

May 2020

# Lit MAG 2020





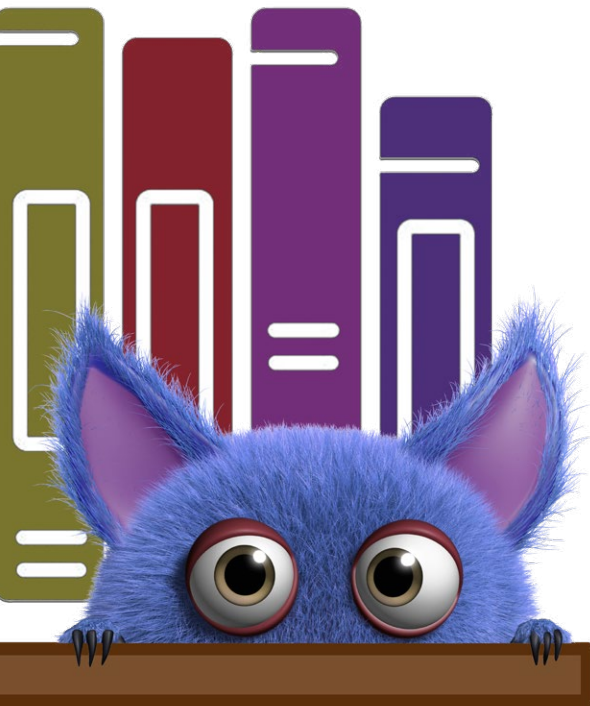
We're proud to present our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual issue of the Osceola Library Lit Mag featuring stories and poems by local young authors. Tween and teen writers were asked to explore the theme "There's a Monster in My Lit Mag" and submit writing inspired by magical creatures. They surprised with fairies, trolls, and beings of their own imagination.

This year for the first time we opened submissions to visual artists as well. We were enchanted by the monsters and worlds these young visionaries created. This issue is the perfect antidote to a world that is maybe a little too real.

Let these gifted artists, writers, and poets carry you to new places on the wings or spiked backs of the beasts they've dreamed up.

- Osceola Library System

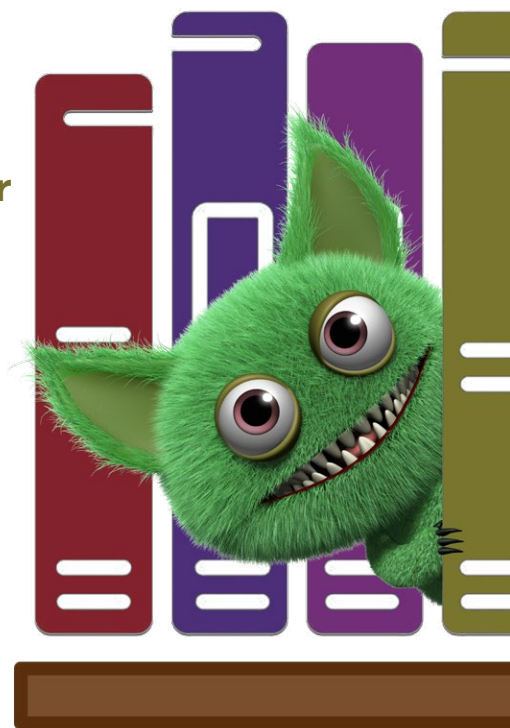




# Lit MAG 2020

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## Sarah McGuire

Sarah McGuire is a nomadic math teacher and author who sailed around the world aboard a floating college campus. She writes fairy tales and fun fantasy and would be just fine if one day she opened a wardrobe and stumbled into another world.

Coffee and chocolate are her rocket fuel. She wishes Florida had mountains, but she lives there anyways with her husband (who wrote this bio in less than three minutes!) and their family.



## Sarah Nicolas

Sarah Nicolas is a recovering mechanical engineer, library event planner, and author who lives in Orlando with a 60-lb mutt who thinks he's a chihuahua. Sarah writes YA novels as Sarah Nicolas and romance under the name Aria Kane.

Sarah has published both traditionally and independently, and has also worked in the publishing industry as an editorial intern, editorial assistant, publicist, publicity director, cover artist, and art director. Sarah is the current Board Treasurer and Agent Liaison for Pitch Wars, a contributor for Book Riot, and is represented by Rebecca Podos of Rees Literary Agency.



