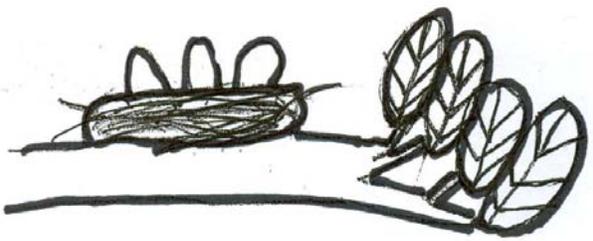


West side
story



Joseph M

West Side Story

Issue 1



From the Editor's Desk...

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Dear Readers,

Welcome to our first issue of *West Side Story*, the literary magazine at West Side School. When we first announced the opportunity to submit writing pieces to the magazine back in March 2009, we weren't sure what kind of response would be received. However, I'm thrilled to say that over fifty West Side students took this opportunity to share their thoughts, feelings and ideas and get published! I am so proud of each of the students who

participated and helped make this first issue a great success.

I hope that the writing shared by fellow students inspires even more students to write for the next issue. Each student has a unique and important voice that can be expressed through this magazine. I encourage all students to use the magazine as a way to communicate with others.

Thanks to Joseph M. and Imaan S. for designing the magazine covers. Special

thanks also to all teachers who encouraged their students to submit and also to Mrs. Herschlein for her guidance and support in getting this first issue published!

Please enjoy reading the great work of your peers and have a wonderful summer.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Koch,
Editor

Message from the Principal

Dear West Side Writers,

The writing in this magazine demonstrates your passions, interests, and commitment to sharing your thoughts and ideas with others. Thank you for taking the time to share your work with our entire school community.

As you read through this magazine, you will find stories

that make you wonder, think, and laugh, articles that inform you, and poetry that makes you imagine and smile.

Enjoy reading the writing of your peers. I hope it sparks your thinking, and that you take some time this summer to write your own story, article, or

poem. Save it, and submit to our magazine in the fall.

Write from who you are. Write what makes you happy. Write what makes you different.

Just write.

Wishing you all the best,
Mrs. Herschlein,
Principal

June
2009

Short Stories



One Last Try

By Alex K.

Brandon walked with his friends hoping they wouldn't ditch him this time. His friends, Josh and John, would always play jokes on him. Luckily for Brandon, they were too caught up with the basketball tryouts that they hadn't thought of it. Brandon was also thinking about the tryouts and if he would make it.

"We're so lucky there are three tryouts," said Brandon.

"I know," answered Josh.

"I wonder who is going to make it," said John.

"Beats me. I'm just wondering if I'm going to make it or not," said Brandon with concern.

The basketball tryouts were very important to the boys. Each of them worried about making the team. Unfortunately, for Brandon, he did little to get himself ready for the tryouts like his friends, Josh and John, who practiced at home.

The day before the tryouts, John visits Brandon at his house. John was working the game controls, his eyes never leaving the television screen. The same was true for Brandon. "Are you ready for tomorrow?" he asks.

Brandon is slow to respond. "I think so," he says.

"You don't sound convinced," said John.

"I'm convinced these tryouts are a waste of my time. You know I'm going to make it," said Brandon with confidence.

"Alright," said John. "Whatever you say."

On a cold Saturday morning in front of the doors leading to the Murphy Junior High Gym, forty twelve year olds were standing and shivering waiting for Coach Mike to let them into the building. Brandon was nowhere to be found. Josh and John said little as they watched the doors open up and the boys stream in. Coach Mike was already barking orders to place their coats and bags in the stands and to form two lines. John realized that Brandon was late. "Where is he," asked Josh.

"I have no clue," said John. "I told him to be here early, but he obviously didn't listen to me."

The first drill was a dribbling exercise that required the boys to dribble with their weak hand first around a series of folding chairs set up in a straight line. Coach Mike was making notes on a clipboard, when Brandon came into the gym late. "Where were you?" Coach Mike inquired.

Brandon hesitated and finally said, "I overslept."

"Well, let's see how you do on this drill, Sleepy," replied Coach Mike.

Brandon quickly grabbed a ball and followed the rest of the kids in the dribbling drill. As the boys nervously weaved their way through the chairs, Brandon looked up to see where the coach was when suddenly he bounced the ball off of his left foot sending it far onto the other unused court. He had to leave the line to get the ball hoping the coach wouldn't see him. But Coach Mike was watching and made a quick note on his clipboard. Next, the boys had to take the free throw

line to shoot ten free throws each. Brandon looked over to see where John and Josh were. Finally when he saw them he ran over to them.

"Where were you?" John asked Brandon with a serious face.

"I overslept," Brandon said wiping the sweat off of his forehead.

"We better start shooting or we're never going to make the team," Josh interrupted.

Brandon saw how John and Josh were so focused and hardly missed a shot. Brandon finished all ten shoots and only four went in. The next drill was give and go layups. Brandon found himself missing the pass and missing the shot over and over again. Then they had a twenty vs. twenty scrimmage. And then the part Brandon hated the most, suicides. After practice, Coach Mike called Brandon over.

"What happened out there?" he said.

Brandon took a deep breath and said, "I don't know." Brandon mumbled but managed to get it out.

"Well, I need you to do better or I can't put you on the team. I'll make the tryout later in the day, and that's all I can do," Coach Mike said. Brandon left with frustration as he knew he most likely didn't make the team.

The next day at school Coach Mike posted the first five kids that made the team on the office window. That day when Brandon went to school he looked at the first five kids who made the team. The list named: Jake, Kevin, Tyler, and Josh and John. Brandon couldn't believe it. "I didn't make the team but they did," Brandon said to himself.

Later that day Brandon asked Josh and John on the phone for advice for the next tryout. That night Brandon told his parents the bad news.

"I told you that you wouldn't make it if you didn't practice," said Brandon's dad.

"You're better off practicing for the next tryout," his mom said.

"I don't need to," Brandon said, "I got a lot of advice from Josh and John."

The next day at the tryouts Brandon got there just on time. Coach Mike started off with two laps around the court; unfortunate for Brandon he was unaware that this shoe was untied so he tripped as expected. Next they did dribbling with their weak hand through folding chairs and then their strong hand like last time. He was doing well at first but instead of his ball going into the other court he went too fast and bumped into Anthony in front of him who then fell into a folding chair. After that, they did left-hand, right-hand lay-ups, passing up and down the court, a scrimmage, and finally, suicides. At the end Brandon guessed he did pretty well except for a few errors. Also he was anxious to know if he made it not.

The next day he couldn't believe his eyes. The list read: Anthony, Allen, Rob, Ike, and B..... as soon as Brandon saw the letter B he closed his eyes as he knew he made the team. But when he opened his eyes to his shock and horror it said Blake. After he saw that he knew that Coach Mike was playing a joke on him. So that day he went to Coach Mike's office.

"I really didn't make the team," Brandon said in confusion.

"Yap, that's right, you didn't make the team so this isn't some joke. No, I didn't see you playing your best. But if I see you do your best next time, I'll put you on the team."

That day Brandon thought about what Coach Mike had said. The walk from the gym to his house wasn't very far. Brandon had plenty of time to think about what had happened. As he was walking he thought about how he hadn't practiced, and how he wasn't the best, and how he should have listened to his mom and dad. He thought about how stupid it was of him to come to the

tryouts late. He thought how clumsy it was to let the ball come out of his hands and go into the other court. He thought about what his parents would say when he told them the bad news. At that moment he knew he would have to practice as much as he could and give 100% at the last tryout and then he knew he would make it.

He told his parents that he didn't make the team, and so that night, no matter how dark it was, he practiced. And even in the morning when he had to go to school. And even before the tryouts because he got there early. And all that practicing really paid off, because once he picked up that basketball there was no one there to stop him.

What's Right, Not Best

By Dylan B.



Chapter 1

Mary knew that the end of the year tests would be the turning point in her friendship with Lilly and Jessica. Since Mary isn't that smart, Lilly and Jessica have a good chance in finding that out and that's exactly what Mary wants to stay away from.

"Ughhh," moaned Mary. "I can't believe we have those tests tomorrow! Did you hear what Mr. Saller said about them being the most important tests of the year?"

"Yeah, yeah, you're not going to freak out like you did for the other exams, are you?" said Jessica. She got really annoyed when Mary did this.

"Anyway Mr. Saller says that same thing for every test," said Lilly trying to calm Mary down a little bit, but she could see that it wasn't working.

This was true. Their main teacher, Mr. Saller, gave a few more tests compared to the other teachers and he repeated this same saying for every test that he's going to distribute. All of the 6th graders call this the "saying." Still, for every time he repeats this, Mary starts to let her nerves take control of her. She has a reason for this. Mary, like some other kids, doesn't get amazing or even good scores on these tests. On the other hand, Jessica and Lilly get perfect scores almost all of the time which has a way of chipping away at Mary's confidence.

A silence fell between the girls as they made their way down the sidewalk. The streets, as for the sidewalks, were pretty empty as they walked to the town drug store. Most kids get picked up by their parents or go on the bus because they don't live too close to the school. Mary and Jessica live right across the street from each other and Lilly lives a few houses down the street that Mary lives on. Right now they were on their way to get candy. Each of them saved up their weekly allowance, eight dollars, to buy whatever they want. Every week they chose candy and the place to get it is the Mininton Drug Store.

On their way to the store, about the only person they passed was 10 year old Ally Campbell, the recipient of abuse and teasing from Jessica and Lilly, otherwise known as the "Mininton School Bullies."

Jessica and Lilly, as I mentioned before, get good grades and are really smart. They tend to make fun of kids who are not as intelligent as they are. Since they are already really good friends with Mary, it doesn't really occur to them to tease Mary for her average grades. Since

these tests are being given, they have a good chance of realizing that Mary is just like any other kid they tease and they may just start teasing her. This is exactly what Mary is afraid of.

"I want Starburst!" Mary exclaimed as she walked into Mininton Drug Store.

"Same here," said Lilly.

"And me too," agreed Jessica.

This is the type of thing that annoyed Mary. Mary felt like Lilly and Jessica do the same thing and she was the one who did everything for herself. For example, last week in gym everyone had to choose a partner. Since there are 19 kids in her gym class, Mary, as usual, was by herself. Also, the other day Jessica and Lilly wore matching clothes and "forgot" to tell Mary. Mary felt left out the whole day.

"I'm home!" Mary announced as she walked into her house to find her mother sitting on the purple couch in the middle of the living room. She was watching the news again. Mrs. Thomas always watched the news.

"Mary, please start setting the table for dinner. Kayla will be home any second now from softball practice," ordered Mrs. Thomas. Mary wished she could play softball but it's only for 8th graders. She usually wanted to do anything her older sister did. Kayla is like her role model and a guide when she needs help.

"Did you have a good time at school today?" asked her mother, her eyes still on the TV.

"It was alright. Mr. Saller says that we have the end of the year tests tomorrow and he used the saying again."

"Mary, you can't let the saying freak you out. He only says that because he thinks that it will make everyone try harder and do better."

This is also what she hears from her mother every time Mary reminds her of Mr. Saller's "saying".

Mary ate dinner really fast and headed up to her room.

"Good luck on the tests tomorrow, bud."

Chapter 2

"Mary! Breakfast!" called her mother while she placed the orange and apple slices and blueberry pancakes on the table.

"I'll eat on the way to school. I need to get to school early today so at least I'm not that much behind on the test."

Mary grabbed a pancake and ran out the door with her backpack banging against the back of her leg every time she stepped forward with her left leg. She walked alone to school, still worrying about the tests. On her way she saw Jessica and Lilly again teasing little Ally Campbell again. Mary pictured herself being Ally and getting picked on by Jessica and Lilly. She shivered.

