

FIRST-PRIZE WINNER

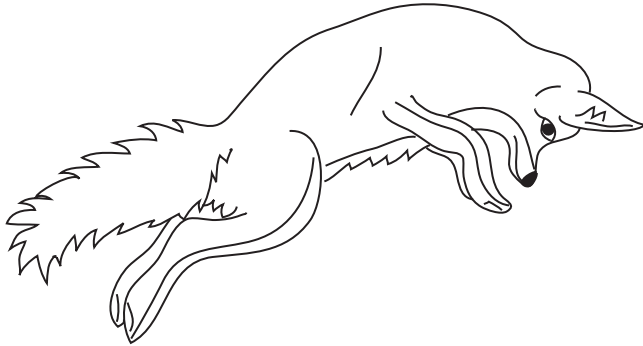
Pizza, the Fox

This is a story about a fox named Pizza. I called him Pizza because he went to people's houses, like my house, and always ate the pizza from our garbage cans.

Sometimes he even ate chocolate cake! When he was all done, he was thirsty, so he would go back to the forest to drink water from the lake.

One day, when he was drinking water from the lake, a fish jumped out of the water and bit him right on the nose! He started howling for his mom, it sounded almost like barking. His mom heard him and came running. She licked his boo-boo with her tongue to make it better. Then they walked home together.

Kamryn Desmoulin (Kindergarten)
Migizi Wazisin Elementary School
Longlac, Ontario



FIRST-PRIZE WINNER

A Flight to Mars

Once upon a time, there was a boy named Tom. One night, he was looking at the sky. Suddenly, he saw a bright object. Could it be Mars? He made a wish to visit Mars. Before he knew it, he was standing beside a huge space shuttle. Tom heard someone talking to him. It was Peter, Tom's friend. Peter was calling him, "Let's go!" Peter and Tom entered the space shuttle.

The space shuttle was about to launch. Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one . . . blast off!

They began to float. They saw the Earth, our planet. And soon, they saw the red planet. "It must be Mars!" The space shuttle began to land. What a good job!

Peter and Tom got out of the space shuttle. Tom saw something glistening. It was a playground! He called, "Peter, Peter, get over here!"

They ran together to the playground. Someone was there. It was an alien! They climbed up a ladder and started to play. The alien couldn't speak their language, but he kindly shared his toys with Tom and Peter. They gave him a badge with the Earth on it and tried their best to explain how beautiful it was there. They invited the alien to come and visit their planet, and he nodded his promise.

The boys went back to their space shuttle, and headed home. The alien stayed behind. They were happy they had met a new friend and hoped that he would visit them one day. They would show him their home, their school, and share their toys with him.

Zeeyaan Bourdeau (Grade One)
The Progressive Montessori School
Stouffville, Ontario



FIRST-PRIZE WINNER

George, the Tallest Giraffe

Once upon a time, there lived in the jungle a young giraffe named George. The tall animal was very nice, and he had many friends. Karry was a little kangaroo. He was very playful, and he loved to hop around. Karry and George were best friends. George liked to eat leaves, while Karry loved grass.

George had yellow spotted fur, lengthy legs, and a very long neck. He was unusually tall, even among other giraffes! Although all his forest pals were fond of him, George did not like how he looked. He had to bend his neck low to talk to the other animals in the forest. Over and over again, Karry tried to tell George how tall and handsome he looked. But George just wished he could look like all the other animals in the jungle. Every day, George paced around sadly with his head hanging over the treetops. Every time he bent down to drink water at the riverbank, he did not like to see his own reflection. He would sigh, “Why can’t I have a shorter neck and legs like the rest of my friends?”

One day, Karry and George were playing games together with other animals when it started to rain. It poured and poured. Soon, it was flooding in the jungle. The water in the rivers was rising higher and higher. All the creatures in the forest were worried, including the giraffes.

Most of the animals in the jungle could not swim. They all nearly drowned, except the very tall giraffe. George, with his extremely long neck, was the tallest animal in the forest. The flood did not bother him at all. George bent his neck low, and the animals hopped onto his back. One by one, he carried the animals to higher ground. At last, all the animals were safe from the rising waters! George was so happy to see that his forest friends were safe and sound. All the animals thanked their tall pal for saving their lives. Here at the top of the hill, George stood tall, but proudly. Having an unusually long neck was not so bad after all! Together, the animals waited for the rain to stop. Finally, the rain ceased at midnight. All the animals were very tired, and they went to sleep.

When the animals woke up the next morning, the water was all gone. The water flowed into the nearby rivers. Once again, the sun was shining brightly. The animals were very happy, and they started to play like before. So here in the jungle, George, with his unusually long neck, lived happily forever after with all the other animals.

Michael Tsoi (Grade Two)
Trinity Montessori School
Markham, Ontario



FIRST-PRIZE WINNER

The Amazing Adventures of Coney

Once upon a time, there was a little turtle named Coney. He lived with his mom, dad, grandmother, and sister inside a giant bubble in the Pacific Ocean. His hobbies were swimming in the ocean and playing with his best friend, Steven.

Coney was in his room reading a book about the sea. Suddenly, there was a storm and a zap of lightning struck Coney. *Bang!* His dad and mom came right away to see what happened. They saw smoke everywhere. Then they hid in their shells until the smoke cleared. They found Coney lying on the floor; he had fainted! His family was so scared they called an ambulance immediately.

