FREE ENTRY

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A great tool to improve literacy in schools!

August 2013
www.ozkids.com.au
The YoungAtArt website and the Young Australian Art Awards are an initiative of the Children's Charity Network. All entrants must be no older than 18 years of age or attending either a primary or secondary college. There are 4 categories: Painting, Drawing, Photography, Computer Art. There are three age groups: Junior (Prep to Grade 4), Middle (Grade 5 to Year 8), Senior (Year 9 to Year 12).

To enter your Artwork you will need to obtain a digital image of your piece of work and submit this image on-line through our website at www.YoungAtArt.com.au.

To do this you will be required to sign up in order for you to have the access to submit artwork. If you or your school do not have access to digital imaging, you may send a copy of your artwork to Young at Art, PO Box 267, Lara, Victoria 3212. Further information is available online.
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August 2013

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FROM THE EDITOR’S DESK

I cannot believe we only have about six weeks before entries close for the 2013 Young Australian Writer’s Awards.

Please have your entries in before the end of September to qualify.

Please don’t leave it until the end!

ENTER ON-LINE at
www.ozkids.com.au

KEEP ON WRITING (TYPING)!

Carol Dick
Managing Editor

CHILDREN’S CHARITY NETWORK
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BOOK REVIEW

Welcome Home
by Christina Booth

Ford Street Publishing
PB Ages 7+ Price: AUD$26.95 HC $16.95 PB
ISBN: HC 9781925000085 PB 9781925000092

Reviewer: Jenny Mounfield

‘When I heard her call, it came from the river, echoing off the mountains like a whisper while the moon danced on the waves.’

Filled with poetic language, and gentle watercolour illustrations in tones that encourage reflection, this is a beautiful story of one whale’s return to its ancestral waters and the intuitive child who is there to welcome her.

‘Each day she comes closer, telling me something new. Sometimes she is full of joy. Sometimes she is sad. It tugs at my heart as I listen.’

Hunted to the point of extinction, the southern right whales have returned to Hobart’s Derwent River after an absence of almost two hundred years. So named due to the perception that these were the ‘right’ whales to hunt, the southern right whale was declared a protected species in 1935.

To ensure our future doesn’t mirror our past, Welcome Home is a must-read for primary school children. Not only will they come away with knowledge of these majestic creatures—thanks to an informative double-page spread at the end of the book—but they will learn about compassion, consequence and respect.

Christina Booth is an award-winning author / illustrator. Other titles include: Kip, I Wish There Were Dinosaurs and Potato Music.

Jenny Mounfield is the author of four books and several short stories for young people. Her reviews have appeared both online and print.

Oz Kids in Print
The alarm sounds once again. As per usual I turn my head slightly to see the long lumpy figure rise out from the bed sheets.

It’s the same routine every day. This long lumpy figure just happens to be my owner Julie. Even though I’m used to it I still sometimes get a little frightened when I see her get out of bed looking like she does right now. As I’m stretching out every part of me I can’t help but give out a little ‘meow’.

I love this time. I wait on the bed sprawled out until I hear the sweet, sweet sound of a tin being opened. I jump off the bed and go running down the hallway until I reach what the humans call the kitchen. I lick my lips and walk over to my food bowl where I wait until Julie bends down and spoons a dollop of “Whiskas” into it. As I purr away I demolish the food in about three minutes. I think I’m getting quicker every day.

At the moment the house doesn’t look like it normally does. Where the cabinet normally sits there are 20 odd boxes stacked up against the wall. I have no idea what is happening. Maybe we are having a garage sale. I love those. I get a scratch behind the ears from nearly every customer. Or maybe it’s all going into storage which will give me more room to sleep. Oh who cares anyway, as long as I benefit from it.

I wonder what’s on the agenda for today? Maybe I’ll actually go outside and catch a mouse, or play with my new odd looking toy that I am yet to try out.

Julie is acting a little unusual today. Maybe she is late for work. She seems stressed out and panicked. Once I get every last morsel of food out of my bowl I head for the couch. Eating makes me so tired.

I walk around the couch a few times before I find the perfect place to sleep, just as I am interrupted by a large beeping noise. Next thing I know, there is a knock at the door. I jump off the couch to investigate. I bet you it’s that post man bringing us more parcels.

As I lay my eyes on the figure at the door that Julie then opens, I learn that it’s not the stupid post man. Julie invites the man in and he heads straight to my couch. With the help of Julie he lifts it up and takes it outside to load it into what I think is a truck. Maybe we are getting a new couch. I sure hope so.

But then he keeps coming back into the house for more of our furniture. He even moves those boxes stacked up in the corner that were in my way. Before my eyes our house was being emptied. Julie and this guy are in and out of the house until eventually there is nothing left in the house.

Julie comes over to me and scratches me behind my ears. I hear the truck drive off. I wonder when he is going to bring back our furniture. Julie then reaches down and picks me up and then tries to shove me in some squishy cage. It’s a bit small for me but that’s to be expected when you’re a fat cat like me. She locks the door and then carries me to her car. I get placed carefully on the front seat as Julie straps herself in.

We drive away somewhere and I have no idea where we are until the car stops. Julie unclips herself and slides out of the car and then walks around to the passenger seat to retrieve me. We are at a house and the truck is back here too. What a coincidence. I wonder what he is doing here as well as us?

Julie unlocks the front door and lets me out of my small cage to explore. I love this place already. There are so many sunny places to take a nap. I still wonder what we are doing here. The truck guy starts to unload our furniture back into this house. Maybe this is our new house. I sure hope it is.

Once again before our eyes our furniture is returned in the same original condition as it had looked before. Before long all of the furniture was placed and scattered around the house. Once the truck man was finished Julie pulled out her purse to pay him for his services. He then drives off leaving Julie and I to explore and settle in to our new house.

I may be wrong but I have a feeling I am really going to enjoy it here!

By Maddison Campbell
Year 8, Cressy District High School
CRESSY – TAS.
As I stood at the base of the lighthouse
I saw a building that was as white as a
wedding dress, with ivy like lace climbing
its walls. I marvelled at the structure that
rose bravely into the oncoming storm. I
took in my new surroundings, my new
home; the home of the lighthouse keeper.

The job of the lighthouse keeper had been
passed down for generations. I was the only
person for the job. My great-grandfather
had been the previous lighthouse keeper.
I was a mere 21 year old, and I did not
want to spend the rest of my life cooped
up in a building like he had. He might
have thrived in that condition but not me,
I was different.

This was the place where painful childhood
memories had been birthed, 16 years ago.
Memories I tried so hard to brush away,
as though it were a strand of hair, a strand
that kept falling across my face forcing me
to revisit these horrific memories.

It was a sunny day when my parents had
taken me out on the ocean in a rowboat.
Unexpectedly, a storm brewed in the
distance. We ignored it, determined not to
let it spoil our day. Blocking all the sunlight
from view, dark storm clouds clung to us
with the strength that an oyster clings
to a rock. It was too late to turn back. I
remember feeling petrified. I realised that
if the lighthouse did not shine we would
surely crash into the jagged rocks that lined
the cliff. The lighthouse blatantly ignored
our cry of despair. A huge wave crashed
on me and water filled my mouth. Then
all went black, leaving me to wake up the
next morning as an orphan.

The memory ended as I felt raindrops
on my face. I was fully alert. As the rain
started to get heavier I took refuge in
the lighthouse. Once inside, I ascended
a staircase that spiralled up the interior
of the lighthouse. As I reached the top
of the stairs I was greeted by a gust of
wind. I was on the observation deck of
the lighthouse.

As I looked at the landscape I saw a raging
storm erupting from the clouds. On
the ocean I spotted a rowboat bobbing
violently, slowly getting closer to the jagged
rocks that lined the cliff. I could imagine
the screams of help the people on the boat
must have shouted as a large wave came
topping down on their boat, bringing
them closer still to the towering rocks.
Suddenly I knew what I had to do. I had
to save those people. I had to show them
the way. I had to prevent another life being
lost, another family being torn apart. The
only person who could save them now was
me. It was my duty; it was my responsibility
to light the way for them.

It was the job of the lighthouse keeper.

By Naomi Johnson
Maryland Public
Hunter Christian School
MAYFIELD – NSW

I lay in bed petrified,
I see an owl from the corner of my eye.
The patterns engraved on her wings,
She flies to my window and sweetly sings.
I stare at her with gleaming eyes,
I’m wide awake, I will not cry.
Tonight I am awake with my owl.
I turned around and so did she,
She flew away, I fell asleep.
Tonight I softly, swiftly cry,
Remembering the patterns in her eyes.
The War was announced,
Bombs heavily drop,
Tonight my owl got hit.

By Isabel Kelly
Year 4, Trinity College
ALBURY/WODONGA – NSW
Riley and the Jumpy Kangaroo
A journey around Canberra

By Tania McCartney
Illustrations by Kieron Pratt

Ford Street Publishing, August 2013
$22.95 hard cover
ISBN: 9781925000023
$16.95 paperback
ISBN: 9781925000030

W HILE visiting the nation’s capital, Riley encounters a very jumpy kangaroo, frantically searching for something she’s lost. Bounding around the iconic sights of Canberra, can this roo finally find what she’s been looking for?

Featuring black and white photos of Canberra’s very best monuments and sights, *Riley and the Jumpy Kangaroo* combines photos, illustrations, adorable characters, humour and an adventuresome storyline in a travelogue-style book that showcases the capital at its very best. It is in celebration of the Centenary of Canberra in 2013.

*Riley and the Jumpy Kangaroo: A journey around Canberra* is out this August! It’s the best Riley adventure yet.

---

Elderly Abandonment

She feels guilty in the morning
her garden cries for her
geranium on the window sill
bows its head

‘But I visited her last week!’
furious whispers in a dead corridor
discarded by a needy world
and now she mourns

The window is too far away
a postage stamp of sky
a helpful nurse ends her daydreams
with a curtain

By Rebekah Hillan
Year 11, Eynesbury Senior College
ADELAIDE – SA

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BOOK REVIEW

Riley and the Jumpy Kangaroo
A journey around Canberra

By Tania McCartney
Illustrations by Kieron Pratt

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$22.95 hard cover
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OUT
August 2013
ONE day when I was playing with my friend Andy we saw a competition poster stuck on the tree that said: ‘Competition: you have to work with a partner to try and win 10,000 dollars by making a funny film of one of you. If you win we will call you.’

‘Hey Andy,’ I said, ‘do you think we could try and win this thing?’

‘Great idea, Gabe,’ Andy answered.

‘Who wants to act it out?’ I asked.

‘I will,’ said Andy.

‘Cool,’ I say. ‘I will film you, OK? See you tomorrow for our first practice run’.

‘See ya tomorrow, Gabe,’ winked Andy.

While that was happening, I didn’t see my big sister Jen spying on us. She is ten years old. I am only eight years old. She had been listening to us the whole time. I didn’t notice her until Andy was gone. She was hiding in a bush with her binoculars. I was really, really shocked that Jen would do that. It was just unbelievable.

At dinner time, I asked Jen to not spy on me and why she did it. But she didn’t reply. The next day after breakfast, I went to the park to meet Andy there. He had been waiting for me for a few minutes. I had brought my camera to film Andy with. I didn’t notice Jen sneaking behind me to the park. I started to film Andy. He was going down the slide and bumping onto the ground of the park. He also did a really funny dance to some music. It was this old, famous music about bugs!

When I wasn’t watching, Jen took my camera after we had finished, to run home and send to the judge. Me and Andy were really shocked that someone like Jen would do that sort of thing because she usually is really nice. But right now she definitely was not being kind, nice or respectful.

‘Hey Gabe,’ said Andy, ‘what shall we do now?’

‘Don’t worry mate,’ I said. ‘I have got a plan.’

‘Come over here,’ I called to Andy. ‘Here’s the plan. OK – we wait until Jen sends the funny film to the guy. Then, we wait till she wins the 10,000 dollars and then we wi–…’ but then I got interrupted by Andy.

Andy asked the question, ‘Jen might not win, so what will we do then?’

‘Good point,’ I replied. ‘Really good point. OK, Andy, let’s just say, if she doesn’t win, we will be doomed! Now where was I? Oh yes, I remember. We will sneak into her room and get the money. Do you like the plan, mate?’

‘It’s great, Gabe,’ shouted Andy.

We sneaked back to the house to see if Jen had won the competition yet, or somebody else. Guess what? Jen won it! Me and Andy were so happy! The $10,000 was in her room. So was Jen. We tiptoed into Jen’s room and stole the money. Victory!

But, oh no! Jen saw us. She said we can only keep it by paying ten dollars each. So we both rush to my room to get the money for her. We gave it to Jen. She said sorry about what she did and that we should keep it.

Andy and I were always happy since we got the prize.

By Gabriel Logan
Age 7
MOUNT STUART – TAS.

Listen O God! And take me to care,
I am a panda, of a species rare!

I am an innocent endangered creature,
In a world so cruel full of terror!

Some of us are imprisoned in a zoo,
Not for safety but for people to woo!

At the cost of our freedom, dollars rain,
You call these people religious men!

For each of the born, some food is there,
I have been assigned the bamboo rare!

Humans are endowed with a selfish thirst,
No land to sleep and no water for us!

In vain I search for leaves to eat,
But to survive, I won’t prey the weak!

Will my cry be lost in the roar of ocean!
Or justice will come, O Master! Of creation!

By Meenal Saxena
Age 11
GEPPS CROSS – SA

A Panda’s Cry

By Oz Kids in Print
August 2013
All I see is working skeletons right in front of my own eyes, living by only hope, innocence is nothing here. As I stand here, in the middle of the camp, a slight breeze passes, a whip slashing through my flesh. All of a sudden, a flash back... All the memories racing through my mind, like a speedway. A building in the midst of the ash catches my eye, it’s a place of death, a place where no one survives, a place of torture. You can feel the pain, amongst your own kind, all hope is lost, no chance to make it through. Destruction and devastation, as the nightmare continues. The horror and the unsettling future, as piles get bigger and bigger. Feeling ashamed and worthless. Knowing you haven’t done anything wrong, but getting treated like you have. Why is this happening to us? It’s the life among us.

By Sara Williams
Year 10, Sacred Heart College
Kyneton – Vic.

A tiny seed is dropped into the ground
After a week of enough sunshine and water,
A small sprout comes into sight
Then one petal then two and it keeps on going on.
It grows taller and taller,
And soon enough it is as tall as you,
All of a sudden it starts raining.
It’s getting darker,
You think that it has enough water.
You wake up in the morning,
To your surprise it is dead.

By Divya Lal
Year 5, Governor Philip King Public School
Edensor Park – NSW

The Life Among Us

She stalks the innocent in the deep of night,
Waiting patiently for the unsuspecting.
Time is nothing to her
She could wait forever,
And ever, and ever.
She peruses the vista while she waits,
Browsing the menu,
Surveying the delicacies,
Licking her plump, luscious, red lips.
Time passes.
She sets a devious trap,
Deceiving,
Conniving,
Seducing,
Until he blindly stumbles in.
Then she pounces,
Devouring him whole,
Enveloping his whole body in her noxious saliva.
He doesn’t fight it,
He enjoys it.
She deprives him of all life,
Sucking it out.
She only stops when there’s nothing left.
Then she spits him out.
Staring at his lifeless body, she smiles to herself
Picks up the menu.

By Prisca Ochan
Year 10, Mansfield State High School
Mansfield – Qld.
A tear leaves my eye and drips down my cheek
Reflecting my life at the end of the week
For all the terrible things that were seen
It'll just bring back sadness bit by bit
But running away will not help it
It'll just bring back sadness bit by bit
So here is how sad I am
No sadder than the normal man.

