

Albert was a goldfish in a bowl. He ate a breakfast of green and brown flakes each morning. Then he watched the children go off to school.	14 26 27
Albert hated being stuck in his bowl because he could only swim around in circles. He'd rather go to school. Poor Albert couldn't even read a book. The pages would get soaked!	39 51 59
Albert was quite a smart fish. He could do flips under water. He could spell his name in the pebbles on the bottom of his bowl. No matter how brilliant Albert was though, he still had a problem. Only the cat spoke to him. And the cat was not particularly nice to him.	72 86 99 112
"I'll eat you up one day," the cat would tell Albert when they were all alone in the house. "I'll gobble you right up. You will be surprised to discover that no one will miss you."	127 141 148
It seemed to Albert that everyone loved the cat. No one seemed to notice the cat was mean. No one seemed to care that the cat hated books and wasn't smart. The cat couldn't even spell his own name, but the children played with him every day.	161 175 188 195
One day the cat dipped his paw in Albert's fishbowl. To save himself, Albert swam to the very bottom of his fishbowl. He hid behind some rocks. When the children came home from school that day, they saw the cat was wet. They didn't see Albert hiding behind the rocks in the bottom of his fishbowl, and that scared them.	207 220 232 246 255
"You are a very naughty cat!" they shouted.	263
Finally one of the children found Albert hiding in the bottom of the bowl. "I found him! I found our wonderful fish!" Albert felt happy that his family loved him after all.	276 289 295
Now the cat gets locked in the basement every day, and the children read books to Albert every night.	307 314

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Andy was one of the many ants who worked daily in the anthill.	13
Every day Andy and the other ants would wake up and go off to work.	28
Andy's job was to carry pieces of sand up the side of the anthill to build it higher. Andy thought his job was really boring. Who would find carrying pieces of sand interesting? All Andy did day after day was stack tiny pieces of sand on top of other tiny pieces of sand. Where was the challenge in that?	44 56 68 83 87
All Andy really wanted was to create a daring new kind of anthill. He wanted to build a modern castle. He could see the castle in his mind, and that goal made him continue his daily grind.	100 114 124
One day Andy spoke to his friend, Sally. He took a chance and told her about his dream. "I don't want to build anthills, Sally. I want to build a modern castle."	138 153 156
"I don't know, Andy," said Sally. "Ants have lived in anthills for a very long time."	169 172
"I need to tell someone who will understand," Andy thought.	182
The next day Andy went to see Queen Ant. He shook with fear as he knocked on her door.	196 201
"Come in," said a low, pretty voice.	208
Andy stepped inside the queen's chambers. There were beautiful pictures on the walls and a bright carpet underfoot. The queen wore a golden crown. She was much bigger than Andy.	217 230 238
"Who are you, and what do you want?" she said to Andy.	250
Andy showed her his plans for building a castle. "You are a lovely queen," Andy told her. "Lovely queens should live in castles. I'm the ant who knows how to build them."	263 275 282
"You are right," the queen said. "You may start building my castle tomorrow."	294 295

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Bat lived all by himself in a damp and musty cave. The cave was	14
always dark and dreary. As Bat hung upside down day after day, he	27
thought about his sorrows.	31
"If only I had a friend," Bat often thought. "If I had a friend, I would	47
have someone to play with. If I had a friend to talk to, I think I'd finally	64
be very happy."	67
At night Bat would spread his strong wings and fly from the cave.	80
He would search for a nice apple tree. Then he would perch on a	94
branch and gobble down a juicy dinner. Bat liked apples, and he loved	107
plums. But his favorite meals were those of beetles and other bugs.	119
To catch bugs, Bat had to swoop through the air with his mouth	132
open. One night Bat was swooping through the air when he bumped	144
into something solid and furry. Bat fell to the ground. He was scared as	158
he looked up and stared into the yellow eyes of a cat.	170
"Oh, please don't eat me!" Bat cried as he covered his tiny head.	183
"I don't plan on eating you," said the cat. "Don't have a heart	196
attack."	197
"Why wouldn't you?" Bat asked as he looked into the cat's yellow	209
eyes.	210
The cat yawned. "My owners feed me plenty of cat food so I don't	224
have to hunt. To be honest, I'm bored most of the time."	236
"Would you consider being my friend?" asked Bat. "I'll teach you	247
how to hang upside down, and I'll even teach you how to catch bugs.	261
What do you say?"	265
"That sounds wonderful," said the cat. "You've got a deal. When	276
do you think we could start? Do you think you could teach me how to fly	292
too? I think I'm going to like being friends with you."	303

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Becky didn't want to go to sleep. She tried as hard as she could to stay awake. She knew that if she fell asleep, she would miss seeing Santa Claus. Becky thought that the old man with whiskers was wonderful. In all her books, he appeared so jolly and kind.	15 28 39 50
Some of the students in Becky's kindergarten class said that Santa was just a fairy tale. Janie was one of Becky's friends. She was a sassy little girl with red hair. She said that parents try to make kids believe in Santa so they behave. She thought Santa was a big trick.	61 75 89 102
Becky didn't believe Janie. Santa was a real person, and tonight she would see him again. She had seen Santa Claus once when she was three. She sat on his lap at the mall. Santa asked her what she wanted for Christmas, and Becky had been too shy to say anything.	113 126 141 153
On the way home, Becky's parents told her not to worry. They said Santa could look into your heart and know things. It still bothered her a lot though. She wished she had spoken to him.	166 180 189
Tonight was Christmas Eve. Weeks ago, Becky had sent Santa a list of the presents she wanted. She and her mother had baked cookies for him this afternoon. They were placed on a big red and green plate right in front of the fireplace. Santa couldn't miss them. He'd be so grateful to have a snack after all his hard work.	200 213 227 240 250
Becky listened hard for the sounds of Santa landing on the roof. She just knew if she stayed awake long enough she would see him. Then she could tell the other kids that he was real. Her head fell against the pillow, and she was fast asleep.	262 275 290 297

