

A scenic view of a lake surrounded by trees. In the foreground, a large, dark tree trunk is visible on the right side, and a wooden railing is at the bottom. The lake is calm and reflects the blue sky. On the left side, there are trees with yellow and orange autumn foliage. In the background, there are more trees and distant mountains under a clear blue sky.

Holiday

*An anthology of pieces by
young writers*

HOLIDAY

This anthology is a compilation of works by talented young writers aged 7 to 14.

*All are based on the theme of the Summer 2014/2015 [Writing Classes For Kids](#) writing competition, **Holiday**.*

They are fabulous examples of how we use our imaginations and life experiences to interpret a particular theme, how our writing is different because we are all different.

Some of these talented creators have also included their original illustrations and photos to go with their stories.

Congratulations to all the writers who were selected for this publication.

I hope readers enjoy your pieces as much as I did.

Happy writing:)

Dee

[Dee White Author](#)

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MR BADGER'S HOLIDAY SCARE - by Sasha Borman - aged 7

CHAPTER ONE: Mr. Badger LEAVES!

One day, Mr Badger popped his head lazily out of his warm bed, and sniffed cautiously at the morning breeze.

Silently, he crept back into his burrow, and filled up his big, black, suitcase.

He picked up his bright family photo of when he was a boy in Paris, and set off on a train journey towards the castle they had stayed at.

He arrived in the dark, put up his tent and sunk inside to pump up the bed.

CHAPTER TWO: CRIMINAL!

The rain coming through the cracks in the tower splattered down on his tent. Eventually the rain eased and Mr Badger began to relax.

Just then a dark figure appeared. A hundred more rapidly invaded tents all over Paris. Lovely family holidays all over Paris were destroyed! Suddenly five ghostly looking figures hovered about six inches above the ground.

Mr Badger woke up. "Oh who can that be at this time of night?" he croaked, and stared at the shadows outside.

A chanting of "Haunt, haunt, haaauunt!" echoed through the castle.

"Remotely remarkable!" He cheered and ran to get his torch and camera.

But whilst he did, the head ghost and her army invaded his tent. The mistresses' black hair as long as the beams of moonlight, whipped about the tent and knocked the valuables down to the floor. She neatly stacked them in her sack, pushing her wheelchair back and forth in delight!

"Yes! Oh yes, oh yes!" she screamed, clicked her fingers and her hair swayed back in the wind. Her purple dress flipped up behind her in the wind. Then her green eyes focused...

CHAPTER THREE: THE RESCUE!

...And Mr. Badgers family photo floated up off his antique shelf!.. But just the very second that Mr Badger's perfectly fab holiday was going to come to an end, a fox ninja, followed by a guinea pig and a ninja police hare ambushed the tent. The fox leapt in front of the evil woman, and the guinea pig dived underneath the photo, and...

CHAPTER FOUR: THE END!

...The guinea pig caught the photograph and as soon as Mr Badger came back, the woman named 'Nomeaque' whisked herself up into the air on her broomstick. "Good bye!" She screamed and zoomed off, leaving the other criminals to worry about their own freedom,

"I'll be back!" She squawked far in the distance.

"So," Mr Badger squeaked.

"You've been tricked. This isn't Paris," said the fox.

As the sun came up, a news writer named Splat Covercob arrived. "You're right ma'am. That old witch disguised this place," he blurted out.

And the hare pushed the other-criminal-sidekicks two, by two, into the police van, ready for jail.

A large crane picked up the tower, and released all the creatures of Bluebell Wood.

"Hey," the news writer, said, "You wanna know why you came ere instead of France?"

"Yes."

"Every driver was the same witch all along, she was trying to drive you round in circles back to Bluebell Wood."

SISTERS ON A HOLIDAY ADVENTURE - by Pranuthi Emani - aged 8

Once upon a time, there lived a family that had a mother, a father, their two little daughters and a little son. Every now and then they would go on an outing like the museum, the seaside, the countryside and the hillside, for the children were very much interested in exploring.

One day while they were on a holiday in Glasgow, Scotland at the Sea Side, Rina the elder daughter, spotted something unusual.

Immediately she called, "Dad come here! I found something!"

Her Dad started to run towards her with, her sister, Tina and her brother, Kenn following him. He said, "That's a fossil! It's an imprint of a prehistoric animal!"

"Oh! That's so cool!" the children exclaimed.

At the City Science Museum they saw displays of animals starting from humongous dinosaurs like T-Rex, Allosaurus, massive Mammoths, terrific tigers to tiny fish and minute insects.

Annoyingly, the parents had to follow the little boy as he was naughtily running away towards the terrifying lions and tigers. While the two girls were drawn towards the mammoths, and were fascinated by the colourful butterflies. They did not realise that they were lonely in the room.

All of a sudden the Mammoth's skeleton started to glare and its hairy skin and body began to develop. The entire room started to twirl round and round in circles. The girls were startled, and they held each others hands very tightly, and shut their eyes.

As they opened their eyes they were astonished to see a brand new world! Then Tina said in a scared tone, "Rina where are we? I want Mom and Dad!"

But, Rina who was a bit braver consoled, "Tina don't worry! Let's look at all the amazing things around and explore this adventure!"

"Yes Rina, this looks like a world to explore, where we always wished to be!" Tina replied.

As they walked around leisurely they saw many peculiar things like glittering plants with bright colourful flowers and beautiful butterflies sitting on them. Quickly, Rina and Tina looked at each other in surprise, since they noticed that the butterflies were the same as that in the Museum. Then, Rina and Tina saw many large big trees swirled just like snake and the abnormal fact is that the branches got into the ground again.

"Rina, this place looks a bit familiar to me." whispered Tina.

"Familiar? This place reminds me of the movie, Amazon Rain Forest, that we watched last week." said Rina shockingly.

At that instant, a group of tribal men headed towards them, holding spears in their hands. On the other side, they found the giant hairy Mammoth with its younger one. As the tribal men were getting closer, Rina and TINA promptly ran to the Mammoths and hid behind them.

The Mammoth and its child began to stomp towards the men, trying to frighten them with their furious roar and horrifying stomps.

After a small fight, the tribes gave up and ran away. The elder mammoth explained to the girls that she would come here once in a while to spend time with her child. She promised to take them back to the museum.

Eventually, Rina and Tina rushed to their worried parents, who were frantically searching for them. As the girls told of their adventures, their parents and Kenn kept listening with their mouth and eyes wide open!!!

LUCY'S DREAM HOLIDAY - by Snigdha Gannavarapu - aged 8

It was a luxurious Sunday morning, and guess why? Wait for it, wait for it. It was my ... BIRTHDAY TODAY! And I was going to have a birthday party. I was going to be 9 years old!

In my family, there was Mum, Dad, Amy (pet monkey) and me (Lucy).

After the party I went to my parents and said to them "Mum, Dad you still haven't given me my present."

"We know Honey, why don't you tell us where you'd like to go for a holiday."

"New York", I screamed after a minute of thought.

"Ok" they chorused.

Amy helped us to pack our bags and we were so happy that the cruise liner allowed us to take her along.

Yes, we went on a spectacular 8-day cruise to New York. I played water ball with my new friends in the wonderful swimming pools and together we went to the Kids' Club.

One day a little after mum, dad and I went dancing, leaving Amy in our Queens suite, we heard a commotion.

We followed the noise and what did we see to our surprise – Amy gorging on a delicious plate of food. It was hilarious the way people ran helter skelter. We had the dining and dancing rooms all to ourselves and we danced all night long - well half the night long!

Luckily that was our last night on the ship and I screamed with joy when we landed in New York the next morning.

We went to the hotel in a yellow cab and I watched awestruck as we drove through the streets, past the tall buildings.

At the hotel, a guide said 'I could help you take a tour of this place'.

Firstly, we went to the amazing 25 acre Battery Park and took a ferry boat to Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. Amy didn't like being on water again and was acting crazy.

Say 'cheese' said dad and took photos until we yelled 'STOP'.

"Did you know that the statue is of a robed female figure and was a gift from the people of France to US?" said our guide.

The climb to the crown was a strenuous 354 steps and it was so hot inside.

I cried 'I need a cool drink,' and mum conjured up one from somewhere.

Dragging our feet, we went back to our room and had a quick bite of pizza before going to bed.

Manhattan was the most lively place I'd ever seen, with bright lights and street performers.

A poker faced guard at the Empire State building stopped us with 'You can't take her along' pointing at Amy.

I looked at my parents anxiously to see what they would do. We visited Central Park instead.

As we drove on Brooklyn bridge to airport, I was busy planning my next holiday to AUSTRALIA!

I couldn't stop chatting about my holiday at school. Some of the kids yawned and some thronged to hear. Katie murmured 'Well she always wanted to go there'.



