

GRADE 10A

NARRATIVE - LEVEL 1

- chronological storytelling with little to no description in the main idea
- details to support critical ideas missing
- run on sentences impact effectiveness of introduction
- attempt at dialogue
- voice attempted but not defined
- inconsistent organization
- weak sentence structure
- no details on how they won the game
- some details did not need to be included in the story
- unfocussed written text
- uses words incorrectly

My perfect moment is a true underdog story that nobody ever saw coming. Its about my bantam hockey team the Frostbite, when we came together as a team in the provincial final to comeback and win the series. This team had chemistry like no other team had and it would prove to be a huge advantage for the long playoff run that nobody thought we could pull off. Everyone loves underdog victories and stories and this is one of those.

It all started when we first got together as a team on a Saturday morning at a cold Jemini rink. There was something about the vibe in the dressing room that was special. If there is such thing as hockey gods they would have formed this team with our chemistry and a little bit of skill involved. The regular season saw its highs and lows but every time we should up to the rink we felt at home. We knew we could win games and we did just that finishing 3rd in Saskatoon. We thought we were set until our coach was suspended for thirty days. Without our coach we thought all hope was lost. Somebody stepped up though and it was one of players dads. He did something to rally our team and help us through what looked to be a tough January and February ahead of us.

As playoffs started we had little confidence that we could win the whole league because there were many teams better than us. Next thing you know we are in the Saskatoon final against the Stallions. Now we knew that no team could matchup to our teamwork and desire to win. We won the series handily and were off to Prince Albert for our series against a tough PA team.

GRADE 10A

NARRATIVE - LEVEL 1

- ineffective intro
- undeveloped main character
- minimal use of dialogue
- some attempt at sentence variety
- basic organization and basic logical flow

Once upon a time Bob went to the store to buy some milk. On his way he saw a homeless man sitting in the gutter and said, "why don't you get a job you filthy bum!" And in a lyrical voice he said, "well, my wife left me with nothing but a dime, she took my house and all I have is time."

This brought a tear to his eye. ~~and~~ "come I'll get you some food and something to drink." Bob said with glee they continued down the street where they saw the store, they ran through the doors. The man's eyes lit up like light bulbs because he hadn't eaten in two months. Bob gathered up milk and bread for his new pal. They left for home ~~and~~ so they can eat. Bob offered his home to the man to let him stay till he gets a job.

The next day they went to Walmart and applied for a job. After a few weeks they called back and told him he was ~~not~~ hired. The man on the street has become a very ~~good~~ successful Walmart greeter. Every day Bob went to visit the man at Walmart.

GRADE 10A

NARRATIVE - LEVEL 1

- ineffective intro
- very limited character development
- weak ending
- weak paragraph structure
- limited/unfocused
- undeveloped characters

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Narrative Paragraph

A while ago I had a dream about my mom and I getting into a serious car accident. We were driving in a red four door car and we were just passed the Kentucky Fried Chicken on Diefenbaker and making a turn when "Bang" we were struck by another car. I looked over and called to my mom, she was not answering me. I tried to shake her and she wouldn't move. I called 911 and an ambulance, a police car, and a fire truck came, but it was too late. My mom was gone. When I woke up I saw my mom in the kitchen and I was very happy to see her. I told her about my dream and how the dream keeps coming back to me. I am scared and I don't want this to happen. Someone told me if you tell the person about the dream then it won't come true. I hope this is true. I don't want anything bad to happen to my mom.

GRADE 10A

NARRATIVE - LEVEL 1

- major gaps in the narrative caused confusion
- some sentence problems
- disjointed organization
- lacks a clear main idea
- only one paragraph

The Day I was Chased

This is a story I will never forget because this story is about fear, love and regret. About 12 years ago, a week before the day of disaster, my friend and neighbour had found a dog which he had been taking care of. We all helped out. At that point in time I loved dogs, just loved them. I had wanted a dog for myself but I couldn't get one, so I took care of this dog. I took better care of the dog than my friend did and during that time. We all enjoyed the dog and had the best of everything. No worries. No problems. Then a week had passed and the day I will never forget was here. The setting was just right, a bright sunny day. I still remember the bright, beautiful red sand, shining in the sun. My friends and I were playing tag. I was it and had been chasing my friend. Next thing I know I'm being chased by the same dog I took care of. I was running as fast as I could but it was still right behind me, chasing me, showing its teeth. I jumped in a tree but I fell out and the dog bit my knee. I will never trust dogs again.

GRADE 10A

NARRATIVE - LEVEL 2

- doesn't really get to a clear point in the intro
- the intro paragraph is not as effective as the others
- integration of dialogue
- good dialogue, it was appropriate
- vivid descriptions that put the reader in the ballpark
- the lead into the homerun was good, but it was left with no concluding thoughts or feelings
- run on sentences
- comma problems

The Perfect Moment

It was a hot and muggy summer day. We had a game that night and warm ups were like usual. It seemed like just another game but something happened during that game was different. It was my second at bat of the game and on the way up to the plate I went through my normal routine which included a few deep breaths as I stared down my sights at the pitcher. This pitcher was having quite the game already by striking out the last three hitters he faced, in the previous inning.

I thought to myself, "You got this. This guy has nothing on you."

The man on the mound started his compact wind up and released his next pitch. It was a fastball with a little more heat than the pitches before hand. It came across the plate with my bat flying by the ball late. Strike one.

After getting ahead of me "0-1" the pitcher stood on the mound full of confidence. Once he got back onto the rubber I took my steps back into the batter's box once again. The next pitch was not going to be a fastball, and I knew it. He was ahead in the count on me and he was going to try and make me chase something. The pitcher went into his wind up and let go of the ball. It was a greasy slider. I didn't want any piece of it so I let it go passed me.

"STRIKE TWO!" the umpire yelled with authority.

I stepped out of the box and thought to myself, "Come on, and get the next fastball."

I took the signs from my coach over at third base and made my way back into the batter's box. Took my routine of breaths and got ready to hit that next "0-2" pitch. The confident pitcher once again went through his wind up and released the ball. It was again another fastball. What was different this time was that everything went into slow motion. The ball had a top spin flying in the air seam over seam. My front foot was down which launched my hands through the zone and the barrel towards the ball. The point of contact was a feeling I had never felt before. It was perfect. The ball touched the bat for the slightest moment and suddenly started flying the other way towards the playing field. After the contact was made the slow motion went away, and I realized I had to run. I looked up to see the ball and it was soaring on a line looking like it might be stopped by the tall chain link fence.

Another thought slowly went through my head, "I better get going because this ball isn't making it over."

I was wrong. This ball flew over the sign that read "365ft" and bounced on the gravel on the other side. I went from a sprint to a slow trot because it was a homerun. I went around and touched all four bases with my team greeting me outside the dugout with high fives. I sat myself on the bench and started putting on my catcher's equipment getting ready for the next inning.

Over all the years I have been playing that slow motion experience had never occurred. It was something I look back on thinking "how did it happen?" I may never know how it really did happen but what I did learn from that one swing is that if I stay confident and tell myself I can do something I can do it.