Sadness

By Shabnam Shafiq
Year 11, Islamic School of Canberra
WESTON – ACT

THE END

By Melody Gray
Age 9
DACEYVILLE – NSW

A
S HE walked out into Mia’s backyard to perform, a little girl screamed.

Magnificent Evans had worn a vampire suit to a 4 year old’s magic birthday party. A mother came over to calm her down while Evans started his magic performance. He introduced himself, “I am Magnificent Evans, the best magician”. Some people thought he looked nothing like a magician as he was wearing: fake vampire teeth, a red cape that had an “E” on it, fake blood dripping down his face, a t-shirt that said “evil” on it, as well as two things that kind of looked like what a magician would wear: a rainbow curly wig and big red boots.

“The first amazing trick I shall perform is the bunny in the hat trick”, said Evans. He showed a black top hat to everyone. Then he looked for his magic wand and said “abracadabra… no.. agrafieldadle. I know, it’s abracadabra! Abracadabra allacazat make a bunny appear in my hat”. Slowly, he tried to pull a bunny out of his hat but he could not find it. He felt embarrassed, where was it?

Just then, two babies crawled over to the party food to find a red eyed, white bunny eating the carrot and celery sticks. Evans saw his bunny too. “Look everybody, there is the bunny, see!”. The kids applauded but the parents were not happy.

“No I shall perform my second trick, the color-changing scarf.” He picked up his scarf and pulled the secret end, but he did it too slowly and all the children saw that it was not magic. Whoops, second mistake.

“My last trick is the card trick.” As he looked for his cards, he forgot his trick and all he could do was make it up. “Could somebody please come out to choose a card?” Fifteen hands shot up. Evans chose a girl called Emma. Emma chose a card and put it back [5 of Spades]. Then Evans turned the pack around and saw the 3 of Clubs out of place [he forgot to put his cards in order]. Evans announced “Emma’s card was….. the 3 of Clubs” but then Emma stood up and said “No, my card was the 5 of Spades”. Evans’ mind went blank. What could he do? What could he say? He blew three tricks in a row. He coughed, grabbed his bag and shouted “Goodbye everybody, see you next time!”. Then, the world’s worst magician left Mia’s house.

“Time for the cake, everyone”, said Mia’s mum. And everyone sang happy birthday to Mia. When it was bedtime Mia said to her mum, “I don’t think that Evans was a very good magician but he was very funny!”.

By Shabnam Shafiq
Year 11, Islamic School of Canberra
WESTON – ACT

My week has been sad...

So here is how sad I am...
No sadder than the normal man.

My week has been sad...

So here is how sad I am...
No sadder than the normal man.

Sadness

By Shabnam Shafiq
Year 11, Islamic School of Canberra
WESTON – ACT

THE END

By Melody Gray
Age 9
DACEYVILLE – NSW

A tear leaves my eye and drips down my cheek
Reflecting my life at the end of the week
For all the terrible things that were seen
It'll just bring back sadness bit by bit
But running away will not help it
It'll just bring back sadness bit by bit
So here is how sad I am
No sadder than the normal man.
Dear Literacy Educator

Take a look at Creative Net. We have authors and illustrators who you won’t find on other speakers’ agency sites. Better still, Creative Net is the only speakers’ agency in Australia that doesn’t charge a booking fee. Our services to you are completely free.

We also organise literary events for schools. Students pay $20 + GST and we provide the MC, authors and illustrators for a day which includes three workshops from each of the presenters, a launch, book signigns, etc — everything you would expect from a festival, plus free show bags each containing a Ford Street book and merchandise (worth around $20).

Ask us about our PD seminars for TLs/educators, too. (We organised the two highly successful Keeping Books Alive seminars at the RACV Club.)

We can be contacted by phone on (03) 9481 1120, fax (03) 9481 1123 or email fordstr@internode.on.net

With best wishes

Terrie Saunders
Creative Net

For a full list of our authors and illustrators check out our website at www.fordstreetpublishing.com/cnet
FORGET

Forget to remember the past, remember to forget the future,
For it is thoughts of the present that you must nurture,
Remember all you have heard, all you have seen,
Memories of long ago that have already been,
Forget all of your grudges and all the past pain,
Let them wash far away with last year’s rain,
Remember your memories but forget the past,
Make the moments of the present the ones that truly last,
Remember the burning hatreds, the battles and wars,
The face of history is torn by countless scars and sores,
Are these the aspects of life we want to dwell upon?
Do we keep our ancient feuds raging on and on?

Be the most you can be while in the present,
Or the nostalgic thoughts of the past you will resent,
You are here and now, in this very moment,
Offer others forgiveness and they shall offer atonement,
Grudges and hatreds are ugly things to behold,
So let their fires burn low, dark and cold,
If towards forging friendships anew you do strive,
Then into the present moments of the future you will survive,
These are the sentiments we must keep in our thought,
Only then will we find the release man has often sought,
Unite with others, yet keep your individuality,
Remain independent, but offer others loyalty and fidelity.

Throw away all of your past feuds and quarrels,
Do what is right; be guided by your morals,
Try to live your life under the brightness of the sun,
Fill the present with great laughter and fun,
The future is too short to lurk in the dark,
Make the most of this life; upon others leave your mark,
And make that mark one of inspiration,
Of confidence, initiative, and joyful imagination,
Forget to remember the past; remember to forget the future,
For it is thoughts of the present that you must nurture.

By Matthew Harper-Gomm  
Year 9, Kambrya College  
BERWICK – VIC.

BODIES, BLOOD and WARFARE

A sudden outburst, a cry,
The bullets begin to fly,
Some hit and some miss,
Nobody wants to feel the metal’s kiss.

The rain is tormenting,
The wind a wailing moan,
The enemy is relenting,
This can only be described as a hell zone.

There are shapes in the mud,
And where there should be dirt there is only blood,
The bodies of those men,
Who will never see the light of day again.

There is nowhere to hide,
Not fighting makes you a coward,
But when you have no more pride,
Not fighting seems reasonable
when you’re completely overpowered.

The moon disappears and with it comes light,
The horrors are over for the night.
But the scene lay before is filled with despair,
Bodies, blood and warfare everywhere.

By Bridget De Vries  
Year 9, Mt. Lilydale Mercy College  
LILYDALE – VIC.
Dear Mr. Farmer,

I am writing to inform you that yesterday the enemy monster heading our way had two long antennae and a very slimy trail. I was rooted to the spot, quivering and scared as can be. I’d turned green with fear.

We will never change our opinions on these beasts, no matter what anyone says. Our current number is thirteen thousand and every day we see five hundred of us get trailed on by slugs and snails. It is a tragic misfortune.

All our lives end, ours differently to yours. We don’t find that disgusting though. The thing we find most disgusting is getting trailed on by slugs and snails. They make us sticky like honey to your skin and they feel slimy like a rotten mango.

Recently I read a leaflet in the Cabbage Daily. It was about how many slugs and snails are blocking up the water supply, so that us and all the other vegetables don’t have any water and wither away and die. The slugs and snails used the old chewing gum to do it and quite a few times in the article it stated that it was fatal (I quite agree!). There are strong armies of slugs and snails invading our patches.

That reminds me, when I was a young citizen of the community, the wise and elderly told us that when we saw our enemies coming we were to run. Well that would be correct apart from the fact that we can’t move without dying. So we just have to sit there watching as they invade. It is a terrible sight, as I was witnessing it just yesterday.

If these monstrous beasts do not trail at least a quarter of a field of our kind, I will be amazed. It will be a cabbage record. There will have to be a massive party!

So start teaching the enemies you never thought you had a lesson!

Regards,

Number 1647 Cabbage
Row 127, 5th from the left

By Jemima Williamson-Wong
Age 10
FREMANTLE – WA

WOMADelaide

When I move through the throng,
I pass flags that fly like sails
as they flutter and flap in the wind.
The line-up for doughnuts
snakes back through the trees.

While I stand in a trance
the music dances over the crowd,
reaches down
to touch our hands
and weaves its way into our souls.

When the sun goes down
the moon takes the stage,
and the lights in the trees
twinkle like stars.
The Diablo, a boy spins,
zooms at top speed
against the tightly held string.

With the ease of a professional,
he tosses it in the air
and using lightning reflexes,
whips the string
and catches the falling toy.

I am weary
and the spell
of the instruments
lulls me
into a deep sleep.

By Keeden Moat
Year 10, Eynesbury Senior College
ADELAIDE – SA
JAK hit the ground running, stumbled, but straightened just in time to narrowly evade a storm of bullets that tore up the ground around him. He sprinted to the gangplank, the last barrier to his freedom. His window of opportunity to reach the narrow thread to freedom was closing rapidly, as enemies closed in behind and moved in to block him off from the front.

You see, Jak Collins was a slave. Or at least, he had been minutes ago. He had now escaped, and was running for his life as a gang of very angry space pirates waving blasters chased after him.

For his entire life he had known nothing but being moved from planet to planet, as he was brought by one master, then sold and brought again by another. He had been waiting his entire life for an opportunity for escape, and now that it had come, he was going to seize it with both hands or... well, the alternative didn't bear thinking about. The sad thing was that the slavers could travel through time and were able to capture suitable slave candidates as soon as they were born and sell them in the future, without fear of consequences.

As the space pirates closed in, Jak realised that he was going to make it. The pirates weren't fast enough. Jak had worked hard his entire life and his muscular legs powered him towards the gangplank that led from the ship into the teeming spaceport beyond.

At the last moment, with his legs tensed to spring, Jak's toe hit a bulge in the rusting metal of deck, and he plummeted to the ground.

With his hopes extinguished, his heart sank. Through his tears as his face crashed into the ground, he saw the slavers cover the gangplank. His hopes faded to despair.

When Sarah saw the cell guards fall into a brawl, she knew Jak was going to do something silly.

She had been in the same cell as him for the entire trip through space right up to the spaceport where they were to be sold as slaves. Neither of them had ever known their parents and both had lived their lives as slaves. As soon as they were thrown into the same rotting cell, they formed a friendship. One little bright flame amid all the darkness their lives had so far contained.

Just as Sarah had predicted, Jak decided to make a dash for it. As soon as the guards begun to get drunk and unruly, he reached a hand through the bars and snatched the key card from the utility belt of a particularly rowdy guard. The guard didn't even notice. Within seconds, the door was swinging open and Jak was running. Despite their drunken state, the guards had been long in the business, and they immediately set about chasing after the escapee.

A few seconds later, another figure stole furtively through the twisting corridors of the slave ship.

Sarah started, disturbed by the sound of a commotion from the direction of the loading bay which was the easiest way off the ship. She guessed that Jak had gone for the gangplank there, and she took off after him.

She emerged into the wide expanse of the loading bay and ground to a halt. All guns were pointed at Jak, who was lying limp on the ground, seemingly beyond aid.

To her credit, Sarah didn't even hesitate. In a desperate effort to get to Jak, to somehow free him, she jumped into the group of pirates and swung her fists blindly, lashing out at anything that moved. Dying here with Jak was preferable to dying as a slave in a rich criminal's palace. Angry red laser bolts flew at her in a torrent of pure energy. Sarah took one bolt in her left arm, the energy searing her and throwing her to the ground. Her momentum carried her forward across the slippery polished floor and she crashed in among the legs of the slavers, bringing them down like bowling pins. With pausing she pulled herself up, lunged at a blaster that had fallen from a pirate's hand and picked it up.

She swung it up, and aiming not at the slavers, but at a utility panel on a far wall and fired it, hoping luck was on her side and that the laser bolt would hit.

In what seemed ages yet was no more than a second, the bolt of energy flew ponderously towards the panel. Fortunately, it hit.

Suddenly, the lights went out, and a shroud of darkness covered the loading bay. Without a second glance, Sarah heaved the comatose Jak over her shoulder and ran for her life.

In what seemed ages yet was no more than a second, the bolt of energy flew ponderously towards the panel. Fortunately, it hit.

Hours later, after hiding in the numerous twisting alleyways of the spaceport and the surrounding metropolis, Sarah and a rested Jak made their way to a downtown marketplace. Jak collapsed into Sarah's arms and burst into tears. For the first time in their lives, they found themselves completely alone. Jak found himself longing for his unknown parents, somebody to comfort him, to guide and support him in this wide ruthless galaxy.

Sarah sighed. 'First things first,' she said. 'Let's get some money.'

They walked into a dirty shopfront lit up by sparkling neon lights. Sarah walked up to the counter and uncovered the blaster from the ship.
How much for it?’

The trader stroked his chin thoughtfully. ‘For you… I’ll give 15 credits.’ ‘Got a better price?’ Sarah said as she pointed the blaster at the trader and tightened her finger on the trigger.

Minutes later, Sarah and Jak strolled out of the shop, now holding cards loaded with more credits than they were likely to need.

Some years later, Jak and Sarah lived contentedly in a decent district of the city, having respectable jobs and secure lives. It seemed the days of slavery and darkness were long behind them.

Eventually, they married, and Sarah soon after gave birth to twins.

As was the custom, Jak and Sarah took their new children to be registered as citizens of the galaxy. But when the twins’ DNA was analysed the automated registrar droned significantly ‘These humans are already registered. Their DNA is that of Sarah and Jak Collins…’

By Matthew Harper-Gomm
Year 9, Kambrya College
BERWICK – VIC.

Proud to Be a Bookworm

Unable to sit the book down
For fear it might read on without you
And you might miss something exciting or important
But needing to finish it before it is over-due

The way they sound
The way they read
So descriptive and perfect
Yes indeed

So what? I have no life
But forgot TV and electronics, I prefer books
One a week or maybe three a month
I like reading about romances and crooks

The feelings they trigger
Are described with such class
That you completely understand their emotion
And give me pure joy, like joy of listening to jazz

It’s true, I am a bookworm
And am proud to be
They fill me with sheer pleasure
But it feels like no one agrees

Give me a pen and paper, or a book, and I am amused
Although I may not look
Like a bookworm
It’s what I do best… Reading and writing books

Entreating things they are
So amazing and alluring
Gives me something to do when sick
And maybe even curing

To the bright person who invented these lovely miracles
I admire you appreciably and with a deal of heart so great
I thank you from the bottom of my heart and say
To me, you are like a Saint.

By Chelsie Joy Mott
Age 14, Swan Hill College
SWAN HILL – VIC.
Fit for a King

Prologue (King Ronald's P.O.V.)

This was going to be the 16th battle against King Arthur's victorious kingdom. We, or should I say they, had lost all the other 15 battles straight, except in the tied battle, number 12, when there were only two of the opposition fighting against the whole of my army. This was just getting shameful, I had to do something about. Our kingdom really needed this land, I couldn't think of any other way to win except to...

(Agent 101/James's P.O.V.)

"James, or should I say Agent 101, what time do you plan on leaving?" questioned King Ronald.

"What? I mean pardon, I thought you wanted me to clean you mes... room today", responded Agent 101.

"Don't be so daft, you're as a dumb as a dodo, no, wait – dumber! I told you that today you were going to King Arthur's castle to steal, I mean find, information about the forthcoming battle. Don't you know anything? If I don't claim the rights of this land, someone will have to pay", he said, looking Agent 101 in the eye. "My reputation shall be ruined EVEN MORE! Now, run along now AND remember, you're a spy, your name is Agent 101", barked King Ronald. He was trying to live up his reputation of being honest, kind-hearted and agreeable, but his servants and family all knew he was deceiving, devious and deceptive and led people to have false impressions of him. I felt so dumb; King Ronald was always making me feel so small and silly. My pride had disappeared, suddenly, I didn't feel so tall and handsome anymore, it felt like I was like a bug, waiting to be squashed. I had to uphold my pride, I flicked my guyish long hair and stalked away.

