

Lily Brown, Gr.9, Westsyde Secondary

## Malefecint

There I lay asleep on the top of a hill all alone on a fluffy bed. A golden sword lay at my feet and a red rose in my hand. Even though I was asleep I could still sense, feel and see everything. There was fire everywhere, people lay on the ground showing no sign of life and there amidst the chaos I saw her, Maleficent, the evil being that had cursed me when I was just a babe.

I could still hear my fairy Godmother say to me "It is your destiny to defeat the Destroyer," when I turned back to face the woman, she had taken a new form. In the place of the wretched witch was a bloodthirsty dragon. She towered above me, growling and hissing as you picture a dragon would.

With a whispery voice she beckoned me closer and closer. So close I could feel her hot fiery breath on my face. My only thought was that I was going to die. "Help!" I shrieked. Suddenly, I woke up hot and sweaty with my 12 Godmothers hovering above me muttering things like, "Oh the poor dear!" and "It probably was just another nightmare." "Stop fussing over me", I said, "Today is my day because it is my 16th birthday!" Little did I know that the special birthday that I was so looking forward to would bring with it a prison that would hold me captive for the next one hundred years.

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**Lily Brown, Gr.9, Westsyde Secondary**

**Aurora Rose**

Many people have heard my story up until now but what they don't know is that the prince didn't save me from the slumber I was condemned to after pricking my finger that unfortunate 16th birthday, for we hadn't even met. A prince breaking my spell with "true love's kiss" was only a bedtime story told to soothe young children. When I was born the jealous Maleficent cast a spell on my life, cursing me to prick my finger while picking a rose near the castle and fall instantly dead. Merryweather, one of my fairy Godmothers, tried in vain to revoke the spell. Her powers were not strong enough to remove it completely, but she was able to lighten the curse. So I would not die but rather sleep for one hundred years alongside all those in my kingdom. As long as I held the rose, my sleep would be broken when a century had passed.

**100 YEARS LATER**

Smoke! I smell smoke. Fire! I see fire. Wait. I could... I could see! I was awake! I could move my limbs! I could drop the cursed rose! I felt as if I could fly! Hold on... fire, smoke, thorns, people on the ground. This could not be the kingdom I once knew. What was going on? Maleficent!! She was behind all this.

I suddenly had an urge to go to the palace where I was born. I looked down at the rose I'd held so long. The magic of the spells had hardened its delicate petals into crystal and it shone with a golden brilliance. I placed it in my robe, grabbed a sword for protection and set off.

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Aurora Rose

As I crossed the grand entrance of the palace I saw a dark figure turn toward me and say, "Oh how nice of you to show up! Now I finally get that perfect battle I've been planning." It was Maleficent. "Why you..." I screamed. "You've been planning this ever since you knew I was born Right? You just wanted to get rid of the royal family so you could come in here and rule my kingdom. Well, I won't have it! I will avenge my kingdom if its the last thing I do!" "Oh but darling. It will be the last thing you do. Have you met me in my newest form?" said maleficent with glee!

A flash of green light shot from Maleficent's body. The next thing I saw sent shivers down my spine. It was just like in my dream. Maleficent had turned into a hideous dragon. I grabbed at my sword and stabbed it into the ground, "Aaahhhhhhhh!!" Maleficent shrieked. The sword was jammed through her scaly foot. I yanked it out hard but as I did I watched in amazement as the wound instantly healed. My anger surged as I slashed wildly at any part of her within my reach. These gashes too closed almost as instantly as they'd been opened. "Honey, nothing you can do can kill meeee," she hissed.

A thought then flashed through my mind, "If she put me into a spell, I can do the same to her. But instead of only for 100 years it will be forever!" This was my last chance to show Maleficent she had made a huge mistake in casting her spell on me. I threw the golden rose at her. Its tiny thorn pricking her scale-covered finger as it fell. "You fool!" she screamed in agony. "Do you know what this does? Magic reversed is nothing but a curse! It will kill meeeeeeeeeee!" Her giant form writhed, withered and shrunk until she lay dead before me in her regular form. Just an ugly wretched witch.

**Lily Brown, Gr.9, Westsyde Secondary**

**Aurora Rose**

I turned my head and saw my parents running toward me. "Oh darling is that you," My mother said on the verge of tears. "Yes, yes! Oh how I've missed you!" I said. We all embraced and I saw my 12 godmothers and a man standing behind them. "Oh honey, let me introduce prince John, he has been searching for you for 100 years." said my father. Well, I guess I was wrong about the prince and true loves' kiss being only a bedtime story. Maybe I do get a happy ending. Now that I've told my story I guess there's not much else to say except for "And we all lived happily ever after".

