

By Zoe McCall

Grade 4, Dallas Elementary School

Cuddly Kittens

Wet noses

Twisty tails

Rough kisses

Warm hugs

Twitching ears

Kneading claws

Waggily whiskers

Furry swatting paws

Cuddly kittens

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The Wind

It roars through your hair on a windy night

It rustles through the trees

It carries melodies to your ears

It swishes through the grass

It swirls the leaves up from the ground

Up in the air it chills its surroundings

Flames

Geneva Wereley

Grade 5

Westmount Elementary

Two years ago my life was perfect, or so it seemed. It didn't have very many problems, until the big fire. I think the fire helped me with my life though. Before the fire I was quite rude and mean. My family was quite rich and had a big house and lots of cars. I bragged a lot. But on July 30, 2003 everything changed. In British Columbia fire was blazing everywhere. This would be one of the most remembered years for fire in the history of BC.

In my house the news was on lots and in the city nobody was talking about anything else except the fires. Sometimes I would look out my window and see a pale orange light glowing amid the clouds that were filling the sky with a grey haze. There was a high smell of smoke that made my eyes water, even though the air conditioning was on and I was in the house. I could barely see the home where the Jarsys lived across the street. The heat was so unbearable, and the bushes on either side of my driveway were brown and dying. Even though our air conditioning was on full blast, the air was like breathing in sand. I decided to finally go downstairs and ask my mom about when we were going to go on our yearly trip to our house in the Bahamas. I walked up to mom and thought she seemed rather stressed. She was running around grabbing things and stuffing them in bags. I noticed that she wasn't packing her luxury blanket that cooled or heated when you pleased. She wasn't packing her makeup or her fur coat that dad had got her. I went up to her and asked her what she was doing. "Oh I'm just packing a few things," she

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replied. "Are we finally going to the Bahamas?" I said. "Well, actually I don't think we're going to go this year Pearl." "What!!? No!!!" I shrieked. Stunned by my reaction, she said calmly, "Well as you know, all the airports are closed because of smoke, and most of the highways are closed because of fallen trees or flames." This was true, I did know this. "Uggghh!" I groaned with frustration. "Sorry dear," she said softly. I had completely forgotten about asking her why she was packing but I don't think she forgot. I dragged my feet back up the stairs, went through the threshold of my room and sat down on my bed. The summer I saw ahead of me was not the two months I had expected. This was going to be one long boring sixty days. Later, I sat up realizing I'd dozed off. I remembered what my mom had said and groaned. I decided to go play my tablet. While I was walking through my living room I heard a beautiful sound. I looked toward the noise and saw my dad playing a guitar. "I didn't know you could play guitar." "Yep. I thought maybe I'd forgotten, but it looks like I still have it in me," he replied. "Where'd you get it?" I asked. "My dad gave it to me," he said. "Papa Dave?" I asked. "Yeah," he said as he put it in its case and put it by the door. I continued looking for my tablet.

That evening I thought about how my parents weren't acting normally. My mother seemed to be forgetful, and my father seemed to be lost in his memories. Everything felt different like the fire was having an impact on my family. Even my brother was acting strange. I slowly drifted off into a deep sleep.

Flames

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“Pearl!” My mother’s voice drifted up the stairs. “Pearl! Start packing your suitcase!”

“Why? Are we finally going to the Bahamas?” I asked. “No were getting evacuated!” she called. “What!” I yelled. I bolted up from my bed and rushed down the stairs. It wasn’t possible, it couldn’t be. But even though I didn’t want to admit it to myself, I knew it was true. I rushed up to my mom where she was standing in the kitchen and said, “No! You’re joking.” “No I’m not,” she said. I looked at her with my mouth slightly open, and started to cry. She hugged me and said it would be ok, like most moms do. Quietly she told me to go pack my stuff, and I walked up our carpeted stairwell. I walked up to my closet, and pulled out my white suitcase and slowly started piling my stuff into it.

Something was weighing me down, something I had never understood. It wasn’t really a thinking question, it was more something to feel. I packed my clothing and some of my jewellery, and decided to take my old favourite stuffy named Buttons. I changed into my travelling clothes, and dragged my suitcase down the stairs. I found my father waiting at the door for the rest of my family, dressed in his travelling suit holding his guitar case. He told me to go wait in the car. I pulled my stuff out onto the driveway and opened our trunk. I threw my suitcase into the small area, still holding Buttons. My eyes were watering horribly from the smell of the smoke. Ash was coming down like rain. Slowly I lowered myself into the leather interior of our electric BMW. I waited for a few minutes while the ash was brushing my window. My family piled into the car, all holding the things I saw them packing before the evacuation. My father pulled the car out of the