(Author's P.O.V.)

Agent 101 crept through the halls of King Arthur's castle as he made his way to the battle office. He thought to himself, why did everyone think King Ronald was so 'amazing'? All he thought about was himself and the money he had. He wasn't paying any attention as he banged into a wall; it felt like the wall was talking to him, everything seemed magical or unusual in this castle. "Watch it, rude intruder, watch where you're going. If you rudely, repulsively, refuse to be careful and quiet, I shall kick you OUT!" Suddenly, a beautiful princess emerged from a nearby room. Uh-oh, he was in for it now.

(Princess Piper's P.O.V.)

"Excuse me kind sir, what brings you here? Oh, aren't you one of King Ronald's servants? Yes, you are! I've seen you when he does those media interviews, what are you doing here?", I demanded. I stared at him up and down, he was tall and looked very intelligent.

"SHHHHHHHHHH, please, King Ronald despises how your father runs his kingdom, he sent me here to try to find some information about the upcoming battle so our kingdom can win for once. Well, I better be off now. I bid you farewell", answered James, or Agent 101 sadly. He felt like a failure, he quickly pulled her into the nearby corner, so they were hidden from any onlookers.

"Why are you going, you just got here?" I curiously asked.

"Well, you saw me and are probably going to rat me out to your father", answered James.

"I don't like the way he treats everyone, so I'll help you get the battle secrets, BUT you mustn't tell anyone, do you understand?" "The only reason I'm doing this is because he's really cruel and makes everyone, including ME, work all day. He's strict, unkind and I'm not speaking for myself, I'm speaking for our whole kingdom. If I make sure your father's kingdom wins the battle, will you save our kingdom from my father's cruel rule?"

(Author's P.O.V.)

As they snuck into the battle office, Agent 101 thought whether he was doing the right thing, stealing wasn't any better than cruelly ruling the kingdom. Princess Piper assured him that he would be saving lots of unhappy people. They found out what machines they would be using, the sword points and their strategy. They would weave around the opposing soldiers and attack from the north, south, east and west, thus enabling them to capture the flag, signalling their victory.

Princess Piper and Agent 101 made their way to the battle office; however a sneaky, sly, small security camera zoomed in on them. Totally unaware of this, Princess Piper again voiced her opinion of her father and Agent 101 told her what everyone thought of her father, which King Arthur already knew. King Arthur was sitting in the security room, right at that moment when he heard his beloved daughter and Agent 101 talking about him. His ears pricked up like a dog hearing his master call his name, as he heard his name being spoken of with such hatred. His heart was full of sorrow; he was only trying to make his kingdom successful and the best that they could be, by making them work a lot. Suddenly, he had a brilliant idea. He would be the BEST King yet in the whole history of Kings, his kingdom would love him and rejoice when he paraded the streets! He would let everybody relax, do what they wanted and he would let them have anything they ever dreamed of, like if they didn't want to work, that would be all right, there were plenty of people that could replace that person. If they wanted some expensive luxury, they could have it, after all they earned it and their kingdom was extremely wealthy.

(King Arthur's P.O.V.)

I suddenly saw Piper rushing towards me looking puffed and concerned.

"Daddy, I am so sorry, I told some spy from King Arthur's kingdom that I didn't like the way you were treating us because you were so strict, then he asked me to make a deal with him. He would 'save' us, as the people in your kingdom if we let their kingdom win. I agreed, but then he put glue on the soldier's guns and cockroaches in their boots and many other terrible things. I am so sorry. Please forgive me", pleaded Piper desperately. I was absolutely furious.

"Honey, I overheard you talking to him on the security camera, that's why I changed into the 'nice' King everyone always dreamed of, but I realised I was doing the right thing by being so strict and harsh on you. However I am furious that they tricked us like that, I am going to report it to the media, and then we'll see who gets the last laugh! How dare they try and
win decisively, the nerve of them, look at them, they can't even lose like good sports, humph, now I have to go over there and fake a nice act on saying how supposedly 'great' their battle skills were and would be even better in the future", I replied and stalked away.

(King Ronald's P.O.V.)

As reporters started to crowd around my castle, I started to get worried. I summoned Agent 101 towards me. "Agent 101, why are there angry reporters outside my castle? Do YOU have anything to do with this?"
I also took this opportunity to fix my hair and straighten my robes. People told me I was vain, but I didn't believe them, I just wanted to look presentable.

Agent 101 slowly backed away, "You told me to steal the battle information, right?"
I was so overwhelmed by all these questions, or I may never feel the same, here I had pretended to say that King Arthur was doing the right thing. I'm sorry to James, one of my servants because I made you do my dirty work, which was to cheat; I made him do it and left him no choice. I am sorry to King Ronald, that your soldiers couldn't win an honest battle. I will await my punishment patiently and regretfully."

(Author's P.O.V.)

King Ronald sat on his throne for the last time, with his head in his hands. A guard stalked in and coldly told him to go to the main dining hall. He was about to tell him off for not addressing him respectively, however he remembered he would probably no longer be King. He walked with heavy steps towards the room...

(Judge's P.O.V.)

"Mr Ronald Hooper, you have been found guilty of cheating because you are the brains of the operation. Do you accept this?", I demanded coldly and judgementally. Ronald nodded his head sadly.

"Well, because you were a good King and most people liked and respected you, you will only lose your position, but you may be of service to the new King or you may end up being appointed King again someday. You will of course have to make a formal apology to anyone you harmed and you may choose whether it be private or public. I am sorry, but these are your consequences. That's it, you have until next week to gather your belongings and find new accommodation. You may now leave", I stated. Mr Hooper reluctantly got up and left the room.

(Ronald's P.O.V.)

I sadly got up and left, I went to start packing my belongings, when I saw James on the way. "Hi James, I'm so sorry for how I treated you and how I made you do my dirty work. You probably hate me right now and I understand, I hope I haven't ruined your future, like you said before…" I apologised.

He looked angry for a second, but then his expression changed. He seemed okay. "It's all right, you know. We all make mistakes and I hope this one doesn't cost you for the rest of your life. And remember, if you need any help, I'll always be there", he said.

I felt really mean and guilty inside, I had been so rude to him and now he was being nice and thoughtful. I didn't understand how he could forgive me after how I treated him and called him dumb and everything. We said our goodbyes and parted.

I will stay with my brother for a while until I find permanent accommodation and my family was being so nice, which made me feel even guiltier. I went over to King Arthur's Kingdom to apologise. He graciously accepted it, however he directed no emotion towards me, but he did say that because of me, he learnt that being nice didn't help the people in your kingdom, you had to do what was best. I departed and I guess I was on my way.

Epilogue (Author's P.O.V.)

Ronald was soon made King again. King Arthur's Kingdom was thriving in success. King Arthur was incredibly proud because his armed forces were going to the nationals in their military parade. Soon, King Ronald and King Arthur were at their annual battle, this time it was for the nearby lake. Everything was going well until King Ronald decided to play some tricks again...

By Megan Chiu

Year 7, Korowa Anglican Girls' School
GLEN IRIS – VIC.
In a laboratory not far from the city centre lots of scientists worked hard all day and night working on different experiments, potions, lotions, research and cures. Two experienced young aged Geologists worked there to monitor the large volcano that guarded their town. The scientists’ names were Jane and Peter. They lived not far from the big laboratory they worked in. They were adventurous young scientists who loved climbing and exploring the dormant volcano. They admired its lush grass that grew at the base and the sheer rocks that were scattered towards the top. Everything about rocks and volcanoes fascinated them.

Each fortnight on a Monday morning it was Jane and Peter’s job to monitor the huge volcano. Jane and Peter took a series of samples from around the volcano to help monitor the activity levels and to make sure the huge giant remained sleeping. They would drive out to the volcano and check the soil and river water, bringing back samples to the Lab to study.

Another Monday morning arrived much like any other Monday morning. Jane and Peter did their normal routine and drove to the giant volcano. They noticed the birds who were usually singing or drinking out of the crystal clear waters of the small stream were all flying around in a state of panic.

Jane and Peter stopped their car and got out to examine the usually blue water. They noticed that today the water was murky and beginning to bubble and boil. Then suddenly they felt beneath the ground a large vibration. They also heard rumbling coming from the volcano. Then they saw thick dark, gray smoke coming out of the mysterious, enormous volcano.

Jane and Peter said nothing. They were both too shocked at what they were seeing. Their hearts were thumping fast as they took the sample back to the car.

As they drove away they could see red, hot lava flowing down the mountain side. The scientists knew that the volcano had erupted and that it was only going to get worse.

They raced their car to the local television station and said to the manager they needed to make an urgent television broadcast to alert the small town about the immediate danger they were in. They told the people to gather their most important belongings and to evacuate to the research boat that was moored on a nearby stream. The people in the town were frantically rushing to pack their most important belongings.

Just as all the people jumped into their cars to drive to the research boat they heard a rumbling sound from the huge volcano. Then suddenly, the giant volcano started spilling out red, hot boiling lava like an overflowing saucepan. The lava was heading down the mountain side, coating the mountain in a thick blanket of bright red goo. Ash and smoke were bursting out of the top of the mountain turning the sky black and blocking out the glimmering yellow sun.

The people were driving as fast as their cars could go. They were trying not to panic as they rushed to the research boat. Just as the people arrived at the stream and got out of their cars, the burning lava began to smother and eat up their small village. People screamed loudly as they boarded the research boat. Jane and Peter told the Captain to start the boat engines. The Captain did as he was told and the engines began to turn and rumble immediately.

As Jane and Peter looked behind them they could see red, glowing lava streaming down the mountain towards them. The Captain sped up the research boat and it sped away from the town of Rivera.

The small town was completely destroyed. It was covered with a blanket of thick grey ash and red boiling lava. The trees became stumps and a flower never bloomed again. The people of Rivera were devastated. Their houses and town was gone. They stayed in the Research boat for months contemplating about how and if to rebuild their town.

Then after months of waiting, the Captain steered the boat slowly back to the town of Rivera. When they got back to their small town everyone was shocked. As they left the boat they walked towards what was left of their abandoned city. All that was left was sludge, mud and rocks. The houses, roads, trees and animals were gone. It was like a grey desert.

Some people thought about rebuilding the town. Others thought it was too hard. While the people of Rivera were discussing if they should rebuild the town, a little girl wandered away from her parents and began digging in the thick, grey mud. As she played and dug, she saw a small green seed. She gathered it into her hands and took the seed back to her parents. Her parents were amazed to see the small seed. It was a sign of new life.

A decade later the town of Rivera was once again back to normal. Jane and Peter worked hard continuing to monitor the destructive volcano.

By Haylei Whitehead
Year 4, The Essington School
DARWIN – NT
Neglect

Neglect is like an ice cold smother of dirt
It makes you feel so much hurt
It nips you with its sadness until you cry
With it around you your cheeks will never be dry

Neglect comes in many forms
It strikes you like lightning in deep dark storms
Feeding on sadness it drains all your confidence
Leaving a hollowness taking all resilience

Neglect has many disguises
Goodness and kindness it deeply despises
It wraps you up so you are helpless indeed
Preying on those who are bitterly in need

How to get rid of it? I hear you ask
Well, I’ll tell you if you take the task
If it makes you feel useless, deeply in pain
Find those that care and neglect will be slain.

By Molly Waters
Year 4, Robertson Primary School
ROBERTSON – QLD.

Meeting My Grandma

The train rushes past the stations,
The wind blew on my face,
I hold on tightly as I can,
But I am thrown down when it comes to an abrupt stop.
I wonder where we are.

The signal is flashing, going from red to green,
It had been a five minute stop,
But now we’re off, off to a wondrous place,
Off to Alice Springs.

I’m going alone on the night train,
I couldn’t afford a plane ticket as it was a tight budget,
But I managed to get the train.

I woke up to a sound, a voice going “wake up”
I saw a man gently touching my shoulder trying to wake me.
When I did wake up, I got my bags and rushed off the train,
I was happy to be home.

On the horse carriage, I saw green trees and brown land,
Same as last year, when I was seeing my grandma,
Every year I came here for Christmas with my family
But today I came alone.

I reached my grandma’s place,
It was big and gorgeous but I felt it was missing something.
Love and affection was the key thing about my grandma,
But this time she said nothing but hi and took me upstairs,
And that was it.

Grandma explained that she was ill,
She had cancer, blood cancer
I was surprised but no tears came,
It was silent, pin drop silent.

Grandma shivered, I hugged her,
And held her tight and told her it was all right.
The last thing she said to me was “I love you dear.”
That was it, the last time I saw grandma.

By Jishita Sathyanarayanan
Year 7, Age 12
TARA – NSW

August 2013
When the world is shaken by swirling storms of thunder,  
What shelter do the people go to, to take cover under?  
What motionless island amidst the raging sea will offer a safe port?  
To stand against evil as a great tower or mighty fort.

They shall be taken in by the goodly, kindly lord,  
He will help them cross the deepest river by finding the ford,  
When times are getting hard, when the times are tough,  
He will offer refuge, not one person will he rebuff,

They call to him, “Lead us through the sorrow, through the pain”,  
He does not refuse; he leads them through scorching drought and flooding rain.

His eyes sparkle like the countless shining diamonds in the sky,  
Where he dwells in his abode up in the heavens so high,  
His smile is like the reassurance of our closest friends,  
For all the faults of mankind he attempts to make amends,

No mistake or blunder he will not forgive,  
The pains of the past he will not relive,  
Instead he thinks of the bright future he sees ahead,  
He will give food to others who are starving before he himself is fed,

No sorrow or pain or trouble does he overlook,  
He will take every problem off its sharp thorny hook.

When the people are in need, they look for aid,  
When all else fails, they look to him.

By Matthew Harper-Gomm  
Year 9, Kambrya College, BERWICK – VIC.

I stay awake.  
Eleven o’clock passes.  
Twelve o’clock passes.  
Soon enough it’s two in the morning.  
I begin to grow tired.  
Not physically tired  
But mentally and emotionally.  
Because I know  
In another four hours  
I will have to get out of bed  
And begin the day.  
I will get dressed  
Cover the bags under my eyes  
Skip breakfast  
Go to school  
Sit silently in class  
Pay no attention  
Sit alone at lunch  
Almost burst into tears  
More than once  
Sit silently in some more classes  
And groan at the impossible expectations  
That are thrown upon us.  
It will kill me.  
But it’s okay.  
Because soon I will get home  
I will have a shower  
I will open my laptop  
I will reflect on all of the stupid things I have done

By Jaida Walker  
Year 10, Cerdon College  
MERRYLANDS – NSW
Krista Bell is an award-winning author of twenty-one books for young readers. Krista has been professionally involved in children's literature for over thirty years, as well as being the mother of three sons, all of whom are good readers and writers! Krista's middle son, Damien, is the illustrator of her junior novels. Having grown up in Sydney, Krista had her own bookshop, was a publicist for a publishing company, then a book reviewer on ABC Radio for fifteen years, and during that time moved to Melbourne with her family.

It was in Melbourne that her first book, JEZZA, a picture book illustrated by Kym Lardner, was published in 1991. Krista calls the way she writes FIBTION, because she takes real life experiences, embroiders them with fibs and turns them into stories.

Krista lives with her sons and transport planner husband next to a railway line so she can quickly catch a train to the MCG to watch a football match, or go to the theatre, a concert or the National Gallery in town, or visit South Bank or Federation Square where she can be a professional "stickybeak", collecting story ideas. Visit www.kristabell.com.

