Short Story Collection
Gloucestershire Hospital Education Service
This collection of short stories is dedicated to the memory of

Alisha Rajeev
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We would like to say a very special Thank You to each of the young people who have contributed to this collection and to Jake and Jemma for their fabulous illustrations. We hope that you have enjoyed the writing process and that you are as proud of your achievements as we are. Also, our thanks to your parents and carers who have encouraged and supported you.

Our message to you all is to keep reading good writing and to keep writing good reading!

Thanks also to the Hospital Education Service team who have supported and encouraged students in their writing and inspired them to produce such high quality, thoughtful and creative work.

We have greatly appreciated the StarPrint team at the National Star College for producing, printing and publishing our collection. Thank you all, it has been a real pleasure to work with your team.
Introduction

We at the Gloucestershire Hospital Education Service are delighted to present our collection of short stories.

Over the past year, we have invited our students to take part in a short story writing challenge. It has been exciting to observe the energy, enthusiasm and commitment which students have expended on this enterprise and the results really do speak for themselves.

There is a wealth of imagination and creativity apparent as well as some complex and sophisticated manipulation of language and linguistic devices used for effect and carefully crafted stylistic work. Students have learned about some of the technical aspects of creative writing, the drafting, proof reading and redrafting process and about working to a deadline.

As an adult, to be asked to go away and write a creative short story would fill me with dread...where on earth to start? But these young people have risen to the challenge and produced some fabulous writing.
What is a ‘short story’?

Like all literary genres, the ‘short story,’ has its literary conventions and devices. Inevitably, a truly masterful wordsmith doesn’t always conform to an exact formula, but as a rule of thumb, a short story should have at least some if not all of the following devices:

   Exposition

This is where background information is communicated to the reader. It is the point of ‘world-building.’ It could be information about the setting or the characters and their backstories.

   In medias res

This is a Latin phrase used by the poet Horace, meaning ‘in the middle of things.’ This is where the writer begins the story in the middle, so that the reader is sufficiently intrigued and hooked to want to read on and to catch up.

   Inciting incident

This is the point or event which brings about the problem or complication in the story.

   Rising action

This is where the problem escalates. Suspense and tension builds towards the point of interest.

   Climax

The crucial, decisive moment of the story; the most dramatic and exciting point. Perhaps the exposure of the villain or the point at which something which has been hidden is discovered.
What is a 'short story'?

Falling action/resolution
This is what happens when the conflict or complication has been resolved.

Denouement
The final outcome of the story, where all the loose ends are tied-up. All aspects of the story are resolved.
Descriptive writing

Descriptive writing isn’t, ideally, an end in itself but it can be used as part of a narrative in order to help the reader to imagine or visualise a scene, a character, an aspect or something specific. It has its own conventions and requires, in short, some or all of the following:

Sensory description – using the 5 senses. What can the narrator see, hear, touch, taste or smell?

Use of adjectives (words which describe nouns). For example – the aquamarine ocean. Using the adjective aquamarine helps the reader to visualise the colour of the ocean.

Imagery – painting word pictures perhaps using similes or metaphors, again in order to enable the reader to create a picture in their minds. For example: The aquamarine ocean shimmered like a precious jewel.
The Fairy Tale

The Fairy Tale is a special narrative genre, originally from the oral literary tradition. Fairy Tales are short stories featuring folkloric, fantasy characters such as elves, pixies and gnomes and often set in magical or enchanted settings.

There are fundamentally four parts to traditional Fairy Tales:

The presentation of an initial setting.

The presentation of a problem, or complication.

A hero or heroine character is entrusted to resolve the problem.

A ‘happily-ever-after’ resolution and ending.

Other features might be - familiar opening and/or ending phrases:

*Once upon a time...and they lived happily ever after.*

A dramatic contrast between good and evil characters.

Royalty – Kings, queens, princes and princesses.

Poverty – a poor family or people struggling to live.

Good often triumphs over evil.
Cat Story
Kate Bailey, Y11

Cat Story

I swagger down the hall. I swagger down the hall with all the confidence in the world. I deftly catch a piece of fluff, which whizzed past me. Arrogantly, I am the best cat in the world. Neatly, I spray a coat I had discovered, lying on the floor. I march through the house with my stomach swaying from side to side. I am a beautiful beast. I am a black and white creature, with a human-like personality. I constantly have to stop to catch my breath. I weigh 3 stone. I am a tremendous creature.

I am like a king. It is the dead of night. Everything is pitch black, but there is a light shining brightly, like a star from one of the bedrooms. I hear nothing but the creek of the floor as the lower cats walk on the ice cold floor. It is freezing. Outside, I can see the ground filled with a blanket of white. The other houses sparkle, as if they are covered in fairy dust. I hear the quiet but steady ticking of an old clock, as if it is warning me of the time. I am glorified. I am in a cosy house looking out on my kingdom, at all the lowly souls out there in the cold. I feel the warm ground beneath my feet and the warm atmosphere surrounding me. I can almost smell the cold, but the smell of cooking fills my nostrils as the sky slowly turns red. It is dawn, reminding me that my attackers will be back soon.

Suddenly, I hear a herd of cats and a bang. It is the monsters and they have come for me. Six pairs of eyes stare at me
from the doorway, glaring, gloating, gazing. These ghastly creatures are my attackers, the ones who chase, rip and bite at me. They are the ones who bully me. They are the monsters. They stand tall and proud. Three black bruisers and two grey ghouls. Their fur shines in the morning light and shimmers as the morning gets lighter. It is like magic dust, making even these creatures look tame. They let out growls and hisses, threatening me, terrorising me. I am not scared. I bravely square up to them, even though I can smell danger in the air. I hear the noises around me, the chatter, the bangs, the clicks, of people getting up and rising from their sleep, unaware of the danger I am in. I see these tigers. They still stand tall and proud. I can feel the atmosphere grow tense as they appear to get angrier and angrier.

Quickly, one of the black cats lunges at me. I am buried underneath a blanket of grey and black. The noise is deafening. The lead cat rips and tears like a tiger. He lays into me as I lie there, helpless. I don’t know what to do. I am alone with these animals. These are animals which are friendly. They are friendly with everyone, except me. I am singled out. I am alone. I am bullied.

I try to run away and escape, but they chase me, capture me and claw at me. And then, I am free! But I soon feel the familiar bites and scratches. I howl and I screech, but no one comes. I am not rescued and I am not saved. I am stuck, pinned to the floor. All I can see is black. I can smell blood. I can feel the bristly fur against me, the claws and the teeth.
Magically, a person walks out. A life-saver. I am no longer alone. But they reach past me, picking up the black monster that first ripped into me and began the violence. Its followers go after him. Once again I am left alone. I sadly sit and watch them. They are hugged and they are loved. They are smothered, the way I wish to be. But I am not. I feel abandoned. “I love you little Whisky,” and “come here Roo darling,” is all I can hear as I am left, outside in the cold. I am terrified to go in. I fear these monsters. I cower down like a mouse.

Until “Come here darling,” I hear. My immediate thought is, ‘Oh no! There’s another cat out here.’ But none appear. Then I wonder, ‘Are they talking to me?’ They are! Finally I feel loved, no, I am loved! I feel elated, so joyful! “What are you doing out there in the cold?” I am asked. I slowly lift up my head and a massive smile spreads over my face. I begin to purr, like a motor. I feel warmth. I am fed. The food tastes phenomenal. I am ecstatic. I feel wonderful, much better than I have done in a long time.
I am Scared

“I am scared,” shivered Emma as they were on the plane.

“We all are going but we’ll be fine,” replied Mum. The family were about to land and they got everything ready for the great adventure on another island.

After they arrived at the unknown island they began to walk on the soft sand. It got windier and windier and Dad held on to the map so he wouldn’t lose it because it was their only map. As they struggled through the sand they could smell the salt from the clear blue sea.

Then suddenly, the wind blew stronger and the map blew away. Slowly, the wind started to calm down. “What are we going to do?” cried Mum.

“We’ll find a way out,” moaned Dad.

“We’re hungry!” complained the children.

“There is food in the blue rucksack!” shouted Mum. So the family started eating and they all tried to think of a plan to get out.

“I’ve got an idea. There is a man who lives in the cave we passed and he will know the way out,” cheered mum. So the whole family set off to find the mysterious man who lived on this island.
The cave was dark and gloomy but the family were not scared because this was their only hope. They went into the cave and saw the man. He was tall and very smelly, with big blue eyes and sharp teeth. Despite his rough appearance he was a kind man.

The family asked if the man knew the way out of the island. He smiled, “Come with me.” The family followed the man and found their way home on the man’s boat.

As a Thank You, the family gave the man the remaining food and the blankets they had. The family got home safely and began planning their next adventure.
A Day Fishing with My Dad

As we approached the fishing lake, I caught a glimpse of a large fish on the surface. A big, black body with a gaping mouth. Only one word to describe it... Carp.

We geared up and settled down onto the little wooden pier. I opened up a lime green container.

"Eurgh."

Wriggling around were all sorts of grubs: cherry red ones, golden yellow and jungle green ones.

Once I had gotten over the vomit-inducing maggots (and had some on my line), I cast my rod overhead. Time had frozen... It was beautiful. A shimmering water, hiding secrets as deep as the bottom of the lake, surrounded by a dense layer of trees, making home to birds and bugs alike and a rod sitting in the water, tempting fish to bite.

As time sped up again, my line shot downwards. I was excited. This was it. After 30 seconds of solid feeling and pulling, I realised it was a small but feisty fish. Suddenly I began to lose my footing on the damp wood.

