



A Story Studio Anthology
by Young Authors
(Ages 5-13)



Story Studio is a charity that inspires, educates and empowers youth to be great storytellers, transforming lives and strengthening communities. We create innovative, 'fun-first' workshops that develops narrative capacity in youth, and celebrate young writers by crafting beautiful publications from their words.

This anthology is composed of stories written by children and youth across Canada, between the ages of 5 and 13 as a result of our September 2021 creative writing contest. The task was to write a short flash fiction story taking place at school overnight.

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Story Studio Writing Society

2021

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SURVIVAL AT SCHOOL

by
Atharva

Just then he saw a closet, *'I can hide there,'* he thought. He jumped sideways and was in the closet. He quickly locked the door. Soon the zombie pencils were gone and Atharva got out of the closet, but he was still super scared.

'Is this what school is like?' Atharva wondered. This had just changed everything for him but he still could not understand. "What if there are other things like that in school?" he said as he walked down the stairs.

Then he could start hearing someone. "Who's there?" he said.

When he got down the stairs he saw another nine-year-old boy. “How do I know you are not one of the zombies?” he said to Atharva.

“Umm. I can talk,” said Atharva.

“Oh yeah, I guess so,” he said. “My name is Alex. What's your name?” he asked, moving toward Atharva.

“My name's Atharva,” said Atharva.

“Did you see the Zombie pencils?” said Alex.

“Yeah, it was creepy,” said Atharva. “Where do you think they went?”

“Probably upstairs,” said Alex

“Yeah, maybe,” said Atharva.

“Let's go, Atharva,” Alex said, grabbing Atharva's hand.

When they were upstairs they saw a giant purple portal. “Woah! Let's go!” said Atharva shoving Alex in the portal first. “Time for me to go in,” then he ran into the portal screaming, “AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!”

He landed on a rock called Obsidian. Then he saw Alex running from a zombie pencil. He grabbed Alex and they hid in a bush until the zombie pencil was gone, then they saw the world. It seemed nothing could survive here, there was obsidian, red sand, and lava everywhere.

They got out of the bush, “WOW! This place is amazing,” said Atharva.

“I don’t like this place,” said Alex. “I’m pretty sure we have to catch the pencil king and take him through the portal with us. If we write with him he’ll return to a normal pencil, everything will go back to normal, and we can go home,” said Alex.

“OKAY!” said Atharva.

They walked through the bridges that went from the island to another island. Suddenly, they saw a huge dirt hut with a yellow light. “Hey! that hut is probably where the Zombie pencils are!” they both said at the exact same time.

They ran across all the bridges when suddenly all of that stopped... Before them was... **A TEN-METER LAVA MOAT!!!!!!**

“How are we going to cross that lava moat?!” said Atharva.

“Hmm,” said Alex. “I think I know a way. I throw you in the lava and then I find a way across.”

“No!!!!” said Atharva. “I think I know the way.”

It took a long time but Atharva and Alex finally did it. They slowly walked across the stick bridge together. **AND THE ZOMBIE PENCILS WERE HAVING A PARTY.**

They saw the king and took him with a stick and went back to the portal spot. The portal came and they went through to their home and the king went to his.

THE END.

ZOEY AND UNICAT'S ADVENTURES: DARK NIGHT CAMPING

by
Eiliya

Meet Zoey. She has long, curly, dark brown hair and skin the colour of her favourite milky tea. One day on her way into school, she sees a rainbow flash of light behind a rose bush and hears, “Ouch!”

“Unicat?” Zoey guesses.

“Yes!” says Unicat. Unicat is a magical creature with the body of a cat and a sparkling unicorn horn.

“Maybe you should walk to school with me instead of magicing.” Unicat had moved into Zoey’s yard a few weeks ago because he needed a kind human friend. He chose Zoey.

In the classroom, their teacher, Ms. Gemmy, announces, “Today your homework is to pack! We are going on a camping trip in our school yard! Isn’t that exciting news?”

There are several cries of joy, but Unicat whispers, “Oh no.” His horn dims.

Ms. Gemmy continues, “Choose partners please. I will camp in my own in my tent.”

Unicat’s horn brightens into rainbow sparkles. He smiles and winks at Zoey. Unicat knows who his partner will be. Still, the day goes by too quickly for Unicat.

When Zoey and Unicat return to the school yard that evening, they are shocked. There are five tents on the soccer field! In the middle of the circle of tents is a large pile of sticks and twigs.

“What are we doing with these sticks?” Unicat asks Ms. Gemmy.

