

BETHESDA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

LITERARY MAGAZINE SPRING 2020

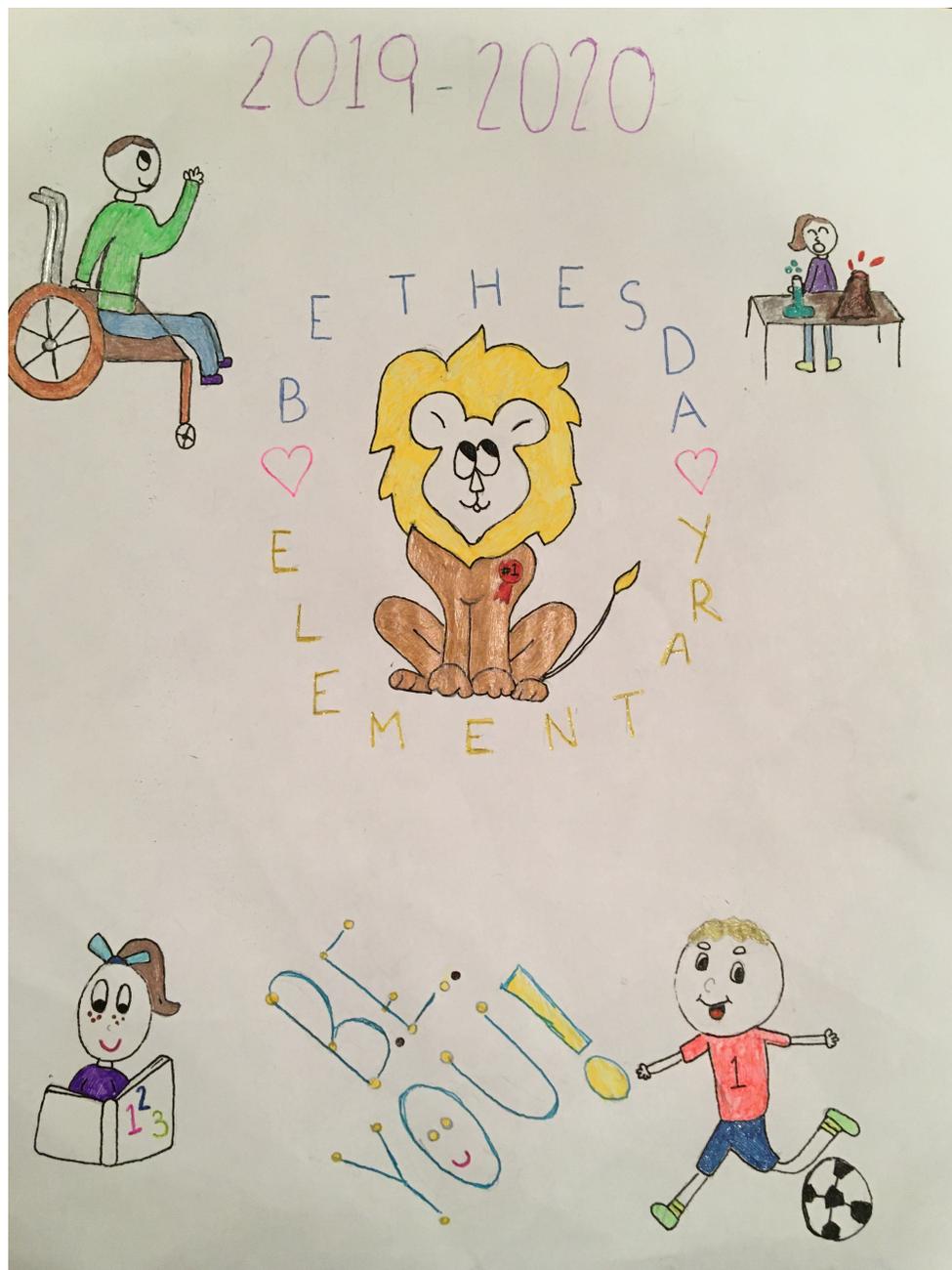


Illustration By Kira Trabert, Grade 5



Thank you to ALL of our contributing writers
for sharing your talents with us!

And a BIG thank you to Ms. Claire Li for her
help and support!

The views expressed by the authors of the works
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Table of Contents

POETRY

This Kid in Quarantine (Evie Nicolardi)	p. 2
Imagination (Anneka Hoek)	p. 3
Escape Land to the Journey (George Beynenson)	p. 3
Ice Cream (Alexander Schreiber)	p. 4
Let's Make, Let's Make (Serena Lee)	p. 4
Kindergarten is the Best (Molly Gillespie)	p. 5
Let the Words Play (Tammy Beynenson)	p. 5
My Dog (Liffey Small)	p. 6
Summer (Noa Makleff)	p. 7

PROSE

Earth Day (Charlotte Danzis)	p. 8
Finding Happiness During Quarantine (Elena Smith)	p. 9
The Baking Contest (Samantha Shakin)	p. 10
Rubber (Luca Borrelli)	p. 11
The Earthquake in San Francisco (Jun Oshirabe)	p. 12
The Princess and the Girl (Mia Merrey)	p. 14
The Spring Time (Angel Trinh)	p. 16
The Story of Leaper and Lasher (Cole Kahan)	p. 17
Vanished or No Longer (Olivia Raucher and Friend)	p. 18
The Two Magic BFFs (Vanessa Feifer)	p. 20
The Venus Flytrap Finger Eater (Max Esfahani)	p. 22
The Whipped Out Water (Alaz Aruoba)	p. 24
Two Girls, a Unicorn and a Bad Witch (Ilyana Graham)	p. 26
Who is the Villain and Why (Aanya Garg)	p. 27
The Test (Benjamin Trackman)	p. 28

This Kid in Quarantine

By Evie Nicolardi, Grade 3

This kid in quarantine has nothing to do but watch screens.
I can't even go to the latrine
without my baby brothers bothering me.

I don't think I'll survive
much more time inside.

After Zooms are done
There is nothing left that's any fun.

I'm looking forward to school again,
so I can run around and play with all my friends.

I hope this doesn't take all summer.
That would be such a bummer.

No camps or beach or summer pool,
there won't even be ways to keep us cool.

