

FIRST PRIZE

A Good-Luck Medallion

There were two twins, Evan and Evelyn. They lived with their nanny on her blimp.

“Nanny, where are we going now?” asked Evelyn.

“We are going to a jungle. In fact, it’s right below us now,” said her nanny.

Evelyn looked out the window. “Wow, this jungle is huge! Evan, come look.”

Evan came over right beside his sister. “Ha, you’re right, Evi!” exclaimed Evan. “Hey, Nanny Mary, do you know what the name of this jungle is?” he asked.

“It’s called Lollizon,” she responded.

The jungle had a lot of big, green, leafy trees. It had sparkling blue rivers and streams. But there was one thing special about this jungle.

“Wait!” said Evelyn. “This jungle is rumoured to have a temple that holds the sapphire medallion!”

“The sapphire medallion?” said Evan.

“The sapphire medallion is sparkling sapphire and is rumoured to give you good luck,” explained Evelyn.

“Then, I’m going to get it!” declared Evan.

“Not if I get it first!” sang Evelyn. Then, those two started nonstop bickering!

“Stop fighting!” yelled Nanny. “We will go to the temple, and both of you will race to see who gets the sapphire thing-ding first!”

“Nan, it’s called the sapphire medallion, and yes, I’m willing to race. Are you going to accept the challenge, Evan?” Evelyn sneered.

“Yes,” Evan said as he stuck his tongue out at Evelyn.

“Lookie-do! We’re here, kiddos,” Nanny said. Nanny steered the blimp to the temple.

The temple looked old and rusty. Big vines were surrounding it.

“Okay. Rules are simple. Start here, and you have to manage through three rooms. No cheating!” declared Nanny.

“Okay,” said the twins.

“And one . . . two . . .”

“I’m going to beat you,” whispered Evan.

“No way,” retorted Evelyn.

“Three!” yelled Nanny.

Evan and Evelyn bolted to the door like two cheetahs. They went inside, and there were two puzzles.

“Looks as if the first room is a puzzle,” sighed Evan. Evan wasn’t great at puzzles, but his sister was great at them.

“Oh! We’re making a lion puzzle,” clapped Evelyn. She finished the puzzle without hesitation. Evan was still struggling.

Evelyn went to the next room. It was a climbing room. “Oh no,” mumbled Evelyn. Evelyn wasn’t really great at climbing.

Soon, Evan went into the second room and was climbing with no struggle.

He went to the last room, and there were tiles. At the end of the room was the medallion. But Evan heard a scream from the other room. It was his sister. Evan was so close to winning, but he put his sister first.

“The rope is breaking!” yelled Evelyn.

“Jump into my arms!”

Evelyn jumped into her brother’s arms. “Thank you,” she said and hugged him.

by Alessandra Orante (Grade Five)

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FIRST PRIZE

Moving Out

“C’mon!” my sister hollered. She was probably the most impatient and demanding person I knew. The more I ignored her, the more she shouted. It was getting to be too much. I had already been dreading this moment for weeks: moving day. My parents had sold our home, and we were moving across town to a new house, a new school, a new community.

Even as I was packing my last few things into boxes, I already missed the house. I brought my last box to the moving truck, put my stuff in, and went back to the house for one final look. It looked so different, as if it were just a plain, old house. I had no idea that was even possible, and a feeling of sadness struck me hard. Hanging my head, I felt anger and fear join my sadness. I didn’t know what was happening or how I could control it. I felt extremely confused. My eyes started to water, but I dried them. I didn’t want to look like a baby, especially in front of my surprisingly intimidating little sister. But, more importantly, I didn’t want my parents to see how upset I really was. I kept my face hidden, trying to hide the emotions growing inside me. I dragged myself out and left my house for the last time.

I had a good reason to cry. This was the only home I’d ever known. I’d learned almost everything I knew here. It was one of the most important places in my life. I had always felt safe here. I was going to have to redo everything I’d worked so hard to achieve. There was no way I’d settle in a week before the start of school. That’s not easy. They thought everything would be a breeze, but I knew better. I would be all alone at a new school, and with my inability to make friends, the change wouldn’t be easy. I knew my sister was all excited and would have no trouble making new friends, but I’m not her. I never cope well with change. I mean, some of my friends had moved, but not across the city! This was different.

The car ride was exhausting. I would’ve gladly fallen asleep, but my emotions were still boiling inside me. I wasn’t sure whether I was carsick or anxious, but I needed a distraction. I turned on my phone and started looking at my photos. I wanted to keep those happy memories alive and strong.

