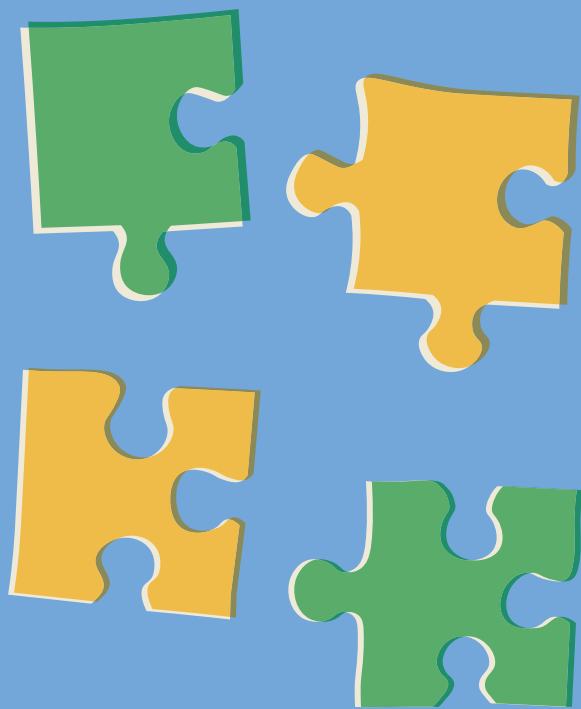


WIMBLEDON  
BOOKFEST



# THE GAME

Junior Young Writers  
Competition 2024

Collection of Short Stories & Poems



# WIMBLEDON BOOKFEST

## Young Writers Competition 2024

Collection of Short Stories & Poems  
By Junior School Pupils, Age 4 -11



Wimbledon BookFest, 35 Wimbledon Hill Road, SW19 7NB  
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**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

# Young Writers Competition 2024

## Junior Judging Panel

### Chair of Judges

Eve Wersocki Morris  
*Publisher & Children's Author*

### Judges

Amy Waite  
*Research Fellow, University of Roehampton*

Julian Butler  
*Writer & musician*

Georgie Morley  
*Wimbledon BookFest*

Joanne Gail Johnson  
*MA Student, University of Roehampton*







## Highly Commended KS1: Years 1-2 (age 5-7)

### Poems..... 27

Alexandra Buss	<i>The Study Prep School</i>
Luke Penzhorn	<i>Pelham Primary School</i>
Quinn Bowditch	<i>Wimbledon Park Primary School</i>
Syed Shah	<i>Hatfeild Primary School</i>

### Stories..... 33

Alexander Alvarez Artemiev	<i>Donhead Prep School</i>
Aria Cowie	<i>Sacred Heart Primary School</i>
Arin Pandit	<i>Pelham Primary School</i>
Arlo Krishnan	<i>Wimbledon Common Prep School</i>
Ayman Islam	<i>Dundonald Primary School</i>
Cobi du Preez	<i>Wimbledon Park Primary School</i>
Fleur Purser	<i>Pelham Primary School</i>
Jade Kwan	<i>Dundonald Primary School</i>
Liantai Jasper Lin	<i>Wimbledon Common Prep School</i>
Lyanna Asare	<i>Merton Abbey Primary School</i>
Ottilie Williams	<i>Fircroft Primary School</i>
Theodore Kfoury	<i>St Mary's Primary School</i>
Viaan Jain	<i>Wimbledon Park Primary School</i>

## Highly Commended KS2: Years 3-4 (age 7-9)

### Poems..... 55

Aariv Chadha	<i>Dundonald Primary School</i>
Aleksander Zych-Twaddell	<i>Sacred Heart Primary School</i>
Alfred Bacon	<i>Fircroft Primary School</i>
Aveer Gulati	<i>Donhead Prep School</i>
Caspar Murrell	<i>Shrewsbury House School</i>
Edward Vosper	<i>St John Fisher Primary School</i>
Emilie Boyce	<i>Ursuline Prep School</i>
Isabella Mackie	<i>St John Fisher Primary School</i>
Kira Cousins	<i>Malmesbury Primary School</i>
Libby Carew-Gibbs	<i>Sacred Heart Primary School, Merton</i>
Maya Pal	<i>Poplar Primary School</i>
Myra Kasat	<i>Wimbledon High School</i>
Nathan Cooper	<i>Merton Park Primary School</i>
Om Bindal	<i>Dundonald Primary School</i>
Orla Vashisht	<i>Ursuline Prep School</i>
Senara Bacon	<i>St Matthew's Primary School</i>
Sophia Karapata	<i>Malmesbury Primary School</i>
Theodore D'Lima	<i>Donhead Prep School</i>
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Allegra Stanelli Angilè	<i>Poplar Primary School</i>
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Austin Lyons Whyte	<i>Donhead Prep School</i>
Carla Zayas-Felipe	<i>Joseph Hood Primary School</i>
Elena Formisano	<i>Dundonald Primary School</i>

Evie O'Sullivan	<i>St John Fisher Primary School</i>
Finlay Carandang	<i>St Mary's Primary School</i>
Hamish Subramaniam	<i>Dundonald Primary School</i>
Humphrey Warrick	<i>King's College Junior School</i>
India Jarvis	<i>Wimbledon High School</i>
James-John McSherry	<i>Shrewsbury House School</i>
Josephine Williams	<i>Wimbledon Park Primary School</i>
Kyra Das	<i>Wimbledon Chase Primary School</i>
Lara Wehmeier	<i>The Study Prep School</i>
Lucy Wilson	<i>Wimbledon High School</i>
Nathaniel Winter	<i>Links Primary School</i>
Odelia Poh	<i>Poplar Primary School</i>
Samuel Reeves	<i>Shrewsbury House School</i>
Sofia Key-Peters	<i>Sacred Heart Primary School</i>
William Farstad	<i>King's College Junior School</i>

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Ayah Fellague Chebra	<i>Fircroft Primary School</i>
Charis Peck	<i>Dundonald Primary School</i>
Charlie Ahern	<i>Hatfeild Primary School</i>
Daya Riva Malhi	<i>Wimbledon High School</i>
Elliot Mattmann	<i>Donhead Prep School</i>
Eve Gherghetta	<i>Dundonald Primary School</i>
Fiza Laeeq	<i>St Mark's Primary School</i>
Hanna Eve	<i>Merton Park Primary School</i>
James Degas	<i>Merton Park Primary School</i>

Kalrav Agrawal	<i>King's College Junior School</i>
Megan Pedrosa	<i>St Thomas of Canterbury Primary School</i>
Moyi Wei	<i>King's College Junior School</i>
Sofia Watson	<i>Benedict Academy Primary School</i>
Syed Fadi Raif	<i>Wimbledon Park Primary School</i>
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Adrian Zhang	<i>Shrewsbury House School</i>
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Coralie Julia Rose Morton	<i>Sellincourt Primary School</i>
Danae Florence Hanlon	<i>Poplar Primary School</i>
Edward Gilbertson	<i>Donhead Prep School</i>
Giulio Formisano	<i>Dundonald Primary School</i>
Isabella Ritson	<i>Wimbledon High School</i>
Lidia Tisch	<i>Wimbledon Park Primary School</i>
Livia Lewis	<i>Merton Park Primary School</i>
Matilda Hurley	<i>Pelham Primary School</i>
Maya Flouch	<i>Wimbledon High School</i>
Milo Jarvis	<i>King's College Junior School</i>
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Anthony Timbrell

*Cricket Green School (SEN)*

Craig Ireland

*Cricket Green School (SEN)*

Danyal Lilani

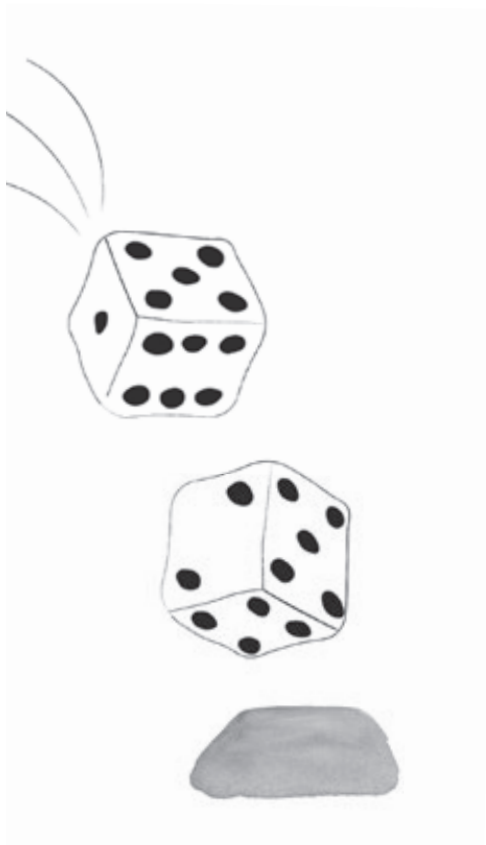
*Cricket Green School (SEN)*

Liam Patmalnieks

*Cricket Green School (SEN)*

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# Introduction

Are you ready to play?

Plug in your console. Lace up your football boots. Roll the dice. Assemble your team. And prepare for the game of your life!

In this collection of stories and poems our young writers aged 4 – 11 put on their best game-face to tackle the theme of ‘The Game’. Here you will find many different types of games; ancient games, animal games, video games, sports games, board games, card games, magical games, mind games and games within games!

Some games take us to distant mystical lands, while others take place in the comfort of home. Some games are a matter of life and death; others are an entertaining way to pass the time on the weekend.

Through ‘The Game’, our young writers explore themes of failure and triumph; friendship and rivalry; determination and resilience. How we play the game, face challenges and solve problems, reflects who we are as individuals. Not all champions are winners. Sometimes just taking part and trying your best is enough.

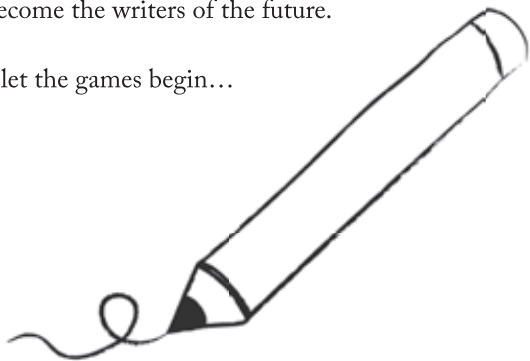
This anthology displays a fantastic array of young talent; these original, thoughtful and funny poets and storytellers have clearly got what it takes to become the writers of the future.

So turn the page and let the games begin...

*Eve Wersocki Morris,*

*Chair of Judges*

*Author*







**WINNERS**





## **Calm and Happy Mind**

Evelyn Nuttall



*Wimbledon Chase Primary School (Year 1 - Age 6)*

This is my poem about a game I play in my mind when I go on adventures, it keeps my mind calm and happy.

I spy you and I, I spy birds in the sky.  
I spy flowers growing, I spy water flowing.  
I spy leaves on the ground, I spy lost and found.  
I spy birds flying, I spy people buying.

I spy children playing, I spy people laying  
I spy swings swinging, I spy children singing.

I spy the path for walking, I spy mummies talking.  
I spy people throwing, I spy people going.

I spy you and I,  
On my journey home.

# The Tale of Captain Tickle Tips and the Whipper Snipper

Benjamin Leclercq

*Merton Park Primary School (Year 2 - Age 7)*

This story is about Captain Tickle Tips and Sloppy the Dog. Captain Tickle Tips is a pirate with an eye-patch. An evil parrot nipped him as an adult and there was a ginormous dent in his eye, but his Grandfather came along and gave him an eye patch with a skull and cross-bones on. Sloppy the dog was lost in the ocean when Captain Tickle Tips found him and he had a massive heart – the size of a diamond. When Captain Tickle Tips was 5 years old, his grandfather told him the story of the Whipper Snipper and his tail with a thousand knives, and the yellow and purple gems of power.



We start our journey with Captain Tickle Tips. He assembles his five crewmates and he says 'Crewmate Salute' and they set off on the Quest to find the yellow and purple gems of power. Then a little bottle floats by. Big Bellied Bruce, a large bellied pirate gets a fishing rod and fishes it out.

There is a poem inside the bottle and a little golden trophy.  
To find the gems of Power

Go past the doomed sunflower  
The Whipper Snipper you must defeat  
He's not someone you want to meet.

So they cross the blue waterfall until a rattlesnake comes along and says 'Hello, my name is Otto'. Luckily, he was a friendly rattlesnake and he shook his tail as a wave and slithered away. Then they squelch through the snappy alligator lagoon. When they jump on a rock, they wanted it to be a rock, but it was an alligator – there was a mighty snap and they quickly hopped away. One pirate lost their leg when the alligator went 'snap', so Captain Tickle Tips got a log and quickly made a pole and put it on the pirates thigh to make a new leg.

They journey to the mountain and the Whipper Snipper's tail was poking out of a hole. So they quietly crept past it. The Whipper Snipper's tail gave a mighty whip and they all jumped away and the tail quickly slithered back inside the hole.

The Whipper Snipper had two massive fangs and a thousand knives as a tail all hanging together like a bunch of bananas. His bottom lip stucked out further than his top lip. He shot socks out of his mouth like a cannonball.

The Whipper Snipper grabs Sloppy the Dog by his tail with his mouth but then Captain Tickle Tips tickles the Whipper Snipper and he laughs out loud 'Ha Ha Ha' and lets go of Sloppy.

They had to defeat the two headed Whipper Snipper by cutting off his tail. They know he is defeated because his mouth opens. There are yellow and purple gems inside each mouth. They were magical, sparkling, and glistened in the sun.

The two pirates grabbed them, and ran back to the ship. There, they had a party that never ended, until sunset of course.

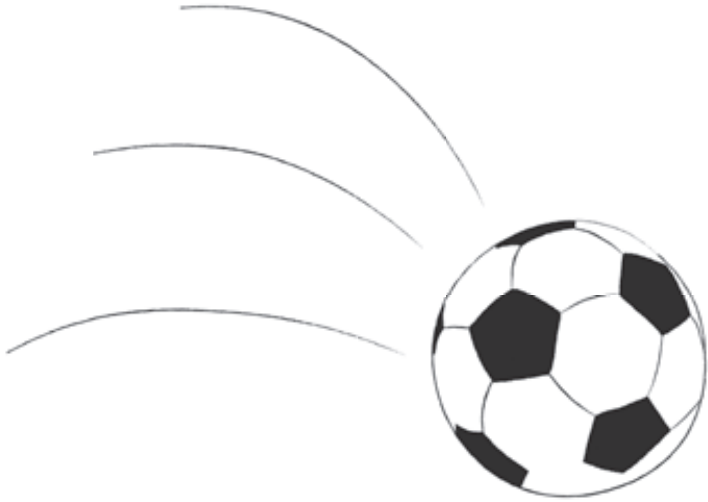


# The Game the Rabbits Play

Neave McLagan

*Wimbledon Park Primary School (Year 4 - Age 9)*

In a field of green where the wild rabbits play,  
There's a game they love day after day,  
Bounding and leaping through the field they go,  
In a rhythm and flow, that only they know.  
Their tails twitching in anticipation,  
Their ears perked up in concentration,  
They frolic and chase, in a dance of delight,  
In the soft glow of the fading twilight.  
The game they play is simple but grand,  
A mix of tag and hide- and- seek, played on the land,  
One rabbit is "it" with a wink and a bound,  
While the others scatter, without making a sound.  
They dart behind bushes, they vanish in shadows,  
They blend in the earth, in a clever bravado,  
But "it" is relentless, with a nose finely tuned,  
To the slightest scent, of the rabbits festooned.  
The chase is quick, the laughter pure,  
As they zig and they zag, through fields that endure,  
Their hearts beat fast for the thrill of the game,  
Their wild spirits freed, from all sense of shame,  
And when the game ends, with the setting of the sun,  
They gather in a circle, all hearts as one,  
For in this game, they find pure bliss,  
In the company of friends, that they will miss.  
So in a field of green, where the wild rabbits play,  
They'll continue their game day after day,  
For in the joy in their heart, they'll forever remain  
In the game they play their spirits remain.



## **Just Look at Me Now**

Molly Lila Mayhew

*Wimbledon Chase Primary School (Year 4- Age 9)*

As I stepped onto the soggy grass, sniggers and whispers surrounded me. I knew exactly where they were coming from, but I tried my best to ignore them. No one had ever thought that a girl could play for a boys' football team, but here I was, standing on the muddy, wet pitch. The only girl in a sea of boys. Although I had played football with boys at school, this was the first mixed league game I had ever played. The worries seemed to fill my head like swarming wasps. It was the first game of the new season, and everyone seemed about a metre taller than me. However, I was still waiting for my growth spurt. As I glared at the opposing team, one boy stood out like a skyscraper towering over a row of tiny cottages. He was, for me, the tallest person I had ever seen. He was a giant. Worst of all, it looked like I was going to be marking him for the entire game. Butterflies filled

my stomach. I waited apprehensively for the referee's whistle to start the match. The ball zoomed towards me like a bullet. I mis-controlled it and it flew to the really tall player. He took the ball past two of my teammates and headed swiftly towards the goal. I had to forget about my first touch and gain back my confidence. I sprinted forwards and found myself right in front of him. I knew what I had to do... Go in for the tackle. And it had to be hard. CRUNCH!! The boy fell to the ground in despair, yelling in pain. Despite a few open-mouthed parents, no whistle blew as it had been a fair challenge. I glanced at the boy, who didn't have enough strength to get off the floor or even move a muscle. I continued on and powered through the rest of their defence. I crossed the ball to my teammate who smashed it into the back of the net. There was a huge cheer and I felt even braver than I did before. The rest of the game flew by and any nerves I might have had vanished into thin air. My whole team played outstandingly well, and the opposition barely got started. They couldn't get over the fact that a small girl had completely outshone them all. The tall boy, who had never been tackled before and was usually the star of the show, appeared to be rooted to the spot throughout the whole game. In the end we won 4-0. I was ecstatic. The whispers I had heard at the beginning of the game had completely disappeared. Instead, all I could see now were smiles and all I could hear was the sound of applause. It felt wonderful. I realised that anything was possible, that I should believe in myself, and that I could fulfil my dreams.

# The Game

Helen Kaiser

*Wimbledon Park Primary School (Year 6 - Age 11)*

Silence

They watch waiting.

Waiting for movement

Anticipating the deathly quiet

The air seems alive with it

The moment they have all been waiting for

It's finally there

He spies over his cards thinking

Confidently placing

Soundlessly

Something.

The next one stifles a gulp

How could this be?

A smirk cuts through the air

Worrying everyone else

They dimly recognize it

But that thought is pushed away

What they do not know

Sitting

Around the oil lamp lit table

Yes, what they do not know is that

He

Has

More than one Ace up his sleeve.



# The Dart

Juliusz Warzecha

*Donhead Prep School (Year 5 - Age 9)*

“Bullseye!”

My shouts awoke every animal on the farm and their grunts echoed through the countryside. It was a crisp morning and me and my friend, Tim, were on a glamping holiday. The barn was our favourite place, and we were playing our treasured game: Darts!

I strode over to the board, gripped the dart, and pulled. It didn't budge.

“Hurry up!” urged Tim “It's my turn!” I pulled until my friend got livid. He came over and yanked the dart. It didn't move.

Blitzer, (the farm dog) jumped up and seized the dart in his slavering jaws. He scratched and tore at it. He was a cat with a mouse, savaging the board and flinging it helplessly around like a ragdoll.

The dart was still in the board.

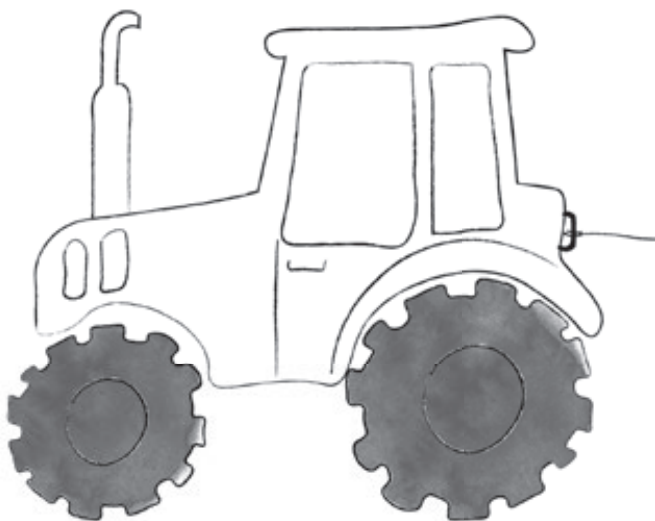
“I know! Let's tie the dart to the barn door and open it – just like with my loose teeth!”

Tim stared with a quizzical expression, but I had discovered a ball of string from a nearby family of cats. Moments later, I had tied one end to the dart and the other to the barn door.

“Push!”

“Harder! Harder!”

The string had broken, the door had flung open, and we had both dived into enormous, fresh, cowpat!



CAAAAAW!

The murder of crows up in Nevermore Tree seemed to be chuckling at us.

Tim grinned at the tree. Picking up the end of the of string, he began to climb.

“What are you doing?” I hollered.

From the branches, Tim was busy creating a spaghetti junction of string. What’s worse, he was tying each of the ends to the claw of every crow!

“Make a noise!”

“Why?!”

“Just do it!”

At that moment, I remembered reading that crows are terrified of owls!

“T-WOOOOO!” I shouted.

Instantly, the surreal sky was full of crows and obsidian black feathers, flapping and fussing. Both of us kept our eyes peeled, we dashed into the barn...

The dart was still in the board. Nothing could get it out!

Over the next hours, we tried the pigs, the Friesian cows, a horse, even the farmer!

Vroom!

To my delight, a light bulb lit up in my head! If I could get the farmer’s daughter to tie a tractor to the dartboard, then she could get the dart out by driving it!

Minutes later, the tractor was revving; at one end a sturdy rope was tied to the dart; the other end was tied to the tractor; The farmer’s daughter released the brake; this was it!

VROOOOOM!

The engine revved, dust gathered, and the giant wheels were spinning, flinging mud; suddenly, the barn walls began to shake! Our hearts were beating! The animals were bleating!

CRAAAASH!!!

We crawled out from the mound of rubble that used to be the barn. Poking from under a pile of timber was the dart! Surviving all these hours, we could continue our game...except we couldn’t. For under the debris, clinging on for life...

The dart was still in the board.

# Crocodile

Mahira Sarkar

*Cricket Green School (SEN) (Year 1 - Age 6)*

I choose blue,  
Blue fish,  
Boing,  
Eat it,  
Yum yum yum,  
Open up honey,  
Look it's a fish,  
Colourful fish.



# **Favourite Game: Minnie Mouse**

Thujana Jeyakumar

*Cricket Green School (SEN) (Year 5 - Age 9)*

My favourite game is Minnie Mouse. When I play the game it makes me feel happy and I play my favourite game with my sister. The things you can do on my game is you can dress up Minnie Mouse in different outfits. The characters in my game are all very helpful and friendly towards Minnie Mouse. I feel really sad and angry when I can't dress Minnie Mouse in the clothes I would like her to wear. I play my game on the computer and I have to be very quick to beat the timer. In my game you don't need to build anything and my favourite thing about my game is that I can dress Minnie Mouse in so many different outfits.





# **RUNNERS UP**

# The Game That Could Never Be Played!

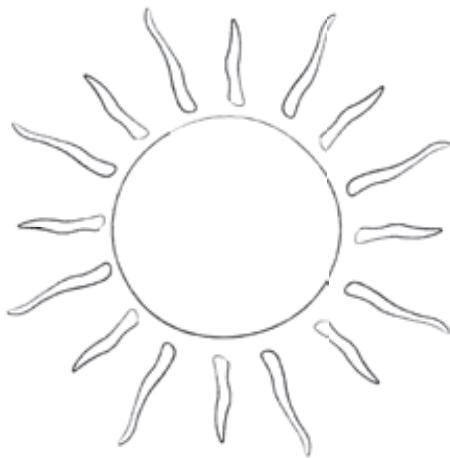
Elisha Cregan

*Ursuline Prep School (Year 4 - Age 8)*

The children were playing the game,  
the game that could never be played,  
the game that swooped,  
the game that spun,  
the game that loop de looped around the sun.

I said to one of my friends, isn't it cool,  
They're playing the game, the game that could never be played.  
The game that could never be played doesn't actually have a name,  
so, everyone calls it the game, the game that could never be played.

I felt sorry for the game, for it had no name,  
so, I asked if I could play, they said yes,  
and the game finally got a name,  
it was called the forgotten game!



# Pancakes

Tom Parry

*Willington Prep School (Year 3 - Age 8)*

Venue: Pancake station at the breakfast buffet

Fixture: pancake - fest

Opponent: my brother

He is 13, taller than my dad

I'm 8.

I might be small but I'm a giant when it comes to eating pancakes.

Perfect small circles of joy.

Load them up

Pile them high

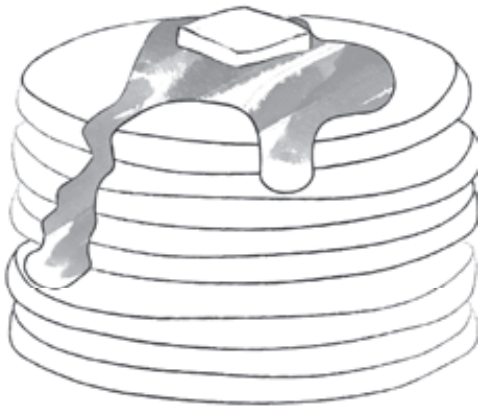
Drizzle with Nutella, maple syrup, strawberries.

Ignore Mum's face.

Dive in. Bliss.

I forget the competition. My belly is full and happy.

I've already won.