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Roger wasn't much of an athlete. It wasn't that he didn't like sports.	13
He really did like basketball. But he was better at tripping and crashing	26
into things than he was at making baskets. His classmates seldom	37
asked him to play on a team when they played basketball at noon. Mr.	51
Park never chose him to shoot baskets in front of the gym class. Mr.	65
Park always picked Tom, a boy in Roger's class, to show the gym class	79
how to make the perfect basket.	85
It seemed to Roger that Tom never missed a shot. Tom was so	98
quick and so skilled. He was the best basketball player in the fourth	111
grade.	112
"I want to make every basket like Tom does," Roger told his best	125
friend, Sam, one afternoon when they were walking home from school.	136
"I want to be Mr. Park's favorite student."	144
As they walked, the two boys passed Tom's driveway. Tom was	155
already home from school. He was shooting baskets in the basketball	166
hoop set up in front of his garage. As Roger and Sam watched, Tom	180
missed two baskets and made five.	186
"See," Roger said. "Tom is such a good ball player."	196
"Why do you think he's so good?" Sam asked Roger. "Do you think	209
he's so good because he practices all the time? All you do when you	223
get home is complain that you're no good at sports. Then you sit in front	238
of the TV all night."	243
Sam was right. Roger did sit in front of the television most nights.	256
"Yeah, but I'm not going to do that anymore," Roger told Sam. "I'm	269
going to practice, practice, practice. Do you want to join me?"	280
Sam shook his head and showed Roger the trumpet case he was	292
carrying.	293
"Nope, I already decided that I'm going to be the best trumpet	305
player in the fourth grade. That means I have to go home and practice."	319

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It seemed to Roger that Tom never missed a shot. Tom was so quick and so skilled. He was the best basketball player in the fourth grade.

"I want to make every basket like Tom does," Roger told his best friend, Sam, one afternoon when they were walking home from school. "I want to be Mr. Park's favorite student."

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Even though Marcus and Beth were twins, they were very different people. Beth liked exciting things. At the fair, she liked to ride on the fastest roller coaster. When she visited the ice cream shop, she chose a new flavor each time. Marcus liked things that didn't change much. At the fair, he rode the Ferris wheel around and around slowly. When he visited the ice cream shop, he always chose chocolate.	11 25 37 50 63 72
Mother told the twins they would soon have a new baby brother or sister. Beth wanted to name the baby after a super hero. Marcus thought "Marcus" was a nice name.	85 97 103
When Mother came home with the new baby, Beth wore a party hat and blew a loud horn. Marcus just held a sign saying, "Welcome."	116 128
First Beth held the new baby. She sang the baby a song about horses and ducklings. She put shiny purple and orange tap shoes on the baby's feet. She tried to make the baby laugh. Beth made faces and told jokes, but the baby just slept.	141 153 166 174
Then Marcus held the new baby. He whispered a slow song in the baby's ear. He repeated the names of all the rocks he knew. He tickled the baby's little feet. Marcus showed the baby his favorite stamp collection. He read the baby a story about reptiles, but the baby just slept.	187 201 212 225 226
One day Mother asked, "I wonder if the baby will be like Marcus or like Beth?"	240 242
Marcus said, "I want the baby to be just like me!"	253
Beth shouted, "I want the baby to be just like me!"	264
Suddenly the baby woke up and began to cry harder and harder.	276
Mother said, "I think the baby is saying he doesn't want to be like Marcus or like Beth. I think the baby wants to be like himself!"	290 303

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Gabe was always telling his friends about his Uncle Jack.	10
"My Uncle Jack," he would say, "is really famous. He can fly his own plane, and he can ride wild horses. He's over six feet tall, and he wears a cowboy hat made out of alligator skin."	23 38 47
"Why does he wear a cowboy hat made out of alligator skin?"	59
Gabe's friend, John, asked him one day. "What's so special about that?"	70 71
"Well, my Uncle Jack wrestles alligators," said Gabe. "That's how he got the hat."	81 85
The boys in Gabe's class grew sick and tired of him bragging about his Uncle Jack all the time. No one really believed Gabe's stories about his Uncle Jack. All the boys thought Gabe was lying. They started to pick on Gabe. They started to call him mean names.	98 111 124 134
"Lizard breath!" John called Gabe one day. "I bet you've got lizard breath because you've been kissing alligators!"	146 152
Everyone laughed at John's words. Gabe couldn't believe it. He thought those boys were his friends.	162 168
One afternoon, John was teasing Gabe as usual when there was a knock on the classroom door. When the teacher answered it, all the kids gasped as the teacher stepped aside.	180 192 199
A man walked into the room. He was over six feet tall, and he wore a cowboy hat. He had very big hands, green eyes, and a dead alligator slung over his shoulder.	214 228 232
"Hello mates," he said. "I'm looking for my nephew, Gabe."	242
Gabe jumped out of his seat. He was so excited to see his Uncle Jack that he gave him a hug in front of everyone.	256 267
"Gabe," the teacher said, "would you please introduce us to your guest?"	278 279
"This is my Uncle Jack," Gabe said with a smile. "He's come here today to show us how to wrestle alligators."	292 300

