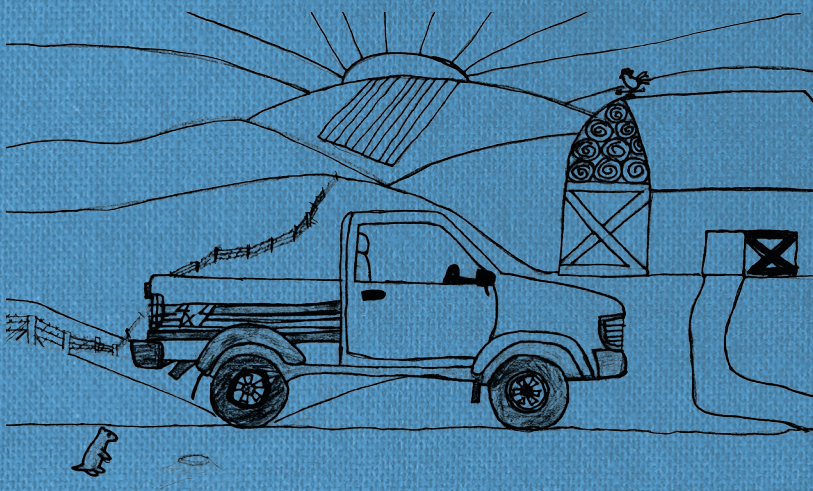


Grannie Annie

Historical Family Stories

Written and Illustrated by Young People



from
*The Grannie Annie
Family Story Celebration*

Vol. 9

The Grannie Annie *Family Story Celebration*

Welcome to the 2014 Grannie Annie celebration of family stories! Students in U.S. grades 4 through 8 and homeschooled or international students 9 through 14 years of age are invited to interview their family storykeepers and write a story from their family's history. The Grannie Annie experience leads young people to strengthen family and community bonds, encounter history in a personal way, and polish their writing skills. Students are encouraged to illustrate their story and then share their work with their family, school, community, and [The Grannie Annie](#).

The works of thirty-five young authors and thirteen young artists, chosen to represent the submissions received this year, are included in this ninth annual volume of *Grannie Annie*. This book is also available as a PDF edition.

The Grannie Annie mission—to inspire young people to discover, write, illustrate, and share historical family stories—springs from a belief in the transformative power of “story.” The simple, genuine family stories in this book can help us connect with people in today's world and with people from times past. In unexplainable ways, these stories foster feelings of unity with people whose lives may seem very different from our own. Quietly, surely, the world moves one step closer to peace.

Grannie Annie
Vol. 9

Historical Family Stories from
The Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration
Written and Illustrated by Young People

Saint Louis, Missouri

The Grannie Annie welcomes—and desires to receive and publish—family stories from students of every race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, and creed.

Because the stories in *Grannie Annie, Vol. 9*, were captured from the oral tradition, they represent a unique blend of history, legend, and opinion. Accuracy—historical or otherwise—is not guaranteed, and the views represented are not necessarily those of the authors, directors, or publishers.

Cover illustration by Luke Allen.

Particular thanks to fiber artist Elda Miller, graphics specialists Josh Hagan and Jeff Hirsch, and researcher Doug Nolte.

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Your tax-deductible [donation](#) will enable more young people to take part in The Grannie Annie, and will make the remarkable Grannie Annie [published stories](#) more widely available.

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In memory of Ann Guirrerri Cutler,
whose passion for saving family stories
inspired The Grannie Annie
1944–2007

In memory of my beloved granny,
Ethel Chenault Kingsland,
a lovely teller of stories
who was a story in herself
1884–1968

Honored by donor Anne Perkins

In memory of Glenn Ray McIntyre,
farmer and scholar,
who told the best horse stories
west of the Mississippi
1904–1972

Honored by donors Louise and Jack McIntyre

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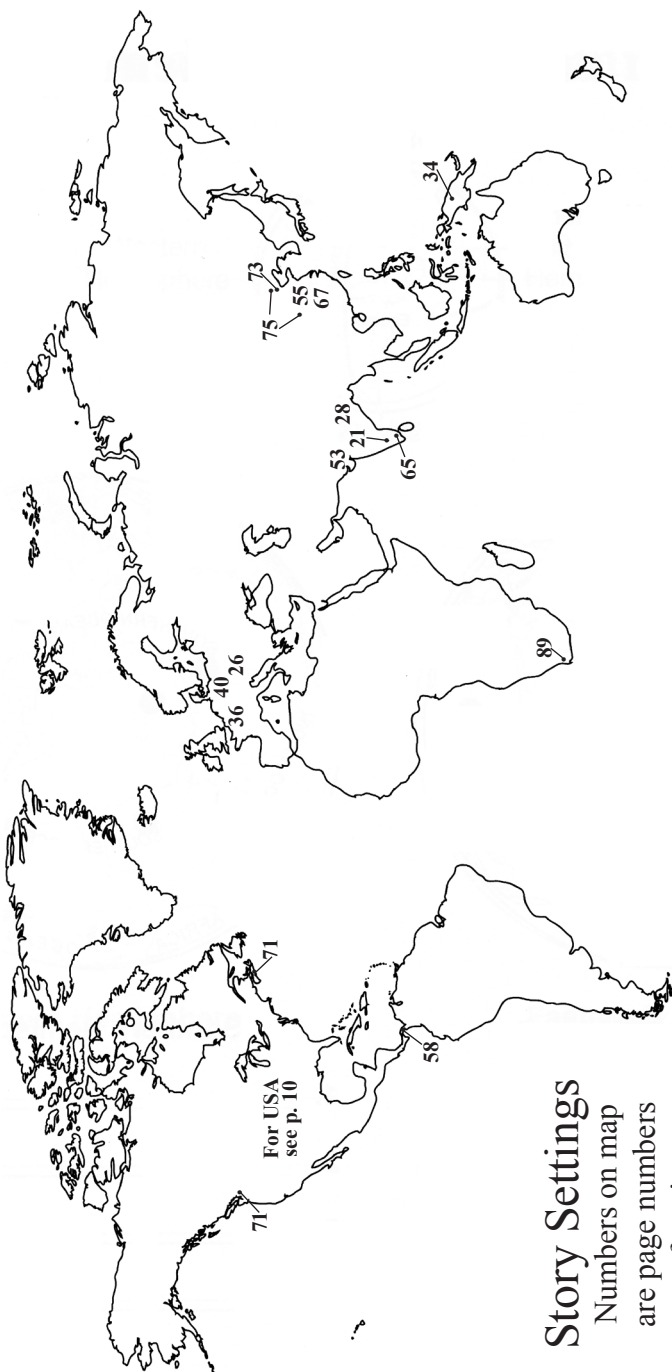
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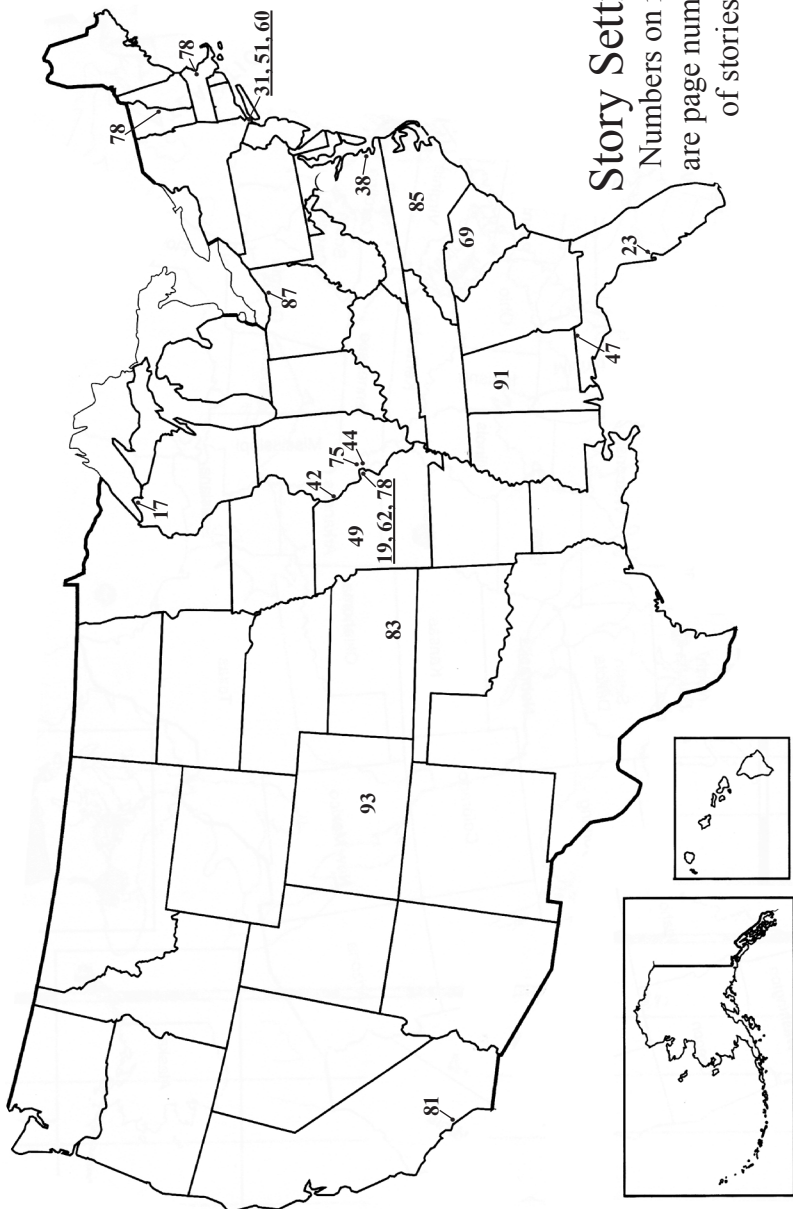
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Story Settings

Numbers on map
are page numbers
of stories



Story Settings
 Numbers on map
 are page numbers
 of stories

A Word from Grannie Annie

Some Native American nations so valued their histories that they designated a tribal storykeeper. My mother filled that role in our family for decades, and before that, our family storykeeper was Mom's mother, my grandmother Randazzo.

Gramma Randazzo lived with us when I was a child. She didn't speak English well; however, at an early age I learned to say "Tell me a story about the Old Country" or "Tell me again the story about the baker's daughter who had dough under her fingernails." Then she would begin, in her broken English that made the stories even more fascinating to me. She told me stories about the olive groves on the family estate in Italy, about Grampa Randazzo's brothers and all their escapades, and about the family's early years as immigrants in Brooklyn. Mom carried on the tradition with her own repertoire of stories—about teaching in a one-room school, about blizzards and floods on the farm, and about rolling up the rug and inviting the neighbors over to dance.

I was fascinated by their tales and still am. I have written down many of their stories, saved them in keepsake books so they won't be lost. They're a treasure to read now, just as I had hoped, but I find I saved more than the stories themselves. Listening had been a way to be close to Gramma Randazzo. When I read Gramma's stories now, I remember sitting near her, hearing the stories from Gramma herself. When I read Mom's stories now, I remember aunts and uncles and cousins gathering around the kitchen table to listen. By

sharing their stories, Gramma and Mom created a sense of family, a sense of closeness and security, that will stay with me forever.

Ann Guirrerri Cutler
The Original Grannie Annie
April 2006

Note to Parents and Educators

One family member dangles from a tree in Papua New Guinea. Another discovers a friend in South Africa. Yet another finds herself feeding the hungry in Tampa. Many of the family stories shared in this ninth volume of *Grannie Annie* will carry you to surprising places . . . or to unexpected consequences!

Some stories in this collection answer important questions; some *raise* questions. What do you do when your best day ever turns into your worst day ever? What does it take to follow your conscience, even at great risk? When you hit a wall—real or metaphorical—how do you set aside discouragement and keep moving forward? What if you find out Dad is wrong?

The thirty-five historical family stories in this volume stretch across five centuries—from the brave sacrifice of a father in the late 1600s, to the compassionate welcome of a new “family member” at the dawn of the new millennium. The maps on pages 9 and 10 will help you locate each story’s setting—in North America, Asia, Europe, or Africa. You can also find these stories and their illustrations in the identical PDF edition and on the Grannie Annie website.

As always, these family stories were chosen for you and *your* family. Still, you may want to read the stories before sharing them with young or sensitive readers.

We invite you to relish your read, deepen your connection with your world family, and join us again next year for The Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration!

Connie McIntyre and Fran Hamilton
Directors of The Grannie Annie

Listening is an act of love.

—*Dave Isay, StoryCorps*

Grannie Annie, Vol. 9

The Story of Chief Biauswah

late 1600s*
northern Wisconsin, USA

One day Chief Biauswah,** who was one of my great- . . . great-grandfathers from the Ojibwa tribe, was out hunting. When he got home, his village had been burned and destroyed. There were only a few survivors. He found a trail made by the villagers that had attacked his village, and followed it. When he got to their village, he realized it was the Fox tribe.

The Fox tribe had captured a young boy and an old man, whom they were going to torture then kill. First they wrapped the old man with birch bark, lit him on fire, and made him run between two lines of people, who would beat him as he ran.

Chief Biauswah looked at the boy, and it became clear to him that the boy was his son, whose name was Biauswah II. The Fox were hanging the boy up on a post, getting ready to burn him at the stake.

Thinking only of his son and not of himself, Chief Biauswah jumped out of a hiding spot. He said he was the chief and that the boy was his son. He tried to get them to stop. He cried out,

My little son, whom you are about to burn with fire, has seen but few winters. His feet have never trodden the war path. He has never injured you. The hairs on my head are white

* The setting of each story is noted below its title. In cases where the exact year is not known, "c." (circa) indicates that the year given is approximate.

