

# Youth Art Day 2021

Division: Literature

Category: Short Story

Grades: K-2

## The Stuck Volleyball

It was a warm and sunny day at the beach. Jim the giraffe was going for a walk on the beach when Sealy the seal popped out of the water. Sealy asked Jim "Do you want to play volleyball with me?" Jim asked "Can we play somewhere sandy?" Sealy said "Yea, that sounds good." Then they played on the beach and they were happy. All of a sudden, a big gust of wind blew the volleyball into a tall tree branch. They stood there feeling surprised. Jim had an idea to use his long neck to get the volleyball out of the branch. He used his head to knock the ball down. The ball fell to the ground and rolled to Sealy. Sealy picked the ball up and they played together until the sun set. Jim and Sealy became best friends.

The End

By Jack Deaven

3/01/2021

## SECOND PLACE

### Pooh Gets Stuck

Once upon a time, Pooh the bear was going on a walk and he got stuck in a branch. He was sad and lonely. Flippy the turtle was eating a little snack when he heard a cry. Flippy wanted to help him so he went back home to get an axe. Flippy chopped the branch and Pooh came tumbling out. Pooh felt happy that he was rescued. Pooh asked "can we play soccer together?" Then, Flippy said, "yes!" Then, they played soccer until their moms called them home for dinner.

The End

By Owen Deaven

3RD PLACE

Adalynn Nadu

First Grade

Susquenita Elementary

Short Story

Three Wishes

One day I found a leprechaun. I found him in a jar. I told my mom. He asked me if I wanted a wish. I said, "Yes!" He gave me three wishes. My first wish was that I wanted 100 cats. My second wish was that I wanted to work at an animal hospital. My third wish was that I wanted 1000 wolves in my backyard. I love animals.

# Youth Art Day 2021

Division: Literature

Category: Short Story

Grades: 3-5

# FIRST PLACE

Ava DiPaolo  
Grade 3  
Susquenita Elementary School  
Short Story  
Piper the Fairy

Once upon a time there was a fairy that hid in a forest called Flower Forest and as you guessed, it's full of flowers. That fairy lived in a flower herself. Her name was Piper and only Piper. She loved trees more than flowers, especially cherry blossom trees. Piper one day decided to try and find another fairy in the forest. There wasn't much luck finding fairies in forests, especially for humans.

Sometimes she would go to different forests, like the Cherry Forest. She really liked the Cherry Forest and knew almost every fairy there! Anyways, she had no luck finding a fairy friend like usual. She decided to go into a forest call The Fairy Forest that was just a forest that had fake fairy doors and you can go in (if you were a fairy of course). So she decided to move there, she thought, "What's the worst to happen? It is just a forest full of fake fairy houses." So she went there and found the perfect house. Turns out it was just a glued-on door that can't open and she was miserable after hours of trying until she found the perfect one. Its door actually opened, it was her style, but it wasn't decorated. So it was up to her to decorate. Piper of course took this seriously and by the end of the day the fairy house, or fairy tree was fully decorated with tiny wood furniture.

She was happy with her new home, then she saw a group- a group of fairies! They were just a tree away. So she said to herself, "I MUST go to them, it's not like I've met more than 10 fairies." She flew over there like the fairy she was. She decided to just watch and not interrupt them. She listened closely and surprisingly (not very surprising) they were talking about her! Apparently, she was popular in this forest. She of course decided to go over at this point. They were talking about her! She had to! So as the curious fairy she was, she asked, "Why are you



talking about me? Am I popular here? How am I known? How..." Then she got interrupted by a person in that group, who said she was her biggest fan! Her name was Maya, she was from the Cherry Forest! The only person Piper didn't know there. Now they have become best friends. Turns out she was the only one who was talking about Piper, and the other two weren't really excited to see her, but very excited to see someone who was basically a celebrity! A fairy celebrity, in fact. It started getting dark so they headed back inside of their little tree houses or shacks. Piper decided to pull an all-nighter, but she very quickly decided otherwise.

When the sun finally decided to show, Piper heard a knocking on her door. She decided to check who it was like usual. Well, not that usual. She never had visitors. She was quite surprised to see it was a hum, or course she didn't open the door. She instead looked out the window considering it could be something wanting to eat her or... yeah. So she went downstairs and looked out the door's tiny window, it was a surprisingly young girl. There's no way Piper could be hurt by the young girl... right? So she opened the door and fluttered out. The young girl was shocked and excited at the same time. Piper decided to flutter onto her hand, it was sticking right in her face. The little girl must've thought fairies were something that were allowed to be pets or taken to show others. She of course ran to her mommy... no daddy surprisingly. She attempted to show her mommy Piper, but Piper flew off in just a blink. Maybe next time? Well, the little girl chased Piper like a fly! Piper was surprised by seeing the young person try swatting her like a bug! Piper yelled, "STOP! I'M A FAIRY, NOT A BUG... OR FLY!" The little girl walked away looking depressed. Well, next time try not to swat a fairy like a

fly to be friends with them. Honestly, do fairies even look like flies? How weird that was. Well, back to the story.

Piper decided to look for her the next day, so she did. They lived in a little house, about 2 stories. She needed to get in, but how? She didn't know how. So she looked around the house and found a little hole! Perfect, she found a way in! But as soon as she flew to it, it had been blocked by a toy. Well, now Piper had to find a different way. So she did, she found a mouse hole leading inside and they left it there. She flew in and found the young girl in a small room. No lights, no anything. Just her. Piper flew to her and asked her name. She was Lila, a beautiful name. They became friends and have been friends very since until... Lila had to move. Piper had a new problem, because they were moving in to a completely different place! Piper needed to find Lila.... But how? Piper had all the time to think because Lila told her an hour ago and she just decided to worry. The whole house was packed up already, there was no way for Piper to get to the new house in time... or was there? Piper saw an open box and knew exactly what to do. She flew inside the box and waited until she was being moved. She was now inside the moving truck. But her box, which was almost completely empty, fell out. Well, Piper lost all hope at that point. I mean, how would she finally find the house... but there was a car stopping in front of Piper and picking her up. The box was taped and no hope again until she saw a hold in the box. She flew out and to Lila's house. She flew in the open door and then... it was Lila! Just standing in front of her and looking. Piper was confused on why Lila looked scared, until she saw the cat running right at her. She flew up to the highest place she could. Turns out the cat was just scared, so Piper flew down to greet the cat. She then made friends with it in a few minutes. And they were happy for the rest of their days.

