



School District No. 73 (Kamloops / Thompson)

2017 Young Authors' Conference

Marg van Duesen Award Recipients & Honorable Mentions

ELEMENTARY WINNER - Recipient of Marg van Duesen Award

Adam Vukusic, Gr. 6 Aberdeen Elementary: "Until the Bell Rang"

Honorable Mentions

Allie Piroddi, Gr. 4 Kamloops School of the Arts: "The Magical Secret of Elvis Trolley"

Quilla Decker, Gr. 5 Lloyd George Elementary: "The Wish"

Paige Foidart, Gr. 6 A.E. Perry: "The Essence of Who We Are"

Fyfer Brookes-Gillingham, Gr. 7 Pinantan Elementary: "The Window"

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#### *SECONDARY WINNER - Recipient of Marg van Duesen Award*

*Maggie Jones, Gr. 9 South Kamloops Secondary: "Icarus" and "[remember]"*

#### *Honorable Mentions*

*Lauren Fulton, Gr. 8 South Kamloops Secondary: "Cricket"*

*Mary Pinette, Gr. 9 South Kamloops Secondary: "Aurelius"*

*Talia Wiens, Gr. 10 South Kamloops Secondary: "The Young Rebels"*

*MacKenzie Sewell, Gr. 11 South Kamloops Secondary: "Paper Things"*

*Raifta Cameron, Gr. 12 NorKam Secondary: "Memories of Man"*

# Until the Bell Rang

Adam Vukusic Gr 6  
Aberdeen Elementary  
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Syntron was standing by the door tapping his long wooden hitting stick on the ground in an impatient way. Staring a rude stare at the little boy, only 10 years old, with ripped clothes and tired blue eyes. Syntron was known to be a very grumpy man. Many kept their distance.

At this time of day there was usually no one in the room, except Syntron who was a teacher at Yellowwood Elementary. But today, a normal Monday, Alexander had to finish his math work, so he stayed in over lunch hour. Alexander had been dreading this moment for the few minutes he had to chew his stale cheese sandwich over lunch break. The thing no one knew about this young boy is that he wasn't a very normal boy. There was something hiding in him. It wasn't exactly an emotion or a super power or anything like that. It was smaller. It was like a sign that this boy had been through something. Something more. Something bigger than his small personality. Maybe it was the countless beatings the young boy got from his harsh father who was skipping from job to job eating the left over scraps of food in their cupboards. Or maybe it was the feeling that always hung around Alexander reminding him of the morning he woke and his mother was gone, never to be seen again.

Meanwhile Syntron was scratching black x's into young children's best school work. His dark grey eyes moved back and forth from his desk to Alexander.

"Do not move from your desk boy," barked Syntron in an unbearable tone. This kind of talk directed at Alexander was normal between home and school. The room was so silent that the sound of pencil on paper overtook the sound of breathing. Finally the end of lunch bell rang and this dreadful time was over.

# Until the Bell Rang

Adam Vukusic Gr 6  
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Tuesday the world was drizzling and gloomy. Yet again Alexander was not done his math work from the day. He had been unable to focus in class. He was inside again with Syntron over lunch. This being the second time alone in a room with this man, Alexander felt somehow like he knew him better than he had the day before. Maybe striking up a conversation would ease the tension between us, thought Alexander. I will never know unless I try.

“Syntron Sir. How are you today?” asked Alexander.

“Pardon me?” chirped Syntron raising his brow slightly on the left side of his worn face. “Did you ask me how I am doing today? Alexander, is it? Well, normally I would would say ‘fine thank you’ but, if you want the truth I don’t usually ever feel very good. And you?” Syntron moved his body uncomfortably in his chair.

“Well, I would most likely say the same,” Alexander said with a sigh. “I am not having the best day either. Some days just don’t fit.”

The bell rang

The next day the bread on Alexander’s cheese sandwich didn’t taste as bad as the normal Wednesday sandwich. Maybe it was the lighter feeling Alexander held under his torn jacket or maybe it was the blooming flowers just outside the window. But it was there.