** Pronounced bee-ah-swah.

with many winters, and over the graves of my relatives I have hung up many scalps, which I have taken from the heads of your people. My death is worth something to you. Let me take the place of my son so he may return to his people.*

The Fox people were astonished but agreed to this, for they had long desired to kill the chief.

They released the boy and tied the chief to the stake. They scorched him to death. Biauswah II became the new chief.

Elon Johnson
Minnesota, USA

* These are the chief's words much as they have been passed down for centuries.

The Nine-Year-Old Goose Killer

1911
St. Louis, Missouri, USA

It was the winter of 1911 in St. Louis. My great-great-grandma, Helen Benner, was forced to raise the family by herself, because her mom had died and her dad had to work all of the time. Helen had three younger brothers—Eddie, Harry, and George—and two younger sisters, named Dorothy and Gladys. George was nine at the time, and no matter where George went, he always seemed to find trouble.

One day, close to Christmas, Helen's dad's boss gave the family a goose for Christmas dinner. There were two problems: one, the goose was alive, and two, the family had to walk three miles downtown to pick the goose up. Helen had to babysit Dorothy and Gladys. Her dad, Eddie, and Harry were off working, so that left only George to pick up the goose and take it home.

When he arrived downtown, George realized that he didn't have anything to take the goose home in, so he decided that he was going to carry the goose home in his arms. However, the goose did not like this, and it started to peck and flap its wings at George. He then realized that carrying the goose was not an option. So he devised the best plan he could think of. First, George got a rope. Second, he tied the rope around the goose's neck, and third, he began to walk the goose home like a dog on a leash.

Soon after George began his trip back, he realized it was taking too long to walk home, so he decided to run.

However, the goose could not keep up, and it was soon strangled. The goose continued to become heavier, but George assumed it was just struggling with the rope, so he didn't look back.

When George arrived home, he found out that the goose hadn't been pulling on the rope; it was dead! George had dragged it two of the three miles back. The dead goose was covered in dirt and rocks, and the skin had been scraped off. Naturally, the family couldn't eat the goose, and everyone was furious with George for ruining their Christmas dinner.

A couple of days later, George had forgotten how mad he was about the goose and was throwing his sister Dorothy's hat into the air. One time he looked away as he tossed it and was surprised when it didn't come down. He looked up to find that it was resting on a kerosene lamp and it was on fire. It could have burned the house down.

On Christmas morning all of the excited kids looked in their stockings to find oranges—all of the kids except George. When he looked in his stocking, all he found was a big lump of coal. George's antics that year led to him becoming known as "the nine-year-old goose killer."

Jack Christian
Missouri, USA

Arranged Marriage

1921-1939
Bangalore, Karnataka, India

You may have parents or grandparents that are married. But at what age did they get married? Did they get married at 27, 30, or 35? Maybe even 23! But have you ever heard about arranged marriages in India? My great-grandmother had an arranged marriage and got married at just age 13! Can you believe that?

My great-grandmother Lakshmi was born in 1921. I call her “Muthajji.”* At age 3 she knew whom she was marrying! She met my great-grandfather (whom I never knew) at age 8. This was at the bride-viewing in 1929. The bride-viewing was where my great-grandfather, age 12, met Muthajji, age 8, for the first time. Muthajji and my great-grandfather then decided if they wanted to marry or not. As part of the deal, Muthajji’s family agreed to pay for my great-grandfather’s medical school. The wedding would be held on one condition—if Muthajji’s body was able to have babies. Then the couple would marry. Muthajji would not be able to live with her husband until he finished his medical school and his residency.

When Muthajji was 13, the wedding took place in Bangalore, India, under a mandap made of flowers. A mandap is a canopy usually made of flowers and silk. Muthajji was very nervous at first. She was also upset, because she thought that she should be able to pick

* *Muthajji* (MOOTH-uh-gee), meaning “great-grandmother,” combines *muthu* (pearl) and *ajji* (grandmother) in a name that is informal yet respectful.

her spouse. When she was 8, her parents had made the decision for her. She hadn't had a choice. When she was 13, she wanted to have a choice. She knew she had to marry my great-grandfather, but she was upset. She secretly wanted to make her own choice, but she would never disappoint her parents. Hindus never disappoint their parents. To Hindu children, parents are the world. Their word is law.

In 1939 my great-grandfather completed his medical school and residency. At that time my great-grandmother was legally allowed to live with my great-grandfather. Love came eventually, but it was not there at first.

In the end Muthajji was married for fifty-five years. She made her parents happy. She had two children and ended up living a life of contentment. She eventually came to realize that, indeed, her parents knew best.

Colin Kowalski
New Jersey, USA

Saving Tampa

c. 1930s

Ybor City, Tampa, Florida, USA

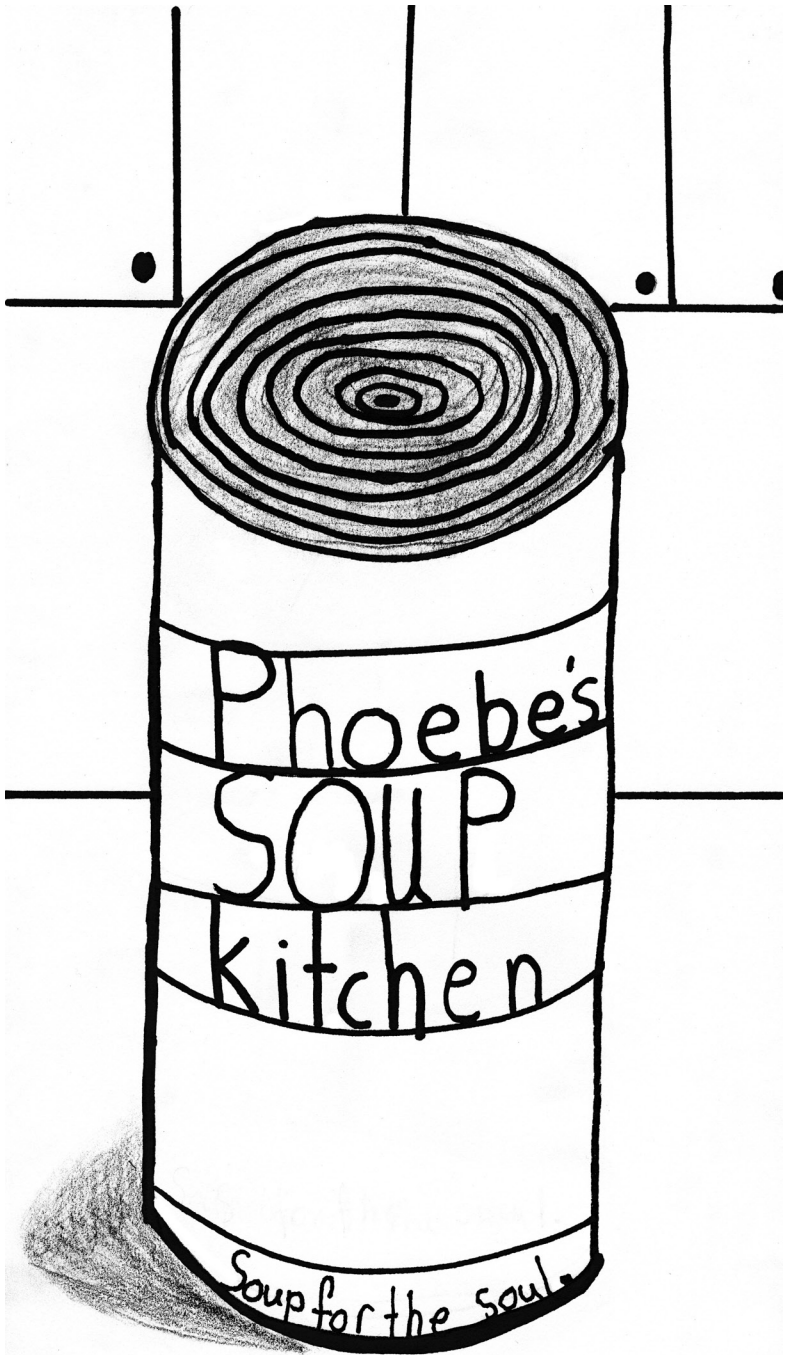
During the Great Depression my great-great-grandmother Antonia came home from the worst day of work. She owned a grocery store called “American Beauty” in Ybor* City, the Latin Quarter in Tampa, Florida. When she came home from her little grocery shop, she sadly complained to her mother, Phoebe, “All the vegetables are going mushy and brown, since nobody can afford them. So now the store is struggling to stay open.”

Phoebe thought for a little while, and then finally said, “I can make soup out of the bad vegetables for you to give out to all of the hungry people for free. Maybe when people can afford things again, they will remember that it was your store that made the soup, and they will shop there.”

They had money to spare, so they ordered more fresh vegetables and made free soup out of those after they used all of the old vegetables. People enjoyed the soup and realized how generous Phoebe and Antonia were.

Phoebe made the soup in huge pots that could make about seven batches at once. She had two extremely wonderful stoves, so the line went quickly—almost as fast as Phoebe could make the soup. She did not waste any time at all. The line for her vegetable soup was so

* Pronounced EE-bor.



long, it went all around the block. Phoebe was married to a gypsy's son and had five children—Antonia and four others. The four other children came over to wash the dishes and serve the soup to the hungriest people they might ever have seen in their lives.

A few years after the Depression, when Phoebe died, all of the doctors and lawyers and more of the important people in Ybor City came to her funeral and said, "If it was not for her wonderful vegetable soup that she often made during the Great Depression, we would have died of hunger, and everyone else tragically would have died without our service."

After Phoebe and Antonia started the very first soup kitchen in Tampa, more soup kitchens started around that area, so a few years later they were not doing all the work.

This is how my great-great-great-grandmother and her daughter saved all of the starving residents of Tampa.

Clara Rominger
Alabama, USA

Times of the Holocaust

1937–1948

southern Poland; northern Austria

When I was fifteen, I was taken from my home in Lublin, Poland. After being detained in different places in Poland for five years, I was sent to Austria and put to work in a factory. While I was there, one of my jobs was to make sights* for the guns on the *Messerschmitt*, the first German jet-propelled combat airplane. However, this was not my favorite work. I was used to working outside on my father's farm, not inside a factory like this. But I had no choice about the work I was doing. I *did* have a choice about how to do it though. So instead of doing my job right, I moved the base of the sight too far one way or the other, making the gun miss its target when fired. I also put sugar in the engines to make them seize.

Why did I do this? I did this because I was forced by the Nazis to work in a labor camp because I refused to join the German Army when I was asked. I did anything I could to work against the Nazis. I even used shrapnel I found on the ground to cut communication lines. I worked against the Nazis because I was not on their side. I didn't agree with what they were doing. I was determined not to fail. I was also determined to live.

I lived by doing what I was told, and that's how I somehow lived through eight years of my life. Once one of the "icemen," a soldier in a special unit of the Nazis, told me to clean his boots, so I did. Then later the same

* A sight is a device on a gun that helps the shooter aim at a target.

“iceman” came back and saved me from being killed. But unfortunately my friends were not so lucky.

Another time, a German guard sent a group of us to take showers. But then another guard, who was Austrian, sent me back to the barracks because he thought I was a good worker. I ran back with my clothes in my hands. No one came back from that shower. Gas was released in the showers, killing everyone. I had been saved again.

My real freedom came in 1945, when I was finally freed from the Nazis by American and Russian troops. I immediately wanted to join the United States Army so I could fight against the Nazis for real.

Three years later I immigrated to America, arriving at the navy depot in New York. Though I look as round as Santa now, I actually weighed only fifty pounds when I got here. I lived with my mother’s sister in North Thamesville, a part of Norwich, Connecticut.

Though life was different in America, I had the chance to live it. I was lucky I was alive. The lessons I learned in concentration and work camps, like following directions but also never giving up, helped me in America. I also never forgot that doing something little could make a big difference.

Paxton Hilgendorff, great-great-nephew of narrator
New Jersey, USA

Lali—The Legend

1942–1948

Uluberia, West Bengal, India

The man-animal relationship can be an unbreakable one, and our family legend rightly proves it.

It was the year 1942. World War II would continue for two more years, but it had already had its effect on India. India had to send tons of food and thousands of soldiers to aid the Allies; after all, we were part of the British Empire. The taxes were already proving fatal for the farmers, but the war was something different. There was always a fear of Nazi and Soviet attacks, but there also was a sure possibility of famine and plunder.

My grandpa was then studying in a small school in a minute village. By that time, the famine had already started, and he was soon removed from school. After all, how will a child study while he is dying of hunger? Soon the schoolhouse was empty—not a single child came. Meanwhile, my grandpa had to work in fields with his mom, dad, and brothers so they could get one square meal a day. It was laborious, but at least they were not dying.