GRADE 10A

NARRATIVE - LEVEL 2

- basic dialogue inconsistent
- inconsistent use of subject verb agreement
- question in opening paragraph gets audience attention
- basic sentence construction
- punctuation errors
- many run-on sentences
- paragraphs vary but are inconsistent
- dialogue weak – ending is unclear

In my whole entire fifteen years of my life one of the most interesting experiences I can recall of is the time I went to Waskesiu with my moms side of the family for seven days. Just imagine... 6 cousins, 10 aunties and uncles, my grandma and of course my mom and my dad in one cabin. Now you're probably thinking twenty people in one cabin ? Well that's where you're wrong. Some of us slept in tents outside and others slept inside the cabin. It was actually an amazing time other than the fact that the mosquitos were biting me all the time and the family was somewhat annoying.

We went there in the middle of summer and it was extremely hot when we were there. Plus thirty or hotter except for one day. When we got there it was parents in the cabin and kids outside in tents, but I had a mattress so I had a good sleep any ways. The only thing that disturbed me was everyone talking late at night especially my cousins, they were goofing off in their tent and last but not least the BIRDS, they were so annoying I couldn't believe how disgusting they were being, they wouldn't stop chirping, I could've shot them. I was also stuck with my older sister and she would always take my blankets while I was sleeping and when I was just about to be falling asleep she would yell:

“WAKE UP I’M BORED!”

but then I would reply:

“Be quiet I’m trying to sleep!”

And with us bickering the family would start talking again.

We spent everyday basking in the sun on the beach and biking around in the big yellow bikes, enjoying the sights and sounds of nature. The beach was probably my favourite part about the whole vacation. The feeling of sand through my toes with the sun beaming down felt so nice. My family and I would be playing volleyball on the beach and the little ones would be playing on the playground.

The time there was exceptional but my family was a bit too much at times, but then again they have always been like that. Rob (my uncle) was always trying to prank the whole family or was trying to get under my skin. Rob and I have always have had a love/hate relationship, we still do today. If you know our family, you would know that we're either mad at each other or laughing at one another and goofing off. The funniest thing that he did on the vacation was when he threw me into the lake with my clothes on at night. I was joking around with him and he got all mad at me and he said:

“Ok that’s it. YOU’RE GOING IN.”

During the vacation my family and I would always go for walks on the trail right before you leave Waskesiu and we would always have a family dinner together. We would always be together but some days I couldn’t handle them so I would go golfing with my uncle to have a

break. He would let me drive the golf cart and I would always feel so big. Other days I would go for runs or walks on the beach and then go swimming afterwards or I would sleep longer, but it was hard with such a loud, obnoxious family.

The one day that the weather wasn't so great we would play Uno and a bunch of board games. We knew how to keep ourselves busy which is a good thing. My grandma made her home made chilli and it was delicious. My grandma is the best cook in the entire world! She makes the best... EVERYTHING.

That week at Waskesiu was amazing and somewhat brutal but all in all a blast with the family. I did enjoy myself a lot. I got a great tan and some good bonding time with the family. Everything was memorable and I hope do it again some time soon.

GRADE 10A

NARRATIVE - LEVEL 2

- basic sentence form
- paragraphs and sentences change topics often
- topic changes focus in some paragraphs
- unclear understanding when to use numbers in formal text
- some mundane details
- organization needs to revolve around one focal point

February fourteenth, twenty twelve at three thirty am was the day I started my journey being a servant of God. I, along with nineteen other high school students and four leaders, were given the opportunity to travel all the way across the world to Belize and serve the less fortunate through Project Serve. I had many fears, along with much excitement, going into this trip. This would be the first time I was going to be away from home and family for an extreme period of time. With no computer or cellphone to connect with life or family back at home, and the thought of being in the middle of a tropical jungle with new sounds, made me a little more fearful as to how I was going to get through the next two weeks, however, I knew with God on my side, anything was possible.

My alarm finally went off and I knew it was time. I really hadn't slept that night, because I was way too excited. I arrived at the Saskatoon airport shortly after five am and the smiles on the faces of the nineteen other students travelling with me, made all my fears melt away, until I realized I still had two days of traveling to get through before I was actually in Belize.

When I stepped off the plane in Belize City, I immediately was hit with the humidity. The heat in Belize is definitely not the same heat we have here at home in the summer. The four leaders on our team had been to Belize a number of times so when we arrived, we were warmly welcomes with open arms from their Belizean friends. They brought a bus big enough to fit all of our donation bags that we brought for orphans at an orphanage called Kings Children's Home, as well as our own personal luggage. One of the traditions when you get on the bus is a Pineapple Fanta in a bottle, which was a huge treat because we simply don't have that here. When we got to the YWAM (Youth With A Mission) base, we were all pretty tired from our long two days of travelling, so we wasted no time getting to our cabanas to unpack. When the girls got to their cabana, we had a nice surprise waiting for us; several cockroaches crawling on the floor! In

Belize cockroaches are something they deal with on a regular basis like we do with ants or ladybugs in summer. When the girls saw the cockroaches, I am almost positive we woke up the entire base with our screaming, but we quickly became used to the fact that they are always around. The next day we woke up bright and early to start our missions project that we were there to do. Our team had the task of building a house for a DTS (Discipleship Training School) students to live in when they come to Belize. Our first workday was very hot and sweaty, and sometimes tensions ran high, but I always tried to remember the kind hearted words my brother Kyle told me before I left. He said to me, "Lauren, your going to get frustrated with teammates, and at some point your going to want to give up, but always remember, you are a servant of God, and you're doing this work for Him". When I would get mad or frustrated with someone, I would always try and repeat those words in my head, because I knew my brother was right as he had been on this trip twice before and knew what to expect.

Later that evening, we finally got to go to KCH (Kings Children's Home), and I was nervous, excited, and scared because I had heard so much from my brother. When we arrived at the home, we were welcomed by over sixty children, some excited and some shy, wanting to play with us, but as you know, there were only twenty-three of us, so it got a little overwhelming. I was pretty shy and observant of my surroundings. I noticed the house wasn't much bigger than mine, and the main hallway was wide enough to fit only about one person. It really hit like a tone of bricks that this is poverty. I later ventured off outside, and I saw their playground, which was broken and small, and they really didn't have any toys with which to play with. It really made me sad. As I was walking around the yard, I saw a little boy, he looked so shy, yet the look in his eyes showed that he really just wanted to be held and loved like all the other kids. I finally looked at one of the older ladies that was sitting on the bench beside the little boy and I asked her

what his name was. With a simply voice she looked at my and said, "I really don't know sweetie". I was in shock. How could she not know this boys name, she lived with him! I finally decided to step outside of my comfort zone and picked up this little boy, not knowing if he was going to cry or be scared. He was a little shy at first, but finally became really happy. I later found out from the housemother that his name was A.J. He became my best friend at KCH and we hung out every time I got to go there with my team. During the time I spent at KCH I saw a lot, I saw poverty, sadness, kids abandoned by their parents, and young kids neglected. However, one thing that was amazing, was the love that these kids had for one another, and for God, it amazed me and these kids will forever inspire me!

Just like all trips, this one too, had to come to and end. The thought of coming home and seeing my family excited me and filled me with joy, yet at the same time, I was sad to leave Belize and the friendships I had made. We worked hard in Belize, but I still had mixed emotions knowing I was coming home to something a lot better than what my friends had in Belize, and it saddened me. It truly made me want to bring all the children back home to the luxury we live in today. Although it was hard to leave and come home to the everyday challenged and reality, these kids change my life, and made me a better person, and taught me to really appreciate my education and the things I have. These kids will forever have a special place in my heart.

