

The background of the cover is a photograph of a person climbing a dark, jagged cliff face on the left side. The climber is silhouetted against a bright blue sky that transitions into a warm, yellowish-orange glow at the bottom, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall composition is vertical and dynamic.

# Cliff Hangers

BRIARCLIFF MIDDLE SCHOOL  
WRITERS CLUB  
2023

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# *Goldilocks and the 3 Bears Who Wanted Revenge!*

By Maeve Pensyl

Once upon a time, there were 3 bears who wanted Revenge. Just yesterday Goldilocks snuck into their house, ate all the Baby Bears porridge, broke his chair, and drawled on his bed.

When she left, they followed her and when they got to her house, they wrote down the address and then strolled away. The next day they walked over. The walk there was pretty quick and only took them about 5 minutes.

She lives at an average sized house that was right on the border of their town. They went in, the house was actually pretty big and very ornately decorated.

Since no one was home their footsteps echoed in the quiet house. On the way upstairs they saw three plates with cake on them, they immediately devoured it, as they sat in the three chairs that were all differently sized.

“Delicious!” yelled Baby Bear after enjoying the slice of cake.

The Baby Bear sat in Goldilocks chair, while Mama and Papa Bear sat in her parent's chairs.

“Revenge!” Yelled Baby Bear while jumping up and down on Goldilocks chair. It soon broke.

The Baby Bear yawned, he was so tired from the walk over and eating all that cake, so he decided to get some rest upstairs in Goldilocks bed.

When Goldilocks got home, he stayed asleep not hearing the clatter of her walking up the stairs. When she noticed her Broken chair and missing slice of cake, she was confused so she went to her room. When she finally got to her room, she immediately noticed the little bear sleeping in her bed.

“There is a bear in my bed!” Goldilocks Screamed.

It was the bears who lived in the house she broke into!

She knew it was her fault and she couldn't be upset because she went to their house first. But this still made her angry, her favorite chair was broken and there was no more cake left.

She gave the bears new chairs, and they gave her new chairs, she gave them porridge and they gave her cake. They did this with everything until they had everything they were missing back. They had a party with lots of things including there all knew chairs, porridge, cake and much more. They had lots of fun and became great friends with her family, they often had dinner together and mama

bear made more of her porridge, which Goldilocks loved. Goldilocks helped her parents make more cake for them.

Yet again, Baby Bear yelled, delicious! After taking a massive bite of the cake.

Both families agreed that they wished they could eat the porridge and cake forever. They ate it quite often, now that they were friends.

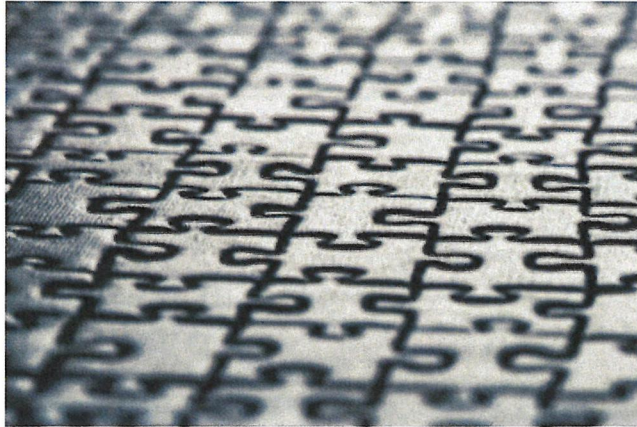
After this, she never broke into a house again and they lived happily ever after.

The End.



Figure 1 "Bears!" by SteFou! is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

# People



*Figure 1 "Puzzle" by INTVGene is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.*

Ha.  
People are so hard  
To figure out.

Like,  
If you say one thing,  
You have an idea  
Of what they are going to say  
In your head.

But guess what!  
They say something different,  
Something unexpectedly unexpected.  
And you are caught off guard.

What their faces tell you  
Could be different than what they are thinking,  
Different than what they are telling you,  
Different than what you think they are going to say.

Ha.  
People are so hard  
To figure out.

By Danny Dempsey

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## ***My Family Cuenta***

***By Aarit Singh***

Two million. Two million people died in the years of 1947-1950. One of the deadliest peacetime incidents of the 1900s. Why? The partition of India. This was when India, Bangladeshi, and Pakistan gained their independence from British India. India is mostly Hindu/Sikh, and Bangladesh and Pakistan are mostly Muslim. These religious groups rarely like each other. In fact, they typically love to kill each other. My family is Sikh, in the majority in Muslim Pakistan. This story taught me the value of hard work and persistence.

The year is 1946, my grandfather is born in the Pakistani side of British India. After a year of uneventful extreme famine for a portion of the country. Britain gives independence to India, and split it into 3 parts, Pakistan, India, and East Pakistan (Bangladesh). There was almost instant turmoil. My Sikh family was in a Muslim part of Pakistan, far from the safety of Indian Punjab. They tried to make their way across, but because of the extremely riotous environment. Hindus and Sikhs were being killed all over the place, for an "Ethnic cleansing" of Pakistan. My grandfather was the youngest of 7 children. It is extremely difficult to navigate the tight areas of Pakistan, with half of the country trying to kill them, and to make it harder, they had 7 children to navigate as-well. It was difficult to find shelter from the sweltering heat, and Muslims ran most businesses and refused to sell to Hindus or Sikhs. They couldn't buy a house, buy groceries, or really anything else. To make the trip easier, they had to make an extremely difficult decision, should they leave their Sikh youngest born son, in a hostile Muslim environment, in the sweltering heat as a 2-year-old, with precisely 0 chance of survival, a bittersweet decision. This person who happened to be my grandfather. They left him under a great oak tree, on the side of the road, in a very distinct location. They said their

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prayers, and despite the morality of this decision, they continued on for the survival of our family. They pushed on to walk back to the safety of India. The guilt was so overwhelming that despite the immense risk; they went back into Pakistan to save their son! They trudged through the sweltering heat and the smoggy, fragrant air of Pakistan. An extremely risky decision. If they messed up now, they would die, and their children would die. They had to be extremely careful, hiding from the riotous Muslims. Walking through the streets they once called home, past their favorite restaurants, past their old home, past the great apartment buildings of upper residential district of Karachi. Through the smog, through the red air. Arriving at the vast green of the upper park. Through the trails, to the one grand oak tree just to find their son, just there, acting like nothing happened. They brought their son back to India, retracing the steps to reach their brothers and sisters back in india. Across the boarder, and a further drive, back to their new home, of Amritsar..

This story was used to teach me the values of hard work, dedication, and the bond between family. This story, the living hell my grandparents went through, laid the groundwork for my ability to live a comfortable life, thanks to them, their hard work, their dedication, and their morality. I'm able to be where I am.

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# Little Red Belt

By Leila Parandian

*Once Upon A Time*, in a faraway forest, there was once a girl named "Little Red Belt". However, legend has it, the red belt she wears is magical.

"Little Red Belt, come down and deliver these dumplings and medicine to your ill grandmother." mom called out.

"Ok, one minute!" I replied.

I ran down the stairs and grabbed the red belt my grandmother had given me for my 12th birthday this year. Before I left the house, I made sure each three containers of the dumplings were tightly packed in my basket. I grabbed my red belt and headed out the door.

"I love fall." I thought to myself.

The leaves were beautiful bright shades of orange, red, and yellow. Suddenly, I heard some rustling in the woods.

"It's probably just a bunny or something," I said to myself, so I ignored it.

As I continued to walk, the noise got louder and louder, but any time I turned around, nothing was there. I got a bit nervous, so I picked up my pace.

"It's fine, grandma's house is only 15 minutes away." I kept reminding myself.

The noise continued to become louder, and my heart started pounding. I got goosebumps all along my arms and legs, and started walking even faster. For some reason I felt like someone was watching me. I turned around to look and then, BAM!

When I turned back around I saw a wolf staring right at me licking his chops.

"Well well well, I was finally able to get you.." said the wolf. "It looks like I'm going to be having a nice feast tonight!"

"You are no match for me wolf." I called out.

He raised his claws at me.

"You're messing with the wrong girl." I said.

I clicked the black button on my belt and got ready to fight.

The wolf burst out into laughter.

“You think your toy belt is going to take me down?” He said while he continued to laugh.

Before he could say anything else I kicked him three times right in his stomach.

He fell to the ground wailing in pain, however, he didn’t give up. He pulled my ankles and flipped me over. There was dirt all over my clothes, and my nose was bleeding, but I wasn’t going to let him win. I thought about my grandma, and got right back up.

I used all three magic buttons on my belt, but nothing was strong enough to take the wolf down. I had only one option left, and it was to use my super strength power. My grandma said to only use this for emergencies when she gifted me the belt, and this sure was an emergency.

“I’ve never used this before. What if it all goes wrong and something bad happens to me?” I said in my head. “Oh well, it’s worth a shot.”

Without anymore hesitating, I clicked it. I felt like I was getting taller, and I knew it was working. I tripped him and pulled his fur, and then I picked up by his tail, and brutally threw him against a tree. He was weak and covered in thorns. I had to end this once and for all. I picked up a hundred pound tree trunk, and whacked him like he was a high striker at a carnival. He flung up into the sun and never came back down.

The end.