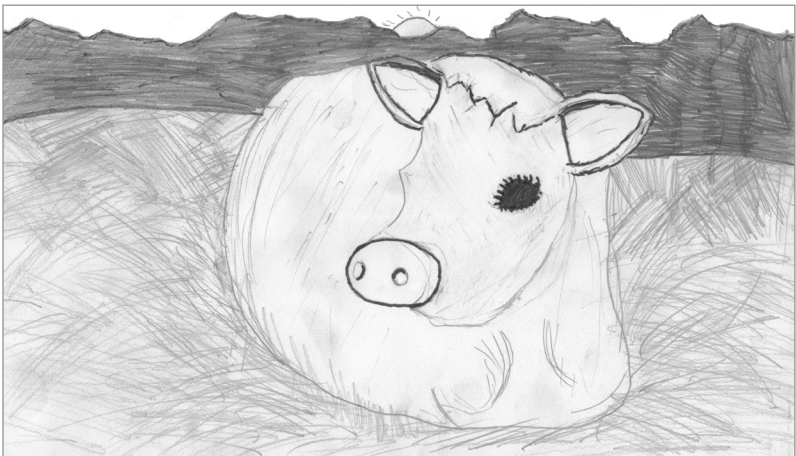
Then one day his dad brought home a small calf, totally red in color. Grandpa described it as the cutest being he had ever seen, and affectionately called her “Lali.”* Soon all his time went into the care of the calf, and their bond started to flourish. In nights when the mosquitoes were scarce, Grandpa used to sleep near Lali,

* *Lali* (LAH-lee) is an affectionate form of the Hindi word *laal*, which means “red.”

trying to protect her from all harm. In the meantime my great-grandfather passed away due to malaria.

Soon the calf was a healthy cow and was able to produce milk, and milk meant that there was another source of income. For a time all went well. My grandpa's mom was a tough lady, and she somehow managed to provide for the household by planting rice with her sons. Grandpa's job was to milk Lali and sell half of her milk in the nearby market. "She gave enough milk that even after selling two gallons we still had lots of milk," he boasted proudly. Due to the milk produced, Grandpa's family was able to buy a large land expansion, and farming also started bringing money into the house.

After the war was over, India became independent. Grandpa's cow was then in her golden years. Grandpa was again continuing high school and had shown an extreme interest in music. His elder brother had got a job, and the house was renovated.



Regan Carpenter

One day Lali took everyone by surprise. Her calf was constantly ramming itself on Grandpa's mom. And suddenly, out of nowhere, Lali came running like mad and gave a full-impact blow to the adolescent calf. That day my great-grandmother was injured gravely, but if it had not been for Lali, she would have died. The bond between Lali and our family was so strong that, ignoring her own maternal feelings, she saved her keeper from her own calf.

Even many years after her death, Lali still remains in our hearts.

Malab Sankar Barik
Uttar Pradesh, India

Oh, Say Can You See

1943

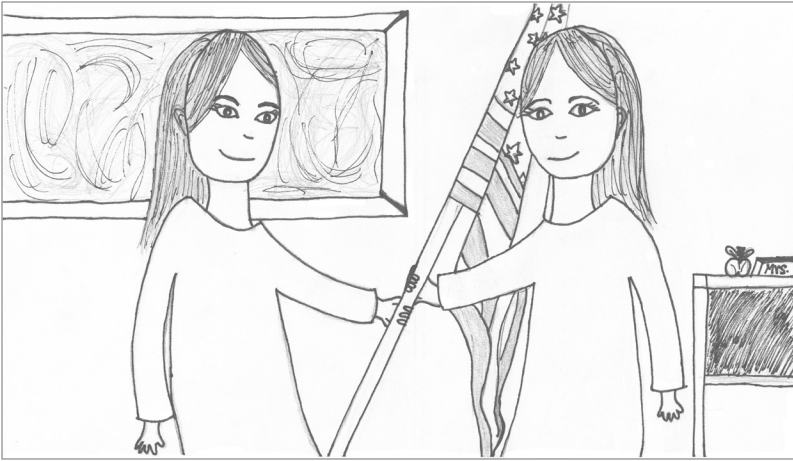
Queens, New York, New York, USA

It was the year 1943. All over the world, the havoc of World War II was raging. Bombs shattered over London as German fighter planes released their explosives. Guns tormented the French as the Nazis infested their land. Troops invaded Italy as the Allies seized their target. All the while, the pencil of Lois Franks scratched the paper. Lois, my grandmother, was hard at work finishing her homework for Mrs. Fowler's third grade class. She was also hard at work scheming some way she could hold the flag.

At PS 127 elementary school, if you had a family member fighting in the war, you could stand up and hold the flag while your class sang the national anthem. To Lois and the other children, this was a great privilege. So as Lois walked to school, she was confident that she would hold the flag. Her brother had not only fought for his country but had died for it. There was only one small obstacle: Lois had no brother. However, her desire outweighed this minor difficulty.

Lois arrived at East Elmhurst School in Queens, New York, with her twin sister, Ruth. She entered the classroom and went to her desk, where she immediately envisioned what it would be like to hold the flag that day. When Mrs. Fowler finally asked for a student to come hold the flag, Lois raised her hand sky-high.

"Lois, do you have a family member fighting in the war?" Mrs. Fowler asked politely.



Abigail Ruckman

“Not anymore, Miss. My brother Harry died in action.”

“Oh, how dreadful! Here, you can stand on the right of the flag, and Ruth can stand on the left.”

Ruth! In remembering her fictitious brother, Lois had forgotten her factual sister. Her heart raced—the lie had been in vain. If you had a sibling, you only stood on one side of the flag. However, this was not Lois’s only fear. The uncertainty as to Ruth’s action tormented Lois, who knew there was nothing left to do.

Ruth stood . . . and crossed to stand on the opposite side of the flag. Relieved, Lois felt convinced that she would not be punished for this lie. True, she didn’t get to hold the flag, but this way, unless some unforeseen crisis arose, she was safe.

Nothing did arise—at first. Then, one ill-fated day, Mrs. Franks and her daughters were at the grocery store. In the aisle next to her mother, Lois spied Mrs. Fowler heading straight for Mrs. Franks. As the women spoke,

Lois helplessly watched the expressions change on the two ladies' faces. She was caught.

After a good spanking, Lois reprimanded herself for her poor behavior. She reminded herself that standing next to the flag—even holding it—was by no means worth the pain of knowing she had done wrong. Nothing is worth the price of a guilty conscience.

Marissa Little
Pennsylvania, USA

The School That Fell from the Sky

1943

Ea Ea, New Britain, Papua New Guinea

Imagine waking up dangling from your parachute, stuck in a tree in the middle of a jungle in Papua New Guinea during World War II. Your plane was shot down. Well, that's what happened to my great-uncle's father, Fred Hargesheimer.

It was June 5, 1943. Fred was flying a P-38 Lightning fighter plane in the 8th Photo Reconnaissance Squadron. All of a sudden his plane was shot down by the Japanese. Fred leaped from his plane, which was on fire, with his parachute.

In time Fred fell from a tree in the middle of the jungle. He foraged for food for thirty-one days. He ate snails for food and drank polluted water. While he was eating one day, he heard music. He hoped that, if he went over by the melodic music, the people wouldn't turn him in to the Japanese. He went over there, and it turned out they were native New Guineans collecting water. They did not turn Fred in, but took care of him and nursed him back to health. Surprisingly they even hid him when the Japanese came to the village looking for the American pilot.

While the villagers cared for Fred, he suffered from malaria. He had a terrible fever and was in a lot of pain. More days passed, and it was clear that songs and prayers were not enough. For ten days Fred could not eat. For the next ten days the only thing he could keep down was mother's milk from his native friend Ida. He had survived yet another challenge!

When the villagers were able to, they got a message to a British Coast Watcher. Finally Fred was rescued by a submarine and returned to America.

In honor of this village, Fred sent money to build a school in the village. He visited several times. Fred later wrote an autobiography about his experiences and titled it with the name that the villagers use for their school. They call it “the school that fell from the sky.”

Peyton Kopel
Minnesota, USA

The Silver Spoon

1944
Ardennes Forest, Belgium

I was drafted into the U.S. Army in the spring of 1944 during World War II. By mid-December I found myself in a dense forest in Belgium under surprise attack by the German forces. This would eventually be known as the “Battle of the Bulge.”

The sharp winter air cut through my clothes as I loaded another round of bullets and shot them into the madness. Suddenly I flew through the air and felt a searing pain in my chest. I reached down into my front shirt pocket and yanked out the silver spoon I was carrying. The bullet that had knocked me over was fused to the spoon.

The spoon wasn’t just any old spoon. My roly-poly mother had given it to me. My mother had immigrated to the United States from Russia in the early 1900s and spoke mostly Yiddish. She was well known for being an amazing cook and for being incredibly stubborn.

On the day I shipped out, she gave me a firm hug, smelling of cinnamon, and a care package. The care package contained gray wool socks (which I am currently wearing), home-baked raisin challah, and a sterling silver spoon, which we used on Sabbath. She told me to wear the socks to stay warm, to eat the food to stave off hunger, and to carry the silver spoon in my front shirt pocket to remind me of home. I told her I didn’t need the spoon, but she shook her sterling-haired head sadly and placed it in my hands. I still refused.

My brother Jay, who has slick brown hair and our mother's stubborn streak, pulled me aside and asked why I wouldn't take the spoon. I didn't really have a reason. Jay told me to carry the spoon so our mother would be happy. I heeded his advice and brought the Sabbath spoon with.

As I lay in the midst of the raging battle, I examined the spoon. It looked like a bent piece of junk, but I didn't care. That spoon was my savior. That very same spoon, which had served me matzoh ball soup and helped me fling peas at Jay, had taken the brunt of the bullet and saved my life. My mother's love and our religious faith were embodied in the spoon, and that is what truly saved me.

I will never polish the spoon. I will never remove the bullet from the spoon. I will carry the spoon with me forever. I'm Lenny, and my mother's special sterling silver spoon saved my life. And if you ever see me, I will *always* have my silver spoon.

Amy Tishler, great-great-niece of Lenny
Missouri, USA

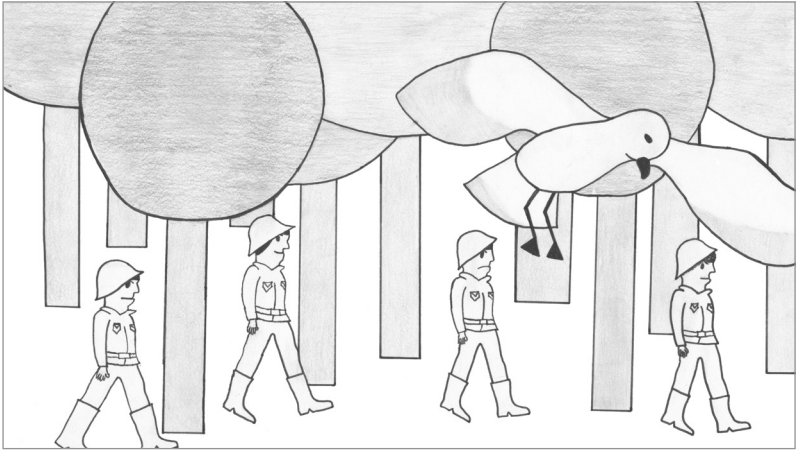
Seagull, Sir

1944
Little Creek, Virginia, USA

It was a warm day in Little Creek, Virginia, and the sun was shining on my grandpa's face. Grandpa was at a military base, training to be in the U.S. Navy for World War II. It was the day that their uniforms were to be inspected. The inspector expected the troops to have spotless, pristine white uniforms when they arrived at the inspection line. In order to get to the clearing for inspection, they had to march about a mile through the wooded forest. The troops were not allowed to speak during the hike through the woods or during the inspection.

My grandpa advanced through the dense woodland, thinking to himself that nothing could go wrong. He had nearly reached the inspection line, feeling he would get a favorable report from the inspector, when a seagull flying overhead dropped its load on my grandpa's right shoulder. My grandpa frantically tried to think of something he could use to wipe the bird poop off, but he didn't find anything. He couldn't even locate a handkerchief. The only thoughts going through my grandpa's head were thoughts of wonder and worry—thoughts like *What will they do to me?* and *They'll lock me up for sure*. Because the troops weren't allowed to talk, my grandpa couldn't ask if anyone had a piece of cloth to wipe the mess off.

As Grandpa stepped into line to be inspected, he knew he would be punished in some way. He prepared



Alyssa Cannon

himself for the worst as the inspector slowly made his way down the long line of troops. There was not a sound. It was so quiet that my grandpa could hear his own heart pounding in his chest like a Chinese gong. When the inspector reached my grandpa and looked over his uniform, he paused to stare at the stain. Grandpa looked the inspector straight in the eye and said, “Seagull, sir.” The inspector smiled and moved on to the next in line, not saying a word to my grandpa.

Braden Luechtefeld
Missouri, USA

Even Baseball Isn't Safe

1945
near Berlin, Germany

One day in Germany my grandfather Howard was playing baseball with his army buddies. Little did he know he was in for a surprise. He was relieved that World War II was over and that he could just have a little fun until he went home. It was a few days until his infantry unit would go back to America. So what better way to pass the time than America's pastime: baseball. Baseball had always been Howard's favorite sport. He was sick of all the fighting, all the terror. He didn't want to worry about anything.

They were playing in a field, and the grass was tall, and fresh with morning dew—just grass as far as the eye could see. Howard loved places like this. They relaxed him.

“Howard, you're up,” called one of his army buddies. Howard grabbed his bat and sauntered to home plate. But then something by home plate caught his eye. It looked shiny and was lying in the dirt.

It's probably just scrap metal, Howard thought. He went over to get a closer look, then brushed his hand over the thing to remove the dirt covering it. Guess what he found. It was a mine!* Howard took it all in, thinking it was his last moment on earth. He waited a few seconds. Finally, when he realized he wasn't dead, he called to his comrades, “Guys, we have a mine over here!” His friends sprinted over to see the mine.

* A mine is a bomb that is hidden in the ground or in water, and is meant to explode on contact.

