



Winning, Highly Commended &
Commended
Entries

8-11 (Junior) Age Category

The 19th Elmbridge Literary Competition 2024

FAME

Reputation is an idle and most false imposition, oft got without merit and lost without deserving.

William Shakespeare

For some, it is a lifetime's pursuit, often slipping through their grasp while others see it fall into their hands by mere chance. However achieved, through talent or luck, Fame, can be an ill-fated prize.

The 19th Elmbridge Literary Competition, run in partnership by The R C Sherriff Trust and Elmbridge Borough Council, asked for short stories and poems on the theme of the double-edged sword that is 'FAME'.

Previous Competition Themes:

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
2022:	Enigma
2023:	The Road

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Category: Short Stories

1st Place: The Sour Raven

Amber XinTi Wang

A body Sadie found in her cousin's attic. Nothing more could be said; she would not disclose this finding, nor would she react to it, for Sadie was used to being shocked, even if bodies found in the half-gloom, half-covered with coarse canvas and stained with icky crimson were superbly abnormal. The body was a typical body, not strange, oblong or especially pretty in any unusual way, and it looked very much like a human being, that body, and it was. Sadie knew because she lifted the body up with her bare palms, pried open the flaked dry lips and investigated a cavernous, full mouth... it was a human, painfully mortal, a figure Sadie might have drunken coffee with, once.

Her cousin, a smirker, a smoker and a beauty, had allowed her the liberty of exploring the Mansion on her own. Sadie liked being free, even if it meant scorn in the newspapers, scorn that welled up and dried like blood too early gone. Dropped out of college, she had. Studied a raven with a surname of Poe, she had. Her cousin was more than happy to allow 'the Failure' to crash a few days in opulence; in a way, the charity reeked of suspicion to Sadie, and she did not like that, no, not in the way she liked Peridot sparkling water in tall glasses with a tint of golden gin that she procured from the local bar, ten miles south of the Mansion. She was simple that way, Sadie. You found her simple (with a capital S like her name), and she led a simple life that required no more than the many shocks that she received - such as finding a dead body in the attic whilst looking for more stored, bottled, sparkling Peridot. The bottles were green, green like her eyes and her heart, and she was nice that way, Sadie, and of course she never thought of being jealous, no, no, she was nice, nice like that.

They called her 'a child'. They said she was 'retarded'. They whispered, behind her back; she did not mind. She had patiently flipped through tomes of ravens and dark words and secret alliances, and loving, caressing stories. She was simply curious, what was wrong with that? And she was curious, indeed, about the wealth her cousin possessed. A full figure of the fashion industry, mounted on billboards in every direction; the catwalk calling.

She wanted to see if the corpse was still alive, pinched it, hard, hard in the cheek. She dug her fingernails in. The frame did not move. It was a normal body.

And then there was a knock on the front door; she heard it, obviously. Obviously. And that door opening of its own accord, and then footsteps, and rapid exhalations and barking commands.

Sadie looked down at the body in an almost loving fashion, swaying the deadened limbs along with her arms - once living, once garbed in glamour. The footsteps. They trailed down the stairway, came down, down, down, down into the bowels of the attic. What was she there for? Yes, Sadie was there for the sparkling Peridot...

"Miss." Clear-cut blue eyes and blond hair brought up into a bun; a police's badge, each fibrous line detailed and woven with gold. Sadie focused on the badge. Then the eyes. She liked blue, but not then, there was a repulsion inside of her, eating at her.

She mumbled something, incoherent, something to do with sparkling water, mineral water, "Peridot..."

"Miss." The tone tugged at Sadie, pulled her down, down, down, further than ever.

"Miss, you'll have to come with me to the police station." There. How satisfying it was, Sadie thought, to be condemned. For she was certainly being condemned, it occurred to her like a lightning bolt from angry Zeus's fist. It was a shock, but not one that hurt. It was a calm sort of shock, and Sadie knew she had done something terribly wrong because when her teacher had spoken to her in that manner, that tone, she had been led down a white corridor, through heavily laden brass doors, and onto a slab of sacrificial plastic where she had been - actually - shocked.

Her feet obeyed the command. Sadie walked fast, with the body trailing in her arms. The woman thought she was running; claws dug into her skin and made her freedom short; a calm voice, explaining it all, a case beginning when she was young... Sadie did not hear - but after all, if she did, what right did the woman have on her childhood? Faster - slower. Faster - slower. On and on, the seeming marathon miles from attic to police car. Adieu chandeliers, glistening ruby red. Adieu, silverware as delicate as finger-bones. Adieu, indeed, to the plump cushions on the pink sofa that reeked of flesh and muscle, sweet flesh, sweet muscle that throbbed, reached out for

her leaving heart. She might have buried herself in one of the wine caskets in the hallway which her cousin loved, retro-style, but that was not fine, fine. It was not a fine death, to be buried alive.

At the station, they made her put down the body, made her record her name, voice, thumb-pad print. She may have dreamed up the entire matter, but they said it was for real, crime, then punishment. There was never an 'and'... Sadie felt the grit of being accused, but she liked it too, liked it because she was made to sit in a cell all day like a weak princess to be rescued by the dashing world. But the world did not save her, and she liked that, because she could be strong, couldn't she? She hadn't killed anyone, had she? Her cousin least of all.

It was declared a case of some malignant pursuit. The newspapers! Beyond print and page now -

But all Sadie wanted was a bottle of green, sparking Peridot.

