



Winning, Highly Commended &
Commended
Entries

8-11 (Junior) Age Category

The 17th Elmbridge Literary Competition 2022

Enigma

The disappearance of Agatha Christie, the Mona Lisa's smile, Banksy; These are some of the most famous, sometimes infamous, enigmas in history. Whether it's the Mary Celeste's missing crew, the Famous Five exploring a treasure island or the nasty thing lurking in Cold Comfort Farm's woodshed, mysteries have always fascinated us. For the 2022 Elmbridge Literary Competition, The R C Sherriff Trust and Elmbridge Borough Council were looking for short stories and poems that unravel riddles, disentangle conundrums and resolve enigmas.

Following the success of 2021's 'Music', The Elmbridge Literary Competition was once more open to national and international submissions. Run in partnership between The R C Sherriff Trust and Elmbridge Borough Council, is open to all ages.

2005:	Cook Up A Story
2006:	On My Way
2007:	A Life In Colour
2008:	Once Upon A Time
2009:	A Symphony of Life
2010:	The Elmbridge 100
2011:	Breaking The Barrier
2012:	A Dickens of A Christmas
2013:	One Act Radio Play
2014:	Dear Diary
2015:	Flights of Fantasy
2016:	Love
2017:	Luck
2018:	A Shiver Down The Spine/Things That Go Bump In The Night
2019/20:	New World
2021:	Music

Category: Short Stories

1st Place: The Enigma of The Lake

Sasha Sinclair

Herbert scraped plastered hair from his face. Gust after gust. The power of the wind poured in. Rain showered down in little, icy needles. The cold stung his face. With one final splash, a mountainous wave loomed in front of the boat. The sky was a battle.

His hands were torn from the railings, his whole body flung from the ship. The last thing Herbert saw was the boat. Capsized. Sinking slowly. Then the white foamed waves consumed the wreckage.

A ghostly shape snaked its way through the murky water. As he went under again, a fiery, burning sensation sizzled in his lungs. The he saw a gleaming eye, pearly silver teeth and emerald jewelled scales.

Herbert's mind flicked back to the present. He stroked his beard thoughtfully. His battered face told a million stories. Most of all his shiny grey eyes told the tale of the Loch Ness monster. Nessie.

A portly man with a bald head glinting with rain stumbled through the entrance. "Oi!" he exclaimed. "The one with the beard!"

"Yes?", Herbert answered, shaking the thoughts from his mind.

"It's Chris P. Bacon", the man shook his hand vigorously. The man held a map and a lumpy rucksack. Herbert grimaced. Tourists curious to hear his tale.

"Herbert Lemon", he replied blankly.

The visitor began to question Herbert at length about Nessie, as the resident expert on the subject.

"Tell me all about her?", the man pleaded, thrusting two twenty pound notes at Herbert.

"They say she has deadly venom?". Herbert paused.

"And the breath of fire?" Herbert kept silent.

"Are the pictures true?", the man cried. "I have to know if she's real", he wailed.

"What's all this you're talkin' 'bout?" said Herbert, evasively. A little sweat ran down his back. Cold, like the waters of the loch.

“Ya fool! No monsters live here,” Herbert said boldly, a little too brashly, “expect Mr Jonas, the post-man”. Herbert didn’t want to go on. He told Mr Bacon to go. Shocked, the round man exited the inn.

Herbert was shaken by this encounter. He remembered, all those years ago, when he promised her he’d never tell. Never. Would he break his promise? What if she was caught? Killed? The memory had faded over time, but the bright eyes of the creature watched him, even when he closed his eyes. Those eyes would never leave him, not in a hundred years, not ever. He could never forget that day on the boat, when she had saved his life.

Guilt growing inside him was like a rock draining his energy and happiness. Then and there, with all his strength, he repeated the oath he’d made so many times, never to give away his friend’s secret.

2nd Place: Enigma

Dominic Hall

My heart sank as my mum breathed her last breath and slowly closed her eyes. With a lump in my throat, I squeezed my mum's hand, and a tear ran down my cheek. As I walked down the corridor, I was hit by a fluster of people going to and fro saying "are you okay honey?" down the over-sanitized hallway. I walked myself home and up the stairs missing that comforting helping hand that I was so used to. I climbed into bed and closed my eyes.

When I woke up the next morning, I was tormented by the fact that I didn't know my dad (I had forgotten all about my dad because I was never allowed to talk about him with my mum). I was stuck with one thing in mind (what anyone who is 10 and called Enigma would want to know): finding my dad. I spent the evening thinking about how I could find him, but before I started looking for him, I had to look for any clues in the attic.

I climbed up to the very top of the house where the attic was. The floor was a sea of dust-covered boxes. As I slowly rummaged around the attic for clues, I was stuck with the perilous task of navigating my way through dust-engulfed attic without giving away a loud sneeze. Trying to find any clues was hard and quite the opposite of a gratifying task although I did find some old comic books that my mum would call her 'mini gems of her youth'. Slowly, the sea of boxes disappeared and there was only one box left. I looked inside the box and saw a picture of my mum with a man, -my dad I guessed- and a worn-out diary. It took only one flick of a page to realize my dad wasn't from England but from Germany! Had my dad been a Nazi? Was that possible? Could his ideas have been so irrational? Finding the old diary was only the beginning, I had just found my first clue. One other vital clue was that my dad's name was Heinrich Schmidt. What would happen next?...

As I carried on reading the diary I found out a few more things about him, like the fact that he had lived in a village outside Hamburg and that he had been a devout Christian, but the real question I wanted the answer to was "why did he leave me, and who was he?". The only way to find out was to go to Germany. When I got there, I could ask the locals for information. My plan was set: I was to catch the earliest train the next morning.

The next morning, I woke up and immediately rushed outside to the train station. I got to the platform right on time and the train started its long journey to the port (where I was going to take a boat to Germany). Next, I took the boat across the North Sea to get to Germany. When I finally got off the boat and onto the streets my heart felt like gold as I knew that I was

drawing closer to my goal. Everyone was speaking German and I didn't know who to ask for help or how.

I started wandering around and after a bit I was in a field next to a farm. Walking towards the farm I was wondering whether I would bump into him and what I would say, but how could I be sure to find him? I came across a derelict barn and decided to check it out in order to shelter from the wind. To my astonishment, I found a name carved into the cracked stone of the wall: Heinrich Schmidt. My heart lifted at the sight of my father's name. Since the barn was right outside the village, I decided to search the village. I searched the streets desperately looking for clues but found nothing, then I decided to stop and have a rest in the local graveyard.

As I sat on the bench wondering whether I would ever find him, a kind looking man dressed as a priest walked towards me. "Hello Enigma" he said with a smile. "How do you know my name?" I asked aghast. "You look just like your father and I knew you would come one day looking for him. You have come to the right place dear Enigma" My heart froze and I had the same indescribable, cold and empty feeling that I had had when my mum died. As the priest led me to my father's grave, he told me the story: my father had grown up in the village and the priest had seen him grow into a young man. He had known my father's family well. And yes, my father had been German but he had been a hero, making his way to England to help the fight against the Nazis. That is where he had met my mother. He had spent his last years trying to crack Enigma. "So that's how I got my name! And why did he leave me and Mum?" I asked sobbing. "Because he thought he would be a target of the Nazis and he wanted to keep you both safe. And he was right, they eventually caught up with him" I knelt in front my father's grave tears streaming down my face. Yet, amid all my sadness, I suddenly felt a new strength in me, knowing that my father had been a hero.

