

THE THINKERBOTS WRITING ACADEMY

2020  
*FLASH FICTION*  
*PUBLICATION*

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*"After nourishment, shelter, and companionship,  
stories are the thing we need most in the world."*

WRITTEN BY CHILDREN AROUND THE  
WORLD

## **FROM THE AUTHORS**

Hello Readers!

Welcome to our 4th Annual Flash Fiction Publication!

This event was created as a fun opportunity for kids to have their writings published. Now, it has grown into an international free service for children who are looking for a chance to have their writings edited and published.

Enjoy reading the Flash Fictions of Fall/Winter 2020! As you read through the pages of interesting stories presented to you, we hope you give yourself a big pat on the back.

Writing isn't easy to do at all - let alone a flash fiction like you all did.

Don't forget to come back for our Spring/Summer 2020 Edition!

And remember ... if you WRITE, we'll make it RIGHT!!!

- The ThinkerBots Team.

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# THE SHAPE SHIFTER

**By: Sriaditi Yellamraju; Grade: 6**

This is a story about a girl named Savanna Marley and (strange) things happening in and around her life.

Savanna's dad was a scientist named Dr. James Marley. Everyday, Savanna's dad, when going to work, poured her favorite chocolate milk in a cup and placed it on the counter with a lid on it. Savanna would drink the milk when she came back from school and she loved the cup, as it was a souvenir they got from their trip to Hawaii. One day when James was grabbing the milk carton from the refrigerator, he heard something drop and turned around. Milo, the house cat, had knocked down a mason jar of edible powder into the souvenir cup.

Milo was a Balinese cat and he was a stray. About three years ago, James, Savanna and Dean (Savanna's older brother) were going to the St. Terrell Goodwin Museum of Astronomy, when they stumbled across an injured cat on the sidewalk. They felt distraught and took the cat to the vet to see if it was alright. The cat was all fine and they decided to keep the cat as a pet. After a long discussion, Savanna and Dean agreed to name the cat as Milo.

The powder that Milo had dropped was luckily just an edible experiment James had made, so it was perfectly harmless. But what James didn't know was that when that edible powder mixes up with a product of cocoa beans, the person who drinks or eats that item will have the ability to shape shift.

Meanwhile, Savanna was at school and she was in the library. In school Savanna was a very smart student. She was always top of the class and a little bit of a teachers pet. But the thing is that she didn't have that many friends. Her closest friends were Daisy and Lily. Somehow she seemed to have made friends with the only girls in the school who had been named after flowers. Tomorrow was the 10th annual school get together of Savanna's school. Every year Northwood Elementary School will have a get together at Down Alley Mall. They reserve tables at the food court. They used to go to the movies but last year they stopped going to the movies because parents of kindergarteners complained that the movies tend to be scary for the kids.

At lunch time she was walking to the table and tripped and had her face straight into the spaghetti and meatballs. Everyone laughed at her. Savanna felt so embarrassed. After school was done she skipped the bus to prevent more embarrassment and walked to her house instead. Her house wasn't far from the

school. While walking to her house she remembered she needed to stop by her neighbor's house to pick up some tools that her dad gave.

Once she reached home she drank her chocolate milk and started her homework. Dean had already come home and had started on his project. He was a Sophomore at Northwood High. He came home early today because every Thursday they have an early dismissal.. Dean was interested in AI/ Robotics and is the captain of the School robotics club. This year along with the school get together, the robotics team is doing a fundraiser to build a lab with every food purchase made at the Burger Queen in the Mall.

A few hours later, her dad came home from his lab. James works at Samuel Hyu Alexander Primitive Environmental Systems (S.H.A.P.E.S). When he came home, he quickly rushed down to his basement, a.k.a his lab, and started jotting down notes. Savanna came down to ask what happened.

"Dad, why are you so upset?", Savanna questioned.

"My boss, Gerald, wants me to come up with some sort of invention that can make S.H.A.P.E.S famous."

Savanna understood that her dad needed some time alone to focus on his work, so she went upstairs, brushed her teeth and went to bed. But what Savanna didn't know was that the next day morning will open up a pandora's box.

The next morning, Savanna woke up looking like a piece of ...candy? She went to brush her teeth when she looked into the mirror and saw herself in a white chocolate and caramel swirl toffee bar. Savanna screamed and ran all the way to her dad.

"AHHHHHHHHH DaaaaaaaDDDDDD", Savanna hollered around the house.

"Oh my god Savanna, what happened!", said James with shock rushing out of his bedroom

"I have no idea Dad ..but please get me out of this weird costume !"

"Think James, think!", James muttered.

James had a thought and jolted to the kitchen. He found the edible experiment and read it. CAUTION: IF MIXED WITH ANY PRODUCT OF COCOA BEANS, YOU MAY EXPERIENCE SHAPESHIFTING.

"Oh no.", said James

"What let me look at it-----oh my gosh", Savanna said with fear.

Luckily, James had found out that she can shift into anything she wants to. And to undo it she just needs to think of going back to herself and she becomes her normal self.

Savanna remembered that today was the 10th annual school get together at the mall. She asked her dad to drop her at the mall. He said sorry dear as he had to stay at home in his lab and continue researching more about shapeshifting so he could share it with his boss. Savanna then went across the street to Lily's house and asked for a ride. While they were in the car they stopped by at Daisy's house to pick her up too.

Daisy, Lily and Savanna were best friends since kindergarten. They all met first by the swings and played with Milo and Lily's baby sister. Daisy's dad is also a scientist and works with Savanna's dad. Lily and Daisy met at Lily's cousins birthday party. Apparently Daisy is Lily's Aunt Marie's neighbor. Since all the girls houses are pretty close, they all meet every day. You can say these girls are as close as THREE peas in a pod.

Back at home, James was doing more researching at his "lab" on the shapeshifting origin. He couldn't wait to see the look on his boss's face when he hears about one of his workers daughter ability to shapeshift. James was so proud but at the same time he was also worried about what can happen to Savanna. Savanna was the only thing that makes him happy ever since his wife died.

Laura Marley was James's lab partner. She had died in a fire in the old lab. Savanna was 3 years old when the incident had happened. Whenever James sees Savanna, he always sees her mother. The nose and the eyes of Savanna were an exact replica of Laura.

The girls reached the mall and started at the food court. Daisy ordered a ham and cheese sandwich from Bee's sandwiches. Lily ordered a Kiddie Meal from McHarolds. And Savanna ordered chicken nuggets and fries also from McHarolds. After a while they decided to check on Dean and his club on how much money they had earned. They were able to raise only \$30 until then.

After shopping and talking, a loud alarm came on. Apparently, there was a robbery at Swarovski - an expensive diamond jewelry store. Savanna thought this can be an advantage to use her ability to shapeshift. She wanted to do it but she thought that her friends might think she is a freak or an alien. She saw that the robber was about to get away.

Savanna made the right choice and quickly ran behind the robber and had transformed into an eagle to soar over him. She turned into a net to capture him but it was too small. She next shifted into a cage to trapped him and threw him down and he fainted . "Yes! I got him!", she said in her head. She landed on the floor and shifted back to herself. After her landing everybody in the mall went silent and stared at her. And then Lily started clapping and like a fire to a bush,

the clapping and whistling spread around the mall. Savanna had never felt so proud in her life. She started thinking about how proud and happy her dad will feel when she tells him about what happened..