“Holy cow,” said one of his buddies, “it must be left over from the war. I guess it was never activated.”

“Everyone back away,” warned another man. “It could still be active.”

None of them knew what to do. Then something clicked in Howard’s brain. They were holding Nazi soldiers prisoner in a camp nearby. He hoped one of the soldiers had deactivated mines for the Nazis. He ran so fast to the camp that even sound was begging for him to slow down. When he got there, he told the guard he needed one of the soldiers.

“But what if he escapes?” the guard asked.

“It’s worth a shot,” Howard replied.

The guard released one of the prisoners and handed him to Howard. Howard took the German to the field and showed him the mine. “Deactivate it.”

The German seemed to understand, and opened the mine. Everyone was worried about what would happen. Would the mine explode? Maybe the German would intentionally kill them. The mine beeped. It was deactivated, and they were safe.

The men went on to play baseball, carefully checking everywhere they stepped. They could now hardly run from one base to the next without worrying that they’d be obliterated any second. Fortunately, no more mines were found.

So next time you play baseball, be thankful you don’t have to worry about land mines. Howard was lucky to be alive. I bet it was the most interesting game of baseball he ever played.

Paul Weir
Alabama, USA

Stuck in a Silo

c. 1948
Quincy, Illinois, USA

My grandma Renee grew up on a 200-acre farm. She was a good little girl, and she liked to play in the smelly barn and to play hide-and-seek in the acres of corn. One day Grandma's friend Shelly came over and was tired of the barn and the field. Out of the corner of her eye, Grandma saw the gigantic silo, which was at the front of the farm. She thought it was full of ripe corn, and they hoped for adventure. The girls quickly ran to the silo.

The silo was so enormous, the girls had to climb a ladder to get in. When they reached a hole where they could climb in, they looked at each other. My grandma said, "You go first."

Shelly took the first step, and right when she stepped in, she knew something was wrong. The corn was soggy and wet! Shelly started to sink very slowly! It was like a mound of corn quicksand.

Immediately Grandma knew she needed help, so Grandma climbed down the ladder as fast as she could and hurried to the house. She went to the phone—which was a party-line phone, so all of her neighbors could hear her—and started yelling, "Help! Help! My friend is stuck in my silo!"

A bunch of neighbors scurried to the house. Shelly was about chest-deep when the neighbors got to the silo. Her life was in jeopardy! The neighbors were frantic, but one neighbor had thought ahead and brought a rope.

He frantically put it around Shelly's arms and pulled her out. The neighbors stood at the bottom of the silo yelling, "Is she okay?" Shelly was so scared she couldn't stop shaking.

Grandma and Shelly got in an incredible amount of trouble. As punishment, my grandma did many chores, and I can't believe this, but my great-grandma was so angry she actually said some "bad words"!

Shelly and Grandma learned their lesson: Don't go into the silo! The silo still stands there today—but no one dares to go into it.

Grace Schlueter
Missouri, USA

Bricks vs. Chickens

c. 1950
Collinsville, Illinois, USA

Angelo was a troublemaker. He did countless practical jokes, and his favorite pastime was playing pranks on unfortunate friends and family members. No one felt safe turning their back on him, because they might end up with a lizard down their shirt if they did. Though he played mostly simple pranks, he wasn't notorious for being simple-minded. In fact, you were usually caught in his trap before you even realized he had one.

It was a warm summer day in Collinsville, Illinois, 1950. Nine-year-old Angelo Zavaglia was sitting on the front porch of his small white house, waiting eagerly for his cousin to arrive. *What will my cousin be like?* he thought. *Will he be a troublemaker like me?* His thoughts were interrupted as a dusty blue pickup truck bounced into the driveway. Angelo stood up, and his mother opened the front door and came out. Out of the truck jumped his aunt and uncle and his cousin Gregg. Gregg rushed to Angelo's side.

"I've heard such great things about you!" exclaimed Gregg.

Angelo found that hard to believe. He waved Gregg inside, leaving his mom, aunt, and uncle to talk. "Are you a troublemaker, too?" asked Angelo.

Gregg shook his head. "What do you mean?" he asked. "If I was, my mom would still think I'm an angel. I've never even gotten spanked—not for anything!"

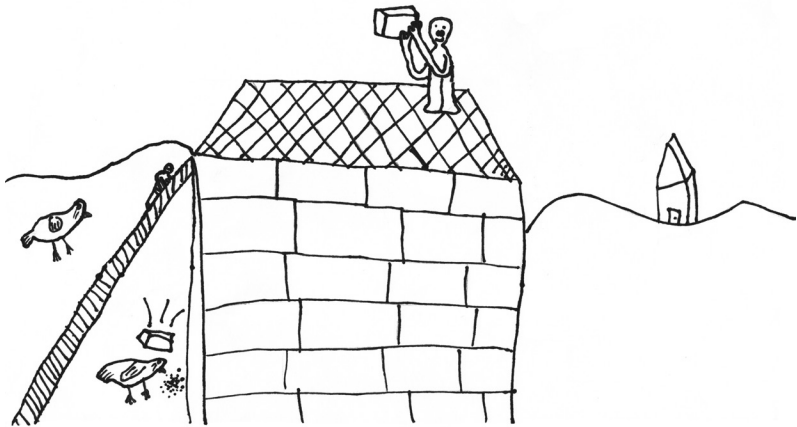
Angelo gaped. He had never gotten spanked—*ever*? Angelo had been spanked more times than he could remember.

Then a light went on in Angelo's head. He waited until his uncle, aunt, and mother weren't looking, and then pulled Gregg through the side door into the backyard. Angelo jogged over to the chicken house, which had many, many chickens strutting around it. By the time Gregg caught up to him, Angelo was already on top of the chicken house. Angelo waved for Gregg to join him. Gregg reluctantly climbed up with him, and stood up. Angelo held a brick in each hand. He handed one to Gregg.

“Throw it,” urged Angelo.

Gregg weakly tossed the brick, missing the chickens on purpose.

Angelo laughed, and handed him the other brick. “You have to throw hard and aim at a chicken,” he said.



Gregg threw the brick, this time only nearly missing a chicken, and a smile stretched across his face. Angelo handed him two more bricks. Gregg was so preoccupied throwing bricks at the chickens, he didn't notice that Angelo had slipped back inside his house.

Moments later, Gregg's mother dashed outside. "Gregg!" she screamed. Gregg turned. His mother came lunging at him. "This is not what we do to our cousin's chickens!" she yelled. Gregg's mom dragged him off the chicken house and gave him a real hard spanking.

Angelo ran back into the house laughing. *Now we're even*, he thought. *Now we've both been spanked!*

Angelo walked up to his room, new pranks and traps already forming in his head.

Raphaella Zavaglia, great-niece of Angelo
Missouri, USA

Sausage Day

c. 1952
Graceville, Florida, USA

In 1952 six-year-old Katie lived on a seventy-two-acre farm in the panhandle of Florida with her parents, Park and Mattie Belle Register, and her five siblings, Jimmy, Nadine, Max, Gertha, and baby Charlene. Katie was the second-youngest in her family.

They had a cozy two-bedroom farmhouse. There were a barn, pens for their animals, and a large shed for their tools. There were large pecan trees growing in their yard that they liked to sit under when it was hot. A catfish pond was full of catfish, and sometimes they would go fishing in the evening when their chores were done.

They were always working on their farm. Some of the crops they grew were for themselves so they could have food. Some of the crops were to sell or trade. They grew peanuts, cotton, velvet beans, corn, okra, and cotton. They had to work hard every day from the late winter through the late fall.

When the late fall came, it was time to slaughter the hogs. Killing hogs was hard work and needed many helping hands. They lived in a farming community where many families had hogs that needed to be slaughtered to provide food for meals throughout the winter. All the neighbors helped each other. One day they would all come help slaughter the hogs at one house, and then the next time they would all go to another home to help. It was faster to help one another than to do it alone.

When it was time to slaughter Katie's hogs, Katie's mom woke her up at 3:00 A.M. to help make breakfast for the family. The neighbors started showing up at about 5:00 A.M. to help. Katie's dad and some other men shot the hogs. Then they placed them in clean oil drums with boiling water and scraped the hair off. Everyone had a job to do.

Katie's job was cleaning intestines to make sausage casings. Her partner was Miss Suzy. They washed the intestines with warm water two or three times. After the intestines were cleaned, Katie had to pull the intestines hard so Miss Suzy could cut them to make the sausage casings. Miss Suzy accidentally cut Katie's fingers several times. Each time she cut Katie, Miss Suzy would say, "Oh, I'm sorry, honey."

While Katie was painfully making the sausage casings, her grandfather was making the sausage. When he finished, Miss Suzy and Katie stuffed the casings with the sausage.

To finish their job, they hung the sausage in the smokehouse to "cook." They did not have a freezer, so the smokehouse kept the meat from going bad.

Once they were finished, Miss Suzy said, "Bless your heart!" to Katie.

Katie thought, *Bless my fingers!*

The next day Katie showed her mother her fingers and said, "I want a new job."

Her mother said, "Okay, sweetie."

Katie learned to always help her family when they need help and to do her job without complaining.

Jefferson "Jake" Davis, grandson of Katie
New Jersey, USA

The Ice Cream Escapade

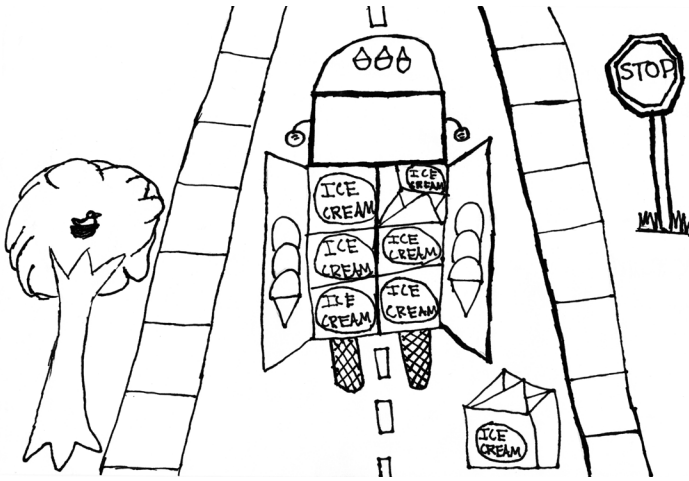
c. 1952
Pilot Grove, Missouri, USA

The story starts on a hot summer day in 1952 when my grandpa Rich was outside with the neighbor kids. The group was enjoying the day, when they heard a big truck rumbling by on the big open road. The truck was passing through town on the way to the next stop to drop off more large buckets of ice cream.

All of a sudden the back of the truck flew open, and a five-gallon tub of smooth, delicious ice cream came tumbling out and banged against the ground with a thud. The kids looked at each other in amazement, wondering what to do. They watched the ice cream with their beaming eyes. What luck they had that day, because it is not every day a tub of ice cream happens to fall into your possession.

The truck continued to roll on down the street, because the driver did not hear the ice cream when it hit the ground. All the kids ran to the bucket of ice cream in the road, opened it, and looked inside and found the savory chocolate ice cream. Their eyes widened, and smiles crept up their faces.

The children ran inside with joy, giddy as they skipped up to their parents. They told their parents the miraculous story, and the adults told the other siblings, who told some friends, who told the neighbors—and soon enough, everyone who lived on the block came outside with their old black pots and pans, and took turns scooping out their share of the ice cream.



Alexis Tounsand

The neighbors couldn't let the ice cream go to waste, so they devoured it! Back then, most people did not have freezers, coolers, or places to keep things frozen, and they did not want the ice cream to just melt in the middle of the street. The neighbors had thought, *What a nice sweet treat for a hot day.* They all devoured the ice cream!

To this day, my grandpa still remembers the ice cream story and can almost taste that ice cream when he tells the story.

Emma Bell
Missouri, USA

“Bye. I am out,” she answered, staring at him, straight in the eye.

I feel really, really proud to be a great-granddaughter of a lady who stood up to a strong and powerful boss. You just think about it. She could have said okay, feeling scared as a cat, but she stood up for herself. She ended up doing the work on Monday, but her boss was not so happy about it.

Etta Krinsky
New York, USA

The Disk in the Sky

c. 1955
Hyderabad, Sindh, Pakistan

Knowledge is precious to the human race. Everything is a mystery to us, and many times we fail to find an answer. My grandpa Shafiq, who became a biomedical scientist, still cannot find answers to some of the mysterious happenings he witnessed as a child.

The Pakistani heat pounded onto Shafiq's back, and this wasn't even full blast—it was still early morning. Warm sand sifted around in the bottom of his sneakers as he sprinted across the landscape.

His competitors lined up, waiting for their turn to hit. This was one cricket match that neither team wanted to lose. The defensive team set up the players similar to an American baseball field. A batsman walked up to the plate; Shafiq stood waiting and ready in the outfield. The pitcher bowled the ball to the batsman, and the boy swung the bat like a golf club.

Smashing against the blade of the bat, the ball flew through the air and into the outfield. Shafiq raised his arms into the air, trying to line up his hands to make the catch. At the tip of his finger, he noticed a gray disk. It had to be about the size of an airplane, if not larger, but lacked flashing lights and unusual noises. The disk could have been a plate hovering in the air. The ball hit the ground behind Shafiq, and players began running around, scoring points, and cheering. But Shafiq continued to watch the disk with wonder. He raised his hand and pointed at the disk. His friends looked up and gasped.



Rachel Liang

Years later his friends chatted about the disk. Everyone had seen it, and yet nobody had a clue what it was. Nothing seemed to match up. And many years later, after all the training and studies and research Shafiq has done as a scientist, he still has no answer.

