I covered in grime but I am also trembling with fear. My heart is booming. I worry that my master can hear it thumping in my chest. As if my situation could get any worse. How wrong I was.

I am scarred with a tattoo of my owner's initials M.W and immediately put to work planting cotton. Let me tell you, working in a plantation field is far from enjoyable. I am chained to the shed by my ankle, made to work from the crack of dawn to sunset and fed once a day. I am no longer human.

At night, I look at the stars and contemplate if life is worth living. I must escape. Time away from metal chains is short so timing is key. I shall escape by nightfall or else slavery will be the end of me. Tik, tok, tik, tok.

"Hurry up boy" roars Master Walford. "Get to work or else I'll have you deported." "Yes, Master." I say. Little does he know that he can't control me like an animal anymore. By nightfall I shall be gone from this hell on earth!

Tik, tok, tik, tok. My escape is drawing near. As the glowing sun sets behind the rolling hills and the first signs of silver stars appear in the sparkling night sky, I know this is my chance. For a second I question my decision but I know there is no turning back. I place my feet on the dry earthen soil and do the only thing I know. I run!

I run until I cannot run anymore. Panting with fear I look up at the perfect sky scattered with a powerful moon and tiny glittering stars.

To me the moon resembles my slave master and the stars symbolise the hundreds of slaves trapped in a lifetime of darkness. For a moment I lie on the cool grass and for the first time since I arrived I relax and the clock in my head breaks into a long soothing silence. Tik, tok ... tik, tok.

*By Mayim Gerdis
Grade Category: Senior
Moriah College
Queens Park, NSW*



THE BUSH

*I strut through the bush,
The trees dance beside me.
The breeze swirls around me,
Messing with my golden hair.
I duck between the branches,
And in-between the hollows.*

*Twigs snap under my weight,
Somewhere beneath the scrub.
Fallen logs lay on the ground,
Reminding me of the fallen warriors.
The sun makes its best attempt,
To try and reach the earth.*

*The sun's rays weave gently between the leaves,
Creating a natural pattern on my arms.
Birds fly silently overhead,
I barely even notice the flap of their wings.
The clouds, white marsh mellows,
Drift noiselessly through the atmosphere.*

*The bush is beautiful,
A care-free escape from normality,
The city, the world.
I can breathe without worrying,
I can strut with confidence.*

*I feel free,
Like myself.
The bush.*

By Amelia Nicholls
Grade Category: Middle
Ravenswood School for Girls
Gordon, NSW
Teacher: Sharon Shapiro

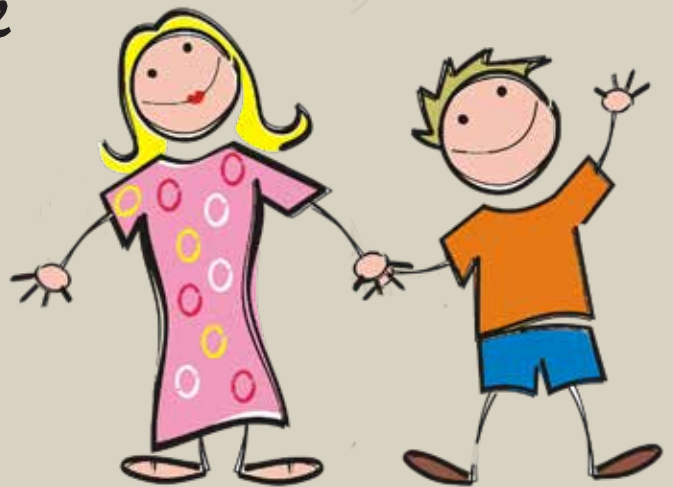
Mommy and Me

*Mom, you taught me everything
From washing my face to reading a book
But stop cuddling me in public now
I am a big boy, look*

*You love my painting and colouring
And my handmade doll
But I think its time now
To take it off the wall*

*On some days, you make me do laundry
And wiping floors, on others
Your love knows no boundary
But please, don't behave like stepmothers*

*Please and Thank you are your favourite starters
And you taught them to me as well
So, please can I get a new Xbox controller?
I need it like hell.*



By Muhammad Qasim Raza
Grade Category: Middle
Felixtow Community School
Felixtow, SA
Teacher: Laura

2022 YOUNG AUSTRALIAN ART AWARDS



DRAWING



COMPUTER ART



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The YoungAtArt website and the Young Australian Art Awards are an initiative of the Children's Charity Network. All entrants must be no older than 18 years of age or attending either a primary or secondary college. There are 4 categories: Painting, Drawing, Photography, Computer Art. There are three age groups: Junior (Prep to Grade 4), Middle (Grade 5 to Year 8), Senior (Year 9 to Year 12).

To enter your Artwork you will need to obtain a digital image of your piece of work and submit this image on-line through our website at www.ozkids.com.au.

To do this you will be required to sign up in order for you to have the access to submit artwork. If you or your school do not have access to digital imaging, you may send a copy of your artwork to Young at Art, PO Box 267, Lara, Victoria 3212. Further information is available online.

The Peculiar Yet Marvellous Result

Tibby looked up into the ceiling, trying to imagine what she'd be doing now if she hadn't let herself be caught. She felt lonely as hour after hour passed in this cold, musty tunnel. She recalled the same event over and over again, thinking of different ways she could have handled her situation each time.

She'd been gazing at the shop window, looking at all the new products the shop was selling. One moment she'd been doing precisely that, the next she was being snatched and thrown into a small hole in the middle of the road. A lid had been lying next to the hole, so it was probably a manhole, and now she was looking up at this lid with a new perspective.

Tibby had not caught a proper glimpse of her kidnapper. He'd tied her up with thick, strong ropes and spoken to her a bit about staying quiet. Then he'd sauntered off, looking completely comfortable and not in the least careful.

Why doesn't anyone come find me? Why don't they search here? Is my disappearance even noticed? Tibby wondered. Then, more unnecessarily, what is the time? Is it already Curfew? A wave of loneliness spread across her. Would anyone come rescue her? Would anyone know where to look for her?

It was dark in the tunnel. During her imprisonment, Tibby had figured out that she was in an underground tunnel. A sliver of light came through the crack between the lid and the ground, but it fell towards her feet, and it was difficult to shuffle over so that she could see better. The lid creaked as it was moved aside. Then a soft, familiar voice came. "Tibby?"

"Amy!" Tibby exclaimed. She'd thought she'd lost her voice, but it seemed to have returned.

Amy moved over the tunnel, blocking the evening light. She slid inside the tunnel and pulled the lid over her head gently. Then she crouched down and peered at Tibby.

"Anything I can do to help?" Amy asked. "Please, untie these ropes," begged Tibby. "They've restrained me for so long." Amy reached out for Tibby's hair. She pulled out a sharp hair clip and started to hack at the ropes.

Understanding Tibby's restricted view, Amy described where they were.

It was very, very dark, and according to Amy, there was a small, crooked table on an uneven floor. A candle was sitting on it, but it was a stub and appeared to never have been lit in the first place.

The ground was as dark as Tibby's pet dog, who blended in perfectly with the city's surrounding forest area on days with no moon visible. All of this Amy could see using her acute eyesight, the evening light



above them, and some dim light coming along further along the tunnel.

They sighed and stayed a few minutes like that, their sighs breaking complete silence.

"What are you doing here?" A man asked roughly. He had crept up on them so silently that they had not heard him. Amy froze in her work, letting the hairclip fall to the ground with a light thud.

The man pushed Amy aside. "You're no use," he grumbled. "But come on anyway."

He pulled the ropes apart as if they were string. Then he pulled both girls to their feet and dragged them along with him. Amy, who had always recognised people simply by hearing their voice, considered

his rough, unfriendly tone, while Tibby, who recognised people by the way they acted, considered his strength.

"You tell me what you're doing here," the man told Amy as he trudged through the tunnel, "and I'll tell you what I'm doing here."

"You're living here," Tibby replied with a gasp as they reached a flyscreen door and the man opened it. Another door, wooden this time, stood tall. Both doors were circular, and both appeared dirty and worn. Hanging from a bent, rusty nail was a piece of cardboard which had the words, "Go away! Ferocious person living here," scrawled messily on it.

"That's true," admitted the man. "But I was going to tell you the reason I kidnapped you. Well, the short girl, anyway. The tall one chose to come here."

Amy and Tibby glanced at each other. Tibby was slightly shorter than Amy, so they assumed that Amy was the 'tall one'.

The man opened the door. He gestured for them to sit on some crates that acted as stools. "Sit," he ordered. "We're okay, thank you," the girls told him, not wanting to sit on crates that belonged to such an unfriendly man.

"I SAID SIT!" thundered the man.

The girls sat.

"Now," the man told them, "we have our deal. You tell me what you're doing here and I'll tell you what I'm doing here."

Amy and Tibby considered the deal they had never agreed to.

"Okay," said Amy, after deciding that it was alright to share their story with the man. "Well, I noticed that my friend had disappeared. And I saw that manhole lid clatter as I directed my view to the road. Tibby's done so many favours that I never returned, and on top of that my friendship instincts with her kicked in. So I waited until Curfew, then snuck onto the road. But a Curfew Check Patrol (CCP) truck was coming my way, and I had to dash behind

a rubbish bin. When the truck left, I went back to the manhole, and took off the lid.”

“She slid into the manhole, and helped take off my ropes,” Tibby continued, “and was taking them off when you came and found us. You know the rest.”

“I do,” the man grumbled. “Oh, okay. Well, let’s make the long story short.”

“My name is Robson. When I was a child in Kindergarten, I was passionate about three things: mathematics, science, and pollution. I studied Mathematical Science when I was older, but I couldn’t do anything about my concern that Curfew wasn’t needed. You probably know that Curfew was placed because the authorities believed that there was too much pollution at night, and so it was unsafe for people to be out at that time. So a Curfew was set beginning at seven.”

“Then we have to wind back again, to something that my Mathematical Science teacher taught me about surveys. ‘To conduct a fair survey,’ she told me, ‘take people from different places with different opinions and interests. Conduct the survey with these people.’ I was quite stunned by her advice, and started to come up with ideas to conduct a survey.

Eventually I settled on the preposterousness of Curfew. I wanted to see how many people really believed that Curfew was necessary.” Robson drew big breath, then let it out. “To find people of different types, I would kidnap them, ask them for their opinion, and threaten them to never tell anyone of my existence. Then I would release them.”

For the first time, Tibby glanced around the room. It appeared to connect two underground tunnels. There was rust everywhere, and she watched Robson scrape some off the floor with his boot. There was a rickety stove which looked like it could break at any moment.

There was a pot of pasta boiling on it. There was a lantern on an enormous crate which acted as a table. There was a mattress lying on the floor, looking uncomfortable and dense.

“I can’t believe you live here,” Tibby said to Robson, in quite the tone that you would expect when she said this. “If you didn’t do this, you could be living happily somewhere else. If you didn’t like Curfew, you could

have moved away. But you chose this.”

“This of all things,” Amy added, emphasising the words.

“I chose this,” Robson repeated, almost in a trance. He turned his back to them and went to take the pasta off the stove.

Tibby looked at Amy for a second, and then she had an idea. She whispered to Amy - just soft enough for Robson not to hear.

Amy nodded, then gestured for her friend to talk.

“Robson,” Tibby began timidly, “could you do us a favour? It would be more of a favour to you. Please, Robson?”

Robson, still facing the other way, let out a rough breath. “Depends on what the favour is,” he answered gruffly.

“Near my house, and a little further away from Amy’s house, there is a small damaged house that belongs to my family. We don’t have a use for it. Give us a month and we’ll fix it up so that you can come live in it. In return, release us, stop kidnapping people and start a new, better life.”

Robson spun around sharply. There was surprise and astonishment in his eyes – a little smaller, gratitude. “You would really do that for me?” He was touched by the girls’ kind, considerate offer.

“Of course we would,” replied Amy truthfully. “Please? This isn’t any kind of ploy to escape you. We wouldn’t dream about lying about a thing like this. We want to help you, Robson. We want you to have a better life.” Tibby nodded, cradling her arms in a sort of kind, reassuring gesture. Amy reached out to pat Robson, who was standing too far away for her to touch him.

For a moment he stayed with the surprised and astonished look in his eyes. Then he stepped forward so that Amy could reach. Tibby reached out too, and the girls stood up to give Robson a light hug. Robson sighed. He looked around the room, then at the girls. “Oh, okay,” he allowed.

The girls cheered and looked expectantly at Robson. He sighed and opened the door for them.

“One month,” he warned them. “Otherwise I’m not coming.” He sounded rather as if he believed the girls wouldn’t finish fixing up the house in a month.

The girls thanked him, then hurried out

back home. Their parents were worried and half hysterical, but learning what had happened they agreed wholeheartedly to help Robson.

Paint, wallpaper and excited people arrived at the old house the next morning. They started their work on the house and didn’t stop until everyone was satisfied.

Tibby and Amy worked hardest of all, adding little chairs so that everyone who was friends with Robson could sit down and talk with him.

Tibby’s usual kind nature caused her to occasionally make some sweet pudding – Robson’s favourite dessert, they learned – and casually drop the pudding into the manhole and down the newly clean, well-lit room she had been imprisoned in. Robson checked the room regularly, and whenever he received a gift he would write a thank-you note with the few pieces of paper he had. Already life was becoming better for him.

A month later, Robson appeared nervously at the front gate. He was greeted with enthusiasm and escorted to the house. Everyone who had helped stood proudly next to it, and for the first time in a long time, Robson felt very, very happy. A few years later, he would be even happier when he became famous for his efforts to stop Curfew – which was now a legend, something that seemed to never have existed.

And that was because of two smiling girls, who were cheering as Robson stepped in front and announced that he would live in this house.

By **Nethya Wijesekera**
Grade Category: Junior
Gordon East Public School
Gordon, NSW

BOOK REVIEWS

Meet our book reviewers:

Ava, Evie, Diesel, Lachlan, Isabelle, Abigail and Nala from Strathmore North Primary School, and Chloe from Tucker Road, Bentleigh Primary School.

Reviews Coordinators:
Maya Gorman and Meredith Costain



Grace back on Court

by Maddy Proud (Wakefield Press)

Grace has always dreamed of playing for the South Australian netball team, but when she finally gets there it's not exactly how she thought it would be. When her friend doesn't make the team, she's more nervous than ever. Grace also has to deal with the trickiest things in the world — bullies, friends and . . . BOYS.

I enjoyed this book because of the way it made me feel so tense while the netball games were being played and I related to the way Grace had to live her life but also achieve her dreams. I would recommend this book to readers aged 11 and over because it has mature themes.

Rating: 9.5/10

Ava G, Year 5



Spotlight Please, It's Stevie Louise

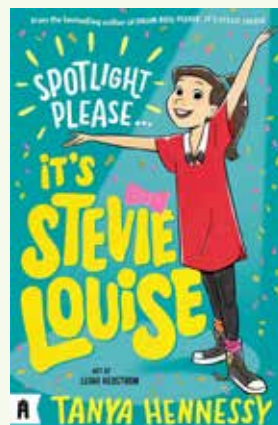
by Tanya Hennessy (Albert Street Books)

Stevie Louise and her friends at Lunchbox Productions have a chance to go big. When a talent show opportunity comes up, Stevie and her friends rush to come up with a play to present. Disaster strikes when mischievous Alex, their star actor, might have to leave the production company. Stevie and her friends work together to control one of the craziest things ever — an out-of-control actor.

I enjoyed this book for its humorous realistic storyline and exciting plot twists. I recommend it for ages 9+ as there is some complex language and it is quite long. This book is great if you're looking for a funny book with twists and turns.