2nd Place: A Snap of Fame

Elizabeth Mintiers

'And this is how you put the chord through the loop and *abracadabra!*' said Max excitedly. He raised his arms to show his perfect magic trick and realised that his classmates who circled him minutes ago to see the trick have all disappeared! Another sad disappointing day for Max, no matter how hard he tried, he could not get the attention of his peers. The only thing Max ever wanted was to be popular in his class and in his school. He compared himself with other boys in the class, particularly Harry and Arthur who were very popular in the school. He wanted them to be his friends and wished that they admired him and think of him as a super cool kid.

'The last day to submit science projects for the science fair is on Monday', announced Mrs Rogers. Max on his way back to school kept thinking of ways to skip the science fair. But he knew, his dad will be keen on him building a science project. 'Otherwise, I cannot convince dad that I am smart enough in the class', sulked Max. On the weekend, Dad and Max went to the nearby country park to collect some soil and rock samples for his science project. 'I will collect some samples on the main junction path, can you carry on up on the slope to collect rock samples?' 'I am sure you will be able to find rocks near the reddish clay deposits' asked Dad. 'Ok Dad!' said Max.

Max was on the slope, a muddy reddish path looking for rock samples. He was tired walking along the slope, suddenly something blocked his foot, he lurched and regained his balance. He looked back to see what it was; and he saw a head of an idol sitting on the red ground. Max tried to recollect where he has seen a similar picture of the idol. Many images jettted through his mind. He suddenly remembered; he saw it in a book about ancient Egyptian Gods but could not quite identify the idol he was seeing in front of him. He bent down and picked up the idol and held it in his hands. He brought it slightly closer to his face for a better look, in an instant he saw the eyes of the idol glowing red, flashing twice, and stopped. Fearfully Max dropped the idol on the ground and rubbed his eyes and ran down the slope to find his Dad. He remained silent and thoughtful on his way back home.

Back home on the supper table, the family was chatting about their day, Max's little sister was making silly faces and singing a song, and his parents couldn't stop adoring how cute she was. Max was trying to talk about the recent magic trick he was showing his friends in school, but his parents were too busy admiring his little sister. 'No one listens to me! grumbled Max and snapped his fingers to get their attention. The moment he snapped his fingers, everybody on the dinner table froze! They all froze in the position they were in. Mum froze in the eating position, dad picking up the fork and his sister froze on a silly face. It seemed to Max as if the time has stopped. He went up to his father and took the fork from his hand, it somehow felt to Max that he has power over them. He said to his dad, 'I am the most intelligent kid in the class, and then turned to his mum and said, 'I have the best magic tricks and you love them.' He said to his little sister that I am best older brother in the world, you will all love me, and pay attention to me,' he continued. Then he snapped his fingers again, and everything was normal. His family continued to eat dinner, but the conversation now was different. Dad exclaimed 'Max how are you getting on in your class? I am sure you are doing very well since you are the most intelligent one!' Of course, added mum ' He was showing his magic tricks, they were amazing and so believable, he is the best!' Max's sister jumped out of her seat and said loudly ' He is the best brother in the world, I love him so much!' Everything that Max heard that evening on the dinner table was unbelievable for him. But this is what he wanted for himself. He pieced it back to the idol he had found, maybe it brought him some ancient magic.

The next day morning in the classroom, Max snapped his fingers, and the classroom froze just as he had expected. He told his classmates especially Harry and Arthur that he is popular and that they should follow him. He announced to rest of the class to be in the awe of him and of his abilities and he is the most popular kid from now on. When he snapped his fingers again, everything happened just as he wanted. Harry and Jack were his friends now and loved his company, they both looked up to him. His teacher and his classmates praised him, and he enjoyed the special attention he received in school from everyone.

Max came back home very happy and satisfied. He was soaked in the madness of his recently acquired fame. He could feel the sense of power he now holds and that he is now popular. He walked to his room and stood in front of the full-length mirror. While looking at his reflection he started praising himself insanely. He declared ' I am the greatest in my school, soon it will be in the city and in the country and in then in the whole world – just - with -a - snap of my finger!' While saying this he snapped his finger to his reflection in the mirror and what a shocker! He froze himself! Max trapped himself in his own fame.

3rd Place: The Missing Cheese Mason Marsh

It was the night before the Cheese of the Year Competition; everybody was perfecting themselves ready for the special day ahead of them. Halloumi was preening his moustache, whilst Gorgonzola was checking her looks in the mirror to make sure her blue side was evenly spread out. Wensleydale was very particular with the ironing line on his tuxedo trousers, and Parmigiano was getting his skin fade at his favourite barbershop on the High Street.

Every year, Cheddar won; he has been named Cheese of the Year in eight years running. Cheddar had it all - the all-important title, the shining trophy, the enormous certificate, the hefty prize money and more. Fame changes a person; Cheddar became this complacent, arrogant and detached version of himself.

In the last few years Parmigiano knew Cheddar was not putting his best game on. So this time around, Parmigiano was very confident that he would have a great shot to win. However, he just wanted to make sure.

That night Parmigiano snuck out of his room without anyone noticing; instead of turning right to the dining hall, he went left, straight into Cheddar's suite. Cheddar was not there. Parmigiano then heard his unmistakably loud laugh down the hall. He followed.

"Would you like to join me in the sauna to relax for a while?" asked Parmigiano in his most convincing and charming voice. Cheddar clearly had had quite a few glasses of red wine whilst having multiple games of darts, he turned around and agreed, "Let me light my cigar first." Parmigiano also fetched the remainder of Cheddar's wine bottle to continue pouring into the night.

The next morning, all the judges were slightly concerned that Ricotta did not show up, "Had she given up because she couldn't hold herself together again this year?!" What's more shocking, was that Cheddar was nowhere to be seen either! A search party began, they looked everywhere in the conference centre, they searched

Cheddar's suite; they looked into the leisure centre including the swimming pool and the sauna.

