

CHILDREN WRITING TO GROW SMART

Stories written by learners for the
Growsmart Story Writing Competition



2023 Edition
Western Cape, Eastern Cape & Limpopo



A MESSAGE FROM DWARSRIVIER CHROME MINE

One thing that we all have in common is that each of us has a story to tell. Stories are the tapestries of our lives, our history and our future and being able to write those stories is a very special medium of communication.

Story writing allows for connection, creativity and provides an opportunity to learn, grow and have fun for both the writer and the reader.

The Growsmart Story Writing Competition provides just that. The platform for learners to share their personal stories whilst taking the reader on a journey through their eyes, weaving through their personal experiences, traversing their imaginative mountains, climbing

their hills of hope and experiencing their deep joy and sorrow.

What makes this anthology of stories ever more so unique is that they are written by learners in Grades 4 to 6.

We applaud these learners for embracing the challenge despite English not being their first language and we hope that this collection inspires other children and their teachers to write and develop the passion for storytelling in a written form.

Dwarsrivier Chrome Mine
SED Team



A MESSAGE FROM THE WESTERN CAPE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

In the delicate choreography of language, the transformative power of writing unfurls, bridging minds, igniting sentiments, and weaving narratives that imprint themselves upon the fabric of our shared human journey. Through this enigmatic craft, ideas transcend barriers, emotions find their resonance, and stories are conjured into existence.

Within the pages of the 2023 Creative Story Writing Anthology, we find ourselves immersed in a tapestry of short stories woven by the hearts and minds of budding authors who enthusiastically engaged in the Growsmart Creative Writing Competition. Their narratives shimmer with the vivacity of imagination, traversing themes as diverse as the lament of a forest and an enigmatic monster veiled beneath a bed.

The act of writing constitutes a journey that sculpts the contours of thought, kindles the flames of creativity, and hones the art of communication. As children yield their pens, they not only craft tales but also forge intellects, cultivate the transformation of problem-solving, and nurture the seeds of expression.

With heartfelt congratulations, we honour the exceptional young Grade 4, 5 and 6 authors whose words grace these pages. Their vibrant and eloquent entries stand as a testament to the profound potency of writing—a capacity to seize the transitory wings of imagination and distill the musings and emotions of youth onto paper.

In the same heartbeat, our deep appreciation reaches out to every participating school in the Western Cape. Your enthusiastic participation in this competition is a testament to a thriving partnership that has flourished over

thirteen years. This journey has embodied a shared dedication to elevating literacy and mathematics. To our esteemed teacher mentors, whose guidance and unwavering support nurtured these budding talents through the creative process, your impact is immeasurable.

In a momentous stride, we extend our heartfelt applause to the rural districts for their inaugural face-to-face presence within the Growsmart Educational Programme. This convergence marks a poignant milestone, opening new horizons of opportunity. Our gratitude resonates with all eight districts in the Western Cape for their progressive spirit, embracing the transformative power of education.

With a sense of pride, the WCED aligns itself with Growthpoint Properties and the Growsmart Educational Programme. This partnership stands as a guiding light, summoning young minds to embark upon literary voyages.

And throughout this odyssey, we resonate with the wisdom of Margaret Atwood, a luminary within the realm of letters: "Writing is thinking. It is a way of exploring ideas and making sense of the world around us. It is also a way of communicating with others and sharing our thoughts and feelings."

May the narratives gracing these pages ignite an inferno within you—an unyielding passion that propels you to read, to write, and to revel in the boundless power of words. For within the realm of writing, we unearth not solely a tool for learning and self-expression, but also a mirror that reflects the very essence of our humanity.

Portia A. Smit
Project Coordinator
Western Cape Education Department



A MESSAGE FROM THE EASTERN CAPE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

"I can shake off everything as I write; my sorrows disappear, my courage is reborn."
– Anne Frank

Writing is an important skill that enables one to express oneself, and articulate ideas effectively. Taking those first steps towards writing a story can be both a fun and daring activity for anyone. Through thinking up, planning and writing a story, children learn to put their thoughts into order and use written language to communicate their ideas in a variety of ways. Finding ideas and inspiration for writing a story can be quite daunting and demanding. But when children engage in this creative writing, their imagination is pushed and they are stimulated to 'think outside the box'. The explosion of social media has completely changed the way people communicate with each other. While this communications boom may have its educational benefits, a possible negative side effect is beginning to take hold in our classrooms. Cyber slang and shorthand is suspected of damaging learners' writing acumen. However, in this collection it is refreshing to find that, despite ever increasing social media influence, learners can still write at length in a cohesive, structured manner to express their thoughts well.

This resulting book provides learners with a sense of accomplishment. Completing and feeling good about a piece of writing

that one has worked hard on promotes confidence. This is an essential element of personal growth and productivity in all facets of education. On behalf of the Eastern Cape Department of Education, we thank Growthpoint Properties for inviting learners to participate in this creative writing competition. The learners who contributed their stories to this diverse collection come from primary schools in the Nelson Mandela Bay and Buffalo City Metro Municipality districts. Well done to those schools who participated in this project. This is an ideal opportunity for improving learners' abilities to use writing as a mouthpiece for their thoughts, feelings and imagination. It can be said, without a doubt, that the competition has brought to light several outstanding stories from aspiring young writers. The stories as well as the illustrations are diverse and rich, featuring various aspects of the lives of our young learners. It is our hope that this collection will inspire other learners to write and develop the passion for storytelling. We urge their teachers to continue encouraging them to use written words to communicate their experiences and emotions competently to others.

Ms B.L. Gwele,
Acting Director:
Primary Curriculum Management
Eastern Cape Department of Education



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WHERE IS THE COOL IN SCHOOL?

Alicia Temyane

Grade 6 | Lydenburg Primary School | Mpumalanga

“The more you learn, the better you feel about yourself” is one phrase that Alicia was struggling with at school, as it was her first year of high school. She dreaded going to school because she struggled with “fitting in” as most teenagers would say. Alicia was alone for most of the time as she was not a social person.

Amanda and Amahle were friends, always together at school because they were quiet and shy. Then there was also a group of friends, known to the class as “pesky girls”. They always bullied and teased other learners, including Alicia. Amanda and Amahle noticed the lonesome Alicia and decided to befriend her. At last Alicia had someone to chat and share her lunchbox with.

The senior of the pesky girls was Sandra. She was tall, had chocolate brown skin and her looks were admired by most of the learners, but she had an evil heart. She actually understood that confidence is key, so she was confident. Three months passed and the friendship was still going well for them, but Alicia thought she was missing something.

One afternoon on her way home, she thought of her two friends and how nice and genuine they were, and how it doesn't stop the pesky girls from bullying them. She came to the conclusion that if she





can't beat the pesky girls, it's better to join them, of which wasn't going to be an easy journey. Alicia believed that being cool means playing with the cool girls.

Besides being cool, she also wanted to be popular like Sandra, because grade 8 to 12 learners knew Sandra Brits, as if she was the president's child. She imagined being cool and popular all learners giving her pretty, amazing names, like pink lips, yellowbone A, and other cool names. She thought that playing with Sandra will make her learn two or more things about being cool and popular. Alicia never understood Sandra, cause she was beautiful, but had an evil, cruel heart, but everybody liked her even though she was evil.

The day passed and it was Wednesday already which gave Alicia time to think about her next move. Alicia woke up



and started wearing her uniform in a certain way, the pesky girl way. When she got to school, everyone who knew her was amazed as she was one of the bright learners who wore her uniform with pride and dignity. Alicia didn't mind the stares as she knew she had to channel her heart and behave like her soon-to-be friends.

She got in the class and looked for her friends, without wasting any time, she shot her shot. She asked to join the group. Sandra accepted her request. Amanda and Amahle were shocked at the sudden change of their friend, but they kept it to themselves. The girls joined the afterschool practice. They stayed from 14:00 – 17:00.

A week passed and Alicia, as the new member, was still trying to understand how people loved Sandra. It was tougher than she thought, oh





well, she wanted to be cool right, so she had to bear the consequences. So it was the first week of their netball practise. The girls stayed after school, so did Amanda and Amahle. The girls met at the netball court. Alicia greeted Amanda and Amahle.

Sandra was very furious that Alicia greeted them, she went to the girls and called them nasty names, like loser and poor girls, and so on. It was time for the girls to go home.

Alicia wanted to use the bathroom quickly, so she asked Sandra to take her bag and give it to her little sister. As Alicia went to the bathroom, Sandra and her friends left it there. When Alicia came back from the bathroom, she saw her bag lying there. She thought maybe they didn't hear her or they forgot. Alicia went home and kept on asking and answering her own questions.

It was the next day Alicia went to school. She found her friends sitting by the corner, she went straight to them and asked, "Guys, didn't you hear me when I asked you to take my bag for me?" One of the girls tried to talk but Sandra looked at the poor girl in a nasty way. Sandra replied, "Oh sorry Alicia, we didn't hear you!" Alicia forgave them and it was the next day.

Sandra baked cupcakes for her friends. She took them out and gave them each, there was one for her and her 3 friends but there wasn't one for Alicia. "I think I forgot yours Alicia, but why worry cause you're not even that important," she said. Alicia was shocked by what Sandra just said. She

realised that she doesn't care about her at all. No worry, it was after school practise.

The girls warmed up and went to their positions. Alicia was defending Sandra. The girls played until Sandra slipped and fell. "You ugly, lazy girl! Why did you push me? You think I didn't see you? I saw proper well with my two eyes," she said angrily at Alicia. Alicia apologised even though it wasn't her. Alicia went home, when she got in she went straight to her room. She cried and yelled!

"First, they left my bag, then I didn't get a cupcake, now she's blaming me about her falling," Alicia said to herself. She was not going to waste her time, she knew she had to change friends to live better. It was Friday, the 16th, Alicia went to her old friends and this is what she said, "I have not been a good friend to you guys. Please forgive me." Amanda and Amahle hugged her tightly. "We are best friends forever," they said.





TRUTH THAT CHANGED ZANE'S LIFE

Amyoli Thobi

Grade 5 | Mzusiwe Primary School | Eastern Cape

Once upon a time there was a boy called Zane. He was from a very poor family in a big township called Motherwell. He tried everything in his power to make his mother proud because they could not depend on anyone for help, but they had each other. It only took one miracle to change the life of Zane's family.

Zane is a very shy and kind boy, and he would hide behind his mother whenever he saw someone he did not know. Zane's sister, Lauren, was very spoiled. When their mother goes shopping, she always wants expensive things because she doesn't want her friends from school to laugh at her when wearing cheap clothes and shoes. Their father got divorced from their mother and decided to leave them while they were still young. Zane was determined to close the gap of an absent father.

On a beautiful Monday morning, Zane was walking alone to school because Lauren had left earlier. He decided to take a different route to school and walked into a small bush where he bumped into a big, black suitcase, so he decided to open it and that is when he almost stopped breathing. The shock of his life felt like a dream when he saw a couple of notes on top. It was money and it was a lot of money.





Zane was struggling to decide if he should take the suitcase home or continue to go to school, "But what if my teachers ask my mom about me? What if my friends at school ask about the suitcase? I don't know what to do." After spending some time deciding, he went to school with the suitcase and hid it under his desk. Everything was normal until he heard banging car doors, his mind was wondering.

