

Thunderstorm

It was a hot, still, summer afternoon. The temperature had reached 93 12
degrees and the humidity was high. My buddy Alex and I were fishing on 26
Green Lake. We didn't have a boat, so we fished from the shore. Luckily, 40
we found a huge oak tree near the shore. We were able to cast our lines 56
from the shade of this beautiful tree. Dressed in our sleeveless t-shirts and 69
cut-offs, we tried to stay cool. If only we could catch some fish. 82

Catching fish soon seemed unimportant. Most of the afternoon the 92
sky had been a bright blue, but now things were changing. We could see 106
white puffy clouds forming to the west. We felt a warm breeze coming 119
from the east. That combination usually meant rain was coming. Soon the 131
puffy white clouds stretched upward, forming grey anvil-like figures in the 142
sky. I remembered my dad called these thunderheads. He always said to 154
get away from these. I knew we should consider leaving soon. 165

The colors in the sky were ominous. The white clouds had given 177
way to grey, and some now seemed to be an eerie green. The clouds were 192
upon us and the breeze had turned into a strong wind. Raindrops were 205
beginning to fall. In the distance we heard the rumbling of thunder and saw 219
the flash of lightening. Again, I remembered my dad's advice. He said if 232
you saw lightening and heard thunder within 30 seconds, the storm was 244
within six miles. It was time to leave. 252

Chopsticks

Have you ever used chopsticks? I know it looks hard, and it can be	14
when you first try to learn to use them. Remember though, learning to use	28
a fork was hard at first, too. My dad complains that I still don't hold the	44
chopsticks in the correct way, but I don't care because I can get the food	59
from the bowl into my mouth the way I use them.	70
I had to learn to use chopsticks because one time, when I was only	84
ten years old, I had to eat with them for a whole year. Using chopsticks	99
got pretty easy, and after a while, I became so skilled that I even	113
learned to pick up oily peanuts with them. I was surprised to learn that	127
some foods, like noodles, are actually easier to eat with chopsticks.	138
The Chinese always use the chopsticks in their right hands. Since I	150
am left-handed, I used them in my left hand. I thought I had learned to use	167
chopsticks pretty well, but after an entire year the Chinese people still stared	180
at the way I used my chopsticks. Of course, they were staring because I	194
was using my left hand.	199

Freedom Trail

After we got off of the train, found the hotel, and got into our room,	15
we unpacked our bags. It seemed to take forever, but finally we were ready	29
to go sightseeing.	32
"We're in Boston, so I think we should start out our sightseeing by	45
walking the Freedom Trail," said Dad. "That's the trail that Paul Revere	57
rode along to warn the people that the British were coming."	68
In the lobby of the hotel we got a map showing us where we might	83
best begin our walk along the Freedom trail. The beginning of the trail was	97
quite some distance from the hotel, so we rode in a taxi to its origin. The	113
trail started in a big park called the Boston Commons where many people	126
were enjoying themselves by feeding the birds. Children were riding bikes	137
or skateboards. Some people were playing music or selling things they had	149
made.	150
On the sidewalk, a red line marked the Freedom Trail. We followed	162
it until we came to a cemetery where we opened an iron gate and went in.	178
Dad said that the names were of people who had lived in Boston over 100	193
years ago. Next, we came to an old church. The buildings around it were	207
new, but the church had been preserved. Up on the top was a huge bell that	223
rang every day at noon.	228

Cookies

The first thing you need to know about me is that I like cookies. I	15
have always liked them and probably always will like them. Now you will	28
understand why the following experience was so incredible to me.	38
I was riding with my family on a bus in Taiwan. We had been with a	54
large group of people sightseeing around the country. Everyone on the bus	66
was from Taiwan or America. I had been listening to the man and his little	81
boy sitting in front of me. They were from Taiwan and the five year old	96
boy had lived in Taiwan all his life. All during the trip the boy had stared	112
at me. He had never before seen someone with blonde hair.	123
The boy had been asking his dad for a cookie. His dad said no and	138
tried to ignore him. However, the boy's voice kept getting louder and	150
louder. "Dad, can I have a cookie now? Dad, Dad, I want a cookie," he	165
kept asking. I was waiting for his dad to get really upset.	177
Finally, the father looked at him and said, "I told you -- no cookies.	190
Only sea weed!" His dad handed him something. To my shock, the boy	203
accepted it and began eating it. When the bus stopped, I found out what it	218
was and bought some at the store. I was surprised, it wasn't bad! Since that	233
day, I have learned to eat and like the dried pressed seaweed. I guess you	248
never know when you'll learn to like something new.	257

