

A misty landscape with a forest on the left and a body of water in the foreground. The water is calm and reflects the surrounding environment. The sky is overcast and hazy, creating a soft, atmospheric light. The forest consists of tall, dark evergreen trees. The overall mood is quiet and serene.

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Editor's Note

A princess stuck in a tower. A very ill girl confined to her room. A poem that enacts the feeling of being trapped in a love/hate relationship. A young boy whose fear of heights restricts his movement. A poem that describes beauty as “suffocating.” The stories and poems in this issue are about being confined, trapped, restricted, stuck, suffocated. They are about wanting to escape—either physically or mentally—from that “stuckness.” This is the feeling, to me, of February: it is a time of rain, snow, cold, and wind after the novelty of that weather has worn off. It is a month for dreaming of spring, of an escape.

Letters: Do you have something to say about something you've read or seen in *Stone Soup*? If you do, we'd love to hear from you, and we might print your letter on our Letters to the Editor page! Post a comment on our website, or write to us at editor@stonesoup.com.

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On the cover:
'Mist at the Lake',

by Brian Qi, 11
Lexington, MA

StoneSoup

Contents

STORIES

4 We No Longer Go Outside

by Stella Lin

Hua Hua, a young dog, reflects on life with her owner—before she got sick

11 The Balcony

by Una Dorr

Milo confronts his greatest fear: the 20-story-high balcony

17 The Waterfall

by Natalie Warnke

A princess's life is not so amazing and magical as you'd imagine

19 Gleaming Star

by Ellen Salovaara

Years after her father's death, Katie wonders who will walk her down the aisle

POETRY

7 Love/Hate Relationship
by Morgan Lane

9 Stroll at Sunset
by Nour Mokbel

15 The Road to Williamstown
by Sophie Nerine

ART

Cover: Mist at the Lake
by Brian Qi

6 Creek Reflection
by Filomena Bertucci

8 Pastel
by Adhav Dhanavel Kumar

10 Glass Bunny
by Sarah Liu

14 Flower Cow
by Cole Gibson

16 Succulent
by Marlena Rohde

2 2 BOOK REVIEW
The Children of Exile reviewed by Portia Li

2 4 HONOR ROLL

We No Longer Go Outside

Hua Hua, a young dog, reflects on life with her owner—before she got sick

Sunrays pour into the old slider window, illuminating the white-washed walls of the bedroom; posters and certificates are plastered on the opposite wall, their color faded from years of sun. A little girl is curled up in bed, clutching the blankets in fitful sleep. I sigh and gaze through the window at the pale blue sky, which is undisturbed by occasional clouds. Outside, the leaves of the cherry blossom tree slowly wave in the breeze, and the birds continue their constant chatter.

“Let’s go play,” I whimper as I lick Sarah’s face.

“Oh, Hua Hua, you want to go play?” Sarah asks; her face reveals a solemn expression.

“Play!” I bark, wagging my tail.

“I’m sorry,” she replies, and lies back down.

I rest my chin on my paws, and Sarah pulls me close to her chest as she lazily strokes my white fur. Nuzzling my nose into her arms, I breathe in the unmistakable scent of her, like daisies. Only the smell is muddled in with something else I can’t quite explain; it must be from her numerous trips to the hospital. I look around Sarah’s room. Her closet stands in one corner, with her clothes and walking shoes neatly sorted inside. Her homework still lies open on her desk. Usually, she would finish it before she’d take me on a walk, but it’s been awhile since we’ve gone

outside together. The nightstand by the bed is piled high with get well cards from all her friends and neighbors, those people I like to bark at when they walk past. Her room smells like the vet’s office, too spotless, not like it used to. It used to smell like sunshine—clean, fresh, crisp.

