

A Vast Garden of Creativity

I was really grateful to be asked by Knowsley Libraries to judge this competition. As soon as I read the first submission I felt as though I'd entered a vast garden of creativity.

I really love the fact that people spent some of their spare time creating such entertaining stories and poems. I scored all works according to a point system to make things as fair as possible.

I would like to congratulate the winners and recommend that everyone involved continues to be creative.

Curtis Watt
Creative Writing Competition
February 2010

Maureen Reason

Adult 1st Prize

The Vigil

Ada stepped primly and steadily on her nightly vigil to the water's edge. She was the focus of much amusement amongst the younger generation; always good for a laugh. As the desolate little figure wandered past them they only saw someone with white straggly hair hanging to her razor thin shoulders, facial hair long unnoticed by the owner of the sallow parchment face.

They giggled at her unusual choice of attire, thick lisle stockings with white sandals, plastic mac tied tightly with string and the inevitable woolly hat worn in all weathers.

What they couldn't see was the young fresh girl that still lived within Ada's emaciated appearance... A lovely dark haired young lady with flashing eyes who waited in vain every night for her young man to come home...

Sometimes she glimpsed him as she stared amongst the frothy edges of the water or caught his smile in the crimson sunset and her heart would gladden as she reached out to hold him one more time.

These nightly visits would lift her spirit to get her through another lonely day which would be surrounded by other beautiful young people wrapped in the segments of old age, condemned to the secret, never to be discussed tortures of the unsatisfied. At times she would stroll slowly into the modern housing estates which were covered in graffiti and littered with broken glass; gangs of youths on street corners would be gathered smoking and spitting... but for some reason they never accosted her at all whilst she passed, perhaps the cold frame of reserve surrounding her kept them at a distance because any jeers wouldn't happen until she had gone by; then she wouldn't notice as she only saw little grey rain washed streets with lamp posts for the children to swing upon and mothers watching innocents playing on the cobbles.

All the locals knew Ada but they none knew her name as she was a mystery, keeping herself aloof from any contact with them. As with most familiar occurrences she was taken for granted and her disappearance unnoticed for some time...

The locals never found out what happened to Ada, being so old she ceased to be a subject for discussion when a few weeks had passed...

A young woman's body was found though with long dark hair spread across the icy water like an enigmatic mermaid, clutching the sleeve of a man's linen shirt, silk roses still attached to her bodice...

The Shadow Dog

Ralph was very happy when he moved to his new house in the country with Mummy and Daddy. It was much better than the small flat they had shared in the city. He had a big garden to play in. There were fields and woods all around, filled with rabbits and squirrels. There was even a stream with frogs and sticklebacks at the bottom of the garden.

But at night things were different. In the city, when Mummy turned off the light, his bedroom was lit by the glow from the street lamps outside. Here Ralph's room was at the back of the house and the only light came from the moon and the moon cast scary shadows on his bedroom wall.

There were the flittering shadows of bats and moths. Worse of all, the branches of trees looked like bony claws reaching out to grab hold of him. Ralph was scared to close his eyes in case they got him. After three nights Ralph was so tired that he dozed off in school. Mummy asked him what the problem was. Ralph told her about the nasty shadows.

Daddy came home from work, while Ralph was having a bath, and Mummy told him how frightened Ralph was of the shadows.

Daddy thought for a while and then snapped his fingers. "I think I have an idea that might help." Mummy watched as Daddy drew a shape on some cardboard and then cut carefully around the outline with a pair of scissors. Daddy attached a tail to the body with an elastic band so that it swayed from side to side.

Daddy smiled, "I'll put it on the window in Ralph's room. Tonight when the moon shines it will cast a shadow on the wall."