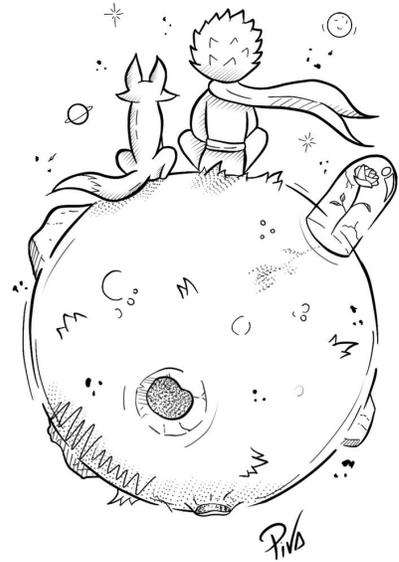
So please wear a mask and wash your hands,
so we can get back to our previous plans.



Imagination

By Anneka Hoek, Grade 5

You can be an astronaut
Or a tailor
A baker or
A sailor
A princess in a tower
Or a prince to give a flower
Or a barber who gives a shave
All of these things you can be
When you use your imagination
You see.



Escape Land to the Journey

By George Beynenson, Kindergarten

Once there lived dinosaurs
Once the people existed
The dinos didn't die
They just escaped to a far away land
That no one has ever visited

Ice Cream

By Alexander Schreiber, Grade 1

Ice cream is sweet and
Creamy and dreamy,
Every flavor is yummy yum!
Cold and crumbly cone,
Red strawberry is yummy yum!
Etiquette out, messy in
And sprinkles on top,
Mountains made of ice cream, yum!



Let's Make, Let's Make

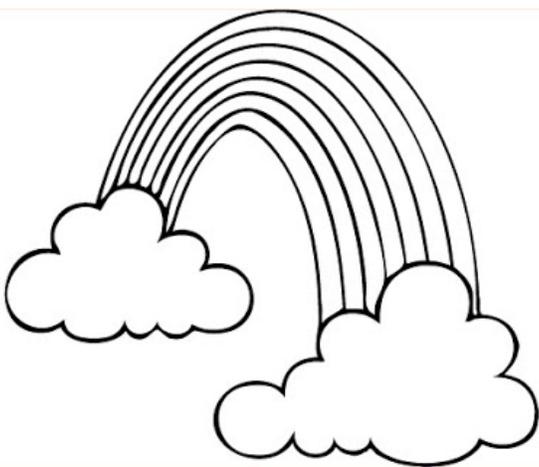
By Serena Lee, Grade 1

Let's make, let's make,
let's make a rainbow.

Let's make, let's make,
Let's make it cheerful.

Everyone has done their best,
Now it's time to seeee.

Let's make, let's make,
Let's make a rainbow!



Kindergarten is the Best

By Molly Gillespie, Kindergarten

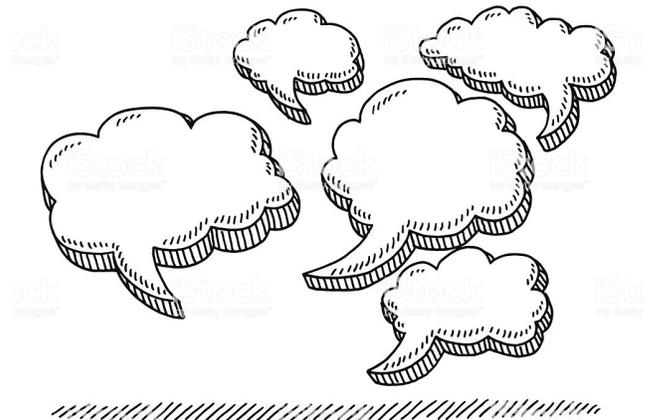
Kindergarten is so much fun!
In PE, we like to run.
In music, we like to sing.
In art, we can make a beautiful thing.
In media, we can read.
In the science lab, we can plant a seed.
My friends like to play on the bar.
My teacher is the best by far!



Let the Words Play

By Tammy Beynenson, Grade 4

What happens to the words after they are spoken?
Are they like ghosts with no shape?
Are they like balloons, that cannot be shaken,
They fly you up to the clouds and then pop and send you crashing?
Are they like dust under a couch, that you never see until you are packing?
The truth is this - it is and/or thing,
They are all that and more.



My Dog

By Liffey Small, Grade 5

My dog is furry and fluffy too,
We give him a toy and he'll start to chew.
He will rip and rip until it is in pieces,
He'll eat his toy but he can't have reeses.
He loves bacon and peanut butter.
He chases birds as they flutter.
My dog licks me when I cry,
That is why it will be so hard to say bye.
He may be annoying but he is also funny,
When it is pouring outside he makes it seem sunny.



Summer

By Noa Makleff, Grade 3

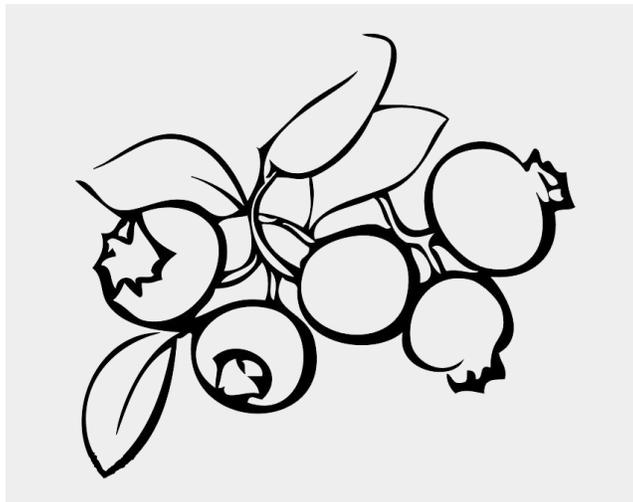
Fresh blueberries picked from the farm
already squished all over my arm.

Flying a kite so high in the blue sky,
already making my way to that blueberry pie.

Going to the beach is so much fun,
just make sure you don't stay in the hot sun.

I already smell the flowers starting to bloom,
I can't believe its already the afternoon!

Summer is already coming to an end,
but I still have all of the other seasons to spend.



Earth Day

A fictional story

By Charlotte Danzis, Grade 3

One day, I was biking down the street looking at the roads, looking at the trash piled up waiting for the trash truck to come the next day. I heard the people two doors down from where I live complaining about recycling. "It is not Earth Day," the oldest boy shouted at his mother.

