

FIRST-PRIZE WINNER

The Empty House

We all went to an empty house to have a costume party.

We were having fun until we all heard a sound.

... *Ooooooo*.

“Where was that sound coming from?”

“It must be coming from inside the house,” someone said.

We found John hiding behind the couch.

He was dressed up as a ghost, trying to scare us.

We were having fun until we all heard a sound.

... *Sshhwwweeshhee*.

“Where was that sound coming from?”

“It must be coming from upstairs,” someone said.

We went up the stairs and found a window open and the wind blowing.

“We are silly, there is nothing to be afraid of,” I said.

Suddenly, we heard a sound.

... *Creeeak*.

“Where was that sound coming from?”

“It must be coming from down the hall,” someone said.

We walked towards the bedroom and noticed the door was open a little.

Suddenly a cat squeezed through the door and ran past us down the stairs. The door creaked loudly.

We were having fun until we all heard a sound.

... *Rumble, rumble, rumble*.

“Where was that sound coming from?”

“I think it’s coming from the basement,” Lilly said.

“I don’t care where it is coming from. This house is too scary. Let’s go!” I said.

So we all ran back to my house and finished our party with Mom and Dad.

by Chloe Funnell

Anchor Academy (kindergarten)

Salmon Arm, British Columbia



FIRST-PRIZE WINNER

The Two Little Kids and the Bird

One day a brother and sister built a bird house. The girl was named Sparkle and the boy was named Harry.

Sparkle and Harry built a bird's nest too. They did this so the bird wouldn't have to work. The bird laid two eggs that hatched, and the mother bird was very happy.

The bird was pink, blue, and red. Some parts were blue, some parts were pink, and some parts were red. The bird loved the home and it stayed there and stayed there. The bird loved the home so much. But after it wanted to leave and make its own house.

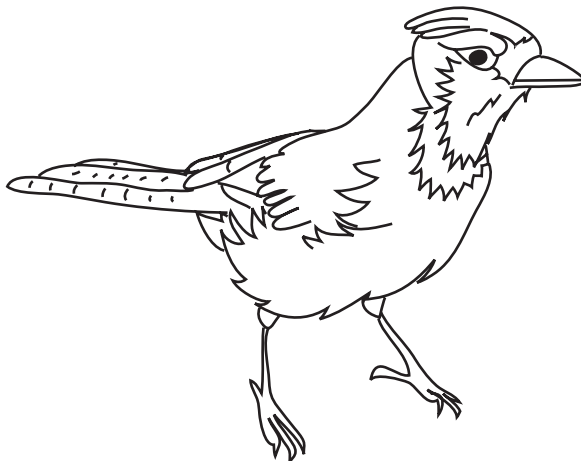
The two kids were so sad! They thought and thought and thought of a way to get the bird to come back. After, they got an idea. They put food in the house so the bird would smell it and feel safe, and the bird would stay.

The bird knew that the kids were trying to get it to come back. The kids cried to pretend, so the bird would come back. But the bird didn't come back. The bird knew the kids were crying on purpose to get it to come back.

So the kids just left the bird alone and went to their rooms and cried all day. The bird got an idea to make the kids happy. The idea was to go back to the house. There was a fence near the house so the bird lived on the fence and this made the kids so happy! They could visit every day! The bird was so happy too because it got to make its own house!

by Christina Robert

English Catholic Central School (grade one)
New Liskeard, Ontario



FIRST-PRIZE WINNER

The Adventures of Mr. Mole and Mrs. Bunny Rabbit

Once upon a time there lived a rabbit and a mole. The only problem was Mrs. Rabbit and Mr. Mole's burrows were too close together. How did the whole thing start, you ask? Well, it all started when Mrs. Rabbit had no choice but to make a new burrow because a big bolder rolled down the hill, landing on her burrow, and it collapsed.

She tried all the places nearby but there was no place like home. Finally she saw a nice peaceful meadow. *Here*, she thought, *would make a nice new home*. So she started to dig and dig and dig. Then she furnished her new home with furniture, like beds. When her space in her burrow was too small for her, she wanted to dig deeper. She started to dig it deeper and deeper. Finally she was comfortable enough in her new burrow.

One day when it started to rain really hard, it damaged a skinny wall in the middle separating Mr. Mole's burrow from Mrs. Rabbit's burrow.

Mr. Mole was asleep and when he woke up that morning, he saw a stranger nearby him. It was actually Mrs. Rabbit sleeping in her grass bed. He asked himself, *What is going on?*

When Mrs. Rabbit woke up she told Mr. Mole the whole story. They decided to become roommates.

A few weeks later they went out and had a lot of fun together. They became very good friends.

by Brooke English

Brookville Public School (grade two)
Campbellville, Ontario



FIRST-PRIZE WINNER

Responsibility for Ricky's "Dead" Pet Fish

Once upon a time a boy named Ricky wanted a pet fish so badly. Ricky's parents told him that having a pet was a big responsibility. They told him that he needed to feed the fish, clean its tank, change the water, and make sure that the water was the right temperature. Ricky screamed, "I am responsible enough!" So Ricky's parents decided that Ricky was responsible enough for a pet fish, and gave him \$45.00 to buy one.

