

IMAGINE

avon | winter 2020

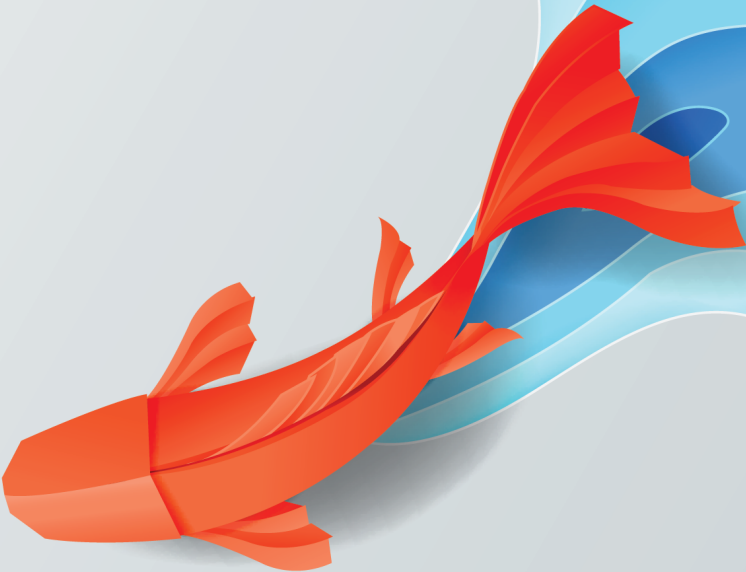


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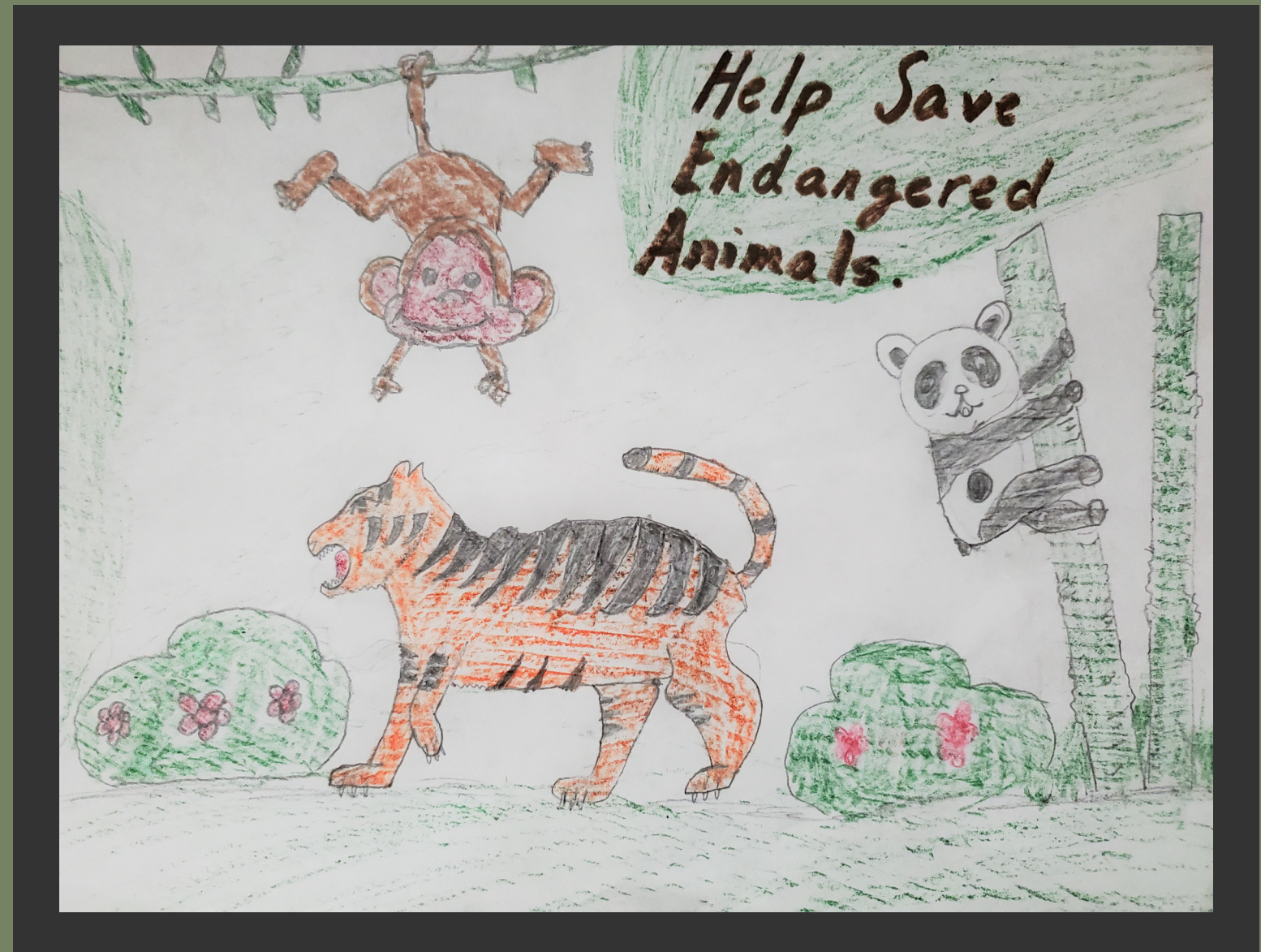
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“HELP SAVE ENDANGERED ANIMALS”

SAUJAS KANT, GRADE 6

SPIRIT SAVER

By Ashrith Varanasi
Grade 6

What if you were the first person to step foot on Venus? You may be thinking of brightness and volcanoes. Well, maybe. But if you think outside the box, you will find your dream turn to reality. You were dreaming on a Thursday night. And this dream turned out to be your destiny.

