

Grade 3-5
Short Story
1st Place

Sofia S.

A Second "Once Upon a Time"

"We're moving?!" I yelled across the dinner table. My mouth hung open wide with surprise. "Well," My mother said while staring at my shocked face and fidgeting with her fingers. "Yes, Jane, I thought it would help to move to a cheaper place. Prices are high here in Velvet Grace." My mom said her words with a smile; she was trying to convince me it was better for us, but I wasn't having any of it. I snapped at her, "I'm perfectly happy here. This place is, well, magical; a literal fairytale! I just started school and made new friends; now you want to move away?" I shoved my supper plate away and slumped in my chair; arms crossed and breath huffed like any teen.

"Your mother's right," Father started, ignoring my response as usual. "We can't afford to live in this old house anymore, and on the account of how many mouths we have to feed, we don't have a choice." I pushed away from the table and stood up to prove my point. "It's just you, me, Mom, the dog, and Percy," with my arms jabbing towards each one intensely. "You should be able to feed all of us and even a few more."

My brother looked up from his plate as he heard his name. "Huh?" he uttered with his mouth full of macaroni and mind full of sci-fi. "Percy, back me up on this!" I glared at him with desperate eyes, hoping he would say anything that would, *could*, help. "Oh, u-u-m..." He turned to me, having not paid attention to anything that was happening. "Uhh, what she said." I buried my face into my hands, as Percy buried his face back into his disgustingly cheesy food. I sighed, as he was useless to my case.

Even if my parents did understand him, it was pointless. I sunk back into my seat and stayed quiet for the rest of dinner. I was too disappointed to swallow most of the grub, not like I wanted to eat it anyway. The argument was over, the battle was won;

one point for them, zero for me. Rusty licked at my feet from under the table to heal my internal wounds but had no idea what was going to happen.

The next morning I awoke, but all my hopes were shattered; barely big enough shards to make into a small mirror. I sighed as I slithered out from under my bed sheets. I got dressed and headed downstairs to the lime green-tiled kitchen. "Hey honey," Mom started. "I made pancakes this morning as a special moving breakfast." She took a plate of pancakes out of the fridge and set it on the table. "Thanks, but I'm not hungry." Mom gave me one of those "concerned mom looks" mothers always do. "Is something wrong? Are you feeling alright?" She put her hand on my forehead to check my temperature, but I pulled away. "I'm fine," I said heading toward the screen door, wondering how she could ask if anything was wrong. "I just need time to think to myself."

I wandered to the backyard, kicking stones as I made my way to the nearby creek. I flung my shoes off upon arrival to the calm, but cold, flow of water and waded slowly around. I pondered for a few minutes, reminiscing about the fun times I had back here in this old place; playing on the swings with Percy and crossing through the creek with dad and mom. Rusty would fetch branches bigger than my arm from the woods during the summer. It was great these past years, having lived here all my life, up until today. I was going to have to leave it all behind. I touched the water one last time before dragging myself back towards the house.

My parents were getting ready, with their things being put into moving vans. I brought out the lonely box from my room with my things and got into the car. "Are you ready to go? Didn't forget anything?" dad inquired. I chuckled to myself; I wouldn't forget

this remarkable place, even if I tried. "Yeah, I'm good." I stated gloomily, "gonna miss this old place, and all the adventures we had here." I looked out the window at the old swing set. Dad replied, "So will we, but there's more adventure in the places we haven't explored. Look on the bright side, you won't have to share a room with Percy over there anymore." Dad smiled sweetly looking at me in the rearview mirror. "I guess so..." I said as I closed my eyes.

I listened to the birds' sweet songs and the wind blowing in the trees for one more time. I took a deep breath; cool Velvet Grace air flowed through my throat. I opened my eyelids and saw the landscapes pass by me in the window, my reflection of myself somehow grinning, when I didn't feel myself smiling. Percy was already drifting off to some space galaxy with his eyes closed as we turned out of the driveway and into the unknown. I hadn't even realized we began moving. I looked through the glass and saw our house, trailing back into the distance, out of sight. Even If this was my last day here, I would never forget it.

I wasn't lying when I said Velvet Grace was a mystical place. If you visited, you would see trails of light speeding through the sky; hear the sounds of wings cutting through the cool air. Creatures never seen elsewhere, never really believed in before; existing otherworldly-like beings: Pixies, dragons, fairies, mermaids. That's why I loved it so much, the enchantment in every yard of the town. Maybe it's hard to believe in these "myths" if you didn't know about them. I've always been curious about what it's like out there without charm. I have never been thrilled to leave something behind, but to see something new and explore the rest of a world without magic would be exciting. I had become optimistic, and hopeful, for the next part of the adventure to begin.

Grade 3-5
Short Story
2nd Place

Emilia F.M.

Spies

Marie had just reached home when a letter landed, thump, on the floor. She picked it up, her eyes shining. The letter was from her boss, Margaret. It said:

Dear Marie,

These are your new instructions. Go to the Hotel la Mode. There you will be greeted by a maid named Laura. She will say, "Your rooms are on level 7." You are to say, "Thank you- do they have cable?" Once this has happens she will take you to a corner room and give you my next message.

