

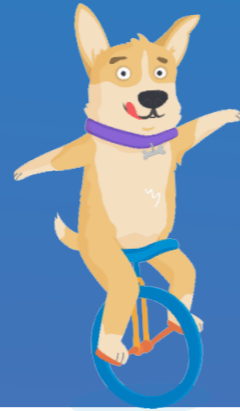


# WRITERS' AWARDS 2020

**HIDDEN TALENTS**

**TOP 10 ENTRIES**

KS1, KS2 and KS3



## Explore LEARNING

All of these young authors have done so well to make it to the top 10 of their Key Stage in this year's writing competition. To fight off competition from thousands of children across the UK is no mean feat and they should be hugely proud of their achievements.

We started the Explore Learning Writers' Awards to inspire the next generation of young writers and we hope that we have done exactly that, giving the next Roald Dahl, David Walliams or Greg James oodles of confidence in their creative abilities.

"A huge thank you to all the brilliant young writers who took part in the Explore Learning Writers' Awards for 2020. Congratulations to all of you for setting aside some time to explore your imaginations. More than anything, I hope you enjoyed creating something anew from your brain. In this terrible excuse for a year I got a lot of joy from reading the stories submitted. The decision to pick one overall winner was tough but I'm delighted to announce **Heidi Ashton** as the champion of this year's awards."



# Joseph Thomas

KS1

## DAD GOT COVID 19

It all started in January 2020. I had a lovely Christmas with my family (dad, mum, nan, grandad and brother Oliver). I was really happy as I got a big monster truck which was my favourite present and I liked it very much.

My brother, Oliver and I went back to school after Christmas. I got to see all my friends which I loved. We were only back at school for a few days when we were sent home from school and mum and dad were sent home from work because of Covid 19. Everyone was put into lockdown. While in lockdown me and my brother were fighting like cats and dogs, and mum and dad were arguing because of being together all the time. I just put my headphones on so I could not hear anyone arguing. Then one day in lockdown dad decided to get fit so he started running. He joined a running club to get fit then one day dad called us all together and said, "I am going to run a marathon!" Mum and Oliver and me, were shocked! Our eyes nearly popped out of our heads.

So dad started running then after a few months, disaster happened! Poor dad got covid 19. He was very poorly. Mum and I started to look after him because Oliver was so little. Dad had to isolate for at least two weeks but the marathon was in three week's time. Dad spent a lot of time moaning because he could not train. After two weeks he started training really hard. My dad is a good runner, he trained a lot and soon the day of the marathon came. He was very nervous of running a marathon because he hadn't done a lot of training. He went to the start line then they were off! "Come on Dad!" we all shouted, but halfway round my dad told us he ran out of energy and that some very nice runners helped my dad to the finish line. We all cheered when he finished and he got presented with his medal. Dad had finished. Well done dad! I was so proud of my dad for not giving up and finishing the marathon and he was so brave for not giving up. I couldn't believe my eyes that he actually finished the marathon after having covid 19.

Who would have guessed that my dad had a hidden talent to run a marathon and not giving up after being so ill and me having a hidden talent to write a story about my clever dad?

I love my dad.

## CLIMBING RACE ON THE HIGHEST TREE

Once there was a girl called Clair. One day she went to a new playground with her mummy. She had fun with yellow slide, orange swing and high see-saw.

Then a few minutes later, Clair's mum said: "Let's go to home; I will cook."

Clair was living in a tall skyscraper with her mum and dad. There was a tall tree next to the skyscraper. Clair loved the tree that was coming to the middle of the skyscraper next to her window. When they arrived next to the tree, Clair had an interesting idea.

She said to her mum: "I will play in the garden, then I will be home in 10 minutes."

When her mum went to the upstairs Clair checked her room window. It was open, and she started to climb on the tree, but she passed her window by mistake carried on climbing the tree until she reached the top. When she reached the top, she couldn't believe that it was so high! It was so high, but she wasn't scared of being at the top!

She was so excited about this adventure!

She climbed down from the tree and came in her open window. She started thinking about how to tell her mum this. Firstly, she wanted to be sure about her new gift. She tried to do it all weekend, and she was sure about her new talent!

Monday morning, she went to school and saw an advertisement in the school corridor. It was written:

'COME TO THE CLIMBING RACE ON THE HIGHEST TREE IN AFRICA'

This was amazing! She wanted to go to Africa to join this race. All-day at school, Clair thought about how to tell her mum. When she came home, she went to the kitchen to talk. Her mum was shocked and couldn't believe what Clair said.

The last word of her mum: "Nonsense, Clair! We don't go anywhere!"

Clair went to her room; her mum hadn't believed her. She was upset and started to murmuring La la la Merry had a little lamb and...Then, her mum came to Clair's room to talk. Suddenly, they heard strange noises out of the open window. A kitten stuck up on the tree, and it was crying. The kitten was about to fall. People were looking up to see the kitten.

Clair's mum called the fireman but before that Clair left out of the window and started climbing towards the kitten. Clair climbed, climbed and climbed. Her mum was watching her, and she was shocked. Then Claire rescued the kitten and reached the bottom of the tree.

She put the kitten on the floor and said "Goodbye, my love."

Her mum was waiting for her next to the tree. She was surprised and also happy. While Clair was hugging her mum, other people were clapping Clair.

While they are hugging each other, her mum whispered: "Ok, let's go to Africa together!"

# Zuleyha Peynirci

KS1

# Vittoria Calace

KS1

## The Powerful Burp

One hot and boiling day, my sister Blume ran outside towards the playground which was open and full of children. The colourful, fun play field had been shut before because of the evil, terrible and stupid Coronavirus. But that day, the hospital

had fewer sick people and we were allowed to go out.

"I love it!" Blume shouted to her best friend, Aisha. Accidentally, a loud, smelly burp came out from my sister's pink, beautiful lips: BUUUUUUUUUURP! Like a strong volcano eruption! Immediately, everyone else weed in their pants.

My sister was puzzled and couldn't understand what was happening. Her friend and all the other people rushed home like speedy rockets and the playground was empty again.

Blume was feeling so forlorn that she went out of the playground and rushed back home as quick as a cheetah.

As soon as she met her family, she did a big, strong burp BUUUUUUUUUURP!!!

Immediately everyone peed in their pants and rushed upstairs to get changed.

Blume was super sad but something funny popped in her mind: a snake hissing to a bat. She laughed for a minute and then went out again.

Suddenly, a young man with a head mask covering his face, came closer to Blume and while he pointed his knife to her arm, she did a gigantic, smelly burp. BUUUUUUUUUURP!!! The young man immediately weed in his pants and very embarrassed, he rushed back home to get changed.

Blume thought for a minute: "What's going on? something smells fishy, I can feel it!". Then she had a walk around, the lightning and the rain came, she covered herself with a peach, big, toy-bat. Suddenly, she heard someone yelling "help, help!". Blume stopped and looked around and saw a beautiful old lady with a very bad cough. "I may have Covid" she said "don't stay too close". In that moment Blume did a big, fat, stinky, loud burp. BUUUUUUUUUURP! Like a Geyser. The old lady weed in her pants, but, immediately, she stopped coughing. The corona virus was gone, FOREVER for her! Blume was so delighted she couldn't believe her eyes.

She was a SUPEHERO, a strange SUPERHERO though!

Aisha invited Blume to visit the nearest hospital. Everyone was coughing there. Suddenly, Blume did a big, strong, loud, noisy, sticky, smelly and long BUUUUUUUUUUUURP! All the sick, unwell, weak people together with all the doctors, nurses, vets, shoppers, builders, baddies, robbers, policemen, mean and good

people....and everyone else had a very long, smelly and disgusting wee. Finally, the bad, evil virus had disappeared from their bodies.

Blume was a SUPERHERO indeed.

A few days later, someone knocked on Blume's door. Knock Knock!!!

My sister opened the door and there it was, a ginormous trophy with the Queen holding it. The Queen in person, herself! She said "Thank you for stopping the Coronavirus! I owe you this big trophy!" and here it was a great trophy with the shape of a mouth burping.

## Hiss Hiss Hooray, For Superhero Snake!

Snake Sally, Caterpillar Coco and Rabbit Ruby were best friends. They always played happily together. But the friends knew that Snake Sally always had a dream in her heart, which was one day she could walk like others. Snake Sally's birthday was arriving soon, her friends decided to help her learn to walk to make her dream come true.

First Rabbit Ruby came up with an idea. She thought maybe making four legs would help Snake Sally walk like herself. She decided to use twigs. Snake Sally was full of hope.

Rabbit Ruby asked friends to lift up Snake Sally so that she could stick the twigs under. But as soon as friends let go, Snake Sally felt terribly in pain, because the twigs were too prickly. She was hurt and very disappointed. Then it was Caterpillar Coco's idea next. She thought making lots of soft legs like herself would work. So she glued lots of grass on both sides of Snake Sally's body. Snake Sally felt very excited, she thought this plan wouldn't fail. But no matter how hard she tried to stand up, she still stayed on the ground as the grass was too weak. She was very upset, she thought her dream would never come true.

Soon it was Snake Sally's birthday. Her friends held a party to cheer her up. Although Snake Sally was sad, she still felt very lucky to have love from her friends.