Anna Ciddor has always been fascinated by the question, 'What if I lived in another time or place?'. She changed career from maths teacher to author so she’d have the excuse to spend lots of time doing research. She has written and illustrated over fifty books, including the highly popular and exciting Viking Magic trilogy: Runestone, Wolfspell and Stormriders. Bravery, friendship, and a dash of magic are the keys to these adventure stories, which are based on real Viking history. Runestone was chosen as a Children's Book Council Notable Book in 2003 and has been shortlisted for many awards. You can find out more about Anna and her books at www.annaciddor.com.

Anna keeps in touch with her readers through school visits and her website, but she is also keen to encourage the writing efforts of budding young authors through the Young Australian Writers’ Awards.

Meredith Costain lives in Melbourne with a menagerie of pets: five chooks, a cat, a kelpie and a red heeler, which often feature in her stories. Her work ranges from picture books through to popular fiction and non-fiction for older readers, and she is the literary editor of national children's magazines Challenge, Explore and Comet. Meredith's books include the series A Year in Girl Hell, Dog Squad, Bed Tails and Musical Harriet, which was adapted for television by the ABC. Her picture book Doodledum Dancing, illustrated by Pamela Allen, was an Honour Book in the 2007 Children's Book Council of Australia awards.

Meredith regularly presents writing workshops for kids and adults in libraries and schools, and enjoys helping writers create stories based on their own experiences. To find out more about her books, pets and early writing years, visit www.meredithcostain.com.

Jeni Mawter (J.A. Mawter) is the best-selling children's author of the hilarious 'So' series: So Gross!, So Feral!, So Sick!, So Festy!, So Grotty! and So Stinky! (HarperCollins) as well as the Freewheelers adventure series: Unleashed!, Launched! and Extreme! (HarperCollins). Jeni's picture book There's a Sun Fairy in Our Garden was based on her family life with her three children. She has also published fiction, non-fiction, poetry and verse narrative for the education market.

Jeni’s enthusiasm for words and books is infectious. She inspires both children and adults. With a Master of Arts in Children's Literature Jeni has taught creative writing at Macquarie University, the NSW Writer's Centre and the Sydney Writers Centre. She presents at numerous other schools, conferences and festivals and is a speaker for the Lateral Learning, Show & Tell and Speaker's Ink speaker's agencies.

If you’d like to find about Jeni’s books or to get some hot writing tips please visit www.jenimawter.com.
"Jacqueline." I turned, my long blonde hair flicking back as I faced my boss.

"Follow me, I’ve been meaning to talk to you for the past week but you keep slipping away" he said with the hint of a frown.

I smiled nervously as I followed him, it was true, I had been slipping away. The reason being, I didn’t like my next assignment. I settled down in his office and looked around, trying to look anywhere but at my superior. Eventually I had no choice.

"Jacqueline, anyone would think that you didn’t want this job." I was shocked and scared, I did want this job. This was more than my job. Without it I had nowhere to go.

"No sir, I do want this job, but..." I started.

"No, Jacqueline, you listen to me. ‘I do want this job.’ That should be the end of it. There are no if, buts or maybes about it."

He looked at me hard as he delivered those words. "Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir." I looked down, I couldn't and wouldn't lose my job.

"Good, I expect it to be done by tomorrow afternoon at the latest. Oh and Jacqueline", here, he paused and looked me straight in the eyes, "You are the best agent we have, as well as the youngest. I'd prefer not to fire you".

Then he was gone. I sat down lower in the chair and almost cried. I didn't want to go on this mission. I couldn't. The problem was, I was in love with this particular victim and as far as I had seen, he hadn't done anything wrong. It was all my fault, I was the one who had given him the information about my job, which meant he was now a target. I heard voices in the corridor and snapped back to reality, jumped up and sped out of the building.

The next day I woke up and groaned. I just wanted to fall back asleep and never wake up. Today I had to kill my lover. I pulled my resisting body out of bed and got dressed, black leggings, grey singlet top and a pull over black and dark purple hoodie. I grabbed a quick bite to eat before hurrying out the door to drive to the destination that I was told the target would be at. Knowing that I would be on camera, I pulled the gun out from under my seat and slipped it into a holster around my hip before quickly pulling my hoodie over it. I locked my car and sneaked into a nearby alleyway to wait.

As I stood there I thought about what I was going to do. I peeked out of my hiding place and jerked abruptly as I saw that he was about 100 metres away, rounding the corner where my car was parked. I half expected him to stop and look at my car and when he didn't, I was slightly disappointed. But I knew I shouldn't be. I was here to kill him. I stood up and turning my back to him, pretended to be a passer by looking at the notice board. I listened closely for his footsteps and heard them getting closer.

With each footstep, my heartbeat grew heavier and louder. Not because I was nervous, no, I had killed many people in my time at the agency. When I guessed that he was five metres away, I turned and looked him in the eyes. His eyes lit up when he saw me, but immediately turned to a shadowy confusion when I pulled my gun out of its holster, and finally to fear when I pointed it at him.

He knew my skills and my reputation. I had tears in my eyes as I moved my index finger to the trigger. He looked at me and I could feel his love and desperation as if he were crying out to me. I felt that him attacking me would have been easier, then at least I would have had a reason to do this.

With him just standing there, made it even harder. I closed my eyes, and said goodbye. Tears running down my face, I slowly pulled the trigger hard and before I had even opened my eyes, I heard the dull thud that meant my bullet had found its target.

I opened my eyes to a scene that almost made me faint. I wanted to run away and hide, but my mission wasn't over yet. I couldn't just leave a dead body lying here on the path, no matter how deserted it was. I shoved my gun back into its holster, once again, pulling my top over it to cover it and walked towards my blood stained boyfriend. I prayed that no one would come around the corner as I grabbed his arm and put it over my shoulder. I tried to heave him up but it was too much work. Instead, I looked around for inspiration. My eyes fell on an abandoned trolley.

Not the most professional way to do it, but hey, I couldn't think of any better ideas. I grabbed the trolley and wheeled it back over to him. After much effort, I unceremoniously stuffed him into it and pushed it down a dark alleyway, different to the one that I was hiding in, and hoped that it was uninhabited. I tried to pull him out of the trolley but with no success. I simply tipped him out.

I laid him out on the ground and dug around in his chest looking for the tranquilliser
dart that I had shot him with. I knew in this alleyway that there were no cameras, unlike out in the street, where it had been rigged for ages, as my boss knew of my reluctance to complete this mission. At least now he was happy. He hopefully wouldn’t be interested in what I was doing with the dead body.

My hands found what I was looking for and I ripped it out of his body. Knowing that it would be ages before he woke, I decided to clean him up while I was waiting. For a small dart it had made a big mess, which is what I had hoped. It wouldn’t have looked like I had killed him if he didn’t bleed.

I returned to my car, hurrying myself as I pulled out a sponge and a bucket that I had brought with me. I dragged them back

Lost,
In the snow,
Exhaustion pats you on the back,
The ice bites and snaps,
Bitter and slow,
Frost.

Collapse,
To your knees,
Death is inviting,
Dark but enticing,
You will freeze,
Relax.

Peace,
Silence grows louder,
The winter lights fall down,
Your body nearly drowned in,
Soft white powder,
Release.

Calm,
Memories float down,
Like the rain that started,
Ever since we parted.
Emotions overwhelm,
Alarm.

Bright,
You can’t flee,
From the oncoming sense,
Of panic and suspense,
Now you see,
Light.

Free,
Escape your embrace,
You turn back to see,
Someone in torchlight, who could it be?
In your place,
Me.

I,
Kneel down beside,
I shake you and hold you,
As your soul watches through,
Invisible eyes,
Cry.

Tears,
They fall fast,
Into the stream of blood,
We lie in the flood,
Of distant past,
Fears.

Wait,
Your soul has,
Tears swelling in its eyes,
Emptying all truth and lies,
It’s something known as,
Fate.

Enough,
Watch no more,
The pain is immense,
The cold is intense,
Hearts on the floor,
Tough.

Show,
Tear Blood Cinema,
You are gone, no more fears,
The person in torchlight disappears,
Nothing left but,
Snow.

By Adrian Harper-Gomm
Year 11, Kambrya College
BERWICK – VIC.

“Jackie, look at me”, I pulled my face up to his but kept my eyes down on the ground. “No, Jacqueline, LOOK at me.” Finally I pulled my eyes up to his.

“I trusted you”, he stated, his eyes clear and blue. “And now it’s your turn to trust me. I knew that what you told me would warrant my death. It was obvious, but I also knew that you would find a way around it. I know you and I know your abilities, and it’s time you knew mine. It turns out we are in the same business. I won’t let them get you. I promise.”

By Jasmine Hendriks
Year 7,
Mount Lilydale Mercy College
LILYDALE – VIC.

Tear Blood Cinema

By Aiden. I started washing him and as I washed, he slowly came to. He looked up at me, then down at his shirtless chest.

At first I thought that he was going to be embarrassed, but he just smiled sleepily. “Hey”, I guiltily looked at him, “Please forgive me, I had no choice”.

“Hey, hey”, he locked me in his gaze. “I know, I’m fine now.” I noticed how he said “now”. “You weren’t earlier, I feel so horrible.” I broke his gaze and leaned back to sit on my feet. I put my hands in my lap and handed him back his shirt. “Here, I’ve cleaned you up.”

He took the shirt but instead of putting it on, he put it next to him and gently took my hands in his.

“Hey” , I guiltily looked at him, “Please forgive me, I had no choice”.

“Hey, hey” , he locked me in his gaze. “I know, I’m fine now.” I noticed how he said “now”. “You weren’t earlier, I feel so horrible.” I broke his gaze and leaned back to sit on my feet. I put my hands in my lap and handed him back his shirt. “Here, I’ve cleaned you up.”

“Hey” , I guiltily looked at him, “Please forgive me, I had no choice”.
1: The Secret Seven

The first book in the series is about seven kids who are in a club together and they solve mysteries. Jack has lost his S.S. badge and goes to find it. It’s dark. He hears voices. Jack calls a meeting. The Secret Seven go to investigate the case. They dress up in white and pretend to be snowmen. Peter goes into the spooky house with Jack while Colin, George and Scamper stay on guard outside. They hear a noise… a weird noise. What will they find out?

I think this is a good book because it includes lots of action, laughs and so much more for you to enjoy!

Rating: ★★★★★★★✩✩

– Harriet

Who are the Secret Seven?

The Secret Seven Society consists of Peter, his sister Janet, and their friends Jack, Colin, George, Pam and Barbara. Peter and Janet’s golden spaniel Scamper is a member too! Their meetings are held in a shed with the initials S.S. on the door. Admission is by password only. The Secret Seven solve mysteries by hunting for clues, shadowing suspicious characters and questioning people.

About the series

The Secret Seven books were written by British author Enid Blyton. If she was still alive today she would be 116 years old. She wrote many famous and well-loved books including The Famous Five series, Noddy and The Magic Faraway Tree.

The Secret Seven books have been republished with pictures by Tony Ross. There are 15 different titles, and they are perfect for readers aged from 7 to 10. Inside each book there is lots of information about Enid and her writing, called ‘Bonus Blyton’. Each book has a Secret Seven token and if you collect any 5 tokens you will get a prize pack.

There is a link to a website www.thesecretseven.co.uk where you can download your own Secret Seven door hanger and get tips on how to make your own club. Don’t forget to invent your own password!

2: Secret Seven Adventure

In the second book, the Secret Seven decide to play a game at Little Thicket. But when a priceless necklace gets stolen, an adventure is waiting for them. Who is the man who climbed into the tree where Colin was hiding and was in a bush near Peter? Is he the thief? And if so, how will they track him down? Is he at the Circus? The scene is set for an amazing mystery.

Rating: ★★★★★★★✩

– Grace
3: Well Done, Secret Seven

The third book in the series is excellent. The members of the Secret Seven and their loving dog Scamper find the perfect tree for a tree house.

They discover that overnight someone or something has been sneaking into their house. But is their first suspect the right one? Or could it be someone else altogether?

I thought this book was great and very mysterious. People will love to read it or have someone read it to them.

Rating: ★★★★★★★☆

– Eva

4: Secret Seven On the Trail

In the fourth book, Peter calls a meeting of the Secret Seven and tells them that he is going to shut the club down over the school term. They will have to wait for the Christmas holidays. When the club members go to school, other people ask to join the Seven but they refuse, so Jack's little sister forms a new club called the Famous Five.

Jack decides to listen in to the Famous Five meeting. However the members find out they are being spied on and talk loudly about an important meeting at Tiger’s Barn. The meeting was just a prank but it turns out something was actually going on in Tiger’s Barn! A major theft is about to take place. The Secret Seven decide to investigate. But will they complete their mission – or not?

Rating: ★★★★★★☆☆☆

– Claudia

A Special Family

Angel of the Skies is a very special lady. She is a magical person. Looking after the solar system is her most important job.

King of the Natives is the best. He is the best king I have seen in my whole life. He is in fact, David Turnock.

Princess Avalon of the Earth is the daughter of the King of the Natives and Angel of the Skies. Together, they make the special Turnock family.

Princess Avalon feels lucky to be around these special people and always feels safe. Her mother, Angel of the Skies, has the magical powers to take her daughter out to magical and interesting places. Princess Avalon's father, the King, can jump up to fifty metres, doing three somersaults in a row.

Princess Avalon has special powers given to her by her parents, which can make her do wonderful and interesting things, like the time her mama gave her the power to solve problems for the Earth.

Together, the family helps everyone live joyfully.

By Atisha Avalon Turnock
Age 6, Kirup Primary School
Kirup – WA
A

OGONY, Sorrow, Pain. It's beckoning at my feet.

Qual, Trauer, Schmerz. It repeats like an echo.

Ausatmen.

My lungs are heavy, my heart is pounding. I forcefully open my blazing eyes and colours are astonishing. They tear at my eyes, so dark, so relentless. There is a glimpse of sweet light flashing from life support, breaking the musky darkness. Red… Red… Black.

I don't understand. What happened?

I try flexing my arm but am rendered helpless. These monitoring cables are fastened tightly. My head lolls to the side and my limbs tighten up. Words murmur themselves from my lips. "Aufpassen, laufen!"

I still don't understand.

My own words, I am confused. What... am I saying?

Einatmen.

Once more, "Das werden Sie." She breathes in "werden Sie tot sein!". She screams out from her lungs, and you can hear them rupture. She gurgles. She yelps. That girl is not me. It can't be. I see her, she's now in front of me. A doctor runs in and flings his clipboard to the ground. Life support screeches and reeks. I reach out to her, as does she. Tears are climbing down her cheeks, as they are mine.

"Schnell, schnell kommen!" The Doctor pleads.

Stille.

Dummkopf. He's worthless. Helpless. He can't do anything. A blood tear forms in my eye followed by another until my sight had been totally vanquished into a horrific sorrow. I try to yell with a distinctive effort, but as I open my mouth I gasp for a final breath. I plummet to the cold hospital floor, the cables ripping from my skin.

One last word seemed to mimic death and that was desperation. My cold heart lay restlessly and my eyes are strained open looking into the distance of, let's say reality.

"Err..." I awaken with a stutter from the horrid image in disbelief. That seemed so realistic. Lazily, my eyes blink and try to get into focus. I hear background noise. A muffled voice. Lights flash greens and yellows. My eyes flutter and I perch my head up. My right hand supports it. 'Tap, tap, tap'. Noise. It becomes more focused. 'Tap, Tap Tap'.

'Valery…'

"Tap, Tap, Tap'

"Valery;" My eyes are stunned open; pupils are emblazed with light filtering over the cheap lighting. The teacher stands beside me, tapping his marking pen on my desk. It is Mr Hood… I think.

"And what have you done this lesson?"

