



THE ENPS

Young Writers' Competition
2024

WINNING ENTRIES

Theme:

BEING BRAVE, BOLD AND/OR CONNECTED





FOUNDATION

WINNERS



Lucy

By Lucy FLH

SUPER GIRL

One day a little girl named Luna
was the queen's daughter. The
queen's daughter saw a big fat
hairy monster. She went to the
wizard. The wizard made her
into a super hero. The monster
was turning off the lights.
Luna was a super hero she turned
on the lights. The End

Super Girl

one day a little girl named Luna was
the queen's daughter. The queen's daughter
said "uhhh!" because she saw a big fat
hairy monster. She went to the wizard.
The wizard made her into a super hero.
The monster was scaring the kids.
The monster was turning off the lights.
Luna was a super hero, she turned on
the lights. The End



Aria



I was unsure.



I was scared.



I felt brave.



I said, "Next pole"



I'm happy.

Tanishq

A bird who was afraid of flying. Once upon a time there was a bird who lived on a very high tree and could not fly. She was afraid of heights. One day her parents went to get some food and did not come back. The little bird panicked. She closed her eyes and decided to take a flight. Her heart was racing. She counted up to 3. She jumped down the tree and off she goes...!! She could not believe she was flying!! She saw her parents next to the pond. She flew down to her parents and hugged them tight. Her parents were so proud of their little birdy.

The END





YEAR ONE
WINNERS



Heath

WALTER THE BRAVE WHALE

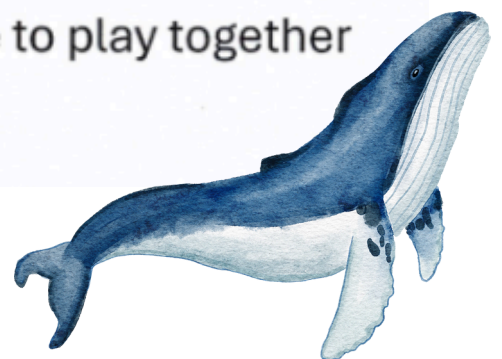
Once there lived a whale in the sea. His name was Walter and he was very friendly. He was friends with all the fish and they would play together on the weekends.

One day a net suddenly came into the ocean and scooped up all the fish. Walter was terrified when he saw all his friends being taken away. Walter decided to be brave and try to save all his friends so he jumped out of the water onto the boat.

The fishermen had tipped all the fish out of the net and onto the deck of the boat. When Walter jumped onto the boat the boat broke and sank to the bottom of the sea. All the fish splashed into the ocean and were saved. The fish were excited that they were all still alive.

“Thank you Walter for being brave and saving us!” said all the fish.

Walter was happy that all his friends were alive and safe and that they would still be able to play together on the weekends.



Ruby

Milli's a
scared cat
exploring
backyard.



Milli the
scared cat.



Running away,
back inside make
her
brave, feel



milli is my
cat at home



Anlo

Dougal the Duck



Dougal the Duck was sitting in his warm cosy egg. He was scared to hatch out. He didn't know what was on the other side. Time came to break out and anyway he was getting too big

for his egg. Dougal opened his eyes and he saw the big big world and he had brothers and sisters. Dougal was so scared anymore.



YEAR TWO

WINNERS



Grace

Simone jumped onto
the bars she was
pumped. The crowds
were chanting,
she scored TEN!



Imogen

On one dark spooky Halloween night, the full moon was up. I was in my bed, dreaming of lollies. It was quite fun going around asking trick-or-treat that evening. Little did I know that Halloween is the year when the spirits rise up from the horizon to haunt the living. Suddenly... I felt a boney hand scratch my arm. I woke up, no one there... so I turned on the light and opened my closet to see a big black, grey figure.

I screamed and ran into the woods to see a run-down cabin. Suddenly I heard a wolf howl then... Piff! The cabin disappeared and out of the dust I saw him. A cloaked wizard named Hareld.

I ran as fast as I could despite all the skeletons, monsters, witches and other things like ghosts.

Finally, the night was over and everything had gone away. Then my mum asked me "How did you sleep?" I didn't know how to answer back so I just said "I don't know."



