

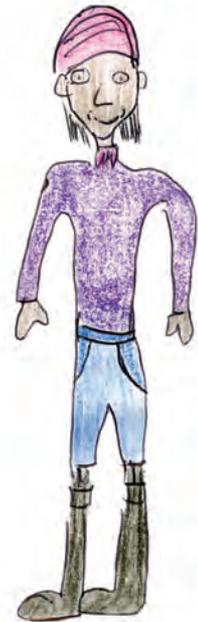
Children 2015 selection writing to grow smart

stories written by learners for the
Growsmart writing competition



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Tauheer Valentine.

A message from Growthpoint Properties



"If you want a happy ending, that depends, of course, on where you stop your story." – Orson Welles

We all have a story to tell – young, old, rich and poor, black and white. Stories are the tapestries of our life, our history and our future. What makes this book so spectacular is that these stories are written by children. Children who are sharing their experiences, their happiness, their sadness and of course, their personal insight into the beauty of life with us, the readers. With a definite South African flavour, these stories capture our hearts and imagination with their innocence, honesty and in some cases, bravery.

This year, we received an astounding 183 submissions for the Growsmart Story Telling Competition 2015. They were all written by learners in Grades 4 to 6, most of whom come from previously disadvantaged communities in the Cape Town area and for some of whom English is not their first language. This book celebrates these young authors and encompasses many of Growthpoint's values, amongst them being that our people are our most important asset. We are extremely proud to be a part of an initiative that explores the human condition and enables us to watch these young minds grow and flourish.



Norbert Sasse, CEO

A message from the Western Cape Education Department

Writing is a magical medium. It is a vehicle for communication, connection and creativity with the self and the world. It is an opportunity to learn and grow, have fun and hone the intellect. Being able to express yourself is a skill and a gift. By cultivating this ability in children, you are giving them the priceless power to share their thoughts and ideas with the world in a meaningful way.

On behalf of the Western Cape Education Department, we thank Growthpoint and their partners for running this stimulating creative writing competition for a second year. The learners who submitted their stories in this diverse anthology come from primary schools across the City of Cape Town. We commend these schools for embracing the challenge to improve their language performance.

Many stories in this selection are imaginative and fanciful. Illustrations are presented in lively colours. Descriptions detail the characters' appearance, conduct and mannerisms. The children's writing reflects deep concerns they have. They care about animals, they value reading, and they use humour to overcome the fear of speaking in front of a class.

May this collection inspire other children and their teachers to write and develop the passion for storytelling in written form.

Brian Schreuder, Deputy Director-General: Curriculum and Assessment Management



A message from Via Afrika



At Via Afrika, we usually work with educational texts that serve to enable teachers and learners to discover the joys of education. It is our task to team up with the authors, editors, illustrators, book designers, typesetters and printers to craft one person's vision into a living object that benefits hundreds, even thousands, of others.

It has therefore been our privilege to work with Growthpoint, the WCED and these talented writers to publish this anthology of experience and imagination. We were presented with stories that moved or delighted; artwork that showed aptitude and insight; and a passion that invigorated us in our tasks – quite an achievement for a group of people with many years of experience in the educational book industry. We look forward to being able to participate in further projects of this worth.



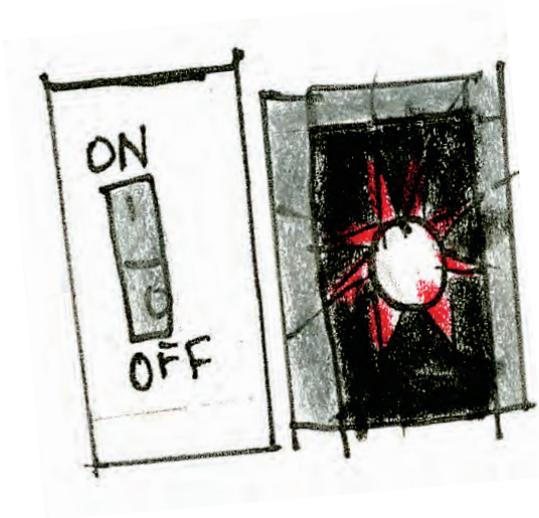
Christina Watson, CEO

A message from Paarl Media

Writing skills form the foundation of education. The Paarl Media Group is therefore proud to be associated with the Growsmart project through printing this remarkable book. Paarl Media supports the education of our nation's learners, and our involvement in this initiative is a gesture of our on-going commitment to education in South Africa.



Well done to all the participants in, and winners of, this competition; you have done South Africa proud.

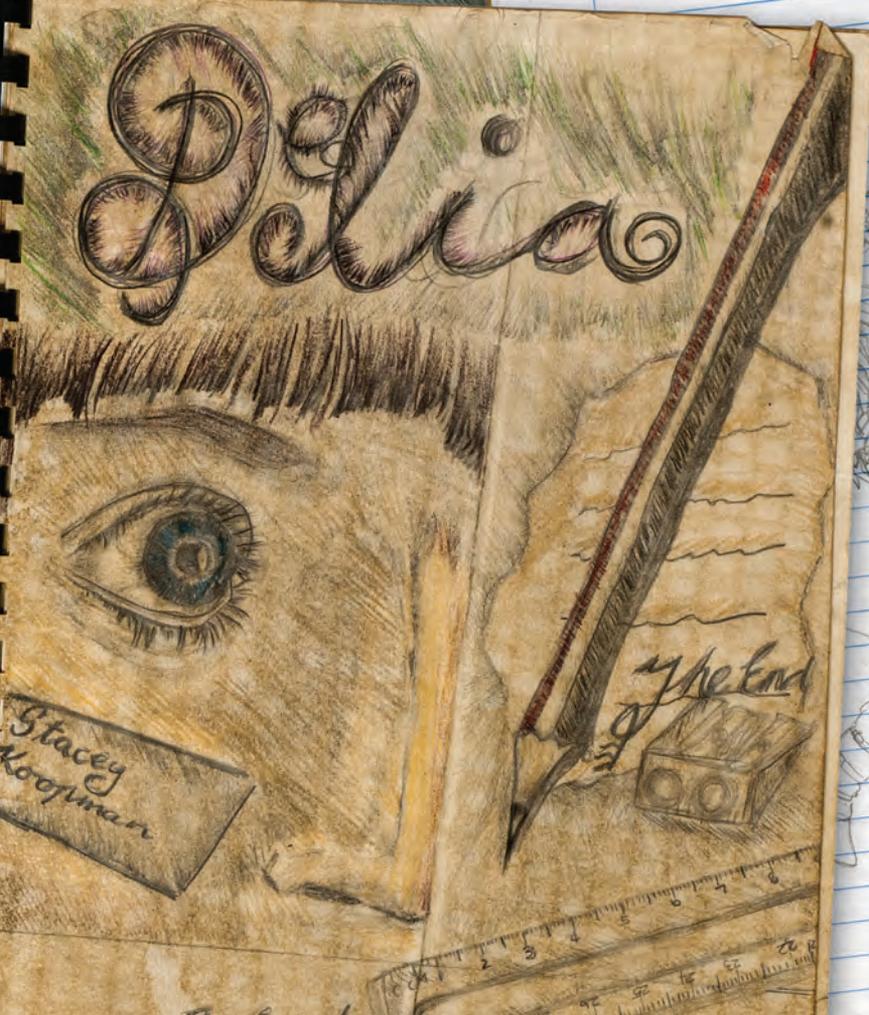


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Dante clean
Dante gave

& nose was so gigantic that my head could go in there. His name was Jonsey.

The other one was so petite I could push his whole body in Jonsey's nose. His name was Olive. I found myself smiling for the first time here. Surely you'll write this all down in the book. I just felt like experimenting a little bit more with my imagination.

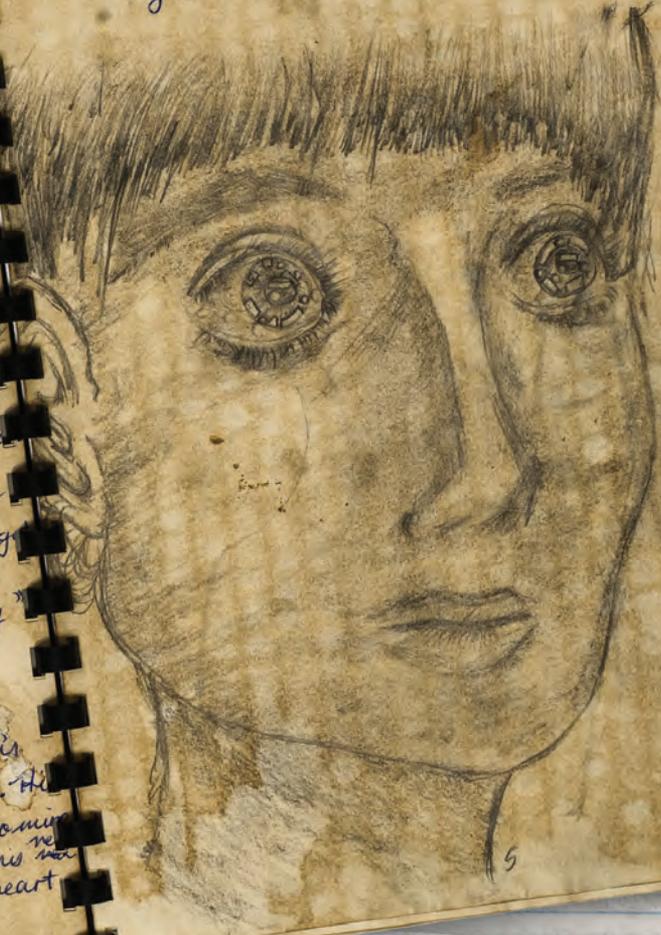


Someone spoke to the two guards on their walkie-talkies and they forgot to rope me. After a few minutes, someone made a "bang" noise on the door.

I stood up, opened the place where you could see the persons' eyes. It was definitely a man. His eyes were strange, not similar to mine. I could see someone's collar behind his neck. I opened the door and my heart



bloodstream. His eyes...



CHAPTER 4

REHAB
THE
TRUTH

rehab - a place where people help people to live a normal life after falling ill or imprison

Delia found something mysterious in the darkest cell.



FATHER



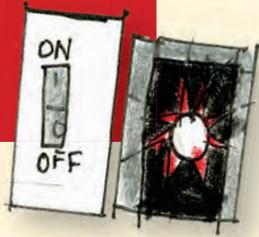
passive had mastered plenty of my feet. On my he used F and like appeared. se. d so thi at look of it's mov and down enjoyment, the one a bird in day would transformed othly. It was goin in a ma



The day Tauheer touched the tempting button

Tauheer Valentine

Balvenie Primary School
Grade 4
Age 10



One cold winter's day after school Tauheer is bored. It's raining outside and he wants to play outside. He asks permission to play in the garage. When he switches on the garage light, he notices a button. He is so inquisitive that he presses the button and is then taken to a different dimension. A world of magic unfolds.

One cold winter's day, I was coming home from school. I was wearing a cap and a school tracksuit. When I got home, I undressed and then I put on my skateboard kit. I wanted to play outside, but the weather was bad. It was raining. It was cloudy and ice cold. I had a great idea. I could play in the garage. So I went to ask permission. My Grandma said that it was all right.

So I took my skateboard and went to the garage and played. I was enjoying myself, but then it started to get dark. I decided to switch on the light. After I had switched on the light, I saw a button next to the switch. The button was white and around it were red glowing triangles. It looked sort of magical to me. I was tempted to switch it on. Then I heard my mother's voice saying, "Tauheer, don't touch that!" I pulled my hand away and played on my skateboard again.

While I was playing, I just could not resist switching on the button ... I just had to push it! So I went back to the button lying next to the switch and carefully pressed on the white part. My hair rose as the button started flashing. Outside the garage, glowing sunbeams appeared. I was transported to a different dimension. It had the most beautiful sky, forests, houses and places. I was excited





green. The sky was blue and everything smelled fresh. The weather was everything I had ever wished for. I was so happy.

My garage had taken me to a massive skateboarding park with unlimited space. The park had many different structures that looked like a rollercoaster of roads and bridges to skateboard on. The variety of ramps were unbelievable. I felt a vibration in my feet. I looked down and saw a high-tech skateboard on my skateboard was another magic white button with the word FRIENDS in gold capital letters. I pressed it... and like magic my two best friends Cameron and Mark appeared. It was party time. Skateboarding party, of course!

The ramps were so amazing and so thrilling. My favourite ramp was the one that looked like a magic dragon with flames coming out of its mouth. When you go up it like a million times. You ride up and down. WEEEE!! It was so great. I was FREEEE!! Enjoyment, excitement and freedom!! When Mark went up the one ramp, I came down. Cameron was sliding like a bird in the air, smiling from ear to ear. I wished this day would never ever end.

The skateboard was completely transformed. It could glide from ramp to ramp smoothly. It was magical and we did not care what was going on in the other world as long as we were in a magical one of our own.

Down. As if I was in an

Suddenly I found myself holding on to our vibrante nest to the main gate of our house. I was out of breath, but smiling. I was back in the real world. Wow! What an amazing afternoon. I heard a car hooting. It was my parents. My father pointed at me to open the gate. I got off my skateboard, my knees still wobbly because of my great adventure. My friends Cameron and Mark had vanished. Was this real? I didn't care. It felt so real. It must have been. My father hooted again. My what's going on? Where's your magic? Open the gate!! He shouted. And why are you skateboarding on the grass

When my father got out of the car, he said. "Don't worry son, next Saturday, I'll take you to that new skateboarding ramp at the mall." I answered, "You don't have to, Daddy. There's nothing better than skateboarding in your own garage!" I grinned with happiness. My dad suddenly got a confused look on his face. Then I received a message from Mark to read "Great adventure, Sawyer, let's do it again soon, AMMAZZINGGG ramps" so the magic button became our little secret.



Magic Magic Magic

Magic Magic Magic

because the weather was amazing ... it was everything I had ever wished for. It was cloudless and hot. The grass was green. The sky was blue and everything smelled fresh. I was so happy.

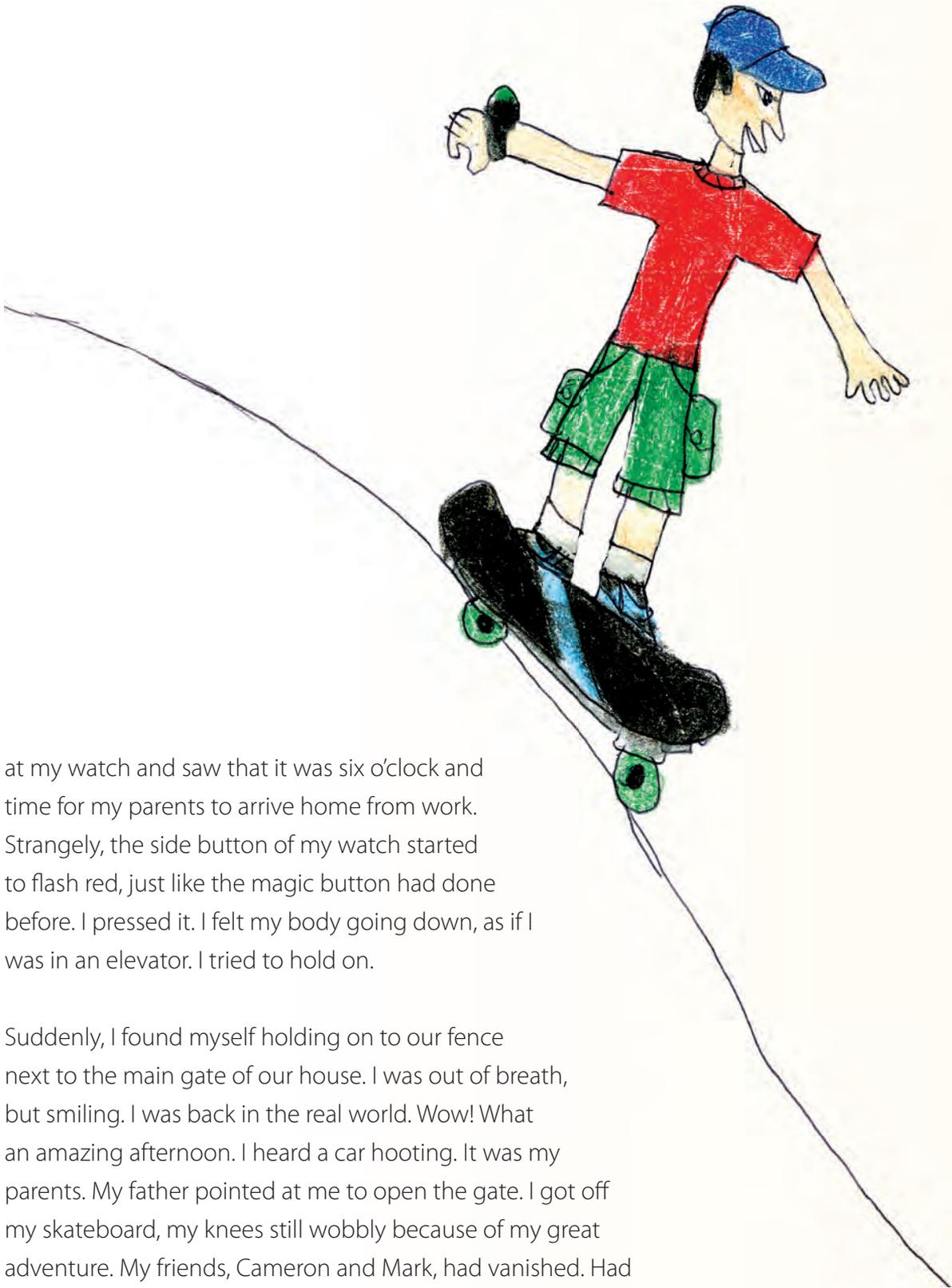
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My skateboard was completely transformed. It could glide from ramp to ramp, smoothly. It was magical and we did not care what was going on in our other world, as long as we were in a magical one of our own.

It seemed like hours of non-stop fun. Then suddenly our skateboards started to slow down by themselves. I looked





at my watch and saw that it was six o'clock and time for my parents to arrive home from work. Strangely, the side button of my watch started to flash red, just like the magic button had done before. I pressed it. I felt my body going down, as if I was in an elevator. I tried to hold on.

Suddenly, I found myself holding on to our fence next to the main gate of our house. I was out of breath, but smiling. I was back in the real world. Wow! What an amazing afternoon. I heard a car hooting. It was my parents. My father pointed at me to open the gate. I got off my skateboard, my knees still wobbly because of my great adventure. My friends, Cameron and Mark, had vanished. Had

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Tori's weather story

Tori Moses

Balvenie Primary
School
Grade 5
Age 11

Whenever Tori has to do an oral presentation in front of her class, she freezes. One day, she has to present a weather report. She prepares herself, but then it happens again – she freezes. Her teacher gives her a chance to regain her confidence. Magically, Tori gives a weather report, but strangely, it is the weirdest weather report ever. What's even weirder is that her weather report becomes a reality.

My name is Tori Moses. I am an 11-year-old girl and I am in Grade 5 at Balvenie Primary School in Elsie's River. This is my story.

It took place one year ago. I had a kind teacher who explained everything we had to do. The work was rather difficult, but I managed. My teacher was like a mother to me. I always did everything that she expected me to do, but there was one thing I could never do and that was to speak in front of the class. It freaked me out.

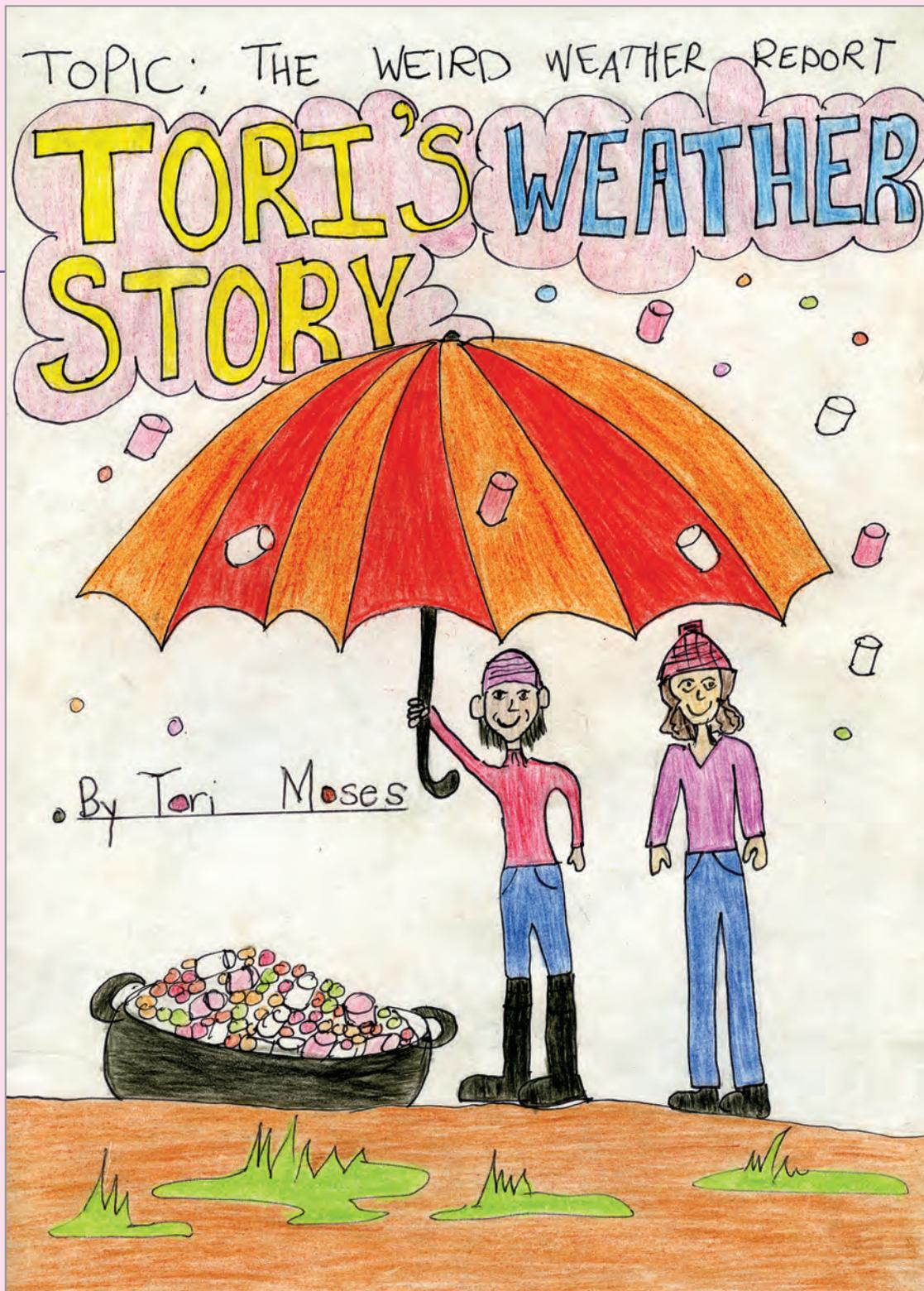
During the second term last year, we were given a task to do a weather forecast for our area. Our teacher instructed us to do a written, as well as an oral report. I had to do my weather report on a specific day as indicated by my teacher. At home everything went well with my planning and my preparation. My mother helped me get ready. I had all my facts straight, the only thing I feared, was the speaking part.