## SECOND PLACE

Karleigh Huggins  
Grade 5  
Susquenita Middle School  
Short Story  
“Things Are Not Always as They Seem”

One Halloween night I was walking home, so that my family and I could go trick or treating. After I got home and got dressed, my family and I climbed into the car and headed out to go trick or treating. When we got out of the car, I saw the meanest girl in school, Joslyn Sand! She was crying, but I had no idea why she was crying.

I followed her to see what was wrong. The weird thing was she went to the graveyard! She went to a grave that said Jake Sand. For some odd reason she dumped out all of her candy and started crying some more. I went up to her and said, "Why did you dump out your Halloween candy?"

She said, "this is my brother's grave. His favorite holiday was Halloween. I come here every year and give him my candy. The reason why I am so mean to you is because you have a brother and I don't."

From that day on we were best friends. That is why even when people are mean to you, you should still be nice to them. You don't know what they may be going through.

# THIRD PLACE

Rylee Checchio

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

Susquenita Elementary School

Short Story

Alone Panther

In a hot and dry jungle there lived a panther. He is very shy and alone. All he has as company is his tree that he sleeps in. He eats a lot of food for his size. He is a black panther. This is the reason why he is alone it is because everyone makes fun him because of his red eyes that look like a demon. Also his name is Hershey so everyone pretends to eat him like a real Hershey bar. The alone black panther grows up being brave and ignoring what everyone thinks and says about him. He tells everyone to not make fun of other animals because what if you were that animal. So the other animals learned their lesson to never bully the panther again.

## THIRD PLACE

Jacob Kimmich  
Grade 5  
Susquenita Middle School  
Short Story  
"Jakoo the Giant"

Once upon a time there lived a giant named Jakoo. Every day Jakoo would yell to the gods, "Hey you up there in the sky give me power, give glory." But every day the gods did not give Jakoo power or glory.

The gods were bored with Jakoo and his begging. They told him, "we will give you power and glory, if you do one task." Jakoo took the task of forming mountains. He started to head north.

He was getting sleepy as he moved. Jakoo rested for the night. During the day, Jakoo dug. He was gathering clay. He made giant sized mounds of clay, and those were the mountains.

Jakoo returned home and the gods gave him power. Jakoo was powerful and every creature in the land glorified him.



# Youth Art Day 2021

Division: Literature

Category: Short Story

Grades: 9-12

FIRST PLACE

Rachael Filip

12<sup>th</sup> Grade

Newport High School

Short story

*A Matter of Life and  
Death*

## A Matter of Life and Death

When I hatched on June 26, 2020, my life officially began. By the time I was eight days old, I had been where no human can imagine. For example, I had thoroughly explored a cow's deflated carcass and tracked all over this big mound of deliciously-tasting, brown squishiness: manure. Resting under the cool shade of a leaf, devouring an overripe strawberry, was one of my many favorite past-times. I had food to eat, shelter whenever I wanted, and my faithful family—I thought I had it made! Never had I experienced the intriguing world full of perfectly-shaped fruit, leftovers, and year-round temperature control—at least not until I was fifteen days old. If I had listened to the terrible tales of my grandparents, I would have thought twice about what I was doing. I had survived battles with whipping tails and shuddering hides, what could have been worse? —not those “terrible” tales. Anyway, NOTHING would happen to ME—I was INVINCIBLE! But I discovered the truth all too late.

I woke up with the dawn on my fifteenth birthday, eager to celebrate another day with all my family and friends. It was tradition to race to a nearby decaying mound of food and explore what goods were new to the pile. I, as always, won. When we landed on the mound, we each rubbed our legs together to clean them before we threw ourselves upon the glorious food. That day's feast just happened to be my favorite: raw chicken scraps, rotten bananas, and a mouse carcass. I quickly busied myself with regurgitating saliva to dissolve the harder food particles so I could suck it up.

After the garbage feast, my cousins and I zipped off to play. We frolicked around on the backs of cows and swarmed their faces, taunting them when they couldn't get rid of us. They were so large and powerful, yet they were essentially helpless when we were around. Soon, I tired of battling the constantly swishing tails and went off to do something else, something more

exciting. As I buzzed past a manure pile, I caught a glimpse of the most beautiful female I had ever seen. Her wings were not nicked, her body hairs were smooth laying, and her big eyes were a lovely shade of red. I immediately doubled back and settled down next to her. Before I could communicate a word, though, she brusquely turned her back to me and darted away. As deeply disheartened as I was, I didn't waste time in moving onward. I could always track her down later. But, at that moment, I was on a mission.

A few minutes after the incident, I had temporarily forgotten about the attractive female and was approaching my desired destination: a human's house. Stories that had been passed down through the generations of all fly families flitted through my mind. I pushed away the spurious thoughts. The stories were all lies and exaggerations, anyway. I couldn't see how *anyone* could believe them—especially the part where humans chased you around their house until you got weary, and then they mercilessly killed you. Besides, the flies who ended up dead didn't have the quick reflexes I had. Those few flies that did survive being chased, well, it was just pure luck that they survived, not skill. I had skill, and I had endurance too. My secret goal was always to be the first fly in fly history to go into a human house and come right back out without a nick or a problem. Simple, right?!—or so I thought. Anyway, the time was right, and I felt ready to go—the only problem was going to be getting into the house. Getting out would be easy; I just had to locate the same spot in which I went in.

Maneuvering myself around the house, I looked for a way in. It didn't take long before I discovered an open window and slipped inside. A blast of cool air momentarily knocked me off-balance and pushed me sideways, but I righted myself with ease. I was in! Now, all I had to do was fly right back out and join the rest of my relatives. I headed to the window, eager to share

my accomplishments, but when I got there, it was closed! The blast of cool air hit me a second time, but this time, I went tumbling. *What was I going to do?!*

When I finally managed to regain my balance, I realized that I was definitely in foreign territory. There were large complex obstructions with four legs, and surrounding one of them were smaller objects with four legs. I shied away from them, at first, but when they didn't move, I relaxed. They weren't monsters. Forgetting my fear, I became fascinated by this mysterious place, for my curiosity always bested me. I continued my journey onward into a room full of delicious scents. There were disk-like things sitting next to what appeared to be a deep hole. Avoiding the hole, I settled onto one of these disks and tasted the contents that were smeared across it: it was food tastier than anything I had ever slurped up in my entire life! This place wasn't dangerous; it was heaven! More disks were stacked to my right with a pile of small pitchforks and rounded shovels on top. They seemed to have all been waiting especially for me!