Charli

THE BRAVE SEAHORSES



Written and Illustrated by:

Charli



Under the sea lives incredible animals, stingrays, jellyfish, fish and an octopus. But there are two seahorses who are best friends, Snowy and Sparkles. Snowy is called Snowy because she is white and has blue eyelashes and Sparkles is called Sparkles because she shines in the dark. They are both kind and helpful in their heart. They had just been to Jelly's birthday party. She is a kind Jellyfish. After they went to the birthday party they had pancakes with maple syrup and berries for breakfast. Then they decided that they would play hide and seek in the long rainbow seaweed. They went over to the long rainbow seaweed. The colours on the rainbow seaweed were beautiful there was Peach, Violet and more colours than you could imagine. Then Sparkles started counting. 1,2,3 "ready or not here I come.". Snowy went to hide in the long Rainbow seaweed, it would take Sparkles a long time to find her because there were so many colours in the long rainbow seaweed and Snowy would blend in. Snowy was hiding for a long time and started to get worried. Then Sparkles said Snowy where are you I can't find you. Oh no they thought they would never find each other again they were so worried. Then 5 minutes later Snowy saw something shining. She thought it was Sparkles but when she got over there it was just some crystals. Then Snowy saw a cave and Sparkles saw a cave too, but they didn't realise that they saw the same cave. They were so brave going into the scary cave. They both went in the cave, Sparkles came the back way and Snowy came the front way. They both went in the cave it was soooooo scary. It had dead bones from a shark and other fish. It had spikey bits and if you went near them you could die from them. Also it was very dark but it had some crystals in it so it had a little bit of light in it. Snowy saw something shining she got excited because she thought it was Snowy but it was just some more crystals again. 3 minutes later in the cave, bump "Snowy" "Sparkles" "I missed you so much" said Snowy. "Me too" said Sparkles. "Let's play hide and seek but somewhere else said Sparkles. Snowy said I know where we can play. We can play where we went for Jelly's birthday party at the sea anemones and where we can bounce all day. Yeah said Sparkles and lets play with our friends, Jelly, Kyle the stingray and Trixie the funny Clownfish said Snowy. Later they found their friends and Sparkles started counting again Kyle, Jelly and Trixie and also Snowy went to hide. They all went to hide behind a big blue whale, called Big Blue, but then he swam away because he started chasing after his food. "1,2,3, ready or not here I come Found you". "Ahhhhhhh swim" they all screamed.



YEAR THREE
WINNERS



Wren

Matilda's Sword

The trees rustled, wolves howled
furiously. Matilda **LOVED**
adventures! She whipped out her trusty
sword.



Wren

Evie

Mermaid University

Splish! Splash! "Sweetie, your breakfast is getting cold". I could hear my mum calling me right as I was in the best dream of my life. I can't remember it all but I remember there was a letter covered in mermaid coloured scales with a shiny metallic shell sticker closing it.

The next thing I know I was sitting at the breakfast table eating my chocolate croissant. "Yum!" So I finished it and before you know it my Mum called me again telling me about a letter and I looked at it and it was exactly the same as the one in my dream so I opened it. Oh Yeah! I didn't

introduce myself "I'm Chloe, sorry about my mum". Today is my first day of boring, old, annoying Human University. Now, let's open this letter that mum is talking about.

5 minutes later... SQUEAL! "YES! I FINALLY GOT THROUGH!"

You're probably wondering about what I'm being so dramatic about. Well, I finally got through to Mermaid University!

I signed up when I was 4 years old and now I'm 18 years old. I need to tell mum. Mum! Mum! Where are you? Guess what! I got through to Mermaid University. Oh good for you, well it's best you start getting ready. Ok, Bye Mum, Love you!

6 hours later.... Finally I got there. Wow that's big....

So I stepped in through the BIG GOLDEN GATES. It was amazing, but then everyone started laughing at me. I don't know why, maybe because I was Human?

The Mermaids looked beautiful with their tails; gills and just everything was spectacular.

Evie (2)

There was this mermaid and I'm pretty sure she was the bully who made everyone else laugh at me. She kept on calling me names and I felt alone and embarrassed.

The worst thing ever happened. There was a poster and it said "A Televised One on One with ALL Mermaids Interview".

"OH NO! I CAN'T DO THAT, IM NOT A MERMAID!!!" The poster said tomorrow.

"So... I got a fake tail". Red and shimmery.

18 minutes later... "Ouch" this is a silly idea! Well my interview is in 2 minutes. Then it started. "So why did you come here?" "Because I'm a mermaid". "What's your favourite colour?" "Purple". "Well then why is your tail Red?". OK, Fine! I can't stand this fake tail!

"Oh My, Oh My" Yep! I'm a real human at Mermaid University. You're probably so mad for all those real mermaids that aren't here but why is there a rule that Mermaids can't come to Human University?

We're all the same. Mermaids are so kind, well most of them. So I'm saying that Mermaids can go to Human University and Humans can go to Mermaid University.

4 years later...

"Hey Guys, how do you like Human University". "It's the Best! I just had my AMAZING graduation and I'm getting a job, a Author so I can tell my story how I got through or I think I want to be a Artist so I can express my feelings with art or maybe a singer or a dancer there are so many options. I'll call you when I know what job I want.

