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THE MILK MONSTER
THE CHOCOLATE BRIDGE

Jose Hernandez Rodas, age 10

Many years ago I went on a spaceship that was supposed to go to the moon. The rocket broke and I couldn’t go back to Earth. I got lost for a week, but I found a new planet that was made of candy.

The planet looked like it had a rainbow when you looked at it from far away. But when you got close you realized that it was a rainbow made of Skittles. At first I ate a lot of candy, but later I was full.

After that I passed the coordinates to the space station so they could come see the candy planet, but then I discovered that there was oxygen on the planet. The space station left the planet because they didn’t know anything about the planet. They wanted to send a space rover first, but I hid and stayed on the candy planet.

Then I hired some builders to make a giant bridge. The bridge was made with milk chocolate, which was melted. They mixed the melted milk chocolate with the hard chocolate. When the chocolate cooled down, it also got stronger. It was so strong that not even a missile could break it. After that, they started to build candy houses and buildings and I stayed to live on the planet forever.

All you see across the bridge now is candy.
There was a dog that no one knew. He was a mysterious dog with deep secrets, but he would always wander off in the middle of the cemetery at night. But no one ever dared to go there because the air was cold. You could feel something was behind you, but you never turned around. Your hands started to shake while you could feel sweat falling down your forehead, but after, you would just hear a voice saying, “Turn around.” People always wondered why the dog would go there each night.

Until one day, a man started to get curious, so he followed the dog to see what he would do in the cemetery. When he arrived at the cemetery, he looked at the dog and saw that he was talking to someone. He kept watching the dog and noticed that the person he was talking to was moving in a funny way. He got suspicious and walked a little closer to see that it was not a human. It was something that was dead but alive!

He thought the dog saw him, so he instantly ran home. But that night was different. He could not stop thinking of what he saw, until he heard a door creak. He got scared but just brushed it off, thinking that it was a normal night. But he was wrong, something happened that changed his life forever.

Suddenly the air got cold. He felt like something was wrong. Then he saw the dog was walking slowly around him, and he knew that the dog saw him looking at him. Then the mysterious thing came and it was a dead human! He asked himself, “What is happening?” He tried to run away but the dog would not let him go. He started to scream for help.

And the dog said, “No one is going to hear you, so don’t even try.” He got shocked and said, “How are you talking?!” The man started thinking he was hallucinating but then he realized this was real life.
The dog answered and said, “Everything can talk, you just don’t know animal life, do you?”

He said, “How long have you animals been able to talk?”

The dog said, “Since the world was made. We have been able to talk all these years but we never let humans know or they might abandon us, just like you did.”

He asked, “Wait, Max?!” Max was his old dog that he had as a kid. They became best friends, until one day he lost him. But the dog thought that he was abandoned, and since that day the dog wanted his revenge. And each day the dog saw him but never got the chance to catch him. But he had the idea to go to the cemetery because he remembered that his owner was a very curious person.

The man repeated and repeated, “Max, I never abandoned you, I lost you.” But the dog did not care.

He heard that a truck was coming and said, “Hush!” He hid in the back of a building. That was the man’s chance to escape, so he ran as fast as he could. When he got to his car, he turned it on and went to New York.

But he has never forgotten the secret he learned that day.
My dad,
who is nice, caring, and hard working,
who loves his kids, my mom, and animals.
Father of me and my siblings,
who feels good when he’s around us,
who finds happiness with a lot of people,
who needs money and love,
who gives stuff to me and my siblings from the store,
who fears (sometimes, I think) big dogs,
who would like to see his boss, my mom, me, my brother,
    and my sister,
who likes to wear jeans and hats,
who likes to be seen as a good dad and a good uncle,
who enjoys working,
my dad.
There was a child who was very lonely, until some kids came and asked him to be his friend. But little did he know, the kids that asked him to be his friend were fake friends. One day the child’s friends asked him if he wanted to go on the roof to look at the “view” but the child was clueless about what they were going to do.

So one of the kids said, “Hey, wanna go first?”

The child said, “Sure!” So the kid went to the roof first and sat down. One kid pushed him off and the child fell all the way down. The kids called the doctor because they thought he would land on his feet. The child was sick and he was rushed to the hospital. All of his family members were there. The doctor came out and said, “I’m sorry, but . . . he didn’t make it . . . ”

Years later, the child’s soul came and the child was turned into the Balloon Child. The reason why he’s called the Balloon Child is because in his past life he loved to play with balloons and his grandpa made balloon animals.

To be continued . . .
AXEL, THE PRETTY AWESOME VIDEO GAME PLAYER

Axel Nic-Bautista, age 9

Axel!
Who loves watching TV, playing video games, and likes to eat!
Brother of Edgar!
Who feels like his life changed when he got his Nintendo Switch!
Who finds happiness from playing video games and feels bored when he is not!
Who needs no more Zoom school because it’s boring and because he misses school in person!
Who fears the dark!
Who would like to see his grandma in Mexico!
Who likes to wear his Minion shirt!
Who likes to be seen as someone who is nice or funny!
Who enjoys playing video games (everyone knows that)!
Resident of the United States,
I am part American and part Mexican, that is why I speak English and Spanish!
Nic-Bautista.
There is one monster and he looks red and blue and works at a gym. He eats purple goo. He has a friend. His friend is Gerald, who works at an art class. Gerald has four arms. He is the best artist in the world.

When the monster started his work at the gym he did something very bad on the first day. But then somebody said, “This is not the proper way to train a monster!” There was an old trainer. When he was done with work, the old trainer showed the monster how he used to work. And the monster tried it and he became the best gym trainer. So the people who went to the gym wanted to get very buff.

Then the old trainer had a heart attack. He went to the hospital. And the best trainer gave his heart away to the old trainer.
Emi, who is cute, cariñosa, and tranquila, who loves toys, para jugar conmigo, who feels amor.

Emi, who finds happiness in the park. Emi would laugh with me. Emi le gusta los unicornios.

Emi, who needs Briana, who gives atención y siempre hablaba conmigo, who fears los monstruos and scary movies.

Emi, who would like to see a monkey and a tiger, who likes to wear pantalones con camisa. Emi es valiente.
THE BLUEBERRY MONSTER

Alaysa Yoc, age 10

The monster has ten feet. He has blue skin. The monster’s name is Selena and he looks like a blueberry. He wants to eat! He is looking for fruit. He looks for fruit in the kitchen! His favorite fruits are apples and bananas. He looks for vegetables. He likes to eat vegetables and his favorite one is broccoli. He doesn’t have special powers. He likes to play with his toys and everything. He likes to sleep, but he only sleeps for five minutes.

Selena lives in San Francisco at Ocean Beach! He likes to sleep on the beach. The monster has his mom, dad, and his brother. He has a human friend named Marcos and they play with a ball. The monster is nice, like my brother. At school he draws pictures of his family. The monster likes to draw pictures of apples. The monster’s love for his family is as big as the Bay Bridge.

The monster likes to sleep on the bed and on the beach at night with his brother. The monster likes to read a story for his brother. The monster’s brother is scared in the night. The monster reads and then the baby monster goes to sleep. The baby monster likes to sleep.

To be continued . . .
FLAMINGOS ARE COOL

Marcos Chitic Castro, age 11

A magnificent creature that roams the North Pole and never gives up. It stands up with pride and stands up for his flock.

Just like a king lion stands up and protects his pack.