3rd Place: Enigma

Molly Kean

Fire blazing. Children screaming. Everyone fleeing the once happy town, soon to be enclosed in flames.

This was all Ivy Daniels could remember of the tragic incident that seemed so distant now. Ivy's town had been attacked by evil fire nymphs five years ago, when she was only seven and she had been living wild in the forest ever since. Ivy had been playing on the beach when she heard the yells and was swept away by who knows what. She clutched her necklace and sighed. The necklace was the only thing she could save from the fire, and to her it was the most precious thing in the world.

Ivy was out hunting for food (which she was very good at, after five years of experience) but she suddenly sensed something was different. This wasn't her usual route. This part of the forest was darker, more intimidating and, with a rush of horror, she realised where she was. The fire forest. Home to the nymphs that viciously attacked her town! She was thirsty for revenge and longed to stay. But her fear told her otherwise.

Ivy ran for her life. Stumbling over roots, her hair billowing out behind her like a storm cloud, she ran until she came to a river with a boat floating there in the sunlight. That was when Ivy found she was lost. She looked back at the fire forest. The nymphs were getting closer. She looked at the name of the boat. *Enigma*. Nervously Ivy crawled onto the vessel. The sun was beginning to set and soon the gentle waves rocked her to sleep. But in her dreams was a slow rhyme, repeating over and over:

*The life stone will set the past right
You'll travel there all through the night
But as great courage comes with fright
There will be dark within the light.*

The sinister words etched themselves into Ivy's brain as she awoke. Immediately she took in her surroundings. Devil Falls! It had to be. Devil Falls was the largest waterfall in the world and it was an incredible sight. The dazzling water rushed into a deep pit. Shining rocks glinted mischievously at the morning sky. Simply staring at the watery wonder made you dizzy as you fell under its magical spell. Ivy remembered her dream: *You'll travel there all through the night*. This was it! Ivy wasn't reckless but she still trusted fate so she took one bold stride and stepped into the waterfall's swirling depths. Down and down she fell, tumbling into the blackness like a stone. Eventually the water disappeared and, with a thud, Ivy landed in what seemed like a cave. There was nobody else in there but there was something strangely eerie about it.

'What's with this place?' Ivy thought. Her question was answered in a peculiar way. A voice. A sinister, rasping voice. But the creepiest thing about it was that there was no speaker, just

a voice. "The loyally kind cave guardians will not let you through. Any excuse is the end of you," it recited. Ivy could see that the 'voice' was very proud of its loyalty, so she had to trick it to get past.

"Excuse me, Mr Voice, Sir," Ivy said tentatively. "But I've just dropped my coat down here and it's so dreadfully cold outside. Can I please get it?"

"Are you taking me for a fool, child? I don't let anyone in. Didn't you hear my marvellous poem?" replied the voice.

"Of course I heard your wonderful composition Sir! In which you mentioned being kind and loyal. Wouldn't it be a disgrace to your honour if you let me freeze?" Ivy coaxed, simpering a little.

"Fine! But I'll be watching you like a hawk," the voice snapped.

Ivy smiled thankfully and ran past the invisible barrier.

"Right. A life stone can't be too hard to find," she thought, and began searching.

There was a mysterious glow coming from the floor, so she knelt down and examined it.

There was a loose stone! Ivy lifted it up excitedly and, sure enough, there lay

Half a life stone. Ivy's heart plummeted down to her toes and she began to sob. All this for nothing. Suddenly there was a vibration on her chest. The necklace?! Ivy gasped. The half stone on the necklace and the half stone on the floor (now lightly dusted with her tears) fitted perfectly! She darted out of the cave, ignoring the voice's yells of, "Wait! Where's your coat, you malevolent child?"

Ivy ran so fast, she almost teleported back to the forest where she had been living. That was all going to change now. Hastily, she glued the two halves together with tree sap and closed her eyes. When she opened them, her surroundings had changed. She was on a throne in front of a huge crowd. Two people she recognised were standing proudly at the front.

"Mum? Dad?" Ivy could hardly believe it, but they nodded happily.

So life went on as normal from then. Well, sort of. Ivy was made Queen because she had saved everyone and solved the mystery. The town was rebuilt and everyone lived there happily. But what was the dark within the light? Ivy chuckled to herself. The boat's name really was suitable. It was an enigma....

Highly Commended: Mistery

Henry Santamaria

Dear diary,

I have done quite a bit in the past 20 years since I have decided to write to you. I have got married, had some kids and have tried to live a good life, which, with my luck, is like a dream.

I got married in 1960, to my beautiful wife Ella. We met at a concert, sitting next to each other. I didn't even know why I was at the concert; I didn't have enough money for three meals a day. It was probably a birthday present or something, because if I used my own money, I would be begging on the streets for forever. That concert ticket turned out to be the best birthday present ever. Sometime later, I had grown a new passion, flying. This is flying in planes, not like I am one of those people who want to fly like birds or anything, it is just that I enjoy flying, being above everything, breaking the sound barrier and all that. That passion then became my employment.

My job was to carry over resources for a company, not the ideal job, but it was great fun flying. It is good to have a job that is actually fun and not just to put food on the family's plates. It wasn't a well-paid job, but I didn't have kids then so I didn't have to worry about two more mouths to feed. Anyway, everything was going great. But now, this is where the real story starts to unfold.

It really all started when I was asked to travel from Andros Island to Palm Beach. But this wasn't really what I was used to doing. Apparently, all the other people who would have done that flight refused to do it. It was weird, though I accepted. Another weird thing, my pilot friend Eddie came up to me and gave me a pat on the back, saying that it was brave of me to do so. Honestly, it was only one flight. Not much of a big deal, right? Carrying on with the weird, I remember walking past fellow pilots and they turned around and gave me a pitiful look, and I could catch some words, they were: triangle and devil. What the hell did that mean. That put me off a bit. But the next thing that put me off was that I was to have my first baby on that day. I did not want to miss that! I told that to my boss but he assured me that I would be back in time to see Richard (me and my wife agreed on call the baby Richard when he was born, and by that time, we knew that it was going to be a boy). Also, Palm Beach was near where my wife was to have Richard.

On the day that I was to fly, it was a clear and beautiful day. Though that had some downsides. Everybody was rushing to the beach which meant traffic. At the rate I was going then, I was going to be late to take off, also late to see my new baby son arrive into this world. I was supposed to arrive twenty minutes before I actually did, so take off was rushed. I was actually airborne at three PM. I was going at full speed, desperately trying to get there

as soon as possible. Then the weird show started again. It started with a light mist, growing less and less transparent, and before I knew it, a huge storm cloud blocked my path. I tried to circle around it, but it had circled around me. At this point, I was about halfway through my journey, nearly half an hour until she would give birth. I had to pray that some miracle would take place. Not very likely. Anyway, the mist and storm clouds consumed me, and I could soon hear the rattle of thunder all around me. Panicking, I tried to look for a break in the storm, something I could fly through. To my luck, a hole was a bit below from where I was. I dived sharply and finally reached the *safe* hole. At the moment the nose of the plane reached inside, the compass went crazy, whirring from south to north, east to west. The inside of the tunnel was unlike anything I had ever seen. There was a yellowy greyish mist around me and I couldn't hear the lightning crashing any more. Half a millisecond after the plane penetrated the tunnel, these strange lines across the tunnel started circling around. I quickly calculated the distance of the tunnel by estimate, and I guessed 10 miles, so it would have taken me about three minutes to get through, but the strange thing is that it only took me thirty seconds.

