2025

Mayors' short story challenge

Alexandrina

city of Victor Harbor

District Council of Yankalilla

District Council of Yankalilla
Winners & Short Listed Stories

Mayors' Short Story Challenge

The Mayors' Short Story Challenge is a wonderful collaboration between the District Council of Yankalilla, City of Victor Harbor and Alexandrina Council celebrating creative writing. The challenge is held during term two each year for school aged children from reception to year ten. Each year the Mayors' Short Story Challenge gets bigger and better.

We would like to thank the Mayors, all the Principals, Teacher-Librarians, Teachers and Student Services Officers involved who encouraged their students to enter. This year the Yankalilla Library received 245 entries from across the District Council of Yankalilla region.

Most of all we thank the children and applaud their efforts in "having a go". They have delighted us with their creative and imaginative writing skills. Without their support the Mayors' Short Story Challenge would not have been successful.

District Council of Yankalilla Section Winners

Special Options

Christopher Nemth, Myponga Primary School
" A great journey"
Cruz Stevens, Myponga Primary School
"Room 13"

Reception - Year 2

Abigail Nottle, Yankalilla Area School
'The three cute dragons'

Years 3- 4

Joshua McCallum, Yankalilla Area School
'GUMNUT BOY

Years 5 - 7

Addi McArdle, Rapid Bay Primary School
'The Ride'

Overall Winner

Addi McArdle, Rapid Bay Primary School
'The Ride'

Winning stories can also be viewed on the website at www.yankalilla.sa.gov.au

District Council of YANKALILLA

Special Options

Category winners

Christopher Nemeth, Year Five
"A great journey"
Myponga Primary School

Cruz Stevens, Year Six
"Room 13"
Myponga Primary School

Shortlisted students

Christopher Nemeth, Year Five
"A great journey"
Myponga Primary School

Cruz Stevens, Year Six
"Room 13"
Myponga Primary School

District Council of
YANKALILLA

#12 by Chris Helmeth

Room 13

Chris was in a scary dream. But when the next day came, he woke up — it had only been a dream. He walked down to the hotel to get his breakfast. Chris had a good day.

But then... it happened again.

When the next day arrived, something felt strange. Room 13... was still *room 13*. Chris was in Room 13.

"Aaaaaaahhhhhhhhh!" Chris screamed.

The next morning, Chris felt happy again.

“Hang on,” he said. “Where am I? Is this... heaven?”

He looked around, confused.
“How long was I knocked out for?
1000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000

0000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000 years?!"

"Age: 1000000000000000000000000000000000000000... Me? Dead? No, no, no! Heaven?"

"Is there a Room 13?"
"Yes."
"Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!"

"So... what is my room number? Please don't give me Room 13. It's really scary, okay?"

"Thanks for telling me. I'll block it off so no one can stay in that room."

"Can I have Room 14, please?"

"Sure," said the hotel staff. "Just tell me if it gets scary, okay?"

"I will," said Chris.

That night, he went to bed in Room 14.

But then... a demon came through the wall.

He died.

And now... he is in hell.

The End

#21

A great journey

Jake, an 11-year-old boy, was playing with his dog Bella at sunset in the village where they lived. This is something Jake did every day and life was great until a stranger came to tell them that a tsunami was coming to the village Jake was worried so he went to the store to buy the supplies he needed to survive the tsunami after Jake got the supplies to survive the tsunami he saw dark grey clouds in the sky and it was raining and Jake was starting to feel scared and worried for Bella. That's when the tsunami started to form and that's when Jake and Bella started to run away from the village but then a strange man told Jake that the tsunami was over so Jake and Bella went to back to the village and found the buildings destroyed but with the supplies Jake had he planned to rebuild the village again and once he had done that some structures kept falling down. Eventually Jake figured out how to build the structures correctly. And they lived happily ever after.

Cruz Stevens

Overall Winner

Addi McArdle, Year Six
"The Ride"
Rapid Bay Primary School

Overall Winner

District Council of
YANKALILLA

The Ride by Addi McArdle

Clip clop, clip clop. The sound of hooves trotting on the hard stable floor echoed like a drumbeat, while the hungry horses neighed, filling the air with their lively neighing. It was another bustling day at Silver Stables. Jasmine, the owner, had entrusted her 13-year-old daughter, Dolly, with the task of attending to the horses.

Dolly had turned 13 just three days ago. She had lived on the farm for most of her life and adored her beautiful horses. Tall for her age, with thick, brunette hair, she loved wearing her Akubras like a true cowgirl.

Dolly owned three magnificent horses: Jester, Pebbles, and Silver. Each day, she rose early to feed the cows and horses, often riding Jester to school during the week or around the paddocks on weekends. Even though she loved all her horses, Jester was her favourite. Jester was energetic, but also calm and playful. She was a chestnut quarter horse crossed with a Welsh mountain pony. Of all the things Jester loved in life, galloping and Dolly were at the top of the list.

After school on this warm, autumn day, Dolly decided to take Jester out for a gallop. They raced joyfully through the green fields, feeling the fresh breeze gently against their faces. Suddenly, Jester made a strange noise, distracted by something lurking in the bushes. A rustling sound had startled him. It was a rabbit darting out unexpectedly, causing Jester to rear up in fright. In the blink of an eye, Dolly found herself on her back on the hard ground.

When Dolly awoke, her head throbbed, and Jester was nowhere in sight. Confused, she tried to piece together her memories of galloping through the beautiful fields. "Wait! Where is Jester?" she thought. Then it hit her—Jester had been spooked. "Oh no," she exclaimed, "It's getting dark. I need to find Jester!"

Dolly remembered packing her walkie-talkie in her saddlebag, but it was attached to the saddle on Jester! Panic began to creep in as the darkness and cold enveloped her, leaving her with no way to contact her parents.

Determined to find her best friend, Dolly stood up, sore from the fall. Then, like a lightning bolt, a thought struck her—our favourite place! Dolly and Jester had a secret hideout near the river. Jester must be there!

Dolly made her way across the field, stumbling in the dark. As she drew closer, she saw the silhouette of a horse in the distance. It was Jester! Despite her pain, she broke into a run, her heart leaping with joy. Jester noticed Dolly and galloped towards her, neighing an apology in her own language and started rubbing her head against Dolly affectionately.

Dolly gently mounted Jester, and they began the journey home. Both were sore and exhausted but grateful to be reunited. They arrived home, and Dolly tucked Jester into the safety of her stable, whispering a soft goodnight.

Inside, Dolly explained the day's adventures to her relieved parents. Exhausted but thankful, she had dinner and went to bed. It had been a day filled with suspense and stress, but thankfully, both horse and rider were safe and sound. She drifted off to sleep, dreaming of their next adventures.

By Addi McArdle

Reception to Year 2

Category Winner

Abigail Nottle, Year Two
"The three cute dragons"
Yankalilla Area School

Shortlisted students

Abigail Nottle, Year Two
"The three cute dragons"
Yankalilla Area School

Matilda Miller, Year Two
"The Three Tigers!"
Yankalilla Area School

Evelyn Johns, Year Two
"Stinky RED Riding Hood"
Yankalilla Area School

Poppy Walker, Year One
"The magical bunny"
Yankalilla Area School

District Council of
YANKALILLA

2. Abi

The three cute Dragons



Author and Illustrator: Abi Nottle



One quite day there was three dragons who lived at the bottom of the sea. The dragons mum said that they got to make there homes as they were growing up.



The biggest cute dragon made its house out of seaweed. The first cute dragon finished his house in one day. Wow that was fast! The second oldest cute dragon made her house out of shells. The second cute dragon finished in one and a half days. Wow that is still fast!!



The third cute dragon made his house out of rocks. That took a long time but, it was very strong and beautiful.

