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Volume 22 Number 9

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 Brian Lies


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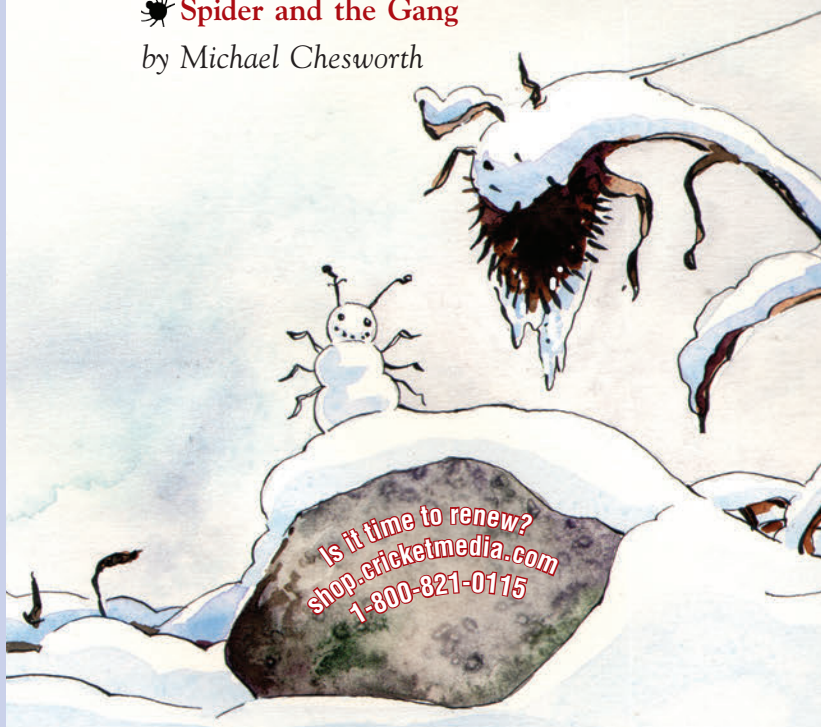
The Fun Zone:

Family Tree by Benton Mahan

Mind-Bugger:

Silly Snow Day by Gilbert Ford

 **Spider and the Gang**
 by Michael Chesworth



Dear Spider,
I love the whole magazine. I really want to make the Dessert Soup (February 2015). Please let Rainbow Jewel be in one of your comics.

Claire Smith, age 6
Auburn, Massachusetts



Dear Spider,
I love your mag and I love you. I love science. My favorite story in the March 2015 Spider is "Blushing Blake."

Titus
Barnet, Vermont

Dear Spider,
Do you know cursive? I do. I learned it from my teacher, Mr. Basmajian. He is really fun! I love your magazine!

Mackenna Brown, age 8
Santa Rosa, California

Mackenna, I love writing cursive in my web!
Cowabunga!

Spider



Dear Spider,
I like your crazy hair. Thistle, you are my favorite bug. Can you please adopt this penguin? His name is Willy.

I have nine siblings, four older, five younger. I like the comics at the bottom of the pages. I love everybuggy!

Elise M., age 11
Mount Crawford, Virginia



Dear Spider,
Do you know how all those kids are always asking you to adopt their animal drawings? Well, I'm sure they're sad when they read the next issue and their animal isn't there. I just wanted to suggest that you have an issue called Adoption Issue. You would fit as many animal drawings from kids as possible. It would give everyone something to look forward to.

Anita, age 8
Opelika, Alabama



We love the animals you all send in. That's why we have a surprise for you and Thistle. Find it on page 35!

Sam



Hi, Gang!
I love your magazines! Sam, congratulations on winning the science fair (March 2015). Thistle, you are so cute. Will you put this kitten in one of the magazines? Her name is Bella. She loves bugs. I'm afraid of spiders, but not you, Spider!

Ava Wallen, age 6
Medford, Oregon



Dear Spider,
I've read your magazines ever since I was little. I love them. You never know what comes next.

Louise Roudabush
Seattle, Washington



WE WORKED ALL DAY AND BARELY GOT ANYWHERE.

I CAN'T TAKE MUCH MORE OF THIS.

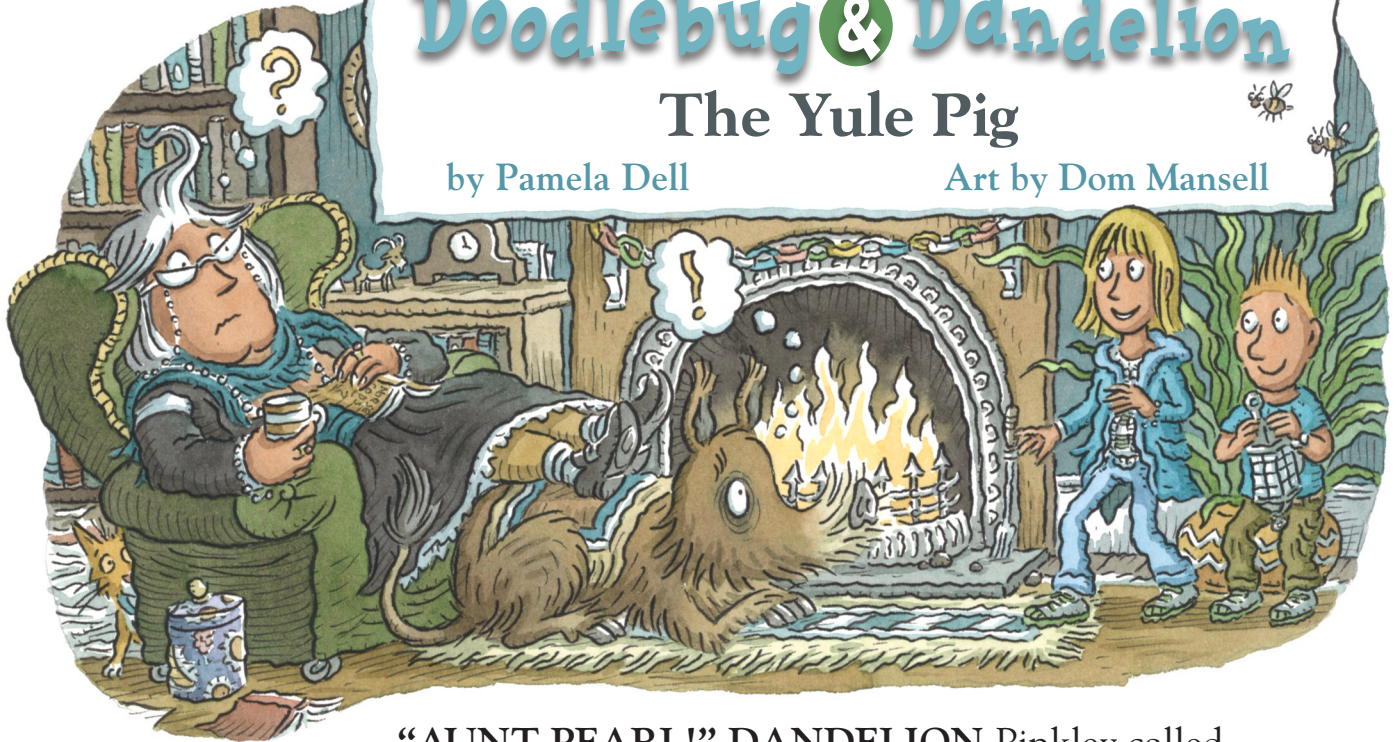


Doodlebug & Dandelion

The Yule Pig

by Pamela Dell

Art by Dom Mansell



“AUNT PEARL!” DANDELION Pinkley called, bursting into the Pinkley family’s library along with her brother Doodlebug. “Can we use Charles as our Yule pig?”

Aunt Pearl was drowsing before a cozy fire in the book-lined room, and Charles, her beloved bearded pig, was acting as her footstool. Pearl and her pet had just flown in from their home on the island of Borneo.

“We rigged up a chariot and everything!” Doodlebug announced.

“And we want Charles to pull it around!” Dandelion said.

At the mention of “chariot” Aunt Pearl’s eyes fluttered open. Charles grumbled deep in his pig throat, shifting under the weight of Pearl’s big clodhoppers.

“Just like you said they do in Scandinavia on the winter

HOW’S THISTLE’S SURPRISE
COMING ALONG, SAM?