Not everything can be explained, no matter how hard we try. That is what makes knowledge so precious. This object can be explained only as a disk in the sky.

Sydney Kinzy
Missouri, USA

Countering the Unfairness

c. 1956–1959

Jiagou, Anhui Province, China

My story took place from 1956 to 1959 in Anhui Province, China. At that time most Chinese families favored boys over girls, because they believed that once a woman married, she belonged to another family. As a result, my grandmother was not allowed to go to school. Her brother was allowed to go to school, but she wasn't. She'd pleaded with her father uncountable times, and now was the time to take action.

It was a warm, sunny *summer* day as she walked down the "road" (dirt path). *A perfect day for the school children!* she thought bitterly. My grandmother knew that she should be cutting grass to be dried into hay, and she knew that the consequences would be severe if her parents caught her out there. She knew all that, but she ignored all of it. After all, school was her greatest wish, wasn't it?

She located the village headmaster's house and knocked on the door. The headmaster came out. My grandmother explained her situation, and the headmaster promised to go to her house later that day.

That night, under the rosy sky, the headmaster walked home, knowing that he had accomplished his task.

Meanwhile . . . at my grandmother's house, her father gave her a punishment for asking the headmaster to help and trying to get him to agree to let her go to school.

When fall came, her father was forced to let her go to school, because he had agreed when the headmaster had gone to his home. He would let her go, but only if she promised to do the cooking, do the gardening, do the laundry, feed the animals, collect grass for drying into hay, and do countless other housework jobs. Below is her schedule:

1. Wake up
2. Make breakfast
3. Go to school (walk barefoot across a rocky $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile "road")
4. Walk back home from school
5. Study while doing chores
6. Make dinner
7. Go to bed (on the dirt floor)

The first month my grandmother went to school, she was excellent. So her father requested her to skip a grade. My grandmother objected. Her father said that if she didn't skip a grade, she would be stupid and she shouldn't go to school. So she could only agree to skip that grade. She kept up well in second grade and soon was excelling again. As a result, her father made her skip another grade.

In third grade, there were multiplication and division, as well as addition and subtraction. This time my grandmother took longer to achieve the third-grade standard status, but she made it and once again achieved first place.

After three hard years of elementary school, she was admitted to Fuli Normal School. She moved on to

graduate from normal school* and eventually became the director of a child development center.

Her life was so successful just because she made her father let her attend school.

Jason Xu
Missouri, USA

* A normal school was a school that trained high school graduates to be teachers, especially elementary-school teachers.

Slavery Escape

1959–1962
Bocas del Toro, Panama;
Panama City, Panama

As an eight-year-old girl, my grandmother was stolen and sold from the Ngöbe-Buglé Indian tribe in the jungle of Panama. A rich family was going to get a slave—who would become a runaway slave. This is the story of my *abuela** and how she escaped from slavery.

In 1959, or when she was twenty-one, my *abuela* tried to run away barefoot from her owners' house in Almirante in the province of Bocas del Toro, Panama. She traveled to the town priest. For safety she hid in his house until the police and owners showed up and knocked on the door. They interrogated the priest. As every terrifying moment passed away, the more curious my *abuela* became. Out of curiosity, she peeked out the door. The police saw her and pulled her away to the owners, who told the police she was only sixteen. The priest stood up for her and convinced the police to set her free.

Later, after everyone left, the priest told her to get a birth certificate. She did not know how, since she had not been exposed to the outside world. So the priest helped her get one.

She moved to Panama City, where three years later she met my grandpa and got married, even with a language barrier of my grandpa knowing only English.

* *Abuela* (ah-BWAY-luh) means “grandmother” in Spanish.

He was there just to serve at the U.S. base in Panama. They soon moved to America for their new life as a veteran and a traumatized free slave.

My abuela learned three languages through immersion in the cultures without formal schooling. She learned her native language of the Ngöbe-Buglé then learned Spanish, the language of her owners, then learned English in the United States.

She keeps in touch with the slave owners, since they are the closest people to parents she has. Recently I traveled to Panama and met them for the first time. They treated us as family, and we treated them as family, too, but it does not make up for what they did to my abuela. If only they had been friendly towards her as a child.

Harry Coons
Missouri, USA

The Big Win!

c. 1964
Manhattan, New York, New York, USA

I ran my fingers through my crispy, reddish-brown hair as I walked up into the room. As nervous as I was, I answered the first question. I could not believe I was even standing where I was. But no matter how scared, nervous, and worried I felt, I continued answering questions. A huge relief washed down my spine once I finished the interview.

“Thank you,” said the man. “I will let you know if your interview will get you onto the show.”

Two hours later, I was sitting in the back row of *The Price Is Right* studio, clenching my husband’s hand. There were no words to describe how long I had wanted to be on the show and how excited I was just to be in the studio.

“Remember, all that matters is that you did y—”

“I know, Max!” I said, cutting him off.

I continued to hold his hand, and felt a little bad because I was squeezing soooooo hard. He looked like he would explode.

“Our first contestant . . .” said the announcer. This was the moment I had been waiting for since I had sent for tickets months earlier.

“Sigma Levy! C’mon down!”

Everyone was cheering—for me! He had called my name—*me!* I ran down the steps as fast as a cheetah or a jaguar or even a rocket ship with blazing hot fire coming out! I think that was probably the fastest I had ever run.

Maybe it was the joy running through my blood. Or the happiness in my bones. Or . . . I don't know.

I sat down on the stage and waited, questions running through my head. *What if? But . . . How come?* Millions of thoughts raced through my mind. *It's okay!* I reminded myself, trying to get rid of the nervous feeling as the cameras started. It sure did feel awesome to be on TV. Me—just a woman from a really small town in Arkansas—on *The Price Is Right!*

The beautiful girls showed us the first item. It was a bedroom set. I carefully made my guess for the price, and so did the other contestants.

Then Bill Cullen, the host, announced the price, and my guess was the closest! Wa-hoo! I had just won a bedroom set. Yay!

Then we waited as the next items were displayed for us to guess the prices. You bet I won those, too. I kept on winning and winning. I won for four days and got lots of different prizes—the bedroom set, a whole bunch of beautiful artificial flowers, a refrigerator. But the best was a trip to Oslo, Norway!

Every day I was on the show, I did my very best—like I always do. But even doing that, someone beat me.

On the day when I lost, my husband, Max, ran up the steps of the stage and gave me the biggest hug ever. It was so tight, I felt like *I* might explode! I felt so proud.

Leetal Cohn, great-granddaughter of Sigma
Missouri, USA

Happily Ever Rafter

1966
St. Louis, Missouri, USA

The year was 1966. My brother Eddie and I had been assigned the task of getting some mischievous birds out of our attic. Eventually we got them out, but things didn't go exactly as planned.

"Ugh!" I cannot believe Dad is making us do this!

"Deb, come on. Dad needs us to do this. We can't wimp out, or he'll get agitated with us. Let's go."

"Fine. But I will always hate birds after this." We pushed up the small slab of drywall and climbed into the attic. When Eddie got up, he spotted the birds' nest about ten feet away. He stood up and wobbled.

"Deb, these rafters aren't quite wide enough to walk on. We are going to have to scoot to the nest. Will you hand me the broom please?"

I handed him the broom reluctantly and started to climb up. I started to scoot behind Eddie, but he was going really slowly. "Eddie, please go faster. I want to get out of this disgusting attic!"

"Deb, have some patience, okay? We are almost there. If we go too fast, we will scare them."

"Eddie, I know, but—" I was interrupted by some footsteps down the hall. Eddie looked at me with fear in his eyes. In unison we whispered, "Dad."

His head poked up into the attic. We both were anticipating a yell or a shout, but he just chuckled and shook his head. I was kind of embarrassed, because we were sitting on the rafters about five feet away from the

nest after what had been probably half an hour, and we had done zero percent of what we needed to do.

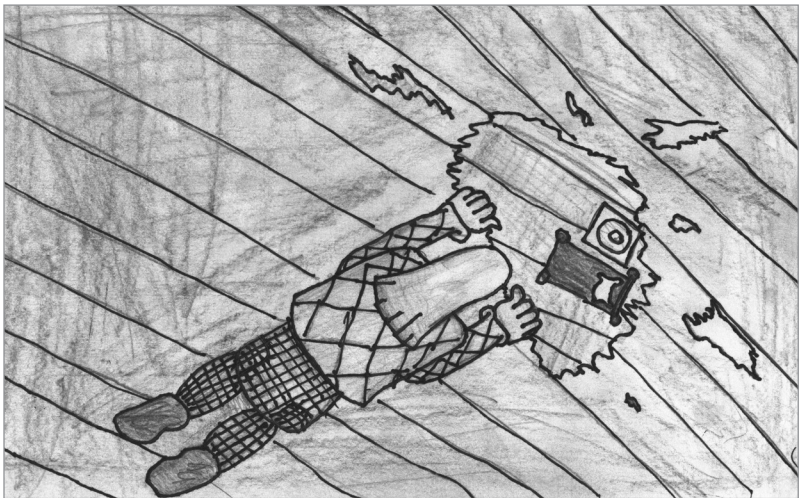
“Man, you kids are big ol’ wimps. Just stand up and walk, and you’ll be done in a second.”

“Dad, we tried. The rafters aren’t sturdy.” Eddie looked at Dad fretfully as Dad started towards the nest. “You’re going to fall.”

“I won’t fall. Now hand me that broom and—” BAM! Dad’s left foot slipped off of the rafter, and he fell through the ceiling, right into his room! I looked at Eddie in horror as the birds jumped up, startled, and flew into the hole after Dad.

Eddie snickered and said, “I told you so.”

I jumped down through the hole Dad had made and found him on the floor, shuddering. “Dad, are you okay?” I examined him to see if he had broken any bones. That had easily been a ten-foot fall!



Luke D. Tyler

“Yes, I’m okay. I’m just worried about what your mother will say when she sees this!” I nodded, also wondering what she would say.

“Let’s not worry about this right now. We need to get the birds out of the house before we have two problems to face.” Eddie leaped down through the hole, the broom in his hand, and ran down the hall towards the birds. Together we shooed the birds out the door. Like I said, things didn’t go as planned, but thank goodness we got the birds out.

Abigail Fink, niece of Eddie and Deb
Missouri, USA

The Compound Wall

1968

Kabisthalam, Tamil Nadu, India

The opportunity for adventure was too great, almost as if the conditions were set up. How could they not do it? Just one compound wall surrounding the theater's interior—their only obstacle to having the time of their lives. So who cared that his brother's wedding was the next day? It was just one movie they absolutely *had* to see—and only one wall in their way.

The plan was to sneak in and out, just like that. My grandpa, who would one day hardly take his eyes off of his grandchildren as they crossed the street, was a rebel. The wide-eyed boy who had collected spare change from odd jobs just to get into the cheapest theater seats had grown into the eighteen-year-old obsessive movie watcher who would do anything to catch the latest flick. His passion for movie watching and storytelling had been sparked when he was little; now the spark had grown into a raging fire. My grandpa lived on the edge, and life was his adrenaline rush.

Getting in was easy; with a boost from his cousin, my grandpa effortlessly scaled the mountainous compound wall surrounding the theater. And they had intricately worked out every detail of their escape to the second; there was no way this could go wrong. Well, let's just say that the *Titanic* was supposed to be an unsinkable ship.

The movie itself was reportedly “fantastic” and would later be described as being worth the risk involved,

but the climax of their escape came only after the credits rolled off the screen. As they were sneaking away from the theater, everything went horribly wrong.

The compound wall, once again, would be the only object impeding their escape. This time my grandpa's cousin went first, just to keep things fair. My grandpa had no one to boost him up, so he began climbing the ten-foot wall on his own. What he hadn't noticed were the haphazardly placed wooden boards and nails that stuck out from random spots on the wall. On the way up, he fell, tearing his flesh along every nail and splintery piece of wood as he plummeted downward.

Minutes later he staggered into the wedding hall, inexplicably looking like a hero injured in battle. There was an open wound stretching across his chest, and fresh crimson blood had seeped through to his shirt. Barely conscious, he collapsed as the rest of the family, who had already been setting up decorations, rushed to crowd around him—all panicking with quickened heartbeats, wondering whether or not the wedding that had been planned for months could still go on.

But this act was just one of several similar occurrences for my grandpa, so he was quick to toughen up in time for the wedding. In no time, he was back on his feet, surrounded by a group of newly acquired adoring fans as he recounted the story of his heroic stunt once again—with all of his usual dramatic flair.

Preethi Sriraman
Missouri, USA

Into the Mountains

1968

Jiangxi Province, China

“My legs are going to give in any second,” my aunt Yun said, breathing heavily.

“At least we didn’t get lost!” one of Yun’s friends said. Getting lost was the one thing Yun, the other students, and the rice farmers had worried about.

It was 1968, and many people in the city where Yun lived didn’t have enough food to eat. Since the farmers who grew rice needed help to plant more rice, many teenagers who lived in the city had moved to the countryside to help the farmers. Sent by the principal of their school, Yun and her classmates had ridden a train for fifteen hours and had walked five miles before reaching their destination. Finally they arrived in the big Yellow Mountains (that were not yellow at all), in Jiangxi Province, China, to plant and harvest rice.

On one particular hot summer day, some of the farmers took Yun and her friends on a walk. After what seemed like hours of walking, the students wondered where they were going and when they could sit down and rest their sore legs. “Where are the fruit trees you were talking about?” one of Yun’s classmates asked, clearly miserable from the heat.