I felt this strange feeling which I guessed was zero gravity, like I was in space. That feeling lasted for around a third of the time that I was actually in the tunnel. As soon as I left the vortex, radio control picked me up. They told me that they weren't able to contact me for a section of the flight. They also told me another strange thing; I was one minute away from Palm Beach. How could that have been possible? I should still have about twenty minutes left on the flight. That meant that I must have been flying nearly at 2000 miles an hour when the planes maximum was 200 miles an hour. I could have postered on this for days, but suddenly I remembered, THE BABY. I rushed to the hospital. I had to be on time. When I passed a building, I could see the big letters on the hospital's building. I entered and quickly rushed up the building and came panting to the door where Ella was to be. "You're just in time!" exclaimed the doctor.

Highly Commended: The Bermuda Enigma

Harry Mudd

People still wonder what happened to my ship. They used to search for me and my crew, but they are not doing that anymore. They just think I am another folk tale. But you're here to find out what happened to my ship.

Well, it was 1942 and we were looking for a way to win the war. Our commander sent us on a mission to the Bermuda Triangle. We are here to find the monster and use it to win this war. We have been given this top-secret invention, which we have decided to call The Monster Ball because it is like a capsule, that opens and uses quantum science to shrink anything near it down, forming a mini habitat until you want to release it. We weren't aware how dangerous this mission was.

We were heading for the Bermuda triangle. We heard of people who went missing there, but we weren't scared. We had the guns, weapons and defences. There was no way we could fail, at least we thought.

It was Sunday and we were on our boat The George - named after the captain – and suddenly I heard a shout "We're in the Bermuda Triangle!" shouted George. A sudden cheer broke out among the crew. Personally, I was a bit scared, but the cheering reassured me. One crew member shouted, "Well where's the monster." George replied "Well," he hesitated, "it is on the other side of the triangle." After he said that it sounded like one thousand gasps went out at the same time.

We sailed for a few hours, then we hit a storm. We were being thrown around like a we were a leaf. We were all told to go below deck and when I did, I was shocked. It appeared to be leaking, there was shouting, and holes were being patched up with jackets. I told them to stop and to use the wood and nails in the drawers.

After a few minutes, it was all patched up and people were all clapping for me. George came down and said well done. He also said that I will be the new danger manager. Now, that the storm was gone we made some progress towards the monster.

The next few days were peaceful, but when we got there, it was mayhem. We saw a green slimy tail, then a whole body. It bared its yellowed fangs and bit some of our sail. In fear and panic the crew immediately started shooting as the monster scuttled back into a cave. I followed it and I saw it was using the sail as a blanket for its eggs. When I saw that I knew we couldn't get it and use it for selfish purposes. So, I lied.

I left the cave and said I caught it in the monster ball (which I didn't). I went back to the ship and on our way out of the Bermuda triangle, we were caught in a storm, again. George said, "Release the monster!".

I replied, "I have a confession, I didn't catch the monster," a gasp went out "It had a family. I couldn't, it would be cruel." George stole the monster ball and opened it with disbelief and we along with our ship shrunk into the monster ball.

That was how me and my crew went missing.

Highly Commended: The Shadow

James Arthur

Once upon a time there was a little boy called Jack and Jack loved playing catch with his best friend Drew. One summer's day Jack and Drew went to the local playing field and played catch all day long until the sun went down. They had so much fun and both were very tired. When Jack was getting ready for bed, he realized he had left his ball at the playing field so he decided to sneak out and get it.

When he got back to the playing field it was already very dark and very quiet. He quickly searched for his ball and managed to find it. Just as he picked it up, a large shadow appeared in front of him. Jack turned and started to run as fast as he could until the shadow was gone. Suddenly, the shadow appeared again and started to follow him again, so he started to run as fast he could until he couldn't see the shadow anymore.

Suddenly, a car alarm went off. Now, a very scared Jack walked towards the car saying "Hello, is anybody there?" - There was no response.

Jack recognized the car and realized he was near his home. He hurried home and climbed into bed but he heard a loud crack, as one of the bed slats under his mattress snapped and then he heard footsteps in the hallway creeping closer and closer. He got so scared that he hid under the covers. Jack peeked out and could see the curtains moving but the windows were closed and he was the only person in the room.

The footsteps got closer and closer and the bedroom door creaked opened and the shadow appeared in the room and then suddenly disappeared. Jack shouted for his Dad. Jack's Dad came to the bedroom and asked "What wrong Jack? Why are you shaking?" Jack told him about his day, about leaving the ball at the field and sneaking out to get it. He also told him about the shadow that suddenly appeared and kept following him. Jack's Dad smiled and reassured him that there was nothing to worry about. To show him all was fine, they went outside together and the shadow appeared. Jack's Dad pointed to the full moon and clear skies and explained that they were creating shadows and there was nothing to be scared of. Feeling better Jack smiled and they laughed together while trying to catch their shadows. Jack promised his Dad that he would never sneak out again.

The End

Highly Commended: An Enigma Story

Nia Awel-Dinesen

It all started with a dare. "I bet you're too scared to go into the house," Elizabeth told Anne, tauntingly. If it was any normal house, young Anne wouldn't mind going inside. But this house wasn't normal...

In this instance, the house was in a state of disrepair and dangerously loomed over a large hill. The roof stuck up like jagged teeth, the terrifying home a cavernous mouth waiting to swallow the children up. A silvery veil of mist flowed through the night sky and wrapped the house inside it. Overgrown hedges lined the derelict walls and broken windows clung to the bricks. In the distance, Anne and Elizabeth could see the enormous house doing a horrible attempt to hide behind the old, creaking gates.

If Anne was slightly more petrified of the house she would have shaken her head vigorously. However, she was that small bit less terrified and so she crept slowly towards the wide gates even though there was no need to be so silent; no one had come in nor out of that gate in more than a decade. The intimidating, black, iron gates were enveloped by thick vines and Anne had to open up the green curtains to touch the gate's railing. Cautiously, Anne pushed open the gate as quietly as she could manage, which was not silent at all.

Behind the gates, Elizabeth watched as Anne climbed the worn steps to the ancient house. Anne turned her head and gave a weak smile. "I was just joking. You don't have to—" cried Elizabeth, but she was stopped by the sound of a heavy door slamming in the distance. Elizabeth felt her heart sink. What if she never saw Anne again? Would her friend be safe? She was extremely worried but she could not bring herself to go into the house either. After contemplating her options for a long time, she decided to wait for Anne to return from the horrifying house.

Elizabeth patiently sat on the dying grass for hours but Anne didn't appear. Whenever she heard the slightest sound she would turn around and scan the area for her friend. Then she would stare anxiously at the ground again. Eventually, she built enough courage to check on her friend. She retraced the steps Anne had taken; she pushed open the grand gate, climbed up the steep stairs and pushed open the double door.

As Elizabeth took her first careful steps inside, she wondered why nobody lived in the house. It was spacious and beautiful beneath the dust and cobwebs, yet it had never been restored. The cold, tile floor stretched towards another wooden door. This one was smaller than the

other and had a silver door handle, coated in thick dust. Elizabeth walked down the hallway towards the tall rectangle and swiped off some dirt. She twisted the handle and the door opened with a satisfying 'click'.