In only a short matter of time, I had explored every part of the room. There was a small garbage heap contained within some sort of container. Another container held nice-looking fresh fruit. Sticky drops were on a large, flat surface, and crumbs were stuffed between some boards. As I went by a towering square thing that was emitting warm air and a wonderful smell, I saw another fly! He was so handsome, I wondered whether he knew the female that had been rude to me. I started to ask him, but he was rude, too! He just mimicked me at the same time I was speaking! When I finished asking my question, he didn't say anything in response! Dispirited, I turned away for the second time that day.

All of the sudden, an object came flying toward me. I just managed to dash out of the way and zoom to a wall. I wasn't even able to catch my breath from the shock before the object came toward me again! After I had skillfully avoided that blow, I flew to the opposite end of the

room. Risking a glimpse back at my attacker, I realized, for the first time, the truth behind all those stories I had thought were exaggerations and lies. My middle-aged heart suddenly thumped in near panic, but I managed to recollect my wits just in time. My human pursuer was coming after me, yet again, and she was holding a racket-like thing that crackled with electricity. She took a swing and missed. *At least I have good endurance and skill! You'll never beat me, clumsy human! I have better, quicker reflexes than you!* I taunted her in my thoughts.

As much as I was beginning to actually enjoy the chase, somewhat, I couldn't help but fear for the worst. I leapt out of the way of another swing and hid behind a bundle of long fabric coming down from the ceiling close to a wall. I latched onto a groove created by some sort of stitching and tried to slow my little racing heart. I only managed to take a couple of deep, shaky breaths before I was shaken loose. Racing to another wall, my path was blocked. *That was a close one.* I deftly went underneath the obstruction and continued on my way, zig-zagging to avoid the relentless human's efforts.

At the end of twenty minutes, I just had to take a break. *How I wish I had not gone into that dreadful house!* My wings were getting heavy from not being allowed to land; my prized endurance was running out. I finally managed to cling to the glass of a closed window without my pursuer noticing. Just as I thought I had gotten lucky and won the battle, an electric shock mercilessly shoved its way through my small, tired body. The last thing I remembered was extreme pain and the putrid smell of my own burning flesh.

From this experience, I learned my lesson the hard way and far too late: NEVER trespass into a human's private domain and LISTEN to and LEARN from your elders, for you never know what will happen. It turned out that I was not better than my peers. I was not invincible ... I was just another one of those flies that thought he could survive the inevitable,

just like all those flies that died before me. Now, I no longer have a second chance at life on earth. The crazy human *was* merciless. Had I believed those stories, I would not have gotten myself into the life-and-death situation I did. My denial caused me my life.

# FIRST PLACE

Kiera Metcalf

West Perry High School

Grade 12

Short Story



“Fire!”

Imagine silence. Silence so still that it grits against you like sandpaper. This is the silence which surrounded her. It was a blanket into which a young child burrows for comfort. This silence, the calm before the firestorm that exploded in front of her. The firestorm that burned what she called home to its very foundation as midnight ascended to dawn and made even a Canadian winter seem as bright and as scorching as the sun itself. The blazing inferno left nothing behind until only the phoenix remained.

Years ago, a rumor began. It started as a hushed whisper, but it grew. It grew from the small chimney fire that ruined her childhood home into the idea that maybe it had been her fault. That maybe she had done it on purpose, that maybe it had not been a childish accident, but instead a purposeful and vengeful act. After all, if one could make their abusive father “disappear,” would they not take advantage of the opportunity? It grew until the words were no longer a secret to be kept behind closed doors. This rumor, this place, enveloped her in a devastating grasp, pressing a weight onto her chest that she could not bear alone. It seemed to crush her, making her only the more unpredictable.

Now whispers of “*fire girl*” followed her, taunting her, begging to be released in a flurry of ash and smoke. Everyone seemed to know who she was, except, of course, her. Her abilities remained unnamed at this time, for even those closest to her feared the power to create fire. Magic was well understood, yet not welcomed with open arms. Fire magic wrought destruction, everyone knew that. Therefore, they remained content to leave her in the dark. It seemed to her that fire was to be feared, not embraced. Why would one desire to be known as something so destructive? She was content to live her life far from the fire, far from the chaos it caused, far

from the pain it revealed, far from the raw blistering landscape it left behind, and most of all, far from the reminder of who she was.

“Fire!”

She did not flinch when the quartermaster burst into the mess hall, leaving the doors sighing loudly behind him. She sighed with them. Fire was no stranger to her; after all, what else would one expect at Fort McMurray, the world’s most fire-prone city?

“It’s probably just another false alarm,” Liam muttered to her left, “there’s never an actual fire.”

She rolled her eyes as Emma sneered from across the table. “You never know, hundredth times the charm, Liam.” Personally, she had never doubted the alarms, but Emma did have a point, there seemed to be a different fire every day.

Once a team had been assembled for fire control, the recruits at the Academy for Gifted Individuals settled back into their evening routine. The name of the school gives off an inaccurate impression, the Academy provides individualized training for young people who possess powerful magic. It contributes to a society full of less powerful individuals who fear the powerful by training those with abilities to control them on command. At least that is what her hometown claimed as they sent her away. As she began the short walk back to the barracks, she took notice of the strong northeastern wind. It whistled through the trees, blowing her thick russet brown hair straight into her face. She caught the faint scent of burning rubber on one particular gust of wind and realized that there really must have been a fire this time. A worrisome thought hovered just outside her grasp as the wind blew harder, “did I do this?”

A memory from merely hours ago bubbled to the surface of her mind, simmering in her subconscious. A conversation. A person, another person, too many people. Panic. The spark had

slipped, there was no way she could have controlled it. She had stamped it out quickly, it could not have survived. "I did this." She ignored her mind's accusation as she bounded up the stairs to her barracks, avoiding the step that had a habit of creaking at the worst of times.

