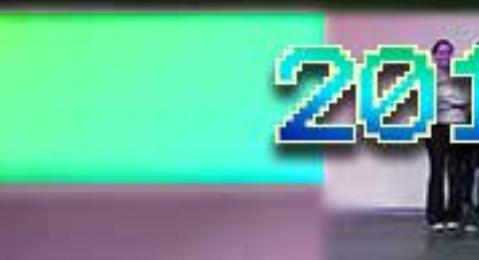




Summer of Service



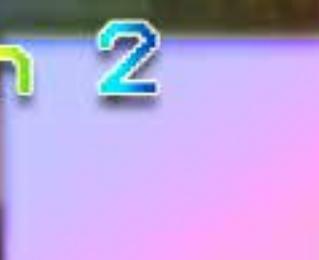
Zine



2015



Session 2



welcome to the sos zine!

this zine represents two weeks of hard work by the purple team. in this zine are articles about the other teams of sos as well as local and global issues about which the purple team kids are passionate. we really hope you enjoy it!

by Kiana

SOS Puzzle

S C C D M A E T C E E H X M U
N A Q A E C Y O D C Y E D M O
S X M O G F M D O I D E E L L
J G F E B M I L T V G W R Z E
G G O B U S E R Y R J B S G I
V J V N V A Q C T E S L N J I
U H I X R E U R M S C A L Q R
N T K N N G N D P Q R N P D S
Y A I L G R C I W O M G D I Y
P I T I O E C Z Z D E Q O F S
S N A U Q E E F U N M K U Z O
Y D L X R N E R D L I H C Y D
P U R P L E O N G B T K Q V O
V G X Z W M M T I X C U D L L
Z M I R D N Q O E O D H N E S

CHILDREN
GREEN
ORANGE
SERVICE
ZINE

COH
FUN
NATURE
RED
TEAM

COMMUNITY
LEARN
PURPLE
STRIPED

Purple Team Article

What the purple team does in an act and a movie and makes all these cool articles we make a lot of stuff with our own hands they also work on photos Photoshop and all the above. Purple team is in the lead for the best they got everything that they need in one very spot we have fun act it's there thing and they also find out new stuff of other teams they introduce them learn new things that we didn't know before until we got to do what we are doing right now it is pretty hard but it also takes a lot of work so we don't just sit right there like doing nothing we work really hard harder than most(I think). I am a member of a purple team and I like it.



Striped Team

Cleo and Mack

The striped team is SOS's leadership and game coordinating team. They are consisted of high school students grade 10 and up. This session the striped team helped lead the reflections at the end of camp for all the SOS teams. Striped team also prepped for their craft fair which was held in the amphitheater at California Discovery Museum. The craft fair consisted of games and fun crafts like coloring fairy/ dragon wings; making a monster out of cornstarch foam; making unicorn horns and wizard hats; and building things out of cornstarch foam. Striped team's reflections this session included a lot of self-reflection and reflection on society.



Orange

The orange team is the early childhood outreach/mentorship team. During most days at SOS, the orange team works at Estrella, helping kids at young ages. During the summer, Estrella hosts a program for children whose families have a low income budget. Estrella is in need of volunteers, so the orange steps in as a helping hand. At Estrella, they play with their kids, doing various activities such as playing the keyboard, puzzles, and building blocks. Alongside Estrella the orange team does many other projects. They go to Salvation Army, where they fill backpacks, they clean up graffiti off walls and streets, and they also do an activity faire at Mommy and Me, where various activity tables are set up to entertain the guests. They help the community by working with the younger generations at places where an extra helping hand is greatly appreciated.



RED TEAM

BY: AZEYA and JASMINE

The red team is the type of team that goes to different places to help their community. They go to the Santa Maria Urban Ministry where they sort clothes, pair shoes, package food, and help out at the kids' summer program. They go around their community to paint murals, clean the forest floor and the lake.

The red team is one of our most important community teams. They go to R.A.F.T, Resource Area for Teachers to make kits of supplies for teachers. The red team is a part of S.O.S. summer camp. S.O.S. stands for Summer of Service, which means all the teams help their community in one way or another. Red team has and always will be a great part of S.O.S. I hope you will consider joining it in the near future, and all of you that have already been on it, you know just how awesome it is.



Green Team



Weeding, mulching, and all else environmental friendly—that is what the green team specializes in! If the wildlife is in danger, this squad of lime colored ecologists work relentlessly to preserve the ecosystem. Amazingly, this avocado dyed crew is not even afraid of the most dangerous substance on Earth... DIRT. Furthermore, they even have the belief that worm urination is a blessing from the gods.

After facing an army of ladybugs and purifying them through a certain Emma's hair, and climbing to the top of the mountain to praise the sun, they have also cleared the treacherous thistle from the farm, another precarious task. Farming, river cleaning, and composting—the khaki stained bunch of conservationists has gone through indefinite troubles to gain their green thumbs.

In conclusion, the green team is the eco-friendly branch (no pun intended) of the Summer of Service camp.

Global Warming *By Mathew*

As the sea levels rise due to the polar ice caps melting, the land inhabited by humans gradually diminishes. Though many call this planet, Earth, their home and the reason of their existence, only a select few actually attempt to maintain this celestial body for future generations. Like the quicksand of a desert slowly, yet hazardously swallowing up an unfortunate organism, so the ocean is engulfing the continents in the same way and at a steady rate. According to an article on www.dosomething.org, the sea levels have risen over 8 inches in the past two hundred years; therefore, taking away a large portion of the land used by all living creatures on Earth. Evidently, we must stand up to this form of environmental destruction known as global warming.

In order to reduce global warming, we must understand its meaning and locate its origin, the cause of the dilemma. It is defined as “an increase in the earth’s average atmospheric temperature that causes corresponding changes in the climate and that may result from the greenhouse effect.” Any gas that contributes to the absorption of solar radiation is known as a greenhouse gas. When these blanketing airs ascend to the atmosphere, they trap the heat inside of the earth, causing escalated temperatures. The U.S. Global Change Research Program explains that temperatures in the United States have intensified by 2 degrees overall in the most recent fifty years, and rainfall has increased by around 5%. Other natural consequences of this heating include the glaciers melting, trees flowering sooner, ice on lakes breaking out of season, and the destruction of coral reefs. Humans are also affected by the trapped energy; very young children or the elderly that have diabetes suffer from greater rates of death and other dangers, effectively plaguing many who are struggling to survive. Another piece of research sums up one of the largest sources of global warming, one that is solely controlled by humans. “With the start of industry in the 1700’s, humans began emitting more fossil fuels from coal, oil, and gas to run our cars, trucks, and factories.” Due to the pollution produced by objects that we use daily, the carbon dioxide in our present atmosphere has been greater than any other measurable point in the last 800,000 years. Statistics show that while America is only hosts 4% of the world’s population, they still create 25% of the carbon dioxide waste. The solution is obvious. We, as a whole population, must work together and decelerate global warming.

An outstanding effort has been dedicated to this quandary already. In the year of 1970, the America passed the Clean Air Act, which gives the Environmental Protection Agency the ability to reduce excess pollution caused by electrical power plants. Signed by previous California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, another act that was passed was the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, otherwise known as Assembly Bill 32. Being a climate change fighting program, it was made to be comprehensive so that everyone could understand the state of the atmosphere. Around a year afterward, the Global Warming Pollution Reduction Act was proposed and passed by Congress. However, even as we pass more and more laws, the real impact only transpires if everyone in the community pitches in. People can drive environmental friendlier cars such as electric cars or hybrids. We can even properly dispose of the toxic pollution in factories. Instead of throwing away all of our trash, we can pick out the reusable ones and recycle them. Indirect methods such as funding renewable energy source research will benefit this cause. In the end, our future will be decided by the actions we choose today.

