

**The
Rock Accord
Young Storytellers
Anthology
2023**



THE ROCK RETREAT GIBALTAR

Octopus House
5, Castle Steps,
Gibraltar GX11 1AA

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The Rock Retreat Gibraltar



GREETINGS FROM GIBRALTAR



INTRODUCTION

In 2023 The Rock Retreat and Accord Literary ran a writing project for young people based in Bermuda, Gibraltar and Ghana.

We suggested writing prompts that were shared through the communities of young creatives and were excited to consider the work of young people in different places that would be applying their own individual point of views to the shared topics.

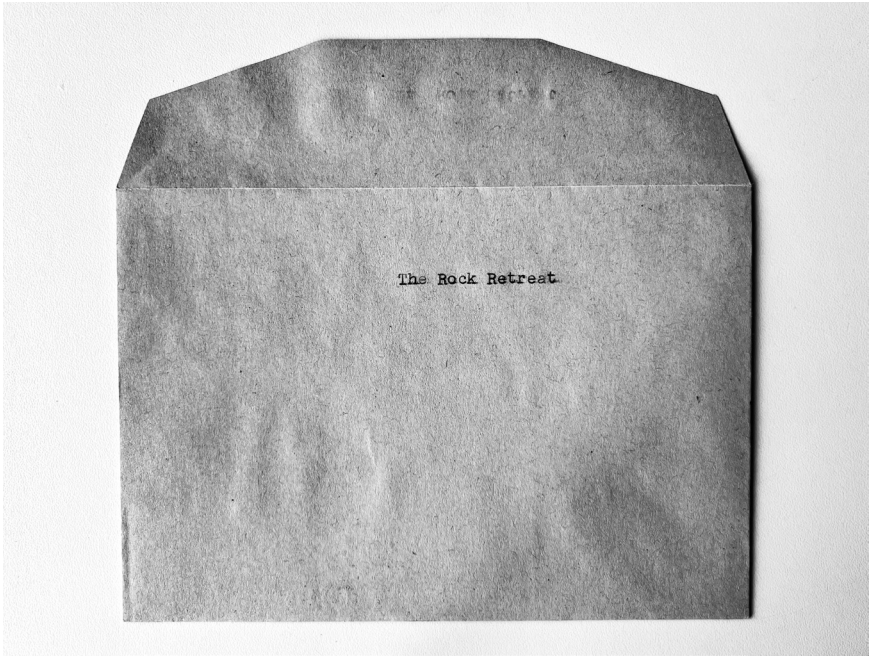
What resulted was beyond our expectations.

We had literally hundreds of pieces of work showcasing the ingenuity, originality and inventiveness of young creatives. Stories, poems, graphic novel ideas, illustrations ... we were astounded and delighted to be able to read this dazzling body of work.

Now, in this volume we bring the work together in one place for you to enjoy. It is an abundance of riches that affirms for all of us that young people are embracing the world and spreading joy and positivity through their creative output.

Eleanor Taylor & Sarah Odedina





Note to reader:

The pieces of writing in this anthology appear as we received them from the authors without any editing. The idea is to show works in progress and we hope you enjoy reading this collection of exciting new voices.

www.therockretreats.com

www.accordliterary.com

ANOTHER CHANCE

By Anali Ressa Moreno

I see her silky blonde curls, the ones I've always wished I had inherited. I feel her warm hands gently touch my icy ones.

“Sweetie, stay right here with me,” She said, her smile like a bite of a soft chocolate chip cookie, filling you with a delightful feeling of reassurance and safety.

“It doesn't seem like you have a lot to do, right?” There it was, the special tone in which she said things that made you believe her no matter the situation. It was calming, slow, and sounded truthful. But was it..? I have places to be, and my mother never lies to me.

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!

Another dream.

It wasn't real, my mother isn't here to reassure me. She's in hospital. And I have plenty to do; the main task is to make money to survive and help my mother out of that hospital, to be the beautiful person she always has been.

I sit up and take a look around the mess of a room I once loved living in. The long white curtains and the sea-shell-themed bed duvet. And most of all, my wardrobe. Filled with shoes, dresses, and jewellery. I used to only see the positive things about my room, yet now when I see my curtains, I think of how excessively long they are for the tiny apartment window. And when I see my duvet it simply reminds me that underneath that duvet was once a clean bed, with no tissues, or empty cans. And the most hurtful of all is my wardrobe. My once beautiful wooden wardrobe. I loved that wardrobe, and now it's a home for dust, and clothes I have outgrown.

I finally get out of bed, and head to the bathroom to try to look like I've tried to present myself nicely for the Job Centre.

Oh, right I haven't told you. I am Elizabeth, a 15-year-old dropout, looking for a job to pay for my mother's hospital bills. She's terminal. Unless I can somehow come up with a large sum of money. Specifically \$47,000. Money we don't have. Money I'll have to provide for us. I don't have a father, a grandmother, or even an aunt who sends a Christmas card every year.

I have to figure this out. And all I've got is a distant cousin who works at the Job Centre.

“El, you know I have been trying my best to find you a job, but you have no skills. No offence.” Adrien said.

“I take offence, and that's not true. I can cook...” He gave me a knowing look. “Fine, I may not be able to cook, but I...” I paused. “Ugh. I don't know. Can't I just work at a library or something?”

“Do you even know a thing about books?” He said, sceptically.

“No, but I am a quick learner. I think.”

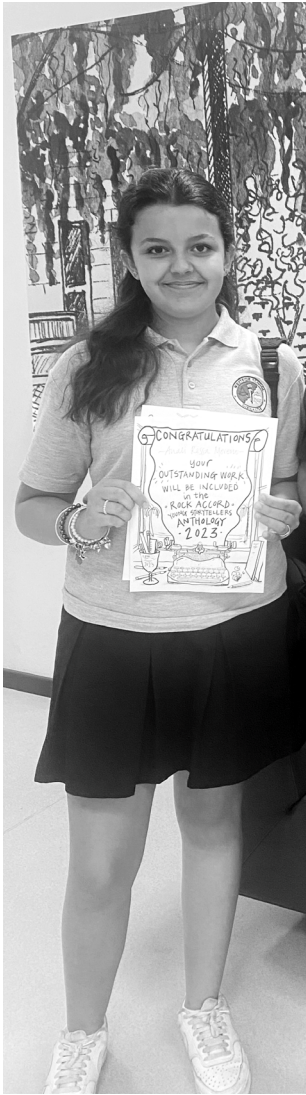
“You lack confidence, El. That's the issue here.”

After a while of trying to find a job good enough for me, Adrien looked up at me. “El. There's a new job that has been submitted. Requires knowledge of how to care for an elderly lady. Pays very well.”

I stare at him, at a loss for words.

“They've rejected 3 people. They must be getting desperate.”

“Sign me up.”



"Elizabeth Cameron?" I stood up so the receptionist would be able to see me.

"You've been accepted. The lady would like to meet you. Is today okay?"

I nodded, at a loss for words. I was just taken aback by the whole situation. I then followed the receptionist into a room with a round glass table, and two chairs. On one chair was an elderly lady, who seemed to be in her eighties. She was facing the window, and suddenly, I felt sorry for her. I had no idea who this mysterious woman was, but she seemed lonely. I heard the door close behind me.

"Elizabeth, right?"

"Yes. I typically go by El or Liz." I replied, and I hated how childish I sounded. I simply felt the need to impress her.

"Why do you need this job? Fifteen is young, don't you think?" The lady asked me in a formal tone.

"My mother. She's terminally ill unless I can somehow come up with \$47,000. We don't have health insurance." She turned to me, making me realise she was in a wheelchair. Her blue eyes were mesmerising, and her blonde

hair reminded me of my mothers. Her look softened and she said, "My name is Charlotte. You can call me Lottie. Tell me more."

So I did.

We were downstairs, sipping on lemonade and talking about my mother and her illness. Lottie had a way of turning the conversation as if she could tell I get upset quickly when it comes to my mother. We began talking about her teenage years, and it turns out we had a lot in common. Both drop-outs who were taken advantage of by others.

"May I call you Betty?" She asked, and her formal tone seemed to be disappearing.

"Of course, I'm not too strict with my name."

"You're hired, Betty," Lottie said, smiling. And for a split second, I saw my mother. I saw my mother in her smile.

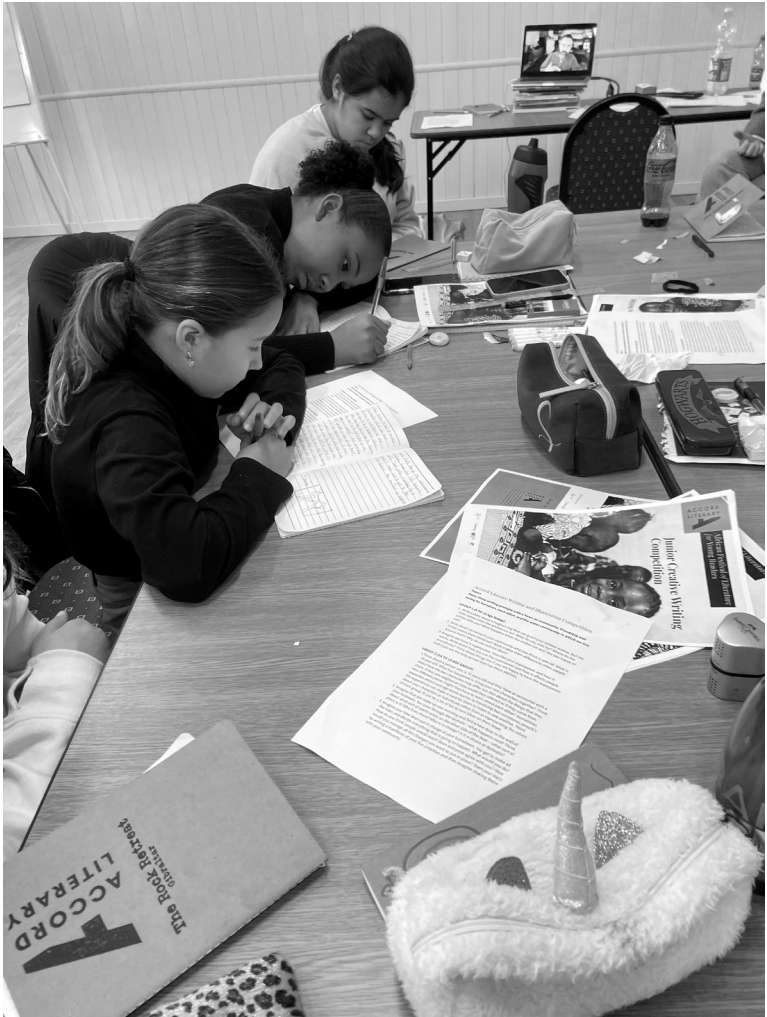
I've always wondered what life would be like for me when I reached my elderly years. So when Lottie accepted me into her life and her home, it never felt like a job. It felt like I was staying at a friend's house, and discovering new things about her.

We were sitting on her porch when she said, “You are always welcome here, Betty. I appreciate the company too you know?”

I smiled at her. Lottie was just like me. Lonely and appreciative of any interaction with another person. Age isn't a barrier to friendship, all you need is an understanding of each other and a hint of empathy.

Then, suddenly everything clicked. I'd been given Another chance. A chance to start fresh. A chance to save my mother. And Lottie, she was here to help me throughout it all.

Anali Ressa Moreno



Stop playing with
toys Jimmy!

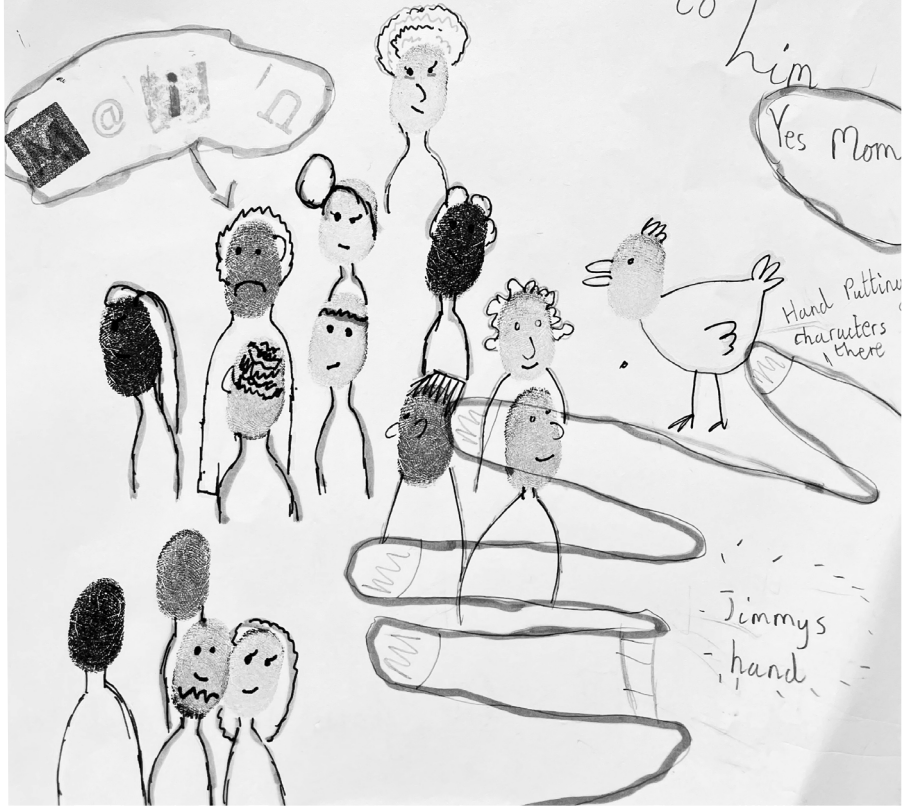
Everyone Never

Talked to him

Yes Mom

Hand Puppets
characters
there

Jimmy's
hand



MERCY

by MIRIAM RAMAGGE

Ringling the doorbell,
I do not hear the echo inside,
Her slippers slapping the smooth, white and brown tiles as she walks to the door.
Warm arms hugging me,
The thought of chocolate waiting for us inside the breabin,
The silver-framed photos of my family in the corridor.

Walking into the living room, ‘
Tipping Point’ is on TV,
Sitting on her red corduroy sofa,
Her needles lying in a plastic bag at her feet,
Balls of wool sitting untangled and expectant,
Laboriously knitting hats for frozen sailors.
The phone constantly ringing,
The sound bouncing around in the flat,
Her voice playful as she picks it up,
Looking at the thimbles that line a set of glass shelves,
Sometimes I think there must be hundreds,

My favourite is the one with a frog.

I peer into her bedroom,
Looking at the fluffy bunny toys that sit in front of her mirror,
Their dresses crocheted and neat,
Her wooden wardrobe opposite her bed,
It is a forbidden room.

Noises coming from the kitchen,
It is the sound of the kettle as my mum makes tea,
Sweets lining the inside of a cupboard,
The calendar that hangs on the wall,
Each month has a picture of a dog,
My sister and I deliberating over which chocolate to pick.

Saying 'Dejala' to my mum as she scolds my sister,
As my mum argues with her, she says 'Callate, Becky',
Sitting between my mum and uncle,
Staring at the old 'Coca-Cola' tray that leans against the wall,
Stealing another 'Malted Milk' biscuit,
The 'Robinsons' orange squash always in the fridge.
Her eyes amused as my uncle tells us stories,
Some of them, I think, are stories that are hers.

Miriam Ramagge

Age 11



Prior Park School, Gibraltar
was officially opened on
19th October 2006
by His Excellency the Governor,
Lieutenant General Edward Davis CB CBE,
in the presence of the Chief Minister,
the Hon. Fabian Picardo QC MP.



THE OLD AND THE NEW by ANGELIKA BOSCO

It all started just a few days ago, and I feel a need to write about it.

School had finished for the day and we were all glad to be out in the street again. So many of us, chatting, laughing, making our way down the wide pavement of New Mole Road, that would take us to wherever each of us were going.

Looking ahead I noticed that there was an old man walking, not too steadily, and balancing himself on a walking stick, against the flow of us, students, who walked past him as if he were not there. My attention was drawn to him because he suddenly stopped, and I saw him stooping to retrieve something from the pavement that he seemed to have dropped.

As I got closer, I saw that he was quite short and had a mop of untidy white hair on his head. He was wearing a long, grey coat reaching to his ankles, though the weather hardly warranted it. He was holding a couple of books, and his walking stick on his left hand, while with his other hand, he was attempting to pick up a book that had fallen from

his uncertain grasp. No matter how much he stooped, the fingers on his free hand failed to reach it.

He hardly noticed me as I retrieved the book for him as the effort he had been making had practically exhausted him. He then gathered himself and said, "Thank you my dear, you are so kind," and by the time I too had gathered myself, and started to look for my friends, he had gone.

It was all very weird.

The following day, as I left school, I was recollecting this incident, when I saw him again. This time he was sitting on a public bench on his own, and I had the feeling that he was looking out for me, for no sooner had our eyes met from afar, he was waving for me to go to him!

I was somewhat concerned about approaching the old man. He was huddled in the same black overcoat, and this time he was also wearing a woollen cap that covered most of his head, except for some white hair that showed around its edges. He looked up to me, and with some emotion in his voice, he said, "Toma, esto es para ti; por ayudarme ayer, tenia gana de verte para darte las gracias." With tears in his eyes, he

handed me a brown, paper parcel, bound with a string. I was much taken aback by all of this, and taking the parcel from his outstretched hand, I carefully undid the string, all without saying a single word. I could see it was a book, and so it was. It was bound in red with the title in gold lettering as well as the flyleaves. The Poetical Works of Shelley, published by the Oxford University Press in 1935. It was in excellent condition, and it was also the book he had dropped the previous day that I had picked up for him!

What a cool thing it was for this strange man to do.

“Never let go of this book, for it is rich in its words and I suspect some of its poems are the work of his wife, Mary Shelley, and it is her spirit that dwells within its pages. They will show you the way when you are lost”, said the old man.

Well all of this was becoming a bit embarrassing for me, and I could only smile at him. However, at the same time, I unconsciously tightened my hold on the book and held it hard against my chest.

He looked up at me, smiling, sensing my embarrassment at his words. “My dear”, he said, “please forgive me. I am an old man. A dinosaur. And those like me will soon be extinct. This world has changed so much that I feel I do not belong here anymore.”

I smiled again, not knowing what to say. My mobile was ringing, and I was getting nervous. My friends were waiting for me at a local restaurant.

“Oh, I am so sorry, but I must go”. As these words spilled out of my lips, I felt so bad at having uttered them. “So, so sorry”. I said once again.

“I understand”, he said, looking at the mobile ringing in my hand, “I understand”, he repeated. He got up from his seat and made to go away, but then he stopped and turned to face me once more.

“The world has changed, so many advances in science and technology are changing our lives. Everything is meant to be better, to make us live

longer. But in particular, technology has dehumanised society, which I find very saddening. I experience that in many ways with life being made difficult by depriving everyone but particularly the old, of human contact”.

“But one thing that neither science or technology will ever change is our human nature. Since the beginning of our time, our nature has not altered in any shape or form. We love, we hate, we have feelings; we are creative; we are destructive. We have a nature that makes us what we are and we have always been”.

He paused and smiled at me, and with apparent sadness etched to his face, he said to me, “I will never see you again, and I am sorry for that. For you are a lovely young woman, with a warm heart and much talent”.

And that was the last I saw of him, though at first I did look out for his presence outside the school. It had been an encounter I will never forget. That lasts a lifetime. Needless to say, the Poetical Works of Shelley are always close to my heart. It is a book of reference when I feel sad or

dejected, and need to seek out the spirit that endures within its poems.

Angelika Bosco

Age 16





GRANDMAS HOUSE

by **MADI LERA ALFRED**

When I was younger, my grandma use to tell me that our family had a gigantic secret, I would spend the whole day chasing my grandma around asking her questions. I can recall writing in my journal for a whole day, jotting down all my ideas on what the mysterious secret might be. So you might be shocked when you read weird story of how I discovered this awesome family-secret! It all started with a boring drive to Grandma's house.

CHAPTER ONE

“Now Lillie, be kind to your grandmother, she’s a bit-”

“I know, Mum, ”I sighed. “I’ll take good care of her.”

Every time I visited my Grandma, my Mum always reminded me to ‘be kind’ to her. Since my granddad died two years ago she had always acted strangely when I came to visit her, My dad said that I reminded her of him too much. My dad did have a point though, I had my granddad’s beautiful dark-brown eyes and the exact same birthmark he had on my left arm. When we arrived at my grandma’s house I hopped out of the car, took a deep breath of the fresh mountain breeze, and went to the well at the back of the garden . I could smell the sweet aroma of the flowers and hear the sounds of animal footsteps. I grinned. I knew exactly who it was. “Hello Mrs Whiskers!” I giggled, staring at the bonnet that she was wearing. Mrs Whiskers was my Grandma’s pet cat, when I last saw her she was only a kitten. “Grandma must have given you something to make you grow quickly.”I said whilst she lapped up some milk. I grabbed my suitcase and knocked on the door. As soon as the door swung open I could smell pumpkin soup being cooked in the kitchen whilst the steam rushed out through the door. “Mother?”my mum yelled. “Lillie has come to see you!”

“Well come in, dearies!”

That was an unusual reply from Grandma, usually she would have smiled at us from her rocking chair and go back to stroking Mrs Whiskers’s back. In fact, when I was younger, Grandma wasn’t able to walk much because of her arthritis. We walked into the kitchen to find four plates of sweet potato mash and pumpkin soup on the counter. “Grandma, you do know Mrs Whiskers doesn’t eat sweet potato mash right?” I asked, looking at the fourth plate of food.

“Of course, poppet! This is for your cousin, Danny!” Grandma guffawed

Just on time, Danny walked smugly down the stairs in a Spiderman T-shirt and greyish-blue shorts. I stared at him but he seemed to take no notice of my mum and I. He took his plate, grunted and nodded his head, and climbed slowly up the stairs. “Smart fellow isn’t he!” Grandma gushed “I hired him to fix my computer. He’s extremely intelligent for a seven-year-old!”

“He looks as daft as a rock.” I muttered whilst slurping on my cold soup, had Grandma even cooked it properly?

After grandma talked to mum, mum left and drove back

home and Danny went out for the night, which left me alone with grandma. As I stared at her something felt off, she looked seriously sad. I tapped her on her shoulder and she looked at me with a sad smile on her face before telling me about vegetables or something. I didn't listen at all, I couldn't care less about vegetables. I was staring at Grandma's pale, skinny face. Her hair was all matted and her face looked wrinkly, I stared hard at her, I could see she was in some sort of pain. I gazed at my sick, elderly grandma. Was she going to pass away like grandpa did? Would she go and leave me all by myself? I suddenly realised that I had been staring at Grandma's face for the past few minutes, my face turned red with embarrassment. Nowadays, I was always staring at someone or something. As I smiled at her, Grandma opened her hands to show me something. Lying down on her palm was a gorgeous ring with diamonds encrusted on its sides , it was stunning! Grandma handed it towards me, she was smiling so much that her cheeks went bright pink. "Do you remember that time I told you that our family had a secret." Grandma whispered.

"Yes," I muttered. "I remember clearly."

"Well this is it!" She beamed, caressing the jewels on the ring.

"Wow Grandma," I said plastering a smile on my face

“it’s... cool! It looks extremely... interesting, thank you for this amazing gift!” I couldn’t see how this small ring could be such a big secret.

Grandma frowned when she saw my disappointment and grabbed the ring out of my hands before asking a peculiar question. “Lillie, do you believe in magic?”

“Well, I... uh I can’t really answer that, it’s a easy question but-”

“Lillie, yes or no!” Snapped Grandma.

“Yes... I think?”

“Great! I need you to name a place you want to go.”

“Well, I have always wanted to go to a fores-”

But before I could finish my sentence we had teleported to a forest!

CHAPTER TWO

As I slowly woke up, I saw two rainbow-coloured animals peering at Grandma and me. I rubbed my eyes, I couldn’t believing this crazy place was real! “Dorothy!” Purred a rainbow cat staring at Grandma.

“Hello Dorothy and... human!” Squealed a bright multi-coloured hedgehog.

“Actually, she’s my granddaughter, Helena!” Grandma chuckled at the hedgehog, her skin beginning to glow.

“Whoa, what on earth is happening.” I croaked.

“Your not on earth, granddaughter!” Helena exclaimed. “Your on the most sugary-sweet-delicious- mouth-watering-rainbowy-ice-creamy island!”

“It’s actually called Rainbow-sugar island,” The cat whispered in my ear. “Oh, and by the way my name is Katie.”

I stared at these animals and began to dig my nails into the soft candy floss ground, what was happening? Why was I here? And, how do I get home? “Grandma, I think it’s time we, uh go home.”

“But we just came, my dear!” Grandma whispered.

“Grandma...”

“Don’t worry, poppet. We’ll go back home.”

So we waved to Helena and Katie before Grandma began

to chant a short poem.

*“Magic ring on my finger,
Take us out of this place in which we linger,
Send us back to our home,
Our lovely forest zone.”*

Suddenly, we were back in the normal forest, surrounded by massive pine trees and small shrubs, I scanned my surroundings but I then realised something, where was grandma?

Madi Lera Alfred

Age 10

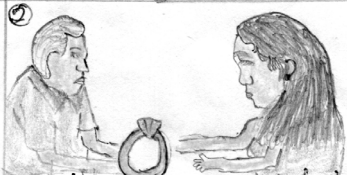
STORY 1

Name: Lawrence Fuese.

Magical Ring Illustrations.



Grandma sharing gifts to everyone.



Grandpa giving me a magical ring.



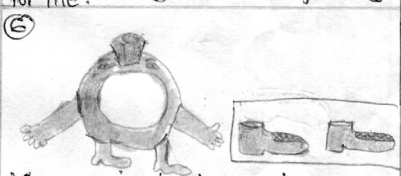
My magical ring.



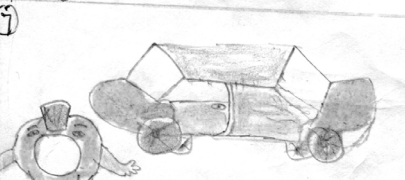
My magical ring commanding money for me.



I bought dresses and toffees for my friends.



My magical ring got me shoes.



Magical ring repaired an old car for me to drive.



Magical ring help me do my chores.



Magical ring found my sisters book.



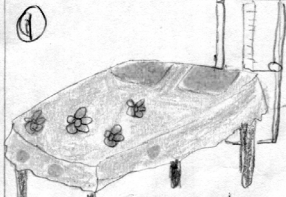
My wishes run out.

STORY 2

Name : Deborah Atayo

Thick Forest Illustration.

①



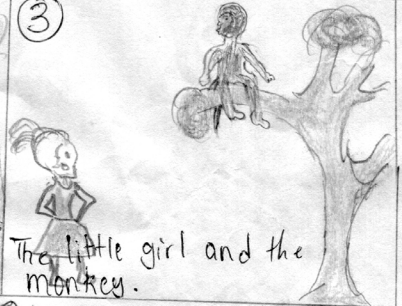
Peering through the new door.

②



A very thick forest with animals and big rocks.

③



The little girl and the monkey.

④



The girl and the monkey built a canoe.
big river

⑤

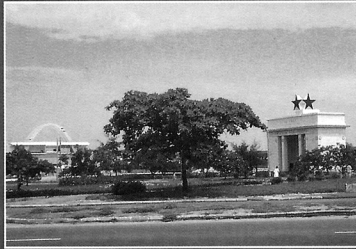


They saw the child.

⑥



They carried the child at their back to the garden close to the house.



Greetings from Ghana



(5)

Name: Perpetual Nanie
Name of school: Aporoaporo MIA Primary.
Age: 12 years Country: Ghana.

Topic: (2)

Write about someone in your community who you think is special. What is it that makes them stand out.

What makes them stand out? What makes them different to other people around them? Why do you admire them.