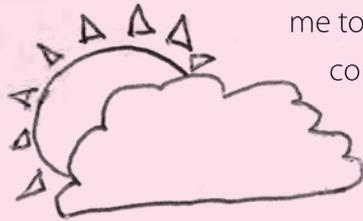
My ideas and facts were in me, but I was nervous. I did my writing carefully and neatly. I wished speaking was that easy. On the day of my presentation, I walked up to the front of the classroom, but, when it was my turn to speak, I froze. I could not say a single word. My legs

TOPIC: THE WEIRD WEATHER REPORT

TORI'S WEATHER STORY

By Tori Moses





were like jelly and I thought they would give way under me. I remembered my mother telling me to take a deep breath before I started, but even that didn't help, because I could not even breathe properly. My kind teacher told me to relax and just to speak like I would in a normal conversation. She gave me a second chance to try after break that day. I was so grateful to her for this, but I knew that I would still face the same challenge.

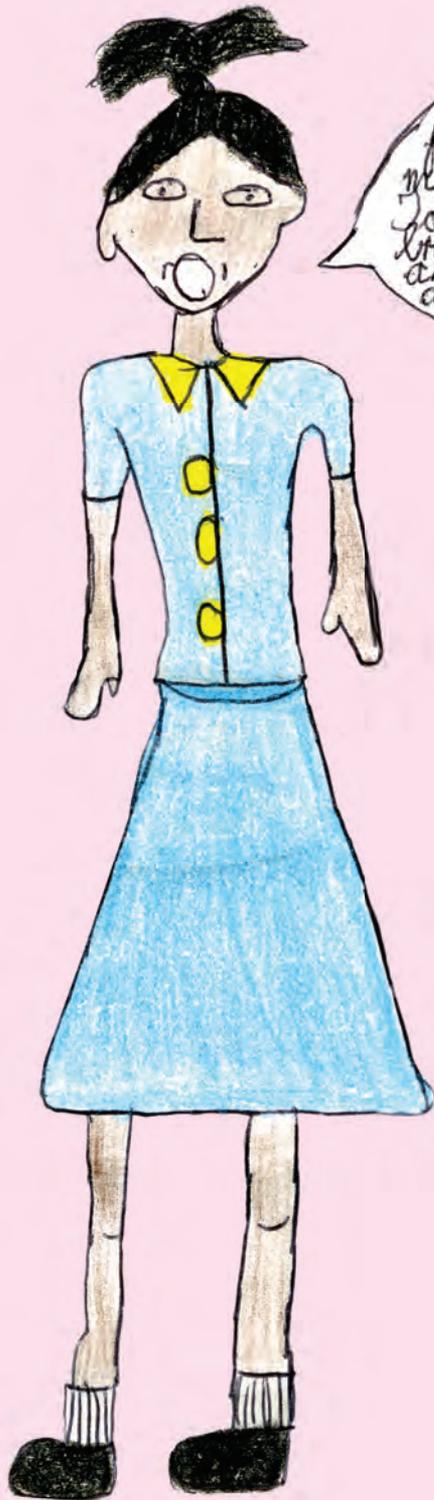
Right after break that same day, my two best friends, Raydi and Courtney, gave such wonderful presentations. They were so confident. Then once again my teacher called, "Tori! It's your turn." For the second time that day, I walked to the front of the class. I closed my eyes and took a deep breath. Then it happened. This is when I started believing in superpowers.

I started. What was supposed to come out of my mouth was:

"A cold front is approaching Cape Town. Therefore, the weather for tomorrow will be cold and cloudy. It will be windy. There is an eighty per cent chance of rain. Please wear warm clothing and raincoats. Take umbrellas wherever you go. There is snow on the mountains; therefore, the temperatures will be very low."

Instead, what came out was:

"Tomorrow is going to be a wonderful winter's day. It will be cold, but very pleasant. The clouds will turn into pink candyfloss. It will lower to the ground and then you can



eat as much candyfloss as your heart desires. It will rain marshmallows and Jelly Tots. Don't bring umbrellas and raincoats, instead bring huge containers to fill with sweets, as much as your heart desires."

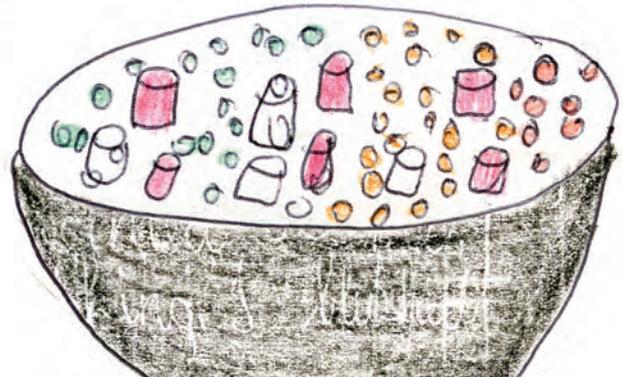
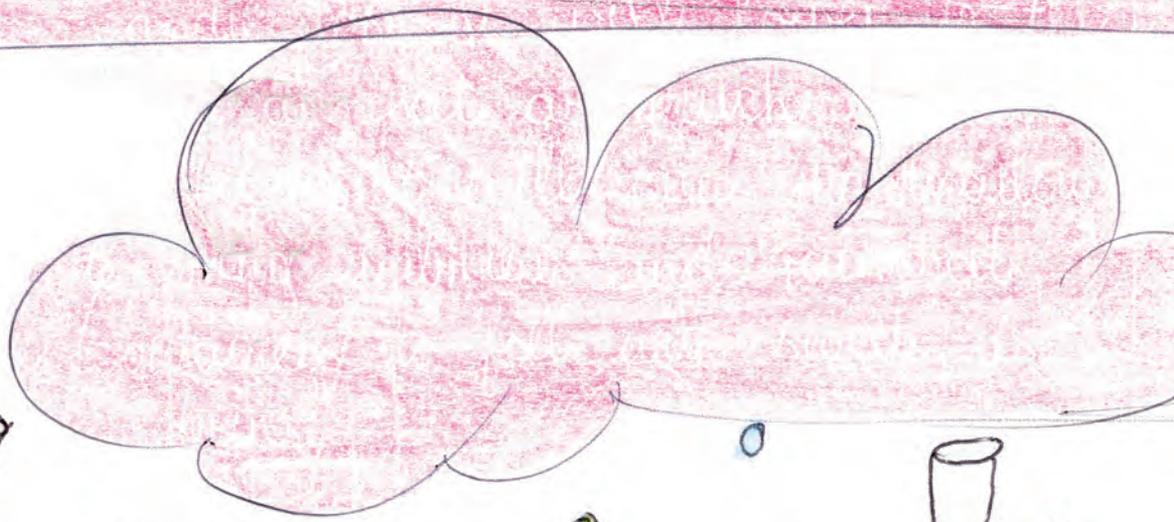
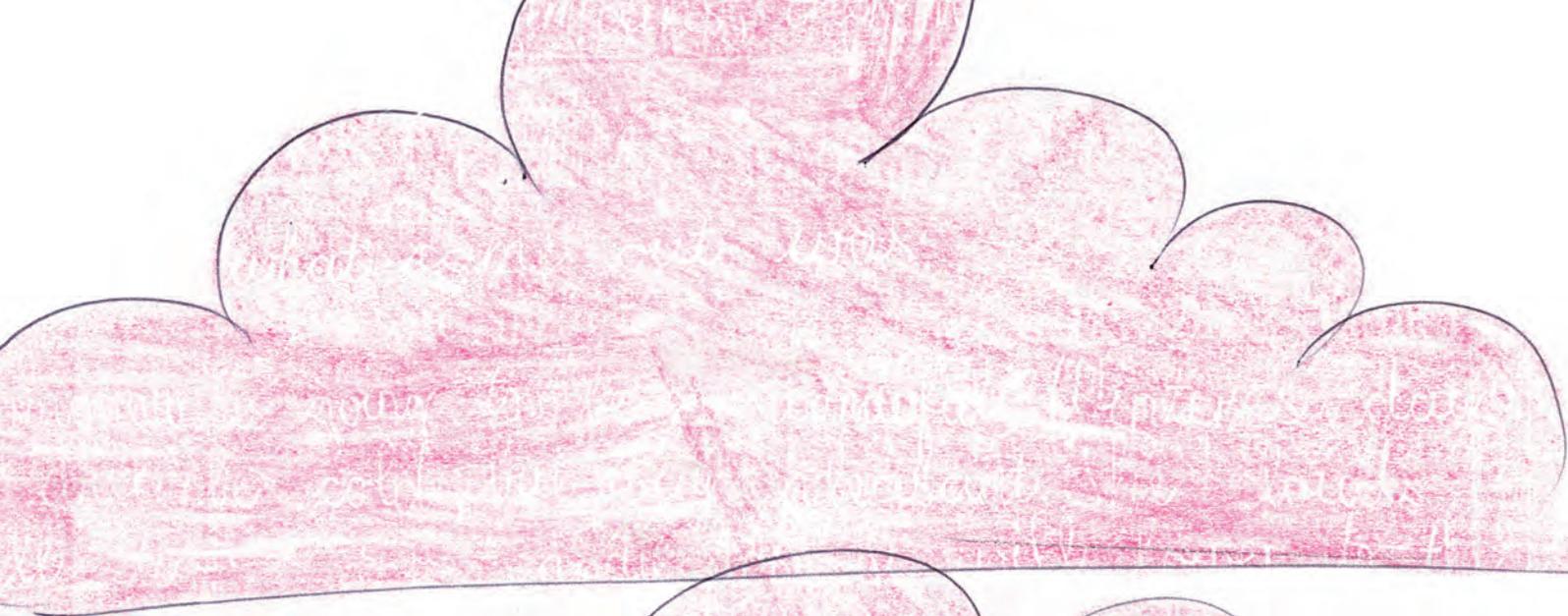
I realised that I had no control over what I had said, but I was happy, very happy. Everything came out confidently and clearly. My teacher was surprised, yet happy. She said, "Tori, that was the weirdest weather report I have ever heard, but I'll be sure to bring my big container tomorrow."

There was absolute silence and then ... the whole class burst out laughing. They were laughing at me. I felt so shy, but happy that it was over. Peter pointed at me, shouting, "Raining sweets! You must be joking." I blushed and did not know where to look.

Once again, my teacher saved me. "Stop that, Peter!" she shouted. "That's quite enough! Well done, Tori, you have overcome your fear." She always knew how to make us feel good about ourselves, no matter how we struggled.

"Don't worry, Tori," said my friend Gabby. "You were great."

The next morning, my teacher was at school early. Gabby and I decided to bring one huge container to share. We went into the classroom. "Good morning, Ma'am!" we said



at the same time. My teacher's empty big bowl was on the table. "I am ready for action, Tori," she said. We all laughed.

When school started, everyone in class giggled and pointed at the containers. After break, my teacher took us outside to explain the water cycle to us. It was cold and wet outside, and she explained how the water got on the ground, and was just about to tell us about the sun and evaporation. Suddenly there was a sound of thunder. Everyone, except Gabby, our teacher and I ran towards the school building to stand under the roof of the long stoep.

Then it happened. For ten minutes non-stop it rained, not water, but marshmallows and Jelly Tots. The three of us filled our containers while the rest of the class stared in disbelief. Then the candyfloss came down – as much as we could carry. I looked over at the class and as they tried to run towards us, an unknown force kept them in place. After about ten minutes, there was absolute silence.

Then, we smiled, but everyone else just stood there. Dumbstruck. Even Peter, the class clown, had nothing to say. The weirdest weather report became our greatest adventure ever.



Video reality

Venite Clayton

West End Primary
School
Grade 6
Age 11



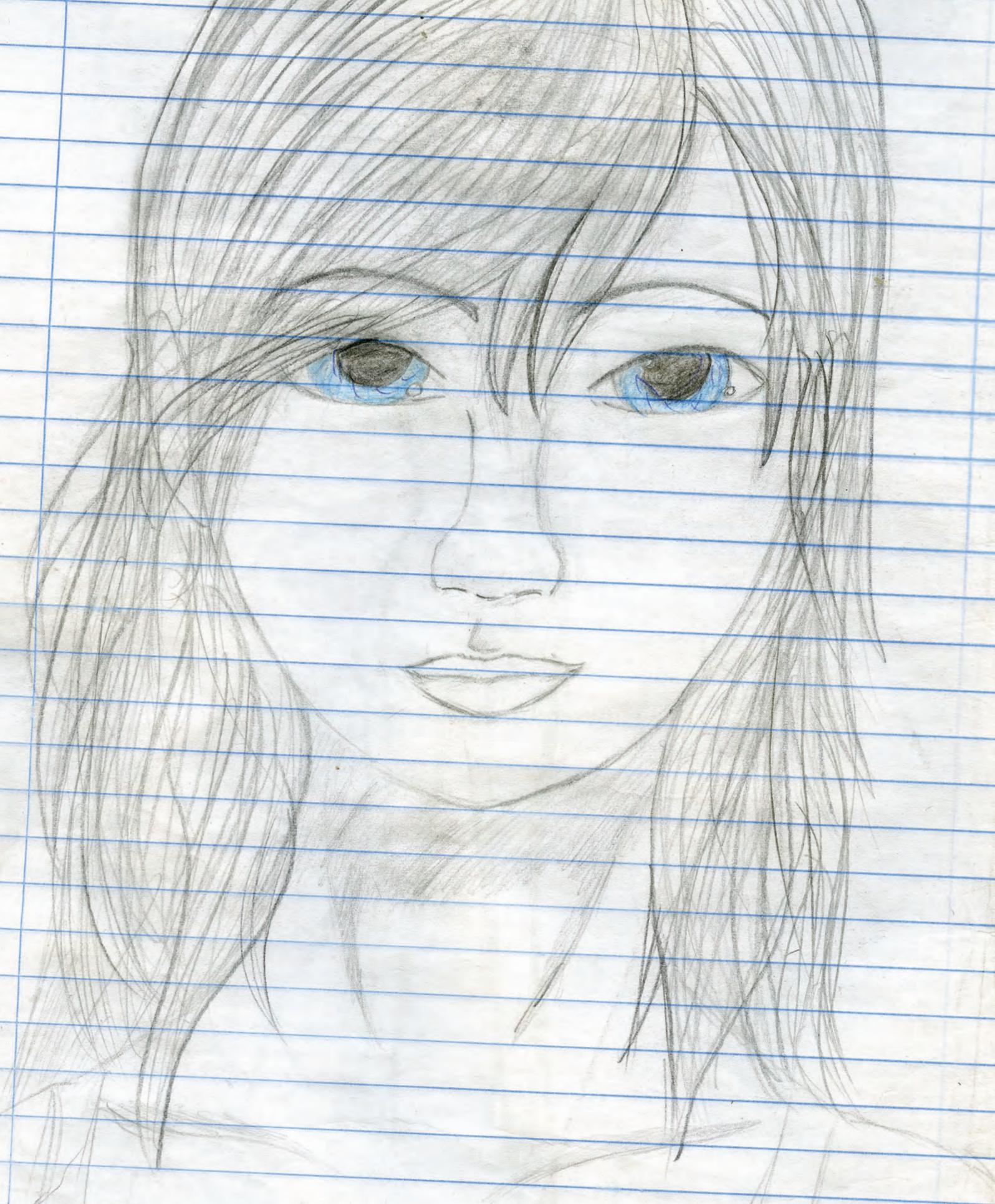
It was a normal day at the Fairhaven City Mall. A teenage girl walked into the video store with a smile on her beautiful face. She roamed the store, hoping to find a good video game to purchase.

She found an X-Box 360 game called *Devil May Cry 4*. She gently took the box from the shelf and examined it. "Great, this is perfect," she said aloud to herself. She walked to the counter at the front of the store with the game in her hand.

"Hey Artemis. How can I help you today?" greeted the cashier. He was about Artemis's age. He had freckles all over his cheeks with shaggy red hair that was in a bowl cut. Lovely brown eyes and lightly tanned skin. He had braces as well and was rather skinny.

"Hello Jason. I'm here to buy this game," Artemis said, handing him the bright green box.

"Anything for our best customer," Jason said, scanning the game. "That will be \$260," he said. Artemis fished around in her back pocket and pulled out her money, handing him \$300. "Here's your change and game. Have a nice day," Jason said, giving her the cash and the item. Artemis put the game in her blue and black sling back and left.





After driving for a few minutes, Artemis arrived home. She walked through the front door and into the living room where her X-Box 360 console was set up. Artemis turned on the television and gaming console, then picked up one of the wireless controllers and signed into her gaming profile.

She took the game's laser disc out of its box and held it with her index finger through the disc hole. She was about to take out the game booklet when she pricked her finger on a piece of plastic that was on the booklet clip.

"Ouch," Artemis said, putting the disc and booklet on the television stand, not noticing that a drop of her blood had fallen onto the back of the disc. She walked to the bathroom and found the adhesive bandages. She took one and wrapped it around her finger. She returned to the living room and continued what she had been doing.

Artemis picked up the disc and put it in the disc tray of her console. She then picked her controller and clicked the on-screen window that read 'Play Devil May Try 4'. Unexpectedly, the lights on the controller and console faded from green, to white, then deep red. Artemis paid this no mind, thinking it was just an error and that the on-screen instruction would appear, telling her how to correct it. This, however, was not the case.

'Do you wish to continue?' appeared on the completely white screen. The words were black and bordered by red. Artemis clicked on the 'yes' box. 'Are you sure?' was then asked, to which she clicked the 'yes' box again. 'Are you

really, REALLY sure?’ appeared. ‘Oh my ... of course I’m sure, you stupid game,’ Artemis thought, clicking ‘yes’ once more. ‘Okay, you were warned,’ appeared on the screen.

“What does that mean?” Artemis asked out loud. The screen turned black. After a few seconds, it lit up bright white, and then Artemis felt herself being pulled towards the screen. She was sucked in through the screen and started falling through a vortex of some sort. She started feeling dizzy and then blacked out.

“Where am I?” Artemis groaned. She sat up and looked at her surroundings. “Jukebox, old oak desk, staircase of steel, plain walls and slow ceiling-fan. This place, whatever it is, is old, dingy and dirty,” she thought to herself. When she heard footsteps approaching, she laid down pretending to be still asleep. A boy stepped in. He looked to be Artemis’s age, if not one or two years older. He had snow-white hair and gently tanned, pure skin. He was strongly built, yet lean, and had the most beautiful azure eyes. He wore a dark, slightly purple, knee-length leather coat. Under that he wore a red hoodie. He had on a pair of blue jeans and wore brown boots. To complete the look, he had a pair of black, wireless headphones. The strange thing was that she felt like she had seen him before. That was when she saw his arm. It was covered with rust coloured, armour-like scales. In between the scales was a crack of light blue scales that glowed slightly. The glowing blue scales also covered his claw-like fingers and his palm.





Dante cleared out one of his spare rooms and Nero gave Artemis some bedding to use. The moment Artemis was in bed she was out like a light. She really is tired. She looks beautiful. Well now, try to grab her feet and wake her. You say that? Nero asked. "What with that bed? You got a good one. I just know you're going to like it. No, I just know how she feels. He doesn't know where she is or what happened. I just want to grab her feet. Well, Nero explained. Okay, well goodnight," Dante said going to his room. Nero looked at Artemis once more then went to his room.

The next day it was 11:50, and Artemis was still asleep. Nero opened the door to her room to see exactly what he wanted. Sheep, she lay. Her limbs tangled in her blanket. Her hair covering her face. It took a minute then roughly

a tall man. White hair similar to that of the boy and piercing blue-gray eyes. Not to mention not to pale skin and a bit of stubble on his face. He wore a red, floor-length, leather trench coat, under that a black leather vest with three belts holding it in place on his broad chest. He had red pants with black leather chaps and red, cowboy-style boots. "Hi Dante. Nice meeting you," he said smiling. "Hi Nero. What's your name," asked the younger of the two. "Hi Artemis," she said. "All right babe. You got some explaining to do. Why did you fall from the sky?" Dante asked. "Why did I, what from the where?" Artemis asked, utterly confused. "Answer," Nero said. "The last thing I remember was being in my living room, then a flash, then this," she said. "Alright then. You have no place to go so you can stay here. Dante announced. "Well help you find your way home too," Nero added. "Great," Artemis answered. That was all she could say. She had long since realized that she was in a video game. So many questions swirled in her head. "I'll just have to learn and adjust," Artemis thought to herself.

Dante cleared out one of his spare rooms and Nero gave Artemis some bedding to use. The moment Artemis was in bed she was out like a light. She really is tired.



The boy glanced over to Artemis and followed her gaze. Realising it was on his arm, he quickly hid it behind his back. "Hey Dante! She's awake!" the boy shouted towards the door he had come from. From the door that Artemis assumed led to the kitchen came a tall man. He had white hair, similar to that of the boy, and piercing blue-grey eyes. His skin was neither too tan, nor too pale, and he had a bit of stubble on his face. He wore a red, floor-length leather trench coat. Under that was a black leather vest with three belts holding it in place on his broad chest. He had on red pants with black leather chaps and wore red, cowboy-style boots.

"I'm Dante. Nice meeting you," he said smiling.

"I'm Nero. What's your name?" asked the younger of the two.

"I'm Artemis," she said.