GRADE 10A

NARRATIVE - LEVEL 2

- no intro
- repetitive words
- no flow between paragraphs
- many mundane details not needed in story
- partially introduced the action
- undeveloped conflict
- dialogue in beginning is effective
- interesting opening lines utilizing dialogue

“I want to go to the very top!” I said with excitement. “It’s the closest I’ll ever get to the real deal! Oh please can we go up! I’ll wait in line for days if I have to!”

“Let’s go talk to the people inside and see what we have to do to get up there! We can all go together!” My dad said in reply.

My love and passion for Paris all started when my family and I went on vacation to Las Vegas, Nevada. When I saw the replica of the Eiffel Tower at the Paris Hotel, I was immediately compelled get in line and go up. I was so excited to get at least a taste of what the real thing would be like. Unfortunately, it began to rain shortly after we got in line and for safety reasons it was shut down for the rest of the day. I was devastated. It was our last day there and it seemed sheer bad luck that it had to rain right as we got in line. I remember the conversation I had with my dad about it that gave me hope that I’d get another chance someday:

“I can’t believe we can’t go. I was so excited. Can’t we stay one more day?” I said.

“I’ll make you a promise. I promise you that when or if we ever go to Paris that no matter what we’ll go up the Eiffel Tower. I guarantee that it will be even better than it ever would’ve been here.” He said reassuringly.

Coincidentally enough, my mom and dad later informed me that we would be going to Paris the following summer. I remember screaming and dancing around my kitchen when they told me! It was the most excited I had ever been to go on a family vacation. Our family began to make lists of classic tourists attraction that were classic must sees. We made daily schedules for each day we’d be there to ensure we’d have enough time to see everything we wanted to. The

year went by and the next thing I knew I was at the airport waiting for my plane. It would be a long flight but I knew that it would all be worth the wait.

When we got to Paris, we still had an hour and a half taxi ride from the airport to our hotel. I couldn't believe my eyes. As we drove, the countless pictures, movies and documentaries I had seen before didn't live up to the surreal beauty of the city as it passed before my eyes. We passed by numerous classics such as the Eiffel tower, the Champs de Lysee, and the Arc de Triomphe, all of which I would get to see more in depth later on in the week. The architecture was so much different from where I was from. There were cobblestone roads, open air markets and not one house in sight. Instead hundreds of different apartments and condo type buildings lined the streets.

My hotel was really a citadel (an apartment away from home) and when I walked into our room, I was not overly impressed. It was fairly small, dull and nothing like what I had expected. I was later informed that it was a 5 star citadel with larger rooms than the countless others we had looked at. Apparently it was uncommon to ask for rooms for four because the majority of tourists passing through were couples or adults. The selling point of the room was when I opened the window in the kitchen. It looked out on a busy Paris street and just above the tops of the buildings; I could see part of the Eiffel Tower. Across the street there was a huge supermarket and tons of restaurants.

I am usually the type to sleep in whenever I get the chance. But in Paris I didn't want to sleep. I wanted to spend every last minute that I could awake and taking in the new environment around me. I was the first one up every morning, waking up between 7 and 7:30. I started the day off sitting by the window peering out on the busy city, fresh croissant in hand from the

supermarket across the street. Starting the second day there, we began to check things off our list of sights to see. We took the metro or walked from place to place seeing up to 5 or 6 checkpoints a day. We visited numerous museums such as the Musee D'orsay, the Louvre and the Cluny.

One day that was the most memorable for me was when we went to Notre Dame Cathedral for a special mass. It was a kind of mass and ceremony that I didn't even know existed until we were there. At this mass, they had brought in what was said to be Jesus' crown of thorns, a nail and a piece of his cross from the day he was crucified. Now being that I was only 12 and didn't really know where I stood in my faith, I found this completely traumatizing. I could not seem to grasp that there in front of me was a piece of his cross, let alone the vary crown of thorns that was talked about in the bible. Both the crown and the piece of the cross were enclosed by gold casings to prevent decay from the germs from our hands, but each had a clear part where they were visible. The part that scared me most was when we went up one by one (like in communion) and each got a turn to either place a hand on them or kiss them. I remember asking my dad:

"How are we to ever know if these are the real deal? How do I just know that Jesus wore that crown of thorns and that that piece of wood wasn't just from a tree outside?"

"It's all based on believing dear" he said. "Faith is based on beliefs, and in this scenario that desire to believe is what really needs to come into play."

Another attraction that stood out to me was when we went down into the Catacombs. Catacombs are basically tunnels lined with bones from old dead people. The reason they lined them with these bones was for two reasons. One was they limed these tunnels so much that they

became worried that the ground would cave in certain areas if it was not supported properly. The second reason was because of the countless diseases passing through at the time, the death rate was so high that they simply couldn't afford to be building new graveyards as often as was needed. So they killed two birds with one stone and put the bones of all the sick people in these lined tunnels for support and to get them out of the way. Going through these tunnels was somewhat eerie at times. The ceiling did drip occasionally and it was very poorly lit. These tunnels were even below the sewers, metros and everything going on above. These tunnels stretched for a long way taking us an hour to get through! I enjoyed the experience and found it interesting but it was definitely not something I'd recommend to everyone.

Best of all, I finally got to go up the Eiffel Tower. We waited an hour and a half to go up but ever second I was up there made the wait even more worthwhile. You could see everything from the top; all the churches from Sacre Coeur to Notre Dame, and all the Museums in between. It was incredible. I also saw the Mona Lisa, visited Versailles, and the Palais Garnier where Phantom of the Opera is based off of.

After two weeks of touring, incredible food, impeccable architecture and fun, it was time to go home. I was excited to see my friends and tell them all about my trip, but at the same time I almost felt like I was leaving my second home. I felt as if for some reason, as cliché and cheesy as it may sound, a part of me felt at home there with my family too. I hope to return there one day or maybe even live there. I've never experienced anything quite like Paris.

Finding Faith

I was scared and my knees were shaking. My teeth were chattering and I was staring blankly into space. As I sat down on the stand to testify, I crossed my ankles, and tried not to cry.

This was an experience that would forever change my life. It was hard to find the courage in myself to speak a story of an abusive situation against a person that was supposed to be taking care of me. It was even harder to speak the truth when I was asked a question, because I was so embarrassed. Even though I had lots of family there to support me, it really felt like I had a thousand eyes staring at me and judging me.

Putting somebody like me in the situation where it was my word against his was not very comfortable for me. It was actually very hard because when I say something I always want to be believed. I wanted so badly for people to be on my side, not for bragging rights, but for security.

Confidence was never something I had a problem with. I'm a dancer, a performer, and a very enthusiastic person. When this experience happened, my confidence came crashing down. It was so overwhelming. It was almost like walking beside someone you had a crush on. You stand tall, and feel confident, and then you trip. Your confidence is no longer existent and you're embarrassed. That's how I

felt. Embarrassed and ashamed to have to tell a story to people I love about the pain and denial I went through for twelve years before I told anyone the truth. I felt sick to my stomach just thinking about it. But I still believed I could do it.

Although the hard part is over, there will still be new challenges to face everyday. There will always be the people that believe you, and the people that don't. I just had to hold my head up high. All I needed to know was that my family was there to support me and that they believed in me. I don't wish for anyone to have to go through a situation like I had to. Although I know that horrible situations happen everyday, all you can do is pray for the best.

