Short Story Contest

2024

*Terms and conditions apply.

Olive and Fred Robins Junior Short Story Contest is an annual programme held each October. Wellington County students in Grades 4, 5 and 6 are invited to submit original stories for the chance to win great prizes and publication of their work.

Thank you to each person who participated this year!
We hope you enjoy these creative pieces as much as we do.

Wellington County LIBRARY

www.wellington.ca/ShortStoryContest

Olive and Fred Robins

Junior Short Story Contest 2024 Winner

The Secret of the Whistling Woods

by Marwa Al Jasem, Grade 4

One autumn afternoon, young Benny Harper wandered into the Whistling Woods, a forest with trees so tall they vanished into the mist. People said the Whistling Woods were enchanted—on quiet nights, the trees would whistle, as if sharing secrets.

Benny was fascinated by these woods. He loved mysteries, and he'd heard of magical creatures and hidden treasures. Today, he decided to explore for himself.

As he stepped deeper into the woods, Benny noticed something peculiar: the trees seemed to be moving. Their branches stretched out like arms, and the leaves whispered in a language he couldn't understand. But he wasn't afraid; he felt as if the trees were welcoming him, inviting him closer.

Eventually, he came across a clearing carpeted in golden leaves. In the center stood a gigantic tree, older and wider than any he'd seen. Benny approached it and noticed a small, knotted door hidden in its bark. He couldn't resist; he gave the door a gentle knock.

To his surprise, the door creaked open, and a tiny, glowing creature peeked out. It was no larger than his thumb and had wings that shimmered like dragonfly wings. The creature wore a silver suit and a little cap that sparkled in the sunlight.

"Hello, young human," it said in a voice like a breeze. "My name is Lira. I am the keeper of the Whistling Woods."

"Keeper?" Benny asked, eyes wide. "What do you keep here?"

Lira smiled. "I keep the forest safe, and I keep its secrets hidden. Not many humans can hear the forest's call, but you, Benny, are different."

Benny's heart raced with excitement. "Could you show me these secrets?"

Lira looked around, as if checking to make sure they were alone. "If you wish to see the wonders of the forest, you must promise never to speak of them outside these woods. Can you do that?"

Benny nodded eagerly. "I promise."

With a flick of her tiny hand, Lira sprinkled gold dust over Benny's head. Suddenly, everything around him changed. The trees seemed to grow taller, their bark shimmered, and the forest floor sparkled like gemstones. He could see tiny creatures flitting about—glowing birds, shimmering insects, and small, colorful foxes with tails that glowed like fireflies.

"Wow," Benny breathed. "This is incredible!"

Lira led him deeper into the forest, where they came upon a shimmering pool. The water was clear as glass, and strange, beautiful fish swam beneath its surface, leaving trails of light.

"This is the Pool of Memories," Lira explained. "It holds every memory of the forest, from the first tree that grew here to the smallest leaf that ever fell."

Benny knelt by the pool and peered in. To his surprise, he saw visions swirling within the water—scenes of animals, plants, and people from long ago. Each image moved like a ghostly memory, reminding him the forest was ancient and filled with stories.

The pool's surface rippled, and Benny saw his own reflection. But there was something odd. In the reflection, he wore a silver cap, just like Lira's.

"What does this mean?" he asked.

Lira smiled mysteriously. "The Whistling Woods only reveal their secrets to those they trust. You may be a guardian someday, Benny, if you choose to keep the forest's secrets safe."

A feeling of responsibility settled over him. He loved the Whistling Woods, and now that he knew its secrets, he understood the importance of protecting them.

After a while, the sun began to set, casting long shadows through the trees. Lira fluttered in front of him. "It's time for you to return, Benny. Remember your promise."

Benny nodded solemnly. "I won't tell anyone."

With a wave of her hand, Lira made the sparkling world around him fade. The forest returned to its familiar, quiet state, with only the soft whistling of the trees to remind him of what he'd seen. As he made his way back home, Benny felt different—wiser, and somehow braver.

From that day forward, Benny visited the Whistling Woods often. Though he never saw Lira or the magical creatures in the same way, he knew they were watching him, and he felt proud to be the keeper of their secrets.

And on windy nights, when the forest whistled its mysterious tunes, Benny would smile, knowing the trees were whispering just to him.