## Peter Raymundo

Peter Raymundo began his professional career as an animator for Walt Disney Studios, where he worked on numerous films, including *Mulan*, *Tarzan*, and *Lilo and Stitch*. From there he transitioned into writing and illustrating children's books with a nearly wordless picture book called *The Monkey Goes Bananas* (published worldwide by Abrams).

Peter is now the writer and illustrator of the *Third Grade Mermaid* chapter book series, published by Scholastic Press.



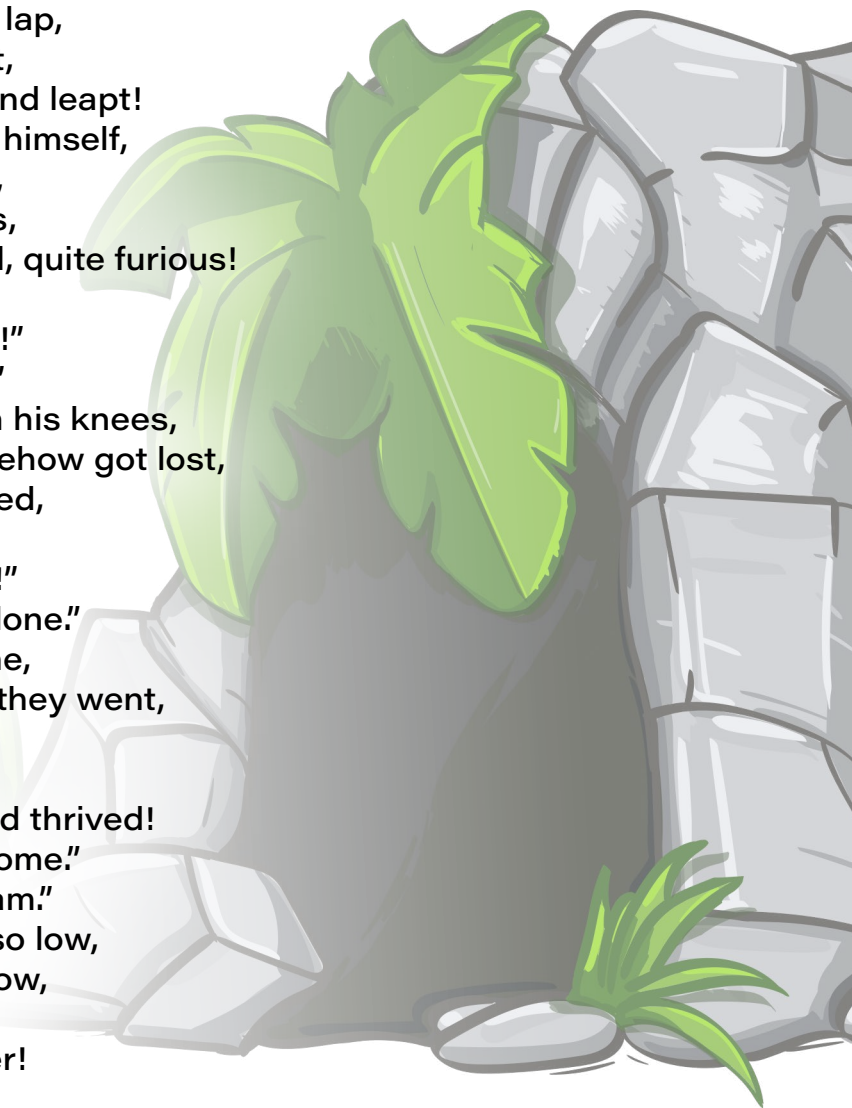


*Lit*  
MAG  
2020 **Cover Art by**  
**Parker Ross**  
Age 12

## Mary and the Troll

by Leilani Power, Age 11

Hey everybody! Come here, help me!  
A terrible troll has arrived! Look, see?  
His putrid breath smelled from miles away,  
Making everyone around close up shop for the day,  
We need to stop him! Capture him fast!  
If we don't it will leave the whole town aghast!  
Fetch the finest trapper, go on now, shoo,  
If she can't do it, who knows what we'll do!  
Call Mary, for that was the fine lady's name,  
If she catches that beast, she'll be showered in fame!  
So off she went, carrying net and trap,  
The whole town's safety, right there in her lap,  
And down to the creature's cave she crept,  
Through the opening tunnel she readied and leapt!  
And what should she see but the monster himself,  
Crying and whimpering high up on a shelf,  
"What is the matter?" Mary asked, curious,  
"None of your business!" the troll snapped, quite furious!  
"Alright then, have it your way," Mary said,  
"If you don't cooperate, I'll have your head!"  
"No, no! I'll tell you, don't hurt me, please!"  
The troll wept and begged, going down on his knees,  
"The thing is, on a sight-seeing tour I somehow got lost,  
In a terrible storm I was battered and tossed,  
Twisting and turning in countless ways,  
The forest just looks like a great big maze!"  
"I'll help you," said Mary, "if you leave us alone."  
"Okay!" the troll said in a most hopeful tone,  
And so out of the cave through the forest they went,  
Hours and hours of hiking they spent,  
Until finally at the plains they arrived,  
Where millions of happy trolls frolicked and thrived!  
"We made it," said Mary, "you are finally home."  
"Thank you, dear Mary, no more shall I roam!"  
Now back across the valleys that dipped so low,  
To the mountains how high? she didn't know,  
Back to the town that she loved so dear,  
Mary finally returned, and up came a cheer!  
Our savior, our hero, brave Mary is here!





*Lit*  
MAG  
2020 Art by  
**Leya Torres**  
Age 11

There's A



MONSTER in

My Lit Mag

Lit  
MAG  
2020 Art by  
Sophia lahfaia  
Age 9



## Drake

by Chaska Power, Age 12

Claws as sharp as razor blades,  
arrogance and greed in spades,  
keeper of a golden hoard,  
teeth as long as any sword.  
A mighty Drake you may call me,  
lord of flame and land and sea.  
A dragon I am surely not,  