As Mary walked into Mr. Saller's classroom, she realized that there was a several page long test on every desk. Marco, Paula, and Christina, three other kids in Mary's class, were already taking the test. Mr. Saller wasn't yet in the classroom, but there were directions on the blackboard saying:

- 1) Sit at your desk and write your name on the front cover of the booklet.
- 2) Read the direction page on the inside cover.
- 3) Take the test and when you're done with the 68 questions read your book.

This wasn't complicated. Mary sat down at her desk, followed these directions, and after 1 hour and 40 minutes she was done. By then, everyone in the room was done, also.

At lunch, Lilly and Jessica sat with Mary and Lilly and Jessica tried to talk about their birthday party, but Mary kept on changing the subject and talking about the test. At the end of the week the teacher gives everyone back their graded test. The sixth graders call this day "Grade Day".

"Grade Day" wasn't that bad. It's just most people don't get good scores like Lilly and Jessica do, so they get really nervous about what their parents are going to say. Mary was one of those people.

Chapter 3

The whole week Mary had worried about today. Today was Friday, otherwise known as "Grade Day". As Mary slouched down in her seat, a big, long test found its way to her desk. This was it. Mary looked at it and felt like she was going to cry. She hoped that Lilly and Jessica weren't near her.

"What's my mother going to say about this?" Mary thought.

Later that day Mr. Saller pulled her outside of the classroom.

"I'm sorry that you failed the test Mary." said Mr. Saller. I will call your mom tonight and we will decide what we should do.

"A 56!?" Mrs. Thomas yelled when she saw Mary's test grade. What were you thinking!? Did you even study?"

"Well, yeah, I tried as hard as I could to study," she lied. The truth was she had been too busy worrying about the test she forgot about studying which seemed obvious to her now.

Just then the phone rang. Mary knew who it was. Mrs. Thomas picked it up and went in the other room. Mary had to know what they were saying so she went in the other room, hid behind the door and eavesdropped.

"Oh, hi, Mr. Saller...I know I just saw her grade...a tutor would be fine...yeah...uh-huh...wait, you want her in a special class for what subjects... Oh, ok... we'll meet tomorrow and discuss this further...Bye."

Mary felt like she was going to cry but not a single tear rolled down her face. She didn't care whether she had a tutor nor had to go into special classes. The fact that Jessica and Lilly may find out is what made her want to cry.

After her mother came back into the room. She informed Mary about the tutor and special classes. Mary tried to talk her out of it but she knew it wouldn't work.

That night Mary went to her older sister Kayla for help. Mary usually went to Kayla through her tough situations and decisions.

"What is it this time?" Kayla asked as Mary walked into Kayla's room with a glum expression on her face.

It looked like Kayla was just laying on her bed reading but she had stopped because she heard Mary coming.

"I got a horrible grade on the end of the year test and mom and Mr. Saller agreed that I should get a tutor and go into extra help classes at school," Mary explained.

"So what's the problem? I know you wouldn't care if you had to go into extra help classes or not."

"I don't. It's Lilly and Jessica. What if they find out and they start teasing me?"

"If they were really your friends, they would understand when you tell them."

"You're probably right, Kayla, but I'm still really scared. I really don't want to tell them."

"Do what you want, but really think about my advice," said Kayla trying to convince Mary to tell them.

Mary thought about it but she kept on thinking about her being Ally Campbell. She got so close to deciding to do it and then that picture of Ally popped into her head. She wished she never stepped foot into Jessica and Lilly's life. She would've never been in this frustrating situation.

Chapter 4

Mary walked to school today with Lilly and Jessica. Her first class today was math her first subject. In the beginning of the class, the math teacher, Mr. Hutch, wrote three logic problems on the board and asked everyone to copy them down and solve them. Mary felt a light tap on her back which meant Mr. Hutch was asking her to meet him in the hallway. As she walked out of the classroom Jessica already had noticed that she was leaving and had a weird look on her face as if she was thinking of all the possibilities that Mary could be doing.

"Your mother informed you about the special classes you are to go in, correct?"

Mary nodded.

"Well, one of those special classes is scheduled right now so I'm going to walk you down and introduce you to Mrs. Robin, the teacher."

"Ok," Mary said while he started to lead her down.

"Yes, Robert, today we are going to do...Oh hi Mary!" Mrs. Robin greeted Mary with a jolly hug, not as most teachers would do.

"Hi," Mary said shyly. She could see the six other kids had stopped their work to look up at her. Robert, the kid that Mrs. Robin was talking to when she walked into the room, happened to be in the 6th grade also. The other kids, Karen, John, Lola, Oliver, Hannah, were all much younger than her, probably in 2nd or 3rd grade. At least, she wasn't the only one in her grade.

Back in her classroom...

"Lilly and Jessica, can you two please do me a favor?" asked Mr. Hutch.

"Yeah, sure, what?" Lilly was excited to get a break from their logic problems.

I have these books that I need to be given back to Mrs. Fuller. Her room is right next to Mrs. Robin's room.

Mrs. Robin's small classroom was filled with stories, composition note books and work books for every subject including math, English, reading comprehension, social studies, science and more. There was a circular table in the center of the room which the other kids were sitting at and doing math right now. On the purple wall, were an alphabet chart, calendar, and a multiplication chart. Above the door was a little window.

"Alright," Jessica said. She was also happy. Ever since Mary left the classroom, Jessica had been wondering where she went and thought this would be a good time to find out.

Jessica and Lilly scurried out of the classroom and fast-walked down the hallway which turned into a slow run. When they started running Mr. Weissman, the principal, stepped out in front of them with his angry face staring down at them.

"What are you two up to?" asked the principal.

"Umm, we're, yah know,-delivering these books to Mrs. Fuller." Lilly was scared out of her mind. She never faced the principal before unless she was getting an award or a certificate. Jessica was never scared like that and knows when Lilly starts stuttering it's time to take over.

"I'll take it from here," He snorted with an unpleasant grin on his face.

"No, no, it's fine, we can do it," Jessica said as they started to walk again but there he was standing in front of them again as if he was a cement wall that nobody could pass through.

"You just proved to me that you can't, so head back to the classroom before I give you the consequences!"

Lilly and Jessica walked back down the hallway to Mr. Hutch's classroom and sat down and didn't say another word until the end of class.

Throughout the day Lilly and Jessica had been noticing that Mary was leaving mostly every class. They tried many ways to get out of the room to see what Mary was up to. Finally, at their last class of the day, they both got out of their social studies class to "go to the bathroom."

Lilly and Jessica really went to Mrs. Robin's room instead. They walked slowly, not to get caught again and looked to see if anyone was near, every time they heard footsteps besides their own.

When they got to Mrs. Robin's room, they stood on their tippy-toes and peeked through the window.

Chapter 5

"What do you think she's doing in there?" Jessica asked Lilly who was still looking through the window.

"I don't know, but we are going to find out," Lilly answered as she started to turn the knob. Jessica pulled her back in an instant, gripping her shirt and hair.

"What are you? Out of your mind! You can't just barge in there unless you want to stand face to face with Mr. Weissman again. If we want to find out we have to act like were not suspicious or anything."

"Fine. But can I just--"

"No. Mary's going to think that we're wondering what she's doing and I think that's the exact opposite of what she wants." Jessica said as she turned around to head back to class.

"When we walk home with her we'll see what she is doing after school, okay?" asked Lilly.

"And if she's busy?"

"We'll think of something later."

"Alright. We better get back to class before Mr. Weissman comes after us again with that big, nasty, grin on that thing he calls a face," Jessica and Lilly laughed, just as Mary stepped out of Mrs. Robin's room. They scurried back to Social Studies, not getting caught. Everyone was packing up their homework or copying the homework off the board.

Mary, Lilly and Jessica walked out of Mininton Elementary School. Lilly and Jessica, excited about what they found out and their plan, and Mary, nervous about Lilly and Jessica, getting more suspicious.

"So, Mary, do you want to come over to my house today?" Jessica asked expecting her to say no.

"Umm, I think my relatives are coming to town today, " Mary knew it sounded unrealistic but she needed an excuse. She couldn't tell Lilly and Jessica that her tutor was coming.

"Oh, what relatives?" Lilly asked.

"Umm, you know, Aunt Casey and Uncle Brian."

"OK, have fun!" Jessica said sarcastically. She was mad that Mary was lying to her. She could tell that Mary needed to think of answers as she asked the questions.

Mary said nothing. She knew that they were onto the fact that she wasn't smart. But the truth is that Lilly and Jessica don't care whether she is smart or not, they just want to know the truth.

Mary finally got to her house. She walked in to find a young girl sitting at the dining room table. She had blonde hair, blue eyes, and was very thin and tall. This was Nancy, her tutor.

"Hi, I'm Nancy," she said. "I'm your tutor. Your mother asked me to help you with the homework you were assigned today."

"Yeah, we should go to my room. I just need to get something from the kitchen. My room is straight down the hall," Mary pointed to the hallway, and it is the second door on the left."

"I'll meet you there," called Nancy as she started to walk to Mary's room.

Mary called Jessica to see what they were doing.

"Hello?" Jessica answered the phone.

"Hi, it's Mary. I was just wondering what you guys were going to do today."

"Oh, nothing really. Just hanging out and watching TV," Jessica lied.

Nancy called to Mary to come to the room.

"One minute," Mary called back to Nancy.

"Who are you talking to?" questioned Jessica.

"Umm, my Aunt Casey."

"Yeah, ok, we weren't born yesterday, we got to go."

"Bye," Mary said but it seemed like Jessica had already hung up on her.

Mary went to her room. She took out her homework and started to work on it with Nancy.

"Let's go!" Jessica ordered Lilly. "We have to find out what Mary's doing!"

Jessica and Lilly snuck out of the house, quietly, and sprinted across the street to Mary's house. They crawled alongside Mary's house in the prickly rose bushes. Jessica stood on Lilly's back. She was tall enough to reach the ledge of the window in Mary's room. She stood up and peeked in.

"She's in there with a girl and it looks like their working on her homework," Jessica whispered.

"Is the girl old enough to be her aunt?"

"No way! The girl is probably only nineteen or twenty."

"That little liar! Jessica get off my back, it's really starting to hurt now."

"Hold on," Jessica said in an annoyed voice. She obviously didn't realize that she was standing on someone's back that was smaller than her. It should really be the other way around but Jessica argued for the point that she should be the one who gets to look in the window.

"I...can't...hold you...any longer!" Lilly stuttered and collapsed in to the rose bush. Jessica let out a scream like she was in a horror movie, and fell on top of Lilly.

Inside, Mary rushed over to the window and saw the two of them, on top of each other in the bush. She could tell that they had been spying on her. Mary ran for the bathroom with tears streaming down her cheeks. Great, Mary thought. Now they are definitely going to make fun of me tomorrow. But the truth was they had no idea, or at least not yet. They are only suspicious about the girl that was with Mary and why she left almost every class at school to go to another room.

After the incident, Jessica and Lilly went back to Jessica's house.

"I think I know what she was doing with that girl," Jessica said. They were now in Jessica's room. Jessica was pacing back and forth and Lilly was sitting in a blue and white striped beanbag chair. Jessica's room was tiny. She had her bed, the beanbag chair, and her desk.

"What?" Lilly asked.

"I think that girl was her tutor and that class was a special help class."

"But don't you think she would have told us by now?"

"No. You know how we are smarter than everyone else, how we tell them that they aren't smart and that we are the smartest in the grade?" Bullies think of their bullying from a different point of view.

"Yeah."

"So maybe Mary doesn't want to tell us because she is scared that we will do the same thing to her!" exclaimed Jessica.

"So what do we do?"

"I really care about Mary and you know that we would never hurt her. We should tell her that we know."