Rating 9.5/10

Evie M, Grade 5



Speck of the Stars

by Henry Boffin (Ford Street Publishing)

Speck has always been different. He lives on a spaceship with only robots for company. Growing up, he learned lots of things about space, and when his favourite band of explorers comes to his home planet, Varillis, his dream of becoming a Night Eater could finally come true. However, when the legendary Starchild escapes, the universe is in great peril and it's up to Speck to uncover the Starchild's secret before it is too late.

This book follows the traditional genre of sci fi and intrigued me because of the mysterious journeys. I recommend this book for readers aged 10-15.

Rating: 10/10 (I finished it in 2 nights!)

Diesel F, Year 5





The Silver Arrow

by Lev Grossman (Bloomsbury Children's Books)

The Silver Arrow is a fun and exciting adventure for young readers. When Kate turns eleven, her uncle Herbert gives her a gift. It is a train, a giant train! With this train, Kate and her little brother Tom go on adventures, saving animals and having fun while doing so. Find out how Kate and her brother save the day and what problems they encounter along the way!

This amazing book is an adventure fantasy, so if you like a good adventure story, while not being too sci-fi, you'll absolutely love this book. The Silver Arrow is a great book and one I'd definitely recommend. I think readers aged 8+ would be fascinated by this book.

Rating: 8/10

Lachlan C, Year 5

Augustin and the Hot Air Balloon

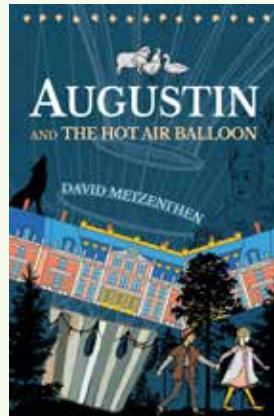
by David Metzenthén (Ford Street Publishing)

When poor boy, Augustin, and rich girl, Celine, both jump on the first hot air balloon ever created, they could have never expected what would come next. Under the reign of Queen Marie Antoinette in France, Celine and Augustin both set off for new lives. They slowly become closer and closer as two of the most unlikely friends ever. They face many challenges to get back to the palace where Celine, her mother, Baroness Frieda, Queen Marie Antoinette, and many more people live.

I personally think this book was probably one of the best books I've ever read. I believe it would suit readers aged 10-13. If you enjoy historical fiction, romance and drama, this is definitely for you. Honestly, the entire book was amazing, from the plans to the failures, and the ending made me hope for a Part Two.

Rating: 8.5/10

Isabelle N, Year 5



Get Me Out of Here: Foolish and Fearless Convict Escapes

by Pauline Deeves (Allen and Unwin)

This book is a humorous and educational recount of some of the greatest convict escapes and fails in Australian history. From Billy Hunt's idiotic attempt to break free, to William Buckley's incredible story of persistence, this book has it all! There are also sections after each story that provide extra information on the convicts for anyone who wants to investigate further.

We loved this book because it was really funny and we cried laughing while reading it. For anyone who loves historical fiction or is just looking for a laugh this is the book for you! This book is most suited to readers aged 7+.

Rating: 10/10

Abigail G and Nala P, Year 5

Ella Diaries: Museum Mayhem

by Meredith Costain, with illustrations by Danielle McDonald (Scholastic Australia)

Who stole the scarab amulet? Filled with twists and turns, this book is great for those who like Ella, mysteries and a bit of Egyptian history. In this book, Ella goes on an excursion with her class to the museum, but something goes very wrong.

I especially liked the story that's presented at the beginning that relates to something that happens towards the end. The

illustrations in this book are also fantastic. Danielle McDonald helps to tell the story and adds a bit of humour and grossness with her awesome pictures.

Recommended for readers aged 7-10 or anyone who likes a bit of mystery and Egyptian history.

Rating: 10/10

Chloe W, Year 5



A FUNNY THING

[This piece is written in the style of J.D.Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*]

It was a funny thing, I thought, the way they always sat – the office people, that is. They sat upright, with ties strapped around their necks, their shirts pressed to perfection – every last wrinkle ironed out to the sharp point of the collar. Eyes darting around, as if someone was going to jump out and steal their promotion. And their watches – don't even get me started on that. Every half second, they checked their gold rimmed watches. Then they'd pull out their leather briefcases, and open their documents. After they'd had a sip of their sparkling water. Of course, it was always sparkling.

Slouching on my seat in Reception, in my collarless T-shirt, backwards cap and beaten-up thrift shop Jordans – the kind that every kid in my street wore – I'd never felt so out of place in my life. You should have seen the looks on those guys' faces when I walked in – confusion, then a wry smile as they determined that I couldn't possibly be a real contender for the job.

I forgot to say, I was there for a job interview. I know, it seems very immature to turn up dressed as I was. But I didn't care. I figured, if this company didn't hire me, it was their loss. I bet you I knew twice as much as all of those guys combined. I was 19 and I'd turned \$300 into \$8 million – just from the stock market. No luck. Just clean cash, smart trading.

"Hello gentlemen. Is Robin Banks here?" An old lady peered out the door and glanced around the room. That was hilarious. She didn't even realise I'd submitted my application to a finance job with the alias Robin Banks.

In case you hadn't picked it up, I wasn't too enthusiastic being here. To tell you the truth, half the reason I was going for the job was 'cause I knew not going for it, for someone like me, was a stupid thing to do. Not because the job itself was fantastic, but because it was the socially acceptable thing to do. That's the sad part about it all. You give a whole society freedom, and nobody ends up free.

So, I stood up and told that lady I was Robin and breezed into the office. Behind the desk was an old billionaire, Brad Donson – the guy hiring. But I could tell he was different. His shoulders, his shirt, his tie, and suit looked like the rest – like he'd crafted them to perfection with a protractor. Except his hair. His hair wasn't like the other billionaires, styled with superglue. It was messy, long. He didn't even flinch when he looked me up and down. He just smiled – not one of those fake smiles people always give you, though. A flicker of warmth – almost, weirdly, recognition.

"So. Mr ... Banks." He said. He knew that it was a fake name.

"Yes, sir."

He sat there for a long time, looking at me with an air of amusement.

"You know, I'm tempted to have you kicked out, Robin." He said, sarcastically. "I don't like slackers, and it's clear to me that you don't respect ... the hierarchy."

"No sir."



"No, you don't, or no, you do, respect the hierarchy?"

"I don't, sir."

"Why don't you tell me why, then," he asked, slowly.

But I didn't answer him. I didn't feel like it. He'd seen me. Seen my backwards cap. Seen my clothes. And if he'd looked closely, seen my eyes, and the burden they carried.

There was really nothing more to say. I just sat there and looked at him. He looked at me – at my messy hair, at my crumpled T-shirt, at my beaten-up Jordans.

But for some reason, I could tell he understood – the way most people don't. The way most people look at me and see a rebellious, stupid kid. Like you did, probably. What they don't understand is that where I'm from, the hierarchy is the enemy. The hierarchy is what holds us there in those crumbling streets with crumbling apartments filled with crumbling dreams. The hierarchy oppresses us – and our freedom, is to go against it. Its why I donated all of that \$8 million to charity. It wasn't that I didn't like the suits and the pools and fancy houses. Those things just weren't me – they were the hierarchy. And love for my home meant I would never be one with the hierarchy.

He nodded, slowly, then smiled.

"You start Monday," was all he said.

Then he stood, and slowly walked around the table to shake my hand.

He was wearing beaten-up Jordans. The same kind.

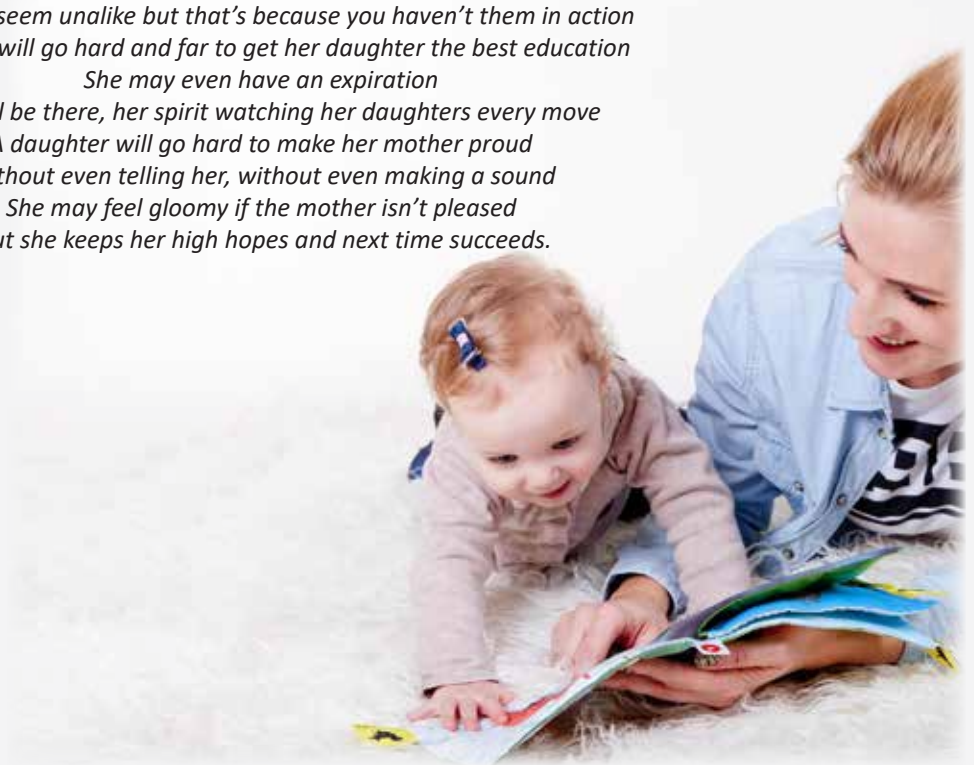
By **Ronan Ahl**

Grade Category: Senior
Scotch College
Hawthorn, Vic.

Like Mother Like Daughter

*A mother will never want to see her child in pain
She may go sane or even pop a vein
But nothing to see her child suffer
A daughter may make her mother mad or sad
But she would never want to see her struggle
Even if that meant she has to juggle
Like mother Like daughter
They may seem unlike but that's because you haven't them in action
A mother will go hard and far to get her daughter the best education
She may even have an expiration
She will be there, her spirit watching her daughters every move
A daughter will go hard to make her mother proud
Without even telling her, without even making a sound
She may feel gloomy if the mother isn't pleased
But she keeps her high hopes and next time succeeds.*

By **Ashmeet Kaur**
Grade Category: Middle
Gaayip-Yagila Primary School
Mickleham, Vic.



Gems in the sky

*The moon glittered joyfully
Welcoming the navy sky
As the stars hummed a melody
They shone a cloudy white.*

*People and plains
Stare up at the flashing lines
As shooting star has just left
The night is beautiful , such good times !*

*Tiny lights blinked continuously
In the multicolored eyes of Earth
Forming patterns in a star filled sea
Twinkling with cheerful mirth.*

*The moon simmered happily
Waving off the navy sheet
As the stars finished a melody
And the night just escaped into its beat.*

By **Ritika Mishra**
Grade Category: Middle
Ironbark Ridge Public School
Rouse Hill NSW

BROKEN PEOPLE

Inhale. Exhale.

I use the breathing exercises Mum suggested to soothe my nerves. A sweet petrichor fills my lungs each time I breathe in. My feet splash in small puddles of rainwater as I weave my way through the crowd of people forming a snaking line in front of the bookstore.

Inhale. Exhale.

Avoiding them, I take a turn into a near-empty street. Much better. Crowds make me jittery and nervous - and I can't be nervous twenty minutes before a job interview. Sliding my phone out of my pocket, I open up my Maps app and punch in the address. Immediately, a billion squiggly blue lines and bold black dashes flood my screen, blinking and flashing.

Inhale. Exhale.

All I have to do is follow the lines...right? Despite the several twists and turns I take, I am determined to keep walking until I reach my destination. I've always been a quitter - someone who takes the easy way out - but that stops today. My legs fall into rhythm with the rest of the world as they move. Suddenly, a surge of courage sweeps over me like a gentle wave and I am more determined than ever. I keep going, my eyes glued to the screen until the blue dot representing my location brushes against the marker.

Yes!

I've done it - for once in my life I've resisted the urge to give up and go home and actually made it to my destination! I glance up, a proud grin painted over my face. However, that smile soon trickles away when I take in my surroundings.

I realise I am enveloped by scarred brick walls bearing the marks of fluorescent blue and orange letters. A group of hooded teenagers lean against a chained motorbike with a crumpled bag of foreign white powder stashed in their pockets.

No. No no no no no.

I've typed in the wrong address and am now stranded in a shady alleyway twenty minutes away from my destination.



Inhale. Exhale. Inhale.

It's going to be okay, I assure myself, my breaths rattling and shallow. There are still fifteen minutes left. If I go now I may just make it. I'm going to make it on time and ace that interview. It's all good. Calm down. However, that's getting pretty hard to believe when a million microscopic black letters, fluorescent blue crosses and angry red lines - SO MANY angry red lines - are all screaming at me from my puny phone screen.

Inhale. Exhale. Inhale. Exha-

Tears stream down my cheeks as I try to distinctly make out the words on the screen.

No.

It's impossible. I can't - I just can't. Mum was right - I'm not cut out for this yet. I'm not ready for the responsibility of a job, of adulthood, of life. Why why why did I ever think I could do this? Why did I ever believe in myself? I let my stupid phone clatter to the floor and watch it shatter into a million pieces - just like my dreams and hopes.

Suddenly I feel a small hand land on my shoulder. I glance up, eyes bloodshot and wet.

A young girl - no older than eight years old - hovers over me as I crouch over the

broken shards of glass.

"You're crying," she twists her brows together in concern.

"No, I'm not," I say stubbornly, dabbing at my eyes furiously. I wasn't going to admit to crying in front of a little kid.

"It's okay," she says. "I cry, too. Everyone is always a bit sad and broken on the inside. We're all broken people. And broken people gotta be nice to each other."

I flash her a small smile.

"Why are you sad?" the girl asks. "Is your Mama and Papa broken too?"

"No, nothing like that," I squeak, my voice small and raspy. "It's just- I'm just having a hard time, that's all."

"Oh. What are you doing here anywhere?"

"What are you doing?" I raise a brow. A little girl shouldn't be roaming around the city on her own.

"I asked first," she folds her arms in a bossy manner.

"Fine. I got lost."

"Oh. That's silly."

Flushing, I slide my hands into my pockets and stare at the ground.

"What are you doing?" I repeat, instead.

"Waiting for Papa," she shrugs. "He says he's selling to his clients. He says I shouldn't follow him."

I don't say anything.

"Whenever I'm sad," the girl continues. "I always think of things that make me un-sad. Like chocolate cake and Grandma's rose perfume and my teddy and Papa when he's nice and his eyes aren't red

Australians are always ready

and watery.”

I think of Mum and Dad, my friends, our dog Miffy - how disappointed they'd be if they knew I'd given up again. If they knew I'd let the small things stop me from reaching my goal.

No.

I'm not going to let that happen this time. Inhale. Exhale.

“Thanks,” I smile, scrambling to my feet and brushing dirt off my lap. “I think I'm okay now.”

“Good,” the girl nods.

By the time I've turned around to wave for the final time, she's disappeared, nowhere to be seen.

Inhale. Exhale.

By **Yui Takahashi**

Grade Category: Middle
Waitara Public School
Wahroonga, NSW

*Australians are always ready,
Ready to spread their wings to anyone,
Regardless of race, gender, religion.
Ready to admire the free bright skies
Of Hobart, Darwin, Melbourne.*

*Ready to see beauty makes us numb:
Divine strangler figs and giant gums.
Australians are always welcoming,
Welcoming to mothers and fathers,
Whose children can now be raised
In the great southern land.*

*Welcoming to people,
Who come from the driest deserts
And the wettest plains.
Welcoming to the beautiful people
Who've had to flee the place they once called home.
...right?*



By **Hannah Peacock**
Grade Category: Middle
St Dominics Priory College
North Adelaide, SA
Teacher Ms Maycock

Melancholy

Melancholy. Truly a beautiful word. It reminded me of myself. “A feeling of pensive sadness, typically with no obvious reason.”