Your eyes jerked open. You look out your window. Just turned midnight. But that is your favourite part of the day. You see, you are a spirit.

Once on a trip, you were exploring an ancient cave below a snowy cliff. There was an avalanche, causing the cave to start to collapse, and no one knew you were in there. Soon you were surrounded. The ground crumbled below you and you fell into a dungeon. You did not come out alive.

You turn away from the window and you hear something in the sky. A lightning bolt strikes, and a Pegasus appears. You quickly grab your armour and rush outside in fear. You see a black Pegasus with little white dots on the wings appears. You go outside and the Pegasus is somehow telepathically telling you, *Get on my back. We are going to a new planet.*

“Why?” you ask. “And who are you?”

I will tell you later. Just please come. I need your help. On your planet, there is sometimes news of some unknown figure saving people. That figure is you. This horse seems to know about you. Reluctantly, you agree to this random horse. You use the armour that you got from your house to fight and deflect attacks. You can also shoot your armour off of you and at your opponent. You assume you will need it. Then you get on the Pegasus’ back.

After two nights of travel, you make it. To a planet you name Venus. In a language called “Spiritomb”, Venus is “bright volcano”. The planet was bright and was covered in volcanoes. You see three arrows coming at you and you block them. “What is this?” you ask the Pegasus.

I was flying around one night, and I found a ship you people call a UFO. And I saw a massive fireball.

“Meteor?” you reply.

If that is what you call it.

You look at where the arrows came from. And you see a three eyed creature that has an antenna and a crossbow. Aliens. You run at it and punch the creature. Behind the one alien, there are about ten or fifteen aliens. Some have laser guns, some have clubs, and some have multi shot crossbows. Laser gun shots and arrows flew at you at light speed. But even more came from above. The ones that came from above came from a turret on a UFO—probably the one that the Pegasus saw. You ask the Pegasus if that is the UFO, and it says yes. You plan on taking out the UFO first, so you drift up to it. You can do this because you are a spirit. But the arrows and lasers take you down, and the aliens with clubs start to charge.

The Pegasus that you started to think of as Starflight, kicked in and took out all the opponents in the way. You get up and limp to Starflight. You whisper, “Fly me to the UFO.”

The UFO stopped shooting and the meteor started to move. Through the window of the UFO, you see an alien that is holding a remote control. You guess it is for the meteor. *So I just have to destroy the remote*, you think. You ask Starflight “Do you think you have enough leg power to put a hole in the UFO?”

Yes, but only my first blow. The Pegasus replies. That is fine, because you have enough power to break a spot into the UFO, if you have enough momentum. You then get off and float, and Starflight delivers her kick. Then you deliver your punch, and there is a small hole in the UFO. But the hole is big enough for you to fit through.

The alien conducting the meteor turns around and you see that it has four arms, and four eyes. One arm is holding a machine laser gun, another is holding a sword, and the last two are holding the remote control used to control the meteor. The alien is green, with horns. This one is probably the boss.

“You, you are the ones that stole land from us! You spirits,” the alien spat, “are the ones that seep into my people and turn them against us! Then you just steal their souls! This new creation Firerock 1000 will wipe out all spirits, so we can live a peaceful life on the planet that is rightfully ours! I will start with you!”

You try convincing it that it was a gang of ghosts. The spirits were the good ones. But the alien would not listen. He just repeatedly strikes to silence you. You have no choice but to strike back. The alien holds up its sword and teleports away from you, appearing next to you. You try again but the same thing happens, except it is behind you. It kicks you and you fall to your knees. You are picked up by your neck, with the sword at your neck, too. You start thrashing in the alien’s arms, and you see the controller. You try to destroy it but it teleports away, and the alien releases you. Now you are panting and getting shot with his gun. You deflect most of the bullets but not all.

You kneel, weak. You blast off your fist armour, but the alien makes it disappear, and then reappear flying right back at you.

You then get an idea. If you cannot beat the alien, crash the UFO. So you spam random buttons on the control panel, but it just keeps moving the UFO; it does not crash it. You did not see the SELF DESTRICT button, and you miss clicking it.

“Hey, what are you doing?” the alien asks. “Even if you kill me, this crystal in my teleporting sword will bring me back to life.”

Three things to destroy, then, you think.

You shoot your fist armour at the alien, and while the alien is distracted, you punch the sword out of its hand. You take the sword, leave the UFO, and the sword becomes long. You use the long blade to slice through it.

You get down and start to go back to Earth. Like in the movies when something explodes behind the hero, you throw the sword behind you, and it hits the SELF DESTRICT button on the control panel.

BOOOOOOOOOM!