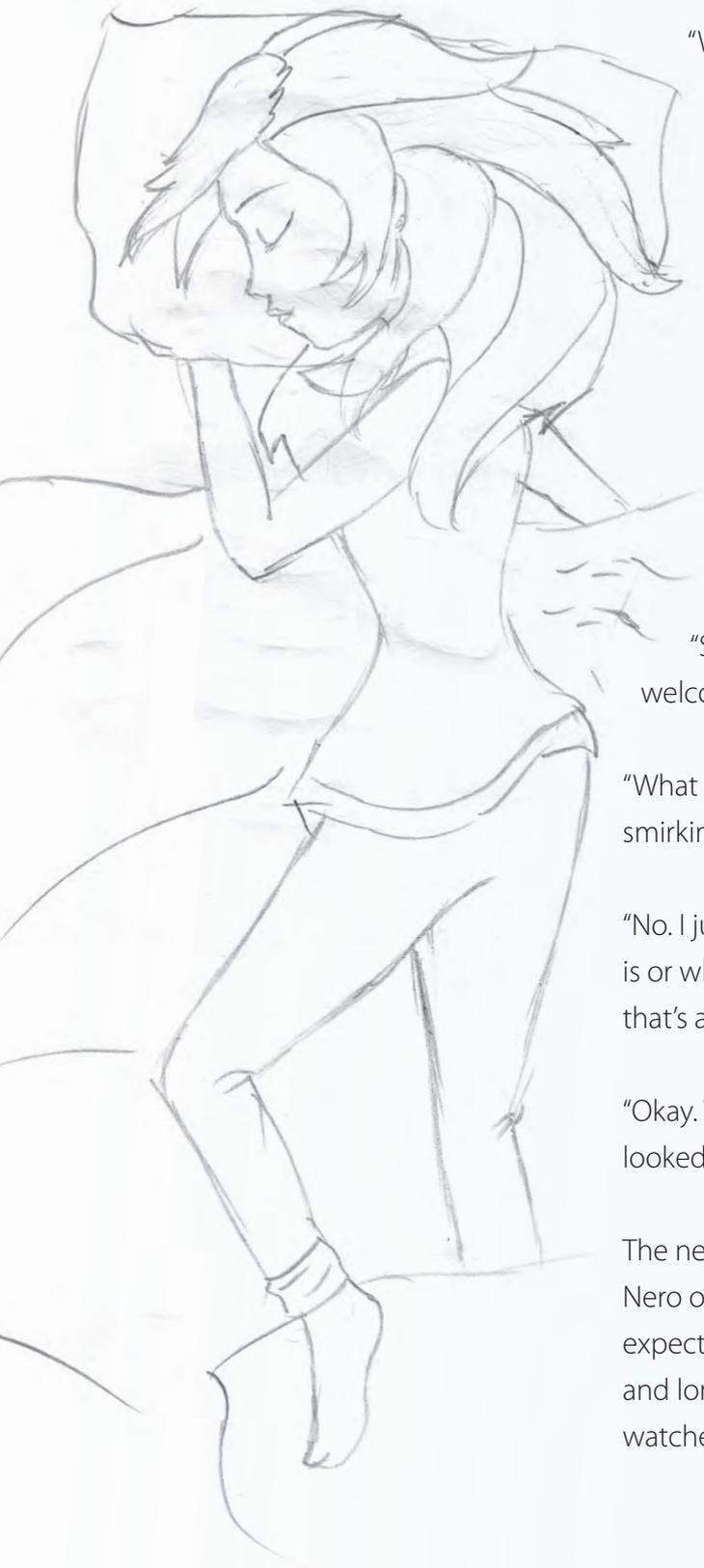
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"Answer," Nero said.

"The last thing I remember was being in my living room, then a flash, then this," she said.

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"We'll help you find your way home, too," Nero added.

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Dante cleaned out one of his spare rooms and Nero gave Artemis some bedding to use. The moment Artemis was in bed she was out like a light. "She really is tired," Dante said, smiling.

"She looks beautiful. Old man, try to make her feel welcome here. Can you do that?" Nero asked.

"What with that kid? You got a crush?" Dante asked, smirking like an idiot.

"No. I just know how she feels. She doesn't know where she is or what's happening. I just want to make her feel better, that's all," Nero explained.

"Okay. Well goodnight," Dante said going to his room. Nero looked at Artemis once more, then went to his room.

The next day it was 11:50 and Artemis was still asleep. Nero opened the door to her room to see exactly what he expected. There she lay. Her limbs tangled in her blanket and long locks of platinum hair covering her face. Nero watched for a minute, then roughly pulled the blankets.

Artemis fell to the ground with a loud thud. "It's 8 in the morning Nero," Artemis complained.

"No you lazy fart, it's almost 12 o'clock. So get up," Nero said helping her from the floor.

"Fine, you win. I don't have any clothes to put on," she said.

"I got that covered. Trish!" Nero shouted.

"Who's Trish?" Artemis's question was soon answered when a woman stepped into the room. She had sky blue eyes and long blond hair. She wore a black leather bustier top that showed off her belly button. Black leather pants and heeled boots covered her lower half.

"Hello honey. I'm Trish, a friend of Dante's. What's your name?" she asked nicely.

"I'm Artemis," Artemis replied.

"Here. Try these on in the bathroom down the hall," Trish said, giving Artemis a bag. A few minutes later she stepped into the room. Artemis wore a silver belly top with purple flower patterns around the neck, sleeves and bottom. A pair of dark blue, knee-length jeans and purple blue and silver high-tops covered the rest. To finish, her long hair was tied up into a ponytail with small braids for detail and her bangs loose. "My work has been done," Trish said, walking out.

"You look great," Nero complimented Artemis.

“Th . . . thanks,” Artemis stuttered, blushing, and then walked downstairs, soon followed by Nero.

Artemis, Dante and Nero were in the main room. They talked for quite some time. The three had figured out how Artemis got stuck there and were talking about what Artemis would do while she was with them, when Nero suggested that she hunt with them. “That would be awesome,” Artemis said happily.

“Alright. What can you do in terms of combat?” Dante asked.

“I do archery, acrobatics and hand to hand,” she answered.

“Okay then. Dante and I will help you improve on those skills and teach you how to use a gun and a sword,” Nero said.



So began Artemis’s five days of training.

Day 1

Artemis was awoken in the worst way possible. Nero had created a phantom claw, which was just a large version of his Devil Bringer arm, and used it to lift Artemis from her bed and drop her on the floor. “Come on. Training is going to start. Get dressed in something comfortable. Your first lesson is acrobatics with me,” Nero said walking downstairs.

Two hours later, Artemis was upside down with her legs bent over the bar to keep her from falling. She then proceeded to grab the bar with her hands and remove her legs from the bar. She started swinging, doing four

full rotations around the bar, and then letting go and completing a mid-air forward flip, before landing perfectly on her feet. "You're good," Nero said walking over to Artemis.

"Thanks. Am I good enough to move on to the next lesson?" Artemis asked.

"Well, if you want to do more, I guess you can," Nero said.

"Um, no. I just want to know because I never want to do that again," Artemis said.

"Fine. You can relax." Artemis then slowly walked to the living room. She went to the couch and passed out.

Day 2

Artemis woke up, went downstairs, made herself cereal and went to watch TV. The last thing she expected was to have a sword pointed at her face. So, when this happened, she squeaked and dropped her cereal in surprise. "Your lesson today is how to use a sword," Dante said, taking the sword away from her face. After Artemis changed, Dante gave her a basic broad sword to use.

A few hours later, Dante lay on the training mat. Artemis had one foot on his chest and the other on the ground. She held the sword next to his head. "I win," she said, helping Dante up.

"Your sword training is complete," he said, giving her a pat on the head. She smiled and went to make herself a second breakfast.





Day 3

"Hey Artemis!" Nero called.

"In here," her voice came back from the training room.

"You're up! Great," Nero said, handing her a basic pistol. He went into the closet and came out with a few target boards. He set them up and then gave Artemis a bow and some arrows.

Artemis started with the pistol first. The recoil was a bit strong, but after a few minutes, she got the hang of it and her aim was precise. Three hours later, the gun had been discarded for the archery set. Artemis's aim was just as precise, and she was soon shooting multiple arrows, continuously hitting the bulls-eye. "You're good," Nero said.



Day 4

Dante and Nero sat in the training room. Artemis walked in, looking ready for her lesson. "Okay, gents, what have you got for me today?" she asked.

"Your final lesson is hand to hand and improvised combat," Dante said.

"We can't use any real weapons of any kind. Let's start," Nero said.

They both charged at her. Artemis did a backwards flip and avoided the attack. She regained her footing and ran for the stairs. Dante and Nero followed her. Artemis took the broom that stood in the corner and broke the head off. With the

improvised staff in hand, she went to the bathroom. Just as her hand was on the door handle, Dante grabbed her from behind. A swift kick to the leg and an elbow to the stomach were enough to make him loosen his grip for her to escape. Artemis took the broomstick and hit Dante on the head hard enough to knock him out cold. She dragged him to his room and, for safe measure, took some tape from his drawer and tied his hands together.

“Where is she?” Nero thought out loud. Artemis watched him from her spot behind the mini-bar. “He’s got his back to me. Perfect,” Artemis thought. Before Nero knew what was happening, he was tackled from behind and his hands were tied together. Artemis stood up with a victorious smile on her face. “I win again,” she announced happily.

“Great, now untie me!” Nero demanded.

“Later,” Artemis answered, walking off.

Day 5

Artemis finished the designs she needed and handed the pages to Dante. There was one page that was meant for Trish. Dante left it in his red convertible. Nero and Artemis were sitting in silence when a car horn sounded outside. “That’s for me,” Artemis said as she walked out through the door. Just as she had expected . . . Trish was sitting in her car, waiting for Artemis to get in. She got in the car and the two ladies left.

Three hours later, Artemis and Trish returned. Then came Dante. “They’re here!” Artemis shouted excitedly, spotting



My main character plans



Fig 3: face

Artemis



Fig 4: body full

the black cases Dante had brought in. She took the shopping bags Trish had held for her and the two black cases, and then went to her room.

She came out a while later, wearing what she had bought: a silver belly top with a hood attached to it, black skinny jeans, and ankle-high boots. Strapped to her back was the sword she had designed, Silver Moon, and attached to the belt behind her waist was the new compound bow, True Aim. "You look amazing," Nero complimented her.

"Thank you," Artemis replied.

Nero thought about something for a minute. "Why do all this if you're just going home soon?" he asked.

"I did my research. There's no way for me to go home. I like it here. You're my family, and I'm happy with that," she answered, smiling at him. He returned the smile.

Months later and a few things had changed. Artemis came from her hunting mission. "Hello," Nero said, giving her a peck on the cheek.

"What's that great smell?" she asked.

"Popcorn," he said, heading to the couch. The two of them sat down. Nero watched the movie, while Artemis thought back on the last few months. She smiled warmly.

"I love my video game reality," she thought to herself.



Wildlife tears

Lisakhanya Saki

Liwa Primary School
Grade 5
Age 11

Acknowledgements

A lot of thanks to my friend Zethu who played a pivotal role in developing this story. Thanks to my teacher Mr Andrews for his linguistic advice that was appropriate for this story. Thanks to my principal F.M. Nodlela for her motherly advice. Thanks to Zikhona Mfo for all her efforts ... you are a great friend. Stay blessed. Ms Banzana and Ms Nocawe, thank you.

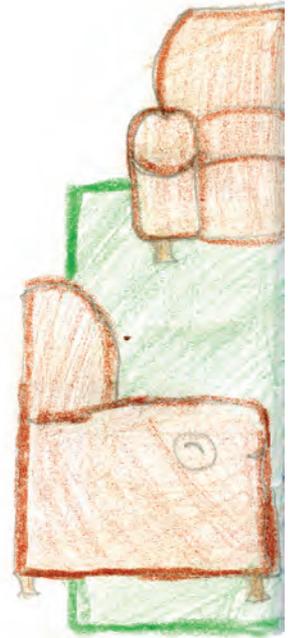
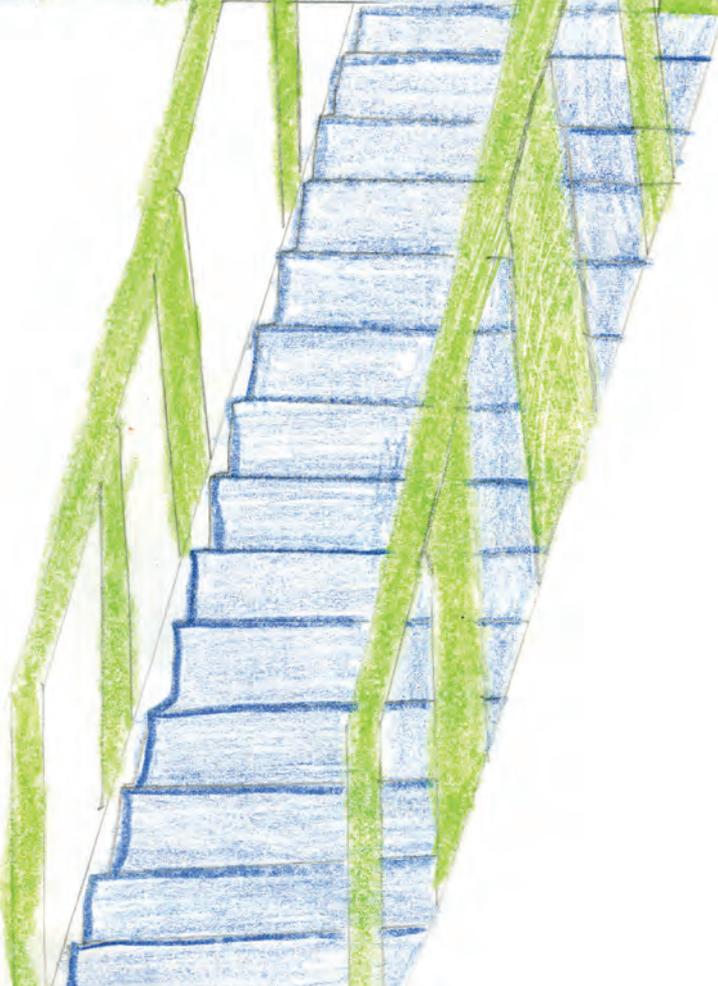
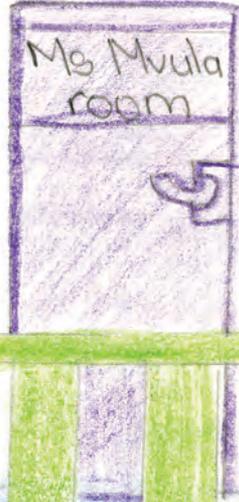
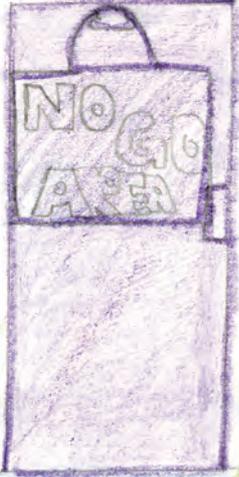
Mrs Mvula lives alone. She likes children and always calls us to play in her house with her. Every day after school I go to her house with my friends to do our homework. We normally leave her home around six in the evening.

Mrs Mvula is such a sociable lady and we respect her. We normally help her with household chores as a way of thanking her for assisting us with our homework. We wash dishes, clean the toilet and sweep. She allows us to go into most of the rooms in house, except one.

This small room next to her bedroom is always locked and a big no-go area for everybody. I was very curious to get into that room to find out why she did not allow us to go inside. There was a big 'no entry' sign at the entrance to the room.

On the morning of 23 December, Mrs Mvula asked us to watch her house while she went shopping for Christmas. We played hide and seek. When it was my turn to hide, I thought of the small room next to Mrs Mvula's bedroom. With my heart pounding, I tried the door and it opened at once. Mrs Mvula had forgotten to lock it before leaving.





Inside the room there was a lot of dust. I started sneezing badly. It was dark inside. "What's wrong with switching the light on?" I asked myself. I suddenly changed into an animal and became an elephant. I was among many animals like baboons, dogs, cheetahs and leopards.

All the animals in this room were talking, socialising and singing with one another. They spoke English, Pedi, Xhosa, Afrikaans and Spanish. I was surprised because they understood one another. They were living together peacefully.

I made a friend, a young girl elephant. She told me that she was alone. She told me sad and good stories. I did not know whether it was by coincidence or not that I had read a story of a young, lonely and sad elephant at school the previous day. In the story, the sad young elephant was looking for her family. Now I had a sad, young elephant standing in front of me.

That night, we slept under a big amarula tree. We made a big fire and we ate amarulas; they were delicious. We fell asleep after eating.

The next day I told my new friend that I was new to her world, but that I did not belong there. She was okay with that. She started talking about animals and life in general.

She taught me how to make delicious soup. We needed honey, leaves and brown rocks. She mixed them together and cooked them, and then I tasted the soup. It was very delicious.

We drank a drink made from amarula and honey. We celebrated and danced. Then I met giraffes and a cheetah with her three cubs, Luna, Sisi and Joy, and mother lioness.

A meeting was scheduled for that afternoon, which different kinds of animals attended. The king, Lion, was also there. Various issues were discussed, but one that took a lot of time was the danger posed by humans.

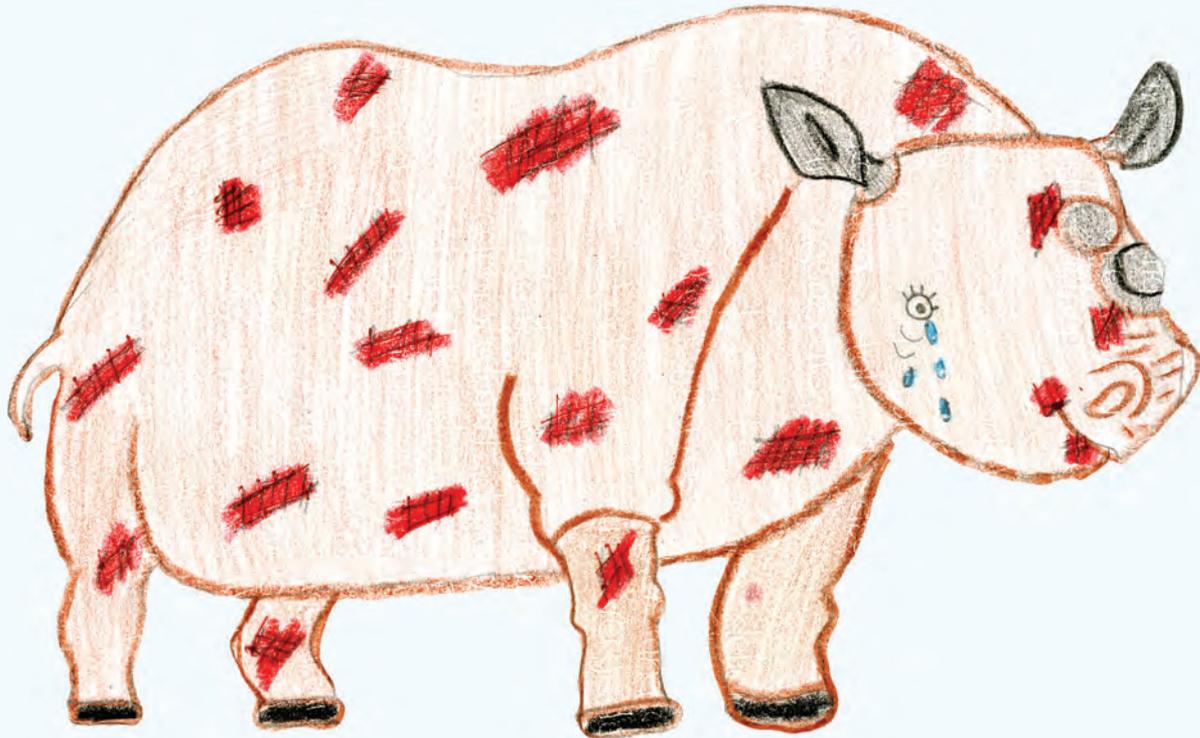
I listened attentively to Ms Rhino's story. I felt sorry for her and nearly cried. She struggled to stand up because of wounds inflicted on her by people. She explained how she had barely escaped death because people wanted her horns. She also cried bitterly for her lost husband, children and parents. All of them had lost their lives to poachers. She concluded by asking the dear King Lion to intervene before their extinction.

My friend elephant started to cry when she heard Ms Rhino's story. The King asked her why she was crying. She narrated her sad story, similar to Ms Rhino's story. She told us that a long time ago she and her family had lived together happily. One morning they went to drink water at the river. My friend elephant heard gunshots and when she ran to her mother, her mother was laying on the ground with a lot of blood.

My friend elephant ran away and realised that she was lost and now on her own. She started to live alone under a big tree full of amarulas, until the day she found this group of peaceful animals.







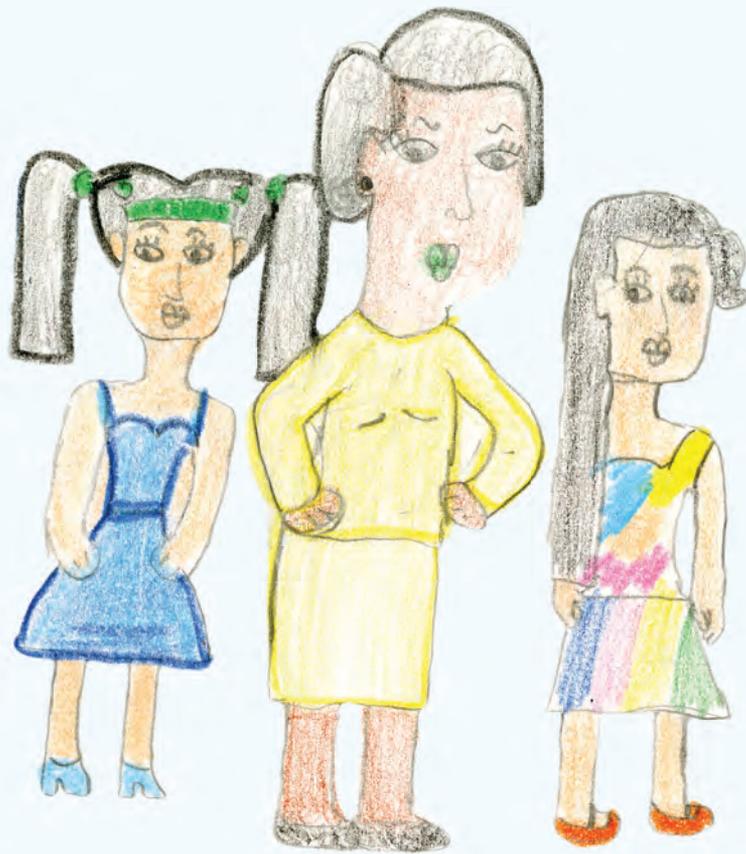
Several sad stories were told. Many animals wept. The King also nearly wept, but he had to show a brave face in front of his subjects. After being quiet for a long time, he eventually broke his silence. He promised to look urgently into all the issues raised by his subjects. The King quickly glanced at me and summoned me to the front. As I went to the front, my heart was pounding. The King then told us, his subjects, that I was going to be a messenger who would pass our grievances to humans and help to map a way forward for both animals and people to live together peacefully.