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I love to read. When I read, I can travel to distant places. I can be different people, and I can do amazing things I would never have imagined doing.	16 28 30
Last month, I read a book that took me to a country in Europe. I climbed the mountains in Switzerland. I wore a backpack and special climbing gear. I was one of the strongest and bravest people there. I rescued a small boy who was lost in a forest!	45 56 69 79
Last week, I read a book about a nine-year-old boy who lives in Mexico. While I read, I almost felt like I was that boy. I went to his school and celebrated his holidays. The climate where he lives is much different from mine. It is warm there all year, and he has never seen snow! I was glad to be myself again after I was done reading.	94 110 122 136 149
Yesterday, a new book brought me to a warm, tropical island in the Pacific. I swam in the warm, salty water. Later, I dove to catch my lunch of lobster and fish. While diving, I discovered a long-lost treasure! It was left from the days when pirates sailed the seas. That was fun and a bit spooky.	162 176 189 204 207
Today, I am reading another book where I am deep in a tropical forest along the Amazon River. The boat we are traveling in has just crashed into a big rock, and water is leaking in! Even though I know it's just a book, I feel scared and hope we can fix the leak or reach the river's edge before ending up in deep water. I can't wait to finish this book! I'll have to read a relaxing one next time.	220 233 248 264 278 288

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Three-year-old Jordan lived with her mother and father in a blue house. Jordan's mother was round and jolly. She was always smiling. Her father was tall and strong. He had blue eyes that twinkled.	13 24 36
Jordan's grandmother was very old and sick. Today the family was going to visit her in a place they called "the Home." Jordan knew what a home was. She loved her own home, especially her bedroom. It was a yellow color, and all of her toys were there.	47 62 75 84
The building her father drove up to didn't look like any home Jordan had ever seen. It was a big brown building. "Is this Nana's house?" she asked.	97 111 112
"Yes, dear," her mother answered. "Nana has to live here so the nurses can take care of her."	124 130
They walked through the heavy glass doors and into a large room with a white floor. There were many people who had wheelchairs. Jordan was frightened and clung to her mother's hand. She could feel all the people watching her as they walked down the hallway.	142 153 165 176
When they reached the farthest door, Jordan's father knocked. Then he opened the door, and they went inside. Jordan's father lifted her up to look at Nana. She was lying there quietly on the bed. She had blue eyes just like Jordan's father. "Hi, Nana," said Jordan.	185 197 212 223
"Nana can't hear very well anymore," her mother said. Jordan squirmed down to the floor and looked around. She saw a white stuffed bunny on a shelf on top of some magazines. She pulled it out.	233 246 259
Jordan walked over to the bed, and her father picked her up again. She laid the bunny on Nana's chest and put both of Nana's hands on it. Her grandmother looked up at her and smiled. Jordan was no longer frightened.	272 287 299 300

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Kim loved the new paper dolls her aunt gave to her. She found a cardboard box and stored them neatly beneath her bed. Kim couldn't wait until the weekend when she would have time to play with them.	14 25 38
On Saturday morning, Kim finally had a chance to play with her new paper dolls.	51 53
"Kim, it's time for lunch!" her mother called from the kitchen. "Put your dolls away. You can dress them up later." Kim placed the paper dolls in their box. She slid the box under her bed.	65 78 89
About an hour later, Kim returned and brought out the doll box again. She opened the box and gasped in surprise. The dolls were not in the box. Most of the doll clothes were gone too. Only a few outfits were left in the box.	101 114 129 134
"Where could they have run off to?" Kim asked herself. "My dolls are made of paper, and everyone knows dolls cannot run away."	146 157
Kim heard a giggle from the toy chest in the corner of her room. She walked to the toy chest and opened it. Inside the toy chest she found her five paper dolls. The paper dolls were standing on their own two legs, and they were smiling.	171 185 198 204
"Surprise!" they shouted as they grinned at Kim. "Do you like our outfits?"	216 217
Kim looked at their pretty dresses and fancy shoes. "Well of course," she said, "I like your clothes, but how did you come alive?"	228 241
"We were cut from magic paper," the dolls said. "We can do whatever you like."	253 256
Then the dolls started to dance, and that made Kim smile. From that day on, the games Kim played with her paper dolls were entirely different. She got to decide everything they did. Now she had new friends to have fun and play with.	269 281 293 300

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"Where could they have run off to?" Kim asked herself. "My dolls are made of paper, and everyone knows dolls cannot run away."

Kim heard a giggle from the toy chest in the corner of her room. She walked to the toy chest and opened it. Inside the toy chest she found her five paper dolls. The paper dolls were standing on their own two legs, and they were smiling.

"Surprise!" they shouted as they grinned at Kim. "Do you like our outfits?"

Kim looked at their pretty dresses and fancy shoes. "Well of course," she said, "I like your clothes, but how did you come alive?"

"We were cut from magic paper," the dolls said. "We can do whatever you like."

Then the dolls started to dance, and that made Kim smile. From that day on, the games Kim played with her paper dolls were entirely different. She got to decide everything they did. Now she had new friends to have fun and play with.

