

2021
Short Story
Contest Journal

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All stories were presented to guest judge, author Pablo Cartaya,
in the same font and size and did not include any information about the author.

Coronadogs

By Hope McSteen

4th Grade - 1st Place

Hi, my name is Bella, and I'm a border collie. My owners are Harry and Claire. Harry is a doctor for people and Claire works for a soap company. Not actually making soap, but finding out which ones are more popular and how to best advertise them.

Since the beginning of April, they've had almost completely different routines. Claire has been spending way more time with me, but Harry has been spending way less time with me. They've been a little sadder than usual, so I've been doing my part. I try to be calmer and more obedient. It sometimes works.

Harry has a different routine. He comes home much later. He never comes in the front door anymore and changes his clothes in the garage. Then he takes a long shower, and by this time the tick disks point to the 12 and the 9. Then he sits for a while and turns on the noisy picture box. Normally he comes home when the tick disk points to the 6 and the 5!

Also, Claire is using what they call computers more and is staying home more. I like it because I'm not alone as much. But when she does leave the house, she wears a weird thing that covers her mouth and nose. She calls it a mask.

We've stopped having playdates with Angie. I miss seeing all the other dogs like Joe, a pug a little younger than me; Saffron, an older Cocker spaniel who is very smart; and Sam, a Welsh corgi with a ton of energy.

Another weird thing: normally on Saturdays we go to the dog park, but not anymore. The only time I leave the yard, or the house is when we go for walks and even then, we move away from all the people. I cannot socialize! It's driving me absolutely nuts!

I mean no disrespect to Claire and Harry, but I want to see other dogs or people, not just them repeatedly! Can you be lonely when you're not alone?

One time when we were playing fetch, the ball landed near Saffron and her owner Pete. I went to go after it, but Claire said stay. I did, then Pete moved away from the ball and Claire ran and picked it up. Then Claire got me a new ball and I couldn't use the one that went near Pete again. I could never understand why.

Since I've been in the house more, I have been doing a lot of exploring. I went into this small room and instantly regretted it. I ran out whimpering, for in that small place slept a monster, the vacuum. The loud monster that feasts on your shed hair, hoping to find the source and devour it as well.

Sometimes I hear Harry muttering in his sleep, "Coronavirus"

I wonder as I curl up in my pink doggie bed, “Could that be the reason for the strange new routines?”

I’m making it my mission to find out. The newspaper came today. The title has these shapes smushed together. One of the groups of shapes are **C-O-R-O-N-A-V-I-R-U-S**. I wonder if that means the Coronavirus word Harry mentioned. So, I brought it in to Harry and when he saw it, his shoulders slumped, and he became sad. I ran four more tests. All of them made him and Claire sad, so I must be right.

One day Harry was incredibly happy. He told Claire, “I got my vaccine against coronavirus today!” I thought, “Maybe things could go back to normal now.”

It took some time - but after a few months, things did go back to normal. When we met at our first doggie playdate, we made the most of every second. It was the most fun I had in a long time. I hope to go my whole life without hearing the word Coronavirus again.

The Snow Day

by Sabrina Tolrud

4th Grade - 2nd Place

Today was a snow day, and I couldn't be having more fun. The snow was 5 feet high, and I had an idea. I went to ask my friends, but they turned me down and said they would rather go sledding. So I built it myself. A snow tunnel! Since there was so much snow, the tunnel went all the way through my yard. I opened the fence gate and popped in. I crawled through, but then found myself in a place I didn't recognize. It was a forest with no snow! For some reason it was now night and I saw teeny little lights in the distance. I went to investigate, and what I saw was magical. Hundreds of tiny fairies. There was one sitting nearby, and it was writing in a journal. It looked up and flinched, then let out a yelp. "W-who are you!?! And what are you doing here!?" She trembled.

"Well, I built a snow tunnel and ended up here!"

"Interesting. I've never seen a human before."

"And I've never seen a fairy before!"

"Well, before everyone else sees you and freaks out, I'd better get you back to your world."

"What? You're gonna send me back just like that? Wait. Do you have magic?!" I asked excitedly.

"Yes. Would you like to see?"

"Duh!"

"Ok, let me get my wand." She brought out a wooden wand with vines wrapped around it. "Ok, this spell will be useful. MUTE SPELL!" she commanded.

