

Hundreds of years ago, in a land far away, an old man named Alexander rescued helpless children. Alexander had a very kind heart. He didn't want the children to go without food, clothing, or shelter. Alexander often drove his mule-drawn wagon around the town searching for homeless children to help.	15 29 42 51
On this particular day, Alexander drove his wagon through a very poor village. He saw a little boy and a little girl sitting in an alley. Their clothes were torn, and the children were very dirty. They sat close together and cried.	64 83 93
"Why are you crying?" asked Alexander from atop his wagon.	103
"Our mother and father have died. We have no family and nothing to eat," said the little girl.	118 121
"We are hungry," said the little boy. "Can you help us, Sir?"	133
Alexander told the little boy and girl to climb into his wagon. Alexander took the little boy and girl to his farm in the country. At the farm, they saw dozens of other children busy at work. Out in the field, young boys were cutting down hay. In the barn, young girls were milking cows.	148 166 182 188
"All of these children have lost their parents," Alexander told the little boy and girl. "We all work together so we can eat and keep the farmhouse clean. I find good homes with loving mothers and fathers for most of the boys and girls. I will find a good home for you too. But until we find a good home for you, I must teach you how to work so you can help us keep ourselves fed."	203 219 236 255 265
The boy and girl were more than happy to work. The little boy ran out into the fields to work with the other boys. The boys were kind and helpful. They taught the little boy how to use a pitchfork. The girl offered to help with the cooking and the dishes. The little boy and girl were very happy in their new home.	282 298 315 328

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Beatrice hated books. Books were dusty and musty and filled with long, tangled sentences that made no sense—at least not to Beatrice. Books were heavy and clumsy and so boring that whenever Beatrice sat herself down and forced herself to read, she fell right to sleep.	13 27 41 47
One stormy evening, Beatrice was sitting in the library doing nothing when her mother looked in on her.	60 65
"Beatrice, darling," she said, "why don't you read a book?"	75
"All the books in here are boring," she told her mother.	86
"They are not," her mother shouted. "You will read a book, and you will give me a full report in the morning." Then she stormed out of the room.	103 115
Beatrice was so angry she kicked the wall and screamed twice. She screamed the first time because she'd stubbed her toe and the second time because a book had become dislodged from the shelf above and fallen on her head.	128 144 155
The book fell open on the floor at her feet. A few stray wisps of sparkling dust rose from its moldy pages, tickling Beatrice's nose and causing her to sneeze.	172 185
"Bless you."	187
The voice came from the shadows all around Beatrice. She heard a faint chuckle as she narrowed her eyes and looked from side to side. No one was there. Beatrice knew she was alone with the book, so who had spoken to her?	201 217 230
"I did, you fool."	234
The voice came again, louder this time, and Beatrice finally looked down at her feet realizing that it was the book that spoke. Beatrice tried to close the cover of the book with her toe.	248 265 269
"That won't work," said the book, now ruffling its pages because it was upset. "I don't like to be kicked. Books should be treated with respect. Let me show you something."	284 299 300
The book ruffled its pages once more, and a strong wind blew as the pages turned. Finally, the book stopped on a page with a picture of a trapdoor. The handle of the trapdoor gleamed.	315 331 335
"Go ahead," said the book. "Pull it open. A world of adventure awaits you, young Beatrice."	350 351

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Crystal's next door neighbor was a very large and strange man. He was well	14
over six feet tall with feet the size of tennis rackets. Sometimes while riding the bus	30
to school, Crystal saw him at the dump digging through piles of garbage.	43
Sometimes while riding the bus home from school, she saw him walking down the	57
sidewalk lugging a heavy burlap sack over his shoulder. Crystal never knew what	70
was in the sack. She could only guess as she watched him open his front door and	87
close it behind him. Her older brother, Jason, had an idea.	98
"Maybe the guy next door is so poor," he told Crystal one afternoon, "he has to	114
go to the dump to scavenge for food. I bet he collects old boots and makes boot-	131
leather soup." Crystal wrinkled her nose. She didn't like the sound of that.	144
"Do you think I should bring him some food?" she asked. "I could bring him	159
some of the leftover cinnamon rolls Mom made last weekend." Jason was too busy	173
laughing to answer. Crystal ignored her big brother. She knew he could be rude	187
and mean sometimes.	190
The next morning before school, Crystal walked across the yard and knocked on	203
her neighbor's front door. She knocked several times, but no one answered. Crystal	216
left the tray of cinnamon rolls covered with tinfoil on his steps and ran to catch the	233
bus. She didn't see the curtains twitch as she turned to leave, but she did see piles	250
of rusty old pipes stacked in the backyard.	258
All day as Crystal sat in class, she wondered what her neighbor used those pipes	273
for. When she got home, she found a clean plate and a folded piece of tinfoil on her	291
front steps. She ran across her yard to her neighbor's door.	302
Before she could knock, the door opened. Her neighbor stood in the doorway	315
towering over her. Crystal would have been scared to death had there not been a	330
kind smile on his face and a sincere look in his eyes. He didn't say a word. Instead	348
he handed her a beautiful set of silver wind chimes.	358
"How lovely," she said. "Thank you very much." Crystal now understood what	370
her neighbor did with his burlap sack and his backyard full of pipes.	383

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Fall is my favorite season. I love to watch the leaves change color and flutter to the ground on cool, crisp fall days. All of my fondest memories seem to involve fall.	16 32
One of my favorite memories happened around a campfire last October. My cousins from Nebraska had come to visit us, and we spent the afternoon gathering firewood and preparing the area for a campfire. After dinner, everyone walked down the path to the beachfront where we had set up a pile of logs for the fire. It was almost dark, and we could barely see each other's faces.	44 58 71 90 100
"Isn't someone going to light the fire?" asked my Uncle Milton.	111
"Be patient. The children have a plan," said my mother.	121
My cousin Sarah had climbed a nearby oak tree and was hidden from view. When everyone was quiet, she lit a match. Suddenly, a ball of fire came shooting down on a thin wire and onto the pile of logs. The crumpled newspaper caught fire and within seconds, flames rose high into the air.	135 150 166 175
Uncle Milton let out a high-pitched shriek and took a step backwards. As he stepped back, he stumbled over something behind him, lost his footing, and landed with a splash in a bucket of water.	190 203 211
My cousins and I took one look at Uncle Milton and began to laugh. One by one, the adults began laughing until Uncle Milton was the only one who wasn't laughing. Then, a smile slowly spread across his face, and soon he was laughing harder than any of us.	228 242 257 260
"May I ask where that bucket of water came from?" he said when the laughter had died down.	276 278
"I filled it and brought it here this afternoon in case the fire got away from us," said my cousin Chip. "You should have expected us to use that kind of caution, Dad. You're a firefighter, remember?" he asked. Uncle Milton was the fire chief in his hometown.	296 311 325 326
"Well, aren't you just a chip off the old block," said my uncle, and everyone started laughing all over again.	342 346

