

OZ KIDS IN PRINT

**February
2016**

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literacy in
schools!*



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(2015 Elise Hurst Art Award)

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FREE ENTRY

**TO STUDENTS IN PRIMARY OR
SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

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Matéo, 8 years old
"ALIEN HUNTER"



Léo, 9 years old
"SUPER DOCTOR"



Théo, 7 years old
"AIRLINE PILOT"



**SMALL HANDS
WILL DO BIG THINGS**



OZ KIDS IN PRINT

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

This issue of the magazine contains the information on the Young Australian Writers and Artists for 2015 and information from the Arts judges on how to enter the Arts Awards. From the next issue onwards we will be including some of the artworks entered for this year's awards. So please do not wait until the last minute to enter. Yours may be picked to be showcased in the *Oz Kids in Print Magazine*. It may not be a finalist, but it will get the chance to be published.

During the week of closing off entries last year we received over 400 entries just for the Writers' Awards. One rule to be chosen for the awards is to be published in the magazine. We went through all of those entries and could only choose a certain number to be published. **Please, please, please** don't wait until the last week to get your entries in.

Keep on writing and keep on entering!

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



KEEP ON WRITING (TYPING)!

Carol Dick
Managing Editor

BOOK REVIEW

A good book should be like a decent pair of shoes; essential to the living of a comfortable life, worn-in from constant use, favoured over others, shared among friends and have the ability to lead you to foreign places. *Rich & Rare*, the newest anthology from Ford Street Publishing, definitely ticks all the boxes.

Jam packed full of 40 short stories and poems and illustrations to match, this book is perfect for any situation or mood. Need a bit of philosophical thinking whilst curled up on the couch? 'Thingless' by Scot Gardner will make you reassess how you live life and redefine your interpretation of homeless. Want something more serious and sombre? The tale of a broken family whose oldest child falls off the rails in Tracy Hawkin's 'I Can't Sleep' makes you thankful for your own family. George Ivanoff's 'Music of the Pod People' gives an account of what life may soon be like with futuristic technology, but with an unnerving outcome. If you're in need of some courage, in 'You're Dead, Jason Delaney,' Bill Condon shows us that even though Jason has the big bully Sarah after him, there's more than one way to solve to problem.

This compilation is what everyone needs on their bookshelf. Suitable for all ages with James Roy's 'Carpet Capers' being a down to earth story the kids will love and laugh with, to the dark and thrilling 'Mr Lovechild' by Gary Crew that will cause anyone who reads it to rethink their actions. It will supply you with romance in the form of Julie Fison's 'Sugar is Sweet', make you cry after experiencing a life taken too soon in 'The Bravest Person I Know' by Archimede Fusillo, but have you in stitches after reading 'Tournament of Taste' where Adam Wallace shows us that revenge is sweet indeed. It covers all the bases with many historical, fantasy, supernatural stories and poems also.

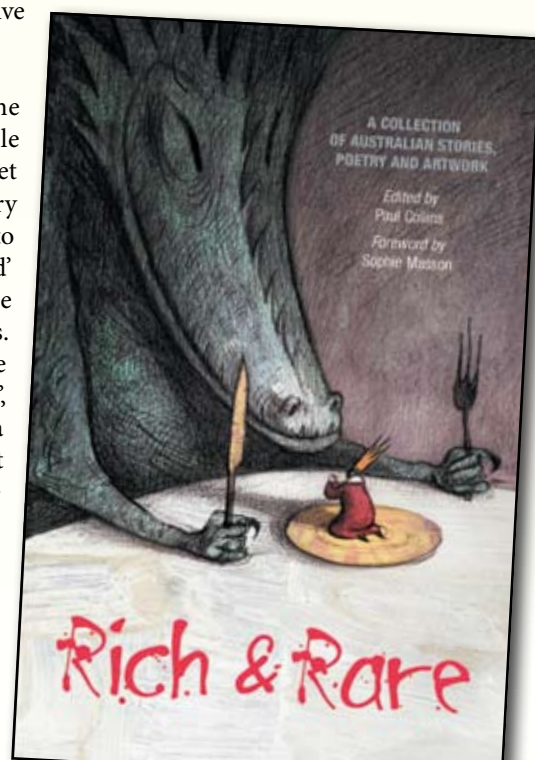
Rich & Rare

Edited by Paul Collins

Reviewed by Bianca Laidlaw

Sophie Masson states in the foreword that 'An anthology can be compared to a patchwork quilt, sewn by many hands. Each piece in the patchwork is different... has its own individuality and could exist on its own. Such differentness, such separateness should mean that it's impossible to put them together. But of course, that isn't true. A patchwork quilt sewn by many hands is a beautiful not despite but *because* it is made of distinctive piece, created by different people.'

Rich & Rare gives you a glimpse of how authors, illustrators, characters, differing worlds and genres can all work together to produce something that sings in perfect harmony. This book allows the reader to browse through and dive into its selection of fictional and factual locations, characters and situations, differing with every story. I commend Paul Collins for the work and effort he has evidently put into this book, as well as all the people the he works alongside, creating this beautifully crafted patchwork quilt of poems and short stories.

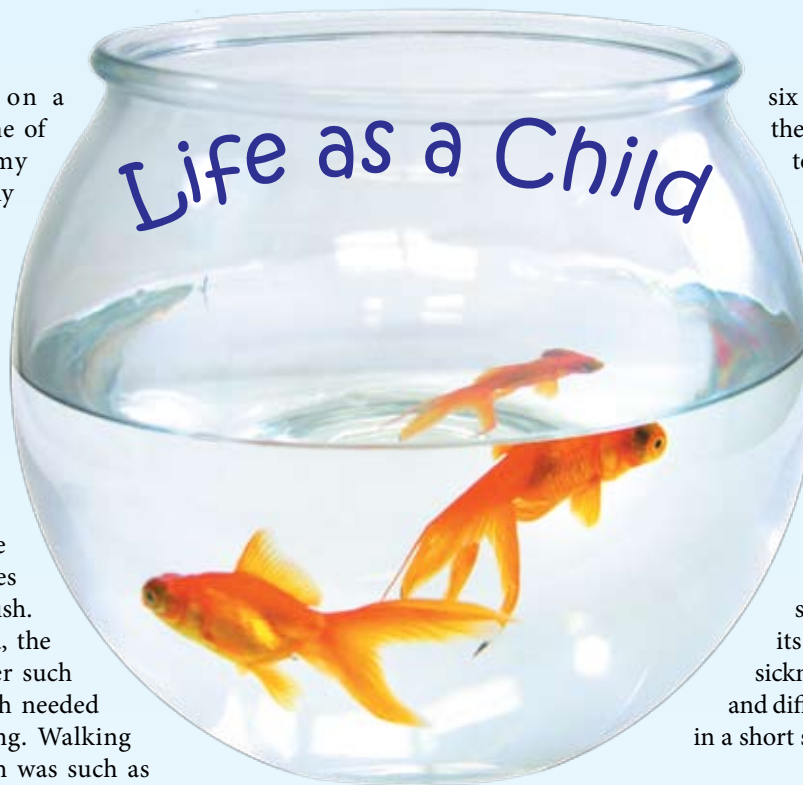


S EVEN years ago on a sunny day, I had one of the best days in my life. The weather was sunny with clouds scattered all around the sky like confetti and the temperature was very warm. I had no idea though what was about to happen that day.

As I walked along the seemingly large path, it led to somewhere very nice. As I looked up, I saw it. A huge place with so many species and varieties of small goldfish. As I was just six years old, the experience of looking after such a small, little animal which needed love and care was amazing. Walking along to choose a goldfish was such a hard decision, seeing all the species and varieties that there were. Then, after a very long time I found one goldfish that I really liked. The species of goldfish I chose was a fantail which had a long orange tail waving like a flag, orange fins and bright scales as orange as the sun.

As we brought the small goldfish home, we placed it in the tank which had been already set up for it. The tank had fresh water, pebbles, green aquarium plants that waved side to side and an air filter which the small goldfish was now staring at. I watched the goldfish intently as it sucked at the small white pebbles and swam around the large tank, coming up to the surface to eat the fish food that fell into the water like falling snow. I laughed as the goldfish occasionally opened its little mouth to yawn. The fantail goldfish which I had decided to name Goldie, had indeed settled into her new environment like a duck to water.

That same week I had just started my first day at school. I was incredibly nervous and excited as I walked up the seemingly never ending stairs. I was wearing my miniature sized school bag which contained my lunch and I clutched my parent's hand tightly as I looked around at the tall buildings which towered above me with the atmosphere which surrounded me. As I approached the unfamiliar classroom, it was filled with all different items, new objects and brightly coloured posters hanging around the classroom like Christmas decorations. Then, after a day of activities I walked back down the stairs and went home.



Three years flew by and Goldie gradually became sick as she started to eat less and less every day and stopped swimming. I didn't know what to do, my heart filled with sadness and I was shocked that it all happened so quickly. One day afterwards, it was getting worse. The agony of watching Goldie slowly dying was so heart wrenching. Time passed and when I thought that nothing more could be done to help her, Goldie's sickness improved drastically, suddenly she started to eat small amounts of food again that slowly drifted down from the water like falling leaves and began swimming again one fin at a time.

At nine years old, I was enjoying school and anticipating the school holidays which were very soon. That day while I ran across the park, the sun was smiling and the breeze was cold as snow. Abruptly, I tripped on a rock as sharp as a knife and hurtled towards the hard ground. I held my hand up to my mouth and saw blood as red as a rose. Sprinting back home, we drove to the hospital and waited six long, never ending hours for surgery as I had torn my Superior Labial Frenulum (the skin at the top of the mouth between the gums and the lip). For one week, I had stitches as rough as hard sandpaper which was discomforting. Slowly, I began to recover with the dissolvable stitches falling out and fully recovering after one month.

Now at the age of twenty years old, I still reminisce about the sunny day with the clouds like confetti in the sky when I was

six years old and got to choose the one goldfish that is still alive to this day. It surprised me that some of the events in my life could be so relatable to when I first started as a child learning how to care for such a small animal that plays such a big part in my life. Even with all the problems and hardships that came by, it all resolved in the end like the sun beaming through the clouds after a treacherous storm. Having a goldfish is like a small scale version of life with its ups and downs, health and sickness, surprises, varies emotions and different stages in the circle of life in a short span of time.

By Lillian Systemans

Year 8

SYDNEY – NSW

Among the Poppies

Through the many years
We have shed a lot of tears,
For those left behind
On the front line.

All our loved ones left
And the world held its breath,
For war is a dangerous scheme,
Even to those who were keen.

Oh, and all the tears cried
When the soldiers said good bye.
For each man knew some would fall
Among the poppies that stood so tall.

By Hailey Wight

Year 6, Crescent Head Public School

CRESCENT HEAD – NSW

Teacher: Mrs Diane Marks

One Way or Another

She is lost, living in a convoluted world
Where simple tasks become mammoth chores
Simplicity hides in hard to reach places
And real happiness has become a foreign concept
The fake smile is just a mere distraction from what she feels inside
And she searches for her old self, who is nowhere to be found
People have stopped caring
And now say she's just one of those girls
She feels as if she is fading
She needs someone to bring her back
A guiding light in a dark tunnel when the end is not in sight
Someone to bring her home and keep her safe at night
But the night is the least of her problems
It's the monster in her head
She feels as though she cannot escape
He follows her everywhere like a blood hound on her track
There is no reprieve, not for even a moment
She hopes she will find her guiding light before his job is done
As she waits for peace to overcome her
One way or another

By Eloise Haigh
Year 10, Melville High School
KEMPSEY – NSW
Teacher: Ms V Nadin

Our World

Emerald forests and endless sands,
An artwork crafted by countless hands,
Sapphire rivers and azure seas,
Rolling valleys and deep leas,
Towering peaks and rugged moors,
A world shaped by no man's laws,
Steaming jungles and rustic woodlands,
This world has its own needs and demands,
They must be fed, they cannot be disregarded,
This world is our heart, and it cannot be discarded.

This world is a living being,
It is all-hearing and all-seeing,
It feels the pain of every scar,
It seems to many to be too far,
But it is only just beneath our feet,
No matter how much we bury it under concrete,
It is as bright and as beautiful as a spring flower,
But we cannot escape its awesome power,
If we live in harmony with this awe-inspiring entity
Then we will suffer no loss, but rather come into plenty.

By Matthew Harper-Gomm
Year 12, Kambrya College, BERWICK – VIC. Teacher: Mr Daniel Vancea

Book Review: I Can Be series

by Phil Kettle

Award winning children's author Phil Kettle, in conjunction with Cricket Australia are proud to announce the release of eight children's books.

This book series is aimed at encouraging both boys and girls to believe that they CAN BE just like their cricketing heroes.

'As a cricket tragic it has been a pleasure to spent time with some of



Australia's greatest male and female cricket champions. To speak with and write about their lives as children and find out what has help mould them into the champions they are or were has been a pleasure.'