There was lots of fun during the party. Rabbit Ruby was playing skipping rope when suddenly a sharp stone tore the rope into two. Snake Sally saw it and said "Let me help you, I'll be your skipping rope."

Although she was very dizzy being kept thrown up and down, she thought it was worth it when seeing smile on her friends' faces.

"Hiss Hiss Hooray, for Superhero Snake!" the friends cheered.

Squirrel Sarah saw the party and wanted to join them. But there was a stream and she couldn't swim over. Snake Sally said "I'll be your bridge." Then she asked Rabbit Ruby to hold the end of her tail, whilst she used her mighty might to throw herself across the stream. Squirrel Sarah then walked across the stream on Snake Sally's body. "Hiss Hiss Hooray, for Superhero Snake!" the friends cheered again.

"Help! Help!" screamed Caterpillar Coco, high above in the air. She was swinging too high and one side of the swing got caught by a branch of a very tall tree. Snake Sally heard the cries and shouted to her friend "Don't worry, I am coming to rescue you!" Then she slithered up the tree till she reached the branch. She then wrapped her tail around Caterpillar Coco and brought her down to safety. "Hiss Hiss Hooray, for Superhero Snake!" the friends cheered again and again.

Although Snake Sally still couldn't walk, but her heart jumped up high for joy!

# Aaron Zhou

KS1

# Sama Siddiqui

KS1

## Sofia's Surprise

The dawn was vibrant and Sofia sat in the sunshine, relaxing in her garden, doing her tenth Suduko challenge. Her long hair was swaying gently in the breeze. She heard her friend Mary playing with her younger sister, in the next-door garden. Sofia wished she could join but she could not because of isolation. It had only been a few weeks, but Sofia had felt like she had been in isolation forever!

Sofia's mum walked towards Sofia, with a fruit bowl in her hand.

"Would you like a snack?" her mum asked politely.

"I'm bored!" wailed Sofia woefully, her eyes eagerly looking at Mary.

"Why don't you try to learn something new during lockdown?" Her mum said excitedly, handing her a new box of paints.

"That doesn't look fun," groaned Sofia.

"Well you never know, unless you try." Her mum smiled and walked back into the house.

Gently Sofia opened the paints and dipped the brush into the strawberry-red pot. She started outlining some swirls for the juicy grapes. Then she went on to paint the soft yellow banana and mint avocado and eventually she had painted all the fruit in the bowl.

At the end she looked at the painting and she was very impressed. Her mum then bellowed,

"Sofia time for bed. Leave your painting on the kitchen table so it can dry."

Sofia's mum read her favourite bedtime story and then sat down beside her stroking her hair,

"Maybe something magical will happen to you." Sofia's mum said as she gave her a wink, blew her a kiss and left the room. Sofia hugged her teddy thinking about what magical thing her mum meant, then eventually she fell fast asleep. Suddenly she heard a BANG! She sat up quickly, it was really dark and scary in her bedroom. She thought everyone in the whole street was asleep except for her. She felt a shiver of fear; her face went as white as snow. She crept downstairs as quiet as a mouse, with a torch in one hand and a cricket bat in the other. There was a strange strong smell of fruit and she could hear music, coming from the kitchen.

She courageously opened the kitchen door. She was speechless! She stood frozen with her mouth wide open. She saw an actual BANANA spinning around on the kitchen stool and then jumping into the air followed by a banana split! There were LEMONS boogying a break dance on the kitchen table. TANGERINES dived and twirled into the sink and GRAPES bounced into a conga around the kitchen floor!

Before she could say anything, the fruit pulled Sofia's arm to join in with them. She danced with the apples a Cha-Cha followed by a Waltz with the ripe green mangoes! She felt so free and wonderful, for the first time in ages. After the party was over, the fruit climbed back into the painting.

Sofia didn't know painting could be so much fun!

## Hedgy the Hero

### Chapter 1

One day there was a cute little Hedgehog called Hedgy. He lived in a pile of leaves in the middle of the woods. It will soon be bonfire night, but Hedgy didn't like bonfire night. So Hedgy liked to warn the others to stay away from smoke at all times. But he couldn't yet because they were asleep. So, he ran downstairs to get some breakfast. Hedgy chose coco pops. He grabbed the coco pops tight and got milk, a bowl and a spoon and then dropped the coco pops into the bowl and then poured the milk in. Then he sat down and gobbled the coco pops up before going out for acorns.

### Chapter 2

Suddenly Hedgy saw a big bad wolf! The big bad wolf looked at Hedgy in astonishment because he had never seen a Hedgehog before. Then surprisingly the big bad wolf ran away from Hedgy! Hedgy's mouth was wide open. "Wow I thought I was gonna die" Hedgy said. He felt worried and relieved. Out at the other side of the woods lived Hedgy's friend Stripey. Stripey was a nice friendly Tiger, but he sometimes can be a bit hyper. He lived in a cosy wooden cottage in the middle of the grassy field. Stripey was out in the field playing tag with his little sister. His little sister was 'it' and Stripey had to run away from her. His little sister was called Tweaky and she was four years old and was very little so Stripey couldn't see her. Now back to the middle of the woods.

### Chapter 3

After Hedgy picked 16 acorns he sets off back home. He liked to entertain himself by pretending the acorns were rockets, and he played with his teddy that he brought. Then he was back at the pile of leaves! Suddenly there was a smell of porridge in the distance. It smelled like human porridge and guess what? It was a human! He had to stay alert of humans his mummy said to him. So Hedgy just ran into the house to safety.

### Chapter 4

Later, Hedgy sets off in the dark to do spy stuff like making sure no robbery happens or when the bonfire is gonna start. Hedgy starts to walk down the woods in his full black suit (with prickly holes) and sees ostriches talking about the bonfire "oh no! I think the ostriches are starting early!" he says. He shouts to Stripey and Tweaky to follow him to a safe place. Just at that moment, Tweaky trips on a twig! Stripey and Hedgy run over to Tweaky and try to lift her up. But she was stuck! Hedgy got his knife and cut the twig to save her. "Thank you Hedgy" She purred.

They race back to Stripey's house and safety. "hooray for Hedgy the Hedgehog saving us!" they say! "Hedgy is a Hero!".

# Elijah Strange

KS1

# Sarah Mirkin

KS1

## Holly The Magnificent Tiger

Holly The Tiger is an ordinary tiger, she's just got two blue stripes and is titchy. Holly is an orphan but had an older sister who died at age 10, when they were attacked by an alligator but Holly survived.

Holly was sunbathing by Fishy Swim Lake when there was a ring on her Jungle Phone.

"Hello" Holly said cheerfully.

"Oh, it's you Holly." one of Queen Lion's servant's said. "Queen Lion wants a new bike." "So, er, er yes, yes, yes...."

"The Queen wants me to make a new bike?" Holly exclaimed.

"Yes" replied the servant. "Come to the palace tomorrow at 11:00" he cried.

The very next day, Holly ran to the palace at 09:00. Because she was in a rush, she did not notice a fierce looking lion. "Who goes there?" he growled. The lion grabbed Holly and put a deep scratch in her belly. I was just giving the Queen a present, Holly weakly whispered. "Ok" the lion growled and pushed her through the gate.

"Whatever is wrong, my darling?" the Queen exclaimed.

"I got scratchy on your Majesty." she replied.

Holly rolled over. "What" shouted the Queen. "Servants get bandages now!" the Queen demanded. In no time at all Holly felt better and got out some junk and set to work. In hours, Holly had painted the base of her bicycle smattered with beautifully decorated patterns. When she stepped back to admire it, she gasped in amazement because she never knew she could make such amazing patterns.

"Holly" the Queen gasped with amazement. "Can I ride the bike yet?"

"Maybe" Holly replied.

"It smells like lychee and looks like bunnies foot fiving each other and it tastes like fried egg sweets and it sounds like ringing bells". The Queen took a little nibble of it but stopped as she didn't want her bicycle to vanish.

They stopped to have lunch but in the banquet hall there was a burglar and he stole the Queen's roar. The Queen, with a very hoarse voice said "Hay, hay, hay you burglar come here now", the whole crowd of animals jumped out of their seats and ran after the burglar. The burglar ran towards the Queen's palace. When the animals stepped into the glamorous place, they stepped back to admire the magnificent bicycle. Suddenly, from the corner of a zebra called Jipanda's, eye, she saw the burglar creep into the palace. Then she gathered up all the other zebras and they stampeded after the burglar mouse into the courtyard, through the gates and did a clipity clop circle around the mouse. "You're trapped" they haughtily laughed. They grabbed the Queen's roar in a net and in one big go, swung it back into her mouth.

That evening the Queen set up billions of chairs and served all the animals some delicious cow cake. Everyone wanted to have a go on 'Holly the Magnificent Tiger's' bicycle. Holly felt amazing as she sat down and watched the evening sky fade away.

## Untitled

One day deep dark in a forest ,there lived monsters that haunt your dreams and that happened to a village called the Shoops and they didn't know what they would expect....