I remember when Sarah and I first met. I was a little puppy then, running around with not a thing in the world that concerned me. You could say I was very energetic, curious, and brave. I didn’t care if I got hurt because I didn’t know what pain felt like. In the cage at SPCA, Sarah crouched down next to me and brought me into her arms. I looked at her and smelled daisies. Her golden brown hair was like long grass growing on the hillside. Her bright smile radiated so much happiness that it was like lying in the warm sun. I took in her freckles, her dimples, and her eyes; I memorized the shape of her face and her daisy-like smell and etched them into my dog heart. Her eyes were blue like sky, and they let me see so deep into her feelings. I saw happiness, playfulness, and pleasure. I saw anything and everything I ever wanted all in a little girl.

That day, Sarah took me to my new home, and we played together in the park. She laughed at me running in circles, chasing my own tail. Sarah’s laugh was so beautiful; it sounded like the wind chimes that were always



by Stella Lin, 12
San Ramon, California

tinkling lightly in backyards. That sound was so sharp and crisp, yet delicate and light at the same time.

I remember we also played with my red rubber ball that she gave me. She drew her arm back and threw it far, far into the field. I came bounding back through the grass with the ball clenched in my mouth and placed it at her feet. I yipped at her to throw it again and again until I lay panting on the grass, too tired to play.

Feeling the dryness in my throat, I heard the rushing water of the fountain nearby. I raced over to the fountain and dove in. Instantly, I realized that my paws struck only cold water, no surface. Frantically gyrating my legs, I tried to keep my head above the water splashing down from the top of the fountain. What I thought would be refreshing was suddenly like dying. Just as the water began to push me under, I felt two warm, delicate hands pull me to safety.

“Hua Hua, you’re such a silly goose. Why would you jump into such a big fountain?” She dried me and hugged me close, burying her nose into my fur.

How I long to be at the park right now with Sarah. I can almost feel the wind ruffling my fur and smell the soil beneath my paws. I can feel myself soaking in the warm sunshine spilling from above, and picture myself running with my red ball in my mouth and dropping it at Sarah’s feet.

With contentment, I sigh as I recall these joyous moments of our lives. I turn my head to look at Sarah now. She still has her dazzling sky-blue eyes, but she has lost her golden brown hair, and I no longer hear her beautiful laugh anymore. We no longer spend the afternoon in the park playing with my red ball, or sprawled on the grass, and we no longer go outside. Now, she just stays in bed and takes trips to the hospital.

I understand that she still loves me, but she can no longer play with me or take me on walks. I understand that things will never be like they were before. I snuggle up closer to Sarah, and she giggles. Whatever she is going through, I am her guardian and loyal friend, and I will do my best to keep her smiling. Nothing in the world can make me leave her side. Just as she saved me from the rough waters, I want to pull her to safety.



Creek Reflection



**by Filomena Bertucci, 12
Quilcene, WA**

Love/Hate Relationship



by Morgan Lane, 12
Longmont, CO

Magnificence!
There is no
Screeching.
The notes
Are pronounced.
Mistakes,
Nonexistent.
The beauty
Piercing the ears.
The sound
Flowing,
A river.
Unlike
Any other.
I will listen to
It all day.
Hating
When it ends.
It makes me smile.
Why me?

Why me?
It makes me smile
When it ends.
Hating
It all day.
I will listen to
Any other.
Unlike
A river
Flowing.
The sound
Piercing the ears.
The beauty,
Nonexistent.
Mistakes,
Are pronounced.
The notes,
Screeching.
There is no
Magnificence.



