

Côte Saint-Luc
Bibliothèque des jeunes
Max Margles
Children's Library

Roslyn & Max Margles

Concours
d'écriture pour

**Jeunes
Auteur·e·s
Young
Writers
Contest**

2026

Anthologie · Anthology

Troisième concours pour jeunes auteur·e·s (2026)

Avant-propos—Un mot de la directrice, Janine West

Merci à tous nos jeunes auteur.e.s qui ont pris le temps d'écrire et de soumettre leurs créations, ainsi qu'aux enseignant.e.s, aux auteur.e.s et aux membres de leur famille qui les ont encouragés et soutenus tout au long du processus. Ce concours ne serait pas possible sans votre volonté de participer, de partager vos histoires et de célébrer le plaisir d'écrire.

Nous sommes particulièrement reconnaissants envers **Mme Roslyn Margles**, dont la générosité et la vision ont rendu ce concours possible. Créé en son nom et en celui de son regretté mari, le **Concours d'écriture Roslyn et Max Margles pour jeunes auteur.e.s** reflète son engagement de longue date envers l'alphabétisation, la lecture et la créativité. Son soutien financier contribue également aux remarquables programmes de littératie pour jeunes offerts par la **Bibliothèque pour enfants Max Margles**. Merci, Roslyn, pour votre inspiration et votre dévouement envers les jeunes lecteurs et écrivains.

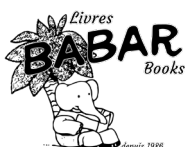
De nombreuses personnes ont consacré leur temps et leurs talents au succès de cette initiative. Nous adressons des remerciements tout particulièrement à **Bronwen Cathey** ainsi qu'à **l'équipe Jeunesse et programmation de la Bibliothèque pour enfants** pour leur dévouement, leur enthousiasme et leur travail acharné ayant contribué à la réalisation de ce concours.

Nous exprimons notre sincère reconnaissance à nos juges, **Carol-Ann Hoyte**, **Hala Tahboub** et **Myra Shuster**, qui ont généreusement partagé leur temps, leur expertise et leurs commentaires réfléchis avec nos jeunes écrivains. Nous remercions également **Suspicious Fish** d'avoir animé trois ateliers d'écriture et d'avoir accompagné les participants tout au long de leur parcours créatif.



La conception graphique et la mise en page ont été réalisées par le **service des Communications de la Ville de Côte Saint-Luc**, tandis que les illustrations ont été créées par les talentueux jeunes auteur.e.s-illustrateurs.trices participant au concours.

Enfin, nous remercions le **conseiller municipal Lior Azerad** d'avoir remis les prix en 2026, ainsi que notre généreux commanditaire, **Livres Babar**, d'avoir offert de merveilleux prix aux gagnants.



The Suspicious Fish



Anthology

Third Annual Young Writers' Contest (2026)

Foreword—A word from the Director, Janine West

Thank you to all our young writers who took the time to write and submit their creations, as well as the teachers, writers, and family members who encouraged and supported them throughout the process. This contest would not be possible without your willingness to participate, share your stories, and celebrate the joy of writing.

We are especially grateful to **Mrs. Roslyn Margles**, whose generosity and vision made this contest possible. Established in her and her late husband's name, the **Roslyn and Max Margles Young Writers' Contest** reflects her longstanding commitment to literacy and creativity. Her sponsorship also supports the outstanding children's literacy programming offered by the **Max Margles Children's Library**. Thank you, Roslyn, for your inspiration and dedication to young readers and writers.

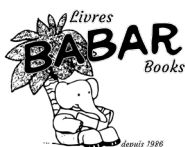
Many individuals contributed their time and talents to the success of this initiative. Special thanks to **Bronwen Cathey** and the **Children's Library Youth and Programs Team** for their dedication, enthusiasm, and hard work in bringing this contest to life.

We extend our sincere appreciation to our judges, **Carol-Ann Hoyte**, **Hala Tahboub**, and **Myra Shuster**, for sharing their time, expertise, and thoughtful feedback with our young writers. We also thank **Suspicious Fish** for facilitating three writing workshops and supporting participants throughout their creative journeys.



Graphic design and layout were provided by the **Côte Saint-Luc Communications Department**, with artwork created by the contest's talented young writer-illustrators.

Finally, thank you to **Councillor Lior Azerad** for presenting the awards in 2026, and to our generous sponsor, **Babar Books**, for providing wonderful prizes.



The Suspicious Fish

**Félicitations et merci à tous les jeunes
auteur·e·s qui ont partagé leur travail.**

Merci pour votre créativité, votre imagination et votre courage pour partager vos histoires. *Continuez à écrire !*

**Congratulations and thank you to all of the
young writers who shared their work.**

Thank you for the creativity, imagination, and courage it takes to share your stories. *Keep writing!*

Adele Mechache

Alice Cathey

Alon Lichtblau

Anabel Ruiz

Andrew Kobernick

Avraham Cremisi

Bahaar Ardalani

Beatriz G.S.

Benjamin Cohen

Carter Nico

Cassie Maislin

Catherine Poitras

Charlotte Ades

Chloe C.

Cordelia King

Denyz Akcayoz

Devin Aydin

Eden Lapkovsky

Elise Painchaud

Eliyahu Meyer Feldman

Estelle Playford

Eva B.

Evan H.

Evan Hanley

Evelyn Tonatto-Melamed

Gabriela Oroc

Gen Nishihata

Harrison Altman

Isabelle D.

Israel A.

Jack Bracewell

Jacob C.

Jordyn Gottlieb

Just-Karl Longa

Klara Grubisic

Laura Sofia Martino

Lena Coleman

Lev Azuelos

Lilian Naimark Maierhofer

Lily Szraibman

Lola Wolff

Maya Isuster

Mehrad Dosthosseini

Menny Lubavitch

Mersana Dosthosseini

Mia Levy Rotter

Mikaylah Ntone Epée

Moe Koffman

Morgan Zelman

Mosata O.

Myriam Falahatkar

Nechama Bauer

Nicole Hasson

Olivia Liberman

Owen F.

Penelope P.

Raymond Fichaud

Riley Blend

Selena Isabelle Lucero

Shira W.

Shlomo W.

Shmuel Farkas

Simone D.

Tyus Tapia

Violet R.

Yael Fugman



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3^e et 4^e année • Grades 3 and 4

The Family Reunion

Riley Blend 7

Première place • First Place

Cette histoire a été saluée par les juges pour son énergie, ses scènes vivantes et ses transitions fluides entre deux points de vue. Les quiproquos liés à l'audition de danse étaient particulièrement créatifs et amusants.

The judges praised this story for its energy, vivid scenes, and smooth shifts between two points of view. The dance-audition mix-ups were especially creative and fun.

Let's Save Gosica

Élise Painchaud 12

Deuxième place • Second place

Cette histoire s'est démarquée par son intrigue aventureuse, son univers magique richement construit et ses dialogues dynamiques. La quête impliquant la téléportation et un puissant cristal a su captiver les lecteurs du début à la fin.

This story stood out for its adventurous plot, magical world-building, and lively dialogue. The quest involving teleportation and a powerful crystal kept readers engaged.

I Wonder

Gabriela Oroc 23

Troisième place • Third place

Les juges ont apprécié la manière dont cette histoire transforme un moment familier—rêvasser en classe—en un voyage imaginatif rempli d'images ludiques et mémorables.

The judges appreciated how this story transformed a familiar moment—daydreaming in class—into an imaginative journey filled with playful, memorable imagery.

Arthur Makes the Team

Jordyn Gottlieb 27

Mention honorable • Honourable Mention

Une histoire chaleureuse et touchante, portée par une voix claire. Les émotions paraissent authentiques, l'amitié se développe naturellement, et la fin apporte une légère touche d'humour.

A warm, heartfelt story with a clear voice. The emotions feel genuine, the friendship develops naturally, and the ending adds a light touch of humor.

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5^e et 6^e année • Grades 5 and 6

The Bookworm, the Compass, and the Oak Tree

Cordelia King 29

Première place • First Place

Cette histoire a impressionné les juges par sa quête significative, la qualité de son écriture et son intrigue bien développée, étroitement liée à l'histoire familiale et à l'amour des livres.

This story impressed the judges with its meaningful quest, strong writing, and well-developed plot tied to family history and a love of books.

Le Journal Intime de Clea

Adele Mechache 39

Deuxième place • Second place

A touching exploration of friendship and honesty. The journal format is used creatively to show relationships with humor, emotion, and authenticity.

Une exploration touchante de l'amitié et de l'honnêteté. Le format du journal de bord est utilisé de manière créative pour illustrer les relations avec humour, émotion et authenticité.

A Magical Tale

Shira W. 49

Troisième place • Third place

Cette histoire réinvente des éléments du conte de fées avec originalité. Une écriture claire, une imagination forte et des moments émouvants la rendent captivante du début à la fin.

This story reimagines fairy-tale elements with originality. Clear writing, strong imagination, and emotional moments make it engaging from start to finish.

The Little Ice Cream Shop

Lily Szraibman 60

Mention honorable • Honourable Mention

Une histoire imaginative avec des personnages attachants et des thèmes significatifs autour de la famille et du changement. L'histoire se termine sur une note pleine d'espoir et réconfortante.

An imaginative story with warm characters and meaningful themes about family and change. It ends on a hopeful, uplifting note.

Rivka: Story of a Brave Girl

Maya Isuster 66

Mention honorable • Honourable Mention

Un récit historique puissant sur une jeune fille confrontée à des circonstances difficiles. Les juges ont trouvé le récit émouvant, bien développé et profondément marquant.

A powerful historical narrative about a young girl facing difficult circumstances. The judges found it emotional, well-developed, and deeply impactful.

Première place, 3^e et 4^e années First Place, Grades 3 and 4

photo: Darryl Levine



The Family Reunion
Riley Blend

The Family Reunion

Chapter 1: They Met

Mia

I was in my class with my friends when the bell rang. This new girl just walked in the class. She looked exactly like me, I almost screamed. I think I might have fainted.... She sat right next to me and looked me straight in the eye.

My friend Lily said “You look like twins!”

“Yeah you really do look like twins!” said Coco

The teacher walked in the classroom, she cleared her throat “Today we have a new student, can you please come up and tell us your name?”

“Hi, my name is Ella and I am new here a.. a.. as you can see.”

Coco and Lily whispered in my ear at the same time “Is that your twin, or sister that you never told us about?”

I thought that my mom hid her or something like that, but I pushed it aside for now. When she sat down, I introduced myself. “Hi, my name is Mia, do you want to hang out?” I asked.

“Yes” said Ella.

I invited Ella to have lunch with us. Coco was talking the whole time! And she had chicken in her mouth! Coco is the funny one in our club, and Lily is the sassy one and I’m the popular one. I think Ella might be the shy one from the way she introduced herself in front of the class.

As we are chatting, I feel my phone vibrate in my pocket. I read the email and my eyes grow wide in shock. My friends notice my face, and ask me if I can read the email outloud.

“Dear Mia, You are one of the 10 people invited to the audition at the Downtown Dance Studio. It will take place on Saturday at our studio downtown. Please have your parents sign the attached form.”

My face dropped in fear, because I knew my parents would never allow me to go downtown by myself.

Chapter 2: The Plan

Ella

I had butterflies in my stomach before going to my new school today. But here I am now, sitting at lunch with the 3 nicest and most popular kids in grade 6. Mia is the first person who talked to me today. It is so funny, we look exactly alike. The only difference is that I wear glasses and she doesn’t.

Mia read us an email that she got and I had a brilliant idea! “I have an idea, maybe we can fake the signature by copying your mom’s signature.”

Mia’s face lit up for a second but then she answered “That’s a really good idea, but my parents will realize if I am gone the whole day on Saturday.”

Coco tried to light up the mood a bit by jokingly suggesting: “Maybe Ella can take both of your places at the same time. You girls look like you could be twins, it’s crazy!” everybody starts to laugh, but Mia looks at me with hopeful eyes.

Mia says “Coco that’s a really good idea, I have a plan if you are ok with it Ella”

Mia told me to ask my parents if I can come over to her house on Saturday to hang out. But in reality, I would be pretending to be her while she goes to her dance audition downtown.

I take a moment to think about it. My parents would probably be so happy that I made a new friend and they would for sure let me go to Mia’s house

“I’m in” I told Mia

Chapter 3: The Dance Audition

Mia

OMG I am so excited for this plan!

At 8 am Ella showed up at my window just as we planned. We could still hear my parents snoring as we switched clothes. Then I took Ella's glasses and put them in my drawer.

"Perfect, now you look just like me!" I whispered.

"Wait, do I have to read or write today? I can see without my glasses but I can't read or write." said Ella quietly. "I don't think so" I replied.

Ella crawled into my bed and closed her eyes while I tip-toed down the hallway, past the kitchen and slipped out the door. I had my backpack on me, which I had packed the night before. I had: money for the bus, my dance clothes, snacks and my lucky water bottle.

When I arrived at the bus stop, I felt as if everyone was staring at me, because I am a kid without a grownup. I hopped on the bus, paid my fare and grabbed a seat next to an older woman. She had very pink lipstick and smelled like cleaning supplies.

I finally arrived at the studio. It was so early that the owners weren't there yet. I waited in the waiting room with many other kids who were fidgety just like me.

The owner walked in with a straight face and went directly to the dressing room. 20 minutes later, she walked out and called our names one by one.

Nikki

Janice

Milia

Katrina

Aliya

Miriam

Lia

And finally, after what felt like hours, I heard my name. Mia.

I shot up from my seat, threw out my snack wrappers and walked to the stage door. My heart felt like it dropped. This was the most important moment of my life.

The owner explained to me that I would now have 30 minutes to make up my own dance with the song: Timber by Keisha and Pitbull. Oh good, this is a great song and I already have some ideas.

After my private practice time, I was nervous, but ready. The music started and I danced so hard that my feet felt numb. The 2 minutes went by so quickly. When I finished, the owner kept her straight face and thanked me for coming.

Chapter 4: The Real Catastrophe

Ella

I'm in Mia's bed, it is so lumpy, I do not know how she sleeps in here. I could barely last the morning. Who knows what is coming up next!

I hear Mia's parents' footsteps coming towards the bedroom door. I start to rethink everything. I don't actually know Mia that well, how will I be able to convince her family that I am actually her? What will happen if they figure out that I am not Mia?