End

"I went on a drive"
By: Syeda Naqvi

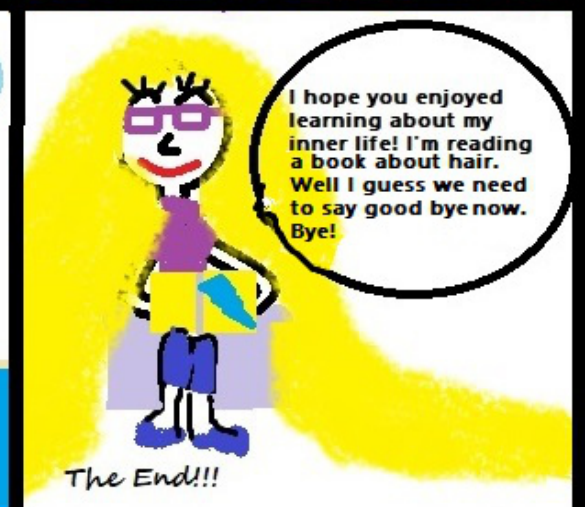
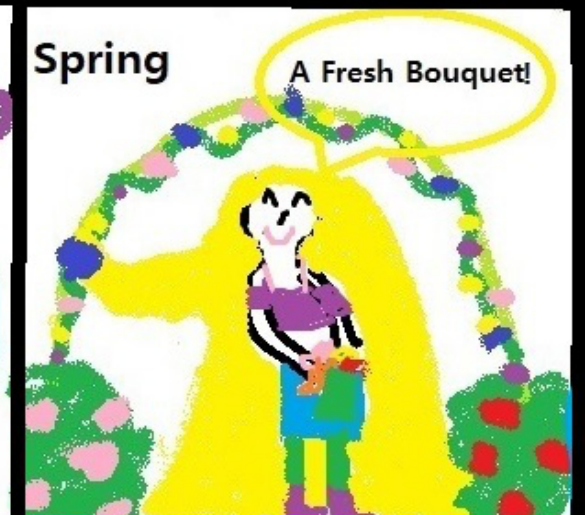
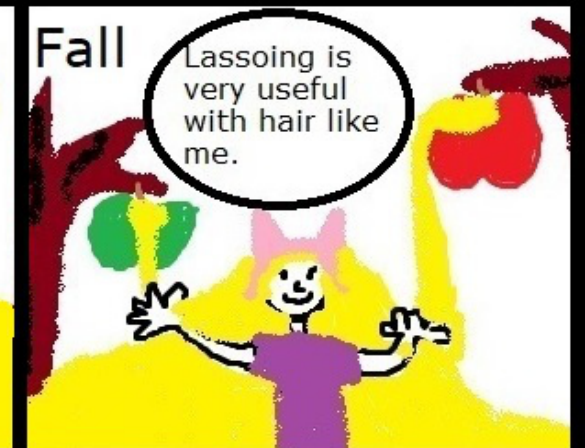
I went for a drive in my car
I went extremely far
I ran out of gas
And filled it up at last
I went back on the road
And saw a huge green boat
I put my favorite jacket on
And did a big yawn
I went to a shop to get candy
And got a stuffed animal named Pandy!
When I got back to my house
I ran and put on my blouse
I went right to sleep
And started counting sheep.

Disney Princesses in 2020: Story #1

Rapunzel

-Charlotte Sohn-

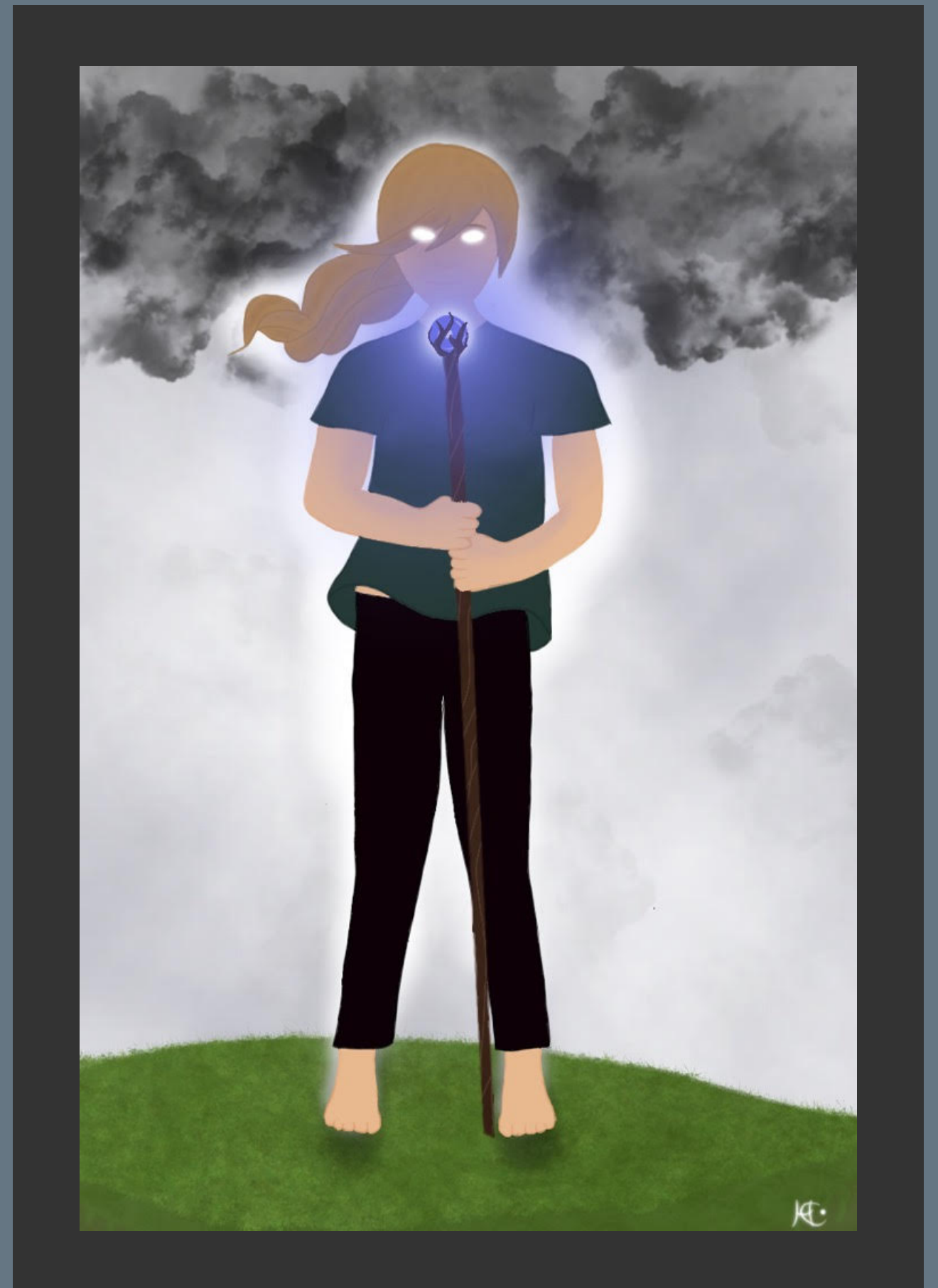
Hi. My name is Rapunzel.
You know the story.
kidnaped as a baby,
trapped in a crazy big
tower, but this is my actual
life. You know what, life
with long hair is actually
pretty decent.