JOURNEY FROM PARIS - by Zoe London - aged 8

Eva was a petite eight year-old girl who longed to go to Paris. She imagined Paris to be as colourful and beautiful as parrot's feathers. She had golden locks just like her mother but inherited her father's dark brown eyes. She enjoyed painting self portrait and landscape, drawing inspiration from masters like Monet and Renoir.

Eva was ecstatic when her mum announced 'Your dad is stopping over in Paris for a few days after business in London. We'll meet him in Paris'.

As they ambled towards the security checkpoint at the Sydney International Airport, Eva had to pinch her face twice just to be sure she wasn't dreaming about going to Paris!

When the plane landed, Eva's mum received an emergency call from Sydney. Her grandma had fainted in the middle of the footpath. In her excitement about Paris, Eva hadn't noticed that for the last two weeks, her grandma had actually been unwell with poor appetite and difficulty walking. Eva wanted to stay in Paris, but with a heavy heart, she decided to return to Sydney to help care for her grandma.

On the flight home, while her mum was distracted with worry about grandma, Eva sulked about the fun things she was missing out on.

Suddenly, the plane jolted and within a few seconds, the plane veered out of control. It was heading towards the murky waters below. Before the plane crashed into the sea, everyone yanked out their inflatable life jackets and put them on. Then all the passengers jumped out of the plane and landed with a thump on the salty water.

Within minutes, the plane plunged into the waters and exploded. Amazingly, all the passengers including the pilots and aircrew were swept inland by strong waves onto a familiar beach. Miraculously, they were washed up to Dee Why Beach, near grandma's house. Apart from a few bruises, both mother and daughter had escaped the catastrophe relatively unscathed. So they trudged up to the house in search of help.

Once they were inside, Eva's grandma was resting in bed looking frail. Her grandma was allergic to Crustaceans and when she ate them she would become weak. While her mum was on the phone to the SES team to help the other passengers, Eva clung onto her grandma. The sight of her grandma's bright red and orange pills caught Eva's eye. She read the information on the pill box. To her astonishment, the pills contained Crustaceans! So that was the problem. Eva's grandma was sick because of the pills.

Eva hoped the other passengers found their way home safely. She was grateful that they had survived the ordeal but she was very disappointed that the exciting trip had turned disastrous.

That night, while she lay in bed hugging her mum, she dreamt of music and colours of Paris.

WHY THE WILLOWS SANG - by Minethra Epa - aged 9

There was no better beach than Sandy Swan for me, it was like a second home except that you had no chores to do and you could play there any day. The strange thing was that Sandy Swan had willow trees, and they sang! I had always wondered why they sang until now...

One afternoon, after I had done my farm work, I headed out to the beach and sat under one of the willows, talking to my border collie, Manfred. Apparently Mannie was talking to me, not me talking to him. His barks would be enough company for anyone.

I told Mannie to sit while I wandered through the willows, picking the brownish-yellowish sand off their tall trunks. This part of the beach was lonely, nobody came here since half of it was burnt by old mine bombs, I had donated money to create these willows and help the bombed part back to life. But ever since then, no one has come here except me and Mannie.

I felt around all the willows, they were soft and brought back tons of memories, then I came upon a trunk with a drawing on it, some stars, a dog and... me! And I remember exactly what had happened...

We went to Sandy Swan and had a short picnic by this tree. And after eating I got out my crayons from my kit in Mannie's mouth. Then I drew a picture of Mannie and me. Then when we were going to leave, I drew the three stars that made a triangle.

Then the next day I ran off with Mannie to play a bit in the willows, and I saw that most of the drawing was smudged away from last night's rain, I drew it back on and then Mannie and me climbed up the tree, actually, I climbed up the tree. I used Mannie's back for a foot help. I don't think it hurt much. And then Mannie had a go at climbing up the tree after me but he fell off all the time. Then on his umpteenth risk, I hauled him up with my arms, I got hold of his collar and then he managed to come up still in one piece.

And that was the end of it, how the drawings were there and why there were small foot and paw prints going up the tree like a continuous path.

All the memories were trying to make me cry but I held it in. I felt the nice apple crumble coming up my throat and ready to fall out but I held that in, too. Mannie must have felt the same because he tilted his head to one side then to the middle and again to the side. He always did that when he was going to throw up. I loosened his collar and made him turn around in case he really needed to.

And now every time I come upon the willows I know why they sing in the wind, because of freedom, helping save the willows seemed like freedom to me and it must have been to Mannie as well.

JACK'S HOLIDAY IN PARIS - by Emily Henley - aged 9

A boy named Jack woke up on a rainy Monday morning. That day he was going to travel to his favourite part of the world: the Eiffel Tower. He got up early and got ready.

He had the best time there. Although at the end of the day he was ready to go back to his hotel and have dinner. His family walked back to the train station. By the time they got there Jack was so tired that he could barely keep his eyes open! A train pulled up at the station and Jack got on. He was so tired: he did not hear his mother and father yell at him not to get on, he did not see them beckon him off and even try to *pull* him off.

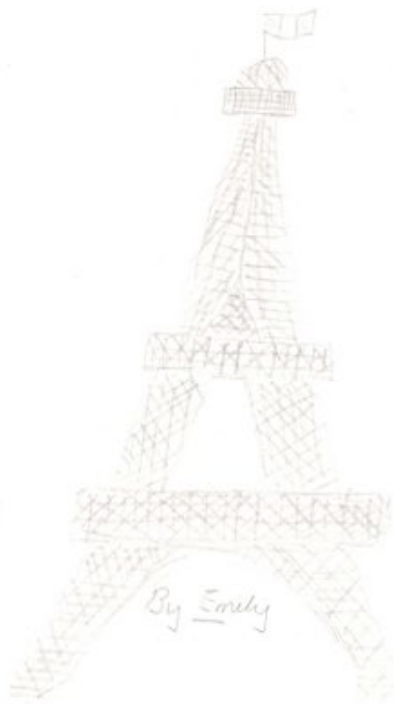
Jack sat down, pleased to be on the way back to his hotel for dinner and bed. He looked out the window dreamily. Jack had a double-take look and noticed that his parents were back on the platform looking worried. Jack watched as they vanished from view around the corner. Fat tears rolled down his face; he was in a foreign country, he could not speak the right language, he had no idea where he was going, not even what direction and he was slowly rolling away from his parents.

At the next stop he got off. That way his parents might follow him and he'd be at the right stop. But then how could he know? They might not see him and continue on. He might have caught the only train that would bring one directly to that stop. Jack tried to think positive, but he couldn't. All he could think was that he was seeing a new part of Paris. But what about his parents?

Jack went to look at the train timetable and almost cried in relief when he noticed that another train would come in a few minutes from the station he was previously on. The next train came and a storm of people rushed out and amongst them Jack could not see his parents. He slumped down to the ground and started to cry. They had probably not seen him as he had thought. They'd continued on and the train and they'd end up miles from him!

Jack sat there for what seemed like hours. He was going to have to ask someone for help. He didn't know how he was going to with his language difference. Jack had almost figured out how to communicate when he felt himself being lifted off the ground. Jack looked around in a hurry. He burst into tears at the sight of his father lifting him up and his mother looking slightly white faced, but relieved.

The next morning Jack's parents told him how they'd got out of a different door of the train and they'd taken a while to find him and from then on Jack was much more careful around trains.



A MEMORABLE HOLIDAY - by Sarah Khawaja - aged 9

Last year my family and I went to the countryside for our summer holidays. It was simply splendid.

The house that we rented was just beside a river and there were hills and a forest nearby. I used to go out with my younger sister, Ellen and my two older twin brothers, Adam and Aaron.

As soon as we'd pop our heads out the door we'd smell the sweet fragrance of wild flowers, and a cool breeze would greet us. My brothers were both adventurous and loved to explore. I was also interested in this type of stuff but for my sister's sake I didn't become a tomboy.

One day we were exploring the edge of the forest and stuffing our mouths with blackberries when suddenly Aaron spotted an orangish bird that he had never seen before (I forgot to mention he's crazy about birds). He followed it and we followed him.

After a while I realized we were lost. We tried to find our way back but couldn't. Some time passed and Adam found a narrow and small but long tunnel and he couldn't resist the temptation to go in. Aaron followed.

Ellen and I waited outside for a few minutes and then decided to go after the boys.

The tunnel was quite long. It twisted and turned. After walking for about ten minutes we saw a tiny light far away.

We both made towards it and saw... A huge field filled with buttercups all waving in the breeze. There were dozens of butterflies. Hills surrounded us. It was a valley. After a gloomy and dark trip through the tunnel this was a beautiful burst of bright colors.

Ellen and I remained dazzled for few minutes with our mouths wide open. Suddenly we saw Aaron and Adam.

