

FIRST PRIZE

Bear's Birthday

ONCE UPON A TIME, there was a little girl named Adelaide. One day, she was walking through a magical forest when all of a sudden, she met a bear named Lawrence.

The bear said, "Hello, it is my birthday today. I am four years old." But the bear was sad. He did not have a birthday cake, and he could not find any of his friends to celebrate with.

Adelaide told Lawrence not to worry, and that she would help him.

First, Adelaide made a cake. Then she found some plants, grass, and berries, and then she went fishing to catch a fish for him too. She made a candle out of sticks.

Lawrence the bear was happy and loved it, but he was still a little sad because he wanted to find his friends too. So, Adelaide said, "Let's look for them together."

They looked in a cave, in a tree, and around the river, but no one was there.

Adelaide said, "Lawrence, this is a magical forest. Let's say a magical spell to see if they appear." Lawrence said it was a good idea.

Together, they said, "Hocus birthday pocus. Fox, Alligator, Monkey, Beaver, and Moose, please come to Lawrence's birthday party." All of a sudden, there was a cloud of rainbow dust in the air. Adelaide and Lawrence closed their eyes.

Then they heard voices say, "Happy birthday, Bear." The friends all appeared, and they had balloons, presents, and juice in their hands. It was a nice surprise, and Lawrence was very happy.

Adelaide became his best friend and decided to live in the magical forest with Lawrence forever.

by Adelaide Martin (Kindergarten)

Sidney Ledson Institute

North York, Ontario

FIRST PRIZE

Fred and the Time Warp

ONCE UPON A TIME, there were twelve outlaws. In the Wild West, they searched for treasures. Fred and Tom were the leaders. They had a plan to steal a precious amulet that legend said contained magic power.

“At dawn, we will go to this X spot and dig our way into the secret chamber.” Fred showed everybody the treasure map.

“What if the sheriff catches us, and worse, what if the guard at the secret chamber captures us?” said the other outlaws. They looked at each other in fear.

“Nonsense! The plan will be we each dig one tunnel, so while one of us gets the amulet, the others will distract the guard,” Tom said. He was very confident with his plan.

At dawn, the twelve outlaws disguised themselves and snuck to the secret chamber. At precisely 5:00 a.m., the sun shone on the sundial, and the door to the secret chamber opened. The outlaws separated and started to dig.

“HOORAY! I have found the amulet,” Fred said, while clinging on to the amulet very tight.

A loud echo thundered across the tunnel, and all of the guards shouted, “Get him!” as they dashed towards him.

But before anyone could take one more look, the room started to spin, and Fred went into a time warp! Fred fell eight hundred feet down onto the top of the Empire State Building.

As he walked back down to the street, he looked around and saw many unmasked people riding hover bicycles. The computer sign on the building read, “2071.”

“I can’t believe this! The magic power of the amulet must be time travelling! Where am I?” Fred was very confused.

“Are you okay?” A little girl walked by to help Fred.

“I am okay. Where is this? Why are there so many trees? Where are all the cars?” Fred noticed there were a lot of trees as far as he could see. He saw seeds were falling from the time warp.

“Fifty years ago, our Earth was very polluted, and global warming was making animals extinct. So, we started to plant more trees and ride bicycles instead,” the little girl told Fred.

Fred had an idea. He caught a handful of tree seeds and put them in his pocket. He activated the amulet again. Everything started to spin again.

Fred was back in the time warp. While being tossed around in the time warp, he tossed seeds in every year before he went back.

“You are coming to jail with me.” The sheriff tied Fred with his rope.

“Ohh, man, but I planted the tree seeds. I’m a good guy. Wait and *seeeee*!” Fred yelled.

by Nicholas Wong (Grade One)

Markham Montessori School

Markham, Ontario

FIRST PRIZE

The Little Girl Who Could

ONCE UPON A TIME, there was a little girl named Liliana. Liliana lived in a little house near a pond in the woods.

One day, Liliana asked her mom, “Mom, can I please go play with Ava?” Liliana and Ava had been best friends since they first met at the park near Ava’s house five years ago.

Liliana’s mother said, “Yes, you can go, but you have to be home by five thirty. We’re having dinner at six o’clock tonight.”

