



What's Your Story?



2016 Seepe Walters
Short Story Contest



*The Future.
Starts Now.*

Produced by Innisfil ideaLAB & Library
December 2016

Seepe Walters



Seepe Walters was a well-respected and dedicated member of the Innisfil community until her death in 1995.

She was involved in many different facets of Innisfil life: the Historical Society, 4-H, the Women's Institute, her Church, her family and various political arenas.

It was her love of writing and all things literary which led her to journalism at the University of Toronto. She then worked as a freelance correspondent with the *Daily Construction News*, taught English to immigrant children, and worked with the Barrie Literacy Council, before helping to found the Innisfil Friends of the Library.

Seepe Walters' commitment to her community and specifically her legacy to the Library, which is now supported by two incredibly dynamic Friends of the Library groups, is being remembered through the Innisfil Public Library's Seepe Walters Story Writing Contest.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Innisfil IdeaLAB & Library would like to congratulate all the students who entered the 15th edition of the Innisfil ideaLAB & Library's Short Story Contest. This contest has been known as The Seepe Walters Short Story Contest since 2004, in memory of the woman who was a driving force behind the creation of the original Friends of the Innisfil Public Library group.

The contributions of many have made this contest and this publication a reality. The Innisfil ideaLAB & Library would like to thank the Friends of the Library, and the Ferraro family for their ongoing support and sponsorship. A special thank you as well to our judging panel: Kelley Armstrong, Sigmund Brouwer, Shane Peacock, Richard Scrimger, and Kevin Sylvester, some of Canada's finest children's and young adult writers; we greatly appreciate your time and thoughtfulness in reading the entries. And finally, the efforts of all the wonderful young writers. Although there is only one name on the Seepe Walters Award, you are all winners for having the courage to pursue your writing dreams.

Many thanks to all those involved. And to everyone else, we hope you enjoy the stories submitted to the 2016 edition of the Seepe Walters Short Story Contest.

Kathy Hammer
Librarian, Curiosity, Literacy & Learning
Innisfil IdeaLAB & Library

DISCLAIMER

The viewpoints and opinions expressed in these stories are those of the individuals themselves and do not necessarily reflect the viewpoints and opinions of the Innisfil Public Library or its staff. Some content may not be appropriate for all audiences. Parental discretion is advised.

Table of Contents

Seepe Walters Short Story 2016 Winner

The White Lie by Abigail Hariprashad (Gr. 11)1

Junior Division Grades 3-6

Super Siblings by Railyn Hodson-Walker (Gr. 4)5

Leo and the Lego Chronicles by Oliver Booth (Gr. 4)8

Dumb Kid by Riley Ma (Gr. 5)10

When I Put a GoPro On My Grandmother by Rosie Wise (Gr. 6)14

Last Dragon Standing by Luke Little (Gr. 4)15

Intermediate Division Grades 7-8

Out of the Desk by Sylvie Potje (Gr. 7)17

Dark Shadows by Olivia Hupponen (Gr. 7)22

Fire Safety by Carson Bowering (Gr. 7)24

Endangered by Amy Van Donkelaar (Gr. 7)26

Extraordinary Life by Simbarashe Musewe (Gr. 8)31

The White Lie

By: Abigail Hariprashad (Gr. 11)

The house was dark and the silence was killing me. I ran everywhere in the house, checking every room, screaming her name as I went. I stopped near the door again, and gripped my head, basically ripping out my hair. Where could she be? What happened to her? I can't live without her! I thought about what I did this morning, then I realized something. I didn't lock the door! I started to cry until I heard a rough knock on the front door. I wiped my eyes, smoothed out my hair and opened the door. In front of me stood a police officer. There were four others in my driveway, guns all raised.

Beep Beep Beep I woke up to the familiar sound of my alarm clock. The darkness of the bedroom surrounded me. I put my hand on the spot next to me on the bed, it was empty but still warm. I heard pans moving in the kitchen and smelt the delicious aroma of sizzling bacon. My beautiful wife has always been an amazing cook. I am so lucky to have such an intelligent and talented woman all to myself. I've asked myself every day, for three years, how she chose *me* out of all people. Smiling, I got out of bed and went to the kitchen. I stopped in the doorway and watched her cook. Even through the blinding lights I could still see her beautiful face.

"This smells delicious." I said

"Have a seat, I'm almost done." She smiled

"Okay"

When she finished, she brought two plates of bacon and eggs and together, we ate in silence. This has always been our daily routine: I wake up to find her cooking breakfast, we eat in silence, I get ready for work, she gives me my briefcase and a kiss on the cheek, I stop by a coffee shop for my co-workers, I get to work and then I come home to a delicious dinner and a very clean house. My wife doesn't like to go out very often because she gets terrible anxiety attacks, so she spends her time inside painting, drawing, reading and cooking. We don't have a T.V because she said it is a waste of time and money. We also don't have a home phone, nor does she have a cell phone.

"Are you done with your plate?" she asked

"Yes, thank you." I graciously replied with a smile

"Your welcome. You should start getting ready, your clothes are already laid out for you."

"I am so lucky to have you." I said looking at her

She didn't reply, she just continued to clean up. I got up, pushed my chair in and went back to our bedroom. I started to get dressed, thinking about the first day we met. I remember it like it was yesterday.

Five years earlier

I was starting my fourth and final year at university. I was moving my stuff into the room I was sharing with my friend. We were carrying something heavy, I think it was a desk, and needed help opening the doors as we went.

"Man this thing is heavy." My friend breathed.

"I know" I replied, equally tired.

No one offered to help us, until a heavenly voice asked,

"Would you like me to hold open the doors for you?"

I turned around and my breath was taken away. In front of me stood a very beautiful first year girl. I stood there, frozen, with my mouth hanging slightly open. It was love at first sight. Since I wasn't saying anything, my friend replied,

"Yes, please. That would be very helpful."

She helped us and before she left, I asked her to hang out. She agreed and we hung out every day for two years.

It was on the second anniversary of our friendship that I proposed to her. She was hesitant at first, but she eventually said yes. She left university so we could move here for my job. She has sacrificed almost everything for me and I'm very thankful.

"Here, let me do that." The voice I fell in love with said.

She saw me struggling with my tie. I watched her carefully as she untangled it and retied it, eyes focused with slight determination. She straightened it out to perfection and stood back.

"You look very handsome." She said with a small smile.

"You look beautiful." I replied, noticing she changed out of her pyjamas

We walked down the hall and to the front door. Handing me my briefcase, she gave me a peck on the cheek and said goodbye. I took out my keys to lock the door. It is the only one in the entire house, and there are a few small windows. The door is metal and locks from the outside, my wife said it makes her feel safer knowing there is only one entrance

and exit. As I was locking the door, I noticed something go under my car. Walking to it, I bent down and saw that it was only a cat. I took it out and let it run off into the woods.

The sky was still dark and the winter air was chilling. The silence was eerie and the house looked black. We have no neighbors and our house is surrounded by a large forest. When we were looking for a house, my wife fell in love with this one because of its location. I'm not very fond of the forest though. At first I adored it, but the more I looked at it, the more I could see things moving. I've never seen it in the light so I always thought it was a dark forest. The trees are like teeth, waiting to eat me whole and its darkness suffocates me. Shaking the thought away, I got into my car.

About twenty minutes later, I arrived at the coffee shop. Waiting in line, I watched the news on the T.V behind the counter. A segment on a missing woman was playing. She had long, brown hair, green eyes and was very slim. She looked like she was in her early twenties. Her parents are still looking for her, even though she has been missing for a few years. I can only imagine what they are going through. I think I'd go crazy if my wife went missing. I'd miss her deep green eyes, deathly black hair and gentle smile.

That thought lingered on my mind during work. I couldn't think of anyone taking my wife away from me. One of my co-workers came in placing a stack of files on my desk. This irritated me a little. I took the files and put it in the corner of my desk, making sure each page is aligned with one another. Someone knocked on the door,

"Hey man, you wanna come to the bar with us tonight?" my friend asked.

"No, thanks, but I'm going home." I replied apologetically.

"Oh, you goin' home to your wife?" he asked with a smirk.

"Yeah, why?" I asked with slight irritation.

"It's just, I haven't met her yet. I want to see who my best friend married. It's the least you could do since I didn't get invited to your wedding." He replied.