Hetalia

By: Autumn



North Italy: PASTAAAAA!!!!

Romano: You're such a baby!

Germany: Romano, don't you dare do that to your brother!!!!

North Italy: Why did you say that Romano? (Starts crying)

Prussia: I'm the Awesome Prussia and I'm just that awesome.

Germany: Not really brother.

England: Does anybody want some of my delicious scones?

France: NO ENGLAND! *cough* your cooking is awful *cough* *cough*

England: WHO SAID THAT ABOUT MY COOKING!!

America: No offence England *chew* but your *chew* cooking *slurp* is *slurp* awful.

Japan: I object everything America-san does not say.

Canada: Uh, hello?

China: Can everybody please calm down, Aru? I'll give you guys some tasty treats?

Canada: Uh, I'm still here.

Kumajiro (Canada's bear): Who are you?

Canada: I'm your owner, Canada.

Russia: I like watching the countries fight. Da?

Lithuania: (trembles) I don't think so Russia. I can go back and get some. *sign of hope*

Russia: Oh, I think you should stay here so I won't be lonely.

Kolkolkolkolkolkolkol...

That there my friends is the chaos of the world meeting in Hetalia and about every episode of it. Hetalia is very popular manga and anime and the anime is now in different languages including English. This anime and manga is under the genre Comedy and History and the anime is in the making of its 5th season. They have made a movie called Paint it White. Basically, it is about when the Roman Empire was around up to modern day. The main character is North Italy and some of the other countries that go through WW1 and WW2. There are some deaths but there is no blood but its 13 and up. I recommend this anime and manga because you learn something and get some laughs out of it.

Nepal Earthquake:

By Kiana

This past April there was a devastating earthquake. On April 25th a 7.8 earthquake (also known as the Gorkha earthquake) hit the capital, Kathmandu and the city, Pokhara in Nepal. This disastrous earthquake killed more than 8,000 people, and injured more than 23,000 people! I am advocating for helping people who are hurting in Nepal. A lot of people heard about this earthquake and said or thought to themselves, "Oh wow, that's so sad!" The thing is little people do something about it. So for my birthday, May 21st I didn't ask for presents, I asked for donations. I am so fortunate to have so many resources that I decided to give back. I had a plan to donate the money to UNICEF that was helping families that were in need of help. In the end I raised \$431! You might be thinking, "The earthquake was like 2 months ago, they don't need our help anymore." Well you're wrong; there is so much destruction that it will probably take at least a year to repair all the damage. Nepal needs our help, you can do as little as having a lemonade stand or going around asking for donations by yourself or with some friends (to make it a little more interesting). Every bit of money counts, so don't be afraid if you only have 5\$ go to UNICEF! There are so many people who are mentally and/or physically hurt in Nepal. So together let's assist Nepal on helping them get back on their feet!

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/April_2015_Nepal_earthquake

<http://www.bbc.com/news/live/world-asia-32461412>

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/inpictures/2015/06/nepal-months-deadly-earthquake-150629083221367.html>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3142782/Harrowing-new-footage-captures-moment-Nepal-earthquake-struck-sending-terrified-people-running-lives-buildings-crumbled-them.html>



Coral Reef Damage By Jason

Home to at least 25% of the marine population, coral reefs provide money and food to much of the world. If you've ever been to a coral reef, you would know just how amazing and mesmerizing they are. All the colors of the rainbow, from red to violet, exist there, with the coral fixed in place and fish dashing around, searching for food. If you're lucky, you might see a turtle, a manta ray, or even a (hopefully friendly) shark!



Unfortunately, as the earth warms up and human population increases, the number of coral reefs in the ocean is slowly decreasing. While global warming is raising the temperature of the ocean to levels of which coral can't survive in, an increase in population is causing sedimentation, which can lead to lack of much needed light in coral reefs. Among those two problems, other



main problems include pollution, coral mining, overfishing, and the use of reckless fishing practices. Many inexperienced or lazy fishers, instead of using nets, use dynamite to catch fish, which can kill coral and endangered animals like the sea turtle or dugong.

Just one year ago, 20 new species of coral were added to the list of protected coral species, increasing the size of the list by more than 10 times.

There are many ways that people can help with stopping the destruction of coral reefs. Conserving water, walking or biking, and disposing of trash all help keep pollution out of oceans; planting trees can help with slowing down global warming as well. If you are visiting a coral reef, never touch the coral or anchor on the reef. These practices can crush the fragile bodies of coral. If you are interested in helping the ecosystem during summer, you can volunteer for a reef clean-up and enjoy the sights while you're at it! Save the coral reef!



Poaching-What's the real problem?

by Jasmine

Poaching is the illegal capturing, hunting or killing of animals protected by government laws. Poaching includes stealing or killing animals without a permit and hunting endangered animals. Millions of endangered animals are killed every day from poaching and very few poachers are ever caught.

Laws against Poaching

A treaty called The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora is an agreement signed by 181 international countries. These countries include Nigeria, Canada, Peru, South Africa, Madagascar, Malaysia, Egypt and France. CITES aims to ensure that poaching and international trade does not threaten the survival of animals.

The Reason for Poaching

Poachers kill many animals every year, hoping to ship the remains of the animals off in an illegal boat so they may sell them on the black market in different countries. The demand for ivory is so great that one pound of ivory can sell for more than \$600 dollars and one elephant is killed every 15 seconds.

Wild Animals in danger of Extinction

Most animals are killed for certain attributes that their bodies have. Elephants and Rhinoceros are killed for the ivory in their tusks/horns, and tigers and other big cats are killed for their pelts.



for more information check out

<http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/poaching/?referrer=https://www.google.com/>

<http://www.worldwildlife.org/threats/illegal-wildlife-trade>

<http://definitions.uslegal.com/p/poaching/>

<http://www.exploringnature.org/db/detail.php?dbID=115&detID=2742>

<http://www.cites.org/eng/disc/what.php>

Genetic Tailoring in Humans

By: Cleo

Humans have been making great advancements and changes since they started walking the face of earth. The first case of genetic modification was accomplished in 1973 with scientists Herbert Boyer and Stanley Cohen. Over the past couple of years genetic engineering has become central in the society appearing in the food we eat and is now innovating and revolutionizing the human medical field. This has created a significant controversy on whether or not humans should be allowed to “play god” and tamper with the human genome. Genetic tailoring is an exemplary innovation and should be used in the human medical field.

Gene modification is beneficial for humans for an assortment of reasons. It not only strengthens the human genome, but it can also help those diagnosed with genetic disorders by altering DNA fragments in certain chromosomes by inserting donated DNA through a vector. This such action is called Gene Therapy and has cured countless diseases such as cancer, AIDS, cystic fibrosis, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (Lou Gehrig’s disease), cardiovascular disease, arthritis, Parkinson’s, and Alzheimer’s diseases. This is a revolutionary form of genetic engineering because this could lead finding vaccines or preventatives for diseases afflicting millions of people. Not only does genetic tailoring help cure diseases, it can also help patients find the right treatment for their illness. Using genetic coding doctors can find out which medicines would be most effective on their patients. Genetic modification is innovative and beneficial. It can further alleviate the medical field and improve the lives of many.



PEOPLE NEED TO KEEP THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS CLEAN

BY: AZEYA

1. If you have too much stuff, instead of being messy and storing stuff everywhere, you can make money by having a yard sale.
2. If your neighborhood isn't clean, you will have health problems. Pollution and trash are unpleasant and could be dangerous to small kids who could choke. Additionally animals and pets could try and eat it and become harmed.
3. If you keep your neighborhood clean, you could have a sense of community. Keeping your properties and your neighborhoods clean can bring the community closer and really shows that you care about where you live. In this way it sends a good message.
4. If you help clean up your neighborhood, you feel ownership. When people participate in events such as neighborhood clean ups, they take ownership of their neighborhoods.
5. You can live in a nice clean neighborhood, if you help keep it clean. If you do, you will hopefully feel pride in it. People feel pride in living in a clean, well-kept neighborhood.
6. By helping keep your neighborhood clean, you will feel unity with your community. When people unite for a common cause, it brings people closer.
7. Peace and love is what you will find with your community if you help keep your neighborhood clean.

