

CHILDREN WRITING TO GROW SMART

Stories written by learners for the
Growsmart Story Writing Competition



2023 Edition
Western Cape & Eastern Cape



A MESSAGE FROM GROWTHPOINT PROPERTIES

Stories have always played a crucial role in shaping human understanding and experiences. They expand our horizons, add colour to our lives, and spark our curiosity and imagination. Offering guidance, temporary refuge, and relief from our everyday routines, stories hold immense power. That's why story writing is an integral component of The Growsmart Educational Programme, as it provides learners with an opportunity to express themselves creatively and safely explore their dreams before turning them into reality.

As you journey into these young authors' tales, your own world will inevitably grow as well.

These stories showcase the talents of students from grades 4 – 6, predominantly from underprivileged backgrounds and where English may not be their first language. This collection celebrates their achievements while inspiring them to share their narratives.

We take immense pride in presenting a platform for these gifted children as we continue to nurture their development and ensure they thrive.

Estienne de Klerk
CEO





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 Grades 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





CONTENT

Page 1	Amyoli Thobi	Truth that changed Zane's life
Page 3	Awonke Mathiso	My happiness depends on me
Page 6	Curtley Hendricks	The monster underneath my bed
Page 8	Esperanca Mungongo	Family over followers
Page 10	Fazlin Jacobs	The brave heart
Page 12	Imange Saula	When the forest screams
Page 14	Khazimla Ntshinga	My happiness depends on me
Page 16	Leethon Pootie	A house of hope
Page 18	Lisanele Notyhowe	The monster underneath my bed
Page 20	Lufuno Jojo	I can...too
Page 23	Lunikolwenkosi Mkuyana	The monster underneath my bed
Page 25	Lwahluma Mlambo	Behind the fake selfie
Page 27	Lwandisuthando Thisani	Jack the forest hero
Page 29	Okae Mokoena	The girl and her piano
Page 32	Romi Grendeling	Just for a day
Page 35	Samia Adams	When a forest screams
Page 38	Sinokhanyo Makasi	The monster underneath my bed
Page 40	Skyler Olyn	Good for her
Page 43	Tanyaradzwa Hozheri	The truth
Page 45	William Witbooi	My happiness depends on me





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

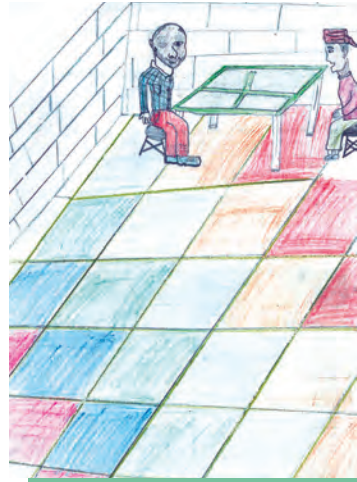
Grade 5 | Nonzwakaz Primary School | Eastern Cape

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

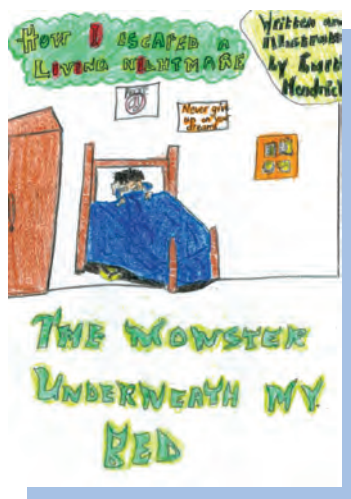
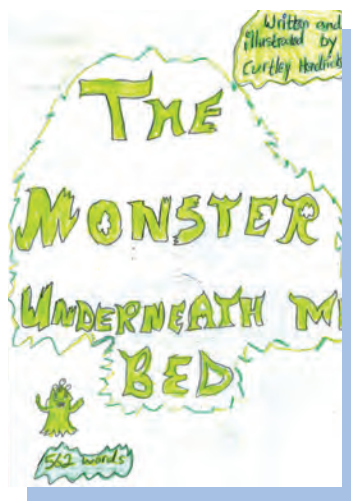
Grade 6 | Hawston Primary School | Western Cape

"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.





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.





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."





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

A House of Hope





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 | Nkosingathi 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

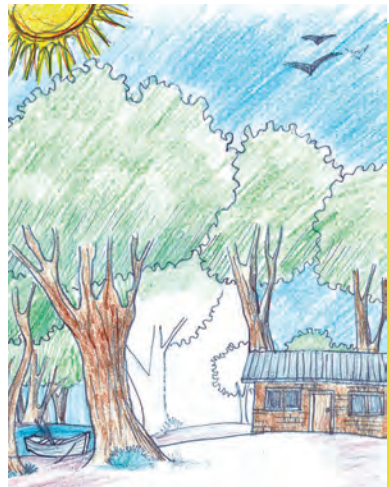
Grade 4 | Meusizwe Primary School | Eastern Cape

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 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.

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.

As she posted more, she started

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.

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.







JUST FOR A DAY

Romi Grendeling

Grade 5 | Helderkruijn 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 | Helderkruin Primary School | Western Cape

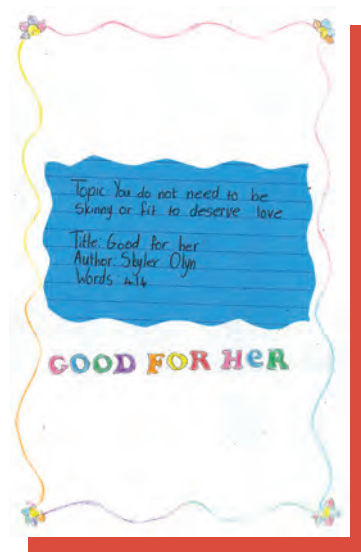
Being a preteen is the pits!

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 go 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.

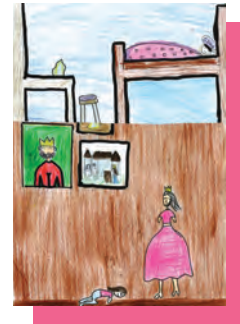
"Nothing. Don't be afraid. Do you like what you see?"

"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.





MY HAPPINESS DEPENDS ON ME

William Witbooi

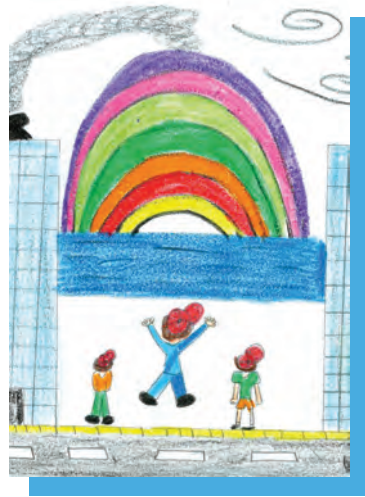
Grade 5 | Seagull Primary School | Eastern Cape

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 and Eastern Cape 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.