The door opens and I hear a woman speaking softly "Mia, are you feeling ok? You don't usually stay in bed past 9am?"

"I had a busy day at school yesterday, I was tired! I answered. I scrambled out of bed and followed Mia's mom down to the kitchen, because I didn't know where it was! Her dad was there and asked me what I wanted for breakfast.

"Some scrambled eggs and toast please" I replied. I figured this is a safe choice, everyone likes scrambled eggs. Her mom looked at me with questioning eyes. "Eggs? We barely have any eggs, you have always hated eggs!"

Oh no! It's only been 2 minutes and they are already suspicious. "Oh, I felt like trying them again since it's been a while and maybe my taste buds changed. But if you don't have eggs, I'll have cereal." I answered.

"Ok, go choose your cereal and I'll get the milk" said Mia's dad. I scanned the room and noticed a door that looked like a pantry door. Oh good! It is the right door. Yummy, they have Froot Loops, my parents never buy sweet cereals.

I finished my breakfast and was going to the bathroom, but I didn't know where it was. I started opening random doors. Mia's mom caught me looking in the laundry room. "Mia what are you doing in the laundry room? We just did your laundry" I thought for a few seconds and then responded "I was just checking to see if it was almost done." Mia's mom gave me a funny look and then turned around and continued to fold laundry. I wonder if they are starting to suspect something.

I found the bathroom door and cheered in silence. Afterwards I went into Mia's room to get dressed. I opened her drawers and closet, but I couldn't find very much in my style. At the bottom of her closet, I found a pair of sweatpants and a black t-shirt.

After lunch, Mia's dad suggested that we watch a movie. I said yes without even thinking. We sat down on the couch and Mia's father passed the remote control to me. "Choose whatever you like"

I turned on the TV and went to Netflix. Oh no! I realized that I didn't have my glasses and I wouldn't be able to read the movie titles. I took a deep breath, squinted my eyes and tried my best. I sort of made out the words slowly. Mia's parents realized I was struggling and asked what was going on. "I don't know, maybe I need to get my eyes checked?" I said.

"Again? We just saw the eye doctor a few weeks ago and you saw perfectly" replied Mia's father.

I felt myself shrink in my seat. "I dunno? They might have gotten worse?" I recognized the picture and quickly chose the movie *The Parent Trap*. Everyone loves that movie.

As the movie ended, we heard the door open. We all turned to look and we saw Mia trying to sneak in the door.

Chapter 5: Reconnecting the Family

Mia

I was so distracted from the audition that I walked in without even realizing that Ella was still here! Oh shoot, I was supposed to climb in through my window and text Ella when I got here. Now it's too late, I've been caught.

My parents just stared at me in shock and confusion. After what felt like hours, my mom spoke up. She pointed at me and shouted, "who are you?"

I started crying, my own mom doesn't even recognize me. "It's me, your daughter. That girl, Ella, is just covering for me, because I wanted to go to a dance audition and I knew that you would never let me go"

My mom slowly turned to look at Ella and yelled "and who are you?"

Ella replied "My name is Ella. We met at school and since we look so much alike, I offered to trade places with Mia so that she can go to the dance audition."

My dad finally spoke up "where are your parents? Do they know about this?"

"Well, I didn't really tell a lie, I told my parents that I was spending the day at a friend's house" said Ella.

My parents called Ella's parents, and they told them what was happening and invited her parents to come over and talk about it.

While we were waiting for Ella's parents to show up, my mom turned to me and said "sweetie, I would have let you go to the dance audition. You did not need to sneak out of the house. We taught you better than that."

Before I had a chance to reply, the doorbell rang. My mother went to answer the door and shrieked. Instantly we all ran over to see what was going on. When we got to the door, we saw my mother and Ella's father staring at each other and crying and then they started hugging.

Almost at the same time Ella and I both screamed "what is going on over here?"

My mom looked at us and said "Ella may seem like she is just your friend, but she is much closer than you realize. This man is my long lost brother."

Ella looked at her dad and asked him "dad, how come you never told me that you had a sister?"

Her dad answered "We had a big argument years ago. We lost touch, and I didn't know where she lived. Part of the reason that I kept moving the family was to find her and make up"

In tears my mother sobbed as she said "I forgive you"

I looked at Ella and hugged her and said "I've always wanted a cousin the same age as me."

Ella hugged me back and said "we are better than just cousins, we are twin cousins."

The End

Deuxième place, 3^e et 4^e années
Second place, Grades 3 and 4

photo: Darryl Levine



Let's Save Gosica
Élise Painchaud

Let's Save Gosica!

By Élise Painchaud

Grade 3, École Katimavik



One day, a long time ago, there were ghosts in the island of Gosica. The ghosts lived happily until the Evil Human King and Queen's Army discovered their land and they imprisoned the ghosts. Why, you might ask? Because they wanted a crystal. Not an ordinary crystal, a magical crystal. They would only free the ghosts if they would tell them where the magical crystal was. They wanted to use it to attract special meteors that can kill ghosts.

A ghost named Gosi was in prison with his pet, the ghostalotl named Axolottie. His prison was an old and dusty place with lots and lots of candles. "Candles, eh? Maybe I can



use one to free me and Axolottie,” Gosi said. The ghost chain wrapped around him was almost too short but it was long enough to allow him to free himself. When no guard was looking, Gosi and Axolottie turned invisible and heated the chains and the bars until they melted and they flew all the way to Puttyland.

They met the Pudding Cat King. The Pudding Cat King said, “Oh, my!” It’s been a long time since ghosts came here. Tell me, why are you here?”

“Because,” Gosi answered, “the humans imprisoned us and we escaped. You guys live in the closest island, so we came here.”

“Hmm, I see,” said the Pudding Cat King. “Say, what do these humans want anyway, Gosi?”

Gosi replied, “They want to destroy Gosica with a special crystal that will attract meteors to blow it up.”

The Pudding Cat King said, “Oh no! If your island blows up, that means our island will blow up too!”



Suddenly, another pudding cat said, “I will come with you! I want to save us! King, can I go? Please please please?”

“Yes, you can,” the Pudding Cat King replied.

“So what do we do, exactly?” asked the little pudding cat.

“Well, first, what’s your name?” said Gosi.

The pudding cat replied, “My name is Powee.”

“Oh, hello, Powee. So this is the plan. The Evil King and Queen want to get the special crystal so they can destroy our island. Our goal is to stop them by getting the crystal before they do.”

“So where do we find this crystal?” asked Powee.

“It’s in the island of Jungée. I think it would be better to go to Huma first. It will be shorter.”

“Let’s go!” said Powee.



At Huma they found a little cottage by the sea. Gosi and Axolottie turned invisible again and went inside for fun with Powee, who could not turn invisible. Inside the cottage lived a girl named Amy. Amy loved ghosts and other non-corporeal things. When Amy saw Powee she burst with joy.

Powee said, "I think you can come out now."

Gosi and Axolottie turned back to normal. "Wow, ghosts too!" cried Amy. "Best day ever!"

"Hey, can you help us with a mission?" asked Gosi.

"Yes, I would love to!" answered Amy. "So what do we do, and what's the mission?"

"This what we do first. First we get to Jungee and then we find our way through a cave, then find a magical crystal, then hide it," said Axolottie.

"Right, right, right, right," Amy said. "And that's it. I guess we go to Jungee?"

"Yep!" said Gosi. "Let's go!"



"Which way?" asked Axolottie.

"I think it's this way," answered Amy.

"Okay, let's go! For real this time! Follow me!"

Gosi and his friends went to north to Northy instead of south to Jungee. After a long journey, they found themselves in front of a big castle. "Let's go inside!" said Powee.

"I wouldn't go in there if I were you!" said Amy.

Everyone except Amy went into the castle vestibule, but the guards were blocking the main doors. "Halt!"

The Evil King and Queen came out. "Well, well, well, look at what it is. Some non-corporeal creatures," said the Evil Queen. She and her evil husband said at the same time, "GET OUT!"

"Ahhhhhh!" yelled Gosi, Axolottie, and Powee.

"Told you!" said Amy from outside.



"Let's keep going!" cried Axolottie. But they did the same mistake again. They went north instead of south. Gosi and Axolottie didn't have a compass because they were ghosts. Powee didn't have one because he was a pudding cat, and Amy didn't have one because they were too expensive.

"Here we are," said Gosi. "I imagine that Jungie is on the other side of this part of the ocean."

"Yep. Let's go!" said Powee.

"Just one question. You can fly but how can I fly? I'm a human," said Amy.

"I guess you will have to hold on to Powee," said Gosi.

"Okay," said Amy.

"I guess that you should climb on my back now," said Powee. "Hold on tight, let's go!"

"Ahhh, this is quite high!" cried Amy, hanging on Powee's back tight.



“Is it just me, or is it getting colder and colder?” said Axolottie.

“It’s just you, Axolottie,” said Gosi.

Twenty-five minutes later:

“Never mind, Axolottie! I think we went north instead of south!”

“Everybody! I think I can see land!” yelled Amy.

“Whoa, so much snow!” said Powee.

“It’s so cold!” said Gosi and Axolottie.

“Everybody, this way!” said Amy. “Oh, no, I think I see a yeti!”

“Everybody attack!” yelled Gosi.

Five minutes later:

“I don’t think we can stop it!”

“Wait! I see something!”



“Step aside. I’ve battled these monsters hundreds of times,” said a creature. She was a dust fox, who had dust rise up from her back and tail every time she moved.

Bam! Bam! Bam! “And voila!” said the dust fox. “I have defeated the yeti again!”

“Wow, thanks for saving us!” said Powee.

“What are you doing here?” said the dust fox. “It’s way too cold for you. My name is Farrah.”

“We are trying to go south toward Jungee but we went north instead!” said Axolottie.

“Ah. I see. I can lead you south to Jungee,” said Farrah.

“Are you sure? It’s very hot,” said Powee.

“No problem! I’m okay in any temperature,” said Farrah. “Three, two, one, and POOF!”

Suddenly they were in Jungee. “Wow, did we just teleport?” cried Gosi.

“Yep!” said Farrah.

“Oh man, that’s better!” said Axolottie.



“Squawk! What are you doing here in Jungée? Squawk!” exclaimed a parrot in a nearby tree.

“We came here to get the magical crystal! We need it so we can stop Gosica and the other lands from exploding!” said Amy.

“Oh, no! Squawk! I will lead the way! Squawk!”

“Wait! First, what’s your name?” asked Axolottie.

“My name is Squawkie,” said the parrot. “Squawk!”

“Okay, now you can show us the way,” said Axolottie.

“Follow me,” said Squawkie.

They followed the parrot into the cave and he gave them the crystal. “Now, let’s stop this explosion!” said Gosi.

“But how? Squawk!”



"I know!" said Amy. "This is what we're going to do. Farrah can teleport the Evil King and Queen into the prison, and then we will be able to free all the ghosts that are still stuck there! Then we'll bring the crystals somewhere super safe, the museum! Everyone will be able to see it but not steal it!"

"Let's do this!" said Powee.

Farrah went and put the Evil King and Queen in jail. Later, she also brought the crystal to the museum while the others freed the ghosts. And the normal people voted for a new leader.



Troisième place, 3^e et 4^e années Third Place, Grades 3 and 4

photo: Darryl Levine



I Wonder
Gabriela Oroc

I Wonder... by Gabriela Oroc

“Hello class!” says Miss Gotsis. “Today we are working on pages 88 to 91 in our math workbook.”

Sitting at the back of the class, in the corner, is me... Gabriela. I’m in grade 4 and sometimes my mind drifts far away from this world to a place beyond my imagination. This is where I like to escape and daydream.

I should explain how it all works. I close my eyes and try to imagine happy thoughts. While I wait, a ladder usually appears and that’s when I enter my daydream. Daydreams are always different. Every time you daydream and you complete a challenge, you graduate to the next level of wonderment.

Today, I climb up the ladder and find myself in a cotton candy mist. I quickly go to the back of the long line of daydreaming kids (drifters), and I bump into my best friend Jaxon.

“Gabi, do you know why we are waiting in line?” Jaxon asks.

I reply, “Oh yeah, I remember why,” I pause. “The raspberry twist roller coaster.” We are next in line when we realize the cotton candy

worker won't allow Jaxon on the ride because of his height. He's 1 millimeter off! We really need Jaxon to complete the ride in order for us to graduate to the next level of wonderment. Each new level gets rewarded with a diamond that is added onto a special challenge ring, which every drifter gets.

Suddenly, I have a brilliant idea of distracting the cotton candy worker. In the misty distance, I notice the Queen of the Clouds appear. Her name is Olivia and she controls the whole Kingdom of Wonderment. Sometimes she grants drifters like me favors. So I explain my situation and she allows us to go on the ride! We slowly make our way back to the raspberry twist roller coaster without getting caught. Then, Jaxon and I sneak past the guard and find the two last seats at the back. We buckle up and start with a flip. At the end, we notice our rings have one more diamond on them. There are twenty levels, and this is our tenth!

All of a sudden, I hear my name being called from far away.

"Gabriela, are you with us?" asks Miss Gotsis. The mist in my mind clears and I find myself in my corner seat at the back of the class.

I reply, "I am now," and smile at Jaxon, knowing that next time, we will get to do something way cooler.



Mention honorable, 3^e et 4^e années Honourable Mention, Grades 3 and 4

photo: Darryl Levine



Arthur Makes the Team
Jordyn Gottlieb

Arthur Makes the Team

By: Jordyn Gottlieb

Little Arthur was two days into the school year. Basketball tryout was rolling around. Arthur practice all summer long. He felt confident and knew how to dribble the ball, pass to other people, shoot from half court and run really fast.

The day of tryout all the boys in the grade were there. James Arthur's best friend was there, he was the type of person to be good at anything without trying. Soon after dropping their school stuff in the locker room the coach whistled and all the boys came on one knee and listened. He said half of you are going to make the team. So he said I'm watching not just for skill and level but also sportsmanship and playing with your heart. The coach whistled again and all the boys jumped up and ran to the cone for the first drill.

The first drill was to dribble the ball and make a pass to the next person. This was easy for Arthur, he practiced. In line James and Arthur talked. They talked about who would make the team and rate the drill out of ten. The next few drills were medium like layup one vs one and so on.

