

# My Twist on a Tale Winning Stories



**A collection of the winning stories from the My Twist on a Tale  
Writing Competition 2019 written by children across the world.**

The stories within were selected by our judges for their exceptional writing, creativity and for their representation of a modern day, diverse world reflecting the writer's own personality, location, heritage, interests or experiences.

My Twist on a Tale

**Winning Stories**

My Twist on a Tale was launched on International Literacy Day with the aim of empowering children and young people to become the protagonist of their own stories as they assert their modern-day stamp on classic tales and create their own narratives to reflect their personal interests, background, heritage and experiences.

This book features eight incredibly creative stories from children all across the world.

We wish to congratulate them all on their fantastic work and for winning My Twist on a Tale 2019!

At Pearson, we work to empower those working with children, young people and adult learners to explore the different dimensions of literacy, improve outcomes and inspire a life-long love of reading and writing.

Diversity, inclusion and relativity matter. They matter in the literature we consume and the books, poetry and plays we put in front of our children. We believe that at whatever age – from early stages to adulthood – people should feel represented in the literature they read and the stories they write.

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# The King

By **Maryam Saquib Imam**,  
Key Stage 1, Jawahir Al-Riyadh International School,  
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

There was a King who had one eye and one leg. He asked all the painters to draw a beautiful portrait, of him. But none of them could because how could they paint him beautifully with the defects. Eventually one of them agreed and drew a classic picture of the King. It surprised everyone. He painted the King AIMING for a HUNT. Targeting with ONE EYE closed and ONE LEG bent.

## **MORAL:**

“Why can’t we be like that painter, hiding others weaknesses and highlighting their strength”.







# Three Little Conchs

by **Hayley Williams,**

Key Stage 2, International School of the Turks & Caicos Islands,  
Turks and Caicos Islands.

Annually, in the Beautiful By Nature Islands of Turks and Caicos, in the month of November, there is a Conch Festival that takes place in the community Blue Hills located in Providenciales. It is an exciting festival where local chefs and restaurants compete for the best and most original tasty conch dishes.

It was conch season and the time was fast approaching for the Conch Festival. Local divers were busy preparing to go diving in order to supply the many local hotels and restaurants that were competing for the tastiest conch dishes.

There were three little conchs, very beautiful and fascinating creatures that lived in the blue waters of spectacular Grace Bay Beach. During the day they live under the sand and in the night they would come out to feed on the surface of the sand. The three little conchs, named King Helmet, Triton Trumpet and Horse Conch were very worried. Yesterday, Queen Conch told them that they may have to leave the comfort of the tropical waters and go to find their own homes. She warned them to be on the lookout for the divers who were busy hunting conchs.

The three little conchs were very sad and decided to go their separate ways, so each find a safe home away from the divers.

The first conch, King Helmet decided to make his home among the seaweeds. Conch Tristan Trumpet found his home under a rock and the third conch, Horse Conch made his home under the coral reefs.

No sooner had the three little conchs sadly parted ways, the divers came diving for conch. They quickly stumbled upon the King Helmet Conch under the seaweeds. He was taken onboard the boat with many other conchs, most of which had already lost their beautiful shells. The search continued and Triston Trumpet was shaking with fear. Just as he thought he was safe, the divers spotted him under the rock and gently fished him out. He also joined the other conchs on the boat.

By this time, Horse Conch was getting very fearful and worried because he thought he would suffer the same fate as his brothers.

However, the divers could not get to his little home, because the coral reef where he lived was prohibited from divers and fisherman. The coral reefs were protected and so the divers could not attempt to come fishing near this ecosystem. The divers were angry and puffed and scuffed, but there was nothing they could do. They just had to obey the law. The divers soon left to search for conch in other areas and so Horse Conch was spared. He was overjoyed that his life was saved but sad knowing that his brothers were not as lucky.

While he lay contented and happy, he thought of all the good times they spent together. Now they were making someone happy by providing a nice meal of stew conch or sizzling conch fritters. That's good, thought Horse Conch but I prefer spending my days in the beautiful turquoise waters of Turks and Caicos Islands.