His mother said in a calm voice, "You should recycle every day." I thought about what the mother said the rest of my bike ride. I also thought about Earth Day and what I should do to celebrate. I thought some more. I thought about when Earth Day was and how I would have a while to plan. I went to my little sister's friend's house passing the arguing family and piles of trash. I got to my sister's friend's house and saw all of the lights on in their house and I wondered. My sister's friend is an only child and her dad worked until late at night so there could not be someone in each room.

I took my sister home and made some rice for us to eat for dinner. I put my sister to bed and did my homework until my parents got home. They are both lawyers so they worked late. I went to bed and the next morning I got woken up by my sister jumping on my bed yelling, "Wake up wake up, it's Earth Day." I was very surprised I had gotten my dates all wrong! So I got dressed and got on my bike to go to the plant store. At the store, I got flower seeds, vegetable seeds and a little tree to plant in my yard. I put the seeds in my bag and I attached the tree to my basket. Then I went home to start planting. The planting took me awhile but when I was done, my sister and I dug up some weeds. That night I thought about what the mother two doors down had said the day before, "You should recycle every day." I do recycle every day but maybe I should not just recycle but care for our planet every day. I thought and decided that I would do some more weeding the next day.



Finding Happiness During Quarantine

By Elena Smith, Grade 4

Right now we are all going through a hard time in our homes, in our country, and in the world because of the quarantine due to coronavirus. It is hard for me socially and emotionally because this is the 6th week of quarantine and I'm really bored while stuck inside. Also, I am frustrated because some of my sleep away summer camps are already cancelled and they looked very fun. I feel like I have nothing to look forward to when the summer rolls in. All of these emotions are adding up and influence my daily mood and actions.

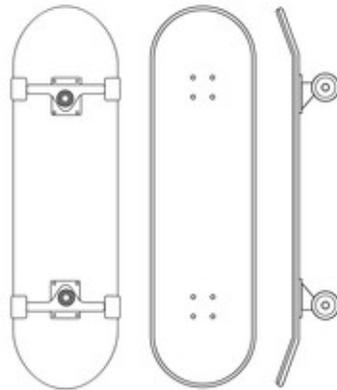
So one Monday morning, I was feeling especially frustrated because it was the 6th week of quarantine at home. I tried to conquer my bad mood but nothing was helping. I read a book, and while it was interesting it did not lift my blue feelings. So I finally went outside and — surprise surprise — there was a big box by the door. I was so shocked to see that the skateboard my family had ordered a few days before arrived a whole month earlier than expected. It was like a small miracle telling me not to be upset and to be happy. Now I'm looking forward to learning a new skill, skateboarding (as taught by my favorite brother) and to building new memories. I skateboard by our school, B.E., even though we can not go there for studies. It makes me feel positive learning a new skill close to B.E., which is my favorite school.

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If I could talk to a girl who had the same actions and feeling as me on that day, I would tell her: "Don't lose hope and still keep a positive mood." Looking back at my actions and how I overcame my terrible mood reminded me of a movie I watched called, "The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind." The family in the movie were starving and didn't have money to pay for school. But they didn't lose hope for a better life and still tried to look on the bright side of things. I started to think, what makes me happy? What makes me happy is having a wonderful life with my caring family, and not worrying about starvation and real dangers like a war.

I am trying to keep the best positive mood during this hard time and to help and support my neighborhood, friends, and family by putting up signs to keep people in a good mood. I also have Zoom meetings so that my family, and my friends, and I could socialize. I also know that while awesome things like my skateboard don't make us happy, what we do with them, like creating special memories does make us feel really optimistic.

What makes you happy?



The Baking Contest

By Samantha Shakin, Grade 1

Once there was a girl named Strawberry. She was 12 years old. Her name was Strawberry because she loved strawberries very, very much. She also loved to bake.

One day, Strawberry entered a baking contest. She had 9 trophies and if she won she would have 10. She was going to bake chocolate cupcakes with pink frosting, chocolate bars, and strawberry & chocolate chip cookies.

When the day came Strawberry was ready. She went to the contest. Ready, set, go! She made all the yummy snacks. At the end, the judges said that Strawberry won! The judges liked her cookies because they were crunchy and sweet. She took a bow then got her trophy.



Rubber

By Luca Borrelli, Grade 1

There once lived five rubber friends that come to life. One was yellow and big, one was purple and almost the size of the yellow one, two were orange, one was red and small. They lived at the beach. One day while they were hanging out on the beach, the red one got an idea. He remembered where they lived before the beach and remembered it was Italy and that they saw the leaning tower of Pisa. Then he got an idea to stack up to make the leaning tower and see if they would fall. One of the orange ones stacked on the yellow one but he fell. They realized they couldn't do it so they went to climb a mountain. Once they got to the mountain they realized there was a snake. So they tiptoed quietly but the snake woke up. The big, yellow one went in front of the snake and distracted him so that the others could pass by. Then the yellow one went with his friends. Once they took a step they realized that part of the mountain wasn't stable. They were going to fall! But they realized there were a bunch of rocks where the mountain wasn't unstable. Before they took a step, they threw one of the rocks to check the spot. It didn't fall so they knew it was safe to walk there. Then they grabbed all the rocks for when they needed them. Once they passed the unstable part of the mountain, they were almost at the top but it was nighttime. They had to find a place to sleep. They found a piece of paper and they used it as a tent. The next morning they started again. Finally they got to the top. They looked down at the view of how high up they were but they slipped and fell down. They were so, so lucky because they fell in the water and they knew that rubber floats. They floated gently back to the beach and built sandcastles, played in the water and had so much fun.

The end.



