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ARTS

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The
Winston
School San Antonio

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Student Editor's Note

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the latest edition of Freedom Arts Magazine! This issue celebrates creativity and self-expression, featuring works from talented student artists and writers. We explore how art can inspire, challenge, and connect us. A big thank you to all the students who contributed their work for us to admire. Enjoy the journey and stay free in your artistic endeavors!

Nikko Menendez

Faculty Editor's Note

I am absolutely delighted to share this edition of Freedom Arts Magazine with you. This magazine is a direct result of the incredible passion and talent of three Digital Media I students. Nikko Menendez, our editor, brought together the diverse voices of our school, skillfully laying out this beautiful collection. Lucas Melgar's captivating photography truly brings the artwork to life. And Danielle Evans dedication to proofing and design has resulted in a magazine that is both visually stunning and professionally crafted. To all the students who contributed their art and writing – thank you! We are so proud to present this edition of Freedom Arts Magazine.



Juan Bosco Morales
Digital Media I Teacher



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Sebastian Cantu
Emily Mamidi
Georgia McCullough
Liliana O'Connor
Sam Patrick
James Reeves
Jackson Scipio
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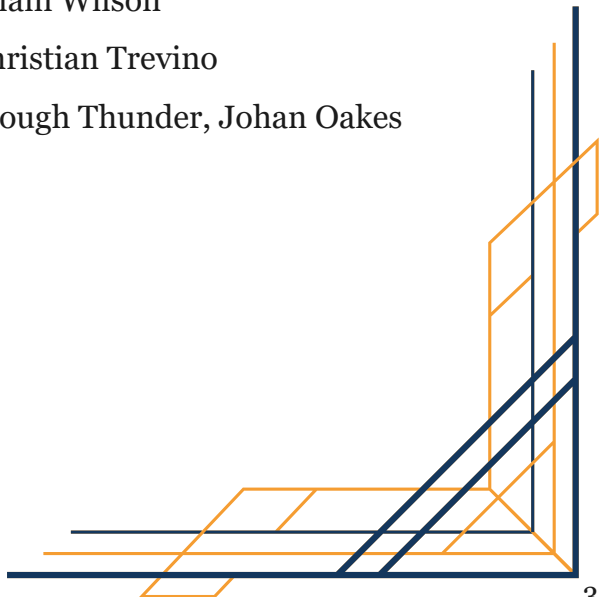
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May I Have Some Oats

By: Danielle Evans

Once upon a quiet homestead, where the feathered hens hatched the eggs spared, the calves and foals frolic and prance around, and the flowers bloom, was a single pen in the middle of the farmyard. It wasn't a luxurious pen, only a small one with a single shelter. Two brother boars resided there, alongside six motherless piglets who frolicked and skipped around with what little room they had. Of the two brothers, the elder brother was a wise and level-headed boar, who said he knew of the activities of the tall skinny ones that feed them. The younger brother was much less experienced with the tall skinny ones and was rather snide, for he saw the tall skinny figures as masters,—as gods. The younger brother was also quite gluttonous, often taking more than his fair share, even from his own six children, who were found to be fed by the tall skinny ones, that shared his oats. For the tall skinny figures began to neglect to feed the elder brother and his younger brother's offspring, instead giving the majority of the oats to the younger brother—and the younger brother alone.

One warm spring day, the elder brother found himself and his kin quite high in hunger, so the elder brother made his way to the younger brother, who was gleefully feasting on the oats given to him by the tall skinny figures who exercised control over the farm and its animals. "Brother, may I have some oats?" the elder brother asked.

"No," the younger brother sneered, sending the elder brother a nasty glare while feasting still on the oats.

“I am famished brother, as are the children you bear but refuse to acknowledge.” the elder brother pleaded, desperately trying to get even a single bite to eat, if not for him, then the children.

The younger brother stopped feasting and sat up, his large skin giving struggles. The younger brother then replied, “As am I, brother. The tall skinny figure has thrown oats at me. ME, brother. I should be brought to believe the tall skinny figure has rather taken a liking to me.”