Crossword

Across

2. This session Orange Team enjoyed helping out in _____, and teaching the younger students.
3. Generous people often give _____ to help unfortunate people.
4. A feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals.
6. The action of helping or doing work for someone.

Cleo

Down

1. Some good characteristics of a _____ include honesty, courage, and compassion.
2. Everyone should take care of the _____.
3. The job of the purple team is to _____ all the other teams volunteering and more.
5. Reduce, reuse, _____

The Drought

By: Autumn

Have you been told by your school or your parents to save water? If so, you should be thanking them. The drought that has cloaked California for a while now has reached to its fourth year. The reason of this is of the amount of rainfall that has been coming to California. The south east winds move the heavy rain clouds away from California and the heavy clouds from the sea rain over the sea, so we're stuck with the dry clouds. (It's not exactly like that but I think you get the point) The shortage of water and snowfall helps us be aware of how much water we have, but doesn't provide more water for us. U.C. Davis researchers have found out that the amount of money that the drought would cost us, just for 2015, would be \$2.7 billion dollars.

Have you heard the saying "killing the Colorado"? The Colorado River is where we get our major supply of water. Because of the drought, the Colorado River is technically dying. Taking time to save some water is the best option right now. If you're doing that right now, thank you so much for saving it. That will help the state save water, little by little.

SAVE WATER!!!!!!!



Drought
by Roman

Why do we need water well many reasons 1 is to drink 2 is to take a bath and 3 is for washing stuff you need clean (etc).

How could we conserve that water well follow the steps of these celebrities. You see not too hard this will really help a lot of people and we will live longer the more water that we have we need everybody's help in order to conserve water to the fullest and to do best. Everybody could make a change in the world by not wasting the water to much. Water is the thing that we need most we need it most is to bring to our bodies to drink it and feel better. Also water means a healthy body that everybody need in there system. And if you don't like water well Gatorade and other sweet drinks won't be able to be made so it will be better if you conserve water.

RANDOMEST FACTS

BY:Azeya

Odontophobia is the fear of teeth.

The most money ever paid for a cow in an auction was \$1.3 million.

When you die your hair still grows for a couple of months.

You are born with 300 bones, but when you get to be an adult, you only have 206.

In the U.S. a pound of potato chips cost 200 times more than a pound of potatoes.

The digits in any number that is a multiple of 3 can be added together to form another number that is a multiple of 3.

99% people feel uncomfortable when the TV volume is an odd number.

Giraffes clean their ears with their 18 or more inch tongue.

Your tongue has a distinct print, kind of like your fingerprint.

The left lung is smaller than the right lung to make room for the heart.

Everyone has a unique smell, except identical twins.

Facial hair grows faster than any other hair on the human body.

Your body contains enough iron to make a 3-inch nail.

Earth is the only planet not named after a Roman god.

Studies suggest that using sarcasm can significantly improve your I.Q.

It would take over 1,000 years to watch every video on YouTube.

The chances of you dying on your way to get your lottery ticket are greater than you winning.

The current flag of the U.S. was designed by a 17 year old for a school project. He received a B-
An elephant CAN die from a broken heart.

During your lifetime, you will produce enough saliva to fill up 2 whole swimming pools

There are more chickens than humans in the world.

The creators of YouTube were originally working on a dating site.

President George W. Bush was once a cheerleader.

In 60 seconds, 695,000 Facebook statuses are updated.

Best super heroes

BY:Azeya

- 1.Spiderman-part human and part spider. human by day and hero by night
- 2.Wolverine-claws that can cut through steel? AWESOME!!!
- 3.Iron man- suit made of armor. Can fly and shoot beams out of palm
- 4.Astro boy-made into a robot/human
- 5.Ben 10- omnitrix!!! Need I say more
- 6.Captain America-from puny little guy to superhero
7. Kevin 11-just plain awesome
- 8.Ghost rider-flaming skull and bike. AWESOME!!!
- 9.Nick Furry-leader of shield
10. Raven-half demon duhhhh
11. Robin-batman's sidekick
12. War machine- just as cool as iron man!!!!



BLACK BUTLER

BY:AZEYA



Black Butler is an anime show about two young boys making deals with demons. The first boy, Ciel Phantomhive wants the other, Earl Alois Trancy dead. But the second boy, Earl Alois Trancy just wants the first boy, Ciel Phantomhive to keep as some sort of prize. Both the boys had a rough past, which they will forever have to live with. Ciel Phantomhive's demon butler's name is Sebastian, while Earl Alois Trancy's demon butler is name is Claude.

In the last few episodes, Sebastian is to finally devour Ciel's soul, but they run into problems. Earl Alois Trancy combines his and Ciel's souls. By doing this, Sebastian could not devour Ciel's soul. Claude, Earl Alois Trancy's demon butler then fought Sebastian, neither one giving up until the other was dead. There is only one way to kill a demon and that is with the "Laevateinn". Claude and Sebastian were both fighting vigorously, until finally.....Sebastian stabbed Claude in the chest with the "Laevateinn", effectively killing Claude forever. He then dived into the ocean, where his young master had been thrown in not long before. Sebastian drags Ciel above the water, and onto a boat that was waiting for them. Before Earl Alois Trancy died completely, he made a wish that was granted, but only he knew it. When Ciel finally opened his eyes, Sebastian discovered what Earl Alois Trancy had wished for. Earl Alois Trancy had wished for Ciel to become a demon, thus leaving Sebastian unable to devour Ciel's soul. Now Sebastian's fate is set, and he will forever serve his young master, Ciel Phantomhive.



Top 10 Mythical Creatures by Jason

1. Unicorns



3. Hobbits

5. Hydra



7. Ouroboros

9. Centaurs



2. Pegasus

4. Phoenix

6. Cerberus

8. Wyvern

10. Minotaur



By Mack Dogs on the 4th of July

Let's talk dogs. The main reason I'm bringing this up is because the 4th just passed and dogs get very frightened on the 4th. Being experienced with dogs, I know that they're sensitive to loud sounds and high pitched frequencies. That's one of the causes for their fear spikes on the 4th. People can't hear the high pitched frequencies that bug and scare them, but even though we can hear fireworks such as the high-pitched "Piccolo Petes," they are high enough to really scare the dogs. Dog whistles are one of the things that annoy the heck out of dogs, because they're so high pitched that we can't hear it. One action you can take is make sure your dog is inside a strong fence or a house. Also, make sure they have a collar and microchip. This will help keep your dog from running away, and if it did it would have a form of identification. As being part of a rescue group called ABR (American Brittany Rescue), every 4th of July we get so many dogs in shelters that the foster homes fill up and adoptions start. This is one good reason I'm happy why fireworks are illegal in a lot of states, but sadly people still use them.

<http://www.aspca.org/pet-care/virtual-pet-behaviorist/dog-behavior/fear-noises>

"Fear of Noises." ASPCA. ASPCA, 2015. Web. 30 June 2015. 501(c)(3)

not-for-profit organization

(<http://www.americanbrittanyrescue.org/>)



Scared Man Attacks Defenseless Firetruck Hoping to Retrieve Lottery Money

By Mathew

August 23, 2015

New Jersey—After gaining countless amounts of cash from the jackpot in the latest lottery, the happy-go-lucky couple who traded in their winning ticket is not so pleased anymore.