The special person in my community is Manager. He is a cocoa man. He has a white car. Sometimes he use his car to pick us when we are coming from farm. He ~~is~~ makes us happy. He also gives us chocolate. I like him because he come to our school to take pictures with us all. He built classroom for my school. He also buy jersey and football for us. When we were using cutlass to weed, he bought mower for all the schools in my community.

He also built canteen for all the schools and my community is very ~~but~~ beautiful. He sewed school uniforms for me and my friends. He brought it to our house. Sometimes he brings white people to our school and also play football with us. He drink, Niche, chocolate drink in my school every week. He brings them to use. He advice us to learn

hard. He also do Health Insurance card for everybody in the community. And also provides for our community Clinic. He likes everybody and we like ~~he~~ him too. There are a lot of cocoa people but he helps our community.

Name: Perpetual Nakiie

Age: 13 Years

School: Aponoapono M/A Primary

Town: Suhum

Country: Ghana

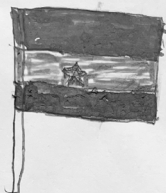
1.1: The old woman and the boy

Once upon a time, there lived an old woman called grandma Edna. She lived in a village called Domeabra. In Domeabra there was a certain help boy whose name was called Adamu.

One day, grandma Edna went to buy foodstuff, on her way going home, she saw Adamu playing with his friends. When Adamu saw grandma Edna, he ran to her and helped her to carry her foodstuffs. When they got home grandma Edna thanked Adamu and said 'Stay behind the bank of the river. Then the old woman said, it means we lived in the same community. From that day they became friends. Grandma Edna shared her things like food, toffes and etc with Adamu.

Everyday, Adamu goes to the old woman's house to help her. Sometimes the old woman tells stories to Adamu and advice him to be obedient and respectful boy. She also advice him to learn hard to achieve his goals. As time goes on Adamu

grew up and became helpful and respectful boy. He also learn hard and achieve his goals. He told her mother that: not opposite sex people are the one to make friends with, but you can make friends with old people or people that have grown than you.



Name: Perpetual
from Ghana



What do you love?

Food: rice and stew

What do you do well?

I love reading



I am reading



I am cooking rice and stew

APONOAPONO SCHOOL SUHUM GHANA

STORY 4

Age: 13

Name: Tetteh Esther

Country - Ghana



Me giving my speech on what I will do when I become in charge of my community.

Tetteh Esther

Age 13

Name: Tetteh Esther

(4)

Age: 13

School: Aponapono M/A Primary

Country: Ghana

Imagine you have been in charge of your hometown. You get to make all the rules and decide everything that is going to happen. What will you do? How will you think people would react? Does everyone agree with you? How would you manage all the changes you want to put in place? Start by writing a manifesto of your five priorities, and then imagine sharing these with your community.

Madam, chair person, I am very glad to be called upon this day to give a talk on how to take charge of my hometown.

If I become in charge of my hometown, I will help the people in the community to obey rules and regulation. I will also tell them to clean the environment, and I will also help them by cleaning the environment with them. I will also teach them how to respect themselves. I will ~~te~~ teach them how to be united, together we stand, divided we fall. I will also help the poor and the needy in my community, and I will do that by creating jobs for them. Therefore they have to be sure that those who are in ~~school~~ school will be in school only to learn hard to achieve their goal in the future life. I will also make sure that what ever they need I will give them what ever they need. And I will also make sure that I will know the people who agree with me and those who do not agree with me. And I will also make sure that I will help those who don't agree with me, so that they will believe me and vote for me. I will also make sure that I will ~~with~~ those who don't agree with me will agree with me. I will also advice them ~~to~~ to understand my vision.

I will build a banana factory for the men and women to work there. I will also build a wall around the school in my home town because people walk through the school field.

I will build a ~~sea~~ big library for my school and also buy more computers for the school. I will build a ~~sea saw~~ sea saw and other games for playing. I will set rules that will make people stop fighting and stealing.

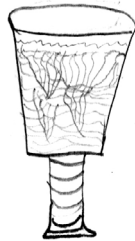
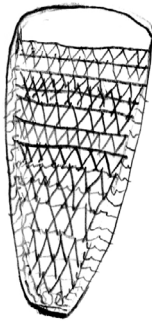
I will ~~build~~ stop parents from child labour. I will provide street light for safety at night.

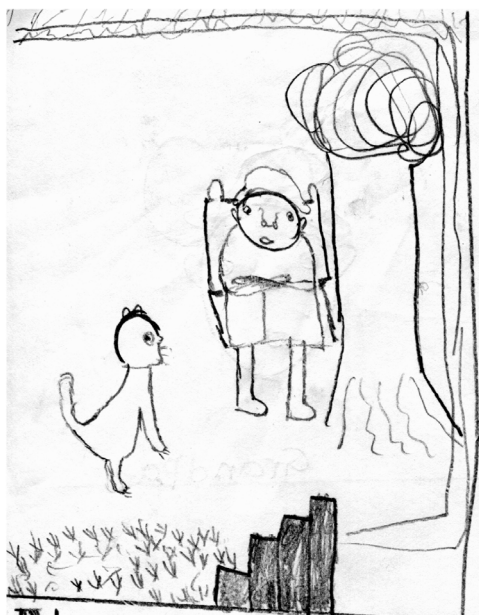
Thank you for listening to me.

THE END.

4

Tetten Esther





NAME: Fusesse LawRENCIA

SCHOOL: Aponoapono M/A
Primary

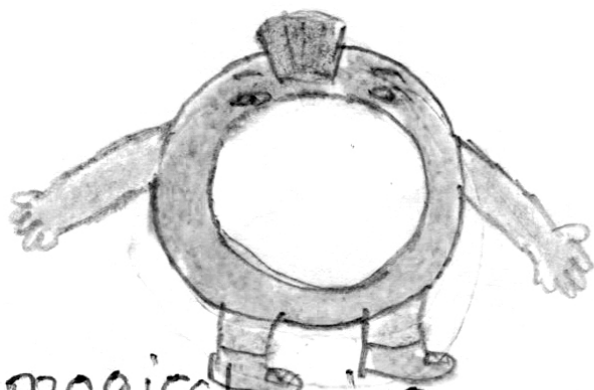
CLASS: 4

Name: Lawrence Fusese
age: 11 years
School: Aponcapono NVA Primary
Town: Shum
Country: Ghana

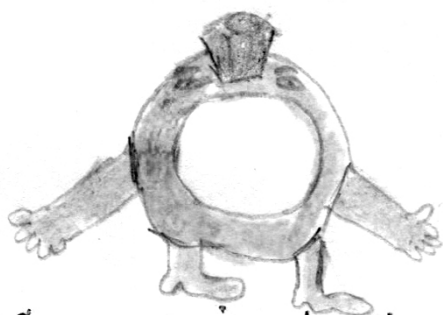
Superpower

If you have Superpower you can do special things. My Superpower is strong. I use it to carry heavy loads for people when they can't carry it. It helps me when I am in danger and if I did not understand something it helps me to understand it and if my friends also did not understand something I go and teach them so they will also understand it if a thief comes to steal and I see him and when I beat him they will be all sad. I use my superpower to help people who are in danger and also I use it to help people who are in trouble and people who needs help too, so that it could make me happy or glad.

Thank You.



My magical ring.



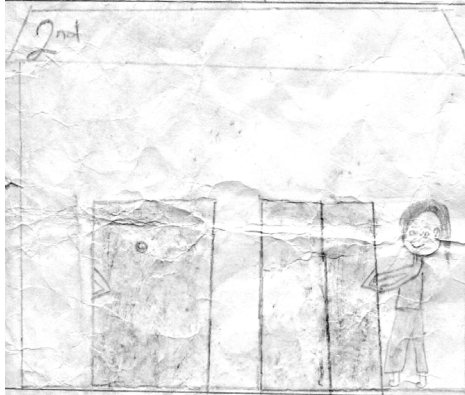
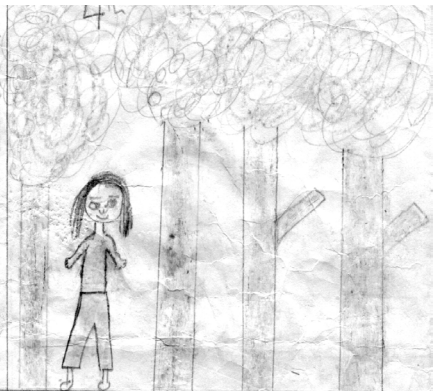
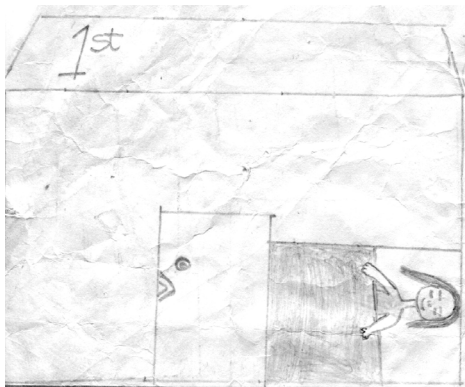
My magical ring got me shoes.

Name: Godfred ~~Abudu~~ Abusom
Age: 12 years
School: Apananpono M/A Primary
Town: Subum
Country: Ghana

The magic ring

Once upon a time there live a handsome boy called Godfred. He live at the edge of the forest. One morning when he wake up from bed. He said that I am hungry I need food to eat. The hand some boy took his cutlass and went to the forest. He went far away in the forest searching for food he didn't find any food to eat he was not happy. That morning when he was going. He saw a beautiful gold ring on the floor. He took the ring and when he took it some one appeared from the ring and said. say anything that you want I will do it. And the hand some boy said if I get Jollof I will eat and that noon. Jollof appeared there I was so happy when I finish eating. I said that I want house so that I can take this night in to day the next day when I wake up from bed the magical ring has do many things for him. I was happy. that day when I was walking thru the forest I saw that someone is in danger so I need to help that person. My magic ring let the lion storm and the girl run away to home. The magic ring do a lot of thing to the boy. the next day the magic ring has build a big castle for me I was so happy that day

the End



GHANA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL



A 15 YEAR OLD MEETS A 70 YEAR OLD
by ROSAMOND DSANE-SELBY

A 15 year old girl dressed like every other 15 year old girl was looking at the man across from her on the torn plaid patterned seats in the empty train compartment. The man was dressed head to toe in contradictions, his navy blue sweater tried very hard to match the aqua blue trousers but neither could make peace with the deep violet fedora on his bald head. Evidently some amount of thought must have gone into the outfit or ensemble was a better word for the weird combination. The fedora at least paired with the dramatically large bag that she had only ever seen in the hands of a magician or street mime, it even had faded gold stars on it. This is what her classmates would call a 'boomerang', clothes so terrible they made you double-take.

She peered over at what the man was reading and couldn't stop her eyes rolling to the back of her head '***Ruth for the youth***' it read, in bold and italics, headlining an eye opening piece of journalism she was sure. Old people could be so annoying, she didn't feel bad for thinking this as he did not look too much in poor health. They were always sticking their noses up at the younger generation she thought to herself knowingly, if he really wanted to know about the youth, the youth was sitting right across from him, all he had to do was -

“You like it?” a pair of downturned, dark eyes were looking right at her. A very crooked ring finger poked the houdini like carry on. The girl hadn’t realised she had been staring, slightly embarrassed by her less than kind inner dialogue she couldn’t say anything back. It didn’t matter, the old man could fill in the gaps

“My granddaughter gave it to me” he paused and his eyes went to the side, “yes, she finds all sorts of funny things and sends them with the dispatch rider”. His eyes returned to her. The girl cleared her throat and he saw that she was uncomfortable so he decided not to offer a treat from the selection in his bag.

The girl fixed her hair before she spoke, as if it would make up for the extremely noticeable stain that covered half her sweater, “Cool, it looks vintage, probably thrifted”

“Yes..” The man took a long pause, smoothing his shirt and it seemed his thoughts before he kept on, “I rarely see young people taking the 5:30, what’s your excuse?” He smiled; genuinely curious.

The girl seemed annoyed by the question “I’m just going home, latter-day avenue”

“It would surely be cheaper to catch a taxi then” the man

said practically “Why on earth waste a good..”

“Didn’t have a choice” the girl folded her arms and pushed the red scarf over her shoulder as if creating a barrier but it revealed more of the large stain so she pushed it back. The old man didn’t seem to notice.

“Well now, there is no need to cut me off, And what’s happened to your shirt?” he was gesturing at the brown stain covering the entire left sleeve of her otherwise spotless knitted sweater. “Or is that the new fashion?”

Her shoulders relaxed, realising she had been rude “I’m sorry, it’s just my friend said she would take the taxi with me since my parents wouldn’t let me take it alone, but apparently a spur of the moment “must-go party” was more important”, the girl really put it in air quotations, “And this stain here”, she looked at it begrudgingly, “Well that is what happens when senseless people leave their bins out in the middle of the sidewalk with large puddles around! ” This all came out in a huff with no punctuation at all.

The man looked on, surprised by the outburst, then he had his own outburst. He let out a guffaw that came in fractions, separated by a weakened respiratory system, but he didn’t mind and laughed louder, coughing a little in between.

The girl was taken aback and a little annoyed that he should laugh so much

“Oh don’t look like that” he said, still recovering from the fit “It’s not so bad, it’s quite funny when you look at it” an involuntary snicker escaped him.

“I’m glad you find my woes so funny” she couldn’t help smiling, his choppy laugh was contagious.

The man sat back, satisfied with this. There was a pause and the man shut his eyelids, his hands clasped on his belly. He opened his eyes suddenly. “That’s a nice sweater, where did you get it, i’m sure my granddaughter would like it”. The girl looked down embarrassed.

“I made it, actually” she admitted, almost guiltily.

“Well then you’re very talented, why don’t you seem prouder?. My if i made a thing like that at your age”

“Well knitting isn’t exactly a ‘cool’ talent is it?” “Maybe if i could sew like those cool fashion girls on..”

“Gah! You young people don’t see what’s right in front of you!” “I won’t bore you with a lecture and the rides are almost over, no time anyhow but you’re a talent, a real

one, remember that.” He nodded truthfully and the girl couldn’t help beaming shyly

”I know you were judging my bag just now, and my clothes too I’m sure” He said all of a sudden yet nonchalantly, “But see? Look at this feast. You should carry a bag like mine instead of that tiny thing” he said, pointing at her little clutch. She waved away this idea, feeling embarrassed that he should read her mind so easily. Just then, before she could respond with a lie that she had not thought those things, the tiara shaped ring on her finger flew off and rolled into a small corner, covered by a corner seat. She let out a small shriek, “That’s my favourite ring!”

“So go and get it” The old man did not see a problem.

“I can’t stick my hand there!” she said indignantly, “there could be anything in there”

“Well use your phone, haven’t you got a torch light, ? I haven’t got one of my own.”

“Oh.” she said. He was right.

“Goodness gracious, see? You people never see what is right in front of you” he looked at her triumphantly.

She nodded, giving him the win, “fine, maybe we’re a little ignorant and judgemental and immature” she said, retrieving the ring.

“No, just young,” he concluded.

The old man began to rummage in his bag all of a sudden. He began to pull out a white rectangle. To her great shock, he began to unfold wooden legs for this white rectangle and set it down between them like a table. It was a table. From his oversized bag. Next followed a table cloth, two doilies and a tin of assorted biscuit, “Got no plates so the doilies will have to do”

The girl couldn’t believe it “You keep a cafe in your bag and you don’t have a phone?!” she spluttered in disbelief. The man looked up at her gaping mouth then back at the table and after a short moment let out another one of his hearty, jigsaw puzzle guffaws, he sat, holding his stomach as his hat slipped to the floor.

The girl began to laugh too and they both had to wipe tears from their eyes, “Oh dear” The man was enjoying himself thoroughly. He picked up a vanilla wafer and prompted the girl to select a chocolate one.

“So...do you suddenly just become wise when you, well..” the girl asked, trailing off between bites.

The question seemed to amuse the man. He let out another shorter laugh accompanied by a snort this time, “When you become an old sack of bones like me?” his eyes glittered good heartedly. He looked at her seriously, then leaned back and sighed,

“Nope”.

The girl was surprised and beckoned for more information, “well then how do you “read minds” and lecture young people all the time about this and that?”

“Well now as hard as this may be to believe, i was young once too” he said this matter of factly, his crooked finger wagging in the air.

“Of course I know that ” she said hotly, he interrupted,

“So when I ‘lecture’ you, as you say, don’t you see what I’m doing?” he looked at her as if a great revelation had been made.

Her eyebrows met each other “See what?”

“When old people teach young people, they are only teaching their younger selves”. He pushed his eyebrows up for emphasis. “How do I know that you.. A young me.”

The train began to slow and the girl found herself a little saddened to leave the strange man. He gave her a little wave as she got up. Just before she left she remembered to ask, “What’s your name sir?”

“Clay, as in Clayton”.

The girl let out a guffaw of her own, “My name’s Klai, as in Klailea”. She heard Clay’s choppy laugh as the doors slid shut.

Rosamund Dsane-Selby

Age 15



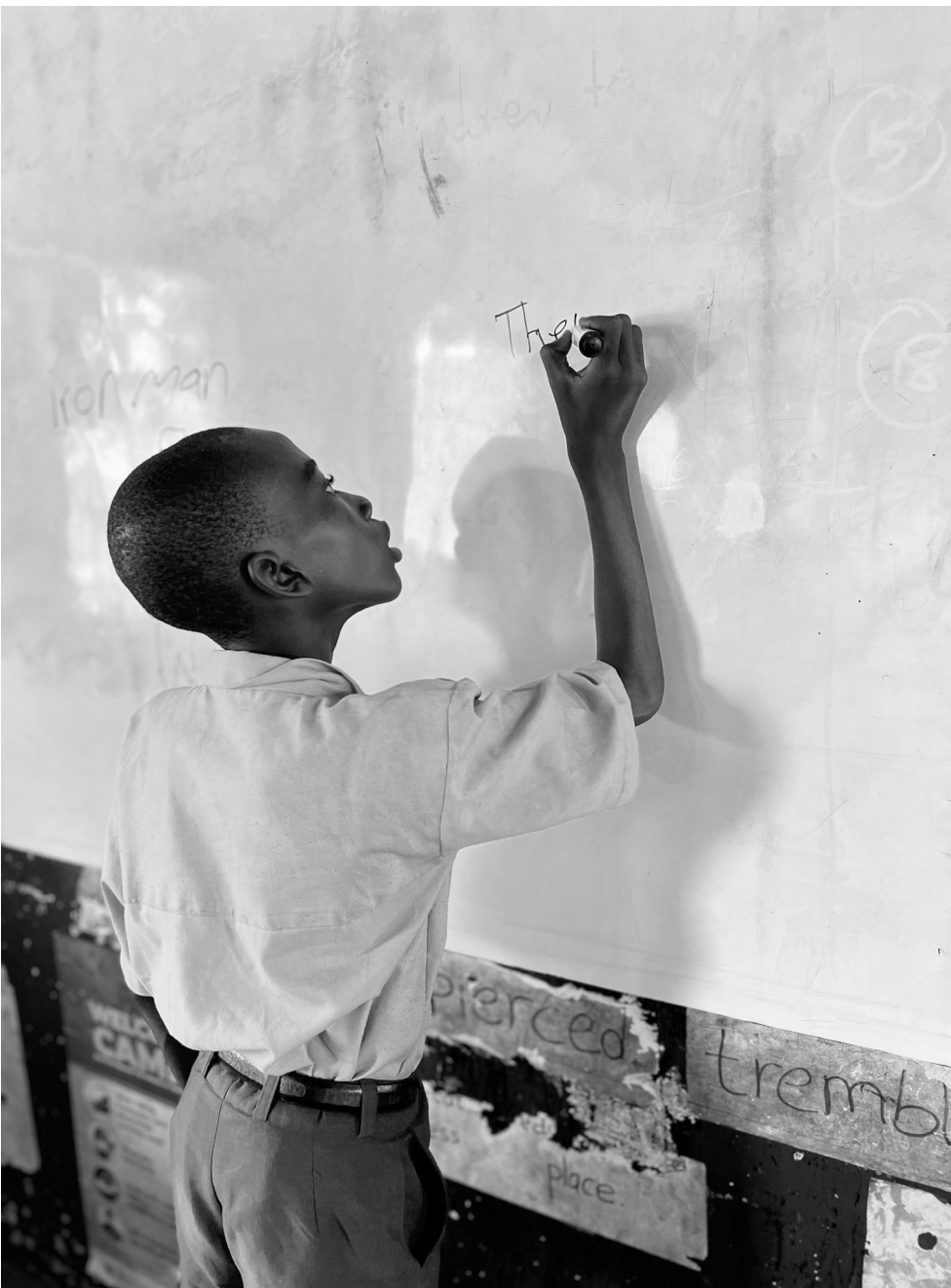


kuma

Stephen







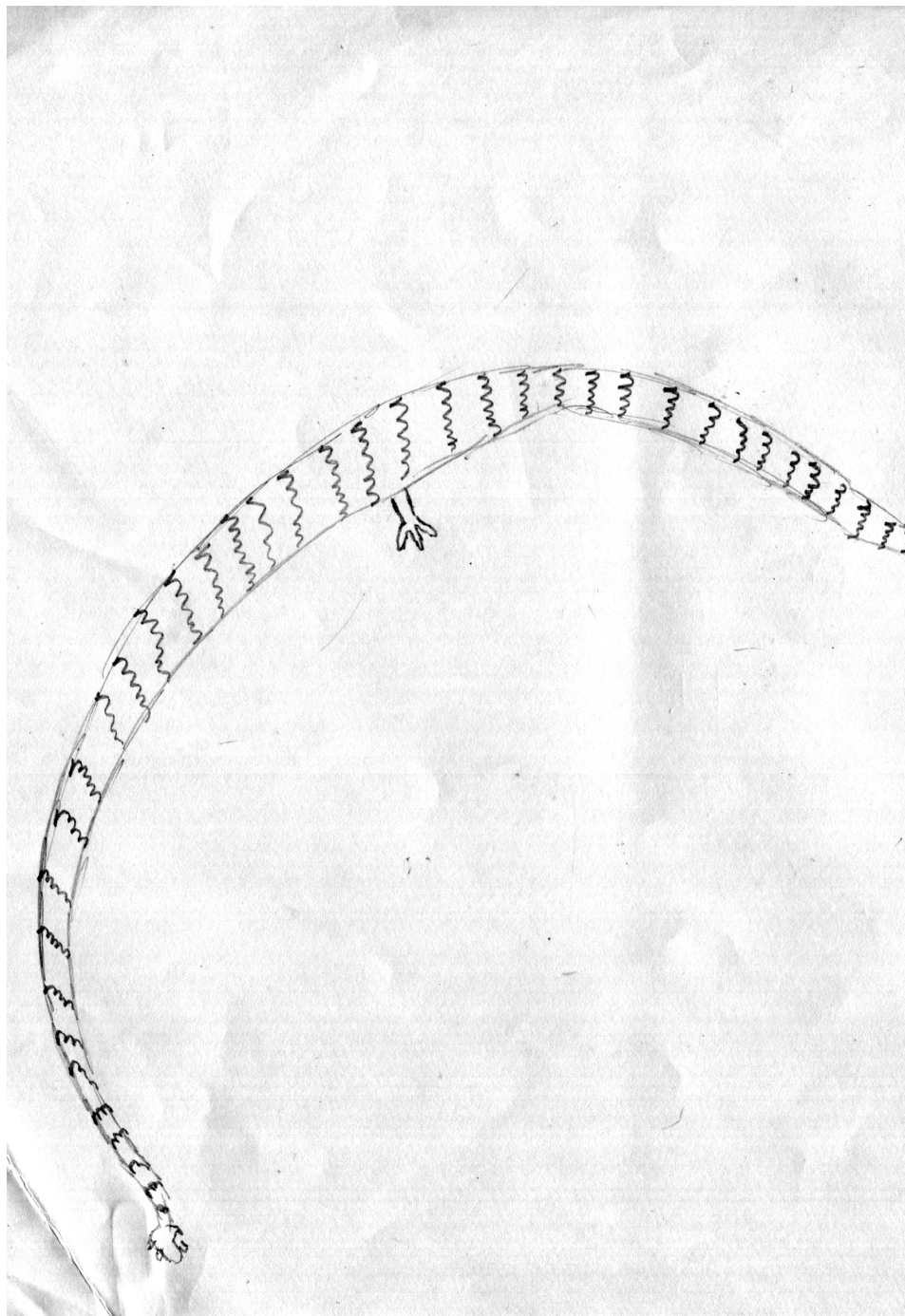
Brian Larbi-Keboa Gis 11 years old 24/05/2023

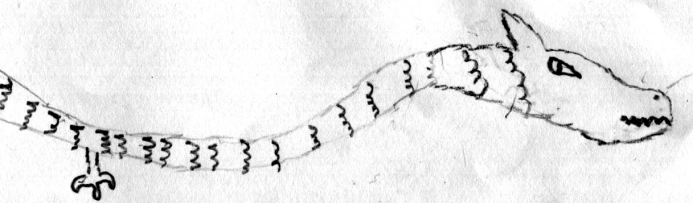
Legendary Dragon Swordsman

When I woke up, I got out of my bed and walked to the sink to brush my teeth, after brushing my teeth I went down stairs and asked my mom what we were eating for breakfast. "We are eating some bacon, toast, eggs and hot chocolate." "Yum!!!!" after I finished my breakfast I went up to my dad and asked him if we could train again.

I and my dad went to the bamboo forest to train our sword skills. We exchanged sword strikes, he hit my sword so hard that I flew back and hit multiple bamboo sticks. "AHHH". I screamed while sent flying to the bamboo forest, I was so angry my skin started turning into scales and I started growing big in size and then, **I TURNED INTO A DRAGON!!!!**

I was furious, I looked like a beast, my eyes were slit and I blasted my father with a beam of water. "He He a water beam, that means he is a water dragon".





I AM A BIRD

I am a bird The colour of me is black and white, In my habitat we like making noise a lot, Some say, I am evil some even throw stones at me, But that is the nature of me. I feel comfortable in my habitat, the funny things about me is I like eaten a lot. This is my nature and I like my nature.



Names

Diana

Israel

Princess

Nadjetu

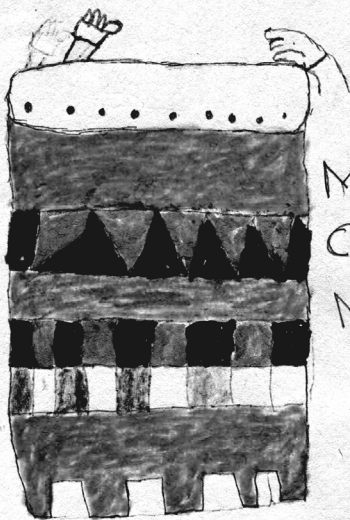
Esther

Samuel

Mary Narko

ONE INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOUR
DRUM

MY DRUM



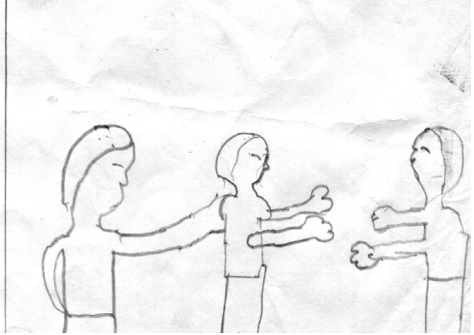
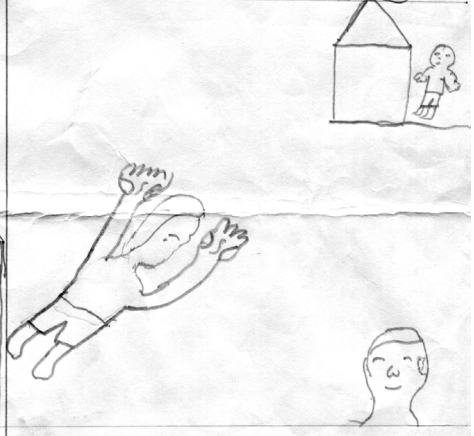
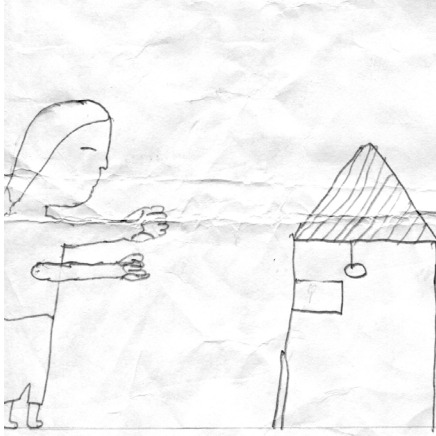
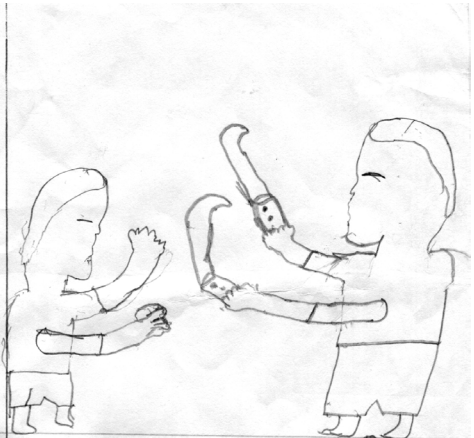
MY DRUM IS
CALLED SMART
NINGER

I LIKE TO PLAY MY DRUM IN SCHOOL

WHAT MAKES YOUR DRUM SPECIAL?