Few minutes later, his principal walked inside the classroom, but she was not alone, a policeman followed her. Zane started to sweat, his body temperature went high and he was shivering. The principal greeted everyone and said she had a special guest who had something to say. William was his name, and he was searching for a suitcase that belonged to someone, he knew he would get help from them.

The policeman called Zane outside, apparently one of the learners saw him when he walked in the classroom with a black suitcase as described by the policemen. Zane refused to tell the truth and denied everything the money was very important to him because he wanted to help his family. He thought about it again when they told him that someone's life depends on it.

After a long battle in his mind Zane decided to tell the truth and let go of the suitcase. They called his mother and he confessed to her about what had happened. To his surprise, everyone was so proud of him for telling the truth, the principal even called him a hero.

Zane got a reward for his honesty. The owner of the suitcase gave him and his family R50 000 to help them. He was happy that his dream of taking care of his family had come true just by telling the truth. Zane had a life lesson that truth is indeed the best policy, it has a reward.





MY HAPPINESS DEPENDS ON ME

Awonke Mathiso

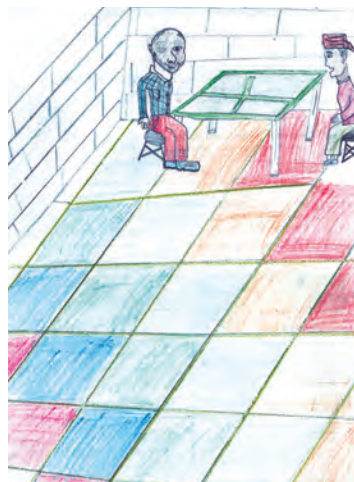
Grade 5 | Nonzwakaz Primary School | Eastern Cape

I never knew that happiness comes from within. We are so conditioned that it is what one has that makes him or her happy. We believe that it is material things that make us happy where, in reality, that's not true. COVID-19 made that clear to Mr. Tom, Mrs. Tom, Grandma and Anelisa's family.

It was a day like any other day the only thing that was different was that movement out of one's homes was restricted. It was only essential workers who were allowed to move out of their homes. All of this happened during the second month of level 5 lockdown in the whole country.

Mr. Tom was a manager at Sour and Mrs. Tom was not working. Mr. Tom used to go to work since he was an essential worker. Life was totally different. It was hard and bitter, so they thought, not knowing that it was still going to get even tougher.

They woke up in the morning as usual on any other family day. Mr. Tom had breakfast with his family. They watched TV. It was then when Mr Tom received "that phone call that changes their lives". The last words he said were, "Oh what can I say, I understand." Even though you were not part of the conversation it was written all over his face that it was unpleasing news.





That phone call was the beginning of the end of their happiness at home. Mr. Tom had bought his child many toys, if she had known that they would be her last, she would have taken good care of them but then how could she have known.

That phone call was actually from Mr. Tom's boss. It was fortunate that he was amongst those who were being relieved off their duties as the company couldn't keep all of them. Anelisa heard that as she eavesdropped his conversation with her mother after that call.

He decided to spend the whole day in his room which was unlike him. Since that day they were seeing less of him, those nice meals they used to have were slowly fading. Peace was a luxury in their house as he was shouting at everyone. Anelisa would sometimes find her mother soaked up in tears, when she asked her, she would say her eyes are itching. Mr. Tom being at home all the time was a nightmare for them. They couldn't watch TV peacefully because he would say it makes a noise. There were days where he couldn't eat because it isn't his kinda food. Happiness was a distant

memory to them because they had based it on things they had.

Mrs. Tom ended up inviting their grandma as the levels of lockdown went down to 2. Misery greeted her from the gate, that is how bad things has been. She spoke to Mr. Tom the whole evening of that day.

Grandma called everyone in the morning explaining the whole home situation. She said, "This man is still the father of the house even when he's not working and you need to respect and show appreciation for he has done so much for you." She further said, "I don't like how things have become here, this is not how family should live."

A week after grandma said those words, things started to improve for Mr. Tom. He called everyone. Grandma had left 2 days ago. Mr. Tom apologised for how he had been to his family. He said he should have been a better husband and a father. "Sometimes we get distracted by things that happen in our lives so much that we even forget that our happiness depends on us not what we have. This whole situation has reminded me that nothing and no one will make me happy other than yourself because my happiness depends on me. I thank my family, as I will never take your support and love for granted." Mr. Tom and his family had peace and love since that day. Things were not easy as he was still working but they had all realized thar happiness depends on oneself as Mr. Tom said, "My happiness depends on me."





THE MONSTER UNDERNEATH MY BED

Curtley Hendricks

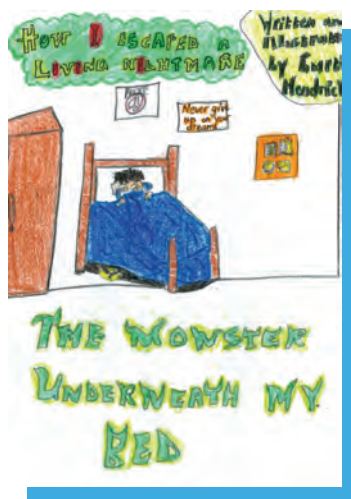
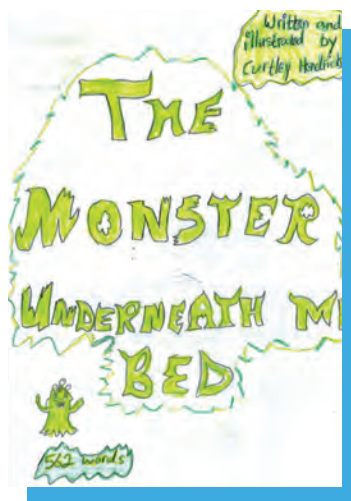
Grade 6 | Hawston Primary School | Western Cape

"I'm scared... I have got to get out of here! Somebody please help me!"

My screams are of no use because no one responds. With drops of sweat rolling down my face out of fear, I try to forget what this monster looks like. I try to think of solutions to free myself from this situation. "Why can't anyone hear me? He is coming for me!" I'm screaming from the top of my lungs. "Oh goodness, this is the end for me!"

I hear screeching coming from under my bed, "Do I jump or must I to lie still?" I'm wondering as soon as I move. It's silent. "Is this only my imagination or is it real?" I'm asking myself over and over as I roll to the middle of my bed. Then against the wall in the shadow, I see a quick sudden movement and read, "It's not over yet," on the wall. My heart starts beating wildly and it feels like I can't breathe. "Oh God, please help me."

Is it what I think it is? No, it can't be, because that was only in the movie I watched earlier. My heart is starting to beat even faster now because everything feels so real. "I'm busy losing my mind here," I'm telling myself. Then suddenly my bed just gave one shake and I almost fell off. "Oh dear, he is going to catch me... I have to get out of here." I'm desperately





trying to make my way out of bed, but I can't move. It's like my legs are stuck to the sheet because I can't move them. I bury my head under the blankets, my way of running away from this evil monster. My breathing is getting harder and faster. "Have I ever been so scared in my entire life," I'm wondering.

A deadly silence falls and slowly I'm taking my head from under my blankets. I don't see anyone. Maybe he's gone somewhere else. I look around wildly, but I don't see anyone. A sign of relief because he is gone and couldn't get me. I can feel my body begin to relax and my heartbeat turn to normal.

Suddenly I just hear one loud bang and it feels I'm being thrown in the air. My heart, which is almost jumping out of my chest, starts beating wildly and I'm out of breath. "Dear Lord, I need you so much right now! Please help me get out of here. This is my prayer to the father in heaven."



In my act of trying to escape, I saw this hairy, green creature with three large eyes, coming from under



my bed. It was like a real horror movie playing off in front of my eye. I immediately froze, but then realizes that I have to get away. I got up and start to run on the endless road

This is when I fell from the bed, woke up and realise that it was only a bad dream about the monster underneath my bed.





HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY

Dikgope Lethabo

Grade 5 | Maphapha Primary School | Limpopo

Naomi has two friends at school, Thato and Mpho.

She used to go to a different school and when she came to this school, she was put in the same group as Thato and Mpho, and she became the third person in the friendship. Naomi did not realise that her friends dislike her, and they are jealous of her because she is the teacher's pet.

On one Monday, the teacher sent Naomi to the principal's office to go deliver a message. Naomi's group had 4 people. Paul was the only boy in the group. He was naughty and mean to the girls. He hated sitting in a girl's group. When Naomi left, Paul also left to go sharpen his pencil behind the door. Thato was trying to find a rubber in Paul's pencil case when she felt paper money. She took the money. "Mpho, look what I found in Paul's pencil case," she whispered to her friend.

"Thato, that is a lot of money! You have to put it back because we will be in trouble if the teacher hears we took it," Mpho whispered back sounding very serious.

"No, don't be silly! We are going to use this money to buy our break-time snacks. It is just money, not Paul's entire life. He will be okay, plus he always puts gum in your head and ties my shoelaces around the





table frame when I am not watching.”

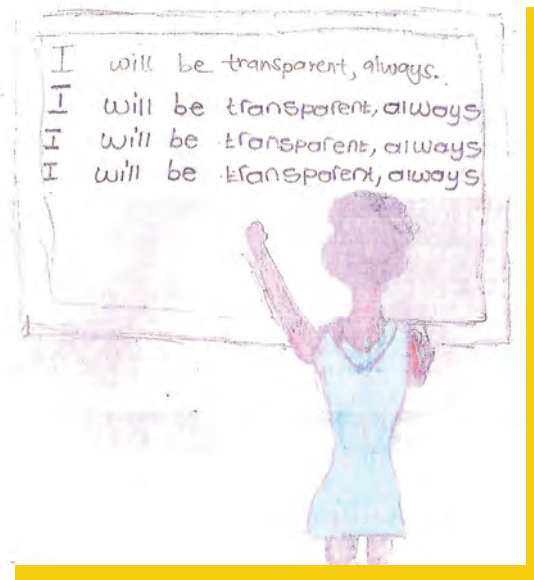
Thato quickly hides the money by throwing it in Naomi's bag when she sees Paul walking back to the table. Mpho quickly whispers, “Oh yes!” and excitedly rubs her hands. During break, Thato tells Naomi that she saw money in her bag and asks that they buy snacks to eat together.

“I never get money for lunch. My mother makes me lunch. Where is the money coming from?” Naomi asks confused. Thato convinces Naomi that God put the money in her bag for them to use because He loves them. Naomi falls for it and even semi-prays to thank God for the money as they make their way to buy snacks from the tuckshop.

“I will ask you one more time! Who stole the money”, the teacher asked

angrily after break. The whole class stays put until the matter is taken to the principal.

After many hours of back and forth, the principal checked the CCTV footage in the classroom. On the footage, it appears that Thato stole the money, and she gets in trouble with the principal. She and Mpho are punished, and she regrets not being honest when she still had the chance because the principal had promised that if the culprit brings themselves forward, the punishment would be less severe. They were suspended from school for 3 days. Naomi's teacher blames her for not coming to her when she found money in her bag and she also realises she should have been transparent to her teacher, she got detention for not being transparent.





FAMILY OVER FOLLOWERS

Esperanca Mungongo

Grade 5 | Belmor Primary School | Western Cape

“Ladies and gentlemen, please remain seated and buckle up.” the captain said in a professional voice. My mom and I eventually got our luggage and ran to hug my great-grandmother, Lillian. She held a colourful sign that said: Welcome to Kimberley Zelda and Esperanca.