When Coney was in the hospital, the doctor checked his shell. He saw a glow of light on his back. Everyone was very scared. Then the doctor told his mom and dad that Coney now had super powers! They were so surprised.

When Coney left the hospital and realized he had super powers, he flew to a tropical paradise. It was very nice and fun there; it also had a lot of trees. Coney started to play in the river. He picked a lot of mangos. He saw a lizard and they played together. They were so happy to pick the mangos. After a while, Coney heard from the animals that the crocodiles were going to destroy the ocean. Coney was so worried about his family. Coney said to the lizard, "I must go back to the ocean and save my family."

Lizard said, "I can go with you because I have super powers too!"

"Oh really? Thank you!" said Coney.

When Coney went back to the ocean, he saw crocodiles were going to destroy his house. He was using his super powers to fight the crocodiles. Finally, Coney won the fight and the crocodiles were gone. They never came back.

Coney's mom and dad were so happy to see him. They were so proud of him that he had saved their home. The ocean was then safe and they lived happily ever after!

Conan Shing (Grade Three)

Trillium School

Markham, Ontario



FIRST-PRIZE WINNER

Home Is Where the Heart Is

Caroline was a sporty girl who loved to horseback ride. She lived in the country, with her little sister, Erika, her mom, and her dad. Caroline got up early every morning and fed the animals.

One morning when she got back from doing her chores, Erika and her parents surprised Caroline, shouting, "Happy Birthday!" They led her outside to the paddock and presented her with a baby black mare!

She thanked her parents gratefully. Caroline began to take care of her new horse right away. She groomed her and fed her. "I'll name her Sky," she told her family.

"Time to take Sky for her first ride," said Erika.

Caroline saddled her horse up, and mounted her. Sky galloped like the wind, heading straight for the beach. To Caroline's surprise, Sky didn't stop at the water but plunged right in, until the water reached her neck. Once they got out, Caroline and Sky headed for home at a brisk walking pace.

Back in the barn, Caroline wondered what was appealing about the ocean to Sky. Her thoughts were interrupted by her mom calling her for lunch. So she gave Sky an apple and went back home. She had no idea that as soon as she left the barn, Sky jumped out of her stall and galloped back to the beach.

When Sky got near the water, she was joined by another horse. Sky put the apple she'd been carrying on the ground, and rolled it to the horse who gladly took it and ate it.

When Caroline returned to the barn later that day, she was astonished to see how muddy Sky was. Wondering, Caroline hopped on Sky and rode her back to the beach. As she approached the water's edge, both she and Sky heard a rustling coming from the bushes nearby. Sky started galloping around in circles until her friend appeared.

Caroline noticed the horse's shiny black coat and braided mane. She could not have been a wild horse; it was clear that she was well groomed. The mare rubbed noses with Sky and the two horses pranced around each other.

Caroline sat very still on Sky; she felt like she was in a dream. She realized the two horses knew each other. Then it hit her. Judging by the looks of them, they were probably sisters! Caroline steered Sky towards home, and Sky's sister followed her. When she arrived back at the barn, Erika ran outside to meet her.

"Oooh, did you bring her for me?"

"Yep! So we can ride together, two pairs of sisters!"

"I shall call her Star," announced Erika gleefully, as she saddled up the mare. Then, the two sisters rode towards the beach, for their first ride together.

Like Mom always says, "Home is where the heart lives."

"And ours shall always live here!" Erika said.

From that day on, the two pairs of sisters spent many hours riding together around their home!

Olivia Wignall (Grade Four)

The Progressive Montessori School
Stouffville, Ontario

FIRST-PRIZE WINNER

Trevor the Barn Owllet

There was an old abandoned barn down by Pinewood Creek. This old barn hadn't been used for several years; as a matter of fact, not since Old Johnny Cooper had fallen out of the loft and into the water trough.

Up in the loft, a mother barn owl had given birth to two adorable owlets. Their names were Trevor and Trish. Trish was a good little owlet who always stayed in the barn loft and listened carefully to her mother's instructions. Trevor, on the other hand, was always distracted by every little thing.

On the day of their first flying lesson, Mother Barn Owl told her owlets to watch her carefully. She walked out to the edge of the loft, took a deep breath, jumped, and spread her wings as she glided through the barn.

Trish walked to the edge of the loft. She took a deep breath, jumped, and spread out her wings. She glided just like her mother.

Then it was Trevor's turn. He walked to the edge of the loft. He took a deep breath. He jumped. He noticed a spider weaving a web, and forgot to open his wings. By the time he realized he was supposed to open up his wings, he was head-first in the empty water trough. Trish just giggled. Mother Barn Owl got him out of the trough and said, "Don't give up; we'll try again later."

Trevor woke up one sunny morning before his sister, Trish. Mother Barn Owl was resting on the edge of the loft. Trevor was really proud to have woken up early. He started marching around happily in the loft. Suddenly, he noticed a dark shape on the wall copying him. If he opened his wing, it opened its wing. If he lifted his leg, it lifted its leg. Trevor decided to become friends. He ran straight towards the wall. *Bang!* He hit his head against it. Trish woke up and giggled. Mother Barn Owl put her wing around Trevor's shoulders and said, "Don't be frightened. It's just your shadow." Trevor decided he should pay more attention during his mother's lessons, because he was getting tired of his sister giggling at him.