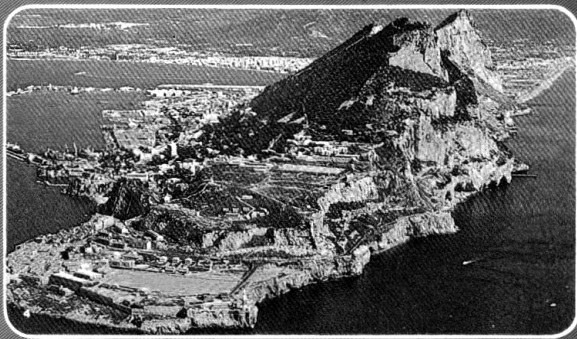
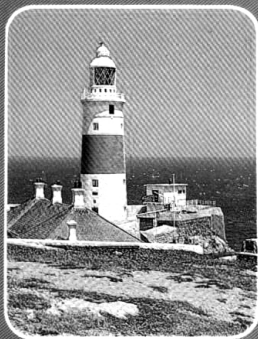
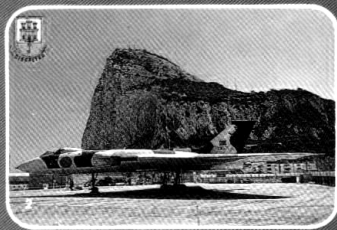
BECAUSE IS GREEN

WHAT SONGS DOES YOUR DRUM
PLAY: ONWORD CHRISTIANG Soldiers





*Greetings
from*
GIBRALTAR



A STAIN IN THE IMMACULATE

by EVA DE VINCENZI

She was newborn, slippery and blue, Wailing
through her gummy mouth, Claspings to the plastic
gloves which held her. A blank canvas of human,

Not yet equipped with brushes.

Young cries, piercing.

Warm cries, safe.

She grew with colour in her cheeks, Iridescent eyes

deep with candour,

An intrepid mind and interminably human soul,

Young flesh, unstained.

Warm flesh, alive.

But she grew to love everything too terribly.

It clogged her pores,

It was a rogue eyelash, prickling her tear ducts.

Young tears, afraid.

Warm tears, turning tepid.

In them she could taste the colour of her eyes;

Bitter and uncertain.

And she feared others might recognise her evils As
they melted in the pool of her irises. Young fear,

ancient.

Warm fear, inevitable.

She had paintbrushes now,

But only those given to her by others,

And she doubted her canvas would have colour at

all If it wasn't for those around her.

Young art, unoriginal
Warm art, frustrating.
The flesh and tears
And art and fears
Began to press into her.
She loved it all too terribly,
So raw it scorched her skin
And forced her eyes onto her own white bone That had been there since she
was slippery and blue; the blank canvas of a human.

Young life, dying.
Warm life, cold.
She began to doubt that her too terrible love, So synonymous with pain,
Was much better than the feeling of peace; Or even,
the feeling of nothing at all.
As her struggle pushed to its peak,
And all doors seemed to be slamming shut, The keyhole of one poured out
pure, blinding light. It swung open,
slow and silent.
It led nowhere.

Perhaps it was time for a break From always being somewhere, Ever since she
was slippery and blue. One foot was already in.
Pure white, stretching in every direction, Bright, humming, static.
The door shut behind her.
There was no ground,
The void stretched on beneath her, Vacant and overflowing,
Dry and damp,
Liquid and cloud, Swallowing noise

and throwing up white silence.

Her mind was emptied in a gust of cold air: If she was free of the shackles of
love, She was immune from throbbing wrists. She floated in its soft, intangible
mist

As trails of smoke wound up her arms, Into her nostrils,
Like vines coiling on the bodies of the fallen, Sucking the colour from her like
sap. Peace, at last.

Nothing, at last.

As each minute passed, Her being became less. She was aware
Of how it was all slipping away. Then,
She wasn't.

She heard the door lock.

She was buried now,
in the soft coffin
she had laid herself in.

Her mind a ceaseless white noise,
Her transparent skin crawling with fire ants, Saliva dripping from her parched
lips,

Blue veins running across her smooth forehead. Was this peace?

She felt nothing.

A distant voice sang to her
Dull and indecipherable.

It melted into the ceaseless polyphony Which skidded in the frozen cavern of
her mind. Was this nothing?

It wasn't peace.

Something grasped at her wrist, A distant thought suggested
it was love's metallic claw, But it was warmer,
it sparked her skin,
And set alight her dormant mind.

It was a hand. Just a hand. That was something. Could it be peace?
But how long it had been since she had felt that touch! She swore to memorise
every indent in it's finger print, Every wrinkle in its knuckle,
Every crease in its palm,
All the dirt behind its nails.

But the mist was in her blood now, Binding, cemented.
She began to shiver, to scream, To truly appreciate the void's eternity And her
own desperate folly. She began to long for paintbrushes, Even if they weren't
hers,
But most of all,

She longed to love things too terribly. Peace, so deceitful. Nothing, so faithful.

The hand tightened its grip and began to tug, But so did the mist.
Peace, interrupted.
Nothing, becoming something.
The voice became louder.
She struggled, she flailed,
A human realising she's in danger, She gritted her teeth,
She sobbed, the clouds of mist Began to sob with her,
Covering her with their freezing teardrops. She bit her lip until it bled blue
blood, And spat it into the vacant void.
A stain in the immaculate.
The void faltered.

It was insulted.

The hand tugged on her arm.

She crashed back into our world Clinging to the hands which held her, And the
door slammed shut.

A blank canvas of human, Shaken, shivering, slippery and blue but learned
And equipped with brushes.

Thankful for the other, Thankful for their hand. Young cries, piercing. Warm
cries, safe.

Eva De Vincenzi



**T H E
E Y E
O F
T H E**

STORM.

THE EYE OF THE STORM by LUCIA JEAN PEACOCK

Screaming. Shouting. I watch, struggling to swim, the last of the mast disappear below. It was too much for me using all of the strength I had left I hung onto a piece of wood and fell into a world of darkness. The fire crackled steadily. Seven years had passed since the sinking of the Victorian yacht. I used a stone as a calendar. I could not remember much, just who I was and where I came from, but I could remember that day all too well. It was a stormy day and I could tell that mum was worried, though she did her best not to show it. We were about an hour out to sea when the boat gave an almighty creak. Water rushed in at all angles. Safety boats were deployed and my mother tried to pass me too one but the boat was in a panic and she was no match for them. The boat jerks forward and we are thrown off. My dog Gabbo is the only reason I am alive today. All I have left is my mother's ring. I wish, wish, wish I could see people again eat cake again make a friend. I blew out the fire and closed my eyes.

“Lacy” I did not open my eyes. I had had dreams like this before.

“LACY”

This time I opened my eyes. There was no mistaking the girl standing in front of me as a dream.

“we`re going to be late for tea and cake”

I reluctantly walked out of the strange room out of the door to where this strange girl was supposedly leading me too tea and cake. She stopped dead outside of a shop that had a closed sign hanging on the door. She turned the knob on it and led me inside.

“are you sure we should be doing this?” I asked her unsure of what to think.

“Are you kidding?” she demanded. When I did not reply she continued.

“This is aunts’ shop!”

“oh...yeah..right..I.I didn’t recognize it”

“Are you feeling ok?”

“Yes!”

We were sitting down at the table now. A small lady with a strange chubby face. She saw me staring at her, “Are you feeling ok Lacey, dear” I didn’t reply.

“You look quite peaky, dear. Why didn’t you stay home with mum or dad? You can have a takeaway cake you know.”

I burst into tears and ran out....right into the road. A car was coming at me fast. It was inches away from me when a hand grabbed my hand and pulled me back. the hand pulled me back and pulled me close.

“Hey, hey it’s OK I’m here.”

I held the ring in my hand close as I said,
“I want to stay here, with you”

“Hey of course you are silly.”

I know one thing for sure, my wish came true.

The End

Lucia Jean Peacock



NIGHTMARE AFTER NIGHTMARE by SOFIA PECINO

Part 1

The morning everything went wrong.... Of course you need a backstory but this story is not one of your regular bedtime once upon a time stories it's the story of McKayla Armfield when she lived her worst nightmare... it's the first day back from summer holidays and you would think you would have had all of your holidays in summer but no McKayla's parents decided to have a getaway weekend to France and leave McKayla with her aunt Caroline which is a terrible idea but her parents don't know yet and will never find out. You see McKayla's dad is the mayor of their town Rigton town and he never gets holidays because he needs to guide the town and if he misses everyday he could loose his job and yes as you probably have already guessed their rich.

"Get up McKayla I have to leave with your father or we'll miss our plane!" exclaimed her mother in a harsh tone, " your going to aunt Caroline's for the weekend or more" said her dad with a giggle, " what! You can't leave me with aunt Caroline she's uhm she's" " she's what" asked her mother " she's evil!" " oh don't be ridiculous darling, she's my sister" " so, that doesn't matter she cooks children for dinner!" " you don't want me to get eaten by her do you!?" " McKayla!,That's enough! You are going to her house wether you like it or not!" Shouted her mother. "

now pack your bags so your ready to go” exclaimed her mother. “ get in the car McKayla and tell the driver to take you to aunt Caroline’s house” demanded her mother. “ hello” said tony (the driver). “ where shall I take you?” “ hello again tony please take me to my cruel Aunties house” she said politely “ do you mean aunt Caroline?” Asked tony “ yep” said McKayla, “ oh she’s not cruel, she’s just a bit weird” said tony “ you mean she’s cruel” “well I wouldn’t put it that way but I guess so”.Tony straight away took McKayla to aunt Caroline’s house, the drive there was rather quite it was like McKayla had something up her sleeve. “Oh hello darling what are you doing here” said aunt Caroline. “Didn’t mum and dad tell you I’m staying for the weekend!?” “Oh yes, yes, she did” aunt Caroline added. “Come in come in, i don’t want you to catch a cold” said aunt Caroline “ bye McKayla” waved tony. “Bye”. Aunt Caroline’s house is infected with cats she’s a cat lady which is not good McKayla loves dogs but her mum and dad will never get one they call them ‘pests’ which according to McKayla is called offensive. McKayla slowly walked into the house and looked at all the different colour cats, there were ginger cats black cats white cats grey cats and one I think was dyed pink. “Let me show you your room” said aunt Caroline, the room was nothing anyone could picture unless your a cat lady it was small a mattress on the floor and cat beds cat toys all over the room. “I hope this is not too much to ask but when I sleep can you take the cats out the room I don’t feel safe around them, I feel like they might scratch me in the middle of the night” McKayla asked “oh McKayla don’t be such baby their lovely cats they won’t scratch this is their home you can’t just kick them out of it” “right sorry I should’ve thought of that before” “yes you should’ve” said aunt Caroline in an angry tone. “I can’t let this woman get the best of me she might be in charge of me for the next few days but she can’t

control me now it's time I get to see her real dark side and prove myself right to mum and dad and then maybe finally next time they know to listen" " what was that" "oh nothing aunt Caroline" " Steven! We are going to be late what are you waiting for do you you want to miss the jet!?" "No of course not honey" "well then what are you waiting for chop chop!" They got to the plane or private Jett in a couple of minutes around the time 12:02 am the plane took off but it only lasted a manner of minutes until the unthinkable happened.

Part 2

The Unthinkable

On the plane it only lasted for 30 minutes until it came down...

"Ehrrh captain what's happening!?" Shouted Mrs Armfield "were going down!." Now the Jett had crashed no one survived that means now McKayla has no parents so the nightmare now begins... or does it...

"McKayla dear I just got a call your parents plane went down they didn't make it, and in the will it says that you get their fortune and become mayor!" "What no I must have read it wrong" "let me see aunt Caroline, nope you didn't read it wrong I guess I'm mayor!" "You cannot be mayor!"

"Well there's no mayor to tell me what I can and can't do" McKayla grabbed her aunts cell phone and straight away put in Tony's number he need to take her straight back to her house! " oh hello aunt Caroline I guess I have to come pick McKayla up now as she's now mayor" said Tony. "Uhh yes yes" said McKayla in her best aunt Caroline voice. "Turn

around” said aunt Caroline in the meanest voice she had ever done. “ uhm uhm uhm uhm” “I said turn around!” McKayla then turned around and saw aunt Caroline furious, “why would you call tony and pretend to be me are you thinking! Go to bed now I have a evil surprise for you I mean kind” later that day McKayla went straight to bed and cried for hours and hours she nearly drowned in her own tears. “McKayla dear” aunt Caroline added “come downstairs I have made you some supper” McKayla walked down the stairs half asleep not knowing what she was about to eat would change her life just for the slightest bit..

“Thank you aunt Caroline” said McKayla with food in her mouth so no one really heard it. “After that go straight to bed you are still punished” that saying woke McKayla up a bit and reminded her that that’s something her mum would say after that she realized another and another aunt Caroline sort of brain washed her and now McKayla realized that she was eating, eating something green and red tasted a bit metally like blood. “ wait! That’s it!” After the will it said it will all go to aunt Caroline she’s trying to get rid of her so that she becomes mayor! “ well if she wants to do that to me I will make it happen to her.” The days went by when McKayla was not living her best life her parents are dead her aunt tried to poison her I know you don’t want that happening to you.

A year later now she gets the hang of things and presents stuff to the public telling them what they can and can’t do.

“ hello everybody as you know I am mayor and I say that you have to work your normal shifts with a one hour lunch break no cheating I can fire you or at least I think I can” said McKayla still getting the hang

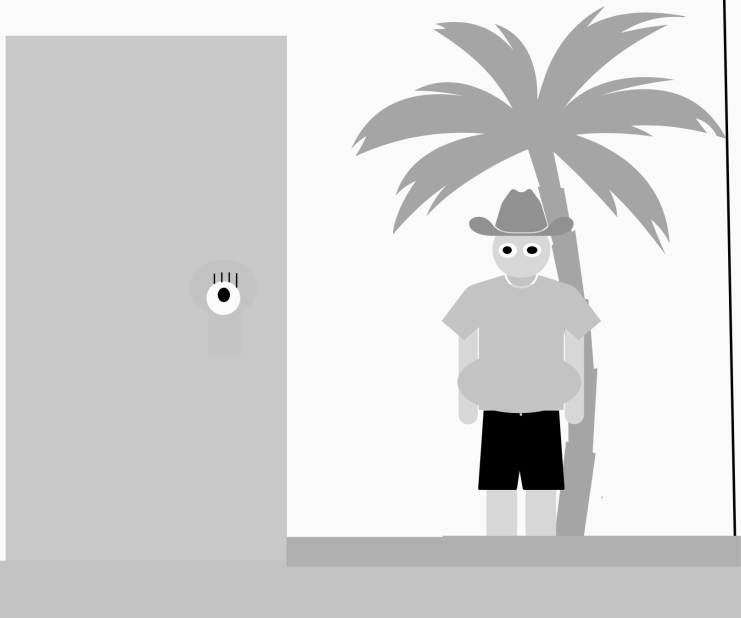
of running her hometown. McKayla is now starting to have a normal 12 year old girls life but she's living like royalty but then horrible aunt Caroline finally gave up on trying to get rid of her niece and has now become nice and yes I mean it this time but the horrible thing about her life is that the public don't take her seriously so her partners aunt

Caroline and tony they repeat whatever she says so the public listen and it works so in this story not everything is bad it's a half and half. The thing is at the start of this story it says leaving their daughter with aunt Caroline is a terrible idea but they never find out the terrible thing was that aunt Caroline hated her niece she always thought she was spoiled at such a young age and got everything but that's normal for someone with a hole in their heart and that hole is filled with her happiness but now it's filled with hatred and yes even now she still hates people but not as much as before which means if you know someone which hates loads of people they can always change!

Sofia Pecino

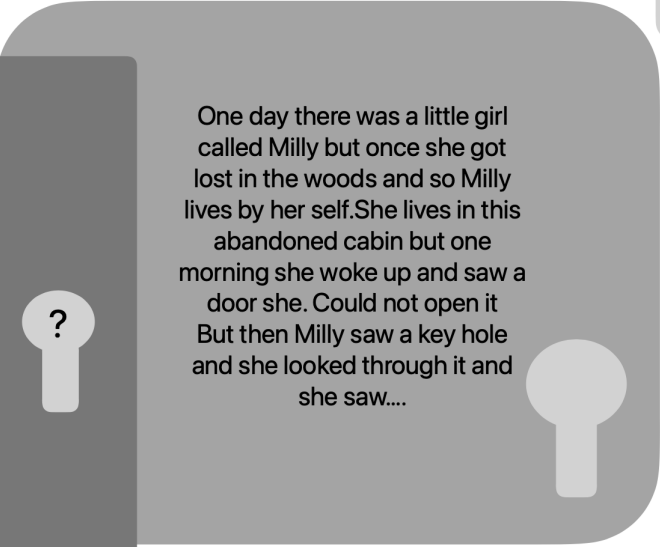
The magic door

Author : Alba
Gilbert
Illustrator:Elena Murto
Gavira



THE MAGIC DOOR by ALBA GILBERT
illustrated by ELENA MURTO GAVIRA

The magic door



One day there was a little girl called Milly but once she got lost in the woods and so Milly lives by her self. She lives in this abandoned cabin but one morning she woke up and saw a door she. Could not open it But then Milly saw a key hole and she looked through it and she saw....



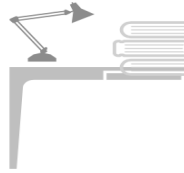
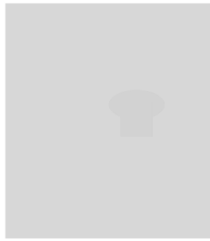
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The mag

On a dull cloudy day, there was this poor little girl on her own in the little abandoned cabin because the forest which led

Milly visited the town quite often to buy and sell things by begging. Milly is a nine year old girl. And one day she found a strange door in

Magic door



Milly was so confused. She tried to open it but it wouldn't budge. "Hmm what is this strange door?" she said.

Then she saw a key hole, so she looked through it. A big and large person. "Well that big person looks like he's looking through the key hole she noticed some things." Milly heard one of the servants speak "h-here's the key to let him to try." Harold, I really need to try.

After a few minutes of silence, Harold knew something was wrong. He got up from his throne and looked around... "Arggghh! What's the key hole!" Said Harold.

So Harold immediately ran up to the door and looked through it. He saw Milly and tears welled in his eyes. Then he realized it was... IT WAS HER FATHER! Milly cried out "DAD! I MISSED YOU MY BELOVED DAD!" And Harold

ic door

called Milly collecting fire wood in the forest .She lives
she got lost in the forest. One day she found a path in
her to a little quiet town

y food . Mostly, she earned her money by
one morning Milly woke up and saw this
in her bedroom.



o open the door but it won't
door doing in my room?" She

gh it and what she saw was CRAZY.She saw a
ks a bit familiar" She thought. While Milly was
thing.There was people serving that man.Then
Harold." Then gave him some sort of juice for
ognize that name " She said.

something was not right so he got up
gggh! I see an eye through the key
Harold.

nd knocked it down. Only one glance
hat is when Milly realized who Harold
t loud "OH MY GOODNESS I HAVE
Milly and Harold happily ever after.

MYSTERY DOOR by LIANNA HARDY

Mystery Door

I wake up tired and cold,
I read my alarm clock; ~~Qam~~ it
told,

When I got up I saw a door,
It wasn't there before,

I walk up to it; scared and
trembling,

Something about it was unsettling,
There was a box next to it,

It a puzzle; so I decided to sit,
Once built it was a key,

Who was I going to see?

I look through the keyhole and all
I see is pitch black.

Now there is no going back,...

I enter alone,

I wish I had someone to follow;

The door closes behind me,

A few seconds back is where I wish
I could be,

A note appears "Each minute the clock

turns, the smaller the room will
become!" It read,
"Let me out!" I plead
I figured not to waste time, so I focused
to escape,
I found a square shape,
After a while the room was quite slim,
The light was getting dim,
All of a sudden a book fell down,
Away went my frown,
In it contained the code,
The keypad had mold,
39878 it five digit code it was,
I was so surprised I had to
pause,

The door it unlocked!,
It was also now, unblocked,
I ran out, as fast as I could,
I never knew I would,
Once I was out I saw my mum,
Together is the only place we had fun

By Kianna The End
Hardy 56



BLAND TO BRIGHT!

by **AMAL ALLABED & LIARA HARPER**

CHAPTER ONE

I was walking to my next class, boring, old, math.

“Ugh, everything’s just so grey around here...” I murmured.

I guess i murmured too loud, because as soon as i said that everybody’s head was turned to me. Then, she walked in...

“Well, Well, Well... Look who’s here.” Savanah -my bully- said to me. “Poor, lonely, Lilith the loser, the one who’s so interested in rainbows. Such a five year old!” The whole hall started to laugh and snicker at me. And i had nothing to say! I couldn’t defend myself, well, it’s not like i ever had. Her dads the mayor of this town! He could arrest my whole family i if i stood up to her. So I just stood there, staring at her, shaking. One of the most embarrassing things ever had just happened to me!

“Aww, the little baby’s gonna cry! Wah, wah wah!” Savanah yelled. Soon the whole hall started chanting with her.

“Wah, wah, wah!” Soon enough, Mira -my sister- grabbed me by the wrist and pulled me aside into math class.

“Lilith, what happened there? You’re always getting into something with Savannah.” Mira told me.

“It’s a long story.” I responded.

DIHHHHHHHHING!

“Phew! Saved by the bell!” I mumbled.

“I guess we’ll discuss this another day.” Mira said.

After that the rest of the day was pretty normal, until after school...

CHAPTER TWO

When I left school I turned the corner while Mira walked the longer path with her friends. Then I saw five people with skull t-shirts vandalizing the wall of a grocery store, they each had colorful spray cans which they were using to write on the wall,

'Mayor Ruben Sucks!' Then they saw the police coming and one of the gangsters quickly handed me their spray can before vanishing around the corner.

"HEY! WHO DID THIS?" Officer Kernel Pop yelled.

"I... Uhhh..." I muttered nervously.

"I'm sorry, but you're coming with me ma'am." He grabbed my arm and I dropped the spray paint can, he dragged me into the BPC car -Blandville Police Control- and drove me all the way to the mayors office. I was trembling because I didn't know what was going to happen. When we turned the corner I could see the mayors office, it was massive, yet grey and dusty. He dragged me out the car and started walking me inside.

"Please let me go! It wasn't me, it was some random group of five people and they had skull t-shirts!" I cried. He just ignored me and walked in Mayor Ruben's office.

"Ah! My favorite cop! Welcome in! And you again..." The mayor frowned. "What has she done now?" Mayor Ruben Asked.

Chapter Three

"She has vandalized the wall on the Greens Groceries store, and the worst part is that she wrote 'Mayor Ruben Sucks!'" Officer Kernel Pop said.

"Im not surprised. I'm giving you a fine of \$1,000. Pay it off this week or you're getting arrested. Good luck." Mayor Ruben said.

"NO! BUT IT WASN'T ME, PLEASE!" I yelled

“Yeah right. Leave this office right now. I don’t want to see you here and your little excuses.” Mayor Ruben snapped. I miserably walked out his office while Officer Kernel Pop and Mayor Ruben stayed in to chat and have some coffee. It wasn’t even me! I’d just been framed by some emo gangsters! I didn’t know what to say when I came home. What would my family even think of me? We don’t have that kind of money! I walked home sadly. When I opened the door that’s when I saw my mum.

“Lilith! I was worried for you! What took you so long?” She said with a concerned look. She could see my expression and knew straight away something wasn’t right. I explained everything to her and she wasn’t mad at all, but she was quite worried. “How are we going to get the money?” She cried. Then Mira walked in.

“I heard everything, this is all I have to help.” Mira handed out \$57.

“Thank you sweetie. We’ll see if we can sort this out. There must be a way for them to know that it was not Lilith.” My mum said confidently.

“Mum, the mayor hates us! There is no way that he’ll know. And he’s too lazy to install any security cameras anyway.” Mira said sadly. Suddenly, there was a loud knock on the door.

“Who’s that?” Mira asked.

“I don’t know, ill open it.” I said.

I turned away to open the door only to see Savannah standing right in front of me.

“Hey freak, time’s ticking! Where’s the 1,000 bucks? I need to buy my new Chanel bag!”

“Ugh! Go away Savannah! We still have a whole week!” And i slammed the door in her face.

CHAPTER FOUR

I ran up to my room stressed about what was gonna happen with the money. We don't have that kind of money! I slumped on my chair, staring at the mirror with a gloomy face, wondering what I could do to help me and my family out of this situation. When suddenly I saw a tall figure in my mirror who kinda looked like the past mayor, Jonathan Dalton. The guy who I was learning about in history. Suddenly, I heard an echoey voice say "You are the chosen one."

"What do you mean? Wait... WHO EVEN ARE YOU?"

"I am the past mayor, Jonathan Dalton. And the new Mayor, Ruben Miller has completely destroyed my city full of color, it used to be called 'Rainbow Falls'. I miss it very much. So I am relying on you, Lilith Harper."

"Relying on me? for what?"

"To bring Rainbow Falls back! I shall bless you with the power of color!"

"WAIT, WHAT? WHY ME?"

"I have been watching over your family since I died thirty-six years ago. I know that I can trust you. But you mustn't tell anyone. Even your family."

"You've definitely got it wrong. My family and i are already stressed on how we are going to get 1,000 pounds in one week."

"Don't be silly! You can definitely learn how to use your power in under the span of a week! And then everybody will forget! Trust me... I'm sure your grandmother, Elizabeth would be very proud of you. Do it for her..."

"You know what? I will... I'll do it for her!"

"That's the spirit! So now, just put your hands together and open your fingers and think of any color and try shoot it out your hands." I did what he said, and i thought of color yellow, and when I opened my eyes

there was a splatter of yellow all over my wall!

“WOW! IT WORKS! I CANT BELIEVE IT!”

“Of course it works! Well, I have to go now, so keep practicing! I’ll be watching you!” He smiled and waved before vanishing into thin air.

CHAPTER FIVE

I didn’t talk to my family the rest of the day and I stayed in my room. The next day I woke up feeling pretty happy! I brushed my teeth and then got dressed. I ran downstairs for breakfast. “Someone’s feeling good this Saturday!” My mum said as she was pouring me and my sister a two glasses of apple juice and making eggs on toast.

“You definitely look happier than me!” I responded.

“Guess what?” My mum said excitedly.

“What?” Mira and I asked.

“Your father just got promoted and we can pay the mayor \$1,000!

“YES!” Mira exclaimed

“HOORAY!” I cried. I was so glad that we didn’t have to worry about this anymore.

