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Children's Voices

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Foreword

This book was compiled in response to a need for indigenous reading materials in our schools. The Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports in cooperation with the Caribbean Developent Bank developed a project to produce these materials to inspire children to read more. The stories and poems in this book were written by children in schools in Barbados. We wish to compliment the children whose work appears in this volume and we hope that other children will enjoy reading them.

Children's Voices

Published by
The Ministry of Education,
Youth Affairs & Sports

A Remarkable Day

"Keisha! Keisha!" my 17 year-old sister Kim shouted outside my door.

I glanced at the clock on the wall and noticed it was 7.45 a.m. We were on vacation so what could she possibly want so early I wondered.

"Keisha, are you up?" she asked.

"I am now," I groaned and dragged myself out of bed to see what my annoying older sister could possibly want. Kim greeted me with one of the worst faked smiles ever.

"Good morning, my beautiful sister," she said in that annoying voice of hers. Then again it's more like a high-pitched squeak than a voice.

"What do you want this early?" I snapped.

"I need a tiny favour."

"Oh boy! What now?" I asked.

"Mary and I have a little shopping to do but both her parents are working and she is stuck with her little sister and we can't take her."

"So?"

"We need you to take care of her today while we're gone."

"No way!" I said, backing away from her. Mary was my sister's snobby best friend and Laura was her equally snobby 13 year-old sister. I did not like either of them, not that I knew them that well and I didn't really want to.

"If you take care of her you can name your price later," she said as a sly grin came across my face.

I came downstairs only to be met by the snob club. My sister and Mary left as soon as I was in sight. So there I was stuck with "princess snob". We decided to watch T.V. first. We were watching BET when Destiny's Child's "Jumpin' Jumpin'" came on and Laura said, "I love this song. This is like my favourite group!"

"Really?" I asked, "It is mine too." I must have been out of my mind because the next thing I knew we were upstairs in my room checking out my CDs and posters. We seemed to be actually having a good time. I found out that we had so much in common considering I am three years her senior.

We had pizza and sodas for lunch and other junk food for the rest of the day. We surfed the web checking the hottest teen sites. We actually went outside and played "one on one" basketball which was strange because the most exercise I get is changing the channel and going to the kitchen for food. We played almost every board game in my house and I loved it. My sister and I never do this stuff.

We must have really been having fun because soon our sisters were back. As soon as Mary and Laura left my sister asked, "So what do I owe you?"

"Nothing," I said leaving my sister looking very confused.

"Are you O.K.? Did that brat slip you something?"

I had one of the best days of my holiday and I gained a friend. I smiled and left my sister dumbfounded, frozen still in the middle of the kitchen.

Keo Forde Harrison College



A Drive in the Country

It was Saturday morning. The clear, blue sky was filled with chattering birds. I had to go outside. The view was magnificent and the countryside looked beautiful. I went back inside and saw Mummy packing up food. Daddy was preparing breakfast. My three sisters were in the bedroom getting together their bathing suits and towels.

I asked what they were doing and was told that we were going to Browne's Beach. After breakfast we were all ready to go. We put the snacks and drinks in the car and were on our way.

We drove for a while and eventually, we reached Browne's Beach. We jumped out of the car and ran towards the sea. The water was a lovely shade of blue and white, as the waves beat against the shore. We changed quickly and went in.