### Life's Biggest Questions

Love. That word has so much baggage. People are often stupid with it. There is an endless supply of love in this world, and yet they say we can't be with more than one person at a time, and we have to devote ourselves to one person, through marriage. Society always forgets to mention the fact that people change through their life. You can change, and so can the other person, and sometimes you just are not happy with each other anymore. It isn't really something that can be avoided, and it's not really anyone's fault. Why can't people just let it go and move on with their lives? We can always find others to be with and be happy together. We have limited time on this Earth, why can't we all just enjoy it? These questions bounce around in my head for hours and hours, ricocheting around the inside of my skull until I get a headache. I remember when I was young, pondering the question, " Why must stories always end, why can't another person just pick up a pencil and continue on?" I was so pleased to find an answer. It was so simple. Stories must end so new ones can start. If there is a person who is continuing another story, they aren't writing a new one.

However, there are some questions that the human mind is not prepared to answer, some questions that it cannot possibly comprehend... such as that of romantic love. Maybe one day, but not now, I hope I live to feel it. At least, this is what I used to think. Until all the questions I could ever hope to think were answered; when I met him.

I remember the day I first saw him. He was introduced to me as a transfer from a laboratory in Amsterdam, and had been assigned to work on my new project with me. He was such a flirt, but he was horrible at it. It only took a few weeks for him to ask me out, and when I said no hesitantly, he covered my brand-new toyota in neon-pink sticky notes; you could not see the black paint underneath! Each post-it asked 'You sure?' messily written in black sharpie. I quickly discovered that my favourite things about him are his intensity, and his ability to care so much about something he feels passionate about. Finally, I agreed. He said he wanted to meet me at the little grey bridge over the river by my favourite coffee shop, which is where I assumed we were going.

I still remember the feeling of how warm his hand was as he shielded mine from the cold wind. With my hand in his grasp, he pulled us both up and over the railing. I was surprised by the gesture because it happened too fast for me to react, and he was too strong for me to resist even if I was ready. Up and over the edge we went, the memory of his face is still floating around in my mind, like a picture. His bold green eyes were smiling and watering because of the wind; his hair flailing every which way, in the meager seconds before we hit the icy water.

I remember feeling the scream coming through my mouth before I heard it, and the strange yelp that came through my lungs as I felt the splash. I hit the cold water and it rushed around me with frigid swirls. When I finally came up, we were quite a distance from the bridge, and he was laughing. I flushed red with anger, despite the cold water winding its way around my body. I swam over and shoved his copper-covered head

deep under the waves. He came out of the water and I glared, before barking "What's so funny!?". He then burst into a fit of giggles and his next phrase was "I knew you knew how to have fun, somewhere in there". Ouch. For some reason, this didn't sit well with me. I had never really thought about it before, 'fun'. I never really needed it. I spent time in the weeks following contemplating his words.

A few weeks passed before I spoke to him again. I would never admit to him how much his words stung...I made him think I was angry. It seemed easier. Was I a boring person? Looking back on it now, I suppose I wasn't the most adventurous. After chatting, we agreed to go out again, and he promised this time there would be no surprises - we were going out for Laser-Tag. I had never tried it, and he, in his juvenile state, insisted we go. Every date was like that...fun, exciting and full of laughs. Being around him slowly began to open me up to a strange new feeling. My smiles felt... different, somehow bigger and better than ever. I soon wanted to be around him all the time just to feel the butterflies.

I remember our last date the best. Clearest, to no surprise, as it was the most recent; but what I remember even more is the lack thereof a date. I knew what was going to happen that night, I am no idiot nitwit. I saw the signs, I found the ring, as he is horrible at hiding things. I was wearing a deep green dress, the mermaid styling fit me perfectly and the flounce flowing to the floor. It was a beautiful dress, bought with the raise I had earned a few months ago. I remember the phone call, the number memorized in my impenetrable memory. It is so strange that I can remember this small,

insignificant detail over the exact words that that were said to me. I have wracked my brain for so many hours trying to. It is all blurry from the moment I picked up the small, blocky phone to say 'hello' to the second it hit the floor when it fell through my fingertips. I heard it 'clunk' on the apartment tiles before I even realised that it had left my hand. Shattered love, I let my walls down, I let someone in. I guess this is my punishment, my own personal torture. I wish that it was not my car that my roommate was returning that hit him. I wish that it had not been so slow to get to know him, my biggest regret. I wish that I had clued into what was going on a few streets away; but more than anything, I wish that I had an answer to life's biggest question.