OH, BORNEO! I THINK WE BIT
OFF MORE THAN WE CAN CHEW.



solstice!” Dandelion added. On the way to visit, Charles and Aunt Pearl had stopped first in Sweden, where she had learned about many solstice traditions.

“That’s almost right, my dears,” Aunt Pearl informed them. “According to the myth, two goats pulled a chariot through the sky on the solstice, carrying the Norse god Thor. Today some people dress as these ‘Yule goats’ and visit their neighbors’ homes, singing and dancing.”

These tales about Yule and the winter solstice—the longest night of the year and the point when the days begin to get longer again—had inspired Dandelion to plan a celebration of her own.

“We are going to sing and dance for the neighbors like they do in Sweden,” she said. “But Charles will be the one playing the goat!”

“Well, *you* might sing and dance, Dandelion,” Doodlebug piped up, “but—”



BORNEO? THE LARGEST
ISLAND IN ASIA?



YEAH. I'M JUST TOO TIRED
TO SAY "PICKLES."



WHAT'S WITH THE SHOVELS
AND CLODHOPPERS, THE HEAVY
WORK BOOTS?



“Charles as the Yule goat!” Aunt Pearl trilled, interrupting Doodlebug and gazing adoringly at her massive pet. “That’s quite an honor, isn’t it, my dainty little turnip? He’s getting so good at understanding English you may even get him to sing along with you! He knows so many words now!”

Charles only groaned, long and mournfully.



On the evening of the solstice, the chariot glowed like a work of art. It was a fancy three-wheeler with gold trim and Viking heads on both sides. Dandelion, Doodlebug, and Cousin Rudyard, dressed in old-time Norse costumes, were eager to visit the neighbors. Doodlebug and Rudyard ignored Dandelion’s blabbering about singing and dancing. They had no intention of doing either.

Charles, fitted snugly into his chariot harness, stuck his snout in the air and whined loudly as they set off. Aunt Pearl and the Pinkley parents trailed behind to witness the antics.



“You give him one of those barley husk sweet rolls and he’ll sing like a bird!” Aunt Pearl called. But Charles drowned her out with his nonstop groaning and dismal snuffling and snorting.

WHAT SORT OF ANTICS, PLAYFUL ACTIONS THAT DRAW ATTENTION, HAVE YOU BUGGIES BEEN UP TO?



WELL, YOU KNOW HOW THISTLE GETS ALL THOSE LETTERS FROM FRIENDS WHO WANT TO COME AND PLAY? I DECIDED TO SURPRISE HER BY BUILDING HER A PLAYGROUND.



YEAH, THIS WAS SAM’S BRIGHT IDEA. NOW WE’RE WORKING TO CLEAR A FLAT SPOT IN THE MEADOW.



At the first three houses, Dandelion was forced to sing by herself and barely did any dancing. By the fourth stop she'd had enough of performing solo. She threatened to pinch everyone, and hard, Charles included, if

they didn't join in. So when the neighbors opened their door, a loud and terrible chorus rose up to greet them. Even Charles wheezed out an unhappy howl.

As a reward for their serenade, the kids got sparklers and winter plums. At the next house they got marzipan candies shaped like bearded pigs. And after two more successful stops, the chariot was loaded with treats of all kinds from their generous neighbors.

"This isn't that bad," Doodlebug admitted, his mouth stuffed with marzipan.

"But Charles is tired," Rudyard observed. "Or maybe he's upset about having to pull us all. Let's give him a rest."

They all agreed and climbed down to walk beside him. A small frown creased Dandelion's brow as she studied Charles. "Do pigs really get upset?"

"He'd be plenty upset if we made him play Yule boar," Doodlebug joked.

"What's that?" Rudyard asked.

TREATS! DO I
SMELL TREATS?



NOM NOM NOM.



VOILÀ, EVERYBUGGY! MARZIPAN
TREATS, MADE FRESH FROM ZEE
ALMONDS, SUGAR, AND EGGS.

"It's a yummy roasted pig they eat in Scandinavia on the Yuletide holiday," Dandelion explained. "They slather it with mustard and bread crumbs and—oh!"

Dandelion slapped a hand across her mouth as Charles let out a terrifying shriek from the depths of his big fat pig belly. Then he reared up and charged off as if propelled by a guided missile.

"Catch him!" Rudyard bellowed.

"Wow," Doodlebug said, "maybe he really can understand English."

"Charles!" Dandelion cried. "We'd never eat you! Never, never ever!"

"I should say not!" Aunt Pearl screamed, lunging after her pet.

Doodlebug howled with laughter. But no one heard him over the thunderous squealing that rang through the solstice night as that little piggy went WEEE-WEEEE-WEEEEEE all the way home. 🐷



YOU'RE BUILDING
THISTLE A PLAYGROUND?
JUST THE TWO OF YOU?



AND IT'S SO
MUCH MORE
WORK THAN WE
IMAGINED!



I SAY IT'S TIME TO CALL
IN DUNG BEETLE BOB,
THE BUILDER!



Lucky Pigs

HOW DO YOU wish someone good luck in Norway? Give them a sweet little pig on Christmas or New Year's! Sculpt your own good-luck pig out of marzipan, a treat made from almonds.



What You'll Need:



Marzipan
(or almond
paste)



Red or pink
food coloring



Small chocolate
chips

What To Do:

1. Add a drop of red or pink food coloring to the marzipan (or almond paste). Mix them together until the marzipan turns a pale pink color.
2. Roll some marzipan into a ball about one inch tall (the pig's body!).
3. Roll four smaller balls and attach them to the bottom of the body (the pig's legs!).
4. Pinch two small triangles and attach them to the top of the body (the pig's ears!).
5. Press one flat circle, carve two lines into it, and attach it to the front of the body (the pig's snout!).
6. Roll a small line of marzipan and twist it up, then attach it to the back of the body (the pig's tail!).
7. Put two small chocolate chips above the snout (the pig's eyes!).



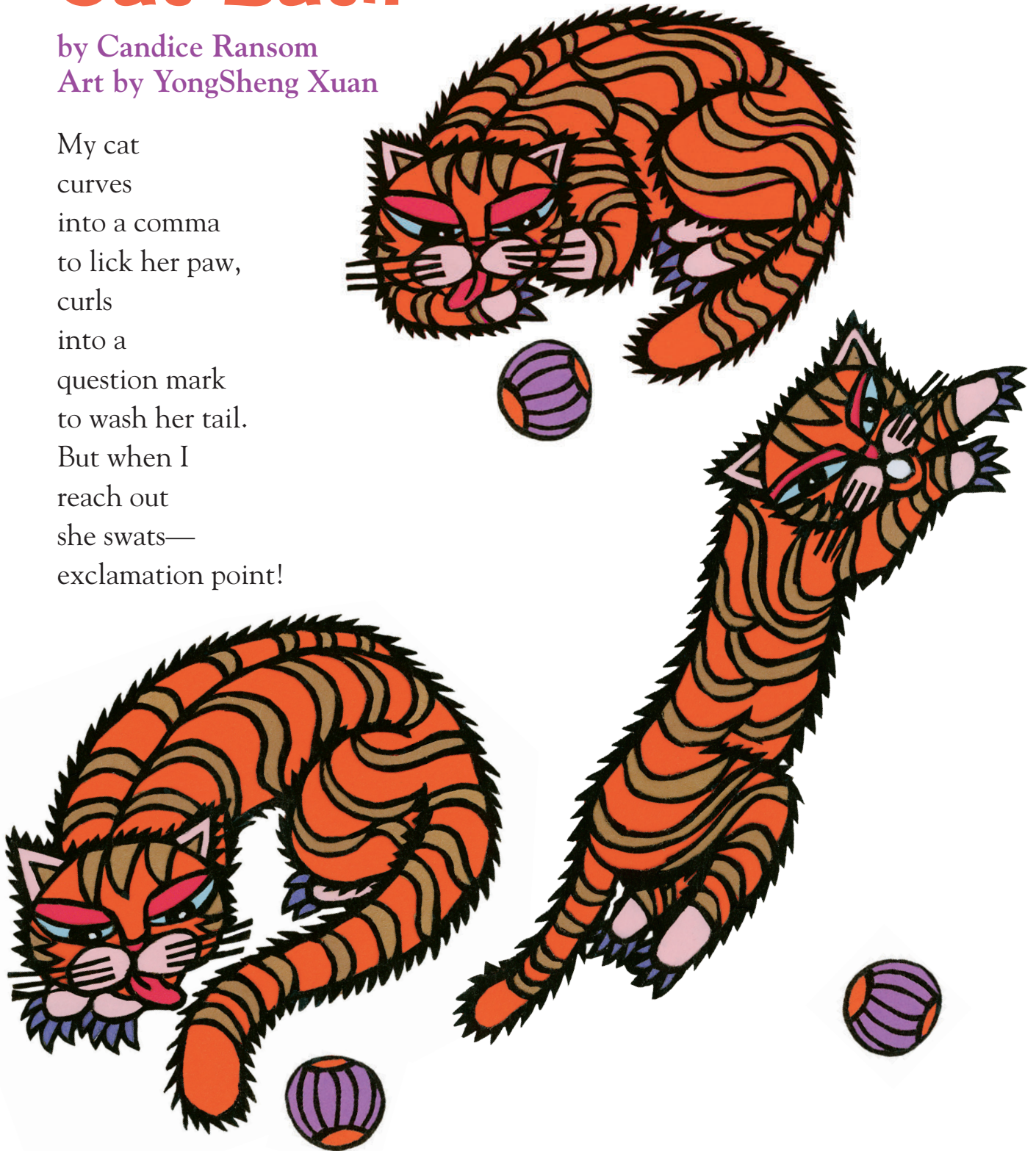
Good luck, and
PIG OUT!