“Bye kids! Bye honey!” My dad yelled before leaving for work.

“Bye! Thank you!” We all yelled.

Suddenly when I looked down on my feet there was a flood of rainbow paint on my pants!

“Is something wrong Lilith?” Mira asked.

“Oh, err... It’s nothing!” I said nervously.

“Okay then...” she responded suspiciously. When nobody was looking I quickly ran off to my bedroom and locked the door. Then I changed my jeans.

“I really need to learn how to control this...” I said to myself. I walked back into the kitchen and said bye to my sister and mum before leaving to the park behind our house. I went to the abandoned park because nobody was there and I could easily test my powers there. I looked at a tree with dead leaves. I closed my eyes and thought of a tree with a brown trunk and colorful green leaves. When I opened them, I saw a beautiful oak tree standing right in front of me! Then I tried the flowers. I closed my eyes and thought of pretty pink and blue tulips right in front of me. And when I opened them, again it worked! They looked even better than I imagined! Then I heard a voice behind me.

“You’re so dead.”

I quickly turned around only to see Savannah right there!

“SAVANNAH?! you better not tell anyone!” I cried. Well, let’s be honest. Nobody would believe her anyway. But then an idea hit me. I’d pretend to be a witch to scare her away!

“Shoo! Before I turn you into a frog!” I put on a smug looking face before she ran off screaming. I could have some fun with this power... i thought to myself.

Next I tried to color in a fish in a pond. This was my first time trying it on an alive animal. I closed my eyes and thought of a golden, orange gold fish and when I opened my eyes I couldn’t believe how beautiful it looked. It had shiny orange scaled and beautiful large fins. Then, I knew I was ready.

CHAPTER SIX

I felt my tummy rumble and I started to feel a bit peckish, so I went to the Green’s Groceries store to pick up a bowl of caesar salad for lunch and sat on a bench. Then I thought about how i felt my grandmother’s

presence with me when I brought color that goldfish. But then I remembered that I had to pay the mayor, just to get it out the way. I walked home quickly as the park was not that far from my home. I opened the door and saw my father there,

“Hi, dad!”

“Hey sweetie.”

“I’m gonna drop off the money at the mayors office, okay?”

“Okay Lills, here ya go.” And he handed out the money from a cupboard above him. “Be careful okay. Don’t lose the money along the way.”

“Okay! Bye dad! I’ll be right back!”

“Bye!” He said. I rushed out and reached the mayors office in around ten minutes. I knocked on his door and walked in.

“Hello, Lilith Harper. Here to give the \$1,000?”

“Yes, actually.” I said proudly

“Good. Hand it to me and go away, rainbow unicorn poop.” He said with a salty tone.

“That’s kind of rude, isn’t it?” I said.

“I said go already!” I walked out and not to my surprise, it started raining. I brought out the umbrella from my bag and walked back home. I was soaking wet when I arrived and was too tired to change or eat dinner. I just took off my bag and threw myself on my bed and I fell asleep in an instant.

CHAPTER SEVEN

I woke up very early after a good nights sleep and stretched. But when I opened my eyes I saw Jonathan Dalton right in front of me!

“AHHH!” I screeched

“Don’t worry! It’s only me! I just wanted to say that what you did yesterday was incredible. And I’ve brought someone that has been watching you with me for a while now with me. She’s a very good friend of mine.” Then I saw a figure slowly appear beside him.

“G-g-granny?” I was trembling because I haven’t seen her since 10 years ago! I was about to stand up and hug her but I forgot that she was a ghost and that I would fall right through her. I started to cry because of how much I missed her. “I’ve missed you... I-I-I’m doing this for you! I’m bringing back the Rainbow Falls that you used to know!”

“I know, Johnathan has told me everything. I am so proud of you. I was watching you when you were practicing and it was spectacular! I always saw something special in you, I believe in you! You can do it!”

“Well, we have to go now. We’ll watch you from above! Goodbye! I wiped my tears and said goodbye. I knew what had to be done. I brushed my teeth and I dressed up in a colorful outfit. I wasn’t following the dumb dress code anymore.

“Lills! You can’t go out wearing a colorful outfit! We can get arrested!”

“I don’t care anymore. Come with me, and tell Mira and mum to come too. I’ll be waiting at the town square by the tallest building in Blandville.”

“Wait!” He yelled. I was so focused on my objective that I didn’t hear him and left. I ran behind buildings so nobody would realize that I was wearing colorful clothing. Then I got out my umbrella and hid under it so nobody would see me and I slowly sneaked up the Blandville trade center, making sure that nobody would see me, I was in the tallest building in Blandville and I was slowly making my way up the stairs and at one point I saw my dad, mum and Mira looking for me. As soon as I reached the top of the building it got windier. I accidentally let go of my umbrella and that’s when everybody saw me, people were worried and

were screaming for others to go and come get me down. As I heard all of the commotion, I closed my eyes and looked up. I opened my hands and imagined what Rainbow Falls would have looked like with the presence of my grandma by my side. I positioned my arms up trying to hold my balance as the wind picked up. Then I opened my eyes and I saw the color shooting across the town as I started to tear up. I couldn't believe what I'd just done and I felt incredibly weak. But it didn't bother me. I saw grown, beautiful oak trees, cottage houses with color splattered all over them. Smooth roads, rainbow cars, a happy place that I always wished for. Then I heard people chanting my name.

"LILITH! LILITH! LILITH! LILITH!"

I waved my hands in the air and ran down the stairs looking like a muddy puddle of rainbow paint. I hugged my family and everything was perfect. Until Mayor Ruben and Savanah walked in.

"WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?!" Mayor Ruben Snapped. Then everybody became quiet.

"This means happiness!" I cried. **"We finally live in a happy place! Not some boring grey place that makes everybody feel gloomy. Now everybody is happy because of their surroundings."**

"You know what? You're right... we're sorry... I'm sorry how I treated you all! I'm sorry how miserable you all felt! I take it back! I take all those nasty things I said back! I'll start fresh!" Mayor Rueben declared. Everyone started cheering and chanting for him.

"RUBEN! RUBEN! RUBEN!"

"DADDY! YOU'RE JOKING RIGHT? THIS IS NONSENSE!" Savanah shouted angrily.

"No, I'm not. And actually, you've always treated me horribly! I'm sending you to boarding school! Now, go home and pack your bags!"

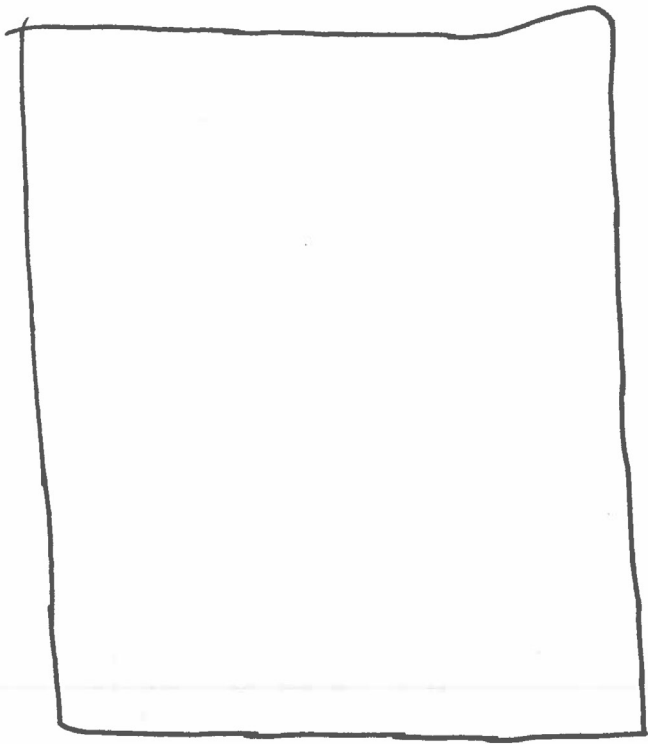
"NOO! PLEASE DADDY!" Savanah yelled.

“That’s it! Go home!” Mayor Ruben said angrily. The whole crowd started cheering and I felt my grandma’s presence around me again. I told my family everything and they were all so proud of me! Soon enough this town was renamed to Rainbow Falls. We were known all around town and nobody like Savannah ever dared to mess with us ever again.

Liara and Amal



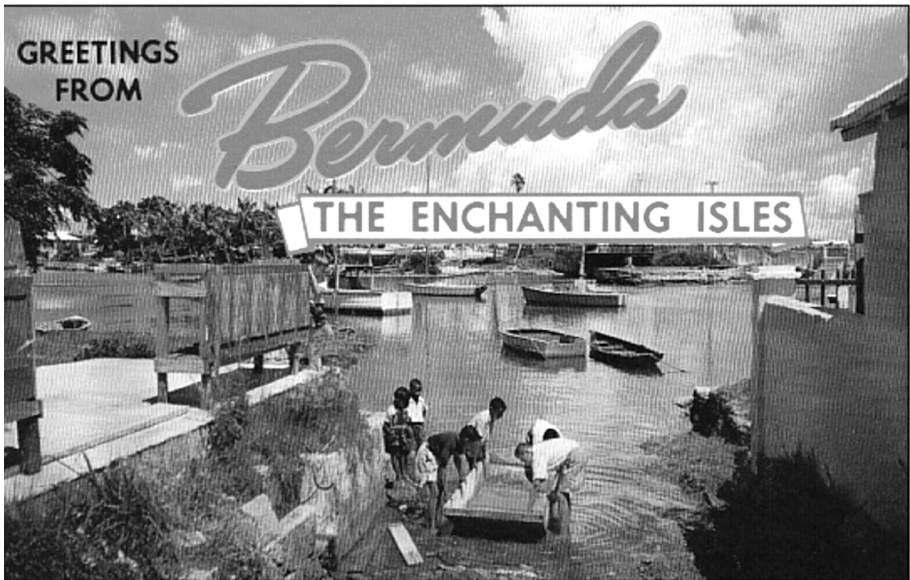
Draw your self



GREETINGS
FROM

Bermuda

THE ENCHANTING ISLES



FAMILY SECRETS by ALAIRE BROWN

I remember it all so clearly. How could I forget? After all, this is how my story began.

I woke up to the sound of shouting coming downstairs. I turned to my alarm clock to see the time; it was 7:30. I tried to fall back asleep but, in the end, curiosity won. I got out of bed quietly and tiptoed to the stairs. The floorboards were cold and creaky. When I was there, I could hear two voices, a male and a female. I guessed that the female voice was my mom's, but I did not know the male voice. I could not hear what they were saying but I knew based on their tones, they were arguing. I wanted to hear what they were arguing about so curiosity won again. Sometimes I wonder that if I hadn't seen him what would have happened. I tiptoed down the stairs and followed the voices to the living room. I hid behind the wall and peeked my head out to see. I could only see the man's back because he was facing the fireplace. The man was wearing a tuxedo and had a Rolex. My mom was still in her pajamas.

"No! I won't let you use her!" My mom shouted tears flowing down her face.

"I'm not using her, and I didn't use you. You knew that she would have to do this." he said calmly. "This is hard for me too-"

"No! We are not in the same boat! I raised her, I watched her grow. While you did nothing!" She screamed.

When she said that it clicked.

Coming out from behind the wall I said, "Dad?"

Both of them turned around in shock but the type of shock was different. My mom's shock was I'm so sorry, but my dad's shock was wow just the right time.

Back then I didn't know what they meant but now I do. It was a warning.

“Hunny-” My mom said pity in her voice

“My daughter.” My dad said cutting my mom off. “You look beautiful and I’m just so happy to see you.”

“No...no, no!” I said, with each no my emotions change starting with joy then confusion and lastly anger. “What do you want from me?”

“I want to get to know you, see you and be your dad.” He said it as if he meant it. How could I not have believed him. “How about today after school I take you around New York? We could get to know each other.”

I didn’t know how to answer so I turned to my mother. The look she gave me said go ahead but I could still see the guilt in her face.

But I said, “Yes.” That one word changed the future if I said no life would have been so much better.

“Great.” He said as he handed me a business card.

He was about to say something else but suddenly the ring he was wearing lit up red and he made up an excuse to leave.

I turned to my mom, but she didn’t meet my gaze as she said. “Get washed up and ready for school.”

While I was walking upstairs, I thought about how wonderful it would be to see my dad and how he was right on time for my 16th birthday. I was so naive back then.

When I finished taking a shower, I went to my dresser to get some clothes but while I was picking out my outfit, I saw a picture of me when it was my 4th birthday. In it I was crying because my dad wasn’t there. I remembered that young girl who swore never to trust him again and there I was doing it all over again.

After I got changed, I went downstairs for breakfast. While I walked downstairs, I smelt something heavenly. I instantly knew what it was, her famous chocolate Chip muffins. I still remember the smell even though it’s been years since I had one. At the smell of that I ran downstairs eager to eat. When I arrived in the

kitchen, I heard my mom hum a little tune. When she realized I was there she told me to sit down and served me a plate. My mom's chocolate chip muffins always helped me get out of a foul mood.

"So hunny have you decided on your choice." she asked, still focused on the oven.

"Yes mom." I said, my mouth stuffed with food.

"Well...what is your decision?" She said it like she already knew what I was going to say.

Before I spoke, I chewed the rest of my food. "Well, I know he hasn't been around, and I have no reason to even talk to him but maybe because I have no reason to talk to him that could be my reason. I want to have him as a dad."

"I knew you would say that." she said with a sad smile on her face.

After breakfast I went outside and waited for the bus as I did, I prepared myself for what was going to happen at school. School was never good for me, especially because Kathy goes there. Kathy is a very rich and very spoiled brat. She made my life a living hell back in high school. I remember that morning not because of the bullying but I remember it because it was the last "normal" morning I would ever have.

I heard the bus before I saw the bus. I could hear the shouting of kids and a kid crying. When the bus came to my stop I got on and within the time of my feet being on the bus a paper airplane came flying into my hair. It was like a ritual they had; every day I came on the bus they would fly a paper airplane to me. Last time it poked my eye. That day I ignored the airplane and took it out of my hair. I then went to the closest empty seat, there was a girl sitting beside it and when she saw me coming, she put her bag on the seat. I looked around but there were no other seats, so I was forced to stand. As I stood there all I could think about was revenge. If only I had power, then I could make the world so much better. I could get rid of all the rude and disgusting people who prevent others from feeling joy. If only... Little did I know soon I would have that chance.

After the uncomfortable bus ride, I got off to my next struggle. Kathy and her goons. As soon as I was in the hallway Kathy and her goons surrounded me, as if they had planned it all.

“Look at the weird kid.” She said with a smirk on her face. “Didn’t I tell you not to come to school today. Or ever again!”

All her goons agreed and came closer to me.

“Kathy, maybe before you make fun of someone you should watch an eyeliner tutorial because they don’t look like twins, more like one looks like a grandpa and the other a dog that got run over.” I said.

She turned to one of her goons and they brought out a mirror and she screamed in horror.

“Which one of you did this?” She screamed at all of them.

Too focused on herself she easily forgot about me and stormed towards the bathroom. I felt triumphant, I loved it when I saw evil people suffer. The rest of the day went in a blur because all I was focusing on was how hanging out with my dad would go.

It was finally the end of the day, and I went outside feeling kind of nervous but also excited. I waited for about five minutes when I saw a limonene that caught my attention. The man driving it was wearing a fancy tuxedo, but I couldn’t see the passenger because the windows were tinted black. I thought it was for Kathy but when the driver parked the car, and my dad came out waving me over I was shocked. I guessed he was rich because he was wearing a suit, but I didn’t know he was super rich. It took me a moment before it clicked that he was asking me to come into the limousine. When I finally started walking behind me, I could hear the murmurs of confused students, but I was also confused. Out of all the mumbles I heard one specific voice that made me happy, Kathy’s. I turned behind me to see her shocked expression and it was everything I ever wanted. Her mouth was hanging open, the drink she used to have in her hand was now on the ground and her posture looked like she was leaning over a table. I wanted to

giggle but I smiled a proud smile and walked to the car with more confidence. When I reached the driver came out and opened the door for me. I said thank you, but he didn't respond.

My dad greeted me by saying, "Good Afternoon." "Hi." I replied.

For the beginning of the car ride, it was quite awkward and silent, but after a while my dad started a conversation.

"So... I was thinking we could go to the Burgundy Mall." He suggested. Not knowing what to say I simply agreed.

"So how was school?" He asked.

"Uh it was fine. The bus ride was a little uncomfortable but-"

"Bus ride? You take a bus to school?" He asked, he looked so shocked like it was the end of the world. "Your mother allows you to take the bus?"

"Yes-" before I got to say anything else he continued talking. "Well, you are not doing that anymore." he said sternly.

"Who are you to say what I can and can't do!" I shouted back.

"Your mother also allows you to talk to adults like this... disappointing." he said looking at me with disgust.

When he said that it made my blood boil, how dare he insult the woman who stayed with me and didn't leave. How dare he insult the woman who always catches me when I fall. How dare he insult the woman who went through hours of pain just to bring me into this world. How dare he insult the woman who clothes and feeds me. The woman who protected me.

"You have no right to judge her parenting skills because you weren't even there!" As I said, the driver rolled up the sectional to block the noise.

In a softer tone he said, "I had to for your own safety for the prophecy-" "What prophecy?" I asked, looking at him confused.

"I will tell you later." He said sadness in his voice.

"That's not what happened." He said this time his voice was full of rage. "Since you want to know so badly, let me take you to my work and show you your

prophecy.”

“Hmph. Fine.” I said.

“Driver! Change of plans, we’re going to my workplace.” He said.

The rest of the car ride was silent. We were both too stubborn to look at one another so we looked outside the opposite windows. After a couple of minutes of driving the car stopped. The building we stopped at looked like a normal office skyscraper. It had ten floors, and, on the roof, there was an observatory. Each floor was covered in windows. Through the windows you could see people on laptops working. It looked very uniform. From what I could see the people had no emotions. It looked like they were robots. The driver parked the limo in the building’s underground parking lot. Then the driver got out and opened the door for me and my dad. My dad had a serious look on his face when he stepped out of the limo.

“This is my workplace, it may not look like anything now but wait until you see inside.” he said calmly. “This place has changed your life more than you know. And soon it will change it even more.”

When he said that I wish I had taken it seriously, maybe I wouldn’t be where I am today, but instead I scoffed. We all walked to the elevator. When we reached the elevator, where the button is supposed to be, there was a scanner. The driver put his eyeball there and then a green laser popped out and scanned his eyeball. When it was finished, he gave me a wink and a smirk. My eyes widened from shock. What is this place? I wondered. We all stepped in the elevator, and it talked.

“Who is this young lady I see?” It asked excitedly. “Oh my gosh! Is this the chosen one?”

“Chosen one?” I asked, confused.

“She doesn’t know yet, sorry.” It apologized.

“Don’t worry about it speedy.” My dad said.

“So, you talk to the elevator, but you don’t answer my question?” I said annoyed.

“Oops. Family drama. I’ll just send you to the roof.” The elevator said.

Within seconds the doors opened to the roof.

“Whoa.” I thought out loud.

The roof was beautiful. Its floor was marble, and the observatory was shiny white. The glass in the observatory was stained. So, in the sun it reflected so many different colors in the sky.

“This is where your destiny will be chosen.” My dad said. “I remember when I was young and how I went in there’ how I was scared but there was no reason to be scared because I became a hero.”

“Wait, so what’s happening?” I asked. “Why are you talking about superheroes?”

“The guardians will answer that question.” My dad said. “All you have to do is go inside.”

“Ok…” I chuckled nervously, as I stepped towards the building.

The inside of the building was dark, I couldn’t see a thing. When I took a step, it felt like I was falling in a never-ending pit. I tried to scream but I couldn’t. Then SMACK, my body hit the ground.

Alaire Brown

Age 12

Ryundae Wong 5059



THE EVIL GNOME BFF (BOOK ONE)

by EKENE HOLDIPP

Once there were two gnomes. One gnome's name was Etana Hipples-hopper. The second gnome's name was Savannah, the beauty. Etana and Savannah were BFFs. They had problems here and there but they solved their problems by working them out. They promised to not hide secrets from one another.

Etana found this evil ring. She didn't want to hide it from her best friend, Savannah, but she didn't want her BFF to be jealous. Would she or would she not keep it a secret?

Savannah came to Etana's house and found the evil ring under her bed. Dun dun dun! Oh no! Will Savannah tell Etana off now or tell her when Etana tells Savannah her secret. Twenty four hours later Etana looked at Savannah and she had a mad face.

When it struck ten o'clock, Savannah and Etana had finished school. Etana went to Savannah's house and told Savannah her secret. Savannah told off Etana and Etana apologized and promised. But Etana broke that promise.

Stay tuned for part two.

The Meme

Block Faces

Into Ryundaes

Hands



By Ryundaewong

Introduction:

I am both evil and good. When I am bad, my superpowers are mind control, I can turn day into night, take anything out the meme block, fly and take things out of the ground. People can get hurt. I am not the only one that has these powers, others have different powers.

When I am good, I can do water bending, make sea creatures come out the water and breathe on land and I can breathe underwater. I save people and I can pick up the villains and they get stuck.

RYUNDAE WONG

The story begins....

One day a boy named Ryundae was at the park relaxing. "What a nice day and the sky is blue and the sun is up," said Ryundae.

"This is Earth?" said FT.

Ryundae didn't know that an evil alien was coming to destroy Earth.

"Boss, when are we going to land?" asked Bloop.

"Wat is that in the sky?" asked Ryundae

"Drop the bomb Bloop," groaned FT.

"Yes sir!" yelled Bloop.

So he dropped the bomb and FT and Bloop both laughed.

"A BOMB!" yelled a random person.

Everyone started running and screaming. Ryundae caught the bomb and threw it back to space.

"Um boss, the bomb is coming back to us," said Bloop.

"WHAT!" yelled FT. "Stop it!" yelled FT again.

So Bloop ran to the guns and shot the bomb. "BOOM!" The bomb exploded into pieces.

"Who could have thrown the bomb at us?" asked FT. "We need to find the person who did this," in a ghastly tone, said FT.

So they landed their spaceship on Earth and touched grass for the first time.

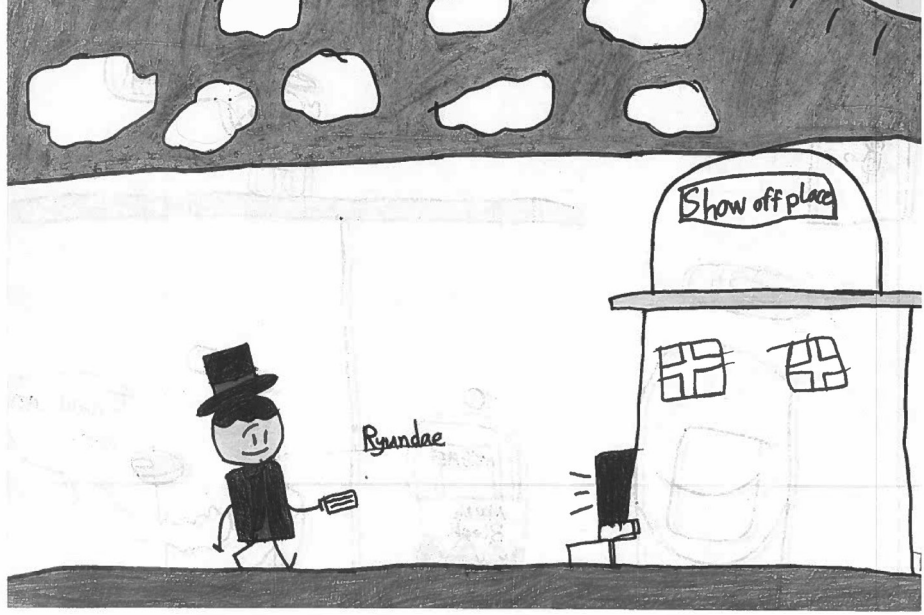
"So this is Earth?" asked Bloop.

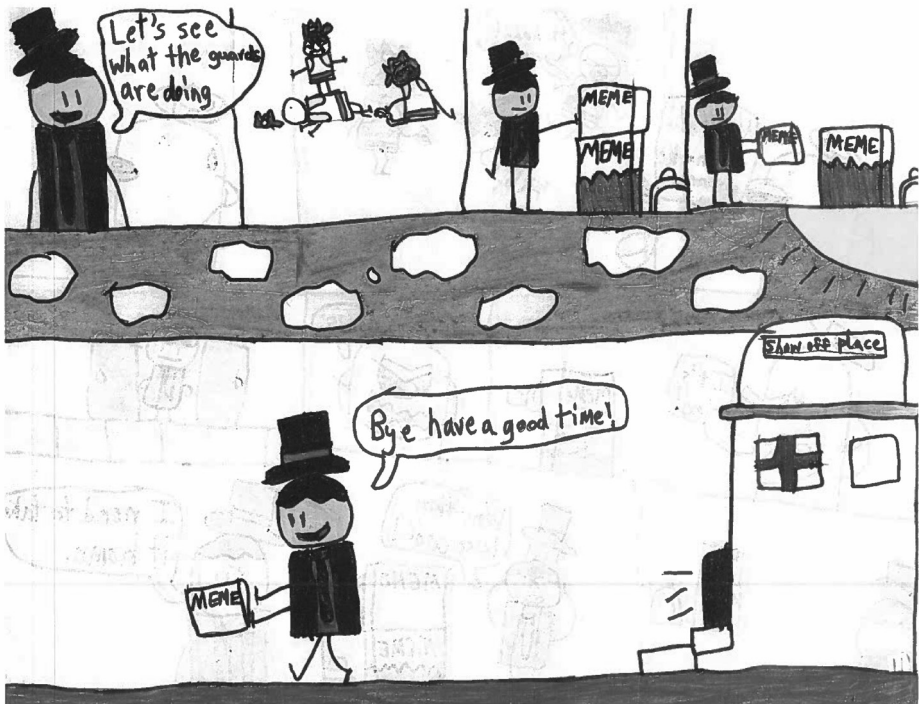
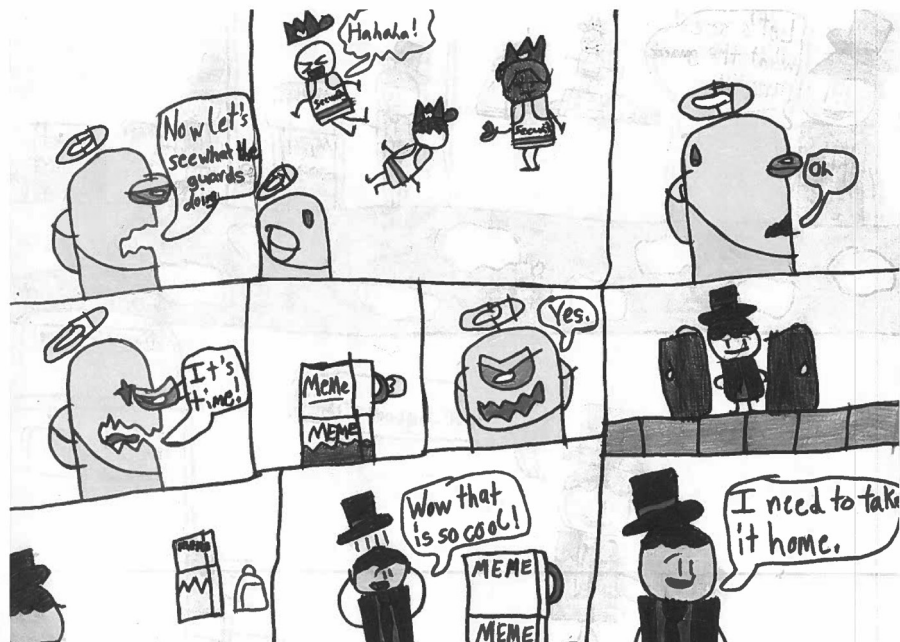
"Yes," said FT.