"Maybe he left for home in a rush for an emergency?" contestants murmured. The competition went ahead, with tad reluctance, the judges eventually named Parmigiano as the Cheese Of The Year.

Parmigiano took a bite of his toasted sandwich to celebrate afterwards. The judges would not have known that, Cheddar took more resistance in the sauna and that Parmigiano had to finish him off in the microwave.

Job done.

Highly Commended: Famous Feet

Charlotte Swartz

I strutted out into the bright lights of the paparazzi, flicking back my lush blonde hair. My feet tapped to the rhythm of the clicking of the cameras, after all it was in my blood as a dancer. I smiled warmly as I sidled into the black limo that was waiting. The door snapped closed, and I breathed a sigh of relief. I lay back in the limo feeling the cold leather against my neck, I closed my eyes and slowly drifted off... Shouts and cheers emerged from outside the limo, I woke feeling exhausted, this is not what I anticipated out of being a famous dancer. But still I went on with the fake smiles, the click-click of the paparazzi and endless swarms of applause, shouting and cheering. As the driver came round the outside, I wondered if this life really was for me. I shook my head, I was being silly, being famous was everyone's dream! I would keep up my reputation, what was I kidding, I had real fans! I put on a dazzling smile as I strode up the red carpet, throwing out my arms dramatically as I turned a pirouette through the door and into the celebrity lounge. But even still as I glided around the room, a little chat here, a little chat there I still had a niggling feeling in the pit of my stomach. Maybe fame wasn't what my fans thought it was, everyone wished that they were famous but then when you're famous you wish you weren't. Fame is a slippery thing, jumping here and there, never staying but sliding around everyone. One day you are in the spotlight and the next you're hiding in the corner all in the dark. One hour later, I was frolicking on the stage, skipping, hopping and twisting to the music. My skirt flared out underneath me as I pushed myself on the beam, swinging sideways as I neatly flipped over and landed with a thump. Applause roared from the crowd, roses fell at my feet, I heard shouts and cheers erupt and die down as I walked off the stage, panting heavily. This was my dream, not fame, but dance. The wonderful tip-tap of my feet, the dazzle of pirouettes and spins as I twist and jump through the air. Even just thinking that thought, it lifted my mood. How I loved dance, I had gotten it wrong, I didn't need fame, I needed dance. As the doors thumped open, my mind came crashing back down to reality, I was still famous, tiredly famous. A thought raced through my head, a crazy thought, fame wasn't by choice, it couldn't be picked up and dropped whenever. But with this idea it would be dropped. I ran down the carpet and darted through the crowd, the screams and cheers followed me down the street. Running away from fame wouldn't work. I decided to do something reckless, but with it.

"I DON'T WANT TO BE FAMOUS!" I bellowed into the crowd. Faces fell but then a round of confusion and then the slow murmuring. Taking my chance I ran fast away into the night, wonderfully feeling the cold air brush against my skin. I was free, Fame was my prison and dance was my key.

A few years later...

"And, first position, straighten those legs Harvey," I called, demonstrating first position myself. A few years before I had realised that there was no point in dancing if I was just a solo act; I needed to express my talent through teaching. So I opened up my dance studio "Light Feet", and here I was on a Saturday morning teaching a class of eight-year-olds to dance. This is what made me most happy, and I was being left alone by my fans now. When my fans still were trailing me around a few years before, I had encouraged them to do what they really loved, not just follow someone who is doing what they love. Fame is never the thing people like; it is the thing they become famous for that they love.

Highly Commended: The Girl From Sad Town

Daisy Cooper

Once in Sad Town, there was a little girl named Charlotte. Every day, she would smile but smiling wasn't allowed in Sad Town because everybody had to be sad. Charlotte felt very annoyed because smiling made her feel joyful and happy but no one else would smile like her.

On Monday, Charlotte had the worst day of her life. Everybody was more sad than usual because it was Blue Monday, and no one wanted to look at her in case they would smile. This made Charlotte feel even more lonely than usual.

On Tuesday, Charlotte wanted to make everyone laugh so she went to the town centre and started telling jokes on the street. Her funniest joke was: "what has five toes that isn't your foot?..... my foot!". Not a single person smiled, and one person even called her parents to tell them what she was doing. Charlotte's parents were very angry and thought they should take her to the sad doctor to see what was wrong with her.

On Wednesday, Charlotte's parents took her to the doctor's office where she was examined. The Doctor told Charlotte's parents, "Your daughter has a happy heart, not a sad heart. This is something that cannot be fixed."

"What's so wrong with having a happy heart?", asked Charlotte. Her parents and the doctor were so surprised by her question. Her parents stayed calm and told her, "We are sad people, not happy people and happy people are our enemies". This made Charlotte feel angry.

In the afternoon she went to the library and discovered books which the sad people had banned. Some books said Jokes on the front cover and she was awestruck when she read them. Charlotte discovered she was being like a comedian, but telling jokes wouldn't work in Sad Town because they don't like them. She made a plan to do it in Happy Town because they would love it.

She put the book in her bag and sneaked it out of the library.

Thursday morning at the break of dawn, Charlotte snuck out of the house to find where the happy people lived. She walked to the edge of Sad Town, through half of the dark and gloomy woods until she noticed that the woods got brighter, she started to hear birds singing and saw squirrels running past. This made Charlotte feel weird because she had never seen anything like it before.

It took her all day and night to get through the woods and on Friday she came across a huge sign that said, "Come here to be happy", and so she followed the sign into town.

When Charlotte got there, she saw a post with an arrow saying town square.

Skipping all the way, she saw townsfolk smiling and some even said: "Hello there."

