



Lara Croft brings action, humor

Lara Croft is the main character in a type of film that the public has seen many times, but "Tomb Raider" is both funny and action-packed, differing from the rest.

The iconic video game, "Lara Croft, Tomb Raider," which was released in 1996, prompted the making of the 2018 movie.

Alicia Vikander, who plays Lara Croft, portrays a forceful, strong and determined woman. She also proves great character improvement over the 2001 version of the film with Angelina Jolie.

Lara Croft is the daughter of Richard Croft (*Dominic West*), a secret explorer and researcher hiding behind his substantial company, Croft.

After he disappears on a business trip, Lara is orphaned.

As a grown woman, she works as a bicycle delivery worker barely making ends meet, but, after she gets in trouble with the police, her caretaker Ana Miller (*Kristin Scott Thomas*) urges her to sign off on receiving her father's possessions and taking over his enterprises.

Lara sees this as a way of finally letting her father go and, after resisting for 7 years, she finally agrees and almost signs off.

But Lara then receives a gift that her father left for her, an intricate puzzle.

Showing off the material we expect from Lara Croft, she easily solves the enigma, resulting in a key.

Then, as she slowly solves the mystery of her missing father, she truly becomes the Lara Croft from the video games that we all knew and loved.

Throughout the movie she solves a total of eight puzzles which keep her moving down the path of resolving her father's whereabouts.

The movie is humorous but doesn't shy away from action.

It also includes many misleading plot twists that keep it interesting and gripping, and the movie does contain some archaeological fiction.

Most of all, it maintains a feminine dominance over the movie's tone that is very empowering.

Gamers will notice that the digital Lara Croft carries two guns by her hips, but she never fires a gun in the film.

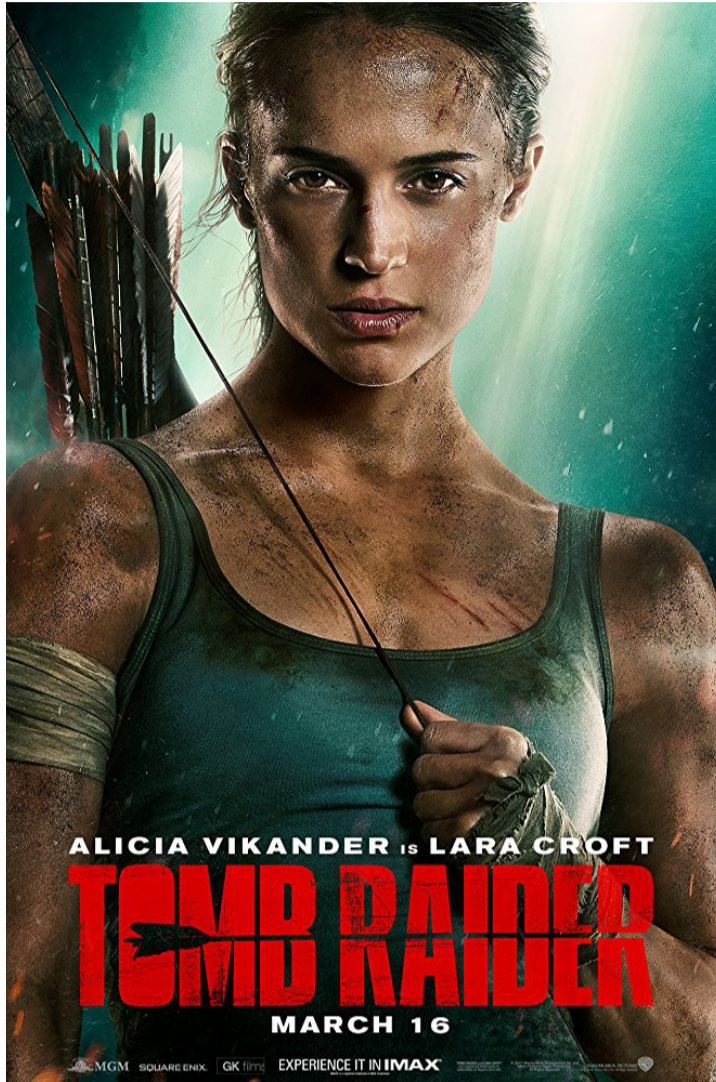
One of the action scenes did seem to be unnecessarily ongoing but the directors easily identified and covered it with a cocky comment from Lara.

Vikander was exactly the right choice to play Lara: She completely sells scenes in which her character is hurt or emotional.

I highly recommend this film, but there is some violence with gun fights, standoffs and bow and arrows, and also some mild adult language, which earns it a PG-13 rating.

However, kids 10 and up would most likely handle the mild violence and language.

"Tomb Raider" is insightful and a good way to transport yourself from the real world.



