



**WRITE
AROUND
THE
MURRAY**

**RIVER OF STORIES
WINNING ENTRIES
PRIMARY SHORT STORIES
2022**

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YEAR 3-4 CATEGORY

Year 3-4 Winner: Audrey Wills [Wangaratta West Primary School]

Title: *Sammy's Adventure*

Sammy awoke from a dream of wonders. "I'd better show everyone who I actually am. Not that slow and silly Sammy who can barely move, but Sammy who is fast and courageous". Sammy looked out at the forest beyond and then saw something small between two leaves. A blue, green, and white reflection shining back at him. Sammy was amazed. Could this be his chance; his chance to show everyone who he truly was?

Sammy quickly and quietly packed up his things and started his journey to the mysterious blue thing. He slowly worked his way down the mossy slope on which he lived, leaving a trail behind him. It was slippery and rough terrain, but after all the hard work he finally got to the bottom. It had already got very late so Sammy chose to take a break and rest. After Sammy had had a not too long rest, he resumed his journey again.

As he looked out from where he was, Sammy saw thousands of rocky mountain cliffs. "This is going to be challenging", Sammy said to himself, "but I'm not going to give up." He moved up the mountain and looked down in horror. It was nearly as steep as a wall! He didn't know if he could do it, but he tried! He kept on moving up and down, up and down, until he was exhausted. Sammy always carried a backpack with him, so he stopped for a snack. After his snack, he started to finish scaling the hills and reached the end of the rocky cliffs.

Sammy quickly noticed that right in front of him were two walls making an alley way. He went straight through. As he emerged from the alley the sky grew dark. Tired from the long day's journey he found a nice warm spot, curled up and went to sleep. In the morning, Sammy set off at sun rise. The deep dark forest was before him.

As Sammy entered the forest, the trees towered over him like big bullies, whispering in the wind. He felt scared, more scared than he had ever been. Sammy felt worried. Should he keep going or should he go back? As he considered how far he had already come, he realised he had gone too far to stop now, so he persevered!

Soon Sammy came to a tall thick pole in the middle of his path. Atop it was the mysterious blue thing. Without hesitating he began to climb up it. As Sammy climbed, he went faster and higher until he reached the top!

There right in front of him was a leafy boat, waiting just for him! As he set off to sail, he started to feel strange. Something was coming, coming quickly. Suddenly it all turned dark. Warble, warble, MAGPIES! A snail's worst enemy! Peck, peck gulp. Sammy had climbed up and then right into the magpie's birdbath!

Year 3-4 Runner-Up: Ellie Walker [Victory Lutheran College]

Title: *Meeting the Forest*

One day when Lilly and Megan were in their courtyard at school, they decided to go for a walk, to the oval. When they got there, Lilly stopped. "What is it, Lilly?" asked Megan. "I've never seen that forest behind the fence," she answered.

Lilly decided to go and have a closer look. "Umm... Be careful Lilly, there's a sign that says 'do NOT go into forest!'" When she got closer, Megan ran to her and whispered "We'll go and look together."

They both went and climbed the fence. They leant over too far and... somehow fell from the sky! "Ahhh!" screamed Lilly. She looked for Megan but decided to focus on screaming instead. Then... Thump! Lilly landed on her belly. She didn't have time to get up before she heard another scream. "Who? Ahhh!" Thump! Megan landed right on top of Lilly.

"Megan, what happened?" asked Lilly, as she tried to wriggle from under her. "I don't know, but... what I do know, is I fell from a mile-high sky!" answered Megan.

When the girls recovered, they went onto a path, but they had no idea where it would take them.

They found a huge tree. It looked like there was a door. Slowly Megan opened the door and... "O my goodness!" said Megan, "It's a house!" And so it was. Looking closer, she saw a very strange thing. It was a small owl, in a kitchen doing the dishes. "Umm... Mrs Owl?" said Megan. "Oh!" said the frightened owl, "Whooooooo are you?" "I'm Megan and this is my friend Lilly," replied Megan. "Oh, I am sorry," said the owl more gently, "My name is Olivia." "Hi Olivia," said Lilly, from behind Megan.

Olivia waddled over and opened the door a little wider, then flew out. "Come children, I will take you to the village." Olivia flew for a long time, but the village was not like what anyone thought! It was sooooo big, that Lilly and Megan saw one thousand houses in one tree! "It's... It's amazing!" stuttered Lilly. "C'mon," said Olivia, "I'll show you girls around." She flew to the next tree. The girls had to follow, because who knows where they would be without a guide. They kept following Olivia around the town. She stopped and bought some apples from the market, then they went back to where they started.

Lilly suddenly realised the time, they had to get back to school. "I'm sorry Olivia, I didn't realise it was so late, we really must be going." said Lilly. Megan looks, "Goodness, the bell is going to ring any moment now." "That's fine, everybody has to go sometime." Olivia smiled, then flew them back to the fence. "Goodbye," said the girls. "Goodbye girls." Even under her dark brown feathers, you could see a smile.

They looked at each other once more, then got into place on the fence and... They fell from the sky again and landed on the ground, both at the same time. The bell rang for the end of lunch. They had to run to their classroom. Their teacher said "You're very late girls! Sit down, we are doing writing." They sat down. "Now, we are writing about what we did at lunch."

Lilly and Megan felt like fainting.

Year 3-4 Runner-Up: Sophie Clifton [Trinity Anglican College]

Title: *Why Are Wombats Brown?*

‘Does it really matter girls? Stop fighting!’ Mum snapped as we pushed past the front door, hands full with the days school gear. ‘I haven’t even had my coffee – get in the car and don’t talk to each other for the whole of the trip’.

The silence was really bugging Elizabeth and the car ride was dragging way too long. She couldn’t speak to her sister Zoe, but maybe she could speak to Mum. ‘Mum’ she asked, nervously testing if they were still in trouble, ‘why are wombats brown?’

*‘The wombats are all brown
Because all the teddies of the town
Come alive at night
To give everyone a fright
BOO!
Their brownness makes them dull
And super hard to spot
Small little chubby things
With eyes as black as dots’*

Her mother spoke like she was hypnotised. That was a super weird response, Elizabeth thought to herself, even for mum who loved to make up random poems instead of just saying ‘I don’t know’.

‘No, that’s not right’ interrupted Zoe ‘Wombat a hug never so, poo and dirt, mud in roll they because brown they’re’. Elizabeth hated when Zoe spoke in backwards sentences.

The lake slowly rolled into the window frame as the car stopped at some roadworks. The sparkling reflection on the lake was echoing around in her mind when she noticed a white creature running holding something brown. ‘Are they holding wombats?’ She thought to herself as they jumped into the lake. ‘Oh no, they’ll drown it’. Elizabeth wound down her window and yelled ‘Stop!’

One white creature looked up and locked eyes with Elizabeth. Zap! It felt like an electric shock rushed through her body. The creatures had disappeared. ‘What’s that brown ball coming towards our car?’ asked Zoe excitedly as she opened the door to let it in. Elizabeth immediately turned around hoping to see a logical explanation but there was a wombat in the car. Zoe heard a scratch at her door and opened it for six more wombats to rush in. They were singing along with Zoe and doing a dance they called ‘the wombat shuffle’. They put a grass crown on Elizabeth’s head as they explained ‘The scary white creatures are always throwing us in the lake, we hate it. Only human eye contact can kill them – and you did that. You are now known as Queen Elizabeth of the wombats!’