I know how hard it is to find faith and self confidence when you're feeling low. I also know how it feels to just want to be alone with your thoughts and feelings. This experience shaped my life for the better no matter how hard it was on me. I've finally grown to accept that. I don't have all my confidence back, but I'm working on it. I'm definatly a stronger person and a more mature person because of what I've gone through. In situations like this, you need to surround yourself with the people who care about you and love you the most. You will be very surprised at the strength you gain when someone believes in you, and you believe in yourself.

GRADE 10A

NARRATIVE - LEVEL 3

- attention of reader in first few lines
- proofreading needed to make final edits
- excellent establishment of setting
- clear focus
- title addition would enhance overall message
- creates "drama" in opening
- strong voice

Final Copy

I woke up on the weekend like any other Saturday, but for some reason it felt different than the other times I had woken up. My eyes were heavier, my hair was filthy and I had an odd feeling in the pit of my stomach. At that moment my mother came in. She asked me to step downstairs because there was something her and my dad had to talk about to me about. I started sweating fiercely wondering what I had done that I'd be in trouble about. My marks were okay, I wasn't drunk the night before, and my room was very clean; not that that would be what it was although I couldn't think of what it might be. I was really panicking. I walked down the stairs and my younger sister was already seated on the couch. I thought okay, it can't be anything to do with just me but my pulse was still racing and that feeling in my stomach would not disappear. My mom came in and sat across from the two of us. She said there was some bad news and that she'd better let my father explain it to us. He sat down soon after and I could see a hint of sadness in his face that made me much more uncomfortable.

I thought to myself, okay who died? Was it our dog? A teacher? But what came out of his mouth next I couldn't prepare myself for. He said,

"Your grandfather was on his way back from the farm, when he suffered a sudden heart attack. He died on the way to the hospital."

At that moment the knot in my stomach exploded and sent ice and pain all through out my limbs. I could feel the tears begin to swell up behind my eyes but I told myself not to cry because I was bigger than that. My mother and sister began to cry beside me and my mother held her for comfort. I sensed the grief in my dad's eyes and I felt horrible. I wished I had never gotten up that day.

The funeral was set for the following week, and the prayers for the night before. We went to the prayer service the night before and the funeral chapel was filled with aunts and uncles and some people I hadn't even seen before; probably some distant relatives I thought to myself as I was sitting there. I could see the open coffin at the front of all the pews and looked around at all the sad faces that looked upon it. The time came where everyone went up and paid their last respects to Fred Megenbir, my grandfather. I went up to say goodbye to him for the last time and I broke down. I cried, and I couldn't do anything about it. My mother hugged me as I cried on her shoulder. I calmed down but I had to get out of there. I left the chapel and waited outside for the rest of my family. I could feel the cool autumn breeze brush my face and dry the last tears off my cheeks.

The following day was the funeral at my grandparent's church. My dad had prepared a speech to read, and as he was reading it there I learnt things about my grandfather I had never known. Some memories made the congregation chuckle and others made them sob. The procession led us to the local graveyard and they blessed the dark hole and his coffin and we all said goodbye to grandpa Fred before he was laid to rest forever.

This whole experience taught me to appreciate all that life has to offer, and to live my life one day at a time and not waste a single second. I loved my grandpa and he also taught me through his passing to be strong through the toughest times of life and live the best that you can because you don't know when your number will come up.

GRADE 10A

NARRATIVE - LEVEL 3

- descriptive passages are effective
- figurative language
- proof reading errors
- some punctuation errors
- vivid details
- effective conclusion
- introduction draws in reader
- introduction and ending effective
- dialogue limited
- inconsistency

The Great Captain

When I was young, around the age of five. I had no friends. Except my family... which didn't really help, seeing I have 3 sisters. Never once did they want to play Power Rangers or even Ninja Turtles. If it was a boy's thing I would always be doing it alone. It just puzzled me how I wanted to be involved with some of the girly things, in fact I did participate in their bathing suit modeling show once, but I'll save that story for another time. I felt at times separated, the things I enjoyed doing, were the ones always shut down by my three wicked sisters. I felt empty when I wanted to feel full. Little did I know, things would start to take a drastic change for the better.

As the snow started to melt and spread as if buttering morning toast, my mom seemed overly happy. Her smile bigger than usual. I could identify certain wrinkles around her nose making her look exquisite in an unfamiliar way. She walked into the living room where everyone was watching TV, more focused on the Care bears than we were on her, she announced we were going to a dog! Our heads turned so fast it was like sudden whip lash.

"Were getting a dog" I replied in a confused state.

My mom had been planning this all winter, it was going to be a Christmas present but it would be a lot easier raising the dog in summer. Ten seconds after she announced the best news I've ever heard in my little life, the TV became a mere object that was un noticed, no time to watch care bears when so many questions had to be asked.

"What kind of dog are we getting?" "When are we getting?" "What should we call him?"

My mom sure knew what she was doing, all those questions didn't even phase her, in different circumstances if we all ran up to her and asked questions, I'm pretty sure we'd get the opposite result. She seemed very open armed telling us everything we wanted to know.

The next day we headed out to Winnipeg to pick up our new family member. The type of dog we were getting kind of upset my dad, not that he didn't want a dog, he just wanted a dog that didn't make a mess. What dog doesn't make a mess? If he really wanted that, I don't know how he agreed to come to the terms of getting a Saint Bernard! One of the biggest dogs ever! We drove up to a mans house and my mom got out and started talking with him, being so small at that age I could barley see over the passengers window. So curious I was literally crawling over my sisters trying to get a peek at what was happening. Moments later the side door of the van swung open and I got my first look at my best friend. We immediately crowded around the petite furry pup.

The drive home seemed minutes in comparison to the drive there. We adored our new pup and finally came up with a perfect name CAPTAIN.

That day was the best day ever! I no longer felt empty because I knew my best friend Captain would always be there for me, and no matter what mood I was in, he'd find a way to make me feel normal. Out of all the things I've got, game boys, TV's, bicycles, nothing can relate to the feelings I had, when I got my first dog.

With all the advances in technology, children can still be impressed by the old standards.

The Gift of love and friend ship through a dog.

In loving memory, my best friend Captain.

GRADE 10A

NARRATIVE - LEVEL 3

- insightful thesis
- voice is very present
- verb-tone confusion
- switches from "Glenda" to "I"

Tuesday s with Murray

Glenda sighed as she grabbed the hard metal handle and slowly opened the door. She couldn't help but think of the numerous tasks awaiting her or the math and English assignments that were due the next day. As she continued to walk, she came to the end of the tiled corridor and entered the main area of the pool. She looked to the left and her lips slowly curved into a vibrant smile. The experiences gained in this one hour a week have changed her life.

She sat down in one of the many chairs positioned on the south end of the pool. Within seconds one of the regular swimmers, Steven, came running towards her, his head down and his arm outstretched in her direction. Glenda shook his wagging hand and almost immediately he ran away to find someone else to greet. Steven's yet to be determined disability allows him little opportunity to develop proper speech, leaving him with hand gestures as his only means of communication. Glenda recalls Steven's first day of swimming. He was thirteen and looked as though he was nine. Regardless, he had made tremendous progress, perfecting his floats and challenging the skills necessary to complete his upcoming swimming lessons. Steven is living proof of perseverance.

It is almost six as Kim emerges from the change room. Her hand is high above her head waving excitedly and her notorious "Hey guys!" resounds through the pool area. Her progress is evident as she high fives Glenda, successfully resisting the urge to hug or grab her. The difference in Kim's behavior over the last couple years is unbelievable, but she still continues to be very difficult at times with autism contributing to her short attention span and unpredictable outbursts. She is definitely a test in patience.