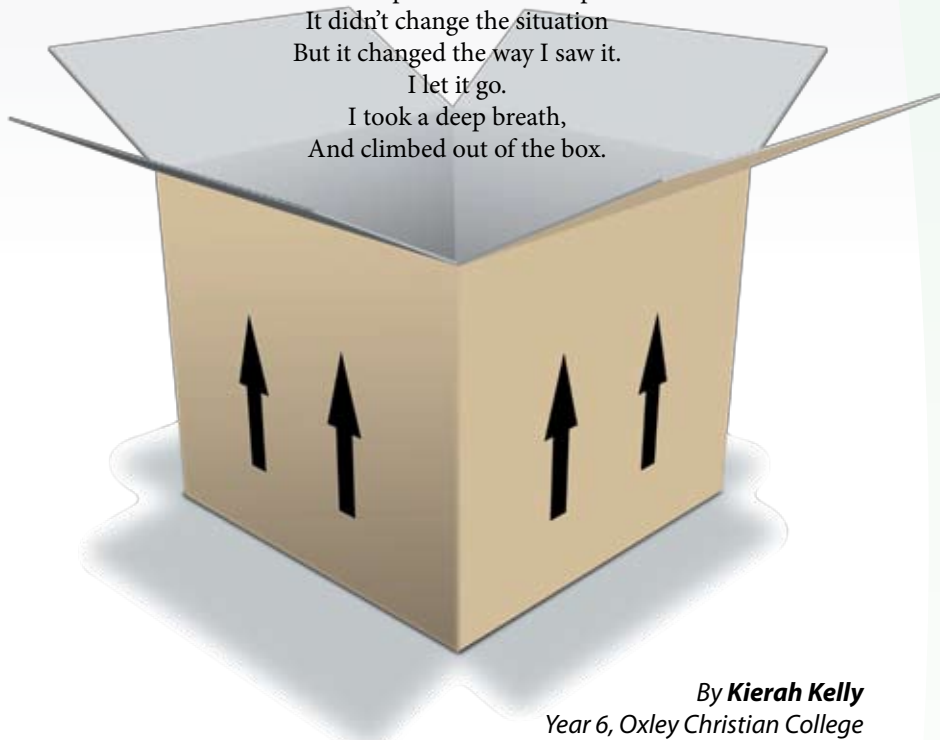
'These books I believe have been written in a fun way which will encourage to readers believe they also CAN BE be just like the champions they admire.'

THE BOX

Have you ever felt like you didn't exist?
Like you were stuck in a box getting shaken around?
The thuds from the box hit you,
But stab your heart instead.
Now think out of the box and of you standing somewhere,
Anywhere,
And someone else standing in front of you,
Teasing you,
Ignoring you,
Rejecting you,
Driving you down.
It feels like you're being thrown around in a box,
Confused with yourself,
Yelling out for help,
But no one listens.
You feel like you're not good enough,
Not worth listening to.

I've felt like this.

I thought I had no one to talk to.
Then I realised there was someone.
I was nervous,
Worrying whether she would bother with me,
But I took a risk.
At 10 pm I texted my friend a paragraph
the size of a skyscraper.
My hands were shaking,
As I tried to press the "send" button.
Soon after she answered.
She told me that she's always here to talk
and helped to build me up.
It didn't change the situation
But it changed the way I saw it.
I let it go.
I took a deep breath,
And climbed out of the box.



By **Kierah Kelly**
Year 6, Oxley Christian College
CHIRNSIDE PARK – VIC.
Teacher: Sharon Sandison



The Boy With No Heart

Once there was a boy
who didn't like a toy.
He thought he was cool
but everyone knew he was a fool.

One day at his house
his grandma in a blouse.
Told the boy to be nice
or things will come at a price.

But the silly boy preferred
never to hear a single word.
His grandma warned him
but the boy still stayed very grim.

The next day the boy biked
which he very much disliked,
to the shops where he met
a man holding a cigarette.

At the shops he got hurt
by a boy in a shirt.
Then the boy ran and ran
all the way home to his gran.

The next day when at school
the boy did not act so cool.
He did not want to be bad
so people won't get sad.

For the rest of the boy's life
he never took out another knife.
The kid acted good
the way he always should.

By **Daniella Sattout**
Year 6, Seabrook Primary School
SEABROOK – VIC.
Teacher: Mr Simon Luthi

Nancy: Girl Detective

THE two lovely friends couldn't be more different from each other – Nancy is a girl who was skilled at solving cases and loved to hear about the mysteries that puzzle other people while her best friend, Melanie, is always bubbly and cannot be bothered about anything. Melanie also loved to chat and take things that belong to others, in the name of fun. On a blistery Sunday morning in the middle of January, the girls were off to church with the rest of their school mates, when the phone suddenly rang in their dormitory.

"Hello it's Nancy here", Nancy said, picking up the phone.

On the other line of the line, was their head mistress who said, "I need to meet with you tomorrow".

Nancy was excited about the call as she thought there could be a mystery ahead.

All through the church service, Nancy could not concentrate. All day long her mind replayed the head mistress' phone call excitedly. She even found it hard to sleep at night. She kept dreaming of the mysteries that lay ahead because she couldn't think of a reason why the headmistress had called.

Bright and early the next day, off to the headmistress's office she went. "Thank you for coming", Mrs. Cooper, the headmistress said. "I really need your help Nancy. Someone has stolen \$5000 from the school vault."

Later that day, Nancy noticed her friend Melanie counting a large sum of money, as she was finishing breakfast. She went back to the dormitory to complete her homework when she saw Mrs. Selby, the house mistress, quickly hide some money in her purse. But when she spoke to Mrs Selby, Mrs Selby looked rather worried and said was organising students help find the missing school money.

Even though she tried to stop thinking about it, she knew that had to tell the headmistress anyway. As soon Nancy walked into the headmistress' office she said, "I think I have finally found the main suspects. I think Mrs. Selby did it".

"I am very pleased with you", said the headmistress. "But Mrs Selby? But how and why?" she exclaimed.

Nancy told her that she saw Melanie and Mrs Selby, counting large amounts of money.

"Why? I don't know", replied Nancy. "But how, that I can tell you. I just need you to ask all the girls in Mrs Selby's class to come to your office. Also send for Mr. James the accountant."

As soon as the ten girls, Mrs. Selby and Mr. James arrived, Nancy laid open her theory.

"Mrs. Shelby, you took the money and I know how", she exclaimed.

"What?" shouted Mrs. Selby. "Me? I didn't do it. I've been...."

But Nancy didn't let her finish what she was saying. "You knew that all the girls had paid their excursion fees to Mr. James on Saturday morning and that he wouldn't get a chance to go to the bank till Monday."

"But everyone knows that", replied Mrs Selby.

"Yes, everyone knows that but no one knows the code to the vault except Mr. James and the thief", replied Nancy. "On Saturday evening, during sport, you shouted the scores are now 2415 when in fact the scores were only 1232 at that

time. When the umpire corrected you, you apologised and said you were thinking aloud about money. We all laughed about it and the game went on."

"What has that got to do with the missing money?" asked the headmistress.

"It will all be clear now", replied Nancy. "When I saw you counting money this morning and trying to hide it in your purse it got me thinking. Where could you have gotten such a large sum? Everyone knows you're always broke."

Nancy continued. "Mr. James, as there is no money in the vault any more, can you tell us the code to the vault and then change it when the money is returned?"

Mr. James looked at the headmistress who nodded her head in affirmation. "2415", he said.

"2415, the same number Mrs. Selby shouted during sport on Saturday when she said she had been thinking of money", exclaimed Nancy. You've only been pretending to help search for the missing money and trying to blame Melanie, when all she was counting was her fake Monopoly money."

Everyone looked towards Mrs. Selby who bowed her head in shame.

By Des'Ree Adelaja
Grade 5, St Margaret's School
BERWICK – VIC.
Teacher: Mrs Cardullo



Run

"RUN!" they screamed as my throbbing feet hit the icy pavement, swollen and destroyed. They screamed and yelled at me, but the more I was abused, the less it affected me. There was no reasoning and no negotiations were made – I was pleading for my life. I had learnt my lesson; you can reason with them, They were the people who could strip me of everything I had... or set me free.

I never knew who They were, the ones who would leave me in a cell cage with no food, no water, no freedom. But the one thing that I could count on, was the 5 o'clock encounter I had with Him. He was the one who would sit with me, hours on end; interrogating me about the recent recon work I led in Afghanistan, with the

American Federal Security Service. I was the lead female intelligence officer. And I was the one who extracted information about the failed terrorist attack against the US. Now They want revenge. I constantly attempted to find clues about my location, but in vain. I was told that They were taking me to another cell. My bare feet slapped down at every step; They made me run, so They wouldn't get caught.

I was pushed, shoved and beaten into a new cell. The only difference between this cell and my previous location was the pale skinned, fragile man curled up in the corner. Days went by, maybe months even. Everything stayed the same. At 5 o'clock I was forced to meet Him, but the interrogations didn't feel the same, and they began to feel like I was talking to a normal human being. He was a person who was able to feel emotions and have sympathy, even for me, the enemy. The pale skinned man opened up to me about what he knew and where we were. Whilst it was very little, I always felt a sense of calmness around him; at least I knew I had him to rely on. The only time I was ever alone was when the pale skinned man went to meet with Him to be interrogated, every morning at 6am. "CHRIS!" A deep voiced man would bang on our cell door, and the pale old man would wait outside the door, to be collected by Him. Chris was the only thing keeping me sane. I told him everything about me, and he did the same.

As more time passed, I felt as if I knew everything about Chris – I knew when he felt lonely and I knew when he felt depressed. In my daily interrogations, They would ask me about Chris. Even though my interrogations were not as vigorous as before, I still knew that They didn't want me to feel content and sane. I simply said that I didn't talk to the other man in the cell and that I knew nothing about him. During our late night conversations with Chris and I, there was no one subject that we did not discuss. That is of course, with the exception of what occurred during our individual interrogations. For some reason, we both felt that discussing what occurred with Him would have no benefit, so it was as simple as that, we never discussed it. However, that didn't stop my mind occasionally wondering what He would do to Chris. Or who He really was?

Many more months passed by, and as Chris and I built a stronger connection, the interrogations began to take a toll on our mental state. I needed to confide in the only human person around me, I needed to tell Chris why I was being interrogated and what information They wanted from me. One night, Chris and I were having one of our usual midnight conversations... and that was when it happened. I started to talk. But not just about anything, about what really occurred in Afghanistan, the role I played and how I stopped a terrorist attack hitting the US. All the information

They spent months trying to extract from me, I blurted out in one night, to a man I trusted with my life.

Silence. For the next ten seconds, it was complete silence, but that was when Chris started to talk. He confided in me, told me why he was kidnapped, what They wanted from him and how we could escape. I knew that wouldn't matter any more though... I had done my job. Weeks of being trapped in a cell room, being fed when it was convenient to Them and doing what They told me to was now worth it. Little did Chris know, I was Him, I was They. I was the one who stripped him of his freedom, destroyed his emotional and mental state all for that one bit of information. Information that I now had complete access to. When Chris continued to tell me about his past, I didn't interrupt, or give away my true identity, I listened intently. It was my mission. And sixteen days later, when I arrived back home to Afghanistan, my mission was complete. I, an Afghanistan undercover intelligence officer had extracted information from the most wanted man in the country through lies and deceit. Do I regret it? No, but would I do it again? Never.

By Annalise Delic

Year 10, Eynesbury Senior College

ADELAIDE – SA

Teacher: Shelda Rathmann

The Young Australian Art Awards 2016

Have you entered the **Young Australian Art Awards** for 2016?

If you have done an illustration or a painting that you (or your friends, teachers or family) think is great, or if you've taken a brilliant photograph or produced a wonderful design on the computer, then I encourage you to have a go.

There are four main categories to the Awards: **Drawing, Painting, Computer Art and Photography.**

And thanks to sponsorship from some of Australia's Mining and Energy companies, eligible students can now also enter the Indigenous Awards.

The year is speeding past, but you have until 5pm Friday 2nd October, so make sure you get your entries in by then.

It is easy to upload your images to the Young At Art website at: www.youngatart.com

Ask your teacher or someone at home if you need help with logging in, activating your account or uploading your entries.

Over the next months, Judges Elise Hurst, Kevin Burgemeestre and I will be looking at every single entry, and then at the end of the year comes the always-difficult task of choosing the Award winners.

The Awards are open to every student living in Australia, who attends a private or public school or who is home-schooled. You can enter the Junior category, (Prep to Grade 4), Middle (Grade 5 to Year 8) or Senior (Year 9 to Year 12).

If you go to the Young at Art website and click on the 'Submit Art' tab at the top of the screen, you will find all the information you need about how to register and upload your work.

Every year since I became a judge I have been impressed with the high quality of artwork submitted, and I'm sure this year will be the same.

However there are a few things to consider before uploading your entry:

- **Be selective.**

Please only submit a piece if you think it is your very best work. If you don't think it's fantastic... we probably won't either. We judges want to look at your drawing/painting/computer design/ photograph and say 'Wow!'

- **Be creative.**

Use your imagination and produce something that only you could have made.

close-up photographs of flowers, and they all looked pretty much the same.

- **Be brave.**

Take risks, try a style or technique you've never tried before and you might be thrilled with the result.

- **Be patient.**

Take your time and take care; there are many talented students entering the Awards and your work needs to stand out amongst the best.

When Kevin, Elise and I have decided on the Award winners, the Children's Charity Network will contact them and post out invitations to the Award Dinner to be held in Melbourne in November. If the winners live outside Victoria, they are flown with a family member or members from their home city to Melbourne for the night.

The Award dinner is my favourite part of being a judge. I love meeting the talented young artists from all five categories and talking to their proud parents and teachers.

Many well known authors and illustrators also come to the Dinner, and students have the opportunity to collect autographs and meet the creators of their favourite books.

So, get out your paints or your sketchbook, or collect your camera and head out to photograph

something amazing. Or sit down at your computer and create something that will make us go 'Wow'!

I'd love to meet YOU at this year's Awards Presentation... so make sure you come up and say hello!

Marjory Gardner
www.marjorygardner.com



- **Be original.**

We don't want to see artwork that is exactly copied from another person's work; we want to see how creative YOU are. We also don't want to see a whole class submitting in the same style. For example one year there were lots of entries from students attending the same school who had all taken very

2016 YOUNG AUSTRALIAN ART AWARDS



Painting

Photography

Drawing

Computer Art

Design by Tanya Rossi
www.logopix.com.au

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.

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

The Underground of Hell

YEAHHHHHH, haha, I win!' shouts Noah.

'Shut up Noah, I wasn't even trying. I let you win' Jackson was frustrated with losing to his younger brother.

'You were trying', Noah says, feeling upset.

'OK then, let's have a rematch. First to 5 wins.' Jackson never liked losing to his younger brother.

'Fine then, but I'll win again.' Noah always felt sad when Jackson said this to him.

The two brothers loved playing sport, especially their soccer. Every day after school, they would go down to the park and play for hours.

'OK, that's 5-0, see, I'm better than you,' Jackson says with his head held high.

'NO! That's not fair,' Noah says angrily.

