



PREFACE

Congratulations, Young Authors!

This anthology celebrates your literary talents and accomplishments as provincial winners of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association's (OECTA) 2025 Young Authors Awards/Prix Jeunes Écrivains.

We applaud all of you, as well as the thousands of students across Ontario who participated in the classroom, school, and unit levels of this year's awards program. The insightful works you have crafted remind us that the next generation of great Canadian writers is present in our classrooms.

Your enthusiasm and dedication, as well as the support of those around you, ensures that the Young Authors Awards/Prix Jeunes Écrivains program continues to grow and improve with each year. We deeply appreciate the commitment of your wonderful teachers, whose inspiration and encouragement provided you with the opportunity to empower yourselves through this competition.

The Young Authors Awards/Prix Jeunes Écrivains program would not be possible without the hard work of many OECTA members across the province. Teachers, OECTA School Association Representatives, Unit Presidents, and Unit Executive members all play critical roles in directing the program in their respective classrooms, schools, and units. Members contribute their talent, time, and effort to preserve the spirit and continued success of the awards. Together, we honour the outstanding work of our teachers and you, our students.

We cannot overstate the value of the contributions of all the dedicated members of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, who ensure that this program flourishes each year for the benefit of our students.

Thank you, and keep on writing!

Susan Perry
Professional Development Department
Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association

Félicitations à vous, jeunes écrivains !

Ce recueil a pour but de célébrer vos talents littéraires et vos accomplissements en tant que gagnants à l'échelle provinciale de l'édition 2025 des Prix Jeunes Écrivains/Young Authors Awards de l'Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA).

Nous félicitons tous nos gagnants mais aussi tous les milliers d'élèves de l'Ontario qui ont participé au programme en classe, à l'école et au niveau des unités. Votre travail remarquable nous rappelle que la prochaine génération de grands écrivains canadiens est actuellement dans nos salles de classes.

Votre enthousiasme et votre détermination, ainsi que le soutien de votre entourage, garantissent la croissance et l'amélioration du programme des Prix Jeunes Écrivains/Young Authors Awards chaque année. Nous sommes profondément reconnaissants de l'engagement de vos remarquables enseignants, dont l'inspiration et l'encouragement vous ont donné l'opportunité de vous engager dans ce concours.

Le programme des Prix Jeunes Écrivains/Young Authors Awards n'aurait été possible sans le dévouement des nombreux membres de l'OECTA de toute la province. Les enseignants, les représentants de l'OECTA dans les écoles, les présidents des unités ainsi que leurs membres exécutifs jouent un rôle critique en menant le programme dans leurs classes, dans leurs écoles et dans leurs unités. Nos membres dédient leurs compétences, leur temps et leurs efforts afin de préserver l'esprit et le succès continu de ce programme. Ensemble, nous honorons l'excellent travail de nos enseignants et de vous, nos élèves.

Nous ne saurions trop souligner la valeur des contributions des membres dévoués de l'OECTA qui veillent chaque année à l'épanouissement de ce programme au bénéfice de nos élèves.

Merci, et continuez d'écrire !

Susan Perry
Département du développement professionnel
Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association

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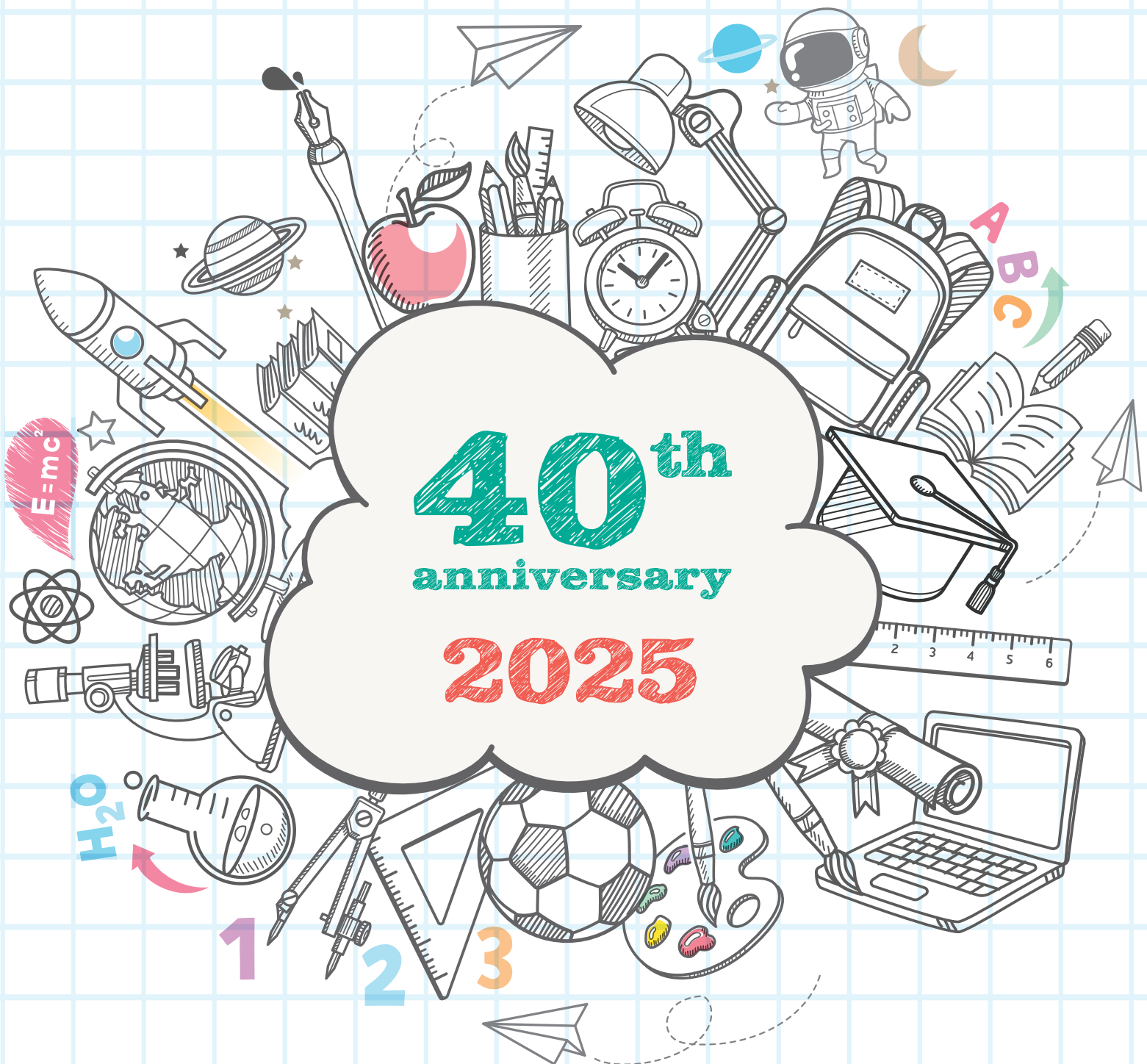
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YOUNG AUTHORS AWARDS



The Bear



SCHOOL: Notre Dame
TEACHER: Lisa Ribout
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Anne Zinger
UNIT: Brant Haldimand Norfolk
UNIT PRESIDENT: Carlo Fortino

ELEMENTARY - JUNIOR AND SENIOR KINDERGARTEN / SHORT STORY
by **Riley Chapman**

Once upon a time there was a bear that was about to hibernate, so he needed to find a riverbank to get fish.

The bear could not find one, so he decided to eat something else.

He went to find a berry bush but there were none close.

Then a little girl came and helped him find a riverbank.

The little girl really liked the bear and so she brought him home.

The mom told the little girl to bring the bear back outside, but the little girl didn't want to.

She found a warm place to stay to eat the fish that they had caught.

It was time to go to sleep, but the little girl didn't want to, so the bear brought her back home to his cave, and they played games that she brought from home together.



Friend



SCHOOL: St. Bernard of Clairvaux
TEACHERS: Christine McClung
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: William Mowat
UNIT: Brant Haldimand Norfolk
UNIT PRESIDENT: Carlo Fortino

ELEMENTARY - JUNIOR AND SENIOR KINDERGARTEN / POEM
by **Aria Wise**

Fishing with my friend

Respectful

Invitation

Eat with my friend

Nice

Dog is my friend



Extinct Book



SCHOOL: St. Mark's, Burlington
TEACHERS: Madeline Clark
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Marcel Schwarz
UNIT: Halton Elementary
UNIT PRESIDENT: Tara Hambly

ELEMENTARY - JUNIOR AND SENIOR KINDERGARTEN / NONFICTION
by **Jaime Carrejola**

Prehistoric Planets – “Was one of the most definitely full of different animals.”

Anomalocaris – “Almost anywhere around the world – invertebrates live in any habitat under the sea. There is scary coral.”

Jaekelopterus – “It rides fish. A gigantic lobster bigger than Mrs. Clark.”

Arthropleura – “One of the longest millipedes ever.”

Age of the Dinosaurs – “Dinos dominate every continent from the Triassic to the Jurassic and all the way to the Cretaceous.”

Triassic – “Beginning of the Dinos. Age of the Reptiles.”

Orodromeus – “Dinos lake forming desert.”

Herrerasaurus – “It was the only dinosaur to have this appetite. It ate the world's biggest and smallest dino for its time.”

Eoraptor – “Was the same time as the Herrerasaurus but didn't get eaten by Herrerasaurus.”

Jurassic Era – “Dinos and Mammals.”

Allosaurus – “Biggest predator from the Jurassic. It has plenty of friends like Ceratosaurus. Also, even the world's biggest animal from that time, the Diplodocus.”

Stegosaurus – “They like Savannas. They have plates. Do you know why they have dots? The dots detect and look out for danger, kind of like eyes.”



Apatosaurus – “It was the biggest Sauropod yet. The biggest thing in this book.”

The Cretaceous Period – “There was a mass extinction that covered 90% of land.”

The Triceratops – “Had three horns on its head. The one that was on its nose was used for detecting predators – like the Stegosaurus dots.”

T-Rex – “Was the only animal to ever eat Triceratops, but did it ever get a nasty bite!”

Cenozoic – “Ice and Snow.”

Woolly Mammoth – “Looks like an elephant.”

Smilodon – “Also known as the Sabre-toothed tiger.”

The End



Victoria and Natasha find the Secret Treasure



SCHOOL: St. John Brebeuf
TEACHER: Danielle Vallesi
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Danielle Vallesi
UNIT: Wellington
UNIT PRESIDENT: Aaron Anstett

ELEMENTARY - GRADES 1-2 / SHORT STORY
by **Victoria Valentini**

Victoria and Natasha are going to a haunted house to find the secret treasure. The treasure is a secret because nobody knew where and what the treasure was. Nobody knew when and who buried it. They went into the house.

"I think we should go back," said Natasha.

"Oh, don't be such a scaredy cat!" said Victoria.

When they went inside, the garbage can moved!

"AHHHH a ghost!" said Natasha.

But it was a black cat with green eyes.

"Oh, it's just a cat," said Victoria.

"Let's look for clues," said Natasha.

Victoria went upstairs. Natasha saw a lever, she pulled it, and the stairs turned into a slide. She pulled it again and the slide turned back into stairs! They climbed up and found a crooked picture. Natasha fixed it, falling through a trapdoor to find two magnifying glasses before coming through the door.

"Look what I found," said Natasha.

"WOW a magnifying glass," said Victoria.

"We could look for things from thousands of years ago," said Natasha.

"I don't think it's from thousands of years ago," said Victoria.

"Oh, you're right! Look footprints, they disappear out of nowhere!" said Natasha.

"What if there's treasure under that crack?" said Victoria.

"Let's look."



And they found the treasure. YAY!

The old box opened, and a very mean ghost came out.

“Give me that treasure! I was looking for that for years!” said the ghost.

He made the light fall on both their heads. They ran home as fast as they could and put the fake treasure outside for the ghost.

He took it and never let anyone come in his house.

Victoria and Natasha were soooooo happy to find the treasure. It was jewellery and gold.

They had the best adventure ever!

The End!



Liquids and Solids Throughout the Seasons



SCHOOL: Notre Dame
TEACHER: Gabriella Porco
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Anne Zinger
UNIT: Brant Haldimand Norfolk
UNIT PRESIDENT: Carlo Fortino

ELEMENTARY - GRADES 1-2 / POEM
by **Ileana Qaisar**

My favourite solid in winter is a sled because I can slide down hills.

My favourite liquid in winter is hot chocolate because it's delicious.

My favourite solid in summer is sand because you can make sandcastles.

My favourite liquid in summer is water because you can go swimming.

My favourite solids in fall are leaves because you can jump in them.

My favourite liquid in fall is cranberry juice because it's sweet and sour.

My favourite solids in spring are chocolate eggs because they are chocolaty.

My favourite liquid in spring is maple syrup because I put it on my chocolate chip pancakes.



All About Gymnastics!



SCHOOL: St. Timothy
TEACHER: Alicia Nunn
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Claire Slaven
UNIT: Halton Elementary
UNIT PRESIDENT: Tara Hambly

ELEMENTARY - GRADES 1-2 / NONFICTION
by **Janelle Oluwafisayo Shobayo**

I dedicate this book to Simone Biles for inspiring me to do gymnastics.

- J.S.

Chapter 1: About Gymnastics

Gymnastics is a sport. It is. Gymnastics is a sport known around the world. A person that does gymnastics is called a gymnast. Boys and Girls can do gymnastics. Gymnasts can wear colourful bodysuits to look good. The disciplines of gymnastics are uneven bars, floor, vault, and beam.

Chapter 2: My inspiration

I chose gymnastics because Simone Biles inspired me during the 2024 Olympics. My mom and friend inspired me too. Did you know my mom was a gymnastics coach? She taught little girls like me. I like doing cartwheels, round offs, and handstands. I hope to be a gymnast.

Chapter 3: Things that happen in Gymnastics

When you're a gymnast, you get to travel for your competitions. You can compete in Regionals, Provincials, and Nationals. Also, you can go to the Olympics, if you're good enough! You can also do gymnastics for fun. It's called recreational gymnastics. I hope you learned a lot about gymnastics.



Wilderness: Heart of the Flame



SCHOOL: St. Luke
TEACHER: Marcy Leahy
UNIT: Halton Elementary
UNIT PRESIDENT: Tara Hambly

ELEMENTARY - GRADES 3-4 / SHORT STORY
by **Bernadette Isabella Irwandi**

For my very smart teacher, Ms. Marcia Leahy, and all the wildfire victims in Jasper and L.A.

INTRO

After his home was destroyed by a fire, Obi the ocelot runs from the only home he has ever known to find somewhere safe. On the way, he made friends, discovered prophecies, and had adventures. Well, those are the things you have to face when you go straight into the wildfire...

CHAPTER 1: THE FIRE

Obi scampered through the forest. He could not wait to tell his parents about how he got an A+ on his test! But then, he smelled smoke. *Probably just another ocelot doing a barbecue*, he thought. Still, his little ocelot paws went faster. As he neared his home, he knew it was not a barbecue. *Fire! I need to find Mom and Dad!* Obi dashed through the house until he found his parents on the back porch, gazing at the flames.

"Obi! You must go! It is not safe here," said Emo, his father.

"I agree. Leave the forest. Find somewhere safe," whispered Lilly, his mother.

Obi could sense the tone of sadness in her voice.

"But, what about you guys?" he asked.

"We'll be fine," his parents said in unison. "Go, Obi," they said again.

So, Obi hugged them tightly and started running, with a sad look on his face.

Obi did not know how long he had run. All he knew was he ran until he reached the edge of the forest. Turning around, Obi saw the only home he had ever known, burning. *Would his parents be okay? What about his school? The little treehouse he had built? His friends? The little kittens that played by his house?* These questions lingered in his mind for what seemed like forever. *Please let them be okay...*



Just then, he realized the flames were advancing towards him. He backed up. Then, he turned around, looking at the horizon. The sun was setting. It looked like a ball of glittering glowing flames. In his head, Obi heard his mom whispering, *find somewhere safe*. But where would he go? The nearest forest was miles away. *I guess, I will have to find out.*

CHAPTER 2: FRIEND OR FOE?

Obi yawned. He was gratefully licking the water from the river and thinking about the forest for the first time since he had left. Obi had been adventuring for the past three days. On the second day, he saw a traveling merchant. Too shy to interact, Obi continued his way. *I hope I will find a safe place soon*, he thought.

Obi scampered towards a small path of trees to rest. But as he neared, he spotted a raven. Eyes widening, Obi backed up. Surprisingly, the raven looked scared too.

"Who are you?" the raven asked.

"O-Obi," Obi stammered.

"Kara. I am Kara," the raven replied. "What are you doing here? I thought ocelots live in forests," Kara asked.

"My home got burnt by a fire," Obi answered.

"Oh, sorry to hear that! Do you have a friend to travel with?" Kara responded.

"No," Obi sadly replied.

"I could go with you," Kara offered.

Obi was silent. He did want a companion, but he and Kara had just met. I am going to accept, Obi decided in his mind.

"Sure!" he said.

"Good. I know the most efficient way to get to the nearest forest," she smiled.

"It won't be Milliwo, right? Because that is where I used to live," clarified Obi.

"Oh well, I was talking about Milliwo," Kara said.

"I guess we'll have to go with the flow," Obi sighed.

"It's OK, Obi. At least we know there is a forest known as Nimowlla Woods in that direction," she pointed a wing north.

"Right," Obi said.

"Let's fly!" Kara flew off with Obi scampering after her.

CHAPTER 3: A FOREST SURPRISE

"Obi! Come here! I think I see lots of trees!" Kara cried excitedly.

"Really?" Obi scampered up the rock Kara was perching on.



He could not believe his eyes. There. The first forest Obi had seen in ten days.

"Let's go!" Obi jumped down and started running towards the thin line of green in the horizon. Finally, he reached the edge of the trees.

"Who are you? Stop right there!"

There was a rustle, and a red fox leaped out of the shadows.

"I am Obi," Obi said nervously.

"Hmmm... Come in. The raven too," the red fox said.

Obi and Kara followed the red fox into the woods.

"I'm Kara, by the way. What should I call you?" Kara asked.

"Chen," the fox replied.

He led them to a fox den. Chen turned around.

"Please tell me why you are here," he said.

"Soooo..." Obi told him the entire story.

"Very well. You can be safe here," Chen said after Obi was done.

"Really?" Obi asked.

"Really," Chen grinned.

"And finally, this is your room," Chen led them into a somewhat cozy room. Well at least it was comfortable.

A question lingered in Obi's mind. Although Chen had answered most of their questions, one remained unanswered.

"Is this your original home? Did you come from somewhere else?" Obi asked.

Chen was silent for a moment as if he was thinking if he could trust Obi and Kara.

"This isn't my original home," he finally said.

"Where do you come from then?" Kara asked.

"I come from Avoran Woods. It's quite far from here," said Chen.

"You come from Avoran Woods? Or do I need my hearing checked?" Kara said in awe.

"No more talk about it. You guys need rest." Chen walked out of the room with a quick goodbye.

CHAPTER 4: THE LEGEND OF FIVE ANIMALS

The next morning, Obi woke up and decided to explore Nimowlla. While exploring, he found a



place that was, in his opinion, very interesting. Filled with knowledge from head to toe, the library was one of his favourite places. Today, one book in particular caught Obi's attention. The title was *Legends*. On the first page, there was a prophecy. It read:

THE LEGEND OF FIVE ANIMALS

Five animals will be born under the full moon,
Five animals will save the world from doom,
One will be spotted head to toe,
One will be dark, and can put up an air show,
One has large eyes and webbed claws,
One has a reputation to not to follow laws,
The last we don't know much about it at all.
Don't listen to these animals,
The world shall fall.

Written by Cleo the Prophet.

I need to show this to Chen and Kara, Obi said to himself. Back at the fox den, Obi called the others down to show them his discovery.

"Wow..." Kara whispered.

"That is a very important prophecy," Chen said. "And I believe we are part of it," he frowned, taking the book from Obi.

"I guess we are very important," Obi said.

CHAPTER 5: MEEP! MEEP! HI!

For the next couple of days, Obi, Kara, and Chen started to decode the prophecy. They also learned Chen did not like rules and it was epic to see Chen scolded by the storekeeper because he was trying to steal some bread.

Chen, Kara thought in her mind.

Kara had laughed after the "incident." Later, they discovered the fourth animal was probably a lizard.

"Maybe they live here," Obi said. "We should look for them."

Chen disagreed, "They probably don't live here. We could waste an entire day," Chen stomped his foot.

"We can't just sit around and do nothing. I'd say we look," Kara said.

"Oohh, fine. I am outvoted," Chen sighed.



Obi, Kara, and Chen went looking for some lizards and asked them if they were born under the full moon. Most of them said, “No,” or “I don’t think so.” Until... they found Liv.

“Well, I remember my parents once talking about it,” Liv said thoughtfully. “So, yessss...” she giggled. “One second, ready for greeting! Meep! Meep! Hi!” she laughed.

Everyone fell into a heap of laughter.

“You are funny,” Obi told her.

“I know,” Liv smiled.

They all went to the fox den to show Liv the mysterious prophecy.

“Whoa,” Liv said. “That. Is. Cool.”

“I know,” Kara grinned.

“Yeah,” Chen said.

Obi was silent. He just noticed a small detail below the prophecy. “*Written By Cleo the Prophet.*” Who was Cleo? He remembered his parents talking about her... or was it him?

“Anything wrong, Obi?” Kara asked.

“No. I just think I’ve heard my parents talk about the person who wrote this prophecy,” Obi said.

“Oh! Now that I think about it, I’ve read about someone named Cleo,” Kara said. “I believe she was one of the greatest prophets ever known, until she suddenly disappeared.”

Obi frowned. “Anything else?” Obi asked hopefully.

“No,” Kara sighed. “Let’s go to the library to find out more!”

CHAPTER 6: FAMILY, NEWS, AND CLEO

At the library, Obi found himself buried in the deepest tales of prophets, trying to find some clues about Cleo.

“Hey! Look what I have found!” Liv said excitedly.

“What is it?” Kara called.

“It’s a story based on a true story and Cleo is mentioned in it!” Liv called back.

Kara flew to Liv’s corner and chirped excitedly, “Interesting. Try looking for more clues!”

“Obi?” Liv said a moment later.

“Yeah?” Obi said, turning around.

“Look,” she whispered.

She held up a newspaper. The headline was “SURVIVORS FROM MILLIWO EVACUATION.”



Reporter Emma of the Bluejays said, "It was crazy. Everyone was running. I've never seen anything like it."

Emo of the Ocelot said, "I hope everyone is okay."

Lilly the Ocelot said, "We told our 6-year-old son to run. Hopefully he got out safely."

The interviewer said, "Please explain the best you can about the wildfire."

"Definitely hot and glowing," Lilly said.

"A mix of red, orange, yellow, and even blue," Emo added. "I guess we can all agree that it was a devastating event."

Obi looked up from the paper.

"Are Lilly and Emo your parents?" Liv asked.

Obi quietly nodded.

"What's going on here?"

They both looked up and saw that Chen was staring at them suspiciously.

"It's lunch time," Chen said.

"Okay," Liv and Obi said, trying to hide the fact that they had found that certain newspaper.

At least I know that my parents are safe, Obi thought. And I like these friends.

CHAPTER 7: BACK OUTSIDE

Obi followed the others to the edge of the forest.

"Why are we leaving," he asked.

"Because we've dug out the few clues in Nimowlla," Kara answered.

"We need to look elsewhere," Chen growled.

"Do you know where we are going?" Liv asked.

"No," everyone said in unison.

"Ohhh-kaaay."

Obi, Kara, Chen, and Liv studied the map Chen had brought along.

Kara flapped her wings. "I don't understand," she said.

"Me neither," Liv sighed.

"I barely do," Obi said. "I only just started learning about maps."

Obi looked at the maps legends again as Chen said, "Once you get used to it, you will see it is simple."

Obi frowned, swishing his tail.

"The closest forest appears to be quite far away. Or am I reading this map wrong?" Liv said laughing.

"You're not reading it wrong," Chen said.



Then, something strange happened. The flames went down the slightest bit as if following Obi's order. Was it only a coincidence? But if the flames were not dying, they would reach his friends first.

No, no, no!

The fire was advancing very quickly.

Ouch! He felt a sharp pain in his front-left paw. Looking down, he realized that a lava-coloured vein was shooting out from his paw. When the vein reached the fire, the fire died down quite a bit. His veins kept shooting out from his paws as the flames went down and down and down... Finally, his friends were freed. When the rest of the land around them had stopped burning, Obi ran to his friends, grateful that they were okay. But, still, their mission was not complete.

EPILOGUE

Kara opened her eyes, spread her wings, and looked around. Obi was asleep and Liv was awake but pretending to be asleep. Chen was out hunting; he had told them last night that he would be gone early in the morning. They were staying in a cave at the edge of the forest. Not too far away was the edge of the sea. Kara had not told her friends why she had been wandering around a tree grove the day she and Obi met. She ought to have been afraid of the water. She could still hear the terrified squawks of ravens as the wall of water surged up. The tsunami continued to crash in her ears...

AUTHOR'S NOTE

You might be wondering what an ocelot is. One thing for sure, there are wild cats with a yellow, white tummy, black leopard-like spots all over its body. You might know them as painted leopards.

P.S. I am writing a sequel! See you in Obi, Kara, Chen, and Liv's next adventure!



The Campfire



SCHOOL: Holy Family
TEACHER: Alison Harrison
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Nadine Pavan
UNIT: Brant Haldimand Norfolk
UNIT PRESIDENT: Carlo Fortino

ELEMENTARY - GRADES 3-4 / POEM
by **Maia Stewart**

The campfire is.....

The hot campfire is warm and toasty

The campfire is crackling near the lake

The campfire is where you have gooey, delicious smores

The campfire is where you warm up when camping

The campfire is glowing in colours such as red, orange, and yellow

The campfire is warm and appealing

The campfire is where I make memories with my family.



Worst Clips Lady – A True Story



SCHOOL: Our Lady of Good Counsel
TEACHER: Maria Spatafora
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Lenka Kovachis
UNIT: York
UNIT PRESIDENT: Mike Totten

ELEMENTARY - GRADES 3-4 / NONFICTION
by **Christian Barone**

This story all started when I had to get a trim. Soo, one fine, fine Thursday I came from school to Great Clips. (It's now Worst Clips.) And I thought, what could ruin this perfect day? Like I brought back my bean seed experiment from school. Soo, anyway before we (me, Mommy, Matthew) got there, there was traffic. At first, I was mad, but later in the story I regret finding another route to get there!

So, we find the other route like I said, but when we got there, Matthew went first. Because he was first on the list. Matthew's hair is shorter than mine also (well, it used to be). But the barber who finished "some other random dude's" haircut stepped right up.

"NEXT UP!!" she called out.

"That's me," said Matthew

"This hairdresser is new!" Mommy said.

"Hope she doesn't mess up," said me.

Well, you can already guess what happens next, like any kid like me, I watch Mommy's iPhone of course! At least while I wait for my haircut. I was watching Spongebob, but I could see a good job coming out of her. When Matthew's turn was finished, it was my turn. I stepped up and the hairdresser was not the one Matthew had; it was the one who used to cut my hair short from my "short hair phase" until I wanted the long Hockey flow. My hair trim (that turns out to be a short cut) started.

First the barber cut fine. Then she cut again and again and again until it was already starting to look shorter than Matthew's! Then I got worried, then panicked until I let out my first tear. Then more tears dripped from my sad, sad, eyes, barely showing though. Every time the barber looked away; I wiped a tear off my face. It was very hard to wipe with that black cape, very thick, big, long, cape it was. It started to look very short, but Mommy thought I was wiping hairs off my face, when I was actually wiping tears off my face. Well at least Mommy even guessed.