Cat Bath

by Candice Ransom

Art by YongSheng Xuan

My cat
curves
into a comma
to lick her paw,
curls
into a
question mark
to wash her tail.
But when I
reach out
she swats—
exclamation point!



THE Theater Cat

by Marilyn Helmer

Art by Brian Lies

PURRCEY LECHAT CAME from a long line of talented mousers. For generations, the LeChats had kept the mouse problem in the Old Lighthouse Theater under control. With Aunt Clawdia in charge, not a tail or whisker of a mouse was seen. *Scarcely* a tail or whisker, that is.

"If it weren't for that rodent Mousetopheles, I could achieve my greatest dream," hissed Aunt Clawdia. "I could retire with a perfect record!" She glared at Purrcey. "When are you going to start following in the footsteps of the great LeChat mousers?"

Purrcey threw his paws around Aunt Clawdia's neck. "I don't want to hunt mice," he caterwauled. "My dream is to be a great actor. One day, the name of Purrcey LeChat will be up in lights!"

"Stop the theatrics," yowled Aunt Clawdia. "You're a cat, not an actor."

"Why can't I be both?" Purrcey asked.

"Because you're a cat," said Aunt Clawdia. "Get two things straight, Purrcey LeChat: cats hate mice, and cats were not meant to be actors."



IN THE STORY ABOVE, THE NAME
MOUSETOPHELES IS PRONOUNCED
"MOUSE-TAH-FUH-LEEZ."

HELLO READERS! WE ARE
THE SPELLING BEES. WE
INTERRUPT THIS COMIC
TO BRING YOU A BRIEF
PRONUNCIATION.



AND I JUST LEARNED THAT
CATERWAULED MEANS "SCREECHED
AND YOWLED." LIKE A CAT, I GUESS.

ENJOY THE STORY. WE
NOW RETURN YOU TO
SPIDER & THE GANG.

But Aunt Clawdia was wrong on both counts. Purrcey didn't hate mice. In fact, he liked them—especially Mousetopheles. And Purrcey *knew* that cats could be actors. Acting was his dream.

One afternoon when Purrcey had been exploring the theater, he'd ended up in a room backstage. He stared, wide-eyed. Magnificent costumes dangled from hooks. A large table was strewn with colorful

tubes, pots, and jars. Above it hung a mirror circled with lights.

Voices were coming from the stage. Curious, Purrcey peeked around the corner. People strutted back and forth, practicing their parts. Purrcey hid behind a prop and watched, fascinated.

From that day on, Purrcey never missed a rehearsal. He learned about curtain calls, cues, and costumes. He memorized lines and could point



out upstage, downstage, and center stage in his sleep.

Late each night, Purrcey left Aunt Clawdia dreaming of mouse massacres and crept into the darkened theater to pursue his own dream. On the empty stage, he acted out every part he knew.

Once, when he was halfway through *Puss in Boots*, another voice called out Tom's lines. A shadow moved, and Mousetopheles stepped onto the stage.

Purrcey knew that a good actor never misses a cue. He went on playing Puss while Mousetopheles played Tom. From then on, he and Mousetopheles performed together every night.

"One day we'll be known throughout the entire world," Purrcey often said.

"Applause! Encores! Rave reviews!" added Mousetopheles.

"Our names in lights!" Purrcey cheered.

Purrcey's devotion to acting was

one thing, but his friendship with Mousetopheles was more than Aunt Clawdia could bear. "I've decided to retire," she announced. "I'm moving to a cottage in the country, with birds singing conveniently in nearby trees and beds of catnip growing in the garden."

She stared at Purrcey. "Surely the LeChat talent will show up in you sooner or later." With one last



CAN YOU MOVE ALL THIS
DIRT TO MAKE THISTLE'S
PLAYGROUND, DUNG
BEETLE BOB?



YOU'VE DONE YOUR SHARE OF
DIRTY JOBS, HUH, BOB?



THAT'S RIGHT, KID. I'VE SEEN
SOME DIRT. I SURVIVED THE BUG
ZAPPER MASSACRES OF '09. MANY
GOOD BUGS DIED THAT DAY,
OH, YOU BETCHA.



hiss at Mousetopheles's mousehole, she headed off.

With Aunt Clawdia gone, Purrcey devoted all his time to acting. Mousetopheles' friends felt safe enough to return to the Old Light-house Theater. Together they formed their own actors' guild, calling themselves the MouseCateer Players.

One day Mousetopheles and Purrcey saw a sign in the lobby:

**WANTED:
ACTORS AND ACTRESSES FOR
UPCOMING PRODUCTION OF
THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN
URGENTLY NEEDED—ACTORS
TO PLAY CAT AND MICE!**

"That's us!" yowled Purrcey.

"Our acting debut!" cheered Mousetopheles.

Tryouts were just one week away. The MouseCateer Players memorized and practiced. When the big day arrived, they were ready.

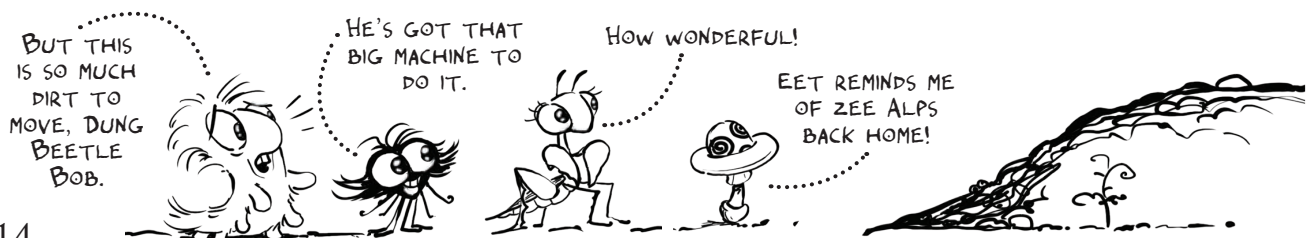
There was a bit of a kerfuffle when the MouseCateer Players



joined the line of actors trying out for parts.

"Everyone has to start somewhere," Mousetopheles told the astonished director.

"Who can play the roles of a cat and mice better than a cat and mice?" added Purrcey.





“Give ’em a chance,” shouted one of the human actors, who knew what it was like to dare to dream.



On opening night, the curtain rose to a packed house. The audience gasped when they saw the stage overrun with live mice. But the

gasps quickly turned into roars of laughter as Mousetopheles and his friends created chaos and confusion, sending human actors scrambling out of their way.

“There’s a mouse on my leg!” shrieked a horrified actress.