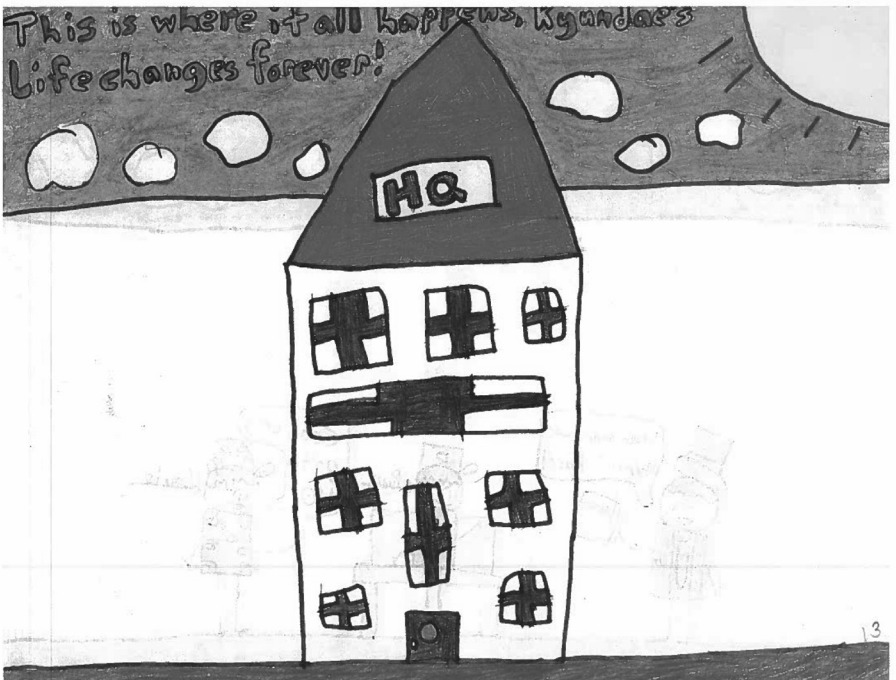
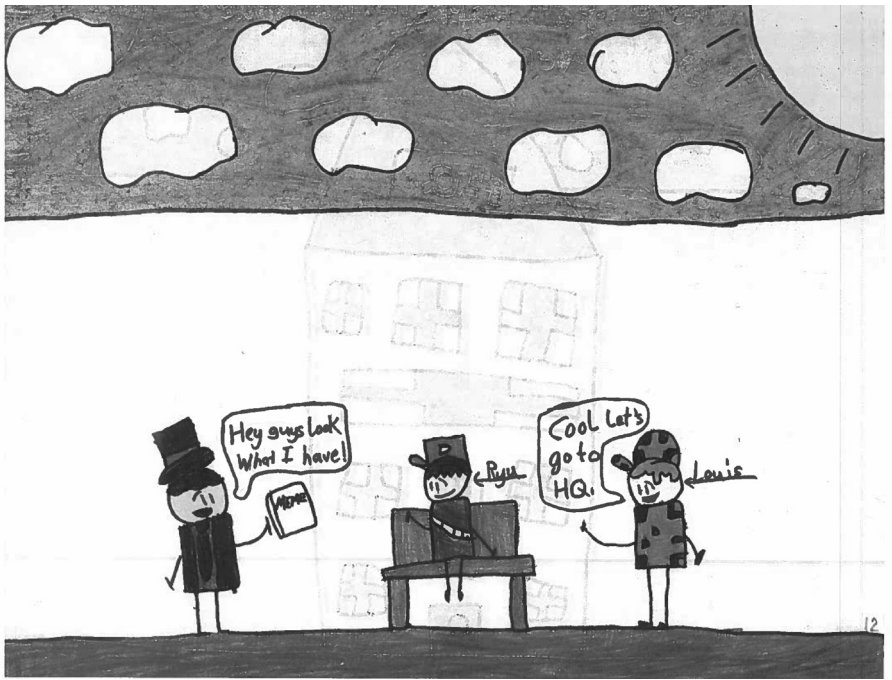
But this isn't the end...



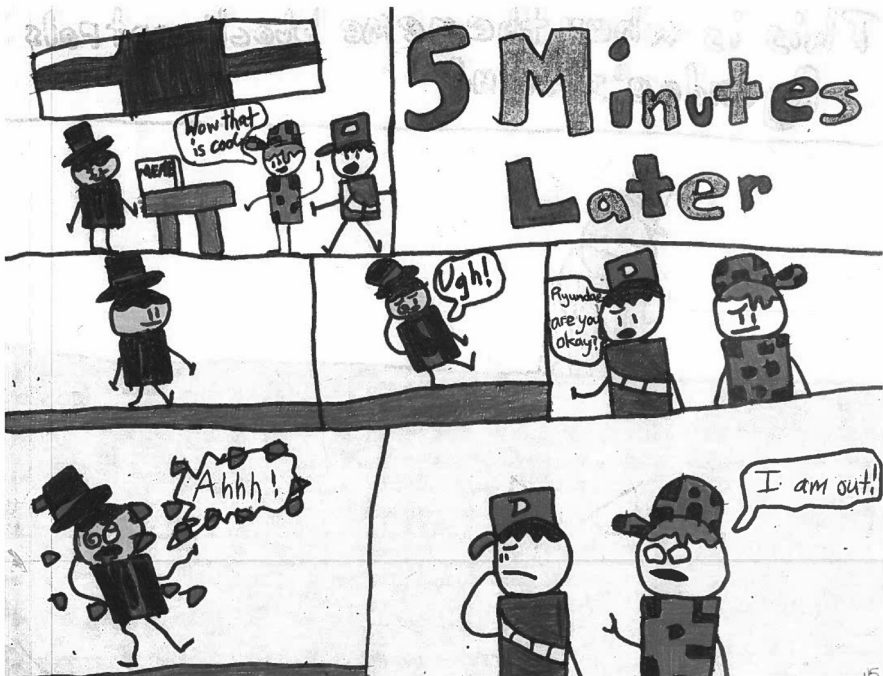
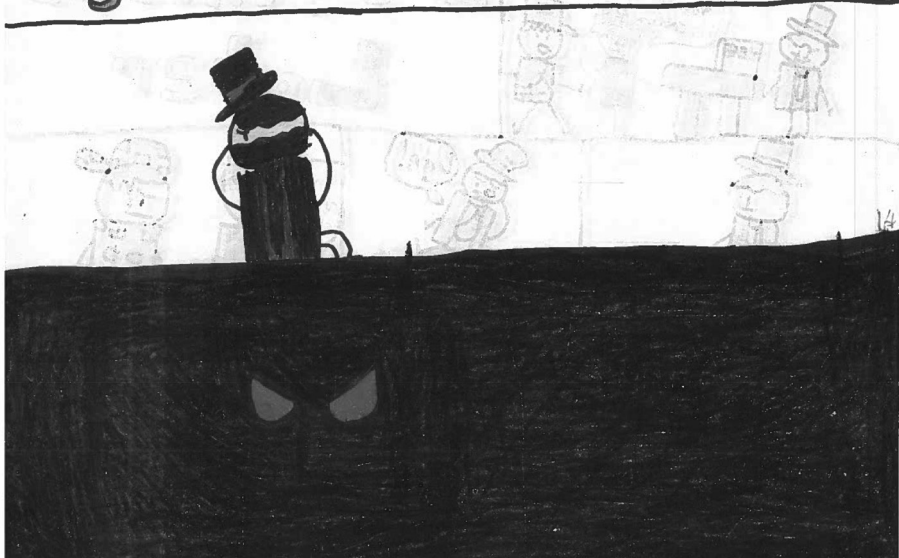
One day Ryndae was walking to the Show off place





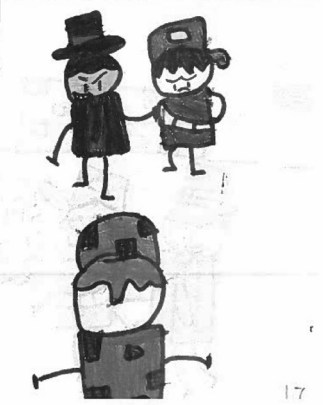
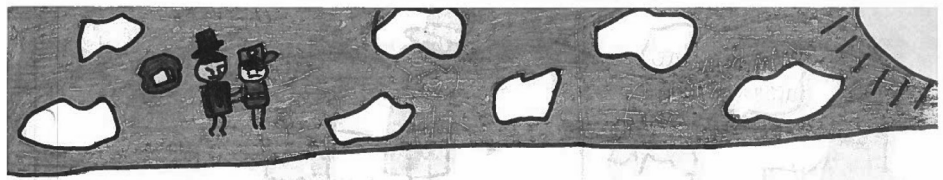


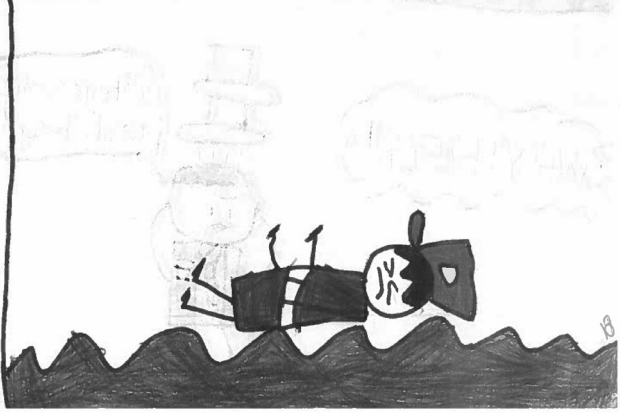
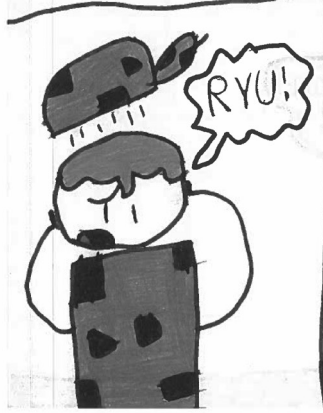
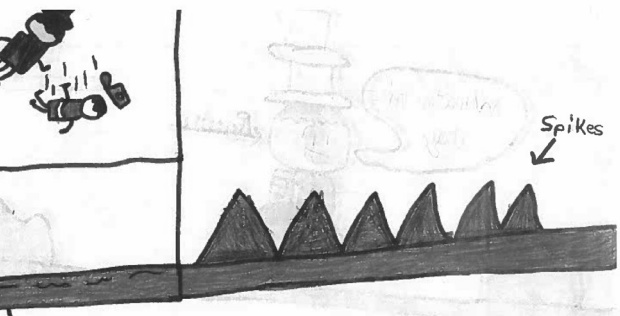
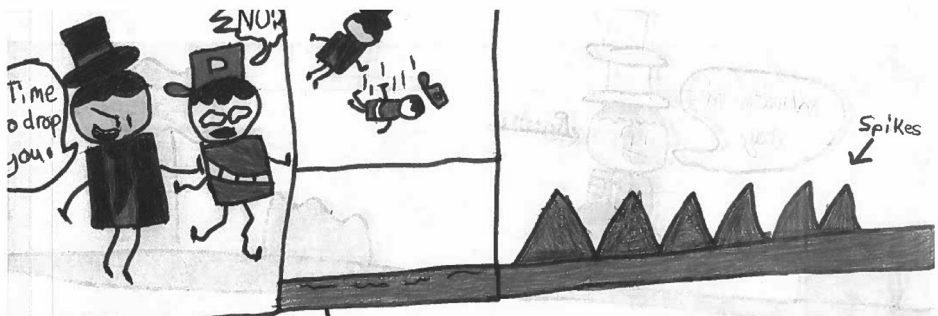
This is when the meme block controls Ryundae's mind

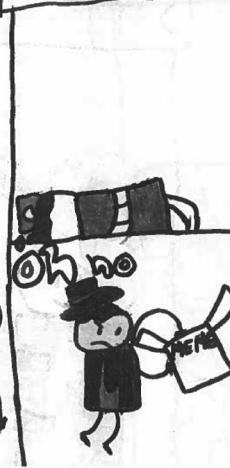
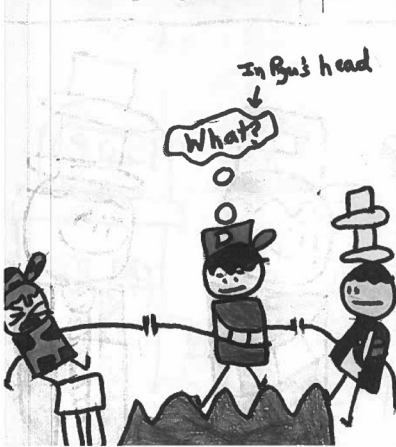
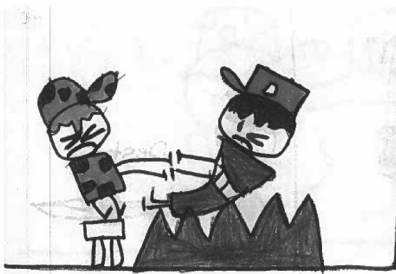


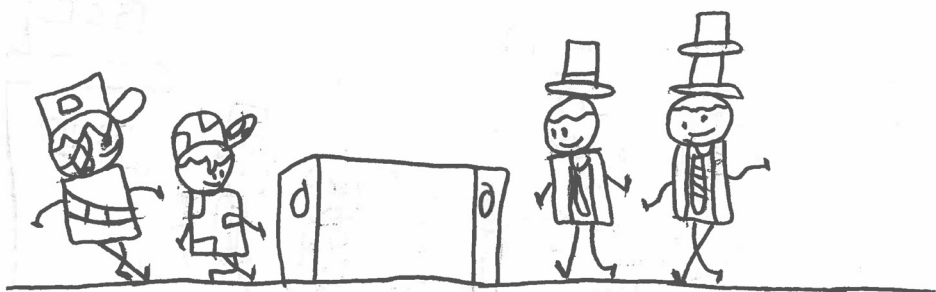
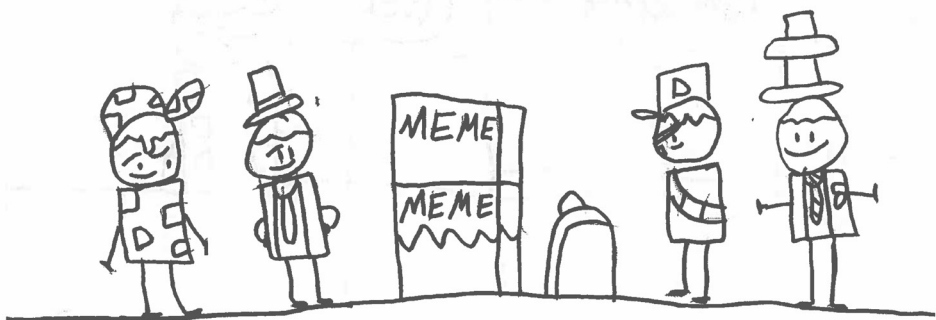


Then Ry undae takes Ryo up in the sky









**PART
TWO COMING
SOON**

BEWARE OF LIES

by **ETANA HOLDIPP-LYNCH**

“Savannah, how could you?!?! I-I-I trusted you. Y-you were my friend -----.”

Ok, rewind before this tragic moment. Believe it or not, I was an animal but not any old crusty

animal. I was a magnificent beauty. I was ... a black hare. What happened was I galavanted in the fresh pearl-colored dandelions. The birds were singing my praises, the sun was glistening on my face as a spotlight (and yes I AM a dramatic Leo). Then, all of a sudden, a silver gust of mist appeared. Little did I know the mist would change me ... for the worst.

Soon enough, a black silhouette spawned. Naive me, I was in my own world and THWACK crashed right into it and, I guess, to leave a long story short, I was human.

“BEEP! HONK! I’M DRIVING HERE!”

I moved to the Big City-- New York-- where I met my BFF, Savannah. She didn’t know my secret identity, though, and I am not only talking about being a hare. I’m ...

“Bonjour ma soeur,” Savvy said as she skipped down the hall coming from French class. Today she had a little more pep in her step. As the pokey --- INTERESTED -- BFF, I asked why. She gave me an ‘are you stupid’ look and I reciprocated it. We started giggling and then finally she exploded...

“PROM!”

I rolled my eyes. I HATED prom. Thanks to me it might just be canceled. RIANG! The bell rang and off I ran. I sprinted into the school garden on the rooftop and transformed. Oh yah, I was trying to tell you, I am a shapeshifter. The truth is I can only shift into a hare. I actually only realized this a couple of days ago. It’s not much but still. I planned on telling Savvy the next day, on her sixteenth birthday, but something strange happened to prevent this. The day before her birthday confused me. Savvy looked upset about some-

thing so I figured it might not have been the right time to tell her so I kept my mouth shut. I tried to cheer her up but nothing helped. To be honest, it looked like she was hiding something but I couldn't tell.

That day I was so irritated that I couldn't tell her my true identity so I did what any irritated, annoyed, super person would do --- broke into a random house by transforming. What? Oh I

didn't say I was a superhero. AHAHAH! Even though I had only started my villain era recently, my crimes had made it into the news. I was so proud.

I did a variety of non-violent yet disruptive crimes daily and it didn't bother me much ... until. Apparently some wanna be Tele-Girl was a new hero in town... ugh. To be honest, I thought I was the only one with powers in these parts and that bimbo stole my shine. I think I figured out the person behind the mask. She is ... S- "Welcome our new student, Samira, to class!"

"Who in the---- anyway," I mumbled to myself.

From the get go, Samira was always disappearing, her and Savvy. Was the secret that she was replacing me? I was in despair that goody-two-shoes Samira was probably also that bimbo Tele-Girl. I hated Samira.

Later that day I was annoyed again so off to another house. I went in disguise this time because I didn't want Tele-Girl capturing me. Surprise, surprise she showed up five minutes into my exploit and she looked familiar. Luckily, I escaped by a hair-- pun intended.

She was good for a newbie but I was better. This happened a couple more times and I really enjoyed it. Yes, we were like Joker and Batman. I even figured out her superpower was teleportation. I know, I know, I should have guessed by her name.

Sooner than I wanted, the night of prom came around. I decided against destroying it as I knew Savvy really wanted to go. On the night of prom, about a half an hour in, I left to, you know, commit a couple of crimes. Sam "coincidentally" left too. I was off, never would I have thought to,

the last battle of my life.

I found myself at an abandoned warehouse to snatch some goods when Tele-Girl showed up. I gave a weak kick and then smack! She struck back and it wasn't like usual. She wasn't playing so I had no choice but to turn up, too. SLAP. She got a paw to the face... VWOOP VWOOP. She avoided my ear whips. She tried to teleport behind me but my ears heard her first. I gave her a thump to the lower back leaving her howling in pain. I had a little smirk. She was strewn across the concrete. There she laid barely moving an inch. I walked over and rip. The mask flew off and the girl behind the mask was none other than...

GAW. In my shock, I didn't notice her teleportation had landed her behind me and THWACK I got slammed onto the ground. Blood oozed out of my head. She landed her FINAL BLOW. Already bruised, that slam put the cherry on top.

“Savannah, how could you?!?! I-I-I trusted you. Y-you were my friend...
-----.”

Etana Holdipp-Lynch

Age 12

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

by JEDZIA WILLIAMS

The night was still and dark. Rain pelted Emily's small body. She sighed as she zoomed down the deserted streets. Her house was on the other side of the city and no buses were available. After a solid hour, she reached her house. She tiptoed in, shivering. Suddenly she heard a hiss outside.

"Oh, it's just the wind," she told herself.

Emily took a few more steps. A glass shattered behind her. She turned around. Nothing. Now Emily began to feel frightened. She ran to her bedroom. Her pet dog, Ash, was waiting. He roared happily.

"Ash, how are you so calm?" Then Emily paused, "Oh, you have your condition."

She picked up her phone, connected her headphones and listened to LOFI music to calm her anxiety.

"Ruff! Ruff! Ruff!" Ash barked. "Grrr! Ruff! Ruff!" I stared at him as if he were mad.

"Ugh, what is it?" I yelled. Then it happened. Sharp pricks in my ankle. Lightning flashed and, out of the corner of my eye, I saw a yellow, glowing figure.

"OMG!! What is that????!!" I screamed. I looked everywhere but couldn't find anything. Huh. I stared outside at the rain and thunderbolts that occasionally cut through the sky. Ash barked nervously as he followed me around. I looked at my leg. Two bite marks glowing neon yellow were by my ankle. In that area, my ankle was losing its color. I ran to my cupboard and grabbed a yellow bandaid. I shuddered as I remembered the neon yellow figure. I grabbed my cream, put it on my bandaid and stuck it onto the bite.

The next day, I woke up rather early. I had my breakfast. Well, sort of. I'd become a snake. I slithered to the table where Ash continuously barked

at me until he realized it was me. I slurped my milk and, with a sudden hiss, I became my normal self again-- a human. Ash barked in surprise. I smiled and hugged him. My wrists and ankles were covered in scales. I sniffed them.

Suddenly, I passed out. When I woke up, my dog, my Yorkie poo, cute little Ash, was barking crazily. My BFF, Christine, was staring at me.

“Are you okay?” she asked. I sat upright in a hurry.

“I-I’m fine!” I said. I felt my face get hot. I was clearly embarrassed. I shook it off. I noticed that Christine had peeled back my bandaid and was looking at the bite.

“Hey! Leave it alone!” I yelled. She showed me her arm. She had the exact same bite mark except it was green.

“C’mon,” she tugged at my sleeve.

“Where?” I asked, “I’m not going to any psychopath scientist.” “School,” she sighed, pointing to my bag which she’d recently packed.

We left my house. Christine showed me the way. We stepped into a glowing light by the ocean’s edge, hidden by rocks. We stepped through and found ourselves outside a tall, neon green and yellow building. It had a sign that read:

SCHOOL FOR THE GIFTED

Christine showed me to my locker. I looked around. Hundreds of neon snakes and girls with glowing hair were walking about. Suddenly I realized that my hair was neon yellow.

“Aaaa!” I screamed.

Christine sighed.

After I settled down a bit, we went to class. Five seconds later, a huge explosion happened. “External overdrive!!!” I yelled. I shot burning venom out my hands. Christine taught me that. BOOM.

I burned the huge robot arm that caused the explosion. “It’s the beginning of the end!!!” Christine yelled.

Everyone ran off. Except me. I beat up the robot arm until I flooded the room. Then I transformed into a snake and slithered my way out.

Fast forward a few hours later...

I lay in the hand of a mighty robot as it carried me away to a lab. I was paralyzed. I had no power left. I was about to pass out when--
CHOOM!

A light blasted off me and destroyed everything. I saved the day. The robots were gone. But guess what? It was all a dream.

Jedzia Williams

Age 11

PEERING THROUGH THE KEYHOLE OF TIME

by KEIMANI TROTT

I am the next generation.

You are the enslaved. Placed on ships with no hesitation. You are shackled and chained.

I am free.

You are barely surviving.

Why would slavers disagree, When you are the only ones not thriving.

I am opinionated and respected. You are degraded and beaten. Once strong but now weakened. All for the gain of a European.

I am sorrowful and mournful.

You are wishing for your deaths.

Why were you subjected to such atrocities, so awful! May your souls lay to rest in those murky depths.

I am acknowledging you unashamed.

You are berated and beaten for pleasure and greed.

At the mercy of those who are to be blamed.

Your livelihoods disrupted because someone had a "need".

I am hearing your cries of pain and desperation.

You are tormented, tortured and left with generational trauma.

The treatment inflicted upon you cannot be fathomed in my imagination.

Living in conditions that outshine the heat of a sauna.

I am grateful but hateful.

You are gone but never forgotten.

You suffered but fought for freedom even when the outcome was fatal.

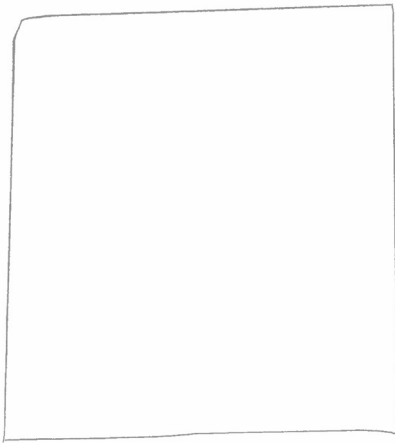
You raised the voices of those down below and made your own heard,
never forgotten.

I am free.

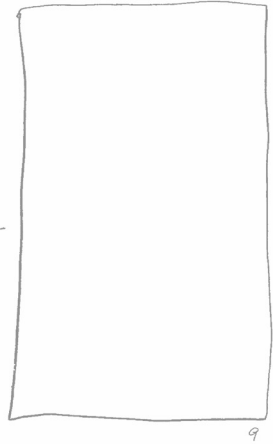
You are fallen.

We heard your pleas and you can rest in peace. Thanks to you we no longer proceed with caution.

Dram a monster



Dram a hero



+

THE RING

by SAVANNAH GREENSLADE

I was dragging my feet around the park. My head hung down and my eyes were puffy. I was already in a bad mood because my parents told me I couldn't go to the party. WHAM! I got hit in the head with a frisbee. At that point, I was done. On my way home the weather started to turn, the sky blackened and the clouds grew bigger over the sun. Rain began to drop, slowly at first...plop plop. After a few minutes, momentum picked up.... Pap pap pap. I sprinted home as the thunder BOOMED.

As I turned the corner onto my street, lightning lit up the sky. Bolt after bolt. With one hitting my ring onto a nearby reflectant mirror, back to my ring.

I was in total shock. My eyes widened in fear. Wha... what did I just witness??? As I walked towards my doorstep I felt tingly. I thought nothing of it at first. I was getting hungry so I made my dinner and then got ready for bed. I changed into my pajamas and when I took off my ring and rested it on my dresser, it glowed, very brightly.

I slowly backed away but I felt a pull drawing me closer to the ring. The closer I got, the brighter it shone. It got to the point where it lit up my entire room and I couldn't see. The next thing I knew, it was on my finger and I was blown away. I felt a strong bolt run through my body as I headed down the street to tell my friend what had happened. Suddenly, my body came to a stop. My body froze like I was in a block of ice. I said to myself, "Why can't I move? Am I not supposed to go into her house?"

I started to think about turning away from her house and that's when I started to feel myself moving. I was so confused. I took a glimpse at my ring and threw my arm forward. A beam shot out of my ring and hit a nearby tree. All of the leaves on the tree instantly crumpled up and turned brown.

"Do I have super powers now?"

I shot my arm out once more. Nothing. I was shocked. "Can I not control this? Does it have a mind of its own?" As I walked home I tried to figure out what could

trigger it.... I started waving my arms, up, down and around. Nothing.

When I got to my front door, I saw that I had a package, I picked it up and “BAM!” it exploded right there in my hand. My eyes widened as pieces of cardboard dropped from the sky. I looked

at my ring and there it was glowing. With my hands still in the front of me frozen, I walked into my house and dashed upstairs.

As I opened my bedroom door, still shocked, I heard, “AHHH, HELP! SOMEONE HELP!” I sprinted back downstairs and opened my front door to see a man in a black ski mask, black cargo pants and a black puffer jacket holding a lady’s arms back. People started looking out their windows wondering what was happening. I instantly thought. “This is my time to shine. I can save her. I have the power.” But I was still unsure if I could control it.

I slowly approached the scene and my arm shot out and a laser beam came shooting out of my ring. It zapped the man’s fingers and he bolted away.

“I just saved someone!”

“OH MY GOD! Girl, you just saved me! This girl just saved me!” the lady exclaimed. Everyone, with a shocked look, started clapping and that’s how I knew I was a hero.

“What is your name?” she asked.

“My name is- is.. Is LaserGirl!” I said with a huge confident smile on my face.

Savannah Greenslade

Age 11

THE CHOSEN ONES

by RUTH ODEDE

“Oh no!” the scientist exclaimed, “there is an asteroid coming!”

The asteroid had two hours before it hit Earth. The chosen ones were Aubrey, Eris, Jade and Lalani. They were so confused.

“Why?” Jade asked. “Why are we the chosen ones??”

“You will understand when you get older,” the scientist said. They were only eleven and twelve.

The asteroid hit California and the ground split open. The trees fell down one by one. The buildings collapsed. Everyone was running and screaming.