Finally, after what seemed like forever, we reached the end of the driveway. I left the car and slowly walked to the front door. At last, I walked inside.

by Ziv Bankey-Mohamdee (Grade Six)

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SECOND PRIZE

Animal Catastrophe

In a lonely rainforest, there was a young woman named Gabriella Wessels. She was a researcher from South Africa. While Gabriella was in the woods, she found a species that nobody had ever seen before! She named it the southern striped toucan. She gave it that name because it had olive-green and bright-orange stripes on its beak and on its long, powerful wings.

Quickly, she zipped out her camera and fiddled, trying to turn it on. Before she could take a picture, the striped toucan flew away with the click of a switch. She said, "Gosh darn it!" Gabriella slowly sank to the floor of the warm, moist rainforest. She could almost feel the earth breathing.

A moment later, she felt something heavy drop down on her shoulder. Gabriella put her head up and was shocked to find that a brightly coloured toucan was sitting on her shoulder! Gabriella grabbed the camera and took a selfie of her and the bird. "Selfie!" she shouted enthusiastically. "Yes! I have finally found it!" she shouted. The toucan squawked.

Then, right at that moment, she heard a loud bang. She saw a giant man standing on a rock, shouting, "Everyone, please evacuate the area now!"

Gabriella leaped up, grabbed the toucan, and ran over to the man. "Why?" she asked calmly.

He whispered to her, "There are toxins—lots and lots of toxins here."

"Are you sure?"

The man didn't answer. Then, he started shaking as he fell to the solid floor of the rainforest.

"Somebody, help!" she screamed in fright. But there was absolutely nobody in sight. She grabbed her sequined flip phone and called 9-1-1. "Somebody, please answer!" she shouted, begging. "Ugh! No internet connection!"

Suddenly, the man said, "See? It's the toxins. . . . I'm tellin' you these toxins are terrible!" His voice echoed through the rainforest.

"Are you okay?" Gabriella asked anxiously.

"Yes, they made me faint," the man said.

"Can you help me?" she asked.

The man hesitated. "With what?"

"I need you to tell me what the toxins are."

"I think they are from an element called berkelium, number 97 on the periodic table."

"Oh, we better leave before it affects us!" she said.

"All right, let's go in my Jeep."

They escaped the toxic fumes and never got poisoned!

"Let's go alert the police," suggested Gabriella.

"All right!" said the man as they drove off together.

by **Sophia Nichols** (Grade Five)

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SECOND PRIZE

Living Free

"I'm so excited!" said Zara as she was getting ready for her first day of school in grade seven. She wondered if she would hear sirens from the bomb blasts. Life in Syria was a nightmare, and she hoped Canada would be a peaceful dream. She desperately wanted to fit in.

"Mom, will the other kids like me?" asked Zara.

"Of course, dear, just be yourself," replied her mother, Lilly.

Zara took her first steps into the school and noticed that there was no security standing with guns to protect everyone. Many of the kids were laughing and did not look nervous at all. She entered her classroom, and her teacher smiled and told her to come to the front.

"Class, please welcome our new student as she introduces herself." Zara softly said her name.

She walked back to her desk with all eyes on her and overheard a student whispering, "Why does she sound so weird when she talks? I can barely understand her." Zara was so confused because she spoke perfect English. It was not going to be an easy day.

Many hours later, she walked into the cafeteria, holding her lunch bag. She saw an empty seat beside some of the girls in her class. She sat and began to eat her lunch. Zara felt as though she were being watched. The girl beside her loudly asked, "Eww, why does your food smell so much?"

Zara could feel her eyes burn and a lump form in her throat. *Why are they being so cruel?* she asked herself.

Just then, she felt someone tap her on the shoulder. "Hi, Zara, my name is Jamilah. Just ignore these girls and come sit with me." Zara thanked her, and they stuck with each other.

She found herself staring at Jamilah because she looked so different. She asked Jamilah where she was born, and she explained that she came to Canada from Somalia. Zara realized it was like looking at herself in a mirror. Both of their families had fled their homes so they could live in a place without terror. Just as the other kids couldn't understand Zara, she could not really understand Jamilah because of her accent. Zara was guilty of judging Jamilah!

The next day, Zara asked Mrs. Brown if she could introduce herself again. Mrs. Brown was confused but agreed. Zara slowly spoke, "Hello, my name is Zara. My family and I left Syria to live a life in Canada, free of poverty and war. I hope we can get to know one another better." Zara heard silence and then suddenly, applause echoed in the room! She was finally home and free.

by Sahara Hans (Grade Six)
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THIRD PRIZE

The Thing

Once upon a time, there was a girl named Fiona, who would throw her pyjamas on the floor every day when she got dressed—and never pick them up.

