

# OZ KIDS IN PRINT



**August 2012**

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*A great tool to  
improve literacy  
in schools!*

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**TO STUDENTS IN PRIMARY OR  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

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# OZ KIDS IN PRINT

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# FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

We are over half way through the year. Where has the time gone? The entries close on 1st October, but don't leave it until then to enter.

**ENTER ON-LINE**  
at  
[www.ozkids.com.au](http://www.ozkids.com.au)

Linda at Media Warehouse has done a wonderful job at designing our website that looks fantastic and is easy to use as well.

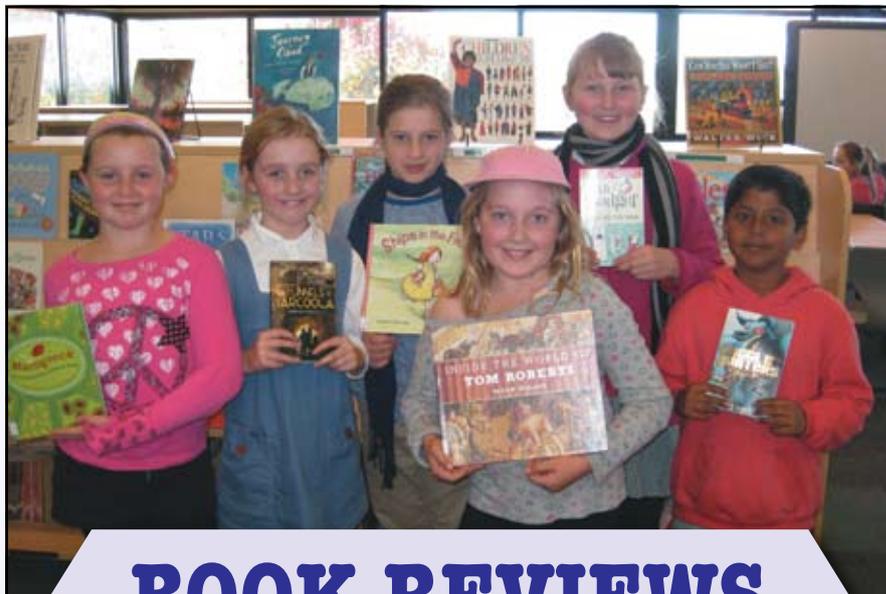
On page 11 is an interview with Den L Scheer. Den was a Children's Charity Network Award recipient. Den won the *Young Australian Artist of the Year* in 2008 in the painting category, and again in 2010. Den also won the *Young Australian Writers' Awards* in 2010 with her poem 'Blood on the Moon'. Den has gone on to illustrate her first book, written by Gary Crew, *In The Beech Forest*.



**KEEP ON WRITING  
(TYPING)!**

*Carol Dick*  
Managing Editor

**CHILDREN'S CHARITY NETWORK  
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## BOOK REVIEWS

Meet our book reviewers – Simone, Alexandra, Grace, Jaimee, Isabella and Pranav, from Gold Street Primary School in Clifton Hill, Victoria.

Reviews Coordinator: Meredith Costain

### **Inside the World of Tom Roberts**

Written and illustrated by Mark Wilson  
(Lothian Children's Books)

Gracie and Ben went to the art gallery to meet their mum. They showed their ticket to the man who said, 'Don't forget to look at the paintings by Tom Roberts.' Last time they went to the art gallery they had actually travelled inside the paintings, would this happen again? Travel back to colonial Australia through the artwork of the famous artist Tom Roberts.

I recommend this book to kids aged 5-8, boys and girls who like magic and art work. It is a cute, old-fashioned type of book.

Rating: 6/10  
Jaimee D

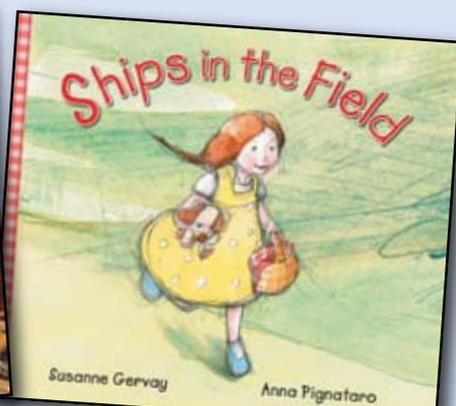
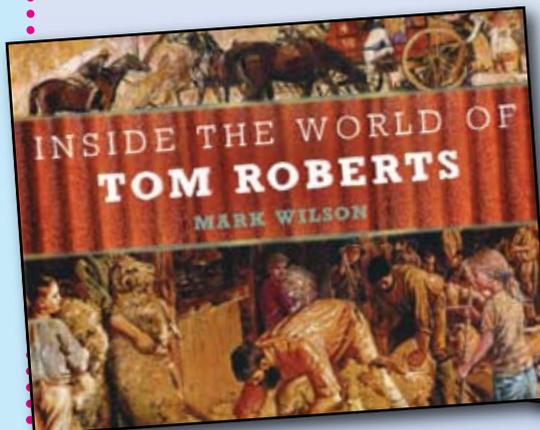
### **Ships in the Field**

Written by Susanne Gervay  
with illustrations by Anna Pignataro  
Published by Ford Street Publishing

In this book there is a girl who wishes for a dog. She and her parents had to leave their 'old country' because of war. Her father used to be a farmer but now works in a car factory. Her mother used to be a teacher but now spends all her time sewing dresses. Her father has a heavy accent and he says 'Look at the ships in the field' – he actually means sheep. People make fun of the way he talks. It is hard for the family to fit in.

This is a very interesting picture story book suitable for readers aged 6+

Rating: 9/10  
Grace B



## **Boggle Hunters**

by *Sophie Masson (Scholastic)*

This book is about a boy called Sam. When Sam's parents go away he is sent to England to live with his uncle, aunty and cousin Jenny. Jenny's secret is that she and her parents are boggle hunters. Boggle hunters search the streets for savage creatures sent to plague humans by an evil Faery race. Sam knows nothing about this but he has his own secret...

When Sam logs on to a game called Grim's Castle, he is hurled into a thrilling world of monsters. Will he master the game or will his next move be his last?

I really loved this book. For readers 8+.

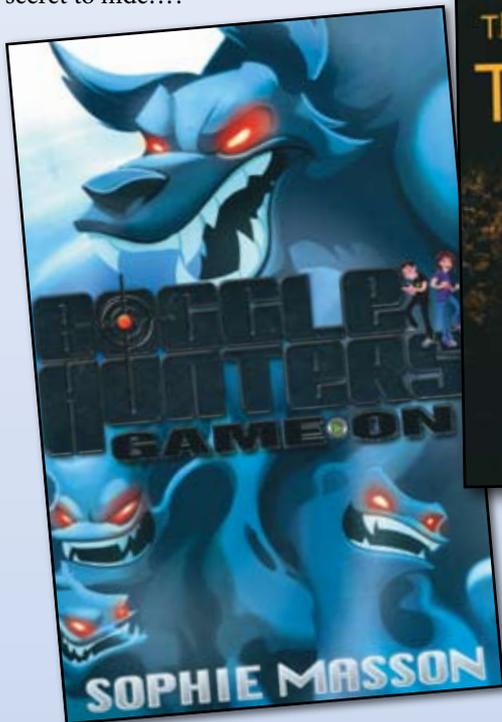
Rating: 10/10

*Pranav Srivatsan*

## **Mr Badger and the Difficult Duchess**

Written and illustrated by *Leigh Hobbs (Allen & Unwin)*

This book is about a badger that runs a very posh place to stay, the Boubles Grand Hotel, with the help of a friendly lady called Miss Pims. One day a royal visitor arrives at the hotel and looks a bit familiar to Mr Badger. This royal Duchess is incredibly tall and is a bit demanding giving very odd orders to the waiters. What will happen to the Duchess and Mr Badger when the Duchess has a secret to hide...?



This is a humorous book with absolutely brilliant pictures that makes you sit on the edge of your seat wondering what will happen next.

I enjoyed this book because it made me laugh a lot.

For readers aged 7+.

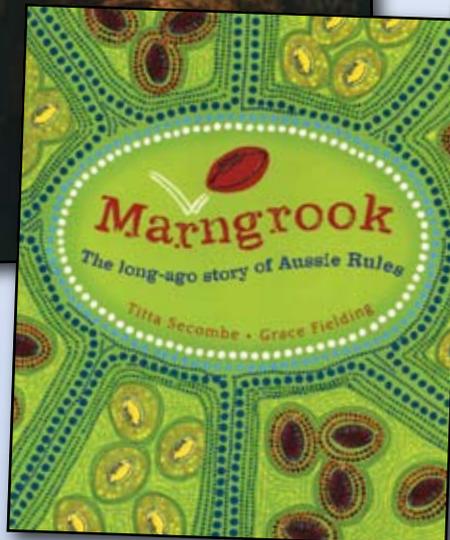
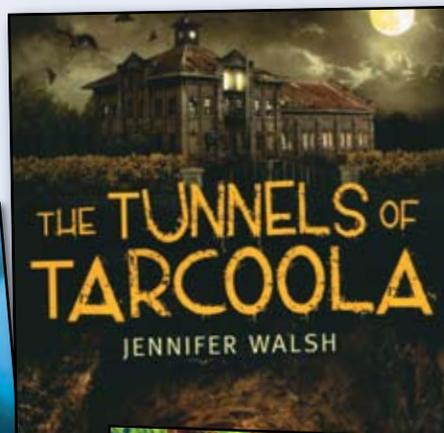
Rating 9/10

*Isabella C*

## **Marngrook: The long-ago story of Aussie Rules**

by *Titta Secombe with illustrations by Grace Fielding (Magabala Books)*

This is a book about a father called Wawi who catches a ring-tailed possum and decides he'll make stew for supper. When Wawi gets back to the campfire he skins the possum and cuts up its meat. After supper Wawi gets a tendon from a kangaroo's tail and sews up the possum skin and leaves a small hole. He gets some emu feathers and stuffs them in. Then he sews the rest up and hands it to his son. The son really likes it and plays with it all the time. What will happen next? Will he play too much and cause problems or will everything be okay?



I think this is a great book and it is interesting because it tells facts about how Aboriginal people used animal skins to make footballs. It is a book for people who like footy and want to know more about it.

I recommend this book for children aged 7-9.

Rating: 7.5/10

*Simone Roubal*

## **The Tunnels of Tarcoola**

by *Jennifer Walsh (Allen & Unwin)*

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to be stuck underground?

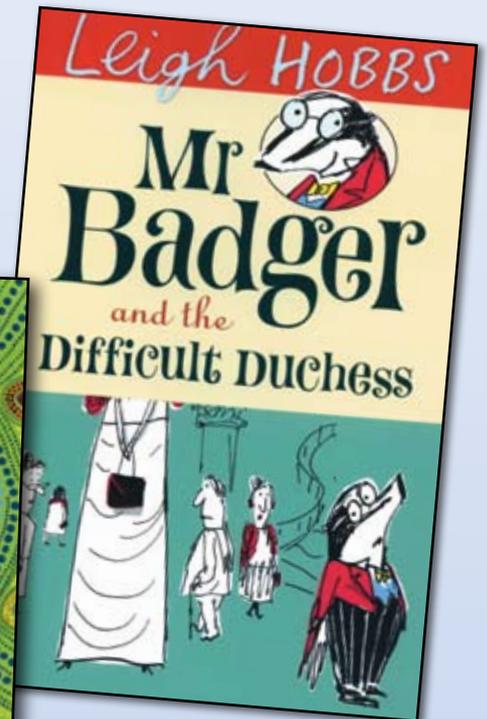
In this book, four friends go exploring in tunnels and find themselves in a haunted house. The rich man of the town, Mr Buckingham, is trying to demolish the house. With help from Miss Gordon, will the friends be able to stop him? The friends are all very different – you will meet sensible Kitty, fun but stubborn Martin, funky Andrea and know-it-all David.

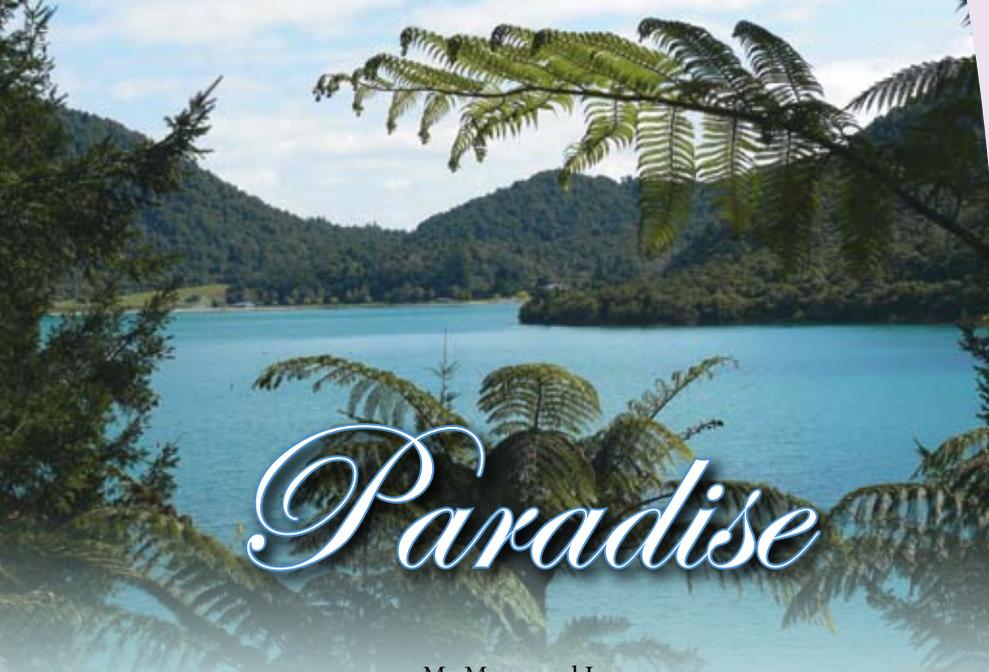
I enjoyed this book because there were many different problems to solve. You will enjoy this book if you like mystery and adventure.

For readers aged 10+.

Rating: 9/10

*Alexandra Dennis*





# Paradise

My Mama and I,  
Will never be apart,  
Because I know,  
Right there in my heart.

There is a world of magic,  
Nothing will ever be tragic,  
There will be fragrant flowers and beautiful pines,  
Lovely rocks and it's not even mine!

Everyone can enter,  
Wanted or not,  
No one will be hurt or scolded,  
Everyone will be moulded,  
Into a loved happy person,

I live in this world with Mama,  
Her and her twinkling eyes,  
I meet her when I feel lost,  
And I look at her and realise;

I love her so much,  
She is my greatest treasure,  
My highest hope,  
She triggers my rush of pleasure.

My Mama and I always are together,  
If we are in the skies on a cloud,  
Or walking in the fairy garden,  
And we always sing sweetly and loud.

The world I refuge in is happiness,  
The creation I find love in is sweet,  
This kingdom I imagine is bliss,  
The realm I adore, I share is a treat.

I know where I am,  
I find it very precise,  
My imaginary home,  
My imaginary life,  
It's called Paradise.

By **Grace Chensee**  
Age 13  
BELMONT NORTH – NSW

## The One I Love

The rich smell of lavender,  
The sweet smell of roses,  
The fresh smell of newly cut grass,  
And the sour smell of the lemon trees.

The rotten smell of a muddy dog,  
The organised look of her cactus garden,  
The faded floral lounge furniture,  
And the dented grey bench.

The forever stained tablecloth,  
And the fly screen door full of holes,  
The old bookcase,  
Filled with ancient stories,  
From picture books to thick dictionaries.

The taste of her chocolate snowballs,  
And her home made gravy,  
Her buttery mashed potato,  
And her tropical fruit punch.

Her dresses that look like night gowns,  
Her round shaped glasses,  
Her grey curly hair,  
And her childhood stories.

The sound of her creaky floor,  
Her old buzzing T.V.,  
And her husband snoring,  
As loudly as the thunder.

This is everything I remember  
See, smell and feel,  
From my adventures I have,  
With someone I love,  
My Grandma!

By **Kylie O'Brien**  
Year 6, Oxley Christian College  
CHIRNSIDE PARK – VIC.  
Teacher: Mrs Sharon Sandison



# The Amazing Adventure

ONCE upon a time there was a vet named Jim. Jim loved animals. He had no wife because she died in a car crash on a very sad day a few years back. Jim was a kind, tall man who loved helping animals and going on adventures. He had gorgeous puppies, enormous dogs and all other types of animals everywhere. Whenever someone comes into his work or home with a dog or an animal it jumps on him!

One day a person from the zoo rang him and invited Jim to go on a research competition. He said, 'I'll think about it'. He hung up, had breakfast, opened his surgery and greeted all the animals, giving them a scratch and a pat as he walked past them. Jim sat down at his desk for a minute and thought about the competition. Finally he decided he would enter, as he thought he could use the reward money to help more animals. That night he packed his backpack and went to bed dreaming of the adventure he was about to go on. The next day he woke up at the crack of dawn and got in his work clothes. Jim was feeling very excited but before he left to go to the jetty he said goodbye to all of his animals.

When he got to the jetty he found his boat number ten. The boat was like a small fishing boat. He climbed on board and set off to find something exciting. Finally he was at an island. He knew this island very well but he had never got off his boat before to explore it. Its name was Pillapong.

Safely he got off his boat and started searching. He looked around. He saw shivering large, green trees and thick bright bushes. Finally he entered the jungle. He pushed his way through the long green vines and thick ferns. In the distance he saw a little monkey swinging from a tree. The monkey was not like any ordinary monkey. It was not brown but instead blue and white. The cheeky monkey smiled at Jim, and yelled at him to get off the ground and start swinging by vines so the poisonous snake would bite him! Jim stared in amazement, but quickly grabbed a vine. He swung across the vines, but had some near misses too! Finally he made it across the sea of vines. He was feeling pretty tired and out of breath. It was hard work! He said thanks to the monkey as the monkey swung off in the distance.

He turned around and found an enormous tree with a huge nest sitting on the top branches. He had never seen a nest so big, or beautiful! It had giant, thick branches and green leaves. He continued walking around the tree, when he noticed a shimmering, blue billabong in the distance. He ran over to the water's edge. He splashed his face with water. As he wiped the water from his face he saw a fin swishing in the water. The fin was coming closer and closer to Jim. Just as the shark jumped out of the water a snake grabbed Jim and pulled him back to safety.

Jim stood up. He thanked the snake and offered the snake a ride in his backpack. The snake said 'Yes'. Suddenly he saw a spotty zebra in a clearing just near the billabong. He chased after the zebra, running as fast as he could. Then the snake popped his head out of the backpack and said 'You need a special fruit, if you want to catch that zebra, it's the only way!'

The vet said, 'Where is the fruit?'

The snake said, 'Legend had said it's always in a big, tall tree, held in a huge nest that belongs to a giant bird.'

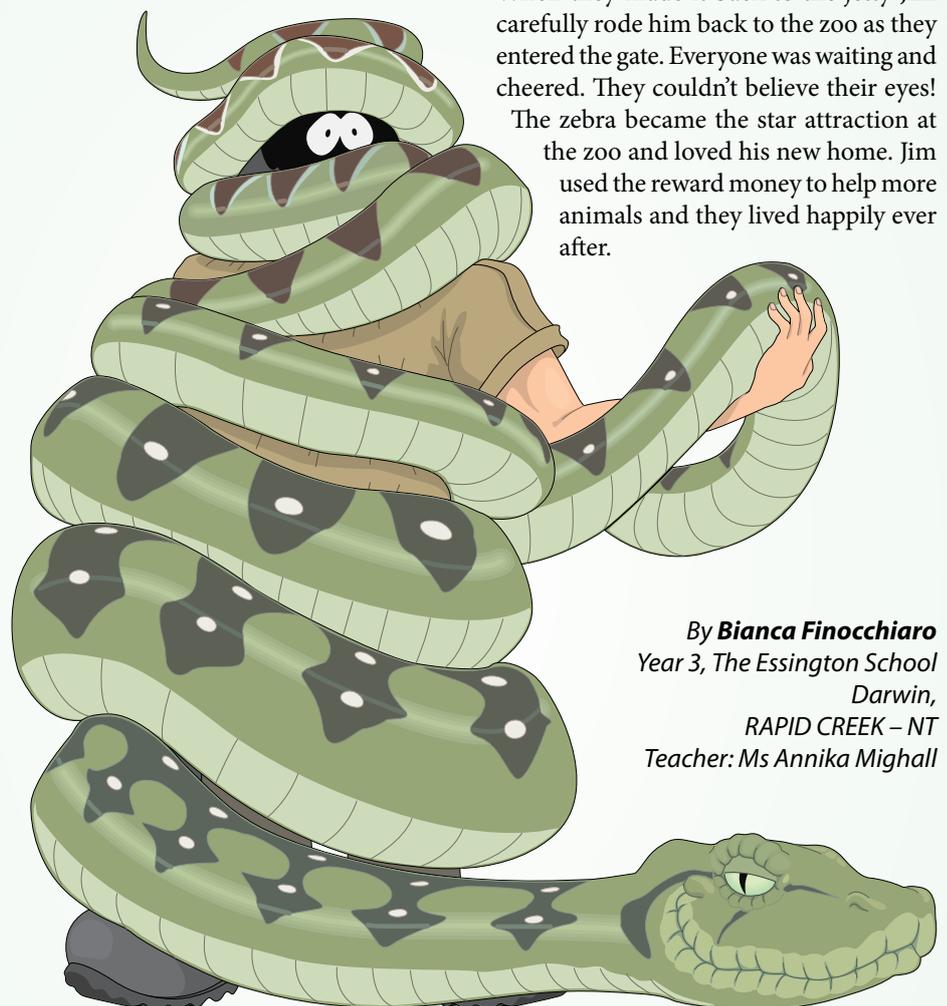
Then Jim said, 'I know where that nest is.'

He started running to the tree. He looked up and saw the massive nest. First he tried climbing the tree. He couldn't get his legs or arms around its thick trunk. So he tried to make a ladder but it was too hard. Finally he found a rope in his backpack. He held it tightly in his hands and made a lasso. Then he climbed the tree like a monkey. When he reached the top he grabbed the fruit and tucked it in safely into his backpack. He climbed down carefully.

In the distance he saw the spotty zebra running across the field. Jim quickly caught up to the zebra. Then the zebra stopped and put his nose in the air as the smell of the fruit drifted past him. Then Jim fed the zebra and put a bridle on the zebra and rode him back to the boat.

When they made it back to the jetty Jim carefully rode him back to the zoo as they entered the gate. Everyone was waiting and cheered. They couldn't believe their eyes!

The zebra became the star attraction at the zoo and loved his new home. Jim used the reward money to help more animals and they lived happily ever after.



By **Bianca Finocchiaro**  
Year 3, The Essington School  
Darwin,  
RAPID CREEK – NT  
Teacher: Ms Annika Mighall

# Bells Beach

**F**OURTEEN-year-old Skye rode the wave. As always Skye's long brown hair swept up the sand on her shoulders as she went through a barrel. Around her there was blue and white of all different shades and an occasional glimpse of a surfer through the hole at the end. As Skye came out of the wave she looked around. "Where is Jamie?" she thought. I thought she was trying to get me out of the water. Suddenly Jamie dropped in. "Wee!!!", Jamie managed to say before colliding into Skye on the last of the wave. "Okay, okay I will have a break but you were a bit late you know", she said. "Yeah, I do", Jamie said with a sigh. Jamie had been nagging Skye to get out of the water so to get her out, she kept dropping in on her until Skye was bored and got out. "Watch out, the rip is strong", Aiden said, filling them in with surf tips. Before he could finish, the girls jumped in, saying "We've already been out, but thanks anyway".

