

Stone Soup

The Magazine by Young Writers & Artists



"Appreciating Flowers," by Zhen Yi Wen, age 11, Hualien, Taiwan

IRISTERRA

It won't rain again in Searain until the lost boy comes home

FIRST IN FLIGHT

Ben is fascinated by the two brothers and their flying machine

Also: A poem by a girl who left her home in Africa

Stone Soup

The Magazine by Young Writers & Artists

VOLUME 34, NUMBER 5

MAY / JUNE 2006

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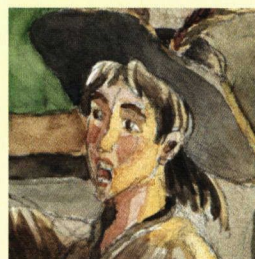
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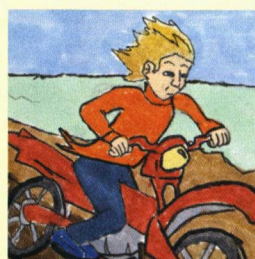
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Stone Soup

The Magazine by Young Writers & Artists

WELCOME TO ALL OUR READERS, old and new! We've had the pleasure of publishing *Stone Soup* for over 30 years. It is our belief that, by presenting rich, heartfelt work by young people the world over, we can stir the imaginations of our readers and inspire young writers and artists to create.



Jessie Moore, 12

Contributors' Guidelines

Stone Soup welcomes submissions from young people through age 13. For our complete guidelines, please visit our Web site at www.stonesoup.com.

Story and poem authors: Please do not enclose a self-addressed envelope with

your submission. Send copies of your work, not originals. If we decide to consider your work for a future issue, you will hear from us in four to six weeks. If you do not hear from us, it means we were not able to use your work. Don't be discouraged! Try again!

Book reviewers: If you are interested in reviewing books for *Stone Soup*, write editor Gerry Mandel. Tell her a little about yourself and the kinds of books you like to read. Enclose an SASE for her reply.

Artists: If you would like to illustrate for *Stone Soup*, send Ms. Mandel three samples of your art work, along with a letter saying what you like to draw most. Enclose an SASE for her reply. We need artists who can draw or paint complete scenes in color. Please send color copies of your work, not originals.

All contributors: Send us writing and art about the things you feel most strongly about! Whether your work is about imaginary situations or real ones, use your own experiences and observations to give your work depth and a sense of reality. Send your work to *Stone Soup*, Submissions Dept., P.O. Box 83, Santa Cruz, CA 95063. Include your name, age, birthdate, home address and phone number.

Cover: "Appreciating Flowers" was loaned to *Stone Soup* by the Association for Education through Art in Taipei, Taiwan. Every year the Association holds an international children's art competition. The winning pieces are exhibited, and they are published in a beautiful book. Special thanks to Chi-Feng Chung and Tiffany Chung.

The Mailbox



LBP, 9

Although Susannah Benjamin is entitled to her own opinion about how a story ought to end, I noticed a serious factual error in her letter of criticism about my story, "Pompeii's Last Day" [May/June 2005]. She states that "every living thing in the city was wiped out by lava and ash . . . Sylvia had zero chance of surviving." This is not true. There is historical evidence that many people escaped the wrath of Mount Vesuvius. After the eruption was over, survivors tried to return to their homes but were unable to live there again. For those who would like to learn more about the famed city, please read *The Buried City of Pompeii*, by Shelly Tanaka (Hyperion/Madison Press, 1997), from which I got this information.

ROSALIE STONER, 12

Gretna, Louisiana

Read Susannah's letter in the January/February 2006 issue, or at stonesoup.com. Rosalie's new story, "First in Flight," appears on page 21 of this issue.

I have been buying *Stone Soup* from Barnes & Noble ever since I can remember. This year, I finally decided to order a subscription! Your magazine is wonderful and really allows for young writers and artists to show their talents within an accepting community of similar fans who love to write and draw. I know that I am too old to contribute any work to your magazine, yet I cannot help hungrily gulping down the treasures stored within the pages of *Stone Soup*. I particularly enjoyed the story "Fort Cuniculus" in the September/October 2005 issue. The story's opening line grasped me at once. With its highly detailed passages and stunningly beautiful artwork that perfectly matched the story, this was one piece not to be missed! Ralphie Kabo should continue to submit his work and Cameron Osteen should likewise continue to draw! Also,

"The Last Dragon" by Veronica Engler in the September/October 2005 issue was excellent! The drawing perfectly matched the mood, and the writing was filled with descriptions that made you feel as if you were smack-dab in the middle of the action! All the stories in this issue were wonderful as well as the beautiful pieces in the November/December 2005 issue. I only wish I could snail-mail the many authors and artists who make getting the mail a real treat.

BRACHA ORYA SHARP, 16

Bronx, New York

I love the stories you print. They are all very good, but one that I really liked was "Truth-Telling," by Katie Sinclair, in the January/February 2006 issue. Katie used a lot of description in that story; I could even smell the popcorn and feel the atmosphere. They remind me of when I go to sleepovers, or host a sleepover. Mona Cao's drawing looked extremely realistic, and was a beautiful piece of art. I think that was the best illustration I've seen before. Keep writing and illustrating to inspire other young people!

AMY XU, 10

San Diego, California

Amy wrote "A Story to Tell," which appeared in the July/August 2005 issue. Katie's new story, "Isterra," is on page 5 of this issue.

I never thought I would be an author at my young age until I read your magazine. I love *Stone Soup* because the stories you print are heartfelt.

ROSE GOTTLIEB, 10

Minneapolis, Minnesota

All the work mentioned in The Mailbox can be found on our Web site: www.stonesoup.com.

Note to our readers: Send us your letters! We are especially interested in detailed comments about specific stories, poems, book reviews, and illustrations. We'd also like to receive anecdotes (150 words or less) about interesting experiences you'd like to share with our readers. Send letters to The Mailbox, Stone Soup, P.O. Box 83, Santa Cruz, CA 95063. Include your name, age, address, and phone number.



"It just so happens that I know the perfect tale for nights like these"

Iristerra

By **Katie Sinclair**

Illustrated by **Anton Dymtchenko**

AT THE VERY western tip of the world lies a land of clear waters and cold winters, where wild storms turn the sky and sea to dark gray, and white-sailed fishing boats once glided like swans over white-crested waves.

During one particularly fearsome storm, where thunder crashed and lightning lit up the sky for miles, a group of travelers huddled in an inn.

"Tell us a tale then," urged one cloaked traveler, nursing a cup of something hot and nasty smelling. "Something to take our minds off this dratted thunder!"

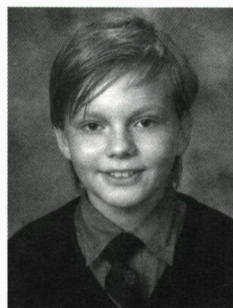
The flimsy wooden shutters rattled open, lending the occupants a view of huge waves pounding relentlessly against the rocks and cliff where the inn was perched, punctuated every few minutes by another bright flash of lightning falling out of the sky. The innkeeper's wife hurried forward to bolt the shutters closed, replacing the view of storm-tossed ocean with badly-painted shutter.

"Come on now, Fion," added a raggedy-looking woman in a faded red cloak smoking a pipe, "best make it quick though, before this whole cursed rock falls into the sea."

"All right then," conceded Fion, a younger man with a mane of long brown hair tied back at the nape of his neck, who wore a battered hat with a feather. "It just so happens that I know the perfect tale for nights like these," he said, standing up and bowing grandly to the other inn's guests. A storyteller by trade, he made his living by keeping audiences enthralled. The woman,



Katie Sinclair, 13
Manhattan Beach, California



Anton Dymtchenko, 12
Montreal, Canada

Nell, told fortunes, and the other man, well, he made sure that no one bothered their small band. Together they lived their lives traveling, surviving off the small coins tossed into his cap after a performance.

"As I was saying," Fion stepped forward into the firelight, casting dark shadows over his usually handsome face, "storms like these bring to mind a certain tale I heard a while back. You folks ever heard of Searain?" he asked, mentioning a rocky peninsula a little ways north and east of the inn. The inn's guests nodded. "Funny name for it, eh? Seeing as there's been no rain there for over a decade, nearly thirteen years it's been, now, hasn't it? Well, it wasn't always like that. Used to be the wettest point around here, and that, my friends," he said, as the rain pounded on the roof and the storm still raged outside, "is saying something. Now the Fisherfolk used to be quite common here in Iristerra," he continued, naming this land where the colors of the sea and land shifted and changed like the rainbow.

"Few years ago, the Fisherfolk were as common as seagulls and as good at fishing too, but then came that huge storm, you remember that one, Nell? Nearly washed her wagon off the road, it did. I was only a young man then, just starting out on my own, before I joined up with the Travelers. Wiped most nearly all of the Fisherfolk out, and the ones that survived left after that. Nowadays it's rare to see those beautiful boats with sails like wings sailing down the harbor." He surveyed his audience, the inn's guests ignoring their drinks

and turning their faces to the storyteller. Even the innkeeper's wife had stopped wiping out glasses to listen.

"Once, not so long ago, when the Fisherfolk sailed these waters, was a young woman who lived on one of those boats, one of the Fisherfolk, yes, but different. Most of those in Iristerra have light hair, pale brown or yellow as daffodils. Her hair, though, was dark as midnight on the water, and some said that it shown with blue and green lights when the firelight hit it.

"These people live by the sea, off the fish they catch. Most never leave their boats except to trade in the town. Rather like us Travelers, in some aspects. She, however, could often be seen wandering along the shore or in the town whenever her boat wasn't anchored too far off shore. She never learned to fish; how to haul in a net or fillet a catch. Refused even to watch a hook and line, something even they let their youngsters do.

"She could swim, though. Swim like a fish or a seal, her eyes glistening blue-gray like the sea itself. She could even catch fish with her bare hands, but would always let them go. Odd, that was, considering that most of the Fisherfolk never learn how to swim. Say that if they can't trust their boats from not sinking, then what's the point? Uncanny, they said. Unnatural even." He paused, taking a sip from a mug that the innkeeper's wife offered him.

"Some even called her a weather-witch, one who could tame the winds and ride the storm. And it was true that on days



One day though, as her man was pulling in the day's catch, the woman saw something strange

when the wind howled and the rain nearly washed the paint off their boat, she could be seen balancing on the bowsprit, right above the figurehead, and that dolphins came to her call. But the Fisherfolk all have their way with the ocean; it'd be considered uncanny and unnatural if dolphins *didn't* come to their call. Half-dolphin already, the whole pack of 'em, leastways they *were*.

