



THE ADVENTURES
OF THE 7TH
GRADE MIND

I am an Author

AZUL TERRONEZ & THE 7TH GRADE
CLASS OF 2011
HIGH TECH MIDDLE

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated all of the writer's workshop students that I have had over the years who have taught me that the only way to become a writer is to write. I am infinitely grateful for the mentor teachers that have inspired me to find the writer within each person. Everyone has a story to tell.

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30	The Scary Prank	Pg 142
31	The Adventures of Incredible Man and Inferno	Pg 144
32	A New Beginning	Pg 149
33	My One Christmas Wish	Pg 160
34	Survival	Pg 165
35	Runaway	Pg 171
36	My New Job	Pg 174
37	The Death Threat	Pg 176
38	Wanted	Pg 181
39	Last Hope	Pg 186
40	The Robbery	Pg 190
41	The Scariest Day of My Life	Pg 192
42	Marooned	Pg 194
43	October	Pg 210

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This collection of stories is a result of hundreds of hours of writer's workshop. The students have come to love writing, mainly because they are allowed to write about any topic of their choosing. By design, the nature of workshop writing relies on self reflection, peer critique and coaching from the teacher. It seems fitting that we should share the students' favorite pieces with the world. This book is written and edited completely by students. This collection of essays exemplifies the pieces that the authors feel are the best representation of their work. I am honored to be working with such a talented group of writers. I am proud of the work they have created. I hope that each of the students would say; "I am an author."

--Azul Terronez, 7th Grade Humanities, High Tech Middle, 2011

2 THE HUNT

Ellie

A silvery cloud drifted above the steep mountain peak. Fog swirled low to the ground, hiding my bare feet from view. I crept silently through the brush, keeping a wary eye out for dangers. A bow was slung across my shoulder, an arrow rested in my left hand. Up ahead, the dense black jungle loomed over the hillside, casting long, jagged shadows beneath the milky moon. I was silent on my feet, sprinting towards a clearing of immense bracken ferns and coal black soil. I plopped down onto my stomach, elbows pointed in a stance to pop up and run. I heard a faint rumble as the ground vibrated and several wild dogs howl, a sheer sound that pierced the night, sending chills down my spine. I do not fear the dog for in a way I am one. Both creatures of the night, both practiced hunters. Yet, the thought of a pack of hungry canines racing through the night like silver darts, would disturb the mind of anyone, from the bright macaws in the high limbs, to the clever snakes that slither through the underbrush.

I prowled through the tall ferns, a slight rustling noise disturbing the eerie silence that now took place. The front strands of my long, black hair were braided around the side of my head, joining at the back and blending into the cascade over

my deeply tanned shoulders. I could hear them. The steady breathing of the herd of deer. All the elder deer were protecting the weak fawn that rested peacefully. I dared go any closer. Another sharp howl bounced off the gargantuan trees of the jungle, this time awakening the herd. Several deer raised their heads in wonder. I figured it was now or never. I charged forward, raising my arrow, and shouting. I ran for the fawn, the only vulnerable one. The rest of the deer were ushering it forward in a slightly brutal manner. I knew this wouldn't be easy. Jumping over jagged stones and other obstacles, I found myself on the trail of my prey. I shot my arrow, narrowly missing its target, brushing the side of the fawn.

After what felt like an eternity, the herd had climbed up the steep rocks at the peak of the mountain, where a human would have a hard time reaching. I gasped for air, as I was nearly drained of energy. I drank from a leather flask and savored the cool, refreshing taste of spring water. I decided this hunt was over and I would return for more in the near future. Exhausted but not discouraged, I began the long journey back home to my village, in the heart of the Himalayas.

3 THE EVENING OF THE SEVENTH

Richei

The goddess sat alone in the stars, carefully weaving the clouds with her delicate hands. She waited until the day she could visit the earth again.

Vega was the daughter of Tentei, the ruler of the sky. Every day she would weave the beautiful clouds in the sky that keep the world of the gods hidden from the humans. One day she kneeled by the river that divided the humans from the gods. She sat there crying into the river as she cried her tears flowed down the river carrying her tears to the mortal world causing all of China to rain. Her father forbid her to have any friends. He had said that if she had any she would eventually neglect her duties and abandon her job.

One day Vega walked into her father's throne room. "Vega, what is wrong my child?"

"Father, I want to have friends. Every day I am lonely and sad and I see the humans on the other side of the river and I see their lives with joy and laughter."

"Vega, you have important duties here, if you neglect your duties the godly world will be visible to the mortals."