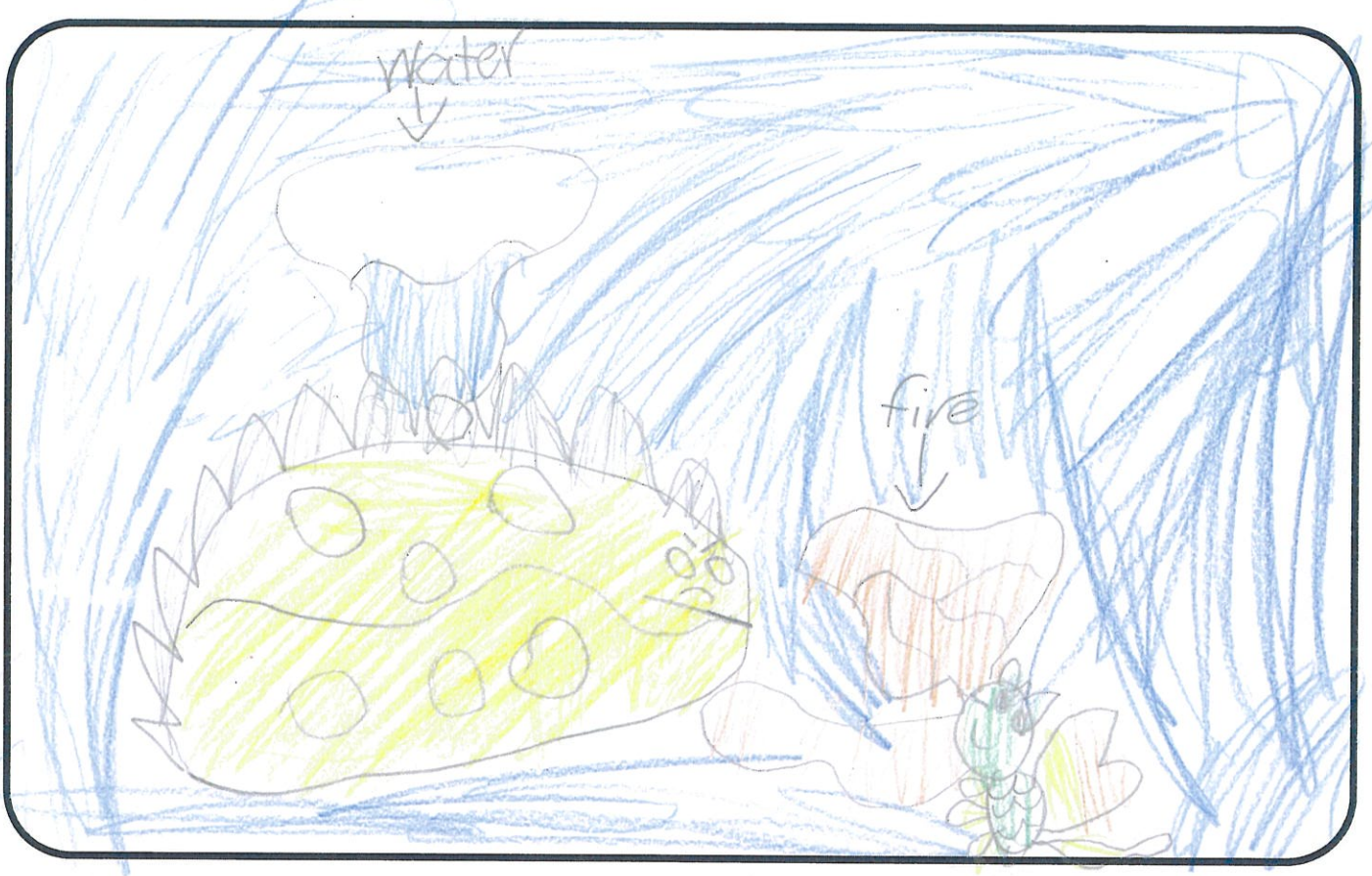
The houses were built just in time because a dragon eating sea monster was on the hose. He ate through the



Seaweed house in one gulp. Next he crunched on the shell house.

All three dragons hid in the rock house. The monster could not get inside.

The smallest dragon thought their fire could scare the monster away. They opened the door



and breathed fire, the monster ran away never to return.

17.

The Three Tigers!

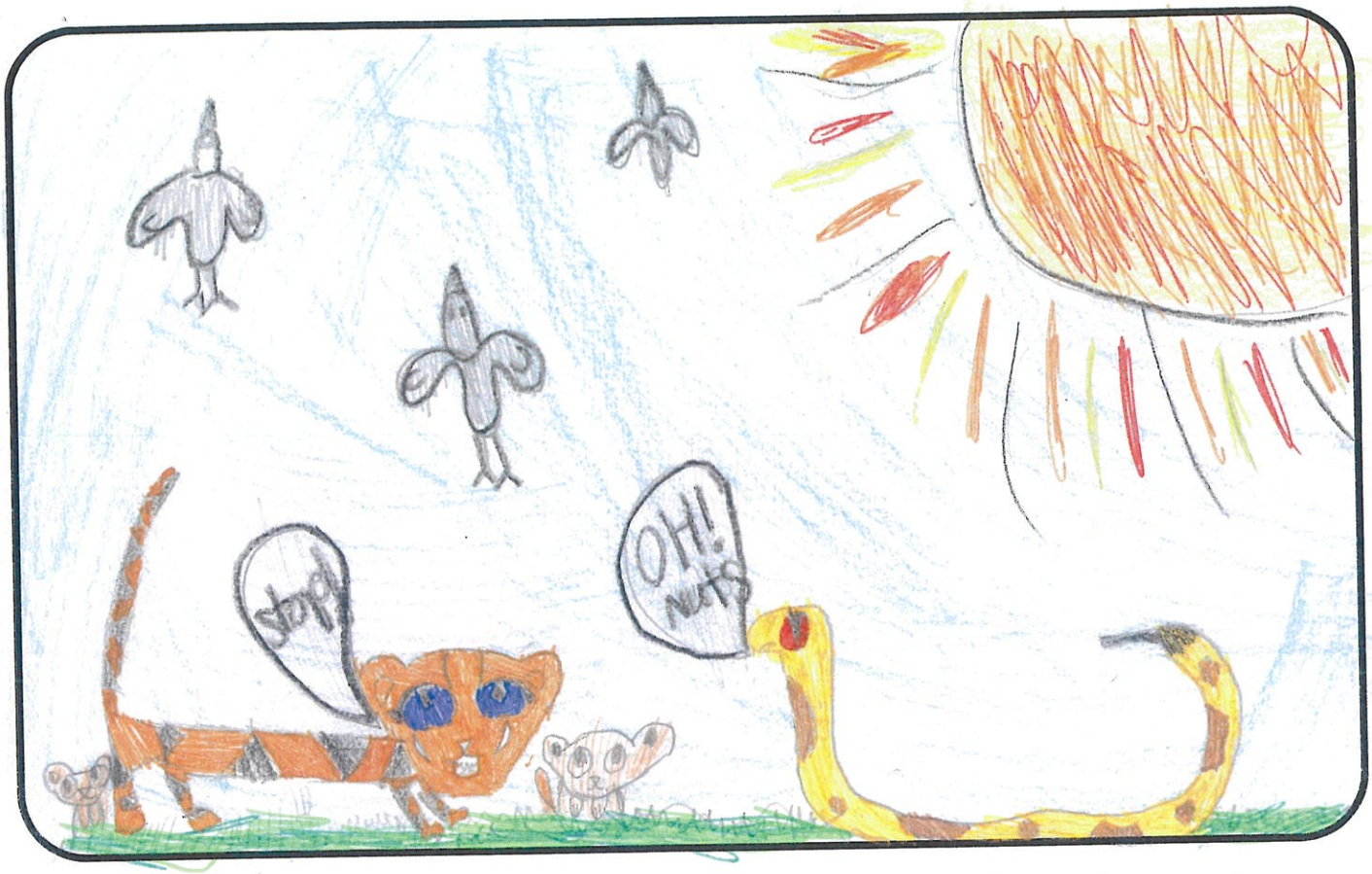


Author and Illustrator:

Matilda Clare Miller !!



Once, on a sunny day three tigers were laging in the long grass, soon thay got bored. they were so bored that thay got angry and hangry they all went looking for something to do and eat.



They all found something to eat it was an antolope they kept chasing it and chasing it, but it was still to fast. They all stopped when they saw a huge snake. The snake licked its lips and lunged at The three tigers! But then the big tiger said stop! The snake stopped and said OH! Nuts.



The three tigers were still so hungry so Narla teaches how to catch a buffalow. They worked together and caught their lunch!