"Some called her a Selkie, one of the seals that could turn into people, and that one day she would up and vanish to join her kinsmen beneath the waves. She didn't though. Maybe she was a very patient Selkie. Maybe she was just human. In time she took up with a feller from Searain, a handsome one by all accounts, not one of the Fisherfolk, a merchant lad he was. He fell in love though, as all who met her did, and left dry land to join her and her family on their boat with sails like clouds." He paused again, staring into the firelight, remembering the boats and the smell of salt spray. *Of course it was just a tale, he chided himself. He never told anyone that there was anything more to it than that, never told anyone the circumstances that led him to the Travelers . . . the guilt and the fear and the long search afterward that still continued to this day . . .* He shook his head to clear it, and went back to his tale.

"In time she gave birth to a child, a boy with his mother's sea-colored eyes. Her family's boat moved to the waters off Searain, so her man wouldn't feel homesick. Her family grew to love him too, and he learned how to net a catch like she

never did. He even learned to swim!"

All eyes were on the storyteller now. Even the stable boy, odd Ben, who had a strange habit of wandering off in the middle of storms and returning wet and drenched the next morning, who would sit still on a rock for hours, something most fourteen-year-old boys would have trouble managing, had come in from the rains to hear the tale. Fion's eyes lingered a bit on the newcomer, his tawny ones matched stare-for-stare by the boy's funny gray ones.

"They were quite happy for a year or two, as their child grew and walked and sat in his mother's lap as she perched on the bowsprit when the wild weather came. One day though, as her man was pulling in the day's catch, the woman saw something strange. An eagle, one of those that live on the cliffs hereabouts, came swooping down out of the sky, catching in its talons a gannet, but instead of taking the poor bird back to its nest, flew with it out toward the setting sun.

"The woman took this as a bad sign. Being as she was one of the Fisherfolk who take such stock in omens like that, she told her man to find safe haven somewhere, in the nearby harbor or in some rocky cove along the shore. But the man wouldn't, saying she was being foolish, as eagles are wont to attack seabirds and eat 'em for their supper. Turned out he was the foolish one, stupid, stupid man." Fion's tone became bitter, and the listeners simply thought that it was one of his storyteller's tricks, not realizing that there

was something more. *There was always something more . . .* "That night, she sat on her familiar place on the bowsprit, clutching her child. That night, a storm blew in out of nowhere, wrecking their ship and half of the other Fisherfolks' as well."

"That's it then?" asked Ben, surprising the innkeeper's wife, for he seldom spoke, if at all, and never to strangers. "That's all, the storm came in and they all died?"

Fion appraised him sharply. *Yes, he was sure . . . he was almost entirely sure that this boy was the one . . .* "Now wait just a second! Yes, most of 'em died, but not *all* of 'em. The woman's child was found, afloat on an old trunk lid, some ways south and west of Searain. She had used her magic, whatever magic she might've had, to save the child's life, when she could have saved her own. No one knows what became of her child after that, maybe he lived, maybe he died. No one knows what became of her man either. Only thing anyone knows is that it hasn't rained in Searain since, the sea itself, they say, mourning the loss of the Fisherwoman who could swim with the dolphins. And it's not going to rain soon, either, not until their child comes back on

those white-sailed boats and brings back the rest of the Fisherfolk with him."

It was the end of the tale, and the assembled audience clapped. They tossed a few coins, which Fion caught deftly in his cap.

"'twas a good tale," the innkeeper's wife sighed, "even if 'twasn't true," she added, with a glance at Ben. He was still in his corner, staring at that handsome storyteller gentleman, brow furrowed in thought.

The next morning, Ben and the Travelers were gone. "Oh, he said that that storyteller offered him some work with the Travelers," said one of the maids, after being interrogated by the innkeeper's wife about the whereabouts of the strange stable boy. "Made sense, seeing as how those two were talking after he finished that lovely tale 'bout the sea woman and all."

That summer, when the winter's tempests had finally blown themselves out, white-sailed fishing boats were seen sailing down as if on wings off the coast of Iristerra. Those who saw them say that the lead boat was manned by a boy and a gentleman with a feather in his cap.

The night after, it rained in Searain. ❀





Everywhere I look, a perfect tapestry of color and shape greets my eyes

The Garden

By Emma Agnew

Illustrated by Lara Gechijian

THE LATCH CREAKS gently as I push open the gate. In front of me, a small potting shed covered with wild roses blocks my view. But I already know by heart what lies beyond. And sure enough, as I walk around the corner of the shed, the sight of a familiar garden greets my eyes.

But it isn't just any garden, it's *my* garden. Even though anyone can come here, it has always seemed to belong just to me. It has been my sanctuary in times of sadness and my inspiration in times of joy. But most of all, it has always been somewhere where time seems to melt away: where there are no math papers due, no people to be polite to, no mothers to get into fights with.

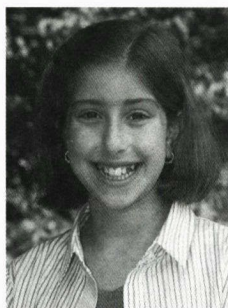
Everywhere I look, a perfect tapestry of color and shape greets my eyes. Here, perfect rays of sunlight reach down long fingers to gently caress the silvery leaves of a grove of aspen trees. There, a vibrant butterfly gently alights on the lip of a delicate blue-and-gold flower, slowly fanning its wings, anticipating its first sip of nectar.

I breathe in deeply, inhaling the mingled scents of rose and hibiscus. Slowly, I can feel the anger coiled tightly around my heart loosen its grip. The memory of my most recent fight with my mother starts to fade.

For the past few years, our fights have become more and more frequent. Sometimes I feel like just flinging open the front door and running away. Usually I resort only to *slamming* the door. This time was just one time too many, that's all. I couldn't face her anymore. I had finally opened that door and left.



Emma Agnew, 13
Topanga, California



Lara Gechijian, 13
Lincoln, Massachusetts

At first, my intention was to leave and never return. But now I wasn't so sure. The garden was having its usual effect on me: putting the jumbled thoughts in my head back into place, sorting out the tangled knot of anger and confusion I felt inside. No matter, I thought. I won't let myself think about that right now.

As I venture deeper and deeper into this garden of miracles, I come to a small bridge adorned with horsetails on either side. Instantly I am transported back in time to when I was six.

My Mama and I walk hand-in-hand over this very bridge.

"Wait, Mama!" I say, bending over. "I want to see the fishies!"

Mama lies down on the rough wooden planks next to me, and we both spend the next ten minutes immersed in the activities of the fish. When we sit up again, slightly stiff and sore, Mama reaches out and pulls a horsetail toward her.

"Look!" she says with as much excitement as if she were the one being shown

this small miracle for the first time. Gently, she pries the sections apart and lays them on the wet ground next to her.

"Now, watch!"

Carefully, she picks up each piece and fits them together again. I can feel my eyes bugging out of my head!

After a few minutes of labor, she holds up the horsetail exactly as it had been before she picked it.

"Ta da!" she exclaims proudly.

As my memory fades, I can feel my eyes start to swim with unshed tears. Even though sometimes I feel as though I hate her, I know that inside I will always really love her. Even though sometimes I want to slap her, I know that inside she will always be that same Mama who showed me the horsetails, all those years ago; and that I will always be the same little girl who clung to her hand and exclaimed over the fishies' activities.

For better or worse, she is my Mama, and I love her.



Homesick

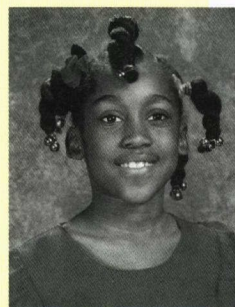
By Soujourner Salil Ahebee

Leaving my dear country
made me sad, made me miss
all that was worth remembering
the food like foutou
the food like attieke
the food like aloko.

Leaving my African country
made me mourn, made me long for
the people like the Baoule
the people like the Senefou
the people like the Dan.

Leaving Cote d'Ivoire
made me sour, made me cry for
the places like Grand Bassam
the places like my grandfather's village—N'Gattadolikro
the places like Abidjan.

Leaving Papa
resting in his grave
made me dispirited, made me despairing.
I miss him
Listening to Louis Armstrong,
reading the poetry of Leopold Senghor,
calling me his chérie.



Soujourner Salil Ahebee, 10
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



"Let's see who could hold the sour the longest," he said with a sinister grin

Sour Memories

By Michael Madans

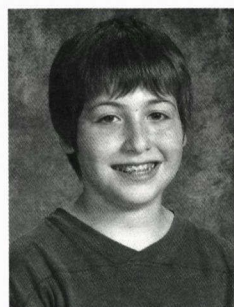
Illustrated by Meghan Cummings

TODAY I GO into candy shops and see little bottles of liquid Warhead sour substances and Warhead sour spray. But I can never find what I am really looking for: sour, sweat-producing, face-pinching, tongue-twisting, and eye-watering, irresistible, Warhead sucking candies.

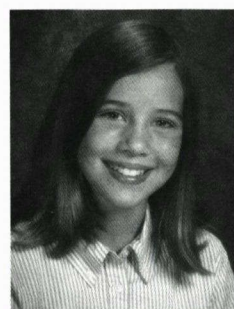
I know it sounds weird making so much fuss over something so little as a sucking candy, but it is more than a sour sucking candy to me, it is a memory to me, one memory that has been wrapped, packed and sent from Japan.

It all started way back in second grade. Fraser and I met each other the year before but that year in second grade was the year of the Warhead! If you did not know any better, you would say Fraser and I were twins. He is slightly taller than me, but he has brown hair, and blue eyes, two of the many features we share. In fact, I, one of the two "twins," had mistaken him for me. I was walking into my second-grade classroom when I saw a picture of me on the floor. I thought it was Fraser's and ran to give it to him. This is how much we look alike. Fraser was a really nice kid. He was a bright and clever kid. He always came up with ideas that everybody agreed on. Even though he was Australian, he did not have an accent. He was someone who was ready to do anything, anytime, anywhere, even if it meant his life. But the thing I liked most about Fraser was that he always had a smile on. He was also daring. He was not afraid of anything. But we always helped each other. Fraser and I were a team.

Anyway, he would come to lunch with a goldmine of



Michael Madans, 11
New York, New York



Meghan Cummings, 12
Eden Prairie, Minnesota

Warheads. Black cherry, green apple, yellow lemon, every Warhead flavor. He would tell me which he thought was the most sour. He would put more than one in his mouth at a time and tell me which were the best combinations. While he did that he would make funny faces trying to fight off the sour. He would imitate the face on each wrapper on the Warheads (except for the head exploding). He was like a librarian. "Hi," you would say to him.

"What could I do for you?" he might reply.

"I am looking for something sweet and sour."

"Hold on." He would reach into the goldmine and pull out a green apple. "Here you go."