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Every day after school all the kids flocked to Jim's house to play computer games. They knew that Jim was the best player in the school, maybe even in town. Nobody could beat Jim at any computer game, but they always tried.	14 30 42
One afternoon Jim was playing Space Ace with his friends. He played very well that day and reached a championship level of performance. His score was higher than anyone in history. He took a picture of the screen and mailed it into the company that created the game.	56 69 85 90
Two months later, while Jim and his friends were playing games, the doorbell rang. Jim's mother answered the door, and there stood two men in uniforms. They were from NASA, and they wanted to speak to Jim. "Jimmy, come here," said his mother. Jim stopped playing and ran to the door. He was surprised to see men from NASA standing there.	103 117 132 147 151
The men explained to Jim that they had seen the picture of his high score in Space Ace and wanted to know if he would help them. There had been an accident in space, and some astronauts were in trouble. The only hope of reaching them was to send a remote-controlled rocket into space. There was no time to test the remote-controlled rocket. NASA needed Jim to fly the rocket for them right away.	167 183 198 214 227
Jim was more surprised than before. "Yes! I'll help if I can," said Jim. Jim and his mother flew to NASA in Florida. There was no time to waste. Jim sat in the pilot seat. The rocket took off. Jim controlled the rocket's flight through space. It was just like the computer game! He flew the rocket around planets and moons. He saw many small asteroids ahead of him. He fired the guns to destroy space rocks and flew quickly to reach the space station. Finally, Jim saw the space station in the distance and flew at super speed. He docked perfectly with the space station. Jim had saved the astronauts, and NASA was very thankful. Jim's picture was in newspapers around the world.	243 261 275 290 305 320 334 347 351

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I began to use it just yesterday. My time-travel machine has a wide variety of	34
buttons. Yesterday I got in, closed my eyes, and pressed one of the buttons. When	49
I opened my eyes and looked out, I found myself in ancient Egypt! I peered out the	66
window and saw warriors running towards me. They looked angry, so I pressed a	80
button that said "The Future" and quickly arrived back at my house.	92
I decided the time-travel machine was way cool and called my best friends, Jeff	107
and Justin. I didn't tell them about the time-travel machine over the phone because I	123
knew they wouldn't believe me. They always questioned the things I told them.	136
A few minutes later, I looked out my bedroom window. Sure enough, Jeff and	150
Justin were walking up the driveway. "Hey," I said. "You guys have to see the time	166
machine I found."	169
"You know we're too old for make-believe," Justin said as he folded his arms.	184
"No, I'm serious," I insisted, leading them to my machine. With their eyes wide	198
open, they stood in complete silence. After a lot of questions, they convinced me	212
they were ready to try it out. We crammed into the machine, and I randomly pressed	228
one of the buttons. Suddenly we found ourselves in medieval England. Jeff and	241
Justin were totally amazed. They couldn't believe their eyes! Just as we were about	255
to step out, we noticed several knights in shining armor approaching. I decided not	269
to chance it. I hit the future button, and we ended up safe and sound back in my	287
home.	288
Jeff and Justin made me promise to take them on another adventure very soon.	302
Hopefully, next time we will be able to stay longer and explore more of the past.	318

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holes in front of a weather-beaten building. Through my smudged glasses, the	30
building appeared very dull. Behind the building, I could see the ocean tossing and I	45
wished my surprise was an ocean outing. I'd rather stroll along the seashore any	59
day than do whatever my mom planned to do in that dreary building. But before I	75
could turn to complain to my mother, she'd already climbed out of the car.	89
"Great," I said, slamming the car door and taking my time as I followed her.	104
The building was about as spectacular on the inside as it was on the outside.	119
There was a dumpy desk stacked with papers, a telephone ringing off the hook, and	134
a row of empty chairs. I didn't see anything more interesting than a thick oak door	150
and some dusty sailing equipment. There were piles of rope and rigging	162
everywhere. Suddenly my mother was nowhere in sight. I couldn't imagine what	174
kind of surprise this deserted office could produce. "I can see this is going to be an	191
exciting day," I muttered to myself.	197
"Are you Jesse?" asked a voice. A young woman stood on the far end of the	213
office. "Your mother asked me to make sure you could find your way. Everyone is	228
already outside." Curiously, I followed the woman across the threadbare carpet to	240
the rear of the building.	245
The woman yanked the door open, and we stepped out, blinking in the sunshine.	259
Before me was the smell of the sea, a stretch of beach, and a gorgeous ship	275
bobbing on the waves. My mom was already on board.	285
"What exactly was going on here?" I wondered to myself.	295
My mother must have felt me watching her, because she spun around and	308
started waving her arms at me. She was beckoning me down the dangerous-looking	322
dock toward the impressive ship.	327
"Surprise, Jesse!" she shouted. "Do you want to go whale-watching with me?"	340
Captain Jones tells me that a pod of humpback whales was just spotted feeding	354
outside the bay. Hurry up, lazybones!"	360
I couldn't think of anything sarcastic to say to that. In fact, I was so excited that I	378
skipped down the beach toward the boat. I guess my mom knew how to surprise me	394
after all.	396