Mama Duck wanted a new sofa for her nest because her old one was lumpy and full of holes and because her baby ducks sat on the old one. Those ducklings took up too much room. Things had to change!	13 28 40
"We need a new sofa," Mama Duck announced to Papa Duck. "The old sofa is falling apart. Its lovely red spots have worn off. We're buying a new sofa and that is that."	52 66 73
On Tuesday, Mama Duck went sofa shopping. One sofa had attractive purple swirls but was too tiny. Another one had pretty yellow stripes but was too large. One sofa, with pink diamonds and purple flowers, was just too ugly.	83 95 107 112
She found a golden sofa that she loved. It was too expensive though. She knew Papa Duck would get upset if she bought that sofa. Mama and Papa Duck had some money, but they had seven baby ducks to take care of. Mama Duck had to watch every penny she spent.	124 137 149 163
Mama Duck sat on a sofa made out of velvet.	173
"Oh, this sofa is comfy," she said to herself. Then she looked at the price tag. "I have enough money for this sofa." She felt lucky to find something that was beautiful, comfortable, and affordable. Mama Duck paid the sales duck and went home happy.	187 201 210 218
That night, Mama and Papa Duck sat on the new sofa. The baby ducks sat on the old sofa. Papa Duck picked up a book and started to read quietly. Mama Duck picked up her sewing and started to sew peacefully. The baby ducks fell asleep with plenty of room to dream and grow. Everyone was happy.	231 246 258 271 275

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Mike was the new kid in fourth grade. He moved from Maine and didn't know any of his classmates. No one spoke to him or knew his name. Mike came home the first day of school in tears.	13 27 38
"Don't cry," Mike's mother told him. "Just show those boys and girls that you're a nice and interesting person. Why don't you bring your marble collection to class tomorrow?"	50 62 67
"Maybe the teacher won't let me have marbles," Mike sighed to his mother. "Besides, the kids will probably think marbles are stupid. I'm positive I won't have any friends this year."	79 90 98
The next day, Mike brought his marbles to school. He carried them in a leather pouch tied to his hip. As Mike walked, the marbles made a cool clicking sound that made him feel very happy. At recess, a student who had never spoken to Mike before tapped him on the shoulder.	110 125 138 150
"Hey, man," he said. "My name's Nick. What's inside that bag you've got tied to your hip?"	161 167
"My marbles," Mike answered happily. "Would you like to play a game, Nick?"	178 180
"I don't know how to play marbles," Nick told Mike. "I think my grandpa used to play marbles when he was a little boy though. Who taught you how to play?"	193 206 211
"My grandma," Mike said with a smile. "She was a marble champion in grade school."	222 226
"If she taught you, you must be really good," said Nick.	237
"I'm okay," Mike said. "I still need a lot of practice though. If you like, I can teach you, and then we can practice together."	251 262
"That sounds like fun," said Nick. "Can I ask some of my friends to join us?"	276 278
"Sure," said Mike. "I have lots of marbles."	286

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One day while Morgan was outside, she noticed a spider spinning a web. The spider was nearly the size of a quarter. Its body was bright yellow with three black spots on it. The spotted design looked like a face. Morgan sat down on the sunny deck and watched the spider for a while. Its web was about as large as Morgan's hand. She watched the spider travel back and forth from the house to the deck.	12 26 39 53 66 77
That night, Morgan told her dad about the spider. She told him how she named the spider Mr. Legs. Morgan's dad wanted to see it. "Some spiders can hurt you because they are poisonous," he said. They went out to the deck to see the spider. Then they looked on the Internet for information about it. They found out that Mr. Legs was not a poisonous type of spider. He was safe to watch.	90 103 115 130 143 151
"What else do you know about spiders?" Morgan's father asked.	161
"Well, I know they eat bugs," answered Morgan.	169
"It is dinner time. Let's see if we can help Mr. Legs find his dinner," said Morgan's dad. Morgan saw a moth but could not reach it. Then Morgan's dad saw some flies near the outside light. He was fast, and he caught a fly in his hand without hurting it. He tossed it into the spider's web. The fly could not wiggle out of the sticky web. When Mr. Legs felt the fly shaking his web, he came over and wrapped it into the web. Morgan thought it was interesting to watch.	184 197 210 225 239 254 262
Morgan's mother called them in to set the table for dinner.	273
"Goodbye, Mr. Legs," said Morgan. "I'll see you in the morning."	284

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Mr. Green had the very special job of painting houses. He would	12
paint a house of any size, and he would paint it any color the owner	27
wanted. In fact, he especially liked helping the owners choose just the	39
right color.	41
One day, Mrs. Plum called Mr. Green. "I would like you to paint my	55
tiny house purple," she said. "Do you think you could paint the trim	68
around the windows an even darker purple?"	75
"I can do that for you," he told her. "It sounds lovely. I'll have the	90
job done by Tuesday."	94
On Tuesday, Mr. Green finished painting Mrs. Plum's house. When	104
she saw it, she was delighted.	110
"You do wonderful work, Mr. Green," she exclaimed. "I'll tell	120
everyone I know."	123
The next day, Mrs. Plum called her cousin, Betty Blue, and told her	136
all about the wonderful job Mr. Green had done painting her house.	148
Mrs. Plum knew Betty Blue had a paint job of her own in mind.	162
Betty Blue asked Mr. Green to paint her cabin. She knew she	174
wanted white trim around her windows, but she couldn't decide what	185
color to paint the cabin. Mr. Green suggested sky blue. After a week,	198
Mr. Green was finished with Betty Blue's cabin. "I love it," Betty Blue	211
told Mr. Green when she saw her cabin. "That's exactly the color I	224
wanted, Mr. Green. It's perfect."	229
That night, Betty Blue spoke to her sister, Rose. She told Rose	241
what a great job Mr. Green had done painting her cabin. The next	254
morning Rose stopped by Mr. Green's gray house and asked him if he	267
could paint her house.	271
"You bet I can," Mr. Green told her with a grin. "Let me guess. You	286
would like me to paint your house ruby red."	295