“Put your pyjamas in the laundry!” her parents chided.

Fiona nodded and said, “Okay,” but she didn’t.

Her parents’ tempers grew like the pile of dirty pyjamas on the floor. One day, they snapped. “We aren’t picking up your laundry anymore, Fiona! It’s your responsibility!” they yelled.

Fiona cringed but let the pile keep growing.

So, Fiona’s parents called on the spirits of the magical world to solve the problem. And The Thing came. The Thing was experienced in his field, which was laundry problems, and it rose out of the laundry. It was a faceless lump of clothes that could be either male or female.

Fiona’s parents heard a scream. They ran into Fiona’s room. The Thing was cradling Fiona like a baby.

“It wants to eat me!” Fiona cried.

“Nonsense,” Fiona’s father said. “The Thing is gentle!”

“The Thing is here to help with our laundry problems,” Fiona’s mother said.

“And he’s going to solve them by eating me!” Fiona shrieked, terrified.

The Thing was a *she*. And The Thing was very much offended.

The next day, Fiona’s parents came into her room. The laundry was folded and put away. There were the remnants of a spell—a bad spell—lurking around. The Thing was gone. But so was Fiona.

“Who needs Fiona?” Fiona’s mother asked, after a tiring half hour of searching.

“Yes, she never put her laundry away,” said Fiona’s father.

But after a bit, they found the spell wearing off, and they began missing Fiona.

Meanwhile, in a magical realm of black space with no gravity that just happened to be under Fiona’s bed, Fiona and The Thing were sheltered.

“Thing?” Fiona asked miserably. “What can I do to go back to my home?”

“You could say please,” The Thing said reasonably. Really, Fiona was very impolite.

“Please!” Fiona fell, dramatically, to her knees. She floated upside down.

“And you could always put your laundry away,” The Thing added.

“I promise I’ll always put my pyjamas away!” Fiona said.

“All right,” said The Thing. “But be warned: if there is one piece of laundry not put away ever, then you will be floating around in this place until you are a pile of bones and fabric!”

The image was very realistic. It made Fiona beg harder.

And *snap*, she was back in her room. After that, Fiona knew to always put her pyjamas in the laundry or tucked neatly away in her drawer.

by Frances Sayer (Grade Five)

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THIRD PRIZE

That Yellow Dress

I'm so excited to see Mama. My nanny told me I couldn't go in her bedroom to see her, but I must. It seems as if she had been at the hospital for forever, but I know it's only been two nights. I don't know why my family is so worried about her; I know she will get better. She has to! I cannot wait until she can hop out of her bed and play with me. Papa has seemed so sad lately, and I can't help but tell him to cheer up.

My nanny has left the door open to my mother's room and gone downstairs. It's impossible to resist the urge of going in. I bounce into the room, only to stop in my tracks. It looks like her, but it's not her. The colour has drained from her face, and her hands are shaking. I hold back tears. I can't see her anymore.

"Hello, Mama," I say.

"Hello, my darling," Mama says croakily from her bed.

I climb onto her bed. "Please get well, Mama," I say sadly.

"My darling, I want to tell you something. No matter how far away I am, no matter how far we are apart, I am with you—my soul, my kisses, and my heart."

And just like that, she's gone.

We packed up Mama's belongings. Her necklaces were packed in her blue suitcase, and her clothes were neatly folded into her bigger pink suitcase. But no matter how hard we tried, we couldn't pack away that yellow dress. She had died in it, and I couldn't stop the memories of her from flowing back into my mind.

One memory I remember more than the others. She was sitting on her favourite chair, I was wrapped in her arms. The sun reflected off her face, and I can remember every word she said from my favourite book.

I didn't notice the millions of tears falling down my cheeks. The doctors had peeled that yellow dress off her and hung it over her door. My nanny had helped me pick out a flowery silk dress for her burial, one of her nicest dresses. She was placed in a wooden coffin, with pink cotton lining and her name engraved.

I couldn't believe she was gone. No matter how hard I tried to block it out of my mind, the thought of that yellow dress kept returning to my mind. The memories it carried meant so much to me.

I carefully slid that yellow dress on top of me, and suddenly, I was overwhelmed with happiness. It felt as if Mama's arms were around me again, saying, "*My soul, my kisses, and my heart.*"

by Olivia Wellings (Grade Six)

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