



Silly Story Scenes

(inspired by MadLibs)

How to Play:

1. Without reading the scene, think of words to fit each category in the word list for each scene. For example, "plural noun" might be "cars" and "past tense verb" might be "ran."
2. Fill in the corresponding spaces with the words you have listed.
3. Read the new scene aloud for everyone to enjoy.
4. You may choose to read the original scene, if you'd like, to see how far your new scene is from the one in the book.
5. Repeat with a new set of words for that scene, or with one of the other Silly Story Scenes provided.
6. If desired, choose another scene from your favorite Read Local Challenge book, and create your own Silly Story Scene by replacing key words with nouns, verbs, or adjectives, etc.



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The Princess and the Frogs

BY: Veronica Bartles

WORD LIST:

- PLURAL NOUN: _____
- PLURAL NOUN: _____
- PLURAL NOUN: _____
- NOUN: _____
- VERB: _____
- VERB: _____
- ANIMAL: _____
- ANIMAL: _____
- PLURAL PLACE: _____
- PLURAL PLACE: _____
- PLURAL PLACE: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- PLACE: _____
- PLURAL NOUN: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- PAST TENSE VERB: _____
- PERSON: _____

SILLY STORY SCENE:

Princess Cassandra should have been the happiest princess in the world. She had hundreds of [PLURAL NOUN], thousands of [PLURAL NOUN], and [PLURAL NOUN] to bring her anything she wanted. There was only one thing she didn't have. A best friend. "I want a pet that matches my favorite green [NOUN]," she said. "We'll swim and jump and [VERB] all day. And at night, he will sit on my pillow and [VERB] to me." The Royal Pet Handler searched for the perfect pet. But it wasn't easy. The [ANIMAL] was too squeaky. The [ANIMAL] refused to swim. The hippo wouldn't jump. And none of the animals were green. "I need a pet that's just right," Cassandra said. So the Royal Pet Handler searched [PLURAL PLACE] and [PLURAL PLACE], rivers and [PLURAL PLACE], until he discovered a [ADJECTIVE] green frog with [ADJECTIVE] brown spots for the princess to love. "He's perfect!" Cassandra declared. The princess and the frog raced through the castle, jumped rope in the [PLACE], and sampled [PLURAL NOUN] in the kitchen. After dinner, Cassandra tucked her new best friend into bed. "Good night, Froggy." She kissed his [ADJECTIVE] green head. Whoosh! The frog turned into a prince. He [PAST TENSE VERB] and kissed Cassandra's hand. "Thank you, princess. Let us be married at once!" She laughed. "Princes aren't pets. I want a frog!" And she sent him to work for the [PERSON].

ORIGINAL SCENE:

Princess Cassandra should have been the happiest princess in the world. She had hundreds of dresses, thousands of books, and servants to bring her anything she wanted. There was only one thing she didn't have. A best friend.

"I want a pet that matches my favorite green dress," she said. "We'll swim and jump and play all day. And at night, he will sit on my pillow and sing to me."

The Royal Pet Handler searched for the perfect pet. But it wasn't easy.

The mouse was too squeaky.

The kitten refused to swim.

The hippo wouldn't jump.

And none of the animals were green.

"I need a pet that's just right," Cassandra said.

So the Royal Pet Handler searched mountains and valleys, rivers and streams, until he discovered a little green frog with bumpy brown spots for the princess to love.

"He's perfect!" Cassandra declared.

The princess and the frog raced through the castle, jumped rope in the courtyard, and sampled treats in the kitchen.

After dinner, Cassandra tucked her new best friend into bed.

"Good night, Froggy." She kissed his bumpy green head.

Whoosh!

The frog turned into a prince.

He bowed and kissed Cassandra's hand. "Thank you, princess. Let us be married at once!"

She laughed. "Princes aren't pets. I want a frog!" And she sent him to work for the Royal Pastry Chef.



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Mama Africa: How Miriam Makeba Spread Hope with Her Song

BY: KATHRYN ERSKINE

WORD LIST:

- PAST TENSE VERB: _____
- VERB: _____
- PAST TENSE VERB: _____
- VERB: _____
- VERB: _____
- NOUN: _____
- VERB: _____
- FAMILY MEMBER: _____
- VERB: _____
- FAMILY MEMBER: _____
- NOUN: _____
- NOUN: _____
- VERB: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- VERB: _____
- NOUN: _____
- PLACE: _____
- NOUN: _____
- VERB: _____

SILLY STORY SCENE:

Miriam [PAST TENSE VERB] as soon as she could [VERB] and [PAST TENSE VERB] as soon as she could [VERB]. She [VERB] folk songs as her mother played the [NOUN]. She [VERB] pop songs for her [FAMILY MEMBER] and his friends. She [VERB] hymns with her [FAMILY MEMBER] in the Sunday school [NOUN]. “[NOUN] gets deep inside me and starts to [VERB] things up!” she said. And from [ADJECTIVE] inside, Miriam began to [VERB] up the [NOUN]... At [PLACE], her [NOUN] teacher tells Miriam she is free to [VERB] out!

ORIGINAL SCENE:

*Miriam sang as soon as she could talk and danced as soon as she could walk.
She sang folk songs as her mother played the drums.
She sang pop songs for her brother and his friends.
She sang hymns with her sisters in the Sunday school choir.
“Music gets deep inside me and starts to shake things up!” she said.
And from deep inside, Miriam began to shake up the world...
At church, her choir teacher tells Miriam she is free to sing out!*



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Masterpiece Robot and the Ferocious Valerie Knick-knack

ILLUSTRATED BY: Rebecca Evans

WORD LIST:

NOUN: _____
NOUN: _____
ADJECTIVE: _____
NOUN: _____
NOUN: _____
ADJECTIVE: _____
ADJECTIVE: _____
PLURAL NOUN: _____
NOUN: _____
ADJECTIVE: _____
VERB: _____
ADJECTIVE: _____
PLURAL NOUN: _____
ADJECTIVE: _____
VERB: _____

SILLY STORY SCENE:

All the while, Masterpiece _____ [NOUN] _____ is engulfed in a sea of _____ [NOUN] _____. Is this the end for our _____ [ADJECTIVE] _____ hero? Will _____ [NOUN] _____ finally triumph over _____ [NOUN] _____? Will the world as we know it become forever _____ [ADJECTIVE] _____ in despair, misery, _____ [ADJECTIVE] _____ bedtimes, and extra servings of _____ [PLURAL NOUN] _____? _____ [NOUN] _____ leaps into battle! She will not allow our _____ [ADJECTIVE] _____ hero to be _____ [VERB] _____. Her mostly _____ [ADJECTIVE] _____ fighting techniques prove too effective for the _____ [PLURAL NOUN] _____, who are unable to adapt to her _____ [ADJECTIVE] _____ _____ [VERB] _____!

ORIGINAL SCENE:

All the while, Masterpiece Robot is engulfed in a sea of drones. Is this the end for our fearless hero? Will evil finally triumph over good? Will the world as we know it become forever shrouded in despair, misery, early bedtimes, and extra servings of vegetables? Sidekick leaps into battle! She will not allow our valiant hero to be taken. Her mostly improvised fighting techniques prove too effective for the minions, who are unable to adapt to her frenzied attacks!



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I Got a Chicken for My Birthday

BY: LAURA GEHL

WORD LIST:

ANIMAL: _____
HOLIDAY: _____
VERB: _____
NAME: _____
ANIMAL: _____
HOLIDAY: _____
NOUN: _____
ANIMAL: _____
HOLIDAY: _____
ADJECTIVE: _____
NOUN: _____

SILLY STORY SCENE:

I got a(n) [ANIMAL] for my [HOLIDAY] . And the chicken [VERB] Abuela [NAME] for a visit!!!

I got a(n) [ANIMAL] for my [HOLIDAY] . And the [NOUN] is a genius. I got a(n) [ANIMAL] for my [HOLIDAY] . And it was the [ADJECTIVE] . [NOUN] . Ever.

ORIGINAL SCENE:

I got a chicken for my birthday. And the chicken brought Abuela Lola for a visit!!! I got a chicken for my birthday. And the chicken is a genius. I got a chicken for my birthday. And it was the Best. Present. Ever.