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Mr. Tan lived in the last house at the end of a shady lane.	14
Everybody knew which house was Mr. Tan's because there were	24
birdhouses in every tree in his yard. Mr. Tan built the birdhouses. The	37
special thing about Mr. Tan's birdhouses was that each one was	48
different.	49
Mr. Tan made every birdhouse different because every birdhouse	58
was meant for a different bird. Mr. Tan built blue houses for the blue	72
jays. He built red houses for the cardinals. He also built special brown	85
and ivory houses for the sparrows.	91
"Birds need houses, just like people," Mr. Tan would tell the children	103
who came to visit him. "Birds need houses to keep them warm and cozy	117
in the winter. They need houses to keep their eggs safe. Here, would	130
you like to see?" Mr. Tan would say. Then he'd lead the children across	144
the yard to a birdhouse. He would take off the top and lift the children	159
up one at a time to show them what was inside.	170
"Wow," the children would say when they saw the eggs. "They are	182
very pretty. When will they hatch, Mr. Tan?"	190
"Oh, any day now," Mr. Tan would say. "They will hatch when	202
they are ready. Then I'll have more birdhouses to build, won't I?"	214
Mr. Tan didn't just build birdhouses for his own yard. He built tiny	227
houses all winter long. In the spring, he put them up on fence posts and	242
in trees all over the countryside. Mr. Tan was hardly ever seen without	255
a birdhouse in his hands and a tiny bird perched on his shoulder.	268
Every summer, birds that had flown south for the winter would	279
return to Mr. Tan's yard. Each year, they would find their houses, firm	292
and sound, just waiting for them to return.	300

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Mr. Tan made every birdhouse different because every birdhouse was meant for a different bird. Mr. Tan built blue houses for the blue jays. He built red houses for the cardinals. He also built special brown and ivory houses for the sparrows.

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Nora lived in a sparkling stream that ran through an oak forest. One day while a brother and sister were splashing in the stream, they noticed Nora swimming lazily in the current.	13 26 32
"I'm going to catch that fish," said the brother. "We'll fry it for lunch. Mmmm," he smiled. "I can already taste the fresh fried fish."	46 57
His sister felt differently.	61
"Let's leave the fish alone," she urged her brother. "We have plenty of nuts and berries to eat. That fish looks pretty in the stream. Why should we bother it?"	73 87 91
"I am hungry for fish," said the brother as he made himself a fishing pole. "You'll be hungry for fish too, as soon as I catch it."	105 118
The brother didn't realize that Nora wasn't a fish at all. She was magical, and she could be anything she wanted to be. As Nora swam in the clear water, she listened to every word said between the boy and girl. Nora thought she would play a trick on the boy.	131 145 158 169
The brother dipped his pole into the stream near Nora. Nora swam up and took the bait.	181 186
"I caught it!" yelled the brother. "I am the best fisherman in the whole world."	199 201
The brother tugged his line out of the water, but only found a muddy stick dangling from the end of it.	215 222
"I was sure I caught that fish," he said with a surprised look.	235
The sister grinned when she noticed silver eyes on the stick and realized it was really Nora. She didn't tell her brother though.	247 258
"Give me the stick," the sister said, as she tossed it back into the stream. The stick winked at her, and she happily winked back.	272 283

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Out of all the beetles in the woods, Betsy Beetle had the most beautiful shell. Betsy's shell was as green as the leaves on the trees. It was covered with tiny flecks of gold that looked like stars. It shimmered as if it were wet.	13 27 40 45
Betsy was always down at the lake, scrubbing and polishing her shell. "A bug has to keep up her looks," Betsy would tell all the other beetles. "We were given such great shells. We might as well keep them nice and shiny."	56 71 83 87
All of Betsy's friends were getting sick of Betsy and her shell. Last week Emma, who had a brown shell without gold specks, bumped into Betsy and spilled tea on her shell.	100 112 119
"I'm so sorry," Emma said. "Pardon me, Betsy."	127
"Why don't you watch where you're going?" Betsy shouted at Emma. "You're always walking around the woods with your head in the clouds. You are so rude, Emma!"	137 149 155
"I didn't mean to spill my tea on Betsy," Emma sadly told the other beetles after Betsy walked away. "I guess I wasn't watching where I was going."	169 181 183
"Betsy's always been that way," said Ted, a plain black bug. "She thinks she's really something special with that shell."	195 203
The next day all the beetles were bathing in the lake when Ted splashed mud on Betsy's shell.	216 221
"Ted, you are so mean!" she screamed. "I just polished my beautiful shell. I've been up since dawn! Now look at it. Why I'm going to...."	232 246 247
Just then, a blackbird swooped from the sky, catching Betsy in his beak and cutting off her words. One second Betsy was screaming at Ted, and the next second she was gone.	259 271 279
"I guess a lovely shell isn't always a good thing," Emma said to everyone.	292 293