It all happened so quickly. I was in the lake. I was damp and sticky and wanted to go home, but I persevered and got myself out of the lake. As fear struck me, I thought I had lost my rod in the process of all this madness. I spotted it about 10 feet away. I was Usain Bolt! As soon as I yanked the rod, the fish was off...
I looked around, staring in astonishment. The usually busy streets of London would now be empty if it weren't for the seemingly endless piles of litter blanketing the roads, adding colour to the dull greys and browns of the buildings surrounding me. The early morning sky was the same grey as the pavement I walked on.

Not a single noise could be heard besides the whoosh of the wind and my gentle breathing. No cars. No people. No birdsong. Nothing. I continued on at a slow pace across London Bridge, carefully pressing my bare feet to the cold cement, stepping around the litter. I stopped in my tracks every now and then in an attempt to detect any sounds or a simple movement from something – anything in the distance. Still nothing.

‘What is going on?’ I thought to myself, for probably the hundredth time in the last ten minutes. It’s impossible for London to be so quiet, so empty. Same goes for anywhere in the world. There were no apparent signs of life; not even a single bird flying in the sky above me. My confusion outweighed my fear. I had so many questions, but how was I going to answer them? How and who will answer them?

After being in a coma for a month, this was not how I expected my return to be.
London Streets

I had been in a coma, only waking up what must have been an hour from right now. I had fallen into a coma at the end of last month after an almost fatal car accident. Another thing I didn’t know was what had happened to whoever else may have been involved in the collision.

Unsurprisingly, the hospital was empty when I woke. I remained clothed in a bright green hospital gown.

The breeze grew stronger, the stench of the waste leaving a vile taste in my mouth. The silence was almost deafening. Dazed, I stopped in front of the Houses of Parliament. I looked down at my attire. The thin, itchy material clung to my body as it struggled against the wind. I only faintly remembered the car crash, losing consciousness immediately after the impact. I didn’t know much else of what happened. Confusion still overwhelmed me. What could have happened in these twenty-eight days? Looking around me once again, I still saw no sign of other life, no movement besides my own, my shadow, and the rubbish blowing in the wind. I was alone. That thought certainly scared me.

I managed to continue walking for quite some time. The sun reaching higher was my only way of knowing that time had passed. Exhausted, I sat on the curb facing the quiet road and many parked cars. Two minutes had passed before I got up. The chances of finding out something, anything about the abandonment of the entire city were slim, yet my mind wouldn’t allow me to stop. At a slow and steady pace, I continued in the same direction on the path.
My walk was soon cut short.

I had walked past a small gift shop. A huge crack almost the entire width of the shop window had caught my eye. None of the buildings I had passed previously had appeared to look damaged or abandoned in the slightest and I had dismissed the lack of customers, of course. I was somewhat curious about the damage. There were a few shards of glass decorating the ground in front of me. This clearly had to have happened recently, before everything and everyone disappeared.

It surprised me that I was even more confused than before. I stared at my reflection. The crack in the window split my reflection in two. Carefully, I put a hand up to the broken glass.

“Huh,” I said to myself. I traced the many small lines coming off it. I brought my hand back down to my side again and looked in each direction to see which way I should go. I stared back at the glass.

The eyes staring back at me weren’t mine...
One Busy Day

One busy day, Winnie Witch was making potions in the dungeon in her castle. This was one of her favourite things to do. Another one of her favourite things was to eat treats, like slimy slugs, juicy worms and unshaved rats.

Her dungeon had talking walls and so she was never lonely. Once, the wall did stop talking to her and so she decided she would have a cat, a black cat that talked. After a while, one cat wasn’t enough and so she decided to get some from the village down the lane…

Sophie was usually nice to everyone, but one morning she saw her friend and his cat. Her friend was called Daniel and his cat was called Fluffy. It was a beautiful sunny day and Daniel wanted to go and play outside with Sophie so he climbed carefully through the window so that Sophie couldn’t hear him. Suddenly he shouted as loudly as he could, “HELLO!”

Sophie nearly jumped out of her skin. Fluffy ran into Sophie’s wardrobe to hide.

“Daniel, what do you think you are doing in my room!?”

“Sorry, I didn’t mean to scare you,” Daniel said sadly, “I just wanted to have some fun today.”

Back at the dungeon, Winnie Witch was watching them all
through her magic globe. Winnie had set up globes all around the dungeon using her magic wand.

When Winnie saw Fluffy jump into the wardrobe, she wiggled her tall, stripy hat and said, “Abracadabra… I turn you invisible and bring you to my kingdom.”

In a flash, Fluffy was sitting on Winnie’s broomstick. Winnie flicked her wand, “Kazam! You can be a chatterbox cat!”

Fluffy said, “I am a chatterbox”

The witch says, “Yes Fluffy, you are.”

Back in Sophie’s bedroom, the children were panicking. Sophie said to Daniel, “When we find Fluffy you can have her back.”

They spent all afternoon looking, but nobody had seen Fluffy. Eventually they got to the end of the village, so they came into the house and Winnie Witch led them to the dungeon.

She slammed the door and had a grin on her face. They look yum yum! Licking her lips, she left them for two whole weeks without food. They were so thin and skinny.

Fluffy came over to where they were being kept. “Look out of the window,” she said, “slide me out and then get out of here…”
Meanwhile, Mum had called the police. The whole village and then the police spotted Sophie and Daniel as they slipped out of Winnie Witch’s window. They were so ecstatic to see them.

The police then went in but Winnie had shrunk and all of her stuff had gone with her. The Police returned to take Fluffy the cat back to its owner.

Sophie and Daniel were playing nicely and then a puff of smoke appeared in the wood, but Sophie and Daniel did not see.
The local shop was a small little thing situated on the corner of a busy road and a quiet housing estate. The surrounding area was neither run down nor up market, just your average neighbourhood. However, the shop itself was looking a little work for wear. The window was covered in advertisements from ‘Zumba’ to ‘pets for sale’ and lost items posters from years ago. Although old, above the window was a long, rectangular sign which brightened up the place with its vibrant yellow background. To the left was a small red sign which would easily be missed, advertising that ‘The Sun’ newspaper was sold here.

Inside there was ripped up, stained and sticky lino on the floor, old broken shelves on the walls and the floor was punctuated with some barely running fridges and freezers along the middle. Various items littered the shelves and the lucky dip baskets, from household goods and magazines for adults to 10p sweets and cold or frozen goodies for excited children hungry for a treat. Incense sticks gave off potent but sweet smells adding to the already fragrant air. Behind the counter, at the back of the store sat the friendly Asian man who ran the shop, sitting there all day watching DVD’s as if he was part of the furnishings, only getting up to serve and talk, but never a smile would leave this man’s face.

The mornings were quiet, for only a few would pop in; a sleepy teenager with heavy metal blaring from his phone,
reporting for his paper round and a smartly dressed
businessman, whistling a sweet little melody, looking for a
snack and a newspaper to take with him on his commute.
Outside, you could hear a delivery lorry unloading its freshly
baked goods, with their confused smells ranging from
aromatic spices, sweet cinnamon to fresh thyme.

The clock ticked slowly until eleven o’clock when the gentle
tapping of a walking stick could be heard as a frail old lady
gingerly climbed the step into the shop for her daily chat.
Then came the hustle and bustle of the lunch time trade, as
the sweaty couriers arrived with a sense of relief, knowing
that their hectic day was half done and looking for their
pastry fix to quell their pangs of hunger.

The narrow aisles were now bursting at the seams, as what
felt like millions of muddy and wounded school children with
blood and mud on their royal blue jumpers rushed in giggling,
shouting and knocking things over. It was busy-rush hour, with
boisterous little ones clamouring for attention. You could taste
the anticipation in the air. Leaving their bikes and scooters in
a tangled mess on the pavement outside, they rustled their
brown paper bags as they filled them with Pick’n’Mix. Two
girls squabbled over the last Strawberry Lace, tearing at each
other’s ponytails. For some, the excitement was too much to
handle and they started to cry. Their parents were not far
behind, pushing prams and buggies yelling at them to be
careful and not to spend too much but to no avail, as the
damage had already been done.
The shopkeeper, weary and tired, finally put shutters up in front of the windows and doors as the sun started to set, creating a mesmerising orange sky. With no one around there was peace at last upon this small local shop.
In Memory

Mikey Grimmett, Year 11

In memory of those who fought and lost their lives in battle

In the distance is a waste land of mud. Nervously, the soldiers wait, frozen, soaked and utterly exhausted; saying their prayers, as the watch ticks, as slowly as loneliness. The trench is like a swamp, no shelter, narrow and swimming with stinking water which squelches under their old, ragged boots. The smell of smoke hangs in the ice cold wind, the taste of ash reaches their tongues, as the falling bombs explode all around. The bitter cold numbs their fingers, so their cobalt hands can no longer grip their weapons.

Suddenly, the whistle blows. The soldiers rise to fight, perhaps for the last time. As they climb the ladder they say one final prayer for their family, friends and perhaps most of all, for themselves. The air is filled with a clamour of noise. The sounds all compete; they can hear the screams from other soldiers, cannons and rifles firing and bombs exploding like predators. Everywhere, the sky is lit as if by fireworks. Mud grips the soldiers as if it intended to hold them back, as they charge forward, towards the enemy.