“The fruit trees and the water springs are just up ahead,” one of the farmers said, nodding his head and pointing his finger.

Despite their sore legs and difficult breathing, the students ran across the dusty road toward the orchard.



Cameron Roberts

Once all of the students reached the trees containing fruit, they split up. Thinking she had never seen so many colors in her life, Yun picked a blueberry-shaped fruit. It tasted like a mix between an apple and a pear. She had never tasted or seen this strange fruit in the city.

Just as Yun got thirsty, she spotted a very small geyser. *It looks like a magic water fountain that has been shooting up water since the beginning of time*, she thought. Through cupped hands, she drank some of the water, and she gasped with delight. The water was not only cold, but it was also refreshing. She had never tasted anything like it in the city.

Once Yun's thirst had been quenched and her hunger had been satisfied, Yun realized that staying in the mountains might not be so bad after all. She continued to plant and harvest rice for ten more years before returning to her home in the city and seeing her family again.

Hannah Gao
Missouri, USA

A Purple Mess

1974

Camden, South Carolina, USA

What my dad thought was going to be the best day ever, turned to the worst day ever. My dad was in first grade, and a day soon to come was making him feel energized and excited.

My dad was a Cub Scout. He was at a den meeting where the leader announced that the boys would be having a project that would be displayed to all of the parents and the other scouts. The display would be at the school, and the boys would have a dinner to attend before the awards were given out. The boys would all be making wooden rockets, and they all got a plain block of wood to carve and paint.

My grandpa was out of town and he couldn't help my dad, so my dad decided to make the rocket himself. He got out the wood, the paint, and a paintbrush, and headed down to the musty garage. He didn't know how to carve wood, so he decided to skip that step.

He started painting blue at the top, white in the middle, and red at the bottom. He was going for a patriotic look, to win the "USA" award. After he glued the shiny capital letters "USA" onto the rocket, he was satisfied with himself and got up. As he was getting up, he knocked over the paint, and it splattered everywhere. His rocket, which had been red, white, and blue, was now a messy, wet, purple piece of soggy wood. He called his mom down to help him clean up his project, but it was no use.

The next day was the big award show. My dad tried to convince his mom not to go, but she said everything was going to be fine. My dad sure hoped so. When he got to school, there were rows and rows of tables with nicely painted and well-carved rockets displayed on them. My dad quickly put his purple mess on the table and walked away before anyone knew it was his.

After the dinner everyone came around, and the leader announced the winners. “And last, but not least, the award for ‘Do It Yourself’ goes to . . . Tracy McMillin!” My dad was shocked, but he did deserve the award, considering all the other boys’ dads had done the work for them. My nana gave my dad a look that said, *I told you so*. My dad proudly walked up to the man and got his award, and my nana was very happy for him.

Through this experience my dad learned to never give up and to always be confident, because you never know what will happen. I hope this story can teach you the things that it taught my dad and me.

Neeve McMillin
Missouri, USA

The Walk Across Canada

1975
Canada

My great-grandpa—the Reverend William Paul Conrad Rabel, or “Will,” as many people called him—walked across Canada in 1975. He had always wanted to do it, and after his wife died, he decided it was time. He dedicated the walk to paying the mortgage for the Richmond Church of God, the church that he pastored in Richmond, British Columbia, and to raising money for the Canadian Cancer Society to help fight the disease that had killed his wife.

He began his walk at Halifax, Nova Scotia, on March 21. The entire walk was about 3,592 miles, or 5,780.764 kilometers, in length. He earned an average of ten cents per donor per mile.

Will took Sundays off during his walk in order to visit churches, where sometimes he was asked to preach. He met lots of people along the way. One of the people he met was a Canadian soldier who became one of his friends. The soldier took Will to an army camp to get a pair of army boots made for him. For the last 2,500 miles Will wore those boots—and had to have the boots resoled three times!

One day while Will was walking, a huge dog came running across a field toward him. Will prayed for protection. Just as the dog was about to attack, a semi truck ran the dog over.

Several of Will’s grandchildren joined him for short periods of time during his walk. When my mom

was walking with him along the Trans-Canada Highway, a Mountie drove up to them and asked him why she was walking with him, because the Mountie thought Will was kidnapping her.

Will collected stuff he found along the way. He found two uncashed checks along the road. He wrote to the owners of these checks to return them. He picked up enough tools during his walk to fill a toolshed!

Will was fifty-nine years old during his walk. He finished his journey on September 21, exactly six months after he began the walk. Technically he went across Canada four times. First he drove to Halifax. Every morning he drove his car to his ending point for the day. Then he hitchhiked his way back to that day's starting point and walked back to his car. It took him almost 10,000,000 footsteps to complete his journey.

Will said later that he might have had to ask for permission if he'd wanted to walk across Canada again, as he was getting married less than a month after he finished the walk. About eight years later, Will died of a massive heart attack while walking up to the pulpit to lead the prayer at camp meeting.

Sterling Ebel
Ohio, USA

Tangshan Terror

1976
Tianjin, China

My mother says she remembers the event like a silent film. It was a dark, stormy night in 1976. The wind howled at the windows as if trying to fly into the dimly lit apartment. In a room partitioned by a hanging sheet, my mother and aunt were sleeping softly. The day before, chickens in Tangshan were trying to fly out of their coops; dogs whimpered and paced. Every animal and insect knew the coming danger. Only we, the foolish governors of the earth, didn't. Our ignorance would have many horrible consequences in the hours to come.

In the early hours of the morning, before the sun appeared but after the clock signaled the start of a new day, the earth struck. More accurately, it slipped. A fault line that had been building tension shot forward, creating a wave so powerful that the rock transmitted it like water in the ocean. Meanwhile, on the surface, precious china plates in Tangshan cabinets rattled a few times, but it was dismissed as caused by the wind. A few minutes later in Beijing, radios wobbled on nightstands. Then the first plates fell. The sharp, unmistakable noise of shattering ceramics kicked their owners' minds into action.

My grandmother held her children tight, one in each arm, and raced down three flights of stairs with my grandfather following closely behind. If there were an observation station in space, one could see the lights going out in central Asia as a visual representation of the main shockwave. The pulse blew past the

“青山绿水,” or tree-covered mountains, and river valleys. In four seconds the pulse would reach my mother’s location. My grandmother rounded the bend in the stairwell and turned onto the fourth-floor landing. Three seconds—she reached the third-floor landing. By then, neighbors had joined the mad dash to get out of the building. One second left, and people landed a few meters from the door.

The ground heaved up and then dipped down into the depression caused by the wave. Pillars collapsed and shattered when they hit the ground. Smashed oil lamps mushroomed into towers of orange-blue flame, and wooden banisters shot splinters in all directions, like an orchestra of catastrophes playing the famous *1812 Overture*. Then, as suddenly as it had started, the main shock passed, leaving a trail of mangled buildings and blood and fire.

My mother, aunt, and grandmother waited under a pitched tent of sheets several layers thick to keep out the rain and keep in the warmth of delicate, shivering bodies. My grandfather took the risk of going back into the building in the presence of multiple aftershocks to salvage what he could. He brought back some food and more bedding, along with one of my mother’s highly valued possessions, a Rubik’s Cube. For her, it was a sign of hope. We still have the same Rubik’s Cube in our home and the original instructions in a folder.

Kenny Wang
New Jersey, USA

The Magical Box

Luoyang, Henan Province, China, 1978;
Beijing, China, 1988; Edwardsville, Illinois, USA, 1990

It seemed like a normal day to a ten-year-old girl in Luoyang, China. The year was 1978. Little did my mom know she would witness magic that would change her life that day—magic from a nine-inch box.

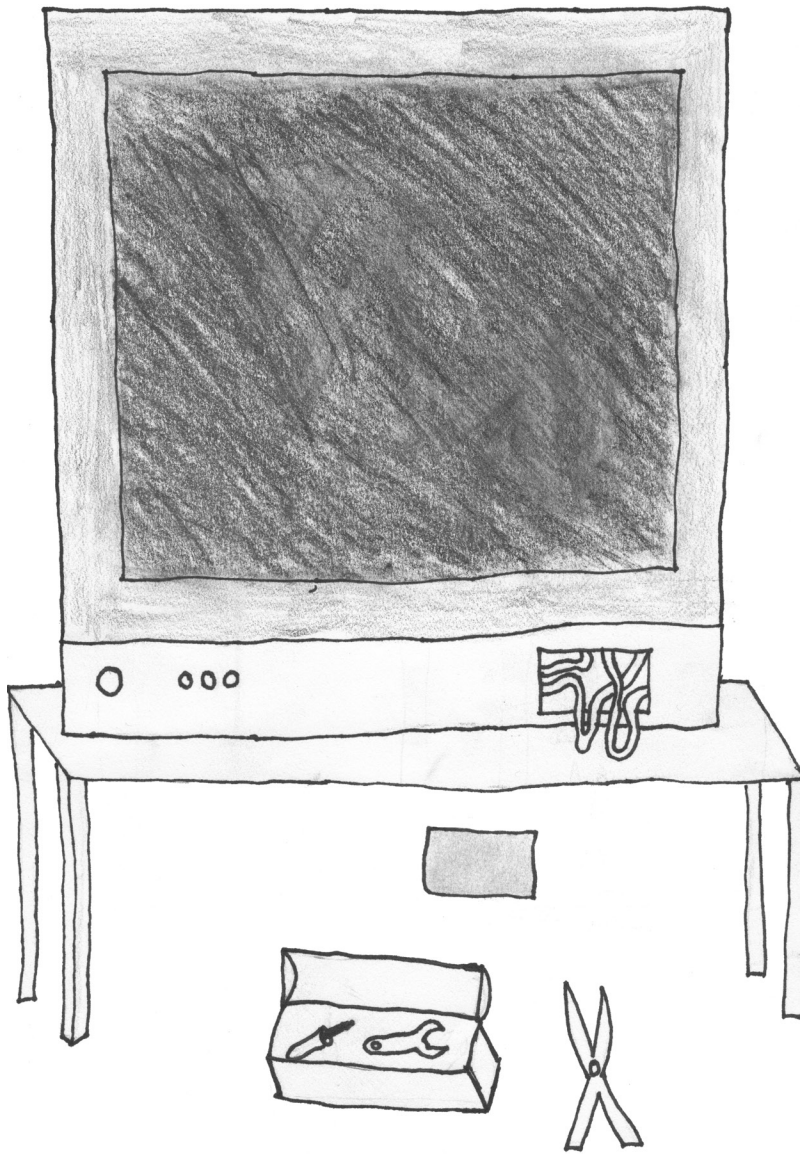
Her dad, an electrical engineer, was fixing up some contraption as usual while she played outside. By late afternoon her father had fixed the small appliance, but from the excited look in his eyes, she knew there was something different about this boxy machine with a nine-inch screen. Her family crowded around to take a look, and when she saw people inside the box her father had fixed, her eyes grew to the size of coins. Black-and-white figures were singing glorious songs and dancing. Oh, how they moved! It was unlike anything the girl had ever seen. *It must have been magic*, she concluded.

When the magical box had to be returned to its owner, she was extremely sad, for she knew her family could never afford to buy one for themselves. Because of this, she vowed to buy a magical box as soon as she could afford one.

* * *

Ten years later in Beijing, China, my mom, now a young lady, started working at her new government job. Fresh out of college, she had just begun earning 60 yuan* a month, equal to about \$6.67 at the time. At

* Pronounced yoo-AHN.



Teagan LeVar

that rate, she knew it would take forever to buy even a small magical box, which cost 4,000 yuan. To buy this childhood dream of hers, she would need to get a job that paid better, and to do that, she would need to go back to school.

But why stop there? She could even move to a better job market—the United States. It would take harder work than she could ever imagine, getting a scholarship in order for her visa to America to get accepted—not to mention the tough competition against countless other students who wanted to live the American dream just as much as she did. That didn't scare her though. Instead, it made her study harder, dream bigger, and never stop until she reached her goal.

* * *

In a foreign country far away from her culture, family, and friends, a determined young woman sat in her dorm room the winter of 1990, watching a brand-new nineteen-inch magical box. At the very least, it had taken lots of waiting, a frightening plane trip, an assistantship teaching undergraduates, and \$200 of hard-earned money to get this magical box of her own. Without her relentless courage to pursue her dream of a better life in America, she would never have been able to have the magic of images, voices, and music before her eyes—and this time in color! It was more rewarding than she could ever have imagined.

Victoria Sansone
Missouri, USA

Blizzard Blunder in Boston

1981

St. Louis, Missouri; Hanover, New Hampshire;
Boston, Massachusetts; USA

It all began in 1981, when Nana was eating her daily bologna sandwich on white bread at my grandma Judy's house. The phone started ringing. Ring-a-ling-a-ling! It was my aunt Lori at Dartmouth, where she went to college. When my grandma Judy hung up, she told Nana, my great-grandmother, to start packing for a one-day trip to Dartmouth. Aunt Lori was going to be in a play!

"When's the play?" croaked Nana, as she readjusted her crooked wig.

"In two weeks," said Grandma Judy.

Fourteen days later they hit the road—and the air. They got to Dartmouth safely and enjoyed the play.

It was time to leave. It was late November, so it was getting dark early. Nana and Grandma Judy had to drive two and a half hours to Logan Airport in Boston, then had to catch a 6:00 P.M. flight back to St. Louis. Of course, for my grandma Judy, who was a very slow driver, two and a half hours meant four hours.

When Nana and Grandma Judy got into the car and started to drive, *buckets* of snow began falling from the sky. A huge snowstorm was coming their way!