All the swimmers enter the pool as the clock strikes six. As Glenda slowly slips into the cold water, a rubber ball suddenly collides with her head. She can't help but laugh as she turns around to see forty-seven year-old Murray's toothless grin. His hands forming antlers at the back of his head, as he taunts Glenda. Without a second thought, she picks up the ball and accepts his challenge. She wipes the smile off his face as she throws the ball back, hitting him in the arm. Murray's ability to seize the moment and create a sense of fun encourages the already excited group, making the practice more enjoyable for everyone.

Murray then throws another ball which narrowly misses the unsuspecting Ashley. Downe Syndrome may limit her speech but not her throwing arm. The ball bounces off Murray's head as the delighted Ashley plunges into the water and performs a foot trick for her unsuspecting audience and insists on continuing her

swimming activities well past the hour. She finally decides to get out of the pool at least ten minutes later, with the convincing of four different people. Unbelievably stubborn one minute and an entertainer the next, Ashley is a challenge and a gift for everyone.

Every Tuesday I volunteer for an hour to help with the Special Olympics Swim Program, and that hour a week has definitely shaped me as a person. I have learned that every swimmer has a lesson to teach and a gift to give. It is these gifts and lessons that I have learned so much from. The people I assist at swimming every Tuesday have taught me more than I would ever have expected when I began to volunteer three years ago. Although they may not realize it, they have passed to me qualities such as perseverance, patience and humor, but they also offer me a place where no one ever feels excluded or unwelcome. The world through my disabled friends' eyes is full of acceptance and a genuine desire to enjoy the moment. As the hour comes to an end and I prepare to leave the change room, I feel as though I have accomplished something. I am ready to face another week.

GRADE 10A

NARRATIVE - LEVEL 4

- intriguing questions promote reader interest
- good use of dialogue
- strong character development and establishment of conflict
- some weak transitions
- skillfully identifies and develops the story's main characters
- creates drama
- some punctuation errors
- effective ending
- insightful points
- compelling style and voices

Did you ever make mistakes that involved most of the people around you? Did you ever lie to someone especially the people you are close to and regretted it afterwards? It has probably happened sometime in your life. We want to live to the fullest but in some cases, we need to restrain ourselves. In this story, you will realize how small things we lie about are a big deal to others.

On a bright, warm summer day in August, Paula Adams was packing her things because they were moving to another town. As she got her things ready, she looked out the window. The bright sunshine reflected her deep blue eyes, and the warm breeze stroked her long, shiny chestnut hair. She daydreamed about how their new house, town and people will be like. She also thought about her new school. She was hoping it was going to be a great one. While she was daydreaming, her mom, who was also packing, called her from the other room. "Sweetie, are you done packing? We are leaving in less than ten minutes. You should be ready!"

"Not quite Mom but almost done!" Paula exclaimed, alarmed.

Her mom quickly said in her charming voice, "All right, sweetie, hurry up! Dad is already waiting at the car."

Paula loved it when her mom talked in her charming voice. She could listen to her mom's voice everyday. It was like music that you cannot stop listening to once you started. She packed the last of her stuff. Nothing was left in her room. She was ready.

After a long road trip to their new place, Paula was so happy about the house they had found. It had two storeys, and a modernized style. She ran to her own big new room and unpacked her things with great ease. As she watched her new curtains blow in the breeze, she thought of how wonderful it was to have a bigger and cooler room. She looked around in their new house. She could still smell the new paint from the walls. She dumped herself on the couch and watched some shows for a moment. While she was relaxing, her mom dropped a brown envelope on the table in front of Paula. "What's this Mom?" she asked as she grabbed it from the table.

"It's from your new school. You might want to open it and see what's inside, sweetie." her mom replied. Paula opened the envelope and saw a pamphlet. The cover said 'Livingston School Year 2009-2010'. It showed all the stuff about her new school. She happily read all of the text in it. School would be starting soon; she would have friends over, sleep-overs, and parties. It was just the way she wanted her life to be.

After a couple of weeks, school started. On the first day of school, she was nervous because she was worried about being the new girl and thought that no one would probably talk to her. But everything went great. She made new friends and even got a date, the captain of the football team. His

name was Gerald Anderson. He was tall, had light green eyes and light brown hair. She was so happy about it. She thought to herself, "I want to be popular and I'm going to be, because I just got a date with the star of the team!" To be known in this school you had to have a clout, and dating Gerald would be sure to help her out.

One day after school, Paula and one of her new friends, Anne hung out for a while. They decided to hang out at the park. While they were sitting on the swings, Anne started the conversation about having Gerald as her boyfriend.

"Hey Paula, how's it going between you and Gerald?" she said excitedly.

Paula answered with a big grin on her face, "It's going great so far. I'm so happy. I can't even explain how amazing he is!"

Anne giggled and said, "I know! You are so lucky to have him. You know, every girl in school had a big crush on him and unfortunately for them, he ended up with you!"

Paula was still smiling and immediately replied, "Really? I hope they won't hate me for it!"

"Nah, they won't, and they will understand," Anne said to her with great confidence. Paula shrugged. Suddenly her emotion changed. Anne noticed her face, which was sad and in denial. Anne asked her, "Is there something wrong?"

Paula looked up and said, "Gerald is amazing and I love him!" Anne nodded. Paula continued, "But there's one only problem."

Anne leaned forward to listen and asked, "What is it?"

"My parents don't know that I'm dating Gerald and I'm afraid to tell them because I know they won't agree. They'll say I'm too young to date someone. They are going to freak out!" Paula said disappointed.

"Oh, what are going to do then?" Anne asked her.

"I don't really know," Paula said while thinking. Then she immediately straightened up. "Well, I just won't tell them the entire truth!"

"That won't be a great idea." Anne shook her head.

Paula shrugged. "They won't know the difference. What's there to lose?"

Anne raised her right eyebrow at her and said, "Then you got a problem there, Paula!"

Next day, Paula and Gerald were walking in the school hallway heading to their classes.

"Babe, are you available tomorrow night?" Gerald asked her.

"Why? What's going on tomorrow night?" She also asked him.

“Well, my friend is having a small party and a moonlight ride afterwards at their place and I want you to come with me,” Gerald explained.

Uh-oh, a moonlight ride and a party overnight? Definitely no from her parents. She thought about it and said with a slight smile on her face, “Oh okay, that would be great!”

Gerald smiled back. “Alright! I’ll call you. Okay?” he said excitedly and he kissed her on the forehead. She smiled at him but she was still worried about telling her parents about the party.

Several hours before event, Paula figured out how to convince her parents. Instead of telling them about the party, she asked her parents if she could stay with her friends that night. “Mom! Dad! May I stay with my friend’s house tonight?” she said as she smiled. But her heart was pounding nervously, anxious to hear her parent’s answer.

“Come on, please say yes, please, please, please!” she thought as she crossed her fingers. Her parents looked at each other and frowned. But after a couple mumbles from them, her parents consented. Excited, she hugged her parents. “Thanks, Mom and Dad. I love you!” She couldn’t believe they allowed her.

“No problem, sweetie, be safe and take care!” her parents told her, and Paula nodded.

She got ready for the big event. She rushed around like she had no sense. She fixed herself and dressed up decently. When she was ready to leave, she kissed her parents goodbye.