Flamingos are cool. Pink flowers like the neck of a flamingo twirling and whirling like the pattern on a candy cane.

A flamingo is an animal that is very different from every other animal. A candy-smelling animal that does not fly.

The cotton candy-smelling one that does nothing but eat candy. He also can not fly. Flamingos are cool.
THE MILK MONSTER
LOST IN THE FOREST

Guiliana Anticona Nolasco, age 9

The Milk Monster went on a trip by himself. He got lost in the forest. He was trying to get back from his trip. Then he remembered that he had a map, but he’d never used one of these maps before. He thought he was holding the map the right way, but instead it was upside down, so he kept going in circles.

The Milk Monster finally realized that he was going in circles. It became nighttime, but he hadn’t brought any shelter, like lamps or anything, because he thought he was just going on a little walk. He needed to camp there with nothing.

The Milk Monster saw a house when he was walking. He went inside and there was nobody there. So he stopped. He thought, *I’m going to go get supplies! But I have to hurry, the owners might be coming soon.*

So he hurried up.

The next day the owners realized that some stuff was missing. When they realized it, they went to go report that someone had broken into their house. They called the police and everything, but the Milk Monster went inside again.

He didn’t know that they had a dog. The dog barked at him. He ran away, but the dog followed. Hours later, he finally lost the dog.

He went inside the house again. He grabbed more supplies and spent the night. Tomorrow he was going to make a plan to go back to his home.

So the next day he was going to go back to his house. He said, “If it’s nighttime, I’m going to keep looking, but if I get tired, I will sleep.”

To be continued . . .
I TOLD YOU ALREADY, MAGIC, KIDDO
I have been so eager for Christmas, I have been waiting in my bed for five hours waiting for Santa to come down the chimney! Then the phone rings. 

*Briiiinggg, briiiiiing.*

I yell to my mom, “I got it!”

And sadly Santa says, “I have a bad case of the flu, and I cannot deliver the presents to the good little boys and girls. Do you think you could deliver the presents for me?”

“Oh, . . .” I say with a sinking feeling, “I’ll do it.”

Ten hours later, I am going around asking people what they want for Christmas presents. I get all the Christmas presents into a giant list and then get into my sweet helicopter and fly to the North Pole.

Two hours later, I arrive at the North Pole. I give the list to a little elfling. He runs over and opens the door and I see all these elves working on different things like planes, helicopters, and toy cars, and I think, *Boy, there must be more than a million presents in here!* 

Thirty minutes later, the elves pack everything onto the sleigh. I feed all the reindeers! I feel exhausted. I haven’t had sleep in twenty hours but I have a job to do. I must prepare and I must not fall asleep on the job! I drink coffee to stay awake. I have candy canes on a stick that motivate the reindeer to fly. *Here we go again, saving Christmas.*

(Rolling eyes emoji.)

I feel the wind grab my hair and I think, *Boy, elves take this trip every year, how do they not get cold?!* I say to myself, “Okay, put that aside, it’s time to save Christmas.”
Donovan’s Log: Christmas-Not-So-Morning

I am flying over the town delivering all the presents. I am left with one present, and for some reason, this address feels familiar. There is a meow that comes from it. I look at the tag, it says, “To Donovan, From Santa.”

I am thinking, Wait a minute, Santa has the flu. How could he make this present for me?

(Cuts to scene of Santa.)

“Magic, kiddo!” he grins with all his sugar-filled teeth and his rosy cheeks.

I look everywhere and I say, “He is not here! He is not behind me, he is not around me, how did he do this?!”

(Cuts to scene of Santa.)

“I told you already, magic, kiddo.”

I decide to look inside the present and there is a litter of candy cane cats, white and red kittens inside! And then, imitating Santa in his low low voice I say, “Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night!”
LULU

Luana Anticona Nolasco, age 9

Lulu,
who is kind, confident, and positive,
who loves spaghetti and meatballs.
Daughter of Angie and sister to Guili,
who feels normal,
who finds happiness in eating and watching a movie,
who needs strawberries and raspberries,
who gives happiness.
BACON NEWS II: THE FALL OF THE BACON

Zein Anderson, age 11

Feat. Cocue, Saucey, and a whole lot of bacon

Last time on Bacon News, the Bacon and Flaming Pig uprising started. Today, we were all stuck at home wondering who would save us from this bacon that took over our city. But when no one was expecting anything, a sewer drain started to rattle and . . . a small mouse emerged from the sewer drain. And then Cocue emerged from another drain.

(Cocue is a tunachum with elf ears. A creature of pure insanity and strength—oh wait, I take that last one back, the mouse just pinned him down.)

A bacon leapt towards Cocue and fell straight into the sewer drain that Cocue came out of. Cocue saw another bacon on top of a small building. The bacon leapt towards Cocue but fell in Cocue’s mouth.

And then Cocue got a grand idea, that idea was to eat all the bacon. But because he was lazy, his plan was to call his friend Saucey and tell him to eat all the bacon. He ran to a phone booth, that for some reason only had a toilet, then he remembered that he had a phone that he stole from a human. But he could not remember Saucey’s phone number so he guessed his number, 666-666-6666.

Ring, ring, ring.

“Hello, this is Saucey.”

“This is Cocue, come over here. There is a ton of living bacon that you can eat.”

Five minutes later Saucey arrived and proceeded to consume every piece of bacon. The fear that the bacon experienced was indescribable. Being bacon, they naturally feared the winner of the 2020 Bacon Eating Contest, Saucey.
In a few minutes Saucey had eaten all the bacon, or so they thought. Because unbeknownst to them, the single piece of bacon that fell into the sewer that Cocue came out of had survived and started a plan to take over the city.

Anyways, to read the conclusion of this story, get the next 826 book and read the finale of *Bacon News*. 
MY FAMILY

Ximena Torres, age 9

From my mom, I learned how to earn something.
You will get something that you want if you work hard.

I live my life differently because Kim taught me to know things.
You need to listen, be respectful, and be helpful.

Thank you, April, for inspiring me to be a good friend.
From Mira, I learned to do counting by two.
From Mady, I learned my ABC’s.

Thank you,
Mom and Mady and Mira and Kim and April,
for inspiring me to be cool!
AMONG US HACKS FOR IMPOSTORS

Marvin Castro Mendoza, age 11

You can only read this if you are playing Among Us and you are the impostor.

1. The game has to make you the impostor, if you’re lucky!
2. When you are impostor, try to not be weird. So pretend to do tasks, like swiping cards and pretend you are also fixing wiring.
3. So when you are pretending to do tasks, go to someone who is alone. You eliminate the crewmate and you run or you vent so no one sees you. A vent is something in the game that takes you in another room when you hop into it, but make sure no one sees you go in the vent.
4. So then when the cooldown period is done, use triple elimination. Then we vent and we turn off the lights so no one can see for a second, and we can run.

And the impostor can also win if they do oxygen or reactor meltdown and they complete it in about thirty seconds.
One day Nacho the pig got up from his bed and was getting ready for work. First, he changed, then had breakfast, then brushed his teeth and went to work. On the way to work he was thinking about the bridge that he left when he was eighteen. He wondered if it was still standing and if he would ever see it again.

Ten minutes later he got out of his car and went into the pet shop. He went over to the fish section and started feeding the fish. After twenty minutes of feeding the fish, he went over to other fish and fed them. At the end of the day, he went up to the owner of the shop and asked him for his payment. He got one hundred dollars and then got in his car and left.