As shells hit the earth with deadly thuds, comrades fall to the sodden ground everywhere they look. Anxiously, soldiers further back watch their friends fall like bowling pins before them. They smell the metallic blood from their brothers’ bodies. Soldiers hear the rat-a-tat of machine gun fire hitting friends as they scream in pain, like wounded animals.
Suddenly, a young private cries out in ferocious agony. The youngster stops in his tracks, drops his gun onto the soggy and hell-like floor. As the bullet wounds him, he stops dead still, as if something has spooked him from afar, like a horse scared by a distant crow. Slowly the soldier crumples to the dirt like a rain drop falling from the summer sky. He lies on his back, his now unseeing chocolate brown eyes gazing at the sky, as if waiting for the heavens to open and carry him home.

All of a sudden, quietness falls. The bombs stop falling and the noise is silenced. The soldiers’ screams turn to whispers in the wind as they close their eyes with the setting sun. The fields that once grew crops are now full with bodies that will never grow in that wasteland. The fear can be felt, hanging in the air like a ghost. Everything is smothered in the same blood-stained mud, making it look like a giant slaughtered beast. In time, the ruby poppies will bloom in memory of the lost and lonely souls that fought long and hard for their lives, and lost.
Sacred Forest

I walked with pure excitement, knowing what lay ahead; my memories restored. The air was newly born, so soft on my senses but, to my surprise, no birdsong. No symphony from the song thrush, no ballad from the black bird or racket from the robin. It was odd, but it did knock me back to a time of peace and tranquillity. I saw that sacred forest of mine with leaves, a collection of different shades of green. Some looked like the fresh skins of limes. Others, as dark as the scales on a lizard’s back dampen my mood.

My feet became sore as I strolled across the rocky path. I noticed that nature had reclaimed it. Human contact must have been quite rare. I reached the mouth of the forest. As I walked into the jaws of the great, green dragon, the scent of the air started to change. Deeper and deeper, I was swallowed down into the throat of the beast. The smell was overwhelming, making my stomach churn. I felt vomit brewing. All I saw was darkness approaching, a satanic taint. What on earth had infected this garden of heaven?

As I marched on through the forest, the transition from light to dark made my blood curdle. The trees became bare, their leaves lost in the darkness. Left were just a few strong offspring, clinging tightly onto their exhausted parents. I remembered clearly that there used to be wide variety of trees from the strong and muscular oak to the elegant and attractive silver birch. But now they all looked the same. The
bark was black with a hint of grey and the branches were thin and brittle, wailing like frightened children. They were like skeletons whose flesh and identity had been taken away from them. Observing their soulless shells brought a tear to my eye.

Suddenly, I tripped. My stunned body started to sink. I had landed in a pit of mud. It held me with a tight grip. The stubbornness of this slime-like creature was frustrating. If I tried to escape, it gripped tighter. In my struggle I caught a glimpse of a spear-shaped branch. I instantly reached for it, my hand fumbling through the foliage, and seized the wooden weapon. I drove the spear into the beast until it released me, allowing my escape. I stood upon my kill heroically, but then I caught sight of what I had tripped upon.

The creature lay there, motionless. Its fur was matted with dried blood. The metallic smell was so strong that I could taste it. It seemed as if the creature’s spirit had been sucked right out of it, leaving a torn corpse behind. The only life left was in the form of the sons and daughters of the god of the vile and grotesque: maggots. There was a whole civilisation of them, feeding upon the rotten flesh of the deceased beast. Even the sight of those pale, worm-like undertakers made me shiver. I left the corpse in disgust. I was determined to find the stimulus of this chaos.

I ran through this Forest of Hell to find its heart. It was a barren wasteland, filled with darkness and despair. I covered every nook and cranny, searching for the heart. My mind was occupied with many questions: What had happened? What
had slain the deer? Where should I go now?

I stumbled, falling to my knees. I tried to get back up on my feet but it was too late. I was plucked from the ground in a tight grip. I lifted my head and screamed in fear. The being that held me was indescribable. The queer beasts had the torso of a man and the bottom half of a goat. It had twisted horns like cork screws and the eyes of a demon. I tried to escape but it was no use. Its grip was so strong. The demon brought its free hand above me; its sharp, ebony finger nail cut through my shirt, leaving my chest bare. It raised its putrid finger above me again, but this time for another purpose. Lightly, it cut through my skin several times leaving a bloody pentagram upon my chest. After that it dropped me to the ground and then evaporated into the night.

The touch of terror drove my heart to madness. I could not take it anymore.

The taint had started to infect me. My skin turned white like bone and the pulsating veins engraved across my body grew thicker under my skin and were as black as the night. I trembled in fear as my transformation began. I knelt in front of a puddle and I looked at my reflection. My hair was grey like the pelt of a wolf. My eyes were red like the fires of Hell and my teeth turned to fangs that a beast would be proud of. I cried tears of blood.
The Adventures of Supertato

Supertato entered the kitchen with super speed. He looked around suspiciously at the fridge which was open. Then a streak of lightning struck Potato World and lots of bad guys came out. Then their ship set fire.

Supertato called the Justice League.

Supertato hid behind a tree. The justice league parachuted down into the tree. Suddenly, a shooting star landed and the star spawned into an immense mutant squid.

“The battle begins!” shouted Supertato, bravely.

Peaman got TNT from a mutant creeper and blew up the superhero’s base, but Supertato mashed Peaman up with his pea masher. Peaman yelled, “Save Me!”

Then, Vampire Pig Fox cut Mutant Creeper’s leg off and Mutant Creeper fainted. Suddenly, Vampire Pig Fox got Mutant Creeper’s gun and shot him dead. Rabby was running around with super speed and saw Evil Stick Guy, who was about to blow up the world. Rabby laserized him in a flash. Evil Stick Guy blew up.

Then, out of nowhere, appeared Mutant Squid who was going to destroy the world. Zombie Spider was riding Mutant Squid’s back. Supertato got an axe and killed Mutant Squid.

They all killed Zombie Spider together. The team rebuilt the base.
I didn’t ask for a dragon as a pet…

A few weeks ago my Mum bought me a dragon. Originally, I asked for a hamster, but one day Mum came home with a dragon. She walked through the door with a massive box and shouted, “Ethan, come downstairs and see what I’ve got!”

So I ran downstairs and saw a massive box lying on the table. My mum told me to open the box, so I did. The massive box burst open and out popped a humongous dragon.

“AaaahhHH” I shouted.

This dragon looked scary! It was the size of a car and it smelt as though it had been living down in the sewers for 2 years. It sounded like a broken violin and felt spiky and hard.

After a few weeks, the dragon and I started to hang out. We started listening to music on my mp3 player and watch TV together. When I went to school, the dragon would get bored and try to work the TV and mp3 on his own. He couldn’t work them, so he waited until I came home that day. When I got home the dragon looked sad so I asked questions about what was wrong until I asked him about the mp3 and TV and the dragon smiled. I soon realised that he couldn’t work them, so I showed him. Now, every time I go to school the dragon will be happy.
I didn’t ask for a dragon as a pet...

I had had the dragon for 1 week and decided to call him Larry.

One day, out of the blue, there was a knock at the door. Standing there, on the doorstep was a man in a posh suit with 10 other men behind him. He said “Good afternoon. My name is Agent Zoil. I work for the government. I have been informed that a dragon has been spotted in your back garden and we have come to take it back to headquarters where we will locate a new home for him as he cannot live here.”

The men came in and tied the dragon down as a tear slid down my cheek. The men in suits put Larry in an enormous truck. As the men were getting in to drive away, I said goodbye to Larry as it was for the best. I slipped my mp3 player through the metal bars of the truck so that Larry could listen to music and hopefully be happy in his new home.

The men drove off as I looked at Larry and waved goodbye, as did my mum. Both Larry and I started to cry as tears poured out of our eyes. I wiped my tears and went inside and tried to carry on as normal.

That was the story of a very special dragon, called Larry.
He was well built, strong, with broad shoulders and a wide jawline which framed his muscular face. His small blue eyes matched his petite lips, yet his delicate face contradicted, ironically his job. He was a soldier; part of an army of trained, professional killers.

It was normal day in Camp Bastian, Afghanistan, which had become his new home. He had woken up on a bright morning with the sun shining through the roof of the tent as he awoke from his sleep. He still felt tired because it was never quiet at the camp. There were constant gunshots in the distance and perpetual shouting, making it difficult to fall into a deep slumber.

He got up, slipped into his uniform and crawled out of his tent as he had done day in and day out over the last days and months. The sandy ground danced in front of the sun while the breeze wafted grains of dust and sand up to his knees. Men were lining up at the food stand waiting for breakfast, innocently chatting away. No-one would ever have guessed that these men would end countless lives that day. Not least John Watson.

John had been on the battlefield for 16 weeks. He had been walking through this derelict village for hours now, searching for snipers, poised and ready to kill. He walked into an old church, observing the boat-like ceiling and eerily quiet aisle.
As his heavy boots fell to the ground, a low echo was sent around the room. The church was barren. Eerily barren. The Sergeant yelled, “Some help out here!” John hurried up the steps and pulled out his gun. As he went to pull the trigger, he was looking into the sniper’s eyes. He felt nothing. The life he might have gone on to lead… Nothing. This was the moment he realised he had become desensitised. John took a sharp shot and watched as the sniper’s body flopped to the ground, a lifeless lump of bones and flesh. John turned and walked away, with eyes as dry as a desert stream.