When her dad heard the news, he drove down to the mall, ran to his daughter and gave her a big hug. More whistles and clapping erupted in the air. The police came and arrested the robber.

And the best part was James boss's wife worked at Swarovski and she was so thankful. So Gerald gave James a promotion after finding out about the shapeshifting daughter.. When people found out that Dean's sister can shapeshift, lines were formed at Burger Queen to donate money for the new lab. Everyone was happy - Dean and his team for raising enough money , James for getting a promotion and Savanna for feeling so proud being a hero. Now when Savanna walks down the hallway of her school, everyone notices her. Everybody had forgotten about what had happened at lunch. Savanna had never ever been so happy and proud of herself. Savanna was not only known for saving the day, but was also known as the kid who had helped build a new lab at her brothers high school.



# TIMEBREAKER

By Akshaj Devireddy, 5th Grade

Archeologists found a note dug deep into the ground. It said, "Find a time travel machine." Archeologist Bill was the only person to read the back of the note which said the exact longitude and latitude of the machine which was 5° 26' 46" S 65° 58' 56" W. Bill traveled there and found out that the "machine" was a time traveling wristwatch. He found out that there was a date on the screen of the watch. The date was July 31st, 5391. Bill put the watch on his wrist in curiosity and couldn't even say a word before he disappeared in a blue flash of light. Bill opened his eyes to see a man.

"Hi, my name is Johnny and I've been waiting for you, Bill," he said.

"How do you know my name?" asked Bill.

"Come on, let me explain. You see, the time travel machine was invented in the late 44th century. But people could only go back and forward in time a millennium. Everyone wanted to go to the past, since they wanted to see how life was like back then. People didn't go to the future, a little because they were too scared and mostly because the scientists who made the machine would block off the way back. But, the scientists were so tempted to see the future that they sent one person - me. As soon as I arrived, I saw this," Johnny replied pointing to the barren ground behind him.

"I found out after analyzing the world, that humans had gone extinct. After that, I found a note in the ground that said, 'Find Bill. He will save you.' I checked the back of the note and it gave me a longitude and latitude. I went to its location and found you here."

"We're going to have to find the cause of human extinction," Johnny continued, "We're going to do that by using your time traveling wristwatch."

"Okay, let's do this." Bill replied.

"I'm from 4391 and this time is 5391. That means that humans have gone extinct somewhere between those times. Luckily, I have this artificial intelligence chip called PIE from 4391. PIE stands for Powerful Intelligence for Everyone. So, everyone in my time has PIE. If I'm thinking this through correctly, I can program PIE to calculate the exact date that humans had gone extinct. I'm the top scientist at my lab, so I'm the only one that can do this," Johnny said.

Johnny took out PIE, a futuristic laptop. He did some typing and told a date, "September 16, 4963."

"Why couldn't we just go in your time traveling machine instead of this wristwatch?" Bill asked.

"As soon as I stepped out of my time travel machine it disappeared behind me. I have no idea why. Maybe the scientists forgot to cancel the blocking off way back code. Oh, and one more thing. Time messes with your memories. So, only now I remembered that the time travel machine was a top secret government project and not revealed to people at all. Now, let's go." Johnny said.



Johnny entered the date "Sept 16, 4963" on the wristwatch. Then, Bill held Johnny's hand, hit the "Initiate" button, and both of them disappeared in a blue flash of light.

They arrived hearing an explosion. A huge robot stood in the middle of a city. Buildings were crumbling, about to be destroyed, and everywhere they looked, there was rubble and debris. A booming voice coming from the robot said, "You will all die! All because of a huge nuclear reaction!" In the distance, Bill saw a mysterious humanoid figure running towards him and Johnny. When it got closer, he could see that the figure was a man.

"Bill!" he said, "I knew you would come!"

Bill asked the question he asked Johnny in 5391, "How do you know my name?"

"No time to explain. First, let's get to a safe place." he replied.

Once they got to a safe place, which was rare in this environment, the man said, "My name is Tim. Bill, I'm your great\*23 grandson. I'm a scientist and I've been time traveling all over the place unseen, without other scientists' permission. I saw human extinction coming. I would have tried to tell other people, but they would've laughed and not believed it."

"Then, I realized that if more people supported my cause, the world would listen to me. So, I went to different times and dug notes in the ground, and waited for the heroes to read it and come find me. But I also knew how to stop human extinction. I wasn't able to try it out myself because I recently figured it out. Also because I was scared that it would tear apart the timeline. Okay, now your ultimate mission is to stop human extinction from ever happening in the first place, and to do that, you have to stop nuclear reactions from ever being created."

"Okay, we'll try to do that, but what about you? Where will you go?" Johnny asked.

"I'll be there when you most need me. Now, go! Fulfill your destiny!" Tim answered.

"But I don't know when it was created." Johnny said.

"But I know when it was created. In 1940, by Dr. Bush under President Roosevelt." Bill said.

"We don't have an exact date, though. Maybe PIE can tell us that." Johnny said.

Johnny pulled out PIE, did some typing, and recited a date, "June 14, 1940." Bill entered the date in the watch, and both he and Johnny disappeared in a blue flash of light yet again.

They appeared to see old-fashioned houses made entirely of wood. The paint on the houses were peeling in patches here and there. Cars were rattling by, parallel to the sidewalks where Bill and Johnny were standing. Other people were also strolling by, men wearing gray suits and black fedoras and women wearing skirts and hats. Bill and Johnny were the only ones standing out, Bill with his T-shirt and jeans, Johnny with a shirt that said, "Google is dead" on the front and "P.I.E takes over" on the back. But, the other people didn't seem to notice them, as they carried on with their day.

“Okay, now we need to find Dr. Bush,” Bill said, “I learned that he spent most of his time in his laboratory.”

“Where did you learn all this stuff?” Johnny asked.

“Excuse me, but I’m an archeologist. I happen to know a lot of things from history. Also, isn’t that kind of obvious? Dr. Bush is a scientist and scientists spend a lot of time in their laboratories. Anyway, let’s ask someone where Dr. Bush is.” Bill replied.

Johnny nodded, went to the nearest person, and asked, “Do you know where Dr. Bush’s laboratory is?”

“Head down this street, make the second left, and continue until you see the numbers 4582 on a building. That’s what you’re looking for.” the man replied.

Bill half expected the man to say, “Find it yourself.” and walk away, but he sure was glad that didn’t happen. Both of them followed the man’s directions.

Once they got to the building that had the numbers 4582 on it,(it took a rather long time) they decided to eavesdrop Dr. Bush’s words instead of going up to him, since they needed to plan things out first. They went to the back of the building and peered through a window from there. The phone rang.

“Oh, it’s President Roosevelt. I better pick up.” Dr. Bush said.

The windows were so thin they could hear what Roosevelt was saying.

“Dr. Bush, we need to end this war now. That’s why you are now in charge of creating a nuclear bomb using uranium and Albert Einstein’s formulas. We are going to drop it on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to end this war once and for all.” he said.