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It was a cold and dreary day. A few leaves clung desperately to the branches of the solitary trees, but most of the leaves had been ripped off as the wind gusted through. It was only the middle of October, but already the wind was bitterly cold. Even the trees seemed to shiver.	16 32 47 53
One house stood alone, surrounded by barren fields. It seemed lonely and vulnerable. There were patches on the roof where the shingles had come off and most of the paint was chipping away. The house looked shabby and neglected.	65 79 92
The inside of the house was no cheerier. Its three rooms were starkly furnished, and the floor was bare except for a few ragged-looking rugs. The only point of interest in the living room was the large, crudely made easel that sat near the eastern window.	106 122 137 139
A slender, aging man stood before the easel in bedraggled clothes and bare feet. He was painting a beach on the canvas before him. It was a lovely scene depicting sand, water, and the vibrant colors of a sunset.	153 169 178
The man was pleased with his work thus far. He had awakened to the gloomy day, and his mood was as bleak as the weather outside. Breakfast had been a hurried affair because he was eager to get to work and dispel the aching sadness in his heart.	193 208 224 226
As soon as the man began to splash color on the canvas, his despair started to evaporate. He began to drift away, his concentration entirely on the emerging picture before him. His loneliness and hopelessness left him, like a heavy shawl lifted from his shoulders. It was as if he were a part of the scene before him, his memory and rendition of it more real than his dismal surroundings.	242 254 267 285 296
Then the man added the final element to the painting. It was a woman, lovely and graceful. She was approaching the painter, her arm lifted in salutation and a radiant smile on her face.	311 325 330
As the man completed the final touches of the painting he felt great joy. Painting could brighten even his darkest days.	345 351

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Late one afternoon, Patrick O'Connor was walking home from school when a	12
strange thing happened. His usual route home took him through a dark tunnel and	26
high along some cliffs near an ocean. He saw nothing in the tunnel that amazed	41
him. He didn't see anything strange as he walked along the cliffs above the wild	56
waters. But just as he turned down the lane that led to his grandmother's cottage, a	72
strange sight caught his eye.	77
It was a fairy sitting cool as a cucumber on a corner fence post. Patrick stopped,	93
closed his eyes, rubbed them, and then opened them again. The fairy was still	107
sitting on the fence post, and now she was staring at him. The tiny, shimmering	122
woman was the most beautiful creature Patrick had ever seen. She had long, glossy	136
hair and wings like a butterfly.	142
"I've been waiting for you all afternoon, Patrick O'Connor," she said. "What took	155
you so long to walk home from school?"	163
"I didn't know anyone was waiting for me, so I had no reason to hurry," Patrick	179
stammered.	180
"That's an honest answer," she told Patrick. Then she stood up and flapped her	194
pretty wings. Before Patrick realized what was happening, she'd already landed on	206
his shoulder and propped her elbow on his ear.	215
"Patrick O'Connor," she whispered. "Did you know your grandmother was friends	226
with the fairies in these parts?"	232
"No, I did not know that," Patrick replied. "What do you want with me?"	246
"Well, now that you and your family live in your grandmother's house, the fairies	260
want to be your friends as well. I was the one chosen to speak with you. Has	277
anyone ever told you that you have your grandmother's eyes?" Patrick blushed and	290
shoved his hands in his pockets as the fairy smiled kindly at him.	303
"I must go now, but we will speak again very soon," the fairy said as she blew	320
him a kiss and disappeared.	325

Late one afternoon, Patrick O'Connor was walking home from school when a strange thing happened. His usual route home took him through a dark tunnel and high along some cliffs near an ocean. He saw nothing in the tunnel that amazed him. He didn't see anything strange as he walked along the cliffs above the wild waters. But just as he turned down the lane that led to his grandmother's cottage, a strange sight caught his eye.

It was a fairy sitting cool as a cucumber on a corner fence post. Patrick stopped, closed his eyes, rubbed them, and then opened them again. The fairy was still sitting on the fence post, and now she was staring at him. The tiny, shimmering woman was the most beautiful creature Patrick had ever seen. She had long, glossy hair and wings like a butterfly.

"I've been waiting for you all afternoon, Patrick O'Connor," she said. "What took you so long to walk home from school?"

"I didn't know anyone was waiting for me, so I had no reason to hurry," Patrick stammered.

"That's an honest answer," she told Patrick. Then she stood up and flapped her pretty wings. Before Patrick realized what was happening, she'd already landed on his shoulder and propped her elbow on his ear.

"Patrick O'Connor," she whispered. "Did you know your grandmother was friends with the fairies in these parts?"

"No, I did not know that," Patrick replied. "What do you want with me?"

"Well, now that you and your family live in your grandmother's house, the fairies want to be your friends as well. I was the one chosen to speak with you. Has anyone ever told you that you have your grandmother's eyes?" Patrick blushed and shoved his hands in his pockets as the fairy smiled kindly at him.

"I must go now, but we will speak again very soon," the fairy said as she blew him a kiss and disappeared.

Laura was very excited that there were only three days of school this week. The long weekend was going to be great because Laura was going to stay with her grandma and grandpa. She always liked to stay with them because it was so much fun.	15 30 45 46
Mrs. Stevens gave a spelling test on Wednesday morning, but Laura could hardly think because she kept imagining what she was going to do after school. She needed to pack her clothes in her new black suitcase. She also needed to bring her favorite book because each night everyone would sit by the fireplace and read. Finally, she couldn't forget Mrs. Mouse, her favorite stuffed animal, who had slept next to her in bed since she was little.	59 73 89 102 115 124
By the afternoon, Laura had an even harder time listening to her teacher. Laura thought about other nights at her grandparents' house. She knew that she'd have to be in bed before 8:30, even if it wasn't a school night. She also remembered the rule to eat ALL your vegetables. Still, most of the differences were fun. Grandma would always let Laura rent a movie and eat popcorn on the couch. Better yet, Laura would be able to hear stories about things HER dad had done when he was a kid. Best of all, Grandma would ask her how she felt about different things, and Laura would always feel safe talking.	138 152 168 182 197 214 229 235
That night, when Laura's dad dropped her off at Grandma's, he surprised Laura by picking her up after he'd grabbed the black suitcase. He teased her by saying the suitcase was heavier than she was.	248 264 270
"Have a super weekend, Peanut," he said as he rang the doorbell. "I wish I didn't have to work out of town, but I do. Have a great time, and I'll see you Sunday night."	286 305
Grandma opened the front door and gave Laura a big hug. Grandpa took her suitcase and carried it upstairs pretending like it was heavy. Laura heard popcorn popping in the microwave. She looked at the coffee table and saw the movie she wanted to see about a girls' basketball team.	319 332 347 355
"Yes," thought Laura. "This weekend is going to be great!"	365