That night when Ralph had gone to bed Daddy came up to tuck him in. "Good night Ralph," said Daddy and then he gave a wink, "and there's no need to worry about the shadows any more because I've sent someone to keep guard." Ralph didn't know what his Daddy meant but he whispered "Thank you Daddy" and quickly ducked under the duvet as Daddy switched off the light. It was warm and safe under the duvet but it soon got very stuffy. Ralph poked his head out, ready to duck back under if he saw the shadow things. He turned his head slowly and looked at the wall opposite the window. Ralph opened his eyes wide in surprise. On the wall was a dog, a shadow dog and it had a waggy tail! Ralph smiled happily. Now he knew what Daddy had meant about sending someone to protect him. Ralph yawned and whispered "Goodnight shadow dog," before falling fast asleep.

The Magic Powder

Oscar Shannon ran outside as Postman Ted knocked, 'One for you from Mongolia,' he smiled.

He ran upstairs with Uncle Bertie's letter, with colourful stamps. A letter and a sealed envelope came out.

'Dear Oscar,

You wrote how you were bullied at school, and friends refused to play. I send you this magic powder that will change your life.

At the stroke of twelve, on a frost-free, full moon night, pour it into a saucer, spreading it with a duck feather. Place it on a windowsill for the moon to shine on it. Next morning a Chengis Khan warrior will appear. He'll be your friend. He'll stay by your side and give you strength. Good luck. Uncle Bertie.'

Thoughts about the warrior gave him goose pimples. After school, he rushed to the marshy pond nearby and fetched two duck feathers. After dinner, Oscar tiptoed back to his room carrying a saucer. Pouring the powder into it, he spread it with the duck feather and left it on the windowsill. At midnight, a silvery haze from full moon fell on the saucer. As he slept, a wisp of smoke stemmed up and formed a shadowy figure of an eight-foot tall warrior, with a shield and a sword, by the window. He had slanting eyes, drooping moustache like the Chinese and a long pleated ponytail.

'Are you from Mongolia? What's your name?' he asked.

A thundering voice answered, yes, I am Balkan. I'm your friend.'

'Will you come to school with me?'

'Yes, but no one will see me or hear me talk.'

Balkan followed him to school each morning but no one saw him. Knowing Balkan was by his side, Oscar became fearless. The teacher and the boys didn't scare him at all. Oscar worked hard and Mr. Shepherd complemented him. John and Liam, who used to bully him, invited him to play. Balkan was around but Oscar needed him less and less. When frost appeared, Balkan said,

'Tonight's the last. I'll always stay with you, and the children who need me.'

Oscar's eyes filled with tears, 'thank you, with you by my side, I've got over my fear and feel confident. Children who feel weak need you now.'

He watched Balkan fade to a hologram and then disappear, as glistening frost gathered outside the window and the magic powder was gone.

Fog over Huyton

Young Danny Morris emerged from Huyton Library and stepped into the densest fog the town had seen for many years. He had been reading up local history and hadn't noticed the time slipping away. It was a November Saturday afternoon, frosty and just about to go dark.

The fog muffled the sound of what little traffic that there was, and reduced visibility to about the length of a bus. He made his way towards the subway, barely visible through the gloom, and set off down the dimly lit passage. Up to now he hadn't seen another living soul. It was cold and dank in the tunnel and he was glad to reach the other side.

He stopped in amazement at what beheld his eyes. Alongside the pavement was a Hansom cab with a driver dressed in Victorian clothes sitting up top. The streets were cobbled, and the Queen's pub was a black and white timbered building with a thatched roof. There was a man standing some distance from the cab dressed in a frock coat and top hat. He was in conversation with a lady wearing a crinoline and a poke bonnet. Suddenly, she tore something from her finger and stormed off up the steps to the station.

The man watched her for a few minutes, then got back in the cab and ordered the driver to drive on. They set off at a smart pace and turned into the Orchard. Danny followed at a safe distance, fascinated.

Upon reaching the bar across the road, the cab halted and the driver dismounted to open the gate. As he did so, he noticed Danny and stared hard at the boy.

Danny took to his heels, by now terrified, and ran all the way to his home in Tarbock Road. All his family were at a party and the girl next door was baby sitting for the evening. He decided not to tell her what he had seen and to wait till his parents arrived home. He found himself becoming drowsy during Match of the Day however, and took himself off to bed.