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Ray Barns loves socks. He loves socks so much he wears five	12
pairs of socks a day. People know and love him as the boy with the	27
socks. They think it's unusual, but they enjoy it. However, Ray's mother	39
is always complaining about it.	44
"Two feet. Five pairs of socks. Ten socks a day!" she can be heard	58
saying as Ray huffs up and down the stairs of the house. Every day	72
there is a pile of socks for her to wash. "When will he stop? When will	88
my boy start acting normally?"	93
Every morning, Ray pulls on his socks in rainbow color order. He	105
starts with a strawberry red pair pulled up to his knees. Then he pulls	119
on a lemon yellow pair, a lime green pair, and a blueberry blue pair.	133
Finally, he pulls on a pair of purple ankle socks.	143
In the winter, Ray has to cover those fantastic socks with boring	155
pants. Too bad for Ray. In the summer, Ray gets to show off his socks,	170
but he also nearly melts from the heat. He's happy though, because	182
wearing colorful socks is more important to him than comfort.	192
Ray's mother tries to talk him out of all those socks. "I bought you a	207
pair of sandals," she tells him one summer day. "Trust me. Once you	220
put on these sandals, you'll never want to take them off."	231
Ray knows his mother loves him, so he sits down and starts pulling	244
off his socks. Finally all five pairs are bundled neatly in the middle of the	259
kitchen table, and Ray is wriggling his bare toes in his new sandals. He	273
realizes the sandals look great. He realizes the sandals feel really good.	285
Ray's mother is right. From this day forward, Ray will insist on	297
wearing sandals. He'll wear them right over his five pairs of socks.	309

Ray Barns loves socks. He loves socks so much he wears five pairs of socks a day. People know and love him as the boy with the socks. They think it's unusual, but they enjoy it. However, Ray's mother is always complaining about it.

"Two feet. Five pairs of socks. Ten socks a day!" she can be heard saying as Ray huffs up and down the stairs of the house. Every day there is a pile of socks for her to wash. "When will he stop? When will my boy start acting normally?"

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Sam was a snake who lived in a large cage at the zoo. The cage had both inside and outside areas. Sam's best friend was a lizard named Lilly who lived in the same cage.	15 27 35
Every day Sam and Lilly would lounge in the sun on a wide rock. People were always pointing at Sam and Lilly.	49 57
Lilly was very pretty. She had black and orange scales and yellow eyes. Sam was very dull. He had brown scales and even browner eyes.	69 81 82
Sometimes the kids who came to the zoo didn't even see Sam stretched out on the rock beside Lilly. Sam and the rock were the same shade of brown, so the kids didn't always notice Sam. The boys and girls only noticed Lilly.	94 108 121 125
Sometimes Sam was jealous. He wanted to be noticed too. He couldn't help being so very brown.	136 142
"What a beautiful lizard," the boys and girls would whisper to each other when they spotted Lilly. "Look at her black and orange scales. Look at her yellow eyes."	154 166 171
"She's not so lovely," Sam would whisper under his breath. Then he would feel awful because, after all, Lilly was his friend.	182 193
Lilly slept through the praise coming from the people on the other side of the fence. She only cared about the sun on her back, the warm rock beneath her, and her friend Sam.	205 220 227
Sometimes Lilly would reach out to catch a fly with one long whip of her tongue. The school children clapped when she caught one. But Lilly just ignored them and laid her head back down on the rock and fell back to sleep.	241 252 267 270
"How can you sleep with them watching you?" Sam hissed one day.	282
"Oh, I don't care about them, Sam," Lilly yawned. "I'm just glad we get to spend our days together." Sam felt better knowing he was perfect in Lilly's eyes.	295 308 311

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Ted loved going for walks with his grandpa. When they walked together, they would search for pretty rocks. Ted's grandpa was an expert at finding the prettiest rocks. He usually spotted them before Ted did. He'd smile at Ted as he held a rock up to the sun.	11 22 34 48
"What a beauty," he would say. Then he would slip the rock into his pocket. When they returned from their walk, they would each place the rocks they found in separate jars. Ted's grandpa's jar was nearly filled to the top. Ted's jar was closer to empty.	62 74 86 95
"Don't worry, Teddy," his grandpa would say. "Someday you'll develop the knack for finding rocks. Practice makes perfect, and that's why we walk together every day."	104 115 121
One day Ted's grandpa arrived home with a surprise. It was a special machine that polished rocks.	133 138
"See," the old man explained, "you put the rocks in here. Then you wait for the machine to tumble them. In a few days, you have beautiful rocks. Let's polish some of our own, shall we? We'll each do five."	151 165 178
Ted picked out five of his biggest and prettiest rocks. His grandpa did the same. They put the rocks in the machine and waited three days. When the time was up, Ted pulled off the cover and dumped out the rocks.	190 204 218 219
"Wow!" he exclaimed.	222
The rocks were beautiful. They were polished and smooth and warm to the touch. They were also much brighter and more colorful now. Ted studied one and saw his own reflection.	232 244 253
"I may have a lot of rocks," his grandpa told him, "but you have some real beauties."	267 270
Ted brought his polished rocks home and set them on his bookshelf. He couldn't wait to go out and look for more.	281 292

Ted loved going for walks with his grandpa. When they walked together, they would search for pretty rocks. Ted's grandpa was an expert at finding the prettiest rocks. He usually spotted them before Ted did. He'd smile at Ted as he held a rock up to the sun.

"What a beauty," he would say. Then he would slip the rock into his pocket. When they returned from their walk, they would each place the rocks they found in separate jars. Ted's grandpa's jar was nearly filled to the top. Ted's jar was closer to empty.

"Don't worry, Teddy," his grandpa would say. "Someday you'll develop the knack for finding rocks. Practice makes perfect, and that's why we walk together every day."

One day Ted's grandpa arrived home with a surprise. It was a special machine that polished rocks.

"See," the old man explained, "you put the rocks in here. Then you wait for the machine to tumble them. In a few days, you have beautiful rocks. Let's polish some of our own, shall we? We'll each do five."