By Haley Deison,
12, a CK Reporter
from Arvada

Message makes 'Love, Simon' matter

Life is unfair, no doubt.

However, it can be even more frustrating for those who have to hide who they truly are for fear of the judgement of their peers.

Seventeen-year-old Simon Spier (*Nick Robinson*) is a perfectly normal senior student at his high school except for a huge secret he's hiding: He is gay.

Simon has recognized his sexuality for four years, yet has kept it to himself, not even telling his best friends Leah (*Katherine Langford*), Nick (*Jorge Lendeborg Jr.*), and Abby (*Alexandra Shipp*).

He finds out on the school Tumblr page that there is another closeted gay student and strikes up a correspondence.

After a classmate discovers the emails and blackmails Simon to get together with one of Simon's friends, a choice must be made: Is it more important to stay in the closet or to spare his friends the heartbreak?

"Love, Simon" (*based on "Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda" by Becky Albertalli*) is a work of art.

The acting is phenomenal, working with the emotions to really bring the movie to life.

Simon comes across as a typical guy, with normal family and school issues (*e.g., school play, awful jokes from his dad, annoying little sister, etc.*), making the movie more relatable for kids and teens alike.

What makes this movie even more intriguing is the way it puts a twist on the typical teenage romance story.

As Simon embarks on a quest to discover who his pen pal is, it is made doubly difficult due to the fact that society tends to frown upon homosexuals, taunting and humiliating them simply because of who they are and love.



In the end, it all comes down to trust and love. Maybe someday, if this film's message carries through, people will look back and laugh, disbelieving that a person would have to hide who they are for fear of prejudice and persecution.

If so, this film will no longer serve as an education on letting people be whoever they are, and can instead serve as a curious memento of a time of taboo on loving whomever you choose to love.

"Love, Simon" is a wonderful story with a fresh spin on the much used pen-pal romance plot.

This movie is rated PG-13 for mild swearing, however it is definitely a must see, with a powerful message that can resonate with an audience of kids and adults both.



By Maria Ciobanu,
13, a CK Reporter
from Denver

'Brackitz Pulleys' great for young engineers ...

The "Brackitz Pulleys 77 Piece Set" is a great toy kit that allows you to use connectors to latch plastic spars together and then connect pulleys.

The plastic spars are easily put into the connectors and easily taken out, but will hold sturdily when a pulley has weight on it.

It comes with a rope, and I have already built multiple inventions with it.

The pulleys do work, and the materials are strong. I have tied slip knots and used the pulleys to lift things from a fork to an inexpensive security camera.

You can also tie the rope to axles and use the small plastic bucket that is provided to lift anything you want.

The possibilities are endless.

I am 12 years old and have an extensive knowledge of Legos and other building kits, so, I went through my normal four-step process:

1. Sort the pieces.
2. Build the model.

The kit came with directions to build 10 contraptions such as the Boom Digger, or a drawbridge. The instructions only show a picture of the final object, but they do also give you a link to a Youtube account where you can find step-by-step tutorials.

3. Try it out. This is when I see if I got everything right, and see if it works.

4. Make it better. This is when I spend a few minutes looking at all parts of it to see if there are any faults, or if I can improve it.

I then continue on doing steps three and four until I can find no faults, and I am out of ways to make it better.

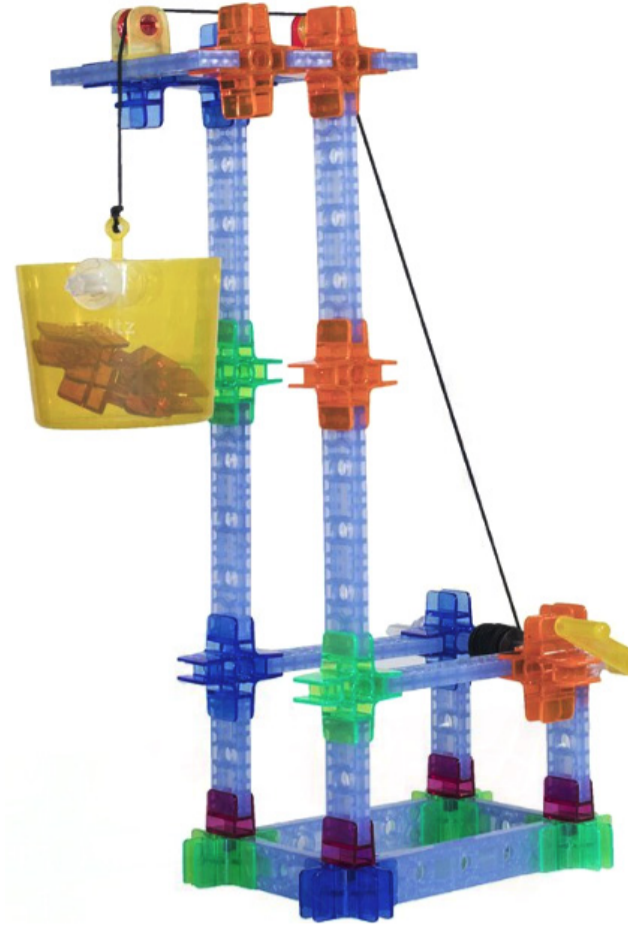
Finally, I show it off to my friends and family, then break it down and get to work on a new project.