One day, Trevor noticed that Trish and his mother were watching a mouse running across the barn floor. They never moved their eyes, they just rotated their heads from front to back. Trevor thought this was really cool and easy. So he tried it. He looked forward. He looked over his left shoulder. He looked behind him. He started to look over his right shoulder and got his head stuck. He was all twisted around. He knew this was not good. He wobbled towards his mother, bumped into her, and said, "Mommy, my head's stuck!"

Trish just giggled, and his mother sighed. Mother Barn Owl lovingly held Trevor's head in her wings and walked around him, unwinding his head. She finally said, "Don't give up; your father was exactly the same!"

Philip Law (Grade Five)
Trillium Waldorf School
Guelph, Ontario



FIRST-PRIZE WINNER

Survival

The air is thick with the scent of sheep, many of them enclosed together. My throat is sandpaper dry, rasping as I exhale. My jaws hang heavily. I have eaten nothing but bark and berries to survive. I am becoming weak and my limbs are sore. My muscles are protesting against every step, but I persist and force them to move. One more step, just take one more.

It is unnatural to have so many animals crammed together. They do not even balk at my approach; I am invisible in the snow. They have been domesticated, kept merely as objects. Only now do I realize how valuable my liberty is. When a creature is captured, it loses all its senses. It becomes tame, and does not shudder at the slightest creak. It cannot taste the wind, or feel the distinct tremor beneath its feet. How I pity them. I would never give away my freedom for anything.

But how hungry I am! My mouth is watering and I smell so much prey! My padded paws leave no trace on the damp ground. As I clamber over the gate, I become crazed. The scent of fresh meat is everywhere. I make a mad dash at the nearest ewe and leap. I claw wildly at the hide as I land. There is only one thought in my mind: to kill.

Before I know it, five sheep lie on the ground, dead. I pause uncertainly and see a bewildered lamb near its mother's carcass, wondering if she will ever move again. Deep down, I feel guilt, but I push that feeling away. I step closer to a carcass. Once again, I lose myself in the blood lust. I am too intent on my feast to notice footsteps.

Bang! I feel something piercing impact my side. Searing pain spreads throughout my body and I fall to the ground, yowling all this time. My ribs crash against the hard earth and a sonorous shatter is heard. I struggle as I clamber to my feet and attack the adversary: man with his rifle.

Another bullet whistles by my ear. My breath quickens. I must be more careful, or I will be killed. A shot hits me straight in my chest. This time, the pain is worse and I shake violently. I again clamber to my feet and dash away, hoping for an escape. Several more bullets soar past my neck before I manage to slip under the fence.

I have realized I am also an object to a human, not anymore valuable than prey. As I stop to rest, I see my reflection in the morning dew. I see a predator's eye with a tiny slit for a pupil. The skin around it is scarred from many battles. My chest heaves painfully, and I know my time to leave this world has come. At least I will die free.

Kathleen Chen (Grade Six)

Toronto French School
Toronto, Ontario



SECOND-PRIZE WINNER

Bunny Counts

One day, Mama Bunny said, “Little Bunny, can you go to Mr. Cow’s farm and pick four carrots for me?”

Little Bunny took a basket and hopped out happily.

At the farm, he picked up one carrot after one, after one, after one, and after one until he got tired. Mr. Cow said, “Little Bunny, why did you pick so many carrots?”

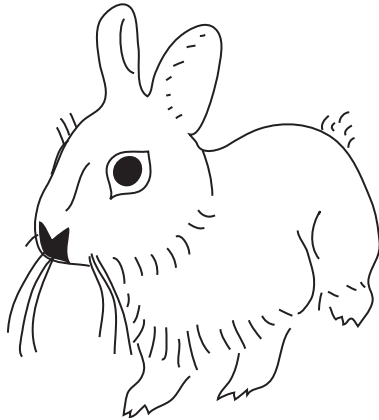
Little Bunny said, “Mama told me to pick four carrots for her.”

Little Bunny went home with a basket full of carrots. When Mama Bunny saw all the carrots, she was so surprised. Mama Bunny said, “Little Bunny, didn’t I ask you to pick four carrots?”

Little Bunny was so shy. He said, “Mama, I don’t know how to count.”

Mama Bunny opened her arms and said, “Oh, my dear Little Bunny!”

Adrian Chan (Kindergarten)
Century Montessori Private School
Richmond Hill, Ontario



SECOND-PRIZE WINNER

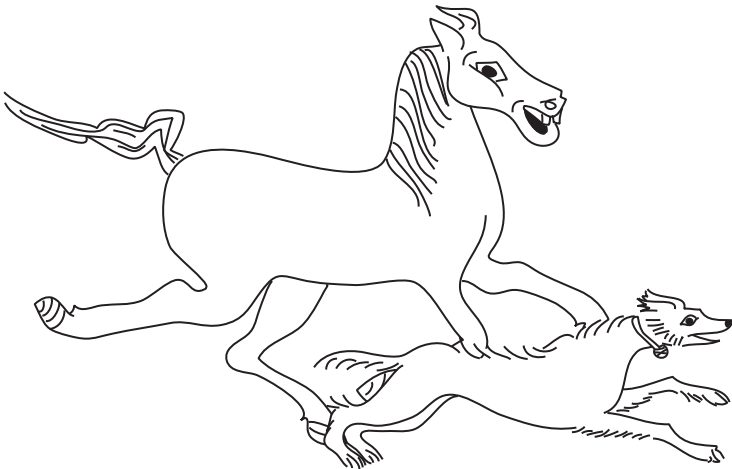
Goldie and Star Save the Day

There was a dog and a horse and their owner loved them as much as shelter. Every time she was hurt, her dog would let the horse out of the stable and both the horse and the dog would help the girl.