Noah bombs the ball all the way down the hill and it ends up rolling down the road. The boys chase after it hoping it doesn't get run over by a car. They get close to the ball but it rolls down a drain before they can get to it.

'Oh great, this is your fault Noah.'

'No it isn't.' Noah didn't want the blame.

They boys decide to lift up the drain to get the ball out. With one mighty heave, they boys manage to take the lid of the drain.

'OK, be careful Noah, don't fall whatever you do,' said Jackson, being cautious of his younger brother.

When they reach the bottom of the stairs and get to the ground, Jackson turns on his torch. 'There's the football,' shouts Noah.

Noah spots a weird shaped hole in the wall; it was the shape of a 3D square. Under this strange hole was a rock the same size.

'Does the rock fit in the hole?' asks Noah.

'I'll see.' Jackson puts the rock in the hole and a strange light flashes. A door appears and slides open.

'What the?' Noah says in shock.

'Can we go in?' asks Noah in excitement.

'OK, but stay close to me, all right?'

'Yes okay.'

They 2 boys head into the tunnel not knowing what to expect.

After a good 20 minutes of walking, they start to see some light. They notice two rectangular figures start to open. It all of a sudden starts to get really bright. Two large doors open and a large man is waiting there.

'Welcome' the strange man in a suit greets the boys nicely.

'What the hell is this place and who the hell are you?' Noah asks in an angry manner.

'My name is Stephen. I am the head chief of this place. This is the little underground place called Scareville. Come on in.'

The boys head in anxiously.

The room was lightened by the lanterns on the wall. There were portraits of people on the walls.

'Do you want something to drink?' Stephen leads them in, pushing them along. They take a seat at a very large table.

'I'm a bit scared.' Noah's worried voice makes Jackson feel a bit anxious too.

'We'll leave soon; we don't want to be rude to them.'

After a very nice meal, the boys knew that it was time to leave.

'Thanks for the meal, but we better head off now.' 'No no, you can't leave yet. Come with us.'

'No sorry, we can't stay; we really have to get home.' Jackson tries to get through the man.

'You're not going anywhere', says the strange man in a creepy voice.

Noah and Jackson are both grabbed by their hands and are tied together tightly.

'Let's go' says the big man.

The two big men pushed the boys along, shoving them hardly towards the direction of a secret room. They enter a room that is pitch black.

Stephen lights up the lanterns.

'Arrrrrrr' Noah screams at the top of his voice.

'That's where you will be in a few hours, hanging from the roof with all the other crazy humans that wanted to leave us.'

On the roof, there are about 150 humans hanging from their legs. They are of course all dead.

Jackson was moving around with his eyes shut saying, 'Please be a dream, please be a dream.'

Noah just stood there with his eyes shut, yelling out in anger.

'OK, let's head to the chopping room', the big man yells out.

At this stage Noah had almost passed out

in shock. Jackson was yelling, throwing his body around trying to escape, but it wasn't working. They go into the chopping room.

A man gets pushed around hard in the chamber. There are blades all around the outside of the chamber.

'3, 2, 1, Go' yells the big man.

'Arrrrrrrrrrrr, noooooo' the innocent man yells.

The man gets torn to shreds with blood spurting everywhere. He was dead within the first 2 seconds. This procedure only took around 5-10 seconds. He was just bones after this, no skin. The man was then taking to the top of the building and hung by his feet.

'Who wants to go first? I'll even let you guys choose.'

The boys were too frightened to say anything.

'All right then, yeah tall one, you're first.'

With Jackson's feet and arms tied, there was no escaping now. This was it!

'OK, go in 10, 9, 8....' says Stephen.

'You can't do this to me, please, please!' The sound of the blades start to louden.

'Nooooooo, don't you dare kill my brother!'

'3, 2, 1...'

Noah yells to the big man. 'Let him go!'

No more words were heard from Jackson after this point in time.

'You killed my brother you psychopath. You're an absolute jerk and you should die.'

'Shut up little guy, it's your turn now.'

'You can't do this, let meeeee go!'

Noah tried as hard as he could to get away, but it didn't help.

'OK, start the countdown Stephen.'

Stephen started right from 3.

'3, 2, 1'

Noah let out a huge scream. 'Heeeelllllllp!'

'Noah, Noah, wake up, it's Jackson.'

Noah jumps up in fright.

'Ohhhhhhhh, thank god, it was just a dream.'

Noah breathes with a sigh of relief and gives Jackson the biggest hug.

'Come on Noah, our football game starts in an hour and we need a good warm up.' Jackson was anxious to play.

'Wow, thank god that was only a dream.' Noah breathes with a sigh of relief and gets his soccer gear on.

By Nicholas McKenzie

Year 9, Korumburra Secondary College

KORUMBURRA – VIC.

Teacher: Melissa Neill

The Stars and I



It was cold in the empty house.

I sat and thought, like always. Wondering why they left me here. It happened so quickly. I saw people on the street when I was walking home that day. As I crossed the street, I felt a pain in my side. But that soon left my mind, because when I stepped through the front door of my house, everything went quiet, except for the distant sound of a siren that slowly faded into silence. It was as if the door frame was a trigger. I had demolished most of it with an axe from the garage. I smashed at the door frame until I was exhausted, looking

for answers or any sign of where everyone went when I stepped through it.

I didn't feel the cold. All I had felt for the four weeks I had been there, was numb.

Maybe that's why I was not afraid.

There was nothing there to hurt me, except for time.

By Chloe Kemp

Year 9, Brentwood Secondary College

GLEN WAVERLEY – VIC.

The Land of Nocturno Tempore



MY FRIEND Damien and I are bush walking on Mt Wellington. We've been singing and laughing while we walk. We reach a clearing surrounded by tall green ferns. On one side the ferns form a corridor that fades out into white at the end. Little orchids dot the edges of the soft mossy path.

"Hey, Matt can we have a break? There are some good orchids and landscapes around. You seem exhausted from trekking up the mountain."

I puff, "Yeah you're right, I'm shattered, but it's almost three. We should be at camp by now. Let's keep it short, just enough to let us catch our breath, eat some lunch and take some photos. OK?" Damien nods, getting out the food and his camera. I plonk myself on a mossy boulder and grab a sandwich. Damien is already ploughing through a salmon roll with dill and tzatziki. I unwrap my lunch and take a bite, it tastes divine. Silverside soaked in honey and rosemary with sliced potatoes roasted in duck fat, topped with grated carrot, shaved radish and fresh lettuce, all in a sourdough baguette. "Yum!" "This salmon has a different texture to normal. Did you change the amount of smoke used?" Damien inquired, finishing his salmon roll and reaching out for an egg and smoked chicken mini quiche from my rucksack. He always eats an enormous amount of food when we go walking, so I always pack enough for three. "I did increase the smoke, but I also fried it in lemon juice and olive oil afterwards."

"Are you going to take any photos?" "Yes, yes. Just let me finish these mini quiches

and set up the camera. Don't be impatient!" He sighs, finishing off the last of the quiches. He wipes his hands with a towel and starts setting our camera up. When we go bush walking we always take a camera, a computer with a portable charger – in case we run out of battery, two torches – wide and narrow beam – with lithium batteries and spares, but somehow never pack enough spare patience.

I huff loudly and walk around the clearing, inspecting the orchids. Sun orchids, Bell orchids, bearded orchids and more dot the pathway. I am so mesmerised by the orchids that I don't notice that half an hour has passed and Damien has snuck in pictures of me before turning off the camera. He's always trying to get pictures of me when I'm not looking.

"Matt, I'm done... Hey Matt. Matt? Matt??" Damien says, worrying because I'm not answering. I don't answer back, transfixed by what I see. In a deep hollow on the side of the clearing there is a small mossy mound and illuminated from the top by sunlight. In the middle of the mound is the most beautiful orchid I have ever seen. Purple at the base of the stem and fading into mottled green at the head. The petals are pastel purple and white with tinges of pink and tangerine at the edges. "Are you OK Matt? Hello?" Damien squeaks, shaking me until I come to my senses.

"Yeah, I'm OK. Just infatuated by this orchid. It's amazing! Here, look", I say, pointing into the deep hollow to show him where it is. He looks into it and a huge grin forms on his face, camera to his eye. He takes some photos from different angles

and stands up, obviously happy with his pictures. We pack up the last of our things and head off.

As we walk between the ferns it gets darker and the mist thickens forming eerie shadows. We trudge through a thorny overgrown patch; Damien helps me through the last of the brambles and gorse. We stumble into a part of the bush where the mist is so thick that we can't see each other. Luckily Damien is still holding my shoulders otherwise he would have lost me. "Wow, this mist is really thick. Can you see me?" "Yeah... only just. We should keep going, hopefully this mist will disperse."

"Matt! Look at our clothes! They're old fashioned!" exclaims Damien; excited by the medieval clothes he was dressed in. I look down at my clothes and smile. I am wearing a green silk tunic with a wide leather belt that holds a myriad of pouches and scabbards. My legs are no longer clad in denim but in smooth brown tights with knee-high leather boots, laced up at the front and decorated with silver thread. My arms are wrapped in short platinum arm guards with dark supple leather fingerless gloves attached. I am swathed in a forest green jacket that flares out from the waist and trimmed with silver wire, woven into Celtic patterns. A heavy grey cloak with a tarnished silver clasp, shaped like a shield with two swords crossed and a dragon intertwined in them, tops this. My backpack has morphed into an old leather satchel filled with ancient versions of my bush walking kit. Damien and I are both wearing old-fashioned goggles.

Damien turns, I nearly choke. He has wings. I put my hand back to see if... I can feel I have wings too! They are the most amazing things in the world! We dance around in excitement shouting in unison: "We have wings! We have wings! We HAVE WINGS!". We both have dappled grey and black with smudges of auburn.

"Are you ready to try the wings Damien?" I ask thrilled at the thought of flying through the midnight sky and soaring into a city filled with things that I have never seen before. "Yeah!" he says, running towards the edge of the cliff. This is going to be fun!

By **Renée Young**
Grade 6, Fahan School
SANDY BAY – TAS.
Teacher: Mrs Ingrid Heather

Samuel's School Disaster

I WAS in such a hurry to get to school that when I was nearly there I realised that something was missing. I had my skateboard, myself and... and... 'Where's my bag?' I yelled to myself.

'Oh no', I thought, 'I'll have to go hungry because there's no time to go back'. Those awful words made me shiver or at least send a tickle up my spine.

Then I heard a noise, it sounded like someone stepping in poop. I guess it was that nerd Jayson, who BTW = by the way, always gets singled out in class for stepping in poop.

Saying that he stepped in poop might sound weird, but that was the kind of thing Jayson did all the time. If there was poop around Jayson would step in it.

Being popular at school is very important. If you make one wrong move you will get teased every single day by the COOL KIDS. I went over and told Jayson that he had stepped in poop, but then he said something so dramatic, that I... I... screamed. He said that I was the one that stepped in poop! Now I really had a reason to run home screaming but if I'm late again Mrs Brooks will be giving me five months detention and I can't have that.

I thought, 'how can I get this poop off?'. Maybe bark would work but it didn't. I thought of grass, but again sadly no. What could I do, then I had a brain wave, once I saw flowers being watered by a hose.

Okay, I know you're all wondering what I am going on about, but once I tell you what I'm thinking, it will all make sense. You see, people use hoses for lots of different reasons, some for (and yes, this is what gave me my magnificent idea), watering flowers, washing something, putting out fires and of course, this is my idea (because no one else's would be as great) washing off poop!!!

But the down side is I will have to buy a hose and I'm already ten seconds late for school. I bet Mrs Brooks is already planning my funeral.

Then one of my (always) awesome ideas popped into my head. I would go to the

junk shop and say my nan is very sick and needs a hose.

Great, it worked, they gave me one free, but great it's missing the connection. Then I saw a hose attached to a tap. The house looked vaguely familiar but no time to worry about that now.

I needed to get to the water but I didn't want anyone to see me. I decided to put one of my socks over my head. I sniffed the left one, I sniffed the right one and decided on the left one. I managed to get the sock over my head without it looking too suspicious. My head is really small, not because I don't have any brains, I was just born with a small head.

Whoosh went the water, it gushed out the hose harder than I expected. I fell over and smashed the window in front of me ... I'll have to hide my face, no wait I have the sock over my head. Now if you thought I was lying about the no brain thing, it proves you're WRONG. Ha-ha.

Just then I saw a familiar face at the window. It was Nan's face and then the thing I had been dreading happened. My nan saw my face, the sock had blown off. Oh no, I'll have to mow the lawn for a year. I hung my head with sorrow, then I realised something that made my day. In spite of the big challenge that was set for me today, there was no poop on my shoe!

'The plan wooorrrked. The plan wooorrrked', I sang happily in my head (another reason to believe me about the no brainer thing). I rushed over and gave Nan a big kiss and told her I would do the lawn for two years.

'Samuel, don't worry about Mrs Brooks. Your mum's told me how many detentions you've got, good news and bad news, Mrs Brooks won't be there for a month and good news you're off the hook for detention. Your mum's the substitute teacher for that month, Nan yelled out to me.

Fantastic! I rushed off to school.

I huffed and puffed and finally got to school. And there was my school bag, in my locker, good old Mum, she must have brought it for me. Now I have my lunch I don't have to face the meat loaf in the cafeteria. No one knows (apart from the cook, of course) what's in that stuff.

Life just got better!

By **Ali Godden**
Year 5, Ivanhoe Grammar
IVANHOE – VIC.
Teacher: Mr Wilisoni



The Flying Brownie



I WAS sitting at Tosca Brown's, a local café, with Mum. She had taken me for a treat and I had chosen a big gooey brownie with extra cream. While we were waiting for our food to arrive I noticed our school music teacher, Mrs Major, sitting at a table nearby. I smiled at her shyly. I wasn't sure if she was the sort of teacher who liked talking to students outside of school.

Finally the waitress came over with the big brownie and a mountain of cream on top. I stabbed my fork into it. OH MY GOODNESS!!! The brownie slipped off my fork and flew across the room and straight

into Mrs Major's face. The cream splattered all over her. Mrs Major glared at me furiously. I was so frightened. Everyone in the café turned around to look at me. My face turned red. I backed out of the café nervously and ran down the street. I would never go out in public again. NOT EVER!