Sometime that night, she awoke to complete silence. It was vaguely comforting in light of the constant noise of the base. She allowed herself a thin smile, there had been nothing to worry about after all. She sat in peace for several moments before the thought registered: it was quiet. Too quiet. She glanced around the room searching for a hint as to why it was so quiet. Nothing. Everyone was gone. Had she missed a drill sometime during the night? As questions barreled through her sleep-deprived mind, a loud crash, like a thunderclap, erupted from outside her room. She bounded from her bed to the door, barely taking time to grab shoes, and threw it open.

Excruciating heat blasted into her, sweat immediately breaking out across her body as she sucked in a deep, hot breath that seemed to sear her lungs. As her eyes adjusted to the light, she watched flames 10 feet tall fan up into the air and lick the edges of nearby roofs. The crackling, popping, and roar of the inferno was deafening. Trees and buildings alike crashed down around her, sending showers of sparks into the inky blackness of the night. The sparks were mesmerizing, they seemed to be tiny flaming stars, desperately trying to reach their glowing counterparts, yet they could only fly so high before they were tossed back to earth with destructive disdain.

She pounded down the metal staircase, the stairs creaking and groaning beneath her. The railing warned her that he should not be touched, it laughed at her with a red-hot smile, daring her to cling to it, only to be burned. Acrid smoke filled her nose and lungs, and she hacked desperately, attempting to clear her throat of the thick, chalky ash which coated her sinuses. The course, blackened earth crunched beneath her burnt rubber soles. Sweat streamed down her back

and forehead, stinging her eyes. Tears flowed freely down her cheeks, blurring her vision. The flames leaped to and fro in front of her, like a distorted version of *Starry Night*. Simply breathing was a challenge. Thick, black smoke filled her airways, slowly suffocating her, taunting her as she tried to escape. She stumbled through the burning, smoldering wreckage of what she once called home, dragging her battered and weary body along behind her.

She crawled and shoved her way through the base, yet the flames created a never-ending maze. They clawed at her clothes and ankles, leaving blisters she knew she would feel later. She stumbled once more and lay gasping for breath on the scorched earth. She longed for the cool, refreshing taste of water to wash away the thick coating of ash on her tongue. It tasted like blood and burnt flesh, with a hint of charred spruce. The flames began to stalk closer to her. They roared their triumph as they clutched her with their dry, blistering tendrils. She couldn't die here. She wouldn't die here. With one final burst of adrenaline, she launched herself clear of the flames and looked back with one exhausted yet triumphant smile.

She knew why they called her fire now. Fire didn't die without putting up a fight. Even after you douse a fire over and over again, the coals still remain. She refused to die. The fire doused her in pain, yet the coals of her spirit still glowed hot. She was fire. She understood fire now. She understood the power of her abilities, the beauty and strength they portrayed. Even as the fire attempted to smother her, she could feel her power grow, begging to be released, to add to the destruction which had already been wrought. Fire is an element to be welcomed, not feared. Why would one desire to become something so destructive? Because fire is fought with fire, water cannot win. Because fire is a force to be reckoned with.

## SECOND PLACE

Nathan Hixson

Grade 9

Greenwood HS

Short Story

The Kidnapping in Hollywood

## The Kidnapping in Hollywood

“I need a cop at my house right away! My son and my one body guard are missing! My name is Bill Jones and my address is 6456 Popular Street in Hollywood. Please help me!” cried Bill as he frantically looked around.

Officer Smith replied, “I need you to calm down, sir, we will find them in no time. I will be there shortly. We also have Detective Philip O’Reilly on the case. He will be there shortly.”

“Ok, thank you. Be safe on those windy roads,” said Bill. “Crashes tend to happen a lot on it.”

Officer Smith quickly got out of his office and on his way out he yells, “Someone please get Philip O’Reilly to 6456 Popular Street in Hollywood. We have a missing child and bodyguard. I’ll call if I need backup for any reason.” He gets in his car and starts driving to Bill’s place.

Halfway there, Smith notices a human-like silhouette in the woods. Suddenly, he hears a gunshot and his tire pops. The car spins out of control and crashes into a ditch not too far from the road.

Smith pulls out his phone and quickly dials in his department’s phone number. “I need help!” screamed Smith into his phone. “I don’t know exactly where I am but I got to be close to Bill’s. Someone shot out my tire and I crashed in a ditch. My head is bleeding really badly too.”

“I’ll go look for him,” Officer Corkle said as he got out of his office. “If I find him, I will rush him to the hospital. Hopefully he is okay”.

The detective arrives at the house and right away notices all the alcoholic beverages everywhere. “Someone must have had a party,” he said to himself writing in his notebook. He

walked up to Bill and greeted himself. “You must be Bill. My name is Detective Philip O’Reilly. I got called that you are missing two people.”

“Yes,” said Bill. “My son and my one body guard, Mason, are missing. We threw a party because I just recently got the main role in a Hollywood movie. I beat this one actor that always gets the main roles, Kevin Holmes. I have never seen someone so upset about not getting a role.”

“Well, congratulations on that!” said Philip. “When was the last time you saw these two people?”

“It was about 4:30, right before we started the party. Charles, my son, was outside practicing soccer. And Mason was also outside on duty,” Bill stated.

“Interesting,” Philip says writing in his notebook. “Has Officer Smith arrived yet?”, questioned Philip.

“No,” Bill replied. “You are the first here.

“That’s weird,” said Philip.

Officer Corkle was driving around and didn’t see the flipped car because the darkness was a **pall**. He almost drove past it, but he saw it out of the corner of his eye. He quickly got out of the car yelling, “Smith! Smith! Can you hear me?” No response. He got down on his knees to look into the window and saw Smith laying there unconscious. He broke the rest of the window and carefully dragged Smith out of the flipped car. Corkle wrapped a cloth around Smith’s badly bleeding head. As he drives away, he calls the hospital telling them that he will be there soon with someone.

Back at Bill’s house, Philip received a call from his Smith’s department manager. “Hey Philip. Smith called us about 20 minutes ago stating that he was in a car crash. We sent out

Officer Corkle to find him, and he did. He reported back that he found him. You will have to cover this case yourself.”