"Wait wha-MMM!!MMM!!!" I couldn't talk anymore.

"Now, let's get you back." she said. Suddenly a wolf approached. "AH! WOLF!" She shot her wand at it. The spell didn't kill the wolf, but it was definitely traumatized, and quickly ran away.

"No one messes with fairies!" She looked over at me. "Ha! You look pathetic. Here." Thankfully she unmuted me.

"Thanks, what's your name?" I asked.

"Willa." She replied.

"Cool! Mine is Michelle."

"Well, you're in luck, because I might have to use more spells." Suddenly it started raining. "Oh no! Protection spell!" Willa yelled, and shields like hamster balls surrounded us.

"Cool! We won't get wet anymore!" I exclaimed.

Just then, someone started screaming. "HUMAN! HUMAN! WE'RE ALL GONNA DIE! EVERYONE LIGHT YOUR TORCHES!" All the fairies woke up and started throwing torches at me. Even though they were tiny it hurt. "Ow!" I exclaimed.

We ran through the forest. Well, I ran. Willa flew. She waved her wand at my wounds. “That just gets rid of the marks, this gets rid of the pain.” She flew into a hollowed out tree. About thirty minutes later she had prepared a leaf shaped into a scoop with pink liquid inside. It smelled like citrus and mothballs. “Drink it.” Willa instructed. I drank it. It tasted amazing, and I didn’t hurt anymore.

“So what did you come out of when you arrived here?” Willa asked.

“It was a cave. A big one.”

“I think I know what you're talking about. Let me take you there.” She brought me over and it was the exact cave.

“Yep. This is the one.” I said.

“Ok, before you go, take these.” She gave me another one of those leaf scoops, and a notebook.

“What’s this?” I asked.

“It’s a notebook that you can write to me in. When you write something it goes straight to me.”

“Wow! So, like texting?”

“Huh?” Willa looked confused.

“Never mind.” I went back into the cave, and then I started to see light. I was back in my snow tunnel and walked out.

“Hey Michelle!” One of my friends came over. “Wanna help us build a snow ramp for when we go sledding?”

“Sure.” I said. She ran over to the hill. I looked at my snow tunnel. I will probably have to pay another visit before the snow melts.

The End

Splat: An Epic War Between Taco Toppings and Hungry Humans

by Karson Williams

4th Grade - 3rd Place

In a forbidden place where humans are not allowed, comes mysterious creatures never seen before in...

TACO TOWN

For seventeen years us tacos have been hiding on a secret island because of **humans!** They have been hunting us tacos and taco toppings for years, but today they found our island and now we have war.

As we were setting up for war they were getting closer and closer. We had swords, shields and we had even stuffed ourselves with extra meat, lettuce, tomatoes, and sour cream.

We were ready, but on the other hand for the humans, they were screaming so loud that we could hear them from our island. How pathetic. They thought they could really win.

“Are you guys ready to win!” One human yelled. But it was useless, only one person had yelled back. Then, it was so quiet you could hear a pin drop. “Haha, they've never beat us. . . Don't worry.”

The humans finally got to the island and we were ready for battle. We all lined up and...**Charge!**

We ran at them with all our power but it didn't do anything. They were bigger and stronger. Nothing that we were doing was working. But then I remembered the taco launchers. That effortlessly took out a few of them.

Now there were five left on each team. What they didn't know is that we had backup... plan B was in action. Time to unleash the other tacos...

There were beef tacos, chicken tacos, vegan tacos, tacos with tortillas and even tacos with guacamole!

They had no chance against us now. Everyone was getting tired so we went to hide. I could hear them walking around our base. The next morning we woke up to see humans taking all our stuff! And they took the cannons.

The only thing we could do was sling shot warriors over there. When the humans were fighting the tacos, I snuck behind the human commander and tried to attack him ... He dodged me. "Ha ha ha you thought you could take me down." Exclaimed the commander. One of the tacos came to me and said, "A taco double crossed us." This is not good. He knows where the base is and the password. The humans won? They took out every one besides me and I am no match against all of them. I have to go to the **BIGGEST** tower ever, made by Dwayne The Guac Jonnson!