# If I Were A Game

Eleanor Davies

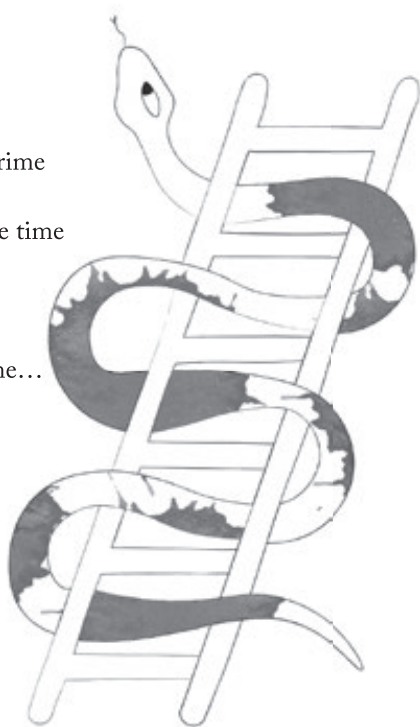
*Merton Park Primary School (Year 5 - Age 10)*

If I were a game I'd be Snakes and Ladders  
I'd slither around the board  
I'd race up all the ladders  
I'd collect my winner's hoard  
If I were Snakes and Ladders

If I were a game I'd be Scrabble  
I'd get points galore  
I'd jumble up the letters  
I'd be a triple word score  
If I were Scrabble

If I were a game I'd be Cluedo  
I'd know who committed the crime  
I'd know what they used  
I'd know where they were at the time  
If I were Cluedo

But if I were – I forget the name...  
...oh yes, Solitaire...  
I'd lose every game.





## **The Quest for the Lost Trophy**

Erin Atakora

*St Thomas of Canterbury Primary School (Year 5 - Age 9)*

In the heart of the bustling city of Paris where glorious structures whispered secrets of grace and courage, lived an energetic girl named Lyra. Her brain swelled with longing thoughts of adventure and her heart pounded in beat with the legends engraved in the stones; but it was the tale of the lost olympic trophy that lit up a fire in her, a fire that would lead her on an extraordinary quest.

The trophy, a beautiful, golden trophy, had vanished decades ago. It was known to hold mystical powers and the ability to inspire champions. The last Olympian to lift was the champion, Aurelius Swift. His winning lap had shaken the earth and the trophy gleamed in his proud grasp. But then, tragedy struck. The trophy disappeared from the Olympic hall only leaving a confusing riddle, 'Seek the silver coin where the sun kisses the sea. There underneath the ancient olive tree, your journey will begin.'

Lyra, encouraged by curiosity and a wanting for greatness, took off on her quest. She packed her backpack with a map, a flask of water,

and a worn photograph of Aurelius. Her path led her beyond the city walls, into the wilds of La Tournette—the sacred mountain where gods once roamed.

She trekked through dense forests, her footsteps being guided by the moonlight. At the edge of a cliff, she found a silver coin, its rim shimmering like stardust. She placed it on her palm and suddenly, her senses sharpened. She heard the voices of ancient French gods urging her forwards. She trod on following the riddle, and soon enough, she'd reached the sun-kissed shore. There, beneath an olive tree older than the earth, she found a stone tablet. Its lettering revealed a hidden cave, the cave of echoes. Lyra stepped into the dullness. She listened attentively. She could hear many voices but one stood out.... The voice of Aurelius Swift! "Lyra," it murmured, "You have come all this way, to find the trophy, to be seen as a great person and a hero. But all this time you haven't realised that the greatest praise that a person can receive is for having a champion's heart. Not all victories are measured in gold." It was then when Lyra realised the trophy wasn't lost, it had been within her this whole time. And as she hiked back to Paris, she did it with a smile on her face.

She returned to the olympic hall, wearing the silver coin as a pendant. She stepped onto the empty trophy pedestal and raised her arms. The clouds separated and a gleaming light shone upon her. The crowd watched in silence and then burst into applause. Lyra became the true champion—the embodiment of Olympic spirit. The trophy might never reappear, but its legacy lived on—in every athlete who dared to dream, in every heart that raced toward victory.

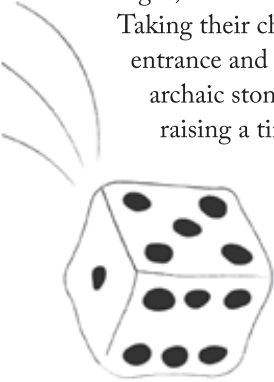
# The Game of Life

Eva Adesuyan

*Wimbledon Chase Primary School (Year 6 - Age 11)*

Has your life become such a tangled monstrosity that your only desire is to undo and redo the knots in your life? Seed was desperate to do just that: to unravel time one had to embark on an ambitious journey to Hall of Games and locate one's personal gamemaster.

Hidden in the web of your dreams, the entrance to Hall of Games guards a place so unknown, so unheard that it is rarely visited. One night, silence shrouded the world and guided Seed into a dream. Taking their chances, Seed began to frantically search for the entrance and tore the dream in two. Peeling it back to reveal an archaic stone door towering over. Seed breathed in awe before raising a timid hand, hardening it to hammer on the door.



Inside, the Hall of Games was like a hotel. An unoccupied receptionist stared, dull-eyed at the floor that was carpeted in dust. Seed approached them. "Name?" the receptionist asked in a voice that did not regularly exercise as they opened a slim book.



"Seed Carole".

"Room 3,400,063,936 – here's the key, up the stairs 200 hundredth left ... or take the lift"



After reaching their destination, Seed rapped on the door of splintered planks that stood in front of them and it creaked open on its rusted hinges.

Stooped on a battered metal bucket an ancient woman rung her hands that were wrinkled as though wearing ill-fitting gloves. Twisted ropes of knotted white hair hung down her back, the ends knitted into her homemade dress. Her unwashed body ignited a stench so odious it would've knocked a mouse unconscious.

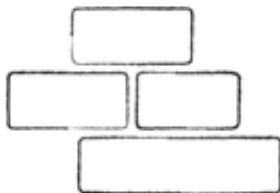
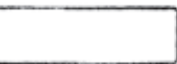
As she beckoned Seed towards her, her stale breath hanging in the air, she moved towards a game board, piled with cards and dice.

"Name's Helada, what ya comin' ere for Seed?" she snarled baring her worn, rotten teeth.

"I want to re-wind, re-set and re-start my life" Seed's voice ricocheted across the dark walls to create an echo.

"Hmph, if you wanna do that you gotta play me at a game of your life, see if you can get the re-start card, and see how ya re-do, 3 hour match".

After agreeing to Helada's challenge, Seed found themselves caught up in an arduous game. 3 hours wheeled by and Seed had faced the unexpected but had not succeeded. Leaving disheartened, Seed went to live out their life, but now they had learnt to see the sun through the clouds. Because you can't always change the way life plays out.

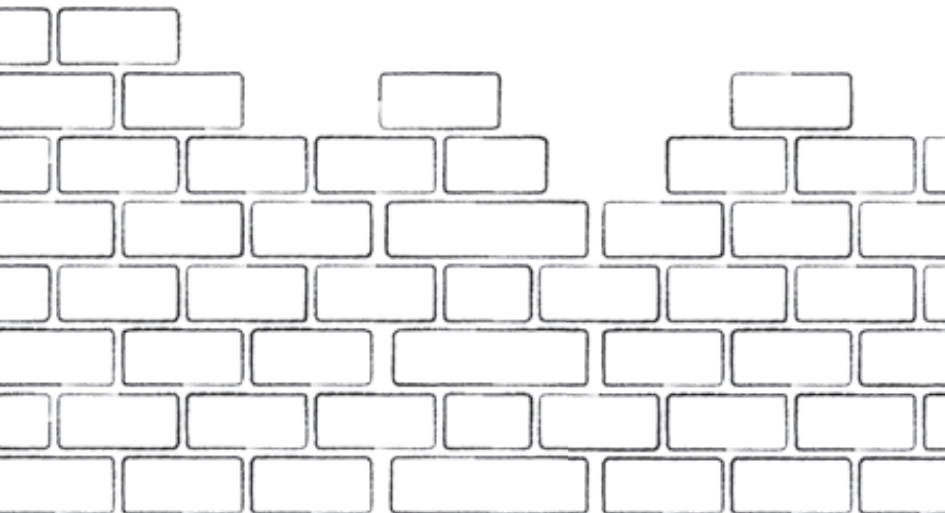


## **Roblox Game**

Yahia Boulaam

*Cricket Green School (SEN) (Year 6 - Age 10)*

My favourite game is Roblox. Playing Roblox makes me happy, excited and proud. I play Roblox with my brother. On Roblox I walk around the characters are cool and look like Lego. When I lose I get angry and mad. Sometimes on Roblox I use bricks to build houses. I play Roblox on my phone or computer. When I play Roblox I have to be quick and smart. My favourite part of Roblox is playing with my brother.





# HIGHLY COMMENDED POEMS

Key Stage 1

Years 1-2

Age 5-7



# The Game

Alexandra Buss

*The Study Prep (Year 2 - Age 7)*

Uno the game  
just seemed to go on and on.  
I had the exploring card  
I was whisked to a tropical island.  
I explored  
all day and all night for  
all my might.  
I went to the king  
and found his ring.  
He said  
anything you like ma'am.  
I said to go back home  
to see my  
stone  
and to be alright.  
He said sure ma'am  
but in return  
you must save my  
squiggly worm.  
Alright I said  
he must be caught by night.  
I caught him.  
I bought him.  
And I got home quite alright.

# Quidditch

Luke Penzhorn

*Pelham Primary School (Year 2 - Age 7)*

A game where dreams come to life  
Kids soar on broomsticks into the light  
Whacking the ball and zooming around  
Having fun and being a team  
Diving gracefully  
Swooping here and there  
Gliding through the air  
Flying near the ground  
Making memories unforgettable  
Being fearless and brave  
Sprinting as fast as teleportation  
Rushing around the field  
As the crowd cheers them on  
Dodging the Bludger, going twisty and turny  
Looping quickly, dribbling the Quaffle  
Swirling up and down, going faster and faster  
Then higher and higher and scoring a goal  
Catching the Golden Snitch and winning the game!  
Celebrating the victory, their supporters go crazy!

# The Candy Forest

Quinn Bowditch

*Wimbledon Park Primary School (Year 1 - Age 5)*

It is a game to guess which candy everything in the forest is made from.

The flowers are made from marshmallows.

These trees are smelling good.

The bees, butterflies, ladybirds, and insects are flying around in the sky where there are rainbows are everywhere.

There are unicorns on the fluffy grass, it is so green, and in the sun. There is an alicorn in the fluffy bright sky.

The clouds are made of candyfloss because the forest wasn't an ordinary forest, it was a candy forest! There are candies everywhere in shimmery sky.

There is so much colour, sparkle and shine.

The sun is made from oranges and lemons. It is so bright.

Oh wow, is that a trampoline made out of lots of tiny marshmallows? I can bounce so high!

This is a special flower made out of gummy bears that look like flowers.

There is a rainbow that comes to the green grass and you can even climb up it. Then you can slide down it. It is so fun.

Look, a rainbow lake with silver and gold chocolate coins on it.

Look a cake, which is a palace and there are princesses are coming out of it!

There are fairies fluttering down to the fresh green grass. The fairies are coming to me and gave me have fairy wings, that means I am a fairy princess and queen of the whole candy forest now.

Now it is time to say goodbye. This was in my dreams. I had the best day of my life.

See you later as I say goodbye to the special candy forest.

# Nico Nextbots

Syed Shah

*Hatfeild Primary (Year 2 - Age 7)*

My mum lets me play Nextbots for an hour,  
While she takes a nice warm shower

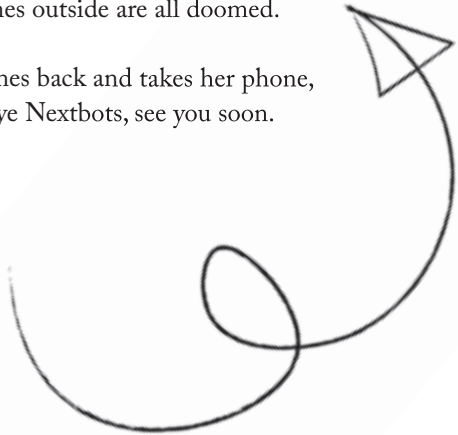
The Nextbots are the monsters that chase,  
you can now see the excitement on my face

I need to collect all the items,  
Because if Nextbots comes, it will be a problem

When the lights flicker,  
We have to run quicker

I feel excited and my heart beats fast,  
Because I don't want to be the one to come last  
As I run from them,  
I keep getting away from them  
Now I made it to the safe room,  
The ones outside are all doomed.

Mum comes back and takes her phone,  
Bye bye Nextbots, see you soon.





## HIGHLY COMMENDED STORIES

Key Stage 1  
Years 1-2  
Age 5-7



# Tommy and the Tonk-a-Tonk Game

Alexander Alvarez Artemiev

*Donhead Prep School (Year 2 - Age 7)*

Tommy was an ordinary 8-year-old boy who lived with his grandpa Thomas in a tiny, tattered cottage on the edge of the village. Tommy loved Grandpa more than anyone else in the world. Grandpa Thomas was ancient – his face was wrinkled and shrivelled like a prune, his hair lost all its colour and was now as white as the pages of this story, his voice was croaky and whispery; but his eyes were as blue as the sky and sparkled like two stars. He spent his days slouching in his favourite old-fashioned rocking chair. He was the most incredible story teller Tommy had ever met. Tommy could sit on the unpolished, dusty floorboards next to his grandpa's rocking chair listening to his great stories full of adventures for hours. Tommy's favourite story was about the Tonk-a-Tonk game his grandpa had played when he was a little boy of Tommy's age. Every time Tommy heard this story, he couldn't help but dream of playing Tonk-a-Tonk one day. The only problem was that Tonk-a-Tonk could only be played with a special curving ball called Tonk which had mysteriously vanished over 90 years ago.

On the last autumn day, Tommy was coming back from school walking along the village path, when he saw a raggedy, squashed, mucky object behind a rubbish bin. He picked it up, intending to throw it in the bin, when some inexplicable force made him want to take it home. Back at the cottage, Tommy ran the tap and sank the object into the soapy, warm water. He gave it a good rub and, all of a sudden, he glimpsed a golden light in the now mucky water. He couldn't believe his eyes at first, but the light kept on glowing and the shrivelled object appeared to grow in size until it was round, plump and smooth. Excitedly, Tommy pulled the object out of the sink and gasped...

‘What is it, Tommy?’ croaked Grandpa from his rocking chair.

‘It’s a ball, Grandpa, the most beautiful golden ball I have ever seen!’ exclaimed Tommy, showing the ball to Grandpa.

‘I can’t believe it,’ whispered Grandpa. ‘It’s the Tonk!’

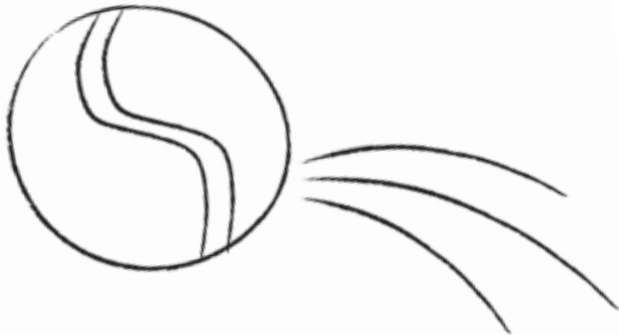
‘Is it, Grandpa? Is it really?’

‘Yes, Tommy, it certainly is! There is no other ball quite like it.’

Both Grandpa and Tommy now had tears in their eyes.

‘You know, Tommy, I think this ball was meant for you. I think your dream of playing Tonk-a-Tonk made it come back to the village. Should we take it out for a game?’ suggested Grandpa.

‘I’ll call my friends! We can play in the field behind the cottage!’ exclaimed Tommy running out of the cottage with a radiant smile on his face.



# The Game

Aria Cowie

*Sacred Heart Primary School (Year 2 - Age 6)*

My favourite game is called Potions Class. It's a game I play at home with my little brother Zachary and my mummy and daddy. I also have a little sister who likes to mix the potions around and always makes a mess. Potions class isn't a game about winning or losing. It's a game where no one gets left out and everyone gets to join in even if they are really little, like my baby sister who is only newborn.

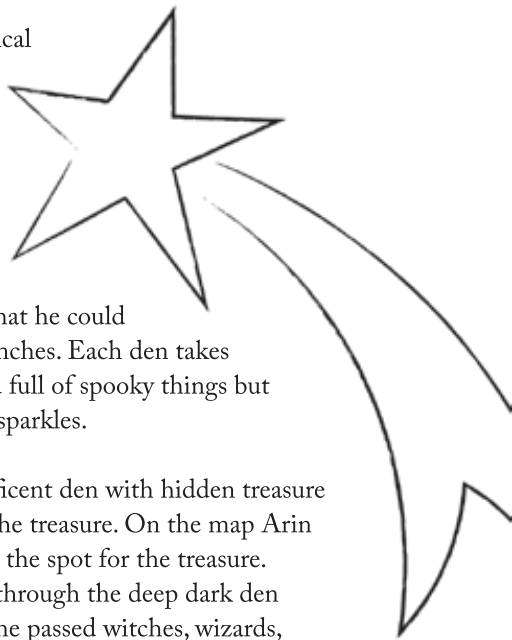
To play the game you need lots of ingredients and someone has to pretend to be the teacher. And then you have to follow the teachers instructions. The teacher makes up the names of things, like lentils could be grasshoppers eggs. I like coming up with funny names that start with the same letters, like, tiny tiger toenails and pegasus poo. My dad always lets us go into the garden and pick plants and put them in the potion. My mum let's us make chemical reactions, like vinegar and sodium bicarbonate. It makes a big explosion and foam goes everywhere and we all scream with laughter. We mix colours using food colouring and I love seeing the colours change when we mix it around. When we put in too many colours it always comes out brown. Sometimes we make it a halloween potion and put in toy bugs, rats and bats. I like seeing them disappear into the water. It makes me feel like a witch. Then we scoop them out and put them in a cup and give it to our parents. It's so funny when they find a spider in their tea. They get such a shock. I like it when my little sister tries to mix the potion because it's so cute when she does it. When we make a massive potion we have to do it outside because we make so much mess. I secretly love making lots of mess. At the end we help clean it all up and look at each other and chuckle together because of all the fun we had.

# Exploring Dens

Arin Pandit

*Pelham Primary School (Year 1 - Age 5)*

Once Upon a time in a magical land far far away there was a little boy called Arin playing a game called Exploring Dens. It was the most amazing game ever! In this game Arin built dens out of pillows and blankets and anything else that he could find like chairs, sofas and benches. Each den takes Arin to a new magical world full of spooky things but mostly full of fireworks and sparkles.



One day Arin built a magnificent den with hidden treasure in it. He had a map to find the treasure. On the map Arin saw a sign that said X marks the spot for the treasure. To find the X Arin crawled through the deep dark den using his torch. On his way he passed witches, wizards, werewolves and other spooky things. It was a bit scary but Arin was brave and crawled past them. When Arin found where the treasure was he started to DIG DIG DIG to see what it was. After some time digging Arin could see something shiny and sparkly and he dug even faster and found the treasure. It was round shiny marbles and gems and golden coins! Arin filled his pockets full of the treasure and had a little party with sparkles and fireworks to celebrate. He invited the witches, wizards and werewolves to the party and they had a disco. They were no longer spooky to Arin because they came to the party and became friends.

There were a lot of guests at the party and the den became a

little unstable and collapsed. When Arin rushed out of the den he saw that his daddy had accidently tripped on the pillows and the blankets that made the den. Daddy was so upset that he had accidently damaged Arin's den and said he was sorry. Afterwards they built a new den and it was even better than the last one and together they had another adventure.

The most important thing about the den game is to let your imagination take you to new magical places and have fun!

The end.

# The Race for Victory

Arlo Krishnan

*Wimbledon Common Prep School (Year 1 - Age 6)*

One sunny day, three gargantuan ships – Olympic, Titanic and Seawise Giant, were selected to participate in a race. The race took place every year and these three ships were always chosen to participate although sometimes other ships were invited to take part as well. For example every odd year the Gigantic is selected too.

The race always took place in the summer because the weather was better and the sea was much calmer. The ships really enjoyed the race as it was fun and everyone got a prize even if they came last.

As the race started, the Olympic went full speed ahead till it came across an iceberg. Then it manoeuvred to dodge the iceberg. Olympic slowed down to send an emergency message using the morse code to the next ship in the race Titanic so it could finish the race safely. Three minutes later, the Titanic gave a message in morse code to the Seawise Giant, even though it was far behind, due to its colossal size. Luckily, it was still able to receive the message.

Fortunately, all the three ships finished the race safely. The Olympic came in first but it didn't beat its personal best time compared to last year because it had to slow down to send the emergency message to Titanic.

The judges decided to remove the extra time the Olympic took to warn the Titanic because it was very responsible and helpful. The moral of the story is that it isn't all about winning but also about helping your opponents when they are in need.

# The Anilympics

Ayman Islam

*Dundonald Primary School (Year 1 - Age 6)*

Deep in the jungle some animals were getting ready for the Anilympics. The Anilympics is the annual event where many animals in the jungle take part in amazing events. The games start with the first signs of summer - when the sunflowers and roses blossom. These games are not planned and don't have any rules. They are like some of the games we humans play but with a twist!

So, one hot sunny day in 2023 when the giraffe spotted a bunch humongous golden sunflower swaying in the breeze, they immediately started to kick a coconut which had fallen to the ground and passed it amongst themselves. A troop of monkeys happily munching on bananas high in the treetops looked down and saw the giraffes playing. They realised the Anilympics had started. They leapt down from the trees to join in the fun!

Before you knew it, the monkeys started to play football against the giraffes with the coconut. But the sky turned grey and heavy rain poured for days, flooding the jungle.

However, the monkeys and the giraffes didn't want to stop playing. So when the ground got covered with water, they turned their football match into water polo game. They continued to play for days until the rain stopped, all the water disappeared and the sun came up again.

The game only stopped when the animals got tired and they needed to rest and feed. There were no rules so there were no losers, only lots of fun and winners.

There were lots of other fun events going on in the jungle that summer, but that was the end of the monkey and giraffes game....until next summer!



# The Game- Feeling Healing

Cobi Du Preez

*Wimbledon Park Primary School (Year 2 - Age 7)*

One summer day at school, Pomny notices that her friend Miya is looking a bit down.

It is lunchtime and they are in the cafeteria.

Are you okay? asks Pomny.

Leave me alone. says Miya.

You sound a bit sad, says Pomny. Why don't you try some positive energy to change your mood?

I don't believe in energy, it's just a lie someone made up, replies Miya.

No it's not, said Pomny. You can use energy to heal yourself so you won't be in a bad mood.

Jax and Kayt is sitting next to them eating lunch and they agree.

I'll prove it to you, says Pomny. This is a game I made it up myself.

Let's play it.

That's a good idea, says Jax. What is it called, asks Kayt?

It is called – “feeling healing” – says Pomny.

How do we play it? asks Maya.

The rules are simple! smiles Pomny.

You must convince as many people as you can to feel energy. This is how.

- 1) First, put your hands out in front of you with your palms facing upwards.
- 2) Feel the weight of both hands. Do you feel anything? Do they feel the same?
- 3) Take one hand away and put it behind your back.
- 4) Now look at the hand in front of you and imagine a fruit in your hand. Ask questions. What does the fruit look like, it can look like anything. What colour? What does it smell like? How heavy is it? What does it feel like when you are holding it?
- 5) Now bring both hands out in front of you again. Lift both hands up and down in the air in front of you. Which one is the heaviest?

The hand with the fruit will be heavier. This proves that you can feel energy and that is how you play this game!

But how do you win? asks Kayt.

Whoever convinces the most people, wins, answers Pomny.

Let's begin! says Jax.

The 4 friends in the lunch hall decide they will play the game.

They head off into the playground. They each find one person at a time to let them do this experiment. Their mission is to convince them that energy exists and that we can all feel it if we try.

At the end of break time they discuss how many points they have.

At last the results are in!

Kayt has convinced 8 children.

Miya has convinced 12!

Jax only has 2.

Pomny has 17! The winner is Pomny. Hurray!

I feel better says Miya. The game was so fun. Now I understand how energy works.

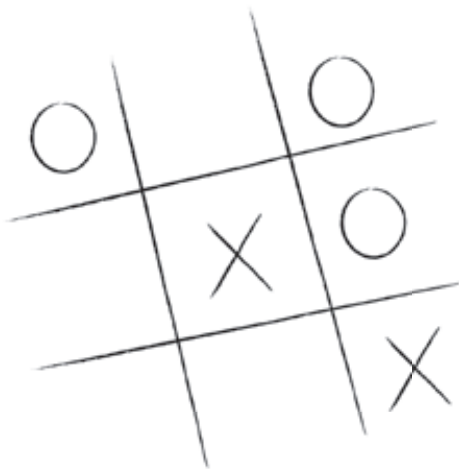
I just have to imagine feeling better and I will no longer feel sad.

The energy from my thoughts can change the energy from my feelings a lot. I just have to believe in myself and try.

Thank you Pomny for showing me.

The school bell rings and they all go back to class in a happy mood.

The end.



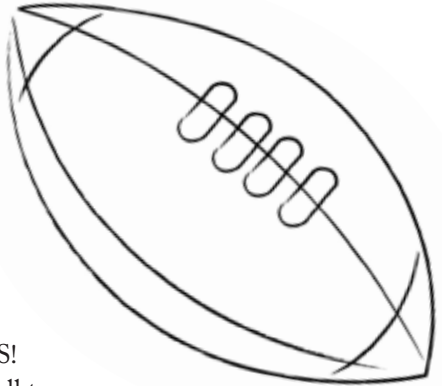
# Fun and Games

Fleur Purser

*Pelham Primary School (Year 1 - Age 6)*

The rules are:

1. You have to make a circle with your friends and family.
2. The judge throws the ball into the middle of the circle.
3. The first one to grab the ball gets to choose the category.
4. The category is...COLOURS!
5. When a person throws the ball to you, you get to choose a colour and then you throw the ball to another friend.



The game is magical.

Lily got the ball and said the colour “blue” as she threw the ball to Eva. Lily looked down and she saw she was changing colour to blue because she was sad because in the last round nobody threw the ball to her.

Eva caught the ball and said the colour “green” while throwing the ball to Ella. Eva looked down and saw that she was changing colour to green because she was feeling calm because when Lily threw the ball she threw the ball very calmly.