“Alexander, you finished all your math work. Why are you still inside?” remarked Syntron in a tone slightly lighter than the day before.

“Syntron Sir, may I stay inside with you today?” asked Alexander .

“Well, I’ve got some work to do. But suit yourself.”

# Until the Bell Rang

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“So Syntron, where did you grow up? What’s your story?” asked Alexander unsure if he would get a response.

“Well my childhood experience was different from the average kid. I had to grow up faster than I would have rather. I worked odd jobs to keep me, my mother and my youngest brother fed. I had to balance school with work. I didn’t have it as easy as you kids have it these days.”

Alexander fell silent.

Syntron noticed Alexander was weary and uncomfortable, his fingers repeatedly grasping his shirt. He decided maybe he should ask Alexander something.

“So what’s your life out of school like Alexander?” croaked Syntron.

“Well it’s not the easiest. My dad doesn’t usually have a job. There isn’t usually much food in our basement apartment. My mom left me at age 5 and.. and... well, I get beaten quite a lot.” Alexander whispered.

Syntron fell silent. He reached into his old leather bag pulling out a crumpled peanut granola bar and slid it across the table to Alexander’s hands.

The bell rang.

It was now Thursday and when Syntron looked out at his class he noticed one desk was not filled. It was Alexander’s desk.

“Does anyone know why Alexander is absent?” snapped Syntron in a slightly worried tone.

But there was no reply.

# Until the Bell Rang

Adam Vukusic Gr 6  
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On Friday morning the sun shone across the classroom floor casting a warm glow not only on the floor but in Alexander's heart.

"Where were you yesterday?" Syntron asked Alexander sounding relieved to have him back. Yesterday seeing Alexander's empty desk had kind of scared Syntron. Not the kind of scare when your friend creeps up on you, or when you jump when a bee stings you. But the kind of scare deeper than that. It scares you from the inside. That hour at lunch Syntron did not do his paperwork. He put it back in his old leather bag and waited for Alexander to finish chewing his cheese sandwich.

"So how are you today?" asked Syntron in a kind, questioning voice. They would talk and talk that day and every day. Until the bell rang

### The Magical Secret of Elvis Trolley

Once, there was a metal, banged-up motor home in the side of the gravel road. This wasn't the trailer of an ordinary townspeople; it was the trailer of Elvis Trolley. His trailer got stuck in the village road a few months ago, and even when it got fixed, Elvis still didn't want to leave the town. The townspeople had been hearing strange noises from inside the trailer, and when they knocked on his door, he closed the curtains and came out with a baseball bat. The police couldn't even find out what he was doing inside that old trailer. But this wasn't even his strangest shenanigans.

Every Saturday, the townspeople would gather in the town park to see a magician. His patchwork cloak dragged along the grass when he moved and his black hood thrashed in the crisp morning wind. The magician would never reveal his face; it was hidden by a white sheet with narrow eyeholes. The tricks he performed were never really tricks, they were spells.

One Saturday, the magician cast a purple fireball above the park, and another Saturday, he transformed a frog into a dazzling crown. The strangest thing he would do, however, was after the show. After the show, the magician opened the door to Elvis' trailer and it was empty. No one saw the magician until next Saturday.

The police even went to the magician's shows. In the beginning, they were fascinated. But, as this became a regular thing and more and more people came to the show, the police became very suspicious. They begged to know who the mysterious magician was. They started rummaging through people's homes to see if they were practicing witchcraft. They took things to a whole new level by bringing the magician and the other "followers" to prison if they found the magician. None suspected Elvis Trolley.

The following week, the police chief gave a speech that the magician shows were being canceled. He specifically stated that the shows teach the "dark arts" to both children and adults and that if they continue, the next generation of the townspeople were to spread havoc and destruction across the region. Elvis didn't believe that would happen. He wanted to keep doing what he loved and not have the police get in the way. Elvis just realized he had to keep quiet until he got immensely interrogated. He sulked all the way to his trailer.