In the front Mum sipped her travel mug and watched the road works ahead. Could she not see them or hear them? I mean they were having a wombat karaoke party in the back seat! But she just looked ahead and listened to her podcast.

‘We’d better go now’ said the wombats. ‘Before you go, can I ask you a question?’ asked Elizabeth ‘Why are wombats brown? Are you teddies? Do you roll in dirt? Are you

mini bears? Camouflage? '' But it was too late. All the wombats and the karaoke party vanished.

"Have a good day" Mum said as she pulled up at school. As they walked into school Elizabeth put her hand in her pocket to make sure she grabbed the canteen money. She felt something strange in there and pulled out a grey gumleaf with tiny black writing saying "*We just look good in brown*".

YEAR 5-6 CATEGORY

Year 5-6 Joint Winner: Sophia Graham [St Patrick's Parish School, Albury]

Title: *A World Inside the Pages*

The dusty covers opened, revealing pages that were torn and had faded over time. Words glittered amongst the yellowy-brown pages, shining a light on the walls of the old library. The millions of bookshelves that encased the lonesome armchair started glittering in the dim light. Books started shifting, pages started flicking, sounds of animals, rustling leaves and running water shook the carpet, causing all of the furniture to shift.

I stared, speechless as the library shelves transformed into rows of trees, bushes and vines. The couches turned into creatures of the jungle: monkeys, gorillas, jaguars, toucans, a tiger and more animals that I didn't have time to take note of. The tiger had taken advantage of me being stunned and locked its eyes on me as it took a step after another, closer to my death.

The long, sharp claws glittered as they dug through the ground with each step. Yellow teeth with specks of fresh blood shone in the bright sunlight. A growl from the tigers white and black striped stomach made me jump, almost toppling over into the muddy ground beneath me.

The tiger took one more step, then its legs started bending, burrowing its arms in its thick fur. The tiger's front paws started lifting off the ground, stretching as far as it could, before its back feet lifted off the ground. Its lips opened wide revealing the pink gum of its jaw. "This is it," I whispered, but before the tiger could reach me, I got a hard thump on the side, hands wrapped around my waist, swinging me up, into the air. I never thought I would see the world again.

The ground beneath me swirled, giving me a headache. The wind whipped at my hair, pulling it away from my face. The green, lush forest plants glittered in the sunlight that reached them.

The ground looked like it was getting closer to me. I started wriggling, trying to escape from the grasp that held me up in the air, but instead, it tightened around my waist. I started panicking. The forest floor threatened to flatten us. It got closer and closer every time my heart beat. The floor was inches away, but it had stopped moving. We had stopped! I had been saved!

I lowered my feet on the ground, turning to see the wonderful person who had saved me. A young boy about the same age as me smiled as he met my gaze. His clothes were

ripped and had faded over time. His hair was overgrown, much like the bushes surrounding us.

He reached out his hand, like he wanted to shake hands with me, so I put my hand in his. "Hello, I'm Tommy. The only person left alive after the storm a few years ago. That's why I'd like to know where you came from." I stared up at him, wondering where in the world I was. Finally, after minutes of silence, I decided to answer with the truth. "I'm Elizabeth, 13 years old and I come from Sydney in Australia."

Tommy just stared up at me, a confused look in his eyes. It was as if we were people from different planets meeting for the first time.

A small wooden hut sat in between three thick branches, one of which had dents in it, much like a ladder. Leaves covered the hut, camouflaging it in the forest. Inside, a pile of wood was stacked in a corner, some of the branches burnt. A wooden desk with a large dusty book on top stood against one of the walls, and a bed with sheets of animal hides rested in another one of the corners, a big window right above it that looked out into a clearing of the forest.

Tommy watched me as I inspected his home, the look of confusion still lurking in his eyes. "Soon it will be dark, you can sleep on the bed if you want," He offered, gesturing to the bed in the corner. I stared at it and nodded, I'd have to get used to this place.

In the morning, I heard bacon crackling on the fire. Sitting up, I looked over to where Tommy had slept during the night. He wasn't there, when I scanned the treehouse, he was nowhere to be seen.

I got up, rushed outside and scanned the area before venturing into the wilderness. I ran through the thick layer of trees and bushes. Birds sang their morning songs. Tigers were hunting their prey. Monkeys were leaping from tree to tree. But none of that mattered now.

I skidded to a stop before realising where I was. Firstly, I had run into a forest that was unknown to me. Secondly, I had attracted animals, not one, not two, but at least ten that were fighting behind me. Thirdly, I was on the edge of a cliff that was so deep, you couldn't see the bottom. Where was I meant to go?

I heard my name being said, spinning around to where I heard it. Sitting there, on a boulder, was Tommy. He waved at me, smiling as I came closer. Tommy held a book in his hands, the one that was on the desk at his hut.

"It's just like us," He whispered. "One of us here in our home, the other from another universe." I heard him, but it was still very faint against the leaves rustling in the distance.

"You need to read this. I don't know who you are, or where you came from. But I know that you need to read this book." He handed me the book, its cover had a blanket of dust, hiding the title from sight. I blew on it, dust rising up, into the air.

The book's title read: One person, Two Universes. I opened the cover. All of the dust started glittering, the wood started shifting and soon, I was back in my library again, but I wasn't alone.

Year 5-6 Joint Winner: Olivia Shadgett [Kiewa Valley Primary School]

Title: *The Lonely Avocado*

The avocado was super-duper popular at Woolworths. She had so many friends, she didn't even remember some of their names. But what she did know for sure is that she was the most beautiful, kind avocado and that all the other avocado girls were jealous (and the boy avocados wanted to date her). But, she only had eyes for the most handsome avocado, Chad. But Chad was dating Isabella, Avocado got so jealous that she pushed Isabella onto the floor which resulted in Isabella getting thrown into the bin. Chad still didn't want to date Avocado – because she killed Isabella. Within days Chad had turned everyone against Avocado. After that day no one talked to her, except for the lamest avocado... but at that point, Avocado would talk to anyone! Every time Chad saw her, he gave her a sour look. One day, Chad was about to push Avocado off the shelf but as she was falling, someone picked her up and put her in their shopping basket along, with Chad. When they were in the basket, Chad said, "Look, I don't like you, but we need to look out for each other."

"Ok," said Avocado.

After sitting in silence they heard some snoring coming from the other side of the bag. Chad crawled over to the noise and poked it... it was a banana, the banana screamed, "Don't touch me you freak!!!"

Chad felt offended, and he replied arrogantly, "If anyone were a freak here it would be you! So next time you talk to me, be kind and call me your master you rude creature!"

The banana looked disgusted and then looked at Avocado and said, "How do u deal with him?"

She sounded annoyed, "Oh, I don't."

The banana laughed. After that they all sat in an awkward silence.

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Hours later they saw a beaming light. Chad asked, "Is this heaven?"

Banana and Avocado burst out laughing until a hand reached into the bag. All the colour drained from their faces. The hand grabbed Chad.

Sarcastically, Banana said, "Thank God he's gone."

"You're not wrong," replied Avocado.

But the hand came back! This time it took Banana. After avocado could no longer see banana she thought to herself, 'all alone again'.