I wondered where my cousins, Tyra and Kirsten, were. It was strange because we haven't been to the Northern Cape in two years, and they never even came to the airport. When we arrived at Ma Lillian's cosy, little house, nobody came to greet us. This was getting strange... Ma Lillian frowned and said to my mom, “Zelda, the girls never come out of their rooms anymore to even greet me. They just send WhatsApp messages even while we are in the same house! They make TikToks all day!” Suddenly my mom's phone beeped, and she said loudly, “How can they send me a WhatsApp to say welcome?” My cousins appeared as fast as lightning and hugged us without even taking their eyes off their cellphones. I was extremely disappointed when they immediately went back to their rooms. I just wished social media would come to an end! Ugh!

“Oh my word! Social media has crashed!” Kirsten said in a panic the next morning. “We have no followers, friends, or likes! This is the worst day ever!” Tyra said with tears in her eyes. When we switched on the TV, we saw the headlines saying that the social media networks had crashed





worldwide, and technicians were trying to solve the problem. My cousins were forced to spend time with us, but eventually enjoyed it! We ended up playing games like 30 Seconds, hide and seek in the hills, and so much more. We baked and cooked with Ma Lillian. We spent all of our time together for that entire week. It was the best holiday ever!

On the last day of our vacation, the technicians managed to solve the

problem. I thought my cousins would get their devices immediately. Then Tyra said, "We have learnt to log out of social media and log in to what is real." Kirsten exclaimed, "Family over followers and less time on social media!" As we hugged at the airport to say goodbye later, Ma Lillian smiled and said, "I don't know who wished social media would crash but thank you!" I just smiled secretly.





THE BRAVE HEART

Fazlin Jacobs

Grade 6 | Mount Pleasant Primary School | Western Cape

Monday morning Amy's mother woke her up very early and asked her to start packing her things into boxes because they are moving out of town to a new house.

Amy turned to her mother and asked why? She tried to understand because she saw nothing wrong with their old house. Her mother looked at her and explained, "I am sorry under circumstances I need a new job a got one in Windsor. This job also gives me more money, that's why we need to move to be closer and save more money for us to live a better life. I want you to have a bright future, because ever since your father died things changed. I am the only breadwinner. Please understand I only want the best for you Amy."

They hugged each other and both were very excited for the new adventures that lied ahead. If only Amy knew how things would start off. They packed up and left for their new hometown.

It was Amy's very first day at Windsor High. It felt like everything was falling apart when things became very bad at school. She totally lost herself as Amy and felt like a nothing.

Many times she felt frustrated and rejected because there was this popular, rude girl named Mckenzie who tried to make Amy's life a living hell. She called





Amy fat and told her she was too ugly to fit in their positions at school. She met two friends, Ryan and Madison. They used to tell Amy to ignore Mckenzie but that was the hardest part of all. Everywhere she turned Mckenzie was there trying to bring out the worst in Amy. She would accidentally bump into Amy and say, "Hey! Ugly, fat duckling, can't you see the QUEEN is coming your way or are you blind too?" Each time she would just walk away with bitter tears, then Ryan and Madison would catch her every time. One of the long days the two came up with an excellent idea to make a bad day turn into a dream.

Time for self-confidence and inner beauty to shine. They told Amy to look in the mirror and see how beautiful she is, "You have real friends, loving friends who support you in good and bad times. Mckenzie only has friends while she has money. If you keep your head up, she will be all alone. She does not have real friends, you do, stop being shy and be



you. Make her see a real 'queen'. Love standards not an attitude."

She started showing off her talent and ever since she did, everyone started to become interested in her. She was filled with joy and laughter and had lots of friends. She found her inner peace which Mckenzie did not have. Amy accepted who she is and told herself, "You are beyond beautiful. You are blessed beyond measure. You are surrounded by real loving and caring people."

In the end she was never made to fit in but made to stand out. "I am beautiful Amy no matter what they say words can't bring me down." Amy told herself. She became captain of the cheerleaders and Mckenzie could only dream of becoming that.

Thanks to my loving friends who showed me. It's not what is on the outside that matters but the inside, and action speaks louder than words.





MY HAPPINESS BELONGS TO ME

Hope Mabitla

Grade 6 | Nkokoane Primary School | Limpopo

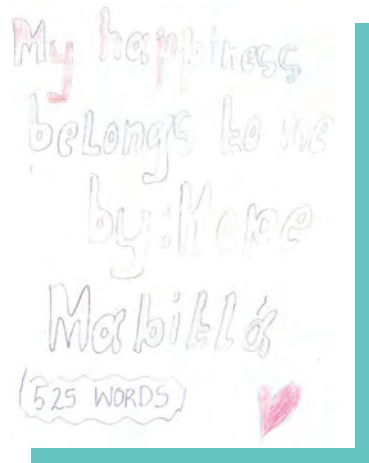
There was once the Twala Family. They were very rich, and they lived in the suburbs. They had everything money can buy, luxurious cars and clothes. They had three children, two boys and one girl namely Sipho, Kagiso and Precious.

The two brothers were like two peas in a pot. Sipho was good looking and had a lot of friends he was very popular especially at school. Kagiso was an introvert (kept to himself) he didn't have that many friends, so he spent most of his time with Sipho and his friends. Precious was just a daddy's little girl.

Sipho was the most happy when he took his friends out whenever he had money, he was not stingy with his money, or you can say, his parents money. He would buy stuff for them. He had a bunch of friends. But you know what they say about them, "When days are dark friends are few".

The children attended a private school (Tersia King Secondary). The school was in town (Pretoria), and they lived in the estates nearby.

Precious was the last born in grade 9, Kagiso was the second last born he was in grade 10 and Sipho was doing his matric. The story focuses more on Sipho who needed his friends to be happy. He was





very much liked by the girls because of his looks and obviously, because his family was loaded. He got allowance monthly from his parents, so he was the big spender amongst his friends.

One morning they all got up and prepared themselves for school. They attended the same school. They went to school it was a normal day like every day. Their dad went to work and so did their mother.

When their father got to work, he was called in for a meeting. The company had sad news that some of the workers had to be retrenched from the company because they were not making enough profit and had to let some of the workers go.

They will inform them at the end of the names of the people to be

retrenched. Mr Twala got very stressed because he was about to lose his job possibly.

The week went by as normal. Come the end of the week Mr. Twala was announced as one of the people to be retrenched. He was very sad when he left the company with his stuff packed.

When he got home, he told his wife and children about the retrenchment. His family was very worried because he was the one paying for most of the bill sat home, their mother was not getting paid enough to be able to keep up with the bills and maintain their lifestyle.

Especially Sipho because he relied on his for happiness. His friends had turned on him they were ignoring his calls and didn't want to hang out with him anymore. From that day on he saw that his happiness depends on him, because his friends were not there to be entertained.





WHEN THE FOREST SREAMS

Imange Saula

Grade 6 | Van Der Kemp Primary School | Eastern Cape

The scariest thing ever happened to Libby. Libby was very adventurous and she likes to figure things out. She was 11 years old with short, afro hair and brown eyes. Libby was used to passing this forest with her best friend after school. Mia was short, shy, with long, brown hair. Mia was 10 years old and she looked up to Libby. She usually followed Libby everywhere and made her want to explore even more. They have been friends since Mia and her family moved into their new house six months earlier. Libby's father always warned her about the danger of the forest, but that only made her want to explore it more.

Libby was used to passing the forest with Mia and they always paused in front of the tree that looks like a person's face. They were both too afraid to touch the tree but would admire how it looked like a person. As if it could just open its eyes and speak to them.

One day, Libby and Mia came back home after school. They decided that they would walk through the forest again, suddenly, they heard someone screaming!

Confused, Libby and Mia looked around them to see if someone was in danger, but they did not see anyone. Both of them ran home to tell their parents.





Libby's father calmed her and reminded her that she should never enter the forest again.

The next day, Libby and Mia were going to school with Mia's mother, because they were too scared to walk alone. Mia's mother said, "You must not go through the forest after school. Just take the long way home." After school, it was raining and when Libby and Mia passed the entry of the forest, they heard a screaming noise coming from the forest again. The screaming sounded even worse than before. It made them stop in their tracks because it sounded like someone was hurt. They knew that it was dangerous to go into the forest, but what if someone was truly in danger? They decided that they needed to be brave in case they could save the person in need.

But when they walked into the forest, there was no one around!

Who was screaming as if in danger? They decided to go to the tree that looked like a person's face on its trunk. They saw the eyes opening – both of them were shocked! Then, the mouth opened, and it said, "Do not be afraid I'm just a friendly tree."





WHEN A FOREST SREAMS

Kaebelswe Nkadimeng

Grade 6 | Lydenburg Primary School | Mpumalanga

In the dusty streets of the rural areas, there lies a dark, dingy, and dreadful forest with terrifying eyes peeking out of the bushes. The residents who reside within the area are sweating, hearts beating fast, not knowing who the next victim is. The poor community is so scared, the old people's old grey hair stands, they would even want to go under their bedsheets. It is said that the beast might still be walking within the area, so we never know who the next victim is, you might even be their or its next victim...

The screams only start when there's a full moon, the loud screams pierce through the ears, every night on a full moon. The villagers start trembling, the neighbours want to go to one another's house. Whenever you pass by the forest never look into the forest or even dare to play near the forest, the beast might even take you away in a flash.

A few years ago, a man moved to the village as a new resident, his name is Mr. Kanag. He is a Nigerian man with a daughter named Omdemo. She was very curious and wise girl, and she was the most beautiful girl in the village and everybody admired her for her energetic and bright personality.

Whereas her father was very impolite and didn't talk to people at all, no one understood why he behaved like that. A few weeks since he had arrived, he was





well known, as well as Omdemo.

The villagers were breathless when the screams had soon settled down, they could now sleep without any fear, but unfortunately their happiness was temporary it was as if the beast casted an evil eye upon the village.

One day as Omdemo was outside playing in the lovely hot sun, along with her best friends, Gille and Reitumetse. They were such kind friends and very intelligent girls. As they were walking on the dusty roads of the village under the boiling hot sun, while they were strolling, they came across the forest. Gille said, "I don't think we should be roaming around near the forest, anything devilish might come out and attack

us, so we need to be extra vigilant around this area." Reitumetse agreed with her, on the other hand Omdemo was looking deep into the forest with her eyes wide open and stood frozen to the spot. It was as if her soul was leaving her body.

She suddenly snapped out of it when Reitumetse started calling her name out. They didn't tell Omdemo about the forest because they didn't want her to know anything about it.

On her way home she kept asking herself why she was frozen to the spot when she glanced into the forest, but she had no clue and simply just brushed it off her mind and didn't think much about it.

Later that night, she quickly took a bath and went to bed without even eating. As she was dozing off, in





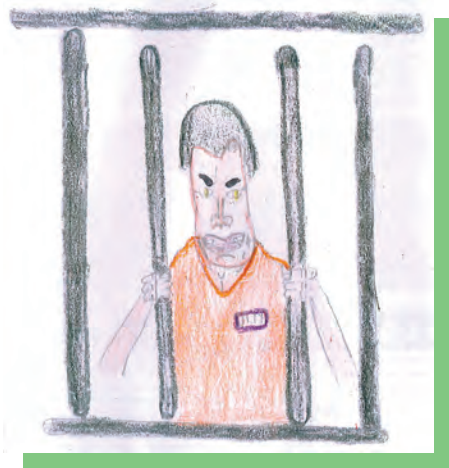
her dreams she saw a man figure wearing pitch black pants and a hoodie. The man was standing in the middle of the forest shouting out her name, calling her to come into the forest. As she got closer she noticed that the man figure was Mr. Kanaga, reaching out to the hammer near him. He was charging to her and ready to attack her with the hammer. She screamed her voice out and she suddenly woke up all sweaty, her father stormed into her room and gave her some water to clear her throat. After some time, she dozed off again.