As the girls headed up to the café Jamie said "There is a comp on in Victoria at Bells Beach. It's not the pro comp of course but it's a Mini Bells Beach Comp for people like us. It's totally worth it. It's good for experience and if you come first, second or third you get a sponsor and 2000 bucks". "Well I'm going if I'm allowed". "Me too" Jamie added as they walked up the sand dunes to the café.

Soon the girls were sitting in the café calling their mums and dads and drinking chocolate milkshakes. As soon as they had found out that they could both go if they passed a partner exam, they decided to be partners. "Well if we have to tell the class about something let's tell them about something we know about", Jamie suggested. "Surfing rips and how to get up on a board", they both said without another thought. After two days of rehearsing they were ready to present the talk. "Remember that tomorrow is the talk", Skye reminded Jamie.

As Skye headed back to her parents' house she took the long way and went down Beach Street. At the beginning of Beach Street there was an old sign saying "Welcome to Crescent Head". The post which held up the sign was falling down and the old white and blue paint was peeling. Around the old sign there were

bits of rotten wood which had broken off. Hanging on the sign was a mirror with a bell. Skye ran her hand around the old bell. She saw a 14 year old girl with brown eyes and olive skin staring back at her. As Skye stared at her reflection she suddenly saw why everyone thought she looked like her mother. A large gust of wind picked up sand and sent it flying at the sign, covering the mirror with sand. Skye remembered she had things to do and carried on walking down Beach Street.

By the time Skye was home and up the stairs it was seven o'clock and she was exhausted from surfing. After seeing all of her notes and schoolwork were finished for the next day she plopped down into her bed and fell asleep.

The next day Skye woke up at six o'clock, got dressed and went downstairs. She sat down on an old bar chair and looked around, remembering her mother's and father's stories. They had said their house was an old hotel. Skye walked up to the cupboard, got some cereal and made breakfast. When she was finished getting ready she went outside, picked up her surfboard, fastened it to her bike with her lucky blue rope and rode to school.

"We passed!", Jamie and Skye screamed after they received their exam results. The girls rode to Skye's home in silence as their imagination ran through the amazing opportunities that could happen to them at Bells Beach. The girls parked their bikes and walked into the kitchen. There they found Nicole polishing the old bar chairs. "Hi Nic", Jamie said politely to Nicole. "Hi you two", Nicole said as she greeted both the girls with a warm welcoming smile. "Would you like afternoon tea?" "No thanks", both the girls replied over their shoulders as they walked up to Skye's room. "How did the exam go?" Nicole said, trying to force the conversation. "Oh great, we got an A", Jamie answered. Just before Nicole could ask another question the girls fumbled their way upstairs and shut the door tight. Nicole's body language dropped as she muttered quietly to herself. "They grow so fast, it seems like only yesterday I was taking them to pre-school."

Meanwhile in Skye's room, Jamie was sorting out what they needed to write

down while Skye wrote their ideas on a list. "So we have a week to raise 500 bucks each to have enough money to buy food, plane tickets and other stuff", Jamie said as she sorted out what they needed to do. "So how are we going to raise this money?" Skye asked awkwardly. "Err, well I haven't really thought that bit up yet." "Neither have I. I know, let's make some of my mum's special apple pies and sell them outside the mall." "Great idea", Jamie said enthusiastically.

Over the next two days the girls raised the five hundred dollars. By the end of four days they had raised one thousand dollars.

"950, 1000, 1050, 1200, 1300, 1400, and 1550", Jamie counted, her eyes getting bigger. "Yes, we have extra money", Skye exclaimed. And a day later Skye found herself in a plane flying to Victoria.

It was 2.00 pm in Victoria when the girls arrived. Their legs were stiff and their muscles were numb but despite the pain that was running through their body they did not complain. At 4.00 the girls had arrived at their beachfront hotel and were excited and very sleepy, so instead of surfing they went to sleep.

The girls woke up at 6.00 pm and familiarised themselves with the rule book. "You can't drop in on anyone, yes, go person who made these rules", Skye informed Jamie. "Well, that means I'll win because I don't drop in on people and I have talent", Skye teased Jamie playfully. "I will get you for that", Jamie laughed as she chased her around the room.

After a dinner of macaroni cheese, a big breakfast and a good sleep, the girls were ready for the comp. "Ready?" Jamie asked nervously. "Yep", Skye replied. Both the girls took a deep breath and walked out into the water. The waves crashed madly around their feet and the sand covered the girls up to their knees. As they got on their boards Skye's number fell off and after putting it on, Jamie was too far ahead to catch up to. "Maybe if I go around to the left I can catch up to Jamie. No, concentrate on winning the comp and finding out what I could do to improve my game" Skye thought to herself as she paddled out to the waves. As she paddled out she saw

Jamie. "Go Jamie, what?" Skye muttered in disbelief as a girl dropped in on Jamie. "Cheat" she whispered to herself in anger as Jamie fell off.

Jamie also had contestant 10, 11, 12 drop in on her. Skye had contestant 12 and 10 drop in on her. Suddenly the loudspeaker boomed over the wave. "Contestants 10, 11, 12 are disqualified for dropping in. For the final, contestants 15, 16, 20 please stay in the water", one of the judges boomed through the loudspeaker.

Jamie and Skye's faces turned to each other. Their smiles were so wide you would think that they had just won two thousand dollars.

The finals took place in a barrel set. Skye was quite happy because barrels were her best. During the barrel set Skye managed to go through one barrel and do a 360. Jamie on the other hand waited for the next set. The other contestant, Lee from Byron Bay did a barrel and a 360 like Skye.

On the next set of waves Lee did a 360 and was leading the competition. Jamie followed up with two 360s. Skye missed out on getting points for this round. She was unable to catch any of the waves without falling because large waves were

not her strength. "Contestants 15, 16 and 20 please leave the water. Your scores will be announced and the trophy will be handed out at 5.30 pm on the stage", the judge boomed over the loudspeaker once again.

After the girls got back to their hotel they needed three calming down yoga sessions before they were able to talk without squealing with happiness.

At 5.30 pm the girls turned up to the stage wearing their lucky charms. Both girls were crossing their fingers as the judges walked onto the stage.

A sixteen year judge walked out onto the stage, his long brown hair brushed over his eyes. He flicked his hair to the side quickly as he tried to open the envelope. Once he awkwardly opened the envelope, he started to read. "In third place for the Mini Bells Beach Competition we have Jamie who came all the way from Crescent Head NSW. In second place we have Skye also from Crescent Head NSW. In first place we have Lee coming all the way from Byron Bay NSW. Please come up and get your awards." The three girls walked up onto

the stage stunned. The judge handed the trophies to the girls in silence.

"Now girls would you please ring your bells" Ring ding, ding, ring, ding, ding, ding, ring ding, ding. One person in the audience clapped, it spread like wildfire and soon everyone in the audience was clapping.

When the girls had got back to the hotel, the first thing that Skye said was, "Well, we have something to talk about when we get back".

Both the girls laughed as they walked out to meet their sponsor Liam and to collect their prize money.

**By Mia Hardcastle**

*Year 4, The Essington School Darwin*

*NIGHTCLIFF – NT*

*Teacher: Ms Annika Mighall*



*Point Addis, near Bell's Beach, Victoria*



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# Interview with Den Scheer

Den L Scheer grew up on an isolated farm in Grass Patch before moving to Northam when she was eight years old. She graduated from St. Hilda's ASG in 2010 and currently studies Fine Art at Curtin University. Between university she rides her two horses and works as a labourer and engineer-fabricator offsider for various companies.

**Who are your favourite illustrators right now?**

HR Giger, DM Cornish, Boris Vallejo, Julie Bell, Brom, Frank Frazetta and Chris van Allsburg.

**What are you currently working on?**

Between university and various jobs, a pet project of an illustrated novel that is about what makes a monster a monster. At the moment it seems to be paired well with the monoprint sketches I have been doing of the illustrations I want to include. The writing needs a final edit of the draft then a butchering, but the illustrations have a way to go. I'm trying to include them with my university folios to save time.

**How long did it take to illustrate *In the Beech Forest*?**

A year and a half for various reasons.

**The writing is by Gary Crew. How do you get inside the head of someone else's characters? Do you have any thoughts of writing and illustrating a book?**

You just learn the character and anticipate their response. In this case though, there is little by way of character development being a picture book so it wasn't as if I had to do much in this manner. Regarding my own books, I wrote a complete book longhand between when I was 13 and 15, a picture book when I was 15 and this year I'm onto the third edit of a novel I started when I was 15. For the latter, I'm experimenting with monoprints and etchings for the illustration plates but the other books were designed to have drawings and paintings with them. No one's really cared about them before though. My closest friends do have typed, signed and dated drafts and pictures from some of the older versions though. I still have all the notes which is one of the benefits of writing everything in long hand first and not trusting machines. The books vary in styles too, from children's to fantasy, sci-fi and the current, which I suppose is a

mixture of most genres. It depends what I read at the time of writing.

**What does being an illustrator mean to you?**

Drawing pictures that tell a story.

**What sparked your interest in illustrating picture books?**

I like reading books and drawing.

**What advice would you give to other illustrators?**

Do not sign a contract to illustrate a book during your final year of high school. You are stressed enough without having to deal with another venture such as a publishing deadline. Also, be vigilant regarding contact with your acquaintances and colleagues. You will miss out on a lot of useful information if you don't and it ends badly. Don't be afraid to ask for help because as long as everyone else at least knows what is going on, things progress a lot more smoothly.

**Name five illustrators you would like as companions, and why, if you were stranded on a desert island.**

My first choice would be Marc McBride because I have met him a few times and he's Irish. If I were to be stuck with others too they'd probably have to be Shaun Tan, Graeme Base, Tony DiTerlizzi and DM Cornish because I like their art styles and would like to learn their techniques in art making.

**Illustrating a picture book is a big undertaking. You were going through Year 12 at the time. How did you juggle study and the pressure of illustrating a Gary Crew book?**

Not very well, honestly. I was very fortunate that my publisher and Gary were incredibly patient and understanding, extending the contract deadline during my studies, else the project would've been canned quite early on, I suppose. In saying that when I graduated I managed to qualify to study medicine. I didn't go out very much during high school. I was too much of a loner and in consequence I had a lot of spare time.

**What do you enjoy most about illustrating?**

I draw stuff and get paid for it. As long as I'm art making or writing to most degrees I'm happy.



**Which illustrated books did you admire when growing up?**

*Deltora Quest* was my generation's series to read and I still have Graeme Base's *Discovery of Dragons*. As a young child I had most of Shirley Barber's books, the *Franklin the Turtle* series and most of *Goosebumps*.

**What is it about surrealism that appeals to kids? Why is this genre so popular?**

The mind of a child is generally untainted by the pervasive conditioning of our society. For example: skulls mean bad things. This is only true due to our cultural value of life and the tendency to reject death in consequence. I think they like surrealism because they can find things to see and can actively search for an object rather than being a passive observer. The genre can be anything where nothing is right or wrong.

**What age group do you usually illustrate for?**

Concerning *In the Beech Forest*, 10 and up is the age recommendation but this is conditional. I think people underestimate the resilience of a child's mind though as I previously mentioned.

**When did you first become aware that one day you would be illustrating books?**

When I signed the contract with Ford Street.

**What are your – if any – expectations/hopes/fears?**

I expect to get my own books illustrated and I hope that *In the Beech Forest* gets a second print. What I would love to do is concept art for the movies and games industry and illustrate my own books.



# Haunted

**I** NEVER used to believe in ghosts, but the extraordinary sightings and other unnerving encounters that occurred in my house at Henley Beach changed everything.

All the sightings I experienced occurred when I was four years of age in our old house at Henley Beach, and many of them I experienced with mum. The ghosts were the original owners of the house and evidently had not moved on from this world. One day while passing through the dining room, mum and I sensed a presence, as if someone was staring at us. I said, "Mummy, I feel something".

In response she said, "Me too, sweetheart". As the walls were white and it was day, whatever we were 'feeling' blended into the room and we left, continuing with whatever it was we were doing.

As early evening approached, I began to feel the same sensation I had felt earlier that day. Mum and I walked slowly back into the dining room and found that the presence had become visible as the room was darker. It was a female ghost. She appeared as a faint white silhouette, gliding as she moved. She seemed friendly enough as she was rather peaceful and was only gazing. Other than that, she minded her own business and did not pay any attention to us. This was our first sighting but strangely, we were quite calm and neither mum nor I were frightened by what we saw, only confused. This experience continued

as a daily occurrence and became an accepted part of life.

After approximately three weeks had passed, mum and I had another ghostly encounter which did not involve a sighting. This experience felt eerie and was terribly frightening, an absolute contrast to our peaceful sightings of the woman.

It was 7:30 in the evening and mum had just tucked me into bed and was reading me my favourite story, *The Pink Rabbit*. She was in the middle of a sentence, when suddenly we heard footsteps stomping loudly up and down the hallway two or three times. Then it stopped. The footsteps sounded as if they belonged to a man as they were heavy, and we thought it might be dad home from work. Mum and I left to tell him off, because he knew this was the time mum put me to bed, except that dad was not inside the house. We walked towards the door leading outside, thinking that might be where he was. This was when we noticed that the latch was on the door, meaning that no one could enter from outside. Mum and I were afraid and I said what we were both thinking, "Mummy, who is here?". Mum did not know and she did not respond. She picked me up and ran as fast as she could to her bedroom and locked the door, waiting, absolutely petrified, for dad to get home.

When dad arrived, he told us that he had not been home all day and then searched the house but he found no one. All three

of us assumed that it was another ghost. We justified this from our sightings of the female ghost. Fortunately, this did not happen again.

The next night, mum told me, "Natalia, go into the bathroom and get ready for a bath". As I approached the bathroom, I saw the man who we thought had been walking up and down the hallway the night before, walk down the corridor and into the corner of the bathroom. I was terrified. "Why aren't you going in?" mum asked me. I stuttered, "The-there i-i-is a m-m-m-man i-i-in th-h-e ba-a-th-h-roo-oom. I do-o-on't wa-ant a ba-ath mummy". Mum rushed to see what I was talking about, but saw nothing. The man's appearance was very similar to the woman's, except that he stood firmly planted on the ground and walked, while she glided, slightly above it. This was the only sighting I ever experienced of the man and the only sighting of the man ever experienced by anyone in our home.

After this, there was a difference in one particular sighting when mum became pregnant again. It was a cold and rainy afternoon while mum and I were in the kitchen; mum was washing the dishes and I was playing with my toys. I saw the female ghost glide into the room and as soon as mum felt her presence, she turned around and saw her also. The ghost looked only at my mum and this time there was a difference in her gaze and appearance. During this occurrence, the woman was dressed in black and her face was sorrowful. She looked at my mum, mournfully, and glided off. Within the week, mum had a miscarriage. It was almost as if the ghost was foreshadowing what was to come. I found that rather scary.

Since moving out of our house at Henley Beach, I have not had any ghostly encounters, however, the couple who bought our house have had similar experiences to ours. Looking back now, I can still feel the hairs stand on my neck and goose bumps raise on my arms at these inexplicable events. Even though I think it was frightening, I am intrigued to find out the stories of others.

By **Natalia Pandos**

Year 10, Eynesbury Senior College

ADELAIDE – SA

Teacher: Shelda Rathmann

# PURE FEAR

**T**HE first weekend in August was known for hosting the annual Gawler Show. But this year, crowds were scarce, avoiding the terrible weather. I was standing in the pouring rain with my friend Casey. As I breathed in I could smell the crisp rain combined with the sweet scent of popcorn. My mouth began to water, but that did nothing to ease the sick feeling in my stomach.

As I looked up I could see the monstrous contraption above me. They called it the Kamikaze; it had two arms, each with a carriage attached at the end which rotated upon a vertical pole. I watched it spin around and around, forcing the screams out of the passengers aboard.

Beside me, Casey was shouting over the crowd in my ear, "Come on Laura, it's only a ride, it won't hurt you, please, for me?"

She had been persistent for the entire hour we had been standing here, begging me to accompany her on the tour of terror. Through the drizzle, she tried everything to persuade me including guilt tripping, threatening and blackmailing me, all of which hadn't worked. But as the rain pelted down, her patience began to wear out. Of course I wanted to climb aboard, but my fear of heights and the voice in my head telling me I would end up suspended in the air, convinced me otherwise. Just the thought of being at the mercy of the mechanics made my legs turn to jelly. Every year I would end up in this position, and would eventually chicken out. But not this year; this year I was going to conquer my fear one way or another.

Casey interrupted my inner monologue, "I'll even pay for your ticket, come on, you wouldn't turn down a freebie would you?"

My throat felt like sandpaper, "Well, um, I guess I— I—"

She cut me off and dragged me towards the ticket box. I could hear the thunderous roar of the heavy rain on the tin roof, and it echoed the beating of my heart. My throat was tight and my whole body shook violently, travelling all the way down to the hand Casey was clutching. She felt the tremor and turned towards me; I knew

she could see the sheer fear in my eyes, but before she had time to respond, we reached the counter.

"Two tickets please!" Casey yelled, trying to make herself heard over the noise.

As the tickets were handed over, my eyes filled with tears. Still to this day, I don't know why I began to cry. It was like an automatic reaction I worked myself up to, as nerves got the better of me. Luckily the rain disguised my weakness, hiding my emotions from Casey.

I followed her towards the compartments like a sheep, stumbling a little, blinded by the tears in my eyes. I could smell the grimy oil in the hinges, and feel the strength of the metal bars at my back as I clambered in beside Casey. As the reality of what I was about to do set in, my airways seemed to almost completely cut off, and I was gasping for breath.

The ride began creeping forward. I shut my eyes, not being able to bear the sight of the safe ground below me. Every ten seconds or so, Casey looked over in my direction; I think she finally realised the effect this experience was having on me. The carriage gathered speed and the wind began rushing through my hair, whipping it into my eyes causing them to water even more. Then I was hanging upside down in the air and I screamed. It seemed as though I was disorientated forever and as the carriage plunged back down towards the ground, I attacked the bars with every little bit of strength I had left in me. I was yanking them with all my might, doing everything to stop this fearful beast from continuing on its course of death. Casey restrained me, trying to calm me down, but she was no match for the fear within me. We continued in this struggle for the duration of the ride, onlookers observing what must have looked like a circus act.

As soon as the reign of terror ended, and I was freed from my prison, I sprinted to the exit gates of the show ground. I had had enough for one day, and Casey didn't utter a single word on the way home. She sat stone-faced

looking out the car window. She had just witnessed a side of me that no other person had ever seen.

That was one of the most significant days of my life. While some may not consider it to be a major event, in my eyes it was successful. I let go of all my hesitations and finally conquered my fears. While I did despise every minute on board the ride, I do not regret a second. Casey and I now both look back and laugh, realising how comical it was that I could be scared of something so silly. Don't get me wrong, I'll never be a side-show enthusiast, but I will always remember the experience. It also marked the beginning of a friendship between Casey and I. She is always encouraging me to venture out of my comfort zone, as this memory demonstrates, and that's why we are best friends.

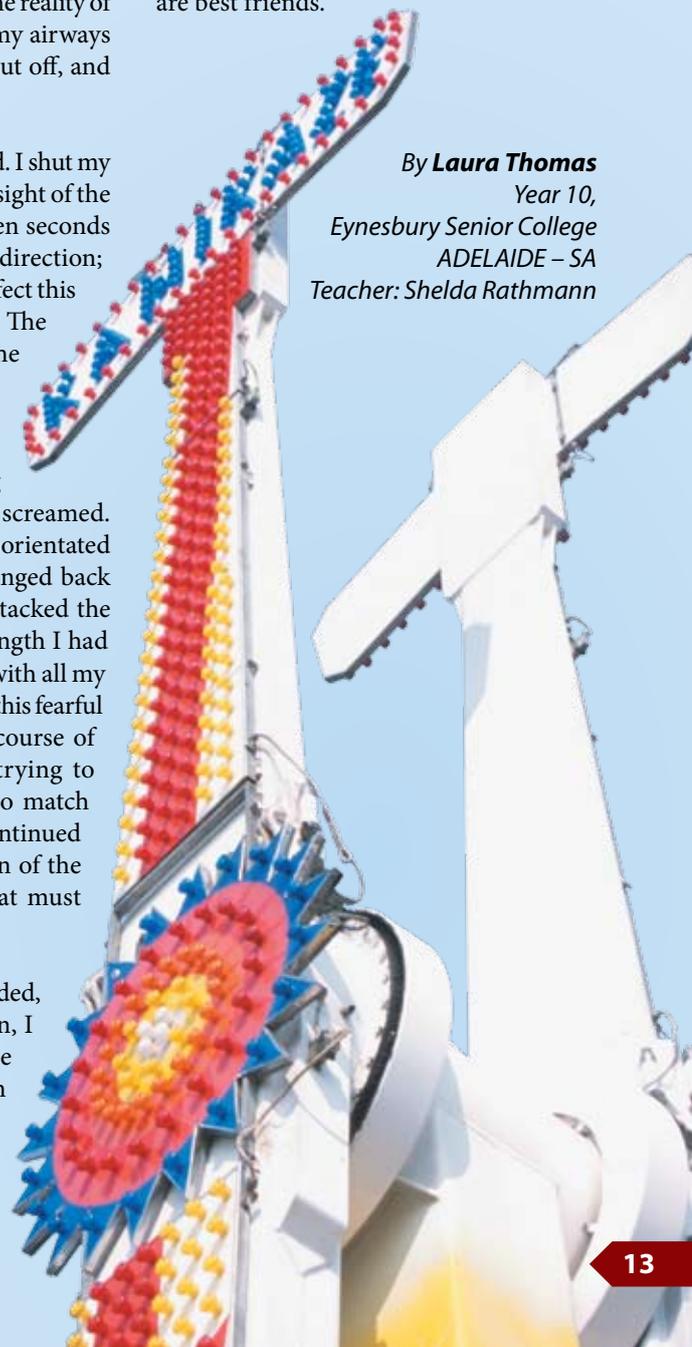
By **Laura Thomas**

Year 10,

Eynesbury Senior College

ADELAIDE – SA

Teacher: Shelda Rathmann



# Night Time at My House

It's night time at my house  
I'm feeling rather sleepy  
As I try to close my eyes  
But my room looks really creepy.

My mother tells me "go to bed".  
I'm feeling rather grumpy  
As I try to lie on my bed  
Which is feeling really lumpy.

I toss and I turn  
As I get on my bed.  
It is then I realised  
That I have bumped my head.

There are boys outside who scream and shout  
I wish they'd go away.  
Crashing noises come from pots and pans  
Now I'm really not feeling OK.

That was the worse night that I've ever had  
It was really bad.  
I hope I'll never have anything like it  
Or else I'll go mad.

By **Brigette Lill**  
Year 3, Loreto Kirribilli  
KIRRIBILLI – NSW

## Dragons That Breathe Fire

'RUN!' my brother yelled in a frightened voice. I turned to look at him with fright. He looked even more scared than me. I wanted to ask him what was going on, but I couldn't make my mouth move. My feet were stuck on the ground, and then an ear blasting roar rang in my ears followed by a shoot of fire. I turned my head to see what had made the horrible noise. Right in front of me was an enormous dragon with sharp teeth, an aggressive face and three eyeballs! The terrifying animal glared at me with all of his eyes and then let out another roar. It felt like I was about to turn deaf because he was even louder than before. His nostrils flared and he let out another blast of fire straight at me. I forgot that I wasn't alone but all of a sudden my brother pushed me out of the way and he was too late. The fire had hit him and he collapsed to the ground and in his place was a pile of ash.