I am not sure whether or not the King had sensed that I was not in my own world. He kissed me on the forehead

and wished me the best of luck in my endeavour to bring peace between animals and people.

Before I realised what was happening, I saw the door to Mrs Mvula's sacred room opening, with Mrs Mvula and my friends looking for me.

I could see that Mrs Mvula was furious, but I didn't care because I had a big mission to achieve.





Delia

Stacey Koopman

Cavelleria Primary
School
Grade 6
11

Delia is a serious and thoughtful girl, but her father treats her like a slave. Her teacher gave her a book in which she could tell her story for the world to read if something bad suddenly happened to her. But without completing the book, something bad would happen!

Chapter 1

My father always said that I had to keep my friends close, but my enemies even closer. I've been doing that since I was ten years old. I finally realised that he was my enemy. Dragging me to places I didn't know, screaming at me and calling me names that were all related to my stupidity. At that early age, for a while, I thought my second name was 'Shut up.' "Take a vacation ... go to Club Dead!" I once screamed at him.

Ms Rafa was my English teacher. Her name means happiness, which explains everything. I know that when she looks into my eyes, she sees guilt hidden under the darkness surrounding my eyes, misery in my heart, and a part of being rebellious in the roughness of my hair.

She gave me a book once, and these words are quoted from that book. I can prove my life only through this book. It shows my happiness, unhappiness, rises and falls. It was the book and nothing but the book that I had left while I was sitting in this room, surrounded by darkness. I might find myself one day, and then I'll wish I hadn't. Literally!



FIRST DRAFT

THE BOOK AND PENCIL

My father always said that I had to keep my friends close, but my ~~more~~ closer.



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Chapter 2

Pictures, my first start for a dark morning. It seems this is the only thing I'm good at. People just don't understand the point of it. I draw pictures from feelings, and that's the only thing that can reveal my happiness, unhappiness, rises and falls.

I'm odd ... I'll remember it for the rest of my life. I'm not one who always builds castles in the air. Sometimes those plans don't arrive as you expect them to. I apologise; I sound like a half-melted rubber dog therapist, just pooping out all the rubber situations you've ever seen!

Anyway, I was sitting on the floor, looking at the two guards. One's nose was so gigantic that my whole head could go in there. His name was Jonsey.

The other one was so petite. I could push his whole body in Jonsey's nose. His name was Olive. I found myself smiling for the first time here. I'll surely write all this down in the book. I just felt like experimenting with my imagination a little bit more.

Someone spoke to the two guards on their walkie-talkies and they forgot to tie me up. After a few minutes, someone made a banging noise on the door. I stood up, and opened the place where you could see a person's eyes. It was definitely a man. His eyes were strange, not similar to mine. I could see someone's collar behind his neck. I opened the door and my heart beat faster, blood streaming wildly in my bloodstream. Tears filled my eyes.

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Chapter 3

My father, my enemy, my monster, my truly worst friend, was standing in front of me. Can you believe it? The one who taught me that behind every strong man, stood an even stronger woman. He had given me the name 'Delia' because he knew who I was and was capable of becoming. He'd hold me tight in his arms and tell me the most beautiful life lessons, but look what I deserved now – a cell. "Father you look so petite. It seems like all of your slaves treated you like a pair of ripped jeans."

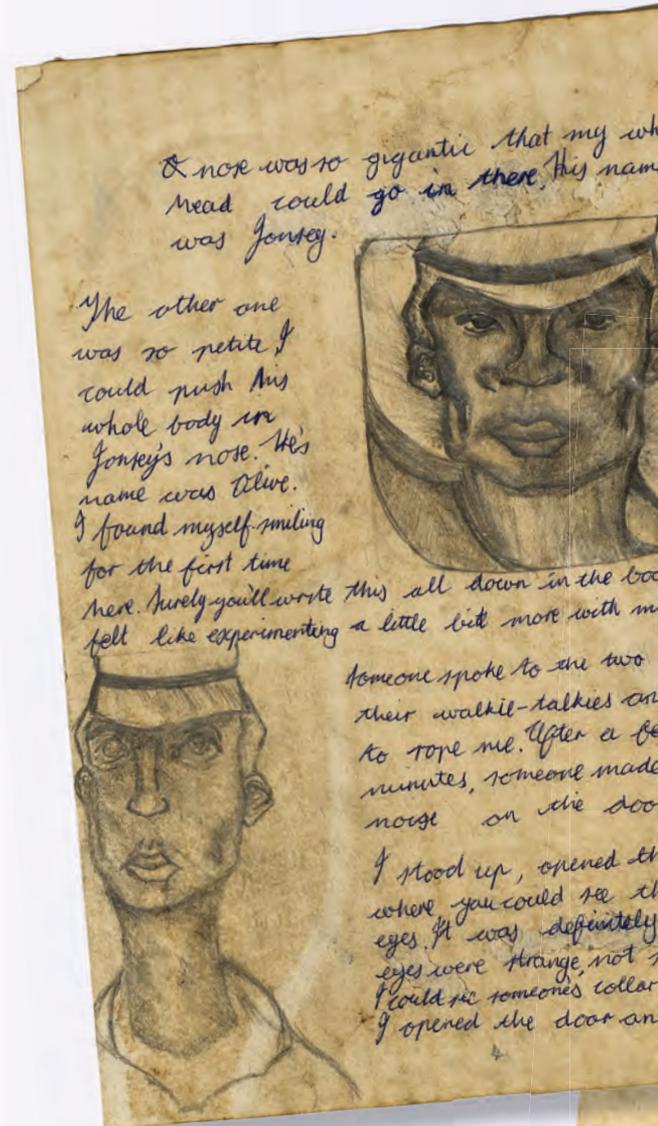
"Shut up! You'll now sign a contract that will make you stay in the darkest cell of the kingdom for the rest of your life."

"No!" Delia said, "I'll not sign the contract!"

"Then I'll sign it myself."

He then grabbed me by my right arm and led me through the dark passage where the lights were wildly flickering. We passed doors that had big, bold letters painted on them in blood. These doors were called SC, JB, KN, and DK. We came to the tenth door which was painted in an emerald green.

The guards opened the door and pushed me onto a chair, and chained my hands. What kind of father would do that to his daughter? He was a murderer, but he didn't care. It wasn't the way he killed the people that got me afraid, but how many people he had killed.



& nose was so gigantic that my whole head could go in there. His name was Jonsey.

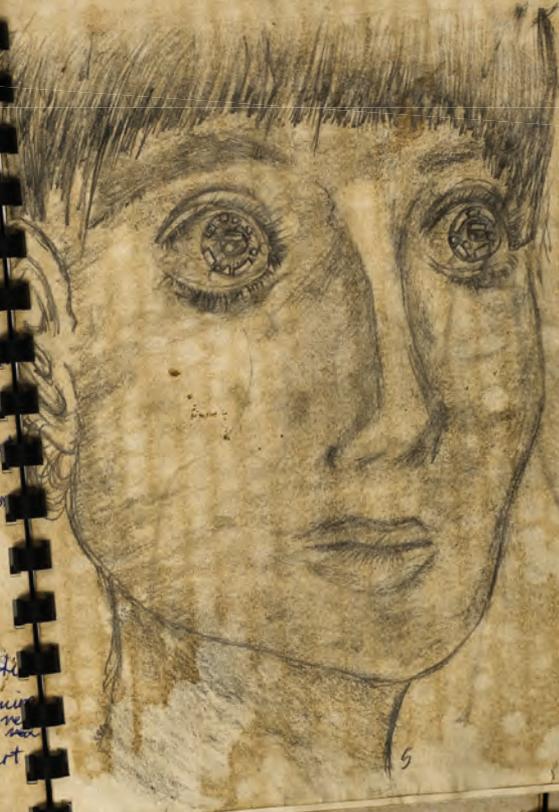
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Chapter 3

father, my enemy, the monster, my
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of me. Can you believe it?
The man who taught me that
and every strong man, stood an
stronger woman. He gave me
the name 'Delia' because he knew
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his arms and told me the most
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in which you'll stay in the darkest cell of the kingdom for the rest of your life." "No!", I said, "I'll not sign the contract!" "When I'll sign it myself."

He then ~~grog~~ grabbed me by my right arm and led me through the dark passage where the lights were wildly flicking. We passed doors that had bold, big letters painted on them, with blood. These doors were called H, SC, JB, KN, SC and DK. We came to the tenth door which was painted in an emerald green.

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7

Chapter 4

My father chained me. That was the worst thing he would do to someone he knew. He treated me like a wild bulldog. I couldn't see what was where, for ~~the~~ the cell was darker than the one before, and there was only light in the centre of the ceiling.

Someone was



at the door, who had the strangest knocking and long shoes that made a sound like a pair of heels. Olive appeared in front of me and came towards me, and held my

8



Chapter 4

My father chained me. That was the worst thing he would do to someone he knew. He treated me like a wild bulldog. I couldn't see what was where, for the cell was darker than the one before, and there was only light in the centre of the ceiling.

Someone, who had the strangest knock and wore long shoes that made a sound like a pair of heels, was at the door. Olive appeared in front of me and came towards me. He held my book in his dirty hands, like you'd ask someone for a piece of something, begging. "Hi, Delia! You forgot your book in the last cell. I picked it up and now I'm giving it to you. Your time is limited."

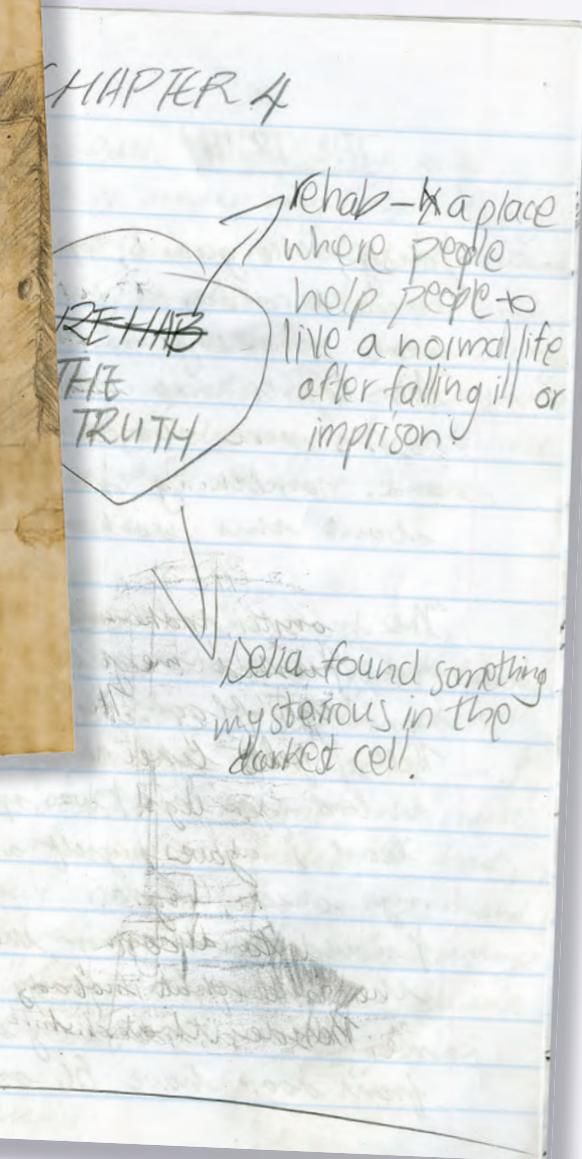
"What?" Delia said.

"I mean your room is limited." Olive was about to leave.

"Why are you acting so strange? Did I do something or did you read the book?" Delia enquired.

"It's about time that you should know that your words in the book describe your life and other people, but what about yourself? What's wrong with you? You are unhappy and guilty. Read the book again . . . you might find yourself one day! Literally."

The door closed with a bang. My heart was beating so quickly that it should have jumped through my chest and rather killed me. If I had to choose between death and living, death would be my option. I'll read my book again



and make sure that they don't live in my eyes. I'll rather kill and escape to where luck's waiting.

Chapter 5

I just heard this morning that my father went to war. War in the eighteenth century could be very dangerous, especially using gunpowder. People had to escape from their hometowns and some were even killed, while wanting to escape. That's what I'm going to do: be an escapee for the day!

I've read my book over and over again and Olive was right. I am the most careless person in the palace, me, Delia Delenastro. I've been trying to escape from the strong chains all night and finally I did and took a huge log to make a hole in the door.

I was so busy trying to escape that I almost forgot my book, so I went back into the cell to fetch it, but then something unbelievable happened. A vision came into my head that my mother was still alive and was somewhere inside the cell. I was calm, my eyeballs glued to the book and soldiers behind me, staring at the beautiful statue appearing in the centre of the cell. The book wasn't complete and I knew that, for me, it would only be sitting in a darker cell, and thinking of other people but not myself.

The statue was Sheila Delenastro. My mother chained and with bruises around her eyes.

If only I were twelve again, being treated like a fool and making jokes at the two guards ...

I'm wearing white, knowing that I should belong here, with happiness, while my mother's standing beside me, singing songs at the right hand of our father, God Delenastro, at his funeral. "This is the best day of my ..."

"Act like Delia, Lee-Anne. Cut, cut, cut!" I know I'm not good at acting, but I have to pay for my unhappiness, happiness, rises and falls. I mean my rent.

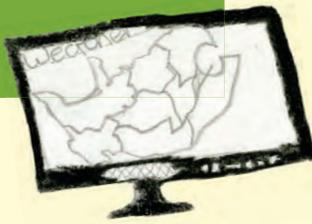
I've done what I had to, but this isn't the end of my happy journey to happiness. Only by a press of a button can I make sure that he never returns, not in the future of my mother, and, if he does, revenge is coming his way! The focus is on the magic button, now.



The strange weather report

Chad Abels

Bellville South
Primary School
Grade 6
Age 12



Who would have thought that a weather report would change our lives and town?

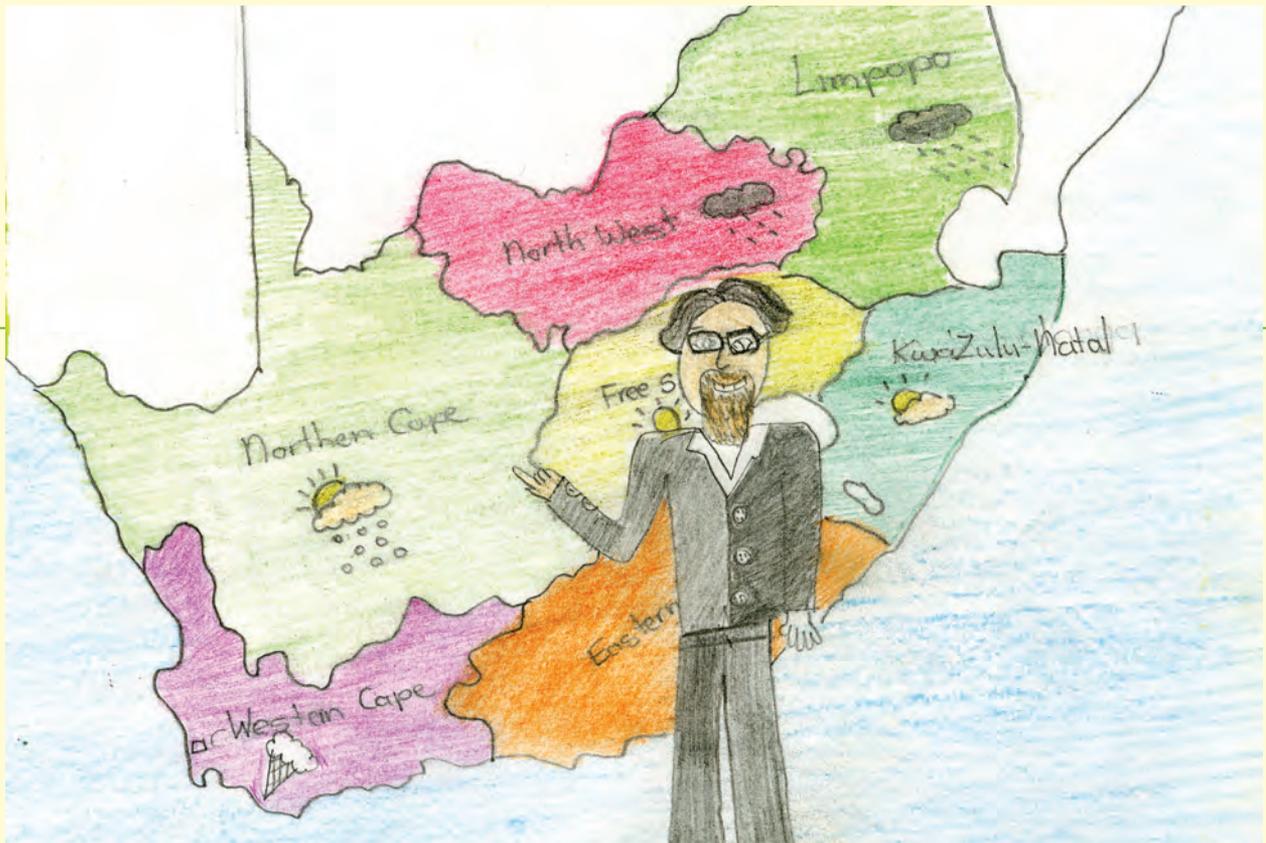
Chapter 1 – Watching television

While I was watching my favourite television programme, my mother was chopping onions and making mouth-watering food for supper. After we had eaten our delicious food, I switched channels and watched the weather report. It was a strange weather report.

Chapter 2 – The weather report

The bearded weatherman, whose beard looked like white clouds in the blue sky, said that it would snow the next day. We had to put on warm clothes because it would be freezing. I saw that there was a delicious ice cream cone instead of a snowflake on the screen.





Chapter 3 – Magical weather

The next morning, when I woke up, it was freezing cold. The first thing I did was to look through the window. "Wow!" I shouted. "The weatherman was wrong!" The warm sun was shining, but it was very cold.

I got ready for school, ate my breakfast and put the garbage bin outside. I saw our neighbour's cat eating ice cream from the ground. "Gross!" I shouted, and the cat ran off very fast in the direction of the iron gate. "Why was this cat eating ice cream from the ground?" I thought. Then I saw the whole town was covered in all kinds of coloured ice cream, with cherries on top of each house. The clouds were made of soft white cotton and it was raining Safari

raisins. "Yippee!" the children exclaimed. Everyone was delighted and happy, but suddenly the fairy tale ended.

Chapter 4 – What fairy tale ended?

There was a strong wind. The children panicked and ran into their houses to protect themselves from the strong wind. I saw a twisting tornado. It was made of spaghetti and meatballs, just like in the movies I had watched on television. The adults laughed because they thought it was funny. Then a child shouted, "A witch!" The people asked where this witch was. "I saw her at the library, running away," the scared child answered.



"We better run and catch her!" everyone shouted, very bewildered. They ran through the town to catch her. Then I saw the ugly witch running into a game shop. The policeman caught her there. She had put a spell on the weather. The weather should not be like this. She was very angry and ran away. The owner of the shop caught her and they both fell onto the road. Everyone tried to talk to her.

Then suddenly, there was a bright light shining, but it faded away and everything was normal again. The ice cream snow melted and the clouds looked the same as they usually look, every day when we look into the bright blue sky. Everyone was delighted, except the ugly witch. The witch made peace with everyone in town.

Chapter 5 – The normal town

The witch turned into a beautiful young lady with a pretty smile. Everyone in the town sang and danced, and the children played happily in the warm sun. The next day, everything returned to normal. The workers went to work, the children went to school and the grannies baked bread and cakes and even knitted jackets for their grandsons.

Chapter 6 – Another weather report

While I was watching television, the weatherman was reading the weather report. "It is going to be sunny in Cape Town, and raining Safari raisins in Kimberley," he laughed.

"Is it going to rain raisins in Kimberley?" I asked my mother.

"No my dear," she answered, with a smile.





**Stephanie
Petersen**

Helderkruid Primary
School
Grade 6
Age 11



Kim is an ordinary girl, but like all children, she hates reading. She goes to the school library to do research for a book report. While in the library, she hears strange things and thinks the library is haunted. Kim investigates and finds out the library is ...

A shadow behind me

One day I walked over to the school library to do some research on animals for a book report. I asked the school librarian, "Excuse me, do you know where I could find a book on animals?"

She replied, "Sure, follow me." We walked into a creepy, dark room. It had wall-to-wall shelves, stacked with books. "Call me when you need help," she said and left.

Not long after she had left, I got the feeling that someone was watching me. I looked up from the books, but no one was in sight. Suddenly, I heard a squeaking sound, followed by what sounded like glass shattering on the ground. I jumped up and went to the next room, but still could not shake the feeling that someone or something was watching me. I heard a strange sound, but no one else seemed to be bothered by it.

I was so interested in the books that I did not notice that everybody had already left ... it was just the librarian and me. As I was about to leave, I looked at her and shivers ran down my spine. She was floating above the floor ... with no legs, no feet! "What are you still doing here, girl?" she asked. I was so scared that I could not open my mouth.

TOPIC: THE HAUNTED LIBRARY

TITLE:

A SHADOW
BEHIND ME



WRITTEN BY:
STEPHANIE PETERSEN



Shadows appeared from nowhere and started walking towards me. As they approached me, they repeated the same word over and over again: "Read, read, read". I was 'forced' to sit down again. The librarian came to sit opposite me and said, "Don't be afraid, little girl. I am a friendly ghost and won't do any harm to you. These are all my friends. A wicked witch turned us into ghosts because she did not like reading. She wanted us to scare all the children away from the library. She did not want children to read and learn new things. Her spell can only be broken if we can convince learners to use the library regularly, and for that we need your help." I agreed to help them and left.

I told my friends about what had happened at the library, but they did not believe me. I started to organise fun activities at the library to attract more learners: dance classes, storytelling and colouring-in competitions. Children started to enjoy visits to the library, and for every visit they got a sticker. If they got twenty stickers in a month, they won a prize.

After every twenty visits, one ghost was set free and become alive again but stayed in hiding. Six months after my encounter with the ghosts, they were all back in the land of the living.

We arranged a function at the library and they all made their reappearance there. People were shocked and asked questions, such as: "Where were you all these years?" and "What happened to you?" It came to light that hundreds of young booklovers had disappeared on their visit to the library years ago. They told the people about their experiences as ghosts, when they were haunting the library. I was the hero in the community because not only had I freed the ghosts, but I also got learners interested in visiting the library.