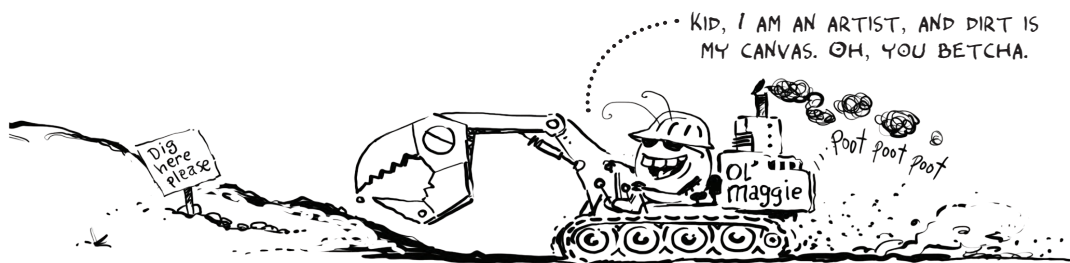
“Someone’s stepping on my tail!” squealed an indignant mouse.

The audience rolled in the aisles.

Suddenly, silence fell. A strange-looking creature walked onto the stage. He shimmered with color, from his wide-brimmed hat to his flowing cape. Around his neck hung a silver flute. “I am the Pied Piper,” he said. “I have come to get rid of the mice.”

“How will you do that when all others have failed?” the mayor sneered dramatically.

Purrcey put the flute to his lips. The tune he played was so haunting, the mice followed him in a trance. Cheers rose from the audience and the other actors. At the end of the play, when Purrcey





led the mice of the town away,
there wasn't a dry eye in the house.

Applause rang out as the curtain
closed. The cast and crew were called
back to take bow after bow. The play
received rave reviews. Word went out
that the special effects were amazing.



Purrcey invited Aunt Clawdia to a
special performance on closing night.

At the cast party afterward, she
threw her paws around his neck.
"My dear Purrcey," she purred,
"watching you get rid of all those
horrid little mice tonight was
outstanding. You have finally
proved that you do indeed come
from a long line of talented mousers."

Over her shoulder, Purrcey
winked at Mousetopheles. 🐭

OL' MAGGIE HERE JUST
LOVES TO MOVE DIRT!

LOOK AT HIM GO, SAM!
WE CAN THROW AWAY
OUR SHOVELS!



What does the tooth fairy give to a shark when it loses its tooth?

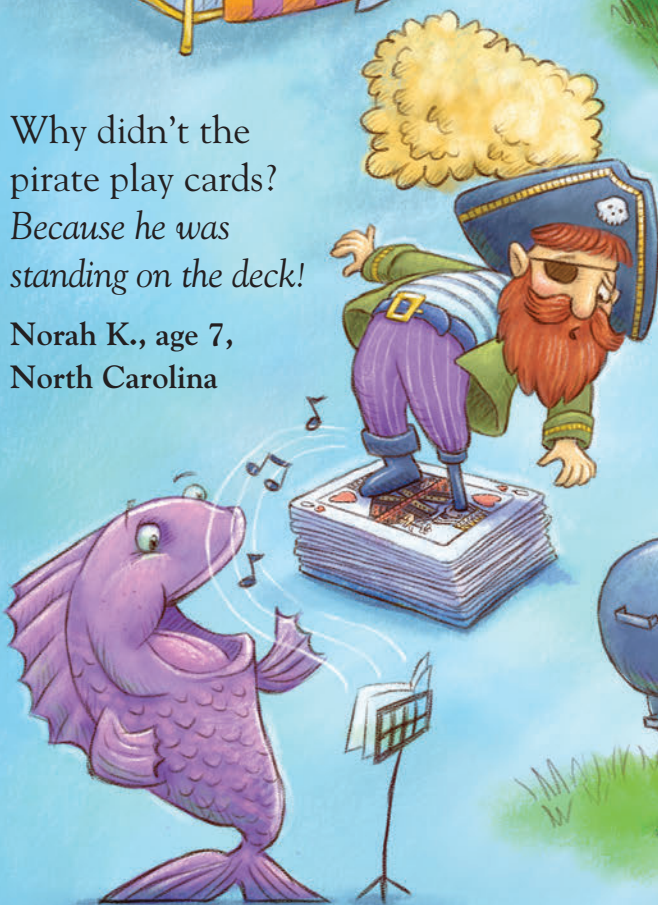
A sand dollar!

Leah F., age 8, Illinois



Why didn't the pirate play cards?
Because he was standing on the deck!

Norah K., age 7,
North Carolina



What kind of bear doesn't have any teeth?

A gummy bear.

Rachel H., age 7, North Carolina



How are fish and music the same?
They both have scales.

David H., age 5, North Carolina



What is a hair stylist's favorite kind of party?

A barberque!

Kathy M., age 9, New Hampshire



Art by Linda Silvestri

art © 2015 by Linda Silvestri

SEND YOUR FAVORITE JOKE TO
SPIDER@CRICKETMEDIA.COM!

BY YOU!

Cavemanners

by Neal Levin

Art by Rupert van Wyk

A caveman's behavior is commonly crude,
But follow these steps and you won't be so rude:



Don't drag your sister around by the hair.



Don't go outside of the cave when you're bare.



Remember to bathe when you're down
at the creek,



And please change your loincloth
at least once a week.



If you can't grumble nicely,
then don't bother blathering.



Don't chase the grownups while
hunting and gathering.

Pick up your slingshots, your arrows and bows.



Don't eat the boogers that grow in your nose.



When eating raw meat, wipe the blood off your chin,
But don't use the sleeve of your animal skin.



At dinnertime keep conversation succinct.



Don't leave 'til you ask if you may be extinct.



Please follow these tips with intent and resolve.
You have to mature if you want to evolve.

Nature's Cleanup Crew

by Andrea Vlahakis



When I get scared, I vomit explosively. To stay cool, I poop on my own legs. Wanna sniff me?

THE FIRST TIME I saw a turkey vulture, it had its head inside a dead raccoon and was feasting on its decaying flesh. I know staring is rude, but I couldn't stop watching. Not only was this my first turkey vulture—it was a turkey vulture at work.

I love the smell of rot in the morning.



Work? Turkey vultures have jobs? In a way, yes. They eat dead animals—anything from small road kill to dead cows—that could infect other birds, cats, dogs, or wild animals and spread disease. You could call them nature's cleanup crew.

They also have a great sense of smell, which is rare for a bird. Turkey vultures can pick out a whiff of rotting road kill while soaring overhead and zero in on it with pinpoint precision.

Turkey vultures rarely kill. And they have an unusual way of fighting, too. They vomit as their defense. And what they throw up stinks. Would you hang around?

IT'S AMAZING
HOW YOU USE
THAT MACHINE
WITH SUCH
PRECISION,
EXACTNESS.



YEP, I CAN PICK UP A GNAT'S EGG
WITHOUT BREAKING THE YOLK.



These huge birds aren't built for fighting. They have weak feet and can't hold on to much with their talons. Their feet are more useful for walking than for tearing an animal apart like a hawk would. That's why dead meat is a turkey vulture's preferred meal.

I don't celebrate Thanksgiving.
I celebrate MEATsgiving!
Nom nom nom.



So, how come *they* don't get sick when they eat decaying flesh? Stomach acid. A turkey vulture's digestive system kills off any viruses or bacteria it eats, making their droppings clean and disease-free.

THAT MACHINE LOOKS LIKE SOME DIRT-EATING BEAST WITH METAL TALONS, CLAWS.




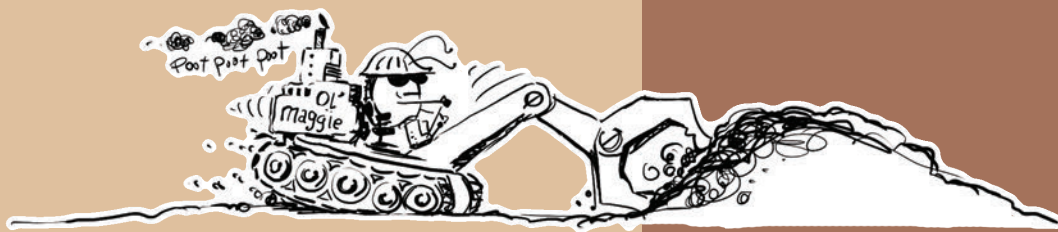
BUT SOMEHOW DIRT DOESN'T UPSET ITS DIGESTIVE SYSTEM, THE GROUP OF BODY PARTS THAT BREAK DOWN FOOD.



To be kind, turkey vultures aren't pretty. They're also not turkeys. They come from the same family of birds as herons, storks, and flamingos. But they got their name because their bald red head looks like a wild turkey's.