no breath of death all flaming hot.  
I make do with a mighty roar,  
strong enough to shake the floor.  
Of wings a-flapping I have none,  
my mode of travel is to run.  
My main offense, a poison sting,  
to the victim, death I bring.  
My body, long and tough and lean,  
the ultimate killing machine.  
As I rest upon my golden throne,  
deadly, silent and alone,  
I yearn for someone on which to depend,  
a true ally, a steadfast friend.  
A person who would play with me,  
we would get along so easily.  
A companion who, through hardships many,  
would stand by me for not a penny.  
Though a monster such as I,  
even if I try and try,  
could not find someone when walking by,  
who would even look me in the eye.  
Wait, hold up, slow down a bit.  
I know someone who's the perfect fit!  
A friend who's loyal, brave, and true!  
You think I could be friends with... you?



## **The Pinewood Creature** by Shaelynn Mercer, Age 12

The Pinewood forest will never see,  
the creature that is coming for me.  
Green glowing eyes,  
Dark brown fur,  
Bright teeth emphasized by the pale moonlight,  
this is the creature that's coming for me.  
Blood on its claws fresh from its last victim,  
but the loneliness in its eyes,  
struck me so hard,  
this is the creature that's coming for me.  
I approached it holding out a hand,  
it backed away seeming scared,  
blood on its claws but I did not care.  
Its tail a pinch dark and elegant,  
green like the ancient pine,  
sad and alone,  
was this the creature who had come for me?  
Awaken from my dream no longer in fear,  
the darkest of people,  
might just be lonely and in fear.  
Life's a pinewood forest,  
poking, trapping and leaving alone,  
in the darkest of time have no fear,  
the people who love you,  
will always be near.



*Lit*  
MAG  
2020 Art by  
**Paige Jordan**  
Age 12



*Lit*  
MAG  
2020 Art by  
**Leilani Power**  
Age 11

## The Wimstican Extinction

by Jenai Greer, Age 13

The tall, broad tree would only hide him for so long before giving the secret away. The foreign environment mixed with the weight of nightfall made Nualker grip his acclaimed bow, feeling the engraved title of Axiom with his clammy digits. He could hear it lurking, it thundered through his head. Its location was a whole different matter.

The air begging to escape his lungs made him shut his eyes as he felt for the perk slider. Shaking, he placed his thumb on the built-in slider and began to wipe.

Distance. Precision.

Damage.

His shoulders sunk as the acid coursing through the bow gave him an ounce of security.

Nualker looked up at the gold canopy that once seemed to shimmer with the love of the two suns above. That was long gone now.

One final breath and he was off.

His feet hardly hit the ground as he flew down the path of marked trees. He was glad that he marked them, for the forest wore a different mask at night.

