

The black and white dog was very smart. He hid his bones	12
all over his yard. He hid his bones in the shadows of the trees.	26
He hid his bones under the swing set. He even hid his bones	39
in the sand of the sandbox.	45
The dog was always happy. He was never without a bone.	56
The dog's teeth were very sharp and white, but he never bit	68
anyone. He only chewed on bones.	74
One day the dog was sleeping. A rat came into his yard.	86
"I will take this dog's bones," said the rat. "He is sleeping.	98
He will never know that I have taken them."	107
So the sneaky rat snuck around the yard and stole every	118
bone. Then he slipped under the fence and climbed up a tree.	130
He had all the bones with him in a bag.	140
"I will watch the dog from this branch. I will see what he	153
does when he opens his eyes."	159
The dog opened his eyes. He was hungry. He got up to	171
dig up a bone. He dug. The hole was empty.	181
"I am sure that I hid a bone here. I hid it right in the shadow	197
of this tree." He looked around.	203
Then he heard the rat laughing. He looked up and saw the	215
rat on the branch.	219
"I took your bones!" the rat yelled.	226
Just then the bones fell out of the tree. The dog ran under	239
the fence and got them all. He chased the rat away.	250

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Sue liked to play games. She liked to play inside and	11
outside games. She liked any game she tried. One of her	22
favorites was "Skip Bo." She would always ask her friends to	33
play.	34
One day, her friend Josh had a new game. Sue had not	46
played it before. It was called "Sorry!" She and Josh got out all	59
of the parts. They tried to read the rules together. Then they	71
set up the game. They played that game many times.	81
They had a snack time. They had some cookies and milk.	92
Then they wanted to play a different game. Sue picked out	103
a game. She had lots of games in her room. She picked	115
"Mouse Trap." It was fun to set up the parts. They laughed as	128
they played.	130
When they got tired of that game, they picked another.	140
Josh chose checkers. Sue was red. Josh was black. They	150
were both good at this game. It lasted a long time.	161
Sue knew Josh's tricks, and Josh knew her tricks. They	171
didn't fall into any traps.	176
The game lasted so long that no one won before it was time	189
for Josh to go home.	194
They left the pieces as they were. They were going to play	206
again tomorrow. Josh was going to come over after school.	216
Sue told Josh thanks for coming over. Josh said thanks for	227
having him over.	230

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The cat in the yellow house was lazy. All day long he slept in the window.	13 16
He didn't hunt for mice. He didn't watch the birds. He didn't chase after bees. He didn't come when he was called.	27 38
"Harry!" The old woman that lived in the yellow house with him would call. "Harry, I just saw a mouse!"	49 58
Harry would close his eyes and purr. He would not get up to help the old woman. He would not go and catch the mouse. Oh no, he would not move because Harry was very lazy.	70 83 94
One day Harry was sleeping. Something jumped onto his pillow. Something tugged on his ear. Harry opened his eyes slowly. A tiny mouse stood in front of him. The mouse crossed his eyes at Harry. He stuck out his tongue at Harry.	103 113 125 136
"I bet you can't catch me," he shouted at Harry.	146
"You are right," Harry said. "I can't catch you." Then Harry went back to sleep.	157 161
The mouse watched Harry sleep. "What an odd cat," he said to himself. "I have never heard of a cat who will not chase mice. I think I will call my brothers and sisters. This is a good place to live. No cat will chase us out."	171 185 199 208
The mouse called his family. His family came to stay. They built nests in the walls. They built nests in the floors. They built nests in the TV. They even built a nest under Harry.	219 231 243
Harry was asleep, so he didn't notice.	250

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Dad and Rob went fishing.	5
"We will catch fish to eat for lunch," said Dad.	15
They loaded their fishing things into the boat: poles, bait, life jackets, and a net.	25 30
"Let's catch a fish!" said Rob.	36
Dad made the boat go fast over the water. Rob liked feeling the wind in his hair. He liked feeling the cold water splash his face.	47 59 62
Soon they arrived at Dad's secret fishing spot. Dad took a minnow to put it on the hook.	73 80
"The big fish will try to eat this little fish. Then we will catch him," Dad told Rob.	94 98
Rob said, "What! We will let a big fish eat this little fish?" Rob looked at Dad with sad eyes.	111 118
He took the minnow from Dad. He held the little minnow in his hands.	130 132
"Dad, this little minnow has a family in our bait bucket! He has a mom who will miss him! He has a dad who will be mad at you for taking his baby! All the brother and sister fish will cry!" said Rob.	144 159 172 175
Dad shook his head. He started the motor and steered the boat toward home. Rob smiled. He was happy now because he had saved the little minnow.	186 196 202
Dad frowned and said, "I guess we will just have to eat hot dogs for lunch."	215 218