*****Advisory: This story may be upsetting for young children*****

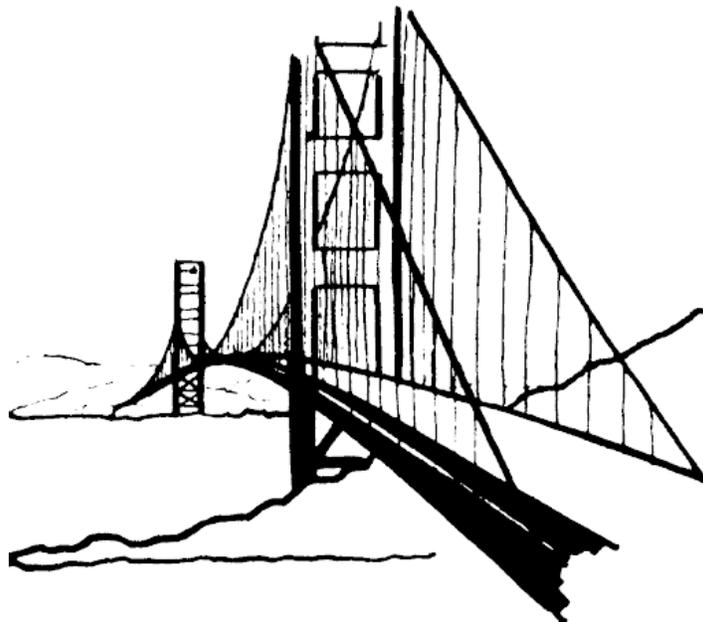
The Earthquake in San Francisco

By Jun Oshirabe, Grade 5

One day in San Francisco, Max's dad was heading toward work. He was hired to help build what is now the Golden Gate Bridge. Max's dad's name was Bobby. They had just moved there from New York. It was very different there. There were no trolley cars in New York. The houses were so stable and very well constructed because San Francisco is on both the Pacific and North American plates. This is what causes the earthquakes in San Francisco. As Bobby went out the door, Max shouted, "Be careful!!" Max was hungrily eating his cereal. Just then, a huge earthquake occurred. Max remembers that his dad said that he was working on the framework of the bridge and he was going to be hanging from a rope. He quickly ran to the phone and picked it up. He dialed, but no one was answering. He realized that it is too late. His father has risked his life to make the bridge. His mom called out for him and he rushed to her. He sees her under the bed. Above the bed, a huge shelf was falling down onto the bed. He shouts, "Quick! Get out of there! You're going to be crushed!!" She tried, but she failed. He quickly runs out the door to see lights and screaming everywhere. Down the block, a huge fire was starting. As he runs for his life he wonders if he has lost both his parents. A policeman picked him up and ran towards the police station. He is put under a desk and sees his best friend on the other side of the room and he is bleeding. As the ambulance crew picks him up, Max shouts, "Hang in there buddy!" The shaking has stopped by then. He is released and is sent to his grandma. After a few hours, he receives news that both his parents have passed away. His grandma gives him a hug as tears flow down from his eyes. As time passes, he is always being nice to his grandma. His little sister cries often remembering the giant earthquake. Even some days, Max is the one crying when an aftershock occurs.

Time passes by and now Max is in middle school. Max, his sister, his brother and grandparents had moved to the District of Columbia (Washington DC). They were riding the very bumpy Metro to Farragut North. There, they would walk to the White House and then go see some museums. The people that were controlling the train were too rough and almost pushed her out of her grandma's lap. The people were so rough when we were arriving at Farragut North that she was crying and asking for a lollipop. His grandparents thought that she looked super cute when she asked for a lollipop. Max thinks that his grandparents are right. She looks like she is still 1!

Thirty years later, Max goes back to the bridge with his children and tells them about the story of his childhood and how his father had worked on the framework of the bridge. This memory will be passed through generations of his family. They will be sure to be proud to know about their family member.



*****Advisory: This story may be upsetting for young children*****

The Princess and the Girl

By Mia Merrey, Grade 5

Once upon a time there was an orphan girl who was a princess. But she didn't like that. Her name was Elizibeth. She didn't like all the fancy dresses and the handsome men, who were admiring her. No! She wanted to be like other girls and wear pants instead of skirts, shirts instead of dresses, sneakers instead of high heels. She wanted to escape and be free. But that would be challenging because there were a lot of guards outside.

The next night though, wasn't as she expected. She got woken up by a loud smack. When she opened her eyes, a girl was standing there. She was dressed up all black and had wavy long blond hair. Her mouth was covered by a mask. Her eyes were dark green and really deep. She had a big black stick in her hand. She kind of looked like a ninja. The girl raised her stick and the next thing Elizibeth knew, was darkness.

When she woke up, she found herself in a room, but not a scary one, more like a bedroom. When she looked around, she found herself in a really comfy bed and a pajama that was not a princess's pajama, it was a "normal girl" pajama. She stood up and walked into the next room. She saw the same girl again but this time, she was dressed up in a hoodie saying "GIRL POWER!", jeans, and sneakers. "Hi!" she said. She seemed so nice all of the sudden. What is happening? "H...hello" Elizibeth said. "I'm Emily" the girl said. "I've been spying on you for the last couple of months, and figured out that you don't like your place, right? Elizibeth was shocked. "Ye...Yeah". "Well, I'm making you an offer. I will let you live a normal girl's life if you..." "If I what?" "If you won't tell on me and... if you always have my back." "That was the best sentence Elizibeth ever heard. Elizibeth was so happy that she could not stop herself and she hugged Emily. Emily was surprised at first but then she returned the hug.

A couple of weeks passed...

"I'm finally going to school!" Elizibeth screamed through the house. Emily was already waiting at the door with her backpack packed. "Well, then you're going to have to hurry up!!!" The next thing Emily knew, she was

being pulled on her arm by Elizibeth. When they got to school, three girls were standing at the entrance. They looked at the two girls like they had mud all over them.

"Oh uh," Emily whispered. Elizibeth didn't know what was happening. The three girls walked up to them and immediately started talking to Emily. "Oh look, it's the school nerd, oh and look, she's got a friend! "Hey! That's not nice" Elizibeth couldn't stand those girls already. "No, leave it, Elizibeth, it's fine." Emily tried to calm her down. But it didn't work. "No!" Elizibeth continued. "No Elizibeth, just leave them." "NO!" Elizibeth yelled. "Elizibeth, just please-" "NOOO!" Then the mean girl grabbed Emily by her hand and pushed her behind her and said, "Oh, but your friend is right. LEAVE IT!" Then the girl took Emily and gave her a shove. "That's what you get!" she whispered, and then walked away. "EMILY, ARE YOU OK?!" Elizibeth screamed. "NO, no I am not!" Emily hissed back. "I'm so sorry, I was trying to protect you!" "Well, it didn't work, did it?!?" said Emily before she walked away. Elizibeth just looked at the spot that Emily had been standing at, then started to cry. "What have I done?!?" she thought to herself.

When they got home they didn't talk to each other at all. Emily just went to her room and Elizibeth went into her own.

A few hours later, the doorbell rang. Elizibeth went to check who it was but when she saw who it was, she wished she hadn't. "HELP!" she screamed as she got taken out of the house and put into a limousine. Emily ran out to check why Elizibeth was screaming. When she saw that there were guards from the castle she ran after the limousine. When they arrived at the castle, Elizibeth was locked in her room.