We ran towards them right through the field. After a while we reluctantly went back through the tunnel and somehow found our way back.

After a couple of days we went again with Mum and took torches and a camera but we didn't find the tunnel again. Wasn't that a pity?



MY HOLIDAY TO SEA WORLD - by Saffron Maitland - aged 9

It was early in the morning when I went to the airport. It was my first time going on a plane and into an airport, so it was a bit scary.

My first stop on the holiday was going to be Melbourne. You see, there was no such thing as a Perth to Gold Coast flight, so I had to go via Melbourne. The flight wasn't bad but the food was yuck. Because I was on the morning flight, we got the breakfast meal, scrambled eggs and burnt bacon. Luckily I packed some choc chip cookies for the trip. On the plane I coloured in and watched Despicable Me.

When the plane landed in Melbourne, I went and had some lunch at McDonalds. I quickly had to get on the plane to the Gold Coast. It was a quick flight and before I knew it I was on the Gold Coast.

When the plane landed, I gather my luggage and left to catch a bus to take me to my hotel. For my entire trip I was staying at the Paradise Hotel. It was a family friendly hotel, so there were a lot of kids with their parents. The hotel had its own water park which was going to be my favourite thing to do at the hotel.

The next day I went to Sea World. It was so cool. There was an area where you could either be a pirate on the shore or a pirate in a boat. There were water cannons for you to shot. The object of the game was to get the other person drenched with water. I got so wet that I had to stand in the sun to dry.

Another thing I enjoyed at Sea World was the Dolphin Show. They were so talented. They preformed spins and flips in the air.

They also had touch pools where you could touch starfish and coral. You could go downstairs to the underwater tank, and watch all the fish, turtles and sharks swim around. I really had a great time at Sea World.

As all good things, it had to end and I had to go back to Perth. The flight back to Melbourne was quick. Before we got on the plane to Perth, we picked up some Krispy Kreme Donuts to take home.

The flight to Perth seemed quick. I was tired once I got home, so I unpacked and went to bed.



TREASURE HUNTER - by Clara Cho - aged 10

I was running towards the finish line. Capow, Bang! I was about to cross it when, “NO!” I yelled. The TV went off!

I turned back and saw my mum holding the remote control. “Billy, it's time to freshen up. I know you love video games, but you can't sit there all day long playing games!” she exclaimed.

I sighed. After what happened to dad, our family got stressed out. Mum spent more time at work instead of spending time with us, my sister Abigail got moody although she hasn't started puberty, and I have been playing more video games than ever. We all needed a holiday.

The next day, mum burst into the house. “Guys! Let's spend the holidays on a cruise,” she shouted excitedly. Abigail raised an eyebrow. We all knew mum was cheap. She would buy anything that was on sale. So we wouldn't have been surprised if what mum called “cruise” was a tiny boat. “If you don't believe me, I have an advertisement!” she showed us.

CRUISER

A perfect way to spend your holiday.

Luxurious spa, wonderful pool,

Excellent service with 3 meals.

EXTRA CHEAP!

Next morning, we went to the harbour to look for our cruise. But there was only a tiny ship that said CRUISE on it.

“That must be our cruise” “It doesn't quite fit the description on the advertisement,” mum said.

“Wait, the advertisement said CRUISER not CRUISE!” Abigail exclaimed.

But since mum already booked it, we had to go on it.

There was no spa, pool, king sized bed and the food was disgusting. After dinner I went to Abigail's room, I saw her staring into space. “What's wrong?” I asked. “Nothing!” Abigail gulped. She always gulped when she lied. “I know you're lying,” I said. Abigail pointed at the closet. Inside there was a treasure chest! Someone must have stolen it. It couldn't be the other passenger, old Mrs Green. It must have been the driver and the cook.

That night we hid behind a pot of dead flowers.

“I saw Mrs Smith wearing a gold necklace” “We have to steal it this dawn. We've robbed Mrs Green's emerald ring and the treasure, but it's not enough!” Someone whispered angrily.

Abigail gasped. The golden necklace was the only expensive thing mum had. It was also the last thing dad gave to her before he died.

At dawn, I went to Abigail's room and shook her. “What?” she muttered. “The robbers,” I whispered. She sat up abruptly. Then we got a torch and a rope. We heard the door silently creak open. I shone the torch on them. They winced. Abigail quickly wrapped the rope around them. They were scared. Abigail commanded them to bring the ship to the nearest land.

Finally, the police captured the robbers, the ring went back to Mrs Green and the necklace was safe on Mum's neck.

BUFF'S HOLIDAY - by Jessica Foreman - aged 10

Bang! Ow. Bang! Ow. Bang! Ow. Why can I not get this simple piece of wood into the wall? After forty minutes of hammering, all I have hit is my finger! And, now there is blood on the carpet, which will be extremely difficult to remove. And, cleaning I hate. So. Perhaps I need a holiday.

Beep, beep, beep! Oh dear. Why does this computer always need fixing? First, the keys on the keyboard stop working, then the mouse cord snaps, and now, for the fourth time today, the screen is having a freeze! Which is a total bummer, for I love watching Youtube and playing video games. So. I think I need a holiday.

Smash, crack, smash! Why am I so amazingly professional at knocking glasses over? This is the third one today, tenth one this week! Now I have got to vacuum, dust, tidy and clean up. And what a waste of my precious money that I never like to spend. So. Surely, I need a holiday.

Tap, click, flash! And..! Oh. I can never ever never ever take good photos. The eighth time I have used my new iPod, and all I have are a few terrible, blurry photos. Ooh! There is a big, white swan, not far out. Perhaps I can get him, and... No! Splash. I cannot believe it! My very expensive, sixty-dollar iPod is in the muddy pond. And all my important information about cabbages is on there! I definitely need a holiday.

Creek, tiptoe, tiptoe. Ah. The library. What can possibly happen in here? All shushed up and quiet, nothing disastrous can happen while reading a simple story. I mean, it is not like my book is going to spring to life and start attacking me, right? Argh! My book has sprung to life and is attacking me!... Wait, it's just an enormous cockroach. Stay calm. What? An enormous cockroach? Run for your life! That is it. I am going on holiday!

Finally. No building or hammering to do, no computers to deal with, plastic cups only, no ponds or confusing cameras, and, no giant cockroaches. Yes, I do hate spending money. But maybe just this once.

Suddenly, I notice my hand is sweaty, so I glance down to inspect why. I am holding something. Ah. A pamphlet? No way, Jose. The Pamphlet. The Pamphlet that got me out of trouble. It brought me here. To paradise. No, not paradise. To *Paradise*. But, now I am thinking, if it had not been for hammering my finger, my computer breaking, dropping my camera, my glass smashing and the giant cockroach, I would not be on holiday. Those things made me want to be on holiday. No, not want. Need. Need to be on holiday. Oh, great. I think I need a holiday. From talking! All the mistakes, fixing up re-saying to do, then having to explain it...

Why can't I get a proper holiday? From everything?

TIME TRAVELATOR - MY EGYPTIAN HOLIDAY ADVENTURE - by Tvish Iyer - aged 10

I love archaeology and ancient architecture. I would like to invent a machine that could travel from the present date into the past and the future. Then I could research ancient cities and study the lifestyle of the people who lived there.

First, I would want to see how the Great Pyramid of Giza, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World was built. So I check the timeline inside my time machine and set it to the 27 century BC.

I would arrive in the reign of a famous pharaoh named Chephren who built the Sphinx, which was carved from a single stone. This was one of Chephren's contributions to the Egyptian civilisation. I would then explore the palace near the Sphinx. One of the royal guards of the pharaoh would spot me and take me to Chephren. Chephren was a notorious king of the Egyptian empire. He would sentence me to death for lurking near the tomb. But, I would use my knockout gas and spray it on the royal guard's face. Then using my Taekwondo training (I am a red belt!), I would overpower the guard.

I would then run to my time machine praying that I can travel to the future.

But, when I reach my machine, I decide that I would like to travel to the time when Cheops (Chephren's father) was the pharaoh – so, I set the timeline to 26 century BC and voila, I would be in the reign of Cheops. One of Cheop's greatest achievements was that he built the Great Pyramid of Giza – and on his death Cheop's mummy would lie there.

I would not believe my eyes when I saw thousands of slaves digging and dragging stones to build the pyramid. (it took 2.3 million blocks to build it !)

I would see one of the seven wonders of the ancient world being built! It would be a fabulous discovery, and when I got back to the present all of this would be old! I would wish I had not forgotten my camera at home.

Wow! What a skeet (translation: amazing) adventure !

