

Stone Soup

the magazine by young writers and artists



"Spring," by Tomara Eleni, age 6, Greece

A STRIKE FOR THE WIND

A wild horse longs to return to his home in the plains of Africa

A PUZZLING STORY

Rachel wakes up to find she is living in a jigsaw puzzle

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Volume 28, Number 4
March/April 2000

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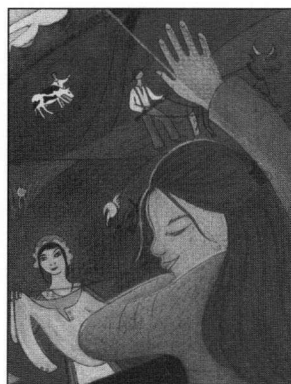
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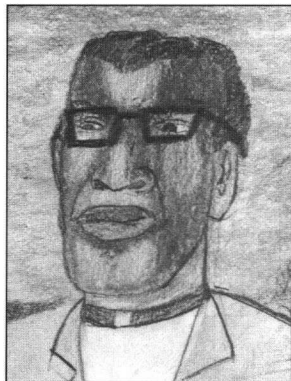
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Stone Soup

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Welcome to all our readers, old and new! We've had the pleasure of publishing *Stone Soup* for over 26 years. It is our belief that, by presenting rich, heartfelt work by young people the world over, we can stir the imaginations of our readers and inspire young writers and artists to create.



Contributors' Guidelines

Stone Soup welcomes submissions from young people through age 13.

If you want us to respond to your submission, you must enclose a business-size self-addressed stamped envelope. If you want your work returned, your envelope must be large enough and have sufficient postage for the return of your work. (Foreign contributors need not include return postage.) Contributors whose work is accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope will hear from us within four weeks. Mail your submission to *Stone Soup*, P.O. Box 83, Santa Cruz, CA 95063. Include your name, age, home address, and phone number. If you are interested in reviewing books for *Stone Soup*, write Gerry Mandel for more information. Tell her a little about yourself and the kinds of books you like to read. If you would like to illustrate for *Stone Soup*, send Ms. Mandel some samples of your art work, along with a letter saying what kinds of stories you would like to illustrate. Here's a tip for all our contributors: send us writing and art about the things you feel most strongly about! Whether your work is about imaginary situations or real ones, use your own experiences and observations to give your work depth and a sense of reality.



Jessie Moore, 12

Cover: "Spring" was loaned to *Stone Soup* by The Museum of Greek Children's Art in Athens. The museum preserves and exhibits children's art, holds an annual art competition for Greek children, and conducts educational programs for children and teachers. Special thanks to director Mrs. Helen-Fay Stamati.

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Editors



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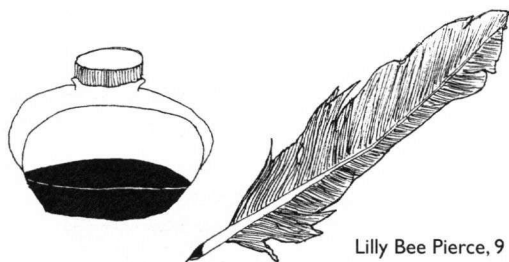


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Lilly Bee Pierce, 9

The Mailbox

I read your magazine as soon as it reaches our mailbox, and I think the stories are excellent, especially "Emily Ames: A Fictional Biography" [September/October 1999]. I also especially liked the drawings by Kate Engel [also September/October 1999]. My one complaint is that all the poems are about the season, and they get a bit boring. I would like to see more variety in the poem selection.

Cameron McArdle, 10
London, England

Readers, send us your poems! We are especially interested in free-verse poems about the things that matter most to you. Remember, a poem is not a story; every word counts in a poem, every word must evoke an image or feeling.

I really enjoyed "Emily Ames: A Fictional Biography" by Alison Innis. Kelsey Low's illustrations made it very realistic. I think they are both very talented. I also enjoyed Jessica Libor's illustrations in that same issue. In "Farley" I really thought I was in the forest with the characters. I look forward to seeing more of her pictures.

Gene Goldstein-Plessner, 10
Durham, North Carolina

Jessica illustrated "A Strike for the Wind" on page 8 of the current issue.

I am a faithful reader of *Stone Soup* and would like to commend you for the excellent work you do on your magazine. You seem to have a keen sense of the types of fiction and poetry that your subscribers will enjoy. Each issue stands alone as a wonderful collection of young writers' work.

Katherine Assef, 13
Rochester, Minnesota

Thank you for the opportunity you give kids to have their ideas and efforts valued and even potentially published—it keeps their sights high, and encourages them greatly!

Wenda Lagan, parent
Simsbury, Connecticut

I fell in love with "Dolphin Promises" by Shasanna Browne, illustrated by Hanna Kozlowski [November/December 1999]. The story was written beautifully, and the pictures were amazing. Fabulous job!

Alice Blackwell, 13
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

I have been getting this magazine for three years and I love it. There are a lot of different moods in this magazine. You can choose to read about everything from the bond between sisters to a war on a different planet. Every time I get a *Stone Soup* I prepare to sit down and relax on my bed and pick a story. Thanks a lot.

Michelle Sellke, 11
Newton, Massachusetts

I love the way that almost every story is educational (but in a fun way!). Every time I read one of these stories I think in my mind that they are written by adults . . . but no! They're written by kids my age.

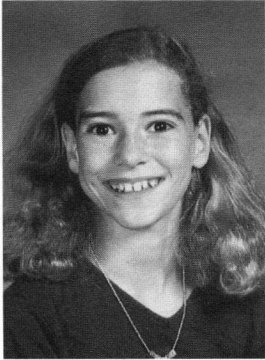
Sophie Levihn-Coon, 9
Austin, Texas

Note to our readers: Send us your letters! We are especially interested in your comments about specific stories, poems, book reviews, and illustrations. We also want to know what you like and don't like about *Stone Soup*. Send letters to "The Mailbox," *Stone Soup*, P.O. Box 83, Santa Cruz, CA 95063. Include your name, age, address, and daytime phone number.

ABC Hobby Store

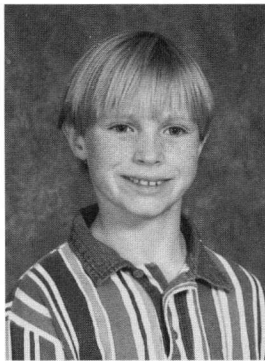
by Becky Shafer

illustrated by Garrett Landon



Becky Shafer, 13
Evanston, Illinois

Becky wrote this story
when she was 11



Garrett Landon, 11
Santa Cruz, California

THE LADY STOOD in the kitchen, moving swiftly as she cut the vegetables. Her apron swayed when she shifted her weight, and she made piles of the lettuce. The door opened and she turned around to see a boy standing in the corner. His small shadow appeared on the wall, and his eyes darted around the room.

"Ben, I've asked you not to surprise me like that," she said. Another woman, Ben's mother, stood off to the side, nodding in agreement.

He looked at them for a moment and murmured, "Sorry, Mom. Sorry, Mrs. Smile."

"It's OK. Come in," Mrs. Smile apologized, reminding herself about Ben's shyness.

She frowned, remembering how talkative the boy had been, but that was before. . . She shook herself and tried to calm the frightening memories. Stop thinking about the accident, stop it, she thought. But Ben's happy words, "I'm going to Florida!" stayed in her mind, along with his smiling face talking to her son, Joe. If only the plane hadn't left, and the ten-year-old had not gotten on it. Debby Show, her good friend and Ben's mother, had changed because of that plane ride, too.

"Are there really new puppies?" Ben interrupted.

"Yes, go on back," Mrs. Smile replied, noticing the excitement in the boy's eyes. "Joe is in the back room."



He reached toward the litter, scooping a puppy into his cupped hands

Ben ran toward the small porch where Joe greeted him, picking up a puppy and handing it to his friend. "She's the runt," Joe said, scratching the yellow dog's ears. "My dad's going to put them in the store soon—just two weeks."

Ben stared at the dog, which was wiggling in his arms. "I wish I could have her."

"You know your mom is allergic," Joe said. He reached toward the litter, scooping a puppy into his cupped hands. Two others pawed, whining, at the topless, metal cage, and another one lay across the newspaper.

The boys stood together, not speaking,

their eyes wandering around the room.

The next day, Ben ran down the street and stopped at a building which had a sign that said, in big, red letters, "Alphabet Hobby Store." As he stood at the door, he remembered the beginning of the long, terrifying flight.

He had waved good-bye to his father, and his mother led him aboard the plane. She counted the rows until seventeen, and helped Ben settle comfortably near a window. The attendant's voice came over the loudspeaker: "Welcome aboard flight 187 with nonstop service to Orlando." She explained the safety directions, motioning to the exits.

The plane began to rise and his mother leaned over him, whispering in his ear, "Chew your gum." He nodded, looking out the window at San Francisco.

Now Ben opened the glass door, listening to the bells ring. "Joe?" he called. This store is so strange, he thought. He wandered among the overfilled shelves, looking at things he had never noticed before. The only shelves that weren't crowded were the ones containing food.

"Joe?" he said a little louder, his eyes darting down the aisles. He stopped and stared at a pile of pans, each marked with different prices on big green tags. The rows of colorful cups seemed wonderful, and he studied especially the shades of blue.

He could still see his mother flipping through magazines that she had pulled out of pockets in front of her. He played with a Game Boy, pressing the buttons quickly. The attendants gave him soda and lunch, which he ate slowly. Then he heard it. The thud. It sounded like thunder crashing to the ground.

Ben walked into another room, looking at the parrots who spoke to him, and the cats, who slept peacefully. Bags of dog food were laid in a pile, and he bent by an empty puppy cage.

Remembering where he was, Ben called, "Joe? Joe!"

"Yeah?" his friend appeared from a doorway, his straight hair bouncing as he walked. His faded jeans had holes in

the knees and his oversized shirt was splattered with paint. "Sorry, I didn't go to your house. My dad wanted me to help him with the new shipment. We're also painting."

Ben nodded. "It's OK."

The boys wandered through the store, with Joe pointing at new supplies. He picked up a clock, opening a latch. A small, wooden bird popped out of the door, saying, "Cu cu."

When he walked home later, Ben kicked the dust on the sidewalk carelessly. A truck passed him and blew its loud horn, making him jump. The sound of bouncing inside the truck reminded Ben of luggage shifting on the plane.

The thumping noise surprised him again. "We're pointed down!" somebody shrieked, and the passengers began to scream. Their voices filled the plane, and Ben's heart pounded. Tears ran down his cheeks and his mother reached over, jerking at his seat belt, tightening it. When he looked over, she was weeping, her mouth moving in a cry for help.

Ben shook his head, trying to control himself. He entered his house, forcing himself to think of other things. Running up the stairs, he leaped on the bed and closed his eyes.

A week later Ben went back to the store. Joe sat on the floor, his back turned from the door. "Joe? What's wrong?" Ben cried. Joe slowly crawled in a circle and faced his friend. He wiped tears from his eyes with a muddy

hand, ignoring his messy hair. "The store is going out of business," he managed to whisper.

Ben stopped, shouting, "No! It can't be!"

Joe nodded. "It is."

"Your Alphabet Hobby Store? That's impossible."

Sadly, Joe looked down. He picked up a small toy airplane, twirling it in his hand.

"Calm down, everyone," the pilot said over the loudspeaker. His voice was shaking. "The flight attendants will help you prepare for the crash landing."

Ben held his breath and tightly closed his eyes. He turned away from the window, not daring to look down, and waited to drop. People were screaming.

The flight attendants raced up and down aisles, speaking in soft, timid voices. Backpacks tumbled out of kids' arms, and the attendants would pick them up, showing the children how to put them securely under the seats. They made sure every chair was upright, and that each person knew what to do, and where to leave. Then they stopped running past Ben. They were sitting at the back of the plane, no longer offering help.