# The Parachute Kingdom

by **Husnur Hajigizi**, Key Stage 2, British School of Baku, Azerbaijan

There was a city which was also a kingdom ruled by a wise king and queen they were very good and just, but sadly they didn't have any children. However, they had very good friends and seven fairies. Each fairy looked after one of the seven boroughs that made up the city.

People were happy because the king and the queen took care of the problems that they had. People used the royal e-mail service to send their letters to the king. At the same time people could share their problems with the fairies who were glad to help. The fairies were also very helpful as they had meetings with people and encouraged them to have excellent manners, friendships, kindness and also explained to them that keeping the climate clean is crucially important. They told people about nature, the freshness of the air and the cleanliness of water. People listened to the fairies and took care of the city environment. They used recycled materials, water filters, eco friendly cars and solar panels. Each time a person did something amazing they released mini parachutes and took a selfie with it. The city was clean and blooming with lots of parachutes in the air that lit-up like disco balls at night.

While people of all seven boroughs were happy living their daily lives, there was one place where sadness was taking over happiness. It was the palace. The king and the queen were getting older and weaker and they wanted to retire but they didn't have an heir to the throne. The fairies noticed their

sadness and tried to help them. They were spending a lot of time in their magical library and found a book which had a spell that could work. However, this spell was very hard, so the fairies were training days and nights to perform the spell.

In the meantime, the king and the queen got seriously ill and they were not able to read emails sent by the public. The fairies were so busy while working on the spell they forgot about their duties. The city was changing terribly as people got very angry and the fairies disappeared so nobody was helping with their problems. They stopped cleaning rubbish, stopped being nice to each other and some even started vandalising the city! They forgot about kindness and stopped protecting their environment. The city was fading and there wasn't a single parachute left in the air.

It seemed that all hope was lost, when one morning the fairies performed a spell in the royal garden. A beautiful flower with golden petals started to grow and a beautiful lady with golden hair came out of it as the petals opened. The fairies called her Goldy and were happy to welcome her. Suddenly they heard shouting from behind the palace walls. A big protest had started and people with banners were calling for the king. The fairies flew closer to the protestors but they were angry and did not listen to the fairies. The king was so disappointed in the fairies that they hadn't helped while he was ill that he ordered the fairies to remain under home arrest.

Goldy was very brave, optimistic and a natural leader she promised to help the fairies and went in front of the public. Everyone fell silent as they saw her golden hair. She reminded them about their environment, friendship and kindness and she released a golden parachute in the air. It shone beautifully and she took a selfie and uploaded it onto social media. News reporters were filming her and all TV channels and websites were streaming live. Soon, the whole city was aware and listening to Goldy and rushed to clean the city together. Goldy listened to all the problems people had and helped them. The city was in harmony again.

Goldy returned to the palace, where the king and the queen wanted to meet her – the hero. Goldy took a petal from the golden flower and made a magical drink. She asked the king and the queen to drink it. They instantly felt better and thanked Goldy. Goldy asked the king to free the fairies and told the king that they taught her all she knew. The king asked the fairies to forgive him and he asked Goldy, who became the most popular person on social media, to take his royal duties. Goldy agreed and the king retired with a great party. There were fireworks all around the kingdom, but most importantly the sky was once again full of parachutes.



Illustration drawn by Husnur Hajigizi









# DJrella

by **Abigail Tutuko**, Key Stage 3, Pearling Season International School, Qatar

Once upon a time, there lived a little girl called Ella. Ella lived with her evil stepmother and her two mean stepbrothers, Evan and Ethan. Her stepbrothers loved to play mean tricks on her, like putting a spider in her slipper.

Her stepmother, Madam Foofa, loved to give Ella horrendous chores. Ella felt miserable. However, there was one thing that would always make her smile. Music. Oh, how she loved music. She would lock her bedroom door and wait for Madam Foofa and her sons to sleep, pick up her headphones and listen to music all night.