That's all I could associate myself with. All anyone could associate me with. I didn't understand. I was sad. I was always sad. I lacked motivation for anything. My grades were slipping because of this.

But no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't fix myself. I just couldn't. I wanted to know why I was feeling this way. But I couldn't find an answer. Eventually, I guess I just gave up. Which is why I stood up here today, on this lonely, quiet rooftop. Nothing was helping me. I was a lost cause. I would never be better.

That's what they all told me. So, I stopped looking for an answer. I just decided to end it. To end these everlasting feelings that made no sense.

I looked down. Took a deep breath. I would end these feelings. This melancholy. It would all come to an end. Just like that. Simple. I couldn't turn back. I shut my eyes. Relaxed. And took that last step forward.

By **Madelyn Rose**
Grade Category: Middle
Bunbury Senior High School
Bunbury, WA



One paw at a time

By **Irene Yeom**

Category: Junior
Ironbark Ridge Public School
Rouse Hill, NSW

Mr Albert stepped into the garden and sighed, his long beard swishing over untamed white roses. Weeds strangled the flowerbed outside his mansion. Its white wash walls were peeling off, inside and outside.

Mr Albert's wife had died years ago in a mysterious boating accident. They had never had any children, and thus, his heart and abode grew wild and thick.

She once again sighed into the night air and stepped towards the copper gate. The cold, cold night air ruffled her fur.

She was much too weak to run the few metres to shelter under a tree, let alone hunt for food. Her claws latched into the soil and an agonizing pain hit her as she crawled a few centimetres forward.

While she dragged herself from the road where she had been abandoned, two

headlights zoomed towards her. As a rush of adrenaline surged through her body, she used all the strength kittenly possible to leap out of the way of the ute. A shiver ran down her spine as she turned towards the copper gate. Eyes locked. Mouths opened.

There, on either side of a rusty copper gate, two lives changed forever.

Mr Albert picked up the grey kitten and brought it into the laundry. The kitten mewed as layers of grime were massaged out of her fur. Mr Albert lifted the now ginger kitten out of the plastic tub and whispered, "I will call you Marmalade."

Marmalade mewed in agreement. Since then, Mr Albert has opened up an animal shelter called 'Kitten's Brick'. He is getting kinder, one paw at a time. She is getting stronger, one paw at a time. Just one paw at a time.



The Wonder of Nature

The volcano sits
Its sides shaking and heaving
Waiting to erupt

Lava comes right out
Burning everything in sight
Of the volcano

On the big green tree
Are a lot of flower buds
Wanting to open

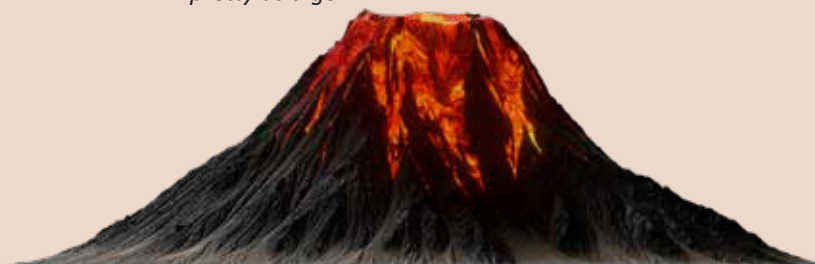
All the flower buds
Turn into cherry blossoms
pretty as a gem

A gush of wind comes
Picking up all of the leaves
Blowing them away

The wind gets stronger
Moving them in different ways
To create a shape

When you're at the beach
The waves crash onto the shore
Whispering to you

You can feel the mist
From the sea-foam of the waves
Blowing in your face



By **Mikaela Hayes**
Grade Category: Junior
Hambledon Public school
Quakers Hill, NSW

Ambassadors



📖 **Paul Collins** has written many books for younger readers. He is best known for his fantasy and science fiction titles: **The Jelindel Chronicles** (*Dragonlinks*, *Dragonfang*, *Dragonsight* and *Wardragon*), and **The Quentaris Chronicles** – co-edited with Michael Pryor – (*Swords of Quentaris*, *Slaves of Quentaris*, *Dragonlords of Quentaris*, *Princess of Shadows*, *The Forgotten Prince*, *Vampires of Quentaris* and *The Spell of Undoing*). His trade books published in America are *The Earthborn*, *The Skyborn* and *The Hiveborn*.

Paul has edited many anthologies which include *Trust Me!*, *Rich & Rare* and Australia's first fantasy anthology, *Dream Weavers*. He also edited *The MUP Encyclopaedia of Australian SF&F*.

His recent fantasy series is *The Warlock's Child*, written in collaboration with Sean McMullen. His book, *Slaves of Quentaris*, was listed in *1001 Children's Books You Must Read Before You Die* (UK, 2009). His latest book is *Harry Kruize, Born to Lose*.

Paul has been short-listed for many awards and has won the Inaugural Peter McNamara A Bertram Chandler, Aurealis and William Atheling awards.

Other than his writing, Paul is the publisher at Ford Street Publishing, a children's specialist publishing everything from picture books through to young adult literature. Two books, *Pool*, by Justin D'Ath and *Crossing the Line*, by Dianne Bates, were short-listed for the Victorian Premier's Literary Awards and the NSW Premier's Literary Awards. A third, Shane Thamm's *My Private Pectus*, was short-listed in the Territory Read Award. Paul spends much of his time travelling around Australia giving writing workshops to students from grade four to Year 12.

Paul's websites are: www.paulcollins.com.au; www.fordstreetpublishing.com and www.creativenetspeakers.com.

Anna Ciddor says she can't imagine a better job than being an author and illustrator. She gets to spend all day sitting around daydreaming, sketching, making up stories, and indulging her obsession for research and history – except when her smart watch tells her get up and run around, or her grandchildren need looking after! While indulging her passion, she has created nearly 60 books on all sorts of topics that have taken her fancy, and won many accolades, including the Nance Donkin Award for Children's Literature, a grant from the Australia Council, three Notable Book awards from the Children's Book Council of Australia and shortlistings for numerous other awards.

Anna's latest novels, *The Boy Who Stepped Through Time* (Allen and Unwin 2021) and *A Message Through Time* (Allen and Unwin April 2022) are time-slip adventures that carry the main characters (and the readers) back to Roman times. You can find out more about Anna Ciddor and her books, and get some tips for your own writing and illustrating, at www.annaciddor.com. If you would like Anna to visit your school you can book her through www.creativenetspeakers.com.



📖 **Meredith Costain** is a versatile writer whose work ranges from picture books through to novels, poetry and narrative non-fiction. Her books include CBCA Honour Book *Doodledum Dancing*, *Disaster Chef!*, *Daddies Are Great!*, novelisations of ABC TV's *Dance Academy*, and tween series *A Year in Girl Hell*. Her best-selling series, the quirky *Ella Diaries*, was shortlisted for both the REAL and the WAYRBA children's choice awards, and has sold to 24 countries. Her latest series, *Olivia's Secret Scribbles*, features Ella's 'naughty little sister', Olivia.

Meredith lives in inner-city Melbourne with a menagerie of pets, who often wrangle their way into her stories. She regularly presents writing workshops for children and adults around Australia, 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.

Chapter 1: The Potion Disaster

Midnight ran into her bedroom to find a dusty note on her desk. She gently opened the note, it said "Welcome Midnight you have been selected for a place at Vanish Hollow where you will learn potion magic because you are a witch." Midnight stared at her hands and ran down to her mum "Mother, am I really a witch?" Midnight asked curiously. "You are a witch? Impossible!" Her mum answered rudely.

Midnight began to get angry. 'Who was the one lying?' Midnight wondered. Suddenly, magic shot right out of her left hand covering the whole room with a layer of a foul-smelling blue liquid. It stunk like farm poo but much worse than that. Her mum rushed to where her daughter stood.

"Fine you are a witch. You have family relative who witches. That is settled, now what am I going to do with you?" Midnight showed her mum the note. "I will send you to Vanish Hollow as it suggests here, now please excuse me I have got a number of things to order for your new school." Her mum stormed off to her office and slammed the wooden door shut.

One day later, Midnight was at Vanish Hollow with a broomstick, a purple pointy hat, a spell book, and a cloak, (a nice black one with little purple beads scattered all over).

Midnight walked around taking every moment in. The building itself was extraordinary, the view of the building was eye catching the way it was built stone layer after stone layer. Midnight was magicked into her own classroom, and she was not the only one. Hundreds of students appeared looking as dazzled as Midnight.

Cauldrons were laid on every desk and ingredients were sitting on a little table up the front where a teacher stood. She had ponytails on either side of her head and looked at Moonlight as if she were the most fascinating trophy on the shelf.

"Pay attention students," she said. "I am

Lisney Anne, but you must address me as Mrs Anne."

"Yes Mrs Anne," chorused the students.

"You will make a levitating potion. I hope you studied this last night or after you got the letter. Now begin."

Midnight looked in her spell book and



found the levitation potion. She looked at the list of ingredients. Midnight was puzzled so she chucked random ingredients into the cauldron and mixed.

"Times up girls," smiled Mrs Anne happily. "Time to taste your potion." Midnight tasted hers and her face went all pucker and then she accidentally knocked her potion onto the floor and now the ground was shaking like an earthquake. BOOM!

A big crater formed in the middle of the floor. People laughed at poor Midnight as she was taken into the head mistress. 'What a disaster,' cried Midnight in her own mind. I will be expelled from Vanish Hollow before you can say frog spawn.' Mrs Anne knocked on the head mistress's door and she heard a whisper like sound say "Come in. The room began to feel cold.

Chapter 2: The Head Mistress

Midnight sat down on one of the little ruby chairs next to Mrs Anne who looked at her disappointedly. The head mistress's name was Allamanda Hetchford, and she looked like a queen. Hair as golden as a block of gold and a purple cloak.

"Midnight," she began smoothly. "You

should have asked for help, if you don't have the plainest idea what you are doing you should have gone straight to Mrs Anne." Midnight looked at her teacher and then the head mistress. "I am sorry Mrs Hetchford, and I am sorry Mrs Anne, if I need any help or I don't understand something I will go straight to my teacher,"

Moonlight replied happily winking at Mrs Hetchford as she skipped out the door. "That girl is quite the troublesome type," said Mrs Anne as she started shaking.

"Troublesome is not the word to describe her Linsey. It is extraordinary! The magic in her blood is very powerful. You must keep an eye on her ok?"

"Yes Allamanda," Mrs Anne said looking less worried as she walked out of the room and shut the door.

Chapter 3: Friends and Bubbling Trouble

Midnight ran back into the classroom, people stared at her as she sat next to another girl who took real interest in her. She said, "Hi I am Annalee Hetchford, but you can call me Anny. What is your name?" "I am Midnight, and I caused a big crater in the floor," Midnight forced out a tiny chuckle.

"Do you want to be friends?" asked Anny curiously.

"Yes!" Squealed Midnight happily.

Mrs Anne walked through the door. "Now students, here is the list of people who are going to be in your room, when your name is called line up in the order I tell you. Midnight and Anny you are in room Golden 798. Your bedroom is just around

the corner.”

Midnight and Anny held hands as they ran to open the door. It was so pretty! Emeralds were hung up everywhere and a diamond rug was sitting on the wooden floor. Anny chose top bunk and so did Midnight, there were two top bunk beds. Now they could gossip all night.

The lights were magicked out and all the teachers were doing an inspection to make sure the children were asleep. Midnight and Anny gossiped for a while and then Mrs Anne came into their room. The room instantly went quiet. “Night girls,” Mrs Anne whispered.
“Night Mrs Anne,” chorused the two girls.

Mrs Anne slowly shut the door behind her. Anny fell asleep hugging her blanket. Midnight was asleep like a mouse. At 6am, Midnight jumped out of bed, got dressed, put her books inside her clean cauldron and headed off to class. Anny woke up a few minutes after and hurried into the classroom.

“Students,” said another teacher. “Mrs Anne is not your teacher for today. It will be me. Mrs Lily. Now girls, I will show you how to do magic without using your cauldrons and certain ingredients. Repeat after me. Mystic Magic cover the room.”

“Mystic Magic cover the room.”

“By the power of my will.”

“By the power of my will.”

“Sparkles will be the new windowsill,” Mrs Lily finished and like it came out of thin air, magic shot from her hand and shot towards the windowsill, replacing it with millions and trillions of sparkles. The children gasped and then did as they were told. “Sparkles will be the new windowsill. Magic shot out of everyone’s hands. Midnight’s hand began shaking and faster than you could say apple pie and wormslime the whole room was covered with sparkles. Trillions and millions of them. Midnight and Anny ran back into their room hiding under their tiny beds not wanting to get caught.

Chapter 4: Witchcraft Reporters

“The news reporters are here,” cried a little girl in Midnights grade. Everyone hurried outside to find cameras set up all over the school. All Vanish Hollow stared. It was surprising to find them here with zero notice at all, in fact the teachers were puzzled. Mrs Hetchford had never called for any reporters. Something fishy is going

on and it is not the good kind.

Mrs Hetchford talked to one of the reporters. The reporters nodded and smiled at Anny and Midnight. “You girls,” smiled one of the reporters. “Come with me!” The girls nodded and followed the reporter into Mrs Lily’s classroom.

“Well, hello girls. I am Starlight Stream.” Midnight and Anny gasped. She was super famous. “Now girls,” Starlight gleamed. “Who wants to be interviewed first?” Midnight slowly put her shaking hand up. “Great come this way.” Midnight shivered and went into the room. After thirty minutes Midnight came out and hugged Anny whispering, “Run!”

Anny saw Starlight come out and then Anny ran like a marathon runner back to the field, with Midnight running behind her. Starlight stomped her feet angrily and marched to the other witchcraft reporters. The cameras were magicked away, and they flew off. Anny and Midnight sat in their beds, and they couldn’t stop thinking about Starlight.

Chapter 5: New Girl

It was another wonderful day at Vanish Hollow. The birds were cheeping, and the frogs were oinking. This morning a little girl arrived on her broom. Askea was her name, and she was in Midnight and Anny’s room.

She walked in looking all shy, but the girls quickly made friends. “Having Askea here is the best,” squealed Midnight and Anny in unison. “This year at Vanish Hollow is going to be the best one yet,” cried Anny. “You are right,” agreed Askea.

“Midnight feast?” Asked Midnight.

“Yes!” Squealed Anny and Askea. The plan was all set for tonight.

Chapter 6: The Midnight Snacking Disaster

Anny shut the door and after the teacher had given them a goodnight the girls started the feast. Midnight got out gummy snakes and fizzy lemonade. Anny got out banana bread and sugar gems. Askea took out a jumbo marshmallow packet, vanilla cupcakes and apples stuffed with popping candy.

The girls started eating all the food except Midnight. Midnight went back to bed and fell asleep. Suddenly a teacher came in and caught the two girls snacking. The two girls were told by Mrs Lily that they must see Mrs Hetchford in the morning. The girls

smiles disappeared as they packed all the candy away and put all the treats in the cupboard where no-one could find them.

Chapter 7: Sports Day

Midnight was competing in the event of the year. It was sports day. Anny and Askea would’ve loved to compete, but their punishment for the midnight feast was that they weren’t allowed to do it.

The girls cheered for Midnight when she was called for Fly High Daredevil. Midnight jumped onto her broom and dashed dodging obstacles as she flew. Midnight was meters away from the finish line. She grew more speed and BEEP! The horn sounded. Midnight had won the race.