So it was just an ordinary day for Lucy. She would wake up and get ready for school but obviously not on weekends of course. For some reason her parents alarm clocks were ringing very loudly. So she checked and screamed in horror. Lucy saw her mother's glasses and slippers lined up perfectly. Lucy got mad like real mad as if her eyes were gonna pop out. She thought it was a prank so she checked everywhere in her house and she couldn't seem to find them so she checked outside and saw tons of kids scavenging around and around for their mums and dads. Lucy was very confused and checked her friend. She saw Stella covered in her mom's jewelry as if she was her. Stella asked, "Have you seen my ma or pa? I can't seem to find them anywhere.They need to cut my pineapple because I can't use knives,.". "Sorry no and I have my own problems too," Lucy sighed. "Oh yeah I have to check on Elsie if she is alright. See ya" "See ya," Stella replied happily.

"Elsie...? Oh Elsie...?" "HIYA! Oh hi Lucy didn't see ya there lemme help you," Elsie said. "You almost got me but not this time!" said Lucy with a chuckle. "Oh and by the way have you happen to know if you have seen your parents.?" "Nope I was doing karate but now you said it where are they?". "Oh well.....Wait you know the deep dark forest our parents told us about?" Lucy asked. Elsie knew she had a plan "Yeah that place gives me the creeps." Elsie replied. "Well WHAT IF our parents got taken into the forest and need help to get out!" "I have heard crazier ideas but maybe that did happen ." Then Lucy said "OKAY LET'S DO THIS!" "This is going to be the best adventure EVER!" [10 minutes later]"LETS GO!" they shouted in unison.

[Later] "UGH i am soo bored.."Elsie moaned. "Stop moaning or we would never get out of here,"Lucy replied. "NOOOOOOOOOOOOO!"exclaimed Elsie. Then suddenly something appeared in the darkness. It was a BRIGHT light that illuminated the darkness around it. "Wow that was creepy!" Stella said.

While the team was walking, they noticed something on the path. Ella picked it up and said, "It says Mwa HA HA HA we have captured your silly parents! They are also kinda useful but you will never catch them.We built our entrance so secret that you can never find it! Clunks out." "OH NO what are we going to do now!?" they shouted together.

# Dominique Regachuelo

KS1

# Luke Sargeant

KS1

## Untitled

There was a little boy called Lucas. He's nine years old and wants to be a fireman when he's older. He's wanted to be one since a firefighter saved him from a fire in his house.

He was surrounded by fire so the fire man jumped through the fire to get him.

He wore special clothes to protect his self. People are poorly at home but Lucas is in his school. A fire starts because someone was doing a campfire in the jungle next to school but it spreaded because of the wind.

Lucas went outside to play with his friends but he came back in and there was fire.

He really wants to put it out so he punches his hand and does a kick. He whispers you will never know this password and water comes out of his hands.

It puts the whole fire out with one spray.

No one sees him do it so he saves the day and puts out the rest of the fire.

He finds out that he can do very big jumps because he rescued a lady up high. He can walk through fire because he's the bravest and saves a dog from school.

Sometimes he turns the powers off so he doesn't shout because people might want to come to his house and steal them.

He keeps being firey the superhero even when he's grown up.

He puts out the most fires out of any fire station in the whole world.

He's proud of his self.

## Untitled

In a small, quaint town in Germany, lived a very small girl with big dreams. She dreamt of going to the moon. She longed to find the awesome, chocolate chip space cookies her grandma told her about.

Charlotte was 7years old, with green eyes and short curly hair. She was already good at many things like hula hooping and crafting but she did not think she had the talent to get to the moon. However she was a determined and clever girl.

Charlotte was skipping on her way to school one morning. It felt different. There was something special in the crisp autumn air. The cold air made her cheeks rosy red. Everything seemed vibrant, the colourful cobbled street to school which always reminded her of the yellow brick road from wizard of Oz, made her feel she was about to start a wonderful adventure.

As she rested alongside a stoned wall, She saw the prettiest poppy bush with a little robin sitting on it. "Robbin can you take me to the moon?" She asked. "No I can't because I am to small ,to take you to the moon" replied the Birdie

That evening she was dropping her grandparents back to the airport as their visit was over. She saw an aeroplane pilot and said "can you take me to the moon sir?" "No I can't because my Aeroplane is to huge " replied the pilot grumpily. Charlotte did not give up because her mum once told her that if at first you don't succeed then you must try and try again.

Charlotte decided to make a big rocket herself. She found tins, broken telephone boxes and glass windows and She used her dads hot glue gun to stick it all together. She used her bothers remote control monster truck as the engine.

She stood back and looked at the huge rocket..... will it work? Will it work? She thought excitedly and got in. She started the engine....it worked!! Wow she could not believe she had a hidden talent and now she was going to be the worlds youngest most famous astronaut space girl.

5, 4, 3, 2, 1....BLAST OFFFFFFF! The rocket shot to the sky with a big SPARK! A BIG BANG and an ALAKAZAAM!

When she got to the moon she saw the space cookies.

Charlotte had a big grin as she flew the rocket back home. She sat down on her porch ready to eat the delicious cookies. At that very moment a poor boy with ripped clothes was looking at her from the road. He looked hungry like he hadn't eaten for days. Charlotte decided to share the space cookies with him. They became best of friends. Charlotte had learnt if you are determined, dreams come true. But the biggest thing she learnt was that it made her feel happy sharing her dreams. Charlotte had used all her talents to achieve her dreams but her hidden talent was flying to the moon....who would have known ?



# Liyana Ali Butt

KS1

# Samuel Nowotny

KS2

## The little penguin

There once lived a blue, little penguin. He was called sam. Everyone had a talent except him. Pip the little polar bear could climb like a monkey, and fred the fish could swim as fast as swordfish.

Sam could not climb and when he tried he banged his head, and when he tried to swim he nearly drowned! He only had one friend and that was win the walrus, and if you wonder why he's called win it is because he wins everything.

One day Sam and his friend win were doing a maths test. Win got full marks and then in the playground started boasting about it. Then Win came up to Sam and said he was the best and things like that, he hurt Sam's feelings.

That very moment it got windy and chilly, then a snow storm arrived! Then the teacher called them in and said "come in class, we can play inside."

Everyone got inside except Sam, he didn't even bother to find some shelter he just walked straight into the snowstorm. Inside the teacher did the register she said "Fred, pip, win..." but when she came to Sam nobody answered. she tried again " Sam, SAM!", but nobody answered.

Meanwhile as Sam was moving through the ferocious snow storm he found he had got himself lost. He looked left and right and knew where he was, he was in the coldest, windiest place on the ice float! He found shelter and stayed there to wait for the storm to end.

In the classroom the teacher was very worried. Soon she made up her mind to call the emergency services. unfortunately the polar police were busy, and the detectives could not hear them because the snow storm had cut the line.

Now, back to Sam. Sam was fast asleep, then his tummy rumbled. He woke up going to get some fish. Luckily he was close to the sea, it was full of splishy, splashy waves.

He saw some fish and leapt into the fresh, clear water. He caught some fish and got out of the sea, then went to his shelter. The snow storm had stopped by now.

At the school, the teacher said " we are going to have to look for Sam, it is the only thing we can do." So they decided to look for Sam.

The whole class set outside to look for sam. As they started to get tired they saw a shelter they saw it was Sam's! They found Sam in the shelter! They all went home, but on the way they saw an iceberg .

Pip could climb over it, Fred could swim under it but Sam could neither climb nor swim. That moment something very weird happened he started to fly, he was the first penguin to fly!!! He flew over the iceberg! As they went home he was very happy. And that's how Sam got his special talent!

The end

## The Tale Of Sally McCallie

Once upon a time, there was a creative little girl. Her name was Sally McCallie. Sally always had a passion for performing arts. She would dance and sing around the house constantly. She was always known as the creative class member at school. Her family always supported her in her dreams to become an actress. Every time Sally performed, she felt like she was on a big stage; she imagined that she was wearing a fancy dress, singing in front of a huge audience who were cheerfully clapping along. Sally was very excited when she found out that her school was hosting a talent show for the all the kids in Sally's year. Sally was in year 6, so a lot of the kids were quite talented. Sally knew that she was going to sing and dance. She pictured all the kids chanting her name, "Sally, Sally, Sally!" It would be her perfect moment.

When Sally arrived back at home, she saw her older brother, Greg, shuffling a deck of cards. As soon as Sally walked into the room, Greg asked her to pick a card. Sally pulled one out and looked at it. "Now," Greg said, "I will pull your card out of my hat." Greg pulled out a playing card showing the king of hearts. "Nope." Sally said, showing Greg her card. "Dang it," Greg said, "Magic isn't very fun anyway, I just wanted to impress people. I'm going to go and play football." Greg left the deck of cards on the table. Sally picked them up and shuffled them. She picked a random card and placed it face down. Somehow, she knew exactly what card it was. She did it again several times and she knew what card it was.

Sally went to her best friend, Lilly's house and showed her. Lilly couldn't believe it. "I'm sure you can do it too; we both do the same things." Sally reminded her. It's true. Lilly and Sally had everything in common. Lilly tried and tried, but she had no clue which card it was each time. Sally tried to hide her smile; she was so happy that she was good at something that Lilly was not. After all, throughout the whole time she had spent as a member of her school, she did everything with Lilly.

It was time for the talent show the following week. First was Sally's turn. "I can't wait to see what she is going to sing." said a girl in Sally's class as Sally stood up. However, Sally didn't sing or dance, she did magic. She made every child's card appear in her pocket. Afterwards, everyone cheered loudly. "Woah!" one boy said. "Wow!" said another. Sally felt so happy. She didn't realise why she hadn't noticed her special talent before. "Well done," said Sally's teacher, "I definitely wasn't expecting that! Thank you for sharing your hidden talent."