One day, a letter was sent out to everyone in the village, saying that DJ Charming was looking for a DJ partner. Of course, Ella was super excited and wanted to go, but her stepbrothers and stepmother laughed at her. The time had come where her brothers got ready to leave for the auditions.

"Oh my, I'm sure one of you boys will come home tonight as my little DJ. Make mummy proud, boys!" praised Madam Foofa.

"And as for you," she said, looking at Ella, "Here is a list of chores I want you to complete by seven o'clock."

Ella stared at the long list. "That's impossible!" She cried.

"Exactly," Her stepmother ordered, "So you better start now."

Ella felt upset. If Ethan and Evan are allowed to audition, why can't I? She thought to herself. She grabbed a mop and started mopping the floor, while watching her family members hop on a carriage, which Madam Foofa had rented to celebrate her son's early victory.

A tear rolled down her cheek, and soon enough, she burst into tears. *It's not fair. I work harder and longer than Evan and Ethan, but they get to go.* She thought.

Suddenly, a bright light appeared in front of Ella.

"Don't cry little Ella. You will go to the auditions, I promise it" said a mysterious voice.

Ella looked up and saw an old woman smiling down at her. The old woman explained that she was Ella's DJ Godmother, and was here to help Ella.

"But my family will recognize me," Ella said.

DJ Godmother pulled out a masquerade mask and slipped it on Ella.

"There," she said, "Even I can't tell it's you!"

Ella smiled at her. They both walked to the palace and DJ Godmother reminded Ella to be home before the others did.

Before entering the palace, Ella gave DJ Godmother a hug and thanked her for helping her out.

She entered the palace, and while waiting for her turn, made some new friends. She chatted and danced all evening, until finally, it was her turn. Ella put on her headphones and walked up the stage. She was nervous at first, but as soon as she began, she found herself lost in the music.

When she finished, everyone applauded, and DJ Charming complimented Ella on her brilliant performance. Just before he was going to announce the winner, Ella noticed that her stepmother and step brothers were heading home.

She panicked and ran, dropping her headphones.

"Wait!" DJ Charming yelled. "Miss! Miss! You won! Miss, come back!"

All this commotion made Madam Foofa and her sons look back to see what was happening.

Ella dashed through the guards and made it home a minute before her family members did. *I won*, she thought, *I won the competition*. Madam Foofa was especially upset because neither of her sons won.

The next day, everyone was talking about the mysterious DJ who ran away when she was announced winner. They all wondered who it could be.

DJ Charming went from house to house, asking girls to put on the pair of headphones that his mystery DJ dropped. When he went into Ella's house, he asked her to try it on, and of course, they fitted her!

"Are you the mysterious DJ from last night?" He asked her.

"She couldn't be. Ella stayed here all evening, cleaning up the house and doing her chores." Madam Foofa answered impatiently.

"Actually, yes I am the mysterious DJ." Ella replied shyly.

"What?! But how? You were cleaning up all evening! You couldn't have been there. That's impossible!" Madam Foofa complained.

"A little bit of magic helped me..." Ella said to Madam Foofa.

And ever since then, Ella has been living her life smiling and making music with DJ Charming. They called her... DJrella.

# Little Miss *Mu-Fêt*

by **Jacob Lydon**, Key Stage 3, Casablanca American School, Morocco

"Tell us another story, Nana!"

"Of course, my little êkir."

"Yay!" the children squealed.

"This story is from a time long ago, when I was a little older than you are now."

The children sat, captivated.

"Many years ago, when I was an explorer on the Ava Mezin river, I heard a rumor. High up in the Zagros Mountains, in a cave on the highest peak, lived an evil, gnarled woman. They called her çermu fêqîh, or *Mu-Fêt* for short. She was said to have lived for five hundred years without a beam of sunlight or a drop of water. And worst of all, she was said to eat..."

Not even a breath could be heard as the children sat, wide-eyed.

"Little Kurdish children just like you."