A few minutes later she heard a knocking on her window. When she looked, she saw a girl dressed all in black with a mask on and a stick in her hand. Emily was happy to see her. A few hours later they were at their home eating ice cream and talking. "Thanks Emily, and I'm sorry." "Oh, it's fine. I will always protect you from the guards." "And I will try to protect you from the bullies." And they lived happily ever after.



The Spring Time

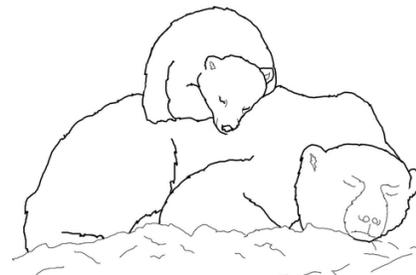
By Angel Trinh, Grade 3

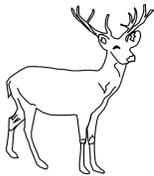
After a long cold winter and all the animals are almost done hibernating, it starts to get warm so that means spring is coming. Soon after it gets warm out, up in the mountains a black bear rises up from its nice sleep. The black bear looks around examining all around him. Then he walks carefully down the mountains. He finds a nice big tree near a pond and sharpens his claws against it and after he is done sharpening his claws he goes to try and catch some fish in the pond.

Then he catches a fish and eats it. After he eats, he goes and explores around the forest and sees what is new. He looks at the trees, the leaves, and the squirrels collecting acorns. The black bear saw all the animals out just roaming around the forest. Not long after that, the black bear stumbled across a baby cub by himself. At first the black bear thought to just leave it but he thought, "It's getting dark out and I don't know where the mother of the cub is." He picked the cub up and brought him back to the mountain and once he got there, he tucked the cub close to him and went to sleep. While the cub was asleep, the black bear got up and went out of the cave and outside.

When it was morning, the black bear went back to the cave before the cub awoke. The black bear took care of the cub. He took care of the cub for a long time but once the black bear got old, he couldn't take care of the cub that he had always been looking out for. The cub took care of the black bear that had taken care of him. Once that black bear who took care of the cub died, the black bear had been sad. Long after that, after winter again, in the spring when the black bear awoke, the bear did everything the black bear did that took care of him. He found a lost... Cub.

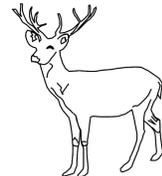
The End





The Story of Leaper and Lasher

By Cole Kahan, Grade 3



In a frigid forest where it never stopped snowing that was located in the very middle of Russia, two teenage deer named Leaper and Lasher lived with their large herd of deer. But the herd had way too many unnecessary rules! "Not more than two helpings at the feast tonight when we are supposed to have at least ten, my little deers." said the mom. Sometimes they even did things that were unintentionally mean, "Do this.... Do that.....no not that."

The teen deer grew VERY angry and reminded the parents, "We did what we were told." But the parents whined and whined and whined and then they screamed, "But you broke rule 10,547 and you broke it sixteen times!" The most despicable rule of all was not to go to the half of the forest that was chock full and by full I mean over 2,000,000 hunters. It was so despicable, the two teenage deer decided that some night soon they would go by the cover of darkness! (cue Ninja music dm-d-dm-d-d-dm-d)

A few days later in the middle of the night, the teenage deer decided they had rehearsed their plan so many times they could have done it in their sleep. They were now fully capable of going and succeeding! The pair of deer snuck out of their warm, comfortable and safe bed and snuck outside where it was snowing. They used the language they had come up with to communicate "Blob blorgal," whispered Lasher.

"Bog," replied Leaper in an abnormally happy way. (translation: "Let's have some fun," whispered Lasher. "Ok," replied Leaper in an abnormally happy way.) They could do whatever they wanted. So the teenage deer had to use all of their VERY small amount of willpower to keep walking and not playing around in the snow. They were so happy to break the rules they just might burst from happiness.

"Big Bloop wob tobreed spoopy," said Leaper. (translation: "I love all this glorious freedom," said Leaper.) Finally, when they got to the other end of the snowy, cold forest they were about to take a bite of yummy moss when a net lifted them into the air and someone or something said, "Antlers up!" and suddenly a gun was being pointed in their faces like, well a gun.

Of course their antlers whipped up faster than you could say, "I'm in REALLY BIG trouble." They saw a large hunter with a mask, shoes, pants,

and jacket. Otherwise known as decked out in black. Plus, he or she had a sort of menacing laugh in their voice. If they tried to get away he would shoot. But then something happened. There was a **HUMONGOUS** stomping of hooves and over a hundred thousand deer came stampeding out of the dark, thick woods and they ran over the hunter. "How ... but.... Where.....," sputtered the brothers. But when they got back to the right side of the woods, they were yelled at (" You could have died!") and grounded for a year and a 1/3.

The moral of this fable is only and I mean only sometimes you should follow the rules!

Vanished or No Longer

By Olivia Raucher, Grade 5 and Friend

There she was, lying down trying to breathe when all that was left was pain and sorrow. She was alone, she was hurt, and she had nowhere to go. A single tear ran down her face and onto the ground. She tried to rise, and as she did her beautiful scales were shown. The white gloss of her body, the gold outlined tips, the astonishing blue eyes, they were breathtaking. I had a glimpse for just a second, but as soon as I did, she fell to the ground once more, and all that was left of her was dust. She had vanished and the dragon was no more.

I was in awe of the creature who had once stood before me, and now she was gone. Nothing was left, or at least, that's what I thought. As I went into the cold, dark cave, once filled with light and happiness, where once sat, all I saw was darkness, but I was determined to find more. We headed straight in with no thoughts or expectations.

I couldn't see a thing, I couldn't hear a thing, but the drip, drip of a long-forgotten waterfall. I was close-close to a being, a being of what, though is about to be uncovered? Our eyes soon started to adjust to the darkness, but it was too late, for a light, so breathtaking, had already shone upon me. It was mystical. It was a waterfall, a golden waterfall, made of pure liquid gold. It was calling out to me. I had never felt so, so drawn to

something in my life. It was incredible! Slowly, I descended toward the waterfall. I had no idea if I was ever going to come out again, but I didn't care. Gradually, I walked until I was so close that it was touching my nose. I took one last look behind me and leaped in.