Winona

Winona had straight black hair that came to her shoulders. Her eyes 12
were deep brown and sparkled when she smiled. Her ancestors were part of 25
the Chippewa Indian tribe. Now her family lived in the city in a large 39
house. Many other Indian families lived in her community. Her aunts and 51
uncles and grandparents were all close by. 58

One of Winona's favorite pastimes was talking to her grandfather. 68
She loved to hear him tell of life in the old days. Back then, her people 84
lived close to nature. They understood and were friends with the animals 96
and birds around them. They used things in their environment for food and 109
shelter and clothing. At the same time, they were careful to always leave 122
plenty for future generations. 126

"Life in those days was simple," said Winona's grandfather during 136
one of their discussions. "We had some difficult times, but our needs were 149
few." 150

Sometimes, Winona would dream of the past. She wished that she 161
could go back in time for just one day to experience that life. At the same 177
time, she knew that it would be much more difficult and demanding than 190
her present life. 193

The Green Frog Mystery

"Look at the size of that frog!" exclaimed Jose. "Let's try to catch him for a pet."	13 17
Angela looked at the frog, and it certainly was the biggest frog she had ever seen. It was also the greenest frog she had ever seen, and its bulging eyes seemed to beckon them to follow. Every time Jose grabbed for the frog, it hopped several yards ahead. Once he fell to the ground with his hands cupped over the frog, but it slipped out and continued hopping.	30 45 57 72 85
"Come on, Angela, you have to help me," said Jose. "If you position yourself way ahead of me, then you can grab him when he jumps."	98 111
Angela wasn't convinced that she wanted this role, but she finally decided to help and said, "Oh, all right. If we don't catch him soon we'll end up miles away from home."	122 137 143
Angela and Jose tried their new approach several times, but each time the frog got away. After he jumped away from them he would stop and look at them as if to say, "Come and get me!"	155 169 180
"I'm getting tired of this," Angela complained. "Let's just forget about the frog and go home."	190 196
"Wait!" said Jose excitedly. "What's that?" Angela's eyes followed in the direction of Jose's pointed finger. Straight ahead, only a few yards away, stood an enormous house.	206 218 223

Sightseeing in Boston

Our sightseeing trip was fun, but Antonio got tired of walking. We	12
didn't know what to do with someone who couldn't walk, so Papa gave him	26
a ride on his back. I'll bet lots of fathers have carried their children when	41
they got tired of sightseeing.	46
Finally, we got to the bay where the riot called the Boston Tea Party	60
had occurred. There were lots of ships in the bay that we might see, but we	76
were all getting hungry so Papa took us into a small shop. We looked at the	92
food counter and saw all kinds of fish lying on ice. None of it looked very	108
tasty too us, so we ate some shrimp instead.	117
All of a sudden Antonio said, "I want to go swimming,"	128
"Me, too," said our sister Selena. "This has been fun, but I'd like to go	143
back to the hotel and jump into the swimming pool."	153
"Okay," Dad agreed, "I think we've had enough walking for one	164
day."	165
Instead of taking the taxi back to the hotel, this time, we rode the	179
bus. When we got off, we still had to walk two blocks to the hotel, and I	196
was so tired when we arrived that I slept instead of going swimming.	209

Off We Go

In preparing for their hike, Steve's father gave them several	10
important items. He gave them a compass, which would help them figure	22
out what direction they would be walking. He also gave the boys a first aid	37
kit in case one of them got hurt. Finally, he offered the boys some	51
waterproof matches that might come in handy in case it rained.	62
Soon the day arrived for beginning the hike. Steve and Bob carefully	74
looked over their equipment to make sure they had everything. Both boys	86
placed the gear in their backpacks. After trying on his pack, Bob thought	99
his was too light. When he checked the pack he found that he had forgotten	114
the pots, pans, and cups needed for cooking. Fortunately, they hadn't left	126
home yet and he was able to pack the cooking gear.	137
Steve's dad drove the boys to the beginning of Ridge Trail. It was a	151
sunny summer day and both Bob and Steve were glad to start their hike on	166
a warm, dry day. After walking for several hours on the first day, the boys	181
began to tire. It seemed as if they had been going uphill the whole time.	196
Finally, they arrived at Pine Lake in the late afternoon. Bob was ready for	210
a swim, but Steve said he was too tired.	219