Bill sighed and said, “He said Albert Einstein’s formulas, so I guess we’re going to him now.”

“But, where is Einstein? More importantly, when?” Johnny asked.

“I know he published his ‘Miracle Year’ papers in 1915. But, I don’t know the exact date. Let’s ask PIE.” Bill replied.

Johnny asked PIE and spoke out a date, “November 25, 1915” They entered it on the watch, and vanished.

They appeared in a more old-fashioned area than before. The cars that were zooming past them were now less advanced. Unlike last time, they landed right in front of the patent office Einstein worked at. They decided to sneak around once again. They peered through the window at the back of the building. The room had a huge whiteboard with all kinds of complicated math equations on it.

“Yes, I have finally finished these papers that I will submit to the scientists at Zurek Polytechnic! I can already see my name in headlines!” Einstein said to himself.

Einstein strolled off to the bathroom, leaving the papers on the table. Bill and Johnny saw their opportunity, as they snuck in through the window and grabbed the papers.

“Now, where do we put these?” Bill wondered.

Bill looked around the whole room until his eyes rested on the fireplace, where the fire still burned. Bill tossed the papers in, the flames crackling as it consumed Einstein’s precious work.

“Let’s go before he comes back.” Johnny said.

Bill nodded, entered the date to the future, said, "I hope this works," and both him and Johnny disappeared.

They appeared in September 16, 4963, and everything looked alright. But suddenly, a booming voice cut through all the peacefulness.

"Tomorrow, the world ruler, Jonas Hitler VIII has come to celebrate his birthday here in Amazon City. You must all make presents for him or else you will go to prison, as so many have already have. You have 24 hours. Now, get going!" it said.

Now that Bill looked closer at his surroundings, he could see the Nazi sign everywhere, even carved onto buildings and painted on roads.

"What happened here? What did we do wrong?" Johnny asked.

"I'll tell you what you did wrong," a familiar voice said.

It was Tim, walking toward them.

"Since you burned Einstein's Miracle Year papers, the professors rejected him, he didn't get famous, and most importantly his formulas didn't get famous. That prevented nuclear reactions from ever being created, great, but another thing happened. Since the atomic bomb wasn't invented, they couldn't drop it on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the two cities in Japan. That gave a huge advantage to Adolf Hitler who was trying to rule the world. Normally, he would have been defeated, but since you and Bill changed time, he won the war, and became world ruler. Now, Jonas Hitler VIII, descendent of Adolf Hitler, is world ruler. But, as usual, I thought of a way to stop *this* from ever happening," Tim said.

Tim pointed at Johnny and said, "In your time, Noah Hitler IV was short on money because he pushed the government aside. The government got all of the money and Noah got none. So, when the PIE was invented, he made a deal with PIE Industries. He said he will do a partnership with them and make a law stating that everyone has to buy PIE and pay a monthly fee for it. But in return he would get all the money and would only spend little money on building more PIEs. PIE Industries agreed to the deal and has been going on ever since. But, if you go back in time and stop PIE from ever been invented, then everything should go back to normal."

"But why does Noah even need money? He is a world ruler. He can do anything," Johnny asked.

"Sure he can add simple little laws but to make big ones, he needs a certain amount of money. Everyone has to follow rules," Tim replied.

"But even if we stop PIE from ever been invented, won't Noah just find another company to have a partnership with?" Bill asked.

"That's the thing. After PIE Industries got partnership with Noah, all the CEOs of all the companies in the world saw PIE Industries as a huge threat. They became scared and sold their companies. So, you are going to have to go to the time around 5 years after the partnership. PIE was invented in April 20th 4380." Tim replied.

Bill entered the date, "April 20th 4385" and both he and Johnny disappeared.

They arrived in front of a big building that said PIE Industries on it. People were flying across with jetpacks, about 10 feet off the ground. Even higher, Bill estimated

about 50 feet off the ground, flying cars were zooming past them. Bill was surprised there was no traffic at all. Suddenly, a huge question sprung into Bill's mind.

"At this point, don't billions of people have PIE? How will we destroy all of them?" he asked Johnny.

"There has to be a way. Come on, let's ask the CEO." Johnny replied.

They stepped into the building and asked the nearest person where the CEO office was.

"Travel up to the top floor of the building. Then from the elevator go left, and you will see a room saying, 'CEO Office.'" the person said.

They followed the person's directions, and went into the office. A man was sitting in a chair and said, "Hi, I'm Ben, CEO of PIE Industries. How may I help you?"

"I have a question. What do you do if, I don't know, all the PIEs in the world go haywire?" Bill asked.

"Oh, there's a button for that on the second floor in Room 6547. The code for that button is in the cabinet over there. Also, why I am telling you this? You must leave at once." Ben replied.

"Uh, and there's an employee choking on the 1st floor." Bill quickly said.

"I must be there immediately." he said.

He ran out of the room.

"Good quick thinking. Now, let's get this code." Johnny said.

Bill opened the cabinet and peeked in to it. The code was carved on to the bottom of it. It was 201BD. Once they were in the room on the second floor, they went in and they saw it was vacant except for a small red button sitting on a pedestal. They got closer to it and Bill saw that there was a cover to the button that had been padlocked. Below the button, on the side of the pedestal, there was a key pad. Johnny typed in the code and the lock clicked open. The instant they opened the cover an alarm blared loudly. Bill pressed the button and said, "We better get out now."

They turned around and they saw a muscular guard watching them.

"Oh no, you don't," he said.

He began running towards them when suddenly, there was a blur and he was unconscious on the floor.

Standing on top of his body was Tim. "I thought you needed my help," he said.

"We really did." Bill replied.

"But first, I have to check if everything is alright in the future." Tim said.

He disappeared for a moment and then came back. When he came back, he had a huge smile on his face.

"Bill and Johnny, you have officially prevented human extinction!" Tim said.

Bill and Johnny breathed a huge sigh of relief.

"Hitler is still there in Bill's time because we stopped Hitler after Bill's time, so Bill has to come to the future and live with Johnny." Tim said.

Bill remembered when Johnny said time messed with your memories. That's why Bill had forgotten everything else in his previous life and was ready to start a new one with Johnny in the future.

After Bill and Johnny were in the future, Bill realized he hadn't checked under the watch. But when he finally did, there was one word written on it, "Timebreaker."

# The End

# MY ONE-EYED MOTHER

**Written by Margaret Stevani**

My mom only had one eye. I used to hate her... She always embarrassed me, trying to make me her friend, cooking for students and teachers to support the family, and hiring out of pity.

One day during elementary school my mom came to say hello to me. I had never been so embarrassed in my life! How could she do this? Obviously, ignored her, threw her a hateful look, and ran away. The next day at school, one of my classmates said, "Eww, your mom only has one eye! What is wrong with her!" I guess I never asked exactly what had happened to her, because sometimes I was so full of hate and embarrassment that I never even cared about her story.

I only remember wanting to bury myself after that day at school, and for her to just disappear. I confronted her that day and without thinking about I said, "If you're only going to make me the reason of joke in school, why don't you just die and make everyone a favor?" My mom did not respond, she just remained in silence... I didn't even stop to think for a second about what I had said, because I was full of anger, and what's worst of all; I didn't care about her feelings.