“We are going to learn how to make a campfire!” Miss Gemmy replies.

“I brought back-up lights,” Unicat says, pulling two big lamps out of his bag with the cords dangling.

“Unicat,” exclaims Ms. Gemmy, “There are no electrical outlets outdoors!”



“Oh.” Unicat is embarrassed. “Well, let’s make a really big campfire so it lasts all night.”

“The campfire is only to make dinner,” she explains.

Unicat’s horn dims. His shoulders slump. Zoey remembers wanting to keep the lights on at night when she was younger. She wonders if Unicat is scared of the dark. “Don’t worry, Unicat. I brought a flashlight.”

Unicat sighs in relief. “Thank you, thank you, thank you!”



After a delicious campfire dinner with s'mores, everyone goes to bed in their tents.

In the middle of the night, Zoey opens her eyes. She sees Unicat looking very scared. Her flashlight has gone out! "Unicat, I used to be scared of the dark. I can help," she says. "Why does it scare you?"

Unicat thinks. "Well, I usually have lots of lights on when I sleep. I've never tried sleeping without them."

Zoey reaches out her hand. “Let’s try.” She tells him a story about a unicorn that helps a cat see in the dark.

“So, you’re trying to tell me that cats can see really well in the dark so there’s no reason to be afraid of the dark?” asks Unicat in a sleepy voice.

“Yes,” says Zoey.

Unicat does not reply because he is already asleep.

The next morning, Unicat wishes he could camp for weeks, months, maybe even years! He's happy he's not afraid of the dark anymore.

THE END.

DETENTION AT AMERICA'S TOP HIGH SCHOOL

by
Eliana

I cavorted through the peaceful corridor, approaching the talent room at the end of the hall where my friends were. We all attend America's Top High School, it's our first year and we're all excited about it.

“Uh oh,” I said just as Cameron, Emma, Milie and Karli walked up behind Elizabeth and I. “Did you miss Mr. Bertie's class too?”

“Yepp,” they all said, with worry in their voices.

“We’re going to get in so much trouble,” Milie said, just as Mr. Bertie turned the corner heading toward us.

“Detention. All of you,” he shouted with an angry look on his face.

Once we were all settled uncomfortably in detention Mr Bertie walked out of the classroom without a word.

“Did he leave us in the school?” Karli asked.

“It seems so! No one is here but us and it’s late!” I replied, a bit scared, but also flushed with fascination. “We should start discovering the dark secrets of this school!”

“Let’s go!” they shouted.

But as Emma grabbed the Talent room door, it wouldn’t budge. We were locked in! Cameron quickly went over to the windows and opened one right up, “Good thing we’re on the first floor!” he said as he began to climb out.

Emma noticed a loose brick next to the window that we climbed out of. She easily pulled the brick off the wall. Inside was a button. Without hesitation she pressed it and slowly the brick wall started to slide open. Flashing lights started spewing out, looking like a dozen bats on the wall. We all stood there watching, shocked, unable to move or say anything.

As the lights stopped flashing we noticed a box sitting in the room. We inched closer to the box, worried something might jump out at us. I reached out and touched the box and it suddenly began opening.

Inside was a golden pencil with an ice tip. I was amazed, speechless.

We all got a little closer and noticed a note written on the pencil. I read it aloud, “This pencil has codes to all of the lockers in the school and leads to each of the corridors in the school. It can be used as a key to open each and every door inside.”

I picked up the pencil and Emma led us back outside and then pressed the same button to close the brick passageway.

There was no way we were all going home now, we had a magical school to explore!

We headed to the front doors of the school and used the magic pencil to get into the first corridor. There were tiles on the floor, fancy lights across the ceiling, the walls were bare and magical things were hiding in every corner. Things like fairies, mini dragons flying around and even a magical school bus flying above our heads! We were amazed.

Three fairies flew down to stand in front of us. One said, “We will guide you through the wonders of the magical corridors. Our names are Elly, Pixie and Sadie.” Pixie made a magical pathway with their wands. The shimmery glitter led us into an enchanted garden. There were different coloured pine trees, a bridge going over a little lake, and a little empty house surrounded by lots of flowers.

We walked along the bridge over to the little brick house. I pulled open the door and inside was Mr. Bertie!

He was playing music with his eyes closed, and didn't even stop when the door opened. Confused, we decided to leave him there.

Without disturbing Mr. Bertie we decided to head to the lake to check out the water. The fairies lead the way again back across the bridge.