"Okay, but I think I have to go. My mom is probably wondering where I am," said Lilly.

"Bye," said Jessica, "and remember to meet at my house in the morning."

Chapter 6

"Hey," said Jessica, in the morning, her eyes wandering around looking for Mary.

"Hi," Lilly said. Her eyes were wandering, also.

"Oh, there's Mary."

"Oh, yeah."

"You go tell her."

"No you."

"You."

"You."

"You."

"Fine," Lilly said. She was getting tired of this back and forth game that she knew Jessica was never going to give up on. Lilly rushed over to Mary. Mary tried to look away and pretend not to notice them but she knew they already had noticed her.

"Hey Mary," Lilly said softly.

"Umm, hey, Lilly."

"I just want you to know," Jessica was watching Lilly and listening to what she was saying, "don't be mad at us for what happened yesterday...and that we know about your tutor and special classes. Jessica and I just want to assure you that we would never make fun of you if that's what you were thinking."

"Thanks so much."

"You're welcome and if it makes you feel any better we're going to stop doing whatever we were doing to Ally because we realized that it bothered you."

"Thanks."

"You're a great friend and nothing will ever change that."



Sage

By Gia G.

Sage slowly walked into the living room trying to get the courage to ask her mom to take dance classes. She found her mom sitting on the brown couch watching TV.

"Mom," Sage said.

"Yes," her mom replied.

"I was wondering if I could take dance classes," she asked nervously.

"No," her mom said sternly.

"Why?" Sage asked. Sage didn't even know why she bothered to ask. She knew it was going to be a no. Only because her granny performed once and got badly hurt.

"Your granny was badly hurt by dancing," Sage's mom said.

"I know, but that was a long time ago," Sage said.

"She is still hurt badly," her mom replied.

"Fine," Sage sighed and left the living room. Her mom thought she went to her room, but she really went to the dance studio.

Once Sage got to the dance studio she looked for the teacher named Miss Chrissy. She knew Miss Chrissy because when her granny was a dancer she was good friends with Miss Chrissy until she got hurt. Sage didn't think Miss Chrissy would recognize her, but she did.

"Hi, Sage," said Miss Chrissy.

"Hi," Sage nervously answered.

"Do you need help with something?" Miss Chrissy asked.

"Yeah, I was wondering if I could take dance classes here," Sage told her.

"Does your mom know you're here?" Miss Chrissy asked knowing how Sage's mom felt about dancing since Sage's granny's injury.

"No, and she really can't find out," Sage said.

"Okay, every morning at 5:45 and don't be late," she said.

"Okay, I'll be here," Sage answered excitedly.

Chapter 2

The next morning Sage woke up at 5 o'clock to get ready for dance. Sage knew she had to be quiet because she couldn't let her mom find out. Once Sage was done getting ready it was only 5:15. She knew she didn't have much time so she quickly had breakfast then got on her bike and went to the dance studio. When Sage got to the studio she had to wait five minutes until Miss Chrissy came. Sage was really excited but kind of nervous.

"Hi, Sage," Miss Chrissy said from the parking lot.

"Hi, Miss Chrissy," Sage answered.

"Let's go in the dance studio and begin the class," Miss Chrissy said.

"Okay," Sage replied.

Miss Chrissy led Sage into the bright pink dance room where the sun shone through the windows and reflected off the shiny black dance floor.

"Okay, let's start off with stretching," Miss Chrissy suggested. "Do you know how dancers stretch?" she asked.

"Kind of," said Sage.

"I'll stretch the way I stretch and you can follow along." Miss Chrissy told Sage.

They stretched and Sage followed along well.

"Good, do you know how to do leaps?" Miss Chrissy asked.

"Yeah," Sage said.

"Okay, I'll do one then you can do one. Make sure that when you do your sashay your feet click in fifth position and when you step to do your leap that your arms come through first position." Miss Chrissy told Sage. "Also, remember to point your feet," she reminded her.

"Okay," Sage said. Miss Chrissy did the leap to show Sage. Sage did the leap after Miss Chrissy and it was done perfectly.

"Good job, now I am going to show you how to do a shanay," she said. Miss Chrissy did the turn across the floor then said to Sage, "When you do this turn you need to pick a spot on the wall and turn towards it. Make sure your legs are straight and not bent."

"Okay," Sage said and then did the shanay.

"That was good. Now I am going to teach you a peakay turn." Miss Chrissy told Sage. She demonstrated the turn then Sage did it. Sage's turn was perfect, her feet were pointed, her standing leg was straight, and you could tell she spotted because she stayed in a straight line. Sage also wasn't dizzy after the turn so that also meant she spotted.

"That was perfect," Miss Chrissy said amazed. "I think you know how to do kicks but when you kick your right leg the second time I want you to grab your leg as close to your ankle as you can," she told Sage. Sage just nodded her head and did the kicks. All of the dance steps came natural to Sage. She was able to hold her leg forwards for a long time.

"Amazing," Miss Chrissy said once again amazed.

"Thank you," Sage answered.

"Alright, now we are going to work on leg holds. What you have to do is start off by putting your left hand on the ballet bar. Then take your right leg and grab your foot and pull it up to the side. Remember to point your feet," Miss Chrissy said. Sage did the leg hold and it was great.

"Okay, that was good. Now do the same thing on the left," Miss Chrissy said smiling. Sage turned around and put her right hand on the cold wooden bar and lifted her left leg. It was amazing what Sage could do because she hadn't danced since she was three.

"That was really good. It's been forty-five minutes and class is over," Miss Chrissy said.

"Okay, should I come again tomorrow?" Sage asked.

"Yes, at five forty-five in the morning," she told Sage.

Sage nodded and said, "Thank you."

It was almost seven o'clock in the morning when Sage got to her house. She opened the golden handle on the white door and quietly went up the stairs. Sage opened the squeaky door to her room and went to sleep pretending she was there the whole time. Her mother never guessed she had been to the dance studio.

The next morning Sage got up at five o'clock again and she did the same thing she did yesterday, get ready for dance, then have breakfast. Once Sage was done with that she got on her bike and went to the dance studio. Sage had another great dance class and she started her dance which, to an outsider, looked amazing.

Many more days passed and Sage was having a great time at dance. Today's class would be Sage's seventh class. She got ready for dance and was quickly out the door. Sage had to wait a few minutes until Miss Chrissy showed up.

"Hello, Sage," Miss Chrissy said.

"Hi," Sage replied.

"Alright, let's go into the dance studio," Miss Chrissy said. They pushed the silver handle on the glass door and were in the dance studio. They walked into the eye blinding bright pink room to start the dance lesson.

"Let's start stretching," Miss Chrissy said. When they were done stretching Miss Chrissy said "Now we are going to work on leg holds." Sage nodded and walked over to the soft wooden bar and did her right and left leg holds.

"Your leg holds look really good, now do leaps," Miss Chrissy smiled while she said this because she knew Sage could easily do a leap. Sage did her leaps and they were fantastic.

"The leaps look amazing," Miss Chrissy told Sage.

"Thank you," Sage replied.

"Now I am going to teach you how to do a switch leap. Sashay with your right step left, step right, then left again and kick your left leg an-" Miss Chrissy was interrupted by Sage's cell phone.

"Is that your phone, Sage?" Miss Chrissy asked sternly.

"Y-yeah, um, should I make sure it's not my mom?" Sage nervously asked.

"Go ahead," Miss Chrissy sighed. Sage quickly went over to her dance bag and the screen said home. Sage answered it.

"Hello," Sage said into the phone.

"Where are you?" her mom asked her voice full of panic.

"Um, I'm at ,um," Sage stuttered.

"Are you at that dance studio?" her mom asked.

"Yes," Sage answered unhappily.

"Get home now," her mom demanded.

"Okay," Sage said as she hung up the phone.

"Was that your mom?" Sage turned around to see Miss Chrissy.

"Yeah, she said I had to leave," Sage answered her voice shaky.

"Okay, but does she know how much of a talent you have?" Miss Chrissy questioned.

"No, and I don't think she'll ever find out," Sage answered glumly.

"I'm so sorry. It was my fault. I shouldn't have given you dance lessons behind your mom's back. I fe-"

"It's okay, it wasn't your fault," Sage interrupted. "I should really leave. My mom is expecting me," Sage said and then quickly ran out the door. She got on her bike and she felt a tear roll from her watery eyes on to her cheek. Why did I do this? Sage thought to herself. She had a feeling her mom would find out. Sage wouldn't give up though. I'll go to the dance studio tomorrow and change the time she thought.

Chapter 3

Sage woke up early the next morning. She was about to get ready for dance until she remembered what happened yesterday. Then, she remembered that she was going back to the studio in the afternoon to change the times.

Later on that day Sage went to the dance studio but told her mom she was going to her friend's house. When Sage got to the dance studio, Miss Chrissy was teaching a class so Sage had to wait for the class to end. After what seemed like forever, the class was over. Sage went over to Miss Chrissy and said

"Hi."

"Hi, Sage," Miss Chrissy replied.

"Can I switch the dance class time to four o'clock in the afternoon until four forty-five?" Sage asked.

"Are you sure? Because last time your mom was very upset when you took dance classes," Miss Chrissy said.

"I'm sure," said Sage full of confidence.

"Okay, then four o'clock to four forty-five," Miss Chrissy said still unsure.

Thank you," Sage said.

"You're welcome," Miss Chrissy replied.

Chapter 4

The next day at three thirty Sage told her mom she was going to her friend's house for the next couple of nights to do a summer project. Sage left the house and went to the dance studio.

"Hi, Sage," Miss Chrissy said.

"Hi," Sage replied.

"Let's go into the dance room now," Miss Chrissy said as she twisted the shiny silver knob on the light pink door. Miss Chrissy put on the music and they stretched.

"Let's see right, left, and center splits," Miss Chrissy said. Sage did the splits and got all the way down every time.

"Okay, kicks across the floor. The one when you grab your leg the second time you kick it," Miss Chrissy told Sage. She did the kicks and got her legs high up.

"Good, now do shanays," She said.

Sage did the turns across the floor and the rest of the class quickly went by.

"Class is over now, so do any dance step out the door," Miss Chrissy said. Sage did a perfect second position leap with both legs facing the ceiling.

The next morning, Sage realized how many classes went by and that she loved taking the dance classes. She had been doing it for a week since the last time her mom found out and Sage was surprised but glad she didn't find out this time.

Sage went to dance class that afternoon and things were going great until her mom showed up looking through the window of the door to the dance room. Sage immediately stopped dancing as her mind filled with nerves.

"What's wrong?" Miss Chrissy asked concerned.

"My mom is standing at the door," Sage told Miss Chrissy. Miss Chrissy looked out the square window on the pink door. Sage's mom opened the door and let herself in.

"Hi, I'm Sage's mom," Sage's mom said.

"Hi, I'm Miss Chrissy," Miss Chrissy introduced herself.

"Sage, we're leaving now," her mom demanded.

"Fine," Sage replied as she felt a lump form in her throat and her eyes start to water.

When they got in the car Sage's mom was giving Sage the silent treatment until she said, "I can't believe you took dance classes again. You know how I feel about dancing since your granny's injury."

"I'm sorry, but dance meant so much to me and I didn't care if I did it when you said no," Sage explained.

"Well you aren't allowed to go back there for dance classes ever again," Sage's mom said. Sage was silent the rest of the car ride.

When they got to their house Sage opened the golden handle on the door and ran upstairs. Her mom thought she was in her room but she went to the dance studio. This time she didn't go for classes. She ran away.

Chapter 5

Sage got to the dance studio and Miss Chrissy was there.

"Hi, Sage what are you doing here?" Miss Chrissy asked.

"My mom doesn't know I'm here, but I just ran off," Sage replied.