I wanted to get out of that house, and have nothing to do with her. So I studied really hard, and as a result, got a chance to study abroad. At first it was hard, but my motivation of staying away from her was still present and strong. After I graduated from law school, I got married. I now had a house of my own. I had kids of my own. I was happy with my life, my kids and the comforts I had. Although sometimes she had tried to reach me, I naturally rejected her messages and letters. Then one day, my mother came to visit me. She hadn't seen me in years and she didn't even meet her grandchildren.

When she stood by the door, my children at first stared at her and then uncontrollably, they laughed at her. All those memories from school came up, I started to remember all the embarrassment I once had. And that was when I yelled at her for coming over. I

screamed at her, “How dare you come to my house! GET OUT OF HERE IMMEDIATELY!” And to this, my mother politely answered, “Oh, I’m sorry, maybe I got the wrong address.” – And she disappeared at the moment.

One day, a business trip to my hometown came up. I had to work on some cases there and go to reunions with other firms. I didn’t even think of staying at my mom’s house or go to visit her, I just went to a local hotel. But after a reunion, my old neighbor stopped me and gave me a welcome hug. Meanwhile we talked he told me my mother had died a week ago and that he had tried to give me something she wanted me to have but couldn’t reach me.

It was a letter with only my name on it and when I opened it, my heart shrank a little and a tear went through my cheek. After all, she still was my mother. The letter said:

“My beautiful daughter,

I think of you all the time. I’m sorry that I came to your house without telling you before; I just thought “nobody hates surprises”, but I guess I was wrong.

I write this letter to you because the next time I see you, I may not be able to even get out of bed. I’m sorry that I was a constant embarrassment to you when you were growing up, I guess I just didn’t know how not to be. I think I tried too hard to make our lives normal.

I never got to tell you my story but when you were very little, you got into a big accident, and lost your eye. As your mother, I just couldn’t stand watching you having to grow up with one eye. So I gave you one of mine. I thought maybe you would use it better than me.

I wish you a happy life and I will love you forever, Mom”



# MATH - The Perfect Balance of Control and Chaos

**Written by Lucas Hinds**

Equations, equations, infinite equations.

Hyperbolas, quadrics, exponentials and more. Though vast they all are, they do have limits, and those limits have their limits.

Even undefined expressions make their mark in calculus. But they obey rules just like the rest of us. And then there are things without solutions, twisting the undefined beyond repair. But in the end, we find that all it is, is a graph and some lines.

# A DEEP LOSS

Written by Anisa Patel

Do you ever wish you could go back in time? To make sure nothing bad happened?

Living in San Jose, CA, and being a normal person, you would never think that something traumatic happened to me. But it did. It all happened 3 years ago. It was a cold October 31st, 2016 and all the Halloween candy I mixed up was spread out on the ground from trading with my friends. The ground was a colorful mess. It was 10:00 clock in the evening and I was so full from eating all the candy I collected. I was getting ready to sleep in my room when my mom came into my room and said, "I'm going to go see our family friends. Good night, Anisa and see you in the morning!" I was confused as to why would you go see the friends you just saw an hour ago! I figured they just wanted to talk about how fun it was to see each other. I also thought they were going to gossip about how much candy was on the ground and how much time the costumes took to make. After thinking about that for a long time, I finally dozed off ready to go to school the next day. Friday was going to be the end of the week and the start of another fun-filled weekend.

It was 10:00 in the evening on October 31st and I was at the hospital. I had told Anisa I was going to see my friends but I was actually going to the hospital. Our dear Ana was going to pass away. Ana's daughter Rosana had called me 9:30 p.m. saying I should come to the hospital without the kids. I told her that I would go visit her with over the weekend, but she stopped me and said, "Sangita come now, please" in a traumatized way. She was half crying and half begging. I went right away telling the kids I was going to see some friends. During the drive there, I started to think about how Ana, who was so dear and close to our daily lives for 8 years, was on her deathbed. Once I got there, I was so sad that I had to fight to hold back my tears. She was on a white bed, just lying there. There were so many machines hooked up to her. At first I thought everything was painful, but then I learned that the machines helping keep all the pain away from her. The bed was diagonally placed in the room. The sheets were white, the pillow case was white, the blanket was a soft cream color. Ana herself looked as pale as the sheets and blankets. When I went up to her to talk to her, she didn't answer because of how much pain she was in. I was scared and couldn't handle what I was feeling. I wished that Ritesh was here with me, but he had to take care of the kids. That made it even more scary. Thinking about how was I going to break it to the kids also made me feel sad. I started to worry a lot and

eventually, my head started to hurt. I sat down next to a bunch of Ana's relatives and started to cry. I totally forgot about trying to not cry. I was even more devastated, because no one was there to comfort me. I was around a bunch of people I didn't know. I felt like an outsider. Even though I felt like an outsider, I was proud to be included in this moment, even though my heart was breaking. The room was the opposite of Ana's loving personality. It was cold and undecorated and bare. It looked like a place where color didn't exist. It was colorless. The priest praying was the only real talking going on. Everyone else was crying. Finally, Ana passed away without pain, but she still was gone. We miss her to this very day. Ana was like a grandmother in our house for 8 years. She took care of me, not just the kids. And now no more.

November 1st, 2016. Before I went to school on that chilly, gloomy morning, my mom came and sat down next to me. The bottom of her eyelids were black and she looked pale. At first, I thought she was sick, but after she looked at me for a minute without talking, she told me something serious was going on. I got prepared for here to bad news by sitting straight and holding my jacket so close, I could taste the cotton. When my mom finally started talking, she grievously said, "Remember how Ana has been sick in the hospital. She overcame cancer 3 times because she was so strong. But this time, it was just too hard and the cancer caught up with her. She passed away last night. I'm so sorry, beta." I was so devastated that I didn't talk to anyone and just couldn't bear the pain. I still had to go to school that day, but I cried at recess and while Ms. Faria was talking. When I got home, I felt a little better, but I was still really sad. A little after I got home from school, my family friends called and said how sorry they were and how they miss her too. Talking to them made me start crying again. I gave the phone to my brother Aman who was sad but not crying. He didn't connect with Ana as much as I did. Even though they tried to help me, I still felt heavy hearted. Nothing they say or do could fix that. After all that crying, I felt very dehydrated, but I still wouldn't eat or drink anything. I didn't even do my homework that night. I was too shocked to eat dinner or even sleep. I laid awake on my bed looking at the ceiling remembering how I never got to say goodbye to Ana. I never got to give her the hug I gave her every time she left our house. I only got to think about her.

\*3 years later\*

Three years have gone by, and once I got used to the fact that Ana was not around, I felt O.K. I started to talk with my parents a little more often, and I started spending time with them. When I say that I started spending time with them, I meant that I started playing games and watching movies with them and overall finding time for each other. We also started to talk to each other a lot more often. I started to express myself and assert myself a lot more with my brothers. I found myself sticking up for my brothers with my parents but of course, we still argue a lot among ourselves.