Emma reached down to touch the water first. The water was warm and everyone else stuck their hands in except Cameron who jumped right in!

The fairies watched us from the shoreline and Elly shouted to us, “Grab some shells from the bottom!”

We all swam back to the top and spread out our shells along the shoreline. We bundled five shells for each of us into a bag and Emma, Millie and I carried them. We all dried off quickly with magic to help before the fairies led us into the trees.

As we were walking the fairies asked if we felt different. Confused, I asked them, “What would be different?”

“Your powers!” The fairies replied. “The water has given you each a magical power.”

We began to notice something changing in each of us. As we walked we tried different powers. I spread my arms and suddenly I could fly! Emma’s strength increased and she was able to pick up a boulder from the pathway. It began raining as we walked and Millie suddenly struck lightning right from her hands. We were all amazed, our powers were so cool! Karli could shoot lasers from his eyes and Elizabeth could teleport. Cameron was the last to figure out the magical power he had.

Pixie asked him to try to freeze something. Confused, Cameron looked at a tree on the side of the path, thinking about freezing it. Suddenly the tree was covered in a sheet of ice, frozen in place!

We reached the end of the pathway, but it wasn't actually the end, it led us into a new corridor where a magical school bus was flying around. Suddenly it came to a stop right in front of us. The door opened and inside was Mr. Bertie sitting in the front seat!

We all looked at each other with excitement brewing. “We’re magic!” Elizabeth shouted.

“But magic comes with a price. Sometimes, magic can be dangerous, it must be used in a special way,” Mr Bertie said just as the school bus doors closed and it flew away.

Confused, we all looked at the fairies. Pixie said, “Because you were at school after hours, the magical corridors picked you up. It’s now your job to find Mr. Bertie within the corridors and escape together.”

The corridors were similar to the school hallways so we knew which way to go, and the magical pencil acted as our key into each new corridor. We headed toward the talent room, because that was the last place we had seen Mr Bertie before we entered the magical corridors.

Suddenly we all flew up to the ceiling, as though we were pulled up by a magnet. It was a rocket, pulling us all toward it. I quickly flew up on top of the rocket to open the door and then the fairies helped us all get inside. Because of the magnetic pull, it pulled Mr. Bertie and the school bus into the corridor with us!

Mr Bertie opened the bus doors and jumped out. Millie accidentally shot lightning from her hand and the lightning strike made the bus disappear just as the magnetic rocket stopped. Everyone dropped to the floor.

“Now that we have Mr. Bertie, we just need to escape,” Pixie said.

Emma suggested we use the window again, just like we did to get out of detention. So she used her hands to open the window and pointed the pencil at the open window. She said, “Ta-da!”

and suddenly we were all standing outside the front of the school doors where it all started!

The sky was jet black and there were shimmering stars in the sky. It must be midnight. Sadie touched the brick wall of the school again and suddenly all three of the fairies became human! Their wings disappeared leaving them in human form, but they still held their wands.

The fairies joined as new students at the school the next day. No one knew that they were once fairies.

The secrets of the magical corridors at America's Top High School were ours to keep, with Mr. Bertie of course.

THE END.

I'LL COME AGAIN

by
Mina

A girl appeared from the shadows. Her thick jet-black hair hung around her shoulders loosely, as her blue eyes were the only source of light. She walked, her boots clicked against the school-floors, the sound echoed and bounced off the walls and hallways.

As she walked, the floors turned into space. Galaxies, stars and planets appeared below her one by one. Each step she made caused a watery ripple beneath her small black boots. It was as though space was made out of water.

The walls soon morphed into the midnight sky outside, windows dissolved into nothingness.

Stars turned into a ramp with black and white stripes that glowed. The girl cast her bright blue eyes around the school, slowly yet steadily, little silhouettes and shadows of people popped up out of nowhere. They all passed through her harmlessly.

These all symbolized something.

From the palm of her hand, the girl pulled out a sharp sword, gripping the hilt firmly with her left hand. The girl swiftly lunged. She swung her sword horizontally and the blade touched the neck of the silhouette for a split second before it sliced through smoothly. The shadowy figure disappeared to thin air, in its place a stem and a bud from the floor grew.

Seconds later it bloomed into a beautiful red spider lily.

The girl leapt and lunged repeatedly, until all the spirits in the first floor were all turned into spider lilies.

She then ran up the ramp, the colours of black and white splashed around her like milky paint and ink. Soon, the splashes mutated into hands, grappling around her feet desperately. Though no voices were heard in reality, the girl could hear the cries of anger and sadness in her mind.