Minutes and minutes passed, and my haircut was fiiiinally over. So, like any kid like me, I took a lollipop right after the last cut happened. But bad haircuts probably will make you BITE your lollipop like I did. Soon, Mommy called me to see my hair. She said it looked "supa," I said the opposite.

To make a "long story short," I cried all the way home! When I got home, I took my spelling with me upstairs barging into every door I came across! I also wrote signs, a note to the Worst Clips' lady, including the book you're holding right now! After all that, I went to plant the plant I mentioned earlier,



in the garage was where it was planted but I was very stealth going to the garage with this type of hair. When the plant was born it didn't like my hair! Not one bit.

Two hours later it was time for dinner. I ate as fast as possible. 30 minutes later, we were getting ready for bed. While Matthew was in the shower, Mommy read all my notes and signs and laughed and took a picture of me and send it to Daddy!!!!!!

THE END!!!



Chess and Alzheimer's



SCHOOL: St. Francis
TEACHER: Rachelle Lilley
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Sandi Capasso
UNIT: Thunder Bay Elementary
UNIT PRESIDENT: Michelle Pero

ELEMENTARY - GRADES 5-6 / SHORT STORY
by **Finn Workman**

"Alzheimer's," he said. It was the single word that I didn't want to hear. I stayed silent, wishing it was a dream, a dream I could wake up from.

"Pardon?" I asked even though I had heard him perfectly.
"I'm sorry, Mr. English. Your wife has Alzheimer's."

It was the sentence that changed my life. My wife was fine a month ago. She was fine. Every muscle in my body seemed to tense.

"I'm sorry," the doctor said again.

And from that moment onward my life changed entirely.

"Checkmate," I said, three years later, moving the chess piece and standing up.

We shook hands quickly and then headed out the door. I dashed out to the parking lot and quickly got in my car. I backed out as fast as responsively possible and drove home.

My name is Matthew English, 76 years old. I am a chess grandmaster. To some people, chess is a game, a pastime. To me, chess is how I bought my house. I play in tournaments around the globe, and I win.

As I reached my house, I parked my car and walked up to the door. My wife greeted me at the door, and her personal support worker.

"Hello, Anna," I said to my wife.

Anna had blond-grey hair and green eyes.

"Hello," my wife said. "How did you do today, Matthew?"

"Oh, I did well," I told her.

"That's nice," she said. "I'll get you some celebratory milk."



"Thanks," I answered.

I didn't know what celebratory milk was.

"How did you do today, Matthew?" she asked again.

"Oh, I did well," I told her again.

"Hello Matthew," Mrs. Cartwright said.

Mrs. Ella Cartwright helped my wife deal with her Alzheimer's while I was away playing in tournaments.

"Is the new medication working?" I asked Mrs. Cartwright after my wife went to the kitchen.

"Well, she remembers more things in the long term, but less in the short term," she said. "I think it's working better than the last medication."

I said to her, "I see."

She replied, "Unfortunately I can't keep administering it."

"Why?" I asked.

"Your health insurance has run out, Matthew! I can't take care of your wife if I'm not paid," she said to me.

"I know that" I replied shortly. "I told you I just need a little time to get the money."

"Matthew, I really love working for you and your wife, but you can't just keep stalling my payment!" she said.

And I could tell there was no arguing with her. "Give me one more week," I pleaded.

"Matthew—" she started.

"I'm in a new tournament," I told her. "The first-place prize is thirty-five thousand dollars. I've looked at the competition and I'm certain that I can win. Please Ella."

Luckily for me, Mrs. Cartwright was a very pleasant woman, and she nodded to me, but then looked me in the eye with a sharp glare.

"Matthew," she said. "Don't lose."

"I don't plan to Ella," I chuckled.

Mrs. Cartwright left soon after, and I drank my celebratory milk with my wife.

"How was your day, Anna?" I asked my wife.

"Well..." Anna started to think.

"Did you do anything special?" I prompted.

"No..." she told me.

"I, we, I don't remember, Matthew," she said and threw up her hands in an exasperated "I don't know" sort of fashion. I hope she couldn't see the sadness in my eyes.



I lay in bed and didn't want to think about my wife. But I did. She was so sick, and I hated seeing her like that. She used to be so vibrant, full of life, and smart. She was a brilliant lawyer. But then three years ago, she got very sick. I told myself that the first step to helping her was to get her care, so I needed to find the money. Therefore, I needed to win my tournament. So that night I reviewed my Sicilian defence theory, the image of my smiling, healthy wife three years ago nagging in the corner of my mind.

I woke up the next day in a better mood than the preceding evening. It was the day I flew to Toronto to compete in the chess tournament. I quickly dressed and had a breakfast of eggs and toast. I wrote my wife a note and put it on the fridge (so she didn't forget where I was) and grabbed my bag. I headed out of the house very confident that I could win every single match.

At the airport, I met a friend. Some of you reading this might think that chess players are nerd's who have no friends, but that is not true (In the most part. I mean, I don't know much about the other player's personal lives.). That friend's name is Alex Adler, and he was also a grandmaster, but he has since retired from playing competitively.

"Fancy meeting you here," I said.

"Hello Matthew," he told me.

Adler was a very short, very round man in his late sixties.

"Competing or spectating, Adler?" I asked him as we sat down in the waiting area near the gates.

"Spectating this time, Matthew," he answered. "I'm in the area for work, so I figured I'd stop by. But you must be playing," he said.

"Yes, I am," I told him.

"Have you heard Göricshen is playing?" Adler asked me.

Göricshen was a Dutch grandmaster. He was in a coma from a motor accident eight months prior. He had just woken up, so I doubted that he would be at his sharpest.

"He'll be a problem," Adler said.

"I don't think so," I told him confidently.

"If you say so," Adler said, and we sat in silence as we waited for our flight.

Our flight was uneventful, but that's the way I prefer it. But Adler had me thinking. Göricshen was two hundred rating points above me. But that was eight months ago, wasn't it?

I arrived in Toronto at 12:30 in the afternoon, to news that sent chills through my entire body. I logged into the tournament's website to check in on its progress after I got off the plane. It showed that Adrianus Göricshen defeated grandmaster Pierre Bouchard in an embarrassing fashion, in the first match of the tournament.



face fell, and he resigned.

As a chess player, I've learned to relish the expression on my opponent's face when they know they've lost. When they're in a terrible position, or under my attack, it's the same.

"Good game," I said and shook Lucas' hand.

I signed our scoresheets and shook his hand one more time. Then I walked over to the spectators' area to watch Göricshen's game. The spectators' room was a restaurant style room with large screens to watch live games, some with commentary. I found Adler in the spectators' area, intently watch Göricshen's game while drinking an iced coffee. I sat down beside him. Since Göricshen just woke up from a coma, and the media was all over it, Göricshen's game had two commentators.

"It looks like Göricshen is in a bit of a tricky spot," one commentator said. "After Knight e5, Queen e4 it looks like black is almost lost."

"He doesn't look very stressed," the other commentator added. "He looks perfectly content. Although, he's just risen from a coma. Can he see the attack?"

But as I watched Göricshen smile and move the piece, I saw why he wasn't stressed. His counterplay was so precise that I was wondering if he got better by being in a car crash. I knew he was going to win in a matter of moves, so I left the spectating area and walked over to the board where I was going to play Göricshen. As I sat down at the board, I saw Göricshen leave his board he used to be playing at and move to mine. I shook his hand, which grasped mine with such strength that I knew I would be in for a fight.

Adrianus Göricshen is sometimes called the "Master of the Attack," by the chess community. He was branded this nickname when he beat a grandmaster at the age of thirteen in forty moves. I never thought he was as tactical and attacking as the media made him out to be. He played not just with speed, but with calculation and extreme knowledge. Our game was so fast paced the arbiter constantly walked by our game to make sure we were writing our moves down on our scoresheet. On the fiftieth move I thought I had him. It was too bad the arbiter had left to see other games; she seemed so invested in our game I was disappointed she couldn't see me take the advantage. Göricshen thought for quite a while after my move. The arbiter returned right when he made his move. I resigned four moves later.

"He cheated," I told Adler, only two minutes later in the spectators' room.

"He didn't cheat," Adler argued. "Matthew, you were in your head. You were under pressure. It happens to all of us."

"He was in a coma for eight months!" I said. "And on top of that, he played twenty-five top computer moves!"

"Matthew, he didn't cheat. Replay the game. Cool off," Adler said. Then he left the room.

I knew that Adrianus Göricshen had cheated. He couldn't have beat me. You may not be familiar with how to cheat in chess, and this is the very thing I contemplated as I sat in my hotel room. The



easiest way is external assistance. A person sitting in the crowd signaling Göricshen. But the crowd was in another room. It was impossible. But I reminded myself that it was impossible if he didn't cheat. He was in a coma for eight months. He played twenty-five top computer moves. He cheated.

The next day I drove to the tournament, even though I was eliminated. I saw the schedule of the day. Göricshen was playing in the finals against Vladimir Sveshnikov. I walked into the tournament centre to quite a surprise. The spectators' room had overflowed, so the eliminated players were sitting on chairs set up close to the board. I sat down beside Lucas Jackson. I looked at Göricshen intently, but he didn't notice me.

"Mr. Sveshnikov," the arbiter called Vladimir, who was talking to someone on his phone, probably his coach. Vladimir got off the phone and put it in a plastic box on the administration table for anti-cheating purposes. Vladimir sat down at the table to face Göricshen.

"Shake," the arbiter said and then she shook the hands of Göricshen and Vladimir. Then the arbiter started the clock.

It's very hard to spot cheating in the opening, since everything is theory. I just watched. Göricshen played the Sicilian Four Knights Variation, the top choice of the chess computers. Coincidence?

The whole room was silent throughout the middlegame. It seemed like the only one who moved was the arbiter, who more often than not walked by the board to see how everything was going. Göricshen was moving fairly quickly, another sign of cheating.

"Draw," Sveshnikov offered.

"No," Göricshen said. And then he sacrificed his queen.

The arbiter looked so surprised that she walked up to look on Göricshen's score sheet to see that he wrote the move he played on the board. Or pretended to. And I knew how Göricshen cheated.

I ran over to the administration.

"You need to stop the game," I said.

"Why?"

"Mr. Göricshen is cheating," I told him.

"We have lots of anti-cheating technology for the players, a metal de-"

"You may search the players, but do you search the arbiters?" I asked.

"No, why?"

"I'll show you," I said, walking over to the board with the tournament manager.

"Excuse me," I called the arbiter.

She walked over quickly. "Yes," she said.

"What's the time?" I asked.

"Two seventeen," she said looking confused.



"Could I see your watch?" I asked.

"Why?" she asked and chuckled.

"Madeline, show me your watch," the tournament manager said.

"No," the arbiter, Madeline said.

“Madeline, you understand that cheating can result in fines. Your compliance will only help your case,” the tournament manager told her.

"What are you talking about," Madeline asked.

“We know about the cheating, Madeline,” the tournament manager said, slightly raising his voice.

"You have no evidence," Madeline said.

“Except for the hours of film from the cameras,” I added, gesturing to the multiple security cameras in the room, trying to contain my smirk. It didn’t work.

Madeline showed us her watch. It did not show the time. It showed the best move in the position that Göricshen and Sveshnikov were playing at that moment.

As you may know, some electric watches can receive texts. Madeline's watch was sent a text that says the best move in the position of every move. All Madeline had to do was walk by Göricshen with her watch on, and he would read the move.

"Stop playing!" the tournament manager called. Sveshnikov looked back, startled.

“Mr. Göricshen, come with me,” the tournament manager said, pulling Göricshen from the arm away from the board.

"And you, Madeline," he said.

Due to the cheating scandal, everyone was removed from the venue, which was one of the reasons I was surprised when I received an email from the tournament asking if I wanted to play Sveshnikov for the prize. Because with Göricshen disqualified, I was the finalist. I immediately said yes. So, the next day I sat down at the board opposite of Sveshnikov to play the match.

In the opening I played solidly. I played fast. I played my best. In the middlegame, the game transformed into a tactical minefield. Sveshnikov was good. But he was no match for me. So, by the endgame, I was winning. It's like the world fell away and there was only the board. So, on the sixty-eighth move my opponent analyzed the board one last time, his face fell, and he resigned. I shook his hand, and I felt the happiest I had been in three years.

I was still riding high by the time I was in the airport for my flight back home.

"Matthew!" someone called. Adler. "You were right," he said.

I just nodded humbly.

"You can say it," Adler admitted.

"I told you," I said.

Adler smiled. "You deserve that money," he said.



I met my wife at the airport.

“Good job, Matthew!” Anna said, hugging me.

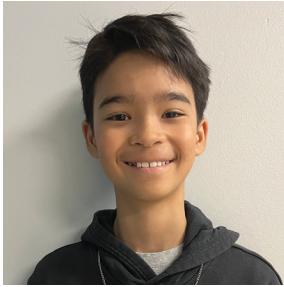
“Congratulations,” Mrs. Cartwright added, smiling.

“What are you going to do with your winnings, Matthew?” Anna asked. “Go on a trip?”

“No,” I said. “I’m going to invest in something much more important.”



Am I Bad?



SCHOOL: St. Rose
TEACHER: Laurie Clement
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Amy Bensette
UNIT: Windsor-Essex Elementary
UNIT PRESIDENT: Adriana Palamides

ELEMENTARY - GRADES 5-6 / POEM
by **Eduardo Parungao III**

Every morning I wake up
knowing that it will be a bad day,
because when people see me
they immediately run away.

People climb over monkey bars,
and dive under swings,
they are so fast
it's like they have wings.

They say that I'm reckless,
or act like a fool,
the words that they say
are super uncool.

But is it all true?
Am I bad? Am I rude?
Or am I just clumsy
and misunderstood.

I've tried to change,
but no matter how hard I try,
I still mess up
I don't know why.

I still work to be better,
But people don't say I'm nice,
So maybe my heart
is just cold like ice.

I must keep trying
to improve,
and maybe just maybe
I can get in the groove.

There's always an opportunity
for a new start,
and maybe new actions
can grow my heart.

But still,
I don't care what you say.
I am just clumsy not mean
in any possible way.



Catching the Leprechaun



SCHOOL: Our Lady of Good Counsel
TEACHER: Julianna Violin
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Lenka Kovachis
UNIT: York
UNIT PRESIDENT: Mike Totten

ELEMENTARY - GRADES 5-6 / PLAY
by **Theodore Cozos**

Characters:

Amy
Henry
Leprechaun
Theo
Jaxon
Narrator
Amy's Mom
Amy's Dad
Ms. Reynolds

Narrator: It was a nice and sunny day in Ontario, Canada. Amy, Henry, Theo, and Jaxon were all in Ms. Reynolds' class.

Ms. Reynolds: Ok, class! Today we are going to make Leprechaun traps, since Leprechaun Day is right around the corner.

Henry: I call dibs on these materials.

Amy: Too late, I already called dibs on them.

Ms. Reynolds: Settle down class! You all share the materials.

Henry (angry voice): Fine!

Amy (angry voice): Fine!

Jaxon: So, can I have a sleepover at your house, Theo?

Theo (upset voice): Sorry, my parents didn't let me.

Amy: I was supposed to have a sleepover with my other friend, but she cancelled, so you guys can come.



Theo (excited voice): Awesome!

Jaxon (excited voice): I'm so excited!

Henry (excited voice): Yes!

Amy: I'll go ask my parents if you can come tomorrow.

Theo: Ok.

Jaxon: Aw man... I spilled glue all over me!

Narrator: The next day (Leprechaun Day)

Everyone: "Ring!" "Ring!"

Ms. Reynolds: Good morning, class!

Amy, Jaxon, Henry, and Theo: Good morning!

Ms. Reynolds: Today we are going to focus mainly on our Leprechaun traps, since it's Leprechaun Day.

Henry: (sigh of relief) Good thing, I'm nowhere close to done!

Amy: I'm done, Ms. Reynolds.

Ms. Reynolds: Good job! Now you can get free time on the Chromebooks!

Amy: Thanks!

Henry: Free time on Chromebooks! Never mind, Ms. Reynolds, I'm almost done.

Ms. Reynolds: Now class, remember to take your time! After all, we are making these Leprechaun traps to catch the Leprechaun.

Everyone: "Ring!" "Ring!"

Ms. Reynolds: Ok class! You are dismissed!

Jaxon: Is it fine if we bring our Leprechaun traps?

Amy: Of course! After all, you guys didn't make the traps for nothing!

Narrator: After the bell rings, the kids walk over to Amy's house for the sleepover.

Amy: We are home! So, what do you want to do?



Jaxon: Do you want to play a round of hide and seek, then watch a movie?

Henry, Theo, and Amy: Sure!

Narrator: After the game of hide and seek and the movie, Amy's parents walk into the room.

Amy's mom: It's time for you kids to go to bed! It's getting late.

Amy's dad: Agreed.

Amy: Can we please sleep down here? We want to see if the Leprechaun comes.

Amy's dad: Well, the traps are made to catch and hold the Leprechaun.

Amy's mom: Fine, but you will probably fall asleep before the Leprechaun comes!

Theo: We'll take that risk!

Narrator: As the parents went upstairs, the kids stayed awake for a little while longer, before they were all asleep.

Narrator: A few hours later, a sudden sound woke up all the kids!

Everyone: "Clamp!"

Narrator: Theo's box has caught the Leprechaun!

Theo (smiling): I can't believe it! I've actually caught the Leprechaun!

Narrator: Even Amy's parents came downstairs from hearing the kids' voices, as they were talking to the Leprechaun.

Leprechaun: You were the first ever people to catch me! Good job!

Theo: Thanks!

Leprechaun: Because you caught me, all of you split my pot of gold coins equally!

Amy: Thank you so much. Before we let you go, we have one question?

Leprechaun: What?

Theo: Are you the only Leprechaun or are there others?

Leprechaun: No, there are still 236 living in Ireland.



Amy and Theo: Thanks!

Leprechaun: No problem, good luck and goodbye!

Amy, Theo, Jaxon, and Henry: Bye!

Narrator: The next day at school.

Ms. Reynolds: Wow kids! I can't believe you actually caught the Leprechaun! I just have one question?

Jaxon: What?

Ms. Reynolds: What did you do with the gold coins?

Amy: We split them equally, sold them for money.

Theo: Then we put a quarter of our money in one big pile and spent it all on candy.

Henry and Jaxon: Worth it!

Narrator: The kids lived happily ever after with a small fortune, tons of candy, and an unbelievable story!

Everyone: The end!



Taking the Hard Road



SCHOOL: St. Patrick
TEACHER: Marie Smith
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Marie Smith
UNIT: Wellington
UNIT PRESIDENT: Aaron Anstett

ELEMENTARY - GRADES 5-6 / NONFICTION
by **Lucas J. Varamo**

Imagine a young man who has just recovered from cancer with only one leg saying to his mother, “Mom, I’m going to run across Canada.” She might think that’s an impossible goal! But that’s exactly what Terry Fox said to his mom when he began his Marathon of Hope. And this year marks the 45th anniversary of Terry’s journey.

I’d like to share with you the ways that Terry Fox inspires me. Terry taught us that taking the hard road is not easy but can be worth it when trying to reach your goals.

When Terry Fox was 18 years old, he was diagnosed with bone cancer which led to the removal of his right leg. After he recovered from surgery and chemotherapy, he had to decide what was next for him. In 1980, he decided to run the length of Canada. But Terry didn’t run for fame. He ran because he was inspired by the children in the hospital diagnosed with cancer like him.

Everyday we face choices that make us pick a direction. To the right is a sunny, straight path, and to the left a winding, rocky road. You know that the sunny path is easy and that the rocky path is hard. But the rocky path is going to lead you to something you really want to achieve, so you know it’s the right way to go. But darn it – the rocky path is going to be really tough!

I think this was how Terry felt. He knew that running across Canada would be hard. He didn’t have to do it, but Terry believed it would be worth it. He wanted to inspire others and raise money for cancer research, with a goal to one day see the world free from his disease. So, he put on his shoes, trained really hard, and started running his Marathon of Hope.

What happens after you decide to take the harder path? Well, it’s uncomfortable and sometimes you want to quit. It takes resilience to keep going. During his Marathon of Hope, Terry would run over 40 kms a day! He was in a lot of pain when he ran.

But instead of giving up, Terry leaned into that discomfort and kept going. His resiliency inspires me when I don’t feel like doing challenging homework. I’d rather play lego or watch TV. But I try to be resilient and be okay with the struggle, because I know it’s helping me reach my goals in school. I remind myself that – yes – it’s hard, but I can do hard things.



Breaking News



SCHOOL: St. Charles
TEACHER: Jesse Clapperton
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Jesse Clapperton
UNIT: Sudbury Elementary
UNIT PRESIDENT: Chantal Rancourt

ELEMENTARY - GRADES 7-8 / SHORT STORY
by **Maxwell Hawke**

As the bus pulled up to the school, my stomach did multiple backflips. The previous night, I had gotten an email from the school principal. The message had said that they needed somebody to publish a story of what had happened between a bully and their victim. The principal had also mentioned that the school had no leads as to what had happened.

As I walked into the school, I noticed the principal looking at me from his office window. He beckoned me over.

There were two other students in the room when I entered. I recognized one of them as Sally Kennedy, but I had never seen the other boy.

"I'm assuming that you all received my email?" the principal asked as I closed the door loudly.

"Yes, Sir," we said in unison.

"I don't know anything," he said. "One of the teachers said that a kid had been bullied, but they wouldn't tell us who, where, or how. The teacher also failed to tell me the victim's name," he said embarrassed. "This is why you're here. Stories about bullying in the newspaper sell better. We need you guys to write an article about what happened when you find out. I asked all the teachers, and they seemed to think that you guys were the best people for the job. You are excused from your classes until you find out who the bully was, who the victim was, what happened, and where it all went down. I'd like to have this resolved before tomorrow, as it is the weekend and next week, we will be very busy with exams. The sooner you start, the better," he said with a smile.

I left the office. "No help *at all*," I said under my breath, shaking my head as I walked down the hall toward the teachers' lounge.

The other two reporters went toward the gym instead.

I made a list in my head of the meanest bullies at school.

Ryan R. resembled Frankenstein's monster because he had so many scars.

Lou L. would act like a teacher's pet, but behind people's backs, she'd break into lockers and spread horrible rumors about others.



Oscar O. never showered after gym class, and he smelt so much like a troll that teachers hung up air fresheners in their classes.

Gretchen G. was so punk rock that she had a spiky, green mohawk.

Bobby B. destroyed school property and vandalized the school washrooms every chance he got.

Violet V. was never found off of her phone, she was always taking pictures without permission and posting them online.

I then made a mental list of victims that had seemed to be the bullies' targets in the past.

Grayson G. was such a nerd that he came to school wearing an astronaut helmet.

Natalie N. was so goth that she was confused with people's shadows.

Patty P. was often seen picking her nose and wiping it under the desks.

Whitney W. was the only albino girl in the school and she was made fun of for her overly large glasses.

Billy B. was made fun of for his acne because he had so much of it covering his face.

Nathan N. was so skinny that he could probably squeeze in the crack between a door and a wall.

I opened the door of the teachers' lounge. Mr. Clark was playing a game of pool against Mr. Scott.

"So, this is what you guys do on 'prep', is it?"

Mr. Clark nodded.

"I just wanted to ask, do you guys know where Ryan R. was yesterday at school around..." I looked down at the note that I had received from the principal, "10:42?"

"I have no idea. All the teachers were in the office having a meeting," Mr. Scott replied.

"Oh, him! He's in my science class. Although, he was suspended for pantsing that one kid last week," Mr. Clark said.

"And what about Grayson G?" I asked.

"Wait, that kid that wears an astronaut helmet?" Mr. Scott laughed, "Yeah, he's in my AP Math class. He was sick yesterday though."

"Ok, thank you!" I called as I hurried out of the lounge.

I ran across the wide corridor toward the library and hustled through the columns of books. The librarian stopped me with a stern look on her face.

"What do you think you're doing? This is a *library*!" she whispered loudly, shushing me.

I saw multiple kids that had been studying and reading look up at me.

"I truly am sorry," I said dishonestly. "But I'm in kind of a hurry right now. Was there a disturbance in here yesterday?"

"Of course there was! Kids running, jumping, and even throwing books left and right!" she said in an aggravated tone.

"Any fights or anything though?" I asked irritably.

"Oh no, no I don't think so, no, no," she bustled off without another word and started to dust books with her feather duster.



Where to go next? I asked myself. I decided on the science lab. Crazy things always happened in the science lab. The science lab was dark and deserted. Glass phials were bubbling in the corner and diagrams of cells were visible from beneath a counter. I walked over to the teacher's desk, and I saw a note on it.

Field trip forms for June 24th that have been handed in:

- Whitney W.
- Caleb F.
- Nico B.
- Lily H.
- Natalie N.
- Chloe T.
- Jayden F.
- Olivia S.
- Sophia C.
- Noah L.
- Lou L.
- Ava R.

The list stopped there. The date for the field trip was yesterday. So that meant that none of the kids on the list had been at school the previous day. A slight gurgling sound pulled my attention away from countless charts hung up on the walls. I slowly crept over to the sound. It was coming from under a table. I bent over and my eyes fell upon a kid who was hiding under the desk, eating paste. He looked up at me and we stared into each other's eyes. Multiple tubes and containers of paste were lying, empty, beside him.

"Hello?" I said, uncertainly.

A stream of bubbles and froth spilled out of his mouth.

"I'll leave you to it how about-"

Remembering that kids would have been studying for exams and the lab wouldn't have been in use, I quickly left the lab, starting toward the washrooms.



Closed.

The sign read “CLOSED, FOR VANDALISM.” I made a note on the list and crossed off all the rooms I had already visited.

Library, office, science lab, washroom – I paused, remembering that the teachers’ lounge hadn’t been confirmed safe. I made a side note of the teachers’ lounge in the corner of the page as I moved onto the music room.

The whole class looked up as I opened the door. The only people I recognized from this class were Nathan N. and Trevor E. The teacher greeted me.

“Hi. Can I help you?” Miss Hernandez asked.

“Yes! You can. I was just wondering whether or not you were here yesterday.”

“I was in the office all day except for fourth period,” she admitted. “Why?”

“Well, there was a fight yesterday and I’m trying to figure out where it happened.”

“You could always check the cameras. I put them up in my room because I don’t trust people with my precious instruments. I don’t think anyone would dare cause any mischief here,” she scowled.

“Would you like to check them?”

“It’s fine,” I said. “Can I just speak to Nathan in the hall for a second?”

“Yeah, sure! Where is he?” she scanned the classroom for him, but he was already walking toward me.

When we got into the hall, I asked him, “Where were you yesterday?”

“I had to study for exams. I was in the library all day!”

“Thanks for letting me know,” I said.

I ran toward the shop, stumbling on someone’s shoe that two kids had been throwing around to each other. When I opened the door, many workers started to hustle toward me.

“Sorry kid. This zone is off limits right now. It’s under renovation,” one of the workers yelled over the noise of a large backhoe taking down the back wall.

A big, burly one with lots of muscle nodded and added, “this is a dangerous area to be in for a youngster like you.”

“Ok,” I yelled through the noise.

I stepped into the hallway and closed the door. The noise died away instantly. I took out my list and crossed off the music room and the shop. All I had left to search was the gym and the cafeteria. Although the teachers’ lounge hadn’t for sure been ruled out.

On my way to the gym, I remembered that it was football season. The gym would’ve been used all day. The bully couldn’t have done anything there. I turned around so fast, I almost lost my balance.

The cafeteria was also deserted. The vending machines were casting a dim, eerie light through the rows upon rows of tables.

I heard a sound. People muttering to each other. As I approached the sound, I realized who it



was. My friend, Billy. It sounded like he was talking to someone else. I couldn't see properly from where I currently was, so I walked toward the other side of the cafeteria.

Their outlines grew larger as I got nearer and when I could hear their conversation clearly, I hid under a table to listen.