# Dia Popat

KS2



# Terelle Williams

KS2

## The Unstoppable 5

### Chapter-1 (The story)

Have you ever heard of Alex and the terrible flame? You have probably never heard of it, so, I'll tell you. Every 1000 years, an item that the chosen one values very much will come down and tell them what they need to do in order to save Marvel city. One boy called Alex did not listen to his object and Marvel city was burned by Pezzz the dragon.

### Chapter-2 (Shooting Star)

David and his mum were star-gazing in their backyard and looking for shooting stars. David was a footballer and a explorer too. All David wanted for his birthday was a brand-new football or go to a new school. David's wish to go to a school was granted but he did not get a new football. Just then, a shooting star crashed into David's garden like a bull charging at a red cloth but 10x faster.

### Chapter-3 (The Ball)

David walked up to this interesting object from space "What is it?" asked David's mum in terror. It looks like a football "A football?" replied David's mum, "Yes, a football. Mum can I have it?" asked David. "No, you can't" answered David's mum, worried. The next morning, David went to look at the space ball. When he arrived, the ball started to talk on its own.

### Chapter-4 (Brand New School)

David's mum just dropped him to his new school. The only thing he wanted to do was make some friends. The school was big, and the classes took 1 hour to finish. By lunch time, David had a new friend called Ben who was into football and exploring. After school, Ben showed David to all his friends- there's Simon who can fly, Sofia who can do magic and there's Oliver who can build stuff.

### Chapter-5 (Surprise)

When David met his friends, he thought that he was lucky because he never had friends like them before. When David put his bag down, a ninja took the bag and banged his head onto a fridge and fell asleep. As the ninja was sleeping, David and his friends went and took the ninja's belongings and stole a map to get to Pezzz's castle and a sword for David.

### Chapter-6 (Teamwork)

So, David and his gang set off to find Pezzz's castle. It took a long and painful journey. Just then, Oliver asked "Are we there yet? I am getting bored." Then Sofia answered "Yes, we are. I am so glad that we made it. So, what should we do now?" "Let's wait" said David.

### Chapter-7 (The End)

David and his friends were waiting for Pezzz to show up. Eventually, he did and with a huge roar, the fight was on. David, Simon, Sofia and Oliver all attacked him all at the same time but Pezzz was not defeated. Just then, David thought of using his football to attack the dragon. It took a few attacks but it worked David and his friends saved Marvel city!



## No Longer Hidden

The dust, the dust! I can not take it anymore. Why do I, as innocent as I am, have to be dumped in the back of the shed? I can't believe it. I am supposed to be used by someone, that's what I do but yet no one has picked me up for at least a couple of years. I just sit, in my spot, collecting dust and all the debris around me. I should be used. I have a talent.

My fellow brothers and sisters are the same. Yet I am the only one who cares. The darkness creeps me out. As for the cobwebs, oh the cobwebs! My long neck is aching badly, slumped as I am against cold wooden planks. It's not good for my body and as for my beautiful varnish - it is chipping away! I still reminisce about all my success in the past; the sea of hands waving, joyful faces swaying and joining in for the chorus, children on shoulders and music filling the air. I can't take it, I just can't. But I have to. For the sake of my family, I must keep going. All I need is a human to walk in and use me. I know it won't be long.

Then, to my great joy, daylight approaches! A human is there. I see it! It's my chance; my time to shine. So I scuttle over a bit, trying to make myself visible. There he is, he is approaching, he is coming! Come on, closer..... YES! I am being picked up! YES! This is my time to show the human's what I have got, my unbelievable talent! One pluck, just one.

I am being taken up a flight of winding steps which is making my stomach churn. I am already nervous and now this! I need to show the humans what I can do; what I sound like when they strum me. This could reignite my promising career! I need to make a good impression on the humans. Ok, deep breath and..... STRUM!

The sound of myself in the right pair of hands triumphantly echoes through the room we are in and I feel better again, I feel alive again! I am no longer hidden, no longer voiceless. He strums me again and again. He is brilliant! We sound unbeatable, what a team we will make. A drawn out pause, a heaving chest and loud sigh and then I hear him say, 'this is it! This is my talent!'



*Competition winner!*

# Heidi Ashton

KS2

# Jai Callan

KS2

## The Tree of Talents

Far, far away, in a world between worlds stood a regular, talentless boy who longed to be able to do something others couldn't. His name was Jasper Natus.

Everyone at his school made fun of Jasper because however hard he tried, he never seemed to succeed. At anything. This was not because of lack of effort. He just found things hard.

As usual at lunchtime Jasper had no one to play with. In the library he flicked slowly through a slim but unique book alone.

In the gargantuan library with books stacked at every corner, Jasper nearly fainted when he discovered a way to make friends! On a different planet called eth, eeth or ath? Well it was spelt E-A-R-T-H, but the point is the book spoke of a mystical "tree of talents" and whichever leaf you

take will give the talent you always wanted! In the old book was a map which showed the route to the tree and something called a "Magmalias Dragon" that he would need to face to earn his time with the tree.

Jasper took his compass and a bag filled with things he might use like food, water, rope and of course, the book, and set off on his amazing journey. He would find the tree of talents and earn his powerful, magic leaf! After hours of travelling north just like the map said he finally reached the breath taking, trembling view of the Obsidian cave. Quietly, he tiptoed into the cave then instantly froze when he saw the huge, black, scaly creature. Slicing through the air it flew at Jasper. He quickly ducked as the bloodsucking, murderous creature turned back and magma met the surface, dancing all around Jasper. He sped out the cave of ash faster than a perigon falcon and waited hours until the apocalyptic, malicious beast was asleep.

Cleverly, he took the rope and tied the brute's head to the floor. When it woke, the dragon soared with all its might only to be nearly strangled by its own power! It fell to the floor, defeated and furious. Suddenly, the world started spinning and in a puff of rainbow smoke the almighty tree of talents stood before him!

"Hello Jasper Natus, I have been waiting for you since the dawn of time," it said peacefully. "You are here to take a leaf and realise the talent of your dreams." "Wow, very impressive," admitted Jasper amazed.

"But you will not need my leaf since you have an amazing talent for resilience." "What do you mean?" asked Jasper curiously. "You never give up. No one else has the will or determination to battle and defeat Magmalias. Take the scale of the dragon and when you and others touch it, the scales will fall from your eyes and your true talent will be recognised!" Jasper clutched the scale and realised that he – just like everyone else – had his talent all along. Back home, others now appreciated Jasper and he never felt lonely again.

## RAINBOWPOCALYPSE

'TAKE COVER!' shouted Enar to Mixer as a huge black rainbow lobbed a tree trunk towards the pair. 'Mixer we must take all the villagers to the safety of the trees,' Enar screamed.

'But that's impossible! The rainbows will just eat us,' Mixer said. There were ten huge, black rainbows lobbing trees around the village.

They had already destroyed an entire cottage. They had beaks the size of ten men and their hands looked like wet soot. They sounded like a thousand creaky gates on a windy day.

'Well what else could we do?' said Enar.

'See you later!' Mixer shouted as he ran towards a group of young children. Suddenly, Enar spotted a young boy quivering on the floor. Enar ran towards him as a rainbow threw a tree trunk at them. 'Hold on,' she murmured. She grabbed the boy, then dived into a nearby bush as the witch-like hands of the roots reached out to grab them. Enar called Mixer and told him to take the boy back to the other villagers.

Once the boy was with Mixer, Enar then ran into the clearing and just as everything seemed to be more simple, out of the corner of her eye she spotted an elderly man, standing underneath one of the monstrous black rainbows. Fear settled within her eyes as she realised there was no way she could reach the man in time. 'But I'll do it anyway,' she whispered to herself. She started to run. As she was doing this, she watched the rainbow's beak come down upon the man. Suddenly, her speed increased and increased and increased until she was no more than a blur. She reached the man in less than a second.

Enar screamed. Not because she was about to be eaten alive by a monster, because she just ran faster than twenty peregrine falcons diving.

'Are you alright there, young chap?' said the elderly man, totally unaware of what was happening.

'Let's just get on with this,' replied Enar whilst picking him up. 'HOLD ON!' she screamed over the roar of the stampeding rainbows.

She reached the forest, which was two miles away, in less than two seconds. 'Mixer,' she screeched, 'take this man to the other villagers!'

Enar took a moment to realise what had just happened. Did I really just run that fast? I suppose I did. That's great! Enar straight away knew what she would do to save her village.

She whizzed home, grabbed her holeless net that she used to pretend she was a pirate. Enar then sped her way towards the black monsters and ran up their slimy backs, scooping up their bodies in the net as she went. She did this to all ten.

'Enar, you saved us!' said Mixer, who was exhausted.

Enar became defender of the village and they had a huge party to celebrate their victory.

'I never knew you could do that,' said Mixer. 'Neither did I,' replied Enar.