Ella missed the ball and after a very long time said the colour “red” as she threw the ball to Ruby. Ella looked down and saw she was turning red because she was angry because she had lost because she couldn't think of a colour and she didn't catch the ball.

Ruby looked down and saw that she was changing colour. The colour was...yellow! She was yellow because she was very happy playing the game. And before all of that she threw the ball to Fleur when she said "yellow".

Fleur caught the ball and then she looked all around and she saw Lily and Eva and Ella and Ruby and Fleur had all turned yellow because they were extremely happy because they absolutely love playing the game!

# Finding Snail

Jade Kwan

*Dundonald Primary School (Year 2 - Age 7)*

On a bright Sunday morning, a hare, a cat, a turtle, an earthworm and a snail were playing hide and seek in the playground.

The cat stretched out her body to look like a bench. The turtle stayed still so he could look like a stepping stool. The earthworm buried himself in the sandpit so that nobody could find him. Now, the hare was ready to look for them.

She searched and searched but couldn't find any of them. She decided to take a break. Hare saw a nice ginger stripy bench. "That is a nice place to rest," thought the hare. She went over and sat on it. "How come this bench is as fluffy as a cat?" thought the hare. "This is not a bench. It's cat! Found you, cat!"

Now where is the turtle? While the hare was thinking, a gust of wind blew some sand from the sandpit. It went into turtle's nose. Turtle couldn't stay still anymore. "ACHOO!" Turtle sneezed. "Found you, turtle!" shouted the hare.

It was a bit tricky to find the earthworm because he was so small. Suddenly, it started to rain. A puddle appeared in the middle of the sandpit. "Help! Help!" shouted the earthworm floating on the puddle. The animals noticed him and quickly pulled him up before he drowned.

Now the animals only hadn't found the snail. They searched for hours and hours but still couldn't find him. "We need a plan," said the hare. "How about getting a new house for the snail? We all know that snail's shell is getting old. We can collect as many shells as we can and place them here for snail to move in." "That sounds like a good plan," everybody agreed.

The animals went out to look for shells.

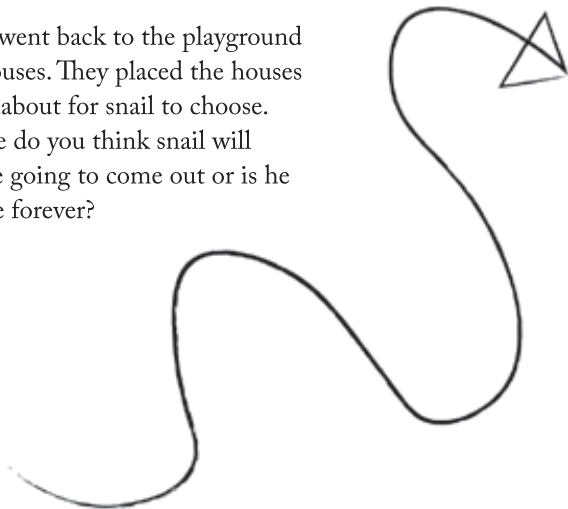
Turtle found a shell on the beach. It was made of slimy seaweed, shimmering pearls and colourful seashells. Most importantly, it was waterproof!

Earthworm dug and dug near a volcano until he found a black hollow obsidian rock. "This could do!" thought the earthworm because he knew this rock formed from volcano ash could make a fine, strong house.

In the woods, the hare scraped and scraped using her cute little paws until she gathered a pile of bark from a tree. She carried the bark to her workshop to carve out a wooden house. "This house will keep snail cool in the summer," she thought.

Cat had a pillow stuffed with cotton. She used some cotton to sew a comfy, cosy house for the snail.

The animals went back to the playground with their houses. They placed the houses on the roundabout for snail to choose. Which house do you think snail will choose? Is he going to come out or is he going to hide forever?



# Checkmate to Save the World!

Liantai Jasper Lin

*Wimbledon Common Prep School (Year 1 - Age 6)*

Not long ago in a bustling, cozy town nestled between rolling, leafy hills and sparkling, winding riverd, there lived two adventurous and curious boys named Jasper and Ethan. They were extremely passionate about playing chess and dreamed of embarking on magical adventures.

On a splendid, sunny spring day, Jasper and Ethan attended the finals of a famous junior chess championship a the town hall. At the lengthy break time before Round 2, they crept cautiously into the Wonderful Woods nearby. The majestic, emerald, green tees stretched as far as the eyes could see, and the treetops like gigantic, green umbrellas provided pleasant shelter. The rainbow coloured flowers were dancing elegantly in the breeze while a floral sweet scent was drifting in the air. As they skipped along a narrow, twisted path, Jasper and Ethan enjoyed the soft, melodious tunes made by birds chirping merrily.

All of a sudden, under a giant oak tree, they discovered a shing, mysterious chessboard made of delicate china. With hearts pounding with excitement and curiosity, Jasper unlocked the chessboard and a whit shimmer emerged.

In the blink of an eye, they found themselves in a peculiar place – a barren black and white landscape. “CHESSVILLE? The place where chess was invented HOORAY!” Ehtan cried excitedly, peering at a sign written Kingdom of Chessville. Just at this moment, an enormous, pearl white horse galloped boisterously towards them. On top of it rode a fierce, fearless knight wearing a golden armour, as dazzling as a supernova. As the horse stopped, the knight bellowed exhilarated, “Thank you for coming and we need your help!” The knight then explained patiently. The

dark, powerful Lord Checkmate had controlled the kingdom, capturing the caring king and queen and turning this colourful, lively kingdom into a dull, black and white waste land.

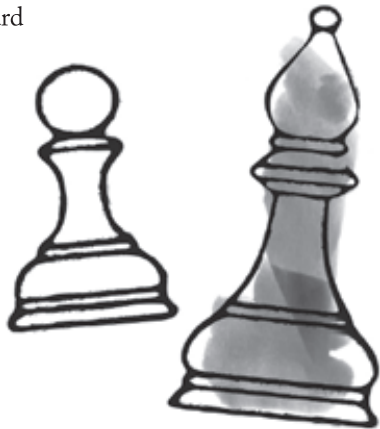
Without warning, as Jasper and Ehtan joined the knight and marched towards the castle of Lord Checkmate, Lord Checkmate and his wicked black army turned up mysteriously. With wild, dirt beards, a long, warty nose and bulging, sneaky eyes, Lord Check mate was as ugly as a mud fence Waving his gnarled fingers like spikder legs, he declared viciously, "I will change the rule of chess and make everyone hate the game!" He continued, "I will dump every chessboard into your oceans, so that your magnificent Planet Earth will be flooded and destroyed entirely!"

"Never take a chance!" Jasper and Ehtan exclaimed determinedly.

Then they started a challenging chess game against Lord Checkmate. With skills they learnt in their years of playing chess, Jasper and Ethan outsmarted Lord Checkmate, leading to the final VICTORY.

In the flash of mage, Lord Checkmate shrank back to a piece in the chessboard

– King of Black. As the Kingdom of Chessville came back to life Jasper and Ethan found themselves back in the town hall and ready for Round2. The world was still as peaceful as before, making Jasper and Ehtan delighted. Outside, birds were still chirping tremendous tunes.



# Riddle Me This

Lyanna Asare

*Merton Abbey Primary School (Year 1 - Age 6)*

Riddle me this, I can move, I can swim, and I can climb but I have no legs, what am I?

**SNAKE!**

This is a story about a girl who loves to play games with her dad. The time she spends with her dad is the best, especially when he gives her riddles to answer and when they play her favourite game, Snake oi.

Her dad's riddles are always so tricky and helps her to use her brain to think, like.....What goes up and never comes down? I bet you don't know the answer to that? Getting the answers to the riddles makes her feel confident, excited and proud.

The Snake oi game is also very exciting and such a thrill. In the game, the player's snake must eat as many other snakes as possible. The more snakes the player's snake eats the longer and longer the snake becomes. The snake gets to curl around smaller snakes, trapping them. The player must be quick and clever enough to avoid their snake being eaten.

Riddle me this, what is better than losing?

**WINNING!**

Becoming the longest snake and becoming the king is amazing but what is more amazing is playing the game with her dad.

Riddle me this, what words come at the end of every fairy tale?

**THE END!**

# The Girl Who Loved Games

Otilie Williams

*Fircroft Primary School (Year 2 - Age 6)*

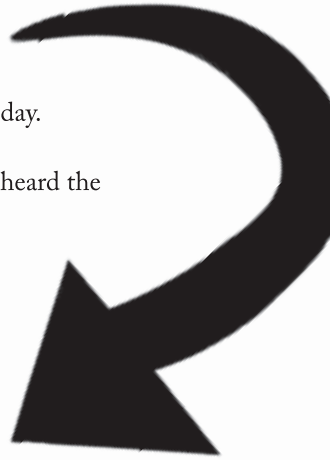
Once upon a time there was a girl called Mila and she had a brother, a daddy and a mummy, and she loved playing games. She played games every single day.

It was a Tuesday morning when suddenly she heard the doorbell ring. Then she answered the door. Five of her friends came into her house. There were three girls and two boys.

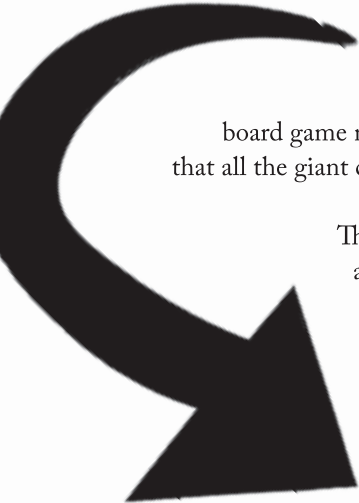
They started by playing a game of Snakes and Ladders, then they played a game of Monopoly. Suddenly, all the characters in the game of Monopoly came alive! To Mila's shock, her house then turned into the game. Her family were so scared they ran out of the house screaming and left Mila alone with her friends. Luckily, she was 11 so she was ok with being alone.

The characters were the size of humans and a train carriage from the game had even come to life too. A character called Monopoly from the game went on the train. He carried on playing the game, he threw the dice, he got nine and then his train carriage moved nine spaces along. Then a human, one of Mila's friends, gave the character a game card with five houses on it.

Next, the boy from the game rolled both dice again and got two. To his horror, Monopoly landed on the Jail square. Bad luck! The police arrested him and locked him in jail.



Mila and her friends were so confused. The board game had become human-sized. Luckily, Monopoly had a card so he could get out of jail. Suddenly something fell off the shelf in the living room and fell into Mila's hand. It was a control button. She pressed the button and the Monopoly game disappeared. She thought, 'Phew! I've got my home back to normal.'



The character Monopoly and everything from the game vanished and got sucked back into the box.

Mila's friends then decided to play the board game normally and she joined in, feeling happy that all the giant characters from the game had gone.

The next day, at school Mila told her class about what happened but her class didn't believe her. They thought it wasn't true, so Mila changed her mind and decided to keep it a secret in the future instead. Her parents were so scared, they tried so hard to forget about it and they never remembered it again.

# **The Chicken Who \*Tried\* Not to Give Up**

Theodore Kfoury

*St. Mary's Primary School (Year 1 - Age 6)*

Once upon a time there was a chicken called Harry.

He wanted to be the best rock climber. So he climbed 8 rocks, but he fell down. He said to himself: "Rock climbing is a bit tricky."

"Silly old chicken!!" Said Harry. So he decided to try another thing.

He tried an art club. First, he had to draw an apple. His picture was not good. He tried to draw an animal, but it was still not good! He said, "My hands are tired of drawing, better try something else."

Later he went to a dancing club (after school chicken club). They told Harry to do a warm-up. Harry said, "Are we going to the beach?"

The instructor said no. When they started to dance, Harry was not following the instructions. So, he was kicked out of the dancing club, Harry had to try another club.

The last thing he tried was gymnastics, when the teacher was telling everyone what to do,

Harry was talking over the teacher. When they were practising the moves, Harry was just flopping all around his mat. All the moves were risky. Harry then decided to go home. He changed into his pyjamas and whispered in bed, "I give up, I never want to go to clubs, ever again."

# The Great Plane Race

Viaan Jain

*Wimbledon Park Primary School (Year 2 - Age 7)*

I was an ordinary boy. I had friends, I had enemies and I lived near Wimbledon Park. One day I got a letter, it was golden with a white paper plane in the middle. I opened the letter, my hand trembling it said “congratulations!

You have been invited for paper plane finals. Meet us at 3:00PM at Central hall.”



Paper plane race wasn't just a race it was a league! In the race you make a paper plane, throw your paper plane, which ever gets the furthest wins. It was 2:00 PM I knew I had to make my plane fast. I made a fabulous plane it was smooth and faster than a bullet so I named it Bullet.

The clock struck 2:40 I had reached Central hall. It was grand and 400 years old. It was 1000F large and the sealing was made out of gold. I looked at the time. 2:59. I trembled a little I saw a huge cup with diamonds, emeralds and rubies. It was time to throw the planes I gulped. I looked at bullet and murmured don't fail me we got in line.

The first person was last years champion Max, he threw his plane 800F. Next was John he had a very pale face and a scratch on his forehead. His plane went 900F. Next it was me I felt nervous and went to the edge and threw my plane 1000F. I one! Soon I was holding the golden, glimmering cup. I felt so excited I fell down from the bed and woke up.



# HIGHLY COMMENDED POEMS

Key Stage 2

Years 3-4

Age 7-9



# The Game in My Imagination

Aariv Chadha

*Dundonald Primary School (Year 4 - Age 9)*

The game in my Imagination  
Is one unlike any other,  
From the ivory-white clouds,  
To the supervillain's lair.  
(Which makes everyone cry in despair).

The game in my Imagination  
Is one unlike any other,  
Where trees talk and snakes squawk,  
And look out for poisonous goldfish like a hawk.

The game in my Imagination  
Has bullies all about,  
But we change their minds and shout out.  
Soon in my imagination, seedlings sprout,  
Filled with teamwork and courage from heroes themselves,  
Just like the elves,  
Heroes like us  
(Although we sometimes get in a fuss).

The game in my imagination  
Is more than the fun,  
Its about how everyone's a hero,  
A superhero in fact!  
No matter how big, no matter how small,  
We can all make a pact,  
About the way we act.  
Always be good,  
You really should.



The game in my imagination  
Can also be fun,  
Makes you feel like jumping over the sun,  
If you don't want it to be a bore,  
Maybe you can even do a little more,  
But remember not to go to extreme,  
Or being a winner will become a distant dream.

The game in my imagination  
Has rules of being: Ready,  
Respectful, Kind and Safe,  
while keeping the game steady.  
But the most important rule is to be a true hero,  
No matter your race or your pace, you can be a hero.

The game in my imagination  
Drifts off into yours,  
Shifts and shapes taking a different form.  
Having ideas in the mind travel from,  
Brain to Brain.  
(Although many think that it's insane).

To play the game in my imagination  
You will need to enter the world of creation,  
That defies the realms of perfection!  
So are you ready to play  
The game in my imagination?

# Champion of the Boxing Ring!

Aleksander Zych-Twaddell

*Sacred Heart Primary School (Year 4 - Age 9)*

Let me tell you a little secret on how to be the champion of the boxing ring,  
Well, if you really want to win in the ring,  
Lots of dedication you need to bring,  
What do they say?  
No pain, no gain!  
Train, train, train it doesn't matter the weather, even if it will rain,  
Smooth arm movements whizzing unthoughtfully through the air,  
Now your opponent really ought to care!  
Careful – watch out! Left, right, left right,  
My flicking, dancing legs are moving out loud, my arms are screaming with power,  
Don't give up, don't give in, don't give up and remember...  
No pain no gain, you're the champion of the boxing ring!



# The Game of Life

Alfred Bacon

*Fircroft Primary School (Year 4 - Age 9)*

Which path to choose?

One you might lose.

Career or College?

One you'll gain more knowledge.

Riding along, what's your career?

A politician, or an engineer?

Time to get married. Pay 50K,

Also maybe get a house to stay.

Fill up your car with family and friends,

Twins, Billy and Ben

Plus pets, Jilly and Jen.

Spin the wheel, it decides your fate

So spin it now, before it's too late.

Driving along, thinking it's cool,

Before you send your kids to private school.

Some actions go your way,

While others make you really pay.

Finally, you have the chance to invest,

So pick the number you think is best.

It'll be lucky number two

An ice cream stand might fit for you.

STOP! Mid-life spinout,

Will I spin black or red?

Going down the longer path is a concern, to be said.

Cruising down the motorway,

Retire early for a big payday.

Now it's time to do the count,

Family and cash all amount.

Let's see, will it be enough?

No! My brother has made it too tough!



# Games in My Life

Aveer Gulati

*Donhead Prep school (Year 3 - Age 8)*

When I was one games were fun.  
Playing peekaboo with mum and giggling away.  
Whoosh...I was dads pretend plane.  
My brother shared his favourite toys with me.  
I can't remember how I felt but in all the pictures I had a broad grin, so I'm guessing it was joyful.

When I turned two games were jolly.  
For Christmas I got a toy broom and vacuum cleaner until my brother got attacked by them!  
Instead, mum told me to play with blocks and learn numbers through snakes and ladders.  
I always had a toothy grin while playing games.

When I was three games were epic.  
I got a hole in one with my colourful, mini golf set.  
Beating my mum in Sorry even though she had 33 years of experience, was terrific!  
I had a glow of happiness when I got a Paw Patrol truck for my 3rd birthday.  
No job was too big, and I was not so small.

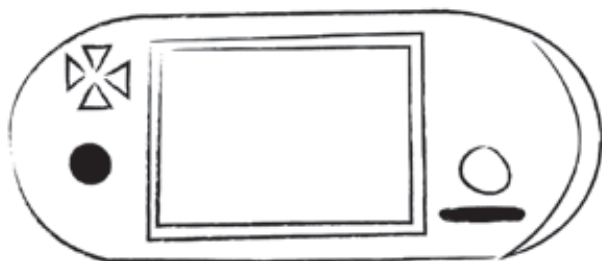
Halfway gone of this poem, I was four.  
I used my engineering skills to carefully design the longest Marble run in history.  
Football was fantastic and I never lost a game of Uno!  
I was over the moon when I got a Spiderman action figure for my birthday.  
I swung webs of any size and caught thieves just like flies!

When I turned five the games were thrilling.  
Playing pretend with Lego men and making their world.  
I learnt to swim like a dolphin in West Wittering, but I wonder  
why mum had a worried expression on her face?  
I was always buzzing with excitement and broke into a broad  
smile while playing games.

When I was six games were exciting.  
I discovered Minecraft!  
In Cluedo, I could guess a suspect in two moves. I promise I was  
not cheating!  
I was unstoppable in Labyrinth.  
Games became humorous because I learnt a trick or two!

Last year I was seven, games were awesome.  
The FIFA 23 bug bit me!  
I was swinging like a monkey in Go Ape but sadly I still haven't  
got carrom, yet!  
Games are getting better every year.

Now I am eight, games are lively.  
Playing rugby for my club, we are Warriors, and we are  
unbeatable.  
In cricket, I'm turning into a fast bowler like Kapil Dev.  
Dad and I love smashing balls in table tennis.  
And I am looking forward to playing a lot of new games.



# The Escape Train

Caspar Murrell

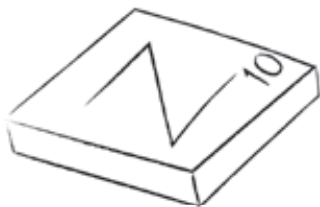
*Shrewsbury House School (Year 4 - Age 9)*

I'm playing a game of tennis,  
and Josh is playing too,  
but my racket sucks me into it,  
making a sound a bit like 'moo'.

I travel through space and time,  
at the speed of a rapid plane,  
and where do I land, of course,  
on the floor of an ancient train.

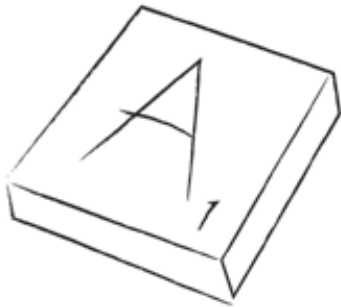
It's very, very rusty,  
there's a letter on the bench,  
it says I need to do three tasks,  
and that I cannot use a wrench.

I start by getting coal,  
a really messy job,  
it made me pant a lot,  
like an exhausted dog.



I then move on to cabin crew,  
I've got someone to help,  
in cabin six, needing to mix,  
some seaweed and some kelp.

I find nobody there,  
except some target practice,  
I take my gun out and shoot them,  
the targets fall onto a mattress.



Out comes a high-tech hoverboard,  
from the unknown above,  
on the front it is engraved,  
with a flying dove.

In the next cabin I find some blocks,  
and slots in which to put them,  
I do them all correctly,  
Out comes a key with a gem.

The gem was very valuable,  
and so was the key,  
I found a door and unlocked it,  
and out, on a hoverboard, comes a flying me.

I find a time machine,  
a massive time machine,  
When I step inside,  
The floor is very clean.

I click the big red button,  
and out of the window I see,  
the white-blue swirl of time,  
and it amazes me.

I came out feeling queasy,  
like time travel does to you,  
I hear Josh muttering quietly,  
saying “why is it always moo?”

When I come home I find a letter,  
perched upon a bench,  
it says I’ve done all of my tasks,  
and that I can now use a wrench.

# Football: The Brilliant Game

Edward Vosper

*St John Fisher Primary School (Year 3 - Age 8)*

GOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOAAAAAAAAALLL!!!

Dribbling, shooting, passing,

Defending, heading, turning,

Attacking, assisting, saving,

Striking, sliding, clearing,

RUNNING, RUNNING, RUNNING!

THINKING, THINKING, THINKING!

BATTLING, BATTLING, BATTLING!

Keepers, defenders, midfielders,

Wingers, strikers, centre-backs,

Teammates, friendship.

Coaches, stewardship.

Winning? Drawing? Losing?

GOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOAAAAAAAAALLL!!!

Lifting the... TROPHY!!!



# Captured

Emilie Boyce

*Ursuline Prep School (Year 3 - Age 8)*

I am the most important one,  
They treat me with care.  
I am the Queen and I have a King  
And our Knight is over there.

Playing this game is like a rollercoaster,  
It's full of ups and downs.  
They pick me up and I am floating,  
With my beautiful gown.

Where will they put me? Where will they move me?  
Who will I capture?  
It could be a pawn. It could be a knight.  
Will this be the next chapter?

Now I have given you all of the clues,  
Now you have to guess.  
It's a game of moving pieces.  
It's a game of chess!



# Spectacular Sports

Isabella Mackie

*St John Fisher Primary School (Year 3 - Age 8)*

Sport is spectacular in every single way,  
From Acrobatics to Ziplining, there is something for everyone  
to play.

Playing with my family and friends and trying something new,  
Football, Swimming and Horse riding are 3 of my favourite  
things to do

Playing football with my friends, jumpers for goals  
Sliding in mud and passing the ball  
Tackling and scoring is so much fun  
Lots of laughing and cheering until the game is won.

When I swim, I feel free and peaceful jumping in the pool  
Under the water it is so clear, calm, and cool.  
Learning the strokes with different arm movements and kicks  
I also love swimming in the sea and snorkeling with the fish

Horse riding is a special sport that always excites me  
meeting my pony and making a connection ever so quickly  
Remembering to balance, feeling confident and free  
Sitting up straight, trotting along as happy as can be.

Sport can be challenging and tough but always lots of fun  
It can be an adventure, something new, or something you have  
always done  
It can be fiercely competitive or soothing and calming to play  
Sport is spectacular in every single way!

# The Day has Come

Kira Cousins

*Malmesbury Primary School (Year 3 - Age 7)*

The day has come,  
The morning has arrived,  
I am feeling nervous with butterflies.  
I have practised day after day and night after night,  
I don't know if we are going to win,  
But we will try with all our might.  
Are my team ready? Are they feeling scared?  
Are their tummies upside down?  
Are they prepared?  
It is time to go now to face the journey ahead,  
My body is shaking with sweat on my forehead.  
Now I am here, I have warmed up a bit,  
My friends are here, they are in their new kit,  
It is time to play the grand final!  
Come, let's go says the referee.  
The game starts, the ball is bouncing around,  
I pass it to a team mate and bounce it down.  
The hoop is right in front of me,  
I shoot it and it goes in.  
Every one is cheering and jumping,  
Now we are going to win!  
Can you guess the game we're playing?  
It's fun, even if you are small  
You guessed it right...  
It's basketball!

# Family Fortunes

Libby Carew-Gibbs

*Sacred Heart Primary School (Year 4 - Age 8)*

Gather round it's game night fun,  
With family fortunes, we've begun,  
We sit around the table tight,  
Ready to guess, with all our might.

Mum read the questions, we're all excited,  
Our answers wild, minds ignited,  
From "name something you find in a kitchen drawer?",  
To "what is a pet that you might adore?"

"Survey says" brings cheers or groans,  
But we're all happy, not just clones,  
Win or lose, it's all okay,  
because we're together come what may.

With every round, our bonds grow strong,  
In family fortune we all belong,  
It's not about who gets the crown,  
But sharing laughs, without a frown.  
So thank you, GAME, for all the fun,  
With Family Fortunes, we've won,  
We'll play again, without a donut,  
Because being with family is what it's all about.

# A Pack of Games

Maya Pal

*Poplar Primary School (Year 4 - Age 9)*

As I reach for the stars  
I leap, weightless in the air  
Flying through this game of mine  
But this feeling I can not define

A ray of sunshine upon my face  
When I do not compete with my  
fellow mates.

Instead I BREATHE

But do they breathe?  
When a storm echoes inside them,  
I can feel the thunder when it slips away  
As it begins to break walls and shatter boundaries

The mind begins to pick up  
It stirs the senses  
Fingers curl, thoughts rush  
Now this is a game of black and white

The mind darkness with a whirlwind of emotions  
It's ripped apart by indecision  
What should I Do?  
Eyebrows twitch, lightening strikes  
Along the rules, they do not reside  
To win, they say, the rules I must not abide

As the storm rages on  
And the lawless choices are made  
Sunlight does not shine



We're better off without a hurricane inside  
For when our eyes are not fixed on the trophy  
The tension breaks, the heart roams free  
As it pumps with joy  
We jump as one  
As the wolf with his pack.