As I reflect back, I learned a lot of interesting and helpful things. For example, I started cooperating with my brothers to do our household chores. We, each had to help out since we had one less person in the house and still the same amount of work everyday. I learnt to appreciate my family and my friends a lot more as I saw how easily I can lose someone I love. Something things I'm still working on are little responsibilities like finishing my work before enjoying myself with my free time. Ana would always give me the friendly reminder well in time and for those odd times, she would stick up for me so I never got in trouble with my parents. I miss her so much when it comes to looking at our pictures or writing and talking about her. She always used to give me big hugs and make amazing food for me (... and for the whole family)! Now I have to listen to my parents and my brothers instead of her. She always had a wonderful way to say everything. Looking forward, I am doing good and I'm happy with my family and friends and my home. Sometimes I think of Ana and I find myself smiling as I think of the fun times I had with her. Sometimes it brings tears and sometimes it makes me smile. But that's the balance and I am ever so thankful for those wonderful times and memories.

Even though I was born at the Good Samaritan Hospital, I never want to see that place ever again. It had made life hard for me and made me become a totally different person. My mom agrees with me when I say this, but I never want to go back there again. The white lights remind me of the pale passed bodies. Writing this narrative has brought tears to my eyes, but it is one of the reasons I am who I am.

# FOSSIL HUNTING

Written by Rudra Chakrabarti, 9 years old

I woke up on a normal, lazy and very boring Saturday.

My dad and I were alone in the house since my mum had gone on a business trip. I thought we should do some outside activities to start the day.

I lifted the blinds and saw thunder crashing down from the sky. "*Welp*," I thought, "*There goes that idea*". I took out my father's laptop from the drawer next to my bed and Googled some ideas of things to do when you're bored.

I was pretty surprised with the first one I saw: fossil hunting.

I read the online tutorial and found some maps of fossil hunting landmarks around our neighborhood. I then printed them out. After eating a light breakfast, I asked my dad if he wanted to go with me, and he replied, "Fine" in a very unconvincing tone. "Yay, hooray, huzzah!" popped out of my mouth, despite the tone. "*Seriously?*" I thought to myself.

The rain had stopped by then.

I retrieved my shovel from the shed. We found the closest fossil hunting landmark and started digging. My dad muttered something about bad ideas and trouble.

Anyway, we started digging and dad pulled on something. I tugged with him as he said, "Yep... almost." He had to strain to speak. Suddenly – BONK! "OW!" I yelled in pain, "Something hit my head!" I looked up, rubbing my forehead, and saw a medium-sized bone sitting on my tummy.

My dad had a weird look of exceptional glee on his face until he saw a dog staring at me. It began running towards me. I thought it was running to play or something, until I remembered the bone on my stomach. "Oh my GOD!!! RUN!!!!!!!!!" I screamed as I threw the bone back behind me and heard the sound of barking, "Ruff, RUFF, RUFF!!!!!" behind me. "No, no, no, next please" I huffed, out of breath. I looked on the map and saw that we were standing on a marked spot. I beckoned my dad to come over and help me dig. We found another bone that was stuck, and I checked to see if there were any dogs around this time. The coast was clear. We dug, and the bone we found was HUGE!

We took it to the museum, and my dad looked like he could barely breathe. I helped out by offering two more hands to give it to the receptionist. She said that she would be right back after talking to the examiner. The examiner said it was a brontosaurus fossil, and we were very lucky to find one.

My dad said, "Come, let's go" to the spot where I was standing. Little did he know, I was looking for a speaker to play some upbeat music on...

# MOMMY DIDN'T UNDERSTAND

**Written by Flora Mack**

My mommy just didn't understand! She told me monsters weren't real. She told me nothing was under my bed or in my closet. That nothing was going to hurt me.

Beneath all those lies, there was one truth. There was nothing under my bed or in my closet.

It was outside my door, talking to Mommy, hiding in plain sight in plain sight.

It came here a little while ago and started sleeping in the same bed as Mommy.

I lay awake every night. Listening. Listening for any screams. Listening to make sure Mommy is okay. Listening to make sure she doesn't get hurt.

If I hear something I think sounds like a scream, I jump out of bed and walk to Mommy's bedroom door. I open it slightly, slip through the crack, and stare, watching the monster for hours not moving a muscle. Once I'm certain it's not going to hurt Mommy, I go back to bed. Every morning, I get out of bed, get dressed, then stand next to the door. I press my ear against it to listen for the monster. Every morning, I hear nothing. But when I walk down the stairs it was always sitting at the table, waiting for me. Mommy always brings it eggs and bacon.

I never expressed my concern to Mommy. She wouldn't understand. She'd send me back to that place with the padded white walls and bright lights. That place where my only company was a bed, a toilet, and my own troubled thoughts. I stayed there for at least 3 months. By the end I realized that the reason they hadn't released me was because I was trying to create my own entertainment. Tearing the stuffing out of the pillows, talking to myself, and banging my head against the walls. They thought I was crazy. So instead I lay in bed all day. That's when they finally let me out. I never want to go back.

So I had to find a way to get rid of the monster without Mommy's help.

Mommy didn't understand.

She looked at it in a way she never looked at me with. I knew she loved it. The monster was a siren, and I was mommy's ship. She abandoned me to swim out to meet the monster, only to be its next meal. When I look at Mommy I can't tell if she's still swimming or if she's already been devoured. Either way I can still save her.

The only way to get the sirens song out of Mommy's head is to kill the siren.

The next morning I was ready. I walked into the kitchen and grabbed a cast-iron skillet and a silver fork. I went over to the table and stared into the monsters eyes for one last time. For once I was able to smile at it. It smiled back. I pitied it. It had no idea what it's life was coming to. I raised the skillet and bashed it into the side of the monster's head. It would be less painless if the monster was unconscious. I stabbed the fork into the place where its heart should be, if it had a heart. I giggled with excitement as I watched the blood run down its chest. I knew Mommy was going to be safe now.

That's when Mommy ran into the room. She froze and stared at the limp body lying on the kitchen table. Then she saw noticed the bloody fork in my hand. " You killed him! " She screamed " You horrible girl! What have you done!" She rushed to the monster's side. She cradled it's head in her arms and sobbed. I stood and watched.

Mommy didn't understand. She would thank me later.



# THE UNLUCKY NOTE

By: Aarav Mehta

One Halloween night in the year 1073, Jaxson Igor was at the library. He checked out a fiction book about Halloween and started to read it. Little did he know that something bad would happen to him on the next few pages. When he had reached page 13, something weird started to happen. His body was getting sucked into the book! When he was fully in the book he yelled for help. Suddenly, there was a huge gust of wind. There was a note in the air and it landed in front of Jaxson's feet. He read it.

*Dear Reader,*

*Come to the haunted house on 1313 Scare Avenue. If you don't you will be stuck in this book forever! Or will you?*

*From,*

*Unknown*

Jaxson decided to be brave because he wanted to go home. He started to walk in the direction of 1313 Scary Avenue. On his way, Jaxson thought he saw a guy in a car. That made him relieved because there was another guy in the book, but what he really saw was a witch riding a giant green and black eyeball holding her broomstick! When he arrived at the haunted house, the door was ajar and nothing was inside, but as he entered, he got surrounded by zombies that held scythes and witches with potions of poison. 5 seconds later, the roof collapsed and the witches threw their potions at Jaxson and they poisoned him.