“Ok, thank you,” replied Philip.

After he got off the phone call, Philip said, “Yeah Bill? I just got word that Smith isn’t going to be here,”

“Why’s that?” Bill asked nervously.

“He crashed and is being sent to the hospital. It will only be me here, so let's get started. Can I talk to those two men over there? I want to see what they know about all of this,” stated Philip.

“Ok,” said Bill. “These are my two bodyguards Quinton and James. I have one more named Mason, but I do not know where he is.”

While they were walking over, Philip thought to himself, “Yeah, I would never mess with guys with that big of biceps!”

“Quinton, tell me what you saw or what you know,” Philip stated.

“We heard a scream from behind us so we ran that way. As we were running, Mason punched James and kicked my legs out from underneath me. I think he got in the car with the man,” Quinton said. “I don’t know if he got in the car to help whoever this man was, or to try to save Charles. And why did he stop us from going as well? I don’t think he was trying to save Charles.”

“Interesting... thank you sir. I think it’s safe to say that we know at least one suspect now,” Philip stated.

“It doesn’t make sense to me though. He would always help him with work and help him



practice whenever he needed to,” James said.

“Yeah they were super close to each other,” said Bill.

“That could be a good cover up if this was being planned for a while. He is still a suspect on my list though,” Philip explained. “Do you have any idea where Mason could be?”

“I could track him with my phone. For every bodyguard, I have trackers if something would happen if they didn’t show up on time or if they were M.I.A.,” Bill stated while pulling his phone out.

“Pull it up right now,” demanded Philip. “With this, we can get your son back right away.”

“It says that he is only 5 miles away! Look!” exclaimed Bill.

“Lemme see this,” Philip says as he takes the phone out of Bill’s hands. “Well then, I’ll call the department to have other officers meet me there and we’ll make sure to get your son back. Say, what did you say that man’s name was earlier?”

“Kevin Holmes,” said Bill.

“Ok, I’ll remember that. I feel like he might have something to do with this based off of what you told me,” Philip replied. “What is the address again?”

“7362 Elm Street,” replied Bill.

“Philip!” yelled James. “I don’t know if this is useful at all, but Mason has this huge tattoo on his bicep. It’s like a cross with snakes wrapped around it. He would never tell us what it meant.”

“Ok, thank you for that. It might come in handy,” Philip replied.

Philip went back to his car and called the police department. “I need backup at 7362 Elm

Street. We tracked down suspects there. One of them is a big boy so be ready,” Philip said into his phone.

He put his car in drive and drove to the destination praying to find Charles and arrest whoever is behind this.

Philip and the other officers arrived at the same time. They quickly talked amongst each other and came up with a plan. The plan was to be nice and **amicable** with the men, but if they did not cooperate, it would be a different story.

Philip goes up and pounds on the door three times stating, “We know you are in here, please open up! And do not try to run, your house is surrounded by other officers.”

Inside the house, Charles hears the words of the men outside. “I’m going to be saved,” he quietly said underneath his breath. “In here!” Charles yells and as he gets backhanded to the face by the kidnapper.

Philip and the officers heard the words of a kid in distress and broke in while some remained outside to keep cover. The first thing he noticed was some sort of **coat of arms** on the wall. “Cross with snakes wrapped around it,” Philip thought to himself. Then he remembered Mason's tattoo!

“We need to get out of here, Mason,” Kevin said.

“No really. I thought we were just gonna go turn ourselves in right now. But how do you expect us to get out? They have every door blocked,” Mason replied.

“The basement. They most likely won’t have that door blocked off,” Kevin said.

“Oh Kevin,” Mason replied, shaking his head. “How many times do I have to say this? They have every door blocked. We are done for!”

“It’s our only hope. Leave the kid here, I don’t care about him anymore. We are gonna get out of here with no trouble,” Kevin replied, pulling Mason by his shirt. “Now come on!”

“I bet you \$10 we are gonna get caught,” Mason said jokingly.

“And I bet \$10 we don’t. But we have to go now,” replied Kevin

They hurry down the basement stairs, running for the door. They both noticed that there was nobody there.

“This is our chance!” exclaimed Kevin. “Lets go quick!”

They slam open the door, alerting the officers right around the corner. They run out of the darkness tackling both of them.

“Philip!”, exclaimed the officer. “Go inside and get Charles and return him to his dad. We can handle these two losers.”

Philip runs inside and finds Charles sitting there in a chair all tied up. He noticed that bruised eye and the large handprint across his face. Philip went to untie the rope and Charles tensed up, as if he was about to get hit.

“Don’t worry, Charles. I am here to help you and get you back to your father right away,” Philip reassured Charles.

“Tha-thank you,” Charles said through his tears.

Still wrestling with Kevin, the officer finally got him in his handcuffs. Mason was also in his handcuffs. While forcing them into the cop car, Mason says, “Hey Kevin. I better get my \$10.”

The officer replied, “The only thing you’re getting is jail time. Now c’mon get in the dang car.”

As they are driving back to the house, Philip asks Charles, “How did this all happen?”

“I was outside shooting on my goal when all of a sudden Mason, my dad’s one body guard, called me over. He said that my friend Jason was here to shoot with me. I walked over to the car to greet him when all of a sudden a man runs out and puts a bag over my head and forces me into the car,” Charles said. “I don’t remember too much after that other than them hitting me and saying this is what I get for being the son of Bill. They were hurting me because my dad is a better actor than Kevin.”

“Well you won’t have to worry about them anymore. They will be in jail for a while,” Philip said.

The rest of the car ride was silent. Philip thought to himself, “One of them most definitely was behind the demise of Officer Smith.”

They arrived back at Bill’s house and Charles ran out of the car as soon as he saw his dad.

“Dad!” Charles yelled while running towards his dad with his arms wide open.

“Charles!” Bill yelled back. “Are you okay? Is your head alright?”

“Yeah dad, I’m fine. I’m glad to be home,” Charles said through his tears.

“Thank you so much Philip. You saved my son! Also, did you find out about Officer Smith?”

“Yes,” Philip said. “He unfortunately didn’t make it, but I know he is looking down at us smiling because we found Charles.”

“Oh,” replied Bill. “I feel so bad for him and his family. I hope they adjust to him not being there. Please let them know if they need any kind of help to call me.”