Towards the end the end of tryout Arthur felt great, confident and grateful that he pushed himself this far. Then all the sudden he forgot about the permission slip to be handed in today the deadline. Arthur shrieked in horror as he forgot! He started to panic and realized he couldn't make the team. So, tryout continued. At the end the coach said that everyone did a fabulous job by tomorrow if you get an email that means you made the team. As Arthur's mom came to get him, she brought the permission slip with her and handed it in. They left but Arthur felt scared and nauseous in the car.

The next day at school everyone was talking about basketball tryouts. Every conversation was about basketball, but all Arthur thought was did I make it or not. James saw Arthur panicking and cornered him.

All the words came out of Arthur's mouth in a blast! He said I might not make it, he said, biting his lips. My mom gave the permission slip too late, he said, sweating. Ok said James well if you don't make it, I won't be on the team, deal said Arthur, deal said James.

At home when Arthur saw his mom, she said that I have spectacular news. She pulled out her phone to show Arthur the email that he made the team. He jumped up and down and scream Hipity Hopity Hab. How did I make it? I gave in the permission in late, but the coach saw your talent, skill and how hard you worked. So, get ready for practice tomorrow, his mom said, because you're not going to like the schedule.

Well, that is how Arthur made the team.

Première place, 5^e et 6^e années
First Place, Grades 5 and 6



photo: Darryl Levine

*The Bookworm, the Compass,
and the Oak Tree*

Cordelia King

The Bookworm, the Compass, and the Oak Tree



Cordelia King

Amber was a bookworm. She would sit for hours in her treehouse, up the oak with the red leaves, and read. Her big sister, Claire, said that the tree was red because a witch had enchanted it to create special leaves for her potions. Amber didn't believe her, though. Not because she didn't believe in magic, which she did, but because her sister also said that she would benefit from "Leaving her treehouse once in a while and making some friends." But she DID have friends! A lot of friends! ...Okay, they were trapped in the pages of her books... And most of them weren't human... But *still*, she had friends!

"Amber! HELP! Come quickly!!" Claire called from the house, panic rising in her voice. Amber rushed over to the bookshelf next to her favourite reading spot, shoved aside the *Encyclopedia of Mythical Creatures*, and grabbed the kit that she had prepared for monster invasions. She was ready for anything, but she hoped it wasn't dragons. She wasn't scared of dragons, but, in her books at least, they were gentle creatures, and she didn't want anyone to accidentally hurt them!

Gripping her kit between her teeth, she raced down the treehouse rope ladder as quick as lightning. Bracing herself for chaos, Amber kicked her house's back door open, but to her surprise, everything in the kitchen was how it should be.

"Amber, in here!" her sister called from the living room, sounding as distressed as before.

Amber dug the spray bottle of home-made monster repellent out of her kit. Her finger on the trigger, she burst into the living room. Her eyes scanned the empty room. Where was Claire? Had the monsters already gotten her?

"Claire?" she whispered. "Where are you? Are you okay?"

"SURPRISE!!!" Her parents burst out from behind the sofa and Claire appeared from behind Pop's armchair, holding Amber's pet lizard, Carl.

Startled, Amber squeaked and dropped her bottle on the floor. She sighed, half with relief that everyone was alright, and half let down because there were no monsters of any kind—not even dragons.

"Happy birthday, Amby!" Pop exclaimed, hiding his hands behind his back. Amber craned her neck to see what he had, but every time she came close, he turned away, laughing. She crossed her fingers and hoped with every bone in her body that the surprise was the newest book in her favourite book series, *Fly Away*. She doubted it, though. Her family was kind of poor (she wore her sister's hand-me-downs, and Pop had built their house himself,) and they didn't have extra money for things like new books, so she usually got her books second-hand or borrowed them from her town's amazing library. Still, excitement bubbled up inside her, soon to be replaced with disappointment. Pop brought his hands in front of him revealing... A COMPASS?! What was she supposed to do with that?! She thanked him, bearing a smile that didn't reach her eyes.

"I know you don't like it. But look, it's really cool!" her dad said, moving the compass closer to her face. Still, Amber was skeptical. Her dad may think that hiking and mapping out the forest was cool, but she preferred sitting in a cozy chair, reading a book, immersed in a magical world much more interesting and exciting than hers.

"Where is my true love?" he whispered into the compass. Its needle promptly turned to face her mother. Then he did. Then they kissed. *Eww!* But yeah, fine, that thing was cool. Okay, really cool!

"Please tell me that's magic!" she whispered, awe-struck. She figured that her mom was probably holding a strong magnet or something, but desperately hoped that the thing she wished for on her birthday candles every year had finally come true: that magic was real.

"YES!" screamed Claire, before Amber had fully gotten the question out. "I've been bursting to tell you for three years, since I turned 12 and learned about our family secret!!!"

SECRET!!! There was a family secret?! Now this just got interesting...

"Every kid gets the compass and you use it for your birthday quest!" continued her sister, as if that were a totally normal thing to say.

"Birthday quest...?" echoed Amber. She liked the sound of that!

"When every kid in the family turns 12, they go on a quest to find the tree in the forest that helps them connect with their magical powers," her mother explained. "Claire's tree grows berries that she blends into paints that make whatever she paints become real. Your father's quest led him to a tree stump that he discovered he could regrow to get unlimited lumber. He used that wood to build our house without harming any other trees! Your family has been living near this forest for generations, and it's full of magical trees that your ancestors have been bonded with. Now it's your turn."

"That forest must have at least a bajillion trees! How am I supposed to know which one is mine?" A million thoughts swirled around in Amber's brain.

"The compass will guide you."



Before she knew it, Amber was stuffing helpful books into her old leather satchel, trying to process that she was going on a quest to find her magical powers. The last book to go in was her beloved *Encyclopedia of Mythical Creatures*—she knew that it would be heavy to carry, but she'd rather be safe than sorry. This book was a family heirloom, so Amber suddenly realized

that it had probably helped many of her family members on their own quests. She wondered how many.

Amber slipped on her lucky gold cloak, climbed down from her treehouse, and skipped toward the gate where her family was gathered, feeling lighter than air.

Pop handed her the compass and planted a light kiss on her forehead. The cold metal felt nice in her clammy hand. As she examined the rust-covered contraption, she whispered into the compass like her father had shown her: “Lead me to my magic.”

Amber started walking backward into the forest, keeping sights on her family who were waving and blowing kisses. Passing the point where she could see them, Amber was vibrating with anticipation. Now the adventure could really start! She looked in the direction the compass’s needle was pointing and followed it. The forest felt peaceful with its sun-dappled rocks and tree trunks, and birds chirping overhead. She could get used to this! Continuing on her way down the compass’s path, a question suddenly hit Amber: What *type* of tree would hers be? Would it be deciduous? She’d be happy with pretty much any tree because she liked sooo many kinds (maple, birch, aspen...) but none more than her old oak out back. But since magic wanted her to have a different tree, she knew she’d grow to love it in its own way.

The loud sound of her stomach gurgling interrupted Amber’s thoughts. She was glad her mom had insisted she pack a snack! She plopped down on a fallen log to take out the cheese sandwich that was buried somewhere deep in her bag and put the compass down next to her. While she ate, she flipped through the books in her old leather satchel, but she couldn’t shake the feeling that something was off. Slowly turning her head, she looked next to her on the log. Her heart sank and panic rose inside her, because the compass was GONE! Had it rolled off the log!? Had it magically disintegrated because she had taken too long or something!? Had someone stolen it!?

The thoughts clanked inside her as the happy butterflies in her stomach turned into worried ones. She checked around the perimeter of the log, finding no compass. Ok, it probably hadn’t disintegrated, so had someone actually stolen it?! A goblin? She knew that goblins liked shiny things from reading *Fly Away Volume II: a mischievous guest!!* Now that she knew what to look for, Amber scanned the forest around her. To her surprise, the compass-thief wasn’t a goblin—it was a little bird with black and white feathers! She started running toward it.

“Hey! That’s mine! Give it back!” she yelled to the compass-thief. Spooked, the bird took off at full speed. *Smooth, Amber. Smooth.* Speeding up as well, she chased after the bird, huffing and puffing the whole way. She was not used to so much physical exertion... She was more of a mental exertion kinda person.

Still running, Amber reached into her bag and pulled out Pop’s old birdwatching guide. She was worried about trying to read while running, but fortunately the bird stopped in a tree. She flipped the dog-eared pages until she found a drawing that looked like the bird she was

chasing: a magpie! Done with its break, the magpie resumed flying, and Amber continued struggling to follow. Then she stopped struggling—running was getting easier. Hey, maybe all this running had helped her reach her full potential and turned her into an expert runner!

The bird finally slowed and landed in what Amber thought to be a nest (she couldn't see up in the high branch.) She knew where the compass was, now she just had to figure out how to get it! She pulled out her kit—there had to be something in there that she could use to get up the tree. Monster repellent... binoculars... and a rope! Perfect! After unrolling the rope, she tied one end around her waist and the other around a rock. She threw it up, up, up, until it wound around the closest branch, just above reaching level. This was a technique Tess Fireheart used in an action scene in *Fly Away Volume IV: reaching the sky*.

"Tess always says that 'I have what it takes inside me and I just need to find it.' I really hope that's true," she muttered to herself. She closed her eyes and reached for the rope. After a few heaves, she found herself on the branch and repeated the pattern: throw, loop over branch, heave. But she noticed that each heave was easier than the last, almost like she was getting lighter! "Maybe, I'm stronger than I thought", she said grinning. "...Or maybe it's magic. Is this my power?!" Reaching a branch two away from the magpie, she saw a crow sitting and watching her intently. It cawed. Then she heard something else...

"Give it back to her, Maggie." The voice was firm, but not mean. Where was that coming from? "Anybody there?" she called without looking down (she'd come so far and didn't want to make that rookie mistake). Silence. "Was that you?" she jokingly asked the crow, laughing at her own joke. Another set of caws made Amber giggle. Shrugging, she chalked the voice up to her overactive imagination.

Reaching the final branch, she gasped! The magpie's nest was filled to the brim with coins, brooches, and jewellery. In the collection she also noticed tabs from aluminum cans, buttons, and most importantly, on the very top of the pile, right underneath the bird, was her magical compass.

"C'mon little magpie, I'm not gonna hurt you. But I really need that compass, ok?" she coaxed. The magpie didn't budge. She needed another strategy. Balancing on the branch, Amber dug out her bird watching guide. *That's a magpie. What do magpies like? ...Shiny things... Do I have anything shiny?*

"I'll give you this..." she rummaged around in her cloak pocket, "... old penny if you give me the compass," she enticed. Noticing the bird's eyes light up, she took it as a "yes", placed the penny in the nest, and took back her compass. Yeeesss!!!!

With the compass now safely in her pocket, Amber had a crazy idea: What if her magical power was flying!? She could randomly run and climb easily, so why not flying? She looked down to the ground. It was really far away. NOPE! Nevermind! She carefully climbed down the tree, little by little, still filled with confidence from her successful compass rescue mission.

“Compass, lead me to my magic,” she whispered, in case it had forgotten.

“Caw, caw!” The crow was following her, and it seemed to be getting closer. She wasn’t worried though; if it took her compass, she’d be ready!



Amber continued deeper into the woods, running her fingers along the bark of the trees growing next to the path. Some trees were rough, some mossy. Seeing an interesting tree, she stopped to admire it. It was beautiful—part of the bottom was hollow and overflowing with orange mushrooms that continued up the side. The leaves were a deep orangey-bronze, looking like remnants of autumns past. It was unlike anything she’d ever seen! She wished Claire were there with her sketch pad to document it! She’d have to bring her sister back here sometime...

Suddenly, Amber caught a glimpse of the compass and noticed its needle had changed directions! Oops! She followed the new direction. Turning a few corners, she continued walking, fizzy-feeling anticipation returning to fill her stomach with butterflies. She skipped around a bend, smiling at the crow still above her. But when she caught sight of the forest ahead, she was confused. There was a tree.. with orange leaves... and mushrooms going straight up the side. Either this forest had a serious fungus problem, or she was going in circles. Her confusion slowly dissolved into frustration. The compass was supposed to guide her! It shouldn’t mess up and guide her in circles!

“I’m giving you one last chance, compass!” Amber announced. “Lead me to my magic,” she whispered curtly. As the compass’s needle spun, the crow suddenly swooped down to land on a low branch.

“It’s pointing to me!” he exclaimed matter-of-factly.

EXCUSE ME—WHAT?!!! Amber knew that crows were smart, but she didn’t think that they were smart enough to speak English! The familiar feeling of her brain overfilling with thoughts crept over her, and she found herself frozen in place. Shaking it off, Amber asked the first question she could get her mouth to say.

“Why didn’t you say anything *before* I broke my brain trying to figure out where I was going?!” she grumped. “And before I wasted so much time! It’s almost sundown!”

“I did! You just weren’t ready to understand yet,” he explained, flying to land on her shoulder.

The fire inside Amber began to soften into sparks. “Oh.” She started to pet her silky shoulder-companion, smiling. Something hit her right then... she could understand animals! She had gotten her power! Yeeess! But also, what about running really fast, and climbing easily? She had really thought (and hoped) that her power was super-strength or something.

“So, you know where my tree is?” she asked, hoping if he did, they could get wherever it was before the dusk turned into night.

“I don’t, but you do...” he told her mysteriously.

“I don’t, though,” she retorted, confusion and frustration returning. Maybe crows weren’t as smart as she thought.

“Follow your instincts. Your body knows where to go, even if you don’t.” Though she didn’t know why, she did as he told her. She walked and walked, not looking back, even when she wasn’t sure where she was going. Glancing down occasionally, Amber followed her instincts, trusting the compass to guide her on her way. Nearing the edge of the forest, she saw the peaked wood roof of her house and the red leaves of her oak tree in the back yard.

Her heart sank. She must’ve just known the way back to her house! That’s not special! ...Or magical!

“I’m sorry! I just wasted so much time! L-let’s go back...” she stuttered, feeling gutted. This whole day—this whole quest—would be for nothing if she couldn’t find her tree! She didn’t want to go to sleep that night without it, but she figured that she would have to. Because she had failed, plain and simple as that. She would never be a hero like Tess Fireheart. Tess never failed her missions.

Suddenly, Amber felt a warmth inside her that reminded her of eating Momma’s chicken-noodle soup when she was sick or cold. Then she noticed a faint golden glow that seemed to be coming from her heart. Following it with her eyes, she remarked that it led directly to a matching glow illuminating her big oak with the red leaves from the inside out. Gasping, she walked slowly toward it.