"I only wish to have a friend."

"I will hear no more of this."

"But father, I promise I will not neglect my duties!

You cannot keep me locked here forever!"

"ENOUGH!"

The sky rumbles as Tentei's voice projected all through the heavens.

"I will hear no more of this, if I ever discover you lurking in the human world you will be forbidden to ever leave this palace spending all of eternity weaving the clouds."

"Yes...father"

That night Vega shrouded herself in the clouds as she floated down the river into the mortal world. She then tripped and fell and a kind man helped her up.

"Hello there miss."

"Oh I'm sorry I wasn't looking where I was going."

"That's alright would you like to come to the festival with me?"

"What festival?"

"Today is the Qi Xi festival celebrating the stars."

"Of course I would like to come with you, what is your name?"

"Altair and you are?"

"I am Vega, the weaver of clouds."

Vega and Altair were fast friends, they made each other laugh and filled each other's lives with happiness. Her father

didn't even realize their bond until the day the clouds stood motionless.

Then one day, Tentei followed Vega to the river. He looked down upon its reflection and saw her with a simple cow herder and grew furious. He then descended from the sky. Lightning cracked and thunder boomed as he step foot on the ground.

"How dare you defy me Vega!"

"Father, please do not harm him."

"From this day forth you shall never step foot away from the palace again! You shall spend an eternity weaving the clouds." Tentei, using his enormous strength, willed the river to rise and come crashing down in between them and disconnected its link to the human and godly world.

Seven months past and the day of the Qi Xi festival arrived. Vega longed for Altair, as she sat looking down upon earth. Then a small bird flew by and took pity on the lonely goddess. The small bird then called its brethren and created a bridge in between the river reestablishing its connection to the mortal world for only one day.

The evening of the seventh is based on the Chinese Tanabata festival, celebrating the day when the goddess Orihime and Hikoboshi, a simple cow herder, met. Her father Tentei the ruler of the sky prevented them to have a relationship and separated them with an endless river

otherwise known to the Chinese, the Milky Way. This was the Chinese interpretation of how the Milky Way was formed.

4 BURNT MEMORIES

Ana

Smoke burned my throat. I longed for fresh air, but found none. I had to get out of here or else I was dead. My eyes burned because of the ashes and I whipped my arms blindly around me, hoping I'd find the door that led outside. I tried to open my eyes to catch a glimpse of something, anything, that would save me, but found it impossible. I was losing hope; I was going to die alone except for the white-hot flames lashing out at me. Visions flooded my brain, first my room, with my neat bed and blue covers, my desk and my belongings splattered all over the place. Then I saw the family room, with books and board games placed neatly in alphabetically order on the spotless shelves. Lastly, I saw my family, my parents standing proudly with their crisp new clothes and trimmed hair that matched their personalities perfectly. My sister with her perfect blond hair and gleaming smile that never left her glowing face. My brother, so easy going and perfect, his friendly smile shining in the sunlight. And then there I was, looking alien next to this perfect family, my short dark hair with purple highlights completely blocking my left eye from view. I knew every family had it's flaw, and I knew I was my family's. I had always been the rebel. That was the

reason I was on my knees right now, hopeless and ready for the worst. Because I had refused to go eat dinner with them.

Something was burning my skin. Something that felt just like... a doorknob. I turned it sharply, ignoring the pain, heard a small creak and ran outside, into the cold, dark night. I didn't have any place to go to in mind, but I knew I had to flee. I ran until all that could be heard in the silent night were my footsteps and heavy breathing, not the crackling flames that haunted my house. I stopped and tried to calm myself, I had to think of somewhere to go, a place to stay, a place with water. I racked my brain ferociously for a place that would satisfy my needs. The lake! It had water, bushes that would provide eatable berries and there was a cabin too! But how was I supposed to find the lake when I was half blind? Concentrate! I told myself, you can quit and just stay here until someone finds you or you die. I winced at the thought, I was no quitter! Or, you could try and open your eyes again and look for the lake. It seemed unlikely, rather impossible that I would quit that easily or that I could make it to the lake half-blind. "Okay." I whispered, "Here I go." I balled my fists, took a deep breath and opened my eyes. Pain shot through me and I screamed in agony.

Trees surrounded me. Everything was blurry, the lights seemed to expand themselves and I could barely make out the shapes of tree trunks, but I could see. The pain had subdued and I was used to the uncomfortable feeling of opening my eyes after

sleeping. I had been searching for the lake for what I guessed had been 3 days, comforting my empty stomach with berries I gathered from bushes and drinking what little water I found to comfort my aching throat. But what pained me the most were my memories. I longed to see my family. The one I had thought I hated. The one I had thought I didn't belong to, and maybe I didn't but I loved them and they loved me, I just hadn't truly appreciated that until now; now that I was lost. The only thing pushing me forward was the thought of finding my family, my perfect family.