This toy is priced at \$39.99.

I think that this would be best for anyone over the age of eight who is interested in engineering or architecture.

If you are younger than eight, it might be hard to figure out the combination of pieces to actually build something.

Of course, if you are not interested in engineering though, this toy might seem boring for you, and it will probably not be used enough to justify the price.



By Jack Vanourek, 12, a CK Reporter from Littleton

... but 'Marble Run' a frustrating disappointment



"Hours of kinetic fun" as advertised on the box of the "Discovery Marble Run" is a lie. It's more like hours of annoyance and frustration.

The kit comes with 313 pieces including ten marbles and one instruction booklet with tracks, gears, and other pieces to build your own marble set.

Despite all of this, it's definitely not something you should waste your time or money on.

For starters, the instruction manual is really only a blurry piece of paper. It's incredibly hard to read and there's no color, so you can't tell which pieces are which.

It shows you how to make one marble run but it's so dark and hard to see, you might as well just make up your own.

The poor contrast and minor differences between pieces that you can't see in the instructions makes it really hard to build the run, especially since you also don't know how to use the pieces.

There are eleven types of these pieces and they all have flaws.

The slides and tracks are flimsy and break when you're trying to put them together.

They are also extremely hard to connect; it was hard for me to put them together, much less a six-year-old, which is the specified age for this product.

The chain links snap in half when connecting, and by the time the whole set was put together, there were six broken pieces and it didn't even work.

The marbles are way too big for the tracks, so that they speed off or get stuck and don't move.

The chain that is supposed to lift the marble up with little claw-like pieces doesn't work at all: The marbles slide off and the pieces don't fit with each other.

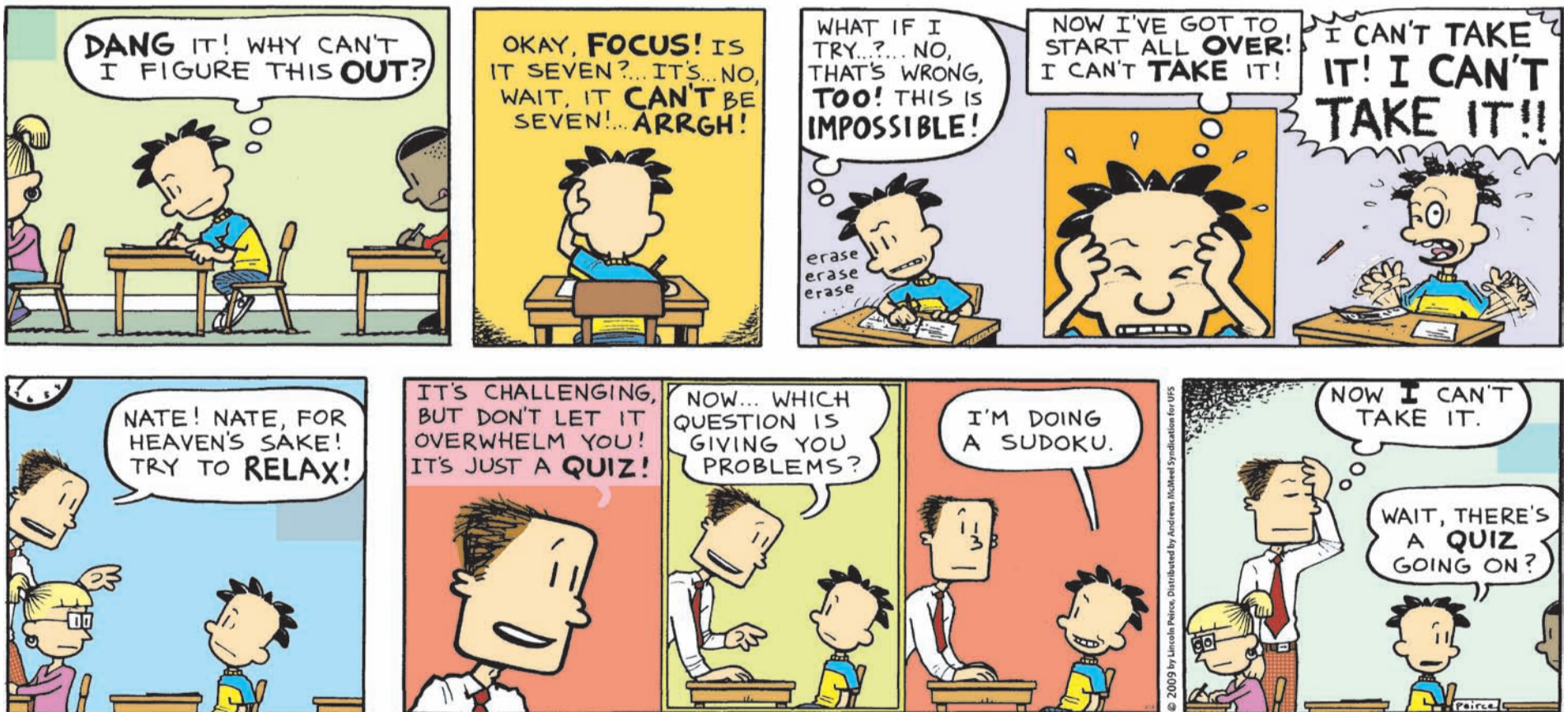
This would get one out of five stars because it doesn't work, pieces broke, the instructions are hard to follow, and after a while of trying to figure it out, it's not fun anymore and leads to lots of disappointment.