“Momma! Pop! Claire! C’mere!” she called with awed excitement. The house’s back door swung open and her family rushed out, bombarding her with questions. Without answering, she forcefully motioned toward the glow, silencing them.

“Is that...?” Claire started.

“My tree,” finished Amber, in a half whisper tone. She touched the familiar bark, looking at where she had engraved her initials in grade two, reminiscing. This had always felt like her tree, but now it really was. Her glow and the tree’s glow were now intertwined, swirling around both of them. The curls of yellow light were blinding in the dark of dusk. The glow intensified to the point that Amber had to look away. Her hand on the side of her face acting like a blinder on a horse, she squeezed her eyes shut. Unable to wait any longer, she cautiously opened one eye. Her gaze met with the shape of a door outlined with light in the trunk of her favourite tree.

“Wow...” Feeling awe and amazement like never before, Amber reached for the intricate gold handle that had replaced the knot on her tree that she had pretended was a doorknob when she was little. At the sound of her voice, her family all opened their eyes.

“Open it,” Claire encouraged, beaming.

Hesitating, she touched the unfamiliar handle. It felt warmer than she expected. The trunk of her beloved tree slowly split along the perfect arch of light. Amber stepped back as the door creaked open on its own. As the magic glow faded, Amber looked at her moonlit tree, struggling to see what was inside through the inky darkness. She stuck her head through the doorway, curiosity filling her brain.

“What’s the point of a magic tree if I can’t even see what’s inside?!” Amber grumbled. She didn’t want to wait until morning! Rummaging around in her satchel, Amber tried to find her emergency flashlight. But before she could reach it, she noticed a little spot of light in the distance. As the light grew bigger, it filled the sky with purple, then pink, then orange. She realized she was witnessing a sunrise, though outside her tree it was still night.

Unwilling to wait, now that she could see where she was going, Amber took a first step through the arch into the unknown world inside her tree. Though she expected it to feel different inside, everything felt disappointingly normal.

At first everything looked normal too: a forest with trees and a rushing stream. Suddenly though, Amber noticed something flying in the distance that was bigger than any bird she’d ever seen. Was that *A DRAGON*?!!! It was! She also saw a young woman sitting on a rock, facing away from her. There was a quiver of arrows over her left shoulder, somewhat hidden by her golden hair.

“Hello?” Amber called out with nervous excitement. The young woman turned her head to look at Amber, revealing the golden phoenix on her quiver. It was so familiar. She knew that emblem. Where did she know that emblem from? Amber cautiously took a few steps into the mysterious magical world inside her tree. The woman stood and approached her, smiling.

Amber returned her smile, taking in all the details she hadn’t been able to see from the doorway. “What is this place?” she asked.

The woman’s smile grew. “Your bookshelf,” she responded.

“My bookshelf? How can this be my bookshelf? My bookshelf is in my treehouse above us...” She looked up at the blue sky. “Well, uh, not above-above... It’s in my tree. But so are we, so...?”

“Look around. You have the answer inside you. You just need to find it.”

Wait. That was Tess Fireheart’s motto. And the golden phoenix was Tess Fireheart’s symbol. And there were dragons in the sky. Suddenly it all clicked into place. That was Tess Fireheart. THAT. WAS. TESS. FIREHEART!!!!

“YOU’RE TESS FIREHEART!! OHMYGOSHIAMYOURBIGGESTFAN!!!!”

Tess Fireheart was really real? And Amber was talking to her! Wait, how was Tess Fireheart in her tree? Had she been there the whole time?! And Tess had said that this was her bookshelf...

“Are we inside my books?!”

Tess nodded, knowingly.

“So, if this is my tree, what’s my power? And don’t give me one of your cryptic answers, please. Today has been really confusing!”

“You’re almost there. Just think for a second.”

Ugh fine, she did have to admit that those answers sounded cool. Her gears turning, Amber thought about all the weird things that had happened that day, like running really fast, the ability to pull herself up the tree—not to mention understanding and talking to animals. Suddenly she got an idea so crazy, it just might be true.

“Can I do whatever I need to solve a problem as long as I’ve read about it in a book?!” Amber asked.

“I knew you’d get there!” Tess responded happily, putting up her hand for Amber to high-five.

“Thanks. I couldn’t have gotten here without you. All the cool things I was able to do today were only possible because I read about *you* doing them!”

“Amber! What’s in there?!” She heard Claire call from outside the tree, pulling her back to reality (well, as much as a mystical world inside a magic tree could count as “reality”) .

“Well, I’d better get going... I can’t wait to tell my family about all of this,” she said, gesturing dramatically around her. “And to visit again. There’s so much I want to explore!”

“Coming!” she called back to her sister.

Turning to leave, Amber expected to be faced with her door on the inside wall of her tree’s trunk. But to her surprise, she saw endless forest beyond the clearing she was standing in. Her magic door was freestanding, its intricate design still faintly glowing.

As she skipped through deep grass toward her door, Amber turned around to look at Tess, knowing that her life would never be the same. She used to think that her friends were trapped in the pages of her books, but now, Amber knew that book pages weren’t limits. With her old oak and new magical powers, she could live out whatever story her heart desired. All she had to do was never stop reading.

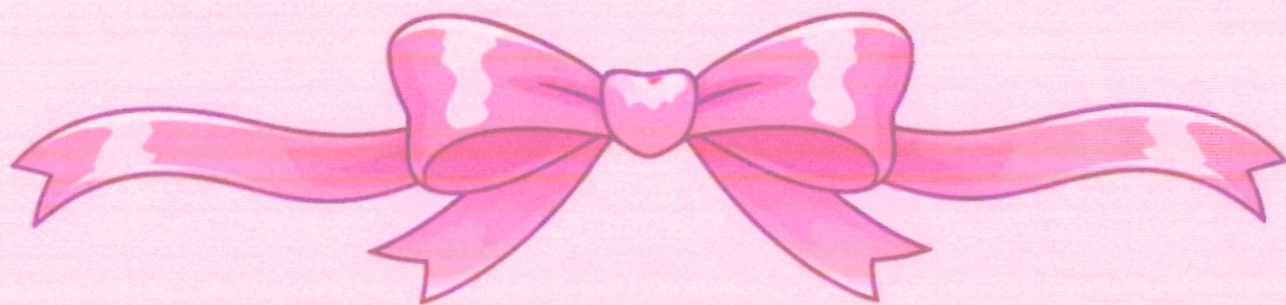
Amber smiled to herself. That shouldn’t be too difficult...

Deuxième place, 5^e et 6^e années
Second place, Grades 5 and 6

photo: Darryl Levine



Le Journal Intime de Clea
Adele Mechache



Journal intime de Cléa



INTRODUCTION

CLEA COHEN:

CLÉA

Née au Canada sa mère est née en Suède et son père en Norvège. Cela explique d'où elle tient sa peau claire, ses cheveux blonds et ses yeux bleus. Cléa aime la couleur bleu. Énergétique, serviable et rapide, elle a plusieurs qualités comme : mignonne (avec ses yeux bleus, c'est sûr !), elle sait comment donner des ordres sans être arrogante (comme on le dit en anglais : elle est une "born-leader"). Elle n'aime pas l'école, mais son ennemi numéro un est le français. Elle n'a jamais eu de mauvaise note en français mais à la maison, elle ne fait que se plaindre à propos de cette matière, pas qu'elle n'aime pas sa prof de français, Mme Yaël, non, loin de là, elle n'aimait pas cette matière tout simplement. Après cette merveilleuse aventure elle a changé d'avis en disant "J'ai tellement écrit dans ce journal qu'il est devenu mon ami !"

ÉVA WEISS:

ÉVA

Née au Brésil, Éva a la peau claire (légèrement plus foncée que Cléa, sa meilleure amie), les cheveux bruns clairs de la même couleur que ses yeux. Son arrière grand-père du côté de sa mère était un réfugié de l'Holocauste. Ses ancêtres vivaient au Pays-bas, Amsterdam, ils se sont réfugiés au Brésil. Et c'est là-bas que ses parents se sont rencontrés, puis mariés. Éva est douce, studieuse, polie et indépendante. Elle a 7 frères et sœurs dont elle est l'aînée (Éva vient d'une grande famille, mais Cléa en revanche, est fille unique). Dans cette histoire, chers lecteurs, vous allez être témoin que Éva sait très bien réconforter les autres.

Le journal intime de Cléa

Dimanche 31 août 2026 (dernier jour des vacances d'été)

Cher journal,

Ma mère m'a obligée à écrire dans un journal intime, mais je ne veux pas ! Je trouve que c'est seulement une perte de temps. J'aurais pu être en train de faire un jogging dans la rue d'à côté, ou bien j'aurais pu aller chercher les filles de mon équipe de foot (dont je suis la capitaine) et on aurait pu pratiquer pour le prochain match, ou n'importe quoi d'autre à part écrire !

Ma mère a dit que je ne serai jamais capable de transporter toutes mes émotions avec moi, alors elle m'a dit d'écrire. Elle a même dit que quand je serai adulte, je lirai mon journal et je rigolerai de tous mes problèmes ! Non mais est-ce que tu arrives à imaginer comment elle peut parfois être, ma mère ?!

Comme je suis obligée d'écrire, je vais me présenter. Je m'appelle Cléa, j'ai des cheveux blonds et des yeux bleus. Je suis quand même pas mal bonne à l'école, mais pas la meilleure. Tous les jours, j'attends la fin des cours pour aller à la pratique de basketball pendant l'été, la gymnastique pendant l'hiver, le soccer en automne et le football au printemps.

Ark ! Pourquoi est-ce que je parle de l'école quand ce c'est le dernier jour des vacances d'été, je dois encore profiter avant que l'on me retire ma liberté (peut-être que je suis un peu dramatique) ?! Bref, tout ça pour dire que d'avoir un journal intime ne sert à rien

Lundi 1er septembre 2026 (premier jour d'école)

Cher journal,

Je pensais vraiment que t'écrire serait l'idée la plus banale du monde. Mais je commence à douter un peu de cette idée. Ce matin, je me suis levée de mauvaise humeur, sans savoir que la journée serait pire que prévu. Tout a commencé quand j'ai ouvert mon sac à dos où je range ma tenue de sport. En l'ouvrant, j'ai réalisé qu'il était vide, complètement vide !

Sans mon sac, je ne peux pas m'entraîner. Il contient mon uniforme et mes espadrilles de football. Notre équipe va perdre à cause de moi. C'est sûr. Le pire c'est que l'entraînement d'aujourd'hui était mon premier entraînement en tant que capitaine. Je voulais prouver que je méritais cette place. J'ai essayé de faire semblant que ça ne me dérangeait pas, mais en vrai, c'était la panique !

À ce moment, Éva Weiss, ma meilleure amie, est arrivée. Éva est spéciale. Elle a comme ce pouvoir spécial de lire dans les pensées des autres. Elle a tout de suite réalisé que quelque chose n'allait pas. Je lui ai dit que je ne savais pas où étaient mon uniforme et mes espadrilles. Je croyais qu'elle allait rigoler de moi. Mais apparemment, je me suis trompée. Au lieu de ça, elle m'a donné ses propres espadrilles et son uniforme (Éva est une ancienne membre de l'équipe, donc son uniforme et ses espadrilles sont tout le temps dans son casier). J'ai refusé au début, mais elle a dit qu'elle était obligée, car c'est ce qu'une amie ferait.

En fin de compte, j'ai accepté. En marchant vers le terrain, je me suis demandé ce que j'aurais fait sans Éva. Ce jour-là, j'étais loin de savoir que ce n'était que le début d'une nouvelle amitié.

Les espadrilles d'Éva étaient un peu trop grandes. Après que ma coéquipière a envoyé la balle vers une autre membre de l'équipe avoir envoyer la balle du cote adverse, j'ai couru protéger le but. Tout à coup, mes lacets se sont défaits. L'équipe adverse a marqué. Tout le monde me regardait, énervé que je n'ai pas protégé le but. J'ai baissé la tête, honteuse. Je ne savais pas si ma place était vraiment celle du capitaine.

Sur les bancs, Éva était debout en train d'applaudir et de crier mon nom. Elle est une si bonne amie. J'ai continué à jouer. Pas pour prouver que je méritais ma place de capitaine, mais pour ne pas décevoir Éva. À la fin, on a gagné. J'avais chaud et je transpirais. Je n'avais

pas amené ma bouteille d'eau. Éva a couru à l'école sans me dire pourquoi. Elle est revenue avec deux bouteilles de jus dans les mains. Elle m'en a tendu une. Je l'ai serrée dans mes bras le plus fort possible. C'est à ça que servent les amies.

Sur le chemin du retour, on a parlé de tout et de rien. Éva m'a avoué qu'elle avait peur de changer. Je lui ai dit que j'avais peur d'être oubliée. Avec elle, je peux tout dire. On se confie des secrets que même dans ce journal je n'ai pas écrit car mon vrai journal intime, la seule personne à qui je peux me confier, c'est elle, c'est Éva.

Mardi 2 septembre 2026

Cher journal,

Aujourd'hui, une dispute est arrivée. Une vraie, pas une petite dispute, une grande. J'ai dit des mots trop durs. Éva est tout de suite partie. Elle n'est pas revenue. Elle m'a laissée derrière, toute seule, au milieu de partout mais qui, à cet instant-là, semblait nulle part. Je n'aurais pas dû. Je n'ai pas fermé l'œil de la nuit. Je lui ai envoyé des messages. Elle ne m'a pas répondu.

Mercredi 3 septembre 2026

Cher journal,

Éva ne m'a pas adressé la parole de la journée. Je vais être honnête, je n'aurais pas dû commencer la dispute. C'est à ce moment précis que la prof m'a interrogée. Moi, bien sûr, j'étais sur la lune : « Cléa, on dirait que tu es à des kilomètres de là. Je peux savoir à quoi tu penses ? Si tu veux partager tes pensées avec la classe, tu es la bienvenue, veux-tu ? » Je savais que la prof me narguer quand elle m'a demandé si je voulais partager mes pensées à la classe, mais je le fis quand même.

« Oui » répondis-je. « J'aimerais partager mes pensées avec la classe, Madame. » On t'écoute, Cléa », rétorqua la prof.