One day, the girl broke her leg. The dog went to get her mom, and her mom drove her to the hospital. They waited to hear how she was. Then they heard that she would have to stay overnight. That night they worried about her.

The next morning they all drove back to the hospital to see how she was feeling. The doctor called them in. She was better! They took her home and celebrated. Her mom made a cake and a good meal and they all had dinner. Then they had a bath and went to bed. The dog and the horse went back to the stable.

Tanya Koletic (Grade One)
Brookville Public School
Campbellville, Ontario



SECOND-PRIZE WINNER

Magic

Once there were two girls named Emily and Ashley. On Tuesday, Ashley and Emily met each other at the park. They played together and they shared secrets until, one day, Emily found out Ashley believed in magic. Emily did not agree. “There’s no such thing as magic,” teased Emily.

“Yes, there is,” said Ashley.

“No!”

“Yes!”

“No!”

“Yes!”

They kept fighting until their moms came out and said, “What is the matter?”

They looked up. There was a pause. “Magic doesn’t exist,” said Emily.

“Yes, it does,” said Ashley.

“Nope,” Emily said.

“Girls, settle down. It doesn’t matter if magic exists at all,” said Emily’s mom.

“I guess it doesn’t,” Emily said.

“I think it matters!” cried Ashley.

“Well, you’ll just have to leave it,” her mom said. “It’s getting late, you guys better get home.”

“Alright,” Emily groaned.

“Okay,” Ashley yawned and each went home.

That night, Ashley went home sobbing. She had a shower, brushed her teeth, and went to bed. Meanwhile, Emily had a movie night with popcorn. She watched *Charlotte’s Web*. After, she also went to bed. But something happened when they were sleeping, because when they woke up, everything was different. They were together in a room that had a strange sofa with red and green stripes. Their beds were no longer there! They must have vanished into thin air. The girls stuck together and slowly crept downstairs. They screamed! Monsters were everywhere! Finally, they made their way through and saw weird plants all around them, like a maze.

“Oh, how will we find our way out?” yelled Emily.

“Oh, no! Oh, no! We’ll never ever get out,” sobbed Ashley.

“Magic is real after all!” Emily shouted.

Ten minutes later, the girls got out of the maze.

“Excuse me,” said a voice.

The girls jumped and spun around. “Oh, hello,” gasped Emily. Ashley just stared, she didn’t say a word.

There was a tiny fairy. It spoke. “Hello, I’m Ella,” murmured the fairy.

Ashley, finally finding her voice, glanced at the fairy and said, “Ella, what a pretty name.”

“Thanks!” replied the fairy.

“What are you doing?” boomed a voice behind them.

“N . . . nothing,” they said.

The voice went away and there stood a nice giant. “I’ll get you home,” he said. With a wave of his wand, the girls were home. The girls hadn’t been gone long and they were each back inside their room. They each woke up their mom, but the girls never told anyone about their magical adventure.

Ella White (Grade Two)
Parkcrest Elementary School
Burnaby, British Columbia

SECOND-PRIZE WINNER

The Missing Link

One sunny afternoon, there were two girls named Amy and Mariam. They played together every single day. They even went on a treasure hunt!

While the two friends were playing, they found something shiny on the ground! They decided to check it out. While they were trying to find out what was so shiny, they discovered it was actually a tiny, shiny, rainbow seed. They thought it would be fun to plant it. The children were hoping for the seed to become a plant the very next day. That did not happen. Amy thought it was because the seed did not get enough sun. Mariam thought it was because it did not get enough water. But they were both wrong. . . .

The very next day they had science class. During class, the girls were learning about plants. They learned about the three ways to care for a plant. Plants needed water, sunlight, and plenty of care. When Amy and Mariam heard that, they knew exactly what they were missing for their seed to grow! They were missing care. They gave the seed everything it needed, but never any care. The girls now had a plan to give the seed a lot of caring. . . .

When the girls arrived home, they started their quest to give plenty of caring to the seed they had planted. Soon, Amy and Mariam were talking to their seed, giving it a lot of water, and making sure there was a lot of sunshine, because that is what plants needed. After they completed this task, Amy went home and Mariam was ready for bed.

The next morning, Mariam asked Amy to come over so they could see if the plant had grown. Amy arrived at Mariam's home and they both thought the plant would have only grown a little. Upon checking the plant's growth, however, they were shocked! The plant was extremely huge, enormous, and gigantic! The plant was so beautiful, with many colours like orange, yellow, red, blue, and pink. The smell was so sweet, like molasses, and looked shiny and bright. Amy and Mariam knew that they had planted a magic seed!