The awakening of Sleeping Beauty

Lawin de Jager

Delft Primary School
Grade 6
Age 12

A thousand years ago a beautiful princess was born. Her parents, King Stephan and Queen Audrey, named her Jenique. She grew up to be a royal young lady. She thought that she lived the life of any other royal teen. However, it was anything but that. Just before her 21st birthday she discovered that her father, King Stephan, had an evil, wicked enemy who was out to destroy his daughter.



The King and Queen celebrated Jenique's 21st birthday in their big palace. Every royal person was invited. Before the clock struck midnight, a cloud of smoke appeared in the middle of the dance floor.

Everyone was gasping for air, wondering what it could be. King Stephan ordered one of the guards to check it. The guard leaned into the cloud of smoke and suddenly a powerful gust of wind sent him flying through the air.

While the guard was flying through the air, evil laughter came from the midst of the smoke.



A hideous, evil, wicked witch appeared, pointing her wand towards Princess Jenique, wanting to kill her. One of the guards came from behind to slit her throat with his sword. Melting down to the floor, with the little breath she had, she put a spell on the princess (or so they thought). The princess fell to the floor.

Years and generations passed.

From a deep sleep, Princess Jenique awoke to find a guy leaning over her. "Was this her Prince charming? Could it be?" she wondered, and then sat up straight. "Where am I?" she asked.

"Prince Charming, is that you?" she asked. The three pale-looking students couldn't get out a single word, and just stared at Princess Jenique.

Out of frustration and fear she started screaming out loud, bringing the students back to earth. The student, who had kissed her, placed his hand over her mouth and tried to calm her down. "We won't hurt you. We'll tell you everything you need to know. Just stop screaming," he pleaded.

Carefully, he removed his hand from her mouth and placed a string of hair behind her ear, before introducing himself and his friends, "I am Chad and these are my friends, Julian and Colsando." He then explained, "Don't freak out okay, but you're the last person to tell the tale."

"But I don't understand. Where am I? Where're my parents? Chad, do you mind helping me out?" she asked.

She lifted her ballroom gown so that she could get out of the glass bed she had been sleeping in. She missed a step and, in a blink of an eye, she found Chad catching her, and her in his arms.

park

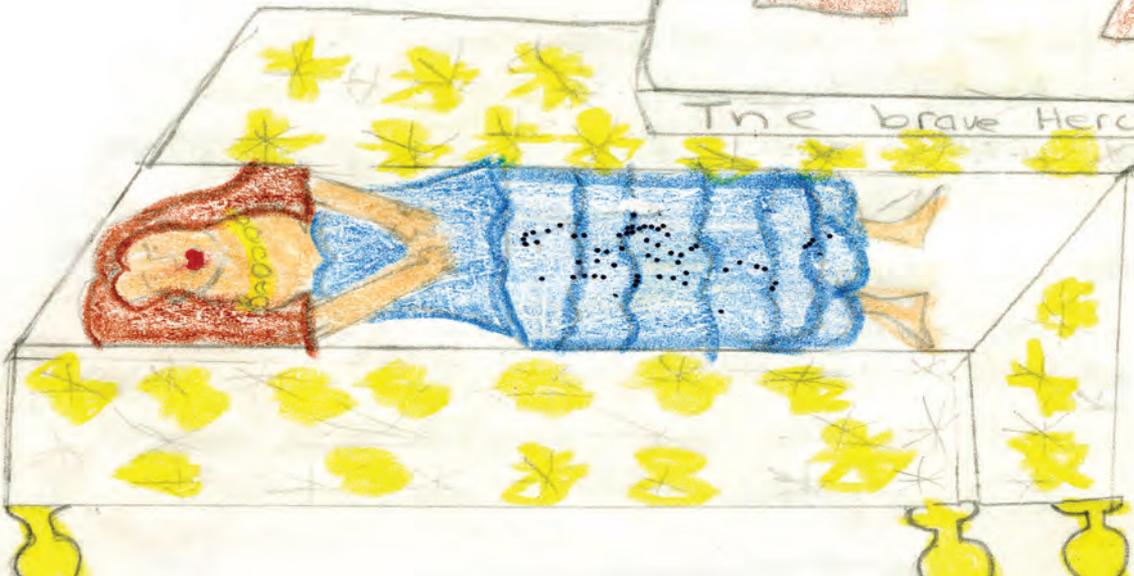




The Giant Atlas



The brave Hercules



"I want to go home. I don't understand what's going on," she cried out, very confused.

"I'll explain everything, but we have to get out of here before anyone sees you," he said.

After exiting the building, they went to a nearby park.

"Okay, I'll start from the beginning. You had your 21st birthday a thousand years ago. At your birthday celebration, an evil witch cursed you. You've been asleep ever since. It is believed that only a prince's true love kiss can awaken you.

"If this happened a thousand years ago, how do you know all these things? Princess Jenique asked.

"Well, today my history teacher took our class to the museum. The outing to the museum was for a history test and that is where I learned all about you. You were kind of part of my history test. You have been asleep in the museum for a thousand years," he explained.

A bit heartbroken, she finally understood, but there was nothing else she could do about it. For some reason, she felt safe in his presence.

They spent hours together. He taught her everything she needed to know about modern times, like motorcars, cycling, cell phones and electricity.

In the hours they spent together, they developed feelings



for each other. He took her hand and put it in his and they walked from where they were sitting to get some ice cream. While crossing the road, he reached for his cell phone, but it slipped through his fingers and landed in the middle of the road. He took the princess to the other side of the road.

“Wait here, I’ll get my phone quickly. I will be back now. Don’t go anywhere,” he said.

He went to where his phone was in the middle of the road, bent down and suddenly felt the ground shaking.

“Chad! Look out!” Princess Jenique shouted. Before he knew it, a truck was coming his way at high speed. The only thing left of Chad was his shoe.

Princess Jenique awoke, breathing deeply and heavily. She saw her parents beside her and, across the floor, she saw the hideous, evil, wicked witch in a pool of blood where the guard had slit her throat.

"Where's Chad Is he okay? The truck ...?" she asked.

"Sweetheart, calm down. Everything's okay. You were only dreaming. The witch was about to put a spell on you, but one of our brave guards slit her throat before she could. You saw him slitting her throat and that is why you fainted," her mother explained.

The rest of the guards took away the body of the witch, and everyone continued celebrating Princess Jenique's 21st birthday party.

King Stephan and Queen Audrey called Princess Jenique, to introduce her to the prince she was supposed to marry, according to the royal law of arranged marriages. "Prince Charming, would you bless us with your presence?" King Stephan requested.

"Good evening, Your Highness," Prince Charming said.

Princess Jenique turned around and thought she recognised Chad's voice. To her surprise, she saw that it was Chad. He took Princess Jenique's hand and kissed it.

"I am Chad Charming," he said. "It's so nice to meet you."



An amazing discovery

Jaydee Charles

Dagbreek Primary
School
Grade 6
Age 11

My story tells of an 11-year-old girl who has dreams of her own. She has a loving family and lives in a loving neighbourhood. She finds a magic button and suddenly her life, and the life of others close to her, changes.



There is a chilling breeze blowing through our neighbourhood. Winter is fast approaching. My Grandma used to say that when the joints in her legs start to pain, heavy storms are coming our way and that we must prepare hot meals of soup, pumpkin fritters and bean curry, as these are winter foods. She is the person who keeps our family together. We have a small house in a very busy neighbourhood. My two older sisters, my mother and father and I share a three-bedroomed house. It is neither too big, nor too small. Our house is comfortable and one might describe it as the best house on the street. We live an average lifestyle, and spend cold winter evenings in our warm kitchen, discussing our dreams.

My dream is to have a little more than we now have: a bigger house, a better car and enough money for my sisters and I to study at the university. I also dream of having a better neighbourhood that is both safe and has caring neighbours. And I dream of meeting Justin Bieber. I dream of a day that he – at the touch of a button ... a magic button – comes down our road, looking specifically for me.

Our house is at the end of the street. From my window I can see all the fun and games and hear all the gossip

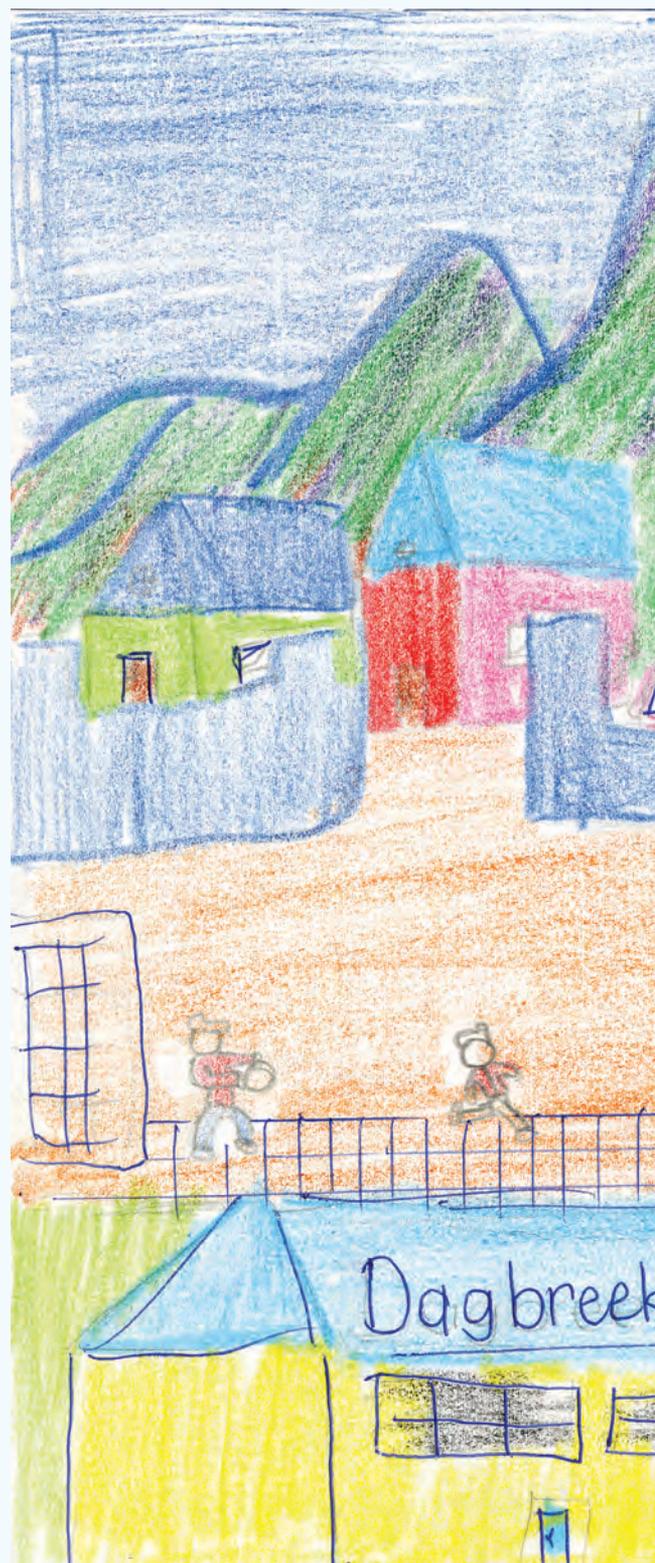


from the unemployed mothers and daughters, as well the young men who are too lazy to find jobs. Although the people in our community are not violent, it still feels unsafe for us children to play in the parks and playing fields, as there are too many strangers roaming through our neighbourhood. The neighbours in our street are quite loud. They sleep during the day and are wide-awake at night.

Although there are not many break-ins or much theft in our area, the death of young men, women and children is ever increasing. Little children grow up without fathers because these fathers have chosen a life of gangsterism, crime and drugs. Sometimes I sit and contemplate my choices in life, and wish that I could rewind my actions and choices by the push of a magic button. Most of my friends come from broken homes.

We are always in discussion about what life would be like if we all had a loving family with our mothers and fathers both loving us equally. I, of course, am very lucky to have this, but sometimes wish I could do more for my friends to change their circumstances. My parents are very special in my life. They are both very loving and understanding, although my father is very strict. My mom works for an Australian company, while my dad works for Plasform. I always wish that one day their lives would improve because they are hardworking and deserve better.

We have a beautiful garden. It is my father's pride and joy. One morning I took a stroll through the garden. I was smelling the roses and removing snails from the leaves.









As I was bending down to pick up a momma snail, I happened to see something glowing in the hot morning sun. I thought it was my imagination. It seemed as if this fascinating glow was following me through the garden. I retraced my steps, bent down and picked up the magical object that had drawn my attention and curiosity. It was shaped like a button, and I thought it might have belonged to an exotic coat. I love beautiful things, so I thought I would add this to my treasure chest.

I was about to put the button in my pocket when it gave off a soft warm glow. Is this my imagination? Am I dreaming? No! I was not. The button became brighter and brighter and hotter and hotter. I wrapped it in my handkerchief and ran to my parents to show them. Both my mom and dad said that it was a piece of junk and my father tossed it in the bin. When they were not looking, I took the button from the bin. I was mesmerised by it. To me, it had strange power.

Then something strange happened. My mother screamed with excitement. She had found R200 in her purse. She knew that her purse was empty, because she had told us to eat sparingly, since it was still 10 days before payday. We could not believe our eyes.

That morning, we went shopping for groceries at the supermarket. We could each choose our own breakfast cereal and a chocolate. My mother and father were so grateful that they were able to share some of the food with the neighbours, as everyone was waiting for payday. What happened next was unbelievable. We heard on the telly

that Justin Bieber was going to perform at the Cape Town Stadium. I screamed with excitement.

What I had forgotten was that I had entered a competition where you could win tickets to your favourite singer and songwriter's concert. Things were happening so fast. The next minute, I heard my name on the MTV channel and the announcer said that I had won tickets to see Justin Bieber. I was on cloud nine. My body was shaking. My mom had to give me sugar water because she thought I was going into shock. I was paralysed with excitement. I called my best friend and told her that she was invited to see the Justin Bieber concert with me in May.

It was then that I wondered, clutching the button, whether this 'magical' discovery maybe knew my dreams, wants and needs. But I also asked the question, "Was it the power of this button that made my dream come true, or was it my Faith and Hope that one must not give up on one's dreams?"

From that day on, life became beautiful for my family, my friends and me. Despite all our challenges and disappointments, we must enjoy life to the fullest, as the best things in life are free.







1 000 years ever after

Fathiyah Aziz

Strand Moslem
Primary School
Grade 6
Age 11

The seven dwarves from the movie/fairy tale *Snow White* invent a time machine because the princesses are tired of telling the same adventure over and over again, and want to experience a different, exciting adventure. Giselle from the movie/fairy tale *Enchanted* decides to use the time machine to go to the future because only one person can go, and she already has experience of going to another world. She thinks she can cope with the people in the future, and what they do.

Chapter 1 – Surprise

It was another magical day in fairyland and all the princesses were bored of telling the children their adventures.

Princess Snow White was tired of telling her fairy tale of the seven dwarves.

Princess Sleeping Beauty was tired of the true love kiss.

Rapunzel was tired of her long hair.

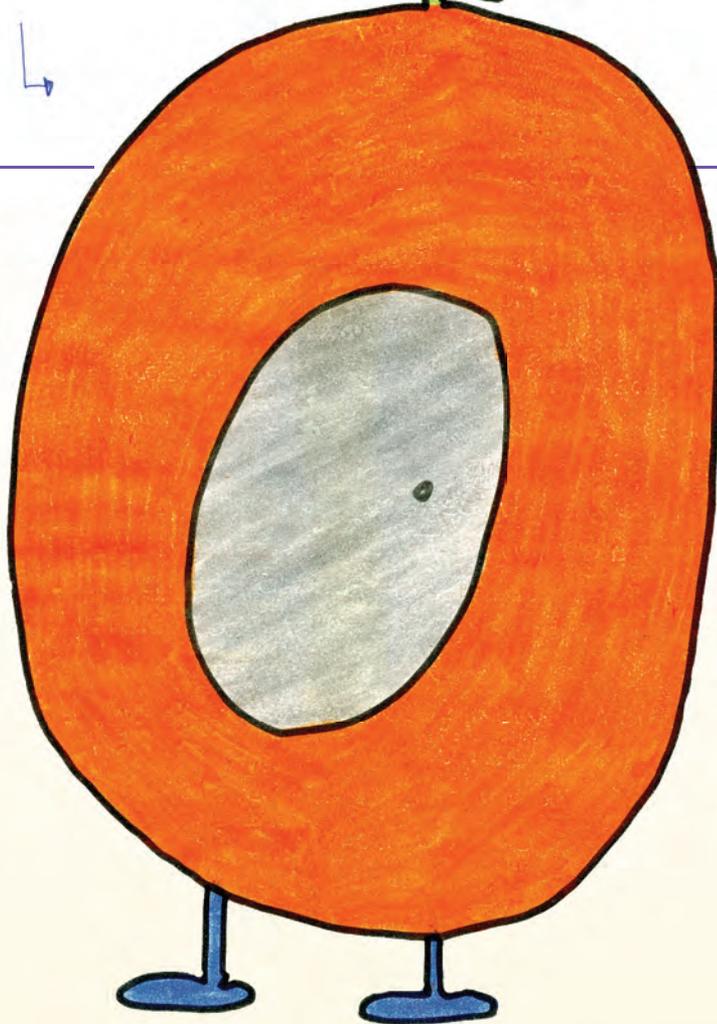
Giselle was tired of her 'becoming real' adventure, and many more princesses were all bored as well!

"Hi," said Grumpy laughing and smiling for the first time. "If you ladies are so bored, come with me. My brothers and I have been working on something for a long time that I think you will be interested in!"

They finally arrived at the dwarves' home. Grumpy took his key out, opened the door and in they all went. As soon as the other six brothers heard the door close, they jumped up and shouted, "Surprise!" The princesses didn't know what to say until they turned around and saw it. They

Time
Machine :

fan to take
them up



could not believe their eyes ... they had never seen anything like it!

"This is a time machine. You can go to the past or the future!" said Sleepy with a yawn. "But ... but princesses, don't get too excited because only one of you can go and

you can only go to one place and come back. For example, if you decide to go to China you must choose:

- Future/Past?
- Which Princess?

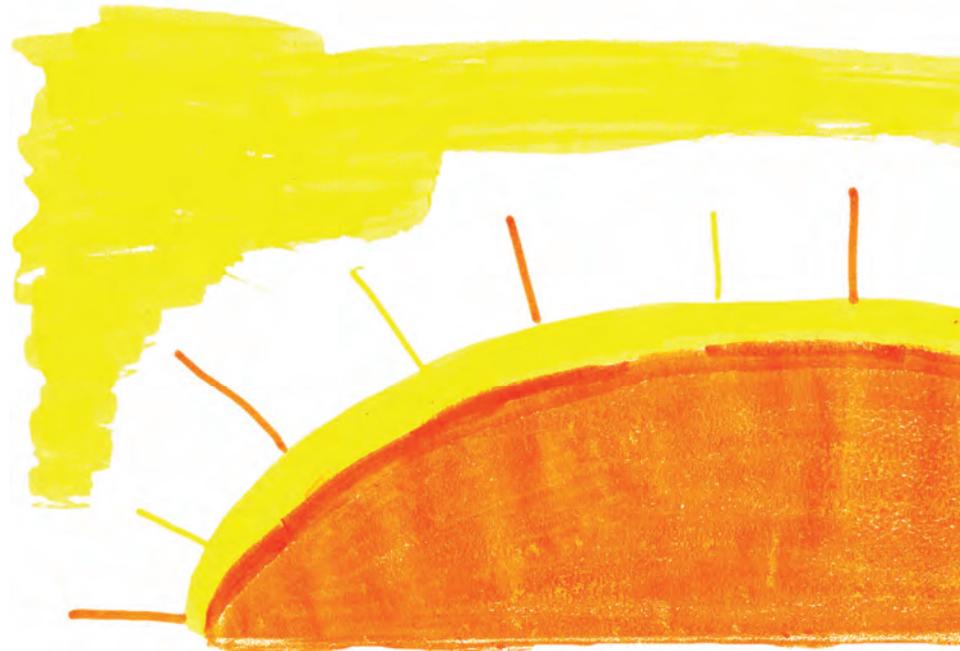
Then you must come back home. And remember, only one princess can go.”

Chapter 2 – What?

“So you are saying you designed it just for one trip and one seat for one princess? asked Giselle.

“Yes,” replied Happy, “because if it goes to two places, you will be stuck in whichever place you wanted to go!”

“Okay everyone, I have decided that I would like to go,” said Giselle with a smile.



“Yes, yes, yes!” said all the princesses, because Giselle had already experienced going to another world!

“Okay, princesses, first thing in the morning, you should come to our house so you can go!” said Happy. Everyone was so excited and just couldn’t wait for sunrise.

Chapter 3 – Departure day

It was early morning and Giselle got into the time machine! It looked like a car, but had lots of colourful buttons inside. “Enter the destination, Your Majesty, and press the green button,” said Nosy. “The green button means go to whichever place.” They all said their goodbyes – even Bashful gave a little wave – and off Giselle went.

The first thing Giselle did was press the green button:

- Destination > South Africa
- Future/Past > Future





The time machine went higher and higher, and disappeared in the blink of an eye. "I hope she enjoys herself," said Sneezzy with a sneeze. "We will see her in a few weeks' time. Let's just hope for the best."

Chapter 4 – Let the adventure begin

Giselle did not know what to do until she landed in South Africa. Firstly, she asked around to find out where she could see the most amazing sights in South Africa. Some people gave her a few ideas, like:

- Table Mountain
- The Kruger National Park
- Robben Island
- The white sandy beaches in Cape Town
- Museums

Giselle just couldn't wait to go home to tell the whole of fairyland about her amazing adventure.

Chapter 5 – New things to tell

Unfortunately, it was time to go home, but Giselle was so excited to tell her friends about what a lovely time she had had. Giselle packed her things, pressed the green button and back to fairy tale land she went.

