

Jill and Sue Make a Cake

Jill likes to play with Sue. They like to run and jump. They like to ride bikes, too.

One day, they wanted to make a cake. Jill asked her mom if they could make a cake in her house. Jill's mom said no. She did not have time to help.

Jill and Sue went to Sue's house. Sue asked her mom if they could make a cake in her house. Sue's mom said yes.

Jill and Sue made a cake. Sue's mom helped. It was good.

Nick's Trip to the Lake

Nick and his dad like animals. One day, Nick and his dad went to the lake. They went to see the animals. They sat next to the lake. They were very still.

Then Nick saw a big duck. He saw the duck swim to a big rock in the lake. Something made the duck fly away fast.

Nick asked his dad, "Why did the duck fly away?"

Nick's dad said, "Look over there." He showed Nick something in the lake. Nick thought he would see something big.

What a surprise to see a little green frog!

Ben Helps his Mom

Ben was sad. He wanted to go to the park with the other children. But his mom said he had to stay home.

Ben's grandma was coming to see his family. He had to help clean the house.

Ben had to put away his toys. He had to make his bed. He had to move the chairs. Then Mom cleaned the floor.

Then he had to watch his baby brother while Mom baked a cake.

At last, Grandma's car was coming down the road! She got out of the car. She had a big box. Ben heard a noise. It came from the box. It sounded like a bark!

Danny Goes to Camp

Danny is very happy this morning! This is the first day of camp. Last year, Danny went to day camp. This year, he can spend nights at camp. He is going to stay a whole week, just like his brother.

Last night, Danny packed his clothes. This morning, he dressed and brushed his teeth. Then he went to the kitchen. Danny's dad gave him some eggs and toast. But Danny was too happy to eat!

Danny's dad drove him to camp. The trip seemed like it would take forever. Finally, they came to the camp. There were hundreds of boys and girls all dressed in blue shorts and yellow shirts. As soon as the car stopped, Danny saw his friend Joe. Joe told him they would be sleeping in the same tent. Danny knew this would be a great week!

Kay's Island Home

Kay lives on an island far out in the ocean. You may think that it would be fun to live on an island. But Kay is miserable. Kay hasn't seen her friends in a year. There is no one to play with or talk to. There isn't even a school!

Why has Kay's family chosen such a lonely life? Kay's parents study animals that only live in the harbor of this island. But Kay's dad knows how unhappy Kay is. He wants to do something to make her happy.

Kay's dad discovered a new kind of fish. It has bright orange fins and a blue tail. Dad named this unusual fish after Kay. He calls it the Kayfish. It hides in the seaweed. It only comes out in the morning and at dusk.

Kay's dad takes his underwater camera to the harbor every day. He hopes to capture the Kayfish on film. Maybe someday her dad will learn enough about the Kayfish. Then Kay can go back to her old school. Then she can see all her old friends again. Kay hopes that day will come soon.

Jessie, Champion Skater

More than anything, Jessie wants to be a champion skater! She can't remember a time she didn't want to skate or a time she didn't want to be the best.

Jessie began skating instruction when she was three years old. In her first ice show, she played the part of a ladybug. She still remembers her red and black spotted costume. Most of all, Jessie remembers the audience clapping their approval of her first performance.

Jessie doesn't have much time for ice shows anymore. Now she must practice jumps and turns. When Jessie was six, she started skating in contests for ages six to twelve. By the time she was eight, Jessie was the junior state champion. Now that she is thirteen, Jessie competes with adults. She is the state champion in ice skating.

Last week, a sports writer wrote an article about Jessie's performance. It said she was a "brilliant young athlete." It said her skating showed "confidence and grace." Jessie thought about the countless falls she had taken to make each jump look perfect. She didn't feel very graceful or confident!

Next week, Jessie will represent her state in a national meet. This will be the first time she has skated at this level. She hopes all her practice and hard work will pay off. Jessie hopes that her confidence and grace will help her win.

Ted's Camping Trip

Ted's family was taking one last camping trip before school started. They found the perfect campsite! It was just where a clear stream trickled into placid Green Lake. The surroundings were ideal. Ted and his brothers could swim to their hearts' content. They could row into hidden coves along the shore. It was a perfect place to fish or relax.

The first two days were great, with spectacular sunrises and adventurous days. The nights were cool and refreshing. Just before nightfall on the third day, a rainfall began. Everyone joked and laughed as they packed their belongings. But, by the second day of continuous rain, tensions rose. The four boys grew tired of sharing their cramped tent. Late that night, Ted was awakened by a loud crash. He realized he was floating! Their quiet stream had become a rampaging river and their tent had been washed into it! Ted roused his brothers and they thrashed about in the darkness as they struggled to pull themselves onto the riverbank. Streaks of lightning flashed across the sky. Thunderbolts shook the earth. The storm raged through the night.

Near daybreak, the lightning and thunder ceased. The brothers could see the path of destruction left by the storm. The huge oak across the stream had been struck down. Now it was no more than a jumbled woodpile. Their canoes had been tossed about the shore like toys. They worked hard all morning to restore their campsite. During lunch, a park ranger came by to see if they were okay. He told them a camper had been injured when a tree was hit by lightning and fell on his tent. Ted and his brothers were lucky to have escaped with only scratches and bruises.