Untitled



by Adhav Dhanavel Kumar, 10
Coimbatore, India

Stroll at Sunset

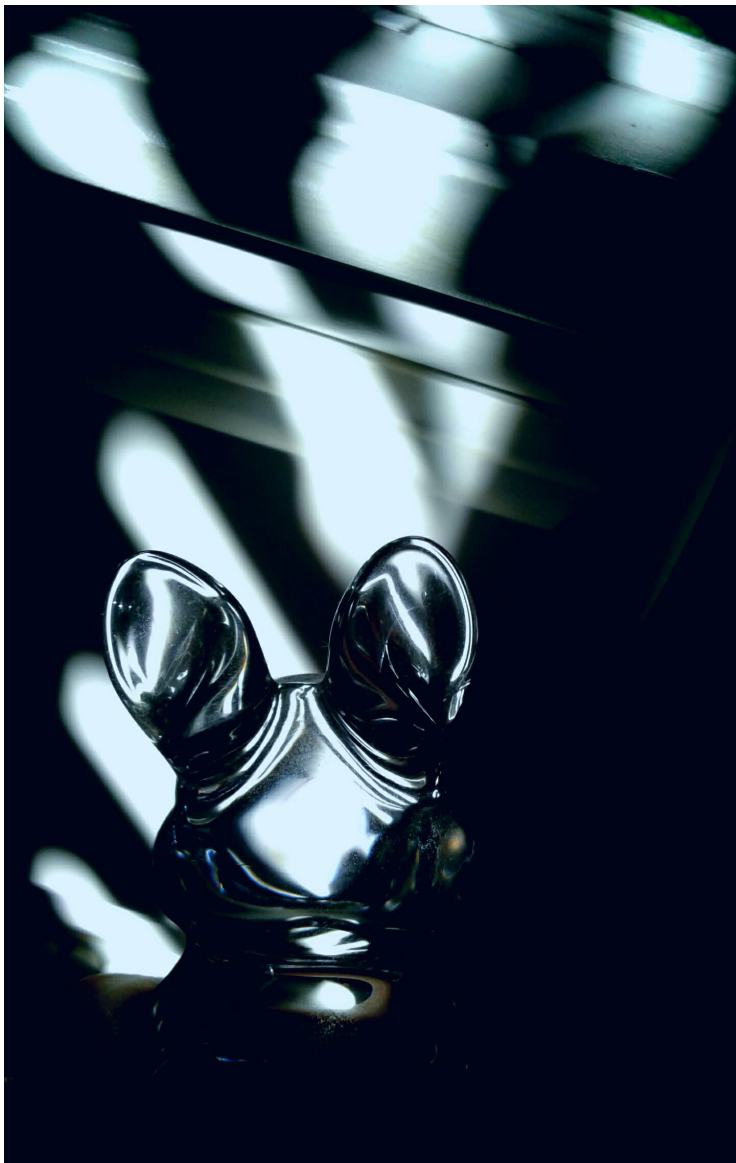
by Nour Mokbel, 11
Springfield, VA



Rolling waves of green blue spume,
Soothe my aching feet,
Silver specks whiz by against the stone,
I look up from the shallow waters,
The sky coated in a pastel orange pink,
Seagulls soar my what beauty,
A cooling breeze whistles by,

It hums through tireless work day and night,
The painter of the skies brushes his paintbrush silently,
Tiny green creatures hidden in rough sand,
Who are brave enough to disturb the quieting day,

And now I must go before the waves whisk me off,
I watch as the remains of sunset absorb into the now starry night.



Glass Bunny



by Sarah Liu, 12
Weston, FL

The Balcony

by Una Dorr, 11
Brooklyn, NY



It was a tall, weather-beaten building with countless weather-beaten balconies jutting out of its sides. Milo, a plump and red-faced 9-year-old, had felt unsafe in the top floor drafty apartment since his grandma had sold her oceanside cottage and deposited him and his loyal and fat cat Ella into this leaning block of misery last July.

Of course, he always felt queasy in high places, afraid his usual clumsiness might send him hurtling through the air only to land as flat as a pancake on the concrete below—but there was something particularly terrifying about this place. Perhaps it was the way the ceiling fan pointed as if it might just send something—like Milo’s homework—through the doors to the balcony that would swing open if the lock system malfunctioned. That thing might just land on the balcony, coaxing you to climb out to retrieve it. (Kind-hearted but pessimistic Milo always assumed the worst would happen—that his weight would make the whole balcony crack off the side of the building, as he had thought one afternoon when his math homework had sailed out there—that homework never did come back, and it caused him to get in trouble in

school for the first time the next day.)