Then Liliana asked her mom, “Why are we eating at six o’clock tonight? We normally eat at five forty-five.”

“Dad’s running late today because the bus broke down again, and he has to bike home now,” said Liliana’s mom.

Liliana got ready and rode her bike to the pond in the woods near her house. Ava lived on the other side of the pond. At school, the two best friends had talked about meeting up together at the pond to talk, play, and walk.

The two girls talked and walked, and while they were walking, Liliana told Ava about her dad having to ride his bike because the bus broke down again for the third time that month. Liliana was so busy talking that she didn’t see where she was going, and she fell into a big hole. Liliana called Ava, asking her to help her get out of the big hole.

Ava said, “I brought a rope today so we could maybe play jump rope together. Let’s try using it to get you out.”

Suddenly, a wolf came and grabbed the rope out of Ava’s hand. The two girls screamed. They were surprised by the wolf. Liliana told Ava to use her bike to go after the wolf and get the rope. So, Ava did.

She biked as fast as she could. The wolf tried to bite Ava. But then the wolf dropped the rope instead. Ava climbed quickly up a tree and jumped down on top of the wolf. The wolf tried to stop Ava from getting the rope, but the wolf’s plan did not succeed. Ava got the rope! The wolf ran off.

Ava tried to get Liliana out of the hole. It worked! Liliana was out.

Liliana told Ava that she had to go home to dinner but first thanked Ava a lot for helping her get out of the hole.

by Juliana Jacobsohn (Grade Two)

Holy Cross Elementary School

Burnaby, British Columbia

FIRST PRIZE

The Mythical Boat of Time

I'VE ALWAYS HEARD that magicians can make things out of thin air. I didn't believe it until today, when something really did appear out of nowhere. Except there weren't any magicians. It was the power of the sea. . . .

It all began this morning. I asked my mom if I could go sailing, three blocks away from where we lived. "Okay," my mom said. "Be careful!" I brought our cat, Aronic.

After fifteen minutes of sailing, the water shifted. *What was that?* Then the water shifted again. This time, a railway rose up right under our boat! I checked the boat for damage. That's when I noticed we were zooming away from home, fast! The railways seemed endless over the vast open plain of water.

After an hour, we arrived someplace unfamiliar. My cat and I stumbled out of the boat, dumbfounded. I soon realized that there were no buildings, let alone people, and the place smelled very strange. The smoke and bustling city smells were gone. It smelled like someplace ancient.

Suddenly, my cat's whiskers were twitching. The bushes moved, and an enormous tiger jumped out. But it wasn't any tiger. It looked like a sabre-toothed tiger! We must have travelled back in time. With all this thinking, I didn't notice that the tiger was slowly and quietly advancing towards us. There was only one thing left to do: RUN!

My cat and I ran as fast as we could, but it was no use. The tiger was too fast for us. Just then, I saw the ocean up ahead. Gathering all of my strength, I scooped up my cat and plunged into the ocean headfirst.

Fortunately, the tiger didn't follow. I took a huge gulp and discovered that we could both breathe underwater! The water was magical. I looked down and saw a glowing stone shimmering. The moment I touched it, the whole place shifted. We teleported into another jungle!

It was almost night-time, and we gathered some fruit to eat, but then it dawned on me: *How are we ever going to get home?*

We walked around the forest, hoping to find a portal. Even my cat seemed homesick. I noticed that my pocket had a faint glow. *The stone that I found in the sea!* The moment I put it in my hand, it lit up, glowing brighter and brighter.

In a flash, we were back in our city. As we walked home, I asked Aronic, "Do you want to go again one day?" Everyone watching must have thought, *Crazy kid, talking to a cat.* But I didn't mind.

Meow, Aronic purred. I took that as a yes.

by Jiayan (Thomas) Liu (Grade Three)

Brain Power Enrichment Program

Richmond Hill, Ontario

FIRST PRIZE

The Grey Lady

IN A SILENT, veiled summer night, The Grey Lady drifted over the city while every household was still soundly asleep. At dawn, the unsuspecting early risers were surprised by her presence. When they opened their windows, getting ready to do their morning stretches and yawns, they saw a dimmed sky with a bleeding red sun glowing mysteriously. Then, a smog of filthy air consumed their lungs, suffocating them.