At this, the children let out terrified shrieks and clutched each other, as if that alone would stop the evil woman from eating them up.

"Now children, there is nothing to be afraid of. Her cave has been empty for a long time, and nobody has seen her for many years. But when I first heard her story, she was very much alive and I was very much afraid of her. I went to bed that night with one eye open, just in case she might sneak up on me.

When I woke up the next morning, I thought that it must be a terribly cloudy day, because all I could see was the light of a few oil lamps. But after I had rubbed my eyes a few times and could see clearly, my heart started to beat faster. My fears had come true. I was in a cave, and from the carpet of pasty-white bones that littered the floor, I could tell exactly who lived there."

"Were you scared?" blurted one of the children.

"Of course I was scared! I was lying in a pile of bones from other unfortunate children just like me. But I was smart and didn't let my fear get the best of me. I could hear someone moving in another chamber of the cave, so I found a doorway to look through. I could see a very tight hallway with a stove and a tuffet in the corner. Next to the tuffet, stood the worst monster I had ever seen. I realized that this horrible creature was *Mu-Fêt*, the child eater."

"Was she ugly?"

"She was so ugly, she could have curdled milk by looking at it."

At this, the children began to giggle.

"I could have fainted right there. But I stayed courageous and began to look for ways that I could escape. Before I could see if the hallway led outside of the cave, I was startled by a blood-boiling scream.

I jerked my head back and watched with horror as *Mu-Fêt* slapped a giant spider off of her shoulder. It bounced harmlessly onto the floor and I could only gape as the woman lumbered over to the spider, ladle in hand, and beat it to death. When *Mu-Fêt* was done slamming her ladle into the spider mush, I opened my eyes and had an idea. Just as I had hoped, I found a spider even bigger than the one *Mu-Fêt* had just killed. I tiptoed back over to the doorway and waited for an opportunity. At this point, I realized that I had to execute my plan. I plugged my nose, stepped out from behind the door, and threw the spider at *Mu-Fêt* just as she began to taste her stew. I watched, amazed, as the spider drifted through the air. It twirled, spinning its silk, floating like a dying leaf down from a tree on the first day of autumn. As if blown by a chilling breeze as the sun goes down, the spider readjusted its trajectory. I stared as all of the spider's legs made their descent onto *Mu-Fêt's* shoulder. And when she could feel the many legs next to her head, I watched as her eyes filled with the fury of a thousand suns."

"Did you escape?" asked one child urgently.

"Don't worry, I did. When *Mu-Fêt* saw the spider, she let out an even louder scream than before. While she was blinded by rage, I bolted down the hallway. The tunnel led out onto the mountainside and I ran as fast as I could down the slope."

The children clapped and grinned at me. We shared good-nights and the children went to their beds, comforted by the thought that *Mu-Fêt* had been dead for a long time.

I smiled to myself as I waited for the children to fall asleep.

By the next morning, they'll realize that I was very much alive.









# The Reader Ogre

by **Ana Luiza Pinheiro**, Key Stage 3, International School Zurich North, Switzerland

Not so long ago, there were two kingdoms, divided by a valley: the human kingdom, at the west, where the humans lived, and the magical kingdom at the east, where creatures like dragons, fauns and ogres lived their peaceful lives. But there was one thing the humans had and the magical creatures didn't: libraries.

However, some creatures, like princess Melissa, were really interested in piles of paper that could tell stories... Actually, everything in the human kingdom seemed to interest the princess.

The little ogre used to dream every night about the human kingdom, until, one day, when she was about ten, she felt she was ready for it.

– Dad? – she called.

– What is it, Mel? – the king asked.

– I've been thinking, my birthday is only two weeks away, and I... – She held her breath and tried to speak calmly – I want to go to the human kingdom.

– Mel – his expression was serious – Even though the kingdoms are in peace, it doesn't mean it'll be as if you were one of them... In our kingdom, we're proud of our hospitality, but the humans are not like this... Are you sure you want to go?