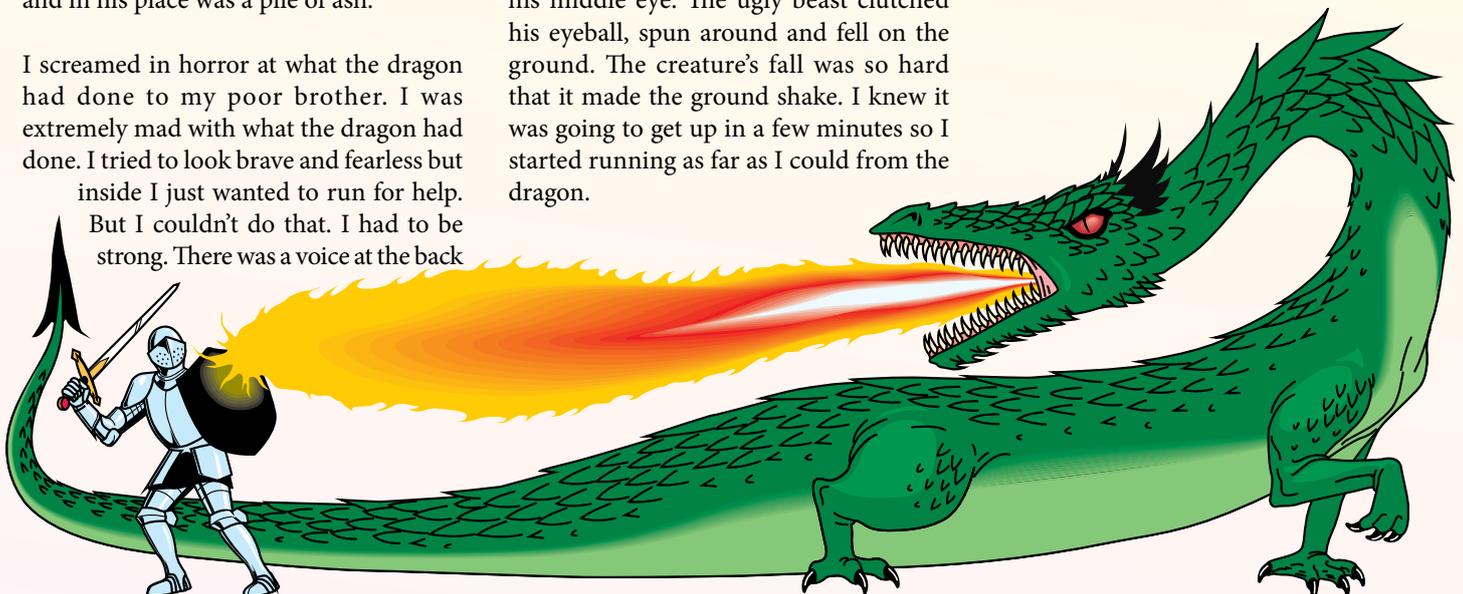
I screamed in horror at what the dragon had done to my poor brother. I was extremely mad with what the dragon had done. I tried to look brave and fearless but inside I just wanted to run for help. But I couldn't do that. I had to be strong. There was a voice at the back

of my head and it was telling me not to be afraid of the creature. I scrambled to my feet and tried to find the sharpest object on the ground but there were only small pebbles covering it. I tried to look harder when something silver caught my eye. I moved to it and stretched my arm out to grab it but the dragon let out a hideous screech. I jumped out of the way, just in time before I was barbecued.

I picked up the silvery object and ran to hide behind a large boulder. I looked at what I had picked up and I immediately knew what it was. A sword! I gripped it hard with both hands and took a deep breath. I moved towards the dragon and swiped his leg with the sword. He let out a howl of pain but he still could walk. Without thinking, I threw the sharp sword at his face and it hit him in the centre of his middle eye. The ugly beast clutched his eyeball, spun around and fell on the ground. The creature's fall was so hard that it made the ground shake. I knew it was going to get up in a few minutes so I started running as far as I could from the dragon.

I suddenly felt faint and I was starting to get dizzy. I knew it was the end. The dragon would soon recover and then it would burn me into crisps. I turned around and it was right in front of me. I fell to the ground and I started to cry. I waited for the dragon to burn me but I heard was a roar and a big thump. I looked up to see the dragon lying on the floor. There were deep wounds all over the large beast and a strange, green liquid was pouring all over. I hadn't seen anyone back there except for the dragon and my older brother. My brother had been burnt to ashes right in front of me so it couldn't have been him. Someone had saved me, but who?

By **Diana Androustopoulos**  
Year 5, Methodist Ladies' College  
KEW – VIC.  
Teacher: Mrs Ryan



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# THE HUNT FOR THE LOST EGYPTIAN TREASURE

IT WAS summer, 2012 in the city of Melbourne. The streets were busy and the traffic was heavy. It was a usual day in the City. My name is Kimberly May. I am 26 years old and I am a book author.

I was walking by a dark alley when a stranger ran forward and pulled me towards him and handed me an old, torn scroll. "It belongs to you. Take care of it and do whatever it says to do. Keep it close to you always and tell no one of this encounter", the stranger said in a serious voice.

He left me stranded as he raced down the alley, until I could see him no more. Shocked, I caught a cab back to my apartment and opened the scroll.

The inscription on the scroll read:

*"Follow the clues and come what may, for this may be your lucky day. Go to the place where the feline with no nose, Observes all the sand with its eyes that pose."*

I knew immediately that the place that the scroll says to go to is the Great Sphinx in Egypt. I rang my twin sister, Courtney May who lives in Egypt and is an Egyptologist and told her about my fascinating morning. Then I said enthusiastically, "Courtney, I'm coming to Egypt!".

I met up with Courtney when I got to Egypt then went straight to the Sphinx. It was 4.00 in the morning because we wanted to arrive before all the tourists. We decided to recite the poem to see what would happen. All of a sudden, the sun rose before our eyes.

The eyes on the Sphinx glistened in the sun and we saw another scroll. Courtney climbed up the Sphinx carefully, received the scroll, and climbed back down. The poem read:

*"Go to the place where the great King rests, for those who are the ancestors of the treasure chest. You will find your reward at the end of the day, Enjoy it but be careful of what may come your way."*

All of a sudden I heard someone creeping up behind me and as I turned around, the scroll was ripped out of my hands and placed carefully into another's. "Let's see what we have here", said the only one wearing a suit as he opened the scroll. "Who are you?" I asked, shaking. "I am Sir Victor Crane!" he said proudly. "What do you want with us?" Courtney asked, suspiciously, "The second clue to the King's treasure. Men, take them into the cell and keep them there to rot!" he said fiercely.

I began to run and quickly grabbed Courtney's hand as the men raced behind us, ready to take us to our death. I picked up the nearest and longest shovel and used it as a weapon as I ran. They pulled out guns and began shooting rapidly from afar, fortunately we reached the car safely.

We drove off into a dark alleyway and lost sight of Sir Victor Crane and his men. I

got out of the car and saw a figure of some Egyptian family crest underneath the car. It was exactly the same one that was on the second scroll that I saw, right before he ripped it out of my hands! "It's here! This is where the treasure is hidden!" I said excitedly and out of breath. "Are you sure?" asked Courtney. "Positive!" I said in a very loud voice.

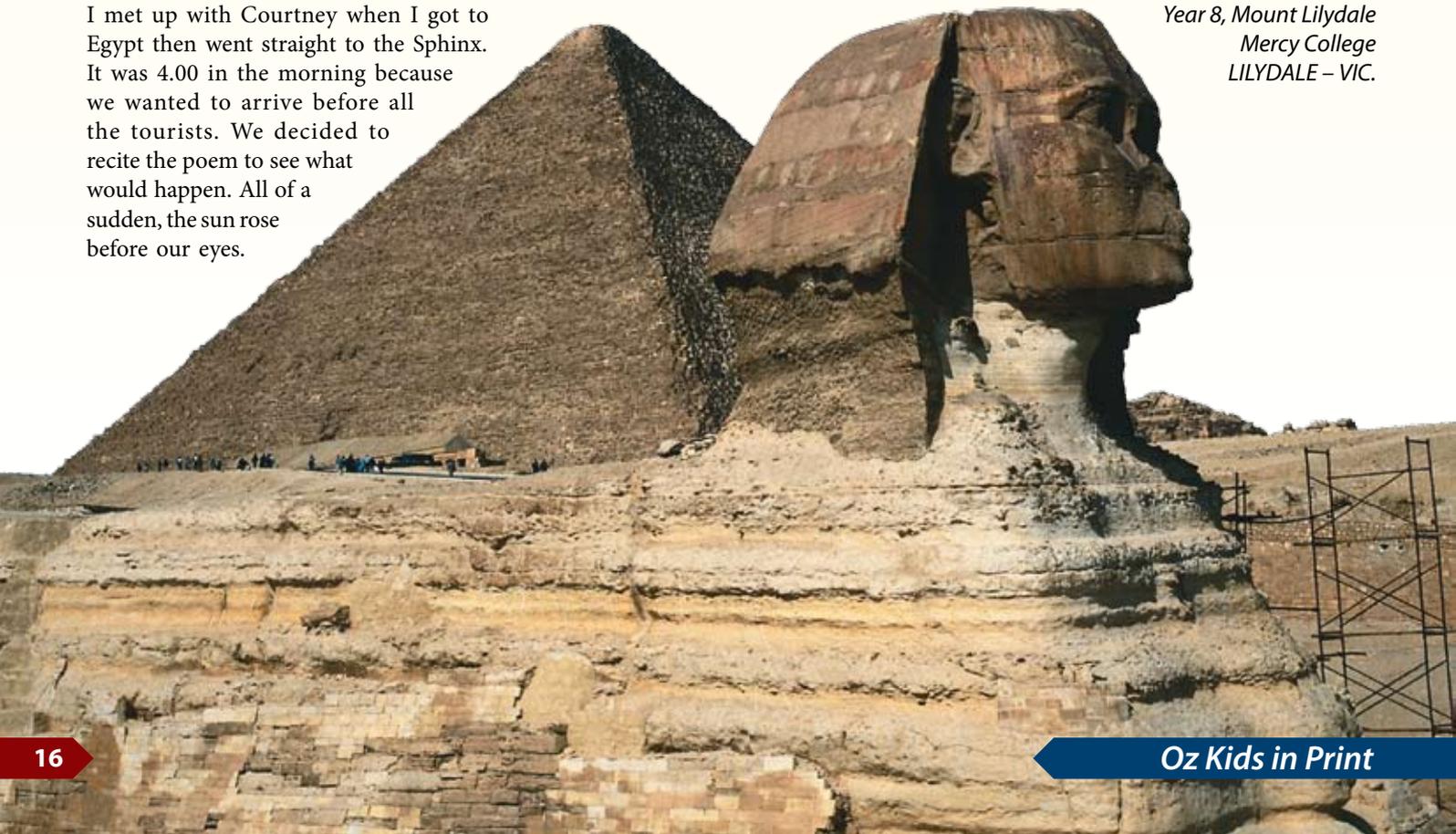
Courtney backed out the car and we dug until we hit something solid. It was the treasure! We picked it up, very carefully, as it was very heavy. After we picked the lock and opened it, we saw the vast amounts of treasure, more than we had ever seen in our lives! As Courtney was hauling it in the back of her truck, I saw a note. It read:

*"Kimberly and Courtney May, this treasure is yours. Many people have been searching since I've died. I have left it for you so that you may reclaim the family secret along with the treasure. You must know that in the waters of the Nile, there is the family spear, made completely out of gold. But you may never retrieve it, because if you do, the world will disintegrate. Be brave and live life to the fullest."*

*Signed King Khufu, your ancestor."*

But the adventure continues...

**By Katharine Graziano**  
Year 8, Mount Lilydale  
Mercy College  
LILYDALE – VIC.



# Ambassadors

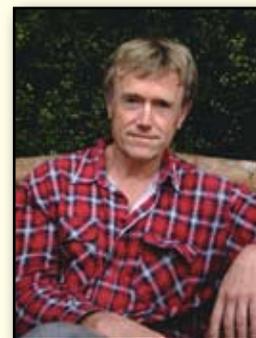


☺ **Krista Bell** is an award-winning author of twenty-one books for young readers. Krista has been professionally involved in children's literature for over thirty years, as well as being the mother of three sons, all of whom are good readers and writers! Krista's middle son, Damien, is the illustrator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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

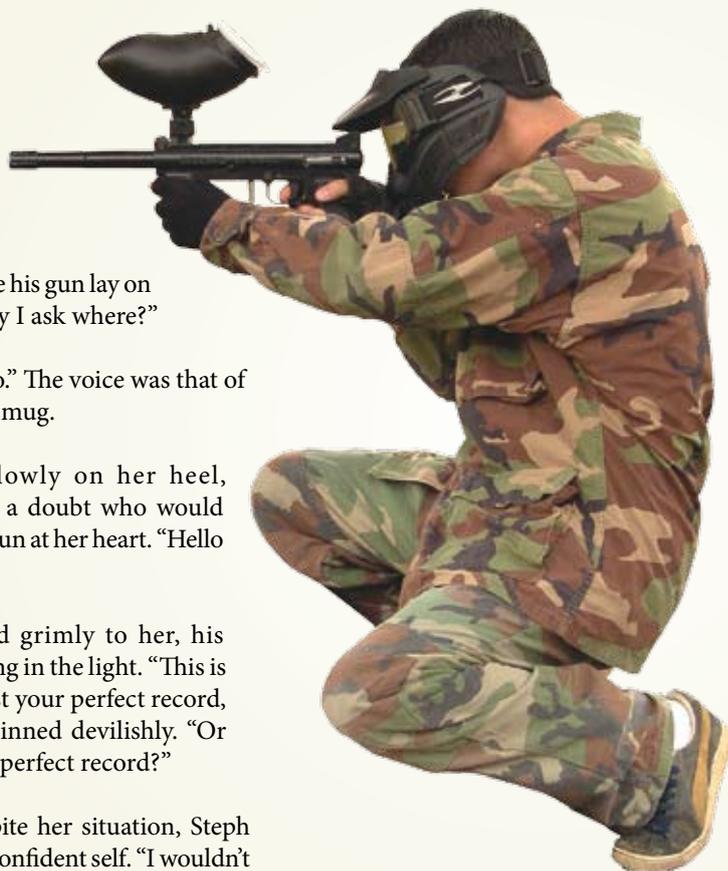


☺ **Jeni Mawter** (J.A. Mawter) is the best-selling children's author of the hilarious 'So' series: *So Gross!*, *So Feral!*, *So Sick!*, *So Festy!*, *So Grotty!* and *So Stinky!* (HarperCollins) as well as the Freewheelers adventure series: *Unleashed!*, *Launched!* and *Extreme!* (HarperCollins).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

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

If you'd like to find about Jeni's books or to get some hot writing tips please visit [www.jenimawter.com](http://www.jenimawter.com)

# SIG SAUERS AND RED STREAKS



SEAN felt the gun pressing into the small of his back. It resembled a Sig Sauer P226, the steady, reliable handgun made by Sig Arms in Switzerland that had replaced the once-preferred Browning High Power in many military forces. There was room for fifteen bullets in the magazine and it was fully loaded. The 9mm barrel was icy against Sean's bare skin, taking his attention from the draught in the empty warehouse. Sean was sure that the barrel had already left a red imprint in his skin.

"This is really uncomfortable, you know", he remarked, his eyes on the cold, grey concrete floor. His own gun lay there, knocked out of his hand and maddeningly out of reach.

Steph didn't respond. If Sean had been able to see her deep hazel eyes, he might have noticed her exasperation, but as she was the one holding him at gunpoint, it was understandably a bit difficult for him to face her.

"I'm the enemy", Steph said in a tired, almost bored tone. "I'm holding you at gunpoint. So what are you going to do? Or are you just waiting for me to finish this myself?"

Sean swung his right leg backwards and smacked the back of Steph's knees hard with his foot. She lurched against his back, unbalanced, and he threw himself backwards so that he crashed on top of her. He felt her wriggling underneath him and rolled off quickly, coming to his feet and instantly settling into the defensive position, feet spread apart, fists raised and ready.

Steph stood stiffly, smoothing her creased black singlet over her metal chest plate. "Good", she said softly. "Very good." She held up the Sig Sauer. "But I've got a gun."

Sean grinned. "So have I."

Steph raised her eyebrows unbelievably and twirled her handgun around her finger. She glanced pointedly at a spot

behind Sean where his gun lay on the concrete. "May I ask where?"

"You don't need to." The voice was that of a man, deep and smug.

Steph turned slowly on her heel, knowing without a doubt who would be pointing their gun at her heart. "Hello Timothy."

The man nodded grimly to her, his blonde hair glinting in the light. "This is going to go against your perfect record, you know." He grinned devilishly. "Or should I say once perfect record?"

"Is it now?" Despite her situation, Steph was still her ever-confident self. "I wouldn't count my chickens before they hatched if I were you."

That's when Sean knew that they had missed something. Something crucial that could mean the difference between a win and a loss. He glanced around the warehouse, at the metal platforms and ladders that lined the walls. At the end of the long building was the small door through which Timothy had entered. It hung open, swinging in the breeze. Open...

Timothy would have never have made such an error. If Steph had noticed the open door, the game would have been up. A movement against the right wall caught Sean's eye. A figure, huddled against the wall and dressed from head to toe in black, drew his gun and directed it at Timothy.

Sean immediately dropped and rolled along the floor, grabbing Timothy's legs and pulling him to the ground just as the first shot was fired. Red splattered the wall behind them, dripping down in bloody streaks. Sean propelled himself from the wall with his legs and slid across the smooth floor on his stomach. Steph saw what he was doing and ran forward, but Sean reached his gun before she did. He raised it with one hand and pushed himself to his feet with the other. He and Steph stood motionless, each with their gun pointing at the other's heart.

Behind them, Timothy had recovered and climbed a ladder on the left wall, opposite the figure in black, using boxes at the top for cover. He rotated his shoulder painfully and fired at the figure on the opposite wall. The figure ducked, but was hit three times, in the leg, chest and shoulder. He was thrown against the wall and slid across it, slashes of red marking his path, but not before he managed to raise his arm once more and catch Timothy in the arm.

Sean and Steph both knew that their opportunity to shoot each other was about to pass. Steph twisted to the right and fired at the same time that Sean ducked down, firing at her. Both teenagers were hit and both simultaneously cried out in frustration.

Sean looked up from his position on the floor and grinned at Steph. She shook her head and gave one of her rare smiles, holding out her hand. Sean took it and she pulled him roughly to his feet.

"Nice work, Gibbs", she said gruffly.

For Sean, it was the best compliment she could have given him.

Timothy slid down the ladder, slapping his hand on his thigh in triumph and grinning wickedly. "I got you Jay", he called. "Ha! I told you I'd get you! That's fifty bucks you owe me."

The tall figure against the wall stood, laughing. He pulled off his balaclava and his midnight curls fell out around his handsome, dark-skinned face. "Ah, but I still managed to get you, didn't I? Never said I would be first."

Timothy's face fell and his voice lost its goading. "You're kidding me!"

"You made the bet." Jay laughed again and met his friend in the middle of the floor, his palm extended. "Cough up, Hale."

Timothy raised his gun and fired twice at Jay's chest before the African-American could pull out his and fire back. Red paint flew through the air, splattering the walls and turning the floor into a slippery carpet

of crimson. Laughter bounced off the walls and the two men ran around like children, throwing empty threats and curses at each other.

Steph folded her arms and watched, an amused expression on her usually serious features. "They're so immature", she stated, rolling her eyes.

"Well, you know what they say", Sean said, glancing at her sideways and biting his lip. "If you can't beat them, join them."

Steph was just turning to face him, suspicious of his nervous tone, when a paintball slammed into her stomach. She stumbled, caught her balance and looked

up to see that Sean had already begun sprinting across the concrete, glancing back mischievously over his shoulder.

"Gibbs!" Steph shouted angrily, drawing her imitation Sig Sauer. "You'll pay for that!"

However, despite the curses she yelled at Sean, Steph's face broke into a reluctant smile as she gave chase. Until Sean looked back again. Then her face turned back to its usual stony expression, and she shot at him, missing his head by mere centimetres.

By **Talia Walker**

Year 12, Cerdon College  
MERRYLANDS – NSW

# A SCARY NIGHT

I TOOK my eye away from the peephole. No one was there. Who made that knocking noise then? I combed my long, dark hair with my fingers. I do this when I'm nervous.

I know what you're thinking; a ten year old shouldn't be left home alone in New York City at 9pm. But mum said that she would only be gone for five minutes, to check the mail. We live on the top floor of an apartment building. It's been half an hour. I somehow find myself in the living room, watching our large TV. Oh great, I think to myself, a scary movie's on.

An even louder knocking noise comes from the front door. I get up and bolt to the front door, trying to catch whoever is trying to scare me. Probably Elisa, my next door neighbour. I bet she saw that a scary movie is on and knew that I would get scared. I looked through the peephole once more. Not a soul in sight.

What happened next is what made me jump. "Katy, oh Katy", a whispered voice sang to me. I cast my eyes towards the kitchen. It looked empty. I saw something move. "Kate-Katy-Katy."

"G-g-go away!" I stuttered to the mysterious voices. The door handle shook. Maybe Mum was

home! I peered through the peephole for the third time that night. What greeted me wasn't surprising. An empty hallway. I ran to my room and sat at my desk, my favourite purple pen in hand. I took out my list book. I began writing:

*Things that have happened tonight:*

- *There was no one at the door when I heard a knock*
- *I heard people in the kitchen*
- *I heard voices in the living room*
- *The door handle shook*

The bellowing sound of a door slamming stopped me dead in my tracks. My pen dropped to the ground as I took in a sharp breath. You're just being silly, I tried to reassure myself. It's probably just one of the neighbours.

As I was creeping to the door of my room I saw my reflection in my small wall mirror. A completely different person stared into my eyes. It was still me, but my eyes were blue and my hair was blonde. I'm normally hazel and brunette. I knew it was me because of the freckle in the middle of my cheek. I rubbed my eyes and the reflection disappeared. Just the same old me.

