



2016
Tim Winton Award for Young Writers

FIRST PLACE
MIDDLE PRIMARY CATEGORY

© **Anika Zammit**

Nine years old
Mel Maria Catholic Primary School

Middle primary category

THE **UN**-BASILISK
By Anika Zammit

As I sat under a tree, a gentle breeze whispered in my ears. It made the grass ripple like a sea of emerald. Flowers nearby bowed and curtsied to the sun. The trees nodded their heads sleepily as ivy hugged them.

Larks flew across the sky as a strong wind arrived. Suddenly a tree quivered. It shook. It fell slowly at first before speeding up. It crashed to the ground and out of it came an ash black creature like half human, half devil. Grass withered under its fiery touch as it raced into the dark, dark forest.

Darkness seemed to settle on me and I watched as a coal colored cloud covered the sun. There was no sound except for my heavy breathing. A rush of thoughts streamed through my body but only one was listened to. It circled my brain like a raven.” go after it!’ it screamed. I obeyed and I got up and I started to run towards the devil. My feet carried my body towards the edge of the path of black. I suddenly stopped. What was I about to do? I considered my options. I could go back home and forget everything or I could go and kill myself. I knew which one I wanted and so I turned around but fate placed a gentle hand on my shoulder and gave me a small push forward.

I stood on the hard ground and I walked on with my bare feet touching the spiky grass. Nine minutes later fate dropped my hand and strode off, without me. Gone. Alone. But still I walked on. I walked on through a huddle of trees

that were gossiping in a whisper. I thought I heard a twig snapping. I looked around and nothing was there. I wondered if the “thing” could turn invisible but I was no longer scared. It was almost as if I had left it behind with fate. I moved silently toward the clearing that now loomed in front of me. I saw a flash of blue-back and the thing appeared in front of me. I now saw, and understood, what it was.

It was a snake that had been trapped in a growing tree. The tree had grown hot and ash had settled on the snake. The ash was of course heated and the snake had thrashed and wiggled until the tree fell. When it was released the creature had raced towards the forest, leaving a trail of ash behind it.

It was not a devil. But why was it in the tree in the first place? I looked into the creature’s eyes for an answer and I saw one. It had been a human, a man, It looked strangely clear and I could see every detail, including the tranquiliser gun he held in his right hand. Then it hit me. The man was actually there. He was reflected in the snake’s eyes. “Stay still”, he growled at me. He lifted the gun, aiming it at the snake. He pulled a lever and the snake was covered in a net. It thrashed as he walked over to me and placed a blackened hand on my shoulder. “ I know the truth and I will tell you, but not here”, he promised me. “Come”. So I did.

I walked alongside him. Soon we reached another clearing. In it, a handsome centaur was berry picking. He waved cheekily. "David" he said as he grinned and pointed to himself. I walked past and waved back as the man climbed an oak tree.

I followed and found myself sitting in a comfy yellow bean-bag in a tree house in that tree. "So?" I asked. The man sighed and explained, "I know that magic exists, and I thought that is a basilisk, so when I saw the toad...." "Sorry I do not wish to interrupt?" I interrupted, "but what is a basilisk? So he said, "they are the most deadliest snake on earth. If you look in its eyes you will turn into stone 'til you are bathed in a barrel of eel's eyes at full moon.

So, to get back to the point, I saw the snake hatch from a chicken's egg from under a toad, which is how they are born. I thought that basilisks were real, so I panicked and locked it in the tree, but now I know it was just a normal snake, so you can go back home. I will free it, and all shall be well. Goodbye. So he escorted me out of the forest and I knew all was well.

A few years later

A young woman, no longer a girl sat under a tree. A gentle breeze scattered leaves as a strong wind arrived. A tree quivered, shook. But it didn't fall.



A middle primary entry

B A R N E Y

by Ruby Bell

2016
Tim Winton Award for Young Writers

SECOND PLACE
MIDDLE PRIMARY CATEGORY

© **Ruby Bell**

Eight years old
Presbyterian Ladies' College

Here she comes! Her sapphire glasses reflect my hopeful, rather furry face. My tail quivers, the hairs all standing on end, but then my aching heart sinks. She walks past. All my hope dissolves like sugar in water. My tail drops between my legs. I see the small, excited beagle licking her face as they walk together out the door.

Another! Another chance blown! The world is a great blanket of sadness, enclosing me in its trap. My tiny body can't hold so many feelings at once. All I want is a family. Not to feel gloomy, woeful and completely miserable. I only want to be loved.