On Ricky's way to the pet shop, he met some of his friends. "Hi, Lily, Andrew, Jesse, and Jessica! I've got to get to the pet shop before it closes," Ricky cried.

"What's the big hurry? What pet are you getting?" Jessica asked.

"I'm going to get a pet fish." He asked, "Want to come?"

"Yeah, sure!" they all exclaimed.

Together they all went to the pet shop. They chose a goldfish for Ricky. It cost \$25.00 plus tax. Andrew knew that really meant \$45.00 because he got a fish aquarium as well.

Ricky named his goldfish Goldy. For a while Ricky took great responsibility for Goldy.

On Sunday, after Ricky's hockey game, Andrew asked Ricky if he could come over to Ricky's house to see Goldy. Immediately, Ricky remembered he had neglected Goldy. Ricky quickly told his friends the bad news. Everyone agreed to help Ricky feed Goldy, clean her bowl, change the water, and make sure the water was the right temperature; but, unfortunately, poor Goldy was floating dead in the water when they arrived.

"Is she sleeping?" Jesse asked.

"No!" Ricky replied. "She is dead!"

Ricky called his mom and dad. They came rushing up to his bedroom. "What?" they cried together. Then they saw it: poor Goldy lying dead.

"What should we do with it?" Ricky asked. "It's making me sick."

Now Goldy's death caused a really big problem—the fish was going to be rotten and smelly soon. Everyone thought about Ricky's question. Now the thought of the dead fish flashed in everyone's mind. Everyone felt sick, especially Ricky's mom. She had an idea. "I know what to do!" Ricky's mom cried.

She went to fetch Goldy and brought the poor dead fish to the bathroom. As everyone followed, Ricky figured out his mom's idea. Right away he stopped his mom, and told her that her plan would not work. His mother's plan was to flush Goldy down the toilet. Ricky told his mom that he wanted to wash Goldy, clean her up, polish her, and use her as a decoration. Everyone agreed with Ricky's plan. They all helped to clean, polish, wash, and use Goldy for decoration.

When everyone had finished, they all stepped back to admire their handiwork. They had all done a splendid job. Whenever someone came over to Ricky's house they made sure they did not forget to admire Goldy, the dead fish. So from that day on Ricky remembered to be responsible for anything that he had, and Goldy was his reminder.

by Brianne Luke

Trillium Montessori and Elementary Private School (grade three)
Markham, Ontario

FIRST-PRIZE WINNER

Uhhh ...

Fred waved goodbye and never said “*Uhh ...*” Oops! I should probably start from the beginning and explain how Fred’s problem all began.

The story started in the year 2007 when a normal eight-year-old boy called Fred was at his school. The school was called Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious Public School. His teacher, Mr. Niceguy, was tapping his pen on the desk. He was trying to help Fred on a math question, but Fred just didn’t get it. In frustration Fred muttered his favourite word, “*Uhhh ...*”

Then Mr. Niceguy turned red and steam oozed out of his ears. “*Arhhgh!* Why are you always saying ‘*Uhhh ...*’?” Mr. Niceguy screamed.

“*Uhhh ...*,” complained Fred.

Then the teacher fainted.

“Guess school’s over!” Fred exclaimed and scurried out the door in a jiffy.

When he got home, his mom wondered out loud, “Why are you home so early?”

Fred replied, “*Uhhh ...* I don’t know.”

Then his mom shrieked, “Stop saying ‘*Uhhh ...*’!” Fred’s mom overexerted herself and fainted.

“I guess it’s break time,” Fred said.

He turned on the TV and saw a person inquiring, “Whoever knows what 60x2 is will win \$100.”

Fred sighed, “*Uhhh ...* I wish I knew the answer!” Right after he said that, the TV exploded! Still stunned, Fred wondered to himself, *Was that supposed to happen?*

The next day, Fred went to school as always. When he stepped into the classroom, the first thing the teacher asked was, “Where’s your homework, Fred?”

Fred mumbled, “*Uhhh ...*”

Then the teacher screamed, “All right! I have had enough! Go home!”

Fred headed for home.

The minute he stepped into the house, his mom informed him, “We are going to the doctor to see why you are always saying ‘*Uhhh ...*’.”

Fred replied, “*Uh huh.*”

“However, you can play for forty-five minutes before the appointment,” his mom told him.

When Fred heard those words, he jumped up and started playing on the computer. After the forty-five minutes, they went to the doctor. The doctor examined Fred’s mouth and blurted out, “He has the word ‘*uhhh*’ stuck in his mouth! We must take it out immediately!”