He clutched his bow and opened his eyes for any colleagues, anyone except the very beast that he now knew the location of.

A man-and-a-half tall, eight times as heavy, and just as fast. That was what pursued the Wimstican expeditioner. With the brute gaining speed, he leaped to the side. He aimed, pulled the string back, and released. The weaponized acid flew into the giant's mass of fur, a massive chunk corroding off the immense animal. It roared as it skidded to face Nualker. The affected area caused smoke to erupt in a dense cloud as if it was the pollution of industry.



## The Wimstican Extinction

(Continued)

by Jenai Greer, Age 13

In the blink of an eye, Nualker was tearing down a partition in the trees. The creature was once again chasing him.

The unmarked trees polluted his mind with puzzles, this wasn't the path he traveled before. He had a price to pay for his detour.

The giant breezed through the trees in hot pursuit while Nualker stumbled like a child taking its first steps. It was gaining and Nualker was losing.

He turned to damage the animal, to stun it. He pulled the string back, aimed with malicious intent, and was flung into a knot of roots with a simple shake of the beast's head.

He landed forcefully on his elbow. His bones and Axiom snapped. He screamed in agony and fear. It charged as Nualker laid frozen, his arm throbbing sharply. His eyes gazed at the canopy above, silently pleading for an easier release.

He never wanted to do this, never wanted to be an accomplice to these crimes. It wasn't a choice.

His eyelids fell and with screams of torment, he did too.

Sveta dealt the final blow to the towering balwalker as she thrust her blade deep into its side, ramming it through the creature with the force of her whole weight. The balwalker cried out and struggled to stand, its bleeding limbs offering no support.

It submitted to its fate and lied on its side. Sveta held the blade in. The balwalker's chest rose up and down slowly, dark blue blood and grime of its resistance seeping into its mass of fur. The rising stopped. Sveta removed her sword and stumbled down from the body.

She wipes her brow and drops her sword.

"Balwalkers seem to only become aggressive once they've been threatened. I'll add that to the expedition datalog,"

Arillis said through her exhaled breath.

She felt the tender wound on her arm and holstered her weapon. The weight of their actions gripped her shoulders.

"The data on this environment that we have accumulated from our endeavors will delight the ambassadors of Norsval and Vasa Runa," Sveta responded, still out of breath.



**The weight of  
their actions  
gripped her  
shoulders.**

## The Wimstican Extinction

(Continued)

by Jenai Greer, Age 13

Arillis gazed at the balwalker's body. The natural vapors that the beast admitted rose from its fur no more. They had learned from observations that this was to attract the species known as nightlight birds, to engage in mutualism.

One flew overhead as she reflected, a shooting star in the night sky.

"Our discoveries will benefit us and our comrades, settled disputes will calm the nerves of many," Sveta noted as she pulled her hair out of its confinement.

Her short, white hair framed her equally pale face as she smiled at Arillis, sweat still crawling down her face. Her eyes always hid something that Arillis could never detect. Arillis turned to avoid the eyes of the monarch. She looked at the deceased balwalker and then the bodies of the balwalker pups. They laid sporadically around their mother with deep stab wounds.

Arillis glanced back at Sveta and made direct eye contact.

"I sense your concerns, Arillis."

Sveta approached the researcher and held her hands.

She softly gazed directly into Arillis' eyes.

"Exterminating the balwalkers aren't a choice. We require this land for our people to expand and to secure favor with our allies," Sveta claimed as she looked around.

Arillis followed her movements. In the empty, golden field laid balwalker cadavers as far as the eyes could see. Young and old fell to the Wimstican expeditioners. The hunters would slaughter with their bows, and the scientists would prod with their tools.

"Not all will be destroyed, all the trees that were here when we arrived will be here when we leave. Everything we do is for the common good, I promise you that," Sveta endeared as she drew circles on the scientist's palm. A sign of utmost trust.

Arillis looked past her leader at their small settlement of expeditioners.

Past the carcasses, over the terrain, the colony was bustling with activity. People were trading with foreigners while researchers dissected a balwalker under a large tent.

Several portals were open as supplies and people trickled in.