Well, that was the end of the big bad wolf. He surely didn’t live happily ever after, but I sure did. After he got burned and killed from the sun, I delivered the dumplings and medicine to my grandma. We enjoyed them together and I told her about the...let’s just say, interesting walk I had here. We both lived happily ever after, and never heard about him again. Until I met his son...(To be continued)



Image: Danny Dempsey

## My Cuento

By Ryan Grower

Hard as it is to believe, my dad used to be a young child. That was a long time ago, but some of his stories still seem as fresh as if they happened yesterday. Some are hilarious, and some are somber and sometimes even gruesome. This story is the perfect mixture of both- that kind of perfect combination that makes a good tale.

One day some 40 years ago, in a quaint town in Long Island, my dad was outside with his friends. It was a perfect day- both for our characters and for a good story. Clear, balmy, skies with the inconsistent cloud drifting lazily overhead in the July weather. It couldn't have been a more perfect day for my dad and his friends, but unfortunately- for my dad, at least- things were going to get much, much, worse.

Right then the merry band were walking around town. And there was something on their minds. "Did you hear about those killer bees!?" "Yeah, there supposed to hurt like a needle driving into your skin!" "Haven't they been sighted around here!?" And other things like that. On and on it went, with exclamations like "Look out behind you!" Or "LOOK THERE'S A KILLER BEE RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!" This culminated in multiple injuries, with one of the friends hitting another across the head and someone running into someone else.

Now, you may be doubting the truth behind these exclamations, but they were, in fact, true. Killer bees had been sighted around, but they weren't actual killer bees- those are called Africanized bees and can actually kill

someone, or at least a large group of them could. These were simply a different type of bee that may have had a bit more painful sting, but they certainly couldn't kill you, even a large group of them. After a while, the friends got bored and they decided to do some exploring in the woods. Not wanting to just stray into a random forest, they decided to go through someone's backyard. It was deemed that my dad's house had the easiest route into the forest, and off they went.

So they entered the forest, their feet crunching on the dry leaves (albeit few and far between, as it was July) and looked around in wonder at the great towering elms that although they explored the forest many times, still never failed to amaze them. They seemed human giants to them; ancient kings frozen in animation for centuries, waiting to be reborn. So busy were they looking up at the great towering canopy that many times they tripped over roots or stones in the ground- one friend slammed into the trunk of the very elm he was staring up at. After a long while, they decided to play hide and seek; this continued on for a while until all of them were quite dirty and only ended when one boy almost got lost and the other kids had to spend a half hour looking for him. After they finished up their game of hide and seek, they happened upon a beehive.



Figure 1 "Queen Bee" by U.S. Geological Survey is marked with CC0 1.0.

Immediately, all four boys fled with a mixture of breathless excitement and fear. “Those had to be killer bees!”, said one boy. Another exclaimed that he had seen one, and it had been “The largest bug *I’ve* ever seen.” Now, this hive was not of a killer bee but rather a regular bumblebee hive; who were, in fact, unable to sting. The boys didn’t know this, of course, and they couldn’t wait to get home to tell their parents and classmates. Little did they know that a far more “exciting” encounter lay ahead...

As they went on, the friends still had eyes only for the trees, but my dad instead decided to look down, exploring the vibrant plants and ferns along the barely cleared trail. A very interesting fern caught his eye; he bent down to look closer. It seemed so much more vibrant and larger than the other ferns; it seemed to regally tower above them, their ruler. Although it sent a pang through him to destroy this wonderful plant, he decided he would do the old technique where you grasped the plant from the bottom and then pulled up, making a flower fern of sorts. He was just reaching for the base of the plant when he noticed it had become peculiarly quiet. They stayed still, straining his ears to scan the surrounding for noise. He looked at his friends. One held a stick in his hand, and they were all creeping quietly towards the tree. The tree he was under. He stood up. “What are you doing?” The normal tone reverberated in the still and silent forest. “Shhh!” One of the boys hissed. My dad was about to say something else when all of a sudden, like a snake striking at its target, the boy with the stick released it into the air. The second it was out of his hands the boys turned and ran, screaming and shouting. My dad still had no idea what was going on. But then he heard it. *Bzz. Bzzz. Bzzzzz.* A cold

fear ran through my dad's body, seeping down his neck, trickling down his spine, and creeping down his leg. He finally looked up.

And he saw it.

The hive.

The buzzing intensified. My dad was still stock-still, not moving. The fact that there was a beehive above him had yet to register in his head. The fact that his friends had thrown a stick at the beehive- and promptly run away- had also yet to register in his head. Bees were starting to erupt out of the hive, leaking out from every pore. And finally, his brain realized what was happening, triggering his flight or fight response. In that millisecond of time, he decided which option to go with- fight or flight. Which one do you think he chose?

My dad fled. He sprinted as fast as his legs could carry him, his feet automatically pumping up and down. My dad had always been a good runner, and for a second, with wind streaming through his ears, he thought he was safe. Then came the sting. A red- hot needle, piercing his skin. He fought through the pain and didn't stop. Another one, on his back. Then his arm. The bees were in front of him now; no, not in front of him, all around him. They hung like a yellow cloud through which he could not see, stinging his entire body. His eyes were already swollen beyond seeing, and he slammed into a tree and fell to the ground. The bees surrounded him, stinging, stinging, stinging. Instinct told him he needed to get up. To keep fighting. But he couldn't. Suddenly, in the tiny slit of vision that he still had, he saw that the entire sky

was blood-red orange. Amazed at the sight, he drift off, seeping into unconsciousness, his eyes falling completely shut.

When he woke up, he was staring up at a bland, paneled grayish-white ceiling. His eyes were slightly less swollen now, but he had a major headache and his entire body hurt. He tried to say something. “Mhhhgnrh” was all that came out. A recognizable voice screamed “He’s awake!” It was his mom, my grandma. She appeared over his bed. “Your friends said they lost you, and they went back into the woods to look for you! They found you unconscious lying next to a blanket of dead bees!” He tried a sentence. “How... man.. sting..” “oh poor darling,” his mom said as she leaned on the the bed. “The doctor said... there was 59 stings.”

Weeks later, my dad had recovered. He was soon back to normal life, romping through the same forest, walking through the same town. Although he was initially very understandably mad at his friends, they soon became buddies again and the entire incident was forgotten- well, not really forgotten, or else I wouldn’t be telling this story, would I?

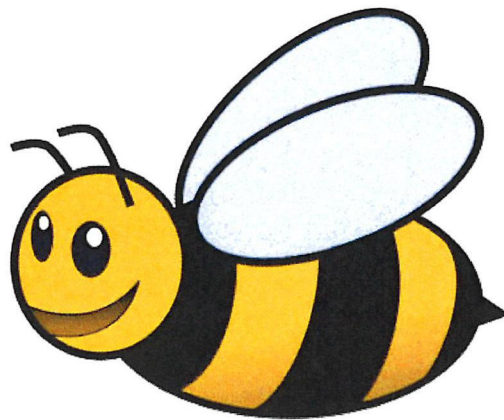


Figure 2 "bumble bee (also a jigsaw puzzle )" by uhur<sup>l</sup> is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.

## *Fairy Tale with a Twist*

*By Christina Liang*

Once upon a time, Reviewer Goldilocks was walking across the street when she saw the most beautiful house she had ever come across. It had vivid colors, a neat painting job, and a nice roof. She would usually knock on the door and ask to come in for a review, but it was currently Saturday. After making sure the house owners were gone, the house reviewer broke into the building.

The first thing she noticed was the strong scent of porridge.

“Ah, I see. Some porridge. How absolutely disgusting,” she complained. “I guess I don’t really have another option.”

Reviewer Goldilocks ate a spoonful of porridge out of the largest bowl, wincing.

“This porridge is way too cold! How long has this been left out?!” the reviewer screamed. She threw the bowl across the room, watching it shatter into pieces. “Ah, I see. Weak silverware.”

The reviewer sighed and took a bite out of the second porridge.

“Ick! This porridge is way too hot!” The reviewer yelled. She threw the second bowl across the room, watching it shattered and joined the first bowl on the floor. “Seriously; what is with all these cheap and low-quality kitchen bowls?! I just threw them gently.”

The reviewer grabbed the remaining bowl and took a large bite of porridge. She kept it in her mouth for a few seconds, and then swallowed it down.

“Yes! This porridge is *just right*!” The girl gasped delightfully, gobbling down the rest of the porridge. “I think I need to sit down.”

The reviewer then entered the living room. When she saw the size of the room, her mouth widened in astonishment. There were three chairs sitting at the center, surrounded by a variety of lights and colorful, vivid mats.

“Fancy decor, I see. It seems quite colorful, but it ruins the simple feeling of the room. I suppose I should sit down to observe this more conscientiously,” the reviewer thought out loud.

She sat on the biggest chair, trying to get a good angle of the room. The reviewer immediately stood up, realizing how hard the chair was.

“Seriously,” she scowled, “I cannot sit; on a chair made out of rocks!” The reviewer flipped the chair over, watching it land on the ornaments nearby.

The girl transitioned to the second chair, hoping that it would be softer. When she sat down, her entire body sank into the cushions. She looked like a puddle of water casually floating across the chair. The girl screamed in anger, throwing the second chair across the room.

“I don’t get it, why can’t people just buy some *ordinary* furniture?” Reviewer Goldilocks yelled in frustration. “If this third chair is just as bad, I might as well leave.”