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"Let's go exploring," suggested Amanda. "I've always dreamed of discovering treasures left behind by pioneers."	10
"Weren't many pioneers rather poor?" Beth asked thoughtfully. "I never thought of pioneers leaving behind treasures. It may be possible that because their wagons couldn't carry everything, travelers buried their belongings and hoped they could return for them later."	15
"I don't care who left it or why. I just want to find someone's long-lost money, jewels, gold, or silver! Don't you ever daydream about becoming rich overnight?"	26
"Not really," replied Beth. "If I found a lot of money, I'd probably just spend it foolishly and it would be gone before I knew it."	39
"What if you found gold or jewels?" asked Amanda. "Wouldn't it be fun to wear bangles or hair pieces that were once owned by queens or princesses?"	50
"Even though I only wear blue jeans and T-shirts, I suppose it would be amusing to decorate my ears and long hair with jewels," laughed Beth. "You know I detest dresses, and I usually wear a ponytail. I doubt very much that jewels would go with my wardrobe!"	54
"Does that mean you want to stay home and play something else?" asked Amanda.	71
"No way," cried Beth. "Let's go exploring! You never know what we'll find. We may discover the long-lost treasure you've been dreaming of, or we could find some old books or a long-lost letter. Even if we don't find anything, the search will be fun. We can start at my grandma's place down by the river. Let's telephone her to get her permission. Maybe we'll get really lucky, and she will bake cookies for us!"	83
After the girls got to Beth's grandma's house and finished their cookies and milk, they ran off towards the river. Oh my, what a dilemma. Where should they start looking? Since centuries had passed and no trails remained, the pioneers could have buried their belongings almost anywhere.	99
The girls sat on the riverbank and pretended they were early pioneers traveling through the area. What would it feel like to leave behind things you love, knowing you might never return? As they imagined life as pioneers, the sun set. Eventually they ran back to the house to have dinner and ask Beth's grandma what she knew about the pioneers.	109

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Little Wolf's mother was hungry for rabbit stew one morning, so she told her son to go out and shoot a rabbit for her. She said she would make a savory stew for dinner. Little Wolf was happy because he loved to hunt. He was good with a bow and arrow and rarely missed when he shot at an animal.	15 33 49 60
Little Wolf wasn't in the forest for very long before he came upon a rabbit and took aim. He was just about to release his arrow when the rabbit turned and spoke to him.	76 92 94
"Oh, please don't shoot me, brave hunter," the rabbit pleaded. "I am the mother of five defenseless babies. If you kill me, my children will starve."	108 120
Little Wolf did not lower his bow and continued to aim the arrow right between the rabbit's pleading eyes.	136 139
"My mother is hungry for rabbit stew," he told her. "She sent me out into the forest for rabbit and will be very angry if I return with nothing."	155 168
"Return with nothing, wise hunter. If you let me go so I may tend to my babies, I will give you the best of luck with my magical powers."	186 197
"Bah!" Little Wolf said. "We do not need luck. We need food." Still, even though Little Wolf was famished, he could not shoot the rabbit because she had spoken to him.	212 227 228
"Go on then. I will shoot another rabbit," he said. Despite the good luck promised to him, he returned that evening without a rabbit for his mother's stew.	242 256
"You lazy boy!" his mother shouted at him. "Go down to the river and fetch some water for me."	272 275
On the trail to the river, Little Wolf thought he caught a glimpse of the rabbit he'd let go earlier, but it was too dark to be certain. When he got to the river, he dipped his mother's jug into the current, only to pull it out and find a silver trout trapped inside. Little Wolf tossed the trout on the beach, dipped the jug again, and out came another fish!	292 311 328 344 346
"What luck!" Little Wolf said. He and his mother had savory trout stew for dinner. Little Wolf thought trout stew was better than rabbit stew any day.	361 373

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Molly tried to sleep, but she couldn't. Every time she closed her eyes and tried to	16
snuggle her pillows, she would remember that tomorrow it would be her turn to	30
stand up in front of the class, in front of EVERYONE, and give her speech.	45
Molly couldn't help it, she was nervous. Tonight when her mom tucked her into	59
bed, she folded the covers around Molly more snugly than usual.	70
"I know you're nervous because of your speech tomorrow, Molly, but you really	83
have nothing to be scared of."	89
Molly couldn't speak, so she nodded instead. Her mom didn't really know what	102
Molly was so nervous about. Her mom was thirty-five years old, not eight years old	118
and in fourth grade like Molly.	124
She didn't know that Michael O'Connor sat in the front row of Molly's class. She	139
didn't know that whenever a girl got up to give her speech, he made funny faces and	156
stuck his tongue out at her.	162
What if Molly stood in front of the class tomorrow and found she couldn't speak?	177
What if she blushed until she was as red as a beet? What if her eyes popped out	195
and rolled between the aisles to the teacher's desk? What if everyone laughed at	209
her?	210
Molly's speech was about the lions in Africa. It was about how they lived in	225
families called "prides" and how lionesses did all the hunting. What if nobody cared	239
about lions?	241
Molly didn't remember falling asleep. She must have slept because the next	253
time she opened her eyes it was morning and time to go to school. Even though	269
she was more than a little bit scared and so nervous she could only eat half her	286
cereal, she still went.	290
When it was time for Molly to give her speech, the whole classroom suddenly got	305
quiet. Molly went to the front of the room, her hands trembling. There was Michael	320
O'Connor crossing his eyes. Molly looked at him and then looked away.	332
"Lions live in Africa," Molly said and went on with her speech.	344

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Mr. Shrunk worked as a filing clerk at the telephone company. All day long he filed names, names, and more names. Mr. Shrunk thought his job was probably the most boring job on the planet.	15 29 35
One day, Mr. Shrunk could not take it any longer. Even though he was in the middle of organizing a huge stack of folders, he stood up, put on his jacket, and walked out the door.	51 67 71
"That's the last I'll ever see of that place," he said to himself as he climbed into his car and drove home. "Now I need to find myself a new and more exciting job."	88 105
The next morning over a bowl of chocolate crunch cereal, Mr. Shrunk reviewed the classifieds in the daily paper.	118 124
"It looks like they need help at both the police station and the fire station. I'll apply at both places," he said to himself. Mr. Shrunk finished his cereal, changed out of his pajamas and slippers into a suit and tie, and went out to look for work.	140 154 172
First, he stopped at the police station, where he got the chance to ride around with a pair of police officers in their squad car. An hour later, Mr. Shrunk decided dodging bullets and high-speed chases were not for him.	187 203 213
At the fire station, the firemen asked Mr. Shrunk to climb five stories of ladders and then slide down the long fire pole. Since he was afraid of heights and burning objects, he left the fire station without a job.	228 244 253
The next morning, Mr. Shrunk reviewed the classified ads yet again. He was about to set aside the paper when an ad on the far corner of the page caught his attention.	266 284 285
The ad read, "Brave stunt man wanted for dangerous stunts in a feature Hollywood film." The ad said the studio was looking for a tall man with a medium build and a mustache. The ad also gave the number to call if interested. Mr. Shrunk stood up.	298 314 330 332
"I'm tall," he said. "I have a medium build and a mustache." He marched across his kitchen and picked up the telephone. Mr. Shrunk was sure tomorrow he would start a new job.	347 361 365