On the way home, he could not stop thinking about the bridge and that maybe he let his parents down by leaving. He wondered if Mr. Pig and Ms. Pig (Nacho’s aunt and uncle) were still taking care of the bridge. He also wondered if without the bridge the world would collapse. He was a bit scared of that idea. As soon as he got out of his car he went into his house.

He went into the living room to read his book from 826, but when he looked up, he was so surprised he could not believe his eyes. It was his aunt and uncle! He had not seen them since he was seventeen years old (by the way, he was now thirty-six years old). He asked his aunt and uncle what they were doing in his house and how they got in.

They responded, “We need your help, and we found your key under your welcome mat outside. You have to stop putting it out there, someone will rob you.”

Nacho said, “Okay, okay, enough with that subject. What do you need my help for?”

They responded, “The bridge is collapsing and you are the only one who knows how to rebuild it. Your dad taught you.”
But Nacho said he would never go back, he didn’t want to be like the rest of his family.

Then later that night, at 12:00 a.m., he heard his aunt say, “We need you, Nacho, please help us.”

Nacho decided it would not be too bad to go with them, so he did. He woke up in the morning and started working. When he was finished he decided he liked it there so much that he would stay! So he did and he lived happily ever after.

The End.

Hey, you are still here!

Why are you still here?

You should have left where it said, “The End.”

Now, bye!!
THE SQUIRREL POEM

Gabriela Winton, age 9

From my brother, I learned to code in Scratch.
I live my life differently because my brother taught me how to code.
I see my brother acting this way, and I am inspired to code just
like him.
Thank you, Santiago, for inspiring me to code.
From my brother, I learned to code.

From my mom, I learned to be creative.
I live my life differently because my mom taught me to be creative
and use my imagination.
I see my mom acting this way, and I am inspired to be creative.
Thank you, Mom, for inspiring me to be creative.
From my mom, I learned to be creative.
MEMORIES FROM SCHOOL AND HOME

Leonardo Loeza Santiz, age 9

First, I remember that my friends and I always play Freeze Tag. If they get me, I freeze in the place that I’m in right now. Sometimes we fight, then we calm down, and then we keep playing random games or whatever. Sometimes I just bring my Nintendo Switch to school and sometimes I get caught.

I love lunchtime. We always share our food together. My favorite foods are hot dogs and mini pizzas. Sometimes I sneak and get more, or I dress up and then I get more. Last, my friends and I always play hide-and-seek. I always win. If I’m the seeker, I still will win.

I remember my first holiday was when we were in my cousin’s house and we celebrated La Noche Buena. It was dark outside and so cold. I also remember my first Thanksgiving, when my mom, friends, and cousins came over to the house we celebrated. We ate food, chicken, and meat. It was the best food that I ever ate.
I heard shooting by my back. I was scared, so my squad and I ran to hide. Then my squad and I went to hide in the tallest building, all the way up in the highgrounds.

They built up to where my squad and I were. So my squad and I pushed them and they pushed us. Grxteli died and it was only me, Geneyvar, and Matrix. So then I went to get more mats so I could build more.

I went to push them again. It was only Geneyvar and Matrix. Then Geneyvar hit one, then the other pro hit Geneyvar. We had almost lost the fight.

To be continued . . .
THE COLORS OF
THE RAINBOW

Levi Doane-Declercq, age 11

HARVEY,
who is strong, kind, and smart,
who loves spreading happiness, like a blooming flower helping
like there is no tomorrow.
The son of William Milk and Minerva Milk, and the brother
of Robert Milk,
who feels that all should be treated fairly, no matter what they
identify with,
who finds happiness helping people, making them smile and
be happier,
who needs to be, and demands to be, treated the same way
he treated others,
who gives hope on the darkest of nights, and smiles as bright
as the sun,
who fears that not everyone will get the same rights,
who likes to wear T-shirts, but feels like he has to wear suits
to get respect,
who likes to be seen as someone who is taken seriously,
but approachable,
who enjoys bringing sunshine and rainbows,
throughout the day and forever,
resident of San Francisco and the Castro District,
MILK.
IT TURNS OUT
TOY MICE AREN’T
VERY TASTY
AT ALL
THE MAGNIFICENT NACHO

Azeeza Whitney, age 10

I was eating my dinner when suddenly, my brother Chico said, “Hiss! Go away, intruder!” He was hissing at the next-door neighbor’s cat. He was sooo annoying sometimes.

So I went over there and hit Chico while saying, “Oh, be quiet you annoying pig!”

Then he said, “Hey! I’m not a pig!” I rolled my eyes.

I heard a noise and looked up. It was my owner’s uncle. He was watching closely, like he was actually interested in what Chico and I were doing. I got bored and left to go continue eating. While I was walking back to the cat feeder, I saw a mouse.

Oooh, that seems tasty, I thought. I licked my lips and pounced! Well, it turns out toy mice aren’t very tasty at all. I think that I’m going to go sleep with Azeeza, I thought.

Oh, right. This is a story, so you don’t know who Azeeza is, sorry. Azeeza is my owner. She is usually on her computer or on the couch reading, so she only really has time for me at night.

So I hop up on her and Yasmeen’s bed (all you really need to know about Yasmeen is that Yasmeen is Azeeza’s twin sibling and older than her by two minutes) and I quickly sneak under the covers.

I woke up to the sound of food pouring into my and my brother’s bowl. Ahhh! I love that sound. So I went out to the supposed living room and ate, except I wasn’t all that hungry. Then Chico came running and I slowly walked away. As I was leaving my throne room—

“Uh, uh, uh, what’s the throne room?” the Narrator said.

I rolled my eyes. “Okay, okay, whatever. The throne room is the living room, but I thought that the name was boring so I changed the name. There, ya’ happy?” I said.

“Yup,” the Narrator said.

“Well, since we’re at it, why don’t I tell you the names of the
other rooms? Hmm, let’s see, the bathrooms are the Dungeons, the back bedroom (my owner’s Dad’s bedroom) is the Window Room, and my owner’s bedroom is the Laundry Room (because there are like three laundry baskets in there). Oh, and my owner’s uncle’s bedroom is the Treehouse (because there is a loft in there).”

“Thank you, Mr. Nacho,” said the Narrator.

Well, it’s 2:00 p.m. (the time when my owner goes outside), so I should go try to sneak out.

Sorry, I skipped the part where Chico and I stealthily escape and sneak outside.

Umm, so it’s now like 3:00 p.m. I think, and we got locked outside. You know the neighbor’s cat? Well, I don’t like her and she doesn’t like me.

“Mr. Nacho, do you want to include the part where you heard the door click, so that’s how you know that it’s locked?” said the Narrator.

“No thanks. Maybe? Okay, fine. Wait, you already told them.” The Narrator giggles and I do this low growl thing.

Now it’s like 4:30 p.m. and we’re still out here and Chico’s asleep and I’m going crazy!!!

“Yeah, right,” the Narrator said.

“I’M TRYING TO BE DRAMATIC!”

“I know, I know. Calm down,” the Narrator said. I roll my eyes.

“Ugh, it’s so hot,” the Narrator said.

“You aren’t even here!” I said.

“Yeah, I was trying to be dramatic,” said the Narrator.

“It’s actually kinda cold,” Chico said

“Finally, you’re awake,” I responded.