Paula headed to the party. The party started soon. They got pizza, met a couple of new people. Most people were in groups; Paula and Gerald were in separated groups.

In the middle of the party, Paula began to feel guilty about all the lies. But what’s pizza, a party and a moonlight ride? Well, the pizza was good, and the party was great, and the moonlight ride would have to wait, for Gerald was half drunk by this time.

When Paula saw Gerald come out of the room where he was hanging out, she came to talk to him because she was worried about his condition. “Oh Gerald, are you sure we are going to make it to the moonlight ride? I’m worried about your condition. You can’t just drive when you’re drunk!”

But he kissed her and said that he was just fine. He went back to the room and Paula followed him. The room surprised her. The whole room was filled with smoke, and Paula saw Gerald took a puff. Paula couldn’t believe he was smoking that stuff. She was so disappointed.

Now Gerald was ready to ride to the point, but only after he’d smoked another joint. He invited Paula. They jumped in the car for the moonlight ride, not thinking he was too drunk to drive. Gerald got all excited as they finally made it to the point at last, and he started trying to make a pass. A pass is not what Paula wanted at all (and by a pass, I don’t mean like playing football.) She started to get nervous.

She thought to herself, 'Perhaps my parents were right. Maybe I am too young to date. Boy, how could I be so dumb?' Afterwards, anger surged into her. With all her might, she pushed Gerald. "Please take me home, I don't want to stay!"

He laughed at loud as he ignored Paula's command. "Please!" Paula yelled at him.

"What?" Gerald asked her.

"You're stupid! Take me home. I don't want to stay!" she repeated.

Gerald cranked up the engine and floored the gas. In a matter of seconds they were going too fast. As Gerald drove on in a fit of wild anger, Paula knew that her life was in danger. She begged and pleaded for him to slow down.

"Gerald, please slow down!" Paula said in tears. But he just got faster as they neared the town. "Gerald! Please, just let me get home! I'll confess that I lied to my parents, that I really went out for a moonlight ride and this party." she cried.

Then all of a sudden, she saw a big flash. It was another car coming ahead! She tried to convince Gerald to drive slowly and use the right side of the road but he wouldn't listen. "Oh God, please help us! We are going to crash!"

When the car was near, Paula shouted in shock and closed her eyes because of the bright headlights. Everything went black all of a sudden. She didn't remember the force of impact. She heard someone yell, "Call an ambulance! These kids are in trouble!" She knew there were two cars involved in the wreck and wondered if Gerald was all right, and if the people in the other car were alive. She closed her eyes and cried in pain.

She awoke in the hospital. "You've been in a wreck, and it looks pretty bad." The voices echoed inside her head. She saw the doctor and the nurse who are just beside her. The doctor went beside her and said, "Hello. Paula, right?" Paula nodded. "How are you feeling?"

"I'm still in pain. How's Gerald? Is he okay?" Paula asked in a small voice, unable to talk out loud.

"I'm sorry Paula, Gerald died half an hour ago," the doctor answered.

Paula sobbed. "Paula, we've done all we can do. But it looks as if we will lose you too," the doctor added.

"But how about the people in the other car?" Paula cried.

"We're sorry, Paula, they also died." The doctor sniffed.

Afterwards, the doctor left. Paula immediately prayed, "God, forgive me for what I have done. I only wanted to have just one night of fun." She was crying and blaming herself for what happened. Paula turned to the nurse and said in tears, "Tell those people's family, I've made their lives dim, and

wish I could return their families to them." She paused. She took a deep breath and continued, "Tell Mom and Dad I'm sorry I lied, and that it's my fault so many have died. Oh nurse, will you please tell them that for me?" She begged.

The nurse just stood there looking at her pitiful and never agreed. Instead she took Paula's hand with tears in her eyes, and said in a small voice, "I'm so sorry Paula!" And a few moments later Paula had a cardiac arrest and died.

As soon Paula died, they covered her in a white sheet. The nurse, who Paula talked to, came out of the room and the man who helped them and called the ambulance for them asked the nurse, "Why didn't you do your best to bid that girl her one last request?"

She looked at the man with sad eyes. "Because the people in the other car were her..." She paused as she cleared her voice and continued, "...were her Mom and Dad." The nurse left, the man was in shocked.

Everything seems great at first; life is too short, so why don't we just have fun? But if you made a mistake, it will just erase all those great things in life. Mistakes revolve around us. Everybody's not perfect, but we still have to carefully better decide what's best for us and be careful about the things we want to do. We need to limit ourselves too. Think about the consequences of your actions. Don't outsmart, be smart!

GRADE 10A

NARRATIVE - LEVEL 4

- skillfully introduces, develops and resolves a conflict/quest
- skillfully uses dialogue
- provides an effective ending
- compelling style and voice
- strategic patterns of organization
- uses words precisely and accurately

Kari Niessen took photo after photo of the dense foliage, the exotic flowers, the unusual animals that dared to approach her camera, the breathtaking view from the top of a hill, and her circle of friends, ever ready to pose for photos. Kari's class were on a camping trip to Aurora National Park, famous for its rare plants and animals.

Kari took a whiff from her inhaler, feeling out of breath. They had trekked only a kilometre along the trail, but already Kari could feel fatigue. As the class excitedly moved forward, Kari slowed down to catch her breath.

She felt a gentle hand on her shoulder. "Are you all right?" Kari gazed into the deeply concerned eyes of TK Avery, her oldest and closest friend. "You're pale."

Kari shook her head, smiling. "There's no fooling you, is there, TK?" she said fondly. "I might need a second to rest."

Her friend's eyes widened as he rummaged his pockets. TK's voice rose an octave as he squeaked, "My wallet's gone." His icy blue eyes began to water. "Everything's in there! I have to go find it!"

Kari soothed her childlike friend by stroking his bright blond hair. "We'll tell our tour guide. Then they'll find it for us—"

"No!" TK's eyes darkened; his usually innocent features turned dark and angry. "I have to find it now," he said quietly, his voice considerably deeper than before.

Kari sighed. Often and unpredictably TK switched back and forth between dark and happy. Finally she nodded. "Let's go."

TK was quick to return to his happy-go-lucky self. His smile was bright and thankful. "Really? Let's go then!"

By now the rest of the group was out of sight. Kari did not want to go forward to notify someone and leave TK behind. He was already backtracking, his eyes wide and hopeful. The image of a child losing his toy entered Kari's mind. Chuckling, she followed him.

"Wait up, TK!" she called, quickening her pace. TK nodded, smiled happily, and took her hand. "Stuck like glue!" he sang. "Let's go find my wallet!"

Kari pushed the worry of being lost away. Surely one of her friends would notice that they were gone? Sooner or later the whole group would come and find them. Also, the trail was easy and clearly marked; it was easy to retrace their steps and rejoin the group.

As they searched without results, TK was getting more and more frustrated. He finally stopped, glaring in fury at the tree in front of them, gripping Kari's hand tightly. Meanwhile, Kari, with a jolt, realized they had strayed from the path. She was completely disoriented and had no idea where to go. TK's mood did not help. "What are we going to do?" she asked quietly, not wanting to upset him further.

TK's ominous atmosphere evaporated and said in his usual tenor voice, "Are you tired? I'm sorry I haven't—"

"I'm fine." Kari did feel dizzy, but she didn't want to bother him.

