

CONVERSATIONS WITH ANIMALS

A Story Studio Anthology by Young Authors (aged 5-13)



Story Studio is a charity that **inspires**, **educates** and **empowers** youth to be great storytellers.

We create innovative, 'fun-first' workshops that develop narrative capacity in youth, and celebrate young writers by crafting beautiful publications from their words.

This anthology is composed of stories written by children and youth across Canada, between the ages of 5 and 13 as a result of our September 2024 creative writing contest.

We asked young authors to write about what life would be like without trees. We looked for forward-thinking tales that captivated readers with dynamic plots, compelling characters, and immersive settings.



THIS MONTH'S WINNERS

- **Ages 5-9 1st Place:** The Scientist by Lucas (age 9)
- **Ages 5-9 2nd Place:** The Christmas Bunny by Claire (age 5)
- **Ages 10-13 1st Place:** Cockroacherella by Amelia (age 13)
- **Ages 10-13 2nd Place:** Rat's Best Friend by William (age 11)

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The Chirps of Silence

By Abby, age 12

Tap. taptaptaptap.

Blink.

People.

Hello?

They stared at me and shrugged meaninglessly.

Was it the way I look? The way I talk?

Silence filled the dream so much the air thickly was wrapped all around, pressing her lungs shortening— “Milaaaaa, Mila, Mila, wake up!”

“Sophie, shut it. Leave me alone,” Mila replied for a moment of silence, followed by sizzles of breakfast.

Mila closed her eyes, digesting her dream and cupping her face with her cold palms. Routinely checking if there were any messages three times until she had to go for the bus.

Noise.

Mila never liked it unless she was in it.

'Today will just be a quiet day; I won't care if I'm not included,' she thought while nervously fixing her looks unintentionally, canceling the noise with her earbuds, and trying her hardest to look like she didn't care. But she did care; she cared ever so much to finally disobey her proper-sided part of her consciousness and walk directly to the group of people who she didn't really know.

As the bell chimed for Mila's second period and she already wasted almost all of her social battery talking about things that weren't interesting, the only reason she joined in with these conversations was of how desperately she wanted to fit in.

"Hello!"

Mila turned her head so fast, her neck begged in agony. *'Who said hello?'*

The rest of the day Mila had a very uncomfortable day where Mila's skin felt sticky with sweat with the Autumn sun licking her with the mysterious voice. Mila was so unfocused while she raked her hands through her hair over and over while praying this day would come to an end.

As Mila flopped on her bed, tapping on her bed frame in pattern and heard, "Helloo!"

This time Mila made sure to see who greeted her while secretly hoping it was some boy from school. As she was rushing to the window, while mindlessly tripping over her backpack, "Helloooo," yelled a tiny voice, followed by many others.

Mila gaped in pure shock. It wasn't a cute boy, but they were... bugs? As the little bug crawled next to Mia and replied, "Well, are you going to say hello back?"

Mila could swear the bug was smiling. Before Mila figured to scream, her instincts took hold of her. She smacked the tiny bug while yelling until her parents came to her room.

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry."

"It was just a bug," Mila quickly said in a croaky voice.

"Hello."

"Hello."

"Hello."

"Hello."

"Hello."

"Hello."

"Please. Make it stop!" Tears slipped out of Mila's eyes as her head throbbed with all of the noise filling the silence.

Silence. How Mila wanted to hear silence again. As she lay awake until her eyelids felt like bricks weighing to close her eyes. Finally finding sleep after hours of searching and treasured it deeply.

Silence woke her up.

The End.

Cockroacherella

By Amelia, age 13

I'm sure you've heard the story of Cinderella. I probably don't need to explain it to you, but I will;

Cinderella is a nice girl forced into servitude by her wicked stepsisters and even wickeder stepmother. Then Cinderella's Fairy Godmother appears and does some magic. Bam! Pumpkin carriage, Bam! Ballgown, Bam! Glass slippers. She goes to the ball (ooh, ahh) she meets the prince, they fall in love, the clock strikes midnight, she has to leave, he finds the slipper, he seeks her out (using a less than questionable method), they reunite, happy ending!

What if I told you that the Fairy Godmother was a bit of a novice when it came to this magic stuff, I mean come on! No self respecting master fairy godmother would let their magic run out at midnight.

So would it surprise you that in this version of the story, the fairy godmother got caught up in the whole song and dance and accidentally hit a poor, unassuming cockroach with a beam of sparkle, panache, and high fructose corn syrup (seriously, it's in everything).