Dingalingaling. The bell rang. I ran to the classroom and looked at the schedule, I froze. Right there in front of me was the word 'music.' I stood there for a while. Then I gathered up my courage and walked out of the classroom. I ran to join the line that was waiting to go into the music room. I saw Mrs Major walking over to open the door. When she opened the door she looked bigger, her eyes looked fiery. "You may come in" she said sternly. When it was my turn to walk through the door she gave me a hard stare. I quickly ran over to the very far corner of the room. "Who would like to sing a song on their own?" Lots of hands shot up. I kept mine well down. I

was terrified of singing by myself. "Chloe!" "What I didn't have my hand up". "Come on! Stand up and sing *Worlds Full of Joy*." I felt like crying but I had to do it. The whole class turned to look at me. Everyone knew that I was a hopeless singer, I began to sing. A sick sound came out of me and I stopped. Mrs Major said "Come on Chloe, louder, we can't hear you". She seemed to be enjoying herself. When I finally finished singing nobody looked at me. They all knew it had been terrible.

That night I went straight to bed. I was still recovering from my terrifying day.

The next day was a weekend. Mum asked me if I wanted to go to Tosca Brown's. "No thank you" I said quickly. "I never want to go to Tosca Brown's again." "Why not?" asked my brother. "It's a long story".

By **Sophie Merrin**

Grade 3,

The Hamilton and Alexandra College

HAMILTON – VIC.

Teacher: Miss Sophie Ross

Valkryies

We soar above the darkened clouds,
Our hair tendrils of copper gold,
Our teeth bared, lips snarled,
We follow the smell of death,
The metallic tang of blood,
The bitter scent of war.

They wither upon the soaking earth,
Their screams a symphony with the wind,
Their fear a palpable force, leaking courage,
They fight like wolves,
Their broken bodies scattered,
The sour smell of sweat.

We land on the torn ground,
Our wings trailing though the gore,
Our amour tingling with shrapnel,
We hold the dying's calloused hands,
The thunder growling,
The creeping cold of death.

They spasm in agony in the mud,
Their frail hearts flutter like sparrows,
Their roving eyes searching the stars,
They die like autumn leaves,
The bullets fall like hail,
The shining shards of bone.



We collect their lifeless corpses,
Our hands streaked with crimsons,
Our eyes burning like moons,
We rise into the smoking heavens,
The hell below shrinks,
The acidic wind of war.

They walk in gleaming halls,
Their bravery in death a new life,
Their weak hands made strong,
They walk with fellow warriors,
The broken made whole,
The glittering halls of Valhalla.

We ride out again,
Our wings whispering storms,
Our eyes glowing with stars,
We follow the smell of death,
The metallic taste of blood,
The bitter scent of war,
We ride,
The Valkyries.

By **Simone Engele**

Year 10, Oxley Christian College

CHIRNSIDE PARK – VIC.

Teacher: Mrs. Sandison

*What if the **Sky** was the **Ground**?*

Below you will first notice the sky,
A pale blue and the clouds that seem like soft, fluffy cotton wool.
It is like you are walking through the mist.
But in this world, the mist doesn't float through tall stalks of lush grass.
Instead it glides through the lost blue,
As if it were to be drifting through an ocean.

Looking from above in this strange world,
Hues of greens, yellows, whites and blues can be seen.
Oceans separate most colours and divide different portions of land.

What you must be careful of are the ball of fire's incandescent flames.
Even though it is known to be full of light and happiness and gives this world illumination;
It can also create fire and cause death.

This spherical fiery blaze will rise
Into the green land and the shimmering seas.
At this time of day the whole ground will turn into colours of
Daffodils, pumpkins and sapphires.

As the bright orb sets on the horizon that lies between the sky and the ground,
Yet another elliptical like shape emerges from its darkness.
Every day a different fraction of it can be viewed.

This dull rondure is considered to be the black, grieving side of our world.
However despite all this darkness and misery,
The lead coloured globe has a relationship with magic and myths;
Which are not thought to exist.

Before this gloomy sphere rises,
The ground transforms into a transcendent spectrum,
Sister of the glowing orange floating down into the lands.
Although, this time the scorching ball will set.

If you travel up into the rough oceans,
You will be able to see amazing things.
Magnificent creatures of the seas,
Colourful coral and sea plants and planets manoeuvring beneath the surface.
If you look down while in the oceans,
You might be lucky to see the shining sphere's reflection glimmering on the bubbly surface of the clear water.

Swoop down.
You will be left in the vagueness of a cave.
When you are in a cave, phosphorescence you may still see.
Fly down once more.
Imperfect pearls can be seen all around you.
Yet they are still perfect and unique.
You can see the illumination and luminousness.
If you go to them, or leave them,
That is just many, many more incredible worlds to explore

*By **Haylei Whitehead**
Year 7, The Essington School
NIGHTCLIFF – NT
Teacher: Ms Jo Masters*

THAT smell, that God awful smell, it's everywhere. It's there in the morning, it's there at night, it smells like burning toast. I thought I'd get used to it but apparently not. It's been three months since the bomb was dropped on Massachusetts and we were told it wasn't going to have any effect as far as New York but mum told me that there have been reports of ashy smells and thick air as far as Pittsburgh.

I stand here in the middle of what used to be one of the most populated cities in the world, one of the most beloved cities that has ever existed and that has been given the famous nickname of "the city that never sleeps" I think to myself how can a city with so much life and colour feel as dull and dead as a funeral.

"Sam come on now, we have to get a move on, can't stay up here for too long", my mum yelled from across the road. Well, what used to be a road. I don't think it would be very safe to drive on now with all the pot holes and cracks in it that were caused by the bomb and the earthquakes that followed. She's always making sure I'm doing what I'm meant to be doing, for some strange reason she always thinks that I'm up to no good.

It's been another unsuccessful check-up. My mum and I go on these daily check-ups where we walk through the city hoping that we will find people passing through. We have been stuck in an underground bunker for three months not knowing where or what to do. The last thing we heard was that the government strongly advised anyone in the area to stay put so that we won't be affected or exposed to any nuclear air and that we should keep our radios on in case they try to contact us. This was about two months ago and we haven't heard from them since, I think my mum and dad are starting to lose hope.

My mum and I head back to the bunker and as I get closer to the steps I find myself having the same feeling I have every other time we leave and come back. It's hard to explain. It's sort of a dull feeling knowing that you are going to be restricted to a one room bunker for another 24 hours. Every time I open the door I hope the bunker has changed in some way or another, but it never does. My dad was waiting for us

The Great Apocalypse



when we walked in. He never leaves the bunker and my sister Louise is too young to leave. So it's always down to me and my mum.

After having stale old crackers and cheese for tea I went to see what my sister was doing in her castle made out of the old cardboard boxes. I couldn't see her so she must be inside. As I went to open the cardboard castle door my dad jumped up out of his seat with an enthusiastic scream. We all ran over to the lonely table to see what all the fuss was about.

"I found one, I found one!" This was the first full sentence I had heard my dad say in about a week.

"Hello, is anyone there? My name is Lieutenant John Cash. If you can hear me please respond with your whereabouts", said a static voice on the other end of the radio that my dad was gripping tightly. The lieutenant's voice was deep and brooding, one of the strangest voices I had ever heard. He was excited but lifeless at the same time.

"Yes, we hear you. We are a family of four and we are in New York!" my dad replied cheerfully. There was no reply. Everyone was silent and then I heard the radio crackling again.

"Okay, we have a safe base in the Brooklyn Museum. I think that would be the closest one to you. My advice would be to head there first thing in the morning and take a rag each to cover your face in case a wind storm occurs and blows some of the nuclear down from Massachusetts. I hope this helps and your journey is successful". This news was the best thing in the world. It has put a smile on everyone's face and I

think tonight will be the first night we can sleep knowing there is something to look forward to.

"Wake up Sammy, we have to get a move on!" My mum hadn't called my Sammy since the bomb was dropped, hopefully she and my dad are starting to realise that we are alive and that by itself is enough to be optimistic. We grabbed a few supplies and put them in our backpacks along with a rag and a blanket. We set off on our adventure to the museums, just like another one of our family adventures that we would have had once a month before the bomb was dropped.

We had been walking for about half an hour and I asked if we could sit down and have a snack. Everyone agreed and we found a seat on the side of the path to sit at and eat something. While we were eating my dad pulled out a drawing pad and asked who wants to play the Lewis family game which is basically charades. I couldn't remember the last time we played this and everyone wanted to take their mind off of the situation, so it was a very good idea. As per usual Emilia would get her choice of parent because she's the youngest. She chose dad so once again I was stuck with mum who was basically a lost cause. She couldn't act if her life depended on it but myself on the other hand could probably be nominated for "actor of the year". As we were playing I heard a rumbling sound coming from the sky and then the most horrific sound I have ever heard. BOOOM!!

"RUNN!!!" shouted my mum. I ran and hid inside an old bakery. I heard another 3 or 4 vicious bangs and then a monstrous rumble knocked me off my feet. I knew that these sounds were bombs and I just hoped mum, dad and Emilia all found cover. I was crouched behind the counter of the bakery for about 5 minutes and then decided to check if it had finished. I jumped up and when I was on my way to the door I felt my cheeks start to strain. My eye lids got heavy, I forced them open. Everything was spinning and then I drifted away from reality. The lights got smaller and all I could see was black.

By Tristan Halliday

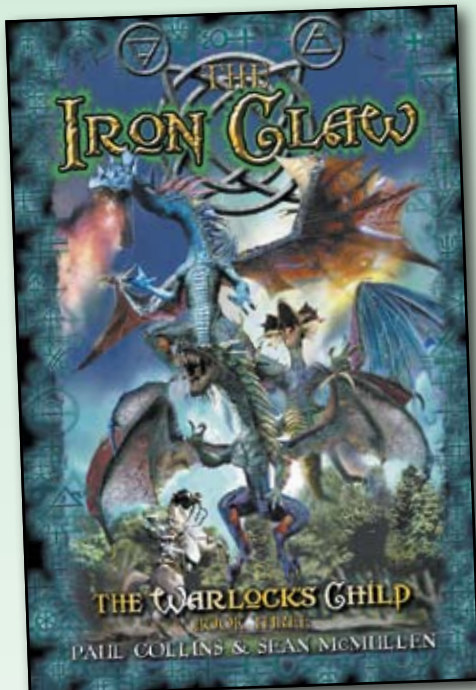
*Year 9, Korumburra Secondary College
KORUMBURRA – VIC.
Teacher: Melissa Neill*

LONELY

By **Kanisha Williams-Bryant**
Year 8, Mount Erin Secondary College
FRANKSTON – VIC.
Teacher: Ms Pudney

I am watching all,
I hear pain, I see happiness,
I tell others stories of how things once were,
And how things will become,
Slowly I walk through the ages of time,
I stand tall, yet day by day I seem to be getting thinner and thinner,
What's new what is best? I am always getting updated,
Always getting replaced by the many more of me.
I feel lost,
I am no individual,
I am no extraordinary,
For each year there are more of me to compete with,
Each year someone betters my kind,
A lonely television, a ghost on the wall.
I've lost sense of self,
I've lost my power and my greatness.
I am watching all, I walk in the footsteps of heartbreak and misery,
And in the footsteps of greatness and great madness.
Out dated, and overrated,
This I; as once told previously told,
I am simply, a lonely television.

BOOK REVIEW



The Iron Claw

by Paul Collins and Sean McMullen
Ford St, 2015
RRP \$12.95
ISBN 9781925000948
Reviewed by Emily Meldrum

When the three dragons appear over the city of Teliz they make it very clear that they are angry. Evidence has been found that humans were once again using forbidden magic – permitted to dragons only. It is easy to imagine that angry dragons cannot be ignored and this story begins with the king doing what he can to appease the fierce beasts above while ensuring his own plans are not compromised.

As offspring of the wicked warlock Calbaras, Velza and her brother Dantar are intricately entwined in the story despite their differing perspectives. Velza, known as 'The Iron Claw' behind her back, is seeking her father to expose his plans for forbidden magic but Dantar

is heading in other directions – with a talking rat!

While each chapter in the book takes on the perspective of either Velza or Dantar, the dragons also have their turn in allowing the readers to see the plot from their point of view. The reader knows that while they want to stop humans using forbidden magic they also seek a dragon chick, and even though they sense the youngster from time to time they have yet to identify its whereabouts... but the reader is beginning to know!

This six-part fantasy series known collectively as 'The Warlock's Child' is easy to read and compelling. It would suit readers aged eight upwards. For fantasy fans all the major elements are covered – dragons, warlocks, magic, good versus evil and mystery. I recommend that readers begin the series in order and beg their local library for each newly released component as available.

ESCAPING THE WAR

1921–

Sailing through the open seas,
howling winds, a gusty breeze.
A cup of cocoa in my hand,
searching for a new free land.

An image in my blank head,
I hope the war will soon end.
I sit in my cabin on the boat,
while I write a small note:

Dear reader I hope you see,
I will soon be free.
Open to a new land,
taken in by hand.

No I can't write that!
I sound like a rude brat!
I rip the paper and throw it out,
while I scream out and about.

I miss my mum very much,
I remember giving her a soft touch.
She was killed by an awful man,
because of his hurtful plan.

Then the captain walks in,
explaining that we have a win,
“Come look outside.”
Someone screams like they just died.

While I'm walking out the door,
I start to hear a little more.
Screaming, yelling and cursing too!
What am I going to do?

The people don't like us from this land,
they're not taking us by hand.
They're telling us “Go away!”
But we just got here, today!

Yes they're now taking us in,
now I know that we will win.
They're taking us to a closed place,
which doesn't even have a face.

No doors, just wire and brick walls,
only two open stalls.
“Here! You rude thieves!
Now you'll never ever leave!”

Us, all thieves?
Who would believe?
My life is this, forever and ever,
I guess they were far too clever.

1933–

This is it, I've had my life,
I've just been stabbed by a knife.
The girl pretended to be my friend,
all I know is that this is the end.

