

# Writing competition

Reading is magic and can transport you to amazing and curious places.

## The Land of the Children

"Zoom, zoom," Jack said as he toyed around on the aeroplane as any five-year-old boy would in the circumstances present. The Murray family were on their way to Pagosa, a remote tropical island in the Pacific Ocean. "How much longer?", moaned Noah, Jack's older sister. Just at that moment an announcement came through the loudspeakers, "We are preparing for landing now so please fasten your seatbelts," the robotic voice finished as though answering her question.

After a hectic baggage claim and a long taxi drive, they finally arrived at their hotel. Jack and Noah's parents breathed a sigh of relief as they passed through reception and by the time the soft massage beds had come in to view the children had been sent off to "explore their surroundings". The forest around them was thick and humid, beautiful bright flowers of every colour dotted the emerald bushes. Vividly coloured parrots swooped from tree to tree. Noah stepped forward to inspect an interestingly patterned snail, just as she picked it up a net fell from a tree tightening around her. "What is going on?" asked Noah, questioning no one in particular. At the same time her brother was hoisted into an identical rope net. The last thing Noah remembered was eating quite a delicious lemon tart.

When Jack awoke he thought he was still asleep, everything he had ever dreamt of was right in front of him. A gigantic playground loomed above him with pillows and ropes, and to top it all off sat a giant table with every desert you can imagine, and at the table sat nearly fifty kids all eating with their hands. Just then a child seated at the head of the table stood up and stepped onto the white frilled tablecloth. He was wearing a fluffy brown bear onesie like something Jack had worn as a baby. He lifted a colourful glass and banged his knife loudly into it "ATTENTION!", everybody fell silent, "We have visitors". A wave of murmurs flooded through the crowd until it reached Noah and Jack. 'Oh no,' cursed Noah under her breath. "We have to get out of here," she whispered to Jack. "Really?", Jack said as a sad frown crept over his face. He had just found the place of his dreams and was now being forced to leave it. This hardly seemed fair. Jack pouted, "why?"

Just at that moment, the guy in the bear costume continued talking. "We welcome two new Childeers to our lands, Noah and Jack." This was greeted by a round of over-enthusiastic applause and a lot of awkward looks. 'We welcome you to the land of the children. You will stay here forever, no one ever leaves the Land of the Children. I will now give you a summary of the rules. Rule number one, no grown-ups. We cannot stress this rule more. And rule number two, there are no rules! Now we shall greet you in a centuries' old tradition," he paused.

"FOOD FIGHT!" a random girl wearing an outfit that wouldn't look out of place on Captain Hook's ship, shouted and threw a enormous piece of meringue at a child wearing a rugged pink-turned-brown princess dress. All of a sudden every child was throwing food at one another and the table had turned

into chaos. Noah realised this was their only chance to escape while they were all distracted. 'Jack,' she tugged at her little brother's shoulder. 'Follow me.' The problem was, all the exits were guarded by children wearing makeshift suits of armour, all except one. One tiny exit was left unguarded, opposite the playground. It was mainly covered in vines and looked as though no one had used it for a matter of decades, but it was their only choice. To get there they would have to climb up the highest point of the enormous playground and slide down a gigantic slide, then they would have to sprint approximately 250 metres, she assessed. Someone had just thrown a generous slice of cake at the bear guy. This was their chance to go for it. Noah shot off up the playground, her brother close behind.

Jack was devastated, when they had to leave. Noah was always so pushy and expected him to do everything she said, it was so annoying. He wanted more than anything to stay in the Land of the Children, but he also wanted to check out the apparent pools his mother had promised would be there. So fine, he would do what Noah said, for once.

Noah and Jack were nearly at the top of the tower when the Childeers realized they had left. The children were nimbly racing up the tower and were gaining on them. Noah had reached the slide by now but Jack was lagging behind. 'Come on, Jack, hurry!' Noah called out. She reached out and pulled her brother up to the slide. They took a deep breath and slid down. 'Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh,' they screamed as they slid down the slide. As soon as it had started, it had finished and Noah and Jack found themselves racing to the exit, the children close behind. Noah and Jack finally made it to the exit. They batted long draping ivy out of their way, jumped over puddles of condensation and ducked under long stalactites. The last part of the cave was pitch black and they could only just hear the children telling each other they had to go back and their leader broadcasting all his thoughts to the group. Finally Noah and Jack could see light coming from a small gap at the end of the cave. They had to crawl towards the hole and they squeezed themselves through. When they popped through they were in the massage place and their parents were lying on two beds above them. 'Kids! How was it?', their mother asked.

'All right.' Noah said.

'Did you see anything interesting?', their father asked.

'Not really,' Jack replied. And the siblings shared a cheeky smile.

# The End