5 THE MAN WHO HAD NO LUCK

Julio

There once was a man named Joe Smithy, aged 24. He was going through a period of his life in which he had no luck. First, some construction workers blocked both streets were he usually goes through, Joe asked, "Why are you blocking both my means of transportation?" The workers said, "Well we want to get both streets done quicker!" Joe couldn't argue with this and went along with life. Then, a comic book geek came and attempted to steal his, now-rare, Marvel Legends action figures. Joe said "Stop right there thief!" the geek replied "But I have been searching for these figures for months!" Joe, feeling a little sorry for him but angry on the inside, decided to give the geek his figures. Just when things couldn't get any worse, Joe finds out about PlayStation Network being disabled by hackers. Joe had enough of this bad luck, so he then searched Google and found that there was a lucky god named Soahc (pronounced so-a-ick), so he went on a journey to find Soahc who is located in Bronson Cave, Hollywood. Joe then traveled by train, by foot, and by car to Bronson Cave (where a movie is being shot there, as usual). He finds Soahc sipping a glass of fountain water, Soahc then notices Joe and asks "Who goes there?" Joe makes a reply by saying "Joe Smithy." Soahc continues "What brings you here Joe Smithy?"

Joe answers, "I came here to ask you to cure my bad luck." Soahc then said, "Ah! So we have a common customer!" Joe replies, "Yes, now could you tell me how to get rid of this bad luck?" Soahc then gave some advice, "Alright, if you let people do what they want, you will get something good in return." Soahc then disappeared in a puff of smoke. Joe whispered, "do you know that is basically karma?"

Joe then went on a journey home and found that his streets were not blocked off, brand new Marvel Legends figures, and PlayStation Network back up and running. Truly, Joe has finally found some luck after all, thanks to god Soahc.

6 JEFFRY THE COW

Alex

There once was a cow named Jeffrey and he liked meat but it was weird because he is meat so he was sent to cow jail and was never allowed to leave ever. One day Jeffery had a visitor.

"Hey Jeff my boy how's jail?" asked his father. "Well it's not fun I wake up at 6:30 and it smells like old cheese but I think that I'm getting used to the smell," said Jeffery. "Well we miss ya back at the farm," said his dad. "There is a lot of weird stuff around here like my jail cell at night smells like flowers and sometimes I here encouraging 80's music," said Jeffery confused. "Well that's very odd I think that might be your imagination but maybe the cleaning guy uses flower spray to make the jail smell nice and likes to play encouraging 80's music," said his father. "I hope that one day someone can get me out of here and I can go home to Junebug and uncle Buckey but they say that it will be a long time until I get out of here," said Jeffery in a sad voice. "Well son my time is up, I gotta go so see ya next month, OK, bye," said his father. A month went by but his father never showed up.

"Gee I wonder where on earth he could be? He should have showed up by now, well there is always tomorrow," he said. Three days went by and still his father had not shown up.

"I think there might be something wrong down at the farm," he said nervously.

"Hey Jeffery come and meet your new roommate," said the police officer.

"Okay!" he said excitedly.

"Jeffery this is Mike, Mike this is Jeffery," said the police officer.

"Hello Mike," said Jeffery about to high five him.

"I don't do childish things like high five," said Mike.

"Okay. Then, um, so what are you in for?" asked Jeff.

"Well I don't think someone like you can handle it. Well moving on what are you in for, not paying your parking ticket on time?" he said laughing.

"No I like to eat meat," he said.

"Meat? Aren't you and me meat?" he said terrified.

"Ya but I have been trying to eat vegetarian," he said.

"It's hard sometimes when I just can't stand being vegetarian but I'm managing," Jeff said.

"Well I have been in here for 2 years. How long are you supposed to be here?" asked Jeffery.

"I forgot how many, all I know is that I will be here for awhile," said Mike.

It was the 26th of the month which is the is the day that his father usually comes to visit but for the last three months he has not shown up so he was not expecting him.

“Hey Jeff you have a visitor,” said the police officer. “Me? I have not had a visitor in three mouths is it my dad?” asked Jeffery.

“No some kid named July Bug or October Bug or a..”
“JUNEBUG!”

“Uh ya Junebug. SEND HER IN!!” yelled the police officer. See Junebug was Jeff's best friend and they hadn't seen each other in years.