Or maybe the scariness lay in the windows, low enough to the floor for even a boy of Milo’s height to fall out of. Or perhaps it was merely the place where you would land if you did fall: an enormous gravel parking lot with stones sharp enough to cut you if angled in the correct way. Milo often stood in his apartment (as far from the windows as possible, of course) wondering if there was a reason the apartment was so cheap: the plumbing worked and there was thick carpeting in some of the rooms, even—was it cheap because it was so high, which made you more likely to—

Snap out of it, stupid! Nobody else on the top floor is scared! Grandma, with her fear of dust bunnies hasn’t given its height a thought! There isn’t anything to be afraid of.

But Milo’s complete trust in his grandmother’s protection only reassured him for a short period of time. Soon he was back to thinking of his greatest fear: the balconies. Surely three minutes of standing on one would result in it cracking off the side of the building and tumbling 20 stories down to the lot below.

The first few days of living in the

Milo confronts his greatest fear: the 20-story-high balcony

building resulted in his grandmother begging for her little boy safe at home, because he had arranged so many sleepovers with friends that he hadn't spent more than an hour in the apartment with her and Ella. Milo tried other excuses: "Can I camp out in the woods tonight, Grandma?" or "How 'bout we go to the Jersey Shore for a few nights? It's summer break after all, eh?" But it was difficult. How can a child of age nine get out of spending time in his own home?

One average afternoon when the golden summer sun was sinking down the cityscape, Milo noticed something. While stepping into the spacious kitchen, he glanced down at the checkered tiles to find that the shiny, fake gold cat food bowl was just as he had left it 3 hours ago: full. Ella, the enormous tabby cat Milo had cared for and loved as long as he could remember (and long before that too—Milo's memory was far from good), hadn't eaten her food. "Pleasingly plump" did not describe Ella. There was no doubt about it—Ella was a very fat cat, who certainly would never miss a meal. But here the bowl was: full, full, full.

When he had come home from the public outdoor swimming pool a few hours before, he had found a post-it attached to his door, decorated with his grandmother's swirly and impossibly small cursive. He hadn't bothered to read it closely—it probably said that she was at her "volleyball for old people" class at the gym, and that she would be home at 7:00. Milo found himself thinking of this note now: had Grandma gone to the vet with Ella, perhaps?

Milo fished out the note from his pocket (he had stuffed it in there on his frantic run from the bathroom—you see, Milo was afraid of the toilets at the swimming pool.) Squinting, he read what his grandmother had written:

Dear Milo,

This isn't any usual volleyball class! It's the big day, dear, my first competition! You may come if you wish (you know where the gym is, right?) but I know you have much to do. I'll be home at 8:30! I hope to see you in bed when I get home if you decide not to come!

Love,

Grandma

P.S. Don't forget to lock the doors behind you.

Silly Grandma. In their old house, they had to lock the door and Milo was always forgetting, but in this house, *all* the doors locked immediately without any help from humans, but no matter. Milo found himself forgetting small details, too. He reread the note, giving it his full attention. Nothing about Ella, but what was this! Milo hated volleyball, so despite his deep love for his grandma, he wouldn't watch her compete. That meant...8:30! It was 6:30 now, he had 2 more hours by himself! How very, very mature he was: such a long time in a terrifying top-floor apartment without Grandma! His excitement and fear set him in high spirits during his search for the cat. He closely looked in each crevice and crack that Ella's hugeness could fit into. He even ventured near the windows, with the vibrant colors of the sky illuminating the floor below him. His

high spirits sunk and sunk as he went on and on inspecting the house.

“Ella! Ellllaaa!” The only response was an eerie echo, that as far as Milo could tell wasn’t possible, because there was so much furniture in the house. A few minutes later, the last wisp of excitement had been suffocated by defeat, like a tiny patch of blue in a cloudy sky, gradually being covered by another gray blanket of fog.

Milo sat cross-legged on the beige velvet couch, vigorously biting his nails. He tried to think—where had Ella hidden in the old house? Under... under the bed? No. The space under there was *much* too thin for Ella. Under something, but what? The couch. The couch? The couch!