The reviewer headed to the last chair and slowly sat in it. She paused for a bit, adjusting her position.

“I cannot believe this is the only normal chair in the entire house,” Reviewer Goldilocks thought. A moment later, the chair broke into pieces.

“Wow.” The girl stared at the broken chairs and exclaimed, “I think I genuinely need a nap.”

Reviewer Goldilocks headed upstairs, facing three beds in different sizes. “WHY MUST *EVERYTHING* COME IN THREE SETS!?” she yelled, “Whatever, I will just try to sleep in the first bed.”

Reviewer Goldilocks slept in the first bed but rolled off immediately realizing its firmness. “What is the point of this bed?” She sighed and headed over to the second bed. The solidity was softer, but to an impossible amount.

“This bed is a literal marshmallow,” the girl stated. “I shall head over to the last bed.”

The reviewer jumped onto the last bed, praying for her desired consistency. The bed was just the kind of bed she needed. “*FINALLY*,” the girl sighed. She relaxed and fell asleep.

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A few hours later, the front door opened. Three bears walked in --there was a father bear, a mother bear, and a baby bear. The three had gotten home from a busy day picking berries. When they saw all the mess, their jaws dropped open.

“My porridge bowl is shattered!!” exclaimed the father bear.

“*My* porridge bowl is shattered!” screamed the mother bear.

"My porridge is all gone!" cried the baby bear. His parents were too busy screaming to hear him.

The bears hurried to the living room, sensing that someone had entered their house.

"My chair is tangled in my lights!" yelled the father bear.

"*My* chair is thrown across the room!" screamed the mother bear.

"Well, *my* chair is broken down into pieces!" cried the baby bear. His parents were still too busy screaming to hear him.

The three bears headed to their bedroom, hoping for their beds to be alright.

"My bed is all crinkled!" yelled the father bear,

"That's *nothing*! My bed looks like it just got deflated!" screamed the mother bear.

"There's a girl in my bed!" cried the horrified baby bear.

Reviewer Goldilocks woke up, disturbed by the racket that the bears made. The baby bear was already petrified.

"Bears." Goldilocks sighed.

"She's awake!" the baby bear observed, trembling in fear.

"You bet I am," the reviewer replied, "And your home is the most confusing thing I have seen in all five of my years reviewing homes." The reviewer got out of bed and casually walked out of the room.

"Don't worry, I will not be coming back;" the girl assured the family of bears, "At least, not until you fix your cheap furniture." The girl walked out of the bears' house, and she never returned again.

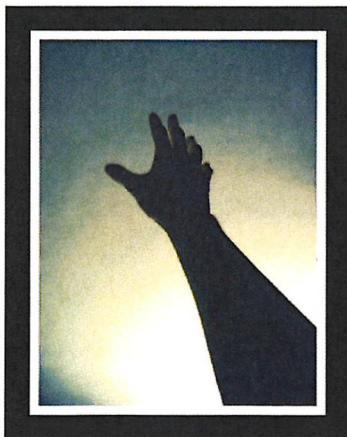


Figure 1 inside?" by Gunn Shots ! is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

*Locked in a Cage*  
*About Jews being sent to concentration camps*

We are all locked in a cage,  
A cage full of black and white.  
There is no warmth,  
And no hope.  
Expect for when the dazzling circle,  
Hovering above us,  
Shines its light.  
Its rays are bright yellow, stretching down to us like a hand ready  
to help,  
A warmth spreads like a match lighting up in a cold, dusty cellar.  
Soon enough, the happiness grows,  
From one soul to another,  
Until everyone is reaching out for the sunlight,  
The only light left in the grey.  
But like all times, the light leaves,  
Carrying everyone's hope with it.  
Then everything is back to black and white.  
We are all locked in a cage.

- Bianca Jain



"Hopeless" by kudumomo is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#).

## Believe by Vera Turner

I couldn't believe my eyes. Of course, it wasn't what I had imagined when I was little, but it was real. Right in front of me, was a creature I had dreamed of long ago. I stopped believing when I was eight years old, for that was when I started my obsession of makeup and jewelry. Of course, I'm over that now. Now that I'm thirteen, I've gotten more realistic.

I've begun searching for jobs and colleges, hoping that I can make my future perfect. I wouldn't have stopped believing if I knew that they actually existed, but I knew that everyone at school would mock me. I grabbed a small stick on the ground and tried poking the animal to see if I wasn't dreaming. I obviously hadn't thought that through, and the creature ended up kicking me in the stomach. It definitely hurt, but I tried to over come the pain. I went to grab its tail, to see if it was exactly how I imagined it. It was.

The silky smooth, golden beauty of the tail was so incredible, I almost didn't notice when the creature stepped on my foot with its hoof. *Ouch!!* I looked back up at the magnificent animal. I realized how different it looked in my head compared to real life. The tail and mane were the same, but it sure had an attitude that would easily get on anyone's nerve.

Its hooves were rough and heavy, saying that it had already maybe broken my toe. Its coat was covered in smoke and ash, as if it had been in a bad accident. Its horn was unbelievable, but it was much longer and sharper than I thought it might be, and it had many rough edges. I definitely would have hoped for it to be a bit different, but nothing was perfect. I still couldn't believe it. A unicorn, was standing right in front of me.



"Unicorn" by scorpiorules58 is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.

## The Last Sip of Freedom

### A Family Cuenta

By Owen Lynch



This was the end for her. She had come all this way and finally escaped, but now she was just going to be recaptured and be exploited for cheap labor. If she was caught the first time, there would be no chance of escaping a second.

Veronica Link was born an only child in Hungary on February 1, 1882. When she was growing up, she was always a little pudgy and her weight was always the topic of discussion. This would often make her feel uncomfortable and self-conscious.

One stormy night, when she was only 9 years old, when the wind was howling and the harsh rains splashed all over her cotton sheets through the open window, she saw a dark shadowy figure standing right outside. It got closer and closer, so she hid under her thin covers, which she didn't realize was pointless. She heard the sounds of wet, heavy boots climbing through the window and then clunking around on the wooden floor. Veronica saw the silhouette of a man hold up what looked like a baseball bat and the last thing she remembered was seeing him take the home-run swing at her head. She was knocked out, so the stranger took the opportunity to grab her covers and turn her into a human potato sack. He thrust her through the window and into the storm, with only the occasional lightning strikes to dazzle the vast lands. After a journey down the soaked hills, her rolled-up body hitting against the kidnapper's back, Veronica was tossed into the back of a carriage onto sharp farming supplies.

After a few minutes, the voyage started. Even though she was unconscious, Veronica was in for a long, rough trip. They were on their way across the country in a rickety carriage. Through the storm, they traveled in the sticky, clumpy muck for miles and miles. Veronica was drenched and freezing. The next evening, the storm started clearing up, but the journey continued. In the middle of the night, Veronica woke up, staring at the fully illuminated moon. The twinkling stars stippled the sky like little specks of glitter sprinkled with a small stroke of magic. Magic was exactly what she needed in a situation like this. Even though her vision was blurry, she could sense that someone unknown was taking her to a secluded area. She squinted through the moth-eaten holes to see if she could make out who the mysterious kid-stealer was. Her attempts were unsuccessful, and Veronica was too terrified to say anything, so she just curled up and silently sobbed while she was taken away into a mysterious forest. She felt the huge black-and-blue mark on her forehead, and it started throbbing. She could hear a distant ringing in her head and felt the steady pulse of her heart beating like a pole repeatedly hitting her eardrum. Not only was she hurting, but she was extremely thirsty and famished. Veronica was always a little overweight, and a day didn't go by where the townspeople didn't bring it up, but she had to eat. She closed her eyes and pictured a

feast with a plethora of foods and appetizers. The desserts included arrays of pies, cakes, doughnuts and endless flavor variations of ice creams.

After the long and questionable migration across the country and harsh jerks all around, the carriage finally stopped. Veronica assumed she had fallen asleep, because it seemed to be early in the morning. She still had the taste of honey-glazed pork lingering in her mouth. She looked up to see the resplendent buttery orange sky, dripping into the hazy clouds like marmalade. It reminded her of the memories with her mother who she had seen so recently, but it felt like hundreds of years before. Veronica heard the stranger with big boots jump down from the carriage and it started shaking with his force. She tried to fake being asleep, but it didn't work. He slapped her across the face to get her attention. She opened her blood-shot eyes due to the intense pain, and saw a scruffy, middle-aged man with a whip. He had anger in his aquamarine eyes, like bright blue fire combined with two circular tsunamis. He opened his mouth to say something, but then restrained himself. He took a step back and made out two words: "Get up." The man had a deep, rich voice, backed with a tinge of mystery, like he was hiding something. After a long pause, he continued. He spoke of all of the jobs she would be doing around the farm including working in the fields, cooking, cleaning, making clothes, and working with the animals.

She forced back the hot tears, because she knew crying wouldn't lead to anything good. Veronica had to make her own bed out of bamboo and had to sleep in the slaughterhouse. When she was not even 10 years old, she was working in the fields for hours a day in the scorching July sun, and was constantly whipped for the slightest infractions. Her slaveowner also acted very inappropriately around her, and she was fed next to nothing. He always fat-shamed her even though he starved her, and she got no nutrition. Eventually, she just accepted that this was going to be her life and that there was nothing she could do.