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Vivian and the Legend of the Hoodoos

BY: TERRY CATASÚS JENNINGS

WORD LIST:

- NOUN: _____
- NOUN: _____
- ING VERB: _____
- ADVERB: _____
- NOUN: _____
- PAST TENSE VERB: _____
- NOUN: _____
- NOUN: _____
- PAST TENSE VERB: _____
- NOUN: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- NOUN: _____
- NOUN: _____

SILLY STORY SCENE:

Grandma’s voice was like a Paiute lullaby. Through Grandma’s _____ [NOUN] _____, Vivian could almost see them.

Here, a woman sorted _____ [NOUN] _____ nuts, _____ [-ING VERB] _____.

Next to her, a young boy _____ [ADVERB] _____ dropped pine nuts for his mother to grind. A hunter knapped obsidian into tiny arrow points by a _____ [NOUN] _____. Next to him, strips of meat _____ [PAST TENSE VERB] _____ in the sun.

An older woman sewed skins into a blanket by a _____ [NOUN] _____.

Next to a tree, another hunter strung a bow with _____ [NOUN] _____ strings. “They had to respect the trees, and the creatures, and the water, Vivi,” Grandma said. “If they didn’t, they would die.”

Slowly, Grandma led her through the ruins. Chips of obsidian _____ [PAST TENSE VERB] _____ the ground by a rock. By the ruins of a pit house lay an awl made of _____ [NOUN] _____, perfect for sewing skins. And close to the tree line, a smooth, _____ [ADJECTIVE] _____ blade of locust wood was barely covered by the sandy soil. It had a notch at one end. Once it had been a bow. Vivian knelt by a _____ [ADJECTIVE] _____ stone and ran her hand over its surface. A gentle dip had been rubbed smooth in its center. It was a metate for grinding nuts and grains. Vivian and Grandma returned to the _____ [NOUN] _____ grove to finish their task. This time Vivian asked the trees’ permission without being told. She filled her bucket many times, always with respect. “Thank you. Thank you for giving your _____ [NOUN] _____ so that we may live,” she said when she left.

ORIGINAL SCENE:

Grandma’s voice was like a Paiute lullaby. Through Grandma’s story, Vivian could almost see them.

Here, a woman sorted pine nuts, singing. Next to her, a young boy slowly dropped pine nuts for his mother to grind. A hunter knapped obsidian into tiny arrow points by a rock. Next to him, strips of meat dried in the sun.

An older woman sewed skins into a blanket by a fire. Next to a tree, another hunter strung a bow with yucca strings. “They had to respect the trees, and the creatures, and the water, Vivi,” Grandma said. “If they didn’t, they would die.”

Slowly, Grandma led her through the ruins. Chips of obsidian littered the ground by a rock. By the ruins of a pit house lay an awl made of bone, perfect for sewing skins. And close to the tree line, a smooth, slender blade of locust wood was barely covered by the sandy soil. It had a notch at one end. Once it had been a bow. Vivian knelt by a large stone and ran her hand over its surface. A gentle dip had been rubbed smooth in its center. It was a metate for grinding nuts and grains.

Vivian and Grandma returned to the piñon grove to finish their task. This time Vivian asked the trees’ permission without being told. She filled her bucket many times, always with respect.

“Thank you. Thank you for giving your fruit so that we may live,” she said when she left.



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Mother Ghost: Nursery Rhymes for Little Monsters

BY: **RACHEL KOLAR**

WORD LIST:

PLURAL NOUN: _____
NOUN: _____
PLURAL NOUN: _____
PLURAL NOUN: _____
PLACE: _____
VERB: _____
NOUN: _____
PERSON: _____
PLACE: _____
NOUN: _____
NOUN: _____
VERB: _____
NOUN: _____
VERB: _____
PLURAL NOUN: _____
PLURAL NOUN: _____
NOUN: _____

SILLY STORY SCENE:

Sing a song of _____ [PLURAL NOUN] _____, pocket full of _____ [NOUN] _____
Four-and-twenty _____ [PLURAL NOUN] _____ locked in a cage.
When the cage was opened, the _____ [PLURAL NOUN] _____ took to the
_____ [PLACE] _____
But before they _____ [VERB] _____ away, they had a
_____ [NOUN] _____ to try.
The _____ [PERSON] _____ was in the _____ [PLACE] _____, picking
_____ [NOUN] _____ and _____ [NOUN] _____,
_____ [VERB] _____ as she dreamed of tasty _____ [NOUN] _____ stew.
She _____ [VERB] _____ to the cauldron and mixed her
_____ [PLURAL NOUN] _____ with care
When down came those _____ [PLURAL NOUN] _____ and pulled out her
_____ [NOUN] _____.

ORIGINAL SCENE:

*Sing a song of witches, pocket full of sage
Four-and-twenty blackbirds locked in a cage.
When the cage was opened, the birds took to the sky
But before they flew away, they had a trick to try.
The witch was in the garden, picking thyme and rue,
Cackling as she dreamed of tasty blackbird stew.
She hobbled to the cauldron and mixed her herbs with care
When down came those blackbirds and pulled out her hair.*



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Puddle Pug

BY: KIM NORMAN

WORD LIST:

- ANIMAL: _____
- NUMBER: _____
- PLURAL NOUN: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- ANIMAL: _____
- VERB: _____
- VERB: _____
- NOUN: _____
- NOUN: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- ANIMAL: _____

SILLY STORY SCENE:

By sundown, Mama _____ [ANIMAL] _____ had found all but _____ [NUMBER] _____ of her _____ [PLURAL NOUN] _____. Where was teeny, tiny Petunia? Petunia was too _____ [ADJECTIVE] _____ to be gone so long. Where would a too-_____ [ADJECTIVE] _____ [ANIMAL] _____ go? Percy _____ [VERB] _____. He _____ [VERB] _____ at his puddle _____ [NOUN] _____. Then he remembered the perfect _____ [NOUN] _____ for a too-_____ [ADJECTIVE] _____ _____ [ANIMAL] _____.

ORIGINAL SCENE:

By sundown, Mama Pig had found all but one of her piglets. Where was teeny, tiny Petunia? Petunia was too tiny to be gone so long. Where would a too-tiny pig go? Percy wondered. He stared at his puddle map. Then he remembered the perfect place for a too-tiny pig.



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Sweet Success

BY: LIZ AND JIMMY REED

WORD LIST:

-ING VERB: _____
ADJECTIVE: _____
-ING VERB: _____
ADJECTIVE: _____
PLURAL NOUN: _____
VERB: _____
NOUN: _____
ADJECTIVE: _____
TIME: _____
VERB: _____
NOUN: _____

SILLY STORY SCENE:

_____ [-ING VERB] a new project was _____ [ADJECTIVE] .
_____ [-ING VERB] it was _____ [ADJECTIVE] . Scoops was
in the middle of so many _____ [PLURAL NOUN] she forgot
to _____ [VERB] the most important one of all. Her
_____ [NOUN] wasn't close to being _____ [ADJECTIVE] ,
and the party was _____ [TIME] ! If Scoops was late, she'd
_____ [VERB] the big _____ [NOUN] .

ORIGINAL SCENE:

Starting a new project was fun. Finishing it was something else. Scoops was in the middle of so many projects she forgot to complete the most important one of all. Her present wasn't close to being done, and the party was today! If Scoops was late, she'd miss the big surprise.



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Porcupine's Pie

BY: LAURA RENAULD

WORD LIST:

- PAST TENSE VERB: _____
- HOLIDAY: _____
- NUMBER: _____
- NUMBER: _____
- NUMBER: _____
- FOOD: _____
- NOUN: _____
- VERB: _____
- NOUN: _____
- VERB: _____
- NOUN: _____
- VERB: _____
- HOLIDAY: _____
- VERB: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- FOOD: _____
- EMOTION: _____
- VERB: _____
- EXCLAMATION: _____
- FOOD: _____

SILLY STORY SCENE:

Porcupine [PAST TENSE VERB] with excitement. It was [HOLIDAY] ! Her mouth watered as she opened her pantry: [NUMBER] stick of butter, [NUMBER] handfuls of sugar, and [NUMBER] scoops of flour. In a pail, she had a pile of rosy, red [FOOD] . Just the right ingredients to make her Famous [NOUN] Pie.