“Junebug is that really you?” asked Jeff exited as ever. “You bet your darn tut-in I am! It feels like forever since I saw you,” said Junebug.

“1095 days, 13 hours, 15 minutes, and 45 seconds - sorry 46 seconds,” said Jeff.

“Well that's fantastic I guess when you're in prison you keep time,” said Junebug.

“So how is Pop, I have not heard from him in 3 months?” said Jeff.

“Well we were hoping you would forget about Pop because um..” said Junebug waiting for Jeff's response.

“Tell me now what is wrong!” Jeff demanded.

“Well he was injured pretty bad, “ said Junebug.

“What... what happened?” asked Jeff.

“Well some kids were going to pull a prank on the farmer by pushing the cows over and they pushed everyone over and when they got to your father he tried to stop them but then they got him. He rolled down that hill that we used to roll down when we were kids and broke all of his legs and lost some of his memories and I guess he forgot to come,” said June bug.

“Well does he remember me?” asked Jeff. “Ya I think so, I will bring him in to see you,” said Junebug. “Well those kids were sent to kid jail but that's all I heard,” said Junebug.

“Well Jeff I have to go... I will see you soon OK,” said Junebug.

“Ya well it was great talking to ya,” said Jeff.

(7 months later) “Hey Jeff, good news someone bailed you out, “said police officer.

“What are you telling me the truth?” asked Jeff.

” Yes I am,” said the police officer happily.

”Who bailed me out?” asked Jeff.

“I don't know they didn't say their name,” said the police officer.

“Oh that's OK as long as I'm out,” said Jeff.

“Well here you go,” said the police officer.

“What is all this stuff?” asked Jeff.

“This is what you had when you got here 3 years ago,” said the police officer.

“What do I have?” asked Jeff.

“A cell phone, wow you have 8,550 missed calls and 3,000 text messages - that's a lot! You also have a ring that says ‘cow’ on it and lastly a T.V. remote. Why a T.V. Remote?” asked the police officer.

“I don't know but JEEEEZZZ that's a lot of calls,” said Jeff.

“You must have been a pretty popular guy,” said the officer.

“Well maybe,” said Jeff.

“ It's time to go Jeffery,” said the police officer.

“OK this is going to be fun,” said Jeff happily.

He had finally gone home and when he arrived something bad was waiting for him.

“I'm home!!!” said Jeffery excited.

“Jeff you're home why?” asked uncle Buckley.

“Well someone bailed me out,” said Jeff.

“It's great your home we have terrible news though,” said uncle Buckley sadly.

“What is it?” asked Jeff.

“Your father has well...passed,” said uncle Buckley.

“Oh my gosh that's terrible. How did it happen?” asked Jeff.

“Well he went to the hospital because he was complaining about his head and his stomach so we took him to the hospital and about 17 or 18 hours ago he died. His last words were and I quote ‘tell Jeff to make sure the farm is still working’ ” said uncle Buckley.

“When is the funeral?” asked Jeff.

“In a week but until then he is in the farmer's shade.” said uncle Buckley.

(3 days later) “JEFF!!! Come here,” yelled uncle Buckley.

“What's the matter?” asked Jeff.

“It's your father, his body is missing,” said uncle Buckley.

“What? Why would it be gone?” asked Jeff.

“Well look for yourself,” said uncle Buckley.

“Oh gosh he really is gone,” said Jeff terrified.

“ I wonder who took him?” said uncle Buckley. After awhile of searching they could not find out who took him but then there was a glimpse of hope. “Well I guess you're going to have to have the funeral without him because there is no sign of his body anywhere,” said the police officer.

“Well I guess we could, but, what do think we should tell Jeff he was the closest to him,” said uncle Buckley.

“Well just go on ahead with the funeral and we'll take care of Jeff OK?” said the police officer.

“Okay we will,” said uncle Buckley.

“This Saturday I know the church is open,” said the police officer.

It was Saturday and they still did not know where his body was, the only thing they knew was that the funeral was on Saturday.

“Well let's start,” said Junebug.

“WAIT!!!!” shouted the police officer.

“We found him!” he shouted again.

“Where was he?” asked Jeff.

“Under the hay stack in the horse stable,” said the police officer.

“Oh my goodness that's great news, the funeral will include Jeff's father now,” said Jeff mom.

“Well now that we have him let's start the funeral, “ said Jeff.

The funeral was as planed and everyone was sad but happy that Jeff wasn't in prison and his father was properly buried. And, that's the story of a cow named Jeffery.