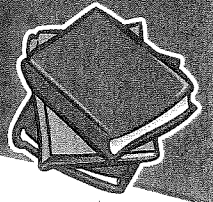
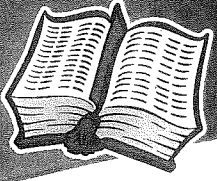


Dolphins



People have always loved friendly, playful dolphins. Many have seen their acts in amusement parks. They are smart and easy to train, but they are also playful in the wild. They often follow boats to ride in their wakes. They love to leap and can jump 16 feet in the air.

Bottlenose dolphins are the most common dolphins in American waters. They get their name because of the shape of their noses. Males can be as long as 13 feet.

Dolphins are very social. They swim in groups of about a dozen animals. These groups are called pods. Bottlenoses talk to each other through squeaks and whistles. They can hear each other for miles. They also work together when hunting small fish.

Dolphins are mammals, which means they breathe air. They also give birth to live young. Females give birth every two or three years. Their babies are called calves. Mother dolphins and calves have close bonds. The mothers stay with the calves for years.

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The Great Millie



Millie moved the yo-yo side to side. She whispered, “You are getting very sleepy.” She watched Sara’s eyes follow the yo-yo as it went back and forth. Soon, Sara’s eyes were shut.

“Sara?” said Millie. “Are you asleep?”

Sara said nothing.

Millie let out a gasp. She had seen the Great Zambino do this trick on TV, but she didn’t believe it would really work!

“Sara, hop on one foot,” said Millie. Sara began to hop.

“Okay, now tap your head.” While still hopping on one foot, Sara tapped the top of her head. Millie giggled.

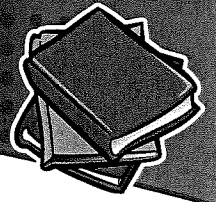
Millie couldn’t wait to tell Sara that the trick had worked. She remembered that all she had to do was snap her fingers to wake Sara up. She snapped, but Sara did not wake up. Millie kept snapping, but nothing happened.

Millie cried, “Oh, no! I’ve turned my best friend into a zombie!”

Just then, Sara laughed. “Oh, Millie, I’m not a zombie. I told you that silly trick would not work.”



California Gold Rush



Before 1848, few people lived in the West. That changed fast when gold was discovered in California. It was first found at a place called Sutter's Mill. People became interested in searching for gold.

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By 1849, word had spread. Thousands came to California from around the world to get rich. They came in ships and by covered wagons. The Chinese called it "gold mountain," and many came to look for it. Others came from Mexico and Europe. Of course, Americans came from the East.

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Some people did get very rich in the gold rush, but others lost everything. Native Americans were driven off their hunting lands. Many of them were killed. Small farmers were forced from their farms.

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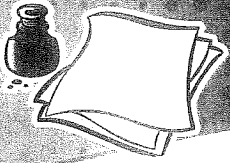
Most who came did not get rich. But many stayed and built homes and businesses.

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The gold rush had a lasting effect on American history. Almost overnight, small towns became big cities. Roads were built, and transportation, from railroads to ships, improved. People began to think of America as spreading from coast to coast.

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Thunderstorms



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|--|-----|
| My little sister is afraid of storms. | 7 |
| She hides under her covers and hums a song. | 16 |
| She won't come out until the noises have stopped. | 25 |
| The rain's patter and the thunder's pop. | 32 |
| Last night we had another big one. | 39 |
| Dark clouds came and thunder boomed. | 45 |
| I wanted to help her get over her fear. | 54 |
| I told her she's safe inside when lightning is near. | 64 |
| "In the house you stay warm, cozy, and dry. | 73 |
| You don't need to worry," I told sister today. | 82 |
| Our roof is strong, and these walls are, too. | 91 |
| The lightning and thunder cannot get through. | 98 |
| "I know that, Brother," she said back to me. | 107 |
| "I'm safe inside, but I cannot be happy | 115 |
| When the animals outside are getting all wet. | 123 |
| They are shivering and cold. That I cannot forget." | 132 |
| "Sister, animals are smarter than you think. | 139 |
| They have thick fur and places to stay. | 147 |
| The squirrels and birds hide in our old oak tree. | 157 |
| While you worry about them, they throw a party!" | 166 |