One sunny day, a few years later when she was out weeding, a new boy, who seemed way older than her, joined her in the work. He introduced himself as Frank Moke and she found out he was 9 apart from her, at age 23. Frank did not get as used to the intense working conditions as fast as Veronica had. He had knowledge about their country and knew that they had abolished slavery in 1867, about 30 years before. What was going on was completely illegal. He spoke up and instigated against his owner, daring to be whipped. In the middle of the night, he would sneak into the slaughterhouse to talk to Veronica, and his idea to plot an escape. She was not easily convinced, so Frank had to be more persuasive. Veronica hated being enslaved but she also knew there was nothing she could do, and the risk of getting a severe punishment would be worse than anything imaginable. Once a week, the slaveowner had a man come in a large carriage to pick up the food that the two slaves had slaughtered and harvested, which they would then pack in large sacks. They came up with the idea of hiding in one of the sacks and hopefully escaping.

Later that week, on the delivery day, Wednesday, they hopped in the carriage and started packing the bags with freshly slaughtered meat and newly cultivated vegetables. They knew they were being watched through the window, so they made it look more realistic by doing some of the work. Finally, they decided to hop in. It was not very pleasant because the carriage reeked of rotten meat and most of the vegetables

they had grown were all squashed and bruised. Eventually, the carriage started moving. The two were relieved.

After 5 years of being enslaved, Veronica was finally free. Or so she thought... she turned back to get a final glimpse of what she called "home," but was horrified to see that her slaveowner was chasing after them, and they were not going at a fast pace. Frank thought quickly and he grabbed one of the fresh, shiny tomatoes and hurled it at the old man. It splattered in his face, throwing the old man off guard. He collapsed into the thorn bushes and was last seen screaming back at them as his voice grew more and more distant. Frank and Veronica didn't even care. He deserved this. Together they shared a relieved laugh, and then they hugged.

The two got married a year after on May 1, 1898, when Veronica was just 16. On August 21, 1900, they had a son named Frank Jr. Fearful of their slaveowner coming after them, they decided to flee the country and move to America for a better life. Frank Jr. was forced to stay behind in Hungary and live with his grandparents when he was barely a year old.

When the couple arrived in Pennsylvania, they received a lot of hate from the people around them for being immigrants with a language barrier and struggled to find jobs. Eventually, Veronica gave birth to a son named Andy and the couple continued to work very hard to earn a living. On June 10, 1906, Veronica had a daughter who was also named Veronica, but was nicknamed Ronnie. Ronnie was very sick as a baby and passed away the following year.

When Veronica became pregnant with her fourth child, also Frank Sr. got very sick. Unfortunately, he died on January 19, 1908, when he was 35. His daughter, Mary was born two months after, but she passed away as an infant. Veronica was heartbroken, but over time was able to recover. Although Veronica got remarried after Frank Sr.'s death, the retention of his heroic act was one of her most treasured memories.

*Authors note: As for me, it was hard to first hear this story, knowing that just a few generations before, my family had started in such a difficult way, her being my great-great grandmother. It was a sad story, but with an empowering ending which educated me about what courage really means, and that my struggles nowadays are nothing compared to what Veronica had. Learning about my past will help inform me about my future and knowing that people before me went through so much just for me to be here right now is astonishing. Even though Veronica is long gone now, the story of her escape from slavery will continue to live on in my heart forever.*



### *First part of "The Periwinkle Camellia"*

*"Goodbye!" I shouted, waving my hand in the air. In my other hand I clutched the periwinkle camellia she had given me, its rough fabric scratching my hand. "See you soon!" Aurora's lips formed a smile, but her eyes were still sad. "Farewell, sister. Until we meet again." She turned for the final time and shut the door softly.*

*I was alone, but I was fine. Aurora had left many times before, to do work in the village or gather ingredients in the forest. She was the best sorceress in the village, making her schedule cluttered. She was always busy. However, one thing stayed the same; she always came back—back to me, and I would always come running into her open arms.*

*That day was different. Dusk came, and I stayed awake during the night, clutching to the hope that she would come through the door once again, like she always did. Yet soon was the arrival of dawn, and when yellow covered the sky. I fell to my knees and wept, because "see you soon" and "until we meet again" meant nothing anymore.*

# The Golden Archers

**By Jacob Janowitz**

A long time ago on the planet of Durot, where there are beautiful valleys, and luscious mountains with green grass covering the entire planet, lived a Durotian boy named Rubin. Rubin had purple skin, blue hair, and a ripped up shirt and pair of pants. Rubin's family were all archers and they would practice archery every single day. They lived on the top of a small mountain called Wuwa. They would arch for food, and arch for their safety. They are very poor so they have to survive on little to none berrests, which is the Durot currency. One day, Rubin's dad, Tipan, was in town when there was a dangerous 4 person gang called the Gruesomes who were walking through town. This group is filled with people who are bloodthirsty and high in power. The head of the Gruesomes is named Atris. She is a powerful witch who was born on the planet Blanion, but a group of aliens invaded the planet and she had to escape because of the danger. The Gruesomes were walking through the town when Tipan accidentally fell over in front of them. One of the members of the Gruesomes, named Drazo, pulled his laser gun out and held it to Tipan's head.

"Sorry mistress. I didn't mean to get in your way. I just tripped on that crate of russleberries. I beg for mercy," Tipan begged.

"It is going to cost you, Tipan. It is 3,000 berrests," Atris said sternly.

"I'm sorry I can't pay that,"

Drazo put his finger on the trigger and everyone was ordered to look away. There was a zap sound and then a black blanket covered the body.

"Everyone go back to their homes right now," Atris ordered.

Everyone packed up and headed to their homes. A whip sound was then heard. Drazo screamed in pain because an arrow impaled him in the chest. He fell over and green blood spewed out of him. The Gruesomes turned their attention to the direction of the arrow and spotted Rubin with a bow and arrow in his hands.

"Get him this instant," Atris said.

The Gruesomes chased after Rubin. He jumped through the woods, onto and off of trees. One of the Gruesomes climbed up a tree and then chased after Rubin. Rubin got to his treehouse and activated a conveyor and the treehouse started to

make its way to Rubin's small cottage on the top of Wuwa mountain. The Gruesome misstepped and fell out of the tree onto the shadow covered grass below.

Rubin got to the cottage and jumped out of his treehouse and told his mom, Wilya, and his older brother, Hector about the death of Tipan.

"Your kidding Rubi. Come eat some russleberry stew," said Wilya.

"Mama, I'm telling the truth," Rubin confessed.

"Stop lying Rubin," Hector said.

"Believe me! The Gruesomes killed Papa and then I shot one of the Gruesomes with my arrow," Rubin yelled.

Wilya and Hector finally realized it was true and broke down in tears.

All the way west of town there was a palace, where the Gruesomes sat on their thrones. Drazo's throne was empty because of his death.

"It is such a shame that Drazo had to leave us," Atris said.

"I know, right?" The Gruesome named Chusi said.

"Lets just welcome our newest member, Natip,"

A figure wearing all black stepped into the throne room. Natip was wearing a black helmet with a golden glass covering over the face.

"Sit in your new seat, Natip," Atris said.

"Sorry majesty, but you can't give him Drazo's seat," The other Gruesome named Yusram said.

"What if it was different?" Atris stated.

The throne became gold and black, just like the color scheme of Natip's outfit. Natip headed over to his seat and sat down.

Back at Rubin's cottage, Rubin and Hector were practicing arching and fighting together. Rubin ran to Hector and did a jump kick. Hector threw a punch to Rubin's knee. He fell out of the air and rolled down the mountain into a tree.

"You okay, bro?" Hector asked.

"I'm fine," Rubin stated.

Hector heard a growl come from behind him. He looked behind him and saw a vicious crystalline wolf staring at him. Hector ran down the mountain and the wolf chased after him. Hector met an incline and ended up sliding down the mountain. As he was sliding he turned around grabbed his bow and arrow, and shot the wolf in

the blindspot, but because of the crystals on the wolf the arrow bounced off. Hector then, shot a sling arrow (which has a string attached to it) at a tree, so then he tried to swing over to Rubin who was next to the tree, but the wolf slid into him and knocked him into the woods at the end of the mountain.

“Hector!” Rubin screamed.

Rubin slid down the mountain and entered the woods, and Hector was nowhere to be found. Rubin heard a crunch behind him. He looked behind him and saw Yusram with a laser gun trying to shoot Rubin. Yusram shot a beam, but Rubin jumped and grabbed onto the tree above him. The beam missed, hit a tree and it fell on Yusram. His laser gun fell out his hand revealing a crystal shaped tattoo. Rubin then, realized that the crystalline wolf was Yusram. Rubin pushed the tree off of Yusram and helped him up. Rubin waved goodbye. He then went back to the cottage, and Yusram walked back to the palace.

Back at the palace, Yusram walked back into the throne room and reported to the rest of the Gruesomes.

“I located the killer of Drazo. He lives on the top of Wuwa Mountain. I killed the brother,” Yusram said.

“Good Yusram. I am going to now go to finish him and his family off,” Atris said.

“No, please, don’t!” Yusram begged.

“I’m sorry Yusram, but you can’t get in the way of the Gruesomes,” Atris stated.

She pulled out a laser gun and shot Yusram in the chest. He shook in place and then fell into a state of death on the floor, leaving a pile of green blood surrounding him. Atris walked out of the throne room and went to the flight deck.