The End!!!

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“THE STAFF OF AOMUR”

HANNAH CHIU, GRADE 7

Winter 2020

THE ESCAPEE

By Sixian Huang
Grade 7

Scarlett's heartbeat thrummed in her chest, a drum that pulsed in her ears. Her legs threatened to crash under her as she ran. The chilly autumn wind blanketed the ground in colors of brown, yellow, and red that seemed to glow under the streetlamps. Tonight marked the third year in the facility. No luck taking down the wards. It's not like she hadn't tried before. Every time she'd tried, she ended up in a containment cell until her "step-sister," Zoe, arrived from work and made excuses about how she probably tripped or fell or got pushed into the wards, but there were only so many times it'd work. Then Zoe scolded Scarlett later about how she hoped it would never happen again and next time she wouldn't cover for Scarlett and she'd let them send her to the Swamps. Yet strange thing is, she always covered. Scarlett knew she should've been thankful, but, in her heart nothing could fill the place of her real family.

Soon after her latest "little incident," she'd been sent in for questioning; they hadn't even bothered calling her sister. Just straight to the lab. Scarlett didn't answer, of course. Well, she never answered their questions, so it wasn't surprising when the questioning was just one sided. It wasn't until Morise, her "stepmother's" friend and a scientist, found Scarlett and was able to convince them that she wasn't guilty. They reluctantly agreed.

As Scarlett neared the fence, she stopped in her tracks as she felt the invisible wards, the glittering golden magic surrounding the fence. Scarlett's heartbeat quickened in pace. Adrenaline rushing through her, pushing her forward. She was ready. She was going to escape. But fear clung to her, like a gnat that never seemed to go away. What if she got caught like last time and Morise isn't there? What if she got sent to the lab again? The lab had never ceased to scare her. The thought of being taken away and being dumped with all the criminals and those who didn't obey the rules—but she had to take the risk. To find her real family. She knew it was selfish, but what did she have left here? Three years and all she had was a fake family that barely even knew her. Scarlett pulled her hood up and over her head, hiding her mother's honey blonde hair behind her black hoodie, and reached. She reached out for her magic, feeling the pale blue energy coursing through her veins and focused on compressing her magic inside her body, building up the energy.

Her plan was simple: She would fry the power lines so that it would cause a distraction, then she would use the magic she had built up and released it. She was strong enough to possibly break the wards for at least a few minutes. She knew it was risky, yet she couldn't miss any opportunity that she got. She fried the power lines with a twist of electricity. The lights went out. It was silent for once. Every window that had been lit up now dark. Those windows that were once lit, made this place look like a home. It reminded Scarlett of New York, the windows always looked like stars that lit up the night sky. It was one of the beautiful things about New York. She missed home. She missed her small apartment in Alphabet City, she missed Ethan and Jesse, she missed her bed, but, most of all, she missed her family. Her mom, retelling her version of her favorite tales in Greek mythology, always giving it a modern twist. She loved family karaoke night where the whole family—except her mother—would all take turns using the karaoke machine that Dad had bought just to annoy Scarlett's mom, a potato of a woman who, despite living in the 21st century, couldn't stand any type of modern music and still listened only to Beethoven, Bach and Chopin.

Now the streets were dark. It was only a matter of time before the backup generators started to kick in.

"It's now or never," she told herself and willed her legs to run as fast as she could. Right before she hit the fence she let loose a storm of electricity that swallowed up everything in its way and cracks appeared on the fence. She felt the glittering golden wards weaken. She threw her power again. Another crack. She threw everything she had and...

The wall cracked, crumbling to the ground into a pile of rubble. Her head throbbed and her body ached from using too much energy. But, she knew that blow didn't destroy the wall completely. Soon, the magic would string its way back together. She had to act fast. She ran through the rubble just as she heard the wail of sirens in the distance. Of course somebody called reinforcements. She groaned as she ran. She didn't look back, not even when they yelled at her to put her hands behind her back. She just ran. Ran as fast as she could. Feeling her magic pulsing through her. She didn't have enough energy to take them on. She ran until she couldn't see the city anymore, feeling a sigh of relief flood through her. She'd escaped. Done the impossible. Done what her step-sister, Zoe, thought of as an act of rebellion. She couldn't wait to see the look on Zoe's face when she learned what Scarlett had done. Zoe's lips pressed in a thin line, blue eyes frowning at her, clear disappointment evident on her face. She would then lecture Scarlett on how she was an eagle, not a chicken. That Scarlett was better than them and that she had a better chance here than in the real world. Yet, the feeling of proving her wrong made it even better. She let herself fall to her knees, letting the world around her dissipate. Leaving the buzz of nerves and a strange excitement of what is stored for her next.

End



My Name

By Ava Passon
Grade 8

My name is short and sweet. Gets the point
Macross. Simple. Quick. Easy. Quiet. Makes
you think of a shy girl, hiding behind the wall
between dreamland and the real world.

I'm loud. Friendly. Chatter like a bird. I know
things, remember things. My name is not a
perfect description of who I am.
But maybe it suits me.

No one in my family has this name before me.
It's mine, all special, unique, but not really. A
popular name, common in all the girls. I wish it
was mine. Only mine.
I wish it was special for me.

It sounds like feathers, gliding through the air.
Grass, poking up through the ground. The start
of a new beginning. That's what my name
means. That's what it is. It has no foundation,
always floating, and never connected forever
(though maybe temporarily).

Did you know, forward and back, my name is
the same. Never changing. No matter how you
spell it. Forward and back. No matter if you
spell it left or right, it's always the same. Just
like me. I never differ from who I am.