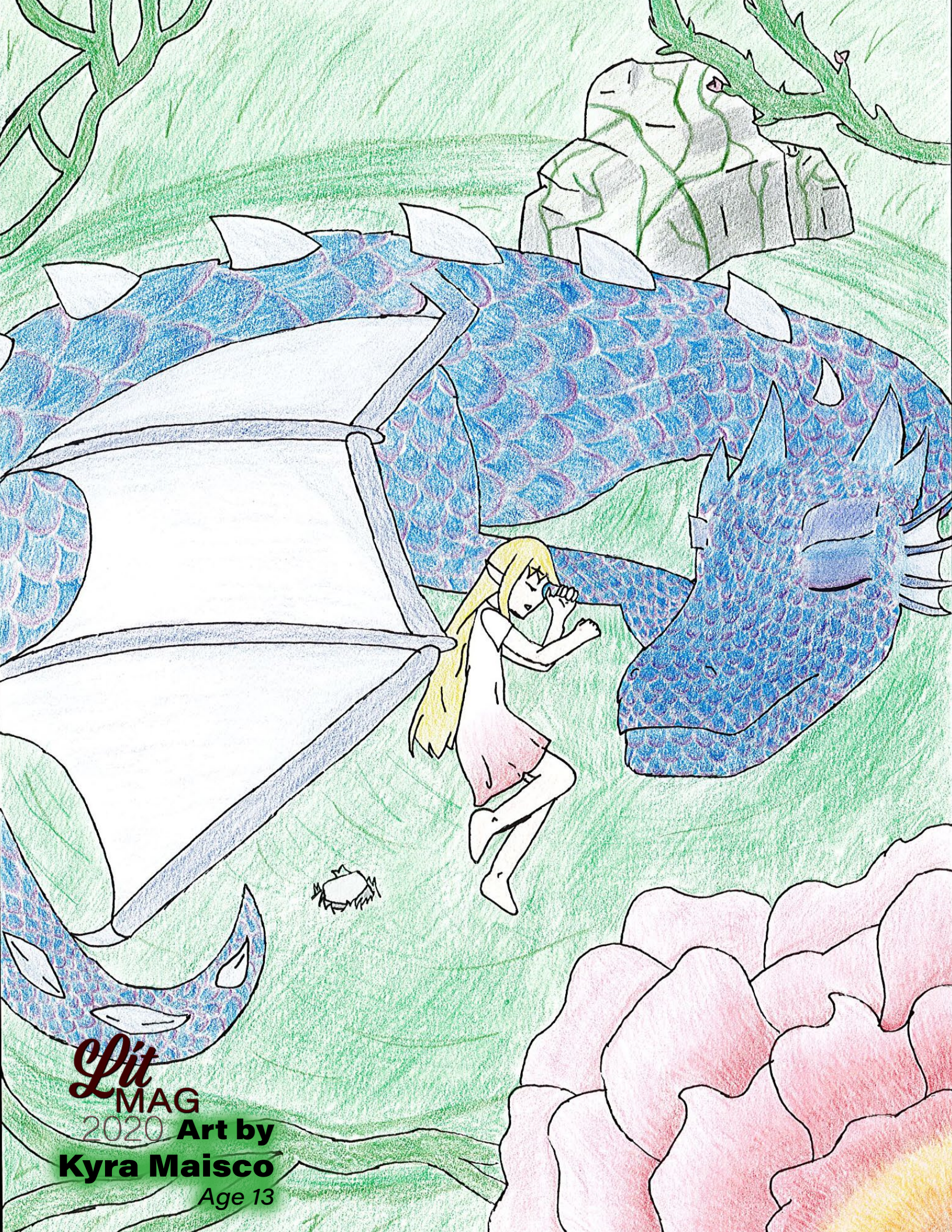
Maybe she was simply overthinking. Sveta would only want what's best for her people and nobody had been harmed in her schemes.

She looked at Sveta handling her palm and smiled.

Yeah, she only wants what's best.

**Her eyes always hid something that Arillis could never detect.**





*Lit*  
MAG  
2020 Art by  
**Kyra Maisco**  
Age 13



## Fyre

by Delaney Sullivan, Age 13

"Yes!" Zora exclaimed. *Fyre* was finally starting to get interesting. After months of investigating and searching, the dragon called Akkiux had determined the whereabouts of Shadow, the evil ruler of the scorpions, and was battling him. Just when Akkiux seemed to be winning, it began to rain. But surely, Zora thought, Akkiux would win! In the end though, Shadow won. Now ruling both scorpions and dragons. How could this possibly be true?!?!?