My sorrowful house is full of yelping dogs, reminding me how lonely I feel. I can see beastly cages stealing away the freedom of fifteen unloved puppies. It smells stuffy and worn-out, and is a horrendous place, far from the meaning of home.

The sun sets and darkness comes. I need to escape this ghastly trap. I can't feel this distress anymore! There's no point suffering all this mess. I must have scratched all night. My paws are aching. But all I am left with is sore paws and a ruined cage. There is no point in continuing.

The sun rises and the tiny bell rings on the door, tingling with the hope of adoption. For a change, these people actually look at me. They look at my curly, midnight-black fur, my pricked-up ears, and my twitching nose. I hope they see the excited smile on my face through my thick coat.

This family has a little girl, and the girl asks her mum if they can take me home! I jump up on my hind legs, and let my bright pink tongue loll out to one side. I wag my tail and look at them with adoring eyes. They might take me home!

The small girl has long blonde hair and blue eyes and looks sweet and caring. Those eyes are the colour of the ocean I dream of swimming in one day. But her brother seems to look cruelly at me, baring his teeth in a snarl and suddenly I am terrified. But it is too late. They have paid for me!

The brother shoves me into the big, pitch black growling machine, they called a 'car'. I almost let out a growl at him but I knew I had to be good to be in the family. I whine softly to myself as he sits on my tail purposefully. I want to bite him, to give him a piece of my mind.

I am sure they can hear the sound of my heart thumping in my chest. I am glad to be out of the pet shop but afraid of this unpredictable boy. The growling machine stops and I am lifted by the grateful girl into the house. It feels like the whole world has spread out just for me, in one place. She throws me a bright green ball. My tail wags with excitement! I stop and look at it for a second, and then bolt after it. It is such fun to stretch my legs and have this open space after the entrapment of the small, glass cage.

I sprint through a door with my nose on the ground, sniffing. It smells like fresh straw and sunlight. There are bright colours everywhere and a large pink teddy bear. I run out into another room. This one has closed blinds and is dark. It smells like mud and has dirty clothes sprawled over the floor. I grab a soccer ball and push it back outside with my nose. I look around for the girl but I can't find her.

I eagerly sniff around for the girl and try to bring the ball to play more games of fetch with me. I sink my teeth into the ball, catching sight of her and wagging my tail. Pop! An alarming hissing noise is coming from the ball! The girl runs up to me fearfully, and all of a sudden I am afraid. The mum comes marching up to me, with a crying boy. Her voice is low and threatening. She hits me on the bottom. I bark! and bite her frightful hand.

Oh-oh. We are straight back in the growling machine again, with the girl holding me tight in her arms. She has a little waterfall on her cheeks and I lick it off her wet face. I don't have any idea what is happening. Then familiar smells come back to me, and I recognise the pet store. Bang! The glass door shuts like thunder and my aching heart sinks once more.

The sun sets. I bury my lonesome, disappointed face in the straw. I dream of a new family that love me, and lush, warm emerald grass beneath my paws, instead of glass and cold concrete. I wish I hadn't ruined my fleeting opportunity.

The sun climbs up again, the tired bell rings persistently and I try once more. I jump up and down on my hind legs to try to catch the attention of the new customers. There are three girls and their parents. The tallest girl has dreamy green eyes and brown hair the colour of my doggy biscuits. The next one has a kind, round face and chocolate eyes. The smallest has hair the colour of sunshine and I know instantly that I want to be in this family.

Two of the girls tap the glass window, and I tap back with equal excitement. The other pleads desperately to have me, and I want to go yelp with them. They show me a shiny new orange collar and a matching leash.

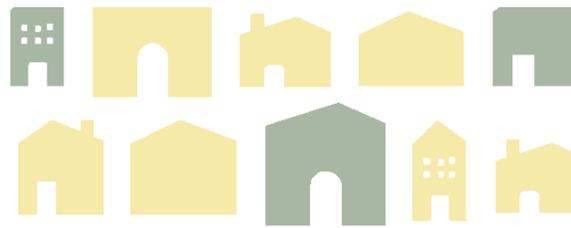
Swish! The door to the glass cage opens and I leap out, licking my new family. They smell like friendship and fluffy clouds. I feel as if I could touch the moon! I am going to be the perfect little pup! I silently say a relieved goodbye to the pet store again and this time the sun shines brightly on my face.

"Barney!", they keep saying, and I like it!

My tail beats a happy rhythm. I have finally found the place where I belong.



middle
primary
category



"a chicken with a determined spirit"

I want to go to school



by Tiffany Wong



2016
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THIRD PLACE
MIDDLE PRIMARY CATEGORY

© **Tiffany Wong**

Nine years old
Freshwater Bay Primary School

“Mum! If Jimmy can go to school, why can’t I?” groaned Millie the young feathery cinnamon coloured chicken.