– I'll give it a try – she said, thinking that humans would never be like this.

After a long silence, he said:

– Fine... You're allowed to go. But please, – he looked at her with a few tears in his eyes – be careful...

Two weeks later, when the day finally came, she didn't have time to lose! She couldn't remember going down that hill so fast! Soon, she got to the west hill. There, facing her, was the biggest building she had ever seen, with huge letters forming the word "LIBRARY".

She was ready to run, but something else caught her attention. In every corner, she could see beautiful creatures, more known as humans, looking at the same place, and whispering... The princess took a few seconds and realized they were looking at her!

When she got to the library, she heard a woman's voice:

– No costumes inside!

The little ogre could see that it came from an old lady, who, a second before was sitting behind a table, and that, now, was coming towards her.

– Sorry? – the princess whispered.

– Why are you still here, wearing this ugly ogre costume? – she had a shrill voice – Costumes are only allowed in Halloween!

– I’m sorry, but I don’t know what you’re talking about. I’m Melissa, from the Magical Kingdom. It’s a pleasure to meet you. The lady’s eyes suddenly widened when she saw the gills in the hand Melissa was offering for a hand-shake.

– You’re a real monster... – she whispered.

A girl, who had been watching everything, started laughing; a cruel laugh. Many followed her; soon, everyone was laughing. Everyone but a boy. He got up and went in their direction.

– Mrs. Susan, I don’t think you expressed yourself right – he said – I’m sure you didn’t mean to say she was a monster.

– Look, if it is not “Weird Edmund” defending the ugly ogre – shouted the girl that laughed first. – Go away, freak! Those “magical” creatures are all freaks, and will always be!

Melissa stopped. No one would talk about her kingdom like this.

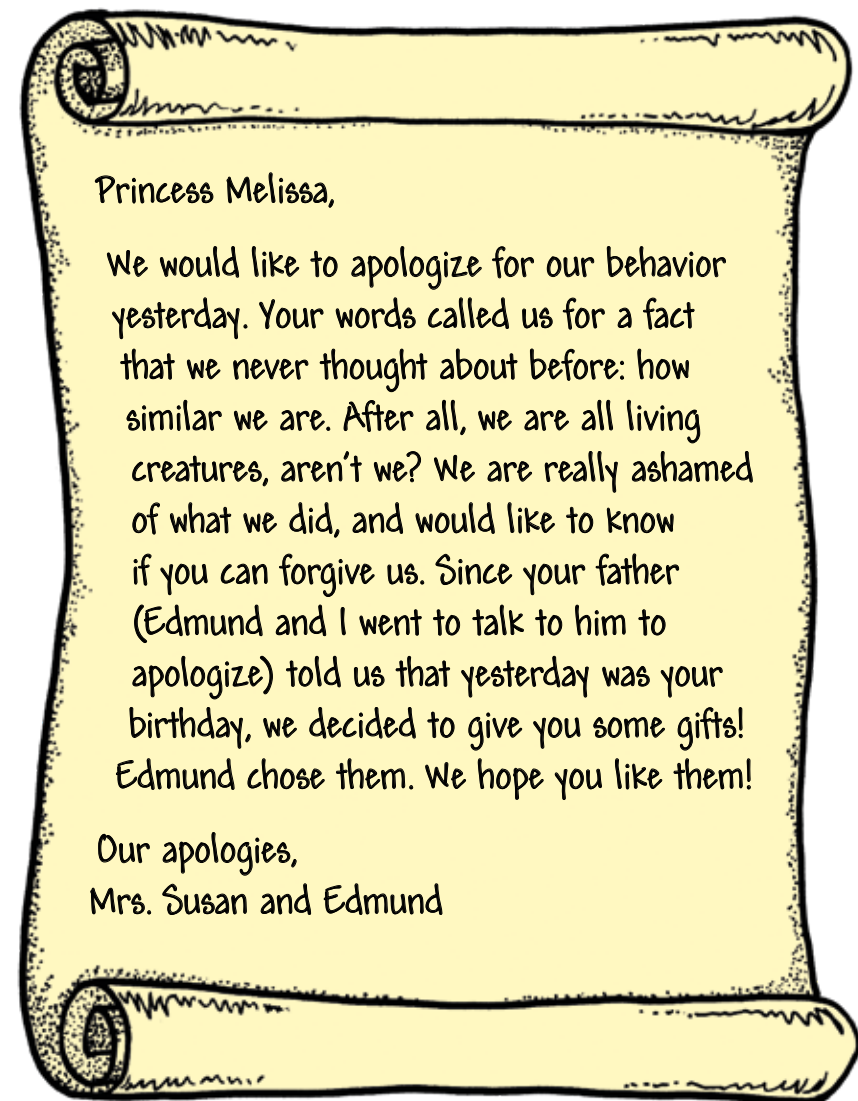
– Enough! – she shouted, looking up – I won’t let you disrespect my kingdom!