Goodbye world, I hope you see,
now I am really free.
So thank you for this long rest,
I will no longer be so.

By **Amelia Katsis**

Year 6, Seabrook Primary School

SEABROOK – VIC.

Teacher: Mr Simon Luthi

THE BOULDER

HAVE you ever wondered about the big boulder deep in the freezing sea waters? This boulder had a past... Down deep in the waters once lived a glistening sea dragon. Its delicate body zoomed through the smooth waters as if it was a tiny fish.



In the pitch black night, one small ship sailed through the crashing waves as a small boy spotted one of the sea dragon's scales floating on the surface of the water. He reached down, with his belly on the floor, to the golden scale. The scale seemed as if it was quivering under his long, stick-like fingers. Panic fell over the little boy. His legs shook madly as he loosened his grip of a pole and slid into the icy waters. Staring in astonishment he caught a glimpse of the magnificent tail of the sea dragon as he sank like an anchor to the bottom of the salty waters.

The huge monster zoomed towards him as it opened its mouth wide and froze.

Something was happening. The dragon's paw glowed and dark grey spread across its whole body. With one glimmer the dragon transformed into a huge boulder.

Many years later, still the dragon awaits a brave boy to cure this spell once and for all, so that it can be freed and again come upon its next victim.

The little boy's body was never to be seen again.

By **Ayu Hamaguchi**

Grade 4, Essington School Darwin

NIGHTCLIFF – NT

Teacher: Selena O'Connor

Ambassadors



🍷 **Krista Bell** is an award-winning author of twenty-six 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, started as a book reviewer on ABC Radio, and during that time moved to Melbourne with her family. She now reviews books regularly on ABC Radio in Queensland.

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Three Months

IT HAS been my home since I was five. Though, it's not a house. There are hundreds of people scattered about this address. New faces arrive, and old ones dissolve back into the outside world. Many come here unsure about their future and leave having found some clarity. I call them the Lucky Ones. They get to go and live in the outside world. I'm not a Lucky One.

Many straight corridors. Many corners. Walls divide the rooms, the people, and their problems. I make new friends each day. Then they leave and I'm still here. Still.

The air whips across my bare scalp as I skip down the corridors; my cool breeze. I climb the poles in the indoor playground; my trees. Apple trees bloom across the walls, while cartoon dogs and cats dash across the very same canvas. Rooms in my home are painted with an abundance of colours, for the children like me. Paintings of happy, healthy children. They are the only healthy children found here.

Mum takes me and Ted, my favourite teddy bear, to the Starlight Room. As Mum talks, I hear her pretending to be happy. Ted and I agree that she's not a good actor. The Starlight Room is silver and sparkly, like a spaceship from a movie.

They design these rooms to look original, with oddly shaped furniture and patterns on the wall. They hope it will make us feel special that we're here. But what we really want is not to be 'special'.

★ ★ ★

Sally Starlight, stares down at me as I draw. She's wearing an unsuccessful attempt at a fairy dress. The short skirt pops out almost horizontally from her waist. It reminds me of jelly as it awkwardly and unflatteringly wobbles as she moves. It appears as though someone has roughly dumped a box of sparkles on her.

"When are YOU leaving the hospital?!" barks Sally, accosting me with an unnervingly elevated level of

enthusiasm. I transform into an echidna and curl up. No. I'm a girl, with limits. Many, many limits.

I'm drawing a little girl on a white piece of paper; my mind isn't in the conversation. When Sally talks to me, she frightens me with her fake exaggeration. Her smile unnaturally broad, her nods unnaturally big. Don't even get me started on the hospital clowns that come around. I know Sally's covering up her pity. I may have problems in my brain but I still have one.

Right now, Sally Starlight is crouched down over the low, bean-shaped table, waiting for my response. She's acting as though she's interested in what I have to say.

"Three months", I answer, finally. I don't even look up. I'm absorbed in the art, the girl.

Sally Starlight's reaction pounces out of her. "That's not too long now!" she replies loudly, waving her finger at me in mocking

accusation. She's trying to make me smile, so I lift up the corners of my mouth for a brief moment. Eyes down. In her practised Sally Starlight voice she questions me on where I'm going to go.

"I don't know", I reply with honesty. A look of bewilderment crosses behind her eyes. Her smile pauses on her lips in a more unnatural way than usual. It looks plastered onto her face.

I draw a teddy bear, just like my beloved Ted, in the girl's sketched arms. She looks happier now, with a friend. She looked lonely. I would hate to be lonely like that girl had been, her only friend being the vast stretch of white.

Sally says in a flippant manner that I should probably ask my mum where I'm going to go. She thinks I haven't tried that.

"But Mum doesn't know either."

★ ★ ★

I know that one day I will leave. That is one thing that I know for sure. But if I'm leaving, I must be arriving somewhere? I trust God, I think. When Mum told me, she said I was going on a trip to heaven. I saw the truth buried beneath her words. Ever since then, I have seen the world in a new way. It seems to go faster. I have only just understood its uncontrollable speed. I won't be alone, in the white. I'll hug Ted as I leave. This way God will let him come with me.

Just Ted and me, on a trip to heaven.



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

THE APOCALYPSE

THE boy peered out from behind the building, assessing the landscape. A bird sang out from a nearby tree, and somewhere in the distance a car started up, but apart from that there was no sound. But wait – The boy suddenly stopped his survey, pausing to listen. He had heard something. Gunshots.

There they were again – rapid fire, accompanied by the sound of men yelling, yelling which was getting closer. The boy had to move.

As the boy ran, he barely noticed the direness of his surroundings – the empty, vandalised buildings, windows smashed, walls covered in a mess of dark, angry graffiti, doors hanging open, banging in the breeze. The atmosphere was eerie and seemed to crackle with tension, as if any moment some unknown terror would jump out from behind a corner. This thought caused the boy's adrenaline to peak, though not unbearably – he was used to running on adrenaline, just as he was used to being constantly on the run.

Suddenly, another gunshot split the air, one that was alarmingly close. The boy jumped quickly through the yawning doorway of a building, pressing himself against an old bookshelf. The room in which he had found himself was empty, except for the bookshelf and a few chairs which were clustered in the opposite corner of the room, covered in dust. They looked spookily like they were waiting for some unknown person – or thing – to come back to sit on them, and this thought sent shivers down the boy's spine. Whoever it looked like the chairs were waiting for, the boy did not want to meet them. There was another door in the opposite wall, though even if the boy had had time to duck through that door, he would not have wanted to venture further into the house unless he had too. The place gave him a bad feeling.

More gunshots rang outside, causing the boy to press into the bookshelf, holding his breath and praying that the beating of his pounding heart, which sounded so loud in his own ears, wouldn't give him away. He felt like an animal caught in a trap, waiting for whoever had set it to come back and kill him. He wanted to run, run as fast as

he could, as far away from here as he could get, but he knew that leaving his hiding spot would put him in full view of the enemy, and he would not last two minutes, unarmed and defenceless as he was.

As these thoughts ran through the boy's mind, the gunshots came closer – and now he could hear the voices of men, loud and confident, approaching. Closer, closer... The blood was pounding in the boy's ears, and he clenched his fists, and felt his fingernails digging into his palms. And suddenly, the room was filled with gunshots. The boy closed his eyes briefly, hoping that they would not come in – they were spraying bullets for fun, flaunting their power to please themselves and to boast to their accomplices.

The boy closed his eyes, trying to make himself seem as small as possible – and then there was a shout. They had seen him.

There was only one thing to do – run. Run like there was no tomorrow – because, if the boy was caught there would quite literally be no tomorrow. He bolted out from behind the bookshelf, making a dash for the other door, the one which he had previously thought he would not step through unless he had to.

He was almost there – less than a metre now – he was going to make it. And there was white pain in his back, pain which sent him staggering.

"I've been shot", was the last thought that crossed his mind as he stumbled to the floor. The boy felt the life leaving him, and he was gone.



★ ★ ★

"Crap, I died", Tyson Brown said, throwing his xBox controller on the couch. "Stupid game." He looked out his bedroom window – the sun was setting, bathing everything in a soft evening glow.

Not that Tyson noticed this – or, if he did, he didn't take note. The texture of light was of no interest to him – in his books, nature was overrated, something for old ladies and hippies to glorify and rave about. Sure, he knew about the forests that were being destroyed in far-away countries, just as he knew that species poached to extinction, and that his smartphone had probably been manufactured by some exploited, poverty-stricken child in a dodgy sweatshop – but those things were so far away from Tyson's reality, that he preferred not to expand his mind to think of such things. Tyson had enough to worry about with levelling up in his video games, worrying about the deteriorated state of junk food in the kitchen, and keeping his parents off his back about his poor grades, and his lack of motivation to do anything about it.

Tyson grabbed another handful of corn chips, his controller, and prepared to have another go at his game. Even if it took him to 2am in the morning, he would complete the game – he could always sleep through English the next day.

By Amelia Matheson

*Year 11, Linuwel Ruldolph Steiner School
MAITLAND – NSW*

Teacher: Martyn Badham



The BIC Young Australian
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BRIANNE GATEHOUSE

St. Augustine's College, Qld.



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ISABELLA FIORAVANTI

*St. Macartan's
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◀ **ASG Short Story Award**
MONICA RALLABHANDI
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ALANAH BYRON
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Helen Handbury Literary Award ▶
ISABELLA CREAN
 St Paul's Primary School, WA



(Above) Australian Scholarships Group
 Literary awards winners.



(Right) Judges Kevin Burgemeestre, Marjory Gardner and Elise Hurst with Millie Ng, winner of the Elise Hurst Art Award.

Photos Carol Dick & Frank Jones





**Commonwealth Bank Art Award
Painting – Senior**
TAHLIA STANTON
Ballarat & Clarendon College, Vic.



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Painting – Middle**
BARTHOLOMEW WASAGA
Holy Spirit College, Qld.



**Commonwealth Bank Art Award
Painting – Primary**
LANSE VANHALEN
Torquay College, Vic.



**Hamilton Property Group Art Award
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JORDAN WHITE
Paralowie R-12, SA

Young 2015 Australian Art Awards



COURTNEY CUMMINS
Mandurah Baptist College, WA



**Bic Australia Art Award
Drawing – Senior**
TAYLOR TREWARTHA
Proserpine High School, Qld.



**Bic Australia Art Award
Drawing – Middle**
MARIUM EL-HAJJ
Dulwich Hill High School, NSW



ASG Art Award – Drawing
SHANGHAVI RATHANTHAS



ASG Art Award – Painting
HIMANI KARKI
*Maroubra Junction
Public School, NSW*



**Bic Australia Art Award
Drawing – Primary**
ERIC YANG
Carlton Public School, NSW



**Dymocks Camberwell Art Award
Computer Art – Middle**
ANTONI CAMOZZATO
St. Michael's College, SA



**Dymocks Camberwell Art Award
Computer Art – Primary**
ALICIA SERGEANT
Home-Schooled, NSW



**Lions Club Art Award
Photography – Senior
NATALIE GRASSI**

John Septimus Roe Anglican Community School, WA



**Lions Club Art Award
Photography – Middle
RYAN YOUNG**

Bethany PS, Werribee, Vic.



**Lions Club Art Award
Photography – Primary
JACK LLOYD- PARKER**

Taroona State School, Tas.



**Judge's Choice Award:
Marjory Gardner
ENNIE LI**

Arncliffe Public School, NSW



**Judge's Choice Award:
Elise Hurst
MILLIE NG**

Queensland Academies of Creative Industries, Qld.

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SHIANNE KYNUNA**



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**Millennium Minerals
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LAURA TCHINBURUR**



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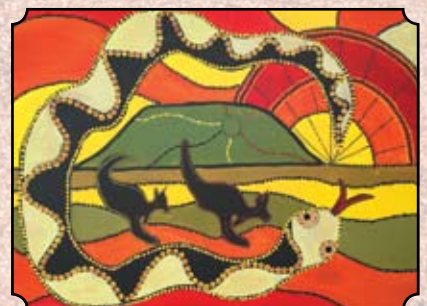
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**BC Iron
Indigenous Art Award**
JAYQUIN NELSON



**Resolute Mining
Indigenous Art Award**
ADVIT KOTHARI



**Tribunal Resources
Indigenous Art Award**
DYLAN SINCLAIR



DESTRUCTION FROM THE SKY

NEVER had the small town of Asperta seen such heavy rain. Heavy droplets pelted upon the citizens' weak roofs, where small holes had begun to appear. With a sound that struck terror into the hearts of children and adults alike, thunder rumbled like an angered god in the distance. A bolt of lightning lit up children's pale faces. It was a storm. A great, mighty storm was here, and it wouldn't be satisfied until it had brought destruction to the entire village.

The majority of frightened families were huddled inside their homes. Or at least they used to be homes. The storm had shattered windows with a single blow. Slowly but steadily, the once-tiny holes upon roofs widened. It had made several 'homes' become something closer to a swimming pool. Not nearly as damp as the floor beneath her, one girl's tear-stained face held one expression: 'Make this storm stop. I don't like it.'

She began to cry again. Her sympathetic parents knelt down beside her and began to pat her soothingly, praying that the storm would halt. Their chocolate brown dog whimpered softly as he lay down

beside them. Water now covered the shocked family up to their waists, tears not seeming to make a difference. They all thought the same thing; 'This is no place for people like us.'

Despite his usually brave personality, the child's father was shuddering uncontrollably. His wife held his hand, tightening her grip every millisecond. "I-I'll look o-outside", whispered the child's father. "Me too", said the child's mother. "I will go as well!" cried the girl, throwing her hands up to embrace her parents. "No", they said sternly, perfectly synchronised. "It's too dangerous for you." The child began to wail hysterically. The two adults sighed at each other and then kissed their daughter's forehead lightly. "We will come back", they said, though they didn't sound so sure. And they were proved wrong as the door gave way and they were caught in a current.

"NO!" shrieked the girl, who was nowhere close to the current. Her dog clutched her skirt with his jaw, preventing the current from reaching her. She could only watch as her parents were washed away into the deadly trap of water.

