

## The Big Read: Writing Showcase Winners

### High School – 1<sup>st</sup> place

Spencer Holbrook, 10<sup>th</sup> grade

Murray High School

Teacher, Laurie Edminster

Title: Privacy

“I never heard tell that it’s against the law for a citizen to do his utmost to prevent a crime from being committed, which is exactly what he did, but maybe you’ll say it’s my duty to tell the town all about it and not hush it up. Know what’d happen then? All the ladies in Maycomb includin’ my wife’d be knocking on his door bringing angel food cakes. To my way of thinkin’, Mr. Finch, taking the one man who’s done you and this town a great service an’ draggin’ him with his shy ways into the limelight – to me, that’s a sin. It’s a sin and I’m not about to have it on my head. If it was any other man, it’d be different. But not this man, Mr. Finch.”

-- Sheriff Heck Tate

**To Kill a Mockingbird** by Harper Lee is a classic novel that teaches us many lessons about life. Some of the characters in the book display the traits that we regard favorably, and other display the characteristics that we hold in contempt. The novel shows us what human kindness can accomplish. Sheriff Heck Tate was a good example of a character who displayed favorable traits.

Sheriff Tate was trying to make it clear that the only result from telling the community what had really happened that night would be that Boo Radley would receive congratulations and praise that he did not want. If no harm will come from allowing Boo his privacy, then why should they drag him into the limelight, when it is obvious that he would rather stay inconspicuous? Sheriff Tate wanted to be clear that he felt it was a sin to drag Boo into public view. He was saying that Boo deserved to have his wishes respected after what he had done for both Atticus Finch and the town of Maycomb as a whole.

If someone does the right thing, then they should be able to choose to take credit for it or not. If they want to just be left alone, then that should be their right. Who are we to force them to come out into the open and take credit for what they did? All too often, when someone tries to just be nice and help people, it becomes a big deal and everyone has to have their say about the matter. Some people just do the right thing instinctively, and don’t want the attention that results from an act they may not have even thought out. If people would just leave others alone when they want to be left alone, instead of intruding into their business, then maybe more people would be willing to do the right thing.

**To Kill a Mockingbird** can teach us many things about human nature and about basic human kindness. We could all learn from reading and studying the book written during a time when basic rights were being fought for.

### **High School – Honorable Mention**

Griffin Watson, Grade 9  
Paducah Tilghman High School  
Teacher, Hema Ramanchandran

Title: Auron's Story

On the northern peninsula of Spira in the northern hemisphere of a planet called Gott, there is a town called Zanarkand. In this town was a man called Tidus; he was twenty-five. When Tidus was seven, his dad, Jeckt, died on a voyage to the Capital City. Jeckt's best friend, Auron, survived and came back to guide Tidus through his childhood. Auron told Tidus that when he was twenty-one he would tell him what happened when Jeckt died. Today was that day. This is Auron's story.

### **High School – Honorable Mention**

Catherine Miller, Grade 9  
Paducah Tilghman High School  
Teacher, Hema Ramanchandran

Title: Come What May

Time was moving so slow it seemed to be going backwards. Every few seconds, Helen's gaze would creep to her watch, only for her to sigh anxiously and gaze again at the parking lot. Or, more accurately, the empty space where her mother's car should be.

Helen sighed; her mother was always late. Suddenly her phone vibrated, snapping Helen out of her reverie.

"Hello," she answered, already expecting her mother's breathless apologies.

"H-Helen," a deep, choked voice.

She immediately recognized the voice as Eddie, her mother's current boyfriend.

"Helen," Eddie began again. "C-come to the hospital r-right now. Your m-mom..." He broke off. "J-just come."

The line went dead.

Fear rooted Helen to where she stood; her previous frustrations over her mother's tardiness forgotten. Only one thought ran through her mind: she must get to the hospital.

### **Middle School – 1<sup>st</sup> place**

Kaylee McCollum, Grade 8  
Reidland Middle School  
Teacher, Laura E. Smith

Title: The Dream Journal

I stood in the middle of a huge meadow with long blades of grass blowing in the breeze. A blue fox darted out of the woods surrounding the meadow and stared straight at me. Suddenly, it began running down a bubbling stream to my left. I followed it.

The fox abruptly stopped at the top of a tall cliff where a water fall rushed down its side. The blue fox looked back at me once more before it unexpectedly leapt off the edge. I hurried to the side of the cliff to see if I could spot the fox, when I lost my balance and began rapidly falling toward the harsh waters below.

I woke with a start. It was 6:00 and my alarm clock began buzzing loudly. I got out of bed and went to my desk. I pulled out the worn notebook with "Dream Journal" written in neat letters across it. I gently opened it to a blank page and began describing every detail of the strange dream I had just had. After I finished, I closed the notebook and neatly placed it back in the drawer where it would wait to be filled with another dream.

### **Middle School – Honorable Mention**

Kayla Ferrell, Grade 8  
Reidland Middle School  
Teacher, Laura E. Smith

Title: The Apple Abduction

"It all started on a summer day last August," said Frank Apple. "I was walking down Main Street on my way home from the movies, when I noticed a black Mercedes following me. I got a little nervous and picked up the pace. The Mercedes sped up and passed me, parking a little way down the street. A tall man in a black coat got out of the car. I ducked into a nearby alley to hide. I thought I was safe but then he turned into the alley. I was cornered!"

He walked up to me and said, "I have a gun so don't try anything. Walk back to the car and get in the back seat."

"I did as he said, opened the car door and got in. I saw a paper with a picture of me on it and the word 'order.' Then everything went black."

## **Middle School – Honorable Mention**

Shelby O’Conner, Grade 8  
Reidland Middle School  
Teacher, Laura E. Smith

Title: Waving High

The fifty stars danced in the wind as all the men stepped onto the ship, leaving their wives and children behind. I assume that they all began to wonder, “What will happen if I don’t come home?”

That’s what I wondered when my father stepped onto the ship. It was just my little sister and I, no mother at home to care for us. She died just two weeks after my sister was born.

The night we found out my father was leaving for the war was the worst night I have ever experienced in my life. With a strong voice and expressionless eyes, he sat us down and told us, “Girls, I have been drafted to go in the war.”

My sister, who did not know better, started to ask, “Daddy, what if you don’t...” Her voice cracked and her eyes were watery.

I finished the question for her: “Come home?”