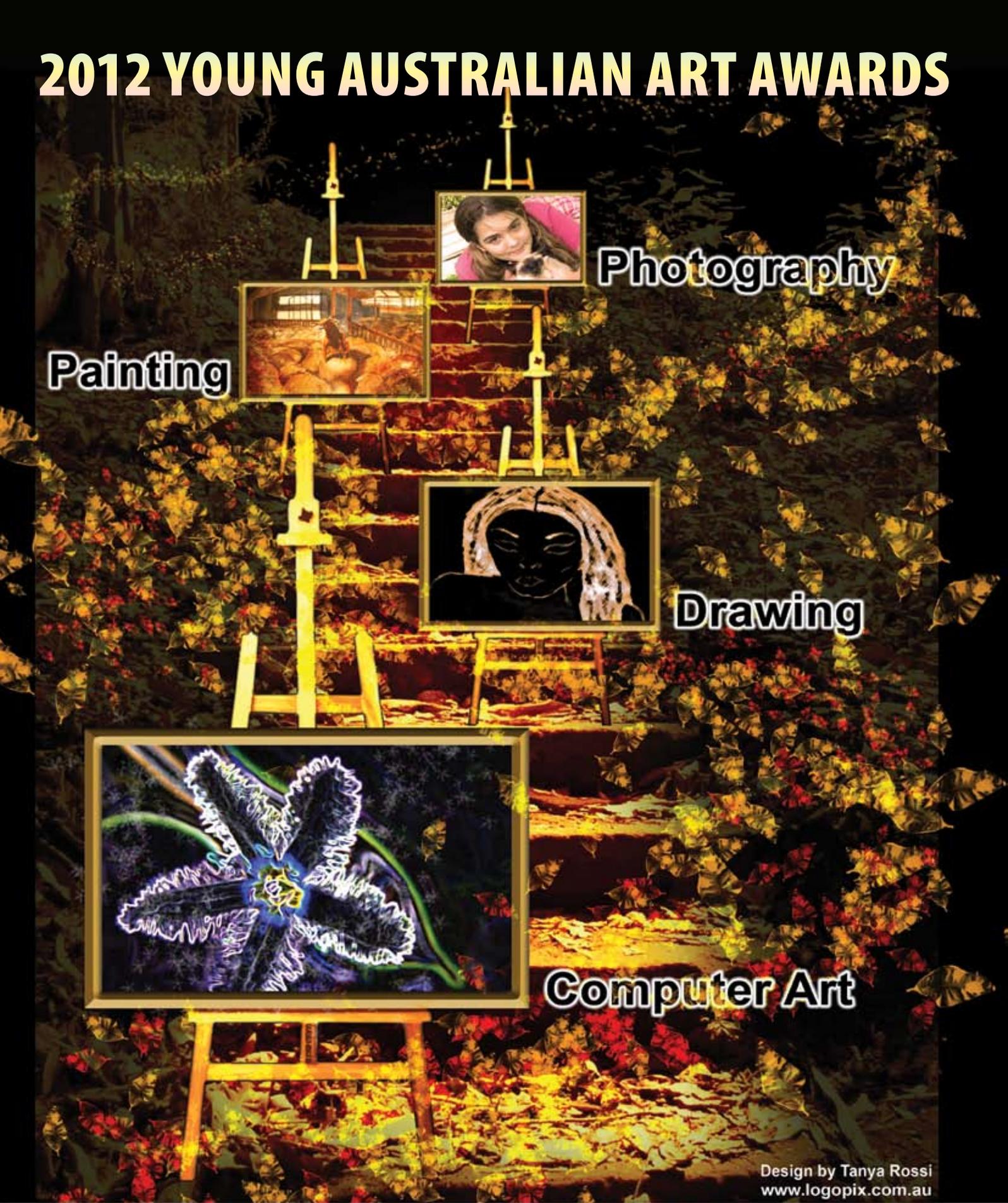
"Mehehehehe", an elderly cackle surrounded me. Voices came from the kitchen. Voices came from the living room. The door handle shook. Last of all, a loud, long, slow knock, shaking the whole floor, made me stare at the front door. I couldn't move. My bottom lip quivered. What was going on? Elisa made me watch a movie where very similar things happened, but it was in black and white. The knock sounded once again. The door opened. I screamed...

By **Jessica Swan**

Year 7, Ormeau State School  
PIMPAMA – QLD.



# 2012 YOUNG AUSTRALIAN ART AWARDS



Painting

Photography

Drawing

Computer Art

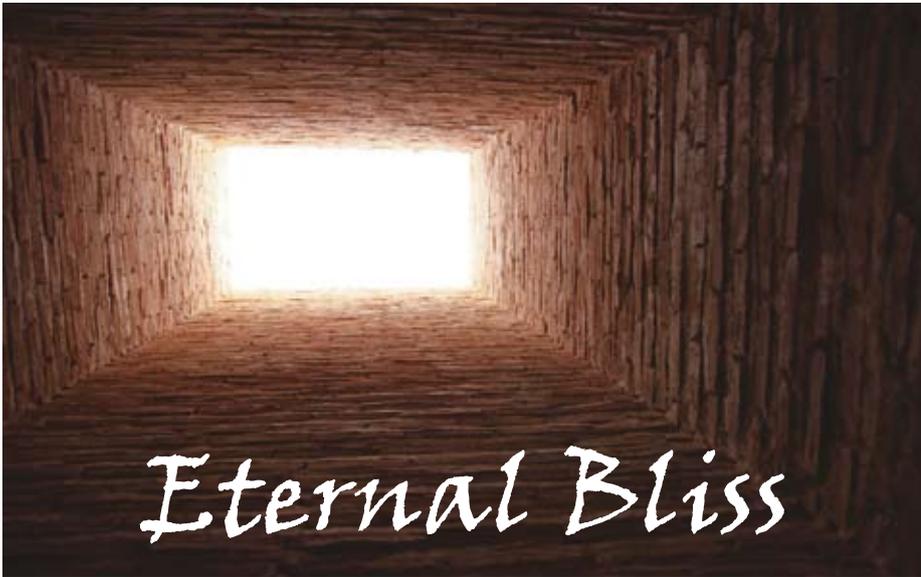
Design by Tanya Rossi  
[www.logopix.com.au](http://www.logopix.com.au)

[www.YoungAtArt.com.au](http://www.YoungAtArt.com.au)

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.YoungAtArt.com.au](http://www.YoungAtArt.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.



## Eternal Bliss

**T**HE higher I climb, the more I keep wishing that I was far away; in another place, in another time. My breathing is slow and heavy, thick with the soot that lines my throat. A perpetual light shines overhead, close enough for me to see yet too far for me to feel the warmth of the sun. I see a small bird sitting on the edge of the chimney top. I can hear it quite clearly. It hums a harmonious song of woe. It beckons for me to come and follow but I am trapped. The ash that lines the chimney wall eats away at my face. My arm moves to a lifeless rhythm, nothing like the bird's sinuous melody. I move the brush lamely, up and down; a broken and rigid motion. My heart aches, it aches with the desire to be out in the open, in the meadow, drinking dew off the crisp, morning leaves.

Down below is a bottomless pit; I see nought but darkness and then a spark. The faint smell of smoke rises. I slowly begin my ascent.

My mind wanders to a time in the past. I remember a mother's kiss, a father's laugh, and an angel caressing me and telling me I was where I belonged, a place where the whole world seemed to come alive as though it was possessed by some mystical being. We would laugh and sing: songs of joy, songs of sorrow. But here, the sun hides behind dull, dense clouds. The church bell rarely rings, before we force ourselves together, confined and restrained. Here, all eyes are cold and all hearts are hollow. Silence is our only companion, cloaking us with her icy veil of desolation. The walls of the church bear down on us like oppressive beings. We cannot reach and are forever struggling to repair the severed

union between ourselves and our Creator. Punishment is doted on, forgiveness despised.

A drop of sweat slithers down my face before shooting into the glowing abyss. The flame grows stronger and draws nearer. I continue my ascent.

As I climb I look upwards to the heavens once again. I see two birds now, singing to each other. If I could sing, I would sing to the heavens and plead for salvation. Here, singing is forbidden, we learn that the places we travel to in our dreams are places created by a demon that eats away at our very souls. Every day, I feel my spirit growing weaker and weaker. In another time, my spirit used to be free and my soul, bursting with life! My father used to tell me about a place, where birds sing all night and all day, where the flowers dance, the pixies play and where we're free to be whoever we want to be and do whatever we want to do! He and my mother are happy there, I'm sure of it! My father called this place Heaven and told me, "Death is the only impediment son". But what is Death exactly? I'm sure it is a friend, a being whose sole purpose is to collect the tortured souls and take them to a paradise.

I can hear the Master barking at me from somewhere below, he wants me to hasten but I cannot, my arms are sore and I can barely breathe. I hear a loud, deafening thump and look down gravely. Another blazing log sits on top of the already burning one below. Now two great giant flames begin crawling higher, licking the walls of the chimney. They climb and then recede; a fluid motion leaving black, blood-

like stains on the burnt bricks. My whole body begins to heat up. I take a moment to regain my breath before looking up again. I can see the birds still perched on top but now they have stopped singing. I hold on to the edge of the chimney wall and begin to climb higher up the flue.

As I move the brush along the walls of the flue, a film of ash escapes the bristles and begins a graceful dance in front of my nose. I watch as it twirls around following the pattern of my quick breaths. I blow one more time but the ash scrambles desperately into my mouth seeking refuge in my throat, sending me into a vigorous spasm of violent coughs. My insides shake robustly but my body stays still. With my knees a few centimetres from my chin and my shoulders wedged between the narrow walls of the flue, I try to shuffle around, hoping to cease the numbness in my leg. No such luck. I shuffle for a little longer before resigning myself to the pitiful state of stillness.

The walls of the flue seem to close in on me, and my breathing begins to accelerate. I look below and see that the flames have risen considerably; I look up and still see the birds nestled together, oblivious to the pair of desperate eyes looking up longingly. I cannot climb higher, I simply cannot. My hands are sweaty, my ears and my face are burning. My chest heaves slightly but I feel suffocated. I cough and my insides throb, sending sharp daggers of pain through my body, it is as though my lungs are sobbing, pressing against my ribs, wanting to get out.

The end is near, I can feel it. My physical being is becoming weaker yet my spirit seems to be getting stronger. My head begins to palpitate and my eyes become blurry. Dizziness overcomes me as I strain to steal a glimpse at the heavens above. The birds have begun their melody again and have started to take flight. I can hear them calling me, calling my name. "Percy, you're nearly home". I smile and surrender myself.

Death has finally reached me. I feel no pain nor do I feel sorrow, all I feel is the hope for eternal bliss with my Father.

By **Sasha Borges**  
Year 12, Cerdon College  
MERRYLANDS – NSW  
Teacher: Mrs Agius

# Time Is Of The Essence

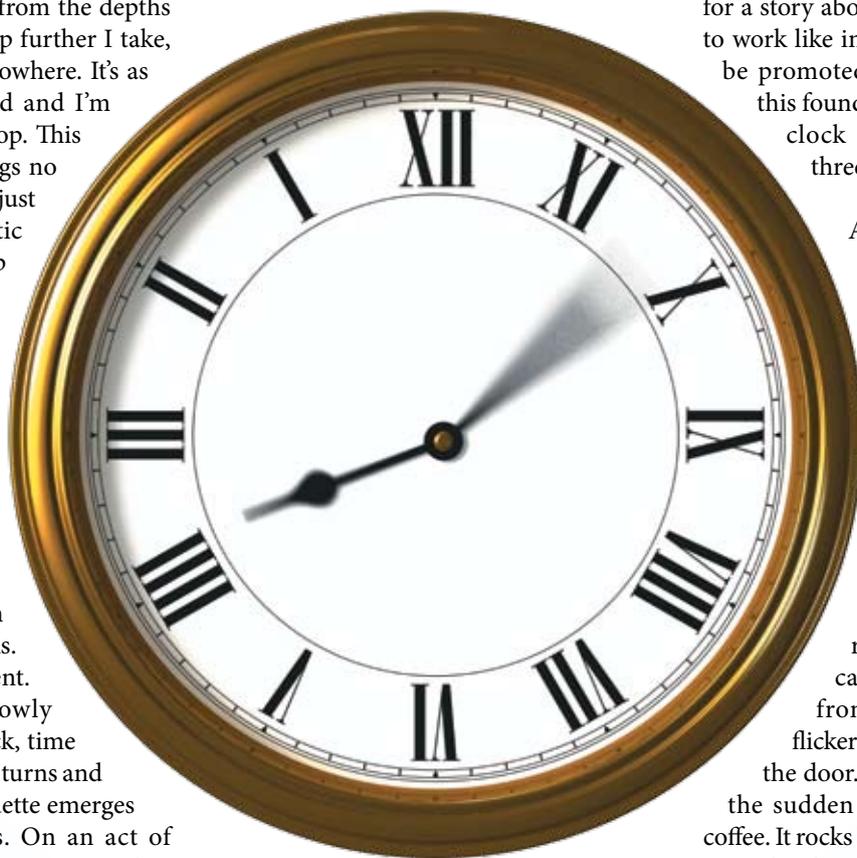
**H**uff, \*Beat\*, Huff. My lungs and heart are singing for relief as they strain against the cold wind and icy flakes. 'I must keep running; I can't stop... for if I do, I'll die...' Memory glazed, and head spinning. Why am I doing this? ... Why?

I turn the corner swiftly and listen for my feet padding along the wet stone. It's a vicious night and the sea breeze is whistling amongst the trees. A light shower of velvet snow has covered the city giving it a graceful glow from the depths of the night sky. Each step further I take, I feel as if I am getting nowhere. It's as though time has stopped and I'm running in an endless loop. This place is familiar but brings no memories. Perhaps this is just a dream or a really realistic nightmare. I take in a deep breath but break into a coughing fit, splattering blood and colouring the snow murky. Frost gives no sympathy and eats you inside out blood cell by blood cell until you can't move or resist what's next to come.

I stumble from the sudden fit and stop in my tracks. Everything has gone silent. 'Tick... Tick... Tick'. Slowly approaching I hear a clock, time is flowing again. My head turns and I watch in shock, a silhouette emerges from the deep shadows. On an act of impulse I suddenly start sprinting but everything is getting darker, it's as though I don't really exist. How much longer will I last, my breaths are getting slower and yet I still must run... Ignore the desire to stop, for something is after me!

As I collapse to the ground, my thoughts sing to me in a song of defeat. A tear forms in my eye followed by another until my sight has been vanquished into sorrow. A silhouette approaches and I hear the clockworks of a pocket watch being rewind. I try to yell with a distinctive effort, but as I open my mouth I gasp for my final breath. My cold heart lay restlessly and my eyes are strained open looking into the distance of, let's say reality.

'Ahh, what is this...' Images flash before my mind, vicious spectacles into my subconsciousness.. They are all blurred yet seem to impose a message. 'Something's not right... Why am I seeing this!' My mind burns and throbs, each merciless second I regret what's coming... \*Beat\*... Light... \*Beat\*... I need light! \*Beat\* My heart beats as if it's sitting on hot coals. 'What's wrong with me?...' Words whisper... 'Time'.. from the nothingness... 'Death'.. over.. 'Beating'... and over. 'Where am I?...' Tick... 'Who am I?'



'Wake up!'

'What was that?' My mind freezes over. I heard something.

'Wake up you fool!... Your life clock is ticking.'

'Tick, tick, tick.' Clockworks churn. 'Life clock? What could it mean?'

\*Beat\* 'You' \*Beat\* 'Don't' \*Beat\* 'have much longer.'

'What do you m...'. Suddenly my eyes blink and I gasp for air. I focus and try and remember where I am. Tilting my head up

I see my office chair on its side. I must have had a fall and hit my head against the desk, there's no other reason for my thoughts or dreams. I gather myself up and sit promptly on my office chair. My morning coffee awaits, how nice of the staff. I take a sip but it's icy cold, it seems as though it's been sitting there a long time. 'How long have I been passed out?' I click the mouse of my computer and awaken it to find all my articles exactly how they were. 'That's right; I was working on a story for the local newspaper, I wanted the large commission for a story about human organs adapting to work like inanimate objects. I want to be promoted to the top Journalist in this foundation.' I look up at the wall clock and both hands point to three o'clock.

A beeping sound is chirping from the crevices of my desk cupboard, I open the door and find I have a fresh fax. Picking up the fax, at first it seems blank but then I flip it around and read writing inscribed on the edges. It reads, 'Look Up'. 'This has to be a joke?' I look back up at the clock and suddenly it shatters, raining glass onto the clean carpet. I jump out of my desk from fright. The lights start flickering and I back away towards the door. The office chair rolls from the sudden jolt and knocks the cold coffee. It rocks back and forth and as I grab onto the door handle it stubbornly falls and covers the desk in coffee. 'The door, it's locked?' Someone somehow must have locked it from the outside. I start to panic. A sweat bead forms above my eyebrow and dribbles down my nose.

The coffee is making its way down the grooves of the pine desk getting closer to the power network. The lights are dimming in and out, getting more vigorous; surely they can't fail me now. Feeling around in my pocket I find a note, I read it out loud: 'Time doesn't wait'. As liquid drips and penetrates the power network, the computer shuts down to a sudden halt. I shut my eyes and open them again to see an object approaching. Every time the

lights go dark or I can't see, it gets closer. The ticking, its starting again. I grab the door once more and scream in plea. Every second the ticking gets louder. I feel around my area, but there's nothing to grab. Suddenly the room blacks out. I hold my breath and it goes quiet. My heart starts thumping again, like stainless steel being belted across my chest, when suddenly I feel a hand on my shoulder. It whispers 'Quickly'. I scream and force the door open slamming it behind me.

I now find myself in an open lit corridor and when I turn around, the door had disappeared. 'This is strange, what's going on?' I start walking up the corridor and listen to my footsteps echoing along the tiling. This seems to go on forever. I turn the corner and find a dead end. Taking a closer look I am stunned to find writing on the wall. It's written in fresh blood, slowly oozing down the wall. It says 'Kill me before I kill you.' My eyes widen with disbelief. I step backwards. 'This can't be real, what could possibly be trying to kill me when it's not real!'

I turn around and sprint the opposite way. Walls either side of me are covered in drawings of clocks. I clench onto my ears, 'No more!' I plead. I see a light ahead, a bright light. With any sign of hope emerges a sign of doubt. I swing my head back and notice a silhouette following me yet again. 'You're not real!' I dash through the light.

This place is completely blank. There is nothing. I rub my eyes and look forward. I see my reflection staring right back at me. I put my hand on the mirror and the image does the same. But, something is different in the reflection to what is actually true. I step back and towards the side. Behind my reflection is a wall clock, whereas when I turn around, there is nothing. I blink in amazement. It's the same clock from the office, glass gone. But its hands are pointing at two o'clock. 'Ouch!' My heart is burning more than ever. I look back up at my reflection but, it's crying? It has a mind of its own. Tick. What's... Happening? Tick. The clock is ticking! But... It's going backwards? Tick. I feel for my pulse. Tick. It's beating at the same rate as the clock is ticking. Tick. How? My reflection, what's it doing. Tick.

My reflection reaches for its pocket and pulls out a pocket watch, with waves across the glass. It's also going backwards. Wait... I think I understand... My heart is that life clock... As it beats or ticks I get closer to dying, every beat it drums I can't reverse the clockworks, it's in my body! You've been following me, my conscious. Lurking in the shadows; speeding the death rate up. I am your ticking toy. I know what I have to do; I have to stop you before you take me or another person in another endless loop! An evil smirk arises from the reflection's face, not so emotionless now. I don't have long, two minutes at most. I

slowly walk away. That reflection must be broken. I turn around and charge at the mirror, before pouncing and exerting all my weight on it. Tipping back and forth the mirror loses balance and fully topples over, breaking into many pieces. I come crashing down to the ground.

This is it, I have to kill myself as well whether how real or dreamlike this is. I scramble for the largest glass shard and hold it to my chest. My breaths start slowing down and I get dreary. Now! I pull back the glass and it penetrates into my body. Right into the heart. My body falls backwards and my eyes turn glassy.

'Elizabeth... Elizabeth! Doctor, she's breathing!' I gasp and my eyes are strained open. 'After three months you're still alive! Your pulse was getting so weak; you've been in a coma.'

'What, How did this happen?'

'You fell and hit your head on the desk at work.'

Time's been ticking, my time was of the essence.

*By Jessica Carpenter*

*Year 11, Kelmscott Senior High School  
Kelmscott – WA*

*Teacher: Mrs Summers*

# One



Solo like a tree when all his friends have turned into houses  
Alone like a dog up for adoption that no-one wants  
Single like a horse at the bottom of the pecking order

Together a duet singing in harmony  
Pair working on a project adding details  
Two people enjoying each other's company

Triplets – three people born at once  
Triple times around the oval  
Three things are stronger than one

Many feet become a fun run  
Lots of smiles make you happy too  
Heaps of friends supporting you  
Like God protects us  
Towns joined together form nations  
Different notes make a song  
And it all starts with one.

*By Chloe Sansom*

*Year 5, Oxley Christian College  
CHIRNSIDE PARK – VIC.*

*Teacher: Sharon Sandison*

# A Friendship Forged by Flames



**H**AVE you ever been hunted, searched for, like an animal? Have you ever been turned against, hated and despised, by millions of people? I have.

They came with burning torches, knives, and pitchforks. The perfect image of an angry mob. And, worst of all, they were after us. It was we whom they were referring to, as they chanted bloody songs, talked of stabbing and murder, stealing and raiding. It was we whom they screamed about: "Aristos! Filthy, gross aristos!"

And they came. They attacked, took everything, chased us through the house – a wall was on fire, it crashed down as we ran, flames and sparks leapt, I screamed, fell over a rock. They didn't see me. I was covered by the darkness. But I was there.

The children. I had played with them in the village once, when I was younger. Now, they played around our furniture, which their parents had dragged out onto the lawn. One of them (a boy: Pierre), was hiding behind the chair that my mother had sat in after dinner every evening. Another woman sat in it now. A woman of hollow cheeks, dirty clothing, laughing, drinking my father's wine, cheering as another wall collapsed. I was even further away now. Almost gone. My family's home was a distant, burning flame on the horizon.

Have you ever been downtrodden, squashed like a bug, and treated like even less? Have you ever had nothing to eat but grass? No bread, no meat, no cheese, not a crumb?

What would you do if you had to watch your brother die of hunger, not being able to do a thing about it? Would you have thought that maybe it was good for him to die when he did, instead of having to suffer later? I did.

It was time for a new era, a new day. It was time for freedom. Liberté, égalité, fraternité. It was time, we knew it. It was time for us to have a go: equal rights. The aristos had taken everything from us. Everything we ever had, and we were sick of it. So sick. So tired.

We ran, the whole village, up the hill, on fire, fuelled by the happenings in Paris, and so excited. The Bastille had fallen. The time for the people, it was now, we were in it, we were ready. They would die today, we knew. They would die, the reign would end. It would be a new day. I couldn't wait, we charged into it.

Through the house, we ran. We chased the family, ate their food. My first bread for a month at least. My first meat for three. There were some foods I had never eaten in my life. And there was so much of it! Someone had lit a fire, and they were dragging furniture out to watch the house go down. They said the aristocrats had escaped. Well. May they die on their journey.

I followed them outside, and took a seat on a chez Lange armchair, helped myself to a little wine, and watched the show.

I may have felt a pang of remorse at some point. This family – their children, had

lived by my town since before I was born. But the fire of revolution was burning in my veins, and it burned the remorse to the ground.

But then – then, I turned my head a little bit, arching it away from the flames, and saw a face. Scared and white, it stared back at me and the house, with tears running down her cheeks and glistening in the firelight. Her eyes were wide, her mouth was open. Her dress was white, tattered and smeared with dirt. I knew who she was: she was the daughter of the lord, who owned the land on which our village had been built. She was a resident of the chateaux that we were burning down. I knew she deserved to die. And yet I couldn't help but see the terror in her eyes. Surely what she had done to us wasn't any worse than what we had done to her? But then again, why spread more sadness?

I gave up and tried to simply ignore her, but I couldn't stop turning my head again and again to watch her.

As I watched the grand old house burn away, I thought. I thought of the future, I thought of the past. I even let the present cross my mind a few times. But mostly it was the future: tomorrow, next year, ten years' time... could the world really change? Would the world really change? I sure hoped so. It had once seemed impossible. Now it was within our grasp. So who knew where it would end up later?

Not too far behind me, several men and a woman were standing on an antique coffee

table, positioned harshly in the grass. Firelight glinted off of the polished wood, reflecting on a collection of half-empty wineglasses that stood there, by the feet of the people. "Hey!" one of them grunted. "Who's that?!" He was pointing into the distance, where I saw the face that I had seen earlier. It ducked over the top of the hill. "A little aristo", said the woman. Her voice was unpleasant, too high pitched, like a baby bird screeching for its mother. "Let's get her!"