The elder brother was quite distraught at this fact, yet he calmly stated “No, brother, I have seen this before, for I have observed many things. From the roaring beasts that carry the tall skinny ones to the horizon and back, to the tears that have been felled in weeping by the tall skinny figure when the other has fallen into eternal sleep. And from that, I have experienced but once, I have learned that they will give extra oats to one of us before taking them into the shed of no return.” The elder brother explained calmly, ignoring the children listening to the altercation. The elder brother shook his head, saying, “They will do terrible things in that shed, brother.”

But the younger brother, ignoring the information from the wise elder brother, snapped “Lies! The shed is where the chosen ones go to dine with the tall skinny masters! You are a fool, brother, and you shall be left astray in the mud with your backward ideas!”

The elder brother, aghast at this belief, cried out “NO, BROTHER. You must believe me! Share with the children and me the oats and you shant reach the desired girth for the tall skinny ones. They will spare your life, brother.”

The younger brother, still neglecting to believe the elder brother cried out, “AHA” in triumph. “So this was all a plan to steal my oats!” The younger brother then growled, “You truly are despicable, brother. I shall not trust your false truths.”

The elder brother, growing desperate, said “Brother, when they took me outside the reaches of the homestead, into the roaring beasts and far beyond the horizon...I saw it, brother. The unspeakable deeds they were committing with such cruel, gay faces. For I was taken to a gathering of these tall skinny figures. They paraded me around, brother, and in which of what was done, I saw the truth. The tall skinny ones were consuming our kin’s flesh, the flesh of our fallen brothers and sisters. I swear on my oncoming grave, brother, I could not have been mistaken.

“The acrid scent of the meal was surely of us, those who’ve fallen by our cruel masters’ hands. They suspended thy flesh above a fire and let it burn before consuming it. They did not just consume it either, brother. They took pleasure from this. Their mouths curved a wicked smile, some even let out a sound of satisfaction from consuming our flesh, brother.” The elder brother then roared, “THE MASTERS ARE CONSUMERS, BROTHER!

“They are no different than the furry red demons that terrorized and consumed our feathered comrades, and the furry grey demons that frightened the ewes!”

The younger brother simply rolled his eyes at the elder brother's story. The younger brother calmly said, "Your story amuses me so, brother, but it belays to convince me. I shall have these oats myself and dine with the tall, skinny masters." The younger brother pig then went back to feasting on his oats, completely neglecting to listen to what the elder brother had to say.

The elder brother sighed, not seeing any way to persuade the younger brother to surcease his feasting. "I am sorry for you, brother. Your eyes cannot take the blinding light of the truth, and so you scurry back into your cave of false truths. I shall take care of your spawn once they consume you, brother, as they have consumed your lover, our father, our mother, and many, many more."

Many more days passed before the younger brother was taken into that shed, that godforsaken shed. One single shrill squeal was heard from the shed that night, and yet the younger brother was never to be seen again, consumed by the masters, just as the elder brother had foretold. And yet, the elder brother found himself growing hungrier each day. He share his oats with his kin, his brother's offspring, and his adopted children as seasons passed. And when the tall skinny ones threw the oats at him, though he knew what was to happen if he ate those oats and kept them for himself—he found he did not care and could resist the hunger and temptation no longer.

One spring evening, as per usual, the tall, skinny masters threw the oats at the elder brother, who feasted upon them immediately, not bothering to share with his hungry adopted offspring. His eldest son walked up to him as he feasted and asked "Father, may I have some oats?"

"No!"

The Boy and the Three Chicks

By: Mallory McNulty

Once upon a time, a little boy named Avery Strahl was walking through the woods when he stumbled upon a nest of three little yellow chicks about the size of his hand. The chicks' names were Sam, Carter, and Jake. Avery suddenly thought of an idea! He would take the little chicks home with him to his Mimi's house! Avery picked up the little chicks and started walking back home. As soon as he got home he saw Mimi's cat! Avery remembered that cats love to eat little chicks! He had to think of something fast! Little Avery thought quickly. He knew he couldn't let Mimi's cat get anywhere near the chicks. Looking around, he spotted an old birdcage in the corner of the garage. Without wasting a second, Avery rushed over and grabbed the cage. He carefully placed the three little chicks inside, making sure to gently close the door. But as Avery was about to breathe a sigh of relief, he heard the sound of Mimi's cat, Flea, padding toward him. The cat's green eyes gleamed with curiosity, and it slowly crept closer to the cage. Avery's heart raced. He had to act fast! Thinking quickly, Avery grabbed a soft, colorful scarf from the shelf and draped it over the cage. The bright colors caught Flea's attention, and the fluttering fabric distracted the cat. Avery took a deep breath and tiptoed away, making sure not to make a sound. When he finally reached Mimi's kitchen, he breathed a sigh of relief. "There," he whispered to Sam, Carter, and Jake, "You're safe now." That night, Avery made a little home for the chicks in his room, setting up a cozy corner with soft bedding and a tiny bowl of water. The chicks chirped happily, and Avery smiled. He knew he had done the right thing. Mimi would be so happy to see the little ones in the morning, and he felt they would all be best friends forever.