The next day everything seemed to be back to normal and Danny assumed that it had all been a dream. Later that afternoon, curiosity got the better of him. He walked to the station where everything was back to normal, yellow lines and parked cars. He made his way up the slope towards the station where he had seen the lady the previous day. Looking down, there amongst the leaves was a diamond ring.

Bobbie's Friend

Bobbie was a little boy of no more than seven. He loved going to school and learning all kinds of different things that this teacher Miss Sloan taught.

Every day Bobbie would hurry home when school was over and repeat to his mum all that had gone on in class that day. His mum Mrs. Alan took a great interest in whatever Bobbie was learning and helped him as much as she could. When his Dad came home from work each night of course everything was repeated by Bobbie and nothing was left out. His dad would laugh and tell him to slow down as he could not keep up with what Bobbie was trying to tell him.

One day a new boy joined the class and Miss Sloan introduced him as Edwin James. Edwin was a rather shy boy and as there was a seat vacant next to Bobbie, Miss told him to sit there. After couple of days Bobbie began to realize that Edwin was a little slow at reading and would stumble over some words then stop altogether. When Miss Sloan asked Edwin to stand up and read to the class some of the boys hid their faces with their hands to giggle, Miss Sloan became very angry and told the culprits to behave.

After school one day Bobbie asked Edwin if he would like to come to his house for tea the following day, Edwin said he would ask his mum if he could as Bobbie only lived two roads away. Next morning Edwin told Bobbie he could go to his house for tea but his mum said he had to be home before it went dark.

They walked to Bobbie's house from school and Edwin was introduced to Mrs. Alan who had a nice tea waiting for them. Soon after Mr. Alan arrived home from work and after tea they all played games until it was time for Edwin to go home.

The boys became firm friends and Bobbie often helped Edwin with his reading, Miss Sloan saw a great improvement in Edwin's work and there was no more giggling in class.

Val Stuart

Adult Highly Commended

The Secret Wood

Martin leant against the tree, closed his eyes and counted. "1...2...3...." He heard George move away "9...10... *Coming, ready or not.* He looked all around him trying to decide which way to go. It all looked the same. The trees reminded Martin of their Christmas tree at home. They even smelled the same, but these were much bigger.

Martin walked further into the woods, calling to George. "*I'm coming to get you.*" He heard rustling sounds behind a large bush. Martin pounced around it... "*Got you...Ohh.*" There behind the bush sat a little brown rabbit with long floppy ears. "*Oi, careful. Whatcha think ya doing, scaring me like that?*" Martin's large blue eyes almost popped out of his head. "*Whatcha doing wandering round here on yer own?*" rabbit asked. "*I'm looking for my brother George.*" replied Martin. "*We're playing Hide and Seek but I can't find him.*" "*Eaded off towards the stream.*" "*Thanks*" As Martin made to leave rabbit called him back. "*Ere don't tell anyone ya met me. It's got to be our little secret.*"

Martin ran off towards the stream. Everything was quiet in the wood except the tinkling sound water made as it ran over rocks. "*George, come on where are you.*" "*Ssshhhh...*" said a little voice. Martin turned to find a robin redbreast sitting on a log. "*I was trying to have a nap if you don't mind*" the robin cocked his head to one side and peered at Martin. "*What's all this noise?*" "*I'm looking for my brother but I can't find him anywhere.*" "*Did he have a red cap on?*" asked the robin. "*Yes, have you seen him?*" "*Passed here in a bit of a hurry, went towards those rocks.*" "*Thank you robin.*" Martin went to cross the stream when robin called to him... "*You mustn't tell anyone we spoke. It's our secret.*"