After all, how is it possible for a tiny, little seed to grow so quickly and be so beautiful? *The Guinness Book of Records* offered to publish the girls' plant because they also believed it was a magical plant. The girls were offered a money award of one-hundred dollars. They split the money in half, so each girl received fifty dollars. Mariam spent her money on a cute dog and Amy spent her money on the family vacation to Florida. The girls never expected that playing a little game like their treasure hunt could lead to such a lot of fun and excitement.

Maria Boktor (Grade Three)
Philopateer Christian College
Mississauga, Ontario



SECOND-PRIZE WINNER

A Day in the Life of Ken the Kat

My name is Ken the Kat. First name Ken, middle name the, last name Kat. I am a white Persian cat. My owner thinks I am grumpy. I don't think I am grumpy. I don't feel grumpy. I don't think I even look grumpy. I did look in the mirror today . . . okay, maybe I do look a little bit grumpy. Well, maybe if I don't get enough sleep I get a little grumpy. But I don't feel grumpy today because I did get enough sleep last night. Actually I slept all morning. Then I slept all afternoon. Then I slept all evening.

I woke up when my owner was ready to go to bed. I sat on his pillow and meowed, "Where is my coffee." I don't think he heard me right because he gave me a bowl of milk instead. I looked at him and then I looked at the bowl of milk. *I think there is something wrong here. The cup in my owner's hand should be my cup.* I walked over to his cup to have something to drink. I looked at it and it was warm milk. I wondered if my owner was part cat too. I meowed again for my coffee. It didn't work. Nothing happened. When my owner was looking the other way I drank all of his milk.

I decided to go to the living room. I saw a nice spot on the couch with a blanket. I went inside the blanket and stretched out my paws. The loud noise on the TV changed. My paw was sitting on the remote control. I jumped on it and it changed the channel again and it was all about. . . . Oh, no! I had to jump off the couch and run down the hall. I was going to have a litter-box moment.

I saw my owner's computer sitting on the table so I thought I'd go sit on it for a while; it was usually warm there because he forgets to turn it off. I moved the mouse around to surf the Internet. I really wished it were a real mouse. I played some games on the computer for a while. Then I decided to go do something else.

I ran around the house knocking things over. I liked to do that sometimes; it's fun. I crawled under the blanket on the couch and felt comfy. I decided to think about what I was going to do that day, which was really night, but my eyes started to feel sleepy again. *Maybe I'll just have a little nap and then start my day.*

Devyn Bartlett (Grade Four)
École Boreale
Hay River, Northwest Territories



SECOND-PRIZE WINNER

Alice and the Rabbit

“Alice, look what I found!”

My seven-year-old sister, Mia, is banging on the door. I open it and in flies Mia, shoebox in hand. Inside the box is a fluffy white rabbit with a red nose and long floppy ears. It smells bad.

“I told you The White Rabbit from *Alice in Wonderland* lives in our backyard.”

“Oh, really?”

“Yeah, really,” is her reply.

Friday, November 18, 2008: “Dear Diary, it’s been really hard on Mom since Dad got in the accident, but he’s in good hands at the hospital. Mia is totally obsessed with that smelly rabbit. I am yawning like mad, so good night, Diary.”

“Alice, look!” Mia runs around the house, screaming my name. The rabbit is lying in Mia’s arms, sleeping peacefully. “Isn’t he cute?” she says.

“Yeah.”

“I know that he’s The White Rabbit because he’s always hopping around like he’s late.”

“How do you know it’s a boy?” I ask.

“I have a strange feeling about this rabbit,” she says. “He is bringing my mystical powers to a special place.”

I stifle a laugh and walk out of the room. I turn the bend and trip over one of Mia’s toys. I grab the stuffed rabbit (rabbits everywhere!) and throw it up the stairs. It hits a stair and comes flying down again, landing at my feet.

Saturday, November 19, 2008: “Dear Diary, the rabbit was let out of its cage and it peed all over Mom’s couch that Dad gave her when they got married. Mom threatened to give away the rabbit if it happened again. Mia started to cry and Mom sent her to her room.”

Today we wake up to find that the rabbit is missing. Mia cries and cries but no amount of crying will bring back her beloved rabbit.

The phone rings. It’s from the hospital. I hand it to Mom.

“Thanks, thanks for calling!” Mom yells into the phone. She dances around the kitchen. Then she says, “Your dad’s okay!”

Sunday, November 20, 2008: “Dear Diary, I am too tired to write tonight. Good night.”

I wake up feeling happy. There’s no school. Mia bounces down the stairs. She’s going to Grandma’s. I look for my favourite book. Where is it? Mia probably took it. I walk up to her room, open the door, and smell a horrible smell. It’s coming from the empty rabbit cage. I go over to take the cage, and see a piece of paper: “Dear Alice, thank you for taking me in as a guest. I realize you didn’t believe in me, but what eleven-year-old girl would? Tell your sister that she is a great girl and I really appreciated her care. Here is a gift for you. Now I have to go; I’m late! Sincerely, The White Rabbit.”

Beside it is a large, gold, pocket watch.

Molly Lydon (Grade Five)
Cordova Bay Elementary School
Victoria, British Columbia

SECOND-PRIZE WINNER

The Harvest

Drrummm went the engine as my dad started up the magnificent, grass-green machine also known as the combine.