Porcupine read her recipe. Step 1: [VERB] the cranberries.

Porcupine stepped into her favorite [NOUN] and waddled down the path toward the river.

Porcupine [VERB] to rest at the base of Squirrel's [NOUN] . "Squirrel?" Porcupine called. "Are you [VERB] your Famous Nut Bread for [HOLIDAY] ?"

Squirrel [VERB] her head out of her nest. "No. It's just [ADJECTIVE] nuts for me this year. Bread needs [FOOD] and I have none."

"Don't look so [EMOTION] , Squirrel. I have flour to spare."

Squirrel [VERB] down the tree trunk. "Really? Oh [EXCLAMATION] , Porcupine!"

"The [FOOD] is in my pantry. Help yourself!"

ORIGINAL SCENE:

Porcupine pricked with excitement. It was Fall Feast Day! Her mouth watered as she opened her pantry: one stick of butter, two handfuls of sugar, and three scoops of flour. In a pail, she had a pile of rosy, red cranberries. Just the right ingredients to make her Famous Cranberry Pie.

Porcupine read her recipe. Step 1: Wash the cranberries.

Porcupine stepped into her favorite boots and waddled down the path toward the river.

Porcupine stopped to rest at the base of Squirrel's oak tree. "Squirrel?" Porcupine called. "Are you making your Famous Nut Bread for Fall Feast Day?"

Squirrel poked her head out of her nest. "No. It's just plain nuts for me this year. Bread needs flour and I have none."

"Don't look so sad, Squirrel. I have flour to spare."

Squirrel scampered down the tree trunk. "Really? Oh THANK YOU, Porcupine!"

"The flour is in my pantry. Help yourself."



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Passing the Music Down

BY: SARAH SULLIVAN

WORD LIST:

- NOUN: _____
- PLACE: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- INSTRUMENT: _____
- SONG: _____
- SONG: _____
- PLURAL PLACE: _____
- PAST TENSE VERB: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- PERSON: _____
- ING VERB: _____
- MONTH: _____
- VERB: _____
- NOUN: _____
- NOUN: _____
- NOUN: _____
- SUPERLATIVE: _____

SILLY STORY SCENE:

And, when the _____ [NOUN] is done, they sit out on the _____ [PLACE]. The _____ [ADJECTIVE] man tunes his _____ [INSTRUMENT], and the boy leans in close. They play “_____ [SONG]” and “_____ [SONG],” tunes older than the _____ [PLURAL PLACE] the boy _____ [PAST TENSE VERB] through, tunes _____ [ADJECTIVE] as the mist and twisty as the roads. Soon the _____ [PERSON] and his family are _____ [-ING VERB] down roots in the next county over from the old man’s farm. On cold _____ [MONTH] nights they _____ [VERB] by the fire. Snow settles deep against the _____ [NOUN], and the boy settles deep inside the _____ [NOUN]. The old man shares his _____ [NOUN]. They’ve become the _____ [SUPERLATIVE] of friends.

ORIGINAL SCENE:

And, when the work is done, they sit out on the porch. The old man tunes his fiddle, and the boy leans in close. They play “Bonaparte’s Retreat” and “Yew Piney Mountain,” tunes older than the towns the boy traveled through, tunes old as the mist and twisty as the roads.

Soon the boy and his family are putting down roots in the next county over from the old man’s farm. On cold December nights they fiddle by the fire. Snow settles deep against the fence, and the boy settles deep inside the music. The old man shares his stories. They’ve become the best of friends.



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An Artist's Night Before Christmas

BY: JOAN WAITES

WORD LIST:

- HOLIDAY: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- NOUN: _____
- VERB: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- NOUN: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- NOUN: _____
- NOUN: _____
- LAST NAME: _____
- NOUN: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- PLURAL NOUN: _____
- COLOR: _____
- COLOR: _____
- NOUN: _____
- NOUN: _____
- VERB: _____
- PLURAL NOUN: _____
- VERB: _____

SILLY STORY SCENE:

'Twas the night before _____ [HOLIDAY] _____ in a _____ [ADJECTIVE] _____ [ADJECTIVE] _____ house,
 Not a _____ [NOUN] _____ was _____ [VERB] _____ except a _____ [ADJECTIVE] _____ [NOUN] _____ .
 Beneath the _____ [ADJECTIVE] _____ stairs, through a crack in the _____ [NOUN] _____ ,
 lived le petit _____ [NOUN] _____ , named Henri _____ [LAST NAME] _____ .
 His _____ [NOUN] _____ glowed with a _____ [ADJECTIVE] _____ golden light,
 He squeezed out some _____ [PLURAL NOUN] _____ yellow, blue, _____ [COLOR] _____ and _____ [COLOR] _____ .
 The _____ [NOUN] _____ he worked on was for his best _____ [NOUN] _____ .
 He _____ [VERB] _____ on some _____ [PLURAL NOUN] _____ and started to _____ [VERB] _____ .

ORIGINAL SCENE:

*'Twas the night before Christmas, in a cute country house,
 Not a creature was stirring except a French mouse.
 Beneath the old stairs, through a crack in the wall,
 lived le petit artiste, named Henri DuPaul.*

*His studio glowed with a soft golden light,
 He squeezed out some paints; yellow, blue, black and white.
 The painting he worked on was for his best friend.
 He brushed on some colors, and started to blend.*



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To the Copper Country: Mihaela's Journey

BY: **BARBARA CARNEY-COSTON**

WORD LIST:

ANIMAL: _____
PLURAL NOUN: _____
NOUN: _____
SOUND: _____
NOUN: _____
NOUN: _____
NOUN: _____
BODY PART: _____
ADJECTIVE: _____
PAST TENSE VERB: _____
NOUN: _____
PAST TENSE VERB: _____
PREPOSITION: _____
ADJECTIVE: _____
ADJECTIVE: _____
PAST TENSE VERB: _____

SILLY STORY SCENE:

The _____ [ANIMAL] _____ had gone and the air was still. She heard _____ [PLURAL NOUN] _____ snap. An _____ [NOUN] _____ falling, she told herself. Then another _____ [SOUND] _____, louder. Mihaela clutched her _____ [NOUN] _____ and _____ [NOUN] _____ as her _____ [BODY PART] _____ skipped a beat. When she heard more _____ [ADJECTIVE] _____ snaps, she _____ [PAST TENSE VERB] _____ her _____ [NOUN] _____ with as much force as she could and _____ [PAST TENSE VERB] _____ away _____ [PREPOSITION] _____ the sounds. She saw a flash of _____ [ADJECTIVE] _____ fur moving into the shadows. Her mouth went _____ [ADJECTIVE] _____ and her heart _____ [PAST TENSE VERB] _____.

ORIGINAL SCENE:

The gulls had gone and the air was still. She heard twigs snap. An acorn falling, she told herself. Then another snap, louder. Mihaela clutched her pot and stick as her heart skipped a beat. When she heard more crackling snaps, she banged her pot with as much force as she could and moved away from the sounds. She saw a flash of black fur moving into the shadows. Her mouth went dry and her heart pounded.



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Tiny Infinities

BY: J.H. DIEHL

WORD LIST:

PLACE: _____
ADJECTIVE: _____
ADJECTIVE: _____
NAME: _____
PAST TENSE VERB: _____
PLACE: _____
TEAM NAME: _____
PAST TENSE VERB: _____
ADJECTIVE: _____
PAST TENSE VERB: _____
ADJECTIVE: _____
EMOTION: _____
NOUN: _____

SILLY STORY SCENE:

The _____ [PLACE] snack bar cooked their curly fries almost- _____ [ADJECTIVE] _____, in corkscrew twirls that I loved, that came out of the fryer _____ [ADJECTIVE] _____-colored. _____ [NAME] had _____ [PAST TENSE VERB] my order. I asked where she used to live and she told me _____ [PLACE] _____, where she'd swum for a team called the _____ [TEAM NAME] _____, and her best stroke was breaststroke.

I couldn't resist. "I'm aware of the fact that your best stroke is breaststroke."

She _____ [PAST TENSE VERB] at me.

"I watched you swim," I said.