Squeak!

Squeal!

Shut!

Click!

Bang!

Slam!

Windows and doors were shutting as if a moving domino chain were webbing through the city.

The Grey Lady felt rejected. She wandered through every alley and stopped by every park. No one greeted her. Everywhere she passed by, she left a trail of dark soot and a scent of burnt wood.

Behind those closed windows and doors, children were crying irritably and seeking their mommy's hugs. Sick patients were gasping for air hungrily, and even the healthy folks had their nostrils dripping like a broken faucet.

Drip

Drop

A-A-Achoo!

Legend has it that The Grey Lady possessed a raging spirit from the flickering flames of the South. Aided by the wicked wind of the West, she swelled and spread mercilessly. She terrified every living creature along her path and engulfed their happiness for enjoyment. Only the mystical rainbow mist from the ancient North could dissipate her anger and restore the harmonious balance to the forest.

"Attention all staff and students. No one is allowed to go outside during the morning recess. If anyone is feeling unwell, please report to the office immediately," announced Mr. Wood.

"*Ahh*, I guess we can't play lava tag today," sighed Sienna.

"What a boring day . . .," Alysha muttered while putting her head down on the desk.

"I heard on the morning news that the air quality index should drop to two after it rains today," suggested Charlie, as he pushed his golden-rimmed glasses up on his straight but slightly flat nose.

"What does that mean?" wondered Alysha.

"I hope it means that we can go out to play lava tag later?" Sienna asked, her eyes lit up with hope.

"Correct," Charlie confirmed.

The children waited and waited until the first drop of rain splattered onto the school's concrete playground before noon. And it rained and rained, washing away the scorched haze and every trace of The Grey Lady.

Finally, Sienna, Alysha, and Charlie were able to play lava tag before they went home that day.

"Charlie, you are IT!" shouted Sienna as she raced across the playground with Alysha.

Behind those giggling and hollering children, a ribbon of colours danced across the sky as the sun shined through a blanket of sparkling mist.

by Angelina Lo (Grade Four)

Fresh Minds Academy

Richmond, British Columbia

SECOND PRIZE

Santa and the Rescue Hydrocopter

THERE WAS A MAN CALLED AIMEN who lived at the North Pole. He had a hydrocopter that he drove to town and back. He drove a hydrocopter in the summer and winter because it could travel over ice and water and land. Aimen lived on an island and when there was a sea emergency, he came to help. When someone was stuck at home and needed an ambulance, a hydrocopter was there to help.

One Christmas Eve, Santa was delivering presents to someone's home. The presents in his sack were too heavy, like big toy cars and big toy buses. When he came out, he tried to sit on it, and it broke! He felt disappointed and sad. He wanted to deliver presents! How could he deliver the presents with a broken sleigh? He tried to sit on his reindeer, but they could not fly without the sleigh. He called 9-1-1, and Aimen came.

Santa said, "Aimen, can you take me and my reindeer home?"

"Yes!" said Aimen. Aimen tied the reindeer. The reindeer flew the hydrocopter with Santa and Aimen inside going back to the North Pole.

Santa got another sleigh and took the presents! Then, Aimen drove back.

by Mwine Ahimbisibwe (Kindergarten)
St. Augustine Catholic Elementary School
Cambridge, Ontario

SECOND PRIZE

The Old Cow and the Apple Tree

ONCE THERE WAS AN OLD COW who loved to eat apples. Every morning, he would go to his favourite apple tree on the farm. He would ram his head into the tree, making the apples fall. He then would eat the apples.

One day, he went to ram the apple tree. When he was ramming towards the tree, the tree stepped away. “What happened to the tree?” he said to himself. So, he tried to ram it again. The apple tree stepped away again. This time, the old cow hit his head on the fence. The old cow was dizzy and angry. “*Ouch!* That hurts!” he said loudly.

Suddenly, the tree talked. “You think that hurts! You ram me every day. Don’t you think that would hurt too?” the tree said.

“Sorry I hurt you. Next time I will ask for permission before taking the apples,” the cow said.