"Oh my!" exclaimed Grandma Judy. "I can't even see the road." All poor Grandma Judy could see was snow and glimpses of the car in front of her. She took a risk and followed that car, with high hopes that it would lead her to Logan Airport.

Then my grandma Judy asked Nana, “Can you drive, because I can’t see the road and it’s getting harder to see the car in front of me.”

“No! I’m eighty-five, blind in one eye, and I can’t even see well on a bright summer day—let alone in a snowstorm. Plus, I got my driver’s license taken away last week,” squawked Nana.

At this point it was snowing so hard that Grandma Judy could not even see the car in front of her. The highway seemed to end. My grandma Judy came to a stop. She could not move on. She heard sirens. She saw something other than snow: red and blue lights—the type you see on top of police cars. Suddenly a big, gruff policeman appeared before Nana’s one good eye.

“Uh-oh,” said Nana, as she tapped Grandma Judy and pointed to the policeman.

The policeman had guns in his holsters. He said, “Ladies, do you know where you are?”

“Well, not really. We got lost in the snowstorm,” said Grandma Judy innocently.

The policeman looked at Grandma Judy and Nana, with her wig askew, and realized that they were *not* terrorists. Then the policeman told Nana and Grandma Judy that they were on the runway of the Logan Airport airfield.

“The runway? Isn’t that dangerous?” cried Grandma Judy.

“Oy vey,”* sighed Nana.

* *Oy vey* (oy-vay) is a Yiddish expression of irritation, sorrow, or distress, similar to “Oh no” or “Good grief.”

After interrogating Nana and Grandma Judy, the gruff policeman led them off the airfield. Look on the bright side (not the snowy side)—at least they made it to the airport in time.

Belle Gage
Missouri, USA

The Fire Bird

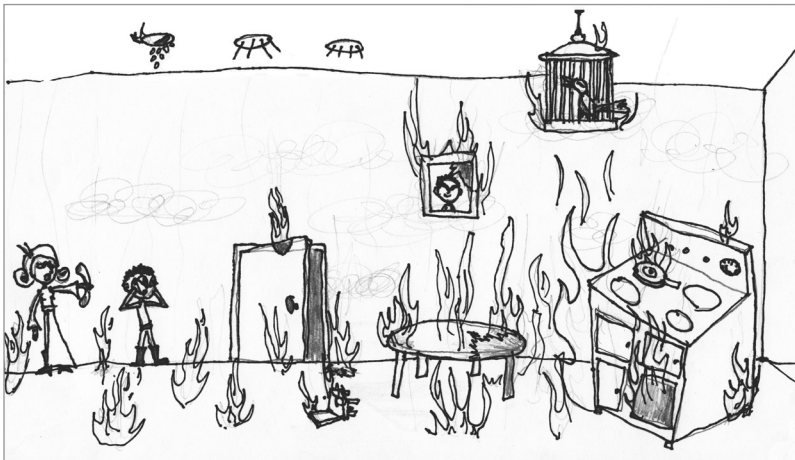
c. 1983
Santa Ana, California, USA

One very hot day, Vu was on his way home from school when he heard a strange sound coming from the bushes. He looked to see what it was. It was a baby sparrow!

Vu didn't know where the mother was, so he decided to make the bird his pet. He took it home and fed it, groomed it, let it loose in the sunroom, played with it, made it a home, and even tried to talk to it.

Then as night fell, everyone in the house went to bed. Vu slept in the living room to be near the sparrow, because his parents didn't let him take the bird to his room.

"Tweet! Tweet!" the bird screeched as smoke rose into the air. Vu woke up to find that when his mother had



Christian Bigler

gone to bed, she had forgotten that she was cooking. She had left the electric stove on, and it started a fire.

“Fire!” Vu screamed. Everyone dashed into the room. His mother called the fire department. They all went outside to wait for help.

Sirens drew closer. Vu’s sister, Vi, was screaming, “Over here! Over here! See the smoke?” She was yelling toward the fire truck that had just entered their neighborhood. The firefighters put out the fire, but couldn’t save the bird.

The bird had saved Vu and his entire family that night, but now the bird was gone. Vu felt proud, sad, happy, and guilty. He was proud because his bird saved him. He was very sad because his bird died. He was happy because his family was safe and okay. He felt guilty because he felt like he should have taken the bird outside, too.

Even now Vu still misses the bird, but he treats others better than before because of what the bird did for him.

Aaron Do, son of Vu
New Jersey, USA

Tennis Switcheroo

1984
Wichita, Kansas, USA

Bounce . . . bounce . . . bounce.

John McEnroe served the ball. His opponent skillfully hit the ball back: crosscourt, back, forth, back, forth, volley, lob, overhead, down-the-line. Who was the opponent of temper tantrum thrower John McEnroe? My dad! Fourteen-year-old Steve Talbott.

It all started when my dad was asked to be a ball boy for a tennis exhibition match between the famous John McEnroe and Vitas Gerulaitis in the Wichita, Kansas, coliseum. My dad's jobs were to chase down the balls and to post the scores on the manual scoreboard. After running in the burning sun, my dad was dripping sweat and feeling a little upside down as he sprinted to the courtside scoreboard and placed the "4" scorecard upside down.

Vitas Gerulaitis looked up and saw the upside-down 4. He started pointing at the scoreboard, and my dad was very confused. Then Vitas did the strangest thing. He jogged over to my dad and handed him his wooden Wilson tennis racket and told him to go play against the famous temper tantrum thrower, John McEnroe. Then Vitas went over to the scoreboard to keep score!

My dad leaped onto the tennis court. The crowd went wild. McEnroe served, soft and easy. He didn't know if my dad was a good tennis player. My dad slammed it back. John McEnroe's jaw fell wide open.

Crosscourt, down-the-line, volley, lob, overhead, back, forth, back, forth . . . Smash! My dad won the point. (Of course, John McEnroe had played easy on him.) The crowd went crazy again.

Vitas Gerulaitis grabbed for his racket, but my dad shooed him back to be the ball boy. The crowd was bursting with laughter.

The next day the story of my dad playing John McEnroe was printed in *The Wichita Eagle-Beacon* newspaper. My dad has the article in a frame. He told me he will treasure it forever. Maybe when I'm older he'll give it to me, since I wrote this story.

Meredith Talbott
Missouri, USA

A Geyser for Mother

1985

Fuquay-Varina, North Carolina, USA

One fall afternoon the whole Woodard family was doing chores. All except one—Matthew—who was playing video games. Soon his mother found out and told him to go clean out the gutters because they were clogged with leaves.

Matthew got the ladder from the garage, got on the roof, and started to clean the gutters. He did this for an hour, but he had made barely any progress. He hated cleaning out the gutters, because the leaves were very soggy; he also got stung by a bee that had made a hive in the leaves. He really wanted to go back to playing video games.

Matthew went back to the garage and looked for something to make the job go faster. First he found a rake. It was faster, but the rake scraped the gutters. He went back to the garage and found exactly what he needed—a leaf blower.

Matthew climbed up on top of the roof with the leaf blower. It worked perfectly! He was getting the work done ten times faster. Before long, the gutters were clear of leaves. *This was easy*, he thought. He was about to climb down from the roof, when he saw a pipe sticking out of the roof a few feet away. Matthew guessed that it needed cleaning, too.

Matthew walked to the pipe and looked down. It was dark inside. He guessed that it was dark because it was clogged with leaves, just like the gutters had been.

He held the leaf blower up and stuck the end of the blower into the pipe. He pulled on the trigger, and the motor raced. He didn't know how long he should gun the motor. It was a question on his mind when from somewhere within the house he heard a distant scream.

Matthew climbed down the ladder. He looked in the kitchen window and saw his brothers and sisters racing toward the back of the house. *I wonder what is up with them*, he said to himself. He went inside.

In the bathroom his mother was lying on the floor. Her panties were around her ankles. Water was all over the floor.

Matthew's mother had been on the toilet, and the air pressure from the leaf blower had pushed the water up out of the toilet* and made a geyser for mother.

Bray B. Woodard, daughter of Matthew
North Carolina, USA

* The pipe on the roof was a vent for the sewer line, so air blown into the pipe came up through the toilet.

From the Heart

1987
Cleveland, Ohio, USA

“You’re not smart enough,” the college counselor stated as my father’s dreams of being a doctor slowly faded. The plump man that smelled like overused cologne watched as my father took in this news. Embarrassed, my father felt tiny in his petite chair. He rose without saying a word, and dragged out of the big, stuffy office, discouraged about entering medical school and becoming a doctor.

We don’t have enough money to send me there anyway, he tried to convince himself as he walked down the high school hallway. Little did he know that the counselor was wrong about his future.

Six months later my father sat in a hard wooden pew, hymns echoing from the white walls. The gold chandelier sparkled from the high ceiling of the church. My father thought about everything that had happened that year. Outside the window, flowers bloomed in the crisp spring air. “Doug,” his dad said, “I was talking to my friend, about your predicament, and he told me that you could watch him perform an open-heart surgery!” Filled with excitement, my father could only imagine what that would be like.

Two days later my father stepped into the surgery room, which smelled like human organs. It seemed like an eternity before he was finally “scrubbed in.” Each person had a job and hustled to see it through. Finally everyone was ready, and surgery began.

First they gave the patient a shot and told him to count to ten. He made it only to four before he was out like a light. Then they opened up the chest, but before they put the heart machine on the man, the doctor said, “Doug, would you like to touch the heart before we begin?”

My father set his hands on the heart, and was filled with awe at this fragile, yet amazingly strong, heart—pumping in his hands. All the other bustling was shut out, and all he could hear was the pumping of the heart. At that moment he knew that no matter what other people said, he was going to become a doctor. He would study and work like he never had before. He carefully withdrew and watched as the skilled doctor and his assistants put the big heart machine on like they had done it a million times.

After spring break the next week, my father returned to school determined—and ready for what lay ahead. He would work hard to achieve his goal, and finally, after eight years of sleepless nights cramming—but never forgetting his goal—he graduated. Finally he stepped up to the stage at his graduation ceremony and received his degree. His family cheered for him like crazy. After he was done shaking everyone’s hand, he headed toward his family and relatives. “Congratulations!” they all shouted.

Then he thought about that doctor who had let him touch a beating heart and who had believed in him when no one else had. That one act of encouragement changed his whole life.

Kate Pogue
Missouri, USA

Equals

1988

Cape Town, the Western Cape, South Africa

It was 1988, and my father was in Cape Town, South Africa. My father, Paul, went to the University of Cape Town, and he was seventeen. At that time black people in South Africa were treated wrong—they didn't have rights. Nobody knew that six years later so much would have changed.

The university my father went to was a mix of white and black people. My father had never mixed with black people before, because of segregation. In the dorm next to my father's there lived a black person. His name was Potiphar. He had been named after a captain of the pharaoh's guard in the Bible, and he came from a town called Soweto. Potiphar was the first black person that my father had ever really spoken to.

Over time my father and Potiphar developed a friendship. They used to talk, but it was difficult to understand each other, because my father spoke English and Potiphar spoke Xhosa.* They would jump into each other's rooms and pretend to tackle each other. They realized that they had the same hopes and dreams as each other. The country they had grown up in had made them think they were quite different, when really they were not. They were different colors on the outside but were the same on the inside.

* Xhosa (KOH-suh) is a Bantu language spoken by more than seven million people in South Africa.

Being friends with Potiphar made my father realize how unfairly and how wrong black people had been treated. You don't always think about it until you meet someone it affects.

Potiphar risked much for his friendship with my father. He was a good marathon runner, but he could not run in a university marathon, because the black student body was mad at him for being friends with my father. He could not run in the marathon, because he had made friends with a white. The black students were angry about how they had been treated by white people.

After being at the university for a year, my father had to move on to another college. At that time my father lost contact with Potiphar. However, my father never forgot him, and it has been about twenty-four years.

Soon things started to change. White people were starting to change their minds about black people, and black people were changing their minds about white people, just as my father and Potiphar had. In 1992 white people in South Africa voted to ban segregation.* In 1994 South Africa voted in its first black president. His name was Nelson Mandela, known fondly to his people as "Madiba."** The rest is history.

Mia Jardine
New Jersey, USA

* Eighty-five percent of eligible (white) voters voted, with nearly seventy percent of them voting to end segregation.

** *Madiba* (muh-DEE-buh) was Mandela's clan name. To the Xhosa people, using the clan name is an important sign of respect and affection.

Gang Shoes?

1997
Birmingham, Alabama, USA

My mother, Jahan, was walking to school in her birthday present. She was in new, shiny skateboarding shoes. Little did she suspect she was violating school policy just by wearing them. They were black and white, and her best friend, Ann, had almost the same pair as she did. When they got to school, they were stopped immediately by their homeroom teacher. “What kind of gang are those hideous shoes from? Detention for both of you!” she scolded.

You may be thinking, *Well, detention cannot cause any pain whatsoever.* WRONG!!! In my mother’s school, detention meant students standing with their knees locked until they fainted. I know what you are thinking—*that’s inhumane and brutal.* But it’s true.

When Ann and my mother went to the detention room, they were greeted by the other victims of the cold-blooded and vicious punishment. Before detention started, the other kids were crying or sitting with their heads down on their desks. Some people wore green socks, and others had their hair in side ponytails, which were apparently violations. Many other people wore one pant leg rolled up, which was an actual gang sign. Others wore green or red shoelaces, which was also a gang sign, but they didn’t get in trouble.