Milo moved from his position to lying on his stomach, legs dangling off the back of the couch, head dangling over the place where *feet* usually go. He squinted into the endless abyss, and relief washed over him. There she was, the big bundle of fur, probably fast asleep. He reached under and tugged gently on a roll of fat, to wake her up. To his amazement, it came loose, and loose. *Is, is... What is this? What has happened to my cat!?* Finally, Ella unraveled. The thing under the couch was a big bundle of fur—his grandmother’s fur coat.

This was simply too much. Tears poured down Milo’s face and snot dripped from his nose uncontrollably.

And then he heard a terrible creak, and the sound of something breaking. His tear-stained face swiveled around to face the—the—the balcony. There she was, fast asleep. Definitely her—in the last rays of daylight he could see ears, a nose and an enormous body.

Ella was at the far end of the balcony, asleep. Milo’s stomach jumped up to his throat, and stuck there.

It was Ella this time, Milo told himself. Not math homework, Ella. Ella! The love of your life! In determined defiance, Milo robotically walked toward the balcony doors, knowing what the sound had been. The balcony was breaking.

Unaware of his movements, he opened the door—when it had blown shut behind Ella, it had locked. He tried to reach for Ella, call her name, but Ella was far away and totally out. *Ella, your life. Ella, your only real friend.* Milo took a foot off the floor that had scared him before, but now seemed as safe and sturdy as ever in comparison to the breaking balcony. *Ella.* He placed it on the concrete floor of the dangerous shelf which might take his life. *Ella.* Another foot on the balcony. *Ella.* Another step. *Ella, Ella, Ella,* another, another, *Ella, Ella, Ella!* A gust of wind. He was almost there! *Ella.* And then another gust, strong and fierce through the nighttime air. The door slammed shut behind him. He was locked out.



Flower Cow



by Cole Gibson, 8
San Rafael, CA

The Road to Williamstown



by Sophie Nerine, 12
Quincy, MA

We are in the valley between two mountains
coated in blue,
like sheep's wool.
It is suffocatingly beautiful,
and exhilarating at the same time.

A river runs by us.
White stream-water moves quickly, unreservedly
down the wooded granite peak
towards the river,
as if filled with the joy of being home.

The road we took was far too filled with cars
for any bird to call these woods their home.
We were alone
with the sky and trees,
with the mountains and river.



Succulent



by Marlana Rohde, 12
San Francisco, CA

The Waterfall

by Natalie Warnke, 12
Eden Prairie, MN



You would think that a princess's life would be amazing and magical but it's not how it seems. I sit on a bed in a tower. Every day. Always nervous. Having that one feeling where you have knots in your stomach. That something would happen. Something evil, something terrible. But every day it was the same: the same voices outside, the same hands handing me food through a slot in the wall. But then something did happen—something bad and evil. Not what I wanted. I wanted a Prince Charming like other kingdoms but I didn't get one.

I heard a scream and the castle doors shutting. People were running, voices were yelling, and I was here alone. I sat there for a while not knowing what to do. My heart started pounding. I sat patiently, knowing that sooner or later someone would remember me. But nobody did. So I started banging on the doors as hard as I could. No one heard me over the screams of terror. We were under attack, and I was stuck in a tower next to it all, hearing the whole thing. I was terrified. My hands shook like maracas. I grabbed a metal pan I had my supper on, and I thrashed it against the door. Surprisingly, a piece broke off. So

much for safe keeping.

I started peeling and chiseling the wood away. After about an hour of work, I finally had a small space to crawl out of. I slowly slipped through with a few splinters that hurt and landed on the first step of the staircase. I ran down the staircase. Then I noticed that voices were gone. Except for one hush one. "Be quiet!" I heard. I was scared. I had never had a real encounter with a human—or at least I can't remember it.

I was nervous but kept going. Quieter this time but at a fast pace. When I was almost down I saw her—a beautiful young girl. She was about three years younger.

"Who are you?" I asked.

"I'm Leda."

All the sudden I felt something I had never felt before: love. Even though I had known her for only a second, I knew she would make an amazing friend. She grabbed my hand and led me out the door.