"I... ahh..."

He picks up the lined paper from my desk.

It looks like this:

Zir Zeit ist kurz. Ihr nicht, wer sie behaupten, Sie sind.

Achtung

Beobachten Sie die Details.

Rufen Sie Ihr Gedächtnis.

Oder werden Sie am Ende tot ist.

Qual, Trauer, Schmerz.

He tries pronouncing the words.

"Th-re... Zeet... Is-t Kourz. What does this mean?" He lops his gaze over to me.

"I don't know... I... I can't read it."

A smirk emerges from his emotionless face. "This isn't English obviously. This is an English class. Why you no specking zee English?".

"Können Sie mir bitte das wiederholen?" I say aloud.

I think it to myself as 'Can you please repeat that?'.

The class giggles. "Don't talk back to me!" He slams his palm down on the wooden desk. All goes silent. His other hand curls up.

"Let's start somewhere simple." He takes a quick glance around the room. His knuckles crunch.

"What is your name?"

"Ahh..."

"Girl, don't make a mockery of me!"

I grab onto my long blonde hair and put it behind my ear.

"I don't know?"

"That's it, you're hopeless; I'm sending you to the counsellor's office, NOW!"

As he wiped the pool of sweat of his forehead I gathered myself up and stumbled towards the door. In the corner of my eye I could see the amount of satisfaction he had achieved from that ordeal. With one last envious bit of effort, I slammed the door behind me and ran for the corridor.

"Scheiße. ' I don't understand anything, even my own words. I just don't understand. They come out of nowhere, I don't know what they even mean. They aren't english, am I not english? I walk along the newly polished tiles and chuckle to myself. I must be going crazy! Although, I don't really remember anything to this day. Yesterday. What was yesterday? Hmm... Is my teacher's name even Mr Hood?

Before I proceed any further I stop and acknowledge the counsellor's office. It's approaching a few metres ahead.

Inhale

I stand in front of the counsellor's office and admire the door. It is an old wooden
design, probably jarrah, and had a nice glazed glass through the middle. Very old school if you ask me. I knock politely. No answer. I take a look to my left, and clutch onto the golden handle. Might as well go inside and wait. With a click of acceptance the door opens and I am bewildered by a neatly furnished room. The smell of new leather and a crystalline desk. There is a window adjacent to the couches, satin blue curtains closed. I walk over, the door lurches closed behind me, and I take a seat on one of the single couches. To my left is a small antique coffee table, a now cold beverage with a bitter sip mark sits and waits to be fouled. I sit for a moment and use my sleeve to wipe sweat beads from my neck. How long will I have to wait? There is no clock in the room. So silent… so… hot. I look up and at the large window. Such a waste to keep it closed. ‘Let’s let some air in’. I pull myself back up and wander over to the window. I swish the curtain out of the way and examine the window ledge. It looks like it hasn’t been opened in ages. There are dead bugs crowded on the panels, and dust has gathered up leaving a grey coating over the old white paint. I tug at the lock and with little effort the window swishes open, allowing light to come flooding into the room. My face is flushed with sweet cool air. It feels like I haven’t breathed in a long time.

Exhale

My heart thumps, my brain whirs. Everything starts to go blurry. Nothing seems familiar. Why is it hot? It’s never hot, it’s always freezing cold. Always. There is no snow outside. I picture small compact homes with snow covered roof tops. You’d always have to use a shovel by the front porch to leave the driveway. I blink and that image disappears. The homes and land here are barren. The roads are all crusted and dried up, and the trees are the same from one to the next. You can hear the cicadas chirping from down the road. I rub my eyes, and nothing changes. This isn’t right. Where am I? Who am I? I turn around with obedient eyes and something glimmers from the desk. I approach it cautiously. It looks to be an envelope in pristine condition. Whoever was sitting here last left the seal opener in an oblique position at the end of the desk, as if they were in a hurry to go somewhere before they opened it. I grab the seal opener and break open the seal without a second thought. I open the flap and rip out the letter.

It looks something like this:

Your time is short.
You’re not whom they claim you are.
Look out, Watch the details, and Retrieve your memory.
Or you’ll end up dead.
Agony, Sorrow, Pain.

…The rest has been ripped off, it’s not in the envelope. But it seems familiar. Is this my hand writing? My focus becomes disturbed from sudden silence. All of my reflexes start to panic. I can hear footsteps proceeding their way up the corridor. As each agonising creak of the sullen tiles gets closer my muscles start aching.

Silence

I see the girl. She’s now in front of me. A doctor runs in and flings his clipboard to the ground.

Red… red… black.

I reach out to her, as does she.

“Quickly, come quickly!” the doctor pleads.

~ I see it all happening again. As if it’s on replay. She has long blonde hair, the same as me and crystal blue eyes that sparkle in the light. I peer at the clipboard and it has details of the girl on it.

Name: Christa
Surname: Schneider
Age: 17
Birthplace: Brandenburg, Germany
Hospitalised Illness: Gunshot wound to the chest

I suddenly awake from my daze. Christa… I flip the envelope around and at the bottom left right hand corner it’s signed. ‘Christa Schneider’. It had been posted from Germany. I am startled. I remember. I posted this letter, whilst I was home, in… Germany. With my family. I couldn’t stay there. People were trying to kill me. I… I infiltrated some big corporation for… my country. Instead I was induced with a blow to the head and a case of amnesia, in which they transported me to Australia to evade the enemy… until they got everything under control. Obviously I’m not safe here. I tried to warn myself… I’m going to die, I need to run. This is not just a counsellor’s office.

My leg takes one step to the side, followed by another but then pauses for a moment. There is more than one person approaching, I can hear them whispering. I can’t die now. This must be a trap. They have guns, they must have guns. They are going to shoot
me. I try to open the desk drawer. ‘Scheiße’ It needs a key! I need more time. I reach in my pocket and find the most unusual thing. A lighter. This could work.

I hear the door handle fidget as someone presses their hand on it. I sprint for the door and flick the lock, I’m trying to buy myself seconds. The talking has gotten louder. They realise someone’s in the room. I sprint over to the leather couches and try to set them alight. Glass smashes all over the floor, and the people are forcing their way in. Red… red… black. It’s not working. I try again, red… red… a spark! The couch is suddenly enriched with flames. A man runs up behind me and grabs onto my shoulders, trying to cut me off. I grab onto the coffee mug and fling it in his face. He wails in pain and staggers backwards. I run for the window, and the whole office is set alight.

“Man kann nicht ewig laufen”, one of the men screams as I make my way to freedom. I translate it to “You can’t run forever”.

As I wander down the dusty old road, I look back and see the satin blue curtains burning. Lights flash greens and yellows. Colours are astonishing.

Agony, Sorrow, Pain. It’s beckoning at my feet.

Qual, Trauer, Schmerz. It repeats like an echo.

By Jessica Carpenter
Year 12, Kelmscott Senior High School
KELMSCOTT – WA

Continued from page 27

“O H, LOOK Rachel, look!” Kirsty said. “Look at that ship.”

“Oh, it’s beautiful”.

Mrs Tate is going to bring cake here.

Kirsty is staying with Rachel for seven months of the Easter Holidays. Rachel and Kirsty shared a special secret. They were friends with the fairies.

“Oh Kirsty, I think we found a pirate ship”, Rachel exclaimed.

“I think you’re right”, said Kirsty, “and look, there is a flag with a picture of a skull on it”.

“I think we’re going to have another fairy adventure. Mum, can we explore the beach?”

“Yes but do not go too far.”

“OK Mum, we won’t. First let’s go to that cave over there. Oh Kirsty, I can see fairy dust coming from the cave and it’s blue.”

Rachel looked over to Kirsty to see if she had spotted it too.

Then she saw a fairy with wings on her back. “Hello” said the fairy with a tinkling voice. “Hello, I am Tara the Treasure Chest Fairy.” She landed on Rachel’s shoulder. “I’m looking for my crown, chest and throne. Jack Frost and the goblin servants have stolen them and took them back to the Ice Castle”.

Rachel, I want to get them all back right now”.

“I know, Kirsty, I want Jack Frost to stop giving mischief”.

“Don’t worry, Tara, we’ll get them back.”

Kirsty nodded “Let’s find them now”.

“OK, let’s go”.

“I’m really excited” Kirsty said.

“I hope Jack Frost isn’t there”.

“Oh, Rachel, they are not pirates, they’re goblins and that’s Jack Frost”. 

“I spotted the tiara”, Rachel said, “but whether is the key?” (To open the tiara – from mum.)

“Inside the tiara”, Tara said.

“Rachel, Tara”, Kirsty said, “I have an idea…”

“What is it?”

“We will pretend we’re handing out lollies and the goblins will want one and Jack Frost too. While we hand them out, Tara will fly down and get her stuff”.

“Great idea, let’s start. Can you magic up lollies?”

“Sure.”

“Hello, would you like free lollies?”

“Yes.”

“Here, how many?”

“Ten.”

While the goblins stuff themselves with lollies, they get so full they fall asleep. While they’re sleeping, Tara gets her stuff back.

“Yea, we got it back!” they said.

“Bye, Tara.”

“Bye bye, have a nice time at the beach”.

“Thanks, Tara.”

THE END

By Juliette Gray
Age 6

Tara the Treasure Chest Fairy

Oz Kids in Print
August 2013
Through the Eyes of a Dog

This wet and stormy day was about to get a lot calmer. I kept my nose close to the ground with my front legs arched and my back legs as straight as the majestic lighthouse in front of me. "What is it Ruggly?" asked my owner Rosie as she tried desperately to keep up with me. I raced through the rain and into the sandstone building at the base of the lighthouse.

I had caught the smell of someone. It was the crisp smell of deodorant, mixed with the pungent smell of fear. Humans call it adrenaline. Whoever it was, he was obviously in a rush to climb the hard, cold, winding stairs to the top of the lighthouse. His footprints were only visible on every third step. As I bounded up the stairs after him, the smell of fear in the minute skin cells got stronger and mixed in with the musky smell of wet concrete. The lead around my face was beginning to hurt but I had to keep going. Curiosity was oozing out of my furry pores. Three more steps, two more steps, one more step, bingo. We had reached the large lantern room and there in front of us was the source of the adrenaline. His hair was plastered to his face and water was spraying off his oilskin as he violently shook the lamp, willing it to turn on.

As Rosie and I followed his gaze, over the gunmetal railing and out to the horizon, we saw the reason for his panic. Out in the stormy ocean we could make out the faint outline of a boat, obviously lost, and about to crash into the knife like rocks at the edge of the cliff we were standing on.

A blinding arc of light leapt out from the lamp releasing the darkness from its cage. As our eyes adjusted, we saw the white terror in the captain’s eyes as he realised the sheer size of the rock face in front of him. He tugged sharply on the steering wheel, causing the boat to sway and lurch at a bone crunching angle. In a state of panic, the captain started barking orders at his crew, ordering them to run to the highest point of the boat. As the small vessel succumbed to their weight, they were forced to dash back to the other side to try and stabilise the fickle boat, rolling back and forth like a drunken sailor.

Finally, bit by bit, the captain slowly urged the boat out of harm’s way. The man, my new found hero, slid to the ground in relief. I tugged loose from Rosie’s grip and raced out towards the railing, just in time to see the boat round the bend towards the harbour.

And there behind the lighthouse, through the dull, misty morning rain, I glimpse the first ray of sun and that spectacular Sydney skyline.

Woof!

By Roshan Richardson
Maryland Public
Hunter Christian School
MAYFIELD – NSW

Praying Mantis

Jade mantis
Swaying on a leaf
You meditate

Reverent head
Bowed in silence
You pray

Hands clasped
In spiritual peace
You grow

Eyes open
With divine awakening
You nod

Revived soul
Spreads its wings
You fly

By Rebekah Hillan
Year 11, Eynesbury Senior College
ADELAIDE – SA

August 2013
Want 9,542 friends worldwide?

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With Youth of the Year, Leos and new Lions Clubs forming every day, there’s always new people to meet at Lions.
Refugee

With war raging through my country, my children were not free
It wasn’t safe, it wasn’t right, it was no longer home for me

With no time to wait for papers, we had no choice but to flee
Holding the cheapest tickets on a fishing boat, we swapped our country for the sea

On board the rickety ship we went, four children, him and I,
Bound for a land we didn’t know but where shrapnel wouldn’t fly

Time went past; days I couldn’t count, trapped down below the deck
Many times, on many nights our ship did nearly wreck,

We arrived one night with a pitch black sky, and eyes that couldn’t see;
The rocks that were arising, out of the treacherous sea

The wood splintered fast, it wasn’t strong and we didn’t stay afloat
When a solid rock pieced straight through, our rickety fishing boat

We plunged down fast and scrambling, into the greedy watered sea,
I gasped for breath and cried for my children, scared and frantically

A muffled cry, a covered shout was all I heard in reply,
Before the screaming and the yelling, and the sound began to die

Down sunk hope for a brand new life, hope for a chance to start again
Forgotten dreams and unlived lives, met there a harrowed end

Only three survived that night, one child, him and I,
The others found their haven in the dark and starless sky

The new land of Australia, we all hoped would be our home,
Still holds my dear family close, both on land and through the foam.

By Clare Rogers
Year 10, Abbotsleigh Senior School
WAHROONGA – NSW

Snow

What does a frog know about snow?
It’s cold and it’s wet
And it freezes my toes.
It covers the ponds
And the streams and lakes
It puts out the flames
On my chocolate cakes
Oh, once I was happy
In warm, sunny air,
Floating on lily pads
Without a care
But a witch came along
And sent snow falling down
So now this poor frog
Wears a permanent frown!

By Sachin Iyer
TAYLORS LAKES – VIC.

Bell Rings

Bell rings.
Children line up.
Teacher walks.
Children follow.
Children understand.
Books open.
Children play.
Teacher eats.
Bell rings.
Children line up.

By Lucas Febbo
Age 5
YARRAVILLE – VIC.
The Estorok

Oh wonderful creature of purest light
What foul deed could undo thee
How one would ever cast arrow and sword at you
How could one end all that is good
By to have slain the Estorok

Oh what cruel king could give the order
To destroy the beast of good divine
To crush the hearts of the beasts of the world
By to have slain the Estorok

Oh what dark one would follow king's orders
Take up arms and march on forth
Take ill wish to farthest corners
Take sword and bow to good's only refuge
By to have slain the Estorok

Oh what evil weapon wielded by man
Could rend the great beast's heart from chest
Could butcher the beast's hide of white gold
Could slice through all that is right and just
By to have slain the Estorok

O what great mourn spread through the land
As all good departed this Earth
As man's heart darkened and beast's heart too
As all hope, and honour, and justice left
By to have slain the Estorok

O thus we pray, eternally
That good beast's soul reached heaven divine
That Holy One will have mercy
That through prayer, we may be gifted once more with good left
By to have slain the Estorok

Oh wonderful creature of purest light
What foul deed could undo thee
How one would ever cast arrow and sword at you
How could one end all that is good
By to have slain the Estorok

By Zachary Dalton
Year 8, Blackfriars Priory School
PROSPECT – SA

Remembering the ANZACs

We stand to attention, trying hard not to melt,
Looking back in time, wondering how ANZACs felt.
My ears are attuned to the blaring last post,
As I picture and think how a man turned to ghost.
It was impending tragedy that was certain to take place,
Men did not know what would be the actual case.
Third brigade soldiers stood ready to run,
Not much older than I but holding a gun.
A flash of movement on the hills above,
Uncertain, unknowing they hoped for a dove.
‘Guns at the Ready’, the general roared out,
And guns were loaded with a serving of doubt.
Overheard conversations around the boat,
So few which one could possibly quote.
Each man wishing the other’s safe return,
As home was the place for which they really did yearn.
One after another they gathered on the bow,
Following the lead of young Snowy Howe.
Abruptly the boat ground onto the beach,
Sucking colour from each face just like a leech.
Each man courageously charged onto the cove,
Raging fires erupted like the feared, flaming stove.
Shrapnel pieces sprayed, staying alive was a guess,
And from that point on the battle’s described as a mess.