When she got to the town square, she took out the book and set herself up with the book in front of her so she could read it. Then she shouted: "COME HERE TO HEAR THE BEST JOKES IN THE WORLD!"

The happy people came because they were wondering what was happening.

Everybody knew everybody in Happy Town because they say hello to each other and get caught up in a chat, but they had no idea who Charlotte was.

She waited for everyone to come to her and then she started the jokes.

"I only know 25 letters of the alphabet. I don't know 'Y'."

The people laughed so hard that they almost peed their pants. Charlotte thought her next joke would be perfect.

"Why can't you hear pterodactyls go to the bathroom? Because the 'P' is silent."

Charlotte didn't know that the Mayor of Happy Town was in the crowd the whole time. Mayor George laughed so hard that he cried. He asked the comedian what her name was and where she came from?

Charlotte replied: "I am Charlotte from Sad Town. My parents and the doctor said I have a happy heart, so I came here. I want to share my jokes with the world to make everybody happy, but in Sad Town no one would like it."

"You must be very brave to do all of that." The mayor said, surprised to hear it. "If you want, you can live in Happy Town with us and tell jokes to make people happy."

She told people jokes that they had never heard because they were from the Sad Town library, where the books were banned, and no-one ever took them out. "Have you heard the latest news about a girl called Charlotte. She tells the best jokes in the world." the townsfolk told each other. "She's from Sad Town!"

"That's very odd." the people replied.

The Joyful Daily newspaper heard about Charlotte because people were talking about her. They wrote an article that went on the front page, and that's how everybody heard the story about the famous comedian who came from Sad Town. She stayed there telling jokes to make everyone happy.

Highly Commended: The Typewriter

David Mintiers

It was a warm afternoon; I have been thinking about an intense climax for my short story. 'Hello! I am Gary, and I want to be the biggest storyteller ever.' I often participate in the best story competitions run by libraries, schools, and local charities. Unfortunately, I never win the Best Story Award. Mum knows about my disappointment and a wave of sorrow that washes over me each time I lose. She tells me, 'never give up' and to keep trying, that one day I will succeed. Every person wants to be famous, but they want their fame in a particular field they love, and my love is – 'Telling the Best Story ever'.

Mum and I enjoy taking a stroll together, we were excited about the newly opened antique shop in the market. "Gary, do you want to check the new shop after school," asked mum. 'Yes'! I said eagerly. I walked back home from school, and then went to the shops with mum. It was a windy afternoon. We reached the shop, it belonged to an old man, he had winter white hair, his face was timeworn and wrinkled. With a friendly smile, and he welcomed us into the shop and showed us some new collection that came in that morning. I took a good look around the shop and I laid my eyes on an old typewriter. When I pointed at the typewriter, the old man hissed, 'This typewriter is not for sale'. I pleaded him saying it will help me create interesting narratives and it is a must have for an author like me. The old man warned me saying, 'Ok you can have it at your own peril, it will have serious consequences'.

I placed the typewriter on my desk and fed the paper onto it and started typing. I finished the climax for my story I had been working on and submitted it to the competition. A week later the competition results were announced. My story was awarded the Best Story and was given a cash prize! This was the first taste of FAME for me! This story was about a Rugby tournament, against the odds, the underdog team wins at the cost of one of the players in the group getting severely injured with a broken leg. The next day my school team returned with a Champion Cup winning the Rugby tournament for the first time, but one of the players had his leg broken. I was shocked to see this, and thought, 'is my story happening in real'. I wondered if this has got anything to do with the old man's warning that using the typewriter will have consequences. The madness of the fame was strong within me, so I ignored it. Soon I got an invitation from Young Story Writers competition on a district level, as

now I was counted among the young famous writers in my town. I wanted to avoid using the typewriter, but the fame and popularity among my readers that I was experiencing had a big effect on my decisions. Therefore, I started writing a story for the competition on the typewriter. This was a story of a family that goes on a holiday not knowing it will be a biggest nightmare . I finished my story and sent it to the competition and crossed my fingers. Results were announced my story was won the Best Story on a district level!! The next day there was news in my neighbourhood about a family who went for a holiday and had met with a big accident. I was partially shocked, as at this point as I had begun to believe that the typewriter churns out stories that turn real. The glory and fame I received by winning the award for this story killed away the guilt of using the typewriter again. It was my ladder of fame.

Months passed; I have been waiting for another competition to compete on a county level. Winning a competition on a county level would mean, fame that will stay forever. Not long, and a Literary Competition was announced, the best writers from every district were invited to participate. This competition came with a theme -

‘Adventure’, I was sure many writers will come up with creative stories for this theme. I decided to start writing the story on my typewriter knowing that there could be another victim, but the fame I will gain after winning this will be priceless! I began writing a story about a group of friends who went for mountaineering. I chose this adventure as it was my favourite too. I could use my own challenges and experiences to give the story a natural feel. When I finished writing I clicked the button and submitted the story. I was patient for the results as somewhere I was confident that the typewriter is a winning machine. Days passed I had forgotten about the story, I had sent. I had an adventure trip coming up planned with my friends and few adults months ago. It was my favourite outdoor sport, climbing the hills nearby and I couldn’t wait for it. I had always been an expert climber, but this time while climbing the hill, I missed the safety rule and forgot to tie the knot to my harness. I continued climbing, I could feel the loose end, and I crumpled in a heap, rolling down the hill. As I rolled down, my heart sank, and the flashes of my recent story jetted my mind – ‘Adventure’ for the County Level Competition. I realised it was coming true and this time it is me in the story and it is my turn. The fame that made me write all those awards winning stories on the typewriter, today I am victim of that

FAME. I broke both my elbows badly and dislocated both ankles, my fate remains undecided, will I ever be able to walk, write or even think of a story again!