Halloween

What night every year is the most exciting? When I try to answer that question I have lots of nights to choose from. Christmas Eve may be the best of all. That's when all of our family gets together again. Everybody seems to be full of love at Christmas.	13 27 40 49
The night before my birthday is a very special one for me. When you are a child, you always want to be another year older. A birthday is exciting because it is your special day. Everyone pays attention to the person who has a birthday.	62 77 89 94
I'm trying to choose the most exciting night of the year for kids, though. When I think about exciting nights that come every year I can't help but think about Halloween. Wow! I don't know who invented Halloween, but it must have been a kid.	107 120 131 139
Just think, a night when you can dress up in a scary costume and walk around in the dark. A night when you can go to someone's house and get free candy! I only wish I didn't eat too much and get sick every year.	154 169 184

The Beach

The best way to cool off on a hot summer day is to go to the beach.	17
Where I live, we don't have air conditioning and the temperature can get up	31
into the 90's some days. To keep the house cool, we pull all the shades	46
down and turn on fans. Sometimes, it's so hot that we just spend the whole	61
day at the beach. Other times, we go after dinner for a quick swim to cool	77
off before going to bed.	82
At the beach we stick an umbrella in the sand and lay out a blanket to	98
mark our territory. But most of our time is spent down by the water. The	113
sand is wet and cool and the breeze off the water makes you forget how hot	129
it is back home. We bring a cooler with food and drinks and some sand	144
toys for the little kids. I like to swim out to the dock with my friends and	161
practice diving off. Sometimes we throw "treasures" into the water and try	173
to find them underwater. My mom can relax under the umbrella and read	186
her book since there is a lifeguard to watch us in the water.	199
When we get back home, it doesn't feel so bad. Besides, we're so	212
tired from swimming that we can fall right to sleep. It's a great way to stay	228
cool.	229

Basketball Game

Do you like to get very excited and yell and cheer? If you do, then	15
go to a high school basketball game. I should warn you that if you go,	30
there will be an awful lot of noise and music. When you put all the	45
students from two different schools together in the same building and each	57
school has its band playing, it can be hard to hear what the person next to	73
you is saying.	76
Don't let that stop you from going to the game though. It's	88
really fun, and before you know it, you will be yelling and cheering along	102
with everyone else. In fact, you will probably cheer even if you don't	115
know any of the players on the teams. At the beginning of the game you	130
may wonder why people are yelling so loud. Don't bother to ask the person	144
next to you why people are yelling. That person will probably say, "Who	157
cares? Everyone else is cheering so I do too!" Sometimes I think that	170
everyone at the game is crazy. What do you think?	180

The Mansion

When Jose and Angela looked up and saw the house Angela cried out,	13
“Where are we anyway? I thought we were in the middle of nowhere and	27
all of a sudden here is this huge house. It's a mansion!”	39
“I don't know where we are,” said Jose, “but I’m not going to be	53
afraid and run away, I'm going to investigate this place. This has to be	67
where the frog was leading us. Are you coming with me or do I have to	83
explore this place by myself?”	88
“Are you sure it's safe?” Angela replied. She hesitated on the path	100
leading toward the front door, all the while considering what she should do.	113
Just then, the frog that had been leading them jumped onto the front steps	127
of the mansion and hopped through the partially open front door. “All	139
right, all right” croaked Angela. “If a frog can go in, I can go in, but let's	156
stay together.”	158
“What do we have to be afraid of?” replied Jose. “It's just an old	172
abandoned house with lots of broken windows, dark rooms, peculiar noises,	183
and maybe a few ghosts inside.” It was typical of Jose to act brave and	198
pretend he was unafraid even when fear was an appropriate reaction.	209
“Here goes,” he said as he slowly pushed the door. The hinges	221
squealed and cobwebs fell as the door opened. They heard a	232
fluttering sound in the air and what must be other creatures skittering in the	246
dark. So, when Jose looked at Angela, they turned and ran out of the house	261
as fast as they could and never went back.	270