J'ai dit : « J'aimerais dire que l'amitié, ce n'est pas toujours facile. C'est aussi faire face aux erreurs, aux épreuves. Et maintenant, j'aimerais m'excuser auprès d'Éva Weiss avec qui je me suis disputée hier. Je suis vraiment désolée, Éva ! »

On a pleuré. On s'est reparlé. On s'est comprises. Et on s'est pardonné. Toute la classe observa la scène et comprit, elle aussi, que l'amitié a une très grande valeur.

Après ça, notre amitié est devenue plus forte. Parce qu'on savait qu'elle pouvait survivre aux tempêtes. Éva m'a dit qu'être amie ne veut pas dire être parfaite, mais être honnête. Même quand c'est difficile. J'ai continué à écrire ici. Pas parce que j'y étais obligée, mais parce que j'en avais envie.

Ce soir, ma mère m'a demandé pourquoi j'écrivais autant. Je ne savais pas quoi répondre. Alors j'ai dit la vérité. Elle a dit : « Je savais que ça allait marcher ! » J'ai roulé les yeux. En vrai, j'étais très reconnaissante envers ma mère. En relisant les pages précédentes, j'ai vu l'importance de l'amitié. J'ai vu les preuves. Les gestes. La gentillesse. Les sacrifices.

MORAL :

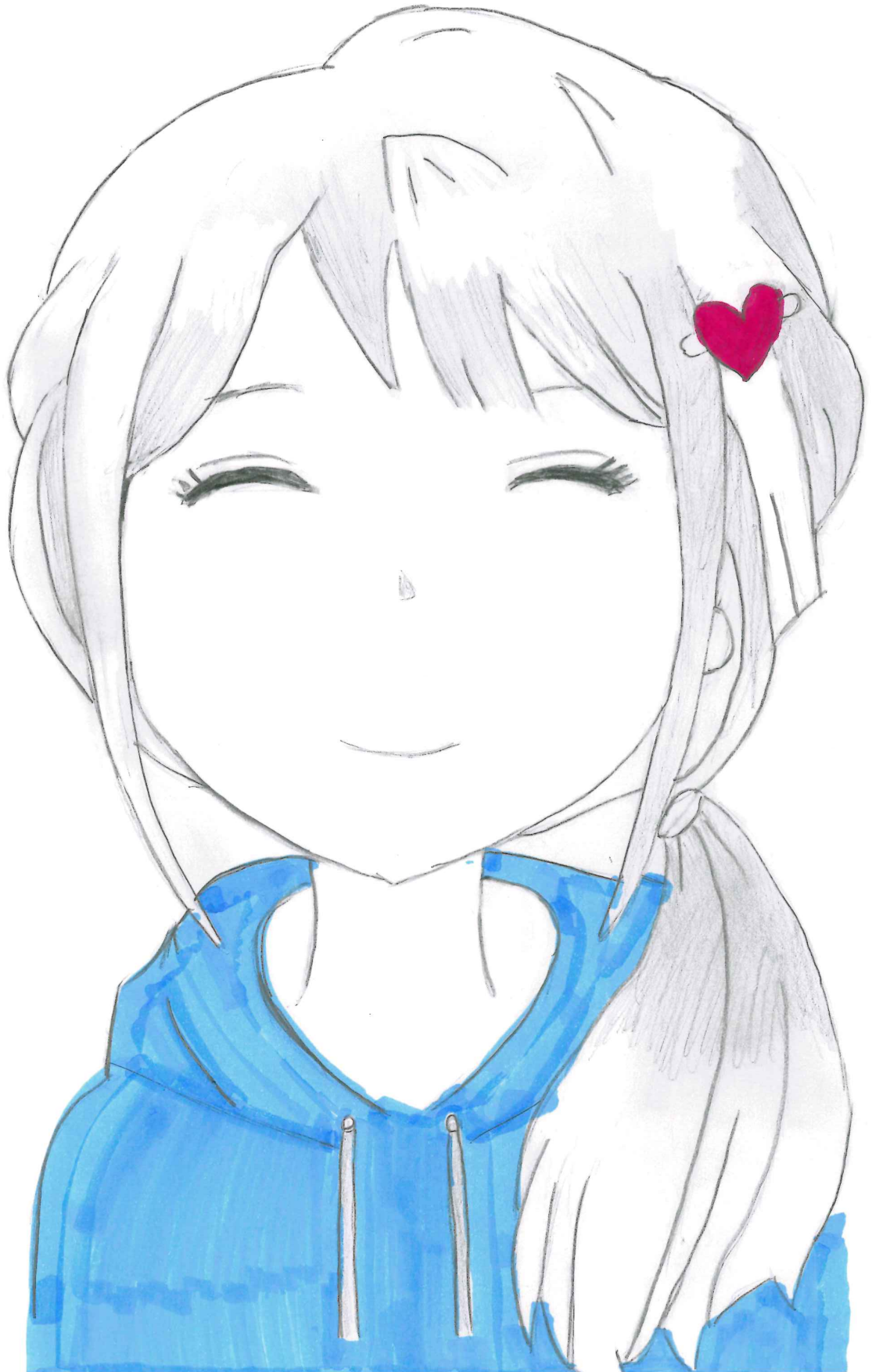
Alors cher journal, voici la morale. On peut être forte, talentueuse, courageuse, rapide, vive, jolie et toutes les autres qualités du monde, mais on n'avance jamais toute seule. Les amies sont celles qui nous tiennent quand on a besoin. Et même quand on n'a pas besoin, elles sont toujours là. Les amies sont celles qui croient en nous, qui restent quand tout devient compliqué. L'amitié, ce n'est pas d'être ensemble quand tout va bien, c'est d'être là pour l'autre même quand c'est dur, même quand il faut du courage, même quand ça fait peur.

Un jour, quand je serai adulte, je relirai ces pages. Je ne rigolerai pas de mes problèmes.

Non. Je penserai à Éva Weiss. Parce que certaines amitiés marquent une vie entière.

Finalement, ce journal n'était pas une perte de temps. Non. C'était une preuve d'amitié.





Troisième place, 5^e et 6^e années Third place, Grades 5 and 6

photo: Darryl Levine



A Magical Tale
Shira W.

A Magical Tale

By Shira Wisbaum

“Well? What have you come back with this time? You remember, I gave you one last chance and with all the information you have, I won’t spare your life,” a cold voice said from somewhere in the shadows.

“I couldn’t find anyone, but there is a pregnant woman. Think of it. You could curse the child in the belly, and then steal it while it’s a baby. So, then it won’t be hard forcing a child to play along with your evil acts when they already know and miss their family. It will take more time, but will be much easier,” Dan said, frightened that the sorcerer might kill him.

A long time ago, he found out about the witch’s plot to kill the mayor and put the entire city under her spell. He reported her to the police immediately. When they arrested her, she was so angry that she swore to him that she would make him pay. And that’s exactly what she did. She escaped jail and forced him to help her find someone that she could teach her evil powers to, or else.

“Hmm, nice plan. Now take me there before I change my mind!” the witch cackled.

The man led the way through a quiet street in Montreal. There was a white house with a flat black top and a completely green yard with beautiful lilies in front. It was a three story building with two balconies and a warm welcoming feeling. The witch ran past the man and broke through a window very quietly.

Once she found the woman, the enchantress placed her hands on the big belly and started chanting the words to her spell. Her hair started floating and her eyes shone a bright white.

“As of tonight, my power is my might. To make the evil rise, is when everybody cries. The only thing that has worth, is when the mother gives birth.”

The belly started glowing. The witch left with the man tagging along.

“What if someone breaks the curse?” he asked.

“Impossible,” she said. “They’d need a wishing spell, and the only way they can get one is by using three wishing stones. And they’re so well hidden that no one will ever find them.” The enchantress quickly listed their locations and then evaporated, leaving Dan all alone in the dark street.

“Come on! Get yourself together and save that family!” he said to himself. He went back into the house very quietly, quickly wrote a note and stuck it to the door of the first room he saw, praying that everything would be fine.

The sun shone and the birds chirped. A nice breeze blew through the morning air.

“Time to get up, sweetie,” Shira’s dad called out.

It was another day of school. Shira opened her dark brown eyes, got up and put on her slippers. She was slowly walking towards her bedroom door, her silky brown hair shaking from side to side with each step, when she saw it: a note taped to her door. Shira opened it and read the note carefully. It said:

Dear person,

If you are reading this note, it means you are about to save your mom, aunt, cousin or any other relative that is pregnant and lives in your house. An evil witch enchanted the baby so she could steal it and use it to let evil grow and teach it to be horrible. But if you think you could save the day in time, here is the information for you to get a wishing spell.

There are three wishing stones in three different places:

- One is here, at the Notre Dame Basilica*
- Another is in New York, at the Statue of Liberty*
- The last is in London, at the London eye.*

When you have them all, hold them with your hands and say your wish. But you will have to be very precise on what you want to happen. I wish you luck.

Shira just blinked. She wasn’t sure if it was true or not, so she decided it was best to at least ask her mother if something happened that night. Her mom looked exhausted, with her hair a mess and dark bags under her eyes.

“Good morning, Mom! How did you sleep? Did anything happen last night?” *Anything bizarre like a witch cursing the baby in your belly?* Shira thought.

“Nothing out of the ordinary. I could’ve sworn I was floating in the middle of the night, though. Probably a dream,” her mother shrugged it off.

Shira left the room before her mom could say more.

She had so many thoughts running through her mind. Her mother was due in only three more days, if she even lasted that long. How would Shira travel around the world in such a short time and find all the stones? There were at least 1 million stones in any given neighbourhood! But she also wanted her sibling to be born and not learn evil witchcraft. Shira had to do it, even if the note might be fake. She did not want to take a risk. And she knew the perfect person to ask for help. Her 17-year-old cousin, Neomi, was staying with them for a while because there were people renovating her house.

Shira walked in the room and said, “Hi Neomi, this might sound crazy, but I need help. First, I need you to read this note.”

Neomi read it, fear flickering in her light blue eyes. Tucking her dark brown hair behind her right ear, she asked, “Are we sure this is even real?”

There was a pause before Shira spoke.

“I don’t know, but I don’t want to take any chances. I don’t think you want to, either.”

“I can’t pay for cab and airplane tickets to save it either!” Neomi said, frustrated.

“But we only have three days! I’m sure we’ll get there! Please! I can’t do this without you!” Shira begged.

“Fine, but you owe me half of it!!” Neomi said.

“Fine, I’ll pay you once I get that much money!” Shira replied.

The girls got dressed and packed a bag with two extra pairs of clothing, along with snacks and water. As much as they wanted to say their goodbyes, they needed to trust their gut to not tell anyone.

The girls left the house secretly and called a taxi to take them to the Notre Dame Basilica.

“Are we ready?” Neomi asked.

“I hope so!” Shira said.

She might be away from home for a long time. Shira already missed her family and wanted to jump out of the taxi and run back home. *This is for the best*, she thought to herself.

“Where do you want to go?” the taxi driver asked.

“Notre Dame Basilica, please.”

Luckily, it was only a 30-minute drive from Shira’s house. When they arrived, Neomi paid the driver and then they headed off to find the stone. Where would a wishing stone be?

“Is it possible that the stone is in the crypt? Access to the public is prohibited. It would be the perfect place to hide it! Mainly because there is also a human buried there...” Shira glanced around nervously.

Neomi would NEVER go in there! she thought.

“Wait! Whoa, recap. THERE IS A HUMAN BURIED THERE?!” Neomi exclaimed. “It would have been nice to know before!”

“Sorry, but there’s no time for you to freak out now. Every second counts! We need to go quickly!”

Shira and Neomi walked around until they bumped into a security guard.

“Sorry, this place is off limits to anyone who is not on the list,” he said.

Shira had to think quickly. She needed to do something. Just then, she saw a bug crawling on the floor.

“We are the exterminators! Haven’t you heard? We are here to fumigate the room because someone mentioned it is full of cockroaches and spiders. Now scurry on, before I call your boss!” Shira said.

“Sorry but I’ll need your ID!” the security guard said.

Shira glanced around, trying to come up with a solution.

Neomi looked into her bag and said, “Oh shoot. I must’ve forgotten our IDs. I guess we shall leave the dead man resting in a nest of bugs instead of in peace...” she added with a sad face.

“And why are you here?” the security guard asked, pointing at Shira. “You don’t look a day older than ten!”

“I just look young. I’m actually 18 years old, and I don’t appreciate your tone,” Shira said.

The security guard looked at the girls and sighed.

“You’d better make it quick. I don’t have all day for this,” he said.

Shira and Neomi kept their faces straight and waited until he closed the door. Then they jumped up and down in excitement, delighted that their plan had worked.

“You heard the man. We don’t have all day, so let’s get started!” Neomi said. The young ladies got to work, looking for the stone.

“I wonder what it will look like,” Neomi said.

“Light blue, glowing and smooth,” Shira replied.

“Thanks... Wait... how do you know that?” the teenager asked suspiciously.

“Because I found it!!” Shira responded, her voice filled with awe.

“Then let’s go to New York. I’ll order us ferry tickets to the Statue of Liberty online, just like your mom did on vacation!” Neomi said.

A few months ago, Shira and her family went on vacation to New York with Neomi. One day, her mom surprised everyone by saying that they were going to Liberty Island.

“I went on my phone and it said that the fastest way to get to New York is by driving. I’m gonna call a cab, okay?” Neomi asked.

“Yeah, that’s fine,” Shira said.

When the cab arrived, Shira and Neomi settled in and ate a snack when all of a sudden, Neomi’s phone rang.

“What do I do?! It’s your mom!” Neomi exclaimed.

“I don’t know, answer it! We don’t want her to think that we’re missing! She might call the police!” Shira said.

“Okay fine. But what do I say?” Neomi asked.

“Make something up!” Shira blurted.

“Okay,” Neomi said before answering the phone, “Hi Sarit! If you are wondering where we are, I took Shira to the amusement park because the tickets were fifty percent off. But don’t look it up because the deal is over. Crazy, I know. Bye!”

Neomi was about to hang up the phone when she heard Sarit shout “Wait!!!”

“What’s going on?” Neomi asked as she put the phone back to her ear.

“I’m being rushed to the hospital. My doctor said that I need to be watched closely until I deliver so I probably won’t be home for a few days. Shira’s siblings are already at your grandparents’ house, but I’ll need you to keep an eye on Shira for me.”