Ben wandered among the toys, touching small cars, looking at board games. Suddenly, Joe pulled him to the side, showing him a chair and saying, "Sit. I know you still think about the plane crash, but it's been two months and you need to get over it. Nobody died and only six people were hurt. It must have

been scary, but you're lucky to be alive."

Ben nodded, remembering his mother rushing him away from the plane and the wailing babies.

He saw in his head a uniformed man walking toward them, saying that everyone was alive. His mother sat on the dirt in the big field, gasping for breath. The man tried to calm her, telling her that she was just panicking.

Later, a plump lady rushed around, introducing herself as Mrs. Todd, owner of the nearby farmhouse. She handed each of them an apple from a basket and showed them where to get water. Ben stayed seated, watching the emergency workers.

Joe spoke again, "You only think about how you almost died, right?"

Ben swallowed and murmured in a dry voice, "Yes."

"Think about how lucky you are to be alive, and just try to stop thinking about the crash."

Ben raced to his father's arms. "You're alive! You're alive!" the man shouted. His mother came close behind him, reaching out to hug her husband, beginning to relax.

He opened his eyes, testing Joe's suggestion. The tension inside him began to disappear, and when he looked at his friend, he felt his troubles were almost gone.

Although Joe's eyes stayed lowered, Ben smiled and turned to wait for the future. ❖

A Strike for the Wind

by Rachel Schneck

illustrated by Jessica Libor



Rachel Schneck, 10
New York, New York



Jessica Libor, 12
Worcester, Pennsylvania

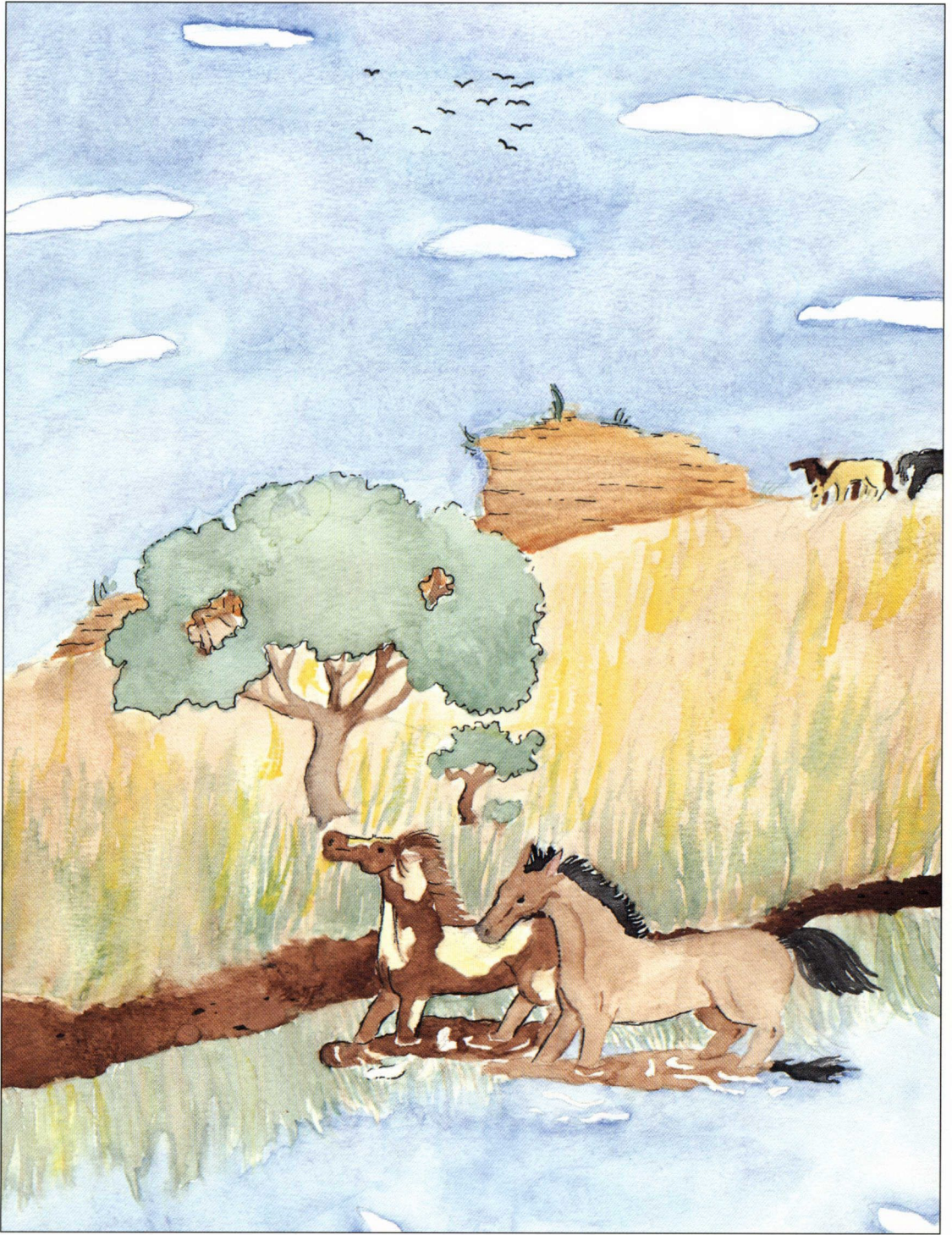
WHAT FUN! I galloped down the slope, near the river. My best friend, Amarganth, the red colt, was already splashing in the cool water. I've known Amarganth since I was a newborn foal. Mother, Father, Amarganth, my sisters Moru and Embrea, and my cousin Exanthion all belong to the same herd of wild horses. The prairie sun was hot, so I joined Amarganth in the cool river. "Ginger," whinnied Amarganth, "I wonder what the world is really like."

"Why, Amarganth! Can't you see the prairie and the river? Surely that is the world!" I neighed.

"Mother has told me stories of faraway lands," said Amarganth.

Two of the herd's leader stallions came to drive us back to our mothers. It had been a nice day. Tomorrow I planned to race Exanthion. I sighed and went to sleep, next to my mother's side.

Next day Mother woke me up with a sharp nudge. She shoved me up, and I was surprised to see the rest of the herd galloping away, like the wind. Thinking this was a game, I galloped too. But from the warning neighs of the leader stallions, I knew that danger was coming. A swift lion bounded after us. I was getting tired. The lion's sharp eyes looked around the herd, and spotted me. I was the last horse, plus I was only half-grown. My mother tried to hurry me, when I slowed to a canter. The lion focused on me, and came sprint-



The prairie sun was hot, so I joined Amarganth in the cool river

ing toward me. I gave a whinny of shock when I felt the lion's claw scrape across my back. Luckily I was able to run fast enough to catch up with the herd. But that lion stayed in my dreams for weeks.

Some time later I was a full-grown chestnut mare. I was quiet and sedate enough, but I still had a way of turning up my tail, rearing, and galloping away at full speed. I was a little distance away from the herd when it happened. I saw something I had never seen before. It looked like a big green box on wheels. Later I learned it was a truck. It came closer and closer to me. I tried to run, but it came too fast. Something hit me, and that was all I remember until I woke up.

I was on board a ship, going to Maine, far away from my African homelands. To get me on board, strong straps were tied onto me, and I was lifted up off my feet. It was very unpleasant. Then I was kept in a cramped, tight stall with other wild horses. I often whinnied to them, but they were scared stiff, as though paralyzed with fear.

The ship finally came to land, and I was lifted off the ship. But then a man shoved me into the back of a large truck, which I learned was a horse trailer. I had to ride around in it for some time, but then the doors opened onto a fenced place, with three other horses inside it, all old palominos. I was shoved out into that place. All I could do was gallop a few yards up, and a few yards back. I kicked at the fence, and tried to jump over it. It was too high. Suddenly,

I felt hungry. So I grazed along with the other horses on the lush, crisp grass.

Three men came, with a strange-looking kind of rope thing. They came running after me. I was frightened, so I neighed, held up my tail, and galloped away at full speed. But the little grassy yard was too small. I was cornered. One of the men held my neck, the second held my head, and the third fitted the rope thing around my head. It felt terrible to have a cold piece of hard metal pushed over my tongue. For many days I lived in fear that I would swallow it when I ate or drank. But I soon found out that the leather straps around my head held it in place, so there was no possible way to get the metal (which is properly called a bit) out of my mouth. I learned the leather straps were a bridle. I had to grow used to lots of things: a saddle, a halter, a harness, and a cart being dragged behind me.

I was soon tamed by coaxing, and wheedling, and good food, and an airy stable. What more could I want? Freedom! Of course my groom sometimes let me out in the cow pasture or the fenced meadow. But an African wild horse still has her spirit, even if she is tamed. I knew I should be grateful for the good food and stable, but no. I got into a habit of bucking and rearing and kicking. My master tried to tame me more. "Be good, Joy," he kept saying. I wanted to tell him my name was Ginger, but he didn't understand. I gave him a good kick, and that was the last straw. I was sold.

I was sold to a riding school. And I was made to carry child after child after child on my back. Some were shy, some were gentle, but most felt as if a horse is a truck, and can go on as fast and as long as the rider likes. The instructors called me different things. Brownie, Babe, Minto, Beauty, Patty, Cookie, Misty, Susan, Skippy, Willow, Penelope, Rosemary, and Sally were just a few. Some riders didn't even know I was a mare! They called me Hector, and Eric, and other such things. I got irritated and aggravated, and started rearing and bucking. So I was shut up in a hot stall, day after day, making me angry and upset. I stamped and fretted. But one day a man came to look over all the horses and ride them in turn. He rode all the palominos, pinto ponies, Shetland ponies, Morgans, Arabians, Western mustangs, and Clydesdales. When he came to me, the groom said, "You want to be careful with that one. She's a wild mare from Africa."

The man got on my back and rode me at a walk, then a trot, then a canter, then a gallop. We bounded across the pasture and back. "This horse is clearly a racehorse!" the man said to my master. And again, I was sold.

I went to a big, airy stable, with a big stall and healthy food. Outside was a big field with hedges and pools and obstacles. I tried talking to the horses in the stalls next to me. One was a slender, lean, black stallion with a white star on his forehead. His name, I learned, was Ebony Star. The other was a flashy,

white mare named Moonlight. Both were very stuck-up. Ebony Star thought that the best thing in the world was winning a race. Moonlight said the best thing in the world was getting her mane braided. *They* don't know how wonderful it is to gallop across miles of grass stretching far into the distance. Or to bathe in the cool river on a very hot day. Or to watch the sunrise, which shines on the river, and fills the lands with blazing sunlight. Or to listen to the grass, bowing and rustling and whispering before the breeze. Or to look up at the sky, which stretches like a blue carpet. *They* don't know. *They* never will. *They've* been born in captivity, and have never known freedom, and liberty, and a wild horse's spirit, which can't be trapped in any stall, or field. While my body is stuck in this stall, listening to the boasting and bragging of Ebony Star and Moonlight, my mind is grazing in the sunlight on the African plains, and galloping through the cool waters of the river.

One day me and Moonlight were let outside in a small yard. I learned that she had been a show horse, and she bragged and boasted and strutted around. I told her about the lion and Amarganth, my sisters, Exanthion, and how I was captured. "You *wild* horses are so . . . disgusting!" said Moonlight. She said "wild horses" as someone might say the word "manure." She kept on throwing out dark hints about what she thought made me such an unsatisfactory horse. When she said that my

mother was a hag, I couldn't bear it any longer. I reared up and we started a fight. I kicked at her, but she defended herself with her hoof. She aimed a blow at my head, but I bucked, with my head between my forelegs. She tried to pound me down with her hooves, but I reared up, swishing my tail like a whiplash. Then we both reared up and tried to pound each other with our front hooves. But Moonlight had not had the experience that I had, when Exanthion and me started fights. I gave her a hard kick in the ribs, and would have gone on, but our masters came back and separated us.