She leaped off the table and began running through the grass and down towards the pastures. The men followed suit, and some of the other villagers joined the chase too. They ran through the fields, darting between sunflowers and corn, faster and faster, the night sky watching from above, the moon lighting their path. I knew it was awful, but... but I didn't really want them to catch her. It was bad enough for her as it is. We had taught their family a lesson for now, and she would probably die soon anyway if she tried to run away. Why make it sooner? And yet, I joined the chase too, but this time, without any intention of hurting the girl. I just wanted to... to see what had happened. That's what I told myself, at least.

Ahead of me, in a field of yellow sunflowers, I saw them catch her. They seized her roughly, and I watched her fall to the ground. As I grew nearer, their voices began to carry over to me. "Eh, missy, what're we gonna do with you now?"

I don't think she responded. I know that I, at least, wouldn't have said a word.

One of them picked her up, and she stood, shivering, on her feet.

I was nearing the group now.

She was standing still, stock still, not moving an inch.

They had her surrounded, a proper gang of thugs. What would they do to her? They were discussing it.

I heard them. "Hang her!"

"Shoot her!"

"Flay her!"

"Chop off her head! Off with her head!"

Her skin was pallid and pale. Her eyes were sharp with shock.

I knew everything I was thinking was wrong, but... but I couldn't help feeling sorry for her. I mean, I hated her. Or at least, her family. I certainly hated them. But this girl, about the same age as me... she, herself, had not done one thing wrong.

Before I knew what I was doing, I found myself pushing through the group, right to the centre, where I shoved myself in front of her.

"Oi!" I did my best to sound strong and sure of myself, but my voice quivered a little bit. "What're you doing to my cousin?! She's no aristo! What'd she ever do to you?! Anyway, I'm pretty sure the one you're looking for went over there. Idiots." I pointed in the opposite direction.

"She's wearing aristo clothing! Why's she doing that?!"

"Same reason you're drinking their wine!"

To my utter surprise, they nodded. Murmured swear words. Began to walk away. Slowly. Slowly but surely. I watched them go, wondering what I had done. All aristos should be killed, their family names and blood wiped out for good. But here I was, standing in a field with one right behind me.

I turned around to face her, and saw that her eyes were still wide with fear.

I took her by the shoulders, and stared into her eyes. "Be glad that I saved your life", I said, "and make it count. What I did back then shouldn't have been done. I hope you appreciate it. Move to England, start a new life.

I'm so sorry. Good luck, my friend."

With that, I let go of her shoulders, and watched her walk away.

I wondered if she would listen to my warning.

I hoped I had done the right thing.

I couldn't stop thinking about how I had called her my friend.

In a strange sort of way, she almost was.

*By Beth Downing  
Year 9, Campbell High School  
CAMPBELL – ACT  
Teacher: Ms Johnston*

# THE CLAW

The moon is a claw,  
reaching out to snare  
the unsuspecting in its vice.

Dark and shrouded  
it looks down upon us  
with the mystery of the ages.

Biding its time perhaps,  
encased in its glass,  
Cold and forgotten.



But then, black like coal  
its gale rages –  
storm clouds gather, lightning flashes.

The moon is a claw,  
reaching out to snare

*By Elizabeth Bellchambers  
Year 10, Eynesbury Senior College  
ADELAIDE – SA  
Teacher: Shelda Rathman*

# The Tree

I am the tree,  
I stand guard,  
I am resolute,  
I move only for the passing of the breeze.  
I feed,  
I nurture,  
I shelter,  
I am home to Mother Nature's children.  
I wave to those who pass,  
I breathe, like you,  
I dig my toes into the earth,  
I watch in silence,  
The passing of time and seasons.  
I have seen black man,  
I have seen white man,  
I have seen horse and cart,  
I have seen machine,  
I have seen war,  
I have seen Peace,  
When my time comes, I return to the earth from which I once came.  
I am the tree.  
I am resolute.

By **Mikaela Ewington**

Age 14, MacKillop Catholic College, HOBART – TAS.

# The Majestic Tree

As I walk past the majestic tree  
The leaves are swaying gracefully in the wind.  
I pluck a leaf with tender care  
The leaves are swaying gracefully in the wind.  
I hold the leaf in the warmth of my palm  
The leaves are swaying gracefully in the wind.  
I inspected the leaf with genuine awe  
The leaves are swaying gracefully in the wind.  
I observe its tiny veins and its luscious colour  
The leaves are swaying gracefully in the wind.  
The leaf is light-weighted, small and round  
The leaves are swaying gracefully in the wind.  
I look at it, oversee its beauty, and know that it is part of God's creation  
The leaves are swaying gracefully in the wind.  
Then one day, when all was dark, the wind ceased to blow  
The leaves are still and quiet.  
The tree fell silent, along with its vibrancy and happiness  
The leaves are still and quiet.  
The leaves felt a great deal of sadness and regret  
The leaves are still and quiet.  
I long for the wind to once again sift through the majestic tree  
But I realise, with great sadness that the leaves will never again sway gracefully in the wind.

By **Zac Ryke**

Year 9, Saint Michael's College, HENLEY BEACH – SA

# WARLOCK

**S**OLON raised his gnarled oak staff above his head. Thirteen-year-old Sam shadowed his grandfather, eyes unblinking as he scrutinised the phenomenon before him.

The staff whirled in the air, and then suddenly plummeted, establishing itself firmly in the heavy, cracked clay.

“Mind you, Sam”, Solon said gruffly, “maintaining solid contact with Mother Earth is most important. Everything else is just for show. People like to see something happen, something flashy so they think they know what’s going on. But you don’t actually need the stick, understand?”

Sam studied his own two bare feet, and nodded. He gazed up into Solon’s face. The radiance of the setting sun basked the old man’s greying strands in a warm red glow, and for a moment, Sam was reminded of an old painting above the mantelpiece: a handsome young warlock, proud and defiant with a shock of red hair, much like Sam’s own. Solon had always said their red hair was the symbol of fire raging within them, the fire that gave them strength, the fire they needed to tame.

“You’ve got to feel the fire inside you”, Solon instructed. “Feel it in the earth, and let it run, up your feet, your legs, through your entire body. If you feel a warm, tingling sensation at any time, even on your hands – you know you’ve found the perfect balance. The warmer your hands, the closer the fire.”

Sam nodded again, and Solon beckoned to him. He held out his staff, and a flame flickered into existence above its ancient tip. Entranced, Sam watched it dance. He tried to note the many shades of scarlet and gold, but soon lost count.

“Close your eyes now”, Solon said. He rested a reassuring hand on his grandson’s shoulder. “Relax. Take hold. Not too hard, that’s right.” He placed the staff into Sam’s small hands. His arms buckled at the sudden weight, but he regained his balance through sheer determination.

Solon smiled. “Good. Now empty your mind. Think of nothing but the fire.”

Sam concentrated. He thought until every nerve in his brain was straining, every muscle in his body tense with effort. He imagined torrents of fire coursing through his body. But nothing happened. The sun had vanished under the horizon, and his hands remained as cold as ever. When he opened his eyes, no flame leapt from the tip of the staff.

“Don’t be disheartened, Sam”, Solon soothed. “We’ll try again next time. There’s always a warlock in this family, and sometimes, just sometimes, the fire has been known to appear only when all seems lost and it is needed the most. You could almost say that the fire has a life of its own, if you ask me.” He ruffled Sam’s hair affectionately as he always did, and smiled as he led his grandson towards the road home, but Sam could see his smile was forced.

They never tried again.

One day later, Solon received an urgent plea from the king to save a nearby village from a marauding dragon. Leaving thousands dead in its wake, nothing short of a warlock’s magic could stop it. During the many days Solon was absent, Sam would often stare down the road in front of his house. His gaze was cold and distant.

When Solon finally did return, although victorious, the fire blazing within him had gone out. They buried him in the family grave for warlocks where his father and brother lay.

Sam took Solon’s staff and practised at sunset every day, trying to find the balance his grandfather had shown him. Several times, he thought he saw smouldering embers where his hands tightly gripped the staff. But Sam knew this was false hope. A warlock didn’t need a stick to make magic.

Sam visited his grandfather’s grave a month after his death. The setting sun seemed somewhat dim, filling the grave with a cold, rosy glow. Sam gently rested the gnarled oak staff on Solon’s grave.

“Hail, Grandpa”, said Sam. He opened his mouth as if with something further to say, then snapped it shut again. He inspected his bare feet, planted firmly on the red clay ground. When he finally looked up again, his eyes were filled with tears.

“I’m so sorry I couldn’t do it, Grandpa. You’ve always been patient and compassionate with my shortcomings, but I’ve let you down. I’m so sorry – our proud line of warlocks ends with me.” His voice broke. He wept as much for his failure as for his grandfather’s death.

When his tears were exhausted, Sam made his way back to his house. The disappearing sun bathed his crimson hair with light, and he once again thought of the painting of the young warlock on the mantelpiece. Then the sun dipped below the horizon, and a flame flickered into existence besides him. A warm gust picked up and ruffled through his hair in a manner he knew all too well.

“Grandpa?” Sam whispered. He felt foolish, but Solon’s presence alongside him was unmistakable. He paused, longing to turn, but not wanting to discover himself alone.

The flame elongated, and started to dance with a life of its own, forming long tendrils that reached out to brush against his right hand. Sam yelped, and snatched his hand away from the blaze, but paused as he realised the flames did not burn him.

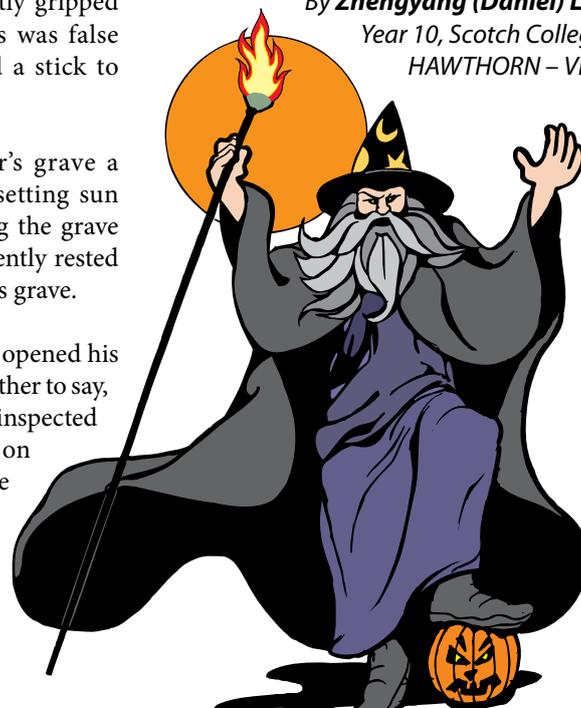
Then, a tingle of warmth enveloped his hand. It rapidly spread through his fingers and up his forearm.

Sam didn’t dare breathe. Slowly, he looked at his hand, then at his feet. They were firmly fixed.

Inhaling deeply, he clicked his fingers.

A ball of flame leapt to life above his hand.

By **Zhengyang (Daniel) Liu**  
Year 10, Scotch College  
HAWTHORN – VIC.



# ❖ Shal and Jin ❖

## Chapter 1 – Guess Who

POP! Out of the teleporter came Shal and Jin.

Shal had long blonde hair that went down to her knees. She wore a warrior's belt. All around it were throwing knives and she wore a sword with a diamond blade. The handle was made of pure gold.

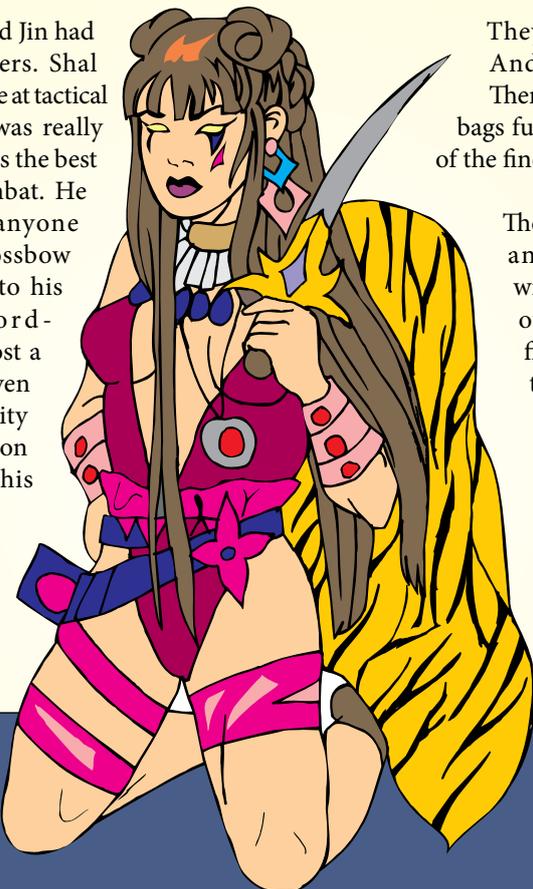
Shal's armour was made of zang – the best and lightest resisting mineral in the entire world.

Jin had mildly long grey hair. Like Shal, his armour was made of zang. He had two swords made of melted and moulded unicorn horn and the handle was made of platinum.

Jin had a shield on his back which was also made of zang. On his belt was a crossbow and on the side of his left leg was a big pouch full of crossbow bolts made from the wood of a Snap Tree.

The head of the bolts were made of milfane – an explosive mineral only found in the three realms: Zylia, the Mysteries and Amethyst.

Both Shal and Jin had special powers. Shal was incredible at tactical moves and was really smart. Jin was the best at close combat. He could kill anyone with his crossbow and thanks to his quick sword-play never lost a battle. Jin even had the ability to block a x-lon arrow with his shield.



'C'mon, let's go save 'em,' said Jin, 'Wait, don't you think we should ask for directions to the village first?'

Jin considered this for a moment.

'Well, we should really go steal some gold and gems from the mine. After all, we spent all the money on the ride!'

'Good point,' said Shal.

## Chapter 2 – Battle Field

When they got to the mine, Shal and Jin hid behind a rock.

'Load my crossbow with sleep arrows Shal,' Jin whispered.

After loading, Jin expertly pulled back the trigger and aimed.

'Here goes nothing,' said Jin.

He shot the three guards with precision and all of them fell to the ground fast asleep. Shal and Jin dragged them behind a rock and changed into the guard's clothes.

'OK,' said Shal, 'We're ready to go.'

They crept into the mine. And each drew a breath. There were bags full of zang, bags full of gold and even bags of the finest cut diamonds!

They ran over to the bags and filled their purses with gold until they were overflowing, then they filled their pockets with the finely cut diamonds.

Suddenly, a guard interrupted them!

'Hey! What are you doing?' said the voice from the entrance.

Fast as lightning, and with his purse overloaded with precious

gems and gold, Jin shot his crossbow and hit the guard.

Suddenly there were more. Twenty more! Jin jumped in the air drawing his sword and landed on the group of guards, slicing through them with precision. He then flipped over the heads of the remaining shocked guards, kicked one in the head and knocked him out flat.

Another two were pinned to the wall with a couple of nearby picks and the rest fell about around them, unconscious after Jin knocked their heads together in one fell swoop.

Shal threw a quiver of knives. The next round of guards swooped on them.

'Ha! You missed us!' said one.

Shal stood in a battle stance, 'Ah... no I did not!'

Glancing above, the guards realised she had hit the support beams of the mine, just when the roof caved in on them!

Shal rubbed her hands together, looked over at Jin and shrugged, 'I took my time is all.'

'Right,' said Jin, 'let's get to the village.'

'Yes...but I need to stop for a posha,' replied Shal (a posha was a drink made of special rare fruits that replenished energy).

Both warriors jumped on the winged horse that had been tethered to a post within the mine. The poor creatures had not seen natural light in years. Kindly it took them to the village and flew off, delighted it had been freed.

On the ground, Shal and Jin ran to a map board and quickly located the guide. But while they walked a sneaky pick pocket tried to steal Jin's purse.

The chase was on!

Jin climbed up onto the roof of a building, tracking the thief.

'Get back here you filthy thief!' shouted Jin.

He raised his crossbow and shot the pick pocket in the leg; he fell with a thud on the footpath.

Jin walked over slowly, bent towards the cowering thief and retrieved his purse.

'I'll take that,' he said cockily, snatching his purse from the desperate clutches of the pick pocket.

Shal sprinted over to Jin and the injured stranger.

'OK?' she gasped.

Jin nodded, glancing at the thief who was dragging himself into the shadows in a trail of blood.

'Come on,' she said, 'we really need to get to the guide.'

### **Chapter 3 – A Very Random Message**

When they finally reached their destination they saw their guide talking softly to a tall, hooded figure.

'Ok yes... tomorrow... I will take you there... be sure to bring a concealed weapon... no, no... just in case.' The guide looked around, nervous that he might be overheard.

'Hey,' shouted Shal.

The guide looked up startled, then composed himself.

'How may I be of assistance, young lady?'

'We need help. We need to know the fastest way to get to Death Locker.'

'WHAT?????????' yelled the guide.

'Yep, you heard right,' replied Shal, 'Death Locker. Can you help us or not?'

The guide glanced sideways and lowered his voice.

'OK,' he said softly, 'I can show you but it will be double the price. The road is treacherous... amongst other things.'

'It will cost you one thousand, five hundred and eighty six Ga,' said the guide with a smirk.

'Done,' said both warriors in unison.

### **Chapter 4 – The Dark Forest**

Off they went. The journey was easy but long. They walked for days and wished they had kept the winged horse to make the journey easier.

Finally they reached the edge of the Dark Forest.

'Whoa. Whoa! This is as far as I go,' said the guide. He threw magic dust in the air and disappeared to the village.

'Now why couldn't we have used THAT?,' said Jin.

'Oh well,' replied Shal, 'We're here now.'

Walking through the forest, the warriors heard a howl..

'What was THAT?' whispered Jin. 'It sounded like a wolf!'

Shal rolled her eyes. 'Stop being such a girl, Jin.'

They both looked sideways and saw a shadow emerge but it was changing. It was a man but it was growing hair... then fangs... then long, big ears...

'Werewolf!!!!!!!!!!!!!!' they both screamed.

The wolf pounced at Shal and Jin.

Jin rolled on the forest floor and knocked the wolf from underneath while slashing at it with his sword.

It didn't even hurt it.

'Wait!' warned Shal, 'a werewolf in the Dark Forest can only be killed by stabbing it in the ear!'

Jin reached for his crossbow and deftly loaded it with bolts, aimed and fired.

The bolt pierced the angry werewolf's ear. It fell writhing to the ground and slowly turned back into a human. To Shal and Jin's surprise, the wolf had been only a boy no more than 15. He had soft blonde hair and brown eyes and was wearing what can only be described as a cloth rag.

'Is he dead?' whispered Shal.

'I'll check,' said Jin.

Jin slowly walked over to the boy and checked his pulse, 'He's still alive!'

'Agghhhhhhh,' yelled Jin.

'What happened?' cried Shal.

'He bit me!'

The boy started mumbling, 'It's coming... it's coming...'

'What's coming?' asked Shal.

The boy looked frightened.

'The... the... the...'

Shal stared at him, waiting. 'Yes???? Tell us!'

'The... Fang,' the boy whispered almost inaudibly.

'That can't be true,' said Jin.

Shal looked quizzical.

'What's the Fang?' she asked.

'No,' Jin repeated, 'They passed away!'

'OK Jin... that's enough. We HAVE to get on with the journey!' said Shal.

Jin quickly wiped a tear from his cheek, 'OK...'

### **Chapter 5 – A Prisoner Named Leo**

When they finally reached their destination, Shal and Jin were met with an army of guards.

Skulking in the shadows, they both moved to another part of the entrance and scaled the wall.

'OK,' said Shal catching her breath, 'the paper says we need to get to Chambers G01 and G03.'

They checked but the chambers were no longer there.

'You seek the blonde boy and brunette girl don't you?' came a voice in the shadows.

*Continued on page 30*

Continued from page 29

Shal and Jin spun around.

'Yes,' cried Jin into the darkness, 'do you know where they are?'

'Yes...' was the reply.

'Where are you and WHO are you?' asked Shal

'I am in G05,' came the voice, 'my name is Leo. Who are you?'

'Jin,' said Jin.

'Shal,' said Shal.

'Well,' said Leo, 'now that we know each other you need to know that the people you seek are prisoners in the gold palace and are waiting to be executed.'

Shal thanked him.

'By the way,' she said to Leo, 'What is the fang?'

'Fangs,' began Leo, 'are giant birds with poisonous teeth that are fatal to humans when bitten... humans like yourself but they are nearly extinct,' cackled Leo.

'Thank you,' said Shal, frightened.

Just when Shal and Jin started to thank Leo for his help, a giant bird swooped on them and threw them onto its back.

Leo laughed heartily... 'Hahahahaha hahaha!!!!'

## Chapter 6 – To The Castle

'Right,' said Shal, 'I think we really know what a fang is now.'

'Oh you THINK!' said Jin sarcastically.

Luckily, the fang was heading for the gold palace as well.

'I have to get down there,' they each whispered to themselves.

Jin put his arm around Shal and shot a rope bolt. It hit the outside of a corner tower and Jin and Shal swung silently into the prison yard.

Thud!

The place was overrun with prisons.

'Whoa,' said Shal, 'that's a LOT of prisoners.'

'You got THAT right,' replied Jin.

'Hey, you two!' yelled a man.

Jin and Shal looked at each other and then back at the man.

'Us?' replied Jin, pointing to himself and Shal.

The man nodded and gestured for them to come over.

'Break my chain,' he said when they finally reached him.

'Why?' asked Jin.

'Because if you do,' said the man, 'I will help you save Crystal and Silver.'

The warriors gasped.

'How do you know about THEM?' asked Shal.

'Because I'm a mind reading fire magician,' the man said quietly. 'My powers are useless because of these chains though.'

'Ok,' said Shal, 'If we break your chains, you have to help us.'

'Deal,' said the magician, 'and the elements will help!'

'Yep!' came a chorus of voices.

Three men sat cheerfully next to the magician, all chained together.

'We'll do it,' said Jin, 'after all, six is better than two!'

With that, Jin raised his sword and smashed the chains, freeing the magician and the elements.

## Chapter 7 – The Final Battle

Meanwhile, in the gold palace...

'Executioner!' bossed the queen, 'do you have your sharpest axe at the ready?'

'Yes my lady,' said the hooded figure.

'Are the prisoners ready?' she asked.

'Yes, my queen. The boy is already on the tablet.'

All was ready. The queen stood above her throne.

'On my count executioner. One... two...'

'Stop right there!' a voice interrupted the count..

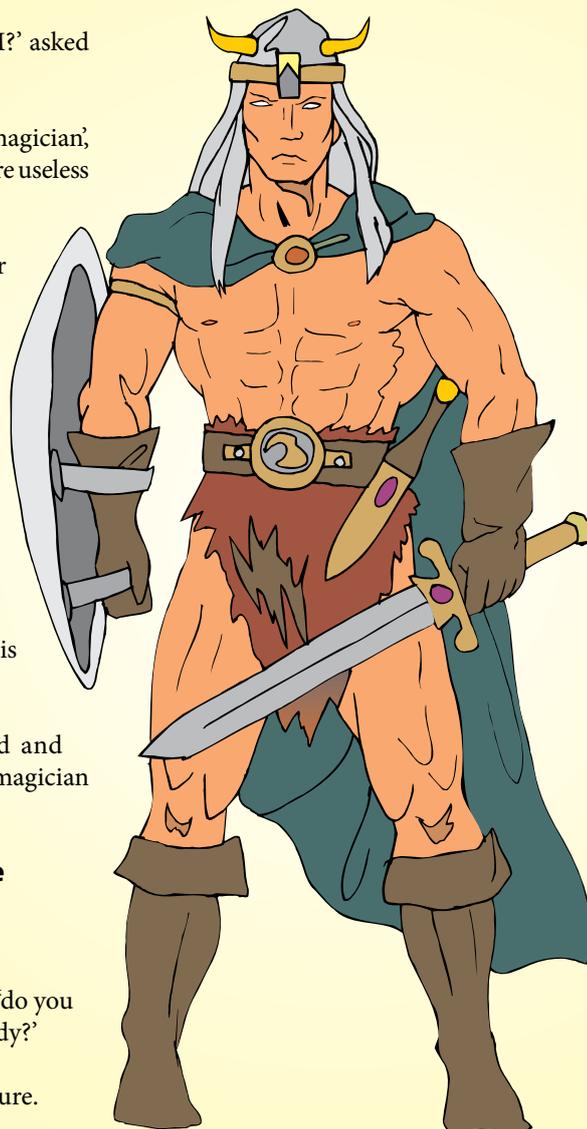
It was Jin.