A dazzling light awaited me. I was stunned, in awe at the sight of it! I couldn't believe my eyes. It was a cave full of crystals! Little gems were on the walls, on the floor, and on the ceiling! I just had to explore! This was like nothing - **nothing** - that I had seen before! I started to walk around, checking every beautiful inch of the place. But then I saw something strange. It was a-a tail peeking out from a giant crystal. I was confused but intrigued. I went over to investigate, *gasp*. I had found them! I had found the dragons! All my life's work had finally paid off- every tantalizing hour! But where was the mother of these dragonettes? Then I realized that the mother had died just moments ago, and I had witnessed it! These poor dragonettes had no mother! They might just die too, without their mother's warmth and love. That's when I decided I will protect these dragonettes, I will feed them, love them, and fulfill every need they have.



The Two Magic BFFs

By Vanessa Feifer, Grade 3

There once lived a kitten named Catrina. In her land, everyone was magical and had different powers. Catrina had the power of ice, so she could quickly freeze mice and eat them--though her ice didn't only work on mice. It worked on EVERYTHING! Catrina's best friend was Flutter, a magical hummingbird. Flutter had the power of water so that she could water the flowers. One day, as they were walking/flying down Magic Makers road to go to the library and get new books, Catrina swore that she had seen a witch! Witches were rare in their land.

"It's probably just Bella (a magical bunny) testing her magic, or your imagination," replied Flutter. (Bella had the power of making illusions.)

"I hope it's Bella--I was going to ask her how long her illusions last," Catrina said. Just then, Flutter also saw a witch--and she wasn't see-through, so not an illusion! She told Catrina, and Catrina turned around and created a small wall of ice behind them.

"You didn't need to do that. We don't know if the witch is coming after us," Flutter observed.

"I'm just being safe," Catrina hissed back. "Your parents are on another trip and I'm sure they'd want you back without being possessed by a witch." Flutter's parents were famous world fliers and were usually gone on flights. Of course, they always made sure that Flutter was well-stocked before they went. Flutter's mom was also a hummingbird, and her name was Nectar. Flutter's dad was a robin, and his name was Red.

"You're right--I bet they wouldn't like me being possessed when they get back," Flutter realized as she shot a ball of water at the witch, quickly drenching it. Running now, the two hurried to the library and threw open its doors. Quickly, they got their books and walked/flew home. Suddenly, Catrina stopped, dead in her tracks.

"What's wrong?" Flutter asked Catrina. "Look," Catrina replied faintly. She pointed up at the sky that used to be clear and bright blue but was now dark and stormy. Tilting her beak a little bit farther right, she was astonished to find clouds shaping the words "EITHER EVERYONE IN YOUR VILLAGE MOVES OUT, AND CREATES A NEW VILLAGE AND GETS ALL OF IT, OR YOU STAY BEHIND AND LET WITCHES HAVE HALF OF IT! THE CHOICE IS YOURS."

"It must be that witch we saw!" exclaimed Catrina.

"You're right! Do you think we should tell the Magic Sparks police? I mean, just so that someone knows?" asked Flutter.

"I don't think so. Those letters were so big the whole neighborhood could probably see it!" Catrina replied. "I don't think we need to."

"You're right. Which option will you choose? We are happy here and half of our village is hardly ever used; why couldn't the witches use it?"

"I DON'T KNOW, OKAY FLUTTER!?! STOP TRYING TO TELL ME WHAT TO DO!" exploded Catrina.

"Gosh, that message really must have gotten to you!"

"Grrr...", Catrina thought. But luckily for Flutter, Catrina's mother, Dove, chose that moment (her mother was a magical cat) to call, "Catrina, hello, Flutter-I hope Catrina wasn't about to use her claws, because, you know, in all the books cats eat birds."

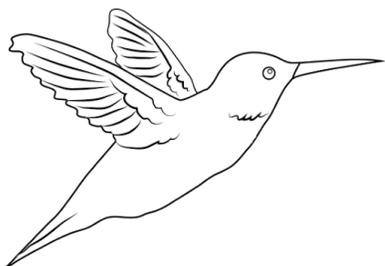
Flutter's eyes widened at that fact and quickly said, "Uh, no Dove, I mean uh, ma'am!"

"Flutter, you know that you can call me Dove, now, Catrina, come inside with me right now. Flutter, I want you to go to your house--your parents will keep you safe--oh, right they aren't here. Well, you might as well come to our house, then. Follow me."

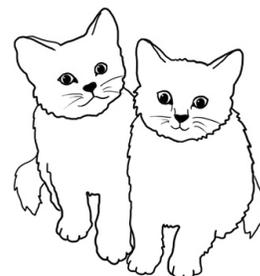
"Uh, okay," Flutter responded nervously, looking over her shoulder at Catrina, though all Catrina looked like she was feeling was annoyed. Flutter and Catrina followed Dove into their messy, little hut. It was covered with twigs on the outside and it had a reed curtain for a door--no one could see them, which may be perfect for cats but Flutter couldn't fly very high and was scared she might need to if what Dove said would happen actually would. But Catrina seemed much calmer now that she wasn't outside.

"So, girls," Dove said once they had sat down (or sat perched on a cat-play structure in Flutter's case). "What choice are you going to make? Personally, I agree with Flutter--we have plenty of room in our village."

"I don't know, Mom, I think that they should get half, and so will we. Yes, they will move into the other half!" All of the sudden there was a crack and boom, and everyone knew what choice Catrina had made (magic) and the witches happily moved into the other half of the village.



THE END



*****Advisory: This story may be upsetting for young children*****

The Venus Flytrap Finger Eater

By Max Esfahani, Grade 5

There was once a public garden for guests to look at the cool plants. Gardener Joseph was the keeper of the garden. He was at the garden for the majority of every week, and he never saw anything weird or suspicious.

The garden was full of many sweet and innocent plants, but one plant wasn't so innocent. In fact, it was incredibly guilty. It was the only plant of its kind in the garden. It was a venus flytrap. But, it just wasn't any kind of venus flytrap. It was a venus flytrap that ate flies and human fingers!

It all started a few years ago. A bunch of 5th graders went to the garden to look at the cool flowers and to relax. They scanned some plants, and then they noticed a pretty unusual plant. It was the venus flytrap. They saw the plant had pointy spikes which looked like teeth, but for a plant. The boys dared each other to put their fingers in the venus flytrap's mouth. It didn't harm the kids, but it sure did harm the venus flytrap. It made the venus flytrap's mouth sting and it made his teeth ache. Since the venus flytrap looked so different from the other plants, it was almost impossible for kids to not notice him.