# The Olympic Games

Myra Kasat

*Wimbledon High School (Year 3 - Age 8)*

The whistle blows,  
Water seeps through goggles,  
Routines are designed,  
As backflips and splits are performed.

The ball goes up in the air,  
And a serve is hit,  
A pair come on,  
And do a sit spin.

A skateboard is brought,  
As a jump is finished,  
A horse rider climbs onto a saddle,  
As the horse begins to trot.

BOOM  
The 400m sprint starts,  
Clapping begins,  
As the javelin is thrown,  
The pole is placed, the athlete is in midair,

The high jumper gets ready,  
As the leap takes place,  
The strike is launched,  
HURRAY! its a GOAL,

The stadium is full of noise and excitement,  
Stories of success are shared,  
Champagne is sprayed and  
Parties are held everywhere



# My Flying Machine

Nathan Cooper

*Merton Park Primary School (Year 3 - Age 8)*

My Flying Machine

On the table, my machine awaits,

It sits there watching me.

It wants to be flown and glide through the air,

What can it be?

I get my remote and turn it on,

I must make sure not to lose it or it will be gone.

Over the table and under the chair,

It is now flying in the air.

The propellers are spinning but then there is a crash,

Oh no it fell but at least it did not smash.

I race it all over and I practice every day,

Inside, outside, up, and down, it always goes a different way.

I try to be an 'ace' and

to win every race.

I have good days and bad and

Sometimes it does not land on the pad.

To summarise in short,

I wish this were an Olympic sport,

So, I can compete one day.

in the Olympic games and show everyone how I play.

So, I guess you wondering what this can be...

Well, this is the story of my drone and me.

# Zip, Zap, Zoom – a Dream Come True!

Om Bindal

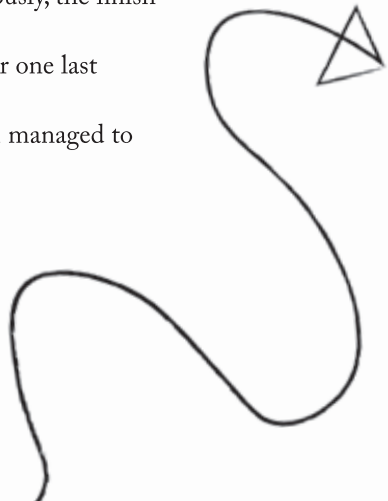
*Dundonald Primary School (Year 4 - Age 9)*

Always fascinated by the concept of pace,  
I found my calling when I got this chance to race.  
Always admiring the bravery of Formula 1 drivers,  
Now it was my turn to be one of those survivors.

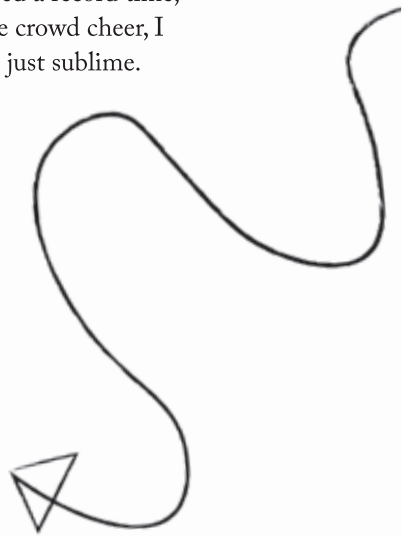
At the start line, sitting anxiously at the wheel biting my nail,  
A million thoughts ran through my mind, one of them being  
“What if I fail?”  
Slowly and gingerly, I picked up speed,  
I just knew I had to overcome my fear and somehow succeed.

Moving, manoeuvring, speeding, slowing,  
Faster than a roller coaster, my kart was going.  
Confidence mounted as I did my best to strive,  
Adrenaline pumped through my veins, making me feel more  
alive.  
Comfortable with my surroundings I was now becoming,  
With every passing lap, I could feel my technique improving.

As the checkered flag waved vigorously, the finish  
line was in my sight,  
‘Screech...’ I pressed the accelerator one last  
time with all my might.  
With only a split second to spare, I managed to  
get to beat the kart ahead,  
The taste of success was sweet  
indeed, but I didn’t let it  
get to my head.



In spite of my first attempt, I had achieved a record time,  
Standing on the podium and hearing the crowd cheer, I  
could barely express my feelings – it was just sublime.  
Happiest indeed I am every time I race,  
Afterall I do love PACE!



# Checkmate

Orla Vashisht

*Ursuline Prep School (Year 4 - Age 8)*

The warriors are ready, let the game begin.  
The board is the battleground, who's going to win?  
64 squares, waiting and waiting.  
My army in white, my brothers in black.  
16 pieces each, ready to attack.

You can play chess anywhere,  
Sitting on the beach, sitting on a chair,  
Speak any language, be any age.  
Grandmaster or beginner, its fun at any stage.

Logic and strategy, use your brain!  
Don't be lazy: plan, then plan again.  
Look ahead, what could your opponent do?  
If they check you, check them too.

Pawns pounce like panthers, ready to attack.  
Rooks glide like dolphins, forwards and back.  
Others move in 'L' shapes or diagonally.  
The King is lazy, only one square at a time,  
The Queen slides to victory, making everything fine.

I know the rules, its not a mystery,  
My ancestors did too – a link with history.  
Its started in India, then moved throughout the East.  
From there, its spread never ceased.

I play when I'm happy, I play when I'm sad.  
Sometimes I'm good, sometimes I'm bad.  
CHECK!! CHECKMATE!!  
It stops the boredom from closing in.  
It's even more fun when you win!

# Quarrelsome Quidditch

Senara Bacon

*St Matthew's Primary School (Year 4 - Age 8)*

Striding boldly on to the wide-stretched pitch  
Mounting their trusty broomsticks.  
Filling in like an angry swarm,  
Wearing gleaming, majestic uniform.  
Soaring across the bright blue sky,  
It feels as though times merrily whizzing by.

Players so brutal, cheers the crowd,  
Hear their chants said aloud.  
Riders spit and groan and moan,  
In a very inappropriate tone.  
Seeker swiftly catches the snitch,  
The other team is in an awful stitch.



All the players go dirty and start to slash,  
'Cause the bludgers given them such a cruel bash.  
Ref blows his squeaky whistle , minus five points  
Unfortunately , players collide and suddenly go "bdoink".

Crowds boo, cheer, and whoop whoop.  
Goal saved by the keeper, "Oh shoot!"  
Half-time stops the flow of happiness,  
And as for the attitude half time starts sapping it.

Soon the whistle blows, we fly elegantly to the ground,  
Hear the crowds exceedingly deafening  
As a mighty sound!

# The Competition

Sophia Karapata

*Malmesbury Primary School (Year 3 - Age 7)*

A lot of hard work,  
Hours of practice,  
On Saturday after the lessons,  
A group of singers and dancers,  
Participated in an intense competition,  
Run by Sutton Council,  
Dressed in traditional Ukranian costumes,  
We sang our hearts out,  
And danced our Gopak,  
Like bravest Kozaks,  
Presenting our culture in London,  
Waiting patiently for our turn,  
With joy and surprise we heard that we had won,  
Sharing great news with our friends and families.



# Game On! A Family That Plays Together, Stays Together

Theodore D'Lima

*Donhead Prep School (Year 4 - Age 9)*

It was the holidays, end of school.  
I was being a silly fool.  
On the sofa watching TV all day,  
Nothing to do, nothing to play.  
Letting life go by, slowly fading away.

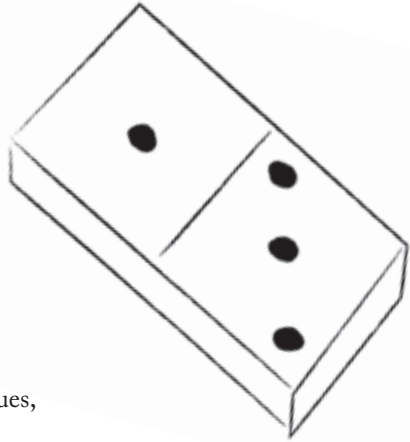
One noon, one day,  
Bored on the sofa, where I lay.  
In came Dad, with a grin so wide,  
Carrying a big box, could this turn the tide?  
It got me all excited, I was ready for a fun joy ride.

It was filled with all sorts of wacky games.  
"Game on!", he said, "no tricks, no names!"  
First, he pulled out a game of Chess.  
I played it before, so was able to guess,  
Every move to checkmate - I won straight sets!

We had a blast with Snakes & Ladders plus Ludo  
But more players needed, so bro joined in after Judo.  
Next came Scrabble and little sis was winning.  
She's good at forming words and I, at tiles placing.  
Then, we all played Bingo till late, late evening.

In the morning, Jenga was a classic,  
Keeping the blocks stacked up was kind of magic.  
Post lunch, a lucky hand at Uno was the best.  
Draw-two, Draw-four and Reverse thrown all in jest.  
A well-timed Wild card helped me win this quest.

We teamed up for Dominoes,  
Checkers, and Connect4 all in line,  
Following on to Darts and  
Marbles, where I did just fine.  
Later on, tried my hand at  
Rubik's cube with pride.  
But managed to solve only  
one side,  
I found it tricky even with the  
solution guide.



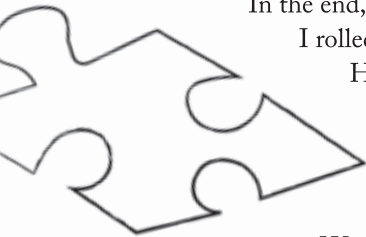
Dad wanted a dynamic dual using cues,  
pucks and rackets.  
Into the box he dived to reveal more game packets.  
We played Table Tennis, Air Hockey and bumper Pool.  
I was behind, as he made me follow every rule.  
Finally, after winning a Badminton match, I felt cool.

Mum was all about a nice family sit-down.  
Quickly solving 1000-piece Puzzles, she took the crown.

In the end, Monopoly turned out to be quite the dare.

I rolled double sixes and got to Trafalgar square.

However, on a Chance card I landed in jail -  
it was so unfair!



Just like that, the holidays flew  
by super-fast,

With endless things to do at last.

Playing games indoors with family was super fun.  
We laughed, we cried, and we fought until we were done.  
Afterall, Life is a game – we each play our part and together we  
grow as one.

# Guess the Game

Zaynab Khan

*Joseph Hood Primary School (Year 3 - Age 8)*

Guess the Game

You can play with two or more people

Anyone can play anywhere

With mum and dad at home

Or with friends at school

Things taking you up but also down

Tangled and tied wiggly creatures

Roll the dice to make your counter move

They can travel up, down or sideways

If you get to the end you will win the game

Wooden sticks you must climb to win

Sometimes you get very high or very low

It starts at one and ends at one hundred

Can you guess the game?

Would you like to have a go?





## **HIGHLY COMMENDED STORIES:**

*Key Stage 2*

*Years 3-4*

*Age 7-9*

# Resilience

Abinitha Sathiyasothy

*The Sherwood School (Year 4 - Age 9)*

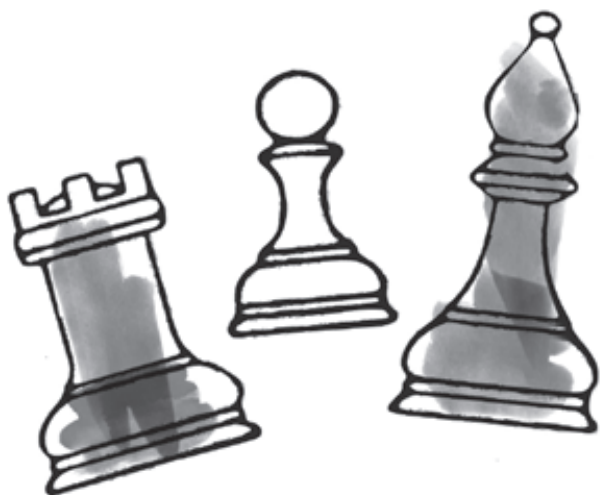
In a small peaceful town, there was a famous primary school called The Sherwood. We can say that there are about five hundred pupils studying. Every child is expected to follow the Sherwood values that spell out RESPECT. Every week the head teacher addresses the values, so the children are clearly aware of them. Every morning and afternoon the streets outside are like an ocean of people! It's fascinating to watch the happy children in the mornings and afternoons.

In year four, there is an intelligent and merciful girl named Lagaya. She is the best in everything and she never gives up. If you ever looked at her, you would think that she has something in her head. Other's think that she doesn't know how to express herself, as she is always silent. But the truth is opposite to others' assumptions.

One humid afternoon, a man was giving out leaflets to the parents. Lagaya got one to as it looked as beautiful as a rainbow which captured everyone's attention. Whoever saw it wouldn't pass by without reading it. The second Lagaya read it, her smile washed away the clouds and lit up the sky like the sun. The leaflet was all about a chess competition next month. This leaflet is what Lagaya was waiting for.

Eventually the most awaited day came. Lagaya was nervous but at the same time excited! This was the golden day in her life. The game started smoothly, then got a bit tighter, and then very tough! For a second, Lagaya lost her confidence, but she knew that she should never give up. Eventually, the time came where Lagaya was crowned the winner! The crowd went wild and Lagaya started crying!

Now it was time for her victory speech. “First of all I would like to thank my parents for introducing chess to me. My family is very small, my mum, dad, brother, and me. My dad’s ambition is for me to become the world’s best chess player! This place gave me confidence, that told me that I can make his dream come true. We are a family with a poor financial background,” suddenly Lagaya started crying, “Due to the financial problem, I stopped learning chess last year. Whenever Mrs. Samouel talks about the Sherwood values, the word resilience makes me stronger every day. This helped me achieve the grandmaster award at this young age. So my dear friends, I advise to play any game, as it helps to keep you mentally and physically well. One day, you will rock the world!



# **The Girl from Morden Who Wins Wimbledon**

Allegra Stanelli Angilè

*Poplar Primary School (Year 3 - Age 8)*

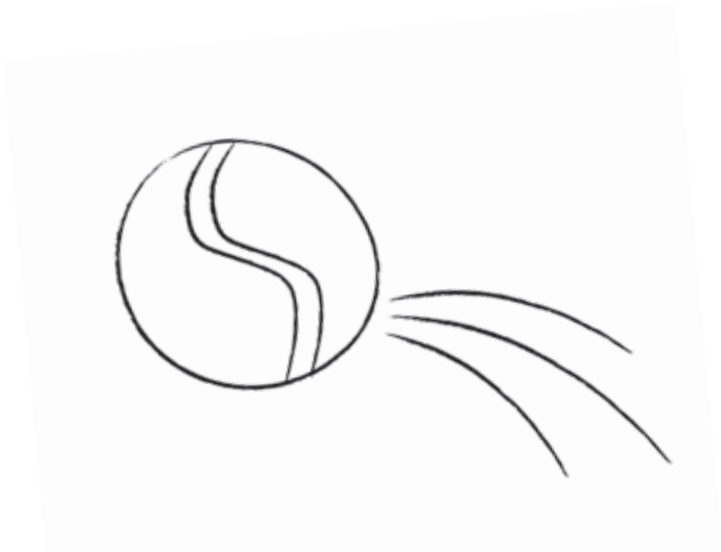
Once upon a time there was a girl who lived in Morden and loved Wimbledon.

Her name was Melody, she was 8 and she loved everything about Wimbledon: The Smiggle shop, Franco Manca, the cinema...but, above all, she loved the Wimbledon Championships! Melody really enjoyed playing tennis, her dream was in fact to win the Wimbledon Championships one day.

Melody had a dear friend, Harmony, who enjoyed playing tennis too. Melody and Harmony would spend hours after hours, days after days practicing in Morden and having the best time of their life. One day Harmony asked Melody: "Would you like to go to the Wimbledon tennis courts with me to practice?" Melody thought it was a brilliant idea, so she replied "Yes!" and they went to Wimbledon by bus together with their mums.

When they finally arrived there, Melody was amazed by how beautiful the Wimbledon tennis courts were. Melody and Harmony kept playing and training there for many years until they were both 19, when Melody qualified to compete at Wimbledon. Although Harmony did not qualify, the two girls stayed best friends and continued to support and be kind to each other, like true friends do.

Melody thought the competition at the Wimbledon Championships was very challenging because all the other players were good. However, she was now 19 and, thanks to all that hard work and practicing with her best friend Harmony, she



learned a special skill called “low shot”, a magic trick that made her win many matches.

When Melody got to the finals, she had to compete against Crudelia, a player who was bully and rude with all her opponents. Harmony then reminded Melody to believe in herself, stay kind and try to beat Crudelia using her magic “low shot”.

Once on court against Crudelia, at match point, Melody did her low shot and won the Wimbledon Championships! When receiving her trophy, in her speech she reminded everyone to always “be kind, work hard and follow your dreams”.

# The Game

Anthony Tianyi Cocula

*Wimbledon Chase Primary School (Year 4 - Age 9)*

One stormy afternoon, at his cosy home, Jeff was comfortable on his cushiony sofa enjoying his computer game. CRACK! Suddenly, a bright light shot out of the computer screen and struck him. Terrified and bewildered, Jeff felt himself spinning at a tremendous pace, and with a booming bang, he fell to the ground...

Jeffery's legs were noodles, bile bubbled in his mouth and his hair stood up like prickly needles. Where was he? Perplexed, Jeffery turned his head to see an eerie manor shrouded in mist, that was nested in the heart of a gigantic overgrown garden. CRACKLE! Thunder rumbled like a ravenous stomach and dazzling arrows of lightning streaked across the sky, ripping its belly which let out clusters of clattering rain. Straining with steamy, wet eyes, Jeff groped toward the vast manor before him.

As Jeff approached the door, the wind was a knife on his cheek, and to his surprise, the doorknob was unlocked. Cobwebs lingered and the foul stench of blood loitered in the air. It was as dark as night in the manor so Jeff couldn't see a thing. Suddenly, there was a flash of light and he caught a glimpse of a shadowy figure darting past him. What could it be?

A malevolent voice came from ahead of him: "He he he! What do we have here?" it cackled. It was a giant of a man, who had a grand moustache and a titanic beard. He wore an inky black cloak that swirled like a terrifying volcano, sucking himself up and into the air. Rising above the ground he cackled, "Surrender, or else!"

Fear leapt into the shadows, enveloped in a shady cloak and squeezed Jeff tightly as the giant was coming closer. With his clammy hands, Jeff grabbed an axe lying on the floor and

attempted to throw it at the aggressor, but it went unnoticed.

“I said surrender!” boomed the man, “and obey the sinister sorcerer – me! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!”

“NO!” shouted Max. I will not! And with that, he darted out of the manor and into the pouring rain.

“Catch him, my lads!” the sorcerer exclaimed, “He’s ours!”

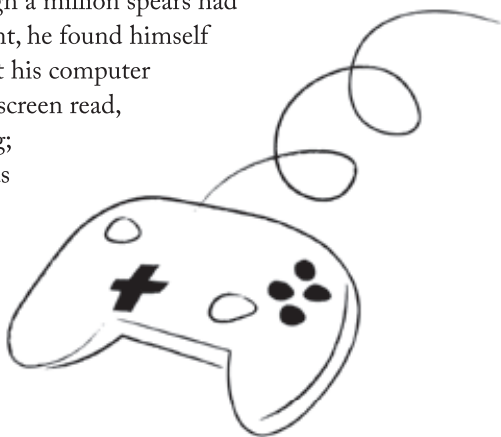
A group of ghosts sang a haunting melody while pursuing Jeff, as swiftly as a deer.

Looking behind, Jeff saw the group of ghosts approaching him. His heart thumped heavily in his chest as he scanned the horizon for any signs of civilization. However, there were none in sight. OUCH! OUCH! OUCH!

Numb and disoriented, Jeff lifted his head off the floor. The ghosts loomed over him.

“Kill him! Have no mercy!” came a large voice.

Suddenly, Jeff felt a bolt of lightning strike his belly, causing him to feel as though a million spears had pierced him. After a moment, he found himself sitting on his sofa, staring at his computer screen. The message on the screen read, “You got struck by lightning; better luck next time.” It was then that Jeff realized he was inside a video game.



# The Game

Austin Lyons Whyte

*Donhead Prep School (Year 4 - Age 9)*

'Austin! Monopoly time!' shouted my Mum excitedly. I was in my room building Lego. I didn't want to play, but I did want to beat my Mum, for once, so I trudged downstairs. I found my Mum and Dad waiting, eager to play. It was my turn to roll so I picked up the dice and shook them rigorously, hoping for a double six.

That second, I felt myself shrinking, and my fingers started tingling. I was being pulled, like a needle to a magnet, into the Monopoly game. When I looked down, I realised that I had turned to metal. I looked around and saw lots of houses and hotels standing proudly along the roads. I blinked my eyes in amazement as I spotted a man in a tall top hat and black suit with white hair and a white moustache. I noticed that he had a polished silver, diamond M sign around his neck that sparkled like the sun on a summer's day. The man gave me M2000 (monopoly money) and I instantly remembered this man was identical to the man on the Monopoly box. Could I really be in Monopoly, I asked myself?

Suddenly, I felt a giant hand pick me up and drag me to a Community Chest. I thought, 'Yes! I am going to get lots of money. Community Chest cards are usually really good!'

Ecstatically, I opened the chest, but to my horror, I saw a card telling me to go straight to jail. Out of nowhere, I was surrounded by policemen!

'You must go directly to jail!' demanded the chief policeman as he put handcuffs around my wrist.

‘What have I done wrong?’ I cried, ‘I’m innocent!’

‘Those are the rules, sir,’ he replied, surprised that I didn’t understand.

As I sat in my jail cell, I felt annoyed and angry. ‘This isn’t fair,’ I said to myself. ‘What have I done wrong?’ Luckily, it wasn’t long before I had a visitor. A small silver, talking motorbike. He explained that I could get out by rolling a double on my next turn. He handed me a dice, and I rolled a double 6, again! I could not believe my luck!

‘Well done’, he said kindly as he zoomed away.

I spent the next few minutes travelling from street to street wondering how I was going to get home. Every time I got to a different street, I was asked to pay rent or buy the road. I asked myself what was going on? Why was everyone asking me to rent and buy streets? After what felt like years, I spotted an immense blue sign that sparkled in the sunshine. It read ‘you are about to pass GO!’ Full of hope, I darted to the sign, I was given M200. Suddenly, I felt the familiar tingling in my fingers, I started growing again.

In the blink of an eye, I found myself home at the table looking down at the monopoly board.

# Impossible is Not a Word

Carla Zayas-Felipe

*Joseph Hood Primary School (Year 4 - Age 9)*

There once was a game known not for its fame among the competitive, but for being known as the “Impossible Game.” It wasn’t just any game; it was a trial of survival and cunning, requiring players to complete ten deadly tasks. Each task was more dangerous than the last, full of dangers so terrifying they were simply referred to as “you do not want to know.” The reward? Several million pounds, a fortune that tempted the bravest of souls.

One fateful day, a clever participant discovered a shortcut at the very start of the first deadly task. While other players raced through some challenges, battling monstrous creatures and dodging collapsing skyscrapers, this player found a different path. He drove calmly, observing the chaos through the crystal clarity of his vehicle’s window, avoiding the horror around him.

Surprisingly, this untraveled route led directly to the game’s end. The entrance to victory lay before him. With no monsters to murder him and no buildings to dodge, he crossed the finish line easily and claimed the prize.

With his new wealth, he purchased a grand mansion for his family, giving them comfort and happiness. Generous and joyful, he gave a weekly allowance to his children, making them the wealthiest among their peers. Though the jealousy of many, his children were kind and shared their fortune with those in need. Happiness spread through the community, and from that day forward, the legend of the Impossible Game changed, nothing was impossible anymore.

# **Terrible Trevor and the Willow Team**

Elena Formisano

*Dundonald Primary School (Year 3 - Age 8)*

On a cliff above the sparkling sea, there stood a white cottage called the willow tree. Inside, there sat three children named Mia, Benjamin and Matilda. Benjamin's favourite hobby was climbing. Mia liked colourful snakes and Matilda had an uncle who tamed venomous snakes.

One day, they decided to play snakes and ladders to celebrate the opening of the village toy shop. They were halfway through when they were rudely interrupted by their dog Trevor. "Come back here" Matilda moaned but Trevor disappeared outside with the dice. He knocked over a bottle saying "drink me" and stopped to drink. Suddenly, the dice he stole got bigger and he got transported into a life size version of snakes and ladders!! The children tried to approach him but, with a flash of light, they found themselves in the same game.

They landed on square 1 where they spotted a huge dice. "We can't move!" exclaimed Mia. "If we can't move, maybe when the dice rolls we can" Benjamin said. "Exactly" cried Matilda. "Listen..." whispered Mia. They quietened down and heard a faint barking coming from square 8. The dice rolled. "We got a six!" They moved and landed on a steep wooden ladder as high as a skyscraper. "Let's go up to find Trevor!" Benjamin suggested. Matilda started climbing cautiously when a blast of wind knocked her down. "I can go first!" boasted Benjamin. They reached square 200 and caught their breath. After a while, the dice moved again and they confidently marched to square 203 where they heard a hissssing sound.

There laid a snake with red stripes and tremendous teeth. It was

as long as 50 squares and was silently slithering towards them. Benjamin tried to touch it. Mia shouted “No, it’s a slippery snake-back, it makes you go down!” but it was too late. “We have to go after Benjamin” said Matilda.

On square 153, Benjamin stood pointing at something. “What’s that?” he whispered, “it looks like a book!” They picked it up and it said “you shall not pass until you have answered my riddle... My spine is hard, my skin is pale, what am I?” “It’s a book!” said Mia. “Correct” it said. “You’ll find what you have been searching for on square one.” Then, it vanished in thin air.

They arrived at number 1 where Trevor had been waiting for the whole time. “How can we get out?” Benjamin asked. Then, Trevor pushed them towards the edge of the board where they hurled themselves into a giant slide that swirled countless times. Finally, they arrived on square 1,000. “Why did Trevor bring us here?” questioned Matilda leaning against the wall. Just as she did it, it started shimmering. “Oh, it’s a portal!” they cried. “It won’t open until we find the password, maybe it’s one of the numbers we did” Benjamin observed. Just then, Trevor nudged the dice, rolling a 1, and the children realised they were moving again. “We are heading back home!” they cheered.