My mind now turns to those men who sought adventure,
Remembering they were part of death’s fearful thirst quencher.
So I am standing here on our ANZAC Day,
Remembering young men from that fateful, first fray.

(*Lance-Corporal ‘Snowy’ Howe disembarked in the first wave at Anzac Cove.)

By Aaron Bronitt
Year 8, Anglican Church Grammar School
EAST BRISBANE – QLD.
I don’t know if I’ll do it. I don’t know if I’ll ring the doorbell. It is Halloween and all. I’m a dreaded fearless werewolf for goodness sake. I walk up the cobwebbed steps and start to see the blood-dripping door. I sweat uncontrollably as I ring the doorbell. A spooky voice begins to speak. “You have rung the wrong doorbell, child.”

The doorknob slowly begins to turn and the door is pulled backwards. Behind it is a miniature version of Batman offering me candy from the bowl. I reach to take some. Then something really weird happens. He grabs me by the head. I’m dragged along on the floor for several moments. Luckily the floor was carpeted. I get dragged into a cold, dark, musty room. Batman quickly padlocked the door on the outside so I knew there was no escape. Then I hear groaning and screaming. The door slowly swings open. I poke my head out the door but see nothing in the dark hallway. I sneak along, past the Batman only to find that he was dead. There’s a bite on his neck. Mystery! It looks like a human bite. How is that possible? I walk further and further down the corridor until I hit a dead end. I look up and see a trapdoor in the ceiling. I move my fingers around for a latch or a piece of rope. My fingers brush against a piece of rope. I grab it and pull down. Something falls down and hits the floor, something that looks like my sister who was kidnapped 4 years ago. “Lucy”, I whisper. “Where have you been?”

“Worry about that later. Right now we have to get out of this house”, whispered Lucy urgently.

We climb up the ladder into the attic together and she tells me about something called Formula X and a wave of it is coming to our town, Forestdale. I hear slight groaning. I duck down quickly behind some boxes and so does Lucy. The boxes contain all sorts of old junk, including sporting equipment. I reach in and my fingers wrap around a smooth metal shape. I pull it out and see I have grabbed a baseball bat. “This might come in handy”, I think to myself. The groaning continues. Out of the gloom a figure appears. It was something that looked slightly human. I was just going to get up when I saw a human leg in its mouth. I lifted my finger to tell Lucy to be super quiet but she had already gone behind another box. She is scared, as I can see from her facial expression.

I’m just about to attack it, when it climbs down the ladder and leaves us alone. We both creep out only to find another one of those creatures. It starts to run towards us. I feel the baseball bat that I’d picked up earlier and swing it towards the creature’s face. He is knocked out for a few seconds, then BOOM the ladder breaks and we are surrounded by the creatures. Then Lucy has an idea. She says, “Knock their heads off”. So I start to swing the bat at the creatures’ necks. Surprisingly, their heads come off with a small smack. Through the creatures I see the door. I run as fast as my legs can carry me and open the door. Lucy is hot on my heels. Outside it looks like a bomb has hit. There’s nowhere to take cover from these creatures. We’re going to die!

THE END for a very long time
HAHAHA!

By Breanna Whitwam
Year 4, Elimbah State School
ELIMBAH – QLD.

There are ants in the classroom and they are bothering me
I just don’t know what the reason can be.
It looks like they are coming all over the floor
They might be thousands or many more.
We asked the teacher, “What shall we do?”
But the teacher said “I haven’t got a clue”.
There are ants in the classroom and they are bothering me
I just don’t know what the reason can be.
We asked the cleaner to spread stuff on the floor
But the ants kept coming more than ever before.
We told the principal we cannot play
He said, “Let’s close the school and have a holiday!”

By Rachel Mathews
Year 1
WAHROONGA – NSW
That’s what my Maadar Borzorg always said. Before she watched her children die, Before the Taliban came Before I learnt that hell was real Hell was just another word for earth Afghanistan is my home My greatest love and my greatest tormentor The rolling hills The rocky mountains The roaring river The hidden land mines hungry for human flesh Slaking their victims like a wolf in the night The mines have claimed many lives and many more limbs Baba walked with a wooden leg The mine stole his smile when it took his leg The mine took his stories too Baba told us once of a better land Free from bombs Free from terror Free from the Taliban I’ll never know if he was talking about heaven Or somewhere else somewhere real But he is dead now. They all are. It’s only me. It was the stories I followed. Across the sea.

In a rickety boat. Alone; but surrounded by people All trying to escape But it didn’t work. We merely traded one prison. For another. This prison was different. It was clean, and bright. I longed for home while trying desperately to avoid it. I came for freedom. We all came for freedom. But it is not here. Here is only another cage. There is blood running down their wrist. Their arms. Their chests. There are tears running down their faces But their eyes are empty Cold and dark. Without joy, without love, without hope. Before this place I’d never seen a man cry. Baba taught us it was a great shame to cry. There is much shame here. They have taken my dignity. So I took my blood. They have taken my voice So took my speech They have taken my hope So I took my life

By Simone Geurts
Year 12, Mount Lilydale Mercy College
LILYDALE – VIC.

“Difficulties are meant to rouse, not discourage. The human spirit is to grow strong by conflict.”

Across the sea

Oz Kids in Print
The worst kind of loneliness is when you are surrounded by people. If you feel lonely, it doesn’t have to mean that you are. If you feel lonely, however, being alone is more than likely going to be the outcome. Relating to this, the worst kind of depression is when you are surrounded by happiness. The laughter and joy merely highlights your depressing situation. This state of being is unliveable, to be utterly alone, utterly depressed. Surrounded by laughing people, it is impossible to think “I’m happy”. You can never consider asking yourself “Doesn’t that seem better than this? Aren’t I sad like this?”? It is impossible to consider this to be the reality, because even if you do consider these questions, your answer will be “No. I won’t be able to become that.”

This isn’t a fairy tale, after all. The real world has no “Once upon a time” or “Happily ever after”.

For some reason, you are dragged into this miserable void. It is more powerful than loneliness, filled with more melancholy than any state of mere depression could hold. What happened to you? Why did this happen to you? How did this happen to you?

Have you become a ghost, wondering around aimlessly in your own home, with nobody acknowledging your existence?

Have you been surrounded by anger in your house, trapping you inside?

Life isn’t a fairy tale, after all. The real world has no “Once upon a time”, but what about a “Happily ever after?”?

You won’t be able to move if there’s nowhere to go, you cannot cry if your tears ran dry already, you cannot call out “I’m here, I exist” if nobody can hear you.

However, maybe the world is waiting for the right time to point you to the right direction. Maybe you can’t cry because the world couldn’t stand it, and made the tears stop. Maybe nobody can hear you because you have not yet found the one person who needs to hear your voice.

I found that person.

I found the one person who can hear me. I found the one person who is able to understand loneliness and depression. I found the one person who can smile at me, and make me smile as well. I found the one person who could cure my sadness, my isolation. As long as I am with that one person, as long as they understand me…

I’ll be okay.

By Jayde Ibels
Year 9, Menai High School
ILLAWONG – NSW

Good Book

There’s a land that I love
A land where you can go anyplace
A land that takes me to the skies, above
That’s the land I love

I need no tickets, I need no plane
For all I need is my bedroom, my haven
No matter if sun or rain
Just go to my bookshelf and pick my destination

The crisp, white pages
The glossy front cover
Time to take a trip through the ages

A book is my sanctuary
The author’s decision, like my fate
Not stopping until I finish
Is it healthy? Reading at this rate

My favourite character
Weeping for them, rejoicing for them
That’s one big factor
They are so brave, my favourite character

The thing is, where would I be without books?
Without a world to be absorbed in
I wouldn’t be here without those wonderful inventions
I wouldn’t be here without books.

By Ella Andersen
Year 7, Flinders Christian Community College
CARRUM DOWNS – VIC.
I TRY to smash the glass, but it’s firm and doesn’t even shatter. I’m trapped in here, not knowing why I was here in the first place. The men grabbed me at night, shoving me into a brown itchy bag and carrying me away. It was suffocating me and I tried to get out, but it was hard. I squirmed and wriggled, unwilling to cooperate with my captors until they threw me. I felt an immense pain and knew that I had definitely broke my shoulder. This is not how most Scottish behave, especially not in this tiny town, so I figured that these men were foreign. I heard an engine hum beneath me and we took off. The journey lasted hours, maybe days, until finally, they picked my bag up and carried me through some doors, using me to open them.

We finally stopped, and I was harshly emptied out of the bag. I collapsed in a heap on the floor and screamed out. My shoulder had hit the floor hard and I could see out the corner of my eye a bone poking out of my skin. They lifted me up and dragged me along the floor until we reached the glass enclosure. They opened the door and threw me inside, walking away with their backs to me withering in pain on the floor. That was a week ago. I’ve had many visitors since then, men in suits asking what I was doing here and how I found them, but I kept telling them that I had no idea who they are and what I’m doing here. They eventually grew sick and tired of me and left me alone. My shoulder tried to heal itself, but not properly without the right equipment and medication.

I’ve been studying medicine at university for a few months now and I had just come back for the holidays to visit my family. I push the thought of my family away. If I’m going to get out, I need to be strong and not have any doubts or sadness in my mind. I don’t know how I’m going to get out, but I figured that there has to be some kind of weakness in this glass. All glass breaks... doesn’t it? I’ve tried banging on the glass with my good shoulder, kicking it with my leg and punching it with my fist, but nothing worked.

The glass provides little space and I feel like I’m being suffocated like when I was in the bag. I can feel something tighten around my throat. I try grab onto it, but there is nothing there. The squeeze becomes worse while I struggle. I can sense my life slipping away and I collapse to the thin layer of glass beneath me. The invisible force around my neck disappears into thin air. I gasp for breath, taking a few seconds before I gather my strength again. I don’t know how I can become this strong again after being a few seconds away from death. I’m determined now and I bang and bang against the glass. An earsplitting noise surprises me.

I look at the glass and see a shatter. I smile in victory, but it’s not all over yet. The noise was quite loud, and I’m sure that the others keeping me here would of heard it too. I quickly bang against the shattered glass again, and this time it breaks. Loud clangs erupt as the shards of glass hit the floor. I hear pounding feet and I quickly shoot out the glass enclosure. But then a doubting thought creeps into my mind. If I get out of here, where do I go? To walk back there, it would take me days. I push the thought back, knowing that I’ll cross that bridge when I come to it.

I run away from the pounding men behind me. I don’t look back because I know I won’t like what I’ll see. I see broad daylight and I run towards it. All the doors are starting to close around me. The one in front of me slowly starts to close, but not slow enough. I run super fast, pleading that I make it and that my pursuers don’t. I’m almost near the door, threatening my escape. I pass through the door just in time, and look to see the door firmly shut behind me. But I know that that won’t hold them for long. I keep running until I smell fresh air and feel the sun’s rays on my skin. I stop for a moment and breathe in the freedom that surrounds me. But not for long.

The suffocating feeling starts up again, but this time it’s tighter than before. I gasp for air, but nothing fills my lungs. I struggle, pulling at something that’s not there. I collapse to the floor and see feet appear in front of me. I don’t worry about them, all I want is air. I look up and see them staring at me, confused and I know that they aren’t the ones doing this to me. My breaths become short and I know my time is running out. A silent tear runs down my cheek and I take the time to think of my family. All the good times, and all the bad times. The struggle gets worse and I there is a current flow of tears running down my cheeks and splashing onto my jeans. But suddenly, the feet in front of me turn into dust and disappear.

I am being rolled side by side by something invisible, but then I see a figure appearing slowly. My sister appears, a worried face glued onto her delicate features. Tears run down her face, but it doesn’t help the fact that I’m nearly finished. A wall appears, then furniture, then posters on the walls. My room now materialises and my mother bursts through the door. She grabs something around my neck and yanks it off. I gasp. I can breathe. No mean men around, I know that what I just experienced was just a dream. I suddenly feel cold and realise that my whole body has gone purple. My window is wide open and my blanket is wrapped tightly around my neck. So that is what was strangling me. My mother rubs a damp towel over my forehead, but I feel fine. My sister has to leave for school, so I tell my mother all about my dream. By the end of the day, we all laugh about it. But I couldn’t sleep with that blanket any more. It’s like my own personal reminder of what could of happened, what happened in my mind. My own mental barrier...

By Caitlin McCartney
Year 8, Silkwood School
MT. NATHAN – QLD.
ON THE 21st of July in the heart of the town, a house was hosting a party!

Around the house was the butcher, the town church, the town school and the orphanage. It was an old run down mansion. Its windows were shattered with pieces of unwanted stuff, broken glass lay amongst the overgrown grass and leaves attached to the walls. Inside there was cracked marble floors with statues chopped into thousands, even millions, of pieces. The back yard was littered with gravestones that had letters and numbers carved onto them. In the front yard there was a birdbath with a couple of fish skeletons bobbing up and down in the water with a sceptre next to it.

The owner of the mansion was Luigi. Luigi had pale skin, a brown muzzy, blue eyes and green clothing including a green shirt with the letter L in a circle. Luigi also has a wife called Wendy. Wendy was very tall, had blonde hair, biscuit sized eyes, blue shoes and a couple of black ribbons in her hair. They were unusual people, who never left the house unless in need of supplies.

That night as Luigi walked to bed he heard a strange sound coming from the TV. As he approached it a little green figure behind the couch turned the TV on and a skeleton behind the cupboard turned the channel to Luigi’s favourite channel, the news. Luigi then realised the green figure was his servant, ‘Shy Guy’ but the skeleton was an intruder! It was Dry Bones! (These characters are from my favourite video game.)

Dry Bones is wanted for bank robbery and the reward is 12,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 dollars! Dry Bones ran around the mansion in an outrage trying to escape. When Dry Bones found the basement he used his finger to pick the lock and open the door, he pushed it open and Dry Bones ran like his life depended on it (which it did) down into the murky darkness of the damp, mouldy basement.

As Luigi followed him into the basement the door closed and locked. Luigi was TRAPPED! The even more scarier thought, was that he was trapped in the basement all alone with Dry Bones. Luigi was DOOMED!

As Luigi walked around, feeling the cold bricks in the darkness he felt a little bump on the side of the wall, yes, could it be? It was the light switch! Luigi turned it on, revealing Dry Bones who was right next to the door.

The chase was on! Dry Bones got a head start heading towards the keyboard, but suddenly he gets pushed over by someone. It was the ghost BOO! Luckily enough Drybones was able to slide under Boo and Luigi to make it past them. He just jumped Boo like he was a hurdle, so Boo grabbed Luigi by the leg and floated through the wall with Luigi into the wine cellar next door. Luigi never even knew this room existed!

Then Boo dropped him in front of another ghost but this time the ghost had a crown on its head made completely out of solid gold, with rubies, emeralds and sapphires on it as decoration.

When Luigi regained balance, he got knocked over again by a powerful bright beam. This was a problem for Luigi because he wasted all his energy on trying to catch Dry Bones and now he had no energy left to fight back!

Luckily, out of the corner of his eye he saw a bright star. It was a star power. Luigi quickly ran over to the star power and ran over to king Boo getting ready to throw the star. As soon as he was in range (which he was) he threw the star at king Boo. In at least 3 seconds king Boo was destroyed!