Suddenly, a light beam appeared. It went directly to the chosen ones. They rose up as though they were possessed. Then their bodies dropped back down to the ground. Their powers circled their hands. Purple, spikey liquid swirled in the calm of Aubrey’s hand.

“What? What’s happening?”

In Eris’ hand, pictures of moving objects appear one by one. His eyes popped open wide and his eyebrow rose up.

Jade felt tension in her fists. She clenched her fists and her biceps bulged and grew for a quick second. Jade gasped in shock.

Lightning bolts flashed on the tips of Lilani’s fingers. She was the savage one. She gave no emotions.

Just then their powers sucked into their bodies.

Aubrey had poison powers. Eris - telekinesis.

Jade was given super strength. Lalani - super speed.

And together they were the Chosen Ones!

Later on that evening they heard the news on BBC.

“The alien is coming. Lock all of your doors and be safe,” announced the news reporter.

Scientists discovered that aliens had sent the asteroids. The scientists found out by spotting a UFO and seeing the alien a short while ago.

“Oooooohhhh! Now I get it!” Lalani shouted. That’s what I saw in my hand after the asteroid hit and broke into Earth.

Eris hopped off the couch and screamed, “That’s why we got our powers! We’re going to set up a plan and use our powers to defeat the alien enemies.

“I don’t think that’s a good idea,” Abrey mumbled

“Stop being a scaredy cat and get over it,” Jade laughed.

BOOM! They looked outside the window and saw another asteroid.

“Another one?” Eris said.

The Chosen Ones tiptoed over to see a little bit more. Then they saw ...

“It could not be,” Eris said.

“Not just one,” Lalani whispered, “but a thousand.” She pointed.

Everyone looked up and saw thousands of UFOs in the asteroid. That was the day of the dark battle of the universes.

THUD! BOOM! The aliens rushed to the Chosen Ones. Jade used her super strength to punch the aliens out. Eris used his telekinesis to rise up the enemies and throw them a thousand kilometers away. Lalani used her speed to confuse the aliens and they ran into each other. She sprinted around them. Aubrey made a poisonous purple liquid and splashed the rest of them away.

“You will see when we come back!” The master alien shouted and then his voice faded away.

The Chosen Ones did a victory dance.

Ruth Odede

Age 8 1-2

THE

MA

ON

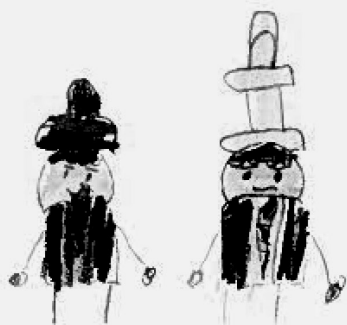
The
Monster
was in a
chamber

D. D. ...



anster

anster

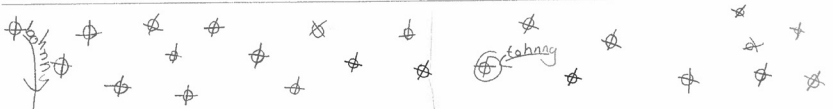


Two boys named Ryunn and Ryundae on Earth.

Ryunn was working on the top rocketship. Ryundae was working on the bottom rocketship. Ryunn was working in the rocketship the cockpit.

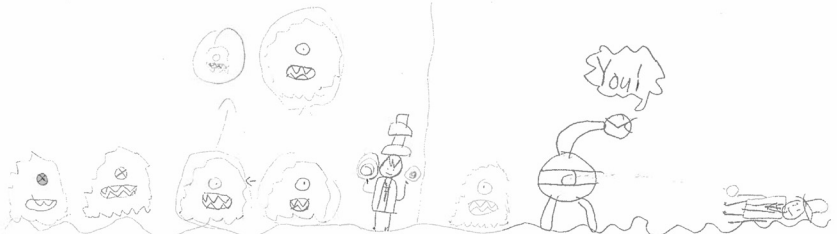


The rocket ship flew out Earth first up in space landed on mars



The aliens started attacking Ryunn and Ryundae when they landed, so Ryunn used his powers to lift up two aliens and then he used his powers to make the other two become blind, so they can't see. The aliens knew that Johnny the alien was up there in the sky, but Ryunn didn't.

When the rocket ship landed, Johnny's friend fired a laser at Ryundae. He fell on the ground, but Ryundae used his power to blind the the alien.

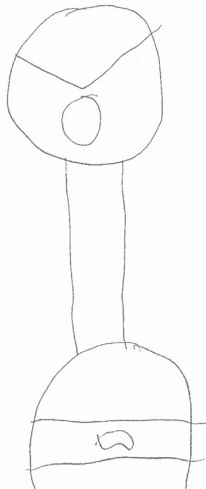




Johnny came and was going to attack Ryundae. Ryundae threw a brick at Johnny.

Johnny's friend was sad because Johnny got knocked out.

The flash back in mars

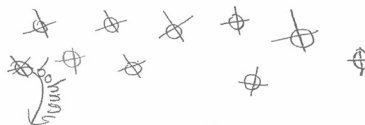
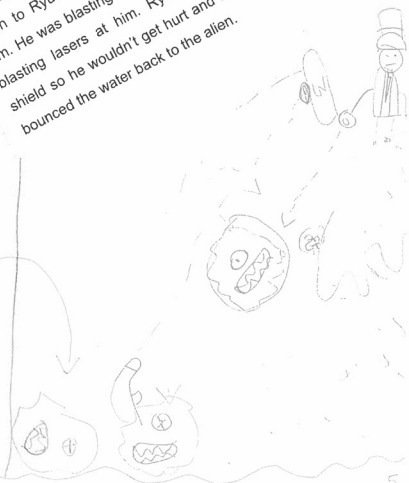




[When aliens get hurt, they become stars]

Ryundae was on the mountain, trying to come down to Ryunn and the alien was trying to stop him. He was blasting the alien, the other alien was blasting lasers at him. Ryundae made a water shield so he wouldn't get hurt and the laser shield bounced the water back to the alien.

When Ryunn wasn't looking, the alien that was touching him was about to throw him, but Ryunn used his powers to throw the alien. Ryunn threw him over to the other alien.



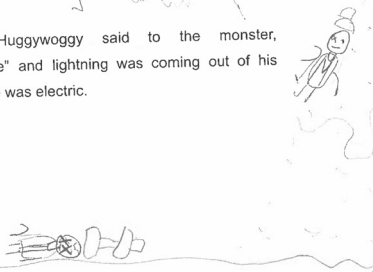
The monster is in the chamber. The monster is trying to blast Ryunn. Ryunn made a shield. Ryundae blasted the chamber with his powers. Ryundae is on a hoverboard.

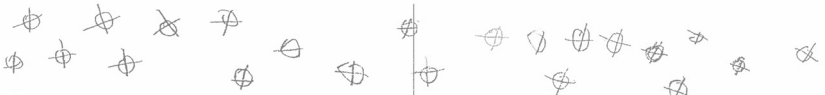


The monster blasted Ryundae off the hoverboard into the mountain and Ryunn was lying on the ground.

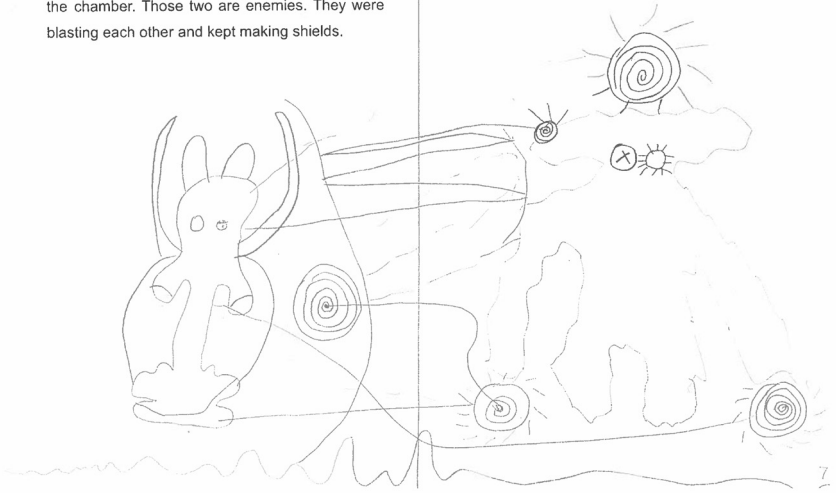


Crazy Huggywoggy said to the monster, "Revenge" and lightning was coming out of his arms. He was electric.

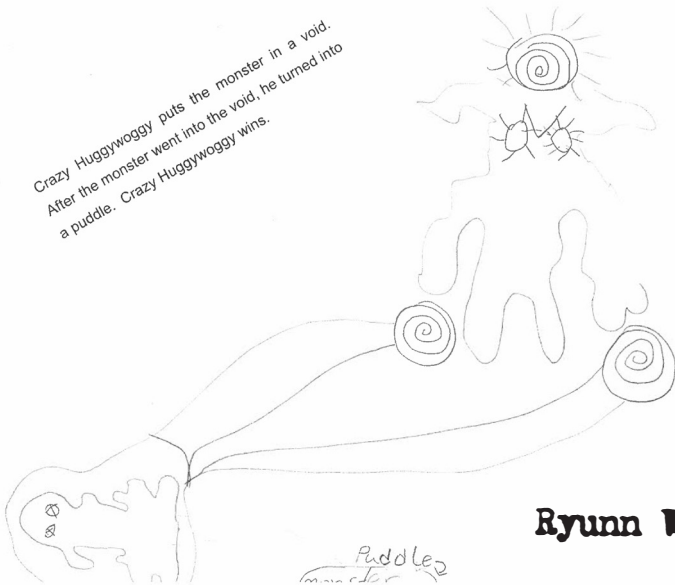




Crazy Huggywoggy started fighting the monster in the chamber. Those two are enemies. They were blasting each other and kept making shields.



Crazy Huggywoggy puts the monster in a void. After the monster went into the void, he turned into a puddle. Crazy Huggywoggy wins.



Puddle monster

Ryunn Wong



LA WIRELESS ACCRA

AN ADVENTURE THAT CHANGED MY LIFE by MUFIDATU ABDUL-RAHMAN

Chapter 1

Iqra Jamil is my name. I live in the Burma Camp Barracks with my nuclear family. My father Mohammed Abu-bakr Sadiq is considered among the rich soldiers in the barracks. I was the only daughter. I got everything I wanted. I had a nanny, I barely did anything. I did not wash; I didn't clean nor cooked. Everything was done by the nanny. I had a very mean personality, arrogant, bored and I treated people with little or no respect. As I was born into a wealthy family, I was cold and distanced from those who didn't have money. I had a problem with almost every one of my classmates. I just had a thought that nothing could change and that I will remain a princess forever and ever. But I guess I was wrong.

One Wednesday morning as I heard the sound, “Wake up!”, “Wake up!” “Wake up!” “Wake up!” “Wake up!” I expected my hands to turn off the alarm. Already in a sleepy state, I sat on the bed feeling very sleepy, thinking of going back to sleep. But with the left corner of my eye, I saw a door that wasn’t supposed to be there. I was astonished by the appearance of the door, the sleep instantly disappeared. Upon observing the strange door for a while, I realized that the sides of the door were bright as well as the keyhole. So, I decided to take a peep at other side of the door through the keyhole. Before I could view what was there, I realized I was not in my bedroom but was in a completely different world altogether. I was very scared. “Is anybody there?” I screamed. Even though I could hear some voices within my “new world” I could not see anyone. I moved a few metres into the biggest room I had ever seen and noticed where the noise was coming from. I turned to look and saw people being flogged by tall men to work. “Where is this place?” I asked myself. A man came from behind me and flogged me saying, ‘Come on, go to work!’ he said in a deep voice. “Excuse me! Who the heck are you to tell me what to do?” I flashed angrily at him “How dare you? Don’t you know what we do here? Now go on and do your work!”, he commanded. This was obvious, I was in another world where people are suffering from severe cruel treatments. It was like hell. I felt pity for them, not knowing I was going to be one of them soon.

Chapter 2

I went to a woman to ask her where this place was but she ignored me. “Take this, wash it or else Sam will flog you”, the woman said after giving me some clothes to wash. “A princess

like me can't wash these clothes" I said in an arrogant manner. In response, the woman gave me a dirty slap. I was visibly angry at that moment. But my saviour arrived, 'What is it?' Yas asked. "She doesn't want to wash the clothes" replied the woman. "Go on, I will take care of her myself" Yas pleaded.

There, I thought I was free from work but I was wrong. Yas forced me to wash the clothes although I didn't know how to wash. "Where is this place?" I asked. "First, what is your name?" Yas asked. I am Iqra Jamil from Burma Camp Barracks "I replied politely. "Where? Bu- Bum-, Bu-r-ma, where from that name?" Yas asked laughing" By the way, here is the world of suffering and injustice", as she went on. "So, you will all suffer just for no reason? I pity you guys, as for me I will leave this place by the time I see that door again. I will leave this world of woes", I interrupted. "There is no way out, unless the princess allows you" Yas said. I was confused and remained silent.

Evening was approaching. Yas was about to go home. "Where can I sleep?" I asked "Look for a place to sleep" Yas replied, "please, I have nowhere to go. "Please can I spend a night in your house?" I asked with a soft voice. I was surprised about myself; I mean I have never used please before" "Okay" Yas accepted. So, we went to Yas's

house. We got there just for me to find out it was a hut and so disgusting. They slept on mats with rats in the room. I almost regretted coming to the Yas's house. She had a brother called Yasin. But I was lucky because they were Muslims. I joined them to pray. But my question was "Who is that princess in charge?" My aim was to meet her so that she will allow me to leave that place. Thinking of all this made me fall fast asleep. It was in the morning and I wasn't awake. I was flogged in my sleep and that made me wake up suddenly. "Sir, she is new", Yas pleaded, I woke up to find a group of men in the hut "Yas what's going on?" I asked. The men went out. "They flog us to wake up every day" Yas replied. "What?" I asked angrily. "This is how we suffer here Oh, we have to go to work or else we are dead," cried Yassin. "Now let's go to work" Yas commanded.

Chapter 3

I sat down for some time because Yas told the men I am very ill. For the first time I felt guilty because Yas was flogged because she said I was ill. She did that because I was hurt by the canes. Young girls were asked to sleep with the men so that their families will not suffer and work like the other families. That same day, I tried to follow a man going towards the palace but Yas stopped me. "Stop it, or

else you'll die" Yas said. We met an old man who was carrying a heavy load. I felt like helping and I did help the old man. "May the princess bless you" the old man said to me. Yas and I accompanied him to his house and left. I was happy because I helped him. Soon we saw Yassin coming from the woods and we went to him. "What happened?" Yas asked. The princess is coming to the hall today. In fact, right now" Yassin answered. Not only us but everyone, rushed to the hall just to see the princess.

It was time for her to enter the hall, and can you imagine? Everyone bowed down to her, but not me. I didn't bow for that girl. "Why are you bowing?" I shouted. The princess took a cane from one of the men, came close to me, she looked familiar. "How dare you? You fool", she said angrily. There I knew she had put her monkey up. She began to flog me. A pain I had never experienced before was inflicted on me. "You cheap girl. A good go for nothing girl. You are very poor, but I am the rich and wealthy princess who is in charge in this town. So, bow down for me" She shouted. But those words were common in my eyes; it was like I've heard it somewhere before. Yet, I never bowed. This gave me a punishment to wash and clean every day. "Do I know you?" I asked the princess when she was about to leave. "Do you think so?" she asked smiling and left the hall. Yas was furious with me; she took me to the hut. "Why did you refuse Princess Sherifa?" Yas asked. "Wait, did you say Sherifa? asked surprisingly. "Yes" Yas replied.

This made me remember Sherifa my classmate who was humiliated and framed by me. It was tough but I was able to explain everything to Yas and Yassin. "So how come you got here?" Yassin asked. "I peeped through the keyhole and I got to this place", I answered. "So how can I go back? I want to back home" "Don't worry, now you have to change and become a good girl" Yas said.

Chapter 4

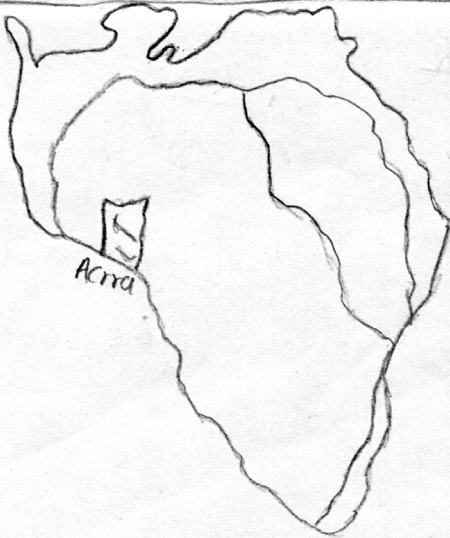
Now I know why I am in this miserable world. Sherifa's speech came true. I did it take it serious back then, but now I believe what she said. How painful it was to say all those things to her. So, as I was told to do. I washed and clean every day with flogs. A little mistake you would do, you'd receive six flogs. Yas helped me with the cooking. She taught me how to cook. Now a lazy girl became a hardworking girl in spite of the suffering. I can say I went through a lot of torture in that different world. I was now loved by some people because after I finished with my work, I went to help them. Aside all these torture, I did not give up because I knew one day I will surely go back home. Due to the low quantity of food given to us, people planned to steal food and they ended up getting caught and killed. I learned new things like how to store things, how to talk to elderly persons, and other things. I spent like years in that world.

During one of the days at work, I fainted. I was quickly

rushed to their doctor called Sitta, "Her time is drawing closer, she must go back or else she won't survive". he said. "If she begins to bleed from her nose then you must let her go back" he recommended. I didn't know the people went to the palace to plead with the princess to let me go. "I am feeling much better now", I said when I was awoken. I got out and I saw the princess coming with the people. "What is going on?" I asked Yassin. "Iqra, you will soon go back home", replied Yassin. "What?" I screamed excitedly. I was very happy to go back home. But I saw Yas looking in the direction of the entrance so I turned quickly to see Sherifa, at the entrance. I quickly went to knell down in front of her. "I am sorry Sherifa, I didn't know what I was doing. Now I know how life is. You punished me but it had somehow favoured me. Forgive me, please I am so sorry for everything" I pleaded. "Get up, it's fine. Now you're no more the princess who had pride, has no pity and the princess who teases friends lower than her. You are now Iqra, no more the bad princess", she said amidst tears and we both busted into tears. "Now, you can go" Sherifa said. When I turned to look back, I saw the door again. I gave and Yassin a big goodbye hug and later waved to everyone. But before entering, "Iqra, Iqra, Iqra" I heard someone shouting my name. I opened my eyes and saw myself sitting on the bed with a bleeding nose "Iqra" my mom called out for me. I opened the door for her. "Mama?" I asked. "I've been calling you for a long time now", she said, worried. "Mama what says the time?" I asked.

JAMP

SAMUEL
AFRICAN STAR



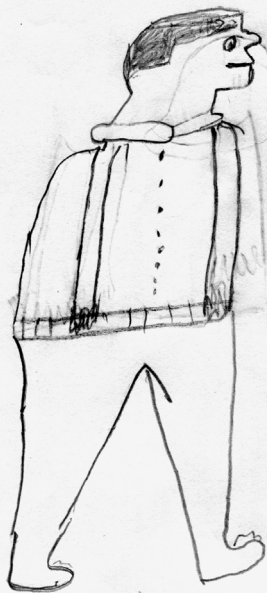
"Six O'clock am, why was your alarm not working?" She asked. "It was working" I replied.

I decided to surprise everyone. I cooked breakfast for my family. Everyone was shocked. I later washed my clothes and cleaned the house. "I like this character of yours", nanny said. I went to school and I saw Sherifa. It was like she is back from her suspension. I asked for her forgiveness in front of everyone, and she forgave me. "Iqra, how come you have changed just within a night? I typed on my phone what is the word given to an imaginative place of suffering and injustice and the answer was a "dystopia". So, I replied my classmates, "A dystopia changed me" and "I said to myself "An imaginary world of mine."

The End

Mufidatu Abdul-Rahman

Dardoye Kingsley



My self

My favourite animal is a donkey

I always take it to beach.

My favourite color is blue and white

~~my~~ favourite food is chocolate and bread.

My hobby is reading and Juggling.

My best friend is Alik Godwin.

My best friend is kind to me because is very ~~Honor~~ faithful and he care for me.

Mr. OPOKU THE HUNTER

Mr. OpoKu went for hunting. One day he went for hunting in a thick forest. He aim to shoot a big rabbit not knowing it was a big snake called a black mamba and it split its venom on his eyes that was the reason why he became blind. He can't see all the beautiful thing around him again. He became poor and can't go for hunting anymore for about ten good years.

One day he was sitting under a big tree. Hearing his big cloth called kente. The bird was on the tree and the eagle saw it and so the eagle went there to catch it and eat it up, but the bird flew to the blind man's shoulder. So the blind man hid the bird and when the eagle went the bird came out and told the blind man that thank you for "saving" my life and the man said you are welcome. And the bird stay with me.

After one week later, the bird saw that man is blind so it said to the man I will help you to see. And the man asked the bird that how can you help me a thinny bird like you. The bird laugh hahaha --- I know some helps that can be can heal your eyes and the man said are u sure that u can help me and bird I can.

One day the bird went out and it came back with some leaves and it gave it to the man to apply it on his eyes. so the bird told the man that 22 hours later remove it and you will be able to see and it happened so. They became friends forever.

THE HIDDEN WORLD BEHIND THE NEW DOOR

by ERNESTINA TANOAH

Long, long ago, there lived a very loving happy family by the name the Wilsons in a town called Aboso. The family had a healthy living life. Most people in the town admired that particular. Some even wish they belonged to that family. Anyway, who wouldn't like to live with a sweet and loving family?

My name is Magdalena Wilson. My family consist of my mom and dad and my five siblings namely. James, John, Janet, Lovely and Susanna. My dad died when I was a little baby but never mind, I'm very lucky to have such a loving family of seven. In every home there is a star and I am going to shine and bright as one.

One early morning, I woke up and found a new door in the wall of my bedroom. I was curious to know what was behind that door so I peeped through the key hole, amazing was the sight that I beheld. The same curiosity made me decide to proceed to the magnificent world before me. When I entered, I saw wonderful things I had never seen before. All the trees were very colourful, the streets were well asphalted, the lights were dazzling, their buildings were even taller than those in my home town, in fact skyscrapers are even shorter. The most astonishing thing about it was when I heard that animals in that world could talk and also experienced it.

Group '1'

Dr. Kwame Nkrumah



Members.

1. Agyei Bismark
2. Sonusi Aliu
3. Caleb Elome
4. Juliana Awan
5. Erica Okpoty
6. Christiana

“You’re most welcomed dear” I heard a voice behind me. I turned abruptly to see who that was. A total stranger. The stranger asked me my name, my age and what I was doing there. I told him that I don’t talk to strangers. He said he was just there to help me. I told him my name; age and narrated to him how I got there. “The door always goes to people who are destined to see this wonderful place”, said the man. The man said he knew my father and I did not believe him. I thought he was telling lies until he mentioned my father’s name. He said my father was a good man and that the people who killed him went against the rule of the town so they were severely punished.

In that place, you needed not do anything. All you had to do was say or think about what you wanted done or where you wanted to go and it would be done or you would be there. Also, at that place, you would not see cars moving around. Things happened like magic. I forgot about all my worries and for once in life I was very happy.

Some months before all this, when my dad died, my family’s happiness also died with him. It was as though he was our source of joy. There were always troubles after troubles that came our way and we lost everything we had, our house, our respect. We ended up in a mud house. After all this, my mom, my two younger siblings; that is John and Janet and I lived in the mud house. I narrated everything to the man. All of a sudden, the man started crying and he said he was sorry.

I asked him why he was crying and why he just said sorry. He told me that he was my father and that he was not there to help us through our difficult moments. He told me he created that place for people who are just like him. I was very happy to finally see my father and my father gave me a diamond box and told me to go back home. Immediately I passed through the amazing door back home, it vanished. I found myself on my bed wondering what really happened to me. As I sat gazing the point I saw the door, I fell fast asleep.

I woke up later in the day on hearing crying and wailing in the house. I did not know what was going on. I rushed outside to see what was happening. I saw my mom, siblings and neighbours crying. Some of the neighbours were consoling my mom. They did not notice my presence initially. One of my siblings was the one who saw me first and shouted, “Ghost, ghost, ghost...” and they started running away. Not knowing who she was referring to, I joined them screaming “Mom, mom, mom...” I caught up with my mom and asked her why they were running. She said they thought I was dead because they have tried everything possible to wake me up but to no avail. I felt sad and told my mom to let us get to the house. I narrated my adventure to her while she was still sobbing.

When everybody were gone, I brought out the diamond box from beneath the bed where I kept it and gave it to my mom. My mom opened it just for us to see some crystal

stones. “These are real diamonds”, my mother said.

My mom later sold few stones and we became very rich.
We lived happily ever after.

THE END.

Ernestina Tanoah



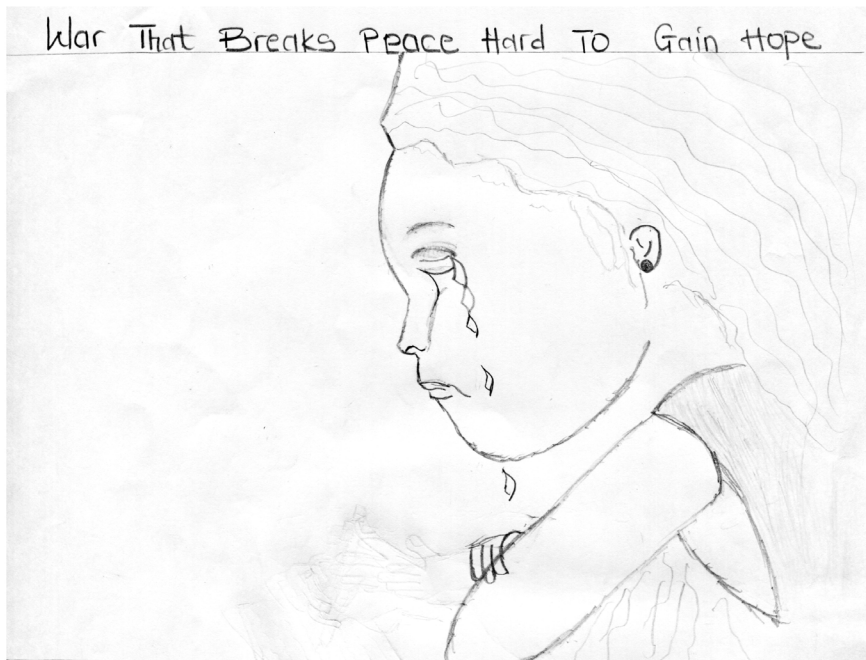


Kwame Nkrumah





War That Breaks Peace Hard To Gain Hope



War That Breaks Peace Hard To Gain Hope

Days when we used to be around grown ups, but this days we run away from them.

It all started in the year 2007 when Dad passed away. Darkness overcomes Moms hard work. From sunrise till late night 11:30pm, she is not yet back from work, Mr. Dery was our only hope, when our mother is away

One faithful night for Mr. Dery who breaks hope and

Peace in my sister's live at the age of 15 and he was 70 years old. As I saw my sister crying, what breaks is it as she said "War that breaks peace", what do you mean Sis.

Can't you see is hard to gain hope and truth to be around grownups that can helps us but sex. Mr. Dery has taken away my peace and hope.