From then on, every time the cow wanted to eat apples, he first watered the tree and then asked it for apples. The tree would shake the apples off for the cow to eat. They became friends.

by Zachary Shyr (Grade One)
Agincourt Junior Public School
Toronto, Ontario

SECOND PRIZE

The Alien Who Needed Friends

IN A GALAXY FAR AWAY, there was an alien named Emmett. He was very lonely—very lonely. He needed some friends, so he decided to make some.

Just then, something snuck up behind him. “Boo!”

“Ahh!” It was another alien; his name was Edwin. Emmett and Edwin became friends, then they jumped into Edwin’s private rocket. They went to a planet called Saturn. Their ship crash-landed. They got out of their ship. They bumped into a kid named Tyler. Tyler had a spaceship, so they just got in and flew off this planet and went to a dwarf planet named Mack Mack.

They crash-landed there. Their rocket was broken again. They had to find someone around to help them. So, they just started searching.

Just then, they found a cave. They thought someone was in there, so they headed in there.

Edwin hit his head on a rock. Edwin fell down. Emmett and Tyler grabbed Edwin. Both of them held one of Edwin’s arms.

Edwin spotted a person walking. Edwin got back on his feet. He started running until he caught up. The person’s name was Simon. Simon had another spaceship, so they just went to another planet named Jupiter. They were going to land on a giant brown spot.

They landed on this giant brown spot. Then their ship was incinerated. They landed on the ground. That giant brown spot was a raging storm twice the size of Earth.

“Ahh!” They ran away from the storm.

Then they saw a shadow of a life form. They bumped into the shadow. The shadow person’s name was Tanner. Just like everybody, Tanner had a spaceship, so they all left this planet and went to another planet. Emmett wanted to go to Uranus, but Tyler wanted to go to Neptune, and Edwin wants to go to Mars. Tanner wanted to go Venus.

“No,” said Emmett. “We will melt on Venus.”

Tyler just said, “We’re going to Neptune, all right.” So, they just went to Neptune.

They landed on Neptune. It was very windy, and once again, they lost their spaceship. They needed to get another one. The wind knocked them over. Emmett fell backwards. Then this kid named Mason walked right behind Emmett. Emmett knocked over Mason. Mason said, “How are you, stranger?”

“I’m—wait! Who are you?”

“I’m Mason.”

Emmett asked, “Could we use your rocket?”

“Fine,” said Mason. “Only if I drive.”

Emmett said, “We’ve made a lot of friends. And that’s good.”

by Tyler Brissenden (Grade Two)

New Dundee Public School

New Dundee, Ontario

SECOND PRIZE

How the Hurricane Happened

IT WAS A CRISP EVENING in Scotland. A dog named Julia was just about to have a nap when her owner George came panting into the house.

“Mom, Dad! There’s going to be a hurricane next week,” George panted.

“George, are you sure?” Mom asked.

Before George could say anything, Julia started barking. “What is it, Jules?” George asked Julia. Julia started to scratch the emergency board, which meant that you had to go to the news and see what was going to happen and then pin that information to the board.

“Oh my gosh!” George said.

“What?” George’s mom weirdly screamed.

“I think Julia actually understands,” George pointed out.

“Oh my gosh, she does?” Mom asked.

“Yes, I think so!” George exclaimed.

“Oh my gosh, I think she actually does understand,” George’s mother told him.

“Well, I know it’s cute and all, but we can talk about all this after, because first, we have to get ready for the hurricane to happen,” George’s dad exclaimed.

First, they taped up the windows, packed an emergency bag, and got a thermometer for outside so that they would know when the hurricane got near.

“What if we have to evacuate the house because the hurricane gets too strong? Where would we go?” George asked.

“I honestly don’t know,” Mom said.

“Wait, wait, wait! If we have to evacuate, what will we do with Julia?” And then, at that very moment, Julia started to whine. “Aw, see, look at that sad face.”

“Honey, I know,” George’s mom said.

“Ow! What was that for, Julia?” George asked.

“What did she do?” asked Mom.

“She bit me,” George said.

“Julia, that’s a bad girl. Why did you bite George?” George’s mother asked.