# Basketball Mayhem

Evie O'Sullivan

*St John Fisher Primary School (Year 4 - Age 9)*

Twisting, turning, up, down, whooooooosh! The earth spun below them as they frantically tried to see what was happening. They were terrified - mystified - AMAZED!

It all started two weeks ago, when a girl called Hannah was having a very ordinary day. Her chocolatey brown eyes shone in the sunlight. While she tossed her beautiful blonde hair out of her eyes, she scored a 3-pointer with her basketball. She was short for her age, she was the shortest in her class, and her best friend was called Salish. She wore loose, cool cloths and always had her hair tied up.

One hot, sunny day, Hannah was playing basketball in her garden when she heard the doorbell ring. Salish had come over to play! Salish was also small and had brown hair. Her hazel eyes started to glow in the light and her cute, tight clothing really suited her. They did their bestie handshake and got to scoring. Hannah and Salish both scored 5 shots when something WEIRD happened. Suddenly, they were both lifted into the air! It felt like a tornado had come and picked them up. Twisting, turning, up, down, whooooooosh! The earth spun below them as they frantically tried to see what was happening. They were terrified - mystified - AMAZED! Hannah's head was spinning...Salish's hands were sweating.

Suddenly, they fell to the ground. It took a minute for them to realise where they were but when they did, it shocked them... they were in the middle of a basketball match!

Salish immediately pulled Hannah to the side of the court and started panicking. "It'll be okay" Hannah said to her, "We

WILL find our way back home but for now let's play basketball!" Salish felt reassured by her friend's words, so they joined their team and started to play! Salish scored 3 and Hannah scored 2. They were scoring waaay more points than the other team! After a lot of team-work, they beat them 7-1. The joy they felt was better than anything they had experienced!



After the match was over, Salish begged Hannah to help find their way home but before Hannah could answer, their teammates started dragging them into the changing room.

Salish lost Hannah in the crowd of the team members. She didn't know what to do. She couldn't leave Hannah behind - could she? As a couple of people moved out the way, Salish spotted something - a portal. Could this be the way back home? Well, there was only one way to find out! As quick as a flash, she jumped into the crowd and grabbed Hannah and dragged her through the portal.

They felt the magical pull and in a blink of an eye, they were back in Hannah's garden. Salish and Hannah sat down, "What a day!" Hannah gasped.

And even after all that drama, Hannah and Salish never stopped playing basketball!

# Finlay Drifted Off

Finlay Carandang

*St. Mary's Primary School (Year 4 - Age 8)*

"Fine, you can be white," Finlay sighed, knowing it wouldn't matter.

He had always beat his little sister in chess and nothing would be different on that day. They set up their pieces on both sides of the board. They sat down on huge, leather chairs, put their final pieces in position and started. "A classic King's pawn opening," announced Ellis (Finlay's little sister).

Finlay shrugged and responded by moving his far right pawn two squares, making space for his rook. The rook was a speed-runner, but couldn't go in diagonal lines. Ellis hesitated, but ended up sliding her bishop to a square near the center. The bishop was the opposite of the rook. Instead of not being able to go diagonal and not go straight, the bishop could go diagonal and couldn't go straight.

After a back and forth game, Finlay was very confident he could win. He had both of her rooks, one knight and 7 pawns. He was so confident that he slowly drifted off into another world. When he woke up, he was in a huge, wet, slimy puddle of mud. It was as big as a house and the mud was so thick, it seemed as if it was quicksand. Finlay was so focused on the mud beneath him, he hadn't even realised he had a paintball gun in his hand. It was a huge, heavy gun, with a hollow storage place with a hundred miniature, green paintballs. They were in a fake junkyard. It had rusty, broken cars. They were in a horrid state with missing tires or smashed windows.

Then Finlay saw an exhausted person stumbling toward him. He had bright, blonde hair and a pair of shredded, ruined

paintball jeans. He was wearing a yellowish shirt and had a pale white piece of tape on his right arm. His eyes were half closed and his breaths were so loud it pierced Finlay's ears. His name was Harry Rook. He was an attacker, very athletic and a sharpshooter. He said, "We are the two of three people left on our team."

Finlay responded, "Who is left?"

Harry explained how Andrea Bishop was the only other person left on the team. "He is like me but always more protective of himself. Hiding and things." Harry responded, relieved Andrea hadn't been eliminated. Suddenly, a splash of green landed on Harry. He put up his hand to meet Andrea in the safe zone, who had just been eliminated too.

Finlay was all alone . . .

His heart was thumping in his chest, mind racing with bad thoughts. 'Will I get hit?' 'Am I the only one left?' All of this sent a cold shiver down his spine. As he hid behind the biggest car, he noticed a gloomy shadow tip-toeing toward Finlay. He stumbled back ...BAM! A rush of mud fell on Finlay and the other paintball team had cornered him to the edge of the junkyard.

Luckily, he felt a pinch on his neck and he slowly awoke. "Checkmate".



# The Mammoth

Hamish Subramanian

*Dundonald Primary (Year 4 - Age 8)*

When Buddy's eyes fluttered open he was tucked tightly into his bed. Was it all just a dream?

As he lay there, trying to fall back to sleep, Buddy's mind was racing. Reluctantly, he moseyed out of bed and into the dining room for breakfast. As he sat there, munching on his meal, a red flash with bold letters popped up on the TV. "BREAKING NEWS! Rare spotting of an extinct saber tooth tiger and herd of woolly mammoth. Creatures attack three unidentified boys. If you have seen the missing suspects, please phone 112 immediately!". Buddy's jaw dropped. Were Billy and Bert alive?

As quick as a flash, he dashed out of the dining hall, shot up the stairs and smashed into Bert and Billy. "Thank goodness you're alive" Buddy squeaked as a tear dribbled down his rosy red cheeks. "Did you see? We are on the news – WE'RE FAMOUS!" Exclaimed Billy. Before Buddy could get another word in, ten police officers barged into the stairwell and strode towards them. "Put your hands up" shouted one of the police officers angrily. Billy, Buddy and Bert threw up their hands. "You are under arrest for the abduction of an extinct woolly mammoth." Ten police officers marched towards them and quickly removed them from the building as their classmates watched in shock. After hours of driving, they arrived at what appeared to be an airport and boarded a private flight AA127 to Melbourne.

Suddenly, as the plane soared through the sky an ear piercing screech began as a bright, red light flickered on and off, oxygen masks dropped and life jackets popped up from the chairs below. The three boys looked at each other in shock. What was happening?



A split second later the airplane was diving towards the vast ocean. Suddenly, the back of the plane exploded and most of the police officers vanished. With widened eyes, Buddy, Billy and Bert clutched onto their seats for dear life. Plunge! The aircraft pierced into the deep ocean and began to sink. With no time to spare, the boys swiftly unfastened their seatbelts and swam to the surface as they watched ravenous sharks devour the remaining police officers. As quick as they could, the boys swam to the golden sandy shore of this mysterious island.

Where were they? Was this all some kind of game?

The island was covered in a carpet of green with tall summits that poked the light blue sky. They could hear strange noises gurgling from the perilous waters below and territorial growls from deep within the forest. "Where are we?!" Billy boiled in frustration as he looked around. The place looked strangely familiar, like a picture he had seen advertising a new game. Before Billy could get a word out, a centaur darted towards them. Just as it was about to reach them an arrow soared through the sky and pierced the mystical creature. Instantly it collapsed to the ground in front of them. "We are not alone" Billy muttered.

# The Game

Humphrey Warrick

*King's College Junior School (Year 4 - Age 9)*

Thud. Pharanus's heart pounded fiercely inside his chest. The tiger's lips formed a vicious snarl as it strode toward him. As he briefly gazed upward, the crowd was booing, screaming for bloodshed. "I'm going to die here..." the gladiator muttered to himself miserably. The tiger's inky black stripes shone in the scorching heat of the sun's rays. It stalked him, getting ready to pounce. "Keep your guard up" he thought to himself "one swipe and you're out". The beast hurled itself at Pharanus, but the brave gladiator nimbly sidestepped to his right, scarcely avoiding being pierced by razor edged incisors. The tiger ran at him, roaring in fury. This time the tiger's claw raked down Pharanus's side. His whole body screamed in agony, and he fell to the ground. Pharanus tried to crawl away from the remorseless predator, but the gory wound prevented him from moving.

Suddenly, Caesar told his guards to stop the fight and let Pharanus live. The fallen gladiator was dragged back his grim chamber. Two hours later, the magistri informed him that he would be facing a lion, another deadly creature, in two days time. Sitting in his cell, he knew he would have a long day of battle training with his magistri tomorrow. His cellar was dark and wet with a small mat for him to sleep on. Pharanus hated living in it.

He woke up and someone was banging on his door.

It was his magistri. "Up you get you lazy boy, we've got some training to do". No one else was at the Ludus Magnus so they had it all to themselves. "I want you to show me your dodge and strike move". His magistri ran at him quickly, and Pharanus agilely sidestepped and pretended to strike him. "Very good", he praised. Many hours later, Pharanus headed back to his cell and wondered

whether he was going to lose the game of life tomorrow. He woke up and was given a piece of stale bread and a glass of water for the fight later, the bare minimum to keep him alive. There was no training today, so Pharanus had some time to think of a strategy.

The crowd cheered as the majestic lion walked out onto the battlefield and did the same for when Pharanus walked out with his sword and shield already clenched in his fists. Caesar strode in and received an even larger round of applause. He felt his spine shudder and turned his fearful eyes to the lion. His whole body trembled as the creature prowled threateningly toward him. Shaking internally but wanting to appear brave, Pharanus edged toward savage animal like a stealthy leopard stalking its prey. The ferocious creature let out a deafening roar and launched itself at Pharanus. Pharanus leapt with his sword outstretched in front of him. "For Caesar!" he yelled.



# The Forgotten Sport

India Jarvis

*Wimbledon High School (Year 4 - Age 8)*

Polyxena woke to the loud clatter of bronze pots and pans. She could smell the lavish breakfast being made for Master Alexander cooking in the tiny kitchen. As she swiftly dressed into her tattered rags of clothing, Polyxena rushed to help the other slaves before she got whipped for being slow.

After serving the scrumptious food, Polyxena was tasked with sweeping the entire house, the gigantic chambers, the dusty slave bedrooms and the dank, musty cellars for food that was long past its due date. Next, she had to clear out the symmetrical, pearly white cobwebs, spun of the finest silk there was, except, of course, Athena's.

“Master Alexander?” enquired his friend, Andrew.

“Yes, Andrew? Do come in.”

As Andrew arrived, the slaves polished the seats, plumped the cushions and spread the floral tablecloth quickly, ready to serve the food they had been making.

“I have come to present you with an offer, my friend. You have been invited to Olympia to watch the Olympics.”

Juvenile, Alexander took a long sip of his delectable, sweet wine.

“Wonderful. Thank you, Andrew,” once he had left, he glared at the slaves. “What are you waiting for? Get back to work!”

Dipping a cloth in some scorching water, Polyxena rubbed off the wood marks made by the wine goblets. She stepped outside into the stunning, beautiful garden. There were unfurling flowers which the bees sucked for nectar, emerald, green hedges, herbs, old, ancient trees and youthful ones. Butterflies flapped their delicate, paper-like wings, free unlike the slaves.

Filling up a heavy, rusty iron bucket, she watered the delightful plants that brought her so much joy. Other slaves tended to different, unique plants.

Meanwhile, Alexander lay on his comfortable couch thinking about which slaves he should take with him to the Olympics. Bodyguards for safety, some to impress, after all the more the merrier. After a week of pondering, Alexander summoned Polyxena to his chambers.

Gulping, Polyxena wondered what Alexander wanted with a lowly slave like her. Stay calm, Polyxena.

Gently, she rapped on the door in anticipation.

“You will be accompanying me to the Olympics.”

She gasped. Her go to the...Olympics? They got into the four wheeled cart with two burly, ugly slaves and an elderly woman with a tight bun whose ship had been sabotaged by pirates when she was younger.

Finally, the carts reached Olympia, which was dedicated to Zeus, King of all. A respected deity, he had killed the Titans with help from the Cyclopes. The stadium was filled with excited, cheering crowds. As she watched the courageous, brave athletes compete, Polyxena smiled for the first time in years of torture, this was the only light. It was a thrilling

spectacle. Then Polyxena noticed the bodyguards with a dagger aimed at her Master.

“Stop it!”

The stadium erupted furiously. The bodyguards were chained and dragged away.

“Polyxena, I hereby declare you free.”

Sapphire blue tears came to her eyes. She was free.



# One Night When I Came Home from School

James-John McSherry

*Shrewsbury House School (Year 4 - Age 9)*

RRRRRRRRRRRRRR!! my blue wooden door, which was expanded due to the heavy rain that has been coming constantly to England. As the door opened a candlelight glow flowed out. I stepped in and I was waved with warmth and the smell of tuna filled the house, “welcome, my non furry friend,” at this moment I was astonished at the fact that my cat Fumo\* could SPEAK! (and that he was wearing my baggy jeans and my school tie) “would you like to play a game with me, but I don’t think you can keep up with my intelligence” “could you?” “Try me!” I tried to hide that I was definitely not ready. “Here is your first clue” he handed me a grubby cat food stained bit of chewed paper that I could just make out the words: What do you touch for good luck, the fraise touch\$^%. And that was it, just it.

But then I remembered the phrase touch wood! wood that was it! I immediately scanned for the collapsing floor board, after finding it I jumped on it and got stuck but I found a tape “A TAPE” tapes are the most old fashioned tv viewing mechanism ever! The cat was at this moment joyfully sitting on my head, “look where you humans, put old functional stuff” telling me as if he didn’t know that I was stuck. the attic! I darted up the stairs and into the old and dusty attic( after I got unstuck) I searched and searched but no tape player was found .... clash! a tape player hit me on the head “ who did that” I projected annoyed and frustrated. But I didn’t know that the tape player was in my hands. I stormed down two sets of stairs and a corridor “ ah, you found it “I was about to explode when I had finally noticed it was there Right in my hands. I put the tape in and it showed the video of fish, so I

went to the fridge and got the fish out “now what do I do?” but before I got my answer my cat HAD EATEN THE FISH! “sorry my dear fellow, this was all just for you to feed me” “You mean that getting stuck, touching raw fish getting hit in the head was all to feed you” I could not get cross with cat, because their eyes were so adorable, so instead we sat down cuddled up and watched fish swimming (it was very boring)

\*Fumo = italian for smoke

P.S my cat was back to normal in the morning.



# The Everlasting Game

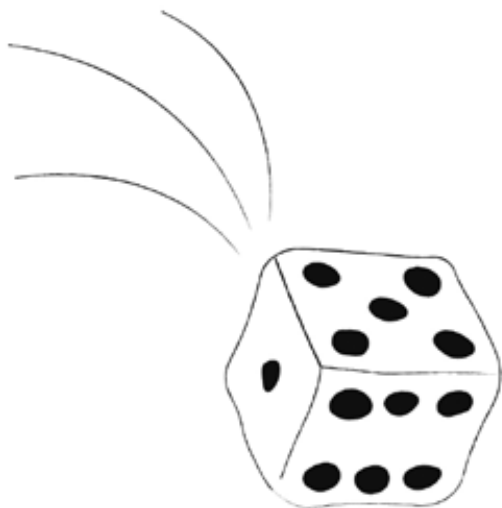
Josephine Williams

*Wimbledon Park Primary School (Year 3 - Age 8)*

In a world far from where you live, there lived a brother and a sister called Christopher and Chole. They both loved going to watch any sports game with their dad and they adored playing board games together.

One Christmas Eve, Christopher and Chloe were playing hide and seek. Chloe was very good at this game and so decided she would hide in the attic. Quietly, Chloe hid behind a dusty old box that she had not seen before. Curious, she opened the box and suddenly a bright flash sprang from the box onto Chloe's face. In no time at all, Chloe was shouting down to Christopher; 'Christopher! Christopher! Come quick!'. In a flash, Christopher was in the attic. Chloe explained what had happened. Christopher thought this was a joke so he tried to change the subject; 'Um...Chloe, would you like to be the seeker now?'. But Chloe was convinced that what she saw was not a joke and she told Christopher she would prove it. She knelt down beside the box and put her head over it. Once again, the light flashed out onto Chloe's face. Chloe looked at Christopher; 'See!'. Christopher stared at Chloe and shouted 'It's a game! We've got to play it!'.

Christopher and Chloe took the game out of the box and, as they did so, a flock of words appeared, floating in the air in front of them. Chloe read aloud; 'Welcome to the Everlasting Game!'. A dice flew out of the box and straight into Christopher's hands. Without a thought, he threw the dice onto the board and it landed on a 6. Out of nowhere, a miniature piece which looked exactly like Christopher arose from the board. On the board itself there appeared a winding bronze circle and Christopher couldn't tell where the beginning



or end was meant to be. The miniature Christopher was on the move! It shifted forward 6 spaces. Suddenly, Chloe gripped hold of the dice and out of the box sprang a miniature Chloe. The dice fell on a 4 and, just like Christopher, Chloe's piece glided forward along the board. Chloe looked at Christopher, horrified! They both had no control over this game!

Round and round they went. The dice kept rolling and their pieces kept moving. This really was an everlasting game.

That was 50 years ago. Christopher and Chloe are still playing...

# The Game - Symphony in Play!

Kyra Das

*Wimbledon Chase Primary School (Year 4 - Age 8)*

What comes to mind when you think of the word 'Game' - most likely a sport or competition between players and teams? Whilst true, it can also be an enjoyable challenge where the objective is to accomplish a task or activity rather than defeating an opponent. The sweet taste of victory is when you achieve your aim and entertain the audience!

My favourite sports are rhythmic gymnastics and synchronised swimming; I can spend an entire day performing to music. But if you were to ask my favourite game; the challenge that comes to mind is musical jugalbandi! Jugalbandi is an Indian classical music performance featuring a duet of solo musicians. A playful competition exists between the performers. Although it might sound as a musical performance, there is an implicit spirit of game that entralls everyone involved!

As you would've guessed, music is my passion. I love to play violin- the thrill of hearing a perfect piece overwhelms me and I step into my own world of music. Interestingly, I share this passion with my brother who is a pianist. Often our sibling squabbles spill over to our musical passion. While my parents appreciate our music, the resulting cacophony can be an ear sore!

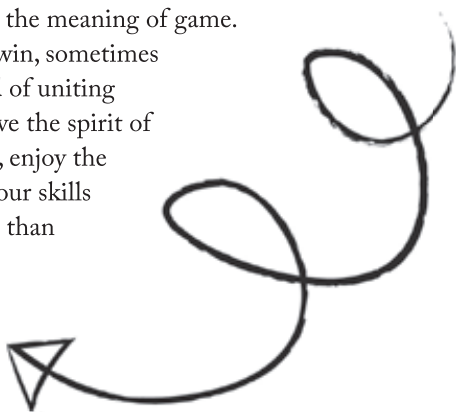
One day, tired of our discordant musical rows, mum yelled, "I challenge you both to a game of jugalbandi. Let's see how you match each other by next weekend!". Always up for a challenge, we took it up without even batting an eyelid. Of course, we didn't know how this was achievable! As much as we tried, our musical journey didn't seem sync. Desperate

not to give up, we kept on trying but alas, we were nowhere close to a composition we could play! At that moment, Mum commented with a smile, “United we stand, divided we fall”.

Eureka! We realised that instead of an intent to outdo each other, this is a game of working together to compose a symphony with different instruments. “We need to keep going!”, my brother exclaimed, “Remember, even if we make mistakes, it’s just a game. Let’s have some fun!” Slowly, our music started to sound like a melody.

Finally, the day arrived. My parents most likely forgot about it as when we asked them to take seats after dinner, they looked at each other in an inquisitive way. While we had practiced, it wasn’t enough and we stumbled on our start. But we looked at each other, smiled and played with a reassuring tone. We lost track of time and both of us were mesmerised by our composition. Our happiness knew no bounds when Dad couldn’t stop applauding and Mom’s eyes were swelling with pride!

This incident has been etched in my memory forever and redefined the meaning of game. While we all love to win, sometimes they divide us instead of uniting societies. I truly believe the spirit of a game is to have fun, enjoy the camaraderie and use our skills to make magic rather than just winning!



# Monopoly Mystery

Lara Wehmeier

*The Study Prep School (Year 3 - Age 8)*

There was once a game, a very addictive game called Monopoly owned by a happy and obedient girl called Helen and her little sister called Lydia. They loved the game and played it any time they could.

A few year before, their uncle came to visit from the hot and dusty country of Saudi Arabia. Lydia had been excited for day about him coming as her uncle brought great presents.

When their uncle finally arrived carrying a long rectangular parcel in his hand, Helen and Lydia dashed to the small red door to greet him.

“Hello girls”, he said with a big grin on his face. “I brought you a present”.

Helen and Lydia had a lovely time while he was with them and were gutted to see their uncle leave.

“At least we can open our present now”, Helen cheered with a hint of enthusiasm.

Lydia nodded eagerly, and ripped the delicate, tissue paper wrapping to find an exciting looking game called Monopoly. Helen read the instructions. The sisters each took turns to roll the dice and then “BAM!” Black smoke began to circle the game. Helen’s heart was thumping in her chest and Lydia was holding back tears.

They were stuck in the middle of a purple whirlwind swishing them off to a different land, the land of Monopoly.

“Oh no!” sighed Helen. This was awful but what was more awful was, when Lydia rolled the dice on the game’s time machine, it took them back to 1666, the time of the deadly virus, the plague. There were rats scuttling around the floor and Lydia was jumping up and down with high knees, hoping to use that strategy to kill the rats. Luckily, Helen had a great memory so she could remember where the time machine had landed. She took a few minutes, sitting on an old wooden carriage sprawling with tiny miniscule spiders, to think. She jumped up and found Lydia curled up in a ball sniffing.

“Come on”, Helen said, bouncing up and down. “I have a plan”. Helen told Lydia with excitement that they would climb to the top of the house to see where the time machine was. As they sat down on the cool slate roof they could see, even in the dim lighting, a great view of the city. Lydia was rummaging in her pocket and she found some bubbles. She blew them and suddenly she and Helen were stuck in a bubble floating in the sky. They both got a birds eye view of the city and could see the time machine.

“Pop it, pop it!” screamed Lydia. Helen took her index finger and popped the bubble.

“Crash!” They landed on a soft pile of autumn leaves and jumped into the time machine which sucked them in and left them lying on their bed in the dead of night.

They had a good night’s sleep and when they woke up Helen giggled,

“We certainly won’t be playing Monopoly any time soon”

“I agree”, sighed Lydia.



# The Magic Chess Story

Lucy Wilson

*Wimbledon High School (Year 3 - Age 7)*

It was a very wet Wednesday. Amy was playing with her best friend Sophie and they were stuck inside because of the rain. They had been playing chess but Amy was not a fan. "This is boring, I hate board games!" Sophie got up to look at what they could do. She loved games and wanted to show Amy that they could be fun. She had an idea, "I'm going to get my magic glitter to make this more exciting". She ran upstairs, took out her glitter box and picked out her pink glitter. Sophie returned to Amy but slid and landed with a bump. The glitter spilt all over the chess board. Sophie said, "Well, that's the work done for us". Amy was very confused, did magic really exist?

Sophie explained that the magic would take some time to work. "Let's try the chess game now and it will be fun as the magic starts. I'll sprinkle the glitter on me so I can help the magic work." They set the board back up. Amy felt a bit scared, what was the magic going to do to her best friend? What was going to happen to the chess game? Would the magic help at all?

After a few moves, Sophie starts to tell a story about a brave, fearless knight who saved the Kingdom from another Kingdom's army. There were many soldiers who fought and not many survived. The opposing Kingdom shot down one of their castle turrets. It was a brutal battle. The knight bravely went into battle and won the victory for the King and Queen. Amy loved the story, she was fascinated by every word, the turns that were taken, when victory seemed impossible and when it was close by. As the story drew to a close, Amy realised that her pieces had all gone and her King was left standing alone. She looked up at Sophie, "What's happened? Has the magic stopped working or have I just been playing chess the whole time?". Sophie just smiled at her friend and shrugged her shoulders.

# Nathaniel Vs the Roblox Hacker

Nathaniel Winter

*Links Primary School (Year 4 - Age 9)*

Nathaniel was mindlessly scrolling down the near infinite games to play, while sat at his computer. It was a bright summer day with sunlight beaming through the window, then he saw a game called Sols Rng. Then, he clicked on it. The first thing he saw was a play button, of course he clicked as he wanted to play. "This is interesting." Nathaniel commented.

Next, he saw three buttons one involving Robux, (which is the currency in Roblox that you pay for to buy items and game passes) one saying auto roll, and one saying roll. "Huh?" Nathaniel questioned. He clicked the roll button and it said he got a common. Then, he rolled again and again. Then something happened, the game shut down. "What, I was enjoying that!" Nathaniel shouted. So as soon, as he could he quickly clicked it again. This time, instead of the play button it was pay. He clicked (it wasn't a transaction). Yet again he saw three buttons pay, pay and pay. "WHAT!" shouted Nathaniel in despair. He was now feeling really annoyed.

Out of the side of this eye, he saw someone flying (flying means hacking). Nathaniel then realised he had probably hacked the game. So, he just left because A, he didn't want to be hacked and B, his friend was a moderator (a moderator is someone who bans hacking). He then joined his friend.

"Someone hacked my new favourite game!" Nathaniel exclaimed.

"Wait really?" shouted Billy.

"Yes, now join me!" Nathaniel called urgently. So, they did, first they began walking around and hid behind a blocky hill "Ok, ban

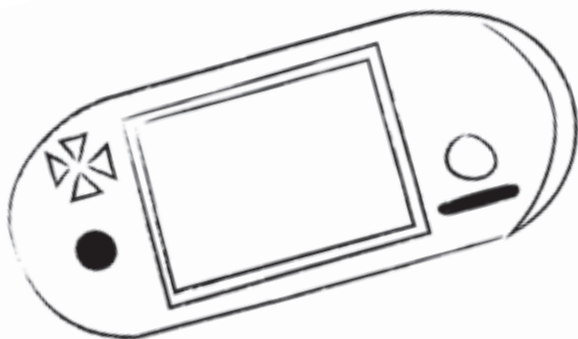
him” ordered Nathaniel.