"It was a private wedding and we didn't want anyone invited, but I could ask her to stop by the office to meet you guys." I replied.

He nodded and left, giving me a smile. I mean, it wouldn't do her any harm. Besides, I want her to come out of the house for a little. I finished work and drove home. The sky is just as dark as it was this morning, and the weather didn't get any warmer.

I walked up to the door, taking out my keys. I was about to unlock the door, when I noticed the door was slightly opened. That can't be right, I'm the only one who has the key, and the door can only be opened from the outside. Panic overcame me, my heart was beating a mile a minute and I was only thinking about my wife. Storming into the

house, I called her name. Once, twice and nothing. The house was dark and the silence was killing me. I ran everywhere in the house, checking every room, screaming her name as I went. I stopped near the door again, and gripped my head, basically ripping out my hair. Where could she be? What happened to her? I can't live without her! I thought about what I did this morning, then I realized something. I didn't lock the door! I started to cry until I heard a rough knock on the front door. I wiped my eyes, smoothed out my hair and opened the door. In front of me stood a police officer. There were four others in my driveway, guns all raised.

"Are you Aiden Malley?" the man asked in a gruff voice.

"Yes?" I replied in a confused tone.

"You are under arrest for the stalking and kidnapping of Olivia Smith."

Now why would my wife lie to such good men?

Super Siblings

By: Railyn Hodson-Walker (Gr. 4)

“Heavy rains moving towards Vancouver” said the news reporter on T.V. Alex groaned. The almost non-stop rain had been going on for days. He went to find his younger sister, Jenny. “What are you doing?” asked Alex. “I’m looking at the school website, there’s a science fair in two months,” she replied. “What should we do it on?” He asked. “I don’t know, maybe Robin will.” When Alex looked in Robin’s room he found her on her ipad, “What should we do for our science fair project?” Jenny asked. “Well at school we’re learning about rusting problems.” Said Robin. “What do you mean?” Jenny asked puzzled. “All the rain is rusting statues, and they’re falling and causing thousands of fatalities.” Robin bossily answered. “How is this supposed to help?” Alex questioned. “We can make a project on something that stops an object from rusting.” “Did you just say we?” asked Jenny. “Yeah, science is my thing. You could learn some stuff from the expert.” bragged Robin. “Alright, alright, come on let’s get started.” Jenny suggested. All three siblings walked downstairs to the garage and got Robin’s old chemistry set out. “You used THIS dusty thing to win first place in the science fair last year?” Alex asked with lots of attitude. “Whatever!” Robin said. They unpacked the whole kit. “Are you sure we should be using car wax and oil?” Asked Jenny nervously. “It’s okay, I know what I’m doing.” Robin said. When they had added everything, they shook it up. There was old, rusty car parts everywhere in the garage. This whole room was filled with test subjects! Their first experiment just made the object smell like spoiled milk. The second experiment coloured a rusty door handle blue. Alex ran over to grab a rusty hubcap in the corner. “Help, it’s too heavy.” he said. The girls made their way to their brother. They started to pull the car part to the table they were using when they all cut their hands on their test subject. They tried their best to ignore the stinging and get working. They added a few more ingredients to their project. “One more thing and our experiment will be complete!” Robin said with enthusiasm. Just as they added the last ingredient, the project bubbled over the top of the tube and into the kid’s cuts. “Ow! It stings!” Jenny whined. “It is getting late, we should get some sleep.” Alex said. “Good idea.” Robin said. They couldn’t sleep that night. Usually the pitter-patter of the rain put all the children to sleep, but they were too worried about what happened that night to sleep. When she woke up, Robin had a hot shower to ease her nerves. She turned on the water, and just to make sure it wasn’t too hot, she put her hands in front of her. Usually, the water would hit her hands and run off. But, this time it didn’t. This time the water stream curved up just before it touched her hands. When Robin pulled her hands away from the water, the stream was normal. When Jenny woke up, Alex threw a toy at her. She put her hands in front of her face to stop it, and the toy started floating in mid-air. Jenny put her hands down and her brother’s

“weapon” dropped to the floor. Jenny and Alex stood there in amazement for a moment. Alex went into the backyard to run around. He started off slow, then ran as fast as he could. When he returned to his sister, she asked, “How did you do that?” “Do what?” Alex asked. “How did you run so fast? Do it again, and I’ll videotape you.” said Jenny. “Okay.” Alex said. When he came back, Jenny showed him the video. “That blur of colour is me?” He asked. “Yes. Let’s go find out if anything happened to Robin.” Jenny suggested. Then they tip-toed into Robin’s room and found her half asleep. “Robin, did something happen to you?” asked Jenny. “Maybe, did something happen to you?” Robin answered. “We’ll only tell you if you tell us.” Alex said. “Does it really matter? I mean, Mom and Dad might go in the garage, we should go clean it up before they get mad.” Robin anxiously said. They walked downstairs only to find a hubcap that was rusty the night before, but now looking brand-new. “Wait, wasn’t that the rusty hubcap that we experimented on?” Alex wondered out loud. “I think so, we left it right there,” Robin said. They raced upstairs to look for their parents and tell them that their project was a success, when...they heard the radio say “More storms moving quickly towards southwest B.C.” “I’m going to get the computer so we can look at the radar.” Robin said. “That’s not just a storm, that’s a hurricane.” Alex said as he looked at the computer. “Okay, when you asked about something happening, I think something happened to me. Come on, I’ll show you.” Robin said. Robin turned on the tap and put her hand under it carefully. The water stream shot straight up and hit Alex in the face. Robin asked, “What do you think it is?” “Maybe you can control water.” Alex answered. “Now show me what happened to you.” Robin demanded. Jenny raised her hands to her face and the clip in Robin’s hand started floating. “You can create force fields!?” Robin asked. “Robin, come race me outside.” Alex said. Robin and Alex stood right next to each other and, on Jenny’s cue, took off. Alex was back at the finish line within seconds. “I can’t believe it!” Robin said. They went back inside. “These power are really amazing. We need to do something that helps out.” Jenny said. “If I controlled the rain, Jenny made force fields around the statues, and you ran super fast while putting the anti-rust residue on the ruined objects, we could save lives.” Robin said to Alex. “Please correct me if I’m wrong, but that helps.” Jenny added. The kids ran back to the garage and re-made their third project. They poured a drop onto a rusty bumper. The rust started running off the surface. After exactly a minute, all the rust was gone. They made as much of the potion as they could. Once everything was used, half of the two-car garage floor was filled with jars, bottles, and test tubes of the Anti-rust residue. “This has to be enough.” Alex said. Then they made a belt out of duct tape that could hold the containers of their mixture. “Now for the fun part.” Robin said. They started trying to help Robin control her water power outside. After almost an hour, Robin had learned how to direct water. It took only 20 minutes for Jenny to learn how to make a force field around another object. “There are hundreds of statues in Vancouver.” Robin said, scared. “But, they’re really close together. You could direct the water away from half and I could make force fields around half. Alex is so fast that he can probably cover all of them,” Jenny comforted. “We have to get going if we want to make it before the hurricane

does. If we don't, the statues will become way too loose, get whipped around by the hurricane and they could kill people," Alex said nervously. They rushed to town square and then split up. Robin remembered that her parents were shopping at the mall, and the hurricane was moving right towards it! Robin ran to the mall and concentrated on moving the water back into the ocean. Jenny looked back, worried. "We can't turn back now," Jenny thought. She gazed at her older brother, and for the first time in a long time, he looked worried. "It's okay, we'll be alright," Jenny said. Alex smiled. When they could see tons of statues, they stopped. Alex squeezed Jenny's hand and disappeared. Jenny took a deep breath and focused on making a force field around every single statue in sight. Small Bubbles appeared around the statues that only she could see. The rain passed by without rusting the statues. Alex was running so fast that he was sweating when he was pouring the potion on to the statues. He opened the bottles and splashed the potion on all of the statues one at a time. He raced back to town square to find his sisters. After Robin saved her parents, she rushed back to town square and found her little sister. Robin asked Jenny where Alex was. "I thought he was with you." Jenny answered, scared. "Hi. Is everything okay?" Alex said from behind them. All three siblings hugged. Thousands of people came out of safe places and thanked the three kids for being so heroic and saving all of them. Their parents pushed through the crowd and tightly hugged their kids. They walked back home holding hands. The girls helped Alex take the belt off. They pulled up the radar on their laptop and saw that the hurricane was gone. Robin yawned and said, "Who cares about the science fair, I got something even better." "Let me guess, superpowers?" Jenny asked. "No, an opportunity to hang out with the bravest kids in the world." Robin said.