Jaxson was the only survivor but was about to die because of the poison. He ran around the haunted house because the way out was blocked. He ran into a door that said "*Enter if you dare!*" He opened it and saw two animals, a cat and a rat. They both had name tags and Jaxson learned their names, the rats name was Master Fur Von Cackle, and the cat's name was Mr. Meow Candystick.

“Well, well, well you did read my note after all. Come step in the square in front of you.” said Master Fur Von Cackle. Jaxson did that and a cage landed on him. He remembered the poison was in his body and left his arm out of the cage. The cat cut it off and ate a bite. He thought it was good so he offered the rat some. He also ate a bite and loved it.

Then the cat died and the rat realized he would die too, so he took Jaxson up to the roof of the haunted house and trapped him. He asked Jaxson what happened to Mr. Meow Candystick. Jaxson did not answer. Then, Master Fur Von Cackle yelled and ran down the stairs in pain. The poison was working. Master Fur Von Cackle came back up with a cannon and shot Jackson out of it. Jaxson was never seen or heard of again. It was like he disappeared from the universe.

# ELIZA'S ADVENTURES WITH ZANE - THE GREAT ESCAPE

Written by Kathleen Werth

Eliza sat on a branch in one of the full blooming trees of Tree Stump Meadow. Eliza's pink summer dress fluttered in the warm spring breeze. She sat there dangling her legs off the branch, when she saw something small and red flying towards her. "Could it be?" she thought to herself. "Could it be Zane coming towards me?" "Why is she flying so fast? I hope nothing's wrong."

The small red thing landed on a twig next to her. It was Zane!

"Is something wrong Zane?" Eliza asked.

"Yes." Said Zane. "It's those Fire Beings again. But this time it's worse."

Eliza asked, "How can it be the Fire Beings again. We got the stick?"

"Well I forgot to mention. Gigi Claw, the head, can make new Fire Beings." Said Zane. "And she's made a new controller. But this time it's not a stick, it's a lit lantern! The only way to blow that out is fanning it with a lilac flower."

"Wow, you know everything about these Fire Beings. How do you know so much about them?"

"I gave a ring to Gigi Claw that can track everything that she says and does. It's also a camera, so I can see everything that's going on."

"Wow, smart thinking. But where did you get the ring from?"

"Well, I didn't exactly get it, I made it. I got the power of listening, and the camera from a sorcerer. Then I made a comfortable ring shape. I learned how to make rings in a special jewelry making class. Then I put the potions inside the ring. And lastly, I put the ring into a sparkly purple box and sent it to Gigi Claw. I also made rings for two of the Fire Being guards."

"Well," Said Eliza, "Let's go get that big lantern and save you."

Zane led Eliza through Tree Stump Meadow and into Cherry Forest. And there in the center of the forest there was a very skinny tree. But something was very strange about that skinny tree.

"On-a-fire, On-a-fire!" Zane shouted.

Then there was a loud creaking from the tree and the tree split open! Eliza stepped back.

Zane asked, "Do you have a flashlight?"

"Well yes. I always keep one just in case." Replied Eliza.

"Perfect!" Said Zane.

Eliza took out the flashlight, and shown it inside the tree. As soon as Eliza and Zane went inside, the tree shut closed. This room was so dark that Eliza's flashlight was really bright in the darkness. Eliza walked over to one corner. There was a picture of three things hanging on the wall. There was one small Fire

Being, one large green goblin and an average sized, light green goblin. The light green goblin had dark green hair done into very bad braids.

"Zane. What is this a picture of?" asked Eliza.

Zane flew over and landed on top of the painting. She looked down and said, "Eliza, there's black writing on the right side of the painting. What does it say?"

"It says Morgi Vika Lim Sheesh. Huh? What does that mean?" asked Eliza.

"Oh!" Zane said sounding like she knew exactly what it meant. "It's telling us where the Lantern is."

"But Zane, how does a picture of two goblins and a Fire Being tell us anything about where the lantern is?"

"Well." Said Zane, "that is a picture of two goblins and a Fire Being, but what it's really showing us is a picture of Gigi Claw and her husband George, and the Fire Being guard that guards their magic lantern. And guarded the magic stick when they had it."

There was nothing else in the room but that painting. Eliza went over to the other wall where there was another door. She opened it and there was the magic lantern. Flickering, the lantern cast a beautiful orange glow over the room. Zane went through the door and took a quick flutter around the room, and gave Eliza the OK that there were no Fire Beings in the room. Eliza made a quick dash for the lantern. Eliza reached for the lantern but a Fire Being jumped out of the lantern, grabbed Eliza by the arms and flew through the wall with her. The Fire Being realized that there was still someone else in the lantern room, so it flew back through the wall with Eliza and grabbed Zane with one of his other five free legs.

The Fire Being went back through the wall and then through another wall, ending up in a large room with a big, brass colored carpet. In front of the Fire Being was a large golden throne, with black armrests and deep purple cushions. On the throne was the light green goblin with the bad braided hair. Next to the throne were 3 pillows. Two of them had Eliza's parents on them! And the third one had Molly Jenn, their neighbor.

Eliza was startled. She was trying to think of a way that her parents and neighbor could have gotten here. Because she knew if she spoke, the Fire Being would do something even worse to her. "Hmm", she thought. "Maybe they knew that I was here, and were trying to get me, but they got captured too!" There were still more possibilities, but she couldn't think of them all. "Maybe, maybe... Oh forget it, I shouldn't be thinking about how they got here, I should be thinking about how to get us all out of here."

The Fire Being's one eye opened, then began to swirl. And then the Fire Being began to speak out of its eye in a low, grumbling voice. "These scoundrels tried to steal the lantern, what should I do with them Gigi?" The Fire Being said, bowing to the goblin.

Then Gigi began to speak. "We must keep these creatures till they tell us what they were doing."

"Ok." Said the Fire Being, bowing again. Then he turned away, and started to leave. He stopped and turned back to Gigi Claw and said, "Should I take these creatures too?"

"Yes," Gigi replied.

The Fire Being grabbed the parents and neighbors with three of her 6 arms and flew out of the wall again. But this time instead of going straight it went left, then straight and into another room. The room only had one lantern that cast a soft orange glow onto the room. In one corner there was a metal bed with a small mattress and a blanket. It looked like a normal room. It had everything a normal room would have except for a welcoming feeling. Oh! Said her mom. This is a room? It's not very welcoming.

The fire being gave her mom a fiery glance. Then dropped Zane, Eliza and Mollie Jen in the room, locked the door, then floated out with Eliza's parents. Eliza rushed to the door. She shook the door. It didn't open.

Zane, mollie! Yes said Zane. Do you guys have anything sharp and long?

Um, Maybe,`` said Zane.

I don't want to hurt you but ok. Said eliza

Try picking the lock. Zane tried picking the lock with her arm but it wouldn't open.

I have a hair flower and it has a clip. Maybe that will do, said mollie jen.

Mollie Jen walked over and picked at the lock. It still wouldn't open.