She felt raindrops on her head. TK looked up and said excitedly, "Rain! Kari, this is our first jungle rain together!" The worried look Kari gave him made him say sheepishly, "Sorry. I just love the rain! But you might get sick, so we better look for shelter!" TK's smile became arrogant. "I have to protect you," he said cockily, "because you're my pretty flower."

Stunned with TK's erratic behaviour, Kari let TK guide her through the jungle. The drizzle turned into steady rain; Kari added catching a cold and staying warm to her list of worries.

Kari and TK soon emerged into a clearing. She saw a small, abandoned thatched cottage. It was covered in so much ivy Kari couldn't tell what colour it was; the windows were broken and the door was boarded up.

TK grinned at her. "Let's go in."

"But there might be animals—" she protested.

"Better than letting you freeze out here." TK hugged Kari tight. "I'll go in first, okay?"

She watched him take the boards apart. For a teenager as petit as TK, he was unusually strong and pried the boards apart with ease. TK poked his head through the door, and then smiled brightly at Kari. "All clear! House is empty, but it'll keep us nice and dry!"

Kari entered the cottage. It was dark, dusty, and very empty. She gingerly sat on the floor, rummaging through her backpack for food. TK sat down beside her, his head down and tears streaming down his face. "I'm sorry," he sobbed, "that I got so worked up with finding my wallet. Now you'll get sick and you'll get a rare jungle virus and it's all my fault!"

Kari smiled, used to TK's put-downs of himself whenever she got sick. She stroked his dripping hair. "Don't be sorry, TK. I would've gone and looked for your wallet even if you didn't want to." She frowned when she felt TK's warm forehead. "You're hot."

TK winked at her. "Thank you," he said in teasing tones, "I think you're pretty—"

Kari cut him off. "Here. I've got Advil here—oh where's that bottled water—and lie on my lap. I won't have you lying on the dusty ground."

TK giggled. "Yes, Mummy."

Kari did not know what to do. She wanted to go for help, but she didn't want to leave TK. She didn't have a cell phone. For now, they were warm enough; what if they had to spend the night with no heat? They had enough food, but not enough water for the increasingly feverish TK.

She absently listened to TK's fevered ranting. Planning on what she would do in case of an emergency, she stroked his hair and tried not to blush whenever TK said something flirty to her.

Finally, TK fell asleep. His fever was coming down. Kari breathed a sigh of relief. Then she heard a slithering sound, like a heavy object being dragged on a floor. Kari stiffened. Ears pricked, she slowly lowered TK's head to the floor underneath some extra clothes. The sound came nearer; she could now hear a hissing sound along with the slithering sound. Snakes, she thought. She stood up, trying to keep the panic at bay as she recalled what to do with snakes.

The snake appeared in the doorway. Kari's heart beat wildly in her chest as she gazed at it. The snake's skin was a glossy black; it was at least five feet long. It paused at the doorway, locking eyes with Kari. Its eyes, sickeningly vicious yellow slits staring intently at Kari, made her realize how it felt like to be prey.

"Ah," the snake said. "Fresh, young food. What do you know... A sick, feeble boy and a frail, helpless girl. Who do I go for first?" the snake sneered.

Kari's brain couldn't register the sharp, cold voice. Snakes don't talk, she thought wildly. So this is a dream! I have to calm down and just go with it.

The snake started slithering towards them. Kari, even though she knew it was a dream, was paralyzed by fear. Her legs wouldn't move despite her urgings; instead they shook and nearly buckled.

The snake bit deep into TK's chest. Kari screamed, "No!" She lunged down at the snake, but the snake had recoiled, leaving a black, gaping hole in TK's chest. She saw a stone, as beautiful and lustrous as a diamond, in the snake's mouth.

Kari didn't know what the connection was between the hole in TK's chest and the diamond, but she knew she had to get it back. "Give it to me," she said shakily. "Give it back!" she repeated, more forcefully.

The snake laughed evilly. "You want dear TK's heart back? Come and get it!" With the challenge the snake slithered away quickly.

Kari ran after it. She chased it outside. The snake paused at the edge of the river. Kari

smiled; at least it couldn't cross the river! But her heart sank as it said, "See you later, alligator! Don't get eaten by one!" it slithered into the water.

She collapsed in despair. The river looked peaceful; its pristine blue waters were still. But it was too deep and dangerous, and Kari knew swimming after a water snake was useless. Cold tears began flowing down her cheeks.

When Kari looked up again, there was a bridge directly in front of her. She rubbed her eyes and pinched herself. Then Kari realized it was only half of the bridge. The wooden plank bridge, with no railing, simply ended in the middle of the river.

Kari sighed. "Right. This is a fairytale dream where I have to go on an adventure to have a happy ending. Cinderella only had one glass slipper... I guess I have half a bridge. Okay, Kari Niessen, this is no time to complain! Up and at 'em!" Rejuvenated by the sight of the bridge, she stood up.

A creature emerged from the shrubs. Kari's eyes widened. The snake was realistic, but this wasn't. The creature stood upright like a human and was only until Kari's knees. It resembled most a cat. Where the upper paws should be were glove-like claws, striped with yellow and orange, in contrast with its snow white fur. The ears were four times as large as a normal cat's with violet tufts of hair at the tip. The tail was longer than its body, with another violet tuft of hair at the tip. Its deep blue eyes gazed at Kari.

"I'll help you if you give me cookies and milk," it said, its voice silky but with a hint of a feminine purr. "Not those Oreo ones. Too sweet!"

Kari simply stared at it in amazement.

"The name's Tail," the unusual cat said. "I'll take that as a yes. You'll need my bridge regardless. FYI, that snake likes to eat diamonds in his little cave down the river. He's my worst enemy. We wonder why poachers haven't gotten to him yet. That glossy skin should bring a fortune!"

"I'm against animal cruelty," Kari replied indignantly. "He may be a menace but I would never wish to—"

"Ah, the nature loving heroine. Yeah we get one of you once in a while. So, let's go!" Tail flicked her tail annoyingly. "Want to revive your boyfriend or not?"

"No. And he's not my boyfriend." Kari moved forward. "He's my best friend. He—"

Tail raised a paw. "Aren't those the same things? Honestly. Girls make it so complicated! Anyway, I can't let you pass without your word that at the end of all this, I will have cookies and milk."

Kari nodded eagerly. "Yes. You have my word."

Tail turned around, flicking her tail again. "Come on then!"

As they reached the end of the bridge, Kari watched as more planks of wood attached themselves to the end, extending and turning the bridge so that they were walking above the river.

"Cool, no?" Tail said. "Gets you girls every time. Hurry up! Do you walk like this everyday? Snails are faster than you! Hurry up!"

Kari hurried. "Sorry. I'm not athletic."

"Doesn't have anything to do with it! Jeez! Exercise more," scolded the cat, who was now on all fours and easily keeping up with Kari.

Kari saw the snake swimming ahead of them. As if sensing her eyes on it, it turned its head and jeered, "Ah. You got the cat to help you. Careful, that cat only has one life left! When I'm done with you humans I'll kill the cat next!"

"Don't listen to that stupid reptile. I've got a good three lives yet," growled Tail.

"So is this a regular thing?" asked Kari. "Girls in distress?" She noticed how she was not

out of breath; it strengthened her belief that this, indeed, was just a dream.

"Oh yes. You girls are quite troublesome. I try to help whenever someone promises cookies and milk. I've been hooked since that first heroine offered them to me."