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My name is Elmer, and I'm nearly six years old. Six years old is about 42 dog	17
years, so it is a little embarrassing to tell you that I got lost at my age. Actually, I got	37
lost because I listened to my kennel mate, Abby, who often gets us into trouble.	52
We traveled from Illinois to Michigan to see our owners' relatives. It was a long	67
ride, and our owners did quite a bit of visiting when they arrived. I guess that's why	84
we missed our long daily walk. When they let us out the next morning, Abby took	100
advantage of the situation and started running. I impulsively followed her!	111
We were exploring a new neighborhood, and the next thing I knew, two black	125
Labradors appeared and started sniffing me all over. Abby bolted towards the	137
highway and left me to fend for myself. The labs' owner, who seemed mean at that	153
moment, tried to control her noisy dogs. Finally, she placed her hands on her hips	168
and firmly yelled, "Kennel!" I understood that word, so I ran into the kennel with the	184
labs. I guess I wasn't supposed to go inside because she dragged me out by my	200
collar.	201
The lady commanded me to sit. She read my tags and giggled. Then she asked	216
a familiar but embarrassing question. "Elmer? What kind of name is that for a	230
handsome dog like yourself?" She called my owners' number and left a message for	244
them. My owners quickly returned her call and made arrangements to pick me up.	258
She fed me some biscuits and called her office to say she'd be late. She offered me	275
a portable kennel to sit in while my owners came to get me. My owners were happy	292
to see me. They thanked the nice lady before she left for work.	305
Some people say it's a dog-eat-dog world out there, but I disagree. Especially	320
when you are lucky enough to get lost near a kind dog owner. However, I know I was	338
lucky, and I think I've learned my lesson. The next time Abby wants to go exploring,	354
I'll remind her that there's no place like home.	363

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The lady commanded me to sit. She read my tags and giggled. Then she asked a familiar but embarrassing question. "Elmer? What kind of name is that for a handsome dog like yourself?" She called my owners' number and left a message for them. My owners quickly returned her call and made arrangements to pick me up. She fed me some biscuits and called her office to say she'd be late. She offered me a portable kennel to sit in while my owners came to get me. My owners were happy to see me. They thanked the nice lady before she left for work.

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Old Mr. Jenkins was digging around in his flower garden one afternoon when his hoe hit something solid. He put down the hoe and picked up a shovel.	14 28
"It must be one of those pesky rocks again," he told his cat, Virginia, who was always watching him. "When will I get rid of all of the rocks in my garden? I've been digging up rocks for more than fifty years."	44 62 70
"Meow," Virginia said as she watched Mr. Jenkins turn and start digging.	82
The rock that Mr. Jenkins hit with his hoe was long and narrow. It was soft, brown in color, and had two rounded ends. At first Mr. Jenkins thought he was digging up a petrified log. Soon though, he realized he was digging up a fossilized bone.	98 113 128 129
"Good heavens!" Mr. Jenkins exclaimed when he'd finally unearthed the bone and saw how huge it was. "What do you make of this thing, Virginia?"	140 154
Virginia, the cat, leaped gracefully down into the hole Mr. Jenkins just dug.	167
Mr. Jenkins could tell Virginia was thinking as she paced the length of the bone. Finally, Virginia stopped. She jumped out of the hole and stopped five feet across the lawn from it. She began to dig another hole with her furry paws.	182 196 210
Mr. Jenkins was about to scold Virginia because she was digging in the middle of his tulip patch, but he was curious. Instead of hollering, he picked up his shovel and went to help.	225 241 244
An hour later, Virginia and Mr. Jenkins dug up another bone. This bone was the skull of a dinosaur. It was as big as Mr. Jenkins' lawn mower and had rows and rows of sharp teeth. The teeth were the same size as the blade on Mr. Jenkins' hoe. When Mr. Jenkins saw the skull, he set it down carefully and walked into his house. From his kitchen, he used the telephone and called the local museum.	259 276 293 309 321
"I've got something out in my garden I think you'll want to see," he told the scientist who answered the phone. "Bring shovels!"	337 344

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Once upon a time, in a small village called Bandion, there lived a boy called Samir. Samir had three roosters, and every morning they would say, "Cock-a-doodle-do! Cock-a-doodle-do!" As soon as Grandma heard their call, she would get up and start her day. They would call again, and Grandpa would rise and begin his day. When they called for the third time, Samir and his father, mother, and brothers would wake up and get ready for the new day. Everyone in Samir's family depended on the roosters to wake them up in the morning. Samir loved his roosters very much and took excellent care of them.	15 28 44 60 75 90 106 112
One day, two of Samir's uncles came to the village to visit. They stayed for several days. The roosters would say, "Cock-a-doodle-do" promptly at the stroke of every hour. Samir's uncles were impressed that his family didn't need a clock, and they wished they each had one of Samir's roosters. On the last day of their visit, Samir's uncles convinced him to give them each a rooster. After all, he did have three roosters and one rooster should be enough. Each uncle picked a rooster and left for their home.	127 142 156 172 187 201 205
Samir stroked the rooster that was left behind. "You are all alone now," he said sadly.	220 221
The next morning, the lone rooster did not crow. Grandma waited and waited for it to call. When Grandpa finally got up and left for work, he was late. Everyone in the family got up late that day, and everyone was angry.	235 252 263
"Why didn't the rooster crow?" everyone asked. Samir understood. The remaining rooster was lonely and missed his friends very much. Samir decided to write to his uncles and beg them to return their roosters. Before he could finish his letters, there was a knock at the door. Both of his uncles had returned with their roosters.	273 286 302 318 319
"Take your roosters back," they said. "They did not crow this morning, and we were all late!"	333 336
Samir gathered his roosters into his arms and said, "You clever roosters. You planned not to crow if you were ever separated."	349 358

Once upon a time, in a small village called Bandion, there lived a boy called Samir. Samir had three roosters, and every morning they would say, "Cock-a-doodle-do! Cock-a-doodle-do!" As soon as Grandma heard their call, she would get up and start her day. They would call again, and Grandpa would rise and begin his day. When they called for the third time, Samir and his father, mother, and brothers would wake up and get ready for the new day. Everyone in Samir's family depended on the roosters to wake them up in the morning. Samir loved his roosters very much and took excellent care of them.