"No, please. It's not fair." Billy pleaded.

"I don't care what's not fair!" a gruff voice responded.

"No—but—"

I was about to say something but then I realized that Billy had to deal with his own problems. I had things to do, places to be. I shifted my foot, about to get up, and stepped on a chip bag.

They suddenly stopped talking and looked toward the noise. Billy made a daring escape and just barely got out of the cafeteria when the bully caught him by the shirt and pulled him back.

"Oscar!" yelled a teacher from the hall.

Oscar quickly let go of Billy.

"I assume it was just 'playful' fighting?" the teacher said, putting emphasis on the word playful.

What happened to Oscar, I never found out because I had left before the teacher could say anything. When I got into the hall, I heard someone catch up behind me. I turned. Billy was panting behind me.

"Hi" I said.

"Hey, whatcha up to?" he asked.

"I need to figure something out. There was a fight yesterday and nobody knows anything about what happened."

"Oh, cool. I'm just glad that Oscar wasn't here yesterday. He's been bullying me for weeks." Billy added, "did you hear what happened to Ryan R. after he pantsed that kid last week?"

"Yeah, Mr. Clark told me about it earlier. Hey, did you see anything suspicious yesterday? Did anything *eventful* happen?"

"No, not really, like I said, Oscar wasn't here yesterday. Although I *did* see Bobby B. looking smug near the teacher's lounge."

"Ok," I said interestedly.

Billy looked at his watch. "Oh, I'm late for history! Bye!"

I dashed to the teachers' lounge thinking that if it wasn't there, then I was at a loss. I opened the door to the lounge. There was nobody there.

I've always wanted to make coffee in the teachers' lounge, I thought, looking at the coffee maker, but I don't have time for that.

I looked around the room. There was a large tupperware container sitting on the table and



multiple stacks of paper littering the room. I walked over to the container and examined it. I'm sure there was a reason for it being there. How often did teachers bring in their tupperware to showcase it? I flipped it upside down and a note fluttered out onto the floor. I stooped down and picked it up.

Dear Teachers,

This is a gift for all of your hard work. My mom and I baked them ourselves. I hope you enjoy the cookies.

P.S. Thank you, Mrs. Boles, for giving me a 94% on my science test.

Sincerely, Patty.

There were also coloured pencil shavings on the floor. Not thinking anything of them, I looked more closely at the note in my hand. The teachers' lounge was off limits to other students. So why was this note and the container in the teachers' lounge? Someone had entered the lounge without permission, dropped off a batch of baked goods and then left. But who? I glanced down at the note again. It said "Sincerely, Patty" in the corner. So... Patty came to drop this off and then the bully, who I had narrowed down to be Bobby B, ambushed her and... stole her lunch money? Copied her science test? I thought about it for a moment. Those were all possible outcomes, but I was going to have to find Patty to figure it out. Looking at the floor, I saw the pencil shavings again. Something clicked in my head, and it all made sense.

"I hadn't seen Patty all day yesterday. She was supposed to be in my art class, which she would have been on her way to at 10:42 with her art supplies. She probably went home, and Billy said that Bobby had been looking smug near the *teachers' lounge*. It all adds up!" I said out loud. "He snapped her coloured pencils and that's why there are pencil splinters all over the floor!"

I burst out of the teachers' lounge, knocking a confused looking Mrs. Bryer to the floor, and ran to the office. When I opened the office door, I saw the principal shaking Sally Kennedy's hand. He gave her a certificate for special services to the school.

"Oh ho! Looks like you have competition, Sally!" the principal exclaimed, looking at me. He called me over and handed me a piece of paper.

June 24, Friday.

Sally Kennedy

BREAKING NEWS

Earlier this week at Oakridge Academy, a 13-year-old student by the name of Patty Phillips was bullied when someone named Bobby Bartrede took her pencils and snapped them all in half. Despite the school's anti-bullying policies, Patty has been constantly made fun of by fellow peers. Certain teachers have now launched a thorough investigation, working closely with Patty's family to address the problem



and ensure a safe learning environment. This case highlights the critical need for effective measures to prevent and address bullying in schools.

Attached to the clipping was a side note:

This is also a reminder to all students that the teachers' lounge is off limits.

Sally had published before me. The war had been won. I may not have been the first to solve the case, but at least I had found my passion.

THE END



Listen Now Before it's Too Late



SCHOOL: Georges Vanier
TEACHER: Austin Jordan
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Jennifer de Witt-Plante
UNIT: Algonquin-Lakeshore
UNIT PRESIDENT: Dan Graham

ELEMENTARY - GRADES 7-8 / POEM
by **Melanie Giffin**

You are politicians and leaders, you have lots to achieve,
Yet you are invasive liars, greedy, and naïve.

Our Earth is flooding yet you refuse to cry,
Maybe it's time for you to comply.

Let us lead, let us fix,
All of the things you've tried to cover up with bricks.

No more silence, let us try,
Before our lands become bone dry.

Tired of promises you cannot keep,
It's like all this time you've been asleep.

Digging oil while the seas become hot,
Fixing this will be a long shot.

Money and power are all you could care,
One day there will be no more food to spare.

Listen now and listen close,
Our Earth is something you can't decompose.

Our air is thick, our crops are bare,
You cannot fix this, not even with a prayer.

We will not be silenced, we will fight,
Until it is fair, equal, mended, and right.



Yeshua Ha'Mashiach: A Modern Apocryphal



SCHOOL: St. Gregory the Great
TEACHER: Michelle Solimine
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: John Ricci
UNIT: York
UNIT PRESIDENT: Mike Totten

ELEMENTARY - GRADES 7-8 / PLAY
by **Yovela Nnoaham**

INT. NEW JERSEY STUDIO APARTMENT, BEDROOM – NIGHT

A woman named Mariam wakes up in the middle of the night to the sound of a voice calling her name from the living room.

A Voice: “Mariam,”

- *Mariam shifts in her bed and rubs her eyes*
- *She hears the voice again shot up straight, more alert this time*
- *Silently gets out of bed and grabs an aluminum bat from her bedside*

MARIAM: *thinking to herself* Cousin Liz always told me that I should keep a bat near me at all times. I still think it’s overkill, but I’ll thank her later.

pulls the door of her bedroom open to see a light coming from her living room. Mariam begins to breathe faster, squeezes her eyes shut as she makes the sign of the cross

MARIAM: *whispers* Jesus take the wheel.

- *MARIAM jumps out from behind a wall, bat raised, but is shocked by a beautiful man*
- *MARIAM nearly drops the bat on her foot*

MAN: *smiling* Mariam. Good, you’re finally awake. I’ve been waiting for you.

MARIAM recoils

MARIAM: *angrily* What the HECK are you doing in my apartment? *She raises the bat to the Man’s chest*

MAN: *Staring at the bat amused* Slow down, there’s no need to get violent. I’m a friend.

MARIAM scoffs and rolls her eyes



MARIAM: “Friends” don’t break and enter. Now who are you and what do you want? I am warning you – I will swing this bat!

MAN: Mariam, please. Be at peace. For you have been cho – AGH!

Mariam swings the bat at his midsection, cutting him off

MAN: WOAHH, WOAHH, WOAHH! LADY! CHILL! Heavens above, I didn’t think you’d actually swing at me...

The man closes his eyes and draws out a breath Mariam trembles on the floor, pointing a shaky finger at the man

MARIAM: *stuttering* T-t-t-the b-b-bat...it-it went right THROUGH YOU!”

MAN: If you had let me finish, you would know that I am the angel Gabriel, come to Earth once more to deliver a message to you, dear Mariam.

MARIAM stares for a while before bursting out laughing and looking crazy while doing it. She stands up clapping her hands and looking around

MARIAM: *disbelief* Ha friggin’ ha guys. This is so funny. Now why don’t you come out so that I truly appreciate this hilarious joke.

Gabriel sighs, rolling his eyes and muttering something about “never having this much trouble with the original”

MARIAM turns back to face the alleged angel

MARIAM: Okay, then I’m dreaming, I must be dreaming, otherwise I’m just crazy.

Mariam walks around in a circle quickly before promptly stubbing her toe on the coffee table in the middle of the room. She hisses in pain before pausing and looking back up at Gabriel, who had been tapping his foot in mild impatience

GABRIEL: Are you quite finished?

MARIAM nods slowly and Gabriel smiles

GABRIEL: Good! Now the message is as follows:

He pauses, clearing his throat, lightning crashes, wind blows, and the disembodied voices of a choir filled the room

Gabriel’s eyes glowed gold and his voice boomed



GABRIEL: MARIAM, daughter of Ana, wife of Jocasta. You have been chosen. You shall carry the Son of God in your womb. You shall be called blessed and blessed the fruit of your womb shall be. So sayeth the Lord.

Everything stops

Mariam is left staring up at Gabriel, too many emotions brewing inside her. Fear, confusion, wonder, anger, disbelief

MARIAM: *confused* Wait but the Son of God already came. Why do you need me to do anything?"

GABRIEL: *shrugs* Well, it would appear that humanity has forgotten all that the Saviour came to teach them and are in need of... something of a reminder..."

Mariam is still confused, shaking her head, trying to get her thoughts together

GABRIEL: *smiling* Be not afraid, my child, for this destiny is yours to accept *MARIAM is quiet*

MARIAM: *thinking to herself* Why? Why me? I'm not anything special. I'm a nurse in a small, out-of-the-way town in Southeast Ontario. Sure, I'm a strong believer in God but there are plenty more women, surely, more suited for something like this.

Mariam is hit with the memory of a certain visit to church with her mother when she was young

Set change to a church

They had been listening to a sermon about Moses, and MARIAM (now 9 years old) hadn't understood. Moses wasn't a good speaker and yet God chose him to lead his people. That day, she decided to talk to Pastor Zachary about it

YOUNG MARIAM: But why did God make Moses do a job that needed someone who was good at speaking?

PASTOR ZACHARY: *laughs* God chose Moses to show that anyone can be chosen to do God's work. He wouldn't give someone a job if he wasn't completely sure that they could do it.

Set changes to apartment

Mariam contemplated on this for a while, before taking a deep breath, standing tall to meet Gabriel's eyes and nods

Gabriel grinned and touched a single finger to Mariam's forehead and she opened her eyes to find herself staring at the ceiling in her apartment bedroom

Set changes to a shop and a bathroom



MARIAM buys a pregnancy test from the drug store nearby

She checks and the test was positive

Set changes to a street

Mariam locks eyes with Yossef (a young man). And when they met, something in them just clicked

MARIAM: Yossef, I need to tell you something...I'm pregnant...with a miracle baby.

YOSSEF: *pauses* Hail Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy.

MARIAM begins to tear up

Set changes to a wedding

MARIAM AND YOSSEF are seen getting married

Set changes to a bedroom

MARIAM is seen holding a perfect little boy in her arms, she couldn't help but start to cry tears of pure joy

Yossef wipes her tears away

Suddenly the door flies open to reveal an aged MAN in a priest's suit

MARIAM: *joyful, smiling* Pastor Zachary! What are you doing here?

PASTOR: Well, how could I allow myself to miss the second coming of our lord and saviour when it's happening right under my nose?

He brings Mariam close for a hug and looks at the now sleeping child

PASTOR: And I imagine you already know what you're going to name him?

Mariam looks down at the newborn in her arms

MARIAM: *whispers* Yeshua. Yeshua Ha'Mashiach. Anointed One the Messiah.

.....

INT. ST. JOHN CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM – TUESDAY MORNING



Luca (a teenage boy) walks in and hangs up his backpack and coat on his rack outside his grade 8 classroom. Another boy (Taj) comes behind him and claps his hands on Luca's back

LUCA: Hey, Taj. *Turns around and starts walking into the classroom with Taj* What's up?

TAJ: Dude! *shakes Luca* Luca! Luca! Luca! You won't believe it! We got a new kid!

LUCA: No way! In the middle of the first term? Why?

TAJ: *shrugs* I dunno but Francesco said that he heard Lauren say that she heard from Jayden in the other class whose dad is on the parent teacher committee that his family is JEWISH.

LUCA: For real?! *Taj nods*

*Three girls (Gabriela, Brooke, and Alexandria) run up to them from the hallway. They're all yelling over each other for the two boys.

GABRIELA, BROOKE, ALEXANDRIA: GUYS! GUYS! GUYS!

LUCA: WHOA! CHILL! Deep breath and speak.

The girls breathe

ALEXANDRIA: OKAY! So, we were coming into school from the yard and this guy comes up to us and introduces himself. He said his name is Yeshua and that he's new.

BROOKE: But that's not all. He heard us talking to Sonia about how upset she was about her broken arm and how the doctor said she might never play basketball again, and then Sonia says that she believes that it'll all be fine and that God will sort everything out somehow and yada yada, and then THIS GUY says *deepens voice* "Look and see you are healed by your faith." And then –

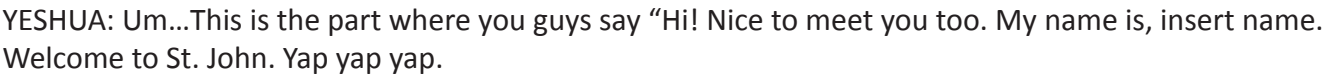
GABRIELA: AND THEN HER CAST. FELL. OFF. AND SHE COULD MOVE HER HAND AGAIN! AND JUSTIN GAVE HER HIS BASKETBALL, AND SHE SHOT, AND IT. WENT. IN.

ALEXANDRIA: She's in the office right now calling her mom to pick her up. She said she's going to church.

Luca and Taj just stare past the girls to the boys (Yeshua) walking into the classroom and over to them

YESHUA: Hi. *Waves slightly* I'm Yeshua, nice to meet you guys.

All are silent and just staring at Yeshua



LUCA: Sorry, sorry. We're just surprised to have our very own Wonder Boy walking around. I'm Luca. And this is my friend, Taj. *Points to Taj who is still gaping* And you already know Gabby, Brooke, and Alex. *They wave lightly* Welcome to the grade 8 class of St. John CES.

INT. ESTONIA, PRISON – FOUR YEARS LATER

*The road is full of people holding signs advocating for the release of a group of wrongfully persecuted Christians. Yeshua, now 18, stood at the front of the crowd of people. Around him stood Luca, Gabriela, Taj, Brooke, Alexandria, Sonia, also 18, and others.

YESHUA: Walk free my brothers and sisters.

Every door in the prison swung open and the persecuted Christians came running out. Cheers rang out through the gathered crowd, and they all began to sing “Hosanna”

LUCA: *smiling at Yeshua* We've come far, eh, Wonder Boy.

Yeshua smiles back and puts an arm around Luca's shoulder as the prison guards rush towards him and his group with handcuffs.

INT. U.N. HEADQUARTERS, GENEVA, TRIAL ROOM – 10 YEARS LATER

Yeshua, now 28, stands in the centre of the room surrounded by reporters and national representatives. All eyes are on him.

U.N. SECRETARY GENERAL: Yeshua Ha'Mashiach. You stand accused of inciting public unrest throughout several countries. What do you have to say to that?

YESHUA: I have nothing to say. Nothing but I have done what I was sent to do. I have spread my Father's word and done his good work. I have nothing more to say.

An uproar goes out through the room and Yeshua is escorted out of the room by two guards. He closes his eyes and begins to pray.



Years after his imprisonment and untimely demise, Yeshua Ha'Mashiach, the son of God Almighty, would still be remembered by the world for who truly he is through years of ministry throughout the world. He healed the sick, saved the sinful, and gave faith to the faithless. And when it was time for the Lord's final coming, he was sure that his children were ready for him.



What if Time Travel Was Real?



SCHOOL: St. Hilary
TEACHER: Blair Tremblay
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Adriana Di Bernardo
UNIT: Dufferin-Peel Elementary
UNIT PRESIDENT: Lori Austin

ELEMENTARY - GRADES 7-8 / NONFICTION
by **Kirsten Fernandes**

Imagine waking up tomorrow and knowing you could have the ability to travel to any point in time! You could walk amongst dinosaurs, meet your future self, or maybe save yourself from that awkward hair phase. So, it begs the question, what if time travel were real? What would you do? The outcomes are endless but also terrifying. Today we are going to take a deep dive into what time travel is. What if it were real and why are we as a society so fascinated by it?

Time travel is a concept that has fascinated scientists and dreamers for centuries, but why are we so intrigued by it? Perhaps it's the idea of going back in time to change history or fix past mistakes. Maybe, it's that tempting urge to see what's waiting in the future. Dating back to the 1980s, time travel has been a foundation for pop culture. It has been featured in countless iconic movies. Some classics like "Back to the Future" showcase a generic and more straightforward time machine. While a more modern, successful movie such as "Avengers: Endgame" launches more complex ideas like Pym Particles and the Quantum Realm. The media influences a lot of our thoughts, so fresh perspectives on time travel over the years has sparked our fascination and enabled our curiosity to continue.

Ethical dilemmas in time travel are born from the thought of how small actions we alter in the past can change the world. Many of us probably fantasize of fixing past mistakes, but should time travel really be used to prevent historical tragedies? The truth is everything we experience today and in the future is shaped by the lessons of history. Think about this, if you were baking some warm cookies, and then you burned yourself taking it out of the oven with your bare hands, would you make that same mistake and not use an oven mitt the next time? No, probably not. In the same way, history has taught mankind lessons to not make the same mistakes in the future. For instance, horrible actions such as the holocaust or slavery, although horrific, have revealed major lessons that have shaped our understanding and societal progress. We grow and learn from our failures, fixing every past mistake and making our lives "perfect" would just be setting ourselves up for disappointment in the future. The morality of changing the past, forces us to evaluate the value of learning from history or having the desire to rewrite it.

If time travel were real, it would have a significant effect on our society, we would be able to witness and have a much greater understanding of our world history. Or we could go back to the time of Jesus and answer questions about our faith that have been unresolved for centuries. However, everyone having the ability to time travel would lead to a meltdown of a rational order of events. Having that power to go past or see what's waiting in the future is an ability I don't think everyone



should have. If you were to go to the past and change something, who's to say that someone else can't go back and undo what you've done. So, who would get to wield this power and for what purpose? There could be a terrible misuse of time travel that could only help people for personal gain. Additionally, the economical state of our world would also change if we had the knowledge from our future selves to inform us on great investments and stocks. Ultimately, the invention of time travel could create multiple realities and embark on rethinking our values and priorities that could change the world.

In conclusion, time travel captures our imagination, offering endless possibilities on how we can explore the past, but also shape the future for worse or for better. It also raises many ethical, and scientific dilemmas that challenge our understanding of morals and the consequences of our actions. While rewriting history or catching a glimpse of our future is extremely fascinating, the risks that may present in our society and in the fabric of time cannot be overshadowed. Time travel is a concept that will always remind us to learn from history, live in the present, and look forward to what's waiting for us in the future.



I'll be Waiting for You at the Oak Tree



SCHOOL: St. Theresa of Lisieux
TEACHER: Jamie Oppedisano
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Deborah Todde
UNIT: York
UNIT PRESIDENT: Mike Totten

SECONDARY - GRADES 9-10 / SHORT STORY
by **Vivian Zhang**

"I called your mom," I whispered. My tone wasn't that of a child admitting they'd broken a plate. It was the voice of a doctor announcing a death. The days grew colder, Christmas already a faint memory. Snow clung to my bare arms, but nothing could match the ice in your eyes.

We stood under the oak tree.

Three years ago, we met under the oak tree. I remember sitting beneath its sprawling branches, letting the sun filter through the leaves. Komorebi – the sunlight threading through the foliage like gold. The oak tree with its roots like veins in the Earth. I opened my eyes, and there you were. You were sunlight and laughter, green leaves tangled in your hair, the haloed girl I fell for instantly.

"Oaklynn," you smirked, leaning on the tree like an old friend. "But you can call me Oak."

The tree became our sanctuary – the place of first words, first kisses, first heartbreaks.

You, me, and our families – we met over Thanksgiving dinner in the ninth grade. You introduced me as your boyfriend. Your mom was radiant with laughter, shoving extra helpings onto my plate. We went to church together, sitting in the same pew, singing carols. It was only the ninth grade, but I *knew* we were building our future. I loved you, and you loved me.

But love isn't a cure-all. Love doesn't solve everything. Love wouldn't save you.

And by tenth grade, you were disappearing before my eyes. You were all fragile edges: hollowed cheeks, twig-like wrists, and laughter that cracked like glass.

"Oak, you're so skinny," I said one day, my voice trembling. It wasn't just skinny – you were brittle. You couldn't have weighed more than ninety pounds.

"Isn't that a good thing?" you'd giggle when I pointed out your weight loss.

I'd point out your deflected grades, your growing silence. You'd smile. I told myself you'd get better. I let your smile – a fractured version of the one I first loved – convince me.

But I couldn't drop it. Not when I saw your arms. Not when I saw your scars.



We argued. We were in the tenth grade now, and I didn't want you throwing your life away. You had a mother, a father, a sister, and you had dreams. Big aspirations. You wanted to go to a top university. So why was Thanksgiving dinner so silent? Why didn't I see you on stage accepting the honor roll like you used to? You, who once dreamed so loudly and brightly, were now a shadow.

The oak tree bore witness to all of it: the kisses, the fights, the tears. It stood silent as I begged you to let me help, its branches sprawling above us like the outstretched arms of someone who wanted to hold us together.

But love isn't glue.

Every meal you skipped left *me* hollow, the ache in my stomach mirroring the one in my chest. Every hour of sleep you lost weighed on *me* like lead, dragging me down into your darkness. And when we sat down for Thanksgiving dinner in the eleventh grade, the silence between you and your family was deafening. I've seen connections stronger between strangers.

At some point, the severity of our arguments far outweighed the redeeming nature of our kisses. I just wanted you to be happy. I *needed* you to be happy. I just didn't know my need for you to be happy would sacrifice our relationship. We would still see each other, but quiet moments were enclosed by unspoken words – words hidden in an effort for one peaceful moment. All that matter was that I loved you.

It was January when I realized love might not be enough to keep you alive.

It was a cold night, the kind where the world seemed to hold its breath. The wind howled through the empty streets, slicing through the air like a blade, sharp enough to leave scars on anyone strolling outside. You wore your own scars. I found you under the oak tree, your body curled in on itself, your skin paler than the snow beneath you. Your breath came in shallow gasps, your eyes barely open.

"I can't stay awake," you whispered, as if speaking was a burden.

Your body trembled under my touch, fragile as paper, one gust of wind away from disappearing into the snow. Your words were distant, as if you were saying them from someplace far beyond.

"Stay with me," I whispered, my voice cracking. "Please, Oak, stay awake. Look at me."

You didn't answer. Your eyes drifted for a moment before fluttering open again, barely slits of dull hazel. They were unfocused, as though you were somewhere far away, somewhere I couldn't reach. I wanted to cry, but all I could do was hold you tighter.

The oak tree loomed above us, its branches bare and brittle in the winter air. It had seen us at our happiest, our loudest, our most alive. Now, it watched in silence as I begged it not to let you go.

I brought you home, then ran back to mine. The wind sliced my cheek as I sprinted back to my



house, my legs and arms bare. I thought of your mother's face when she opened the door for me, of how her anticipation quickly turned into worry, of how she carried you in and thanked me. Of how I was shut out, the door closing behind her.

I loved you, and for a while, that love kept me from calling your mom. I didn't want to betray you or risk losing you. But in the end, I realized I *love* you. So, I called your mom.

It was the first time I cried since I met you, since I saw you at that oak tree. As I gripped my phone, I cried about your hollowed cheeks, your twig-like bones, how you distanced yourself from friends at school. I reminded her of the daughter she used to see – the one who laughed over Thanksgiving dinner, who sang carols with me at church, who had so much life ahead of her. She thanked me for telling her, her own voice cracking through the line before hanging up.

The days after I called your mom were a blur. I did what you always told me not to. It was why we argued. I knew that you would be upset, that you would be hurt. It was why I would lose you either way. I was going to lose you regardless, but everyone else didn't have to.

So, that day you asked to meet me under the oak tree in the cold winter, I admitted that I called your mom. After a shimmer of betrayal flashed through your eyes, you left. You stopped talking to me. You stopped seeing me.

But I did not stop seeing *you*. I watched, patiently in our last year of high school, how you pieced yourself together, one fragile shard at a time. I called your mom, and we never talked again. But I did watch you from afar.

You graduated with honours, wearing the same gleeful smile I fell in love with while shaking the principal's hand.

You got into your dream school. Your mom sent me the pictures of your certificate. The prayers paid off.

You attended your sister's wedding. I wasn't there, but I saw videos – videos of you clapping and singing along. I saw your tear up from happiness while giving a toast to your sister. I once wiped those tears under the oak tree.

You will soon be attending your own wedding, I hear. You found someone special, a wonderful young man that must mean everything to you because you would never settle for anything less. I won't be there.

But, I'll...be waiting at the oak tree.

It's where I first saw you, haloed by sunlight, your smile lighting up the world. It's where I loved you first, where I loved you the most, and where you let me go. I sit alone on Thanksgiving now, the laughter at our table softer than it once was. I go to church every Sunday, sitting at the pew and praying for you – always by myself.



New Virus On The Block



SCHOOL: St. Augustine
TEACHER: Danielle Pirrello
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Michael Oyston
UNIT: York
UNIT PRESIDENT: Mike Totten

SECONDARY - GRADES 9-10 / POEM
by **Kaylee Selvarajah**

Covid isn't just staying six feet clear,
Covid isn't just the needle I fear.
It chills the body all through the night,
Disrupts your sleep as you shake with fright.

Covid seeks to seal my fate,
Breathing makes me suffocate.
The thick black veil I despise,
Our muffled voices behind N95s.

Whispers linger from the days gone by,
Awaiting a cure with a hopeful sigh.
Hands left reaching with no embrace,
Screens replacing every face.

Classrooms vacant, halls left bare,
Laughter swallowed by stagnant air.
Through frosted glass, we'd wave hello,
A world confined in a solemn glow.

The empty streets, the closed-up doors,
The quiet echoes on the floors.
We long for touch, for voices clear,
For days when we lived without the fear.

The days stretched long in endless grey,
Hope seemed distant, locked away.
New screens flashing numbers high,
A daily toll that made us cry.

Hospitals filled with frantic cries,
Echoing fears, tear-stained goodbyes.



Doctors fought through endless nights,
Hearts weighed down by dimming lights.

Holding hands that grew ice-cold,
Stories of bravery left untold.
The price of care, the weight of pain,
A world left reeling in the rain.

Covid, you've drained me to the point of fatigue,
You stand at the top in your own league.
But just when you think you have the lead,
Here comes the needle to cease your deed.

Yet, the battle isn't over still,
The world moves slow, against its will.
Variants rise, like shadows that creep,
In a world where normal feels out of reach.

But hope, like light, begins to shine,
In the hands of science, hope aligns.
The needles bring a chance to mend,
A path toward the pandemic's end.

A single shot, a spot on skin,
Marked the day we'd start to win.
Though wounds run deep, we rise once more,
Stronger than we were before.

So Covid, you may have had your reign,
Brought the world both loss and pain.
But even through the darkest night,
Humanity will find the light.

In times of grief, we learned to cope,
Through acts of kindness, we kept hope.
A mask, a smile behind the screen,
A lifeline in this in-between.

For though the storm may come again,
We rise, together, to begin.
The light of hope will never die,
We face the future, reaching high.



Dead Upon Arrival



SCHOOL: Bishop Allen
TEACHER: Melanie Gaudet
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE:
Drazana Cuvalo-Pedro
UNIT: Toronto Secondary
UNIT PRESIDENT: Antonella Di Carlo

SECONDARY - GRADES 9-10 / PLAY

by **Isabella Cabiria Ciaccia, Amelia Mae Macleod,
Andrea Esteves, Oskar Samek, Riden Torres**

INT. – Train Lounge – 8 PM

Bentley, Priscilla, and Valerie enter the train and take their seats. California Dreamin' (1965) plays in the background. Felix enters. Lights dim, spotlight on Felix.