During their proud stroll around the park, surrounded by their aura of expensive, deluxe edition accessories, the couple simply could not contain themselves. “We were just so content with the sudden influx of money that we could not hold ourselves back from bragging...” Rahul, 74.

Their boisterous, bling-displaying promenade lasted for hours; they were seen showing off their new wealth to all kinds of things: humans, domesticated pets, and even automobiles. It was almost like they were so haughty that they couldn't think rationally anymore. However, being too carefree came with a price; the couple, while touting to a tree, accidentally dropped their massive purse full of dollar bills under the wheel of a nearby firetruck, instantly causing dilemmas to ensue. The couple's first reaction was to ask politely, inquiring the unresponsive automobile if they could take back the money. When the firetruck, unable to move due to a lack of present driver, could not return their cash, the man, afraid that they would lose social reputation which would further hurt their towering egos, resorted to combat. Putting on his exquisite, gold encrusted boxing gloves, he punched at the poor truck, trying to throw out his stored fury and quench his money-hungry thirst.

In the end, a passerby policeman saw the assault that was happening; immediately, he sprinted and handcuffed the man, who was later taken down to the local police office where he is currently being questioned. Casualties on the firetruck include missing wheels, a clogged hose, and shattered glass. The man's trial should begin next Tuesday, in the town courthouse.

I Hope These Puns Aren't Cheesy
--- but I Don't Know if That's the Queso-not.

By Luca

(Puns are not taken from a website, but are not always original).

Sausage puns are the wurst.

I like talking to stairs. They are very down to earth.

Camping is so in tents.

Baking is the yeast of my worries.

Steak jokes are overdone.

People who go right ahead are always left behind.

Tape always puts you in a sticky situation.

My friend always brings ducks home. He's such a quackup.

Cameramen shutter at the thought of a broken lens.

You can tell the difference between trees by their bark. Same with dogs, depending on how ruff they are. (thanks green team)

Clocks always seem to tick me off.

Broken windows are a pane to fix.

Phones always seem to go to jail because they are charged for battery.

Heated arguments always have a fiery conclusion.

Typing is the key to success.

I may not make cents, but I do make dollars.

Mercury

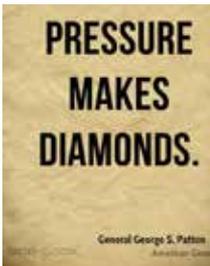
by Jasmine

The element Mercury is considered one of the strangest elements discovered. Mercury has been around for so long that no one knows who discovered it or when and where it was discovered. Mercury is now made in factories in Spain, Italy, China, and India, as it is rare to find on Earth itself. Mercury was named after the Roman god Mercury, who was the messenger god. The scientists who observed mercury realized that its swiftness of the way it moved had a likeness to the fast planet Mercury, therefore naming the element after the planet. Mercury is found in four different forms: Mercury Metal, Methyl Mercury, Inorganic Mercury and Phenyl Mercury. All forms of Mercury are very toxic and Mercury can enter the body through the respiratory system, the digestive system and when touched. Mercury harms the nerve system, brain, kidneys and liver. Mercury is a liquid at room temperature, and it is the only liquid metal on the Periodic Table. Mercury is used in thermometers, barometers and batteries. Small traces of Mercury can also be found in tuna fish because factories that create inorganic Mercury sometimes leak a very small amount of Mercury in to the ocean. When it gets into the ocean, plankton and zooplankton devour it. Minnows and other small fish then eat them, while bigger fish and trout eat the small fish. Tuna fish then eat the trout, which still has small traces of Mercury in them. We then eat the tuna, and we ingest a very small amount of Mercury. As easily seen, Mercury can be very useful, if not helpful, but is very dangerous to be around.

General George S. Patton Quotes

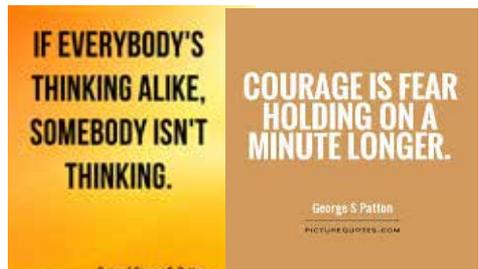
By Mack

- If everyone is thinking alike then somebody isn't thinking.
- Courage is fear holding on a minute longer.
- A pint of sweat saves a gallon of blood.
- Better to fight for something than live for nothing.
- Pressure makes diamonds.
- May god have mercy upon my enemies, because I won't.
- Success isn't measured by what you do when on top, it's how you bounce when you hit the bottom.
- A good plan violently executed now is better than a perfect plan executed next week.
- No good decision was ever made in a swivel chair.
- Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity.
- Accept the challenges so that you can feel the exhilaration of victory.
- If you tell people where to go, but not how to get there, you'll be amazed at the results.
- Take calculated risks. That is quite different from being rash.
- Prepare for the unknown by studying how others in the past have coped with the unforeseeable and the unpredictable.
- Wars may be fought with weapons, but they are won by men. It is the spirit of men who follow and of the man who leads that gains the victory.
- Lead me, follow me, or get out of my way.
- I am a soldier, I fight where I am told, and I win where I fight.
- You're never beaten until you admit it.
- All glory is fleeting.
- Success demands a high level of logistical and organizational competence.
- Perpetual peace is a futile dream.
- If I win I can't be stopped! If I lose I shall be dead.



**“A good PLAN
VIOLENTLY
EXECUTED
NOW IS BETTER
THAN A PERFECT
PLAN EXECUTED
NEXT WEEK.”**

George S. Patton



<http://www.quotehd.com/>
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April 3, 2076

California—Yesterday, a genuine miracle transpired; when the neighborhood washing machine broke down due to its missing apparatus, a ‘savior’ tin can robot donated its extra leg, which happened to exactly fit the missing part.

Hundreds of people must wash their clothes every weekend, and if their washing machine has broken down, it’s virtually impossible to clean everyone’s dirty laundry. Without the benefits of cotton dried shirts and fresh pants, hygiene is drastically deteriorated. In the end, everyone feels too unkempt to do work, essentially shutting down the whole neighborhood. Evidently, any issues involving washing machines, large or small, must be repaired.

Many people know about the current situation with the broken washing machines in California; however, only very few know about the benefactors in this quandary. In a small beachside town, a prominent tin can robot has donated many specific pieces of machinery to the town washing machine, alleviating the predicament. This specific time, not only has the robot fixed a massive dilemma, but he has also made a large sacrifice—his very own spare leg. “He’s a real guardian to the town. We could never have fixed this old machine without his help, and I feel like that everyone should know about his good deeds,” Emma, 53. The robot explains its own actions with a few simple lines. “I cannot feel emotion. I am hard coded to fix machines in which I have mutual respect for. These include but are not limited to: microwaves, cars, chairs, computers, washing machines, and other household appliances. Your response has been given. Initiate: Shutdown.”

By giving up one of his surplus legs that happen to have the same use and shape of the broken machine part, the tin can robot has effectively, but indirectly, saved many lives, and a massive quantity of time that would have been wasted. After utilizing the specially made part, the town has been able to last another day, and the people who live there have nominated the tin can robot as mayor. For a follow-up story, see: Emma vs Robot Election pg. 89.



Trevor the one who started everything very curious and is moving on the one who ruled the purple team and was very happy to he was very brave to continue and has a lot of favorites had a shirt of Pikachu falling down and ash making him stand up. That’s all I remember. He got his hand bit off by donkey for waking up the dragon Trevor didn’t know what he was doing until it fell off and poor old Trevor didn’t stop smiling.