What is love?



Sunflowers.  
Alexa Marshall  
Grade Nine, SKSS

### Sunflowers.

Leo-May was an odd girl who loved the hot summer wind and the colour of soft sunset orange. She grew up with two sets of older twin brothers and always had a scraped knee underneath her pretty dresses and loved school despite how all her peers moaned and groaned for summer to come faster. She glared at boys and sometimes spat on the sidewalk and wrote out math faster than some could think. She also loved sunflowers.

Leo-May hated winter. One year, she had idealised the idea of winter in the middle of a blistering hot summer; It was all happy holidays and a not-too-cold kind of weather. Six months later, she was hit in the face with the coldest weather it had ever been, and she quickly realised that winter wasn't just cute, cold noses; it was bitter winds, it was not-warm-enough clothes, no matter what you wore, it was the *worst*. So now, Leo-May hated winter with a cold (haha) passion.

Leo-May was now hopeful for a summer full of running with little cousins and a job and too much swimming at Grandma's and extra classes to get ahead. She was nearly in the same level of math as the second set of twins, Alexander and Aristotle, even though she was two years younger, and she took great pride in it. Jack and Julian, nearly graduated, had been trying to convince Mum to let the five of them to go on a roadtrip down to San Francisco without her, since she used all her vacation days when Leo-May had caught a nasty fever bug in January. Mum stubbornly refused to allow it, as she said she needed all four boys home to help with the shop over the summer, but the twins had swayed her in the past, and they all knew she was perfectly capable of balancing things in the shop; she just didn't want them to leave the nest so soon, even if they were near adults. Leo-May wasn't sure whose side she was on, whether she wanted to go or not.

Leo-May had been contemplating her two choices when Kenta made himself known on the other side of the crowded street, waving on the curb. She smiled and remembered another reason to stay, looking at him. She took a sip of her still-hot chai, watching as her best friend looked both ways then

Sunflowers.  
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crossed the road, a brown paper bag grabbing her attention as it swung in his too-long arms, contrasting against his grey button-up coat. He stepped onto the curb, now standing in front of her, towering over her small, strong frame at nearly six-foot two. His dark skin was an even bigger contrast against the brown bag as he passed it to her.

“Happy early birthday,” he said, planting a kiss on her forehead as Leo-May took the bag.

“It’s in, what, two months?” She said incredulously, but without edge. He wrapped an arm around her, now guiding her through the still packed street.

“I know, but I was on my way here and saw them, and I know that sunflower season is just starting up, so...” He trailed off as she pulled a bouquet out of them out of the bag. He looked to her face. She absolutely lit up with joy.

“I love them,” she said. She was holding the flowers by their strong, stiff and slightly prickly stem. She looked up to his eyes. They were a deep brown, near black. She looked so excited to him, like a giddy kindergartener, her blonde hair framing her pale but red-cheeked complexion and bright blue eyes. She looked back down at the flowers, soaking in the brightness of their yellow petals and the dark brown of the center seeds. They almost matched his eyes.

“Thank you,” she said, “I really do love them.” His face softened.

“You’re welcome,” he said tenderly, lovingly.

“So,” she started, putting the sunflowers gently back into the bag, “Has your mum budged yet? I know how much you wanted to go to Japan.” He pulled his arm off her shoulders and his hand slipped into hers, large and dark and gentle. He smiled down to her, and she up to him.

“She said that she’s okay with me going,” he replied, “but that I’ll have to stay with relatives.”

“That isn’t unreasonable,” Leo-May said, sipping at her chai.

Sunflowers.  
Alexa Marshall  
Grade Nine, SKSS

“It really isn’t, not with my mother, as you know.” He grinned, looking at the bright orange sky.  
“I’m just nervous. Japanese spoken-language hasn’t ever been my strong suit.” Again, he looked down to her. “Not like it has been yours.” She smiled, still looking forward.