Neomi looked concerned. “I’ve got everything under control here, you just take care of yourself,” she said before hanging up.

Shira overheard the entire conversation, and tried her best to hold back her tears.

“Hopefully we’ll manage to get back before she even notices we’ve left. My mom doesn’t need another thing to worry about right now. I just pray that she and the baby will be ok,” Shira said. She tried to put on a brave face, but in truth she had never been more scared in her life.

The 7-hour drive felt like forever, but they finally arrived in New York City. It was a busy place. Luckily, the girls were close to the ferry harbour, so they walked for a few minutes. Then they had to go through security and they made it out just as the ferry arrived.

As they got on board, Neomi said, “I think I’m gonna stay inside. I feel seasick!”

So, Shira went out where she could see the ocean best and let the water’s mist splash on her face. *It feels so refreshing*, Shira thought. Once the ferry arrived at the Island, the girls started to plan. When a group of people would climb the Statue of Liberty, Neomi and Shira would follow and pretend to be part of that group until they found the stone.

And that’s exactly what they did.

“Whew, I thought that wouldn’t work for a second!” Shira said. “Where do you think the stone is?”

“Probably on the torch. Not many places to hide a stone here,” Neomi said.

So they walked to the highest point they could get to and started preparing.

“I don’t know what to do!” Neomi said. “It’s easier if you do it since you are smaller but if you fall or die, I’m responsible! But I also have a higher chance of falling because I’m bigger than you.”

“I’ll go. Trust me, I’ll be fine,” Shira said. She walked out to the nearest place where she could rest her foot and started moving forward. The wind blew in her hair and she smelled the ocean breeze. Shira walked carefully onto Liberty’s arm and looked down, but immediately regretted it. She was so high! But she climbed more until she got up to the top.

“I made it up!” she yelled.

“Great!! Now find the stone. If it was me, I would hide it at the tip of the fire!” Neomi shouted back.

Her instincts were right. In no time, they got the second stone and headed to the airport to catch their flight to London.

The girls’ bodies ached from sitting on the plane for so long, but they eventually landed in London and headed straight to the London Eye.

Just then, Shira heard the familiar voice of her closest friend from camp.

“Hey Shira! What in all the stars are you doing here?” Noa asked, in her British accent. Shira jumped up and down with joy before introducing Noa to Neomi. Then, Shira filled Noa in about everything that had happened.

“Do you know anywhere someone would hide a stone around here?” Shira asked.

“Probably in the plant pot near the line. But it will be hard to get!” Noa warned them. “It was planted by Elizabeth II. Everyone knows about it. But you will need a massive distraction. In less than a second, someone will notice it’s gone.”

So, Shira started to think. *It couldn’t be Noa, since she lived here and Shira didn’t want to leave a mess behind for Noa to have to deal with. Maybe I’ll do it. But then Neomi would be too big to hide behind the pot until the time came to grab it.*

“Ok guys! Here’s the plan: Neomi, you’ll take care of the distraction. Noa, I need you to get more people to notice Neomi. Then I’ll steal the pot. Neomi, I know you probably don’t like this, but it’s easier this way. I’ll explain later. Now think of a distraction! I’m going to hide!” Shira explained and ran to the nearest hiding spot.

Then a loud scream pierced the air.

“HELP HER!” someone screamed. “SHE FAINTED! SHE PROBABLY DAMAGED HER BRAIN! CALL AN AMBULANCE!!”

It took Shira a second to realize that was the distraction. She grabbed the pot, moved it behind the garbage dump on the side of the building, and hid again. But then she thought to herself, *what if someone really called an ambulance? If people figure out it's a distraction, we'll go to jail.*

Shira jumped out from her hiding spot and said: “My father is a doctor. You!” she pointed to Noa. “Help me carry her! Everything will be fine!” she told the people. Then the girls carried Neomi away until they were out of sight.

“Are you ok?” Shira asked. Neomi was coughing the whole time. *But probably part of the distraction,* Shira thought.

“Fine. Now get the stone and make the wish,” Neomi said.

Noa dug through all the dirt and pulled out the last stone. She handed it to Shira. The second Shira got all the stones together, someone appeared out of thin air. It was the witch.

“Are you the witch who enchanted the baby in my mom’s belly?” Shira asked.

“But of course. Now hand me the stones, or suffer a slow and painful death!” the witch yelled.

“NEVER!” the trio shouted. Noa and Neomi tackled the witch to the ground and Noa punched her just hard enough to knock her out.

Shira held the stones in her hands and shouted, “I WISH FOR THE BABY IN MY MOM’S BELLY TO BE IMMUNE TO ALL EVIL MAGIC THAT WAS, IS, AND WILL BE CAST ON IT!”

All of a sudden, a big light burst through the stones and then they were gone.

The sun shone brightly through Shira’s bedroom window. *Ah, it's good to be home,* Shira thought to herself as she got up and headed to the den. Her mom was still at the hospital and her other siblings were still at her grandparents’, so the house was quieter than usual.

“Last night, a big light flashed through the world at 10:29 PM! Investigators are searching for what caused it. All they know is that it started in England, not far from the London Eye, but we have no other details at this time,” a news reporter said on the television.

Ring, ring.

“Shira, can you answer the phone?” Neomi asked, “I just sat down to eat.”

“Sure,” Shira replied. She turned off the television and grabbed the phone.

“Hello?”

“Hi Shira!” Shira immediately recognized that voice. It was her mom!

“Good news! Your new little sister was born at 10:30 last night!” her mom said.

Shira sighed happily, knowing that she made her wish right in the nick of time.

“What’s so wrong with having another sister?” her mom asked, mistaking her reaction for disappointment.

If only you knew what I just went through to bring that baby safely into the world! Shira thought to herself. But instead she said “I’m just so relieved that everything went well and that the two of you are healthy and safe!”

As soon as Shira hung up the phone, she squealed with excitement and ran to share the news with Neomi. The past few days were the absolute craziest of Shira’s entire life, but she wouldn’t have it any other way. She’d always do whatever it took to protect her baby sister’s soul. And she knew in her heart that there was no greater gift she could possibly offer.

Mention honorable, 5^e et 6^e années Honourable Mention, Grades 5 and 6

photo: Darryl Levine



The Little Ice Cream Shop
Lily Szraibman



Tall Tale

The Little Ice Cream Shop

"Yawn!" I open my eyes to see my twin brother Carl shaking me awake. As soon as I get out of bed, my brother starts jumping repeatedly. He exclaims "Get up, Charlie! Grandma is taking us to Scoops today!" For those who do not know, Scoops is a little ice cream place at the end of the road. It is owned by a nice lady named Barbara who always gives us a free scoop.

After rushing Carl out of my room, I put on a nice dress and head downstairs. Seeing grandma is a big deal. Just then I notice a sweet smell in the air. My mom is making one of my favorite foods. "Pancakes!" I practically shout. Once my brother hears the magic word, it doesn't take long for him to join me. Carl shouts "This is the best day ever!" I have to admit, it kind of is besides our birthday, of course.

Ever since our parents got divorced, our mom hasn't been as cheerful. But right now, she looks like any other mom. She flips 3 pancakes onto my plate and I sit down at my usual spot. It is Saturday, so thankfully I get to enjoy my breakfast instead of being rushed to school. I am about to take a huge bite out of my pancakes when I hear "Ding dong!"

Carl and I race to the door but I get there first. I swing open the door and see grandma Rosa there with her bags. "Look how much you two have grown!" Is the first thing out of her mouth. My mom joins us at the door. She hugs grandma and says "It is very nice to see you, Ma,". I invite grandma inside and Carl is already getting his new Lego spaceship to show her. Mom offers grandma some pancakes and she politely declines. She says she wants to save room for the ice cream we will have later. Carl comes back with his spaceship. He trips on a Lego brick that fell and the spaceship goes flying and lands on the floor in many pieces! My twin crawls around picking up what he finds and tries to repair the broken spaceship. He is almost in tears because he loves that Lego set more than anything. Grandma puts a hand on his back and says "Don't worry dear. We'll fix it together. But first, let's get some ice cream to cheer you up!". Charlie gets up off the floor and hugs grandma. "Thanks" he replies. Grandma Rosa asks mom if she could bring her bags to the guest room. We all wave mom goodbye and get our jackets to leave.

The ice cream shop is a 10-minute walk from our house but it feels like 2 minutes since Grandma is here. Carl and I take turns telling grandma what she had missed. When we arrive, my brother opens the door. There are only 3 tables full, which is nice because it's quiet. Barbara greets us at the door and says "How lovely to see you, Rosa!". And then she adds "You too, Carl and Charlie!". We go to the counter to order. I get a banana split with syrup and whipped cream, and Carl orders a bowl with 3 big scoops, mint, banana, and vanilla. Grandma gets a medium size chocolate milkshake. We sit down at table 5. After a few minutes, Barbara brings out our ice cream.

What makes Scoops so special is that they have a room in the back that has bins and bins full of toppings you can choose from. We stand up to go and get our toppings. As we are walking, Barbara pulls Grandma into her office. Grandma motions for us to stay there and wait for her.

After about 3 minutes, she comes back out. Carl asks her "What was that about?". I nudge him because he knows it is not polite. Grandma laughs and says she will tell us soon.

Grandma Rosa pushes open the door to the topping room and we go inside. I immediately head for the chocolate sprinkles while my brother goes to the vanilla wafers. After getting my toppings, I look over to see what Grandma and Carl are taking. My eyes land on Grandma. She walks to the corner of the room where the least popular toppings are stored and stops at the black licorice bin. Grandma calls "Come here Carl and Charlie!". We look over at Grandma and go over to the bin. She pulls out the bin to reveal a big hole in the wall connected to a giant yellow slide.

"A slide!!" Carl shouts. I am stunned. How could we never have noticed? Carl is ready to jump on it and slide down but I hold him back. I ask Grandma "Where does this lead to? And how come you never told us?" Grandma Rosa answers, "Come on kids. I'll explain everything as we slide." As much as I want to stop her right there and demand answers, I also trust Grandma and I know she would never put us in danger. I reluctantly get ready to slide but Carl beats me to it and says "Nuh un! Me first!". I roll my eyes and step aside so he can go first. My twin sits on the giant yellow slide. He uses the handlebar to push himself. I watch as he disappears into the distance. I hear Carl shout "This is so cool! Come down here, Charlie!". I sit down at the tip of the slide and hold the handlebars. After pushing myself, I feel the excitement build in this new adventure.

I open my eyes. I didn't even notice that I had them closed. Carl is standing over me while I lay there on something soft and cold. I stand up and realize it is snow! I stand there in awe because we never get to see snow. Since we live in Sydney, Australia, the only time we see snow is on vacation. Carl pulls me away from the slide. A few seconds later, Grandma appears and falls onto the exact spot where I was. I get up, dust myself off, and thank Carl for saving me from being squished. Carl exclaims "The snow is so cool!" My twin opens his mouth to catch the fresh snow. Grandma gets up and opens her mouth to catch snow with my brother. I decide to join them and the 3 of us stand there quietly for a few minutes just catching the snow. Finally, I break the silence by asking Grandma, "Where are we?". She responds with "This is Scoopleville. The name is a mix of the words sprinkle and scoop.". Right after Grandma finishes talking, we hear a noise coming from nearby.

I turn around and hear it again. An angry chirp coming from the bushes. Whatever is in there rustles the leaves and decides to come out. The creature turns to face us. It's a little penguin! But not just any penguin. It is a pink penguin with a strawberry on top. Right behind it, two more penguins emerge from the bushes. A vanilla and a chocolate one! Carl asks, "Why do they all look angry?". Grandma Rosa explains that the penguins think when Barbara opened Scoops she stole their land. They have been fighting for as long as the shop has been open. Barbara made a sturdy ice wall that they had to break through if they wanted to get to us. Yesterday, they got through the ice wall and they started attacking us. Barbara has been able to hold them back but now she cannot. "So Barbara wants us to help?" I ask. Grandma responds "Exactly. Come follow me". She leads us to an ice cave and starts walking. Carl and I follow her into the

ice cave. She motions for us to sit down around a small ice table. Grandma pulls out a little ice potion cauldron and some bottles. First, she put in some neapolitan ice cream. Then, Grandma Rosa adds some sprinkles and wafers. Finally, she inserts some black licorice and mixed it all together with a wand. The potion starts glowing and it turns into a light pink colour. Grandma waves it with her wand one more time. All of a sudden, the potion starts levitating and it separates in 2. Half of the potion comes to me and the other half goes to Carl. Suddenly, I feel like I got hit by lightning. The potion surrounds me and somehow, I absorb it. When it is over, both Carl and I have the same question. "What happened?" we ask in unison. Grandma says that we got blessed by the ice cream shop and something special will happen. My brother gets mad that Grandma is not telling us so he picks up a pebble and throws it at the ground. After Carl throws the rock, he realises that he threw something else with it too.

"An ice cream ball?!" Carl asks quietly. Grandma reveals that the potion gave us magic powers. Whenever we come to Scroopleville, we receive them. I ask Grandma "So what is mine?". She responds with "Try holding out your hand and pointing it towards that pebble." I do as told and the pebble freezes. "Woah my power is so cool!" I say. Grandma responds with "Now let's go protect Scoops against these penguins!".

Outside the cave, the penguins are coming towards our slide. Grandma goes in front to help protect us even though we have powers. My brother starts throwing ice cream balls at the penguins and a few into his mouth! More penguins come from the bushes and Grandma tells me to freeze them. I try to but the penguins are able to dodge it. They start throwing snowballs at us and we use everything we can find to block the snowballs. Grandma Rosa says that if Carl and I combine our powers, we will be able to defeat them. My twin makes a giant ball of ice cream and I hide a big block of ice inside. We throw it at them and it stops some of the penguins, but they are still too powerful.

I suggested that maybe we could just talk to them and make some type of deal. Grandma thinks it is worth a try. We walk over and they waddle close to us. I open the conversation with "Nice to meet you, Neapolitan penguins." They respond with "Chirp Chirp Chirp!". Grandma somehow knows what they are saying and she says they are asking us "What do you want?". I respond with "Can we make a deal?". "Wawk Wawk!" they answer. Grandma says that means "Ok. What's the deal?". I think for a minute and then the perfect idea comes to mind. "What if you guys come work at Scoops?". The Neapolitan penguins all huddle together and talk about it for a minute. Finally, they break the huddle and a vanilla penguin says "Wawk chirp wawkychirp!". Carl asks Grandma Rosa what that means and she informs us that they said yes as long as they can put more toppings in the topping room. Carl and I say in unity "Of course!" and I add "The toppings are a little outdated anyways!".