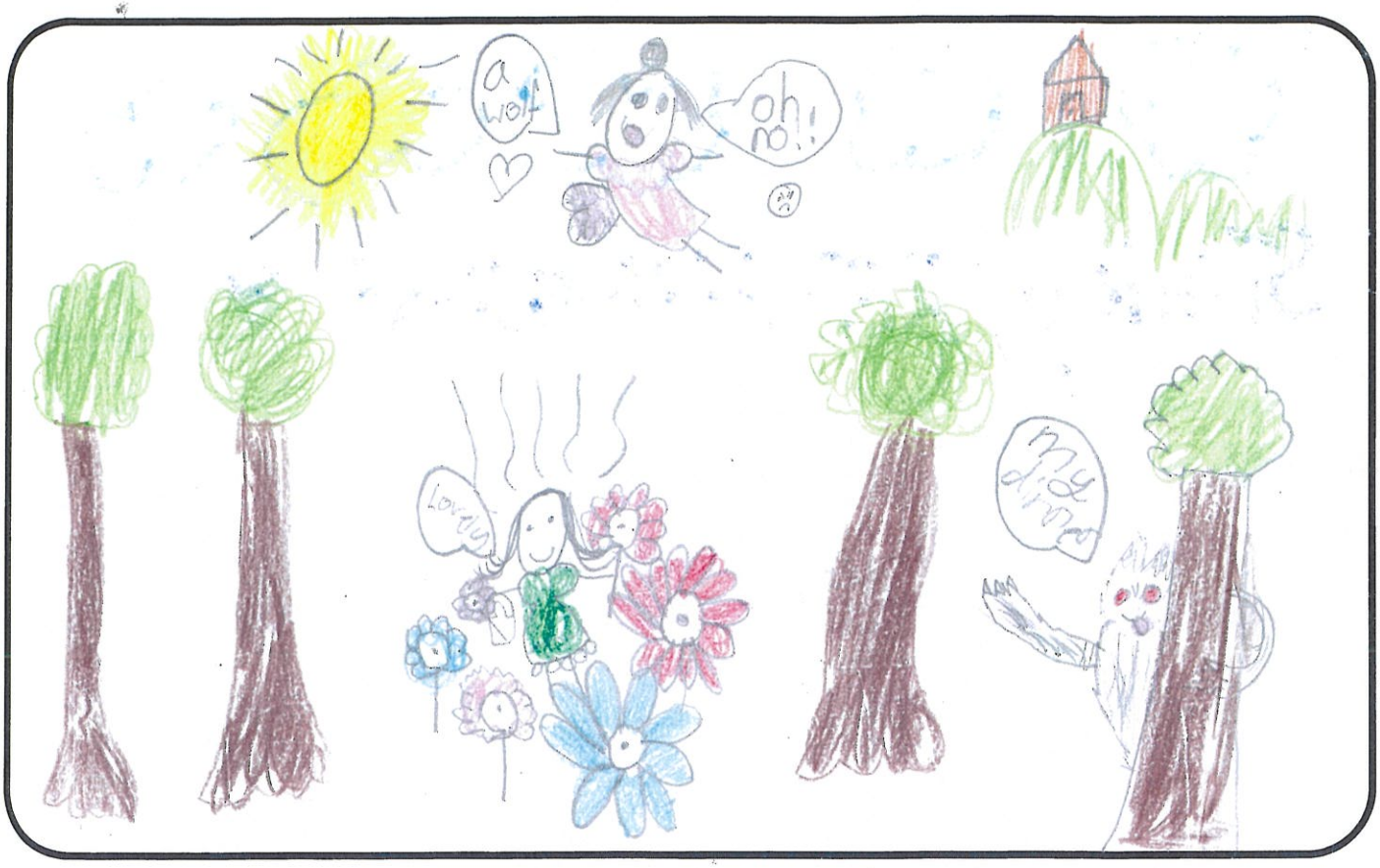
1.

STinky RED RidinG Hood



Author and Illustrator:

Evelyn Johns



One sunny day in the woods there was stinky Red riding hood and her friend, a fairy called Abi. They built a house from bricks and they lived in it.



Stinky red riding hood did not like to shower, especially in her new house. Her friend Abi noticed that she was starting to smell. The smell was very bad. It smelt like bugs.

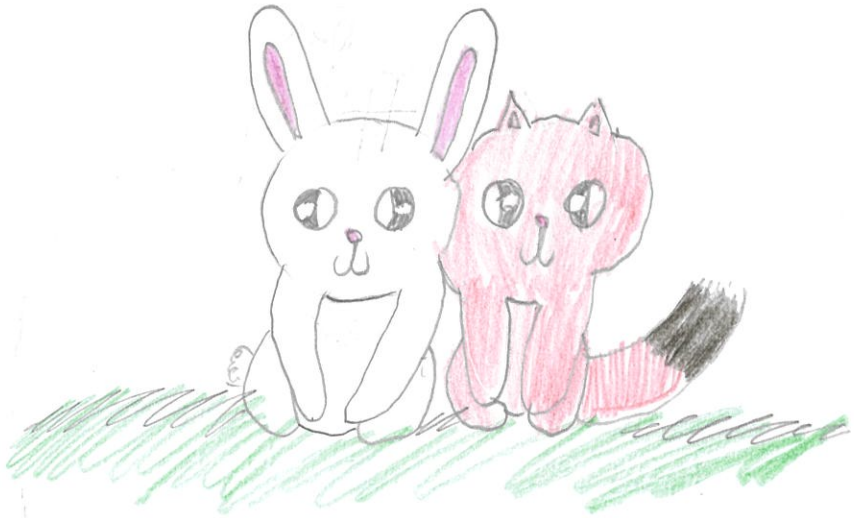


Abi tried for many days to get Red to shower. She tried putting Idlies in the shower but Red ate them without geting wet. She put her treasure under a waterfull but Red blocked the water with a big rock.

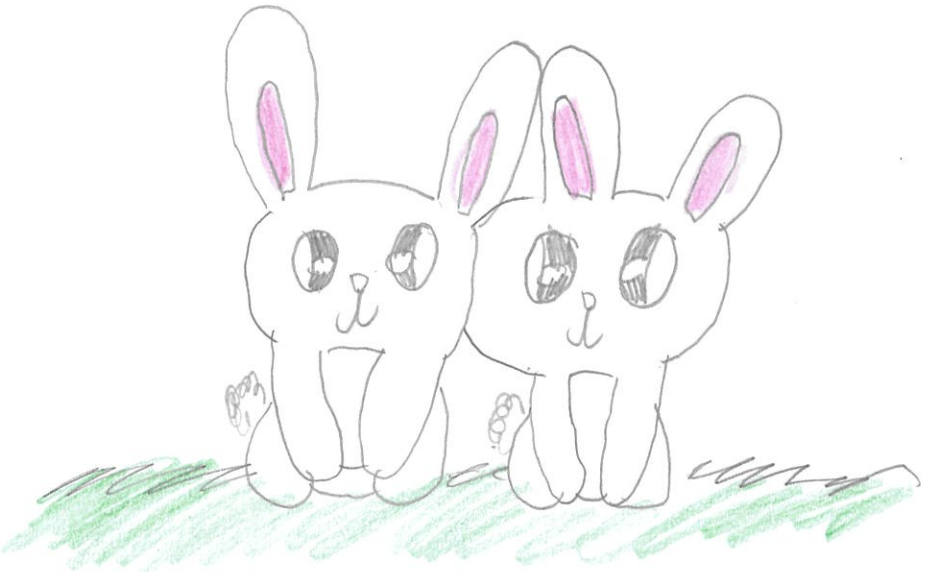


"I have had enough of you Red, go get wet, you Stink like bugs!" said Abi. Red thought for a moment, "I will only get wet at a water park"! Abi used her magic to turn their house into a water park! little red Splashed in the water and was no longer stinky