(p.s. The strongest taco of them all)

At the tower there were so many buttons I did not know what to do. Oh what does this button do? **CLICK**, lazar blasters! I was at the top of the building and looked through the binoculars to see the humans. **KNOCK, KNOCK**. Who could that be? Before I open that door I need to gear up. Vest on, gloves activated, lazar canons, let's do this! I looked through the peephole and It was the humans. How did they know I was here? The only way out was through the Secret exit.

It was too late, the humans came in right when I went down they grabbed my leg. Finally I got him off of me but it did not matter because there were humans at the bottom. I remembered I have all the equipment. Sure it was just me, but I had hope. When they opened the doors I charged out. The humans stopped me from going anywhere I had no chance. I gave in. That night the humans were hungry and had tacos for dinner.

The End

The Little House of Bolingbrook

by Alexia Shinay Ju

5th Grade - 1st Place

Once upon a time a little girl named Shinae lived in a little house of Bolingbrook. Shinae lived with her ma, her pa, her little sister Hannah and her baby brother Ian and her old bulldog, Jack.

Winter was there and snow was falling from the sky. They were all happy to see the crisp cold sparkly snowflakes in the sky. Shinae and Hannah listened to the wind and pretend they were flying over the snow and clouds. Soon her pa told them that he had to start hunting the game. They were sad to see him leave into the freezing snow outside. But ma told them he was going to be okay. When pa left, they helped ma to get things ready for dinner. They went outside quickly to get sweet potatoes for dinner, but Ian just watched them from the windows. For sure, he was too little to pick sweet potatoes. After they picked the potatoes from outside, they helped ma wash them and dry them. They wrapped them in foil which was Shinae and Hannah's favorite part. They loved how they wrap them. The foil crinkled and made loud noises. They even made a song for it. "Wrap it like a burrito, flap flap pat". They sang it all the time when they prepare the sweet potatoes! After that, they went to their rooms and played with their dolls until pa came back. They threw blankets and pillows all over the room and opened shades of the window. Everything was snug and cozy. Their pillows became tables and chairs. It was perfect for them.

Ma called them to do their chores each day. Ma would say "wash on Monday, iron on Tuesday, workout on Wednesday, clean on Thursday, bake on Friday, rest on Saturday, and play on Sunday. When the night came, pa was still not back. Ma, Shinae, Hannah, and baby Ian were a little worried, but they needed to keep calm and know he would come back soon. So, they decided to set the table. When the table was set, they heard a doorknob screaming. The door was opening more and more. Then, baby Ian said pa! pa! They all knew it was pa.

Hannah liked this part the most. She always hid under a chair while pa takes off his beanie hat and fancy boots, and says "where's my little half cut of sweet honey that's almost drunk up?" That was Hannah because she was so skinny and small. Sometimes pa got his guitar and played music. They danced around him as he sang songs of all kind. Other times he told stories about when he was a kid and they begged for more. Pa had gleaming tiny black eyes. His smile was so big and merry. It made Shinae want to scooch more closer to him and lay her head on him and just smile.

Outside the house was freezing cold and snowy but the little house made with wood was snug and cozy, and most of all, loving pa, ma, Shinae, Hannah, and baby Ian were comfortable and happy in the little house of Bolingbrook.

Waking Up

by Skylyn Worden

5th Grade - 2nd Place

I opened my eyes. A bright light shone directly in my eyes. I saw a girl sitting in the corner. Tears streamed down her pale face. Who was this? Why was she here? Where am I? Why am I here? Thoughts raced through my head. Before I could think anything else, the girl looked at me, put her hands to her mouth, and stood up.

“Oh Audra! I can’t believe it! I knew you would be okay! I’m sure you probably don’t remember everything, I’m your sister Alina. I need to call the nurse right now!” she said. I slowly sat up. When the nurse entered the room, she spoke with Alina, and then handed me a mask and backed away. What is going on?

The nurse spoke, “Audra we’re so happy you’re awake! Please put this mask so it covers your mouth and nose. When you leave here make sure you stay six feet apart from all people. I am so happy for you and your family!” I was so confused. I just nodded my head.

Later in the car, Alina told me how I had been in a coma for almost a year. She told me she had made me a cake for my birthday and kept it right next to me the whole time and that I still had Christmas presents at home. After some time, I broke my silence.