A moment after that, Avocado started crying. A hand reached in and grabbed her, placing her down in a fruit bowl. There Chad and Banana were just sitting, chilling with all the other fruit. An orange, and a really handsome banana called Brad. Banana was sitting really close to Brad. Avocado looked over at Chad and him with Isabella. They both looked at Avocado with an angry look.

Isabella said with a sassy tone, "You thought you could get rid of me! But you thought wrong you dumb avocado!"

Avocado looked in disbelief! Isabella was alive, and was with Chad. Avocado crawled over to the furthest corner away from everyone else and after they all fell asleep. She began to cry.

After hours of crying and saying "I will be alone forever", Orange woke up and rolled over to her and he asked, "What's wrong?"

She started crying even harder after that. Orange wrapped her up in a big orange hug. In the morning Chad and Isabella held a meeting with all the fruit, but excluded Avocado for the obvious reasons. (But if you didn't catch on, here's why: it's because Isabella and Chad don't think avocado is worthy of their presence, and because they hate her).

After the meeting, Orange, Brad and Banana said that Chad and Isabella were planning to let the humans eat Avocado. Avocado felt offended, but not surprised. An hour later, a human came over, picked up Chad and took him away. All the fruit crawled over to where they could see the bench and saw Chad ON THE CHOPPING BOARD!! , Isabella screamed, "NOOOOO!!!!!"

The human chopped Chad in half, and they saw Chad's heart come out of him. Isabella leaned into Avocado and started to ball her eyes out.

Banana said, "Good riddance! He's gone, but I do feel bad."

"You better you stupid banana!" said Isabella while sniffing her nose.

While this was all going on, no one had noticed that someone had grabbed orange and chopped him up. They noticed when they saw a person with an orange walk past. No one said anything, but they all thought "oh no."

That night Isabella held a meeting but this time surprisingly invited Avocado. At the meeting Isabella said, "We all need to start hitting each other or hurting ourselves." Avocado didn't really want to do that because she didn't want to look ugly or dead, but all the others followed Isabella's orders.

Every now and then when Isabella was looking, she would throw herself against the side of the fruit bowl. Eventually banana looked so banged up she got thrown in the food scrap bin. That night Avocado woke up to Brad crying, so Avocado didn't say anything but just hugged him. After a while of sitting like this they both fell asleep.

In the morning Brad and Avocado woke to Isabella saying, "What is this! As soon as Banana gets thrown away you start sleeping together? How revolting!" As soon as they realised what's going on they separate as fast as they could.

That day Brad asked Avocado to beat him up so he would be able to see Banana, but when someone finally grabbed him and chucked him in the bin it was completely empty.

"Oh sugar. I am too late!"

Now it is only Isabella and Avocado. Days later Isabella and avocado were having a debate whether or not Chad was handsome. A while after the debate ended Isabella jumped out on to the bench, then to the floor. Isabella had just made it to the back door

when she got picked up put back on the bench where she was promptly cut in half. Avocado looked on surprised as Isabella's corpse lay on the bench beside the glass bowl.

For a couple of days Avocado wept over Isabella's death. Weeks later, when Avocado was about to give up, she woke up she saw her old friends from Woolworths. Avocado felt so alive again. And that's story of the of the lonely avocado.

Year 5-6 Runner-Up: Macauley Sexton [St Patricks Parish School, Albury]

Title: *A Christmas Crime*

"Stop right now!" Ordered the angry policeman as he ran over to Tom. "You should be wearing a helmet you naughty boy!"

As the policeman was talking to Tom a bright light flashed and everything disappeared. Tom felt scared because he had no idea where he was and what had happened to him. He looked around and saw snowflakes falling everywhere. There was a sparkly village of gingerbread houses with a massive Christmas tree right in the centre. A huge golden star was sitting at the top of the tree, shining brightly over everything.

"Where are we and who are you?" Tom demanded angrily to the policeman.

"I'm Snoggel and the reason I brought you was I needed a child to steal the North Pole Star. Only a child can get into Santa's toy shop because there's an age scanner and I'm twenty so I would set off the alarm. When I was an elf, Santa embarrassed me by making fun of me when I stuffed up the job of making candy canes. "I want revenge!"

"What's in it for me?" asked Tom.

"You can have any toy you want when we're finished," suggested Snoggel.

"I'm in!" yelled Tom happily.

Using Tom to get into Santa's village was a smart plan for Snoggel's revenge. They snuck through the village towards Santa's toyshop like they were in a spy movie.

"Hey Snoggel, what do I need to do to get out of the toyshop?" Questioned Tom.

"You need to find the big black drone in the flying toy section so that we can fly up to the Christmas tree in the centre of the village," answered Snoggel.

When they arrived, Tom put his head in front of the small wooden door and a red line scanned down his whole face. When it had finished scanning, it made a beep noise and then the door opened. He then climbed through the small brown door into the massive building while Snoggel was on the lookout for Elves.

"Wow! This is amazing! I wish I worked here every day!" Tom shouted excitedly. The room was massive with colourful toys stacked right up to the roof with labels above them

such as Barbie Dolls, Lego, Bikes and Board Games. Suddenly Tom felt cold and looked at his clothes and they were covered in snow flakes that were falling from the ceiling. A dozen or more elves were flying around on tiny surfboards towing toys behind them. As Tom sneakily walked over to the bikes section he found a surf board and hopped straight on it.

"Whoa! This thing is incredible! I wish I had one of these at my house!" Tom thought to himself. As Tom was riding on the amazing surfboard he found the massive drone section. "I think this is where I hop off," said Tom.

Ten minutes later, Tom was still looking for the big black drone that Bells had described to him. While he scrambled back through the pile of drones an elf walked in just when he found it. So he quickly hopped on and was flying all over the place out of control. As this was happening the elf was racing up the hill of drones trying to grab him.

After a bit, Tom got the hang of flying the wild thing and looked around for an exit. He saw a huge window above him which was shutting slowly so he had to move fast. Just as he flew through it he felt the window close and skim his hair. He was pumped and so relieved that he'd just managed to sneak out!

"Good job Tom! You made it out! I had no faith in you," Snoggel admitted.

"I know, I had no faith in myself either," laughed Tom.

"Let's go and get that star now," suggested Snoggel. He quickly hopped on the drone with Tom and flew to the centre of the village where the town's Christmas tree stood. Whoop! Whoop! Whoop!

The village alarm sounded as they stood on the top of the tree trying to pull the star out.

All the little elves started to run straight to the tree to see what was happening. "Santa, Santa, they're trying to take the star!" they yelled.

"What are we going to do? Santa will be here any second now!" Tom panicked.

"Don't be a wimp and feel sorry about your actions!" yelled Snoggel furiously.

Whoosh snow covered Tom's vision so he couldn't see then it cleared and he saw Santa floating next to them in his sleigh.

"Cooooooool!" Tom exclaimed excitedly.

"Hi Snoggel. I had a feeling it was going to be you! How have you been over the years?" Santa asked.

"I have been fine without you in my life," Snoggel yelled furiously at him.

"Come back to your home! Be an elf again! I'm sorry for what I did. Come back!" Santa sadly said.

"Only if I can be the head elf and get Tom back to his house," Snoggel said to Santa.

"Ok fine," Santa happily agreed.

Then after all that Snoggel put the star back where it belonged. Tom was the happiest boy in the world. He got to ride in Santa's sleigh!

"Goodbye Tom. I'm really sorry for what I did to you," Snoggel told him.