The girl shut her eyes and allowed new feelings to sink into her mind. The feeling of becoming an orphan. The feeling of her parent's dramatic end. The feeling of triumph the storm would feel once her parents were long gone. Then, once the emotions had made themselves at home, she blacked out...

A blackened world appeared before the girl. A twist of colour emerged out of nowhere. Unexpectedly, she inhaled a strange scent. It smelt like antiseptic. Bolting upright and knocking her snoozing dog awake, she murmured to herself. "Wh-where... Where am I?" she stuttered. Glancing around briefly, she saw friendly neighbours with scratches and cuts in their skin. But she saw no parents. Unable to conceal her tears, she let them free. Suddenly, she flung her arms around her dog and embraced him heartily, allowing her wet tears to fall into his golden fur. "Thank you", she whispered.

By Natalie Chung
Year 4, Deepdene Primary School
BALWYN – VIC.
Teacher: Mrs. Lafferty

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We can be contacted by phone on (03) 9481 1120, fax (03) 9481 1123 or email fordstr@internode.on.net

With best wishes

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A Ray of Hope

The Beginning

As the last cinder floated down to earth I wiped my face, leaving ash lines where my tears had been. Who would have thought it would come to this? The last physical remnants of my father, my last living relative, were gone, or so I thought.

Though I stood so far away from it, the fire burned my eyes and left black spots dancing before them. I wanted to cry, I wanted to scream but my throat was empty. I wanted to turn my back, I didn't want to see any more. I wished darkness would cover my teary eyes. My black, silent world. But my eyes widened even more. Standing on a hill I could see it. I could see everything and I wasn't able to take my eyes from it. I saw it falling into ruin. Brick by brick. Burnt to ash. No desperate screams of people crying for help. Just a ruin of bricks and charred wood.

Each moment with my father was lost, although it was painful and heart-wrenching, something inside me told me it was going to be all right; perhaps a ray of sunlight in the ash grey day.

Sighing dejectedly, I drag myself to my feet to find and salvage what was left of my childhood.

I cringed as I felt the warm ashes between my toes. I could still smell the burning wood.

I suppose I should be grateful I got out with my life.

The next day I went searching through the rubble, I found a small charred book beneath a splintered piece of wood, it seemed to have been crudely wrapped. Just legible on the cover were the words, "My Life's Journey by Richard Jones". Could it possibly be a book written by my father? Dad had always said that he had dabbled in writing as a teenager, because he had found it so hard to express himself in words, but he hadn't shown me any of his work.

I opened the book. Inscribed in the cover were these words, "When times are tough and things look bad, when everything seems to make you sad, you can always find me within this book, all you'll need to do is look! Within these pages my life will be unfurled, I'll always be with you, just remember books light up our world", Your Loving Dad.

Even though the cover was charred, miraculously the pages were intact. Chapter after chapter, I could feel my father come to life, I could hear his warming voice

comforting me and see his warm smile. It was as if he was alive again, guiding and mentoring me from his grave. Clutching this precious gift to my chest, tears of joy and sadness started coursing down my cheeks. I sank to the ground, no longer aware of my surroundings, time standing (stood) still. New hope and confidence bubbled up inside me and I knew that whatever life threw at me, I would survive, with Dad by my side.

From that moment on, I knew that the next few months, even years, would be tough with only fading memories and a book to remind me of what I once had; a loving family and a wonderful life. It is amazing how things can change so quickly, but maybe I had taken advantage of how lucky I was. I had an education, a family, friends and most of all the ability to feel safe. Or maybe I was just oblivious that this was even possible, but I know for sure now; this is real.

I felt a warm hand touch my shoulder. "Dad!" I swung around and hugged him, but it didn't feel right, he no longer smelt of oak wood. I stepped back confused, only to find it was my friend, Nathan.

Nathan had always been there for me, but it's not the same, I need my dad. He's



the only one who could make this all go away.

"Kloii, are you hmm okay?" Clearly he was as shaken up as I was.

"I'm fine", I say trying to be strong but end up sounding mean.

"If there is anything I—" he attempts to say.

"I'm over crying and being weak. Now, I need a game plan, I'll go stay with Dad's old mate, Bill, for a while until I sort myself out. All right?"

"If that's where you think you should go and would be comfortable, then it's fine with me. I mean you will visit won't you?", he says.

"I don't think that would be such a great idea, it would just bring back bad memories."

"Bad memories huh? What, is that what I am?", he says, letting go of my hand.

"No of course not. You know what I mean, about the house and my father?", I say slowly, reaching for his hand.

"Sure, that's what you meant!" he shouts as he walks away from me leaving me alone and cold, just as I felt seconds before.

The thought of losing my best friend was too much and I had to stay positive because in the end that may be the only thing I have left.

Before I knew it I was standing outside Bill's weathered old door. I could hear his shuffling feet moving from room to room. The smell of oak wood enveloped me reminding me of my dad and I was comforted. Hesitantly I knocked on the door.

It's been a long time since I've seen him and I'm unsure what to expect.

"Who is it?"

"It's me Kloii, Richard Jones' daughter", I reply.

Gingerly the door is opened and I see a man who I don't recognise.

"Hello Kloii?", he says gruffly. "Jeez it's been a long time. How's your dad?"

Suddenly a silent tear escapes and Bill gently brings me inside saying, "Tell me all about it kid".

Bill makes us a cup of tea as my story unfolds. He listens intently, muttering words of comfort here and there. My journey does not end here, in fact it has only just begun.

By *Scarlette Dossel*
Year 7, Emmaus College
FRENCHVILLE – QLD.
Teacher: Mrs Lee

THE CANDLE



See now, how the crows fall,
A crying, chirping funeral pall,
Over the silent parade,
That quiet, still charade.

Watch now, how the children flock,
All around like numbers on a clock,
Each one signifying something,
But meaning nothing.

But you see, it's happened all before, this is nothing new,
Another nameless face just jumped the rushing queue,
Taking the short way out,
Of this maddening rout.

And every time the unwanted circus comes to town,
A new faceless name takes the painted crown,
To entertain and please for free,
All who come to see.

The candle burns so very bright,
Throwing out a shining light,
Of a rare and precious sort,
But alas! It burns too short.

And all the shadows that candle throws upon the wall,
Do crack and crumble and tumble and fall,
Until the contented crowds go home,
And the waxy corpse is all alone.

By *Matthew Harper-Gomm*
Year 12, Kambrya College
BERWICK – VIC.
Teacher: Adele Smarrelli

MIRROR MAGIC

SOPHIE crept into the dark house, full of spider webs, knowing that she would never come out.

“It’s okay, my parents just died, that’s okay, and my Auntie and Uncle probably just abandoned me because they were moving. That’s all.”

Sophie was wrong and she knew it, Auntie Piper had always had herself in mind and Uncle Mat had always hated Sophie, so to get rid of her they threw in this creepy old, wooden house.

Sophie was a very positive girl, and she would make a good world for anyone who lived in it, even Auntie Piper and Uncle Mat. But they didn’t appreciate it, how do we know that? Well, she never went to school. Her bed she had to make herself out of newspaper and the only clothes she had were the ones that her parents gave her.

“It’s going to be okay.”

Sophie thought to herself. Then she heard a noise, an unusual noise. She shook her head but the sound was still there. She turned around slowly, frightened of something but she didn’t know what yet. It was a door; it was bright and colourful, unlike the rest of the house. It was slowly creaking open. She was amazed, and quietly she walked inside. She saw a mirror, it was oozing with goo.

“That’s what the noise was!”, Sophie said, astonished.

She quickly turned the mirror over and on the other side was a lovely version of Sophie, all in nice clothes and her hair in pigtails. She noticed she was with her parents. A tear dropped from her eye.

“I have to be strong”, she thought.

She quickly turned it over to the first side she had seen. It was Sophie again, but this time her hair was oozing with goo, her clothes were all ripped and torn, and

instead of her parents with her it was Auntie Piper and Uncle Mat.

There was some sort of ring on both the sides of the mirror trying to pull her in. Sophie turned the mirror over again. There was a ring on that side too, trying to pull her in. She jumped in the ring that was with her parents and suddenly she was with her parents at dinner. They were talking to her something about going to a fundraiser event on Sunday night. Sophie stopped for a second and started to yell at her parents saying, “No you can’t go! This is part of my life where you died, you can’t go!”

“Honey, sit down”, Sophie’s Mum said.

“You can come if you like!”, Sophie’s Mum explained.

“Okay I guess I’m just acting like a baby!” Sophie said this but she knew it wasn’t true. She was in this past and it was the day before her parents died and she knew it. But at least if she went with them she might save them from being killed.

It was Sunday and Sophie was stepping in the taxi with both her parents. She knew this would be the last day of her life. But she had gotten to the fundraiser still alive and she couldn’t believe it! She was raising money for cancer and her Auntie

and Uncle came up to her and said hello. This was not how Sophie could remember her life. Her Auntie and Uncle had always been mean to her even if Sophie’s parents were with her.

It was half way through the Fundraising Event and Sophie’s parents were slowly fading away, literally.

“No!”, Sophie screamed in horror.

Everything was disappearing now, even the world. And then she was back in the old house and saw a machine. It was a hologram! Sophie sat on a box and started crying. She was sitting on something. She felt under her and found a letter. It read:

Dearest Sophie,

It is your parents here. I know you just saw that hologram and you’re probably crying now, knowing you! Anyway your father and I aren’t dead, we’re just in a different continent now. Africa, to be precise. We were in the taxi on Sunday evening when guns started shooting. Someone apparently had stolen a valuable treasure from the museum from WW1 and was a criminal on the run. Anyway some people took us to Africa so we were safe. And we are. Come and visit us whenever you feel like it.

Love from Mother and Father.

Sophie read this note a million times when she got older and had more money than ever. Sophie being positive had made her lots of new friends and found her a job so she could afford to go to Africa and see her parents.

Unfortunately when Sophie arrived in Africa she found out that her parents were far from alive. Sophie stood at their graves and cried.

By Alice Scobie

Year 4, Korowa Anglican Girls’ School

GLEN IRIS – VIC.

Teacher: Miss Louise Hatton

The Message

WE LIVE in a world where people have changed. You can see other's deaths before they happen. It is a message, it tells you the time and the reason. You can't see your own, but people can see yours. My name is Lucas James and this is how it all ended.

I strode towards the front door of the Police Training Station, I had to teach the new recruits the ropes. But there was something strange. Nobody was looking at me. Then John Lake, my rival, walked up to me and whispered "I hope you have a great day". I couldn't understand why he was being nice to me, then it hit me. "How long?", I asked but no one answered. "I need to leave", I said and they all nodded. Then a hand grabbed my arm and I turned and saw a girl standing there. She was about 6 foot and she had blond curly hair, bright green eyes and a smile that made my insides melt. I would have thought she was pretty, except I was pre-occupied with my upcoming death. The girl said quietly "3:30 accident".

"What's your name?", I asked.

"Sapphire", she answered.

"Well, Sapphire, how about you come with me for extra protection?" I asked. She looked stunned. It wasn't every day a famous police officer asked you to walk with him. We walked back to my



apartment at a leisurely pace and started talking about our lives, I started.

"I was abused as a child... I had no friends and was always last picked for everything and I got bullied. How about you?"

"I was never popular at school but I still had some friends, I got bullied a lot and people made fun of me because I was so smart." She finished in a murmur so quiet I had to come closer just to listen. I grabbed her hand so she knew it would be okay and I pulled her to my place so we could continue talking in private. When we got there she walked to the balcony and put her head in her hands. I stood next to her and put my arm around her.

"I... I'm sorry, I shouldn't be br... breaking down like th... this when you're... you're going to die... It's just... I... I just met you but I feel like I have known you my whole life... and... and I don't want you to d... die", she sobbed.

I gently grabbed her face and held her head up so I could look her in the eye and I brought my face closer and whispered "It'll be okay." And I closed the gap between us and pushed my lips to hers. There were sparks in the air as we kissed. When we came up for air we smiled. I put my arm around her waist. I then checked the time and saw 3:29 – the smile on my face disappeared.

Then I tripped and heard a scream and my vision went black.

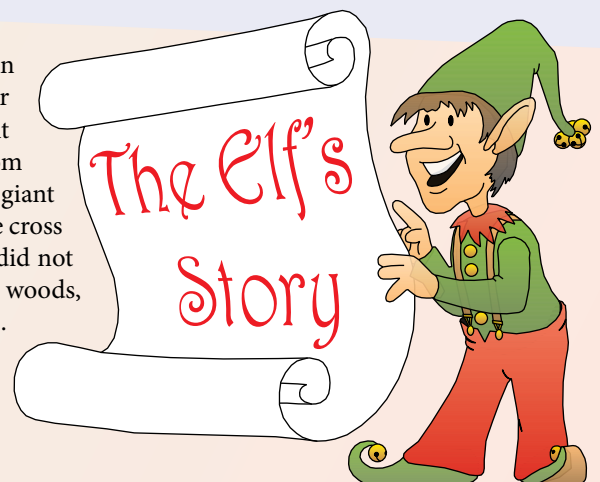
By Luke Richardson
Grade 6, De La Salle College
MALVERN – VIC.
Teacher: Mr Atkins

ONE bright, sunny morning there lived a tiny elf. He had three sisters and two brothers. This tiny elf's name was Zeddie. Now, Zeddie was only four years old so he didn't have much magic in his small fingers but he still did magic. Zeddie lived in the enchanted forest where he could do whatever he wanted, but he had to be very careful.

One afternoon Zeddie was in his colourful cubby house when he heard a thump, thump. He ran to the tiny window at the corner of the room to see what it was. It was a giant, a giant Zeddie had never seen before. The giant was huge compared to Zeddie. He wore a big red and white top which was too small for him. Zeddie was really scared and he didn't know what

to do. Suddenly Zeddie had an idea. He ran to the cubby door and slowly opened it. Creak! went the door. Zeddie jumped out from behind the small, blue door. The giant saw him and bellowed "Who dare cross my green fields". Now this giant did not know that just behind him, in the woods, there lived a whole colony of elves. The giant was just about to grab Zeddie when there was a bright, yellow flash that zoomed across the fields like a rocket.