That's where our story takes place. Poor little Cockroacherella is magically transformed into a human (which is an animal), now able to communicate, and blend into human society, how will she fare?

Not well, it turns out. She trips over her own two feet at least eight times before she can even stand. Wobbly, she makes her way to a reflective pond to see a pretty girl

with short brown hair and a lacey cocoa colored ball gown covering her body. She is startled out of looking at her reflection by a loud clock chiming six o'clock. Cockroacherella soon realizes that she isn't going to transform back into her true self anytime soon, so she decides to seek out the fairy godmother.

She seeks high and low, from the very tippy top of the stars to the very bottom of the morning dew. She converses with many townsfolk, surprised at her new ability to talk to the giant stompers, as the cockroaches call them, but no one had even heard of the fairy godmother! Just as Cockroacherella started to succumb to the fact that she was going to stay as a horrible, no good human forever, she decided to check the library.

As soon as she pushed open the large, hickory doors, she heard an old woman say, "Oh for the love of - whatever!" Cockroacherella immediately recognized the voice of the fairy godmother. She sprinted as fast as her stubby little human legs could towards the fairy godmother.

"Please, godmother, turn me back into a cockroach, I'll do anything, just get rid of this disgusting human flesh!"

"You'll do anything, you say."

"Anything."

"Even spy on Cinderella in the palace? I want to make sure she's okay."

"As long as I can do it as a cockroach."

So with a poof, Cockroacherella turns back, then turns towards the palace.

And as she flew, her wings sparkled, just like glass.

The End.

One with Nature

By Anke, age 10

My name is Brooklyn, and the last few weeks may just have been the weirdest of my life. Let me explain. It was just another lazy, hazy Thursday afternoon when, all of a sudden, everything changed. I was walking home from my school, Corbin Mackin Elementary, and as I walked down the sidewalk of Dorsal Avenue, I noticed something strange. A glowing green light, trailing a wispy trail of emerald green smoke, was descending from the sky, and it was heading for... Me. I stood still, stunned; then my survival instincts screamed, "Run!"

I took off, sprinting as fast as I could (not very fast), heading for home. It followed me all the way to the big oak tree, a stone's throw away from my house, where I stopped, out of breath. Helpless, I watched as it slowed, then floated to my chest, and into my heart. For a moment, I couldn't breathe. Then the air turned freezing cold, then sizzling hot. Finally, everything returned to normal, except for a warm feeling, as if I had just sipped Grandma's hot chocolate. Bewildered, I went up the cobblestone steps to my house, opened the door, dropped off my backpack, and went upstairs to my room. My cat, Thompson, was curled up on my bed. I picked him up and put him in his bed, an old Amazon box, where he meowed sleepily. Weirdly, I could understand him perfectly, as if he was speaking English!

In my surprise, I said, "Thompson, are you... talking?"

To my complete bewilderment, he replied, "Of course, silly! Just because you humans don't understand the language of nature, doesn't mean we aren't talking!"

At that point, I fainted. When I woke up, I decided to try talking to Thompson again to make sure I wasn't dreaming. But first, I scooped Thompson up and brought him to the bathroom, then closed the door to make sure I didn't embarrass myself (because my older sister, Lindsey, was home). "Okay, are you saying that I can now talk to cats?" I asked Thompson.

He replied, "Not just cats; ALL animals speak the language of nature. You're just the first human to speak it! I can introduce you to Eructos, the dominant doe of the local herd. She has a problem that you can help her with."

I felt like fainting again, but I accepted the strange fact that I could now talk to animals and decided I wanted to meet this "Eructos" doe. With a sigh, I told Lindsey to tell Mom that I was taking Thompson for a walk (he likes walks for some reason). Then I brought Thompson outside and told him to lead me to her.

He took me to the nearby forest park and led me to the small lake in the middle of the park. There, we saw a herd of deer taking a drink. Thompson went up to a beautiful caramel-coloured doe and explained that I wanted to help her with her problem. Delighted, she thanked me and told me that animals were getting sick because there was too much garbage, and either they were mistaking it for something to eat, or it was polluting their habitat. She simply needed me to find the Gem of Purity, which would cleanse the forest, restoring all its former glory. The problem is, I had no idea where the gem was! Fortunately, Eructos told me that she could sense that it was somewhere in my city, which may sound like a big area, but my city, Bermas Hills, was actually pretty small. She told me that the gem was the clearest emerald green, shaped like a thick leaf.