Leo-May and Kenta had been best friends for as long as anyone could remember. Their mothers had gotten along well throughout high school and kept in contact throughout the years. Kenta was a few months older than she, putting him a grade higher than her. They had finally met face-to-face when Leo-May was only three. He had gotten along well with the mischievous twins, Alexander and Aristotle, and went over to their house for a playdate while the mothers talked, only to get along better with her in the end. She had been working on a small puzzle and he had sat down with her, helping her put the right pieces where when she got frustrated, calming her with his small voice. They had been inseparable ever since. It had been a year since Kenta had finally collected the courage to ask her out. She said yes.

“No,” she agreed, giggling, “speaking Japanese hasn’t ever been your strong suit.” He snorted.

“Understatement of the year.”

They walked in silence together, hands swinging between them, towards the early morning, West-End Farmer’s Market. The crowds began to thicken, the smell of deep-fried something filling their noses. She led them to the first stall, choosing one chocolate, one caramel doughnut, paying the woman at the till and splitting both doughnuts in two so that each of them could have half of both, one of their traditions. She munched happily on her doughnut, her cold Chai now discarded in one of the many garbages and her bag of sunflowers now hanging off her wrist, her other hand still intertwined with his.

He looked down to her. She was a short girl, bright-eyed and clever, so clever. She was tough, but dainty when she was hurt, he knew. She looked cute, but beautiful, in the light of the still-rising sun, squinting as it hit her eyes. An unasked question weighed down his tongue.

“Will you come with me, this summer? Leave behind your classes and cousins and brothers, and come with me?” She was quiet for a moment.

Then she looked at him, all of him, everything he meant to her,

and said “How could you make me choose between you and them?”

Andie McDeis  
Grade 9  
@Kool

Her.

She has scars,  
And even though they're not visible,  
Because they're not necessarily physical,  
She has scars.

She has a passion,  
One that ignites a fire in her heart,  
And determination in her brain,  
She has a passion.

She is a lover,  
Oh how she wishes the world would be at peace,  
How she wishes the violence would deplete,  
She is a lover.

She is strong,  
Though sometimes she wishes the world weren't so rough,  
Or perhaps that she could be a bit more tough,  
She is strong.

She is an athlete,  
With a passion for speed,  
Three turns and some hustle is all she'll need,  
She is an athlete.

She wants to change the world,  
Though she knows it won't be easy,  
That her brain will be wheezing,  
She wants to change the world.

Andie McDeis  
Grade 9  
@Kool

Broken.

Breaking.

I swear,

I can feel another piece of my heart breaking.

Another shooting,

Another innocent person dead.

One more family,

Will never see their loved one again.

Is this all we are?

All we'll ever be?

We're all living a life of sorrow,

A life of regret,

Praying for a better tomorrow,

But it won't get better

No God is going to save us,

No matter how many churches try to pray for us

We can only save ourselves

Everyone wants to see the better day,

But how will we see when our selfishness blinds us?

How will we know?

The media keeps denying us.

We all want a better tomorrow,

But how will we get that if we can't fix today?

Another child will go to bed starving,

Another mother will continue trying,

Trying to give her baby a better life,

But how will she do that?

She's working for food,

Hoping for clean water,

Only to fail to give,

A better life for her daughter.

Broken.

Andie McDeis  
Grade 9  
@Kool

He Said, She Said

“Daddy?” Asked the young girl.

“Yes, daughter?”

“Who do you want me to be?”

He thought for a minute,

Before deciding on an answer.

“I want you to be tough,

To not let anyone ever hurt you.”

She wasn't sure she wanted to be tough.

Could she not be strong, but still gentle?

“Mommy?”

“Yes, daughter?”

“Who do you want me to be?”

“I want you to be beautiful,

To shine brighter than anyone else.”

She liked the thought of being beautiful,

But wasn't there a way,

For her to see other's beauty

Without forgetting her own?

She sighed.

“Who do I listen to?

It will be hard to listen to both.”

“Listen to Father!” Screamed the Heart.

“Do not let me be broken!

Keep me safe from

Boys and bad friends!”

“No, silly! Listen to Mother!” Yelled the Brain.

“When you're beautiful, you can achieve anything,

Get anything you'd like!”

While both sounded great,

She wasn't sure.

“Maybe..” Whispered the Soul

Andies McDeis  
Grade 9 @Kool

“Just maybe,  
You could be yourself.”

# **Break A Leg**

*Vivian McLean*

*Desert Sands Community School*

*Grade 9*

“Ah!” I hissed under my breath, as I was once again stabbed by the torturous weapon called eyeliner. “Is this really necessary?” I asked while trying my hardest not to let any more tears escape despite the pain.