"Not like you're _____ [ADJECTIVE] _____ or anything."

"I am, but my best event is freestyle." I _____ [PAST TENSE VERB] another curly fry.

She shook her head. "Backstroke."

"How would you know?" My voice sounded as _____ [ADJECTIVE] _____ as I felt, which right away I regretted since Coach B asked me to be nice to her.

"Never mind," she went on. "Once I met an Alice named after Alice in Wonderland. Were you?"

It's surprising how often people ask me that. I almost always say yes, even though it isn't true. I'm not _____ [EMOTION] _____ of the real truth, which is that I'm named after a _____ [NOUN] _____.

ORIGINAL SCENE:

The pool snack bar cooked their curly fries almost-crunchy, in corkscrew twirls that I loved, that came out of the fryer orange-colored. Harriet had copied my order. I asked where she used to live and she told me Minneapolis, where she'd swum for a team called the Loons, and her best stroke was breaststroke.

I couldn't resist. "I'm aware of the fact that your best stroke is breaststroke."

She glared at me.

"I watched you swim," I said.

"Not like you're competitive or anything."

"I am, but my best event is freestyle." I ate another curly fry.

She shook her head. "Backstroke."

"How would you know?" My voice sounded as annoyed as I felt, which right away I regretted since Coach B asked me to be nice to her.

"Never mind," she went on. "Once I met an Alice named after Alice in Wonderland. Were you?"

It's surprising how often people ask me that. I almost always say yes, even though it isn't true. I'm not proud of the real truth, which is that I'm named after a dog.



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The Incredible Magic of Being

BY: KATHRYN ERSKINE

WORD LIST:

- ING VERB: _____
- WEATHER TYPE: _____
- MOVIE TITLE: _____
- NAME: _____
- ING VERB: _____
- PAST TENSE VERB: _____
- WEATHER TYPE: _____
- NOUN: _____
- NOUN: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- EMOTION: _____
- PAST TENSE VERB: _____
- PAST TENSE VERB: _____
- MOVIE TITLE: _____
- ING VERB: _____
- ING VERB: _____

SILLY STORY SCENE:

Once Mom tried to help me deal with my fear of _____ [-ING VERB] by having me watch a movie about a _____ [WEATHER TYPE], _____ [MOVIE TITLE]. Even _____ [NAME], who's pretty tough, said, "Are you sure this is a good idea?" When people have to ask that, the answer is usually no.

My parallel universe friend Clara is also scared of _____ [-ING VERB], so she watched it with me. When the family in the movie started getting _____ [PAST TENSE VERB] in the _____ [WEATHER TYPE], spinning upside down under _____ [NOUN] with _____ [NOUN] and trash hitting them, I couldn't help it, I screamed. Mom jumped and said maybe this was a _____ [ADJECTIVE] idea and I should stop watching. Clara yelled, It's a little late for that, isn't it? I can't UN-see it now! What were you thinking? but Mom looked so _____ [EMOTION] I just said, "I'm OK." And in the end, nobody in the family _____ [PAST TENSE VERB] and they all _____ [PAST TENSE VERB] each other so even though the movie was called _____ [MOVIE TITLE], I guess sometimes things seem impossible but they're really not. Or it was just a bad movie title and should've been called something like Horrifying Story of Almost _____ [-ING VERB] or How to Scare Julian to Death, because I still had _____ [-ING VERB] nightmares afterward—and I mean, a LOT.

ORIGINAL SCENE:

Once Mom tried to help me deal with my fear of drowning by having me watch a movie about a tsunami, The Impossible. Even Joan, who's pretty tough, said, "Are you sure this is a good idea?" When people have to ask that, the answer is usually no.

My parallel universe friend Clara is also scared of drowning, so she watched it with me. When the family in the movie started getting swept away in the tsunami, spinning upside down under water with trees and trash hitting them, I couldn't help it, I screamed. Mom jumped and said maybe this was a bad idea and I should stop watching. Clara yelled, It's a little late for that, isn't it? I can't UN-see it now! What were you thinking? but Mom looked so upset I just said, "I'm OK." And in the end, nobody in the family drowned and they all found each other so even though the movie was called The Impossible, I guess sometimes things seem impossible but they're really not. Or it was just a bad movie title and should've been called something like Horrifying Story of Almost Drowning or How to Scare Julian to Death, because I still had drowning nightmares afterward—and I mean, a LOT.



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The Incredible Magic of Being

BY: KATHRYN ERSKINE

WORD LIST:

- ING VERB: _____
- WEATHER TYPE: _____
- MOVIE TITLE: _____
- NAME: _____
- ING VERB: _____
- PAST TENSE VERB: _____
- WEATHER TYPE: _____
- NOUN: _____
- NOUN: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- EMOTION: _____
- PAST TENSE VERB: _____
- PAST TENSE VERB: _____
- MOVIE TITLE: _____
- ING VERB: _____
- ING VERB: _____

SILLY STORY SCENE:

Once Mom tried to help me deal with my fear of _____ by having me watch a movie about a _____, _____ . Even _____, who's pretty tough, said, "Are you sure this is a good idea?" When people have to ask that, the answer is usually no.

My parallel universe friend Clara is also scared of _____, so she watched it with me. When the family in the movie started getting _____ in the _____, spinning upside down under _____ with _____ and trash hitting them, I couldn't help it, I screamed. Mom jumped and said maybe this was a _____ idea and I should stop watching. Clara yelled, It's a little late for that, isn't it? I can't UN-see it now! What were you thinking? but Mom looked so _____ I just said, "I'm OK." And in the end, nobody in the family _____ and they all _____ each other so even though the movie was called _____, I guess sometimes things seem impossible but they're really not. Or it was just a bad movie title and should've been called something like Horrifying Story of Almost _____ or How to Scare Julian to Death, because I still had _____ nightmares afterward—and I mean, a LOT.

ORIGINAL SCENE:

Once Mom tried to help me deal with my fear of drowning by having me watch a movie about a tsunami, The Impossible. Even Joan, who's pretty tough, said, "Are you sure this is a good idea?" When people have to ask that, the answer is usually no.

My parallel universe friend Clara is also scared of drowning, so she watched it with me. When the family in the movie started getting swept away in the tsunami, spinning upside down under water with trees and trash hitting them, I couldn't help it, I screamed. Mom jumped and said maybe this was a bad idea and I should stop watching. Clara yelled, It's a little late for that, isn't it? I can't UN-see it now! What were you thinking? but Mom looked so upset I just said, "I'm OK." And in the end, nobody in the family drowned and they all found each other so even though the movie was called The Impossible, I guess sometimes things seem impossible but they're really not. Or it was just a bad movie title and should've been called something like Horrifying Story of Almost Drowning or How to Scare Julian to Death, because I still had drowning nightmares afterward—and I mean, a LOT.



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Maddy and Cole Vol. 1: The Food Truck Grand Prix

BY: RICHIE FRIEMAN

WORD LIST:

- NOUN: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- EVENT: _____
- NOUN: _____
- NOUN: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- NOUN: _____
- PAST TENSE VERB: _____
- PERSON: _____
- NAME: _____
- ANIMAL: _____
- NOUN: _____
- EVENT: _____
- PEOPLE: _____

SILLY STORY SCENE:

The realization that Pop Pop's _____ [NOUN] was not _____ [ADJECTIVE] at all crushed my dreams of winning the _____ [EVENT] and getting my new _____ [NOUN]. How on earth could we win when Pop Pop's _____ [NOUN] looks so old and _____ [ADJECTIVE]? As far as the _____ [NOUN], I seriously doubted it would work and _____ [PAST TENSE VERB] whether he even had any at all.

The greatest _____ [PERSON] in the world turning _____ [NAME] into a fire-breathing _____ [ANIMAL] seemed easier than what would be needed to make Pop Pop's _____ [NOUN] a winner in the _____ [EVENT]. In fact, we would need a team of _____ [PEOPLE]. No, an army of them."

ORIGINAL SCENE:

The realization that Pop Pop's food truck was not fantastic at all crushed my dreams of winning the Grand Prix and getting my new bike. How on earth could we win when Pop Pop's truck looks so old and beaten up? As far as the "magic," I seriously doubted it would work and questioned whether he even had any at all.