Next day my new master, Jack Manly, took me out. He put a saddle and bridle on me. Then he brought me to the big field with all the obstacles. He mounted me and started me off at a gallop. I tore down the track and cleared bushes, and pools, and fences. Jack made me go around the track seven times, all at full speed. Then he gave me a good grooming and some oats and shut me up in my stall, where I tried to ignore Ebony Star, who was telling a very boring story for the forty-seventh time.

Jack practiced with me on the field every day. Finally he mounted me and walked me over to a line of other horses, side by side. A whistle blew, and every horse was off!

I galloped too, clearing hedges behind everyone else. Jack took his riding whip out of his belt, and I felt a searing pain go through my back. I knew perfectly well it was Jack's whip, but in my

mind I pictured myself scared, tired, and running as fast as I could, with the lion close behind me. I again felt the lion's claw on my back as the whip struck me. I forced my body to gallop. Front left hoof, front right hoof, back hooves together. I repeated this in my head over and over again as my hooves churned. I soared over the bushes like a bird, and jumped over the water without getting my legs wet. I was moving up toward the front of the horses. Mother always told me that the safest place, when a herd is being chased by predators, is the middle. At the back you are usually killed, but at the front you are vulnerable and alone. In the middle you are protected by the leader stallions, who gallop around the sides. But this time I felt an urge to be galloping across the African plains. I ran past the other horses, and leaped into the front, where I passed Ebony Star. He looked bewildered and tried to run faster, but had to slacken his pace in order not to be kicked by my flailing hooves. The whip was now in Jack's belt. I crossed a white line of grass in the field of green, and suddenly there was an explosion of clapping and cheers. I had won the horse race when I thought I was escaping a lion! Ebony Star looked quiet and sullen, and Moonlight sulked and pouted.

After I had won the horse race, I was sold to a group of men who made natural geographical wildlife videos. They were filming wild horses, and I was to be brought to Africa and filmed running



I crossed a white line in the field of green, and suddenly there was an explosion of clapping

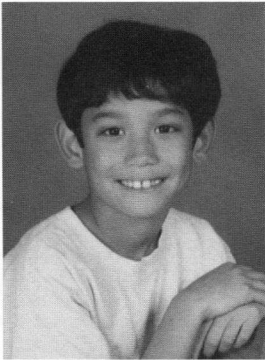
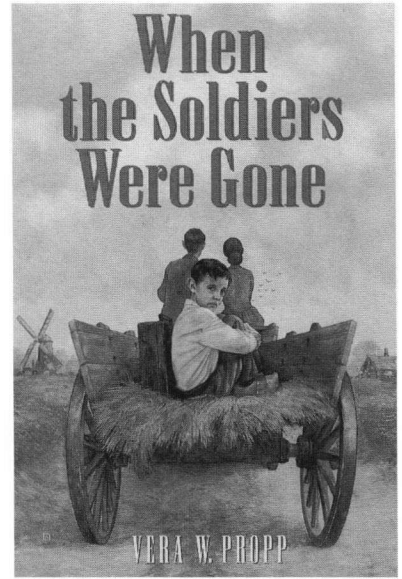
over the plains. I was again put on a ship, and when I stepped off I smelled the wild African air. The director thought I was much more tame than I really was. Finally the cameramen went into a small car. I was to be pulling a tiny cart, which would be edited out. A man went into the cart, and my legs were tied down while everyone got organized. I wanted to be free! I wanted to roll and jump and run and graze. I stamped and pulled. Finally, I twisted my feet around more, and jerked. Then I put my teeth to work. I chewed through the ones on my front legs. Then I stamped the ones on my back legs until they broke. The man in the

cart rushed to my head and tried to stop me, but I knocked his head away with a savage blow. I took to my heels, and I was free!

I trotted and walked and cooled off in the river I remembered so well. I lay down and rested. I galloped and stretched my head, and looked at the huge sky. At last I could feel the warm air and the sweet breezes. And hear the grass rustling and the river flowing. I could taste the lush grass, and the crisp wildflowers. "Of course there are lions, and I could get sick . . ." I told myself, sternly. But then, I stopped. After you've made a strike for liberty is no time for worries. ❖

Book Review

by Sam Levin



Sam Levin, 9
New York, New York

When the Soldiers Were Gone by Vera W. Propp; G. P. Putnam's Sons: New York, 1999; \$14.99

WHEN I FIRST saw the book *When the Soldiers Were Gone* by Vera W. Propp, it sounded boring. Then as I started reading it, it was sad and fun to read and soon I couldn't stop. Henk (the main character) is friendly, kind, and also very brave. During World War II, Henk, who was Jewish, had to go live with his parents' friends so he would be safe with Christians. He thought the Christians were his real parents and forgot his real mom and dad. If I found out my parents weren't actually my parents, I wouldn't be nearly as brave as him. His real parents named him Benjamin.

Another character is his real mom, Elsbet. I felt bad for her because she had to give her son away. Then, for him not to remember her is heartbreaking. In the end, at least, he ends up remembering her.

There's a mean character named Max. He is in Benjamin's class. He hates Jews. He's racist and cruel. On the first day of school, he was going to trip a kid, but Ben caught the eye of the kid. Ben looked at the floor and so did the kid and he

wasn't tripped. The kid who was almost tripped is Jop. He became Benjamin's friend.

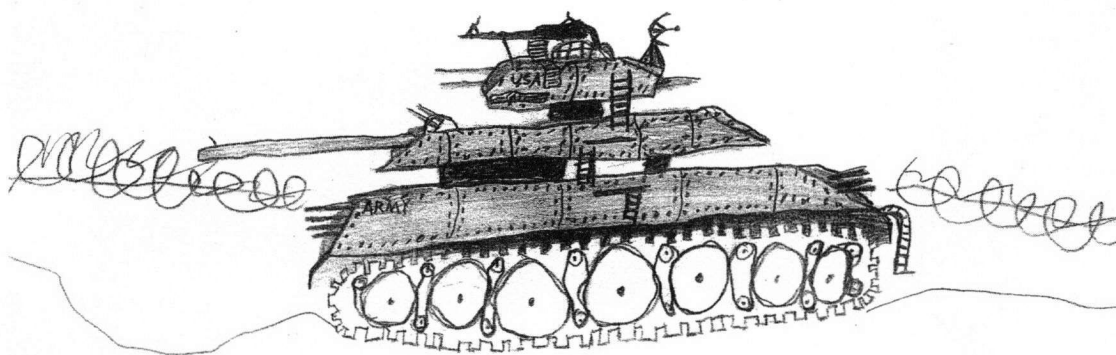
One scene with Max and Benjamin happened after school when Benjamin was walking home. He was finally getting adjusted with his school and his real family. He was finally fitting in and he was happy, which made me happy. Then what made me feel sympathetic for Ben and upset was when Benjamin was walking happily when Max put his arm up. Benjamin thought he was going to wave so he started to wave, but instead Max threw a rock at his forehead and he was bleeding. That's one reason why I really don't like Max.

One time in my life, something happened like this. It was in school. My friend was standing in line to go somewhere. She was humming a song that another girl didn't like. The girl said "I hate that song. Why are you humming it?" "I'm allowed to hum it if I want to,"

my friend said. "Is that so, white girl," the girl said meanly.

Another scene in the story made me excited and happy until . . . Benjamin was walking home from playing in the park with friends. He saw a farm cart go by and knew that his papa (who wasn't really his real father) was in it. Then he started chasing the farm cart down blocks and up streets. He finally caught up to it. It turned out it was a different person. He was lost, to make matters worse. It makes me feel really awful but makes the book interesting. It's like you're playing on a Little League team and your team's undefeated. Then you lose your last game. It turns something good into something bad, which is sad.

The book was sad, but fun and exciting to read. There are good characters and mean characters. I had to stop to watch TV. I wanted to keep reading. That's why I think kids will really like this book. ♦



William Mattingly, 10, Westfield, Indiana



As she gazed into the scene, she drifted off to sleep, right on top of the unfinished puzzle

A Puzzling Story

by Erin Brock

illustrated by Nikkie Zanevsky

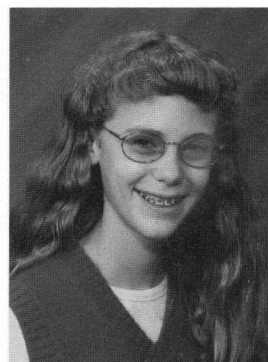
RACHEL LOVED PUZZLES. Jigsaw puzzles. Thousand-piece clear-blue-sky and flowery-meadow puzzles. Cute little puppy-dog-face puzzles. Any kind of puzzle suited her fancy. She loved the challenge of putting one together, piece by piece. Discovering the piece that fit was always thrilling and a small victory over the manufacturer who had labeled the puzzle "difficult."

For her thirteenth birthday, Rachel received a package in the mail from her Aunt Lola, who shared her passion for puzzles. When she ripped open the box, she found a one-thousand-five-hundred-piece puzzle with a painting of a colonial farm and the surrounding forest on it.

It was very detailed, with a mother working in the garden while two girls hung up the wash and a boy led the cows out to pasture. A farmer worked in the fields and a large wooden barn stood off to the left. At the edge of the field was a forest and a gravel road running through it. The farmhouse and various animals were also included in the busy scene.

Rachel sat working on her puzzle: "Colonial Farm: A Painting by George Smits." She put together most of the puzzle pieces and was working on the forest. Being the imaginative type, Rachel thought the girls didn't look like they were having much fun. She wondered if those colonial girls could ever have fun like she had, perhaps in the forest.

She thought, That would make a good basis for a novel. I



Erin Brock, 13
Neenah, Wisconsin



Nikkie Zanevsky, 13
Brooklyn, New York

wonder if Kathryn Lasky has written anything like that. I should go to the library and find out.

She checked her watch and realized that the library wasn't open.

Anyway, she thought, I'm too tired to walk to the library. I'll go tomorrow.

Rachel stared at the puzzle again, searching for the place where a piece with trees on it would fit. As she gazed into the scene, she drifted off to sleep, right on top of the unfinished puzzle.

When Rachel woke up, she fumbled around for the puzzle piece she was trying to fit in. Once she found it, she examined it to refresh her memory. It was a clothespin! Not a puzzle piece! Rachel rubbed her eyes. A clothespin? Why, it was. She turned around and found herself facing a girl she had never seen before.

"Nan," said the girl, "why are you staring like that? You look as though you've never seen a clothespin before."

My name's not Nan, Rachel thought. It was then that it dawned on her, though she could scarcely believe it, that she was *in* the puzzle.

Rachel stood up and walked around. Yes, there was the barn and there was the field and there was the mother in the garden. Yes, she was in the puzzle.

"Nan, where are you going? We have to finish hanging up the wash!" the girl cried.

Rachel decided that the girl *was* talking to her and she would answer to the name Nan until she got out of the puzzle, if she ever did.

She walked back toward the clothesline to join the girl to hang up clothes.

After they had finished, the mother called them over to help in the garden. The girl and her mother were soon engaged in a lively conversation about the upcoming quilting bee with some of their friends.

"Nan, dear," said the mother, pausing in her conversation, "it is unlike you to be so quiet. Just yesterday, you were talking up a storm about how a patchwork quilt is just like one of those jigsaw puzzles in John McGregor's store. You and Cathrine stared at them all morning the last time we were in town, before the world fell apart."

OK, Rachel thought, this is odd, the mother must be my mother and the girl must be Cathrine. My sister, maybe? I wonder . . .

Her mother interrupted her thoughts, exclaiming how time did fly and telling her to go help her sister take the wash off the line. Their working in the garden, while holding up a decent conversation, had taken all afternoon!

The phrase "time flies when you're having fun" came to Rachel's mind, but fun wasn't the exact word to describe it. Now she knew why the girls in the puzzle weren't smiling.

DINNER HAD been interesting for Rachel, meeting the farmer who was supposedly her father and the boy with the cows who was her brother. Having onion soup and brown bread to eat instead of lasagna was also different.