The End

Leo and the Lego Chronicles

By: Oliver Booth (Gr. 4)

I've been stuck in this box for days. I have no idea where I am but something spikey pokes my back and a brick sticks into my ribs. It's dark and cold and now there's a big hand reaching in to pull me out. The big hand belongs to the boy who got me for his birthday and who is finally playing with me.

My name is Leo and I'm a Lego Minifigure. I am a person just like you, except made out of Lego.

I thought my time was up but when I looked around I found myself in a room surrounded by bricks of all colours, shapes and sizes. Other people were scattered and body parts were everywhere. Suddenly, I was stuck on a Lego base plate then I saw something big and it was a WW1 tank and I was pulled apart and put back together in a WW1 British uniform! I was in the middle of a battlefield with a bunch of other Lego people, all in different poses. The ditch in front of me was filled with soldiers but the soldiers were all shooting at me! I realized that nobody was moving and that's when I saw the boy leave the room and dash upstairs. All of us were scared. I asked the soldiers beside me "where did the boy go"? One soldier said "Who knows?" We waited for him to come back to decide what happened next.

It all seemed like a strange dream. I kind of hoped it was. Until the next day came when I woke up and I was somewhere new! I looked around but I was by myself. Suddenly, I found myself aboard the Titanic with cold water soaking my feet. I looked down and saw that I was wearing a Captain's uniform. I freaked out and did not know what to do, so I did nothing. Everything moved in slow motion and I did not see the boy anywhere. I started to walk to where life boats and people were scattered everywhere. Some were in the cold, dark ocean and some were in the life boats. Two hours later the boy came back with a box and set it on the table. He opened the box and placed down more people, all dressed in the same type of suit as me. Then suddenly, the boat that I was on was ripped off the side of the great ship. I was scared but then I was replaced with a different person and seconds later the big hand threw me into mid-air and back into the bin. Phew, I was happy not to go down with the ship but not happy to be back with the pointy bricks and body parts. I waited and waited.

A few days later the boy's big hand reached into the bin and grabbed me. I was placed inside a building at a desk with a mug stuck in my hand. I looked outside my office window and saw cars, trucks, people and the CN Tower! I realized I was in Toronto and I was so excited! Except that I sat there for days. I tried to be patient and wished for my next adventure. What would it be, swinging from vines in dense jungles? Fighting zombie mummies in ancient Egypt?

I'm realizing that I have had some great adventures thanks to the boy who decided to finally play with me that day. I think the boy has had great adventures too thanks to finding me in the bin.

Until next time, would someone please get me out of this boring office?

The end.

Dumb Kid

By: Riley Ma (Gr. 5)

I'm dumb. That's what everyone says. Even I know it. Ever since senior kindergarten, I was known as "Dumb Kid". Almost no one knows my real name, which is Harold, by the way, since everyone calls me my self-explanatory nickname. I'm currently in grade 6, yet my spelling is reely bad. I have a slight learning disability, where I get frustrated easily and can't really comprahend things I don't understand. I also have a sister. She's in grade 2, and she loves playing horrible pranks on me. The only ones who, firstly, like me, and secondly, actually know my name, are my friends Lily and Jeremy. Lily's nice, smart, and pretty, with brown hair and brown eyes. Jeremy is short and frendly, with blonde hair and blue eyes. Even though Lily's my friend, I don't really get to hang out with her, as she's usually surrounded by a group of popular girls. So we were having lunch, and one of the popular girls beside my desk said "Gross! Like, what's that like, horrid smell? Like, eww!". I opened my lunch bag and inside, what I saw made me sick.

It was a pear. But the gross part of the pear wasn't because it was rotten and smushed.

It was full of worms

And beside the pear, there was a slip of of paper. I picked it up. Written with pen (but smudged with pear) in cursive said, "I hope you enjoy your lunch! Love, your wonderful sister, Aaliyah". I shook with anger and embearressment. Everyone around me pushed their chairs away from me, except for Jeremy. But still, even he looked like he had just lost his appetite. I stood up, and ran to the boy's washroom.

I looked in the mirror. Looking back at me was a boy with short brown hair who looked depressed. He looked like a loser. I shook my head, and I sighed. I felt tears rolling down my cheeks. Just then, Jeremy walked in.

"Dude, are you okay?" he said to me. "It's fine." I said unconvincingly. "Don't worry, the lunch supervisor, Ms. Declaw, came in and emptied your lunch of the pear" Jeremy said reassuringly. "She's currently helping to wash out your lunch bag. She's super nice." "Well, thank god" I said, relieved. "Now all I need to do is resist 'bout two weeks of teasing. Sounds like so. Much. Fun." I added sarcastically. We walked out of the washroom back to our class. My dark blue lunch bag was hanging on the sink, dripping with water. One of the popular girls, Melody, exclaimed, "Hey look at DK(Dumb Kid)! What else does he have in his bag, huh? Maybe a mouldy pizza?". Jeremy glared at her. "Cut it out!" He shot at her. "Oh, so you're sticking up for him, eh?" Holly said mockingly. "I thought you would anyways, you baby!". Jeremy shook with anger. I patted his back. "It's ok. She's not worth it. Let's go back to our seats. Next period is art." We returned to our seats, and I got out my pencil case full of art supplys, as well as my pencil. Ms.Quinto came in carrying a mug of coffee. I personally have secret beliefs that instead of milk, she

adds coffee in her cereal. That's how much she likes it. "Okay, class," she started off, taking a sip from her mug (more like a gulp) and placing it on her desk. "Today we are going to make mood drawings. Mood drawings are when you take a specific mood, for instance, proud. Can someone tell me a colour that represents proud?" Lily and several other people's hands shot up. "Yes, Lily?" Ms. Quinto said. "Green" Lily replied. "Good! Now, why does green remind you as being proud?" Ms. Quinto gently pressed. "Well, green is known as a happy-ish sort of colour" Lily replied logically. "And I imagine that when you experience a moment that triggers you to be proud, you won't we found crying of sadness and anger." The class tittered at her joke. Holly nudged her and grinned. We began our art. And guess what I chose as my emotion?

Sadness.

The day dragged along. I bumped the ball right out of the boundaries during volleyball in P.E. At last, it was time to leave. And guess what. I missed my bus. I was late because I went to retrieve my lunchbag from the classroom. So I stood in the bare tarmac for about 30 minutes, waiting for the bus to return. When I returned home, I took off my shoes, thundered up the stairs, dropped my bag in the middle of the living room ("Pick up your bag, Harold") picked up my bag, stomped to my room and threw my bag on my bed, angrily approached my sister's room down the hall. The door was slightly ajar. I pushed it open...

...and a bucket of ice cold water splashed on my head as the deafening *bang* of the bucket hitting the floor rang through my ears. My sister burst out laughing. "Got you again!" she snickered. That was it. I couldn't handle it anymore. I looked at my sister, my new shirt dripping with water, shivering from the coldness of it. Anger surged through me, and my coldness seemed to have vanished. I picked up the bucket, which still had some water in it, and chucked it at her laptop. I heard her scream with anger, I heard my parents thunder upstairs, and I heard myself run to my room and slam the door.

I was grounded.

No electronics for 3 weeks. Orders of my dad. He scolded me for what seemed like three hours. My mom, on the other hand, was sympathetic. After dad had finished his scolding session and I had changed, my mom came in. She knew I didn't act like this. She knew something was wrong. She came to me, sat on my bed, and asked me in a soft voice, "What's wrong?". So I told her. I poured out all that had happened, from the pear to the water. I cried on her shoulder half the time. When she heard about my sister, she looked as though she was swelling with anger (which I was fine with), but she listened to me until the end. She looked at me, said "I know it's not your fault" and hugged me. It made me feel so good, to get this affection. I hugged her back. "You wanna go have dinner?" she asked me. "I'll order pizza. Cheese. Your favorite.". I nodded, starving. I hadn't eaten anything except for a measly container of applesauce from the snack bin. If there had

been anything else, I would have devoured it. We went downstairs, away from the sound of my sister pouting to Dad in her room about her computer. Away from my wet clothes. For the first time today, I was happy.