Hannah was short and stocky. She had jet black hair, as dark as the night sky. Her eyes were bright blue and blonde and shone through her fringe of hair. As she pushed back her sleeves to put her hands into the sink, she revealed two arms stained with ink. Words were scribed, ‘Dad’, and ‘Baby Amelia,’ also vivid illustrations of family and friends. She was a soldier, committed to saving lives. She pushed her hair back, wrestling it down with a mouthful of bobby pins. She gazed at her reflection in the mirror and wondered how she had ever got to this place of death, this graveyard.

She had always wanted to work with children. 12 months ago she saw a story on the news about how many children were being injured, mentally and physically, by the war. This is where it had all started. She decided that there were too many sons and daughters being hurt and orphaned. She wanted to be there – to do something. Whenever the woman saw a child, she found a lump in her throat where she thought of losing her own baby. She understood how it felt to lose a child. She wouldn’t wish it on anyone.
The Sergeant summoned the man and woman to his office. He showed them a picture of a shop and explained the situation. There were bombs. Not just one, but two, in a restaurant that hundreds of people visit daily; Mothers with daughters, boyfriends and girlfriends, families.

Here were the orders: someone needed to detonate the bombs, in order to diffuse them and make it safe and the only people trained for the job were John and Hannah.

John didn’t feel his heart pounding, he felt nothing. “What is wrong with me? “ He questioned himself. “Has my heart turned to stone?” His response was robotic. He did not panic or fight tears. He stood there, and listened. Hannah fought back a flood of tears. She realised that she might never achieve all she wanted and she saw her future disappear in front of her eyes. No children, no family. John thought of his wife at home, and his children.

As they arrived at the restaurant, it was filled with people. New mothers discussing babies, families devouring their food after a long bike ride, and new found lovers on their awkward first date. It was full of love and friendship. Bunting hung from the ceiling and candles were lit, whilst sweaty waiters dodged their way around furniture. No one would ever have thought anything was wrong.

But the soldiers had arrived at their battlefield.

After they climbed the stairs into the room with the bomb, Hannah spoke first: “Well, we might as well introduce ourselves.”
It was difficult to make conversation as there was a big elephant in the room; one of them could die. There was no avoiding it.

They both contemplated why they should live or die. Hannah remembered her inability to have children. “I have no reason to be here,” she thought.

“She’s much younger than me,” John calculated. “I have lived. I have deteriorating health and I have done everything I wish to do with my life.”

There was quiet. They stood in silence. All they could hear was chattering from downstairs, from the lives they had to save.

John strode towards the bomb and picked up the tool bag, but the woman thought of nothing but his family at home, so she ran and pulled him back.

“No!” the man exclaimed, but before he knew it there were flames and sparks.

“The body has been retrieved” said the Sergeant. “She was carrying a baby.”
It was a hot summer’s night late in July when a group of four girls started their summer vacation. Kayleigh was already planning their activities when Lacey started to wind her up, saying that she shouldn’t be planning… Something would be coming for them!

Lacey was the joker of the group. Maddie grabbed Kayleigh and gave her a hug and said, “Lacey’s just being her normal silly self. You lot had better stop messing around ‘cos the coach driver isn’t happy.”

“Oohh sorry Mum!” Lacey replied sarcastically. Everyone laughed and they spend the rest of the coach trip chatting excitedly and getting on each other’s nerves. It seemed it had only been a few minutes on the coach when the driver called out, “Journey’s over, all out!”

Despite the two hour journey, the girls sprung off the coach pushing and shoving their way through, knocking people out of the way to get their bags from the back of the coach first.

Everything seemed peaceful. Like a lucky omen, the sun was shining down on the girls giving them peace of mind. Birds were chirping like a mothers’ meeting outside the school gates on a Monday morning. The girls lugged their heavy bags across the bouncing rope bridge which took him safely over the rippling water beneath. They certainly did not feel in the least bit safe as Lacey followed closely behind springing the bridge in mischievous delight.
Once over the bridge, the girls stopped and took in their surroundings. Grass covered the vast landscape like a green blanket and the woodlands were intimidatingly huge.

The girls argued continually as they found their spot on the campsite and pitched the tent. Thankfully, Maddie’s laidback nature prevented World War Three. Before the night drew in, the girls decided they would explore their surroundings. Everything appeared to be perfect. It was quiet and peaceful. As they drank and ate happily around the campfire they chatted the night away until Kayleigh decided it was bed time. It was only the following morning that they realised their tent was pitched upwards facing away from everyone else’s.

Day one was an action packed day. Kayleigh, being athletic and the Tom - boy of the group was going to thoroughly enjoy this. Maddie on the other hand, walked with dread to the equipment area. Zip wiring wasn’t really her thing.

Maddie sat with her sore feet up as Eva screamed at her to get off her bum and to do something for a change. “Get the plates out, ready for tea.” Even Lacey congratulated Eva on the beautiful chilli-con-carne she had put together. Lacey then made a joke saying that Maddie should break the habit of a lifetime and do the washing up, followed by Eva and Kayleigh voting yes in agreement! In good spirits, Maddie picked up the dish cloth and waved it around her head.

Everything was soon to change.
Lacey lay awake feeling lonely as the rest of the girls had fallen asleep. But it wasn’t until a few minutes later that she looked out of the tent’s open door and realised she was not alone. About one hundred yards away, there stood a woman wearing a ripped black dress. The woman was fixated on Lacey. She was scared and wished that she had never made a joke about something coming for them in the night.

Lacey woke the girls to tell them what she had seen, but no one believed her and she was told, firmly, to get to sleep. Lacey decided, finally that it must have just been her imagination - seeing things as she had been so tired and she shortly fell asleep.

On the second day, it was wood skills scheduled for the day’s activities.

It was on that day that, during their activity, the girls found a rope tied to a tree and lying beneath it, a pair of old fashioned baby shoes. The girls went on to untie the withered cord and took the shoes with them.

It was not until the second night that Maddie also saw the mystifying woman this time, getting sight of the woman’s features, which Lacey had not managed to do. Eyes of brutal darkness stared into Maddie’s terrified face. Rooted to the spot, Maddie began to shake like salt falling from its container. The woman had a rope burn around her neck; this was when Maddie realised that the rope that was hanging from the tree must have belonged to this shadowy woman.
Maddie awoke the girls with urgent attention and told them what she had seen. The others, apart from Lacey, struggled to believe her. It wasn’t until the next morning that Kayleigh and Eva had their suspicions confirmed that Maddie and Lacey were playing tricks on them when they realised that the baby shoes that they had found during wood skills were gone. Despite Maddie’s and Lacey’s protest that they hadn’t taken the shoes, Kayleigh and Eva laughed it off. Although Kayleigh and Eva found this hilarious, it was clear that Maddie and Lacey didn’t think the same and their mood was lowered.

On the third day, Lacey and Maddie stayed behind while Kayleigh and Eva carried on with the activities that had been scheduled for the day (rock climbing and a nature walk) which Kayleigh thoroughly enjoyed. When Kayleigh and Eva returned back to the campsite, all four girls decided to pack their bags ready to leave the following day. Unaware of what was to come, the girls breathed heavily in their sleep. The blood stained woman arrived with a sudden chill. In such deep slumber the girls ignorantly dreamed on. Entering the tent, the woman angrily returned to seek revenge on the young women who had dared to remove the only remains of her baby boy. Wearing a tightly fitted bodice and a skirt that flowed like the blood from her next victim, the twisted woman swept all of the four sleeping girls into her arms. All that could be seen was the dirty hands and mud packed nails clasping her blood seeping mouth, as if she was demanding quiet for her get away.
The twine that hung from the tree was where the woman had hung herself and the baby shoes had belonged to her little boy who had been brutally murdered by her jealous stepdaughter. His tiny, compact body was found floating, head down in a nearby lake.

As dawn appeared, the coach pulled away, its passengers unaware of the missing girls. There was laughter and joking from the passengers as they heard screaming in the distance, assuming it was the next group zip wiring.

But was it?

Far in the distance, where the girls’ tent had stood, all that remained was a pair of each of their shoes – the only evidence they had ever even existed.
Once upon a time, there was a pretty girl called Cinderella, also known as Ella, who lived in a small town called Dursland with her family. She was outgoing, bubbly and friendly. She adored music and dancing and she was actually the Glossyland County glass slipper tap-dancing (a very unique type of tap dancing) champion!

One day, after her exams had finished, Ella prepared her new clothes: a short red dress, polished black high heels and round hooped silver earrings. She couldn’t wait to dance the night away with her friends at the year 11 leavers’ party, the following night.

The next day, Ella’s cousins arrived to spend the weekend with her. The cousins had always been nasty to Ella about her talent for tap dancing and made fun of her as she was the youngest.

Despite them being mean to her, Ella was eager to tell them about her leavers’ party. Harvey and Harriet arrived clutching their new iPhones, barged passed Ella and headed straight to the kitchen looking for food.

Ella followed them into the kitchen, like a playful, bouncing puppy.

“Look, Look what I’ve got. I’ve got a VIP ticket to the year 11 leaver’s party tonight!”
Harvey, pretending to be interested, prized the ticket out of Ella’s hand and ripped it up into tiny pieces.

Harriet laughed sarcastically, “Haha! Well done, Harvey she deserved that! She’s always been spoiled!”

Distraught, Ella ran away crying. Her godfather, the cousin’s father, made Harvey and Harriet apologise. He confiscated their iPhones and grounded them for a week. Even though Ella rang up her friends asking if there was a spare ticket, she knew there were none left. No ticket, No party! She sat in her room, clutching her sparkling, glass slippers wishing for something good to happen.