THE END

Leander

The valley of the undead skeletons

It was a very sunny morning and Thomas and his older brother, Tom, were going to the mountains for a day trip to hike and look for different types of plants. After they gulped down their delicious breakfast, their father asked, "are you ready to go boys?"

"Ready!" the boys shouted and flew down the stairs and into the living room. They headed out the front door to their father's car.

"Let's go, boys!" their father called, and the boys hopped into the car. "So where is the place where you two want to go?"

"The Outback Mountains!" the boys replied, which is a place the two boys often go to on the holidays.

"A lot of people have trekked up the Outback Mountains before and have accomplished the hike up," dad said to the boys. When they arrived at their destination, the boys dashed off to look for different plants and leaves they could find to bring home to show their mum. While they were gone, their father made a large campfire so the boys could see where to go if they got lost.

Suddenly, Tom fell into a humongous valley! Tom screamed and then Thomas screamed because Tom screamed. "What's in there?" Thomas asked. Tom realised it was a large valley that was covered with sticks and leaves! "It's the home of 22 undead skeletons Thomas!" Thomas then got hit by a stick from behind. The stick smacked Thomas into the valley of undead skeletons. The skeletons attacked Tom and Thomas because the skeletons thought the boys were intruders. The two boys quickly gathered as many plants and leaves as their pockets could hold. "It's good that there are lots of plants here, Tom, because we came to look for plants and leaves." Thomas said to his older brother. They each grabbed a few of the sticks that had fallen on the ground when they had fallen in.

Though the boys were outnumbered, they managed to defeat the undead skeletons. They used the sticks to make a staircase to the top of the valley. When they got out, they figured out they had been trapped inside the valley for a few hours! The boys saw a trail of smoke in the distance and decided to follow the trail to the streak of smoke ahead with Thomas leading the way to go back to their dad.

They arrived at where they parked the car a few moments later. Their dad was waiting for them and worrying at the same time. On their way home, both boys told their dad what had happened from the beginning to the end. It was a very tiring and unexpected day for the two siblings, but they were lucky to have each other.



YEAR FOUR

WINNERS



Amelia

The adventure

"Ding Ding Ding" goes Amelia and Zadie's alarm. They pull their coats on meanwhile Sara calls from one of the other cabins to see if they are ready to sneak out. 10 minutes later they are at the back of all the girls' cabins. Then all of a sudden there is a massive gust of wind that comes and blows Sara's map out of her coat pocket. They gasp in shock "this map is our only way back" shrieks Zadie. "Without it we will be lost here for ages". Says Amelia as they start to chase the map. "Now we're lost, now we're lost" Zadie was saying repeatedly. The wind suddenly stops but as they approach it there is suddenly another massive gust of wind that blows the map into the forest. "Should we go in there?" Asks Sara. They nod and start chasing it once again. After 30 minutes they lose sight of the map. What they do find is a shack with 3 beds. so they decide to sleep there for the night. The next morning they wake up and start trying to find their way back. Suddenly they see a bright blue light coming from behind the trees. Suddenly they see a bright blue light coming from behind the trees. They knew that this was a portal. All the kids at camp talked about this. Some people believed it, some people didn't. "Should we go through" asked Sara. "Yes" said Amelia and "no" said zadie at the same time. "Why" ask Amelia and Sara. "Because we could be taken somewhere else". "So" they reply "were not scared". "Well i am" after several minutes of arguing zadie finally caves in. "Okay hold hands, we'll go in 3.2.1". Suddenly everything is a blur of blue and white. 10 seconds later they are at the edge of the forest. "Yessssssss" they scream together. After a few minutes of celebrating They say "we better get back to our cabins before Miss Thang comes to wake us up" "yes that's true". They start heading to their cabins. "Bye Sara"Zadie and Amelia say, then rush back. When they get back to their cabins. They jump into bed. 5 minutes later they are woken up to the ringing of bells and miss thang screaming "get up,get up, get up, it's time to get ready. You have 30 mins to get ready before breakfast". After Miss Thang leaves, everyone starts getting ready. Once everyone in their cabin is ready (Zadie, Amelia,Georgia and danni), they start heading to breakfast. After they sat at the table with Sara and their friends they started telling their friends about what happened. The girls ask "can we do that tonight with you"? "We are never doing that again"! The rest of breakfast is a massive conversation "if my parents find out they would be so mad" "i know right". "Same, I would be grounded forever.

Mia

Clovers Best Friend

By Mia.