Felix: Tickets, tickets!

Felix goes from seat to seat, checking tickets. Everyone searches for their tickets. He hole punches the tickets.

Felix: *(Facing audience, dramatically)* Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for joining us for this train ride. I hope that upon arrival; you are all pleased with the service I provided. Enjoy the ride!

Felix exits. Music starts. Lights up. Music stops.

Bentley: Strange fellow. *(laughs, goes back to reading)*

Lights fade. 3 knocks.

Elaine: Hello?

Door creaks open.

Elaine: Hi there! Is this First Class?

Valerie: Yes it is!

Elaine sits beside Valerie, glaring at Bentley.



Valerie: Hi there! *(puts out hand)* My name's Valerie, but you can call me Val!

Elaine: Hello. My name's Elaine. *(soft smile at Valerie)*

The cart goes silent. Everyone gets back to doing their activities (ex. Priscilla brushes her hair, and Val reads a Miss Marple Book). Lights dim once again. Another knock comes.

Priscilla: My goodness! Can I not get 5 seconds of silence?

Elaine: *(to Val)* What a jerk.

They laugh. Door opens to reveal Felix.

Felix: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, Felix here, at your service. You'll note the selection of delectable snacks before you. No money is required – this is just a little gift from me and the conductor. Please, help yourselves and enjoy!

Val: Oh, how lovely and kind! Send him my thanks, Felix.

Felix: Certainly Miss, can I offer you any snacks?

Val: Mhm... A coffee would be lovely.

Felix pours Valerie a cup of coffee.

Bentley: Felix!

Felix heads towards Bentley.

Bentley: I'll have tea, green.

Felix: As you wish sir. *(Felix rummages through the cart)* Mhm. It appears that I forgot to add green tea to this cart. I know for certain I have some. *(his hands clasp)* Do you mind waiting?

Bentley: That's fine, just don't take too long. *(groans)*

Felix: Of course. *(bows)*

Felix leaves in a rush. Elaine looks over her seat.

Elaine: Hey! Ugh.

She slouches back into her seat.

Elaine: He had poptarts.



Val taps on Elaine's shoulder comfortably. Bentley gets up from his seat and steps over Priscilla.

Priscilla: Do you mind? Ugh!

Bentley: Whatever...

Priscilla: Where are you going in such a hurry?

Bentley: That is none of your business.

Bentley continues to step over Priscilla, to go towards the bathroom. Felix fixes Bentley his food in the kitchen. The cart is silent once again and the music resumes.

Felix: Bentley, are you in there?

Bentley: What?!

Felix: Just so you know, I've left your green tea and some complimentary biscuits just on the side table!

Valerie: *(Valerie closes her book)* Excuse me dear, would you mind getting up for me? I'm afraid I also have to use the powder room.

Elaine: Yeah, sure.

After Valerie reaches the bathroom, Elaine gets up as well.

Elaine: Actually, I have to go too...

Priscilla: What are they doing, having a party in there? Jeez!

Elaine: Shut your trap, it's a free country!

Priscilla rolls her eyes and looks away.

INT. – Outside The Bathroom Door – While Elaine and Valerie Wait

Valerie: *(looks out the train window)* Elaine, look at the stars!

Elaine: Cool! Back at home, I used to see stars like these every night. *(Elaine says this as her back is towards the audience, poisoning Bentley's tea.)*

Valerie: In my city I can't see the stars. Lucky you.

Elaine: Oh, I didn't grow up in the city. I grew up closer to Kernville.



Valerie: Oh, I buy strawberries from that area – *(gets cut off by Bentley who comes out of the washroom)*

Bentley: Are you going to move?

Valerie: Oh sorry! *(Valerie makes a sad face.)*

Bentley grabs only his tea and goes back to the lounge. Elaine taps on Val's back.

Felix: Bentley, did you get your biscuits?

Bentley: Damn it! I forgot them!

Bentley leaves his tea at his seat and goes back to get his biscuits. Priscilla laughs and reaches for her bag. This is when she has an opportunity to poison Bentley.

MONTAGE: *Valerie goes to the washroom, comes out, then Elaine goes. Meanwhile everyone continues to do normal stuff.*

Felix: Sincerest apologies, everyone, but it is 11 PM, which is our train's curfew. Please, make your way over to your compartments for bed.

Everyone exits stage right.

INT. – Bentley's Compartments – 11 PM

Only Bentley enters the stage. He sits down on his chair, takes a sip of the tea, stands up, dies dramatically, falling on the floor.

INT. – First Class Compartments – 8 AM

VOICEOVER:

Knocking sound.

Felix: Elaine, breakfast is ready!

Elaine: Give me a couple of minutes.

Knocking sound.

Felix: Priscilla, time for breakfast!

Priscilla: Gah, even on vacation I can't sleep in!

Knocking sound.



Felix: Valerie, breakfast is ready!

Valerie: Okay, I'll be right out, dear. Thank you for all your help!

Felix knocks on Bentley's door.

Felix: Bentley, it's breakfast time! *(pause)* Bentley? *(knocks harder)* Sir?

Felix fumbles with keys, then opens the door. He's horrified and stands there for a bit.

Cast walks in from stage right, and sees Felix petrified.

Valerie: What's with all the ruckus? Everything okay?

Elaine: Yeah, what's going on? *(yawns)*

Priscilla: I thought breakfast was ready? Why are we all crowding around Bentley's door?

Felix: Um... *(moves out of the way shakily)*

Women gasp.

Elaine: Oh my god!

Elaine rushes into the room.

Elaine: I'm first aid certified. Get out of the way!

Elaine gets onto knees.

Elaine: *(sigh)* he's been out too long... *(covers her face)*

Valerie: Oh no... how could this have happened. He seemed like a healthy young man. *(gets onto knees beside Elaine)*

Elaine: I...I...don't know!

Priscilla: Well, finally something interesting. *(stares at dead body)*

Valerie: Are you crazy?! *(gets up from knees)* A man just died?! *(points to Bentley)*

Elaine: That's so messed up, what are you thinking!

Felix: Maybe it was something in the tea?

Priscilla: Yes...look at the teacup. There's residue of something... the tea would have evaporated in less



than a few hours. Elaine, how long do you think he's been out for?

Elaine: Maybe around like... 10 hours at least.

Valerie covers her face and turns away from the body. Priscilla picks up the teacup.

Priscilla: Whatever this stuff is, it's not tea...

Felix: He wouldn't add something to his tea that he'd be allergic to, right? Nobody would do that!

Valerie: *(quietly)* Was he suicidal?

Priscilla: Well to be fair he was making us all suicidal, wasn't he?

Valerie: Priscilla Ford, that's no way to talk about the deceased!

Felix: I don't think he would've killed himself. Look, I think he has a family!

Elaine: Ugh! This is terrible. His poor wife. *(looks at Bentley's family picture.)*

Valerie: You know... If Bentley didn't take his own life, then that leaves only one option...

Priscilla: Someone on this train killed Bentley!

Bentley (Ghost): WAIT! *(snaps fingers)*

Spotlight goes on Bentley. All characters except Bentley freeze in place. Bentley paces around the other characters.

Bentley (Ghost): *(angry)* What happened?! I spent my entire life trying to be perfect—first becoming a great student at Kernville High, then earning a scholarship to a top university, graduating, starting a family, and finally founding my own law firm. I was set to finally enjoy my success with my family. Only for what? For one of you to poison me? You're telling me I did all of this for nothing? *(laughs)* No. I will do something lasting with my life, even if that means doing it as a ghost. I will find out who did this. *(points to Felix)* You! You went out of your way to give me that tainted cup of green tea! *(points to Elaine and Valerie)* You guys! You were alone with my tea while I was in the bathroom. Were you guys really interested in the stars or was it just a distraction? *(points to Priscilla)* And you! You were annoyed with everyone on the train, and you could have added something to my tea while I was getting my biscuits. Screw you all! Any of you could have done it. Killer, whoever you may be, listen to me carefully: I will find out who you are.

Everyone unfreezes. Lights out.



INT. – Train Lounge – 11 AM

Elaine: Hey, Val, don't you read those Miss Marple books?

Valerie: Yeah, why?

Elaine: If anyone on this train is going to figure this out, it's gonna be you!

Felix: That's an amazing idea! My brother used to read those books and he's a professional detective now.

Priscilla: Just because you read those books doesn't mean you are a certified detective.

Elaine: Well, she's the best bet we got. *(throws a stink eye at Priscilla)*

Felix: It worked for my brother, so... is it not better that we try to solve this?

Elaine: If we solve this before the train ride is over...we won't all get in trouble.

Valerie: Mhm...okay, that settles it. *(claps hands)* Felix, would you mind sitting down here, everyone else please leave.

Felix: Of course!

Valerie: Can you state your name and age for the record please.

Felix: My name is Felix Lafontaine, and I'm 32 years old.

Valerie: Why are you on this train?

Felix: I work here. As a server, an assistant. Really, the only job I don't do is conducting the train!

Valerie: Well, that checks out. Okay, moving on. What do you think happened to Bentley?

Felix: Well, obviously, someone's killed him!

Valerie: Any other thoughts? Maybe about the tea...

Felix: Maybe there was something put into the tea! I don't know! (*Felix gets up and slowly sits back down*)

Valerie: Okay, calm down, there's no reason to panic. *(pause)* Let's move on to the last question: Have you ever seen Bentley before?

Felix: I think I've seen him before, yes. He travelled frequently.



Valerie: Okay, thank you. You may leave. Elaine, would you mind answering a few questions?

Elaine: Okay. *(smiles)*

Valerie: Would you please state your name and age for the record?

Elaine: My name is Elaine Brown, and I'm 34 years old.

Valerie: Why are you on this train?

Elaine: Why am I on this train? Well, I am here because... I'm trying to get into the LA scene. I'm going for a huge audition for a part in a movie.

Valerie: Wow, very interesting. Next up: what do you think happened to Bentley?

Elaine: Well obviously this act was intentional, it was definitely caused by himself or someone else. He did not die of natural causes. He seemed healthy.

Valerie: So you believe he was killed, and no other details? Okay, last question: have you ever seen Bentley before yesterday?

Elaine: Sorry, that's all I can think of right now and to answer your last question. I've never seen Bentley ever...

Valerie: Thank you. Please let Priscilla know she is next.

(Waits until Priscilla sits down.)

Valerie: Priscilla! Hello!

Priscilla: Hi

Valerie: Would you please state your name and age for the record?

Priscilla: What record?

Valerie stares down Priscilla.

Priscilla: Whatever, my name is Priscilla Ford, I am 30 years old.

Valerie: Why are you on this train?

Priscilla: I'm finally going home to my family after 2 months of travelling for my father's business.

Valerie: Okay. Um...what do you think happened to Bentley?



Priscilla: Well, given the residue on the teacup, I think Bentley was poisoned by someone on this train and they're trying to cover it up.

Valerie: Thanks for your answer, I am happy that someone is actually giving thought to this. Lastly, have you ever seen the deceased before?

Priscilla: Where, pray tell, would I have seen Bentley, a married man in business completely different from what I do?

Valerie: Okay, thank you for your time. Please leave me in silence.

Priscilla starts to leave, Valerie looks at notes. They freeze as Bentley comes in.

Bentley (Ghost): You know, I find it odd that you haven't gotten interrogated yet. Why are you on this train? Do YOU know what happened to me? Have we ever met before? Why –

Priscilla: Wait. *(turns back)* You know what, Val? Maybe it's time for you to be interrogated.

Valerie: I guess that makes sense...

Priscilla: Well, *detective*, why don't you answer your own questions?

Valerie: Mhm...Okay. My name is Valerie Vanderwald, and I am 50 years young. I am on this train because I am visiting my son who just moved to LA for university. I think that Bentley was poisoned by someone who held a grudge against him. Who that is, I don't know. And no, I have never seen Bentley in my life.

Priscilla nods and walks off. Valerie gathers her things and exits.

INT. – Train Lounge – 1 PM

Valerie: None of this makes sense! All these people seem like good, normal people... *Come on, Valerie, think!* What would Miss Marple do? What would she do, what would she do?!

Valerie goes to her seat and sighs. She sits on Elaine's jacket. Priscilla talks to Felix in the background.

Valerie: Oh, what's this? Is this not the logo for *Strawberry Fields Forever*? Wait... who would work there? What? This makes no sense. *(inspects flannel)* Hm...What's in the pocket? Wait, strawberry pesticides, isn't that strange? Priscilla! *(gets up)*

Priscilla and Felix are talking.

Valerie: Sorry dear, can I steal Priscilla for a second?

Felix: Oh, sure.



Felix pauses.

Priscilla: Felix... Shoo.

Felix rushes off stage to an employees only area.

Priscilla: What do you want?

Valerie: Look at this shirt.

Priscilla: What about it?

Valerie: The logo, Strawberry Fields Forever, that's the farm where I get my strawberries from.

Priscilla: Okay... and why would I care?

Valerie: No, look what is in the pocket! Do you think this could have been the murder weapon?

Priscilla: Huh... you may be on to something, Miss Marple. *(chuckles as she takes the vial)*

Valerie: Do you think strawberry pesticides could kill someone?

Priscilla tries to speak.

Elaine: Hey, put that down!

Priscilla: Elaine, is this shirt yours?

Elaine: Why else would I tell you to put it down, stupid!

Felix: Hey, calm down! Is there a problem here?

Elaine: No, not anymore, sir. *(grabs shirt)* Keep your paws off my stuff.

Priscilla: Elaine, but how do you explain this? *(pulls out poison)*

Felix: Wait... Is that not the same colour of the residue that we found in Bentley's teacup? Elaine... Elaine, did you kill Bentley??

Valerie: Well, did you kill him?!

Elaine: Valerie, you just don't get it. You have no idea what it's like to grind every single day, just to make ends meet. I dedicated my entire life to that farm, putting in more effort than most kids my age never had to, just to afford my food. But that's the way things are, right? The rich get everything. And people like us? We get nothing. I watched my own father die, Valerie. I saw sickness tear away at a man



who gave me all my opportunities all because I couldn't afford a doctor. I remember that fateful day when my guidance counsellor told me Bentley got the scholarship. He claimed that Bentley worked harder. Bentley just had it all, didn't he? Born into wealth, never had to lift a finger in his life. Everything handed to him – education, opportunity, a future. He didn't have to fight for any of it. And there he was, taking what was mine. My scholarship. My future. The one thing that was gonna get me off that farm and live my life! I earned that scholarship. I fought for it, Valerie. But Bentley? He waltzed in like it was his by birthright. He just took it even when he didn't deserve it. I deserved it. But that's the world we live in, isn't it? A man like Bentley can just waltz in, take everything I've worked for, and nobody says a word. So yes, I poisoned him. He wasn't just someone who stole my scholarship and future; he embodied everything that's wrong with this world, a world where men like him get everything handed to them while women like me have to struggle for the bare minimum. I did what I had to do. If that makes me a killer, then so be it.

Valerie: That's no reason to kill, he had a family!

Felix: You still killed a man who had a young daughter!

Elaine: Well, I had a family too?!

Priscilla: But you're still alive, Elaine, you killed a man! How are you going to come back from this?

Felix silently leaves and calls police. Train sound effect. The train stops.

Felix: *(afraid)* We've arrived. Elaine, can you stay back for a moment? Everyone else, please, exit the train.

Others exit in a line. Elaine is at the end of the line and freezes before she gets off.

Bentley appears with a snap.

Bentley: So, it was you...after all these years you still held a grudge. Sure, I ruined your life, blah blah blah. But you did something even worse. You didn't just ruin my life, but you took my life. You made me dead upon arrival. You murdered me... Took me away from my family. You crazy woman!

Bentley walks away, then goes to sit on one of the chairs.

Officers Esteves and Ciaccia enter.

Officer Esteves: Elaine Brown?

Elaine: Yes?

Officer Esteves: You are under arrest for the murder of Bentley J. Fox.

Officer Ciaccia goes to handcuff Elaine, and then Elaine shoves Ciaccia to the ground.



Officer Esteves: Elaine! Ciaccia are you okay? *(helping Ciaccia)*

Elaine: I thought they taught you self defence in the academy. *(Laughs. As she jumps, she yells this)* I hope Bentley liked the tea!

Officer Ciaccia: Esteves we have to go! *(both officers run off)*

Bentley (Ghost): What is happening?

Strawberry Fields Forever plays.



A Few Reflections on Navigating Anger in Children



SCHOOL: St. Elizabeth
TEACHER: Bernice Wu
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Emilia Adorante
UNIT: York
UNIT PRESIDENT: Mike Totten

SECONDARY - GRADES 9-10 / NONFICTION
by **Sabina Alexandra Colceriu**

A small mishap, something ordinary for a child of her age. A minor slip and a slight fall down the stairs. A fall resulting in some tears that should dry up with the help of a hug and some ice on the painful spot. However, attempts to comfort her and make her feel better were met by a hostile glare, followed almost instantly by crying. Screaming. Hiding. Shielding her scarlet, teary face with her hands. “Don’t look at me!” she shrieked repeatedly through heavy sobs. And again, with her rage reaching primal levels, “Don’t look at me!”

Sonia Leia, just shy of four years, did not let anyone get close or lay eyes on her. Huddling under a chair, she draped herself in cloths and blankets, trying in vain to conceal herself from the rest of the world, as if she were embarrassed to suffer, to cry, to show her weakness. Nonetheless, continuously crying and screaming, “Don’t look at me!” Wrath and craze seemed to have taken over her sweet brown eyes. An alternate conscience, a soul of burning fury. Despair and anger. A child pulling away from a hug, a child choosing to suffer alone.

After what felt like hours of yelling and suffering, pain and sadness slowly crept away. Her energetic personality returned. Giggles. Running around. “Let’s play!” Finally, the agony was over. At last, the young child was back to being herself.

Why had all this happened?

What are some causes of anger in children?

Often, when met by feverish anger and haste from little ones, the adult’s temptation is to respond on impulse, often without constructive consequences for the angry child. The ideal response would be to pause and dig deeply in order to discover the underlying causes, the roots of the child’s suffering and angry behaviour. Psychologist A. Pruess (2022) states that “there is more to anger than meets the eye.” She believes that an angry child is trying to cope and survive the best they know how. “Anger is survival” (Pruess, 2022).

According to research, physical causes, such as low blood sugar, lack of sleep, growth spurts, and learning challenges can influence a child’s reactions to various stimuli. Moreover, certain stages of development come with prolific brain growth. Because the child’s synapses and neurons work hard during these developmental leaps, the child has an obstructed ability to use some areas of the brain,



specifically those that regulate self-control and emotions. All these factors can lead to angry responses and aggressive behaviour.

Emotional factors can also be important contributors to angry reactions in children. One cause of anger that might be hard to spot is anxiety. While in a state of anxiety, the “fight, flight, or freeze” response is activated in the human brain. While adults or even older children might resort to the “flight” or “freeze” response, when young children feel threatened, they often choose to defend themselves, which is equivalent to triggering the “fight” response. One example is related to routine disruptions which can lead to children feeling unsafe in their environment. Once the sense of safety is lost, the brain switches on its life and death regulation centre, causing the part in charge of critical thinking and problem-solving to power down. Now, the child will lash out, run away, or hide.

Anger can also be an expression of a child’s powerlessness. Child-directed play has proven to instill a healthy sense of creativity, collaboration, and control in children. However, psychologists have noticed that many of today’s children spend much of their time following the directions of busy parents or caregivers and using passively-entertaining or minimally-interactive devices. Hence, children have little opportunities to use voluntary, enjoyable, and purposeful playtime to learn to problem solve, develop social skills, and minimize emotional problems.

Unmet needs are another source of anger in children. In order to achieve healthy development, both physically and mentally, children must feel they are strongly connected to their parents or caregivers. A child has a biological need for a close relationship with caregivers, and meeting this need helps the child to achieve a sense of security and “a strong foundation for becoming a happy and productive adult” (Foley, 2019). According to research, angry behaviour is often a quick way in which children convey the message that they do not feel seen or heard as much as they need to be seen or heard.

How do adults in different cultures deal with anger in children?

Children all around the world display their anger in similar ways, but the manner adults address the anger in children differs from culture to culture.

In the 1960s, Harvard graduate student Jean Briggs lived for over a year with an Inuit family in the tundra above the Arctic Circle. This family, along with the rest of the community, followed the same laws by which their ancestors had lived for thousands of years. Briggs made “a landmark discovery about the nature of human anger” (Douclevff & Greenhalgh, 2019). She noticed that Inuit adults were able to control their anger incredibly well. Moreover, she found that parents never scolded or raised their voice at their children, even when children’s misbehavior was very serious. According to Douclevff & Greenhalgh (2019), “traditional Inuit parenting is incredibly nurturing and tender.” Inuit people believe that if children misbehave “they’re upset about something and [parents] have to figure out what it is.” Therefore, the golden rule of Inuit parents is to control their own anger and avoid yelling at children, because “yelling at a small child [is] demeaning. It is as if the adult is having a tantrum” (Briggs in Douclevff & Greenhalgh, 2019). According to the article “How Inuit Parents Teach Kids To Control Their Anger,” Inuit people use the ancient tool of storytelling to discipline their children. Even though some of the stories may seem scary, the authors of the article conclude that, “oral storytelling is what’s



known as a human universal. For tens of thousands of years, it has been a key way that parents teach children about values and how to behave.” The Inuit community is working hard to keep this parenting approach alive, even though colonization over the past century has been influencing their traditions in a damaging way.

Other cultures around the world have different approaches to dealing with angry children. The Kalahari San are the oldest inhabitants of Southern Africa, where they have lived for at least 20,000 years. Here, parents are less likely to intervene with lessons on anger management but are tolerant of their angered children. As opposed to responding in anger themselves, mothers are calm during the course of a tantrum and ignore the angry or aggressive child. Scoldings are not uncommon in this area, but parents consider children to be irresponsible, and believe that as the children grow up, they will learn to stop having tantrums and learn to control their anger themselves. Another group of people, the Ovimbundu, an ethnic group living in central Angola, are strongly against displays of anger. They teach their children that anger is the main cause of sorcery and is traditionally feared. Therefore, it is “taboo” and children must simply avoid expressing it.

Other regions utilise Western-like concepts of disciplining children who are angry or aggressive. On the Pacific atoll of Ulithi in Oceania, physical punishment, such as hitting with the open palm, is most often used, since it is the most feared by the child. Children are sometimes threatened with stories that spirits will give them diseases if they do not control themselves. The Western idea of hitting to discipline angry children can even be present in Canada. Here, hitting a child is allowed as long as “legal parameters” are met. This means parents can use reasonable force on a child by way of correction. The force must be minor, no matter the actions of the child. Adults are not allowed to hit a child younger than two or older than twelve.

What does research suggest?

Decades of research prove that healthy child development clearly does not come from using any form of punishment. Hitting can be very traumatic for children. A study that collected data from over 160,000 children reveals that the more a child was hit, the more likely they were to experience aggressive and angry behaviours as well as mental health issues. The study, whose findings were published by the American Psychological Association, found no better behaviour due to hitting.

Psychologists and educators agree on one aspect: the period of infancy and early years is undoubtedly the richest in a child’s life. It is the period when children grow and develop in all areas, including the emotional and social ones, by “absorbing” the information offered by their environment. Dr. Alexis Carrel, writes in his book, *L’Homme cet Inconnu*, that “instead of ignoring the early years, it is our duty to cultivate them with the utmost care” (Montessori, 1988, p. 5). Researchers encourage parents to teach their children that there is nothing wrong with experiencing any feelings, including strong emotions such as anger. Once children know that all of their feelings are validated and respected, they learn that emotions do not have to be repressed, but “channelled to constructive ends.”



As anxiety is a major emotional factor leading to angry or even aggressive responses in children, psychologists and educators suggest several approaches to help children gain and maintain a sense of safety and control.

Routines are of utmost importance in a child's daily schedule. By following the same routines everyday, the child learns what to expect and what the expectations are, thus establishing the feeling "that life is safe." Nevertheless, there must be flexibility within routines in order to allow the child to develop a sense of creativity, power, and control. According to Stanwood (2020), "the child is looking for a sense of balance – between routines and flexibility – between curious wonder and everyday expectations." A somewhat similar concept was introduced in 1949 by Dr. Maria Montessori in her book, *The Absorbent Mind*. Montessori states, "discipline in freedom seemed to solve a problem which had hitherto seemed insoluble" (p. 184). What Montessori suggests is to prepare the environment and expose children to activities that are attractive, practical, purposeful, and challenging. Once the child learns how to complete an activity and is immersed in it, the child will concentrate deeply in order to "master" this activity. This deep concentration marks "the arrival of 'discipline'" which will "spring up spontaneously" (Montessori, 1988, p. 184). Discipline, in Dr. Maria Montessori's view, is equivalent with inner order, which is the answer to a healthily developed child. She believes that "if the child is placed upon a path in which he can organize his conduct and construct his mental life, all will be well. His troubles will disappear, his nightmares vanish, his digestion will become normal, and his greediness subside" (Montessori, 1988, p. 182).

Research suggests the importance of caregivers being proactive by giving children frequent opportunities to talk about emotions, being positive role models by practicing healthy coping skills and self-control, and especially ensuring children feel loved and valued at all times.

Navigating anger in children is not easy for a simple reason: anger, although considered a "basic emotion" that is universal to all humans, is rooted in other emotions and occurs as a reaction to them. It is the adult's duty to guide their child through the early years of life because, as Dr. Montessori states, each stage of life lays the foundation for the one following it. "In the same way, the caterpillar and the butterfly are two creatures very different to look at and in the way they behave, yet the beauty of the butterfly comes from its life in the larval form, and not through any efforts it may make to imitate another butterfly" (Montessori, 1988, p. 177).

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The Heartbeat of Everglow



SCHOOL: Corpus Christi
TEACHER: Kelly Rehel
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Kelly Rehel
UNIT: Halton Secondary
UNIT PRESIDENT: Vanessa Slee

SECONDARY - GRADES 11-12 / SHORT STORY
by **Mia Jordanovski**

The Everglow Woods thrived under a gentle, pulsing magic, casting a glow that bathed its flora and fauna in hues of emerald, amber, and violet. Leaves shimmered like glass under moonlight, streams glinted as if they carried liquid starlight, and soft whispers of wind carried the forest's songs. For centuries, healers had safeguarded this balance, nurturing the connection between the woods and the magic that sustained it. Now, that responsibility rested on Aurelia's shoulders – a mantle that felt both too big and too heavy to bear.

Six months had passed since her mother, Lirabelle, had died. Lirabelle had been the forest's healer, tending to its needs with a grace that seemed effortless. In the wake of her loss, Aurelia had tried to step into the role, but doubt crept into every corner of her mind. She sat in her cozy hollow carved into a great tree, her fingers trembling as she attempted to prepare a tincture.

The herbal mixture, meant to be a simple remedy for minor ailments, refused to cooperate. The consistency was off, and the golden glow her mother's mixtures always had eluded her. Aurelia sighed heavily, resting her head against her workbench.

"I can't do this," she murmured.

On her shoulder, Miri – a timid yet loyal ladybug companion – landed gently and hummed softly. The little creature had been with Aurelia since childhood, a gift from her mother, and she now served as a quiet reminder of the life Aurelia was struggling to live up to.

Aurelia glanced out the hollow's window and froze. The ferns outside, always so vibrant, had wilted. Their emerald glow had faded to a dull yellow, and black streaks marred their delicate stems. Alarmed, Aurelia rushed outside to examine them.

As she knelt to touch the plants, she noticed a small squirrel nearby, its movements unsteady. The creature blinked sluggishly, its once-glossy fur matted, and its usual energy dimmed.

"What's happening to you?" Aurelia whispered panic rising in her chest.