“Ambré, get my ship,” Atris ordered.

“Yes, mistress,” Ambré responded.

A large dark purple ship flew into the flight dock and the door opened. Atris walked into the ship and into the cockpit. The ship started to roll out of the palace and into the air. She headed to the mountain and landed next to the cottage. She walked out of the ship and into the cottage.

“Oh well, oh well,” Atris said.

“Oh, sorry mistress,” Wilya said.

“You are not sorry yet. Where is Rubin?” Atris said.

“He is not here right now,” said Wilya.

“What did you say?” Atris snapped.

“He isn’t h-“

Atris used her powers on Wilya and rose her in the air. A bunch of glowing beams appeared in Wilya’s neck. She started to scream, and her skin started to rip up.

“He’s in town!” Wilya confessed.

Atris let Wilya down and walked out of the cottage. Wilya pulled out her bow and arrow, and shot an arrow at Atris. She caught the arrow in her hand and set the arrowhead on fire with her powers. She threw it back and it stabbed Wilya in the chest. She got fatally lit on fire and fell over onto the floor. Atris got in her ship and flew to town. She landed her ship by the woods near the town and walked in. She got out her sword and spotted Rubin. She got behind Rubin and rose the sword up and swung down. Rubin jumped out the way and Atris sliced open a crate of fruit. Rubin ran off into the woods and hid in the leaves of a tree. Atris walked into the woods and cut down trees as she walked through the woods. When she got to the tree Rubin was in, Rubin dropped a 4-pound-rock onto Atris. Atris sliced it in mid air and then cut the tree down. Rubin fell out the tree and barely missed the blade. He rolled on the ground, and then slingshotted a Durotian bee onto Atris’s back, and then ran away. The bee stung her and she screamed in pain. She used her mind powers to crush the bee. Then, she turned around, and spun her pointer finger and a beam highlighted the path of her finger. This special move was used to send a message to Natip. Natip arrived on a hover-cycle and chased after Rubin. He jumped off his hover-cycle and ran on foot. Rubin ran up onto the mountain and saw the burnt up cottage with Wilya’s body, burnt up and soulless. Rubin walked over to it and kneeled next to it and cried. Natip got on the top of the mountain and saw Wilya burnt up. He froze at the sight of her dead, but continued to go after Rubin. He pulled out a laser gun and walked over to Rubin. He put the gun to Rubin’s head, and put his finger on the trigger. He looked away from the sight of him holding someone hostage and tried to shoot him, but Atris arrived.

“Why are you hesitant to kill this imbecile?” Atris yelled.

She used her powers to move Natip out of the way. Then, Atris lifted Rubin up with her powers, and threw him off of the mountain.

“Let’s go,” Atris demanded.

Atris and Natip walked off the scene simultaneously. They walked down the mountain, and to the ship. They walked in the ship and blasted off towards the palace.

Rubin was yelling while falling from the top of the mountain. He fell for 45 seconds until he splashed into a thin-ice covered pond below. He passed out and lost consciousness when he shattered the thin-ice. A little boy named Glodo, spotted the splash and alerted his mother, Frea. She jumped into the pond and pulled Rubin out. She pulled him out and gave him chest compressions. He started to resuscitate

from his drowning moment and woke up spewing ice water from his mouth. Frea took Rubin inside her house and gave him a blanket to warm up in.

“Are you okay? What happened? Sir, what’s your name?” Frea asked.

“Hello, I am Rubin and I live on that mountain up there and the mistress threw me off of the mountain. And yes, I am okay,” stated Rubin.

Frea gave Rubin some russleberry stew to eat.

“Thank you...”

“Frea the name is,” she said.

A couple hours later, Rubin made his way back into town, fully recovered, full of his arrows, and his bow. Just as he made his way into town. The Gruesomes stood in the way of Rubin.

“Where do you think you are going badger?” Chusi teased.

“Tase him,” Atris ordered.

Chusi and Natip poked Rubin in the shoulder with their electro staffs. Rubin screamed threw his teeth as pain and shock entered his body.

“How did you survive?” Atris asked in disappointment.

“I just kept a grin in my heart,” Rubin stated.

“Tase him more,” she ordered.

Rubin jumped in the air and shot Chusi in the torso with an arrow. She fell over into death. Rubin landed on the ground and kicked Atris in the face knocking her to the ground. Natip dropped his electro staff and wanted to do a hand to hand fight. Rubin pulled out an arrow and dropped the rest of his stuff. Natip threw a punch at Rubin, but he dodged it. Rubin did a 360° kick into Natip’s ribs, and then attempted to stab him. Natip blocked the arrow and snapped it in half. He dropped it and knocked Rubin over. Rubin fell over with fear wiped all over his face. His fearful face was reflecting off of the gold face shield of Natip’s helmet. Rubin kicked the face-shield and it shattered a bit, showing who was behind the mask.

“Rubi?” Natip asked.

“Papa?” Rubin responded.

Rubin was trapped in the realization his father was still alive, but Atris got up and stabbed Tipan through the back with her sword, taking the special moment away, almost instantly. Atris retracted the sword and Tipan’s body dropped. Tears flooded Rubin’s eyes as his father was brutally murdered in front of his own very eyes.

“Ha ha ha. You are now scarce of a family. Just like me,” Atris expressed.

“Just how? How did Papa survive?” Rubin asked.

“He never survived anything. We faked the death, and turned him into Natip,” she said.

“Why did you need to kill him?!” Rubin furiously asked.

“He was a hesitating dweeb. He was probably a terrible father to you,”

Rubin was so fed up with her, and jumped up. He grabbed the sword and pulled it out of Atris’s grip.

“You need to learn a lesson to never mess with my family, again,” Rubin expressed.

Atris laughed and used her power to freeze Rubin. She pulled the sword out of Rubin’s hands, and attempted to stab him. Atris pulled the sword away from Rubin’s body, getting ready to stab him, and then a loud whip sound was heard in the air. An arrow head appeared sticking out of Atris’s chest.

She turned around saying, “Yusram should’ve killed you when he had the chance,”

“But he didn’t,” Hector said.

“Long live the Gruesomes.”

Atris’s body dropped, revealing Hector with a bow and arrow in his hands.

“You’re alive?” Rubin said.

“I am. I hid for the last couple of days. I have cuts and bruises from the crash, but I am okay,” Hector said.

“Papa was actually alive, but Atris killed him. Mother is also dead so it is just us now,” Rubin said.

“Hector? Rubi?” Tipan said weakly.

Rubin and Hector ran to Tipan’s side to check on him.

“Don’t leave us. You can’t,” Rubin said.

“I can’t stay for much longer, but I will miss you guys. You have been such nice kids to have. I left a gift for you guys by the well behind the cottage. I will miss you so much,” Tipan expressed.

Rubin and Hector gave him one final hug, and then heard the discontinuation of Tipan’s breath and sobbed at the death.

The next morning, Rubin and Hector went to the well behind the cottage, and a staircase formed. They walked down the steps and saw two golden bows and arrows, which are known as the gold of an archer, and they were given gold to them by a golden person, aka Tipan. They are now going to take on their adventures, known as the golden archers...



Image by Danny Dempsey

# The World

By Danny Dempsey

The world  
Is such a vast place.  
Full of everyone.  
So different,  
Yet so alike.

People,  
Who hurt others for their own personal  
Gain.

People,  
Who help others despite their own personal  
Losses.

People,  
Who don't care about others  
Who care so much about others  
And people in between.

The world is large  
Spinning fast,  
1,000 miles  
Every hour.

7,942,645,086  
People on earth  
Numbers are probably different  
Now.

People die every second  
People are born every second

Death has a grip  
Life has a grip

I can't tell who's is stronger, though



Figure 1 "Crowd" by theapoc is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

## **Rosilocks and the Three Bears**

### **By Vera Turner**

Once upon a time, there lived a young but cruel girl with hair as red as a rose, but a heart as sharp as a thorn. Everyone in the village called her Rosilocks. Rosilocks happened to also be the granddaughter of Goldilocks.

One day Rosilocks was picking berries when she stumbled upon a small hut in the woods. She threw her basket and berries into a nearby bush while she ran towards the strange home.

“This old hut looks like it was built by animals!!” She yelled, as if someone could hear her.

She banged her fist against the big metal door to see if anyone was home. No answer. she grabbed the edge of the door and pulled with all her might.

She pushed the door open, and inside was a completely wooden house that Rosilocks thought was the ugliest thing she had ever seen. On a small table, was three bowls of tomato soup.

“Ooh! Maybe if I eat this, I won’t starve when I bring home no berries!”

She walked over to the table, barely even noticing the small picture of three bears hanging on the wall.

Rosilocks grabbed a spoon and dipped it into the largest bowl.

“Ahh! Burning!”

Rosilocks dropped her spoon on the floor and slapped her hands on her tongue as if about to cry. She then grabbed the next spoon and dipped it into the second bowl that was a bit smaller.

“Ew! Gross! This one is freezing!”

She threw the bowl on the ground and the soup spilt all over the rug.

“This one better be good!” She yelled. “Or else it will end up on the floor as well!”

She took a small bite of it, and eventually, it was all gone from the bowl. After that, Rosilocks was about to leave when she decided to go into the living room to sit down after eating all that soup. She sat down on the biggest chair, and then all of a sudden sprung back up.