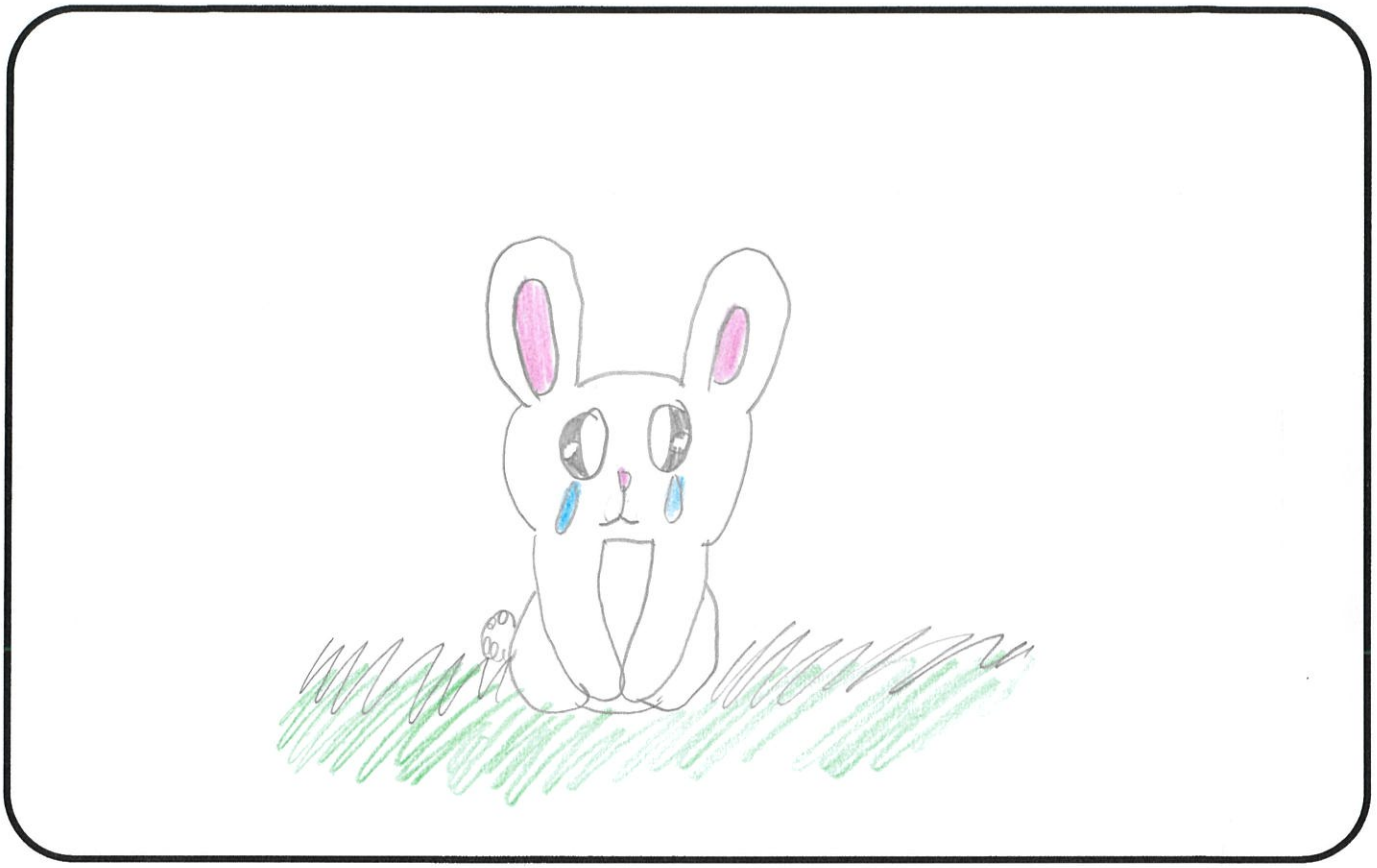
the magical bunny.



Author and Illustrator: Poppy



Once upon a time there
Was a little bunny he
had big fluffy ears
and his name was happy
and he had a sister.
He lived in a magical forest.



It was a dark night and.

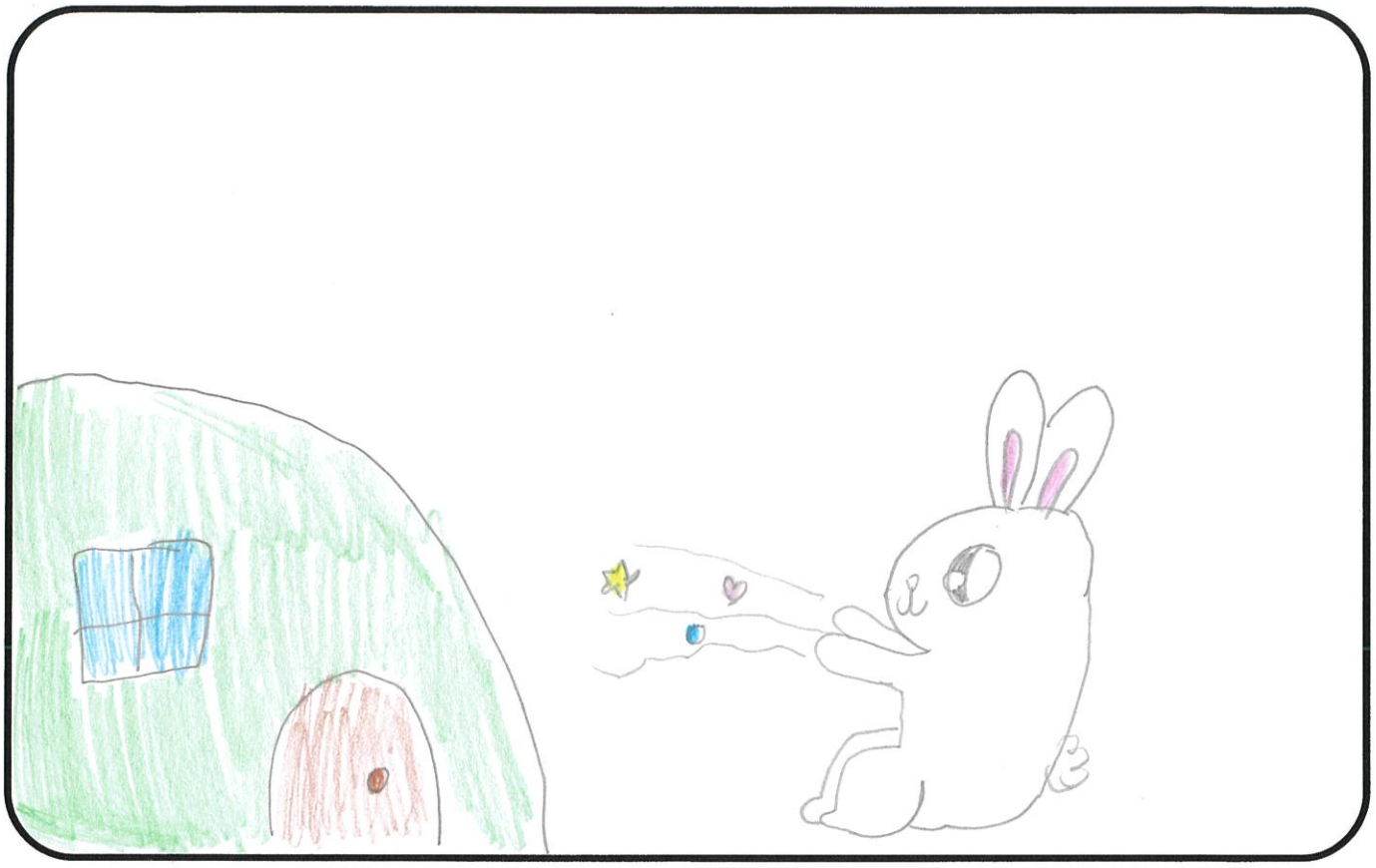
There Wous one problom he.

Did'nt have any freind's

so he went to find

some. In the magical forest

he had magical powers so



he used his magic to.