Beyond the door was an ancient living room. Mystery seeped through the flaking paint. Two large, leather sofas lined the walls. A stained blanket was lying in a heap on top of one, looking as ruined as the house. It was accompanied by a set of cushions that leaked stuffing. A single window let in dim light and cast a shape shifting shadow over the floor. A cold, howling wind blew through it and a shiver darted down her spine like a mouse. In the corner of the room was a lonely plant, withered and dying. Most of its leaves were crumpled in a pile on the floor but a few hung on hoping for survival in the gloomy house. Elizabeth hurriedly checked the room then walked back into the hallway: there was no one there. Her eyes were brimming with tears - any hope she had left was lost.

She decided to try another door so she moved to the one opposite and tugged on the handle and it swung to the side. Elizabeth was now in an enormous kitchen. The same cream tiles from the hallway had followed her into the room and the paint was peeling off the walls. "Anne?" whispered Elizabeth; for no reason at all, it seemed only right to speak in a hushed voice when you were in that house. She heard a murmur but Anne did not seem to be in the kitchen.

"Anne?" she called again, a little louder. She waited a few anxious moments before hearing a reply.

"Here! I'm over here!" responded a muffled, panicked voice that was easily recognisable to be Anne's. The sound was coming from above. Elizabeth raced up the stairs and pulled on every door she came across. Tall bookshelves stood against the beige paint. As she passed, Elizabeth noticed that one bookshelf was tilted to the side. Elizabeth began to approach it when she heard another wail - so loud it seemed as if Anne was next to her. It was coming from the book shelf. Elizabeth pushed the shelf to one side, littering the floor with books as she went. Then, she reached out a hand and turned the door handle.

Crouched on the floor in a ball was Anne. She looked up with relieved eyes and stood up slowly. The cupboard was even more dusty than the rest of the house - if that was possible. It was dark, cramped and dingy and the only light was the one that flowed from the hallway. Elizabeth felt immediately sorry for poor Anne. She couldn't believe that it was her fault Anne had been trapped there. They both felt tears streaming down their cheeks like rivers but their sadness was soon replaced with terror.

“What do you think you are doing here?” asked a loud, booming voice. The question cut through the air like a bullet, sharp and powerful. A fearful sensation ran through the children and they forgot how to breathe for a moment. They continued staring into the cupboard but they knew they would have to face the mysterious stranger eventually.

Highly Commended: Attic Secrets

Eloisa Wort

Whizz. Boooooom. Crash.

I woke up in a bed of sweat and realized that the nightmare had hit again. Thumping back onto my soft bed, I replayed the sounds of bombs crashing down and the screams of my mother and father. The only things I knew about them were that my dad had been a pilot and they're dead. But as I layed there watching the sun rise back into its throne high above the trees and birds, I realized that that was all I knew about them. Looking to my left, I looked at the black and white picture of my parents wedding day. At that exact moment I decided I would find out who they were. Who they really were...

* * *

Faster than light, I raced downstairs, found a torch by the back door, turned the corner and yanked the cellar door open. Switching on the torch, I let the beam wander down into unknown darkness. Flicking my torch beam over each box, I carefully read aloud the words scribbled on the lids: Grandma's Old Vases, Second Hand Stuff, Hand-Me-Downs. The list of names I read out seemed endless. Until I found it. Shoved right in the corner at the back left - Helen's Background. Helen. Me. Could this be it? Could I finally find out my past? Or could it just be my auntie (twice removed) labeling incorrectly?

Wading through the never ending ocean of boxes, a sudden lump of excitement swelled in my throat. Leaning down slightly, I opened the box...tears streamed down my face like leaves falling off a tree. Inside there were lots of items: weathered black and white pictures of my parents, leather bound albums and what looked like a diary. Gently, I picked up the diary and removed the hide strap. Inside read: EMILY BROWN. My mother. I turned the book slowly over in my hands, taking in all the smells and textures: there were wrinkled pages, the smell of spilt coffee - suddenly, I came across it. A marking carved into the leather at the back, bottom right corner. Intrigued, I pulled out the photo album owned by my dad - Richard Brown - which had the same unusual marking. Rummaging around in my pockets, I found a scrap of paper and a pencil attached to the diary. Carefully, I traced over the markings of the diary and the album. They were exactly the same. I knew this meant something and I had to find out why...

Rushing back into the main house, I grabbed my coat and launched for the door quickly shouting I was going to the library.

* * *

Quietly, I placed my coat at the back of my armchair and slowly paced up and down the aisles. Millions of books were lined neatly in alphabetical order. The genre of books varied: Oliver Twist, Beauty and the Beast to A Guide To Bird Watching. After a couple tortuous hours of scrolling, flicking and denying any need of assistance from the librarian I finally came across it. The book. The answer. Again, I placed my finger on the back, bottom right hand corner, and, just like I had expected, there was the unusual marking. The book was entitled - Hidden Figures. On the front cover lay the words - Connecting people to people, known for its bold red and is filled with a device that can transport people with only the flick of a page. Confusion circled my brain like a toy train on its track, though I only pushed it away. I opened the book and on the second page there was the contents. My eyes automatically flicked to the Es. Scribbled messily, near the top was - Emily Brown (373p). Overwhelmed at the thought of being even closer to finding out the truth, I sat down clumsily on the floor, book in hand. Turning the pages to number 373 I looked down to see the page was ripped out! My mind turned back to the riddle swimming around in my head. Standing up, I registered my book, gave a quick smile to the librarian and left the library.

Rain pounded and cars splashed weary pedestrians on the pavements. I pulled out my umbrella and used it to shield my face from the lashing rain. In the process I walked straight into a red telephone box filled with books. Of course! The answer to the riddle. A red telephone box filled with books. I rushed inside, slamming the door shut. Inside were 6 shelves - reaching to the ceiling - on all four sides. My eyes flicked over every book taking in all the titles. Wedged in between two thin story books was the exact same book I was holding in my hand. Excitedly, I pulled it out. Nothing happened. Inside the book was exactly the same contents with the same page ripped out. Anger bubbled inside me and I slammed the book back into its position.

Without warning, a feather-like object fell on my head. In surprise I looked upwards, making it flutter to the ground. Looking back down, I realized it was a page ripped from a book. Carefully - so as not to knock over any books - I crouched on the ground, picked up the piece of paper to find it titled - Emily Brown (373p). Opening both books that were now stacked neatly in the corner, I placed the page in its right full place. It fitted. Cautiously, I moved my eyes along each line, reading every sentence and taking in every word. Code breaker. To be remembered in secret... A conclusion started to form in my brain: My mother was a code breaker during the war, she cracked messages that were being sent from Germany to spies. She also invented her own code to send messages to English spies. My mother was a hero. A smile spread across my face.

Everything clicked into place. Everything made sense. Happily, I returned the book back on its shelf and entered back into the outside gloom...

Highly Commended: Marie's Mission

Flora Swinson-Pearson

Bang! It was half past 9 when the door slammed on Thursday 15th February 1942 and Marie really should have been asleep. However, she had been turning page after page of her thriller and so was wide awake as her parents discussed those things that they tried to keep from her ears.

"We can't go to Strasbourg to visit Uncle Pierre next week: it's very important," said her father, who was employed by the French government.

"Whyever not? Marie will be devastated not to see Jacques!"