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Peg watched her mom get ready for work.	8
"Mom, you have an important bag. You have important papers and important cards. I want important things too," said Peg.	17 27 28
Mom smiled and said, "My bag holds everything I need to do my job. My papers tell me what I need to know to do my job. My cards help me get things I need for my job."	40 55 66
All afternoon at daycare Peg pretended that she was at work. She put on a blue dress. She carried a suitcase.	76 87
Mom returned from work.	91
"Peg, now we can get important things for you," said Mom.	102
Together they drove downtown. They stopped at a huge brick building. The building looked very important.	111 118
"The library is where you will find important things," said Mom.	128 129
Peg walked with Mom into the library. There were so many books! There were magazines, computers, and even an area for children. Peg chose some picture books about animals.	140 149 158
Peg and Mom stood in line to check out their books. Soon they met the library worker.	169 175
He said, "Here is your library card and a library book bag. Here is the paper that tells you when to return the books."	187 199
Peg walked out of the library proudly. Now she had an important bag, important papers, and an important card—just like Mom.	210 219 221

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Meg, Anna, and Kate were best friends. They always ate lunch together, and they always played at recess. They always called each other on the phone.	10 20 26
One day Anna came to school with very sad news. She was moving far, far away.	37 42
Kate and Meg felt very bad. The three girls had been friends forever. They had gone to the same church, daycare, and preschool.	53 63 65
Anna told her friends that her dad had a new job. He said it was a step up in the company he worked for. Anna didn't care about all of that. She only knew that she was going to a new town. She wouldn't know anyone. She was scared, but no one seemed to care what Anna thought. At least no one except Meg and Kate.	79 92 106 117 128 131
The girls had only three weeks to prepare for Anna's move. They spent every free minute with each other. The girls made plans to be friends forever. They traded addresses and agreed to write every week.	142 153 163 167
The girls cried the morning Anna left. As she pulled out of her driveway, she saw tears running down their faces.	179 188
Meg and Kate were sad, but they knew they still had each other. They decided to send a letter to Anna that very day. They knew she would smile when she received the first piece of mail at her new house.	200 212 223 229

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It rained all day long. The wind and rain knocked the remaining leaves to the ground where they were swept into the street. Today was a typical fall day.	12 25 29
Just two days ago, the sun was out and the temperatures were very pleasant. Raking leaves into large playful piles was very relaxing.	42 52
The family worked together gathering the maple leaves into piles. Kids will be kids, and they loved jumping and hiding in the leaves. Even their dog liked to romp around in the leaves. It was fun for everyone.	62 76 90
The next day, the weather changed slightly. Clouds began to roll into the area and darken the sky. It did not rain then, but it was clear that winter was near. The family thought that the ground would be covered in no time. Winter was approaching fast.	101 117 129 137
They awoke to the rain hitting the roof of their home. It was a light rain, so they figured it would rain all day. They were right. Now the kids would not be able to play in the leaves. The leaves were all wet and brown. They were no longer dry and colorful.	152 167 182 190
The winds picked up speed and sent the piles of leaves blowing across the yard and into the street. The kids thought they were pretty lucky to have been able to play in the leaves yesterday.	202 215 226
Later in the day, the street sweeper came into their neighborhood and, with its mighty vacuum, gobbled up the leaves that had found their way into the street. The leaves were gone.	237 250 258
That night the kids were tucked into bed for the evening. As they slept, the rain turned to snow.	271 277
The kids dreamed of sledding and snowmen. The next morning their dreams came true. Snow!	287 292

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Billy was sitting on the sidewalk curb holding his favorite old baseball glove.	11 13
"Hey, Billy!" he heard. "Weren't you supposed to meet me half an hour ago at the park? Why are you sitting here instead of moving?"	25 38
"I'm waiting," Billy replied.	42
"Waiting for what?" I asked.	47
"I'm waiting for Mr. Sanchez to leave for work. It shouldn't be much longer."	60 61
"Billy, your Mom said it was all right for you to play ball with me at the park. I don't understand why you're waiting for Mr. Sanchez."	77 88
Billy sighed as he explained, "Well, Mr. Sanchez's car is parked in the driveway, right across the street. See? And the park is across the street and down the block."	100 113 118
I shook my head because I didn't understand what Billy was talking about. This morning he was excited about playing baseball with the guys. He was a pretty good shortstop, even though he wasn't quite five years old.	130 141 154 156
"I know where the park is and so do you. So explain to me again why you are sitting here?"	171 176
"I already told you. I'm waiting for Mr. Sanchez," replied Billy. I looked across the street. There was no sign of Mr. Sanchez coming out of his house.	188 201 204
"Mom said I can't cross the street if I see any cars," Billy continued, "and I see Mr. Sanchez's car. It's right there in his driveway!"	218 230
"Oh, Billy!" I laughed. "I'm sure your mom meant you should not cross the street if you see any cars driving on the road! She just wants to make sure that a moving car doesn't hit you. She's not worried about the parked cars! Come on. You can walk with me to the park!"	242 257 271 284
"Oh, Sam. You're so smart. Thanks for being my friend. Let's go play ball."	296 298