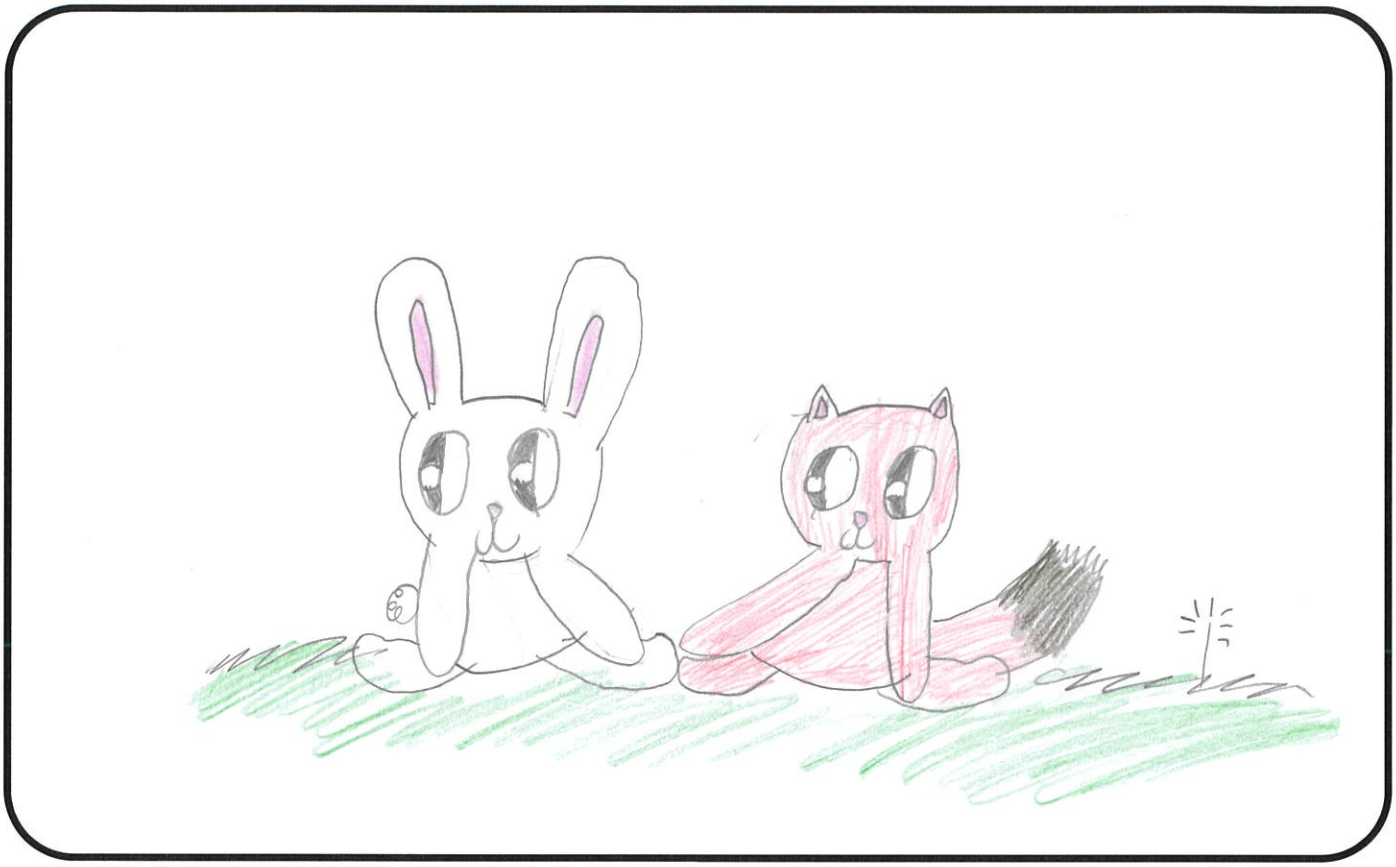
Find some so he went to.

A house he didn't no

who's it was so he nkoked on

it and there was a fox he was red

and black. The fox didn't no wat the bunny said so



the fox said that he didn't.

No wat the bunny said.

So the bunny used his

magic and the fox said yes!

So they our best freind

the end.

Years 3 to 4

Category winner

Joshua McCallum, Year Three
"GUMNUT BOY"
Yankalilla Area School

Shortlisted students

Joshua McCallum, Year Three
"GUMNUT BOY"
Yankalilla Area School

Matilda Graetz, Year Four
"The Great Poet"
Yankalilla Area School

Winnie Redelinghuys, Year Four
"World's Youngest Astronaut"
Myponga Primary School

Freddy Oliver, Year Four
"Jumbo's Story
Myponga Primary School

District Council of
YANKALILLA

2. Joshua Mccallum

GUMNUT BOY

By Joshua McCallum

Once upon a time there was a little forest not too far away from a farm. The farmers liked to go to that little forest. Then one day something terrible happened. Well, the farmers thought it was horrible, but it really wasn't. A meteor hit!!! Luckily it didn't really matter because it was only 10ft. Although the meteor did do something helpful, it brought all the gumnuts to life. This strange event caused a problem. The gumnuts didn't know a bit about Earth, and they didn't know each other. They didn't know how to do anything. After a while the farmers stopped being afraid of the gumnuts and started to help them. Once the gumnuts knew how to do stuff on their own, they built their own village and life was good for the gumnuts.

So, this is when the real story begins....

This is a story about a boy called Ned who is about 12 years old. He's not a regular boy, he's a GUMNUT BOY!!! Gumnut boy was probably the most active child in the village. Every day you would see him climbing trees, running around and swimming in lakes. He was so active that everybody knew him, and he knew them. Ned was very helpful too because when his friends didn't want to climb the trees, he would show them the little trees. When they didn't want to go swimming in the deep rivers, he would show them the shallow pools.

Then one day something horrible happened. A bird swooped down and took one of gumnut boy's friends. Then another one of gumnut boy's friends shouted out "we are under attack". Ned and his two friends were running for their lives. When suddenly, SWOOP, there goes another one of Ned's friends. Ned quickly thought of a plan. He tells his friends to split up. They all go in different directions. Then the bird went straight for Ned. He needed to get to safety. Ned spotted a hole. He jumped in the hole so the bird couldn't get him. Suddenly he realised he was not the only one in the hole. He felt something touch him and he knew it was a snake. Ned had just jumped into a snake hole. The snake tried to get him, but he was too fast. The snake hit his head on a rock. Ned hoped he had enough time to get out of the hole and get to safety. Ned ran as fast as he could. His plan worked but he had forgotten about the bird. He ran with all his might, but it was no use the bird swept him up. The bird hit Ned in the head hard enough to knock him out.

Ned woke up in a weird place. It was dark and smelled like bird poop. He found his friends all wrapped up in leaves and Ned started to freak out. He needed to think of a plan quickly. The bird was not in the nest at that moment, so Ned had a little while to think of a plan. He looked in every direction and found a way to escape. He finally though of a plan.

Ned sprang into action while the bird was distracted. Ned jumped out the escape way and hoped there was something soft underneath him. Sadly, there wasn't something soft underneath him and he ended up breaking his leg. The good thing is that someone fand Ned and brought him back to the village. He saw a nurse and the nurse said it should get better in about a month. There were a lot of questions about his friends. When he told them what had happened to his friends, they were all so sad and miserable. Then they all asked how it happened. Ned said "we were playing then a bird attacked the bird swooped up all my friends. It then swept me up. Then I escaped and I broke my leg".

Two weeks had passed and Ned was still in hospital. He hadn't seen his friends in all that time when suddenly one of his friends walked in with a broken arm. When Ned saw his friend, he was so relieved. They both asked the same question at the same time "how did you survive?". They told each other how they survived they were so relieved. THE END ....for now!

12. Matilda Graetz

The great poet

One fantastic day there was a girl called Amy, that girl was me I love poetry and I want to become a poet when I'm older it is my dream. Here's some extra information about me, I live in Yankalilla, I'm almost ten and I have
two sisters, and a dog. One sunny day my teacher announced some very exciting news, that there's a Mayors' Poetry Competition. I thought that it was exciting but some of the boys clearly didn't. Guess what they did. If you guessed that they screamed out, "noooooooo" you are correct.

The next day my teacher said if you are entering the competition put your hand up and of course pearl the mean girl had to enter because she apparently had a really good idea. She probably just wanted to win the prize because after our teacher said that there was going to be a fifty-dollar prize she put her hand up she doesn't even like poetry as much as I do. I've been thinking about what I want to do for my poem but I can't think of anything to do. Pearl probably has the most brilliant idea while I'm stuck thinking about what to write for the competition ugh just when I thought I was hopelessly hopeless I had a perfect idea. My idea is, drumroll.... I can go around Yankalilla looking at places that I can make a poem about. Things around the local area, because the theme is local. Yes, yes, yes! I'm so excited to start writing my poem.