The next day, a class went to the garden as a field trip. The same thing happened, again. This time it was a few girls, who weren't that amused at the other plants. Instead of daring each other they just went for putting their fingers in his mouth because they really had nothing else to do. That also stung the venus flytrap's mouth and made his teeth ache.

The same thing kept on happening to the venus flytrap for two long years, but then one day something changed his life forever. Gardener Joseph planted a new plant right next to the venus flytrap. The plant looked ordinary like any other plant, but this new plant had secret powers! This plant was a genie that would give the plant next to him one thing that he would really like.

A few weeks later, the Plant Genie was big enough to grant wishes. "Hi, I'm the Plant Genie! I give one wish to the plant that is right next to me and it seems you are the plant right next to me, so what wish do you want?" asked the Plant Genie.

"Um . . . ok? It is actually a pretty easy decision. So a lot of kids come

up to me and stick their hands in my mouth and it stings my mouth and makes my teeth ache. So I would like my wish to be when a kid sticks their fingers in my mouth, I can bite their fingers," replied the venus flytrap.

"Are you sure you want that to be your wish? Remember you only get one," questioned the Plant Genie.

"Yes, final answer!" answered the venus flytrap.

"Whatever you would like," said the Plant Genie. Then some purple and pink pixie dust came out of the plant genie and went inside the venus flytrap. After that, the garden closed for the day. That made the venus flytrap have to wait one night until he could get revenge!

It was the next morning and right when the garden opened again, some foolish kids came to the garden. They noticed the venus flytrap right away and went right to it. Right when they put their hands in the venus flytrap's mouth, the venus flytrap bit their fingers as if they were a snack. The boys told Gardener Joseph, but Gardener Joseph didn't believe them.

The same thing happened the next day, and the next, with boys putting their fingers in the venus flytrap's mouth and getting taught a lesson by having their fingers bit. Days passed and the venus flytrap ate more fingers, but then he got the reputation for biting fingers. Kids started to avoid him, and he got lonely. He was still biting fingers when someone came near enough, but he kept on getting more lonely and he didn't feel right. He didn't know why, though.

"Are you okay?" asked the Plant Genie. "Do you know why you are drooping down? Think about it."

The venus flytrap thought and thought and then he finally got it. "I was getting lonely because people wouldn't come to me anymore because I either hurt everybody or people are now scared of me," said the venus flytrap.

"That is why I told you to choose your wish carefully," said the Plant Genie.

Lastly, the whole entire time, the venus flytrap was the one who was getting taught a lesson.



The Whipped Out Water

By Alaz Aruoba, Grade 3

Jason Shur, Lilly Tage, and Jack Beasten were walking down main street. While they were walking they saw this mysterious wishing well in the park. "Let's go check it out!" shouted Jack. "Ok, let's go," agreed the others.

Once they got to the well, beautiful, shiny water was splashing out of the well. Suddenly the water stopped and a bucket flew up with a rope tied to it. "Where did the water go and what is that bucket for?" asked Lilly.

"I don't know but we better go find out," Jason said with excitement!

Luckily Jack had a rope in his bag. "Let's tie the rope to the top of the well and wrap it around ourselves so we can go to the bottom of the well," Lilly suggested.

"Great idea, Lily," Jason said. First Lily went, then Jason and finally Jack. "I can't," screamed Jack, "I'm afraid of heights!"

"You can do, Jack. Just come down slowly and you'll be fine!" yelled Lily. Jack took it nice and easy and finally reached the bottom.

Jason stumbled on something. He took out his flashlight and pointed the light toward the floor. "Hey guys! Look what I found!"

"What?" asked Lily and Jack. "There's a trapdoor!" "What in the world is a trap door doing down here?" asked Jack. "

"I don't know but we better find out," declared Lily.

"Let's see if I can lift this door," said Jack.

"I don't think you will be able to but go ahead," said Lily.

He attempted and lifted the door like it was a piece of cake. "That was easier than I thought it would be," Jack said with a grin on his face.

"I call first," shouted Lily.

"I call second," shouted Jason.

"I call last," sighed Jack.

Once they all went down the door they heard some whispering., "Who else is down here?" asked Jack with some worry.

"Well, let's stay calm and slowly find out," whispered Lily calmly. They each walked quietly to where the voice was coming from. There was a sound in the background. It was the mystery person coming right toward them.

They leaned against the wall. The person passed right by them! Lily tried to look at the face but the person was wearing a dark, black mask on his face. Once the person cleared the path they ran over to where the person was standing in the first place. There was nothing left. "Where is that person going?" asked Jack.

"We will figure that out later," demanded Jason.

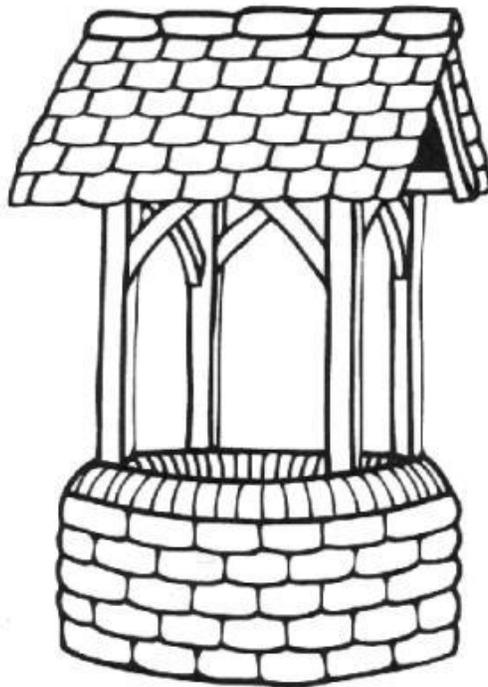
"We should go and follow the person, maybe he took all the water!" shouted Lily.

"Ok, let's move" said Jason beginning to walk toward the man's footsteps. They passed the trap door and went to the other side of the path.

"Look!" shouted Lily, he has a helicopter and is taking the water away in his tank. "I am going to go up with it. I'll try to grab on and then climb up as fast as I can. Then Lily will grab on to me and Jack will grab onto Lily and then you guys climb up ok?"

"Sounds good to me," said Lily.

"Okey-dokey," said Jack.