Commended: A Coffee Cup Full of Fame
Matilda Turner

“Fame makes you rich, successful and solves all your problems! And we, here at Coopers’ & Co., can bring you all that and more! Remember, Ring Us Up And Up Goes Your Luck!” Percy Cooper smiled his glittering, toothpaste-white smile and winked at the camera.

“That’s a rap! Take five, everyone!” The director nodded at the film crew, then turned and grinned at Percy Cooper. “Good job today, Percy. We’ll have those people ringing up Coopers’ & Co. in no time!” Percy smiled thinly and slid off his stool. “That IS what I pay you for, Morgan. Hey, can I get an iced Espresso!” He clicked his fingers and a nervous-looking assistant handed him a tall paper cup before scampering away.

Percy strolled into his private elevator and pressed the shining red button for the 10th floor. While Percy glugged down his coffee he thought about all the business requests he’d deleted this morning. “46...That’s got to be a new record.” He chuckled to himself. Last night he’d watched a TV show called Remorse: where mega-billionaires get sappy! It’d been recommended to him by his Netflix account, and Percy had enjoyed it very much. Seeing ultra-rich, ultra-successful rich guys, like himself, turn over a new leaf, become friendly and kind, almost good-hearted, was pure comedy in Percy Cooper’s eyes. Like he, Australia’s best businessman, would ever go on a show like THAT.

This was inside the shiny glass office building of Coopers’ & Co., the most successful marketing firm in Australia. Behind all these smiley ads, though, the company was secretly the biggest scam in marketing’s history. And it hadn’t been discovered yet. Percy Cooper bribed his staff big bucks to keep his secrets under wraps, and they did, because if someone pays you a couple of thousand to do just about anything, you usually do it. The millions of Coopers’ & Co. clients were smooth-talked by Percy Cooper, who was a real charmer, into giving him almost all of their money so he could ‘make them famous’.

Of course, Percy Cooper didn’t actually make them famous, or successful, and he doubled their problems. Refunds weren’t an option and later the clients would look at their empty bank accounts and wonder why they’d given Percy their entire careers. As you can guess, this got a LOT of bad reviews and complaints, but people who hadn’t yet ben scammed yet are quite suggestible and one sparkling smile from

Percy and they chose to ignore the angry comments. *The internet's full of lies*, they told themselves, *it's probably fake reviews*. They shrugged and swooned over Percy's handsome sideburns instead, before dialling Coopers' & Co. and making an appointment.

Funny, what the idea of fame does to people...

Unknown to anyone, after a few billion complaints about Coopers' & Co., the MI7 decided to get involved and investigate. They sent an intelligent agent called Loren Bluebottle to find out from the inside, disguised as a private barista (Percy adored an iced Espresso).

When she'd finished making coffee, she'd secretly hack into the CCTV footage of Percy's office, tracking shady business phone calls and putting it all on a USB drive.

Loren sent all this to the MI7 until they had enough information to make an arrest.

One lovely sunny morning, there was a knock on Percy's office door. "Augh! I'm in a meeting, OK? Come back in fi-" he was cut off as Loren entered the room. "Call you back!" Percy hung up his phone. "Got my coffee, then? I ended a meeting for you!" Loren smiled smugly. "No, Percy Cooper. You're under arrest," She held up her MI7 badge triumphantly, and in her other hand was a coffee cup, still steaming. "Oh, and here's your Macchiato!" Percy raised his eyebrows. " First of all, WHAAAT? And second of all, I like Espresso not Macchiato-" Percy was cut off as Loren threw the coffee cup all over him. SPLOSH! Australia's richest man was now pouring in oozy brown liquid, and had cream dripping from his short groomed beard.

The next day there was only one thing the news headlines could talk about: Percy Cooper had been lead out of his office in handcuffs and covered in coffee. And as Percy Cooper's story was brought into light, so was the truth about Coopers' & Co. People gathered in front of The office building to throw eggs, shout a bit, and demand their money back.

Over 400,000 people got their careers back that day, but it made them think twice about the prospect of Fame. And ordering a coffee.

Commended: Fame
Chloe Oulahan

Dear diary,

I just wish I wasn't famous. It's no fun at all. It isn't my fault I'm famous. I didn't want to be on the telly. I don't want to be interviewed all the time. I sometimes try to imagine what it would be like if I hadn't skied so well. If I hadn't don't that big jump when I was small. Now, whenever I go down a slope on my fast skis, people point, photos are taken: all the things I hate. Well I guess I'll have to put up with it.

Dear diary,

Just my luck! I can join a competition! A great one, too! I've just had a plan. If my plan succeeds, well, I'll be the happiest person alive.

Dear diary,

I've joined. I've submitted all the information that was required. I'm all set and ready. My skis are clean. My race gear is laid out neatly on the bed. Whenever I was past it, oh it makes me feel glorious.

Dear diary,

Today was the day! I leapt out of bed shaking with fear and excitement. What would happen, I thought? Toadstool purred, curling around my legs, sending out a wave of comfort and calm in my frantic mixed-up thoughts of the day ahead. I sighed. I kneeled down and let my hands sink into his soft, warm fur. The cuckoo clock struck ten and I watched as the little bird peeked through the shutters of the house. It was time to go. I reluctantly stood up and walked slowly towards my car, picking up my skis and boots on the way. This was my only chance.

After that everything was a blur. Driving through the buildings with the pretty balconies, then I remember getting out of my car, getting ready for the competition, watching the other competitors race down the slope...and then my name was called.