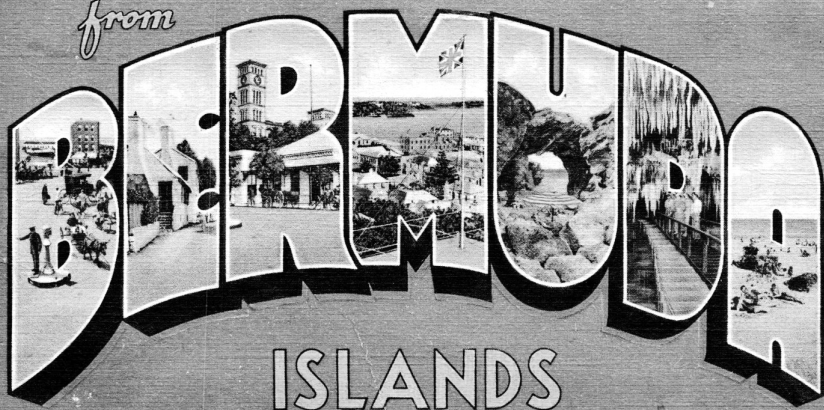
GROUP MEMBERS 2023

La-Wireless 2 JHS From: 3

- 1 David Dery
- 2 Anastasia Awuah
- 3 Mwinkaame Dennis
- 4 Linda Coffie
- 5 Monica Worlanyo Goka

GREETINGS

from



ISLANDS

CEDARBRIDGE ACADEMY BERMUDA

CHANCE ENCOUNTER by ESHE HOLDIPP-LYNCH

Another day, another boring trip visiting my great-aunt Bev in the countryside. It's become a tradition to "runaway" there everytime life in the city becomes too hectic. My parents call it 'relaxation time', but I see it more as torture.

My aunt lives alone with a elderly cat who loves to leave for long periods of time. My mom says that it's good to visit once in a while. And while it might give my Aunt Bev happiness, it takes away mine.

Although this time I put up a fight, I still ended up sitting back on this scratchy, knitted purple couch cover. I don't think I'll ever get used to the smell of cat food that is always left uneaten by the cat that is never around.

Today, I've officially had enough. After cleaning out Aunt Bev's cat's litterbox and washing her laundry, I've decided to go into town for the day. A nice day out for once will be good for me since over time the boredom has mounted up, almost unbearable. While my parents were out shopping and Aunt Bev was asleep, I used my allowance to get on the first bus headed town and free at last I was.

As I looked around, nothing in this small town could interest or excite me. Although bored, I was relieved. Almost anything was better than staying in a closed up house such as Aunt Bev's.

Just as I was giving up hope, I came across an old antique store. A big sign read from across the front stating, Surprises Everyday In This Store !! It intrigued me and as I walked inside, a whole new world opened up in front of my very eyes.

In this store, there were antiques of all kinds. Things that I saw in history books and such. My awe was disrupted by the sound of an elderly man's voice.

“Awesome, isn't it ??“

I turned around to see an elderly man, tall in stature, with a long grey beard to match his hair. Taken aback, I hesitated to answer. He introduced himself as the store owner and spoke not another word. You could hear a pin drop as I walked around.

From the corner of my eye, something stood out to me. It was a book on display. On the cover it read, "WIZARDS THROUGHOUT TIME, HOW THEY BLEND IN".

"How they blend in?", I thought to myself. What could the book possibly mean by that? At that very moment, I was almost blinded from a bright flash. I looked around to see what had happened, but no one was around. I decided to forget about it and continued to look around. I approached the wizard themed book again and out of curiosity decided to read more. As I began to open the book, a loud voice boomed from behind.

"STOP! DON'T OPEN THAT BOOK!"

I frantically closed the book. I turned around and it was the same shop owner from before. Though I now knew that I wasn't supposed to open it, my curiosity rose like a thermometer in boiling water. It was just getting late,

so I caught the bus home. On the way home, I decided to check it out the next day as it was getting late. I was going to find out the secrets of that book.

On the bus going home, I thought to myself, “Things might actually get interesting around here.”

I arrived home and was sucked back into my reality of bad smells and chores. I really wanted to rewind the day back to when I was at the store. There were still many hours until the next day.

I decided to try to get rid of my feeling of boredom and started an actual conversation with Aunt Bev for what felt like the first time since my parents weren’t yet back from their shopping spree. I still had a lot of unanswered questions and she basically lived in this town for as long as I can remember.

“Aunt Bev, do you know that old antique store in town??”, I asked, not expecting much of an answer.

To my surprise she responded, “Of course, it has been there since I was a kid.”

“Wow, the store must really be ancient”, I thought to myself. But what she said next really made my jaw hit the ground.

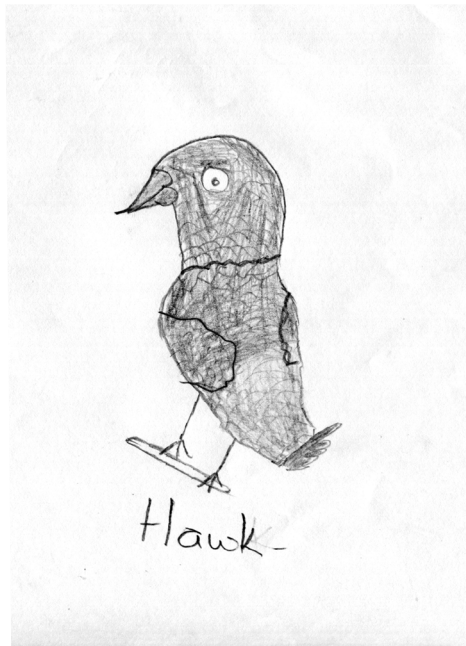
“It used to be run by this older gentleman with a long grey beard that matched his hair.”

At that I was stunned, it was as if all words had been pulled from my brain. When they finally came back to me I said, “I saw a man who fit that same exact description when I stopped by this afternoon.” For the first time, I didn’t feel bored at Aunt Bev’s.

The night was full of conversation between me and Aunt Bev and I ultimately fell asleep with a ton of questions on my mind. The next day I swore to find out the answers.

Eshe Holdipp-Lynch

Age 14



THE RING

by EVANGELINE WORSICK

In St. George's, a remote town in Bermuda, surrounded by a thick mangrove forest, a girl named Julia was sitting by a glistening pond. A fish bolted through the water. Julia held a shiny penny in her hands, rubbing it between her fingers. She tossed it in. It sunk to the bottom with her eyes on the pond. The sun shone onto the coin but then something else caught her eye. It was a ring - the ring had an enormous emerald in the center. Julia stuck her arm into the water and pulled the ring out of the mud. It glistened in the sunlight. She put it on her finger, a true beauty.

Julia started on her long walk home as the sun was setting, her finger weighted down by her new find. Julia wasn't anywhere near her home "Ugh," she thought, "I wish it didn't get dark so fast." At that very moment she looked back up at the sky and it was suddenly bright again. It didn't look like it was 5pm. Julia was so confused, but she kept walking. As she approached her house it became dark again, and a gust of wind blew her hair into her face, getting tangled in her mouth. She thought to herself, "This day has been too weird."

Julia went inside and sat at the table where dinner was there waiting for her, stew with a side of cold peas. She stirred her stew, deep in thought. After almost an hour, Julia finished her dinner and went upstairs, deep in thought

about her troubles with friends, how much she hated her brother.

The next day, as Julia was getting ready to go back to the mangrove forest, she noticed that her shoes were not fitting her. She hadn't worn them in about a month since their last break because of her school uniform, but these were her favorite shoes and they weren't cheap. "I wish these still fit," she said out-loud. At the same moment, she was startled by her brother barging through the door. He snatched her bag from her desk and ran downstairs. "Give it back," she shouted after him. She slid her shoes on, but now they fit perfectly. Julia was so stunned that she didn't even chase after her brother.

Right before leaving for the day, Julia remembered to remove her ring because something of that value should not be out and about. Julia pulled with all her might but this ring wouldn't come off. She was frustrated and her finger hurt so she gave up. Instead, she gazed at the sparkling emerald encased in gold. Yesterday on the side of the ring there had been the number 13 engraved in the gold, or at least she thought so. Now it read 12. It confused her.

When Julia made it to the pond she sat there and wondered about this ring when everything strange that had happened over the last day clicked. What if this ring granted wishes? She was going to test the idea. "I wish that my

shoes were white.” Julia turned away and when she looked back her black shoes were bright sparkling white. “I wish my pants were shorts.” Julia’s jeans turned into jean shorts. She watched the number on the side of the ring go down by one each time she made a wish. By now Julia had used 4 of her 13 wishes and the number on the ring read “9”. Julia was overjoyed with her beautiful emerald ring that grants wishes, nothing could be better than that, she thought. Julia could change her life and make it better.

Once again Julia started her journey back from her outing purposely late, because she knew she could ask the ring to help light her way. It worked. “I wish it wasn’t so dark” and again it became light as day. Julia walked home. She wanted to make it faster. Julia wished for roller skates and in the blink of an eye roller skates appeared on her feet and she skated home. It did get her home faster but now she had used 6 of 13 wishes.

She came home to a dinner of mac and cheese and peas and rice waiting for her. This time as she sat down, her brother swept in and stole her dinner. He ran to the bathroom, locked himself in and ate it. When he finally opened the bathroom door, insults flew between the two. It quickly became violent when Julia threw her roller skates at him and her brother pulled her hair.

When Julia had had enough, she stormed back to her room with her brother trailing behind her screaming, “You can’t just run away from this like you do with all your problems. Are you going to run back to your forest and cry? That forest doesn’t want you just like everyone else!” Her brother had taken it too far, and Julia started to cry.

Julia screamed, “I wish you were never born.” As she slammed the door in her brother’s face., The entire fight had made Julia forget about her ring. She opened her door wide open and her brother wasn’t standing there anymore. Julia sprinted to her brother’s room. When she opened the door, she didn’t find her brother’s room, instead there was a plain guest bedroom. She ran to the families’ pictures on the wall and her brother was missing from the Christmas picture, from the summer holiday picture, and all his baby pictures were missing. Now Julia had used 7 of her 13 wishes.

School started back up the next day. Julia was still in pure shock that her brother just disappeared like that from her life and no one seemed to notice. Julia felt she couldn’t tell her parents in fear that they would send her to a psychiatric hospital. Julia walked to the bus stop. The air was thin or was that just Julia holding her breath trying her hardest not to break down in tears. The bus arrived in no time.

When Julia stepped onto the bus, her ears buzzing, and her eyes watering.

Once she got to school, she ran to the bathrooms, locking herself in a stall. “I wish this would go away.” Julia muttered. Her wish was invalid so she still had only used 7 of her 13 wishes. She started to cry. Her stomach dropped to her knees as she heard the other girl’s distant laughs coming from the sinks. The girls’ laughs sounded like a group of cackling banshees.

Julia felt more like flushing herself down the toilet than going out and facing the other girls. “I wish those girls would leave.” This time her wish was granted, and Julia heard the sound of the creaky bathroom door closing.

The bell rang for Julia’s first period math class, her least favorite subject. She entered the class with messy hair, bloodshot eyes and her lips quivering. During her math class, she was questioning her very existence. If her brother could disappear like that, then why couldn’t she? “I wish my brother was still here,” Julia said out loud as the entire class turned to stare at her. The staring turned into laughs and suddenly she was being videoed by those same girls from the bathroom. She ran out of the class and her teacher didn’t even react. As Julia turned the corner she stopped, closed her eyes and said “*I wish I was at the forest*”.

When Julia opened her eyes, she was in the mangrove forest but not at her special pond. She was somewhere else, deep in the dark murky mangroves. Julia desperately tried to wish herself out of there, but it wasn't working. Julia wandered in hope of reaching her pond but she truly had no clue where she was going. Julia stumbled upon a stone anvil and a stone sledgehammer. Julia was freaking out that if this was the end, what if a being came out of that forest and pummeled her with the hammer.

It was the end but not of her. Julia had an idea - what if she used the sledge hammer to break the ring? The only problem was the ring did not budge from Julia's finger. She would have to break her finger. Julia figured breaking a finger was worth the chance, as her hopes was that after she broke the ring all her wishes would be reversed, sending her back to school and her brother back to earth. She picked up the sledgehammer, laid her hand on the stone anvil and stuck out her index finger. Julia lifted the sledgehammer up, the weight making her arm shake and bend. Julia took a deep breath and dropped the hammer onto her finger. The pain was unbearable but she repeated the process another 3 times till the ring broke. She was free. Her finger was throbbing. It had turned purple and her nail had come off. Julia fainted but when she opened her eyes, she wasn't at school but back at home with her mother, father and brother standing over her. Her shoes

were black and she was wearing pants. Apparently, she had been taken to the hospital and her finger had been bandaged and given a splint. The ring was gone and the world had returned to normal, finally.

Once Julia healed from the experience and her injury, her life slowly started to get better. She made many new friends and her brother started being nicer to her. Maybe the ring had a deleterious effect on Julia's life or maybe it's actually the reason that she's doing so well now.

In the end, Julia was glad that she found the ring because she learned that you should always be careful what you wish for.

The End.

Evangeline Worsick

Age 11



Group 5 Golden Star

28 May, 2023

AGE: 14

Who ever painted Ead white he must
be black, Says the black man of course
not! He's got to be green, quipped the green
man but cannot be. He must be red



Dr. Stranger



Benz

DARK IN LIGHT

by McKENZIE BEAN

You may see the world as a colorful, safe place but not for me. I, McKenzie Bean, live a chaotic life. Below the surface is the Area of Darkness which is where thieves' and prisoners' souls live. I am half human-- half memalacian. Memalacia is, wellll... the Area of Light. It is a really special half-memalacian and half-human because they are on two completely different sides of the universe. Here is my birth story...

I was born human. Everything about me was human. I was very sedulous in everything I did. One day I was in my backyard and I fell on a ring. I had a feeling that it was a wishing ring. I made the one wish that I could... I knew about the Area of Darkness, whose actual name is Demelicia but I would never wish for that. Instead, I wished that I could be half-human and half the Area... of... Light! I felt a zap move through my body and at the same time I heard the ring say, "No more wishes can be granted," and it disappeared.

Well that was my birth story. Here is how I lived through my first power...

Days passed and I discovered my first power. One day mom asked me to wash the dishes. I was thinking, "Should I wash the dishes?" And when I normally think, I snap my fingers so, as usual, I snapped three times. When I got my lazy butt up and went to the kitchen, to my astonishment, the dishes were done! Then I thought to myself, "Should I sweep the floor to help my mom?" and I snapped three times. The floors were cleaned!

I pondered to myself, "Should I get my nails done?" and snapped

three times. NOTHING happened. I figured out that this power only works when I am trying to help someone.

The next day it was a Saturday. It was 1:00 am. People were at my door shouting, Memalcea's Police! Open up! We are armed!"

My parents whispered, "Hide!" as they opened the door. After that, I never saw my parents again. But I soon learned that the police were after me, just me. I knew I was special, just not how special.

Three years later... I discovered my second power. March 15 marked the day my parents were taken. I was at the door thinking about how I could find and save my parents but, most importantly, I was thinking about Memalicia. I closed my eyes and thought and thought. When I opened my eyes, I wasn't in my house. I couldn't be? Or could I be? No, yes, maybe, probably, yup! I had just teleported to Memalacia. Then I thought of Earth and returned immediately. I was officially a teleporter! I read as many super hero books as I could and wrote notes. I discovered that I had one power left. I waited a whole week then I got it! Now I was ready to travel to Memalicia to save my parents.

I thought of Memalicia and in the blink of an eye I was there. I got up and looked around. It seemed that I was in a high-tech castle. I walked down the hallway and saw human-like robots coming towards me saying, "We must capture McKenzie."

At the very last second I shouted, "Force field!" At that moment a force field appeared before my eyes. I heard a robot say, "She is too powerful. We must get the ring. It is in her hair." They then vanished and I continued my search for my parents.

I searched through the hallways for ten minutes. What I didn't notice was a new group of robots coming behind me. I turned around but it

was too late. They pulled something out of my hair. It was a ring, not any ring-- but the wishing ring.

I tried to make my famous force field but nothing happened. I heard the ring say, "You can use the power one more time until I am back in your hair." Luckily I was the only one to hear this secret message.

The robots took me and locked me up. My eyes were shut. I was in the corner of my cell, sobbing. What would I do? What could I do? What should I do? When I finally opened my eyes, I saw... my parents in the same cell!

I screamed in shock and jumped into my mother's arms. My parents held me tightly and wept. I knew we had no time to talk-- I knew we needed to escape.

I wondered why they wanted us so badly. I know Memalicia is where I am from.... Before I could finish my thought, the door flew open. In walked a tall woman into the room. She introduced herself as Queen Beena.

"I'm here to hurt you. No one can be as powerful as me. No one can overrule me. No one in Memalicia, including myself, has powers like you do. That's because you are from the two strongest planets in the world. I will not be overpowered," Queen Beena exclaimed and sat down in a nearby chair with her guards to glare at us. Her face was red with anger and her eyes were beams of evil.

I thought to myself, "I know very well that darkness can't live without light and light can't live without darkness. Beena must be the darkness in this beautiful Area of Light. And, oh what a darkness she was."

I pushed that thought out of my mind and quickly pulled a bobby pin out of my hair without Queen Beena noticing. Before I moved towards the lock, I remembered my one wish. I said to myself, "I need the ring to

help us escape.” I snapped three times and the ring magically appeared once again in my hand. I shoved it into my hair before Queen Beena and the guards could see.

I looked back at my parents who looked shocked. They had seen me receive the ring. Beena, still glaring, saw my parents’ faces and knew something was up. She stood up and screeched, “You will never get past me and my guards!”

I told my parents to grab onto me and, as soon as they did, I thought about Earth. In a blink of an eye, we were there safely. For extra security, I made a force field so that no one like Beena would be able to get in. This also meant, we also could not get out.

That’s how I, McKenzie Bean, lived my life. As you may already know, people have learned to break the forcefield and I know that you humans helped them. In the modern world today, you guys smoke, litter and pollute the Earth. Every time that happens, the force field gets weaker. My powers run on nature and only you can save it. I can’t fix that. I live in fear of the day the force field finally breaks because I know Beena will seek her revenge.

McKenzie Bean

FACTORY MAGIC

by **MARLEE WILSON**

It was a silent night. My brain was awake but my eyes needed a break. I couldn't sleep-- glitching nightmares of the megalodon king of the sea horrified me and gave me visions of attacks.

Suddenly, I started to tip toe out of my bed into my sister, Amara's, room. It was very dark in there. Her floor was so creaky and that's what woke her up. She regretted it already.

"What are you doing here?" she asked.

"Just follow me," I said.

We tiptoed into the kitchen and out onto the deserted street. We walked right into the laboratory. Our uncle, the scientist/CEO, owned this laboratory factory. He studied radioactive shifting animals in this treacherous place. The week before we had a tour.

Right at the end of the tour our cousin explained, "Whoa. Don't go in that room," as he pointed towards a door in the left corner. "It holds great danger."

The room they were not supposed to go into, we didn't care. We went straight in! We got terrified by the slithering sounds of factory snakes and the hanging cocoons filled with radioactive limbless reptiles and slime.

We tried to get out. There were hissing and spinning calls echoing through the air. We busted out of that specific room as soon as

possible. Our bodies were still shaking in fear until we reached this giant tank of bibbling, pink goo.

Suddenly one snake launched out of its cocoon. Amara screamed in terror, tried to run but accidentally tripped over her own feet and fell backwards onto the tank. CRASH! The fragile glass of the tank shattered all across the floor. Some of the goo slithered on to her arms. A couple of seconds later she found it sinking into her pores.

In front of my arms Amara shapeshifted into a small anaconda. I knew it was my sister because of her glorious dark green eyes. She talked to me and said, “You’ve got to help me, Jahara. You’ve got to. The goo has given me a superpower that has enabled me to turn into any snake that I desire. I don’t know how to contain this power. If I dream of any snake, I will turn into it. I don’t want this to happen unless I am helping someone.”

We are just getting started. This is the start of a new adventure of terror, of fighting wild creatures and megalodons-- nightmares coming true.

Marlee Wilson

Age 7

BLACKED OUT

by YAJHA BRANGMAN

The eternal void was filled with everything, but yet there wasn't anything there.

It was filled with darkness, as if the stars were falling out of place, the void's cold expanse growing any further than even the darkness could lead it. Yet there was something there, floating within darkness not to move or be moved like it was placed there to stay there for the rest of eternity.

A silhouette floated in the darkness alone, curled up into their own protection from the pitiful void they were trapped in. The silhouette's eyes opened slowly, finally unwrapping themselves from their small ball of safety, they seemed awfully confused; they didn't remember a thing.

"Wha- hello?" The silhouette murmured low only for the void to hear, it was almost as if the silence covered up the loud noises they heard before. The sound of screaming and glass shattered against the cool ground, only small fragments of their memories pieced back together.

The figure wore a suit with the black coat tied around their hips, they wore black and white gloves on one of their hands and their tie was lazily hanging from the shirt. They floated for what felt like eternity in a bottomless pit, to be rescued by gravity itself so they wouldn't hit the ground as fast.

It was like feeling the weight of gravity on yourself pushing you down but lightly lifting you up, that's what they thought at least.

"Ugh- what is this..?" The silhouette stared into the endless abyss, squinting at the darkness as if it stared back. Suddenly a bright

white light lit up the darkness that filled the void, it started to levitate the silhouette into its blinding lights.

The silhouette slightly shut their eyes from the blinding light show that the void put on, it drew them closer to the object that seemed to carry them. It looked almost unnatural up close, its cube-like figure with terrifying eyes all on its body with arms everywhere on its body as well.

It's unnatural arms stretched out to reach for them, the silhouette's eyes widened realizing what it was reaching for they tried desperately to move out of its path. The creepy-like arms firmly wrapped its arms around them slowly, it wrapped almost all over their body.

“LET GO-!!” Their muffled screams were covered by the creature's gooey arms, wrapping itself around their mouth. A white gear rotated around its body before turning a deep blood-lust red color, it became rather hostile and started to uncontrollably glitch out of place.

It made a terrible loud screech echoing throughout the void, it hurt the person's ears shutting their eyes closed if it was one thing they hated it was loud noises. A reloading sound of a gun was heard and the blood-lust red button stopped in front of their body and turned into a target getting ready to blast them.

In almost an instant a yell was heard from the distance a female, with black hair and blue two toned hair, dropped from above slamming a large dagger into its back followed by its painful screech. It threw the silhouetted figure to the side and unmerged its deep blood red button back into his white one.

The girl threw her knife straight into the floating gear that acted as its eyes, throwing herself at it and sinking the knife deeper through the

white button. The creature glitched out before finally dying out, the female let out a huff while her mouth glowed a blue shade and it left an electric tingle through her body.

“Hey are you-” The female paused as she saw the figure she saved drop immediately into the bottomless void, plummeting at great speed. She launched herself down towards the figure, reaching her hand out to grab them hoping to catch their hand.

Seeing it was no use, instead she grabbed their waist and pulled them up beside her, the figure got a close look at the female before a shock in her brain was felt. They covered their head with their hands, hoping to shut out the ringing noise the girl showed concern trying to get them to stay awake.

Until finally they blacked out. Their conscience slipped away into its deep eternal slumber, while they tried their best to hold onto to its life but slipped into nowhere.

The figure winced at being thrown to the ground, they were fighting someone or something, they were fighting over a golden clock small enough to fit in your hand. The figure screeched in pain as a creature impaled them through their abdomen. It was blurry from the figure’s tear but they gripped onto the clock cracking it slightly before taking the wheel to reality.

“Hey- HEY!” An arm shook their shoulder furiously, the person woke up to meet face to face with the same girl from before, the one that saved them. She was waiting for their conscience to get a grip on reality again, a warm smile appeared on her face looking into their eyes.

“Way to not die!” The two toned haired girl huffed in a relieved tone, she retracted her hand from the person’s shoulder instead ruffling the white haired figure that sat before them. They were on a surface, floating blocks were everywhere, even some taking the shape of buildings.

The white haired figure was rather confused, they looked down to see the girl’s light skin hand wrapped in bandages and one sleeve covering her arm completely. She wore a purple hood with some fresh purple sneakers as well as a scarf that covered part of her mouth but her blue diamond-like eyes being the most outstanding feature of her figure.

The white haired figure pushed her away quickly, worried she might keep them captive here or do worse. It didn’t matter if she saved them, to them it’s just a phony trick to make people in their debt, they glared at her as an intimidation tactic that didn’t work. The female kneeled down putting their hands out, as if she were calming a dog down.

“Woah- woah. I won’t hurt you, I promise.” She started off sweetly, sweat dropping at their sudden hostility holding her hands up in defense. The white haired figure thought otherwise, they gritted their teeth towards the girl while attempting to properly sit up.

“Hey question stranger.” The female spoke, concern merged with utter curiosity laced in her voice. The white haired couldn’t help but take a small peak towards the girl who spoke, then finally looked the girl in the eyes.

“How long were you down there for?” The two tone haired asked out of pure curiosity, she seemed amazed and yet so curious and confused all in one facial expression. The white haired figure simply deadpanned at

the question criticizing her by the dumb question.

“What?” The white haired figure muttered out loud, the girl’s eyes widened slightly by the random outburst of confusion.

She seemed amazed at the fact they could talk since they were determined to stay quiet or just figured they were mute. The white haired figure stared at her in utter confusion, they had no clue what she was talking about or what she meant by how long.

“You talk? I just meant that whoever stays out in the open normally stops breathing after a while.” The girl explained putting her fist out then opening it like a mini explosion indicating you’d poof out of existence if you stay there for long.

“I’ve never seen someone stay out there for so long, oh and I’m Raine!” She waved her hand around while introducing herself. If you stay off the ground for long you would perish? Is that what they were getting?

“Um.. Mk-” The white haired figure eventually revealed their identity to their savior, Mk felt uncomfortable around people, especially extroverts who put themselves out there as though they were the next big thing to cure the self centered society.

Raine, looking surprised at their cooperation, offered another warm smile towards Mk, holding out her hand to help which surprisingly Mk accepted. Mk looked at their surroundings, they were still in

the eternal void with no stars to guide hope to those lost. It was your job to guide your soul to the afterlife. Instead there were platformed surfaces like broken buildings.

Mk lightly tapped the ground with their foot, checking if the platform was sturdy enough to stand or walk on. It was almost like floating is-

lands in the abyss, God had made these islands in the silent abyss long before the light, a civilization living in nothing but darkness.

Mk felt a jolt through them, a sense that something was extremely wrong. Suddenly another terrifying screech was heard from the distance, Mk covered their ears in hope to block out the ratchet sound. On instinct Raine grabbed Mk and began to run in the other direction of the noise, just then another blinding light appeared as a far bigger creature dropped from the heavens.

Its eyes turning blood red, it began to glitch out and screech. Raine started dragging Mk the other way as the lengthy creature crawled just behind attempting to swipe its stretchy arms at the two. Mk suddenly saw a vision of a golden hand-watch ticking forward, time kinda stopped for Mk but it was still fast for Raine.

Raine looked back towards Mk, who was lost in their head, everything about their features was different. Their eyes being the most noticeable, they were an unnatural glowing yellow while their mouth was glowing white as they puffed.

A horrifying scream was heard from the both of them, both hitting the ground and losing grip of each other. Mk's eyes widened, while regaining their original color from before, they tried getting up feeling pain for their right leg.

They overcame their pain to run towards Raine, helping her up on her feet again. The monster creature crawled faster towards them, shooting towards the two but missing when Mk ducked with Raine. Raine stared at the edge holding onto Mk, she had an idea.

“DO YOU TRUST ME?!” Raine questioned, desperation in her eyes, holding onto Mk's hand. Mk looked into her eyes with all their passion

and sweat before deadpanning at the question that was spilled from her lips.

“NO!?” Mk yelled loudly, Raine’s face dropped immediately after Mk’s answer, she ignored Mk’s answer before gripping their hand. The creature cut them off by one of its infamous screeches of blood-lust that was yet to be fulfilled. The creature’s eye turned into a target before attempting to blast them, in that exact moment Raine made a move and jumped into the void dragging Mk along with her.

Now, they were plummeting through the void at a high rate of speed. Raine gripped Mk’s hand tighter while they fell, Raine spotted a platform 3 cm away from them and started aiming for the platform. Mk’s eyes popped open once the impact hit their back and they both rolled across the platform.