THE END

by
Roman

E-Cigarettes; the “Solution” to Tobacco

By Luca

A new type of cigarette is emerging... people are using e-cigarettes, an electronic cigarette that runs on batteries and a nicotine-based liquid. Many are drawn to these because they may seem to be “healthier”, but there are unseen consequences behind the seemingly “harmless” vapor-powered cigarettes. Margaret A. Hamburg, M.D., Commissioner of food and drugs says, “The FDA is concerned about the safety of these products and how they are marketed to the public”. To start, The FDA is worried that e-cigarettes are actually increasing addiction to nicotine in younger subjects, which may lead to the use of other tobacco products. Surveys conducted by the CDC found that youths using e-cigarettes experimented more with the products than those who used traditional cigarettes. The worries are that the experimentation of these products will lead to the use of other, equally harmful tobacco smoking. Furthermore, e-cigarettes are not labeled correctly. A study conducted by the FDA, by Dr. Tianrong Ceng found that “the nicotine level listed on the labels of e-cigarette cartridges and refill solutions is often significantly different from measured values.” People who purchase e-cigarettes will have no idea of the quantities of the chemicals in their product if the values listed are all incorrect. Also, just because e-cigarettes release vapor and not smoke does not mean the chemicals are harmless! E-cigarettes have caused pneumonia, congestive heart failure, disorientation, seizure, hypotension, and other terrible problems. One of the main reasons people are drawn to e-cigarettes is because they do not have tar in them. The same study discovered chemicals such as formaldehyde, cadmium, and nickel in e-cigarettes which are not always the safest to inhale. They are also recognized by the FDA as not an effective way to quit. The e-cigarette can be deceiving... a newer product isn't always better. Watch out!

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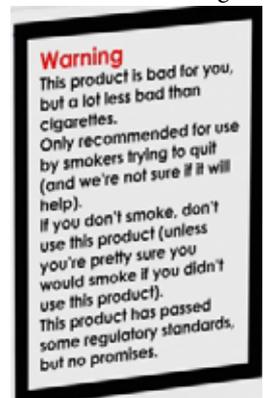
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11 Cutest Crossbreeds

Alusky: Alaskan Malamute & Siberian Husky



Border beagle: Border Collie & Beagle



Chusky: Chow Chow & Husky



Dalmachshund: Dalmatian & Dachshund



Cleo

Gerberian Shepsky: German Shepard & Husky



Goberian: Siberian Husky & Golden Retriever



Golden Cocker Retriever: Golden Retriever & Cocker Spaniel



Ouran High School Host Club

By: Autumn



Have you heard of Ouran High School Host Club? If you have, Yay! The Ouran High School Host Club is an anime and manga. It is based on a girl, Haruhi, who is accepted to a private school and lost her mother at a young age; there, she runs into the Host Club where she breaks an antique vase. There the boys make her join their club to pay off her dept but they don't know that she's actually a girl. One by one, they slowly find out that Haruhi is a girl with short boyish hair. Tamaki starts claiming himself as Haruhi's "father" even though she has one. All n' all, it's a very fun and silly anime and you will have a very fun time watching or reading it.



H
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Top15 Ways your prom could go wrong

BY:Azeya

- 1.You could fall into a lake when taking pictures
- 2.You could fall while dancing, and everyone laughs
- 3.Your date could stand you up
- 4.Your prom could be canceled, and you don't get the memo
- 5.You could get into a fight with somebody
- 6.You could spill punch down the front of your dress/tuxedo
- 7.Your best friend could steal your date
- 8.Your mom could chaperone your prom
- 9.You could have to bring your younger siblings
10. Carey (from the movie) could show up
11. Everybody is wearing the same clothes as you
12. Your date could throw up on you
13. Your parents could show up and start dancing
14. The police could show up and arrest your date
15. The police could show up and arrest you.



“OOZE AND AAAAHS!”

A Mad-Lib by:Azeya

I will never forget the night it happened. It was an ugly night, and I was relaxing upstairs with my knife, a good book and my faithful cat, Freckles. Suddenly there was a loud bell. I sprang to my feet and crept downstairs, trying to be as bloody as I could. Nothing looked out of the ordinary. Suddenly I heard the bell again, but this time it was much grosser and I knew it was coming from the basement. Summoning my courage, I grabbed a flashlight and strode sickly down the stairs. I might have met my end right there, if not for Freckles, who let out a loud “wind!” Startled, I jumped creepily to the side just in time to avoid a long gooey appendage. I turned my flashlight on the intruder and gasped in horror. Lurking there in my basement, bathed in the tall glow of my light, was a huge, quivering, shapeless blob of ooze! The hideous thing was as black as a kitchen and as big as a speaker. “OH NO!!” I cried.

I fled hurriedly upstairs, but the thing chased me with lightning speed. I was trapped, and knew I had to fight if I wanted to survive. First I tried to chop it with a sharp computer from the kitchen, and then I shot it with my grandpa's house that hangs over the fireplace. In desperation, I even tried throwing blood on it, but all to no avail. It just kept coming. I thought I was dead for sure, when suddenly a strange figure crashed through my window and leapt between us! He was tall and short, with fierce dry eyes and wet shoulders. He was dressed entirely in black, except for his red shirt.

“BOO!!” the figure cried, and quick as a dog he jumped in and stunned the ooze creature with a powerful kick.

The Woodland Faeries

by Jasmine

“Wake up!, Wake up, you sleepyhead!” a loud voice yelled up into the small comfy attic of a tall oak tree. Azalea stirred and very slowly opened her eyes.

“Way too early...” she groaned. She rolled herself over and tried to go back to sleep.

“Don’t make me come up there!” The loud voice sounded more annoyed than before.

“Fine...” Azalea pulled herself up, and propped up the pillows so she could sit upright. She pulled the covers off, and shivered as the cold air of the morning suddenly hit her. Her legs swung over the side of the bed and her toes touched the fluffy moss and leaf rug. As she stood up, she stretched her arms and yawned.

She suddenly realized she was freezing to death in her thin spider silk night gown. She looked around but couldn’t find her other sets of clothing.

“Where is my uniform?” she yelled.

“Where do you think?” replied the voice.

Azalea sighed. She walked over to a small built in cabinet. Opening it, she found four crisp, dark green tunics complete with tight black pants, tough, green boots, and leather belts. She grabbed one of the tunics, pulled it on, and discarded the white night-gown. While pulling on a pair of pants, she snatched one of the belts. Without tucking her shirt in she swiftly knotted the belt and seized both boots. One foot in, lace up, and tie. Second foot in, lace up, and tie. Perfect! Azalea hopped up and dashed down stairs, where she grabbed a dark brown satchel, bowl of berries and then slid into a chair in the large kitchen.

“You’re going to be late, Azalea.” A tall woman in a bright green apron frowned down at her from her place at the table.

“Not if I go now!” She jumped out of her seat and slid over to the door.

“See ya, mom” Azalea said as she ran out the door on her nimble feet.

“Take care, Azalea!”

She ran as fast as she could through the bustling and busy streets of her home forest Alkeyred (pronounced al.kay.ee.red). Azalea was an adolescent woodland faerie. Woodland faeries were the only faeries that did not have wings. To make up for their loss of flying, they had extraordinarily agile and brisk feet.

Azalea stopped at a thick redwood tree and looked up. The sun was rising through the branches and a large brass gong hung from the side of the tree. Luckily there was no sign of anyone that had or was going to ring it. She dashed up a flight of stairs that wound around the tree. At the very top was a wooden door with copper hinges, and the words carved in ‘Kalghan’s Learning Center for Adventurers and Big Dreamers’ in big letters. Opening it quietly, Azalea crept in, trying not to disturb the peaceful studying going on inside. This was the library and study hall. Many faeries, all in the very same uniform, studied their notes, on the plain but purposeful wooden desks and chairs. Others on the other hand sprawled out on an elaborate tapestry that was laid out on the ground. But all of the faeries in the room were studiously reading or writing. Azalea took a deep breath. The dusty smell of all of the ancient books was very calming to her. She walked through the room to one of the tables, and sat down next to another faerie.