The next few days were very uneventful, including me having to do three pages worth of math problems as homework and me (once again) hitting the volleyball in gym to the wrong place. This time it was fire alarm. The deafening *BRING BRING BRING BRING* of our fire alarm pounded in our ears as we evacuated the gym and stood out in the heavy rain, waiting for the firemen to clear us while we heard the rain splatter on the portable roofs with a *plunk*. These couple days also went very slow because I wasn't allowed to touch my iPad. At least my mom was able to convince my Dad to let me watch the television. One of the things that I was dreading in school was that in four days, we were going to have a math test. Oh no.

Have you ever noticed that when you are dreading something, time seems to speed up? That's what I felt like. Four days seemed to pass in the time of two. Before I was ready, Ms. Quinto had Melody hand out copies of our multiplication and division test sheets. I looked at the front page and wrote my name and date with a shaky hand. Harold. Thursday, December the 4th, 2016. "Alright, begin!" exclaimed Ms. Quinto.

I got eight questions right. Out of thirty.

I got a retest to do on Monday.

I studied right when I got home. I headed towards my room after setting down my bag on the couch and picking it up again ("Harold, how many times do I have to tell you! Bag in the closet!"). I narrowly missed a water balloon placed on my wooden chair, (no doubt that it was put there by Aaliyah), sat in my chair after disposing of the water balloon (by putting it under Aaliyah's cushion on her desk chair), and wrote down a whole bunch of long division and multiplication questions on a sheet of lined paper. Then I asked my mom to help me. And she did. She is the best teacher/mom ever. I usually ask dad math stuff, he will just tell me the answer, but Mom, she helped me get the answer for the question AND understand how to do it. She helped me through every question. You may be wondering this, but, well, why didn't I ask the teacher when I didn't understand? Well, it was because I didn't want my friends to look down at me. I didn't want them to dislike me, even though they probably never would. I was just worried. When we finished the page, I felt as though I had known this so well that I could teach this (not really). We continued to practice whenever I finished a snowball fight with my mom and sister. Like, we would come in wet and cold, and mom would make us hot chocolate and teach us some math while Dad complained about the trails of slush going through the kitchen. When Monday came, I felt ready. We were having math again. Ms. Quinto handed me the test. But this time, unlike anytime before when we were given a test, I felt confident. Confident that I could bring back at least a twenty out of thirty. My hand didn't shake as much when I

wrote my name and the date. I looked at the first question. $9 \times 8 = ?$. I wrote down 72. Time seemed to drag along, but for some weird reason, I didn't mind. It wasn't as though I was having fun, it was just, now that I understood most of the questions, it wasn't so bad. By the time I finished, since we have math at the end of the day, it was time to leave. I handed in my test, got to the bus on time (for once), sat with Lily (thankfully, none of her friends rode the same bus as her), and chatted with her about the *star wars* movies while secretly sneaking some gum to one another. When we reached my stop, I waved goodbye and sprinted back to my house. I opened the door, actually remembered to take my bag to my closet, and approached Mom, who was making something that smelled delicious in the kitchen, and said to her, "Thanks, mom, for teaching me multiplication and division. It really helped. I owe you." My mom smiled, kissed my head, and told me that it was nothing. I proceeded to my room, but was blocked by my sister. Her bottom was soaked. "HAROLD!!!" she screamed as she stomped her foot. "WHY WAS THERE A WATER BALLOON UNDER MY CHAIR CUSHION!!!!". I suddenly remembered me disposing of her water balloon under her chair cushion. "REVENGE!" I laughed as I bolted past her to my room and locked the door. I chuckled happily. The next day at school Ms. Quinto came to me with a smile on her face when I entered the classroom. "Harold," she said. "You got Twenty-seven out of Thirty on your test." She beamed. I could have jumped for joy; I was so happy! During lunch, Jeremy (despite the "No sharing food" rule) gave me a caramel filled chocolate chip cookie to share. I couldn't stop stammering my thanks. And you know what? I think things might look up for me from now, though I'm sure I still won't be 100% happy. That's fine, I'll just try!

When I Put a GoPro On My Grandmother

By: Rosie Wise (Gr. 6)

One bright and early morning I woke up and had an amazing idea, to see everything that happens in my grandmother's day. So I decided to put a GoPro on her head and see what happens; these are the results.

9:00 she woke up and she immediately installed the GoPro camera. She began her day by taking a shower, but trust me, you don't want to see that. Then she ate breakfast (more like drank breakfast) she had a cup of coffee and a piece of multigrain bread and butter, of course this was followed by the obligatory dose of Restoralax. By 10:00 she was ready to take her morning "power" walk. She started walking and stopped walking at the frightening sight of an old man, shirtless, running with his pet beagle. She obviously stopped and started to talk to the man. She asked where he got his dog and what the dog's name was. The man responded "his name is Bruce and I got him from the breeder." My grandmother didn't realize that the dog wasn't on a leash! The dog jumped on my grandmother so hard that she fell down and the dog stood on top of her licking her face. She was hurt and so upset with the dog that she started to scream and cry. I might be considered a bad granddaughter for this but, I thought it was hilarious and I was laughing my head off. By the time she fully recovered and walked home it was 11:00 am. She was hungry again so she prepared her dentures to have a snack. The options on the table were dry toast, or dried prunes or for a treat, dried apricots. My grandmother likes dried fruit. I saw her sneak a hidden donut inconspicuously into her mouth. I don't think she realized the GoPro caught all of this on video. She once told me she only eats food that aren't dried but only after she is very upset (I would call this comfort food). Due to the fact that my grandmother no longer works as a cat therapist she has a lot of down time to do whatever she desires. My grandmother has recently taken on the difficult task of sheep herding. Grandma said that to sheep herd you need a stick and a lot of patience. She loves the fact that when she tells the sheep what to do they actually listen (unlike my grandfather). It's 2:30 and it's time for her to take a nap because after snacks she becomes instantly tired. The GoPro is crying for some action. It's 4:00 pm and she finally gets up to go to the washroom (I guess the Restoralax worked). She walked to the kitchen for some afternoon tea to wake herself up. The tea wasn't strong enough to wake her up so she decided to be rebellious and add some sugar to it. At 5:00 pm she drove to the panty and brassiere store, it was buy one get one free so she bought five panties and five brassieres. The ladies who worked there looked older than antiques (she fits in just fine there). It was 6:00 pm when she started to head home for dinner. She finally made it home and ate toast and jam for dinner. She brushed her teeth, went to the bathroom, took a few pills and some more Restoralax and went to bed. It's been a long day (in her mind). I know now that every time I come to see and visit her it truly is the highlight of her day!

Last Dragon Standing

By: Luke Little (Gr. 4)



Here I was, standing alone, in the darkness of a cave, hoping the hunters would pass. My name is Lavea, and I am the last dragon alive. Both my parents had been killed, and now I was what most people would call a lone ranger. I have been on the run for the past year, running from a group of hunters called the Cheetah Squad. They were a dragon hunting group, and all they wanted was gold and riches. They had tried to kill me multiple times, but each time, I had gotten away.

Bang! The next thing I knew, a harpoon net was flying into my cave, heading right for me! The net collapsed onto me, anchoring me to the floor. I gave a loud shriek as the men trampled into the cave. They took metal ropes, and tied me up. Soon enough, I had passed out.

When I woke up, I found myself in some sort of prison. I tried to stand up, but I was chained to the wall. Then, I realized that I wasn't alone. About 5 guards were sitting outside the cell, each one with axes in their hands. Slowly, I sat up to the best of my ability, hoping they wouldn't notice. I would have breathed fire at all of their red-shirted backs, but I still couldn't will up enough heat to get fire.

Suddenly, a guard turned around. When he noticed me, he flexed his muscles, and opened the door to the cell. He had some kind of veil in his hand. All of a sudden, I realized what the veil was for. The chains were only locked because there was no liquid in the lock! He unlocked me, and right away, he tied me up, and said, "My master wishes to speak with you." I roared loudly, trying to get him to change his mind. He lifted me up off the ground, and brought in a cart. He dropped me into the cart. I roared one last time, but after that, the guard tied my mouth shut. I decided the wise thing to do was to answer all the interrogation questions honestly. I knew what he wanted, but I didn't want for him to have it. If he hadn't killed all the other dragons, I would've been fine with him taking one of my teeth. When we got to the main room, I started to realize just how run down

this dump really was. There were broken ornaments and vases everywhere I turned, and legs of chairs, and what seemed like human bones were scattered across the floor.