You say they’re freaks, but they’re kind, and friendly! And if there is any freak in here, that is not me! It’s all of you, who are making fun of my people!

Then she went back home, certain of one thing: she would never go to the Human Kingdom again.

“Knock, knock”. It was with this sound that the little ogre woke up in the next day. She got out of bed, and went to see who was at the door. When she opened it, she found no one but a box. Inside the box, there was a letter and... guess what?

Books! It’s hard to describe the surprise she had reading the letter, but it was something like this:



Princess Melissa,

We would like to apologize for our behavior yesterday. Your words called us for a fact that we never thought about before: how similar we are. After all, we are all living creatures, aren't we? We are really ashamed of what we did, and would like to know if you can forgive us. Since your father (Edmund and I went to talk to him to apologize) told us that yesterday was your birthday, we decided to give you some gifts! Edmund chose them. We hope you like them!

Our apologies,  
Mrs. Susan and Edmund

Melissa couldn’t believe in what she had just read! From that day, the two kingdoms made a friendship treaty that lasts until now. A non-inflammable library was built in the Magical Kingdom. Melissa and Edmund became really good friends; they even married when they grew up! But that is another story, that will be told another day...







# The Short Princess

by **George Nnona**, Key Stage 4, Corona Secondary School, Agbara, Nigeria

Once upon a time in a land far away,  
There was a little castle where a fair maiden lay,  
Beautiful she was and pretty as she might,  
She was not very adequate in the area of height.

From doctor to doctor she went and explored,  
From person to person and door to door,  
Try as she may, and do as she might  
There was absolutely no way she could increase  
her height.

By now she'd forgotten and even given up,  
When one particular day she heard a loud knock.  
She opened the door and peered into the night,  
When a tall old hag gave her quite a fright.

In shock and in fear, she asked who she was,  
But she said nothing, smiled and extended her  
claws,  
Wide his hand opened and inside was a bottle,  
And on it read, "This will help with your trouble."

She crawled up the stairs and into her room,  
Unto her bed, then stared at the moon,  
"Will this really work?" She thought and she  
pondered.  
"Let's give it a try, It has to work wonders."

A little she gulped, then more and more,  
Her desire so strong, it continued to poor,  
Once she had finished, downed it all,  
She went to her bed and hoped to be tall.

The next morning she awoke, awaiting her dream,  
But very unusual, everywhere seemed.  
Her bedroom was massive, so much taller,  
"I haven't grown! I'm just way shorter!"

The old hag appeared and laughed all the while,  
As the young maiden struggled to put up a smile,  
"Enjoy your gifts," she started to say,  
"Or all of them might just be taken away!"





# Becoming Imara

by **Oluwalaonoayo Ashiru**, Key Stage 4, Corona Secondary School, Agbara, Nigeria

Imara. Believed to be a resolute female, a born leader, an unwavering presence. Perceived to be a strong woman. I cannot help but disagree. Being named Imara, I am a personification of all the name is not. In the past, when my name was called, people looked around for a vivacious female and it was almost a reflex action how rapidly their bright, curious, searching eyes turned dim with disappointment. Since the community did not like associating such a powerful name with a disappointment such as myself, I began to be called Gwandoya meaning, 'met with misery'. Life moved on after this, but unfortunately, I am not blind to the pitying looks or deaf to the commiserative whispers. I am however, mute to condescending remarks. I am the square peg pleading to be fitted into the round hole that is my family.

