

Finding Uncle's Tractor

Friday:

“Maria! Look at this!”

My best friend, Kay Hills, waved me over. She was quiet when we were in school, but could be *really* loud when she was excited. Already, half the heads of our 6th grade class were turning towards Kay. “It’s awesome! *Come on!*” She yelled, and began to jump up and down like a 1st grader hyped up on caffeine. I sighed, and dropped the paper that I was slowly cutting out for art class. It was a deep blue, my favorite color, and Kay’s, too. All of us 6th graders were making pinwheels that we would take home to show our families; I didn’t really care about showing them—I just wanted a decent grade since lately it seemed like I was failing everything. I walked up to Kay the 1st grader and smiled a weak smile. “

“Okay, what is it?”

“IT’S THE GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD!”

Kay always thought everything was the ‘greatest thing in the world.’ I looked at the paper she was grasping in her hand, and gently took it away from her.

Hello, fellow photographers!

Do you like taking COOL pictures? How about an AIRPLANE before it takes off? Or maybe a car rolling RIGHT TOWARD THE CAMERA? How

neat is THAT?! PLUS, if you're ONE OF 5
SELECTED as a WINNER in our NATIONAL
contest, you win \$1,000!!!! Just ASK YOUR
art teacher for a REGISTRATION SLIP and for
ALL the details!

Happy photography,

- Brennan Kimberley Young
Brennan Kimberley Young, President

“We have to do that!” Kay screamed, making me jerk my head up into her chin. But now I was excited—too excited to notice the pain.

“I think we should go ask Mrs. Le—“
But Kay was already talking to her, and at the same time waving me over—again.

“See, Mrs. Leaner, we think we’re going to be good because I had a month of photography class in 2nd grade and Maria is good at art and stuff so if you can give us the slip thing and--” Mrs. Leaner held up her hand.

“All right, all right.” She laughed. “Just fill out this form by hmm... let’s see... it says to have the form completed by Wednesday. I’m assuming your pictures would want to be ready at that time, too?”

We nodded our heads.

“Wonderful. Then you both have five days. Have fun!”
Even before Mrs. Leaner was out of hearing, Kay squealed at the top of her lungs. “This, THIS Maria is AWESOME!”

I flinched away, but covered my ears and yelled along with her. Someone tried to say something, but all I cared about was the \$1,000. I couldn't wait! If we won, we'd each get \$500 which, for a kid like me, is really cool. We just needed the perfect picture...

* * * * *

Saturday:

RING! RING! RING!

The ringing of my cell phone suddenly woke me up. Turning to my right, I could see the little alarm clock my grandmother had given to me for my 6th birthday. (It still worked, oddly enough.) The time was 5:14-- *Who in the world could be calling at this hour?* I wondered.

"Hello?" I asked, sleepily picking up the phone. A voice on the other line shouted, "MARIA! WHERE ARE YOU?!" I jumped. "You said you'd be here now! What are you doing? I've been waiting since four!" Suddenly I realized my mistake. I'd told Kay to meet me at the County Library at 3:50, but I'd never mentioned p.m. or a.m.! So *that* would explain the look she gave me...

"Look, Kay, I'll talk to you *yawn* at 4:30, okay? Just—just go home and get some sleep." I then hung up the phone and drifted off once again.

* * * * *

Afternoon:

“...And then we’ll get some professional to develop the photos and then I can get my mom to put them on blue paper. Sorry, I don’t have dark blue.” Kay ended her speech with a long breath.

“That’s okay. We’ll make do. Now, the question is—what in the world are we going to take pictures of? The detail sheet said to have at least five... hmm.”

It was after four, just like I’d told Kay to meet me. We’d come to the library to find it empty except, of course, for the librarian. Perfect, as Kay had said. Then no one would steal our ideas.

I studied the paper. The ‘car rolling toward the camera’ part was standing out to me. But what could we do? It was supposed to be abstract and unique! I sighed, and my arm brushed against the sheet. A bit of paper slid against my finger.

“Ow! Oh, great! I hate paper cuts!” I shouted. Leaning forward, I could see the edge of paper that injured me. Hold on—was that a flap? “Hey, look at this.” I motioned for Kay to come in closer. Carefully, (not wanting to hurt myself again,) we opened the flap.

“We-ll... I see some fine print...maybe... um...I’m not sure, Maria.” Then she stopped. “Hey wait! Don’t you have a magnifying glass on your backpack?” Reaching down, Kay unhooked the glass and thrust it above the mysterious writing. She studied it for a long time.

“Ka-ay! Hurry *up!*” I hissed, growing very impatient. She set down the magnifying glass and cupped her hand around my ear. “Kay, do you really have to whisper? Just tell me! Out loud!”

“Fine-- Okay, here it is. Putting the magnifying glass over the writing once again, she began to speak:

“For ye art small; ye nay utter the phrase of...um...I don’t know how to pronounce that...okay, here’s the rest... o ye shall be bestowed a great defiance; thou shall be disillusioned.”

I frowned. “Kay... I don’t get it.”

“Neither do I...”

