

## 50 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

# Stone Soup Creative Writing Project

## kids inspiring kids

### PROJECT FOR WRITERS

#### REALISTIC FANTASY: WRITING BELIEVABLE MAGICAL STORIES

##### MENTOR TEXT:

“The Golden Locket” by Shannon Griggs (age 10)

*All of a sudden I felt a strange tingling feeling on my back. Wings began to sprout out right above my shoulder blades. I soared gracefully into the sky and over the meadow as if I was born on wings. I flew over the pine trees, the electric fence, Cody's house. . . . I felt just like a bird.*

TURN THE PAGE to read THE FULL PIECE.

##### WRITING TIP:

Emotional and sensory detail is what makes fantasy stories believable. Shannon's characters live in a solid world, one with telephones, thunderstorms, and electric fences. But it is also a world in which a girl can sprout wings. During the most fantastical part of the story, when she swoops down to save Cody, her wings are described as “battling the wind.” Although she is magical, she is still subject to most earthly forces.

### ACTIVITY

#### WRITE A STORY COMBINING FANTASY AND REALITY

##### STEP ONE: CHOOSE YOUR MAGICAL ELEMENT

Magic. A table that produces food upon demand. A super power: the ability to fly. Picture a magical element or super power in the real world where you go to school, do homework, and eat dinner. Imagine what might happen if your world included this fantastical piece of magic. In this story, a locket creates a super power. In your story, a locket might be a door to a different world. Make a list of three or four ideas for magical elements and then choose one (or more) to write about.

##### STEP TWO: DRAFT YOUR FANTASY

Your fantastical element—a magical locket in the case of this story, Harry Potter's invisibility cloak, whatever the magical element is and whatever power it gives your character—place it within the normal everyday world you are familiar with. Start with a first draft. Let

your ideas flow. The more you can imagine being the character who is empowered by the magical something you come up with, the more believable your story is likely to be. Help readers believe in your story's world by including the kinds of sights, sounds, smells and feelings that we are all familiar with.

##### STEP THREE: REVISE YOUR FANTASY

Once your draft is complete, read over your fantasy. Have you kept your focus on the physical reality of your adventure? In Shannon's story, she ends up fighting with wind, overcoming the storm as her wings strengthen. We are able to visualize her struggle at the cliff's edge. How might you revise your story to add touches of reality? Smell, taste, touch, emotion. Magic and magical powers woven into a story full of sensory and emotional details is what will make your magical story believable.

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MENTOR TEXT

### The Golden Locket

by Shannon Griggs (age 10)

“HELP!” he screamed at the top of his lungs. I stared at him, unable to move or speak. Cody’s short, brownish hair flew back wildly as the powerful wind blew it away from his neck. His sea-green eyes looked up at me pleadingly. His sweaty fingers drew slowly closer to the edge of the rocky cliff that he was grasping onto with all his might. I knew he had never, in his short three years of life, been as scared as he was now. My feet felt like they were planted to the ground, but I knew I had to do something and do it fast.

I peered through the electric fence that separated my family’s property from his. I hated the way the fence kept me from being able to play with Cody and his big sister, Cara, who happened to be my best friend. From where I stood the electric fence seemed endless. It stretched a mile on my right and a mile and a half on my left. The top of the cliff that he clung to was at least a hundred feet from the threatening ocean below. Giant waves splashed against the rugged cliff. I knew that if Cody fell he would be gone forever.

Cody was like a brother to me. I had known him since he was born and had babysat him a million times. I had always wanted a younger brother or sister of my own. I was tired of being bossed around by my big brother and sister. They always told me how to dribble a basketball, how to kick a soccer ball, or how to catch a baseball. Everyone in my family

was very athletic in one way or another. My mom swam and played soccer, my dad surfed, and my brother played basketball. My sister and I liked to play just about every sport. But of course, she thought she was better at everything.

I ran with heavy feet all the way to my house to get help. As soon as I got inside I remembered that my parents had gone to watch my brother’s basketball game and wouldn’t be home for over an hour. I grabbed the phone and dialed Cody’s parents’ number. It rang eleven times and still no one answered. It rang a twelfth time and then went dead. I could see lightning off in the distance and I knew the storm was becoming more powerful. Rain poured down everywhere, blurring my view through the window. I ran over to switch on the light, but the room remained dim.

Crash! The thunder had me nearly jumping through the roof as I searched frantically around in my darkening bedroom. I threw my books, clothes, and other belongings across the room. In my panic all kinds of things bounced off the walls until I finally placed my fingers on the golden locket. The locket was shaped like a bird; my favorite aunt had given it to me for my fifth birthday. When my aunt had given me the golden locket, she had told me that it was magic. I believed it then, but by the time I turned seven I had stopped believing in magic.

A voice inside of me urged me to put on the

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### The Golden Locket

(continued)

shining locket. Without thinking, I picked it up and carefully fastened it around my neck. I felt strangely comforted when I put it on. It gave me a warm feeling inside, and the whole thing felt so unreal. Was my aunt really telling the truth when she had said that the locket was magic?

Quickly, I opened the door and stepped out into the wet, outside world. The cold air slammed the door shut behind me. Terrified, I ran through the meadow. Thunder rumbled everywhere. As I hurried toward the electric fence I began to stumble over rocks in the grass. The trees swayed at the edge of the meadow and the dust that blew in my face stung my eyes.

All of a sudden I felt a strange tingling feeling on my back. Wings began to sprout out right above my shoulder blades. I soared gracefully into the sky and over the meadow as if I was born on wings. I flew over the pine trees, the electric fence, Cody's house, and more dry grass. I loved having wings and the excitement of flying. I felt just like a bird. It was a shame that my dad and my brother weren't there to see me fly. They loved birds. My brother even had a book about bird calls.

I could hear Cody yelling something from the cliff top, but the howling wind cut off his voice. I knew that if I saved him, his parents

would no doubt tear down the electric fence and find another way to keep the cows from escaping. It would be a way that wouldn't keep me away from playing with Cara.

I flew over the meadow until I was fifteen feet away from the cliff. The rain soaked my hair and wings. I swooped down, battling the wind with my strong wings. I was getting better at flying all the time. Right before I got to Cody he lost his grip on the cliff and went tumbling toward the deep ocean below. I grabbed him out of the air just in time. I flew all the way back over the grass and trees and dropped him gently next to his house. Before he could see that I was a bird I flew off and landed smoothly on my side of the electric fence. As I was landing, the rain stopped and the thunder died down.

I looked down at the golden locket. It had helped me so much that I knew it was something I would always treasure and never lose. Smiling to myself, I slipped it off. I felt my wings shrink quickly down until they disappeared.

"How did you do that?" Cody shouted across to me.

"Magic!" I yelled back.