Now she and Cathrine were talking up in the loft where they should have been sleeping. Actually, Cathrine was doing most of the talking. She kept referring to fun times they had enjoyed together before the world had fallen apart. Rachel, of course, had no idea what Cathrine was talking about and nodded her head in agreement, as Cathrine fondly recalled trips to town and Independence Day celebrations.

"Cathrine," Rachel asked abruptly, "what is this about the world falling apart?"

"Oh, Nan, don't be dense," Cathrine replied. "You were the one in tears over not being able to go to McGregor's store because the world was broken. And call me Cath; you always used to. What's wrong with you? You've been so mindless lately."

Rachel shrugged, rolled over, and went to sleep.

ALL THE next day Rachel was kept busy with endless chores: working in the garden, sewing, and cooking. As she labored, she pondered what everyone meant by the world "falling apart." That was the reason for no trips to town, and why they were isolated on the farm. Then she realized that she *was* in a puzzle, and what did people do to puzzles after they had been put together? They took them apart, of course! *That* was why her puzzle-family couldn't go off the farm; the puzzle wasn't fully put together. But how could they ever go to town, if there was no town

on the puzzle? Oh, this was all so confusing. But anyway, Rachel thought, not everything has to make sense.

Rachel turned her attention to herself. She realized that she had to get off the farm and out of the puzzle, if at all possible. She figured that in order to get out of the puzzle, it would have to be put together. But how could she do that if she was in the puzzle? It was all too much for her to fathom.

Her mother called from the other room.

I'd better get working, Rachel thought.

That evening, Rachel and Cath searched the house for scraps to take to the quilting bee. Cath had said it was taking longer than usual for the world to put itself together and the bee probably wouldn't happen for a while. But Rachel, of course, now knew the reason and suggested they start looking anyway.

While they dug through their mother's scrap basket, Rachel mustered up the courage to ask how they were going to get to the bee. Cath responded with a tone of disgust at what to her seemed like a game of stupidity that Rachel was playing. She did answer, however, saying that when the world was together, they went down a road through the forest.

That was what Rachel had wanted to hear. Now she knew what would be on the pieces she was looking for, and where they would connect to the rest of the puzzle.

Later that night, Rachel went to bed feeling a sense of accomplishment.

IT WAS Sunday afternoon. No work was done on the Sabbath day, so Rachel was free to do some piece-hunting.

She walked to the edge of the puzzle and looked out into a vast ocean of grayness. Off in the distance she could see an island that must have been a piece of the puzzle. It was too far away, she thought. Being so tiny, she would never reach it.

I bet I know what is on it, she mused, and she pictured several lush green trees and a sliver of the road near the edge. And before her eyes, that very puzzle piece slid over and connected itself. Rachel was so astonished and pleased that she imagined what would go next to the first piece. It, too, appeared and fit itself in. Rachel's task of putting the puzzle together now seemed exceedingly simple.

For the next week, Rachel began to imagine the puzzle together whenever

she had a moment to spare. Her puzzle-family became increasingly joyful at the connection of every piece.

By the time Sunday rolled around again, the puzzle was complete. Rachel left the house after lunch. She was as ecstatic about going back to her real home as Cath was about the quilting bee. As she walked along the gravel road, she wondered when this would end and reality would begin. Or would she end up in the town Cath had talked about? But the approaching darkness of evening gave Rachel the opportunity to sleep on her questions.

Rachel awoke to the sound of chattering. Not of squirrels and forest creatures, but a human voice she didn't recognize. She knew that the quilting bee wouldn't be for a couple of days, so she wondered whose voice it could be.

She opened her eyes to see her mother, her *real* mother, talking away on the phone. She was home!

It must have all been a dream, Rachel thought. But on the table was the puzzle. Completed. ❖

Teddy's Eyes

by Lucy Strother

illustrated by Jade D'Addario

HOLLY GAPEN SIGHED and switched the elbow she was leaning on. She was stuck in deep thought. Algebra was so discouraging!

"Holly?" Holly's ever-loving mother called. "Holly, it's dinner time. Lasagna, your favorite."

Holly shuffled her papers, finally done, into her overstuffed binder and groggily stretched her lanky legs that brought her so much trouble. Kids teased Holly because of the fact that she was six-foot-one, really tall for a fifteen-year-old.

"Holly, this is my last call."

"Coming, Mom. You sound like a train conductor."

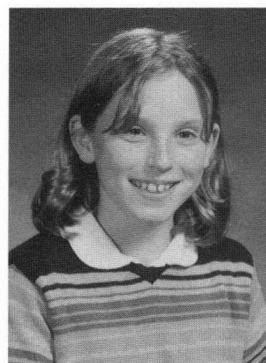
"Toot, toot. Very funny." Holly's mother had come into the living room and was flapping a towel toward her daughter, playfully.

"Come on, Mom," Holly complained. She stood up and went toward the dining room.

THE NEXT morning, Holly awoke abruptly from a terrifying nightmare. She clung onto her teddy bear, Teddy, the only real friend she had. She was sweating and her hands were clenched into hot balls.

"Holly, honey," Mrs. Gapen reassured, "you're all right. Everything's OK."

Holly blinked her eyes and woke up. Her dream had been



Lucy Strother, 9
River Hills, Wisconsin



Jade D'Addario, 11
Seattle, Washington

about the state achievement test.

FOUR . . . THREE . . . one . . . seven . . . open! Holly opened her locker and limply flung her backpack in. She looked toward her classroom and saw Linda Harvey, someone she naturally avoided, strolling toward her. She had a spiral book in her hands. Holly waved shakily and greeted, "W- what's up?"

"Hi, *personne grande*," Linda sneered.

"What?" Holly scrunched up her face.

"You'll find out in French class, today," Linda snickered as she pushed her shoulder-length frizzy red hair out of the way of her exotic green eyes.

"Well, I guess I'll see ya around, Linda. I've got to get to class now." Holly backed away from Linda, watching the spiral book get smaller and smaller before it took a turn down the hall.

"*Bonjour, mes amis*," Miss DuJour greeted her class.

"*Bonjour, Madame DuJour*," many children chorused.

"Today, we'll talk about features. To be tall is to be *grande* as to be small is to be *petite* . . ." Miss DuJour's voice faded away and Holly was insulted. Kids had turned around and were chanting, "*grande, grande* . . ."

Holly turned away to muffle the chants of her classmates. She was overcome with guilt that she was so tall, so she hid her eyes in her stringy, bleached hair. She was comforted when French was over and retired to the hall.

Linda was already waiting for her

there. Her normally free hair was pushed back by a plastic headband with teeth that looked threatening. She was holding the same spiral book as before.

"Hey, Holly. Whatcha doin'?" Linda leaned against a locker, getting ready to stay there a long time.

Holly searched for an excuse in her mind to leave Linda, and thought of after-school activities. "I-I've got to get to tennis," she stammered. This was true. Tennis was Tuesday night. "Yeah, tennis," she announced more confidently.

"OK, yeah, tennis." Linda was not impressed. "But, you know, could I talk to you for a sec? I've got something you might like."

"Well, only for a second," Holly agreed a little reluctantly. "You know how Coach is if you're a little late."

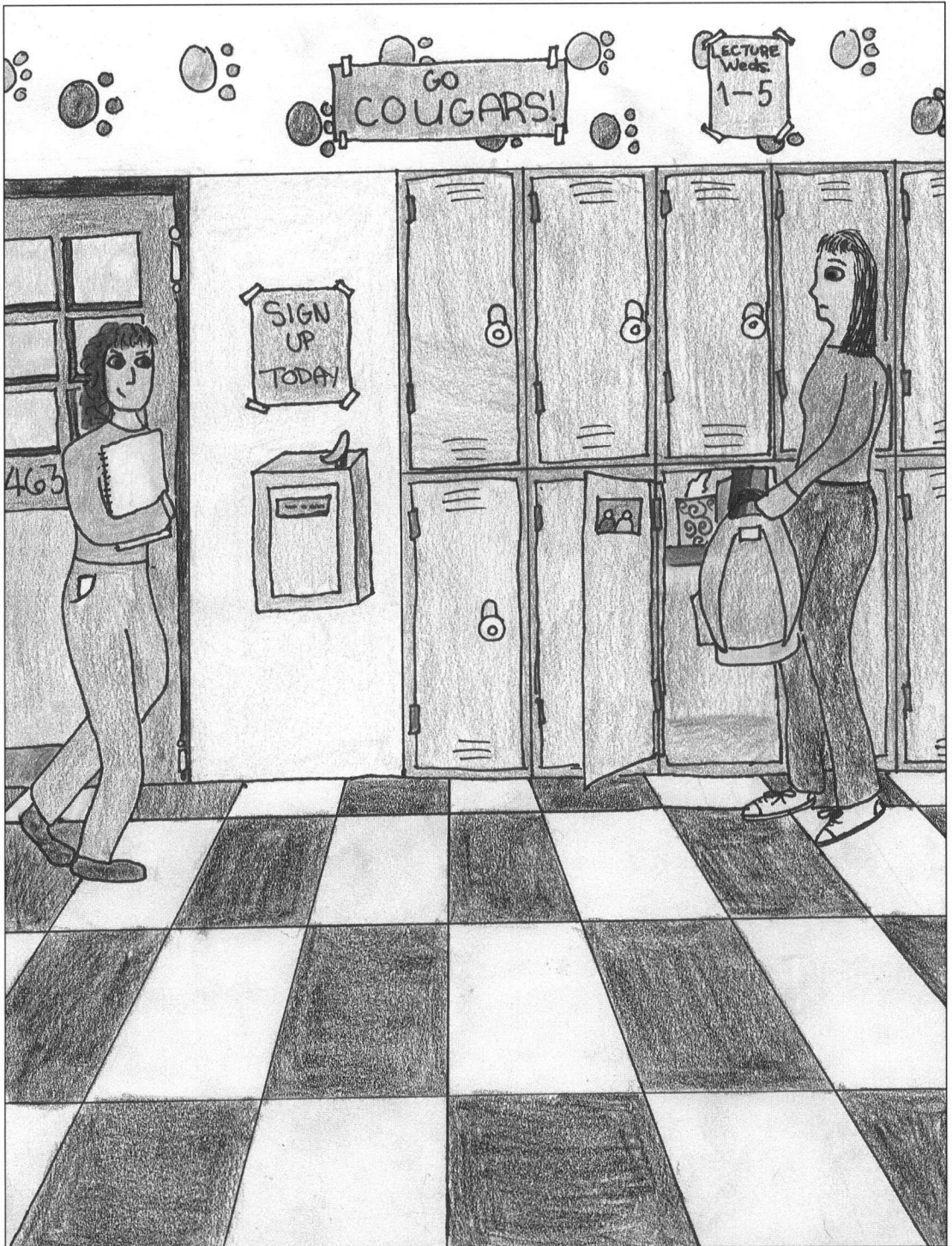
Linda had a sparkle in her eyes. She smiled at Holly and beamed with pleasure at someone wanting to talk to her.

"Well, it's about the test." Linda glanced down at her spiral book and continued. "You know how some of the questions are really hard?"

"Yeah." Holly remembered some of last year's algebra.

"Well, look at this." Linda opened the book she had been carrying around tenderly and showed Holly the first page. In bold, capital letters, a message was printed. It read:

**1999 STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT TEST
ANSWER BOOK
HIGH SCHOOL**



She saw Linda Harvey, someone she naturally avoided, strolling toward her

"Oh, my. Where'd you find this?"

"Doesn't matter. Do you want to?"

"What?" Holly was mortified and asked the question even though she knew the answer.

"You know. Come on. It'll be fun. Imagine—the perfect scores."

Imagine—getting expelled, was what Holly was thinking. But still, so she wouldn't upset the volcano, she whispered, "I'll think about it."

Linda seemed pleased with that remark, and let Holly go in peace to tennis.