# Judah Hagan

KS2

# Robbie Ryan

KS2

## The Clumsy Shark & the Sea Circus



Jeff was an extremely clumsy, tall mako shark. He was 4,271 years old!. Jeff lived in a dark, narrow cave in a small sea-city controlled by the King, a colossal sea-serpent. Ever since Jeff was little, for no reason why and whenever he could, he juggled anything he was given to hold, often dropping them in his usual clumsy way, not helped by his fins which were as slippery as a butter-fish.

Jeff worked as a security guard in the coral reef department. His boss was a mean, ginormous megamouth shark with red fiery eyes and a snarly temper.

Once, when guarding the coral from the raptor piranhas and beastly sea animals, Jeff accidentally dropped a spear on the fins of a small wobbegong shark, who was innocently passing by. Jeff was so clumsy! Especially when juggling spears! This led to Jeff losing his job, at least for a short time. Jeff was often given another chance, but only when his mean boss couldn't find anyone else to do the job.

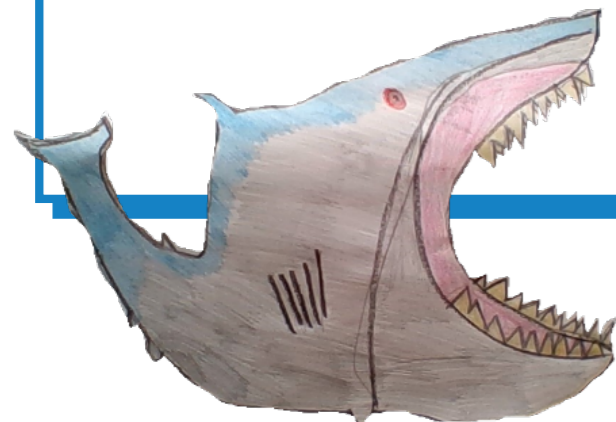
Trouble always found Jeff. Many years ago, when cooking for the King, Jeff dropped three fresh giant leopard seals (the King's favourite food) on the poisonous rainbow starfish! But Jeff's luck was about to change. One day his friend Mr Teeth, a great white shark (with no teeth), told him that Mr Seaweed's Sea Circus was opening the very next day and they needed guards. Jeff applied and (because Mr Seaweed didn't know Jeff was so clumsy) he got the job!

The big day arrived and everyone was at the circus, including the King. However, the clowns had not arrived. Mr. Whale, in charge of the humongous, monster whale gang, had chased the clowns away, thinking they were dangerous.

Mr Seaweed, fearful of an angry crowd, told Jeff to tell the crowd the bad news and offer them some clams to eat instead. So that is what Jeff tried to do, but as he began to juggle the clams, he dropped them all, as clumsily as always. This made everyone, including Mr & Mrs Seal, the Starfish family, Mrs Coral, the Salmon children and the God of the sea Poseidon - all roar with laughter.

Mr Seaweed recognised Jeff's talent and told him to continue, giving Jeff different ideas every time. Jeff even tried to juggle jellyfish whilst riding a unicycle on a tightrope! Each time it ended in disaster, as he dropped everything on the seabed. The more he juggled, the more he dropped, and the more he dropped, the more the crowd laughed. After a week the crowds kept coming and growing. Jeff was now the star of the show. He became very famous, known as "Jeff the Juggling Shark". He even had his own Shark-show on Seaflix, which everyone watched.

Jeff's talent was not really hidden. It was always there, in the open sea for everyone to see. It just took him some time to find a better buttery use for it.



Written and illustrated by Robbie Ryan

## HAIRAGEDDON

Today I am having a haircut...oh no not the normal haircut, you see we're in lockdown so my dad has to cut my hair. I HATE HAIRCUTS!

"Come downstairs Benjamin, its time for your haircut." shouted mum, she was enjoying this.

I have to hide, where shall I hide? I know, in the wardrobe, just have to get all mum's sparkly dresses out, sure she won't mind.

I got into the wardrobe and stayed very still and quiet. I heard footsteps coming up. I knew it was mum, even her footsteps sounded scary when she was annoyed or was I just imagining that.

Mum came in the room, straight to the wardrobe and opened the door wide. How on earth did she figure it out so quickly... oh yes her dresses were on the floor. You should have seen her face, mind you, you're probably lucky you didn't.

Mum dragged me downstairs screaming and shouting.

Dad was waiting with the torture instruments all laid out: newspapers, scissors, a comb and last but not least the dreaded shiny clippers AKA the blades of evil. "Don't worry Ben I've done this loads of times." said dad. I knew he was lying, what if he slices off one of my ears or even worse makes a runway on my head and then I will look even more like him, my worst nightmare.

Mum held me down in a chair so I couldn't escape and THE BATTLE BEGAN.

I started to think of all the good times to try and distract myself. I was thinking of all the fun I had during lockdown: being at home, staying up late, getting up late and the best bit was getting away with taking apart things like pens during my Zoom lessons and only having to wear the top half of my uniform, no one could see my PJs. Please don't think of me as a naughty boy, I am no way as bad as Henry next door.

Suddenly, I jumped with fright as I heard the loud whizz of the clippers and I was bought back to my real life nightmare. There was lots of hair around me! I took a deep breath in and started to panic, what if he shaves off all my hair, my friends and teachers won't even recognise me when I go back to school on Monday.

I need a mirror I thought, to see the real damage that dad was doing to my hair. It feels like I have been sitting here for hours no days! Finally, dad was finished. That was a truly hair-raising experience.

Mum gave me a mirror, surprisingly, dad has done a pretty good job, probably due to the YouTube videos he was watching repeatedly for hours on end in preparation. So it turns out my dad is an amazing barber, "mum," I said gleefully "I think its your turn next."

Hairageddon the sequel coming soon.

# Krish Badiani

KS2

# Zachary Edon

KS2

## My Secret Talent

My name is Zachary, I'm a ten-year-old boy and my super special secret talent is multitasking. I've always been capable of doing more than one thing at a time, but it was during 'lockdown' that I really put this to the test. After weeks of watching TV, playing on my switch, and using my phone; all at the same time, my parents came into my room and presented me with an energy bill. Who knew electricity cost money? Apparently, it does, and I was using too much! To my horror my electronics were confiscated, and I was told to do something more productive. How was I going to pass the time now? I needed to think of a way to win my electronics back...

First, I offered to help with breakfast; which shocked both my parents. My brothers asked for yoghurts, the cat needed feeding, and my parents always enjoy a nice mug of coffee first thing in the morning. Greg James was on the radio as I began to prepare the breakfast. I must have lost concentration momentarily as I ended up making coffee for my brothers, I gave a mug of whiskers to my parents, and the cat got the yoghurts. It took mum hours to get my brothers down from the roof after their caffeine fix and turns out yoghurts don't agree with cats' tummies; Yuck!

Next, Dad gave me jobs to do in the garden, I had to paint the fence, cut the grass and water the flowers but I ended up watering the fence, painting the grass and cutting the flowers. Dad was far from impressed with his grey grass, soaking wet fences and flowerless pots.

I then decided to try cooking. I decided to make brownies, cakes and a pizza but I got the ingredient's mixed up - I ended up with chocolate pizza, peperoni brownies and a mozzarella cake. My parents were disgusted by my creations, they decided cooking wasn't for me (my food was actually very tasty, you should give it a try).

My parents had run out of patience, and I had run out of ideas. I had to reside to the fact that I might never get my electronics back, this must be what life was like in the 90s! To my surprise, my bedroom door swung open and there was Mum holding my switch, phone, and tv remote. "Here you go Zachary, if you want a job done right...do it yourself". My parents had decided the electricity bill wasn't that high after all. It turns out that was my plan the whole time and it worked. I might use my multi-tasking powers for good one day, but for now I'm happy just chilling.

## Jeff The Sneezing Unicorn

There was a young Unicorn and Jeff was his name,  
he had white fur and a sparkly mane.

When Jeff went to school, the other unicorns picked him last,  
even though in sports he was incredibly fast.

Jeff wanted to have friends and play outside,  
He'd love to go with the other unicorns and go out for a ride.

But what I haven't told you, is that Jeff has a secret!  
Well it was meant to be, if only he could keep it.

He had a problem that he couldn't keep inside with ease.  
When he was happy or excited, he started to sneeze.

The other unicorns looked at him in disgust,  
because when Jeff sneezed, he sneezed out green dust.

They all thought it was stinky, horrible and tragic,  
if only they knew, that Jeff's dust was magic.

When Jeff was happy, he looked up to the sky  
and sneezed his magic green dust, which then made him fly.

He flew through the clouds and wherever he could roam,  
but all he could think of were the other unicorns in their homes.

He just wanted some friends to fly with and hang,  
when all of a sudden, he crashed into something with a bang.

They fell to the ground and all in a heap,  
and when Jeff looked up, something started to speak.

'Are you ok?' said an Eagle. 'You look very sad!  
What's happened to you, that is so bad?'

'I'm fed up, I'm lonely and the other unicorns are mean,  
every time I sneeze, the think my magic is yucky dust that's green.'

'I want to be like them, I don't want to be different you see,  
but the other unicorns stay away and make fun of me.'

'The Eagle thought for a minute and scratched his head  
and then he looked at Jeff and smiled and said.

'It's ok to be different, you're special you see,  
the other unicorns can't fly like you and me.'

'Being different is good and that's what makes you, you.  
If you show them your magic, they'd see it too'.

'You're right' Jeff said. I'm different and proud,  
I'm going to show the other unicorns tomorrow, in my town.'