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Mama frog carried her babies upon her back. They rode there as she swam in the water and hopped along the edge of the creek. In fact, the only time they jumped off her back was when Mama frog caught them something to eat.	12 27 40 44
Those baby frogs just loved to eat black bugs. Green flies, though, were their favorites. "Mama, Mama," they would holler from her back. "Please catch us something to eat. We are very hungry. Growing babies need lots of insects to get big and strong."	56 67 78 88
"That's true, but I am very tired," said the mama frog. "I have been carrying you around all day. I must rest now."	102 111
Mama frog swam beneath a lily pad and closed her eyes. She tried to sleep, but she couldn't because her baby frogs continued hopping around on the lily pad above.	124 135 141
"Will you three settle down?" the mama frog demanded of her babies. "Your mama is very tired."	152 158
"Okay, Mama," the baby frogs said. "We'll be quiet."	167
Just then, one of the baby frogs saw a green fly buzz by. It zoomed low over the water and right by their eyes. That was too tempting for them to ignore.	182 196 199
"I'm going to catch that green fly," one of the baby frogs told his brother and sister. "Since Mama is going to take a nap, I'll catch our lunch. Someone has to take care of us!"	213 227 235
The baby frog waited for the green fly to buzz over again, and then she jumped with all her might and opened her tiny mouth. The green fly flew right in.	249 263 266
The mama frog watched. "My babies are growing up," she said. "Maybe it is best if I just relax. They are doing well by themselves."	277 291

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As soon as the temperature drops, people start getting excited up in Nome, Alaska. They never go to bed at night without peeking out their windows first. They want to see what the weather is doing. If a light snow is falling, they know that by morning the roads will be dangerous. That's where the sled dogs come into play.	12 25 39 52 60
Sled dogs are fun, peppy, medium-sized dogs. Their colors are different, but they all have thick, downy coats of fur. The dogs' tails curl up when they are excited.	71 85 90
There's nothing a sled dog loves more than the cold, fierce winds of winter. Even though most owners build shelters for their sled dogs, the dogs prefer to sleep outside. They tuck their noses into their tails. They snuggle their bodies deep in the snow.	103 115 128 135
Sled dogs are playful, intelligent, and very vocal. They do not bark. Instead, they howl like wolves. It's not uncommon for a pack of sled dogs to have a group howl at sunset and sunrise.	147 160 170
A person who owns sled dogs can be sure that their sleep will be disturbed on the mornings after a deep snow has fallen. The dogs will be up on the roofs of their doghouses, welcoming the snow with their long yowls of anticipation. "Wake up, wake up, WAKE UP!" They seem to be howling. "We want to play in the snow!"	184 197 210 222 232
The two most important things in a sled dog's life are running and pulling. Quite simply, that is what they are born to do.	245 256
A sled dog will like nothing better than to trot in front of a person on skis or a sled filled with supplies. They've been known to race with their owners on bikes or rollerblades. Pulling is a good way for them to get exercise and stay in shape all summer long. It's also great for the dogs' owners.	272 286 300 314 315
Together the dog and person team can romp and play in many ways during the snowless months. Nothing beats the thrill, however, of winter's return and a dog sled run through the snow.	327 338 348

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Charlie Clark had been a mailman for thirty years. He was used to delivering mail in all types of weather. He'd delivered letters on delightful days, and he'd delivered letters on dreadful days.	13 24 33
Charlie was proud of his work and happy with his job. Never, in all his years as a mailman, had Charlie ever had a problem with a mailbox. Other mailmen complained about mailboxes on their routes, but not Charlie.	47 61 71 72
He didn't have any worries until one day when he noticed there was a new box on his route. The mailbox was nailed to a branch of a dead tree. It was battered, dented, and badly rusted. The flag at its side was crooked and bent.	85 101 115 118
Charlie felt bad about it. "People should treat their mailboxes with more respect," he muttered as he dug through his bag.	129 139
He had letters addressed to the box, so he pulled it open and set them inside. He was about to pull his hand out when the box bit him. It had a grip on his hand and wouldn't let go.	153 169 179
Charlie looked up and down the street for someone to help him, but there was no one in sight. He wrestled with the box for an hour, until the box spit out his hand.	192 208 213
The next day he had more letters addressed to that box. With the letters in his hand, he stopped in front of it. He waited for something to happen, but the box was quiet today.	226 241 248
Charlie quickly slipped the letters inside and almost got his hand out before the box latched onto him again.	260 267
This time Charlie and the mailbox had a fierce battle. Charlie hit and kicked the box, but still the box wouldn't let go. Finally, Charlie was out of breath, and he had to stop. He rested his head on the mailbox.	279 293 308
Suddenly, he had an idea. "There, there," he told the mailbox, patting it gently. "Why don't you let me go so I can deliver the rest of my mail?"	319 336 337
The mailbox began to purr and let him go nicely.	347

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This time Charlie and the mailbox had a fierce battle. Charlie hit and kicked the box, but still the box wouldn't let go. Finally, Charlie was out of breath, and he had to stop. He rested his head on the mailbox.