"Oh, well I have a class coming but you can sit and watch," Miss Chrissy suggested.

"Okay," Sage said.

Sage watched for two hours until her mom showed up.

"Sage, what are you doing here?" her mom asked.

"I'm not going home until you let me continue dance classes," Sage said.

Her mom sighed and said, "Let me talk to Miss Chrissy."

"Okay," Sage said as she got Miss Chrissy.

"Hi, Miss Chrissy," Sage's mom said.

"Hello," Miss Chrissy replied.

"How long has Sage been dancing here?" her mom asked.

"About a month and she is really good," Miss Chrissy said.

"Okay, Sage if you want you can continue taking dance classes," her mom finally agreed.

"Really?" Sage asked happily.

"Yeah," her mom said.

"Thank you." She said.

"You're welcome," her mom replied.

"Sage, if you want you can join the competition team. It's where a group has a dance and goes places and performs in front of judges and competes against other studios," Miss Chrissy explained.

"Okay," Sage agreed.

Sage became an amazing dancer, got great scores at competitions, and got many awards. The best part to Sage was that her mom was finally okay with it.



Escaping By Eliza N.

Holly always wanted to escape, but where would she go? Holly tapped Lauren lightly on the back, even though she was already awake. Holly could already hear the honking horns and other sounds of the Manhattan morning chaos. Then Holly heard the loud stomps on the floor and closed her eyes. It was Mrs. Smith, the meanest, ugliest orphanage owner in all of humanity.

"Time to get up, ladies," snarled Mrs. Smith.

Then the sounds of moans and groans filled the entire room. Once Holly and Lauren were dressed they walked down stairs to have another disgusting breakfast. The chubby lady behind the counter scooped up some hot oatmeal that Holly thought looked like throw up. It made a plop on the old metal tray. Then she grabbed some burnt toast and a glass of orange juice and met Lauren

at a table. The girls talked amongst themselves and turned on an old messed up radio. Holly liked listening to the radio it made her forget her terrible life. She lived in an orphanage, had been in it her entire life, and she has to put up with Mrs. Smith. The only good part about her life was Lauren, her best friend. They'd met when they were four -- their first year in the orphanage. The radio finally started to work and said,

"Now, for the winner of the two tickets for the hottest play on Broadway, Mary Poppins starring Lila Eller!" said a smooth radio voice.

"Wait," Lauren shuddered, "Isn't that you're mom's name, Holly?"

"Oh my god, you're completely right, Lauren. We have to go, we could find her and get out of this dump," Holly said in an ecstatic whisper.

"Well, umm, let me think. No! Do you even realize how much trouble we could get into, Holly?" Lauren whisper yelled.

"It's pretty simple, we'll sneak out, go find the show, and sneak in," replied Holly.

"Uh, hello! Holly, are you nuts? That's like impossible. I mean, I am really happy for you, but I'm not sure if I'm coming on another one of your adventures."

"Oh, Lauren you have to come think of all the great opportunities this could get us," Holly pleaded.

After many persuasions and good ideas from Holly, Lauren finally said, "O.K., fine. You can count me in."

Though the more Lauren pondered the idea, she found more bad than good. But she couldn't tell Holly that. She would be crushed. As the week passed the girls talked and planned for the coming weekend. Their plans changed, obstacles came up. But March 30 was almost here, and the girls couldn't wait.

"I can't sleep, Lauren. I'm way too excited," Holly noted. So many thoughts were running through her mind. She was full of hope and a tiny bit scared at the same time.

"Me neither," Lauren replied. "Holly, what if something, I don't know, goes wrong? I'm like insanely scared."

"Lauren, I promise nothing will go wrong," Holly stated. The girls never got a wink of sleep that night.

It was finally morning, there was absolutely no one up, considering that it was the crack of dawn. The girls scurried around the room to get their things as quietly as they could. It was a little risky leaving in broad daylight but it was the only way.

The city was everything they had hoped for and more. There were sights and sounds beyond the girl's most extravagant dreams. There were colors everywhere, even in the earliest morning. Where to go first, what do we do, were just some of the thoughts running through Holly's mind. Even though it was hard to hear your own thoughts with all the loud obnoxious sounds going on, as the girls stood there motionless too amazed to move. Holly's light, brown, wavy hair and Lauren's blond corkscrew curls blew around in the light smoky wind. The girls must have walked for hours. They were looking in stores, getting distracted, and having the best time of their entire lives. Even though it was so much fun they were getting a little frustrated about how they would ever find Broadway. The girls were also tired and cold from the late January weather. Lauren was most tired and after many persuasions she got Holly to just give up and explained to her that they were going to have to go back sooner or later. On their solemn walk back to find the orphanage, Lauren saw it! It was Broadway, the place they had been looking for the whole entire day.

"Holly, look! Look! Look!"

"Oh, my god, you're right! It's there, it's really there!" Holly gasped. " But wait, How are we going to get in, I mean it's easy to say we sneak in, but look at that guard."

"Well, I really have absolutely no idea."

"Oh no, Lauren. We are not, I repeat, *not* going back." Holly begged.

The girls planned everything until the plan was flawless. They were going to miss the first half or more of the show, that didn't really matter though.

"Umm, excuse me, but have you seen a black and white dog running around here?" Holly asked in the sweetest voice she could possibly fake.

"Well, no I haven't. So get back to wherever the heck you came from, little lady," replied a harsh and demanding voice.

"Sir, I don't mean to be rude, but I love this dog with all my heart and I really need to find him. You see there's a really interesting story behind this dog and it has been with me through everything," Holly rambled on as Lauren snuck in and pretended to be her grandmother or some kind of relative for that matter.

"Come along, dear, we don't want to be late for the show," Lauren faked an old lady voice.

"Thanks for your help, officer," Holly said.

The officer was so confused he didn't help her at all, not one little bit. He just let it go. It didn't really matter, and he didn't really care.

The girls were finally in! They couldn't believe that they had done it. Although they were still in shock, they had to get moving and find that show. They finally found it, even if it was only five minutes.

They only got to catch the last twenty minutes of the show. While everyone else in the theater was leaving, Holly and Lauren snuck down to the stage. It was hard but they managed to jump on the stage and ran to hide in the thick, red velvet curtains. Holly and Lauren hid behind anything and everything backstage. They didn't know where to go so eventually they had asked someone if they knew where Lila Eller was. They soon walked up to a lady with brown wavy hair just like Holly.

"Uhh, excuse me are you Lila Eller?" Holly asked.

"Yes I am, who are you and your friend?" said the sweetest voice Holly had ever heard.

"Well, I'm Holly Eller and this is my friend Lauren. We both live in a horrible orphanage, and I think that you are my mother. You see we escaped from the orphanage and we've been searching for Broadway all day. I think I'm your daughter, but I'm not really sure." Holly replied.

Just as Holly finished a security guard came up and said,

"Let me see your backstage passes girls."

"Well, we, uhh don't really have any," Lauren answered.

Then the guard took the girls hands and was soon dragging them out.

"NO!" Holly yelled, "Let me go now!"

"Stop! She's my daughter, and the only reason that I left you is because show business is no place for a child. I didn't want you to grow up here. But now I realize I was wrong, and I want you back."

"Well you shouldn't have left me," Holly replied and burst into tears.

After those words rolled off Lila Eller's tongue, it was a miracle and Holly and Lauren's lives changed forever. When everyone was finished figuring everything out, they all went back to the

orphanage, packed up their few things and left for their new home. Now Mrs. Lila Eller had two new children.

James The Farmer

An Original Western Tall Tale

By Jake M.



Once upon a time, there was a couple who lived on a farm in St. Louis, Missouri. Their names were Marcus and Narcissa Whitman. They were a very simple couple, who worked extremely hard to make a living. In 1796, Narcissa gave birth to a baby boy named James. She stated to her husband, "James will be a very special person one day."

Over the next ten years, James had seven brothers and three sisters to play with. They would play with the animals on the farm. The girls mostly played jump rope, while the boys played cowboys and Indians. They fought sometimes, but most of the time they were a helping and caring family. They woke up at 4:30AM every day to help plow the fields and feed the animals.

Over the years, James was old enough to move out west to Barlow Gate, Oregon to another farm away from his family. He mostly grew potatoes in his new farm. However, it became very difficult to take care of his farm by himself, and could not afford to hire anyone to help him. James had many sleepless nights, and his parents could not come and help James, because they had their own farm to take care of.

One night John, the small boy next door, lost his tooth. When the tooth fairy came, she went to the wrong house and accidentally sprinkled magical fairy dust on James's feet. It was definitely a little too much! The next morning James noticed that his feet felt unusually different. He thought, "Why do my feet feel so weird?" Later that day, while he was farming outside, he went to get the plow and noticed that both feet had transformed into plows! He screamed, "My feet are plows!"

After a while, he started to enjoy his plow feet, because he got five times as much work done. One evening, when he was happily eating dinner, he noticed that after he finished eating, his feet became dish washers, and washed all his dirty dishes.

The next day, his neighbor John came by and said, "Mr. Whitman, you have gotten a tremendous amount of work done since the last time I was here." "How did ya do it?" James replied, "One morning, my feet just became plows."

"Really?" said John, "I gotta go tell my Mama and Papa!" After John said that, James realized that his feet were a special gift, and their purpose was to help others.

As time went on, he could do so many things with his feet, it was almost uncountable. When people needed something, they would travel to his house, and ask him for help. His feet would transform into whatever the need might be. James had to travel far distances to help many people.

People noticed that James was running around so much to both his family and friends, that he formed a trail, which became the Oregon Trail. The first emigrants to Oregon, in a covered wagon, were his parents, the Whitmans who made the trip in 1836. But the big wave of western migration did not start until 1843, when about a thousand people made the journey.

People across the country will never forget James the Farmer. Many people believe that he is still alive. In fact, some children in fifth grade have seen him in their class.



The Baseball **By Nicholas S.**

Fred saw the baseball fly toward right field and his heart dropped. It was the third one he hit into the woods at the school field this week. "Nice job hotshot. You always show off and hit a baseball into the woods," Bob

snapped.

"I can't help it that I'm really good at baseball," Fred retorted.

"Hey guys, let's um, try to just get another baseball" Charlie cut in with a wad of gum in his mouth

"Okay Bazooka Joe. I'll go get another baseball," Fred answered.

"Actually Bazooka loses its flavor too quickly. It's Hubba Bubba that's the best," Charlie stated.

As Fred entered the school to look for a new baseball, he remembered that there was a baseball in Principal Arloff's office. Fred was sent there so often he knew exactly where it was- on the left side of his big oak desk right behind his nametag. He smiled at how much trouble he got into today when he got caught throwing wet globs of lunch napkins at the wall in the cafeteria. He quietly entered the office, saw the ball on the desk, took it and left. It was just a plain baseball, looking a little old because of its off-white color.

Running out to the field Fred said, "It's still my turn. The last hit doesn't count."

Fred threw the ball up and slammed it with the bat. The ball went up, up, up and then down, down, down. All eyes were on the ball when it dropped, bounced, rolled, and fell into the storm drain. "Again! You've got to be kidding me," Charlie whined.

The three boys ran over and stood in a circle above the opening of the drain. The ball was in sight and they all reached for it through the grate but their hands were just a little too short to reach the baseball. "Hey, I know, we can get a stick," Bob suggested.

Charlie answered, "No, we need something that can keep the-"

"Got a stick" Bob interrupted. Fred and Charlie rolled their eyes because it was just like Bob to always think his ideas were the best.

Bob reached through the grate holding the stick. He could hit the ball with the stick, but he could not get the ball out. "I don't understand" Bob exclaimed. "I was sure this would work."

Fred, Bob and Charlie were dumbfounded trying to figure out how to get the baseball. "Why don't you go into the school to see if you can find something that will get the ball out," Charlie told Fred.