When the other kids in the room saw that Ann and Jahan just got there, they all asked if Ann and my mother could faint for them. If someone fainted, that meant

that everyone could sit until they got picked up by their parents. Of course, they both accepted, because being at home or the emergency room surely beat standing for hours at a time for no reason.

Then suddenly the door swung open, crashing into the wall behind it, almost falling off its hinges. “Detention has started, you delinquents. ABSOLUTELY NO TALKING!” screeched the detention teacher. As the teacher was checking names, the boy who was usually there scratched his head, making the school-wide symbol that meant “make it look natural.”

After about an hour of standing, Ann fainted. No one noticed, because the teacher was asleep. My mom was surprised that it wasn’t she who fainted first, because it was her first time and Ann’s fifth. But after another hour, her body finally gave in to the cruel and unusual punishment.

When my mom got home, she was in big trouble with her parents. Because of that, she decided to go to school the next day wearing her old tight shoes.

That next day Ann wasn’t at school. My mother started to panic because her friend was out of her sight. After school she called Ann and asked her what was wrong. Ann said that her mom had a very long and detailed talk with the principal, and he was very angry with her and her mom. She didn’t want to feel the wrath of the principal again, so she got permission to stay home.

That day my mom agreed that she would never wear those shoes to school ever again.

Rowan Khazaeli
Alabama, USA

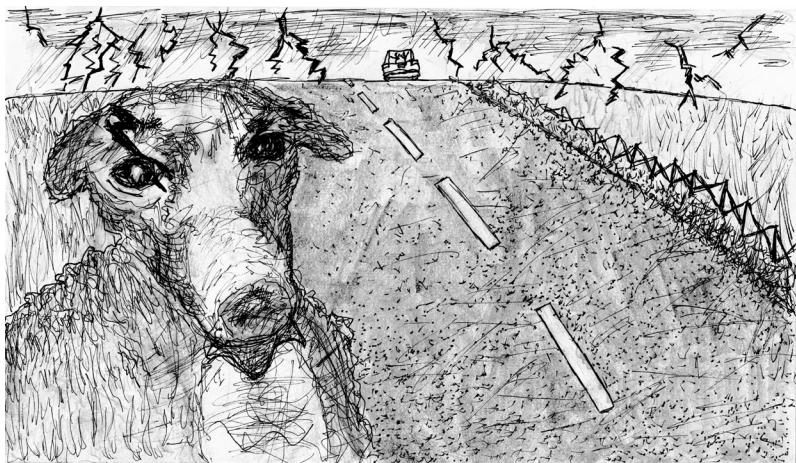
Lost and Found

c. 2000
near Pueblo, Colorado, USA

My name was “Misty,” but now it’s “Ginny.” I am a twelve-year-old black lab. When it happened, I thought I would never have a family again. But I am getting ahead of myself. Let me start at the beginning.

It was a warm summer day with a cool breeze from the east. The smells of maple and pollen mixed into a harmony in the air. My people called my name to go into the car. I jumped in eagerly, hoping they’d take me to the lake! Instead they took me to a hillside. Still hoping we’d play ball, I jumped out, and the door closed. As the car drove away, I sat—scared and confused. I was lost.

After *hours*, I got up and left to find food and water. My secret stash of water was a lake not far from where they left me. There were plenty of rabbits, mice, and rats



Joshua C. Bowman

that I could feed myself for weeks. One day when I was walking around, I came upon a peculiar structure. There was a tall stick which had strange strings that looked very poky. I ran up to the peculiar structure and barked at it. It did not move. It smelled metallic. I ran closer. The smell made me feel threatened, and I snapped at it. I bit down on what I thought to be string. Seconds after I bit it, it bit me back! The roaring pain exploded from my mouth to the bottom of my legs. I tried to pull away, but I couldn't. I was stuck.

I'm not sure how much time passed, but it felt like forever. I saw a white truck with many different pictures on it. It was an animal control truck. As soon as the man saw me with my tongue stuck on the barbed wire, he got his tools, released me, and put me in his truck. I felt happy and scared—it wasn't a good mix. I was scared because the truck smelled like other animals, but I was so happy to be with a person again!

We arrived at a small building. The people looked very serious, and looked at me with sadness in their eyes. "We can't treat her. It's infected. We'll have to put her down," said one of the employees.

"But she's so sweet. Let me make a phone call," pleaded another.

Two days later a woman who smelled of dog treats walked into the room and looked straight at me. She said, "Everything's going to be okay. You're coming with me now. You are rescued." She took me to the dog doctor, who removed a bit of my tongue to fix the infection. I lived with the woman, her dog, and her family for several months.

Later that fall she took me to a little house in Broomfield, Colorado. The door opened, and there were a mom, a dad, and two kids. It was love at first sight. I was finally found.

Lucy Sherman, younger “sibling” of Ginny
Colorado, USA

Illustrators of Volume 9

- [cover](#) Luke Allen; Missouri, USA
- [p. 24](#) Madison Nowotny; Missouri, USA
- [p. 29](#) Regan Carpenter; Missouri, USA
- [p. 32](#) Abigail Ruckman; Missouri, USA
- [p. 39](#) Alyssa Cannon; Missouri, USA
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- [p. 76](#) Teagan LeVar; Missouri, USA
- [p. 81](#) Christian Bigler; Missouri, USA
- [p. 93](#) Joshua C. Bowman; Missouri, USA

Grannie Annie Storykeepers 2014

Congratulations to the following young people for discovering, writing, sharing, and submitting a story from their family's history!

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Zeeshan Ahmed • Mary Allen • Tierra Allen • Shira Aminov
Perela Amsel • Molly Andersen • Mason Andrasko
Patrick Andrews • Savannah Arnold • Hudson Grace Atkinson
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Tehila-Chen Davidov • Jefferson "Jake" Davis • Colin Davitt
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Robert Zimmermann • Alexander Zinn • Zack Zoellner

Invitation to Participate

Please join us for the 2014/2015 Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration. The submission deadline for *Grannie Annie, Vol. 10*, is February 1, 2015. Complete [details](#), including the required submission form, are available at www.TheGrannieAnnie.org.

Praise for The Grannie Annie

When I showed my student his illustration in the book, the whole class gave him an ovation. Thanks so very much for providing him with this opportunity to succeed.

Clayvon Wesley, Teacher; Missouri, USA

The thrill of holding a book with my story in it is a feeling that can never be matched.

Aaron Schnoor, Author, *Grannie Annie*, Vols. 5, 6, and 7;
Grannie Annie Selection Committee, 2014; North Carolina, USA

Publication of our daughter's story is special to us for so many reasons. . . . Both my mother and grandmother passed away a few years ago. Growing up, I heard this story countless times from my grandmother. It's wonderful seeing that story told through my daughter's words.

Andrea Rominger, Parent; Alabama, USA

My students were so excited to write their family stories! Since the stories were written during our immigration unit, the students had even more reason to ask their families questions. The stories really enriched our classroom discussions and helped the students to connect to the concepts being taught.

Amy Del Coro, Teacher; New Jersey, USA

Since my mother died recently, I have been cleaning out her house and going through her things and wondering, *Who made this quilt? Who's in this old photo?* Trying to remember the family stories that she told me has really driven home the need to preserve family history. It is so wonderful that *The Grannie Annie* encourages this continuity of memories.

Beverly Miller, Teacher; Alabama, USA

This book should be on the bookshelves in all elementary and junior high schools.

The Reading Tub™, www.TheReadingTub.com

The Grannie Annie provides the perfect opportunity for students to start asking questions about their families' past—not just the facts, but the stories. Then as they write, students begin to understand how *telling a story* differs from *writing a biography of facts*.

Mark Futrell, Teacher; North Carolina, USA

Year after year, my fifth-grade students are eager and excited to submit their work to The Grannie Annie. The experience of submitting a manuscript—with the hope of publishing—gives newfound meaning to their learning. The students stand taller when they become cognizant that the world is benefiting from their contribution.

Rebecca Friedman, Teacher; Maryland, USA

Orion's writing a family story was extremely important to his grandmother, who had a serious illness. When he called her to tell her that his story was going to be published, she was as happy as anyone had seen her in months. She read the story to anyone who would listen. I can't even begin to tell you the positive impact that this has had on our family.

Andrew Jones, Parent; Pennsylvania, USA

I would like to thank you for giving Yifu such an encouragement, and working diligently to publish his first article! Our families in China are very happy to hear about this. It is an amazing experience to me that I witness that a part of my family heritage is being connected from my father to my son through the event you support! Thank you!

Yuxing Feng, Parent; Missouri, USA

Writing for *The Grannie Annie* helps my students feel confident as writers, which in turn provides their imaginations with a comfortable setting in which to create.

Katelin Moquin, Teacher; Missouri, USA

The Grannie Annie challenged my students to go beyond their comfort zone, to write for a broader audience, and to see that learning goes beyond the four walls of a classroom.

Ann-Marie Harris, Teacher; Maryland, USA

The Grannie Annie is a good start for kids to get published. And I love the way *The Grannie Annie* helps people understand their family history. It also helps children get closer to their families.

Andrew Malphurs, Author of the *Grannie Annie*, Vol. 5, story “Grandpa’s Saddle”; Georgia, USA

Since first becoming involved with *The Grannie Annie*, we look forward every year to the truly unique and heartwarming stories each student brings to the classroom.

Brian Billings and Laura Amburgey, Teachers; Ohio, USA

Stories connect people in families and communities, giving them a common language and understanding of the present as well as the past. Through *The Grannie Annie*, generations connect as students take time to listen to the stories of their older relatives—and learn from them. Then, as the students write and share their stories, the connections multiply.

Amy Glaser Gage; Children’s author, writing teacher, and consultant to *The Grannie Annie*

As I’m sure is the objective of *The Grannie Annie*, this was a lovely experience, and now memory, for Andrew and his grandpa.

Susan Barton Malphurs, Parent; Georgia, USA

The Grannie Annie is remarkable in its goals and in its approach. Recording and sharing the stories of preceding generations goes to the heart of education—it teaches us who we are as family members, citizens, and members of human civilization.

Matthew Lary, Co-author of *Victory Through Valor: A Collection of World War II Memoirs*

The Grannie Annie is all about connection. As it hearkens back to the original Grannie Annie, it continues her tradition of oral storytelling to link generations and cultures. Grannie Annie family stories written by young people illuminate a long span of history, often revealing family values honed from adversity or triumph and tempered by humor and love.

Janet Grace Riehl, Author of *Sightlines: A Family Love Story in Poetry & Music*

Perhaps the greatest value of the Grannie Annie stories is something not written in the book. When a child interviews an older relative, the child gets to know a person he or she may have taken for granted. The relative gets to tell a story that might have been lost. A bond is created or strengthened. A story is recorded for posterity. New memories are woven, and—just maybe—a writer is born.

Lulu Delacre, Author/illustrator of *Salsa Stories*

My son “harvested” several stories from my father, including one that appeared in *Grannie Annie, Vol. 1*. My father has since passed away, and I am forever grateful that my son recorded these stories before it was too late. I doubt he would have done so if it had not been for The Grannie Annie.

Karen Metcalf, Parent; Tennessee, USA

It is a privilege to be a part of The Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration. This wonderful anthology helps to shape our children’s identity by providing them with the opportunity to understand and value their ancestry.

Jodi J. De Luca, Ph.D., Parent; Florida, USA

When kids learn details about what life was like decades ago, the past comes alive for them. History becomes real—and they want to know more! The Grannie Annie provides an opportunity for kids to be inspired by their own family’s history.

Florrie Binford Kichler, Patria Press, www.PatriaPress.com

Although most students in our Eastern European village live next door to family members from earlier generations, The Grannie Annie prompted them to talk with their grandparents in new ways—and to discover the customs and challenges of times past. In addition, stories from the Grannie Annie books have given my students a glimpse of the world outside their village, where differences may abound but the underlying human condition remains the same.

Martin Ellinger-Locke, Peace Corps volunteer in Glodeni, Moldova

Thank you for starting such a heartwarming project where *all* the kids are winners, whether their stories are published or not.

G-g Metzger, Teacher; Texas, USA

Our son’s *oma* is overwhelmed that her “story” is in print in *Grannie Annie*. . . . Every family member and family friend has a signed copy.

Karie Millard, Parent; Indiana, USA

Taking time away from your technology-filled life to join in The Grannie Annie is like trading fast food for Sunday dinner at Grandma’s.

Debra K. Shatoff, Ed.D., Family therapist and author of *In-Home Child Care: A Step-by-Step Guide to Quality, Affordable Care*

Teachers and parents, if you want to motivate students to love writing, ask them to write for The Grannie Annie.

Bonnie M. Davis, Ph.D., Author of *How to Teach Students Who Don’t Look Like You: Culturally Relevant Teaching Strategies*

Grannie Annie Order Form

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and can be sent by fax (toll free) to 888-641-5353.



The Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration

Young People Learning and Sharing Family Stories

The Grannie Annie invites students everywhere to discover and share stories from their family's history, and publishes collections of their work. The Grannie Annie experience leads young people to strengthen family and community bonds, encounter history in a personal way, and polish their writing skills.

“When I showed my student his illustration in the book, the whole class gave him an ovation. Thanks so very much for providing him with this opportunity to succeed.”

—Clayvon Wesley, Teacher; Missouri, USA

“The thrill of holding a book with my story in it is a feeling that can never be matched.”

—Aaron Schnoor, Author, *Grannie Annie, Vols. 5, 6, and 7*;
Grannie Annie Selection Committee, 2014; North Carolina, USA

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—Andrea Rominger, Parent; Alabama, USA

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