It had been a long tiring harvest this year, but we were finally on our last quarter. The canola swathe lay still as a rock in long straight rows up and down the field. I heard the whistle of the wind blowing softly through the crack in the door as my dad began picking up the long, thin stalks of canola.

“You know,” I began, “I think we’re going to make a lot of money on our canola crop this year.” My dad smiled. I knew he agreed with me. We’d had an amazing canola crop this year since the beginning when we seeded it. Up until this day, I had imagined how relieved we would feel when we finished this harvest, until those thoughts faded with the grim reality that the weather was about to change. Let me tell you exactly what happened.

My dad and I were out combining our last field and listening to the radio. The weather was on and the forecaster was calling for a one-hundred-percent chance of wet snow. “Do you think we will finish in time?” I asked my dad. He looked at me with a sad face. That was not a good sign. Every fall we always finished weeks before the first snowfall but this year winter was coming early. We had to work fast.

The next morning, when I woke up, I heard my parents having a discussion in the kitchen. I wondered if they were talking about the snow the forecaster was calling for. Sure enough, when I pulled up my blind I saw a thick, white coat of snow covering our yard. I raced out to the kitchen and saw disappointment in my dad’s eyes. I never imagined him so frustrated over the weather. I went over and hugged him and whispered into his ear, “Don’t worry, we will finish.” He nodded but I knew he was still upset.

Later that day, I walked over to our frozen field and made a family of snowmen and a puppy too. They all looked so joyful, unlike our family right then. As I was playing in the snow that morning, the sun came out and shone brightly over our field. It melted most of the snow that day, but it was still too wet to combine. After a week of warm, sunny days, and a very welcoming wind, the canola tested dry and was ready to combine.

I knew my dad felt relieved the second we were finally able to finish our harvest. “We won’t make as much money as we had hoped, but we are so fortunate the weather warmed up and we can finally finish our harvest!” exclaimed Dad.

I agreed. “Next year will be better, a lot better!” I promised.

Daria Schaff (Grade Six)
Lampman School
Lampman, Saskatchewan



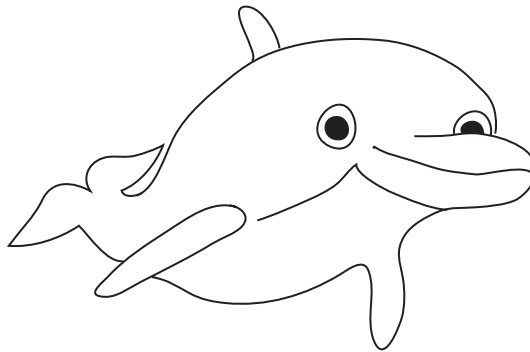
THIRD-PRIZE WINNER

My Trip to Beijing

I flew to Beijing with my mom. I went to see the dolphins and I fed them too. I watched the dolphins do cool tricks. They put a ball on their nose and jumped up and wiggled their tails. A girl held one dolphin's tail and the dolphin zoomed about in the pool. It was a lot of fun.

I also saw my aunt's cat. When I pet it though, it scratched me. I had a lot of fun in Beijing!

Rita Gao (Kindergarten)
Sidney Ledson Institute
Toronto, Ontario



THIRD-PRIZE WINNER

Konnie Learned Her Lesson

Once upon a time there was a girl named Konnie. She lived in a small cottage at the beach with her mom and big brother, Sam. Konnie was very naughty.

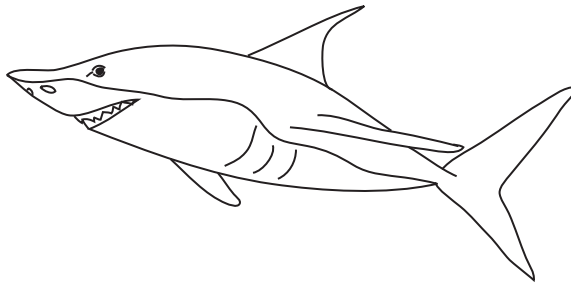
One day, Konnie asked her mom if she could play on the beach. Her mom let her go with the promise that she would not go in the water. Konnie did not keep her promise and dove into the water. A big shark was waiting and gobbled Konnie up. Konnie was trapped inside the shark's stomach!

When Konnie did not return home, Mom got worried. She sent Sam to look for Konnie and bring her back. Sam was a brave boy. He had a big sword. He went to the beach to find his sister. But the shark gobbled him up too!

Sam was happy to see Konnie alive inside the shark's tummy. With his big sword, he cut open the shark's stomach and both of them climbed out. They swam to safety on the beach.

Konnie learned her lesson to listen to her mom and she lived happily ever after with her mom and brother.

Brinda Batra (Grade One)
Century Montessori Private School
Richmond Hill, Ontario



THIRD-PRIZE WINNER

Jumper's Adventure

A frog named Jumper was sitting on a lily pad while his friend, a fish named Fishy, swam around the lily pad. Jumper was really bored. Then Fishy came up and asked, "Do you want to come with me on an adventure?"

"Yes!" cried Jumper, but he couldn't think of where to go.

"But," said Fishy, "I don't know where to go either."

Suddenly, a rumbling sound interrupted their chat. They were so scared. It was a huge wave! Jumper and Fishy swam as quickly as they could to get away. The wave washed them both in different directions. Fishy got washed into a lily-pad forest. Jumper got washed into a swampy place. Jumper and Fishy weren't very far apart.