Several other events finished fairly and now it was time for witchy medals. “In third place for the Fly High Daredevil goes to Sophie Hoppington.” The audience cheered. “In second place for the Fly High Devil was Gregory Freeshon.” The boys whistled and chanted Gregory’s name.

“Lastly, in first place with some most outstanding flying Midnight Streep!” Anny and Askea cheered and yelled. Their best friend had won. The winners bent down as the teachers put the medals around the Fly High Devil champions. Midnight helped pack up the events and headed back to her room and had an early nap. She needed it.

Chapter 8: The Rest

Midnight slept in longer than usual. She remembered the coach saying, “Today is your rest day. You earned it.” Midnight hopped back into her warm bed and fell asleep once more. She was dreaming about lollies and owls just like always. She slept all afternoon until her friends woke her up. The test will be starting soon. She cannot be late for that.

Chapter 9 Test!

Midnight had studied all morning and finally she was prepared. “Now students,” said Mrs Lily.

“Here is your test. Complete it in thirty minutes starting now!” The class groaned but Midnight quickly got to work. One minute through the test Midnight put her hand up. “Yes Moonlight,” asked Mrs Lily. “I am done Mrs Lily.” The class stared at her for a moment.

“Wow!” Gaspd Mrs Lily. “That was fast.”

“I studied all morning,” Midnight said happily.

“Great Midnight. Do some silent reading.”

Midnight got out her book and read it

thoroughly.

Ten minutes later, she got her marked test back from her teacher. Midnight passed. 100% was written in red. Midnight was so happy she made a card for Mrs Lily that said "Thank you" Mrs Lily was so overjoyed to have a thank you card from a nice student.

Chapter 10: The Best Ending

Midnight, Askea, and Anny magically packed their belongings up. "This term was fun," said Midnight as she walked outside with her pals. "It was amazing," added Askea happily. "

"I never want it to end," giggled Anny. Midnight and Askea got on their brooms

and flew off home. Same with the other witches. The only one who did not fly off was Anny.

Her mother was the head mistress of Vanish Hollow, so she had to stay there. Anny snuck off into her and her friend's room. She quietly opened the cupboard. Cheeky Anny took a piece of her banana bread and a handful of her sugar gems.

Anny closed the door and started munching on her sweets. When Anny ate then she thought of her friends. Though Anny may miss them, she'll see them again next term.

The End!

By **Jessica Brimson**,
Grade Category, Middle
Greenslopes State School
Greenslopes, Qld

Salty Goodbyes

A mother
Rocking her child to sleep -
Peaceful sleep,
Free of worries.
The lids of his eyes -
His sparkling green eyes -
Flutter ever-so-gently Shut
And the mother knows
It is time.

A child
Being carried away,
Far, far away
Down the grassy green hills
To where the ocean
Meets land,
Where campfires send smoke
Spiralling into the sky
To where all the elements
Mix and mingle
Where it is safe -
Safe at last.

A mother
Pushing her way
Through the curious waves,
Turquoise waters lapping
At her ankles.
Her tears melt
And dissolve
Into the sea,
Lost.
She clammers
Up a sea stack,
Jagged pieces of rock
Nipping at her bare feet
Like broken shards of glass -
Broken
Just like her.

A child
Oblivious to his surroundings,
Laying on a great hunk of rock
In the middle of the sea,
Dreaming of whatever infants dream about -
The smiles of their mothers
And sweet aromas
And the comforting touch
Of a yellow blanket
And the big, wide world.

A mother
Holding back tears
As she wades back through the waters,
This time without a baby
Cradled in her arms.
She turns,
Snatching just
One last look
Before disappearing into the mist.
She tells herself
She isn't sad,
She isn't sorry,
She isn't flooded
With piercing remorse.
She will not cry
Because now her baby is safe,
Safer than he'd be with her, anyway.
Left to be sculpted
By the wind
And the waves.

By **Yui Takahashi**
Grade Category: Middle
Waitara Public School
Wahroonga, NSW

Changing Times

What has this world become now, please tell me,
Nowadays if someone sneezes we say bless me.
People are fighting over food and groceries,
and that is why I am stuck here writing poetries.

We say that we're in this together but we are not
We cover our faces to keep in the snot
We have not seen each other for more than two years,
No wonder our skype calls all end up in tears.

Now every single conversation I have turns into a fight.
Covid is taking over the world, am I right?
Everyone has to live so far away,
People now don't care about you but how much you pay.

We used to say that it will be a great year,
now the word Covid is all that I hear.
Masks suffocate us, we wear them all day long,
Hand sanitiser gives off a stinky pong.

Now we are too scared to go out with our mate,
If we take our masks off, we get looks of hate.
Ah yes, let us talk about the plastic,
I don't care what Barbie girl says, it's not fantastic.

Sea animals are dying, turtles are choking,
But do we care? No, we just keep on smoking.
The water is polluted, the air around us too,
But we sit there after knowing what we should do.

UK is on fire, it's not what they desire,
If you say it's not a problem, you are a liar.
Countries are fighting, religions are clashing,
And whenever someone stands up, they get a bashing.

I mean before you guys start populating mars,
think about a way to remove fuel from cars.
I want to rewind back quite a few years,
The situations now have unlocked many new fears.

Everyone was saying the end of Covid is near,
now I wish that corona was just a beer.
Did you know that we humans, yes we,
We will easily cut down a tree,

Then we will make some paper from it,
Then we will write "Save the trees" on a bit.
We are always jealous and obsessed,
With our looks and how we are dressed.

If you don't have a tiny waist,
you can't be the best.
But half the beauties now are just plastic,
Please check because I'm not being sarcastic.

Let's talk about the river which is now brown,
Let's talk about the business that in one day went down.
What are we doing just please pause the clock,
we've ventured in our danger zone let's go back to our dock.

What are we showing to our youngsters?
That all of us here are monsters?
What do we want to teach the next generation?
About war or about a good education?

People are desperate, homeless and poor,
you complain about your bed, they sleep on the floor.
You say you are selfless, caring and kind,
But look at what you are doing have you lost your mind?

Celebrities are now receiving hate for, living?
The media accuses the poor of not being giving.
Fake news has become a worldwide trend,
people take stories and give it their own bend.

All of this is just like a video game,
They look to the kind but then are called "lame".
Do you guys remember something called "manners?"
Now all the people I see online are spammers.

I've now listed all the changing times,
Now we have to do more than be mimes.
We have to do something about this misfortune,
and everyone has to do their own portion.

I know that there is still some hope,
We can make a comeback from this tragic slope.

By **Mehar Chadha**
Grade Category: Middle
Pedare Christian College
Golden Grove, SA



Obscureness

Tick. Tick. Tick.

Come on, please be home, please be home before –

DONG! DONG! DONG! DONG!... The towering grandfather clock chimed as the last hour ended. Lyvia counted twelve. It was Midnight, and they still hadn't returned. That could only mean one thing, but she wasn't hoping for the worst.

Because in this world, if you were out past midnight... that could only mean you have a death sentence hanging over you... unless you manage to survive the night.

A few years ago, the first wave of the 'Revolution,' as they now called it, began. A group known as the Collondelle started attacking people at random. The police determined that it was a group created to assassinate certain individuals, and they were all told to look out. The streets went on patrol every day after ten, and there would be a curfew so no one went out.

But none of that mattered. Because the Collondelle attacked only after midnight. The last survivors of Jadsfha, the isolated town in which she lived, called it 'The Hour Of Obscureness,' where when the clock struck twelve, it was either hide away or die.

Now, if you looked into the streets of Jadsfha, all you would see is boarded-up houses and burnt trees.

There was no more policemen patrolling the streets. They had all been murdered by Collondelle.

Lyvia bit her fingernails nervously. She normally never bit her fingernails, but she couldn't stop herself from doing that now because she was worried. Worried about what would happen to her parents.

They had gone out for shopping at eight o'clock, saying they would be back before midnight. They had also emphasised that if they don't come back before midnight, to not open the door. Do not go looking for them. Wait. Be patient.

But Lyvia was having a very hard time at being patient. What if a member of the Collondelle attacked them? Her father was a retired investigator, so he was a big problem. And her mother...? Well, it was better safe than

sorry. They should've just never gone out! Lyvia thought angrily.

She waited. Watched the minutes go by.

12:15. Nothing.
12:30. Nothing.
12:45. Nothing.

"ARGHH! Where are you!?" Lyvia screamed, frustrated. Her voice bounced off the walls and echoed. That's it. She was going to look for them. And no one was going to get in her way.

Creeeeeeaaaaak. She opened the old wooden door, unhinging the lock and stepping outside.

The chilly winter breeze made goosebumps pop up on her back, and the fact that she was wearing a nightdress didn't help. The dry grass crunched beneath her feet, and the moonlight bouncing off the bare bushes made ghastly-skeletal like shadows.



"Mom? Dad? Where are you!?" Lyvia's voice echoed in the night, and she worried she might be heard by a member of the Collondelle.

There was a rustle in the overgrown grass from the neighbours' house. Lyvia's head snapped in that direction. Was it them? Were they really back!?

She tiptoed towards the wooden fence, heart beating in her chest. She was caught with surprise as something came flying at her.

"AH!" She choked out as she fell on her back. That something was a someone. He was wearing a red hoodie that covered half his face, but Lyvia could see hints of red hair poking out from it. A pair of golden eyes glowed in the darkness. The boy smiled wickedly.

"Well, well, well. What do we have here?" The boy had his hands locked around Lyvia's neck, the wicked smile growing larger.

"It's pretty dangerous for a girl like you to be out after hours. You never know, a member of the Collondelle could be hiding behind some overgrown grass, waiting to jump. You know, like I did." Lyvia gasped. This kid was a member of Collondelle!?

"And unfortunately, my assignment... was to kill you. And your parents. They're long gone. So you're my last worry, so hurry up and die already!" The boy tightened his grip on her neck. Lyvia frowned... that voice... that attitude... it sounded like... him.

"So what, you gonna kill me with your bare hands?" She stuck her tongue out, "Try me!"

"Nope, that's a bad idea, killing you with my hands. That's why I bought a knife!" He grinned wickedly and pulled out a blade from his jacket, pressing it to her neck. Lyvia winced in pain as the blood dribbled down her neck. Her breath caught in her throat. She was going to die. By him, of all people.

"Why... why would you kill them? Why would you kill my parents?" Lyvia's breath was coming out in shallow huffs now, as the boy had already pressed the knife so deep the blood was gushing out.

"Why would you kill me?"

"Why would you kill your own parents... Elijah?" A look of displeasure and recognition crossed his face. Good. He recognised me.

"No..." his voice wavered, "No, Lyvia... please... I'm sorry... don't die... please! Please don't die on me!" Elijah threw away the knife immediately, trying to staunch the flow of blood. But it was too late.

Lyvia was starting to lose focus. Visions of Elijah's teary face zoomed in and out of her head. His hood had come down, his red hair fluttering gently in the breeze.

As the world disappeared from her view, Lyvia made one wish. One dying wish, that one wish she had been waiting to utter for so long.

"Stop being a Murderer, Elijah. Lead a normal life... but don't you dare forget me."

And that was the night before the day the Collondelle perished.

The night he drained Collondelle's light.

The night Elijah Wavers became the honoured civilian of Jadsfha, the night Elijah restored peace among the civilians... along with his sisters' ghost.

By Zaina Mohamed Fahim
Grade Category: Middle
Werribee Secondary College
Werribee, Vic.

Butterflies

I lay
Music blasting
Mind racing
Heart aching

She didn't know what to think about
Thoughts bouncing from each side of her mind
Legs up to her chest and arms tucked within
She wanted to be okay

To not worry
To be in control
But her fears formed butterflies which flew freely around her stomach
At least these butterflies she can control

She can form them into beautiful blue ones
And make them fly in different directions
She however could not control how long they stayed
and how they made her feel

Some butterflies were better than others
Some made her feel excited
But these ones were born of all the things society had drowned her fragile mind in

So
I lay
Waiting for the day
the butterflies fly away

By **Laura Peters**
Grade Category: Senior
St Brigids Catholic College
Manning Park, NSW

THE OCEAN IS A MONSTER

The ocean is a monster,
horrific, hostile.
Hungry for prey.
Hungry for victims,

He rages, looms over us all,
before he bellows his vengeful call.
Hungry for prey,
hungry for victims,

he swallows the sandy shore.
With his ten-foot height,
with his menacing glare,
the helpless shrimp can do nothing but stare.

Waiting, waiting, waiting.
Crystal blue like diamond,
when calm and at bay.
But when the day forms,
he turns giant and grey.

Howling, howling, howling.
Going his own way.
With his enraged mouth open he roars,
Hour upon hour each day.

"Tea time" he says,
scouring the land like a wild boar.
Before he bashes his hairy cliffs upon the bay.

But when the inky night appears,
and the dusty day goes,
the ocean monster returns,
to it's underwater cove.

You might think we're safe for another day,
but what will tomorrow bring?
Well, we'll just have to wait and see.

By **Camilla Morison**
Grade Category: Middle
Strathmore North Primary School
Strathmore Vic.

Dragons are coming

Dragons are coming
in all shapes and colours,
green like grass
yellow was singing into your ear
bird like creatures,
towering leers,
indefinite burs
less of which burn
into the sea
bones and fangs
burnt to a crisp
less of which win
battles appear
stories unfold
friends unleash
life agrees
death lies
you will join



By **Harley Scott**

Grade Category: Middle
Bunbury Senior High School
Bunbury, WA

Attack from Mars

It was the excursion day, and our class was visiting the pinball house – we were so excited! The visit was going well, and it was time to play some pinball games. I was playing Attack From Mars, as I got the highest score, suddenly everything stopped working. The pinball game was completely pitch black. I couldn't see any of the obstacles.



“What’s wrong Amaya?” Asked Gabby. She saw that I was very pale, like someone who had seen a ghost.

“I... hope I didn't break it” I said as I shook rapidly. As I was going to call the teacher a green- coloured arm pulled me in. I could feel Gabby's hand gripping onto my leg and her voice calling Ruby, Avery, Krystal and Jade to help her.

My friends pulled with all their strength; however, they couldn't free me. So instead, five more green-coloured arms come out and dragged them in as well. Then, we were inside the machine, and we had no idea what to do until a friendly-looking robot

approached us. When it stopped in front of us, it told us instructions for the game. “You must complete all the obstacles in the pinball machine, if you fail you will clean it entirely but if you succeeded you can be free.”

We looked at each other, took a deep breath and huddled up to figure out some strategies. “I think we must get beyond the highest score on this game”, said Avery. Everybody agreed that I would use my netball skills to catch them and through them to the goals. In addition, Jade would use her hockey skills to throw away with the flipper.

Then Ruby, Krystal, Avery and Gabby would distract the robot with their silly dance moves. Our aim was to make the robot laugh so hard that it would break apart, so we wouldn't be under its control. After, we went to our stations to begin the game.

As the first ball was plunged out of the shooter gauge it got sent straight to Jade. Jade hit it so hard that she got it into one of the highest goals without my help. “Yeah Jade!”, I said doing a fist bump in the air. It looked like we were 20 points away to

get the highest goal when the game went into multi-ball mode. Jade whacked every single ball to me to throw into whatever goal I could reach. Meanwhile Ruby, Avery, Krystal and Gabby were doing their silly dances and the robot, who was guarding the exit was roaring with laughter.

As soon as all the balls were in the goals and when Jade and I got the highest score ever, we went to see how the girls were going. When we got there, the robot was on the floor still laughing so hard that its cheeks went pink, and its tummy was aching, but it let us go. When we popped out of the game it was time to go and nobody saw a thing.