The next day came and Jeff went to school,  
he was determined that today it would be really cool.

At lunchtime he laughed and he sneezed up high  
and instead of moving away, the other unicorns started to fly.

They looked in amazement when they realized the dust wasn't yucky  
and they said sorry to Jeff for being mean and realised he was lucky.

They played all day, and flew and rode round all night  
and Jeff was so happy he had friends, there was no sadness in sight.

That night, Jeff bounded home all happy with glee  
And he sang to himself, 'I'm different, I'm special and I'm ME!'

# Ollie Madden

KS2

# Imogen Mansell

KS3

## THE MIRACLE

It was 1860. Naomi, a black seventeen-year-old girl, was a slave at Wordsworth Manor. Wordsworth Manor may have been the grandest and largest, but everyone knew that its master was brutal, rude and the opposite of understanding.

Each and every day, Naomi would wake up at 03:30am, dust the shelves and ornaments, wash the dishes, go to the market and everything in between. When 11:00pm came, she would finally get to rest.

Unfortunately, the unforgiving and ruthless master caught her day-dreaming. This was the one-day she did not want to make the master mad... Instead of completing her daily chores, she was fantasising about achieving her dream, a tightrope walker.

There she stood, on the highest platform ever known to man. Naomi took one deep breath and began to walk. Slowly and carefully, she placed one foot in front of the other. Her audience watched in awe. Every so often, Naomi wobbled just to give the audience a scare. The crowd, they would cover their eyes leaving a small gap in their fingers so they could still see everything. Approaching halfway, she slipped...

"What on earth do you think you're doing!" the master interrupted. "You're treading a very fine line young lady!" The malicious master had Naomi by the ear and was swiftly waltzing up the long, winding staircase. He shoved her into his office and closed the door.

He took out the leather belt. First, he whipped the air. Then Naomi's legs, working his way up her body. Once he was done thrashing her, he beat the air once more with the brown, textured belt. Only, he missed and actually hit Naomi. THUMP! She was lying on the floor... unconscious.

\*\*\*\*\*

A few days had gone by before Naomi awoke. But she awoke to something life-changing. The once grandly decorated house adorned with red and gold was now black. All Naomi could see was black. "I'm.....BLIND!!!!!!!"

The master did not want this to be on him. So he made the decision to throw Naomi onto the streets.

She was wandering aimlessly when a man stopped her. "Are you ok my dear? I'm Humphry" the old man said. "My name is Naomi. And I'm not ok...I'm blind. Now I'll never fulfil my dream of becoming a tightrope walker."

But Humphry knew the circus master and insisted she meet him.

\*\*\*\*\*

It was opening night and Naomi was ready. She was escorted to the top of the ladder. There she stood, on the highest platform ever known to man. Naomi took one deep breath and began to walk. Slowly and carefully, she placed one foot in front of the other. Her audience watched in awe. Every so often, Naomi wobbled just to give the audience a scare. The crowd, they would cover their eyes leaving a small gap in their fingers so they could still see everything. Approaching halfway, she slipped...but she managed to steady herself and continued walking to the other platform.

"I'm the young lady who is treading a very fine line!!"

## Hidden Talent

"MUM! DAD! I CAN TURN INVISIBLE!"

\*\*\*

Talent, an only child, aged eight-and-a-half, leaped out of bed. Whilst dressing, a peculiar thing occurred. Yanking his googly-eye sock on one foot and hopping on the other, a tingling feeling enveloped his body. Inspecting his hands, he realised they were ashen grey like an ancient photo. The tints of his body and clothes were synchronising with his surroundings. He was invisible!

Brain-boggled, Talent twisted his foot on the stairs. Clenching it, he hopped on the other. He materialised again.

His parents, Ann and Jeff, rolled out of bed to follow Talent down the stairs.

"I named him Talent hoping he might have some - not bash around like a bumbling buffoon!" Jeff muttered.

Once breakfast was finished, including Greg James on Radio One, Talent conquered the shock.

"MUM! DAD! I CAN TURN INVISIBLE!" he spluttered hastily.

They regarded him with monochrome, dull-faced expressions. A look in their eyes grumbled: 'What joke is it this time? We don't wanna know.'

Very expressive eyes.

Suddenly, Ann jumped out of her seat, ignoring Talent.

"Oh no!" she cried, scrutinizing her phone, "our flight's been cancelled!" Jeff grabbed the computer and sat with Ann checking flight policies, tickets and insurance. They needed to be back in London on Monday for the start of the school term.

Unsure of what to do, Talent rocked on the swing in the garden of their holiday apartment. Soon, he began reading his favourite book, Kid Normal and the Shadow Machine, for the thousandth time. Many times, he'd dreamt of being Kid Normal, a boy who, without superpowers, saved the world. He'd dreamt of fighting Magpie and winning. Now, all was different: he could be a super zero with a power! With invisibility on his side, how much quicker Murph would capture villains!

By lunchtime, Talent needed to tell someone. As beans were served, he clamoured:

"MUM! DAD! I CAN TURN INVISIBLE!"

Just as he was about to exhibit his newfound power, a waft of smoke drifted into the room. Soon, the whole family was engaged in extinguishing a fire. The tea towel next to the pan of beans had set alight, together with the four cupboards above.

Talent wandered into the garden as his parents talked again about insurance. He felt incredibly alone and burdened by his secret. He beheld a fledgling sparrow tottering on the edge of a nest high in the trees. There was so much potential but so much uncertainty.

By tea, the frustration was aching. He would show them! As Talent prepared himself, water suddenly dripped from the ceiling. Jeff leaped up, knocking his chair, and rushed upstairs. He returned sodden.

"I left the bath running," he murmured, embarrassedly, "Ann, can you help me?"

His parents still thumping upstairs, Talent slouched to bed, neglected. Would his parents ever be ready to listen? He dematerialised. Would his parents even care? Finally, they too trudged upstairs, exhausted. Suddenly, they realised: Talent wasn't there.

Talent was hidden...

# James Wright

KS3

# Ellanean Jarvis

KS3

## MY DYSLEXIA

(This story is written in different colours to help other people with dyslexia!)

Hi I'm Ellanean and I'm 13 years old. I have ADD and Dyslexia. One of my hidden talents is my Dyslexia! In this story, I will take you with me on my journey of learning how to value my dyslexia, not as a problem but as a hidden talent!

Ever since I was a baby I have had dyslexia. It has been very hard for me to see this as a positive thing, and a hidden talent - it's difficult for me to do things that other people find easy. It's like I've landed in a foreign country - and I can't speak the language (I'm learning Japanese and a bit of Italian from my stepdad in lockdown!)

Close your eyes when you read this. Imagine this. You step off the plane on holiday and you forget the language you just learned for the whole year. You have to find your hotel but you can't remember how to say the name. You look for someone who can speak your language - asking everyone you bump into in this new country and you find someone that speaks your language and you find it at last. Sometimes it makes me sad, that I'm left behind. But lockdown has let me discover, like an intrepid explorer, the hidden talents that dyslexia hides.

I found my own wings to fly in lockdown that describe me - literally! My hidden talent is building, using my hands and my imagination to engineer my very own pair of extraordinary working wings. I have to add the feathers - but the frame for my massive wings is finished. It has shown me that not only am I good with my hands, but that I have the potential to fly, even with dyslexia. When I put the wings that I built on, I feel like anything is possible and it makes me proud.

I see myself as a magnificent bird, free to roam the amazing world wherever I want to go. Sometimes, as I fly over the treacherous ocean, the sea spits and growls at me but I rise above it, where its claws can't reach me. That's how I like to imagine the things I find almost impossible - like reading, writing and English. But I know, through my hidden talent of art and creativity that it's possible for me to fly with my own magnificent wings.

In lockdown, I found hidden pathways in the forest around my little woodland home. I'm good at finding secret pathways wherever I go and that taught me that sometimes a talent can't be obvious, it can be hidden and you have to find it yourself. Sometimes a path to something can take a different route, especially with dyslexia, but you will get there eventually.

Finding out that dyslexia was a hidden talent in lockdown made me realise that there is talent in everything and everyone. It can be any shape or form.



## Scott's Language

Scott's life was grey; as grey as his school; as grey as his home; as grey as the town he lived in.

Since his plain, dull, uninviting town did not attract any tourism - or anything else, for that matter, his school was lacking the money that most other schools would have to pay for staff and equipment; and that had lost many lessons that would have undoubtedly helped the kids. No one had any hope for their futures.

Each day was exactly the same - his mother left early in the morning because she had to work in that colourless, lifeless, unremarkable office (it was the only way to get money). His father looked after his baby twin sisters who were stuck at home because there wasn't any childcare. In school, all Scott did was English, Maths, and some Geography and History. On the weekends, he had to look after his siblings as his father worked in a supermarket.

Scott's life was grey.

The bright, morning sun woke Scott up. He put on his school uniform and went downstairs - to come face-to-face with his mother. With a puzzled look on his face, he listened as she explained everything - his father had finally found work somewhere and they were going to move. Like a star going supernova, Scott's face lit up, brighter than even an Angel's, in joy, excitement, delight. He asked another question. When were they leaving? Today!

But delight transformed into horror as he stepped off the plane... in another country.