The next few days revealed the answer, though it offered no comfort. The illness spread rapidly, moving from plant to plant and affecting creatures across the Everglow Woods. Glowing flowers dimmed, their petals curling inward. Trees creaked with a heaviness that was not just physical but magical. Birds stopped singing; their fragile forms weakened by the mysterious ailment.

Aurelia worked tirelessly, turning to every remedy her mother's old journal described. She prepared tinctures, poultices, and infusions, but nothing seemed to help. With each failure, her doubts grew louder. She sat one evening by her workbench, her head in her hands, staring at the array of vials that represented hours of fruitless labor.

"I'm not her," she said aloud, her voice thick with frustration and grief. "I'll never be her."

Miri buzzed softly around her, landing on her shoulder in a gesture of comfort. Aurelia reached up to gently stroke the tiny creature.

"What do I do, Miri? The forest is dying, and I'm failing it."

But the forest didn't wait for her grief. Its pulse, once steady and strong, grew faint. The Woods needed its healer, and Aurelia had no choice but to seek help. She left her hollow and ventured toward Elder Willow, the ancient tree spirit who had mentored her mother.

Elder Willow's immense form rose from the forest floor, his gnarled bark covered in glowing moss and delicate vines. His face emerged in the crevices of the trunk, wise and weathered, with eyes that seemed to see into Aurelia's very soul.

"You come seeking answers, child," he said, his voice like the rumble of distant thunder.

"Yes, Elder Willow," Aurelia said, her voice trembling. "The forest is ill, and I don't know how to help it. I've tried everything I know, but nothing works."

"The illness is not a sickness of the body but of the spirit," Elder Willow explained. "The forest's magic is unbalanced. You must listen to its heartbeat."

"Heartbeat?" Aurelia frowned. "I don't understand. How do I—"

"The forest remembers," Elder Willow interrupted, his tone cryptic. "Even when we do not. Trust it, and it will guide you."

Aurelia left the elder tree feeling more confused than reassured. Listen to the forest's heartbeat? Trust it to guide her? How could she possibly trust a magic she didn't fully understand?

Still, she had no choice but to try. With Miri buzzing at her side, she ventured into the heart of the forest, deeper than she had ever dared to go. The faint pulse Elder Willow had mentioned seemed to tug at her, an almost imperceptible rhythm beneath her feet. The air grew thick with magic, heavier and richer with each step.

The pulse guided her to an overgrown glade, hidden beneath a canopy of glowing vines. Aurelia gasped at the sight. The space felt sacred, untouched by the illness that plagued the rest of the woods.



At its center stood a small, moss-covered altar surrounded by rare, luminescent plants. She approached cautiously, her heart pounding as she realized she had been here before – long ago, with her mother.

“This was hers,” Aurelia murmured.

Among the vines, she found a leather-bound journal marked with her mother’s handwriting. She opened it, her hands trembling as she read. The journal detailed Lirabelle’s connection to the forest’s magic, revealing secrets Aurelia had never known. Her mother had cultivated this sanctuary, a place where the forest’s magic was strongest.

One entry caught Aurelia’s eye: a description of the Starpetal, a rare flower capable of restoring balance to the forest. “A single wound can heal the wounds of the Woods,” the journal read, “but its magic is fragile and must be handled with care.”

Determined, Aurelia searched the glade until she found the Starpetal. Its delicate, translucent petals glowed faintly, as though barely clinging to life. She gathered the flower with reverence, wrapping it in a silk pouch before making her way back to her hollow.

There, she worked late into the night, her mother’s journal open beside her. Every step of the preparation required precision, and Aurelia relied on both her instincts and the memory of her mother’s gentle guidance. She heard Lirabelle’s voice in her mind: *“The forest will guide you if you trust it, Aurelia. You are stronger than you believe.”*

When the potion was finally complete, it shimmered faintly, its glow matching the light of the Starpetal. Aurelia held it tightly as she made her way to the forest’s central stream – the lifeblood of the Everglow Woods.

Standing at the water’s edge, she hesitated. What if it didn’t work? What if she had misunderstood the journal or miscalculated the formula? The weight of her fear threatened to paralyze her.

Miri landed on her shoulder, her tiny presence a quiet reassurance. Aurelia closed her eyes and took a deep breath. “Trust the forest,” she whispered, repeating Elder Willow’s words. With that, she poured the potion into the stream.

For a moment, nothing happened. Then, a ripple of light spread through the water, travelling outward in shimmering waves. The forest seemed to shudder, its branches creaking and leaves rustling as the light moved through its veins. Slowly, the changes became visible. Leaves unfurled, regaining their glow. Flowers bloomed, their colours vibrant once more. Creatures stirred, blinking as strength returned to their limbs.

The forest’s pulse, faint for so long, grew steady and strong.



Aurelia sank to her knees, overwhelmed with relief. Around her, the inhabitants of the Woods began to gather. Birds chirped, squirrels chattered, and even Elder Willow’s great branches swayed in approval.

“You have done well, child,” the ancient tree spirit said. “The forest lives because of you.”

Miri buzzed excitedly, circling Aurelia with newfound energy. Aurelia smiled, her heart swelling with a sense of belonging she hadn’t felt in months. She wasn’t her mother, but for the first time, she realized she didn’t need to be. The forest had chosen her, and she had risen to the challenge.

As she returned to her hollow that evening, she paused at the edge of the stream. The Everglow Woods shimmered brighter than it had in weeks, its beauty restored. Her mother’s words echoed in her mind once more: *“The forest will always guide you.”*

Aurelia smiled, her fingers brushing the leaves of a glowing fern as she whispered, “Thank you.”

She had found her place – not as her mother’s replacement, but as the forest’s healer in her own right. The Everglow Woods thrived once more, a testament to resilience, harmony, and the enduring power of legacy.



2007 A.D. –



SCHOOL: St. Michael's Choir School
TEACHER: Andrew Hume
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Andrew Hume
UNIT: Toronto Secondary
UNIT PRESIDENT: Antonella Di Carlo

SECONDARY - GRADES 11-12 / POEM
by **Sebastian De Re**

A cage of bone:
What rattles within?
Intersecting high-speed veins, rapid-firing neurons,
yet no traffic.
Cushioned with crimson,
composed of cells and plasma.
All wrapped in skin, like a bow,
sealing a birthday gift shut.
From the womb to the world, this gift is yours.

What matters more:
to breathe, or to feel the air?
Your vessel sighs –
veins weaving, lungs lifting,
a silent engine,
never asking why.
But who turns the key?

In a second, we can crash –
spiral downward,
like the double helix of our DNA.
Who pulls the final thread?
Us, or the body unraveling?

Yet each day,
to breathe within this delicate frame,
to bend, not break
is a quiet miracle.



To ignore it is disobedience.
To take advantage of our presence –
Who do we betray?
Ourselves?
This body is fragile,
made to break.
Why live a life full of regret,
when fulfillment is easier?

Live with ease.
Flood your mind with wisdom.
Seek your purpose.
Between every bone, every joint, every muscle,
lies your worth.
Find it before you are laid underground,
with your potential
locked inside.

Express yourself.
Unlearn your fears.
Grow. Change.
Love who you are,
as love brought you on to the earth.

Each day you rise,
Not just to wake, but to begin.
To turn setbacks into startups,
To make meaning from suffering.
Breathing, body humming, whole:
a chance to create.

You are your own doctor.
Treat your mind
as you would treat your body.
Heal yourself.
Make your own remedies –
your persona is just as vital as your person.



Pump love –
let it rush like red rivers.
Filter your toxins.
Rid yourself of negativity.
Digest your words,
with every syllable you speak.
Eat your emotions –
for they have no expiration date.
You can consume them raw.

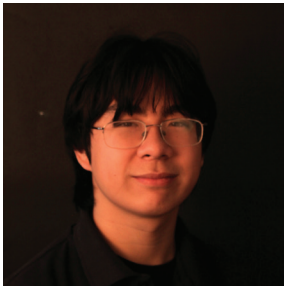
Live fully.
Life is simple –
Your body a maze,
the path yours to choose.

Do not wait for the day
your body shuts down.
Between birth and death –
a single hyphen.

Yours to fill.



The Fight for Glory



SCHOOL: Bishop Allen
TEACHER: Tess Franzè
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Drazana Cuvalo-Pedro
UNIT: Toronto Secondary
UNIT PRESIDENT: Antonella Di Carlo

SECONDARY - GRADES 11-12 / PLAY
by **Andre Kent Arambulo and Luke Stasiw**

OPEN ON:

1 BLACK SCREEN 1

A title card appears, reading, "THE FIGHT FOR GLORY."

FADE IN:

2 EXT. CITY STREET—CLOUDY DAY—DUSK 2

We see a tall bulky man, JOHN MORRIS, 47, walking down a run-down city street. He looks down at his shoes, a cigarette hangs out of his mouth.

3 POV SHOT—MORRIS 3

Morris peers up to a billboard on a low roof. The faded paint is barely legible, reading, "FIGHT OF THE DECADE – MUTT VS. MORRIS."

4 WIDE SHOT—BILLBOARD, MORRIS 4

The height difference between Morris and the billboard emphasizes how far Morris has fallen from his prime.

5 CLOSE ON—MORRIS 5

We see Morris try to light the cigarette between his lips. After failing to catch the flame, he spits it onto the street.

6 EXT. ROCKY BOXING GYM—CLOUDY DAY—DUSK 6

Morris approaches the front door to the gym. Looking at the brick wall of the building, he sees a small poster with the same advertisement as the billboard: "FIGHT OF THE DECADE – MUTT VS. MORRIS." Morris tears the poster from the wall and crumples it into a ball.

7 INT. ROCKY BOXING GYM—DIMLY LIT 7



The door swings shut behind Morris. He spots MICHAEL MILTON, the owner of the gym.

MORRIS

Mikey, why'd you keep this poster up? I told ya I'm done with fighting. I only come here to stay fit.

MILTON

(Boston accent)

You was a beast Johnny! It's a great poster!

Morris tears up the crumpled poster and throws the pieces away.

MILTON

Buddy, I'm just lockin' up for the night. I trust ya though—stay as long as you want.

Milton leaves the gym. Morris puts away his bag and changes into his training clothes. His physique is reminiscent of a fighter, but he is clearly not in top shape. As he trains, Morris struggles to fight like he once could, mistiming punches and striking with little force. From Milton's office, a telephone rings. We see Morris approach the office, opening the door and picking up the receiver.

8 INT. MICHAEL MILTON'S OFFICE

8

MORRIS

Milton's office.

We hear an unfamiliar voice; ROBERT BENNETT, Morris' former boxing manager, speaks from the other end. Bennett recognizes Morris' raspy voice and sarcastic tone.

BENNETT

Is that Johnny? Michael told me you'd be there.

CUT TO:

9 INT. ROBERT BENNETT'S OFFICE

9

Bennett sits at his desk with the receiver in one hand and a fat cigar in the other. We see him take a long puff before answering the telephone.

BENNETT

Listen old pal, I've got a proposition for you—one last



fight—the biggest fight of your
goddamn life!

MORRIS

Bobby, you know it's been years.
I'm over the whole fighting thing.

10 CLOSE ON – BENNETT'S TELEPHONE

10

BENNETT

(Toned-down voice)

This is different—it's the Denver
Championships—two rounds, and the
prize money is like nothing you've
ever seen!

MORRIS

What are we talkin' here?

BENNETT

(Excited)

Two hundred and thirty grand!

CUT TO:

11 INT. MICHAEL MILTON'S OFFICE

11

Morris' eyes widen. He is almost at a loss for words. Unsure how to react to the amount,
he instead asks another question.

MORRIS

Who's the fight against?

BENNETT

Sammy Simpson. Young guy. Are ya
in?

MORRIS

(Hesitant)

I can't say no to a prize like
that.

BENNETT

Perfect!

Before Morris can speak, Bennett hangs up. We hear a dial tone. Annoyed, Morris exits
Milton's office. Down the hall, a young janitor, PEDRO-REYES, mops the floor.



12 CLOSE ON—PEDRO-REYES 12

Pedro-Reyes slides his mop back and forth along the floor.

13 CLOSE ON—MOP IN PEDRO-REYES' HAND 13

Pedro-Reyes appears to hold the mop with one hand.

14 WIDE SHOT—MORRIS AND PEDRO-REYES 14

Pedro-Reyes looks at Morris mysteriously. He sees something in him that Morris does not see himself.

PEDRO-REYES
(Thick Filipino accent)
Old fighter.

MORRIS
(Unnerved)
What's your name?

PEDRO-REYES
Not important. You are in a bad
place. You need something new.

MORRIS
What do you know about fighting?

PEDRO-REYES
More than you think I know.

MORRIS
Get outta here kid—I've never even
seen a guy like you fight.

He spins his mop like a bo staff using only one hand, knocking Morris to the ground. He holds the tip of the mop up to Morris' face. Pedro-Reyes chortles and turns around to continue mopping the floor. Morris realizes that he underestimated Pedro-Reyes and kneels before him. Morris understands Pedro-Reyes' prowess as a fighter.

MORRIS
Why haven't I heard of you?

PEDRO-REYES
Ah. Pedro-Reyes pulls up his sleeve, revealing an amputated hand.

He turns around to resume his



mopping. Recognizing a skilled fighter, Morris realizes that Pedro-Reyes may be able to train him for his final fight.

15 POV SHOT—MORRIS

15

Looking up at Pedro-Reyes, frustration builds within Morris. His fists begin to shake and his body shows no sign of strength.

MORRIS

I need your help—please. Teach me
your ways as a fighter. These
young guys—they’ve got new
techniques that aren’t like
anything I’ve seen before!

16 WIDE SHOT—MORRIS AND PEDRO-REYES

16

Pedro-Reyes reaches out towards Morris with his hand, pulling him up.

PEDRO-REYES

We will begin tomorrow. You will
find me in the woods.

MORRIS

Where?

PEDRO-REYES

You will know tomorrow.

Pedro-Reyes packs his equipment and leaves the hallway.
Morris is confused, yet excited to begin his training.

FADE TO BLACK:

FROM BLACK:

17 EXT. WOODS—EARLY MORNING

17

Morris hikes through the woods. Pedro-Reyes is nowhere to be seen. Suddenly, he hears a branch snap above him, Pedro-Reyes jumps from a tree onto Morris’ shoulders, bringing him to the ground.

MORRIS

What the hell!?

Morris gets up, dusting off his dirtied hoodie. He looks at Pedro-Reyes.



PEDRO-REYES

That, I cannot promise. To achieve success, one must also endure failure. You must be aware of your surroundings—a surprise attack is your enemy’s greatest weapon.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

18 EXT. WOODS—DAY

18

Pedro-Reyes yells at Morris as he bench-presses a heavy log.

Morris and Pedro-Reyes stand side-by-side on tall tree stumps, balancing on one leg each, meditating.

Pedro-Reyes holds boxing pads as Morris practices throwing quick punches.

END MONTAGE

It is dusk. Morris lies on the forest floor, exhausted.

PEDRO-REYES

You are a strong fighter.

MORRIS

Right back at ya.

PEDRO-REYES

Do not flatter me. I am no fighter, just a trainer.

Morris looks up at the forest canopy. Sighing, he thinks about the fight that he has signed himself up for. Both afraid and excited, he wonders what Pedro-Reyes has in store for him tomorrow.

PEDRO-REYES

We will continue your training tomorrow. You know where to find me.

With that, Pedro-Reyes gets up, running off into the darkening forest.

FADE TO BLACK:

FROM BLACK:



19 INT. ROCKY BOXING GYM—MORNING

19

Morris strikes a punching bag with new-found strength from his training with Pedro-Reyes. From Michael Milton's office, he can hear two voices (Milton and Bennett) speaking. Approaching the office stealthily, he listens in on their conversation.

20 INT. MICHAEL MILTON'S OFFICE

20

MILTON

He's been training, Robert.

BENNETT

I'd expect him to. That doesn't mean anything, though. He's been out of his prime for years. Listen—I've got a lot of money on Simpson winning. I've known Johnny for years, and he ain't makin' any kind of comeback before the fight.

21 INT. ROCKY BOXING GYM

21

Hearing this, Morris is filled with rage.

22 INT. MICHAEL MILTON'S OFFICE

22

MILTON

All I'm sayin' is that I don't think you should completely write him off—I've seen how the man's been training—he's looking fit.

Bennett sloughs off Milton's comment. He begins to approach the office door.

23 INT. ROCKY BOXING GYM

23

Morris hears the door unlock and quickly heads back to the punching bag. Bennett exits Milton's office, Milton following. Bennett spots Morris, and a smile appears on his face.

BENNETT

Johnny! Good to see ya. How ya been?

Morris looks at Bennett and turns toward the punching bag. He strikes with impressive might, wanting to show Bennett that he is wrong. Turning around once more, he sees Bennett shaking Milton's hand before leaving. Catching one more glimpse of Morris, Bennett smirks, giving a slight nod before leaving the gym.



24 EXT. ROCKY BOXING GYM

24

SAMMY SIMPSON, 21, stands outside of the gym, looking up at the old, worn sign. He carries himself with prestige. He sternly strides towards the front entrance.

25 INT. ROCKY BOXING GYM

25

Morris sees somebody unfamiliar enter the gym. Simpson, with a grin on his face, waves at Morris.

SIMPSON

It's a great honour to meet the former champion in the flesh. The name's Sammy Simpson.

Simpson reaches his hand out towards Morris, who looks at it, ignoring his handshake.

MORRIS

Oh. So you're the new champ, eh? I never expected the new guy to be so... lavish.

Simpson smirks at Morris, flattered by his comments. Morris scans the young boxer, he seems—fake.

SIMPSON

(Chuckling)

To be the best, you've gotta dress the best.

Morris looks at Simpson once more before returning to the punching bag. Simpson is visibly confused that Morris is not at all impressed.

SIMPSON

I knew you'd be here, champ.

MORRIS

(Striking punching bag)

That so?

SIMPSON

I wanted to meet you ahead of our big fight. A lotta money to be won there.

MORRIS

My competition means nothing to me.



SIMPSON

(Starting to get angry)

Watch it pal, I'm one of the best
young fighters in the USA!

MORRIS

So was I.

SIMPSON

(Disgruntled)

You know what? Give it up old man.
You're out of your prime, anyways.
What's a fight like this gonna do?
I'll end up beating your butt like
Boyd back in '59.

MORRIS

(Holding back his anger)

I may be. But I'm far from
finished. You just wait, kid.

Simpson lets out an audible "humph" before storming towards the door and slamming it as he leaves. Morris shakes his head. At the back of the boxing gym, Pedro-Reyes emerges from the darkness.

PEDRO-REYES

Some young folks aren't so wise.

Pedro-Reyes performs a surprise attack on Morris, swinging his leg towards the fighter's head. Morris is able to react, ducking before he is struck. Pedro-Reyes's abdomen is open—Morris takes this opportunity to strike his gut. Pedro-Reyes is knocked to the ground. He looks up at Morris, smiling.

PEDRO-REYES

You have learned much since we
met.

MORRIS

I've been practicing.

PEDRO-REYES

You will soon be ready for the
Denver Championships.

MORRIS

I hope so.



FADE TO BLACK:

FROM BLACK:

26 EXT. JOHN MORRIS' APARTMENT—EARLY MORNING

26

The sun has not risen yet, and there is a chill in the air that sends a shiver down Morris' spine. He begins to run through the neighbourhood in the dark, past houses, parks, and industrial buildings. Eventually he reaches the Denver Coliseum—the place where he will fight in one day. He gazes at the building in all its glory. Built in 1951, it stands as a reminder of his past (and soon to be present) as a fighter. He had his first professional fight in that arena, as well as his last—the “fight of the decade” against Eddie Boyd. Morris continues his run, finally reaching his home and running to the telephone.

27 INT. ROCKY BOXING GYM—JANITOR'S CLOSET—DARK

27

Pedro-Reyes is startled by a phone call. He exits the janitor's closet and runs towards Milton's office. Annoyed, he picks up the phone.

PEDRO-REYES

(Sleepily)

Who is it? I was sleeping!

MORRIS

Morris. I'm ready to fight.

PEDRO-REYES

(Smiling)

Ah, Morris. I've been waiting for this moment.

FADE TO BLACK:

FROM BLACK:

28 INT. DENVER COLISEUM—CHANGE ROOM—FIGHT DAY

28

Morris sits hunched over, applying wraps to his hands for support under his gloves. Pedro-Reyes sits in the corner of the room, watching Morris as he prepares. Morris looks up, signaling Pedro-Reyes to come over. Pedro-Reyes helps Morris tie the boxing gloves tight around his wrists. Morris takes a few swings once they are fastened, impressed at their weight.

MORRIS

A lot lighter than they used to be.



29 INT. JOHN MORRIS' NEW HOUSE—MORNING

29

After the greatest fight of his life, Morris is able to relax his shoulders for the first time in a long time. We see a trophy case on the wall in his new house. He stares into the mirror, pleased with what he sees.

THE END



Back to the Old House



SCHOOL: Bishop Allen
TEACHER: Cecilia Conroy
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Drazana Cuvalo-Pedro
Unit: Toronto Secondary
UNIT PRESIDENT: Antonella Di Carlo

SECONDARY - GRADES 11-12 / NONFICTION
by **David Di Giovanni**

My old backyard was a magical realm during my childhood. The glass sliding door in the kitchen was a portal to a land of wonder. The long strip of grass was where any game could be played, a gateway that inspired imagination. The great pine tree was a guardian of the backyard, a towering and ancient figure that gave the gift of shade from the burning summer sun. The swing attached to the tree was like a rocket ship, a simple rope swing, whose wood smelled like a relaxing cottage, where I could blast off and swing from one side of the yard all the way to the other. The hammock was comforting, rocking me to sleep on the most exciting of days. Finally, there was the pinnacle of the backyard – the play structure. There was the enormous slide, and the lookout tower on the top. There were even monkey bars! It was a towering castle made purely for entertainment and joy.

My mom was a teacher, so she always had the summers off to play with me and my sister. I remember how she taught me how to kick and pump the swing, and how I used to pretend not to understand so she would keep pushing me herself. I think about how I used to translate my sister's toddler babble for her because I was still close enough to that age to understand her. Many specific memories fade but I remember my mom's dimple filled smile that shone brighter than the sun on many summer afternoons. She wasn't alone. My dad ensured he also got to use the backyard with me. We always played catch with a baseball, the quintessential father-son activity, yet he always added small twists to the game that blew my little mind, and for the first time showed me the grand personality of my dad. One year for my birthday, my dad bought me a mini pitching machine with wiffle balls. The machine was like a canon, and when a ball came flying towards me, I clutched onto my little league bat, and became Babe Ruth in the world series, sending thousands of balls into my neighbours' yard.

My sister was the perfect playmate in the backyard. During the winter, we would pile snow onto the slide, and it would shoot us out like a waterslide. We'd race on the long pavement strip that connected the driveway to the backyard, whizzing by like her favourite Formula One cars, and ignoring the warnings not to fall from our parents. We'd compete over who could perform the most acrobatic feats on the monkey bars, all kinds of flips, tricks, and turns. I remember pushing her on the swing when she was little, and getting frustrated when she didn't listen to me on how to swing properly. She loved to play in the rain, either for no particular reason, or for purely out of defiance to our parents'



insistence that we shouldn't. Although I didn't care – even on the days where the rain was flooding the deck, and we got terrified by thunder – I'd never miss an opportunity to have fun with my little sister. Once we were a little bit older, we'd jump down from the deck to the grass, taking flight before coming to a soft (or not so soft) landing. It wasn't too far of a jump, but it was still dangerous enough that we had to make sure our parents weren't looking, leaping across the yard like the stealthy ninjas we believed we were. No matter the day, rain or shine, summer or winter, clear or fog, we would always find ourselves in the backyard.

Most vividly, I recall the day we first adopted our dog. On a sunny summer Saturday, we took the scenic drive through the countryside to the breeder. I walked into the house, a den filled with tiny, delightful puppies. The floor was a sea of little labradoodles, and I was afraid I'd step on one of them. After taking in the scene, I began to search for the dog we had chosen, "turquoise collar puppy" as the website had listed him. Although I called him Buddy. A name I had chosen, and one that's genericness is trumped by its boundless charm. Buddy was extraordinary. He made the rolling hills on the drive back look dull and lifeless, but at the same time it was hard to hear him whimper so much. However, my mom was there, cradling him the same way she must have done with me as an infant, and quieting the little beast. Once we got home, Buddy was electric. He was inspired, charging through the backyard with the vigour of a lion and lacking the grace of a gazelle. Most puppies are scared when they get home for the first time, but not Buddy. The backyard became home to him immediately, and I began to see the confident canine I would learn to know so well. It was difficult for my parents to wrangle Buddy for a photo, but after a few minutes, my dad managed to capture the image pictured above. I remember being so enthralled that I spent the entire day until sundown playing with Buddy in the backyard.

Buddy fit in perfectly to the backyard. Some days he didn't even need a walk, he could simply run in circles around the yard, chasing squirrels, and gallivanting around causing all kinds of mischief. He started to grow fast, turning from a fragile and energetic puppy to a gentle giant, the most well-behaved and courteous dog I've ever seen.

However, my backyard changed, as everything did, in the winter of 2015, when my mom was diagnosed with cancer. As the bushes in my backyard slowly died in the winter, so did she. Stomping through the patches of orange leaves became timidly walking down the orange tiles of the hospital floor. Suddenly the stretchy grilled cheese sandwiches my mom made, were replaced by the stale grilled cheese of the Tim Hortons in the hospital lobby. As the shrubbery in my backyard recovered in the spring, she did not.

I don't remember playing in the backyard after that. I'm sure I did, but it was never the same. The colour had drained from the lively backyard the same way it drained from my dad's vibrant smile. The magic of the backyard had disappeared as quickly as it was conjured up. The monkey bars began



to rust, the screws came loose on the lookout tower, the pitching machine broke down, and the ropes on the swing gradually unraveled and fell apart. Even Buddy no longer spent his time in the backyard. I have the vivid image of him lying down on the hard wooden floor that sat before the front door. He waited there for hours a day, without moving an inch. He was waiting for her to come home, the same way he would wait in anticipation every afternoon when she'd come home from work. Even through his distorted canine features, I saw an intensely human frown curl across his lips when his little brain slowly realized she wouldn't be coming home. Man's best friend, even in death.

After a few years, we moved houses. Our new abode was a townhouse, somewhere noticeably without a backyard. There was no longer a place in my life for the symbol of all that was innocent in the world. I said goodbye to the old backyard. All of the warm, fuzzy, and truly beautiful moments that happened in the backyard had become just memories. I had to leave all of that wonder that I once felt behind, in that truly magical place that lives on in my mind.

Buddy never minded the lack of a backyard. Without his former puppy energy, he handled the smaller space well. As ridiculous as it may seem, he was a source of immense support in those trying times. Every time someone in my family was sad, he could always sense it, in an almost supernatural way. Buddy wagged his half-brown, half-white tail wider than any dog in the world. His fur was somehow straight and curly at the same time, and undeniably soft and fuzzy. The little kisses he planted on our hands saved me and my dad from many nights of woe. Unfortunately, after a few years Buddy was diagnosed with an illness of his own, and soon he succumbed to kidney failure. It was difficult to watch him slowly deteriorate from the strong and capable companion he once was, into a sickly and skinny pet, a shadow of his former self. The last relic of the old backyard was gone.

This photo holds a special place in my family. It's my dad's favourite picture and is still my grandfather's wallpaper eleven years after it was taken. It captured the best of times, right before tragedy struck. It occurred to me that I could choose to see it as a representation of everything I've lost. It puts on full display my mom, Buddy, and the old backyard. Although that's not the way I look at this photograph. I choose to remember the backyard not as the rusty and broken-down place it became, but as the embodiment of all I thought was loving in the world. I choose to remember Buddy, not as the bone skinny and timid dog he became in his final weeks, but as the rapid, fluffy, and comforting canine that I first saw in the backyard. The same way, I choose not to remember my mom as the pale and sickly woman I barely recognized in the hospital bed, but instead, as the tall, confident, playful, and incredibly loving woman she was in the backyard, the setting for the vast majority of my memories with her.