Suddenly, he had an idea. "There, there," he told the mailbox, patting it gently. "Why don't you let me go so I can deliver the rest of my mail?"

The mailbox began to purr and let him go nicely.

It was difficult moving to a new house. When I was eight, we left our old neighborhood and moved to a new one. We packed my dresser, my bunk bed, my computer, and my scooter. In every room of the house, boxes were piled high like building blocks.	14 27 40 48
The house felt still. I walked from room to room trying to remember what each one used to be like. As I walked through the living room, I noticed orange scribble marks on the wallpaper. My younger brother made those marks when we used to play art museum. Entering my bedroom, I noticed a large scratch on the hardwood floor. That was where my puppy, Clyde, and I used to play fetch with his toy kitten. Wandering down the hallway, I noticed pencil marks near the bathroom door. That was where my father used to measure me to see how tall I had grown each birthday. I already began to miss the wallpaper on the walls and the light fixtures on the ceilings.	61 76 86 98 110 124 135 150 163 171
"This has always been my house," I thought. "I don't want to leave." There had to be some way I could keep my house.	184 195
Looking out my bedroom window, I noticed the tree house Dad and I constructed years before. I hurried to the backyard, climbed up to my tree house, and decided not to go unless my tree house went too. I would keep the tree house to myself, and then I would be happy.	207 220 234 247
Just then my neighbor Logan arrived to say goodbye. "I wish you could stay, but I know you'll have even more fun at your new house," he said sadly.	259 274 276
Suddenly, I began to think of someone beside myself. I thought about my house, my yard, and my neighbors. I would miss everything, but I was going to get a new house, a new yard, and new neighbors. Logan, though, was just losing a friend. I realized then that Logan needed the tree house more than I did.	287 299 314 326 334
"Goodbye, Logan. Take care of the tree house," I said. "It's all yours."	346 347
The smile on Logan's face made me feel much better.	357

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The fox wasn't wise like the owl, thrifty like the squirrel, hard working like the beaver, or determined like the robin. The fox was sly and secretive.	15 27
She slept most of the days away in her den with her kits curled around her. She went out to hunt only on nights when the moon was hidden by clouds. Not many of the other animals saw her during the day or met up with her at night.	44 61 76
"I know that nasty fox is stealing hens from the henhouse," the squirrel told the owl one afternoon as they sat on a branch and gossiped.	91 102
"That's why she doesn't show her red nose around here during the day. That thieving fox makes me angry."	116 121
The owl didn't say anything. She thought about the rabbit she'd caught that morning and held her tongue. What would the squirrel have to say about her after she'd heard that she ate rabbits for breakfast?	134 149 157
That evening at sunset as the fox slipped out of her den, her fur was a fiery red in the light of the setting sun and her eyes were black and clever. She was just about to slip under the farmer's fence when she heard someone snicker at her from a tree branch above.	176 193 209 211
It was the robin. "Good evening, fox," she said. "Where are you off to this fine night? There was a ruckus at the farm yesterday morning. I heard it when I flew over in search of worms. It seems some creature has been sneaking into the henhouse and stealing hens. You wouldn't know anything about that, would you?"	227 243 257 269
The fox ignored the rude robin and slipped under the fence, but instead of heading toward the farm as she did most nights, she cut down to the river.	283 298
Beaver was working on his dam, and he watched with awe as the fox caught three fish in a row and tossed them on the shore. He'd always known the fox was as smart as she was sly.	313 331 336