“Hi, Aelfric.”

“Hey.” He didn’t look up. The boy was tall and tan, with dusty brown hair mess

ily combed. He worked hard, but it was easy to tell he was struggling with the work. His quill was to the side and calculations and notes covered the parchment. His head rested on his hands. Azalea took her satchel off and hung it in on the chair.

“Working on science again?” He sighed.

“Yeah...”

“Well, do you need help?”

“...Dunno”

“Ok, here let me help.” Azalea leaned over and observed his work.

“You have a good start...”

“I don’t know any of the rest of this.” Azalea turned around and reached inside her satchel. She pulled out several scrolls, textbooks, her own feather quill and some parchment. Azalea opened up one of the books and flipped through the pages.

“Here it is. One of the best charts on transformations.” Aelfric glanced over at the page she set in front of him.

“Oh.” He looked at Azalea.

“I thought that Headmaster Kalghan wanted us to use Rhoswen’s Scientific Novel for Conversions.”

“Well, he said you could use either one, and I quickly found out that the way the charts in the book explain transformations is so much easier than the lecture that Rhoswen wrote.”

“...Oh.” Aelfric returned to his work. Azalea looked back at her scrolls. She opened up one and began to read, when a loud booming voice rang out.

“Alright, young’uns, the Headmaster has something to tell you!” Every head raised up in interest and wonder. A large shouldered giant, was at the front of the room. He had a large cudgel at his side and was wearing a light brown mantle that was draped over one shoulder. A leather belt was smartly fastened around his waist and dark orange pants hung loosely until tightened by black boots. A short and stout dwarf stood behind him. The dwarf wore a light grey tunic with long sleeves. He had light brown pants and boots and carried a crooked staff. He had a very official look to his dress.

“Thank you, Trakond.” The dwarf said in a wavering voice. He stopped to straighten his waist length beard. “Oh, and would you please ring the gong and make sure all tardy students report to my office?”

“Yes, Headmaster Kalghan” the giant responded and took off.

Headmaster Kalghan stood at the front of the room, commanding all the woodland faeries to stand up. “We will recite our school anthem and then I will inform you all of today’s announcements.”

All students then stood up straight. “And...Begin” said the Headmaster. The great gong outside had begun to ring.

*We pledge to forever be diligent in our studies
For we do not consider others dummies
And a wandering dream or thought
Should be rewarded and never be fought*

“Good.” The students sat back down and chatter began to arise as the students got excited by what news had come up. “Settle down, please” Everyone once again focused their attention on Headmaster Kalghan.

“Now as I was saying before, we have some very interesting news.” Whispers arose slowly and heads turned.

“We have several students that our tutors believe are ready to graduate.” Excited chatter grew louder as some students cheered as they wondered if they would soon be leaving the school, as others thought about all the assignments that they had failed and how it would be a long time until they would graduate.

“Upon leaving our school these several students will have to complete a quest that will prove their mastery of skills to us.” All the faeries returned to silence. Everybody wanted to know the who, what, where, when and how of the graduation.

“That quest has not been determined yet.” Complete silence. “You are dismissed.” Azalea stood up along with many other faeries and began to put all of her scrolls and textbooks back into her satchel. “I’ll see you later, Aelfric.”

“...Okay.” Azalea pulled her satchel over one shoulder and headed to her first class, *Conversing with Wildlife*. She headed down the long winding stairs on the inside of the tree, until she came to room 8. Inside was a spotted grey jack-a-lope. He wore a soft green sash tied across his shoulder to his waist and had a small light brown belt. Azalea walked in and sat down at one of the many individual desks in the room. Several other faeries trickled in and then class began. The jack-a-lope, who was busy preparing his materials spoke fluently not only in the wildlife but also in the faerie language. “Class, today you will get an enchanted gem. When tied on a coil of sap and moss, this gem will let you converse with any wildlife creature.” But nobody was paying attention to the Jack-a-lope. They were all too excited about the graduation.

As the day went by, most of the faeries forgot about the big news. As Azalea walked home she wondered about the graduation. She was worried. What if she was chosen to graduate but then failed at the quest? She felt uneasy as she fell asleep that night.

The next morning, Azalea woke up earlier than usual. She tried to calm down the butterflies in her stomach by wrapping herself up in a soft blanket of lambs ear leaves and drank some mint leaf tea. When the morning finally came, Azalea was much calmer. Today I will do fine no matter what, she told herself over and over. She got dressed and ate a medley of pine nuts and truffles while finishing up last nights homework.

As she once again walked through Alkeyred, she passed tree-ents, dwarfs, pixies, faeries, sprites, and animals of all sorts. Azalea passed all sorts of trees, and flowers. She reached the school, climbed up the stairs and entered the study hall. There she read, patiently waiting for the morning announcements. When Headmaster Kalgan finally appeared, every faerie in the room could not hold down their excitement. They recited the school anthem hastily, because all of them could not wait to find out who had graduated. “Faeries! Please calm down! I will tell you who has graduated now. Then I would like the graduated faeries to join me onstage.” All of a sudden there was complete silence. “We are proud to announce 5 special faeries who have graduated. Please give a hand for Raglind.” A shy boy slowly walked on stage. That was no surprise, thought Azalea. Raglind was one of the most studious and intelligent faeries she had ever met. He had done extensive training in geography, history, and orienteering. Needless to say, he knew his way around.

“We are also proud to help Ester graduate.” A tall long haired girl stepped forward. No surprise there either. Ester was one of the oldest fairies at the academy. She often tutored younger faeries and was easily likable. Azalea was nervous. That was two out of five cho

sen. She could be in the last three! But she was still really confused in whether she really wanted to be chosen.

The next to be chosen, Briorg, a fairly aggressive male faerie, who swaggered up to the front of the room to join the others. Azalea thought he was probably chosen for his skills in metal working and wood shop. Then Leila, a short dark brown haired girl was chosen, probably for her incredible expertise in mastering her way in cooking, herb collecting, potion brewing, and probably the most important, healing. Leila looked very surprised as she cautiously walked onstage to the Headmaster.

“We will now present the quest leader.” He paused.

“Please welcome Aelfric!” Azalea was shocked! Aelfric? The quest leader? She looked down wondering why they had chosen Aelfric. She was the one that had helped him on everyone of his assignments! She deserved the credit. Azalea felt ashamed that she was blaming her friend for being the quest leader. She looked back up, and there was Aelfric at the front of the stage, wearing a beautiful bright green sash with the words Our Amazing Quest Leader written in gold on it. She could not believe it. Her very own best friend had been chosen as quest leader. She was higher than him. Who had given him her notes so that he could correct his homework? Who had helped with calculations when he forgot his math textbook? Who had written down notes for him when he was out sick? Azalea had! And yet, now there he was at the front of the room graduating in front of her. She felt sick.

As Azalea trudged home that evening, she only felt sorry for herself. She forgot all the anxiety that the chance of being picked to graduate had given her. She only thought about the loss of her pride and dignity when a student that had almost failed the last trimester, her own best friend, was the quest leader. Azalea began to drown in her own sorrowful thoughts when someone tapped her on the shoulder. She spun around. Standing in front of her was Trakond, the giant.

“Azalea, the headmaster wants to see you.”

As Azalea rushed back following Trakond, she noticed that the butterflies in her stomach had come back. She began to freak out, trying to figure out why she would be called, after school of all things! They walked back to the academy, Azalea almost running to keep up with Trakond’s big steps. Why did the Headmaster need to see her? Had she done something wrong?