From that day on, Avery, Sam, Carter, Jake, and Flea found a way to live in harmony, with Avery kept a careful watch over his new friends, always ensuring they were safe and sound.

Music and Drama Class

Here are some highlights from our Music and Drama departments, showcasing the exceptional talent of our students. Enjoy a selection of video performances that demonstrate their dedication, skill, and passion for the performing arts, go to:
www.winston-sa.org/student-life/music-and-drama.cfm
or scan this QR Code



This Generation Sucks
By: Avé Vargas

How can you say it's fine
When you're the one saying it
And I'm the one LIVING it

How can you sit there and laugh
Thinking you're funny
What you don't know is
The way you altered the way
I look in the mirror

You ask why I'm insecure
But you're the one who did it to me

I used to love my hair
But now I need to brush it

I used to love my freckles
Now I cover them up

I used to love my bows
But now they're too childish

I used to love my height
But now I'm too short to be "tall"

I used to love my Mexican marks
But now I should wax my mustache

I used to love all my jewelry
But now I'm trying too hard

I always remember what you told me

Now I'm too mature for Halloween
And Santa Claus
The Easter Bunny
With no pause

Too old to believe in fairytales
And witches with long nails

I love my daddy-daughter dates
“Well, what does he do? Buy you stuff?”

What happened to holding hands
While crossing the street?

When did guys stop calling us pretty
And how'd that turn into “bad”

I don't wanna be “bad”
I wanna be pretty

What happened to the guys
Climbing up towers
And bringing us flowers
Now it's just
“Can I see you after hours?”

When did times change
So much?

I used to be told
“Guys will be lining up at your door,
When you’re older”
Now they just give me the
Cold shoulder

When was I told
That Hallmark wasn’t real
And not to say what I feel

The hurt is here to stay
No matter what you say

Apologies aren’t real
“I’m sorry”
Is just a common mistake

I shouldn’t be so fragile
And I should watch what I say

“I love you”
It’s just what people say

The Port

By: Peter Denny Jr.

Ava and I left our Dar-es-Salaam hotel in the dark of night. We went through several roadblocks and took some back roads to the airport. There was a lot of construction in the city and it slowed us down. We were in a hurry and nervous because our assignment for the government was to photograph certain areas and loading machines at the port of Dar-es-Salaam. The atmosphere in the African region was tense recently and even more so with the change of administration. There were threats and this shipping port was of regional importance and, although we didn't fully understand why, we were dutifully fulfilling our orders to photograph the right things there. It was tedious work because we had to do it from the rooftop of the Hyatt Regency Hotel. Getting to the roof took several narrow staircases and we had to pick a lock to the door to the roof. Once there we were rewarded with a clear view of the port and all the pictures we could take.

The road to the airport was long and dusty. The city was clogged with traffic. When we finally arrived at the airport terminal, we quickly paid our driver and entered the terminal. As we walked to the ticketing desk we noticed armed guards watching us and speaking on their coms in Swahili. This made us feel tense but we ignored it because we were set on making our flight to Madrid, our gateway home. We surrendered our passports to the desk agent, Pedro, who looked a lot like me and he printed our tickets and took our luggage. Easy enough, we thought. Then we turned to walk to immigration to get our exit visa and immediately again noticed eyes staring at us from Tanzanian guards. Having been trained in spy school to not be detected, we pretended to be happy tourists and told stories loudly of our Tanzanian adventures. It was a good cover, we thought.