Nothing good is perfect, but just as much, nothing is completely terrible. Although all good things must come to an end, I'm glad I was able to experience so many beautiful moments in my old backyard, and I'm even more glad with who I spent those memories with.



PRIX JEUNES ÉCRIVAINS



Centre d'écriture



SCHOOL: Notre Dame
TEACHER: Lauren Alvarado
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Anne Zinger
UNIT: Brant Haldimand Norfolk
UNIT PRESIDENT: Carlo Fortino

ELEMENTARY - JUNIOR AND SENIOR KINDERGARTEN / NONFICTION
by **Marie Mogridge**

Je suis contente parce que je suis allée au centre d'écriture.



Le garçon et le souhait de la Saint Valentin



SCHOOL: Notre Dame
TEACHER: Alessia Topino
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Anne Zinger
UNIT: Brant Haldimand Norfolk
UNIT PRESIDENT: Carlo Fortino

ELEMENTARY - GRADES 1-2 / SHORT STORY
by **Xereus Gyan**

Il était une fois un garçon triste. Il voulait un souhait de la Saint Valentin, mais son papa lui avait dit « Il n'existe aucun souhait de la Saint Valentin ». Le jeune pleurait dans son lit, quand soudain, une fée est arrivée dans sa chambre. « Je suis la fée de la Saint Valentin », lui dit-elle. « Salut... Je m'appelle Max », répond-il perplexe. « Souhaite-tu faire un vœu ? », demande la fée. « Mais oui ! Je voudrais un chat, s'il vous plaît », sourit Max. Et HOP ! Dans un éclair de lumière, un chaton tel une peluche apparaît devant lui. Et voilà, le garçon était à nouveau heureux.



L'Amour



SCHOOL: St. Marguerite d'Youville
TEACHER: Fanny Hung
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Anthony Biggs
UNIT: Halton Elementary
UNIT PRESIDENT: Tara Hambly

ELEMENTARY - GRADES 1-2 / POEM
by **Lina Jiang-Kreidi**

L'amour est comme une fleur.

Aimer toute ma famille.

Mots doux, main dans la main.

Ours en peluche.

Un bisou, un câlin.

Roses rouges.



Costa Rica



SCHOOL: Madonna della Libera
TEACHER: Réjeanne Piekosz
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Daniel Gouthro
UNIT: Brant Haldimand Norfolk
UNIT PRESIDENT: Carlo Fortino

ELEMENTARY - GRADES 1-2 / NONFICTION
by **Lyla Pottruff**

J'ai vu des singes hurleurs. Il y avait beaucoup de palmiers. Je nageais dans la piscine tous les jours. Nous roulions en voiturette de golf. Nous avons traversé une rivière en voiture. Je suis allée faire de la tyrolienne dans la jungle. Un énorme criquet a atterri sur le visage de ma tante. Elle a crié ! J'ai vu un magnifique coucher de soleil à la plage. Je mangeais chaque matin au lever du soleil pour le petit-déjeuner. J'ai adoré passer de temps avec ma famille au Costa Rica.



Le monstre est mon ami



SCHOOL: Madonna della Libera
TEACHER: Krystina Pucci
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Daniel Gouthro
UNIT: Brant Haldimand Norfolk
UNIT PRESIDENT: Carlo Fortino

ELEMENTARY - GRADES 3-4 / SHORT STORY
by **Nora Stillwell**

Un beau soir de décembre, il neigeait beaucoup. Un garçon était dans sa chambre et il avait peur du noir. La nuit, le garçon dormait dans son grand lit mais pendant qu'il dormait un monstre bleu est arrivé. Le garçon avait peur. Il a essayé de courir dans la chambre de ses parents, mais le monstre avait bloqué la porte. Alors, le garçon s'est caché sous les couvertures.

Maintenant le monstre est triste car il ne veut pas effrayer le garçon. Le garçon est troublé alors il dit « Est-ce que tu veux être mon ami ? » Le monstre répond « Oui, mais... n'étais-je pas méchant ? » Le garçon dit « Oui, mais je te pardonne. » « Merci ! » s'écrie le monstre. Le garçon dit « Chuchote ! Tu vas réveiller mes parents ! » Les deux amis décident de regarder des vidéos drôles de chats sur YouTube et dormir toute la nuit.



Souvenir



SCHOOL: Immaculate Conception
TEACHER: Lucette Parent-Mundy
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Catherine Dominelli-Hayden
UNIT: Sudbury Elementary
UNIT PRESIDENT: Chantal Rancourt

ELEMENTARY - GRADES 3-4 / POEM
by **Caden Matz**

Souvenir des soldats qui sont tombés en guerre

Onze heures marque le temps où elle s'est finie

Une guerre appelée la première guerre mondiale

Vétérans très importants pour le pays

En novembre, le onze à le onzième heure, on pense à nos alliés

N'oubliez pas votre coquelicot

Il est très brave d'aller à la guerre

Respecter les personnes qui y sont allées



Salut Père Noël



SCHOOL: St. Joseph
TEACHER: : Nicole Viren
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Natacha Couillard
UNIT: Peterborough, Victoria, Northumberland and Clarington
UNIT PRESIDENT: Bart Scollard

ELEMENTARY - GRADES 3-4 / NONFICTION
by **Carson Hearty**

Salut Père Noël,

J'étais très gentil avec mes deux grands frères. Mais Cole et Cameron étaient très méchants avec moi. J'espère que tu n'as pas de cadeaux pour eux. J'ai aidé ma maman pour le dîner et oui je suis très bon à cuisiner de la nourriture incroyable. Je suis allé sur mon toit pour mettre des lumières de Noël car Cole était trop fatigué pour le faire. À l'école, j'ai donné tous les bonbons de mon sac à dos à mon ami Niko et j'ai donné des biscuits à tout le monde. Je suis allé au parc avec ma famille et j'ai joué au soccer dans la neige. Après ça, mon frère Cole et moi avons fait du ski mais Cameron a préféré le snowboard. Cole skiait sur une piste noire de Timberline. Cole a trébuché ! Je lui ai donné un pansement. J'ai aussi utilisé ma main pour l'aider. Il était un petit peu blessé, mais il va mieux maintenant. Je suis désolé d'avoir jeté une grande boule de neige sur Cole. Il y a beaucoup de choses gentilles que je fais pour ma famille et mes amis aussi. Je pense que je mérite tous les cadeaux du monde.

Mon ami Niko a une question « Qu'est-ce que les lutins font avec toi pendant toute l'année ? » Est-ce que les lutins et toi volez sur le traîneau pour visiter les Bahamas pendant l'été ? Père Noël, pourquoi tu manges tous mes biscuits ?! Ces biscuits sont seulement pour moi ! Ma famille sait que c'est un problème parce que je suis très clair à propos de ceci. Un de nos problèmes aussi est qu'il n'y a pas de cheminée dans ma maison ! Est-ce que tu as des super-pouvoirs ? Une autre possibilité est que tu as les clés de ma maison, mais je préfère l'idée que le Père Noël a des super-pouvoirs. Père Noël, est-ce que les rennes n'ont pas de nourriture ? S'ils n'ont pas de nourriture, je peux leur en donner. Mais pas les biscuits ! Je les ai mangés dans la seconde.

Comment as-tu tout cet argent pour avoir des jouets pour tout le monde ? Pourquoi n'as-tu pas donné de cadeaux à mes parents ? Est-ce que mes parents ont été sages cette année ? Quel est ton jour le plus productif ? Oh, probablement Noël. Quelle est ta nourriture préférée ? Le poulet ? Quel jour est ta fête, le 25 décembre ? Quels lutins font mes cadeaux ? J'espère que tu peux me fabriquer des marqueurs Posca !



Il y a beaucoup de cadeaux que je veux à Noël. Je veux vraiment ceci comparé à d'autres. Le cadeau c'est les marqueurs Posca. Ces marqueurs sont très, très bons. J'aime l'art et ces marqueurs sont fantastiques. Père Noël, je veux vraiment ouvrir ce cadeau à droite de mon sapin. Ne donne rien à Cole ! Je t'en supplie ! Oui, il y a d'autres choses dans ma tête pour ce Noël. L'autre cadeau est le plus important de mes cadeaux ! Je veux un casque de réalité virtuelle. Je veux jouer avec mes amis. C'est très amusant ! De plus, un nouveau ballon de soccer ou des crayons pour l'art seraient une bonne idée. Le même ballon que mon frère Cameron est mon type préféré. Je veux aussi un nouveau jeu de société comme les jeux d'échecs ou le jeu de dames. J'aime vraiment les grands oreillers. Si tu vois un ours polaire, est-ce que je peux l'avoir ? Merci pour toutes les choses que tu me donnes ! Merci pour tout ce que tu fais pour tout le monde, Père Noël.

Sincèrement,

Carson



Rudolf et la banane vivante



SCHOOL: Holy Rosary
TEACHER: Hilde Acx
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Kari Cilibanov
UNIT: Waterloo
UNIT PRESIDENT: Patrick Etmanski

ELEMENTARY - GRADES 5-6 / SHORT STORY
by **Alex Tulusso**

Un jour, Rudolf va dans sa chambre, et il voit une banane à la porte. « Qui m'a donné une banane ?! », crie-t-il. Blitzen va vers la chambre de Rudolf. « Moi ! », crie Blitzen. Mais ce n'était pas seulement une banane. « Qu'est-ce que c'est ? », demande Rudolf. « C'est une banane vivante ! », dit Blitzen. « Mais ça n'existe pas ! », répond Rudolf. « Ça c'est que tu penses », dit Blitzen alors qu'il sort de l'escalier. « Les bananes vivantes n'existent pas ! Les bananes vivantes n'existent pas ! », pense Rudolf après que Blitzen ne sorte de l'escalier.

Rudolf met la banane sur son lit. Après ça, il mange le petit déjeuner, brosse ses dents et prend une douche. « Ah, oui ! », dit-il. « J'ai oublié cette banane ! » Rudolf ramasse la banane, mais il entend « Nooon ! Ne me mange pas ! » « Quoi ? », dit Rudolf. « C'est moi ! Je suis la banane vivante ! » « Euh... Ok... Qu'est-ce que tu fais ici ? », demande Rudolf. « Je suis ici pour vous avertir de la ruée des bananes qui est dans deux jours ! Vous devez vous préparer immédiatement. Je peux vous aider ! », dit la banane vivante. « D'accord... », répond Rudolf. « Mais, qu'est-ce qu'on a besoin de faire ? » « On a besoin d'avertir les autres rennes, Père Noël, Mère Noël et tous les lutins. Si les lutins peuvent construire presque tous les jouets dans le monde, les lutins peuvent arrêter une ruée de bananes », répond la banane vivante. « Je peux avertir le Père Noël et Mère Noël, et tu peux avertir les lutins et les autres rennes. D'accord ? », demande Rudolf. « D'accord », dit la banane vivante.

Après que la banane vivante et Rudolf aient averti tous les autres, tout le monde était prêt. Ils ont construit un mur fait de pâte à biscuits collante et un canon à boules de neige. Ils sont prêts pour battre la ruée de bananes.

C'est le jour de la ruée des bananes. Il est neuf heures. Tout le monde pense que les bananes ne viennent pas ici, mais après, ils entendent « À l'attaque !!! » « Qu'est-ce que c'est ? », dit le lutin au canon de boules à neige. Rudolf voit les bananes. Beaucoup de bananes sont coincées dans la pâte à biscuits, et toutes les bananes qui traversent la pâte à biscuits sont frappées par les boules de neige. Le camp de Rudolf a gagné !

Après la bataille, ils remercièrent la banane vivante pour son aide et lui demandèrent s'il voulait rester. « Pourquoi pas ! », dit la banane vivante. « Je veux rester ici toute ma vie ! »



Souvenir



SCHOOL: Immaculate Conception
TEACHER: Lucette Parent-Mundy
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Catherine Dominelli-Hayden
UNIT: Sudbury Elementary
UNIT PRESIDENT: Chantal Rancourt

ELEMENTARY - GRADES 5-6 / POEM
by **Ivy Blouin**

Soldats, ces personnes très importantes pour le monde

Onze est un numéro symbolique du jour du Souvenir

Un coquelicot est une fleur rouge et noire que les personnes portent sur leurs vêtements

Vétérán désigne une personne qui s'est battue à la guerre

Et une couronne est utilisée pour les cérémonies

Novembre est le mois où la guerre s'est finie

Ils ont combattu pendant la guerre

Respecter et se souvenir des soldats qui ont bataillé naguère



Je veux mes bonbons !



SCHOOL: Holy Rosary
TEACHER: Hilde Acx
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Kari Cilibanov
UNIT: Waterloo
UNIT PRESIDENT: Patrick Etmanski

ELEMENTARY - GRADES 5-6 / PLAY
by **Alex Tulusso**

Acte I

Scène I : La maison de James

Narrateur	Un jour, un garçon qui s'appelle James, va à la table pour le petit déjeuner. Il va au placard pour obtenir quelques-uns de ses bonbons d'halloween.
James	Où sont mes bonbons ?! Maintenant, que puis-je avoir pour le petit déjeuner ?!
La maman de James	Il y a beaucoup d'autres choses que tu peux manger. Il y a des céréales et du pain. J'ai caché tous tes bonbons d'Halloween jusqu'à ce que tu manges plus sainement.
James	Quoi ?! Tu ne peux pas faire ça !
La maman de James	Si, je peux.
James	Non ! Tu ne peux pas !
La maman de James	Oui, je peux. Je suis ta mère.
James	Bien sûr... Mais quand est-ce que je peux manger mes bonbons ?
La maman de James	On va voir.

Scène II : La maison de Lucas

Narrateur	Après le petit déjeuner, James va dans la maison de son meilleur ami, Lucas.
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Lucas	Quoi ?! Ta mère ne peut pas faire ça !
James	Je sais ! J'ai dit la même chose que tu as dite, et elle dit non ! Je ne comprends pas ça ! "Mange sainement ! Oh non, tu ne peux pas manger un bonbon". C'est très stupide !
Lucas	Il nous faut aller à ta maison et chercher tes bonbons. Mais d'abord...
James	Quoi !
Narrateur	Lucas va au téléphone. James va derrière lui.
Lucas	Bonjour ? Est-ce que c'est la police ?
Officier Timmy	Oui ! De quoi avez-vous besoin ?
Lucas	On a besoin d'aide au 734 de la rue Maple maintenant !
Officier Timmy	D'accord !

Scène III : La maison de James

Narrateur	Les deux garçons vont à la maison de James.
La maman de James	Bonjour Lucas ! Bonjour James !
Lucas et James	Bonjour !
La maman de James	Bonjour Officier Ti... Qu'est-ce que vous faites ici ?!
Officier Timmy	Lucas et James ont dit qu'ils avaient besoin d'aide ici.
La maman de James	Quoi ?! James, tu es puni !
James	Mais c'est Lucas qui a tout fait !
La maman de James	Je m'en fiche ! James, tu es puni !



James	D'accord... Mais...
La maman de James	Non ! Pas de “mais” ! Tu es puni ! Montez à l'étage maintenant !!!
Narrateur	James monte à l'étage. Lucas l'a suivi.
Lucas	Pourquoi est-ce que tu es puni ? J'ai tout fait !
James	Je sais ! C'est très méchant !
Lucas	Il faut trouver tes bonbons.
James	Alors nous serons détectives, et trouverons mes bonbons manquants !
Narrateur	James et Lucas mettent de vieilles tenues, et une fausse moustache. Après ça, ils sont prêts.
James	Allons dans la chambre de ma mère. Elle cache habituellement des choses là-dedans.
Narrateur	James et Lucas vont dans la chambre de la mère de James, et regardent dans tous les endroits où elle cache les choses habituellement. Mais il n'y a rien en dessous du lit, dans le placard, ou en dessous des couvertures.
James	Noooooooooon !!!
Lucas	Quoi ?
James	Mes bonbons ne sont pas dans tous les endroits où elle cache les choses habituellement !!!
Lucas	Alors, où est-ce qu'elle cache tes bonbons ?
James	Je ne sais pas... Mais, j'ai une autre idée.
Narrateur	James s'est déguisé comme son père, puis il est allé voir sa mère.
James	Bonjour Belinda ! Où est-ce qu'on a caché les bonbons de James ?



La maman de James	Tu ne te rappelles pas ? On les a jetés à la poubelle !
James	Ah... Euh... Oui !
La maman de James	Dis aussi à James d'aller jouer dehors. Il est resté trop longtemps à l'intérieur.
James	Euh... D'accord, mais il est puni !
La maman de James	Ah, c'est vrai. Dis à James qu'il peut aller au parc pour une heure, et nulle part d'autre.
James	Oui.

Scène IV : Le Parc

James	Je n'arrive pas à croire que ma mère se soit débarrassée de mes bonbons ! Et bien sûr, elle nous fait aller au parc.
Lucas	Je sais ! C'est totalement inconsidéré !
James	Nous devons trouver mes bonbons. Je pense que ma mère mentait sur le fait de les avoir jetés. Mon père est assez grand, donc elle savait probablement que c'était moi.
Lucas	D'accord. Alors, où est-ce qu'on va regarder ?
James	Je ne sais pas.
Lucas	Jusqu'à ce qu'on trouve tes bonbons, tu peux manger mes bonbons.
James	Merci Lucas. C'est très gentil, mais...
Lucas	Mais quoi ?
James	Je ne veux pas manger tes bonbons seulement parce que ma maman a caché mes bonbons.
Lucas	Tu es sûr ? J'en ai beaucoup pour nous.



James Oui. Je suis sûr.

Lucas D'accord. Donc, est-ce qu'il y d'autres endroits que ta mère pourrait utiliser pour les cacher ?

James Je ne sais pas.

Lucas J'ai une idée !

James Qu'est-ce que c'est ?

Lucas Elle a caché tes bonbons dans un endroit si évident qu'elle savait que tu ne regarderais pas !

James Comme l'autre placard !

Lucas Tu as deux placards ?

James Oui.

Lucas Il est dix heures ! On peut aller à ta maison maintenant !

James Parfait.

Lucas Si nous ne trouvons pas tes bonbons ici, je ne sais pas où il nous faudra regarder.

James Je sais. Mais, pourquoi est-ce qu'on reste ici ? Il faut qu'on trouve mes bonbons !

Lucas Fais la course !

Acte II

Scène I : La maison de James

James Maman ! Nous savons que tu avais caché mes bonbons ici !



Lucas	Ils sont dans l'autre placard !
Narrateur	James ouvre le placard. Il n'y a pas de bonbons.
James	Quoi ?! Mes bonbons ne sont pas ici !
La maman de James	Oui, Je sais. Ils sont cachés bien mieux que ça.
Lucas	Non. Ils ne sont pas cachés plus mieux que ça.
James	Tu n'avais pas caché mes bonbons dans une bonne cachette. Tu avais caché mes bonbons dans une terrible cachette, où tu penses que je ne vais pas regarder !
La maman de James	Je ne sais pas que tu dis.
James	On sait que tu n'avais pas caché mes bonbons dans un bon endroit !
Narrateur	James monte l'escalier. Il ouvre le placard dans sa chambre. Il voit une grande boîte.
James	Qu'est-ce que c'est ?
Narrateur	James ouvre la boîte. Il y a une autre boîte dans la première. James ouvre la deuxième. Il y a une autre boîte. Après quatre boîtes, il descend l'escalier et parle à sa maman.
James	Pourquoi-est-ce que tu as caché beaucoup de boîtes dans ma chambre ?
La maman de James	Quoi ? Je n'avais pas caché seulement beaucoup de boîtes dans ta chambre. Il y a sept boîtes et après la septième, il y a une surprise.
Narrateur	James va dans sa chambre. Il ouvre la septième boîte. Il y a une autre boîte dedans. James descend de la chambre encore une fois.
James	Maman ! Tu as menti ! J'ai ouvert la septième boîte et je n'en ai pas trouvé une autre ! Je vais chez Lucas !
La maman de James	D'accord. Au revoir.



Narrateur

La maman de James monte l'escalier. Elle a ouvert la huitième boîte. Elle prend les bonbons de James et les pose sur son lit.

Scène II : La maison de Lucas

Lucas

Est-ce que tu as trouvé tes bonbons ?

James

Non. Ma maman a caché beaucoup de boîtes dans ma chambre ! Elle a dit que dans la septième il y a une surprise, mais dans la septième boîte, il y a une autre boîte !

Lucas

Tu dois regarder dans la huitième boîte !

James

Oh, j'ai été tellement stupide !

Lucas

Tu dois aller à ta maison maintenant pour regarder dans la huitième boîte !

James

Viens avec moi !

Lucas

D'accord !

Scène III : La maison de James

Narrateur

James et Lucas vont dans la chambre de James pour trouver ses bonbons.

James

Mes bonbons !!!

ucas

Est-ce qu'ils sont restés ici tout ce temps ?!

James

Je ne sais pas. S'ils sont ici depuis tout ce temps, alors je suis tellement stupide.

Lucas

Hé, regarde ! Il y a une note ici aussi !

James

Elle dit "James, j'en ai assez de tes questions. Voici tes stupides bonbons. Mais à la seconde où tu fais quelque chose stupide, ils disparaissent. Tu as compris ? " - Maman

Wouah ! Tu as tes bonbons maintenant !

James et Lucas descendent les escaliers.

Maman ! Tu m'as donné mes bonbons !

Oui. Je commençais à me lasser de tes demandes, alors je te les ai donnés. As-tu vu la partie de la note qui disait quelque chose comme “Si tu fais quelque chose de stupide, tes bonbons disparaissent” ?

Oui.

Bon.

James a mis cinq bonbons dans sa bouche en même temps. Sa mère les a pris et les a cachés.

Pas encore !!!

Nooooooooooooon !!!

LA FIN



Faits amusants sur les Cris



SCHOOL: Holy Rosary
TEACHER: Hilde Acx
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Kari Cilibanov
UNIT: Waterloo
UNIT PRESIDENT: Patrick Etmanski

ELEMENTARY - GRADES 5-6 / NONFICTION
by **Aili Harris**

Les tipis sont les maisons des Cris. Les tipis sont faits avec des peaux d'animaux et de grands bâtons de bois. Les tipis sont conçus pour pouvoir les monter et démonter facilement. C'est aussi conçu pour que la pluie et la neige glissent sur les côtés.

Pour la nourriture, les Cris mangent des poissons et des plantes comestibles. Ils mangent aussi les choses qu'ils attrapent à la chasse. Les exemples de choses qu'ils attrapent sont : les lapins, les élan, les caribous, les canards, les oies, etc. Ils font la nourriture avec un feu quand ils doivent cuisiner.

Les Cris ont des vêtements avec beaucoup de couleurs. Les vêtements sont faits avec des peaux d'animaux. Ils portent aussi des mocassins sur les pieds. Quand il pleut, ils portent des capes et des ponchos. Beaucoup de leurs vêtements ont des franges, des dessins et aussi des perles.

En été, les Cris voyagent en grands groupes, à marcher et canoter, près d'un lac pour les poissons. L'eau est aussi bonne pour faire la nourriture, le lavage des vêtements sales, et pour se refroidir quand l'été est trop chaud. En hiver, les Cris sont plus adaptables. Ils voyagent avec des raquettes et des toboggans.

Les faits amusants sont : les Cris utilisent beaucoup d'écorce de bouleau pour faire des canoës et bâtons de bois pour les tipis.

Tôt dans les années 1600, les commerçants d'Angleterre et de France commencent à arriver sur la terre des Cris.

Les Cris aiment les jeux. Encercler les bisons est un jeu qui enseigne aux enfants à travailler ensemble et dans des équipes. Le jeu consiste à essayer de mettre les bisons dans le cercle.



Cuisiner pour l'amour



SCHOOL: St. Peter
TEACHER: Helen Luis
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: : Josh Halsey
UNIT: Brant Haldimand Norfolk
UNIT PRESIDENT: Carlo Fortino

ELEMENTARY - GRADES 7-8 / SHORT STORY
by **Sonia Girish Chaudhari**

Aujourd'hui, c'est la veille de la Saint Valentin et je suis triste. Je m'appelle Marcelino Renault, et j'aime Priscilla Anne-Deschamps, mais il y a beaucoup de problèmes. Le plus grand est que je ne sais pas comment lui dire que je l'aime. Je pourrais lui offrir une boîte de chocolats, ou écrire une lettre d'amour. C'est très frustrant !

« Lino ? Est-ce que tu vas bien ? »

Oh ! J'ai oublié. Mon ami Pierre est à côté de moi.

« Oui, ça va bien. »

Pierre est mon ami depuis toujours. Il est le frère de Priscilla. Mais il sait que j'aime Priscilla.

« Tu n'es pas un bon menteur. Qu'est-ce qui se passe ? »

« Ok, très bien ! Je ne sais pas comment dire à Priscilla que je l'aime. »

Pierre mange sa salade et après il dit « J'ai une bonne idée ! Tu peux cuisiner un gâteau au chocolat pour Priscilla ! »

« Pourquoi un gâteau au chocolat ? »

« Le gâteau au chocolat est le meilleur dessert », dit Pierre.

« Mais je ne sais pas comment faire un gâteau. Je vais lui donner des chocolats. Elle aime bien ça non ? »

« Non ! Tu ne peux pas donner des chocolats à ma sœur ! », crie Pierre.

« Alors quoi ? »

Peut-être que je devrais attendre l'année prochaine pour lui dire.

« Attends ! », crie Pierre. « Je connais une amie qui aime faire des gâteaux. »

« Qui ? »

« Suis-moi ! »

Nous marchons vers la maison de l'amie de Pierre.

« Darcy ! Ouvre la porte, s'il te plait ! »



La porte s'ouvre et une fille sort. Elle porte une chemise rouge avec un pantalon blanc. Ses cheveux sont bruns et ses yeux verts.

« En quoi puis-je vous aider ? », dit Darcy.

« Bonjour Darcy ! Mon ami Lino a besoin d'aide pour cuisiner un gâteau au chocolat. Le gâteau est pour Priscilla. »

« Hmm... D'accord ! Entrez dans ma maison ! », dit Darcy.

Nous entrons dans la cuisine.

« Alors, on commence avec les ingrédients. »

« Quels sont les ingrédients ? », demandé-je.

« Ah oui ! Nous avons besoin des œufs, du lait, de l'huile végétale et un mélange à gâteau au chocolat. » Darcy trouve les œufs et le lait. Ensuite, Pierre trouve l'huile végétale. Finalement, je trouve le mélange à gâteau au chocolat. En premier, nous cassons deux œufs et mélangeons les ingrédients dans un bol. Deuxièmement, nous versons le mélange dans un moule à gâteau. Enfin, nous faisons cuire le gâteau pendant trente-cinq minutes.

« Pendant qu'on attend, on peut jouer à un jeu », dit Darcy.

« Pouvons-nous jouer à Séquences, s'il vous plaît ?! », crie Pierre.

« Non, Lino peut choisir », dit Darcy.

Pierre et Darcy me regardent.

« Nous pouvons jouer à Séquences », dis-je aussi vite.

Trente-cinq minutes plus tard, Darcy crie « J'ai gagné ! »

« Ce n'est pas juste ! », dit Pierre.

Je regarde l'heure et dis « Le gâteau est prêt ! »

Le gâteau au chocolat est chaud. « Alors on attend cinq minutes », dit Darcy.

Enfin, nous décorons le gâteau au chocolat avec des cœurs en chocolat et des fraises.

« Parfait ! », dit Pierre. « Maintenant tu peux... »

« Oh non ! Il est 17h00 et Priscilla arrive dans dix minutes ! », crie Darcy.

« Quoi ?! », crié-je.

« Je suis désolé Lino. J'ai oublié ! », dit Darcy.