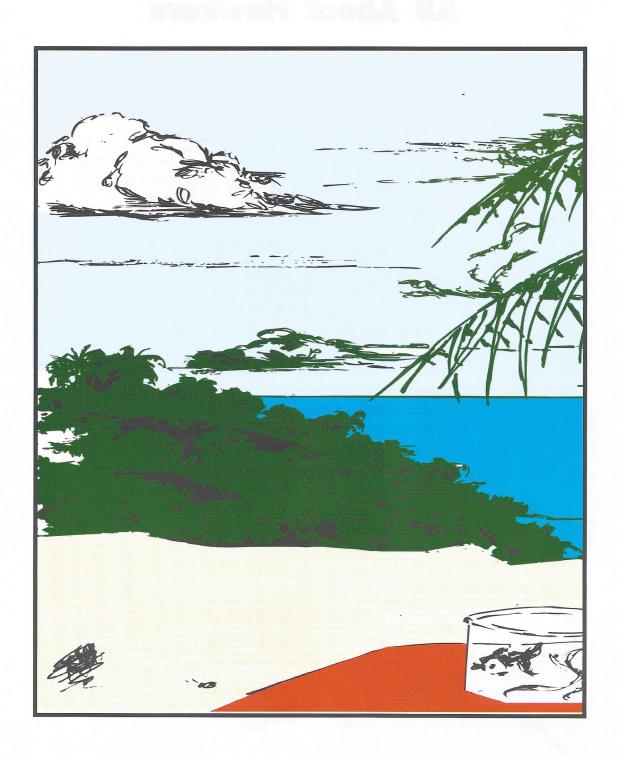
We splashed about for a while, then came out and collected some beautiful sea shells. Daddy tried to catch some fish. Suddenly, we heard him shout. He had caught a beautiful fish. We found a jar and put the fish in it with some seaweed and water. We dried ourselves and got into the car.

Daddy decided we could go for a drive in the country. On our way we passed vendors selling fish, coconuts and fruit. We stopped and bought some pineapple which we enjoyed.

We soon reached the country. In the distance we saw coconut trees swaying. We heard parrots and other birds chattering as they flew back and forth. We found a spot and stopped for lunch. We got out of the car and set out a blanket. There was a gentle breeze and around us was very peaceful.

Renee and I took out the drinks and food. Janine and Mommy took out the plates, cups and cutlery. We sat and ate and enjoyed the picturesque view. Soon Mommy was fast asleep. When it was time to leave, we got into the car and began our journey back home.

Kara Moore: Class 4
Belleville Grammar School



All About Hawkers

I love to go to the market with my grandmother on Saturday mornings to shop for produce. It is so much fun to hear the hawkers shouting, "Darling, do you want lettuce, tomatoes or sweet potatoes?"

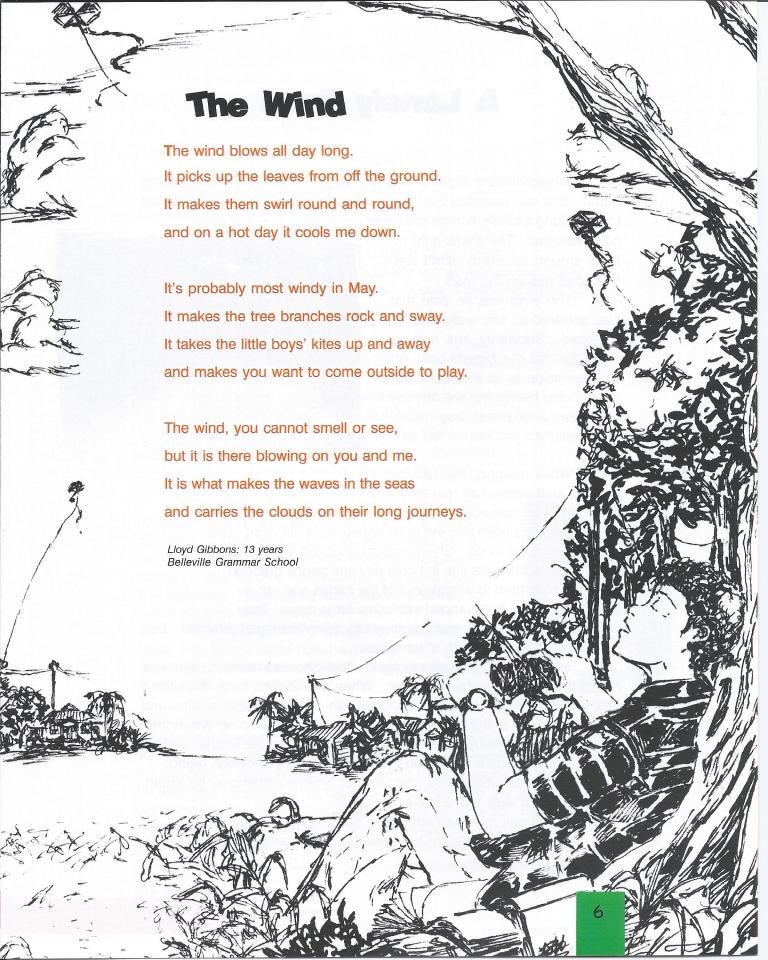
As we walk the narrow paths, we not only bump into people but meet friends we haven't seen for a while.