We lead the penguins to our slide and it magically turns into stairs. I start climbing with Grandma, Carl, and the penguins close behind. We reach the top and go back through the spot where the black licorice bin was. Barbara rushes in to greet us in the toppings room. She looks

-

surprised when the penguins come out too. We explain that we made a deal that they could help run the shop and reorganize the topping bins. Barbara looks so relieved that the fight is over and that she will have extra help managing Scoops so she says “Every year on this day, everyone gets 3 scoops of ice cream for free!”. All the penguins rush toward the counter to get their free scoops while Grandma, Carl and I sit at our table and enjoy our melted ice cream from before this all happened. I say “ Ok, this is actually the best day ever! Even better than our birthdays”. Carl and Grandma both agree with me. We stay there talking and enjoying our ice cream with Barbara and the Neapolitan penguins. The end.



characteristics

Charlie:

Eyes: Ocean Blue

Hair: Havana Brown

Personality: Bookworm. Cares about her clothes. Also crafty

Likes: math class, stuffies, tuna

Hates: Her brother, when she forgets her homework, some adventures

Mom:

Eyes: leafy green

Hair: sparkling amber

Personality; loves to cook, dresses fashionably, takes care of her garden

Likes; math class, muffins,

Hates;

Dad:

Eyes;

Hair;

Personality;

Likes;

Hates;

Carl:

Eyes;

Hair;

Personality;

Likes;

Hates;

Ice penguins:

sprinkle+Scoops= scronple

Mention honorable, 5^e et 6^e années
Honourable Mention, Grades 5 and 6

photo: Darryl Levine



Rivka: Story of a Brave Girl
Maya Isuster

Rivka: Story of a Brave Girl

Written By Maya Isuster

Prologue

Hi, my name's Rivka. I lived during the Holocaust. Being there was pretty traumatizing when I was a kid. I was six years old when I heard a siren for the first time. So, you would expect it to be really scary. When the Holocaust started, I lost all hope. My family was the only thing that could make me feel happy. Being Jewish in the 1940s wasn't fun. Constantly having to hide because of the Germans was pretty scary. I had no idea what to do or even try to do during that time. I couldn't run away because I would most definitely get captured by the Nazis. I wasn't smart when it came to being safe during that mess. If I could go back to the past, I would tell my younger self to be courageous in the times I was in grave danger. Eleven year old me wasn't fully introduced to the darker side of the world. I went through sirens, but I've never seen a Nazi so close to me. Living in Bordeaux was scary sometimes. Hearing gunshots while I try

to sleep makes me gag. Talking with my mom and dad about who we think would die made us laugh a bit when it was funny, but when it was someone I cherished, it really wasn't.

Welcome to my life.

Chapter 1

“Rivka!” My mom yells for me. There’s a siren. The sirens are repetitive so I’m not rushing. Even though I’m not scared, I sprint to the basement. When I get there, I see my little brother Levi. He’s whimpering. I’ve never seen him so quiet during the sirens. He’s always half screaming when he’s frightened. Levi is only three years old, so I’m responsible for everything he does. I have to get him dressed, brush his teeth, cheer him up, keep him safe and so much more. I never thought it was fair that I had to do everything for my brother. He was able to do most of the things I had to do for him. Why was I told to act like Levi’s slave? My dad holds my mom’s and Levi’s hand really tightly, but not mine. My dad always picked favorites with me and my brother. He didn’t like me as much as Levi. My mother once told me he didn’t want a girl, but I feel like there is another reason. I begin to remember the first time I heard a siren. I was six years old when I heard a siren for the first time. I remember fainting because I was afraid. I couldn’t escape or scream out for help. I snap out of it and my mom signals to look behind me. A Nazi who was holding a shotgun was right outside of our small little duplex. I can’t believe what I’m seeing. I’ve never seen someone hold a gun really close to us. He leaves. I breathe out in relief. All of the weight of anxiety comes off of my chest. Close to twenty minutes later, we go back to doing our regular stuff. The

siren finally has stopped. I feel safe now. So, my mom goes back to cooking dinner. My dad lays back into bed to nap because he got almost no sleep last night due to his crazy work schedule. My brother runs around the living room acting like he wasn't bawling not too long ago. I started to write in my diary to make my brain clear and refreshed after what just happened.

August 5th, 1944

Dear diary, this might be the last time I write in my diary. I heard a siren today. Not that strange. I'm a bit scared about the Nazis surrounding our village in Bordeaux. I learnt a new word in French from my mom: Aide. She told me it meant: help. She said I would need to say "Bonjour, vous pouvez m'aider?" if I needed help when we are separated. Anywho, I will be having challah tonight because it is Shabbos. I will also be lighting the candles. How exciting! My father finally permitted me to have another task at Shabbos dinner. I've been waiting (and supposedly whining) for a very long time. I have to go, I hope to write tomorrow.

"Rivka Maya Goldberg go to the kitchen this instant!" My dad hollers. I jump in terror. If he screams at you, you're done for. I rush to the dinner table.

"We were looking through your pile of papers, and we saw something." What could I have possibly done?

"We saw your French exam" What mark did I get? This is the most important test of my report card, it's worth 40%.

"Rikki, It was 95%. You're a genius!" My dad exclaims. Oh. My. Goodness. I got 95%! Madame Deaux said it was near impossible to

reach 90%. My dad goes in for a big hug. A *hug*. He has never even put both his arms on me.

“To show how proud we are, you’ll be doing the candles, the brachot and the speech you’ve been preparing!” *Baruch Hashem!* (*it means: Thank G-d!*) After Shabbos dinner, I presented.

“Dear family, thank you. Thank you Mom, for comforting me when I don’t feel safe. Thank you Dad, for... helping me with homework! Last but definitely not least, Levi. Thank you Levi, for making me happy all the time. If I was asked to live with all of you for forever, I would say “oui” (that means “yes” in French).” Levi giggles. He loves the word “oui” so much. At 8:00, my father puts me to bed. I’m slowly starting to like him. Minute by minute.

“Lila Tov my sweet Rikki” Lila Tov means “good night”. I love when he calls me Rikki. The next day, I put on my school uniform. I have to wear a blue and white striped shirt, a navy skirt and some white socks. Then, I walk to school. When I get there, I go to English class.

“Hey Yael!” I roar to my friend.

“Hi R.K!” she squeals. In English class, we learn about acronyms.

“Someone give me an acronym!” I raise my hand

“Uh.. ASAP?” Mrs. Totherman looks happy.

“Good job... Riva.” She still doesn’t know how to say my name (probably because it’s unique).

“Someone give me another one!” Mrs. Totherman says.

“LASER!” Arthur says. He’s pretty smart, he’d obviously know that one. At the end of period 3, I met up with Yael. I’m flabbergasted once I see her. She has blood all over her face. She’s also sobbing.

“ALL STUDENTS AND TEACHERS TAKE SHELTER DOWN STAIRS!” I don’t listen and I run home, it’s across the street.

“Rivka, what are you doing here? Come in.” my mom says.

Levi is holding onto me. I signal him to put his head on my lap.

Thirty minutes later, I went to bed since the alarms stopped.

“Rikki! We need to talk.” My dad screams from his and my mom’s room. I hurry. Surprisingly, he has a concerned look. My father is never concerned *about anything*.

“Rikki, we are very proud of you for acing your French test, but you have got to start studying for other tests and quizzes. ” It’s so silent you could hear mosquitos flying.

“But dad, I am!” I almost screamed. I cover my mouth fast enough.

“Rikki!” I think my mom might be a bit mad about my tone.

“No you are not. We have never seen you practice nor study for things in class. Please, you need to take it seriously. Throughout the whole school year, you only practiced for the big French exam. Nothing else” He doesn't yell, he whispers. Why? There’s a Nazi outside with a rifle. The Nazi walks away. In my town, no one knows our family’s jewish except for the school I go to. It’s because it’s a jewish school. There’s nothing to do, I might as well write in my diary.

August 6th, 1944

Dear diary, I almost went through a school shooting today. The Germans found the school. I saw Yael with blood on her face at school. She was crying too. I really hope she’s okay. Is she hurt? It looked like she was. My parents said I have to start practicing and

studying for tests and quizzes, even though I already do! They said they don't see me doing it, but I'm always working really hard no matter what it is. They'll never believe me. Do they think everything I say is a lie? Well, it definitely seems like it! Mom and Levi went to Aunt Esther's house. Are they safe? I hope so. I can not live without them. Especially mom, she is literally one of the only people that can make me instantly happy(Yael also makes me really happy). Dad is taking care of me. I have got to go.

“RIVKA! SIREN!” My father howls. I hid with him.

“IST JEMAND HIER!” A Nazi breaks in. I am dead silent. All of a sudden, I feel someone pull my leg. It's the Nazi.

“STOP!” I scream. I keep pulling myself away but he drags me away. Suddenly, I'm in there with a bunch of Jews. Hebrew, French, German, all of them. I only have two things. My diary and a pencil. I see a girl who looks like she's the same age as me.

“Bonjour, pouvez-vous être mon ami?” I say to her in a poor accent. She nods. It's about 8:00 PM so I lay on the muddy ground and close my eyes. Suddenly, I feel someone hit my back really hard. It's that girl again.

“Hey! I saved you.” She whispers to me so we don't get caught.

“Thank you. M-my name's Rivka. Yours?” I responded.

“Your jewish! My name is Ora Katz.” Katz? That's Yael's last name. I have never met someone with that last name other than Yael. She might be Yael's sister. I remember her telling me that she had a long-lost sister somewhere in France, but she doesn't know where. Me and Ora run away onto a bus that says: “ BUS POUR LES CIVILIANS.” in a bold red font. I'm guessing that Ora is from

France. So, we ran on the bus acting normal. A strange old woman gives us a dirty look. We stopped at a weird village called “L’ore”. Me and Ora walk to a river. We rest. I start writing in my diary

August 7th, 1944

Dear diary, I was dragged to a camp. I escaped. I found this jewish girl called Ora. We got onto a bus for civilians only. I’m not a civilian. I grew up in Hamburg, Germany. My family decided to move to Bordeaux because things in Germany weren’t going well. I’m scared to see what would happen next. My life is like a story that progressively gets worse. I got separated from my father. I’m at a river, that’s shining. I wonder what happened with mom and Levi. I hope they didn’t get hurt. My mother is something I can not lose. I technically lost her already. I’m in the middle of this city far away from my village on a quiet river with nobody there. I have got to go now.

While I put my toes in the water, I feel like I might fall in. Suddenly, I dropped into the river. *I can’t swim.* My parents never taught me how to swim since it’s a bit useless in this situation. I’m screaming for help. Ora tries to save me. She pulls as hard as she can. She’s losing strength and energy. I feel like I might die. My parents never let me experience being in a river, lake, pool etc. She drags me back up to safety. I gasp for air. Thank G-d Ora is here with me. If she wasn’t here, I’d be dead. No one would be able to save me. It gets

late. My clothes are soaking wet, I'm freezing and I'm in the middle of nowhere. I see a bus station that could potentially bring us home. How would it work if I just fell into the water? I have no change of clothes. Then, I see a towel behind a tree. Looks like I'm pretty lucky!

"Hey, where do you live in Bordeaux?" I ask while drying myself

"N-no where!" Ora gets shy and almost turns into a ball from embarrassment. She starts biting her nails. Now that I'm dry, we could take the bus. The bus is smelly and falling apart. It desperately needs to be washed outside and inside, for sure. It takes all the way back to Bordeaux. *Strange*. It said it would be a short drive. It took us an hour or more if I'm right. Though, the way they went back to Bordeaux was odd. The bus driver drove through long tunnels, abandoned towns and ran into a trash can. Not a great bus driver if you ask me. When we get there, I look around and I see my house. I run as fast as I can. Dad, Mom and Levi are there waiting for me with soft smiles.

"RIVKA! We thought you were dead." My mom says not too loud as she hugs me tightly. If she screams too loud, a Nazi will notice her and drag her to a camp like me.

"I got dragged into a camp. Ora somehow got us out of there. There was a hole in the wall that was big enough for me and her to go through. Not surprising since I'm so skinny. Eventually, we got on to a bus that took us to a place called "L'ore". We rested at a river. *I*

almost drowned. After, I spotted a bus that took us back here.” I say out of breath.

“Oh Rikki, it must’ve been so hard without us.” My dad said softly. My knees drop and I start sobbing. I can’t stop. Ora and my family comfort me. My mother carries me to bed to get rest after all the stress I went through. Finally someone can understand me. She gives me a used napkin because we can’t afford a lot of tissues.

“I’m going to go to the bakery to get you *pain au chocolat*.” She whispers to me with a soft smile. Ora leaves. I have no idea where she went. Anywho, I hope she comes to school on Monday. She told me that this Monday she will start going to: École Juive de Bordeaux. My school. I wonder if she will be safe alone in the streets. Based on my experience, she won’t. I saw our old neighbor: Isidore Dubois, try to go to the bakery down the road and she got shot. Nothing better will happen to Ora, she’s a child. The Germans hate the jewish children. If Isidore didn’t make it, Ora definitely won't make it either. I miss our neighbor. Every Shabbos, she would come to our house to celebrate since she was lonely. Her husband died before World War 2 started. He had pneumonia. He didn’t make it. I think about how lucky I am to not be dead by now while lying in my bed that’s falling apart. I don’t know how Ora got us out of that camp. Well, it wasn’t well protected. There were holes in the fences due to all the shooting happening in the village. The soldiers were wandering around shooting houses that had no one in it. Next time, they should learn how to make a real camp, or just don’t make one at all. I look out the window to see my mother running in the

streets so she won't get caught. I hear the door open. I'm so glad she's safe. It's nighttime so she shouldn't be out in the streets.