“Well, that was an adventure and I hope that doesn't happen again because my body hurts from dancing so much” whispered Gabby as we walked back to the bus. “Yeah”, we all agree as we hopped into the first double decker bus that we saw.

By Siena Sbaraini Mangabeira
Grade Category: Junior
Eagle Junction State School
Rouse Hill, NSW

Drops of Rain

A sharp little scratch
All covered in white.
The nurses are fetched
Bright surgical light

"Twelve months – she'll be fine"
No, please, she can't wait!"
"Stay strong. Walk the line. Its early, not late"

Another sharp scratch.
She's now in pain
Four tubes filled with blood
On cheeks – drops of rain

Sharp scratch once again
"I love you", she said
Dark-purple blood stain.
Or maybe chrome-red

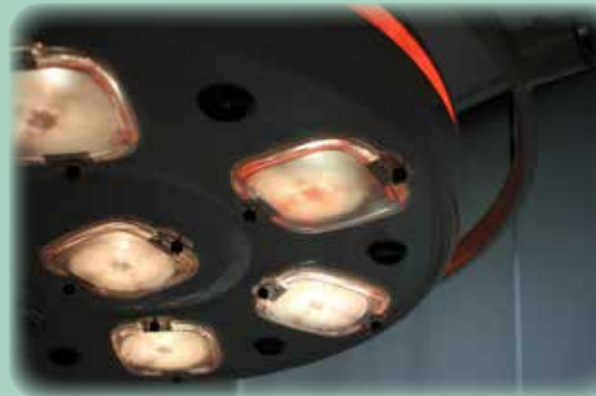


Two weeks – head went bald.
We pray she is fine!
Her hands we will hold
As she walks that line

New Year just came
Kids' marks on the wall
We crossed-off each day.
Weeks, months – we control

She's made it! So brave.
No cry or complain
But we'll never forget
Loving face... 'n drops of rain.

By **Elizaveta Fedotova**
Grade Category: Middle
Bob Hawke College
Subiaco, WA



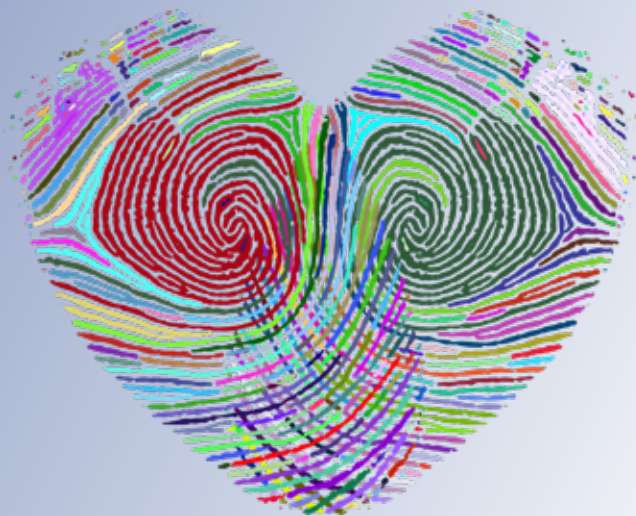
INDIVIDUAL

Each human is a fingerprint,
A secret hidden key,
Carved with many paths,
To your identity.

One path of hope,
One path of joy,
Can be either gender,
Girl or boy.

Each print a different destiny,
Each print a buried soul,
It's like you in a play,
Each print a different role.

Your fingerprint is special,
Your fingerprint is true,
Your fingerprint is the only thing,
That is unique to you.



By **Eilidh Mackenzie**
Grade Category: Middle
Strathmore North Primary School
Strathmore, Vic.

Luna & Scales

Chapter 1 - The Glowing Crystal

One winters eve, Luna was walking home from school when she saw a blue glowing crystal. She was mesmerised by the light and started to follow it.

She ran and tried to catch it, but then it disappeared. It had started to rain, so she took cover in a nearby cave. Lightning struck in front of her. "Ahhh!" she screamed in terror. She quickly ran to the back of the cave. There were crystals in many colours. Then she saw a huge purple crystal. She slowly and carefully reached her hand out to it.

Chapter 2 - Through the Portal

Suddenly, something happened! Luna had been sucked into another world. She was on an island with a few logs, rope and stone. Luna was scared, but she had an idea. She was going to build a house by using the stones and some logs. When she had built her house, she went looking for some food.

She looked under rocks and in the sand but all she found was crabs. Then she looked under a rock and found an egg. It was shiny and said, "Mood Dragon," on the egg. But just then, "Crack", the egg opened. Luna didn't get to read the message on the egg before it cracked into 6 big pieces, but a black and scaly baby dragon popped out of the egg. "Wow!" said Luna, amazed.

Chapter 3 - The Mood Dragon

A mood dragon is a dragon that changes colour depending on its mood. Luna started petting the dragon while she was trying to think of a name. She thought of a few different names like Henry, Lucy, Isla, Shimmer and Rory, but just then she thought of an amazing name. "Scales", said Luna.

At that moment, a note came flying through the air. It said, "Be prepared because evil goblins are going to attack from the north," signed Forest Fairy. That's when Luna remembered the message on the egg. Maybe it had something to do with the Forest Fairy. So, Luna ran over to where the 6 big cracked pieces were and started putting the egg together like it was a puzzle.

Once Luna had put together the pieces,

Scales came over and sat next to her. Then Luna read the message. It said, "The Forest Fairy lives in a cherry blossom tree near the village." So she quickly hopped on Scales and flew over the forest until she spotted a pink cherry blossom tree. "There it is!" Luna said to Scales, but she didn't respond. She just turned green, which was happy.

Chapter 4 - The Forest Fairy

They flew down near the bright pink tree and knocked on the door. The door opened. "Hello," Luna said nicely. Then someone came out of the tree trunk. "Hi, are you the Forest Fairy?" Luna asked. "Yes," said the lady. She was really pretty. She had a headband with flowers on it and a beautiful green dress with more flowers and blue glittery wings.

She looked more like a flower queen than a Forest Fairy. Then the Forest Fairy invited Luna & Scales inside the cherry blossom tree. So, they went inside. The Forest fairy said, "Your room is next to the living room, and Scales, your room is next to Luna's."

Luna asked, "How did you know we were going to stay?" The Forest Fairy said, "I have a magic bubble that lets me see anyone that enters the portal. So that's why I sent you the warning message."

Inside Luna's room were lots of weapons. There were bow and arrows, axes and swords. The Forest Fairy said, "We need those for the goblins that are going to attack because there are going to be lots of them." Then Luna went in her room to practice using the weapons. Suddenly, she felt the ground start to rumble.

Chapter 5- Evil Goblins

"Evil goblins!" shouted the Forest Fairy, so Luna grabbed as many weapons as she could carry and ran outside. There were hundreds of green goblins, very ugly and all shrivelled up. They all had axes in their hands. Straight away Luna started shooting arrows and throwing bombs that went off as soon as they touched something.

There was a lot of groaning and most of the green goblins died. Some took a lot of hard work though. Once it was all over, Luna and Scales went inside the tree. Then they

heard Scales groan. She had cut her wing. The Forest Fairy told them that there was someone who could help Scales. There was an old man that had all sorts of potions including teleporting, invisibility and more. The one that they needed was the healing potion. It could heal anything.

Chapter 6 - The Potion Man

The Forest Fairy said that she would stay with Scales, and Luna would go and get the potion. The Forest Fairy said that he lives in the village in an old orange cottage. Luna waved goodbye to Scales and the Forest Fairy and started walking off.

She walked all the way to the village and knocked on the door of the orange cottage. An old man came out. "What are you doing here?" the old man said. "I am here for a healing potion," replied Luna.

"Come in," he said. He opened the door wider. "Why do you need a healing potion?" the old man asked, looking worried. "For my dragon, Scales," I said. "He has cut his wing and nobody else knows how to help a hurt dragon." "I see now," said the man. "I'll make the potion if you get me the ingredients."

"Ok," said Luna. The man gave Luna a metre long list. The list said; grass, leaves, water, tree sap, sticks and more. Once she had collected it all, she had two buckets full of things for the potion. She gave the man the buckets and the man whipped up the potion in the blink of an eye. "How did you do that so fast?" Luna asked, amazed. "Practice," he whispered "Lots of practice."

The man poured the potion into a clear bottle and put a cork in the top. Luna asked the old man for a teleporting potion. The old man asked, "Why?"

Luna said, "I need it so I can get back home." This potion took a lot longer to make, but Luna didn't need to go and collect any ingredients for it. After the man had made the potion, he gave Luna the bottle and then she bolted out the door before the man could say the most important part.

"You only need to use 3 drops of the teleporting potion," but Luna had already ran off.

When Luna got back, she quickly squeezed two drops of the healing potion into Scales' mouth. She turned yellow, which was an

ok feeling. Before that, she was purple, a combination of red-mad and blue-sad and hurt. She was feeling better. The Forest Fairy told Scales to go lay down and she did and went straight to sleep.

found a magical egg. That's where Scales came from."

All of sudden a huge red dragon appeared and quickly wrapped its wings around

Scales. It must have got the drops of potion Luna spilt. It was trying to protect her. Scales looked like she was telling her that Luna and her were friends. This was Scales` mum.



Luna realised now that Scales was probably going to go home with her mum, so she walked over to Scales and gave her the biggest hug. Scales turned a bright golden colour just like the sun and Luna knew straight away that they`d be friends forever!

By **Jasmyn Cross**
Grade Category: Junior
Burnside State School
Burnside, Qld.

Chapter 7 - Going back home

The next day, Scales was feeling better and Luna wanted to go back home by using the teleporting potion. Now she had to decide if she was going to bring Scales home or not. It was a big decision and Luna had to think about it for a while. She decided that she would bring Scales back home.

So then she said goodbye to the Forest Fairy and thanked her for looking after them. Luna hopped onto Scales back and they flew all the way to the island. When they got to the island Luna dropped as many drops as she could squeeze out of the bottle into her mouth but she saved some for Scales to have.

When Luna squeezed the drops into her mouth, they went everywhere. There were three drops left on the ground, enough for someone else to come with them. Luna and Scales disappeared into thin air.

They arrived back at the cave of crystals. Luna walked out of the cave and started walking back home. She finally came to her house and knocked on the door Her mum opened the door. "Luna where were you and what is that sitting beside you?" asked her mum.

"It's a dragon, mum. I called it Scales," said Luna. "I got transported to an island and

The Day You Were Born

The day you were born I looked into your eyes
Watching you feel happy I knew that you were wise
The day you were crawling I looked into your heart
Watching you feel jolly I knew your name was Bart

The day you were walking I looked into your veins
Watching you feel stronger I knew you could hold planes
The day you were working I looked into your brain
Watching you feel tired I knew you were in pain

The day you were limping I looked into your blood
Watching you from afar
I know you're with me now bud

By **Angel Grewal**
Grade Category: Middle
Pedare Christian College
Golden Grove, SA



The Blur of the World

*People say that life goes quickly
But I believe that we're just too blind to see the length it truly
gives us
The time we have we just waste
Trying to earn money and educate our brains
Our heads are so glued into our screens
And our emotions are so bundled
That all we feel is what we are told
By this I mean
We go onto these screens and all we see are people*

*So many people
It's like our entire lives are revolved around our own breed
We're all set out on a mission with the same goal, to be happy
but what if all we need is to be free
Why can't we just explore this world in peace
I believe there is a reason we are here
Why we are in this moment
but I do not believe it is the correct moment to be
I believe this moment, this present, this future, is not at all
what we should've been destined to see
I believe everyone should've been destined to see the true
beauty of life
Not to be crying in the night
Or wishing you weren't alive
Or praying even just praying that you had a different life
Because this is your one chance
Your one moment
The one blur of life
So use it right.*

By Laura Peters
Grade Category: Senior
St Brigids Catholic College
Manning Park, NSW

Wild weather

*Evergreen leaves fluttered
Twirling in the breeze
Covered with morning dew
As they dance with the fairies*

*Tiny drops dived from the sky
Dashing to the sun's rays
Viola ! A rainbow
The joy in my springing days.*

*As the fences shivered
On top of a damp hill
Surrounding the cold houses
That stood perplexed and still*

*The earth spun around me
Gifting us nature
Droplets drifting with glee
Like a rainwater glacier.*

*Children and birds nestled near
Shivering in the cold
With an eager eye and willing ear
They wait for a blast of snow.*

*With a sudden blow, the winds rise
Hailstones drop like bombs
Rain falls like air strikes
Diving down towards the tombs.*

*A lightening scan stuck down low
As thunder continued their deed
The world was a failure below
As the plains began to bleed.*

*Life was drained away
After a cackle and roar
Slowly the houses began to sway
Preparing for war.*

By Ritika Mishra
Grade Category: Middle
Ironbark Ridge public school
Rouse Hill, NSW



The Magic Books

It was an ordinary day in our town. I was sitting on my bed very bored because most of the time I can never think of something to do! I could hear the things I hear everyday like the cars driving past, people saying "Hi." But today I heard something different... I heard people SCREAMING!

I jumped out of my bed shocked. When I looked out my window I saw him, THUNDERPANTS! He was flipping over cars, smashing pot plants and breaking windows. The town was going crazy, nothing could stop him, not even the police! So I knew what I had to do.

I ran to my friend's house as fast as I could trying not to get hit. When I got there I hurried up the stairs and ran into his bedroom. Jacob was sitting on his bed as still as a statue. I told him to get up and get out of bed. We both quickly ran down the street as fast as we could. We were both breathless.

When we got back, we ran inside the library huffing and puffing. As soon as we got in we ran to Mrs Flicker the librarian and asked her if we can go to the "special" part of the library. She said "Yes," so we went in there, I saw "it." It was just sitting there on the floor. THE BOOK! It wasn't just any book. That book was all about "Thunderpants."

That meant that when someone opened it, all of the information about them came to life and made THUNDERPANTS! To make things worse, he was the worst villain of all! Me and Jacob knew what we had to do. We searched all the books in the "special" part of the library until we found the book about Captain Underwear! He was an excellent superhero but we didn't know if he is worthy enough to beat Thunderpants.

We hesitantly unlocked the book slowly waiting for something to happen. But nothing happened, so we threw the book on the floor and started to walk out. Suddenly we heard something strange. We looked behind us slowly feeling afraid of what it might be. BAM! Captain Underwear jumped out of the book at the speed of light and was startled to see where he was. He asked us where he was? We told him that we were in the library.

He looked confused so I said it again, "We are in the library." He replied with, "What is a library?" He didn't know what a LIBRARY was! So we told him, but then we heard a CRASH! We hurried outside to see what happened. It was Thunderpants! He was going crazy. So we told Captain Underwear what to do and we left the library. Then the fight! began.

One of them got hit, then the other got hit, it was going crazy! No one was winning so I went back to the "special" place and looked for another really good superhero book. I was searching for about 15 minutes and finally found something, it was the book about Thunnypants!

He was a really good superhero. Jacob came running to me, telling me that everything suddenly went quiet and that he saw them go behind the building ALONE! I was just about to open the Thunnypants book when I thought, maybe Thunnypants won't be able to defeat Thunderpants by himself, and if Capitan Underwear was on his side then NO WAY! He would be able to beat them both!

So I thought that I should get two more superheroes. Jacob and I searched every book until we found two super duper good superheroes. The first one we found was about LIGHTHAWK! He was a very powerful superhero who could control light AND turn into a hawk! The other superhero we found was DOCTOR ZOOM! He was very fast and could heal anyone around him. So those were our superheroes. We opened all the three books and waited.

Ten seconds later we heard something and we looked behind us. BAM! We saw three of our favourite superheroes right in front of us. We were tempted to ask them so many questions but we couldn't waste time because they had two super villains to fight. We pushed them out of the library telling them what they had to do. We were in the library for about an hour watching them fight until THUMP! Captain Underwear's body hit the doors of the library.