Fred ran into the school looking for something when he ran into the custodian, George. George was walking down the hallway, carrying a plunger. When Fred saw George, he asked him, "Where are you going with that plunger?"

George responded, "There's a clogged toilet I need to fix."

"It wouldn't be the boys' room near the Science lab with a roll of toilet paper stuffed in the last toilet near the wall, would it?" Fred gasped very quickly with a knowing look on his face.

"As a matter of fact, that is where I am going. What are you doing here?" asked George suspiciously.

Fred explained that the ball they just found was lost in the storm drain. "You don't mean the one from Principal Arloff's office by any chance? Do you?" George asked. Fred hesitated, "Um, if I told you yes would you tell the principal?"

"Oh, my gosh!" George exclaimed. "Did you know that when Principal Arloff was young, he caught that baseball at the World Series? It was a home run hit by Mickey Mantle. Did you know that Principal Arloff has been a Yankees fan since he was a little boy? That baseball is one of his prized possessions!"

Fred felt guilty for taking Principal Arloff's baseball and was determined to get it back. Looking at George he had an idea. "Can I borrow that plunger?" He asked.

"Sure, what are you going to do with it?" George asked.

"I promise to bring it right back" Fred replied, without answering the question.

He grabbed the plunger and ran out of the school. Charlie and Bob saw him with a plunger and said, "What are you going to do with that?"

"Charlie, can I have your gum?" asked Fred.

"What do you want with it? It's a fresh piece," Charlie answered.

"Just give it to me and I think I can get the baseball out," Fred said impatiently.

Fred attached the gum to the inside part of the plunger and put it through the grate and down toward the ball, just like he had seen on an episode of Scooby-doo. The ball stuck to the inside of the plunger and Fred carefully pulled it up. As he tried to get the plunger back through the top of the grate, he held his breath and pulled it out of the grate.

"You have no idea how much trouble I would have been in if we hadn't gotten this ball back," Fred said to Bob and Charlie.

"Let's play then," said Charlie.

"No, I have to return this baseball to where it should be. This is one time that the right thing to do isn't always the fun thing to do!"



The Ghost of the Hut

By: Michael M. & Jesse M.

A long, long time ago.....CAWWWWW... in a forest in the middle of nowhere there was a blacksmith named Giovanni who was working in his little blacksmith hut that he spent a year's work on. It was a normal day in the forest, the birds chirping and the eagles cawing in the sky. While Giovanni was working in his hut with his trusty companion Silver Fang (who was a wolf) he was singing to himself a song that his mother had taught him. Both his parents had died from murder by Indians, while Giovanni was only a kid (age of 5-8). It was hard for him but he managed to live by

himself in the forest. In the hut he was thinking all the time. He was mad, very mad at the murderers and then felt bad and lonely without his parents. But he couldn't do anything about it now. He told himself "Why didn't I try to stop those guys?" but then he remembered that they were well armed. They would have killed him too, if he didn't stay in his hiding spot.

Giovanni was working on a sword that he would use for hunting, when he heard Silver Fang growl. It was an Indian trying to capture his land and hut. He wouldn't let them do this now after what had happened to his parents. NOW HE WOULD FIGHT BACK FOR HIS PARENTS, NOT SIT AND HIDE LIKE A BABY. Giovanni was surrounded, although then he remembered his escape plan. He grabbed his new sword, but it was still too hot to handle so he dropped it on the floor, and that is what made the Indian hear him. Giovanni ran for his bow, took an arrow from the quiver, notched it, and fired it right over Silver Fang and hit the Indian in the chest. Then he realized that he had no more arrows because he had just come back from hunting. He didn't have much time but Silver Fang jumped and bit the young Indian's head and ripped it off. Silver Fang was grateful for his kill.

Twenty-five years later, Giovanni was using his survival skills in the forest living only on fish, berries, and if he got lucky, he got small game. He still had his hut and was just encountering landlords on his property. He told Silver Fang to heel and then he walked over and asked,

"What are you doing over on my property?"

"You are a disgrace to this land! You do not pay your taxes and we are taking the hut down and building a better house for the Smithson family." Giovanni called over Silver Fang, who jumped up to hurt the landlord but Giovanni shoved Silver Fang and he missed his target. Then the landlord pulled out his stun gun and zapped Silver Fang who went back to Giovanni for cover. Giovanni was amazed about the technology this man had, but he couldn't do anything about it and was scared of the gun so he backed off and let the landlord talk.

"Give up your land or pay the consequences," demanded the landlord. Giovanni thought about it. All the memories were coming back to him now. The Indian. Then he ran. He ran all the way to the forest because he had nothing to do. He cried all the way into the forest. He spent a day in the forest with Silver Fang. They were only living on small game because that was all they could get with a bow and arrow. Suddenly he heard a big boom coming from the direction of the hut. He ran with curiosity and saw his hut being brought down. It was a horrible sight. Then he called Silver Fang and commanded him,

"Sick 'em boy!" Then he realized that Silver Fang was not there. He looked back at the hut and saw Silver Fang fighting back at the landlord. The landlord was writhing in pain. Then the landlord grabbed the stun gun and shocked Silver Fang. Giovanni yelled,

"Get off my dog!" and then swore. Giovanni grabbed his bow, took an arrow out of the quiver, notched it, and then had a flashback of 25 years ago of when he killed the Indian. He didn't care about this landlord. He was an awful man. Then he yelled, "AHHHHHHHHHHH!" and shot the landlord. He felt good. He went over to the landlord and saw him lying on the floor.

"Yeah, he's dead." Giovanni whispered. Then he told him,

"Next time, you better not mess with my dog." He heard Silver Fang whimper. He took him and rubbed his stomach until he was barking happily.

Five days later, something tragic happened to Giovanni. The association heard that one of their colleagues was killed in the operation of building a new house and yard for the Smithson

family on Giovanni's so-called "property". Giovanni was killed and so was his dog. That night Mr. Smithson was cleaning the dishes with Helga (his wife) in their new house after dinner,

"What a dinner honey!" roared Mr. Smithson.

"Awww, thanks honey," croaked Helga.

"No problem," responded Mr. Smithson and then froze in amazement.

"What the..." he yelled, "I thought I took that stupid hut down already!" he yelled while he looked out the kitchen window. He went outside to take the hut down, but it wasn't there. He went back inside and took a dish to dry. Helga was minding her own business until she heard her husband scream again.

"What's the matter with you!" she screamed. She saw her husband go outside again and she looked out the kitchen window. She saw her husband being strangled by a man outside the window. Wait, is that Giovanni? Yes it was. She ran outside and didn't see her husband anywhere.

"Hold on a second here" she whispered practically to herself.

"You are not tricking me this time!" and then grabbed the family shotgun. She saw Giovanni, and her husband being dragged. Helga was shocked and was so mad that she shot Giovanni. It went right through him.

"Nice try. Maybe next time you shouldn't take away people's houses or huts." Giovanni took his bow, took an arrow out of the quiver, notched it, and started to laugh,

"Just like old times."



Tide Town
By Kaitlin R.

Once upon a time, there was a beach. And every beach has an ocean but this one didn't. It was rocky and it had tide pools. In those tide pools was a big world full of sea creatures. This is where the story begins.

One day a boy starfish named Dot was walking through Tide Town. There was a big library in Tide Town and that was where Dot was headed. The librarian was Mr. H.P. Crab. Dot was thinking about his own dream, about going beyond Tide Town, about going beyond the rocks. When Dot got to the library, Mr. H.P. Crab was putting up a sign.

"What are you doing Mr. H.P. Crab?" asked Dot.

"Oh Dot," said Mr. H.P. Crab, "I'm putting up a sign."

It was a sign about Mr. Trout. Mr. Trout was the governor of Tide Town. Mr. Trout had 126 rules. The rules were on the sign.

"I agree with Mr. Trout's 126 rules," said Mr. H.P. Crab.

"I don't!" said Dot.

"That's what all kids say," said Mr. H.P. Crab.

"I'm not a kid!" said Dot.

"Oh yes you are!" said Mr. H.P. Crab.

"Oh no I'm not!" yelled Dot.

"Get away from my library!" yelled Mr. H.P. Crab

Then Mrs. Clam swam by and said, "Mr. H.P. Crab, how can you say that to a child!"

Then Mr. Trout swam by and said. "Mrs. Clam you are disobeying rule 116!"

"And what is rule 116?" Asked Mrs. Clam.

"Don't disobey a librarian," said Mr. Trout.

"What a silly rule!" said Mrs. Clam.

"Oh good it is!" yelled Mr. Trout.

Dot swam away. He didn't want to hear the fight.

That night for dinner was roasted seaweed. After Mr. and Mrs. Starfish tucked Dot into bed he decided something. He was going to go beyond Tide Town. He decided to disobey Mr. Trout's rule. Then he called his best friends Petty, a sea urchin, and Less, a starfish. Petty and Less had the same dream as Dot, to go beyond Tide Town. Less was from Pool Town and Petty was from Tide Town just like Dot.

So they met at a Sunshine Reef and started swimming. They swam and swam till they finally got to the rocks.

"Looks like we're going to have to push our way through," said Dot. So they started pushing the rocks.

"Hey, I made a hole," said Less. So they went through it.

"I can't breathe," Dot gasped.

"Where's the water?" asked Petty.

"Are you dumb?" said Less. "Some worlds don't have water."

Dot splashed back under water.

"I think we should follow him," said Petty.

"OK," said Less.

They went back under water.

"How are we going to get on land?" asked Petty once they were underwater.

"All I can say," said Dot, "is that world is strange!"

"Hmm, but we need to get up there," said Less.

"I know!" said Dot, "we could ride in Shells." Shells was a turtle.

They went down to Tide Town to go get Shells. Once they got Shells and brought him to the rocks, Shells asked, "Are you really going to do this?"

"Totally!" said Less.

"OK," said Shells.

So they climbed into Shells' shell. In Shells' shell was water so they could breathe and have everything they needed to live.

"Wow!" said Dot as soon as they were on land.

Soon they came to a street. Then they saw another turtle. Shells started talking.

"Is he talking to us?" asked Petty.

"I don't think so," said Dot.

"I know," said Less, "Shells is talking to the other turtle."

"How are we going to get him to start moving again?" asked Petty.

"I know," said Dot, "we could yell until Shells hears us and then we can move."

So they started yelling. "Shells!" They kept yelling. Still Shells didn't hear them. Then Dot spotted the emergency bottle. They filled the bottle up with water and got in. From the inside Dot

pulled the cap on. Then suddenly they tried to get the bottle out of Shells. They kept trying. Then Shells felt something and said to the other turtle, "Sorry buddy, I have to go. I've got travelers."

"What are travelers?" asked the other turtle.

"Bye!" said Shells.

After a few days of great adventures, one day, Petty said, "I'm homesick."

"I am too," said Dot.

"Then let's go home!" said Less.

"OK," said Shells.

"Which way is home?" asked Less.

"Um, well, I don't know," said Shells.

"Uh oh," said Dot.

"Well," said Petty, "we could try and ask some of the animals around here if they know where a beach is."

So first Shells walked over to a squirrel. "Do you know if there are any beaches around here?" asked Shells.

"Well, there's one," said the squirrel, "It's, umm, go straight forward and then you turn right and then you see a beach with a pretty ocean."

"We're actually not looking for a beach with an ocean," said Shells.

"There is no beach in this world dude that does not have an ocean," said the squirrel.

Shells walked on. They went to the beach with the pretty ocean. Then suddenly they saw something.

"Tide pools!" said Dot.

"Maybe they can take us to Tide Town," said Les.

So they dove into one of the tide pools. They saw some sea creatures and then they saw a rock tunnel.