"I need to work tomorrow. We've got a new code and it's an enigma." Marie was thrilled. Maybe she could persuade her father to take her in the next day - it would be so fun.

On Friday, the office was packed with sinister looking men and cramped offices.

Unfortunately, Mr. Minge's was on floor 12: the highest. After puzzling over the taunting message for hours, a message came in; English code crackers had done it! Message reads:
Attack Strasbourg 19.02 5.20pm

Father and daughter looked at the message fearfully. They both knew that to act would reveal that the Allies cracked the cipher

"They'll be fine. Honestly, I mean it," he said in his usual, calm voice. But Marie knew he didn't. Her beloved uncle did everything he could in the Allied Resistance.

That night, she couldn't sleep. Her brain whirled with worry. Eventually, she had had enough and she leapt out of bed and filled the room with torchlight. She gathered food, warm clothes and some money she promised to pay back.

Then she shut the front door.

Teeth chattering, Marie hurried towards the train station, which (fortunately) was local. When she arrived, she did not waste a moment getting into the warm. Even this late, the station was bursting with people and noise. She had to fight the waves of legs to get to the small ticket office that stood in the corner. There, she bought a ticket to Center Strasbourg, not bothering with returns. Luckily, everyone was too busy with themselves to notice the girl alone amongst the crowd. After what seemed like forever, the shiny, ruby train screeched to a halt in a cloudy whirl of steam and smoke beside the platform and soon after boarding, Marie collapsed into deep sleep.

Whilst Marie dozed, Jacques was preparing his departure. He was going over in his mind how he was the scrawny child of the family, bullied at school by his classmates and teased at home by his brothers. He'd been so looking forward to seeing Marie, and that morning a telegram had come saying she couldn't come. Anger had built up inside him until he couldn't bear it. That was when he decided to go to Paris. He began packing...

As she woke, the train was clickety-clacking through the pastel coloured French countryside with farms and infinite lakes all around. It was beautiful.

Then she remembered. The mission. It shattered her tranquility like a blade of ice in an instant, especially when she realised that there was only a couple of days until the 19th. Panic pulsed through her veins and she willed time to take her to the next stop - her's. Finally it did and she rocketed off the train.

Shortly after, she sped round a corner and collided into someone.

"I'm so sorry. Are you okay?" Then her jaw dropped. "Jacques? What are you doing here?"

"I ran away," admitted her cousin, mumbling. Marie was so surprised that quiet Jacques had run away that her words came out all jumbled. She explained messily about the message, her journey and the danger his family was in. He was shocked at the horror of it, the luck of them meeting like this and the idea of being a family hero for once. Eyes wide, he begged Marie to let him help and, eager for any help, she agreed immediately. They set off into the wind for time was slipping by like a cat in the dark.

The pair strode through the lonely streets of dark, dawn and early morning. They could almost taste the freshness of the new air that hung around them. It was chilly, and Marie was pleased she had brought her coat, though unfortunately, it had evaded Jacques' mind. As the pale sun trickled through the thick blanket of cloud, two thin, shivering figures were making their way through the winding streets of Strasbourg. No one but them were roaming about, and even if they were, no one would know their crucial mission (although Mr. Mingea would guess when he woke).

Soon, they arrived in the outskirts of Strasbourg, where Jacques normally lived. They tried the door. It was locked. Then Jacques remembered the emergency key under a loose tile and they were inside. Unfortunately, none of the inhabitants of No.73 liked being woken abruptly on a Saturday, but they all listened to Marie's story. Pierre then took charge and ordered everyone to pack and that they were going to the station the children had just left. On the way, they stopped at a friend, who would also be targeted, for helping prisoners escape. Only did the motely group relax when they were aboard the next train to Paris. It was difficult to get tickets before 9 am, but Uncle Pierre could be *very* persuasive at times. Despite this, he insisted that he stayed behind to help if any bombs came.

Back in Paris, Mr. Mingea had a large row with his daughter about 'sneaking off' and 'nearly giving her poor mother a heart attack,' but Marie knew that deep down he was relieved that his extended family was safe and immensely proud of his brave child. Later that afternoon, there was a story on the radio applauding the heroic Pierre Mingea on his outstanding evacuations from the atrocious Strasbourg bombing. Everyone cheered that he was now safe, and Marie Mingea slept knowing that the people she loved were nearby.

Highly Commended: The Enigma Girl

Francesca Pearson

It had been only three weeks since the mysterious shadow started appearing in the dark alleyways of London. It was of a young girl called NiaGem. No one knew much about her apart from her name and the fact that she tragically died in World War 2 aged just 13. No one had seen her but everyone had seen her shadow...

* * * * *

I first heard of the girl from my friend, Violet, who, like me, was keen to solve any mystery. After she had seen the shadow one evening, she begged me to investigate with her. I hesitated at first, but my curiosity got the better of me and I had to agree.

We started off our investigation in our local library. It was old, dusty and the bookshelves were overflowing with too many books. Fortunately, this gave us plenty to work with.

We spent hours scanning every book in the genealogy section in desperate hope of seeing the name "Nia Gem" written somewhere on the pages. Sadly, despite the large number of books, we couldn't find anything.

I came home to the worst news I could've heard. Mum was sitting in the kitchen holding a portrait of Grandma and crying more than I'd ever seen her cry before. Her hands trembled and she muttered quietly to herself.

That's when I found out about Grandma.

I didn't want to admit that she was dead and I spent the next couple of days mourning her loss. My pain and sadness eased over time but it was still there. I spent the nights which followed her death crying myself to sleep and remembering the happy memories with her, which only made the pain worse.

Eventually, I returned to my usual curious and cheerful self and was ready to continue work on the mysterious shadow. When I returned the next day to school, the first time since my grandmother passed away, I knew immediately what Violet was going to suggest. As I had guessed, she proposed that we follow the shadow ourselves. I knew if we were going to continue our investigation this would be the next move, so I agreed with her idea.

We spent the next few weeks carefully planning and preparing for the night. It took longer than we had expected but we were determined to achieve our goal. The time, however, passed too quickly and, before I knew it, the night came.

I was still recovering from Grandma's sudden passing so I kept a photo of her and her much loved sister in my coat pocket. I sighed with sadness at it. Grandma wanted more than anything to see her sister again. They hadn't seen each other since they were separated during the war and sent to different homes.

At 5 minutes to 2am, I climbed out of bed and checked to see if my mum was awake. Thankfully, she was fast asleep so I hurried downstairs and left the house through the back door.

Outside, the air was cold and bitter and the trees loomed over me. I shivered not just from the cold but from my fear. I found Violet waiting at the end of the road for me. She too was trembling but I guessed she was just cold because she appeared to be fairly calm about the situation. We, once again, discussed our plan before setting off on our route.

We had already been looking for an hour, when we finally saw the shadow. The girl looked familiar but I couldn't quite work out why, so I continued following her. Over time, she sped up and at one point we almost lost her, but we still couldn't see a figure. I was starting to worry about whether there was anyone at all.

We were approaching the end of our route and were about to close in on the shadow when, unexpectedly, it vanished. Violet and I searched the area but couldn't see any sign of it. All I could see were 6 numbers and 6 spaces beneath them painted on the wall and a mysterious telephone box that had letters instead of numbers. Whatever road this was, it was certainly a strange one. We thought for a while and brainstormed ideas about the shadow and the numbers but nothing made sense. Suddenly, Violet and I both looked at each other and knew we had the same idea. These weren't just random numbers - this was a code!