Being bald, for a turkey vulture, has its upside: no feathers to clean after they've been poking their heads inside a dead body. And they are very clean birds, considering. Turkey vultures can spend up to several hours a day preening and cleaning their feathers. They love taking baths in ponds, too.

Once I spotted turkey vultures who looked like they had just taken a bath. There were three of them, all with their wings spread out, sunning themselves on the roof of a house. You can't miss a turkey vulture doing this, either—adults have a six-foot wingspan. These huge wings let turkey vultures glide in the air for hours without ever beating their wings. They're the original hang gliders.



The best part about being bald? No need to shampoo.

So are these birds grisly and disgusting? Well, they're ugly. And they eat decaying flesh. But they can also catch a pocket of rising warm air and let it carry them up in circles, then float in the clouds practically all day. So to me, they're not gross. They're just nature's cleanup crew. ☘

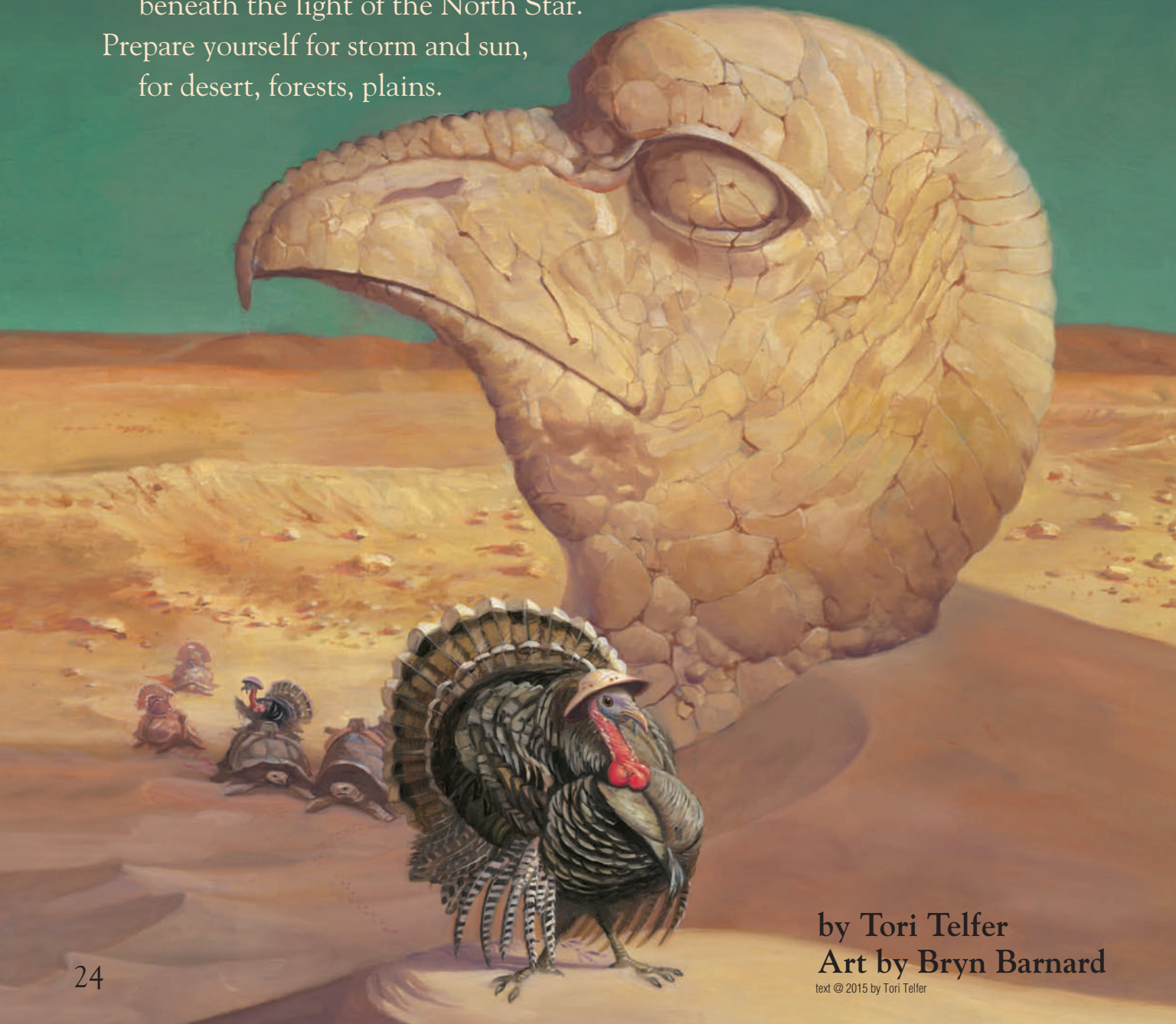


I could float here for hours. Maybe I will!

Rules of Adventure

Remember to bring water
when you cross the golden sands.
Be the first to volunteer
when peril is at hand.
Be glad when home is near,
and be brave when you've gone far.
Learn to plot your course
beneath the light of the North Star.
Prepare yourself for storm and sun,
for desert, forests, plains.

Bite your lip and smile
when you just want to complain.
Ask your mom to pack a snack—
she knows what tastes the best.
Race against the setting sun
before you stop to rest.



by **Tori Telfer**
Art by Bryn Barnard

text © 2015 by Tori Telfer

Director's Cut



Ms. CRUZ



SHANA MCGOVERN

LOUIS PENSKEY,
aka LOOPY



WILSON A. BECKETT



Ms. BECKETT



KID WITH
UNUSUAL TALENT

DIRECTOR



FREEZER

CHARACTERS

(Setting: A school auditorium. DIRECTOR and Ms. CRUZ stand onstage.)

DIRECTOR: It all started when my fourth grade teacher, Ms. Cruz, wrote a holiday musical for our class.



by Margaret Mincks
Art by Barry Gott

text © 2015 by Margaret Mincks, art © 2015 by Barry Gott



Ms. CRUZ: (*passionately*) *Cosgrove Fairy Wonderland*.

It's the story of a brave fairy who risks everything to save an abandoned ice kingdom.

DIRECTOR: Ms. Cruz asked me to be the director. Here's what she said:

Ms. CRUZ: You would be **SUCH** a fabulous director!

DIRECTOR: Here's what she meant:

Ms. CRUZ: (*covers her ears*) You are **SO** tone deaf! Please don't sing. My ears can't take it.

DIRECTOR: (*shrugs*) Fine by me. (*dreamily looks into the distance*) I'll be the best director *Cosgrove Elementary* has ever seen. Every kid will want to be my friend! (*turns to audience*) But I learned that directing a play is a great way to make enemies.

(*Entire cast enters auditorium.*)



Ms. CRUZ: (*smiling at students*) Welcome, students, to auditions for *Cosgrove Fairy Wonderland*. Remember, there are no small parts, only small actors.

DIRECTOR: But there's only one star in *Cosgrove Fairy Wonderland*: Twinkletoe, the Head Fairy. Now, on to the auditions. First, we have the Freezers.

FREEZER: (*starts to sing*) Twinkle (*freezes*) . . . Twinkle (*freezes*) . . . (*runs offstage*)

DIRECTOR: Next we have the kids with, um, Unusual Talents.

NOW WE JUST HAVE TO PUT TOGETHER THIS PLAYGROUND KIT.

THESE INSTRUCTIONS LOOK COMPLICATED!

WE DON'T NEED ANY INSTRUCTIONS. THIS THING GOES . . . HERE, OBVIOUSLY.



KID WITH UNUSUAL TALENT: Today I'm performing an original song. It's called "Armpit Anthem."
(*puts hands under armpits*)

DIRECTOR: Then there are the Talented Terrors.
Cosgrove's Talented Terror Number One is Shana McGovern.

SHANA: Auditions are a waste of time. I was born to play Twinkletoe. Am I right or am I right?

DIRECTOR: Shana's hobbies are peel-off nail polish, running for school elections, and bossing people around. YOU try saying no to that kind of confidence. Cosgrove's Talented Terror Number Two is Wilson Beckett.

WILSON: Wilson "A." Beckett. 'Cause I ALWAYS bring my A-game to auditions.

DIRECTOR: Wilson "A." Beckett is a theater kid. I think he was born in a theater instead of a hospital.