Mike's New Bike

Mike squinted at the midday sky. He had been working since sunup and needed a break. Wiping the perspiration from his face, he continued his exhausting work.

Mike had been working all summer to earn enough money for a new bike. His ancient, beaten up bike was a total embarrassment. But his mom said they couldn't afford a new one. Even though Mike knew she was right, in his frustration, he shouted back at her, "You never give me anything!"

He only needed fifty more dollars. Mr. Painter had offered him forty dollars to dig a new drainage ditch. He wanted to stop the flooding in his rose garden. Mr. Painter wanted the new ditch to run parallel to the old one. Mike didn't think that would be effective in a downpour. So he suggested an alternate plan to direct the rainwater away from the house.

Mike noticed Mr. Painter watching him from behind a curtain. Knowing the old grouch, he'd deduct that little brow-wiping break from his pay. As he returned to his work, Mike waved. Mr. Painter acknowledged the wave and disappeared.

Mike worked steadily until midafternoon. Then Mr. Painter came out for an inspection. "Why don't you lay off for today and get a fresh start tomorrow?"

"I'd rather finish up," replied Mike. "It's supposed to rain tonight, and I'd like to have this operational before the next storm."

About six-thirty, Mike laid the last pipe in place. As he was returning the tools to the shed, Mr. Painter walked up, "Mike, you're an enterprising young man. You don't see many young people these days who care about their work." He handed Mike an envelope and went to inspect his roses.

When Mike opened the envelope, he counted three twenty-dollar bills. He ran to catch Mr. Painter and started to hand one back to him. Mr. Painter declined the offer, "Take it as thanks for keeping an old man from making the same mistake twice."

In Trouble Again

I knew I shouldn't be drawing in algebra class, but I just couldn't resist. Mr. Galvin had such a comical look as he peered over his bifocals at Jamie's futile attempt to solve the problem on the board. Maybe I could call this brilliant work of art "Galvin-eyes" or something equally insulting.

I suddenly realized Mr. Galvin was calling my name, "Peter, what is your solution to this problem?" Oh no, Mr. Galvin was walking in my direction! If I got in trouble again, I could be suspended. In desperation, I tried to adjust my book to cover the drawing, but it was too late. "Peter, have you completed the computation for problem number seven?"

Even though I hadn't even started the problem, I replied in my most respectful tone, "Not quite, sir." When he stopped at the front of the row, it bolstered my confidence. "I'll have it done in just a couple of minutes." Why did I always have to open my big mouth, instead of leaving well-enough alone? Now he was coming directly toward my desk.

Mr. Galvin, in a tone of total mistrust, suggested, "Why don't you come to the board and show us how far you've gotten, and perhaps your classmates can help you complete the problem?"

As I fumbled for an answer, Mr. Galvin reached my desk. He lifted my book with the expectation of finding a partially solved algebra problem. Instead, he found a drawing of himself, bifocals and all, glaring at Jamie with a quizzical look on his face. At least I hadn't had time to write the caption!

"Peter!" boomed Mr. Galvin, "just what do you expect to make of yourself with this kind of behavior?"

Without thinking how it might be taken, I replied, "A cartoonist."

Wrong answer! The class gave an appreciative round of applause. But Mr. Galvin perceived this as yet another attempt on my part to confront him. Once again, I had tried to undermine his authority with the class.

I had ample opportunity to think of alternative replies while I waited in the assistant principal's office.

Biology Woes

James had always excelled in science, winning every science fair and making straight A's. But this year, he would be taking Biological Studies, and he knew that meant dissecting animals. He was agonizing over the thought of cutting up a creature that had been alive. He couldn't even envision cutting into a cockroach—and he hated those! James started the summer with an overpowering fear of embarrassing himself. By July, he had worked himself into a state of near hysteria.

To solve his problem, James bought a dissecting kit to practice. Inside the kit, he found an address to order preserved animals. After some contemplation, James chose an earthworm, a crawfish, a frog, and a snake.

When the animals arrived, James carefully dismantled the corrugated box so he wouldn't damage the contents. When he reached the innermost container, he was shocked beyond words! There must have been a mistake. Not only were these animals not preserved, they weren't even dead! James looked at the order form and discovered his mistake. He had marked the wrong code!

Suddenly, James was the proud owner of four creatures who were very much alive. He had no idea what to feed any of these animals, nor any desire to find out. Deciding to dispose of them as quickly as possible, he biked to the nearest pet shop to sell the animals. The manager told him they only bought from licensed dealers. He tried the administrator of the zoo, but she didn't have room for any more animals just now. James was disheartened. He realized he would have to accept responsibility for the animals himself.

First, James went to the library. There he learned that the animals would have to be housed in separate containers. He went back to the pet store and bought four small aquariums. By the end of the summer, James had learned an extensive amount of information about his new pets. What had started as a dissection project had turned into a valuable study of live animals.