5 14 9 7 13 1
— — — — — —

Luckily, Violet and I were both good code-solvers. We were sure this code would be a piece of cake. We were wrong. After hours of decoding and problem-solving, we were back at the beginning. I struggled to think of any other number codes and it was becoming frustrating. Violet joked, "Look at us finding this hard. Imagine what the people who solved the enigma code had to go through!"

"Enigma, the code is Enigma! How could we be so blind!"

I remembered the telephone box and bolted towards it. Violet followed behind me, still trying to work out how I came to the conclusion. Once we were both in the box, I dialed ENIGMA. Out of nowhere, the platform of the box began sinking down and Violet and I found ourselves surrounded by darkness.

A voice of a young girl began to speak. She had a clear voice and an English accent similar to mine.

She said, "Congratulations! You have found me, Nia Gem or should I say Enigma. I did, in fact, die in the war so I bet you're wondering about me. Unfortunately, I can't tell you. You may have solved my little puzzle but you haven't solved me. I still remain an enigma."

The voice disappeared and was replaced by a figure of a young girl. I only saw her for a few brief seconds but that was enough for me to realise Nia Gem was Grandma's long lost sister.

Commended: The Enigma

Ella McGovern

This is part one of the story of how one of the greatest heroes came to be. Now you may not know them but they are one of the kindest, gentlest, bravest and most selfless people you will ever meet. Or not meet. You see, they're a secret superhero. They don't stick around for awards or thanks. We don't even know their name. Few people have ever seen their face. Even those who have, can't remember their face properly. They live on a deserted hill peaking up to the clouds, just outside a village which is prone to disasters. Natural and Man-made...

They wouldn't stick out in a crowd due to their black robe. The few people who have seen their face have claimed the only thing they remember is their hair, a wild whitemess, their eyes, a gentle aqua blue and their smile, a kind, genuine expression.

Physically, they were average in every way but mentally they are very astute and didn't miss a thing. Their old, hunched frame was a familiar silhouette to see as it was spotted every day on the hill, shuffling along planting new crops to help the village thrive.

Whatever the weather, they would be out there digging, planting, watering and harvesting.

Their voice had never been heard by anyone in the village; so when they delivered the crops to farmers they were completely mute.

The story begins on a lovely spring day. The Spring Equinox to be exact. Everyone was outside. Dancing. Laughing. Smiling. Little did they know their happiness and excitement was about to become fear and melancholy. Our day started off in a village on the coast of north Spain a long time ago. Here, there is a HUGE flower festival to mark the first day of the Spring Solstice. The Chief's daughter, Maria, was getting ready to help her dad host a dancing competition. She was getting ready in the family hut, threading flowers through her long thick, black locks. Her father and mother were waiting for her outside. All of a sudden, disaster struck. "Fire, FIRE!" The villagers were running all over the village screaming. Their arms waving all over the place frantically.

Well... most of them. The proactive few were trying to find water to put the fire out. In their helpless attempt to do so, they didn't notice anything that was going on around them. This meant they didn't see the Chief diving into the flames. Sadly, the Chief was struck by a falling, scorching beam.

"NOO" screamed the Chief's wife as she collapsed into a decoration pillar and passed out.

Out of nowhere, the hero (their nickname) charged into the flaming hut like there was nothing holding him back. Neither life nor death. Moving like lightning, they sprinted through the inferno with caution, jumping over the ghost like flames to rescue Maria.

They swooped out of there, Maria drooped over their shoulder. Her hair was singed to a coal black colour and her arms were covered in burn marks. Her mother had regained consciousness but started wailing: "OH MY GOD I'M DEAD. Where is my husband? Wait, I'm actually dead. ARGH!" Then she fainted again. Everyone ran to the chief's wife and lifted her to her feet. By that time, the hero had disappeared. Maria was taken to a healing hut and her wounds healed in no time. Though something was still bothering her. Why had the hero done that and how convenient they were at the crime scene...

Finally, Maria plucked up the courage to ask the hero why they were at the crime scene and marched over to their house on the hill. As soon as they saw Maria, they shuffled back inside. "WAIT," Maria called out but they just left. "We need to talk." She followed them back to their hut. "Wait. Come back here. Listen to me. Why did you do that? TELL ME!" And yet despite all the persistence, they didn't give in. "Why don't you talk? Please just one word." Maria begged and begged but not a word came out. Eventually, after a long time protesting, Maria was let into their house. "Please say something," Maria begged one last time. "Why should I?" they blurted out. It was a soft voice. A feminine voice. "You're a girl!? Maria blurted out in surprise.

"You were bound to find out soon, your whole village was." Surprisingly she started to remove her black robe to reveal a girl, the same age as Maria.

"Why? Why would you do this? Why would you do all of this?" Maria stammered almost too shocked to speak.

She answered with: "Let me take you back a few years ago..."

"I was nine and dumb. It wasn't supposed to happen. I was the problem" she cried, her bright blue eyes glinting with tears.

"It was all me." "You don't have to tell me if you really don't want to." Maria replied. "No, no I need to get this off my chest." She blinked her tears away and continued to explain: "I was born with a condition, a condition that turns my hair white." She gestured to her white as snow hair. "Everyone in my village thought I was a curse. A curse that makes crops and villagers die. My mother died giving birth to me and my father fled the village as soon as he saw me. All the other villagers despised me. I was brought up by the shamans who cared and nurtured me like I was her own. She stood up for me when other kids and adults shamed me. She, she loved a curse." Tears started to well in her eyes and rolled down her cheeks. "And I accidentally repaid her with death." Floods of tears were coming out now and nothing could stop them. "I, I was playing with all the potions and created a fire. The shaman dragged me out the fire but she didn't survive. I dove into the fire when I regained consciousness but it was too late..."

Commended: The Hunter and The Deer

Zyra Genovese

One misty cold afternoon in Brownville, Maine, a deer hunter named Buck Smith had his finger gently on the trigger of his hunting rifle. Buck was ready to shoot a deer he spotted through the crosshair of his rifle. Suddenly a voice said to him. "Do not shoot, or you will pay the consequences!" But Buck ignored the voice and shot the deer. The following day Buck went hunting for another deer. Unknowingly, another deer walked in front of Buck. A bullet struck the deer and it fell to the ground with a thumping noise. "I told you not to shoot the deer! You must pay the consequence!", a voice shook.

Buck suddenly had a splitting headache; it felt like his head was splitting in half. Growing out of his forehead were two enormous antlers. They felt like the weight of twelve concrete bricks were on Buck's head. "Ack!" Suddenly, Buck's body started to feel itchy, like fire ants were crawling all over his body. His skin began to tear, and deer fur replaced his skin. His mouth started to sting, and a gigantic snout replaced it. Of all the terrible things occurring to him, his hands hurt the most. His hands began to make a crackling noise while crumbling into a ball then a brownish-black shell started to form around his hands. Buck wanted to shout, but all that came out was a thunderous deer noise.