"I don't care because it was so much fun," Tom happily yelled.

"Thank you Santa for dropping me home!" Tom shrieked. The noise was absolutely deafening.

Year 5-6 Runner-Up: Logan Nagy [Sacred Heart Catholic School Corryong]

Title: *Doomsday*

"Prepare to be extinguished!" a growl barked menacingly. A red-hot laser flew out of a strange looking device, scorching the sky as it rocketed towards Sky City. Screams filled the streets as furry citizens helplessly flailed and scrambled for shelter as the beam grew closer and closer.

Meowers woke up in a puddle of sweat. He was a fluffy orange-striped tabby cat who always wore a green scarf. Covering his right eye was a patch of brown fur. He worked as a spy for S.C.A.R.F. or Spy Cats And Risk-Taking Felines; it was the reason he always wore a scarf. Although, he hadn't been assigned a job for months now. Meowers sighed as he climbed out of bed. He'd been having this recurring dream for weeks.

It had been 6 months since the Great War between cats and dogs had decimated Earth but this ancient rivalry had not ceased. The cats had gathered their remaining forces in a remote secret location; Sky City. They survived on meagre rations. Meanwhile, the dogs had hidden their survivors (and their greatest spoil of war, a genius cat scientist named Puffy) in their underground base on Earth. The cats had peace in mind, but the dogs had other plans...

Meowers decided he should relay this recurring nightmare to the person he trusted most, his old S.C.A.R.F. partner, Socks.

Socks was working on his latest project, taking no notice of Meowers walking up behind him. Socks was a fuzzy grey cat who always seemed to have various stains on his fur, probably because he never stopped tinkering with gadgets.

"What do you want?" Socks asked without looking up.

"I've been having this recurring dream," started Meowers as he squatted next to him, "Sky City is destroyed by lasers... it feels so real. I feel the dogs are planning something."

"It's just a dream... what's your point?" challenged Socks while pulling random tools out of his pockets until he found the right one.

"We should investigate!" Meowers retorted.

Sock's head jerked up and he exclaimed, "Are you mad? The war ended; we haven't gone on a mission for months!"

Meowers stood up slowly saying, "What do you value more, the safety of ALL the cats or your quiet new life?"

"*Helicopter landing now, location is marked!*" a transmitted voice declared. Meowers and Socks were being flown over the enemy's last known base location.

"Let's go, Socks!" shouted Meowers over the heavy blades' buzzing before jumping down onto the barren terrain. Meowers scurried off with Socks trailing close behind until they found the beacon.

"This is it!" said Socks as he whipped out his Giga Drill 9000™ and started to break through the surface with minimal effort. Quickly the earth shifted, the ground gave way and two cats tumbled down.

"Oh no, we've landed in a prison cell!" Socks cried, spitting dirt from his mouth. "I knew this was a bad idea!"

Meowers surveyed the area and stated calmly, "Think Socks, we need a way out." Socks pulled out a strange device and slotted it through the bars. Trusty Socks always had a gadget! The bars started to stretch outward as the machine expanded, making a hole. Socks grinned at Meowers, "Let's go stop some bad doggies."

They stealthily crept out of the cell and saw the control room's entrance was guarded by mutts. "Let's take the vents," whispered Meowers. Socks quietly unscrewed the bolts and they clambered into the duct. This was not the S.C.A.R.F. agents first time sneaking through the dog's base, so quickly but quietly they found themselves above the empty control room. They popped out of the vent.

The control room was in disarray and looked suspiciously empty. As Meowers tripped over an upturned chair, he spied a button on the floor. Pressing it immediately, a wall slid open to reveal a hidden room and a Sphinx cat in a white lab uniform with spectacles peering over the top of blueprints.

"You shouldn't have come here!" shrieked the cat.

"Puffy? We thought you would be dead by now!" Meowers and Socks yelled in surprise.

"Quiet, or they'll hear you," Puffy whispered. "I don't have much time to explain but..."

A growl interrupted Puffy, "Found you, naughty kitties! How foolish of you to come here."

A large Doberman stalked through the doorway, "But now you're here, you'll be the perfect test subjects for your friend's weapon to destroy Sky City!"

Meowers and Socks backed up towards Puffy but suddenly, 'BASH.' Socks felt Puffy grab his jacket and shove him towards the dogs.

"TRAITOR!" Meowers screamed, as the Doberman dragged him and Socks away.

The two cats awoke in a white room with bright lights making an ominous buzzing noise. They scrambled to their feet and heard a metallic voice echo from an intercom, "*Hello kitties, and welcome to your demise, testing will begin shortly.*" All Meowers and Socks could do was wait, thinking about how Puffy betrayed their kind. "*Testing commencing now.*" A bizarre armoured machine lowered from the ceiling.

"That is the same weapon from my dream!" gasped Meowers. "Think Socks, do you have a gadget to stop this?"

Socks shook his head and rummaged through his pockets. "It's shielded, the only thing that can stop a machine like this is a kill swi..." He speech paused as his fingers struck a foreign device. He pulled out the kill switch, but how?

"*Firing in three, two, on... - BOOM!*" the deadly laser shattered into hundreds of tiny pieces. Not only did Socks press the kill switch disabling the machine's shields, he also threw a sticky grenade at the now exposed body. This explosion shot upwards revealing a gaping hole to the surface.

Puffy ran into the room, "C'mon, let's get out here!" he yelled.

"You betrayed us, you gave us to them," accused Meowsers.

"No time to explain," Puffy muttered. "They'll be here soon."

The buzzing of a helicopter filled the cats' ears and a long ladder descended into the newly made hole. "*Need a ride?*" a familiar voice transmitted to their earpiece.

"Explain yourself, Puffy," Meowsers ordered, once inside the helicopter. The dishevelled Sphynx sighed, "I knew it was the only option. I had to slip Socks the kill switch somehow! Didn't you think it was weird that it miraculously appeared in your pocket?" Socks and Meowsers grinned as realisation hit them. The dogs' plans had been foiled and Sky City lived to stand another day. Yet Meowsers wondered if the battle was truly won.

PRIMARY SHORT STORIES ENCOURAGEMENT AWARDS

Encouragement Award: Patrick Clancy [St Patrick's Parish School Albury Yr3-4]

Title: *A Different World*

All was silent in the forest. The warm sun smiled down on me while I curiously explored the forest. The pleasant smell of pink blossoms danced in the light breeze as euphonious birdsong filled the air. I felt the leather of the worn black boots as I slid my toes into them, like a brown snake hunting its prey.

Suddenly a wave of fear and sadness crashed over me. I tried to scream and cry, but my throat was constricted. I toppled down, fiery pain searing throughout my body before I fainted.

The swirling vortex was a mixture of pinks and purples, and colours that have no names. The boy's body was limp, as if his soul had evaporated. It descended towards the ominous black portal until it disappeared. Nobody knew of the massive consequences of this moment...

Wearily, I opened my heavy eyes. I could feel the cold grass underneath me as I sat up. The forest had vanished. I was now on the outskirts of a skyhigh city!

As I cautiously strolled into the city, I noticed something. This city was different from any I had ever seen. Then it dawned on me: there was no smoke rising from the buildings; there were no homeless people. What was going on?