The next day, I set out to ask random animals about the gem. A few squirrels had no idea, a deer could kind of sense it, but couldn't pinpoint an exact location. A duck asked me for bread, so I tossed him a crumb. I was getting nowhere until I met a friendly chipmunk in my friend Lorretta's neighborhood that said he could sense it close by.

All of a sudden, I realized that my friend's birthday party was tomorrow, and I forgot to get her a present! I checked my Hello Kitty watch, and it was already five in the afternoon! I thanked the chipmunk, picked up Thompson, and went home. After a delicious supper by Mom and Dad, I went down to the local gift shop, got a cool

glitter notebook, and a pen with a huge pom-pom on the end, and went home to get some sleep.

I woke up at about seven in the morning, so I had plenty of time to get ready for the party. When it was time to go to the party, I walked to Lorretta's house, and we had a lot of fun, but when it was gift-opening time, I got a HUGE surprise. She opened a jade and silver gift from her parents, and it was a gleaming emerald in the shape of a thick leaf, with a golden chain going through it. I couldn't believe my eyes! It was the Gem of Purity, and this was my chance to get it!

Without thinking, I asked if I could have it. Very bad idea. Everyone laughed at me, Lorretta said, "Um, no, this is expensive!" I felt myself blush, and then a sudden burst of shame swelled up in me.

I went home crestfallen, embarrassed, and disappointed. I was tantalizingly close to getting the gem, yet it was just out of reach. The next few days, things were looking pretty grim, until an absolute MIRACLE happened. One day at school, I overheard Lorretta talking about a rare comic, and how she would trade ANYTHING for it. I was mostly thinking about how close I was to getting the gem, when I remembered seeing the comic she was talking about, Supa Stickman #45 Issue 8, in my closet this morning!

As soon as the bell rang for home, I sprinted home to check, and there it was, on the floor next to my unicorn plushie. I grabbed it, then hitched a ride on a deer (don't ask) to Lorretta's house. When she saw it, the look on her face was priceless, and she asked me what I wanted in return. You can probably guess what I picked.

When I arrived at the forest lake, Eructos was waiting for me. She hung the Gem of Purity on the youngest evergreen tree, and as it happened, the green light in my heart flew to the gem, and a brilliant bright flash of turquoise lit up the forest. Then the forest suddenly... changed. The colours grew brighter, old withered trees grew green again, and the lake glistened crystal clear.

I realized I could no longer talk to animals, so I went home, happy that I had done a great deed to nature, ate supper, and went to bed. All was well.

The End.

A Christmas Rabbit

By Claire, age 5

On Christmas eve I got a rabbit. The cutest rabbit I ever saw.

It jumped up at me and said, "Am I cute?"

"What?" I said, "Of course you are!"

It didn't seem strange that my new rabbit could talk, it just seemed like destiny.

The bunny cuddled me and made a cuddly noise, "Mhhmf! Mmmmmhhff!"

I laughed, and then got a brush for his beautiful fur. As I brushed him I thought of the most perfect name... Cutey! "Your name will be Cutey," I said to my rabbit.