“You know it is,” replied Cassandra, one of our faithful volunteers who mainly worked on actors’ hair and makeup before performances. “Otherwise the lights will make it look like you have no eyes. I’m sorry about hurting you, but if you’d stop flinching, this could be done much faster,” she reprimanded before grabbing my face more securely and reapplying whatever makeup had been smudged down my face with my tears. “There! All done,” she finally declared and swiftly sat back in her seat to admire her work one last time before giving me a nod, signaling that it was alright for me to get out of the chair and do something else before the play began. I looked around the green room - the backstage room for the cast to wait in when they weren’t acting - and tried to decide what to do. I already had my costume on, as it was much easier to avoid smudging makeup when you weren’t pulling things over your face, so the next half hour or so was free time. I decided to dispel some of my nervous energy by taking the fifteen-second walk from the green room to the backstage part of the set to make sure all of the props were in place. This was very important to me, because even though my part in this year’s production of “My Fair Lady” was minor, I was one of the first people onstage.

Of course I needn’t have worried because Jennifer, our dutiful stage manager, was on top of everything as always. All of the props were set pristinely in their respective spots, waiting for the moment when the actors would swipe them away without a moment’s notice. Right beside them, stooped over her script with a miniature reading light attached to it for visibility, was



# **Break A Leg**

*Vivian McLean*

*Desert Sands Community School*

*Grade 9*

Jennifer, checking over every last little detail before the show began. This never ensured us a perfect show but it wasn't for lack of trying on our part. After I was positive everything was in the right place, I took a moment to listen to the buzz coming from the other side of the curtains. Judging from the sounds of it, I knew that night would have a good turnout. Despite my insecurities, I was glad. Many people had worked so hard for that moment, and I knew they would feel proud about how many people came to view their hard work. All those weeks of effort and dedication came down to a few hours, and all we could do was hope that the crowd enjoyed every moment.

Satisfied that everything was set up to run smoothly, I decided to warm up. It was all I had left to do, so I quickly went on my way back to the green room. Once there, I approached my friends Sky and Matthew. They were two of the few people in our acting group who were around my age. They agreed to join me, and we went to a less chaotic section of the room, in hopes of avoiding the traffic of the people around us. Once in place, I caught the eye of Tania, our vocal instructor who was also in the musical, who immediately caught onto our idea and walked over to join us. Once she was there, we began our diaphragmatic breathing exercises, then moved onto our tongue twisters. By the time we had finished a few, several other members of the cast had begun to join around us, forming a larger group, all chanting the words in sync with one another. Then, once we were sure our enunciation and projection would be the best they could, we moved onto our scales, singing them over and over again together, like one big loud harmonious family. In that moment, I looked around to take everything in, knowing that all our progress from over the last several months was about to hit a climax. Even the people perfecting their looks in the

# **Break A Leg**

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floor-length mirrors across the room seemed to know it, as they joined in our vocal exercises from a distance. The enthusiasm and anticipation in the air was almost palpable.

Once finished, the group gradually split apart, sharing smiles and laughs of comradery and holding conversations of what was to come shortly. I looked over to Matthew and asked him if he was ready. He told me he was, then added a “why wouldn’t I be?” His words made realize he was right. I knew that no matter what, ‘the show would go on,’ and I was one of those ‘now or never’ moments you only had so many of in your lifetime. At that point, there was no going back, even if I wasn’t ready. After that, Matthew walked away and left me to my thoughts, lightly muttering his lines under his breath.

“The play starts in under 15 minutes! If you need to pee, you better go now or suck it up until intermission!” Jennifer declared as she entered the room briefly before quickly scuttling out again, surely to go check everything backstage over again for the hundredth time.

After another five or so minutes, I decided it was finally time to head down to the set, so I once again took the fifteen-second-long walk to the spot from which I would enter the stage when it was time. Then I closed my eyes, took a deep breath and reminded myself of everything I had learned over the years. I revised my character’s backstory, reminded myself of my first few lines, and mentally transformed into who I would be as soon as I stepped foot on that stage. Then I exhaled, steeled my expression and strode into the raising lights, ready for the show of my life.

Lindyn Schrauwen (name), Clearwater Secondary School (school), grade 9 (grade).

Alex and The Ocean (title)

A little boy sits at the edge of the water. It laps at his toes, making him smile a little.

Every fibre in his body wants to leap into the water and swim to his heart's content.