“I have some very important questions.”

Alina nodded her head.

“What is my favorite food and how did I get into this so-called coma?” I spat out. She looked hesitant to answer. I needed to get my life back!

Alina spoke, her voice cracking like she was going to cry, “We were driving home from our basketball game. The car in front of us hit an ice patch and we wrecked. Me, mom, and dad weren’t hurt, but you slipped into a coma.” Quickly swiping her eyes, she continued on, “And your favorite food is Kraft Mac and Cheese. In fact, let’s stop at the store and buy some!”

At the store I saw lots of images. Mask wearing instructions. Stand six feet apart. Arrows on the floor pointing the way to walk.

“What’s going on? Why am I wearing a mask? What are these s-“ Alina interrupted me waving to a girl around my age. As she approached me, Alina whispered that it was my best friend. I recognized her immediately and ran up to hug her. But she backed away. Was I dirty? Were we not friends anymore after my coma? What?

“Sorry Audra. We have to social distance. I’m so happy to see you!” she said. My heart cracked in half. I wanted to cry but I didn’t have enough strength. We bought the Mac and Cheese and left hastily. I wasn’t even hungry anymore.

When I got home, my parents were on their computers. All. Night. Long. Alina told me they were on Zoom. I stayed up all night, not wanting to miss a single thought. Small images of life before this would flash through my mind. Alina and me posing for a picture in Disney World. Me and my dad getting to meet my favorite basketball player. I fell asleep. I did not know what was going to happen tomorrow or the day after that. But I knew one thing for sure. That I would live and find my life, even if it took me a while.

“Audra? Audra you’re awake!” Alina and my parents hugged me. What was going on?

“What about coronavirus and masks and six feet apart and all that junk?” I asked frantically. My parents and sister looked at me in confusion.

“Audra, honey, what are you talking about?”

It was all just a dream. I thought.

“Oh nothing. Can I get some Mac and Cheese?” I asked. I smiled to myself, **just** a dream.

How Time Flies

By Lily Keller

5th Grade - 3rd Place

Molly was bored out her mind. She was in her bedroom on a hot summer day in 1992. Molly's mom was at work. Her nine-year-old brother, Jack, was at the arcade. Her two-year-old brother, Dylan, was taking a nap. Her dad was tinkering in the garage with some new, mysterious machine. And her best friend was on vacation. She had no one to hang out with. She considered the tire swing, but at age 11, she felt too old for it. Just then, Molly heard the front door swing open. *Oh no.*

Molly knew Jack was home. But because of the extremely creaky door, Dylan woke up and began to cry.

"Thanks a *lot*, Jack," Molly muttered.

Jack called up the stairs, "Don't worry, Dylan! I'm coming!"

"Shack?" came Dylan's quiet reply.

Molly met the boys in their room. "Let's go see Dad," Molly said to Dylan as she picked him up.

"Dada?"

"Yeah, let's go see him."

"Okie." Molly went down the stairs and into the garage with Jack and Dylan following close behind.

Dad looked up from his telephone booth-sized machine and smiled. "Hey kiddos, what's up?"

"I'm bowed," Dylan said, who was still working on pronouncing his Rs.

"All right, let's see....," thought Dad. "How about you three keep an eye on my machine while I go get a drink of water?"

"Sure!" replied Molly, wondering why the machine would need watching.

"Great! I'll be right back." Dad ran inside.

"Yay!" cheered Dylan as he...*walked inside the machine...AND BEGAN PUSHING BUTTONS.*

“Dylan, NO!” Molly yelled, as she hopped into the machine beside Dylan.

“Dylan! Stop! Bad boy!” Jack yelled.

“Jack, that’s not working! Get over here!” Molly ordered. So Jack hopped in. Dylan pushed a big red button labeled, “Let’s go!” and everything began to spin in a whirl of color and light. “Oh no!” Jack shouted.

“What’s happening!?” cried Molly.

Dylan’s eyes widened. “Uh-oh...”

They were spinning faster and faster. Then everything was still. Noisy, but still.