“And that’s why..” Mk stated in pain, obviously irritated by Raine’s reckless decision to jump off the platform. Raine sweatdropped before getting off of Mk, who was visibly annoyed, they sat up staring at Raine who was now brushing herself off.

Raine paused, in all that silence there was a sound a small at best but it was there. Mk noticed it too, slowly starting to stand up listening to the small ringing sound. Raine began walking to a small building on the floating platform, Mk trailing right behind Raine.

In the building stood a room, with a couch and a tall table that was shaped like a living room. Sat on the table a yellow phone polished and shined, almost as if it was a brand new phone. The ringing got louder the more the two got closer, the ringing was becoming unbearable.

The ringing in their ears, it was becoming a warning from the heav-

ens above the angels who wanted to guide them out. Raine reached her hand out towards the phone to be stopped by Mk who stopped placing their hand on hers, Raine lowered her hand down staring at MK.

Mk reached out to the phone, picking it up finally answering the angel's call or so they thought. Finally they were in contact with heaven, they were finally gonna be guided to safe haven out of this nightmare. Mk raised the phone to their ear, to better hear the person on the other side but was met with the chuckling of a demon.

"Wow, I must say you're smarter than ya look Mk!" The demon chuckled, Mk's face dimmed by the comment, whatever or whoever this person is was not here to help. On the other side of the phone was no mere angel but the works of a monster, they were here to hold them in this prison.

Mk had the urge to immediately hang up, yet they froze in place taking the role of a statue. There were a million voices behind the phone, whispers and tiny voices consuming the phone including Mk. The whispers were paralyzing the two completely, holding onto the phone listening to the constant whispers.

"No one ever made it out of there." The voice stated, Mk didn't know what it was about them if it was the cold yet unpleasing tone or if it was because this voice knew Mk. This was a monster sent from the demons of this world or maybe even the other way around, it didn't matter this was the thing keeping Mk here.

Raine watched the show unfold in front of her eyes, helpless she couldn't aid Mk as she was frozen stiff as well. It's voice was paralyzing like it could take control over everything just from it speaking, it was terrifying being unable to move or to control your body freely.

“Who-” Mk started off, their tone shaky and unsure whether to speak to this unidentified demon or stay silent. Mk could just picture the voice’s grinning face, laughing at the two confused figures in the middle of nowhere, the static voice behind the phone sighed loudly for the two to hear.

“You honestly don’t remember anything Mk? Really?” The voice’s tone switched into a tired one, becoming bored of the bland conversation going on between the phone. It was time to cut to the chase.

“You saw what happened out there right?” The voice started off, Mk was confused, the question wasn’t for them but for their companion. Raine saw what happened to Mk when they were running, her face dropped hearing the question from the voice.

Mk turned to her, confusion written all over their faces and they shook their heads. Raine lowered her head facing to the side, Mk turned forward once more looking down at the phone in anger. The voice started laughing lightly, this was such a conversation and it was just getting interesting.

“Let’s take a trip down memory lane!” The voice suggested, a cold static whisper flowed through the room before everything faded into pitch black. Mk reached out for Raine who faded into the darkness, she reached her hand to grab Mk but faded through the ground.

“RAINE!” Mk yelled, falling to their knees and lowering their head. They were alone again just like before, a sound was heard behind them, the sound of metal hitting the ground. Everything lit up the room turned white completely, the voice mumbled words in disbelief.

Another person was here, maybe an angel had finally come to rescue them. Mk turned around to the figure behind them, spotting a golden clock on the ground Mk's eyes widened looking up from the clock. Mk saw themselves, not in self reflection but saw their past self.

“This- This isn't real.. is it.”

“Bingo!”

...

Yajha Brangman

Age 12

25th May, 2023



THROUGH SHIRA'S DOOR by KISAYE' BELL

You know I tried to believe that women of color were equal. Of course I spoke from the viewpoint of a dark skinned woman, living in a world where they favored the lighter skinned woman. Men I mean. They don't cherish our dark skin like they do the lighter. We are constantly the second choice because of our color. For some reason, our skin seems to signify that we are more aggressive and less girly. It's sickening.

This happened to me today in school at Cedarbridge Academy. I was in the hallway close to the North block. It was 11:56, right around time for lunch, when I confessed my feelings of love to my crush. My friends had pushed me to confess to him, because he and I appeared to them to be true friends. We partied together, studied together and we both loved to play PlayStation games and go to the movies together. They said that if he rejected me it wouldn't really sting because he would try not to offend me.

I pulled him aside as he was en route to the cafeteria, and I told him exactly how I felt right in front of his friends and mine. At first I didn't realize that almost the whole student body standing at the entrance and waiting in line to order

food, was watching us and some could hear our conversation, but I was confident. Call me stupid for being that confident. I honestly thought he wanted something more from me and may have been afraid to ask. I actually thought he wanted to date me!

“Are you serious?” he asked as tears of laughter streamed out of his eyes. He raised them to meet my hair as if it was the first time he’d seen it. He twisted his face in disgust. Deshay laughed in my face and slowly dragged his index finger down my left cheek.

“I’m sorry Kaija, you’re just not my type.”

Not his type? My body quivered as tears threatened to spill out of my eyes.

“You crying?” Deshay chuckled.

Don’t cry. I knew what would happen if I did. I would be the topic of discussion for the next nine days on every high school chat group. Then he turned and pointed at Alliyah, a light skinned girl with big loose curls and a small stature that stood behind him. Then with a cynical smile he said three words.

“You ain’t her.”

Alliyah stood there with a smirk, as if she knew this would've happened from the very beginning as she was one of those people who saw me pull him aside. That's when I realized that I couldn't continue to delude myself into believing that Bermudian men would ever abandon the way they think or the way they love their women and how they see them.

Now, I'd love to pretend as if I didn't care but, I'm human. We get hurt by these things and we hate showing it. We are meant to wear a facade as if this blatant prejudice doesn't bother us. Our own men are disgusted by the same skin that birthed them.

Deshay's friends laughed at me as he walked away with his hands in his pockets and a resolute grin plastered on his face. Alliyah latched onto his arm as they continued into the cafeteria, smiling as she whispered in his ear, probably talking about me. I was preoccupied trying not to scream or hyperventilate.

My friends looked sorry for me. I guess they felt sorry because, like me, they had misjudged Deshay's actions and the time they saw us spend together for something more than just a friendship. Their push for me to confess my feelings came after he had given me a new football jersey that matched his for school jersey day, but just then, I re-

alized that he was being my friend. I had allowed them to put my hope for a love that I wanted so badly in a place I had left unguarded.

Others in the crowd looked either shocked or amused. I thought I was amazing and that I was beautiful, and that maybe I would have a chance at someone who didn't like me just for my body. He made a mockery of me. Deshay made a mockery of me! I stared at the ground and clenched my fists trying to will away the tears that accompanied my bruised heart. Today it had taken its first beating in matters of love which presented me with self-doubt and my first jolt of a lack of confidence. Light skinned or white was the blueprint for being considered attractive and I didn't fit in either of those categories.

My confidence which I had built block by block within me by taking advantage of opportunities that were presented to me over the years was now demolished in a matter of minutes, and after each block fell, what remained was the rubble of my new reality. I was average. I had acne. My stomach was pudgy and my hair...oh my hair! It wasn't even close to being perfect...Aaliyah perfect. Of course Deshay liked her! How could he not. She had everything a young woman should have except for humor, but lucky her, she made up for it with her looks. My chest tightened and my breathing quickened. Finally I let my tears flow.

Yeah. It's true. I was no Alliyah. I needed to leave school. Go back home. Home to my room where I could avoid the backlash of my love's rejection and prying, public eyes. No one would miss me. I guess that's the type of presence I had, huh? I could try to be overly helpful, or funny, or strong if I stayed, but I knew that deep down inside of me I was too broken and that I was lacking the level of courage that I needed to thrive if I stayed. I left before anyone could say something to me and ignored every call I had felt like I heard, because right now, nothing else mattered except me and my journey back to my old reality, the more safer and comfortable one, where I can dwell in my rejection in peace.

I found myself in the girl's bathroom where the window above the last stall, which displayed a fairly dusty looking 'Out of Order' sign, was left open. I had never been tempted to climb out of that window, like the popular kids did, until now. They climbed out to smoke all the weed they needed to erase their troubles, while I did so to run from my embarrassment. Sometimes, school is a scary place for teens, especially for those who've faced public humiliation like myself.

I stepped on the toilet top and peered out the window. When I saw the sun smiling down on all the land outside of the school compound, I couldn't help but smile too, and

it looked as if it smiled back.

Bermuda was my heaven, a beautiful island in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean that had no pollution filled skies or ocean like other countries I had visited. The branches of the trees seemed to raise their leafy green hands to wave at me as I passed by. Seeing this welcoming view had already improved my mood. I climbed out that window and the Bermuda breeze hit my face. It always smelled slightly salty to me. I realized that before now, I didn't care too much about it because although my country had all those natural assets, there were ugly people who lived there that did ugly things, and in my case, Deshay's ugly was so bad that I had difficulty finding the beauty that I had always seen in him. I was hurt. His behavior was the violence that would spread from time to time, brought into schools and other places and times meant for harmony. I had seen black girls hate on one another because of the type of hair they had. It's not like we have a choice in these matters.

I hated my hair for that exact reason. I had no choice in the matter. The hair I tried so hard to love and care for never cooperated with me. It never grew past a certain length. My curls weren't defined or large and loose and every time I got a silk press it puffed out in a few minutes. My hair was not beautiful, and covering it up was all I could do to hide how I felt about it. I dyed it, bleached it, added extra

hair to it, but in the end the simplicity of it stayed the same or at least the way I felt about it did. As I walked home I pulled and tugged at my short hair. Hoping that maybe it didn't look as bad as I thought it looked, but I knew it did. It always did

.

As this thought plagued my mind I saw something drop on the ground. I jumped back, staggered like a drunk as I thought it was a spider or a bug of some sort, then I got the nerve to search the ground. But you know what it was? My hair. It was falling out and my head had started to burn. This slow stroll of mine turned into a full on sprint to my house to avoid anyone seeing my balding head.

“No, No, No, No, No.” I screamed as more hair fell as I ran. Why was this happening to me? Was I being cursed?

I almost collapsed from relief when I saw my home in view. I barged into my house and darted towards my room, where my hair could fall out in private. I rushed to the mirror and almost fainted from what I saw. Yes, my hair had been falling out but what met me in the mirror was the most shocking thing of all.

My hair was still on my head, fuller and darker than ever. But it was different. It was moving in rhythmic patterns that indicated that it was breathing. That it was alive. It brushed my face and moved in all sorts of different directions like it was admiring everything around it, sort of like

a newborn baby would. My hair had become magical and looked way more special to me than any other person's hair that I had ever seen, even Alliyah's.

"What is going on?" I asked aloud as I cautiously moved my hands to touch my hair. It was cool to touch and seemed to reach out to welcome me. "Are you alive?" I asked, curious to know if it would respond. I figured that if it could move this way in the first place, then wasn't anything possible? I reached up to touch it again and what it did excited me to my core. It wrapped around my hand as if it was giving me a hand shake. How cute! Even though this was weird, I loved every moment of it. It was the best thing that happened to me all day.

As I reminisced the events of my emotionally charged day, I witnessed something even more mind blowing. My hair grew. Like not just growing a couple of inches you couldn't see. The hair was now shoulder length and lovingly brushing my ears. How was this possible?

Then my room shook. My dresser slid towards my television, knocking it over. School books slid off my bookshelf. My light left its home on the ceiling and a doorway appeared where my dresser once stood. I stood in front of it and saw that it had many different variations of blues and purples in its center. The door frame was made of a beautiful white wood that sported engravings in a language that

I did not understand

.

Standing in front of the door was a woman, a goddess more beautiful than any woman I had ever seen. Her skin was blacker than onyx. She sported an afro so humongous that it filled half my room. She glowed.

“Who are you?” I asked her.

“I am Shira,” she answered with a very warm smile.

My hair started to move erratically. It moved itself into a style that I couldn’t see but that I knew was just as beautiful and as magical as hers. As if she could read my thoughts, her face transformed into a mirror. I was in awe of myself. My hair was braided at my hairline and blossomed into a large Afro.

“Do you like it?” Her smile grew bigger as she asked the question

“I love it, but why did you do this?”

“All of my children must love themselves first, then they can love others unconditionally. Princess Kaija, my daughter, I am here to ensure that you rediscover your love for yourself. Things of this world have taken too much of your self-love away. I have come so you can love yourself again.

You are powerful. Your hair is your crown, a sacred, cultural and spiritual symbol of your strong African Heritage. When you wear braids and other intricate hairstyles they have deep historical roots that can symbolize your age, marital status, religion, rank and wealth in society. When you embrace these things no-one can defeat your spirit.” Her mirrored face transformed to her human face. It was then that I realized that I was looking at a reflection of myself.

“Kaija, it doesn’t matter what you do. It will never be possible to make someone love you.”

I sat down with my face between my legs. I wept in silence.

“Enter my world and you will learn what it means to love who you are.”

Shira stared at her door. It magically turned to glass. Shira turned to me and extended her hand. I hesitated. She gave me a look of assurance that it was safe to enter. I did not take her hand. She turned and walked through the door. After a few seconds I followed.

I entered a portal, the tunnel of swerving colors, the magnitude of which blew my mind. I was on a fast moving train ride through colorful refracted light energy created by the

glass door, but there was no train. It was a short ride and when it ended the tunnel dissipated. My jaw dropped in awe at the beauty that accompanied this new world.

There were fragrant trees with white bark and pink leaves. Colorful fragrant freesias bursted everywhere. The scent of freesias. There was color everywhere, but to my disappointment, nothing was black.

“Where is the black in this world, Shira?” I asked, slightly upset. “We are the black.” she smiled.

“We are?”

I was skeptical that nothing else was black. What good was it to bring me to a world where black did not exist?

I flinched as I heard rustling in a nearby bush. I dashed to Shira in a desperate attempt to secure my safety amidst pending danger.

I took my eyes off Shira to look at a bush in which a little girl had appeared. She was pink.

“What the hell?” I whispered.

Laughter exploded all around me. I could tell that I was

heard even though I whispered. Shira laughed too.

“Do not fear my child, they will not hurt you, I promise.” Then she disappeared, but I sensed her watching me. The laughter emanated from people of varying colors popping out from the bushes. Purple, blue, green, yellow, turquoise, any color and any variation of color you could think of. Their clothing was made of the flora and forms around them.

They were breathtaking creatures with features that resembled animals. I had seen someone with the ears of a fawn, another with whiskers like a cat, and even someone who had the legs of a bull. All of them were muscular, and strong, and those who seemed designated as soldiers carried weapons engraved with golden letters that read HE.

“Ni nani ona?” said the little pink girl to one of the older figures. I didn’t understand her language. Soon they were all actively communicating with each other talking simultaneously, moving closer to me.

“Ona alikuja kutoka brama.”

“Ona alikuja niebo.”

“Ona ni nzuri.”

“SHIRA!” I screamed. I was freaking out. They were getting closer and closer, and I didn’t know if they were dangerous or not.

“Oh I’m sorry my child, let me help you with that.” I heard Shira say apologetically.

A circular beam of light hovered over my head and slowly lowered and enveloped me. I willingly accepted it, and immediately I could understand what they were saying.

The pink little girl asked, “Where are you from?” “She came through the door,” a green boy replied.

“She came from the clouds,” offered a yellow one. “She is beautiful!” exclaimed an orange, chubby girl.

I walked over to this little girl, stooped down to her level and said, “I come from a place called Bermuda.”

She tilted her head in confusion and asked, “Bermuda?”

“Yes Bermuda, a tropical island in the North Atlantic Ocean surrounded by nothing but water and coral reefs. It is small, but the people are mighty.”

I stopped talking when I realized that I had been speaking

their language. I smiled and continued.

“Our island is known for its pink sand and clear skies. It was once known as the Isle of the Devils, due to our constant stormy weather that sailors would experience as their ships passed by. Our Cahow birds frightened the sailors as their loud noises sounded like wailing demons. Under the water, our deadly coral reefs sank any ship which sailed too close.”

I was proud that I could communicate with them in their language, confident in telling my story and feeling beautiful because I saw the beauty in the people surrounding me.

“Tell us more. We like to dance. Do your people dance?”

“Our dancers wear these colorful costumes donned with jewels and tassels. They are called Gombeys. They wear these lofty headdresses with peacock feathers at the very top which are said to add a few feet to their height. These feathers symbolize pride and strength.”

“Just like your hair!”

This little purple girl made my day! She touched my hair as I continued to talk.

“These Gombey also glitter their hats to make them sparkle.”

“Just like you. You’re glowing Kaija.” Shira was enjoying her transformation.

“They wear capes that are adorned with embroidery and embellishments which relate to Bermuda’s culture and folklore. And If you saw one with a whip and the longest cape of them all, that would be the captain.”

“I like your story. You should be a captain,” said the pink girl.

“Women don’t dance the Gombey. Our women were poets, who were known for their beauty on the inside and their writing on the outside. They got the attention of other countries from not just their stories but the natural beauty that they were born with and an accent that would confuse both Americans and the British. Doctors would say that our bodies were perfect works of art.”

My excitement had reached new heights, and it was then that I realized how amazing I was. These little people had moved closer to me and were sitting at my feet. They stared at me in awe and the only thing left for me to do was smile.

“Are all the people as black and beautiful as you?” A young man with purple skin and horns of a deer asked as he rose to stand by my shoulder.

“Beautiful? Pfft! Me?” I blushed.

I took his hand, looked him in the eye and replied, “You are truly the most beautiful people I have ever met.” I laughed. He continued.

“Your skin. I have never seen anything like it. It’s so dark and out of this world. What is it called?” He complimented me, gently lifting my arm and stroked my skin. I would have been scared but something about these people made me fearless.

“My skin is black.” I said it boldly. “I am black.”

“Black and perfect,” he said, all the while smiling.

“And your hair.” He ran his fingers through my hair and it wrapped around his hand and fingers like it did to me earlier, greeting him. I saw stars in his eyes as my hair danced. In his eyes I saw that I was magnificent.

Shira glowed into their presence.

“You are magnificent,” and my confidence was restored. “What is your name?” The purple guy asked.

“Kaija.”

“Kaija.” My name rolled off his tongue in a way that made me realize how beautiful my name was. The others repeated it, in the same fascination he was in.

“And what is your name?” He blushed. His cheeks turned a deeper purple. “My name is Asra, I am named after Hewas’ energy.”

“Hewas’ energy? Who is Hewa?” I asked as I tilted my head to get a better understanding.

“Yes, this world we live in is called Hewa. We are Astrians.” He said, gesturing to all the people around us with a sweeping motion of his hand.

“Astrians absorb Hewas’ energy called Astra. Astra aids in our body cultivation. It makes us stronger, faster, and smarter. Our skin becomes extremely resilient and hard to penetrate.” He raised his arm and flexed his bicep, while tapping it with his other hand. I could have sworn I heard metal clanging when he did that.

He motioned for me to grab his arm and I complied with no hesitation. I was shocked. I did not feel skin and muscle. I felt a semi-human male made of metal. Vibranium if I could call it so. He did not look like it but, without a doubt, this man could tank a train without trying, maybe put a hole into Mount Everest with his pinky finger, erase an entire continent with a single exhale.

I knelt at his feet and looked into his eyes. “I want to be as strong as you. Please teach me!” I got on my knees and clasped my hands together praying that he would teach me to be strong like him.

“Of course. We will all cultivate together.”

All of the Astrians settled into a cross legged position. Then Asra continued.

“In order to absorb Astra, you must be able to recognize it first. Let Astra become a friend to you. Close your eyes and imagine someone of importance to you. Get familiar with every shape and contortion of their body. Engrain the image of that person in your mind and associate them with Astra. Depending on your bond with that person, will depend on the intake of Astra energy. Your soul will absorb this energy until it’s full. Your soul is like a cup. Once it is full, it will spill over. Now when your cup spills over,

that Astra energy will start to fill your body, strengthening every bone, every muscle, and every tissue, until it can no longer do so.”

“What happens when you can’t strengthen yourself anymore?” I asked.

“I do not know and neither does anyone else. That point has never been reached. Strength has no bounds. And strength is not only physical. It is mental as well. There will always be someone to beat in a mental or physical battle, and when you beat the next person there will be someone right behind them. You may think I am the strongest man in the world right now, but what about that God who brought you here?”

I gasped as Asra mentioned that last bit.

“How did you know that I was brought here by a God?” He shrugged and closed his eyes, and taking it as he didn’t want to answer my question, I closed my eyes as well.

I thought long and hard about who I would like to be my representation but I couldn’t quite get it. Every person I thought of just didn’t seem right. They were wrong to me in every way, their proportions were off and to me, they didn’t look like how the embodiment of Astra seemed to

be, until I got to a certain person. The person who I knew the most. All her dislikes, her likes, her mannerisms, her attractions, and even the way she loved. That person was me. I was Astra and in my head I was mapped out to be exactly who I knew myself to be. I was confident, I was beautiful, and I was black! Astra is black!

As I made this revelation of my blackness I realized that I was also light. My light was my energy.

“Kaija! Kaija!” I gasped as my eyes opened. My body was drenched in sweat. Someone shook me. I was shaking, I felt cold and slightly numb compared to how I felt a few seconds ago and soon I realized why. I was in my room again. My mother was in front of me kneeling on my bed. Her hands were on my shoulders. She cried, concerned about my condition. My sister paced back and forth with a phone to her ear, crying hysterically.

“Mama?”

“Oh my baby!” She hugged me tightly. I felt her pain that accompanied her tears.

“Kaija!” My sister ran to my side. She dropped her phone on the bed and hugged me too.

I pulled away from them and asked, “What happened? What’s going on? Why are you guys crying?” Just a moment ago I was in Hewa, finding Astra, and now I’m in my room on my bed, feeling cold and tired, with my mother and sister in hysterics. Was everything that just happened a dream?

“When we first found you, you weren’t breathing. Then for some reason you started to breathe again. We have been calling your name hoping you would wake up. ”

“Why did you leave school?” My sister asked.

“What happened to you, and what’s this mess on your wall?”

I turned to look at the wall. Above my bed was a symbol, a message from Shira. She had used small pieces of leaves from the tread in Hewa to write this message. The smell of the freesias and the vibrant colors were evidence of my journey being real.

I looked below the picture and read the words aloud. “Up-endo kto ty ni, sainsi Szira.”

“What madness is this?” My mother was scared.

“What does that mean?” My sister asked.

I smiled. I immediately recognized what those words meant and the lesson that I learned on that train ride to Hewa.

“Love who you are. Signed Shira.”

Kisaye' Bell

Age 18



Jessica Estun



Corn

Royal Family

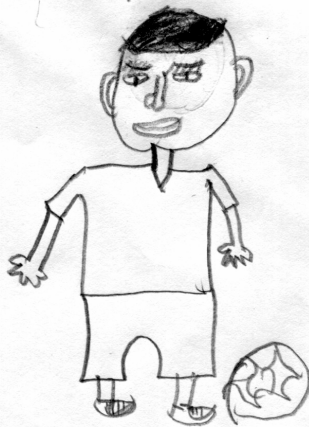


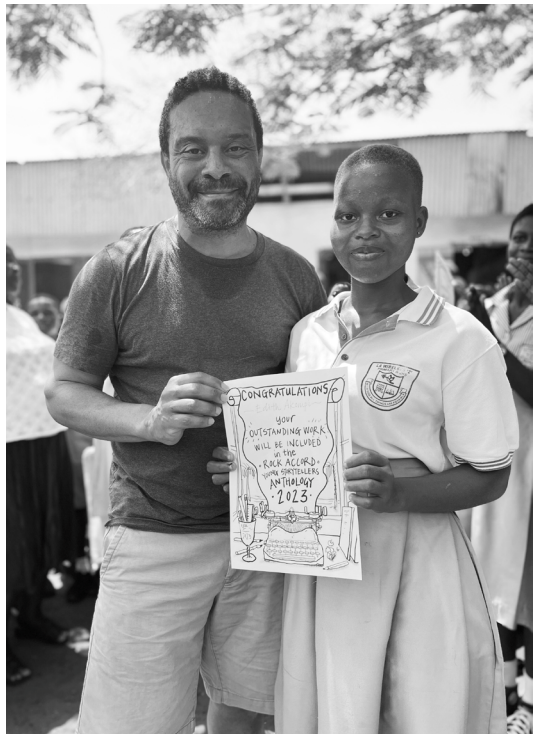
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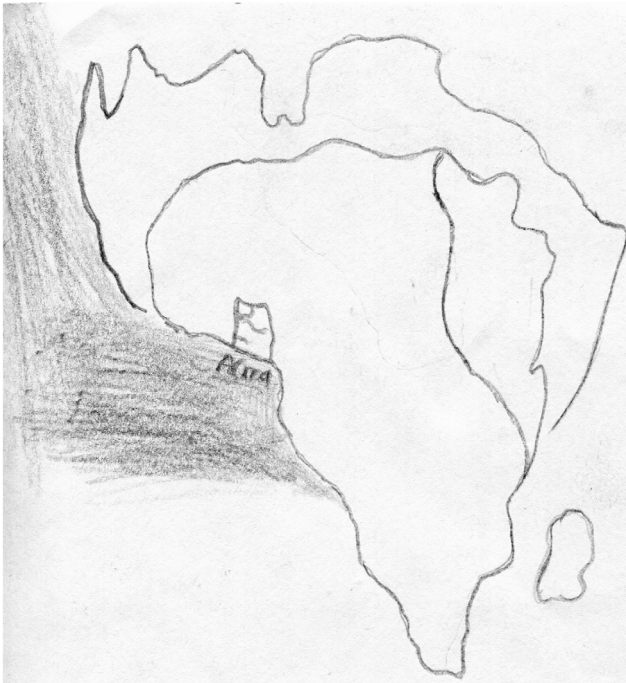
FROM: Ghana

FAVORITE FOOD Rice well:

SOMETHING I DO WELL:







J

1. Job
2. Joseph
3. Jump
4. John
5. Juice

J K

K

6. Killed
7. Kiced
8. Kingbom
9. Kind
10. Key^{boa}

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Thank you x

Eleanor Taylor & Sarah Odedina



THE ROCK ACCORD YOUNG STORYTELLERS!

Topics

Enjoy these writing prompts with a focus on community, friendship and caring for ourselves, each other, and the wider community in which we live.

GROUP 1 (9 TO 13 Age Group)

1. Write a story about a magical ring that can grant your wildest wishes. But the time comes when the wishes run out. What do you wish for? Where do the wishes take you? What happens when the wishes run out? Are you happy or sad?
2. Write about someone in your community who you think is special. What is it that makes them stand out? What makes them different to other people around them? Why do you admire them?
3. Imagine you have a superpower. Describe your superpower and how it works. Write about how you use the superpower and how it affects people around you? Think about things like if you are happy to have the superpower, and if you are the only person that has these abilities

GROUP 2 (14 TO 19 AGE GROUP)

1. Think about a person who is 70 years old and they have an encounter with a 15 year old. What has happened to bring your two characters together? Think about how the two characters may differ but also about the things that they share. If they are neighbours how would they interact or if they came from very different places might they have to learn about each other? Sometimes opposites attract and age is not a barrier to friendship but sometimes people's life experiences can make it hard for them to listen to one another. Think about your characters as individuals rather than as representing the values of their group. It can be a lot of fun to turn ideas on their head.
2. Imagine that you wake up one morning and find a new door in the wall of your bedroom. You peer through the keyhole – what happens next? Think about what sort of world exists on the other side of the door – what sort of place is it? Who lives there? Who is in charge? Is it a utopia or dystopia?
3. Imagine you have been put in charge of your hometown. You get to make all the rules and decide everything that is going to happen. What would you do? How do you think people would react? Does everyone agree with you? How would you manage all the changes you want to put in place? Start your story by writing a manifesto of your five priorities and then imagine sharing these with your community.



My wishes run out:

"I kept always
two books in my
pocket, one to
read, one to
write in."

- Robert Louis Stevenson