“I will,” said Philip. “Now I have to go deal with Kevin and Mason. Have a good rest of the night. Stay safe.”

## SECOND PLACE

Gabriel Woodard

Grade 9

Greenwood High School

Short Story

The Duplicitous Killer

## The Duplicitous Killer

I have finally tracked my quarry. For two years Cornelius has evaded me, losing me in busy streets, tricking me with fake identities, changing his looks. But he could never evade me forever.

Two years ago, 1994, Cornelius Sandman borrowed a large sum of money from me, adding up to almost 750 grand. He promised to pay me back, but then again, do they ever? I waited patiently, calling him every so often. He never answered. One day, I grew tired of his antics and decided it was his time to pay for his transgressions. But with something more than just money.

For so long, he has slipped through my fingers, but I have finally caught up to him. It was in Reagan National Airport, October 6 1996, when I found him alone in a café. He was very relaxed, which surprised me: I haven't seen him relax in 2 years. I did it quickly and efficiently, not wanting to be seen at the scene of the crime. I made sure the last thing he ever saw was me.

### Detective Winston, Monday October 6, 1996

The station was quiet, a little too quiet for Detective Winston. He liked keeping busy, or assist his partner, Detective Smith, with his more difficult cases. Detective Smith kept to himself most days, including days with cases. Today was not unlike the others that week. No action, which was good, but boring for Winston.

That was, until the call came in. Winston picked up the wired phone. "Arlington Police Station, what seems to be the problem?"

"There's been a murder! It happened not too long ago apparently, but not many people

were around. We need your help!” exclaimed the jittery voice on the other end of the call.

Winston was alert immediately, asking, “Where did this all happen?”

“Reagan National Airport”

“Reagan National Airport?”

“Yes”

“My partner and I will be there soon,” promised Winston, and hung up. Smith was looking at him with a quizzical expression on his face.

In his calm, collected voice, Smith asked, “What happened?”

“Theres been a murder at Reagan National Airport,” repeated Winston.

“Well then, what are we doing lingering here?” asked Smith. Smith and Winston both got up, and walked out of the front doors to the station at a brisk pace.

Fifteen minutes later at Reagan National Airport, the detectives hurried to the crime scene. When they arrived, the Airport police had already taped off the café where the body was. As soon as Smith stepped into the small café, he was analyzing everything with his sharp, keen eye. While he was preoccupied, Winston busied himself with talking to the police.

“What happened here?” asked Winston.

The officer gave the report. “This morning at approximately 8:00 A.M. a man was stabbed through the heart, sitting at a secluded booth in the corner of this here café. There are two people who claim to have seen something and one who we suspect is the murderer, one being the cashier at the time of the murder, the other was the man who discovered the body. We have both of them in custody here at the airport. The oddest part of this whole thing? No fingerprints on the blade.”



Winston took a moment to ponder the information, then requested to question the witnesses. The officer agreed. “Smith!” he said to his partner, snapping him out of his inquisitorial trance.

Together, the two detectives went to question the witnesses. When they arrived, the officer said, “I will leave you to your questioning,” and left.

Smith, who the detectives silently agreed would do the interrogation, asked the first witness for their name.

The man said, “My name is Mathew Butler.”

“Tell me what you saw.”

Matthew started nervously, “I was checking the stock market in the newspaper, I own some stocks you see, when I heard a quiet disturbance a little bit away.” He started to fumble with his short, blond hair. “I marked my page, not in a hurry, and walked over to where I heard the disturbance. When I saw what had happened to poor Cornelius, I gasped and almost fainted.

“I passed a man sitting in a booth not too far away, and told him what happened. The man’s eyes grew wide with horror as I told him what happened. He yelled for the cashier to come quick. The cashier screamed, ran over to the phone and called airport police.

“When they arrived, they immediately took the cashier, the other man, and me here. That is what happened,” rushed Mathew.

“Did you see anyone do anything or act suspicious?”

“Funnily enough, I did. The man that was not too far away from the victim was not even paying attention to anything. He didn’t check his watch to see when his flight was, he didn’t even look *alive*. When I started talking, he jumped as if *I* had murdered someone.”

Smith was in deep thought. He looked Matthew up and down, then asked, “I have just one more question for you: when you saw the victim, where was the most amount of damage on the victim?”

“His leg had a very large gash on it, almost cut off for that matter, but his deepest wound was where the knife was, in his chest,” answered Matthew.

Smith extended his hand and said, “Thank you for your time, Mr. Butler,” and shook his gloved hand.

Smith moved on with his questioning, moving on to the cashier, whose nameplate read Heather White. “Heather White, I presume? What exactly did you see in the café this morning?” Smith inquired.

Heather started her account, “I thought today was going to be just a normal day: wake up, go to work, go home, then chillax. But that is not what happened. Before I even got to work I knew it was gonna be a bad day. I ran into a lot of traffic on the way here and some guy cut me off. I honked my horn but I knew it was no use.

“So I was in a bad mood when I got to work, and I let everyone else know it. I snapped at people if they said good morning, ignored people who wanted to talk with me. When the café opened, of course the first customer I got was an I-want-everything-to-be-perfect guy. I was not gonna take his attitude, so I didn’t let him in the café.

“Then two other guys show up, one a little ways behind the other. They seemed nice enough, said ‘please’ and ‘thank you’. I had another one come in about ten minutes later. It’s about 7:50 now, and my mood was slowly improving.

“About twenty minutes later, I hear ‘Oh my, what happened?’ So I went to see what was

the issue. When I saw the dead body at the booth in the corner, I screamed as I ran for the phone. I called airport police, and they brought me and the two other living souls in that café here.”

Smith considered his next words carefully, then asked, “Which one of the two people over there was sitting at the table near the booth?”

Heather pointed to the one who Smith hadn’t interrogated yet.

“Thank you for your time, Miss White,” thanked Smith as he walked over to the suspected killer.

The man sitting in the seat in front of Smith was very calm: shaken, but calm. He seemed very confident about something, whether it was of his innocence or his ability to weasel out of the incriminating evidence pointing in his direction.

“I hope you realize,” started Smith, “that your position is not looking the most ideal right now.”