"Where are we going?!"

"You'll see!" she said as she dragged me through the burned-down doors.

We walked until came to this place. It was amazing and so pretty. There

A princess's life is not so amazing and magical as you'd imagine

was a gorgeous waterfall. She brought me behind it.

There, behind the waterfall, was a small beaten-up mattress and a pair of old shoes. “What is this place?” I asked Leda.

“It’s my home. I left the kingdom a little while after my mom passed away. About two months ago. I’ve been here for a while but I’m getting used to it.”

It was a beautiful place. I sat down on the bed. It was kind of hard but I didn’t care. We kind of just sat there. When she said I could live here, I was relieved. I would have had nowhere else to go if I couldn’t stay here.

When we were done talking about me moving in, I went back to the tower to grab my clothes and maybe a couple pillows. I walked back through the castle doors and I was devastated. I hadn’t really noticed how terrible it looked. There was almost nothing left.

I walked over to the tower and up the staircase slowly. When I reached my room, I grabbed a bed sheet and put my clothes on it, then wrapped it up. I grabbed the three pillows on my bed and brought them as well. The only thing left besides that was a bracelet my mom gave me. I felt tears coming up and out as I slipped it onto my hand. Then the dam broke. I sat down on my bed and sobbed. I realized the hands giving me food had belonged to my mom. My mom had been the one making the noise. My mom had protected me from whatever was out there. Now she was gone. I never said thank you when she gave me the food. It wasn’t fair.

After I was done crying, I walked back down the staircase and back to the waterfall. I put my clothes down

and set the pillows on the bed.

It was about ten o’clock when I fell asleep. It was hard to fall asleep with the raging waterfall in the background but I got over it. When I woke up, the sun was already rising. I saw Leda down by the water; she had something red in her hands—strawberries.

“Hey can I have some?” I asked.

She handed me one. I took a bite into it. It was sweet. I walked back up and sat on the bed. I fiddled with the bracelet around my hand. I guess this would be my life.

Gleaming Star

by Ellen Salovaara, 13
Baltimore, MD



I was young when it happened—a mere eight-years-old. Daddy had gone out one day for work . . . and hadn't come back. The funeral was impossible to bear. Mama was crying hysterically, and the grey-streaked sky pounded down fat, round tears. That night though, Mama took me outside after dinner. The sky was calm then, and a warm breeze tickled my fingers and lazily tossed my hair around. Juniper bushes swung to the breeze's song, and the flat New Mexico land stretched out around us.

"Katie, look up," Mama said as she pulled me up onto her lap. My eyes traced over the endless black sky, weaving in and out of the rooftops. "Do you see the *estrellas*, the stars?"

Even though we are not Hispanic, growing up around Spanish-speaking people had rounded out my knowledge of the language, and Mama's rich voice made the already beautiful words seem delicate and smooth, like chocolate.

I nodded, staring into the tiny stars piercing the inky night sky.

"See that one?" Mama pointed at an especially bright one, directly above me.

"That's Daddy, looking down at us." I pressed my hands over my heart

as silent tears began to roll down my cheeks.

"I love you," I whispered to him
And underneath my hands, deep
down in my heart, I felt his voice. *I love
you too, my little gleaming star.*

I hear a truck rumble into our gravel driveway, and I push back my chair. Papers are in a tangled mess on the deck table, and I pull my eyes away from them.

"Katie!" My mom rushes to me after she locks the doors to her truck.

"Mama!" I hug her.

"How is everything going? *Bueno?*"

"Yes," I say. "Hectic, though. It's crazy."

Mama laughs. "Been there, sweetheart, been there. I still can't believe my *hija* is getting married!!" She wraps me in another hug, and she begins to cry." Your father would have been so proud." She stands back and looks at me, a sad smile on her face. I force back tears. She had ripped apart the stitches to my time-worn wound.

"So? Where is he?"

As if on cue, Ben comes up behind me and gives me a hug. "Hi, honey. Ready for the wedding?"

I give him a fake glare. "Far from

*Years after her father's death, Katie wonders
who will walk her down the aisle*

it.”