TENNIS CLASS was different. Holly was usually a natural leader and played really well. That Tuesday was different. Holly missed every ball that came to her and just wasn't running fast enough. When practice match time came, Holly was paired up with Ronny Simmons, who was one of the easiest kids on the team to beat. She was occupied thinking about the answer booklet, though, and Ronny beat her easily.

Holly sat down after the match next to Coach. He seemed understanding.

"Got something on your mind, eh?"

"Yeah."

"It's hard." He smiled and patted Holly's back. "Sooner or later, you'll get to your goal. You'll make it."

Holly remembered his words as she untied her shoes. You'll make it. She wondered if she would make it to eleventh grade, and then her mind wandered back to the booklet and all thoughts of Coach vanished.

"HONEY, HOW was school?" Holly looked up from her book to stare at her mother.

"Fine, I guess." Holly lied through gritted teeth. If she told her mom, all she would get would be a lecture. They usually lasted at least an hour long. They weren't what you would call "fun."

"All done with your homework?"

"Yeah."

"Get to bed early. Then at least you won't be so grouchy for the big test day after tomorrow."

"That early?" Holly dropped her book on the floor, then recovered it.

"Uh-huh. Be prepared!" Mrs. Gapen cackled like a witch.

"Very funny, Mom." Holly gave her mother her most bored look and resumed her reading.

"Well, you better get enough sleep for tomorrow." Holly's mother left the room and went back to cleansing dishes.

HOLLY OPENED her locker and carefully hung up her backpack. She had gotten a good night's sleep, and was prepped for the test that would be taken by many the next day. Thinking of the test made her remember Linda, and she tried to desperately think of an excuse to delay her answer to the discouraging question Linda had popped. She could run, but that would be senseless. She already was viewing Linda strolling down the hall toward her. Holly tried to look cool, and Linda smirked.

"Well, have you chosen?" Linda pushed, still holding her spiral book.

Holly meant to set Linda straight, right then and there, but Linda's exotic eyes just bore right into her. Holly knew cheating on a test was wrong, but she couldn't bring herself to say so. So she just smiled and insisted, "I'll tell you tomorrow, I really will."

"Sure, yeah, tomorrow." Linda tapped her glittery nails on Holly's locker. "Well, be ready with an answer. I'll be here tomorrow. How about right before school tomorrow?"

Holly nodded. Linda seemed to settle things with her eyes, and everything was straight.

The rest of Holly's day was mediocre. Nothing was really great, but nothing was terrible. Everything just sort of went by in a jumble. By the time she went home, Holly was confused and exhausted.

"TEDDY, YOU'VE got to help me." Holly squeezed another hug out of her limp arms.

Teddy just stared with his lifeless glass eyes. If you had not known the stuffed animal, you would have thought, It's no use. But Holly saw through those glass eyes and knew what Teddy was saying. She was definitely ready for the next day. Having settled that, Holly leaned back and dozed off to sleep.

LINDA WAS already there, looking impatient. As Holly put away her

backpack, Linda pushed her question. Holly cleared her throat, wiped her skirt, and began. "Linda, from the beginning, I knew that what you were doing was wrong. Now, I'm going to tell you two things. First, no, I'm not going to cheat on a very important test, plus I'm going to report you."

Linda grasped Holly's shoulders and threatened, "If you . . ."

Holly had already broken away from Linda's squeeze and ran to Miss Lepson, the guidance counselor. The whole tale poured out, even the section about Teddy. Tears mixed with words, and everything rushed out like a faucet. All the stuff Holly should've said came out too, all in one big glob. Miss Lepson was very understanding. She took Holly to her class and had an explanation talk with Holly's teacher along with Linda and her teacher.

HOLLY WENT home happy. Mrs. Gapen got a call from the school and she and Holly discussed a bit more.

The matter was straightened out now. Everything was under control. Holly's mother graciously understood Holly's not telling her a word.

THAT NIGHT, Holly sat thinking in her bed. She was happy with how she had done her test, although she didn't have her score yet. She remembered how much Teddy had helped, even though he was lifeless. All she had to do was to see behind Teddy's eyes. ❖

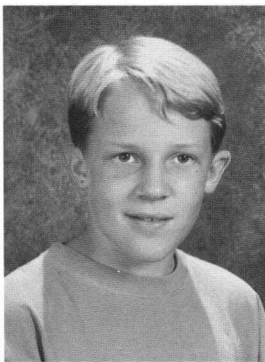
The Battle of Lake Trasimene

by Ryan G. Braun

illustrated by John Fullbright



Ryan G. Braun, 10
Topeka, Kansas



John Fullbright, 12
Midpines, California

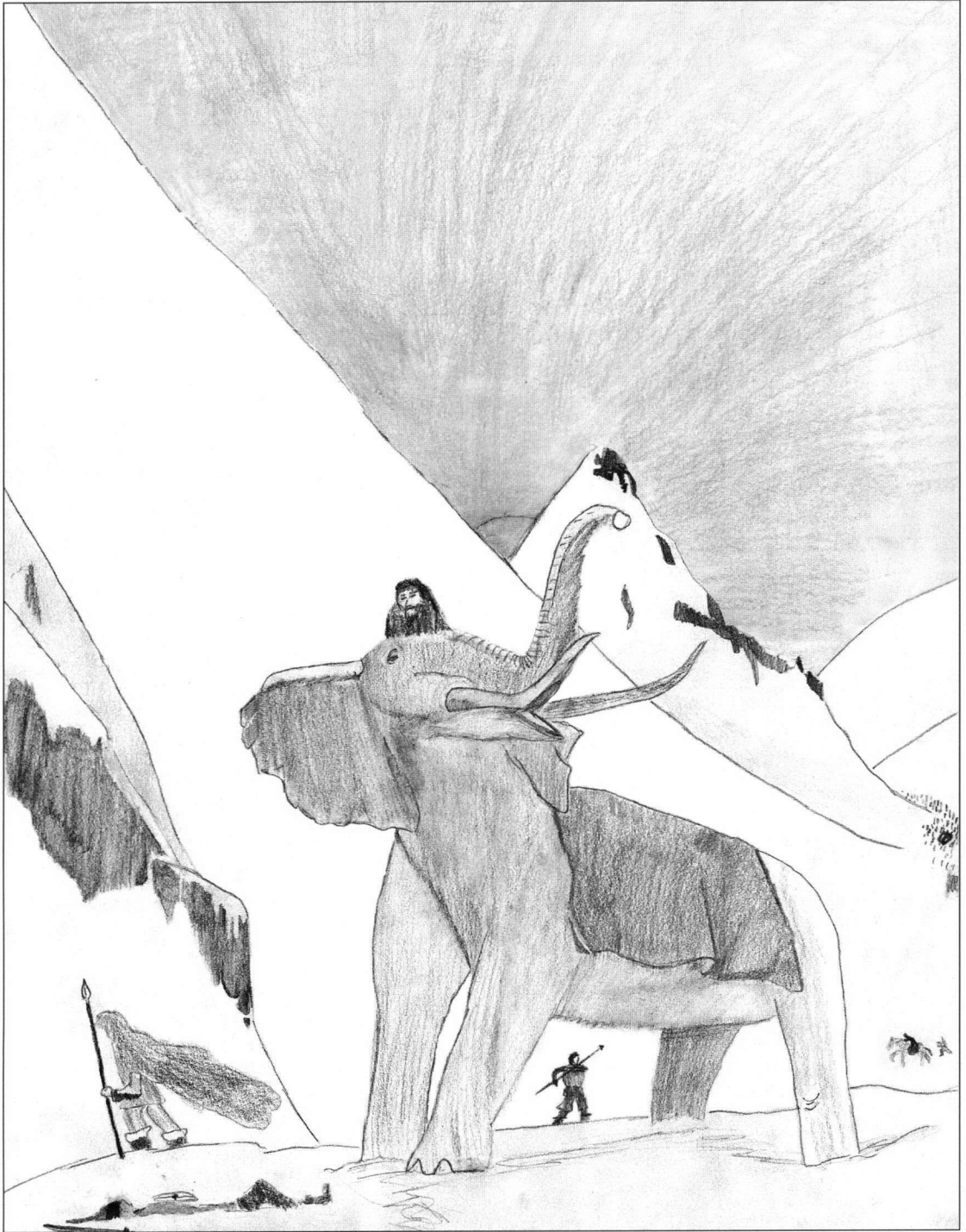
THE FIRST RAY of sunlight crept up the Apennine mountain range in central Italy. Above the winding hills and jagged rocks, the bulk of the Carthaginian army was perched above Lake Trasimene, just below a higher cliff.

Standing at the edge of the cliff, staring out toward Spain, stood a man. He was wearing a faded red tunic with leathery flaps hanging down at the waist. On his head, a brass helmet sparkled with a dull illumination, reflecting off Lake Trasimene which was below him, and coming back to him in dozens of vivid shapes. A sword was sheathed at his side and a dagger was belted to his waist. His eyes were deep and sorrowful. With his right hand he twisted his deep black beard. In his other hand he held a torch. His expression was cold and sullen.

This man was the leader of the Carthaginian army, at the helm of the operation. He was the great war leader Hannibal.

He was hoping, no, praying that Spain would remain in the hands of the Carthaginian government. His youngest brother Mago was running the operations in Spain at that time, hopelessly defending it against the sieging Roman legions that encamped all across its borders.

It was 217 BC, and Carthage, a North African empire and a world power at the time, was engaged in a struggle with the emerging Roman Empire. It was the second conflict between



From eastern Spain he started the huge trek through the dangerous Alps

Carthage and Rome, known as the Second Punic War.

Hannibal looked back at the sound of his men waking. He looked down again into Lake Trasimene, watching the mist rise from its cool, clear surface, and anxiously awaited his enemy's arrival.

After Hannibal's father, Hamilcar Barca, was defeated by the Romans in the First Punic War, the Romans had been gloating in their success. Meanwhile, Hamilcar was trying to rebuild his military. However, Hamilcar was killed in battle. His successor, Hannibal's brother-in-law, Hasdrubal, inherited the control of Spain. But after Hasdrubal's assassination at the hands of a slave, Hannibal, who was next in line, took over. Not satisfied with Spain alone, he launched several campaigns for the purpose of recruiting mercenaries. He recruited cavalry and spearmen from Spain (which was where his brother Mago's stronghold was located); cavalry and infantry from Gaul (modern France). He also recruited cavalrymen from Numidia, led by the great cavalry commander Maharbal, and slingers and pikemen from the Balearic Islands. Finally, with his huge army of 90,000 infantry, 12,000 cavalry, and 37 elephants, he was ready to begin his journey. From eastern Spain he started the huge trek through the dangerous Alps.

The trip was costly. The harsh weather of the Alps made it difficult for Hannibal. When he finally made it through the Alps into Italy, his numbers equaled about 60,000 infantry, 6,000 cavalry,

and most of his elephants had perished. But Hannibal was a brilliant leader, and with the troops he had, he remained in Italy for sixteen years, winning many major and minor battles. Significant among these was the Battle of Lake Trasimene.

On the other side of Trasimene, Hannibal's adversary, Flaminius, the arrogant newly elected Roman Consul, and his army were just now waking from the hard bunks in their temporary legionary base which they had constructed the night before. Legionaries were just now climbing out of the pitched tents and huts. After the legionaries woke, they would put on their thick red tunics. Then began the difficult process of putting on the plate armor. One legionary would help another strap his breastplate to his chest, and also strap on the arm protection and the leg armor. Thick leather embroidered with colored beads hung down from the waist to protect the groin.