Hm, said eliza. She searched her pockets for something, anything.

No one had anything that worked.

Then Eliza had an idea. She took 2 of the sharp things that mollie jen had and she had. She went to the wardrobe and opened it.

"What are you doing", said zane.

"Trying to get us out of here," Eliza replied.

"Mollie jen", she said.

"Yes dear," said mollie jen," what is it?"

"I know you know how to sew. I need you to sew something for us."

"What is it dear," said mollie jen.

She took out everything from the wardrobe.

"I need you to sew these things all together then we can hang it out and escape."

After a couple minutes, mollie jen had sewn all the things together. Zane and eliza had entertained themselves by reading a book.

When mollie jen was done she said "Done dear."

Great!

She took the string of clothes and draped it out the window. Then she tied one end onto the bed post. And then told Zane to tie the other end to a big boulder down below. Then Zane flew up and held onto the rope that was held by the bedpost.

"Now," said eliza. "We need to get out of here by climbing down that string of clothes. Then I'll tell you the next step."

"I'll go first," said mollie jen.

"OK, "said eliza.

So, Eliza took the bed post end with Zane. And mollie jen took the end out the window and held the rope.

Zane and Eliza held the string of clothes tightly while Mollie jen climbed down.

The rope tugged, but Eliza and Zane tugged back.

Zane fluttered over to the window. Mollie jen shouted, you can tell Eliza she can come down now.

Zane shouted back but since she was so tiny, Mollie Jen probably couldn't hear her.

"Eliza, you can go down now," said Zane.

"OK," said Eliza.

So Eliza climbed out of the window and started down the string of clothes. Once Eliza got the bottom, she shouted up, Zane untie the rope from the bedpost.

Zane shouted back but of course eliza couldn't hear her. So Eliza assumed that Zane heard her when she fluttered back into the room. Zane untied the rope then fluttered back out the window.

Haul the rope up and tuck it in the bed so it looks like a person sleeping, Eliza shouted up. Zane did as she was told then fluttered back down to eliza.

"Did you do it?" Asked Eliza.

Yeah.

"Oh zane I just forgot something." Said eliza. "Go back up and take the string of rope out and replace it with something else because we need that rope."

"Ok," said zane.

Zane fluttered back up, took the rope, and replaced it with a couple of cushions.

The rope fell out and zane followed with it as it floated to the ground.

And there Eliza stood with the bundle of rope made of clothing.

Zane flew down and perched on eliza's shoulder.

"Now," said eliza to mollie jen and zane. "Sorry for all the work zane, but you need to do one more thing."

"As long as it gets everybody out of this demon castle, I'm glad to do it."

"Ok then," said eliza. "Now, take this end of the rope and haul it up to my parents room."

So zane took one end of the rope and fluttered up to the room with the open window.

"Who is that there," said Eliza's father, Jason.

"Don't be afraid," said zane, "but there's a talking lady bug in your room, because I'm here to save you."

"Ok", said jason.

"Now," said zane tying the rope to the bedpost. Then she threw the other end out the window to Eliza who attached her end to a boulder. "Jason, climb out the window and down the rope of clothes."

So Jason clambered out the window and down the rope. Zane looked out and saw Jason was at the bottom, so she motioned to Alice, Eliza's mother, to go and do the same. Once Alice had made her way down, Zane untied her end of the rope and Eliza united hers, and Zane fluttered down to Eliza, Molly Jenn, Alice and Jason.

Molly Jenn and Eliza greeted Eliza's parents with sweet handshakes, and "Hi's". Then Eliza told them the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of her plan. After saving them all. Her plan was, well, since the Fire Beings castle tree was so small, it would be easy to spot 4 humans and a lady bug roaming their base camp, which is the castle tree. So Eliza had a plan to not be seen. They would all go behind the castle. Then Zane would flutter up to the window sill of the throne room and make sure that no one was looking out the window. Then after that was safe, Zane would flutter up with the rope to the lantern room. Then, because there is a closet, they would climb up and go straight into the closet. Zane would take another good look around the room, just in case, then give Eliza to the "OK". Eliza would dash out, grab the lantern and run back into the closet.

After Eliza told them her plan, Zane flew up and attached the rope to a table sitting in the lantern room. Eliza climbed up the rope and into the closet. Then Alice, Jason and Molly Jen came up. They caught

their breath from the hard work of climbing up the rope and the fear of Fire Beings getting them while they were on the rope. But while they were catching their breath, pink sparkles burst out of the wall and onto the floor and disappeared on the floor like bubbles. And out of the pink sparkling came something that looked very much like a Fire Being, but different. It was a dark shade of pink, like the sparkles that came out before she did, but she had only one eye like a Fire Being. Instead of 6 legs, she had 4 legs like a dog. And ears that looked like a Fennec Fox. She also had a mouth. Another difference from the Fire Beings.

Then she began to speak in a soft tone that made Eliza feel comfortable. She said, "Hello. What's your name? I'm Loba. And I've come to help you take the lantern."

Eliza was amazed. This creature didn't seem mean at all. She seemed quite nice. Eliza knew at once that she was nice.

"I've been stuck here. I could have left at any time, but the Fire Beings said there would be consequences if I left. And if we can get this lantern, Gigi Claw will not be able to make another controller. Not to brag, but I know about every single thing that happens around here."

Eliza had so many feelings. She liked to think of her feelings like they are a cake batter. She had a happy, shocked, excited, and scared all mixed together. Happy because there was someone else on her side, she was also shocked that there was someone else on her side. She was excited that it would be easier with someone else helping them, because if you work together you'll get the job done. She was a little scared because she didn't know if Loba was just pretending to help them, or if she was really wanting to help them. With all those feelings it created confusion and calm. She decided to throw away the confusion and go with calm.

So Eliza answered Loba, "My name is Eliza. These are my parents Alice and Jason. This is my neighbor Molly Jenn and my friend Zane the ladybug. Thank you for the offering of help. We really appreciate it. And we really hope that what you said about Gigi Claw not being able to make another controller is true, and that we can help you."

Loba's pink face turned to a bright brick color as she blushed. "Oh shucks. You guys are so nice, I'll gladly help you."

Zane zipped around the room and landed on the table that had the rope tied to it.

"Loba, I can't do this because the last time we tried this a Fire Being grabbed me and took me to Gigi Claw." Said Eliza, "But if you go they will still capture you because you don't look like the other Fire Beings ...No offence."

"None taken." Replied Loba, "I don't want to be like the other Fire Beings, I'm a Starry. That's a different kind of creature."

"Wow!" Exclaimed Eliza. Then Eliza continued describing her plan. "But if we dress you up like a Fire Being, if a real Fire Being comes they'll think you're just checking on the lantern and not taking it."

Loba nodded, and said, "That's a good plan".

Jason said in a surprised voice, "Hey, we're in a closet full of clothes. Maybe some of these clothes will work since they're all black."

"Yeah" said Eliza as she walked over to the rack of clothes. The closet was very big. A couple minutes later, Molly Jenn, the sewer who always had sewing supplies in her pockets, and always seemed to have exactly what was needed, sewed together some clothes to make Loba look like a Fire Being.