In the morning she told her father about the dream, but Mr. Kanaga looked scared and suspicious, he just told Omdemo she was just hallucinating, and it was just a dream. The next day, it was nighttime again, but her father didn't return the night, so she went out to look for him, she was very frightened because it was her first time walking alone in the streets at night.

Reitumetse spotted Omdemo and caught up to her and walked with her, they talked and talked until Reitumetse spotted Mr. Kanaga in the forest. It seemed like he was cutting and hitting something with the same hammer she dreamt about. As he was hitting blood kept on sliding down from the hammer with a bit of flesh on it. Mr. Kanaga stopped and noticed Reitumetse and Omdemo marching towards the forest with their eyes wide open. "Oh my gosh! Is that Mr. Kanaga?" Reitumetse said in shock. "Father?" Omdemo said. "Yes, dear?"

Mr. Kanaga said. "So my dreams about you weren't just dreams, they were visions to show that you are a murderer! I hate you! You don't deserve to be a father." Omdemo quickly phoned the police as everyone gathered around the whole scene.

The police arrived in a hurry and got Mr. Kanaga arrested. The people were insulting Mr. Kanaga as he got into the van and left. At the police station he refused to confess and was placed in a cell. He was charged with murder and could go to jail for 28 years. They finally released the court hearing date which was on the 30th of May 2017 where it will be determined if he's guilty or not. Omdemo's life was finally going great, and she joined therapy and got adopted by a warm and kind family. Reitumetse and Gille would visit Omdemo at her new home to make sure she was okay. All that was left to do was go to the court hearing of Mr. Kanaga and he would finally be in jail behind bars.





MY HAPPINESS DEPENDS ON ME

Khazimla Ntshinga

Grade 6 | Nkosinathi Primary School | Eastern Cape

Khazimla and her friends like to hang out during December holidays.

Ever since Khazimla lost both her parents due to Covid, she is not her usual self. She used to be a very bubbly person. Khazimla loves to wear dresses with the most beautiful colours.

One day Khazimla and her friends, Masange, Endinalo and Avethandwa were sitting on the beautiful green grass, all with phones playing games. They were enjoying competing with each other. Khazimla was also telling them her sob story of how she misses her parents. Masange thought Khazimla is making an excuse because she wants favours. "Do all of us have colourful dresses?" asked Masange. "Yes!" they all shouted "Yes!" Khazi went on and on expressing her affliction. "You will be fine Khazi," said Avethandwa comforting her. Endinalo rolled her eyes showing boredom "You are such a wimp Khazi." Masange poked her on her forehead.

"The day of the party has arrived, and all my friends have their colourful dresses on," said Khazi. Their cheeks puffed up in pink glittering make-up, I don't like makeup!" Khazimla moaningly said. Khazimla got delayed.





She was a laughingstock. Poor Khazimla in her stunning dress that is brightly decorated with pink, purple, and blue flowers and purple on top, looking powerlessly as if it is the end of the world, Khazi looked at the gift she bought her friend. She asked herself: Who will ever love me? I will never find joy anywhere. "I am all alone, how will I be happy alone?" said Khazimla sobbing. She wrote on her diary everything that had happened at Endinalo's party.

The following morning, Khazimla took the diary book.

She read, "Dear diary, today was my worst day ever. I felt so humiliated when my friend rejected me. I have made a decision. From now on my



own happiness depends on me. Never again will I think of depending to somebody else for love, besides Gogo who loves me too. The sun never humiliated me. I am a very happy girl. Thank you, diary, for listening to me. Love Khazi (Drawn Heart)"

All her friends came to apologise Khazi to forgive them and never allowed any offense ever again.



A HOUSE OF HOPE

Leethon Poetie

Grade 5 | Belmor Primary School | Western Cape

Soccer was Jack Jackson's whole life. His grandmother always said, "One day you will be a famous soccer player Jack and you will be able to buy yourself a big house and a fancy car," Grandma Sylvie attended each and every match and would jump up and down, shouting and even whistling with two fingers in her mouth when Jack scored a goal. He could always see her gold tooth flashing when he looked at the crowd.

Yet life was not easy for the Jackson family. They lived in the tiniest house and Jack's mom and Grandma Sylvie barely had enough money for food. To make everything worse his classmate, Axel Abrahams, was always making fun of his old shoes, small house, and thick hair when he could not afford to go to barber.

After soccer practise, Jack stayed behind to help the coach pack away the balls and gear. As he walked home across the field, he saw an unusual blue briefcase. He knelt to pick it up. When he opened it, he closed it quickly. There must have been a million rand in it! There was not a single person on the soccer field and Jack thought to himself excitedly that maybe his prayers were finally answered. Maybe he could buy his family a house...

As he was about to reach the gate, he saw an expensive, red Mercedes Benz and a tall man in a pinstripe suit looking for something anxiously and just knew it was





and could not stop thanking Jack. "I came to watch my nephew play soccer today and somehow this briefcase ended up here." He waved goodbye, jumped in his car and sped off.

A few days later, that man knocked on Jack's front door and said very seriously, "I am Mr McDonald, the CEO of a very successful building company and I would like to rebuild your house to say thank you for your grandson's honesty." Grandma's gold tooth flashed brightly as she laughed with happiness.



for the briefcase! He started to hide behind a wheelbarrow and tried to figure out what his next move would be. Suddenly Grandma's favourite saying came to mind, "Honesty is the best policy!" and he knew what he had to do. He walked over to the man and said sadly, "I think this belongs to you sir." The man was truly shocked



THE MONSTER UNDERNEATH MY BED

Lisanele Notyhowe

Grade 6 | Young Park Primary School | Eastern Cape

As a child my first encounter with a monster was basically a toy my mom bought for me on my birthday last year. I encountered the real deal in the house we rented in Young Park. My family emigrated from Mozambique, it was over a century old essentially, the size and strength of a wet shoebox, and was shadowed by an ominous oak tree in a rundown neighbourhood.



My dad, who grew up poor and lost his father as a teenager, had cultivated a knack for stretching every penny he earned. Years before we moved to South Africa, he squirreled away what he could, which helped him settle in Port Elizabeth when a local insurance company offered him a job as a sales consultant on a working visa.

The timing couldn't have been more off, he left for South Africa when I was 13 and my mother was pregnant with my sister but my parents felt their sacrifices would be well worth the potential opportunities neither of them had been fortunate enough to grow up with. Several months after my dad settled in South Africa, my mom who was just 10 weeks pregnant and I joined him.



We began to hear rumbling around the neighbourhood, the moment our second-



hand beaten-up build crawled up the bumpy road to the curb in front of our new home. The house, the only rental we could afford, was larger and had a pool than any of the apartments – like flats we'd previously brushed dirt but it was weathered, wizened, and falling apart.

At first, my parents chalked up the peering eyes and hushed whispers to neighbourhood curiosity. We were new and my mother didn't know a lick of English, but we soon learned there was something else going on.

Even though I was very young at the time, I will never forget the first encounter I had one night, sometime after we'd unpacked, I put on my pyjamas, turned off the lights and hopped into bed. As soon as I closed my eyes, I heard a voice whispering, "Come here", so I looked around.

I tried turning on the light, but it didn't work, so I went to see what was going on underneath my bed. As I reached out to lift the blanket, I saw a black shadow grabbing my hand and pulling me inside. I was walking down this porthole and noticed lights flashing everywhere. The next thing I know, I was inside a school, but it wasn't the one I usually attend in Mozambique. As I turned around, a monster was strolling down the corridors. I was so terrified when I saw the alien girl standing next to me, but when I realized she was also terrified of me I begged her to assist me.

She began to scream. I told her I needed to go home to my family since I was in a panic mode, she

backed down and said she could assist, she introduced herself as Kathy. Before anyone could see me, she hurried me to the bathroom. Before I could respond she informed me that the only return home is to enter the dancing competition, you receive one wish as a result, and with that wish, you return home to your family. I looked out the bathroom door window and I saw a man hiding, he had an odd appearance. Before I could say anything, Kathy vanished after I inquired who that was.

She said that is the principle after hearing a sound in the bathroom when I realized there was a box in the bathroom corner with a bottle labelled "invisibility potion". I tried to hide in one if the bathroom scarves. I began to fear for my life. The doorknob began to turn, I was scared to drink the potion, but I had no choice but to drink the entire bottle, and then my body started to vanish.

I woke up from the dream.





I CAN...TOO

Lufuno Jojo

Grade 5 | Helderkruijn Primary School | Western Cape

"I'll take a steak and chips please."

Three pairs of eyes stared at me.

"Three salads, no dressing!" Aunt Mable barked at the waiter, not taking her eyes off me. I knew what was coming. "You know Mia, if you stop stuffing your face with that garbage, you could look just as fit your cousins." I stopped listening after that sentence.

You see, I'm the youngest of three cousins. I'm also the chubbiest. Stacey and Maddy are perfect little princesses. They are also very skinny models. Different shoots at different locations every month. Chubby old me just has to tag along. Aunt Mable does this on purpose in hopes that I will strive to be think like them. Little does she know I love the camera. Just on my own terms.

I also want to model. I'm actually quite confident around my friends because they make me smile and laugh all the time. We also love posting our pictures on our joint Instagram account, @Happy_in_our_skins. Aunt Mable does not know about this though.

Ever since mom moved to London to further her career in writing and left me with them, they have become witches. I've obviously tried telling her about this, but I know she has a lot on her plate





trying to give me a better life. So, I try to stay out of their way and find other things that makes me happy.

One Saturday morning I woke up to "No way!" I called Carly with trembling fingers. "Did you check our inbox?!" I shouted. "No, why?" she asked.

A new teenage clothing shop is opening and they want us to model their clothes.

I immediately replied yes. Details were exchanged, appointments were made and on set we were. Walking on set my jaw dropped. There stood three people I never expected to see.

"Fancy seeing you lot here," I said bravely to my family and walked past



them. Aunt Mable followed me and stopped me in the hall.

"What do you think you're doing? You can't honestly think you can model looking like...that?", she said looking disgusted. I was about to reply when the agent came out of my dressing room.

"You and your girls can go now, thank you!" We both stood there open-mouthed. "It's a body positive range, Mable. We don't need all your negative energy around here."

Aunt Mable turned around, too stunned to speak, gathered her little girls and walked out. The shoot was so much fun and involved so much laughter that I knew this is what I want to be doing forever.

We got signed permanently because they loved our positive energy. Aunt Mable remained bitter about it.

As for Mom, she said as soon as I'm ready I can come to London to pursue my career in modelling.

I think I will do just that!







THE MONSTER UNDERNEATH MY BED

Lunikolwenkosi Mkuyana

Grade 6 | Nkululeka Primary School | Eastern Cape

On a dark, eery night I invited Lilly over for a sleepover. We enjoyed playing on my new computer game. It had explosions and lasers and other stuff. It was the best game ever. "This is like the best game ever created," I said excitedly. I was so focused on the game. I eventually let Lilly play so she could get a whiff of what I was playing. "Wow!" Lilly exclaimed, "Where'd you get such a terrifying yet amazing game?"