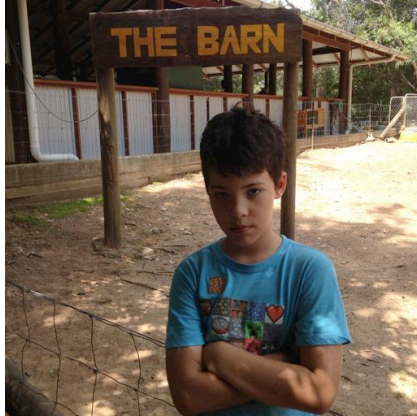
Next, I would go to Ancient Rome, or maybe Greece.



THE PETTING ZOO (A HORROR HOLIDAY STORY) - by Jack Zhouand - aged 10

How would you like to spend the first day of the holidays? Would you like to go to rock climbing or ice skating? Well, that's not how I'm spending my holidays. I am at the world's most horrible place. A petting zoo.

I begged mum and dad to go ice skating and I almost convinced them, but then they remembered they had promised to take Manny to the petting zoo. We drove in the car for two hours, the cold, freezing wind making my hair stand up like I'd been electrocuted. I couldn't believe that I was going to a place as filthy and grotesque as this when I was twelve! It probably had pigs that sat around and didn't do anything. Our beaten up Holden turned into a parking lot that stank like mad.



"Just make the best of it Jack," said mum.
"How do I do that when this place is rated 0/10 for everything?"

"Manny doesn't think that."

"But he's a 4 year-old!"

We got out of the car and the smell was even more disgusting. I took a deep breath, prepared for the worst and walked in.

It was horrible. There were slops and poo everywhere, and it was totally crowded. I couldn't believe that so many people wanted to come here! Manny and Mum started off towards the goats. My eyes looked longingly towards the ice rink as I imagined myself gliding briskly from end to end. It was only a block away. Then I had a brainwave. There was a long block of hay stacked against the fence of the petting zoo, next to the ice rink car park. Maybe if tunnelled through the hay I could reach the ice rink. It was worth a try.

"Mum is it alright if I get a quick drink?" I said.

"Only if you promise not to walk out of those gates." She gestured to the entrance.

"Sure." After all I was telling the truth. I walked a few steps towards the bubbler and then when mum had her back turned I walked to the hay and crawled in. "Here goes nothing," I muttered

I crawled through the hay, its sharp edges scratching against my face. Inside was pure darkness. I kept on tunnelling but when my head popped out I realised I'd been crawling diagonally and instead being next to the ice rink car park, my eyes were staring at cow's bottom. And then it did a poo.

It splattered everywhere. My hair, skin and clothes were covered in poo. I got up and brushed off as much of it as I could. Then, to my horror, I saw Max Jones, the captain of the cricket team and 'Mr Popular'. He was walking through the ice rink car park. When he saw me he burst out laughing, whipped out his phone and took a photo. This was the worst holiday of my life.



WE ARE ONE! by Dinethra Epa - aged 11

“There is no easy walk to freedom, and many of us will have to pass through the valley of the shadow of death again and again before we reach the mountaintop of our desires.”

When the sun hit its highest point, I packed my bag. Going canoeing was the last thing I wanted to do. Nan always said that going canoeing would give my stepsister and I different experiences, but it was just her excuse to find some really good backgrounds to paint on her canvas.

I whistled and my parrot Ring flew up to my shoulder, his sharp nails digging into my shirt.

“Herminie, Melanie, time to go!” Nan shouted. She always yelled when she was excited.

“Coming, give us two seconds, Nana,” I replied. I raced downstairs and rushed into the bathroom before Melanie. Melanie and I were always having competitions.

I knocked on Melanie’s door and called out. “Stop putting makeup on, we’re just going canoeing.”

“I think I know what I’m doing!”

“Okay, okay, keep your skin on!”

“Get out!” my stepsister stormed out of her room and put on her I’m-getting-angry face. I stifled a giggle.

“What ya laughing at.”

“Uh... uh, nothing,” I said nervously, but I couldn’t help telling the fake. “You have lipstick smeared all over yourself!”

“I don’t believe it. Get out of my sight, Herminie!”

Melanie wasn’t going to believe me or to look in her ‘Wonder Teens’ pocket mirror. So when we set off to the river, my stepsister still had the smeared lipstick on her mouth.

“Dibs the front of the canoe,” I claimed.

“That’s unfair, you had it before.”

“No, I did not!”

“Yes, you did!”

“Kids, kids, stop arguing, I shall go in the front,” said Nan.

“Fine,” Melanie and I chorused.

“But next time I get the front.” Melanie said after a bit.

Every time Nan stopped an argument, my stepsister would start a new one at the same time.

Nan let Ring come along with us. We were half way there and Nan stopped painting her canvas.

I let Ring fly around for a bit. All of a sudden the boat tipped over, Melanie and I knew how to swim but Nan didn’t. I called for Ring so he could tell where Nan was. Melanie had already swum up to the river bank and was huffing and puffing.

“Melanie, help! Nan doesn’t know how to swim,” I shouted letting a big swallow of water enter my mouth.

“There’s no time to waste,” she cried as she dived into the water like an eagle stalking its prey.

Together we helped Nan up, but unfortunately the canoe floated away with the picnic and canvas.

“If it wasn’t for you two I would have been history,” Nan thanked us.

“But how on earth are we going to find our way back?” Melanie questioned.

“Oh don’t worry about that, Ring can help us, he can remember the way home,” I exclaimed proudly.

“Oh thank God we brought him with us”” Nan replied.

Ring flew guiding us. It was about a one hour walk but we made it.

TEAMWORK was the answer.



FIRST SNOW - by Camille F - aged 11

I open one eye drowsily, and slowly and hesitantly open the other. Crossing my fingers and toes, I tip toe across the frosted wooden floor, creeping quietly like a mouse over to the window. I slowly reach my hand forward, unsure if I am ready to see what I have been waiting for. I grasp the soft violet colored curtain, and quickly yank it open. I close my eyes and focus on thinking. "Snow, snow, snow," I chant in my head," Please let there be snow!"

I finally open my eyes, one after another, afraid to see what I will see out the window. I am blinded by the sudden brightness, I can't see anything, bright colors flood my eyes. I blink rapidly and try to adjust to the sudden attack of shining hues of colors.

When my eyes finally adjust, I am filled with wonder. The entire neighborhood is filled with a blanket of fresh snow. Windows are covered in sparkling frost, trees are topped in white and the holiday lights are sprinkled festively in paper like snow. The snow adds more color and life to the bland neighborhood and its folk.

Nellie and Toby are creating a fort, Blake and Mr. Smith are building a snowman and many are taking a walk through this frosted landscape. I hesitate between running outside this instant or telling mother to get my snow gear out. My first impulse wins.

I fly down the stairs, still in my jammies, I grab the frozen door knob and run outside. I am taken aback by the cold air that slaps me in the face. Snowflakes fall and land in my hair. My toes and fingers are numb from the cold, but my mouth is smiling and my eyes are twinkling. I hear my full name being called loud and clear from the kitchen.

"Coming!" I yell back, still admiring the overnight snow.

I dash inside and rub my frozen toes across the carpet, as my body starts to heat up again. Once my senses come back, I can hear the Christmas music playing from the radio, the fire crackling in the chimney and my family's footsteps echoing off the tiled kitchen floor. I smell Dad's slightly burnt waffles and Mom's coffee brewing. I step into the kitchen as a flurry of activity whirls around me.

"Tilly," my dad calls, " Why are your toys littered around the kitchen floor? Someone could trip and fall!"

My little sister looks around in confusion then declares, " They're just having a tea party!"

My dad sighs then continues making more waffles.

My mother coos, "That's neat, but someone could get hurt so could you please move the tea party to your room?"

Tilly smiles and obeys.

I run around the house in a flurry, picking up mittens and boots, getting ready to play outside in the Winter Wonderland!

HOLIDAY IN AN UNKNOWN LAND - by Diya Goel - aged 11

After a lot of trouble, Elsa had succeeded in getting her parent's permission to go camping with her friends. On the first night of their stay, they decided to take a walk by the moonlight with just a torch in their hands. With Elsa in the lead, deeper and deeper they went into the forest.

Suddenly, Elsa came to an abrupt halt. Everyone stared, open-mouthed, at the object at which Elsa's glaze was fixed. A block of ice? Anna, one of the group members, carefully stepped forward, ready to jump back any moment. She shrieked! Frozen in the ice was a body of a boy not more than 16.

"Is he alive?" asked Lavender, her voice barely audible.

"No idea," said Padma, speaking for the first time since they entered the forest.

"Can we drag it back though?" asked Gabrielle. "Or can we try..", but the rest of the Lavender's words were drowned by a strange noise.

A strange creature stepped out, or rather flew out, from the bushes.

"What are you?" Gabrielle blurted out.