I tapped a boy on the shoulder and asked why there was no smoke. The boy looked at me like I had just said I was a deranged purple bat that ate pink cupcakes. "Pollution? Poverty? Every problem was solved decades ago!" he said, like everybody knew that.

My head started throbbing with confusion. No. That couldn't be true. Just this morning I had read an article about global warming getting worse, how the ice caps were rapidly melting. Surprise, surprise, I fainted. Again.

My eyes shot open. I didn't care how long I was unconscious. All I wanted was to return home to *my* world. I rose and bolted. Signs saying: zero emissions, global warming gone, 0% poverty all flashed past me.

My body froze. A forest. Pink blossoms everywhere. All other thoughts were wiped from my mind, like a cloth cleaning a benchtop. All I needed was to reach the forest and escape home. My legs started moving of their own accord, as if a magnet was pulling me there.

In the blink of an eye I was there, blossoms carpeting the forest floor. I spied the boots, but something was wrong.

The boots were slowly but definitely fading. "Stay." I whipped around and saw the boy, leading a crowd of glassy-eyed people. Stay in a perfect world, or go back to where I belong? The boy who had spoken looked familiar, like an old friend. "Stay. Stay. Stay." they chanted.

I looked at the crowd slowly moving towards me, then at the boots which were still fading. Then back at the zombie-like crowd. So I made my choice.

I rubbed my eyes as I sat up. I was never so happy to be face-planted in manure. While I wiped it off in disgust, I wondered if all that really happened. It didn't matter. All that mattered was that I was back in my own world. Then finally I noticed that there, lo and behold, were a pair of big, fluffy slippers...

Encouragement Award: Henry Talbot [Home Educated Yr3-4]

Title: *Good Story*

"Good Story," I muttered to my grey 17.2 hand mare as I saddled her up. She nickered back as if saying thankyou.

My brother and I had bought 20,000 acres in the Queensland, Australian outback. My brother was saddling up his 16 hand horse Book, we were heading after 200 steers in the long paddock.

"We have a contract after finishing this job," I said to Jacob.

"What is it for?" he called from the other side of the stable.

"We are to bring 500 cattle from Queensland down to Victoria," I informed him.

"Does that mean crossing over the Murray River?" Jacob asked.

"You bet."

"Do you have anybody else lined up to help us?" Jacob questioned.

"Ned's selling some of his stock, so he and his son, Peter, will be there of course. Along with Archie, Caitlin and Claire who never miss a chance to sit in the saddle."

"Should be fun then." Jacob answered.

The next few hours were spent tracking down cattle from various hidey holes of the long paddock. By afternoon we were back at the homestead, both riders and horses tired from the day. We were greeted by our friends.

"Tomorrow's droving day!" Archie shouted. "Thought we'd get an early start by staying here the night."

"7am at Ned's tomorrow," I added "I say we get to bed early, ready for the fun ahead."

All saddles were packed and the two pack horses standing by loaded at day break. We soon arrived at Ned's place, where he had the cattle waiting in the small yard next to his house. We headed off down the dirt road running from his house with ten dogs yapping here and there at the cattle.

The day quickly passed and it was nightfall. Peter and I were set to take the night watch until two o'clock, and then Jacob and Archie took the rest of the night.

We are off with the rising sun and got to the border of Queensland by evening. The next morning we soon had the cattle over the creek we had camped at.

The next two months flew by with the established routine of; pack up camp at day break, have lunch at a water hole if possible, then ride until 5pm and finally stop to make camp. We kept rotating the night watch, making sure two people were on watch all night. Finally we were camped on the banks of the Murray River.

It was nearly 2am when cattle thieves appeared. Archie and I were headed for bed when we heard them coming. We raised the alarm by cracking our whips, and our team soon came running. Jacob, Peter and Ned jumped on horses charging at the thieves alongside Archie. Caitlin, Claire and I rode around the cattle keeping them quiet. Soon our friends returned with the news that the cattle thieves were gone, scattered in the bush.

After two more days droving we had the cattle happily grazing within the gates of the Victorian property.

"Good Story" I patted my mare as we turned for home.

Encouragement Award: Xina Weeks [One School Global Albury Campus Yr3-4]

Title: *Pet or Pet?*

Its March 3rd, 2250 and Earth is a giant zoo where almost all humans and animals are locked up. Aliens from other planets come and go, humans and animals taken away to be pets, duplicated, have body swaps with humans/animals or have DNA swapped.

For Karissa it's just another day, the almost endless sounds of beeping cards, alien voices, footsteps, screams of happiness and sadness from humans and animals, cracking of whips, laughter from aliens and the whirring of the unknown vehicles that make the aliens come and go.

Karissa longed to be a pet. It might sound weird, she thought, because long ago humans had pets. But sometimes being a human pet is better than being a human zoo animal. Karissa looked at the clock. Three hours until it's nine pm, sleep time.

For the next three hours Karissa thought about what life would be like if she was a pet. Would her owner put videos of her on MeTube a thing like what humans had long ago, called YouTube? Or would she just be a normal pet, that lives a normal life in their owner's home?

If she had an owner, would her owner be kind? Karissa thought about all these questions until suddenly she realised it was time to sleep.

Karissa closed her eyes and tried to dream about being a pet with a kind owner on MeTube. Suddenly she was asleep dreaming.

Finally, after a long night Karissa woke to the first sounds of beeping cards and the crinkle of breakfast getting poured out. While Karissa was eating vooberry, wryberry and grugort for breakfast, she saw an alien girl about the same age as her- which was twelve- looking at her with a smile. Not a cruel smile like the ones she was used to- a kind smile. When Karissa thought about it- like right now, aliens really did look and think like humans, only aliens are much more developed than humans. They even talked in the same language as humans! This girl alien had a perfect face: she had deep blue eyes, pale pink cheeks, fair skin, blond hair, and a small nose. She wore a dark pink ribbon in her hair, plain dark pink dress, and dark pink shoes with light pink roses on them. She was a picture of perfection and health.

"Hello" said the girl with a seemingly honey filled voice. "My name is Clara. What's your name?"

"M-my name is Karissa". Karissa's voice stumbled.

"Hello then, Karissa" , said Clara.

For the rest of the day Karissa talked to Clara , she was filled with excitement for having a friend. For another week Karissa lived a blur of talking to Clara and everything that always happened. Then one day two adult aliens and Benly, one of the workers at the zoo, came over and unlocked Karissa's cage. Suddenly one of the aliens said "Clara! Come on!" Clara came. Karissa said "Clara, are you?"

Clara replied, "Yes Karissa, you're our pet".

Karissa exclaimed "Thankyou!"

Encouragement Award: Khloe Ilao [Kiewa Valley Primary School Yr5-6]

Title: *The Manor*

Eveland Manor, a palatial building owned by the Eveland family. The manor is nestled amongst the tree and bushes of a forest. Not hard to spot and not hard to find. Best known for its unsettling art pieces strung up across walls. These pieces were said to hypnotise the mind. To trap the souls of a human. To punish and grant eternity.

Eveland Manor was founded by James Endou in 1980 although strangely enough the manor was found lifeless; many cases were conducted, the case ended with a conclusion of a 'mysterious disappearance'. However, this wasn't enough to quench those of curious mind. So brave souls set foot in the manor never once to be seen again...

