

## GOING FOR A SWIM

“Swimmers, in the water.”

I slid into the pool and clenched the slippery bar in my hands.

“Place your feet.”

My toes instinctively found a grip on the hard tile wall.

“Take your mark.”

Every muscle tensed as my ears strained to hear the buzzer. A harsh mechanical foghorn signaled the start of the race.

Just like that, I was off. My arms snapped into a streamline and my legs started kicking. From under water I watched the surface ripple a few inches from my face.

My lungs began protesting for air. I thrust my left arm down and propelled myself to the surface. I emerged gasping for breath as my arms spun to action. I hadn't realized how quiet it was under the surface until the din of the crowd swallowed the silence.

Within a few seconds, I spotted the flags. I counted five strokes before I rolled over to my stomach for a flip turn. For a moment I couldn't focus anything except the water swirling around me and the silence pressing on my eardrums. My feet connected with the wall as I pushed off.

My legs felt like pudding. Pudding with nerve endings, that is. *Your kick is your motor*, I thought to myself. I forced myself to kick a little harder.

Soon I could see the flags once more. I counted strokes and slammed my hand onto the touch pad. Before even looking at my time, I punched the touch pad a few more times for good measure.

Finally, I looked at my time. It was 37.63 seconds, which was my personal best for the 50-yard backstroke. I had won the race by two seconds. It was technically a record, as well, but it was the first year they had that event, so the only record I broke was my own.

I yanked my cap from my head and dunked under, letting the cool water seep through my hair. I can remember this moment especially clearly - the cheerful roar of the crowd being replaced by dense silence as my ears were surrounded by the thick wall of water and my pounding heart calmed by the stillness.

I like to revisit this memory because I enjoy the satisfaction of winning and doing my best. Whenever I am racing someone, I always try to push myself a bit harder than I did the last time so I can accomplish more. When I am in the water, it feels like that is the place where I should be, and it gives me that feeling of confidence and success. This memory gives me incentive to persist in things that might be challenging so I can succeed.

By Maria Neuzil

Grade 7

## LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD: THE WOLF'S POINT OF VIEW

I was walking through the woods and saw a red-hooded girl running through the woods all alone. Instinctively, as a good citizen, I thought she might be lost so I followed her.

Trying to catch up with her was hard; she was fast like a fox and sneaky, too. She had a big basket with her and I did not know what was inside. She ran faster as we approached a house. Then I got the idea that she was a thief and that she would put the stolen goods in the basket.

Quickly I ran to the back door, rushed in, and saw an old lady standing there. I shoved her into the closet to keep her safe. Next, I dressed up as her so I could catch the girl in the act. She burst open the door and came in.

She knew that I wasn't an old lady but she started saying random things like “Grandma, what big claws you have!” and “Grandma, what big teeth you have!” Let me tell you something right now, I get angry easily and when someone makes fun of my teeth, I get really angry.

I lunged at her but like I said before, she was fast. With all the noise, the next door neighbor called the cops. When they showed up, I bet you can guess how I looked. I was dressed up as an old lady chasing a little girl around and the real old lady was found shoved in a closet.

The cops didn't even listen to my side of the story, just threw me in a cell. Maybe you can tell them the real story.



By JoJo Dean

Grade 6