The next day its Saturday. Today I'm going to start looking at places to write about in my poem, but before I go, I'm going to spray my brand-new perfume. It smells as lovely as a rose. The first place I'm going to go is the Yankalilla Museum/visitor centre. On my way I saw a boy playing a guitar. He was really good and I love playing guitars so of course from the kindness of my heart I had to give him money. I also decided to not go looking around Yankalilla because I'm going to write about him. If I win, I'm going to share half of the money with him because everyone should be kind and friendly to anyone.

The next day its simple Sunday. Today I'm going to finish off my poem because tomorrow I have to hand it in. I'm so nervous. I don't really care if I win or not, but it will be nice to give more money to him. It is now Monday, I'm going to school, tomorrow I will find out if I won the competition. For now, I'm just going to read my best poetry book.

The next morning, I wake up after I accidently fell asleep and slept in late, oops. I get ready quickly and go. By now it's after school I'm going to tell you now, I didn't win just joking I won I'm so excited to tell the boy I guess most stories have a happy ending the end.

Made By Matilda Graetz

Moral of the story always be kind and try your all and don't give in

Winnie

15

World's Youngest Astronaut

As Dora peered through the open window daydreaming about rockets, galaxies & new planets nobody had discovered before she hadn't noticed her teacher was asking her a question. She felt everyone staring at her. She didn't always fit in with the other 'normal' children. She suddenly snapped back to reality. She didn't know what to do, she wanted to disappear and never return. This is how she feels every weekday. She was as red as a cherry by this point. All she knew to do is run so that's what she did.

Dora's heart was pounding faster than a cheetah could run. She was bolting around corners. She was terrified, but felt like a comet. Her short thick hair was galloping behind her. Her untied shoelace wiping her loose socks. Dora was extremely close to the door now, she reached for the door, feeling something roughly yanking her collar. She tripped on her shoelace and she was trembling. She expected the principal to be howling in anger, but it was her Mum hugging her. Dora's face sank into her Mum's soft long hair. It smelled of oranges. She heard her Mum gently whisper in her ear, 'I'll have a meeting with your teacher.' Dora instantly felt colder as her Mum let go of her. She knew what was coming next, and she wasn't going to like it.

When Dora got in the jelly bean scented car she instantly felt better. No more school for the day, She happily whispered to herself, Mum didn't hear her because she was on the phone with Dora's Dad, probably talking about her. Dora's Mum's voice slowly faded as Dora drifted off to sleep.

The next thing Dora knew she was gazing up at her ceiling and she could smell her Mum cooking fresh bacon. Today was the meeting. She went into the kitchen and asked, "Mum, what time is the school meeting going to be?". "9:00am", Mum answered. It felt like 7:00am. She looked down at her watch. It was 8:56! Dora rushed up the stairs, she just yanked random clothes out of her drawers. She looked terrible, her hair was in a birds nest, she was wearing a skirt AND a dress! Her Mum was in the car aggressively beeping the horn. She would have to wear what she had on.

The boring meeting felt like it went on for hours. Her Mum knew that Dora was exhausted, so she let her wander off into the garden. Dora saw a light, a little speck of light. It kept multiplying. She followed the lights until they led her down a gorgeously decorated path. At the end of the path was a towering wall; it had vines spreading across the whole thing. There was a handprint on the wall. Dora could fit her hand in the slot, glitter filled the air.

The last thing she remembered was lying in a bed with silky blankets covering her whole body. She was strapped down. The light glistened in her eyes. She unclipped the buckle on the strap and suddenly started to float. She noticed that she was in a space shuttle. She felt so light, as if there was no weight on her shoulders anymore. A man appeared in the distance, he was tall with fiery red hair and vivid green eyes. He was there to make sure Dora stayed safe. He said "wake up sleepy head, it's time for our mission." Who is this man and where am I? Dora wondered. She was curious about what the mission was going to be. She glanced over at the man and noticed he was wearing a glimmering blue badge that said Mike. He had a warm and friendly face and she felt instantly at ease in his presence. Mike gently asked Dora "are you ready to find a new planet with life?". Dora pretended to know what he was talking about. "Totally!" Dora replied.

Dora puts her big bulky helmet and thick warm suit on while Mike attaches her to a special cable. He puts some liquid food and water in her pockets and says his goodbyes. He sends Dora off into the dark and terrifying world called space. Dora floated for what seemed like an eternity. Suddenly she started to see a bright light off in the distance. "Could that be a planet with life?" she questioned. It doesn't seem like there's life until a loud rumbling noise started shaking all around her. It felt as if it was pulling her towards the light, the light started forming the shape of a sphere. Dora blinked the second she opened her eyes again she noticed that she was on a new planet that nobody had discovered before, she felt like a hero, her heart was pounding,"A NEW PLANET WITH LIFE!!!" she exclaimed. She was so wrapped up in her happiest moment, that she barely noticed the horrifyingly scary, "RROOOOAAAAAAAARRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR!!!!" Her heart was racing in terror. She instantly spun around howling in fear trembling, she tripped on a rock and fell down what felt like it would go on forever. She fell into a pile of something it wasn't soft but she kept sinking down into it, until she started being picked up and yanked out of what looked like gold stones now. She was helpless, her heart leaped into her throat because it was what looked like a DRAGON! She

had found the source of the rumbling noise. And guess who was there to rescue her? MIKE! He was in the corner, pointing her finger at Dora then pretending to faint. Dora knew what he meant, she had to pretend to faint, then the dragon would leave her alone. So that's what she did.

She lay down, and played dead. She repeated in her head three times "please let me go home." She had never wanted to be home this much. So she drifted off to the deepest sleep she ever had. The next time she opened her eyes she was lying under the shady trees of the school garden. She couldn't believe she was asleep the whole time!

Book 1

Jumbo's Story

The Garages

In a misty, scary poor town lay a small burgundy house, tucked away in a corner of the main street. The man who lives there, known as Jumbo, was having a hard time trying to find a better home. One day, Jumbo took his dog Bones for a walk through the dreadful and dilapidated neighborhood. But as he looked up, he spotted a rusty garage with every single tool in the world. "It's like a ghost town, but a garage," Jumbo whispered to himself, in awe.

Jumbo is 34 years old and slightly overweight because he eats Maccas cheeseburgers. He wears a beige button jacket, ripped blue jeans from 15 years ago, and a green and white checkered baseball cap. Jumbo doesn't like being excluded or being lonely, but he does like his canine Bones and watching Saturday night footy.

He moved closer to the site and continued scanning the garage. "No wonder it's abandoned," Jumbo murmured under his cold winter's breath, peering through the window covered in cobwebs. He strolled towards the weak and rusty garage door, trying to lift the door up, but got his right foot caught under the door and fell with a thud! Pain shot through his foot, and he lay there on the gravel, unable to scream out at the top of his lungs for help.

After a long time, he got up and walked the path of the street, Bones's leash held tightly in his grasp. Day by day, he found more and more garages, trying to find the perfect one for him. Some were too miniature, some were gigantic. The garages were almost a better home than the tiny little hut that he lived in. He could put a bed and his furniture in them,

maybe even move into one of the garages. It sounded like a stupid idea, but the thought looped in his head, over and over. Life was getting harder, money was tight, it seemed as if the *whole* world was crashing down on him.

Jumbo needed to pay bills that he couldn't afford, until he went to court. After months of pain, disaster struck, worse than Jumbo had ever witnessed; he had lost all his money! His heart pounded harder than ever before, lightning striking in his chest. His hands started tingling and burning, as if he had just touched a frying pan. He couldn't buy food anymore, nor clean water to drink. He sat near the side of a dirty and disgusting footpath. Jumbo closed his eyes, thinking back at all the things he'd been through; the garages, his foot, and the bumps and knocks he had taken. Soon after, he drifted off to sleep.