We reached a big throne, and sitting in it, was a boy who couldn't have been any older than 12. "Hello," he boomed. "I welcome you to my palace. Please take a seat wherever you please." I started to shift away, but the guard put a firm hand on my arm. I let out a soft roar, but nothing more. This king had a presence that I thought might make me pass out. He put a hand out, and touched my nose. Immediately, I lost all my sense of smell. I tried to roar, but something was restraining me! I started to panic. I thrashed around madly, trying desperately to do anything to defend myself. "I guess we will have to do this the hard way." said the king. He pulled out a sword, and started trying to hack out one of my front teeth. I immediately realized his mistake. He had cut the rope that held my mouth shut! I quickly started roaring, and thrashing around like a stuck rat! The king and I fought a long battle, but I somehow managed to do something truly amazing.

I took a big breath, and blew as hard as my lungs could blow. The king started to shrivel up like a salted leech! I roared, and bit at the guard. He scampered away, and I roared once more, to let everyone know that I had finally defeated the king. Suddenly, a strange shape appeared right in front of me! I soon realized that this dragon image looked exactly like my mama! I roared again, but the image of my mama hushed me. "Lavea, I have come to let you know that you are in great danger." said my mama. "I have strict orders from the lord of the Underworld to lead you to your destiny as dragon king. You are not alone." my mama started to fade away, but I stopped her by saying, "Why did you ever leave me, mama?" I asked.

"Honey, I had to. I couldn't let them get to you. You were too young." a tear started to roll down her face.

"Mom, I never-"

"No." my mama stopped me. "It's all my fault. I shouldn't have left you. I am very sorry. But please, follow the North Star. I will meet you there."

"Okay." I responded as the image faded away. I got up on the windowsill, spread my wings, and leapt out into the open.

THE END!!!!!!

Out of the Desk

By: Sylvie Potje (Gr. 7)

“Ringgg!” All the school supplies in Hank’s desk woke up with a start.

“It’s time for me to rise and shine, and make you lot look boring!” said Hila Light, the vibrant, drama queen of a highlighter.

“Watch your shiny mouth, because Ernie is here to rub you out!” warned our so-called “tough guy” eraser.

“Um... sorry pal, but erasers can’t erase highlighter.” said practical pencil Newton.

“Ze penzil is right” said Monique, a French fashionista pencil.

“Wanna hear a joke?” said Blue Crayon.

“NO, PLEASE, NO!” screamed Huey and Luey (my pencil pals) because our crayons have a reputation for being annoying.

“Yesss!” chorused the crayons.

“What does a crayon do when he’s tired?” Blue Crayon asked. “What?” screeched his colleague crayons.

“He *cray-YAWNZ!*” Blue responded before bursting out laughing.

“Hee-Ha, Hee-ha, Hee-ha!” squeaked 63 stubby sticks of wax. Blue Crayon looked proud. Everyone else groaned.

“Come on, that was terrible.” That was me, Francesca, a mechanical pencil. Everyone agreed, except the crayons, who were still hee-hawing like angry donkeys.

Suddenly, we heard a rumbling noise, like millions of rocks slapping on concrete. Five plump, pink, tentacles shot into the desk, grabbed me and pulled me out past my jealous friends. Hila’s bright face turned to an envious green as I was pulled past 64 open mouthed crayons and one wide-eyed eraser, and.. WHOOSH! Out of Hank’s desk into glorious sunshine! I was the chosen pencil! I was the best utensil! I was... back to being a silly pencil in a second grader’s grimy hand who, at the moment, was trying to carve his initials in his desktop with my plastic tip.

“Ooo-kay, class!”

Saved. Hank stopped carving, and looked up at his curly-haired, make-up covered teacher, who apparently was going to teach them cursive w's. I know cursive w's already. I thought anyone could do them, they're so easy. I was wrong. Hank's were messy and he forgot how many bumps they have. The letters looked like electrocuted worms, not dainty little w's with curly wings. I cringed. Hank's grip on me was tightening, and his palms were sweaty as he chewed my rubber rump in frustration. I wanted to scream, but if I did, the secret lives of school supplies would slip. Everyone would know that some inanimate objects could think, move, and act. The lead in my bones felt like elastics about to snap.

"It hurts!" half of me wanted to scream. "Don't tell!" protested the rest of me. "Can't bear it!" "Please, no!"

"OWWWWWWWWWWWWWW!"

Every 7 year old in the class looked at Hank. It took me a while to realise that my last thought was out loud! Just when everyone was turning back to their work, a cheeky voice rang out, clearly from inside Hank's desk.

"Aww shucks, Francesca! Ye really blew it! The nasal voice with the slightly Irish lilt could only belong to Stubby. Stubby... how should I say this? He is not the sharpest pencil in the desk, both physically and figuratively, because he is *deathly* afraid of the sharpener. If he hadn't said anything, everyone would have accepted that the noise had come from the hallway. But the dullest pencil ever had to blow the fate of all utensils out the window! I took some deep breaths and when I opened my eyes, every kid in the room and the teacher were staring at me nervously.

"What, you've never seen a pencil taking deep breaths?" I snapped and then wanted to bite myself. Why did I speak? That was the worst thing I could have done! Everyone started backing away slowly.

"I'm calling the police, class!" Mrs. Makeup-face screamed. "Call the exterminator!" Hannah cried out.

"Call the principal!" shrieked Lucy. "CALL THE MUFFIN MAN!" Hank yelled. "HA HA HA HA HA!"

The class cracked up. Second grade humour was worse than Blue Crayon's. I rolled my eyes and something caught my attention. Every single school supply in the room was inching out the door. I scrambled to catch up.

"Hey, Newton, pal, what's going on?" I puffed. Pencils don't have legs, you know.

We stumble-hop balancing on our tips. It is exhausting work!

"Walter... the ruler's idea... something about a rebellion... we are all sick and tired of being thrown away, broken, or filed down to stubs." Newton managed to pant.

“Really, I’m just in it for the pizza. Half a slice says we win, Huey!” Luey exclaimed. “You’re on!” Huey agreed. You can tell they are brothers. Always competing. And boy, have they ever *not* gone through the trash on pizza day?! They love pizza.

The parade of school supplies grew bigger as stray pencils joined from other classes. “Hey, Walter, where are we going?” I shouted into the crowd of lead and rubber, but my cries were drowned out by a gruff voice.

“ARGGH!” It was MacGerty, the giant custodian, who doesn’t like it when the students leave supplies on their desks. You can imagine how he felt when we trailed colourful lines or graphite streaks on his floors. Everyone wobbled a little faster. We heard footsteps that echoed off the walls like rocks falling in a cave or Hank drumming on his desk. MacGerty was chasing us. We all stumble-hopped a fair distance, but just when we felt safe, our party heard a whimper. We looked back and saw Carnation Pink, the youngest crayon, dangling upside-down over the trash can, only suspended by two of MacGerty’s grubby fingers and crying in fear.

“Help Meee!”

It is at these times you wonder what is really better. Hanging by an angry man’s greasy fingers or plummeting to your death in a trash can, too far away to call for help? Waiting with the knowledge that sometime you will be taken away, ground up, and dropped on a stinky landfill.

We had to rescue her, we just had to! Pink was the youngest crayon, the prettiest, the cutest. She was only an infant, and her twin brother, Baby Blue, was wailing.

“Get back to your class, NOW!” MacGerty growled. “WAA-AA-AA”, shrieked Baby Pink. All of us stared as the crayon-hater loosened his grip on his captive. Suddenly, a miracle happened. Our ruler, Walter, bent backward, with Stubby on the 27cm mark. The scotch tape taped down one end, the one without Stubby. They were forming a catapult!

While the captor started to drop Pink, Stapler stepped off the end of Walter, and like a cannonball, Stubby shot off the ruler. With perfect aim, the little pencil flew through the air, knocked Baby Pink to the floor, and struck MacGerty in the face. In unison, every pencil, marker, eraser, crayon and other supply in the school said, “WE DECLARE WAR!” The courageous, new army proudly marched through the halls, leaving MacGerty with a mouth so wide you could stick a ruler in it. I saw Hila and Monique whisper something to Walter, our General. He nodded and they rushed off. We marched more. Actually, it was more like hopping, but we had the spirit.