That Saturday, Elvis still showed up to the town park to perform his magic show, but nobody came. After fifteen minutes, he gave up. As Elvis walked back to his trailer, he was surrounded by police cars. Elvis froze in his tracks. "We caught him, Smith. What a beauty..." a police officer said, then snickered.

Elvis started to back away, hoping he would escape, but the police chief cornered him.

“Reveal yourself, stranger.”

Elvis shook his head.

“No? Then, we’ll do this the hard way,” stated the police chief as he ripped off the sheet covering his face.

All the police officers were in shock. The police chief winced. “Elvis Trolley...” The chief couldn’t stammer a word. Suddenly, a broad smile shone on the chief’s stubble-covered face. “Jail time, wizard!”

All the police officers were laughing so hard tears came out of their eyes. The police chief threw Elvis in the car and it disappeared into the busy streets of the town.

That week, the big news was published on the front page of the town newspaper. The townspeople had a very surprising reaction. Mrs. Byrd, an elderly woman, was very unhappy with the police. “He was such a good man. I know it’s the law, but he shouldn’t suffer because he was trying to entertain people.”

A young girl named Karina heard about Elvis’ jailing. She was one of those kids who loved the magic show and couldn’t believe that the police thought the magic shows would cause any harm. She spoke up to the police. Karina spoke firmly to her parents. “We really need to fix this,” she said. “This man did nothing wrong. He didn’t want any money or attention.”



Her parents were shocked. "Karina," her father said. "It is the law. The law protects our town and if anyone destroyed it, our town would crumble."

Karina's face got hot. "I'm not trying to destroy the law! I'm just proving a point!" Karina darted up the stairs into her room and slammed the door. She opened the window and stared into the black silence of the sleepy town. She glanced at her wishing star. "Set Elvis Trolley free, please."

The next morning, Karina was woken early by her mother. "We need to go to town square. Wake up."

Karina had a million thoughts running through her head. She quickly got dressed and ran out the door with her family.

When they arrived at the town square, the police chief was on the podium. The chief snapped his fingers and shouted, "Now!"

Karina watched the officers open the door to the police car and bring Elvis out. Karina gasped. Now is my chance to speak up, she thought.

The officers returned and the chief began his speech. The chief cleared his throat. "Good morning, townspeople. As you can see, we have found the magician." The crowd could not believe it.

"Elvis Trolley has claimed he is the secret magician behind this dire shenanigan. He was put into jail for a very good reason."

Karina jumped to the front of the crowd and protested, "No, he was not!"

The police were shocked.

“So, you think a little girl could get in our way?” the police chief sneered.

Karina was offended by this. “Yes, I can, and you will set this man free!”

The townspeople gasped in shock, but eventually they started to understand where Karina was coming from. A large number of people actually got to the podium and started protesting against the police. Eventually the police chief got such a big crowd of protesters that he and the officers eventually gave in.

Later that week, Elvis was set free, and the magic shows were up and running again.

What happened to the police chief? He was fired.

Characters:

Clara/Princess Peony

Clara's Mom, Elizabeth

King Edward

Queen Katherine

Maid, Nancy

Lily (fairy)

Michael (tutor)

Miss Rose (governess)

Witch's cat

Evil Witch

Scene 1:

*Near a little farm in a beautiful valley protected by a gigantic mountain range. Clara is returning from picking flowers when she sees a fairy cowering from a snarling black cat.*

Clara: *(reprimanding)* Bad cat! Shoo!

Cat: *HISS!*

*The cat runs away. Clara hurries over to the fairy and picks her up.*

Clara: *(worried)* Are you alright?

Fairy: *(grateful)* Yes, I'm fine, but I wouldn't be if you hadn't saved me. Thank you so much!

Clara: *(surprised)* You're welcome!

Fairy: My name is Lily. What's yours?

Clara: *(smiling)* My name is Clara, pleased to meet you.

Lily: This was lovely, but I really must go now. However, I am very grateful to you.

Would you like a wish as thanks?

Clara: YES!!!!!!

Lily: What do you wish for?