Julia didn’t know why, but she was sorry no one understood her. That’s what she didn’t understand, and then she thought, *Well, I am a dog, but how do I tell them what I feel? I mean I can’t bite them—or can I?* And at that split second, she said to herself, *No, no, I can’t.*

“I wonder why she’s so quiet,” George said. “Oh, wait! I know why. Why did you yell at her? Of course, she wants attention but— Oh no! The h-h-hurricane!”

“It’s here!”

“What do we do? What do we do?”

At that moment, the house went up, up and away, but then Julia picked all of them up by their necks because that’s what her mom would do with her, so she jumped as far as she could and then landed by the shed and dragged them all down to the basement.

by Michaela Caithness (Grade Three)

Hawthorn Public School

Mississauga, Ontario

SECOND PRIZE

The Giant Dog

I WAS DRIVING TO WORK one morning, and I came across an empty beach. So, I decided to park my car and go for a walk. The beach looked as if it used to be an old scientific base. There were chemicals and unidentified objects scattered everywhere. I collected some of the weird-looking chemicals to examine them.

When I started walking back to the car, I heard a strange noise, not animal and not human. I was scared and quickly sprinted to a hiding place behind a sand dune, and I observed a strange creature. It was a normal-looking dog but much, much larger. It was a giant dog.

The giant dog sniffed my scent and started coming towards me. I began to run. I tried to dial 9-1-1, but there was no connection. The dog was catching up with me. I shouted, "STOP!" I leapt into my car and drove away. The dog didn't chase me through the city because he didn't want to be seen and captured.

I went to a friend's home to examine the chemicals. It looked like a potion that made objects gigantic. I asked my friend to find an antidote for the potion. He said I needed a chemical called AUF-5, but where could I find it? So, I decided to return to the beach to search for more clues.

On the beach, I stepped on a hidden door covered with sand. I shovelled off the sand and entered a secret passage. I descended a long stairway, and at the bottom, I found a long corridor with four doors. I went through a door labelled SCIENCE LAB. Inside, there were a lot of test tubes filled with a green liquid labelled consecutively from one through one hundred. The fifth test tube was AUF-5. I grabbed the bottle, but then I heard someone walking through the corridor. I hid behind a chemical brewer. The person looked into the lab for suspicious activity, but he didn't see me and left.

I ran up the stairs, through the door, and into my car. I drove back to my friend's. He tested the chemical and said it was the antidote.

I went back to the beach with the antidote to find the giant dog. He recognized me, but before he could attack me, I threw the potion towards him as if it were a bone. He caught the bottle in his mouth, and when the liquid poured out of the bottle, he drank it, and the dog began to shrink until he was back to regular size. The dog was so happy! So, I decided to adopt the dog.

by Ryan Zander (Grade Four)

Kingsway College School
Etobicoke, Ontario

THIRD PRIZE

The Vampire House

ONCE UPON A TIME, there was Billy and Mookie, and then suddenly, it was Halloween Day. So, they put on a lion costume and a werewolf costume. Their mommy and daddy didn't come because they were at the park looking after their cousin. The cousin would play with them at the Halloween playground.

Billy and Mookie were standing right in a Halloween house. Then they saw some ghosts and goblins. This was a talking house, and it said in a spooky voice, "Welcome to the Vampire House!" They followed the spooky shouts and went further inside.

And then they looked around, and they were standing right in front of a vampire. And then Billy and Mookie said, "Are you going to suck our blood?"

And the vampire said, "Yes!"

The vampires chased them and sucked their blood. Billy and Mookie turned into vampires too!

But suddenly, a door appeared with a button in the middle. They pushed the button, and it beeped. Then in a *poof* of smoke, they turned back into Billy and Mookie.

Another door appeared, and the two vampires pushed the button. It beeped and in a *poof* of smoke, the vampires turned back into Daddy and Mommy.

by Maxan Wilson (Kindergarten)

Park Public School
Georgetown, Ontario

THIRD PRIZE

Gig and the Micro Adventure

ONE DAY, Gig was looking through a microscope when . . . he got sucked in! “*Ahhh!*” Gig was dizzy.

He saw a sign that read, “Microville or Devilville.”

Gig thought, *Hmmm*. Then, he said, “Aha!”

Gig decided to go to Microville. But Gig accidentally went to Devilville instead. He said, “Oops!”