Martin was getting tired and hungry now. He was fed up with this game and wanted to go home. He was thoroughly lost. They'd never been in this part of the woods and he was feeling frightened. He sat on a rock and pulled a fluff covered biscuit from his pocket. "*That looks nice.*" Martin looked around but couldn't see anyone. "*Up here*" came the voice again. Martin looked up the tree beside him and spotted a squirrel. "*You look lost, can I help?*" asked the squirrel. "*I'm looking for my brother, but I'm lost and don't know how to get out of the woods.*" "*Come on, I'll show you.*" The squirrel scampered away over the rocks. Martin quickly followed. His little legs had never moved so fast. Squirrel stopped suddenly and Martin nearly bumped in to him. "*There you go*" said the squirrel triumphantly. Martin looked up and across an open field he could

see his Mummy, Daddy and brother George all waving to him. " *Thank you squirrel!*" he shouted. " *Think nothing of it, just remember, you mustn't tell anyone we met. It's our secret.*"

The Multi-Coloured Tiger

There once was, in the jungle, an unusual tiger who was nameless and not only that... his stripes were odd. He wasn't anything like the normal tiger... he was multi-coloured. He was covered in all sorts of different colours. Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, black, white, every single part of him was covered in colours in an odd way. This didn't make him happy, because all of the other tigers, who were ordinary, laughed at him and called him names. Not one of those name-calling names was worthy of him keeping it as his own name. The tiger knew he was different on the outside but on the inside he had the same amount of courage as a fierce tiger would. When the others all played games, which included them training to fight if any hunters came snooping around looking for skin rugs, they wouldn't let the multi-coloured tiger play. They felt that with him being all funny coloured he couldn't attack the same way the others could. This made the multi-coloured tiger feel very upset and the more the other tigers had little confidence in him, the more he had little confidence in himself.

One day, two strong, fearless hunters came storm trooping into the tigers' part of the jungle and threw a large net over the tigers who struggled to get free from it. The multi-coloured tiger was just coming back from the river when this occurred. He raced towards the hunters, stood in front of them and gave the biggest roar that was ever heard in the jungle. The hunters' courage then became little and they ran away deep into the jungle. When the multi-coloured tiger had freed the other tigers they were all amazed and couldn't believe it. They had no idea that he could do this and they realised then that it doesn't matter what a person or an animal looks like on the outside, it's what's in the inside of them that matters most of all. The multi-coloured tiger announced that he had a name perfect for him and it wouldn't be forgotten in the jungle... the multi-coloured tiger! So, remember, it's not you look like on the outside that counts but it's the question of what's on what's on the inside that matters. Would you like it if that happened to you? Never judge a book by its cover!

The End!

The Dirty Dinosaur

Once upon a time there lived a dinosaur and he was called the dirty dinosaur and he absolutely loved getting dirty. Every time he saw mud he ran to go and roll in it. The dirty dinosaur loved mud and he loves getting dirty and he loves being dirty. One day the dirty dinosaur was walking in the forest and he met another dinosaur and he was called Tom. He also loved to play games so the dirty dinosaur played some games with Tom.

The dirty dinosaur lived all on his own. So did Tom so they decided to live together because they liked being with each other. The dirty dinosaur was extremely happy that Tom was living with him. They took turns playing each other's games. Tom's favourite game was hide and seek and the dirty dinosaur's favourite game was rolling in the mud. Tom and the dirty dinosaur liked each other a lot and they both lived happily ever after.

The End

The Ghost of the Lake

The moon was shimmering brightly on the lake; the soft, white snow fell like rain. Carrice paused; all she could hear was perilous cracklings on the lake. Then Carrice heard a voice, not just any voice but a soft ghostly voice, she swiftly spun around and there right in the middle of the ice was a beautiful ghost girl. The girl had blonde curly hair, a blue sparkly ice dress and boots.

"What are you doing on my lake?" whispered the ghost getting angry. But what she said was drowned by Carrice's scream. She ran back home. Carrice did not even get her pyjamas on she just took off her boots and went to sleep still shaking with fear. The next day Carrice did not mention the night before. She went to the lake where there was no sign of the ghost; it was perfectly still and clear. Carrice decided she might find out more if she went to the library, where she found a book on the history of the village. It told of the village's legendary Olympic ice skating event three years ago, when tragically as the star skater was performing her winning dance, the ice suddenly cracked open and she fell through and drowned. So now every night because she died in the spot light she comes to life in the moonlight. Carrice slammed the book closed.