"Edika Straussman!" boomed out of the speaker. Everyone cheered. I winced. This was atrocious. "On your marks", boomed the voice again, "Get set", it was now or never, "GO!!".

I raced down the slope making sure I went slower than usual. My hair flew behind me. Up came the jump. I soared through the air and landed with a bump. I mark was taken off. Good. The second jump came up and once again I soared through the air and landed with a bump. A second point was taken off. I then pretended to drop a pole. It rolled down the slope and as I feigned shock and horror I raced after it. A third point was taken away. Excellent. My plan was working.

I soon finished the race and to my joy I had lost. I sat down on a stool and began to laugh. To everyone it looked as if I was crying, but I was in fact, swimming in ecstasy.

As soon as I got home I began to dance around the house. I had the largest smile on my face. I was much too excited to sleep but when I finally did, it felt as if I was glowing. Toadstool curled up on my feet in an apologetic manner. He looked as if I had no idea what was happening. I sighed. No fame. Wonderful!

Dear diary,

This morning I woke up to the sound of shouting and frantic banging on my door. I peeked out of the window and saw an enormous crowd of reporters. This was exactly what had happened when I was smaller. I immediately got ready. Why had I not thought of the consequences? Why? I switched on the news. I was everywhere. My eyes were wide and I was breathless. No. No. No!

I had interview, after interview. Never ending until lunchtime. Then I slammed the door in the next journalists' face. My house was a haven of calm as I sank down to the floor. I sighted and got up. Well too bad. It was like this for the rest of the day. The next two days as well in fact, and at the end of each day, I sank into bed absolutely exhausted.

Dear diary,

It's been a long time. At least a year since the competition, and I haven't felt like writing for a while. I am famous no longer. My dream came true! Now I live in

peace with Toadstool and it's bliss. One thing has not changed though – I still go skiing every day, but now no one pays any attention to me.

Commended: Renewable Hope

Andreas Armond

Nerrian Alonso was a climate change activist who was inspired to fight to save nature by the terrible scenes of decaying life around her. Though, she had not a clue what surprises the next day would bring.

The day before, at Speaker's Corner, in front of the entire audience of Hyde Park, Nerrian spoke passionately about the effects on wildlife and the ecosystem that polluting emissions brought, swaying the crowds immensely, who applauded her greatly at the end. What Nerrian did not know was that for hours after, people discussed and discussed remembering the words Nerrian had spoken.

After a long night's rest, Nerrian woke with a shock to hear a great deal of chattering outside. She swiftly changed and headed to her front door, turned the knob and stopped. She stared. There were crowds of people all huddled about her front porch. People holding cameras and microphones were prodding her with questions. "What more do you have to say about this?" one asked while another, "Please tell us, how do we truly cut our emissions?" Taken aback by this peculiar reaction to her speech and the dense accumulation of people, she was lost for words. With only seconds to respond before another question was thrown at her, she felt hopeless in all the commotion. Retreating into the safety of her house, she breathed a sigh of relief, glad to be away from all the chaos. After finally managing to drain out the chatter just outside, she realised that her speech had touched the minds at Hyde Park that day and that the crowds outside would be willing to follow her to cease the harrowing impacts of climate change. Then she knew that, now, she could finally make a change.

While the crowds outside left, Nerrian got to work. She had planned to open a charity to raise funds for the reduction of greenhouse gases before, but she never had enough attention to open it. Now Nerrian could finally implement her idea. She truly believed this would raise enough awareness to reverse the terrible actions done to the environment and finally make a more stable ecosystem. Deciding the name "Protect our world", she designed the logo and finally, after all was complete, she stepped back and smiled. A step of the way to her dream was achieved.

Renting out a building, Nerrian set up her charity swiftly. She beamed as people rushed in to donate and was immensely grateful how generous the people were. She raised over a thousand pounds on her first day. With the funds, she was going to support a renewable energy project and promote more sustainable products. Hopefully, she thought, people would aid her. Luckily enough, Nerrian had great influence over crowds ever since her great fame came forth.

Since the days of her childhood, Nerrian had a fierce passion and inspiration for saving the planet. Travelling, when older, to places all over the world she witnessed things she could never believe existed. Failing ecosystems; dying forests; lost wandering packs of animals. She was horrified by the outcomes of climate change and knew she had to make a change. As a young adult, she led protests against deforestation, waste and the like. Furthermore, Nerrian participated in large beach and park clean-ups while enlightening her fellow volunteers on the ferocity and pace of climate change. There she began to become much of a role model for others, inspiring those unsure of how to help and aiding those who were struggling. There she decided to devote all her time and energy into saving the planet.

Surprisingly, though, on the eve of Summer, Nerrian received a message from someone named Am-Cumbak, a mayor of an African town. He spoke about a major fuel shortage for their diesel energy generator, a crucial feature in their town keeping the place alive. Apparently hearing of Nerrian's great speech, the mayor believed she could be the best help he could get for his town. The generator powered their watering systems for crops and if it failed the town would be starved. Now, though, was an important time for them since Summer was their harvesting time meaning that urgency was required. Nerrian accepted swiftly and, after gathering a crew to help and packing large equipment, booked a flight to the African town.

Her journey was long but she knew she had to attend to the problem with haste. The issue was serious. After six and a half hours on the plane, she began to see Africa. She was amazed. There were zebras grazing and trees straining in the scorching heat. She had never seen anything so beautiful. Sadly, the wonder was cut short for the plane was nearing the runway and Nerrian's crew had to prepare to get the heavy equipment out of the upper compartments.