Kari was amazed at herself. She hadn't known she had such a wild imagination! What was her subconscious trying to tell her?

She saw the river end suddenly ahead. A waterfall, Kari guessed. She was right; she peered over the last plank of the bridge. The height was dizzying; the trees were almost tiny specks down below.

Tail yelled, "Give it up, snake! You know what happened the last time you jumped. If snakes were a cat delicacy, I would've deep fried your pieces and dipped them in ketchup!"

The snake grinned, exposing fangs and a long forked tongue. "Don't worry! I'll slurp that tail of yours like noodles! The human looks tough though; how about softening you for a bit?"

Kari cried out in horror as the snake spit out the heart over the waterfall. Kari had no time to think about it; she jumped, reaching out for the precious jewel that was TK's heart. She didn't feel the air rushing past her, or the sheer cold, or the fear of falling to her death. All Kari felt was desperation and frustration; no matter how much she reached, she could not reach the jewel.

All too soon they were at the bottom. Kari felt as if her own heart had broken when she watched TK's heart hit the water. There was a loud, shattering sound that tore both the diamond and Kari apart. She saw the pieces, still dazzling and resplendent, float to the surface.

Kari closed her eyes. "Should that have happened at all?" she thought. "It's just water." Her own impact didn't come; when she opened her eyes, she was standing on the bridge at the bottom of the waterfall. Tail was in the water, gathering the pieces of TK's heart.

Kari started sobbing heavily. This was supposed to be her dream! She was in control! How could she fail so miserably and so early on in her adventure?

Tail emerged from the water, holding the pieces up. "Great. Now put Humpty Dumpty back together again!"

Kari looked at the pieces. Was it possible? Could she truly do it? She had no choice. She had to return it to TK. "Bring me to TK," she commanded. "Please," she added as an afterthought.

"Ha!" exclaimed Tail. "One of the rare ones to remember to be courteous."

Kari numbly looked at the pieces as they rose back up; the bridge making clanking noises as it pushed the two companions up. She had to believe in herself. If she failed to do this, she felt as if she would never be able to look at the real TK in the eye.

When the cottage was in sight, Kari picked up the pieces and ran inside. There he lay, exactly as she left him, black hole and all. Carefully she sat down beside him. The diamond pieces glowed so bright that she had to cover her eyes. When she could see again, the diamond heart was whole again.

"Yes!" cried Kari. "Happy ending!" She placed the heart on TK's chest. The little teenager did not stir.

"Why?" Kari was in tears once more.

"It needs a little kiss for a jumpstart," said Tail, who was rummaging through Kari's backpack. "Hey! A camera! Awesome! Kari, let's take a picture--" Tail saw the snake stealthily gliding into the room. Angrily she said, "You filthy snake! What, haven't learned your lesson yet? Want to see me turn you into a kebab?" There were loud hisses, scuffles, and insults flying back and forth from the creatures.

"Of course," Kari said quietly, paying no attention to the brawl. "What fairy tale doesn't end with a kiss? Is that what my subconscious is saying? That I want TK to be my prince?"

She leaned down gently and pressed her lips against his. When she pulled back, the hole

had disappeared. But TK did not stir.

"Wake up!" Kari yelled, unable to stop the tears. She pounded her fists on his chest. "Wake up! Tail, what else do I have to do? Tail? Tail!"

She was greeted by silence. Both the snake and the cat-like creature were gone.

Kari cried herself to sleep, wanting the nightmare to end soon and wishing with all her might that her prince was all right and would forgive her someday.

* * *

She opened her eyes to see concerned faces looking down at her.

"Thank goodness!" said Carol, wiping a tear.

"Don't faint on us ever again," scolded April.

"How are you feeling?" asked Lina, helping Kari sit up.

They were in the cabin. Kari was lying on her bunk. All a dream, she thought. She felt better, less guilty, and eager to tell TK an abridged version of the vivid dream. "Perfect," said Kari, smiling.

Carol remarked, "Someone will have to run for the tour guide and the doctor to tell her Kari's fine."

"I'll do it," volunteered April.

"Cookies!" Kari said, thinking of honouring Tail's memory. "I'll go get it. I have to stretch and get the blood flowing again," Kari said when they all protested. She went to the cupboard in the bedroom, stretching on the way. She gasped as she saw that the homemade chocolate chip cookies her mom made were gone.

"Where are the—"

TK entered the room, smiling. "Cookies? Gave them to that cat when she wouldn't stop bugging me about what you promised."

Kari froze. "Tail?"

TK's eyes glinted playfully. "She tells me you were quite the heroine."

"I wasn't, and it can't possibly be real—"

TK kissed her. Kari's heart leapt for joy.

"This way you'll always have my heart," TK whispered in her ear, placing something in Kari's hand.

As TK exited the room, Kari peered at the objects and nearly fainted. In her hand was a picture of Tail holding down the snake, grinning at the camera, and TK's diamond heart.

GRADE 10A

NARRATIVE - LEVEL 4

- great voice and style
- excellent exploration of identity
- original thought
- strong message and effective title
- needs to work on: verb tense, sentence endings, conclusion – breakup last paragraph to focus conclusion

Finding My Way

1 2 3 4

Being strong is something we all have faced in our lives one way or another; it's whether or not a person can benefit and become stronger is what matters. Everyone in their lives have situations that break them down and are harder to overcome. The amazing thing is we can choose to learn from it or you can break down and call yourself a failure. We can take the opportunity to mold ourselves into a better stronger person.

Today being raised by a single parent is common but lots of those children know the struggles you can sometimes have. When I was only two years old my mother left my father. At that time in I was to young to know what was going on, but I felt from my parents emotions that there was something wrong. We moved far away, I never saw my dad, but he made no effort to ever change that. It was just my mom and I living by ourselves, I got so used of it just being the two of us. I never thought anything was 'abnormal.' My mom's family seemed to look down on us since my parents separated. I was only three or four years old but I felt the vibe of their feelings. At times I have felt excluded from them; I thought there was something wrong with me. One struggle of being in a single parent family was that my mom did not have an abundant supply of money. It's not that she was lazy; she tried her best at minimum wage jobs. Even though my mom did not have enough money, she never gave people the reason to look at us that way. I remember always being clean and well dressed, never was I ever lacking or deprived of anything. Looking back I remember my mom talking to people about paying bills, and putting food on the table were hard struggles each month. Even though my

mom had three jobs it never can off that she was stressed about the struggles we were going through. Remembering she had to face all those obstacles makes me realize how strong and what character she has. Knowing that she could have given up really gives me a lot of respect for her; she is my mom and I look up to her.

My life experiences and the struggles we have went through has shaped me into the person I am today. Overall I thought it has made me a well rounded person. My mom not having a lot of money has made me realize that I should not take anything for granted; it taught me I should be grateful for everything I have. Through the hard and lonely times it has slowly built me into a more mature and grown up person for my age. None of this would have happened without my mom. The 'mistakes' she has made I have learned from them. By not living what some call the 'ideal' life has given me all these values that I could have never had with the problems and upsets I have faced in my life. When I used to think there was something wrong with living in a single parent home, I now realize I was wrong. If you have a loving and non dysfunctional parent who makes every effort to put you first and present you with opportunities to be successful in life, it does not matter where you grow up and how much income they bring in every month. My experiences from being in a single parent home has not only made me stronger it's has made me more independent. I have my extraordinary mother to thank for staying strong and not choosing to fail.