The man replied saying, “Yes, I am aware of that, but I would also like to say I have had no quarrel or argument with the victim. I don’t even know who he was.”

Smith’s eyebrows rose slightly as he asked, “Would you tell me everything you saw this morning, sir?”

The man sighed. “I know this looks very suspicious to say this, but I was not paying very much attention to anything this morning. You see, I was here in Arlington to care for my father in his last moments. He and I were very close. He died two days ago, and I haven’t been able to get over it.” He looked on the verge of tears.

The man continued, “So when I was being shaken by that man over there,” he pointed to Mathew, “I was very startled. He shouted something like ‘A man is dead! In the booth two seats

away! How did you not see anything?' I couldn't even reply, so he called for the cashier, who promptly screamed and ran for the phone. I'm sure the others told you the rest."

"I am very sorry to hear of your loss. I will not question you further, I am sure you have other things on your mind," Smith said. Smith got up and walked over to Winston.

"Did you find anything interesting?" Winston asked hopefully.

Smith sighed and said "I hope so."

They returned to the crime scene, where the body was still sitting ominously. The air smelled of blood. Smith walked over to the table where the body was and struck a match to light up the small area he was examining. As the match passed over the table, Smith paused, then examined the victim's leg. It was cut severely, with dried blood on the edges of the wound.

Smith smiled to himself, as though congratulating himself on a victory. Winston knew that look all too well: it was the face he made when he solved his mystery efficiently and quickly. "Officer, if I may ask this of you, I would like for you to bring in the witnesses and the suspect."

"Of course, sir," replied the officer.

As the officer left to retrieve the witnesses and suspect, Winston confronted Smith. "Are you sure you have it figured out?" questioned Winston.

Smith was sure.

The officer returned with the suspects. So Smith began his accusation. "I have brought you all," said Smith in a calm manner, "to tell you all first who the real killer is. I know that you all believe the suspect to be the killer. But on the contrary, I say it was someone else.

"Miss White, your alibi is valid. I found no loopholes or other misleading information in your testimony. So that leaves you, Mr. Butler. Officer, put him in cuffs."

The officer advanced on Mr. Butler with the cuffs, but Butler got up and attempted to run, where he was tackled by another officer. As the officers put the cuffs on him, he writhed in anger. He looked at Smith with such hatred that Winston looked away from him.

“Mr. Butler, I am sure you would like my reasons for suspicion. Firstly, your manner of speaking was nervous, whereas the others were calm and collected. Secondly, had you been innocent, you would not have been able to see the victim’s leg, which was under the booth. Thirdly, I had not told you the name of the victim, yet you still knew who he was, so I can only assume he did something to you. Fourth, you were wearing gloves today which wouldn’t put fingerprints on the weapon, and there were no fingerprints on the blade.

“But the most important piece of evidence, other than the gloves, that led to your demise was the supposed newspaper you were reading. Today is Monday, Mr. Butler, yet you claim to have been ‘checking the stock market’, which doesn’t run during the weekend and isn’t updated until Tuesday, at least not in the paper. So you wouldn’t have been able to check the stock market as it wasn’t posted yet, whether or not you actually have any stocks.

“Officer, take him away!”

The officers forced Butler through the doors, where the detectives could hear Butler yelling in frustration.

Winston looked at Smith and smiled. Of course Smith had it right, he was always right. Well, except for that one time in New Jersey...

# THIRD PLACE

Lia Zurenko

9th Grade

Greenwood High School

Short Story

Trapped

## Trapped

I strolled over to my car to get my sunglasses that I left behind on the dash as the warm, golden sun shined upon my face. Glancing to the right, I saw the two neighbor kids named Lily and Anthony coloring bright pictures on the sidewalk. They were very... interesting children. Lily was a dainty, naive 6 year old, but the high pitched voice she had was like no other. On the other hand, 8 year old Anthony was more reserved, but very protective of his sister. Although they were very different from each other, both children insisted on growing their thin hair much longer than most kids their age would. It seemed like they looked forward to every conversation they could have, with me especially, but also with any neighbor in general.

I wasn't in the mood to talk to them, but before I could return to the comfort of my home, a shrill voice began rattling off questions.

"Hi Shima! How are you today? What are you coming out to your car for? Can we help you with anything?" Lily asked.

I replied, "Hi kiddos! I'm doing just fine, but I forgot my sunnies out here. Are you guys doing anything fun today? I see you have some chal--"

"Hello, Shima. The kids are fine right now, and yourself?" asked Vicki as she inspected our conversation from the safety of her front porch.

Vicki was our neighbor in my family's large duplex. She was also Lily and Anthony's grandma. Nobody here knew what happened to their parents, but we did know that Vicki had been taking care of the kids ever since we moved in. Although I didn't speak with her frequently, she seemed to be a fairly nice woman. I felt sympathy for her. It would have been challenging to

take care of two energetic kids at her age.

I declared, “I’m fine right now, but I’ve got to go back inside. I don’t want to miss saying goodbye to my mom before work.”

“Alright, we’ll see you later then! Tell your mother I said hello,” Vicki insisted. Her tone of voice almost made it seem as if she was glad that I was returning to my house.

Vicki and the kids began to frown while I was walking away. I wondered why. They looked so happy moments before. At that point, their glares had dug their way deep into my mind.

As I entered my front door, I heard an angry, but quiet voice.

In a hushed yell, it claimed, “You darn kids never learn! How many times do I have to tell you that you are *not* allowed to talk to the outsiders? You never listen to what I tell you, and that’s why--”

The voice was abruptly cut short by the slamming of a door, so I could not manage to hear what was said after. Quite obviously it was one of the neighbors, but surely not Vicki... I thought to myself that there were many other families around us. Maybe the person whom the voice belonged to was just having a hard day. Although I was interested in the voice and who it came from, I could not dwell on it, for I had to say goodbye to my mother before she left for work.

After saying goodbye and wishing my mother good luck at work, I headed up to my room to relax for the night. A strong wave of tranquility washed over me. Having the whole house to myself, I got cozy in my bed and began to watch my favorite television shows. It was a relief to not have to babysit any loud siblings or rowdy pets for the night.



I began to hear a knock on the wall. Assuming that it was Vicki asking me to turn the television volume down, I did exactly that. It was getting decently late, so I wouldn't want to keep Lily and Anthony awake. They needed their rest so they could grow and thrive as little kids. Even after I lowered the volume, the knocking continued. This time it was softer, but more fast paced than the previous time.