After a minute or two all the boo had fled the room including the ghost holding a key which it dropped. That key was to the basement door! Unfortunately for Luigi, Dry Bones went with the boo to another dimension. At the same time it was fortunate for Luigi that the key fitted the lock perfectly meaning that his adventure was now over.

As he headed to bed exhausted, his servant, Shy Guy, handed him a cookie for a snack but Luigi was so tired that he fell asleep on the floor almost instantly!

The End

By Lucas Moore
Year 4, The Essington School
DARWIN – NT
I HATE school. I dread waking up to the sound of my deafening alarm. I dread seeing the same people and going through the same routine every single day. You wouldn’t think that a typical 16-year-old girl like me would complain about school much right? I believe I have every right to. I consider it hell. In every direction all I see is girls gossiping about other girls, girls screaming and laughing so loud at their friends even though there as close as they could possible get to each other without it being physically awkward.

In the middle of those gossiping girls is Amy Dawe. She isn’t the most intelligent teenager but she enjoys crushing people’s souls on a daily basis, including mine.

“You’re different Jody, you’re real different. You’re not like us… and you never will be. You really should stop trying to act like we’re your friends.”

Mum always tells me to ignore her. She says that if I walk away I’ll be the bigger and better person. I’ve been walking away for over a year now and I’ve really had it with this girl. Amy is my worst enemy. She is a lion waiting patiently to strike her opponent with hurtful words that can crush the untamed heart of her victim. She’s in my year and even worse, she’s in my circle of friends. Yes, my circle of friends are the gossiping ones who huddle so close together that it nearly becomes physically awkward. Even my closest friends bow at her entrance into the school gates. I loathe her existence.

“Jody, how’s your boyfriend going? I haven’t seen him in a while, Jody. He’s quite a nice boy I must agree. Well he was certainly nice to me. But that’s another story and I probably shouldn’t discuss it with you anyway. Wouldn’t want to jeopardise your relationship now would we?”

My friends chuckled as if her joke was funny or something.

The way she talked about all the important people in my life made my face turn a dangerous shade of red. A shade that represented the colour of blood.

Amy had two things that pleased her, one was of course, teasing me and making my life miserable, and the other was her horse, Molly. Molly had been Amy’s companion ever since she could walk and Amy talked about her just about every day. The girls didn’t mind listening to Amy babble on about her stupid horse. Of course it annoyed my quite a lot. But then again, everything about Amy annoyed me.

I wasn’t in the best mood that day either and for once it wasn’t just Amy that had killed my mood. The previous day we had a maths test that I completely forgot to study for. I don’t know how stupid I could possibly get, I was one of the best math students in the grade. The test was so difficult and I didn’t even give 100% effort. I always took school seriously (and I’m talking about the work side of it, my social life is too far gone). It was the only thing that kept me focused on my future. I found no point worrying about my social life considering I had so much ahead of me and so much to look forward to. I wasn’t a nerd as such, just more dedicated than everyone else.

Mrs. Linn placed the results on my desk. At first I didn’t even want to look at them. When I finally decided to take a peek I was guttered, it certainly wasn’t the result I was hoping for yet, I wasn’t at all surprised. A C grade at least would have been nice. It’s all Amy’s fault. If it weren’t for her, I would be 110% dedicated to schoolwork.

I saw Amy talking to my friends at lunch. She gave me a filthy look and turned her body so it was directly facing me. I thought that she might have run out of things to say about me by now however, I braced myself and began to count to 10. Mum said counting sometimes helps too.

“Jody, I heard you didn’t do so well in the maths exam. That exam meant a lot for your grades. What a real shame, Jody. What would your father think? He is probably cursing at you from below.”

I reacted at the moment she mentioned my deceased father. At that moment I wished I had the ability to shape-shift into a crocodile and swallow her whole.

I could have killed her on the spot. With a gun in my hand I wouldn’t even hesitate putting a bullet straight through her skull. I’d pleasantly watch her corpse drop to the ground in lifelessness. Her death would have satisfied me more than a slice of my mother’s home made chocolate cake.

She was diagnosed with a few bruises and two severe black eyes. She deserved every violent move I made on her that day. I don’t regret a second of it.

The principal decided to give us a few detentions. I could live with that. Mum was disappointed in my actions like every mother would be, although when I told her that Amy mentioned dad in one of her tormenting comments, her mood changed slightly as sadness came over her like a cloud ready to burst out in heavy rain. Obviously that didn’t surprise me. My father was in the army. He dedicated his life to saving our country and the foreign enemy took his life, just like that.

I must admit he wasn’t the nicest man in the world and he did fancy a beer or two. His drinking wasn’t much of an addiction but more of a habit. He got on my mother’s nerves from time to time. Despite of that, I seemed closer to my dad more than to Mum. I don’t really know why, I guess you could say we shared a bond that a father and daughter could only be blessed with.

I struggled to keep my eyes open at school the following day. I couldn’t get the image of Amy’s evil smile out of my head. I had so much to think about in my life. Of all the people SHE was stuck in my mind. That day we made no communication with each other whatsoever, which I was grateful for. Not one teasing gesture or evil stare. Of course it didn’t change the way I felt about her. Not even slightly.

That week Amy told my friends that she was throwing a party. She announced it loud and clear so I could hear her. When she finished handing out the invites she gave me the same evil look that she used for heaven’s sake and I doubt that Amy’s party will be any good anyway. I must admit that did tip me off the edge a bit. Tammy who was one of my closest friends approached me.

“What are you wearing to Amy’s party, Jody? I’m still deciding between the red
and black dress, you know which ones I'm
talking about, right? I just can't decide.”

“Tammy, I’m not exactly invited, I have
something on this Friday anyway, it’s my
brother’s birthday party.”

The words came out so quickly I didn’t even
get time to think about what I was saying.
She nodded and walked off. She gave me
the impression that she was disappointed
or something. I didn’t like that very much.
I don’t even have a brother.

Amy’s party looked like a success. Good
on her. Judging by the countless photos
on Facebook I’d say that everybody had
a blast. I didn’t go to school the following
Monday, partly because I didn’t want to
hear all the talk about the party last Friday
but also because Mum wasn’t well and I
wanted to look after her. She hasn’t been
herself the past few months. The doctors
don’t have a clue what’s going on with her.
That night I slept in mum’s bed with her
just to keep her company. We talked and
talked until we both fell asleep.

I woke all of a sudden. Something had hit
the bedroom window. I thought it was just
a bird so I drifted off to sleep again. Than
I heard another bang, and then another.
The window smashed and glass rained on
top of us. Mum woke up with a fright and
I ran to the front porch to see what was
happening. Mum always says my lack of
fear for these situations was somewhat
abnormal for a teenage girl like me. My
eyes, like an eagle, scanned the main road. I
wished I didn’t see what I saw that night.

Amy drove off into the darkness leaving
nothing but skid marks and a few large
rocks on my driveway.

“Jody, who is making all that noise? Did
you see who it was? Jody, call the police!”

I hesitated for a minute.

“Mum I didn’t see who it was.”

I got the police on the phone and told them
what happened. I left out the minor detail
about seeing Amy. I knew for a fact that
the police wouldn’t give her everything
she deserved. I wanted to plan my own
revenge.

As I closed the door, I thought about
Amy. Was it meant to be a joke? I honestly
wanted her to feel the pain that I felt and I
so badly wanted to wipe that smile off her
face once and for all. She asked for a war,
and that’s what she was going to get. Then
I had an idea.

It was a humid night. I put my evil plan into
action as soon as I reached her paddock
gate. My stupid bike hardly made it there
due to a flat rear tyre. My mind focused on
my mission. I thought a small vial of poison
should do the trick for her noble steed. I
watched as it fell into a deep sleep.

I escaped the crime scene unharmed and
unseen. The silence of the lifeless beast
satisfied me. Riding home that night I
felt like all the pain I have endured over
the past year had disappeared and the
image on Amy’s face was out of my head
forever. I thought for a split second if
I had taken things to far. That thought
was soon overpowered by a sense of
evil and ruthlessness. I slept pleasantly
and peacefully that night.

I arrived at school the next day, walking
through the dreary, dismal rain that
dampened my mood as well as my clothes.
I didn’t regret what I did last night, I hope
she woke up to feed the thing and saw what
was left of it. Amy didn’t show up for class
and of course my friends didn’t think much
of it. They obviously weren’t informed of
the death of Amy’s beloved companion. I
went about my daily routine just like every
other day. That day seemed better due
to Amy’s absence. For the first time in a
while I had a proper conversation with my
friends, which was nice. I still didn’t quite
get them though. They basically gossiped
about everything under the sun for the
entire six hours of school. That’s something
I never participated in. Mum said if I
gossiped then it would always come back
to haunt me, so I listened to her.

I wanted to tell my mum that Amy was
responsible for the attack on our home
but somehow I didn’t have the mental
strength to tell her. Mum was diagnosed
with depression and given medication to
treat it, she was going to be all right. I didn’t
know how she would react and I didn’t
want to tell the police because I know that I
would also get in trouble for killing Molly.
Even if Amy knew it was me or not, she’d
pin the crime on me. My satisfaction didn’t
last long at all.

Wednesday came quick enough and my
God I wish it didn’t go so fast. Amy finally
showed up after two days of absence
although I didn’t manage to see her myself.
My friends whispered to themselves and
the only definite words I got out of it were,
bathroom, crying and Amy. So I guess
the death of Molly hit her pretty hard.
Well, she’s ruined my first three years of
high school so far with her tormenting
comments and I wasn’t about to feel sorry
for her.

When the girls found out there was the
usual chatter and messages of sympathy.

Continued on page 40
Continued from page 39

"Oh Amy, if you ever need anything you just let us know! We know she meant a lot to you."

They might as well kiss her feet while they were at it.

I said nothing during the girls’ conversations. I hope my silence didn’t give away the fact that I might have been involved in the crime.

I went into my locker for 5th period and saw a small note scrunched up under all my perfectly aligned textbooks. Surely someone had put the paper in there. I’m not one for leaving rubbish in my locker. I unravelled the paper and read the writing on it. A five year old has better writing than this person. Then it clicked.

"What, you think I didn’t know that it was you? This isn’t over Jody!"

My heart skipped three heartbeats in a row. As I began to breathe normally again I remembered that Amy has a slight habit for saying things and not doing anything about it. She’s all talk that one. There is nothing she can do to break me. I’ve had it with her and her games.

Mum went out with a few friends that night and left me in charge of the house. She said I could take the car if it was an emergency or if I wanted to get food to eat.

I drove to West Minister Road where the local pizza shop was located. Amy didn’t live far from there, that didn’t bother me in the slightest.

One whole pizza and a few rentals would last me the night. It was going to be a peaceful night in. At least, that’s what I thought before things started to take a turn for the worst.

Who could ever know being stabbed in the back could hurt so much? Like, literally getting stabbed in the back. You feel as if your body is paralysed and you get weak at the knees until they suddenly buckle from beneath you sending your body to collapse and collide with the footpath.

Next thing I knew I was looking up at the sky, in the exact spot that I was hurt. There was no ambulance, no hospital, just me and a very unpleasant pool of blood.

The wound stung although, I don’t think the object went in far enough to pierce anything but my skin, lucky for me. I stood up and realised the car was gone too.

This had to be Amy. I can’t believe she would even go this far. This is definitely crossing the line. It took a couple of weeks but the wound eventually healed. Mum didn’t even realise I was gone. That, I was thankful for.

I took a well-earned week off school to fully recover from my injury. I tried not to think about Amy and focus my mind on my schoolwork. I waited for the stampede of eager students to subside so I could enter the corridor without being trampled on. I left the classroom and in the corner of my eye, there was Amy.

I found myself face to face with her. Amy and I were completely alone. There was no sign of emotion. As we stood their motionless, silence filled the air. This looked like a scene off a cowboy movie right before they draw out their guns. I think we both wished we had guns in our hands. At that moment, my blank expression matched hers. We both had no fear, both unsure of what would happen next.

By Laura Sultana
Year 10, Terra Sancta College
SCHOFIELDS – NSW

The Australian Year

Scorching heat, swimming freely
Off the back of the boat, diving deeply
This is the season where sunburns we suffer
This is the Australian summer

Flame topped trees
Many fallen leaves
Water’s still warm, for some reason
This is autumn, the in-between season

Rain, hail and low temperatures
No, this weather isn’t irregular
It’s the season we all dread
Look out, there’s a long winter ahead

Sun and storms, that’s what this season’s about
Bright flowers, rain in the spout
Sadly in this season bees sting
Why, this mighty season is spring

Now back to summer
But that’s no bummer
But never fear
This is the Australian Year

By Ella Andersen
Year 7, Flinders Christian Community College
CARRUM DOWNS – VIC.
Once a little girl named Alicia lived with a boy called Max. One day Alicia thought of going on an adventure. ‘Great idea,’ said Max. So they asked their parents. ‘Only if you be very careful,’ said their Mum. So they booked a flight for Africa on the 7th of October which was the very next day. They quickly packed, feeling very excited! Soon they were on the plane. It would be a very long journey so they decided to get some sleep. At midnight they were asleep. The cabin of the plane was dark and everyone was sleeping... Suddenly they woke up. The plane was out of control. The oxygen masks had fallen from the ceiling. Everyone was screaming. They were trembling with fright. The plane was groaning and spinning towards the ground. Alicia felt like she was falling, unexpectedly they hit the ground but it wasn’t the ground, it was the sea.

‘Oh no!’ They were sinking. They smashed the windows and climbed out, just as the plane disappeared into the ocean. Soon they were swimming to the edge of an island. Alicia and Max had no idea what had happened but at least they were safe. They were the only ones that had made it out of the plane.

They went inside. Then the crazy man spotted them. ‘Hey, do you want to learn a new song?’ ‘Not really,’ answered Alicia. ‘So what’s your name?’ He pointed to Alicia. ‘My name is Alicia and his name is Max.’

And my name is Zooakab,’ said the crazy man. ‘I have never heard that name before,’ said Max. ‘I didn’t know my name so I mixed up words and this is what I came up with.’ ‘Who turned this beautiful land into this strange laboratory?’ questioned Alicia. ‘There is or was no door in the first place. This is a fake Albino door. I just wanted to trick people, but there has never been anybody to trick. Now I have finally done it.’

‘YEEEEEEEEES,’ laughed Zooakab.

‘I have been bitten by a farramundi,’ cried Alicia. ‘What’s a farramundi?’ asked the mad scientist. ‘He is a nice guy, but very strange,’ whispered Max to Alicia. ‘I really need help. Do you have anything to cure my bite,’ asked Alicia. ‘There is only one fruit that cures all bites, but there is only one left,’ the mad scientist said. ‘I’m sure you would give it to me, it hurts so much,’ cried Alicia.

‘Yep. Sure. If you want it, but it tastes disgusting. You can have it if you want,’ said Zooakab.

‘I’d like to be able to walk again,’ exclaimed Alicia.

‘Here you go,’ said Zooakab.

‘Thanks, I was getting tired from helping Alicia walk,’ said Max.

Alicia bit into the fruit. It was the shape of a pear and it was covered in yellow and purple polka dots. It tasted like medicine mixed with Brussels sprouts! A few hours later Alicia felt much better.

‘Now you’d better go home, there is a new boat anchored in the river outside my office.’

‘It’s great,’ said Zooakab sadly. They thanked the scientist and made their way to the boat to begin their journey home. In a month or two they were home and they were so glad. Once again they did it, the greatest adventure ever. Well until the next one!