"Let's go in," said Petty.

"There's only one problem," said Dot.

"What's that?" asked Petty.

"Turtles can't go through rock tunnels. Remember?"

"I have a plan," said Less.

"Shells can walk the distance, we can get directions from one of these sea creatures and we can go through the rock tunnels. Then we can all meet at Tide Town in Sunshine Reef."

"OK," said Shells.

They swam over to a jellyfish and asked for directions. The jellyfish told them it was 10 rock tunnels away.

So they went through the first rock tunnel and Shells got out of the tide pool. They kept going through rock tunnels. Then when they got out of the last rock tunnel, they were facing Mr. Trout!

"Where have you been?" asked Mr. Trout.

"We were having adventures!" explained Petty.

Then suddenly he saw Shells swimming down to Tide Town.

"Shells! You disobeyed my law!" yelled Mr. Trout.

"Actually we all did," said Dot bravely.

"Our boy!" said Mr. and Mrs. Starfish running up to him. They hugged him tightly.

Then Mr. Trout yelled, "WHAT!"

Luckily Mrs. Clam swam by and said, "All of Tide Town has voted that you are not governor anymore!"

And ever since that day, Dot has had great adventures.

Dawncloud
By Katie N.



"Emma!" Emma sighed. She was almost done with her picture.
Almost, but not quite.

It was of a unicorn, but it wasn't like a picture in a fairy tale, with and other features that amazed little kids. No, Emma was eleven and she was done with that. She drew realistically now. The unicorn had a horn but not of gold or rainbow like in her little sister's books. Emma couldn't even *te//* what color it was, it just came from her pencil. The fur was like a horse's brown. There was white surrounding the horn. The tail was the same peculiar color as the horn, and the same color had also captured the mane. She was almost done with the hooves. She had finished the front two and was working on the back. The only thing that stood out was there was a strange symbol on the front left hoof. Emma didn't know what it meant. Her pencil always drew wondrous things for her, but this ... this was different.

"Emma!"

"Coming, Mom!"

When Emma arrived downstairs, she found her sister, Lily, chanting, "We're going to the zoo-oo! We're going to the zoo-oo!"

Emma sighed. "Lily, be quiet."

Lily replied, "What's the ma-gic word?"

"Please", said Emma.

Typical 7-year-old. "Emma put on your coat. And your shoes. Oh, I told you to be ready by 12:30!" yelled her Mom.

"Hold on. I need to finish my picture. It'll take 5 seconds, really," said Emma. "Fine", her Mom replied.

Emma raced upstairs. She had just picked up her pencil when Lily, yelled "It's been 5 seconds! I counted!"

"Lily you know what I meant" yelled Emma.

Their mother stepped in. "Actually Emma, your sister is right. We're going to miss the train if we don't leave now."

It's always about Lily. Emma folded up the picture and put it in her jeans pocket and went downstairs.

"Coat and shoes," her mother said.

Emma slipped on her Uggs and put on her new jacket she had gotten for Valentine's Day. She had to admit, it was pretty soft. "Now let's go!"

"We're here! We're here!" Lily had danced and chanted the whole train ride. "Finally,"

Emma murmured. If they got there any later, Emma thought she might have gone deaf.

"I want to see the lions and tigers and giraffes and bears and monkeys and leopards and jaguars!"

Her mother giggled. "We'll get to see all of those, dear, and more." Taking Lily by the hand, they entered the Millietown Zoo.

Lily kept pestering her mother with questions like "Can I ride the elephant?" and "Can I swim with the dolphins?" "No we can't" was always the reply. She finally found something she could do, though. When Lily asked if she could go to the petting zoo, the answer was "Sure. Come on Emma." No asking Emma's opinion. They walked (Lily skipped) to the petting zoo.

"I wanna hold the bunnies!" They went to the rabbit section. After five minutes, Lily declared, "Bunnies are boring. I wanna pet the baby sheep!" They went to the lamb area. Lily soon discovered that, to her, baby sheep were boring too.

"Let's go to the ponies!" Emma sighed, but she didn't know that there was something waiting for her at the horses section that would change her life. She had a right to sigh, though, because mostly anyone in that position would think that they would have to walk around at Lily's orders for the rest of the day instead of staying at home, doing something at their leisure.

They walked to the horse and pony section. "I wanna ride 'em!" was what Lily declared as soon as they arrived there.

Mrs. Falita said, "Emma, you stay here and don't talk to anyone. Do you have your cell phone?" "

"Mm-hmm."

"Good. Remember, that's for emergency use only. No calling, no texting, no -".

"Mom!" Emma was getting impatient and she guessed Lily was too. And when Lily gets impatient, she gets cranky, and you do *not* want to see Lily cranky. "I'm eleven. A decade and a year. I know this stuff."

"Well, alright. I'm taking Lily to the horse ride. I'll be back as soon as I can. I - ". "Mom!" Emma interrupted.

"Sorry. See you!" Mrs. Falita and Lily ran off.

Emma sat on a bench. Finally, she thought, some peace and quiet.

"Emma!" *It's probably just a mom and her kid*, she thought. "Emma Uni Falita!" Emma turned around. Nobody knew her full name. Her mother had never even used it before.

"Y-Y-Yes?" Emma stammered.

"Come" it said. It was coming from the horses.

Emma walked toward the horse barn. "To the left", it seemed to whisper in her ear once she got there. She whipped around to her left. "Yes" it said.

"Okaaay?" Emma murmured. The problem was, there no one was there. There was only a brown horse with - *white where a unicorn's horn would be*.

No, Emma thought. *You're just letting your imagination run away with you*. But she couldn't resist the urge to look down at the front left hoof. Yep, there it was, right where it was supposed to be. She whipped her picture out of her jeans pocket. The horse in front of her had the same exact qualities as her drawing - hoof and all.

No, Emma thought. *No, No, No!!*

Yes, the voice said. It had become a conscience now, deeper inside her mind. *Yes, Yes, Yes!!*

"Who are you?" Emma whispered, just above her breath. She was afraid she already knew.

I am Dawncloud, your destined unicorn calf. *To be continued...*

Screenplays



Robert Rat and Laughing Hyena
By: Matthew R. and Anthony N.

Cast of characters: Narrator, Laughing Hyena, Robert Rat, Hippo Jack, Intelligent Chimp

Narrator: It was the first day of school in Toronto, Canada. Laughing Hyena and Robert Rat were trying out for the hockey team. Laughing Hyena is a good skater and Robert Rat is not.

Laughing Hyena: "Hey, why are you trying out, you can't even skate! Anyway, I already know I am going to make the team."

Robert Rat: "Give me a chance, it is my first time skating."

Laughing Hyena: "If it's the first time you're skating, why are you here smelly Rat?"

Narrator: After the tryouts, Robert Rat went to go see his new friends, Hippo Jack and Intelligent Chimp about what happened with Laughing Hyena at the tryouts.

Hippo Jack: "Well, why didn't you tell the coach?"

Robert Rat: "Oh, I forgot about that. I'll do that next time it happens."

Intelligent Chimp: "I have an idea."

Robert Rat: "What?"

Intelligent Chimp: "I know the janitor really well."

Robert Rat: "So?"

Intelligent Chimp: "So he can open up the rink so we can practice."

Hippo Jack: "I told you he was smart."

Narrator: That evening Hippo Jack, Intelligent Chimp, and Robert Rat went to the rink to practice. Hippo Jack taught him how to skate. By the next practice he was good.

Laughing Hyena: "I bet you're going to do worse today."

Robert Rat: "Oh really!"

Narrator: At the end of practice Laughing Hyena and coach was amazed at how Robert Rat was skating. Robert Rat told coach that Laughing Hyena was making fun of him.

Robert Rat: "I made the team and Laughing Hyena did not, and I'm also captain."

Intelligent Chimp: "Great!"

Narrator: Hard work pays off when you put a lot of effort in it. Just like Robert Rat.

Reflections

Basketball is a Very Important Part of My Life.

By Jack R.



I continued on in Long Island. Now I play in an intramural league for Cold Spring Harbor. Where ever I go, basketball is always with me.

When I lived in the city I loved basketball. I was only two years old when I started to dribble the ball. I would always get dad out of work to play basketball with me. I would always rush him to get into his favorite blue t-shirt and his sweat pants. And we would go out and I was at least ten feet from getting the ball into the basket. And there would always be this guy shooting hoops on the court. And he would teach me how to shoot.

I remember one time in third grade. It was a Saturday. I woke up at 7:30, waiting until it was time to go to the game. I was on the New Jersey Nets and I was playing at the West Side School. There was 6:30 left on the clock. I was in a fast break. I decided not to go for the easy layup but for the top of the key shot, almost half court shot. It was "nothing but net!" I said, "Man that felt good."

Sometimes I go out to the high school courts. And I play with my dad over the weekend. I love to play alone with my dad. It is so much fun when he goes rough on me and sometimes he knocks me down. That is really fun! I love to practice with my dad.

I couldn't imagine my life without basketball. Some of my best memories are from basketball. I learned to run really hard and move without the ball. My dad always used to say, when I was in a game and we were losing with very little time left, to hang in there! We will win! I learned to be part of a team. I wish I could be a pro basketball player!

The Amazing Dream

By Annalise S., with help from Sydney S. and Katarina V.



This is what happened when I was in food land, my dream. When I was in food land, there was a dancing roasted turkey, a waffle and pancake Santa and ginger bread houses everywhere. There was Pueblo, the happy unicorn. Plus Pueblo, the happy unicorn is a lollipop lover. There was ice cream everywhere. Then beef jerky was attacking the food land. But we whip creamed the beef jerky. Pancake buffalo came. I was so happy to see Pancake Buffalo. He helped to destroy the beef jerky. But they all had to leave. Then I got sucked up by aliens. We became friends. Then we destroyed some bad planets. The aliens dropped me off at food land. Fred burger was eating off the GIANT PANCAKE that fell out of the sky, with whipped cream and syrup. Then there were puffs of cotton candy. Now HOT SAUCE was pouring out of the highest mountain. But the aliens saved me. And that is what happened in my dream!

Bayville Fire House

By Thomas F.

I went to the Bayville haunted fire house.

I saw on line a guy with no legs.

I went in the dungeon.

We saw two skeletons.

We went to the elevator.

We went to a boat.

We went to a snake pit.

We went to the many petty place.

We went to the hall.

We went to the crazy butcher.

We went to the hall.

We went to the jail.

We went to the clowns and one was holding a chain saw.

We went to a van.

You enter it and see a guy with a grotesque looking dummy with very sharp teeth.

We went out of the haunted part. I got a hat and my dad got a sweater.

We went home and went to a friend's house for pizza. I had a great time at the Bayville Haunted Firehouse!



Peace on Earth

By Henry H.

If I were a Nobel Peace Prize winner, I would do a lot of things.

I would donate money to countries in Africa.

Instead of having a war, I would talk to solve problems.

I would donate money to homeless shelters.

I would visit schools and talk about peaceful ways to solve problems.

I would make new medicines for sick people.



Fairy Tales

Gingerbread 1

By Imaan S.



On a snowy day a girl made two gingerbread kids. The girl had three buttons and the boy had two buttons. She made a gingerbread house. It was all red with whipped cream on it. She also made a gingerbread boy but the gingerbread boy who had two buttons ate up the house and we all went to sleep. When we all woke up we found out the gingerbread boy had three buttons and the house was gone.

Gingerbread 2

By Maddy R.