"Thanks." You would take the Warheads and leave with sour explosions in your mouth.

One day while we were in the second grade we were at Fraser's house when he got up and said, "I'll be right back." When he returned, he laid out five black-cherry Warheads (the most sour) on a paper napkin in front of me. He did the same for himself. "Let's see who could hold the sour the longest," he said with a sinister grin. "Whoever spits their Warheads onto the paper napkin first loses."

"You're on," I said, confident of my victory.

"On your marks," he said, "get set, go." We stuffed the candy in our mouths. Immediately my face scrunched up from the explosion. But Fraser was sitting calmly with that sinister grin again.

Can newcomer Michael Madans beat Warhead master Fraser Stead? I thought. Nope. I stared at the Warheads that were just in my mouth and now on the paper towel. Then I just laughed. Once Fraser finished off his Warheads he started to laugh too. And we just laughed and laughed.

This was more than just a sucking candy, it was one of the things that made our friendship stronger.

Halloween of 2003 was the last time I saw Fraser. We were only in the fourth grade when he moved back to Australia, where he was first born. And that was also the last time I had a Warhead for a long time. It is Warheads that keep our friendship as strong as it is. It was devastating. I just stood there doing nothing, no matter what my heart said. "I guess this is it," I said.

"Yeah," he said. "Bye."

"Bye," I replied. I was ready to do something outrageous. But I didn't. It felt like being strapped to a brick wall. After all these years of happiness, laughter and Warheads, we were going to be separated on Halloween, which is supposed to be a holiday of joy. "It was really nice knowing you, bud," I said. "I am going to miss you. See ya." And that was it.

But little did I know, I did not just say goodbye to my friend, I also said goodbye to the memory of a huge friendship.

So that was it. No more Fraser. No more Warheads.

I wonder what my life without Fraser would be like without Warheads. Would

we remember each other? Would we still be friends? Many things could happen if it was not for that piece of candy.

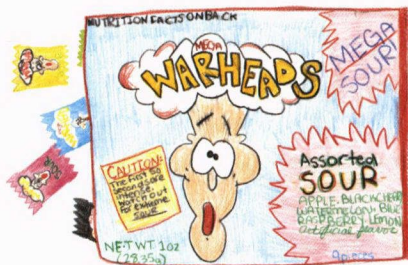
So here I was a fifth-grader, almost sixth, walking down the street. It has almost been a year since I last saw Fraser and the last time I had a Warhead. I think to myself, if I could just taste the sourness, and the sweetness of the memory, my spirit would rise. I wonder if Fraser has Warheads in Australia? Does he remember Warheads and all the memories?

I walk into the nearest candy store and think, I wonder if they got more blue raspberry sour spray. I reach in and pull out a package of *WARHEAD SOUR SUCKING CANDIES*. I really do not think when I see it. I just grab it. It is not a bag of candy to me. It is the key to my happiest memories, Fraser. I give the cashier the exact change and run out the door.

I open the package and look at the goldmine of Warheads, which I thought was lost. Black, blue, pink, green and yellow pieces of gold in the lost mine. If only

Fraser was here.

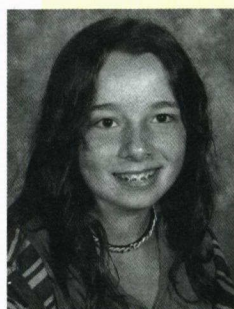
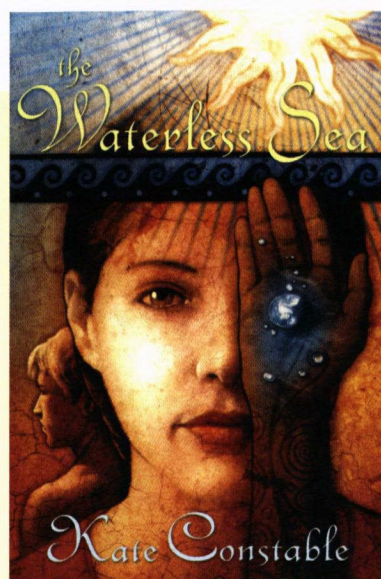
Today I love to purchase bags of Warhead sour sucking candies whenever I get the chance for two reasons. One, you just can't get over the explosions of sour that you get by putting a single candy in your mouth. And two, every time I have a Warhead I think of Fraser and all the good times we had. Right before I open a bag I think, What will Fraser do? I stuff them into my mouth. I taste the artificial flavor that was erased from my mind. The sour explodes in my mouth and my heart explodes with happiness like it is the Fourth of July, or Halloween. That same Halloween that was the last time I saw Fraser. Well, it really was not Fraser. It was more of the grim reaper. But it was definitely Fraser under the bloody mask, I think. But now there is a new ingredient in the Warhead. Something that cannot be artificially flavored, wrapped, packed, and sent from Japan. It is something different. Something that will not fade away. Something called friendship. ♣



Book Review

By Katherine Long

The Waterless Sea: Book Two in the Chanters of Tremaris Trilogy, by Kate Constable; Arthur A. Levine Books: New York, 2005; \$16.95



Katherine Long, 13
Bellevue, Washington

BEFORE I EVEN begin writing this review, let me tell you, the glorious reader, about my two beliefs concerning fantasy novels.

First, there is such a thing as sappy fantasy. In fact, there are so many sappy fantasy novels that it could be called a genre unto itself. Sappy fantasy can usually be recognized only by a true fantasy connoisseur, such as myself; however, there are a few defining marks: 1) the main characters of sappy fantasy novels are always beautiful or handsome; 2) elements (such as orcs, goblins, elves, the “Gift,” etc.) are stolen from other true fantasy novels and are entwined into the literature.

My second belief is that you can always tell how good a fantasy novel will be by reading the first paragraph. If the book starts out by describing (a) the sunrise/the sunset, (b) a woman who is not the main character, or (c) clothing, 99 percent of the time, the book will be a sappy fantasy story.

The Waterless Sea fits none of these requirements.

Unlike books such as *Eragon* (and now, *Eldest*) or the *Alanna* series, which perch precariously upon the brink of the cliff which leads down into the cavern of sappy fantasy, *The Waterless Sea* sits far removed in a secluded hamlet in the realm of true fantasy—a realm which is steadily shrinking.

Kate Constable's characters are bold and daring, yet not without weakness. One of the book's main characters, Darrow, is deathly afraid of the responsibilities of leadership, mainly to try and prove to himself that he is not who his former-friend-now-archenemy, Samis, claims he is—a man hungry for power, a cohort in Samis's quest to conquer the land of Tremaris.

Yet the character who intrigues me the most is not Darrow, for all of his quiet strength. I am most interested instead by Calwyn, a young girl who grew up on a sheltered mountainside, yet who always dreamed of adventure. In this way, both Calwyn and I are alike. My home is an idyllic place—quiet, peaceful, and really very boring. I dream of traveling and going beyond just what I can see by taking the bus or walking out my front door.

Just like Calwyn is, however, I fear that I will be disappointed by what I find there, wherever “there” may be. Calwyn dreams of the world as an exhilarating adventure abounding with opportunity and hope. What she finds is a sullen, twisted, reproduction of the world that existed in her imagination—where she is hated and despised for her ability to sing the ancient magic instead of loved and respected, where women are downtrodden and meek instead of considered men's equals, where the rulers are corrupt and greedy while the poor starve in the grimy coastal towns.

I fear that something like the disappointment that Calwyn went through will also happen to me . . . instead of the lush jungles that I imagined I will find burning stumps of trees; instead of soaring towers and turrets of ancient castles, I'll find swarming tourists and graffiti. Perhaps I am too naïve in my assumption that everything beautiful will stay as it is . . . but at least to protect the dreams of children we should be making more of an effort to make that which is beautiful also permanent.

I recommend this book to readers aged nine to twelve. Also be sure to read *The Waterless Sea's* prequel, *The Singer of All Songs*. ❀



"Are you making the flying machine?"

First in Flight

By Rosalie Stoner

Illustrated by Noel Lunceford

“THEY’RE CRAZY!” shouted my father, bursting through the door and coming in for dinner. Mother, careworn and ever patient, calmly laid the bowls for supper.

“Now, Jim,” she said practically, filling our bowls with warm soup. That was what she always said when Father got excited.

“I mean it Mabel!” he said, lifting his arms into the air. “If those men think they can get away with making a machine that can fly, well, I just think they’re craz- . . .”

“If the Good Lord had intended us to fly, we would have wings,” agreed Mother. “Supper’s ready.”

THE NEXT MORNING at breakfast, I gulped down my food. “Papa?” I asked, downing a spoonful of porridge.

“Yes, son?” said my father, busy doing something else.

“Papa,” I said, “tell me about the men who are making that flying machine.”

Papa grumbled disapprovingly. “The fools. They’ve come here to Kitty Hawk to play with gliders and try to make the silly things fly without wind. Like birds. Ridiculous.”

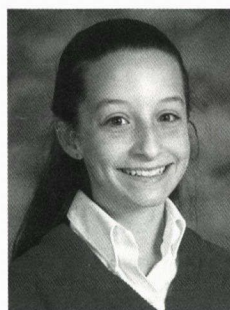
“What are their names, Papa?”

“Wilbur and Orville Wright. A pair of daydreamers.”

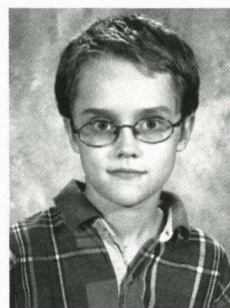
“Maybe they’ll be famous someday, Papa.”

“Famous?” roared Father. “Famous? The whole business will amount to nothing! Nothing, I tell you!”

Mama, clearing the table, mildly interjected, “Now, Jim. You said the same thing about the horseless carriage.”



Rosalie Stoner, 12
Gretna, Louisiana



Noel Lunceford, 12
Grandview, Missouri

"And what became of it?" Father broke in, waving his hat.

"An automobile, like Uncle Bill's," I said dreamily.

"A cloud of smelly black smoke with a steering wheel, that's what! Anyway, *I* am off to work. Good day!" He violently slammed the door.

Mother gave me a reproachful glance. "He's right, Ben," she said. "Now you got him all excited. He's never been the same since that time with Uncle Bill . . . Ah! What am I doing? Children, you get along and do your chores. Frannie, scrub the dishes. Carolyn, you can help with lunch. Ben . . ."

I was out the door like a shot, racing to the sand dunes of Kitty Hawk. I wanted to see the men who were going to fly. My arms and legs pumped faster and faster. Perhaps they had figured out how to fly already. I just had to get there in time.