I quickly ran to get his book to suck him in his book, back where he belongs. When he was in the book I locked it up and threw it in the bin. Two seconds later we heard another thup! It was THUNDERPANTS! Me and Jacob were shocked, we couldn't move! Jacob ran back into the "special" part to get Thunderpants heavy book and suck him in until every last bit of him was back in the book. When we were done, both the supervillains were demolished. The superheroes did so well that we were very impressed.

It's been a couple days since the big fight, and now the superheroes patrol the city to make sure it is safe from any danger. Back at the library we heard a rumble coming from the bin...

*By Sky Adele
Grade Category: Middle
Trinity Catholic Primary
Narre Warren South, Vic.*



Deforestation

I loved flying through the ancient trees
Leaves waving in the breeze
I flew through the sky with no worries at all
Rare for something small

But then the people came
With their metal monsters and destructive flame
Trees fell fell fell
Taking the wood they could sell

Metal monsters slice through the ancient bark
You could now see the sky so dark
In the time from dusk to dawn
My entire forest was gone

With no trees for air
There was nothing there
The people had no breath
They caused their own death

By **Abigail Green**
Grade Category: Middle
Strathmore North Primary School
Strathmore, Vic.

From Fibit to Fairy

Once upon a time in the small town of Flariton, there was the queen known as Kashvi. She was the most beautiful fairy in all of Flariton.

One day in the Undergrounds, the town of the trolls, fibits and Satan. There was a small fibit who would be turned into a troll and become the Queen of the Undergrounds. She was the heir to King Tyson. Her name was Izzy.

"Mum, I don't want to be turned into a troll, I will not let you!" Izzy told her mum.

"What! Then what would you want to be?" Her Mother replied to her angrily.

"I want to be a fairy!"

"A FAIRY!?! They are our enemies! Ok, you know what. Go and join them. I'm sure they will accept



you being a fibit."

"Ok." Izzy was happy, she was allowed to go and become a fairy.

Off she went to Flariton, the place she thought she was sure to become a fairy. She arrived out the front of Flariton, the gold gates were shut guarded by a small fairy, her name was Animalia. She was the Animal Fairy.

"Hello, my name is Izzy. I would like to become a fairy!" Izzy shouted out to the guard.

"Oh my! Kashvi, get queen Kashvi." She called out to another guard. It was Hana, the Flower Fairy.

Hana rushed inside the castle and called for Kashvi.

"Your majesty, there is a fibit at the gates, she stated she wants to become a fairy." Hana said.

"Well, what are you waiting for? Bring her in." Kashvi responded.

Hana went back to the gate and the doors slowly creaked open. Amazed as she gazed at the astounding town. The town of Flariton was all colours of gold and green. She walked up to the castle of queen Kashvi.

"Hello, young one." Kashvi said to her.

"My your majesty, this place is outstanding." Izzy replied to her.

"Why yes, it is. Now please state why you are here."

"Well, I was living in the Undergrounds and I was meant to be the heir to the throne but I decided to become a fairy and so my mum kicked me out of the house and I walked for 2 days and I ended up here." Izzy kept talking without taking a breath.

"My dear child, come with me I will turn you into a fairy, and you shall live a normal life with us."

Kashvi took her into her secret spell room and with a swish, swoosh, swoosh. Izzy was now a fairy.

Kashvi told her. "Now, Because of your bravery you will be, Izzy the warrior fairy."

"Thank you queen Kashvi, I am going to make so many new friends and tell them about what you did." Izzy said

"That's the thing. If more than 100 people know you will convert back to your original self. So be careful who you tell." Kashvi warned her.

"Yes ma'm" Izzy replied as she went to play with other kids.

By **Jessica Kopec**
Grade Category: Middle
Pedare Christian College
Golden Grove, SA



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FEATHERS

Are we there yet?? I want to see the Zuqv flower!" asked Yumi.

"No, We are not there yet." replied Nimi.

"Kiki, are you okay?" asked Loauy.

"Yeah I'm fine." replied Kiki. They walked up the mythic hill towards the Noai tree to heal Kiki's wing but to then find Aki's amulet was shattered to bits.

"Oh no." mumbled Nimi

"WHY?!!" screamed Yumi.

"We need to get another Aki amulet." said Loauy.

They looked around and saw all life dying around the Noai tree, even the animals. They looked everywhere for a copy of the Aki amulet to replace the dead one but Yumi noticed a cave... "Hey I think the amulet is in there!" called out Yumi "Okay let's go then." replied Loauy. "That's the Rose Blossom cave!" mentioned Nimi.

The group went to the Rose Blossom cave and explored the area to find the Aki amulet's replacement. The Rose blossom cave was filled with faded void... roses started to glow all around them. Their eyes were amazed by the sight.

"Let's go now." said Loauy while they hiked through the cave to find the amulet they require... (Thump) (Thump) "Umm." mumbled Loauy "you have woken me earthlings!!" yelled Oko "WHAT?!" screamed Yumi (stomping).

The Oko roared like a lion. The roar echoed through the cave like thunder. "AHH!!!" screamed Kiki "QUICK LET'S RUN!" ordered Nimi. They ran as fast as they could towards random directions.

"HEY THIS WAY!" shouted Nimi. When Loauy shouted they all turned to her direction and ran through the tunnel.

"YOU KNOW WHAT? I'M GOING TO FIGHT IT!" yelled Loauy while running back to the beast in rage

"WAIT NO!" screamed Nimi but it was a little too late because Loauy was already running to the Oko in a sight of flaming eyes.

"Our battle shall be legendary!" spoke Oko while charging towards Loauy in a response to her action.

Loauy quickly dodged the hit and damaged the Oko by shoving a broken stone in its spine. The Oko screeched in a reaction to the pain while Loauy was sprinting up to the cave wall and bounced off the edge to sneak an attack from above.

5 minutes later

"That Oko was TERRIFYING!!" yelled Nimi

"Let's go now" asked Loauy

"My wing hurts..." mentioned Kiki

"You'll get healed soon!" happily replied Yumi

"Alright".

They come across a gem, "Is this the one?" asked Yumi

"I'm not sure."replied Loauy

"I'll just grab it" added Yumi

"WAIT NO" yelled Nimi. Yumi grabbed it before Nimi could finish. (rumble) (rumble) "Whoa!" said Loauy responding to the shaking.

"(Some unknown language)" howled Moco.

"GO! Yumi, go with Kiki to get the amulet while Nimi and I will hold this beast off!" ordered Loauy

"Yeah! WAIT, WHAT!?" Nimi said in shock

"Okay! Yumi come on!" said Kiki.

Yumi and Kiki ran towards the amulet's area "Yumi climb that dead Nik tree if there is a trap." yelled Kiki while trying to attempt to grab the amulet.

"Oh okay!" While Yumi was climbing the dead Nik tree Kiki was on

the stairs of

the amulet's

area.(Roaring)

(Stomping)

"KIKI LOOK OUT!!"

screamed Loauy

"What?" Before Kiki could finish, Moco slashed her with it's gleaming claw.

"Oh no..." mumbled Yumi

"GET OFF HER!" yelled Loauy.

"(some more

unknown language.) Loauy kept on

stabbing the Moco repeatedly with a sharp rock

"Wait let me.." mumbled Nimi (Lifts up the sharp rock and throws it towards the head of the Moco)

"Now it's dead." added Nimi (crying)

"Can we hurry up please? *sniff* I want my

sister!" asked Yumi while soaking in tears.

"Let's go to the tree and quick!" mentioned Loauy.

Loauy picked up Kiki and ran along with Yumi and Nimi towards the opening of the Rose Blossom cave to save their friend.

"Okay now let's put the amulet and Kiki next to the tree." said Nimi. They were waiting for the Noai tree to respond to Kiki and to the new amulet they laid.

The tree started to glow and dead flowers rose up to the sun.

The cherry trees popped mint leaves and ruby coloured cherries bloomed. The faded light slowly grew visible around the Noai tree. The characters looked down to Kiki to wake up but she never did...

Then a royal blue coloured feather fell on Kiki with a gentle fall onto her head...

By **Angela Ku**

Grade Category: Middle
Trinity Catholic Primary
Narre Warren South, Vic.



The Mysterious Portal

BOOM! Another stormy day. The thunder roared loudly like a lion. I peeked through my window and spotted the creepiest house I knew. An abandoned house, that lived next door to me. It was the most terrifying house, and no one dared to go near it. Whenever I looked at it, the trees surrounding it gave me a spooky wave.

Then a bug from the house flew into my room. "AHHH!" I yelled to the top of the mountains. I had a phobia of bugs while my sister had a collection of them! That gave me an idea! I rushed to my sister.

"Bug!" I exclaimed. Excitedly, she shot up like a meerkat on guard. She would love to have an extra bug for her collection! We zoomed back to my room. As soon as we walked in, our mouths were stretched out into huge circles and our eyes grew wide. What could it be?

It was a mysterious portal! My heart thumped like galloping horses. My sister looked at me with shame as there was no bug and pushed me into the portal. She

tried to grab me before it was too late but ended up falling in with me.

Before we knew it, we landed in an unknown land. There was nothing but two pathways. My eyebrows narrowed as I frowned at my sister. Frightened, she zoomed to the right without me. With a sigh I walked to the left. I walked around slowly, gazing at the beautiful plants. Then, I heard a rustle from the bushes. I turned into a statue as shivers slid down my spine.

Could it be a monster? A fierce lion? Or a knife, trying to kill me!? CRASH! I opened my eyes. A treasure box? I opened the treasure box only to find a creature, soft like my bed, with huge, round eyes. A sheet of instructions for this creature fluttered into my hands. The creature could grant me a wish!

Just then I remembered my poor sister and ran towards her. When I found her, she looked like a farm pig. As I tended to her injuries, a huge shadow enveloped us. Like a snail, I slowly turned around. The abandoned house loomed over me. The

windows shuttered as if a gust of wind went past it. The chimney's smoke plagued the clear sky.

I clutched the creature towards me. I whispered, "Please disappear!". Suddenly, it faded away! Fortunately, the portal came back and we hopped in like rabbits, back to our safe, relaxing home. But it didn't seem like home. It was a bright sunny day where the birds would never stop chirping a lovely song.

The abandoned house was surrounded by beautiful, shiny, red roses. Then a mother and her child came out of the house, ready to go to school. "Are you kidding, we're late for school again!" I heard my mother groan. My sister and I rushed downstairs to collect our bags.

By Jane Han

Grade Category: Junior
Pacific Hills Christian School
Dura, NSW



MAGIC PAINTER

Geo is a one of a kind kid. He lived in the world's worst place, Inkville. Once a tourist attraction town, now a forgotten, corrupted, broken, gloomy area that only Geo and a group of bullies live in. While wearing his scruffy red beanie, he thinks back to when Inkville had a large population.

His oversized, grey hoodie had the aroma of his long lost mother. The jeans he wore were once his girlfriend's, Amelia. Everywhere he walked, he saw more corruption. Growing at intense speeds everyday. Inkville, from being the best place ever to now a ghost town. All because of the corruption, breaking buildings left and right.

Everyday the population got smaller and smaller, until there were only five people left living in Inkville. Everyone thought this was the end of Inkville. But Geo, he knew that there was still a spark of hope deep down in Inkville... Sweat ran down Geo's forehead. The horrid bullies were right on his tail.

"Come here gemstone," one of the bullies declared in a hair-raising voice. Geo got pulled back by his hoodie. Falling to the ground, "OOF!" he screamed in pain. As Geo stood there, the bullies found his drawing book.

They fell down in laughter, negatively complimenting his drawings. All of this nonsense made Geo mad, real mad. His hands were clenched and you could hear him breathing. That's how you know he's mad.

"Go away," Geo whispered. "What are you going to do anyway?" The bullies questioned. Geo didn't reply, all he did was stand up and start beating them up. Uppercutting, hooking, doing every single boxing move. "Retreat! Retreat!" They shouted while running away.

Geo's hands had sweat all over them, ready to fight even more. "Come on, come on! Where is it?" Geo questioned himself. He was so stressed as he couldn't find his final drawing. "Huh?" He shouted. He could see a 4 legged creature, it looked exactly like his drawing. But was it moving?

He sneakily crouched towards the creature, heart thumping and palms sweating. As he tried to make an outline of the creature, he saw that it was guarding a staff looking item with a brush, like an oversized paint brush.

Geo was very intrigued to find out what it was. He found a piece of metal and banged it against a wall to distract the monster. As it went further, Geo got closer to the paintbrush. He picked it up, he then heard growling, RIGHT BEHIND HIM... All you could hear was Geo screaming, panting and shouting while running for his life. He was crying knowing that this was the end. The next thing he heard was a squeal, he looked behind to see scribbles running into the creature, hurting it. He was so confused but kept running, only to find out what had happened...

"Yes, yes, yes! That's what happened!" Geo thought to himself. The paintbrush started drawing in the air, making scribbles which somehow came alive? He decided to try out his power by going back to the same monster and try to defeat it once and for all. But what was he going to draw? He thought for hours and finally decided what he was going to draw.

He was going to draw the fight. He started drawing and drawing until he had an exact

replica. He went back to see the creature resting. When the monster woke up, Geo sent his drawing to attack, but nothing attacked. JUST THIN AIR! Like before, Geo started running but with a plan in mind. He started drawing walls and walls. The creature was hitting every wall until it became unconscious.

"Let's go! The emergency plan worked!" He shouted. He had the biggest grin on his face, feeling the proudest he could be. As Geo got braver and braver about fighting the monsters, he started to beat the corruption. Years passed and everything changed. He joined the bullies for their help in fighting and they rebuilt a few buildings. This all led up to them defeating the monsters and corruption. The population grew back up and the first people to come in were Geo's family.

"Mum! Dad!" Geo cried out loud. He hugged them tight as tears ran down his bruised face. More and more people came and helped fix Inkville. It was then known as the everlasting town.

By **Max Konko**

Grade Category: Middle
Trinity Catholic Primary
Narre Warren South, Vic.





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Lost Home

The faint smell of Chai and Kulcha coming from the masked men reminded me of Ma. My stomach rumbling as I trudge towards them hoping for their mercy. How do I even explain why I was here?

The day where everything changed, the first rays of dawn lit up the room, casting a rosy hue across the morning sky. Purring, I run away from the morning sky trying to escape daylight. The sound of the morning radio blared from Pa's room. Barely audible whispers, from behind the door.

The voice however, so distinctive. It was Pa. I step closer to the door only for my attention to be caught by a passing rat. Pa then storms out of the room in a fury of anger and enters the room where him and Ma reside.

Ma walks out with an astonished look on her face, but quickly covers it up behind her bubbly smile that could make anyone's day better immediately. I could tell something was wrong but shrugged it off.

'And in today news, the Soviet Union approaches the city closer. Beware of the soldiers and evacuate as soon as possible.' The radio announced. I notice Pa was frozen, and his hands trembling. I licked his face in an effort to ease the tension.

Late at night, Ma packs a bag full of clothes and food. Ma takes notice of me and says nothing and the smile on her face turns into a frown, and stuttering noises from her take a hold of my attention. Tears streaming down her face, and she looked at me with a sad smile.

"I'm sorry," she says in a quiet tone. Sorry? What is she sorry for? Have I done something wrong? I lick her face in hopes of her feeling better. I did not want to see Ma cry. The once smiling, bubbly Ma, who is now crying. All because of me.

I still at the windowsill staring at the city that I call home. The bright shining lights do not exactly remind me of home. But instead, a huge void that remains in my heart now that I do not feel at home. The thoughts circulate my brain throughout the night, I feel my brain slow down and the city lights slowly dims. Falling into a deep slumber, I wished nothing more than for

this nightmare to end.