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Leo went to the forest every day to gather firewood. He would collect the wood,	15
tie it into small bundles, and carry the bundles home each day. He would pack his	31
lunch and stay in the forest until sunset. At noon he would have his lunch, and at	48
noon a bird would visit him. It was white with ash-colored wings and was larger than	65
a dove but smaller than an eagle. Leo always shared a morsel of his food with the	82
bird. Leo called it Jayto and would talk to it from time to time.	96
One very hot summer day, Leo began to eat his lunch and Jayto arrived right on	112
time. Leo gave him some of his lunch, and the bird eagerly pecked at it. It was so	130
hot, Leo decided to take a nap. As he lay down, the bird began to peck and caw at	149
him. The bird was able to convince Leo to follow him. Jayto kept flying small	164
distances waiting for Leo to catch up. Finally they came upon a broken stone wall.	179
Leo had once heard that a rich businessman used to live here long ago. One	194
day he left for a foreign country and never returned. His wife lived alone for a long	211
time, and it was said that she buried her jewelry box and that a strange bird stood	228
guard over it attacking anyone that got near.	236
Was it possible that Jayto was this bird? Suddenly the bird flew from the wall to	252
the ground and started pecking. Leo helped the bird, and sure enough, they	265
uncovered a jewelry box. It was filled with gold, diamonds, rubies, and other	278
precious stones.	280
Leo decided not to go back to town for fear that his treasure would be taken from	297
him. With Jayto on his shoulder, he traveled to a large city far away. He became a	314
rich man and built a beautiful mansion. The mansion had a large garden filled with	329
ponds and flowers. Jayto had all the mangoes that he could eat, and Leo lived a	345
long and happy life.	349

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It's like a jungle in my grandmother's house because she has so many plants.	14
Even though she has enough plants out in her front yard, she still insists on having more. There are rows of tulips near her house, big clumps of ferns, and hedges of roses in the back. There are also pots of houseplants inside.	30
She brings as many of her outdoor plants inside as she can for the winter.	46
"I don't want the poor dears to freeze," she tells me, as I stare in awe at her rooms filled with greenery. "Besides," she likes to say, "a house full of plants is much cozier than a house without. And mark my words, there's more magic in a house filled with plants."	57
"Okay, Grandma," I say because I don't want to argue with her.	72
One night I slept in a sleeping bag on the floor of my grandma's front parlor. The front parlor by far has the most plants in the house. My two older brothers call it the jungle room because we can no longer see the wallpaper. All we see when we walk in the door are leaves and colorful flowers. It actually smells quite nice.	90
I was secretly excited to be camping out there because it would almost be like sleeping in a real forest minus the hard ground. Grandma made a fire in the fireplace that night so I could roast marshmallows and read books. I read until around midnight. At about that time, the fire went out and my aching eyes dropped shut. I closed my book and laid my head on the pillow.	105
It was then that I heard the rustling and the whispers.	120
"Hey," a tiny voice called out in the darkness, "do you think they're all asleep yet?"	124
"Be quiet," another one hissed. "We've got one right in the room with us."	136
I heard more rustling of leaves and whispers, more hissing and scolding, and then I saw them. Gnomes, I guess, is what they're called. They were short and skinny with pointed ears and glowing green eyes.	163
They thought I was asleep, so they didn't bother me much.	171
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One of the reasons Becky loved traveling on the weekends to her grandparents' house in Connecticut was her Grandpa Bob. As soon as she and her parents pulled into the winding drive and stopped in front of her grandparents' house, she and Grandpa Bob would go for a walk.	13 28 42 49
Becky lived in New York City in an apartment she shared with her parents and a golden retriever named Ralph. She and Ralph walked in the city, and she saw lots of interesting things. They saw yellow taxicabs, men in suits, and women in high heels. But never in New York did she see the fantastic things she saw with Grandpa Bob on their walks.	65 80 94 110 114
Grandpa Bob knew just about everything there was to know about the forest and the animals that lived there. Once, when she and Grandpa Bob were walking, a blue bird landed on his shoulder. When it flew away, Becky remembered her grandpa had looked down at her and winked.	128 142 155 163
"It was just telling me some secrets, that's all, Becky," he had told her. "That bird just told me there would be a frost tonight and that there is a herd of deer nibbling on grass just beyond those maple trees."	179 198 204
Becky followed with her eyes where her grandpa was pointing and saw a pelt of brown fur and the long legs and the velvet nose that did indeed belong to a white-tailed deer.	219 236 238
She couldn't believe a blue bird was smart enough to tell her grandpa all that. At the same time, she wished one of those critters would land on her shoulder and sing secrets to her.	254 270 273
Later that evening, when Grandpa Bob was dozing in front of the fire with his pipe hanging out of his mouth and Becky and her mom and dad were playing a game of cards with Grandma, Becky leaned in close to her mom and whispered in her ear.	288 304 319 321
"When I grow up Mom, I think I'm going to be like Grandpa Bob."	335

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"When I grow up Mom, I think I'm going to be like Grandpa Bob."