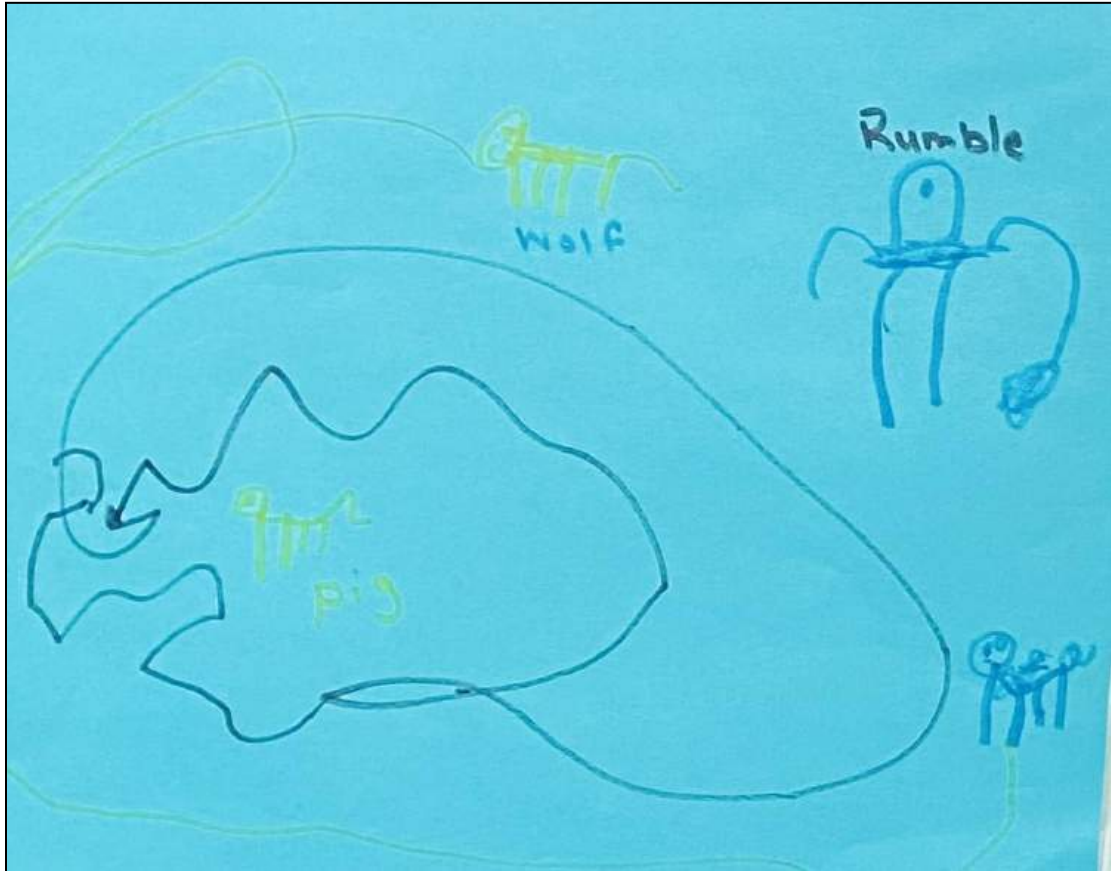
"I love you!" Cutey said.

And we became the best of friends.

The End.

Raccoona

By Lincoln, age 5



My story is about Rumble. Once upon a time, a pig was dancing in the mud. Then suddenly, the human fed him and a big, bad wolf came. Aquaman saved the day and the wolf was running away.

Rumble can speak animal languages. A monkey was chased by a lion. Rumble would say, "Sit down pig. Sit down monkey." Then a crocodile wanted to have some pizza.

Rumble is happy to have this superpower because he just likes telling stories. The animals say, "Thank you very much Rumble," because he takes good care of them.

The animals saw a big, good giraffe. A rhino wanted to say hello to the pig.

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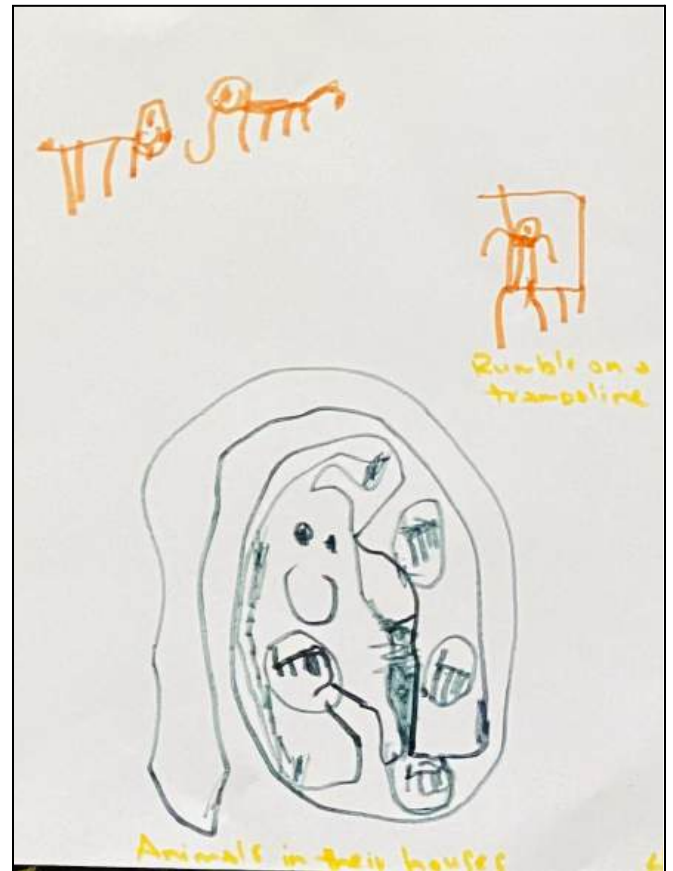
Rumble said to the pig, "It's okay! You can say hi to the rhino."