All along the way we hear hawkers offering items for sale. It's so nice to see them displaying their goods.

I love to hear the Rastas. One says, "Gran, you in buying no ackees for your grandaughter?" another fellow runs in front of him and says, "Don't buy any ackees from him, mine sweeter than his."

It is really a treat going to market and hearing all the funny things the hawkers say and seeing the old and young selling fruits and vegetables. It is a pleasure to see the young people working to get pocket money or money to help out at home.

Rickala Carrington: Age 10 Erdiston Primary School

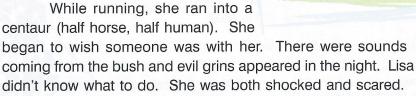


A Lonely Road

It was Sunday night and a young girl named Lisa was walking home. She had attended Evensong at the local parish church. She had

to walk along a lonely, narrow road with no streetlights. There was a lot of bush around so she couldn't see if anyone was on the road.

The wind was so cold that Lisa shivered as she walked along the road. Suddenly, she heard a noise like that of a bicycle bell. She stepped aside to let the cycle pass. When it was beside her she observed there was a headless boy riding it. She screamed and ran as fast as she could.



In the darkness she felt cold as eerie hands grabbed her. She managed to wriggle out of the hands and ran as fast as she could but bumped into some large dogs. They snarled and bared their teeth as they ran down the street after her. Lisa realised they had the teeth of vampires.

Soon Lisa's house was in sight. Boy! She was relieved. She saw her mother waiting outside for her. When she looked back everything that was in the road disappeared. Lisa ran into her mother's arms and began telling her of the things she had just experienced on her way home.

Her mother laughed and said, "Lisa, that was your brother and his friends trying to scare you. Don't you know it was Halloween night?

When she went inside, she saw her brother grinning as he asked, "How was your walk home? Was it scary?"

Lisa shook her head and said, "No! it was very exciting." Her brother smiled for he knew that she was terrified.

Julie-ann Burke: Age 12 Lodge School

Pranksters

It was a joke for us. On Saturdays, when our chores were over, we would run by the road and flip the old stop sign. Then we would hide in the bushes nearby, watching the drivers' confusion as they stopped, laughing as they drove off angrily.

Then the day came when we weren't laughing. As usual, we ran, after doing the dishes, to the crossroad. Alan watched the road carefully, then sneaked out and turned the sign quickly, before dashing back to sit beside us. We watched impatiently for the unlucky driver to pass. It was an old blue car that finally drove up the road. Keisha pointed excitedly and we waited, anticipating the driver's reaction.

Then suddenly we saw it - a red truck speeding along the other road. The driver expected a clear road and was not slowing at all. Alan was up and running, but it was too late. The drivers didn't see each other until the last minute. There was the screech of slamming brakes, and a loud crunch as the two vehicles collided.

As we advanced towards the vehicles, Keisha was crying hysterically, "We have killed them!"

The drivers were unhurt, but in shock, and slowly crunched through broken glass to safety at the side of the road.

Our neighbours had gone to call the police and fifteen minutes later, the officers arrived. A few spectators had gathered, but quickly dispersed on the policemen's orders. I was the one who told them what had happened, as Alan was watching the wreckage and Keisha was still crying. The drivers were angry and shocked, demanding to talk to our parents about insurance money.

I will never forget my parents' faces as they came. My mother was flushed red and my father's lips were set in a firm line. Awaiting our inevitable punishment, we listened silently as they sorted out the repair costs.