The backyard was always full of wonder. The sun was so bright it hurt her eyes, but it was so warm and cosy. The green hedges were rustling against the wooden fence. Mirabell was always enjoying nature, but was scared of heights so she never went hiking in the mountains before. Mirabell started to walk along the stone path which led to a white cosy gazebo. But suddenly a purple swirl started to emerge near a tree.

"Umm what is that purple swirl?" Mirabell asked confused. She walked down the steps of the gazebo and walked into the purple swirl then...

"AAAHHHHH" Mirabell screeched and the swirl vanished.

She woke up under a tree and a sparkly green thing was right up into her face.

"Uhhhhh" Mirabell sighed, " where am I ?".

"Hi there!! My name is Clover. Nice to meet you!!!" Clover exclaimed. Mirabell was still droopy but Clover dragged her to a giant Mall with, a rock climbing wall, arcades and more! Mirabell woke up... Clover started to chat with her, explaining where she was and to be her friend. Mirabell was ok with being friends with a dragon... but not sure about where she was... But suddenly warm wind passed Clover, and Clover knew what that was immediately. A fire dragon called Blaze was Clover's enemy.

"What are you doing, you miserable creature you don't belong here!!" Blaze shouted as she got red in her cheeks. " H-h-hey don't speak I-I-like that to m-m-my friend!" Mirabell said, quivering.

" OH YEAH, then I will challenge you to a death match!!" Blaze shouted.

"Ok" said Mirabell bravely. Blaze led Clover and Mirabell to a Rock climbing area as high as 2, two stores houses stacked on top of each other. The aim of the game was Mirabell needed to climb at the top of the wall in 1 minute, otherwise Clover would never be able to live in dragon vill EVER AGAIN. The thought of heights made Mirabell feel dizzy and sick, but Clover was her best friend. She didn't want to let her Friend down. She put her harness on and looked right up at the finish.

Sweat and worry was surrounding her. One by one she climbed and not to look down at the floor.

" Are you scared, Mirabell" asked Blaze in a babyish voice. Mirabell ignored her, she had 6 more rocks to climb up. There were 10 seconds left!!!! 5 more, 2 more and... Buuuuuzzzzzz!!!!!!!

"I-I I done it!" Mirabell shouted. The harness lowered down and she let Clover have a big hug.

"That was amazing" exclaimed Clover.

"Well done" smirked Blaze. But Mirabell needed to go home now, she gave Clover another big hug.

"It was great meeting you, hope to see you soon" Said Mirabell.

"Bye, Mirabell" said Clover. The purple swirl came and then vanished.

Aayush

Hidden danger

Hannah was a young girl who loved playing video games . As the youngest in her family, everyone adored her, always giving her presents. Her older brother John always teased her and called her spoiled. But she didnt cared, she loved the attention.

Little did she know that one of those gifts would put her life in danger.

On her 10th birthday she received lots of presents. When she opened her grandparents gift, she gasped " OMG! It's a laptop!" she screamed rushing to her room.

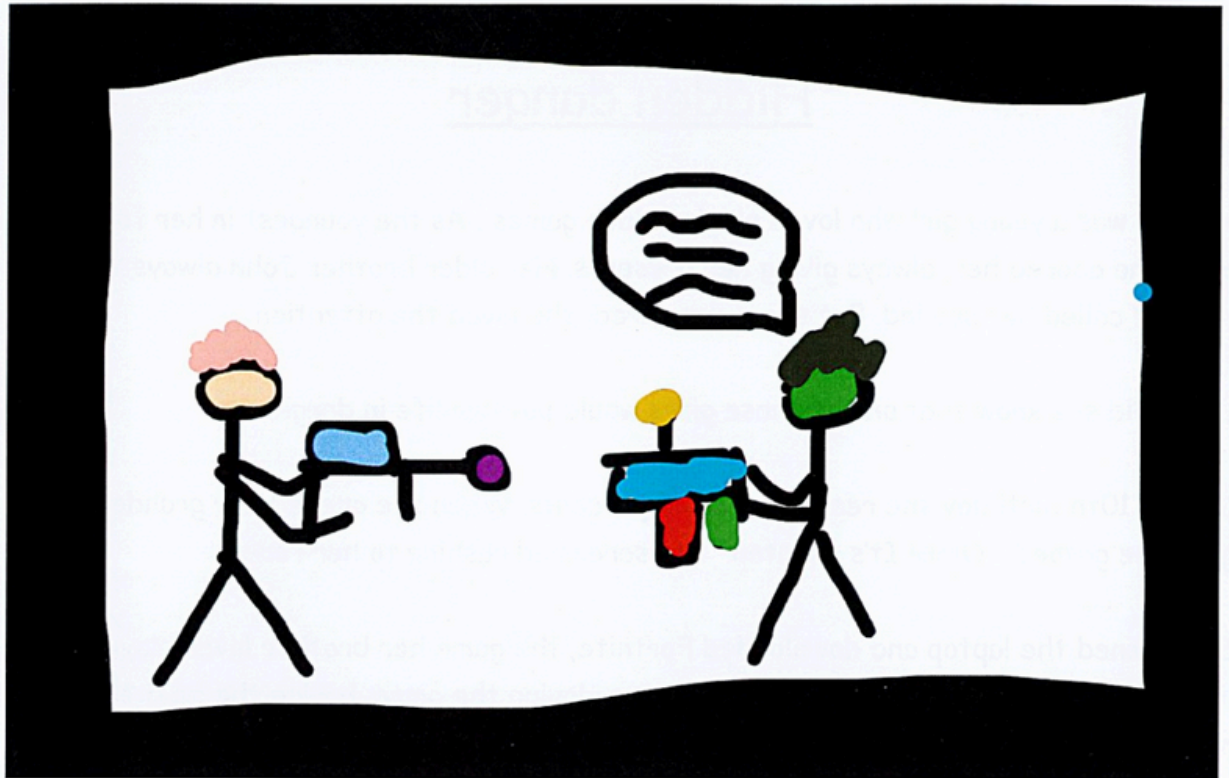
She opened the laptop and downloaded Fortnite, the game her brother loves playing and she can't wait to play it too. She spent hours playing the game, having the best time of her life. But then she noticed another player following her everywhere she went in the game. At first she ignored it, but then she saw a message flashed on her screen: "I know where you live " .