A sheep was in trouble by a shark. Then suddenly, the crocodile wanted to eat a shark and the second shark. But, the shark wanted to eat the giraffe and crocodile. They were challenging each other to a battle.

Rumble went in his robot machine to talk to all the animals to listen to the farm. Lightning hit the robot and there was a fire. A crocodile was stuck in the owl house and the robot saved him.

The animals got into the houses and that's how Rumble saved the day. The animals said, "Thank you very much for saving the day."

Rumble was bouncing on a trampoline and shouting hooray!



The End.

The Scientist

By Lucas, age 9

A scientist made something incredible one day. Something creepy. Something ridiculous! But he did it by mistake. He mixed up some liquids and poured in too much powder, so when he drank the mixture it almost made his head explode!

But that's not all. As he went downstairs to get some water he heard a sound. A whisper. "I love you," it said. And then again, "I love you!" And it got louder and louder until it was a yell, "I LOVE YOU! I LOVE YOU!"

Standing in front of him was his dog, manically, crazily, screaming out his love! And the scientist realized he could hear animals speak! Shock hit him like a baseball bat, and he fell over as his dog jumped on him.

"I LOVE YOU!" the doggy yelled.

The scientist got up and ran out into his backyard, slamming the door behind him. Almost immediately a flood of words came to him from up above. The trees were alive! No, it was the birds!

A bird swooped down in front of his face and in an Italian accent it said, "Hey mister! You got any pizza?"

The scientist could not believe it. He shook his head, terrified.

"NO PIZZA?" the Italian bird squawked loudly.

The scientist ran away again, but out of his backyard and onto the street. He took a few deep breaths but suddenly heard a tough sounding voice.

"Who are you?" said the deep voice.

The scientist turned around and saw a gang of cats. The one up front was the leader, looking at the scientist with scary eyes.

"I said, who are you?" the gangster cat said angrily.

"I'm nobody! Just a scientist!" the scientist yelled.

"You've got an attitude for a guy on our turf. Get him, boys."

And suddenly all of the neighbourhood stray cats were running toward the scientist. He turned around and, again, ran for his life. He ran and ran and soon he thought he wouldn't be able to do it anymore. But just then he heard a familiar sound in the distance.

"I love you..... I love you..... I LOVE YOU!"

His precious dog had come to his rescue. The scientist sighed with relief this time. He was saved.

The End.

Rat's Best Friend

By William, age 11

Six PM

BOOM! Cough, Cough. "I can't believe it, another failure," I say aloud to no one.

My name is Harry, and what you just heard was the sound of a spell gone wrong. I am so very disappointed. You see, I'm trying to make an amazing magical hat that can talk with a spell. I need this because I want a constant companion to tell me if they see an animal behind me. I can only look in front of me, not behind. But with a talking hat, it will be my eyes and ears, in all directions. It can warn me if it sees something scurrying up behind me.

You may be wondering, "Why do you need to know if an animal is behind you?" The answer: I hate any four legged creature that walks on the face of the earth today. Animals are gross. Dogs have fleas, cats have germs, and elephants just stink. I especially don't like rats, because they made the black death.

After the explosion, I grabbed my wand and potion book, determined to try again. I dumped the magical ingredients into my silver cup. This time I added only one scoop of elixir, and two scoops of flour. I prepared to zap the hat with my wand, but I missed, and zapped a corner. I was so mad! I was going to have to try again.

Eight PM

Hi, I'm back, and I am prepared to make my potion again! Wait, I think I saw something move in a corner. I'm going to go take a look. AHH!!!! There is a rat in my house! "Shoo, shoo," I say as I grab a newspaper

"Stop!" a voice says.

Wait, who said that?

"Down here," the voice comes again.

"You can talk?" I ask.

The rat replies, "Of course I can talk, you zapped me!"

I think about what he means by that, and I realize that when I accidentally zapped the corner, I zapped the rat instead! I am so confused so I start from the beginning.

"What is your name?"

It says it is called Jerry

"Why are you in my house?"

It says, "I smelt the magical pumpkin pie that you created in your oven!"

Okay, this is really weird, but I think it's about to get weirder because the rat looks like it will keep talking.

"There is a wicked human named Jack O Lantern, and he has all my mouse friends!"