The dark, electric sky, booming with thunder, woke Scott up. He put on his new school uniform and trudged down his new street towards his new school. As he met the gates, his heart seemed to die - he wouldn't fit in, he wouldn't understand anyone, he would be left in the corner of the yard to cry.

"Hello!"

Scott spun round like a tornado and stared at the boy who had just spoken.

"Hello! How can I understand you? Can you understand me?" Scott asked in disbelief.

"Yes, I can understand you. When did you learn Japanese?"

Scott suddenly remembered: a few transfer students from Japan had come to his schools over the years. He had wondered why all of them could speak what he thought was English and why everyone else looked so puzzled.

Maybe, just maybe, he could actually hear and speak Japanese fluently. Was it Japanese heritage - or was it something else?

Scott's family stepped off the plane: his mother - now a manager in a really successful business - and his father - now owning his own huge brand. Scott breathed in the German air and happiness rushed through him: he was on holiday!

After they had collected their bags, they left the airport and found a taxi waiting outside. With the rest of his family on Google Translate, Scott heard the driver ask him "Where would you like to go, Sir?"

Scott answered.

# Edward Smith

KS3

# Amalie Keefe

KS3

## Kind Heart

I was staring at the old clock on the wall. TICK TOCK TICK TOCK... The ticking suddenly seemed to become louder. I begged it to stop in my head, which is stupid, because I could have just walked away from the annoying thing. But I didn't. Please stop. TICK TO... It stopped abruptly. I held it close to my ear and hit it. Hard. Nothing. I stared at the ancient, brass hands, no movement. I sprinted downstairs, two at a time. If I had broken the clock, I'd be in big trouble. It was a family heirloom from my great-great-great-great-granddad. Special.

"Mum!" I called, no answer. I knew she was here though. I walk into the living room. There she is, staring blankly ahead. Her eyes glazed. "Mum?" I say. I shake her. "MUM!" I started shouting. My first thoughts were to call an ambulance. I go over to the phone and dial 999. No answer. I rush outside and shock almost makes me collapse. The whole world is frozen. Birds and planes are stuck in the sky and people are unseeing, unmoving. A shiver ran through my body. I have stopped time.

I walked along the cobbled streets, seeing everything happening at once. People were in normal day-to-day positions: off to work, waiting for a bus, queuing for shops. I broke into a run as I neared Great Ormond Street hospital. If time had stopped, I could finally visit my brother.

My little brother's name is Ethan. He lives in the hospital as he has heart failure. He has to be on the list for a transplant as the medical treatment isn't working. He is seven years old. I run through corridor after corridor the white walls like a maze, until finally, his ward. I stare down at him, his peaceful face looks like he's sleeping. Tears well in my eyes and I'm about to walk away when I stop. I could do anything now. Anything at all. Over the next week I stay in the time-zone reading medical books. Three months now. Studying on computers. 2 years. I taught myself medical school. 8 years. I learnt chemistry and biology and physics. Finally I began testing. Two drops of this, one of that. A dash of powder. And then, there, I have it. A single vial of 9 year's work. I haven't aged a minute.

I slowly walk back to the ward and insert the liquid into Ethan's drip. It mixes with the water and at the push of a button I inject it into his bloodstream. I wait patiently and then, in my head, I say, Please. Please unfreeze time. My brother's eyelid flickers.

On the front desk of the hospital there is another vial and a note.

Dear Sir or Madam,  
This is the medicine which will cure all heart failure,  
I hope it will be useful with your reasearch in hearts,  
Yours faithfully,  
Anon.

I hold my brother's hand tight. "Hi, Ethan. Time to wake up."

## Darren the dinosaur

There was a dinosaur named Darren, the kindest dino in the Jurassic, But the other dino's were jealous of him, they thought he wasn't so fantastic.

Although he wasn't rough or aggressive and mean,  
Darren knew he had a talent, but that he had not yet seen.  
He could do 1000 burpees, he could last forever doing a squat,  
He could jump the highest, but this talent was what?  
He searched through the woods, and saw dino's running,  
That looked like a talent, his idea was cunning.  
"That's it!" Darren bellowed, "That looks quite fun!"  
"Running is my new favorite, that's my number one!"  
He ran and ran and ran, then he started to wheeze,  
He gave up quickly and head back to the trees.  
He strolled through the woods, and saw some dino's box,  
He thought he would try that because he was as tough as a bag of rocks.  
"That's it," Darren bellowed, "That looks quite fun!"  
"Boxing is my new favorite, that's my number one!"  
Darren boxed for a bit then gave up, "Stop, just please,"  
"This sport is way too rough," so he headed back to the trees.  
He sat by the river, and thought in his head,  
"I give up on finding talent's, it's hopeless," he said,  
Crouched up into a tiny ball, with no talent found,  
He saw some beautiful swans and the birds made a lovely sound.  
He thought he would dance to it, so he started with a plie,  
"This is a dance move," he said, "This is ballet!"  
The strength of the ballet, came from the boxing,  
The stamina of the ballet came from the running!  
Darren's talent inspired others, ballet was his thing,  
As for every other dino's, they were no longer hateful, they thought he was a fantastic dino-being!

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And as for me, my talent, rhyming stories makes me pleased,  
If you don't like my story, I will run for the trees!

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# Gene Croser-Neely

KS3

# Megan Woods-Powell

KS3

## Untitled

Creativity flows off the boy like ribbons in the wind, bright colours emitting from his eyes. His head is down, tongue poking out in concentration as his paint brush diligently grazes the canvas propped up in front of him. He's in a world of his own, a world I can only imagine is bright and jocular. I've never seen him like this before, he's practically radiating confidence, an emotion I rarely see him express in class. The painting was bright with streaks of colour draped across the canvas, the black silhouette of a man situated in the centre draws my attention automatically, its stark contrast in colour making the painting seem even more eccentric.

The boy takes a step back and admires his work, his eyes glistening with pride at his accomplishment. He looks around cautiously as the door opens and closes with the wind, his eyes widening with shock when his eyes meet mine.

"I didn't realise you could paint," I say, walking around him to look at his artwork. His eyes follow me hesitantly and his knuckles turn white from clutching onto his paintbrush. His painting is astounding, the vibrant colours are energetic and the sharpness of the black amplifies the pigment.

"Nobody knows and I want it to stay that way," he states snatching the canvas away and placing it on the drying rack, "people find me weird enough, they don't need to know I paint." He paces around the small art room, returning the supplies to their initial places. He looks significantly less jolly, his previous smile has dropped and is now replaced by a frown, his eyes losing their sparkle.

"You're so amazing at it though, why hide it away?" he just shrugged and continued to pack his stuff away, his previous persona seemingly dissipated, now exchanged by his usual bitter façade and bored-looking eyes I've become accustomed to. "Why would it make you weird?" I question, confused as to why he's being so defensive. He turns around slowly, sighing and allowing his eyes to show vulnerability, "its my escape, the only thing that makes me feel happy at the moment," he reveals, looking down at his feet in perhaps what could be perceived as embarrassment or maybe trepidation. "My dad left for the army when I was younger, he's been stationed in Afghanistan for the last six years. I feel like when I paint, I'm talking to him, like he's really here," he expanded, looking me in the eyes for the first time today.

Suddenly the bell rings and the boy is shook from his trance and rushes out of the door, leaving me confused and alone in the art room. I shake my head and slowly exit the room, walking into a stampede of kids rushing to class, leaving behind the colourful painting and its heart-warming message.

It astounds me how something so simple can evoke so many feelings, each individual to the person experiencing it. Sadness. Happiness. And all that comes in-between.

## Stanley and the beach.

Stanley was good at... cleaning, and yes you read this correctly, CLEANING! His mum or dad never did the cleaning he did. If there was a mess in the house Stanley would insist on cleaning it. Anything he could find that needed just a little dusting got cleaned. His bedroom wasn't the average bedroom. All he had in his bedroom were some teddies, a bed and cleaning products. Window cleaner, door cleaner, metal cleaner, you name it, he had it. His mum, Margaret was very hygienic, washing her hands 24/7, one hair in her food, you already know it's going in the bin.

Stanley at school was your average Joe, doesn't like school, hates school in fact, wants to get home schooled and no this is not because school is boring, this is because he wants to get home to CLEAN.

One day after school his neighbors Johnny and Savannah said, "Look boy if you're going to do well in life you need to sort your priorities." Stanley didn't reply. "Take a stroll on the beach, do something nice for a change!" Stanley thought to himself 'I'm going to prove to them I can go for a stroll on the beach and get sand in my feet.' So that is exactly what he did. He walked past his local fish and chip shop where Jamie his mate worked at, "Ay, Ay mate! Never seen you out here!" Shouted Jamie from around the corner. Stanley didn't listen and carried on walking, everyone was making a fool out of him. He went down the steps to the beach and on the last step... there he goes, sliding on a plastic flamingo falling flat on his bottom! He looked below and saw lots of rubbish, he looked around the beach, no one was here, except one turtle, his head stuck in a plastic bottle. Stanley instantly ran over to it and ever so slowly took the bottle off the turtle's head and the turtle trotted back into the sea. The beach was a disgrace to Stanley, he had never seen anything so messy before in his life! Apart from Jamie's bedroom. He couldn't bare it, he ran back to his house grabbed his rubbish picker, some gloves, an apron and a rubbish bag. Back at the beach he picked up as much rubbish as he could see, every last bit of it! By the time it was 6pm he had finished. The beach was clean again.