“Well, let’s try to get out of here,” responded the Narrator.

“Once again, you are not here!” I said. The Narrator rolls his eyes.

“So now it’s like, almost dark and I’ve lost count, but my guess is that it’s like 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. is the usual time that the neighbor’s cat comes.”

“Quezz, you’re overreacting,” said the Narrator.

“No, I’m not,” I said with a wrinkled nose.

“Shhhhh! I hear something,” my brother whispered (that’s my expression).
“STOP IT, CHICO!” yelled the Narrator.
“Okay, okay, okay . . .” Chico responded.
“It’s 6:57 p.m., I think, and the neighbor’s cat is here.”
“What the heck are you guys doing out here?” said the neighbor’s cat.
“Nothing,” I said.
“We got locked out,” Chico said. I slap my head with frustration.
“Well . . . first, I’m Fluffy, and I guess I can help you, if you do me a favor,” said Fluffy.
“Okay, fine,” I said.
“So . . . introduce yourself,” Fluffy said eagerly.
“I’m Nacho and this is my brother, Chico,” I said. There was silence as Fluffy stared at them.
“What?” I asked with an eyebrow raised.
“Who’s that?” She pointed at the Narrator.
“That’s the Narrator,” I said.
“Howdy,” said the Narrator.
“Hi,” said Fluffy.
“So, the favor?” I said.
“Oh yeah, you have to be my friend,” Fluffy said.
“Okay,” I responded.
“So, we all have to meow very loudly. Then I will leave and we will all see each other tomorrow,” Fluffy said.
“Okay . . .” I said.
We all start meowing very loudly (including the Narrator). Then my owner comes and says something like, “There you are!” Azeeza then brings us all inside (also, she can’t see the Narrator—only cats can, but he comes in too).
Today is Monday and we had a great time with Fluffy.
(Ears prick up.)
Oops, that’s my owner. Well, this was fun, but sadly I have to go. Bye.
“Meow! I’m coming, I’m coming.”
MI ABUELA

Leonardo Espinosa Martinez, age 10

Nani,
who is nice, helpful, and caring,
who loves to plant trees and flowers.
Mother of my mom,
who feels love for her family,
who finds happiness from my baby sister,
because she makes her laugh!
The Pirate Store was made by some grown-up pirates. They needed a place that would guard their treasures. The pirates put all their treasure there. It was a Pirate School and also a Pirate Store. The pirates decided to make a place where kids could learn to read and write. They made the Pirate Store and the kids all went there.

There were three kids who were super adventurous. They went to the Pirate Store to find a map for the treasure. They followed the treasure map to the part that had an “X” on it. Then they found all the treasure!
One day there was a competition during December. And they added a new skin in *Fortnite*. It was called the “Fortnite-Among Us Skin.”

*Among Us* was watching the *Video Game News* and they saw that *Fortnite* added a new skin called the “Red Impostor Skin.” And then everybody in the whole Fortnite World got the skin—even Ninja!

And then *Among Us* got super mad and they called James Charles and they played one more round of *Among Us* with James Charles. Then they flew their spaceship to the Fortnite World and they saw everybody staring at them when they got there. Everybody was like, “Hey this isn’t your world. Put your hands up or we’ll shoot.”

But then the *Among Us* people said, “You guys better stop copying our skins!”

And then the *Fortnite* leader, Travis Scott, as the Deadpool skin, said, “We aren’t copying your skins, we just want to be more famous than you guys!”

Then the *Among Us* people said, “You guys think we are famous? Haha, losers!”

Travis Scott, AKA Deadpool, said, “Attack!” Then they all attacked.

The Red Impostor Leader also said, “Attack!” They fought and fought and nobody won, until one more game, *Call of Duty*, joined the party.

When *Call of Duty* got there, they saw everybody staring at them. And then since everyone was staring at them they flew back into space. They were just wandering around to see if
they could lose *Among Us* and *Fortnite*, who were following them. They saw an island and they landed. What they saw was *Fortnite, Among Us*, and their biggest enemy of all, *Apex Legends*. Then *Fortnite* and *Call of Duty* teamed up and ran away, until they saw a bridge.

And you know what they saw on the other side of the bridge? They saw *Among Us* and *Apex Legends* working together! All of them said, “Attack!”

The last two teams standing were *Fortnite* and *Call of Duty*! And they won the crowns of Kings of the Games!
My name is Yaya. I’m a monster and here is my story! 
First, it was 2010, in a hospital in Aguativia, Honduras. 
It was 6:00 p.m., and push!
I was born!

Next, in 2011, I crossed the border. I was tired and it was 3:00 a.m. My mom got me from the bed and took me somewhere called Guatemala. It took two days to get there. Then we went to Mexico and it was fun. Then we went to the border and we crossed.

I went to a daycare for two years and then I went to preschool. I didn’t like it but I liked the food. The reason that I didn’t like it was because they started at 8:00 a.m. and ended at 5:00 p.m. I loved to go to school, but only when there were field trips.

One day the other monsters bullied me and I was so mad! The next day I got the ear of the monster who bullied me and I dragged him all around the school. I got suspended for a month. In that month I got punished. I had to do extra chores and I couldn’t use any type of technology. But I convinced my mom to buy me a huge kiddie pool, so I had so much fun.

Finally, I went back to school after being suspended. I told the monster that bullied me, “Hey, just because I am different doesn’t mean you have to judge a book by its cover.” Then we became friends and we were misunderstood monsters together!
I snowboarded last year. It was my first time snowboarding and I completely hated it! I didn’t want to do it. I got a lesson in the afternoon and now I love snowboarding!

How to snowboard:

1. Always bend your knees or you will fall more frequently.
2. Never look or lean back.
3. To go faster, turn 180-degrees with your snowboard, and turn your head too.
4. To stop, turn your board sideways and lean back.
5. Watch out for Kiwi Coconut monsters! (haha)
One time, long ago, there was a pirate base, and inside of it there was a pirate store. There were bodyguards protecting the base: Agent 1 was Superted, Agent 2a and 2b were the Twin Pandas, Agent 3 was Frosty, Agent 4 was Karate E, Agent 5 was the Buff Shark, and Agent 6 was King Bear.

Almost everyone was an agent. There were only some people who were innocent, just in case the base was in danger.

So then there was an evil, bad guy who wanted to find out what was in the secret base, but there were a lot of agents. The strongest, most powerful ones were Superted and King Bear. The bad guy also had his henchmen with him. The bad guy was called Doctor Penguin. Doctor Penguin had gadgets that were so helpful. He used the poltergeist, which turned him invisible. But he forgot that the Twin Pandas actually can see invisible stuff, and the twins alerted the other agents.

"Hey guys, it’s Doctor Penguin! He’s here for revenge!” said Twin Panda 1.

“Oh no, this is bad. I think we’re going for a battle, guys,” said Superted. And everyone agreed.

“I have been waiting for this for my whole entire life,” said Buff Shark.

“I’m glad he’s back because of what he did to my father, who was like a sensei to me. If he chooses me I will give him a lion barrage,” said Karate E. And when Karate E said that he saw the look on Superted’s face. The face of a flashback of the thing that happened to Superted.

When Superted was ten years old, his dad and mom sacrificed everything for their precious kid. Doctor Penguin came to say
hello to Superted’s parents. They were fighting outside of the house when Superted got stung by a bee, which gave him so many superpowers. Doctor Penguin did this by mistake. Superted was unconscious.