Cordially,

Margaret Rose

Marie could hardly wait! She ran upstairs and packed the essentials for her trip. Then dressed warmly, she got in her car and sped off for the lavish hotel. When she arrived a maid with long brown hair and a careful expression greeted her and said softly, "Your rooms are on level 7." Marie replied as instructed and was shown into a corner room. There the maid, now identified as Laura, handed her the next message:

Dear Marie,

Now go to the airport. (I have arranged for you to fly first class.) Your plane to France leaves on 4/15/22. In France you will be picked up by a taxi driver named Jones. He will fill you in on the details of why you are in France.

Cordially,

Margaret Rose

P.S. The taxi number is 12.

Marie immediately packed up her things and set out for the international airport. When she arrived the plane was nearly ready to leave the airport. She made a mad dash for it and got on just in time, breathless with relief. As the plane was flying she wondered, just before she dozed off, what she was going to be doing in France.

When she woke up the plane had landed. She left the plane and found many taxis waiting for passengers. After a little searching she found Taxi No. 12, a shiny new red cab. The driver, a stout man with a big red beard to match his cab, helped her in. After they had driven for 5 minutes Marie finally asked, "Do you have any info for me about why I am here?" The driver paused and then said in a fake French accent, "Yes, a jewel mine was discovered in the South Pole a few years back. All sorts of countries are trying to claim it even though it really belongs to the United States." He paused for breath and then went on.

"All the countries except France have released their claim; France still firmly insists that it belongs to them even though it belongs to us."

"But you still haven't told me why I am here?" Marie pestered.

"I was getting to that," Jones said, seeming a little bit annoyed. "The government wants you to investigate the French government land agency."

"How am I supposed to get in?" Marie questioned.

He told her, "While you are here you will be posing as a British agent here to see another agent." Then without another word, he dropped her off and gave her a note.

Dear Marie,

When you go into the agency there are three hallways. Enter the center one. At the end is a glass elevator; when you go in it hit the dark blue button. It will take you down to an underground hallway. At the end of the hall in front of you is an office. Insert the enclosed info tab. When it is full, pull it out and leave the way you came in.

Cordially,

Margaret Rose

Marie found her disguise tucked under the seat in the cab and slipped it on over her clothes. She went into the building and found the indicated halls. Going down the center one she encountered a glass elevator with a metal ceiling, but the blue button was nowhere to be found. She stayed calm and thought. After a little looking she found a panel that slid away. The blue button was underneath. She pressed it and the elevator dropped quickly as she hung on to the side. As it was slowing down, she could see a man in the office she was going to! Before he could see her, she used her spy training to open a panel in the metal roof and climb on top. As she hid, she managed to still hear a conversation. It was about the jewel mine!

"They still won't give in, Frank," one man said.

"I know, Joe," said Frank, "and the boss is mighty angry. Now, let's get back to work." When they left Marie stealthily went into the room, got the data, and left the building unseen- except by one person. The hidden person cackled evilly in the shadows. He did not know that she could hear him. Marie looked, startled; she spotted the man then turned, jumped in the waiting taxi, and sped away. Looking back, she saw a yellow sports car following her.

"We have to lose him," she urged Jones. "I can't lead him to the hideout!"

Suddenly he took a sharp right, then left, drove through an alley, and turned back on the same street. Smiling to himself, he did some fancy turns, finally ending at an old dealer shop. She walked into the back room and turned on a screen.

"Good work, Marie," said a pleased voice from the dark screen. The voice belonged to her boss, Margaret Rose.

"The Agents picked up the man who was chasing you," she said. "He will go to prison for a few years for trying to kill you."

"Thanks, boss," said Marie, startled. She hadn't realized his intent. "I need to get home- is that okay? It's my youngest daughter's birthday."

"You may go," her boss said. "And say hello to your daughter for me."

"I will," Marie said gratefully.

Marie left the shop, got in Jones' taxi, and he took her to the airport. When her plane landed, she took another taxi home, and prepped for her daughter's party. Later at the party while she gave her daughter a Mona Lisa notebook, she thought with excitement, "I wonder what my next mission will be."

Grade 3-5
Short Story
3rd Place

Qadhi Abdul Qadir B.

The Bird with No Feathers

A bird with fur has to find a way to not get teased by other birds, but he can be good at other things.

A bird, who was three years old, had a mother and father. They were a little teary eyed, because they loved him so much. They gave him the name, Furthers. When Furthers was about 5 years old, he got lost and his mother died with sadness. Fortunately, you can find Furthers at his mom's grave every weekend. During the week, Furthers was ready to start going to his new school.

One day at recess, Furthers was teased by his two bullies, Vulture and Eagle. He got teased because he didn't have any feathers. "I can not have feathers, but I can do other things", said Feathers. The bullies laughed. "Prove it to us," said Eagle.

Later that day, Furthers, Eagle, and Vulture had a reading test. Furthers was a very good reader and aced his test. However, Eagle and Vulture failed. Eagle and Vulture looked at Furthers paper and said "how did he get an A+ but we're ruined?" "I think you learned your lesson." said furthers. Eagle said "I think he is right, Vulture, but he has a smart brain". "Wanna learn how to read?" said Furthers. The birds were surprised. So then they learned and Furthers didn't hear a tease about him anymore.