Lilly was so mesmerized by the game. "You better use all your artillery..."

"So, I can defeat all the monsters," Lilly said finishing my sentence. "Tina, Lilly, go to bed now!" called my mother. I rolled my eyes, sighed, and called back saying, "Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'll put it away as soon as I can defeat these monsters." The sounds were intense and loud, but I didn't mind.

"Switch it off now!" Mom yelled at me. Sometimes I wonder how in the world I ended up with a mother like her. "You can continue playing tomorrow, switch it off NOW!" She practically yelled at me. "Okay Mom," I replied annoyed. I switched the lights off and I continued playing under the blankets.

Lilly, on the other hand, was exhausted, so she went to sleep. I continued with the game, but I eventually lost. Feeling





defeated I put the game away and went to sleep. By that time, I was already dreaming of tomorrow. All of a sudden, I was woken up by bumping, scratching and creaking sounds. Scratch! Bump! Bump! Scratch! After I had opened my eyes. I pulled the blankets up to my chin.

I searched the room and after I had gained the courage, I finally looked underneath my bed. I saw two eyes staring condescendingly at me. It was the moment where my heart skipped a beat. "No, it can't be," I said trying to reassure myself that everything is perfectly normal, "Maybe I'm hearing and seeing things." I thought I saw something so as a quick reaction I stuffed a few things under my bed.

"Finally, I can go back to sleep in peace," I thought. Just as I was climbing on my bed, I heard another sound, only this time it was louder. Gripped by fear, I ran over to Lilly and woke her up. "Lilly!" I began "I, I.. "You, you, what? Just spit it out already," she said. "I think there is a monster of some sort underneath my bed!" I replied.

"What the what!" she said. "Okay look, first of all monsters don't exist and secondly you're giving me déjà vu and I don't like the feeling," Lilly said with a chuckle. "It wasn't a dream, I had to stuff underneath my bed in order for the monster to not escape," I argued back at her with sass. Lilly signed and scratched in her backpack and she found a torch.

We walked towards my bed and sure enough there another thump,

only this time it was louder than the other. Thump! Bump! Scratch! "See! I wasn't making anything up," I said. "Whatever," Lilly replied. "Let's get this over with, I want to go to bed." We neared my bed and took out all the things I had stuffed in there. The green eyes came closer and closer. "Tina go get the pillow base, now," said Lilly. Just then mom and Joshua walked in. They helped Lilly lift the bed. The creature jumped straight into the pillowcase Lilly was holding. Joshua snatched the pillowcase from Lilly then opened. There stood the cutest thing on earth! "Hi, my name is Terroritic Intentsive Pigent T10111, but you can call me Tia for short," said, well, Tia. She was loving and caring and she also helped around the house. She was now a new member of our family, The Moscovits.

Mom, Joshua, Lilly and I...Oh wait, how can I forget Tia. Well, we had something you can call a "happy ending".





BEHIND THE FAKE SELFIE

Lwahluma Mlambo

Grade 5 | Nkosingithi Primary School | Eastern Cape

Teenagers today are facing peer pressure issues. Lisa is one of them. Nokulunga's one and only daughter who loves to look beautiful and colourful. They lived in the backyard of a big double-storey corner house in Cambridge, East London. They are a small family of three. Nokulunga is a hard-working mother who would do anything for Lisa and Lisa's little brother. Lisa developed an addiction. She will always ask for her mother's phone claiming she has homework that requires internet. Nokulunga owns the most alluring blue iPhone. Lisa would take it to her friends at a street corner taking selfies. She wasted her mother's internet data by posting her pictures on Facebook. Her brother restrained her from doing this. She was as stubborn as a mule. "Please brother, do not tell mom, I will get money out of this." She kept on begging her brother.

One day Nokulunga came from work carrying a plastic bag full of goodies. "What's this mom?" she asked. "Oh, sweets," she said looking disappointed. "A grateful dog is better than an ungrateful man." Nokulunga is expressing torture. "I want a phone! I want a phone!" shouted Lisa. "Is that a good way of talking to me?" Nokulunga shouted. Lisa cried. Nokulunga tried to speak to her in a soft voice.

"There is more to life than phones," said Nokulunga, "You are forcing me to leave





my phone behind when I am going to work. My bosses bought me this phone as a gift because I'm working hard," Nokulunga said with a gentle voice trying to convince her daughter to understand the situation.

The next day, it slips Nokulunga's mind that she is supposed to take the cellphone to work. Lisa did not go to school claiming she had a headache. She spent all morning taking selfies. She took pictures in front of the stunning double-storey house which is in front of their flat. She posted all her pictures on Facebook and wrote a post: "Soft life diaries".

She attracted poor people. Her Facebook comments were 267. Twenty-four people shared her post. Nine thousand people liked her post. Her inbox was full. Before she knew it, the yard was crowded. Some wanted to take pictures with her, others



asked for donations. Her mom and brother arrived. They went straight to the flat. "Lisa! Lisa! Please give me old clothes!" others were screaming. The noise was uncontrollable. When her mom came and grabbed her to the flat. Everyone was shocked to see her going to her real home A flat in a backyard.

She got herself into cyberbullying. She was accused of being a fake girl. She was teased at school.

Her mom and teachers suggested that she must not live by the standard of friends and of world. She must live true to herself all the time. Teachers called for counselling, and she got help she needed.

Nokulunga bought her new phone. She promised that she will focus only on schoolwork. Nokulunga was a happiest mother ever after those promises. They live happily in the backyard flat.





JACK THE FOREST HERO

Lwandisuthando Thisani

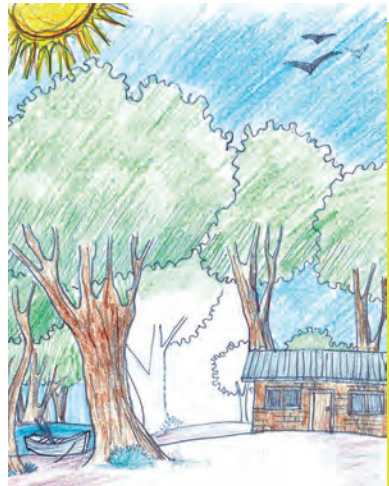
Grade 4 | Meusizwe Primary School | Eastern Cape

Once upon a time there was a man called Jack who lived with his dog, Ginger. They lived in a beautiful forest called Amotole mountain in the Eastern Cape. Every morning he could take his boat and go fishing with his dog.

One day on his way back home he spotted a group of men cutting down trees from the forest. He became very furious because the forest was his permanent home. Jack got closer to them and begged to stop but they never listened. That night Jack slept in tears because he felt that the forest was screaming for help.

Jack heard a very deep voice in his sleep telling him to make a wish that will come true. He made a wish to speak to animals because he wanted to start a group that will fight against the forest destroyers. Although he thought it was all just a dream, he was shocked the next day when he heard Ginger speaking. When he got up, he couldn't believe what just happened. He shook his head, got up and ran outside.

But when he got outside things became worse, birds flew over his head calling other animals. They all gathered around him and introduced themselves. They told Jack that they also heard the forest screaming, so they decided to come up with a plan to chase those men away.





Pumba the fearless bear told them to meet up under the tree and be ready to attack. Crocodile sharpened their teeth and nails, elephants exercised with the bears and monkeys made bows and arrows. Jack was very excited. He kept on looking at the clock as if tomorrow would never come, but he fell asleep and got up the next day.

A loud noise that sounded like a tractor came from outside, Jack jumped out of bed to see what was going on and it was the forest destroyers. Luckily a bird was passing by and he told the bird to call the other animals. He quickly put his clothes on, collected his weapons and said now I am ready to defend my forest.

Jack and the animals surrounded the forest destroyers and told them to leave, but they refused. Monkeys started to use their arrows and others threw bananas at them. When they ran, they tripped over the snakes



and fell into the river.

They tried to swim out, but they noticed crocodiles on the opposite direction with their mouths open. The fish jumped out of the water and clapped them in their faces till they got dizzy and started crying. Jack asked the elephants to pull them out. When they got out, Jack looked at them and said, "Do you still remember me?" They said yes, one of the destroyers got on his knees and begged for forgiveness.

Jack forgave them and said they must plant the trees. They accepted that and never destroyed the forest again.

Jack, Ginger, and all the animals lived happily ever after.





THE GIANT OCTOPUS WITH SAD EYES

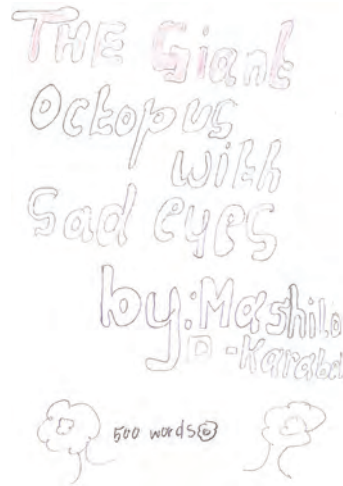
Mahilo Karabelo

Grade 6 | Nkokoane Primary School | Limpopo

It's a Saturday morning, one of those hot summer days, and the Chego family was preparing for their December summer vacation, which they do every year. They're going to Durban since they went to Cape Town last year. Bontle, who was the first daughter, was busy fitting her swimsuit and short dresses. She is known to be the one with a bubbly personality. On the other hand, there is Kgosi, the younger brother, who is always on his mother's lap. Mr Chego, who is Bontle and Khosi's father and a husband to Mrs Chego, called everyone to the sitting room where they usually pray and asked the whole family to pray before they go.

They were all over the moon, but the kids were more excited than their parents, they were like a dog with two tails. Along the way they played nice music as they took pictures of every beautiful landmark they pass.

They had a 6-hour drive and were tired but that wasn't gonna stop them from having fun I guess. They refreshed and went to the beach called the Blue Lagoon, Bontle couldn't stop taking pictures, she was bouncing off the walls. They all enjoyed playing with water and all were full of the joys of spring not knowing that the worst is yet to happen.



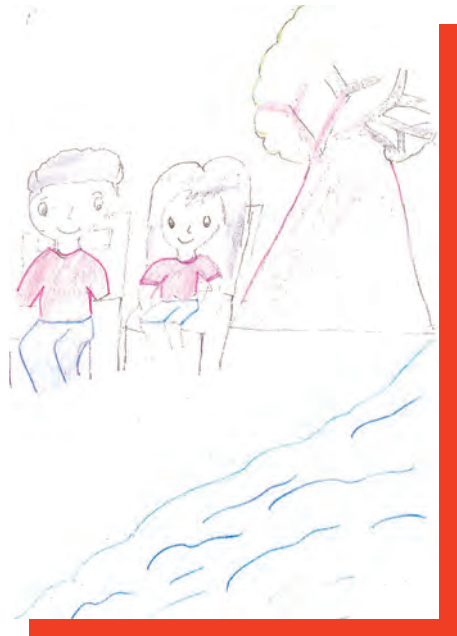


The First Aid Kit that Bontle got from her first aid class was way too far from where they were, she had no choice but to think on her feet. She decided to call the lifeguards and they quickly came and took Kgosi to the hospital. They called their parents and they rushed to the hospital, Bontle knew she was in deep waters.