The greatest magician in the world turning Cole into a fire-breathing dragon seemed easier than what would be needed to make Pop Pop's truck a winner in the Grand Prix. In fact, we would need a team of magicians. No, an army of them."



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The Battle of Junk Mountain

BY: LAUREN ABBEY GREENBERG

WORD LIST:

PLURAL NOUN: _____

ADJECTIVE: _____

VERB: _____

-ING VERB: _____

NUMBER: _____

PLURAL NOUN: _____

VERB: _____

NAME: _____

PLACE: _____

VERB: _____

SILLY STORY SCENE:

The next morning, we reach the elementary school to find the parking lot busy with sellers unloading their [PLURAL NOUN] from their cars. Bea and I hurry our boxes and bags into the school's gymnasium. Rows of [ADJECTIVE] tables divide the space, and Bea finds her name on a Reserved card near the entrance.

"Good spot," she says. "People will have to [VERB] us on their way in and out."

The high ceiling carries the echoes of [-ING VERB] glass, rustling paper, and metal folding chairs scraping across wood floors. We quickly arrange our table in an artful display. I wonder if her trash will look like treasure in someone else's eyes.

At the stroke of [NUMBER] o'clock, the double doors fly open, and a stream of [PLURAL NOUN] pour inside. Hundreds of eyes scan the tables, hoping to snatch the best deals. The room feels manic, like we're selling cheap wedding dresses instead of Aunt Emily's old pot holders. It's not long before the temperature rises, and I [VERB] my face to stay cool.

Bea sits on her folding chair like she's Queen of the Court. She waves to friends and strangers alike, hoping they will stop for a look at her fabulous offerings. I notice a few familiar faces, like [NAME] , who's holding hands with her longtime boyfriend, Billy. I sink low in my chair as I spot Ray from the [PLACE] browsing a few tables down. Then I see Gio and [VERB] even lower.

ORIGINAL SCENE:

The next morning, we reach the elementary school to find the parking lot busy with sellers unloading their goods from their cars. Bea and I hurry our boxes and bags into the school's gymnasium. Rows of long tables divide the space, and Bea finds her name on a Reserved card near the entrance.

"Good spot," she says. "People will have to pass us on their way in and out."

The high ceiling carries the echoes of clinking glass, rustling paper, and metal folding chairs scraping across wood floors. We quickly arrange our table in an artful display. I wonder if her trash will look like treasure in someone else's eyes.

At the stroke of eight o'clock, the double doors fly open, and a stream of people pour inside. Hundreds of eyes scan the tables, hoping to snatch the best deals. The room feels manic, like we're selling cheap wedding dresses instead of Aunt Emily's old pot holders. It's not long before the temperature rises, and I fan my face to stay cool.

Bea sits on her folding chair like she's Queen of the Court. She waves to friends and strangers alike, hoping they will stop for a look at her fabulous offerings. I notice a few familiar faces, like Leanne, who's holding hands with her longtime boyfriend, Billy. I sink low in my chair as I spot Ray from the Cod Café browsing a few tables down. Then I see Gio and sink even lower.



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National Geographic Kids 125 Rescued Pets: From Pound to Palace

BY: KITSON JAZYNK

WORD LIST:

- NOUN: _____
- PAST TENSE VERB: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- PLURAL NOUN: _____
- PAST TENSE VERB: _____
- ANIMAL: _____
- BODY PART: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- PAST TENSE VERB: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- PERSON: _____
- ING VERB: _____
- BODY PART: _____
- PAST TENSE VERB: _____
- PEOPLE: _____
- PLURAL ANIMAL: _____
- ING VERB: _____
- ANIMAL: _____
- PLACE: _____

SILLY STORY SCENE:

When Chino arrived at Days End _____ [NOUN] Horse Rescue, he was nearly _____ [PAST TENSE VERB] to death and in _____ [ADJECTIVE] shape. His former _____ [PLURAL NOUN] had seriously _____ [PAST TENSE VERB] his care. He was in so much pain upon getting off the _____ [ANIMAL] trailer, he wouldn't stop grinding his _____ [BODY PART]. He ended up in _____ [ADJECTIVE] care and _____ [PAST TENSE VERB] to survive. He had a _____ [ADJECTIVE] recovery, but this survivor went from _____ [ADJECTIVE] shape to _____ [ADJECTIVE] with the rescue's care. When a _____ [PERSON] visited to see about _____ [-ING VERB] a horse, she couldn't take her _____ [BODY PART] off Chino. It was love at first sight. Chino _____ [PAST TENSE VERB] up with the _____ [PEOPLE] other rescue _____ [PLURAL ANIMAL] and began his new life as a pampered pet. He loves going for trail rides, _____ [-ING VERB] out in the barn with his girl, competing at _____ [ANIMAL] shows and even swimming in the _____ [PLACE].

ORIGINAL SCENE:

When Chino arrived at Days End Farm Horse Rescue, he was nearly starved to death and in terrible shape. His former owners had seriously neglected his care. He was in so much pain upon getting off the horse trailer, he wouldn't stop grinding his teeth. He ended up in intensive care and struggled to survive. He had a long recovery, but this survivor went from bad shape to beautiful with the rescue's care. When a girl visited to see about adopting a horse, she couldn't take her eyes off Chino. It was love at first sight. Chino joined up with the family's other rescue horses and began his new life as a pampered pet. He loves going for trail rides, hanging out in the barn with his girl, competing at horse shows and even swimming in the Chesapeake Bay.



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Power Forward

BY: HENA KHAN

WORD LIST:

LAST NAME: _____
SPORT: _____
ADJECTIVE: _____
NUMBER: _____
NOUN: _____
BODY PART: _____
ADJECTIVE: _____
PERSON: _____
EMOTION: _____
VERB: _____
EXCLAMATION: _____

SILLY STORY SCENE:

Coach _____ [LAST NAME] lives for _____ [SPORT], like me. Plus, he makes us work hard. In my old league we had a super-_____ [ADJECTIVE] coach. But all we got was a sportsmanship award after losing every game by _____ [NUMBER] points or more. This season I'm playing better. And we've been winning, too. "Nice pass," Keanu says to me after Coach blows the whistle. Coach blows the whistle again, and I inbound the _____ [NOUN]. William dribbles down to the three-point line and passes to Chris. I pause, and my _____ [BODY PART] goes into overdrive. It's like I'm seeing everything in _____ [ADJECTIVE] motion. I've been hot today. What better way to end the scrimmage, and impress _____ [PERSON], than taking a winning shot? I glance over at Keanu, and then, instead of setting a screen, call for the ball. Chris passes it to me. I'm feeling _____ [EMOTION] as I dribble, pump fake, and _____ [VERB] a shot that goes straight into the hoop _____ [EXCLAMATION].
Did I mention I'm on fire?

ORIGINAL SCENE:

Coach Harding lives for basketball, like me. Plus, he makes us work hard. In my old league we had a super-nice coach. But all we got was a sportsmanship award after losing every game by twenty points or more. This season I'm playing better. And we've been winning, too.

"Nice pass," Keanu says to me after Coach blows the whistle.

Coach blows the whistle again, and I inbound the ball. William dribbles down to the three-point line and passes to Chris. I pause, and my brain goes into overdrive. It's like I'm seeing everything in slow motion. I've been hot today. What better way to end the scrimmage, and impress Coach, than taking a winning shot?

I glance over at Keanu, and then, instead of setting a screen, call for the ball. Chris passes it to me. I'm feeling confident as I dribble, pump fake, and launch a shot that goes straight into the hoop
SIZZLE.

Did I mention I'm on fire?



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Lalli's Window

BY: KAMAKSHI P. MURTI

WORD LIST:

- NOUN: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- NOUN: _____
- EXCLAMATION: _____
- NAME: _____
- PAST TENSE VERB: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- ADVERB: _____
- VERB: _____
- ING VERB: _____
- ING VERB: _____
- ING VERB: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- NOUN: _____
- PLURAL NOUN: _____
- PLACE: _____
- BODY PART: _____
- PAST TENSE VERB: _____

SILLY STORY SCENE:

A _____ [NOUN] is as cool as can be!
 It shows you a world _____ [ADJECTIVE] -free.
 Down a _____ [NOUN], up a hill,
 Go around just for a thrill,
 Till you cry out: “_____ [EXCLAMATION]!”