. . .

Days passed when Ella’s godfather suddenly appeared in her room. He told her to get dressed in her best clothes, put on her glass slippers and go outside to see the surprise that was waiting for her.

Outside there was a huge, posh limo at the gate. Her name was plastered all over it!

“Is this for me?” Ella asked in astonishment.

“Yes darling it is, you deserve this treat as you missed out on your leavers’ party, but be sure to be back by midnight or your luck will run out. Now go on and have a ball!!”

So, with that, Ella followed her godfather’s words and got into the limo.

As the limo drove off, Ella had a huge, beaming smile on her face and waved to her family. Her cousins scowled and
Cinderella and the Glass Slippers

walked inside.

Ella saw a large, golden envelope on the seat beside her with her name on it. Nervously, she opened the envelope to find an invitation to audition for the new series of Britain’s Got Talent. Her godfather must have remembered her passion for glass slipper tap dancing that she had been doing since the age of five. Although she had won loads of talent shows, she had never dreamed of being on TV.

From the moment she arrived at the theatre, she knew it was going to be the best night of her life! She got through each of the stages right up to the final and even won the show.

Simon Cowell told her that her feet were as fast as a hummingbird’s wings. He said she was an incredible tap dancer and that he loved her glass slippers.

As she left the theatre, Prince, one of the singers from the Royal Four-Piece Opera Quartet, found a glass slipper on the stage. He stopped the limo just as it was pulling out of the bay, opened the door and asked Ella if the slipper belonged to her. He slipped it onto her foot and everyone cheered, as they exchanged numbers and promised to keep in touch.

From that day on, Ella and her prince were the most popular couple on Dursland.

And of course, they lived happily ever after!

The End
Fairy Pea and the Hawaiian Duck

Deep in the Hawaiian rainforest lived a colony of Hawaiian fairies. One of the fairies was called Fairy Pea. She wore a dark green, leaf dress with purple shawls and a matching hat. She lived in a tree – a gigantic tree.

One day, Fairy pea was watching The Fairy 6 o’clock news. The biggest headline on the news was that the local volcano was about to erupt. The advice from the news was to stay as high as you could on the mountain and to avoid falling ash. Fairy Pea worried a lot. Her lip trembled as she worried about her village…

Suddenly, with a gasp, Fairy Pea remembered the flowers she had planted a while back by the volcano. She didn’t want them to get burnt by all the steaming hot lava. She decided, as she had an hour until the volcano would erupt, that she would go and rescue some of the flowers.

Pea flew up to the volcano and started picking some of her flowers when she heard an unusual noise. She didn’t know what it was. It was a high pitched tone. She thought it sounded like cries of help but muffled, faint and distant.

Pea followed the noise to the top of the volcano to investigate. She saw a brown creature with soft fluffy feathers. He looked injured and in distress. She went over to help what she discovered to be an injured baby duck. The duckling explained how he had waddled up there in curiosity, when he fell and hurt his wing and his foot.
The baby duck was getting worried that he wouldn't get away before the volcano erupted. Fairy Pea knew she must help him. As they thought what to do, they heard the sizzling noise of lava beginning to bubble, which meant that they had a mere twenty minutes to try and save themselves. They had to think fast.

Suddenly an idea came to Fairy Pea. She would quickly zoom home and get a rope and basket so that she could put the duck in the basket and tow him to safety.

The little duck sat there in a wreck of worry, listening to the gurgling lava whilst he nervously waited for Pea to return.

A long ten minutes went by until Pea returned with the equipment they needed and they moved quicker than a cheetah! The duck carefully limped into the basket as Pea harnessed herself to the wicker.

Pea flew back to the village with the Duck faster than she had ever flown before! The volcano erupted soon after they got back.

Everyone was safe, unharmed and glad to have made a new friend.
My name is Stuart, just Stuart. At the time of writing this, I am a soldier fighting in the American Civil War. Perhaps you’re wondering how I signed up as just ‘Stuart’? Well, I didn’t. My surname is Baker. Of course that’s not my real surname, it was given to me when I was rescued by a soldier and adopted by the orphanage. That’s a whole different story filled with depression, a bit of luck and lots of confusion. Perhaps one day, I will have the strength to write about it, but that day isn’t today.

Something almost as dramatic has filled my heart with despair.

It was cold, dark and the sky was home to not a single star. I knew it was going to be a bad night. The stars represent hope and when there is no hope, anything can happen. Without the safety from the star light there is nothing we can do about it.

I was ordered to stand guard on a small bridge separating two villages. One owned by the Republicans, and the other owned by the Democrats. I was standing alone gripping my gun with loose fingers. My finger was trembling over the trigger. “It was cold,” I kept telling myself. The thought of having to shoot someone sent shivers down my spine and the fear of killing an unarmed civilian stayed in my hands buzzing like a trapped fly. I was following orders, “Shoot anyone who
Diary Entry – The Soldier

attempts to cross the bridge,” my Officer told me.

It was a long night, with nothing more than the sounds of birds and the occasional shouting coming from one of the pubs. That was until a woman approached the bridge and jumped as she saw me standing there with my rifle at hand. “Turn back!” I shouted. “This bridge is off limits by orders of the military.”

The woman looked at me for a few seconds. Her face was covered in dirt and her hair untidy. The glow from her eyes faded into a gloomy stare as she whispered in a faint voice “Okay.”

A few hours passed and the sun was hiding as darkness covered the bridge. I was aided by nothing but my lantern to create a circle of light around me. It was then that I heard footsteps approaching. Slowly, they got louder and louder. “Who’s there?” I shouted. I must have been nervous as I stumbled over just the two words. A figure emerged from the darkness and stood in the lantern light before me. It was the same woman from earlier. Her eyes were watery and she looked in a state of despair. She was looking down at something. I was not sure what, but she was focussing on it.

“Turn back!” I began speaking as she looked up and stared me in the eye.

“I need to cross the bridge.” Her voice was broken but she
sounded determined.

“The bridge is off-limits by orders of the military,” I shouted. I was scared. Anything could happen in the next few seconds and the light of the stars were not here to offer protection.

She took a step forward and I raised my gun, aimed at her and shouted another time, “The bridge is off limits. Turn back immediately or you will be fired upon.”

MY hands were trembling more than ever as I struggled to keep the gun steady. I have shot lots of people, but never someone who presented no threat. She took another step.

“Please don’t shoot me.” She started to cry but there were no tears left in her eyes to support her emotion. She began walking towards me, faster and faster until I had no choice.

Bang.

There was a silence as she dropped to the floor. I looked around. The sound of birds was no longer that of gentle song but of a panic to get out of the area. Eyes began peeping through the dark windows of houses and I looked at her body. She was dead.

I can never look at the beauty of the sky the same way.
Smoke started gushing out of the plane. The plane began tumbling down to the ground. It was then that I realised we were not going to get to our paradise holiday. The pilot spoke through the microphone telling everyone to put on their oxygen masks and parachutes.

My heart came through my chest.

In a moment of panic, I jumped before everyone else had. For a split second I closed my eyes and thought back to when I was home in my warm, cosy bed but I quickly woke up to the reality of finding myself here. I was swirling round and around as I plummeted to the ground. I suddenly remembered to pull the rip-cord of the parachute. I hit the ground and everything went dark.

I was dizzy in this paranormal world. It was vividly green. No one else was around me. I was alone. I shakily stood up. I had been swallowed up by a jungle!

Vines twirled round, weaving between the trees. Tropical flowers in striking colours coated the surface of the jungle ground. Magnificent birds swooped down, missing my head by a couple of inches! I stood, baffled as to what I would do next. Many voices, all asking questions filled my head. Would I ever get home? How would I escape? What should I do now?

It began to rain. I sat on the edge of a tree stump, under the
shelter of the trees above. The sun began to set. My stomach rumbled, it sounded like a lion! I walked round for a while in search for food – anything (anything other than poisonous foods!) I spotted bananas in a tree, but there was a slight problem – monkeys surrounded it…

I found two sticks and rubbed them together for a lifetime. I was nearly falling asleep when the stick finally lit a flame! Tripping on vines and logs that buried the floor, I warily walked up to a tree where the bananas were and also where the monkeys (and gorillas now) were. I held the flame high above my head and shrieked. Sure enough the monkeys and gorillas fled from the tree. I now had to solve the puzzle of how to get the bananas.

My mind ticked over how to climb the tree. I noticed rocks with little indents, like rock climbing walls. Steadily, I climbed the rocks… A couple of minutes later, and my stomach was moaning for more bananas.

I now needed a real shelter. I’d seen Bear Grylls do it. What could be so hard? Venturing through the jungle was fascinating; millions of creatures filled the jungle keeping it awake, with a constant buzzing noise! I was looking for a good spot – one that had food nearby, a water source, shade and sunlight!

Before I could find a shelter, the sky was purely black, the wind began to pick up, whistling in my ear. My hair danced in the gusts of wind. The wind rapidly flew faster and faster…
10 years later…

Explorers found his body rotted underneath a tumbled tree. The night he died was the night of Hurricane Sandy. The high paced winds tore through the trees on top of him. A couple of miles away on a symmetrical island, the wreckage of the plane was found with over three hundred dead bodies, which included our dear explorer’s family.

Nobody on that plane ever reached their destination – their destination paradise.

R.I.P. our dear explorer!
Long, long ago there was an ancient wood. This ancient wood was not a gloomy place with twisted trees. It was a light, colourful home with talking trees!