She turned the page. Somehow, Akkiux would win, right? The End, it read. She pulled out her phone and searched for sequels: nothing. "Zora! Time for bed!" her mother called from downstairs. Zora went to bed and quickly drifted off to sleep.



When she woke up, something seemed...weird. Somewhere off in the distance, she heard grass swaying in a gentle breeze. She was laying on something prickly. She opened her eyes. Zora found herself in a field that was filled with flowers and surrounded by huge mountains whose glistening white caps seemed to stretch longingly toward the clear blue sky. "Where am I?" she wondered. "Wait, but... No, it couldn't be!" This place, she had been here before. This was straight out of *Fyre*, the book she had been reading. "I must be dreaming!" she said to herself.

"A dream? You humans don't have mountains?" someone asked from behind her. Zora turned around and was surprised to find there was a dragon behind her! "Anyway, I'm Akkiux!" he said. Of course! She had recognized him by his eyes, a beautiful cerulean blue. Akkiux was exactly as his author had described him, scarlet scales and light orange wings, one with a tear in it from his first battle with Shadow. "I'll cut straight to the point, Zora. You're here because *Fyre* is in danger! As you know, Shadow is the ruler of the dragons! Come on, there's no time to waste! We've got to go to his castle right away!"

"Shadow's castle? Shouldn't we prepare first?" Zora asked.

"Why would we? I've got you!" Akkiux said.

"What do you mean? It's not like I'm a dragon like you," she said to him.

**This place,  
she had been  
here before.**

## Fyre

(Continued)

by Delaney Sullivan, Age 13

"No, but you're more powerful than you think! Now let's go!" She climbed up onto his back, careful to avoid the sharp ridge of spines. He took off and suddenly they were soaring through the sky.

Within a few minutes, they arrived at the base of the castle with tall, spiraling turrets. Its giant doors slowly opened, and out walked Shadow. He had midnight black scales, a long tail with a scorpion-like barb at its tip, and gleaming eyes that were a greyish purple. He lunged forward at Akkiux, but Zora remembered chapter five. "Aren't you famous for always using your tail barb to attack?" she asked. Shadow blipped back to where he had been a second ago, giving Akkiux a chance to attack.

"See! I told you!" Akkiux said to her.

"I think I get it! My power is kind of like a fact check! If it wouldn't happen in the book, I can reverse it!" Zora said. She then stopped an earthquake, alligator attack, and a thunderstorm.

Finally, Shadow was out of ideas. "Fine! You win this time! BUT I WILL BE BACK!" Shadow said as he flew away.

"He's coming back?!?!?" Zora exclaimed.

"Yeah, but you showed me the power of words. Books aren't just sentences and paper, as you've probably discovered! I'll be ready when he comes back!" Akkiux said confidently.

"But how will I know you're okay if I'm back in my world?" Zora asked.

"You'll just have to read the sequel! I hear it's coming out soon! Well, I guess I'll see you later!" he said.

"Yeah, I'll see you later."



"Zora! Hurry up or you'll be late to school!" her mother yelled. It was a week later when she saw it, passing by the bookstore after school. *Fyre 2: Akkiux Returns!* She had turned out to be right after all, Akkiux had won in the end.





*Lit*  
MAG  
2020 Art by  
**Sasha De Leon**  
Age 16

SD

## The Great Wood

by Caiden McLaughlin, Age 13

Regina brushed tears from her eyes as she studied the jagged scrawl of the last story her father had ever written. It had been about a woman with the wings of an eagle who soared over the clouds freely, flying gracefully away from her problems, and just now, Regina wished she could do just that.

Father had always been a great storyteller, but now Regina would never hear another one of his homespun tales.

She attempted to brush a tear off the parchment where it had landed but only succeeded in smearing it, the liquid tinting the paper a darker shade. Suddenly, something dark appeared over the original story. Regina squinted, trying to make out what it was. Another tear escaped her eyes, landing near the first and revealing the next few letters of what looked like a word. Regina blinked the tears away, clearing her vision, and saw that the hastily scribbled letters spelled R E G. That wasn't a word, was it? She smeared her tear-stained fingers onto the page, revealing R E G G I E, her father's pet name for her before he had—

Regina sniffed, pushing it out of her mind. Her fingers had become dry, and the rest of the message was yet to be seen.

Reggie,

I am mos

She had to cry again, or else the note would be lost.