*Clara thinks about it for a moment.*

Lily: Please hurry!

Clara: *(excited)* I wish that I could switch places with the daughter of King Edward!

Lily: Are you sure?

Clara: Definitely!

Lily: Very well.

*She waves her wand and mutters something in a strange language. Sparkles fill the air and descend down to cover Clara. There is a brilliant flash of light, and then Clara loses consciousness.*

Scene 2:

*Clara is lying on a red velvet four-poster bed. She is in a beautiful room with polished oak paneling and hand painted walls. Just as Clara wakes, a woman, wearing a maid's uniform of a black dress with a white apron and cap walks in.*

Maid: Hello Your Highness!

*Clara realizes that her wish must have come true. She decides to play pampered princess.*

Clara/Peony: *(prissily)* Hello, um... what's your name again?

Maid: *(earnestly)* I'm Nancy, Your Highness!

Clara/Peony: Right, Nancy.

*Awkward silence.*

Nancy: Shall I bring you breakfast, Your Highness?

Peony: Yes please. And please call me Peony.

Nancy: Yes, Your Highn... Peony.

*Peony smiles as the maid leaves.*

Scene 3:

*Peony is in her study with her tutor, Michael. She is incredibly confused with the advanced classes, as she has never been to school before.*

Michael: Have you been getting enough sleep lately? You seem... preoccupied.

Peony: *(embarrassed)* Yes! I am just... not in the mood for this!

*She pushes her heavy oak desk away and stomps out of the classroom.*

Scene 4:

*During Peony's comportment classes:*

Miss Rose: Stop Slouching!

Peony: *(Sighs)* Yes Miss Rose.

Miss Rose: No, no, no! That is not how you curtsy! You are a disgrace to all of England!

Peony:*(annoyed)* Yeesh! I'm sorry!

Scene 5:

*In the dinner hall, Peony and her "parents" are experiencing an awkward conversation. The tension in the air could be cut with a knife*

King Edward: *(hopeful)* How were your lessons today darling?

Peony: *(sad)* Good.

Queen Katherine: Are you enjoying your meal?

Peony: *(Stares dejectedly at her plate of fine food).* Yes.

King Edward: How was your day?

Peony: *(Thinks back to her day of impossible lessons and constant reprimanding from Miss Rose).* Good.

*The King and The Queen both sigh.*

Scene 6:

*It is the next morning and Peony is sitting in her bed fiddling with the fringed hem of her beautiful violet dress.*

Peony: *(To Nancy)* Does your life ever disappoint you?

Nancy: I wouldn't say, Miss. I don't want to appear discontent or ungrateful with all that you and your family have given me.

Peony: *(laughing softly)* Don't worry. I won't hold anything against you.

Nancy: Well...Yes, sometimes it does.

Peony: *(nods ever so slightly)* Thank you.

Nancy: *(confused, not sure of what she's being thanked for)* Umm... You're welcome?

Scene 7:

*Peony is walking to her lessons, when she sees an ugly old woman and her cat. The cat looks awfully familiar.*

Peony: Hello!

Evil Witch: My talking cat is mad at you because you stole his lunch of a delicious fairy.

*Peony looks at the cat suspiciously, then realizes that the witch is telling the truth.*

Peony: It is you!

Cat: The witch taught me some tricks, like speech, teleportation and... WISH  
REVERSAL!!!

*He aims his furry little paw a Peony. Nothing happens*

Peony: *(tauntingly)* Ha ha ha ha ha!!!

*The cat reaches into a pouch tied around his waist. He pulls out his paw, covered in glitter.*

Cat: Lets try this again, shall we?

*He repositions his paw.*

Cat: WISH REVERSAL!!!

*Once again, a bright flashes and Clara falls unconscious.*

Scene 8:

*Back at Clara's Cottage.*

Clara's mom, Elizabeth: Wake up Clara!

Clara: *(looking around and recognizing her own bedroom)* Yes! Finally! Princesses are so lame!

Elizabeth: Ummm??...