On a snowy day, a girl made two gingerbread adults. After they got cooked, the gingerbread adults ran away with their children. In the snow, the children and the adults met a snowman. He said it was his birthday and he wanted to eat the whole family up. The dad just got on a boxing team. He did everything he learned and the snowman melted. They went past the melted snow and a BIG HUGE TALKING SNOWBALL came. The mom got all her super power ready. The talking snowball said "I don't care. Come on super men!" He had 21 super men against one super mom. The children and the dad had to join. Pretty much the BIG HUGE TALKING SNOWBALLS team won since he had 21 super men. So mom tried to get past with everyone she had. She got past the snowball. They made it to where they wanted to go.



Fairies are Sleeping

By Alex A.

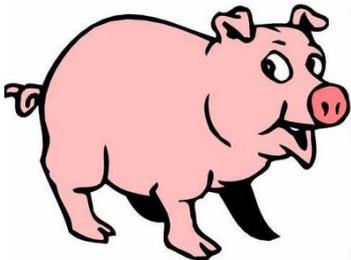
Fairies are sleeping
Fairies are dreaming
Fairies are dreaming of
Leprechauns leaving



The Prince's Birthday

By Kelly G.

Once upon a time there lived a Prince, a King and a Queen. It was the Prince's birthday. It was the best day in his life. He had breakfast in bed. The King asked the Prince, "Do you want to go fishing?" The Prince said, "yes." So they went to the beach. They had a picnic and then they fell asleep. In the middle of the night, the Prince felt a tug. He woke the King up and he pulled something in. He had caught a big fish! They brought it home and had it for dinner and he loved his birthday.



My Lucky Day

By Katarina V.

Once upon a time there was a wolf. One day the wolf was looking out the window of his house for his dinner. Suddenly, he heard his doorbell ring. He opened the door. Standing there was a pig. The wolf grabbed the pig and went inside. He said, "How often does dinner come knocking on the door?" The wolf started to heat the oven. The pig said, "I am very dirty." The wolf stopped and looked at the pig. He saw that he was dirty pig. He gave the pig a bath. The pig said, "I don't get a lot of food so can you give me some food?" The wolf looked at the pig. He saw that the pig was very skinny and he wanted a fat pig. He made the pig spaghetti, fruit and cookies. Then the pig said, "I have a lot of hardness on my body. Don't you want to give me a massage first?" The wolf looked at the pig. He said "Okay." So he gave the pig a massage. The pig said "more to the left...yes, yes right there." The wolf was so tired he fainted! Then the pig said "Mr. Wolf! Mr. Wolf!" The pig saw that the wolf fainted. He wasn't satisfied. The pig took the extra cookies and left. He looked in his book and said, "Who will I visit next?"

Poetry

Spring time is here!

By Alexandra V.

In the spring time you see flowers
and you see showers!

All you know
is that a flower can grow,
grow,
grow!!



Spring Time

By Kelly H.

I can feel the sun shining on me.
I can smell spring from my mom's garden.
I can see all the flowers blooming and buds on the trees.
I can taste that yummy ice pop waiting for me.
I can hear the birds going "tweet" like a song in the sky.

One Spring Day

By Hank T.

One spring day,
The birds were flying,
One spring day,
The bees were humming.
One spring day,
I was in the hay
So I said HOORAY
For spring.



Time to Hatch

By Sarah R.

It's time for baby birds to hatch because spring is on its way.
It's time for new bunnies to hop all around the fields with blooming
flowers pink and blue and red too.
They are blooming because spring is on its way.
It's time for baby horse's birth because spring is on its way.
It's time for kids to play outside because spring just came today.



The Seasons
By Morgan C.

Fall

Cold winds,
beautiful sunsets,
leap into leaf piles,
the most wonderful colored leaves in the world,
rain walks,
and good books.

Winter

Steaming cocoa,
snowflakes on your window,
heated fires,
black-outs,
candles, owmen,
and snow angels.

Spring

Green grass,
pink flowers,
oak trees,
pollen,
allergies,
holly bushes,
football in backyard,
lacrosse,
spring rocks!

Summer

Barbecues on beaches,
riding bicycles,
summer vacations,
swimming in pools,
summer nights
gazing up at the stars.
These are the seasons!

FALL

WINTER



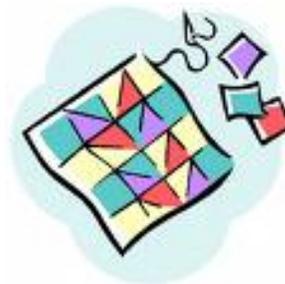
SPRING

SUMMER

Mrs. Agnello

By Katherine K. and Dominique M.

There is a joyful quilting pro
Her name is Mrs. Agnello
Her dog bit her quilt
And then ran in guilt
All the way into Mexico!



Sunset

By Olivia G.

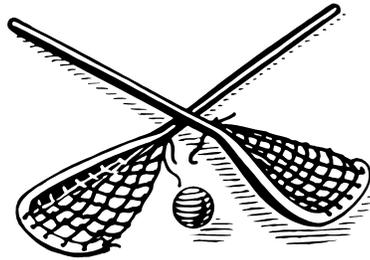
The Sunset on the
Beach is very, very pretty
It shines on the water
And reflects on
The sand
It looks like a giant
Glow stick in the sky shining
Like a bright, bright one



Lacrosse

By Sophie B.

Lots of fun
A ton of games
Catching in my stick
Running on the turf
Oops! I fell
Slippery
Something I love
Exciting



Woodcutter

By Katie R. & Cynthia P.

My name is Woody and I cut down trees.
Big ones, small ones, anything with leaves.
A maple, an oak tree, anything at all.
The bigger they are, the harder they fall.
I'm the biggest, baddest lumber jack in town and I could never see a forest that I couldn't bring down.
I can make a setter seek.
I can make a setter pine.
And late at night I wonder when I close my eyes, how much wood would a woodcutter cut if a woodcutter could cut wood?
My name is Woody and I cut down trees.
Big ones, small ones, anything with leaves.
A maple tree, an oak tree, any tree at all.
The Bigger they are, the Harder they fall! BAM!



When Warm Weather Comes

By Samara J.

I love warm weather.
You don't need those bulky
Coats that everyone hates.
Sometimes you don't even
Need coats. But if you do, then
All you need to wear is a light sweater.
You can wear shorts and short sleeves
And tank tops.
Instead of long sleeves and long pants.



Baseball

By Trevor B.

Beyond
Amazing
Sport
Exciting
Bat
All stars
Little sluggers
Little league



Ice Cream

By Jordy B.

I taste the snowy flavor on my tongue
Coldness dropping to the ground
Eat it quickly before it melts
Creamy flavor
Really sweet
Even strawberry, chocolate or vanilla
A touch of sugar
My favorite flavor is vanilla and chocolate mixed



I Am From

By Caitlin H.

I am from screaming children, some quiet nights and bed bug bites.
I am from lots of kids riding bikes, drawing chalk, flying kites, a dead end or
having some fun.
I am from yummy chicken, lots of sweets, pasta salad or baked beans.
I am from going to the sandy beaches of Montauk Point every year, going sledding or
getting swimmers' ear.

My Puppy

By Ally F.

I have a puppy named Coco. She is a crazy puppy but I still love her. She eats dog food. She is a Shorkie. Sometimes she is happy. When she is scared she shivers. She is very brave but she can be a little too crazy. But she is a happy puppy. Sometimes we give my puppy Coco a bath.

Dogs

By Gabriela M.

Dogs are nice pets to have because you can play with them and have fun with them. They are cuddly and some dogs are really cute. I think that dogs are so much fun to play with. Dogs are the best pet a person can have. It is sad when your dog dies. I have a story about my cousin's dog. He died because he got out of the house and went into the street and he got run over by a car. They buried him in their backyard and they all started crying. And they always remembered their dog that died.

My Dog

By Jackie D.

My dog is very silly. He is two years old. He likes to chew on toys. Instead of walking in the snow, he normally hops in the snow like a bunny because he wants to get over the snow. He is a shitsu bijon terrier teddy bear. He's a white dog with brown ears.

Caramel

By Robert S.

When I'm near my dog's bed,
I smell pine trees, like the ones near my shed.
Caramel looks relaxed when she's sleeping from a long winter's day,
Because earlier she was running, running, a long way.
She sleeps silently making no sound,
Sometimes she just stares and looks around.
I think she's dreaming of a year's supply of chew toys,
With other varieties and things she enjoys.
At other times I think she's having a blast,
With a golden retriever or other dogs from the past.
She remembers her brother and sister from when she was born,
Then she opens her eyes
and chews on an acorn.



Mango

By Malcolm P.

He sleeps in a soft and fluffy bed
That hangs by a thread
He does not make a sound
But moves around and around
His dream is being free
And landing on a tree
His nightmare is being held down by a big bear
He looks like a big ball
Even though he's very small



Checca

By Meghan C.

Resting, resting, dreaming, dreaming I wonder
What she is dreaming about all night
Is she dreaming of snacks
While she goes to relax
On a hot summer day
Or in the winter with a butler named Ray
Waiting on her each day
Maybe she is fighting pirates
On a ship right in the bay
Resting, resting, dreaming, dreaming
Sleeping so happily all night and all day.



I Miss Summer

By Connor C.

I miss summer.
I miss riding my bike,
swimming, and playing soccer.
I don't like winter.
It's cold, icy, and slippery.
I don't like playing
on the ice.
I miss summer.



Informational Writing

Barack Obama, President of the United States

By: Katie N.

The president of the United States is . . .
The coolest guy you'll ever meet
Nobody can beat him.
He's the president of the United States
He lives in Washington D.C.
He controls the U.S.A.
He does it every day.
But you can't meet him; you'll need to drive a long way.
He's the first black President
In the U.S.A.
You can see where he lives
He's the president of the United States.



The Middle Ages

By Alec I.

The Middle Ages, or Medieval Times, were extraordinary times between 1000AD and 1500AD. Before the Middle Ages were the Dark Ages, which were between 500AD and 1000AD. During these times, havoc reigned and everybody fought for power after the collapse of the Roman Empire.

Eventually, the feudal system was introduced. This is when a king rules over the land. Under him in power are great barons, or lords. Below them are lesser lords, and below them are warrior-lords, better known as knights. They fight for their barons and/or lords in wars for a full service of forty days and protect them.

At the bottom of this system are the peasants. They farm and give ten percent of what they grow to the lord, knight, or king that rules them. In 1066, Duke William of Normandy brought feudalism to the British Isles after the Battle of Hastings against a native tribe called the Saxons.

Castles played a huge role in the medieval period and the feudal system. Castles were forts and also homes. Some knights had castles, usually rich ones. Most of the time, a lord or baron would own a castle, and a few knights would live in it. Knights did own pieces of land called fiefs. Sometimes, a castle might protect a town or even have a town in it. The first castles were made of wood. Those easily caught on fire, so many lords built them in stone.

Becoming a knight was a hard thing. First, at about seven years old, a boy of a rich family would be sent to a knight's home to start his training as a page. A page served food, learned how to dance, sing, play music, and read and write. Sometimes a page was taught how to graciously treat a lady. At about fourteen years old, the page became a squire. A



squire looked after his knight's armor, went to battle beside his knight, and learned how to fight, joust, ride a horse, and bear the weight of armor. At about twenty-one, the squire became a knight.

In medieval society, the knight was an important figure. He was highly respected, mostly because of his power. A knight was sometimes like a police officer, making sure the law was enforced in nearby villages.

At times of peace, knights would have tournaments. One of the knights' favorite tournaments was the joust. This was when two mounted knights would stand at two ends of an arena. Then, with blunted lances, they would charge at each other. Whoever fell off his horse would lose. Another popular tournament was the mock battle. Two groups of knights would come at each other armed with blunted swords and wooden clubs. Sometimes the knights were mounted. The knight that captured the most rival knights won the battle. Winning tournaments meant getting gold, money, horses, weapons, and other riches from the loser knight(s).