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driveway and out onto the highway. I looked over where beyond the trees I could see pine trees that were blazing with fire. I was grateful for the firefighters, risking their own lives for ours. It was then, holding Buttons, with my mom, dad and brother beside me, I realized that all that ever mattered was love

Georgia Kelly
Grade 6
Arthur Hatton
"The Book of Silent Screams"

"Tick, tick, tick." April stared at the clock, waiting for it to strike three. "Tick, tick, brrrrriiiiiinnnggg!" The bell sounded as students flew out of their chairs and bolted through the door. April jumped up from her chair and followed the rest of her classmates out into the mob. April walked to her bike and pedaled her way to the local library.

April wandered into the library and greeted the Librarian, Mrs Shanks. She strolled to her usual section, took a deep breath in, smelling the familiar musty book smell that she loved. April grabbed a book, looking at the cover when she noticed a new section. April put her book down and began to mosey over to this undiscovered area. "Weird," April muttered. The peculiar section was gloomy and depressing. There were few books scattered around the shelves. One in particular caught her attention. It was all black with a gold trim. April slid the book out of its cubby and saw it had no title. It was blank--nothing.

April flipped the book open and felt a tap on her shoulder. April thought it was Mrs Shanks telling her to move to the side. She spun around and was met with nothing. April decided it must have been her hair. When she opened the book, she heard a whispering in her ear as if someone wanted to tell her a secret. April didn't turn to see what or who had whispered. She knew she heard something and didn't dare to turn.

April slowly started to leave the creepy aisle, clutching the mysterious book against her chest. She made her way to Mrs. Shanks to check out her new book. After all, a book with no cover is pretty intriguing, Mrs. Shanks took the book and paused.

"Hmm, I'm not sure I remember having this one come in," she said. Mrs. Shanks tilted the book down and said to April, "Are you sure you want this one, hun?"

Georgia Kelly
Grade 6
Arthur Hatton
"The Book of Silent Screams"

"Yup, a book with no cover is pretty interesting," April responded, taking the book back. As she did so, April heard voices echoing. April looked up at Mrs. Shanks to see if she had also heard the voices only to see that she wasn't there. A chill running down her spine, April walked out of the library.

"It's just your imagination," April repeated, trying to make herself believe that it was her imagination. She got on her bike and slowly began to ride back to her house, feeling like something was running beside her. Biking even faster, she turned into her driveway, locked her bike, and bolted inside. Bang! The door echoed through her hallway.

April walked into the kitchen to unpack her bag. As she pulled out her water bottle, her hand grazed the corner of the book. It felt as if icy hands had gripped her shoulders. That was it! April threw the book onto the table and ran up the stairs to her room, slammed the door, and began to sob into her pillow. It was too much to have a spirit haunting her.

April cried and cried till there were no more tears. Mustering the courage, April got up and made her way down into the kitchen. She picked up the book. "I should read this. I mean, that's what books are for," she said.

Back in her room, she began to read, looking at the pictures. Something was off. Looking at the pictures, April noticed the faces were too realistic. They looked as if someone had taken a photograph and taped it in there. Everything was so real: the pores, the wrinkles, the hangnails. The pictures were of different people, but they all had one thing in common: each had their mouth open as if they were screaming. April's fingers quivered as she continued to turn the pages of the book. She had had enough and slammed the book shut.

Georgia Kelly
Grade 6
Arthur Hatton
"The Book of Silent Screams"

"No more pictures! I'll just read the words," she said to herself.

Reopening the book, April flipped to the first page. As her eyes floated across the first sentence, she again felt hands gripping her shoulders, breathing on her neck, and looking over her shoulder. As much as April tried, she couldn't shake the feeling.

"Fine book, have it your way!" she cried. She was fed up and wanted to read. She continued through the chapter, the eerie feeling still with her. She realized that the book was about the people in the images: birth dates, loved ones, gender, age. Enough!

The morning light seeping through the curtains awoke April. The first thing April noticed was that the book had opened to the blank page at the end. Certain she had closed the book, a wave of suspicion washed over her. April closed the book as the air began to get hard to take in.

April ran downstairs to tell her mother, but then she realized she was at work.

"Great," April thought. "Now I'm all alone."

She slowly climbed back up the stairs to the demon novel. Again, the book had opened to the blank page. April had only held her hand over the book for a moment when it sucked her hand onto the page. She tried to pull it away, but the book increased its pressure. She could feel her fingers slipping through the page. April looked down, but her hand had been absorbed into the book. April screamed, but she was alone; nobody to hear her plea for help.