I was rather annoyed that the knocking continued because I thought that Vicki might have wanted me to turn the television off entirely. That wasn't fair to me. Even so, I couldn't even stay irritated because the knocking began again!

*Tap, tap, tap.* It was almost as if it was meant to be heard, but specifically for one single person. Was that person me? Regardless of the answer, I could feel my heart begin to race. Anxiety crept up my spine and crawled into the back of my throat as I continued to ponder the true cause for the knocking.

The next time the peculiar knocking occurred, it was accompanied with a soft, soprano voice. I couldn't make out what it was saying. Intrigued, I hopped off my bed, put my ear up to the wall, and knocked back. I only did it for fun, but in return I heard a faint, quivering voice.

“Please help us! We're scared and trapped in the wall. We're all alone. She doesn't feed us when she traps us like this. Please... is anyone there?” asked the voice.

My eyes were wide open and my jaw dropped in amazement. Did I hear that correctly? I had only knocked back on the wall as a joke, and I didn't expect to get a reply, let alone one as bizarre as what I had just heard. I asked myself what I could even do after this? I couldn't just do nothing! Surely if I went to the police they'd think I'm crazy, but I'm not! I couldn't tell my mother because she wouldn't believe me. She liked Vicki. I mean, I did too, but after this

happened I wasn't so certain anymore. I thought the only logical thing to do would be to talk more to this voice...

"W-Who are you?" I shakily asked, moving my ear up to the wall, anticipating a response.

"It's Lily, and I'm with Anthony now. Shima, please help us! We are so hungry, and we just want to leave. She does this to us every day, and we can't take it anymore!"

I quickly and quietly replied, "Don't worry kids. I'll get you out somehow. Just sit tight, and I will make sure someone comes to help you soon!"

Eventually, I decided that I had to tell the police. After all, my mother couldn't do much of anything about the situation if she wouldn't trust what I was telling her. Doing nothing about it would slowly but surely eat away at my conscience. I couldn't live with myself if I knew these kids were being abused and I did nothing to help them!

Deciding I was going to make a difference, I put my fuzzy, winter coat on and started to walk to the police station. It was a decent distance to walk in the cold, dark, autumn night, but it was worth it. My pace was slow at first, but I remembered that each passing minute was another minute those kids were suffering. The steady walk that I began with soon turned into a rapid run. The ferocious fall wind snapped at my face and nipped at my freezing ears.

Before I knew it, I was at the station. Out of breath, I gazed into the windows. Only a few lights illuminated the front lobby room, but I was determined to tell someone about the dangerous situation at hand.

I broke through the heavy, cinderblock-like doors, panting from exhaustion. The inside of the station was warm like an oven, or perhaps it felt that way because I practically ran 3 miles to

get there. I wasn't sure which one it was, but that didn't matter because a short man in uniform suddenly sauntered into the room. He had a relaxed gait accompanied by a perplexed look on his face.

"Uh... Hello. My name is Officer Scott. What's your name, and how can I help you, ma'am?" he asked.

"I'm here to report a crime," I declared in a very serious tone of voice. Maybe I was overcompensating, but I already had the feeling that the officer didn't take me seriously. It could have been because I looked so young... I wasn't sure.

"Okay. If you are sure you want to report something, you may follow me to this room back here. But first, are you alright? You look a little disheveled?"

I thought that was a bit rude of him to say. I wanted to make a witty remark back at him, however this man was going to help me with the kids. I couldn't get on his bad side already.

Because of this, I replied, "I'm fine. Just a little tired. Thanks for asking."

Officer Scott opened the door to a plain room in which I would tell him how I knew that the neighbor kids were being held in the wall of their grandma's house with no food and water almost every day. He took notes and everything when I was speaking. It started to feel a little more professional, like he was taking me seriously. However, just when I was finished telling him what was going on, he looked confused. I wondered why he was staring at me without saying a word. I spoke my truth. Now he had to help the kids. Right?

"That is quite a case to be making against your neighbor... Vicki?" he added.

I nodded my head because he got her name right, and then I replied saying, "I know it sounds odd but I promise I am telling you the truth. I heard them. Those kids have been knocking

on the wall for a while now. I always thought they were asking me to quiet down, but they were really asking for help! Please, we have to help them!”

Officer Scott jotted some more notes down on his paper, and then he told me there would be a prompt investigation into the matter. He also said that there would be an officer to accompany me at the station. I had to stay there in the lobby while they were conducting the investigation.

After an eternity of waiting, Officer Scott walked through the doors to the lobby of the station as the golden sun started to rise. I wondered if it had really been that long since I first arrived here...

“Shima. There was no incriminating evidence found at the scene that proves your allegations against your neighbor. The kids are fine, and they all said they have never once knocked on the wall to ask for help, or even to ask you to quiet down. I’m going to need you to come back to the room we were in earlier,” muttered Officer Scott. He sounded tired.

Right after that, my mother burst through the front doors of the station.

Almost in tears, she asked, “Shima, are you okay? You had me so worried! What even happene-”

Right here is where I lost consciousness. The state of shock I was in really struck most of my memories of the occurrence from my mind. I don’t remember what happened after my blackout, but I have been told that my mental and physical health had been assessed at a hospital. Since I have no recollection of the assessment at all, I don’t believe it was fair to analyze my

health.

Because of that stupid assessment, the doctors here think I have schizophrenia or something of the sort. I am trapped on an uncomfortable bed in this windowless room. The horrible clothing that they changed me into scratches and picks at all of my limbs. There is nobody else to keep me company in this lonely room, and no way to escape. The doctors and nurses only come in to bring me food and make me feel bad about wanting to help those poor children. They think I am crazy. I know for a fact that I am not crazy, and I know what I heard. Lily and Anthony still need to be saved! They are not safe with Vicki, and I am scared for them.

Therefore, I, in this journal that the doctors gave me, am promising that one day I will save Lily and Anthony. Not only to relieve my racing mind, but because they deserve to live a happy life, much like the one I have been afforded up until this point. Until then, I am signing off on this worthless journal so the doctors can take it out of my sight.

Yours truly,

Shima