WILSON: I've starred in thirty-four plays. My first role was Crying Baby Doll in *The Velveteen Rabbit*. I was six months old. Then I played—

DIRECTOR: He'll tell you every part if you let him. Finally, we have the Underdog—the kid who came out of nowhere. Cosgrove's Underdog is Louis Pensky.





(LOUIS steps forward from the back of the group.)

LOUIS: (*whispers*) Everyone calls me Loopy.

ENTIRE CAST: (*together*) Huh?

DIRECTOR: Loopy is the quietest kid in class. He's so quiet that one day Ms. Cruz marked him absent even though he was there the whole time. Anyway, I wasn't expecting much from his audition. Until . . .

LOUIS: (*sings loudly, clearly*) "The First Noel . . ."

DIRECTOR: Loopy had the voice of an angel. (*wipes tear from eye*) But casting is not that easy. Especially when there are Talented Terrors involved. Ms. Cruz said we had to have something called callbacks. They're the second round of auditions.

Ms. CRUZ: I'd like to call back the following students for the role of Twinkletoe: Shana McGovern, Wilson Beckett . . .

WILSON: (*annoyed*) Wilson "A." Beckett.

Ms. CRUZ: . . . and Louis Pensky.

ENTIRE CAST: (*together*) Huh?

DIRECTOR: Callbacks were the next day. Shana came with her own cheering section.

FREEZER AND KID WITH UNUSUAL TALENT:
(*chanting*) Sha-NA! Sha-NA! Sha-NA!

DIRECTOR: Wilson A. brought his mom.



AAAARGH!
FRUSTRATED!





Ms. BECKETT: (*confidently*) Wilson A. ALWAYS gets the lead role. *Hic!*

WILSON: Mom! Please stop hiccupping!

Ms. BECKETT: I can't help it! *Hic!* It's a medical condition.

Ms. CRUZ: (*looking around auditorium*) Louis Pensky?
Is Louis Pensky here?

LOUIS: (*whispers*) Here.

DIRECTOR: He said "here" four times before Ms. Cruz heard him. Oh, Loopy. (*turning to SHANA, WILSON, and LOUIS*) You'll all read a monologue from Act Two. This is a very serious moment in the play. Just do your best. (*looks at LOUIS*) And pro-JECT. (*turns to audience*) That means "be LOUD!"

WE MUSTN'T GIVE UP.
THIS PLAYGROUND IS NOT
JUST FOR THISTLE. IT IS
A PLAYGROUND FOR ALL
CRITTERS, GREAT AND
SMALL—A PLAYGROUND FOR
ALL WHO WISH TO PLAY.



OH, SAM! WHAT A
STIRRING MONOLOGUE,
A LONG SPEECH MADE
BY ONE CHARACTER IN
A PLAY.



Ms. CRUZ: Let the callbacks begin!

SHANA: Ladies FIRST!

DIRECTOR: Shana was wearing a long, blond, braided wig. I guess she was getting into character. She had no problem projEcting.

SHANA: (*dramatically moaning*)

“Howwwwww could you destroy my kinggggggg-dom? My precious hooooooooome. My only worrrrrrrld.”

DIRECTOR: Shana’s cheering section loved it.

FREEZER AND KID WITH UNUSUAL TALENT:

(*chanting*) Sha-NA! Sha-NA! Sha-NA!

DIRECTOR: Wilson A. Beckett was next.

WILSON: (*even more dramatically*) “HOW! Could YOU! Destroy! MY! KINGDOM!”

DIRECTOR: He punched the air. He fell to his knees.

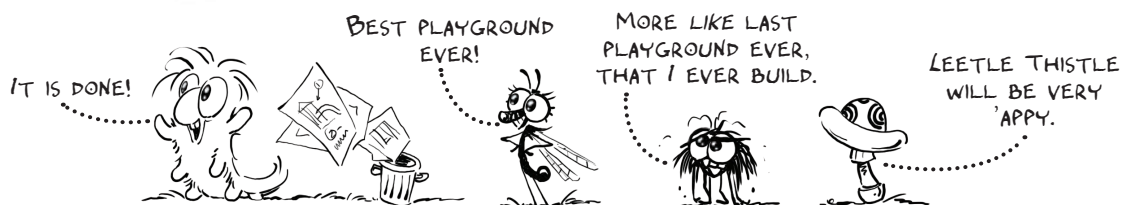
WILSON: “My precious HOME! MY ONLY WORLD!”

Ms. BECKETT: (*stands, applauding*) That’s my baby! Hic! Brilliant!

Ms. CRUZ: That concludes our auditions.

Thank you all for coming out today!

DIRECTOR: (*to Ms. CRUZ*) Wait! What about Loopy?



Ms. CRUZ: Oh, right! Louis, are you here? Please come up for your monologue.

DIRECTOR: *(to audience)* At first, Loopy just stood in the middle of the stage. I held my breath. It was the longest thirteen seconds of my life. Then he spoke:

LOUIS: *(slowly, seriously)* “How could you destroy my kingdom? My precious home. My only world.”

DIRECTOR: It was so simple. So beautiful. *(wipes tear from eye)* Loopy was Twinkletoe. At first, the audience was silent. Then . . . *(Ms. CRUZ starts clapping)*. Then I started clapping. Even Shana’s cheering section applauded. The only person NOT clapping was Wilson A. Beckett’s mom.

Ms. BECKETT: *Hic!*



HERE'S THISTLE NOW!
WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN
UP TO ALL DAY?



I'VE BEEN DIGGING MYSELF
OUT FROM BENEATH A PILE
OF LETTERS.





DIRECTOR: The next morning, we posted the cast list.

SHANA: (*furious*) I'm Tree #2? That better be the tree with the most singing parts.

Ms. CRUZ: Shana, as a wise woman once said: LET IT GO!

WILSON: (*also furious*) I'm BARRY, Twinkletoe's SIDEKICK?!
(*to DIRECTOR*) You'll be hearing from my mom—I mean, my agent!

Ms. BECKETT: Hic!

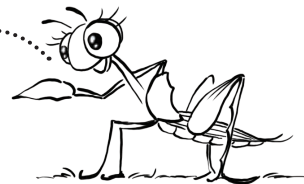
LOUIS: (*whispers*) Wow. I'm the star.

DIRECTOR: OK, so Shana and Wilson A. will never talk to me again. But I have a new friend—Loopy—and I survived my first and LAST time being director of a Cosgrove Elementary theatrical production. That's a wrap! 🐜

EVERYBUGGY
WRITES ME AND
WANTS TO COME
AND PLAY! WHAT
DO I DO?



WELL, DO WE
HAVE A SURPRISE
FOR YOU.



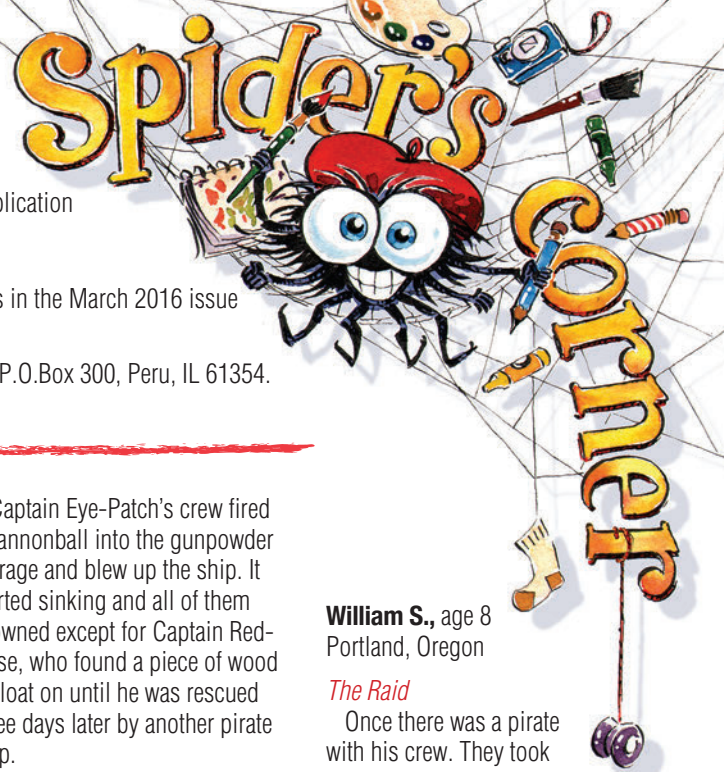
This Month for Spider's Corner:

Send us your best joke.