Winter passed and suddenly the Spring sun shone over Jumbo's town. Valleys filled with water from the mountains and streams surfed their way down the green damp hills. Life returned to the town and money was easier to get. Jumbo found his way and had a regular life again. He slumped onto his newly bought couch with a warm cup of coffee. Warming himself up with the fireplace, sipping the warm cup. A thought popped into his brain, an unusual one at that, the thought read: "*maybe the perfect place for me to belong wasn't the garages, it was all along this burgundy-coloured home".*

Year 5 to Year 7

Category Winner

Addi McArdle, Year Six
"The Ride"
Rapid Bay Primary School

Shortlisted students

Addi McArdle, Year Six
"The Ride"
Rapid Bay Primary School

Xzhalia Stone, Year Six
"The ride"
Rapid Bay Primary School

Carter Falkenberg, Year Six
"Shadow of the Village"
Myponga Primary School

Carson Mills, Year Six
"Today's History"
Myponga Primary School

Seth Scott, Year Six
"Dragon Hunter"
Rapid Bay Primary School

Billy Deed Cole, Year Six
"The Funniest Fishing Trip Ever!!"
Rapid Bay Primary School

District Council of
YANKALILLA

The Ride by Addi McArdle

Clip clop, clip clop. The sound of hooves trotting on the hard stable floor echoed like a drumbeat, while the hungry horses neighed, filling the air with their lively neighing. It was another bustling day at Silver Stables. Jasmine, the owner, had entrusted her 13-year-old daughter, Dolly, with the task of attending to the horses.

Dolly had turned 13 just three days ago. She had lived on the farm for most of her life and adored her beautiful horses. Tall for her age, with thick, brunette hair, she loved wearing her Akubras like a true cowgirl.

Dolly owned three magnificent horses: Jester, Pebbles, and Silver. Each day, she rose early to feed the cows and horses, often riding Jester to school during the week or around the paddocks on weekends. Even though she loved all her horses, Jester was her favourite. Jester was energetic, but also calm and playful. She was a chestnut quarter horse crossed with a Welsh mountain pony. Of all the things Jester loved in life, galloping and Dolly were at the top of the list.

After school on this warm, autumn day, Dolly decided to take Jester out for a gallop. They raced joyfully through the green fields, feeling the fresh breeze gently against their faces. Suddenly, Jester made a strange noise, distracted by something lurking in the bushes. A rustling sound had startled him. It was a rabbit darting out unexpectedly, causing Jester to rear up in fright. In the blink of an eye, Dolly found herself on her back on the hard ground.

When Dolly awoke, her head throbbed, and Jester was nowhere in sight. Confused, she tried to piece together her memories of galloping through the beautiful fields. "Wait! Where is Jester?" she thought. Then it hit her—Jester had been spooked. "Oh no," she exclaimed, "It's getting dark. I need to find Jester!"

Dolly remembered packing her walkie-talkie in her saddlebag, but it was attached to the saddle on Jester! Panic began to creep in as the darkness and cold enveloped her, leaving her with no way to contact her parents.

Determined to find her best friend, Dolly stood up, sore from the fall. Then, like a lightning bolt, a thought struck her—our favourite place! Dolly and Jester had a secret hideout near the river. Jester must be there!

Dolly made her way across the field, stumbling in the dark. As she drew closer, she saw the silhouette of a horse in the distance. It was Jester! Despite her pain, she broke into a run, her heart leaping with joy. Jester noticed Dolly and galloped towards her, neighing an apology in her own language and started rubbing her head against Dolly affectionately.

Dolly gently mounted Jester, and they began the journey home. Both were sore and exhausted but grateful to be reunited. They arrived home, and Dolly tucked Jester into the safety of her stable, whispering a soft goodnight.

Inside, Dolly explained the day's adventures to her relieved parents. Exhausted but thankful, she had dinner and went to bed. It had been a day filled with suspense and stress, but thankfully, both horse and rider were safe and sound. She drifted off to sleep, dreaming of their next adventures.

By Addi McArdle

9

The ride

By Xzhalia Stone

Hi! I see you decided to read my story. Well, I'm very excited about that! It's all about my story! Now, time for you to learn more about me! My name is Milo! I'm a Golden Retriever! I get super excited about everything! Have you noticed all the exclamation marks? That's from how excited I am that you're here! So anyway, here's how it goes...

I was just a puppy when i was sent to the rescue shelter. Woof! I was so confused, what happened to my human parents? Why was there so much screaming at that place that was usually such a fun place to drive through? Why did Human Mother not wake up whe the cars crashed? Why did Human Father seem so distant after leaving the car behind? And... Where am I?

"Woof?" I would always ask Nice Shelter Lady, even though I knew she couldn't understand me. She was my best friend. She would even sneak me extra treats. Sometimes her boss caught her and sometimes she would get in trouble. It was sad really. Well, anyway, I grew up in that place. Nice Shelter Lady had a name too! She's called Abigail but her uniform name tag says 'Abbi' so I can never really be sure.

Five days later

A little girl just walked in with her dad! And they were interested in a Golden Retriever! Woof! I even heard them mention me! So next thing I know I'm in a fancy black car and then... this is my favourite part... Abbi got into the car! The little girl and her dad were Abbi's family! And now i was too!

The ride home was so exciting! We went over heaps of bumpy roads and there were so many hills! I could even smell all the sausages from someone's backyard grill as we zoomed past! My nose was pressed up against the window, fogging it up with every happy pant. The little girl giggled and rubbed behind my ears, and I swear my tail wagged fast enough to power the whole car.

I still couldn't believe it— I had a family again! A real family. Not just other dogs and squeaky toys and the echo of barking all night. But people. A little girl with freckles and sticky hands, and a dad who smelled like sawdust and peppermint, and Abbi—my favourite human in the whole world.

She turned around from the passenger seat and smiled at me. "You ready for your new home, Milo?" she said. I barked twice. That's my way of saying Absolutely, totally, yes, yes, YES!

When the car finally stopped, I leapt out as soon as the door opened—careful not to knock over the little girl, though. She was holding a new leash. Bright red. With my name on it. My name!

"This is your forever home," she said, kneeling beside me. "And I'm your best friend now." Forever? I didn't know how long that was, but it sounded like all the belly rubs and warm blankets a dog could ask for.

Their house had a big backyard, with trees and butterflies and even a tire swing. I ran and ran and ran in circles until I tumbled into the grass, dizzy but happy. Then the little girl lay beside me and whispered, "We're going to have so many adventures, Milo."

And that's when I realized, this wasn't just a new home.

It was the start of a whole new ride.

#13

Carter  

Shadow of the Village

In the quaint village of Willowbrook, nestled between the rolling hills of the Cotswolds, there lived a cat named Shadow. He was as black as midnight, with eyes the colour of burnished gold, and he moved so silently he might have been a whisper in the wind.

Shadow wasn't owned by anyone, but he belonged to everyone. Each morning, he'd pad silently through the mist-covered lanes, weaving between the wellington boots of postmen and the clattering bicycles of schoolchildren. At the bakery, Mrs. Alderton left out a saucer of cream by the back door, and at the butcher's, he was always given a small sliver of chicken. Even the vicar, Mr. Pendle, who claimed not to like animals, left his study window open just enough for Shadow to slip in and nap beside the fireplace.

There was an old legend in Willowbrook, passed down for generations, that a black cat who walked the village at dawn and dusk was a guardian spirit—protecting the village from misfortune. Most laughed at the tale, but not Mrs. Winthrop at the top of Hawthorn Lane, who swore Shadow had once saved her from the giant shadow that appeared out of nowhere and chased her around the village meowing loudly until she stopped walking and

One autumn evening, when the wind howled through the hedgerows and the power flickered in cottages all across the village cold as a freezer in antarctica, Shadow vanished. People noticed his absence immediately. The bakery cream went untouched, and children looked over their shoulders on their walk to school. Days passed, then a week, and whispers grew—some feared the legend had ended.

Then, one stormy night, a frightened tabby kitten appeared at the pub doorstep, soaked and shivering. Behind her, calm and steady, came Shadow. He had found her near the old stone bridge, alone and lost, and led her home.

From then on, Shadow had a companion. The village called her Misty, for the way she followed him like a grey shadow of her own. Together, they resumed their quiet watch over Willowbrook, protectors in fur, moving like poetry through puddles and hedgerows.

And every night, just before midnight, if you looked out your window at the right moment, you might catch a glimpse of two pairs of eyes glowing in the dark—guardians of a village that had never really been alone. But only if you could find this village far away from your town or city. If you were to try and find this village you would pack your bags near midnight when it only shows. And walk as far as you can north.When you get there you should see houses covered in frosty snow and there you shall see shadow the black and fluffy cat and alongside him his sidekick tabby as an American shorthair Misty walking along grass as green as can be. With the trees as fluffy as they can be. When you go there beware of the shadows that lurk over you. Those ones come after you and chase you until morning.