It took three weeks, but the doctor finally managed to take the ‘*uhhh*’ out of Fred’s mouth. Boy, was Fred happy when he waved goodbye to the doctor and the word ‘*uhhh*’. Well, this is the story of my best friend, Fred, who *Uhhh ...* never said the word ‘*uhhh*’ again. So ... *Uhhh ...* Oh no!

by Steven Zhou

Broadview Public School (grade four)

Ottawa, Ontario

FIRST-PRIZE WINNER

The Magical Door

James Johnson walked along a worn-out concrete path with his sister, Melissa, in the town of Flemington. They were twins and both were tall and had black hair and blue eyes. They were in grade five, in separate classes, and were walking home from school.

“Someone should fix up this path soon. I can hardly see it,” said Melissa.

“Hey, stop complaining about the path; it’s very special and actually was the very first path in Flemington! It was paved on Flemington’s birthday in 1902!” said her brother.

“Wow! Where did you learn that?”

“My social studies class.”

“I wish I could have seen it after it was paved. It would have been so shiny and clean!”

“Me too! I think there weren’t cameras back then though. Too bad!”

They walked up to the door of their house. “Speaking of clean, look at the front door!” said Melissa. Both of them stared at it in amazement. They wondered if their mom had just cleaned the door, or what?

James opened the door slightly. All he could see was white. “Wow! The lights must be turned on to their max!” he said. James opened the door all the way. Still, all they could see was white. They both stared again, but this time at the whiteness.

“Is it safe?” asked Melissa.

James touched it. “I think so,” he said. They both went in and closed the door. All of a sudden the lights flashed. “Maybe we should tell someone about this and show them,” said James.

“You’re right,” said Melissa.

They went out the door and their eyes opened wide in astonishment. Everything looked old-fashioned and out of style. “I am not seeing this,” said James, as he almost fell down.

Melissa saw a newspaper lying near the steps. “Maybe this will give us some information,” she said.

It read: “First issue of the Flemington Paper. Ceremony held today. First path finished. Members of town may touch it.” The newspaper only had one page and not a lot of words. There was only the one article since it was a special edition and a special day.

“Wow! We’re in the past, and it is the birthday of Flemington!” said Melissa.

“And the path’s birthday!” said James. “Let’s watch the ceremony!” he said.

They walked to the ceremony, following directions in the newspaper. When they arrived, there were many people of all shapes and sizes. Later on, the new mayor announced that anyone who wanted to could touch the new path today. Melissa was about to touch it when James tried to tell her not to. He said, “Who knows what could happen if you touch it!” Melissa touched it anyway, and then they both were teleported back to their house.

Their mom asked what their favourite part of the day was. James answered, “How about we just say it was something we learned in school!” and winked at Melissa.

by Matthew Fogel

St. John’s—Ravenscourt School (grade five)
Winnipeg, Manitoba

FIRST-PRIZE WINNER

So This Is Heaven

Bonjour, hola, and hello! My name is Colonel Adrienne of Muddybog. I am communicating with you from one of the most beautiful places I have ever seen. My friends say that it is called Heaven! Wait a second, Heaven? That means I'm dead! What? How can this be true? Let me look back at the past events to see how this could have happened.

I guess it all started yesterday when I was attending to my regular rainy-day duties. Oh yes, there I was sitting on the dew-covered grass, enjoying the glorious wetness of that dreary Monday. I sat and munched on a piece of dirt as I absorbed the beauty of the landscape around me.

I guess I dozed off while I basked. Soon I had the most horrible dream! A gigantic bird was looking at me straight in the face and threatening to spring at me any moment. I opened my eyes wide in fright. Instead of little dewdrops or splashing rain, I saw an enormous bird staring at me straight in the eyes, clicking its beak in hunger.

I let out the loudest, most high-pitched scream I could muster! Those greedy eyes stared me down. I didn't know what else to do so I started wriggling to the opening of my home. I wriggled, and wiggled, and squiggled, and jiggled until my hole was almost in reach.

But, of course, by this time the bird had caught onto my actions. He sprang at me, almost snatching me in that bone-hard beak. Giant thumping noises vibrated the ground each time he stepped, making it more difficult for me to make my escape! I continued my struggle for home. Then ... I made it! I pushed my head into my little hole and tried to wiggle down.

My struggle reduced, because of my obvious victory. Suddenly, there was a sharp pain that jabbed into my rear-end like a mousetrap snapping down on a toe. But this was no mousetrap; this was a bird's beak! I felt a chunk of me fall away to create a deep satisfaction in the bird as it gobbled my bottom down. I cried out and hot tears dripped down my slimy cheeks as I tried to bite back the agonizing pain that was gripping me tighter than death.

Finally, my struggle was shown to have been in vain. The bird yanked me out of my hole and threw me back into its mouth. Not a moment later, I was tossed down the bird's throat and had entered its digestive system. I was helpless, so I closed my eyes and then dozed off again. Except this time, it was forever.