Turning Eleven

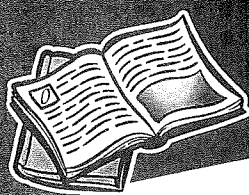


I used to hate running, but since my birthday, all that has changed. On the day I turned eleven, our gym class had to run a mile. 12
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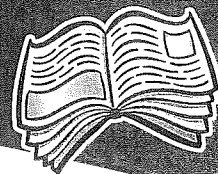
The teacher stood outside on the dirt track with his timer. He even said, “On your mark, get set, go!” The fast kids bolted ahead, as always, and I started jogging with my best friend, Sam. 38
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Last year, we had to walk by the fifth lap, but on my birthday, I felt pretty good—no pain in my side. By the seventh lap, Sam had to rest. I told him I would walk, too, but Sam wanted me to keep going. I did. 76
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I ran that whole seventh lap. By the time I got to the eighth lap, I felt pretty good. My side felt fine, and I could still breathe easily. I even ran as fast as I could for the last half of that lap. I came in third out of our whole class. Now I love running! 123
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A Scary Tale



One day, Jesse stayed late after school to help his friend Bobby with his math homework. Afterward, he decided to take a shortcut through the woods to get home in time to see his favorite show, *Scary Tales*.

Walking through the woods, Jesse started feeling a little scared. The woods were pretty dark.

Suddenly, he heard a twig snap. He stopped walking. “Is...is somebody there?” Jesse asked. He was relieved when a small rabbit hopped out in front of him. Jesse smiled.

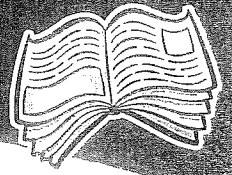
His smile disappeared when he heard a howling sound. Soon, he realized it was only the wind and laughed at himself.

When he felt a tap on his shoulder, he jumped high in the air and screamed. He turned around to see Bobby standing there.

“I didn’t mean to scare you, Jesse. You forgot your math book. I wanted to get it to you so you wouldn’t miss *Scary Tales*.”

Jesse laughed. “Thanks, Bobby, but I think I have had enough scary tales for one day.”

Riptide



The waves crashed down on the sand, making the ground shake. The lifeguards were making everyone stay close to shore.

Jonah was at the beach with his big brother, Mike.
“Hurry,” Mike said, “Let’s get wet!”

Mike dove through a crashing wave. Jonah took his time. The water was cold even for a hot day. Finally, he took a deep breath and slipped under a wave.

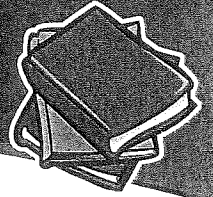
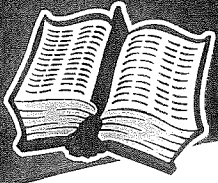
When he came up, Jonah floated on his back for a while. Then he swam a bit. When he looked back, the beach seemed far away. Suddenly, he knew the tide was carrying him away from shore.

He tried to swim back, but it was really hard. He was being pulled out to sea. The next thing he knew, someone threw him a float. It was a lifeguard. He towed Jonah to shore.

Mike was waiting for him. “It was a bad riptide,” the lifeguard said. “You’re lucky your brother saw you out there.”

“Let’s go home,” Mike said. “We’ve had enough excitement today.” Jonah thought so, too.

Snakes



- Many people are afraid of snakes. Some think they are slimy, but snakeskin is really dry. Some snakes do have poisonous venom. Even so, many snakes are very helpful. 10
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- Garter snakes are good to have around. They feast on slugs that eat garden plants. Larger snakes eat bigger pests, like mice and rats. Others eat insects that can spread disease. 39
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- Only a few snakes in the United States are dangerous. Rattlesnakes are one of them. We know them best for the rattles at the end of their bodies. But they are also unusual in another way. Rattlers have a heat-sensing organ. It allows them to find prey even in the dark. 70
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- The coral snake is another one to steer clear of. This colorful snake has red, yellow, and black bands. It looks very much like the harmless king snake. Only the order of the colored bands is different. 123
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