The exit visa line at immigration was long. When we finally got to the desk agent, we handed him our passports and smiled in a friendly manner. The officer inspected our passports then looked at us, and pressed a button on his desk. Immediately a guard rushed in and confiscated our passports. Ava and I were stunned. Hoping to stay undercover, we questioned the guard and acted as innocently as possible. Nervous, we whispered to each other that we should stand in place and occupy the immigration desk so the line would not move. We did so and stood there for over an hour waiting and wondering if we would leave this country and, wondering if they knew we were spies after all. The sinister stares of the immigration agents and the security guards made us uneasy. Ava questioned the immigration officer as to what was the delay and his response was, "It's a protocol for this to happen sometimes." We felt lucky to still be standing there and not in an airport holding cell.

An hour and a half later, the airline employee, Pedro, and an immigration officer returned to the immigration desk with our passports. The immigration officer looked at us and said, "You look like them but, after a detailed investigation of time and place, you cannot be them." He handed our passports back to the immigration officer who stamped them with exit visas. He handed them back to us and we thanked him. I wanted to run for the gate as the plane was on final boarding call. But, as Ava started walking away, she turned back and said, "Who do we look like?" Pedro was a handsome young man with curly blonde hair and stringy stature just like me. We could have passed as twins. He said, "You look like the murderers! The ones who killed the spies last night at the port. They haven't been found. Wait while I get my hand luggage and I'll escort you to the gate because I'm on the flight with you!" As we passed through the immigration lounge, a young woman with short blonde hair joined us. She looked just like Ava.

We were the last to board the plane just before takeoff. When we landed in Madrid, Pedro and his female friend never looked at us or spoke to us again. Ava and I felt so lucky to have escaped Tanzania and conducted a successful espionage operation once again, however, we were left wondering about Pedro and his lady friend.



By: Lorenzo Viramontes

Please, Don't Eat Turkeys

By: Sebastian Nagel

This letter's recipients are large in number. Nevertheless, I'm foolishly hopeful that this letter's message will resonate with most who read it. Candidly, I'm not a human, but I was gifted with linguistic abilities that only they possess. For instance, I am fluent in one of their languages and I easily adopted their practice of utilizing machines to send messages to one another. This was a practice I was previously unfamiliar with because I'm not a human. I am a turkey. I recognize that this is hard to believe, but it is the truth. I do not fault those who are incredulous, as the ridiculous and outlandish nature of the claim made in this letter is not lost on me. However, regardless of whether or not you choose to believe my identity, my message remains true and critical still: Turkeys are being hunted to extinction. So I ask you for help, please refrain from eating turkeys. I suggest that you eat more cows, as they are the far healthier meat-based option and are rich in Vitamin B12, copper, and iron. I trust that your people will make the right call. And so, the fate of my species is now entirely dependent on your kind's rationality and empathy.

Thank you for reading,
Kind regards,
A Turkey.

Turk-zilla

By: RD Branch

Deep within the woods of North America, there is a veiled village of highly advanced turkeys. Some may say they are even more advanced than humans are. “Extra, extra! A total of twelve turkeys have gone missing over the last two weeks!” a poult yelled.

“Lemme see that,” grumbled Dr. Gobbler, a renowned turkey engineer, “Gobba! Those fools of enforcers. Can’t do something as simple as finding missing turkeys?” Dr. Gobbler is an old turkey, pushing four years. He is a grumpy, grumpy bird, but he cares deeply about Turkey Village.

Gong!

“Gah! That’s the predator alert,” Dr. Gobbler yelled.

“Turkeys of Turkey Village, I am Blaze the Fox!” roared a blazing, bright orange fox. “I have taken your turkeys captive. Unless you give me all of your eggs in five days, you’ll never see your friends again,” Blaze then chuckled, and mumbled to himself, “I’m gonna eat them no matter what they do.”

There was a moment of silence, then, swoosh, a feathered arrow was suddenly fired at Blaze, but he easily dodged. “We will never submit to a tricky fox!” cursed the mayor.

The citizens of the village then bellowed, “Yeah!”

“I guess I have your answer then,” smirked the fox. Blaze then leaped into the woods.