The first thing Fishy noticed was he wasn't with Jumper. The first thing Jumper noticed was he wasn't with Fishy. What both of them didn't notice was they were going away from each other.

Jumper wandered around in the swampy place. He found something like a snail shell and he heard something breathing inside. "Hello?" asked a scared Jumper. "Is anybody in there?" called Jumper, who was no longer scared because he noticed it was only a tiny shell.

"Yes," replied a squeaky voice. "And I'm trying to get some sleep, so be quiet!" shrieked the angry snail.

"Well," said Jumper. "I could use your help."

"I'm no use, I'm just a snail," replied the snail.

"You could be useful by guiding me out of the swamp," said Jumper.

"Oh, sure, why not?" squeaked the snail.

"Thank you so much!"

"Call me Slimy," said Slimy the snail.

Meanwhile, Fishy was wandering around the lily-pad forest. He went really deep until he saw something move! The thing was moving closer and closer to him! Fishy started to get scared, but Fishy swam closer anyway. Then, he saw it was a little fish-eating fish! "I think I should run now," Fishy said to himself, "and scream!" Then Fishy ran and screamed.

Fishy could hardly see because he was going so fast. Because Fishy couldn't see he smacked into another fish. "Excuse me," said Fishy, zipping by.

"Wait," said the other fish. "I have a question." But Fishy was too far away to hear. So the other fish swam back towards the little fish-eating fish. Then he also saw the little fish-eating fish and he ran and screamed like Fishy. In no time this fish caught up with Fishy.

"What's your name?" asked Fishy, still swimming as quickly as he could.

"My name is Scaly," replied Scaly. "Let's hide in there," he said, pointing to an underwater cave.

They both swam into the cave. The little fish-eating fish swam right past them. They thought they were safe, then they heard. . . . *Thump! Thump!* Scared, Fishy and Scaly poked their heads out of the cave. And, to their relief, there stood Jumper and Slimy!

"Yay!" cried all the friends at the same time.

Aidan Roberts (Grade Two)
Huntington Hills Elementary School
Calgary, Alberta

THIRD-PRIZE WINNER

The Great Adventure

I heard the water splash over the rocks down at the river. Today my friends and I were on an adventure. It had been a very fun adventure so far because there were so many cool creatures down here and pretty coloured rocks and oysters. I found a pearl inside one of the oysters. So I picked it up and kept it. I put it in my pocket along with a whole bunch of stones and rocks.

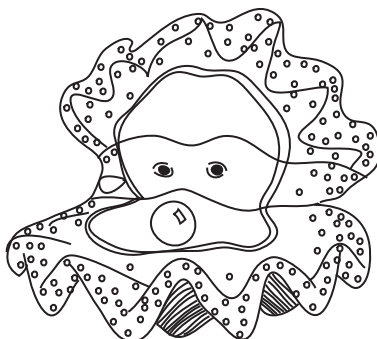
It started to get so heavy that my pockets were about to break. So I put some in Chloe's pockets, but now Chloe's pockets were getting heavy. So she put some in Joel's pockets. We all decided that the rest would go in Billy's pockets.

Now, there was only one problem. We went too far down the river and got lost. We turned around and Billy tripped over a rock. *Splash!* Billy fell in the river. We picked him up and he had a crab hanging from his nose. Billy was screaming, "Get this thing off of me!" So I grabbed it and opened its hand and threw it down the river. Billy's nose was swollen. It got bigger and bigger and I thought that if it got any bigger it would explode.

We ran back towards home but we forgot that we had to cut through a field and we ran right by it and soon were even more lost. Now there seemed to be no way home. I saw a rock and sat down on it. There was something hurting me in my pocket. I pulled it out, it was the oyster. The oyster shone a light somewhere. We followed the light. The light led us through the river, down the river bank, and then through the field we had first cut through. Then we found the trail home. We ran down the trail. When we finally got to Ben's house, we went inside and played. Billy got his nose fixed.

What a day! Thank goodness for the magic oyster. We learned that every time you go on an adventure, you should be prepared with a compass.

Ben Toll (Grade Three)
Harwich Raleigh Public School
Blenheim, Ontario



THIRD-PRIZE WINNER

A New Friend

It was Sunday, June third. A nine-year-old girl named Ally was the daughter of the mayor everyone knew in their small town. And she knew everyone. Ally heard her mom ask, “Ally, can you go to the st . . . ,” but before Ally’s mom could finish, Ally was out the door, heading to the store.

When she walked into the store, she knew everyone there. But when she got to the milk, she saw a boy she had never seen before. *Who could he be?* Ally thought.

She got home and gave her mom the groceries. “I saw a new boy I had never seen before,” Ally said softly.

“Well, maybe you can get to know him,” Ally’s mom, the mayor, said.

“Maybe,” said Ally.

That night Ally was thinking about the boy. *Is he on holidays or maybe he moved here?* Ally thought to herself. Then she turned out the light and went to bed.

The next morning, Ally was still thinking about that boy. *Maybe he’ll go to my school,* she thought to herself. Ally went downstairs for breakfast. She smelled bacon and eggs. “Morning, Mom. Morning, Dad,” Ally said as she grabbed her plate with two strips of bacon and scrambled eggs. “Mom, do you think that boy. . . .”