_____ [NAME] groaned. She had so _____ [PAST TENSE VERB] to try out her super _____ [ADJECTIVE] wheelchair outside today. Every day she was getting better at it. She could turn it _____ [ADVERB] around, she could even _____ [VERB] with it. Of course there was always some grown-up voice _____ [-ING VERB]: “That’s enough, Lalitha!” (When she heard ‘Lalitha’ she knew she was in trouble.) But this morning it was _____ [-ING VERB] and _____ [-ING VERB]. She tried to look out of the _____ [ADJECTIVE] _____ [NOUN] in her bedroom. But the _____ [PLURAL NOUN] were covered with water. Rain lashed against them. “This is like that monsoon rain back in _____ [PLACE] that Thatha always talks about.” She shut her _____ [BODY PART] every time she saw a flash of lightning followed by that awful slap of thunder. She _____ [PAST TENSE VERB] again. “Boring! Can’t do a thing today! The rain – will it never, never stop?”

ORIGINAL SCENE:

*A wheelchair is as cool as can be!
 It shows you a world fancy-free.
 Down a slope, up a hill,
 Go around just for a thrill,
 Till you cry out: “OH GOLLY! OH GOSH! OH GEE!”*

*Lalli groaned. She had so wanted to try out her super cool wheelchair outside today. Every day she was getting better at it. She could turn it quickly around, she could even race with it. Of course there was always some grown-up voice shouting:
 “That’s enough, Lalitha!” (When she heard ‘Lalitha’ she knew she was in trouble.)
 But this morning it was raining and raining. She tried to look out of the large window in her bedroom. But the glass panes were covered with water. Rain lashed against them.
 “This is like that monsoon rain back in Amalaapuram that Thatha always talks about.” She shut her eyes every time she saw a flash of lightning followed by that awful slap of thunder. She groaned again.
 “Boring! Can’t do a thing today! The rain – will it never, never stop?”*



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Beep and Bob: Too Much Space!

BY: JONATHAN ROTH

WORD LIST:

PLACE: _____

PLACE: _____

ADJECTIVE: _____

PAST TENSE VERB: _____

LETTER: _____

EXCLAMATION: _____

ADJECTIVE: _____

-ING VERB: _____

EMOTION: _____

PAST TENSE VERB: _____

FAMILY MEMBER: _____

EMOTION: _____

VERB: _____

SILLY STORY SCENE:

Astro Elementary is a big space station orbiting _____ [PLACE].

I think they picked _____ [PLACE] because it looks
_____ [ADJECTIVE] in the brochures.

Trust me, I _____ [PAST TENSE VERB] to get out of coming here. When I
took the big admissions test, I filled out _____ [LETTER] for every
answer. Instant fail, right?

_____ [EXCLAMATION] Turns out I was the only kid on the planet
this time to get a _____ [ADJECTIVE] score. Now everyone
thinks I'm some kind of super space genius. I'm a failure even at
_____ [-ING VERB]! My parents were more _____ [EMOTION]
than anything, but as much as I _____ [PAST TENSE VERB], they wouldn't
let me stay home or send my little _____ [FAMILY MEMBER] in my
place. She seemed particularly _____ [EMOTION] to see me
_____ [VERB].

ORIGINAL SCENE:

Astro Elementary is a big space station orbiting Saturn. I think they picked Saturn because it looks cool in the brochures.

Trust me, I tried to get out of coming here. When I took the big admissions test, I filled out C for every answer. Instant fail, right?

Wrong! Turns out I was the only kid on the planet this time to get a perfect score. Now everyone thinks I'm some kind of super space genius. I'm a failure even at failing! My parents were more surprised than anything, but as much as I begged, they wouldn't let me stay home or send my little sister in my place. She seemed particularly happy to see me go.



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Bone's Gift

BY: ANGIE SMIBERT

WORD LIST:

NOUN: _____
NAME: _____
PAST TENSE VERB: _____
ADJECTIVE: _____
FOOD: _____
FAMILY MEMBER: _____
NUMBER: _____
LETTER: _____
PLACE: _____
NUMBER: _____
PLURAL NOUN: _____
NOUN: _____
BODY PART: _____
PAST TENSE VERB: _____
ADJECTIVE: _____

SILLY STORY SCENE:

"Bone. You look like a _____ [NOUN]" Jake grinned as he and _____ [NAME] plopped into the seats next to her at the picnic table. It was still warm enough for them to eat their sack lunches outside. Jake _____ [PAST TENSE VERB] several pieces of fried chicken from a sheet of _____ [ADJECTIVE] wax paper. Clay pulled out a couple jelly _____ [FOOD] from his pockets. Without a word, Jake passed Clay a drumstick. Bone knew their stories. Clay's father, Chuck, worked down the mines with _____ [FAMILY MEMBER]—and now Will. The Whitakers had _____ [NUMBER] kids, and all their names started with a _____ [LETTER]. Jake's father was the outside man at _____ [PLACE]. He ran the tippie and worked the machinery. Jake only had two baby sisters. Bone often wondered what it would be like to have even _____ [NUMBER] brother or sister. Bone smoothed out the _____ [PLURAL NOUN] in her new _____ [NOUN]. She had to admit this was a pretty one, with the little flowers all over it. "Maybe we should call you Bone Meal," said a voice over Bone's _____ [BODY PART]. Ruby stood there in her store-bought Sears and Roebuck dress flanked by Pearl and Opal. The Little Jewels. Bone would have to tell Will that one. "At least that's something useful," Ruby sneered. Pearl and Opal dutifully _____ [PAST TENSE VERB]. "I'd rather be useful than a _____ [ADJECTIVE] Jewel," Bone snapped back. The boys laughed.

ORIGINAL SCENE:

"Bone. You look like a girl." Jake grinned as he and Clay plopped into the seats next to her at the picnic table. It was still warm enough for them to eat their sack lunches outside. Jake unwrapped several pieces of fried chicken from a sheet of greasy wax paper. Clay pulled out a couple jelly biscuits from his pockets. Without a word, Jake passed Clay a drumstick.

Bone knew their stories. Clay's father, Chuck, worked down the mines with Daddy—and now Will. The Whitakers had six kids, and all their names started with a C. Jake's father was the outside man at Big Vein. He ran the tippie and worked the machinery. Jake only had two baby sisters. Bone often wondered what it would be like to have even one brother or sister.

Bone smoothed out the wrinkles in her new dress. She had to admit this was a pretty one, with the little flowers all over it.

"Maybe we should call you Bone Meal," said a voice over Bone's shoulder. Ruby stood there in her store-bought Sears and Roebuck dress flanked by Pearl and Opal. The Little Jewels. Bone would have to tell Will that one. "At least that's something useful," Ruby sneered. Pearl and Opal dutifully giggled.

"I'd rather be useful than a Little Jewel," Bone snapped back. The boys laughed.



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All That's Missing

BY: SARAH SULLIVAN

WORD LIST:

- PRONOUN: _____
- NOUN: _____
- PLACE: _____
- NAME: _____
- NOUN: _____
- NUMBER: _____
- NAME #2: _____
- PAST TENSE VERB: _____
- NAME: _____
- PLACE: _____
- PLACE: _____
- NOUN: _____
- NOUN: _____
- BODY PART: _____
- NOUN: _____
- NUMBER: _____
- NOUN: _____
- ING VERB: _____
- PLACE: _____
- NOUN: _____

SILLY STORY SCENE:

On _____ [PRONOUN] _____ way out the door, the _____ [NOUN] _____ on the mantle in the _____ [PLACE] _____ struck the hour. _____ [NAME] _____ stopped dead in her tracks. "That _____ [NOUN] _____ hasn't chimed in _____ [NUMBER] _____ years," she said. "Did you wind it?" _____ [NAME] _____ shook his head. "I never _____ [PAST TENSE VERB] _____ it," he said. _____ [NAME] _____ moved back though the _____ [PLACE] _____, straight to the _____ [PLACE] _____. She walked to the _____ [NOUN] _____ and placed her hand on the _____ [NOUN] _____. Then she turned and gazed around the room. "What's wrong?" Arlo asked. "Nothing." She ran a _____ [BODY PART] _____ along the top of the _____ [NOUN] _____. "I haven't cleaned in here for at least _____ [NUMBER] _____ days, and there's not a speck of _____ [NOUN] _____ on this clock. Must have been that Mr. Garringer. The way he went around _____ [-ING VERB] _____ everything in the house. Must have wound the clock. Probably had his eye on buying it too. What a horrible man!" She walked toward the _____ [PLACE] _____ again. "Hurry up, Arlo. We're late." Was it Arlo's imagination or did something sweep past the window as he glanced toward the attic on his way to the _____ [NOUN] _____ ?