All right, *now* I understand this whole Heaven thing. It's all coming back to me. Well, I guess it isn't that bad; it is Heaven after all. Oh look, a storm's coming! I better go enjoy myself before that bird dies and comes up here too!

by Hannah Zamora

St. Ann Catholic School (grade six)
Fenwick, Ontario



SECOND-PRIZE WINNERS

The Bear's Tree

The little bear had a tree and he liked his tree. He liked the leaves on the tree and it was so beautiful. It is fall and the leaves turn yellow-orange and fall down off the tree.

The little bear thinks the tree is sick because the leaves are falling off! He got some tape and string and tried to make the leaves stick back on the tree.

The wind came and blew them all off again! The little bear tried to get a new tree but they were all bare. He waited until spring and the leaves came back. His tree was beautiful again!

by Gavin Kerr

Prince of Wales Elementary School (kindergarten)
Calgary, Alberta



The Water Giants

Once upon a time there were three little water giants. They lived in a little cave near the water. One day a little boy went into their cave.

The boy saw the water giants. Then the boy went home and when he got home he shouted, "Dad! Dad! Dad! Guess what I saw?"

"What did you see?"

"I saw the water giants!"

"Oh, good for you. Where are they?"

So the boy showed his dad. When they got to the place where the water giants lived, they saw the water giants being attacked by two men in a submarine. Suddenly, the men jumped out of the submarine and swam to the buoy.

The water giants rescued them and they all became friends.

by Michael Bobbitt

Harrington Harbour School (grade one)
Harrington, Québec

SECOND-PRIZE WINNER

The Great War of the Swordsmen

There were two brothers named Hendrik and Luke. They lived on a farm in a village called Stomeberg. Each day they fought with swords for hours and hours. When Hendrik was out on the farm feeding the horse he saw a cement box. He went right to it. His dad called, "Dinner!" He took the cement box to his room and hid it. After dinner he tried to open it, but it did not open. He tried to open it with many things until he finally opened it with a spatula.

There was a sword inside the box. When he picked it up a beam of light went right up into the sky. He looked at his hand; it had the mark of an "s" on it. When his dad and brother came into his room he quickly hid the sword away. They asked, "What happened?"

"Nothing," said Hendrik.

"Then what was that noise?" asked his dad, Marko.

"The TV," said Hendrik.

"Okay, but don't keep it on so loud," said Marko.

The next day he went on a long walk and he saw a castle. He went to it. There were two knights. They said, "What are you doing here?"

Hendrik didn't say anything.

One of the knights said, "I'm keeping an eye on you." The knight then opened the gate even though he wasn't sure about Hendrik.

When he walked in a lady said, "Hello. What's your name?"

"It is Hendrik. What is this place? Who are you? What's going on here?"

"My name is Ellakaya and this is Klukaya. There is a dark side. The people from the dark side want to take over our side and they want to get the sword before we do. Do you want to train with us so we can all fight against the dark side?"

"I will think about it," said Hendrik.

The next day he decided to train with Ellakaya and an older man named Arthur until he was finally ready. That night while he was sleeping he heard sword noises and people shouting and crying. When he looked out the window, he saw the biggest sword war he had ever seen. He grabbed his sword and went outside. Ellakaya yelled, "What are you doing out here? It is too dangerous! Get back inside!"

"No!" shouted Hendrik. "My father is out here. I have to save him!" Then he ran off without saying another word.

When Hendrik found his dad, his father was wounded so Hendrik started crying. That was when Sinisser, the dark lord, came. He said, "What are you doing crying over your little daddy like a baby?"

"He is my father!" said Hendrik.

"Well if he is that important then maybe I should make him a prisoner!"

Then Hendrik blocked a hit from Sinisser and they had a sword fight.

Sinisser fell off the top of the castle and no one ever saw him again. Then the dark side surrendered and everyone cheered!

by Andrew Kates

Anne McClymont Elementary School (grade two)
Kelowna, British Columbia

SECOND-PRIZE WINNER

Excitement and Noise

Early one Monday morning David, an old man, didn't know what to do! He had brought his animals into the house because the barn was flooded. It was so low that the creek had flooded it.

"Wife," said David, "I feel like letting them drown if they can't swim any better!"

"No!" said his wife, Margaret. "We can't let them drown. Besides, I actually like them being in here."

Earlier, she had been frantically shouting and waving her hands. Margaret had not wanted them in the house at all. Now she had changed her mind. David did not like that, so he began to think up excuses.

"The baby could get hurt," he said.

"He is in the cradle and I think Matthew likes the animals in the house."

"They could break your dishes," David said later.

"They are in the cupboard," Margaret replied, "and we could buy other ones." She did not seem to care.

"The animals could ruin the bed, or couch, or cradle, or anything!" David said hopefully. He was beginning to think it hopeless to make up excuses.

"I will watch them," said Margaret.

David gave up and went to get some sleep on the couch. He could get no sleep on the couch or bed because the rabbits kept hopping around on him and the cows kept putting their faces in his. Next he tried the bed upstairs but there was certainly too much racket downstairs. The baby was laughing loudly and his wife kept yelling at the rabbits who kept hopping into the cream she wanted to make into butter. Some dishes clattered to the floor.