Wow, this is really weird. First, there was a rat. Then, it could talk! It's also in trouble! I don't know what to do! All right, I will help this rat to find its friends.

Nine PM

It has been a long day. First, I found a rat that could talk, then it said that it was in trouble! I am confused and tired, so I tell it that I will first sleep, and I will help it tomorrow. But it says that there is no time. So I had no choice but to help it, and save its rat friends.

We walked along the dirty, dusty, and rocky patch that led us to the forest. Once we were in the forest, I started to smell familiar things. First, I smelt the aroma of pumpkins. Then it went to the bitter sweet scent of pine. Later on, I smelled smoke, and ashes coming east from us. I told the disgusting rat, and we ran off to find that

smell. We stumbled across a cabin that had creepy vibes coming from it. The rat showed no hesitation, and ran toward it, banged on the door, and waited for someone to answer.

Moments later, a human who looked very odd opened the door and asked us why we were here. We say that we smelt the pumpkin, and stumbled into the cabin. He let us into the cabin, and what we saw first was a cell with a dozen rats in it! We pretended to pay no attention to them, and because the rats were still sleeping, no one but Harry saw that Jerry was climbing on the cell to try and open it. While Harry was talking with Jack O Lantern, the rat almost got the lock open. But then Jack O Lantern turned around only to see that Jerry had freed the rats! Jack O Lantern ran for the rat cage, but it was too late. The rats had gone free, and were starting to attack the wicked human.

After a long brutalizing fight, the rats finally defeated Jack O Lantern and were celebrating! Then something amazing and fantastical happened! The rats suddenly transformed into humans, and Jack O Lantern turned into an actual Jack O Lantern! That was so amazing! The rat started to tell us that this Jack O Lantern needed to transform the humans into rats so that he could be a human! This was a really exciting adventure! But what I learned was that rats and other animals probably are not that gross.

The End.

The Tale of Communiams

By Yixuan (Tracy), age 12

It was the day after Ava had turned twelve and now she was allowed full access to the mansion. She could go anywhere she wanted to without permission from an adult or a bodyguard trailing her. Just as she was prepping her horse, Holly, for an excursion, she heard a voice.

"Ava, it is time. You have now been chosen by me. I am now you."

"Who's there?" Ava asked, "Wait... Are you talking to me, Holly? But that's impossible! Animals can't talk!"

"Animals can't talk to everyone. We can only talk to those who have the power to talk to us," the horse explained, "You are now twelve and it seems to me that you can talk to animals. Anyways, you and your family are facing great danger. There will be an attack..."

"Wait, what? There's an attack?!" Ava interrupted, "And what do you mean I have the power to talk to you?!"

"Well, I would have told you eventually if you let me. Now let's go on a ride and I'll tell you everything."

And so they went. Holly, the horse, explained everything to Ava. A great danger was heading this way and the only way to fight it was to find the other Animal Talkers. One by one, they were all sent to Ava's mansion. They all had their own Communiamls, the name they made. They were set to travel to the Great Dragon at sunset on the last day of the Season of Leaves to convince it to help them.

So they went to the Great Dragon and they reached it in the second week of the Season of Snow. Each Communiaml was from a different species. One a reptile, one a mammal, and one even a talking fish! Great lengths of convincing and the Great Dragon finally agreed to help them fight the great danger.

"But be warned," the wise dragon said, "The great danger is not what you believe it is. I can't say much but that is all I shall say."

Everyone was confused. What did the Great Dragon mean? It took them two weeks to get to the mansion. During the journey, one of the members of the squad received a prophecy.

"The day you arrive at the mansion, the great danger will be waiting. With one of your loved ones, the great danger will be waiting."

And so they arrived at the mansion. There were two people in front of the mansion. Ava's mom and Ava's younger brother.

"Mother?! You're the great danger?!" Ava questioned.

"Yes hon. I... I am the great danger. I'm sorry but my power is dangerous. Even now I can't control it. The only way to remove this great danger is..." her mother paused, "Is to kill me."

"We can't kill you, mother," Ava whispered.

"Child, walk with me," the Great Dragon commanded Ava, "This is what I meant by the great danger is not what you think it is. I was asleep for five hundred and sixty years. I was awakened when your mother was born. I knew she was the one."

"It's time," Holly whispered to Ava.

With a heavy heart, Ava whispered goodbye to her mother. Her mother walked into the fire with a smile on her face.

The End.

STORY STUDIO ANTHOLOGIES



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