ORIGINAL SCENE:

On their way out the door, the clock on the mantle in the living room struck the hour. Ida stopped dead in her tracks.

"That clock hasn't chimed in eight years," she said. "Did you wind it?"

Arlo shook his head. "I never touched it," he said.

Ida moved back through the kitchen, straight to the living room. She walked to the mantle and placed her hand on the clock. Then she turned and gazed around the room.

"What's wrong?" Arlo asked.

"Nothing." She ran a finger along the top of the clock. "I haven't cleaned in here for at least ten days, and there's not a speck of dust on this clock. Must have been that Mr. Garringer. The way he went around touching everything in the house. Must have wound the clock. Probably had his eye on buying it too. What a horrible man!" She walked toward the kitchen again. "Hurry up, Arlo. We're late."

Was it Arlo's imagination or did something sweep past the window as he glanced toward the attic on his way to the car?



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Twelve Steps

BY: VERONICA BARTLES

WORD LIST:

- NOUN: _____
- VERB: _____
- MOVIE: _____
- PREPOSITION: _____
- ING VERB: _____
- PREPOSITION: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- NOUN: _____
- ADJECTIVE: _____
- NUMBER: _____
- VERB: _____
- NUMBER: _____
- DAY: _____
- PLACE: _____
- ING VERB: _____
- VERB: _____
- VERB: _____
- NUMBER: _____

SILLY STORY SCENE:

The scent of buttered [NOUN] fills the air, and my mouth waters as I step into line with Summer and Emily to [VERB] our tickets for [MOVIE TITLE]. I don't see Jarod or his friends, but the movie starts in ten minutes. They're probably already inside.

"Hey, Andi. What's up?" Dave appears in line [PREPOSITION] me.

"Are you following me now?" I take a half-step away from him, carefully [-ING VERB] so that Emily stands as a buffer

[PREPOSITION] us.

He laughs and points to the [ADJECTIVE] line forming behind him.

"I guess, if getting in line behind you means I'm following you, then I'm guilty as charged. But so are about [NUMBER] other people."

I [VERB] my arms and turn my back on him. "Whatever. I just think it's awfully coincidental that you happen to show up right after we get in line."

"You're right. I planned it. Because it's completely unbelievable that [NUMBER] random people could both want to go to the movies. On a [DAY] night. At the only good [PLACE] in town."

"Hey, Dave, what's up?" Summer asks, giving me her patented, exaggerated eye roll. I can practically hear her thoughts

[-ING VERB] at me. *What are you so afraid of? Dave's harmless. It's not like he's going to [VERB] you right here in the middle of the mall.* But she wasn't there when Dave tried to

[VERB] me in the coat closet after recess in [NUMBER] grade.

ORIGINAL SCENE:

The scent of buttered popcorn fills the air, and my mouth waters as I step into line with Summer and Emily to buy our tickets for Fiero Furious. I don't see Jarod or his friends, but the movie starts in ten minutes. They're probably already inside.

"Hey, Andi. What's up?" Dave appears in line behind me.

"Are you following me now?" I take a half-step away from him, carefully maneuvering so that Emily stands as a buffer between us.

He laughs and points to the long line forming behind him. "I guess, if getting in line behind you means I'm following you, then I'm guilty as charged. But so are about thirty other people."

I cross my arms and turn my back on him. "Whatever. I just think it's awfully coincidental that you happen to show up right after we get in line."

"You're right. I planned it. Because it's completely unbelievable that two random people could both want to go to the movies. On a Friday night. At the only good theater in town."

"Hey, Dave, what's up?" Summer asks, giving me her patented, exaggerated eye roll. I can practically hear her thoughts screaming at me. What are you so afraid of? Dave's harmless. It's not like he's going to attack you right here in the middle of the mall. But she wasn't there when Dave tried to kiss me in the coat closet after recess in fourth grade.



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How She Died, How I Lived

BY: MARY CROCKETT

WORD LIST:

NOUN: _____
ADJECTIVE: _____
DIRECTION: _____
BUSINESS: _____
ADJECTIVE: _____
PLURAL NOUN: _____
FOOD: _____
ADJECTIVE: _____
BODY PART: _____
-ING VERB: _____
VERB: _____
PREPOSITION: _____
NOUN: _____

SILLY STORY SCENE:

“Are you sure we should be doing this?” I ask.

“No,” she says, then flicks on the _____ [NOUN] _____ and follows him down the street.

We trail Todd down Main, past the edge of town. He turns right into a _____ [ADJECTIVE] _____ little strip mall. Lindsey turns _____ [DIRECTION] _____ instead and parks in the lot of _____ [BUSINESS] _____ across the street.

Todd pulls up to the pump outside the Fast Gas convenience store at the far end of the strip. The other places look super _____ [ADJECTIVE] _____, like they’re fronts for something else. Except for Luann’s Nails and Midland Tactical Supply, they don’t even have business names on their _____ [PLURAL NOUN] _____, just what they do in big letters and a phone number below. massage and tattoo and _____ [FOOD] _____.

“Can you see what’s going on?” Lindsey asks.

The way she’s parked, her view is obscured by a _____ [ADJECTIVE] _____ shrub, but if I press my _____ [BODY PART] _____ against my side window, I see the strip mall perfectly.

“He’s at the gas pump,” I say. And after a minute, “He’s _____ [-ING VERB] _____ into Fast Gas.”

What’s weird, though, is that when he goes to _____ [VERB] _____, the checkout woman reaches _____ [PREPOSITION] _____ the counter and pulls up a plastic bag full of something. She rings up his gas and hands the _____ [NOUN] _____ to him, like it’s something he just bought, only it’s not.

ORIGINAL SCENE:

“Are you sure we should be doing this?” I ask.

“No,” she says, then flicks on the engine and follows him down the street.

We trail Todd down Main, past the edge of town. He turns right into a weird little strip mall. Lindsey turns left instead and parks in the lot of Twin Acres Motel across the street.

Todd pulls up to the pump outside the Fast Gas convenience store at the far end of the strip. The other places look super sketchy, like they’re fronts for something else. Except for Luann’s Nails and Midland Tactical Supply, they don’t even have business names on their signs, just what they do in big letters and a phone number below. massage and tattoo and pizza.

“Can you see what’s going on?” Lindsey asks.

The way she’s parked, her view is obscured by a mangy shrub, but if I press my forehead against my side window, I see the strip mall perfectly.

“He’s at the gas pump,” I say. And after a minute, “He’s walking into Fast Gas.”

What’s weird, though, is that when he goes to pay, the checkout woman reaches under the counter and pulls up a plastic bag full of something. She rings up his gas and hands the bag to him, like it’s something he just bought, only it’s not.



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Bewitching Hannah

BY: LEIGH GOFF

WORD LIST:

EMOTION: _____
PAST TENSE VERB: _____
EMOTION: _____
ADJECTIVE: _____
NOUN: _____
PREPOSITION: _____
PAST TENSE VERB: _____
PLURAL BODY PART: _____
VERB: _____
BODY PART: _____
NUMBER: _____
VERB: _____
VERB: _____

SILLY STORY SCENE:

“Emme Blackstone is a mutual enemy and means us both harm.” A tinge of _____ [EMOTION] _____ [PAST TENSE VERB] his tone.

The anger, I understood. After all, we were talking about Emme, but there was also a hint of _____ [EMOTION] _____ that intrigued me further.

“Why do you think Emme means you harm?”

“It’s inevitable—because of what I am.”

What was he besides completely _____ [ADJECTIVE] _____?