Zeddie heard a boom! and then silence. He looked around to see what it was. The bright flash had hit the giant right in the tummy and he lay flat on the ground never to touch anyone again.



By Mae Cowan
Year 4, Essington School Darwin
NIGHTCLIFF – NT
Teacher: Selena O'Connor

On Saturday

IT WAS a sunny Saturday afternoon. I was playing with my friend Freddie outside, but then I heard a loud “Bang!”.

Rubble flew across the vast skies. On the left and right sirens flared, helicopters whirled all at the same time as people were screaming. “Wh-wh-what’s going on?” Freddie whimpered, his knees shaking like an out of control massage chair. I knew from that very moment that something extraordinary was happening.

“Shall we check it out?” I asked, wary of the possible creatures and dangers possibly lurking in the area. Freddie nodded as he warily started walking to the smoke. With every step I took I thought of all the things I could be doing other than walking straight towards an explosion. I could be at home playing online games. I could be enjoying some vanilla ice-cream, but no, instead I’m walking to a giant crater. Freddie suddenly stopped. “Why did you....” I trailed off as I saw why he stopped! Out in the middle of the crater was a huge portal, and coming out of that portal was a pure black demon with cold red eyes.

“Mwahahahaha! At last I have arrived in this measly world”, the demon said as his eyes shone in the golden sun. In almost a second he quickly absquatulated, leaving Freddie and me to stand there shocked. We stood there staring at the spot where the portal once stood, staring at it for almost five minutes. After a while I decided to break the silence.

“That was a dream right?” I asked, my voice still quivering from the shock the event had caused.

“If I saw it too I doubt it was a dream”, Freddie said. His face was emotionless, but I could tell he was bewildered beyond the extreme!

We stood there discussing the event and the actions we could counter it with.

“We can’t just leave him be though. In every single story I’ve read the demons are always up to no good”, Freddie frowned.

“ARE YOU SAYING WE SHOULD FIGHT HIM? We’re just kids, we can’t do anything!” I yelled, so loud that the birds flew away. Freddie picked up a book on the floor, on its cover it said *Book of Spells*. Freddie started to smirk.

“Oh no, you wouldn’t?” I stared at him hard, askance, but his smile would not waver.

“Oh boy!” I muttered to myself.

Our bicycles whizzed past the streets of our town, we followed the dark trail the demon left behind. Our minds were

filled with ancient knowledge of fire, water, air and earth. While Freddie’s face was filled with a smile, mine was left to wobble with fear. I quickly gobbled down the Snickerdoodle my mum gave me for energy before I face my worst nightmare, but before I completely savour the sweet cinnamon taste, I saw him! There in the middle of the street was the demon as he siphoned...

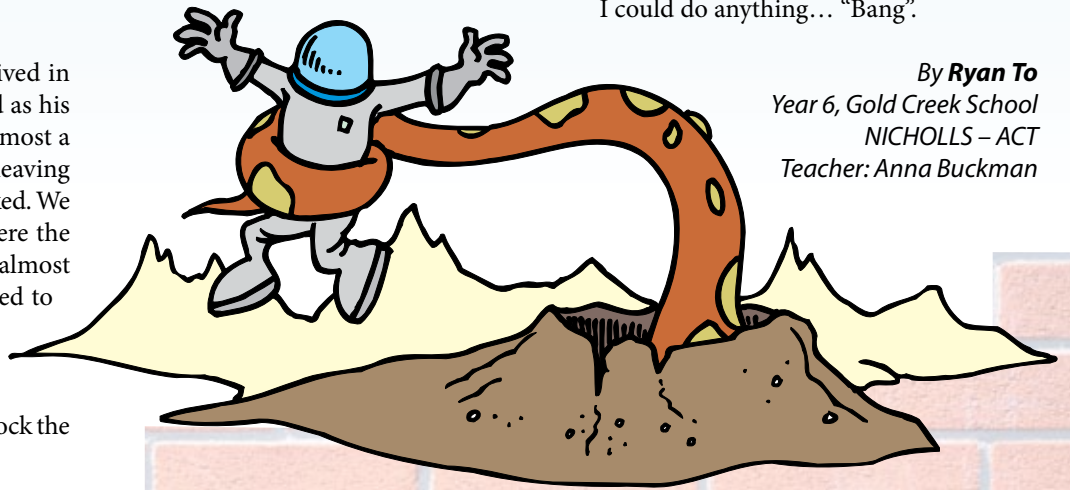
“Water?” Freddie interrupted my thoughts as the demon took gallons of water into the portal. The demon turned and stared at us.

“Charge!” we yelled in unison.

The battle raged on and on as fireballs and lightning bolts flew across the sky until at last the demon was defeated.

After that day I felt a new found pride in myself. Freddie and I received medals and also, my favourite, a weekly supply of Snickerdoodles. I guess that the ‘new found’ pride was my understanding of bravery. I knew now that as long as I tried, I could do anything... “Bang”.

By **Ryan To**
Year 6, Gold Creek School
NICHOLLS – ACT
Teacher: Anna Buckman



BRICKS, STICKS AND STRAW

O that mighty house of stone, high standing house of bricks,
Yet where would it be if not for the house of sticks?
And of the house of sticks, say what you may,
But where would it be without the house of hay?
And in the end, the house of hay, that house of straw,
Could have no more a flaw,
Than the house of bricks.

By **Matthew Harper-Gomm**
Year 12, Kambrya College
BERWICK – VIC.
Teacher: Adele Smarrelli



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The Rock Garden



THE old man sat in silence. Hunched over a street bench and shrouded amongst the enveloping darkness of the night. From a bar behind the ghostly figure, a door slammed open, ‘Eagle Rock’ exploding throughout the silent street as two men staggered onto the cement pavement, clutching at each other for support. Spotting the motionless man, they both began to snigger.

“Hey! You! Gone walkabout have you?”

“The pubs are closing at midnight mate, better get in quick to get your metho spirits!”

As they stumbled down the footpath, their voices reverberating throughout the street, the old man watched on. He seemed to stoop further into the obscurity, his dark skin almost disappearing completely amongst the blackness.

As if he didn’t exist.

★ ★ ★

Leaving a fractured indent in the cheap plastic table, the man slammed his fist into the opened envelope.

EVICITION NOTICE FORM

Mr. Bidjigal,

The Western Australian Department of Housing Commission must mandate the vacation of the premises under Section 3(a) of the State Housing Act 1946 (WA), due to increased demand for residency.

He stooped to the floor, feeling his chest rapidly rising and falling as rain began to

pound upon his small tin roof, creating a droning echo.

Shuffling desperately outside to his garden, the man crouched, staring intently at the large rocks that covered the foliage-floor. Reaching outward, he cupped a handful of damp earth, allowing it to fall back through the gaps in his fingers, momentarily calmed.

As the icy sheets of relentless rain formed a gentle hum in his head, the man stood, feeling the disconcerting presence of a pair of eyes watching him. A small boy’s pale face, peering through the foggy window of the neighbouring house.

★ ★ ★

The small boy watched on through the rainy haze at the strangely stooped silhouette. He hardly ever saw the man; he was quiet, kept to himself, rarely left the confines of his small fibro building.

But the boy had always been fascinated by the shimmering rocks of the precisely maintained garden belonging to the man with the wide nose, dark skin and deep wrinkles that carved through his solemn face.

Every few weeks, the man tended to the small rock garden that lay nestled below his porch, amongst arrays of pink and blue lilacs. He would stand motionless and silent for hours, head bowed, shoulders trembling.

Years ago, a number of small children playing hide and seek within his grove had handpicked one of the lustrous rocks centering his garden. Yelling frantically, the

man had burst from his home, erupting into a desperate rage.

Whenever he asked, his parents always spoke in the same dismissive tone.

Haven’t you heard the Seven National News Hour? He’s an ‘abo’, a ‘derelict’, a ‘dole-bludger’.

As the rain eased, the old man stumbled onto the porch, clutching two large cardboard boxes unsteadily, branded in bold red letters.

REMOVALIST.

His dishevelled hair and tattered clothes coated in a thin layer of moisture. Intrigued, the boy pushed the window open, a blast of damp afternoon air spraying his face.

“Sir! Excuse me! Do you need any help?”

★ ★ ★

The man glanced upwards, as a small boy ran across the pruned grass outside of his porch. An arm’s length from the man, the boy stopped sharply, tautly smiling, his arms folded politely behind his back and chest pushed forward confidently.

They both looked at each other for a moment.

The man. Wary. Suspicious. Irritated.

The boy. Curious. Nervous. Fascinated.

Without a word, the child skipped to the terrace, lifting one of the stamped cardboard boxes and scurrying back down the pathway.

The man stared, his lips curved into a crooked smile.

“I s’pose you can leave them boxes by the gutter.”

Once they had moved the last container back and forth amongst the grey afternoon, the boy advanced toward the blue and pink flowers. Noticing the two shimmering white rocks nestled amongst the vivid foliage, the boy reached forward, sweeping his fingers over the burnished surface.

Suddenly his fingers caught on a groove.

An engraved mark.

Letters.

A name.

The boy squinted closer.

Bindal.

And on the other rock.

Kutjal.

Standing behind the child, the man began to speak in a hoarse moan.

“The big black car came. Came outta nowhere.”

From the open window of the boy’s home, a woman’s face appeared.

“Benjamin! What are you doing? Get back

inside! Get away from there!”

The boy paused.

“Snatched ‘em. Took ‘em away to that big white building at Jigalong. I couldn’t even say goodbye.”

Looking up at the silently sobbing aboriginal man, for a moment, the child understood.

“I hope you find your children Sir. Hey! Maybe they’re just playing a game of hide-and-seek? I can help you look for them if you want?”

As chilly expanses of unyielding rain began to belt down from the sky, the man smiled sadly, amused at the child’s impulsive hopefulness.

Tentatively, he reached out to shake the boy’s hand, his black skin making a strange contrast to the little white fingers’ paleness.

★ ★ ★

The man leaves,

Removed from his land,

The rocks of the garden remain still,

Fading into sand.

By Blake Lovely

Year 12, Manly Selective Campus

NORTH CURL CURL – NSW

Teacher: Ms Carolan

The Murder at Hilcrafter Manor

MASTER Marcielle Jean was met at the front door of Hilcrafter Manor by a large woman in a tight black dress. Her make-up was running down her face from her tears, she threw her arms around the detective. “Thank god you are here!” she gasped, “My husband George is dead!” Marcielle pushed the woman off him and barged past her towards the study.

“Never fear, Marcielle Jean is on the case!” the detective exclaimed with such certainty and confidence that the woman stopped sobbing.

“His body is in the study”, she told him.

“Oh, I already know that. The scent of death is in the air and I have quite a nose for this sort of thing.”

When Madame Hilcrafter followed the detective into the study she saw that Marcielle was well under way with the investigation. Wealthy wine importer and less than loving husband, George Hilcrafter’s body lay lifeless on the hardwood floor. Leaning over the corpse, Marcielle sprung to attention when Madame Hilcrafter entered the room.

“He has been poisoned”, he declared, “by a most deadly concoction only available

from the south of France. This will be a very hard murder to solve”.

“Somebody killed him?” asked a scared looking woman in a maid’s outfit. Her scarlet hair and striking blue eyes captivated the detective. “I do not mean to eavesdrop but I was the one to discover Master Hilcrafter’s body.”

Something clicked in Madame Hilcrafter. “I caught you trying to break into our safe just last week. You want our money. You want our lives. And you are prepared to kill the both of us to achieve it!” A flash of lightning lit up the room and thunder seemed to shake the very foundations of the house. Madame Hilcrafter was taken aback by her own outbreak. “I need a drink” she muttered as she grabbed the half empty bottle of port.

“Please, let me”, offered the detective as he pried Madame Hilcrafter’s fingers from the bottle. “You must rest my dear.” The detective led Madame Hilcrafter to her husband’s overturned desk chair, standing it upright, and helped the shaking woman to her seat. He turned his back on Madame Hilcrafter as he began to fix her a drink. “All will be well again soon”, he reassured her.

Madame Hilcrafter began to drink. “This

is divine!”, she exclaimed. “Did you add anything to it?” Master Marcielle Jean gripped tightly the small glass vial he had in his hand.

“Well actually I added a few drops of a charming little concoction, quite exclusive to the south of France it is.” The smile on Marcielle’s face grew bigger. He could hold back his glee no longer. Madame Hilcrafter clutched at her chest, she began to foam at the mouth and her face went pale – almost grey. She finally threw herself off of the chair and lay still next to her lifeless husband.

Master Marcielle Jean turned to the young maid and winked. “This will be a very hard murder to solve indeed.”

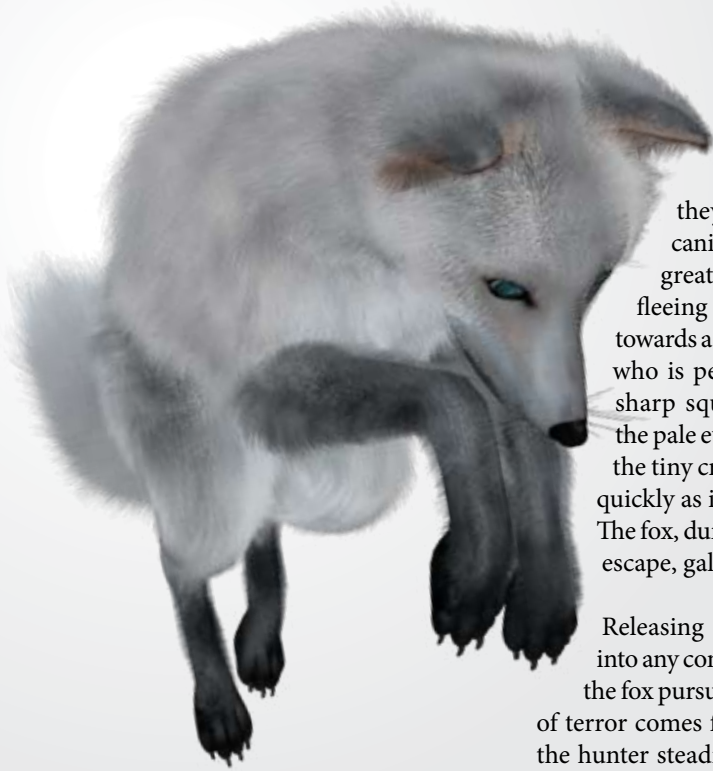


By Lachlan Snooks

Year 9, Korumburra Secondary College

KORUMBURRA – VIC.