Faridah Grant Queen's College

Honesty Pays Off

Charlie was walking through the park one day feeling very hungry when he saw a little package on the grass. Wondering what was in it, he picked it up and opened it.

To his surprise, he saw a wad of dollar bills. Instantly, words he had heard his mother say over and over again flashed into his memory. They were: "If you find any money take it to the nearest police station so that it could be returned to its owner.

Charlie asked a lady who was standing nearby for directions to the police station and set off on the journey. When he arrived there, he went to the policeman who was sitting at a desk. After he told him his story, the policeman asked him for his name and address. He then took the package from Charlie and thanked him.

Charlie went home and thought nothing more about the package. He was occupied more with thoughts of what he would like to have for his birthday which was fast approaching. Of all the things he thought of, he wanted a bicycle most of all. He told this to his mother but she pointed out to him she could not afford to buy him one because she had lots of bills to pay.

The day before his birthday, Charlie was sitting with his mother still pleading with her, when suddenly there was a knock at the door. When Charlie's mother opened the door there was a policeman standing there. He introduced himself and pulled a small package from his pocket and asked her if she had a son whose name was Charlie. She replied that she did.

"Well madam, you have an honest, fine, young boy" he said.

He then handed her the package and told her what had happened. Charlie's mother was proud of him.

The package contained \$300.00. Charlie's mother was happy about the way he behaved. She couldn't think of a better thing than that to allow Charlie to use the money to buy himself the bicycle he so badly needed.

Eden Leach, Age - 10 St. Martin-Four Roads



The Most Embarrassing Moment

One Christmas, my school was having a concert. The children in my class were to perform the Nativity play. I wanted to be Mary, but Rashida also wanted that part.

After auditioning, unfortunately for me, Rashida got the part. I was angry. I asked the producer of the play, Mrs. Bradshaw, why I didn't get the part. She told me Rashida had the right size and that she would do well in that part.

I was stuck as an understudy. I envied Rashida for getting the part. After rehearsals I asked Rashida, "Do you want to be the understudy and let me play the part of Mary?"

"No!" she said, "I was given the part and I'll give it my best shot."

My friend Malyka who was one of the shepherds, and Ben, who was Joseph, tried to cheer me up. Their efforts did not help.

I ignored Rashida when she talked to me. Mrs. Bradshaw said it was time for the understudies to rehearse. I went and did my best. She just told me, "Good job! There is always next year." I smiled, but inside I was boiling.

Ben was taking me to a party that night. I saw Rashida all bandaged up. I went over to her and asked, "What happened, Rashida?"

She said, "I was crossing the road and a car knocked me over. I can't play the part now. You'll have to take over."

Though I felt badly at Rashida's discomfort, I could not help feeling that at last I would get the opportunity to play the part. I was happy inside but tried not to show it.

The next night at the final rehearsal I played the part of Mary. Everything went well. Now, I could hardly wait for the grand occasion.

Finally the time had come and I was back stage getting ready. Mrs. Bradshaw looked me over and told me not to be nervous. I smiled; my clothes were being pinned up because they were too big.

The auditorium was packed. My parents and many of my relatives were there. Everyone from the village seemed to be present. Technicians from the local television station were there to record the event, I supposed for the news the following night.

I went on stage and did my part. When the angel approached Mary (me) to tell her that she would conceive and bear a child, the costume became slack and fell off.

All that I can recall is the extreme embarrassment that I felt then. There is the faint memory of the girl who was playing the part of the angel talking to me. I can remember the look of shock on the faces of my family and others in the front row. All that they could do was to place their hands over their faces.

I was totally ashamed. What I can certainly remember is the loud laughter that was coming from the auditorium that evening.

The part that was most difficult was when I learnt that the television station was carrying the production live. Mrs. Bradshaw and others tried to give me some comfort; their efforts failed to bring any consolation. That evening on the stage at the Christmas play was the most embarrassing moment of my life.