Two weeks later he was at the hospital, and the doctors did not know, for some reason, that Superted had superpowers. When it was Monday, Superted was going to school, riding his bicycle. But Superted wasn’t pedaling the pedals to move the bicycle, the bicycle was doing it all by itself. That’s how he realized that he had superpowers.

But oh no!

Doctor Penguin broke into the secret base and the agents had a big big job to handle. The Twin Pandas attacked thirty henchmen, Buff Shark took forty henchmen, Frosty had thirty-five henchmen, Superted took almost sixty, and King Bear took 110 henchmen.

Now it was Doctor Penguin’s turn. First, the twins were down, then Buff Shark went down, then Frosty and King Bear . . . down.

The only one standing was the best, most powerful, undefeated one: Superted. He threw lasers, fire, clones, everything. Then Superted did his last move to defeat Doctor Penguin. The last move was throwing an electric water ball and lava rocks at the penguin.

BOOM!

Everything was shining.

Superted did it! He was a bit unconscious, but then he woke up and he became famous for saving the day. Everything was peaceful and silent, thanks to Superted.
From my big brother, I learned to be grateful for what I have. I live my life differently, because whatever I have I’ll be grateful for it, and I don’t compare myself to others. I see my big brother acting this way, and I want him to do good in school.

Thank you, Mom, for inspiring me, and wanting me to treat people the way I want to be treated. From my mom, I learned to be a good kid by being kind.

From Dad, I learned to be a gentleman. I live my life differently because he taught me to defend myself from bullies. I see my dad acting this way, and I am inspired.
SLIME, IT’S A NEW EXPERIENCE
One day the monster ran upstairs, but the kid got the Spongebob flashlight. Then the monster saw the kid. After, the kid shined the Spongebob flashlight at the monster. And then he ran away back downstairs, away from the Spongebob flashlight.

No wonder why he ran so fast. Then the Spongebob flashlight turned into the real Spongebob! His mouth was wide open and a bunch of goldfish came out of his mouth. A bright light blinded the monster for the rest of the year.

Then the monster woke up and the Spongebob flashlight was broken. The monster was just looking for food, goldfish as a snack and for dinner. The goldfish tasted like real fish. The kid tasted like me!

Then the goldfish attacked the monster. The monster’s power is that he can throw weird slime. He’s actually made of slime, it’s a new experience.

When I slapped Weird Shrek he just fell. The kid saw the monster and he was so terrified he pooped his pants. The Spongebob flashlight was destroyed because it shattered.

Then it came back two years later because a mysterious character fixed it. The mysterious character was like a ghost, I mean the ghost of the kid. The ghost was the main character. The ghost went back in time and he defeated the monster. Then the kid poured water on Weird Shrek and Weird Shrek turned into a pig.
HOW TO BUILD YOUR OWN CLUBHOUSE OUT OF CARDBOARD

Rio Alcantar, age 10

First, you need an older person, like your sister, your mom, or your dad, to help hold things, to tape the walls, and to paint the walls. Most importantly, to help with the sharp tools and to cut things like cardboard.

Second, get a bunch of magic duct tape to hold the roof and walls together.

Third, grab some paint, because if you paint the club on the inside and outside it will feel like a disco party, and colorful and awesome.

Fourth, you need four sheets of newspaper, either from your grandma or from the store.

The last ingredient you need is a parent that shops at Good Eggs because they give you lots and lots of cardboard.

Then you grab a notebook and you start planning what you want it to look like. I started with a square and drew any details (like an ocean) of what I wanted it to look like inside and outside. Your drawing doesn’t need to be perfect.

Tips:
1. Make sure it can stand.
2. Don’t put too much stuff on the front or it will tip over and break.
One day a mysterious bridge appeared in a field where there was a lake. Scientists wondered what it could be, until one day, someone named Andres crossed the bridge. The bridge had a portal in the middle.

Andres crossed it. When he left he found a city that had robots and flying cars, with tall buildings and many lights. He wondered, *What could all this be?*

He crossed the bridge again and he found a giant lizard. He knew what it was because it was a dinosaur, and he knew a lot about them. So he knew that the bridge was a time machine, and it occurred to him to think of a specific day. He wanted to go back to when the dinosaurs still existed, but when he returned the bridge was not there. He knew he was in serious trouble.

He saw something moving in a bush and he grabbed a stick. When a lizard came out he said with relief, “There is nothing to worry about.” Suddenly drool fell on his head. He turned around and saw a T. Rex. “AAAAH!” he screamed. He ran away.

The T. Rex followed him, until he knocked down a large tree with his tail and it fell on him. Andres was lucky, but maybe the next time he wouldn’t be so lucky to survive. Andres quickly looked for shelter to be warm at night.

In the morning Andres found some eggs. The eggs were broken and big. He grabbed one that hadn’t been broken, when suddenly, a triceratops hit him with its tail. Andres flew away. “Ouch, my foot!”

Days later he found a pterodactyl flying. When the pterodactyl saw Andres, he grabbed him with his claws, flew away, and dropped him. “AAAAH!” Andres fell right into the mouth of a T. Rex.
Then he woke up. “Oof, oof, oof, that was just a dream. Yep, it was just a dream, all this time.” At least in these times you can’t get a bite taken out of you anymore.
Travis Scott, my boy,
has chainzzzz.
Travis Scott, my boi.
His music makes me feel happy.
Travis Scott, my boiiii,
likes to draw.
Travis Scott, myyyyy boi,
helps kids get an education.
Travis Scott, my boi,
inspires me to make music.
Travis Scott . . . my boy.
Once upon a time, in the school in Monsterland, the students were doing math. The teacher said, “Kids, let’s go outside to see our forms and to see what we are, if we’re the Prince or Princess!”

Endy the Monster went outside the school, in the yard with her classmates. It was her turn to go and to show her form. Everyone was shocked because she was the Princess!

“Oooh!” everyone said with shock.

Her teacher told her she was the Princess. “Endy is the Princess of all the monsters!”

(Now I’m really surprised, both Endy and me.)

Next, when she got home, she asked her dad. She said, “Why did you not tell me I was the Princess?!”

Her dad said, “You would not understand me, but I’m also the King. Let’s leave your mom and big sister and meet your real mom, big sister, and little sister!”

Endy said, “Okay, Dad. I’m so excited to meet them!” Also, when her dad was telling her she was feeling surprised, and also sad . . .

But then after the stepmother pleaded to be forgiven, Endy said, “Okay, I forgive you!”

Then she went to meet her family in the castle. She was surprised because the castle was super-duper big, like a big whale. She said, “H-hi.”

Her family said, “Hi, Endy!” Endy felt happy because the family was nice. The day after she met her family, she found a prince who was also a monster. They spent time together. She introduced everyone and they got married.

Months and years later she had kids. The stepmother went to go see Endy’s kids every Monday. She was really, really happy with her new life.
Once upon a time, there was an elf who was working with Santa, making presents for kids. The name of the elf was Veterin. He wore a green and red shirt, pants, scarf, and hat.

One day the machine stopped working, and without the machine they couldn’t make presents for kids. The machine stopped working because when they were making a present it got stuck. That was really bad because they didn’t have time to make more presents. Christmas was about to start in two hours and they needed to get the present to the kids!

So all the elves were helping Santa. Some were helping fix it so that the gifts that were already done could go out. The elves were helping get the gifts to the houses.