Here are the only rules:

1. Your entry must be signed by a parent or legal guardian, authorizing its publication in print and/or online and saying it's your own idea.
2. Be sure to include your complete name, age, and address.
3. Your entry must arrive by November 25, 2015. We will publish our favorites in the March 2016 issue of *Spider*.

Email your joke to spider@cricketmedia.com, or mail it to Spider's Corner, P.O.Box 300, Peru, IL 61354.



Pirate Story

Isabella Gartner, age 9
Monte Rio, California

The Pirate Ship in the Backyard

When I awoke this morning I heard people shouting, "Land ho!" My brother and I scrambled out of bed. We looked out the bedroom window. Ten feet from our backyard was a pirate ship.

My brother said, "Oh no, the ship crashed into the backyard!"

We ran outside to help them. When they saw us they said, "Give us your treasure and finest jewelry."

We gave them all of our money and my pure gold necklace. I said, "We want to help."

They said, "Push our ship back to sea."

We pushed and pushed until the captain said, "We are in the water. You just have to push her a little farther." We pushed and pushed again. She was now all the way into the water.

We high-fived and went inside for breakfast. "We had an exciting morning!" I said.

Tara L., age 9
Livonia, Michigan

Once there was a pirate named Jhones Boal. He was a very sneaky pirate but he could not find any treasure! Every time he went on a

treasure hunt, even more sneaky pirates had beaten him to it.

One day, his crew came to him with a unicorn! "This unicorn here had a map around her neck! It will lead to treasure!" said the pirates' first mate, Dole Greeny.

The pirate (Jhones Boal) hopped onto the unicorn's back. The unicorn started galloping to the treasure, and Jhones Boal's crew ran after then.

Hours later, the unicorn stopped.

Jhones said, "But there's nothing here!" He stomped on a rock. The rock opened and treasure came out. "TREASURE!" Jhones Boal yelled!

Graham D., age 7
California

There was a pirate named Captain Eye-Patch. He and his crew were looking for an island to bury their treasure. When they found an island, they buried their treasure and made an X to mark where they buried it.

Then they went to fight against Captain Red-Nose's crew. They were firing cannons, and one cannonball hit the quarterdeck of Red-Nose's boat and blew up the steering wheel. Captain Red-Nose ran to the cannons and started firing back.

Captain Eye-Patch's crew fired a cannonball into the gunpowder storage and blew up the ship. It started sinking and all of them drowned except for Captain Red-Nose, who found a piece of wood to float on until he was rescued three days later by another pirate ship.

Then Captain Eye-Patch's crew went back to the island, dug up their treasure, and lived happily ever after.

Brant M., age 10
Columbia, South Carolina

Once upon a time there was a pirate called Deadshot. He wasn't very good at sword fighting, but he was a remarkable sharpshooter. His pet was the Kraken.

They were a great pair, and because they were good pirates they only plundered the bad pirates. They gave all the treasure they got to charity. They were the Robin Hood of the sea.

For one vacation they went to Loch Ness, where the Kraken and the Loch Ness monster fell in love. They lived there happily ever after.

And as for Deadshot? He went ashore, opened up a sweet shop, and told his adventures to anybody who would listen.

William S., age 8
Portland, Oregon

The Raid

Once there was a pirate with his crew. They took over many ships, stole many riches, and were very cruel. The pirates' names were Longbeard, One Eye, and Captain Sker.

They found an island with a castle and hundreds of guards. They thought there would be GOLD!

"We must raid the castle," said Longbeard.

"Let's make a plan," said One Eye.

"The castle is on a tall, steep mountain," said Captain Sker. "We must climb it without being seen. Let's make this count!"

One by one, hand and foot, foot and hand, they reached the top. The guards saw them, but the pirates were faster and tied them up and threw them in a room.

Next, they found the king, tied him up, and threw him off the island. Once he hit the water the knife embedded in the ropes cut them and set him free, and he swam away.

JUST FOLLOW US
THIS WAY . . .



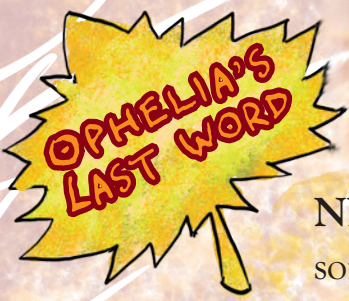
IT WAS SAM'S IDEA.



HEY! I HELPED!



ZIS WAY, LEETLE THISTLE . . .

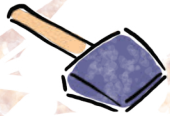


LEAF LANTERN

NEED A CENTERPIECE for your holiday feast? Or a gift for someone who makes your light shine? Thistle made this lantern for Sam and brightened up his whole day.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

clean glass jar



foam brush



Mod Podge glue
(or homemade glue
mixture)

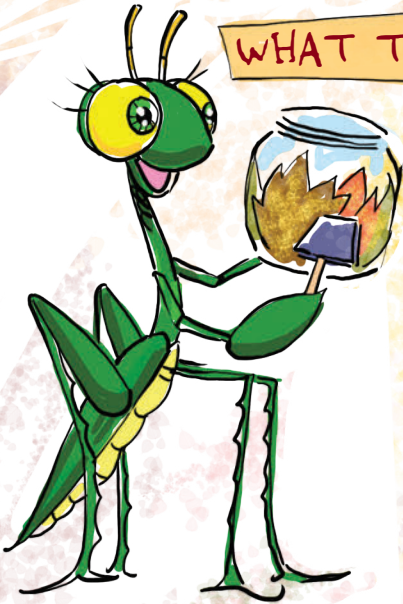


silk leaves
(or dried, pressed
fall leaves)

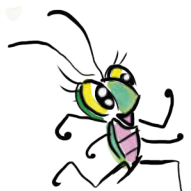
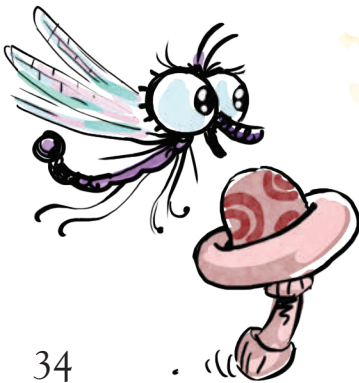


electric candle

WHAT TO DO:



1. Paint Mod Podge glue all over the outside of the jar with foam brush. (You can also use a homemade glue mixture—one part permanent white glue, one part water.)
2. Press a silk leaf on the glue-covered jar. Brush leaf with glue until it is coated. (You can also use real leaves, as long as they're dried and pressed—gather freshly fallen leaves, place them between pages of newspaper, put a book on top of them, and let them dry for two weeks.)
3. Repeat step 2 until the jar is covered with leaves. Don't overlap too many, or light won't shine through.
4. Let the glue dry, then apply a second coat.
5. When the second coat dries, put a candle inside the jar and let your leaf lantern glow!



This way,
Thistle

LOVE,
OPHELIA

Buggy Bulletin

Answer to Silly Snow Day Mind-Bugger

stars; snowflakes; snow; sky; sun; smiley face; spaghetti; skis; skates; sailboat; scuba diver; snowman; scarf; shovel; sandals; sweater; seat; sunblock; soda; straw; stripes; sheep; socks; snail; sundae; sunglasses



I FOUND A PRESENT FOR EVERYBUGGY BUT SAM. ANY IDEAS?



THIS MONTH'S ASK MAGAZINE SHOWS YOU HOW TO MAKE LOTS OF GIFTS—



—LIKE THIS DRAFT SNAKE! IT KEEPS COLD AIR OUT OF YOUR ROOM.



FANTASTIQUE! MERCI, MARVIN. SAM WILL ADORE IT.



...DID I HEAR MY NAME?



Get Ask at shop.cricketmedia.com!



MEET OUR NEW FRIENDS RAINBOW JEWEL, BELLA, WILLY, HAPPYHOPPER, AND CHESTNUT. THEY ARRIVED IN SPIDER'S MAILBOX ON PAGE 3!

Do you want to know how the world works and why?