They reached the school, and Azalea hurriedly climbed up. She opened the door and rushed in. She found Headmaster Kalghan’s office. She raised her hand up to knock on the dark brown door, and found herself hesitating. She was so worried about what the Headmaster might say to her. Well, she thought to herself, I might as well get it over with. Her hand hit the hard wood. Knock,Knock,Knock. The door swung open a couple seconds after, and Headmaster Kalghan was at the door.

“Hello Azalea, thank you for coming and please sit down.” Azalea nervously sat in one of the intricately carved wooden chairs and set her satchel down.

“I can tell that you are nervous. Please do not worry, this is nothing to be anxious about.” But Azalea still had worries. She tried to calm down, act natural, and get it over with.

“Azalea, we have observed your schoolwork and have determined you are an amazingly bright student. You past exceed the qualifications needed to graduate from this academy.” He paused. Unfortunately though...” Azalea’s eyes began to burn. What had she done wrong? He had just congratulated her on her straight A’s, and now? She was so

confused and distressed. A lump began to grow in her throat. The headmaster gave her a look of concern as he continued.

“we were not allowed to graduate you because your assessments are so high that if we had graduated you, the National Board of Faerie Schools would be on our tail.”

She was so confused. She would have graduated? She was such an amazing student that they couldn't graduate her?

“Basically, if we graduated you at your level then, the National Board of Faerie Schools would be annoyed with us because we are teaching you at university level.” He stroked his beard.

“I know it is confusing. I don't quite understand it myself. What is wrong with teaching faeries at a higher level?”

“So why didn't you do anything about it?” Azalea shot out. She was so surprised about her rash act that she embarrassingly said, “Sorry, um..., I mean...” Azalea trailed off.

“No, no, its perfectly normal to be surprised. I'm sorry that we couldn't do anything about it then. But we have found a loophole.”

Azalea was overjoyed. She was really going to graduate! She was so incredibly happy. Azalea could imagine herself standing in front of all of the students of her school.

“Unfortunately we still can't graduate you until you complete a quest, but we have a quest for you.” Azalea was ecstatic. She had wanted to graduate so much that she decided if she had to do a quest in order to graduate, there would be no way she could fail it. “You are to accompany the five graduation candidates on their mission to retrieve a fire egg from the Fire Kingdom.” The Fire Kingdom? Azalea had never even been out of the city! The mission was bound to be easy though. Fire Eggs were a popular ornament in homes and buildings, because when hollowed out they made beautiful vases. It was normal that students were given quests to retrieve fire eggs. But, it seemed like there must be a catch.

“Azalea, the reason we made Aelfric leader was because we are making you the quest counselor. We have observed that you have led Aelfric through many confusing situations involving homework and classwork, and we have determined that you can do the same in a broader environment. You will help Aelfric with his decisions on the quest, and in order to do this we need you to learn about the quest members abilities.”

“Well...I know that Raglind is good at geography and Leila can heal, so...” Headmaster Kalgan stood up, and slowly made his way to the door. As he opened the door, he gestured for Azalea to come. Azalea stood up and slung her satchel over her shoulder.

“The quest members are training at the moment, but in a few minutes they will be ready for you to assess their skills. Afterward you will choose one of the paths that Raglind has provided to take to the Fire Kingdom, and then make sure that every one knows all the strategy or rules that you would like to teach them. While you are waiting, why don't you choose a weapon?”

A weapon? She got a weapon for this? Was it that dangerous? Headmaster Kalgan saw her confusion and said “Don't worry, it's just for safety precaution. We all know that long journeys are sometimes dangerous.” Azalea nodded and followed him down the hall as he trotted away.

“We're going to the armory. The head blacksmith is out today, but we can still access it. At the very bottom of the end of the hall was a tall door made out of very dark wood and inscribed, ‘Stuff’ .

“Here it is! You might want to stand back....Our head blacksmith isn’t very organized.”

Azalea stood behind Headmaster Kalgan as he pulled out a shiny silver key from one of his many hidden pockets. He slowly walked forward and inserted the key into a tarnished brass lock that hung down from a long rusty iron chain which tied around the door. Azalea heard a click and all of a sudden the chain dropped with a loud thump. Azalea coughed, as dust flew up. When she looked up she was just in time to see the Headmaster slide a crystal blue key in the steel key lock on the door. Click. The door flew open and all sorts of junk flew out. Swords, shields, nails, even random blocks of metal, landed around Azalea’s feet. The dust from the armory’s explosion was nothing like the previous time when the Headmaster dropped the lock. A cloud of dust had gone up. Azalea couldn’t see the Headmaster and she got very worried. When the dust finally settled the Headmaster was no where to be seen, but Azalea was knee deep in all types of weapons, enchanted relics, scrolls, and workshop materials.

“Headmaster Kalgan?” Azalea called out. When no answer came she became frantic and rushed over to where he had been standing. She pulled aside javelins, wands, bows, and daggers but found nothing at all to her liking. “Headmaster!” Azalea was about to dash down the hallway when she heard the headmaster’s voice.

“Don’t worry Azalea, I’m quite safe.” The dwarf was floating up by the ceiling with his grey beard floating in the air.

“Headmaster Kalgan! I was so worried...How did you do that? And why didn’t you answer when I called out. What is all this stuff doing here?”

“Shhh... You have too many questions.” He dropped down quickly, landing with a satisfying thunk on the floor. Azalea watched as the Headmaster walked over to the ginormous river of weapons. “Let’s find you a weapon now.”

As Azalea followed the headmaster through the piles of stuff, she couldn’t help realizing how many things there were. “This all fit inside the closet?” she asked tentatively.

“Well, yes. I told you the head blacksmith wasn’t very organized.” They began to go inside the closet and she suddenly realized it was bigger than she suspected. It was torch lit and had many intricate designs carved on the walls. Azalea realized that she was supposed to be finding a weapon for herself. As they waded through the masses of throwing knives, axes, and crossbows, she began to lift some weapons, testing them to see what they felt like. The headmaster noticed and asked “What are you doing?”

“I’m testing out weapons. That’s what I’m supposed to do right? Finding a weapon?”

The headmaster laughed, stroking his beard and smiling. “These weapons? You were choosing from these?”

Azalea wasn’t sure why, but she suddenly felt very stupid. The headmaster regained a more serious look and told her “These weapons are just prototypes, examples and mistakes that were made to teach students how to make things. The real weapons worthy of using are back over here.” There was more? Azalea couldn’t believe it. The headmaster stopped suddenly and pushed aside some weapons to reveal a trapdoor. Headmaster Kalgan unlocked it and grabbed one of the torches from the wall as he descended down a ladder inside. Azalea followed him down. As she reached the bottom and turned around she couldn’t believe what she saw. It was a small room really. It was lit entirely by the torch until the headmaster lit several other torches inside. Hundreds of elegantly designed weapons hung on racks, sat on shelves and leaned up against the walls of the under

ground shed. They weren't organized in any way that Azalea could see, but it was still the complete opposite of the upstairs closet. Long swords, short swords, double handed swords, katanas, and other sharp bladed swords were everywhere. The occasional dagger or knife covered the shelves. Battle Axes, spears, javelins, staffs, and maces hung neatly on the tall walls. Several long bows, short bows, compound bows, and cross bows also decorated the inside of the room. She realized there weren't just weapons. Several chests of armored chest plates, gauntlets, leggings, and boots sat open on the ground. Shields and relics also hung from the walls. Azalea stepped forward and began to admire every piece of craftsmanship with an amazed look. Headmaster Kalgan began to float upward again, and Azalea took her eyes off the wall and looked up at him. He was now hovering close to one wall, and Azalea watched as he carefully unhooked a lean and tall sword from the wall. Holding it close to him he then floated down. As he got closer, Azalea could see that the sword had a long blade and short handle, and that it pointed ever so neatly at the end. The scabbard that it rested in was made of light leather and had a strap that attached with a metal link. The headmaster landed on the ground. He handed the sword to Azalea and said "Here. Tell me how it feels." Azalea pulled the sword out of the scabbard. The metal felt cool in her hands. She turned the blade over and found the name 'Rangstorff' engraved in it. She moved her hands to the handle and motioned as if she was pulling the sword from the scabbard. But something about the weapon didn't feel quite right.