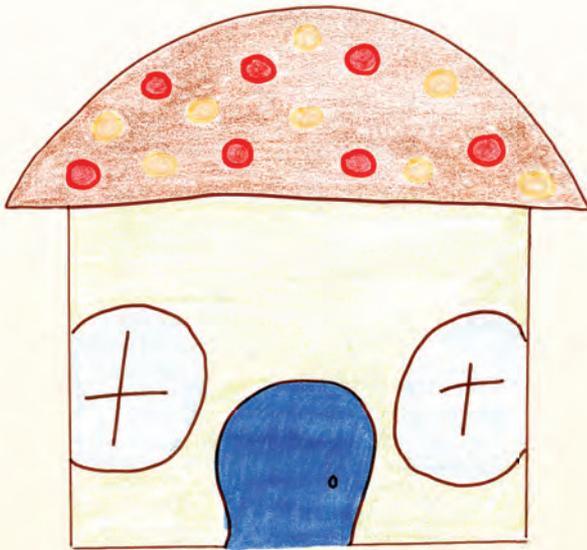
The dwarves as well as the princesses were so happy to see her. Everyone helped to get her luggage out. As soon as she could, she showed them her camera. Of course, she had to explain what it was to them! She showed everyone where she had been and the videos she had taken when she was building a sandcastle at the beach!



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Giselle then took out another square box and said, "This is a phone and you can use it to communicate with other people far away. Oh, and all of this is the latest technology." Giselle told them about all the animals she had seen at the museum and about the prison where Nelson Mandela had been kept. She also told them about Table Mountain and about many other places!

Everyone was so interested in her stories, until the dwarves said, "Don't worry, everyone. We are busy working on something, so all of us will soon go to the real world! One day soon!"





Once upon a fright

Avuyile Tsetswa

Simonsberg Primary
School
Grade 6
Age 11

Some strange things have been going on at Miley's school. She decides to tell her best friend, Heylin. At first, Heylin doesn't believe Miley. But little does she know she's in for a real scare. The two seniors take a trip to school to investigate the matter. Eventually, they actually do find something out. Unless you read the book, it'll forever be a mystery! The fun is just beginning. Beware! You're in for a scare!

There we were standing in the middle of my school library, also known as the 'Home of the Dead', filled with fear as the black shadowy figure cast a shadow over us. It felt as if my heart had jumped up to my throat. I could see the fear in Heylin's eyes as we heaved in horror. The horrid figure moved closer to us, as if preparing to attack.

What would happen next?

How did this all happen, you ask. Let me start by saying it was a normal, beautiful, not to mention, dark day outside. Dark clouds, bright green grass and us friends, just enjoying our break. As always, we were sitting on the tall flowing grass, talking, laughing or fighting over our favourite celebrities. It's kind of a girl thing. "There goes the bell. That stupid bell!" Heylin nagged as the bell ran.

"Oh stop your nagging and whining," Amanda interrupted. I told my friends to go on without me. I thought I had left my pen at our location. And that's when the horror started. I saw something staring at me, something that one could not explain, standing under one of the school's verandas. No kids in sight. NO ONE in sight. My hair stood on end. Was I perhaps dreaming? I rubbed my eyes once, twice. No I wasn't dreaming.





Of course, in class, I was thinking about what I had seen. Schoolwork made no sense to me. Every time the teacher explained it, I just didn't get it. My mind was elsewhere. I decided to tell my best friend, Heylin. I told her what I had seen, staring at me like death. I'll give you one guess what her reply was. Yep, you guessed it: "Lies." She didn't believe me, and said, "Maybe you were just paranoid because it was dark and you were alone."



That night I couldn't sleep. I was still thinking about that morning. The horror, roaming in my mind. The full moon shot through the window. My half open window sent a breeze in, allowing the curtains to sway back and forth. My mind kept asking, "Did I really see what I saw? Was Heylin right about me exaggerating?" I saw myself standing at the window, staring into the deep, cold night. It was 23:59 on a Friday night. I thought tomorrow I'd go fetch Heylin and we'd investigate at school, just to prove I wasn't going psycho.



My morning bell rang and I snoozed to 07:00. After a quick shower, I grabbed my sweats and sneakers, slipped them on and, without breakfast, I stumbled out of the house, nearly falling down the stairs. I caught sight of my bike in the driveway. I immediately made a jump for it and rushed over to Heylin's. I arrived and threw the bike into the driveway. When I pressed the doorbell, Heylin's annoying 11-year-old cousin, Precious, answered the door. "Hey Miley," she shouted. She's supposed to be precious, not annoying, you know.

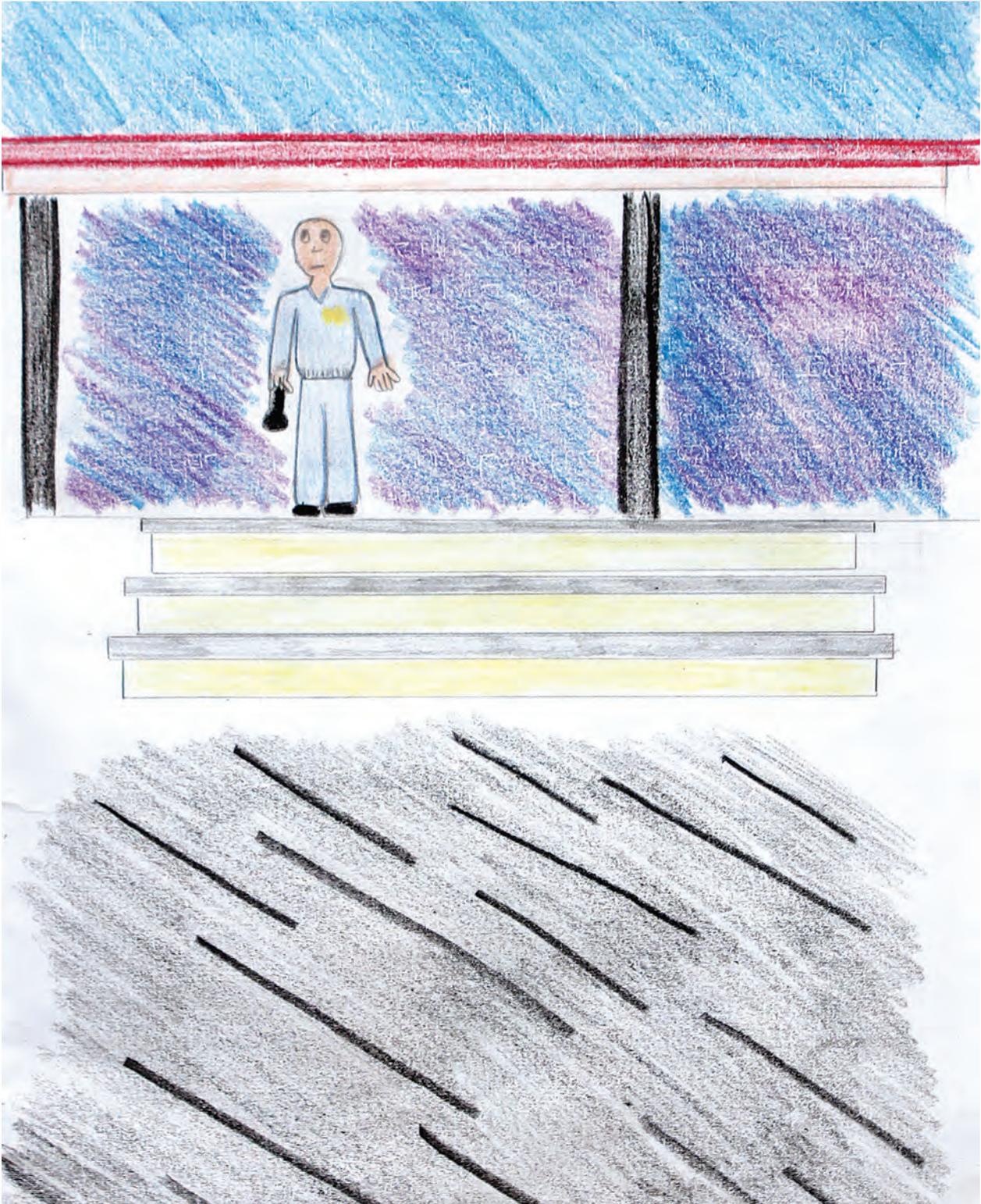
"Yeah, hey, so where's Heylin?"

Before I could even finish my sentence, Heylin burst out saying, "Let's go Miles."

"Bye nerds!" Precious added. Guess she was so annoyed by her own cousin, she didn't care we were going. That's Heylin for you.

We arrived at our school. My throat felt as if there was a wild beast on fire inside. "Let's use the back entrance," Heylin suggested. As we pulled up, we left our bikes at the bike rack near the school workshop. No one was in sight. Usually, the school security guard roams the school grounds, like a sacred guardian. "Guess it's his lunch break," we both wondered. As Heylin and I trudged towards the senior passage, something caught our eye. Something no one could explain.

"It's that thing I told you about Heylin! That's it!" The shadowy figure took a step closer into the sun. My eyes



widened. I was a few seconds away from passing out. But something calmed me down. "Don't be paranoid Miley! You're hesitating. It's just the security guard. Now hide!" I remembered that we had to move in the shadows. Heylin and I made a jump for the passage that led to the library. We saw the security guard enter the same passage. Why were all the doors open? "Come on!" Heylin mumbled. "Into the library! Quick!" We nearly tripped over each other, but who has time for that? "Hurry up, Miley!"



After a few minutes of silence, a few minutes of darkness, I managed to find a light switch and flicked it on. We studied the library. Dust everywhere, of course. Who uses a library? It's the 21st century! As we took a step, the wooden floor creaked and cracked. I gazed down at it. "Miley, check this out," Heylin stuttered. "It looks like one of those circles thingies that unleash ..."



"That unleash what?" I added. "Heylin?" I turned to find Heylin backing up towards me, stunned in fear. Her mouth swung wide open, her eyes bulged. That's when the light's flicked out. Heylin and I heaved in horror.

"I believe you Miley! I do! I really do! Just ... just make this stop! Please!" I could see how frightened Heylin was but what could I do?

"How?" I asked in a shrill voice. I knew I would be scarred for life.

Don't worry. The fun was just beginning.



The magic button

Tiffany de Bruyn

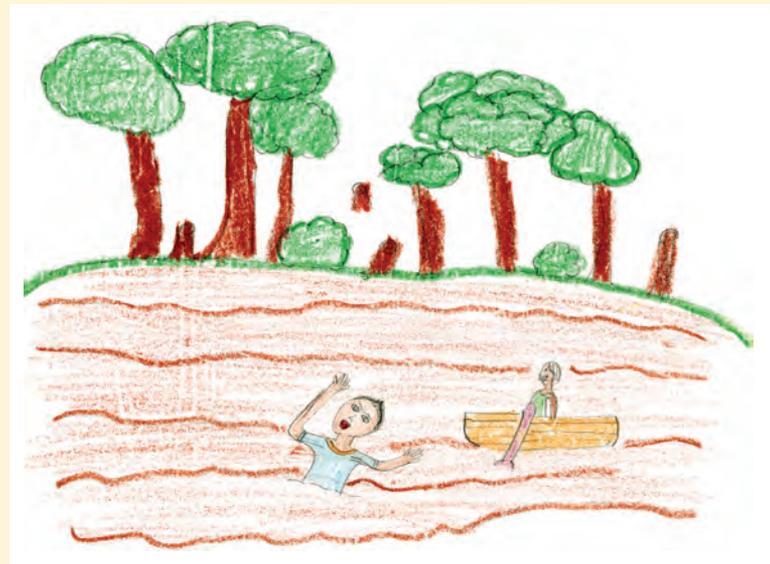
Bellville South
Primary School
Grade 6
Age 11

In a chocolate world,
Mike has lots of
adventures, and there's
a mystery magic button.
Everything caused by an
afternoon nap.

Chapter 1 – A chocolate world

One sunny afternoon Mike took a nap after he was done with his homework. He had a dream. He dreamt that he was in a world made of chocolate. While walking, he saw a boat made of vanilla ice cream. He kept rowing the boat until he got to a man who was drowning in the chocolate river.

Mike jumped out of the boat and swam to save the man from drowning in the river. Mike asked the man to help him get out of there. The man replied that he must look for a magic button and it would help him to get home.





Chapter 2 – Mike met a girl and a boy

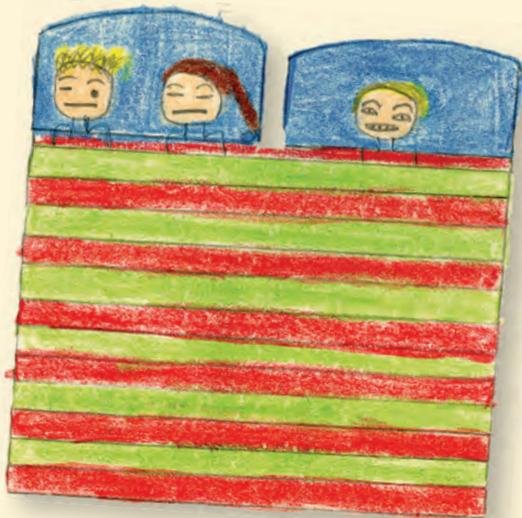
Mike rowed until he met a girl and a boy. Their names were Carisma and Austin. Carisma and Austin were brother and sister. They told Mike that there was a fire on the mountain. They ran as fast as they could to extinguish the fire. They succeeded after a lengthy struggle. As a reward for their bravery, motorbikes were given to them to get home.

They rode until they got to a hotel made of cheese. Upon entering the cheesy hotel, they saw a lady reading a newspaper. Carisma asked the receptionist if there was a spare room for the three of them, but she only had R10. The woman replied, "My child, it is okay. You can stay here as long as you want to." Carisma thanked her and the three of them walked up the stairs to their room. At the back of Mike's mind was still the nagging thought about the magic button that he must find to get home.

Chapter 3 – The uncomfortable room

When they entered the room, they noticed that the lamp was broken and that there was no bed to sleep on. There was only a blanket and two pillows.

They had to share the bedding. Because of the busy day, they fell asleep, except Mike. Mike heard a strange sound. He got up and looked through the window. He saw an old man trying to tell him something, but he didn't understand what. Mike woke up Carisma and Austin.



Chapter 4 – The dark field

They went downstairs and walked in the direction of a dark field. They walked very fast. They felt there was something strange about the field. Their neck hairs were rising. They heard animals running around, but they still followed the old man. They arrived at a tree where an owl was hanging



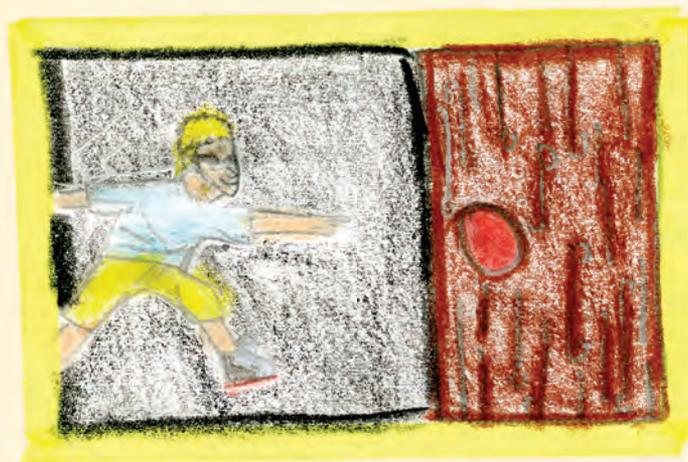


from a branch. "Hoo hoo! Hoo hoo!" They were scared and clung to each other.

In the middle of nowhere a door with a button on it appeared, but there were no walls around it. The old man disappeared into the dark mist of candyfloss.

Chapter 5 – The magic button

Mike told Carisma and Austin that it might be the button that he had to press to get home to his family. Like a bullet, Mike ran to the door and pushed the button. His excitement woke him up. He was so relieved when he noticed the familiar surroundings from his bed. Short of breath, he realised it had only been a dream.



He immediately started looking for his sister in the house, but could not find her. He looked under her bed, but she was nowhere to be found.

It was only when he called out her name, and she answered from the back yard, that he became calm. Next to her the cat was lapping up the last of the chocolate milk from its bowl. When his parents arrived home from work, the first thing his mother asked him was why he had chocolate streaks in his hair ...





Love never dies

Tyra Solomons

Arcadia Primary
School
Grade 6
Age 11

When Mary-Ann and Harry met, they fell instantly in love, but when Mr Ramsbottom, Mary-Ann's father found out, he forbade Mary-Ann from ever seeing Harry again. Will their love survive? Or was their love doomed before it even started?

I was asked to write a story about the supposed haunting of our school's library. I immediately thought of Mrs Potts, our lunch lady. Mrs Potts is a 70-year-old lady who has been working at the school for so many years. She couldn't reveal much, but she did give me a name of someone who could help me with my story. The next morning I arrived at the Good Old Days retirement village, to interview Mr Tomlinson who was relaxing in the sunroom. I felt nervous, but excited. Upon seeing Mr Tomlinson,

I was shocked to see that he

looked very good for a man of 98 years old. We sat down and started talking. He told me that he used to be the caretaker of the library that once stood on the same premises where our school is built.

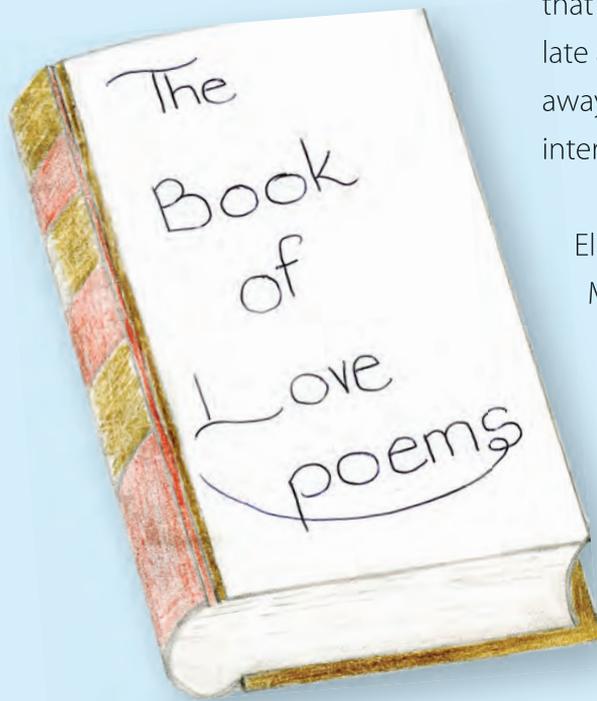
My next question to Mr Tomlinson was: "Is the library haunted?" and so begins my story ...





It all began in 1947 when Mary-Ann, the only child of Mr Ramsbottom, a rich landowner, met and fell in love with Harry Hemsworth, the local farmer's son. They would meet in secret every night at the Grand Library and every night Harry would take out a specific book and read it to Mary-Ann. It was a book of love poems. They had been seeing each other for three months when suddenly Mary-Ann's father burst through the library's door and dragged his daughter out.

Mr Ramsbottom forbade his daughter from ever seeing Harry again. She was heartbroken. Harry, thinking of a way he could get a message across to Mary-Ann, immediately thought of his best friend, Elizabeth. Elizabeth was a maid



in Mary-Ann's home. So Harry gave her a little note, saying that Mary-Ann should meet him at the stables. It was very late at night when Mary-Ann and Harry planned to run away so they could be together forever without her father's interference.

Elizabeth knew about Harry's plans to run away with Mary-Ann. She even helped him plan it. They had been best friends ever since they were children. Their parents all worked for Mr Ramsbottom.

Mary-Ann felt so sorry for her father; if she should run away, he would have no one.

Mr Ramsbottom was very protective of his only child. She reminded him so much of his late wife, Sarah. Sarah Ramsbottom had died while giving birth to Mary-Ann.

The plan was ready. They would meet at the library at midnight. When Mary-Ann arrived at the library, Harry was nowhere to be found. Maybe she was early, she thought. She waited for over an hour, but still no Harry. The time ticked by when she finally decided to leave and go back home. Mary-Ann couldn't understand why he hadn't shown up. For three weeks Mary-Ann went to the library and waited, but Harry never showed up.

One sunny morning Mary-Ann was reading the newspaper. She came across an article, with the headline: 'Body found floating in Horran River'. She turned the page to read further and there was a photo of the man's body. He was so pale, but she knew it was her beloved Harry. She folded

I was asked to write a story about the supposed haunting of our school's library. I immediately thought of Mrs. Potts, our lunch lady. Mrs Potts is a 70 year old lady who has been working at the school for 50 years. She couldn't reveal much but she did give me a name of someone who could help me with my story. The next morning I arrived at the Good Old Days retirement village and interviewed Mr Tomlinson who



Three years later....

A letter arrives, it's addressed to Mr Ramsbottom. It reads.

Dear Mr Ramsbottom.
My name is Mr Louis
Phantom and I am
the manager of
"Five Rue Du Vairé"
Hotel in Paris. Your
daughter has been
staying in this
hotel for 3 years
but she is now
ready to return
home. You can
expect her arrival
in 5 days.
Sincerely yours,
Mr Louis Phantom
Hotel Manager.

He was so excited to see his daughter. It has been too long. Mary-Ann arrived home only to be buried next to her beloved Harry. It was later revealed that Elizabeth shot Harry then dumped his body in the





the newspaper and ran to her father's study. Mary-Ann opened the door to her father's study and found him sitting behind the desk.

She threw the paper at him and screamed, "You did this! You killed him!" She ran upstairs to her bedroom. Just then Elizabeth came and told her everything would be fine. The next morning Mr Ramsbottom knocked on Mary-Anne's bedroom door, but there was no answer. He opened it and saw that her bed had not been slept in and her clothes were gone. He wanted to tell her that he had had nothing to do with the murder of Harry and that he would do everything he could to find out who had killed him.

Three years later, a letter arrived. It was addressed to Mr Ramsbottom. It read:

Dear Mr Ramsbottom,

My name is Mr Louis Phantom and I am the manager of 'Five Rue Du Voiré' Hotel in Paris. Your daughter has been staying at this hotel for three years, but she is now ready to return home. You can expect her arrival in five days.

*Sincerely yours,
Mr Louis Phantom
Hotel Manager*

Mr Ramsbottom was so excited to see his daughter. It had been too long. Mary-Ann arrived home only to be buried next to her beloved Harry. It was later revealed that Elizabeth had shot Harry and dumped his body in the river. She was found hanging in the stables with a note saying, "Please forgive me."