“You can’t go to school darling! School is only for the boys!” replied her mum.

“That’s not fair! They get to do all the fun things! My life is so boring!” cried the little chicken.

Her mum said calmly, “Millie! When you grow up, you get to do all the interesting things such as knitting scarfs and baking delicious cakes!”

“Knit? Bake? Mum! I don’t want to! I want to go to school!” Millie shouted as she stomped off.

Once there was a fuzzy little chicken named Millie. All her life she wanted to go to school just like her brother, Jimmy. In their village, only boys could go to school, but girls like Millie, just had to stay at home to help their mums with chores. Millie found that very boring.

Every day, Millie would secretly try to escape, but her plans had always failed. Right next to their farm, was Jimmy’s school. Millie would always look through the window and watch Jimmy and his friends do exciting things in his classroom, Millie would feel left out especially when they played on the new playground the school had built.

One afternoon, Millie sat under a leafy green tree and watched her brother, Jimmy playing happily in the new school playground. Suddenly, something caught her eyes! She spotted a hole in the ground leading out of the farm to the school. Millie looked around to see if anyone was watching her, nobody was. She clambered under

the hole, brown soggy mud soon soaked her cinnamon coloured feathers. She squeezed through the last bit and just made it to the other side.

Millie got up and dusted her feathers. She felt the luscious green grass on her claws and thought how wonderful it was to be outside the farm.

Millie walked towards Jimmy’s school. She pushed the wooden door and went inside the humongous brick building. Millie saw a teacher! She tried to hide behind a door but it was too late.

“Aaaarrrrgggghhhh! What’s that girl doing here?!?!” the teacher cried in fright.

He ran towards Millie, told her off and shooed her out of the school. Millie was quite shocked. When she was out of the building, Millie realized that it would be very hard to get inside the school, much harder than she thought it was going to be. But she never gave up.

The next day, Millie carried out another plan. She crawled through the same underground hole, but this time she decided to sneak quietly and sit outside by the classroom window, from there, she could hear what the teacher was teaching. When Millie heard that the teacher was handing out pencils and books for the boys, she decided to stand on the wooden box to have a peek into the classroom. She never had used a pencil or book before in her whole life!

Thump! Millie had accidently fallen into the classroom making a loud sound!

“Oh no!” whispered Millie to herself.

The teacher stared at her, he squinted a bit and frowned,
“It’s that girl chicken again! Get her out of here!” he shouted.

The whole class was laughing at Millie.

Finally, the teacher shooed her out of the classroom with a cricket bat! Just then, a TV crew that happened to be in the school that day doing a interview walked by. They were curious what was happening and Millie explained to them that it was unfair that girl chickens were not allowed to go to school.

Millie wanted the rules to change! She thought it was not fair!

Clang...Clang...Clang

It was the bell, That meant school was over. Millie felt upset that she couldn’t succeed. Boys were rushing out of the door shouting. Millie trudged back home alone.

Back at the farm, mum was searching all over the place for Millie. She saw a figure walking towards her. She realized it was Millie!

“Millie! I was looking for you everywhere! Where have you been?”
Millie’s mum cried out.

“Sorry mum, I was at Jimmy’s school. I was trying to find a way inside the building.” She replied quietly.

“Oh Millie! Don’t be sad! Let’s find you something else to do.” Millie’s mum said feeling sorry for her daughter.

“Okay mum.” Millie said as she slowly kept walking towards the barn. Millie tried many other times to get into school, but she failed! A few months later, Millie’s mum let Millie watch some TV for an hour. Millie flicked through the channels. She stopped at the village news channel.

“There has been a big change in the town now!” reported the tall man with cocoa brown hair.

“Yes, there has been indeed! Now all girls can go to school like boys. It will be fair!” said the plump lady with ginger hair sitting next to the tall man.

Millie couldn’t believe it! She jumped up and down all over the place. She couldn’t wait to go to school! Millie was screaming with joy, it was deafening. Her determination made her succeed. She had made a real change in the village!

“Oh! How lucky my Millie! You can go to school now just like Jimmy!”

“Yes mum, I can go to school now!” Millie shouted happily.

The news reached every house in the village. Girls could go to school just like their brothers from now on, Millie was so excited and joyful that she got to go to school! She didn’t have to sneak around anymore. Millie told her brother the good news too! She couldn’t wait to see her brother at school! Millie was the happiest chicken in the whole world!