Alors je réfléchis et dis « Je peux partir avant qu'elle n'arrive. »

« Ce n'est pas une bonne idée. Dis-lui maintenant ! », dit Pierre.

« Pourquoi maintenant ? », crié-je.

« Le jour de la Saint Valentin est demain. Demande-lui maintenant. De plus le gâteau au chocolat est frais ! »

« Bien ! Je vais lui dire maintenant. »



Priscilla arrive à la maison de Darcy et regarde Darcy, Pierre et moi. Darcy et Pierre sortent de la salle.

Priscilla regarde le gâteau au chocolat et dit « Qu'est-ce qui se passe ? »

« Bonjour Priscilla. Je ne sais pas comment dire ça mais... »

Je respire profondément et dis « Je t'aime. »

Elle m'embrasse et crie « Je t'aime aussi ! »

Ce matin, j'étais triste, mais maintenant je suis le garçon le plus heureux du monde !

Je m'appelle Marcelino Renault et j'aime Priscilla Anne-Deschamps.

La Fin



La Nouvelle Année



SCHOOL: All Saints
TEACHER: Erica English
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Karen McDonald
UNIT: Ottawa
UNIT PRESIDENT: Mary Catherine Hogan

ELEMENTARY - GRADES 7-8 / POEM
by **Sarah Luckett**

La nouvelle année est synonyme de nouveau départ et de nouveau commencement. La température monte, l'humeur s'éclaire, les fleurs éclosent. Nos esprits s'éclaircissent, nos espoirs vont de l'avant et anticipent l'été à venir.

Le travail scolaire augmente, les cours semblent longs, on espère que les vacances d'été arriveront plus tôt, les bulletins scolaires arrivent, le stress commence à augmenter, on ne peut pas attendre la fin du chaos, se sentir libre est le rêve actuel tant attendu.

Lorsque l'été tant attendu arrive, le sport reprend. Vous mettez votre force à l'épreuve, vous travaillez dur avec la vision du succès. Si tu n'abandonnes jamais, tu ne cèderas jamais, tu gagneras.

La neige blanche et nacrée indique clairement que l'hiver est arrivé. Sortir son équipement d'hiver, faire des activités de neige amusantes et rire, vous rappelle que l'année va se terminer et vous ramène au début de l'année.



Sans titre



SCHOOL: St. Theresa, Brantford
TEACHER: Maria Iliopoulos
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Maria Iliopoulos
UNIT: Brant Haldimand Norfolk
UNIT PRESIDENT: Carlo Fortino

ELEMENTARY - GRADES 7-8 / NONFICTION
by **Mariam Okikiola Lawal**

Salut ! Je suis Mariam. J'ai treize ans. Ma couleur préférée est le violet. C'est très beau. J'habite à Brantford. Mon école s'appelle St. Theresa, c'est une école catholique. J'ai deux amies qui s'appellent Kim et Gabby. Elles ont treize ans. Nous allons toutes à St. Theresa.

Dans ma famille, il y a cinq personnes : ma mère, mon père, ma sœur, ma grand-mère et moi. Chez moi, nous parlons anglais et yoruba. Ma mère et mon père sont grands mais ma mère est plus grande que mon père. Ma mère est créative et contente. Mon père est sérieux et gentil. Ma grand-mère est petite est douce. Mutimainah est grande et très drôle. Parfois, j'adore ma sœur et parfois je déteste ma sœur. Elle peut être gentille ou mauvaise. Samedi et dimanche, je nettoie ma maison avec Mutimainah : c'est ne pas amusant. Aussi, je prends des leçons de basketball et technologie sur la fin de semaine.

Je viens du Nigéria. Je suis venue au Canada quand j'avais huit ans. Mon pays est grand et beau. Il y a beaucoup de groupes ethniques. Par exemple, il y a les Igbo, Hausa, Edo et Yoruba. Au Nigéria, notre langue officielle est l'anglais mais nous parlons Yoruba, Igbo et Hausa.



Quand l'horloge sonne sept heures



SCHOOL: St. Theresa of Lisieux
TEACHER: Claudia Sabatini
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Deborah Todde
UNIT: York
UNIT PRESIDENT: Mike Totten

SECONDARY - GRADES 9-10 / SHORT STORY
by **Rachel Liang**

« Un, deux, trois, quatre, cinq, six... sept ». Je me murmure en comptant sur les doigts de mes mains. Ma respiration ralentit, et mon esprit se calme. Sept brosses à mes cheveux, sept minutes passées à me préparer pour une autre journée qui sera encore pleine de confusion, sept heures avant que tout ne change profondément.

La peur commence déjà à m'envahir. Je sais exactement comment se déroule ma journée, c'est pourquoi je me sens en sécurité dans ma routine ; chaque jour est un reflet du précédent, depuis mon arrivée au Québec. Pourtant, quelque chose de différent se passe lorsque l'horloge sonne à sept heures et je me trouve bouleversée.

Je prends mon sac, sept stylos, et sept crayons. Sept de tout. Cela me force à me rappeler qu'après ces heures de contorsion et de transformation, personne ne pourra plus m'affronter, personne ne pourra me reconnaître. Après moi, il n'y a plus rien. Sept pas, et je sors.

Tic-tac, l'horloge sonne 1h00... Non, c'est-à-dire 13h00.

Je suis assise au septième siège de la septième rangée, mes yeux rivés sur le professeur de psychologie qui déverse ses mots comme un flot ininterrompu. C'est tellement ironique que j'essaie si fort d'apprendre la psychologie d'un humain « normal », quand je me sens complètement étrangère à moi-même. Mes oreilles se ferment à ses paroles jusqu'à ce qu'un chiffre me frappe :

Sept.

« Les *sept* types d'émotions de base : la colère, le mépris, la peur, le dégoût, le bonheur, la tristesse et la surprise », dit-il, ses lunettes captant juste assez de lumière pour cacher ses yeux fatigués, ce qui m'incommoder encore plus. C'est étrange d'entendre mon numéro par la bouche d'un autre, presque absurde, les cinq lettres résonnant dans ma tête comme un écho douloureux. Pourtant, je dois me contrôler.

« Un, deux, trois, quatre, cinq, six, sept », murmuré-je en comptant les affiches d'entraide sur le tableau. Mes lèvres se séparent dans un acte de concentration. Je reçois un regard étrange de la part des pairs environnants, leur jugement et confusion évidents par le léger mouvement de leur lèvre supérieure, leurs têtes inclinées et leurs yeux qui se lancent. Je fais un sourire gêné et une vague décontractée, je sens mon esprit se calmer de mes comptages routiniers.

Tic-tac, l'horloge sonne 3h00. Pouah, non. Pas encore... C'est-à-dire à 15h00.

Je rentre enfin dans mon petit appartement d'une chambre. Tout est comme je l'ai laissé, ordonné et presque compulsivement rangé. Mes six paires de chaussures, sauf celles que je porte, sont côte à côte sur le support, mes sept vestes suspendues par des cintres en métal au-dessus d'elles. Je dépose mes bottes près de mes baskets, la collection de sept vestes complètes, comme un chiffre magique qui m'échappe toujours.



Mes mains tremblent légèrement alors que je sors un repas pour une personne du micro-ondes. Un peu de poulet effiloché, du riz rassis qui me fixent avec une insistance triste. La scène est d'une déprime extrême. Mes yeux se plissent en suivant la rotation du plat, la chaleur se répandant dans chaque fibre de la nourriture, comme un poison lent.

Pendant que les secondes s'égrènent sur l'écran du micro-ondes, je prends le temps de vérifier mes portes et fenêtres. Sept fois. Ce rituel ne me prend pas longtemps, grâce à la simplicité de mon appartement. Comme chaque jour, je prépare la table, mon ordinateur portable allumé avec ma liste de tâches, et j'attends, silencieuse. Enfin, je prends mon repas morose et m'assieds, seule, une chaise autour d'une table bien trop grande pour une personne aussi petite dans ce monde. Je pense à échanger cette table contre quelque chose de plus petit, de plus intime, mais mes pensées se tournent vers des préoccupations plus pressantes, comme la rédaction de mon article de recherche.

Tic-tac, l'horloge sonne 5h00.

Les mois d'hiver ont volé la lumière à 17 h, plongeant l'espace dans un abîme de noir. La seule source de lumière vient de la lampe qui éclaire mon bureau. J'ai cette peur irrationnelle de me retourner et de voir le reste de l'appartement englouti dans l'obscurité, comme un enfant qui a peur de monter les escaliers après avoir éteint la lumière. Mais ce n'est pas un monstre couvert de tentacules que je dois affronter ce soir. Non, c'est un monstre bien plus insidieux : les mots qui apparaissent sur l'écran, prêts à me consommer.

Je scrute mon travail, les lignes qui s'étendent sur des pages et des pages où je pourrais enfin mettre des mots sur mes peurs. Il parle de moi, de cette transformation qui s'opère chaque jour lorsque l'heure de la septième arrive. Je deviens une coquille vide, la tristesse m'envahit comme une brume épaisse qui se glisse dans mes poumons. Mon corps fonctionne en pilote automatique, mon téléphone silencieux alors que j'attends ce moment doux-amer, où la douleur devient une amie familière.

Comme l'horloge sonne dix-neuf heures, tous les jours, je sens ma façade se relever et mon cœur ralentir. Je n'ai plus besoin de compter sur mes doigts, de nettoyer compulsivement ou de vérifier mes portes. Je n'ai pas à continuer de prétendre que je veux socialiser, que je veux faire semblant. Je suppose que j'aime ça, à part cette fosse paralysante dans mon estomac qui me permet de regarder en face en silence jusqu'à ce que l'horloge sonne à minuit. Ensuite, tout revient à la façon dont il était avant, aussi anormal que cela semble, il devient normal.

Je lève les yeux vers l'horloge, l'aiguille des heures se rapprochant lentement du prochain cran. Puis, mon téléphone émet une alarme générique, et je regarde, une dernière fois, le visage de l'horloge montée sur le mur.

Tic-tac, et l'horloge sonne sept heures.



Le Temps éphémère



SCHOOL: St. Theresa of Lisieux
TEACHER: Claudia Sabatini
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Deborah Todde
UNIT: York
UNIT PRESIDENT: Mike Totten

SECONDARY - GRADES 9-10 / POEM
by **Erin Suzie Lee**

Et voilà,

Alors que la neige fraîche tombe un matin de décembre,

Alors que la musique douce remplit mes oreilles,

Alors que je sens le temps m'échapper,

Je me sens nostalgique.

Je pense à des souvenirs merveilleux et des souvenirs horribles de l'année,

Les hauts et les bas.

Je pense au futur, embrouillé dans une étouffante fumée noire.

Ma tête est pleine d'inquiétudes, doutes et regrets,

Mon cœur est lourd avec les déceptions causées par d'autres personnes.

Pour un moment, j'oublie tout ça.

Finalement,

Je suis en paix.

Mon corps est comme s'il balançait paisiblement sur les vagues calmes de l'océan,

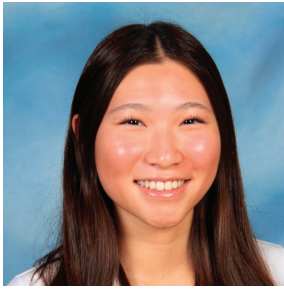
Mon âme est apaisée comme allongée dans une couche de doux, beaux flocons de neige.

Heureusement,

Je sens la paix.



Derrière l'écran : le mur invisible de Mattéo



SCHOOL: St. Theresa of Lisieux
TEACHER: Claudia Sabatini
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Deborah Todde
UNIT: York
UNIT PRESIDENT: Mike Totten

SECONDARY - GRADES 9-10 / PLAY
by **Emilee Hoang and Sarah Lu**

Fiction de la santé mentale

Liste des personnages

MATTÉO :	14 ans, élève d'école secondaire, le fils de Claire et Paul
CLAIRE :	45 ans, maman de Mattéo
PAUL :	47 ans, père de Mattéo
CAMILLE :	14 ans, étudiante d'école secondaire
ÉLEVE (dans les toilettes) :	13 ans, élève d'école secondaire

Lieu

Toronto, Canada

Temps

L'automne

ACTE 1

SCÈNE 1

La maison moderne de Mattéo, située à Toronto.

(Le cadre de cette scène est dans la chambre de Mattéo. Cette salle est décorée avec des peintures et des voitures miniatures. Cependant, ce n'est pas propre, car son lit n'est pas fait et il y a une pile de vêtements sur le plancher. MATTÉO prépare son sac à dos en panique, car il va être en retard pour son premier jour dans une nouvelle école. CLAIRE est au premier étage, en train de préparer le petit-déjeuner pour son fils. Elle monte les escaliers, pour rappeler MATTÉO de l'heure de départ.)



CLAIRE

(D'une voix urgente et stricte, la mère de MATTÉO lui conseille de descendre de sa chambre tout de suite.)

Mattéo ! Viens rapidement ! Tu ne veux pas être en retard pour ton premier jour de 9e année, surtout quand c'est une nouvelle école !

(CLAIRE soupire de déception.)

MATTÉO

(MATTÉO crie en retour.)

Une seconde, maman ! J'ai presque fini.

ACTE 1

SCÈNE 2

Lycée St. Georges CHS, Toronto

(Le cadre de cette scène est dans l'école St. Georges. C'est un bâtiment assez grand avec plusieurs étages. Il y a des dizaines de salles dans chaque couloir. Avec les épaules voûtées et sa tête baissée MATTÉO entre dans l'école. Il se précipite devant les groupes d'amis à l'entrée et trouve son casier. Il dépose son déjeuner et son manteau. La cloche sonne, indiquant l'heure de la première période. MATTÉO choisit un pupitre dans le fond de sa classe de français. MATTÉO rencontre CAMILLE qui entre dans la classe d'une façon frivole.)

CAMILLE

(D'une voix joyeuse et pleine de vitalité. CAMILLE trouve une place à côté de MATTÉO.)

Bonjour ! Je m'appelle Camille. Je viens de l'école élémentaire publique Robert J. Michael. J'ai hâte de revoir mes amies, ça fait si longtemps ! J'aime tellement mes cours ce semestre, et toi ?

MATTÉO

(D'une voix nerveuse et timide.)

Je m'appelle Mattéo. J'ai récemment déménagé ici de Montréal, (Québec). *(Silencieusement)*



Alors, je ne suis pas vraiment familier avec cette école.

CAMILLE

(D'une manière intéressante. CLAIRE parle rapidement.)

Wouah ! Ça c'est magnifique. Est-ce que c'est différent là-bas ? Est-ce qu'il y a toujours des tempêtes de neige ? J'ai toujours voulu aller à Québec pour visiter le Bonhomme Noël, mais je n'ai jamais de temps. Est-ce que l'école est plus facile ou difficile et qu'est-ce qui s'est passé avec les amis ? Est-ce que tu leur parles encore ?

ENSEIGNANTE

(L'ENSEIGNANTE fait taire la classe.)

Alors, on se calme ! Je suis tellement heureuse de vous voir tous, car je suis sûre que vous avez hâte pour votre premier jour de lycée ! Sortez vos classeurs, je distribuerai des feuilles de papiers.

ACTE 1

SCÈNE 3

Lycée St. Georges CHS. Toronto

(Cette scène prend place dans la cafétaria de l'école St. Georges. Il y a de nombreuses chaises et tables toutes arrangées en ordre. Elle est remplie avec une variété d'élèves et tout autour de la salle, il y a de longues fenêtres pour voir non seulement le soleil brillant, mais aussi les élèves qui marchent en classe. MATTÉO suit ses camarades de classe à la cafétaria et s'assoit seul à une table vide devant une fenêtre. Il ouvre son sac à dos, mais il fronce les sourcils quand il se rend compte qu'il a oublié son déjeuner. Au lieu de manger, il regarde son téléphone et envoient des messages à ses vieux amis.)

MATTÉO

(La cloche sonne, indiquant l'heure du déjeuner.)

Oh non, j'ai oublié mon déjeuner dans mon casier ! (Il soupire.) Ça va, je n'ai pas si faim.

(MATTÉO continue de regarder son téléphone, se cachant derrière son écran pour essayer de masquer son anxiété sociale.)

(Soudainement, une foule se forme autour de MATTÉO. Les gens commencent à regarder dans sa direction en le pointant du doigt et en riant. MATTÉO pense qu'ils se moquent de lui, mais en réalité, les élèves rient de la mascotte de l'ours polaire de l'école qui est derrière lui. C'est trop tard. MATTÉO



panique. Il court aux toilettes pour calmer ses nerfs.)

ACTE 1
SCÈNE 4

Lycée St Georges CHS, Toronto

(La scène est aux toilettes et il y a quatre cabinets séparés et privés. MATTÉO court aux toilettes d'une manière instable, et trouve rapidement un cabinet vide. Il entre, mais ses mains tremblent tellement et il devient si étourdi qu'il doit prendre un moment avant de fermer et verrouiller la porte. Il tombe sur le plancher en tremblant et ouvre la première poche de son sac à dos pour prendre une pilule antidépressive.)

MATTÉO

(D'une voix étouffée, MATTÉO fouille dans son sac.)
Où sont-ils ? Je suis sûr que j'ai emballé mes antidépresseurs ce matin.

(Il ouvre ses pilules et en prend une pour se calmer. Il soupire de soulagement.)

ÉLÈVE

(D'une voix inquiète et incertaine.)

Excuse-moi ? Est-ce que ça va ? Est-ce que tu veux que j'appelle quelqu'un ?

MATTÉO

(MATTÉO sort du cabinet. D'une voix faible, il répond.)

Oui ça va, merci.

(MATTÉO va à son dernier cours.)

ACTE 2
SCÈNE 1

La maison moderne de Mattéo, située à Toronto.

(La scène prend place dans la cuisine de MATTÉO et il y a un thème blanc et traditionnel. C'est



jusqu'à ce qu'il soit diagnostiqué il y a 6 mois. Je suis reconnaissant que les séances de thérapie et les médicaments fonctionnent enfin. Oh, et avant que je n'oublie, j'ai invité certains de mes amis du travail pour nous rejoindre pour le dîner de ce soir.

CLAIRE

Pas de problème, je vais faire du steak pour nous. C'est le plat préféré de Mattéo.

(Deux heures passent, le dîner est prêt et les invités arrivent.)

PAUL

(D'une voix forte.)

Mattéo, il est temps de manger !

MATTÉO

(MATTÉO sort de sa chambre avec un grand sourire sur son visage. Il marche vite mais avec légèreté, d'une façon frivole et hâtive.)

Ah ! Mon souper préféré ! J'ai besoin de ce repas après la journée que j'ai eue.

(Lorsqu'il est au sommet de l'escalier, il voit un grand groupe de personnes. Son visage perd toute couleur, sa voix tremble.)

Oh mon dieu ! D'où viennent tous ces gens ?!

(Il court vers sa chambre et ferme la porte en panique.)

ACTE 2

SCÈNE 2

La maison moderne de Mattéo, située à Toronto.

(Dans la chambre de MATTÉO.)

MATTÉO

(MATTÉO se promène dans sa chambre, bouleversé par la foule de gens dans sa maison. Il attrape sa bouteille d'antidépresseur, pour se rendre compte qu'il n'en reste plus. Il est assis sur le plancher contre le mur avec ses mains sur sa tête.)



Oh non, que vais-je faire sans mes pilules ?

CLAIRE

(CLAIRE est en bas des escaliers et crie d'une voix impatiente.)

Mattéo, pourquoi es-tu parti ? Viens saluer nos invités !

(CLAIRE monte les escaliers vu qu'il n'y a pas de réponse. D'un visage inquiet, elle ouvre lentement la porte et voit MATTÉO courir en sueur, voûté dans le coin de sa chambre. Il tremble d'une façon incontrôlable alors elle se dépêche immédiatement d'aller à côté de lui sur le plancher.)

Qu'est-ce qui s'est passé, mon fils ?!

MATTÉO

Je *(voix tremblante)* pense que...

CLAIRE

(Elle tient MATTÉO d'une forte étreinte.)

Chhh... Ça va. Tu vas bien. Essayons les exercices de respiration que ton thérapeute t'a enseigné, d'accord ?

MATTÉO

(D'une voix murmurée.)

J'ai besoin de plus de pilules, maman...

CLAIRE

Non, ces pilules ont fait plus de mal que de bien. Tu en es devenu trop dépendant. Tu as besoin d'une solution à long terme car les pilules ne te fournissent qu'un soulagement temporaire.

Pourquoi ne m'as-tu pas dit que tu étais dans cette situation?

MATTÉO

Je ne voulais pas être un fardeau, vous êtes déjà débordés par vos propres affaires.



(Il se calme.)

CLAIRE

Tu ne seras jamais un fardeau pour moi et tu sais que je ferais n'importe quoi pour toi, mon cœur. Ta santé est ma priorité absolue.

Veux-tu manger quelque chose ? J'ai fait ton repas préféré : un steak avec des pommes de terre.

MATTÉO

Oui, mais qu'en est-il des invités ? Je ne sais pas vraiment de quoi parler avec eux, donc c'est gênant...

CLAIRE

Mattéo, tu dois commencer à parler progressivement aux gens. Ton comportement ne va pas t'aider si tu te caches constamment derrière ton écran et dans ta chambre. Nous y procédons étape par étape et bientôt tu seras plus à l'aise et auras de nombreux amis dans ta nouvelle école. Je sais que ça va demander de la patience et du temps, mais ton père et moi, nous pouvons t'emmener à plus de séances de thérapie pour recevoir de l'aide professionnelle.

MATTÉO

D'accord maman.

CLAIRE

(Elle le serre fort dans ses bras et l'aide à se relever.)

Viens, je crois qu'il y aura quelqu'un que tu reconnaîtras.

MATTÉO

(Les deux marchent jusqu'à la table de la salle à manger et les yeux de MATTÉO s'écarquillent. Il parle d'une voix surprise et confuse.)

Camille !?



ACTE 2
SCÈNE 3

La maison moderne de Mattéo, située à Toronto.

(Dans la salle à manger il y a une table brune au milieu de la salle avec les chaises en bois qui l'entourent. Les invités ont déjà mangé. La table a encore quelques morceaux de steak et de légumes. MATTÉO est en train d'utiliser une fourchette pour remplir son assiette avec CAMILLE présente. La voix de MATTÉO est silencieuse.)

CAMILLE

(CAMILLE et MATTÉO sont assis l'un en face de l'autre pendant que MATTÉO mange son dîner.)

Salut Mattéo, quelle coïncidence ! Je crois que nos pères travaillent ensemble.

MATTÉO

(MATTÉO parle d'une façon timide et réservée.)

Je ne savais pas. C'est bon de te revoir.

CAMILLE

Tu vas bien ? J'ai entendu mes parents dire que tu galérais avec l'anxiété sociale.

MATTÉO

(D'un ton offensif.)

Je me demande pourquoi mes parents ont partagé mon problème personnel avec tes parents !

CAMILLE

Peut-être car nous comprenons bien cette difficulté mentale. Mon frère en avait aussi souffert. Mes parents ont partagé leurs conseils avec ta famille sur la façon dont mon frère l'a surmontée. J'imagine que ce déménagement devait être très difficile pour toi. L'idée de recommencer sa vie à Toronto et d'aller dans une nouvelle école où tu ne connais personne, doit être dur. Ne t'inquiète pas, je peux être ta première amie. Je sais que cette situation est très accablante et stressante, mais je serai à tes côtés.



MATTÉO

(Il a fini son dîner. D'une voix rassurée.)

Oui, c'était assez difficile depuis le COVID, quand je dépendais beaucoup de la technologie. Je me suis retrouvé caché derrière un écran, isolé du reste du monde. La technologie a détruit mes compétences interpersonnelles. Je ne pouvais pas avoir d'interactions sociales avec mes camarades de classe. Comme dans les projets de groupes et clubs, je ne me sentais pas à l'aise. Je me suis vite retrouvé en train d'avoir des crises de panique. Je suis très reconnaissant de ta compagnie. Ton soutien symbolise beaucoup.

(Ils échangent un sourire et se lèvent de leurs chaises pour aller au salon avec les autres.)

REMARQUES DE FIN

L'anxiété sociale est une peur intense et persistante d'être regardé et jugé par les autres, et c'est un problème important dans notre société actuelle. Si vous souffrez de ce trouble, n'hésitez pas à appeler le 1-800-668-6868 (24/7) ou à envoyer un message texte "CONNECT" au 686868.

"Les relations humaines, et l'image de soi de l'être humain, ont été profondément affectées par Internet et par la facilité avec laquelle des images d'autres personnes peuvent être invoquées sur l'écran d'ordinateur pour devenir des objets d'attention émotionnelle."

Roger Scruton

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La moralité de la société : le cas de Luigi Mangione



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SECONDARY - GRADES 9-10 / NONFICTION
by **Elizabeth Shi**

Le meurtre est répréhensible, c'est un concept simple, mais qu'est ce qui pouvait pousser les gens à défendre un meurtrier ? Le 4 décembre 2024, un homme se fond dans les rues de Manhattan, à New York, avec une mission bien spécifique. Tranquillement, il lève les mains. Il semble terriblement calme et stable, presque imperturbable, même quand ses doigts entourent la gâchette, si froide et noire, de son pistolet. Soudainement, la poudre du canon de fusil explose. En même temps, le tireur observe avec une sérénité insolite la balle se plonger dans le dos de la victime. Deux coups de feu supplémentaires sont tirés tandis qu'il s'approche de la victime, sans aucune empathie où hésitation alors qu'il tire le déclencheur encore et encore. Morte, la victime s'allonge à ses pieds. Brian Thompson, chef de l'entreprise United Healthcare, vient d'être abattu. Même avec les allégations de l'évidence en plus des actes odieux, l'immense soutien inattendu des médias est devenu évident, et soulève une autre question ; c'est quoi la vraie moralité dans la société ?

Un homme de 26 ans se présente devant la cour et plaide « non coupable ». Cela aurait pu être attendu, s'il n'y avait pas eu de carnet détaillant sa haine pour United Healthcare ainsi que de nombreuses preuves avancées par les autorités. Tout cela suggère que c'était cet homme qui avait le sang de Brian Thompson sur les mains. Selon la loi, contrairement aux avis des gens, il est innocent jusqu'à preuve du contraire. Parmi les preuves indéniables, le meurtrier présumé a été trouvé avec un pistolet imprimé en 3D muni d'un silencieux ainsi qu'avec un faux permis de conduire, parmi d'autres identifications frauduleuses. En outre, une photo de sécurité montre une ressemblance indéniable entre lui et le meurtrier après avoir été appréhendé à Altoona, en Pennsylvanie. Toutefois, sur la majorité des réseaux sociaux, on a l'impression qu'il est coupable, donc pourquoi est-ce qu'il y a du soutien ? Un des posts en ligne décrit parfaitement la réaction générale du public avec un mème qui déclare : « Dans cette maison, Luigi Mangione est un héros » (Forbes, 2024). En tenant compte de tout cela, c'est quoi la raison de ce soutien incompréhensible ? La réponse est beaucoup plus simple que la situation : l'argent. L'entreprise United Healthcare était apparemment extrêmement corrompue. L'entreprise était censée être axée sur la santé publique mais en réalité, l'entreprise donnait la priorité



à l'argent. Quelques actes ont souligné cette priorité, comme des changements de politique qui rendaient le remboursement d'argent aux demandeurs de plus en plus difficile. À la suite du meurtre de Brian Thompson, les histoires de corruption ne cessaient pas. Une de ces histoires était à propos d'un homme atteint d'un cancer du foie. Il était un bon candidat pour un programme de traitement, mais l'assurance avait ralenti le processus de traitement et de remboursement en lui posant des questions impossibles non spécifiées par l'auteur de poste. D'une manière dévastatrice, il avait succombé à ses maladies en seulement quelques semaines. Le commentateur anonyme a écrit : « La compagnie d'assurance a joué avec la vie de cette personne. Comment peuvent-ils s'en tirer ? Je ne comprends pas et cela me brise le cœur » (Buzzfeed, 2024). Cette situation ressemble de plus en plus à une histoire de fiction controversée, en particulier après le dévoilement de plus de détails. Chaque balle qui avait tué le chef de l'entreprise portait l'inscription « retarder, refuser, destituer », mais c'est quoi la signification ? Quelques internautes ont proposé un rapport avec un livre anglais d'un titre similaire, « Retarder, refuser, défendre ». Le livre, écrit par Jay M. Feinman, professeur de Droit, explique comment les compagnies d'assurances évitent de payer des revendications, et il donne aux lecteurs des méthodes pour contrer ce problème. Sur les balles tirées par Mangione, le mot « destituer » était à la place de « défendre », suggérant un mobile probable pour le meurtre : de destituer le chef de l'entreprise. Ce mobile ainsi que les allégations de corruption, fournissent aux médias un personnage anti-héros qu'ils associent avec le meurtrier allégué, Luigi Mangione. Cela fait remonter une question : le meurtre, peut-il jamais être justifié ?