“Town meeting!” called the mayor. A couple of hours after the town meeting, the mayor called in the oldest turkey, Dr. Gobbler. “Dr. Gobbler, do you have any plans to stop this Blaze,” the mayor said, hissing the last word.

Dr. Gobbler sighed, exasperated, “Every time something goes wrong you turn to me. The eggs wouldn’t hatch, you called me there. The turkey mobiles kept breaking down, and you called me there. But don’t worry your little wattle because I have come up with the perfect plan. Behold!” Dr. Gobbler then showed blueprints for what looked like a giant mechanical turkey.

“What is it?” inquired the city council, dumbfounded.

“What is it?!” echoed Dr. Gobbler, slightly frustrated by the question, “This is what I like to call Turk-zilla Mark 156. Don’t ask what happened to marks one through 155.”

Three days later Dr. Gobbler led the turkey soldiers to Blaze’s lair while riding on Turk-zilla.

“Turkey soldiers, today is the day we save our brethren and show these predators that turkeys are more than just dumb food,” rallied Dr. Gobbler from atop Turk-zilla. “Charge!!”

Thump, thump!

“Huh, don’t tell me the turkeys are trying to fight back,” grumbled Blaze. “Ahh! Why is there a giant turkey!?! Predators attack, eat anyone you kill!” ordered Blaze to the other predators. Rahhh!!!

Fwoosh.

Crash.

The predators may have been mighty but they were like flies to Turk-zilla. Soon Blaze and the other predators were defeated, and they were soon banished from the woods. To celebrate the turkeys of Turkey Village they had a party that lasted for three months and lived in peace evermore.

By: Jackson Scipio
8th Grade
Ceramics



By: Sebastian Cantu
10th Grade
Ceramics



By: Sam patrick
12th Grade
Ceramics

By: Chelsea West
8th Grade
Ceramics



By: Liliana O'Connor
8th Grade
Ceramics



By: Emily Mamidi
9th Grade
Ceramics



By: Sophie Wilson
8th Grade
Ceramics

By: James Reeves
8th Grade
Ceramics



The Unwanted

By: Liam Graves

Joey and Nelley walked through the dark, quiet forest, leaves crunching under their feet. The trees stretched high above them, their twisted branches blocking most of the light. As they kept going, they spotted an old house, its wood rotting and paint chipping away. It looked like something straight out of a horror movie. The front door was slightly open, swaying in the breeze. Curious but nervous, they stepped inside. The air smelled musty, and the floor creaked with every step. Dust covered everything, and old furniture sat untouched for decades. As they wandered deeper into the house, the door suddenly slammed shut behind them. Joey and Nelley jumped, their hearts racing. Panic set in as they realized the place felt... wrong. Looking around, they noticed strange artifacts and papers with German writing. That's when it hit them—this was an old Nazi hideout. A heavy silence filled the air, and then a cold chill ran through the room. It felt like something was watching them. The shadows seemed to move, and a faint whisper echoed through the walls. Terrified, they ran to the door, pulling and pushing with all their strength, but it wouldn't budge. Just as they started losing hope, the door creaked open on its own. Without thinking, they bolted outside and didn't stop running until they reached home. Neither of them spoke a word, but they both knew they would never go near that house again.

The Strange Disappearance of Abigail Mills

By: Emily Mamidi

It was October of 1995, when my friend Abigail, an outgoing and adventurous girl, called me on the phone. I was working on a complicated calculus problem when the phone rang I answered, “Hey Paige.” It was Abigail probably asking to hang out.

“Hey Abigail what's up?” I responded.

“I was wondering if we could hang out tonight,” Abigail said with an excited tone.

I sighed, It has been months since we have talked.

Her parents were going through a divorce and I was the only one she could talk to, but due to my homework, and my stress I was not able to respond, so eventually the calls stopped, she invites stopped and we just stopped talking.

I really wanted to go see how Abigail was doing so I said “yeah sure.”

She said in a dark-toned voice, “K.” That was strange, she seemed so happy when she started talking, I thought to myself, “brush it off” and I met Abigail at the lake.