Then, Gig went to Microville whistling. He saw all the houses on the street. He thought, *Why is it called Microville?*

“*Ahhh!*” Gig saw a microbe! “*Ooof!*” He bumped into a microbe.

Then, Gig and the microbe said, “Hi! You’re not so creepy.”

Gig asked the microbe, “Do you want to be friends?”

The microbe said, “Sure.”

Gig said, “What’s your name?”

The microbe said, “I am Bob.”

Then, Gig said, “I’m Gig.”

“This is my house,” the microbe said.

Gig looked at the house. It was a mansion! Gig said, “You have a man—” Gig fainted!

The microbe said, “Oh no!” The microbe took Gig to the doctor.

He was dizzy when he woke up. There were so many microbe doctors. Then, Gig said, “Whe—”

He got interrupted. The microbe said, “I took you to the doctor.”

Gig said, “Okay.”

“Do you want to see my house?” the microbe said.

Gig said, “Okay!”

“This is my house,” the microbe said. Gig and the microbe went inside the house.

Then, when they came out, Gig said, “I have to leave,” sadly.

Then, the microbe said, “Okay,” sadly.

by Elliott Aspinall (Grade One)

Lakeshore Discovery School

Emeryville, Ontario

THIRD PRIZE

Hide-and-Seek Adventure

FAR AWAY IN A DISTANT LAKE, there lived a raft of otters. One day, four little otters were playing hide-and-seek. There was only one more otter to find, and Mark, who was “it” couldn’t find him.

“Come out, come out, wherever you are,” said Mark.

Suddenly, he heard someone shout, “Help!”

Was that Steve, the last otter? thought Mark. “Penelope! Ella! Can you come over here please?” asked Mark.

Soon, Penelope and Ella came over. “What is it?” asked Ella.

“I just heard Steve shout for help. It seems he’s far away,” Mark replied, unsure what to do.

“Let’s get him,” Penelope said.

“Yeah, let’s go,” agreed Ella.

“Coming,” said Mark happily.

Soon, they started their adventure to find Steve. Before long, they found Steve’s pawprints on the bottom of the lake. They followed the pawprints for quite a while. Then they found Steve tied to seaweed.

“We found him, but what do we do now?” Penelope asked.

“Let’s use our special rocks,” Mark suggested a moment later.

“Yeah, to break the seaweed!” Ella said.

Soon enough, the seaweed was almost broken. But nearby, a crocodile was waking up from all the noise. He was the one who’d tied Steve in the seaweed!

Meanwhile, Steve was finally free! But when the otters saw the crocodile, they swam away from him before he could see where the otters went. Then the otters snuck up from behind and clamped soft clamshells on the crocodile’s feet.

“Ouch,” cried the crocodile.

Mark made a deal and said to the crocodile, “If you don’t eat anybody, we will set you free.”

“I didn’t want to eat anybody. I was just lonely and wanted company,” replied the crocodile.

The otters understood at once. They unclamped him, and Penelope said, “We’ll visit you every day right here, and we can play hide-and-seek or tag.”

“We will all be friends!” said Ella.

Mark and the crocodile both said, “Yes, it’s a great idea! Let’s do it.”

by Ellie Hong (Grade Two)

Seneca Hill Private School

North York, Ontario

THIRD PRIZE

Squirrel's Bucket

ONE MORNING, Aardvark was looking for food under a big fir tree. He looked up and greeted Squirrel. Squirrel barked, "Mind your own beeswax."

Aardvark, who was always cheerful, continued, "What's wrong?"

Squirrel replied, "I lost my nut. Now I won't have a precious little nut to cuddle and nibble on all winter. I'm doomed!"

They looked around and saw a path of tiny little nut tracks. Aardvark began to rap, "Perhaps one day Squirrel had a little sneeze, and his little nut twirled and blew away in the breeze."

Squirrel interrupted, shrieking, "STOP! No one sneezed, okay? My nut just rolled away!"

Meanwhile, Raccoon had found the nut. His house was down the path near the edge of the woods. He knew it was wrong to keep stuff that didn't belong to him, but he had a strange habit. When he got anxious, he would hoard things. Not only did he take Squirrel's nut, he also stole a stash of Cheetah's cheesy sticks, Bear's empty honey pots, and Turtle's salad spinner.