“Shhh!” hushed voices were saying. I turned and saw that we were in front of the office, where two old ladies, Miss Humpwart and Miss Dumpwart were secretaries. Dumpwart turned her head. We were kind of hard to miss, not what you see every day! “Hey Franny, look out there!” Miss Dumpwart exclaimed.

"I'm busy Gertrude," Miss Humpwart replied snobbishly.

Dumpwart was confused. "Didn't you give me the enrollment packages?" "Which you should be working on!" Miss Humpwart snapped with a glare at Dumpwart. Something caught her eye. US!

"AAAAHHHHHHHH!"

"Franny, they could..." Franny fainted.

"Oh," was all Dumpwart said. But in her mind a plan was forming.

"We could make them work for us!" Dumpwart breathed, barely louder than a whisper. She gazed dreamily at the stacks of paperwork, imagining pens scribbling in signatures, dates, marks. And herself, on vacation. To Hawaii, or Cuba. I stopped listening. This was bad, really bad! Us? Paperwork? While greedy old Dumpwart was lounging in Hawaii? Or Cuba? Not fair.

A couple minutes later, we reached our destination, the school dumpsters. But wait, something pink and shiny caught my eye as we rolled flat under the garbage dumpster. Just out of sight from the playground, a hot pink Barbie castle towered over us. Hila, who had slipped away from our army at some point, was poised in the balcony.

"Welcome to your trench house, soldiers. I found it on the side of the road, with the help of Buddy, our doggy friend here." She gestured at what I thought was an old shaggy carpet.

"Cool dog, *Vile*-a, but I am NOT with a capital "N" living in a Barbie dream house, as an army no less!" Ernie snapped.

"Sleep in Buddy's mouth for all I care. He likes to eat feather brains anyway!" Hila shot back, before continuing her speech.

"Anyway, I will appoint leaders now!" she said in her perky voice. "Shouldn't we vote for it?" I asked.

"Yeah, who said you were queen?" "Let us choose!"

"Vote Kevin!" "Pick me!"

"I am pointed, that would be good!"

"BLUE CRAYON, BLUE CRAYON, BLUE CRAYON!"

"What about Francesca? She started it!" "Definitely not! She might mess up again."

“STOP PEDZELS!” a familiar French accent rang out. “Both Francesca ‘ere and Stubbie deserve a second chance! Zey both messed up, but remember last year when ze crayons were singing when class started? Ernie ‘ere rolled out of the desk once.

Isabelle drew a picture on a boy’s spelling test. We all make meestakes, but when zey are accidents, we are not to blame! We can only prove ourzelves worthy again! Let our friends redeem zereselves now. I nominate Stubbie and Francesca as Majors! To Francesca and Stubbie!” Monique declared.

Tears came to my eyes as the army saluted.

“To Francesca and Stubbie!” they agreed.

The next day, we marched into battle proudly lead by General Walter, Major Stubbie, and yours truly, *Major Francesca!* By now, the whole world knew our story. It was televised on the six-o’clock news. Many people supported Miss Dumpwart’s idea of us working for humans making our campaign even *more* important! Walter gave us a pep talk this morning.

“We fight with words, actions, courage, strength, bravery, but not with violence or harm!” he declared, and we were off.

All 64 crayons rolled in rainbow order, drawing pictures for kids and telling jokes.

The pencil crayons all worked together on giant banners with slogans such as: “Sure Pencils Are Not People, But That’s Not The *Point!* ”

“*Ink* Before You Act. Pens Are *Dye*-ing To Be Your Friend!”

I also gave a speech. “We may look different on the outside, but we all have life, all have feelings, all have ideas. Some say we are different. Some say we are the same. It doesn’t matter though, neither does appearance nor background, nor ideas. It is not the *point*. Do the *write* thing! Treat everything fairly!” I pronounced and the world erupted in cheers.

THE END

Dedicated to my own special pencils, Monique, Dipsy, Isabelle, HUEY, Luey, Classico, And most of all, FRANCESCA!

Dark Shadows

By: Olivia Hupponen (Gr. 7)

“137, 138, 139”

A strange, small girl named Quinn counted her steps walking home from school. “140, 141...141” She stopped, questioning her counting, in front of a peculiar A-framed house or, rather, a mansion.

Quinn passed this house everyday but this time it was quite different. As she looked closer, squinting her eyes, she saw there was an orange glow coming from the highest window which could easily be the fourth floor. As she examined the house even closer, her eyes drifted to the address on the front door and realized that the address had changed. It was no longer 25 Court road as usual, but 63 McKnight which just happened to be the address of the neighboring house across the street from Quinn’s house.

“No matter” thought Quinn as she decided to keep walking. But, as she turned to continue, she found her path blocked by an old scrawny looking woman who looked about the age of one thousand. As Quinn jumped, the woman spoke in a hoarse crackled voice “Something wrong dear?”

“Umm” stammered Quinn “I – I – w-was just...” Quinn thought for a moment...she didn’t want to say the wrong thing. “I was just going home” she said in a slightly more confident voice. However, she knew the moment the words left her lips, she had said the wrong thing.

“And where do you live dear”? asked the woman.

“Umm...” Quinn said again. Then said as fast as she could, “*Sorry that’s private information gotta go. Bye*”. She ran and didn’t stop until she reached the foot of her driveway and noticed the car was gone.

As Quinn walked across the front porch, she saw a small piece of parchment wedged between the welcome mat and the deck boards. It read:

To Quinn,

Your father and I have gone out for the night. There is a casserole in the microwave. Please get yourself off to bed. We will see you in the morning.

Love, Mom

Two hours later, Quinn finally finished her home work and cleared her dishes away from where she ate dinner on the couch. She started to head up stairs to change and get into

bed, when she heard a crack from her bedroom. Running up the stairs with slight caution, she opened the door to her room to find a large rock and mud on her carpet. Rushing to her window to see who had thrown it, she saw the old A-frame house right where 63 McKnight was suppose to be. It had the same orange glow coming from the highest window except this time she swore she saw a shadow duck out of the light. Quinn felt a huge jolt and her stomach felt sick. She had heard rumours about no one ever going in that mansion for decades.

“Who could that be? Who threw that rock?” This question nagged her tremendously.

Hours had past and it was now 1:30am. Quinn could feel her feet hitting the cold wet asphalt of her driveway. It was raining. Quinn saw the headlights of a car switch on, this distracted her from the house. As she turned back to it, she saw the orange glow flicker and go out. Quinn blinked hoping it would return but it didn't. She took another step forward and realized she had reached the foot of her driveway. She took another step, and another, until she was less than a ruler's length away from the old eagle shaped brass door knocker of the A-frame house. As if not noticing it, she reached to grab the brass door handle and turned. The door slowly creaked open to a large dimly lit corridor filled with waxy lit candles. Quinn, hands shaking, palms sweating, kept walking until she reached an old wooden door. Hesitating before opening, she twisted the knob and kept walking. Five steps in, she heard her steps duplicating. Quinn stopped, but she could still hear footsteps coming from the floor above. Three seconds later, they had stopped too. Quinn took two more steps, so did the thing upstairs.

As if in a trance, Quinn followed the steps above and heard them stop. As she stopped too, she found herself in front of a long line of pictures hung on the wall. The first one read “house matron” and was a picture of an elderly woman looking much like the one she had seen earlier that day. The rest of the pictures looked the same except older each time. Examining each face carefully, Quinn was startled back to her senses as the footsteps above began to walk again. Quinn, still terrified, kept walking as well, and winced as she stubbed her toe on the edge of a staircase. Quinn looked at the staircase for a moment then started climbing until she reached the second landing. It had a small room with a large dresser and a small window in the centre of the room. She leaned in curiously but, just then, she saw something move in the room and she felt a sharp stab in her gut! As she looked down, she saw red blood staining the front of her white nightgown. Feeling the walls closing in on her, she dropped and took her last breath...

Quinn was now walking down the line of pictures except one was added. A small picture of herself was placed beside the elderly woman she had last seen and her label read “house matron”. As she reached out to touch the label, she found her hand going straight through.