"I am..." the creature began, but Anna completed the sentence for him "- a Dongo. He changes complex situations into easy ones if he is happy. But the problem is, he usually remains angry, just like now."

Before they could start thinking what could make the Dongo happy, they heard a roar and the next thing they knew, a huge, fire-breathing animal was following them. They ran to save their lives. Elsa being the oldest of them, carried the boy-in-ice along.

The Dongo stayed close beside them. They jumped in a bush for the time being, but they knew nothing they did would keep the beast permanently awake.

They knew that only the Dongo could save them and the boy.

Suddenly, Padma brightened up. She went to the Dongo and said, "Hello. I am Padma. How are you?"

The Dongo said calmly, "You are kind. People usually come to ask for help but forget to say hello or thanks."

"Actually, we need your help, but first tell us can we do something for you?"

"No, but I will be glad to help you. What is your problem?"

"Actually, this boy is frozen and that beast is following us. Can you ease this situation for us?"

"Sure, keep your eyes tightly closed."

All of them did as they were asked. The Dongo waved his leaf like hands. "Open your eyes." He said.

After opening their eyes, everyone shouted!

But Elsa understood why. She said, "This beast will follow our command, won't it?" The beast nodded. Elsa continued, "Can you melt boy's ice for us, please?" It nodded again and took a deep breath and the ice melted.

The boy woke up. "Thank you," he said.

They all thanked the beast and the Dongo.

Then they walked back to their tent recalling the adventure they just had. After all it was a holiday they would never forget.

MY HOLIDAY SPY CAMP - by Tarni McCosker - aged 11

I am a very smart girl and am looking for opportunities that might help me get a good job later. My teacher knows this and occasionally gives me brochures full of academic events.

On the last day of school, Mrs Garratson told me that I had been accepted into the Academic Summer Camp 'Exclusive'. I was so excited. Only fifty people in the country were accepted! That camp would get me the best job ever!

When I got to the camp it looked very expensive. There were black and white building with lots of army-type courses up the side of the building. It was Awesome. I went inside and got assigned to my dorm. My dorm was on the top floor and looked like all my architecture and interior dreams combined.

After the parents left, all campers were paged to go to the main room where an announcement was about to be made. The head of the camp came up in full army uniform, medals and all. I was starting to get confused. The head stepped up and said his speech

"Campers" he said "Or should I say Cadets. This camp is not what you think it is. The army needs intelligent people. People who can go about discreetly without being suspicious, people who are sneaky and are good at planning. Who can do things no adult can do. We need You. Welcome Cadets to the Child Spy Program AKA CSP. You will do this training every year and move up ranks. You will be the greatest soldiers Australia ever had. I am General Fink and your journey has just begun."

Suddenly The chairs vanished and I found myself falling down some type of tunnel. Finally the tunnel stopped and I was launched into a room full of scientific equipment. Due to my calculations I was underneath the school. There were 4 other kids there too. A holographic letter appeared in the centre of the room telling us that we were a team on a mission to recover a stolen artifact and I was their leader.

It was exhausting. We had to scale up walls and squeeze in tight spaces. Communications were cut off most of the time and one of my teammates need CPR at the end. We recovered the artifact, which turned out another group of kids had been guarding.

We were in the infirmary for 2 hours after the mission. Most of us had more injuries than just a pulled muscle. I had a sprained ankle, broken finger and needed some stitches across my arm. Fun.

We finally got to bed at two in the morning. It was definitely one of those bittersweet days. I was exhausted and all we had got from the win was an ice pack.

You're still saying that was an okay holiday? That was just the first day. Gotta Go.

HOLIDAY FROM HELL - by Jessica Watson aged 11

I stare at Hades, not quite comprehending what he's saying. 'I think you should have a holiday.'

There is a glint to his eye and I automatically step backwards. 'You are allowed to go to the land of the living for two weeks.'

It's funny when the thing you have been hoping for your whole life - or I should say your death - is right in front of your eyes, you are suddenly reluctant to take it. A holiday. The thought is tempting. The god of the underworld stares at me, flicking his wrist.

I fall to my knees, the trees pirouetting around my head. My face hits smooth concrete and I groan, yet at the same time laugh hysterically. This is it. The world where I had once messed up enough to be sent to the fields of punishment. I twirl giddily in the second before movement catches my eye. I trust my instincts and take a hesitant step forward, then another.

It is here that I steal my first glimpse of the boy. He darts around a corner, the shriek of sirens close behind him. What have you done? Another soul wasting their life. Like me. Unafraid of death until it was before them, before I realised I would wait in agony for 60 years to get my first holiday. That's when I knew what Hades was doing. Tormenting me. Showing me everything I have lost and then ripping me away from it once more. I don't want to think about how much the world has changed, without me. No he would never give me a holiday, he would rather die. I furiously wipe a tear from my cheek.

I dash after the boy, tumbling to a stop. He hears, spinning to face me, a dagger appearing in his hand.

'Please my family needed it, I only did it to save them. I never wanted to be a murderer. I don't deserve to be haunted.'

Bah, deserve, deserve. Still my heart reaches out, takes his. 'I am a ghost, I can't hurt you.'

I shove him into a room as the police run past. Another thing about me, I lie. I can hurt him; I am just as solid as you are. 'Why'd you save me?' He stutters.

'What did you do?' He knows exactly what I mean.

'My family are poor, I was stealing medicine for my baby sister, he was going to stop me. I killed him. Why me? It isn't fair.' Fair, why does anything have to be fair?

I'll stay for the next 2 weeks. Yet I am useless when it comes to the end.

'Together?' He whispers.

Why is his time so short? Why don't the police just let him go?

'Together.' I say and clasp his hand in my own. We step into death, and run as far from Hades as possible. We bask in our stolen happiness. Maybe that's how it always is, maybe everything there is, is stolen.

OPPOSITE HOLIDAY - by Sarah Chuang - aged 12

It's probably the worst way to start your holiday. Waking up and realising your alarm didn't go off at 2.00AM and the letters 3.12AM are on your digital clock's face.

'Why didn't anyone wake me!' You squeal but then you realise you're the only one who lives in this house.

Quick! Stuff the suitcase, brush your teeth, drink your Up and Go, then jump into clothes (ANY CLOTHES), scramble to the car and press the accelerator. That's the way to get to the airport!

I'm on the plane, finally. 'Almost missed ma flight' I say to the person next to me. 'What? Stop looking at me as if I'm an idiot!'

I feel in my bag for the drink bottle, but then realise I had to empty it to get through security. 'Ahhhh, But I'm so thirsty,'

'Welcome to your international flight to Singapore. To ensure your safety...'

'Yes, yes, yes,' I scream inside. 'I've heard it all before!'

After having an argument with the belt, we finally take off. I get the funny feeling in my ears as we lift hundreds of feet off the ground. Now all I have to do is survive seven hours of my life sitting in a plane with a 'weirdo' next to me. This is going to be the best seven hours ever!

We've arrived! Yes! (That was unexpected) After a long queue for a taxi, I finally get that satisfied feeling when sitting down in one.

Unfortunately, the taxi man speaks Chinese (ONLY). 'Um Ni Hao ah, Mah? Go to the um NO-VO-TEL?' 'No-vo-tel, okay' The man says.

I arrived at Novotel. After a silent taxi trip. I found out later that the guy only knows hotel names in English because it says on a sign in his cab.

But I have an even bigger problem. It's probably not as bad as forgetting undies, but I forgot my pants.

So imagine seeing a 'pantless' man, running down the street to the nearest clothes shop, that would be me.

Laying down in a hotel bed. The most successful part of my holiday today. Imagine what my adventure tomorrow will be?



THE POACHER - by Anna Daniel - aged 12

The bronze-tipped grasses glinted golden in the sun as Bethany yawned, bored. She tugged at her mother's sleeve to try convince Mum to let her go back to the hotel, but she was shushed.

"And over there, you can see where the zebras usually gra-"

Bethany's attention turned to the cicerone when he suddenly paused in his uninteresting ramblings, an expression of horror plain on his features.