She was scared to death as she thought she would lose her little brother but to her surprise Kgosi was up and talking but she was still sad because she had ruined her family's holiday, she cried her eyes out as she apologised to her parents.

"Mommy I'm hungry now. Can we get something to eat?" said Kgosi in a very tired tone. Mrs Chego found a perfect spot for the kids to sit while they go to buy food for them. Bontle felt that her parents were taking too long to come back and she was getting bored, so she decided to go back to the beach with her brother.

As they were busy swimming, Kgosi saw something that was very colourful and had sad eyes, he wasn't sure if it was a jelly fish or what. He went closer and when he tried to pick it up, it used its two fingers to get on his arm and it bite him. There he was screaming, "Bontle, come and help! Ouch! Ouch! Help!" His sister quickly ran to him, "What's wrong Kgosi?" asked Bontle nervously. Kgosi cried out in pain as the giant water animal that he had no idea what it was stuck on his arm.







MY HAPPINESS DEPENDS ON ME

Maphopha Phemelo

Grade 6 | Maphopha Primary School | Limpopo

Once upon a time in the small village in the Limpopo province in the Northern part of South Africa, there were two girls who were the best of friends. One was named Phemelo and the other one Barbie. They loved each other so much and they spent all their time together. Everyone knew they were friends because they would go everywhere together and do everything together. Their friendship was solid and not even rumours would break them apart.

These two friends made promises to each other and always kept their promises, except for this one promise that Barbie could not keep – that she would never leave or go where she would not be able to see Phemelo for over a week. The longest they had gone without seeing each other since becoming friends was five days, when Barbie went to visit her grandmother for holidays in Gauteng. When she left, Phemelo cried so much that it broke Barbie's heart. They were very attached, and their social lives depended on each other, but Barbie had to leave because her grandmother needed her for a few days. When she came back, Barbie realised how lonely Phemelo must have been, because she was lonely too in Gauteng, and she promised Phemelo that she would take her with to Gauteng next time. That became their new thing: When one visits family members, they take the





other with. They were like twins and their families were comfortable with any arrangement that made them happy.

Barbie's father used to work in Two River mine and that is why they were staying in Limpopo because originally, they are from Gauteng. Barbie's father got retrenched from work and Barbie's family had to move back home, to Gauteng. That meant Barbie had to attend a new school and go stay in Gauteng. Obviously, Phemelo was not going to move with Barbie and leave her family in Limpopo. So, Barbie left and Phemelo spent many nights crying before sleep, and she spent many days alone at school and at home.

She was the loneliest person anyone has ever seen, and her classmates did not want to befriend her because they already had other friends. She did not fit in any friendship because she had her own that she built on and now it was finished. Barbie also struggled in Gauteng



because she felt her other half in Limpopo. Phemelo lost weight, fell sick and even started feeling ignored by everyone at school and in their neighbourhood.

Until one day she was reading a book that Barbie left her, and on one page it was written in big black letters "Your happiness depends on you". Phemelo realised that she was being miserable because she was allowing misery to follow her around. She looked in the mirror and said to herself, "It has to stop." She was interested in making new friends, but she realised she has to be happy by herself first, and with herself. She started doing things that made her happy. She went jogging, she took walks to the park, she started writing in her diary when she missed Barbie, and she told herself she will meet Barbie when they are older and rekindle their friendship and even give her the diary. She made her happiness her priority, and she learned to be happy even when she was alone.





THE MONSTER UNDERNEATH MY BED

Moela Blessing

Grade 6 | Maphopha Primary School | Limpopo

Once upon a time there was a boy called Kelvin. He was 17 years old and lived with his parents in a far, far away town called Deathville. He was in Grade 12. One day at his school a trip was organised, and he wanted to go but his parents refused because they were scared of losing their only child on a trip.

The next day he told his friends that his parents refused. One of his friends who was wearing an ancestral-beaded necklace and said that Kelvin should go to a sangoma. Then Kelvin asked, "Aren't sangomas for people who believe in ancestors?" So after school, his friend told Kelvin to go to a sangoma with Kelvin, not knowing that sangomas are witches, on Saturday at 12:00. He got to the sangoma's house. When he was about to enter, the sangoma told Kelvin to take off his shoes. Kelvin did what he was told. So the sangoma said he does not have anything that can help. Kelvin was angry, he took a long stick and hit the sangoma on the head and then Kelvin stole a gold rock from the sangoma.

When he got home, he threw the gold rock under his bed. When the sangoma woke up from his deep sleep, the first thing he did was to summon the ancestors. The sangoma said to the ancestors, "Punish that boy who stole

THE MONSTER
UNDERNEATH MY
BED





from me." Immediately a short angry toy bear came to life and answered, "Master I am at your command." So the ancestors thought that the sangoma was tough. The sangoma was amazed that the ancestors responded so quickly, so he said, "I want you to take care of someone." The bear said, "I can transform into an even bigger monster if you want me to." Then the sangoma told the bear to go to Kelvin's home and hide under Kelvin's bed.

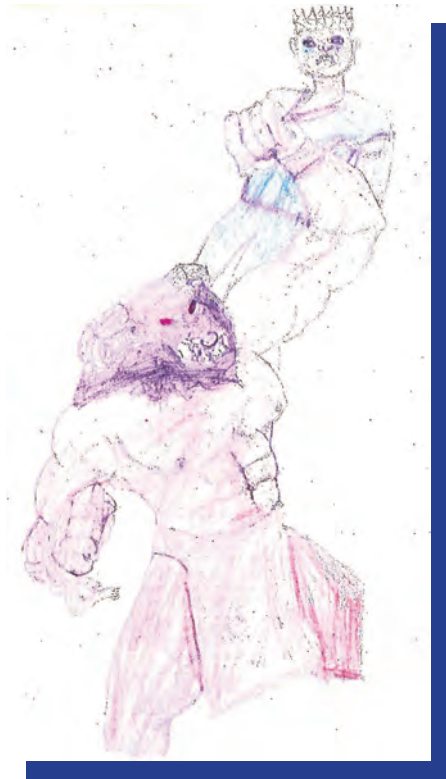
When it was nighttime, the bear transformed into an even bigger monster. When Kelvin was still asleep, a few hours later the monster started beating Kelvin saying, "Vuka wena!" with a loud noise. Immediately Kelvin woke up with a big fright saying, "Mom help! A ghost!" His mother came running like an American jet plane, through the door and the monster vanished into thin air, leaving Kelvin completely unconscious. His mother left thinking to herself that Kelvin was having a nightmare.

The next day Kelvin told his friends that a monster or ghost had beaten him while it was nighttime. His friend, the one that told Kelvin to go to a sangoma, laughed at Kelvin saying "Who told you to steal a traditional element? I said go ask for help, not steal."

After a few days, Kelvin was admitted to St Johns Hospital. When he was in bed in the hospital his mother asked, "Why are you suddenly waking up beaten?" Then Kelvin said, "Mom, I stole a gold rock from a traditional

healer."

After five days, Kelvin was discharged from hospital and immediately they got home and returned the gold rock to its rightful owner. When it was month end, Kelvin's dad came home, and the two parents finally agreed for their son to go to the school trip.





YOU DO NOT NEED TO BE SKINNY OR FIT TO DESERVE LOVE

Mokgadi Lesego precious

Grade 6 | Shoaine Primary School | Limpopo

Long time ago there was a certain girl named Rose. She was very fat and beautiful. Her parents passed away.

Rose came from a very poor family. She was going to school with torn clothes and old shoes. Some kids at school were teasing her. It was only her teacher who loved her because she was very clever and intelligent. That love from her teacher kept her going to school.

One day there was a modeling competition at Rose's school. Everyone was so excited about it, but Rose was not, why? Because she knew that she was too fat. Her teacher chose her for the modeling competition and the whole class laughed. "What are you laughing at!" Shouted Mrs. Kgopane. Rose went outside crying. Mrs. Kgopane made Rose to stop crying. "Stop crying my dear, everything will be fine, be patient." Said the teacher. Rose went back inside her classroom and sat on her desk quietly. "Ohh she's back the fat girl. Ha! Ha!" Whispered Zandile.

Zandile is a beautiful girl that have both parent and her parents are rich. She like to tease Rose with her friend Thando.

Rose told her grandmother about the modeling competition because she entered in the competition. Rose kept





CHARACTERS



thinking about her body to change herself to be skinny and fit. Rose had an idea. She took her mother's old (Make up's) cleaning skin and she fasted for five days.

Rose's grandmother was "puzzled". "Rose why are you fasting?" Said her granny. "No, granny I just want to be like the other kids at school." Said Rose. "But you should eat something." Said granny. "Granny you won't understand." Said Rose. "Hear me carefully, dear be thankful to God, don't change yourself because of

other kids." Said Grandmother.

Rose believed her grandmother and ate her dinner. Her grandmother was telling the truth. "Grandmother is right I don't have to sacrifice what I have to deserve their love or their friendship." Thought Rose.

The modeling competition happened on the 25th August and the judges were there to choose who did well than the other girls.

Mrs. Kgopane and the principal took a decision to have modeling clothes and shoes for the girls that wanted to participate in the competition. The girls modelled and made a speech to the judges. The judges liked Rose a lot and her speech. Rose won the competition. She was happy that she won a trophy.

Rose realized that she do not need to be skinny or fit to be like the other children or to deserve someone's love. The way she is, God made her to be clever and intelligent and she is thankful the way God had made her.





YOU DO NOT NEED TO BE SKINNY OR FIT TO DESERVE LOVE

Mokgethwa Mobudusha

Grade 4 | Loerskool Primary School | Limpopo

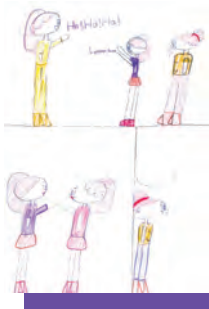
Once upon a time, there was a girl called Nicole. She was body shamed by most of the kids at school and a group called the "mean girls" they made comments about how big and fat she looked. That made her lose confidence in herself, she didn't think she was beautiful. She always wanted to wear big size clothes because she did not want people to see her body. She only had one friend called Penny.

There were many kids who liked making up jokes about her looks. They would say she is too fat to fit in through the door. She was the laughingstock of the school. No one stood up for her except for Penny. One day Nicole saw Penny talking to some of the girls that bullied her, Nicole hid behind a locker and listened to their conversation, she was shocked when she heard Penny sharing her secrets with the mean girls. She knew Penny was not a real friend and would not be trusted. Nicole started distancing herself from Penny. Penny would see and sense that Nicole was no longer the same towards her, Penny eventually started to show Nicole her true colours. She made fun of Nicole in front of the mean girls. She called her all sorts of painful names.

Nicole felt so sad about losing her only friend. There was a new girl in school called Zoey. Nicole saw the mean girls

You do not
Need to be
Skinny or fit to
deserve love.
Word count: 683
Author: Mokgethwa
Mobudusha





making fun of her so she came and helped her, she pulled her aside and left with her. "I haven't seen you around here are you new? Don't worry about those girls they

are mean and cruel. They have bullied me a lot." The two girls instantly became friends.

Nicole offered to help Zoey catch up on her schoolwork. They worked together and she managed to catch up. Zoey was at the bathroom and the mean girls were not aware that there is someone, they were plotting something evil for Nicole. They wanted to prank her and embarrass her in front of the entire school. Zoey overheard what they were planning, as soon as the mean girls left the bathroom, she quickly ran to warn her friend.