Fire Safety

By: Carson Bowering (Gr. 7)

This story was based on true events...sort of.

Now, this is a story about two nitwits (I was one of them) who thought that it would be funny to play with fire, but they had no idea what was in store for them. It was a sunny Fall Sunday afternoon in the province of Ontario, when my dad (who has a big brown wiry beard) thought that it would be a good idea to have some father-son time with me and my brother, Corbin... but oh was he so wrong. My dad said that we would be clearing some brush and having a bonfire with it at our property that he just bought for our new house. During the drive there, I kept hoping that this trip wouldn't be boring like the last one, because last time we went to the property it was gloomy, wet, and miserable. We had to get bright orange rain gear and all we did was walk around hitting stakes into the ground which was very boring, we were all very thirsty, and it seemed to be going on for hours. But I didn't know that it was going to be even worse this time.

We drove up the gravel driveway to the property and hopped out of the truck. My dad went through the plan with us, "I'll be clearing the brush with the weed wacker, and you two" he said pointing to me and my brother, "will be picking it up and putting it into a pile." For about an hour of cutting it, picking it up, and putting it into a pile we were finally finished. My dad looked very tired after cutting down all of the brush on the acre property and sat down on a big tree stump. "Well...you better...go get...the lighter...and the jerry can," he said between big gasps of air to Corbin. Corbin walked off and came back with a candle lighter and a big red jerry can. He handed the lighter to my dad, and he pushed the button on it but...nothing happened. No flame. He tried again and again and again but nothing happened. "Dang it!" he yelled allowed, "I'll have to go to the store and go get some lighter fluid, don't do anything *stupid* while I'm gone." He set down the lighter, walked towards the truck, got in, and drove off.

I grabbed the lighter from where he set it down and pressed down on the button, "hey!" I said to Corbin, "it's working!" A small flame had come out of the nozzle, and a big smile was growing on Corbin's face. "Don't you think that dad would be proud of us if we started the fire?" I thought about it, and it seemed like a great idea! "Brilliant!" I exclaimed, but then I thought of an even better idea. "Hey...what if we made two piles, and then we made a gasoline trail between them so that when we light the gasoline trail, it'll burn both piles at once! wouldn't that be cool!?" He smiled again, "awesome!" We separated the pile into two different piles. Corbin grabbed the jerry can and dumped the gasoline onto one pile, and then the next. Then he made a line of gasoline in between the two piles of brush like I said. We then grabbed some cardboard and newspaper and put it onto the piles. My brother pushed the button on the lighter and set the flame on the line of gasoline. *FOOM!* as soon as my brother set the flame on the line it engulfed the two piles into flames, almost getting us and sending billows of smoke into the air. "Too much gasoline," he said, "uh oh" I said. There was a bunch of embers

that had shot out of the fire that had hit the ground making little tiny fires on the long grass.

“Quick!” I said, “stomp them out!” We jumped, stomped, and trampled on them but they kept coming up no matter how hard we tried. I didn’t know why until I realized that my brother kept spilling the contents of the jerry can onto the ground, which was starting even more fires which deserved him a smack on the head. Just as we stomped out the last of the fires, we heard a car horn, my dad came back with the truck. He got out of the truck, red in the face, looking like a rambunctious bison with his big wiry beard. He was gaping at the giant fire, which was now sending so much smoke into the air you could hardly see. “Wha...” he spluttered, “are you proud of us?” I asked, “do you like it?” “Like it!” he shrilled “*LIKE IT!* no I don’t like it you could’ve gotten hurt or...or... *KILLED* or something!” Corbin’s smile was gone, and it was replaced by a sad frown. “I just thought y’know...that you would be proud of us because we started the fire all by oursel”

“AIEEEEE!” I was interrupted by a very high pitched scream from beside me. Corbin was writhing on the ground, his ankle engulfed in orange flames. “Corbin!” I yelled, “remember what Sparky the fire dog taught us, *STOP, DROP, AND ROLL!*” He tried but he was in such a panic he looked like a fish that wasn’t in water, he was flapping his arms and moving like he was doing the worm. He had probably tipped the jerry can again, making a trail from the fire to his ankle. “Quick!” my dad said, “Pull off his pants!” “WHAT!” I shrieked “I’M NOT PULLING OF HIS PANTS!” “just do it!” he yelled back. So I grabbed one pant leg and my dad grabbed the one that was burning. “HEAVE!” he yelled, and we pulled off his pants showing of his glowing white thighs that have never seen the sun. I stamped on the pant leg that was still burning, and when I looked up I saw a horrific scene. “Jeez Corbin don’t you wear underwear?”

Endangered

By: Amy Van Donkelaar (Gr. 7)

Chapter 1 – Stolen

“Daddy “asked Lily “Tell us the story about the two kidnappers.”

“Okay” sighed their father, Zack. “So, one day long ago there was a small, poor town called Pennington.”

“That was where you grew up, right daddy?” questioned May.

“Yes, May.” answered Zack “So as I was saying, there was a poor town called Pennington. In this poor town there lived a couple of kids. And guess who they are?!”

“You and Aunty Honey” chorused May and Lily.

“Very good” exclaimed Zack. “So Honey and I lived with our parents, your grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Brown. We lived in a white house on Meadowland Street. And, we all had a great life but when Honey was walking to school a strange car followed her. I was 15 at the time so I went to a high school”

“What is a high school” asked Lily.

“A high school is a school with harder work and you would go to school earlier than normal.” explained Zack

“Back to the story now, so your Aunt Honey was walking to school and when she got there a man dressed in black got out of the car. And they grabbed Honey! I’m walking to school when out of nowhere I hear a loud ear-piercing scream. I ran after the car, and I saw Honey’s face pressed against the glass! I knew I wouldn’t be able to stop the car, so I started thinking. What can I do to help Honey without stopping the car? I reached into my pocket and I scribbled the license number onto my hand and took off home. Your grandparents questioned me about why I wasn’t in school, and I told them the whole story. We took off for the police station, and they were not very much help at all because those two kidnappers stole most of the children in Pennington!”

May gasped and Lily’s eyes widened.

Zack continued on “ Parents didn’t let their kids go to school, instead they home schooled them until there was news. Teachers didn’t make money because kids didn’t go to school. Meanwhile, the two men built a camouflaged camp in a junkyard, for the stolen children and themselves.”

“Why did they steal the children in the first place” asked May

"Well no one really knows why. Some think they were going to turn them into slaves, others think they were just plain evil." explained Zack

"Really?"

"Really. Now back to the story. The two men built a camp in the junkyard for the stolen children and themselves, children of all ages tried to escape but almost all the children came back injured and wounded. The two mean men didn't care to tending to the injured children, or giving them a place to rest! In the group there was a smart child called Zoe, who found a secret way out and marked the way with stones! When the news spread the huge group followed the stones and made it out of the junkyard! Except, no one knew where to go, so they took a right and left, two more rights and then a left and by morning, Honey cried out 'cause she saw her home! Honey dashed up the stairs and knocked on the door. A tired looking Mrs. Brown opened the door, but brightened at the sight. Mrs. Brown called for Mr. Brown and the two embraced their daughter, and Honey explained that the group of children was indeed all the stolen children

Chapter 2 – Caught

Her parents listened in awe and agreed that they would care for the injured children. There was about three hundred children, about half were injured and the other half was sad, miserable or depressed. Mr. and Mrs. Brown, Honey and I helped the most injured children while the ones who could walk stumbled to the door. About three quarters of the children were in the house when a strange car pulled up, Honey gave a small gasp as she realized that the car belonged to the bad men! Children raced to the door as fast as they could go! Mrs. Brown, Honey, Zoe and I helped and guided the children to the door, while Mr. Brown helped kids into the house. The men jumped out of their car and grabbed Zoe around the waist, and lifted her off the ground, towards the car. The other man grabbed me by my shoulder and tossed me into the car, after Zoe!"

"Were you hurt daddy?" Exclaimed May.

"No, I wasn't. But I was sore for quite a few days!" Answered Zack "Do you want to hear more?"