The Hot Air Balloon

“Is this how we fill up the balloon with air?” asked Tommy.	12
“Not quite,” the pilot responded. “We need to put hot air in the balloon. This fan just helps us get started. As soon as the balloon is partially full, I will turn on the burner, which makes the hot air. As you know, hot air rises. When the balloon gets enough hot air in it, the balloon will rise, and with this basket connected to the balloon, we’ll be able to go for a ride.”	25 39 54 69 84 87
After a few more adjustments, Mr. Johnson turned to Tommy and asked, “Are you ready for me to turn the burner on?”	98 109
“Yeah!” Tommy yelled excitedly. The pilot turned the control knob on his gas tanks and lit the burner. A huge flame leaped out and roared. Pointed at the opening at the bottom of the balloon, the burner soon began to fill the balloon with hot air.	119 134 148 155
Slowly the balloon began to grow and grow. Tommy couldn't believe his eyes as the balloon lifted off the ground and rose into the sky. It's so tall, he thought to himself. It must be as high as a four story building. He began to take pictures with his camera. Sammy and Ted will never believe this!	165 180 196 209 212
Soon the balloon was ready for take off. Tommy climbed into the basket with his father and the pilot.	224 231

The Vote

There was a period of silence while the students considered the options that had been raised. President Alicia took this opportunity to summarize, "So far," she explained, "we have had three suggestions. One, a picnic at the beach; two, an all-night-party at school; and three, an evening party. Are there any other ideas before we put these to a vote?"	11 22 33 49 62
Jan spoke next. "I agree with Jerry that an outdoor party is risky. The least expensive way might be an evening party here at school. Instead of hiring a band, we could play records. Then our only cost would be some money for snacks and drinks."	75 88 103 108
"I like the idea of skipping the last day of school, though," added Craig.	121 122
No one spoke for several minutes. "If there is no further discussion, we'll put the three choices to a vote." declared Alicia. "We'll discuss details and cost later. All those in favor of a picnic raise your hand."	134 147 160
Only six students voted for a picnic. Next, they voted on the all-night-party, which received twenty-two votes. Finally, five students voted for an evening party.	172 184 188
"It looks like we'll be having an all-night-party," said Alicia. "We'll have to set up committees."	201 206

A New Job

Danny was feeling pretty good about himself. He had managed to 11
get a job after school at a doughnut shop. It was his first day on the job and 29
he was determined to succeed at this one. Other jobs he had tried just 43
hadn't worked out. 46

For instance, there was his former job as a dishwasher in a restaurant. 59
He thought he was doing well until one day when he stacked too many dishes 74
on top of each other and broke twenty of them. By the time he paid for those 91
dishes, he had only made five dollars in two weeks. 101

Then there was the job as carryout boy at the grocery store. Danny 114
enjoyed talking to all the people from his neighborhood as he helped carry 127
their bags for them. One day, he made a mistake. It just happened to be 142
when he was helping Mr. Appleby. Mr. Appleby was one of the grumpiest men 156
in town. He also happened to have a brand new car. When Danny put the 171
groceries on the seat, one bag fell over. It had eggs in it and they broke on 188
the floor and the seat. Danny had to quit that job, too. He sure hoped he 204
would do better at the doughnut shop! 211

Babysitting

One day Vanessa was babysitting two children. Their names were 10
Blake and Kayla. Kayla was 4 years old and Blake was two and a half years 26
old. They were playing hide-and-seek. While Vanessa was counting, the 38
children looked for a place to hide. When she was done, Vanessa went to 52
look for them. 55

She started looking in the closets, bedrooms, even the basement. 65
She was looking for quite a while and was getting worried. Ten minutes had 79
passed. She finally decided to look outside. The kids liked to be outside, so 93
she thought they would go there to hide. 101

Vanessa looked in the bushes and garden. She looked around the 112
yard and still could not find them. She was now panicking and almost in 126
tears. Vanessa started calling out their names. It was getting late and was 139
past Blake and Kayla's bedtime. She asked neighbors if they had seen 151
them. She got to one house and a boy answered the door. He was about 166
Kayla's age, four years old. Before he could say anything, the mother came 179
to the door and saw how frightened Vanessa was. When Vanessa told her 192
what had happened the mother said that Blake and Kayla were inside 204
playing. 205

The Guitar Player

Brian was pleased with his new electric piano. He had been saving 12
his money for a year to buy the piano and take lessons. Brian's teacher had 27
said he was ready to play in public. Brian thought maybe he could play in 42
the end of the year school talent show. But he didn't want to play on stage 58
by himself. 60