In the woods, there lived some animals like unicorns, Caladrius and Pegasus. The unicorns lived near a river, in a bush. They were mostly pink, purple and white. In the wood there was also a Pegasus which lived in a cave. It was a whitey pink colour. The Caladrius lived in the special tree. She was a snow white bird.

Caladrius had proved herself to be brave in the past. She fought an ogre to keep the woods safe. Caladrius never gave up and she knew what was right.

In a mountain, next to the ancient woods, lived a fierce, scaly and ugly dragon. The dragon always flew over the woods and saw all the other animals being joyful. It was extremely jealous!

One night, the dragon flew over the woods to get some food but when he came back he suddenly dropped his food and decided to set fire to the wood. Firstly he breathed fire near the cave of Pegasus. Next, he set alight the bush next to the home of the unicorn family.

Then, he stopped by the river for a breather. After, he went over the river and set fire to one tree and another. Finally he got to the special tree that had a protective bubble around
it. The dragon tried and tried to set fire to it, but he couldn’t. Fortunately, a bit of fire came back at him and got his foot, so he had to go back to his mountain.

The animals only realised the woods were on fire when they felt hot. The unicorn family and Pegasus got together and went over the special tree. They got Caladrius and ran out of the wood. The special tree was still undamaged though.

Two hundred years earlier a magical elf had planted many talking trees. Every other night, when all the animals were asleep, the old magical elf came to talk to the home of Caladrius. He came every other night because he wanted to know what happened in the woods so that he could protect it. The elf added a little bit more magic on the tree and then it had an invisible protective bubble around it.

The next night, the elf came along and he saw the woods burnt down! Also, he saw the animals perched outside the woods. He snuck around them and carefully found his way to the special tree. After he found what happened, the elf went to the dragon to see if he could heal his foot. The elf picked up the dragon’s food that he had dropped and went up the mountain. The dragon recognised the elf from flying over every night, so he let him heal his foot. The dragon explained why he was so mean and wanted to say sorry. So they went down to the woods and the dragon said sorry.

The elf was so pleased that he went to the woods and planted some flowers and some more talking trees. The elf and the animals waited for an hour and the forest grew. The
elf sorted out homes for all the animals and the dragon. Caladrius talked to the animals about the dragon living with them because she knew it was the right thing to do. She told the other animals that if there were any problems, she would sort them out. The animals agreed to have the dragon live with them. They all went into the woods.

They were so happy. All of them got along. All the animals were so much happier. They were good friends forever and all lived happy ever after.

The End.
Rilindon lay on the cold, hard floor of his cave. His scaly eyelids were closed. He was asleep, dreaming who knows what - dark dreams. Rilindon was a mighty Cavern Drake who lived under the Misty Mountains. He had been there for 367 years. He was considered very old by Cavern Drake standards, but he was slowly dying. His inevitable death was the result of more than his age. About a day ago, a young Cavern Drake had challenged him for his lair. Rilindon had easily won but not before receiving fatal injuries. The combination of his age and his wounds meant that he was slowly dying. The young Drake had wanted his treasure as well as his lair. Cavern Drakes, like their dragon cousins, love treasure. Rilindon had his treasure hidden in a deep underwater cavern in the lake which was part of his lair. The light from the treasure drew fish to it, and when he was really hungry Rilindon would go down to his treasure and eat the fish there.

Rilindon’s scaly eyelids opened. His deep and ancient amber eyes lit the cavern, as though someone had lit a match. He sniffed deeply. He sniffed again. Something was coming down to his cavern.

He uncoiled his massive body and, using as much strength as he dared, crawled to the entrance of his lair. Rilindon’s amber eyes lit the tunnel in front of him. He was about to go back to the lake when he saw movement out of the corner.
of his eye! He spun round as quickly as lightning and, with a squeal, he grabbed something small and bony. He looked at the thing in his paw and found, clenched in his fist was a small dark creature. It had great glowing eyes like fire. It felt bony and shrivelled in his hand and it smelt of slime.

“What are you doing?” Rilindon asked. His deep, ancient and growling voice echoed around the tunnels near his cave.

“Mustn’t ask us, Precious. We meant no harm” pleaded the creature.

“Liar!” snarled Rilindon, and he squeezed the wretched creature in his fist. “Tell the truth or I will squeeze you until your eyes come out!” threatened Rilindon.

“We was only looking for food, Precious. Gollum... Gollum,” squeaked the creature and Gollum made a horribly gurgling noise in the back of his throat.

“Food,” sneered Rilindon. “Well food is not easy to come by in the mountains. I have the best fish lake for miles, but you’re not having any of my fish!”

“Fish, Precious. You have fish? What other tasty morsels does you have?” asked Gollum. The Cavern Drake laughed a deep, hollow and intimidating laugh.

“Tasty morsels! Well, if you’re referring to the goblins that live here then you have got tasty wrong. The fish in my lake is one of the nicer foods in the mountains. Goblins are merely what I regard as stomach fillers not food!” cackled Rilindon.

“Now, on the subject of food...What should I do with you?
Should I swallow you whole, or chew on you slowly? Or shall I sting you and eat you later?” wondered Rilindon.

When Rilindon said “sting,” he flicked his stinger out and raised his tail above his head. At that, Gollum struggled and wriggled to free himself from Rilindon’s grasp. But Rilindon squeezed harder. A thought then occurred to Rilindon. If this was going to be his last meal, he should at least make it interesting. He could feel his body losing the fight against his wounds. The clock was ticking.

“How about we make this interesting?” suggested Rilindon. Rilindon picked himself up and made his way back to the lake. He lay down on the stone floor.

“Let’s have a riddle contest. If you win, you can have my lair and all its fish.”

Gollum looked startled, then pleased and then anxious.

“What if it wins?” asked Gollum.

“If I win? Well, if I win I get to eat you!” announced Rilindon.

Gollum gurgled and spluttered. Rilindon put him on a rock in front of him. Gollum tried to run away, but Rilindon easily grabbed him and put him back on the rock. To make sure that Gollum didn’t try and run away again, Rilindon flicked out his sting and pointed it in Gollum’s direction.

Rilindon spoke the first riddle: “Most of you have two eyes; I have only one. Most of you have eyeballs; I do not. Your eyes aren’t dangerous; neither are mine, but all together - I am
extremely dangerous. You can see things with your eyes. I can’t see anything, even though the air is clear where my eye is. What am I?”

Rilindon smiled at the look of confusion on Gollum’s face. Gollum put both his paddle-like feet on the rock he was sitting on, and he rested his chin on his knees. Gollum thought hard and then he remembered watching a strange event happen on the top of the mountain. He remembered sitting on the ground watching the clouds spinning together and he remembered this event, the spinning clouds caused an avalanche.

Then Gollum guessed; “Eye of a tornado, is it?” Rilindon was surprised that the creature had guessed this.

“You are right. Your turn,” growled Rilindon.

Pleased by guessing right, Gollum asked his first riddle. He thought this would puzzle and confuse Rilindon.

Gollum asked, “For some, I am used to get around. I never touch the ground. Sometimes, I fall, sometimes I float. If I am in the air - take note. What am I?”

Unfortunately for Gollum, Rilindon’s thoughts extended beyond that of the underground world he lived in. Rilindon had known about tornadoes, as he had heard them above his cave. He knew the answer to this riddle. He had seen the goblins use them.

“A boat!” he growled triumphanty. When Gollum did not reply, he guessed that he was right.
Rilindon spoke his next riddle: “He comes to bedside, icy bridges, battle fronts and crumbling ridges. When he comes, he comes alone, taps a shoulder and then is gone.” Gollum gnashed his teeth in his confusion and slapped his head. Then, the memory of him strangling cousin Deagol crept into his mind.

He sighed, “Gollum, Gollum, death Precious.” Gollum strangely wriggled on the rock he was sitting on, and started to twist his bony hands.
In the beginning, the world was made of shadow. It was grim and murky. Mars and Neptune wanted to bring light to the people, so Mars went into labour.

Mos the god of light popped out. Mos had a golden crown and skin like bronze. His eyes sparkled like golden coins. Mos looked down at Etha and decided to make a sun. He wanted the sun so he could have food for his people.

Mos had two glowing hearts. He ripped one out of his body. It was a hot, glowing oval of light. He flew on a star to put the sun in the sky.

Weeks later, the plants started to die because they had no water. So Mos got on a star and flew to father, Neptune and asked him for water. Neptune gave Mos a comet of ice. Mos sent the comet down to Earth. That melted into water and the plants started to glow.

The gods were proud of Mos so they gave him a staff of light.
The Big Adventure at Blackpool

Zoe Brennan, Year 7

The Big Adventure at Blackpool

Where to begin?

Emily, Lily and Amy once went to Blackpool Pleasure Beach with Emily’s parents. Before they started their journey there, they went to the petrol station to get some snacks and, of course some petrol.

“I cannot wait to get on all of those big rides – I am too excited to think!” Lily shouted.

“Me too! It’s going to be the best day ever!”

They were talking about all the big and scary rides that they were going to go on... They finally arrived at Blackpool, after a two hour drive.

AHHHHHHHHHHH – they all heard huge screams coming from the enormous rides. They started to get mixed emotions about this day out.

“I feel a little bit sick but I am really excited as well.”