"Rikki, here is your *pain au chocolat*." My mom hands it to me. My mom and dad always try to get as much food they can get for me and Levi. They starve themselves so we could have food and be happy. Every Shabbos dinner, they give us the big challah piece while they save the small piece that only one of them could eat. My dad always gets that piece. He never leaves any for his own wife. Tonight is different, I'm letting my mom have my piece instead of me. Whenever me or my little brother were hungry, she would use up all of her quarters to buy us food. *It's her turn to have a meal*. It's 7:00 PM and I'm getting really tired. I close my eyes. I hear a noise. It sounds like someone fell on the ground. I walk to the kitchen and I see my mom on the ground. She has blood all over her left leg. I think it's broken. At school, we learnt how to take care of someone's leg when it's probably broken. I look around the storage room and I find paper towels. It can double as a cast. I run to my mom and wrap it around her. We don't have a lot of paper towels so we use it all up. I go to the bathroom to get toilet paper. It's really thin. My mom is gushing blood. She's losing more and more. My mother is going to faint any second now. I call for help.

"La jambe de ma maman est cassée!"

"Oh Mon Dieu! Je vais la sauver! Je suis une ex-médecine" I take a deep breath. This person was next to my house, so she's coming very soon. I think my mom's unconscious. I learnt how to do CPR. I need to break her rib for her to fully wake up.

“MOM! WAKE UP!” I scream. I have never experienced anything like this. Thankfully, there’s a hospital only five minutes away from our house so they’ll definitely be here soon. I really hope so. The ambulance gets to our house and puts her on a stretcher. Levi starts crying.

“It’s okay, Levi. The hospital people are going to make mommy better!” I try to cheer him up.

“Mommy gone!” He hugs me. I look at him like I love him, because I do. I bring him to bed and rub his head. I hum a Hebrew song that his teacher at his old daycare used to sing to him. I see Levi smiling. He closes his eyes. I breathe. It usually takes him a really long time to fall asleep. Am I some sort of wizard? I go back to my bed so I can sleep. I feel bad for my father. He has to do everything himself now. His wife is in an ambulance, his daughter is resting and won’t help him; and his son is almost useless. I feel so bad for him that I go to the kitchen and clean up the blood that’s scattered all over the floor.

“Dad, I can do this myself. Go get rest. You look very tired.”

“You look even more tired than me. I am an adult, I got this.” He’s half asleep. I need to help him. He needs rest, too.

“Dad, please. I would love it if you got rest. Just go to sleep.” I responded. He nods and slowly walks to his room. I’m just happy he

can sleep for once. He looks like he went through war, probably because he has. So have I, Levi, mom and everyone in France right now. I find a mop in the corner of his room and I walk out really quietly so I don't wake him up. My dad despises when someone wakes him up when he tries to sleep. His sleep schedule is messed up so you know he cherishes it. I wonder what happened with mom. I don't think she would die because of a leg injury. I've literally never seen that happen to somebody I know. I hope she didn't get hurt while she was in the ambulance. It might've moved too fast that she fell. Well, it surely isn't impossible. I finally finished cleaning up, so I got into bed. I start thinking about Ora. What could've happened to her. Did she get hurt? Did a Nazi catch her? I don't know how, but we clicked so fast. The best part was that she spoke English, so I didn't need to speak French! I hate speaking French so much. For some reason, my pillow is kind of uncomfortable. I think I know why. It's because there's a cockroach on it. I freaked out the second I saw the awful-looking creature. I screech. I am jaw-dropped. I have never seen a cockroach that was so big in my life. Guess what? It's a fake bug. MY DAD PRANKED ME AGAIN. I hate him so much for this. I understand he wants me to have some happiness, but this just makes me feel so much worse. He knows I hate all sorts of bugs. I have had this fear since I was an infant. The thought of bugs makes my skin crawl. I try to forget about it and I close my eyes. I can't sleep. I keep thinking about mom that I just can't sleep. If she passed away, then I would have lost all courage. She is the reason I am courageous. I won't have anyone to encourage and make me feel confident. She is what keeps me going. I only got thirty minutes of sleep last night. I had a dream

that I went to the hospital to see if mom was okay and I saw her dead. That was it. I woke up sobbing. My diary was right next to me and I had nobody to talk to about my feelings, so I started writing.

August 8th, 1944

Dear diary, I slept horribly last night. I had a dream that my mom passed away. I can't live without her. I've genuinely lost all hope at this point. I really hope Ora is safe, same thing with Yael. I'm pretty sure that Yael isn't okay. She was almost shot the last time I saw her. If she is dead, I'm giving up. My mom might be gone. Well, a leg injury can't really kill you, right? She might be dead. I would believe someone if they said she died. I would only have Levi and dad left if Yael and Ora were gone. Oh no. I see a soldier, I must go.

I looked into my window and I saw a soldier with a gun. I look at my dad and his eyes are wide open. Then, a siren goes off. I ran to the basement. I'm scared a Nazi is gonna break in and take me to a camp again.. I grab Levi so he's safe. If I can't be safe, he should. I hear the Germans shooting down people's houses. I hope that doesn't happen to us. To make myself feel calm, I sing a Hebrew song. The one my mom used to sing to me when I went to bed. Levi eventually falls asleep, I do too. When I wake up, the sirens are over; but Levi's gone. Dad's gone too. I begin to realize that I'm in my old neighbour's home. That's really weird. Ever since she passed away, not a single soul has been in her house. I don't even know if it was possible to get here in my sleep. Well, if I'm here, it certainly is. I begin to roam around to see what her house looks like. I can be a

bit nosy sometimes. I'm quite impressed once I see a cupboard full of medals. Almost all of them are gold medals. They're all medals of equestrianism. Wow, I never knew that Isidore did that. She never brought up the topic of equestrianism when she came for Shabbos dinner. I want to go to my house, which is next door, but I'm scared I'll get caught. I take the risk and run. My brother and my dad are nowhere to be seen. I hope they're okay. Anyways, today's a school day, which means I must head to school. I put on my uniform and I walk to school. It takes me a long time to get dressed and do my hair, so by the time I'm done, it's already 8:00 AM. While I walk there, I see Yoseph. He's my friend.

Chapter 3

“Hey Yoss!” I whisper to him. He waves at me with a playful smile.

“Hello Rivka! Welcome.” The security guard at the front of the school says to me, I have French class now. Madame Lacrole starts the class.

“Bonjour mes amis!”

“Bonjour Madame Lacrole!” We start the class with verbs in the past tense. We have a song that we sing to remember some “terminaisons” in the past tense. (that means: ending). Our teacher hums the intro.

“Je? Ais! Tu? Ais! Il ou elle? Ait! Nous? Ions! Vous? Iez! Et finalement, ils ou elles? Aient!” The class chants. All my classes go by so fast that I don’t realize that it’s lunch time. I met with Yael and Ora. Guess what? They’re safe. I was stressed the whole time because I thought they would be hurt.

“What did you learn?” I ask Yael.

“Ah, same old stuff. Nothing new.” We walk to the cafeteria and we eat our lunches. I have a boring egg sandwich, Ora has matzah ball soup and Yael has...nothing. I’m quite surprised. Her parents always give her a good lunch. I wonder if they’re having financial problems and can’t afford food. Last week, she had a small piece of Kugel everyday. Each day the pieces got smaller. I hope everything is okay in her home. I hate seeing my best friend sick.

“Hey Yael! Why don’t you have food?” Ora asks. Yael starts fidgeting with her hands.

“Eh...family situations.”

“FAMILY SITUATIONS?!” I yell. The whole cafeteria heard me. Suddenly, Yael runs out of embarrassment. She probably went to the bathroom. I ran to the bathroom without permission. If it’s for my friend, I don’t care.

“Yael? Are you here?” I ask. I hear her sob.

“Rivka. Go.” She’s mad.

“But-”

“LEAVE!” She screams loudly. I’ve never seen my best friend like this. I’ve never made her this mad.

“Please Yael! I’m sorry!” I beg.

“NO! YOU’RE NOT SORRY!” Woah. She’s *mad*. I leave the bathroom and return to my seat in the cafeteria

“Is Yael okay?” Ora asks with a confused expression.

“Not now.” I say. The last 10 minutes of lunch time is silent. I don’t talk to Ora and she doesn’t talk to me. Our teacher brings us to the classroom. We learn about synonyms. That is so boring! Nobody knows what a synonym is except for me. The whole class was so boring. I pretty much answered all the questions that my teacher asked correctly. At the end of class, I walk home. When I walk, I greet Monsieur Simone. He’s our science teacher. Once I get home, I can’t find dad or Levi. I’m not surprised. My English teacher announced that we have a test on Thursday about acronyms, synonyms and homophones. That’s super easy. I’m 100% going to ace this test. I sit at my small little desk in my room and I start writing down the stuff I need to know in my notebook. I study for almost an hour. Afterwards, I walk to the fridge to see if there’s any food. It looks like I’m not eating dinner today. It’s fine I guess. I go

back to studying. The last thing to study is homophones. It's not super easy. The whole class sort of struggles with homophones. The hardest is probably they're, there and their. I hate those three.

What do you mean I have to use three different spellings for a word that sounds the exact same? It's just so annoying! At least I'm not studying French. French stuff isn't my greatest strength. The accents are just super confusing. After almost an hour or two, I put on my cardigan to go to the bakery. I hesitate to put on my necklace that has a Jewish star, but I still put it on. As I walk, I see a group of three teenage boys laughing together.

“Ew! That girl is Jewish!” One of them says, he can see my necklace. That's just great.

“Dirty Jew!” A little boy that's behind them shrieks. I'm guessing that he's their brother.

“You're right Timothy! Jews are dirty!” The older brother responds. I stand there in fear. I don't know what to do. Running away is the only thing that could help.

“She's running! The dirty Jew is scared!” The youngest says. He looks like he's very amused. They laugh. I gag. I ran into the bakery as fast as I could.

“Bonjour madame. Qu'est que tu veux?” The baker asks.

“Une croissante... s'il vous plaît.”

“Woah, juste une croissante?” He asks. I nod.

“Okay madame.” Three minutes later, I hear the bell at the counter ring.

“Hey French guy! Give us that chocolate thing!” It’s those stupid boys again. My life is simply miserable. I put on my hood from my cardigan and put my hair down so they don’t realize I’m there.

“Remember that girl we saw?” One asks.

“Henry, that was like five minutes ago. This isn't some sort of memory from a couple years ago!” They laugh together, again.

“Oh Maximus, stop acting like you’re smart. You’re failing all your classes!” Henry says. Maximus gives him a weird look. They look at each other and start giggling. The baker gives my croissant and I leave.

“Hey Rivka! Hey!” Talia screams from her window. I wave back. When I get home, I hear a loud bang. Pretty scary. I walk to my parents’ room and I find my mother picking up something from the ground.

“Mom!” I run and hug her.

“Rikki, I missed you.” She hugs me back. All of a sudden, she drops to the ground. I think the people at the hospital gave her some sort of drug.

“MOM! PLEASE WAKE UP!” I yell. She’s still unconscious. There’s nothing I can do. CPR is the only thing that could help. After hitting her chest like 30 times, she still doesn’t wake up. What if she’s *dead? Dead*. I really hope she isn’t dead. May G-d heal her and bring her to safety. I opened the window, and yelled.

“Quelqu’un! Sauvez ma maman!” . My mom just came back from the hospital and now she has to go back. While I’m on the call, the memories of screaming out the window last time gets into my head. Last time I called for help, I was trembling and my face looked like a tomato. The person on the phone says they’ll be here in around 4 minutes. That’s too long. My mom is dying. I checked her heartbeat, it’s really slow.

“MOM! WAKE UP!” I screamed. She starts panting and gasping for air.

“Rikki...” Then, her eyes close. The people from the hospital break into my house. Good thing they made it here in time.

“Hello! Is this your mother” She can speak English too. I nod

“Please take her! She might be dead!” I sob.

“I’ll try to save her as fast as possible.” The girl says. They carry her on a stretcher. To get that out of my mind, I go to the shop that’s next to my house. I need to get some pencils and a notebook. I’ve

filled up my other notebook so it's time for me to get another one. My last one had a blue with green sparkles cover. I put on my school cardigan because I can't find my other one. I only have to walk for 10 seconds and I'm there. The man who works there greets me with a nice smile. Every time I'm here, I get a notebook and pencils. He gives me my things and I pay. My wallet is all dirty when it comes out of my pocket. The things are barely holding on. It's time for me to get another one. I'll get it tomorrow, at the shop. When I step outside, it starts pouring. There's no umbrella in sight. It's okay, I live extremely close. But the rain frightens me a bit. Opening the door, it seems as if someone broke in. One of the windows is shattered, the kitchen table has scratches and the lights are out. Who broke in? Maybe it was one of those stupid boys! Or was it a Nazi? All of a sudden, I heard laughing behind me. While turning around, one of those boys threw my diary at me.

“Hey dirty Jew! We read your stupid diary!” The oldest slaps his knee while laughing. All I want to do is just disappear into existence. How can someone be this rude and disrespectful? That's it, it's time to stay at Yael's house. Her house was always my Plan B when something bad was happening at home. What if she's still mad at me? Whatever, she wouldn't just kick me out of her house, right? Let's just hope Yael isn't mad anymore after the *incident*. The breeze blows my hair into my face. It's the middle of summer, so the wind is needed. It's very hot here in France. I knock on her door and her mom opens it. She slams the door on me immediately. Someone's mad, aren't they? Great. Time to go back to my destroyed house. Yael's mom is pretty impolite. She's an adult and

she's acting like this towards a child because of a stupid fight. Not such a great example, isn't she? Whatever, I'll just go back to my destroyed home. Opening the door, the rude boys are nowhere to be seen. *Good.* Suddenly, I hear someone's voice. It sounds like my dad's voice.

"Oh, honey. Someone came into our house, gotta check who it is." My father walks to the door.

"Rivka! I missed you so much" My dad goes in for a 'welcome home' hug. The best hug someone can receive. *My favorite hug.*

"Rikki!" My mom says. Her and Levi join the family hug. I can't remember the last time my family had a group hug. Just imagine if Isidore Dubois joined it! Wouldn't that be funny?

"Alright, Alright— I laughed— I missed all of you! I'm tired. So, bye!" My dad brings me to bed to get a good rest. I need it. This is the perfect time to write in my diary.

August 9, 1944

Dear diary, I'm finally safe with my family. I'm not alone anymore. Where were they though? They might've been kidnapped or brought somewhere. Well, they're safe. Time to go to bed. Good night.

"Rikki, sleep tight" He kissed my forehead. For the first time, I didn't wipe a kiss away. Time to go to bed. Good night, myself.



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