As I attempt to brush my hair, I observe myself in the reflection from the Lake Ogala. One hand scrunched into the dark brown tumble of curls that defy all rules and gravity with contempt, I recount that it is one of the few features I have similar to my family. My eyes drift to my hands and I yearn for the days when they were small, innocent and free from the evils of the world. Now, dark veins strain against skin, tiny, scattered pale pink lines decorate the surface and the once smooth palm is now rough and

calloused. Right as my eyes begin to float to the rest of my body, a hand is clamped on my shoulder and I flinch so strongly, I almost fear my bones will jump out of my body.

Not like it is the first time I've felt like that, however. I only hear "Gwandoya" before I see the retreating back of one of my sisters. I ache to call out to her, to ask her what dinner is and where it is, to beg her to speak to me, to care for me. But I keep silent knowing the consequences of speaking without necessity. I stand up from my crouched position on the lake bed and can feel my joints weeping in agony from my daily sessions with my father.

Getting to my house, I hear the women in the house discussing something that sounds like gibberish and the words are just floating around. Straining my ears, I hear them say they have to get Amahle, my elder sister ready. I assume she has accepted one of her many suitors and go to the dining to eat. Meals at the table are compulsory and the only time I sit with them. That night, as I lay on my bed, grateful for the reprise from my daily chores and pain, I hear the murmur of rustling clothes and conclude that my sisters are still awake. Suddenly, the window bangs open and a cool gust of air enters the room and my sisters are giddy with excitement but before I even comprehend anything, I am whisked away by a black



mass of air and I hear Amahle's cries of no before I am floating through the clouds. Then I see a wall filled with vibrant hues. My heart stops when the shadow-like mass launches me at it. I scream and black out.

When I open my eyes, I see a brown haired boy with sparkling, emerald green eyes smiling down at me with a hand extended. He wears all green and seems young, around my age perhaps. I am awe-struck and just continue staring at him, till he goes, "You know it's rude to leave people hanging when they offer help right?" This snaps me out of my daze and I grasp his hand and he lifts me up.

"Peter Pan," he says.

"What?" I ask him, confused.

"My name. Peter Pan. It's a pleasure to meet you, welcome to Neverland, land of believers. I'll show you around.

Looking around, I see really tall buildings and weird-looking shiny screens. Peter tells me it is called technology and Neverland is in the future. That it is the future and it belongs to all those who felt they don't belong and are willing to believe. We reach a point and Peter tells me that before I can go any further, he needs to know if I believe. I look into the distance and I see a future, a hope for a brighter tomorrow and all I say is, "I'm Imara".

# Acknowledgements

First and foremost, we'd like to thank everyone for taking part. We were blown away by all of the amazing stories that we received from over 1,200 students from across over 50 countries worldwide!

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We would like to say a very special thank you to our judges for their time to help choose the winning entries.

**Ross Young**, The United Kingdom Literacy Association (UKLA)  
Representative and series creator of *Power English: Writing*

**Phil Ferguson**, The United Kingdom Literacy Association (UKLA)  
Representative and series creator of *Power English: Writing*

*'It's our hope that as young writers you had a good time crafting these wonderful stories. We certainly loved reading them. Thank you! You can now enjoy the satisfaction that comes from being published authors and seeing the result of that hard work! This is what writing for pleasure is all about'.*

Ross Young and Phil Ferguson



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A collection of the winning stories from the **My Twist on a Tale Writing Competition 2019** written by children across the world.

The stories within were selected by our judges for their exceptional writing, creativity and for their representation of a modern day, diverse world reflecting the writer's own personality, location, heritage, interests or experiences.