Teacher: Melissa Neill



CHASE

they can to escape from the canine. Hurling a distance far greater than any of the other fleeing animals, the fox bounds towards a small, defenceless mouse, who is petrified in pure terror. A sharp squeak brings life back to the pale eyes of the mouse, sending the tiny creature scurrying away as quickly as its small legs can carry it. The fox, dumbfounded by the being's escape, gallops after it.

Releasing a growl that strikes fear into any concealed organisms' hearts, the fox pursues the mouse. A shrill cry of terror comes from the small beast, for the hunter steadily gains on it. Paralysed animals that watch the situation do not even try to aid the creature in its attempt to get away. A single glare from the fox represents its adamant nature that doesn't accept failure as an option. The helpless little mouse lets out another hopeful squeak, praying that some animal with a true heart would help it. But no help comes, and once again, the fox is gaining, this time fast.

The two creatures rush into a tunnel with spiders crawling around. The fox, to see fine, continuously reduces the length between the two. As for the fox's prey, it turns around, tripping on stalagmites. Then, as if the mouse has given up the chase, it falls from what looked like nothing. As a merciless hunter, the fox simply cackled.

The fox prepares its fangs to savour the taste of the mouse's flesh, not realising what has made contact with his fur coat. Prey lies underneath the paw of the canine, as still as a statue. Feeling some awkward sensation, the fox checks his fur. Nothing that he can see is causing this. So, he slowly releases his paw and sinks the tip of his sharpest fang into the poor mouse's arm. Blood steadily pours out of this wound, leaving a puddle far greater in size than the mouse below it. But this scene does not last for long, for as the fox is relishing the bloody taste, he slumps to the ground.

Awakening slowly, the mouse catches sight of a large, black and red spider that was revealed to be hidden in the fox's fur. The eight legged beast waves a single spiny leg before scuttling up a cavern wall. As it seems the fox cannot be saved, the mouse scurries away, heading back to his comforting forest home.

As the mouse arrives, a deafening cheer rises from the creatures that once fled from death. The mouse is a hero! But he denies that, bewildering all the curious animals. Showing great honesty, he says that the spider was truly the hero, for he conquered the fox without any hesitation.

"But", says the mouse, patting his wound in a proud manner, "in a way, I was a hero as well..."

By **Natalie Chung**

Year 4, Deepdene Primary

BALWYN – VIC.

Teacher: Mrs. Amos

AS A sudden gust of wind rushes through the bushes, a shadow is seen, but only for the briefest moment. Not one of the dim-witted creatures that thrive in the forest notice the glowing eyes of the shadow, for they chatter away as if nothing was wrong. A strange presence is felt by some of the creatures, but they simply ignore it. All except a young squirrel, who squeals irritably before scampering up a large tree. The squirrel is the only animal that has made a wise choice, for as the squirrel's tail disappears into the tree's bushy leaves, a fox lashes out at the creatures.

With razor sharp claws that gleam in the sunlight, the hunter crashes through the greenery that surrounds the critters. Shrieks are heard as the animals scatter, flying, leaping, burrowing, doing whatever

HOW THE SNAKES LOST THEIR LEGS

ONCE long, long ago in the Dreamtime the snakes had legs. The snakes didn't want them because they wobbled, fell over and got eaten. But one day, one of the snakes fell over then a bird came, swooped but missed the body and chopped the legs off. The snake quickly learnt that slithering was a much better way to move around. All the other snakes went to the Aboriginal people and made a deal...

'If you chop off our legs you could tell us apart from other reptiles!'

So the Aboriginal people did the deal and the snakes quickly learnt to slither.

By **Connor McInerney**

Grade 3, Selby Primary School

SELBY – VIC.



The Crocodile Faced Invisible Monster Snake

ONCE there was a boy named Luke. He was interested in snakes and would study them for hours every day. Luke knew almost everything there was to know about snakes, like anacondas are the largest and strongest snakes in the world. They can squeeze something their own weight to death. And Cobras are the most aggressive snakes in the world. A drop of cobra's venom can kill 50 humans! ... But the scariest, most frightening snake in the world is the crocodile faced invisible monster snake.

'WWWWWWHHHHAAAAAT', Luke yelled when he read that fact. 'Where can I find the crocodile faced invisible monster snake?'

Then something at the bottom of the page caught Luke's eye. It read, in very fine small red print, 'To summon the crocodile faced invisible monster snake, play the Collingwood football theme song sideways on the bagpipes'.

'Hmm', thought Luke. 'Interesting but dumb, how can you play a song sideways? And where can I find bagpipes living in Egypt?'

He flipped the page and here to his amazement, at the bottom of the page in very fine small red print, was the address for the local bagpipe shop.

The following day, during English class, Luke slipped out just after the teacher had called the roll so his disappearance wouldn't be noticed. He had the address of the bagpipe shop written down on the back of his hand and he walked the two and a half kilometres in the stinking hot weather to track down the shop.

It took him two hours in the searing, blistering, roasting, dry, sandy desert to reach the shop. Luke had unfortunately left his water bottle at school so when he arrived, crawling on his hands and knees, he was very hot, sunburnt and thirsty.

He was therefore a little miffed when the shop keeper said, 'I'm sorry, but we just sold our last bowl to that guy over there with the bald head'.

'Bowl?' thought Luke, 'I want bagpipes'.

Just then Luke looked over the road. There was a shop sign that read 'Bagpipe Shop'.

Ooops, he had come to the wrong shop. He was in a noodle shop. Hastily, Luke excused himself and went over the road to ask the shop keeper if he had any bagpipes left?

The owner replied, 'Yes, I have one left. It is a golden bagpipe but it is one hundred and fifty dollars'.

Luke gulped. He only had one dollar.

He left the shop and started to crawl home. He felt really puffed out and stopped to rest. While Luke was resting, to his astonishment, he saw a pipe. Then another pipe, then another. Three pipes in all. As he looked through the pipes to make sure there were no spiders hiding in them he saw a plastic bag stuck inside one.

'Amaze balls', he thought, 'I've an idea that doesn't involve bugging my mum for \$149.00 to buy the golden bagpipe. I'll make my own'.

He forgot all about how thirsty and tired he was and raced home. He got a roll of sticky tape and taped the pipes onto the bag.

'Wow, it's amazing, I finally did something for myself', he thought as he took a deep breath and blew into one of the pipes. The noise was horrendous, it sounded like a dying pig, but it worked.

Luke grabbed the music for the Collingwood theme song and played it sideways. It took a long time to work out but by the end of the day he was playing it perfectly. When he finally finished it he felt really good, until he felt a really big wet drooling nose breathe over him, followed by what smelt like a foul skunk fart. He couldn't see what it was.

He turned around and was face to face with a square eyed, wolf snouted lizard. Luke screamed for help but nobody came.

'Oh no', he yelled again, 'I've played the Carlton theme song by mistake'.

Then Luke remembered that in the book, at the bottom of the page in very

fine small red print, there was another message. It read that if you play anything else other than the Collingwood theme song, especially the Carlton theme song, something horrendous would happen.

Then Luke had an idea. He quickly picked up the bagpipes again. If he played the Carlton theme song sideways again, while doing a back flip, maybe the square eyed, wolf snouted lizard would disappear. It was worth a try.

This time the music came out sounding like smooth jazz. 'Not bad', thought Luke.

And it worked. Yipeeededooooo, the square eyed, wolf snout lizard vanished.

This time he didn't make a mistake, Luke made sure he played the Collingwood theme song sideways which sounded like a rap version of smooth jazz.

Right after he had played the last note, his mum called out it was time for bed.

'OK, Mum', Luke replied.

'Well that was a waste of time', he muttered to himself looking around his room, 'it didn't work'.

Luke brushed his teeth and hopped into bed. Soon he was asleep.

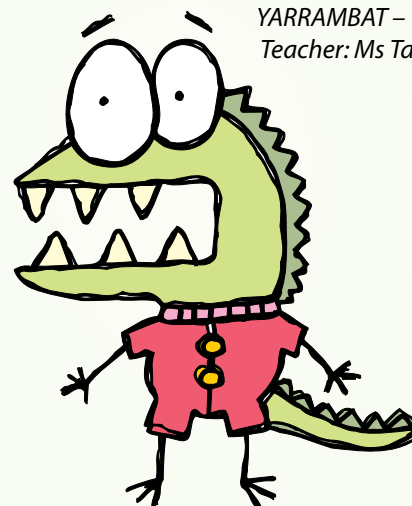
So he didn't see his wardrobe door slowly open, he didn't hear the creak of the floorboards as something slithered towards his bed and he didn't see his bedclothes start to move... because who can see the crocodile faced invisible monster snake...?

By **Max Godden**

Year 3, Yarrambat Primary School

YARRAMBAT - VIC.

Teacher: Ms Tatter



HHEY, I'm Blue! No, I'm not sad! My name is Blue. Blue Moon. Everyone says I have a really cool name. It isn't because of my strange last name, it's because my parents, Owl Moon and Full Moon are king and queen of the werewolves. Everyone thinks of werewolves as innocent people who, on every full moon, turn into succulent wolves. Pfft. How silly is THAT? We are real werewolves. We control when we transform and we don't go cuckoo. I was born with a silver, crown-shaped birthmark on my forehead and that's how we tell who is were and who is not. I've never told anyone about my ancestry but today, I may have let it slip!

So here's what happened, my best friends Jasmine, Kitty and I were sitting in the library in the far corner. As usual, Kitty was ranting on about how annoying her third-grade sister Kate was. "She always treats me like I'm younger than her, but we're 3 years older than that, and..."

Jasmine was listening intently to both of us, as I was trying to cover up why I wasn't able to come to her house last night. "Well... um... I had a very important meeting with... err..."

"Blue, there's something fishy going on and you're not telling us. I thought you trusted us!" Jasmine said firmly.

I sighed. "But I thought you'd freak out if I told you."

"AHA!!" Kitty cried, "So you ARE keeping something from us!" she smirked. "So?"

I sighed again. This day was not going to plan. "I'll only tell you if you promise not to tell anyone, even your parents." Kitty started to inhale, so I kept going. "Or your dogs."

My friends both nodded eagerly. "I am Blue Moon, the Princess of the werewolves. We're not the creepy ones you see in movies, real ones."

Kitty laughed uncontrollably. "HA! That's hilarious! Great cover story, but, ha ha, you have to, ha ha, tell us the, ha ha, the truth!" and she burst into a fit of giggles. "If you don't believe me, I'll show you!" I scolded. Kitty nodded in between giggles. I lifted my long, black fringe, revealing my silver birthmark. Jasmine rubbed it with one eyebrow up. "Oh, but there's more!" I



said, and I started to transform. I felt the familiar rush of my wolf blood coursing through my veins. My arms bent and I fell forward. My legs bent the wrong way, and my black hair morphed into a shining silver mane. A tail sprouted from my back and I was all grey. The transformation was complete. I smiled wolfishly at them, and they were gasping. "That's incredible!" Jasmine cried.

"Oh my goodness, I think I'm scared of you!" Kitty whispered. I felt proud to be a wolf, but deep inside I knew I had frightened my friends.

The next day was Monday, and I was nervous. For the first time ever, I had cut my fringe last night. Before I got to school, I went to the Silver Lion to pick up my friend Yuki from her parents' restaurant. As I stepped in, the delicious aroma of various soups, rolls and noodles filled the air. I sighed. "Hi Blue!" I jumped.

"Oh! Hi, Yuki! Are you ready to go?" I asked.

DING! DING! DING! That was the bell. I looked up from the doodles that I had done in my notebook. Annie, the librarian flung open our classroom door. "Annie! What brings you here?" asked Miss Bambino. Annie's face was pale and she was puffing. "Yesterday I saw a wolf in the library, about to eat Jasmine and Kitty! Are they all right?" she asked. Jasmine waved and Kitty gave a small smile. "What about Blue? Isn't she normally with them?"

I winced. "I was so scared I uh, ran into the next aisle."

Annie left the room. "Wow!" Yuki whispered to me, "A wolf attack, that's awesome! The most exciting thing that ever happened to me was when Mum taught me to make her famous noodle soup!" I giggled.

The next day, Kitty and Jasmine found me crying in 'our corner' of the library. "What's wrong?" asked Kitty.

"Are you hurt?" asked Jasmine.

"Emotionally," I sobbed. Jasmine giggled, but then her face became stern. "Why?"

"It's just, I - I - I don't know. I don't like hiding who I am. It doesn't feel right. I want people to respect werewolves, not fear them!" I cried.

Kitty put her arm around me. "We'll find a way. I promise." Then, a switch clicked in my head. "Lightbulb!" I cried. "Jazz, doesn't your Mum work for the government and is friends with the Prime Minister or something, right?" I asked, bouncing up and down.

"Yesss..." Jasmine said slowly. I squealed.

"This Saturday are you guys free?" I questioned. They both nodded. "Okay. Jazz, we need your Mum, at your house, this Saturday."

That Saturday, we were all at Jasmine's house.

"Okay. Mrs Kelan, werewolves are real, and I can prove it. Please don't scream or be scared." I told Jasmine's Mum. Again, I started to transform. The rush of wolf blood coursed through me. Mrs Kelan stared with her mouth open as I finished the transformation.

"Mum, we want you to do something to make people respect werewolves." Jasmine said calmly.

"Well, I am amazed. I will do what I can..." she said, and fainted.

Seven weeks later, werewolves were roaming around everywhere. "Obviously, the werewolf reality shows were a hit!" said Kitty.

"Are you kidding me?" Jasmine cried.

"You guys have TOTAL respect." She said, indicating me. I smiled. I was finally happy.

By Charlotte Walsh

Year 4, Korowa AGS

GLEN IRIS - VIC.

Teacher: Miss Louise Hatton



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