Then the legionaries would begin the grueling task of taking down base camp. Some would be assigned the task of pulling up the palisades, wooden shafts about three to four feet long with a sharp point at the end that surrounded the temporary legionary bases. Other legionaries took down and packed the tents. Finally, when the base was taken down, the legionaries would take their *pilum* (throwing javelin), buckle on the *gladius* (short sword), and strap their packs to their backs. Their packs contained palisades, utensils, rations, and

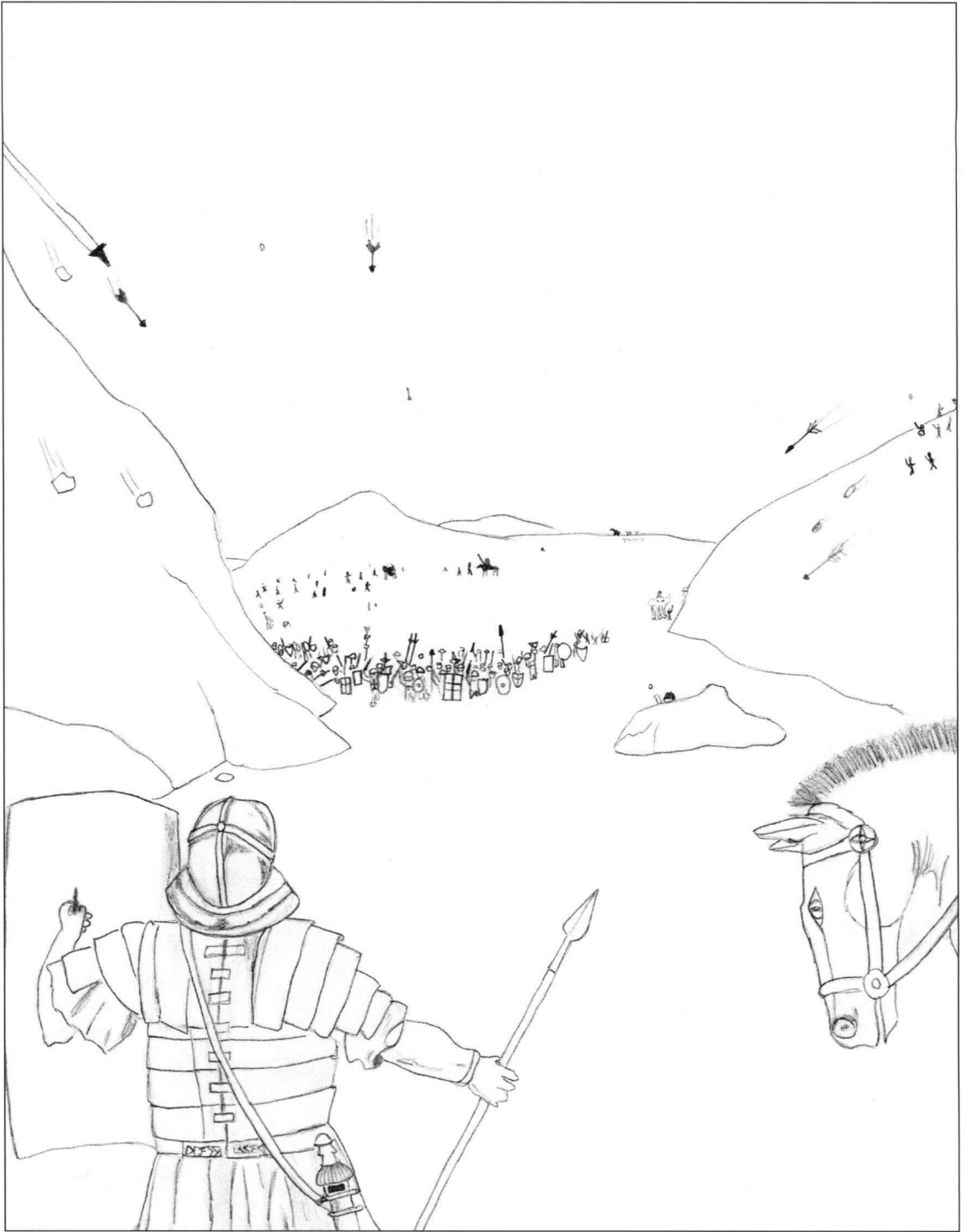
personal items. Finally, after all the tasks were completed, after all the legionaries were accounted for, they began their trek through the tiny gap between Trasimene and the Apennine hills. The Roman army was now on the move.

The legionaries, under Flaminius, marched toward Trasimene in search of Hannibal. Flaminius was unaware that he was walking into a trap. Waiting for him in the hills near Trasimene, Hannibal's men were already strategically positioned to ambush Flaminius and his army. Line after line the Romans marched through, not suspecting that many eyes were watching them from above. The thought of VICTORY was the only thing on the legionaries' minds as they moved on. Finally, the entrance of the pass was just now disappearing behind the last legionary. The time was now right for Hannibal to act. Out of the noise of clanking armor and humming Roman soldiers came the all-too-familiar sound of Gallic war cries. Horrible black shapes were now descending down the mountainside. Out of the darkness they came, into the light of the Roman torches, upon the extremely vulnerable Roman force. The torchlight revealed the forms of Gallic broad swords glistening in the moonlight, and also thousands of their wielders. A horde of Gauls charged down behind Flaminius and his army, blocking the only exit. More shouting and cursing from higher up could be heard. The mass of the Carthaginian army was now

making itself known on the mountainside, spreading out and revealing its power. When Hannibal gave the order, it charged. As the Romans watched the enemy descend upon them, they noticed something. Out of the storm of swords and axes, sticking up out of the maces and the slings, were the greatly feared pikes. Pikes were huge poles made of wood or steel with axe-like blades at the top of them, and a spearhead sticking straight up out of the top. The pikes had in earlier battles proved superior to the Roman gladius. The battle was in full progress. The left Roman flank was crushed already. It was plain to see that the assailing troops were going to win the day: this was clear to the Romans.

A sea of arrows and javelins whistled out of the darkness and tore into the legionaries' unprotected right side, where they had no shield to cover them. From above, huge stones were thrown down that crushed the Roman plate armor, leaving many legionaries with crushed bones and smashed weapons. There seemed to be no end to the flood of assailing infantry which was constantly pouring down the mountainside, numbering about 60,000 men.

The Roman cavalry, in response to the attack, sped up the side of the ridge. Their intention was to mount a counterattack to kill the Carthaginian leader. When they reached the top, instead of the expected Carthaginian force, they found no one. They went to the wrong spot. They realized now where Hannibal



Looking down on all this was Hannibal

must be, but it was too late. When the Roman cavalry looked back down into the ridge, another surprise awaited them. They saw that the nearly invisible forms of the Numidian cavalry that had been perched along the cliffside were just now emerging from the coat of darkness that surrounded Hannibal and his army. The huge Carthaginian infantry was spread out along the mountainside, towering over and surrounding the Roman force. It must have been a horrible feeling for those legionaries, looking up at their doom, knowing there was no escape, knowing that they were going to die.

Looking down on all this was Hannibal. The worries of the early morning had left him, and he was calmly looking down on the destruction of Flaminius's consular army. It was over. The remaining legionaries fled in panic into the mountains, but were eventually put to death or captured. Scattered along the battlefield were thousands of dead legionaries. Also scattered along the rocky surface were the Roman pilums and gladiuses.

Down in the ridge, Hannibal watched as his loyal troops, who loved and re-

spected him, raised their weapons to the sky, shouting victory cries with great joy. Hannibal's hand left his beard and he threw the torch into the water bucket. Hannibal, always being courteous in battle, walked down into the ridge and ordered that the dead consul Flaminius, who had been killed in battle, be given a proper burial. This order was never carried out because Flaminius's special armor, which stood out from all the other Romans, had been stripped off him by the Gauls. His body could not be identified.

15,000 Romans and their allies were killed in the battle. Only 1,500 men in Hannibal's army died. Most of them were Gauls. It was Hannibal's custom to send home the allies of the Romans. After Trasimene he sent home the Roman allies with the message: "My war is against the Romans alone. Go to your homes."

Back in Rome rumors were heard about a great battle, and a great defeat. The Roman Praetor, who was an important leader in Rome, confirmed these rumors. He announced to the people and the senate, "There has been a great battle. We have been defeated." ❖

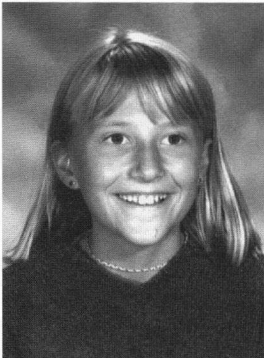
Audition

by Lisa R. Neher

illustrated by Sabina Kraushaar



Lisa R. Neher, 13
Covington, Washington



Sabina Kraushaar, 11
Durango, Colorado

“**T**HIS IS CRAZY,” Marie said for the fourth time. From her seat in front of the steering wheel of the family’s old station wagon, Mom gave her a side glance and an encouraging smile. The dense woods that surrounded the road flashed by the windows in a green blur as the afternoon sun streamed through the back window and cast the car’s long shadow on the road ahead of them. Marie wrung her sweaty hands, biting her lip in nervous anticipation. “This is completely crazy,” she whispered.

For the past two months Marie had been practicing an audition for the school’s spring play, “Little Women.” She had spent hours memorizing the lines to a monologue, and perfecting it so that she could act in the most realistic and persuasive way she could today. She knew it all like the back of her hand. But that didn’t stop her stomach from turning flip-flops like a crazed acrobat, or the slight shake of her body, or that frightened, worried feeling that had been growing inside of her all day long.

MOM PARKED the car in the lot in front of the school and gave her a wink for good luck. Marie pushed her door open and stepped out into the cool, fresh air, her legs feeling weak. She eyed the building, knowing that inside of it was a line of other students waiting to be called into the theater. That line of students was her competition. Marie took a



They were watching her, and she knew what she had to do, so she started her monologue

deep breath. "I'm going to do this," she said quietly to herself. "If it kills me, I'm going to do this. There is no way that I'm going to turn back now and give up—I'd never forgive myself." She headed toward the school.

IT WAS getting up on stage that was hard. Once Marie was on the shiny wooden surface, raised a good five feet or so above the rest of the floor, with four teachers seated at a table in the back with their eyes glued on her, she couldn't *not* start. They were watching her, and she knew what she had to do, so she started her monologue. And once she began, the rest followed.

She didn't lose her voice, or forget her lines, or even stumble over them much. Her voice might have been a little shaky at first, but the more she spoke

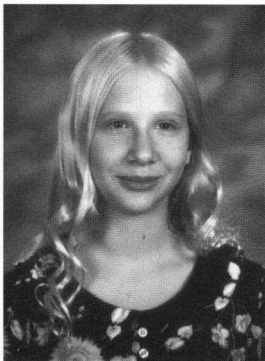
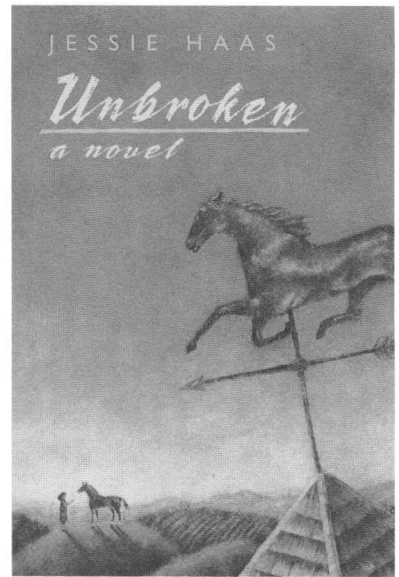
the steadier and more definite it became. Soon, the teachers vanished from her mind, and she became her character, and was no longer Marie, no longer in the school, and no longer nervous, at least, not very much.

And then she had finished. Another student was entering. It was time for her to leave.

THE RELIEF that came upon her, now that she had done it, and it was over, and everything was out of her hands, was greater than Marie ever thought it was going to be. Now all she had to do was wait. And whether she got a large part, or a small part, or no part at all, she had tried. She had done her best, putting all that she possibly could into it. And, for now, that was enough. ❖

Book Review

by Julia Schuchard



Julia Schuchard, 12
Lawrenceville, Georgia

Unbroken by Jessie Haas; Greenwillow Books: New York, 1999; \$15

IN UNBROKEN, HARRIET GIBSON becomes an orphan in 1910 when her mother dies in a horse-and- buggy accident. Now thirteen-year-old Harriet must leave her old life in a small Vermont town to live in the country with her Aunt Sarah. Having recently moved, I can understand how Harriet felt as she left her house, school, and friends. Even though I was unhappy when I moved, Harriet must have been even sadder since her mother just died.