“Hey, little dudes,” a voice said out of nowhere. Then Molly saw him. He seemed to be 14 or 15, had a robot behind him, and was riding what looked like a skateboard, floating on air with no wheels. Molly, Jack, and Dylan stepped out of the machine and began to walk around. They were surrounded by tall buildings that seemed to be made entirely of glass. She didn’t see a single person who didn’t have a little robot by their side. They wore strange clothes like Molly had never seen, metallic jumpsuits in all sorts of colors.

Finally, they came to a little stand where a man was selling little metallic boxes so small Molly could easily fit one in her hand. She picked one up and a little screen-like projection came out of it. It read, “THE DAILY NEWS” and under that, “June 19th, 2348.”

“Ummm, Jack? Dylan? I think we’re in the *future. It’s 2348!*” Molly said to her brothers, and they turned and ran toward the time machine.

When Molly, Jack, and Dylan got back to the time machine, they found it covered with police tape and surrounded by police officers. Molly picked up Dylan and urged Jack, “Run to the time machine. Rip the tape!”

Jack punched through the police tape and into the time machine with Molly and Dylan close behind. Molly began pushing buttons until the screen read “1992.” Then she pressed the “Let’s go!” button, and all the spinning colors and lights came back. Suddenly, they were in their garage again.

Dad was coming through the door with his glass of water. Molly ran to him and demanded, “What year is it?!”

Dad looked gleeful. “It works! My time machine works! Oh, sorry—it’s 1992.”

Molly sighed with relief: they were home! And with that, they all headed inside for lunch.

Paralyzed

by Kyleigh Schrader

6th Grade - 1st Place

I pushed the blanket over my freezing cold legs. A random chill ran down my spine. I placed my head onto my pillow feeling its warmth. I flipped over the pillow to feel the cold side of the pillow. I gradually drifted into a world of no fear, no stress, nothing at all. My mind wakes, but my body is frozen. I can't move, and I can barely sustain my breath. I opened my eyes ever so slightly, to see a large, cloaked figure in the distance. My body can't move, and I feel trapped. My mind is fully conscious but so out of control. The monster gets closer, and fear sends chills up my spine. I tried frantically to move, to scream, to do anything. But it was no use, I couldn't do anything, I felt so useless. The figure had no eyes, yet I felt like it was watching me. It crept closer, and I smelled a strong odor. I couldn't tell what the odor was, something tells me this is the smell of death, and darkness.

A wave of panic washes over me as my breathing gets heavier and heavier. My dog prances into the room happy as ever. His head turned over to the figure and he growled at him. I was completely paralyzed, yet fully conscious. I attempted to scream, but it was no use. I couldn't do anything, I felt so helpless. My dog continued to growl and pounced on this figure. I smiled on the inside but couldn't smile on the outside. This isn't real, it cannot be real. I'm either dreaming or imagining things. The dog hopped on the bed and scratched me in the wrist. Pain washed over me, but I couldn't scream, nor shout so there was nothing I could do about it.

"I have to find a way out of this," I thought in my head. I had no other plan all I could do is keep trying to move. I start to give up, and all energy drains out of me. My dog started to bark, and my parents came rushing over. This figure ran its sharp claws through me, and it dug into my skin. I felt the pain pulse through my skin like electricity. My parents were in my room, but they could not see the figure. They also thought I was asleep. My mind slowly went blank. I could not feel anything or see anything.

Suddenly, I regained feeling and slowly started to move my fingers. The figure was gone, but the scratches, and blood were all still there. I tried to get up, but I collapsed to the ground. I slowly got up and gradually walked to the bathroom. I looked in the mirror and I saw the figure behind me. My body paralyzed, and the figure crept closer and closer. Again, I felt hopeless, and fear pulsed through my veins. I felt so stiff, and uncomfortable. The figure laughed, while I was paralyzed. I was determined to move, to speak, to do anything, but I cannot. I am completely stuck. The question is am I stuck in my body or in my mind? The figure disappeared and I was able to move again. I felt amazing, and I danced around. I will never take movement for granted ever again. I dashed around, feeling free, I am not trapped anymore, and hopefully I will never be

trapped again. Being paralyzed like that feels terrible. You cannot move, and you cannot speak. All you have is your thoughts. I hope that never happens again. Because from my experience, it is terrible.

It Comes with the Rain

by Charlotte McManaman

6th Grade - 2nd Place

The forest was still like time itself had stopped. But I knew the quiet stillness only meant a storm was approaching.