'You've been taking innocent lives for too long Queen Zylia. We are here to put a stop to it!'

The Queen stared at him angrily.

Suddenly, fire balls flew at her head and everyone started screaming.

'Duck for cover!' yelled Shal.



The warriors ran over to Crystal and Silver and smashed their chains.

'Who are you?' cried Crystal, her tear stained face full of surprise.

'No time for questions', replied Jin as they manoeuvred them from the executioner's grasp and ran for the drawbridge.

Jin aimed at the bridge's ropes and fired. The bridge dropped with a huge bellow but a brute of a man who looked about 10 feet tall stopped them in their path. It looked as if there were swords stuck in his shoulders and all four of them ran across.

'Whoa, who's that?' said Jin in amazement while pulling to a halt.

"I'M THE HUMAN SHEATH AND I'M ABOUT TO KICK YOU BACK TO WHERE YOU CAME FROM", screamed the human sheath.

"Jin", Shal said nodding at the frightened figure..

Jin nodded back. Shal sprinted at the giant yelling at the top of her lungs. The human sheath swung his fist at Shal, knocking her off her feet. But all that was just a distraction for Jin to attack the giant man. Jin jumped through the air and landed with his sword through the human sheath's heart.

"Ugh... I'm defiantly never doing that again said Shal, walking over to Jin as

Crystal and Silver ran up behind them and off they were.

'Quickly', said Jin to Crystal and Silver, get into the teleporter. When you're in, think of the mysteries...'

The four adventurers momentarily emerged out of the teleporter in the mysteries.

POP!

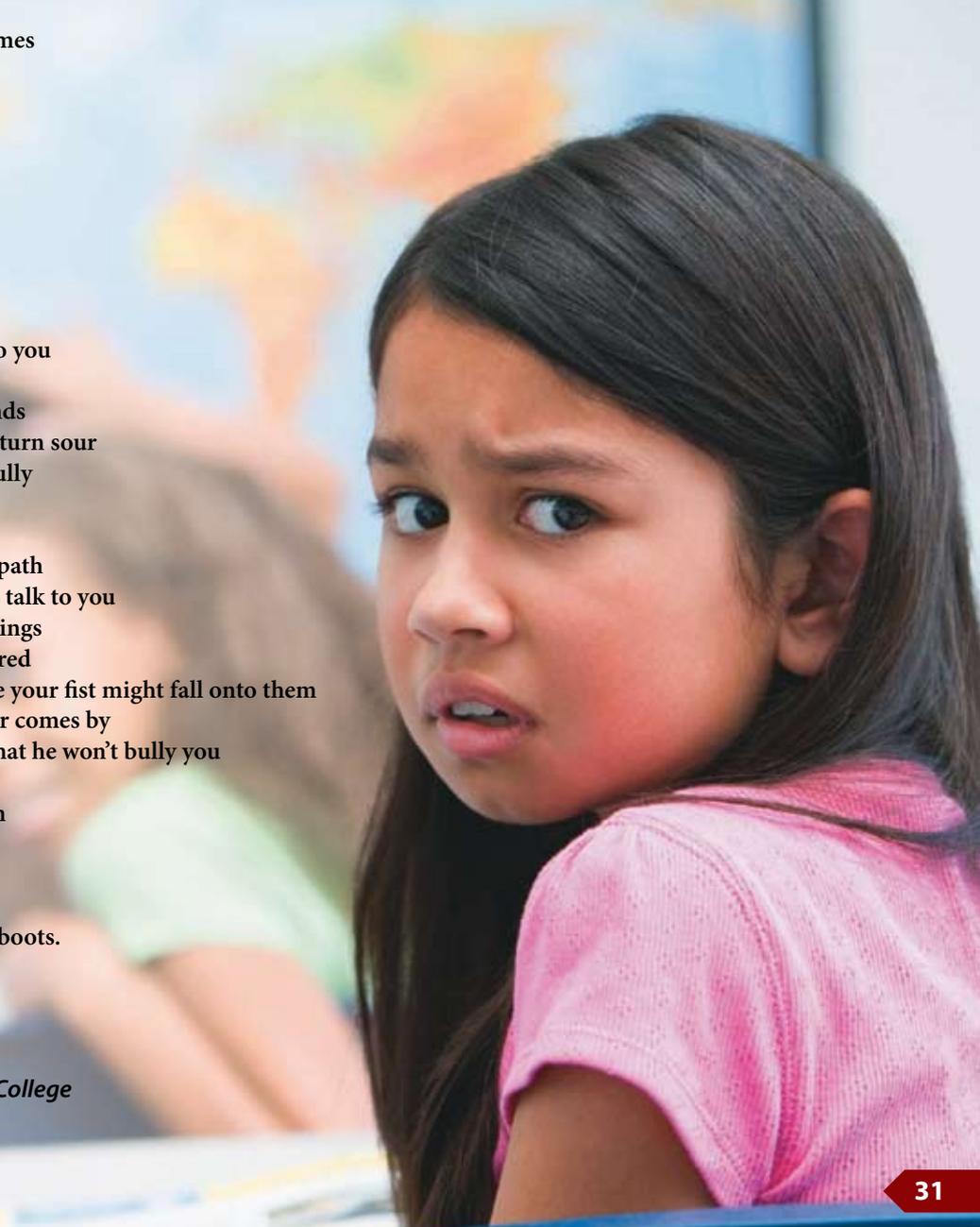
...WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?????????  
??????????????????

By **Daniel Emerton**  
Age 11, Lakeside Lutheran College  
PAKENHAM – VIC.

## Bullying Is Just Cowardice

You think you're cool when you call me names  
You may even decide to get violent  
You think I am going to hide  
You may be a lot bigger than me  
And you may have won every fight  
You may have damaged so many people  
But how on earth do you sleep at night?  
When you have terrible dreams  
Knowing that so many people  
Are running away scared from your fist  
And when somebody decides to stand up to you  
Hitting them hard is a bad thing to do  
Lots of people look up to you to make friends  
Because they are scared if they don't you'll turn sour  
I bet half of them just think that you're a bully  
Thus you have no real friends.  
Scary dreams are all you have at night  
No one likes to walk with you on the same path  
They're just scared to open their mouths to talk to you  
They won't even laugh when you do silly things  
You have everybody below you that are scared  
Obeying your every single demand because your fist might fall onto them  
But if somebody bigger, harder and tougher comes by  
You would bury your head in the sand so that he won't bully you  
You think it's funny to pick on people  
And point out anything you can to do them  
When you get bullied you will understand  
How we have always felt  
You will run you will hide  
You will shiver and try to shrink into your boots.  
There are bullies and sissies  
Which do you want to be?

By **James Tang**  
Year 6, Overnewton Anglican Community College  
KEILOR – VIC.



**A**S THE girl was suffering the consequences of Mr Holt's Detention she noticed something peculiar about his face. He kept it hidden and he didn't say much. This session gave her a lot of time to think and all she thought about was that Mr Holt looked very suspicious. By the time she was let out it was pitch dark. As she walked out the door a huge gust of wind blew her off her feet and she landed on the ground. For the few seconds she was on the ground she saw something fly past her. Not knowing whether it was real or just her mind playing games, she got up and started walking home. Her head throbbed and she felt like falling over but she needed to get home before her mother arrived back from work; her Dad should be home. As she was walking she realised how silent the street was, unusually quiet. She instantly knew something wasn't quite right.

Somebody was watching her. She froze. She turned around, but nothing was there; just the lamp post flickering in the cold night air. She continued to walk. The usual drum playing of her younger brother was in-existent and the lights of the house seemed to be dead. Starting to panic, she

knocked on the door. No answer. She slowly started to walk around to the back door when a ghastly looking creature leaped out at her, blocking her path. She all of a sudden felt sticky and was wet. The girl felt all over her body, trying to figure out the source. Then she realised; all over her clothing was blood. Though none of it seemed to be her own. She heard a faint scream coming from nowhere and she was terrified, like never before.

Her mind started raising questions. Where was her family? What was that ghastly looking creature that left blood all over her? She had no explanation for any of this and was panicking about what to do next. She turned around and saw a lady. Under the dim lighting she couldn't see much but she was staring, wide-eyed, straight at her. Her bright yellow eyes were glowing in the darkness and she was letting off a vile smell.

The girl thought to herself, she needed to get into a safe environment where nothing can hurt her, safe with her family. She was left alone. No one was there for her to hold on to. The girl turned around again and the woman had vanished. The mysterious lady

had made no noise with her entrance and even less with her exit. She just disappeared into thin air.

The best option she could do now, as it was starting to rain, was go to one of her neighbours' houses and ask to sleep there for the night. The first person that came to her mind was Mrs Dathilberry, the kindest old lady in the street. One knock and she had already rushed to the door. There was a look on her face she had never seen before. "What do you want?" she asked quickly. The girl explained what had happened and she let her slowly, cautiously, watching her every step.

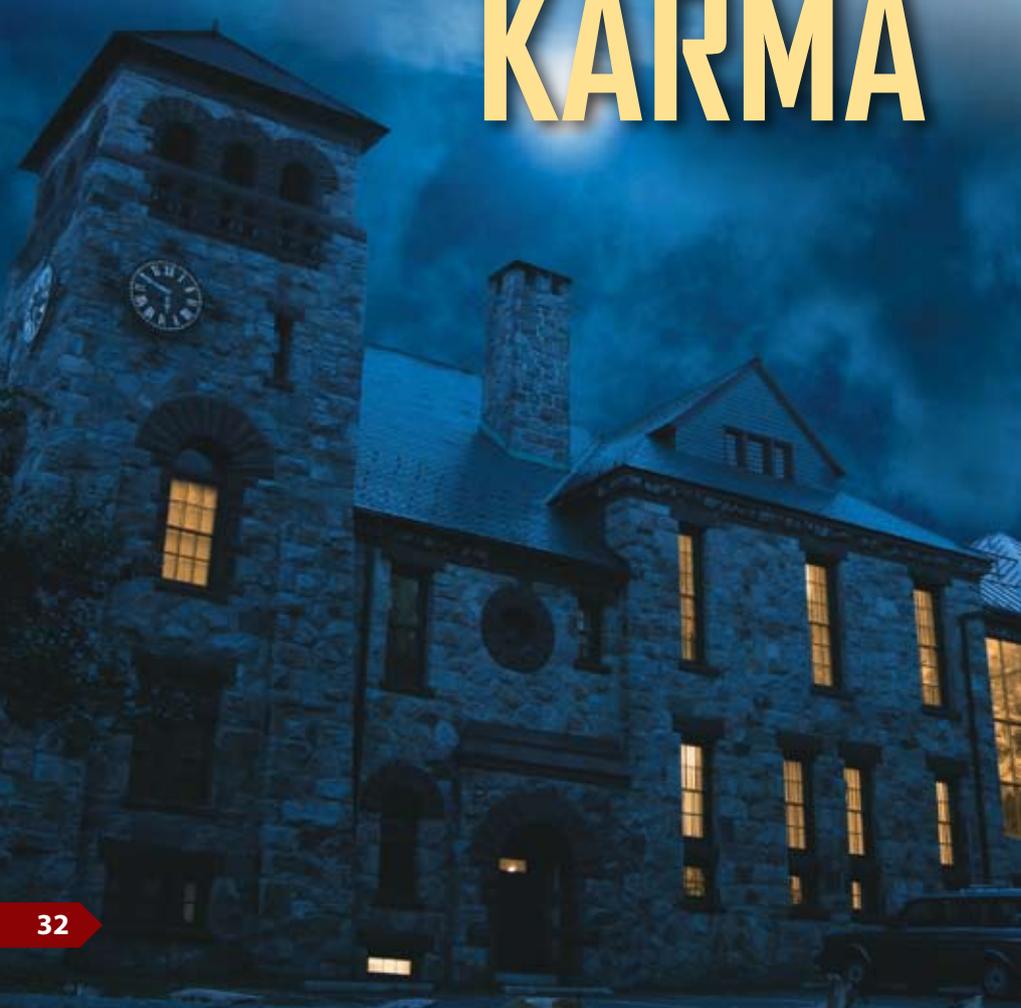
The girl found it hard to sleep that night. Lying on the couch in Mrs Dathilberry's living room, she could see the full moon out through the window. Mrs Dathilberry has sealed them shut and used heavy duty glass so that her cats couldn't break them. She felt as if somebody was watching over her ready to pounce at any time. There was a loud sound of a door banging shut and a lock sealing shut. The girl got up carefully, trying to make as little noise as possible; she crept to the door and tried to slowly open it so that she could get out of here. Locked. Her worst nightmare had come true. She was locked in a small house with the horrific murderer. Not knowing whether it actually was Mrs Dathilberry or if the person had already killed her. There was a scream. That was her dreadful answer. She was locked in; no way to get out.

Trying to think of what to do she started panicking, knowing that her fate lay in front of her screaming at her to come closer. Another shriek. This time it was hers. Someone had grabbed her by the neck and wrung it like a towel. They stabbed her in the chest and with an vicious grin. They said, "This is why you should never be naughty at school"...

I never knew this girl's name, but it was me. I made her sit in the classroom till dark. Covered her in blood. Killed Mrs Dathilberry. I killed her. I am not delusional. I am not crazy. God works in mysterious ways, and that night, he sent the devil into me to teach this girl a lesson.

By **Stephanie Louey**  
Year 8, Geelong Grammar School  
CORIO – VIC.  
Teacher: Mrs Bouvier

# KARMA



# Simpson and his Donkey

By *Elyssa Hawke*  
Year 6, Nambour Christian College  
WOOMBYE – QLD.  
Teacher: *Linda Van der Hulst*

John Simpson Kirkpatrick was born in Britain in 1892,  
And travelled across the ocean to settle somewhere new,  
1914 joined the Australian Imperial Force Medical Corps Army,  
The following year commenced his service landing at Gallipoli.

Simpson fought hard alongside other Australian men,  
With our courageous New Zealand Allies, our land to defend,  
Protecting our flags of red, white and blue,  
Ensuring the enemy never got through.

Our men were brave never giving up trying,  
Simpson worked hard collecting wounded and dying,  
With his donkey beside him through the battle fields they'd go,  
Listening for calls from soldiers in the trenches below.

With bullets flying all around him he acted very brave,  
Never thinking of himself only the men he had to save,  
Soldier after soldier he delivered for medical attention,  
Hundreds of men he did help, too many for us to mention.

After 24 days of solid battle Private Simpson was found,  
Shot dead by the enemy's machine gun and left laying on the ground,  
The courage and honour he and his donkey did display,  
Will forever be remembered and celebrated on ANZAC day.

## Too Bold

"Line up, enlist!" said the strong and fit chief,  
"We need to go to war for Britain's relief."  
Hundreds of people lied about their age and name,  
They thought it was just a fun and easy game.

They all went to Cairo and left their families behind,  
Then known as the ANZACs, when the army was combined.  
After four and a half months of intense training,  
They set sail to Gallipoli to continue campaigning.

They arrived at ANZAC Cove, all ready to go,  
Not knowing their chances of surviving were low.  
Soldiers felt mixed feelings of excitement and fear,  
Until excitement left and only screams they could hear.

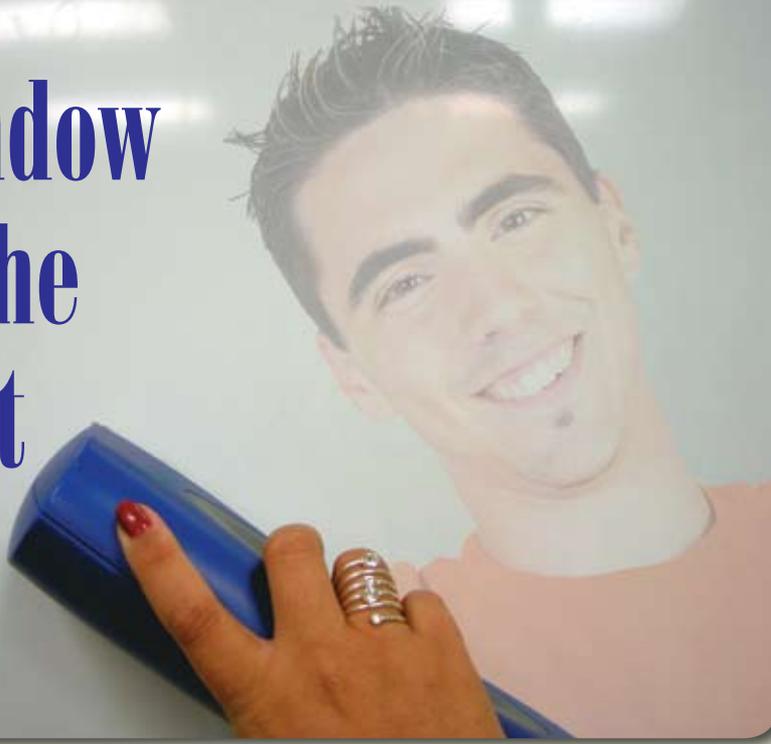
The Ottoman Empire were very strong and sly,  
They explored the place early, but still it was a tie.  
Until thousands of men were injured and dead,  
They had nine hours of truce, but the war still went ahead.

Many soldiers lay dead on the beach,  
A family reunion was out of reach.  
Staring at the sky with motionless eyes,  
Unable to say their farewells and goodbyes.

The fallen ANZACs' spirits are still in every single heart,  
The zeal and bravery, impossible to tear apart.  
Their sacrifice, tears and blood and sweat,  
Have to be kept in mind so, Lest We Forget.

By *Molly Xiao*  
Year 6, Huntingtower School  
MT. WAVERLEY – VIC.  
Teacher: *Mrs Margaret Jones*

# Window to the Past



**'K**ATIE! Wake up. Quick hon!' Mum's voice cuts into my sleep. 'Your brother's treatment's playing up again, we have to take him to hospital!' That wakes me.

Ben can't be sick again, no way!

'Get your emergency pack, we'll drop you off at Ani's on the way.'

So Ben really is sick, his treatment's nearly over though. Another month and he'll be done with chemo. I pull my ugg boots over my cold feet and wrap the fuzzy dressing gown that I keep out for these occasions around me, then, grabbing my emergency bag I run down the stairs to the car. Dad's already there, sitting in the back, arms wrapped around Ben as though leukaemia is a monster that will see him and be scared away.

If only it were that simple.

The car is gone before I can reach Ani's door. I don't even have to knock, Ani just seems to appear. We go into the kitchen and she pulls two steaming mugs of hot chocolate from on top of the coffee machine. We drink in silence. We always do. The time to talk is later.

I remember one of my friends once asking why I call my nana 'Ani'. I wish I could say it stands for something, but it doesn't. When I was little, before I could say 'Nanny' I said 'Ani' – the name stuck.

We finish our chocolate.

'Ben bad?' Ani asks.

I nod slowly.

'When was his last therapy?'

'Thursday', I frown. 'You know, Ani, I thought our troubles were over, he's nearly done with chemo. They said he'd get better!'

It's Ani's turn to nod now. She doesn't try to tell me that Ben will be fine, that everything will be okay. Neither of us wants to give false hope, that wouldn't be fair.

'Bad things happen to good people', Ani says shuffling away.

I go into the spare room and switch on the light. Then, throwing my bag down on the bed, I close the curtain to outside and pull out my whiteboard marker and go over to the window that looks inside the wall.

It's funny. I'd been using it as a whiteboard when I first saw them move in the reflection they cast on my phone screen... the funny little scratches that move to form pictures. They're not just any pictures though; they're my window to the past.

My first instinct was to turn around and look, but I couldn't see him then. I decided it was a trick of the light and turned back around, but there he was in my phone screen and in the mirror: A reflection. Liam was afraid at first. That was clear from the look on his face and the fact that he was yelling the words.

'Who are you? Reveal yourself!'

I'm not sure how I knew that that was what he was saying, I couldn't hear him, I just knew. I quickly rubbed the algebra away. I didn't see Liam for ages after that.

Sometimes I wish I'd never seen Liam move. In the faint scratches he seems so innocent, but in the colourful reflections I've seen him do terrible things. When I started talking to him I asked him why. He told me that he works for the Rhani. The Rhani are like soldiers that are forced to work for the dictatorship. They don't want to. They're given an ultimatum: Kill or be killed.

I pop the lid off the marker and start to write.

'Liam, how are you?' I look into my compact mirror to see what he says.

'I am well', he replies after a momentary pause, 'your brother is unwell again? I thought he was getting better.'

Liam knows that I only see him when Ben's sick.

'Yeah. What have you been doing?' I scribble changing the subject.

'The usual', he replies, 'sailing the ocean with the rest of the Rhani. Will your brother get better?'

His pale puzzled looking face stands out against the pink and orange coloured sky.

'I don't know', I write in big bold angry looking streaks. 'I'm scared, Liam.'

It sounds funny to tell someone who I've never met that I'm scared. I'm supposed to be strong, to pass on that strength to Ben, what I'm not supposed to do is be scared. Scared is selfish, this is happening to Ben; he's the hero here, I'm just the co-star. The bad part though, is that I'm not only scared that Ben could die, it's that I'm thinking of myself too. I find myself worrying about what I'll do if something happens to Ben. We're close, Ben and I, if I lose him I lose my best friend.

'Fear is nothing to be scared of', Liam says knowingly, 'Feed on it, let it become strength.'

I know that he's right.

'I fear,' he continues, 'for my family, for the families of the people I...' The sentence trails off to nothing.

It's hard to remember Liam's problems with the Rhani when Ben is so sick. Does that make me a bad friend?

'What should I do, Liam?' I write.

'Be strong!' he chatters. 'In the Rhani,' he screws his face at this word, 'we have a story, in which you are told to imagine fighting a dragon bird. The dragon bird is the strongest, biggest creature of them all, and only a few can beat it. To beat it you must be brave at heart, and to be brave you must first be scared. I know you will not fight your brother, but be brave, he will feel that and be brave too. In the story the dragon bird feels the bravery and is scared away. Your brother's sickness will be scared away too.'

This is the most Liam has ever said to me and oddly enough it makes sense.

'Thank you,' I scribble.

Then I push the lid back in to place on top of the marker and go to bed, dreaming of Liam fighting the dragon bird and Ben getting better.

After what seems like moments I wake up to the bright light of the afternoon sun. I take the marker from under my pillow and go to my window to the past.

'I'm going to see Ben today,' I write, 'Good luck Liam!'

Then I go out to the kitchen to find Ani.

Ben lies in the hospital bed playing with his video game.

'Katie!' he calls when he sees me. At least he looks better than he did last night.

'Hey, Ben!' I reply.

The words 'no fear' race through my mind as I rub his smooth, bald head.

'Love you, buddy.' I feel myself smile.

'Love you too, Katie,' he smiles back weakly. 'Promise you'll always be there for me?'

'Promise!' I say and arms wrapped around each other we lean back into the pillows of the bed.