Like Harriet, once I was settled in my new home, I wasn't sure how to act. I had to learn how things were done in my new neighborhood and school. "Where do I hand homework in? Do I really need a hall pass just to put my flute in the band room?" I asked myself. Harriet also had to learn how to behave in her new surroundings. When she sits on the chopping block and gets blood on her dress, Harriet is uncertain what to do. "Should I just wash it off or do I have to ask permission?" Harriet wonders. Harriet realizes there's a lot she doesn't know about living on a farm.

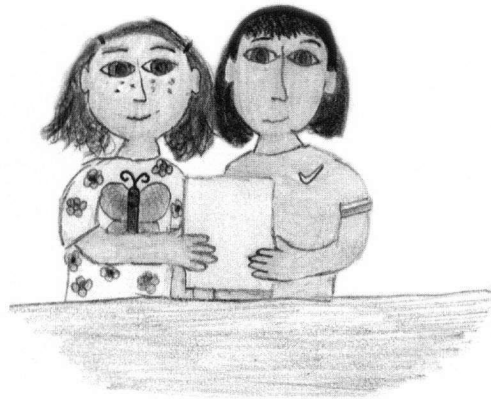
Soon after Harriet moves in, she and Aunt Sarah begin

to argue. Aunt Sarah insults Harriet's mother, complains about the way Harriet does chores, and thinks Harriet will never be able to train the young colt so she can ride him. Both of them are insistent on getting their own way. My older brother reminds me of Aunt Sarah because he always believes his way is right. When he compares his grades to mine or laughs at how I play sports, I often yell at him and get into a fight like Harriet and Aunt Sarah did.

As the summer goes by, Harriet learns how to help with farm work, cope with her mother's death, and get along with Aunt Sarah. One evening Harriet tries to get to know Aunt Sarah by asking her questions about her childhood. Harriet also helps with chores without being asked, such as when she offers to help with cutting the hay. My brother and I

are working on being kind to each other, too. When I play his favorite video game with him or ask how his day went, we become closer. Most importantly, Harriet starts to accept life on the farm and think of it as home, just as I am beginning to accept my new life after moving.

When I first picked up *Unbroken*, I thought it was just going to be about a girl training her horse. Once I started reading, I realized the story was about a lot more—dealing with changes, getting along with other people, and discovering the importance of family. The author, Jessie Haas, made the characters seem like real people. I really enjoyed *Unbroken* and would recommend this book to anyone who likes historical fiction, horses, or just an excellent story. ❖



Maureen DiVirgilio, 11, Orchard Lake, Michigan



My parents discovered me patting her softly with my hand. Lizy was only an egg then

Lizy

by Rosalie Schulick

illustrated by the author

LIZY WAS MY best friend the summer I turned six, though that summer I also learned she couldn't be forever. I found her resting in the cattails by my father's pond. Her shell was speckled with mud and pieces of wet grass stuck to her damp surface. My parents discovered me patting her softly with my hand. Lizy was only an egg then.

My father rolled the speckled egg into his warm palm. "Sally," he said, "I'm going to make you a little friend." I stared at him for a minute, then Mama took my hand and we all went inside. I sat in my chair, while I watched my mother rummaging through boxes in a closet and my father flipping through pages of books with one hand, and securing his reading glasses with the other.

Suddenly my mother spoke, "I found it hon, it's as good as new!"

A few minutes later a little incubator stood on a table in my room. I sat by Lizy as many hours as I could for the next few weeks as my father came in and out of my room, helping me turn Lizy's egg and moisten her shell with sprays of warm water. On the twenty-eighth day, the unbelievable happened and my best friend was born. Loud peeps, a wet, sleepy duckling, and an empty shell, is all I can remember from Lizy's hatching, but memories of gazing, wondering and studying as she grew have not faded through the years. Neither has



Rosalie Schulick, 13
Brattleboro, Vermont

the love I felt when I first laid eyes on the lonely little egg surrounded by cattails.

"It's that time of year again," my father whispered in my ear, "the time when your old grandma comes to wish you a happy birthday." My mother sighed. "Aw, come on, Lynda," teased my father, "she isn't that bad, is she?" He gave her a kiss.

"Ted, you know I care for your mother, I'm just worried about what she'll think of Lizy. Maybe we should move her outside before your mother arrives tomorrow. You know how she is with animals." My father picked me up and held me in his arms. My mother gave him a serious glance. I was placed on the counter.

"Aw Lynda, Lizy's too young for that." He slipped his hand in hers. "Lizy's still a little fluff ball, Grandma won't mind." Then he turned to me. "Isn't that right, Sally?" I nodded my head as a loud peeping noise came from upstairs. "Come on, Sal," he said, setting me down and taking my hand, "Lizy's hungry." We walked up the stairs. When we got to Lizy her loud crying stopped; her food and water bowl were full.

That night as I rested in my bed I heard my parents talking loudly in their room.

"We can't give her away, Lynda, Sal would feel awful, she'd never forgive us!"

"I know, Ted," admitted my mother. "I know that Sal would be heartbroken,

but what are we gonna do, keep Lizy forever? Where she really belongs is outside with other wild ducks, maybe even in the pond, not in a cage, in the backyard."

"I haven't seen any ducks in our pond, and who knows what could happen to her in the wild, that's a terrible idea."

"Right, I know, but Lizy's going to get big and the summer is going to end, Ted. When you go back to teaching in the fall and Sally goes to school, what happens then?"

My father stammered. "You . . . you don't want to take care of her?"

"No, it's hard work. Don't you think I have enough to do? I think," she paused, "that it would be better for Sal, for us to give Lizy away sooner as opposed to later. Maybe she'll forget faster, or maybe she'll never forget, I don't know. But I think she should learn, better than us, what is OK to keep as a pet and what isn't. Don't you think so?" There was no response for a while, then . . .

"She will never forgive us if we take Lizy away. Let her find what's right herself, hon, that's how people learn the best," said my father. "We'll just wait it out, OK? Play it by ear?"

"But Sally's only six years old!"

"Shhhhhh," whispered my father, and I heard no more.

I looked down at Lizy's box. She seemed happy enough to me, peeping softly. I didn't want her to go.

"Lizy," I whispered. I got up and

climbed down from my bed.

"Peep, peep . . ." I said.

"Pip, pip, pip, pip," Lizy answered. I picked her up and put her in my lap. That night I fell asleep on the floor, with Lizy curled up on my tummy.

The next morning when I awoke, Lizy had disappeared from my side. My mind traced back to the night before. I envisioned her being plucked from my hand like a helpless flower and I started to cry. Suddenly a peep came from Lizy's box next to the spare bed. I crawled over to it and gazed at her in the corner. I patted her rubbery beak and wiped my eyes.

That afternoon there was a knock at the door. Unlike most days when I wore sweatpants and a T-shirt, I was dressed in a little yellow jumper with my thin hair tied in bows. My grandmother loved when I was dressed special for her arrival. She loved being clean and proper, and she wanted everything around her to be clean and proper too. She did not like animals and almost every time my grandmother came over she got in fights with my parents.

My mother and father weren't married, they said that marriage just makes things more complicated. My grandma called them lazy once, a lazy couple. She said that marriage was important.

"It shows that two people really love each other, and are not scared to make a commitment for it!"

"Why is a piece of paper the only way to prove that, Mom?" my father would ask.

As the door opened that day, loud peeps came from upstairs. My mother scratched her head nervously.

"What is that sound?" my grandmother exclaimed after she briefly said hello. My mother and father glanced at each other.

"We got Sally a pet, Mom," they both said, almost at once. It was quiet for a while after.

Then finally, "I thought I warned you about children and animals."

My father nodded and put his arm around my mother.

"They don't blend," my grandma finished.

"Animals are dirty, and they smell, but tell me, Ma, why don't they blend?"

"They carry diseases, Teddy, hon, dangerous diseases!" she said, getting flustered.

"It's very unlikely that would happen with a baby duckling," my mother said comfortingly.

"Duckling!!??" Grandma gasped.

I listened to my grandma yelling at my parents and my parents trying to calm her down. Lizy was crying hard, harder than she ever had before, I could almost see invisible tears streaming down her cheeks. And me, I was the center of it all, yet I stood uninvolved in the corner, motionless. I was barely six years old, I didn't know much, but I knew that, one way or the other, in a month or in a year, Lizy had to go away. Part of the reason was my grandma and the things she was telling my parents. Normally, my parents and I would not



Once, while I was sitting on a beach chair on the lawn, she wandered away to look blindly into the distance

agree with what my grandma was saying, because her opinions were usually narrow, dense and strict. I knew that my parents didn't love each other any less because they were not legally married, and I knew that animals and children must blend because of my love for Lizy. But I could tell that something that my grandma was saying struck my mother and father's hearts by the nervous glances they passed to me that in turn struck mine. Then I thought of Lizy. I felt that something was innately, yet unintentionally, cruel about what my parents and I had done to her, and it

would be wrong to keep her forever. Lizy was meant to be free, not crying for me in her bleak cardboard box. For the first time I had put myself in Lizy's position, now I knew what was right. How it made me smile to think of her running on the green grass and flapping her beautiful adult wings and then suddenly taking flight, all with the company she deserved, the company of other ducks.

As days passed, I grew steadily more attached to Lizy. On warm mornings I'd lie down outside on the soft grass wiggling my bare toes while Lizy pecked

playfully at them. It tickled so. I laughed and laughed until I couldn't take any more, then I picked her up and lay her on my belly. Sometimes we fell asleep like that, but most of the time we just gazed up at the sky.

Then Lizy was moved outside; she spent long nights in a little dog house full of hay. Through the days, she grew fast and I fretted that she would grow out of her house soon. Lizy was also growing more independent. She would still cuddle with me and play with my toes, but lots of times when we were taking our walks she would briskly waddle far ahead and I would have to call her name several times for her to come back with me. Once, while I was sitting on a beach chair on the lawn, she wandered away to look blindly into the distance.

"Maybe she's trying to see the pond," I remember suggesting to my parents that evening.

"Yes, maybe," muttered my mother while tossing a salad.

"It is time for her to swim, Sal," my father said, folding his paper.

"In the pond?" I asked thoughtfully. My father nodded.

The next morning I jumped out of bed, whipped on my clothes and went outside. Soon I realized there was nothing soft and warm to let out of her cage. The wire door was swinging nonchalantly on its hinges and Lizy was nowhere to be seen. My eyes became watery as I started to run, my short legs

encumbering my speed. "I wish I had wings," I yelled to the sky as I drew near the pond. "I wish I had . . ." I stopped suddenly. My eyes caught sight of a graceful mother duck with five little ducklings swimming behind her. One of them was Lizy. She was looking right at me, but she did not leave her family. It looked as if she had always been there swimming daintily with her brothers and sisters. I wondered if she would come to me if I called. I wanted to try but I couldn't. "This is where she belongs," I sniffled. "This is where she belongs." I realized that Lizy would fly south with her family. I realized that she would go, and maybe never come back. I had to face that she wasn't my pet or my playmate anymore. She was part of a family; she was part of the family she was taken away from. I turned quickly and ran to the house.

My father was making strawberry smoothies when I slowly walked inside. He smiled at me.

"Want a smoothie, Sal?" he asked. I nodded. He threw another handful of fresh strawberries into the blender. I sat down at the table, waiting for the buzz of the blender to die out.

"Lizy went away, Daddy," I said sadly, when the noise had stopped. But I did not cry.

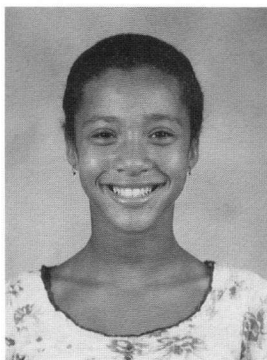
"To the pond?" he asked. I nodded. "She joined her family, huh Sal." I nodded. "How do you think she felt?" He handed me my smoothie. I took a sip.