Frightened, she ran to tell her brother. Her brother thought it's a joke, so he said "Stop playing the game. It's not for kids" . Annoyed, Hannah decided she'd play again tomorrow.

The next afternoon, while watching YouTube shorts a new message popped on her screen: "*You can't hide for long*".

Angush (2)



Panicked, she slammed the laptop and ran to tell her parents . "Mom, dad, someone is sending me scary messages". Trembling, she told her parents everything. Her family asked her not to be scared and be brave.

They called the police and told them everything. The police officer told Hannah that they needed her help. At first Hannah was scared but then she decided to help them. Together they set a trap to catch the hacker.

Next day, as per the plan, Hannah played Fortnite again and the same thing happened, a message flashed on her screen: "**I can see you**". This time she messaged him "What do you want?". He said "Give me 2000 dollars and I will stop messaging you". Hannah agrees and asks him to meet at the park.

It was 3am in the morning and Hannah was sitting in the park waiting. It was cold, dark and eerie silent. She sees a figure coming towards her. His face was hidden behind a mask .



YEAR FIVE
WINNERS



Zara

Secrets

Heavenly gates open to reveal a futuristic city called, 'The city of peace' filled with joy and creativity wherever you go, everyone who lives there is enjoying the time of their life in paradise while the harmony and peace balance together making this perfect place. Linda, a professional spy with blonde hair and green eyes, was going on a rather difficult mission, you see, her task was to investigate the secrets of their government, Rosalina Jade. Everything seems perfect, but it feels too good to be true and the question is, why does the city always close down for a few years? And that's her mission, to find out the answers to her questions or better yet, discover something dark from this, 'City Of Peace' or rather that's what they just call it...

Linda always dreamt of discovering the entire world starting with her own city, but she can't forget that she has a job to do, spying. Even though she can't discover the entire world, she still has room for wonder in her mind which is something most people, when they get older, lack, thankfully her mission is to discover the hidden basement under the parliament building meaning she has more time to discover the wonders of her city.

It didn't take long for her to get into the parliament building's underground forbidden rooms, which are filled with secrets that may even change society forever, meaning that it might never be the same again. And finally, she gets to the giant vault which is guarding the deep dark secrets, Linda has to get through the lock first, so she snatches the bony pin out of her and manoeuvres it inside the lock until she hears the 'click' sound. A hint of excitement creeps in as she slowly reveals the unknown secrets to herself, but all she sees is random and sad paintings with the year listed on top. Feeling bamboozled, she decides to dig into her pocket to find her phone and searches up the year listed above the painting, a link pops up on her screen and so she clicks on it. While her eyes run along the sentences, and that's when she realised when those photos weren't just any photos, they were the photos of major attacks that had been done here at 'The City Of Peace' but who would do such a thing!? But upon further inspection, the answer was clear, it was Rosalina Jade. It wouldn't be a coincidence that her initials were engraved onto the bombshell as well as her signature portrait of herself carved on there too. That's what Linda noticed for the rest of them too until Linda's jaw dropped when she saw an empty frame but when she saw that the date listed was November 11th, her entire life collapsed because it was November 4th and that means that Linda has a solid 1 week to carry out a bold statement that would change society forever before it's too late.