Clara: *(talking a mile a minute)* There was a fairy! And a wish! And...

**THE END!**



## The Essence of Who We Are

Paige Foidart, Grade 6

A.E. Perry Elementary

“Okay girls, this is our last chance. If we win, we win the playoffs. The Red Raptors are the toughest team we’ll ever play, but I know we can do this, so let’s kick some butt! Riley do the cheer.” Coach nods at me after his short inspirational speech. I take a deep breath and scream the words as loud as I can, “Warriors on three! 1- 2 -3 Warriors!”

I skate into the position of defence. The girls on the Raptors were certainly older, a bantam team I would presume. I glance over at my defence partner, also known as my best friend. Emily nods at me then fixes her brown eyes back on the puck being held in the referee’s hand. I hear the whistle blow and my thinking immediately changes to hockey.

They win the faceoff; the right wing takes possession of the puck taking it forward. The play moves deeper into our end. Emily hits the Raptors stick, causing the puck to go spiralling into my side of the ice. I race for the puck, but they beat me to it.

Goal. We change shifts, skating back towards the bench with a frown. The same exact play happens.

Goal.

Goal.

Goal.

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2 minutes left of the 3<sup>rd</sup> period. 4-3 for the Raptors. Coach calls a time out and signals us to huddle in. “The Raptors keep going for the same play every time. We need to take advantage of that. Okay now Riley, here’s what you’re going to do.” Coach draws out the play on his white board. We nod our heads in unison, do the cheer and break apart. I line up for the faceoff once again, but this time I know what I’m doing. The puck gets passed back to me, and I quickly take

it forwards. I get blocked so I pass it behind where I know Emily will receive it. I then try to get open for a pass. I see a clear cut through the middle and I take it. Emily sees it too, so she swerves around her opponent and passes it up to me. I deke a huge girl easily, and now everyone is behind me.

20 seconds left on the clock. Everything slowed down in this moment. Scoring now would put us into overtime giving us another chance to win.

Most people would feel pressure at this moment, but not me. When I play hockey it lets me forget about all the problems at home, it feels like a weight is lifted off my shoulders. I wind up to take a shot when out of nowhere one of the Raptors lunges at me. The next thing I know, I am dazed and staring up into my coaches' concerned eyes. I slowly turn my head to the side and notice my legs lying in an oddly contorted position. I felt a wave of panic rush over me and everything went black.

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When I woke, all I could hear was the constant beeping sounds of the ER. My mother sat beside me, looking at - not her daughter, but a crippled, tube covered hockey player.

“How is she?” Mom asked as a doctor entered the small hospital room. The doctor looked down at me and frowned,” Riley hurt herself badly in that hockey game. Given the circumstances, Riley could end up in a wheelchair.”

My mind swirled, a wheelchair? No way. Never. What would people think of me? How would I play hockey? How would I be able to do anything?

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My mother helps me out of the car and into my wheelchair. It was the first day of school since the incident. The doctor said I might not be in a wheelchair my whole life, but being handicapped is the hardest thing ever. Do you know how difficult it is to get dressed in the morning? It takes like an hour. But the thing that I'm most afraid of is how people will think of me. "Okay sweetheart umm, do you want me to walk you in?" My mom says as she gets my bag out of the car.

"No mom it's fine." She hands me the bag and I roll away. The door opened for me as I entered the middle school. Hundreds of eyes swamped my vision. A clear cut pathway was made for me. As I rolled down the hallway, I could almost feel the cloud of pity engulf me. One girl offered all too kindly to carry my books for me to my next class. I felt so different, alone, left out. It was the same everywhere I went, from my own childhood street to the public grocery store. Day after day, I see the same pitiful glances that break my heart.

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A month later, 2<sup>nd</sup> period was about to start and I was trying to make it to my next class on time. Someone hits my wheelchair from behind and all of my notes and books tumble out of my arms. "Ugh, sorry I'm so clumsy. This basically happens every day." A boy around the same age as me comes around and picks up my books. He stands up and looks at me. My heart beats faster as I look into his eyes. For the first time in a long time, someone looked at me normally. He smiled and asked for my name. "Riley." I answered. "My names Aiden," he replies. Is Aiden different? I think to myself. Is Aiden different from the others? I silently ask myself this as Aiden walks with me down the middle school hallway. Maybe this could work.