"Headmaster, can I try a different weapon?" Headmaster Kalgan looked surprised.

"Oh, why of course, I shouldn't assume that my selections are perfect." He hurriedly took the sword from Azalea and returned it to its scabbard. He flew up and hung the sword back up and after flying around the room a couple of times, selected a short bow from a shelf. He handed the bow to Azalea after landing back down. Azalea examined the bow. Again it was a beautiful piece of art, with a leather notch for the arrow and intricate designs carved in the wooden handle. Azalea turned it around in her hands several times then handed it back to the Headmaster.

"Nope, it just doesn't feel quite right." The Headmaster looked at her in alarm. "Sorry, I..it just.."

"No, no, it's alright.." Just let me put it back." Again the headmaster returned the bow and picked another weapon. This went on several times, every time Azalea turning down Headmaster Kalgan's suggestions. Finally the headmaster landed back down very flabbergasted and said "Azalea, I can't find anything to your liking. Why don't you try to find a weapon of your own. Azalea looked around and it dawned on her how long it would take for her to find the perfect weapon. As she slowly walked around the room she felt strangely attracted to a tall black battle ax sticking out of a chest. Azalea walked up to it and pulled it out of the chest. It was about 5 inches taller than her and was crudely shaped with the blade uneven on one side. But it felt perfect. She hefted and rolled it around in her hands testing its strength. When she felt satisfied with it she strolled over to Headmaster Kalgan, battle ax in hand. When he spotted her he said "Interesting choice Azalea, but still a powerful weapon nonetheless." Azalea beamed.

"Now grab some armor and we can go meet the other quest members."

Azalea spotted a chest of armor and began to rustle through it. After setting down her satchel, she pulled on a bronze chest plate that tied over and around her shoulders and waist with straps of thin links of silver. Azalea pulled on chain mail leggings and iron boots. After finding a pair of silver and leather gauntlets, Azalea picked up her

satchel and the battle ax and followed Headmaster Kalgan back up the ladder and then out the closet door. Headmaster Kalgan locked up after a quick clean up with magic. They headed back down the hall and the headmaster took her satchel and said “You won’t need this anymore. The quest leader will carry a satchel of supplies.” When they finally reached the the end of the hall, Headmaster Kalgan stopped at the very last door. “Here we are. Ready?”

“Yes?”

“Okay!” The headmaster flung open the door and there were the five other quest members, standing proudly in their new armor and brandishing their weapons. Only thing is, they were not exactly facing her. They were receiving a lesson from a teacher, who was showing them how to use the weapons they had chosen. The headmaster told her to go join them, so Azalea walked up and stood at the end of the line, next to Ester. None of the quest members looked surprised, so Azalea guessed Headmaster Kalgan had told them that she was joining. Azalea stepped up and stood beside Ester, who was at the end of the line on the left side. She watched intently and the teacher explained how to parry and block, as well as thrust and stab. She also noticed the weapons her fellow peers had chosen. Aelfric awkwardly held a sword that look a bit too big for him, and strapped on his back was a round shield with a dragon painted on it. Ester had a sash tied around her waist and Azalea noticed that strapped in the sash were several different types of knives and daggers. Some were very small with intricate detail and others much bigger with big crudely shaped blades. A few of the knives were stone, others iron, and silver. Azalea was slightly confused by her choice when suddenly she remembered Ester’s excellency at all of the ball games that the faeries played. Ester had throwing knives. Raglind stood with a staff made of three different types of wood and had iron woven in it. She noticed that when he was excited, the tip, which was a mostly metal, glowed a bright blue. Raglind also carried a satchel of travel compasses and such. Azalea was slightly annoyed that he got to keep his satchel and not she, but she could understand that he was to be the navigator. Briorg proudly brandished his two handed sword next to the intimidated Raglind. The sword, Azalea noticed, was almost as long as Raglind. The scabbard to this monstrous sword was strapped on Briorg’s back. Leila was at the other end of the line. She carried a small dagger in a beautiful scabbard, and she had small bottles and pouches tied to her waist. Those are probably healing concoctions, thought Azalea. Everyone was wearing the same armor, although Raglind had different gauntlets that allowed to work with his navigating tools. When they were done learning about their weapons, the headmaster pinned matching royal blue cloaks around their necks.

“This is your uniform. You must wear these cloaks at all times, including when you sleep. This shows that you are on a quest with each other. Understood?”

The students nodded. “Good.” said the headmaster. Now, Raglind would you like to show you the path he has chosen for your mission.

Raglind led the other 5 students to a table in the corner of the room where he had laid out a map. As the students peered at the map and tried to make sense of it, Raglind readied his quill and played with one of his many compasses. When he was satisfied with them he pointed a finger covered by leather armor at the bottom left corner of the map.

“Here is Alkeyired. Here is the Fire Kingdom...” Raglind’s finger moved up to the top right corner of the map. It stopped at a little dot labeled something so small none of the quest members could read, and said: “And, here is the Fire City.”

The students traced his finger movements and took turns examining the map

and compass.

Then Raglind said, “We could take the most common path, which is the trail that leads straight to fire city, but I was thinking—”

Briorg’s loud voice boomed through the room. “Wait— What?! Why aren’t we taking the shortest route? Shortest is the fastest right? The shorter the path the faster we graduate right?”

Everyone looked at Raglind. Raglind seemed to almost shrink before their eyes. He was obviously very nervous, not used to playing such a powerful part in making decisions.

Leila said in a gentle voice, “I’m sure Raglind has a good reason for making his decision.” Raglind looked at her thankfully, and seeming to have regained some of his confidence, pulled another map out of his satchel. He unrolled it and let the others have a good long look at it. When Azalea was done, she realized the headmaster was gone. She looked up, wondering if he had pulled the same trick on her again, but he was still nowhere in sight. She shrugged, supposing that he had sneaked out sometime after Raglind began his speech, and she put it out of mind.

“This is a 3-D topographical map of our journey. Here is the shortest route again.” Raglind’s hand traced a valley in-between two parallel mountain ranges.

“The problem with this route, is that although it is shortest, it is most susceptible to bandit attacks. It would—”

“Wait. Why is it most susceptible to bandit attacks?” Ester’s calm but inquiring voice rang out.

“It is the easiest natural boundary for the bandits to attack,” Raglind continued “They can group at the top—” Raglind was interrupted yet again, but this time it was by Azalea.

“—and then they can close in from both sides for the kill!” Azalea finished, proud that she realized that.

“Yes.” said Raglind. “A bandit clan will split in two, one group on one mountain range, and the other group on the opposite mountain range. They will hide in the thick foliage, and when a small unsuspecting band of people comes along, one bandit group half will give the signal to the other. Then both groups will rush down the mountain on their sabertooth cat steeds, and corner their victims. After tying the helpless people up they will loot the baggage and then ditch the crime scene, leaving their tied up victims to die.”

“Wow.” said Aelfric softly. “That’s horrid, and yet at the same time I am fascinated with their strategy.” The others nodded quietly in agreement.

“Wait. Why can’t we fight them?” said Briorg, breaking the silence. His quest members looked at him in disbelief. “I mean, we do have weapons and stuff...” Briorg hefted his sword.

“First of all, we are a bunch of inexperienced students. Second, they are trained on looting people, and they would have the advantage.” Azalea proclaimed.

“—and Third, the Headmaster forbade going that way.”

To Be Continued