Carter Falkenberg

#22

Carson

Today's History

Once upon a time a boy named Eli was playing with his new toys in his new house , going about with his day. Suddenly Eli's Mum walked through the door and asked Eli what he wants for lunch, Eli replied "Can i please have some pizza scrolls?" Eli's mom replied "Sure," So Eli went back to playing with his toys. Once he was finished he spotted a weird looking box in the corner of his new house, he thought it was just the old owner of the house's stuff that he forgot. But little did he know it went way further than that.

Curiously he searches the box and finds a really old funky glossy gold watch, so he puts it on. and thought in his head, "Wow this is really cool! But i think the times wrong on it" So he runs to his Mum and says "Mum Mum I found this really super duper watch and I think the times wrong can you please fix it!" So Eli's Mum fixes the watch and says to Eli "Here you go honey" Eli replies "Thanks Mum!" He kept fiddling with the watch then he came across a weird little looking knob on the side of his watch. He just thought of it as the crown of the watch, so he fiddles with it for a bit. Then he twisted it the other way, he started to feel light headed, he couldn't see very well his vision was blurring out he started to have a headache he fell asleep then...

Once he woke up he felt like he was in a different time date and year he woke up in the same house he and his Mum bought. But with a different, everything. Different walls, different carpets, different fans, so he left the house for air. But when he looked around he was very confused. There were no cars, there were carriages, no motorbikes. The clothes people were wearing were all old fashioned, he checked his watch for the date and time the date is Saturday 14/3/1903 he was even more confused. He was more than confused he was, flabbergasted he was in shock. He was looking at the watch wondering how it had just sent him back to 1903 and how it could send him back to 2025. So he fiddles with the crown again and twists it the other way this time, then the same thing happens. He starts to feel light headed, he couldn't see very well because his vision was blurring out he started to have a headache so he fell asleep. He wakes back up in 2025, he thought in his head on how this special watch can benefit him. And how he can use it for his own good.

So he took his watch off and laid in his bed, just wondering how it can benefit him for his own good and his family's own good, to have a better

and brighter future to set him for life and prepare him for all of the outcomes that can happen at any time. So he keeps wondering how it can make him have a better future so he thought of bitcoin. Because of how cheap it was, he picked up his watch and went back to July 14 2010. And bought 50 bitcoins because it was 0.06c for 3 dollars so once he came back in 2025 he sold it for cryptocurrency. Which got him $5 257 755 75 so he was set for life. So he wonders in his head, "how else can i make life and my future easier with this time watch." So he keeps thinking and thinking so he thought "why don't I benefit my loved ones instead of only benefiting myself." So he runs to his mum about to tell her everything he had just found out about the watch but right before he was he thought "would this ruin it all for me to tell my mum would she take the watch away from me" so he thought twice so he didn't but he still wanted to benefit his mum.

So he thought of what he wanted to get for his mum so he thought. Why don't I buy her a new car, why don't I buy her a supercar. So Eli bought her a Lamborghini, so he went to the closet Lamborghini shop and bought her a Lamborghini Aventador. Once he brought down the Lamborghini she first questioned how he got it, but Eli came up with the best excuse he replied with "Mum II.. I won the lottery Mum, I won it. We're rich!"

That night, as Eli lay in bed, staring at the glowing watch on his wrist, he smiled. He had everything he ever wanted money, happiness, and his mum's endless joy. But just as he started to drift off to sleep, the watch began to glow on its own.

This Is Written by Carson Mills.

The Dragon hunter

Once upon a time, there was a courageous dragon hunter named Sam. He was a young man with long, flowing brown hair and a slender frame. His parents, who were loving and kind, had tragically passed away during a fierce dragon attack. This tragic event inspired Sam to become an experienced and talented dragon hunter so that he could avenge the death of his parents.

Sam lived in the city of death a place of cruelty and death. The city of death was full of guards of the dark dragon and there was barely any food. The place was dark and barren the buildings emptied, and windows shattered. Sam would sneak carefully pass the guards and scavenge for food.

Most days, Sam would leave the city and go hunting for dragons. It was mostly easy for Sam to capture and enslave the dragons but when the dark dragon passed by, he would hide. Sam didn't want to get caught or he would face punishment and be sentenced to death.

The dark dragon was Sam's nemesis, his most feared rival. But the day was coming where he knew he had to defeat him. Life in the city was becoming too horrible for the people. Starvation, disease, fear and death under the evil control of the dark dragon. Sam had been planning his attack for years, knowing one day he would face his ultimate battle of life and death. His time had come, his destiny awaited him.

Sam climbed the dark, cold mountain, his heart pounding with determination to defeat his nemesis once and for all. As he approached the dragon's lair, the air grew thick with tension. Finally, he stood face to face with the dark dragon, its eyes glowing like fiery coals.

The dragon let out a deafening roar and lunged at Sam, its massive wings creating a gust of wind. Sam dodged swiftly, his movements as quick as lightning. The dragon, furious and ready to strike again, suddenly stopped, held back by a mysterious force. Sam seized the moment, his heart racing with both fear and courage.

Summoning all his bravery, Sam launched his attack, striking the dragon with all his might. The ferocious beast let out a final roar before collapsing, defeated. The island was free at last. As Sam caught his breath, he noticed a shadowy figure watching from a distance. Before he could call out, the figure vanished into the mist, leaving Sam with a sense of wonder and mystery about who had helped him in his time of need.

Weary from the battle, Sam limped back to the city. Soon the news spread that the dark dragon had been defeated. The townspeople celebrated and cheered for their hero. For the first time in a long time, they had hope that life in the city may one day return to normal.

8

The Funniest Fishing Trip Ever!!!

By Billy Deed Cole

We woke up super early on Saturday morning, like before the sun was even up, and drove down the big, twisty hills into Rapid Bay. It felt like we were on a rollercoaster, and when we came over the top, we could see the whole ocean stretching out in front of us. We were heading there for Brodie's dad's 50th birthday party, and there was going to be a massive spit with lamb and venison (which is deer meat)

When we got there, Brodie was already helping his mum set up. We helped carry firewood and set up tables, and the spit was already spinning with meat cooking. It smelled *amazing*. Once the jobs were done, me and Brodie grabbed our fishing rods and went straight to the jetty while Logan wandered off on his phone like usual.

We caught a little salmon trout, but it was too small to keep, so we used it for live bait. Not long after, the rod bent like crazy. We grabbed it and pulled in a Banjo Shark! It looked so weird, kind of like a stingray and a shark had a baby. We took a photo with it, laughing, but just as Brodie was about to throw it back, *CHOMP!* The shark bit him on the foot!

Brodie screamed and did this funny little hopping dance, yelling, "It got me! It got me!" while trying to flick it back in. I couldn't stop laughing. He finally flung it back into the water, and we just stared at each other like, "Did that actually happen?"

Later, we walked down to the caves along the beach. We climbed up and crawled inside. It was super dark and smelled like dust and old seaweed. It felt like someone or something was watching us. Then, all of a sudden, *FLAP FLAP!* Bats flew right over our heads! We panicked and jumped down, but Brodie got caught on a rock and ripped his pants open right down the back. We laughed the whole way back to camp while he grabbed a new pair from his swag.

The rest of the afternoon was chill, we played cricket and beach games and waited for more people to arrive. Once the spit was ready, we ate so much meat we could barely move, and then everyone gave speeches and had cake.

But the best part? That was still coming.

Around 9:00pm, when most of the adults were just chatting, we went back to the jetty with our rods. The moon was out and everything was quiet except the water gently splashing. We walked to the end of the jetty and Brodie cast out his line. A second later—*BANG!* His rod got yanked straight out of his hands and flew into the water!

Without even thinking, Brodie shouted, "I'M GOING IN!" and jumped right off the jetty into the freezing water. He disappeared under for a second, then popped up holding the rod! Everyone on the jetty was freaking out. He climbed up the ladder, soaked and shivering, and started reeling it in, thinking it was some kind of sea monster.

And guess what it was? A tiny little Tommy. We couldn't stop laughing. All that drama, for a fish the size of a ruler.

Best. Day. Ever.

• Billy told story to teacher who typed due to learning needs.