He smiles and we all go inside. Mama places the dinner she brought for us on the table. I get up to help Ben with the table settings, but he places a gentle hand on my shoulder. “Don’t worry. You’ve worked really hard today.”

“So have you!” I protest.

He laughs. “Figuring out the seating chart is not hard.”

“Yes it is! If you put my Aunt Jennie in the sun, we won’t be able to hear the priest over her snoring!”

He laughs again. “You just rest, okay?”

I concede and watch their intricate dance, dodging each other as they glide around the kitchen and swirl around counters.

The dinner of chicken, rice, and broccoli is eaten quickly, and before I realize it, Mama is whisking away plates. As Ben is washing the dishes, Mama collects her purse.

“You don’t have to go just yet,” I try.

Mama smiles. “I wish I could stay, sweetheart. But I—”

“But Mama, the stars are lovely tonight. Just come and sit on the deck for a few minutes, please.”

Mama sighs, but I can tell she is just putting on a show. She walks into the kitchen, wordlessly fills two large glasses with raspberry iced tea, and strolls out to the deck. I sit next to her on our old, rickety swing, which creaks ever so slightly when we move. It is metal, but painted white, and has little green vines encircling its arms. I lean into the old green cushion and relax a little.

“Okay, Katie, what do you want to talk about?”

My mama knows me so well. She knew I didn’t just want to sit. She knew I had something on my mind.

I brush my hair out of my face and sip my raspberry iced tea. The moon is low tonight, and the night sky is covered in stars. The slight wind whistles as it dances in and out of the wooden slats on the deck floor, and a few tumbleweeds rustle across the wide-open land.

I want to beat around the bush. I don’t want to tear open my wound anymore, but I know I have to say it. So I just start talking.

“I know I should have figured this out already, given how close the wedding is. But . . . who’s going to walk me down the aisle?”

Mama sits in silence for a few minutes. She places her hand on mine and stares up at the sky.

“Katie,” she finally says, gazing up at the sky. “See that star?”

I nod, looking up at the bright star she is pointing at, winking amidst the sky. “Daddy,” I whisper. Mama looks at me, fresh tears blossoming in her eyes. “That’s right, Katie. That *estrella* is your father. He’s probably listening right now. Can you hear what he’s saying?”

“No,” I murmur, “but I can feel it.” I could. *Hey, bonita. I’ll be at your wedding, okay? I’ll walk you down the aisle if you want, but maybe you should let your Mama do it. I’ll still be there, though. It’s okay to let go, and know that even when you do, I will always be there. Letting go doesn’t have to mean forgetting. I love you, my little gleaming star.*

“I love you, too, Daddy,” I whisper

Then I turn to Mom. “He wants you to do it.”

A smile spreads across her face.

“And do you want that, *mi hija*?”

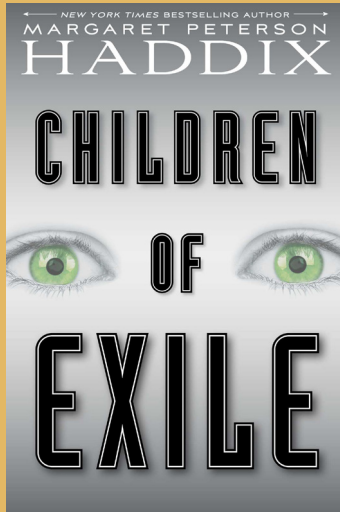
Tears flow down my cheeks as I nod a yes.

She hugs me tightly, and as she does, I can feel my wound healing. Eventually, Mama stands up and heads inside. I stay out a little longer, watching the trees sway and the stars twinkle. I can still feel the echo of Daddy’s voice: *Letting go doesn’t have to mean forgetting*. And then, I feel my heart coming out of its cage and being free. I feel happy.

I love you, my little gleaming star.