Julie-ann Burke: Form 2 Lodge School



A Wish Come True

Ever since I was a baby I wanted to be a ballerina. In fact, according to my mother, my first sentence stated this. Everything I did was a hop, a skip, a leap and a jump. I loved ballet and wished to be taught it by an expert.

As I progressed through school, I made friends with Kiira, a girl who danced ballet. Upon learning this, I pestered my mother to let me join dancing class. Eventually, she agreed. We talked to Kiira's mother about the arrangements. Then my mother talked to the Principal of the school who provided her with the necessary information. I became a student of the 'Dance Place' Ballet School.

One Saturday in 1997, before the start of the September term, my mom and I went to buy my dance uniform. We arrived at the Fifth Avenue Belleville Studio and Dance Shop. I was ecstatic and my heart was skipping beats. My wish to learn ballet was about to become reality. I got my uniform from the shop. It was a blue leotard and a pink shirt. These were complemented by a pair of peach ballet shoes and pink socks. During the first few weeks we learnt the basics and as the term progressed, the steps became more difficult. I enjoyed every moment because I was living out a long-time-wish. At the end of the first year, I was ready for my assessment. I was very pleased with my progress.

After the assessment was completed there was to be Prize Giving just like at any other school. After many rehearsals the day arrived. Prize Giving was held at the Convent. I received a special prize.

Then we performed for the audience. My class performed brilliantly, so an encore was requested. We were happy to perform again because we were enjoying ourselves.

I am presently in Grade Two at ballet and I am hoping to win a scholarship to a Dance College in England. My wish has only been partially fulfilled; I look forward to the day when it will be completely achieved.

Richelle Lubin: Age 10 Roland Edwards Primary School



On Planet X

"We are now leaving Earth's atmosphere," Captain Love reported. We were now in space. I stared out at the stars. They twinkled brightly in the black vacuum. It was the first time I had never been in space; however, Captain Love, my bearded superior officer, had been there many times. I was really nervous.

"Oh, oh," he said.

"What?" I inquired worriedly.

"We've got an energy-" He couldn't finish.

Boom! the ship started to spin. We were hurled through space.

"Ahhh!" I screamed.

"We've lost gravity!" Captain Love reported. He was trying to be calm. Trying! I soared through the air and hit my head. Then, I saw darkness.

When I awoke, there was a big bump on my head.

"Uhhh!" Captain Love moaned. I strained to get up. The ship was badly damaged. Pieces of equipment were in a clutter. Wires were everywhere. It was a mess. I looked out the window and discovered we were on a desolate planet. The ship's monitor blurred. It showed that the atmosphere was filled with an unknown gas. I made my way through the mess to Captain Love. He was bleeding from the head.

"Sir, are you alright?" He sat up a little.

"Yes, I think so." He put his hand to his to his head. "Where are we?" I helped him into a chair and then he checked the computer. "Gravity has been restored. It seems we have gone through a black hole. We are on an unknown planet. Unknown planets are in our computers at Nasa. The scientific term for them is 'Planet X'."

I stared at him in disbelief.

"That is all the computer will tell us," he told me.

We then put on our space suits and went outside to explore.

Our gas tanks were running low on air as we left the ship. From the outside, our ship looked terrible. There were many dents and pieces blown off.

"We don't have the tools to repair her," Captain Love said sadly.

"Let's see if there's any life here," I suggested.

Captain Love snorted. He didn't believe in alien life.

The surface of the planet was hard and brown. No hills and no valleys. We walked. The scenery did not change. We would occasionally pass a sort of cactus-like plant, stones and stone shelters.

"Oh my gosh!" Captain Love was very surprised.

They emerged. They were tall and green. Imagine, a centipede,

the size of a human, just green. Well that's what I was looking at. Their short, tentacles held a device.

"What is that?" I asked Captain Love, nervously.

Tsseemm! A green laser soared from the weapon.

"It's a weapon!" screamed Captain Love, "Run!"

More green lasers were fired. We ran as fast as our heavy suits would permit us. The aliens followed closely screaming some kind of unknown language.

Tsseemm!