The mean girls wanted to pour a bucket of paint over Nicole's head. But instead, something they had never thought of happened. They poured the bucket of paint over the principal and unfortunately for them they Principal knew it was the mean girls because there were other learners who went to him to complain about the mean girls bullying them. The mean girls got detention that day.

When they came from detention, they saw Zoey and Nicole giggling

at them. The mean girls told them, "You can run, but you can't hide, we will get you, enjoy it while it lasts." From that day Zoey and Nicole knew that they were not safe, they knew they had to watch their backs and not let their guard down. They had to quickly come up with a plan that was going to help them to eliminate the mean girls. They went around looking for kids that had been bullied by the mean girls, to their surprise there were many learners who came forward. They all sat together and decided that they would be united and start a campaign against the mean girls. Zoey and Nicole approached their class teacher and the principal about the idea they had. Their principal received it with joy and excitement he could not believe that he had such bright learners at his school. The girls ran a campaign about bullying. They had posters and performances that were talking about the bullying happening at their school. Everyone in the school was speaking up against bullying. The mean girls group started to feel ashamed about their behaviour, Zoey and Nicole slowly, but surely defeated the mean girls. They group eventually got separated. They saw that what they were doing was wrong.

Nicole and Zoey conquered against all odds.

The school was a better place at the end.







THE GIRL AND HER PIANO

Okae Mokoena

Grade 6 | Spine View Primary School | Western Cape

Hope was everyone's laughingstock. She had no friends at home nor school. In the community people would laugh at her, call her names, body shame her, and taking pictures to make memes from. A girl named Sesthu was a popular girl and a spoilt brat. She once took a picture of Hope and made a meme with the caption "stufza" which is a Xhosa word that means "fat girl".

On her first day of school everyone was sitting at their desks and as Hope entered the class, everyone laughed. They looked at her like she was a creature from another planet.

"Hey cute girl. How are you?," said Kara.
"Can I be your friend?"

Hope felt delighted and at ease and nodded her head.

"You are mad! How can you be a friend to such an ugly fat girl?"

"You are such an 'Iscaathi'", which means a fat ugly girl.

Everyone laughed and started shouting "Iscaathi". Hope lost her confidence.

One day Hope was walking home from school and when she looked behind her, she saw three boys from school. She thought maybe they were going home.





Every time when Hope was coming back from school she passed through a black, dark, creepy forest that had a big green bin to throw trash in. As she was walking with the three boys behind her she felt nervous. Suddenly the three boys grabbed her and punched her in the face then ran away but they lifted her into the green bin. When she got out, she was hurt and had a blue eye. She missed school for a few days.



getting more likes and on her fifth post she had ten thousand likes.

At school everyone was talking about “The piano girl”. She felt happy for once. Hope posted two videos at the same time and they were reaching great heights, she began to get twenty thousand followers. She posted and posted, she

was to reach one-hundred-and-fifty-thousand followers. After six months she was at nine-hundred-thousand followers, and she was happy.

Hope had no friends. Her only friend was the phone which her mom bought for her birthday. One day Hope was randomly scrolling on Instagram and suddenly she saw a post about a new app called TikTok. TikTok is a video making app where you post videos that you made so they can be seen by the whole world. She thought maybe she could try it out.

One day Hope saw a poster about a talent show at school. She signed up. On the weekend she practised how to play the piano even though she knew to play. She planned her piece even though she knew how to play. She planned her outfit and it was a glittery pink dress with pink pumps. Hope wanted everything to go well.

Hope was a girl who could play piano and who could sing. She had a really nice voice like an angel, and she played the piano exceptionally well. They had a piano that was in the living room and she would always play it. She downloaded TikTok and she started to record the video and played the piano and sang. Hope went by the stage name “The piano girl”. She hid her face so that people would not know her.

On the day of the talent show, Hope was nervous and she was the fourth one to play. She went on stage and was introduced as “The piano girl”. At first people didn’t take it seriously, she sat in the chair and played the piano in front of her. People were amazed of how she played the piano and she was happy seeing people amazed. After the talent show everyone wanted to be friends because they knew she was talented and they knew how to respect her since she had a lot of followers on TikTok.

As she posted more, she started





JUST FOR A DAY

Romi Grendeling

Grade 5 | Helderkruin Primary School | Western Cape

Do you know what it feels like to be all alone? Do you know what it's like when people sniff you as they pass you by? Do you know the horrible feeling you get when people pretend to be busy when you try to approach them? Do you? Well, let me tell you.

I am Siyabonga. A 10-year-old boy who's mom died and everyone abandoned him. I live under a bridge, not too far from my old house.

Yes, I am homeless.

Living on the streets has not been easy. Nobody notices me. Maybe because my clothes are torn and my face is dirty. Maybe because I smell a little bit (what do you expect?). I am still a human being with feelings though. I still have dreams and hopes for a better future. A brighter future. A future that includes dancing.

I love dancing and I'm quite good at it. I dance every single day, with or without music. I've always dreamt of someone noticing me and seeing how good I am. Until one day...

While walking "home" one sunny afternoon, I saw something shiny in a dry bush next to the road. As I walked closer, I couldn't contain my smile. A cellphone! A cracked one but a cellphone nevertheless. It wasn't locked and after scrolling around





on it I found exactly what I was looking for... TikTok!

Not wanting to invade their privacy, I made myself a new account, used a filter to hide my face and uploaded a video of me dancing. Twenty seconds later I got my first like and people commented on how amazing I was. They wanted to know who I was and where they could find me, but I was too embarrassed to reply.

That day everything was perfect. People saw past my tatty old clothes. They saw my talent. I thought to myself that this would be my secret life on TikTok.

As the sun set, I noticed that the phone was dead! Could it be the battery? Could it be the cracks or is it just my bad luck? I was devastated. I started shaking the phone hoping it would turn on but... nothing.

As warm tears ran down my face, I realised my dreams were shattered. My secret life on TikTok left me, just like everyone else left me. I might be able to pick that dream up again

with another phone but what are the chances?

Back to reality!

Nobody notices me.

I'm just a homeless child.

Would you notice me?







WHEN A FOREST SCREAMS

Samia Adams

Grade 6 | West End Primary School | Western Cape

Chapter 1

Thud! In the middle of the night Jacob Abott, Estelle Madden, Benjamin Hudson, and Elenor Davids all woke up at 21:42 on 16 September 2038 to the terrifying sound of thunder, it felt as if the crust of the Earth was moving. After what seemed to have been less than 10 minutes the sound of the roaring thunder was back. This time more intense, it sounded like a thousand buffalos migrating from one place to another. Jacob calls his friends and tells them to meet him at Stars24. The new coffee shop in town.

Chapter 2

Everyone meets up and Estelle says to Jacob, "Why? Just why do I have to be here? Yes, we all want to know what that loud sound was but why do we have to go now? It's 11pm." "Because I heard the exact same sound a week ago. We need to go check it out," Jacob said. The next morning, they all go to the dark and creepy forbidden forest using Benjamin's car. "Why do you think the forbidden forest is called forbidden?" "Because you're not supposed to go in!" Elenor said. "Grr!" Was the only thing they heard at the beginning of the forest.

A great tourist attraction.

Chapter 3

An amazing hiking spot for hikers but





now it was banned from the public. The forbidden forest was located in front of this huge mountain covered in the trees and bushes. The only way to get there was to hike up the mountain. As the friends start hiking, Jacob cannot help but feel a knot in his stomach, it was as if he knew he was walking to a place of no return. Benjamin felt like they had been hiking for days when they had reached the top of the mountain, everyone was beyond exhausted.

Benjamin asks everyone if they would like to take a break. While everyone is resting Estelle takes out her brand-new iPhone 72 and starts recording the beautiful view. The top of the mountain was magnificent, trees as tall as skyscrapers with gorgeous green leaves. The beautiful blooming flowers were enough to convince you that you had just stepped into an entire new world. The friends now realized why this place was once.

Chapter 4

The next morning, they reached the top of the mountain and everything seemed normal. "Why is this place forbidden? It's so beautiful," Elenor said. "Maybe that's why," Jacob says while looking at the other side of the forest. Benjamin and Elenor turn around wondering what Jacob was looking at. What Jacob was looking at left them speechless and sent shivers down their spines. At first, they thought their eyes were deceiving them, but as they took a closer look they could see hundreds of people, working. They were cutting down all the trees although behind what was left of the forest you could see thick, grey smoke coming out of what looked like a factory. The forest as

losing its life with every tree being cut down you could hear every teardrop, every scream, and every cry for help. The silence from the outside world was too loud.

Chapter 5

All the trees are gone and all the oxygen too. While the trees take their final breath of air, Benjamin tells the group that they need to report what they just saw to the police. They ran as fast as lightning to the police station. "No air, no trees, and no shelter for animals. Oxygen, life not only to humans but to hundreds of animals was now being destroyed, with your help we can stop all of this." Elenor said to a police officer. "What? You dummies. If there's not even a seed left, then we can't survive," the policeman said. They all went to the forest and arrested every single person involved and shut down the factory behind everything.

Two months later...

Jacob, Estelle, Benjamin, and Elenor are still best friends. Through weeks they've been shutting down every other factory involved with the deforestation. Through the months beautiful, blooming, bright trees are reborn. It turns out that our final breath was not needed.







THE MONSTER UNDERNEATH MY BED

Sinokhanyo Makasi

Grade 4 | Seagull Primary School | Eastern Cape

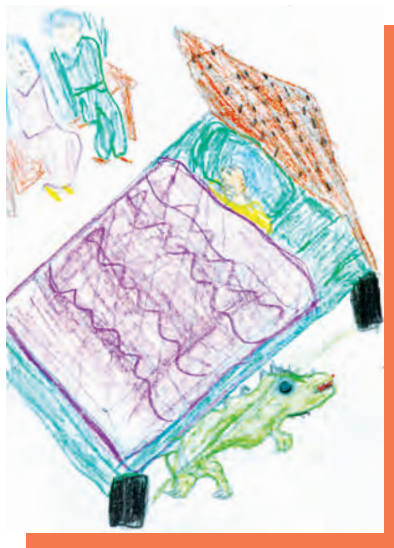
Angelo and his friends were sitting in his room. Safari and Ronnie decided to stay over so that they could comfort him. Angelo's puppy, Fazey, was missing. They looked everywhere but nobody had seen him. "What could have happened to him?" asked Angelo sadly. "I am sure he will turn up," said Ronnie.

Suddenly they heard a growl. "What was that?" asked Safari.

It was just Angelo's stomach. He had not eaten the whole day. Just then his mum came in with tasty treats. The best was the homemade ice cream cake that gave them brain freeze, but they ate until they could no longer feel their bodies. They flopped on the pillows and drifted off to sleep.

In the middle of the night Ronnie heard a loud growl, "Who could still be hungry? They had a lot to eat." Then all of them heard it again. It was not somebody's tummy. "Hey Angelo! There is something under your bed," whispered Safari nervously. Angelo sat up in bed. He was too petrified to peep under the bed. The two friends were in the corner of the room, not brave enough to move any closer.

"Angelo, look under your bed," said Ronnie.





Angelo jumped off the bed and ran to switch on the light.