Ted picked out five of his biggest and prettiest rocks. His grandpa did the same. They put the rocks in the machine and waited three days. When the time was up, Ted pulled off the cover and dumped out the rocks.

"Wow!" he exclaimed.

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The huge ball of many colors rolled down the hill. It moved so fast	14
the children couldn't catch it. They chased after the ball with all their	27
might, but they couldn't keep up with the large colorful ball. The ball	40
quickly picked up speed as it neared the bottom of the hill. It gathered	54
enough speed to travel to the top of the next hill. The ball climbed all	69
the way to the top of the hill and stopped, almost teasing the children.	83
"Hurrah!" the kids exclaimed. "Let's get our ball back!" The kids	94
hurried down the hill and started to run up the next one.	106
"We're almost there! Now we can play with our colorful ball."	117
The wind began to blow harder on the hilltops causing the ball to roll	131
around. "Come and catch me," it seemed to say.	140
"Oh no, the wind might blow our ball down the hill again!" cried the	154
kids. They pretended to be upset, but they really thought it was fun.	167
They ran faster and faster. They wanted to get their ball before it started	181
to roll down the hill again. They were almost to the top of the hill when a	198
swirling gust of wind blew the ball down the hill in their direction.	211
"Yippee!" they shrieked. "Here it comes!"	217
The ball rolled slowly at first, but then started to pick up more speed	231
until it was rolling faster than it had rolled before. The great big green,	245
red, and purple ball was upon the kids in an instant. Here was their big	260
chance. Whoosh! Dive! The great big colorful ball rolled down the hill	272
and right past them again.	277
The kids played at chasing the ball for the whole afternoon. They	289
ran, chased, and laughed. After all that fun, they couldn't wait for	301
another windy day to play with their big, colorful ball.	311

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"We're almost there! Now we can play with our colorful ball."

The wind began to blow harder on the hilltops causing the ball to roll around. "Come and catch me," it seemed to say.

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The kids played at chasing the ball for the whole afternoon. They ran, chased, and laughed. After all that fun, they couldn't wait for another windy day to play with their big, colorful ball.

All the other boys in the neighborhood had new bikes. Some of the new bikes were black and yellow. Some were bright silver with racing wheels. I knew I couldn't have a new bike, but I got to ride my big brother's old bike. At first I was thrilled because it was faster than my old bike. It was blue with a banana seat. But the other boys laughed when they saw me riding it.	12 24 41 55 69 75
The boys liked to ride around on their bikes in a group. They rode together through our neighborhood. Sometimes they rode the trails that went through the woods. Their favorite thing to do was jump high off of ramps.	89 99 113 114
The boys built ramps out of old boards and plywood stacked on top of discarded bricks. Each boy tried to jump the highest and the farthest. Sometimes two or three of the boys would lie down on the ground to watch behind the ramp. Then, a boy on a bike would pedal furiously and jump his bike over their bodies. I thought they were cool! Sometimes, I tried to jump my bike over the ramp, but my bike was too heavy to go very far. When the other boys laughed at me, I felt bad.	127 140 154 167 179 194 209
One day, I asked my dad why I had to ride my brother's old bike. He said, "Do you like your bike?"	224 231
"Yes," I said, "but I don't like to be laughed at because it makes me feel bad."	246 248
"Well, if you like your bike, then that is really all that matters," Dad replied. "A true friend will like you no matter what kind of bike you ride." From then on, I didn't worry much about what the other boys thought about my bike. I knew I had a great bike!	262 277 290 300

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The peacock thought he was the most beautiful of all birds. Each morning, he would wake up and fan his feathers in the rising sun. At noon he would count his feathers as he ate his seeds. At dusk he would fold up his feathers and go to sleep.	12 26 41 49
The peacock didn't talk to any of the other birds. He thought he was too beautiful. He spoke only to his reflection in the silver stream near his nest. The peacock always stood at the edge of the stream and stared down at his marvelous self.	63 76 89 95
"You are so fine," he would boast to his reflection.	105
"Why, thank you VERY much," he would reply to his reflection. "I just had my feathers groomed yesterday. I'm glad you approve."	117 127
There was a birch tree near the silver stream. In the tree lived a tough mama squirrel and her family. One day the mama squirrel got sick of listening to the peacock talking to himself. While her children napped, she snuck down to the edge of the stream and hid in the cattails. The peacock came for a sip of water and to admire his beak.	141 153 165 179 193
"You are so lovely," he said to himself.	201
"You are also quite lazy," said a voice coming from the bushes.	213
"What?" he gasped. "Who's there?"	218
"No one but you," said the voice. "What you need to do is get to work. You can't walk around admiring yourself all day and ignore everything else. Winter is coming, my peacock friend. You need to prepare for it."	233 244 255 258
The peacock had been so stuck on himself that he'd never even thought about winter. After that day, the peacock stopped staring at himself. Instead he stored away food and got ready for winter. Because of the mama squirrel's advice, the peacock lived to enjoy another summer.	270 281 293 304 305