1987: I stand in front of said daunting structure, it was clear the Eveland Manor has seen better days; exterior deteriorating, paint now desaturated, windows fogged. A once thriving garden now over grown despite such an unpleasing exterior the interior was rather pleasing. Crimson red carpet strewn across the boards, elegant wall paper clearly well chosen, ominous yet delighting paintings were strung up (most were portraits). I assume these artworks were of the Eveland family however I was very wrong. Though the windows were fogged, something about the beams peaking through the panels gave a serene ambience in the empty halls. Plants. Despite no one being sighted in the manor for centuries, the plants,

they look perfectly cared for and well maintained. Multiple paintings I could see, almost too many. Strolling around the mansion a painting caught my eye, it was of a boy, in his hand, adoption papers? To the right of the conspicuous portrait a slim looking man with a frizzy beard frowns with an exasperated look plastered on his face. The left painting had an image of a house on fire... Its like the three of these paintings told a story.

An organ now in deep thought, piecing information together like puzzle pieces. Finally, the puzzle was complete. A boy of the name Iida was adopted by the Eveland family. He was cherished and spoiled, yet remained fair and obedient. When he was of age to live independently he was then chosen to lead the family's legacy into the greater future. Therefore, dethroning the current head of the house; that man was none other than Benjamin Eveland. The man wanted nothing more than power and fortune, that night he lay in his bed cursing in his every breath. Then it clicked. To earn his position as head of the house he needed to rid the manor of Iida. What better idea then an 'accidental' house fire? This man was no stranger when it comes to schemes like these, so as the manor set ablaze, so did the corpse within the manor. Benjamin snickered triumphantly. Once the deed was done, Iida Eveland was no more. Benjamin had had his fun now, it was time to play victim. Benjamin grimaced as others fell for his schemes. "I was at the Bazel Street Parlour, I had a meeting with the town's council. At 4:30pm I was on my way to the Opals Diner. I haven't talked to Iida since last night." Benjamin lied.

A painting was created in memory of Iida. The very painting, I stare at now. Interesting how three paintings told such a story.

A whole section of the day I was left in a trance. Hypnotised. Once conscious I tried to leave the manor however, I never passed the large oak doors nor the overgrown gardens of Eveland Manor. I didn't leave. I stayed. I roamed the halls, explored every nook and cranny, analysed every stroke on a painting; when I've done all that was possible I still didn't leave. I waited, waiting, waiting, waiting... till one brave soul entered through the oak doors. I tried to keep track of time, keep track of days. Though now I do not know such knowledge of the year, the day or time. After eons I finally saw the day when one walked through the oak doors, walked across the crimson carpet, just as I did however, when the day came we did not talk. We did not interact. He did not see me...

There was once a tale of a manor that stands tall in the woods it was not hard to spot nor find. No soul roams the halls. No one dares to look. No one dares to breach the large oak doors of Eveland Manor. As if they did, they feared that their souls, their living breath would be taken by the corpses, hidden amongst the walls of the manor. Just like the rumours, just like the tales, ones who entered the manor were gone.

Multiple and countless amounts of detectives and curious souls tried to uncover the mystery of the manor. Instead found themselves trapped in the trance of a painting. A particular painting that was. One that everyone has failed to overcome, the eyes of the boy stared right in to the windows of their souls. The man frowned at the sight of yet another person's prying eyes. Though the painting was still, the manor was still ablaze, screams of house maidens, butlers and Iida's were still to be heard. A tale once said that ones who entered the manor would perish as well as receive the most punishing penalty of all. Eternity....

Its upsetting to hear that every once and awhile someone ventured into the manor and, let's just say their expeditions never went as planned. Curiosity is a dangerous thing especially for prying minds. The manor still stands and today I spy, a petite little girl who enters through the doors...

Encouragement Award: Joshua Sandral [St Patrick's Parish School Albury Yr5-6]

Title: *Houston, We Have a Problem*

Bang!

The doors to the auditorium flew open as the contestants rushed in, running under a big banner that read: Welcome, Contestants! Houston couldn't believe it, he'd worked so hard to get here and now he'd done it.

"Each of you were selected to take part in the secret program and go into years training to become the newest astronauts," Neo told them. With each word Houston's stomach bubbled with excitement. Neo started back in his boring monotonous voice but Houston was too excited to care. He looked around the room as Neo continued, "Your challenge will start tomorrow. You should spend the short time you have training." Now Neo had got Houston's attention. Only. One. Day! This was going to be hard; he had to spend his day training.

"Welcome all of you to this gathering to get to know each other better," Neo said awkwardly as a bird with no wings. I bet he's not used to making a speech, thought Houston. The contenders filed one by one into the lecture hall and Houston looked around and guessed there were about five boys and five girls. Most of them looked at him in a calculating way that made him feel more uncomfortable, than a fish in a tree. "Welcome to your first training session, my name is Neo if you don't already know me, and I am the head of the challenge. Now let's get started!"

"The first training session is a mix of engineering and coding," exclaimed a vibrant sounding woman. She continued, "You will be split into five teams of two." Houston's partner was a young boy with black hair and light skin who looked at Houston with an excited look.

"Hi, I'm Nathan and Neo's my uncle," before Houston had time to react to the surprising news the woman, who he now knows is Claudia, announced the challenge. They would have to build a drone from the parts given and use it to carry a coin from start to finish.

"I can do the engineering," Nathan said.

"Good, I can do the coding," Houston replied, as bright as a ray of sunshine. They both set to work grabbing parts, writing lines of code until the time was up. Claudia announced the end of the training session. All of the drones completed the challenge.

"Well done all of you," Claudia announced, "Now go to your quarters, all of you and try and get some rest because your first real challenge starts tomorrow."

The next day...

Rrrrrrrrrrrriiinggg!

The bell screamed the signal for the start of the challenge.

Houston bolted down the corridor- he had to make it! He couldn't be late for his first challenge! He made it to hall 2, where he was told by the blaring loudspeaker that the first challenge would be held. He shoved the door open and rushed in...

The room was empty! CA-Chunk! The door's loud electronic lock bolted shut. The room was as silent as a grave. What am I going to do? Houston thought, puzzled. Houston wandered around the room looking for something to help him. After some searching he found a hanging wire, an abandoned car battery, (why is that here, he thought to himself) a metal coin and bolt cutters. "Wait," Houston said aloud, "this could be the first challenge!" Filled with new

hope, Houston looked at the control box for the electronic door and saw it was held in place by four screws. Suddenly, an idea hit him as fast as a bullet, he scraped the coin against the floor for what felt like an eternity. Finally, it wore down enough to fit in the screw. Houston slotted the coin into the screw and eureka! It fit better than a puzzle piece. Houston turned all the screws and popped the panel out of its place. Connected the wire to the battery, pulled the lever on the battery and then with a big ca-chonc. The door opened. To Houston's surprise Claudia was standing there with other Starflight officials.

"Well done Houston," Claudia said, smiling, "You finished the first challenge." Houston grinned but controlled the churning storm of accomplishment that he felt would burst out from inside him.

Houston absent-mindedly wandered towards his quarters whilst reading the sheet of paper Claudia had given him.

It read: The second challenge is tomorrow. Here is the list of people who passed:

Nathan Travis
Levy Wong
Roy Brooks
Jillian Stephenson
Houston Cooper

Well done!
- Claudia.

Whack!

Houston's head had a serious disagreement with the concrete wall leading to the contestant's quarters. Houston rubbed his head, sighed and continued on his journey. Finally, Houston reached his quarters and flopped onto his bed like a salmon out of water.