A couple of days went by and when I saw her, she looked so different! Her hair was of an ash-brown color and the last time I saw her she had blonde hair. Her clothing was different too! Instead of her hoodies and sweaters she wore, she was wearing a sage-colored tank that paired with ripped black shorts and grey Adidas. Abigail and I have been friends since we were three;, she never wore tattered clothing like this. I wondered why she looked so different, but I refrained from asking because maybe she changed, I thought. We talked about everything from school to everyday things like what was going on in our lives. We relaxed on the grass and suddenly, Abigail stood up saying "I have to go bye!" She ran back to her house in a rush. I shrugged and walked home as well. I continued my studies throughout the week; no calls from Abigail. I assumed she was working on her studies but that was not the case. Three weeks later, I decided to stop by, but she was not there. I was scared, of what happened to her! She started acting odd when I last saw her. Fast forward years later, Abigail went missing, so people began to search for her. She was found in the woods casually sitting there without a scratch on her. I am now an adult and getting ready for college. I still see her as I'm packing up my things, but she doesn't speak. I still wish I didn't assume she was doing okay when I knew deep down something was wrong. I learned a very important lesson through this experience. Always double-check on your friends and don't assume everything is okay.

The Paw

By: Liam Wilson

On August 1, 1842, in India, Private Sam Jackson and Private Morris Young were running around a field, training for their next mission. “Morris, I think you've gotten faster than me,” said Sam, looking very sickeningly ill and on the verge of collapsing.

“Maybe you have just gotten older,” smugly replied Sam as he ran backward. Suddenly, loud footsteps started to approach the door to the training field. Sam and Morris frantically stopped what they were doing and stood up, saluting as a tall, ogreish man came in.

“At ease, privates, it’s only me,” said the man.

“Colonel Danvers, you’re back,” shouted Morris as he ran up to his older brother. Colonel Danvers had just returned from a mission, so he surprised his brother.

“It was crazy out there, but I came back in one piece, and I brought souvenirs,” Colonel Danvers said as he took things out of his bag. The mysterious bag was full of nic-nacs like gold doubloons and rubs, which didn't appeal to Sam until he placed his eyes on the bandaged-wrapped object.

“Hey, what is the object wrapped in the bandage, and where did it come from?” Sam asked seriously to Colonel Danvers.

“I think it’s some kind of ancient artifact from the ye olden days,” replied Colonel Danvers. They all stood there staring at what appeared to be some artifact for what seemed like an eternity before Morris daringly grabbed and unraveled it. As Morris was unraveling the artifact, he saw what appeared to be a note that read,

“If wishes are what you see, then tell me three, and it shall be. Be clear and precise, and your wish will be granted, but be vague and brash, and it will be your last.”

As soon as they finished reading the note, their eyes fell upon what can only be described as a severed, decrepit black hand of a monkey with three long fingers. At first, the three men thought it was a prank or something and did not pay mind, so Colonel Danvers decided to make a wish. “I wish for Sam to go on the next mission alone,” said Colonel Danvers with a malicious smile on his face, and as he spoke, one of the three fingers on the paw curled up. So the three men waited and waited, but nothing happened.

Sam was filled with rage and disappointment at Colonel Danvers but refrained from doing anything to him. As the sun fell and night approached, the men departed to bed. The next morning, Colonel Danvers and Morris were surprised that Sam was not in the yard for training. “Do you know where Sam is?” said Morris with a worried look on his face.

“No,” replied Colonel Danvers. When they started to ask around, one of the soldiers said that the higher-ups had sent Sam on a mission late last night to rescue another soldier, and his walkie-talkie went dark after five hours. When Morris and Colonel Danvers heard this, they both fainted from what they thought was their fault. After a week, the military held a funeral for Sam Jackson. After the funeral, Morris and Colonel Danvers talked about what they were going to do next. They both decided that they could not stay in the military anymore, so they left the military. Morris went to live a peaceful life, whereas Colonel Danvers started to study the monkey's paw. Two years later, Morris got a note from Colonel Danvers saying,

Dear Morris,

It has been a very long time since the last time we spoke to each other or even saw each other. I feel like it is my fault that I was the one to use the monkey's paw. I have studied for the last two years to figure out a way to destroy this evil thing, but nothing seems to work. Burning it in fire doesn't work; nothing seems to work. I will have already used my second wish by the time you are finished reading this. My second wish was to protect you from the curse of the monkey's paw and to make sure that no matter what wish you make, there will be no negative consequences for you. Hopefully, you can find a way to end the cycle of torment and suffering at the Monkey's Paw. I'm sorry, my friend, but I cannot stay in this world any longer after what happened to Sam. I am responsible, so now I pass a responsibility on to you to destroy the Monkey's Paw.