Finally, I reached the barren windswept wastes of Kitty Hawk. Off to one side was Kill Devil Hill, a mountain of sand towering above me. To the other were two tents, which I had never seen before. Faintly, I detected dark objects moving around inside the tents. I crept closer and closer, my bare feet soundless on the sand. The black objects left the tent and became men, carrying something large. What were they doing now? They were letting it go . . . the breeze caught it up . . . it was flying! Gliding, rather. I moved closer. And closer. Even closer. It was like some kind of magnetic attraction. I continued to gravitate toward the kite until

I was standing next to the man flying it.

Startled at finding myself there, I gasped and hopped back. The man looked down at me with a cheerful smile. He had a small, black mustache and was dressed quite neatly. "Hello," he said, "I'm Orville Wright."

My mouth went dry. "Ben Thompson."

"This is Wilbur, my brother." A thin man leaned out from behind the first Mr. Wright and smiled, doffing his cap.

"Are you . . . ?" I started. "Are you the craz- . . . I mean . . . are you making the flying machine?"

Orville nodded. "We're trying. Still in the experimentation stage. Want a try?"

He handed me the kite, gently steadying my hand. There was a fair breeze that day, blowing in from the ocean.

"You want to make this fly?" I asked.

Orville nodded. "We'll have to find a way to make it fly without wind . . ."

Throughout the next hour, I learned almost as much on the subject of flight as the brothers knew. Then, Amelia, my big sister, came and called me home to lunch. "You better hurry," she said in her prim, superior way. I waved to Orville as I trotted down the road, trying to catch up with Amelia. She was daintily stepping along, avoiding muddy patches and stopping briefly at puddles as if she expected me to be Sir Walter Raleigh and sweep off some velvet cloak for her to walk on.

"Ooh! What will Mama say when I tell her you were flying kites instead of doing your chores?" she said as I panted alongside her.

"Amelia!" I pleaded.

"Won't you catch it!" she gloated.

I pulled her hair.

"**W**HAT'S WRONG with Ben?" asked Mama that evening as I stood motionless with a broom in one hand. I awoke with a start from my reverie and started sweeping again. I couldn't seem to keep my mind off the Wright brothers. One thing was certain: I was going back tomorrow.

I KEPT VISITING the Wright brothers all summer, and soon took to calling them by their first names. They didn't seem to mind that much. One night, after dinner, I ran down to Kitty Hawk to see them. Orville played his mandolin, and Wilbur, his harmonica. We spent the evening singing, laughing, and talking about the long journey that lay before *us* on the road to flight. I liked the way that Orville said *us*, not just himself and his brother. It felt nice to be appreciated and part of a group doing something important.

Wilbur and Orville, although several years apart, made a great team. Yet there were so many differences between them. Wilbur, the elder of the two, was solemn and quiet. Orville took his job seriously, but he was merrier and more outgoing than his brother. Wilbur was also the frailer of the two.

Although both brothers became my friends, I was more inclined to share my thoughts and ideas with Orville. That first evening we spent together, he walked

with me to Kill Devil Hill. We climbed up and sat at the very top, gazing at the stars. They were like little golden seeds, scattered along the dark field of the sky. There were so many! As we gazed into the sky, Orville said softly, "Someday, man will soar through the skies, perhaps even to one of those stars, maybe to the moon, another planet, who knows? It will all be made possible through our work here."

"What if it really isn't possible to . . . to fly?"

Orville stared determinedly into the heavens. "I believe it is possible, that there is a way. And I'm going to keep trying!" He gave me a light pat on the back. "When things look rough, Ben, the secret is this: always, *always* keep on believing and trying. There will be a way."

I looked up at him and he smiled.

"What would have happened if Columbus hadn't persevered in his search for a new trade route to the Indies? We might not even be here! Or if the founding fathers of this country had not struggled for our rights? Or if Abraham Lincoln had given up the South for lost? I tell you, Ben, no one ever accomplished anything by saying 'what if'! So we're going to try to solve this problem whether there is an answer or not!"

THE BROTHERS had to go back to Ohio at the end of autumn, but they promised to return next summer. Winter passed quickly, and melted away into spring. I took to watching birds and sketching bizarre flying machines when

I had the time (and the paper!). Once, after a rain, I jumped spread-eagle off the porch steps. For one glorious moment, I was soaring in the air next to a flock of birds, uplifted on the wings of my imagination, and in the next, I lay face-flat in a pile of mud.

"You look funny, Ben!" giggled Dolly, Frannie, and Elizabeth, three of my four little sisters.

"Ooooooh, Mama!" tattled Carolyn, the other one.

"Won't you get it!" said Amelia.

TRUE TO THEIR word, the brothers returned in July of 1901. Every morning, I rushed through my chores and made for Kitty Hawk to watch. Unfortunately, that summer seemed cursed and almost no work got done for a while. First came the heavy rains which poured out of the sky like God had opened the floodgates of heaven. Amelia got pneumonia and Papa had to drive her in the buggy to the nearest doctor swaddled in blankets, while I got stuck watching four little girls who all had colds and nearly went wild over the fact that they didn't have to behave when Mama wasn't home. Then, swarms of evil little mosquitoes attacked us. I had so many bites that I decided to wait until they loosened up to even attempt the journey to Kitty Hawk for fear of being eaten alive!

By now, Wilbur and Orville could use the gliders to fly (rather, glide) on days there was wind. Alas, the glider they had made often failed to cooperate, spinning

out of control and defying all the plans. As Orville and I watched in horror, the obstinate glider performed the inevitable, crashing onto the ground and thrusting Wilbur forward onto the elevator. We rushed to the ruinous wreck and dug Wilbur out.

"Are you all right?" I inquired anxiously.

"How do I look?" he said in reply, staggering toward the tent.

He really did look awful. His trim suit was torn and dirty, his nose bleeding, and he had several large bruises on his face.

"Awful," I said.

"That's a nasty cut," said Orville.

As we watched Wilbur limping back to the tents, Orville sighed in frustration and began to follow him, muttering angrily. "We came here to solve problems! Now all we've done is create new ones. Man will *never* fly!"

I half ran to keep up. "But you said last summer you'd keep believing and trying!"

"Believing and trying, ha!" he snorted.

"You said you'd never give up! You said there was a way!"

He turned on me, almost yelling. "I don't care what I said last summer! It's never going to happen. I'm leaving this place, perhaps forever! Now go home!"

I couldn't believe it! I was completely stunned, barely able to move. Tears of anger and hurt stung my eyes. For so many months I had hoped, wished, waited, *wanted* to fly so much and now, now, now . . . I turned and ran, leaving behind my hopes, dreams, and the two best friends I ever had. I was going home and I was

going to do my best to forget Orville and Wilbur and their stupid flying machine! Forever!

The next day seemed strange and irregular. I did my chores as usual, but I wasn't hurrying to go see Orville or Wilbur or the progress on their flying machine. For all I knew or cared, they could be back in Ohio along with the remains of that unfortunate glider. I purposely kept myself inside the house that day, knowing if I went outside I would be tempted to return to Kitty Hawk and patch it up with Orville.

Days turned into weeks, and every day I tried to go see my friends, but each time, something inside me held me back. Finally, I worked up the courage to go to Kitty Hawk. When I got there, I couldn't see anybody around except Mr. Tate, the postmaster. Where were Orville and Wilbur? "Excuse me, Mr. Tate," I said politely. "May I see the Wright brothers?"

"I'm afraid you can't, sonny," he said. "They packed up and went back to Dayton."

I was shocked and disappointed. "For good?" I asked.

Mr. Tate smiled. "They said they'd be back."

I leaned forward. "Soon? Maybe next summer?"

Again, he smiled and said, "We'll have to wait and see."

I trudged slowly back home. I just hoped Mr. Tate was right.

IN AUGUST OF 1902, they came back. I was so overjoyed that I began going

back to see them daily. I never mentioned our quarrel to Orville, figuring it was best to let old wounds heal, and we went back to being good friends. The days flew by, days full of testing the new glider, finding fault, improving it, and testing it again. Wings, wind tunnels, warping, why isn't it working, words, always whirling around me. I was spending most of my time at Kitty Hawk, helping the brothers repair their shed and turn it into living quarters, making notes, running errands, flying kites, watching glider flights, and praying that each time would lead us closer to unlocking the secret of the air.

The glider really was improving. A steerable tail was added and the glider was working almost perfectly. All they needed now was an engine lighter than 200 pounds with at least eight horsepower and propellers so that the flying machine could be controlled. However, not everyone was as enthusiastic about this project as we were. No engine-making company wanted to help us, so it was decided that the two would return to their Ohio home to construct their own engine. "Don't worry," reassured Orville as they departed once again. "We'll come back!"

DECEMBER 14, 1903, dawned bright and clear. Since they had returned in September of 1903 we had continued experimenting until it looked like we were ready. I was immensely excited as I stood watching Wilbur climb onto the *Flyer*, as our beloved machine was now called, while the men from the nearby lifesaving station

looked on, ready for any emergencies.

As Orville grabbed a wing to start it off, the machine began to hurtle forward, lifting up off the ground. Then, to my deep disappointment, it stalled, coughed, and smashed into the sand, damaging the left wing. My birthday was in three days, and more than anything, I wanted to know that it was possible to fly. Wilbur, unharmed, announced that repairs would be necessary. I didn't know if I could bear to wait.

I RAN DOWN the road, pumping hard to keep myself warm against the cold. I was turning twelve years old that day, and I somehow knew that today would be the day that man learned to fly. Shivering painfully, I staggered the last stretch of road. Kitty Hawk was almost the same as the first time I had seen it, but I knew something was different today.

Orville and Wilbur came out, totting a piece of starting track, which they proceeded to lay on a flat sand area. "Hi, Ben!" called Wilbur. "Hoist up the signal flag!" The lifesaving team would assemble at the raising of the flag. I did my job carefully. The longer it took them to come, the longer it would be until I knew if the *Flyer* could live up to its name.

Finally, all was ready. Today was Orville's turn to try. He set up his camera, instructing Mr. Daniels, one of the lifesavers, to take a picture when the *Flyer* lifted off from the ground. Then, he and Wilbur shook hands, gripping each other by the shoulder. Wilbur was lending his brother support for his flight. They really are sure

it's going to work, I thought. Then, he strode towards the machine. "Good luck, Orville," I whispered. My heart was tying itself in knots. Please let it work, I prayed, clasping my hands. Orville hopped nimbly aboard, waved, lay down flat on his stomach, let the motor run for a few minutes, and finally released a connecting wire.