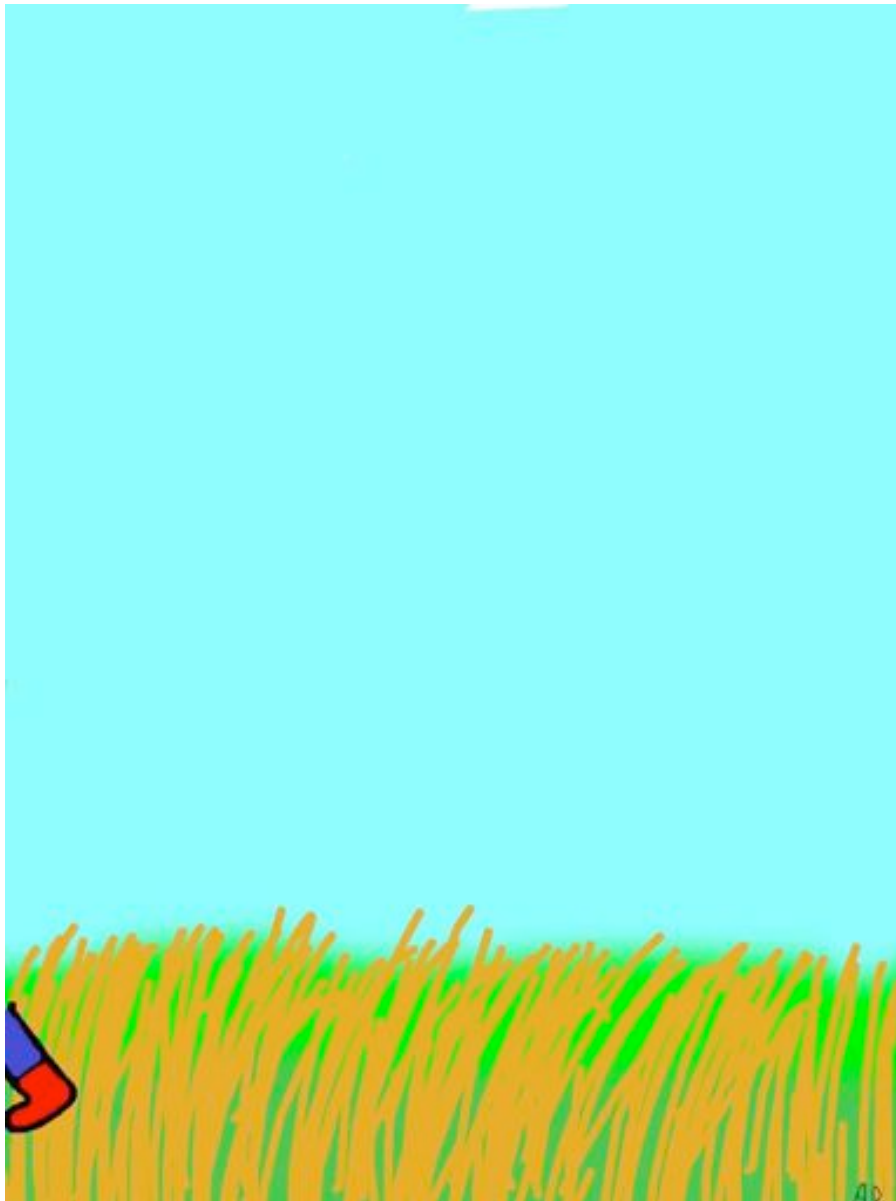
Why had he stopped? She scanned the area, her azure eyes widening in a shock that mirrored his own. It was a massacre - a whole herd of zebras had now been reduced to lifeless, glassy-eyed cadavers.

"Look! Over there!" Someone yelled out, and Bethany turned to take a peek, poking her head out of the khaki four-by-four.

She just glimpsed someone's rufescent shoe and the flash of bright sunlight off a barrel of a gun as he raced away, dust trailing in his wake.

Two guides jumped out the car and raced after the culprit. Soon the tall, African grasses swallowed them all.

What an eventful beginning to their holiday!



A CHILLY NEW YEAR - by Brooke McLean - aged 12

Chilly Frost sat at his school desk, palms up, eyes closed. The room was dead quiet. All his classmates were in the same position. New Year's Day was coming up so Mr. Stevens was planning a New Year's Talent Demonstration.

"Focus class," said Mr. Stevens. "Take your time and breathe in... and out. You need to have a clear head to make your talent work."

Almost in an instant, a little mist of snowflakes formed over everyone's hands and transformed into a glowing crystal snowflake...everyone's besides Chilly's. Chilly opened his eyes to see if his talent had worked, but it hadn't.

The teacher's eyes met his and immediately he knew the teacher wanted to see him...after class.

Five minutes later the bell rang and all the students scrambled out the classroom.

"Chilly, what happened in class? This is the fifth time you couldn't get your talent to work. Have you been practicing at home?" said Mr. Stevens with a disappointed look in his eyes.

Chilly squirmed uneasily then said, "I...I have been practicing."

"Then why didn't it work?"

"I tried but it's just so hard. Maybe I'm just not cut out for winter talents," Chilly replied timidly, hanging his head.

Mr. Stevens was quiet for a moment. He picked up a sticky note and wrote on it and handed it to Chilly.

"What's this for?" Chilly handled the note carefully. "Am I in trouble?"

"No, you're not in trouble. It's a note to Miss Mocha. She's the only person I know who can help you get the hang of your talent by tomorrow," said Mr. Stevens with a smile. "Room number 115."

Chilly quickly shoved his books in his backpack and started to head out the door.

"Thank you Mr. Stevens," said Chilly.

Chilly walked through the hallway, stopped at door number 115, and knocked. The door opened and there stood Miss Mocha.

"Hello, how can I help you?" Miss Mocha said with a smile.

"Mr. Stevens sent me down here with this note," said Chilly.

"Ok," she said, "what's your name?"

"Chilly Frost."

"Ok," Miss Mocha said, "Show me what you can do as far as talents."

"Ok," Chilly said uncertainly. He closed his eyes, put out his hands, and tried to make his talent work. Nothing.

"Hmm, seems to me that you have a rare talent," Miss Mocha said. "Here's the key: all you need to do is focus more."

Once again Chilly closed his eyes and held out his hands and focused more. This time the room filled with twinkling snowflakes and then formed into one glowing crystallized snowflake. Chilly smiled, thanked Miss Mocha, and went home.

The next day was Chilly's best day ever. Chilly was picked to do the grand finale during the Demonstration. As all the students were leaving the classroom for winter break Mr. Stevens said "Don't have a happy new year, have a -"

"Chilly New Year!" said Chilly finishing off his announcement.



I WAS ONLY 13 - by Olivia Johnson - aged 11

The sun burnt like a million hot coals being pressed on my body. The clear, salty water refreshed me.

I ran onto the burning hot sand, and into our small, beachside holiday house. I looked out at the crystal clear sea and the bright sun, cracking through a perfect, blue sky.

I texted my friend "How long till you're here, Hol?"

She replied within seconds "Not long, 'bout 5 minutes x"

I lay on the hammock, thinking.

I was awoken from my slumber by a familiar voice. "Alice!" screamed my best friend.

Before we knew it, we were in our bikinis, and in the water. I saw my mum peering at us, curiously through the kitchen window.

I had always admired Holly, and her long, brown hair and hazel eyes and beautiful freckles. I, however, was simple. Long, straight, white-blonde hair, blue eyes and tanned skin. "This" I thought "is going to be the best holiday ever."

We surfed, and surfed, until about 6. It was summer, so the sun didn't go down for another hour. We sat on our boards and talked. About anything, from boys, to food.

Then, while we paddled in, I felt something aggressively dragging me under the red, cloudy water. My head went dizzy. I couldn't feel my leg. The pain hurt so much, like 1,000 tiny stones being pelted at my body.

A red flow of water swirled around me. Blood. I knew what was happening. I was being eaten alive by a shark.

The world blurred out. I could hear Holly's high voice, screaming anxiously for help. My mind went white and blank.

I woke up, 3 days later, in a hospital bed with Holly trembling, and squeezing my hand. Her head was bowed. I grunted and lifted the white blankets.

Both my legs were gone, but I felt as I could still move them.

Well, I'm now in a wheel chair and I'm in university. It still amazes me that it all happened in a 6 week holiday break. I'm so grateful to still be alive, and to have a friend like Holly.



TWIN OR CLONE - by Purvi Malviya - aged 13

"Abby, Anny! Breakfast is ready," Mom yelled from downstairs.

I glanced at Annabeth, well, my twin. As usual, she had her baseball cap on, her football resting beside her. She was busy playing video games. I mean, we're just opposite! Aren't twins supposed to be like DITTO? Yep,

We've got the same faces but god knows why she has dyed her blonde hair black, she's a total stubborn careless brat, a geek who's always into video games and football, she isn't a social person whereas me, I'm totally popular, and girly (gotta admit). I'm outgoing and social.

The only word to describe Anny; 'annoying'. I walked down for breakfast while she ran, almost tripping me. Uhh! Look, I told you. Can't she just grow up!

I took a bite of pancake and glanced at Anny, such a pig!

"So, where are we going these holidays?" Mom asked. I opened my mouth to answer but Anny cut me off, "Texas!" She knows I hate beaches. Mom shook her head, first time she's taking my side. "This time its Abby's chance to decide, last time was yours." She explained.