Book Review

The Children of Exile by Margaret Peterson Haddix;
Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers: New York, 2015; \$17.99



Have you ever had a hard decision deciding between two books to read? I started in the bookstore holding two precious books. My mother's eyes stared down at me expectantly, wanting me to just pick a book and leave. I looked this way and that and finally made the decision to pick the book, *The Children of Exile*. This book's back cover really intrigued me. After reading it, my mind was filled with questions: *Why were the children sent to Fredtown? What type of people were in Fredtown?* And just like that, I became absorbed in this book by Margaret Peterson Haddix. It is an amazing book about staying strong and standing up for your differences.

In this book, the protagonist is a twelve-year-old girl named Rosi.

Ever since she was born, her brother Bobo and she had been sent off to a faraway place called Fredtown. In Fredtown, there were no arguments and everything was resolved by talking it through. One day Rosi, her little brother Bobo, and all the other children of Fredtown were told that they were going to be sent back to their original homes where they would meet their birth mothers and fathers. Rosi has to take care of all the children and fight for what is right. In this action-packed story, nothing is unthinkable.

One of the important themes in this book to me is to speak up and do what is right. When Rosi comes back to her real home, she realizes the ways are different. Many things require a fight when they could be resolved calmly. For example, having lost their children for six years, the real parents want them back very badly. As soon as the plane from Fredtown lands, the parents bang on plane doors and windows making a loud racket. Rosi and the other children become even more scared. Rosi had imagined a calm line of parents waiting peacefully and welcoming their children with kindness and love. She had not expected this.

My favorite part in this book is in the middle. This is when Rosi's real parents take Bobo and her to church.

Reviewed by
Portia Li, 11
Acton, MA



Then, when the preacher preaches, he talks about how their town had finally got all of its children back. He said that the Fred parents were evil and were thieves who stole their children. While saying this, Rosi was having a hard time keeping her mouth shut; she wanted to speak up and say how kind, loving, and caring the Fred parents were. Finally, when Rosi couldn't contain herself, she spoke up. All of the parents stared at her as if she was crazy, but she kept going. Rosi is a very brave girl and fought for what is right. I absolutely loved her character in the book.

I connected this to my piano class. In piano there is something called sight-reading. Sight-reading is when you are given a piece of music, and you have to play it without mistakes. When I tried to sight-read one of the pieces, it seemed really hard for me. One day I looked at the front cover of the sight-reading book and saw it said for level 7. I remembered I was testing for level 4, but never brought up the fact that the book was level 7. My piano teacher realized soon enough that the book wasn't the right level. Once I got the level 4 sight-reading book, it seemed much easier to me. After reading the book *The Children of Exile*, I think that if I had been brave and spoke up like Rosi, then the problem of my sight-reading book might have been resolved earlier.

I strongly recommend this book to science fiction lovers with a little bit of mystery mixed into it. This story is good for young adults. Both girls and boys will be cheering for Rosi along the way as she finds her freedom. I cannot imagine this story being written any better. Once you pick up the book *The Children of Exile* you will not be able to put it down so BEWARE!

Honor Roll

Welcome to the *Stone Soup* Honor Roll. Every month we receive submissions from hundreds of kids from around the world. Unfortunately, we don't have space to publish all the great work we receive. We want to commend some of these talented writers and artists and encourage them to keep creating.

Fiction

Beatrice Hunt, 9
Quinn Kennedy, 11
Isaac Maddock, 11
Sierra Mickelson, 13
Hannah Scheuer, 13
Malcolm Sullivan-Flynn, 9
Nasir Thompson, 7
Jessy Wallach, 10
Maya Wolfford, 13

Poetry

Vincent Anderson, 13
Gia Bharadwaj, 11
Sanja Greenawait, 11
Lila Howard, 10
Daniel Liu, 10
Emily Maremont, 11
Uma Jasmine Panwar, 11

Art

Aiza Asghar, 9
Ayaad Asghar, 5
Chloe Bowman, 8

Reviews

Roger Fan, 11
Dani Mendell, 11
Jordan Mittler, 13
Shelley Tang, 10

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- Music, spoken word and performances



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 - Journals and Sketchbooks for writing and drawing
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