Wilbur took his place at the wing tip, keeping it steady as the *Flyer* slowly rose off the track. I began to run as Mr. Daniels tripped the shutter. I ran as I had never run before. Even though it wasn't difficult to keep up, my heart soared in leaps and bounds. Strangely elated, I felt that I could fly, even without wings. "You did it!" I yelled. Then, the great machine dipped down to the ground. The flight was over. Wilbur ran up behind me and Orville jumped off the *Flyer*. The two collided, and began a frenzy of shaking hands and congratulating each other. Everyone hauled the *Flyer* back to the starting track and went inside to warm their hands. They had actually flown against the wind, proving that man can fly. Orville had stayed out, gazing proudly at his invention. I stayed outside also, stroking the *Flyer* and working up the courage to ask Orville a big favor. I took a deep breath and approached him.

"Orville?" I said.

"Hmmm?" He gave the *Flyer* a few loving pats.

"Orville," I repeated, wanting his full attention.

"Yes?" he said, still preoccupied.

"Orville?" My voice shrank to a whisper.



Strangely elated, I felt that I could fly, even without wings

"Orville, will you take me flying?"

"What???!?"

"*Orville, will you take me flying?*" I almost yelled. "Please?"

"Why would you want to fly? Don't you know how dangerous it is?"

I nodded. It was too complicated to explain. I had been there when the *Flyer* was still in kite stage. I had flown its ancestor, for that matter. Now, more than anything else, I just had to see it through. I had to fly. I thought of my family. Papa would snort, Mama would sigh, Amelia would sneer, the little ones would giggle. "Give up, Ben." *No!* I shouted to myself. I'm not giving up.

"I have to see it through," I told Orville brazenly. "I want to fly."

Orville, weakening, said, "Now, you understand this is not a pleasure ride . . ."

I nodded.

" . . . and it's not because it's your birthday either. It's because you believed. You cared about flying. It wasn't just a big joke to you. You're right, you do deserve to fly. Wilbur's having a go, then I'll get another turn. You can come with me then, all right?"

I could hardly believe it. "Oh, Orville!" I shouted, giving him a big bear hug. "Thank you."

SOME MINUTES LATER, I stood next to Orville. "You still want to do this?" he asked, looking down. I nodded wordlessly. Just moments before, Wilbur had made the second successful flight. My heart was beating wildly as Orville and I walked

over to the *Flyer*. I hardly noticed climbing aboard. Orville started the motor.

Just then, a man from the lifesaving station began running and shouting and waving his arms. "Get that kid down from there!" he yelled above the roar of the engine. "What will happen if you crash?"

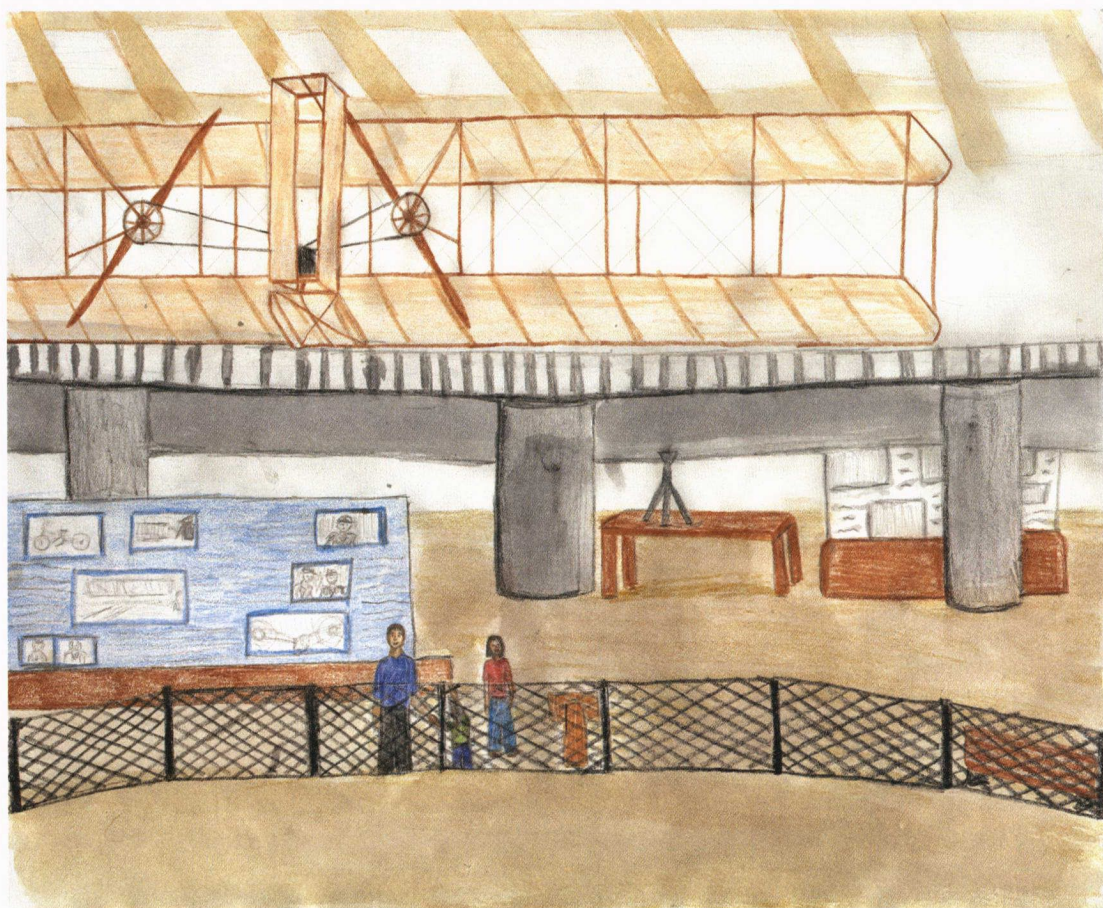
Wilbur was running too. "What's gotten into you, Orv?" he asked. Orville was flat on his stomach. I was on his back, as flat as one can get.

"Help me get this thing started!" he called.

Wilbur stopped, one hand on the wing. "But the boy?"

Orville grinned. "Hurry up, before the engine dies out!"

Wilbur and the lifesaving man reluctantly grabbed a wing and began to run. I smiled. Good old Orville. The craft slowly began to move, and it shot down the starting track as they released it. Then, ever so slowly, it ascended into the air. It didn't go very fast or high, but I didn't care. The freezing wind cut into my face, reassuring me that I really was flying! I saw a seagull cry out and flap his wings as he flew home. We were actually flying! Flying . . . I once again was joyously happy, wishing the moment would never end. A thrill of joy shot through me. I was so completely satisfied that I didn't even seem to realize that the exalting flight was coming to an end. As I climbed down from the *Flyer*, I looked into Orville's eyes. "Thank you," I said, but in those two words I included all my immense gratitude. "I knew you could do it." Then, I turned and ran home.



Such a small plane brought back so many memories

MANY YEARS LATER

“LOOK, GRANDPA!” cried Wil, pointing at the aircraft dangling from the ceiling of the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum. “That’s the ackcherul airplane that the Wright brothers flew in!” My grandson, as usual, was showing off his first-grade knowledge. I looked up. There I saw the *Flyer*, aged like myself, up in the air once again. Such a small plane brought back so many memories. “Grandma?”

asked Wil. “Why is Grandpa crying?”

My wife turned to me. “Maybe it’s best we go now, dear,” she said.

As I walked into the bright sunshine, I noticed an airplane, like a giant silver bird, gracefully climbing into the clouds, and I paused to think. I had seen many memorials to my dear friends, but I realized that I had just witnessed their greatest legacy. How happy they would be if they could see it all today, I thought. Then, smiling, I added to myself, Perhaps they can! ❀



"That sounded very nice," Gabriella said. "I really liked it"

Friendship

By **Sophia Pellegrino**

Illustrated by **Marci Lessman**

ON A COOL, fall afternoon a young girl ran home from school. She pushed her straight, brown hair out of her eyes as she neared her house. She could not wait to tell her parents the exciting news.

"Mom! Mom!" The girl burst through the kitchen door. Her mother looked up from peeling potatoes for their dinner.

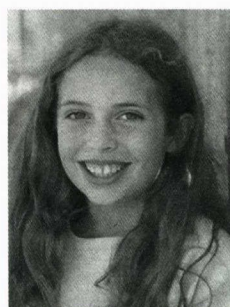
"What is it, Carmen?" she asked.

"Mom, I was accepted! I'm going to audition!"

"Audition for what?"

"There is going to be one student that is chosen to play a solo in front of the whole school and also the parents. All the other children will accompany the soloist in the orchestra. But we have to audition first. The audition will be held on Friday. Then our orchestra teacher, Mrs. Newton, will pick the child to play the solo. I don't know who I am competing against, though." Carmen's eyes shone. She was so glad that she knew how to play the violin. Ever since she was very young, Carmen loved the music of the violin, so her parents encouraged her to play. They had signed her up with an exceptionally good professional violinist, who gave Carmen lessons. Working hard, Carmen established a good rapport with her private lesson teacher, as well as her school orchestra teacher. Carmen's parents were able to help her practice because they both played the piano very well. So, in this way, at eleven years old, Carmen was considered a very accomplished musician for her age.

"What are you playing for the audition, Carmen?" Her moth-



Sophia Pellegrino, 11
Randolph, Vermont



Marci Lessman, 13
Faribault, Minnesota

er's voice broke through her daydreams.

"Oh!" Carmen came back to earth. "I am playing the *Vivaldi Concerto in A minor*."

"The whole thing?" Carmen's mother looked shocked. "That's a very long piece you are taking on Carmen! Are you sure?"

"Mom, I've been practicing the concerto for four months. I have almost fully mastered the last movement. The concert is two weeks away from now! I'm sure if I practice, then I will be ready in time for the audition."

Her mother sighed. "All right. If you say so," she replied. "Good luck!"

That night, after supper, Carmen studied her reflection in the mirror in her room. She did not think much of her appearance. It had been the same since third grade. Carmen had short, straight, rather stringy brown hair. She was sort of skinny, and shorter than most of the kids in her class. Oh, how Carmen wished that she looked like Gabriella, the new girl in her class.

Gabriella had long, curly, golden hair. She had quickly become the most popular girl in the class. Gabriella chose her friends very carefully. Carmen was not one of them. Sometimes Carmen saw Gabriella looking at her. It was almost as if she wanted to talk to Carmen. But every time Carmen had tried to smile, talk, or be friendly, Gabriella acted as if Carmen were not even there. Every time Carmen tried to start a conversation, Gabriella would turn away and start talking to her other friends, girls like her, who only

thought about themselves and how they looked. So, Carmen had long since given up trying to be friends with Gabriella.

For the rest of the week, Carmen practiced and practiced. She thought that perfecting the piece would help her feel better about performing. Instead, the more she played the concerto, the more nervous Carmen got. Again and again she told herself that it would be OK if she was not chosen to be the soloist. It did not help her one little bit! She, Carmen, wanted to be the one on stage on the night of the concert.