Father had always said that crying was a strength, that it meant that you were compassionate enough to care about the fate of others, but Regina had disagreed. She thought that crying could only mean weakness, that it was a sign one was selfish to hope fate to change itself.

But now, Regina couldn't stop the tears from flowing as she thought of how much of her father's death had been her fault. After all, if she had never existed, the Village would not have scorned her father so. If she hadn't existed, she and her father would not have been exiled to the Northern regions, and therefore far from a doctor when Father had taken ill. If she hadn't existed, she wouldn't have been too afraid to call for a doctor, to make the journey back to the village after they had banished her and her father from town.

**Father had always said that crying was a strength...**

By now Regina's tears soaked the pages, exposing the message from her father:

## The Great Wood

(Continued)

by Caiden McLaughlin, Age 13

Reggie,

I am most likely dead by now, and though I am not sure of this, it is the only reason you would be crying so much.

You were so brave when they ran us out of our village. And now I must tell you why.

You are half fairy, Reggie.

I know it must sound crazy, something you read in story books and such... but I promise you I am not telling a falsehood.

Your mother, though you never knew her, was a fairy. She was a nymph, a Tree Fairy, and she lived in the Great Wood. I met her one day when I was journeying to Medalla to trade in the market, and we fell in love. For years I lived with her in the Wood, and we married. She soon had you—and, well, I'm sorry to say that nymphs like her were such delicate creatures, and childbirth—especially the birth of a part-human—was too much for her. She died soon after.

I moved to the Village because, no matter how hard I tried, the fairies would not accept you or me as one of them. So we lived in there for years, keeping your Abilities, which you inherited from your mother, secret.

Pretty soon, as you know, the Villagers saw you doing your magic when you thought you were alone, and they labeled you as a witch.

## The Great Wood

(Continued)

by Caiden McLaughlin, Age 13

That is why we were exiled. I tried to hide it from you, for your sake, but I dare say you heard the whispers behind our backs.

I am so sorry, Reggie, it is all my fault that you were so oppressed. I should have raised you in the Wood, where you could be free.

Please accept my apologies, and know that I really did love you, and I attempted to raise you where it would suit you best, though I failed. Go live where you can be yourself, in the Great Wood.

Destroy this so none may harm you.

Love,

Your father

Regina was speechless. She was a fairy?! She had thought she was a witch for the past eight years! Relief spread over her as she realized that she wasn't evil. And then she knew what she had to do.

It had taken three years for Regina and her father to make the crude hut a home. And it had taken her less than two hours to disassemble it. She only packed what she needed—a gourd to carry water, all the food in the house, which wasn't much, the clothes on her back, plus an extra jacket, and her sturdy leather boots.

Regina did not have a map that led to the Great Wood, but she felt as if she knew exactly where it was, as if the Wood was calling her. Regina could only trust her instincts

## **The Great Wood**

*(Continued)*

**by Caiden McLaughlin, Age 13**

and believe that it was a "Fairy thing."

It didn't take long for her to say goodbye to the home she had resided in for the past nine years, for it had been a constant reminder that she had been banished from a place where she'd thought she fit in.

Now she knew where she really belonged.

Regina stood in front of her father's grave and closed her eyes. Her Abilities surged, pulling the roots of the flora and fauna that surrounded her in the small clearing where the hut, and the grave next to it, sat peacefully undisturbed. When Regina was done, a shrine of roses and daisies, poppies, hydrangeas, gardenias, primroses and lilacs covered the headstone in a sort of cave or tent.

Satisfied, Regina Wilkes began her journey.



## Hours and Locations

**Mon - Fri: 9am - 6pm**

**Buenaventura Lakes Library**  
405 Buenaventura Blvd.  
Kissimmee, FL 34743

**Hart Memorial Library &  
Ray Shanks Law Library**  
211 East Dakin Avenue  
Kissimmee, FL 34741

**Poinciana Library**  
101 North Doverplum Avenue  
Kissimmee, FL 34758

**West Osceola Library**  
305 Campus Street  
Celebration, FL 34747

**Veterans Memorial  
St. Cloud Library**  
810 13th Street  
St. Cloud, FL 34769

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**Wed & Fri: 10am - 6pm**


**Kenansville Library**  
1154 South Canoe Creek Road  
Kenansville, FL 34739



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 Summer Learning Begins **JUNE 1**

the  
**Osceola**  **Library**  
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