Loba squeezed her way into the suit. She looked into the mirror on the closet door and shuttered, "W-w-wow, I r-r-really do look like a Fire Being. I'm kind of creeping myself out."



"Loba," said Eliza in a fierce but calm tone. "You have a job to do and it's not to look at yourself in the mirror. It's to go get the lantern."

Loba shook herself out of her creep trance, and said, "Ok. What do I do and where do I go?"

"Ok, this is what you do." Said Eliza. "With your suit on, walk out there in a bold way. Carry this cloth and pretend like your cleaning the lantern. Then when no one's looking, grab the lantern and rush back in here."

"But wait," said Alice, "what are we going to do when she gets the lantern? I know the Fire Beings are getting suspicious so we need to find another way to get out of here without using the ropes again. My arms are killing me."

Eliza thought for a moment, and then she got an idea. "Oh, I know what we can do. Molly Jenn. Can you make more outfits so we can all look like Fire Beings?"

"Yes dear", Molly Jenn replied, "If it gets us out of here I'm happy to do it." So Molly Jenn whipped together outfits for them all. Some small, some big and one tiny outfit for Zane.

They all put their suits on, and Loba did her plan without being caught.

"Whew!" Said Loba holding up the lantern triumphantly. "That was scary. But we got the lantern. No one saw me, and that was good. So, now we need to get a lilac so we can blow the lantern out."

"Uhh, Loba. Why don't we stop talking, and get moving." Said Eliza, in a hurried voice.

"Yes!" everybody chorused.

"But honey," said Jason. "If we just walk out of here and walk through all the rooms, there's bound to be a Fire Being in one room. And it will capture us and probably give us a worse punishment than just putting us in a room."

"You have a point Dad," Eliza interrupted. "But we're dressed as Fire Beings, and we can walk by anybody and they won't cause any trouble for us."

"I can put the lantern in my backpack." Said Alice, taking the lantern from Loba.

"I have a better way," said Loba, taking the lantern back.

Loba's big Fennec Fox ears wrapped around the lantern, Poof! the lantern disappeared. And so did her ears.

"Uh, Loba, are you able to get your ears back?" asked Jason.

"Oh, yes." Said Loba. "It's just magic. They'll reappear later."

"Good," said Eliza.

All of them hustled down the hall led by Loba. They went through the castle disguised like Fire Beings. They got out of the palace, ran through Cherry Forest and into the meadow where Eliza had met up with Zane this morning.

Loba quickly picked up a lilac. Then her ears re-appeared, and so did the lantern! She opened the lantern, and waved the lilac, and blew out the flame.

"Yeah!" everyone shouted all at the same time. "We defeated Gigi Claw and the Fire Beings once and for all!"

The End.

# Emma's Adventure

Written by Ann Hu

Emma dreaded the test she was going to take tomorrow. Her teacher informed the class only one day before the test, and she definitely wasn't ready. It was a calculus test, and it included a fatiguing amount of math she didn't understand at all. As Emma plopped on her bed and cuddled with her pet cat, Mumu, she knew her impending doom was drawing nearer and nearer. She decided that she would try her best, and she tried to console herself, but she couldn't stop herself from worrying. As she wondered about her fate, she fell into a deep sleep.

When Emma woke up, she had no clue where she was. The sky was a beautiful light blue with clouds everywhere. In fact, Emma herself was on a cloud, too! 'Am I dreaming?' she pondered. "OUCH!" she yelped, jumping up and down, clutching the finger that she pinched. Emma decided she definitely wasn't dreaming. She checked if Mumu was with her. Mumu was patiently waiting for Emma to notice that she was there. Emma was grateful for a companion, but her heart was racing.

Where was she? She examined her surroundings, and found that there was a humongous castle in the distance. She decided to travel there to ask for help. It was like her cat had read her mind, because Mumu swiftly sprinted and gracefully leaped onto another cloud. She turned her head and stared at Emma, expecting her to leap across too. Emma charged forward, but stopped at the last second. As she peeked down, she started to feel nauseous. Mumu meowed, as if she was trying to explain that she was restless. Emma knew that in order to reach the castle, she needed to jump from cloud to cloud. So, she leapt to the other cloud and realized it was an effortless thing to do. Mumu leaped to another cloud and Emma followed. Soon, they arrived at the castle.

It was very beautiful and glamorous, but the strange thing was that it didn't contain any people. Instead, it contained Pusheens and many toys! Emma stared at the glittering jewels of the beautiful, shiny castle. Suddenly, Emma was jabbed by an ice cream cone javelin, held by a tiny rabbit guard. "What is your business here, human?" the guard questioned. "I will have to escort you and your cat to Queen Bertha." Emma was led around the corridors, decorated with precious gems and beautiful tapestries. Finally, they reached Queen Bertha after many twists and turns. The room they were in was by far the most beautiful Emma had ever seen, and Emma realized Queen Bertha was a pusheen! "Bow to the queen!" the guard commanded. "Who are you?" Queen Bertha queried, "And why are you here?" Emma, whose back hurt from bowing for such a long time, replied:

"I don't know how I came here. I just want to go home."

"And you are a human?"

"Yes."

"Do you know the rules in this castle?"

"No."

"There are a few rules. Number one: No taking Queen Bertha's food and drinks. Number two: No questioning Queen Bertha. After that, there are only about a million more rules. But rule number six hundred and one clearly states NO HUMANS ALLOWED. It also says that if a human comes, they have to do a challenging task to go back home or else they will have to stay in the prison (which is just a cloud with bars so you won't escape). "

"Why aren't humans allowed here?"

"They aren't allowed here because a long time ago, humans were cruel to us, and one day, I decided that they had gone way too far; it was the last straw. I told the humans, 'That is rude!' After, I gathered many who agreed with me, and I used my magic to create an enormous castle that could fly. All of the animals followed me in and we rested the castle on a sturdy cloud. From that day on, we decided we would never be with humans again. "

"Oh."

"Anyways, your challenge is to bring me my milk tea from the kitchen. Don't spill the milk tea and add boba and a straw. I'm expecting no artificial flavoring. Don't disappoint me! Go now."

As Emma left, she decided to ask someone where the kitchen was. A cat passing by told her to just walk straight forward, and she'd be there. When Emma reached the kitchen, she thought, "This is so easy!" But when she asked the chef for the milk tea, he replied, "You must make it yourself. Here's the recipe."

Emma took the cookbook and gathered all the ingredients. The milk tea was easy for Emma to make because she loved to bake and was familiar with creating delicious delicacies and baking things with hard recipes. When Emma finished, she grabbed a straw and put them on a silver platter, and strolled towards the room where Queen Bertha was. Before Emma arrived, the milk tea spilled. "No!" she cried. She quickly whirled back to the kitchen. Emma made the milk tea, added the boba, and swiped a straw out of the container at a rapid pace. She walked leisurely so the milk tea wouldn't spill. "Thank you," Queen Bertha said as she took the tray. "Now you may go back home."

Emma felt herself whirling around and when she woke up, she was back on her bed, nearby Mumu. She checked the time. It was seven a.m. She decided to study a little more for the test. But truth be told, she wasn't as worried about the test as she used to be. She was just glad to be home.