I was terrified. When my mom climbed out of the car and started walking toward the dentist's office, I stayed where I was, shivering in the front passenger seat of our car. Then, on a stroke of pure genius, I hit the button on the side control panel that locked all the doors on the vehicle at once. I wasn't going in there. I didn't care if I had crooked teeth for the rest of my life. Do you know what they do to you in dentist offices?	15 31 49 68 87 88
I found out last night while talking on the telephone with my best friend Marcy, who got braces last year. She told me that first they strap you down in the chair, and then they whip out the drills they've been hiding behind their backs. They have to SCREW on each brace, and they only give you the tiniest bit of painkillers. Then they get out the metal wires and tighten and pull to their hearts' content.	103 120 135 151 165
Marcy also told me her dentist, Dr. Pane, pulled so hard all of her teeth fell out. She told me it had taken Dr. Pane five hours to glue her teeth back in place. I think Marcy may be stretching the truth a little, but I know some of what lies ahead of me will, no doubt, cause me great bodily harm.	182 201 219 227
My mom raps sharply on the window.	234
"Let's go, Gloria," she says.	239
I get out of the car because she has the keys in her purse anyway, and I don't want to look like an idiot because my mother had to carry me over her shoulder kicking and screaming to get my braces put on.	257 273 282
"You know you're very lucky," my mom tells me as we walk up the sidewalk. "I wanted braces when I was your age, but I couldn't have them."	298 310
I don't say anything.	314
My mom pulls open the door and then steps aside letting another woman and her son walk out. The boy smiles at me. His teeth are strapped with metal.	328 343
I pinch my lips over my tilted teeth, blushing. I can't wait until I get my braces on.	361

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The land outside the hunting grounds of Black Raven's tribe was beautiful and filled with wild game and tall trees. Unfortunately, no one would brave the rapids of the Silver River to get to it. As a result, Black Raven's family and friends were running out of food.	13 28 44 48
The Silver River twisted through a mountain pass on the edge of the tribe's territory. The stone cliffs of the mountain pass were sharp and steep, and no one could climb them. The only way out of the valley was on the river, but sadly, no one was daring—or reckless—enough to brave the untamed water.	62 77 95 105
Many young men in the tribe boasted that some day they would ride the river to the other side of the mountains and into the fertile valley. They bragged around the campfires as they ate the last of the silver trout from the Silver River.	121 136 150
One evening the old wise man of the tribe interrupted the young men's talk and spoke. "The time has come," he said, "for someone to journey beyond our lands. Who is brave enough to ride the river?"	165 179 187
Many of the young men around the fire jumped up without thinking. Some of them couldn't even swim, but they raised their hands just the same and shouted out that they would surely beat the river and become heroes.	201 216 226
Black Raven was the only young man to stay seated. He thought quietly as the other men strutted and swaggered. He thought about what kind of vessel he would need to float on top of the water and avoid the sharp rocks of the rapids, and as he thought, he reached out and fingered the silvery bark of one of the birch trees nearest to him. He peeled a bit off the tree and thought it just might work.	241 255 274 289 305
"What of you, Black Raven?" one of the arrogant boys called out. "Are you too frightened to take on the river?"	320 326
"No," Black Raven said as he stood. "I think I have an idea that might work. Come, let us sit and think this over."	342 350

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I live in the tiny town of Peanut, Pennsylvania, in the second to the last house at the end of a dead-end road.	17 24
There isn't a whole lot to do in Peanut, but we do have a grocer, a baker, a hairdresser, a mechanic, AND an inventor.	42 48
It's Tommy O'Connor who put our little village on the map. He lives just down the road from me. His house is right before the dead end. A lot of people go back there, turning their cars around when they realize they're lost.	64 81 91
That's how he acquires many of his customers for his bizarre inventions. People pull onto our road, thinking it'll go on forever, but it doesn't. It stops dead in its tracks at Tommy's front door. That means booming business for Tommy.	104 122 132
Tommy has signs for his inventions posted in the ditches up and down our road and out on the freeway. Gigantic signs are nailed to telephone poles and dead tree trunks. They hang from tree branches and other people's mailboxes.	147 162 172
Tourists often stop at Tommy's house, and once they're there, they exclaim over his strange inventions. Then they pull out their checkbooks and spend big bucks.	185 198
Last spring, Tommy crossed his lawn mower with his snowmobile and used it to both clear snow and cut grass. Just a month ago, he found an old hot air balloon in the dump, hooked it up to his own car, and now he no longer has to fight traffic on the way to work. He transformed his wife's hairdryer into a miniature rocket engine and his son's Nintendo into a toaster. Last week he attempted to sell me a calculator that he'd turned into a cell phone, but I had to refuse because we didn't need any more cell phones in the house.	212 230 249 263 278 294 302
He tuned up my car for me about a week ago. The repairs it required were simple—an oil change and a refill on windshield wiper fluid. When I got it back it could go from zero to ninety in a second flat and the radio could pick up stations from around the world.	318 335 352 356