Exiting the plane into the heat, Nerrian and her crew followed a route to the town Am-Cumbak provided her and within minutes were entering the town. Immediately, they spotted the diesel generator and noticed it was in terrible condition and didn't seem to be running. Am-Cumbak came to greet them and finally brought them closer to the generator. Nerrian decided that the most efficient power source would be solar power. With her crew, they assembled an array of solar panels over three days of long, hard work. Hooking the panels to the watering system, Nerrian was complete. The town's food supply was saved.

Am-Cumbak was immensely grateful and couldn't cease to say his thanks. Before the team left, he showed them to the community hearth and, with the help of the townsfolk, taught them how to do an African dance. Nerrian was surprised by the complexity of it. After the great fun, the team departed from the town. And sadly, the four-day-long trip was over. Though now, Nerrian had truly done her part protecting the Earth.

Commended: Ayah and Her Dream

Sofia Dos Santos

Once there lived a baby girl called Ayah. She was six weeks old with green eyes, brown hair, and soft brown skin. She lived with her two sisters in a house on an island with no houses, except their house and no people except them. Their island was called *Sunny Island* and was surrounded by an endless dark sea. The funny thing was the island was never sunny. In fact, it was always wet, cold, dark, depressing, and yucky, which is why no one ever visited it, making it a very lonely place to live.

One day Sofia and Hannah were downstairs in the cold damp kitchen avoiding going to bed, when suddenly, they heard a strange noise from upstairs. Hannah said to Sofia, "go upstairs because I'm too scared". Sofia quietly said to Hannah, "why are you scared?". Hannah replied, "what if it's a monster?", and Sofia replied, "monsters don't exist!". "Well, I think they do!", said Hannah crossly. "Well, they don't!", said Sofia angrily. They both started to fight, but then Sofia said, "stop! We shouldn't be fighting". "Well, then you should go upstairs and see what that sound is", said Hannah. "Okay", said Sofia. Sofia crept upstairs and snuck into Ayah's bedroom where she saw her laying deep asleep. She slowly walked closer to the crib and leant over to give her a kiss. Sofia then stared down at Ayah imagining her dream.

Ayah's dream started with her longing to escape this cold and depressing island so she could be a famous hotelier, where everyone from all over the world would come and stay. She wanted to make sure her name meant something. This was now her opportunity; she would miss her sisters very much but knew one day she would see them again and be able to help them escape the island as well. Ayah escaped the house, which was surrounded by thick and yucky mud, she walked slowly through the mud to a black and white boat, which she used to set off the island. She did not know where the sea would take her for all she could see was endless darkness, but she was brave and knew this was the only way she could ever obtain her dream.

Eventually, Ayah came across land, once she was onshore, she started to explore the area. There were loads of ships approaching and people coming from all over the world to trade. She knew this had to be the place where she would start her hotel, the question was how? As she contemplated this, she stumbled across an

empty large building. There were many people walking past the building, so she asked them “do you know who owns this building?” just as she asked this question a strange man walked up to her. “I see you are interested in this building”, he said, “this building is very special and is only for those that deserve it, once it is yours you will become the most famous hotelier in the world!” Ayah did not understand what he meant but was intrigued, “what do I need to do?” “Well,” he said, “the building is yours for now, but this is only a test, I will be watching you.” As he said those final words the man disappeared before Ayah could utter another word. Ayah stepped into the building, starting to feel tired, she found somewhere to rest for the night.

When she woke the next day, it was as if the building had transformed into this beautiful and glamorous hotel. She walked through the building and found it full of people, she could not believe her eyes, “what is going on?”, she thought to herself. Everyone would walk past her greeting her as if they knew her. Everything was exactly as the mysterious man described.

Years went by and Ayah began to forget about the man and instead fully immersed herself into the hotel, which was now considered the hottest thing in the world. She was famous and no one could take that away from her. People were travelling far and wide to stay in her hotel, her picture was everywhere, on billboards, magazines, and newspapers. The hotel was always fully booked, however, Ayah started to feel lonely.

It was midnight and everything in the hotel went quiet and as she took a step closer to her bedroom, before opening the door she came to the sudden realisation she was missing her two sisters and that she had failed to keep her promise to them. Ayah ran outside the hotel crying “where are you?” she was referring to the mysterious man. She looked around and he was nowhere to be seen, she shouted louder, “I said where are you?!” suddenly, he appeared behind her, giving her a fright “you scared me!” she exclaimed. “Is there something you wanted?” he asked politely “yes!” “I want to see my sisters, I miss them, and I want to go back to Sunny Island, none of this means anything without them.” “I see ” said the man, “are you sure that is what you want? What about all of this, do you seriously want to leave this behind?”. “I need to see my sisters, I left them behind, how can I be happy without them?”. Suddenly everything went dark, the man disappeared, the hotel was gone,

the billboards with her pictures had gone and all she could hear was a large thudding noise coming closer and closer.

Ayah's eyes opened, as she looked up, she saw Hannah and Sofia peering over the crib, "she's awake!" shouted Sofia. Sofia then lifted Ayah out the crib and whispered, "I promise Ayah that I will never leave you behind, we will leave this island and be successful together, as sisters." Ayah just looked at Sofia with her wide green eyes as if she understood her, for what is the point of fame if those you love are not there.