Aardvark and Squirrel followed the nut tracks, which stopped nearby Raccoon's den. They knocked on the door. Raccoon's eyeballs peered out through a crack. The friends asked about Squirrel's nut. Raccoon replied, "No nuts here!" and slammed the door shut.

Squirrel started wailing, "My nut is lost forever!"

Aardvark thought Squirrel was literally going nuts! He suggested they speak to wise Mr. Owl. All the forest creatures would talk to Mr. Owl when they had troubles, and they would always feel better. Aardvark put pouty Squirrel onto his back and sped towards Mr. Owl's tree house.

Mr. Owl's tree house was a welcoming place with big feather cushions inside. Aardvark waited outside while Squirrel told his life story. Finally, Squirrel emerged from the tree house with a huge smile on his face. He declared, "I've been so miserable because I had an empty bucket, but you're such a kind and wonderful friend that you filled my bucket to the brim! Who needs a nut? All I need is you! I *love* you, Aardvark! I'm fixed! Let's try to help miserable Raccoon."

Before the day was done, Aardvark and Squirrel convinced Raccoon to visit Mr. Owl. Raccoon finally admitted he had a bad problem and promised to find a better way to fill his feelings' bucket. He returned items of his hoard to their owners. Squirrel was happy to get his nut back.

From that day on, Aardvark and Squirrel were the best of friends. They spent many days together exploring, swimming in the lake, and practising yoga. They both always had full buckets. Until one day, Aardvark sneezed and his vegan ball rolled off his pile of spaghetti. . . .

by Isabelle Fagnou (Grade Three)

Lycée international de Calgary
Calgary, Alberta

THIRD PRIZE

The Hidden Item

ON SUNDAY, James and his parents had planned to picnic with other children. His family would leave at 8:00 a.m. When James looked at the clock, he immediately jumped up. It was time to go. When he opened the door of his bedroom, he was shocked. The hallway was silent, contrary to what he expected. “Meg?” James called.

His sister, Meg, walked out of her bedroom into the hallway. “I was waiting for you,” said Meg grumpily.

“What’s the matter?” asked James. Meg did not answer. Instead, Meg led James to the kitchen and pointed towards an old vase. “Oh?” said James, “I don’t think we have those kinds of cups. And why are we not going to the picnic right now?”

“It’s raining, but that’s not the point!” Meg screamed. “There is an inscription on it that does not make any sense,” said Meg a little more coolly.

“The inscription spells, uh. . . .” James squinted at the small, neat letters on the vase. “‘Floor 3, Room 2, knock and open.’ There isn’t even a Floor 3 in our old house, let alone a Room 2. And what is that open part for?” James said, frustrated.

“Now you get the point,” Meg sighed.

“That means we—” James started.

“Smash our ceilings,” Meg finished.

“That’s c-c-crazy; Mom wouldn’t allow that to h-happen,” stammered James.

“Do you want to solve this mystery or not?” asked Meg.

“Yes,” sighed James.

They smashed through the ceiling with a hammer and were amazed. There were two doors with numbers on them, and neither had ever been opened before.

“We have Rooms 1 and 3, but where is Room 2?” asked James, panicking.

“Don’t panic,” said Meg. “I found an inscription on that wall that reads, ‘Say this spell, and you will be shown Room 2: *Room 1, Room 3, where is Room 2? It is right underneath your feet.*’” Meg said the spell hesitantly.

All of a sudden, James and Meg felt that they were hanging upside down with blinding colourful light surrounding them.

“Where are we?” James asked as Meg got up beside him.

“We fell into Room 2, I think,” said Meg.

They looked around and saw a table in the centre of the room. On it was a small bottle with a light, sparkling blue mist inside. On it was a label. “*Breathe in this mist, and you will become the richest person in the world,*” the label read. Without hesitation, James opened the bottle and breathed in the mist. It smelled light and refreshing.

Everything around him swirled into a rainbow. Money, gems, and jewels surrounded James in a split second.

But Meg was nowhere to be seen.

by Jacob Gaochen (Grade Four)

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