Shock of my life

Thimna Ntantiso

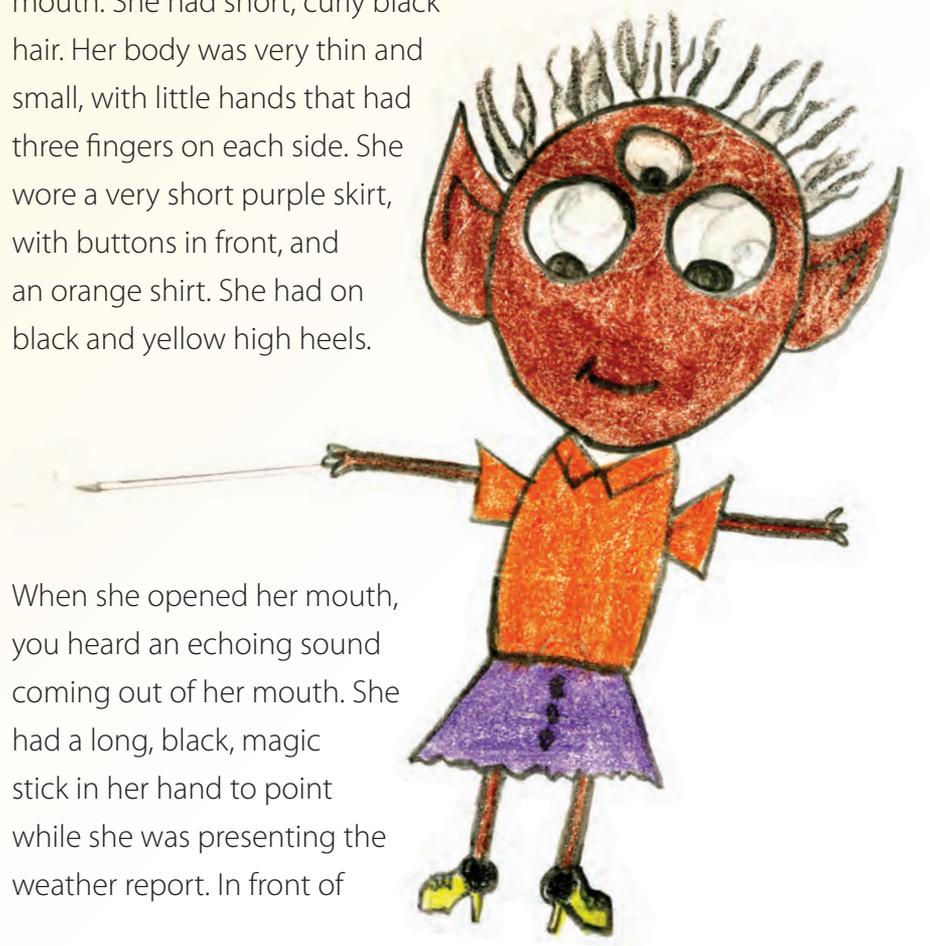
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Core Primary School
Grade 6
Age 11

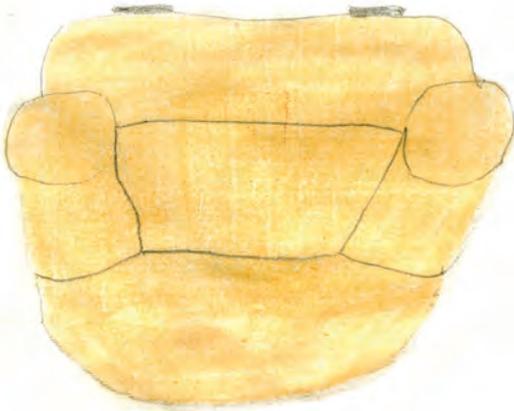
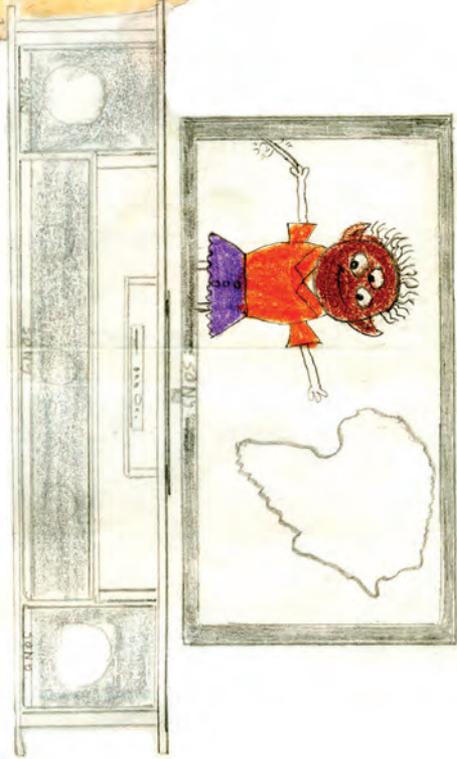
Acknowledgements

A special thank you to my English teacher, Mrs Gela Namba, who encouraged me and supported me while I was writing this story.

One day there was a very strange weather report on television. The person who was doing or presenting this weather report was a lady with a very big head, two big eyes and one small one on top of the big ones. She had two big pointed ears, like leaves of trees, and a small mouth. She had short, curly black hair. Her body was very thin and small, with little hands that had three fingers on each side. She wore a very short purple skirt, with buttons in front, and an orange shirt. She had on black and yellow high heels.

When she opened her mouth, you heard an echoing sound coming out of her mouth. She had a long, black, magic stick in her hand to point while she was presenting the weather report. In front of



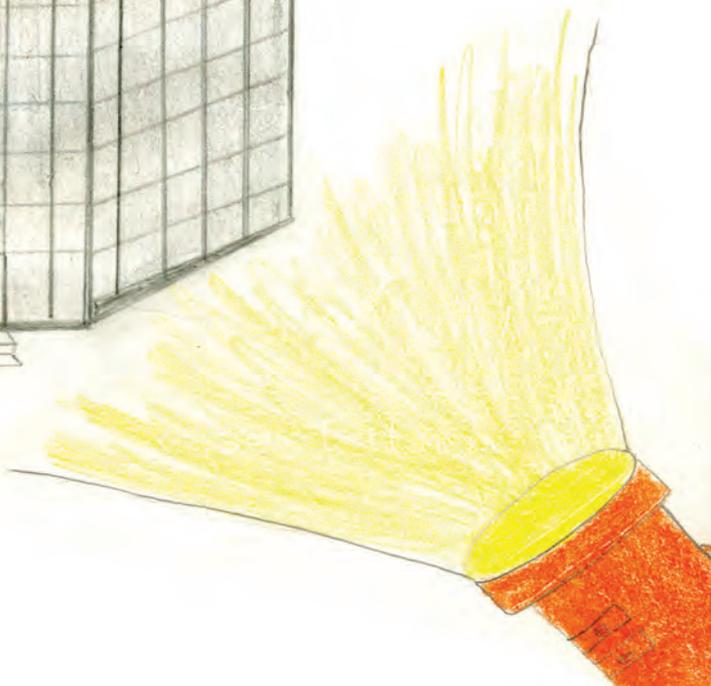
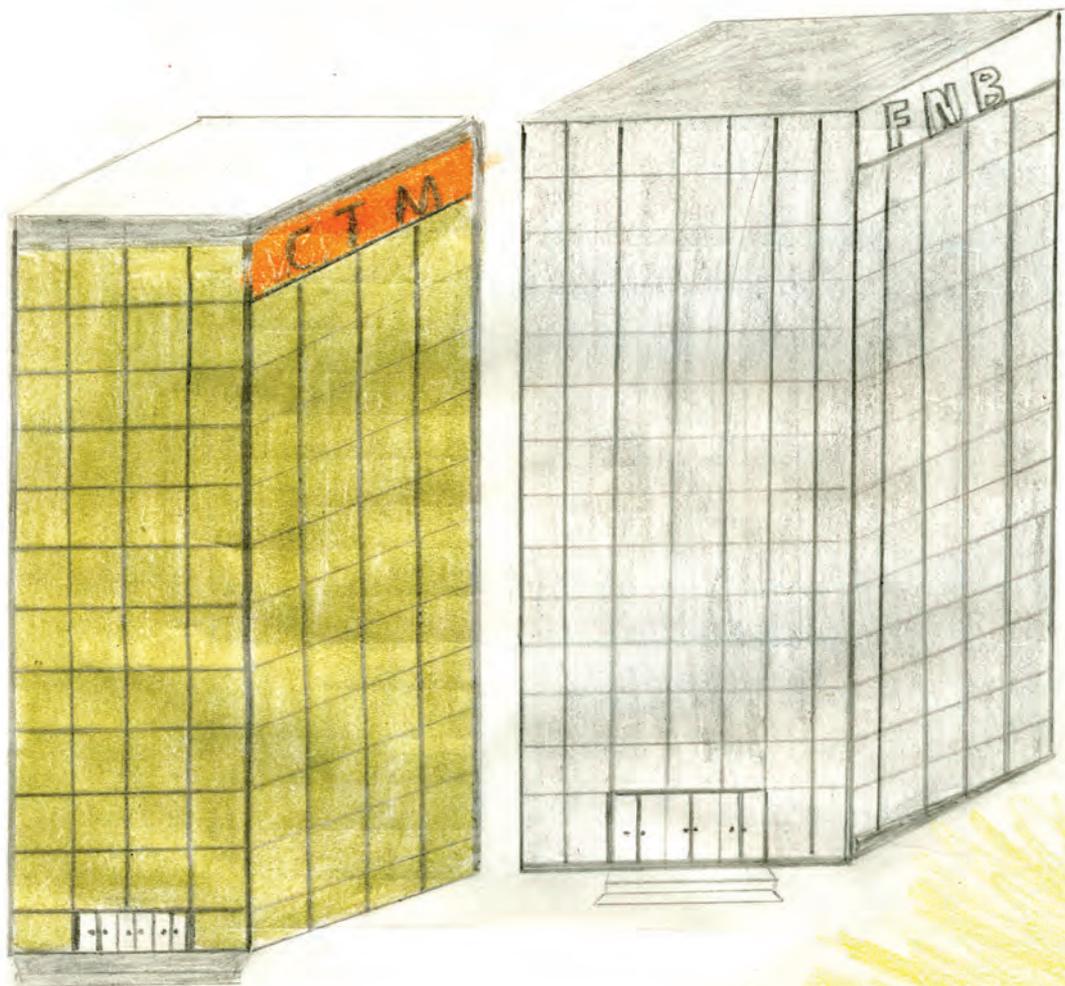


her was a big map of South Africa, but strangely enough, all the other places or provinces were very small and one could hardly see them. The Western Cape was so big and covered most of the map.

This all happened while I was watching my favourite cartoon show. I did not have the television remote control in my hand, but it just changed the programme and tuned in to the weather report for the week. I became scared and shocked, but I told myself to watch and see ... maybe this was magic, or perhaps I was dreaming. I then realised that it was real. I immediately called my mother, who was in the kitchen, to come and see what was happening on the television, because I did not want to witness this alone. My mother came and sat next to me and listened.

While we were listening and watching, I could see that my mom's eyes looked like they would come out of her head because she was so shocked. I started to come closer to my mother and I was shivering. My mom held me tight to give me assurance that she was with me, and that I need not be scared.

This lady started by saying, "Amazing weather report". She took out her black, magic stick and pointed first to the other provinces and gave a short summary of each one. She then immediately went to the Western Cape, specifically Cape Town. This was all weird to me, because the weather people do not usually concentrate one area. In my mind, I was asking so many questions and had to decide whether to sit and watch or stand up and leave. But I wanted to see the outcome, so I decided to stay and



watch. There was no conversation between my mother and I throughout this presentation.

The weather lady continued by saying, "In the world we live in there are mountains in places where there once were seas, and seas where there once was land.

In Cape Town, most of the places where there now are buildings were covered by sea that was pushed aside. One day, that sea will come back to where it belongs, as the weather now is no longer like it was before.



Tomorrow, a light will come from underground. It will cause a rise in our temperatures. It will be 60 degrees hot, and you must sit in the sun or be exposed to the sun for four hours. If you do this, you will find a diamond ring, gold earrings and a gold necklace around your body. You must not remove them, because they will energise your home, as it will be very cold with snow, rain and strong wind for the next hours after that. Ice will fall in huge grinds.

The next day there will be a hot melted rock in the sky, which will be caused by a volcano. There will be strange earthworms coming out of the earth. They will be part of us, and at 22h30 they will be telling us how they live under the ground. So switch on your television and listen to them.

The next day we will have heavy rain, but not in liquid form. The raindrops will be like yellow rice particles. Please do not use umbrellas, because they will be damaged, and will cause you to float instead of walk. During this weather,





you must cover your head with white tablecloths so that you don't get injured. When the rice drops fall on your tablecloths, they will just disappear."

The lady concluded by saying, "I love you all and enjoy the weather."

At the end of the report, I made a very long sigh and my heart was beating very fast. My mother opened the front door to see whether it was possible for this to happen. She looked at the sky, and, while she was doing that, there was noise outside. People gathered in fear of this weather. One of our neighbours suggested that they must go to the witch doctor.

They all went in order to ask how they could stop this weird weather from happening. The witch doctor told them to slaughter chickens and pour their blood in two pots and put the chicken heads in another pot. They must have a coal stove, a 'Welcome Dover Stove', and it must have a hot fire. They must sit around this stove in the early hours of the morning, at 01h00. Some of them must sing and others must do traditional dances and clap their hands, and then this strange weather will never take place ... they will experience the normal weather.

From there, they all went to buy the chickens and pots, and took the coal stove outside.

The next morning, they gathered and did everything they had been told to do. That day they had normal weather and they were all happy.

The next day at the same time, I sat in front of the television, but strangely there was a normal lady who was doing the weather report. From that day onwards, I never saw or heard another weird weather report.

Elderly people said it was a curse that was imposed on the people from Cape Town for not taking care of creation. Now creatures and plants and the sea, with its creatures, are being taken care of.



Lost girl – The magician

Emihle Mayekiso

Liwa Primary School
Grade 6
Age 11

Acknowledgements

My thanks to the following: my friends for their unwavering support; my GrowSmart mentor, dear Mr Andrew, for his time and guidance; the GrowSmart organisers, a big five for opening the door to showcase my literary skills; and my principal for her vision and allowing us to be part of this ever-growing competition.

To my family:
remain focused.

“Welcome to our strange world. There is no need for you to cry.” These were the words I heard from an unknown, funny-looking creature, which resembled a human being.

I was terrified and started to shiver. I raised my face to see my surroundings. All I could see were these funny looking things. “Where was I?” I asked myself. I took a look at myself and I discovered I no longer looked the same. I was covered in mud, and, like everyone else, I was naked. I started to cry aloud, but was consoled by a young lady. She took me away from the rest of the group, and what she told me filled me with fear. It was difficult for me to comprehend.

She first warned me never to cry again, for crying was a taboo where I was. She also told me to respect everyone around and never to look at anyone in the face, when speaking to them. She also instructed me to eat without any questions. I wanted to ask her something, but she quickly reminded me of her last rule. Her final words at least gave me hope. She told me my fate was in the hands of the queen, who had gone away on errands for four days.

“The queen has a soft spot for young girls who obey the rules and respect her,” she informed me. “You have high

LOST GIRL - THE MAGICIAN



Emihle Mayekiso

chances of going back to the real world a better person if you do not mess around with her. It's up to you, if you want to go back," she added.

Before we went back to the others, she showed me a tall figure with a long beard and long feet that no shoe size could fit. The tall figure was sitting on a golden chair. I learnt he was the king and none except a few were allowed to talk with him. His words were the alpha and omega. I felt very small after I had looked at him.



I went back to the rest of the group with this young woman, feeling better and with hope. Once back with the rest of the group, I was served food. The food comprised of tree leaves, uncooked meat, snails and cow dung. After eating that food, I vomited and then we went to sing. I wanted to ask that woman something, but quickly remembered that I was not supposed to ask any questions. I hardly slept, thinking about my fate, my friends and my family. "Where were they now? How would they find any closure about my disappearance? Would they ever see me again?" I needed answers.

In the morning, the same food as yesterday was served. I did not want to eat it, but the look on the young woman's face said it all and I hesitantly ate. Just like the previous night, I threw up again. It was after breakfast that the queen arrived. Though I did not know her, I knew she was the one because of the clothes she wore and the respect she got from everyone. Everyone knelt down, except me, but the young woman grabbed me by the hand and I

did kneel down. The queen seemed to be a kind person, for she asked about everyone's health. She smiled all the way. I envied her from the word go. After the formal greetings, the young woman raised her hand and asked for permission to speak. Permission was granted and she introduced me. She was addressing the queen as 'Her Majesty'.

The queen summoned me to the front. Before I moved, the young woman pinched me. I knew what it meant. I knelt down and never looked at the queen's face, as per the rules. My heart was beating fast and I addressed her as 'Her Majesty'. This seemed to work for me. She asked everyone to welcome me with a big 'hooray'. After the introduction, she dismissed everyone, except the young lady and me. The young lady was asked to be my tutor, and a new name, 'Maidei', was given to me. The queen never said anything about my fate. She only remarked that I was a beautiful young girl.

At dawn the next morning, the young lady whose name I had learnt was Luhle, woke me up and took me to the forest. Here she introduced me to the various plants, insects and animals. She taught me how different plants heal certain diseases. It was not an easy task to master everything. I was taught how to mix various herbs and cures for diseases. I was also taught how to communicate with spirits. This routine continued for more than a month. I am not a slow learner, so I grasped most of the things I was taught. Luhle was impressed. It was during the third week that the queen accompanied us; it was only the three of us. I was afraid.

The queen never said anything to me. She just observed as I mixed herbs and followed instructions from my mentor. The few times I looked at her, I found her nodding. It seemed she was impressed. My classes continued for some time. I was also tasked to attend to the sick among us, which I did quite well. I was no longer thinking of home.

This was my family now.



Everything changed one early morning when, instead of Luhle taking me to the forest at dawn, the queen herself took me. We did not go to the place where we used to go. We sat between two big rocks. It was between these rocks that I spoke to the queen for the first time. It was not a casual talk. I was a bit afraid, but I knew the queen was good and would not harm me. She did not say a lot, except that I should not tell anyone about where I was, for that meant death. She also told me that I would be very powerful in the real world in terms of healing people and that she and her team would always be there for me. And, with those words, she pushed me right to the centre of a big rock, and, in the blink of an eye, I was normal again.

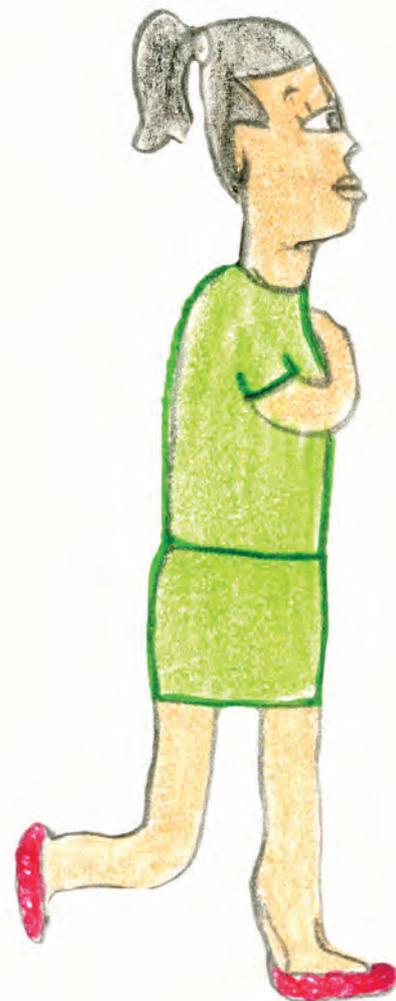
It did not take me long to find my way home, where lots of surprises were waiting for me, after having been missing for some months. As I approached home, my parents and my old granny saw me. They all started to run away, thinking I was a ghost. My old granny was too old to run, so she just looked at me, screaming, as I approached. I felt lost and uncertain of what to expect.

My parents only started to come back after seeing me talking to my granny. My granny hugged me and wept out of joy. Everyone was eager to know where I had been. The whole village came to our homestead. I tried as much as I could to avoid answering them about where I had been, so I came up with a lame excuse that I had been kidnapped but had managed to run away and find my way home. The whole village was angry and wanted me to lead them to the kidnapers. I flatly denied that I knew the route.

A few days after my return, my granny became seriously ill. My parents wanted to take her to a sangoma, but I told them not to because I was going to help her. No one believed me. I went to the forest and collected some herbs and mixed them. My granny did not want to take the herbs at first, but after I begged her, she finally did. Within two days she was completely healed. Word started to spread around about how I had miraculously healed my granny. People from all over started bringing their sick to me. I healed them all, without charging anything.

The more people I healed, the more people asked questions about the origin of my powers. The more they asked, the more secretive I became. I continued to heal people. I was no longer just a small little girl, but a respected traditional healer.

The whole community is still asking, and will continue to ask, where I had got my powers, but that answer is sealed deep in my heart.







Anesa Parker

Symphony Primary
School
Grade 6
Age 12



This story is about a bank that had a huge explosion. To find out more information, read the book! Money pouring down instead of rain pouring down.



Money pouring down instead of rain

Chapter 1

One day, I was lying on the couch watching television. The weather outside was rainy and the wind had been blowing for days. I didn't know what to wear as all my warm clothes were still wet and I had no choice but to relax in my pyjamas. I was hoping that we would have some sunny days ahead. At that moment, the weather report was on and it came as no surprise to me when the reporter said that it would be raining again the following day. All of a sudden the reporter looked shocked. My eyes went big, as I asked myself, "Are we in any danger?" Suddenly the reporter screamed!

Chapter 2

"It's impossible! It can't be!" She reached out for a glass of water and gulped it down. I was sitting up straight, wondering what could be impossible. The questions that were running through my mind were endless. "Are we going to have snow?" or "Was there a tornado on the way?" I was starting to get scared.

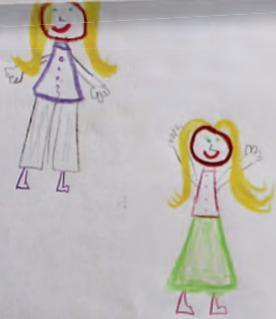
The reporter's eyes were big in her head, as she said, "The bank experienced a huge explosion and all the money is blowing around, like snow on a cold winter's day."

Chapter 1

One day, ~~as~~ I was laying on the couch watching television. The weather outside was rainy and the wind was blowing for days. I didn't know what to wear as all my warm clothes were still wet and I had no choice but to relax in my pajamas. I was hoping that we could have some sunny days ahead. At that moment the weather report was on and it came as no surprise to me when the reporter said that it would be raining again the following day. All of a sudden the reporter looked shocked. My eyes went big as I asked myself, "If we were in any danger." Suddenly the reporter screamed!

Chapter 2

"It's impossible! It can't be!" She reached out for a glass of water and gulped it down. At this time I'm sitting up straight wondering what could be so impossible. The questions that were running through my mind were endless. "Are we going to have snow?" or "Was there a tornado on the way?" I was starting to get scared. The reporter's eyes were big in her head as she said, "The Standard Bank building experienced a huge explosion and all the



reading "What a disaster!" I thought to myself.