Brian's teacher suggested he start a group. All he needed was 71
someone to play drums, lead guitar, and bass guitar. Brian thought of his 84
old friend, Nicky, who had been playing drums for several years. When the 97
two friends got together they got excited about starting a group. Nicky had 110
a cousin, Chad, who played bass guitar and he joined the group. But they 124
still needed someone to play electric guitar and the talent show was only 137
four weeks away. 140

Brian couldn't find anyone to play guitar. He even put an 151
advertisement in the school newspaper. The three boys had been practicing 162
together, but something was missing. Brian was ready to give up on his 175
plans for starting a rock band. 181

One night while the group was practicing in the garage there was a 194
knock at the door. 198

"Come on in!" yelled Brian. In stepped Michelle, one of Brian's 209
classmates. "What do you want?" asked Brian. 216

She showed him her guitar. "Can I join your group?" she asked. 228

Brian shouted for joy. They had a band! 236

The Balloon Ride

Tommy usually did not like Mondays, but today was different. He	11
couldn't wait, because today was his tenth birthday. Best of all, today was	24
the day for his hot air balloon ride. When his parents asked him what he	39
wanted as a gift, he said, "A balloon ride!" He had watched a television	53
show about balloons and thought it looked exciting.	61
All day long Tommy sat in school and watched the clock. At lunchtime	74
he told his best friends, Sammy and Ted, that he was going on a balloon ride	90
after school. Both of his buddies wanted to go, but Tommy said there would	104
only be room for his father, the pilot, and him. He promised he would take his	120
camera along and show them pictures later.	127
Soon school was over. When the bell rang, Tommy ran outside and	139
found his parents waiting in their car. He hopped in and soon they were	153
off. Tommy's father said the balloon pilot had called earlier to say the	166
weather conditions were perfect for the ride. They agreed to meet at the	179
fairgrounds on the edge of town.	185

State Fair

Every summer, at the end of August, we go to the State Fair. My	14
brother and I love to go to the State Fair. There is so much to do and see.	32
We like the rides, the games, the animals, and the shows.	43
The rides are awesome. The roller coaster always has lots of high-	55
speed twists and turns that leave us laughing. My favorite ride is the Big	69
Drop, which plunges over 75 feet. We also like the Cascade Falls ride,	82
which drenches us in cold water. On a hot summer day, that may be the	97
best ride.	99
The games on the midway are also fun. My brother is really good at	113
shooting basketballs and throwing baseballs. I'm better at the shooting	123
gallery games and usually win lots of prizes. One game that neither one of	137
us is good at is the tossing the plastic rings over the necks of empty soda	153
bottles. Neither one of us can get a "ringer."	162
The animal exhibits aren't as much fun, but often are interesting.	173
There are lots of different animals to see. Usually one building has all the	187
farm animals like cows, horses, chickens, pigs, and sheep. Another	197
building has more exotic animals that are found in the wilderness. One of	210
my favorites concentrates on "birds of prey." This exhibit includes eagles,	221
hawks, and falcons. Another interesting display is the bat cave. It's eerie	233
to see hundreds of bats hanging upside down, just waiting to make their	246
next move.	248

Bernese Mountain Dog

The origin of the Bernese Mountain Dog can be traced back four to 13
six thousand years ago. Stone Age farmers in the area of Switzerland bred 26
these dogs. At first the farmers used them as guard and protection dogs. 39
Much later Bernese Mountain Dogs were trained to pull milk wagons. This 51
dog has also been used for herding in the alpine meadows. 62

The Bernese is one of four breeds of Alpine herding dogs. These 74
breeds were near extinction by 1870. However, interest in these breeds 85
revived. Soon these dogs began appearing in shows. 93

Bernese Mountain Dogs are often mistaken for St. Bernards. This 103
may be because they both came from the same region. One difference is 116
that Bernese Mountain dogs are mostly black. St. Bernards are a reddish 128
brown. The chest of the Bernese is white. On its face you see a white thin 144
streak that eventually covers the nose area. Brown patches are found on the 157
legs and lower face. A small brown spot is also found above each eye. 171

Another difference that you might notice is that St. Bernards are 182
much heavier and drool a lot. Bernese males reach 150 pounds. St. 194
Bernard males can be as big as 250 pounds. Females for both types of dogs 209
are a little smaller. Bernese Mountain dogs usually have smaller faces than 221
the St. Bernard. 224