“It’s in her blood and I believe it’s in her destiny to wreak

_____ [NOUN] _____, especially _____ [PREPOSITION] _____ someone who can challenge her in talent like you can.”

I _____ [PAST TENSE VERB] _____ my _____ [PLURAL BODY PART] _____ to my sides, still clasping the enveloping. “Whoa. Like me? You don’t _____ [VERB] _____ me.

You don’t know anything about me. How could you? I’ve been gone for the last year.”

A chortle caught in his _____ [BODY PART] _____. “What’s a year when you come from a bloodline with _____ [NUMBER] _____ of years of history?

A history that’s written down and available to certain people with the right—pedigree.”

Confused, I creased my brow as I continued to _____ [VERB] _____ at his silhouette. “Have you been cyber-stalking me on Ancestry.com or something?”

“Hardly.” There was disdain in his voice as if he considered cyber-stalking to be worse than leaving a girl to _____ [VERB] _____.

ORIGINAL SCENE:

“Emme Blackstone is a mutual enemy and means us both harm.” A tinge of anger laced his tone. The anger, I understood. After all, we were talking about Emme, but there was also a hint of sadness that intrigued me further. “Why do you think Emme means you harm?”

“It’s inevitable—because of what I am.”

What was he besides completely contemptible?

“It’s in her blood and I believe it’s in her destiny to wreak havoc, especially against someone who can challenge her in talent like you can.”

I dropped my hands to my sides, still clasping the enveloping. “Whoa. Like me? You don’t know me. You don’t know anything about me. How could you? I’ve been gone for the last year.”

A chortle caught in his throat. “What’s a year when you come from a bloodline with hundreds of years of history? A history that’s written down and available to certain people with the right—pedigree.”

Confused, I creased my brow as I continued to stare at his silhouette. “Have you been cyber-stalking me on Ancestry.com or something?”

“Hardly.” There was disdain in his voice as if he considered cyber-stalking to be worse than leaving a girl to die.



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Dagger and Coin

BY: KATHY MACMILLAN

WORD LIST:

ADJECTIVE: _____

DRINK: _____

ADJECTIVE: _____

BODY PART: _____

PLURAL BODY PART: _____

ADJECTIVE: _____

DRINK: _____

-ING VERB: _____

VERB: _____

BODY PART: _____

NOUN: _____

PAST TENSE VERB: _____

VERB: _____

SILLY STORY SCENE:

“You look _____ [ADJECTIVE] _____. Have some _____ [DRINK] _____.”

Deshti shoved a cup across the desk.

My fingers were _____ [ADJECTIVE] _____, so the cup felt good in my hands, and my dry _____ [BODY PART] _____ welcomed the hot liquid.

“Thanks. Is...is Jonis still here?”

Her mouth was a thin line. “He went to talk to Loris.”

I closed my _____ [PLURAL BODY PART] _____ briefly. Jonis had probably told Loris exactly what I'd done. I'd been _____ [ADJECTIVE] _____ to think Loris might understand; he probably didn't trust me any more than Jonis did.

I had to gulp down another mouthful of _____ [DRINK] _____ to keep from _____ [-ING VERB] _____. This wasn't how I had meant for anything to work

out. “Did he ask you to _____ [VERB] _____ me too?” I said, trying to keep my tone flip.

Deshti didn't answer, only looked down at her _____ [BODY PART] _____.

I flushed, remembering how I had used her feelings for Jonis as a _____ [NOUN] _____. That hadn't been fair to her. My head swirled with all the mistakes I had made, all the ways I had hurt people.

“Deshti,” I said, “I'm sorry, but I...told Jonis how you feel about him.”

Deshti rose. “That's all right.” She _____ [PAST TENSE VERB] _____ the teacup out of my hands, and I realized that the fingers holding it had grown numb. Drugged, I thought hazily.

Her voice seemed to come from far away when she _____ [VERB] _____ again. “Jonis already knew that I would do anything for him. A lot of us would. You should have thought about that sooner.”

ORIGINAL SCENE:

“You look terrible. Have some tea.” Deshti shoved a cup across the desk.

My fingers were cold, so the cup felt good in my hands, and my dry throat welcomed the hot liquid. “Thanks. Is...is Jonis still here?”

Her mouth was a thin line. “He went to talk to Loris.”

I closed my eyes briefly. Jonis had probably told Loris exactly what I'd done. I'd been stupid to think Loris might understand; he probably didn't trust me any more than Jonis did.

I had to gulp down another mouthful of tea to keep from crying. This wasn't how I had meant for anything to work out. “Did he ask you to watch me too?” I said, trying to keep my tone flip.

Deshti didn't answer, only looked down at her lap. I flushed, remembering how I had used her feelings for Jonis as a weapon. That hadn't been fair to her. My head swirled with all the mistakes I had made, all the ways I had hurt people. “Deshti,” I said, “I'm sorry, but I...told Jonis how you feel about him.”

Deshti rose. “That's all right.” She tugged the teacup out of my hands, and I realized that the fingers holding it had grown numb. Drugged, I thought hazily.

Her voice seemed to come from far away when she spoke again. “Jonis already knew that I would do anything for him. A lot of us would. You should have thought about that sooner.”



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WORD LIST:

NOUN: _____

PLURAL NOUN: _____

ADJECTIVE: _____

PAST TENSE VERB: _____

PLURAL NOUN: _____

PLACE: _____

VERB: _____

ADJECTIVE: _____

PLURAL NOUN: _____

NOUN: _____

BODY PART: _____

PAST TENSE VERB: _____

PAST TENSE VERB: _____

NOUN: _____

ADJECTIVE: _____

NOUN: _____

PAST TENSE VERB: _____

ADJECTIVE: _____

THE TOMBS

BY: DEBORAH SCHAUMBERG

SILLY STORY SCENE:

She was arm in arm with another [NOUN] . Their [PLURAL NOUN] were [ADJECTIVE] and pressed, and they [PAST TENSE VERB] along in their lace-up boots, confident of their position in society. They were probably discussing [PLURAL NOUN] they hoped to be courted by. I remember Grace laughing at me for saying I wanted to go to [PLACE] when I grew up.

“Oh, Avery,” she’d said, dismissing me with a [VERB] of her hand. “You simply must marry, or you’ll end up like that [ADJECTIVE] spinster down the street, the one with all the [PLURAL NOUN] .”

But even though we had different views on certain things, we’d shared all of our hopes and dreams with each other. I removed my felt [NOUN] and smoothed back my [BODY PART] . It used to be her and me walking to school, arms linked like that. I [PAST TENSE VERB] away from the protection of the shadows.

“Hello, Grace.”

The girls stopped and [PAST TENSE VERB] at each other. Did she not recognize me? Of course—my work [NOUN] . “It’s me. Avery.” I smiled. “Avery Kohl.”

The other girl, with a pointed face and a [ADJECTIVE] black widow’s peak, smirked. “My dear Grace, is this an acquaintance of yours? She looks like a river [NOUN] up from the pier.”

Her laugh [PAST TENSE VERB] my cheeks, but I ignored the insult, sure that Grace would put this [ADJECTIVE] girl in her place. “Grace?” I pleaded.

ORIGINAL SCENE:

She was arm in arm with another girl. Their skirts were clean and pressed, and they marched along in their lace-up boots, confident of their position in society. They were probably discussing boys they hoped to be courted by. I remember Grace laughing at me for saying I wanted to go to college when I grew up.

“Oh, Avery,” she’d said, dismissing me with a wave of her hand. “You simply must marry, or you’ll end up like that old spinster down the street, the one with all the cats.”

But even though we had different views on certain things, we’d shared all of our hopes and dreams with each other. I removed my felt hat and smoothed back my hair. It used to be her and me walking to school, arms linked like that. I peeled away from the protection of the shadows.

“Hello, Grace.”

The girls stopped and glanced at each other. Did she not recognize me? Of course—my work clothes. “It’s me. Avery.” I smiled. “Avery Kohl.”

The other girl, with a pointed face and a shiny black widow’s peak, smirked. “My dear Grace, is this an acquaintance of yours? She looks like a river rat up from the pier.”

Her laugh burned my cheeks, but I ignored the insult, sure that Grace would put this rude girl in her place. “Grace?” I pleaded.