So one elf was in one house and putting the gifts under the Christmas tree, and the same thing was repeated a lot of times. The elves were getting help from Santa because Santa was passing the gifts to the elves, and the elves were getting the gifts to the houses. When the elves finished they were so tired that they couldn’t walk. Also, by the time they were finished the machine was repaired.

After that accident they were prepared for everything that could happen.
The anime portal can lead me to the anime world, so I can see the anime boys and anime girls. It will be amazing for me to see the anime world because I don’t really want to see this world. It will be cool and amazing and the food will look different, like it looks real but a little fake.

The anime boys and girls will be Kageyama Killua, Gon, Hisoka, Tsukishima Hinata, Shouko Shoya, Stephany, Kuroo Rin, and all of the anime people.

I woke up in the morning. I went outside to investigate the forest and I saw a beautiful bridge. I went inside and I saw the anime world. The bridge looked creepy. You should go put a pin and teleport there. It’s amazing there.
HOW TO GET ROBLOX AND ROBUX AND PLAY THE GAME

Max Guadron, age 10

First you download Roblox and open the app. It’s going to tell you to log in, but don’t put in your account. Make your own Roblox name and a password, but don’t forget the password. Then it will give you a test to make sure you’re not a robot when you’re done.

You’re going to see your account and game. Now you can do whatever you want. If you have a Roblox card, go to gift cards, but first, scratch the ticket, but not that hard. It’s going to show you letters and numbers, but in caps. Go to “Redeem the Card.” Then you will see “Put Pin Code.” Next, copy the card, and put in the letter and numbers. Then it is going to show you the Robux that you can spend.

When you are done doing all of that work, you can play games, like Adopt Me, a very good game to play, or some gun games, or be in Roblox VR, or maybe tryobby (an obstacle course), or Roblox Tycoon.

You can start off by playing my favorite game, Arsenal. There are lots of things that you can click like, “Free for all.” That means that you can pew pew people in the whole game or you can do Team 2, which means that you can pick which team you want to be, like red or blue.

There are also teams of four, which means you can join teams of four people, and you can pick maps to play on. You can get friends and you can chat with them in Roblox, but first add them. Those are all the things I know about Roblox. Have fun playing Roblox.
DEAR DIARY

Nyella Urizar Manriquez, age 10

If anyone reads this, it’s my plan to destroy Christmas!!

1. Take all of the good toys!!
2. Prank call Lava Queen.
3. Final step to destroy Christmas . . .

Why I want to destroy Christmas is because my family used to live in the snow. I’m a snowman. But I never knew why the kids always wanted to throw me a lot. I got so mad I decided to make myself an army of teeny-tiny snow minions to help me build a motherless cave.

Lava Girl came, sorry, I mean Lava Queen. Just cuz I’m a snowman doesn’t mean you got to always speak right. I, Mr. Snowden, shall be the first snowman to destroy Christmas. I’m feeling toys, I mean, stealing toys. Sorry, being a snowman, I cannot speak right cuz I have a bunch of snow in my mouth.

Let me take you through my journey. Okay, it all started in 1997. I was still a little snowman, or as I shall say, a snowball.

Well, let me start. My name is Mister Snow Lincoln. On Christmas Eve it was snowing, and a couple of dumb little kids came over to my part of the park. My family and I were so scared. Then a couple of kids came over and made a snowman out of me.

They named me Snow Lincoln, so that’s how I got the urge to destroy Christmas. I made an army of snow minions. I used to create chaos everywhere, until Lava Queen came to town and stopped me from doing my evil things.

She almost melted me. So I decided to destroy Christmas. Then she would have to come down to save everybody and she would fall into my evil trap.

So that night, I snuck into the town. I stole all the famous toys, like LOL's, Shopkins, and ponies.
Little Lava Girl came down that Christmas morning and all of the good toys were stolen. She came to talk to me first. How rude of her!

She said, “If you do admit that you did this, then we shall sell these and settle this back at the town.”

So I said, “We shall do that,” but I had another trick up my sleeve. Before she came to talk to me I had made a candy cane gadget, which shot out candy canes. I told her to turn around and I smiled in a very mean way. I shot those candy canes right at her and she stuck to the wall. I walked away from her.

I started chaos, until she got free from her candy cane trap because she melted them. Then she started shooting lava out. She did not get me but she got one of my minions.

What?

You said to lose them but I had to continue. Before she passed she said, “He might be talked around but you always have to be kind to others.”

Should I try to make peace with Lava Girl? If it was a trick then I gave her all my weapons and dolomite gadgets. Now I’m in jail for a couple more years. I shall be free with my mom and dad. I hope she’ll read this, but remember, even if you’re tossed around, remember you always have to be kind to others.
THE PENGUIN LEFT THE HOUSE WITH A BIKE
The Adventure of the Penguin

Dylan Tep Burgos, age 10

When we got a pet penguin, he did not like to be with us. One day we put the penguin in the yard for fresh air. But we forgot to lock the fence, so the penguin left the house with a bike.

The penguin was blue and red and the bike was white and black. He did cool tricks, he bought snacks, and then he made it to his destination. His destination was the North Pole because he wanted to meet Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus. But the penguin got scared because of the elves and the reindeer.

One of the elves left Santa’s village and never came back, but the penguin never knew. Then the bad elf came back and kidnapped the penguin. He said, “Tell me everything you know.”

So the penguin said, “I’m new. I came here for a wish.”

The bad elf said, “Oh, really?” and went to get hot chocolate. The bad elf left the keys, so the penguin got the keys and left. The penguin made it back to Santa’s village.

The bad elf got so mad that he put a tracking device on the penguin. Then he got on his sleigh, but instead of reindeer pulling, he had robot reindeer. He went as fast as he could and made it to Santa’s village. He saw the penguin with Santa.

The bad elf had a candy cane gun, but Santa had a toy gun. The candy cane gun shot candy canes and the toy gun shot toys. So Santa and the bad elf fought. Santa won and the bad elf got so sad that he hit Santa with a snowball. So then they had a snowball fight.
Hey Diary! Hyonia came home today, talking to Mommy and Daddy about “coronavirus.” The only thing that I don’t like about them staying at home is that it means that I have to hide you. I hope you’re okay with that. But other than that I had a normal day. I drank a lot of water. It is so good. I don’t know why humans think soda is so good.

Hello! Today it was Hyonia’s birthday! I gave her some fur balls. It was a weird day. There were voices, but no smells of them. I could feel the vibrations of the people on the floor. It was creepy! The advantage was that there were crumbs (from the cake) all over the house! Yummy!! It was cheesecake! My favorite!! Hyonia and Daddy picked me up and showed me to the TV! I don’t know what they were doing but it was kind of weird. I couldn’t see the people, because I think that they were on the TV. You know that I can see color, but only if the object has a shadow. For Hyonia’s birthday we also went for a walk! It was so long, like, I don’t need that much exercise, guys. I love reading the newspaper, AKA smelling stuff outside, like fire hydrants.

Oof. We went to Yiayia and Ross’s, AKA the grandparents’ house for Thanksgiving. I’m tired from moving around in a little thingy that looks like a bag, but with little breathing holes and space for . . . treats! They usually take me in the bag thing when we travel. I had no idea that we were going. I was chilling, laying down, and then they took the bag out. Honestly, how dare they ruin my day! I can’t wait for Thanksgiving though, because of
... turkey!! Yummy!! I like visiting the grandparents, not for the grandparents, but for the house and rooms. So comfortable. But then again, this time Mommy and Daddy are coming!