# The Window

By: Fyfer Brookes- Gillingham  
Gr. 7 Pinantan Elementary

It was a cold morning when our teacher, Mrs. Beers, gave us a surprise spelling test. Actually, it wasn't a surprise, we knew it was coming for about a week. But our tender teenage minds were set on other things, like food, friends, and sleep.

The room felt like a hot oven, partly because the heat was on full blast, but the real reason we felt as if we were roasting on a grill was the stress. It slowly crawled under our skin, making us sweat and twitch with worry, wondering if what we wrote down on our slim piece of paper was spelled with befitting accuracy.

The stress was too much, and looking at the evil test didn't help with the dismaying situation.

I quickly turned my head to look out the window at the public beach, and hoped what I saw would release the built up stress and confusion. BOOM! CRASH! The dam of despair, located in my mind, collapsed and all my worries quickly drained out into the pit of nothingness. All because of what stood on the other side of that window.

First of all, the window had been painted for Christmas, but when the merry event had ended, it needed to be washed away. Someone had washed it, but they didn't do a very good job, resulting in a white hue which made the glass look as if it was made out of thin caterpillar silk or soft clouds that had been plucked from the sky. This made the scene very dreamy, adding to the already overflowing abundance of unfiltered beauty.

The snow has been hardened after the many grueling cycles of warm sun and cold night. Hard snow is not pretty on its own, but when the sun hits, it looks as if diamonds were having a black and white rave.

The trees have no leaves from the recent, bitter Autumn, all that remains is the stunning skeletons of trees, whose outer branches looked like extended arms, clawing at the brilliant, pure blue sky.

A small patch of cat-tail reeds that have swallowed most of our beach started to battle, swaying back and forth viciously. What was making this happen? The wind? A human? A supernatural activity? My wild mind ran crazy as I search for an answer, which soon came. A little outline of a squirrel popped up on the top of the reed, its hasty movements made it seem distressed, like the rest of the students in the classroom. The squirrel slowly turned it's head-scanning the area, looking for something. It looked like a submarine's scope searching for a battleship, knowing it's being hunted. Why does the squirrel look so wary? No, not wary, terrified. It breathed slowly and calmly, trying to camouflage it's light caramel fur into the dark brown maroon of the cat-tail's pod on which it perched.

And then I saw it, the reason why squirrel was petrified. A dog. It's black glossy hair looked like liquid in the abundance of bright light from sun, it's knees were bent as low as they could go, and it's steady movements made it seem as if it were a well oiled machine. There aren't many black dogs that live in our community, and I'm not sure that if any of them hunt squirrels for food. But you could tell this dog was a looking for a plentifully prolific meal, and had done it before. It's muscles clenched, preparing it's tendons to propel it forward.

The anticipation grew as my palms got sweaty with the flamboyant fear of what I was about to see next, the death of a squirrel? I needed to look away, and yet my eyes were still glued to the window. It was going to happen any second now, the dog was satisfied with its killing posture.

The dog jumped at the reeds aiming for the squirrel, his posture perfect and mouth wide open. The squirrel turned to stone with fear as he stared down the throat of the beast. They were about to collide, the dog had its mouth ready to catch. The squirrel broke from its trance and-  
“Fyfer!”

My thoughts came soaring back to reality as I turned my head to see the concerned face of Mrs. Beers. The worried look quickly turned into a smug smile, “What are you looking at bud?” my teacher said giggling.

“Oh, uh, nothing much,” I said in a shy voice.

I felt the eyes of the classroom drill into my back as my face turned red, I was flooded with embarrassment. Soon the embarrassment was replaced with anger. I was mad that they were wasting the precious peering time looking at me and not out the window at the beautiful view. The animosity I had toward the class boiled as my teacher started the test.