AT THE END of the first week, Friday morning, Carmen woke up early. This was the morning that she had been waiting for: the morning of the school audition. Carmen would also learn who she was competing against and what they were playing. Her heart thudding nervously in her chest, and with butterflies fluttering wildly in her stomach, Carmen got in the car after breakfast and her mother drove her to school. Her father worked on weekdays.

As soon as her mother had kissed her goodbye and driven away, Carmen went straight into the big assembly room in the school building, where the concert and audition were going to take place. Carmen took her violin carefully out of its case. She tuned it to the baby grand piano. The piano had a wonderful, ringing tone to it, and Carmen could not help but set down her violin in its case, sit down on the piano bench, and play a sonatina. Her

mother and father had also taught her to play the piano. Knowing that she was very early, Carmen kept playing.

Suddenly, the door behind Carmen opened. Startled, Carmen stopped playing and whirled around on the piano bench. Gabriella was standing there. To Carmen's immense surprise, Gabriella gave Carmen a small smile. It was so small that Carmen could hardly see it, but it was still there, and it was still a small, but unmistakable smile.

"That sounded very nice," Gabriella said. "I really liked it. Do you think you could play it again?" Carmen felt so surprised that the girl she had tried so hard to be friends with, the girl who had always acted as if she were not there, was finally being nice to her. She immediately sat back down on the piano bench to play it again, when two very popular and not very nice girls came in. They both rushed over to Gabriella.

"Gabby, we've been waiting and waiting for you," one of the girls complained.

"Where've you been? And what are you doing with *her*?" the second girl said rudely, pointing at Carmen.

Without another glance at Carmen, Gabriella stalked out of the room. Carmen was almost in tears. Just when she had a perfect chance of becoming friends with Gabriella, two other girls had to come in to ruin it, completely ruin it! Carmen also felt mad at Gabriella for just walking off like that. Couldn't Gabriella have stayed, even if the other girls left? Carmen thought that Gabriella and her friends had taken this as another opportunity just to be mean and

to hurt her feelings. She knew from past experience that Gabriella's friends would do that sort of thing. She had hoped that when Gabriella joined the class she could be her friend. Now she thought that Gabriella was that way too.

"Oh well," Carmen sighed, "she will not fool me again!"

Carmen rosined her bow and decided to practice. She had gotten halfway through the first movement of the concerto when the door opened for the third time that morning. Carmen's orchestra teacher, Mrs. Newton, walked into the room. Mrs. Newton, the teacher of the Advanced Orchestra, had arranged for the audition to be held, and had also set up the time for the concert. She greeted Carmen just as three more students came in. After a half-hour had passed, the advanced orchestra class was still waiting for one more person to arrive for the audition. Finally, the door opened and Gabriella walked into the room. Carmen's heart sank when she saw Gabriella stalk into the room with her dazzling smile plastered to her face. She took her shining cello out of its case and took her place between the same two girls who had come into the room earlier.

As the first three people played, Carmen began to feel more and more nervous. Then Gabriella's turn came. Gabriella played beautifully. Her cello seemed to sing as her bow flew across the strings of the shining instrument. In spite of the way she felt, Carmen could not help but admire Gabriella. Then a twinge of doubt crept into her heart. Gabriella was good. Very

good. And it would be very, very hard to do better. Again Carmen told herself that life was not all about winning, that it would not matter if she got to play the solo or not. But in her heart, Carmen knew that it did matter to her. It mattered a lot!

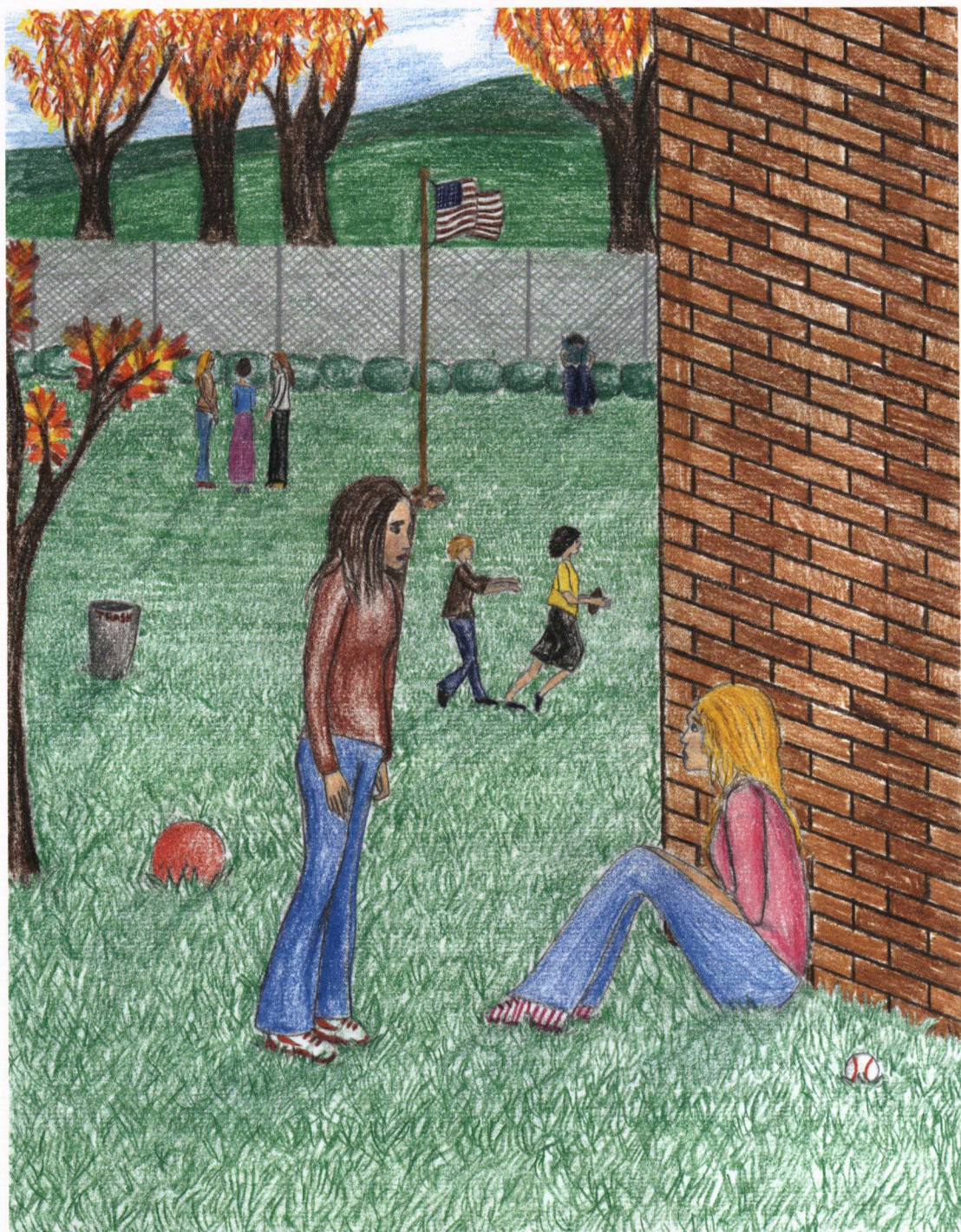
The next five people played, and then it was Carmen's turn. Nervously, Carmen walked onto the stage. She got her violin into the right position under her chin and got her bow on the starting string, placing her finger on the starting note. The teacher motioned for Carmen to begin. Almost at once, Carmen's nervousness vanished and she floated away on the lovely music that poured from her violin. It was as if the violin were singing for joy. Each note vibrated for a moment on the string before it floated away into the air. As Carmen started the third movement, the notes grew faster. Coming up in the piece was a series of notes that Carmen almost always had trouble playing. As the series of notes drew nearer, Carmen became nervous once again. When she practiced, she normally slowed down at this point so she would not play it the wrong way. Now, Carmen could not slow down. She had to keep on playing the same fast pace as before. So when the hard part came, Carmen just played it as well as she knew how. To Carmen's surprise, she played it perfectly! She felt much happier now. Besides, the piece was almost over. Finally, after what seemed years to Carmen, her bow played the last, sweet vibrating notes. The piece was over. Carmen took her place, hardly aware that Mrs. Newton had said,

"Carmen, that was absolutely beautiful!"

Five more children played their pieces. Then Mrs. Newton walked out of the room. A few minutes later she came back. Mr. Springley, Carmen's class teacher, was with her. The advanced orchestra realized the audition was over. The time had come for Mrs. Newton to decide who the soloist would be. Everyone waited anxiously. Carmen saw Gabriella standing up in her row, straining her ears to see what Mr. Springley and Mrs. Newton were saying to each other, and Carmen realized that Gabriella wanted the solo part as much as she did.

Mrs. Newton stepped forward. "Our soloist is . . ." she paused dramatically, "Carmen Valeford!" Carmen's heart leapt inside of her. She just could not believe it! That was why Mr. Springley was here. As if in a dream, Carmen slowly walked off the stage and over to Mrs. Newton, who shook Carmen's hand. So did Mr. Springley. Carmen was so happy that she hardly noticed any of this. Then she walked back onto the stage and took her seat. The stage was very big, so the whole advanced orchestra could sit on it. Then Mrs. Newton announced that Gabriella would be the lead cellist, a boy named Mike Gettling would be the lead violinist, and a boy named Christopher Stransburg would be the lead violist when the orchestra accompanied Carmen on the night of the concert. Mrs. Newton then spoke to Carmen.

"The concerto is very beautiful, Carmen, but I am afraid that on the night of the concert you will not be able to



In spite of the way she felt about Gabriella, Carmen could not help but feel sorry for her

play all three movements. It is a little too long."

"All right," Carmen said. She did not mind at all. She told Mrs. Newton that she would play the first movement. Then she put her violin away and went to class. She did not notice Gabriella burst into tears and run from the room.

That day at recess, Carmen heard a noise from behind the school building. Curious, Carmen went to look. What she saw was Gabriella, sitting on the dirt ground behind the school, crying. Carmen wondered why. Surely it could not be because she had not been chosen to play the solo in the concert. Or was it? Then Carmen remembered the look on Gabriella's face, right before Mrs. Newton had called her own name, that eager, excited, and somewhat nervous look that Carmen knew had been on her own face as well. Carmen also remembered thinking that Gabriella wanted to play the solo just as much as she did.

Gabriella looked up and saw Carmen standing there. "Go away!" she said fiercely.

"What's wrong?" Carmen asked, ignoring what Gabriella had said. In spite of the way she felt about Gabriella, Carmen could not help but feel sorry for her.