"Ahhh!" I didn't look behind. I kept on running but when I looked back Captain Love was nowhere to be seen and the aliens had stopped their pursuit. I retraced my steps. When I got fairly close to the aliens' village I saw Captain Love. He was on the ground struggling to breathe. He had a wound in the back of his suit. I dropped to his side.

"I'm dying."

He could barely talk. I felt my eyes become wet.

"There ...is no sense in me breathing precious air." His hand reached for his air tank.

"Sir, no!" I was crying now. Clank! he handed the tank to me. With his last breath, he shook my hand. "Good...luck." He was dead. I was alone on Planet X. I rose and crept towards the aliens' houses. I saw no one. I walked into a stone shelter. It was gloomy. There was a stone table inside. On it was a weapon. I picked it up.

"If I'm going to die," I said with tears in my eyes, "I'm, taking some down with me."

I jogged to my spaceship. I approached it, slowly to find it fully repaired.

"Impossible!" I cried. Suddenly, there was a flash of green. I turned and fired. The green-like

centipede crumpled to the ground. Turning back to the ship, I felt fear fill my body. More aliens. All around the ship. One came forward. I drew my weapon. It stopped and looked to the ground, sadly. At least, I think he was sad. It took out its weapon and threw it to the ground. Then signalling to his other people, he led me inside the ship. He was letting me go free. I tore off the American flag symbol on my suit and gave it to the alien as a peace token. I closed the door and blasted off.

"Rest in Peace, Captain Love," I whispered silently to myself.



Lost

Miss Marshall decided on Friday night that she would take her five-year-old son, LaJohn, shopping on the following day. She made sure to warn him about the consequences he would face, if for any reason he strayed away from her in town. Early the next morning, she warned him again before they set off on their journey to the city.

It was Saturday morning. The time everybody decides to go shopping. Huge crowds were everywhere. Trying to make your way down Swan Street was like trying to walk through a herd of cows. People of all ages and sizes walked up and down, some staggering with heavy loads.

Hawkers selling different kinds of goods, lined the street hustling people in an attempt to sell their merchandise. Stores were packed to capacity, only allowing one or two persons to trickle in or out at a time. Around eleven o'clock LaJohn was getting tired and restless. He became so restless that he refused to continue walking. His mother stared at him and instantly water began to settle in his eyes and trickled down his chubby cheeks.

It was a hot sunny day and sweat poured from faces of all as they staggered through the unbearable heat. "Things can't get any worse," Miss Marshall said to herself. Just then La John's hand was pulled out of hers as a gang of rebels bored through.

"Watch it woman!" she heard, and she felt someone's elbow connecting with her right jaw. The bags she was carrying fell to the ground.

Crying and moaning she crawled across the street, barely able to call out for LaJohn.

Passersby rushed to help her. Two police officers who were on patrol, saw the crowd gathering and came running to find out what was happening. Miss Marshall saw a big muscular hand reaching out to her. She grasped it and was pulled to her feet.

"I am Officer Greaves. What seems to be the problem?" he said. She explained that she had lost her son.

Meanwhile, LaJohn was wandering around in a toy store. He played with everything he got his hands on until a red shining fire truck caught his eyes. He had always wanted a fire truck. He picked it up and gazed at it longingly.

"Mommy, Mommy, I want this fire truck!" he shouted as he ran

through the aisles looking for his mother. When he realised she was not answering, he started to cry and ran out of the store with the truck in his hand.

The manager saw him and shouted "Stop! stop! come back!" and he ran after LaJohn. He caught him in front of the Barbados Hardware Store. The two officers were escorting his mother down Swan Street and they saw a man in the process of grabbing a little boy.

"That's my son, officers!" she shouted anxiously.

"Let me go!" LaJohn screamed and sank his teeth in the store manager's hand. He was able to wriggle out of the manager's grasp and run across the street. The sound of screeching tyres rang out. The driver of a car swerved to avoid hitting the boy and the car ran into a wall. LaJohn's mother rushed to him and held him in her arms, thanking God that he was safe.