By Tara Chisholm
Year 3, The Essington School
DARWIN – NT
As I slammed the door of my room shut, tears originated in my eyes. I very well knew that I was not allowed to tan myself. But I just couldn't understand why my mum restricted me on this. When worst came to worst, grounding was the only option. My fingernails screeched against the bedroom door as I slid down to sit in slow motion. As a fourteen year old girl who was studying among slender, gorgeous fashion models, it was my right to be able to fit in and I could do anything to obtain my right.

It had happened once again. Mum had caught me tanning myself on the beach in what she called ‘dangerous sunlight’. I was grounded for good this time, meaning that my reverie for this summer was definitely cancelled. I needed a tan – urgently. All my friends were getting one. Jasmine, Tyler, and Lily had already made fun of me and dared me to ‘go get a tan’. The olive-skinned tan elegant teens were always out to impress guys after school, leaving a fair-skinned thin freckled girl behind. Yes, I had always felt left out because of my skin. I hated my skin to the greatest plausible extent.

Wiping my tears as carelessly as I possibly could, I rose up to stand on two stable feet. Instead of looking at my pale figure, I hobbled to my desk. My face burned and when I finally did mistakenly look into the mirror, I stared back at a fire-red freckled but still fair-skinned face. After repeating ‘I hate my ugly skin’ a couple of times, I thumped into my jet black revolving chair. I do realise and admit that I have everything – everything but a tan, I thought after sniffing and snuffling a few times.

I closed my eyes inaversion, feeling disappointed and exhausted. Some boring seconds passed indefinitely. I opened my eyes, brushing away the remaining tears. Though annoyed, I peeked at my desk which was a usual mess. I often did unknowingly drop a book or two on my desk to add to the untidiness but today I found something extra. I picked up the mini-book and flicked the pages, while at the same time wondering who had left it there for me. The title grabbed my attention and I rolled my eyes, thinking of Mum.

The heading read: THINK SUNSMART. Like I didn’t have enough to think about already. I turned to a random page and read. Half an hour passed and I continued on reading. It wasn’t extraordinarily amusing, but was surely informative. The brochure-type-book gave all the disadvantages of tanning. The nastiest one was skin cancer; others included sunburns. I read for another ten minutes. Eventually, my mum stepped into my room to see me reading the book she had left. I dropped the book and ran to hug her. ‘I’ll never go for a tan’, I whispered.

After three incredibly long seconds, I heard: ‘You’re not grounded, my fair-skinned fairy’.

No matter the weather
We’ll always be together
Neither time nor space
Could destroy the embrace
That you will always receive
Whenever you may grieve

Promise me you will always try
No matter how much you may cry
’Cause I’ll be right there with you
Whenever you feel blue
Wiping away your tears
Throughout all the years

By Jade Taylforth
Year 11, Mansfield State High School
MANSFIELD – QLD.

Brought together by a mistake
So glad you’re not a fake
Don’t know what I would do
If you were replaced by someone new
Just remember that you are amazing
And just continue blazing

Seasons come and seasons go
Life will throw you to and fro
But as long as we’re together
Not even a feather
Will you stop you in your tracks
Because we’ll always have each others’ backs

By Sarah Asif
Year 10, Beverly Hills Girls’ High School
BEVERLY HILLS – NSW

Friends

No Tan This Summer!

By Oz Kids in Print
August 2013
“Have you packed all of your belongings?”, mum asked as she walked into my room.

“I’m putting the last one in”, I replied.

And so the time had actually come. We packed all our stuff into the hired moving truck with irreversible finality.

Our new house wasn’t much bigger than our old house but it still felt like a mansion to me. We placed our furniture into the rooms and mum got dinner ready. I found Potato, our dog lounging near the log heater. It was a peculiar name for a dog but I thought it suited him.

The next morning dad said it would be a good idea to introduce Potato to our neighbours. I knocked on the first neighbour’s door casually and I saw there was a lady living there. Her name was Jenny Thomas but she told me to call her Jen. I showed her Potato and she thanked me for letting her know.

I knocked on the other neighbour’s house and introduced Potato. There was Mrs Jenkins, Mr Jenkins, Layla and Connor. Potato immediately took a liking to Layla. He licked her hand and gave her his saliva covered tennis ball. I couldn’t help but feel a stab of jealousy. Potato hadn’t done that to me when I bought him as a puppy. The Jenkins family said they would visit soon to see how he was. When I got home I told mum and dad that the neighbours didn’t mind having a dog around. Then I went straight for a nap.

The next day the neighbours came to visit. Layla and Connor played with Potato and I. Connor and I threw the ball but whenever Potato fetched it, he always gave it to Layla. I wondered why Potato adored her so much. I felt envious towards Layla and I was in a bad mood for the rest of the day.

The neighbours visited a few times and Potato always went straight to Layla. I kept getting more and more jealous of Layla. I couldn’t help it. I loved Potato, he was a member of our family. Every now and then I lied saying that Potato needed a nap because I didn’t want Layla playing with him.

One night my mum came into my bedroom. I had an utterly depressed look on my face. I felt miserable about Potato.

“What’s wrong darling?” she asked.

“Nothing”, I replied sulkily.

Mum intuitively knew about my insecurities in regard to Potato.

“If you’re sad about Potato, it’s okay. Potato will soon get over Layla and come back to being our affectionate little family member. Just try and share Potato because I know you’re not used to having someone else to share with”, Mum said soothingly.

I hoped that was true.

Early the next morning Potato eagerly came up to me for the first time in weeks. He licked me, then sat on my lap. I felt overjoyed even though I was cross with him. When the Jenkins family came in the afternoon, Potato instinctively included Connor and myself in the games. From then on Potato joyfully played with all of us. I learnt to ungrudgingly share Potato and let everyone play with him. After all sharing is caring.

By Shara Hamit
Age 11, Harrisfield Primary School
NOBLE PARK – VIC.
On a clear, breezy night, young Obsidian Snake was sitting on his reed mat waiting for his mother to finish her maize cakes. Finally his mother, Turquoise Maize Flower, finished her maize cakes and sat down next to Obsidian Snake.

“Mother, how did the sun, the moon and all the stars and planets come to be?” asked Obsidian Snake.

“The sun and the universe were made by the gods, let me tell you how it goes. A long time ago there was nothing except for darkness and Ometecuhltli, the Lord of Duality. Then, one day, Ometecuhlti saw some light and he grabbed it and started to shape it and eventually it was in the shape of a woman. He dropped some of his own blood onto the figure.

“Your name is now Ometecuhltli and you are the Lady of Duality. Ometecuhltli was pleased with his work. A while after she had been created, Ometecuhltli realised that she was pregnant. Ometecuhltli was pleased. They would finally be able to create the Earth.

“Soon, Ometecuhltli gave birth to seven other gods. They named four gods Quetzalcoatl, Texcatlipoca, Tlaloc and Mictlantecuhtli. They named the three other gods Chalchiuhtlicue, Chihuacoatl and Chalcuicoaltl. Then they chose the roles of the gods. Tlaloc was made god of Wisdom. He had also bought some spicy cloths and reed mats with his cousin, eagle.

“Then Ometecuhltli and Omecihuatl gave the gods their instructions. Mictlantecuhtli went far away to make his underworld on his own and he hasn’t moved ever since. The other gods set off to make the Earth. Chalchiuhtlicue successfully managed to create a lady of Duality. Ometecuhltli was pleased.

“Now that she had created the sun and moon, Chalcuicoatl wanted to create something else that twinkled and stood still, unlike the sun and moon. She thought and thought and thought but she could find nothing. So she decided to pay a visit to her mother Omecihuatl to ask her what to do. Normally she would not go to her because Omecihuatl didn’t like being disturbed. Nervously, Chalchiuhtlicue approached, not knowing that she was her mother’s favourite child. ‘Um… Mother? I… ’ ‘My darling child! Chalchiuhtlicue, I haven’t seen you for a while, now what would you like?’ Chalchiuhtlicue explained that she wanted something to twinkle and stand still in the sky. ‘Well, thought Omecihuatl, you can ask the Quetzalquetzals if they want to have the role. They sit and blink and blink and blink. Nobody has ever needed them before.’

“Chalchiuhtlicue sent her messenger, Poztupoca to ask the Quetzalquetzals if they wanted to help. Soon, Poztupoca returned with the Quetzalquetzals. He told Chalchiuhtlicue that they were eager to help. Chalchiuhtlicue told the Quetzalquetzals that they would be thrown into the sky and given specific places to stand. One by one she threw them up in the sky and they wriggled into their positions. Once she had finished Chalchiuhtlicue collapsed onto her reed mat. She had finished her hard work and was satisfied.

“After she had rested well, Chalchiuhtlicue joined the other gods who were talking. They were talking about all the gases, dirt, rock, ice and winds that were interfering with their creations. ‘It was Mictlantecuhtli!’ yelled Texcatlipoca, ‘I saw him sending winds. He is jealous because Ometecuhltli didn’t allow him to take part in creating the world!’ explained Chihuacoatl, the Earth Goddess. ‘He wrecked all our creations! How dare he!’ screamed Quetzalcoatl. Chalchiuhtlicue said, ‘I was making the ocean and then this wind, the size of a cyclone, came and flooded the land and destroyed the flowers and the maize, wheat, peppers, sage, fruit, onions and beans Chihuacoatl planted!’ ‘We really need to find a solution’, said Old Tlaloc.

“The gods began to discuss what to do with these interfering pests. While they were discussing, some wind and gas started to tightly wrap themselves around Texcatlipoca. ‘Enough!’ he yelled and he threw the gases and wind in the sky. They started to chase each other and soon had formed a spinning ball. That ball is what we now call a planet. So, the other gods grabbed rock, light, dirt, whatever they could find that was bothering them and tossed them in the sky. Each god and goddess successfully managed to create a spinning ball. ‘They look very nice in the night sky’, exclaimed Chihuacoatl’.

“Wow! That was an interesting story, mother”, said Obsidian Snake. “Yes, it is a rather interesting story. Now go to sleep, tomorrow is market day.” “Oh yes! I forgot that.” Obsidian Snake remembered the last market day. He remembered looking at the fresh chilli, corn, beans and beautiful cloths and reed mats with his cousin, Eagle Snake. He had also bought some spicy maize cakes and tamales. “Please, just one more, a short story”, pleaded Obsidian Snake. “Okay, what story would you like?” asked Turquoise Maize Flower. “One about our seasons.” “Well, here’s how it goes.”
As a child, I viewed the world through a different window and the memories come flooding back of our beloved Hills Hoist. It towered over me, casting an image of a metallic star with spicks and specks of silver glistening in the sunlight.

The two gods went down to the Underworld and handed the message to Mictlantecuhtli. It said, Return Chachaoauatlta to her mother. He gave the goddess back to her mother and they left. But Mictlantecuhtli knew how to get her back. The rules of the underworld were if you ate a pomegranate you would have to return. So he said to Chachaoauatlta, ‘Think of me as you eat this pomegranate on your way to Earth.’ Forgetting that she couldn’t eat down in Mictlan, she started eating the pomegranate. Once they reached Earth they had a huge feast of chilli peppers, cooked quetzals, onions, beans, fresh fruit, spicy maize cakes and tamales.

During the feast, Ometecuhtli received a message from Mictlantecuhtli. It read: Chachaoauatlta has eaten three pomegranate seeds in mictlan. Therefore she must return to me for three months of the year. In tears, Chachaoauatlta hugged her mother and set off to return to the Underworld. She saw Mictlantecuhtli, waiting for her with an evil grin. ‘You tricked me, you horrid creature!’ she shrieked. ‘How could you make me live in this miserable place!’ Chachaoauatlta continued pointing at Mictlan. ‘Too bad’, replied the evil god. ‘Anyway, it is only for three months.’

So, every year, for three months Chachaoauatlta returns to the Lord of the Dead and the other gods weep. Chachaoauatlta doesn’t provide us with as much food and the trees lose their leaves and winter takes over. Chachaoauatlta, the Light Goddess is too sad to give energy to the sun for it to shine all day. She agreed with Texcatlipoca, the god of the Night for him to govern the night for a longer time and for her to have a shorter time of governing the sun. Texcatlipoca, who didn’t care about Chachaoauatlta or her mother, gladly agreed to rule the night for longer with the Quetzalquetzals, the Stars. Tlaloc cries and his tears fall heavily down onto the Earth. Chachaoauatlta weeps uncontrollably and the ocean is wild and there are huge storms. Quetzalcoatl sits in a corner and weeps.

Zzzzz… zzzz…” Obsidian Snake had fallen asleep. ‘Oh, Obsidian Snake’s asleep’, whispered Turquoise Maize Flower to herself. “Well, it’s good that he is asleep because tomorrow is market day and we will need to wake up at dawn. Now it is my turn to go to sleep.” With that, she went to her reed mat and went to sleep.

By Katerina Kalogerakis
Year 4, All Saints Grammar
SOUTH BELMORE – NSW

As a child, I gripped on tightly, swung around on my carousel, feeling fearless and free like a rotating frisbee.

In the billowing wind, wet clothes blew like sails on the green sea, drifting peacefully.

By Nina Nguyen
Year 10, Eynesbury Senior College
ADELAIDE – SA
Through the clouds of Kree came the horrifying figure of Truder, the massive dragon of the forest.

Meanwhile, down in the valley of Kree, the townsfolk were sensing danger stirring in the air. They got ready for the massive event by handing around bows and arrows, swords and nets (for catching the beast).

As Truder came closer the Kree people got ready to fight willingly for their loved, beautiful valley called Kree. As soon as Truder came into view the arrows started flying everywhere, but soon they realised that the arrows that were flying everywhere were not the ones to destroy the horrible Truder. The arrow shot by the archer of Kree bounced off Truder's tough skin and back to the ground.

Next to try were the swords. As soon as Truder's big clawed feet touched the wonderful grass of Kree, swords started stabbing. But even the strongest couldn't get the sword into Truder's tough skin.

The nets were thrown over Truder and this time it worked! Finally, the great Truder was captured. But as they watched Truder fall, they wondered how they were going to defeat Truder.

As keen as foxes the guards watched every step Truder took but a strange step was taken.

“Stupid”, said a voice. The guards spun around... nobody! As they watched Truder fall, they wondered how they were going to defeat Truder.

“Can you speak?!”, asked one of the guards.

“Certainly”, answered Truder. The guards gasped, and hurried off to find the leader. When the leader heard what was said, at first didn't trust them but soon believed the innocent guards. They hurried off to the cage where Truder was and the leader asked, “Can you speak?”.

Truder replied, “Of course”. In his state of shock, the leader made a decision. Everyone was rushed about as the leader led Truder into the forest.

“Truder”, said the leader, “Come to Kree if you want anything, okay?”.

“Okay”, replied Truder, “and thank you for not destroying me completely”. In one quick move of his wing Truder vanished from sight.

Wondering around his forest, Truder was nearly starved to death and very dehydrated. So, he decided to make an appearance once more in the valley of Kree...

That afternoon, the townsfolk of Kree had an unexpected visitor.

“Hello, can I please have some food?” asked Truder.

“Sure”, replied the townsfolk, and every afternoon Truder would come to the town and receive dead rabbits, foxes, deer and wolves.

One night, Truder was flying on patrol when suddenly, his wing hit something hard and Truder realised he had just flown into a cliff. Truder fell agonisingly until at last he hit the ground with a massive THUD!

Bruised and scratched Truder walked through the forest until he was in the valley of Kree. The townsfolk nursed him until he was healed and begging to be let out.

For the rest of Truder's cold blooded, strange life he was looked after PROPERLY!

By Tia Porter
Oonoonba State School
IDALIA – QLD.

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Seasons

By Emilia Febbo
Age 8
YARRAVILLE – VIC.
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