She went back to the lake until she saw the moon come up. Then Carrice glided off the ice, and watched as the enchanted ghost formed out of the smooth ice... "Why do you come out every night?" asked Carrice worriedly. "Because I want people to see my whole dance" answered the ghost with tears falling down her face... "Oh, well nobody comes here any more because they are all convinced that it is haunted" said Carrice "Well, if you get them to come and watch me skate, I promise I will not haunt this lake!"

"Deal!" responded Carrice.

Carrice's mum and dad were astounded by this and brought the whole village down to the lake. Everybody sat and watched the dance. It had extraordinary spins, split jumps and lots, lots more. At the very end the whole village clapped and cheered. Carrice gracefully skated onto the ice and gave the ghost her medal and said goodbye. Now the villagers can enjoy the lake all year round, without being frightened of the ghost.

Little Red Riding Hoody

"Hoody, get up now please!" shouted Little Red Riding Hoody's mum. After a late night watching *Girls Aloud*, Hoody could NOT be bothered getting out of her comfortable bed. She finally got up and had jam on toast whilst watching the *Jeremy Kyle* show.

"Listen Hoody, Granny isn't well so you're going to see her. On your way, stop at Tesco and get some sweet tasty cakes and a bottle of whiskey then get the 61 bus." her mother said sweetly.

Skipping along, Hoody couldn't stop thinking about the concert. On her way home from the concert she saw a big wolf but she thought nothing of it. Hoody went to Tesco and just caught the 61 bus. When she sat down she looked at who she was sitting next to. Guess who it was...? It was the wolf...

"Where are you off to on a fine morning like this?" asked the wolf craftily.

"I'm off to my Granny's house. She lives in the luxury apartments opposite Sefton Park."

The wolf got off the bus at the next stop and sprinted all the way to Granny's. When he arrived there was a security guard on the door. "Who are you? I have never seen you here before, the strong, tough security guard said.

"I've come to visit my Granny because she is ill," the big bad wolf replied. "Okay," said the security guard.

About ten minutes later, Hoody arrived. It was too late. Wolfy had already gobbled up Granny, put her night gown on and jumped into her king- sized bed.

"Yo, Hoody!" the security guard said kindly.

When she arrived at the door she went in and walked right up to Granny.

"OH MY GOD GRANNY WHAT BIG EARS YOU HAVE!"

"All the better to hear you asking for money with my dear,"

She took one step closer and gasped

"OH MY GOD GRANNY WHAT BIG EYES YOU HAVE!"

All the better to see your beautiful looks with," 'Granny' replied.

She handed over the treats and cried,

"OH MY GOD GRANNY WHAT BIG FANGS YOU HAVE!"

"All the better to eat you with!" replied the wolf.

With this he leaped out of bed and chased Hoody out of the room. She pressed the button on the lift however it was broken...so she had to run down the stairs as fast as her tiny legs would carry her. At the end of the stairs she bumped into the security guard. "S'up?" he asked her. "That evil wolf is trying to eat me!" she replied. Within a split second he caught the wolf and rang the police to come and get the gangster wolf. Also he rang Hoody's mum. She came in her Audi A4 convertible.

When Hoody got home, her mum loved her TOO much to scold her. Hoody had learned never to speak to strangers AGAIN and adults are ALWAYS right. The wolf was never seen again.

Nadine

Once upon a time, there lived a young princess. Her name was Nadine. She was rather tall for a princess. Besides being tall she had beautiful blonde hair that sparkled into your eyes. Her eyes like a shining lake of water. Her skin was just the right skin tone and never changed whatever the weather. Her Father the King died, so her Mother married a much older, more powerful man. This man however, did not like the idea of Nadine becoming Queen when he and her mother died.

Because of this, he decided to take her to the mountains for a pretend hiking trip. But what he actually was doing was leaving her in the mountains! He did this and left her there in the cold with no one but the wind and the rocks. The King arrived home and the Queen questioned him, asking where she was. He began to cry, and said in a muffled voice "We were near the top and she walked away to look for a shortcut. She had been gone for quite a long time. I went to look for her but she was gone" The Queen cried, and the King went off to his study grinning with pure and utter glee.