Now her shoulder was gone. Then she was gone. The book had won; that was what the blank page was for. Her. It had been waiting for someone to pick it up. That someone was April.

Three months later.

Georgia Kelly
Grade 6
Arthur Hatton
"The Book of Silent Screams"

"Hi, Mrs. Shanks," Jack said, walking into the library. Jack walked to his section when he noticed a new area. The section was gloomy. Jack looked around and spotted an all black book with gold trim. Jack picked up the book and brought it to Mrs. Shanks. She looked at the book.

"Are you sure you want this one?" she asked. "I knew a girl that checked this book out once. I haven't seen her since."

"Yup," Jack replied. "After all, a book with no cover is pretty interesting."

Chance

1

Raindrops fell on my face and splashed against the cement ground. I looked up at the sky, a setting sun covered in clouds as I walked. I saw the red mailbox ahead and sped up my pace. I reached into my pocket and fumbled with my keys, my hands cold as ice. At last I found the right one and slipped it into the lock. It took some strength to twist the key, as the mailbox was old and didn't work very well. Inside were a few papers, mostly advertisements.

I was about to grab them when I heard a sound other than rain and distant cars. I looked around, but it was hard to see with wind and water in my eyes. I looked past the mailbox towards the forest, and heard it again. It was some type of animal. My brain told me to hurry home, but something else inside of me felt like I needed to see what it was. Going against common sense, I decided to check it out.

Keys held between my fingers in a fist, ready to strike whatever I was to find, I neared the woods, wet grass sloshing under my purple rain boots.

"Hello? Is anyone there?" I called nervously when I reached the trees. For a moment nobody responded, but then I heard the sound again. Now it was more clear as I was closer to it, and it sounded like a cat's meow. There was something about it, though. It seemed... Hurt.

I scanned the area, grabbing onto the rough, wet trunk of a tree. I heard the meow once more. It sounded like it came from a huge, ancient oak that stood to the left of me. I walked over cautiously and looked up, expecting to see a cat hiding up in the thick, mossy branches. Instead, I heard a whimper by my feet.

Sure enough, in the gnarled roots of the tree, huddled a bundle of wet fur. My heart melted as I gently picked up the little kitten. She didn't even try to squirm away, just shivered. I couldn't really tell how she looked in the dark, but I was sure of her beautiful eyes as she looked

Chance

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up at me. One was a light yellow, the other was green as emerald. She blinked at me with a look that begged for help. I couldn't say no to those eyes.

Without hesitation, I gently settled her into my jacket and walked back to get the mail. I locked the mailbox and hurried home.

Luckily, my mother was away on a business trip, so I was able to fill the sink with warm water and clean off the little kitten. I then grabbed a towel and rubbed her soft pelt until it was dry. Now I could see that she was a cream color with a light orange stripe above her rosey nose. I built her a little bed on my bedroom floor with blankets, and she gladly fell asleep. While she was adrift in her dreams, I emptied a can of tuna onto a plate and put it next to her. I knew she would sleep for a while, so I grabbed a book and settled down.

"Hey, girl," I smiled, hearing the kitten yawn awake after an hour. She still needed a name. *It was a special chance that I found her,* I thought. Chance.

"Chance!" I called her. She looked at me and tilted her head. "Chance it is, then."

I heard my phone ringing from the kitchen and stood up to grab it. Mom was calling. I answered the phone. "Hi."

"Hello, dear. Are you doing okay?" Before I had time to answer, she continued. Typical. "Great, I just wanted to let you know I may be a little late, but I'll be back by tomorrow evening. You got the mail, right?"

"Yes, there was nothing." I glanced down at Chance. There sure was something I got tonight when I checked the mail.

"Alright, bye now! Make sure you do your homework."

Chance

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“Love you,” I hung up and sighed. What would I do with Chance? Mom would kill me if she found out about her.

My mom wasn't fond of animals, she wasn't fond of really anything other than money. She was always away on business trips, and seemed far away even when she was home. I had learnt to care for myself.

I went back to my bedroom, Chance following behind. On my dresser sat a framed photo of a smiling man, wrapped up in a scarf and sitting in a snowy tree. He had the same chocolate brown hair as me, even the same salty eyes. He was my father.

I had never known my dad. My parents divorced before mom had me, and though my dad fought for custody, I ended up with mom. I felt guilty about it, but sometimes I wished he had won.

I held the photo. In my dad's arms was a white cat, almost blending in with the snow. One thing I knew about my father was his love for cats.

I put the photo down and lifted Chance onto my bed. I laid next to her, pushing my face into her soft kitten fur, and drifted away into sleep.