11/29/2020
Today we left Lafayette. Daddy got a big tree and brought it into the house! I don’t understand why! Like, there are trees outside. Anyways, they decorated it with lights and hung stuff on the tree. It smells like pine. They said I need to get used to it. Oh well. They are keeping it up until like January!!! I read on the newspaper (AKA outside) that people are getting ready for Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Winter Solstice, and so much more! Daddy also put a “wreath” which is apparently for decoration on the door. Weird. Why can’t they use only a branch? There are pine cones and bows in it.

12/10/2020
We lit the candles for Hanukkah today. They blew them out. What’s the point of blowing them out if you’re going to light candles for Hanukkah? It was a normal day but then they lit candles, with fire! I hope they will not burn the house down tomorrow. Hope this finds you well (I’m on vacation so I’ll be back in a few weeks), bye!
A sea bridge is connected to a mountain, and from the mountain to a water bridge, leading to an island full of wonderful animals and undiscovered creatures. The island is made of wonderful grass, greener than you’ve ever seen . . .

It’s basically an island, surrounded by sand and big walls of electric fences that don’t hurt animals, and me, the leader! The island is full of wonder, and you can discover different species of trees, full of magical fruits, and full of peace and love for animals. I have bodyguards because I’m the king. I like exploring nature.

Mr. Mustache is a time-traveler. He shows up and is trapped in the magic jungle. He goes to the future, to the year 10,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 where animals talk, thanks to scientists’ knowledge. I always stay young—it’s my thing.

Mr. Mustache commits a crime (he digs for gold), and that’s how he is sent to the jungle. He goes to illegal places to earn big money. He steals the time machine, that’s how he travels. Mr. Mustache looks like Indiana Jones—he’s his twin, but he’s weaker and less smart than Indiana Jones.

Somehow his dumbness makes him escape. He thinks of dumb things and they somehow work. He finds the gold and tries getting inside my kingdom, but the Maximum Security Team (S.S. stands for Secret Service) traps him in my kingdom, so there is no escape. The team moves in and they put him in jail. Now his goal is to get out somehow, but he’s dumb—he’s derpy.
He finds a shovel and starts digging for 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 years and he never dies. He prepared his amazing escape for years, and it’s finally done! Now he needs to get past the guards and the big wall, 10,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 years later. He wants to sabotage the guards quietly, like a ninja. He’s hungry and wants pizza. But he still has to go past the Secret Service, after swimming away from the island.

But there’s more!

The Kraken has become alive! There is another wall, which is like a shield around the island. The Kraken protects the shield. He is a lifesaver. He protects the animals from people and monsters. There are thieves trying to get food. The Kraken fights like never before and beats them!
One day, my one and only dog, Fifi, and I were in the desert. I was in the tippity-toppity-top of it and I didn’t have water. Then I saw water.

I saw so many dinosaurs and there was a giant dinosaur. I named him the T. Rex. Fifi saw a tiger and attacked it.

To be continued . . .
MAXWELL

Eleanor Fulchiron, age 8

Maxwell,
who is handsome, soft, and polite,
who is the brother of Jammy,
who feels love from Eleanor and family,
who finds happiness in curiosity,
who needs Eleanor’s dad,
who gives happiness to everyone,
who fears the vet,
who would like to see the couch,
who likes to wear fur,
who likes to be seen as important,
who advocates for himself by meowing,
who taught me how to be calm.
It was a normal day at Wells Fargo. People were cashing in checks, paying bills, and doing things on the ATM. Suddenly, a strange, small, metal object was thrown in the bank. It was about the size of an acorn. The metal object opened up plates on the sides, like gills, and it released something in the air.

Pshhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!

In time, the people in the bank passed out. The strange gas became more like fog. In the bank you could hear shuffling and footsteps. Then something came out of the gas. At first it was a silhouette, then you could see them: two large men holding large sacks of money. Ninety percent of their bodies were muscle, and they were wearing creepy gas masks with a pipe connecting to their backpacks.

After they came out, you could see another silhouette, this time, shorter. Very short. It was about one foot tall. Then you could see it. It was a penguin. He too had a gas mask on.

“Nice work, Olaf,” said a muscle person.

(Wait . . . was he talking to the penguin?)

“Picking the lock on the safe, genius!”

(Now for sure he was talking to the penguin.)

“WAHH!” replied the penguin.

“Good point,” said the other muscle man.

(Muscle Man Two, perhaps?)

Then a giant police car parked in front of the bank. Two men hopped out, both wearing sunglasses. The two muscle men and the penguin started to run. The police chased after and followed them into an alley. They had nowhere to run. Then the muscle men saw a fire escape.
They went over to the fire escape and tried to reach, but they were too short! Then suddenly, Olaf jumped on Muscle Man Two’s head, then to the fire escape, knocking him into Muscle Man One. But there was a problem: Olaf was not strong enough to crank the ladder down! The police were closing in and there was no time to boost each other. The muscle men tried to back up, but it was a dead end.

Just when all hope seemed lost, Olaf was able to break off the ladder and throw it at the cops! The muscle men grabbed the ladder and went up the fire escape. They climbed the stairs up to the roof and went to their hideout.

The hideout was a room in an abandoned apartment. There were other gang members playing pool and darts. They hung out for a while and then went to sleep. The next day they woke up and planned their next robbery.

This time it was a big Chase building. They stole the blueprints and found out where the safe was. They saw there was a vent that led straight to the safe, so they got ready for the operation.

This time the whole gang came. They put on all black, except for the penguin because he was already half-black. They threw a grappling hook up to the roof and climbed up. They went through the vent and got into the safe. They disarmed all the ink traps on the money and put it in their bags. They escaped through the vent and climbed back down from the roof. Before they could even start heading back, the police stormed around them! They fought through the cops and ran to their base. The police followed.

They got to their base and barricaded the door. The police banged on the door for a while and then stopped, for some reason. Everyone (including the penguin) sighed with relief. Suddenly the banging on the door started, but louder . . .

Suddenly, the door barged open and in stormed the FBI with a battering ram! The whole gang jumped out the window into the trash can. They closed the lid.

In the trash can they heard footsteps.

*Thump, thump, thump.*
Then there was the sound of a car starting. They heard the car drive away but they waited a few minutes more. They snuck out the trash can and opened up the manhole to the sewers. They hopped in and closed the grate.

To be continued…
HELEN,
who likes to play the violin,
who likes to skateboard and write,
who likes the color blue,
who loves her family,
daughter of Joel and Norma,
sister to two brothers and two sisters,
PACHECO.
It was a lovely day. The sky was boring old gray, but I had something very important to attend to. I had finally decided to get a pet! As I drove to the pet store, I started sweating. Would I be able to take care of them? Would it be too much responsibility for me to handle? *All great questions for future me,* I irresponsibly thought.

Three miles . . . two miles . . . one mile . . . and I’m there. As I slowly drove to the pet store, I started to regret my decision, but I couldn’t back out then, I’d come too far. Two feet . . . one-and-a-half feet . . . and I’d taken my first step into . . . *PET LAND!!!*

I felt as if the banner was harass-sign *(ba-dum ch).* An employee walked up and down the aisles before noticing me.

“How may I help you?”