By **Natalie Hamment**

Year 9, Mount Lilydale Mercy College  
LILYDALE – VIC.

Teacher: Mrs Andrea Coney

## We live in a Bubble Society

We live in a bubble society  
Just floating in the wind  
Not thinking about anything  
We're like mindless zombies  
A bubble society

We go through life  
Floating around  
Each in our own little bubbles  
We don't let life in  
We don't take the journey  
We follow after bubbles blown in the air  
Constantly exploding  
And in their last breaths  
They realise  
The life they've missed

I'm flying away  
On the wings of the wind  
Like a butterfly  
A bubble in the wind  
But I don't want to  
Get lost  
In the crowd  
So someone  
Burst my bubble  
So I can fly into the night  
Like a rainbow  
In a world  
Of black and white

Everybody bursts in the end  
But it's the time between that counts  
Whether you live your life  
Or not  
We generate  
Spheres of reality  
Individual  
Bubbles  
Of  
Existence  
Our planet  
Comprised of millions of tiny bubbles  
Each one different  
Yet  
Slightly the same

Bubbles, bubbles  
One and the same  
How do you tell this one from that one  
A million bubbles  
Floating in the air  
Fighting to reach the stars

We live in a bubble society  
Just floating in the wind  
Not thinking about anything  
We're like mindless zombies  
A bubble society

By **Karis Cheng**

Year 9, Abbotsleigh Senior School  
WAHROONGA – NSW

# FAMILY SECRETS

## Chapter 1

The girls and I from school decided we needed a break from our hectic year 12 schedules and because it was a Friday night we were having a girl's night out on the town. We had already eaten dinner at Gusto's Italian restaurant and been to our first under-age club of the night. As we walked out of Max's chamber of teens there was a mad rush of people and we got separated. My phone was out of battery and the people of the night city are often too drunk to help, so I attempted to re-group with Elena and Eva.

Somehow I ended up walking down a narrow alley chasing after someone who had the same haircut as Eva, long brown wavy hair that was as extravagant as a lion's mane. I was always one of those people who laughed at the supernatural, and sometimes I even mocked those who believed. I called out Eva's name and this strange young woman turned. As she turned, her hair flung out and she took a pose like she was ready to jump out and attack me. My heart skipped a beat as I prepared to run. From her chest she made a noise similar to what a cat does when threatened but deeper. It sent a chill down my spine as I stood frozen, too shocked to even contemplate running.

I was thinking to myself "This isn't how I planned to die, how the hell can I get out of this mess?."

We stayed that way for what seemed like hours before she started to slowly rise. Once she had completely stood up, I whispered "Hi, I'm Eleanor".

She stared at me, assessing if I was a threat or not, then she said "I am Angela, nice to meet you. Do you think we could go somewhere and talk in private?."

She sounded urgent, so of course I obliged. She turned and beckoned me to follow. I hesitated.

What if this was a trap and she was going to really hurt me? Surely she would have already killed me if she was going to. Right?

I couldn't help but follow her; it was like, like I was possessed. I tried to resist but one foot after another I followed. Unwillingly.

This is so strange it's like she is a magnet and I feel obliged to follow her, almost like a servant would to their master.

As we reached the back entrance of an abandoned factory she turned around with a worried look on her face and her eyes searched around us until they fell back on me.

She smiled and said "Come on, I don't bite. Much, ha-ha. I'm just playing with you. Let's go inside".

Her smile was almost too perfect, unnatural. Her teeth were a brilliant white and perfectly straight. I noticed her eyes are the same shade as mine and we seemed have similar features. This is just too weird for me to handle in one day.

It was pitch black inside, almost like whoever else was here, didn't want anyone to know we were here. As my eyes slowly adjusted I could make out three new sets of eyes, all the same shade as mine. Slowly, they stepped out of the shadows into the slightly lighter light, and as I looked deeper, two seemed to be older women and the third a teenager only a couple of years older than Angela and I.

I took a deep breath and took another step further inside, and as I did the door behind me slammed closed. I suddenly felt uneasy knowing I couldn't get away from these strange but beautiful people. The silence that filled the room was somewhat screaming at me as I was left alone in my own thoughts. I slowly relaxed but was still on alert.

I assume the eldest woman saw what was happening and took a step forward; my guard went back up like a stainless steel wall. She didn't acknowledge that now, she was determined. As she crossed the room and edged slowly towards me with each step the more afraid I felt.



When she was within reaching distance of me she reached her arm out with her hand open. I stared at it blankly for a few seconds, before I realised they were all waiting for me to do something, so I reached my hand out too. I grabbed her hand ready to shake it when she pulled me towards her and embraced me with a hug.

What am I supposed to do, hug her back or should I push her away and run?

She started to weep so I hugged her back.

She continued to say, "My child, my sweet, sweet child".

What was this woman on? I've never met her in my life, yet she is acting as though we have known each other for years.

I scanned the room and the more I looked, the more confused I felt. They were all crying, even Angela. I took one last glance and felt myself slide out of consciousness.

## Chapter 2

My eyes slowly fluttered open. The lights were extremely bright so I closed them, turned over and let out a soft groan. As I did, I heard footsteps coming from

somewhere nearby. A few minutes passed and I heard some hushed voices coming closer to the room I was in. I pulled the blankets over my head and sighed hoping last night was just a dream. As the footsteps reached the door I heard a light knock.

"Pri... um I mean Miss Eleanor. Your presence has been requested in the drawing room. There is appropriate clothing in the wardrobe for you to choose from. I'll be waiting just down the hall to escort you when you are ready." A young manly voice whispered gently.

"OK, that was a little strange", I said to myself.

I peeled back the blankets I was wrapped in so just my eyes were peering out. I lay there frozen.

"My god, it was real. They must be very important people to call this a spare room... it's bigger than my house." I whispered under my breath.

I looked around a little, and I realised that this wasn't actually a spare room. It belonged to someone with the initials PEJM, which was painted in the middle of a large mural of a young family. I looked to my left and saw two doors. To the right was a huge bay window and a door leading out to a balcony. I sighed and got out of the bed, it was surprisingly warm for an autumn day. I slowly walked over to the mural and ran my fingers over it as I tried to figure out what it meant. This family looked like they were very wealthy and important, the three small girls and their parents wore crowns indicating royalty. Ohhhh, a shiver just ran down my spine. I tore my eyes away from it and promised myself I would look at it

later. I walked over to the closest door and opened it; it was the wardrobe the stranger told me about.

The wardrobe was filled with immaculate gowns and shoes. I found a dress that seemed to be the least revealing. It was baby green., my favourite colour. I slipped it on and found a pair of shoes the same colour. I looked in the mirror and felt a small sense of accomplishment and smiled. The dress was elegant enough, the front was a rather high cut but the back stopped just at the bottom of my ribs. It had a few straps holding it to my back, and one of the shoulders was slightly frilly. I walked back out and closed the door behind me. I walked to the next door and opened it to find it was the bathroom. There was a small package sitting on the counter with my name on it.

*Eleanor,*

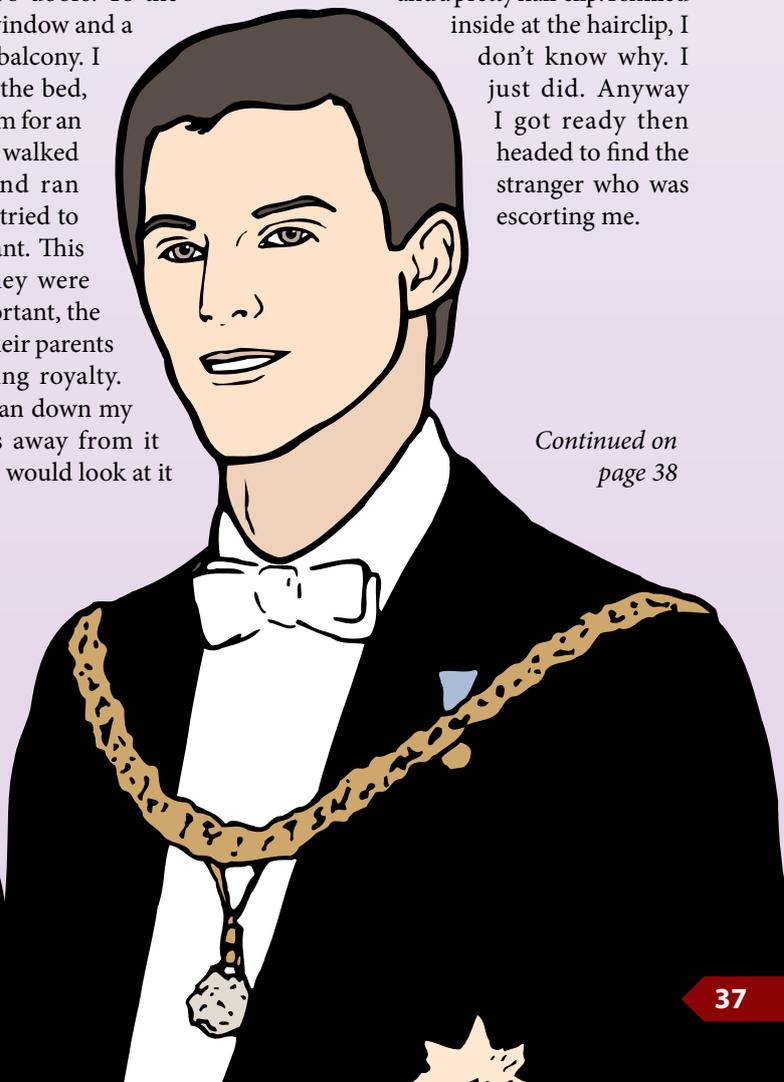
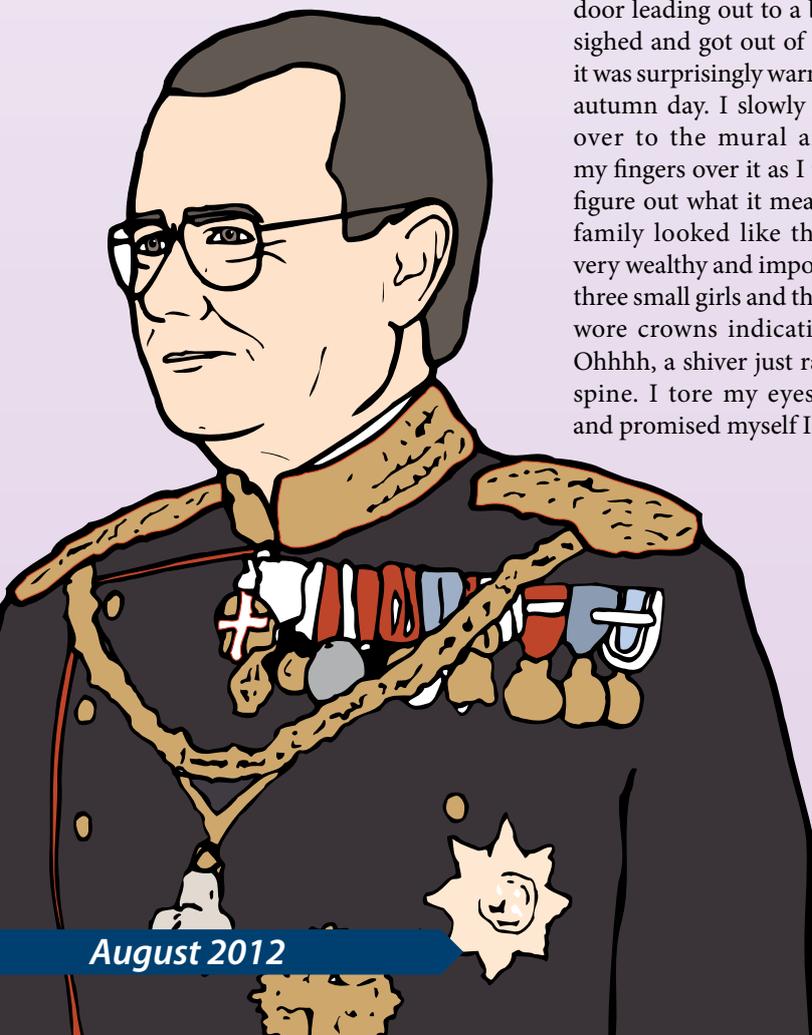
*Thought you might need some necessities to help you get ready.*

*See you soon*

*Angela :)*

It had a hair brush, toothbrush, toothpaste and a pretty hair clip. I smiled inside at the hairclip, I don't know why. I just did. Anyway I got ready then headed to find the stranger who was escorting me.

*Continued on page 38*



*Continued from page 37*

“Hello, is anyone out here?” I said.

The same voice replied “Yes, miss. I’m coming, just wait there”.

I only had to wait 30 seconds at the most before I saw an... wow, he’s good looking. As he saw me his walk faltered, his eyes looked up and down. When he was a hand’s reach away he stopped and bowed.

“Um, what are you doing”, I said, a little scared.

“Oh sorry miss, I was told to bow when in your presence. My name’s Farren. I will be your butler and bodyguard while you stay with the Merrics”, he replied.

“Um, the who?” I said confused.

“Don’t worry Miss Eleanor, everything will become clear shortly. Please follow me”, he said back quickly.

We walked through the strange house in silence. It was beautiful. There was not one thing out of place. As we rounded the next corner Farren stopped in front of an open doorway.

He said, “Miss Eleanor has arrived, your majesty”.

“Wonderful, please come in Eleanor. We have been waiting a long time to meet you”, an older woman said.

I walked into the room and bowed in front of them. Well, he did say “her majesty”. I thought it was appropriate.

“Now dear, stand up. There is no need for that. Come and sit, we have much to discuss with you”, she said.

I sat down quietly in the seat opposite her and a man that I thought was her husband, because they both wore crowns and they seemed both fairly old. Maybe mid-60s. And I looked down at my hands and waited for them to speak.

“Welcome home dear, we have been searching for you since you left us when you were two weeks old. I’m sorry to shock you, dear, but please don’t speak until I’m finished. Let me tell what I need to tell you then you can ask questions. I am Queen Donna and this is King Lachlan. I was

there last night. I’m sorry we had to meet on a rough note but it was the only chance we have had to return you back home. We have missed you desperately.

OK, sorry dear, I was getting carried away. Well, your story. 17 years ago a young woman married our son Prince John and she fell pregnant with twins. You are one of them and Angela, who you met last night, is the other one.

The other two who were there last night were from our royal guard. Our royal guards are distant family members who have debts to pay us; they pay by serving us for a time.

Anyway back on track. Your mother died during birth and left us with you two beautiful girls but we were involved in a battle with some very nasty people at the time. So we thought it would be best to send you girls off into the human world with two different trusted families.

You were supposed to be returned to us when you turned 14. Your sister Angela was returned, but you weren’t, so we began a search to find you were removed from the family we put you in, into a foster family who weren’t keen on giving you up at all. So we have had to wait for an opportunity to bring you back on our terms.

I know this is a lot to take in but please ask us anything you want.”

“So let me get this straight. My mum’s dead, you’re my grandparents, I have a twin sister... why did you say, human family...?” I asked.

“Well dear, we are angels. We all have a power of sorts. Yours seems to be the same as your sisters and mine. Your senses are stronger than humans, and if I am correct you will be able to talk to animals”, Queen Donna answered.

“Whose room am I sleeping in?” I asked.

“Yours”, she said.

“What does PEJM stand for then?” I asked.

“Your full name dear, Princess Eleanor Jane Merric”, she said.

“What about my dad, is he alive, can I meet him?” I asked, hoping he was.

“No dear, he passed away fighting for his family”, she answered as she wiped away a tear.

“Am I older or is Angela?” I asked.

“You are, dear. That means you’re first in line for the crown if you can get married before Angela”, she said.

I stood up, said thank you to them and ran back to my room, bumping into my butler Farren.

“Your breakfast is in your room, princess” she said with a raised voice as I ran past him.

I ran straight to my room, locked the door and leaped onto my bed and cried until I ran out of tears.

Knock, knock, knock. “It’s Angela, can I come in?”

I thought about it for a minute, and said “Yeah, OK”.

She came and sat on the other end of my bed. I watched her for about three minutes. She seemed nervous.

“Hi”, I said.

She replied, “Hi, are you OK?”.

“Not really, I just found out that I am some orphan angel princess”, I said.

“Yeah, it was difficult for me to comprehend it too”, she said.

“Did you meet our dad?” I asked

“Yes I did, he was an amazing man. He tried so hard to bring you home; he cared about us so much”, she said.

“Huh, I am upset I never got to meet him”, I said.

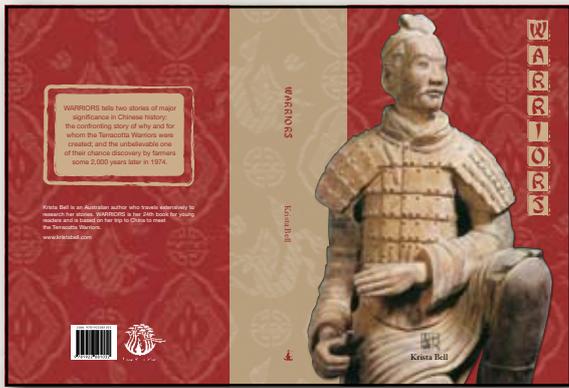
“Come on, let’s go for a ride on the horses, you can ride... right?” Angela asked.

“Of course! That’s just what I need right now!” I said.

*To be continued...*

**By Toni Smith**

*Year 12, Wallan Secondary College  
WALLAN – VIC.*



## The inspiration for a book entitled 'Warriors'

### How China's Terracotta Warriors captured the imagination of author Krista Bell



Way back in the last century, in 1974, I heard about a farmer in China who had unearthed parts of a statue while he was digging for water in his drought-stricken paddock. Local authorities soon confirmed that this was a Terracotta Warrior, made for the first emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang, some two thousand years before.

Wow! How amazing! I was so captivated by this story that I had to know more about this incredible part of Chinese history. Of course I really wanted to travel to China to meet the Warriors in person, but back then it was very difficult for foreign tourists to get into China. So I had to wait. And wait I did, from 1974 until 2007 when my three sons were grown up and I finally had the opportunity to travel to China with my husband.

It was difficult to keep my excitement under wraps as we toured around other fascinating places in China – like experiencing bustling Beijing, China's capital, with its ancient Forbidden City, then visiting the truly enormous Great Wall, followed by a three-night cruise on the rather yellow Yangtze River. Finally, after more than a week in China, I arrived in Xi'an, home of the Terracotta Warriors.

Before we actually visited the Pits to see the Warriors that have already been carefully unearthed, we were treated to a delicious lunch of dumplings and hand-made noodles. All I could think about was seeing the Warriors at long last. Then I was

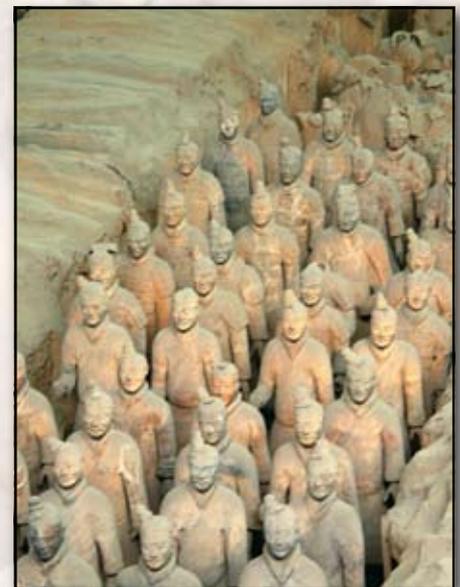
momentarily distracted by a distinctive-looking yellow china tea pot with a blue dragon flying across it. There were tea cups to match. I love drinking Chinese tea so I bought the set and carried it home in an enormous box, a happy memory of my trip to Xi'an – and happily that tea set features in the illustrations for the book I have written, inspired by that trip to the Terracotta Warriors.

Naturally my excitement when I saw the Warriors up close was rather overwhelming. For once I was lost for words! All those years of anticipation – and then the magic of actually being with the Terracotta Warriors and horses was so inspirational that I just had to write down their story. It really is a miracle that they have survived into the 21st Century in such good condition, regardless of being buried under the earth for more than 2,000 years.

Why the Terracotta Warriors were made, and how they were discovered last century, combine to make a truly amazing story that I felt compelled to share with you. Enjoy!

**WARRIORS by Krista Bell will be published by Windy Hollow Books in September 2012.**

[www.kristabell.com](http://www.kristabell.com)  
[www.windyhollowbooks.com.au](http://www.windyhollowbooks.com.au)



# THE LOST CUB

## Chapter 1: Strange Happenings

Papa Bear was determined not to let his gaze wander from his little baby cub, sleeping, embedded in the cold, white snow. After what had happened last time, Papa Bear was not taking any chances.

Mama Bear wasn't making it any easier. She was cuddling up to Papa Bear for warmth and almost blocking his view of the helpless little cub. But he understood her distress, for the two loving parents hadn't expected a winter so harsh and the freezing winds had blown their last ounce of warmth into the moist air.

An urgent and fierce howl echoed in the distance. Papa Bear could not help his strong curiosity and turned to the direction of the ominous howl. Only a moment later did he realise his fatal mistake for his beloved baby cub had disappeared. The sound of approaching footsteps was enough for Papa Bear to know that trouble was coming.

## Chapter 2: No Do-over's

Papa Bear turned to find out who the threatening footsteps belonged to. Mama Bear, on the other hand, was not so keen on finding out and burrowed deep into Papa Bear's fur.

A figure dressed in big, warm and waterproof clothing was carefully approaching them with a black box, which had little tiny holes in it, attached to its belt.

The figure grabbed the box slowly, pressed a button on the side and started talking into the holes. Papa Bear was very confused and had no idea what this strange creature was.

Papa Bear had seen things that no other animal in their snowy habitat had even

heard of. Though this weird, but strangely familiar, creature was quite new to him. He didn't know how this creature could ever be familiar to him, as he had never seen the creature before – or so he thought.

Papa Bear let out a thunderous growl, showing his sharp teeth. The figure backed away slowly, obviously frightened of the dangerous polar bear. It stepped back until it stopped, turned around and ran for safety. Papa Bear didn't bother chasing it because he was too shocked. He had been the one that had caused the incident so he was the one to blame.

Mama Bear peeked and saw that the figure had gone so she heaved herself up and sat down on the freezing snow, shivering slightly.

She wished that they could just go back in time and redo everything. They should have taken more care of the tiny cub, but instead they had focused on themselves and tried to stay warm. She didn't blame Papa Bear because she knew that nothing could keep his curiosity still and he had been trying his hardest to protect the cub. But Mama Bear had just been thinking of herself and cuddling up for warmth. She hadn't thought about the cub and how they weren't cuddling him and keeping him warm. The snow had tucked him in with the cold and he was left to sleep.