Thirty meters away, another hunter heard Buck. The hunter thought it was an average male deer, so she ran towards Buck. When the other hunter spotted Buck, she hid in a bush aiming her gun, but Buck sensed her existence and dashed away as quickly as he could. While Buck was running, he could hear multiple guns shot and thuds from bullets hitting trees. After five minutes, Buck ran out of breath and stopped for a minute. But the hunter was waiting for him in a tree, ready to pull the trigger. "Oh no..." Buck thought, feeling that he was going to die. So, he ran again as fast as he could to get away from the hunter, and boom! The hunter missed. "That was a close one." Buck said in his head. Boom! Another bullet was fired. It almost hit Buck in the leg. Buck ran faster and faster dodging all the bullets that had been shot. One bullet was flying towards his head and another one was near his leg. Twigs and leaves were falling from trees. Louder and louder, faster and faster, Buck was ready to give up. But he knew if he did he would die. He did not stop running, he kept going even if his legs were failing. "Uruppppppppp!" Buck shouted trying to scare off the hunter.

Then he looked straight into the female hunter's eyes and she looked back at him. The female hunter recognized Buck by the way his eyes glistened. Buck put his hoof in the dirt and wrote "I was a hunter". "Do I know you?" the hunter asked. Buck then nodded his head as a way of saying yes.

Commended: Where Does Space End

Caramia Middleton

I sometimes wonder about things on this earth. How do doctors come up with vaccines, why do cats meow and not bark, why is everything the way it is? To be honest, I don't think we will ever know it all. For me the one question I've always wanted to know is:
Where does space end ?

As a curious child, one night as the stars were sparkling, I set off on an adventure. I meticulously built a rocket, better than NASA. To the main body of the shining gold rocket, I made feathery wings made of stars and dreams to help my rocket zoom into outer space. The fins of my rocket were carved from ancient sequoia trees that had stood on Earth for a thousand years. A window to see into space was melted from a thousand lollipops and tasted like a rainbow of colours whirling in your mouth. For this tiring journey, I would need a space suit. For the helmet, I decorated a fishbowl with soft fluffy felt. I would need thick warm boots to protect myself from the icy temperatures of space, so I painted rainbows all over my father's chunky boots. I fashioned 5 layers of gloves into one to prevent frostbite on my fingers. I grabbed my warmest coat and trousers and headed off to my launch site. I fueled my rocket with a million sweets and dragged a heavy cumbersome bag full of food, a camera to show my results and my rabbit teddy into my rocket.

I pressed the large red button and stared at my sleeping house as the countdown began. High in the sky I waved goodbye to Earth and a moment later the Moon. Soon, I had zoomed past our galaxy and were exploring a never before seen world. All was quiet, all you could hear was the rumbling of the hard working engine.

Hours had gone by when I heard my stomach rumbling. Reluctantly I reached into the bag and pulled out a pack of crisps. I needed to ration food. I didn't know how long I would be in space. Whilst tearing open the packet a booming voice shouted ALERT ALERT !With a horrified look upon my face, I realised that I had forgotten to shut the door. I had ignored all the alarms and sirens while deep in concentration of driving the vehicle. The salted vinegar crisps would have to wait. I put on my helmet and attached myself to a rope that secured safely to the rocket. Hesitantly I stepped into the outer chamber. I paddled through the air towards the door. Gripping tightly onto the door I wrenched it shut and tightened the lock. Once I was safely back inside, I knew I had made a grave mistake. I should not have left. I needed my parents, but I couldn't. I HAD to continue.

Almost too easily, I fell into a deep long sleep caused by the absence of warmth and love. Months or maybe years later I woke up. Frozen and lost. The date was 15.09.24, could I really go on? It seems I could ; many more months went on before I had finally done it! What I found was weird, shocking and confusing. All of what we considered to be space was just ONE PLANET of our infinite space. Yet for some befuddling and perplexing reason, I was not able to exit this planet. Like being trapped inside a child's rubber ball staring at the large world. Taking many photos from a large selection of angles to prove my point to the many scientists that would question my theory.

Headed back home after a 2 and ½ year journey home, I couldn't help the excitement that spread like wildfire in my body in my body. To see my family and friends that I hadn't seen in years. Would everything have changed? What would they have thought had happened to me ? All these questions flooded my head and I began to feel awfully dizzy. Anxiety, horror and despair crowded my head leaving little space for common sense. For two years I sat there waiting and waiting for what felt like forever. But at long last, I was back in Earth's orbit ready to prove my point and see my family who at this point were probably in utter despair by now.

Landing in London (just a ¼ of a mile from my house), I felt like I was about to explode with excitement. As the rocket's door slammed with a CRASH! To the green grass on the football field in the dark of night, I grinned from cheek to cheek. Walking back felt like a 10,000,000 mile run with 500kg weights attached to my limbs. 5 years had led up to this moment ...

I knocked at the door KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK and waited expectantly. My mum's tired, weary face turned to a face that had just seen a miracle. "George! George! She's back, come down now!" she yelled up the carpeted scarlet stairs. Greeted with the best hug that I'd ever felt, I knew that I would never leave again. Tears of joy and happiness poured down my parent's cheeks and they begged me never to leave like that again.

As for my research, I was awarded a Nobel Prize and placed on the news. My daring and brave efforts caught the eye of a famous scientist who invited me to spend four months telling him about what I saw. I felt like the luckiest girl in the world.

Category: Poems

1st Place: As If It Never Happened

Avishi Gurnani

Particles of sand, remains of a time long gone
Blow towards her eyes, she pulls her *hijab* closer, her face looking down
As tiny fingers grasp her hand, asking for a promise she could not give
Gunshots echo through the bare streets, warning those who dare to stand up.
Salty tears flow down her bruised cheeks, her ring snug over the fourth of her left hand
A reminder of who she had not seen for months. Where had he gone?
She knew but dare not say out loud, for then, the tiny fingers could grasp no one

A silence for a minute, a second too long
The tear gas bombed the street as he ran back, crying freely.
For his country's freedom, his own pride, and the tear gas in his eyes.
Officers clad in green and black storming the streets, that used to be for merriment.
Those days, those times forgotten, like he would soon be - the unsung, the uncelebrated.
When? He had asked once on the last day he went to school.
His teacher didn't give a reply, so he knew there was none

Wedding bells ringing.
Before a different sound is heard
Blaring from the TV, one word reverberating - 'War'
A missile, a bomb exploding inches away. Hesitant to grab a gun
The very soil that was home was now a battlefield littered with the carcasses
Of those fighting, poised to fire, hands trembling as many a minute pass
A scream is heard, before the silence

As they round a table, discussing a peace treaty in the end,
To let life go on once more
As if the questions were all answered
As if it never happened, as if...

2nd Place: Dinosaurs in Heaven
Max Bowler

When I die at age one hundred and seven
As my soul floats up to heaven
Will I hear the fearsome roars?
Of all the mighty dinosaurs

I think no one ever expects
To spend forever with a T-Rex
But it's a fact that I think we must face
And heaven is a big enough place

I think that it will be lots of fun
To live with scaley beasts that weigh a ton
They'll give me endless things to do
Although I might fall in their sloppy poo

I'll ride a triceratops through the fluffy white clouds
And hopefully that will be allowed
On Velociraptors' I'll fly in loops
And teach them tricks like flying through hoops

Them trying to eat me may be a factor
I'll have to hide from the velociraptor
I'll make it a game of hide and seek
As long as the Dino doesn't cheat

I hope in heaven I will see
All the dinosaurs ready to greet me
Until then I'll keep looking back in History
And the dinosaurs will remain a mystery.

3rd Place: Black Hole Enigma
Dillan Cooper

A man with a plan set out to face,
the enigma surrounding time and space.

He travelled light years very far,
In order to see the death of a star.

The star exploded and was completely destroyed,
All that was left was a massive void.