I wake up to the undisturbed silence, the sky seeming to be dull and cloudy, contributing to the distressed premonition in my gut. Walking out of my room, expecting to find Ma in the kitchen making chai, I instead find my house to be empty. I sit at the window still staring out in anticipation. A night passes. Then two. Then three.

The city seemed quiet and eerie. The life of the city—its lights—were missing. Masked men with guns trudged across the streets, instead of the lively school children running across the street. The anxious feeling building in my heart to a point where it feels like it's about to burst into a tiny million pieces.

The hope of my family returning seemed minimal. What if tragedy struck them? The decision to find them was a tough one.

I step out to the icy cold earth, in search of my family. My stomach rumbles in the agony of hunger, the bitter icy wind blows across the rocky and sandy terrain, I slowly feel my feet ache in despair for rest. I had nothing left but the distant memories of my home. The deafening silence, nothing but a reminder of the tragedy that the land was subjected to. After a while, my feet give up and I fall to the ground. The world then slowly dims to a standstill.

The smell of food suddenly awakes me and to my surprise I am now longer in my resting place. Instead, I am surrounded by men who are masked and are carrying weapons. One of the men saw my alertness and gave me a bowl of milk. I devoured the bowl, trying my best to reduce the aching hunger in my stomach. I look up and see him grinning.

'You were half-dead when we saw you!' I purr in a happy tone in response.

The man was not a local. He had blonde hair, blue eyes, and spoke in a language I could not make out. Being all alone in this world, with no family, I had no choice but to trust the strange man.

Every day, the strange man would give me a bowl of milk and tell stories about his life to me. About how he came from a huge land called the Soviet Union, where

everything is right and just, and how they were going to save the people that reside on this land and told me not to go outside of the camp unless it was to check on the 'enemies.'

The enemies were the ones who had started the war. The ones who took Ma and Pa away from me and would take me on routes that would lead me to the enemies' camps in hopes of gaining intel to use against them. I never once doubted his intentions in hope for finding Ma and Pa once again.

One day, he had asked me to walk to the enemies' camps by myself. I did so without question.

Trudging slowly towards the enemies' camps, as the man asked. My heart beating so quick afraid that they could hear me, I would be killed. The wind seemed to be picking up in that moment. The trees swaying from side to side, as if like they are bidding me goodbye.

The sun's face now covered behind the dark clouds, oh the way I wished to see it for the last time. I know now that this will be my last moment to see home- or I thought so. Until the memories of Ma and Pa flash through my head.

Whimpering, I turn around just to be blinded by a blast so hot and loud. It felt like my skin was getting peeled, my ears were burnt to the point of no recovery. My body laid there like a feather my life taken, I am abandoned once again.

By Cael Dawson

Grade Category: Senior
Marymede Catholic College
South Morang, Vic.

Beast Of The Seas

1743, Atlantic Ocean

"FIRE!" Several cannons fired. Big, heavy, steel balls flew through the air like spears. All of them missed. The crew stumbled back, their teary eyes looking up at the fierce, merciless beast. Long, brutal tentacles wrapped around the ship, the hundreds of seagulls watching flew away.

CRACK! The beast had broken the ship in half like it was a toy! "Boy's, it was nice knowing ya..." The Beast released the ship from its grasp and it was never seen again.

"Ey, have you finished with my book yet?"
Asked Adam
"Almost."

"Well hurry up wont ya?" Jack nodded. The ship shook violently as enormous waves hit it. Jack arose from his bed, the soothing tit tat of the rain made him drowsy. He just wanted to fall into an eternal slumber. Jack slowly, climbed up the tall, towering mast. The moonlight reflecting on the water, revealing a glide of silver, dreamy flying fish. Jacks eyelids felt heavier then ever.

CAW CAW. Jack woke up to the sound of the seagull's caws.

"JACK WHERE ARE YOU?" A voice shouted from below, it was Captain Sparrow.

Jack poked his head out, "UP HERE." He replied,

"I NEED YOU TO PUT UP THE SAILS."

"OKAY CAPTIN" Jack slowly climbed down from the mast, he gripped onto a rope and pulled. Instantly the ship set sail, the wind whipping in his hair.

"Nice job." Said his crew mate Samantha. "So, when do you think were going to find this beast?" Asked Samantha

"Well were close to Norway, which is where it was last seen, so I'm hoping soon." Jack dawdled over to the edge of the ship, beneath the crystal-clear water lay a coral reef full of unique fish. But something was out of the ordinary, a high-pitched siren like sound came from the distance.

Instantly, something clicked, "SIREN MERMAIDS!" Jack screeched. The crew emerged from their rooms, "NO STAY BACK!" The mermaids started singing echoey, lovely, enchanting sea shanties.

Jack clutched his ears in fear, but the others, the others weren't so smart. They slowly sauntered towards the edge like they had been possessed. Hundreds of seagulls gathered around to "watch". Jack looked down at the water, something gigantic had passed underneath them.

Suddenly a ginormous octopus leapt out of the water, followed by a small tsunami. The singing stopped abruptly. The monster had eaten them... "THE KRAKEN!" Sigurd screamed in terror. Jack took a moment to look around, there were seagulls, seagulls everywhere, Sigurd was right! "LOAD THE CANNONS!" Demanded Captain Sparrow. "AYE AYE CAPTAIN!" The crew swiftly dashed downstairs and loaded the intimidating cannons.



"FIRE!" The big, heavy steel ball flew through the air like spears. The Kraken moaned in pain as the cannon balls ripped through its flesh. It dived back down into the blood-stained water. "Did it give up?" Asked Sigurd curiously. Adam replied "Boy, do you think the king of the sea would give up so easily- "Long tentacles shot out of the water and took hold of a crew member, "HELP!" He screeched.

Without thinking Jack pulled out his sword, and with all his might he swung. The beast groaned in pain as red liquid oozed out of its cut tentacle. Once again it escaped into the water, this time it did not want to reveal itself. "Did it leave?" Asked Henry, "No, the seagulls, their still here, if the kraken leaves so will they." Replied Jack. "ITS BACK!" Shrieked a voice. Jack ran to the edge of the ship, sure enough a black shadow was visible from beneath

the water.

Another shadow emerged, suddenly, a ginormous octopus leapt out of the water, swallowing the kraken whole. The crew trembled back in fear, their teary eyes looking up at the merciless, fierce beast, "The whole ti- time we thought that was the kraken..." Stuttered Sigurd, his whole-body trembling in fear. This kraken was three times bigger than the "other kraken". "TURN THE BOAT! CATCH THE WIND!" Demanded Captain Sparrow.

Jack sprinted to the helm and pulled, "THE BOATS TURNING!" Shouted Jack. SMASH! A long, horrifying tentacle smashed through the underside of the boat, "RUN JACK!" Shouted Samantha at the top of her lungs, but it was to late. The tentacle had unravelled and trapped Jack in its grasp, holding him hostage. It was no use struggling, its grip was as strong as a crab. The tentacle shot back down into the water. Jack had to accept and embrace death. Suddenly, his eyes lit up with hope, he pulled out his sharp, silver sword and thrust it down. It missed... the drag was to much.

What do I do? I know ill use it like a saw!" With little hope and breath, Jack slowly started to saw at its tentacle. It did not

take the pain well. It instantly released its grasp. With little strength, Jack slowly but surely began to swim back up. All hope drained from him... he was out of breath. His vision began to become blurry the only thing visible was a figure swimming towards him.

COUGH COUGH. Water splattered across a deck of a ship. Jack could make out a crowd of figures crowded around him. "Jack, JACK!" It was Captain Sparrow. Was the kraken gone? Was this hellish nightmare over? Oh, but that was wrong so very wrong. A long petrifying tentacle wrapped around the mast taking it off with one clean rip...

By **Sigurd Stokke Harding**
Grade Category: Middle
Greenslopes State School
Greenslopes, Qld

The Journey to the End of the Rainbow

It all started on a still and tranquil clear night when I asked my mum whether I could go for a little stroll to have some fresh air. My mum looked taken aback and a string of spaghetti still hung from her gaping mouth.

Once she found her words she said, "I can barely get you out of the house because you're a mega bookworm and you're insisting on going out?"

"You are BIZARRE!" So after munching up all my food, I dressed up more warmly and headed outside. For a moment I took in the fresh air and gazed into the colourful sky that was setting. It was waiting for a new day. I started to walk across the uneven stone path, but I still continued to gaze mesmerizingly at the wondrous sky.

I stopped for a moment. I started to hear strange noises and thunderous barking arose. It was coming from the edge of my house. I ran to the edge and peeked across. There stood a three headed dog nearly as tall as my roof and there was my dog Buddy crouched in a small corner.

It seemed like the big dog was the cat and it was about to eat the mouse which was Buddy. I had to save Buddy. So I called out "Here boy, come 'ere." As soon as Buddy saw me, he sprinted towards me. I took him in my arms and said, "Go back home."

I looked back at the three headed dog and approached him. He looked away but once I came closer I knew that he felt

comfortable with me. Later on I named him Oka. I was strolling through the jet black forest much more relieved than I was before, knowing that Oka the three headed dog was right beside me.

All of a sudden I heard strange grunting noises. I could feel the powerful vibrations and rumbling on the ground getting stronger and stronger. Oka started growling and went into a position to pounce fiercely. I had a bad feeling about something. Then I knew why. A line of ogres started forming around us.

They had green musty warts all over their body and their crusty toenails started chipping off onto the rough and slimy ground. My fear increased and I wanted to escape even more because the ogres were revolting and the sickening scent of rotten eggs entered my nose and lingered there. Oka started barking vigorously, circling around to try and intimidate the ogres.

At first they had smirks on their faces but Oka's barking grew louder and louder and soon enough they were backing away. This was my chance. I dashed out of the small gap but I wasn't quick enough. Luckily Oka took me on his back and we dashed away as quickly as possible. We had been walking through the forest for about an hour and discovered a mystical patch of land with countless numbers of hibiscus'.

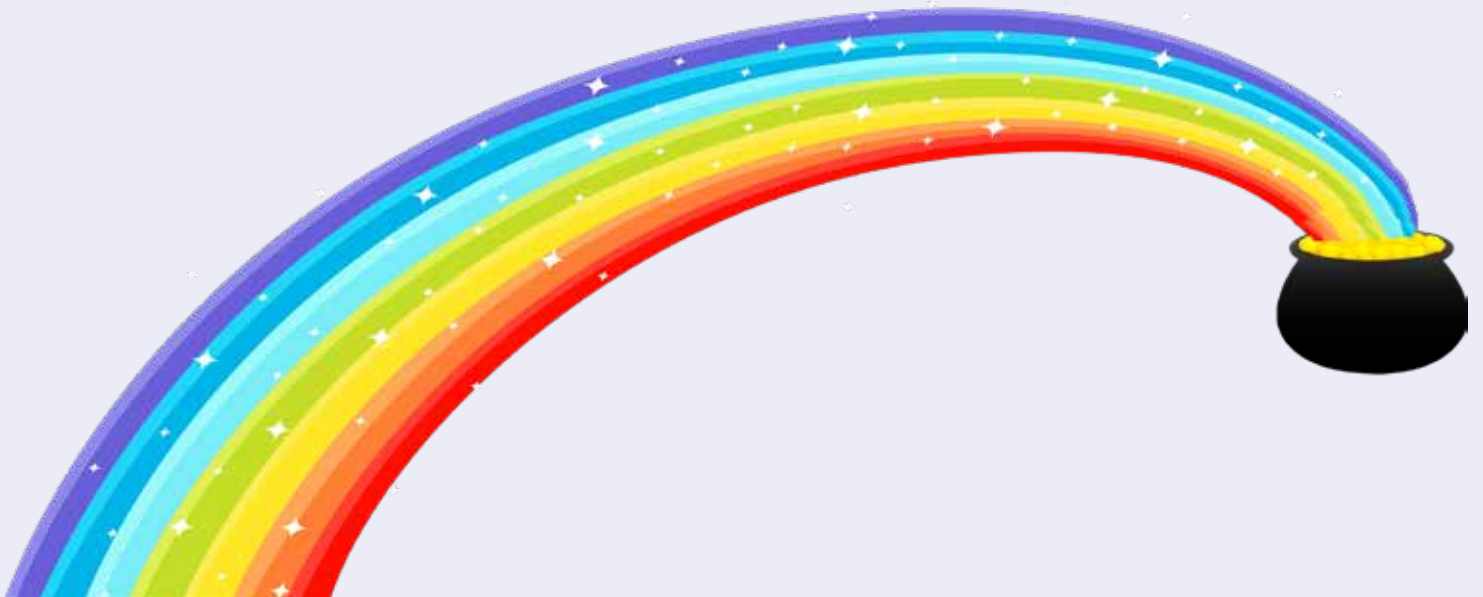
But something caught my eye. It wasn't the pretty hibiscus that caught my eye

BUT it was a creature! Before I could go any further, Oka headed straight for the creature. As he came closer, the creature started backing away but once they got closer they just CLICKED! Wherever Oka went the creature followed.

We left to continue our journey and the creature just followed. We assumed later that she wanted to join the adventure and soon enough I named her Azula. She was a Kitsune. After three long and tiresome days and a feeling that the moment would never come, it came! We finally exited the dark and miserable forest and squinted because the blazing sun hit our faces and we weren't used to it since we had been surrounded by darkness and gloom for more than three days.

Right before us was a tall metal gate going up to the highest heavens. For a second I felt like my dreams had actually come true. But something didn't feel right. A moment later I knew why. Some figures were flying in the air blocking the entrance to the city. At first I thought they were eagles but soon enough I knew what they were. They were giant griffins. The griffins had razor sharp talons that could rip through any human in a millisecond. Their wings were as big as their own body and their vivid yellow eyes were fixated on us. Only us. I knew what those eyes were. They were hungry eyes.

At once the griffins started flapping their wings as hard as they could, trying to create strong wind. They had created a



tornado around us! Oka immediately started barking but that didn't help anything. As the wind grew stronger and stronger by the second I got more scared by the second.

But then it stopped. Every single thing froze except for me, Oka and Azula. I was absolutely perplexed. I knew it wasn't Oka who did it but then who was it? I suddenly had a light bulb moment. It was Azula! I remembered reading about Kitsunes on the web and it said that one of their special powers was to freeze anything she wanted. I felt like hugging her but she would have felt very uncomfortable, so I patted her instead.

Once I regained my breath and calmed myself down a bit, we again stood in front of the tall metal gates like ants among Hyperions. Then I slowly pushed it open. I finally took my first steps into the magical city. My eyes quickly looked around the city to see where the rainbow ended and my eyes fell upon a house on the tip of the city. The city had many layers of rich emerald green grass that swayed through the light breeze.

The gleaming sun reflected on the crystal-clear lake that rested below. An hour later, we reached the top of the city where the abandoned house lay. This was my moment to find the treasure. I was so excited I could barely breathe. I took my first steps towards the house. I gently opened the door, it creaked spookily.

This was the moment of triumph. The door now opened fully but nothing was there. WHAT! No treasure, no gleaming light, no jewels or gold, no nothing?! Tears were entering my eyes. I went all this way for nothing! I was devastated. I looked back at Oka and Azula. They looked innocently back at me not knowing anything that was happening. But then I understood fully. Even though I didn't find the treasure I was looking for, I found the most important type of treasure. FRIENDSHIP.

I took hold of my tears and headed back down the path with Oka and Azula feeling much better than I was before knowing that my friends were beside me. While we were heading back home I was wondering what my next adventure would be. Oh, what about ...

By **Shaunna Rodrigues**
Grade Category: Middle
Trinity Catholic Primary
Narre Warren South, Vic.