Then Gabriella spoke. "I wanted the solo part so badly, but you got it instead! Also, I have always wanted to be friends with you, but I just was not able to tell the other girls that. To impress them, I acted the way I did towards you. I'm re-

ally sorry."

Carmen felt shocked. "That's OK," she said to Gabriella. "I thought that the piece you played was absolutely beautiful! I have always wanted to be friends with you anyway."

"Really?" Gabriella smiled at Carmen, a warm, full, real smile. Then she got up. "Let's be friends!" she said. Carmen smiled at her and readily agreed.

ONE WEEK LATER, Carmen and her parents drove to school on Friday night. It was the night of the concert and Carmen was both excited and nervous at the same time. Once inside the school, Carmen saw Gabriella running towards her. She looked unhappy. Gabriella told Carmen that she still badly wanted to play the solo. Carmen tried to make her friend feel better, but it was of no use. By now, Gabriella was almost in tears. Then Carmen noticed something. Leading Gabriella to the notice board, she pointed to the announcement that showed that two of the five cellists were sick and not coming to the performance. "I'm really depending upon you," she told Gabriella. At that, Gabriella smiled, and the two girls walked over to the assembly room to get out their instruments.

The concert was a huge success. That night Carmen went home feeling very happy. The concert had given her the chance to do what she loved to do most, and also the chance to make a new friend.

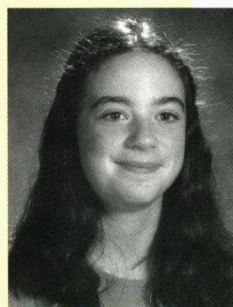


Haven

By Misha Kydd

Soft, quiet, a blanket of books,
Turn left, left again, up the stairs,
Feet finding the usual route.
Passing comrades, enclosed in words,
To the end of the row, near the window,
The chair, my haven,
Of books.

I don't notice when it grows dark,
Outside,
I don't look up from the knights,
And dragons, and swords, and horses.
The problems in this world are easier,
To face than the ones in
Mine.

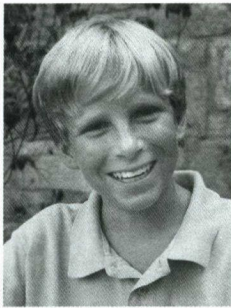


Misha Kydd, 12
Jericho, Vermont

Roaring Regret

By Michael Scognamiglio

Illustrated by Zachary Meyer



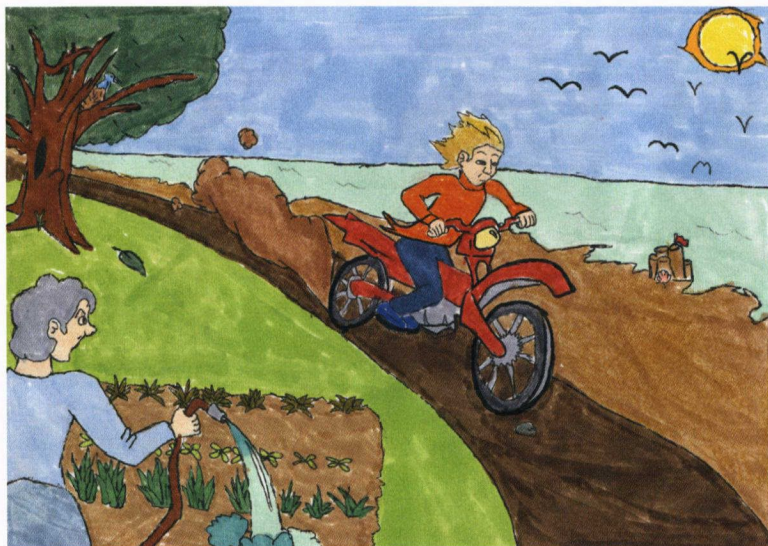
Michael Scognamiglio, 13
Saddle River, New Jersey



Zachary Meyer, 10
Shelby Township, Michigan

SOMEONE'S TRUST can take years to gain, but only seconds to lose. Revving the motor of my best friend's dirt bike always gave me a thrill. Yet, nothing could compare to the feeling of zooming down the back roads by my beach house on a warm, summer day. As I switched gears from first to second, I glanced at an old woman giving me a cryptic stare. I saw her shake her head as if to say this was not safe, which only enticed me to go faster. I shifted to third gear and sped past her garden. I did not care about her opinion, for at that moment, going thirty miles per hour, I was the king of the world. The warm wind whipped through my hair while my shirttail flapped furiously in the breeze. Little toddlers venturing to the beach gazed at me in awe. Nothing could bring me down on that day . . . except for a small strip of gravel on the side of the road.

My head was up in the clouds so I failed to notice the sliver of sand and pebbles ahead. I plummeted down quickly from Cloud Nine, however, when I flew through the dusty air and onto the hard pavement. I heard my friend stop his bike short, dismount, and rush towards me. Wanting to look cool in front of my fourteen-year-old friend, I stood up, brushed myself off, and forced a smile. He gasped as he pointed toward my arm. Suddenly I felt a flash of pain travel up my arm. I stared in disbelief at the blood dripping onto the bike from the dirty gash in my left arm. Gravel was jammed under the flesh of my palm, and my hip and legs were badly scraped. Holding in my tears of agony, I slowly drove back to my house and said I'd call him after I got cleaned



At that moment I was the king of the world

up. After he drove around the corner, I sprinted through the front door and screamed for my mom.

To be honest, I had never told her that I was riding this motorized vehicle. So, when she questioned me, I simply told her I had fallen off my bike. She took me down to the ocean and carefully washed off my scrapes and cleaned the gravel out of my hand. The salt stung my open wounds. When she had finished, I limped over to my friend's house. I was feeling terrible, not just because of my injuries, but because I felt guilty. My mother had recited over and over how dangerous dirt bikes were and that I was never to ride them. The thrill of the ride clouded my judgment, and I did not heed her warnings.

Later that evening, we all went out to dinner. My sister had been with my dad in town during the day and was unaware

of my injuries. So, when I was scooping up my lobster ravioli she noticed the cuts on my arm. She questioned me about the cuts and my mom replied that I fell off my bike. She misunderstood and thought my mom had said dirt bike so she blurted, "You fell off the dirt bike! Aha! Jesse said that thing was extremely safe!"

My dad chimed in with, "How did you fall? You looked like you were great at riding it when I saw you!"

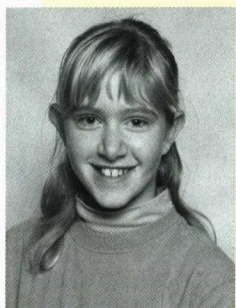
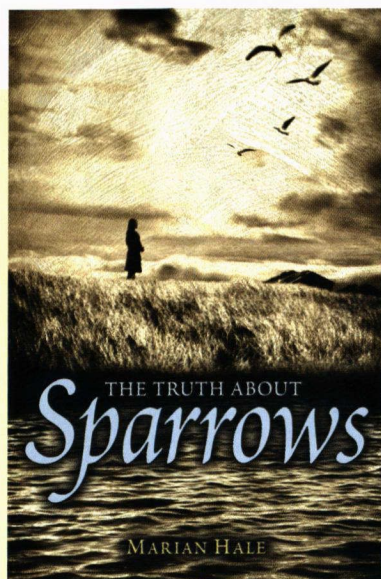
My mom glared at me.

Watching my mom's face, realizing that she had been misled, was sheer agony. Her words, "I see you conveniently neglected to tell me the whole story," felt like daggers in my heart. Suddenly, as I looked at her face, I realized that trust was a very fragile thing. Her eyes clearly told me that I had lost her trust. I always knew she would forgive me, but I still regret hurting her because of my need for speed. ❁

Book Review

By Julia Worcester

The Truth About Sparrows, by Marian Hale;
Henry Holt and Company: New York,
2004; \$16.95



Julia Worcester, 10
Bronx, New York

THE TRUTH ABOUT SPARROWS takes you right back into the Great Depression. From the minute you open the book, all of Sadie Wynn's burdens will be yours. From the very beginning: having to give up a home, the only home you've known all your life. Sadie has to deal with it all. The Wynns have to leave their wonderful farm in Missouri to go to Texas. On the way, they meet a girl, Dollie, and her family. Dollie becomes Sadie's friend throughout the story. But to be true to Dollie, Sadie will have to let go of someone from the past: Wilma.

Wilma is Sadie's best friend back in Missouri. As you read the book, you discover what Sadie discovers: that even if you trust your friends so much, they could still dump you. I've had some experiences like that, including when a friend and I had too many play dates and always got annoyed at each other. Now we're friends again. But even though Wilma promises to, she never writes to Sadie. Sadie sends her three letters and doesn't hear back. Sadie thinks at one point, "Wilma could be anywhere. But mostly, she was gone."

In my favorite part of the story it's Halloween night and Sadie and some friends tell ghost stories. The book really comes alive,

like a personal experience. I've spent time making up funny stories with friends and it sure is a lot of fun. Sadie tells a story about Wilma's brother who heard and even felt a ghost. I enjoyed that scene a lot.

I guess you're wondering why this book has its name. One day, a man comes by a tent the Wynns are living in. He asks if they'll give him something to eat, and Sadie's mama obliges. The next day, Sadie is mad and looks for a place to be alone. She startles a sparrow who flies to another perch. Then Sadie is startled by a movement in a cardboard box. She moves closer and sees that it's the man her mother fed the day before. From then on she calls him Mr. Sparrow. I studied sparrows in first grade. They're the sweetest, most ordinary birds. Perhaps that sweetness and ordinariness is the truth about sparrows, and the truth about the man whose life is so hard he lives in a box.

There is a lot of talk about poverty in the book. Sadie overhears a conversation between a boy and his dad that really stayed with me. The dad describes "... kids sleeping in the cold under Hoover blankets and scouring the dumps for food." "What's a Hoover blanket, Papa?" "A newspaper, son. Just a newspaper." This book taught me a lot of history. Hoover was a man who was President during part of the Depression.

This is what I saw when I traveled to India. Poverty. India is filled with it. "Too many people and not enough jobs," is another line from the book. Whenever you stop at a red light in Mumbai, kids will come to your car, trying to sell you something. Elderly men will ask you for money. The Depression did that to people, too.

This story will make you brood even after the last page is read. It has something to offer to everybody. History, friendship, and the real preciousness of life. I recommend this book to everybody who reads this review!





"Hi Shannon, are you hungry?"

Shannon

By Makayla Hentges

Illustrated by Emily Rappleye

SHANNON LIFTED HER HEAD and howled into the empty black sky. It was a sad, mournful song, shattering the cold silence.