“I’m doing it hang on, there are so many people playing the game I just can’t tell who the hacker his. I need more time. Can you help me find him?” Billy asked.

Nathaniel and Billy continued to work together as a team to find the hacker. They did not want him to con or cause an issue for anyone else. This took some time.

“Found him” Nathaniel replied eventually,

Nathaniel passed on his username and Billy the moderator was able to officially ban the hacker and his account in the process. Nathaniel felt quite relieved. He loved playing Roblox with his friends. He found it enjoyable and challenging. Little problems like dealing with hackers actually made the game more fun. He felt that he had achieved something and prevented potentially appalling actions. The next day all was peaceful playing Sols Rng, fun had been restored.



# The Magical Riddle

Odelia Poh

*Poplar Primary School (Year 4 - Age 9)*

One sunny morning, Pamela Surven moved house into the countryside. It was a beautiful view and pretty flowers looked like dots in a picture. The luscious, jade-green grass shimmered with clear water drops dripping down; leaves were a dark green. The fragrant flowers were as colourful as can be and were waving towards you. Pamela began to skip outside, walked in circles round the trees but as she did, she was whisked in a midnight-black portal. In front of her eyes were two pixies; she blinked, and blinked, and blinked. She couldn't believe it. Where was she?

"Hello, you seem quite worried," said the pixies.

"Who are you, who are you?" exclaimed Pamela scared.

"I am Sylvia," she said, but her twin jumped in.

"I am Silky," said her twin.

Sylvia had golden hair, rose-pink tulip dress and a pink hairband. Silky, though, had golden hair, sunset-yellow tulip dress and a yellow headband. Strange enough, they each had a tulip necklace!

"Here, you'll need it," Silky said handing her a glittery parcel.

Pamela gasped. Her own necklace! Bouncing up and down, Pamela, Sylvia and Silky zoomed up the lift.

"Uhh, it's stuck!" exclaimed Sylvia.

"How do we get up? I need to go home now," said Pamela angrily.

"Answer my riddle," replied a mysterious voice.

"What gets left behind every morning but is needed every night?" it said with a smug smile.

"Let me do this – a pillow!" whispered Silky.

"Yes," muttered the voice grumpily.

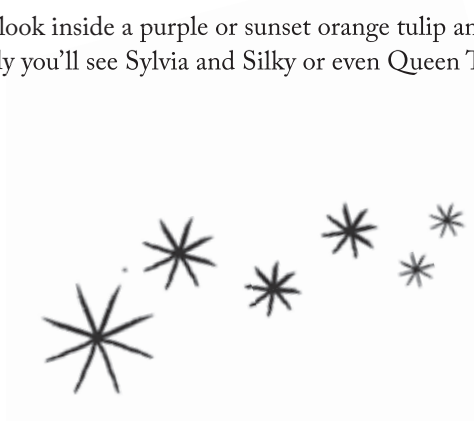
As they went up, Sylvia said, "We've got a surprise for you."

She had a cheeky look on her face ...

Sylvia took her gold necklace and pressed it on. Silky took her silver necklace and pressed it on. Pamela took her ... I'm sure you get the idea now. Petals removed to reveal a dreamy, purple colour. On a purple throne, there was a pixie with wings – so a fairy. She had a purple dress, which was up to the floor, a beautiful gold crown and her velvet boots were also tulips. “I am Queen Tulip, Queen of the Tulips. I hear Sylvia and Silky have something for you,” she said. “Am I not right?” “You are correct,” said Sylvia who handed a pink box to Pamela. Silky did the same but with an orange box. Pamela got whirled home again and fell asleep. She opened her little boxes. Lip-gloss from Sylvia and a friendship necklace from her twin. There was a note inside ...

Dear Pamela,  
Come visit us sometime. Circle the tree with tulips round and do the same as before. Keep the necklace safe.  
Love  
Sylvia and Silky

So, you look inside a purple or sunset orange tulip and hopefully you'll see Sylvia and Silky or even Queen Tulip!



# The Pig Games

Samuel Reeves

*Shrewsbury House School (Year 4 - Age 9)*

In a big farm in America there was a piglet named Johnny. One dark night all the pigs in the pen were preparing to go to sleep getting inside their nice little balls of hay.

Suddenly a big portal appeared out of thin air! It was black and blue with the inside spinning around like a whirlpool. All the pigs and piglets started gossiping and staring curiously at the portal. But one piglet wasn't... Johnny wasn't scared of the portal. He was fascinated by it and saw it as an opportunity so at first sight, he dived into the portal!

Inside the portal was the same as Johnny expected; everything was black and blue. He instantly became dizzy and nauseous. His trotters started shaking. After two minutes of endless spinning, he popped out on the other side and went to sleep.

He woke up to a loud announcement. "Welcome pigs and piglets! This is the pig game where piglets become pigs and pigs become champions. You all must resist the urge to eat the juicy bacon. May luck be on your side and happy pig games!" After the speech a piece of bacon appeared on every pig's plate and a huge timer started ticking down from sixty minutes. Johnny went back to sleep.

Johnny woke up fifty five minutes later and was feeling hungry. He reached out for the bacon when a voice shouted, "No!" as loud as they could.

Johnny turned around. There was a small scrawny piglet about a year younger than him. He was about to thank the piglet when a piece of bacon appeared and a small robot with jaws started

biting him. He looked to the side where the piglet was eating the bacon so he could be put out of his pain. The small piglet let out one last yelp of pain and fell into the abyss below.

From then on it was pretty dull. The pigs gradually gave into the pain the robot was putting them in but two pigs were powering through with ease Johnny and The Rock. The Rock was a lean mean fighting machine that had been trained and wasn't going to back out now he had destroyed his robot. Meanwhile Johnny was a little scrawny piglet.

After the second hour, the robots disappeared. Johnny looked down at his legs. They were tender and sore from being bitten for so long but it paid off because when he looked around there was a single other pig... The Rock.

On the announcement it said one word "FIGHT!"

The Rock ran up to Johnny and swung his fist at him. On the sidelines the guard who was a banana named Peely was watching. Johnny ducked and took The Rocks feet away from under his legs. The Rock got up and sprung onto the top of his pen then he WWE Smackdowned Johnny but he finally dived out the way and The Rock slammed against the ground and Johnny was declared king forever!



# Chess

Sofia Key-Peters

*Sacred Heart Primary School (Year 4 - Age 9)*

Deep down in the dense, humid jungle, a mysterious, untouched game of chess lays, sleeping, waiting to be awoken, where thousands of unique species of animals sit, confusingly unspoken...

The key to unlocking this puzzling game was a lightning bolt, cursed by Zeus, the god of the sky. Then one ominous night, the lightning bolt struck fiercely at the jungle, awaking the chessboard nearby.

Creatures can hear the commotion and are curious. So, four animals, a cheetah, a parrot (team A), a rattle snake and a poison ivy coloured tree frog (team B.) journey over to the rumbling sound and see a checkered chess board that was furious.

A note flew across the sky, so the cheetah leapt through the air and caught it. The note exclaimed, "play me and try me, all day long, for it is I, Zues." the animals were confused. The parrot bravely opened the chess board and found all the pieces, it seemed they had all mischievously moved.

Team A and Team B began playing this life-sized game of chess. They knew they had to complete the game before Zeus reigned down terror on the jungle and all who lived there. So, they competed against each other, and Team A carefully placed a pawn on the fourth row of the chess board, this game of chess was very rare. Team B then gently placed a pawn on the fourth row but then every pawn on the board followed each other around like lemmings, from side to side, back and forth.

The pawns kept going around and around, from East to West and South to North.

The rattle snake then slithered around the chessboard as if it was a maze, trying to catch all these lemmings. Whilst team A tried to compromise, the tree frog glanced over to the knight and made a L shape to kill a pawn, which was left on the side like meat trimmings. Then all these other disobedient pieces cheated their way into winning. They wanted to assassinate each other for a chance of finishing.

The only team that could demolish Zues and the legendary chessboard was team A, so, they continued against all odds to play. Team A were victorious after a successful battle,

Then the rattle snake gave an angry rattle...

Finally, the jungle was safe and there was no grief, so, all the animals sighed, "what a relief!"

# The Game

William Farstad

*King's College Junior School (Year 4 - Age 8)*

On the outskirts of Texas in an old tavern there was a group of cowboys playing a round of cards. The winner would get the treasure they had found underneath the railway station, where an evil gangster had stored 5,000 gold coins from the bank.

Bronco McCoy had beads of sweat dripping down his forehead. The game was so tense. Would he win the pot of money, or would he not? He had one card left to play; it was his go, and he could play it, so he did.

Suddenly, he realised that he had just won! It was a miracle. Bronco had never won a game of cards in his life and now he triumphed at just the right time. Grinning with pride at his friends, he felt incredible. It must have been one of his favourite moments ever. As he opened the bag to admire the cash prize, he saw nothing - the coins had disappeared...

"Where could it have gone?" Bronco thought. The cowboys huddling around him were sure the money had always been there. They hadn't seen anyone touch the bag, but then it dawned on Bronco: someone could have switched the bag for an empty sack!

Like a pack of infuriated hyenas chasing their dinner, the team of cowboys trooped out of the tavern to hunt for the stolen treasure. If they were fast enough, they might just manage to catch the thief. Determinedly, the group hopped onto their chestnut brown, strong stallions and rode off into the balmy afternoon to catch the culprit.

Eventually, they glimpsed a figure dressed in black with a sack

slung across their shoulder silhouetted against the golden sunset in the evening. Who was it? Would they ever catch up? There was only one way to find out. Quickly, the friends broke into a gallop and rode closer and closer to the evil mastermind who had stolen the loot.

As they gradually closed in on the burglar riding on a black beauty, Bronco prepared his lasso, swinging the cowhide rope around the criminal. Yanking backwards, the enemy automatically plunged forward to the grassy ground as fast as a boulder falling off a cliff. When the cowboys reached him, they wrenched off the hood of the villain and saw something they had never imagined they would see in their lifetime.

It was Sam McCow, the wanted bank robber, who's face had been plastered on posters around town for years. He had stored the stolen money in the tumbledown railway station to keep the money safe from the sheriff. Like an artist perfecting his masterpiece, Bronco tied the hands of the gangster together precisely and strapped him onto his horse ready to be taken to prison.

The thrill of winning the card game had boosted Bronco's energy, giving him the power to take down McCow. It was not about the prize, which he was returning to the bank anyway. It was about the glory.





## HIGHLY COMMENDED POEMS:

Key Stage 2

Years 5-6

Age 9-11

# Agata's Hat

Agata Sabina Barbera

*Pelham Primary School (Year 5 - Age 10)*

In Agata's Hat no one knew,  
You would usually find a cake or two!  
In Agata's Hat no one dared ask,  
You would usually find a few strange tasks!

In Agata's Hat there are bits and bobs,  
But things can go utterly agog!  
Beginning to sprout  
you can hear screams and shouts!  
And with no doubt things seem quite tout,  
For you never know what's about to pounce!

In Agata's Hat the season change,  
while the sky turns in a bright beige!  
The breeze turns to wind,  
and the leaves turn to mint!

In Agata's Hat light turns to night  
while the sky returns to its slumber  
Trying hard not to lumber

Falling into a  
deep,  
deep,  
deep,  
sleep...



# Deeper

Ayah Fellague Chebra

*Fircroft Primary School (Year 6 - Age 11)*

As I'm being sucked into the deepest, darkest Ocean hole.  
My head is swirling and whirling out of control.  
My eardrums are exploding.  
My heart's racing and my chest is imploding.

The adrenaline is pumping through my blood  
whilst all my thoughts are in a flood.  
The water pressure is rising  
And my enemies are despising.

My body is sinking deeper and lower.  
Yet, my movement in the water is so much slower.

The waves are crashing strongly in the tide.  
And I'm forced to picture things in my mind.  
A voice is whispering, "the bullies should no longer rise!"

The game is not over.  
It appears I have a chance.  
I now need to find a way out of this deep trance.

As I ascend, the water pressure decreases.  
My thoughts are getting stronger and clearer, pieces by pieces.

I must take a stand.  
My mind is no longer cramped.  
I know what to say, my words will no longer stutter.  
I know how I should be made to feel.  
I will show them. I will no longer conceal.

# No Game

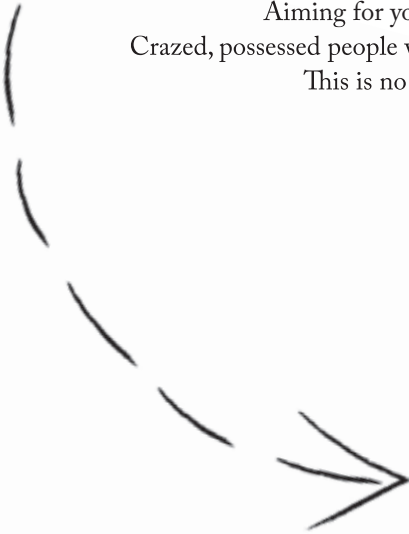
Charis Peck

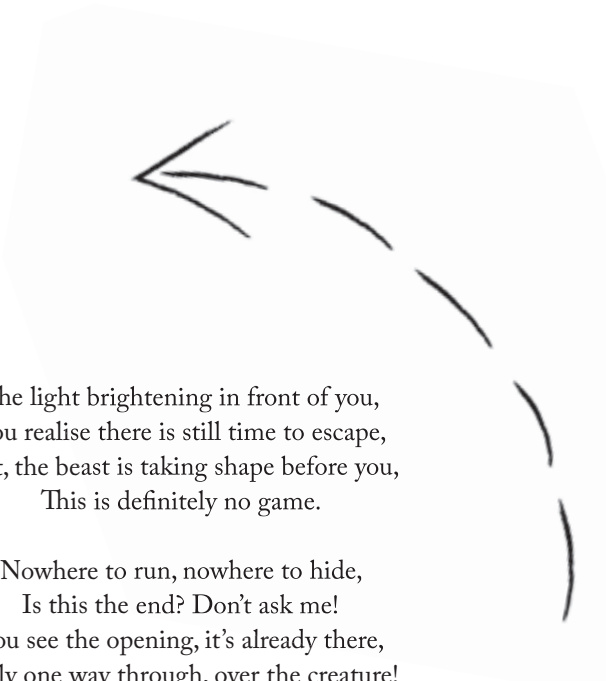
*Dundonald Primary School (Year 5 - Age 10)*

Don't be fooled by its innocent face,  
Just watch it enticing you in,  
Run before they catch you,  
This is no game.

Notice the others facing its wrath,  
Without even knowing what will happen,  
Don't let it get you too,  
This is no game.

Just watch it slithering out behind you,  
Aiming for your ankles,  
Crazed, possessed people wishing you good luck,  
This is no game.





The light brightening in front of you,  
You realise there is still time to escape,  
But, the beast is taking shape before you,  
This is definitely no game.

Nowhere to run, nowhere to hide,  
Is this the end? Don't ask me!  
You see the opening, it's already there,  
Only one way through, over the creature!

Run I say, or you'll be trapped, squashed.

You made it through, leaping over the monster,  
Take a breath, you're alive!  
But, it's still coming,  
He's chasing you down the stairs and...

Oh you trip, causing your little brother to finally catch you.  
"That was fun," You both say in unison, "want to play again?"  
"Sure!"

So, in the end it was a game, and a cute one too.

# Shark in the Middle

Charlie Ahern

*Hatfeild Primary School (Year 5 - Age 10)*

A big parachute, laid out on the floor,  
Oh wait what's that for?  
Maybe we are going to jump off a plane!  
No of course not, that's insane!  
Is this a charade?  
Oh no wait it's a game.  
It's a game of shark!  
Shark, oh where!?  
There, there,  
It's just a game.  
Somebody's been chosen,  
To be the shark!  
I wonder how they see in there  
Wouldn't it be dark?  
Wait are you touching my feet,  
No I'm seated on this grassy seat.  
Wait if it's not you,  
And is not a piece of random fallen tree bark...  
It must be,  
**THE SHARK!!**  
Where is the life guard?  
Keeping above while being pulled under is hard!  
Oh no he's helping him!  
I guess that means...  
I'm the new shark!  
Now you two are sharks!  
"How many barks are there?" Said Kate.  
None which means...  
You're our bait!  
You're being pulled under!  
Somebody help,

Soon she'll be one with the sharks,  
And we'll be kelp!  
But wait who's this?  
The lifeguard!  
Here to stop this bliss,  
Up he pulls her,  
Safe and sound.  
But the sharks still circle!  
Waiting for more kiddie prey!!



# The Lucky One?

Daya Riva Malhi

*Wimbledon High School (Year 6 - Age 11)*

The Lucky One?

Monopoly

Lucky Six or an Unlucky One,

Will it be me or will it be someone,

Rolling a one could land you on free parking,

When the cash rolls in and you crack up laughing,

But then a Six could put you back and send you to jail,

Or you land on Mayfair - which makes you quite pale

Catan

You might finally get the Ore, Lumber or Bricks,

When you roll that Lucky Six,

A city, settlement or road is in view,

Until another player has his go too,

And rolls the dice that unfortunately totals Seven,

The robber steals your resources and your no longer in heaven

Uno

As the dealer shuffles the cards you wait in wonder,

You get four yellow's two red's and one colour changer,

You despise those unlucky cards and wish upon a moon,

That just maybe those four yellows will win you a fortune,

For you manage to play them all in the first round,

It suddenly made sense and your tactics were sound

Monopoly Deal

As you shuffle the cards the temptation to look slowly grows,

You deal five cards to each player and watch their furrowed brows,

A lucky 'Just Say No' and One 'Deal breaker' – you are on a roll,

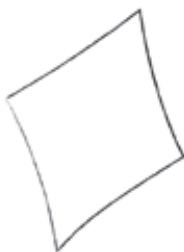
To finally beat your sister is your ultimate goal,

but then You become unlucky as rent swallows you whole,

So, then you must give away your cards that are as precious as coal

Monkey puzzle

You pick up six cards and face them down,



Let's hope your luck shows up in town,  
But the cards you get aren't simply providing,  
Finally, you get that lucky one card that was hiding,  
But the card that you swap turns out to be that lucky wild ape,  
And the next player seizes it and admires their beautiful land scape

Lucky cards, Lucky roll, Lucky shuffle, or Lucky deal?  
The throw of the dice, the shuffle of the cards  
Can be the difference between loosing and winning  
What can be lucky can also be unlucky  
Unlucky can be lucky, the line keeps moving  
But being able to play is really where the luck lays.

# A Game of Rugby

Elliot Mattmann

*Donhead Prep School (Year 6 - Age 10)*

Meeting on green battle fields  
ready and spoiling for a fight!  
With their white-blue jerseys as shields  
flashing in the bright morning light.

Timidly, he was standing back  
shivering in the cold morning air  
Waiting nervously for the attack  
shrouded in frightened despair.

Suddenly, the ball leapt within his reach  
heavy as an unpinned grenade  
Charging as a tiger off the leash  
veering and swerving to evade.

In bewilderment, he almost stopped  
How would he ever make it to the line?  
This is where he always flopped  
Or would this be his day to shine?

Running like a bull seeing red  
the line inching closer yard by yard  
Zigzagging to avoid blows to his head  
towering giants standing guard.

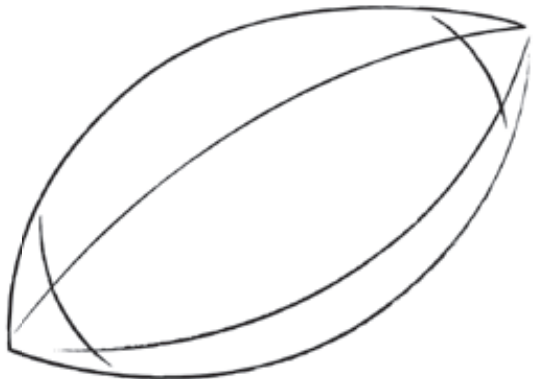
Unyielding enemies on his tail  
fierce predators circling their prey  
Would this be his moment to fail?  
Or could he somehow find a way?

Numb as an ice-frozen thumb  
the ball lugged in a rigid grip  
Moving to the inner beat of a drum  
Feeling the ground under him slip...

...hanging like a statue in mid-air  
he stumbled towards the ground  
Mumbling a sorrowful prayer  
then startled by the eruption of sound.

Was he awoken from a feverous dream?  
His ears ringing with victorious cheers  
Embraced in the arms of his team  
washing away his burgeoning tears.

Burrowed in the freshly-cut grass  
he discovered the barely visible line  
Thanking his lucky stars for the pass  
the feeling of a try was truly divine!



# Arena of Dreams

Eva Gherghetta

*Dundonald Primary School (Year 5 - Age 9)*

In Twenty-Twenty-Four, the world unites,  
In Paris, under the radiant lights.  
A tapestry of nations, colours unfurled,  
Gathered in the spirit of a global swirl.

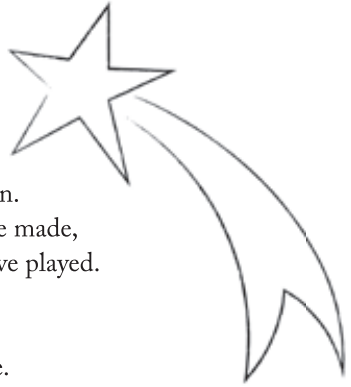
Athletes of valor, hearts beating as one,  
Under the sun's gaze, their journeys began.  
In the arena of dreams, where legends are made,  
Their passions ablaze, in the games they've played.

In pools of azure, swimmers glide,  
Their strokes like poetry, in Olympic tide.  
Gymnasts defy limits, in graceful flight,  
Their movements a symphony, in the Parisian light.

On courts of skill, with racket and ball,  
Legends are forged, in the arena's call.  
In the spirit of unity, nations compete,  
In the game of camaraderie, victories sweet.

But beyond the medals, and records set,  
Lies the true essence, we shall not forget.  
A celebration of spirit, of unity's flame,  
In the heart of Paris, where all are the same.

So let us revel, in the stories untold,  
Of courage, of passion, of hearts bold.  
In Twenty-Twenty-Four, let the world see,  
The beauty of sport, in unity.



# Games I Play

Fiza Laeeq

*St Mark's Primary School (Year 6 - Age 11)*

Turning off the hallway light then speedily running back up  
to my room  
So that I don't get caught by the scary creature  
Is a game I play.

Waving my hand up and down  
While I wait to get picked by the teacher  
Is a game I play.

Carefully not stepping on the cracks  
While I walk on the pavement  
Is a game I play.

Trying to aim right in the bin  
While throwing away my rubbish  
Is a game I play.

Sharpening my pencil  
So that it can poke me like a needle  
Is a game I play.

All of these are games I play and love to play them!  
What games do you play?



# The Battle of Two Kings

Hanna Eve

*Merton Park Primary School (Year 6 - Age 11)*

The knight came forward  
and I retreated  
Yet there was no way  
we would be defeated  
Now the gathered troops came forward  
their eyes fixed on the king with his diamond sword  
My legs ached  
but we stayed steady  
And finally  
we were ready  
A simple soldier took one of us  
but we stayed strong and made no fuss  
The warrior was only a pawn in our plan  
now the battle really began  
Each fighter was taken  
one after the other  
But our path was now blocked  
by the king's loyal brother  
The battle was fierce  
but I came out on top  
And as his body fell  
the whole fight seemed to stop  
The opponents tried hard not to despair  
but war can't be solved by a mere bishop's prayer  
The route to the castle  
was now empty and clear  
And they looked on  
with growing fear  
Many gasps followed  
as forward I reached  
For their precious castle

was about to be breached  
Now standing before me  
was the ruler behind the scenes  
For the real fighting power  
was always the Queens  
She eyed me down  
with a poisonous glare  
But luckily  
I had time to prepare  
She aimed for my head  
and gave a sickening blow  
But I knew something  
that she did not know  
She was now right above  
a closed, wooden hatch  
And with a widening smile  
I opened the latch  
I leapt over  
the now wide gaping hole  
Sensing I had achieved  
my goal  
The King and I  
eyed each other down  
He cowered back  
as I reached for his crown  
“Check mate!” I said to my friend  
For the battle of two Kings  
was now at an end.



# The Deck

James Degas

*Merton Park Primary School (Year 5 - Age 10)*

Every night and every day,  
We barely ever hit the hay.

Out on the table or in the case,  
We never really need much space.

All of us except the Joker,  
Can be played in hands of poker.

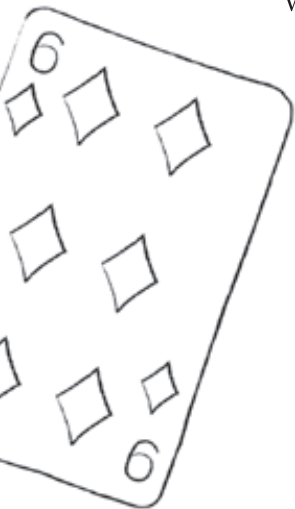
With blackjack and solitaire,  
Diamonds are without compare.

All the way from spade to heart,  
Each of us, we play our part.

Black to red and Ace to King,  
No, we don't need anything.

Why we do it, we don't understand,  
But we all like it hand in hand.

All of us, it's not that hard,  
To be a simple playing card.



# The Greatest Game

Kalrav Agrawal

*Kings College Junior School (Year 5 - Age 10)*

Life is a game,  
A conundrum of esoterica,  
Understood by few,  
With mysteries,  
And turns,  
Along every corner,  
Always questions to be answered,  
And deadlines always just waiting to be crossed,  
But we should always remember,  
To breathe life in,  
And fill our hearts,  
Come back to the present,  
It's now or never,  
Rematerialize in the moment,

Life is a game,  
The greatest ever created,  
With multiple levels,  
Always stumbling at our feet,  
So, I implore you please,  
Pull the plug on the game,  
Feel present life right now,  
Not in a decade,  
Although it's not to say,  
Don't prepare for the next level,  
Just think about how you play the game,  
Now and here,  
Before it's gone,  
Forever.