An

The Blessing of Aotus (Written by An

Part 1 - Prophecy

Theme: Brave and Bold

"AT THE MIDDLE OF THE BLOOD MOON, A YOUNG SOUL WILL BE THRONEED HEIR OF THE SCOURGE AND REFUSAL WILL RESULT IN A HORRIBLE FATE." Following the words of The Scourge's prophet, followers of The Scourge highly anticipated the day of 'The Heir's Ascension'. Grimly, the many of the future Heirs were entirely oblivious to the fact of The Scourge's existence, and they would be forced to view a meeting of maniacal reapers, or even worse... turned into one of them.

Far from the desolate domain of The Scourge's reapers, there lay a bountiful world full of 15 settlements, with each having their own culture and beliefs. Uniquely, the Aotus group believed that an evil would subjugate the lands. Though the others ignored the Aotus' warnings, they were entirely unaware of *The Heir's Ascension*; their probable doom...|

Part 2 - Aotus

An iridescent glisten of sunlight foreshadowed the arrival of daybreak and Sen, the daughter of the settlement's chief, was sweating at the thought of their beliefs. "What does this evil deity need from us?". The morning bells of the Aotus settlement rang as if they were blessings of peace, although the atmosphere of the village felt gloomy and paranoid. To defend her legion, Sen knew she had to plot an escape into the lands of strife and desolation. She knew surely that the village would be in grave danger...

An (2)

Part 3 - Savior

Deep panting was heard as she dug into her hidden chest, full of treasures and clothes, along as an ancient relic that was bequeathed from her ancestors named *Aotus' Spirit*, which was said in stories to penetrate the souls of evil hearts. She sped out her shelter nimbly and into the fields of her world beneath the eerie blood moon, with an uneasy frown. Eerie rustles in the darkness startled Sen, until a burst of red appeared in her eyes, and she instantly lost consciousness...

Part 4 - The Heir's Ascension

The faint beat of Sen's heart could be heard as she lay around a reddish mist. She woke up to the sound of yells, and as soon as she was awakened, she felt... stronger...?! Rather carelessly, she said "Who's The Scourge?". Out of a red cloud, a cloaked entity shot a crimson curse at her! "You're calling ME?! I've got a sinful deal for you; YOU'LL GET ALL THE POWER YOU WANT!". Instinctively, Sen clutched her blade and *Aotus' Spirit* suddenly absorbed The Scourge's curse and converted it into a blessing! "NO... THE HEIR OF THE SCOURGE SHAN'T BE THIS POWERFUL!", the figure shouted. She slashed towards it, and The Scourge was disintegrating into sparks. "Perhaps, your weaknesses are your own curses!".. The Scourge's cultists, without the power of their leader, all collapsed. The lands have been saved by the zealous Sen, and she now has *Aotus' Blessing* on her side! The beliefs in the lurking evil had been true all this time!

Hamish

The savours of a lifetime date

The bold sargeant bravely sprinted across the roaring battlefield, ordering every soldier to keep fighting!





YEAR SIX

WINNERS



Saanvi

Stormbound: The Escape from the Cyclone

For hours, they had been marooned beneath the protection of a bare tree - only snow-capped mountains to be seen. Led by an incompetent guide, a group of ardent hikers found themselves in a predicament, with no contact to the outside world.

The ferocious winds howl at the arrival of the catalyst. In the distance, a cyclone approaches. The hiker's quiver at the sound of a deafening clap of thunder. But, amidst the chaos, a young man named Elias gazes up at the sky, his eyes glistening with resolve. The cyclone inches closer.

Over the roaring winds, he shouts, "My friends, we mustn't fear. We need to find a way out of here." Everyone turns to the man who had suggested this impossible venture.

Next to Elias, a young girl murmurs, "We have to try," she says, steadily raising her head to face him. Others muttering in agreement, Elias moves towards the cyclone, his companions following trepidatiously.

By now, the sky had darkened with ominous, charcoal-coloured clouds. Engulfed by the storm, they struggled to push through. Grappling, Elias hoarsely shouts, "Hold on, my fellow comrades!"

Gradually, the dreary, desolate landscape vanishes behind them, the bare tree lost within the raging tempest...

Matthias

The Shelf of Secrets

Summer was around the corner, and Mikayla sat huddled in a corner of the local library. The stifling heat was making it nearly impossible for her to concentrate on the book she had just borrowed from the new section. So far in the story, Billy and Emma had just escaped from their destroyed house and were trying to find their parents in the Great Chicago Fire. A sudden tingling in her legs brought Mikayla back to reality, and she found herself lying in the middle of an ignited building.