Olive and Fred Robins

Junior Short Story Contest 2024 Winner

The Sweet and Salty Truce

by Gureet Virk, Grade 6

In a cozy kitchen, inside a tall, dark cabinet, two snack kingdoms lived in constant competition. On the left was the Cookie Crew, a fun group of sweet, crumbly treats. On the right was the Cracker Clan, who prided themselves on their crunch and versatility. Even though they shared the same cabinet, they could never agree on who was the best snack.

Captain Chocolate Chip led the Cookie Crew. Proud of his gooey chocolate chips, he declared, "We're everyone's favorite!" Oatmeal Raisin, the wise one, loved sharing tales of his adventures. "Back in my day," he'd say, "we didn't have sprinkles—just oats and raisins!" Sugar Cookie sparkled with colorful sprinkles and danced around, singing, "Look at me! I'm a party on a plate!" Snickerdoodle, warm and coated in cinnamon sugar, added, "We make everyone smile!" The cookies had a way of lifting spirits with their sweet personalities and delightful flavors.

On the other side was Sir Cheddar, the confident leader of the Cracker Clan. "We pair well with cheese and spreads! We're the snack for all occasions!" Saltine, the serious one, stood tall. "We're classic. No fancy stuff needed." But secretly, he loved being dipped in warm soup. Buttery Ritz was the smooth talker, always ready to charm everyone. "I'm perfect for parties," he'd say with a wink, while Wheat Thin boasted, "I'm hearty and wholesome! A real whole-grain original!"

Every night, after the kitchen lights went out, the cookies and crackers argued over who was the best. "We're the best at every celebration!" Captain Chocolate Chip shouted, his chocolate chips shining like stars. "You're just dessert!" Sir Cheddar fired back. "We're the snack for any time of day!"

As their arguments grew louder, the cabinet suddenly shook. "What's happening?" Oatmeal Raisin cried, grabbing Snickerdoodle. The cabinet shook violently, and a peanut butter jar teetered on the top shelf. "Look out!" Ritz shouted as the jar crashed to the cabinet floor, the lid popping off. Sticky peanut butter oozed out, splattering the Cookie Crew and Cracker Clan.

For a moment, all the snacks froze, staring in horror. "My buttery smoothness!" Ritz gasped, wiping at the goo. "I'm ruined!" Sugar Cookie squealed, "I'm stuck!" Captain Chocolate Chip groaned, "This is a sticky mess…"

Sir Cheddar tried to stay calm, grumbling, “We’ll be peanut butter sculptures forever if we don’t get out of this.”

Just then, Saltine stepped forward. “If we don’t work together, we’ll be stuck here forever. Let’s join forces!”

Realizing he was right, Captain Chocolate Chip sighed. “Alright, cookies, we need your soft edges. Crackers, let’s use your crunch!”

Finally, they were free! Ritz, still covered in peanut butter, took a cautious nibble of his gooey corner. “Hold on… peanut butter, crackers, and cookie crumbs? This is… AMAZING!”

The others exchanged glances and decided to give it a try too. Sugar Cookie squealed, “Oh my sprinkles! This is a party in my mouth!” Even Sir Cheddar grinned. “I can’t believe it, but this might just be the best snack ever!”

From that day on, the Cookie Crew and Cracker Clan became friends. No more arguments—just teamwork. They even held a celebration party together, mixing cookies and crackers in fun, new ways. They experimented with peanut butter, cheese, and sprinkles, creating delicious combinations that surprised everyone. Ritz, ever the show-off, grinned and said, “Looks like I was the missing ingredient all along.”

Saltine nodded with a smile. “When we work together, we can create something amazing! It’s always better to join forces than to fight!”

As they enjoyed their new snack creations, the kitchen filled with laughter and chatter. Everyone agreed that their unique flavors complemented each other perfectly. They found joy in sharing their delicious discoveries, celebrating not just their differences but also their newfound friendship.

With smiles all around, the Cookie Crew and Cracker Clan learned that in the end, it’s the joy of collaboration that makes every snack unforgettable. They cheered and clinked their crumbs together, ready to face any kitchen adventure that lay ahead.

Content published with permission by the parent or guardian of contest winners.

Authors retain full rights to their story for reprinting purposes.

Look for the opportunity to enter next year! This contest runs each fall for Wellington County students in Grades 4, 5, and 6.

Visit **www.wellington.ca/ShortStoryContest** for contest details and entry.

Wellington County LIBRARY

ALTERNATE FORMATS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.

OM Official Mark of The Corporation of the County of Wellington