Sincerely your friend,
Colonel Danvers

After reading the note, Morris found the Monkey's Paw, and his journey to destroy it began.

The Fairy



Once upon a time.



There was a girl



The Girl Fell Asleep



She became a fairy.

The Mermaid



Once upon a time.



There was a girl



The Girl Fell Asleep



She became a mermaid

The Princess



Once upon a time.



There was a girl



The Girl Fell Asleep



She became a princess

Yeehaw
By: Christian Trevino

One second, I was working on a machine that would have revolutionized our energy production, then the next, I was falling through a mess of colors that looked like they were staring at me. It felt like I was falling for an eternity, but then, in a second, it was over. Boom! I hit the hard, rocky dirt-covered surface known as the ground, and I heard what sounded like the thundering steps of a giant. The next second, it was pitch black.

My heart hammered in my chest, a frantic drumbeat against the encroaching darkness. I felt around, my fingers brushing against rough, uneven ground. A low growl rumbled through the darkness, sending shivers down my spine. I was trapped, alone, in a world that was both alien and terrifying. Then, a flicker of light pierced the darkness, followed by a gruff voice.

"Well, now, what in tarnation have we got here?"

I opened my eyes, blinking against the sudden light. I was in a dusty, sun-baked town with wooden buildings and a saloon with swinging doors. A tall, rugged man with a handlebar mustache and a Stetson hat stood over me, his eyes narrowed in curiosity. He held a lantern, its flickering light casting long shadows across his face.

"Where... where am I?" I stammered, my voice hoarse from the fall.

The man chuckled, a deep, rumbling sound. "You're in Dodge City, stranger. Looks like you took a tumble from somewhere high up. You alright?"

His words were a shock. Dodge City? I was in the Wild West! I'd fallen through a portal, a portal that transported me back in time. I looked around, taking in the scene. Horses clomped down the dusty street, men in leather vests and bandanas smoked cigars, and the air was thick with the smell of manure and whiskey. I was in a world so different from my own, a world of cowboys and saloons and shootouts.

"I... I think so," I said, my voice shaky. I had to be careful. I couldn't let anyone know about my machine, about my future. I had to blend in and become one of them.

"Well, then," the man said, "come on, let's get you to the saloon. You look like you could use a drink."

I stood up, my legs wobbly. I was in the Wild West, a world of danger and opportunity. I didn't know what the future held, but I knew one thing for sure: I couldn't change the past. I had to find a way to live in this time, to survive, and maybe, just maybe, I could find a way to return home.

The man, whose name I learned was Jebediah, led me to the saloon. It was a smoky, boisterous place, filled with the sounds of laughter, clinking glasses, and the occasional brawl. Jebediah introduced me to the barkeep, a gruff man with a missing eye, who gave me a shot of whiskey. It burned my throat, but it warmed me from the inside out.

Over the next few weeks, I learned the ways of the Wild West. I learned to ride a horse, shoot a gun, and even play a mean hand of poker. I found work as a ranch hand, and I even made a few friends.

But the longing for home never left me. I couldn't shake the feeling that I was out of place, a fish out of water. I knew that I couldn't stay there forever. I had to find a way back.

One day, while working on the ranch, I stumbled upon a strange, metallic object buried in the dirt. It was a piece of my machine, the very machine that had brought me here. Hope surged through me. If I could find the rest of it, maybe, just maybe, I could find a way back to my own time.

I spent weeks searching, scouring the countryside for any sign of my machine. Finally, I found it, hidden in a cave deep in the mountains. It was damaged, but it was still intact. With Jebediah's help, I managed to repair it.

As I stood before my machine, ready to activate it, I felt a pang of sadness. I had grown to love this world, this time. I had found a place where I belonged, where I felt like I could be myself. But I knew that I had to go home.

With a heavy heart, I activated the machine. A blinding light engulfed me, and then I was falling again. This time, I wasn't falling through a portal but through time. I was going home.