## Chapter 3: It's Hard to Say Goodbye

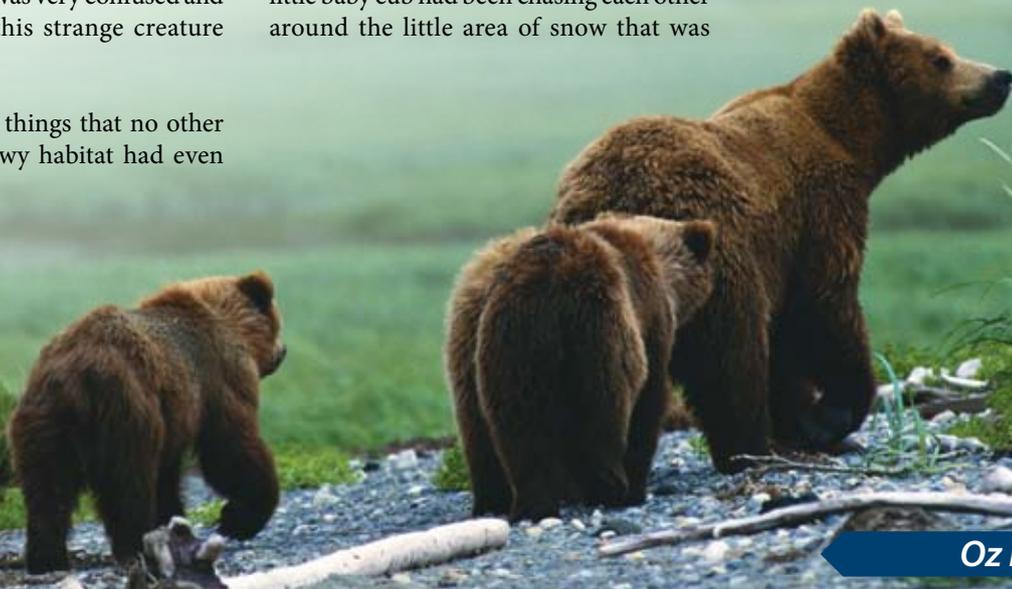
The sorrow in Papa Bear's eyes was unmistakable. He would never forgive himself. Only this morning, he and the little baby cub had been chasing each other around the little area of snow that was

theirs. Mama Bear's eyes were innocent, reflecting the glow of the perfect white snow on the dreariest day of the year so far. Her grunt sounded hoarse and she turned away from Papa Bear as if to say, "I need to be alone". Mama Bear was oblivious to the fact that this wasn't over.

Mama Bear knew it was hard to say goodbye. But she never wanted to give up. She would sail the seven seas to find her defenceless little cub. She never wanted to say goodbye. She grunted again, although this time it was very hoarse, and she buried her head in the snow, hiding her tears of sorrow, of utter dismay. Her heart had been ripped out of her chest and thrown on the ground, left to rot. She didn't want to give in to these creatures, but she felt she had no choice. All hope was lost. Hope had been the only thing keeping Mama Bear and Papa Bear alive for years – now it was gone. All that was left was misery and pain. Pain for their lost little cubs.

## Chapter 4: Daydream

Mama Bear liked to dream. She liked to dream dreams with happy endings... like fairytales. Those were her favourite tales of all. But she also liked to daydream. You didn't have to wait for nightfall. You didn't have to wait until you were sleepy then hope that somehow you would have a dream. A dream that was happy; misery-free. She daydreamed about her lost little cub; she remembered how he nodded his head weirdly when he was happy. And how he grunted when he was angry. Mama Bear remembered his small paws that hugged



her tightly when he was scared or worried. She looked at her own paws then made them into fists. She was sad and angry at the same time. She wanted to be back in the old days. She wanted to go back in time. She wanted to be inside her daydream.

## Chapter 5: The End

Papa Bear knew the end was coming. He just didn't know when. He knew that the end had finally come when eight of those same creatures from before appeared out of nowhere. They formed a circle around him and Mama Bear.

Papa Bear studied them closely then suddenly remembered where he'd seen them before. They had taken his first cub. They were the cause of all this pain and misery. They had destroyed his life twice. But they wouldn't succeed in doing it thrice. He would never give in. He lashed out at them in anger, roaring ferociously. A few of them backed away, frightened. But one held a big black pointy object. He pushed his finger against something and a colourful fluffy stick pierced his neck. He suddenly felt sleepy. He fell to the ground, eyes closed. Mama Bear sat there, stunned. There was nothing more

she could do. The same man who had launched the fluffy thing at Papa Bear did the same to Mama Bear. She, too, fell to the ground, defenceless. All hope was gone; it had vanished into thin air. Mama Bear and Papa Bear were at the mercy of these dangerous creatures.

## Chapter 6: Caged In

Papa Bear awoke to find himself in a box with silver bars. It hurt his paws immensely when he hit them in an attempt to free himself. The ground moved up and down and tilted this way and that. Papa bear felt sick to the stomach. He didn't know where Mama Bear was and longed for her comfort. He roared and growled non-stop until finally, he heard voices. He looked out of his cage and glimpsed light. But he couldn't see snow. The ground was grey and the place was very unwelcoming. He wished to be home.

The Sun was beating down on him. He moaned and moaned in misery. Then his box was lifted high into the sky. Then was plonked down onto the grey ground. He could see everything now. But maybe it would have been better if he couldn't have. He watched as the body of his soulmate

was carried off the big moving thing. She wasn't in a box like he was. She was motionless. Papa Bear moaned in pain and groaned until one of the creatures banged the box really hard. But Papa Bear didn't stop.

He was taken to a place with lots of snow. He could see a way to escape. These creatures were so stupid that they would just let him go free. But when he ran to it, he banged into it. These creatures were magic! He could see more and more creatures coming to him. There were big ones and small ones. They pressed their faces against the magic force field and pointed at him.

The next day when the creatures came to feed him, he was dead. He lay there, not moving. He had not given in, but he hadn't won either. He had lost. He had been defeated. Little did he know; if he hadn't killed himself, he would've found his lost cub. He would've been able to live peacefully with it. But I guess some things are never found.

By **Madison Unicomb**  
Year 6, Gordon West Public School  
PYMBLE – NSW

I leave my house to go to the park  
There are leaves swaying gracefully in the breeze.  
I get to the park to have some fun  
There are leaves swaying gracefully in the breeze.  
I look at a bird fluttering near a tree  
There are leaves swaying gracefully in the breeze.  
I pluck a leaf off a small bush  
There are leaves swaying gracefully in the breeze.  
It has lines and wrinkles and is covered in spots  
There are leaves swaying gracefully in the breeze.  
It's green and brown and yellow as well  
There are leaves swaying gracefully in the breeze.  
I look at all of this and know its part of God's creation  
There are leaves swaying gracefully in the breeze.  
As the my tree grows old the wind grows sad  
The leaves aren't swaying in the breeze.  
Then the wind ceases as if in sorrow  
The leaves aren't swaying in the breeze.  
The leaves are full of sadness and regret as it has spent its whole life in one spot  
The leaves aren't swaying in the breeze.  
I long to play within the trees  
But the leaves are no longer swaying in the breeze.

By **Vincent Graves**  
Year 9, St. Michael's College  
HENLEY BEACH – SA  
Teacher: Mrs. Cardillo

# Leaves in the Breeze

# Do you ever...

Do you ever, wonder about the world  
About the sky, the sea, the trees  
The fluttering butterflies and the buzzing bees  
Rushing rivers and deep dark caves  
Hiding bats and bears and other things  
Do you ever, wonder about the stars  
Where did they come from  
Where else do they shine  
Do they shine for only you and me  
Or are there other children just like me  
In another world  
On another planet  
Far away  
Dreaming about me  
And where the stars shine bright  
Do you ever dream  
About things that should not be said  
Things that people would stare at  
If you said them out loud  
Do you dream  
About the crazy things  
The unimaginable  
The unknown  
I know I do  
I dream of wild fantasies  
Of faeries  
And elves  
And witches  
Or maybe

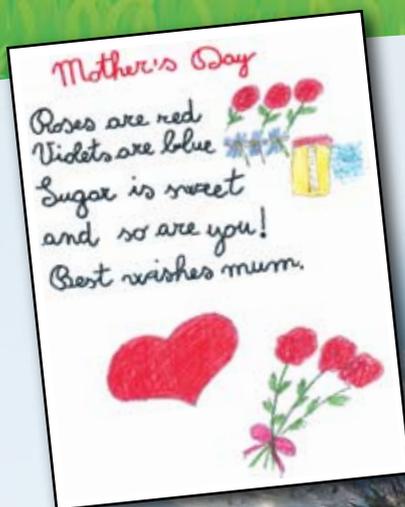
Golden dragons  
From ancient kingdoms of long ago  
Do you ever dream  
Of what it would be like  
If you had another life  
In another place  
Maybe you're a worker  
Slaving away  
Day by day  
In a dusty factory  
Or maybe  
You're an Indian princess  
Riding on elephants  
In the Far East  
Over endless sand dunes  
On hot summer days  
Or maybe you're just normal  
One in over 7 billion people of the world  
But what is normal  
What does that mean  
I could try and define normal for you  
But I'd rather be off in a faraway place  
In a dream  
Riding on the clouds of fantasy  
Do you ever dream...

By **Karis Cheng**  
Year 9, Abbotsleigh Senior School  
WAHROONGA – NSW

## A Poem

A poem contains many emotions,  
Happiness, sadness, anxiety;  
It contains someone's story,  
what they're really feeling inside.  
It can bring the inside out,  
the real person inside.  
A poem can change you,  
your emotions,  
your way of thinking,  
and sometimes your character.  
It can change your big life in a tiny little way,  
and your person within you can be brought out,  
It shows the real you  
like a rough looking oyster opening up  
and revealing a beautiful pearl.

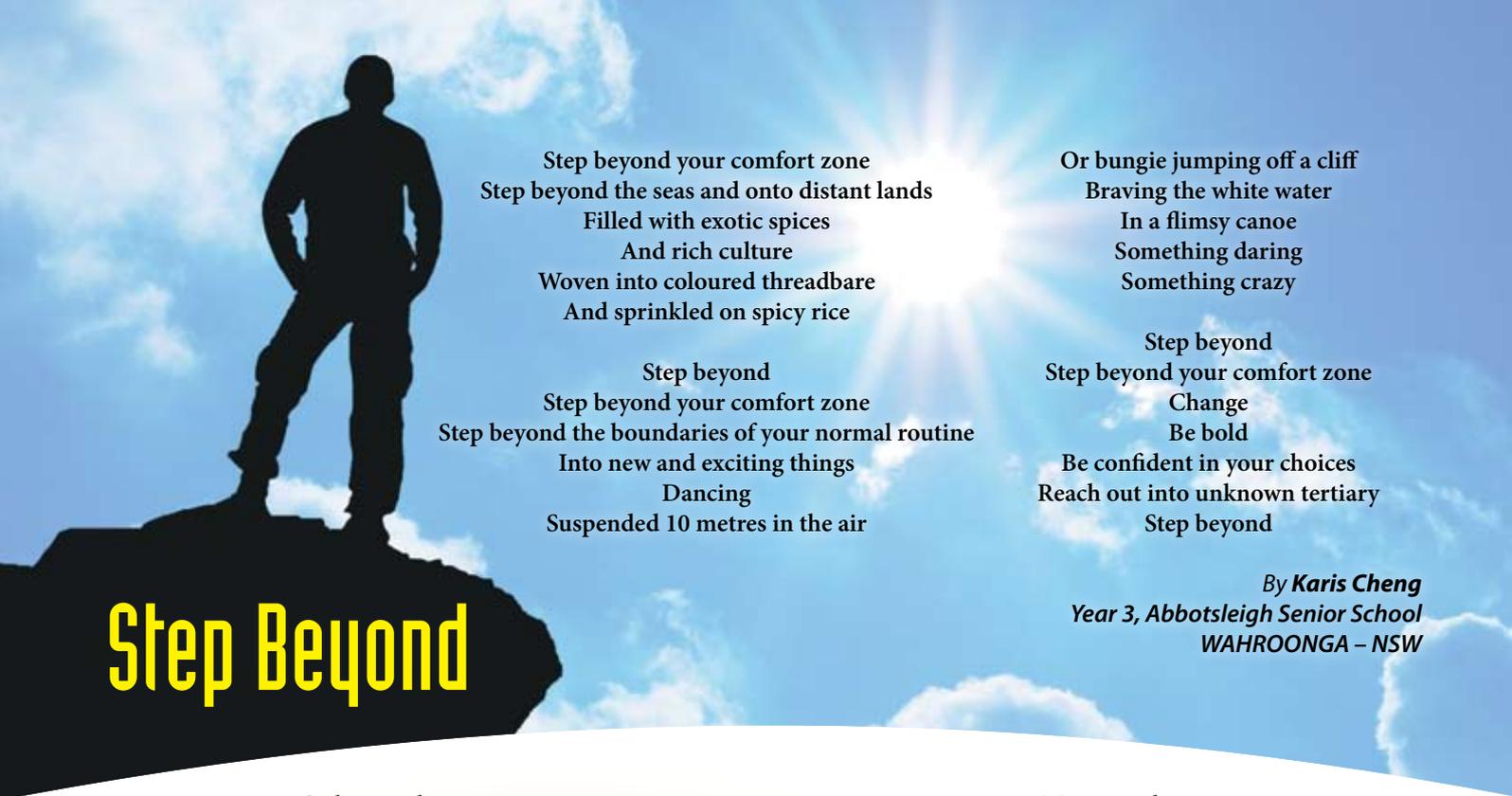
By **Kylie O'Brien**  
Year 6, Oxley Christian College  
CHIRNSIDE PARK – VIC.  
Teacher: Sharon Sandison



## Dandelions

Look at the dandelions.  
Can you see  
The simplicity and the brilliance  
Of the flowers,  
The way each mother flower  
Releases her children,  
One by one,  
With their own parachutes,  
Let them fall gently to earth,  
Give them freedom of life.  
Yet  
Human mothers  
Hold their children tight,  
Reluctant to let go,  
Still pruning the child  
Even after it grows away from them.  
Sometimes  
I wonder  
If humans really are the cleverest creatures on Earth.

By **Ophelia Kong**  
Year 6, Hurstville Public School, HURSTVILLE – NSW  
Teacher: Ms Lorraine Hudson



# Step Beyond

Step beyond your comfort zone  
Step beyond the seas and onto distant lands  
Filled with exotic spices  
And rich culture  
Woven into coloured threadbare  
And sprinkled on spicy rice

Step beyond  
Step beyond your comfort zone  
Step beyond the boundaries of your normal routine  
Into new and exciting things  
Dancing  
Suspended 10 metres in the air

Or bungie jumping off a cliff  
Braving the white water  
In a flimsy canoe  
Something daring  
Something crazy

Step beyond  
Step beyond your comfort zone  
Change  
Be bold  
Be confident in your choices  
Reach out into unknown tertiary  
Step beyond

By **Karis Cheng**  
Year 3, Abbotsleigh Senior School  
WAHROONGA – NSW

Stolen goods,  
forced to be greedy,  
earning money isn't speedy  
This is not the life of the wealthy;  
this is the life of the needy  
Money to burn,  
Food that's healthy,  
nothing needed,  
Strong and stealthy  
This is not the life of the needy;  
this is the life of the wealthy  
Peeling paint,  
broken door,  
uncomfy seats,  
squeaky floor  
This is not the house of the rich;  
this is the house of the poor

# Rich OR Poor

Magazine designs,  
quirky and kitsch,  
perfect everywhere,  
not a glitch  
This is not the house of the poor;  
this is the house of the rich  
Not much to eat,  
Skin won't thicken,  
just might get hold of a chicken  
This is not the diet of the affluent;  
this is the diet of the poverty-stricken  
Top quality meals,  
they are all magnificent,  
yum yum yum is every valuable ingredient  
This is not the diet of the poverty-stricken;  
this is the diet of the affluent  
Nothing in the bank,  
can't afford a coke,  
not many supplies,  
on tears they will choke  
This is not the journey of the loaded;  
this is the journey of the broke  
Money in the bank,  
the safe is coded,  
luxury is life,  
and life is splendid  
This is not the journey of the broke;  
this is the journey of the loaded  
Everyone is different,  
no one is the same,  
and not every person likes the same game  
Everyone has a right,  
according to the law  
and it really doesn't matter if you are rich or poor

By **Stella Cowan**  
Year 6, Derinya Primary School  
FRANKSTON SOUTH – VIC.



# The Legend of King Ethelred

Oh, for ever on the bards of the land shall sing,  
Of the mightiest of men, Ethelred the King!  
The greatest of all questing warriors was he,  
A turncoat and coward he would never, ever be,  
By day he would battle and slay roaring and blazing dragons,  
By night he would feast, eating roast boar and draining frothing flagons,  
Many a mighty empire and kingdom he wrought,  
And shining treasures of myth and legend he sought,  
Yet what in his heart he yearned for most of all,  
Was to have as a bride the wife of Harald the Tall!

Although Harald was a bitter, jealous man with a heart of stone,  
None could deter Ethelred from his wish to make Harald's wife his own,  
So Ethelred then rode to see Harald the Tall,  
To ask his favour in his high and golden hall,  
But Harald would not speak with Ethelred, he departed to his room,  
And thus he unwittingly sealed Ethelred's inevitable doom.

Ethelred stormed in rage from Harald's domain,  
All the while swearing and cursing in vain,  
Yet as he rode away on his mighty steed, he chanced upon a fair and beautiful young maid,  
She said to him, "Oh please great lord, take me from my dreary life before my hope begins to fade."  
To which the king replied, "Who are you and why does such a fair lady dwell in my enemy's hall?"  
"But surely you recognise me", she answered, "I am the one you seek, Hilde, wife of Harald the Tall!"  
So it was that Hilde, with Ethelred, stole away from under Harald's very own nose,  
And when Harald learnt of what had befallen, from his options, war was what he chose.

Thus did the army of Harald the Tall ride to war,  
The mightiest and grandest host the world ever saw,  
And in response, Ethelred did naught,  
No spear or sword or weapon he sought,  
He sat on his bejewelled throne until Harald was at his castle's very door,  
Only then did he descend from his high seat to the floor,  
And there, before all of Harald's might, he spoke, "Oh Harald you fool, can you not see,  
Hilde the fair never enjoyed you and your cold ways, she is far happier with me!"  
After much thought, Harald replied, "I do not accept your excuse, we must settle this dispute with a test!"  
At this, Hilde emerged from the shadows, "But not a test of fighting, I say, but a test of skill with poetry, what I love best!"

So Harald sent word for the greatest bards of his kingdom to help him compose,  
And every last hopeful minstrel, bard and poet came, from every town and village they rose,  
Yet almighty Ethelred the King remained without aid in his halls of stone,  
He would win the test with his own words, and his own words alone,  
Time passed, and at last the eagerly anticipated day of the test arrived,  
In place of the battle Harald had wanted, in which nobody would have survived,  
The test took place in a fertile, lush green valley,  
And at each end of it the supporters of each king began to rally.

And Harald strode forth, trumpets triumphantly blaring,  
All the while, Ethelred's supporters were glaring,  
And hurling insults and abuse in an attempt to discourage the enemy king,  
But Harald was undeterred; he unrolled the scroll of his poem and began to sing,  
"Hilde the fair, you were once the love of my life,  
But when you left you left my heart in strife,  
You abandoned me and my love for another man,  
Away like a thief and a coward you ran,  
Yet despite all this I would gladly give all to have you back,  
Because my heart is not complete when it is your love I lack,  
Come back to me now, and all I shall forgive,  
And happily ever after shall we live!"

With a flourish and a bow, Harald self-assuredly rode back to his faction,  
 And Ethelred took his place, and prepared to launch his poem into action,  
 “Hilde, hear this, that all of Harald’s pretty words are naught,  
 When compared to the great love that you and me have wrought,  
 He promises forgiveness, but what is there to forgive,  
 When you have given him all that you have to give,  
 But he will not take it, for the art of love he cannot, will not, learn,  
 He had his chance, and only bitterness in his heart could you discern,  
 But your decisions and choices, I will not attempt to sway,  
 You heart has its verdicts and it will go its own way,  
 Either to Harald the tall, or to I, Ethelred, and all I can do now is pray.”  
 Yet before Ethelred’s poem was done, Hilde had come to her decision,  
 “Ethelred”, she said, “Was it ever in doubt that it is with you that my heart does lay?”  
 “Put aside your doubts and worries, put aside your unfounded fears, for you have won the test, and you need no longer pray.”  
 As soon as Ethelred heard those words, his heart leapt for joy, and he rushed forth to embrace Hilde the fair,  
 Yet as Harald heard those words, his heart swelled with hate and he seized a nearby spear, and sent it soaring through the air,  
 “If Hilde cannot be mine then none shall have her!” he roared, as the wicked spear hit home,  
 Ending forever the life and tale of mighty Ethelred, sending his spirit to the heavens to roam,

And as Hilde knelt by Ethelred’s dying body, Harald committed a sorrowful deed,  
 All the shouts of anger and disbelief around him he did not, would not heed,  
 For in the midst of his anger, he at last realised the fault of his actions, and drew his knife,  
 And turned it upon himself, to pay for the pain he had caused, all of the sorrow and strife.

Oh, for ever on the bards of the land shall sing,  
 Of the mightiest of men, Ethelred the King!

By **Matthew Harper-Gomm**  
 Year 8, Kambrya College  
 BERWICK – VIC.  
 Teacher: Mrs Leia Hands

Waves lap the shore,  
 While wind whistles through your hair.

Boats’ sails flap like a bird’s wings,  
 While the sun beats down on you like a torch shone from above.

Trees sway in the wind,  
 While crabs scuttle across the ocean floor.

Seagulls squawk at the top of their lungs,  
 While fish silently swim.

Light glistens off the water’s tips,  
 While white water sprays from the back of motors.

The smell of fish and chips wafts through the air,  
 While hopeful dogs wag their tails.

Umbrellas shade a lone beach towel,  
 While a family splashes in the aqua waters.

Flippers splash under the gentle waves,  
 While bubbles rise from a scuba tank.

The heart of Summer,  
 A busy beach,

Summer at its best,  
 Summer at its peak.

By **Tiffany Ampherlaw**  
 Year 5, Ravenswood School for Girls  
 GORDON – NSW  
 Teacher: Mrs Sharon Shapiro

# The Peak of Summer



# Bryce - Grade 4

Bike rides:  
to run away,  
escape.

Alien hideout:  
a place to hide  
and talk.

I told you  
about my friend  
teasing me about the spoons  
in my locker.  
You said, maybe,  
she's not a friend at all.

We sang  
Christmas carols  
eating fruit  
on a day so hot  
that heat rose in waves  
from the tar.

You sang  
a silly song  
to your Dad  
about riding bikes  
all day long.

I had two houses,  
two homes,  
and you.  
It made me sad  
that you wanted to leave,  
go home,  
so soon.

It wasn't so much an adventure  
as a place  
you were forced to be,  
but it was a beautiful,  
wonderful  
adventure to me.

By **Sarah Merry**, Year 12, Mowbray College (Town Centre Campus), MELTON – VIC.



## Going to school!

My alarm goes off,  
On a Monday morning,  
It's back to school again,  
I throw my sheets,  
Brush my teeth,  
And wear my uniform.

I pack my bag,  
And eat my breakfast,  
Tie my shoelaces,  
Get on the bus,  
Wave mum goodbye,  
And off to school I go.

We talk so loud,  
And play games too,  
Until the teacher comes,  
Footsteps are then heard,  
Closer and closer they come,  
Everyone settles down,  
There is not a sound to be heard.

I reach school just in time,  
In time to see my friend,  
The school bell rings,  
We trod to class,  
And everyone sits down.

We learn to knit,  
We got ice-cream in the end,  
What a nice teacher.

The lunch bell rings,  
And everyone runs out,  
Scattering in the playground,  
Lunch ends quick,  
We go to class,  
The teacher gives us prizes!

The day then ends  
I hope she's here  
To teach us all again  
The day was fun  
While it lasted  
Now all I do is sit back and wait  
Until tomorrow.

The door then creaks,  
Our teachers here,  
We take our books out  
Rule a margin  
And keep it very neat.

We turn around,  
And one by one,  
Start to stare at her  
The new teacher is very tall,  
She starts to call our names,  
She looks so mean  
But turns out exceptionally nice.

We play games with her,  
She reads us a book,  
And we have fun in groups.

By **Rose Vincent Pulikkottil**  
Year 6





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