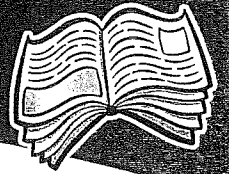




A Big Surprise



It was getting late, and Josh really needed to get home. It was almost dinnertime. His friend Katie had acted strangely all day. She was walking very slowly and was now tying her shoe for what seemed like the hundredth time. Plus, she was petting every dog they passed and chatting with all the neighbors.

“Katie, please hurry,” said Josh. “My mom was expecting us 20 minutes ago.”

“Okay, okay,” said Katie. “Everything should be ready by now anyway.”

“What do you mean?”

“Oh, never mind.”

They finally arrived at Josh’s house. Josh was afraid he was going to be in trouble, so he took a deep breath as he opened the door. The lights were off, and when he turned them on, he saw all of his family and friends standing there. “Surprise! Happy birthday, Josh!” they yelled.

He was shocked. “But my birthday isn’t until next Saturday!”

Katie laughed. “Well, that’s how we knew that throwing you a party today would really be a surprise.”

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At the Fair



There was a fair in town! Julie and her little brother, 11
Kevin, asked their mom if they could go. Their mom said 22
yes. So, on Saturday, the three of them went to the fair. 34

There were so many games and rides, they didn't know 44
what to do first. After walking around and looking at 54
everything, they decided to start with the games. Julie 63
knocked down three bottles with a ball and won a doll. Kevin 75
won a goldfish by popping three balloons. 82

Next, they went on some of the rides. They both rode the 94
bumper cars. Julie went on the spooky house ride by herself. 105
Kevin was too scared. He was not too scared to go on the 118
roller coaster, though! 121

Later, Julie and Kevin had hot dogs for lunch. Afterwards, 131
their mom said they could have a treat. Julie had cotton 142
candy, and Kevin had ice cream. 148

When it began to get dark, it was time to go home. They 161
had a great time. 165

The New Kid



Henry was watching Chris, the new boy in school, sitting by himself during recess. It was the middle of the school year, and Henry was sure Chris was feeling nervous on his first day.

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Henry knew all about that. He had been the new kid, and the first day in the new school felt like a month. Henry thought it would never end. Henry knew all Chris needed was someone to make him feel welcome.

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When it was time to choose kickball teams, Henry said, "I want Chris on my team."

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Chris turned around. He pointed to himself as if to say, "Me?" Henry nodded, and Chris ran over with a big smile on his face.

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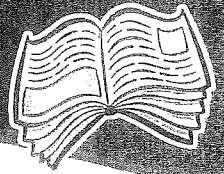
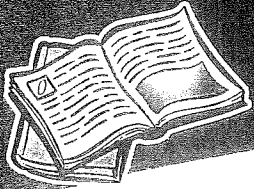
Henry said, "You can kick first, Chris. Let's see what you can do."

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When Chris kicked the ball, it went flying across the playground. He rounded the bases and scored the first run of the game. Henry gave him a high five. "Welcome to our school, Chris!" said Henry.

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The Red Maple



I woke up extra early on Saturday morning. Mom had already made breakfast, so I hurried downstairs to gobble up my oatmeal.

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“Alex, when you finish eating, we can get started,” Mom said.

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I ate as fast as I could without being rude. Then we met Dad outside. He was digging.

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“Do you want to help dig?” he asked me.

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“Sure!” I said. I took the trowel and started turning over the soft earth. Dad began un-potting the baby tree we were about to plant in our lawn.

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“This red maple will be lovely,” Mom said.

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I knew the leaves would turn a deep red color in the fall. “Do you think it will really grow to be 70 feet?” I asked.

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“Yes,” Mom said. “One day it will be. By then, you will be all grown up. You might even have your own kids.”

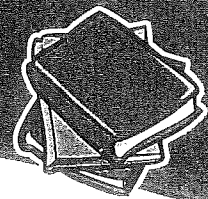
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“I want to plant a tree with my kids. That way it will grow as they do: big, strong, and happy!”

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Log Cabins on the American Frontier



If you had to, could you build your own home? People who settled the frontier did, using materials at hand. Most frontier families lived in log cabins built from the forests around them.

Fir trees made good logs for building cabins because they grew tall and straight. The trees were cut down with hand axes. The logs were cut to size by two-man hand saws. One man stood on each side, and together they sawed back and forth.

To build the cabin, logs were notched on the ends. Each log could then fit snugly on the log below. The gaps between the logs were filled with sticks and mud to keep out the wind and rain.

Compared to today's houses, log cabins were very tiny. There was usually just one room. The floor was made of dirt. Inside, a stone fireplace was built for cooking and heat.

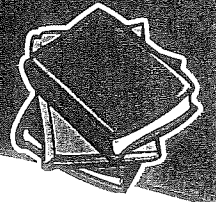
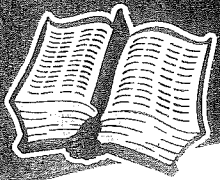
In just a week or two, one man could build a log cabin home for his family.

Who Am I?



I live so far away and shine a very lovely light.	11
The strangest thing about me? I'm only seen at night.	21
You can't see me when it's sunny, when you are at the park.	34
If you want to see my beauty, it must be very dark.	46
I twinkle, and I sparkle. From way up high, I shine.	57
Some people wish upon me and hope for things quite fine.	68
Sometimes people say I look just like a shining jewel.	78
At very late times of night, across the sky I shoot.	89
Unless you ride a rocket, I'll be oh-so-far away.	100
I'll never live on Earth with you. I'll never come to play.	112
If you ever want to see me, just look straight up in the sky.	126
That is where I live, looking down from way up high.	137
Every night you'll see me up in the sky so far.	148
By now I bet you've guessed it. That's right! I'm a star!	160

Deserts



People think deserts are always covered in huge sand dunes. Some deserts are like that, but others can be very different. Deserts can be barren, rocky, and located in the mountains.

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A desert is any place that is very dry. There is very little rain in a desert. Some deserts have no rain at all for many years. Deserts have very low humidity. Humidity is water vapor in the air.

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Most deserts are hot during the day, but they can be very cool at night. Deserts cool off at night because the air is dry. Dry air does not hold the heat from the day.

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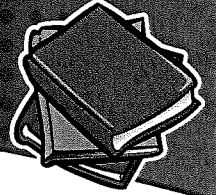
Not many plants can grow in a desert. There isn't enough water to allow plants to live. It's also hard for most animals to live in a desert. There isn't enough water for them to drink. There may not be enough plants or other animals for them to eat.

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However, there are some animals that can live in deserts, such as snakes, toads, birds, and mice.

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Wetlands



Wetlands are part land and part water. They can be found	11
in low areas along the coast and inland. The water in	22
wetlands is shallow. Salt marshes near the ocean are wetlands	32
fed by the tides. Swamps are a kind of wetland far from the	45
coast. Swamps are fed by rivers and streams or water from	56
underground. The water in them is fresh.	63
Wetlands are home to many types of animals. You can	73
find hundreds of species of birds, insects, and fish there.	83
Shrimp, clams, and crabs find food in saltwater marshes.	92
Ducks and geese rest in wetlands during migration.	100
Alligators live in freshwater swamps. Beavers, muskrats,	107
and mink also make their homes in inland wetlands.	116
Some plants are found only in wetlands. The lotus and	126
water lilies grow in fresh shallow water.	133
Wetlands benefit people, too. They protect cities from	141
storm floods. They soak up the flood water like a sponge.	152
Inland wetlands help clean the water that runs through them.	162