Ally’s dad spit out his coffee all over her plate. “What boy? Did I hear something about a boy,” Ally’s dad said.

“It’s just a boy I saw at the store who I’ve never seen before,” said Ally.

“Well, now that I can’t eat my breakfast, I should get ready for school,” Ally said, throwing her food away. By the time she was ready to leave, she had to be at school in five minutes.

When she got to school, she was late. Then something caught her eye. She saw the boy. After school, when she got out the front doors, Ally noticed the boy talking to her friends, so she walked over to where they were. Her friend, Sara, introduced her to Austin, the new boy. Then they all walked home together.

When Ally got home, she told her mom about Austin and her mom was happy that she made a new friend. Ally went for a bike ride after. She went to the street where she had seen moving trucks a few days ago. She heard Austin’s voice. She rode past Austin’s house, and decided to stop. When she got to the front door, she saw through the window Austin’s mom packing boxes. *They are packing already!* Ally thought. So she knocked on the door.

Austin answered and she asked him why his mom was packing. “She is not packing,” he said. “She is unpacking!”

“Oh, okay, well that is good to hear. Do you want to go for a bike ride?” Ally asked.

“Sure,” said Austin and they rode off down the street together as Ally told him about their town.

Kaytlyn Vibert (Grade Four)
Wilfrid Walker School
Regina, Saskatchewan

THIRD-PRIZE WINNER

The Tale of the Stag, Karataev

In a Russian tundra east of Sweden lived an unfortunate reindeer whose name was Karataev. I say unfortunate because he was born in the middle of a blizzard, early on a biting-cold spring morning. If it were your first day out of your mother's cozy shelter, you wouldn't like to get out either, would you?

Two weeks blew off and he was all supplied with his mother's milk. One early grey morning in May, little Karataev saw his mom dashing to the lake. He then saw his whole herd was running, and he started running too. Wolves! Indeed, the herd was now cornered!

The young stag had to choose between two dangers: wolves or thin ice? His instinct decided for him. Even if reindeers were recognized as great swimmers, the wolves were known to swim better. Yet, this time the young stag managed to swim across. But, the lucky duck grew sick. The cold air had frozen him when he left the water and gave him a chill that wouldn't go away. He asked advice from the elder of the herd, and the wise ungulate suggested he travel to the milder country of Sweden. Resolved to undertake this journey to bring back his failing health, Karataev left his home and travelled alone.

Who said that Sweden was a milder country than Northern Russia? The elder of the clan had made him walk all this way to see huge towering mountains and ice fields! Karataev fainted after this frantic exclamation of alarm. Meanwhile, two well-built Vikings found the poor creature and put him on a mammoth-sized horse.

In the morning, the stag woke up on a fresh hay stack lying in the middle of a shack to discover that his marshmallow-textured antlers had hardened. The stag turned around and saw Natasha, a young, adventurous, female reindeer munching on fresh grain. Since then, Karataev started to grow in love. The more love he felt, the less sick he became. With the care of the gentle Vikings, he was triumphantly healed.

Once completely recovered, he frenziedly rushed out of the shack to meet his beloved, Natasha. From that day on, the little family lived a long life with a few other problems—but that would be a story for another time. . . .

Néhémi Jutras (Grade Five)

Elk Island Public Schools—Home Education
Sherwood Park, Alberta



THIRD-PRIZE WINNER

The Tree of Secrets

There was once a boy who was twelve years of age. He was fairly smart and full of adventure. One day, he decided to go exploring in the woods. He was bored of the trails, there was nothing exciting there, so he went off the trail.

On his hike, he saw a very strange tree. It had the brightest blue leaves, and a red trunk with funny green markings on it. Smack in the centre was a glowing button. He hesitated, but pressed it. The button vanished and in its place was a combination lock. With the help of luck, he picked it. A big chunk of the bark came off, and behind it was a door.

The door led to a very long staircase—so long you couldn't see the bottom. Nevertheless, he started down. Magically, it felt like it only took one second to get down. At the bottom, right before his eyes, lay the strangest landscape he had ever seen. You could see the air; its stench was of rotten sap. And the sky and ground were swirling blue, red, and green.

The boy decided to explore the land, though it looked unusually bare. It was strange. It seemed like there was no point to this weird place. The only life he saw was the tree and some dry, grey flowers. Suddenly, he saw a figure walking towards him. The boy ran towards it. He saw it was an old man who looked a little different than normal humans. "What is this strange, empty place?" asked the boy.

"I'm so glad you're here," said the old man. "We are the supporters of the true life on the Earth. We give Mother Nature the ability to live on. Unfortunately, the Earth has been polluting and killing off our world."

"How can I help?" asked the boy.

"I'm an expert here," said the man, "but the Earth I know nothing about. When I die, the Earth will start diminishing."

The boy ran up the steps of the tree, broken-hearted. He started a neighbourhood project to save the underworld. They cleaned up all the garbage in the neighbourhood and planted many trees, plants, and greens. When the boy went back down later that year, he saw yellow water, white grass, and funny red, blue, and green trees all over the place. The old man was now king over many underworld people. The boy was proclaimed the human Prince of the Underworld.

Yosef Aptowitz (Grade Six)

Torah Academy of Ottawa
Ottawa, Ontario