They were feeling scared and excited at the same time. The girls were waiting in the long queue and then they finally got in to Blackpool Pleasure Beach. They started going on all of the massive rides, hoping that it was not going to be too scary. They tried lots of different rides and they were all worn out, but that was no excuse to stop because they were having too much fun. They went on tall rides, short rides, big rides, small rides and on every ride they all smiled at one another.
They stopped off at Burger King and got some yummy lunch. They were looking at the ride in front of them called ‘The Pepsi Max,’ which is what they decided to go on next. It was one of the tallest, fastest and most forceful ride in England. The wait was on.

They joined the queue for ‘The Pepsi Max,’ feeling very anxious but of course, excited. They were about to get on the ride but they could not find Lily anywhere. Everyone was shouting her name but there was no sign of her. They were all so upset they just didn’t know what to do with themselves.

“Lily, Lily where are you? Are you ok?”

They looked everywhere but no one could find her. So they all went to the toilets and they were all about to head home to tell Lily’s parents the dreadful news.

“Hey! Wait up!” said a voice coming from the toilets. “I said wait up Amy and Emily. Wait up!”

“Guys, look its Lily. Where were you? We were looking for you everywhere and we were about to go home and tell your parents that we’d lost you,” said Emily.

“Let’s go on The Pepsi Max then. Come on!” said Lily.

So they all rushed back to the queue ready. They climbed on to the ride. Up and up it went slowly and slowly then suddenly…. WHOOooooSH!

“Down we go. Wow, that was so fun. Let’s go on it again!”

And so they did over and over again, until it was time to go home.
A Very Royal Occasion

A small boy called Frank N. Stein and his friends had created a friendly monster called Steinasaurus Rex from recycled material. He is friendly & fun. He became famous because he eats all the rubbish and solves the waste problem in our country.

The next day, the postman came and gave Steinasaurus Rex and Frank N. Stein an invitation to visit the Queen at Bucking Palace, London.

Later that week, Frank and Steinasaurus Rex bowed down slowly to Queen Elizabeth. “Hello! Nice to meet you,” whispered the Queen poshly. She gave the monster a special present. It was a snow globe of London, but the monster ate it up noisily.

Frank N. Stein and Steinasaurus Rex went with the Queen to her pretty dining room. There was a big, wooden table with pizza, roast potatoes, broccoli, carrots, stuffing and pork with crackling.

Steinasaurus Rex ate it all up greedily. He even ate the table. Frank only got a couple of mouthfuls.

At the end of the party, the Queen gave Steinasaurus Rex and Frank a party bag with a sparkly crown, a glass pen, a golden watch and a sparkly diamond. The monster ate the pen and the watch. He was afraid the crown and the diamond would hurt his neck and make it sparkly.
THE PLUGHOLE PEOPLE
The Plughole People

In a room, in a certain room where you go at least twice a day; where you spend your privacy and do things such as washing your hands, having a bath and even going to the toilet...

What if I told you that that privacy is no longer private? What if I told you that there are people living in your sinks?

Well, in a house, not any house in particular, but in a bathroom down a sink in the pipe, there was a tribe; a tribe no bigger than your fingertip was living there. The tribe village was run by Queen Toothbrush Plughole, or Queen Plughole for short. She was a widow. Her husband, King Plughole, died in the awful plumbing accident of '87, but I shouldn’t go into too much detail about it because that would hurt Queen Plughole’s feelings.

Anyway, back to the story. Queen Plughole was giving orders to one of her servants. His name was Patrick and he was one of the cleaners. When I say servants, Queen Plughole doesn’t mean to be mean to them, it’s just that when you live in the pipe it’s ever so dirty. She doesn’t want to get her beautiful dresses or frocks dirty, so she pays people to do instead. Patrick was poor and he was trying to raise his son. His son’s name was Paddy, which was short for Patrick Junior after his dad.

In the pipes, they would all travel on slugs or snails that found their way up the pipes. Paddy didn’t have much in life, other
than his good looks and Brian - his giant snail. Oh, and yeah, he also had his best friend Bubbles, who was never up for an adventure. Paddy had never been anywhere or seen anything since his mother died when he was younger, so he just wanted an adventure. He was only going to go for a day to the outside and not tell anyone as everybody always told him it was dangerous, but it would be the best thing he’d ever done. Paddy packed his bag and put the saddle on Brian and set off. He couldn’t go very fast as Brian wasn’t only the biggest snail of all time and he was the slowest too. Paddy was trying to keep his head down, but then, round a sharp corner, he came across someone he didn’t want to see. It was Bubbles.

“Where do you think you’re going?” he said.

“I’m having an adventure,” Paddy replied.

“Where are you going then?” asked Bubbles furiously.

“To the outside. D’you want to come?”

“It’s far too dangerous, and no I don’t – there might be beasts!”

Bubbles was right. There were beasts and animals out there, but that wasn’t gong to stop Paddy.

“Alright then, see you soon” Paddy said.

“I’m not letting you do this.”

“You can’t stop me!” and so Paddy and Brian set off until they just became silhouettes.

Several hours later, Brian and Paddy reached light. They had
never seen light before – it was luminous. It hurt their eyes, but it was worth it. There was only one more obstacle to pass until they touched ground – they needed to slide down. It was like a slide and a tunnel and a rollercoaster rolled into one. It was so much fun, although it did make them feel dizzy and sick! But, eventually Paddy’s cold feet touched ground and Brian was glad to be back outside. It was a cold winter morning and white snow gathered across the back garden of a house whose bathroom had been home to Paddy and Brian and their friends and family for all those years. All the leaves from the trees were on the ground. Paddy wondered where they had all come from. He looked up into the bare tree and saw a nest with two blue eggs in it. They were hungry and needed something to eat, and as they weren’t used to the outside world, well they didn’t know that there were two baby chicks that hadn’t even hatched yet inside those eggs. Paddy got off Brian’s shell and he started to climb and Brian began to slither up the tree after him. They climbed up into the tree like two people climbing Mount Everest.

Meanwhile, back in the pipes, Bubbles started to worry about Paddy and if he should tell anyone. What if something happened to Paddy? He would be blaming himself for years and his great family name, Bubble Bath Soap VIII would be ruined. He would let his family down. How could he live with himself? He knew a secret which must be told. He ran to Queen Plughole’s castle, which was a beautiful castle made out of toothpicks.
“Queen Plughole!” called Bubble. “Where are you?” He ran through the door and up the stairs. Then he saw her.

“Queen Plughole, Paddy has gone into the outside world!” exclaimed Bubbles.

“What do you mean? Paddy, Patrick’s son?” replied Queen Plughole.

“Yes, yes!” answered Bubbles.

“Well, have you told Patrick yet?” the Queen said.

“No. I thought I should tell you first. You’re the Queen after all.” Bubbles replied.

“Well, Patrick is his father, so come on what are we waiting for?” And off they went to find Patrick. They searched through the pipes with their torches. The Queen didn’t enjoy herself one little bit. Stepping in damp water and smelly sewage and getting her lovely purple dress covered in navy blue lilies wet.

They got nearer and nearer to the end of the pipes and started to panic. Where could he be?

“Queen, look over here!” cried Bubbles.

“What am I meant to look at?” asked the Queen.

“It’s Patrick!” Bubbles exclaimed. The Queen looked in the distance and there was Patrick cleaning the smelliest, dirtiest bit of the pipes.

“Patrick, Patrick… Paddy’s gone. He’s gone to the outside world!” said Bubbles.
“What do you mean Bubbles? Is he safe?” asked Patrick.

“We don’t know, Bubbles just came and told me what he knew!” answered the Queen.

“Well, the only way we’re going to find him is to go to the outside world and find him,” replied Patrick. Everybody looked at each other in shock. They were scared, but they knew it was the only answer, so they set off to find Paddy.

Back in the garden, Paddy and Brian were near to the top of the tree. It had taken a long time as Brian was ever so slow and Paddy wanted to stay at his pace to keep him company. They were now on the branch where the blue eggs were. Paddy was balancing on the branch as it was like a tightrope. It was very delicate. He told Brian to wait there, because if Brian’s body had touched the branch it would immediately have snapped the branch in two. Paddy was walking very carefully. Then, he had his chance. But, just as he was about to grab the two eggs, he saw something coming out of the sky. It was a bird! Paddy needed to run away, but he needed the eggs too.

Then, Paddy realised something. When his dad told him stories about the outside world, he used to say that there was a species called a bird, which could fly. He told Paddy that birds could lay eggs too. So straight away, Paddy knew that this was a bird and those eggs were hers. Paddy’s dad had told Paddy that there were all kinds of birds such as pigeons, blackbirds, magpies and sparrows, but when he looked at this bird’s chest, he knew that this was a robin as his chest was luminous red. It could possibly glow in the dark and light
was ages. He ran to the pipe but it was hard to run in the snow.
As he reached the pipe he realised he forgot Brian. Paddy ran as fast as he could. He needed to climb up again, that would take forever. Paddy looked around the tree to see if there were any shortcuts. He then found a ladder but unfortunately the steps were too wide for his little legs. He then looked again. This time he was at the back of the tree, he saw a rope he really could
The Plughole People

up the street at midnight on Christmas Day.
Paddy never understood how his dad knew so much! But anyway, this bird was definitely a robin and it wanted its babies. Paddy knew the only way to get out of this situation was to jump. He didn't have time to climb down, so here he went.....

“Aaaaaaarrrrrgghhhhh!” he screamed. He ran back to the pipes, but it was hard to run in the snow. As he reached the pipe, Paddy realised that he had forgotten Brian. He ran as fast as he could. He needed to climb up again, but that would take forever. Paddy looked around the tree to see if there were any shortcuts. He found a ladder, but unfortunately, the steps were too wide for his little legs. He looked again. This time, he was at the back of the tree. He saw a rope. He could easily climb up before it was too late....but - the baby chicks had hatched! They were obviously hungry and the nearest food was Brian!