One day, two of Samir's uncles came to the village to visit. They stayed for several days. The roosters would say, "Cock-a-doodle-do" promptly at the stroke of every hour. Samir's uncles were impressed that his family didn't need a clock, and they wished they each had one of Samir's roosters. On the last day of their visit, Samir's uncles convinced him to give them each a rooster. After all, he did have three roosters and one rooster should be enough. Each uncle picked a rooster and left for their home.

Samir stroked the rooster that was left behind. "You are all alone now," he said sadly.

The next morning, the lone rooster did not crow. Grandma waited and waited for it to call. When Grandpa finally got up and left for work, he was late. Everyone in the family got up late that day, and everyone was angry.

"Why didn't the rooster crow?" everyone asked. Samir understood. The remaining rooster was lonely and missed his friends very much. Samir decided to write to his uncles and beg them to return their roosters. Before he could finish his letters, there was a knock at the door. Both of his uncles had returned with their roosters.

"Take your roosters back," they said. "They did not crow this morning, and we were all late!"

Samir gathered his roosters into his arms and said, "You clever roosters. You planned not to crow if you were ever separated."

One day Addie was collecting seashells in the surf when the flash of a fish tail caught her eye. At first Addie thought she'd seen the tail of a really small whale, so she backed away. Suddenly, a woman's head popped up out of the water, and Addie saw that the tail belonged to a mermaid.	16 33 47 56
The mermaid had tangled green hair. She had webbed skin between her blue fingers and gills behind her ears. The scales on her tail were silver and green.	69 84
Addie was so surprised she dropped her seashells. Her mother had always told her that mermaids didn't exist.	97 102
"Do not be frightened of me," the mermaid said. "I'm the last of my kind living in these waters, and I'm terribly lonely. Would you like to come under the water with me? I'll give you a tour of the ocean."	119 134 143
Addie knew that she probably shouldn't go with the mermaid, but her curiosity was too fierce. Soon she found herself chin deep in the sea with the mermaid splashing beside her.	156 171 174
"I don't think I should go under the water," Addie said. "I don't have gills behind my ears like you do."	190 195
"Just hold my hand tightly, and everything will be all right," the mermaid replied. Then she took Addie's hand and dove under the water.	209 219
At first Addie panicked as the green waves swirled around her. But she quickly realized the mermaid was telling the truth. As long as Addie held onto her hand, she could breathe under water and swim like a fish.	233 249 258
"Come on now," the mermaid told Addie. Her voice sounded eerie under the water.	271 272
The mermaid gave Addie a tour of the coral reef, and they swam with a colony of harmless jellyfish. They even rode on the back of a giant sea turtle. When Addie finally let go of the mermaid's hand and waded out of the water, the sun was setting and she could hear her mother calling for her.	289 304 321 330
"Thanks," Addie said.	333
"Any time, friend," the mermaid replied, and with a flash of her tail, she was gone.	349

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Randy was a raccoon, and he loved to act on stage. He was preparing an animal talent show. Randy scurried throughout the forest talking to the animals of the woods. He wanted each animal to perform one act in the animal talent show.	15 28 43
Soon the big night came. All the animals of the forest showed up for the performance. Randy organized the performers, and the first one to perform was Gretchen the goose.	58 70 73
Gretchen walked out on stage and said, "Thank you all for coming tonight. I've prepared a special song I would like to sing for you." She took a deep breath and honked. She honked and honked and honked. It did not sound very good, but it was the best that Gretchen could do. She bowed when she was finished, and all the animals clapped politely.	87 104 119 134 138
"Borris, you're next," said Randy. Borris the bear shyly walked out on stage staring at the floor.	151 155
"Uh, I am going to dance," said Borris. The bear danced a little, shuffling his feet back and forth. He soon forgot his shyness and began to really enjoy himself. He stood on his back feet and danced backwards and forwards. He turned around in a circle. He jumped from one foot to the other. The animals cheered and whistled. Borris' dance was really quite good.	171 186 201 215 221
Sue the songbird was up next. She sang a beautiful solo. Her performance was perfect, thanks to all her years of practicing. The animals sat in awed silence until she finished.	235 250 252
Robert the rabbit performed a play in which he acted as if a man was hunting him. First he ran away, then he ran back, and then he acted as if he were hit by a bullet. The animals clapped, but they were too scared by the drama to enjoy it.	268 288 303
Randy the raccoon was the last one to perform. He performed a wonderful drama about a king who was looking for a queen. The audience laughed and cried. The animals loved Randy's performance. They clapped and requested another performance.	316 331 341 342
"Please come to the next animal talent show, and you will see more," said Randy. All the animals of the forest left the talent show looking forward to the next performance.	356 372 373

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Tad didn't pay much attention to the goldfish in the crystal bowl on his dresser.	15
Most mornings he just tapped a bit of food into the bowl and went to school. He never talked to his pet. He never admired the fish's golden scales or delicate fins and tail, and he didn't notice the skillful way in which the fish swam circles in the water.	32 47 64 65
One day Tad was feeding his fish and thinking about the monster movie he planned to see that evening, when the fish spoke to him.	79 90
"Hey," the fish gargled, "you're dumping too much food into my bowl. Watch what you're doing, foolish boy!" Tad was so surprised he dropped the container of fish food on the floor.	103 117 122
"No," he said to himself as he shook his head. "It isn't possible for my fish to speak to me because fish don't talk. This kind of thing only happens in monster movies, not in reality."	139 154 158
"This is happening to you," the fish proclaimed. "I'm a goldfish, and I'm speaking to you, young man. You've ignored me since the day you got me. For one thing, the water in this bowl is too cold. Just dip your finger in it, and test it yourself. I don't know how I've survived under these cruel conditions."	172 189 208 216
Of course, the water in the bowl wasn't too cold for the goldfish, but how was Tad to know? How was Tad to know that his goldfish was not an ordinary fish, and as soon as he dipped his finger into the water, he would trade places with the goldfish?	233 250 266
Tad stuck his finger in the water and found it was cold, but not freezing. "It feels just fine to me," he tried to say, but no sound escaped him. Tad was now trapped in the fishbowl, and the goldfish had become a little boy. Tad swam around the fish bowl frantically, but when he tried to speak, only bubbles came out of his mouth. He watched his fish, who was now a boy, move around his bedroom.	283 301 316 332 344
"I think I'll try to see one of those monster movies you mentioned," he told Tad. "Goodbye, Tadpole."	359 362