Jamar Chase, Age 16 St. Leonards



The Day I Did Something Wrong

It was Thursday evening. Everyone was in high spirits after the exciting physical education session. As we were placing our books in our bags our teacher told us we would be having a mathematics test the following day.

"Please revise your work," she said.

Later that evening as I was about to revise my work, the telephone rang. It was my friend Mario. He invited me to the Drive-in cinema with him and his family.

My heart pounded with excitement, for it was a film I had been longing to see. Then suddenly I remembered the test. But as we had been waiting so long to see "Batman", I decided to go and see the movie and revise the test as soon as I returned home. I asked my mother if I could go. She said I could go if I had finished my homework.

"I've done all my homework, Mum," I lied and hastily dialed Mario's number.

The movie was as exciting as I knew it would be. We all had a glorious time. After the show, we stopped to get something to eat. It was close to ten o'clock when I finally reached home. Tired and sleepy, I fell into the bed only to awake when the clock struck seven the following morning.

When I arrived at school, a brilliant idea suddenly struck me. I went to the teacher and told her that I had experienced a serious asthma attack the night before and could not revise my work.

"Oh, Matthew, I am so sorry to hear that you were ill," said the teacher.

A while later my mother walked in holding my red lunch box. I froze in shock and terror.

"Good morning, Mrs. Moore," said the teacher, "Your son is not taking the test. Was the attack very severe?"

"What attack? Matthew Moore, Come here at once!" she thundered.

My knees shook uncontrollably as I, in total shame and disgrace stood, with head bent, before my mother and teacher.

"You will be punished for lying to your teacher and me!" she shouted.

As I stood there with cold clammy hands and dreadful feelings of shame and regret, I realised that I must face the outcome of my folly. I had not only let myself down, but I had disappointed my mother.

Matthew Moore Erdiston Primary

Bedlam Grammar School

Bedlam Grammar School is not a bore! With textbooks strewn across the floor, and mud tracks going the back stair, The secretary's really tearing her hair.

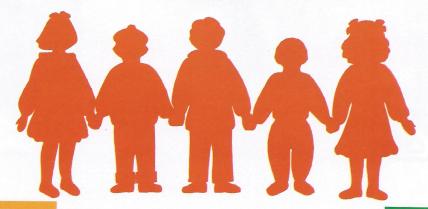
Sir's in the science lab giving a detention, with his pupil standing at attention.

From one's learning how to say 'fenêtre', with their teacher, as well as 'La Lettre'.

Soon the lunch bell loudly goes, and everyone steps on each other's toes. Then volleyball, rounders and tennis begin, each team shouts, 'We'll win! we'll win!'

Just two more lessons, then school is out,
The boys and girls go out with a shout,
and weary teachers prepare to leave,
hurrying away with sighs of relief!

Dianna Emtage, 13 years Belleville Grammar



Life Without Satellites

Satellites play an important role in our life, in the entertainment world and in the sporting world. If there were no satellites, we would not be able to see the West Indies cricket team getting "trashed" in South Africa nor would we have been able to watch television at different times as different countries entered the new millennium.

If we did not have satellites we would not see BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) World, which is based in London, England. It reports about places near England and also worldwide. Another familiar worldwide network is CNN (Cable News Network) which is based in Washington D.C. The satellite enables us to see those networks and know what is going on in every part of the world.

If satellites were not invented, we would not know what to expect in our weather. Suppose we planned a huge picnic (not knowing if it will rain or shine) and are having a good time and all of a sudden, it starts to rain cats and dogs and our plans are spoilt. There are worse things that would happen which we would not know about if we did not have satellites. For example, hurricanes and other natural disasters would occur and we would not have time to secure livestock, our homes and property.

I am very glad we have satellites because they afford us the opportunity to stay informed about worldwide issues and events.

Akeima Bostic. Charles F. Broome

ACTIVITIES

All About Hawkers

- 1. How is this market different from you have seen before?
- 2. Use ideas from the passage to draw a market scene.

The Wind

- 1. Find a phrase in the story to describe how the leaves move.
- 2. List four other things that ate moved by the wind.
- 3. In which months of the year is the wind strongest?
- 4. Through which sense does one experience the wind? Give an example from the poem.