Fire licked the stony walls that were Mikayla's guardians. Feeling helpless, she could only lie there as control finally seeped back into her body. As she dragged herself off the tepid floor, a stone dug itself into her palm. Heat from the flames made it feel like a piece of magma, and Mikayla cried out in pain. After scanning her surroundings for a possible escape, she saw that there was a half-damaged window. The adjacent door was scorched black with heat. Now all she needed was a tool to break the window. No such luck. Nothing here was of use to anyone anymore. Then Mikayla's eyes fell on the fire extinguisher.

Rushing over to the wall, Mikayla dismounted the extinguisher and slammed it into the window. The pane cracked through, and she could smell the smoke on the other side. Arms buckling with the effort as she smashed the glass again and again, Mikayla eventually broke every centimetre of the window, creating a space just large enough for her to crawl through. The glass scraped her skin, but she didn't care at this point. All she wanted to do was to get home and put the book she borrowed back on its shelf where it belonged, so nobody else would have to endure the same hardships as she just had. Scanning the street, everyone seemed to be heading to the riverbanks to flee. Boats were moored to the dock, ready to head downstream with the survivors of the blaze.

'All aboard! We're ready to cast off!' Mikayla had just managed to squeeze herself into the final boat, and barely sat down in time to leave shore. A strong current quickly took hold of the rickety little boat, guiding it towards a curve. As the sun slowly sank down beneath the horizon, Mikayla felt herself lose consciousness and drift off to sleep.

Rustle. Rustle. The crisp smell of ink on paper roused Mikayla, and she shook her head to clear it. She couldn't believe her eyes. She was back in the library, holding the book about the Chicago Fire. Just a few minutes ago, she had been desperately trying to escape the very fire she was reading about, and now she was alive and unscathed. This book was truly amazing, and Mikayla took pride in the courage she had shown in her journey. From that day forward, she took her confidence with her everywhere, and used it to escape many situations.

Shadows of honour

The fires of war have burned deep into the country of Japan. The great era of samurai was coming to an end, bringing with it a civil war. One Shinobi sought to change this though. Takashi, master of the blade, set out to cut any who stood in his way.

Instructed by his master, a great figure hidden in the shadows, he began his path to defeat all three great enemy figures. The first was General Tamura, one of the greatest spear masters, whose castle was hidden in a tomb of mountains. After journeying through a hidden tunnel beneath the earth, he silently infiltrated the castle, slitting the throats of all who were in the way. When General Tamura found out, he challenged Takashi to a duel. The two clashed their steel, each delivering blow after blow until the great Tamura fell to his knees, and Takashi delivered the final strike. Tamura's soldiers kneeled down in defeat, as the castle was taken for Takashi's master.