As I went deeper into the trees, I came to a clearing. Hot tears made my hair stick to my cheeks. Plopping onto a fallen tree, I sighed, wiping the dirt and tears from my eyes. Sunlight peeked through the leaves above. I recalled the news I had heard.

“Was it true?” I asked myself.

I gripped the moss-covered log with my clammy hands when a fat raindrop splashed onto my hand. Rain fell all around me. I had noticed a halfway uprooted tree when I arrived, so I scanned my surroundings for it. I eventually found it and took cover from the downpour just as lightning danced across the sky. I curled into a ball under the tree, where the wet, winding roots formed an almost homely cage around me. Eventually, the heavy rain lulled me to sleep.

A flash of bright lightning woke me up. It was almost pitch black now, but I could make out my surroundings, and with all the lightning flashing above, I figured I could make my way back to town.

Out of nowhere, I heard a noise through the deafening rain. It sounded like a high-pitched shriek. Something crawled out from under another uprooted tree about 20 feet away. The thing prowled with abnormally long, withered limbs, and sharp claws. It had twisted fingers, and when it stood up on its hind legs, it looked to be about 7 feet tall. The thing had a gnarled face, a crooked mouth, and black pits for eyes.

It suddenly jerked its head towards me. I couldn't breathe. The creature saw me, and a horrible, almost humanoid grin stretched across its face as it dropped back down to all fours. The whole forest was quiet except for the rain and thunder. The crickets, night critters, and roaring winds went silent. Waiting. Then, the creature lunged.

Finally, my legs went to action. I scrambled to my feet and sprinted away through the rain. I tried crying for help, but shock and fear bolted my jaw shut. Dodging trees and fallen branches, I stole a glance over my shoulder. The thing was only 5 feet behind, now. It was *fast*. I sprinted faster and harder when I noticed the glow of lanterns through the rain. I made a sharp turn, careful not to slip on the wet moss. I whipped my head behind me again, but the creature was gone. Then I smacked into something.

I crashed onto the ground, head aching. I shut my eyes, trying to concentrate. Where did that thing *go*? Then, my breath was ripped away from me. Something was breathing above me.

“This is it,” I thought, preparing for death.

But then something strange happened. The creature whinnied. My eyes flew open, and standing over me was the butcher’s old horse!

“I’ve found her!” Someone bellowed. Mr. Turner came running towards me with his Doberman beside him.

“What in the world did you stay in the rain for, girl?” he asked, heaving me to my feet. “You wanna be eaten by those grizzly’s, is that it?”

“I...I’m sorry. I got lost,” I stammered.

Mr. Turner sighed. “We best bring you home, now. Don’t wanna catch one of them nasty colds, now do we?” He said smiling.

When the other men caught up, we started for town.

Once we arrived, all the women were frantically running about getting blankets and shoveling soup and bread into my mouth. That night the Turner’s let me sleep in their guest room, though I didn’t sleep at all, and frankly, not ever again. I knew that thing was still out there. Hungry. Waiting. The soothing rain was never the same to me after that night.

The Music Within Her

by Lyla Reece Luebbing

6th Grade – 3rd Place

It was that one note. That one single note was tormenting her. Jane Filani was always finding herself getting stuck on that one note. She tried and tried, but it wouldn't come out of old Jesse, her guitar.

"Jane!" her mother called from their kitchen, though it was a few steps away from her. "Time for dinner!" she finished.

Jane wasn't hungry, she wanted to practice that note more and more so she could finally get it right. Her father always told her that if you set your heart to it and practice until your fingertips bleed, she would get it. That was before he died. Jane's father was a police officer, and he risked his life for his family. And he loved to play the guitar, that's where Jane learned from.

"Jane, I am not fooling around," Jane's mother bellowed out to her.

"Alright, alright!" she said with a little more attitude than she wanted.

As food was placed on their tiny coffee table, they ate in silence until they were full. That's what they always did. It wasn't always like that, but it was for now. After a little bit of shut eye and some breakfast, Jane got right back to it playing the same note, over and over again.

"Hey," Her mother said to her. "Do you want to come to work with me today?" she asked Jane.