Chapter 3

I went back to listen to the updates on the "Weather Report" actually a "Ward Weather Report". The reporter stated, "All residents as well as companies, petrol stations and shops are to be closed." She said the government instructed all roads to be clear for the Army and Police to pass through. All the television channels were shown the chaos that went on through the City due to the explosion. The Army blocked off all entrances and exits to the City.

Chapter 4

With all the commotion going on, I decided to put on my raincoat and go outside. I looked at the people running and catching the money. Children jumping up and down to get hold of the money blowing like snowflakes. They started rolling in the money and picking it up like water and throwing it over themselves. The sky was colourful with a beautiful rainbow and the money flying like birds in the sky. What a

I could not believe my ears. "Sjoe!" At least it wasn't the things that went through my mind. I started to laugh at this strange and weird weather report. I jumped up and looked outside. It was chaos, people running around and cars hooting. "What a disaster," I thought to myself.

Chapter 3

I went back to listen to the updates on the Weather Report, actually the Weird Weather Report. The reported started, "All residents as well as companies, petrol stations and shops are to be closed." She said the government had instructed all the roads to be cleared for the army and police to pass through. All the television channels showed the chaos that went on through the city as a result of the explosion. The army blocked off all entrances and exits to the city.

Chapter 4

With all the commotion going on, I decided to put on my raincoat and go outside. I looked at the people running and catching the money. Children were jumping up and down to get hold of the money, blowing like snowflakes. They started rolling in the money and picking it up like water, and throwing it over themselves. The sky was colourful with a beautiful rainbow and the money flying, like birds in the sky. What an awesome sight!

Chapter 5

I have never seen so much fun, happiness and laughter, or so much money! Obviously I didn't just stand there. I joined them. In a short amount of time, I was amazed by everything, until I saw the army trucks coming down the

road, telling people to stay indoors. Some of the police had big vacuums that were sucking up the money. Slowly but surely the roads went quiet. Only the noise of trucks remained. The bonus! Our backyards was full of money ... luckily we had high walls.





The completely unbelievable story

Anastacia Blignault

Philadelphia Primary School
Grade 6
Age 12



This story is about a 12-year-old girl named Jolyn, who loses her mother. She has a father who is a drunk, and she has to take care of her sibling. One night she discovers a magic button, but where does it take her?

Chapter 1

In the middle of the night, Jolyn Johnsane woke up to the sound of her mother throwing up over the toilet. She rushed to help her mother. Her father, James Johnsane, was not there to help her mother because he was out drinking, again. His drinking problem started when he lost his job two years ago. Jolyn had a lot of weight on her shoulders, not because she was fat, but because her mother had cancer. Her father was a drunk and she had to take care of her sibling, James Junior Johnsane.

Chapter 2

She had a hard time concentrating at school, because she kept thinking about whether her mother was well at home. At the end of each day, she had to clean the house, help her mother with the washing and sometimes go to the supermarket. Her mother was dying of cancer, because she did not have enough money for chemotherapy.

One rainy, cloudy day, when Jolyn got home, she found her mother lying on the floor. She rushed to the telephone and phoned the ambulance. Within minutes they arrived and took Mrs Johnsane to the hospital. Jolyn stayed behind and when her little brother got home, she took him to their neighbours and explained to them what had happened.

☆ THE COMPLETELY UNBELIEVABLE STORY ☆

In the middle of the night, Jolyn Johnstone woke up to the sound of her mother throwing up over the toilet. She rushed to help her mother. Her father, James Johnstone, was not there to help her mother, because he was out drinking again. His drinking problem all started when he lost his job three years ago. Jolyn had all of weight on her shoulders, not because she was fat, but because her mother had cancer. Her father was a drunk and she had to take care of her sibling, James Junior Johnstone.

Jolyn Johnstone



Mrs. Johnstone



THE Johnstone Family.

James Junior Johnstone



Mr. Johnstone



She had a hard time concentrating at school, because she kept thinking about whether her mother was well at home. At the end of each day, she had to clean the house, help her mother with the washing and sometimes go to the supermarket. Her mother was now dying of cancer, because she did not have enough money for Chemotherapy. One rainy, dark day, when Jolyn got home, she found her mother lying on the floor. She rushed to the telephone and phoned the ambulance. Within minutes they arrived and took Mrs. Johnstone to the hospital. Jolyn stayed behind and when her little brother got home, she went and told him to their neighbours and explained to them what had happened.





Chapter 3

Jolyn went to the hospital and rushed to the nearest nurse to find out how and where her mother was. Her mother had been in surgery and when she came back from surgery, she was unconscious for a while. Jolyn tried to phone her father, but once again his phone was on voicemail.

The doctor told Jolyn that she could visit her mother. Jolyn was excited, but before she went in, the doctor told her

that her that there was nothing more that he could do for her mother. Jolyn then felt downhearted, but went inside to visit her mother. Her mother was looking very sick and dehydrated. She called Jolyn and told her that she was going to die in a few hours. Tears gushed from Jolyn's eyes as she stared into her mother's sky blue eyes.

Chapter 4

Then suddenly the machines stopped as her mother slowly started to let go of her life on Earth. The doctors rushed into the room and tried their best to resuscitate her, but they tried in vain. It was her mother's final breath, and then it was all over. She was gone.

Jolyn cried and cried, and within a few minutes her father ran into the hospital. He asked, "What happened?" He saw his wife lying in the hospital bed, ice cold. He shouted in sorrow and fell to his knees.

Chapter 5

The following Saturday, Mrs Johnsane was buried and it was all over. Jolyn did not go to school for the next three weeks, because her mother's death was so tragic to her. This made her father's drinking problem even worse. Every day he would leave the house to drink, and Jolyn would take her brother and they would go to the nearby river. One night in particular, when Jolyn went alone, she noticed a box hidden among the reeds. She opened it and saw



a glowing button. Anxiously she pressed it and she was transported to some other world.

Chapter 6

The sky was ocean blue and there were people walking on clouds. Here also were people with big fluffy wings, flying. Strangely, all of them were wearing white garments with shiny, golden belts. She saw her grandparents. They were smiling at her. It did not take her long to figure out that she was in Heaven! She also realised that she was standing on a cloud and far behind and below her were children playing. Suddenly she heard a deep voice calling her name. At first she was scared, but then the voice told her not to be.

Chapter 7

She then followed the sound of the voice. She could not see a face, but only arms and a neck. She immediately knew that it was God, and her first words were, "Am I dead?"

And God said, "No, my child, you are here because of that magic button you pushed."

Jolyn felt really relieved. With a smile, she said, "Oh, okay." And so God and Jolyn had a conversation, while walking through the valleys of Heaven. It was a majestic place with golden rivers, colourful flowers and blue skies. Heaven had an amazing atmosphere and everybody was jolly. There were angels everywhere you looked.

As they were walking, Jolyn saw a woman in the distance. The woman looked exactly like her mother. It was her



→ Angel

♡ HEAVEN ♡



ooo This is beautiful



Angel ↗

mother! The late Mrs Johnsane said, "Don't mourn, for I am still with you and I watch over you every single day."

Jolyn said, "I am glad and my heart is at ease, knowing that you are here." And just like that the moment was spoiled because Jolyn was transported back to Earth. She looked up in the sky and said, "I love you mom!"







Mayfair's ghost

Bilqees Petersen

Plantation Primary
School
Grade 6
Age 11

Acknowledgements

For Mom and Dad.
Happy Halloween. You'll
have the thrills after this!

Is the school's library
haunted? Bree, Willa,
Chloe and Adam are
doing an assignment in
the school's archives. The
librarian forgets about
them and locks up the
place. They are trapped.
Who will come to rescue
them? Then there is a
ghost. Can they outrun
the ghost?

Chapter 1

Bree, a grade six student at Mayfair Primary School, sat in class counting the minutes till the final bell rings. She was excited because it was Friday. Not that she didn't like school; in fact, she loved school. She was just excited to start on the assignment that the History teacher, Mr Valiant, had given them. It was about their town's history.

They were divided into groups of four and she was appointed the group leader. The only downfall to all this was that Willa was in her group.





"I don't know why Mr Valiant picked you ... everyone knows I was born to lead," cried Willa. Willa was not happy, but she knew she had to comply with Mr Valiant's rules if she wanted to get a good a mark.

The other two in the group were Chloe and Adam. Chloe had been Bree's best friend since kindergarten. She was smart and funny. Adam was the captain of the soccer team and also the cutest boy in school.

Chapter 2

The group agreed to meet at the school's library after school. The library was large and spacious, with book-lined walls and rows of bookshelves, desks and chairs.

Willa arrived half-an-hour late. "I have to attend a party tonight, so I will not be able to stay long," Willa announced.

"Oh, no you don't, we are all in this together, so start researching," Bree said sternly.

They all huddled around the computer. Most of the sites only mentioned what was happening now, and there was nothing about what had happened long ago. The school had been built in the late 1800, but, over the years, parts of it were rebuilt.

After some time, they had a lot of information, but they wanted something more interesting. "Let's ask the librarian if we can use the archives, maybe we'll find something juicy in there," suggested Adam.

"Great idea," said Bree. The archive is at the back of the library. It is dark and very dusty in there.

In one of the dusty, old books Bree found something interesting. "Listen to this. It says here that nearly one hundred years ago there was a fire and the librarian, Miss Emma Phillips, died," Bree read aloud. "Apparently she was working late, and the authorities believed that it was a freak accident."

"Here are reports stating that this place is haunted," said Chloe, waving an old newspaper.

"All this ghost talk is creeping me out," scolded Willa.

Chapter 3

Everyone was so engrossed in the research that they lost track of time. Willa walked over to the window and exclaimed, "It is already dark outside. I'm late for my party!" They all ran out of the archives only to discover that the library was empty and dark. The librarian had completely forgotten that they were at the back in the archive.

Adam ran to the door and turned the handle. His heart sank as he realised that the room had been locked up for the night. Bree and Chloe tried the windows, but they were shut. They were trapped. "Any of you got your cell phones?" Adam asked, but we all said no, because cell phones were not allowed at school.

"My parents don't know that I'm here. They probably think I'm at a friend's house," stated Adam.

"I'm sure my mom will come and get us. I left her a note," whispered Chloe.

Chapter 4

It was getting late, almost close to midnight. Everyone was tired, hungry and nervous. Suddenly, a terrifying screech sliced through the air. Bree yelled out in terror, gazing around her.

“What was that?” cried Willa.

They were terrified, but went in search of what had made the horrible sound. Bree pointed to a chair that was knocked over. A strange banging sound echoed through the library. “I’m too pretty to die,” cried Willa. “I want to go home.”

Then they saw a faint, flickering glow around the corner. They crept closer, and that’s when they saw her, the ghost, floating down the corridor with a blue light surrounding her.

Chloe screamed and the ghost turned. They recognised her from the newspaper clipping as the dead librarian, Emma Phillips. “Show yourself,” the ghost growled. The white of her eyes shone in the darkness.

Bree felt her pulse quicken. Her heart was beating so strongly that it felt almost if it was coming out of her chest. “Don’t offend this woman,” whispered Adam. He felt that it was important not to make the ghost angry.

The ghost stepped closer. “Get back!” Adam shouted to his friends. They dived behind the desk.

Bree held her hand out and stated, “We are not here to harm you.”

“I don’t believe you,” bellowed the ghost, and moved closer.

“Run!” Bree shouted, pointing to the corridors. “That way!”



Bree and the others were running towards the corridors, and Adam dashed ahead. Bree rushed down the corridor after Adam and glanced back.

The ghost let out a shrilling scream. Bree shrieked, "We must get out or try to outrun her." They dashed down one corridor and up the other.

Around a corner, they hid behind a bookshelf. A shudder of fear passed over Bree. "I can't go on," stated Willa clutching her stomach.

"Quiet," whispered Adam, pointing to the opposite bookshelves.

Chapter 5

They stood together, trying to hear if the ghost was coming. Bree didn't realise she was holding Adam's hand. "What if we have to stay here all night," whispered Chloe. "We cannot outrun her." Just then they heard a movement around the corner. Fear overwhelmed them.

"Oh no, the ghost is going to get us," wailed Willa. Suddenly the lights went on and the door swung open. It was Chloe's mom and the school's caretaker, with his grey-streaked hair and big brown eyes, standing in the doorway.

"Chloe, are you alright? You are as white as a sheet!" exclaimed Chloe's mom. Chloe ran into her mom's arms and started crying.

"The ghost, where is the ghost?" stuttered Willa. Bree



turned around and peeped around the corner, but the ghost had disappeared. Everyone hurried outside, eager to get away from the haunted library.

“What a night!” said Adam to Bree. “You kept your cool!”

“Yeah, cool under pressure,” joked Bree.

“Do you think people will believe us if we tell them what happened?” asked Adam.

“I don’t know, but we all know what happened here, what we saw,” stated Bree.



“See you all at school on Monday morning,” shouted Adam, as he got into the caretaker’s car.

Chloe, Willa and Bree huddled into the backseat of Chloe’s mom’s car.

“Let’s be friends,” suggested Willa. Willa hugged Chloe and then Bree.

They were all so happy to be rescued, and just in the nick of time too.



Noorahn Cupido

Delft Primary School
Grade 5
Age 11

Grandma has a big secret hidden in the basement of her house. My cousin and I discover her secret, which takes us on the adventure of a lifetime ...

Grandma's secret in the basement

One day my cousin Kelsey and I decided to visit our Grandma. Kelsey told me that Grandma has something very secretive stashed away in her basement. I wondered what it could be, because Granny is very strict and does not let anyone into her basement. Granny has a chain key to the basement around her neck and she carries it everywhere with her. While we were playing in Granny's yard, I noticed through the window that Granny was fast asleep on her favourite chair.

Kelsey said, "I have a plan to snatch the key off Grandma's neck so we can take a look at what is in the basement." We sneaked into the house on our toes to where Grandma was sleeping and Kelsey removed the chain with the key from around Granny's neck. Kelsey was very careful not to wake Granny. Then we sneaked into the basement to see for ourselves what Granny was hiding. We looked everywhere ... in the cupboards and under the table, but couldn't find any clue to Grandma's secret.

"What could this big secret be?" we thought to ourselves. After much frustration, having looked everywhere, we eventually sat down. Then I saw it ... a big, red button right in front of our eyes, staring at us all this time! How could we have missed it? We looked at one another in

astonishment. Could this be the big mystery we were searching for?

We jumped up simultaneously to reach for the button and pressed it, and 'boom!' we went spiralling down a time tunnel, screaming and shouting with fear. Finally, we came to a standstill. Afraid and shocked, we held hands, realising what we had done. Looking and staring around in amazement, we found ourselves in a strange place with a path leading through a dark, creepy forest. We started walking slowly towards the path, clutching one another, afraid of what lay ahead. All of a sudden we saw the shadow of a man in a black coat running in front of us. Then he disappeared. The black shadow ran behind us at a blistering speed, making us scream and run further into the creepy forest.

We just kept on running through the tangled bushes. All of a sudden, the path came to an end. Here we encountered a river with a bridge leading to a beautiful castle, like one out of a fairy tale. We wiped our eyes and were amazed at what we saw. Steadily, we proceeded cautiously towards the entrance of the castle. Standing in front of the gates of the castle were two tall guards with weapons. They shouted, "Halt! Who are you and where are you going?"

Without any hesitation, the guards marched us off to their evil queen. The queen stared at Kelsey and me, and pointed towards a passage leading down a long corridor. We started begging and pleading because we knew that this did not look good for us. When we came to the very end of this long corridor, the guards hurled us into what looked like a dungeon. I ran to the entrance of this cell, but the guards slammed the door shut and started laughing. Kelsey started crying and I hugged her, because we were both so afraid.

Suddenly, we heard two distant voices talking to one another. The voices grew louder and louder, until we saw two identical girls, who were twins. The twins stared at us speechlessly, and then Kelsey and I started begging them to unlock the cell door. We started to cry and told the twins that we just wanted to go home.

All of a sudden, the twins started arguing about letting us go, because one of them wanted to help us escape, but the other one was afraid to get into trouble. Eventually, after the commotion, the door swung open. We stared at each other in disbelief. The cell door was never locked! We both forced our way pass the twins, who were still arguing, and ran up in the corridor past several doors, but we couldn't find an escape route. Out of desperation, Kelsey pulled on the knob of one door and it swung open to reveal a room with sunlight.

We ran towards the sunlight coming from a window because a sense of hope fell upon us. We frantically

searched for a way out. Then, from the corner of my eye, I noticed this red object.

Could this be the same red button we pressed in Grandma's basement or was it just my imagination? "Kelsey, do you also see what I see?" I asked. Kelsey nodded. How lucky Kelsey had been to pick this door!

We looked at each other and wondered if the button would play the same trick on us, and whisk us off to another even stranger land, if we pressed it. Hesitantly, we pressed the button, and, like before, we held each other and screamed as we travelled through a time tunnel, spiralling like crazy. This time, I closed my eyes, as I didn't want to catch sight of any unfamiliar places.

When the spiralling finally stopped, I slowly opened my eyes and recognised the furniture in the basement of Grandma's house. I grabbed Kelsey and we jumped with joy, because I knew we were home, safe and sound. And of course, Grandma never found out that we had discovered her big secret: the magic button.

So, next time, be careful not to press just any button, especially if it has a guardian.



Gemima Banze

Factreton Primary
School
Grade 6
Age 12

Experiencing *Grand Theft Auto, San Andreas* game

This is my story...

CJ is my name and I live for *Grand Theft Auto, San Andreas*. I play this game every day and every chance I get.

One Saturday afternoon, as I was playing and winning, the evil, exasperating Eskom decided to switch off the electricity. I loathe loadshedding! From the kitchen, I heard my mother shout, "Unplug the television and PSP, CJ!"



As I pulled out the plug, I saw a light neon blue spark! Everything around me became pitch black. I saw that light and I felt drawn to it. My body felt as though I was drifting, flying even, towards it! As I got closer and closer to the light, I realised the neon blue was actually a ball ... no it was a planet!

When I reached the ground, I rolled over, head in front, and somehow landed on my feet. This reminded me of my favourite move in my favourite game ...

I checked to see if I hadn't perhaps hurt myself. As I looked towards my feet, I heard myself scream! "My feet! My hands! My clothing!"

Experiencing
Grand Theft Auto,
San Andreas game.

Gemima Banze





They looked as though they were animations! I turned around and looked at my reflection in the glass doors of some building and saw that I appeared to be a cartoon character! I froze!

I felt as though someone was staring at me. Next to my reflection was a boy, a cartoon as well. He waved and smiled at me.

We turned around to face each other. He said, "Hi, I am Steven. Are you lost?"

I replied, "Hello, I am CJ and yes, I am lost. Where am I?"

Steven replied, "This is Los Santos, the fanciest and most modern city! Where are you from? And how old are you?"

Oh my, I couldn't tell him I am from Earth! Or that he lives in a game! He will think I am mentally ill and have me admitted to a mental institution. So I lied and said, "I am 17 years old and I am from Red Country," since I knew that's a city in the game.

Steven replied honestly, "I, too, am from Red Country. What a fine city it is. Oh, and I am 18. We should become friends.

I felt bad building a friendship on lies, but he seemed sincere and I needed a friend. I smiled and he took that as a yes. "Where do you work?" he asked. I was surprised, but then remembered you needed to start working at 16 in the game.

So I anxiously replied, "I am actually looking for a job. Do you know of any shop looking for staff?"

"Binco, the clothing shop is looking for a cashier," he answered.

Steven helped me to apply and get the job. He was so kind and helpful that he said I could stay at his place until I had saved enough money to rent my own apartment.

I know he is a friendly stranger I have just met, and I would never do this in real life, but this is a game. Unbelievable ... I am working and living in my favourite game.

A few days after meeting Steven, I found out that he was a member of a gang, called Barlors. He transports guns and steals cars. I know this is terrible, especially since he is such a good person, but it is just a game, after all.

Steven came to visit me in my house that I was renting. It consisted of everything a sweet girl could ever want! He said, "I like the place. It is cute and comfy. Would you like to visit mine?"

"Sure," I replied. "What time?"

Steven answered, "Half past five, if that's okay?"

I was excited and said, "Cannot wait!"

The next day, I arrived at Steven's home perfectly on time. I was warmly welcomed by his family and Steven too.





Although they made me feel at home, I still felt homesick and emotional. I went outside, thinking about my family and if I would feel better and if I would ever see them again. This brought tears to my eyes, just as Steven's little brother, Shay came outside. "Why are you crying?" he asked.

I looked at his dramatic, shocked, cartoon face, and wiped my tears away. "I just miss my family," I replied.

Shay then asked, "Why don't you go visit them? I am Shay by the way. I am sure they miss you too."

I said, "I don't know how, it's complicated."

"Oh, I see. Well, we are always here to help if you need it," came Shay's reply.

I thanked Shay and said, "I should be heading home now."

When I arrived home, I really felt down. I decided to lie down and think about how I could get home. After what felt like ten minutes, there was a knock on the door. I got up and opened the door. There stood Steven, looking concerned. He said, "My brother told me you are missing your family."

"Yes, just a little homesick," I replied.

"Let's go for a drive," Steven said.

We got into the car and started driving around the animated city, but this driving was intense and crazy

because it was in a game. Well, apparently, I was soon to discover that the car was not his, and that owner was not aware that Steven was 'borrowing' it! So we got ourselves into a car chase. The police were doing everything to stop us, but Steven knew how to dodge, drive fast and cut corners very well.

Surprisingly, we got home safely.

As a result of the anxiety, the adrenaline and the emotions raging inside me, I decided to tell Steven the truth. I told him everything ... from the fact that I am from Earth to how I got here, without looking up once.

After what felt like hours ... Steven said, "Okay, so do you want to go home? Because I might have a plan."

"You believe me?" I replied.

Steven answered, "I must be honest, your situation is strange, but I believe you, so how about we play a PSP game called *Star Ships!*"

"You must be kidding! Playing a game in a game?" I said.

"Well, that's how you got here, so let's just try," replied Steven.

I responded doubtfully with a quiet, "OK."

Steven said, "You plug it in at the same time as I switch on the power at the electricity box."

"Okay, I will ... but first ..." and I hugged him. "Thank you so, so much for everything."

Steven blushed and said, "Just do not forget about me! Bye, CJ."

"Bye, Steven. I won't forget you," I replied.

Next ... There was darkness everywhere and I was lying on the floor, plug in hand. I sat up, drool in my mouth.

I am home! But wait!

Was it all a dream?





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