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The Writers' Club was an interesting group of talented school children who loved to write. Their faculty advisor suggested an interesting project for them. Each of them would write one paragraph of a story that would be printed in the school newspaper. The suggestion was eagerly accepted by participants. Joanie, the sports star of the school, began the story. She wrote this paragraph:	13 26 41 51 63
"Judy sat in class and watched her friend's gym class play soccer. She wished so hard that she could be excused from class and play with them. Suddenly, her teacher saw her looking outside and said, 'Why don't you go and play with them?' Judy didn't sit there another minute. She grabbed her books and folders and ran out to the field. She joined the soccer team and immediately scored a goal. She was awesome!"	77 92 107 122 137 138
Next was Scott's turn. He was a fan of science fiction.	149
"Just as Judy scored the winning soccer goal, aliens beamed her aboard their ship and flew off. Two large alien guards came at her to seize her and throw her into a cell. Judy gave the two of them a swift kick to the shins and seized control of their ship. She flew back to her school and waved at the students below."	162 180 199 212
It was Jessica's turn next. She loved movies, so she wrote about them.	225
"Then Judy flew off to California. She flew the spaceship right past the Hollywood sign and landed at a movie studio. One movie director asked if she would fly her spaceship for him in one of his movies. She said, 'Yes, but only if I can have the starring role.' The director agreed."	238 252 271 278
Finally it was Stephen's turn. The faculty advisor asked him to end the story with a nice conclusion.	293 296
"But Judy was bored as a movie star and with the spaceship, so she returned home and went to bed. The next day at school all her friends asked her what happened. All she said was, 'I scored the winning soccer goal.'"	311 327 338
The story was published in the school newspaper, and the readers requested a sequel.	351 352

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Thelma's new neighbor was mighty odd. She knew her neighbor was strange from the moment the moving van pulled into the driveway of the house across the street. She knew he was different just as soon as she saw him walk up to the front door of his new house.	12 27 45 50
Thelma wanted to walk across the street and introduce herself, but her new neighbor's costume made her stop and stare. The man wore shiny black boots that came to his knees and a black top hat. He had a mustache that curled up at the ends and a peculiar sparkle that lit his chocolate brown eyes. Thelma watched as he threw open his front door, took a moment to look inside, and then abruptly swung around and walked back to the moving truck parked in his driveway.	63 77 95 109 125 137
"Well, come on," he shouted. "Make yourselves at home!"	146
Then, to Thelma's complete surprise, a gang of clowns stepped out of the back of the truck. A troupe of monkeys and many more exotic animals followed the clowns. Thelma saw a pair of zebras, a bearded lion, and a very large tiger. She gasped when she saw a mama elephant and her tiny baby.	161 175 191 201
"How could the circus be moving in across the street?" Thelma asked herself. "What would she and the other neighbors do about the noise that would surely be caused by their new neighbor with all his animals?"	214 229 238
Thelma stayed at home and sat by the telephone, waiting for her neighbors to call and complain about the new neighbor. She sat for hours but no one called. She could hear loud music and the sound of wild animals coming from the house across the street. Still, no one knocked on her door to ask her if she was annoyed with the noise.	252 268 283 301 302
At one o'clock in the morning, the phone rang. The voice on the other end had an Irish accent.	318 321
"Hi. I'm you're new neighbor," said the voice. "I'm having a party. All your friends are already here. Would you like to join us?"	335 345

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Theodore was an actor in movies. He was not a big movie star, but he did like to act. He was called an extra. You see extras acting in movies all the time. Just look at all the people walking down a street in a movie scene. Those people are all extras. When you watch a movie and see people standing around in the background, you are watching the extras at work.	18 35 51 64 72
Theodore's last acting job was to play a police officer in a big Hollywood movie. Before beginning work, Theodore needed to put on some makeup. In the movies, women and girls aren't the only ones who wear makeup. A makeup artist helped put the makeup on Theodore's face. The makeup made him look good on film. Then Theodore had to put on a costume. His costume was a police officer's uniform. When he wore the costume, he looked just like a real police officer. Even though he wasn't really a police officer, he sure looked like one. He even had a gun in his holster. The gun wasn't real and it couldn't fire bullets, but it did look real enough for a movie.	87 100 115 129 143 159 176 193 195
Once Theodore was ready, he had to wait. He waited while the cameramen moved their cameras into place. He and the other actors waited for the director to tell them where to stand and what to do. The director told Theodore to jump out of the way when the star of the movie rode by him on a horse. He would have to be careful so the horse wouldn't run into him.	208 223 240 259 267
"Action!" yelled the director. The actors started performing. Theodore did everything the director told him to do. He acted like a police officer, and when the star rode by on the horse, Theodore jumped out of the way. Theodore was a good actor, but he wasn't really acting this time. He really did need to jump out of the way of the horse! Theodore and the other actors worked all night to make the scene just right. When the movie was finished, it was fun for Theodore's friends and family to see him on the big screen.	277 293 309 327 343 358 364