"All contestants report to the auditorium immediately for the second challenge," Neo announced over the loudspeaker.

Ten minutes later...

The contestants rushed into the meeting hall and the smell of chlorine hit them like a wall of smell, as they were greeted by a massive pool of water and diving gear.

"The next challenge will be a scuba diving challenge and you will practice with equipment that real astronauts use." The contestants took turns using the scuba equipment and took turns getting scored by the panel of judges.

"It is sad but we must say goodbye, so if your name is not called you are going home," announced one of the judges he continued, "The two people who progressed to the next challenge are Houston and Nathan!"

Before Houston even had time to acknowledge the many emotions racing inside him Claudia came up to him and said; "Houston, come with me, I will take you to the 3rd challenge."

"What is the challenge about?" Houston replied questioningly.

"Oh it's just a surprise."

Before Houston could ask any more questions they had arrived at the room that was as plain as a blank sheet.

"We're here," Claudia interrupted and as Houston walked into the room Bang! The door slammed shut and the lock clicked. She had locked him in! "I'm sorry Houston, but Neo offered me something I can't refuse," as she walked away Houston pressed stop on his phone as a knowing grin spread across his face. The whole conversation had been recorded.

Three hours later...

Houston watched as Claudia and Neo were loaded into a police van on the charges of child endangerment, bribery and cheating.

One of the judges came up to Houston and said; "You know that means you win."

"I know," he replied, "I'm ready for it!"

Encouragement Award: Edward Browne [Cathedral College, Wangaratta Yr5-6]

Title: *Flight 127*

It was Wednesday 12 August 2019 and pilot Stacey Nisson and co-Pilot Emma Miller were about to fly every pilot's least favourite route from Honolulu to Sydney. They didn't like it because there was always turbulence when landing, and they had never done this route before.

They flew for the biggest airline company in the world "International And Domestic Ariel Service" (IADAS) that was owned by the richest man in the world David Hossell.

IADAS flew the most aircrafts in the world with a fleet of 250 planes and 156 helicopters.

Before they knew it was time to depart. They were flying an Airbus A380 - Flight 127. This was the plane they flew the day before from London. Once they boarded the plane the IADAS terminal in Honolulu handed over the information of all 840 passengers on board.

"Welcome aboard Flight 127 to Sydney. My name is Stacey Nisson and I will be your pilot today with co-pilot Emma Miller. I hope you have a pleasant flight and thanks for choosing IADAS".

The safety demonstration was conducted by Chief Flight Attendant Adam Smith and co-workers. Stacey and Emma prepared the plane for take-off.

"This is Flight 127 requesting approval to take-off on the south western runway" Emma said over the radio.

"Request to takeoff on south western runway for Flight 127 is approved" said HNL air traffic control.

As the plane made its way to the runway the cabin was declared secure and ready for takeoff. They entered the strip and took off, reaching 316 KM/H - the amount of speed they needed to take off. Before they knew it they were flying over the Pacific Ocean.

Suddenly a red light appeared in the corner of the dashboard. Emma was clicking buttons to find out the problem whilst Stacey was steering.

"Stacey it looks like we have a mechanical issue" said Emma.

Emma's phone beeped. It was a notification from weather27. Weather27 was another company David Hossell owned. The message said:

"Severe weather warning for Sydney - Electrical Storm"

"Stacey we may have issues landing in Sydney, an electrical storm is rolling in" Emma alerted Stacey nervously.

At this time they were flying over the middle of the ocean and Stacey said over the radio:

"This is Flight 127. Mechanical alarm is on and engine is indicating failure. We are securing the plane for an emergency landing. Advise a secure landing space nearby."

There was silence.

"Flight 127, this is US Naval Commander John Richardson. We are tracking your aircraft and we are approximately 10.3..."

The communications had failed.

"Naval ship, have you got our copy?" Said Stacey with no response.

Before they knew it they could see the ocean and out of nowhere they were approaching an aircraft carrier. Stacey and Emma were chuffed and called Adam and the crew on the aircraft phones....

"Attendants prepare the cabin for a mobile landing"

Since their radio wasn't working they communicated to the aircraft carrier by emergency lights which was easy for Emma as she was a former Australian Airforce Pilot.

As they approached the runway Stacey activated the landing gear.

"Cabin secure and ready for mobile landing " Adam told Emma and Stacey.

They had touched down on what turned out to be a US Naval ship. The passengers were evacuated from the plane as soon as the seat belt sign went off.

After talking with the carrier's ground crew they decided to replace the plane's engine. This repair can take 48 hours but some passengers on board were expecting to get to Sydney tonight. They decided to call on any passengers who were engineers and mechanics to help with the replacement. That night it was non stop hard work.

The following morning they left at 1000 hours. Before they left they also got fitted with a new radio system. It was time to leave. This runway was not like the one in HNL. It's smaller and Stacey and Emma were a little worried. But they successfully took off and in minutes they were back flying over the Pacific Ocean.

Before they knew it they were lowering the landing gear.

"This is Flight 127 asking for approval to land on the main runway," said Emma.

"This is Sydney Air Traffic Control. Approval to land on the main runway."

They hit the ground and in the corner of Emma's eye she saw another plane entering the runway and she screamed!

"PLANE ON APPROACH"

Stacey tried slowing down but they collided. People came rushing down to the main deck and went straight down the slide. Before they knew it the plane had blown and five people were left on board. They were all crew members including Emma and Stacey.

Emergency services arrived at the scene and came rushing out of the plane holding two people who looked critically injured. It was Stacey and Emma.

The next day Stacey woke up and the doctors said she would make a full recovery. It was not the same story for Emma. The doctors registered Emma as deceased at 0205 hours.

Emma would be recognised as an aviation superstar and an IADAS legend.

Two weeks later Stacey received a message from an unknown number.

"Dear Mrs Nisson, This is David Hossel, CEO of IADAS.

I'm writing to you today, as a job offer to be the new CEO of IADAS as I have decided to retire. Please get back to me soon. Kind regards"

Instantly Stacey replied,

"Dear Mr Hossel, I'm going to deny your offer and instead hand in my resignation (please find attached)

Thanks"

Dear Mr Hossel,

Today I will be handing in my four weeks notice.

It has been my absolute pleasure working with IADAS these past three years as a first in hand pilot.

My children deserve to have a mother and I would hate for the same thing to happen to them that happened to Emily's kids. Thanks for the awesome opportunities.

Kind Regards

Stacey Nisson

Encouragement Award: Aiden Barker [St Patrick's Parish School Albury Yr5-6]

Title: *Super Crystals*



PART ONE: The Cave of Planets

"Wow, what is this place?" asked Jamie in amaze.

" I don't know but it's not normal," said Bill.

"Do you guys hear that?'" said Jimmy. The crystals were giving a radioactive frequency making the group do a different thing with a crystal. Jamie eats a crystal and Bill rubs one on his skin. Josh stabs himself with it. Jamie snapped it and swallowed it whole. All of a sudden, four portals opened up and swallowed all four of them whole. They were on different planets and their bodies evolved.

Billy was put on the Planet Doomsday where he grows wings and can shoot fireballs. Jamie was on Planet Clamint where he was able to form any shapes and he could shapeshift. Bill was on Planet Ahook where he could shoot a ghost-like hook. Josh was put on a Jipo where

he could run at light speed. They realised one by one they were in Colossians and they knew they had to fight to go home.