Paddy climbed and climbed as fast as he could, until he saw the robin gently put Brian into her own mouth to give to the chicks. Luckily, Paddy reached the top and ran to Brian and the robin.

“Give me my friend or I'll take one of your chicks!” exclaimed Paddy. But the robin didn't listen. Her chicks needed to be fed.

“Alright then have it your own way,” Paddy said. He took one of the chicks. But he couldn’t kidnap a little baby chick and he wanted his friend, Brian. So, Paddy had an idea - a game
of tug of war.

“Hey bird, you can have your chick back but I want my friend, and if you disagree let’s play tug of war with the snail.”

The robin seemed to like this idea, so she took Brian’s shell and Paddy took his body. It was going to be difficult as she was giant and he was only the size of a fingertip, but he needed his friend back. Paddy pulled and pulled and pulled. He was now using all of his weight against a giant robin for a giant snail. Then, he pulled so hard that he flew up into the sky and fell down on the ground on his back.

“Oh Brian, please tell me you’re alive?” asked Paddy. He then gently opened his hand and there was Brian, alive but shell-less.

“At least you’re alive!” Paddy looked behind him and saw the robin. She wasn’t happy. She flew and tried to catch Paddy and Brian, but she couldn’t. They were fast. When Brian lost his shell, all that weight went and now he was quite fast - not supersonic, but faster than he was before. They quickly climbed up the pipe until they saw some familiar faces.

“I’m glad to see you guys!” exclaimed Paddy. It was the Queen, Bubbles and Patrick.

“We’re glad to see you too,” said the Queen looking a bit disappointed with Paddy.

“You told them! Why?” asked Paddy, very annoyed with Bubbles, but before Bubbles could answer back, the Queen
did it for him.

“It’s very good that he told us, as you could have died!” replied the Queen.

“But I didn’t! Anyway…Dad’s not cross with me!”

“Your dad was the one who had the idea of going outside looking for you.” Queen Plughole snapped, “And before you go, I want to talk to you in my castle.”

They walked to the castle in silence. Paddy knew he would be punished, but he didn’t know what his punishment would be. As they entered the castle, the Queen gathered all of them together. There was no one there except for the Queen, Bubbles, Patrick and Paddy (and the shell-less Brian).

“Today, three men were the bravest, most loyal, and caring men I’ve ever met,” said the Queen. She was now making a speech. “First of all, to someone who was loyal to his friend, who gave help even when his friend didn’t want him to say anything. So, Bubbles – I knight you Sir Bubbles Bath Soap VIII of the Plugholes, for loyalty.”

“Thank you Queen Plughole. Are you sure you want to waste one of your knighthoods on me?” Bubbles asked.

“Yes, I’m sure,” replied the Queen. She now started making another speech. “This next one is to somebody who was caring and even requested to go to the outside world to save his son. This goes to Patrick. I knight you Sir Patrick Puddles of the Plugholes, for caring.”

“Thank you. Thank you so much.” Patrick said.
“And last, but not least, this knighthood goes to the second ever Plughole person to step foot in the outside. He was brave battling a beast. This goes to Paddy. I knight you Sir Patrick Puddles Junior of the Plugholes for braveness.”

“Thank you, Queen Plughole, but what is my punishment?” Paddy asked.

The Queen then replied, “Oh yes, I forgot. You’re going to clean this whole pipe from top to bottom on your dad’s behalf.”

“Is that all? And something else…you said I was the second person to go to the outside world. I thought I was the first?”

The Queen didn’t answer but she just looked at Patrick.

“No! Your dad went to the outside world, just like you.”

“I did son. I was just about your age, but let’s never do it again – me or you!” said Patrick.

“Alright, I promise,” replied Paddy. They then returned home and Paddy did his punishment and they never went outside again. For now.

THE END
The Concrete Scar

The concrete scar of a bypass tears its way across the once innocent faces of grassy knolls and flower speckled hilltops; like some parasitic growth, feeding upon its unsuspecting host. It is the flag bearer of modernisation’s mechanised legions.

Every little human is sealed up in their seemingly, invincible exoskeletons: suddenly a mere step away from fully fledged flight. Yet, despite their superhuman powers and revolutionary advancements, they are rendered helplessly inanimate by the smallest of adversaries; the flashing bulbs and monochrome paint work of the zebra crossing.

A cacophonous drone emanates from the beneath the lids of these industrial scale music boxes, the tunes of which many might wish were inaudible to the human ear. It is a sound that could be likened to every factory assembly line and blacksmith’s workshop, performing as one truly horrendous orchestra.

Erupting from behind these metal monstrosities, great plumes of gritty smoke, that is as far as possible from the plumes that embellish certain elegant birds. These grim and acrid clouds rise to form overhead, grotesque mirages of tortured landscapes.

Each passenger is isolated in their own metal, double glazed little world, entirely oblivious to the world hurtling past their window, charging onwards as if life itself were dependent
upon it.

A carriageway, like the uncompromising canal, cuts with maximum efficiency through the nation's garden, its still surface not muddy waters, but entombing tar. But, through this all-encompassing menace struggles the slightest seedling, raising its shrouded head to the pale sun in one more act of defiance - an emblem of nature's revolution against its mass produced oppressors.
A long time ago, 400 million years ago to be exact, a little piece of sand named Simon was enjoying the beach life. It was blissful and he was not thinking of his future and what little pieces of sand go through in their long lives, but he was about to find out. Soon, he was going to be left with the memories of being a sedimentary, metamorphic and igneous rock before finally returning to sand - but with a big change...

Simon’s journey started when a tiny piece of sand lay down on top of him. It caused great discomfort to him but luckily not a lot of pain. The new sand was a lot younger than him, meaning it did not weigh very much and did not press down on him. Sadly this would not last. Over time, more and more sand piled on top, pressing down on Simon. It was becoming unbearable, when suddenly things changed.

It was high tide and a whole new group of sand had just piled on top when the water started to almost solidify between him and the other sand. Simon started to notice that the other sand was moving slowly closer and closer to him. It was as though walls were pushing in on him slowly. They were so close that if they’d had noses they would have been squashed flat against each other.

Slowly, they compacted into an almost solid rock, but along with the water crystallising between the gaps (cementation) they did, in fact, become a sedimentary rock. This rock was
called sandstone; sandstone has a lot of little grains. With this new form, he almost began to panic. This was all so new and exciting, but also frightening. He was no longer an individual, but instead was part of a group. He had lost his freedom, but had gained a new point of view and friendship. Simon had no idea how to feel…

After a while of having this new form, Simon noticed a change again. He was slowly beginning to heat up as if he had a fever, as if all of them had a fever. It was getting hotter and hotter, almost beginning to be unbearable. Simon also noticed that they were being pushed down by the multiple other rocks on top. By this time he was beginning to panic as he could not breathe, but then Simon relaxed as he remembered he didn’t have any lungs. By now he was being cooked and squashed as if a bus had just fallen on him on a boiling hot day.

All he could do to stay calm was to remember how his first transformation had been fine in the end. Slowly they metamorphosed into a new rock - a metamorphic rock. There was an up - side to going through this process; they now had crystals, beautiful shining crystals. Sadly they were now deep underground where no one would see the loveliness of the crystals. This almost made Simon depressed.

After a long time, he noticed that they were getting very hot again, so hot that they started to melt. Simon started to panic as they slowly started to deform and melted into magma. After such a long time of being fixed in place in the solid rock it was great to have the freedom of being in liquid form - to
flow and change direction however he wanted. Simon still had concerns about this new form, but finally he was regaining some independent movement within his own space.

After a while, he felt the walls of the metamorphic rocks around him start to shake. Suddenly he and the other magma started to be thrown out of the cavern. He did not have time to think about what was going on. There was a sudden rushing sensation and he found himself flying upwards at great speed, out of what he now realised must have been a volcano.

The air all around him cooled rapidly and he felt his movement slowing and stiffening. He could almost feel the others beside him reaching out for each other, but the speed of the change meant that they were locked in place before the groups could grow. There would be no lovely big crystals this time, just little ones.

After turning over and over in the air, they finally settled in place on the hillside. Simon felt dizzy and disorientated and was glad to stop moving. Everything stayed the same. Night followed day and, as Simon relaxed, he lost track of time passing. Spring and summer had already passed and Simon wondered if he would stay like this forever. The days got shorter and the sky became dark with heavy cloud which poured rain down on his head. The perpetual rain filled the small cracks and fissures caused by the tumble down the hillside.
Simon could tell that winter was drawing near as the trees looked dead without their leaves and he shivered as the nights got colder. Being cold and wet and squashed by the ice crystals forming around him made Simon miserable. He was fearful of the future as all around him, the cracks creaked and groaned and the rock surrounding him split.

Suddenly he and only two of his friends were wrenched away from the rest of their rock and sent hurtling further down their hillside home. As they knocked into other rocks in their downward tumble, they were separated. Simon had no time to think about what being alone would mean to him as he landed with a soft thud on to the beach below.

At first, Simon thought that he had returned to the home from where his journey had begun. Thinking back over the last 400 million years and the many changes he had been through, Simon realised he must be mistaken. His first home had been many miles from the nearest volcano.

As he settled down into the embrace of the sandy beach, Simon relaxed and began making friends with those around him. They shared their stories and wondered what new adventures awaited.
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