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Josh walked out of camp that morning into a forest that was perfect for deer hunting. The air was cool and damp, and the forest floor was quiet for walking.	15 30
Josh took a deep breath of the late fall air and knew that today was his kind of day.	49
He turned east off the old logging road leading from the cabin and headed towards Big Bay ridge. He noticed quite a few deer tracks in the soft forest floor and discovered a sapling near the trail that had been rubbed by a large buck.	64 80 94
Upon reaching the ridge, he settled down into a spot that promised some good action. The white-tailed deer were apt to move this morning, and the promise of deer activity excited Josh. As he carefully kept watch, his mind raced through previous hunts where the conditions were very similar. He had been successful on several of those hunts. Today's conditions, however, spelled trophy. His senses were as keen and as sharp as the newly purchased hunting knife that hung from his belt.	108 123 136 149 160 176 177
Josh waited in complete silence looking for any sign—a flick of an ear, tail, or anything that didn't look just right. Concentrating on the hunt was not always easy because his mind wandered from time to time and small things, like a chipmunk playing in the leaves, distracted him.	193 207 221 227
Suddenly he heard a sound that was different. He immediately became alert and readied his rifle. He sat there, tense, his heart pounding so hard that he was sure every creature in the forest could hear it. Then, from the bottom of the ridge, the form of a deer appeared. It was a doe, and since shooting does was illegal, Josh could only watch, admiring the beauty and grace of the animal as it browsed along the bottom of the ridge.	240 256 272 288 303 308
After the doe was long gone, Josh stayed in hopes of a buck following somewhere behind the doe. An hour or so passed, and he decided to head back to camp. Although he hadn't seen the trophy buck he had been looking for, the day had been perfect in every other way.	322 338 353 360

Josh walked out of camp that morning into a forest that was perfect for deer hunting. The air was cool and damp, and the forest floor was quiet for walking. Josh took a deep breath of the late fall air and knew that today was his kind of day. He turned east off the old logging road leading from the cabin and headed towards Big Bay ridge. He noticed quite a few deer tracks in the soft forest floor and discovered a sapling near the trail that had been rubbed by a large buck.

Upon reaching the ridge, he settled down into a spot that promised some good action. The white-tailed deer were apt to move this morning, and the promise of deer activity excited Josh. As he carefully kept watch, his mind raced through previous hunts where the conditions were very similar. He had been successful on several of those hunts. Today's conditions, however, spelled trophy. His senses were as keen and as sharp as the newly purchased hunting knife that hung from his belt.

Josh waited in complete silence looking for any sign—a flick of an ear, tail, or anything that didn't look just right. Concentrating on the hunt was not always easy because his mind wandered from time to time and small things, like a chipmunk playing in the leaves, distracted him.

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The mountain and the river were bitter rivals. The mountain distrusted the river because of her sneaky creeks and streams that trickled down his flanks. The river distrusted the mountain because of his jutting peaks and the rolling boulders that blocked her course. The river was made to erode mountains, and the mountain was made to stand in the way of rivers.	13 27 40 54 62
Every day the river cut a cold path through one of the mountain's passes, and every day the path became deeper and wider. The river was carving a valley on the side of the mountain and this frightened the mountain, but he hid his fear with anger.	77 93 109
"You're cutting too close to my flank!" he shouted. "I wouldn't come too close if I were you. Any day I might choose to let an avalanche loose that will bury you beneath its rubble."	125 141 144
The river lent her ear to the mountain, but there wasn't much she could do to change her course because of her wild nature.	160 168
"There is nothing I can do to stop myself," she said. "I must follow the path laid out in front of me, and I dare say, if you let an avalanche loose on top of me, my waters will only bubble through it and continue on course. As big as you are, mountain, you cannot stop me, and I cannot stop myself. We are simply going to have to get used to one another."	185 205 220 235 242
"Rubbish!" cried the mountain, and in a fit of rage, he shrugged his shoulders and released an avalanche of rocks.	257 262
The rocks splashed into the river's cold depths, sinking to the bottom and impeding the water's flow. For a moment the river was still and confused, but then her nature took over and she started to move. She dodged the rocks and continued to rush down the mountain's flanks. Dangerous rapids formed. There was nothing the mountain could do to stop the river. The great mountain saw this fact and stilled his tantrum.	275 290 305 317 333 335
"Perhaps we should call a truce," he said, "for I cannot conquer you and you cannot conquer me."	350 353