Jane loved her mother's work. She worked at a Homeless shelter for the unfortunate. Jane always loved to help her mom entertain the people living there by playing her guitar.

"Sure thing!", she replied almost instantly. When Jane and her mother arrived at the homeless shelter, Jane grabbed her guitar that she brought with, and stepped inside. She left her mother to do her work while she went over to one of her friends that she made during her many visits to the shelter.

"Hey Conner! How's things going?" she asked her friend who's been living there longer than anyone else.

"Oh, just fine and dandy!" he replied with much joy inside of him.

That's the thing Jane loved most about Conner. Even though He didn't have much in his life, he still went through every day with a smile on his face.

"Are you ready for your next guitar lesson?" Conner asked Jane. She's been taking lessons from him ever since her father passed.

“Always,” she replied.

“How’s that note going for you?” he said to her.

“Well, let’s just say that if there was a goat living in my house, it would sound like that.” she said with sarcasm.

For the rest of the day, they practiced and practiced, until Jane had to go. “Thanks again Conner,” Jane said to him before leaving.

“Any time Jane, any time.” Before Jane left, Conner said to her, “Hey, they’re hosting a concert this Friday for any musical talents.” Jane knew what was coming next. “You should enter it.”

Yep, just as she predicted. “Do you really think that I’m good enough?” Jane asked him.

“I know that you are as good as your father was, and how good was he?” he said to her. “The best musician I’ve ever heard.”

“Then I know you can do it.” Conner protested.

On Friday, Jane told her mother that she decided to do the show. The next thing she knew, she was standing on the stage they did their best to create.

“Are sure I can do this Conner?” Jane said with hesitation.

“Just go out there and knock their socks off!” He said back to her.

As Jane stepped out to the stage and gripped her guitar harder, she finally played that note. And It sounded perfect.

Additional Submitting Authors

4th Grade

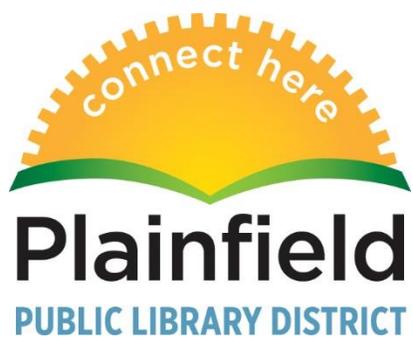
Amy Amacher • Chloe Baker • Ananya Biswas • Olivia Boe • Rayna Boe
Rebecca Brady • Ashley Burrell • Alyssa Carlson • Esha Chabra • Rashi Chabra
Niara Chandler • Claire Covington • Rebekah Dobbs • Adam El Moubaraki
Sidney Gargano • Anneliese Hentzel • Aaralyn Jenkins • Broderick Joiner • Isabella Kazak
Ava Kifer • Hudson Lutfiyya • Emlyn Meeker • Elliot Miller • Callie Polacheck
Katelyn Senese • Luisa Savazzini • Margot Shafer • Diyorbek Takhirov
Landon Thurlow • Olivia Triggs • Avalie Rose Wendt

5th Grade

Amber Andal • Joss Apostolos • Caleb Beeman • Lucia O. Berman
Makena Bingham • Emma Bowers • Bella Cairo • Jonathan • Enzo Cripps • Leila Czosnyka
Isabella Diaz • Angelina Fraley • Camila Guevara • A.J. Hartmann • Elle Haywood
Olivia Hillyer • Abigail Hopper • Madi Kammer • Alyson Kilinskis • Molly Koenig
Gabe Lynch • Kassidy Moore • Elena McClowry • Riley Pate • Arya Patil • Vaishali Pillai
Kasia Sallans • Rishima Sawhney • Ion Siminoi • Jake Snead • Riley Swinehamer
Abby Wilson • Samuel Wittenkeller • Erin Young

6th Grade

Madison Askin • JJ Batiller • Jullienne Beck • Madelyn Cairo • Alyssa Carlson
Aidan Colón • Layla El Moubaraki • Leah Henriksen • Julianna Herrera • Brooklyn Joiner
Gianna Kaminsky • Umair Khan • Mary Kate Moran • Carlos Nuno • Claire O'Neill
Isabella Palka • Ella Ruland • Maeve Prendki • Santiago Zavala



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