"I don't wanna go anywhere. I just want Anny to change.....just for these holidays."

Dad choked some pancakes out.

I sighed and started, "We're just opposite, there's always a fuss because of it. Can't she be just like me? I mean how twins are supposed to be. Same likes, dislikes, hobbies, behaviour, choices. Then things would be perfect. I want a perfect twin's life like they show in movies."

Nobody responded. The whole day dragged on pretty awkwardly.

* * *

Next morning, I woke up to find no Anny. She was up early. I quickly had a shower and got dressed.

Downstairs, Anny was sitting in my place wearing my clothes, and she'd also bleached her hair back to blonde!

"Mom ..." I started to speak but was 'once again' cut off by Anny, "Hey Annabeth!" She spoke in the same sugary voice as mine. Someone please tell me what's going on?

"Anny, you look like Abigail!" Mom squealed hugging me. I could see Anny smirk.

"Aww, so sweet of you," Anny added with a wink.

"B-but I-I'm ABIGAIL!" I screamed, and everyone burst into laughter.

"Ahh, honey. You almost fooled me, nice try." Dad chuckled.

"What, no? She stole my life."

The whole vacation dragged on with Anny being Abby. Finally, today was going to be the last night of this nightmare.

* * *

I woke up next morning as happy as hell, I WAS GONNA GET MY LIFE BACK! I took a shower and got dressed. Annabeth had already left. Mum and Dad weren't home.

At school, I ran to my gang — Lexi, Carter, Dustin, Marcy.

"How were your holidays?" Lexi chirped.

"Totally dramatic, actually ..."

Dustin cut me off, "She looks beautiful."

I blushed, but then I noticed they were all staring behind me.

I turned around and bumped into my twin...CLONE ...to be exact.
Wasn't this deal only valid in holidays? uh oh...



LE VOYAGE - by Eva Cotsell - aged 14

Jetlagged from the 22-hour flight, I managed to hop out of the taxi which had come to an abrupt halt. I was barely out of the vehicle when it zoomed away, spraying filthy gutter water onto my pants. I took a deep breath in an attempt to calm myself. I hadn't imagined my first couple of hours in Paris would be so difficult. The airline had lost my luggage and I couldn't find a taxi for over twenty minutes, but surely it would get better.

Not bothering to try and clean my pants, I reached into my handbag for my map. However, what I retrieved was not nearly in as good shape as the map I had picked up at the airport. A soggy, unreadable mess clung to my fingers. How was I supposed to find the hotel now? Maybe I should've asked the taxi driver to drop me out the front of it, I thought But I *did* want to do some sightseeing.

I trudged over to the nearest rubbish bin to untangle the wet mess from my fingers, but I must've been so caught up in thinking about the stupid map that I tripped and fell straight down onto the concrete. My head throbbed badly. So badly, in fact, it took me a while to realize that almost every French person in the suburb had seen me fall and was staring at me in disapproval. I flushed, suddenly embarrassed, and got up wincing. I could just imagine what some of the people passing by were saying on their phones... "I just walked past this homeless lady lying on the ground staring at her hand. I swear she had gutter water on her clothes!"

Trying to rid my mind of all the nasty things these people were probably saying about me, I imagined the luxurious hotel room I had booked. All I had to do was find another map. I'd be there in no time!

I eyed a Tourist Centre on the corner and slipped in via the side door, hoping not to attract attention to myself. But halfway to the map stand a tall, burly man stepped in front of me, blocking my path. He looked furious. "Vous êtes monté sur vous mon chien de fille stupide!" I stepped back in confusion. What was he saying?!

"Ne jamais se approcher de moi ou de mon chien à nouveau!" he shouted.

It was only when he stormed off that I realised he was holding a dog on a leash. I thought back to when I had fallen on the footpath and gasped in realisation. I must've tripped over the man's dog!! It explained his angry outburst and the dirty looks some customers were giving me.

I was exhausted and frustrated but figured I was wasting time just sitting in a tourist centre sulking. So I set off, dirty, luggage-less and without a map, to find an ice cream shop.

It was a holiday after all.

NIGHTMARE HOLIDAY - by Emily Jones - aged 14

The day was like every other day sitting in class at school being bored and making faces at people across the room.

Until the thundering, ground shaking sound of a rusty hovercraft.

Bombs started falling and buildings were lit up on fire. The teacher screamed to get into an orderly line.

Everyone complied, but I knew that was the worst thing to do, I grabbed the closest people to me.

"Listen! I can get you out of here, just don't panic and never look back" I said with doubt, hoping they didn't notice. They all nodded with wide eyes. I grabbed my bag motioning them to do the same. Then ran, making sure they were all in front of me. "Don't look back, head straight for the river, I will be right back," I yelled over the sounds of screaming, fire and bombs.

"What where are you going?" yelled Chloe.

I didn't answer, just ran straight back into our classroom to retrieve my pencil case which contained the last item my brother gave me before he passed away with cancer last year.

As I make my way back to the classroom I saw dead, mangled bodies. Someone I knew was laying there, and I had to fight to stop myself from gagging.

By the time I caught up with the others my lungs were burning, I couldn't breathe, my lungs were filled with the toxins from the smoke.

I only had enough time to check who was with me. Tyson, Chloe, Kurtis, Cameron and Bailey, before I had to lead the group into a cornet bunker I found when I was exploring around this area with my dad. All I could think of then was my family. I started panicking.

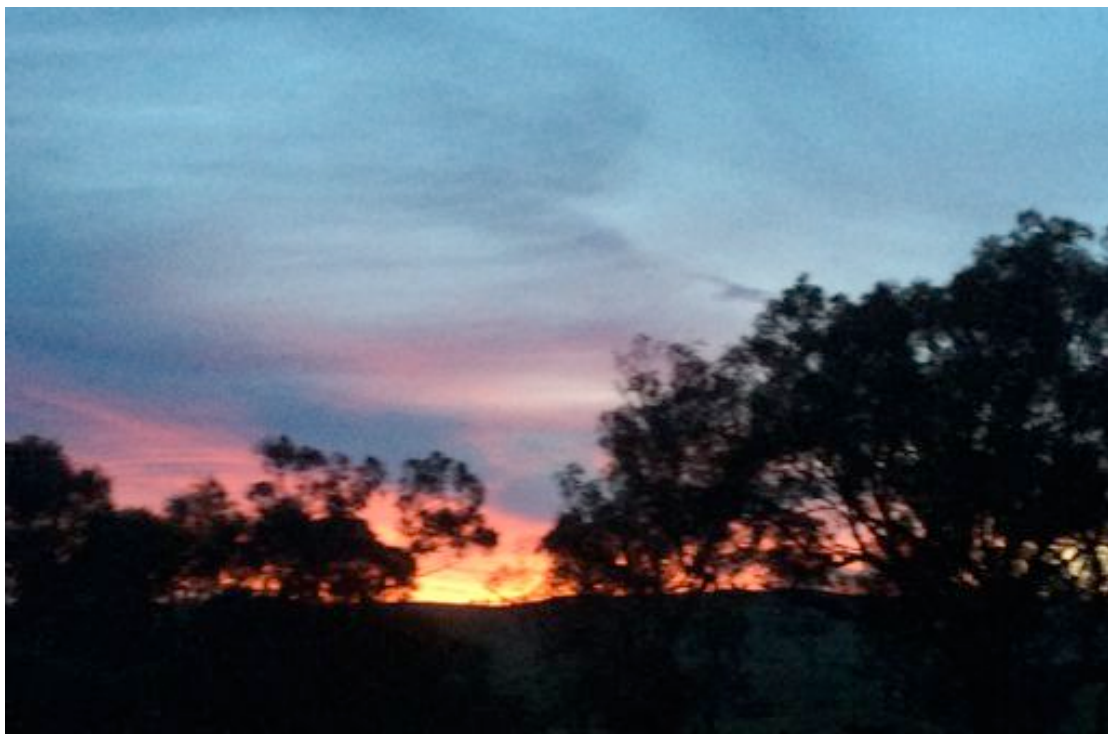
"We, we have to go, go find my family" I screamed

"Steph, Steph its okay were safe" Tyson reassured me

"Yes, yes sorry. You have two choices, go with me back to my house to collect supplies and check on my family or find your way to your families but I'm warning you its extremely dangerous if you go by yourself. If you choose the second choice, you're practically already dead." I said

I didn't wait for any replies. I started heading to my place through all the back roads and paddocks.

When I looked back the town was sky high in red blaze and smoke, at that moment I knew this was going to be one nightmare of a holiday.