I hold true to what I think and what I believe.



RIVER TRAILS

By Sreetama Kushari
Grade 8

During this time of a pandemic, my parents and I have taken an opportunity to
worry about our health a little more, as we are at home all the time. We've
been going on beautiful walks all throughout, on little isolated trails, or, as ever,
walks next to our wonderful Farmington River. And we've been visiting such awe-
inspiring places, that during one particular walk, I figured that I might just burst
with creativity, the way it was flowing through my head. So, I had whipped out my
phone and just started writing whatever came to my mind (mostly). And it was
wonderful, un-edited though it was. It was just plain love of a place's beauty and
the best ability I had of putting it down on paper (phone). And the greatest part is,
it could have been describing any place, anywhere you feel beauty and love and
peace. Anywhere you wish it to be.

Whistles and calls compliment the
boisterous rushing of the river.

Canopies of rain-blushed leaves overhead.
Shrouds of misty blankets like elven cloaks
of deception.

Snowy slivers of papery petals.
Periwinkle tales of soft and sweet.
Crimson blood fruits of poison and rasp.
Masked faces of cool silver but
feet of aged, wise dirt.

Water reflecting mirrored trees.
Fluttering, fulfilling, colored creatures,
perched on lilac bunches and lone lilies.
The trail is winding and tripping and laughing.
But I stand in the peace and content.



The picture you see is a photograph I took because I saw it as a representation of how we journeyed into the unknown during the Pandemic of 2020.

It reminds me of how this year had many families sojourn into places of uncertainty, conflict, and confinement.

But It also represents how I can overcome unfortunate circumstances in the warmth and company of loved ones and with my faith in The Lord.

And when this chapter of the story ends, we can all have a turn at a story to tell afterwards, and eat popcorn!

“JOURNEY INTO THE UNKNOWN”

BY CHANCE CAMPBELL
GRADE 8

GAMES

UNSCRAMBLE!

FALL & WINTER



NWSMOAN

*EFAL

SWNO

HLENEAWO

LALF

kpmipu

tewnir



PRESIDENTS 1-21 WORD SEARCH

G W A S H I N G T O N J K Y L
Q G Q B G Q B U C H A N A N V
J U F A D A M S D M O N R O E
C E I I N C R U K L B P A V R
M A F N L J R F L I E O T A Q
H A R F C L M T I B V L P N Y
L A D T E Y M K K E S K I B J
I U R I H R A O H F L Z E U A
N W G R S U S D R A E D R R C
C T R V I O R O A E Y L C E K
O Y A F Q S N P N M U E E N S
L L N M L J O S C A S I S V O
N E T U B R U N Q T T H U C N
C R T A Y L O R S Q K P G A W
J O H N S O N H L S V L M C L

Quincy Adams Van Buren
Johnson Taylor
Lincoln Polk
Washington Jefferson
Jackson Monroe
Pierce Fillmore
Buchanan Arthur
Adams Tyler
Garfield Madison
Harrison Hayes
Grant

PRESIDENTS 1-20 WORD SCRAMBLE

GANTSHOWNI
NOJEREFSF
MOOREN
AOSCNKJ
RORAHISN
KLOP
OLIMERFL
AACHNNUB
NSONOHJ
HASYE

MDASA
MISNOAD
QCNIUY ASDAM
NVA ENRUB
TYREL
TYLRAO
RECEIP
NCONLLI
GTRNA
FALERIGD

See final page for answer key.

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THY PHAM, GRADE 12



Midnight Singer

By Ben Milheiro
Grade 11

In a small town called Everheart, a young boy by the name of Caleb Springs was a singer. Not your average singer, but he had the voice of an Angel. Every night at the town square, he would sing songs that would make people slowly fall asleep. However, on a late November night, he went missing.

No one in the town really thought much of it since their town never had anything bad happen to them, such as crimes. His parents assumed that he went out to play or had a sleepover. When he didn't arrive the next day, his parents started to call his friends and ask them if they had Caleb over at their homes last night. Every child said no. Only Caleb's best friend, Dylan, claimed he saw him walking on the trail the day he went missing. Mind you, the trail is forbidden to go on without an adult. His parents grew worried and called the sheriff to look for him. The sheriff went into the woods and returned at

11:50. With no hope, he returned home. Suddenly, at 11:55, a boy's voice was heard: the same angelic sound as Caleb's. His parents stopped and turned and walked toward the voice, but only grew more and more tired until they fell asleep and awoke in their bed the next morning.

They got up and went to Caleb's room where he was sound asleep. When he woke up, he could not speak. He opened his mouth and couldn't talk. His parents assumed that because he was out in the cold, he lost his voice. So they went to the sheriff's house after breakfast to thank him. But when they knocked on the door, his wife opened it with red, puffy eyes. She said she heard the boy singing from the woods and the sheriff walking inside. She said she was growing tired because of the singing. She said that the singing stopped as she shut her eyes and let the sleep take over her. The last thing she heard were the screams of her husband.

That next night, with the sheriff gone, his wife got into bed and cried. However, she started to hear him sing. She sat up, leaped out of bed, and walked outside. She didn't grow tired this time; in fact, she was wide awake. She heard her husband singing and she got closer to his voice as she neared the entrance to the woods and then entered it with the hand of her husband holding hers. They walked in and after a couple of minutes, he walked out and fell, just like Caleb.

The next night, with both the Sheriff and Caleb unable to speak, word got out about what really happened. No one believed it because they couldn't hear the singing. It seemed as if the person who went into the woods would sing to capture another whom they set in their mind. I figured this out when my mom started to sing the next night.