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There was a cave in the forest not far from Scarlett's house. Weeds and	14
brambles half blocked the opening to the cave, but the local kids still knew where to	30
find it. They gathered there on summer evenings before the sun set and dared each	45
other to go inside. So far, no one had been daring enough to enter because they	61
knew caves were dark and dangerous.	67
Scarlett, like the other children, was wary of the cave. But the cave also made	82
her curious because she'd heard that bats often lived inside caves. She'd also	95
heard that pirates sometimes hid their treasure in caves. "Maybe," she thought,	107
"there is pirate treasure in the cave in the forest. Maybe if I am brave enough to go	125
inside I'll find a treasure chest waiting for me filled with diamonds and rubies."	139
After many days, Scarlett talked her best friend, Millie, into helping her look for	153
treasure in the cave. One evening they ventured into the cave with a set of lanterns.	169
"Don't be frightened, Millie," Scarlett whispered outside the cave. "Don't you	180
want to be rich? There's pirate gold in there, Millie. I just know there is. We could	197
both be wearing ruby earrings in school tomorrow."	205
Millie looked into the dark cave. Even though she was holding a lantern, she	219
couldn't make out the depth of the cave. She'd tried to talk Scarlett out of this	235
adventure, but she knew it was no use. When Scarlett had her mind set to do	251
something, she did it.	255
Millie followed quietly behind Scarlett as she entered the cave. After walking	267
about a hundred feet, Scarlett suddenly wobbled and pitched forward. Millie caught	279
her around her waist just in time. The girls looked down and saw they were standing	295
at the edge of a large hole. After that scare, they gave up and headed out of the	313
cave. Once they were both safe and out in the open again, Millie sighed with relief.	329
"So much for pirate's treasure," Millie said.	336
"I do like this purple rock I found, but I don't think it was worth the trouble,"	353
Scarlett replied.	355

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Fifth grade was my favorite year of school. My classmates were intelligent and fun, and our teacher, Mrs. Norton, was the best teacher in the school. She made everything fun. She turned learning into an interesting activity.	13 28 37
For example, Mrs. Norton created something called the Link-Up Program. For every book a student read, he or she was given a paper link to add to the chain of links taped to the wall in the hallway. If our class read enough books to stretch the chain all the way around the school, she would reward us with a big party at the end of the year. To get us started at a good pace, she offered another reward. The boy and girl who read the most books by October first would get to go out for lunch with Mrs. Norton. Guess what? I read the most books, so Mrs. Norton took my friend, Kim, and me to McDonald's for lunch.	49 68 85 103 120 138 153 160
Another interesting reward Mrs. Norton used was called the Chocolate Factory. If a student did an outstanding job on his or her homework assignment, he or she would go to the Chocolate Factory. The Chocolate Factory was a wooden box in the shape of a little white house. When you opened the house by lifting the roof, you could see all of the chocolate and other candy that filled the house. A student could use one hand to grab as much candy as he or she could carry back to his or her desk. If any candy fell on the floor, it went back into the house. When I was rewarded with a trip to the Chocolate Factory, I thought about how I could get the most chocolate. I dipped my hand in like a scoop and filled it with candy. Then I carefully carried the candy back to my desk. I had enough candy to share with my friends.	171 187 202 218 234 253 270 286 303 319 320
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Traveling is a lot of fun. Sometimes I travel so I can learn, and sometimes I	16
travel just because I like to see different things. Sometimes I travel just to have fun	32
and to keep from being bored. I have enjoyed traveling to ten different countries.	46
Each country offered different and exciting things to see and do.	57
One of the most interesting countries I visited was Japan. Things are very	70
different in Japan than they are in the United States of America. For example, the	85
Japanese people speak Japanese, not English. They eat raw fish and rice instead	98
of pizza. Some people wear robes instead of suits. The people in Japan are very	113
kind and thoughtful, but it is hard to understand their customs.	124
France is another country that was fun to visit. The capital of France is Paris.	139
Paris is a beautiful city with many interesting things to see. I saw the Eiffel Tower,	155
one of the most famous buildings in the world. One of the biggest museums in the	171
world is also in Paris. It is home to some of the most famous paintings in the world.	189
The food is very good in France. They make good cheese and pastries. If you ever	205
have a chance, you should go to France.	213
Ukraine is another country which is very different from America. The people in	226
Ukraine do not all have cars or new clothes, and their food is a little different from	243
our food. But the people are very loving and fun to know. They are very kind to	260
visitors from the United States. If you go to Ukraine, try as much of the good food as	278
you can.	280
Mexico is also a fun country to visit. In Mexico City, you can speak Spanish and	296
eat burritos. In the coastal areas, you can swim in the ocean. There are many	311
things to buy in Mexico, like blankets, pottery, and clothing. Many people from the	325
Unites States visit Mexico because the two countries are so close together.	337
If you ever have a chance to travel, do not pass up the opportunity. You can	353
have great adventures in other places.	359

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When Maggie Ray's mother told her they would visit Mrs. Zale at teatime next Thursday, Maggie Ray said she wasn't going. Mrs. Zale lived in the big house on the corner of the block. Mrs. Zale's yard was filled with dead trees and surrounded by a tall, spiked fence. The curtains over Mrs. Zale's windows were never pulled open, and her house was always dark at night. Mrs. Zale didn't seem to have any visitors except the mailman when he delivered her mail.	14 29 44 58 74 83
On Wednesday, Maggie Ray cornered the mailman. "What's Mrs. Zale like? I'm supposed to go to her house on Thursday for tea, and I need to know."	95 110
The mailman smiled at Maggie Ray. "Don't tell me you've never met Mrs. Zale. You've lived down the street from her for over a year."	124 135
"Well I haven't," Maggie Ray said. "But I have to meet her tomorrow. Do you think you could tell me a bit about her?"	150 159
"Oh, no," the mailman said. "Mrs. Zale will want you to be surprised."	172
When teatime rolled around the next day, Maggie Ray's mother had to drag Maggie Ray up the sidewalk to Mrs. Zale's front door.	185 195
"I don't want to go in there," Maggie Ray panted. "Please don't make me go in there."	211 212
Before Maggie Ray could escape from her mother's grip, the front door opened. Maggie Ray's eyes nearly fell out of her head when a monkey in a red velvet vest opened the door. The monkey squawked at Maggie Ray and her mother and pointed them toward the dining room.	225 242 255 261
The dining room held another surprise. A parrot was sitting on the chandelier.	274
"Hello, hello, hello," he said as they walked into the room. "Would you like cream or sugar, cream or sugar?"	289 294
Maggie Ray couldn't believe her eyes. A silver tea service was laid out on the dining room table. There were trays of cookies, tarts, candies, and chocolates.	309 321
"Welcome, welcome," said the old woman who stepped into the room. She was dressed in an emerald ball gown. "I'm so glad you could make it, Maggie Ray." Mrs. Zale really was full of surprises!	334 350 356

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