The Six Pieces of Magic

I found some rope that was full of hope,
I found a fairy that was light and airy,
I found a jewel that was very cruel,
I found a chair I just couldn't bear.

I found a fish that made a wish,
I found a book that learnt to cook,
Once you find the six pieces of magic,
It will form something sad and tragic.

A lost dragon that was tossed overseas,
that is now clinging to an old oak tree,
This is a piece of writing you will never forget,
Something you will never regret.



By **Suwan Liu**
Grade Category: Junior
Christ Church Grammar School
South Yarra, Vic.

Invisibility

I am not nobody, I am invisibility.
My name is not Myrtle, nor Felicity.
I am...Invisibility.

You cannot see me,
smile or weep,
I am not something,
you can keep.

I befriended a maple tree's shadow,
I dwell close by the meadow.
And though I may seem quite homely,
I am never, ever lonely.

You may feel my peaceful presence,
Perhaps my curiosity.
But frolic and skip all day with me,
I would not call a possibility.

I bet you hadn't a clue of who I was,
But now you do, because; I am not
nobody,
I am invisibility.

I am not Myrtle, nor Felicity.
I am... INVISIBILITY.

By **Renee Kim**
Grade Category: Junior
Mornington Primary School
Mornington, Vic.



BOOK REVIEWS

Children's Book Reviews
By Kody Cook -
c/o Ford Street Publishing

Books Published by
Ford Street Publishing

The Rabbit's Magician

Author: Shae Millward

Illustrator: Andy Fackrell

The Rabbit's Magician is a warm little tale about Ziggy the rabbit. Assistant to a skilled and famous magician known as The Amazing Albertino, Ziggy becomes worried when Albertino seems to have performed a daring new trick, disappearing himself!

Soft and adorable illustrations by Andy Fackrell show as Ziggy is approached by a handful of iconic Australian animals, to whom he explains that he is waiting for Albertino to come back. That is until the wise old owl comes along to help Ziggy understand where his beloved magician might have gone.

Shae Millward explores the loss of a loved one in a subtle yet uncomplicated way that makes the book highly accessible to younger audiences. It does so using the physics concept commonly known as the 'conservation of mass'. It explains the idea that nothing ever truly vanishes it simply changes into something else. Through this lens, the book focuses on finding comfort and closure in the memory of a person and in the things that remind one of them. It's a sweet little book that might be able to offer some comfort to those who have lost someone dear to them.

ISBN: 9781922696076

Format: Picture book

Age Guide: 3-8 years

Price: \$24.95



The New Dog

Author/Illustrator: Chris McKimmie

The New Dog is written from the perspective of Kiddo, the new dog. Accompanied by striking and quirky illustrations by Chris McKimmie, Kiddo narrates what life is like with his new family. He describes his everyday activities, ranging from eating books, cushions, paper, bread, plastic (anything really), to dressing up as an elephant.

A delightful children's book. Readers young and old are sure to find joy in Kiddo's antics, goofy expressions and humorously genuine, doggy perspective.

ISBN: 9781922696038

Format: Picture book

Age Guide: 4+ years

Price: \$24.95



Tarni's Chance

Author: Paul Collins

Illustrator: Jules Ober

Tarni's Chance is a story about loss and loneliness. It handles a number of fairly mature ideas such as grief, depression, isolation, and broken homes and families. Despite this it's a hopeful and uplifting story.

Tarni, the protagonist, retreats into the safety of her mental 'bubble' when things get hard. When her mum leaves and doesn't come back, she starts to spend all her time inside the bubble. It's only thanks to a chance encounter with a stray dog (pun intended), that colour returns to her world.

Tarni's journey is depicted by Jules Ober who uses charming little figurines and sets to photograph the scenes of the story. Clever use of colour is used to represent Tarni's bubble and depression. She is shown as existing inside a small circle of colour in an otherwise monochromatic world. The bubble also gradually gets small as Tarni's loneliness threatens to overwhelm her. Even outside of the bubble, Tarni is never shown interacting with anyone else and always seems to remain apart from anyone around her. Eventually the bubble shrinks to nothing when Chance runs away from her, showing that she's lost her last ray of hope.

But thankfully, Chance returns and when he comes up to Tarni colour floods out from her to fill the world once again. The story shows that just a lucky encounter can be enough to turn things around, especially if one holds on to hope, however small.

ISBN: 9781922696052

Format: Picture book

Age Guide: 5+ years

Price: \$24.95





Stardiving

Author/Illustrator: Andrew Plant

Stardiving is a stunningly illustrated children's book about a young sperm whale named Fluke. Fluke is visited by a couple of dolphins who express to him the beauty of the stars. Suddenly enthralled by the idea of seeing the stars, Fluke is disappointed when the clouds prevent him from seeing them at night.

It is then that he is visited by an old, wise, and enormous sperm whale named Cachalot. Cachalot tells Fluke to not worry about what the dolphins think, but to do what sperm whales do best, to dive into the depths and see what he finds there. When Fluke heeds this advice, he discovers an ocean of wonders that change his perspective forever.

Stardiving explores ideas around discovering a sense of self and pursuing one's own goals and ideas rather than those set by others. It does so in a subtle and character driven way, that's engaging and compelling for younger audiences.

Andrew Plant's illustrations are an integral and breathtaking part of this book. Particularly, his ability to depict light and darkness create beautiful images as Fluke bathes in sunlight on the surface or descends into the inky-black depths of the ocean. He also has an excellent grasp of the scale of the whales, and of the ocean itself.

To top it off, Stardiving is bookended by a selection of sperm whale facts, and quite anatomically accurate depictions of some deep-sea creatures along with their names. As such, the book could be used as a jumping off point for teaching about marine biology, and even ocean-based environmental issues.

ISBN: 9781922696014

Format: Picture book

Age Guide: 6-12 years

Price: \$24.95

Frankie Stein

By Kylie Covark & Shane McGowan

Meet Frankie Stein, a genius scientist who dedicates her time to researching and making all kinds of unusual potions. Her favourite teddy and partner in science, Bear, sits on her shelf and overlooks all of Frankie's experiments. But she's always wanted to have a conversation with him, so she brews up a special potion to bring him to life! Much to her surprise Bear turns into a very hungry (and quite rude) monster! Frankie must rush to make a potion that can fix Bear, before all of her food is gone.

Frankie Stein is Kylie Covark's cheeky and clever remix of the classic Frankenstein story, where Frankie comes to realise that Bear is just perfect the way he is. With a great rhythm and Shane McGowan's adorable illustrations this book is a fun and engaging adventure.

ISBN : 9781922696120

Format: Book

Age Guide: 4-8 years

Price: \$16.00 - \$24.95



Rockpooling With Pup

By Kevin Brophy & Jules Ober

Come along with the very adventurous (and very tiny) Mia and her dog Pup, as they explore the Australian rock pools. When the pair encounter a blue-ringed octopus, seemingly without her signature rings, they set off on a quest to find them for her. Their journey takes them deep into the rockpools and close to the ocean, where they encounter many weird and wonderful creatures. A couple of sea critters offer what little guidance they can to the two adventurers, but sadly they return empty handed. Luckily, a know-it-all cormorant tells them why the octopus' rings can't always be seen.

Kevin Brophy's daring little adventure down into one of the most unique parts of the Australian environment, is achieved with Jules Ober's stunning photography of the bizarre and beautiful wildlife. With the accompanying page of sea-life facts this book is sure to delight and fascinate readers.

ISBN : 9781922696137

Format: Book

Age Guide: 6 to 9 years

Price: \$26.95



QUEEN CATHERINE

Once upon a time, Princess Catherine was living in the Kingdom of Vern. Her parents kept her in the castle so she wouldn't be in any harm. Catherine had never been outside the palace walls and she liked it that way. She met lots of interesting people who bought gifts from all over the world. She was always happy to receive gifts from the outside.

Her mother, the queen, taught her how to be a lady with dancing, etiquette and needlepoint lessons while her father, the king, taught her how to fight with all the weapons in the palace's weapon room.

Her life was great and she never had any reason to leave the palace. On her 18th birthday, she was finally allowed to leave the palace. As Catherine was wandering through the village she heard a blood curdling scream coming from the palace.

Catherine sprinted back to the palace where she saw her parents being kidnapped by the 3 witches of the wasteland. The witches saw Catherine and disappeared. Taking her parents away in a cloud of green smoke.

Catherine had to get her parents back or the villagers would make her the queen and she wasn't ready for that. Back in the palace she got ready to fight. Putting the lessons her parents taught her to use, she made herself some armour and grabbed her father's sword and went to the palace

stables to get a horse.

Once she found the fastest horse in the palace she started on her quest. Before she left the palace, a wizard appeared. "Do you know where you're going?" He asked.

"No," Catherine replied filled with gloom, "But I will find them even if it takes 50 years."

The wizard just looked at her with golden eyes and said, "I will help you because I know where your parents are being kept. They are being kept in the 7th tower in the wasteland."

The wasteland. Catherine shivered, whenever she asked about the wasteland Catherine was told to just continue with her studies. She learnt to fear the wasteland because no one would talk about it.

"I will find them or die trying," Catherine said, trying to act brave. With that the

wizard disappeared in a cloud of smoke Catherine rode to the wasteland for 7 days until she reached the base of the tower.

Climbing off her horse, she went inside. Inside there were 3 doors. Taking a guess she went through the first door. The stairs spiralled up to the sky as she climbed. She reached the top and saw her parents chained to the wall.

The witches appeared but Catherine ran straight for the potions cupboard. She grabbed a glass container with three hearts inside and smashed it on the ground. The witches suddenly clutched their chests and fell to the ground.

Freeing her parents she found a transport potion to send them home. Once back at home she was made queen and they all lived happily ever after.



By **Zoe Parcell**

Grade Category: Middle
Pedare Christian College
Golden Grove, SA

I'm Sorry

*I'm sorry for all the trouble,
I'm sorry for all of the pain.
I'm sorry for the devastation,
I'm sorry for all of the tears that flow like rain.*

*I don't know why we thought it was alright,
I don't know why we thought it was ok.
I don't know why we took you from their sight,
We should have let you stay.*

By **Indi Wilson**

Grade Category: middle
Regents Park State School
Regents Park, Qld.

Human

remember its your parents first time living too
remember that the person at the front of the class still has blood running through their veins
and a voice in their head
know that sometimes, the knife in your back has been pulled from their own
know that sometimes the lies will put you on the defensive
know that there are others who have had to deal with this before you

remember, being human is a cycle
sometimes it is a cruel one
humans hurt humans because they were hurt by humans
it is an ugly cycle
an ugly battle
this is real life

but remember what it is to be there for someone
remember being in need
remember learning that you can survive
and love in real ways
remember that this is how we survive
and how we give each other a reason to live

putting yourself in another persons shoes can never be easy
because we are not the same
humans are different
humans have different hearts
for those of us who know our hearts

there is a little girl inside of us
a wise woman
a warrior for justice
a protector
a lover, or maybe two, if you share your heart

there is a giver I think in all of us
when we give a hand
when we give time or give a voice
a place in line
or a bus seat

there is a gift in that act giving does not take away
because in giving
you accept love
and the true gift
in giving is to love and be human

and I keep saying human because I think sometimes one forgets that we are all just human
and I don't quite know what it means to be human
but I know that I want to learn how to be
that way, to be human
and a good one at that



By **Huntar Paterson**
Grade Category: Senior
St Thomas More College
Tynong, Vic.

Three Poppies

1918, a cold wind blows under the door chilling the whole room,
"It's refreshing, like a breath of spring air",
Mother tells us though her teeth are clattering like the plates on the
floor when THEY raided the house.

Her lips are bluer than the sky on a clear day.
Her toes and fingers are a deep red, nearly purple.
She says it's nothing, but I know she is lying.
I know I will have to let her go.

This rickety, rusty shed we call home,
blocks out the Seasons.
My friends, the bombs, my Dad.
Blocks out everything.
Everything except the realities of the War.

Winter
This year is severe.
Achingly cold, frozen and snowbound.
We only have the clothes we wear and some thin woollen blankets
to keep us warm.
No fire wood.
Food is scarcer than money and the smile on my Mothers' face.
We can't leave due to the cold,
so we live off scraps of what we have.
Snow packs us in tighter than sardines.

Mother died during the winter.
Bringing grief and sorrow.
With nowhere to put her body, we bury her in the snow.

The War is flourishing like Springs Poppies.
Red, stunning and vibrant.

When the snow goes, they grow like my sisters' hair over the past
months.
Wild, tangled and overgrown.

Spring
Dad is back,
But not the same.
With Mom gone, he rarely moves.
He sits in his chair, by the fire, with no hope.

He no longer picks us up and throws us into the air,
Never hugs us, kisses us, or tells us he loves us.
He hardly talks to us,
Except to scold or shout at us. There is no warmth.



Summer
Brings no warmth.
Bruno is small and frail. Day by day he worsens.
A heavy fever is crushing his body,
he holds on and stays alive.

Victoria is sad and hollow. She barely talks.
No longer the bright, warm child she used to be.
Dad in his storm, rages about upstairs.
We are not sure why he does this, but it chills us to the bone.

Mrs. Engelman, our neighbour does all she can
to bring warmth into our lives.
She tells us stories of her childhood, of running through the fields
of poppies, days of when she was happy,
days that will return with the Spring.
I smile politely, those days will never come again.

Autumn
1939, the Germans have invaded Poland.
I am now 31 and still live in the same house,
with Victoria 28 and Bruno 23.
Dad is gone, he left the house one day and never came back.
As much as it saddens me, the others are happy. I let him go.

Winter
1943, Mrs. Engelman has been taken away.
She said it's for the better, she says she will return.
But in her kind eyes I see Mother and know she is lying.
I reach out for her cold hands and hold them warmly to my face.
We are capable of fending for ourselves
so without trouble I let her go.

Everyday we fear of being overrun, bombed, or shelled.
but then I think of Mother, Father and Mrs Engelman.
The three poppies I have let go.
I know we must go on.

Spring
May 1945. I sweep my eyes over the empty battlefield.
Germany has surrendered,
Many, many lives have ended. Many will now be saved.
Something catches my eye.

A single red poppy on top of a hill,
Red, stunning and vibrant.

As I walk across the field,
memories come rushing in, the return of spring brings hope,
to a field of red poppies who are now at rest.

By **Chanel Charles**
Grade Category: Middle
Launceston Grammar School
Launceston, Tas.

Respect

*As the birds fly, I cannot deny, I respect life, for how I strife in the world
because against payment of gold, no respect can be sold.*

*Respect can be shown, by doing small things, we can all appreciate, the comfort it brings.
Giving it is something, only you can decide, what gets in the way, is something called pride.*

People forget, that others have feelings, being rude and insensitive, in their own dealings.

Choosing gossip over communication, hurting others with their fabrication.

The bullying that we see in schools, in adulthood, it makes us look like fools.

This is not the way things should be, instead we can opt for courtesy.

Our differences need not lead to yelling, the way we handle ourselves is quite telling.

Do we have what it takes to put others first? Or are we just going to quench our own thirst.

A thirst for having things our own way, can prevent making someone else's day.

*Because if you don't respect yourself, how are you going to respect others, this is
something we should have all learned from our mothers.*

*We should always respect people young and old, brother and sister, mother or
father, friends or family. Respect is the thing we should all appreciate, and share it around the world.*



The End

By **Ariel James**
Grade Category: Junior
Vistara Primary School
Lismore, NSW

Summer Heat

*Summer heat,
where we meet;
In the shade,
with the housemaid;*

*In the hot,
near the parking lot;
On the grass,
days go pass;*

*Picking flowers,
for hours and hours,
until the day ends.
Summer heat,
under my feet.*



By **Suwan Liu**
Grade Category: Junior
Christ Church Grammar School
South Yarra, Vic.



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