Slowly the old wolf dipped her muzzle to her toes in a sort of bow. Her graying white coat bristled slightly in the chilly breeze. Snow surrounded her, looking like a big, beautiful quilt of cotton. Only her soft paw prints disturbed it.

She howled again. It echoed off of the nearby mountains, but again, there was no reply.

Shannon stood up and shook herself of the snow, which sprayed everywhere. Then she walked over to the trees, her paws sweeping lightly over the snow. She stopped and listened, but heard nothing.

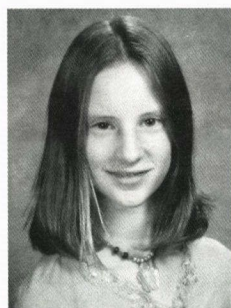
The great, snow-topped trees loomed above her, as though taunting her, but she just walked on. She heard crackling in the bush next to her and flinched. Then she broke out into a fast-moving trot.

She trotted through the big cluster of tall trees, pausing once in a while to sniff around.

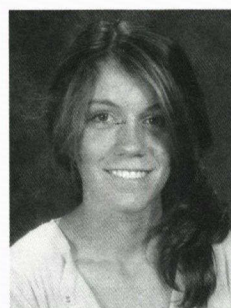
Finally she came to a small clearing. A small, wooden cabin lay nestled tightly in the deep snow; the tiny windows leaked long, eerie shadows onto the tree trunks nearby.

The door of the cabin swung open to reveal a young woman with curly, chestnut-red hair, and a big moose-skin coat. She walked out and shut the door quietly behind her.

Shannon paused for a second before coming out of the trees



Makayla Hentges, 12
Langley, British Columbia,
Canada



Emily Rappleye, 13
Barrington, Illinois

to greet the woman. Her brilliant green eyes darted around.

"Hi Shannon, are you hungry?" The woman smiled and pulled out a small can of dog food, which Shannon eyed. The woman laughed. Then, with her mitten, she dug a shallow hole and dumped the contents of the can into it.

"Eat," she commanded, and gave Shannon one more pat before turning back to the cabin. Shannon dipped her head and started to eat.

Once she was finished, Shannon walked back into the trees and pawed the snow, checking how soft it was. Then she lay down, tucked her nose under her tail, and with a sigh, closed her eyes. Instantly, she was asleep.

SHANNON WAS AWAKENED by the barking of some young, energetic dogs. Heaving herself to her feet, Shannon yawned. Then she trotted back to the same clearing as the night before, taking great, sweeping strides. She knew exactly what was going on, and she did *not* want to miss it.

WHEN SHANNON reached the small clearing, she was met by the woman who had fed her the night before. In the woman's hand was a dog-mushing harness.

"Shannon, do you want to go for a trail run?" the woman asked kindly. Shannon wagged her tail before dropping her head so that she could be harnessed.

Just as the woman was finishing up with

Shannon a short and rather stocky man stepped out of the cabin. His eyes focused on Shannon right away.

"Smart dog ye got there Kayla," he said, his blue eyes twinkling merrily.

"She isn't a dog, John, she's a wolf. Caught her myself, as a pup, I did. But yeah, she's very smart and tame all right." Kayla hooked Shannon up to the rest of the team, and snapping the last piece into place, waved at the man.

"I'll be back before dark; you can count on that. I'm an experienced musher of course. Well, bye." Kayla waved at the man. Then she bent over to make sure everything was packed, just in case. Shannon tossed her head restlessly. She loved trail runs, as long as getting ready didn't take too long.

Most of the dogs in harness were just getting exercised, and knew the trail well. Only one dog didn't. Roxy was a dark gray husky with a pure white mask on her face. She was fairly young, new to the trail, a little bit skittish, and was extremely afraid of thunder and lightning.

This was who Shannon was placed beside. She was not extremely fond of the idea of running with a pup, and was ready to teach Roxy that, except Kayla called upon them to go.

Shannon trotted along, enjoying the beautiful scenery. The trees that had loomed so high above her the night before, now seemed welcoming. The snow now sparkled as the strong, early morning sun shone down upon it, creating a dazzling sight.

Shannon wished her partner, Mendae, could see it. Like her, Mendae was a wolf, caught and tamed by Kayla. She was, like most wolves, gray. But unlike most wolves, she had one blue eye, and one green.

Recently, Mendae had taken a bad fall and broke her paw. The vet said she would never walk again, but she proved him wrong. He said she would never be a good sled dog anymore, but Kayla hoped she could prove him wrong again, but so far she hadn't.

ROXY LEANED OVER and bit Shannon's ear playfully. Shannon gave a warning growl and bared her gleaming, white teeth. Roxy whined.

"Shannon, Roxy, break it up! You guys are supposed to get along!" Kayla jiggled the sled ropes, trying to catch the team's attention. The dogs threw all of their weight into the chest pad of the harness. The sled creaked as it slowly started to move. It bounced along the trail, hitting many bumps as it gathered speed.

Roxy began to bark excitedly as the dogs fell into an easy rhythm. Shannon just pushed harder into her chest pad, her paws turning up small clouds of snow. It seemed as though she was trying to get away from the pup, even though she knew perfectly that she couldn't.

"Keep going! You guys are doing great! Go!" Kayla called, trying to encourage the team into going faster. A gust of wind blew softly, tossing Kayla's long red hair this way and that.

The team trotted on, through the

winding trail that seemed almost endless. Soon the wind started to pick up, howling as it galloped throughout the trees. Roxy bolted, dragging Shannon and the team with her.

Off they went, racing at top speed across the snow as Kayla fought frantically to get them under control. Shannon tried to slow them by hanging back and dragging her feet, but the team was too powerful, and their speed too great, to make a difference.

They whipped around a corner and came to a fork in the trail, where they slowed ever so slightly, before the lead dog jerked right. A bolt of lightning split the sky, and a loud clap of thunder soon followed. Roxy went even faster, her heart hammering in her chest.

THE DOGS SOON reached a big, frozen lake, which they had to either cross or go back. Immediately Shannon put on the brakes. She was not going over it. She thrust her head up and sat down. The dogs tried to pull her, but they couldn't, they were just too tired. They finally stopped, a confused look on each of their furry faces. Kayla jumped off the sled and unhooked a trembling Roxy. She dragged her over to the sled where she lifted the dog up and in. She strapped her in tightly, then turned to Shannon.

"You wanna lead girl? 'Cause you don't have a partner." Kayla looked at Shannon, who wagged her tail. Since Shannon had been a lead dog when she was younger, Kayla thought it a good idea. So she

shuffled the team until they were prepared to move again.

"Lead the way Shannon," was all Kayla said.

Shannon gave a mighty thrust with her hind legs, pulling the other dogs into action. The sled began to move slowly over the ice, which groaned under the weight. Shannon stopped uncertainly, and sniffed the air.

"Go on, it's OK."

Shannon stepped gingerly back onto the ice. She tried to step lightly, but the groaning continued.

Suddenly an ear-splitting roar shattered the almost silent air. The ice had collapsed and sunk into the freezing cold water beneath.

A scream slashed the air, making Shannon cringe. She looked back in time to see the sled tip towards the gaping hole. Kayla tumbled into the water, a wave of water crashed up against the edge of the hole. Shannon watched in fright, her heart racing. She bent over and gnawed on her harness cord. But there was no progress, so she barked at the dog behind her to help. With both dogs chewing on the harness cord, it snapped in no time.

Shannon, wasting no time, plunged into the icy water. The cold gripped her like cold claws, ripping at her flesh. She swam over to Kayla, who was starting to fall unconscious, and bit into the soft, moose-skin coat that covered her. Kayla's red hair fanned out around her in the water as she started to sink. As Shannon dragged her closer to the edge of the hole, Roxy

too broke free of the harness and into the water. But being a pup, she did not know how to swim and sank quickly. Shannon tried furiously to catch the attention of the dogs by barking, but it was muffled by the coat. Luckily Keenia heard her and started to chew on his harness cord. Soon he was free and dashed towards Shannon. He grabbed part of the coat and started to pull, but he found that she was too heavy, and called for another dog to help. Nanook took up the challenge, and puffed out his chest. Then he too grabbed hold of the jacket, and together they dragged Kayla up onto the safety of the sled. Kayla shivered, then was still, only her chest moved as she breathed. Then her eyelids flickered.

"Shannon . . . where's Shannon? And . . . Roxy? Where . . ." Kayla's head dropped and her eyes rolled. The dogs tried to get close to her so that they could keep her warm.

Shannon splashed over to Roxy, who had sunk, her head ducked under the water. Shannon took a deep breath and dived down to meet Roxy, who was floating in and out of consciousness. Shannon bit down into Roxy's neck and dragged her upwards. Roxy started to move, her legs fighting to get her to oxygen, which she was almost out of. Shannon too, was running out of air, and tried frantically to get Roxy and herself up, but then her muscles froze, and wouldn't move. She let go of Roxy and began her descent down to the bottom of the lake, never to be found.

Only Roxy emerged when the surface of the water broke. She scrambled up onto

the ice. One of the dogs managed to break away from Kayla and the harness. He gave two quick barks and darted away and into the great forest of trees.

THE DOGS LAY huddled against Kayla quietly until the dog came back, and with him was a man who all of the dogs knew and loved. It was Brendan, Kayla's husband. He ran as fast as possible, tears stained his face as he looked desperately at Kayla, willing that she be OK.

"Good dogs, that's it. OK, off now. Good dogs." Brendan looked Kayla over. She was stone cold, but still alive. Without the dogs' help, she would have died.

Brendan saw Roxy, who was looking like a drowned rat, and sighed.

"Did you save Kayla? Good girl Roxy! Good girl!" He stroked her.

"No, Shannon . . . Shannon did . . ."

Brendan spun around. Kayla was trying to keep conscious and was watching him.

"Is she . . . dead? Where is she?"

Brendan sighed. "I don't know sweetie, but we have to get you home, and fast." He bent over and picked her up.

"Come," he commanded the dogs. Then they walked together into the trees.

ONCE THEY GOT to the cabin, Brendan immediately took care of Kayla. He ran a warm bath for her.

"I'll go and feed the dogs. Will you be OK by yourself? I mean, I won't take too long," he asked Kayla, frowning. Kayla nodded.

THAT NIGHT, a silvery mist hung in the air. Brendan called the dogs and dumped the food into their dishes. He looked sadly at Shannon's empty dish, and muttered, "You saved my baby, but I couldn't save you. I'm sorry."

The wind blew softly, and he looked up. There, outlined by the mist, stood Shannon, and the silver mist swirling about her paws. ❁



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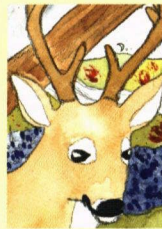
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