Yeah, I'm the sheriff's son. Me. I went into the woods next. I heard my mother singing and I couldn't resist it. I walked in and saw her holding her hand out. She led me to a small house far from our town. The door opened, and I screamed, for what I saw was a monster like no other: black fur covering its entire body and its red eyes looking into my soul. I felt like my voice started to rise up into my mouth when suddenly a blueish white ball came out. I looked in horror as the monster took the voice and put it in a bottle. It smiled a toothy grin and pointed to a room next door. I didn't want to disobey, so I followed it and saw my mother leaving the house.

I remember seeing my sister watch me that night. The next night, I can only assume he used my voice because the next thing I know, I'm the one holding my hand out to my sister. And she's holding mine.

End

SECRETS

The Spice of the Soul

By Audra Schliwen
Grade 9

Secrets. They are everywhere: around every corner and in every mouth. They can be hard to keep to yourself sometimes. There are many reasons why people keep secrets and why they are so hard to keep. Let's take a look at some of the science behind it all.

~Why are things kept a secret?

People keep things a secret for their safety or the safety of others. Certain people just do not like certain people for who they are, who they love, or how they express themselves. People also keep things a secret because they like drama. They will not tell you something just because they want to be the center of attention and want to see you beg for the answer. Sometimes I think my friend is like that. They say something like "I have something to tell you!" and later says "it's private information" or "never mind." But I think that they just realize it may be rude to tell us what happened or that we are prying too much.

The final reason for keeping a secret is because one is afraid. They are afraid that they are not going to be accepted or someone will harm them. They are afraid that the person they like will not like them. They are afraid that everything is going to change just because of something that they say.

~Why are they so hard to keep?

In six studies conducted by Michael Slepian, he found that anxiety, depression, and poor health are directly linked to keeping a secret. This is because people are afraid that others are going to find out, and of what could happen if or when they do. The whole experience in and of itself can be unnerving. But these fears are drastically overshadowed by the effects of what happens when a secret keeper is alone and not interacting with others. When not interacting with anyone, your mind comes back to the secret more often. You think about it more and more and that causes you to stress and feel anxious. That then causes you to spill your guts and tell someone. They will then tell someone else, who will then tell someone else, and then the secret is everywhere. Sometimes you just have to tell someone or you will implode. Slepian suggests to "avoid dwelling on it by practicing mindfulness or by discussing the forbidden topic in anonymous online forums". To keep people's minds in a good place, secret keepers should try to not think about the secrets they are keeping. But, as I said earlier, sometimes you just have to tell someone. If so, post it on an anonymous website, talk about it with that guy that friended you on Minecraft, or get a therapist.

Sometimes it is also good to talk to the person whose secret you are keeping. You can tell them how it is ruining your day and how the burden is too much to handle. This could cause your friend to rethink their actions and possibly realize that their secret is childish. Of course, not all situations are like that, so talking with them might just get some much needed weight off your chest and theirs too.

~The Spice of the Soul

Secrets can drag down our lives. With all the research above, it seems that secrets should be erased from our lives entirely. That is not possible, though. Without secrets, we would not have surprise birthday parties or miracles, and we especially would not have the rush of asking someone out and having them say yes. Everything would be predictable and everyone would know everything you want to hide. Secrets are the spice of the soul; without them, we would not have drama, which can be exciting. Too much spice, though, can ruin your whole meal. Your tongue would be on fire from holding it all in and there would be no milk to satisfy your thirst. Sometimes we need to spice things up, even though life is so flavorful already.

Viscaria Flower

By Katherine Culbertson
Grade 11

Aurora could feel the water splashing lightly against her back while she waited for her beloved. She prayed the stone she sat on wasn't covered in something that would ruin her new white floral dress bought just for this occasion. Her flats were muddy due to the lack of information regarding the dirt pathway. However, at the moment, none of that mattered. What did matter was he was thirty minutes late.

The blonde stood up, dusted off her knee-length dress, and began to pace. Eventually, she ended up walking around the intricately made, clearly Greek water fountain. On the other side, she laughed to herself, seeing her date pacing on the opposite side of where she previously sat.

Paxton looked just as nervous as Aurora was, lightly tossing his phone between both hands. He hadn't noticed her yet, so Aurora snuck up behind him on his right and lightly tapped his left shoulder. She giggled when he looked the wrong way. Paxton quickly looked to his right with a smile. Just the sight of her could relax his tense form. He, slightly embarrassed, pulled out a viscaria flower. Aurora, being a florist, knew in the language of flowers it meant 'Will you dance with me?' She nodded, words unnecessary in this peaceful moment. He held out his hand for her to step down from the grey stone and, of course, she took it. He turned on some 80s music, which happens to be her favorite genre.

They danced until the stars were the only thing lighting the ground beneath their feet.

End

Everlasting Cycle

By Lauren Lee
Grade 9

Velvety petals,
vibrant gold,
soaking up the sunlight.

Scraggly hay-thin roots,
nestled in the depths of the soil, awaiting the
pitter
patter
of crystal blue droplets.

No rain clouds blanket the endless canvas.
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7.
The flower's throat beyond dry,
petals wrinkled,
roots curling.
1. 2. 3.

Flower drooping,
petals shriveled on the crumbly ground,
yellow leaves dulling,
ready to fall.

∞

Puddles,
orbs of water clinging onto the trees' leaves,
gray puffs slathered across the sky,
1. 2. 3...8.

Flower stretching upwards,
hungry for its nourishment,
faded yellow petals smooth yet brittle.
The golden rays are nowhere to be found.

∞

Warm beams of light,
peeking out of its powdery curtains,
shining down onto
the flowers and Earth below.

Later in the day,
a light drizzle.
A quiet
pitter
patter
pitter
patter.

The flower's petals slightly curled,
while absorbing what it has needed.
Petals regaining color,
stem relaxing.
A flower is strong but delicate, and with
that, it needs balance.

END



The Moon & The Sun

By Sophia St. Jean
Grade 9

Stars are just crystallized memories. Each one holds the thoughts and emotions of someone gone.