# Choices of Fate

Megan Pedrosa

*St Thomas of Canterbury Primary School  
(Year 6 - Age 10)*

Life is like a game;  
There are choices you have to make,  
Each level will never be the same,  
It could be so hard that even your body will ache.

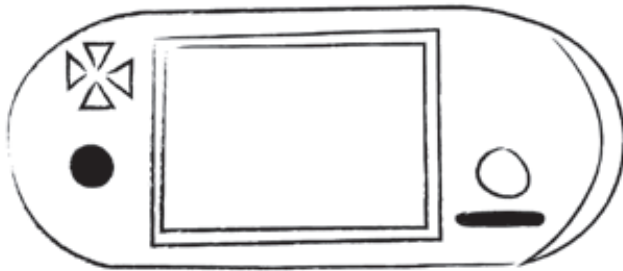
The levels get harder on the next one you play,  
On each one, the choices becomes harder to pick,  
Be careful, foreshadow it and just pray,  
It makes you sick.

Based on your choices, dilemmas could be lurking,  
You have to stand up on your own;  
You have to make up strategies that could be working,  
At all times, find your own strengths and stand alone.

It will all be okay once you cover up this mess,  
Just get out of there.  
This could be endless,  
Your heart and yourself too, shout out together.

Everything else is meaningless, you only have yourself,  
This is your fate,  
You're the only one who will get this solved,  
Run, fight, hide or it's too late.

One choice is good and one choice is bad,  
Try everything without facing oblivion,  
It's you that is the only one who will understand,  
Escaping this place is one in a billion.



You're now on the last stage,  
Death doesn't even affect what you've been through,  
This whole time, it felt as if you were stuck in a cage,  
Win or lose?

Each second here feels so suffocating,  
Don't be stuck here, forgotten,  
You haven't lost yet, but it's all so frustrating,  
Even the moon has turned crimson, everything here is  
twisted and forbidden.

Reflect on your choices, build up your courage,  
It will take every effort to win,  
Destiny is by your side, don't be scared or enraged,  
You picked the right choices, no temptation.

Everything you have done is by the heart,  
You had strong belief,  
You had bravery and were smart,  
You won the game, there is no more grief.

# 1st Place

Moyi Wei

*King's College School (Year 6 - Age 11)*

Who doesn't like coming first,  
The thirst is always for first.  
Second is great they say,  
But that is what would really ruin my day.  
You see, second is the greatest loser,  
So close but so far away.

The crushing hands of defeat,  
Grove as I crawl on my hands and feet.  
Lest I best the sorrow and accomplish the sacred feat,  
The first-place trophy I shall meet.

But in the race, there is only one,  
Who home with the trophy he has come.  
A silver medal for second place,  
With pitiful regret written on his face.  
The winner steps up with grace,  
Friendly exchanges full of praise.

Shining silver may be nice,  
But one cannot resist the strong entice,  
Of the golden medal shining like the sunrise.  
Buried deep down in the loser's heart,  
He fiercely wishes to restart,  
For if he did it all again, maybe he could satisfy his thirst  
for first.

# Magic

Sofia Watson

*Benedict Academy Primary School (Year 5 - Age 10)*

In a world of wonder where magic reined,  
a gnome of wit and cunning sustains,  
a place where heroes rise,  
and legends are made,  
where dreams and courage are the stakes.

The game of gnomes, a test of might.  
A challenge to prove your worth in sight,  
a journey through realms of pure delight,  
where the brave and cunning take flight.

In this realm of wonder, the players come,  
from far and wide, to prove their fame,  
with spells and swords they take the field,  
and battle for the ultimate goal.

The prize is glory, the prize is wealth,  
the prize is the thrill of the game's stealth,  
the prize is the joy of the chase,  
the prize is the triumph of the race.

So gather round, and take the test,  
and see if you have what it takes to be best.



# Tagger Rush!

Syed Fadi Raif

*Wimbledon Park Primary School (Year 6 - Age 11)*

As the minute hand neared the edge of time,  
Ten pairs of eyes eagerly watched it climb,  
A group of young boys and girls, they were,  
And fate would choose one as 'the tagger'.

Just as the snack-time bell screamed,  
They frantically scampered away like mice,  
In a gladiatorial arena, full of traps and mazes,  
A mix of fear and hope in their determined gazes!

The tagger, had to wait and watch, from his lonely spot,  
While others planned, he traced their paths,  
Just as the wait was over, his mind and body raced,  
He could see one of the lambs rushing to their usual graze.

That's what taggers do, they anticipate, the quicker the better,  
He was there before the other one, ready to pull the trigger,  
The laser beeped, and it dawned upon the victim,  
It was her turn to be the tagger, and beat the system.

And as was the ritual, she embraced the change,  
Her eyes dropped fear, they now burned for revenge,  
Great wings emerged from her fragile back,  
As she swooped and cornered the third boy – "tagged!"

And as the baton passed hands, time rushed faster than ever,  
The school bell rang, the play had to stop, but not forever,  
Even though the game had ended for that day,  
The new tagger was planning ahead – to win in a new way!

# The Game of Life

Ved Neoliya

*King's College Junior School (Year 6 - Age 10)*

You start as a baby,  
And little do you know,  
A grown up you have yet to be.  
Crawling around,  
Taking in your surroundings,  
Hush, my child, sleep safe and sound.

But ever so slowly,  
Your teeth start growing,  
And you start eating wholly.  
Exposed to the world,  
You need to adapt,  
You go from furred to unfurled.



You get on two feet,  
Try and try again,  
But it takes time to succeed.  
But hold on a minute –  
Before you even know it –  
You're walking – that's the spirit!

Then time flies,  
You're now in pre-school,  
Teaching you to be wise.  
You're no longer at home,  
Away from your parents,  
You're learning to work on your own.

Living on and on,  
Difficulties come your way,  
But life waits for no-one.

You build your own fears,  
You live with the most severe,  
And you overcome your tears.

It's been a few years,  
It's your tenth birthday!  
Enjoy all the songs and cheers.  
You're progressing in school,  
You're making new friends,  
Learning really is a jewel.

Your O Levels are nearing,  
Life is test after test,  
So many exams and electioneering.  
Now it's your A levels,  
Best of luck from your family!  
They make you feel confident, and special.

You did very well-  
You will be rewarded,  
Oxford University? – that's like a magic spell!  
You can't wait to start,  
To fill your brain with ideas,  
After all, everyone wants to be smart!

You live through your late teens,  
And into your early adulthood,  
Your job interview nice and clean.  
You get a home,  
You get a salary,  
Around the world you roam.

You look for a wife,  
You find the perfect one,  
You get married – what a life!  
Approaching thirty,



Not even halfway through the game,  
Still, you persevere, and through hard times stay sturdy.

You then have a son,  
You'll look back later,  
What a joy it was to have one.  
And the relentless game goes on,  
Sometimes fun, sometimes merciless,  
"You'll grow up one day," you tell your son.

And while you reach your sixties, your seventies,  
You wish you could be young again,  
Go back to the starting square, forget the longevities.  
But the cycle continues, sometimes so lame.  
People being born and dying every day,  
Are we pawns? Is the earth a board? Is life really just a game?







## HIGHLY COMMENDED STORIES:



Key Stage 2

Years 5-6

Age 9-11

# The Game

Adrian Zhang

*Shrewsbury House School (Year 6 - Age 11)*



People say that a little game won't hurt, but that isn't always the case. This story I am about to tell you has a very tragic end, although it started off as just a "little game".

On a cold winter's evening, the skies were filled with obscure clouds as the rain and hail lashed at everything. In every window of the neighborhood you could see the despair in the children's eyes as they stared hopelessly at the chaos outside, there was no chance of playing outside now- well at least most of them felt like that. There were only three children (they were Ben, Charlie and Timmy) in the neighborhood that dared not to listen to the warning of the elders. Playing in the dark by themselves was dangerous enough, but that was not enough for them was it. They wanted to go face to face with danger, it thrilled them. They were entering the Forbidden Forest...

You must wonder why the Forbidden Forest is "Forbidden". This is simply because it was the home of every person's nightmare. Some would call it the Bogeyman of England or Baba Yage of Britain, but those petrifying creatures of evil were no match for this- it was called The Beast. Its tedious name was not like anything that it did or looked like, there simply was no name that could match its evil. Still, did the boys listen? No. They just thought it was just a story that parents used to frighten their children. Oh, did they not know how wrong they were! So there they went happily striding towards their impending doom...

The rain pounded on their backs as if trying to beg them to go back, but still carried on. It was as if even mother nature was afraid of this monster's capabilities and was trying to prevent them from entering the gateway to hell. They decided to play a short game of hide and seek, nothing can go wrong with a little game right? Well that was the tragic mistake they made, and with that the dominos started falling. Ben was the seeker and the other two were the hiders. "... Three, two, one time's up!", Ben exclaimed, but before he even had the time to move he was struck down by the Beast. No one even heard him getting devoured, it was like an assassin. Next came Charlie, he had tried to scream, but no sound came out. Before long, Timmy heard the sound of pounding footsteps behind him. "Okay, you got me", he said. Looking closer, he could see the demon-like body of The Beast, its body was made of the carcasses of its prey. He was a deer in the headlights.

With his heart beating as fast as the speed of light, he sprinted away, but luck was not on his side. The Beast was faster, also he summoned minions. The sound of him falling was the last thing that he heard before he met the same end as his friends.



# Shadows' Gambit: Echoes of the Whispering Woods

Advika Chopra

*Dundonald Primary School (Year 6 - Age 11)*

In the quaint little town of Everwood, where the woods weave their cryptic enchantments, the yearly tradition of the "Gambler's Grave" grew large and painful each year. Three were chosen. Whether a group of friends or foe. Two would die but one would survive. They competed all for one thing: to be victors. Live their life like a king or queen; earn respect and money. Avery, with a determined gaze akin to a flickering flame, stood ready to overcome the endless journeys ahead. In the town eyes, she was just a 16-year-old girl who had lost her only guardian-her mother- in the same journey she must endure.

Along with her and traits there was Elijah, whose senses were as sharp as a hawk and Delilah, whose mind like a chess board; each move precisely calculated. Amidst their unique qualities: loyalty for each other was endless. Together they were an unstoppable trio.

Whispers and tales of the "Gamber's Grave" had followed its way to the heart of Everwood, where the group stood: loathing for the time to come. Dauntless by murmurs, they ventured deep into the woods, where the games arena awaited amongst the ancient, oak trees; the branches crawling its way up to the midnight sky.

Under the moon's blue, ethereal glow, they followed the narrow and tangled meander: the taste of bile welcoming them into to the Whispering Woods. Within its every curve, there was a threat each of them had to overcome. The

air hung heavy with despair, each gasp of breath thick with scent of dirt and mystery.

The “Gambler’s Grave” was a eerie dance of strategy and endurance, where friendship was formed and broken like twigs beneath a hunter’s boot. The red, bent and old cards scattered with the flicker of lantern light, holding the potential of life and death in their bare hands.

As the game unfolded its deepest and darkest secrets, the woods opened its branches to the game and its contestants: whispering hidden truths and ancient secrets. Avery, Elijah, and Delilah dug deeper into the untold stories of the hauntings and mysteries, unravelling clues that hinted a darker purpose behind the “Shadows’ Gambit.”

At the end, the final hand was played. The victor emerged from the dark shadows of the past; Avery stood alone. Triumphant yet distraught of the sacrifices she made along the way. Her only memory of her friends was their laughter echoing through the Whispering Woods. As she returned to reality, the memory of the Whispering woods wood lingers in her head forever.

But the game was not over yet...

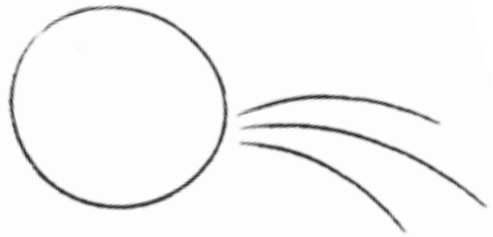


# The Game of My Life

Alexander Rigg

*St John Fisher Primary School (Year 5 - Age 10)*

It was a mild evening. After months of training, it would all come down to tomorrow afternoon. These were the words I was thinking the night before the final of the Olympic competition, Table Tennis. I was scared out of my skin but also couldn't wait for the day to come. As night drew to a close, I started to think of all the things that could go wrong, I started to wonder if those late nights of training and early workouts would actually be worth it. Then I told myself "NO, if I believe, then I will have a chance in this. If I don't, all this training will go to waste." Before noon, my taxi had arrived. The next time I stepped into my hotel room I would be going to be a world champion or going back to my training and early work outs to prepare for the next Olympic games. The drive through Paris was magical as we passed by the Eiffel tower, I saw a few kids playing Table Tennis on a rusty, old table with a large metal net crossing through the middle like a chef slicing through a fish. Maybe they'll be like me one day I thought to myself. The taxi driver told me to exit the car as I had reached my destination. To my surprise, many of my fans were queuing up to take a picture. So much so, I was almost late for my training! As I walked into the hall people started to throw jeers and rude chants at me just because I was not the one they were supporting. Then in walked my opponent, Wang Chuqin, the number one in the world. It was now or never... Before I knew it, I was already one game behind, Wang only needed one game to win the match, for Wang, that wasn't hard. The 2nd game started to shift Wang's way and he was now 9 – 8 ahead, then 10 – 8. "Match Point!" the scorer shouted, the hall went quiet as the ball ran across the table. Poing! Ping! Poing! Ping! I saw my chance to smash the ball and so I did, only



to find it narrowly miss the table. I was distraught. My one chance at becoming number one had come and gone, and at the end of the day, I had come second. I took my medal and walked to my fans, even though they looked just as upset as me I cheered them up a little by signing some of their clothes and magazines. I went over to Wang and he told me some words I remember to this day, "At least you tried your hardest, I had to, too." Then he said, something I'm proud of the number one in the world saying about me. "You are great." I still keep those words in my heart and hope that they don't leave any time soon.

# The Friendship Maze

Clarissa Gan

*Wimbledon Chase Primary School (Year 6 - Age 10)*

Fear and adrenaline coursed through Lottie's veins, an undefeatable opponent. Taking a deep breath, she pictured herself winning the tournament. All she had to do was exit the maze first. The maze was filled with physical challenges as well as puzzling questions. There were ten competitors in total, each from different schools. Glancing at her competitors, her gaze fell on a girl from St Catherine's Academy. Her name tag read, "Katrina". She had her arms folded and an arrogant sneer was etched across her face. Determinedly, Lottie vowed to beat her and focused on the referee as he hollered instructions. 3...2...1...Peep! The referee's whistle blew. Peering at her timer, Lottie could see the time ticking. The countdown had begun. They had an hour each.

Lottie sailed through the challenges – she had scaled the climbing wall easily. The next challenge was a question about books; Lottie was a voracious reader! Questions about monarchies, the World Cup, the area of a quadrant were swiftly answered, and obstacles rapidly completed. However, the next challenge wasn't so easy. She had completed most of the obstacle course, which involved balancing on a rope, inching under swinging weights and leaping on stepping-stones across a lake. But now she couldn't jump high enough to press the button that opened the gate. Soon, despair cascaded over her.

Questions pestered her like a swarm of angry wasps. Did she have to wait here? Was there no other way out? Footsteps pounded closer. It was Katrina. Katrina vaulted up and swiped at the button. Failure! After a few more feeble attempts, it became clear that neither could reach. As Katrina tied branches and leaves together, Lottie tried again. Impossible. Finished

with her flimsy-looking contraption, Katrina used it to climb. Her fingers were centimetres away from the button when the rope snapped. She came tumbling down, shooting Lottie an icy look, as if daring her to laugh. They had to work together.

Reluctantly, Katrina hoisted Lottie up. Lottie scrambled onto the ledge before helping Katrina get up. They pressed the button and ran through together. Once on the other side, Katrina smiled at Lottie for the first time that day. "We make a good team," she remarked. Lottie agreed.

Finally, the end was in sight. Katrina raced forward, beckoning for Lottie, before stopping abruptly, panicking. "There's supposed to be ten challenges! We've only done nine!" The urgency in her voice was bold and accented. Catching them off guard, tripwires burst from the hedges. Lottie stumbled backwards, gasping in shock. Together, they carefully stepped over the wires and exited together. The crowd erupted in cheers. They had done it! They had won! "I doubt the maze was designed to be completed alone. That's why it's called The Friendship Maze," murmured Lottie to Katrina, as she observed the other competitors exiting the maze in groups of twos and threes. "First place goes to Lottie Baumann and Katrina Goldwells!" announced the referee. Sunlight danced across their faces, sparkling like diamonds.

# **The Casino of Eternity**

Coralie Julia Rose Morton

*Sellincourt Primary School (Year 6 - Age 11)*

My family is poor. It isn't their fault but I sometimes (regretfully) wish we could travel abroad like my other friends. I'm Harper and last summer my life took a turn for the worse.

It all started on the first day of the holidays. It was 2am and my parents had woken me up and told me to get dressed. Whenever I asked them what was happening, they just secretively smiled. We got in the car and Dad sped through traffic. At last, we came to a stop near a casino. I thought we were in the wrong place, but my parents got out of the car and started walking, so I followed.

Inside was amazing; it felt like we were rich! We were welcomed by a tall and handsome man, he showed us to our room and left.

“Surprise!” Mum exclaimed.

“Wow!” I responded.

We dumped our stuff in our room and stepped outside. We soon split up and I found my Dad playing poker but when I said hi, he just stared at me, blankly. I thought nothing of it until I waved at Mum.

“Who are you?” she asked.

As soon as she killed me with those three words I ran. I didn't look where I was going and ended up in the staff room.

“It's all going according to plan, soon everyone will have lost all their memories,” someone declared.

My eyes widened and I tried to run out of the staff room but they caught me. They told me that if I won a video game against them, my parents and I could escape this wretched place. If I lost, I would be their servant forever.

I accepted their offer, and followed them into their personal arcade. It was go-karting.

“Strange choice,” I thought.

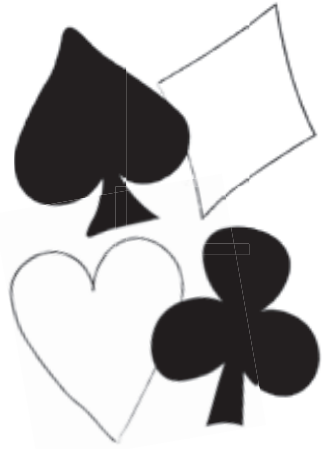
They sent me to a dusty chair and while I prepared myself, one of the employees came up to me and broke the controls. They ‘apologized’ and gave me another controller that barely worked.

“Fine, you want to play dirty, let’s play dirty,” I thought.

I walked over and wacked off my opponent’s glasses, smashing them in the process. I faked apologising and went back to my screen. It was easy after that, even with terrible controls: without his glasses my opponent couldn’t see a thing!

Soon after, my parents and I were walking out of the casino. My parents thought that they had broken one of the rules when they won a gamble so they got kicked out. I guess the manager popped that idea into their heads. I don’t care, I’m just happy that I have my parents back. We got back to our house and went back to our normal lives. But I never forgot the casino and I never will. I will always feel sorry for those unfortunate people who are stuck in the casino. The ones who can’t remember who they are. Maybe I should go back and save them...

THE END



# Twenty-one Dares

Danae Florence Hanlon

*Poplar Primary School (Year 6 - Age 11)*

“Let’s play twenty-one dares,” Molly exclaimed.

“I’ll start then,” Gretchen said, “One, two.”

Molly went next, then Annalise, me, and so on. I ended up being the one on twenty-one, and Gretchen chose my dare. She looked at me, her blue eyes shining and her blonde hair smooth and straight. I glanced at Annalise. Her eyes were lowered, and she fidgeted with her fingers.

Why isn’t she paying attention to the game? I thought.

Gretchen turned to face the derelict building next to the park.

I knew what my dare was. And it made my mouth go dry when I realised Gretchen, Molly and Annalise had planned this together. I knew I wouldn’t be able to escape: Gretchen’s mother helped own the park and Gretchen was holding the keys. My mum was picking me up at four, which was an hour away. Besides, it could be fun.

We walked over to the prison gate, which we then climbed over. And then we were in the building.

It was damp and dark and full of dust and cobwebs. I turned around to look at the group. My best friends. Of course I knew this was only because of my father and what he had done to Molly’s family, but how could Annalise do this to me? Surely this was going too far.

“What do you want me to do?” I asked them.

“I dare you to explore the prison,” Gretchen said.

“Stay on call with us the whole time,” said Annalise. “It won’t take long, we’ll stay here.”

I glared at her. I fumbled around for my phone and turned on the torch, then called Molly.

I took a step forward, but the floor gave way.

Annalise screamed. Molly shouted my name. Gretchen gasped. I hit the concrete floor on my side. I had definitely broken something. My head was spinning and my vision was blurred, but I somehow managed to stand upright. The screams of my friends just made me feel dizzy.

I need to find a way out.

I looked for my phone, however I knew it would’ve fallen out of my hand when I fell. Looking up I realised I must’ve fallen at least five metres. I turned around, nearly falling back down in the process, but found a ladder leading back up to the ground floor. The dark wasn’t helping, and without my phone’s torch, I only had the faint light from small holes in the walls acting as windows to see things.

The ladder. Focus on finding the ladder.

I limped forwards, stopping when I saw the glint of a rusty metal ladder. I placed my sweaty hands on it and began to pull, but it began coming away from the wall.

I slumped down on the damp floor and put my head in my hands. Annalise shouted down the hole: ‘I’m calling the police!’

And then I heard a voice from behind me, “Oh, that won’t be necessary.”

# Ticket Torture

Edward Gilbertson

*Donhead Prep School (Year 6 - Age 11)*

Fred was waiting in the contenders room waiting for a tournament to start. Looking around in the room he was alarmed at how big and strong everyone else looked. his heart was beating uncontrollably and he felt like there were live snakes wriggling around in his stomach. It was quite a big room with a sofa on either side of it, there was a fridge on the side closest to the door also a microwave and something to fill up water cups with. There were security guards like gorillas standing at the doorways in and out of the room. Fred was starting to get second thoughts on entering the competition.

Just when he though his nerves could not get any worse he heard an announcement

“FIVE MINUTES LEFT,” a commentator shouted, then the scream of the crowd came it was like millions of howler monkeys screaming at the same time. He felt his stomach being put in a blender spinning round and round. He couldn't go on; he sat down on the sofa, trying to pretend it wasn't happening.

Putting his face into his hands, out of the corner of his eye he could see his pocket, and he also saw he had no ticket.

Quickly he checked his other pocket it wasn't there, now he was really worrying. Immediately he looked below the sofa; nothing was there. Then he looked between the sofa cushion, it wasn't there either.

He remembered he'd been sitting on a chair before but it wasn't under that either.

He'd looked in the fridge earlier but couldn't eat, he decided

he'd check over there, but, yet again, there was nothing. Without really expecting he'd find anything he looked behind the watercup filler. Knowing there was nothing else he could do he walked up to one of the security people.

"Sir," he asked, "have you seen a ticket on the floor? I can't find mine." The guard grunted a "no" in a very deep voice. Fred knew there was no where else he could look, he sat down defeated.

As he sat down he heard a bit of paper crinkle under him, he felt below him and found a piece of paper in his back pocket. It was his ticket! He was so glad he almost forgot to be worried about the competition. But he felt better now he felt like could do whatever the competition asked of him now.

A few minutes later he found himself walking in to a massive stadium with a crowd screaming around him. He walked towards the centre of the stadium he was ready to start the game.

# The Back Garden Olympics

Giulio Formisano

*Dundonald Primary School (Year 5 - Age 10)*

Conner, Harry, George, Lily and Annabeth were best friends who loved playing together. Annabeth liked logical games; Harry was good at imagining; Conner loved sports; George was amazing at card games and Lily unbelievable at building. Once, in Conner's garden, they played a game so wonderful that it became real...

"What should we play?" asked Conner. Whilst they were thinking, a blue light sucked them up like a tornado. A second later they were hurled out of the sky and into a chamber.

"I imagined this before we started," exclaimed Harry, "we are in one of the levels of our game! There's a drag-".

A deafening roar echoed around the cave. Suddenly, a massive dragon launched a jet of scorching fire. "RUN!" yelled George! They rushed into a large room and locked the door. There, two hands sprouted like a plant from the walls, each hand with two piles of cards labelled "Top Trumps: Dinosaurs." "I think we play the other hand," said George, "I'm good at this!"

As George read out a stat, a dinosaur leapt out of his card and attacked the opponent. It became messier until the adversary had one card left. "And to finish it off," said George, "weight: 100,000." As the card skidded across the floor, a trap door opened and the friends tumbled into another room. It was checked in an endless pattern of black and white. Then, a sign flashed: "Black wins in four moves."

"It's a chess puzzle!" Annabeth said excitedly.

“Can you even do it, Annabeth?” asked Harry.

“I’ll try,” replied Annabeth and sat down thinking. Suddenly, she leapt up and shouted, “I’ve got it!” Victory was in the air. She moved the pieces into winning positions and the group moved to the next room.

This one had a ping-pong table, a ball and two rackets. “Cool,” said Conner, “sports; this’ll be easy.” As soon as he said that, the ball turned into a ball of molten, pure lava! Nervously, Conner took the racket and began fighting over the fireball against a floating hand with everyone watching in fascination.

At match point, Conner slammed the ball so hard that the hand missed it. However, there was no time to celebrate as the floor started dissembling into a Jenga tower. “This is my area of expertise!” said Lily excitedly as the others scrambled for foot places. “The only way is up!” shouted George. Lily kept pointing where to go whilst blocks fell everywhere. Having reached the top, the friends spotted again that strange, blue light. “That’s the portal home,” shouted Lily. As the last person leapt through the light, the tower cascaded down.

WOOSH. The friends tumbled onto Conner’s garden, feeling exhausted. Around, there was a run-down chessboard; a rusty ping-pong table; a damaged Top Trumps pile; a dragon mini-figure and a scattered heap of Jenga blocks. Unexpectedly, Conner’s dad’s voice resounded “Guys, your parents are here to collect you.” The friends looked to each other in disbelief.



# Olympic Playtime

Isabella Ritson

*Wimbledon High School (Year 5 - Age 10)*

In the hills of ancient Greece, there lived a courageous young girl named Callista.