"Yes!!" Chorused May and Lily

"Okay. Now the men turned on Honey who was guiding the last child to the house. Mr. and Mrs. Brown jumped into the house helping the last child get in. Then they turned to help Honey in, but were too late. One man pushed their arms into the house and shut the door! The other man turned on Honey while the other guarded the door. One man knocked her out, then he picked her up by her long, golden brown hair and tossed her into the car. Then, he gave Zoe and I a glass of water, but there was something in it because as soon as I drank it I felt dizzy and nauseous! I am almost certain that it was to not know our way home. When we woke up we were stacked on top of each other, on

top of a pile of tires covered by a dirty blanket. When Zoe and I checked on your aunt, she was covered in cuts and bruises! Her ankle was swollen and twisted, and her arm was cut while oozing yellow puss, probably cut on the barbed wire! Zoe quickly noted that nothing in here would help her, and I agreed. But was there anything else we could do for Honey?"

"Daddy. If I were there I would have saved Aunty Honey" interrupted May.

"I'm sure you would have. Now do you want to hear more or are we done?"

"More. More. More." Chanted May and Lily!

"Ok! So we thought and thought about an exit, but nothing came to mind. Until Zoe remembered her secret exit then she told me about it! She told me everything. How she found it, how she marked the way with stones, how she and Honey got the first group out and we could get out."

"Yay." Cheered Lily!

"Yay is right!" Said Zack. "We had our get away and the kidnappers didn't know about it. Then Honey woke up. She stretched and groaned. Zoe and I explained that we would use the exit the first group used to escape! And, that if she felt okay they would leave at dawn the next day. We were all desperate to get out of the awful, smelly and dirty place, once and for all! At dawn we checked on Honey, she said she was okay, but Zoe and I weren't convinced. She insisted that we go and leave her behind.

We had to choose whether to take her or not so, we took her along. Things at the Brown's house were out of control! The injured children stayed in the dining room, the living room and the family room. Healthy children stayed outside, ate outside and slept in Honey's room, my room and Mr. and Mrs. Brown's room. Back at the junkyard Zoe and I stopped frequently to rest and check on Honey. We followed the footprints of the first group. When I knocked on the door, Mrs. Brown answered it and smiled and took Honey in to get cleaned up, while Mr. Brown took Zoe and me to the police station. There, we told the chief the license number, where they were in the junkyard and where all the kids were now. The next day, all the kids went back to their parents and the kidnappers were caught red handed!
The newspaper said...

KIDNAPPERS CAUGHT! A SPECIAL THANKS TO ZACK AND HONEY BROWN AND ZOE MCCRAY!!

"These children are true heroes. The children were in true danger because of two men. 15 year old Zack Brown gave me the license number, where they are and what they look like. Officer Brian, Officer Elizabeth and Officer Matt caught these two trying to trick 4 year old Alex into getting in their car. And, they promised that they would go to a place with no chores, food goods and a soft bed to sleep in. But no worries, these men are

behind bars. So what can they do? But, these children deserve a reward!

Chapter 3 -Safe At Home

One week later I sat beside Honey and Zoe to receive my medal! Officer Bryan presented Honey's medal to her, then Officer Elizabeth presented Zoe with her medal, then Officer Matt presented me with my medal, and that was the highest honor that I have ever received! But two days later was the worst day for so many people!

"What happened Daddy!?!" Asked Lily

Zack lowered his voice for effect." The kidnappers escaped..."

KIDNAPPERS ESCAPE!

"Kidnappers escape" says Officer Bryan," Joe and Jimmy, the kidnappers have escaped jail! Officer Elizabeth was guarding the kidnappers when Officer Matt came to fill in. Officer Elizabeth had her break. But, she was unable to find her keys that contained the kidnappers' jail key! All the officers but Officer Matt, who was guarding the kidnappers, looked for her keys. When the whole place was searched up and down, they still hadn't found her keys! The next day, Officer Elizabeth found her keys in the kidnappers' empty jail cell. She is almost certain that one of them got her keys from her pocket, then used them to bust out of jail! Parents do not let your kids go to school, and teachers take a break. No one and I mean no one knows where they are! Officers will check the junkyard daily.

Chapter 4 – Danger

That same week a suspicious looking couple stopped at everyone's house in my neighborhood to tell them about their daycare. My mom was talking with the couple and signed Honey up. I was almost certain I remembered something on the woman's face that I recognized but it never clicked in. That night Mrs. Brown told Honey that she signed her up for daycare 9 hours a week! Next week, Honey complained and whined about going to daycare. Why couldn't I watch her, I'm old enough to stay home and I don't want to go to daycare! Mrs. Brown packed her a lunch, a spare pair of clothes and other things she might need....

When she was dropped off at daycare, I hung out around home, watched movies and ate chips."

"That's all you did!?! " questioned May.

“Of course I didn't, but it would take too long to list. Plus you want to hear the story, right?”

“Right” Lily shouted!

“Ok. So when she came back I knew right from the look on her face, she had a bad day! She pulled me into her room and said. “I think the couple is the kidnappers in disguise.” I ask her why she thought so and she said what I thought was the closest description to the kidnappers that I had ever heard of. “

“What did she say? What did she say?” May and Lily were jumping around.

“She said that the man pushed a kid into a hole, probably dug by them. And, that they had a tour of the dump. Not at all interesting. The next day Honey went back to daycare. And, I told her to watch out and be careful! At 3:00 pm when she returned, she told me that they did the same thing and they told their parents that we went on a nature walk and the kidnappers followed. They said they knew because men in black trailed them until they grabbed him when we were teaching. But the thing that didn't make sense, was “men in black followed them.” but how did they know if they were teaching?! Day after day a parent went home, and probably to the police, without their kid. The police caught the two grabbing a kid, Leia while the group ate lunch. The two went straight to jail, and still remain there.

THE END!

Extraordinary Story

By: Simbarashe Musewe (Gr. 8)

My name is Simbarashe Musewe. I was born in Zimbabwe on the first of April, in 2003. I need to tell you my story, which is a true story. Yes, there is more to my story, just as each and every one of us has a story. Telling my story is to encourage others that you are not alone. There is more to life than you think.

As I said, I was born in Zimbabwe 13 years ago. I do not know my mother or my father.

My story goes like this: My mother left me in a football field. She disappeared and was nowhere to be found. As I was lying there, anything could have happened to me. Think of it, a little, pre-term baby boy lying there for how long, only God knows. Africa is a continent full of deadly animals. I could have been eaten by a dog, bitten by a snake or even eaten by a lion.

My help came through this man who was walking, maybe coming home from work or visiting family. He found me. Now, in Zimbabwe, if you find a baby that is left by his or her mother, you call the police. The police will assess the situation and then take the baby to the nearest hospital. The hospital will take care of the baby for at least two months depending on the health of the baby. During that period of time, there is still some hope that the mother will come back for the baby. They will also be looking for an orphanage to place the baby, in case the mother does not come back.

In my situation, my mother did not come back, and my two months were up, so they found a place for me. That is where I called home for the next seven or more years. It is called Harare Children's Home. I was now considered an orphan. Living there, I did not know my story. At the children's home, there were many children from infant to young adult age.

I was fortunate to be adopted by my parents. My mom and dad answered a call from God that they should adopt. We all believe it was meant to be. God chose parents for me, and he chose me for my parents. My mom was the first one from my new family to see me. I was three months short of being four years old. My dad came over a year later to visit me at the orphanage. My new family was already living in Canada. The paperwork took almost four years before I joined my new family in Canada.

Finally, now that I was happy to have two sisters and a brother, when the time came for me to come to Canada, my mom and my older sister came to pick me up from the orphanage. I was very surprised and excited at the same time! I had an opportunity to visit my mom's and dad's family I was more confused than anything else. I saw so many people, and even using public transport was an adventure. Even with all the confusion, I was enjoying every bit of it.

I flew to Canada with my mom after visiting my mom's brother, who lived in Botswana with his family. Botswana shares borders with Zimbabwe. My sister had flown back to Canada before us, and we were going to meet her there.

When we finally stepped down on Canadian soil, I was amazed. It was my first time seeing snow and seeing my other sister and brother. I started getting used to living in Canada. My mom and dad kept on encouraging me to share my story, and they taught me not to be ashamed of what happened in the past.

I hope my story will encourage someone going through a difficult time. WE ALL HAVE A LONG JOURNEY TO TRAVEL AND A STORY TO TELL!!!

(Author Simbarashe Malachai Musewe used to be known as Ngonidzashe Tinomunda).