We both stared at the open flap. I saw that the saying Kay couldn’t pronounce was ‘ye sagne boud yes’. *Hmm...* I wondered, *what could that mean?* Then Kay spoke. “Hey! I’ve got a great idea! Let’s ask the librarian. She’s read a lot of books, I bet.”

Kay and I walked up to the librarian’s desk, and I rang the little bell. Ms. Evens, the librarian, came out with a stack of books in her hands.

“Can I help you two ladies?”

“Yeah... we’re wondering what this phrase means. Can you explain it to us, please?”

Ms. Evens read the odd words. After a while, she put the paper down and told us what they meant:

“Okay girls, I think I’ve figured this out. The interesting saying comes from the Eyoota

language and is also mixed in with some English. It means ‘For you are small; don’t say this—Finding Uncle’s Tractor—or you will be tricked. Your thoughts will be wrong.’ Eyoota is a little tricky to decode correctly. I think that’s what it says. There you go! Have fun!”

She set the page down in front of us and put the ‘closed’ sign on the library’s front door.

“Girls, it’s my break now. Can I trust you to not destroy this place while I’m gone? It’ll only be an hour.” Kay and I both nodded our heads. “Good. I’ll see you at six.”

After Ms. Evens left, Kay raced over to a table. “Oh my gosh! Did you hear what Ms. Evens said? She said the bad thing we weren’t supposed to say! We’re going to DIE!”

I chuckled, walked over to Kay, who now was trembling with fear, and put my arm around her.

“Oh, Kay. Don’t you get it? The phrase just didn’t want us to say the weird ancient thing that *meant* ‘Finding Uncle’s Tractor’. See, we’re NOT supposed to say ‘ye sagne boud yes’.”

Kay screamed.

“Oh no, oh no, oh no, oh NO! Maria, you IDIOT! What were you thinking?! How—you – ugh!”

I knew my heart was racing. I knew that I had to be strong. *There’s no such thing, there’s no such thing, no way, nope. Uh-uh. It isn’t true... just a fake. Who would do that anyhow?* I used those thoughts to calm me down.

“L-look, Kay. It’s so stupid—no one would really mean that anyhow. S-see, just a dumb prank, right? Please! There’s NO SUCH THING!” I gasped for breath and slid down farther in my chair. Kay began to cry and hid her face in her favorite blue coat. We sat together like that for a long time giving each other the silent treatment. Finally, Kay sighed.

“I’m sorry I got so freaked out, Maria. I was just scared. Can you forgive me?”

“I suppose. Just—next time tell me if you’re scared and I’ll understand. Besides, we both know that it’s not true, right? So let’s just think about something else.”

“Okay. Hmm... oh I’ve GOT it! See, when Ms. Evens said tractor I thought--”

“YES! PERFECT! A picture of a tractor!” I interrupted. Kay smiled. “And you know what else? My Aunt Nina owns a farm, and it’s only a few miles from here!”

We both began to jump up and down, excited for the fact that we *could* win \$1000. After about five minutes of jumping, Kay collapsed on the floor, out of breath. “Oh man, that was fun! Alright, I’ll meet you at your place tomorrow morning, okay? I’ll bring my camera!”

* * * * *

Sunday:

“Hello Auntie Nina! We’re here!” Kay and I raced into the kitchen. My Aunt Nina jumped up and pulled both of us into a giant bear hug.

“Oh my darlings! How’ve you been? I’ll let you two get started, okay? Then we’ll eat. Now then... where’s your mother?”

Aunt Nina wandered off to greet my mother, and Kay smiled at me. “You want to see that tractor?”

* * * * *

We sprinted down the hill to a desolate area. “This is supposed to be where the tractor’s kept. I wonder where it went...”

“Hey...” Kay sniffed the air, “Do... do you smell something?”

I slowly turned around. There, standing behind us was the tractor.

“Oh, phew! I thought it was something else--” I stopped and froze.

The tractor was coming toward us.

* * * * *

“RUN!” I yelled, hardly recognizing my own voice. We stumbled down the hard gravel path screaming the whole time. I must have forgotten how fast a tractor really was, because it was right at our heels no matter how fast we ran. I stepped on a rock and fell head over heels into a nearby ditch. “MARIA!” Kay yelled and jumped in there with me.

“KAY WHAT WERE YOU THINKING?!” I screamed, “GET OUT AND GET HELP!”

She tried, but kept falling back down. The tractor was almost on top of us now. A crushing pain filled my leg as I tried to stand. I must have hurt it when I fell. “Kay get help! I hurt my leg!” Somehow she got up. Somehow she lured that demon away from me. But I never got a chance to see that happen. Everything went black.

* * * * *

Monday morning:

“Maria! Time to wake up!” My little brother, Sean, raced into my sun-filled room.” I rolled over and smiled.

“Oh, Sean, I had the worst dream ever. It was about some weird tractor. Oh well. It’s gone now.” I gave him a kiss on the top of his little head and he raced downstairs to breakfast.

“Now, then. What should I wear today?” I rummaged through my dresser drawer. A flash of something shiny caught my eye. “Hey... what was that?”

I pulled out a little piece of paper. Looking at the back, I could tell it was a photo. *Oh I bet it’s that baby picture of me when I was I in the swimming pool.* I thought, and flipped it over. Then I gasped. It was a perfect picture of the tractor.