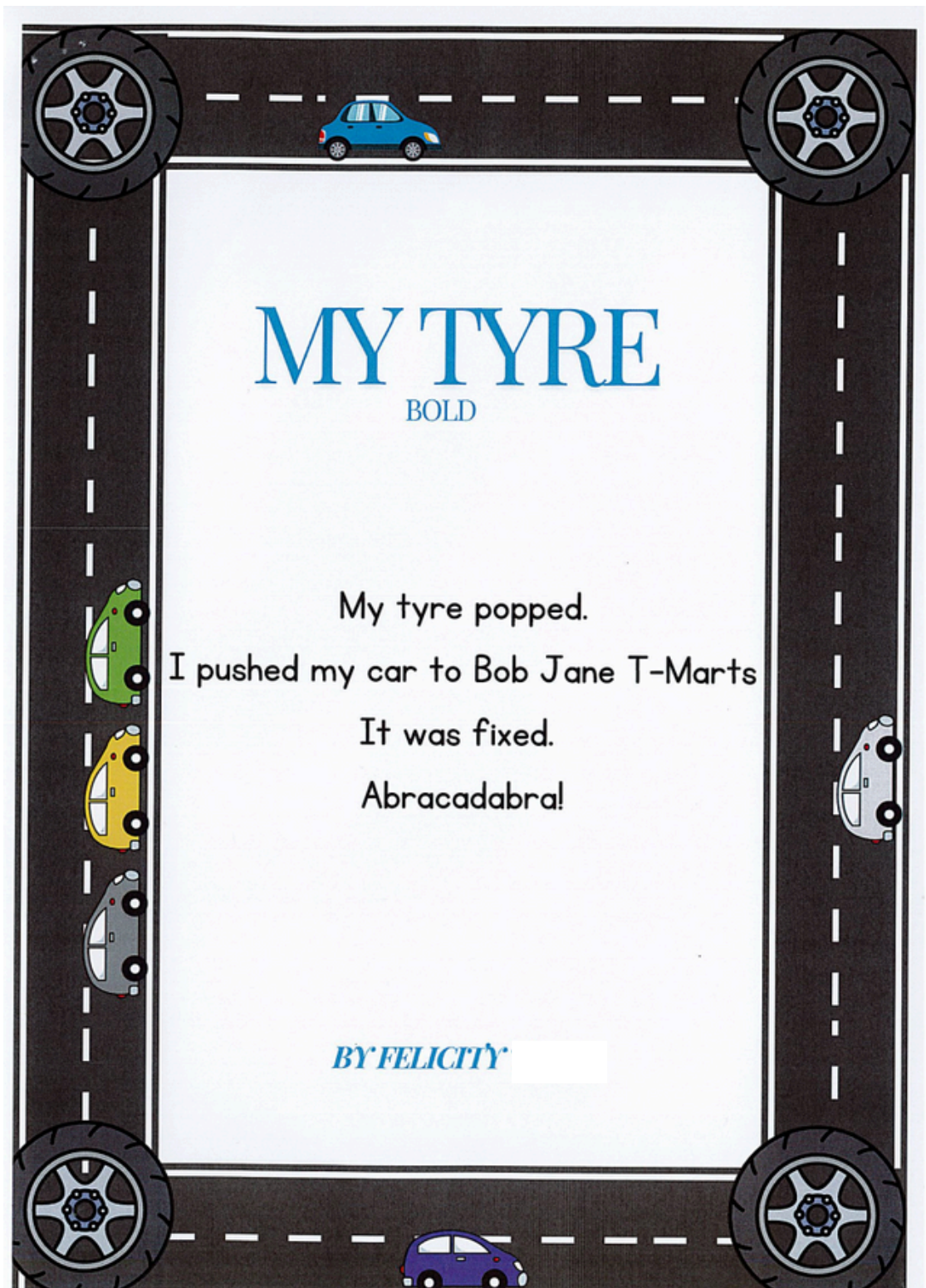
The second to be felled was an unknown assassin, his base of operations in the tall snowy mountains. After scaling the cliffs, Takashi wandered the endless temple, searching for his foe. Suddenly, a shuriken was sent flying his way, though Takashi deflected it with ease. It was the assassin, with his murderous aura blazing maliciously. His fighting style was unique, a combination of shuriken throws between countless sword strikes. Eventually, Takashi's blade was upon the assassin's neck, but he disappeared at the last second. Then, leaping out of nowhere, he aimed to strike his foe down. But Takashi was too fast, and he cut him down centimetres away.

The final leader was the most powerful of them all. Akira, master of the sword, was the final tie to end the war. Takashi's master had revived some info about Akira's whereabouts, but it was located in an active volcano. Takashi's master did say this could be false, but Takashi knew what had to be done. His blade in hand, he leapt in, a gamble with his life. Some might've called this bravery, but you can only be brave if you have something to lose.

Lava was spewing upon the ground. Takashi was alive, and in front of him was Akira, the demon swordsman. Wasting no time, Takashi dashed towards his foe, locking the two of them in a duel with every clash meaning life or death. Their battle was a beautiful dance of swordplay, with the fire raging on behind them. With his stamina nearing to an end, Takashi knew he had to end it soon. So, with the precision of an eagle, he dove forwards, breaking through Akira's posture and finishing it all. It was over. But, Takashi knew his life was too, as the volcano was enraging more than ever. There was no time to escape, so clutching his sword, he sealed his fate. Consumed by the flames, Takashi passed away, entrusting Japan for his master to put at peace.

HONOURABLE MENTION

Fliss



HONOURABLE MENTION

Coen

Before the dark days I was free. Before the dark days I was happy.

Me, mum and dad would celebrate Christmas sitting by the fire, drinking hot chocolate together.

But then when I turned 19, all that changed. A man came to my house. My parents tried to keep me there, but they took me and my brother.

They put us in uniform and gear, and put us on the front line. We fought and fought and fought, and I thought, *'What is this? What are we fighting for?'*

Then the dreaded day came. I lost my brother. Again I wondered, *'What is this? What are we fighting for?'*

I reached into my pocket and got my brother's teddy bear. I held it tight and tears dropped into my hands. And again, *'What are we fighting for?'*

Then three weeks later I lost my closest friend. I took the photo of me and him, and I wondered again, *'What are we fighting for?'*

When we returned home, my mum ran towards me and clutched me tight. I whispered, "I love you."

Though I'm old and tired, I still visit my brother and friend. Always.