"Happy," I answered. ❖

Freedom

by Christina Kells

illustrated by David Derish



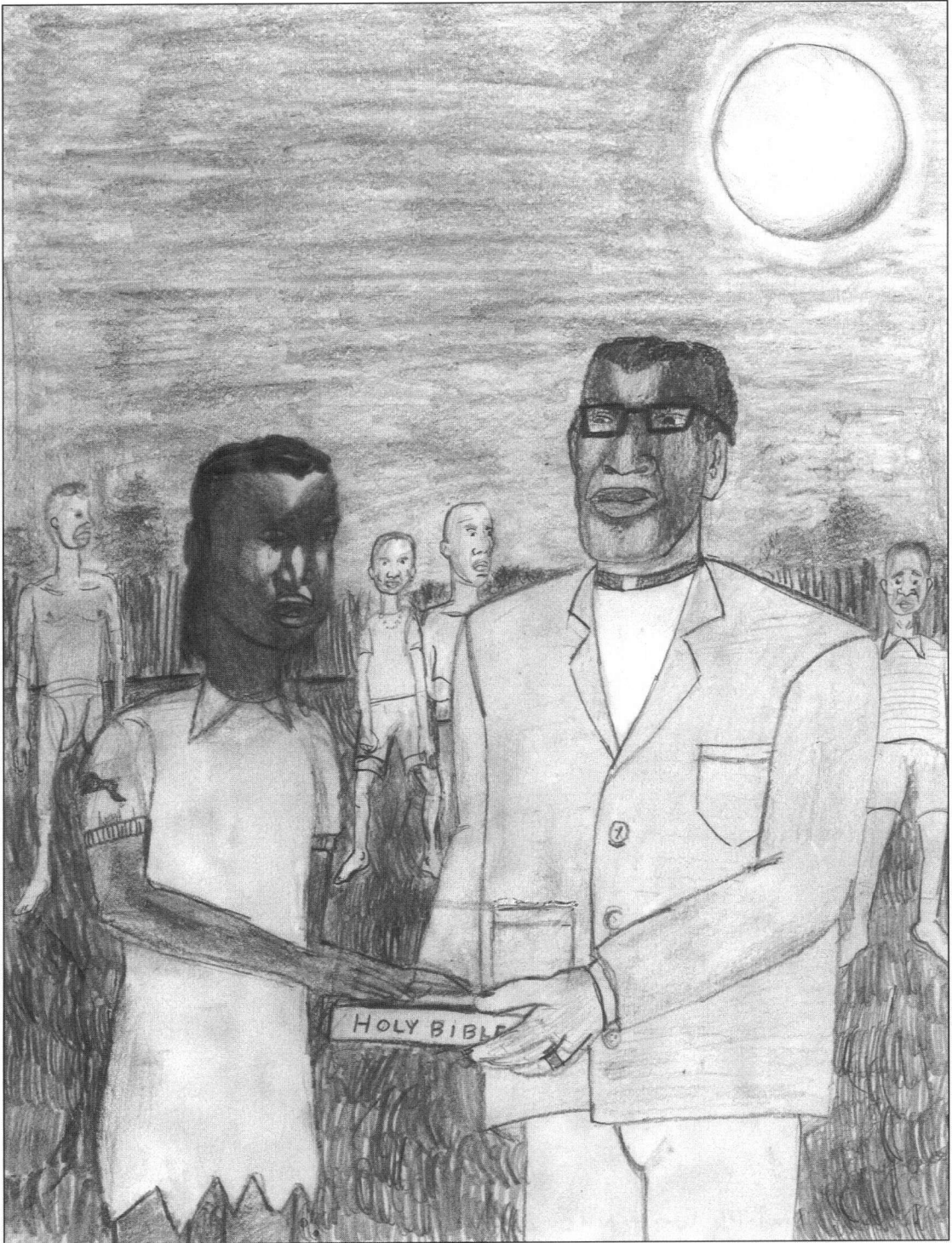
Christina Kells, 12
Leesburg, Texas



David Derish, 13
New York, New York

I WAS ONCE A slave, but now I am a teacher. This is my story. The year is 1830, and I am twelve years old. I live on a plantation in South Carolina. I have no kin with me at this plantation. I was separated from my mother at age seven. She was sold to another master. Of the rest of my family I know nothing, except that there were others. At this time of my life I am changing and growing up. I hear whispers of slaves escaping and reaching the North to be free. Before my mother was taken from me, she made me promise that I would try in any way I could to make it up North. At the time I was very young and really did not know what she was talking about, but now I do. Over the years, I became a companion to the master's daughter, Anna. When we played together, I learned how to read and write. She would be the teacher and I was the student. Reading and writing is forbidden to slaves and punishable by death. Therefore, it was our secret. Anna and I became very close, almost like sisters, and it was she who came upon the idea that I needed to escape and go up North. At that moment, shocked and scared by what she said, I knew she was right, because our game could no longer remain a secret. The seed of an idea was planted, and so Anna and I spoke in terrified whispers to plot how I was going to escape.

For many nights, Anna and I talked about how I was going to leave. Tears would come to our eyes as we realized we



With tears streaming down my face, I said, "It is time for me to go North"

would be separating, but Anna would always remind me that when she becomes an adult she would be able to travel and visit with me. That thought comforted the both of us. One night as I was drifting off to sleep I heard soft voices and whispers. Curious, I got up to see what was going on and saw shadows of slaves sneaking away toward the woods. I followed quietly, and when I reached the woods, I could see people sitting on the ground in a circle. In the middle of the circle was a black man holding a book, reading. I heard him say, "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'" His voice was gentle, but strong and sure. I began to feel comforted and excited because I began to think this might be the answer to my dilemma. I began to walk through the circle of people until I stood in front of him. The man looked at me and said, "To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in You; let me not be ashamed; let not my enemies triumph over me." The man closed the book and waited, watching me.

I reached out my hand and touched the book; with tears streaming down my face, I said, "It is time for me to go North."

The man placed his hand over mine and said, "So you shall." Later that night the preacher and I talked and plotted about how I was going to escape. Finally, he told me I must go back and get my belongings and be ready to go the next night.

Anna and I spent our last day together. We talked about my freedom and how brave I was. Anna gave me a locket with a flower engraved on the surface as a parting gift. I promised her I would send her a message when I was safe.

As time passed, it became dark, and I drifted into the woods where I would meet the preacher. I walked until I spotted him. The evening air was still and damp. We began to run until we came to a river. The water was quiet with an occasional whoosh of sounds and sucking noises. At that moment, he told me that I was going to come to a field of crops, and there would be a white farmer waiting there. He gave me a little nudge and I stepped into the freezing water. I was on my way to freedom. When I crossed the river I ran faster and faster, fear catching in my throat, branches tearing at my face, legs and hands, until I came to a cornfield. I saw a white farmer and ran up to him. Placing his finger to his lips, he directed me to the bottom of the wagon.

As I began the journey into the night, I fell into a fitful sleep. It seemed that all of a sudden the wagon stopped, causing me to awaken with a start. I had not slept deeply but rather I dozed fitfully, my mind still aware of the wagon moving over jugged ground, fear crowding my thoughts of what I was doing. The farmer directed me onto another wagon where I was covered with sacks. I never saw the face of my new friend. All I could think of was how cold and thirsty I was. How I had to hold my

bladder and how unclean I felt. When the wagon came to a halt the driver pulled the sacks off me and lifted me out of the dust-filled wagon.

Time blurred, days became nights and nights became days. My mind was numb and my body exhausted beyond understanding. I was passed from wagon to wagon constantly on the move, eating and drinking whatever food was given to me and sleeping in the wagons. The only break I got was when I needed to relieve myself. It seemed I would never reach the North, but for the fact that total strangers, nameless friends who sheltered, fed and provided what comfort they could for me, were more than willing to help me. There were times when I despaired; the only thought I kept in my mind was my promise to my mother.

When I reached another farm something felt different. As I stood in front of the house, my body sagging with tiredness and hunger, I turned around and there stood a woman in a black dress with a gray apron. She led me inside the house and gently spoke, "My friend, this is almost the end of your journey, but you must choose if you want to go to New York or Massachusetts."

I knew about these states because of the games Anna and I had played. Forcing the tiredness from my mind I said, "I would like to go to Massachusetts; there I will be a free woman." That night I received a soothing hot bath and dinner consisting of a drink of

cider, greens, and potatoes with roasted chicken. The food was delicious. After my supper I was led into a barn where I would sleep deep in a pile of sweet-smelling hay.

When morning arrived, the woman placed a bowl of porridge with a piece of bread and a cup of cider on the floor beside me. She urged me to eat quickly. Once again, I was placed into the bottom of a wagon. I was given a bundle with food to eat later during the journey. I felt alone, for I had not seen another black face since I left my master. The wagon came to a stop after what seemed an endless ride. As I climbed out, the driver told me we were in Massachusetts. I was free! I had made it to the North. I looked around anxiously, soaking in the surrounding area with my eyes. I breathed deeply, fell to my knees, and the first thought that came to my mind was my mother. I made it. I kept my promise. I made it up North to freedom.

My dear reader, as I look back over the years and write this story, I am at my desk in a schoolhouse. I found a home in Boston living with a preacher and his wife on Washington Street where most blacks lived. I agreed to work for them by cleaning the house and helping with dinner. In return, I was allowed to go to school. Those years were difficult. I did not have much time to play, but I did make friends at church, where many of us came together to worship, go to school and have community gatherings. Winters were

harsh, summers were hot. I did not have much in the way of clothes and other personal belongings, but I never went hungry. I was not unhappy growing up, although there were times when I thought longingly of my friend Anna. I sent her a secret message with people who were traveling South. I enjoyed school very much. It gave me the joy and courage to become a teacher. I worked extra hard to try to reach my goal, but always kept up my work at home.

I am now twenty years old, a teacher at a school for black children in a town near Boston called Somerville. So much has happened to me since I first arrived here those many years ago, so many changes. I think of my mother often, and if she has died, I hope she is looking down at me from the heavens knowing I have fulfilled her dream of me being free. You see, dear reader, even

though Anna's father gave me the name as was the custom for most slave owners, Luda Mae, my mother gave me my own name. At night I would lie in my mother's arms while she sang softly to me, and told me stories. She would whisper my secret name. I have never forgotten the words she spoke softly, often, and here in my new land that is the name I use.

I pause, tapping my pen against my teeth, my mind in a faraway place. I hear a soft knocking at my door. Putting the pen down on my desk and smoothing my dress, I walk toward the door. There is a strange feeling in the pit of my stomach, a feeling of anticipation. Fingering the locket around my neck, I open the door. I can tell you, dear reader, how I felt. My heart finally made it home. "Hello, Freedom, I'm finally here." With tears blurring my vision I embrace my friend Anna. ❖

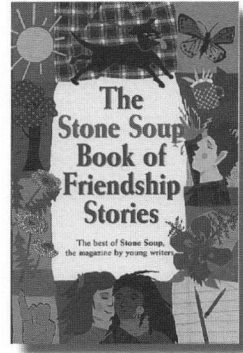
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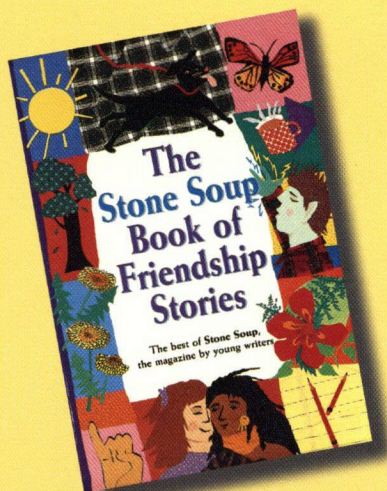
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