The voices demanded to have their stories, that were once ignored and now forgotten, to be retold again and to be believed. The girl made a pained expression as she shook off the hands that radiated unbreakable agony if being forgotten.

She couldn't have their stories told, since she didn't know their stories. All she could do was just to release them from the burden of being tied down to this school for eternity. Each spirit here was treated unfairly for simply worshipping a god. If she released them..then perhaps the god that they believed in would treat them fairly. Perhaps their wishes to be recognized could be granted by their god.

The ramp seemed to go on forever, until at last she reached the second floor of the school.

Who knows for how long she had spent the night releasing spirits. However, it wasn't enough, she needed more time. The sun came up, and the school returned to normal. The remaining spirits disappeared. They were still here, she could tell. They were just hidden from view.

The girl exited the school calmly. Flocks of birds soared over her head, each bird flapped their wings freely. She would be back when the night came.

“I’ll come again.”

THE END.

THE SLEEPOVER

by

Oliver and Archer

Chris tapped his foot on the floor, his eyes locked on the clock that seemed to be moving pretty slow.

RIIIIIIIIIIIIIINNNNNNNNNNNNGGGGGGGG!!!!!!!!!!

Chris ran outside to meet with his friend Marlo. Afterwards, they walked to Marlo's house for a sleepover. For most of the afternoon, they played video games, but as soon as it got dark they went outside. When Marlo's mom called them in for bed at 9:40 they raced each other to the house. By 10:30 they heard Marlo's parents start snoring.

Marlo immediately jumped out of his bed.

“What are you doing?” Chris whispered, looking into the dark where he thought Marlo was.

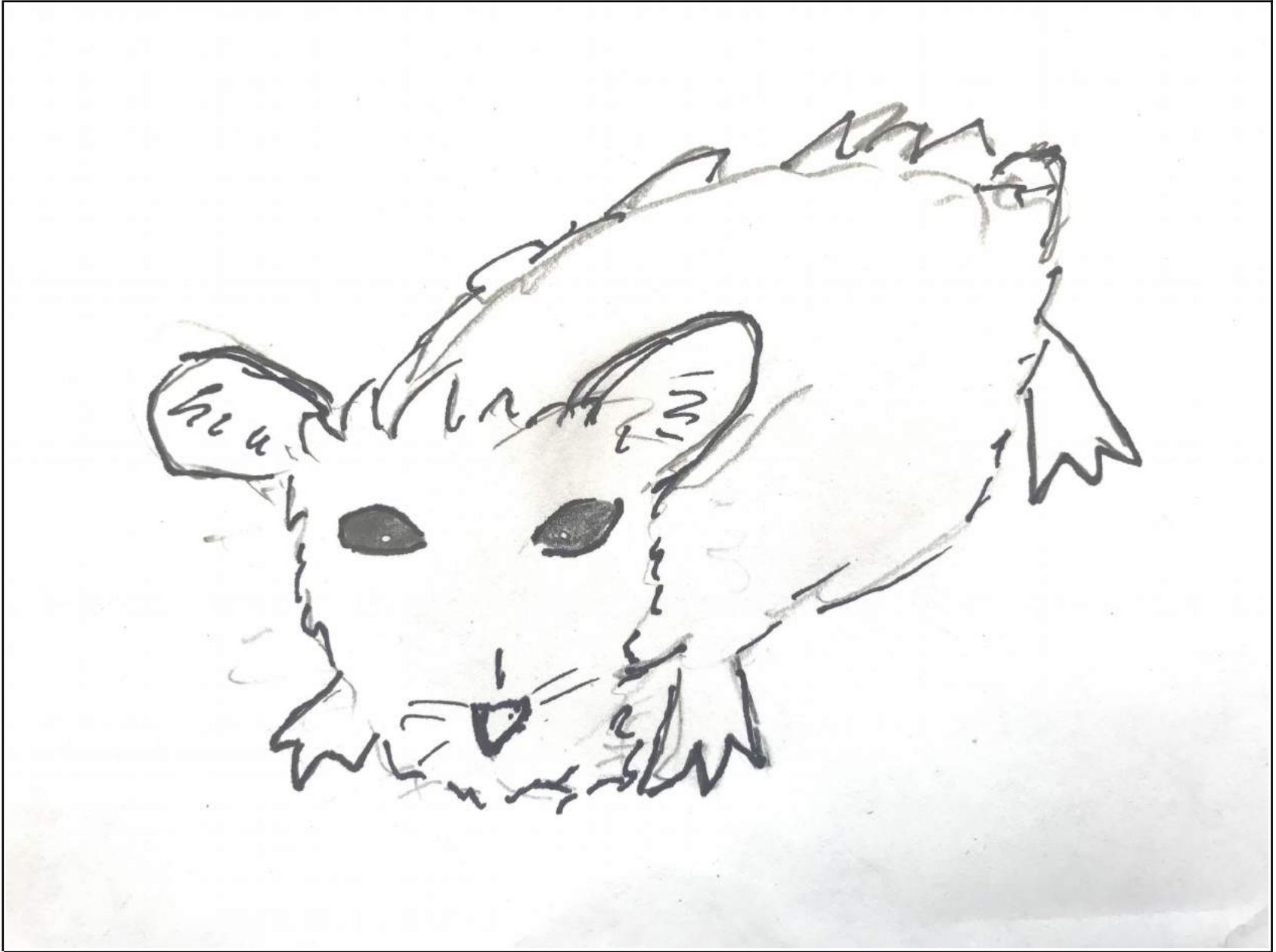
“Follow me,” his friend said from a different direction.