Category: Poems

1st Place: Head or Heart
Ziva Patel

If I listen to my head
This is what it will tell me
Fame can come at a cost
Fame can be short-lived
So please don't tell me
That I can be a trailblazer
That I can be an inspiration
For all I can imagine is
Eyes will watch me like hawks everywhere I go
Or that
I will favour a profligate life over my roots
It is hard for me to feel
The world will be my oyster
Because I can channel my voice and money to those in need
When really
Boom! This life might come crashing down on me
Or
I may not leave a lasting legacy
So it is not right to say
Fulfilling my dreams will lead to happiness
And
I can unite rich and poor, yet stay grounded
Even if I am a celebrity
This is what it will tell me
If I follow my heart
(now read from bottom to top – this is a reverse poem)

2nd Place: What Is Fame All About
Betsy Newark

Glamour and glitz
A night at the ritz
The red carpet is rolled
The outfits are bold
The music is loud
The fans are in the crowd
“No normal people allowed”
The disco ball is shining
But is there a silver lining?
As the awards are told
The glitter shines gold
There’s cheers from all around
Confetti is on the ground
Everyone seems to be having to fun
Apart from one...
Behind the glitter and gold
There is another story to be told
As the music dies down
His smile turns to a frown
As the lights fade
A new story is made
It’s time to go home
And he is going alone
He walks through his front door
No red carpet anymore
Only silence he hears
No clapping no cheers
He has spent his life working so hard
Maybe that’s not the main part
He’s missed out on family and friends
This is where our story comes to its end

Should he have spent some more time?

Would it have all been fine?

It's not too late to change

Should we forget all the fame

Their only a phone call away

And he decided today was the day

Looking from the inside out

What is fame all about?

3rd Place =: Fame is Lamé
Mimi-Raie Mhlanga

Fame is lame,
I mean what's it all for
It's something we dreamed of,
When we were three or four

It's like a riddle,
Something you want but can't gain
Making you question if you really are good enough
Fame is lame

Fame is like this.
Fame is a pain that rained and sorrows again and again, something you can't
contain or
gain, as you try to break free from chains, you're not allowed to change, frustration
screaming your name, as you hear a crying wain, just like a hurtful pain. And there's
no
escape from fame.

Sadness, sadness, mess and madness; fire hot and full of badness.
But fame is like a cycle.
People think you're amazing before looking on the inside
The good go unnoticed but the bad get denied.

Sometimes you need a hand but famous people and that one popular kid is
not granted help.
Even when they cry for it and yelp.

As you reveal your fear, it begins to show, but never is it loud.
Your happiness arrives, followed by foe, as clouds become a shroud.
And there's no escape from fame.
Fame is lame

3rd Place =: Can You See Me
Maryam Khan

Hustle, bustle, crowds, voices ... in front, behind, choices.

Look carefully, there ... in the corner ... quiet ... I stare.

Invisible, insignificant ... I am not,

I am here... black hair, brown eyes, brown skin.

Can you see me?

Flashes of colour, whizzing past, no time to stop.

Forgotten, alone and different ...I feel.

Assemblies, teachers, notices ... all say care and share.

Did you? ...Can You?

I am here ... black hair, brown eyes, brown skin.

Can you see me?

Groups huddle, groups play, groups laugh.

Do they need me? Do they include me? Should I stay or go?

Think before speaking ... is it necessary? Is it kind?

Time moves on, change is slow, I am one. I am alone.

I am here... black hair, brown eyes, brown skin.

Can you see me?

In it together they say ... join in they say ...harmony they say.

My food is different, my language is different, my mother is different.

I am here ... black hair, brown eyes, brown skin

Can you see me? ... Only when I have FAME.

Commended: Fame

Teddy Molden

Fame is a thief;
A mendacious attention grabber,
Who does not assure your victory.
For however perfect seems your future story,
Fame is always the treacherous backstabber.

Fame is deceitful,
An apparent life-long need,
But in reality just whisks away your heed.

Now my friends, I must warn you,
Before Fame's rich garments do adorn you,
That all that glitters is not gold,
And when your steps seem unceasing bold,
Into Fame's land, where you believe glories unfold...
If everything around you promises a route to success,
Step back now, or you shall never progress.

Fame has a dominating force,
It can send even the toughest warrior off course,
Through agonies which make one scream,
Inexplicable in horrors so obscene.

Be canny, avoid Fame's beguiling embrace,
Or risk incessant tears conquering your face,
And your soul being scorched away until you are merely a ghost.
So never let Fame be your master;
Never let Fame be your host.

Commended: The Flow of Fame
Maya Pal

Nothing worse than sitting
On the cold curse of a throne
Why did I fall afoul
Of this witching mirror?

My blunt mind thought it didn't exist
Like a cold imaginary kiss in the mist.

Alexander the Great
Couldn't be worse his fate
Fame lead him to a dreadful end
When he stabbed and murdered his own friends.
Muddling his senses
Stiffening his mind
Legacy was his prize but losing himself was the cost
Fame made him think he was a God
But glory changed his story
Alexander the Great.

What from this can we gain?
Conquering cities, unearthing mysteries
Forging new worlds in which all are equal
Giving us new eyes to see long forgotten beauty
Fame gave us these heroes to lead our parade
Of future dreams and endless hidden paths .

If fame falls upon me
It's only because my heart has led me
Across the dusty paths of ancient poets.

Commended: Forever Legends

Arina D'Souza

Maybe I can offer comfort to those in the camp,
Just like the 'Lady with the Lamp'.
Maybe I can win without agitation,
Just like the 'Father of the Nation'.
Maybe I can fight for human rights safety,
Just like the 'Iron Lady'.
Maybe I can see an apple differently over the pasture,
Just like the 'Priest of Nature'.
Maybe I can pile up centuries and centuries faster,
Just like the 'Little Master'.
Maybe I can sprint at the speed of light in a jolt,
Just like the 'Lightning Bolt'.
Maybe I can slam dunk with a plan,
Just like 'Air Jordan'.
Maybe I can knock out the best,
Just like 'The Greatest'.
Or maybe I can choose to be myself,
And live forever selfless.

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 30 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.