“Ow! This one is way too hard!”

She scrambled over to the next chair, but as soon as she sat down, her legs sunk down into the cushion. Only barely able to pull herself out of the chair, Rosilocks ran to the opposite side of the room.

“Who could ever sit in something that soft??” She screamed. “IT’S WRONG!!!”

Rosilocks sat down on the small chair at the very end.

“Ahh...just right!”

All of a sudden, the chair broke and Rosilocks sat plain on the floor.

Angry, Rosilocks then grabbed the crazy-soft cushion off of the other chair and ripped it, gathering all the feathers and throwing them out the window.

“Gosh...all this destruction is making me tired!” She whispered. “I should go lay down...”

Rosilocks lay down on the biggest bed but immediately ran off.

“HOW COULD ANYONE SLEEP ON SOMETHING THAT HARD!?!?”

She crawled over to the next bed, but sunk into the mattress, only barely able to pull her leg out.

Finally, she lay down on the last and smallest bed.

“Finally...just...right.....”

Zzzzzz

All of a sudden three bears walked in.

“HEY! SOMEONE THREW MY SPOON ON THE FLOOR!” Yelled the first bear, as he ran over to the small table.

“SOMEONE THREW MY SOUP ON THE FLOOR!!” Screamed the second.

“SOMEONE ATE ALL OF MINE!” Whined the smallest bear.

They then walked into the living room.

“SOMEONE SAT IN MY CHAIR!!” Said the biggest bear, as he examined the wood scattered around.

“SOMEONE TORE UP MY CUSHION!” Yelled the mother bear.

“AND MY CHAIR IS COMPLETELY BROKEN!” shouted the baby bear, as he tried to reconnect the pieces.

“I’M SICK OF ALL THESE PEOPLE TRESPASSING INTO OUR HOUSE!! IT’S BEEN HAPPENING EVER SINCE MY DAD BUILT THIS PLACE!!” shouted the father bear.

The bears then walked up to the bedroom.



["fit for a Princess"](#) by [Muffet](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#)

“OUR BEDS ARE RUINED!!” Yelled both of the adult bears.

“AND A GIRL IS IN MY BED!!!” Screamed the baby bear.

All of a sudden, Rosilocks woke up. She stared straight into the baby bear’s eyes and obviously, screamed her heart out. Without thinking, she kicked the bear in the nose and made it bleed.

“OW!!!! I THINK SHE BROKE MY NOSE!!!” The baby bear screamed in a pitch so high, Rosilocks had to block her ears.

The mother and father bear tied Rosilocks in a rope and plopped her on the floor. They then growled at her, for she had hurt their only child.

The father bear picked her up and chucked her out the window.

She then landed in a bush and was covered in all the feathers she had taken out of mama bear's cushion. And for her mother, she died of a broken heart because poor Rosilocks never returned home.

THE END

## Light's Loop of I will

By Maya Chrzanowski

Warm sunlight assembled vertical bars of light through the tall windows that lined the far wall,  
And as the light shifted,  
the outline of the big oak tree allowed the overheated wall to cool for a moment,  
Until the light returned and rippled over the hills that formed her face.

As the brightness increased,  
her heartless figure twitched,  
her sorrowful eyes awoke,  
and her traumatized pupils widened.

The light invaded the quiet darkness of sleep,  
The light invaded her small moment of peace,  
The light forced her to get out of calm,  
The light let her know it was day.

She sat up,  
To allow the blood to return to her head,  
Reminding her of yesterday,  
Reminding her of tomorrow,  
Reminding her of now.

Her tired legs shuffled down the cold, narrow halls,  
lined with invisible black paint,  
Filled with thorns growing from every direction.

A soulless body crashed into the worn chair,  
As the television presented yet another tragedy,  
Seemed as if it was one too many horrors,  
But the ghastly words bleeding out of the monotone reporter's mouth rushed through one ear  
and out her other,  
Since there was no space left in her heavy mind to carry it.

More and more adjectives poured out of the reporter's scripted tongue,  
The stream of words began to rush through her ear,  
burn space into her mind,  
And surge out her eyes.

The soft skin that lay above her melancholy eyes shut,  
Forcing the emotionless,  
And tired,  
And dry,  
And blue,  
Yet peaceful tears to drop from a height that was so high,  
For when it kissed the maroon tiles it shattered into a million,  
Emotionless,

Tired,  
Dry,  
Blue,  
Yet peaceful pieces.

When her eyelids detached from the soaked line of bottom lashes,  
And returned to the softened daylight,  
She so deeply wished to be set free,  
Free of the thorny halls,  
And the piercing whistle of silence,  
And the burden of *I will*,  
Because now,  
it is *I might*.

She sat still with her pulsing brain,  
That could not let go of the horrors on the news,  
And the horrors of now.

And she sat still with her damaged heart,  
That even the silence seemed to beat louder than,  
As she waited out the sun,  
Begging return to the dark clarity,  
Though she knew that light would wake her once more.



Figure 1 "Lonely old woman having a coffee" by \_Franck Michel\_ is licensed under CC by 2.0

## Imaginary Vacation

*The air is filled with the smells of sweets, grilled cheese, omelets, and the salty smell of the ocean, and I walk to the main buffet hoping to devour all of the omelets that they were cooking just to hear the cook say to a man “sorry ma’a...I mean sir, we are out of omelets but we still have biscuits!”.*

*I WAS DEVASTATED. I started kneeling to the floor crying then I remembered that the ship had the most epic water slides the world has ever seen! Also the longest. I ran to my room and slipped on a puddle of water and sat on the floor stunned. Soon I was at my room changing into my swimsuit. I walked into the elevator to the top. It took an hour. That’s how long it was! Then it was my turn I jumped into the slide, and that was the end of me.*

*By Alex Holmes*

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## The Stinky Bus Ride

**By Vera Turner**

The bus, as it shoots through traffic, bumps half the people in it around. I look everywhere. The top, with dents and rust peeling off looks as if it could break at any point. As I look to the people around me, I suddenly feel invisible. A baby grabs for some gum on the pole, as its mom pulls its fragile arm away. The seat, even though covered in some sort of strong material, is tearing away. Fluff falling out of it, I try to ignore. Under the seat, more spiderwebs Than I’ve ever seen. Almost as though the bugs are building a colony. I smell dust and smoke pass me as people walk by. All I feel is the old milkshake that I accidentally stepped in. My shoe dripping, I try to wipe it off. I stare out the window, but all I see is a blur of things going by. I drop back in my chair, as my spine sinks into the cushion, and I start to pass out. Even though I love going to New York City, the bus ride always stinks.

## ***Goldilocks and the 3 Guards***

### **Fairy Tale with a Twist**

By Sloane Pensyl

Once upon a time after a little girl named Goldilocks broke into the three bears house, she jumped out the window when she got caught.

The three bears chased after her they caught up to her and called the police.

When they got there they decided to put Goldilocks on trial to go to jail. They put her in a cell until the trial was going to happen.

The guards said, "You have three hours to get a lawyer to defend you at the trial." Goldilocks called everyone she knew but no luck. She called one more person but they said no.

She had no other options, so she decided to escape. She noticed that the guards left for their lunch break 12:30 till 1:30.

Goldilocks decided she had to do it before Sunday. She only had three more days to escape.

She used everything she had to make a fake version of herself sleeping in her bed. She hid the fake version of herself under her bed until she was going to escape.

It was the midnight before her trial, Goldilocks asked for something to eat and they gave her a plate full of mashed potatoes.

When the guards were on their lunch break she broke the plate and used it to unlock the cell door. The alarm started to go off as soon as she opened her cell door.

Goldilocks rushed into the woods and found a portal she decided to go into it. The portal took her to a fairytale called Little Red Riding hood.

When Goldilocks got out of the portal she saw a little girl she had a red riding hood on. Goldilocks decided to follow her.

Goldilocks noticed that a wolf asked the girl where she was going. Goldilocks followed the wolf and went up to him and asked, "Where are you going?"

The wolf responded, "why would I tell you?"

Goldilocks then said, "Why do you want to go to that little girl's house?"

The wolf then said, "I want to eat them!"

As soon as Goldilocks heard this she said, "I'm in!"

They were rushing to the little girl's grandma's house. When they got there the wolf said, "Goldilocks can you sound like a little girl?"

Goldilocks knocked on the door and said, "Grandma, it's me."

The grandma then said, "Come in, darling."

They went in and the wolf ate the grandma. When the wolf was done eating the doorbell rang and it was little red riding hood and the guards.

Goldilocks jumped out the window and ran back to the portal, but this time Goldilocks ran into the fairytale Jack and the Bean Stalk.

Goldilocks saw a little boy named Jack buying some beans. She went up to him and asked, "What are those?"

Jack then responded, "They are magical beans."

Goldilocks then asked, "Where are you going to plant those?"

Jack said, "Right here."

He buried them in the dirt and it started to grow and grow.

They started to climb up but Goldilocks saw at the corner of her eye that the guards were coming.

She jumped off of the bean stalk and ran back to the portal.

This time the portal took her to a fairy tale called Rumpelstiltskin.

Goldilocks noticed a king trying to teach his daughter to spin gold off of a spinning wheel.

Goldilocks went up to the king and said, "If I teach your daughter how to spin gold you have to give me half of the gold she spun."