Chris followed his voice, feeling his way to the front door. His eyes adjusted. When they got outside, they ran to the school. Marlo picked the lock.

“I thought that we could tour the school for a bit,” Marlo explained, running up a staircase.

They went to see Fred, the science hamster. They rounded the shadowy bend in the hall and turned into the science room. The teacher’s desk was to the left. An experiment table was on the side, where the hamster was shuffling around in the cage in the corner.

“Hey Fred,” the two friends said, peering inside the dark cage.



Wait, what was that noise Chris heard? Was it a teacher?

“Shh,” he said.

They heard two pairs of feet stomping up the stairs. Marlo grabbed Chris and dove behind the teacher’s desk. Soon, they could hear whispering voices.

“Are you sure about this, Mom?”

“Yes, I am sure.”

They gasped. It was the science teacher and her daughter, Meg!
The door was thrown open.

“I just need to get the book. And the hamster,” the science teacher said.

She got the book and the hamster. Suddenly, Meg said, “What are you doing here?!”

‘Whoops!’ they thought.

“What?” a voice came from the science table, then a crash.

They looked to see Fred covered in purple goo, growing and growling. Growing so much his head bumped the ceiling! Chris’ hand bumped something too. It was a trapdoor! He tugged Meg and Marlo down into an abandoned storage room. Passageways jutted in every direction. Silence.

“Okay, do we have to rescue a giant hamster before our parents wake up?” Marlo said.

“Yeahh...” Meg said, “We have the book. We have to throw it at Fred, before he does something to my mom.”

“So we find a passage to the music room and take him from the back.”

Together they ran down a passage on the right, then climbed up a ladder. They popped up by the piano and snuck out the door. Fred was chasing Meg’s Mom, but he turned and slashed at Chris. He dodged. Marlo hit Fred with the book. Fred’s body relaxed as he shrunk into his cage.

They all ran home, just as the sun rose.

We only have guesses to what the book was. A science experiment? A secret weapon? Who knows. But jeez, poor Fred.

THE END.

THE STRANGEST NIGHT EVER

by
Ria

'It's really dark in here,' Ria thought. Where did all of the lights go? To think of it, where did everything go? There should've been some doors, classrooms, signs, and lockers. So how come there were only walls? As she touched the walls, her fingers brushed against a brick. Well, that's weird. There weren't any bricks in the school design.

She had just begun walking when her fingers brushed another brick. But this time she accidentally pushed in the brick, and the wall opened up to reveal a secret passage. She stepped in only to find that it was a dead end. Suddenly, an idea hit her.

She ran to the other brick and pushed it in as well. When she came back to the passage, she realized the dead-end was no longer there. Instead, it had been replaced with a dimly lit hallway.

When she listened closely, she could hear some faint voices. She had just started down the hallway when she heard a bang behind her. She jumped and whirled around. She panicked when she realized the entrance had closed behind her. “Oh no!” she groaned softly. But now, the voices were closer. It sounded like they were arguing? “Who could it be?” she wondered aloud.

Did some teachers stay behind? She looked at the time. No, it couldn't be them. It was ten 'o'clock.

She went a little further and saw a soft light filtering through from a room. "I tell you, it's useless! I say we go out there in the morning and reveal ourselves!" a voice said.

"We only have this little time to be ourselves!" a second voice thundered.

"I'm with you, Lead. Let's reveal ourselves."