Jamie was introduced to his first opponent. Just like Jamie, he didn't know what was going on. When they fought they had different powers but Jamie could not control them. He nearly died when all of a sudden another portal opened. He was in a new coliseum where he saw Josh using his speed to suffocate the horrifying monster, the size of a house.

He looked around the area and he saw his other two friends Bill and Billy.

"Hey guys do you know why we are her--"

The commentator interrupted, "Everyone we have a good fight tonight. We have the goliath and a group of boys with superpowers that sound dumb but anyway the battle will commence in 5 minutes," he announced.

"Who's the goliath?" asked Jamie.

"I don't know", responded Billy.

But with clanks of metal the four boys walk out to the middle. And they look with fright as Cyclops walks out to fight them...

PART TWO: The Battle For Freedom

As the fight commenced Jamie started to control his powers. He formed a giant sword and attacked. He got a good hit but then the Cyclops squashed him. There were 3 boys left standing. The Cyclops tried to hit Josh but he easily dodged. While the Cyclops was trying to hit Josh, Billy shoots fireballs at the Cyclops to distract him, but he gets hit to the wall. Bill shot a chain and tied the beast arms down allowing Jamie time to get up and attack the Cyclops with the final attack to the eye.

Out of the blue a dragon appears. When the boys are released out the gates they realise that they travelled back in time to the mediaeval times on earth and they were in Greece. They set off to find the Cave of Crystals. They travelled for over a week, walking through a freezing blizzard, a soaking storm and burning deserts. They barely had any water left when they finally arrived at the cave. The portals that swallowed them were still there so they jumped in and were transported through time to 'the future'.

The world was a mess and there was a ring in the sky. They tried to find a way up and then a man in a suit showed up and said, "I have been waiting for your arrival."

"We must get out of here!!" said Jamie. The man pulled out what looked like a portal gun then he teleported them to his universe.

"I feel like I have seen this place before. Is this fortnite? Why are we in a flying bus?" asked Jamie.

PART THREE: The Multiverse

"We are in a video game", Billy screamed while walking left to right. The wind was picking up and the bus was shaking. The man introduced himself as Jonesy, then he jumped...

He yelled, "Come on down!"

They jumped and teleported to another universe.

"Where are we?" questioned Jamie, "Why is it all blocky?"

They are in another game, Minecraft. Next thing they know Steve comes out and tries to attack but they still have their powers. Steve stopped and realised we are human.

And he asked them to help him defeat 'the warden guardian of the chest in the darkness of the deep dark' a biome that randomly appeared.

As they travelled down the cave Jamie felt a shiver travel through his body like water dripping down a window he felt as if they were being watched they make it to a weird area with shrines and chest everywhere but there was mainly darkness we were moving towards the chest then we triggered something Steve said "skulk sensor run the warden is coming we ran to the chest and went to get the treasure but a portal opened up and then he woke up in a lab scientist were running test on him they said there trying to help and that i was dying because of the radioactive crystals "where are my friends"

Jamie was worried about the other we don't know but we need you to help us find them

There causing terror around the world looking for you.

"And don't try anything there is a bomb in your neck so if you do not listen we will set it off"
The scientist said AND DON'T FAIL US OR ELSE!

Encouragement Award: Caitlin Talbot [Home Educated Yr5-6]

Title: *The Legend of Story*

I caught Lulu, fetched her saddle, threw on her rug and carefully placed her saddle onto her back. Tightening the girth up six holes, I then collected her bridle from the shed. Some five minutes later, after filling my saddle bags and replacing my blown off Akubra on my head, I mounted Lulu and made for the gate.

Once through, I urged Lulu into a canter with a squeeze of my heels, I rose up and down evenly with her stride. Coming to the far paddock, where I kept some of my growing number of horses, I dismount and throw open the gate.

Soon we were trotting through the undergrowth. Then I came out to the clearing that ran down to the Murray River, there graze five of the six horses who call this paddock home. However, King my old faithful brumby stallion does not stand proudly within the herd of horses before me.

Half worried, I whistle and I hear the wisp of a once majestic whinny ringing on the air. King for sure, but not the normal King I know. Still worried, I cluck and urge Lulu down to the banks of the Murray. What I saw made my heart bleed.

There before me lay my first-caught stallion, in his last moments. I dismount hurriedly and slide down to where King lies, taking his head in my lap. There is no point in calling the vet, he's too far gone already.

With his last strength King kicks the dust and lifts his head, looking pitifully into my eyes. Two big tears roll down my face. I stroke him between the ears and suddenly King's body goes cold. I cry into his mane while Lulu stands over my shoulder, looking as though she understands.

I take my pocket knife and cut a part of his mane off, putting it into my breast pocket. I get up and remount Lulu, all the while keeping my eyes on King. I sigh, blow a kiss to the wind and start off through the bush once again.

Soon I am out of the long paddock and into what I call my old mare paddock. Here were three very old mares Misty, Crackerdam and Bonnie. They are possibly the oldest mares on this side of the Snowy River. They trot up to meet me as I open the gate. Crackerdam so like old King, perhaps his sister, that I shed a silent river of tears.

We move on again, following the well worn track that leads through this paddock and into the vast wilderness of ranges beyond. We climb steadily for about an hour, seeing a few Hereford steers and heifers with calves. A bull too, who challenges me grimly until stockwhip in hand, Lulu and I charge at him and he disappears down the gully, crashing so violently that I could have sworn there were five of him.

At noon we stop, I hobbled Lulu and removed her saddle, giving her water from my Akubra. After having a satisfying meal, I removed my cowgirl boots and lay down to rest. Lulu moved restlessly about nearby.

I was awakened suddenly by the crashing sound of horses rushing through the bush. Lulu stood over me, shaking. Replacing my boots and still wet Akubra, I fetch my saddle, swinging it over Lulu's back and vault into the saddle. I pat Lulu's neck and murmur "Let's go girl." Then to myself "I should have known better than to bring a mare up..." The rest of my thoughts were interrupted by the shrill, ringing whinny of a stallion and suddenly a magnificent dappled grey brumby stallion, followed by half a dozen mares breaks into the clearing. The stallion stopped mid stride, whinnied and then reared. Rear after rear he performs. Behind him his mares pause restlessly, waiting for the signal to bolt. I held Lulu's reigns lightly but firmly. Not for anything in the world, am I going to let her run with them.

I knew as I gazed at his pure strength and beauty that this stallion was Story, The Legend of the Night of Fire tale. Story, was nicknamed Story because no-one knew for certain that this stallion did truly exist... except now, for me. I knew for certain in that moment as I looked upon this brumby stallion's raw beauty.

Suddenly, Story, broke from a rear, pawed the ground and raced into the bush followed by his mares. I breathed a sigh of relief but it wasn't over yet. Story broke from the bush again, this time to my right. He reared and pawed the air with his hooves. At this moment I realised that Story was playing with Lulu... and as an afterthought... with me.

Then with one magnificent dash, Story and his mares crash back into the bush. I breathed freely again as I urge Lulu down the mountain. Story, in one final attempt to steal Lulu, whinnies loudly. "No, Story. You won't be adding Lulu to your herd." I laughed, "And you needn't bother about me either, I won't rob you of your freedom. Stay here where you belong."