The king said "You have to teach her first."

She was heading to the barn to teach the king's daughter how to spin gold on a spinning wheel when the guards snuck up to her and grabbed her arm. They put Goldilocks in the back of the police car and said, "Your trial will be tomorrow".

When they got to the station they put Goldilocks into a more secure cell. When she got to the new cell she tried to escape again but it was no use she couldn't get out. All she could do was wait for her trial.

"Wake up. It's time for your trial" said one of the guards. She got dressed right away and headed to the trial with one of the guards.

Goldilocks was trying to look like a kind and nice little girl in front of the Judge but it didn't work.

The Judge sentenced her life in jail for breaking and entering and escaping jail. No one ever broke into the 3 bears house ever again.

*Wish*  
By Christina Liang

Chapter One

It was seven A.M. at the Fung's. Min Jun's hands were worn out from working all night, and there were dark, black lobes under his eyelids, "I would work this hard in any life..." Min Jun sighed, "...if it means I can earn enough money to pay for her treatment."

Min Jun was a member of a fast-food place. The only difference between a member and an average worker was the amount of time that is spent working.

Min Jun had chosen to be a member because he had no other job and none of his relatives could help. Min Jun's life as a member was not easy, because he had to stay at the restaurant overnight and pay all his house bills with a tiny bit of money.

As the man worked, he wondered why a 'member' at the fast-food place would have to suffer so much, when the word meant that whoever earned the title would be showered with advantages and that they would be treated differently – in a *good* way. Maybe being a member of The Fung's Place wasn't what the word interpreted.

Min Jun was so busy thinking, he had accidentally dropped one of the dishes he was washing. Min Jun couldn't do anything but watch in horror.

"Shoot!" Min Jun exclaimed, collecting the pieces of the plate onto his lap. "I'm such a clumsy, clumsy man, how could I do this!?" The man grabbed his hair and began fidgeting with it. He frantically scurried to the nearest garbage can. Min Jun slapped his forehead, thinking about how much this could affect his job.

Behind him emerged another Korean, staring at the broken pieces of the dish. She looked up at Min Jun with disappointment smothered across her face, and a look screaming the words *I trusted you and this is what you give me?*

When the man turned around, he broke down.

"Please, ma'am; I can't lose this job, don't fire me for a clumsy little accident," Min Jun begged in a soft voice. "I'm a *member*,"

The man thought about his mother, about how disappointed she would be when she found out that her son had gotten from his job just because he hadn't focused. A teardrop fell from his eyes, followed by more and more. Min Jun couldn't stop sobbing after a few minutes. His boss was completely quiet.

*Every hospital, every doctor, every job –why can't I just keep at least one job?* Min Jun then thought of his father.

His boss watched as the man fell to the ground weeping. "I never officially announced your unemployment," she whispered.

*Phew*, Min Jun thought, *I guess my membership DOES give me some advantages.*

Min Jun's boss sat down beside him and patted his back. "You know what?"

Min Jun looked up.

"I want you to spend the rest of this week at home."

Min Jun looked down, feeling embarrassed.

## Chapter Two

On the way home, Min Jun couldn't stop worrying. This had not been the first time in front of his boss, yet her reaction had not changed the slightest. Min Jun thought back on his first breakdown and how sudden it had been. That very day of his breakdown was the worst day of his life.

"Abeoji!" Min Jun remembered saying, "Abeoji, look what I found!" Young Min Jun's held out his hands to an older human who was grinning at him. Sitting on the little boy's hand was a baby toad with gigantic eyes and tiny, round feet. Min Jun waited for the man to respond, still holding the frog in his hands.

"If you don't respond soon, my frog will definitely get impatient and hop off! Abeoji!"

Instead of replying, the man shook his head and whispered, "Shh. If you yell, the frog will spring away even faster." He nudged young Min Jun, tickling his face. The boy tipped over and fell on the ground, giggling. The father and son battled each other, laughing lightheartedly. One hand was over another, feet were tangled together. Two bodies were twisting and tangling each other, rolling around in the grass.

As the two played, the frog in Min Jun's hands suddenly hopped off. Before the boy could react, the frog had disappeared into the grass field. Min Jun yelled in anger, untangling himself from his father. He glared at the man and started screaming and stomping on the floor.

Despite the man's comforting, the boy's tears fell like raindrops falling from storm clouds above. Min Jun sprinted home, leaving his father lying on the field.

"Adeul! Come back right this moment!" Min Jun's father ordered, running after his son.

As soon as the man started running, he tripped and fell on the ground.

To make everything worse, the tree next to him had been extremely weak and unstable -and it was no longer supported by all its roots. Slowly, the tree started to tip down and down.

*Crrrrk! Crrrr~*

Before he could get on his feet, the tree had already fallen onto him. He let out a blood-shrilling scream and slowly died.

Min Jun was almost home by the time his father died, but headed back when he heard his scream. The little boy was only five when he saw his father's corpse.

Everything escalated so quickly, so fast, that even his own mother could not sleep for many nights in a row.

Min Jun couldn't go through a single day without thinking about the horrendous incident. It could've been such a joyous and fun day. It could've been a normal, happy day -but now, even thinking about it created misery.

Min Jun had been thinking so hard, his eyes had stopped focusing. He was no longer watching his feet, causing him to trip directly into a tree.

"Stupid tree!" The man yelled in frustration, hugging his knee in pain. Strangers stopped to stare at him, sneaking a few giggles on the way. He heard whispers and saw the smirks on peoples' faces, but he wouldn't stop screaming. "It's always the trees! The stupid trees! Ugh!"

Min Jun started punching the tree.

"Ugh! Ugh! Ugh!" He yelled, tears pooling up in his eyes. His hands were already worn out from working, and the tree bark was giving him blisters. Min Jun was way too busy to even focus.

People around him started to laugh, amused by his reactions. Min Jun screamed for another few minutes until he decided to stop. "Trees should just disappear in general."

"Uh-uh." A tiny voice growled above Min Jun. "Trees are very delicate plants and kicking them is a very undignified thing to do." Min Jun fell back, astonished by the high-pitched voice.

"What? I was just talking, no need to be so shocked," the cat rolled her eyes. "But don't worry, I understand why you're shocked. I'm too pretty, aren't I? Probably the prettiest cat you've ever come across. I must admit, you're kind of ugly. I can't lie, so I speak with truthfulness. I suggest you get a haircut and a nose job. If you decide to not get one, then enjoy looking like a deformed pufferfish."

"SHUT UP!" yelled Min Jun, glaring at the cat. The cat winced at the man's face and continued rattling on and on about the ugliness it possessed. "I'm not ugly! Ugh, I have such strange dreams."

The flying cat rolled her eyes and landed on the ground. She flicked her tail at the man, getting her desired attention. "Anyway," she began, "I am here to grant you a wish."

"Ha-ha-ha," the man pretended to laugh. "Though, I don't remember falling asleep."

"It's not a joke."

"Flying cat, you are not fooling anyone. *Especially* not me. Go."

The cat growled a curse and sank into the floor.

.....

The next day began horribly. Min Jun had overslept, and his brain was fogged up when he finally awoke. Because of this, he almost burnt himself during an attempt to make breakfast.

"Ouch! Oh my gosh! This darn fire!" He yelled as he blew at his burning finger. The pain had lasted only a second, but the pain struck Min Jun hard. He swiped his finger on a piece of cloth a few times before he resumed cooking. The pot fumed furiously, spurting smoke out from the kennel. Min Jun glared at the pot as if it had been taunting him for getting burned.

"Ah, I see. You're a hater of fire as well." The cat from before popped up behind Min Jun, laughing. "Have you considered wishing to be nature-repellent? You would benefit very much if you wished for that. Of course, it's just a suggestion based off on what I've seen." She laughed again.

The man turned around. When he saw the cat, his face tensed up. He shook his head to make sure that he wasn't hallucinating. *No way*, he thought. *I'm...*

"Why am I still asleep?" Min Jun yelled, ignoring the laughter of the cat. "And why do I keep imagining this annoying creature?" He punched himself hard, hoping that it would wake him up.

The cat shrugged. "I dunno why you think you're still asleep after just waking up -you're awake and I am most definitely real," the cat meowed.

"Talking cats do not exist."

"Do too!"

"Do not."

"Do too. Anyway. As I was saying —"

"Don't. Speak. Another. Word," Min Jun interrupted the cat, shoving his hand in front of her. The cat stuck out her tongue to express annoyance.

"LET ME TALK!" she yowled, "I have some *very important* information to gather." The man shook his head but didn't say anything.

"I was going to ask -before I was rudely interrupted-have you decided what your wish is? If so, you must tell me." The cat crossed her arms and waited for a response. Min Jun rolled his eyes and ignored the question. The cat stared at him tensely as she continued waiting.

After many moments

"Listen, cat. If things were that easy to get, I'd be a billionaire," Min Jun joked, "So get out of my way and let me be."

"So, you wish for money?" the cat asked, sighing, "I seriously thought you would wish for nature repellent." Min Jun watched as stacks of money appeared in the air. He gasped at the stacks of cash flying in the air, eyes wide.

"Wait!" Min Jun yelled. "Don't grant the wish yet! I am not ready!"

"So...you believe me now?" The cat flicked her tail again, smirking.

The man reluctantly nodded.