“Lead, Stubby, please,” a third voice cut in tiredly. “I am not in the mood to go through this again. If we reveal ourselves, nothing will happen. Now, just go and enjoy your “you” time.”

“I just don’t get it, Graphite,” Lead’s voice said. “How can you not want to reveal yourself?” Graphite sighed.

“Call it a feeling, Lead,” she replied.

This was the moment that Ria peeked into the room. When she saw who was speaking, she shrieked and fell. She was sure she had seen pencils talking to each other.

She looked again.

Yup. It was pencils, plain as day, staring at her with a surprised look on their faces.

Lead was the first to recover. “See?” he said. “I told you that if we don’t reveal ourselves they will find us. Eventually.”

Graphite sighed. “Lead, you said that three years ago.”

“Hey!” he protested. “I said eventually!”

“W-wow,” Ria said. “I never knew pencils could talk.”

“They can’t,” Stubby replied. “Just us three. Anyway, my name is Stubby,” he said. Pointing to another one he said, “That’s my sister Graphite, and that arguer is my brother Lead.”

“Hey!” Lead protested.

“Well, I’m Ria.” Ria said. “How come you guys are the only pencils that can talk?”

A wave of sadness rippled through Graphite's face. "We weren't the only ones," she whispered. "There were others, our family, our friends." She gestured to the empty halls, "This place used to be bustling with pencils and joy." She smiled wistfully.

Lead jumped in with a look of hatred twisting across his face. "A child," he spat. "A child decided that he would much rather ally with the enemy. He decided that he would sell out our secret for glory."

“He was the only human we ever trusted...” Stubby sighed. But then he perked up. “Hey! You could be the one to bring back the rest of us! You could be our saviour, and be our next trusted human!”

“Stub!” Lead hissed. “She could sell us out and our kind could really be wiped out.”

“Relax Lead,” Graphite said. “Stub is right. I trust her.”

“I would love to do that.” Ria replied. “But... I’m not sure exactly what I’m supposed to do.”

“All you have to do,” Stubby said, “Is save the rest of our kind.”

“And how exactly do I do that?” Ria asked.

“They are in there,” Graphite replied, pointing to a door at the end of the hall.

“Well, if they’re just in there, why don’t you get them yourself?”
Ria asked, confused.

“Because they are guarded by the child,” Lead answered. “Only a human can get to them. Which, frankly, is why we need you.”

“Okay,” Ria said.

“Okay?” Stubby asked. “Really, Ria?”

“Yes!” she answered. Ria started creeping down the hall.

It was eerily silent near the door. She was sure she was going to hear protests from the pencils.

‘And to think this started because I was looking for a bathroom,’ she thought. She had been at the school for her parent-teacher conference. She had excused herself to go to the bathroom and now here she was, trying to rescue a bunch of talking pencils.

Finally, she reached the door. She hesitated for a second, then propped herself against it. The marble was cool under her touch. It was a pretty rose pink with gold edging. *‘Why would a prison door be so beautiful?’* she wondered.

After listening for a while, she reached for the handle, took a deep breath, and pushed.

As soon as she opened it, a cold wind rushed out. She entered the room and gasped. What she saw before her, was her friend Ethan, resting against the wall, with a bunch of pencils tied up. “Ethan?!” she exclaimed.

He looked up, saw her, and jumped to his feet. “Ria!” he shouted. “It’s not what it looks like!”

“Oh, I see what it is alright,” she said. “You have been kidnapping, or shall I say pencil-napping talking pencils!”

“Listen to me Ria,” he replied despairingly, while the pencils screamed, “SAVE US!”

But she agreed. She sat down to hear why he had been taking those pencils prisoner.

“Lead, Graphite, and Stubby weren’t wrong,” Ethan explained.

“After school let out, this place used to become a bustling pencil

city. I protected their secret, and took care of them and their city. But, over time, they started taking me for granted. Instead of being kind, and courteous with me like before, they started to be cruel and demanding. The only ones that still helped me and kept being kind to me were Lead, Graphite and Stubby. Those three were the only ones who truly cared about what happened to me. Which is why, when I took all the pencils prisoner, I left those three to take care of the place.”

“Well, maybe you can let these guys go now,” Ria said, gesturing to the pencils. “Tell them how you feel.”

And so, Ethan let them go, and everyone reunited and forgave him. He and Ria became the new protectors of the city.

“I just have one last question,” Ria said.

“What’s that?” Ethan asked.

“Is there a bathroom around here?”

And everyone burst out laughing.

THE END.



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