David came down to see what was the matter. He was looking into the kitchen and, as he reached the last step, he tripped over a calf lying by the steps. This caused the calf to jump up. Suddenly, David was flying up in the air and the next thing he knew he landed on a squawking hen. It just so happened that the hen had laid eggs right where David landed. Now he was a *mess*!

Margaret came to see what David was yelling at. She burst out laughing! This made David angry so he yelled at any animal nearby. All this racket made Matthew scared and excited so he started crying. As soon as he saw his grandfather, however, the crying stopped and he started laughing. David couldn't help laughing now himself. Soon Margaret joined in again. This made the animals scared and they started to make another racket.

David stopped laughing and changed into clean clothes. Matthew was hungry so he cried again. David was hungry too so his wife made supper. They were all happy and surprised that they could get sandwiches made with animals in the house.

The next day the barn was no longer flooded and the animals went back to the barn. David, Margaret, and Matthew hope they never have a day like that again!

by Naomi Kuepfer

Thaler's School (grade three)
Chesley, Ontario

SECOND-PRIZE WINNER

Carmen's Adventure

Once there was a cat named Carmen. Carmen was a frisky little cat who loved to explore. She was completely white, from head to paw. Her owner's name was Mrs. Bunler. Mrs. Bunler was small and skinny. She was an older woman, who often forgot things or became confused. Once she even forgot her own birthday! Yet, Mrs. Bunler was kind, very kind. This kindness proved to be a very good thing.

Carmen was an indoor cat who dreamed of going outdoors. She desperately wanted to play with those flying animals she always saw out the window of Mrs. Bunler's house. She would spend hours sitting and staring, hoping for an opportunity to escape. One sunny, summer day, she got her chance. Mrs. Bunler had left the door to the backyard open! Carmen thought, as she crept out, *I wonder what my owner will say?* That thought did not last long.

She suddenly saw a beautiful blue jay sitting on the chimney of the abandoned house next door. Moving slowly and carefully, she climbed the fence and jumped onto the roof of the house. Quietly, she crept up to the chimney and prepared to pounce. As she leapt furiously at her prey, the blue jay flew abruptly away. Carmen felt herself falling and falling as she missed the bird and went headfirst down the dirty, black chimney. Gasping for breath, she landed with a thud at the bottom of the chimney. As she emerged from the sooty fireplace and ran out of the broken-down building, she left black footprints behind her. Scared from her accident, Carmen ran and ran. She ran in circles until she was completely lost. By twilight, Carmen, now black as night, was so tired she collapsed on the side of the road.

Mrs. Bunler had spent the day searching for Carmen. She called and called, but Carmen did not come. She was very sad; Carmen was her closest friend. As she walked down the street, she came upon the little black cat lying in the street. She felt very sorry for her. She bundled the cat in her arms and hurried to the Veterinarian Clinic. "Hmm," said Jill, the veterinarian. "Seems she is suffering from fatigue. Let her rest for a couple of days, and then she will be fine."

Mrs. Bunler took the poor bedraggled cat home. She made a lovely warm bath for her new friend and placed her gently in the water. As she carefully washed, she was surprised to see the black fur turn to white. "My little Carmen," she laughed, "you are a silly girl! I thought I had lost you." Mrs. Bunler hugged her dearly, wrapped her in a fluffy towel, and made her a bowl of warm milk. Her kindness had brought her little adventurer safely home! Carmen purred and purred.

by Leigh-Anne Noltie

Brookville Public School (grade four)
Campbellville, Ontario



SECOND-PRIZE WINNER

Doing the Impossible

Hola! I am Sancardo; I am nine years old. I live in a place called Acapulco. It is a beautiful part of Mexico. Even though I have no family, I live fine on my own. All my life I have wanted to be a bullfighter.

One day I was walking down the street when I saw something on the ground. It was a strange red cape ... that bullfighters use! Little did I know that the cape was the key to my dreams.

When I picked it up, I felt like I was being suddenly sucked into another dimension, which was exactly what was happening. When I finally recovered, I looked up and saw that I was dressed like a bullfighter. I started to look around and realized I was in a bullfighting stadium, with a bull! I heard the crowds cheering, "Sancardo! Sancardo!" I looked at the bull; it looked furious! I didn't know what to do. I had no clue how to fight a bull.

I bet you have heard some pretty scary words. The scariest words I have ever heard were, "Release the bull!" When I heard this I felt like a mouse surrounded by owls. The bull came charging towards me. What I did next was so weird that the crowd screamed. I took my cape and ran near a wall. When the bull saw this, he came charging like a mad man. As he came really close I removed my cape and ran! When I looked back I saw the bull now had two broken horns.