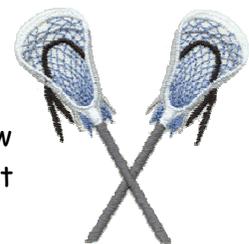
Towards the end of the Middle Ages in the 15th century, knights, castles, and feudalism started to get outdated because of mercenaries. Mercenaries were soldiers who fought for the country that paid them the most. One day, a mercenary could fight for France. The next day he could be fighting for Germany. That is how knights and feudalism died down. Another way knights died down was the bullet. A gun shot could penetrate steel armor. Castles crumbled down for the same reason. Catapults called mangonels launched boulders that somewhat destroyed castle walls, but not completely. With the new use of gunpowder and cannons, even extremely thick castle walls tumbled down with great ease. Soon armorers and blacksmiths made armor so thick that the leg pieces were replaced with riding boots. Special knights that wore this armor carried guns and swords and were called cuirassiers. Another reason the Middle Ages ended was because people became smarter and started painting, sculpting, inventing, writing, and exploring. Michelangelo sculpted David and Leonardo da Vinci painted the Mona Lisa. In 1450 Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press. People did all those things in medieval times and not only the Renaissance, but it wasn't as accurate. By the 1500s, knights were only in story books.

Today, castles still exist, looking prouder than ever. People still get knighted if they served their country well, but they don't get weapons and armor. This report only tells you about only one subject of the Middle Ages, and I leave the rest for you to discover.

**Qualities of a Great Girl's Lacrosse Player:
An Interview with Heidi Howard
By Charlotte**

To find out what makes a great girls lacrosse player, I decided to interview Heidi Howard. Heidi is the Assistant Field Hockey Coach and the Assistant Women's Lacrosse Coach at Middlebury College in Middlebury, Vermont.

- 1) At what age did you start playing lacrosse?



I started playing in 7th grade on my school team, but wish I had started playing earlier. Back then there wasn't an opportunity to begin playing at an earlier age.

2) What was your favorite part of playing lacrosse when you were young?

My favorite part of playing lacrosse when I was young was being on a team with my good friends. I also loved learning how to play the game.

3) When did you decide to become a coach?

My college coach had a huge impact on my lacrosse career and in college I decided that I wanted to become a coach. I knew I wanted to stay involved in the sport of lacrosse and wanted the opportunity to make a difference in other's lives.

4) What qualities do you look for in players?

Our top priority in recruits (potential lacrosse players) is speed. We like to see a person who can run fast, hard and long. We also look for good stick skills and someone who is going to be a team player.

5) Would you choose the best player with a bad attitude or a player with a great attitude who could be improved?

We definitely look for players who have great attitudes and who can improve their skills over a better player with a bad attitude.

6) Do you think sports are important for young girls?

I think sports are extremely important for young girls. Sports can teach valuable lessons to young girls such as how to be a great teammate and positive sportsmanship. Also, girls can learn about health and fitness so that they have a good sense of body image when they get older.

LEGOS

By Jack P.

Legos are plastic and they are so fantastic.

They come in Star Wars and Batman form.

They become a Lego storm.

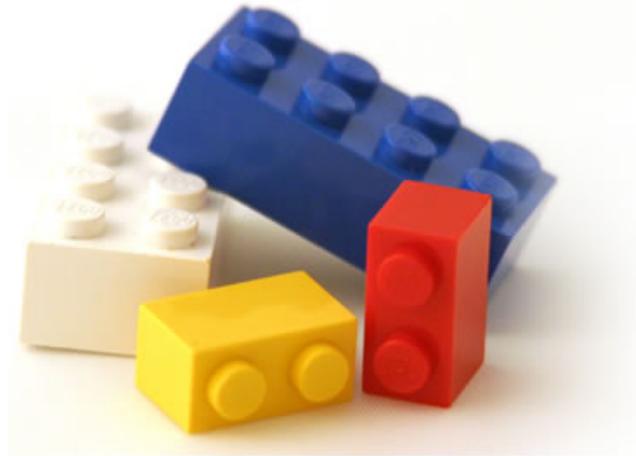
They have ships and weapons and everything fits from bits.

They come in big and small.

You can build them tall.

Sometimes they fall.

That's all.



Comics

By Joseph M.

I am interested in creating comics. They are about a man who calls himself Pizza Man and his best friend, an eye-patched guy named Mat. The idea came from me, with some help from my friend Tom. We drew up a sheet of paper with a bunch of ideas on it, and Pizza Man was the best idea. Mat, on the other hand, was created from the idea that Pizza Man has a best friend. I named Mat after that comic's greatest admirer, Mathew I.



The whole comic thing started when Tom made up a comic about Ryan the Stick Figure. Ryan always got into trouble and got hit by a bus most of the time. With Tom's idea, he started a new branch of Tweet Cards Inc., Tweet Card Comics. Both of these are fictitious companies.

Tweet Cards Inc. was formed a little more than a year ago when I found out I had a talent for creating bird drawings. Around the end of that school year, Tom joined my roster. His bird drawings were good, and I kept him on as we became friends.

That was how I got inspired to make comics. My old comics were about a person called Fly Guy. He got that name because he was five inches tall. Then I found out it was already being used by an author. That was the fall of Fly Guy.

Tom, after Ryan the Stick Figure, made so many comics that I lost count. The disadvantage of having that many comics is that you don't really get the time to do all of them, so some are left in the dust. He still makes up new ones, and seriously, I don't want the good ones like Ryan the Stick Figure to get the ax.

A few months after that, I had a comic-off against Jack. We made a deal that the loser had to quit making that kind of comics. My comics won, no sweat, but some time later, Jack was having a bad day, so I gave his "license" back.

Lately, Tweet Card Comics and Big-Time Comics "merged" together to make TCB (Tweet Cards and Big Time). It happened all under A.J.'s recommendation, and it's good to not have competition anymore. The only problem was that I had to change the company's name from Tweet Cards Inc. to TCB. With Tweet Card Inc. and Big Time Comics merged together, the company took on new characters like Sun versus Moon, Castaway Bay, and the Man at McDonalds.

Currently, there are six members of TCB, A.J T., Tom V., Jack D., Todd H., Nick S., and me, Joseph M.

This story goes to show that anyone can be funny, and anything can happen if you follow your dreams.



Dreams

By Will R.

I believe Langston Hughes is trying to teach never to let go of your dreams, for if you do they will never "live." Life is empty without dreams. If you don't have a dream you will not have anything to live up to. That is what I think Langston Hughes is trying to teach. One of the dreams Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. held fast to was for racism to stop. Yes, his dream came true. Now you are not judged on the color of your skin, but the content of your character. One way that proves this dream of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. came true is that Barak Obama was elected president. Another example of his dreams that live is that black people are allowed to go anywhere white people go. For example, blacks and whites attend the same schools, eat at the same restaurants and can live where they want to live. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was inspired by the dreams of Mahatma Gandhi.

Dreams

By Kelly M.

Langston Hughes is trying to teach us to hold on to your dreams. If you let go of them, they will never come true. He also is trying to teach that if you let go of your dreams you will never accomplish anything. Your life will be empty and lonely like a barren field.

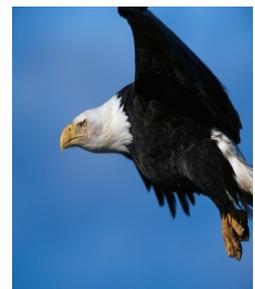
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. believed in uniting as one. Some of his dreams that he held fast to were that little black boys and black girls can play with little white boys and white girls. Another dream he held fast to was that kids of all different colors and religions could go to school together. One other dream was that people like Rosa Parks could sit wherever they wanted to on the bus. Black people use to sit outside restaurants and protest because sometimes they were not allowed to get served at the restaurant. Dr King's dreams came true. In 2009 we have an African American president, Barack Obama. Dr. King helped to change the world.

Dreams

By Langston
Hughes

*Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.*

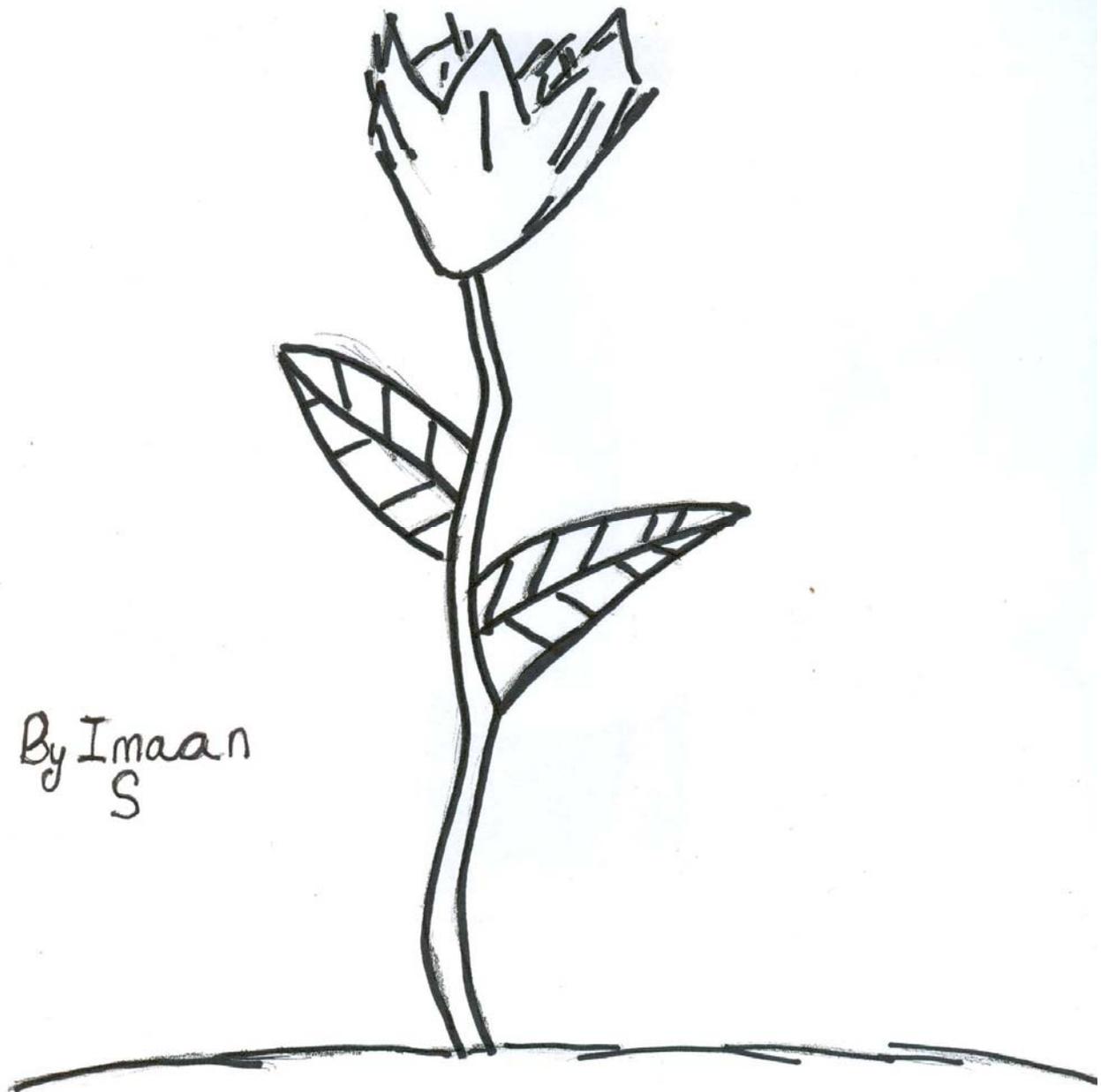
*Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.*



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WSS Magazine



By Imaan
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