A Lonely Road

- 1. Lisa in paragraph 3 did not know what to do. What would you have done?
- 2. Why do you think Lisa said the walk was exciting?
- 3. Make a list of the new words you met in the passage. Use your dictionary to check their meanings.

Pranksters

- 1. What prank did the children like to play?
- 2. If you were Alan's parents what advice would you give him?
- 3. Find the word SNEAK. Write 8 words which have "EA" as the medial sound.

Honest Pays Off

- 1. What lesson did Charlie learn from his mother?
- 2. Make TWO lists Singular and Plural Place all the singular and plural words from the story in the right list.
- Unscramble these words from the story:
 RPISSURE, GRHUNY, EDSRSDA, THIRBYAD,
 BAVHEED, NALIECPOM

The Most Embarrassing Moment

- 1. Why did the writer envy Rashida?
- 2. Explain how the writer's wish came true.
- 3. Why was the writer embarrassed?
- List four different feelings the writer had from the beginning to the end of the story.

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Children's Voices

Acknowledgement

The Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports wishes to acknowledge the contribution of the schools of Barbados as well as that of the Basic Reading Consultants to the production of this volume in the series of readers.

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The schools from which material was taken:

The Lodge School

Belleville Grammar School

Erdiston Primary School

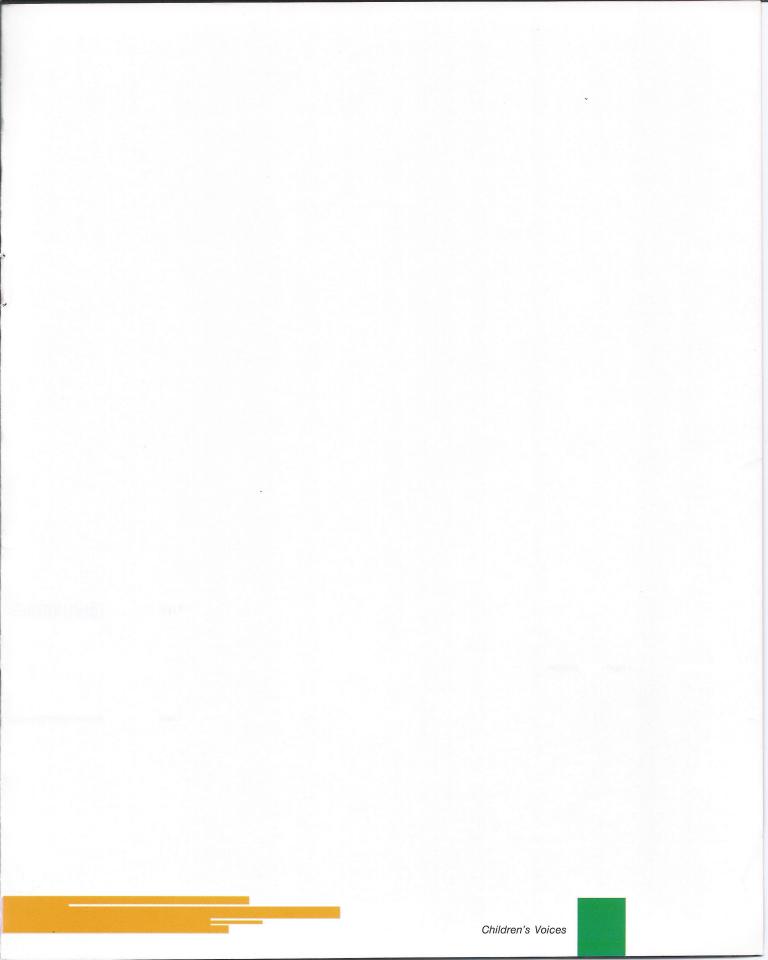
Queen's College

St. Martin-Four Roads Primary

Half Moon Fort Primary School

Christ Church Girl's

St. Leonard's





Ministry of Education Youth Affairs & Sports