Inside the void was a scary place,
But held the answers to time and space.

He learnt all the secrets there to know,
About the history of the universe, long ago.

But the void pulled him in and he put up a fight,
Yet nothing could escape, not even light

He never returned from the star that died,
Because once he was in, he was trapped inside.

Highly Commended: Who
Isla Turner

Who dresses like a man
Who looks like a child
Very small and fluffy
Could it be an animal?
They wear tall boots
And a hat on its head
He is sneaky and creepy
His eyes sparkle at night
Who has whiskers
Who is all alone
Can come in black or brown
Who can help people out
Who has miniature ears
It's Puss in Boots!

Highly Commended: What Does It Mean To Feel
Annabelle O'Leary

Have you ever thought about this enigma?
You pass them everyday. You can see them everyday.
They live inside your body and you make them everyday.
They can come in a blink of an eye and just as quickly make your heart sink. You can't even think. It's an itch that you can't scratch, it's a hunger that you can't fill, it's a problem that you can't solve, it's a bad temper that you can't stop, it's a tear that you can't wipe.

This is hard to explain but i'll try my hardest
But I'll have to write it down as i'm not an artist

Let's start off with sadness,
When every little droplet of magic has drifted away from your tragic, solemn heart.
Dip your toe in that sadness, watch it float away and explode into a
fuming wave of anger and rage,
When a nasty bully came, and got into trouble, but you were the one to take the blame.
Tiptoeing round the corner is the nerves that come when you're late for school
And your stomach is frantic. Acrobatic. Like static on the TV.
Change the channel and you get romance, velvet roses blooming from your heart
With the switch of a light I feel filled with delight
And not even the best of words can explain this feeling

No one will ever have the real answer to how you can solve the enigma of feelings
But there are some things you can do
Speak to your teacher, even if it's the one with the wonky moustache and a hairy nose
Confide in a friend
Imagine the moment when you achieve your dreams of changing the world into a better
place
Have a splosh in a cold, icy lake,
Pretend everyone around you is dressed like a clown,
Be empathetic, listen to the person you love,
Let yourself feel the feelings,
Or else we'd all be the same
And no one would be unique, in their own beautiful way

Highly Commended: The Biscuit Thief
Alice Jackson

On Monday morning,
At 7 o' clock,
The residents of number two
Awoke to a shock.

As they stuck their hands in the biscuit tin,
They soon realised there was nothing left within
"What shall we do?" cried tiny Tim.
They thought hard and rung up the detective inspector,
But all he did was give them a lecture,
"A biscuit was stolen? What's the deal? Go to the shop to get some more."
So out they went through the door.

But the next night it happened again,
So they set up their cameras, traps and guard dog
And went to the shops across the bog.
It was there they bought bait
"Into positions!" they whispered as they sat in wait.
But they soon became tired and gave in
Trying not to think about their valuable biscuit tin.

When at 7 o' clock on Wednesday morning,
The master came in from a jog,
He caught the thief red handed,
For nibbling crumbs on the floor,
Was Timothy the dog!

Highly Commended: Girl Missing
Beatrice Wright

Losing a best friend
like losing a part of yourself
who are you without them?
your heart shatters each time their name is spoken
like a blade twisting in your heart

I never knew how much i would miss her
she was my favourite person,
the reason I went to school
i remembers the little things
dancing in the rain,
laughing till our stomachs hurt
we were practically inseparable

I slowly feel you slipping away
as if all the rivers have lost their flow
the sun has lost its shine
your voice replays in my head
your cheerful laugh
that used to brighten my day
I ask myself where you could be
what happened to you
knowing I'll never truly know the answer
I sit in class, my head down on my desk
trying to maintain my tears
but that thought that I never got to say goodbye

Commended: Nocturnal Stillness In The Woods
Felicity Pringle

Owls are passing by
Whilst badgers sneak and lie.
Foxes may be handsome and sweet
But they're predators so kill to eat.
Glowing eyes they have
Watching from the path.
The moon shines all around
That's when wolves make their sound.
But tonight is not the same.
Tonight the owls are acting lame.
The foxes do not have meat
Instead they have veg to eat.
While badgers sleep in their mound
Wolves just lay on the ground.
Hearing them howl is just the best
Now all they do is a sleeping fest.
I don't know what's wrong with them.
At least the moon still sparkles like a gem.
What happened? I don't know.
Earth is not our foe.
What else will go wrong?
Its been like this for so long.
Why aren't we putting it right?
Why aren't we fighting the fight?
Everything is still.
I give happiness to the wild in my will
So please somebody solve it now.
If you do I shall bow.

Commended: In The Disco
Isabella Williams

In the disco,
Everyone, young and old,
A time before people would be glued to their phones all day,
This was the 80's – dancing all night long, to The Bee Gees. Staying Alive was the song
playing – who knew how true that would be.
This was an ordinary Saturday night,
But the lights started to flicker, then a loud buzzing noise and pitch black!
The door creaks as it opens – oh what an eery sound it makes.
The manager, shaking in his boots with fear,
Turns on the light, what will he see?
ZOMBIES!!
Twelve to be exact, all walking slowly towards him – their next victim.
He tried to run, but his legs felt like jelly, he looked down and his hands and legs were
feeling strange ...
Wait, was he turning into a Zombie too!!!
No one knows, as he was never seen again.
The disco is now a Starbucks, and some say that late at night, they can hear the song
Staying Alive echo through the walls.
To this day no one knows what happened,
'In the Disco'.

Commended: Seas and Skies
Isabella Rettinger

If a boat sets out to sea

Will it return?

or

Will it vanish?

If a plane flies in the sky

Will it return?

or

Will it vanish?

Will the seas and sky swallow it all?

or

Will it give mercy?

Will we live?

or

Will we die?

What if our ride returns,
and we don't?

Will people know our name?

Will people forget we ever lived?

Will we forever be lost at sea and sky?

or

We could live.

Commended: A Ghost Came Into The Class Today

Amy Allen

A ghost came into the class today,

A ghost came into the room.

A ghost came into the class today,

A ghost opened the door.

A ghost came into the class today,

A ghost shrieked aloud.

A ghost came into the class today,

Everyone ran around.

Everybody ran around,

Everybody screamed.

The teacher turned on the fire alarm,

And the ghost decided to leave.

Commended: The Enigma of Life
Poppy Macdonald

How are we here?
Where did we come from?
How were we created?
This is the enigma of life.

Why are we different?
Why are we not all the same?
Why do we act differently to others?
This is the enigma of life.

Why are some people fast?
Why are some people slow?
Why are some people dumb?
Why are some people smart?
This is the enigma of life.

Why are some people white?
Why are some people black?
Why are some people disabled?
Why are some people built differently?
We are the enigma of life.

The R C Sherriff Trust is an independent charitable trust, established through the terms of the Will of playwright, R C Sherriff. It has been promoting and developing the arts in the Borough of Elmbridge, for 25 years. Further details about the Trust can be found at www.rcsherrifftrust.org.uk

Elmbridge Borough Council's Arts Development seeks to increase opportunities for people to engage in the arts, culture and heritage of our Borough, either individually or through partnerships, such as those with the R.C. Sherriff Trust that make Elmbridge Primary Schools Festival possible. With the aim of engaging residents, Elmbridge Borough Council's Art Development supports arts organisations and presents arts-based activities that improve the physical and mental health of people who live and work in Elmbridge.