I was glad I could fight a bull, but I missed Acapulco and I missed the freedom I used to have. While walking out of the stadium I saw a straw hat. I picked it up and, in a flash, I was back home. But wait, I still had the cape! Maybe it would come in handy someday, on my next adventure. Then I wondered if anyone would believe my story. Well, if they did or not, I would still know it was true. I hope you will have a great adventure someday, just like mine!

by Samuel Gallant

John Knox Christian School (grade five)
Woodstock, Ontario



SECOND-PRIZE WINNER

The Snow Leopard

Roger glanced back, clearly irritated. “Come on, Thomas, little brother! We haven’t been tracking that albino snow leopard for two years in the Himalayas just for fun! Good, Tom, we’re almost there, we’ve found the den, and ...,” Roger disappeared over the hill of snow, muttering.

Thomas groaned. “Personally,” he hissed, “I wasn’t the one who started this wild goose chase, so why should I care?”

“Okay, Tom, you go gather firewood. I’ll find shelter and set that leopard trap we brought,” Roger hollered over the hill.

Thomas sighed and went to gather firewood, tramping through the forest in search of sticks. He didn’t particularly like the idea of going to kill the leopard just for its fur, but he didn’t complain.

Weeks passed. Roger became more and more agitated, checking the trap every few hours, while outside the shelter, a snowstorm began, accelerating into a blizzard. The Himalayan temperature had been dropping like a stone for the past week.

One night, Roger and Thomas huddled in their shelter for warmth, while outside, an unusually strong gale blew, sending snowflakes everywhere. Thomas shivered, icy cold snowflakes stung his cheeks.

Suddenly, Thomas saw a strange white shape stalking through the snow outside the shelter. It was sniffing around, apparently interested in the remains of their fire. Roger grabbed Thomas. “There it is!” he whispered, just as the white shape lost interest in the ashes, turned, and disappeared into the night.

Roger grabbed his rifle, leapt out into the blizzard, and was swallowed up by the darkness. Gunshots sounded. Thomas ran outside after Roger, alarmed.

Thomas didn’t know how long he clomped through the snow, calling for Roger. Snow came pouring into his soggy boots and the wind whipped the exposed skin on his face. Thomas had begun fearing that he might drop dead with cold, when he heard Roger’s voice hollering something at the leopard. Thomas continued on through the snow, certain that Roger wasn’t far away.

About five minutes later, Thomas’s stomach lurched at the sound of a sickening snapping noise, not far away, followed by an inhuman scream. Thomas gasped, then burst forward towards the noise, horrified.

Thomas stumbled into the clearing. There was Roger, his face resolute, aiming his rifle at something white, thrashing about desperately on the ground.

The leopard lay there, pure white, its paw scarlet with blood. It was snapping its jaws viciously, trying in vain to scare off whatever was holding its paw.

Thomas turned to Roger. “Don’t shoot it!” he begged. Roger ignored his brother.

Then Roger’s finger twitched, about to pull the trigger. Thomas leapt in front of the leopard. He heard the crack of the rifle, felt an overwhelming pain in his arm, and collapsed.

Thomas woke in a brightly lit hospital room. His arm was in a sling. Roger was sitting beside his bed, lines of worry in his face.

Roger smiled at Thomas’s apprehensive expression. “I let it go.”

by Jane Ding

Broadview Public School (grade six)
Ottawa, Ontario

THIRD-PRIZE WINNERS

The Happy Little Pumpkin

I was a little seed. The children are planting me in the ground. When I am a little seed in the ground, I really need some sleep. But I can't get any sleep because the children are too noisy and they are stepping on me.

I am starting to pop up. I am only a little plant right now and I am just starting to become a pumpkin. I am starting to be an even bigger pumpkin and I am turning orange.

I am a happy little pumpkin but the children decided to take me inside and carve my head right off and carve my lovely pumpkin skin off. They made eye holes and a nose hole and, of course, a mouth smile. Now I am a happy little pumpkin in a happy Hallowe'en town.

by Alexandra Dyack

Prince of Wales Elementary School (kindergarten)
Calgary, Alberta



Making Wood

We went out in the bush to make wood with our horse and the wagon. We didn't bring it home but piled it in the bush. Monday we will probably bring it in and pile it in the wood shed. Dad sawed down a big thick tree. We children had to go on top of a big hill. Dad sawed and sawed and suddenly it cracked. Dad started to back away and it came crashing down. We went to another bush to make about two more loads. We will bring it in with the wagon.

by Vernon Kuepfer

Thaler's School (grade one)
Chesley, Ontario

THIRD-PRIZE WINNER

The Magical Butterfly

Once there was a little girl named Jewel who was walking by a lake. She didn't go to school because she was too poor. She was found sleeping in a shallow river, wrapped in a thick blanket woven by her mother, whoever that was. She was found by a mean man named Jay Cooke.

At the lake Jewel sighed as she bent down to get a drink of lake water. She cupped her hands and put them in the cold water (gulp!). *Ahhh!* A butterfly perched on Jewel's hand.

"Shoo!" Jewel shouted. Jewel told herself, *He'll fly off later!*

Jewel walked on. The butterfly never budged, no matter what she did.