Callista was a warrior with the notable Amazonians, a famous female-only tribe in the ancient world famed for their skills and bravery. Callista was known for her adventurous spirit and fearlessness. Her desire to prove herself worthy of the revered Olympic games, setting off an adventure to showcase her the bravest of all Amazonians.

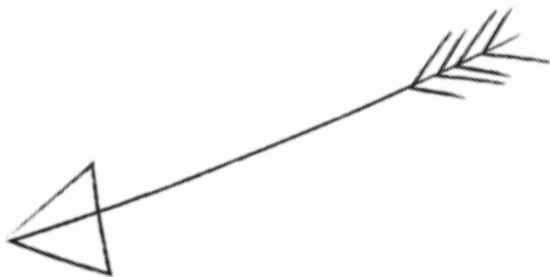
Equipped with her spear, Callista embarked on her quest. Her first adversary was the formidable Chimaera, a creature with the body of a goat, tail of a dragon and the head of a lion. With her amazing fighting skills, she bested the Chimaera, a testament to her strength and courage. Next, she confronted the monstrous Harpies, winged creatures with the faces of women and the bodies of birds. With her nimbleness and unwavering determination, she wrestled the Harpies into submission. If she could defeat Harpies, no one in Olympia wouldn't stand a chance.

Afterwards, our brave heroine encountered the deadly Gorgons, sisters with hair made of living and venomously hissing snakes. They were so hideous that if one gazed directly into their eye, any warrior would be turned to stone. However, with her bravery and agility, Callista used a polished shield to catch the reflection of the Gorgons and avoid looking directly at them, allowing her to fight and defeat them without turning to stone. 'If I can outjump a Gorgon', Callista thought, "then the wreath of victory shall be mine."

Finally, Callista faced the powerful Griffin, a creature embodying a lion's figure and hind legs, and the head and wings of an eagle. With her resourcefulness and bravery, Callista outsmarted the Griffin with the spear, aiming at the beast's vulnerable point, and finally slaying the mythical creature. Yet another Olympic event in the bag, she thought.

After her epic adventure, Callista longed to return as a champion, to be celebrated for her bravery in facing the mythical monsters of ancient Greece and to prove that women should compete in the Olympics. Just as she was about to realising her dreams, "Clara Amazonia, stop your daydreaming." Miss Ford, the headmistress came out "Shouldn't you be in class already?" Miss Ford asked.

Clara must have missed the school bell tolled and didn't notice other girls already returned from the playground to the classroom upstairs. With a heavy heart, Callista begrudgingly ran back to the classroom. Dreams of the famous game would have to wait. This girl would have to wait for the next playtime to fight again, as nothing would deter her. Until then, she would have to face the challenge of the classroom, knowing that she would rise again to face whatever challenges came her way, be it mythical beasts or the challenges of the classroom.



# The Game

Lidia Tisch

*Wimbledon Park Primary School (Year 5 - Age 10)*

Bombs dropped all around me, I clutched my gas mask case to my chest. It felt like the world was ending. Just a few days prior, I still had a house that hadn't been bombed, a mother and a father. Now I am an orphan, on a train to Nottingham, hoping to become a spy.

I arrived at the train station. Whilst I was waiting in a queue of shrieking children, a woman tied a label around my neck like I was a package. I ripped it off and read it. "Eloise Bradford. Born 13th of February 1934. Spy training. Nottingham." Not only did I feel proud at that moment, but I felt important. I was going to be a spy for the British government. Not every child got this opportunity.

I had been in spy training for weeks and the days flew past. I was getting ready one morning when a piece of paper was slid through my mailbox. It read: "Come to room 5A at 10:15am for a final test, the results of which will decide whether or not you will be hired." I hadn't realised that only some of SITs (spies in training) were going to be hired. However, it didn't worry me, as before the war started, I was one of the smartest in my class, so I was confident. I checked my watch, 10:13am. I could just make it if I ran. I sprinted!

I knocked on the door, panting, and I was surprised to be led into a room full of fitness equipment. I had been expecting desks and exam sheets but realised we were going to take a physical test. It didn't bother me as I knew that I was quite strong for my age. But was I strong enough?

A man took me and seven other candidates to a corner full of weights. He told us that the three strongest would be hired. He blew a whistle and we darted towards the weights. The others groaned as they realised they had all overestimated their strength

after they dropped weights on their feet. Luckily, I started with the lightest weight and eventually worked my way up to the heavier ones. Strangely, the weights didn't feel heavy at all, perhaps it was because I was running on pure adrenaline. For a while, it felt more like a game than a test and I was certain I was going to be hired.

After the test had ended, we were all sent to our rooms to wait for the results that were supposed to arrive in an hour.

I waited patiently, hoping with all my heart that I would be successful. At last, another piece of paper was slid through my mailbox. I read it repeatedly, my heart soaring with joy since I had been hired for the agency and was going to France for my first mission in just two months' time.

The game had just started!

# A Pawn of War

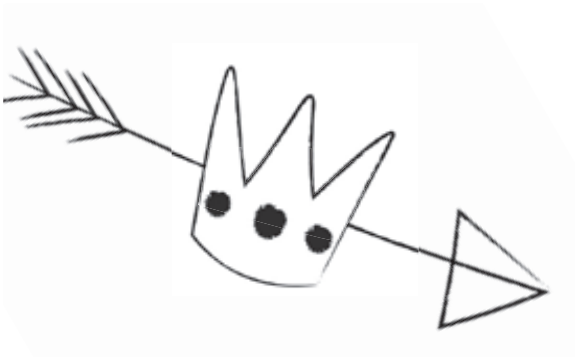
Livia Lewis

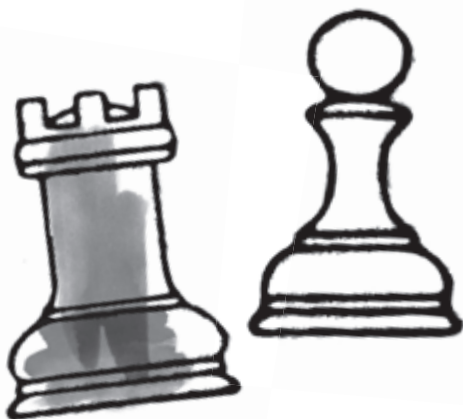
*Merton Park Primary School (Year 6 - Age 11)*

A lone black stallion galloped across the battlefield, eyes wide, nostrils flaring in fear as it leaped over its fallen comrades. The moon shone down like a ghostly galleon upon a stormy sea of stars, as a white arrow fluted through the air striking the horse hard in the temple. Its flesh tore and gushed blood as it fell to the ground dead.

The white flag of the offending ivory castle danced triumphantly in the rotting air of the deceased, as more black stallions, fuelled by the anger of their loss, charged, followed by bishops clad in black armour. A sea of black and white arrows flew through the night sky, as the two armies fought manically.

A dark figure swept through the limbs that scattered the floor, silently stabbing the few pawns that were too slow to stop her dark ebony sword. Upon her head lay her precious royal crown and etched in her mind the goal of victory over the white by killing their king.





Pawns were lost and so were horses. The sky wept tears of sadness at this field of blood and death, as thunder echoed across the sky like a battle drum. White swords and arrows clashed against black in the madness of the war. Neither was victorious, until the scream of the white queen echoed around the battleground. She lay bleeding in her castle, pierced by a black arrow and unable to defend her king any longer, leaving him vulnerable to enemy fire.

Taking advantage, the black pawns charged forward swinging their swords like batons in a ritual, as dark clouds swarmed the sky. It seemed like death himself was stalking the battlefield. As the final pall of thunder and lightning erupted across the sky, the white king took his last breath. Surrounded by black soldiers and the checkered floor of white and black bodies that surrounded him, a single tear rolled down his cheek as he fell.

Checkmate.

# Checkmate

Matilda Hurley

*Pelham Primary School (Year 6 - Age 10)*

*This is a fictional report from the perspective of a young girl, Maisy whose father played a game with the devil and lost, so she and her two sisters, Zoe and Kate, set off to rescue their father.*

“Hurry up Kate! We’re gonna miss the bus!” I called, sprinting towards the bus stop. “So, you’re sure Mum is ok with this?” she replied, uncertainly. “Positive!”

Once we had found a seat on the bus, we talked hurriedly trying to make a plan. We couldn’t think of anything until Kate mentioned something that we all agreed might just work.

We started discussing the ins and outs of the plan until it all fell into place. We would enter hell and then the plan would begin.

Zoe would find Dad and explain his part of the plan (to carry Kate out because she couldn’t run due to her injury), and Kate would steal keys to the devil’s room so I could meet him and challenge him to a game.

“CHESS!” I cried, “It’s perfect! I am an amazing chess player if I do say so myself.” “Yes! Just beat him, then we’ll be outta there!” exclaimed Kate. “Let’s blow this popsicle stand!” cheered Zoe and we all broke out into fits of giggles. But the happiness didn’t last long.

Next stop, hell.

Me and Zoe excitedly rushed towards the front doors, but Kate had other ideas. “On second thoughts, maybe we shouldn’t go. You know, hell is a big place, we may not find Dad, so if we just

turn arou-” but before Kate could finish, we had swung open the colossal double doors and dragged her through. The plan was now in action.

Zoe ran off searching for Dad while Kate and I went off to pursue our part.

It was going exactly as planned, Kate passed me the key, and I pushed it into the keyhole. CLICK. The door swung open, barely missing the end of my nose, and left me staring into the hollow eyes of the devil himself.

“I’m here to challenge you, challenge you to a game of chess,” I announced, trying desperately to mask my fear.

When the devil replied, he spoke in a cold voice, “Why?”

“Because if I win you give me back my father.” “And if I win?” smirked the devil. “I will be your servant. Forever.” He thought hard about my offer. “Deal.”

GULP.

I was trembling. Whites play first. He made his move, I made mine. I started to sweat. One mistake and I would be trapped here forever. The game went on over an hour until...

Checkmate.

The devil roared in outrage. I had done it. I had won.

I grabbed the key to my dad’s cell and left, finding Kate who then showed me the way to Zoe and Dad. I unlocked the door, and he whisked Kate off the floor, and we all made for the exit without a second glance. Our plan had worked.

# Mastering the Sword

Maya Flouch

*Wimbledon High School (Year 6 - Age 11)*

“Halt, nice work, Sophie” Mr Revenouse said sternly. “See you tomorrow for training at six am.”

“Thank you, Mr Revenouse” replied Sophie. She smiles, Mr Revenouse rarely credited her. This never bothered Sophie, he had always been blunt, but Sophie Raclette never gives up.

Five years earlier

Sophie wasn't like her siblings. She was full of energy and caused a racket wherever she went. Her bright blue eyes had shots of manic and her blonde locks were pulled into a messy ponytail.

It was a day, like no other, Sophie went to a bakery with her father to buy baguettes. She started darting around and jumping off chairs. Until she tripped and fell into a tall man. His hair was smoothed back. His brow was furrowed but his eyes still twinkled. His lips showed no emotion. But something about him was beckoning Sophie closer. Her father came rushing over apologising to the man, but still he stayed silent.

Sophie and her father were leaving as a husky voice said,

“Your child has great potential.” Sophie's father turned to face the man; confusion painted on his face. The mysterious man walked past Sophie and hands her a box of macarons. “I will see you soon, child”. Sophie looked at the box. In black swirly writing, a phone number and address are written with the words

-Le Prestigieux escrime academie de Revenouse-

“The prestigious fencing academy of Revenouse” Sophie whispered under her breath. What could that possibly be?

The next day Sophie followed the instructions on the macaron box. Her mother drove her to an abandoned warehouse. When they got out the car they saw the man. He greeted them with a voice as sharp as a sword.

“What is your name, child?”

“My name is Sophie Raclette” Sophie answered with confidence.

“Mine is Mr Revenouse. I am going to teach you the art of fencing” he replied. Sophie waved to her mother as Mr Revenouse led her inside. There were rows of steel masks and clean, white jackets. Mr Revenouse handed Sophie a sword. Its blade was sharp, but the grip was smooth. Let’s get started, Sophie thought.

Sophie spent hours with Mr Revenouse but couldn’t master what he was asking. “You are full of energy,” he says. “You need to learn how to channel that strength into your attack.”

His words wash over Sophie as he continued, and this is what they said:

- “Fencing is a dance that not only needs to be mastered by the body, but by the mind. When two swords cross, it becomes a dance: the clash of wit and agility. The way the graceful defence counters the violent attack. In this art, each of these aspects needs to be perfectly balanced to win over your opponent.”-

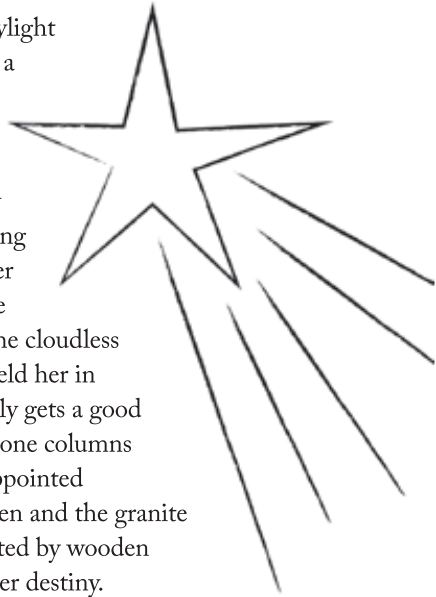
These words never left Sophie; these words are what wake Sophie at six in the morning. She will never give up on her quest to master the body, the mind, and the sword.

# The Angel's Curse

Milo Jarvis

*King's College Junior School (Year 6 - Age 11)*

She steps out into the oppressive daylight from the holding chamber. Holding a bronze dagger, drenched in freezing cold water and covered in stained rags, she comes to what is probably going to be her untimely death. The crowd jeers at her, chucking rotten food at her feet and calling her foul names – the opposing army. The sun winks at her from far above in the cloudless azure blue sky, like the player who held her in their palm like a pawn. and she finally gets a good look at her surroundings. The sandstone columns and pillars loom above her like disappointed guardians against the King of Agryten and the granite levels and viewing platforms supported by wooden beams. It is time for Hoshi to face her destiny.



Hoshi grew up as a shy, meek orphan in a small town. She never knew who her parents were but only knew that, one day, her parents would come back for her. They never did. The angels did.

The angels, who stripped her from her kind brothers and sisters, who cursed her to return to them when she was just twenty – five years of age. She despised them with all her heart. Only one good thing had come from the kidnapping. Her magic, a feral, wild thing that lived inside her – it had also turned her hair a stark white. Ever since she was a little girl, Hoshi has dreamed of being a brave warrior, like a knight in chess. Now her dreams were coming true, just not in the way she has expected them to.

The King of Agryten greets her, bows after her politely, and then the battle commences. Hoshi can hear the chants of the peasants who have gathered below her feet to witness her death – the pawns of the king’s chess game. She quickly dodges a sweep from the King’s deadly mace and returns with a punch in the King’s smug face, and it was like rolling a dice, but of chance. Out of the corner of her eye, Hoshi notices that smoky grey clouds are beginning to form on the horizon.

The two begin to circle each other, while more clouds ominously cover the sky. With a sudden boom, the whole arena shudders, and the viewing platforms wobble. A swirling, glowing vortex appears above their heads, in the midst of the duel, and Hoshi seizes her chance. She leaps forward, towards the King and casts the Curse of Weakness over his whole body and enchants malign snakes to strangle him.

And then it hits her.

Tears come to her stunning blue eyes and Hoshi collapses to the floor of the arena, her whole body throbbing with trauma.

“The angels... don’t... take me...” Hoshi rasps between gasping breaths. Then she sees him for the first time in nine years. Her composure begins to crumble like a rook’s defence.

“We’ve come for you.”

And then she fades into the light, gone forevermore.

# The Game

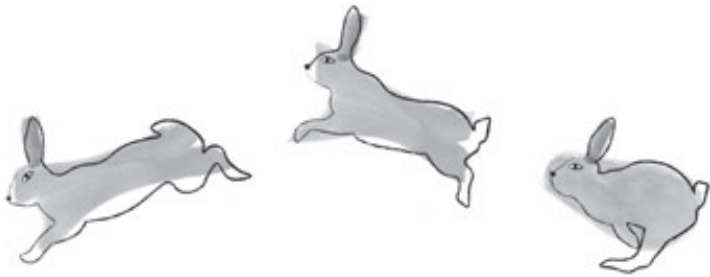
Skyla Hills

*Wimbledon Park Primary School (Year 6 - Age 11)*

Born into a world where each child is bound to a gamer, controlling and punishing them for life, I was barely living by this point, merely surviving. One fateful day, my gamer's cruelty sky-rocketed, leading me into the forest where I encountered a weeping child. By pure instinct, I wandered over to offer comfort to her but my gamer clearly thought otherwise. He stopped me dead in my tracks and I stumbled back as a result of the force. I looked back at her with empathy in my eyes, only, she wasn't there anymore. I swiftly turned my head back to the path ahead of me and there she was, walking like nothing had happened. Her movements were abnormal though, jolty and robotic. Curiosity getting the better of me, I tapped her on the shoulder and a raspy voice escaped her lips, "What do you want...". I jumped back with surprise but deep down I knew this voice from somewhere. Then it clicked, it was the grand high gamer, I was sure of it.

In the heat of the moment, I confronted him, letting my hand go rogue. Punishment followed, as I knew it would, leaving me shaken but determined. The next day, as I was walking through the forest as I had been instructed, when a sense of being watched fell upon me. I looked behind me and there it was, the snake. Trapped by my gamer's control, I found solace in the serpent's guilt-ridden gaze, I seized the opportunity and I ran.

My gamer then proceeded to twist my body into positions that wouldn't even exist in your worst nightmares. Enduring the excruciating pain, I persevered, gaining courage and resilience in the process. Powered by my newfound courage



and a desire for freedom, an absurd idea mischievously tunneled its way into my brain. It was not a reasonable idea but it was worth a try. I was going to bring some hope into my sorrow community.

I closed my eyes and focused all my brain power onto that one thought. Then, all of a sudden, a tingling sensation washed over my body and I was plunged into complete darkness. The tingling feeling pushed its way into the tips of my fingers and toes and a power that I had never felt before surged through creating a beam of light. This light lifted the darkness surrounding me. I took the chance when it was still light and I took in the scene around me. Everyone else in my pitiful neighbourhood was glowing but I was the only one who had light radiating out of my fingers. I closed my eyes again and I was transported to another world. A world where we were all free. The little girl who I had previously seen weeping against the great oak was walking towards me, undeterred. I prepared myself but she simply stuck out her hand for me to shake it so I did then, she whispered, “Thank you,” and glided away.





# **HIGHLY COMMENDED**

*Special Educational Needs Schools*

# **Crocodile**

Anthony Timbrell

*Cricket Green School (Early Years - Age 4)*

Crocodile crocodile, wow a crocodile.



# **Scared, scared, scared**

Craig Ireland

*Cricket Green School (Year 6 - Age 10)*

I a cookie,  
Friends,  
Playground,  
Fun,  
Running,  
Hiding with friends.  
Monster!  
Scared, scared, scared.

# Pop Up Pirate

Danyal Lilani

*Cricket Green School (Year 3 - Age 7)*

Brown, red hard.  
Pushing down,  
Popping up.  
Laughing, happy.



# Hide and Seek

Liam Patmalnieks

*Cricket Green School (Year 2 - Age 7)*

Hide, hide,  
Behind the tree,  
Up high, climb the ladder,  
Up we go.

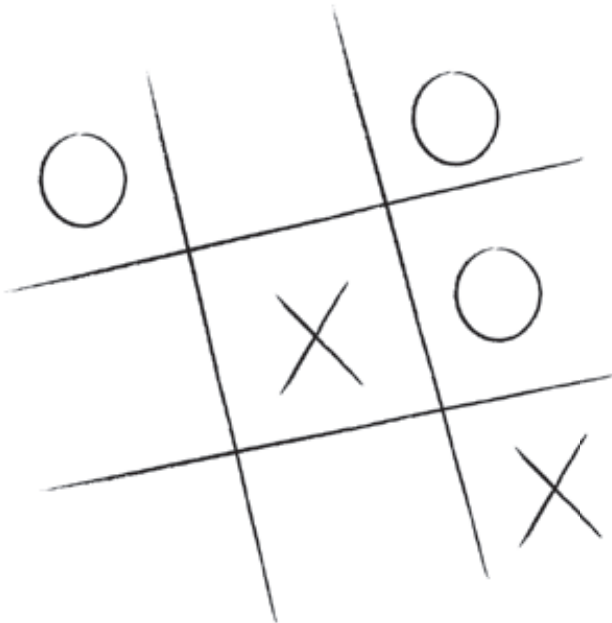


# **Young Writers' Competition 2024**

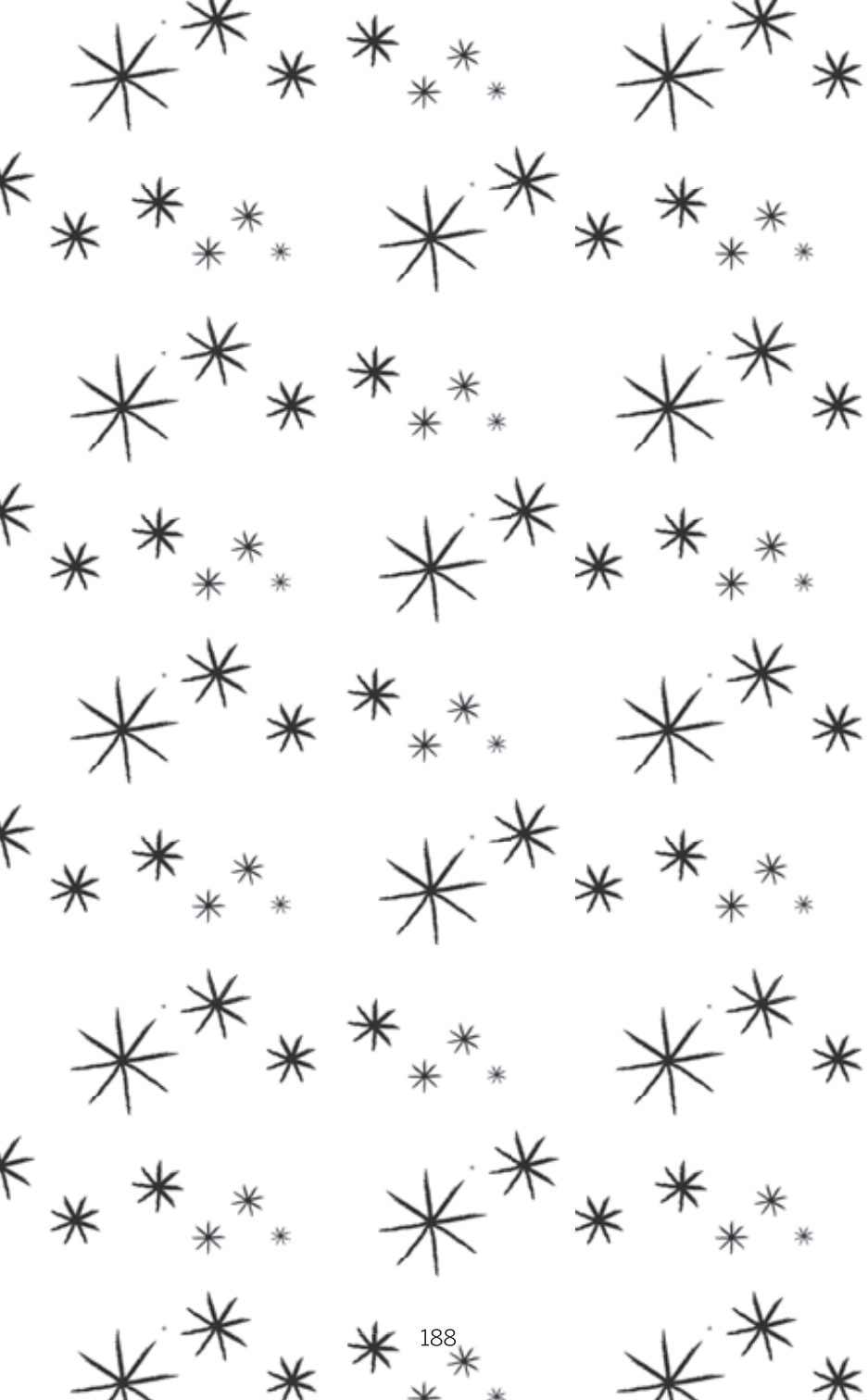
## **Participating Junior Schools**

Benedict Academy Primary School  
Cricket Green School (SEN)  
Donhead Prep School  
Dundonald Primary School  
Fircroft Primary School  
Hatfeild Primary School  
Joseph Hood Primary School  
King's College Junior School, Wimbledon  
Links Primary School  
Malmesbury Primary School  
Merton Abbey Primary School  
Merton Park Primary School  
Pelham Primary School  
Poplar Primary School  
Rokeby School  
Sacred Heart Primary School, Merton  
Sacred Heart Primary School, Wandsworth  
Sellincourt Primary School  
Shrewsbury House School  
St John Fisher Primary School  
St Mark's Primary School, Mitcham  
St Mary's Primary School, Wimbledon

St Matthew's Primary School  
St Thomas of Canterbury Primary School  
The Sherwood School  
The Study Prep School, Wimbledon  
Ursuline Prep School  
Willington Prep School  
Wimbledon Chase Primary School  
Wimbledon Common Prep School  
Wimbledon High School (Junior)  
Wimbledon Park Primary School







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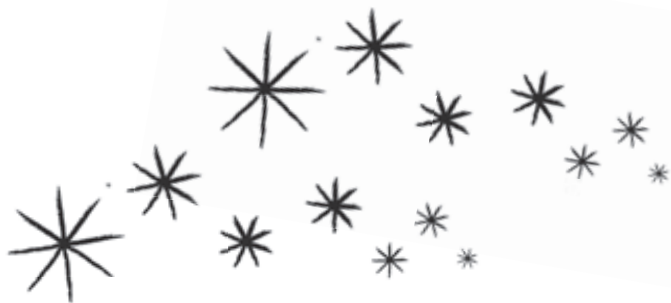
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