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The sun was out, and not a cloud was in the sky. Scott, or Scooter, as his close friends liked to call him, thought today was a perfect day to go fishing at Old Bass Lake.	15 30 36
Scooter climbed out of bed and quickly put on his lucky fishing shirt and the rest of his clothes. He raced down the stairs of his house. Scooter came to a screeching stop on the hardwood kitchen floor. He nearly slid into his mom, almost like he was stealing second base.	49 63 75 87
"Mom, can I go fishing down at Old Bass?" he asked excitedly.	99
"Are you going to fish with anyone?" she asked her son.	110
"Nope, just me, my pole, and my tackle box," he replied.	121
"Well, I think you should take your sister along."	130
"Aww! Mom! Do I have to? I always have to take her fish off the hook, and she always wants to go home early," he complained.	145 156
"Scott Matthew Johnson, you will take your sister along. That is final!" He knew she meant business since she usually called him Scooter. "OK, I'll take her," he said, turning toward the garage where his trusty fishing pole was located.	167 178 191 196
He walked down the hallway and opened the door to the garage. As the garage door opened, he saw the beautiful day he had seen earlier from his bedroom window.	208 221 226
Scooter quietly thought to himself about the lunker he was going to catch. He grabbed his pole and started down the driveway.	238 248
He had nearly reached the end of the driveway when he heard his mother yell, "Forget something?" Pole. Tackle box. Nope, I've got it all, he thought, as he glanced up the driveway and saw his younger sister skipping toward him with her red fishing pole in hand.	261 273 286 296

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The wolf pack ran all through the long night. The wolves sped	12
across snow- and ice-covered lakes. They raced through forests and	23
fields that were covered with a sparkling frost. The hungry wolves	34
hadn't eaten for days.	38
The leader of the pack was a huge, gray wolf with yellow eyes and	52
sharp white teeth. All the wolves followed him because he was the	64
swiftest, smartest wolf in the area. He understood the movement of the	76
deer herd. He could locate holes in the ice so he and his pack could	91
catch fish. He knew how to catch field mice and gobble them down in	105
one swallow.	107
Tonight the leader of the pack led the wolves through a mountain	119
pass. They were hunting for elk. A single elk could keep them fed and	133
warm for several days.	137
When the leader saw an elk, he raced across the snow followed by	150
the other wolves. The wolves formed a circle around the elk and chased	163
it through the woods. They followed the elk along the edge of a river.	177
The elk escaped from the wolf pack. The elk was lucky, but the wolves	191
were unlucky.	193
Since the wolves had nothing to eat, they began to howl. The	205
leader of the pack howled first. He lifted his shaggy gray head and let	219
out a long, low sound. Then the other wolves joined in. Finally, even	232
the baby wolves howled.	236
In the midst of their howling, the wolves spied a deer walking in the	250
field below. On silent feet, the wolves chased the deer. The deer was	263
smaller than and not as strong as the elk. This time the wolves had a	278
better chance. By morning they had caught the deer and were warm	290
and fed. Now they could rest.	296

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Once there was a little bumblebee named Buzz. He would zip through the air going this way and that way. He loved to fly around looking for pretty flowers to smell.	11 25 31
Red roses were very nice to smell. Buzz would sometimes see his bumblebee friends when stopping by his favorite rose bush. Every bee seemed to like roses.	43 54 58
Buzz liked his friends, but sometimes he wished he could be alone. "It would be great if I could find a flower that was just for me," Buzz quietly thought to himself. Buzz decided right then and there to find just such a flower.	70 86 99 102
First, he smelled the daisies that grew along the old farmer's road.	114
"Wow! These daisies smell pretty good, but I will keep looking. I bet my bee buddies already know about these daisies," he said.	126 137
From the roadside daisies, he spied a grove of lilac bushes. They sure were fragrant. Buzz raced over to them to get a closer look. When he arrived at the lavender flowers, he saw that his brother Buzzter was already there.	149 163 176 178
"Nice smelling flowers," Buzzter said to his younger brother.	187
"I have to agree with you," Buzz said. "These lilacs sure do smell good." Buzz hovered around his brother Buzzter and said, "I will see you at the hive later. I am off to find a flower that is just for me."	200 212 229
With that, Buzz flew off. He went over the trees and under the bushes in hopes that he would find the perfect flower. He almost turned around to head back to the hive, when he smelled a wondrous scent. Buzz spotted a white and pink flower growing next to the old farmer's barn. The flower was beautiful and smelled terrific. At last, he had found a flower that was just for him.	242 255 268 281 293 301

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"Where are you going, Dad?" I ask excitedly. I wonder if something interesting is happening.	12
"I'm going to search for some deer. Would you like to come along? We'll take a trek in the woods," replies Dad.	15
"I love going for walks. Wait for me!" I reply.	28
"I want to go too!" yells Mike, my younger brother. "Please help me tie my shoes!"	37
"Don't worry, Mike. I will help you. Dad always waits for both of us," I explain calmly.	47
We live in the country with huge trees behind our house. During the different seasons of the year, my brother and I like to walk along the paths that go through the trees. Dad usually goes with us and teaches us things about nature.	60
It's a fall afternoon and our shuffling feet make quite a racket through the dry leaves. Dad tells us to try to be quiet. He doesn't want us to scare the deer away.	63
"Shhhh!" says Dad. "Stop and listen!"	77
My little brother and I stop, but we don't hear anything.	80
"I hear something!" whispers Mike. "Over there!" he points.	80
I look to where he's pointing and see a big, brown deer looking right at us! She isn't moving, but her head is up high. She's listening just like we are! The deer puts her head down, grunts, and stomps her front hoofs on the ground. We wait while Dad smiles and lifts his camera to his face. Click! ... whirr ... Click! Dad takes two pictures.	93
Two smaller deer stand behind the doe! They are her baby fawns, born last spring. They are eating acorns off the ground. The fawns don't even see us! The doe snorts again and turns to jump away. The two little deer follow her.	107
"That was really cool, Dad. Thanks for taking us with you," we say.	120
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