The Moon loved to look over these memories. With delicate care, she would pick up each star and feel the words, songs, and stories the person had left in their wake. Sometimes they were heroic adventures of past and present, or soft feelings of happiness. Sometimes they were rain soaked days, ending with a misty rainbow. But no matter what, the Moon was always intrigued.

She loved and cared for her stars. Living in this section of the universe, the silver haired girl would hear each one's pain and happiness, and try to soothe those tough emotions left behind. She sewed up the broken hearts and mended the frayed edges, before sending them deeper into space, where they could exist peacefully. They would then glow gently, a soft lullaby sung by the universe itself.

The Moon always felt a pang of sadness as she let each go, having connected with them over time, only to release that bond. But she knew she must let each go, as she was only a part of their miraculous journey through time. She was just the bridge over the lake, nothing more. But one time, as she was welcoming some of the newly formed stars, she felt a strange emotion. Like a lotus blooming, a new feeling began to grow inside of her heart.

As she was examining these new memories, one stood out to her. Unlike the other stars, this star was dimly lit. It pulsed at an uneven pace, and glowed inconsistently. The Moon rushed over to this strange little star, and as she picked it up, she felt that feeling grow stronger.

A soft melody emitted from the star. It sang the song of sorrow, and utmost determination. It sang the song of beauty, and the definition of what it means to be right. It sang the song of loss, the song of countless battles that should've been won. But most of all, it matched the harmony of The Moon's very own song, The Moon's very own song of existence. The Moon's very own life.

As The Moon stood there, she felt that feeling, that emotion without a name, burn like a fire. Her heart began to beat bright like the stars surrounding her. She felt a strong pull, like an orbital path, towards this star. And in that moment she knew.

She knew it as she moved to feel the other stars' memories. She knew it as she gently tugged their heartstrings until they were safe from all fear. She knew it as she let them all go into the deeper universe. She knew it as she sat in front of the dimly lit star, watching its every soft pulse and hearing its stories.

She knew she was in love.

The Moon never felt the need to keep a star instead of sending it off. Something was different. This star was special. The Moon knew in her heart that it shouldn't be here. It was too strange, too special, too sad of a story to exist in this edge of the universe. Yet here it was. As she watched it, she knew that it couldn't hear her words. She knew it couldn't respond to her thoughts. It was just a memory after all. Yet she couldn't just let it go.

As time passed, she continued sending off the other stars and feeling their stories. But this time, she always kept the little star near. When she was done, she sat with the special star, and listened to its songs and stories. She heard all of its struggles, and felt all of its emotions. Unlike the other stars, she didn't break the bond she sowed. She strengthened it. As more time passed, the little star began to glow brighter. It no longer pulsed an uneven beat, or glowed a dim light. Instead, it actually surpassed the others' brightness by far. Its song began to sing louder, and though the Moon knew it couldn't hear her, she sang along with her own harmony.

But it was just one moment in space when everything changed. The Moon was sending off more stars, she waved them goodbye as they floated deeper into the depths of space. As she saw their last glimmers disappear, she felt tears in her eyes. She wished her star could understand her. She wished it could hear her words and live once more. But she knew it was impossible. It was just a star after all.

She sank to the ground like a wilted leaf. She was powerless. All she could do was send souls off, she couldn't bring their consciousness back. She couldn't revive the past. She couldn't do anything. It was hopeless. But as she sobbed, her head in hands, she felt a presence behind her. Her breath caught as she turned around to see what it was.

It was the star. But it wasn't the little star pulsing she first met. It wasn't the glowing bright star she'd grown to know. It was a girl. Like her. The girl began walking towards The Moon. A glowing aura emitted off of her, one of lost battles and beauty. One of sorrow and determination. One of love.

The girl bent down to meet The Moon's eyes. She took her hands in hers, and hugged The Moon close. They stayed that way for a long moment, until they parted. Then, the girl spoke.

"Thank you, dear Moon. Thank you for loving me when no one else in my memories could. Thank you for accepting my dimly lit heart. Thank you for everything you've done. I can no longer stay a simple star, only a bright Sun."

As the Sun moved to its new place in time, The Moon felt the hope of a new day, and the rise of a morning. The song of the heart, and the harmony of happiness. The music of love.

Maybe...

By Acadia Verge
Grade 9

And so the people begin to wonder.
How long?

Why?

And for what?

But why? Why do we question the future, when we truly don't know what will happen? Why bother stressing about tomorrow when we barely focus on today? Why do we allow our anxieties to distract us from the now? Today is today; let's worry about tomorrow...tomorrow.

What has happened today? Maybe you cried and maybe you laughed until your sides hurt. Maybe you pet the softest dog ever. Maybe you smelled the cool crisp air. Maybe you got every word right on a spelling test; maybe you ran faster than you ever have before. Maybe you made a beautiful piece of art.

Or maybe, today was a bad day. Maybe somebody died. Maybe someone got sick. Maybe you scraped your knee; maybe you got in an argument with your family. Maybe you made a mistake that you will remember for months into the future. Perhaps you failed a test, or burnt the toast for breakfast, or maybe you lost a friend.

But life isn't all terrible. Maybe it was a bad day. Maybe there was nobody to tell you that you are good enough, strong enough, beautiful enough. Maybe nobody told you that your drawing looks superb; maybe there was no one to tell you that the meal you made was delicious. Maybe you had nobody to wrap you in a warm hug and wipe away your tears. Maybe nobody cuddled you in blankets and watched happy movies with you. Maybe you had to dry your own eyes and pick yourself up off the bathroom floor.

But, if today was a bad day, does it mean that it's a bad life? No, of course not. It is a very good life. Maybe you are clumsy, or emotional, or too stern, or maybe you seem to scare people away. But that doesn't mean it's a bad life. There are so many wonderful things to focus on. The laugh of a child, the scent of the vanilla sugar candle at your friend's house, the taste of your favorite meal that your grandmother always makes just right. Or maybe you're more of a nature person. Look at the clouds, floating up in the sky without a care in the world. Maybe a mountain near your house inspires you. Remember that mountain is to climb, not carry.