“Um . . . I want a pet.”

“What kind?”

“ . . . ”

“ . . . ”

“ . . . ”

The silence was unbearable, so I had to choose the better of these two options: walk out or say, “Bye,” *then* walk out. *Of course* I walked out without a word and went back home to study up.

Six months later I came back, somewhat confident, knowing I had a plan. I walked in with my best strut, very confident that *this* would be the time I got a pet. I saw another employee pacing up and down the aisles.

“How may I help you?”

“Um, I want . . . a penguin.”

“ . . . ”

“ . . . ”

“A . . . penguin?”
This silence was even worse because I felt I was being severely judged for my choices.

“Excuse me? A penguin? Well, in that case I’ll lead you right this way. Here are our penguins. There’s this one, this one, and this one.”

Although the selection was very small, I thought it was fine.

“I’ll take that one,” I said.

I loved my penguin pal with all my heart. I was a great pet owner! My penguin-studying was impeccable, perfect. There was no mistake whatsoever on my part. I left no room for error . . . except one.

This penguin had powers. Amazing, never-before-seen superpowers. The way I discovered this was actually quite interesting.

I was taking my penguin out to the park, as all penguin owners should, remembering to keep plenty of water bags on me, when all of a sudden, my penguin started floating! This wasn’t your normal trick of the light. This was a full two feet off the ground. I had not accounted for this, but adapted because I would love my penguin pal either way.

I could say at this point, without a shadow of a doubt, that this was a good purchase. I get a penguin pal and he has superpowers!!

“Knock, knock,” someone said while knocking on the door. I come to answer the door.

“Who’s there?”

“That doesn’t matter! Open up!” I opened the door.

“My name is Mr. PetOwnerMan. I love animals.”

“What would your favorite animal happen to be?”

“An amazing, little, cute, penguin pal, named Penguin Pal, of course. Who else?”

The man stepped back in a smooth motion, revealing a squad of people behind him. “Search for the penguin!”

They stormed in quickly, pushing me back. I made sure to grab my penguin buddy before I left. I knew this was not a safe place for my penguin pal.

One man yelled, “Hey, he took the penguin!”

“Penguin buddy! We need to get out of here! And quick!” I yelled.

And so, it sprung into a wild chase. Up and down trees (with the help of my penguin’s ability, which I’m sure he had many more of), past a Starbucks, on top of buildings, in a froyo place (trashed,
courtesy of us, of course), and finally cornered in an alley. My penguin buddy, I could feel was getting hopeless that he (or I) would come out of this alive. The penguin finally spoke up.

“I can not bear for my power to potentially be exploited. With great power comes great responsibility. Goodbye.”

And with that, he disappeared, casting the men back. They ran off, seemingly frightened. I was no longer in danger. My penguin buddy was “saved,” but he was also gone from my life.

With the disappearance of my penguin buddy, there was a hole in my heart that was where he left. I felt empty. A ceremony had to be held in memoriam of this lost penguin.

That day was very gloomy, but it was nice to know that my penguin buddy would be good wherever he went. It was so cold, yet it was nice knowing my penguin buddy would be able to rest easily in penguin heaven (or wherever the heck he was).
ABOUT 826 VALENCIA

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

826 Valencia is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting under-resourced students ages six to eighteen with their creative and expository writing skills and to helping teachers inspire their students to write. Our services are structured around the understanding that great leaps in learning can happen with one-on-one attention and that strong writing skills are fundamental to future success.

826 Valencia comprises three writing centers—located in San Francisco’s Mission District, Tenderloin neighborhood, and Mission Bay—and three satellite classrooms at nearby schools. All of our centers are fronted by kid-friendly, weird, and whimsical stores, which serve as portals to learning and gateways for the community. All of our programs are offered free of charge. Since we first opened our doors in 2002, thousands of volunteers have dedicated their time to working with tens of thousands of students.
FIELD TRIPS
Classes from public schools around San Francisco visit our writing centers for a morning of high-energy learning about the craft of story-telling. Four days a week, our Field Trips produce bound, illustrated books and professional-quality podcasts, infusing creativity, collaboration, and the arts into students’ regular school day.

IN-SCHOOLS PROGRAMS
We bring teams of volunteers into high-need schools around the city to support teachers and provide one-on-one assistance to students as they tackle various writing projects, including newspapers, research papers, oral histories, and more. We have a special presence at Buena Vista Horace Mann K–8, Everett Middle School, and Mission High School, where we staff dedicated Writers’ Rooms throughout the school year.

AFTER-SCHOOL TUTORING
During the school year, 826 Valencia’s centers are packed five days a week with neighborhood students who come in after school and in the evenings for tutoring in all subject areas, with a special emphasis on creative writing and publishing. During the summer, these students participate in our Exploring Words Summer Camp, where we explore science and writing through projects, outings, and activities in a super fun, educational environment.

WORKSHOPS
826 Valencia offers workshops designed to foster creativity and strengthen writing skills in a wide variety of areas, from play-writing to personal essays to starting a zine. All workshops, from the playful to the practical, are project-based and are taught by experienced, accomplished professionals. Over the summer, our Young Authors’ Workshop provides an intensive writing experience for high-school-age students.
COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS
We offer a roster of programs designed to help students get into college and be successful there. Every year, we grant several $20,000 scholarships to college-bound seniors, provide one-on-one support to two hundred students via the Great San Francisco Personal Statement Weekend, and partner with ScholarMatch to offer college access workshops to the middle- and high-school students in our tutoring programs. We also offer internships, peer tutoring stipends, and career workshops to our youth leaders.

PUBLISHING
Students in all of 826 Valencia’s programs have the ability to explore, experience, and celebrate themselves as writers in part because of our professional-quality publishing. In addition to the book you’re holding, 826 Valencia publishes newspapers, magazines, chapbooks, podcasts, and blogs—all written by students.

TEACHER OF THE MONTH
From the beginning, 826 Valencia’s goal has been to support teachers. We aim to both provide the classroom support that helps our hardworking teachers meet the needs of all our students and to celebrate their important work. Every month, we receive letters from students, parents, and educators nominating outstanding teachers for our Teacher of the Month award, which comes with a $1,500 honorarium. Know an SFUSD teacher you want to nominate? Guidelines can be found at 826valencia.org.
826 Valencia’s success has spread across the country. Under the umbrella of 826 National, writing and tutoring centers have opened up in eight more cities. If you would like to learn more about other 826 programs, please visit the following websites.

826 National
826national.org

826 Boston
826boston.org

826CHI
826chi.org

826 DC
826dc.org

826 LA
826la.org

826michigan
826michigan.org

826 MSP
826msp.org

826 New Orleans
826neworleans.org

826 NYC
826nyc.org

826 Valencia
826valencia.org
This chapbook is the product of a collaboration between 826 Valencia and Buena Vista Horace Mann, a bilingual K-8 school in San Francisco’s Mission District. Throughout the spring semester, tutors, interns, and staff worked virtually with groups of third, fourth, and fifth graders as they created misunderstood monsters, shared their expertise, and honored mentors in their lives. These stories of adventure, new worlds, and lessons learned are straight from the imaginations of our young writers.

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826 Valencia is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting under-resourced students with their writing skills. Since 2014, we have partnered with Buena Vista Horace Mann K-8 School, a dual-language Spanish Immersion Community School in the Mission District.

Get involved at 826valencia.org