I woke up the next morning, dim sunlight peeking through my curtains. Next to me was a bit of fur on my sheets, but no cat. *She must be exploring the house.* I thought.

I stood up and opened the window. There was a thin, fresh sheet of white coating the ground. *Great, more snow.* I yawned and slumbered into the kitchen, but Chance wasn't there. I grabbed a sip of water and continued looking for her. I started to panic when I couldn't find her

Megan Pretorius
Grade 6 - Juniper Ridge Elementary
Chance

Chance

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anywhere, and I double checked every nook and cranny in the house. Only then did I notice the bathroom window left open, and little pawprints pressed into the snow outside.

That Is My Job

I sat on the windowsill of Ally's room, a soft gold had filled the space. The cool fall breeze dusted the room with a faint chill. All alone I just waited for her to get home from what she had told me was school. I hate school, it takes Ally away from me for so long. At least now I had something to do. One of my stitches had come loose so I had to make sure I wouldn't lose any more stuffing. Mom said she would fix it, but that was two weeks ago. My feathers are also long past due for a wash but there is not much I can do with that.

It was calm and quiet for a while but then something came swishing down onto the windowsill. It looked as if a piece of the night had flown and landed there. Its thick feathers were a dark black, it was a raven just like me. In its mouth was a small oak leaf like the ones on the trees outside the house. The fellow bird turned to me with a confused expression.

"What are you?" the other bird asked.

"I'm a raven just like you."

"Well, you look a little weird."

"I'm just very well loved," I replied in a cheerful tone knowing I would soon be able to talk about Ally once again. However, that's not what ended up happening.

"Well if you're a raven what are you doing cooped up in here?"

"It's my job to take care of Ally. I'm her best friend. Plus I can't really fly."

"Well, I'm sorry you can't fly..."

It was a small pause with no sound at all. But then the raven spoke in an excited tone.
"What if I take you for a fly?!"

I thought about it. What about Ally, my job, and the love I get from it?

“ Only for a small fly,” The other bird remarked.

“Fine but I must be back here before Ally gets home.”

“I'm sure I can make that work.”

And with that, he started to flap his wings hovering off the window sill. He then picked me up and slowly glided out the window.

I looked down to see the small creek that went through the large landscape that was Ally's yard. There were thousands of spiders with webs that looked like small strands of silver in the soft gold sunlight. Pine trees that were taller than my old baby blue Victorian home. The two of us flew around the forest that circled the old house. There were so many wildflowers, small mushrooms, butterflies and more. Once again the soft cool breeze blew while I still held my stitches close. The world around me was so beautiful, a world I didn't even know existed. Oh, how I wished Ally could soar like this. Birds all around us sang the same song I heard every day. Only now I could see them and their colourful feathers.

I hear the old clock of the house chime two and start to wonder if we should go back now. Yet I don't say a word as we continue to fly.

Finally, my friend raven spoke once again, “I think we should get you back home now.”

I agree, knowing our adventure must come to an end. I think of Ally as we fly back to my home in the cool breeze.

Time goes by fast as we start to be in sight of the big house. But just as we reached the small yet fast creek the raven lost his grip. I fall fast from the sky as fear grows inside of me. Ally races through my mind right before I land in the frigid water. It pulls me fast as I twist and turn through it. My stuffing seeps out of the open stitch. I start to lose hope and all I can do is cry

thinking of never seeing Ally again. What about my job, the job I love and Ally the friend I love... I close my small little button eyes and start to dream of being in Ally's room once again.

All hope was lost until I felt something grasp my wing, it was my friend raven. Also in his mouth, I see the rest of my stuffing. He flies fast towards the window of Ally's room. All of my hope comes flying back at me. However, a horrible noise fills my ears. It was my ripped wing, the seam was slowly breaking away. My friend raven had picked me up by the wrong wing. It was now a race between my seam and my friend raven. He flew even faster but so did my seam. The soft old yellow string was flying out too fast. Just as the string came undone I hit the window sill of Ally's room.

My stuffing spills out all over the area. My friend raven was nowhere to be seen and Ally would be home any minute now. Then all of a sudden I saw the same piece of the night fly in. This time he had a small spider in his beak. He then placed it next to me along with my broken wing. The small brown spider crawled over to me. She then went to work gathering my stuffing and putting it in its original home. Next, she grabbed my wing and made some of her silver web and used it to reattach my wing to me. In no time she had finished.

"Thank you!" I said over and over to raven and the spider. She nodded her small head and slowly used her beautiful web to escape out the window.

Raven walked over to me and smiled, "I will see you again tomorrow for our next adventure."

He then flew off with his big dark wings. I smiled too and waited for Ally to arrive. Now in better shape than ever before.

The End