So please, whatever happens, don't say "today was a bad day, so tomorrow will be too."

Because maybe, just maybe, it won't. And everything will be okay.

ABC, 123...

By Acadia Verge
Grade 9

A B C...
1 2 3...

First, then, finally.

Everything is ordered systematic melancholy. Humming of machines echo in our ears, the sounds of song and laughter no more. Drawing sharp edges with precise lines and movements. We color in between the lines with black and white. Never a yellow crayon in sight. Everyone has the same blank stare. Eyes focused on the end result, never the task at hand. Files and organization. Highlighters and red ink. Narrow eyes and narrower minds.

It kills me inside sometimes to see the soul of a person so down and compressed. I find myself unable to think straight in such an industrial setting. I took my words outside, to tell them to the trees. I cannot bear to see a person, staring endlessly at a screen, doing the same monotonous thing. Every. Single. Day.

There is so much in this world to do differently. We are so afraid to be different, we forget that being different is our power. Do you think that Einstein, Gandhi, Shakespeare, Picasso, or Rosa Parks became famous by following a crowd? You don't have to be famous, but being different makes you memorable. Being different is your power.

Don't you feel good when someone says that your outfit looks nice, that someone bothered to compliment you? It doesn't happen very often, but maybe...if more people did...it could.

Because sometimes, acting on impulse is an amazing attribute. Instead of following the lines, cut off your hair because you like it, wear that ridiculous ugly sweater all winter long if you like it, buy yourself some polka dot shoes and bright red suspenders because you think they look fabulous. Stop trying to impress the people who only search for one type of person. Don't ever change who you are for someone else, because you are you. And you... you are the only you there is. Nobody else is you. And being you is your power.

So don't follow the crowd. Grab some crayons and your badly knit scarf. Eat the strangest food combinations with color and spice. Shop at the consignment shop if you like what it has. Talk to the elderly lady who everyone calls weird. Wake up at 5 a.m. and sing because the sun rose again. Be as annoying as possible by shouting the lyrics to your favorite song in the car. Because someday, someone will be inspired by you. And one person at a time, we will change minds. Make a difference. Smile to strangers, pick the kid who's always left out of the group, and make the art you want to make, and continue to walk in the sunshine.

So tell the stars your wishes and your dog your biggest secrets. And live. Please live.



Paradise

By Christy Park
Grade 12

There is a city called Paradise. Every day, people flock to it by the thousands. There's no question that the pilgrimage is worth it—just look at the smiling faces of the masses, unmarred by the exhaustion and quiet desperation you see in the eyes of strangers and friends alike.

For just an hour, a minute, a handful of seconds, perhaps life doesn't seem too bad after all.

What is Paradise like? you ask.

Paradise always has room for people, no matter how many are already there. In fact, it may seem at first that the city is abandoned. You will walk the empty streets, past skyscrapers glistening like geometric shards of glass in the late afternoon light (for in Paradise, it is always late afternoon—those golden hours just before dusk, when the sky bruises and bleeds out in streaks of dusty lavender and rust-red and gold. Just as bitter and as sweet as finding Paradise should be). You will pass by apartments that don't seem to house anyone and admit that yes, the city is everything you've dreamed of and more, but it is also rather lonely without any people to populate it.

Not too long after this thought crosses your mind, you will begin to see glimpses of the residents. A foot peeking out behind an open door at the end of the block, perhaps, or the barely visible back of a head in a window on the twentieth floor of a high-rise. If you are patient, you will begin to see more and more of them, until you will realize that around every corner and inside every building are people not entirely unlike you. Paradise is a city, after all, and it needs to accommodate all of the wanderers and dreamers of this world. Some may be happy on their own. Some may venture out to meet you.

Of course, you can always seek them out yourself.

Where is Paradise? you ask.

You can find Paradise in lunchtime conversations with your friends or the bustle of your favorite coffee shop. You can find it in the quaint European city you spent an entire day exploring, the concert venue you attended last summer, filled with blaring music and the frenzied screams of the crowd, or the Cape Cod beach where you spotted twelve seagulls and a seal. You can find it in the watery light of the five AM sun streaming through your window, a book that draws you in and makes you lose track of the hours passing by, or the way you fall in love with humanity as the path of a stranger's life crosses yours for a fleeting moment.

Paradise is staggeringly easy—and frustratingly difficult—to find.

What is Paradise, really? you ask. Surely it isn't real, or at least not tangible. You can't find a place in an experience. It can't be the same for everyone, either. It sounds more like a fantasy novel than real life.

True.

That's why Paradise can house so many people. That's why you will find nobody, then everybody, in this faint impression of a metropolis, this concrete-and-cloud reverie. That's why Paradise is right outside your door, on the other side of the ocean, and in your very own head.

Paradise is what you make of it.



Rose Fox Dream Handmade Dolls



Love can come in many forms.

I may not have the courage to stand on a stage and sing. But with each doll, I sew a melody from my own heart, letting the thread guide my way. Stitch after stitch, these dolls aren't just dolls. They are small shards of hope, the hope that they can bring a smile to somebody's face.

—Vixen

<https://www.etsy.com/shop/RoseFoxDream>

This is the inaugural issues of *Imagine: Avon*, published by Avon Free Public Library.

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Special thanks to all our creators who submitted to make this magazine great! Your work is beautiful and you are fabulous! Keep creating!

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Answer Keys

UNSCRAMBLE! FALL AND WINTER

- | | | | |
|------------|--------------|------------|-----------|
| 1. Snowman | 3. Snow | 5. Fall | 7. Winter |
| 2. Leaf | 4. Halloween | 6. Pumpkin | |

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