EID SAMOSAS - by Fatima Abu Bakr - aged 15

Eight year-old Afsha woke up early on Eid morning. Eid is a Muslim holiday that is celebrated all throughout the world by many people of different races. Afsha was excited, she loved Eid, and it was her favorite time of the year. She leapt from her haseera, a small traditional rug for sleeping, and ran to the kitchen where her grandmother was cooking. Afsha hugged her grandmother "good morning Dada".

"Good morning beta" her Dada replied, "Eid Sa'iid (Happy Eid)".

"When are we going to make the samosas" Afsha asked.

"I am just starting them," Dada replied.

Afsha watched as Dada picked up a piece of rolled out dough, and put a small heap of ground meat fried with Indian spices on it. Then she folded the dough, and put it aside on a tray.

Soon there were many samosas on the tray, and Afsha's excitement grew. Now that Afsha was eight, Dada had promised that she could fry the samosas.

Afsha stood next to the pot of hot oil and carefully placed one after another of the samosa in to the pot. Soon a delicious aroma filled the house. Afsha thought about how good samosas were. The outside brown and golden, the inside meaty and spicy.

Her mouth began to water as she watched the samosas slowly turn from light brown to a golden brown and then a dark brown.

Suddenly the smell of something burning awoke her from her day dreams. The samosas were burnt, every single one.

She could not believe that she had just burnt all of the samosas, what would she eat for Eid? She sat down and began crying. It was all her fault, now the whole Eid day was ruined, just because of her.

Just then Dada came in, "why are you crying Afsha beta?"

Through her tears, Afsha explained the situation to her Dada.

"Don't cry over spilled milk" Dada reminded her. "First thing is to turn off the stove. We have other things to eat."

Dada came and sat next to Afsha, putting an arm around her and drawing her near. "Even though the samosas are burnt, the spirit of Eid still survives. We have other food to eat," she said, "inshAllah, we will not starve. Eid is no time for sadness and tears, and look, I have more ingredients to make more samosas inshAllah."

As Dada went to make more samosas, Afsha thought about how kind and wise Dada was.

"It is all true, Eid is not a time for being sad" Afsha smiled, and skipped into the kitchen. "Dada, can I get another chance to fry the samosas?"

TAKING CHANCES - by Amy Kong - aged 15

It's Christmas. The clock just struck twelve. Nothing has changed. What is the big deal with Christmas anyway? It's just another day. I stare at the ceiling in my dorm room all alone. Everyone has gone back to their families, but I don't feel like flying halfway across the country to go meet my new stepmother. It has only been about three months since Mom died. How could Dad go and remarry?

Unable to sleep, I get up, put on a jacket, and walk outside into the chilly air of Brooklyn ground, just simply walking. Then this man grumpily passes me by, pushing me out of his way. He stinks. His long overcoat and hat are ripped. Probably another street person trying to survive. I shake my head at the terrible state the world is in and walk on, but a sudden uproar makes me turn around.

"What's the big idea, old man?" a teenager, probably around seventeen, states. "Are you picking a fight?"

The man doesn't reply at all. He just sort of gives out another grump. The teenager shoves him. As he tumbles back and falls, a white rose tumbles out of his coat, hidden before to me. He scrambles to get it, eyes big in awareness for the first time. As if this rose is the most important thing in the world. But he's not fast enough.

The teenager picks up the rose and smirks. "Oh, this is important?" And being the cocky jerk he is, he tears it up, one petal at a time. He stomps on the stem; the old man powerless to do anything. The teenager laughs at his hurt expression. He walks away, satisfied. The crowd that has gathered disperses, leaving the old man.

He just sits there, looking at the broken rose.

I walk over and stand behind him. "Is this rose important to you?"

He nods.

"Well, how about we get a new one?"

"Lad, I have no money."

"Come on, I have. Let's get some coffee too. It's freezing."

I help him up and he willingly accepts. We talk for a bit.

"What do you do for a living?"

"Anything I can"

"Why don't you just retire?"

"Grandkids not ready to face the world yet."

"Well, where are their parents?"

"Dead, killed in a tragic accident. I took them in two days later."

"They accepted moving in with you rather quickly then."

"Yes, those young ones gave me a chance. That's what life's all about, isn't it? Giving chances. You never know what you're missing out on. They got this old man laughing again, and happy enough to work like a mule." He chuckled.

"Yeah, chances." The rest of our walk was pretty quiet. As we were getting coffee, I excused myself to make call. The voice box answered. I stared at the old man as I left a message.

"Hey, Dad. Make room for three this year. I'm coming home for Christmas."

SOME HOLIDAY - by Maryam Lahham - aged 15

I got off the boat. It was pitch black, I could only just make out the outline of the beach. The rain pelted down furiously, the waves deafened me as they crashed and roared. The motor boat hummed away into the night.

I looked up the beach. It was hard to see anything. I began slowly walking, trying to shelter my head with one hand, the other carrying my suitcase. I was frankly scared. Two nights ago I had received a message from a friend I hadn't heard from for years. He wanted me to join him in Greece, for a holiday. When I asked where, he said 'the island called Hydra. You'll find it straight away.'

So I journeyed to the small Greek island called Hydra, and now needed to find a hotel. I was counting on there being one. In fact I was counting on a lot of things, not least that it wasn't all a joke. There was an eerie feel to this place. The wind was howling, and there was thunder in the air.

I stumbled my way up the beach in darkness, panting. Where does this end? I thought to myself, rather desperately. Then I thought I saw a figure further up. 'Hey!' I shouted, 'Someone there?'

The figure didn't move. I stumbled up to it.

It was a man, wearing a dark cloak wrapped round his head and body. I couldn't see his face. 'Excuse me,' I panted, 'Can you help me? I need to find a hotel.'

In one swift movement, he threw up his hood. I staggered backwards with a cry. His face was a skull! This only happens in stories, I told myself sharply, it must be a mask. 'It's a mask!' I howled at him. 'It's a joke!'

His skull face grinned at me, and suddenly a fist collided with my face. I fell to the ground in a daze, my last thought; it wasn't a joke.

I woke up. I was tied to a chair in some dark room. I shook my head groggily, one of my eyes felt swollen.

'Hey!' I croaked out into the darkness. There was no answer. I tried to pull my hands and legs free from their bonds, but they were tied too securely. Then I heard footsteps, and a door being unlocked. Suddenly light filled the room. I was in a little sitting room, tied to one of the chairs set neatly round the table. In the doorway, stood the skull man. My heart panged painfully against my chest, as I saw him again. 'What do you want with me!' I cried.

He grinned at me, then took off the skull face. I gasped; there was my friend!

'Hi there, Arnold!' He beamed, 'April's fools day!'

'What the blazes...' I was speechless as he untied me.

'Sorry about that. Didn't mean to punch you that hard. Anyway, we will have a great holiday here!'

'Some joke!' I muttered.

HOLIDAY? NEVER HEARD OF IT - by Mary Abigail Cloninger - aged 16

According to SIRI, "Holiday" is defined as leisure time away from work devoted to rest or pleasure. If I really followed that definition, then I have never truly experienced a holiday. No matter what day, no matter what "holiday," I have never taken leisure time to experience rest or pleasure. My life is driven by stress, pressure, and anxiety. But, according to my school, we have four major holidays: Thanksgiving break, Christmas break (a total shun to all other religions btw), Spring Break, and Summer Break.

Thanksgiving break is smack dab in the middle of the debate season so all I can do then is sit, research, and write cases. My diet will consist of Red Bull, Red Vines, and Red Skittles. (No other skittles compare) Oh yeah, and my favorite color is red, can you tell? But seriously, it's not fun. Life in my home isn't giggles and sunshine. While other kids go to their grandparent's houses and celebrate Thanksgiving, I nurse my alcoholic mother and make sure she eats something.

Christmas Break isn't much better. Debate season is getting more competitive. I have to up my game so I can go to regionals, get into nationals, win, and get some scholarship money. College is just around the corner and the money these debate scholarships offer is unreal. So, I hole myself up in my six by seven square foot room and work. There is no time for friends, or any social life for that matter. It's hard but all I can think is that college will be the turning point of my life. I will leave my mess of a mother and find my own way. Become something. Become someone.

Spring break should be filled with pools and beaches. But, I'm working triple shifts at the local diner to make ends meet. It's not fun, but it's necessary.

Summer. Summer is the best time to earn a few extra bucks. Last summer I worked a total of 18 jobs. But, I made enough money to cover rent all fall and winter.

This isn't turning out to be a really happy story but it's my story. I may not have the best circumstances but I make the most out of what I have and I don't waste time on silly holidays.

No one gets to choose their lives. We are all born into different situations for a reason. God placed us into our lives to challenge us and push us to be the best people we can be. Whatever hardships you go through, whatever happens along the way. You just have to push yourself and never give up. I will continue to push myself. I will climb up hill until I reach the top. And I will reach the top. Maybe then, I will go on a holiday vacation.