The next morning Stanley walked back down the beach past the fish and chip shop, down the stairs and this time he did not slip on a plastic flamingo, everyone was now on the beach having a wonderful time, swimming, surfing, sunbathing, building sandcastles and the turtles were all happy, even the dolphins were jumping where you could see them and Stanley realized he had saved the beach and his special talent could also save the planet!

# Holly Dunn

KS3



# Sophia Dodridge

KS3

## Hidden Talents

"Stay at home, keep to the rule of 6."

I groan as Boris Johnson reiterates the guidelines I've heard a billion times. I grab a piece of paper out of Mum's hand. Ignoring her protests, I craft it into a surprisingly well-shaped paper airplane, which I chuck with force at Boris's annoying head. It hits the TV bang on center. I feel a petty victory over his logical, yet vexing rules.

I stomp upstairs, my ill temper increasing with every step I take. This stupid pandemic, ruining everything. I tear a piece of paper from my notepad and start making my to do list.

- Wake up
- Have Breakfast
- BE BORED

The violence with which my last bullet point is written rips a hole through the paper. I let out a strangled cry of exasperation. Fiddling absent mindedly with my list, I spend 15 pleasurable minutes picturing different scenarios, each one ending in lockdown over and facemasks, burned, stamped on and stuffed in a box never to be seen again. Sighing wistfully, I glance down at the paper in my hands. I reel back in shock. A professional piece of origami sits in my hands. I examine the paper butterfly with awe, my astonishment giving way to confusion. I've never even attempted origami. There are so many different folds and turns, my dyslexia would have a total meltdown. How on Earth did I create something so magical with absolutely no thought at all?

I sit at my desk with a piece of paper in my hands and start folding. I sit for 10 minutes, and when I can bear it no longer, I look down in anticipation. My stomach churns with disappointment. All I managed to do was crumple and fold my paper until all I had was a disfigured ball of creases.

I collapse on my bed, my excitement fizzling away like an extinguished fire. A thought occurs to me and I sit bolt upright. When I tried just now all I was thinking about was that piece of paper in my hands.

Hands shaking, I tear off another sheet and let my mind wander. I'm halfway through planning a "We kicked Coronavirus's butt" party when I remember. I look down. I'm holding a cat, it's paper tail folded with a delicacy I didn't know I had. I can barely contain my delight. My hidden talent had revealed itself and I'm going to use it. I smile and begin to formulate a plan.

"Save lives, stay safe and protect the NHS."

Boris ends his speech, and the news presenter comes back on.

"And now for a little bit of optimism during this stressful time. An unknown artist has been leaving origami creations on the doorsteps of hundreds of homes. Each origami piece is inscribed with a positive message to spread hope around the country. Despite everyone longing for this wonderful person to reveal their identity, it looks like their talent is going to remain hidden."

## 10 Again

Amy is an ordinary girl. She has ordinary parents and ordinary siblings. Everybody she knows is ordinary, well, almost everybody. Every Sunday, after her swimming lessons, Amy goes to Tring old people's home to visit her Grandma; Mildred Hedgebury. Mildred's outward appearance was that of an ordinary [if very old and wrinkly] Grandmother. But on the inside however, she was altogether different.

You see, Mildred suffers from dementia and can't remember everyday things like the date or the current Prime Minister or even what she had for lunch. Mildred can remember however every little detail of her life up to the point where she was ten years old. When she was ten, Mildred was a champion gymnast, who won every competition she entered. She was a star. This is where things get a little stranger. Mildred is convinced she still is ten and that Amy is her best friend, not her granddaughter.

That Thursday when she went inside Mildred's room, she was immediately squashed by a huge hug from her Grandma.

"So how was school, what's the gossip?" asked Mildred, reaching out to grab a tin of biscuits.

"It was okay, i suppose" replied Amy in a rather small and sad voice.

"Amy whats wrong?" asked Mildred.

"Well," Amy began, "Every year my school holds this big fancy gymnastic competition."

"Well that sounds amazing!" exclaimed Mildred,

"It would if I were any good at gymnastics. I don't want to make a fool of myself! Gymnastics is not my thing!" moaned Amy.

"Well of course it's not your thing! It's my thing!" declared Mildred, as she stood up and did a 360 pike and a backhandspring, causing Amy to freeze in amazement.

"Mildred, can i ask you a small favour?" asked Amy.

"Anything for my best buddy. What do you want?" replied Mildred.

"Do you think you could replace me in the gym-" Amy was interrupted by about fifty yes'es.

"Great here's my leotard!" said Amy, throwing it at Mildred.

"You're the same size as me so it should fit." Mildred being 99 years of age had shrunk rather a lot.

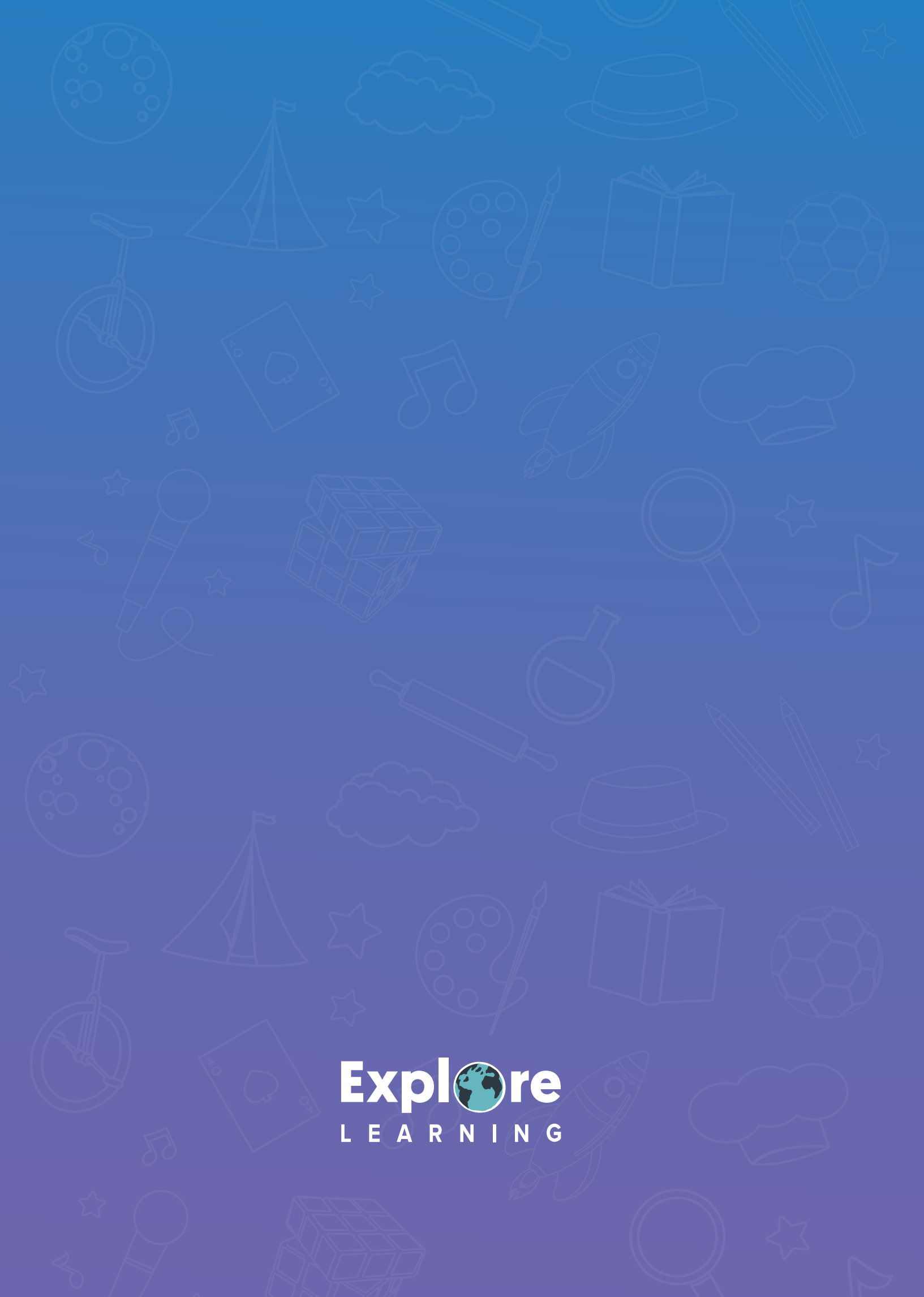
After a month of training [which was actually just Mildred showing off to the residents of tring old people's home] she was ready for the annual gymnastic tournament.

Due to her eagerness, Mildred went to the gym hall half an hour earlier than she was supposed to, making her the first contestant there. After a while, more contestants started to flow into the gymnasium. Soon the hall was filled with pink leotards, dazzling bows and excited voices. All of a sudden, a voice could be heard saying; Amy Willow please make your way toward the floor routine mat. To everyone's great surprise, Mildred got out of her seat and began to make her way towards the mat. The music switched on and the lights flashed. Her moment had arrived.

She leapt, she swirled. She flipped, she twirled. She won the gold and once again, she was the star.

# Suraya Miah

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