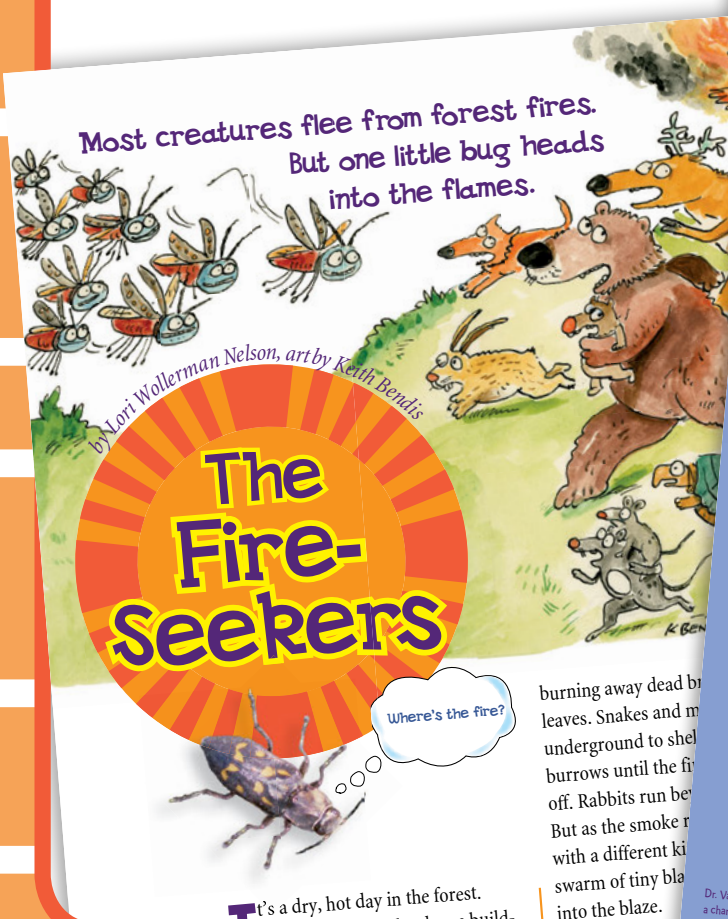
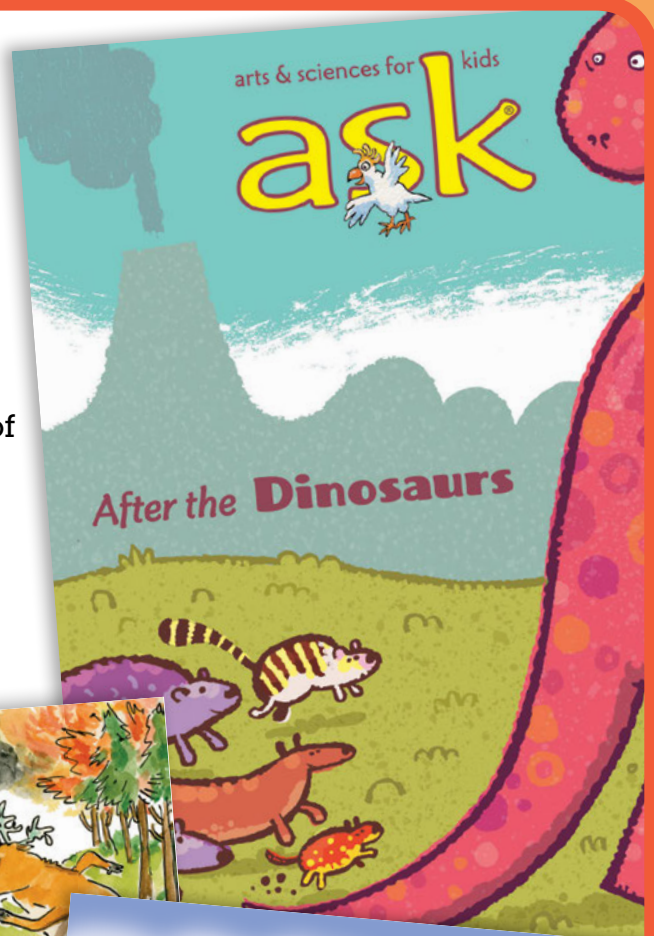
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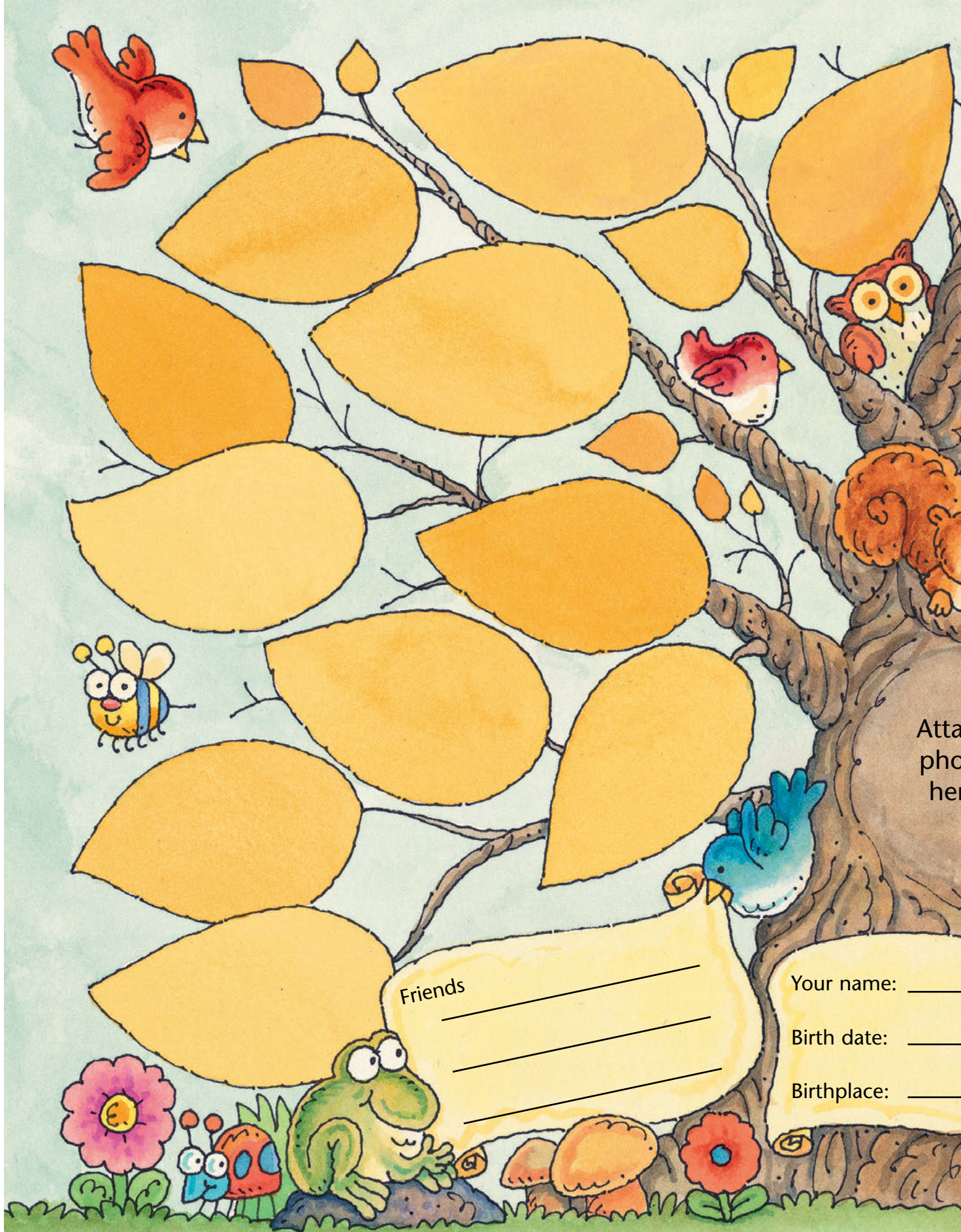


HOLIDAYS ARE A great time to explore your family history. This year, ask your loved ones to help you fill the leaves of this tree with names of family members—or folks you love like family. Write each person's name, birth date, and birthplace on a different leaf. Attach a photo to the trunk to complete the poster.

by Benton Mahan



CAUTION! You are now entering the **FUN ZONE**.



Attach
photo
here

Friends

Your name: _____

Birth date: _____

Birthplace: _____



ch
to
re

Pets



Silly Snow Day

It's snowing, but some of these animals think it's summer! Can you find 26 things starting with the letter S in this picture?