Nadine was stood there crying and as the sun was setting, a cave was shown. She went in and found a group of deer. They were scared, but she showed kindness and they let her pet them.

It had been two days that she had spent with them now. She'd sit there and tell them her life. But all of a sudden, they began to speak to her.

"Why are you here dear Princess?" They asked.

"My evil step-father left me here" she proclaimed.

"Then we shall take you back, dear one, and we shall gather our friends to punish him" they said boldly. The Princess was amazed and agreed to let them take her.

She rode back on one of the deer and she arrived quickly. When they arrived the battle began! The King was struggling to fight back as the deer attacked him. He was screaming and shouting! But all of a sudden, the noise had stopped. He was there begging for forgiveness. The Queen rushed in and found him. The deer explained what had happened. She sent him to the dungeons. And they all lived happily ever after.

All Cosy in Mummy's Bed

Chapter 1

Far, far away in a place called Belasharnia the three little rabbits awoke to their mother groaning and moaning. 'Why are you three little bunnies in mummy and daddy's bed again?' As she said it she was marching up and down, you could tell she was grumpy. 'We're sorry Mummy', they all said together. 'That's it. I've had enough, pack your clothes you're leaving today. They got their stuff together quickly and walked out of the door, before she said anything else.

Chapter 2

They had been walking for 10 minutes, the youngest bunny turned around and to her surprise there was some wood. She was that greedy, she said to her brother and sister 'You two carry on walking. I'm building a house out of wood for myself. 'Goodbye' they replied, 'see you soon' and began their journey again. After a few minutes they came across a man building a wall. 'Have you got any spare bricks to build our new house with?' The man turned and had a smile on his face. He began to walk over to them. They thought it was spooky and scary. They tried to run but their feet were stuck. They couldn't move anywhere.

Chapter 3

He kept on walking towards them. Then he reached his arms towards them and squashed them together with a friendly hug and said, 'Thank you so much, I was building a house to get rid of all my spare bricks. So, what can I do to help you out? Could I help you build your house?'

The bunnies smiled, looked at each other and then both blurted out. 'Yes please!'

The man replied, 'O.K. I'm glad to help out anyway, children.' (*smile on face*). They got to work straight away.

They had been working on the house for 3 days 4 hours with short breaks. They were happy enough with the house. They didn't want to do any more work to it, in case they made a mistake. They were happy with the way it was.

Chapter 4

The two bunnies moved into their new home but something was missing; their sister. And they were missing her a lot. After they left her to build her own house they had not seen her. They wanted to see her house anyway to see whether she had a better house than them. So they put on their coats and began leaving the front door. They walked two minutes down the road and could see something. It looked like a shelter.

Chapter 5

The rain started to get bad and the shape disappeared. The two bunnies began running towards the nothingness that a second ago was a hut. They got closer and could see their sister -lying on the floor not saying a thing. For a second they thought she was asleep but then she got up, 'Hello'. The two bunnies answered, 'Seems as though your house has fallen down. Do you want to come and live with us? It'll be O.K..'. The bunny agreed so they all went home.

Chapter 6

While they were walking home they saw what looked like their mum's car passing by, then it stopped and it was their mum! She had a sad face on. The she said, 'I've missed you so much I've forgotten to pay the bills and me and daddy got kicked out. Can we live with you?' They said. 'O.K.' so their mum and dad moved in with them. That night they all got in bed together and snuggled. And that's where the story comes from. (All cosy in Mummy's Bed).

IT'S CHRISTMAS TIME!

It's Christmas time!
It's Christmas time!
Time to look and go on line!
Pick up the decorations you want to buy!
It's Christmas time!
It's Christmas time!

It's Christmas time!
It's Christmas time!
Let the love and light shine!
Get some milk and biscuits too!
It's Christmas time!
It's Christmas time!

It's Christmas time!
It's Christmas time!
Gather round and sing a song!
Don't matter if you get it wrong cos...
IT'S CHRISTMAS TIME!