« Nous sommes bouleversés d'apprendre le meurtre insensé de notre bien-aimé, Brian » (NBC News, 2024), explique Paulette, l'épouse de Brian Thompson. Malgré tous ses méfaits allégués, Brian Thompson ne méritait pas ce sort. L'opinion détaillée par Alex Goldenberg, conseiller principal à l'université de Rutgers, est que « L'afflux de messages sur les réseaux sociaux louant et glorifiant le meurtre du chef de United Health, Brian Thompson, est profondément concernant » (NBC News, 2024). Son opinion semble compréhensible, car il souligne un autre problème de notre société : la glorification des meurtriers dans des lieux tels que les médias. Les documentaires sur les cas de crimes sont pertinents dans cette discussion, car, dans la majorité des cas, l'avis est toujours fixé sur le tueur avec peu de reconnaissance pour la victime. Par conséquent, une vaste majorité de la société est devenue compatissante envers les coupables, ce qui provoque une désensibilisation aux crimes. Cela ne veut pas dire que l'information ne devrait pas être propagée, ni que les gens ne devraient pas posséder leur propre opinion, mais seulement que les gens doivent être conscients de certaines opinions nocives autour des cas controversés. En outre, un point reconnu par de nombreuses personnes est que personne n'a le droit de jouer au Dieu avec la vie des autres. Hélas, l'argument de la corruption avec M. Thompson aurait pu être fabriqué. Néanmoins, selon Bernie Sanders, un sénateur démocrate socialiste, il est impossible de gagner de l'argent sans « écraser les enfants qui dorment dans la rue »



(Yale Insights, 2024). Souvent, une attitude tranchante est nécessaire pour avoir du succès dans la vie. Cela nous permet de conclure que la vie n'est pas égale et elle est encore moins juste. Cependant, le meurtre est un acte inadmissible en soi et devrait rarement être utilisé comme outil, mais où doit-on tracer la ligne ?

Il n'y a jamais de réponse ni définitive ni correcte en matière de morales, car il n'existe pas un seul aspect de moralité que la totalité de la société pourrait accepter, étant donné qu'il existe beaucoup de différences culturelles et religieuses. Ainsi, qu'est-ce que la moralité en général ? La morale est soit un système, soit un concept qui s'agit des normes communes qui déterminent l'acceptabilité des actions. Ces principes sont considérés comme l'adhésif qui maintient la cohésion des communautés en mettant en place quelques règles tacites comme « ne pas voler » ou « ne pas mentir ». Cependant, ces dictons ne sont pas aussi clairs qu'ils ne le semblent.

Ceci est grâce aux scénarios qui se situent dans la « zone grise », par exemple, si quelqu'un vole un morceau de pain pour sauver un enfant ou s'il tue une personne pour épargner la vie de cinq autres. Toutes ces actions vont probablement causer la plupart des gens à douter de leur moralité, car surtout, le vol est une injustice, mais c'est plus acceptable quand il s'agit d'une cause décente. Cela définit le terme « moralement gris », car il est plus difficile dans ces situations de différencier le bien du mal. Donc, cela illustre parfaitement le dilemme du tramway. Ce problème décrit un scénario où il y a un tramway qui dévale la voie ferrée à une vitesse mortelle, vers cinq personnes sur la route qui ne peuvent pas bouger. Heureusement, il y a un levier qui peut changer le chemin du tramway. Sur la route alternative, il y a une seule personne immobile qui sera tuée si la route change. Si on analyse la situation, on pourrait dire que la personne qui actionne le levier serait coupable du meurtre d'une personne, mais s'il choisit de ne rien faire, il ne serait pas directement responsable du décès. La question suivante se pose : faut-il tirer le levier ? Faut-il sacrifier une vie pour en sauver cinq ? Il n'y a pas de réponse correcte, c'est simplement une question d'opinion. Ce débat est similaire à la polémique entourant les allégations de corruption contre Brian Thompson. Si les allégations sont vraies, Brian Thompson a ruiné et a potentiellement causé la mort d'un nombre incalculable de citoyens assurés par son entreprise. Cela veut dire que l'acte de Luigi Mangione était justifié dans une certaine mesure, mais soyons clairs, il n'y a pratiquement rien qui puisse justifier un meurtre dans un scénario ordinaire.

Cependant, les couvertures médiatiques présentent une perspective unilatérale de l'histoire, sans même reconnaître la possibilité qu'il n'y a pas de vraie réponse. Avec l'information qui était libérée, il pouvait être supposé que cette situation se situe dans la zone grise très complexe, renforcée par le fait qu'il n'y a personne qui soit cent pour cent innocent, juste certains qui le soient plus que d'autres. Dans l'ensemble, penser d'une manière trop simple serait manifestement une erreur ; dans la vie, il n'y a pas de bien ou de mal comme dans les contes de fées, juste des points de vue qui dictent une opinion.



Dans l'ensemble, la moralité est un sujet complexe. Cela est mis en évidence avec le cas de Luigi Mangione, un meurtrier présumé très soutenu par le public dans ses actes contre le chef de United Healthcare, Brian Thompson. Toutefois, la mort tragique de M. Thompson n'est pas vue comme une dévastation à cause des allégations de corruption qui permettent aux gens de se sentir satisfaits de l'échange de vies. Cela étant dit, il n'y a jamais de réponse correcte dans les situations comme cela, juste des opinions qui peuvent être partagées. Ni Luigi Mangione ni M.Thompson n'avait raison. Personne n'est innocent, c'est le dilemme des débats moraux.

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À la recherche de ma chère sœur



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SECONDARY - GRADES 11-12 / SHORT STORY
by **Avery Blazik**

Mes pieds traînent sur le chemin de terre qui mène aux montagnes de Santa Monica. Tout ce que j'entends, ce sont les branches qui craquent sous mes pas et ma propre respiration tendue, tandis que le soleil d'été brûle ma peau de porcelaine. Cela fait des heures que je suis là, attendant que quelqu'un réponde à mes attentes.

Le dernier gars que j'ai vu conduisait un camion délabré et avait l'air psychotique, avec des cheveux qui lui tombaient jusqu'à la poitrine et des lunettes fêlées. Celui d'avant était bien organisé et propre, mais il conduisait une camionnette blanche, ce qui le rendait encore plus effrayant. Je ne devrais pas juger, mais mes propres cheveux bruns sont emmêlés, et ma peau est tachée par la boue des routes.

Alors que je suis sur le point de perdre espoir, j'entends une voiture approcher au coin de la rue. Le soleil éclaire une limousine noire et élégante qui m'attire instantanément. Elle doit faire au moins cinq mètres de long.

Un homme remarquable se penche par la fenêtre, et son sourire parfait me captive. De la banquette arrière, il m'appelle :

- « Hé, tu veux que je t'emmène ? »

Sans hésiter, je me précipite sur les sièges en cuir chauffés. Je suis fascinée par sa beauté : ses cheveux blond brillant et ses yeux vert foncé me font avoir honte de mon apparence.

- « Je m'appelle Jake. Et toi ? »

Je cherche mes mots.

- « Euh... C'était quoi déjà ? »



Son chauffeur, un petit homme à l'air renfrogné, visiblement amusé, hurle :

- « T'es muette ou quoi ? »
- « Je... Euh... Non », balbutié-je, ce qui fait rire Jake.
- « Tais-toi, Lucas. Ne fais pas l'imbécile. Excuse-le, il n'a pas l'habitude d'avoir des filles ici. »

Lucas roule des yeux et ferme la vitre, les joues légèrement rosies par l'embarras.

Le son doux de la radio résonne dans la voiture tandis que ses yeux dérivent lentement vers les marques sur mes bras, les bleus sur mon cou et les trous dans mes vêtements. Son expression s'adoucit.

- « Hé, sans nom, tu veux venir chez moi un moment ? Je peux te donner des vêtements propres et un endroit où te laver. C'est juste au coin de la rue. »

Parfait. Un gentil garçon. Ça me dérange toujours un peu.

Je lui adresse néanmoins mon plus beau sourire et réponds d'un ton enjoué :

- « Bien sûr ! N'es-tu pas adorable ? Au fait, je m'appelle Maya. »

Il sourit, et nous roulons en silence jusqu'à sa maison.

Son entrée est bordée d'arbres imposants qui plongent son manoir dans l'ombre, le protégeant des rayons du soleil. Au centre de la cour trône une fontaine exquise, décorée d'or, et entourée de rangées de voitures de luxe. Je passe mes doigts sur leurs surfaces impeccables, admirant les détails dorés de la porte d'entrée.

- « C'est un artefact », explique-t-il. « Mon grand-père l'a hérité du trésor d'un ancien roi. On a beaucoup de choses comme ça. »

Je force un sourire amusé, cachant mon excitation. D'habitude, je suis plus à l'aise avec des types comme lui.

Mes chaussures sales laissent des traces de boue sur son sol en marbre immaculé, mais il cache bien sa déception.

- « Maya », dit-il gentiment, « Si tu as besoin de quelque chose - nourriture, eau, quoi que ce soit - fais-le-moi savoir. Je vais te chercher des vêtements propres. »



Je lui adresse un sourire gracieux, un sourire que j'ai répété des centaines de fois, tandis qu'il s'éloigne.

Mes doigts effleurent mes vêtements et rencontrent la surface dure de ma jambe droite : ma carte d'identité. Mon corps se tend. S'il la voit, je suis fichue. Tout ça pour rien.

Mon regard se pose sur le miroir, un mur imposant de glace incrusté d'or. J'y aperçois le collier luxueux autour de mon cou, ce symbole de richesse volée, dont la valeur reflète la souffrance de ceux qui l'ont porté. Je le garde pour me motiver, pour me rappeler de ma mission.

Soudain, Jake revient avec une pile de vêtements et un sourire chaleureux qui me fait presque... presque... culpabiliser.

Je reste vigilante. Mes mouvements sont rapides et précis.

Tout d'un coup, je la vois sortir d'une pièce adjacente au salon. Celle que je croyais m'avoir abandonnée il y a une éternité... ma sœur Anisse. Je n'en reviens pas !

En une seconde, tout devient noir et je m'effondre sur le sol en marbre frais.

Le bruit des sirènes vibre en moi, me ramenant à la réalité. Mes yeux s'adaptent aux lumières fluorescentes de la chambre d'hôpital.

Je me redresse lentement... et je la vois.

J'ignore la douleur qui me traverse les bras et stabilise mon expression. Elle me frotte le front. Je me sens soulagée. J'ai finalement retrouvé ma chère sœur après toutes ces années... Ce n'est rien de moins qu'un miracle.



Je la porte avec moi



SCHOOL: St. Theresa of Lisieux
TEACHER: Claudia Sabatini
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Deborah Todde
UNIT: York
UNIT PRESIDENT: Mike Totten

SECONDARY - GRADES 11-12 / POEM
by **Tanya Joulai**

Je n'ai jamais compris
Pourquoi on m'a donné cette vie.
On m'a dit que je l'avais méritée,
Que mon travail m'avait récompensée.
Mais je ne saisis pas pourquoi
Le destin peut être aussi froid.

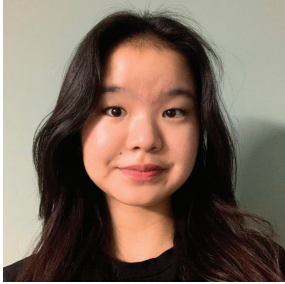
Je n'ai jamais compris pourquoi,
Loin d'ici, il y a une fille comme moi.
Une fille qui fait les mêmes efforts,
Écrit des poèmes bien plus forts,
Mais dont les rêves s'évanouissent,
Et dont les jours se noircissent.

Je n'ai jamais compris
Comment le même soleil peut se lever
Sur des mondes si différents.
Pourquoi ai-je les chances
Qu'elle se voit refuser ?
Où je fais des plans pour demain,
Et elle prie pour qu'il vienne.

Peut-être que c'est le hasard de l'existence,
Ou une intention qui dépasse ma compréhension.
Pourtant, la question persiste,
Et je ne comprendrai jamais tant qu'elle existe.



La Dernière Cloche



SCHOOL: St. Theresa of Lisieux
TEACHER: Claudia Sabatini
SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVE: Deborah Todde
UNIT: York
UNIT PRESIDENT: Mike Totten

SECONDARY - GRADES 11-12 / PLAY
by **Alyssa Park**

Personnages :

Lena : La major de la promotion qui a sacrifié ses amitiés pour réussir à l'école et qui se demande maintenant si tout cela en valait la peine.

Jordan : Le clown de la classe qui s'est toujours caché derrière l'humour et se demande à ce moment s'il aura une vraie identité après l'école secondaire.

Milo : L'artiste timide, qui a passé l'école secondaire dans l'ombre et craint d'être oublié.

Aiden : Un ancien élève, dont la propre expérience triste à l'école secondaire hante ses nuits et oblige, par conséquent, les étudiants à réfléchir à leurs propres choix de vie personnels.

La scène est sombre. Un seul rayon de lampe de poche traverse l'obscurité lorsque la porte s'ouvre en grinçant. LENA, JORDAN, et MILO se faufilent dans leur école secondaire pour la dernière fois.

LENA : (chuchote) Je n'arrive pas à croire qu'on est en train de se faufiler dans l'école à 23h.

JORDAN : (souriant) Une dernière aventure. Qu'est-ce qui pourrait arriver de pire ?

LENA : Je ne sais pas... peut-être me faire arrêter ? Imagine être expulsé un jour avant la remise des diplômes? Oh là là...

MILO : Techniquement, nous avons déjà accompli toutes les exigences du diplôme d'études secondaires. On ne peut plus être renvoyé.

Ils rient, mais avec une pointe de nervosité. Ils avancent dans le couloir, leurs pas résonnent. Ils arrivent dans leur ancienne salle de classe de français.



LENA : Je m'asseyais ici tous les matins. Au premier rang, j'étais la plus proche du professeur, même siège, même vue. C'est bizarre de savoir que je ne m'assiérai plus jamais ici.

JORDAN : (roule des yeux et plaisante) Bien sûr, tu étais toujours au premier rang. Monsieur Durante pouvait jacasser pendant des heures ! Heureusement pour lui, j'étais assis tout au fond.

MILO : Lena, tu parles comme si ça faisait des décennies... après tout, quel âge as-tu ?

LENA : Parce que le passé est réconfortant... au contraire du futur.

MILO : (passant une main le long de son bureau, gravé de gribouillis et de croquis) C'est drôle comme nous avons passé quatre ans à attendre de partir, et maintenant nous sommes ici, en souhaitant rester juste un peu plus longtemps.

Un moment de silence. JORDAN fouille et découvre quelque chose à l'intérieur d'un des pupitres. Les autres l'entourent.

JORDAN : Qu'est-ce que c'est ? Peut-être une lettre ?

Il ouvre une vieille enveloppe. La voix off d'un ancien élève nommé Aiden se fait entendre alors qu'ils lisent la lettre.

AIDEN (voix off) : « Si tu lis celle-ci, c'est que tu es allé à l'école plus loin que moi. J'aurais dû être diplômé avec ma classe, mais je n'en ai jamais eu l'occasion. J'ai laissé la peur rendre mon monde de plus en plus petit jusqu'à ce qu'elle l'engloutisse tout entier. Je pensais pouvoir me cacher dans ces couloirs assez longtemps pour ne pas avoir à affronter ce qui m'attendait après l'obtention de mon diplôme. Mais la vérité, c'est que le temps ne t'attend pas. Il faut avancer avec lui. Il faut croire qu'il y a quelque chose qui vaut la peine d'être découvert, même si on ne le voit pas encore. L'école secondaire n'était qu'une partie de ton trajet de ta vie. Alors, vas-y. Vis ! Sois plus courageux que moi. Et quand tu réfléchis à ce moment, ne te souviens pas seulement des murs qui t'ont retenu, mais souviens-toi des gens qui ont rendu ton expérience de l'école secondaire inoubliable. »

Silence. Ils se regardent en absorbant le poids des mots.



MILO : Je comprends ce qu'Aiden voulait dire. La peur rend le monde plus petit. La peur nous enferme, elle dresse des barrières invisibles qui nous empêchent d'avancer.

LENA : Milo...

MILO : Non, vraiment. Je pensais que si je gardais la tête baissée, si je continuais à dessiner dans les marges de mes cahiers, à faire des croquis sur mon bureau, à me perdre dans les nuages, tout ce qui se passait à l'extérieur n'aurait pas d'importance. Si je me concentrais sur les lignes, les ombres, les détails de mes dessins, je n'aurais plus peur d'être seul et sans amis. Mais je pense... je pense qu'à cause de cela, j'ai manqué beaucoup de moments importants à l'école secondaire. Je pensais que je me protégeais, mais peut-être que tout ce que j'ai fait, a rendu mon monde si petit qu'il n'y avait plus de place pour rien d'autre.

JORDAN : (plus doucement que d'habitude) Mais au moins tu étais là, présent au moment.

MILO : (hoche la tête) Oui. Et je me demande si Aiden a jamais su cela à propos de lui-même. S'il savait que le simple fait d'être présent était suffisant.

JORDAN regarde la salle, ses amis, l'école qu'ils connaissent depuis des années.

JORDAN : Tu sais, je me suis toujours moqué des gens qui étaient sentimentaux à propos de l'école secondaire. Pour moi, elle m'a toujours rappelé mes soumissions en retard pour mes devoirs. Mais maintenant que ça se termine... (pause, froncement de sourcils) Je ne sais pas. C'est bizarre.

LENA : Parce que maintenant, il faut trouver la suite.

JORDAN : (la regarde) Et s'il n'y avait pas de suite ? Et si l'école secondaire était tout ce que je savais faire ? Et si, en partant, je me rends compte que je n'étais qu'un mec qui faisait des blagues idiotes et qui passait son temps à gaspiller le temps ?

LENA : Ah Jordan...

JORDAN : (haussant les épaules, forçant un rire) Je veux dire que je n'ai pas un grand talent comme Milo. Je ne suis pas le major de promo comme toi. J'étais juste le gars qui faisait rire les gens. Et maintenant ? Je ne sais pas ce que je suis supposé être.



Silence. LENA réfléchit à ses mots.

LENA : Tu sais, j'ai passé quatre ans à m'assurer que j'étais toujours numéro un et que je ne faisais aucune erreur. J'ai suivi toutes les règles et toutes les attentes. Et maintenant que c'est fini, je me demande toujours... Est-ce que je l'ai fait pour moi, ou juste parce que c'était ce que j'étais censée faire ?

JORDAN : (doucement) Oui.

LENA : Je crois qu'on a tous un peu peur de se lancer dans quelque chose de nouveau. Mais peut-être que le but n'est pas de tout comprendre. Peut-être qu'il s'agit simplement d'avoir confiance en notre capacité à continuer.

JORDAN : Même quand on est perdu et qu'on n'a aucune idée où le voyage nous mène ?

LENA : Oui, même dans ce cas.

JORDAN plie la lettre soigneusement et la range dans sa poche en expirant.

JORDAN : D'accord. Je suppose qu'on devrait... continuer, alors.

LENA : (petit sourire) Oui.

Le groupe se dirige vers l'auditorium, l'endroit où, dans quelques heures, ils obtiendront officiellement leur diplôme. Ils assistent à la scène où leurs noms sont appelés un à un pour recevoir leur certificat.

JORDAN : (plaisante) Profitez de ces dernières heures en tant que dirigeants de cette école. Dans quelques mois, nous redeviendrons des étudiants de première année, perdus dans un lieu inconnu comme à la rentrée de la 9e.

LENA : Oui, c'est fou. On va tous partir dans des directions différentes. De nouvelles villes avec de nouvelles personnes. Ce ne sera plus jamais comme ça.

MILO : Mais on s'en souviendra comme ça. Ce moment. Cette nuit.

JORDAN : L'époque où nous étions des adolescents perdus essayant de naviguer dans nos vies.



Ils rient, mais ce n'est pas une simple plaisanterie, c'est une reconnaissance que cette version d'eux est sur le point de devenir un souvenir.

MILO : As-tu déjà réfléchi à la façon dont nous penserons en ce moment dans cinq ans ? Dans dix ans ?

LENA : On se souviendra peut-être des grands moments comme la remise des diplômes, le bal des finissants, tout ça. Mais je pense que ce sont les petits moments qui nous manqueront le plus : les blagues entre amis au déjeuner, les séances d'étude nocturnes, et les promenades dans les couloirs bruyants.

JORDAN : Oui... C'est drôle comme les moments auxquels on ne pense pas beaucoup aujourd'hui peuvent finir par être les souvenirs les plus précieux plus tard.

Longue pause pendant qu'ils profitent de ce moment. Puis, la cloche de l'école sonne le matin, marquant le début d'une nouvelle journée. Ils se regardent l'un l'autre.

LENA : La dernière cloche.

MILO : Je crois que ça veut dire que c'est l'heure.

LENA : Tu es prêt ?

MILO : Oui, je suis prêt.

JORDAN : La classe de 2025, nous voilà !

L'un après l'autre, ils se tournent vers la sortie, prêts à écrire le prochain chapitre de leur histoire.



Les choses que j'ai apprises de ma mère



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SECONDARY - GRADES 11-12 / NONFICTION
by **Siyi Cao**

“L'amour maternel est le seul bonheur qui dépasse tout ce qu'on espérait” (Gay).

Cette citation souligne la force extraordinaire de l'amour maternel. L'amour d'une mère est infini. Bien que chaque personne n'ait pas nécessairement une mère qui les aide, la mère joue un rôle important dans la famille. J'ai de la chance d'avoir une maman qui démontre parfaitement cet amour magnifique. Ma mère veut faire beaucoup pour moi et je voudrais dire que je suis qui je suis maintenant grâce à elle. Toutefois, les trois leçons les plus importantes qu'elle m'a enseignées sont : premièrement, qu'une façon de changer notre destin est par les études ; deuxièmement, afin de réaliser mes buts, j'ai besoin de commencer tôt ; troisièmement, il est crucial d'étudier l'économie parce qu'elle peut aider tout le monde à faire de l'argent supplémentaire. En général, ma mère est une personne exemplaire et mon exemple pour beaucoup de choses.

Tout d'abord, ma mère a toujours démontré qu'il est possible de changer son destin avec un effort constant. Elle a dit « Ne compte pas sur les autres, sois confiante avec les connaissances que tu as. » Plus que simplement me le dire, elle me donne plein d'exemples. Lorsqu'elle avait 18 ans, elle a appris l'anglais et a réussi à entrer à l'université par elle-même, ceci a aidé ma mère à découvrir un monde plus vaste. Grâce à son exemple, je comprends beaucoup plus à propos des études et de l'effort qu'il nous faut. Elle continue également à lire, bien qu'elle n'ait pas beaucoup de temps pour le faire, cependant, elle trouve toujours au moins une vingtaine de minutes pour lire. Cela l'aide à être une apprenante tout au long de sa vie. De plus, depuis 10 ans, elle a fini beaucoup de livres pour enrichir ses connaissances. Depuis ce temps, je me suis rendu compte qu'un peu d'effort chaque jour, peut nous mener à beaucoup de succès. Dans l'ensemble, j'ai compris les raisons pour les études, comme elles peuvent nous apporter l'avantage notamment pour changer nos vies.

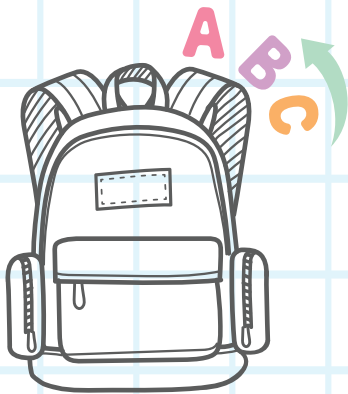
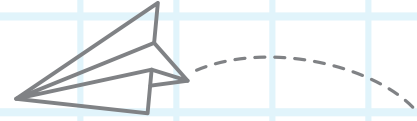
En outre, ma mère est une personne très organisée et elle a une vision d'ensemble. Elle aime planifier bien à l'avance pour réaliser ses buts. Je suis même un exemple de cela. Quand j'étais enfant,



elle m'encourageait à pratiquer différents sports comme la course à pied, le badminton, la natation, le patinage et le ping-pong. Elle a fait cela pour que je puisse avoir une connaissance de base des sports et pour être plus saine en général. Un jour, j'étais curieuse, donc je lui ai demandé « Pourquoi voulais-tu que j'étudie beaucoup de sports quand j'étais jeune ? » Elle a répondu « Parce que je sais que si tu veux être bon dans quelque chose, tu as besoin de commencer très tôt. » Elle avait raison. Tout de suite, j'ai pu bénéficier de cela, parce que je peux maintenant jouer à plusieurs sports. De plus, ces sports m'ont permis de me créer beaucoup d'amitiés avec de nombreuses personnes. Par cet exemple, j'ai appris le point de l'expression chinoise qui dit : le meilleur temps pour planter un arbre est il y a 10 ans, ce qui veut dire que la planification porte ses fruits.

Ma mère, en tant que ma principale influenceuse, m'a appris à utiliser les connaissances économiques pour gérer l'argent et ainsi favoriser la croissance de la richesse. De plus, une autre leçon que ma mère m'a apprise est à utiliser la connaissance pour découvrir les possibilités d'argent. Ma mère n'a pas appris les affaires ou l'économie pendant l'université, mais elle l'a étudié pendant son temps libre parce qu'elle pense que cela est très important. En 2008, il y a eu une crise financière à travers le monde et elle a utilisé les choses qu'elle avait apprises pour continuer à prospérer. Sur base de ses connaissances, elle a investi dans l'immobilier quand le prix était bon pour acheter. Après la crise, les prix ont énormément augmenté et c'était le début de son succès. Depuis ce temps, je me rends compte que c'est nécessaire d'avoir une connaissance de l'économie car dans le monde des affaires, avoir cela nous aide à explorer les différentes manières de gagner de l'argent. Inspirée par son exemple, je veux comprendre l'argent pour la sécurité de ma famille à l'avenir.

Fournir un effort pour ses études, planifier tôt pour ses buts et étudier l'économie ne sont que trois exemples de leçons importantes que ma mère m'a partagées. Elle m'influence d'une manière que je n'ai pas imaginé. Les leçons enseignées sont devenues partie de moi et seront avec moi pour toujours. Parfois, je me demande si nous pouvons dire que les enfants sont l'œuvre d'art de leurs parents. Ma mère est-elle fière de moi ? Je pense que oui. Les choses que j'ai apprises d'elle font partie de moi, comme le sang que j'ai hérité d'elle. Les mères et leurs filles sont tellement connectées, donc, je ne sais pas si c'est la mère qui façonne la fille, ou l'inverse, la fille qui façonne la mère. Cependant, dans les deux sens, l'amour maternel est le plus pur et fort, cet amour nous protégera toujours !



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