And he almost does.

But before he can do anything, his mother calls to him from the shade beneath the swaying willows, beckoning him closer.

"Alex!" she says, "The ocean is a dangerous mistress and it is best not to tempt her," she frowns at the boy's saddened expression at her words, then waves him over gently.

"Why don't you come sit with me for awhile?" she smiles when he complies, albeit reluctantly, and sits next to her, pulling his knees up to his chest and turning away.

Alex's mother is hurt by his cold disposition, as she only wants to help her son.

"Alex, come closer honey," she feigns a smile, trying to be strong.

Despite his mother's best attempts to hide her pain, Alex could see right through it in an instant.

He didn't want to cause her pain, so he scooted closer until he was sitting on the folded towel that kept their hindquarters off the sand, and gave his mum a hug.

"I'm sorry momma, it's just that, well, the ocean is so very beautiful and all I've ever wanted was to feel its touch and glide around within the depths of the deep blue," he sighs, tearing up a little as he gives his mum a puppy-dog look, one that could melt the hearts of even the most callous, cold, and selfish beings.

Alex's mum stares into his eyes, deep brown as his father's had been before him, and full of the longing like she once had at his age.

"Alex, I'm sorry," she says, petting his head as she used to when the nightmares woke him late into the night. When he would crawl into bed with her to banish the nasty aftertaste they left in his frightened toddler mind.

"I wish I could tell you something different, but the ocean is dangerous. Especially to those of us who haven't learned to swim."

He looks down at his hands, a saddened expression clear on his face.

Alex's mum sighs and pulls him to her chest, resting her chin on his head.

"My boy, whatever am I going to do with you?" she mumbles against his head, kissing it, and trying to make her sad little want-to-be swimmer smile.

Eventually, the pair leave the shore and head home. But throughout the day, Alex always finds his mind drifting to thoughts of the ocean.

When Alex drifts off to sleep at night, tucked safe and warm in his cozy little bed, he dreams of swimming and sailing, of fishing and wading, surfing and diving. Anything and everything that had to do with being in or near the ocean and it's beautiful lapping waves.

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The next day, Alex and his mother return to the shore at lunch time.

Alex's mum carries a basket on one arm and clutches Alex's hand with her free one.

Alex is carrying a blanket for the two to sit on and grinning widely.

He is excited to come back to the ocean and practically skips ahead, pulling his mother along with him down the inclined path, to get to their favorite place by the willows.

"Alex, slow down a bit," his mother chuckles, slightly out of breath.

"Sorry mamma, I'm just excited!" he slows to give her a big hug and then starts back up again at a more relaxed pace.

When they reach their favourite slightly shady spot, Alex lets go of his mother's hand and lays the blanket down, smoothing it over as best he can on the soft sand.

Lindyn Schrauwen, Clearwater Secondary School, grade 9, Alex and The Ocean

As Alex finishes up, his mother had set down the rather heavy basket and was beginning to lay out its contents.

First, a large thermos of apple juice and a container of dried peaches. Next, a baggie with their tomato, cucumber, swiss cheese, and chicken sandwiches, cut to Alex's direct specifications. Next came a container of fresh fruits and veggies. Last but not least, a container decorated with christmas things that contained the double chocolate chip cookies baked only yesterday. She then took out two brightly coloured plastic cups and their matching plates.

Alex's eyes lit up with joy. This lunch was made up of all of his favourite foods! Alex's mum smiled and poured him some juice from the thermos. He gulped it down thirstily as she placed his lunch on the plate he had written his name on when they had first bought the matching set.

"Thank-you mamma," Alex says happily as he takes his plate. Alex stares longingly at the ocean as he eats, and his mum watches her son, happy that she could make up for yesterday's mishap by making him smile today.

"You're welcome Alex," she says quietly after a moment, so Alex can only just make out what she said.

After that they both watch the ocean together while they eat, content to say nothing as the waves move in and out, both lost in thought.

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Alex and his mum visited the shore together every day until they grew old and eventually died.

Alex did learn to swim later in his years, he even got a job working on a fishing boat because of it.

He married a lovely redheaded girl who had a passion for painting the ocean waves.

They had two children who grew up to love the ocean as their parents did.

One, a little boy who liked to draw sea creatures, and two, a little girl who wanted nothing more than to float upon the waves, be it sailing or swimming.

Alex died a happy man, content with his life that revolved around the ocean he had loved since before he could remember.