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In the field of geology, there isn't a scientist with more skill, determination or motivation than Dr. Isabel Rodriguez.	14
Dr. Rodriguez started her collection of rocks at an early age. When she was a child, she would take rocks home to her family's cattle ranch at the edge of the desert. As a grown woman, she turned her childhood interest into a career and now teaches geology to college students from the United States and other countries. As a college instructor, she trains young men and women to be skilled geologists. She shows them how to read maps of major landforms and how to tell the difference between a diamond and a lump of glass. She provides her students knowledge they can use while looking for rocks and fossils in the field. For example, her students learn that the Red Mountains in Colorado are tinted red because of iron compounds and that the best source for gems are rivers flowing from volcanoes.	19
One afternoon, as part of her lecture, Dr. Rodriguez held up her pencil. "The graphite in the lead of this pencil is chemically identical to diamonds," she said. "But because they have different crystal structures, they have very different physical properties. You can write with graphite in the pencil, but it is basically worthless. On the other hand, the diamond comes in a variety of colors and is priceless."	34
In the field, Dr. Rodriguez is a rock-finding whiz, amazing her students during their outings across the sun-baked desert. Although many fossils and semi-precious stones lie in plain view, they are clear only to her keen eyes.	50
"An opal has a blue-green glow," she tells her students as they walk across the desert. "When you find one, notice how it reflects sunlight."	64
Dr. Rodriguez is constantly digging up new treasures. Finding a million-year-old carbon imprint of a fern frond trapped in a sandstone wall is not unusual for Dr. Rodriguez. On outings with her students, she is frequently heard saying, "This stone is amazing. Students, come and look at this find!"	76
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Jellyfish are creatures found in most bodies of salt water, from the tropical waters of the Caribbean Sea, to the cold, dark waters of the Arctic Ocean.	13 27
Jellyfish are unusual creatures. When seen in the water, it's hard to believe they are a species from this planet. They look like aliens hanging suspended in water with their luminous layers of tissue and flesh. They have long, curly tentacles and plastic like bubble tops that sway in the sea.	40 54 67 78
Although it's difficult to believe, jellyfish have no heart, blood, brain, or gills. You can see through their mostly hollow stomach cavities where their food is digested and dissolved. Jellyfish have no proper eyes or ears. In fact, it's possible to believe that jellyfish are just brainless blobs without the slightest spark of intelligence. Amazingly enough, despite their lack of sight and hearing, jellyfish can distinguish touch, temperature, light, and darkness. They also know the direction and pull of water currents.	92 105 119 131 142 153 159
Jellyfish come in an assortment of colors and shades. The jellyfish living in cooler waters are generally pale or milky white in color. Many of the jellyfish that live in warmer, tropical waters are often strikingly colored in shades of magenta, scarlet, yellow, and orange.	172 187 200 204
A jellyfish can be as tiny as a thimble, and some can grow to be as colossal as a satellite dish. Most jellyfish can maneuver feebly in the water; however, their poor swimming skills place them at the mercy and whimsy of ocean currents.	222 235 248
Some jellyfish ride the ocean currents alone, while other species travel in special groups called colonies. The man-of-war is an example of a highly adapted jellyfish that travels with a colony. The man-of-war serves a special function in its colony. It catches prey with a very long tentacle that can trail as far as one hundred feet through the sea. The man-of-war's prey includes shrimp, squid, and fish. It also produces potent venom that is harmful to humans who may swim nearby, unaware of the man-of-war's clever and stunning snares.	260 275 291 308 323 336 346

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Mr. Harper was seventy-nine years old. However, that didn't prevent him from rising every morning at sunrise and walking the property lines of his farm. Mr. Harper knew his farm's boundaries and what property belonged to him and what didn't. Most mornings he found evidence of trespassers on his land the night before, but he didn't mind.	13 27 40 53 58
The trespassers left sharp footprints in the turf when they came for the windfalls of apples and plums that littered the orderly rows of his orchard. They came for the bud-blooms on his evergreens and the sweet acorns that fell from his oaks. Sometimes Mr. Harper was lucky enough to come upon the culprits. White-tailed deer were to blame for nibbling the apples on his apple trees. Sometimes he was fortunate enough to catch them dancing on their hind legs as they stretched to reach fruit that had not yet fallen.	71 85 100 113 127 141 151
Mr. Harper was the proprietor of a tree farm that he'd inherited from his grandparents many decades ago. The trees that now dwarfed him were planted when he was only a toddler. He was an adolescent when the orchards had yielded their first crop of fruit.	165 177 191 197
Even though he was now an old man and had been a widower for ten years, he was not a lonely man. How could an old man feel lonesome when a family of squirrels transformed the grand oak trees in his front yard into an apartment complex? How could he feel lonesome when there was so much work to be done?	214 230 243 257 258
Mr. Harper treated his wild guests like royalty because he wanted them to return season after season and keep him company. To keep the animals happy, he put out seed for the birds that nested in his trees and salt-block appetizers for the deer herd that roamed his land. He wooed his raccoon friends with peanut butter sandwiches nailed to fence posts. In return, they provided him with entertainment all winter long. Mr. Harper enjoyed everything about his tree farm, but his favorite part was watching the scenes of nature unfold before him.	271 284 301 315 327 339 352

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