"Yeah, yeah, whatever. I believe you now."

### Chapter Three

The cat was having a stroke in the middle of the kitchen.

"I can't grant you healing! Why not just wish for hundred-dollar bills, and I can spawn em' right in front of you?" the cat yelled.

"*Because I don't want to waste this opportunity on JUST MONEY,*" Min Jun yelled back. He smacked his forehead, irritated by the cat. "I told you already, I want to wish for my mom's recovery."

"And I told *you* that you can't wish for longer life and~"

"Shut up!"

"Have you not got any manners? I am your wish-granter, so you should act politer," the cat scoffed as she flew higher into the air. "But since I am so nice, I will allow you a second chance to act better. YOU BETTER SAVOR IT."

Min Jun wanted to roll his eyes, but he knew that it would ruin his chances of seeing his mom healthy again. He looked away from the cat and sighed. "Okay, since I cannot wish for longer life~er, or healing ~than what *can* I wish for?"

"You want to know the rules of wishing?" the cat asked.

The man nodded patiently.

"Okay. You can't wish for other people ~you can only wish for things that benefit yourself. You can't wish for longer life or healing, you can't wish for abnormal abilities, and you cannot wish for things that do not exist. For example, no bringing people back to life or going back in time. And...you can't impersonate anyone..." The cat rambled on and on about the rules until the man had stopped listening. "Hey! Focus!"

"I was though," Min Jun insisted, "For thirty seconds." The man scoffed. He dazzled at flowers while the cat continued speaking.

"LISTEN!" the cat yowled, staring furiously at him.

"I already listened to the important parts, so I don't need to know the rest," Min Jun glared at the cat. *Always talking, always mocking, always getting on my nerves. I'm just doing payback.*

The cat grumbled under her breath, but after a few minutes, continued speaking.

She rambled on about how the man would suffer consequences if he broke the rules, but she wouldn't tell exactly what they were.

When she was almost done, the man's face had changed from a mocking glare to a frown. When the cat saw his expression, she stopped talking to check in on him.

"You listening!?" she screamed. Min Jun's expression drooped even more.

"Cat, what do I wish for if the only thing I want can't be granted?" he asked, troublesomely. The cat looked up at the only window in the room. She stared at it up and down, left and right, observing every bit of movement she spotted in it.

"Hm, you should seriously consider cleaning your windows. They're very filthy," the cat suggested. The man looked at the window, but he had been too troubled to focus. Instead, he sighed and glared at the cat.

"What does the window have to do with this? Are you suggesting that I wish for cleaner windows? I prefer to spend this opportunity on something more valuable." The man looked down, "I just want to help my mother."

"Well, you can't," the cat replied grimly, "but I *can* give you some time to think about what else you might want." The cat glanced at Min Jun, expecting him to brighten up.

To her surprise, he was not smiling.

He was crying.

## *Goldilock's (real) story*

By Aaron Zheng

The Grim Brothers like to start their fairy tales with “Once upon a time”, but my story is no fairy tale. I’m Goldilocks. According to the Grim Brothers, I was an “impudent, rude little girl.” In reality I was nothing like that. I was actually a poor beggar on the streets looking for tiny scraps and morsels of food. Let me tell you my story.

One day when I was walking towards the village center to try and salvage a few pieces of food, I got lost and stumbled upon a huge mansion. The door was open and inside I could smell delicious smells, and I couldn’t control myself and I just walked in. Looking back, this was wrong, but I was uneducated at the time and almost starving. As I walked in I couldn’t believe how magnificent the inside of the house was, for I had only slept and lived on dirt. In front of me were three huge bowls of porridge. Again, I couldn’t control myself and I decided to try the first bowl, but it was way too hot. My tongue felt like it was on fire. The next bowl I tried was all too cold. Now, My tongue felt like it would freeze. But the last bowl, the last bowl was just right.

At this time it finally dawned upon me that I had just broken into someone’s house and most likely ate their breakfast. I decided to not touch anything in the house again, and I would try to apologize if someone came back. However, the house was so big I got lost. Again. I stumbled upon three rooms in front of me. The first one, was obviously the bathroom so I decided to go in the 2nd room. The 2nd room had three fancy chairs in it. They were fancier than anything I had ever seen.

Yet again, I couldn’t help myself and I decided to sit on them. The first one, was way too rough. It was probably rougher than the village road itself!. The second one, was way too squishy. But the third one, was just right even though it was a little bit tiny. So, foolish me decided to fall asleep. That was, until the chair broke under my weight! Now, not only had I eaten someone’s breakfast, I had broke one of their fancy chairs. I decided to look for pen and paper to draw them an apology letter, since uneducated me didn’t know how to write.

So I went into the last room, and there were three beds! I had never slept on anything besides on dirt or sometimes when it was raining, even mud. I decided to test the beds and the first bed I rested on, was way to hard. The second one, was way to bouncy. However the third one was just right, so I fell asleep.....

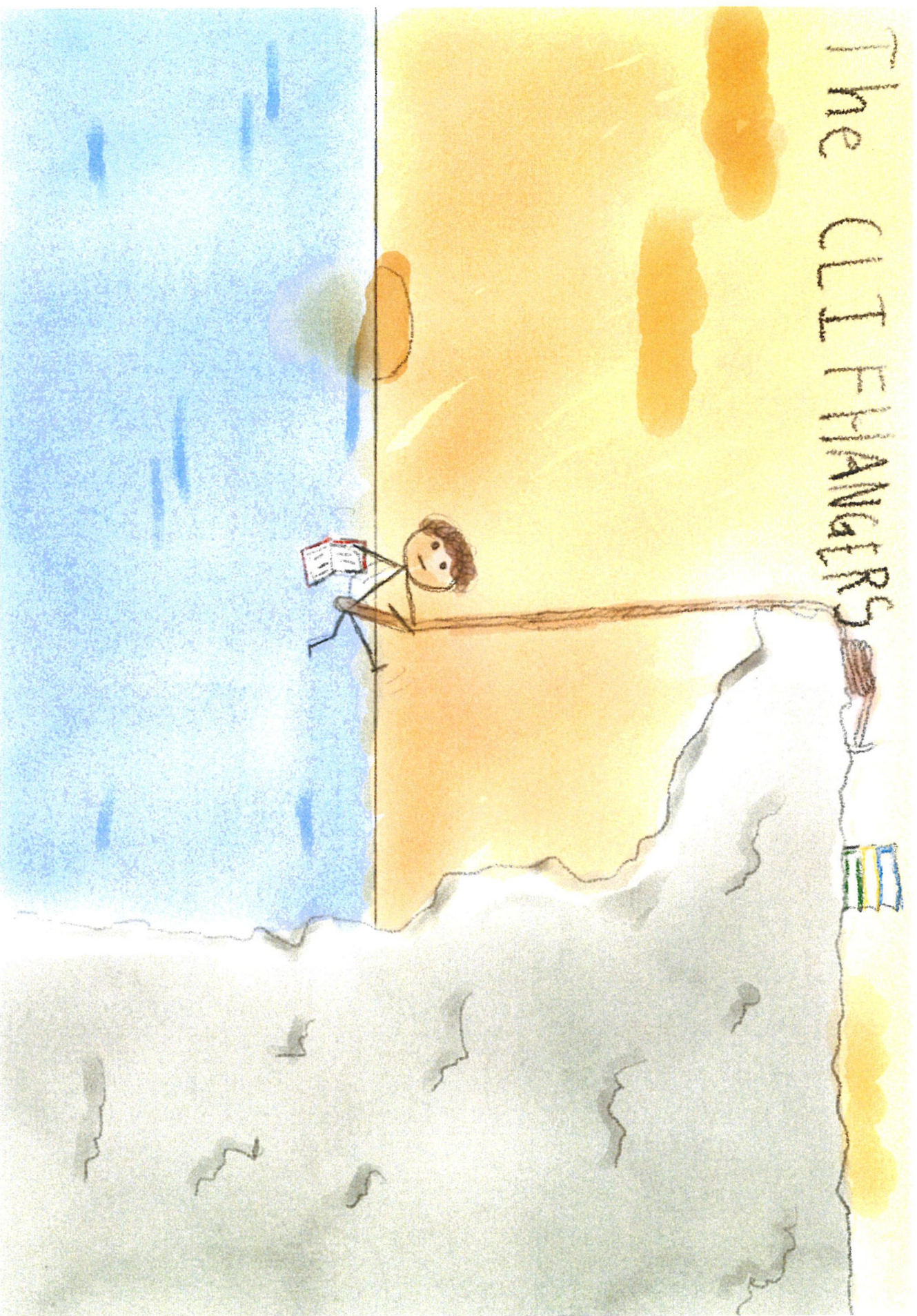
When the bears came back they were shocked, however at the time I was still asleep. Little wee bear started crying when he saw his breakfast gone and Mama and Papa bear were very shocked. When they went into the chair room, they found Little wee bear's chair broken! Now Little wee bear was very mad, determined to strangle and maybe kill who did this. Finally, when they went to the bedroom, they saw a strange creature on the bed. This type of creature called itself a human, but they didn't care what it was called, Little wee bear was just mad.

However, Mama and Papa bear saw this poor creature dressed in rags all dirty, and took pity. They decided to adopt this creature. This is how I was able to write this story today.

THE END



# The CLIFFHANGERS



Artwork by Alex Holmes