Two Girls, a Unicorn and a Bad Witch

By Ilyana Graham, Grade 1

There was a little girl, named Cassidy, who loved to take her unicorn for a walk in the forest. One evening, her and her unicorn were on a walk in the forest. They saw the lake and decided to sit and enjoy the nice breeze.

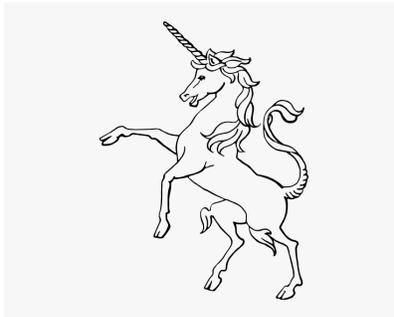
A bad witch was watching Cassidy with her magic crystal. The bad witch sent her servant to capture Cassidy and her unicorn and take them to her castle. The bad witch locked Cassidy's unicorn in a cage and Cassidy knew she had to save her unicorn. The bad witch wanted to know what Cassidy was going to do. The bad witch was hoping for an answer, but, two hours later, Cassidy had not responded. So, the bad witch decided to lock up Cassidy in a cage in another part of the castle. The bad witch really wanted to get the unicorn's power. The bad witch was also trying to make Cassidy and her unicorn her new servants.

While Cassidy was in her cage, she remembered that she had a playdate with her best friend Abby at 2:00 PM. It was already 3:00 PM! Abby was looking for Cassidy everywhere. Abby was so excited before, but now, she was super duper nervous. Suddenly, Abby heard her phone ring. It was Cassidy. Cassidy told her that she was locked in a cage at the bad witch's castle! Abby said she would come over and help get Cassidy out. As Abby was trying to get to the castle, she thought that Cassidy's unicorn could use its magic to get out and save her, but Abby remembered that unicorns can't use magic when they are in cages.

After 3 hours of trying to find the castle, Abby was tired and went back to her house to eat and rest so she could have energy to save her friend and her unicorn. Abby went up to her room to think how she could get Cassidy's unicorn and Cassidy out of the cages. After some time, Abby finally figured out a way to get into the bad witch's castle. Abby's plan was to bring her magical wand from Disneyland, hide behind a few rocks, sneak behind a tree and go in the back door.

Abby left her house with her wand. It was go time! When Abby reached the castle, she hid behind a few rocks and then made her way behind a tree. She saw the back door wasn't guarded and was open, so she went into the castle. When Abby got into the castle, she got out her wand and used the getting out of the cage spell to get the unicorn out of the cage.

Since Abby got Cassidy's unicorn out of the cage, it was time to save Cassidy and get the bad witch's wand. Two minutes later, the bad witch spotted Abby and the unicorn. The bad witch wanted to challenge Abby and Cassidy's unicorn to get past her. The bad witch used her super fast spell to keep Abby and the unicorn from getting to Cassidy. Abby saw a bucket filled with slime and used her wand to pick it up and pour it over the bad witch. The bad witch was stuck in the goo. Abby grabbed the bad witch's wand and dashed to get Cassidy out of the cage! They got her out and Cassidy gave them big hugs. They went outside at the lake and used the bad witch's wand to put her in the lake forever! And they lived happily ever after.



Who is the Villain and Why

By Aanya Garg, Grade 3

Have you ever read the book Jack and the Beanstalk? It is a children's favorite. Do you ever ask your family who the real villain is in the story? In my opinion, I think Jack is the real villain, NOT the Giant. I have many reasons why I think Jack is the real villain. Today, I will tell you them.

One reason I think Jack is the villain is because he stole things. Would you like it if someone stole your money or things that are very valuable to you? Of course you wouldn't like it! Jack stole a hen that lays golden eggs, a golden harp and bags full of tons and tons of gold. I also think Jack is the villain because he tricked the Giantess. Once Jack stole the gold, he got fine clothes and said he was a different boy. He tricked her into thinking he was a different boy. I also think he is the villain because he traded a big cow for 5 very small brown beans. My last reason that I think Jack is the villain is because he cut the beanstalk down when the Giant was on it, not caring about if the Giant was going to die or not.

In conclusion, I believe Jack is the real villain. I hope I have inspired you to think about who the real villain is, too!

The Test

By Benjamin Trackman, Grade 5

This story takes place in 1872, shortly after the American Civil War, which when it ended, freed all of the slaves in the U.S. In 1870, the 15th amendment was passed, which granted African-American men the right to vote. This story is about an African American man named Jackson in 1872, the first election after the passage of the 15th amendment.

Jackson walked down the road. It was the election day in 1872 and Jackson was walking to the polling station. The two main presidential candidates were Ulysses S. Grant, and Horace Greeley. Jackson was a 27 year old former slave who could read and write, both very rare talents for a former slave. Until the 15th Amendment had been passed, Jackson hadn't been able to vote, but now he could.

Jackson entered the polling station, the place where all the votes were counted. It was very chaotic, with hundreds of people walking around. Jackson found the line, and he waited patiently.

Barely five minutes had passed, but now two officials were coming right at Jackson. Jackson knew that this wasn't good. He weighed his options. One way, he could run, and probably get caught, plus he wouldn't get to vote. He didn't like that option, so he went with the other option. He stood tall, and let them come.

"Ahh, if it ain't one of those filthy scumbags now," said one of the officials to the other, none too quietly.

"Get over here," said the other official. Jackson allowed himself to be led away, wondering what all of this was about. He knew it couldn't be good. Bad feelings against African Americans like him were just too strong. He didn't like the look of this.

The officials led Jackson to a table, and told him to sit down. Then one of them produced a piece of paper and said, "Fill it out, you have 25 minutes and counting." Then the officials walked away.

Jackson stared at the paper. On it were some questions about the candidates. One was, "What is Ulysses Grant's campaign slogan?" Another was, "What party is Horace Greeley from?" Jackson now knew what this was. It was a test to see whether he was educated, or not. He found a pen, and began to scribble.

Twenty-five minutes had passed.

One of the officials was coming back, and Jackson wiped his brow. He didn't even realize how much stress he'd been feeling until now. The head official reached the table. He looked at the paper, and then back at Jackson, with newfound respect. Then he said, "It looks like you can read and write after all. Most people of your skin tone ain't able to do it. You can go and vote now."

Jackson went back to the line, voted, and left. He left the polling station thinking that the whole test was very unfair, singling him out as African American. But he also felt happy and joyful, as if he had accomplished something. Which he had. He had voted, for the first time in his 27 years of life.