"Oh my word! That's not a monster!" shouted Angelo. A tiny head popped out of a purple pillowcase. It was Fazey. He was buried under a mass of dirty laundry Angelo had secretly stuffed underneath his bed. It was hilarious. They felt rather silly for thinking that there was a monster underneath the bed.



"No ways! I might lose a finger. Ronnie, you have a look. You do karate," said Angelo.

"Me? Are you crazy. We don't get trained to fight monsters," said Ronnie.

"We can't just stand here. We might get eaten," said Safari.

Then the monster started scratching under the bed. It was trying to get out.

"O no! We are going to be munched by a monster!" Safari shouted. The monster slowly started slithering out from underneath the bed. It was too dark see clearly. It was definitely huge and hideous!

Suddenly they heard a soft whimper.



GOOD FOR HER

Skyler Olyn

Grade 5 | Helderkruijn Primary School | Western Cape

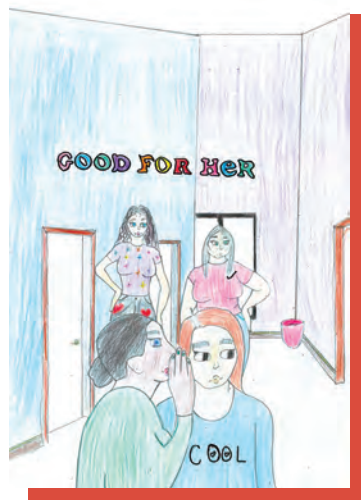
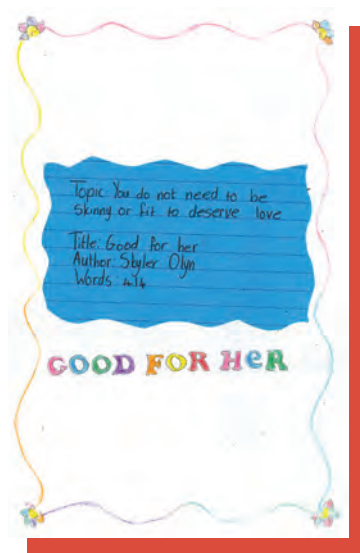
Being a preteen is the pits!

So many things happening to your brain and body. One of the things that happened to my body is I got fat! Not obese, unhealthy fat but my cheeks, got rounder, my stomach a little softer and every full moon I get a gigantic pimple somewhere on my freckly face. My best friend, Willow, thinks I'm exaggerating but she wouldn't know what it's like.

Willow is the prettiest girl in school. She has beautiful blue eyes, red curly hair, perfect body, thanks to good genes and hockey. I suspect people ask her what she does hanging around me, but she really does enjoy my company. We're always laughing and being silly. She also walks me home often. Except for one horrible day.

I was walking home and a group of hockey girls were behind me. One of the girls, Jesse started calling me "Jelly belly" and the whole group howled with laughter. I walked faster to get away, but this resulted in certain parts jiggling. I was horrified! I then ran.

At home I was a blubbering mess. The following day Willow could see something was wrong. She held my hand, I choked up and told her everything.





My blood started to boil and I just saw red! "You know what?! I'm not a baby. You are a horrible human being and a bully. I will not allow you to make me feel bad about myself any longer!" I didn't realise I was shouting until I saw everyone staring.

"Way to go Violet!" someone shouted and everyone whistled. The rest of the day was a blur but not one person said something nasty to me. My jiggly bits were never mentioned again.

Jesse avoided me at every corner. Scared I might embarrass her again.

Good for her!

Now she knows what it feels like.

"I will make them regret what they said," Willow said furiously and stormed off.

The next day, someone in class passed me a note. I ran to Willow at break asking what she did. "Oh nothing! Just got them kicked off the hockey team," she said.

"But...how?...why?"

"Because they are mean girls, Violet, and mean girls don't deserve to be on my team."

After break I bumped into Jesse. "My mother's not happy about me being kicked off, Violet. Why did you have to be such a baby and tell Willow?"







THE TRUTH

Tanyaradzwa Hozheri

Grade 6 | Spineview Primary School | Western Cape

The small community of Sabara was blessed with a river which never ran out of water. The land was fertile with evergreen trees. The mountains were part of this beauty. Despite all these, there was one big problem with this community.

The whole community had normalised lying. Even young children lied. It seemed as if the children were born natural liars. Sydney was a different child for she hated lies. She had not only once, but several times been a victim of lies.

One day whilst in class, a classmate's money went missing. One of the mean, selfish girls in class lied that it was Sydney who had taken it. Sydney knew she was innocent but could not prove it because the whole class ganged up against her. The talkative girl, Ziya, kept shouting that Sydney was a thief. She suggested to the teacher to search everyone's bag. It was only then that they found it in someone's bag. Ziya insisted it was Sydney who put it there.

The next week Sydney went to the shop for school supplies for a project with her friends, Okae. Okae felt embarrassed because she had no money to buy her own and she was afraid to ask Sydney for money. She decided to steal colour pens and notebooks, she stuffed it in Sydney's bag. Sydney paid for her stuff. Just as she was getting out the shop the alarm rang. Security told her to empty her pockets





and her bag. They found colour pens and a notebook in her bag. She went to the police station with security. She waited until her mother came. She knew she didn't do it, but her own friend said she saw her put it in her bag.

Her mother sent her to buy bread and eggs for breakfast. Some girls were cutting the wires on an electricity box that powered the whole community. The electricity box popped and the whole had no power. The girls ran away. People came out of their houses to see what happened. They saw Sydney near the box, and it was her. One of the who was cutting the wires said it was Sydney. The other girls supported her. Sydney was really fed up with the lies.

One day as Sydney was walking home thinking about the lies in her community. She saw a glittering stone. She thought heave had opened for her with a gift of a precious mineral. Diamond, gold, platinum, all these minerals noted to her mind. She went home with the stone and hid it in her cupboard not wanting to tell anyone.

As she slept that night, she was dreaming big, nice cars, mansions and designer clothes. When she switched off the lights to sleep, she felt a strong wind in her room and suddenly she was lifted up, out of her bed, out of her room. When she came to



her full self, she realised she was in another world.

Everyone looked happy. The community was united sharing all they had. They laughed with each other, hugged each other and helping each other. It was a different community from hers. As she walked around, she witnessed the same thing happiness, unity, and love.

Suddenly someone called her name out. When she looked up, she fell on her knees. She saw a beautiful lady dressed like a queen gold jewellery in her hand was the stones she picked before.

"What have I done to deserve this?" she asked trembling.

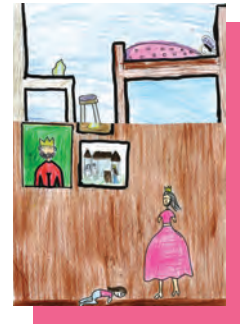
"Nothing. Don't be afraid. Do you like what you see?"

"Yes! What is the secret behind this."

"It's all because we don't lie here. Now go back and tell the world that a world with no lies is full of happiness, love and peace."

When she came back to herself, she was in her room.

A big task lay ahead of her.





THE MONSTER UNDERNEATH MY BED

Tshiamo Chauke

Grade 5 | Ngwanathulare Primary School | Limpopo

I went to bed at night and heard a strange noise. So I turned on the light and I got out of the bed. I checked behind the curtains and inside my wardrobe but there was nothing there. I went back to bed, but I still felt like something was watching me. The next thing I heard the noise again I told myself that it wasn't real and there was nothing there, after I had looked everywhere in my bedroom.

When I heard it again, I pulled the cover over my head and squeezed my eyes shut. My bed shook slightly as the noise got louder and louder but it didn't make sense. I was scared and terrified, but it didn't make sense. I woke up and started looking everywhere when again and I asked myself, "How could it sound so close to me unless... Hmmm it's a monster underneath my bed." I screamed loudly, "Please help!" My dad and mom rushed to my bedroom. They were also terrified and didn't know what was happening to me. My mom was crying because she is a sensitive person. My dad was not, but a little bit scared, and she is a brave mom, but that day was not. I was crying and ruffled my hair. My dad said the monster doesn't exist. My mom said, "How can you say that as you can see that my daughter is frightened."

They checked under my bed, and wanted to show me that there was nothing there. They started screaming when they heard





the monster. They were surprised there was something under the bed. "I told you that there was a scary monster under my bed," I whispered from the doorway. My mom came running out the bedroom, "Which means this must have happened to my daughter at night." My dad used a flashlight under the bed and discovered something hiding there and saw a scary monster. He took it out and made sure that my bedroom was clean. I have learnt that if you hear any noise around your bedroom

please don't ignore and report it to your parents as soon as possible. Because its look like the scary monster has been hiding underneath my bed for several days.

I encourage, especially the youth to keep their bedroom clean. Every day before they go to bed must check under the bed, inside the wardrobe and behind the curtains and make sure that the door is locked.





MY HAPPINESS DEPENDS ON ME

William Witbooi

Grade 5 | Seagull Primary School | Eastern Cape

I've always been a shy boy. My mom, Valentine, encouraged me to take part in cross country as a sport. She believed that it would help to build my confidence. I reluctantly joined the club, but I was not convinced that I was cut out to do this sort of thing. I did not want to let her down, so I just decided to give it a go.

When we started, I didn't feel so alone. "Hi William, come and join us!" shouted Antiano. I jogged off and joined them. It was good to see friendly, familiar faces. We practised so hard, I felt so sore and stiff when I woke up the next day. It became better every day. I was starting to get the hang of it.

Two weeks had gone by, and the coach enrolled us in a race. "Listen up everybody. The first race of the season is on Saturday," said coach. My heart sank. I was not ready. Antiano and the others were over the moon. "Yay! Finally, we will actually be doing something!" shouted Damian. They were so excited. "Why are you so quiet?" asked Lenache. "It is nothing I'm just tired," I replied. I felt sick.

That evening my mum could see that something was bothering me. "William, What's wrong my boy?" she asked. "We have our first race on Saturday and I am so afraid," I said with tears in my eyes. "Don't worry. Just try your best," she said. "It is





okay to be nervous and scared. I'm sure you will feel better once you start running," my mom reassured me.

Saturday came and we left for St. Albans to take part in the race. Everyone was chatting away cheerfully. I closed my eyes and pretended to be asleep. I was not in the mood for chit chat.

The race was about to start. I remembered my mother's words, "Just try your best".

The man fired the starter's gun and we ran off. I was startled by the loud bang.

"Try and keep up with us!" shouted Kurt-Lee. I was focused on keeping up with the others. Just then I tripped and fell flat on my face. It was too painful to get up. I could not finish the race. The first aid team carried me off



the track. I felt so embarrassed.

"I'm never going back!" I said to my mum. My mum hugged me and said, "Quitters never win and winners never quit. Everything will work out. It was only your first race." That night I thought about what she said. It was true. I could not just give up after the first try. I was determined to finish the next race.

A soft mist of rain fell on the morning of my second race. It didn't matter because my family was in the stands supporting me. I felt positive and pumped up. It was all up to me now.

The shot was fired and I took off with the rest of the participants. I stayed focused and kept to my own pace. I crossed the finish line and came third! My family was super proud of me. I did it! I ran and finished my own race.





This compilation of stories are written and illustrated by South African learners from the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, and Limpopo for the Growsmart Story Writing Competition of 2023. Their stories are inspired by their experiences, hopes, dreams, and rich imagination.

The book showcases only a sample of all the wonderful stories received. Take your time and enjoy the adventures between the pages!



This book is not for sale.