Jewel lit a fire in her cave. "Ho!" Jewel said. "I forgot to get barley." So she started running. Soon she stopped because some magical force was blocking her way. She looked around the cave. Then something appeared—a blinding light shaped as the butterfly. The light died down to be the butterfly.

Without recognizing the new butterfly-shaped window and gold heart-patterned curtains, Jewel walked to the storage hut to get enough hay to make a bed for the magical butterfly. Suddenly she recognized the new window and curtains. She put down the hay for the butterfly and Jewel ran out to get barley and tarragon from the fields.

Jewel met a wizard. He said, "You have my butterfly."

Jewel was so scared she quickly picked some food and ran home.

The butterfly was gone when she came back. Jewel started to cry. Then she ran through a portal to the evil wizard's lair. She saw a tube going into a bottle. It was sucking up the butterfly's power. The wizard did not see Jewel so Jewel grabbed the butterfly before she was spotted by the wizard.

The wizard cast a magic spell on Jewel but the butterfly shielded her. They escaped and went home together.

by Carlee Rowsell

Harrington Harbour School (grade two)
Harrington Harbour, Québec



THIRD-PRIZE WINNER

Adezzfe

“Yahoo! This is great riding you again, Lucky!” yelled Sue to her horse. “Oh, look at that brown, wet cave. Let’s go explore. Lucky, stop. What if there’s a bear?” But Lucky walked right in the cave. “*Ahhh!* What are you? You look as hideous as a three-headed monster!”

“I’m an adezzfe. What are you?”

“My name is Sue, Sue Simson, and I’m human. This is my horse, Lucky. Do you have a name?” she curiously asked.

“Why would I have a name?” asked the gloomy adezzfe.

“I have no clue, but I’ll name you Bob,” answered Sue. “Well, my mom will be home any minute now, but I can’t take you there because my mom and dad are fierce hunters. They will kill you as fast as a cheetah can run, so stay here, okay?”

Lucky, the fastest horse in the state, dashed out of the cave all the way home because Sue’s mom would be home and Sue had yet to feed all the horses.

When Sue’s mom came home Sue saw that her mom had bought Chinese food for supper. “Mom, you know it was not necessary to buy supper,” Sue sneered loudly.

“I know,” answered Sue’s mom kindly, “but we needed a change.”

Sue wasn’t very hungry so she ended up giving all her food to Bob. Day after day, Sue would give half of every meal to Bob the adezzfe.

A week went by and every day it was even harder to keep Bob hidden. On Sunday, at supper time, Sue’s mom told Sue some very important news ... the whole family was going to Asia.

What! Oh my gosh! Okay, I can’t keep this hidden. “I have been feeding an adezzfe! Mom, just please don’t kill it ...” Sue was so excited she didn’t even know what she was saying.

“I want you to tell me everything,” Sue’s mom interrupted calmly.

So Sue told her mom the whole story and, after, Sue’s mom wisely told Sue that she didn’t have to keep feeding and hiding the adezzfe because adezzfes are endangered. They both laughed as loud as hyenas but, after, her mom knowingly told her she had to clean the horse pen for a month. Sue never again fed another animal without telling her parents first.

by Kayla Skrlík

Nampa Public School (grade three)
Nampa, Alberta



THIRD-PRIZE WINNER

Parents from Another Planet

Did you ever feel like your parents were from another planet? I did! No, really! From another place than Earth.

It all started last month, when my mother and father dropped me off at school. I was sitting at my desk in Mrs. Phillips' class when I started thinking. *Where do my parents go after they drop me off? What do they do?* The only thing I knew is when I am slow getting ready for school, they shout "Hurry up! We are going to be late for work." The more I thought about it, the more questions I had. *What is work? Why do both my parents go together in the same car?* It was at that moment I made up my mind to do something that I thought I might regret. But what choice did I have? I had to know.

I decided I would follow them the next morning. I had it all planned out, I would pack my roller blades in my knapsack that morning without them noticing. It was easier than I thought. My parents dropped me off and as soon as I stepped out of the car, they rushed off. Luckily, they caught the red light at the corner. I was able to keep up with them, but my heart was beating so loudly that I could hear it. I started to feel better when I noticed my parents were headed back home. They drove the car into the garage.

I was about to head back to school when I noticed something strange. My parents opened up a door on the side of the garage; a door I had never seen before, and I was sure this door was not there yesterday. I followed my parents past the door. I cannot tell you how shocked I was to see this room! The walls were lined with aluminum; there were all types of lights and buttons on the wall. I could not move; I was in complete shock but I was not ready for what I saw next.

My mother pulled down a zipper on the back of my father, almost as if removing a Halloween costume, but this time, he was removing his human suit. Underneath was a green, ugly looking alien. If that were not bad enough, my father pulled down a zipper on my mother and she looked exactly like him. Alien! I must have made a noise because both aliens were coming towards me. Just as one alien put a hand on me I heard Mrs. Phillips calling me and tapping my shoulder.