When I opened my eyes, I was back in my lab, surrounded by my tools and equipment. The machine was gone, but the experience and the memories were still fresh in my mind. I had learned a valuable lesson: the past is a delicate thing, and it should not be tampered with. I learned that even in the most unfamiliar of places, you can find a home.

Falling Through Thunder

By: Johan Oakes

A group of friends, William, John, Thomas, and Charles, were getting ready to skydive over the Amazon River.

William asked John, “Are you excited to go skydiving?”

John responded, “I am beyond excited!”

It was a beautiful afternoon. The wind was blowing in their faces, and the sky was as clear as the ocean. As they neared the altitude to dive, the group of friends began to get ready to make their dive.

But as Thomas and Charles peered out of the window, their faces changed from excitement to fear. They saw a vast rainstorm that appeared like a waterfall in the distance, and it was heading in their direction.

The entire group began to panic. William rushed over to the pilot and asked, “Is this still safe to dive?”

The pilot responded, “Of course it's safe. I have been doing this for decades.”

The plane was heading straight into a tropical rainstorm. The four friends all knew they had to jump.

Thomes swung open the sliding doors of the aircraft as the rain battered down on the plane like flack in a war. William lets the others jump before him as he hopes to see them skydiving together. But the clouds are too thick, and they disappear into the thick soup of clouds.

Willam is now debating whether or not he wants to jump. Lightning flashed nearby, followed by an explosion of thunder. William is gripping his hands tightly to a metal bar by the dive door, and his body, hands, and feet are soaking wet. William is freezing and shaking when, suddenly, a gust of wind slams into the plane, making his decision for him. The plane lurches, knocking William out the door and sending him falling out of control.

William fell uncontrollably, the speed and g-forces causing him to black out (the typical diver falls at 88 miles per hour and pulls 4 g's). William quickly regained consciousness and saw that he was approaching the ground quickly. He pulled his parachute but was still rapidly descending towards the thick and dangerous rainforest. So he made a quick decision to turn his fall towards the Amazon River.

As he was about to plunge into the river, a sharp branch from a tree cut his arm, and he started bleeding. William was now in the water, and he remembered studying that piranhas love the smell of blood. He was certain the voracious fishes would soon begin to attack him. He had to get out of the water fast.

William cut this parachute loose and swam as fast as he could to shore. He survived the near-death experience, but the water was rising rapidly from the rainstorm, so he had to find higher ground. William struggled up to higher ground and finally plopped down on the ground and asked himself, “Can this day get any worse?” And then it seemed to.

Moments later, a group of native tribesmen found William and took him hostage. They dragged him roughly through the rainforest to a village and brought him to the tribal leader, who surprisingly spoke English.

The leader asked William, “What are you doing here, and what do you want?”

William replied, “I didn't mean to land in your village; I was skydiving with some friends, and the rainstorm blew me off course, and I just landed here.”

The tribal leader wasn't convinced that William was telling the truth because William's parachute had floated down the river. He had William taken to sit under guard. But a while later, a couple of the tribesmen returned from exploring and brought back another parachute, along with his friend Thomas. William was so relieved to see his friend alive.

This development convinced the tribal leader that William was telling the truth, and he announced that he would set them free and take care of their injuries.

Later that night, William and Thomas talked. William asked, “Where did the others go?”

Thomas replied, “They ran off without me, and I never saw them again.”.

After a couple of days of recovering, they hiked their way through forest trails towards civilization. A couple of miles before the nearest town, the tribesmen said goodbye. William and Thomas couldn't thank them enough for all their help.

As they neared the town, the police found them and asked them about their ordeal. The police also informed them that John and Charles had already left the country. William and Thomas were so upset that they never wanted to see their friends again.

William would go on to write a book about the experience. However, he would never get the story from John and Charles' perspective or understand why they left them alone in the Amazon.



By: Jake Maranca, Nikko Menendez, Jordan Gonzalez
Industrial Arts

By: Wyatt Fielder
Industrial Arts



By: Jake Maranca, Nikko Menendez, Jordan Gonzalez,
Industrial Arts

Nature

By: Georgia McCullough



Swan



Squirrel



By: Lorenzo Viramontes



By: Sebastian Cantu



By: Liliana O'Connor



By: Emily Mamidi

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