I had fallen asleep in class, and woken from my dream. Funny thing is I have a green stain on my right shoulder.

by Daniel Assayag

United Talmud Torahs—Beutel (grade four)
Montréal, Québec



THIRD-PRIZE WINNER

Christmas for a Poor Girl

Lily looked into the tin cup to see if anyone had dropped anything inside. Not a penny. Lily sighed. She lived on the streets of Japan. She had no parents. She didn't know where they were or what had happened to them.

Lily shivered in the cold December air. She had virtually just rags thrown over her. She felt hunger pains in her stomach because she hadn't eaten in days. She wanted some food, especially since it was Christmas. Lily could hear children laughing, playing with their new toys. The smell of noodles wafted through the air and made her even more hungry. She looked in the cup again. Nothing.

"Are you alone, little one?" a soft voice asked above her. Lily looked up, startled. A tall woman with a beautiful red dress looked down at her. "It's all right. I won't hurt you," she said. "My name is Sun Yatsen. I live over there." She pointed to a big house. "My house is empty most of the time now. My children have grown and my husband died. You seem to be all alone. I have a bed and food for you, as well as some warm clothes. They were my daughter's when she was young. Could you at least stay one day?"

Lily didn't even have to think. She nodded happily.

"Follow me," the woman said.

"Oh, thank you, Mrs. Yatsen!" Lily exclaimed.

Hand in hand they walked to the house, warmth and light coming in the windows.

Lily could barely speak as they entered the house. A fire crackled merrily in the fireplace. The hearth was occupied by a sleeping cat, which lifted one eye groggily and closed it again. "That's Midnight. He is a good old fellow, and about my only other friend," Mrs. Yatsen said. "Come, we must eat."

Lily followed her to a wooden table. On the table was a big bowl of noodles, with a smaller bowl of rice. There was also a platter of fish, while sushi sat on a smaller platter. At the two places, Mrs. Yatsen had set out a cup of steaming green tea. Next to the cup sat a bowl with elaborately and colourfully carved chopsticks. Lily realized they must be Mrs. Yatsen's best. Two beautifully wrapped Japanese cookies sat beside each place.

Lily wolfed everything down quickly. Mrs. Yatsen laughed. "You have quite the appetite," she chuckled.

After supper, Lily listened as Mrs. Yatsen told stories of Christmases past. As Lily fell into bed, she realized that this was her best Christmas ever!

by Megan McEwen

Maranatha Christian Academy (grade five)
Windsor, Ontario



THIRD-PRIZE WINNER

Stranded

It is futile for me to explain my misfortune to you, but I will try. You see, I am in an awkward position. I am stranded on an island; an island I can only describe briefly, for there is nothing to write of but misery and woe. The sand is damp, glittering with dull grey colours. The sky remains cloudy, not even a speck of yellow shows in the gloomy heaven above. The island is bare; only one tree grows, and that one tree cannot bear fruit. My only solace is a pencil to write with, a paper to write on, and a bottle to send my message to the world. This is a nightmare, a dark dream, no mortal ever dared to dream before. The worst part, however, is that I am the main character in this dark play.

I am wondering, fearing, thinking what to write in the last communication I may ever make in my short dreary life. Should I try to make a point about this much confused and miserable world? Should I try to make my voice heard and, if so, what is my voice? Alas, my woeful words to the world:

“Dearest Brother,

I hope when you receive this letter it will not be too late. I am stranded on an island surrounded by water that seems to laugh at my suffering. The wind mocks me as it speeds by. The cold makes my teeth chatter so fiercely that small drops of blood from my lips spill on the grey sand. I have no food, no shelter, or warmth. All I have is paper, a bottle, and a keen pencil, which is eager to question whether we are monsters or man.

Centuries and centuries have passed and yet our actions are still those of a bloodthirsty, uncivilized beast that lives in the deepest, darkest, forgotten hole of Mother Earth.

Benito Mussolini once said, ‘Blood alone moves the wheels of history.’ Sadly, this rings loud and clear in history’s ear. Despite all the wars man has caused, despite the starvation and disease that man has spread around the world, despite all the dreadful disasters man has committed, we have done little to not repeat them. There are a few noble and devoted people who try to make a difference in the world, but sadly, not enough.

In Darfur, genocide and slaughtering occur. Bodies litter the streets, yet the world does pitifully nothing! We watch on CNN at dinner time, as we stuff our already-obese bodies. We take much for granted, and still we want more—more wealth, more land, more power! Hear me, my friend, and make a difference in the world.

Sincerely,

Hopeful”

That is my perspective of this cruel world. If we fail to improve our actions, the world will end in tragedy—a tragedy more melancholy and sorrowful than any of Shakespeare’s. Although the decisions we make are not always horrific, our decisions must agree with Mother Nature as well as with humanity. Until then, it is as though we all are stranded.

by Anokh Dhillon

Colebrook Elementary School (grade six)
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