Avoid this toy and look for other sets out there, because the \$40 Discovery Marble Run shouldn't cost you a penny.



By Grace McClung, 13, a CK Reporter from Denver

Big Nate



Archaeopteryx didn't fly like most birds

The first feathered dinosaur to be discovered, archaeopteryx, has had paleontologists arguing for years.

It had feathers and it had wings, but there were things about it that made many biologists sure it never soared like an eagle.

As this model from the Natural History Museum in Geneva, Switzerland, suggests, it looked more like a turkey, and now a study by a paleontologist suggests that it

probably flew in short bursts like a wild turkey, from the ground to a tree branch and back, or across a short distance of ground.

The researchers used a special kind of X-ray device to analyze the wing bones of an archaeopteryx fossil, to see how use had changed them.

Over the animal's lifetime, the change in size from use suggested that archaeopteryx was not sweeping along the air currents like a

buzzard or even flying around like a robin or sparrow.

Rather, it showed the flapping, short-distance patterns you'd find in turkeys, pheasants and other birds who fly more to avoid predators than to travel great distances.

However, archaeopteryx was not their ancestor; its flapping power did not come from the chest, like a modern bird, but from its arms and shoulders, as ours would have to, if we had feathered wings. photo/Rama

Music documentary doesn't strike right notes



"America's Musical Journey," currently at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, is about how different cultures and religious beliefs influenced America and its music.

It is narrated by Morgan Freeman, and is directed by Greg MacGillivray.

The IMAX movie follows Aloe Blacc, singer/songwriter on a tour through America. (*He sang "Wake Me Up"*)

Blacc visited Chicago and New Orleans, as well as many other cities that show great examples of having been influenced by different countries and cultures.

Blacc discusses Louis Armstrong, and the way he shaped jazz, and his fighting for black rights.

He also explains how Elvis Presley merged rock and roll, gospel, and country to create his own unique style of music.

However, "America's Musical Journey" was kind of random.

At one point, Blacc starts talking about his wife and his kids. When I saw those scenes, I was kind of confused.

It also isn't as lengthy as I would have liked it to be.

The run-time is 40 minutes, which is the typical duration for an IMAX movie, but it just wasn't enough for me.

I would have liked to have seen more female artists be included in the movie. Maybe that also would have made it longer.

Honestly, I also think it would be easier for me to enjoy the IMAX if a more popular artist were in the place of Aloe Blacc.

Blacc hasn't released a song on his own in about five years. Maybe someone like Kelly Clarkson, or Taylor Swift would be more ideal for the part.

Last thing: I would only recommend "America's Musical Journey" for kids five and up.

Children under five have a hard time sitting in one spot for a concentrated amount of time, plus, the idea of music and the category of documentary for a lot of toddlers might be boring.

"America's Musical Journey" will be playing at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science until September 16.

The price of tickets ranges from six to seven dollars, and it is being shown in 3D.

For more information, visit <http://www.dmns.org/imax/current-films/americas-musical-journey-3d/>



By Talia Shanman, 9, a CK Reporter from Englewood

Remembering two men who enjoyed life



AP photo/Peter Cosgrove

who played alongside Babe Ruth, a Hall of Fame hero considered one of the best players in the history of baseball.

Second, neither man ever let bad luck ruin his attitude.

They both died of ALS (*amyotrophic lateral sclerosis*) a nerve disorder that, in fact, is often called "Lou Gehrig Disease" because the famous athlete was the first person many people had ever heard of who had it.

In 1939, Gehrig made a farewell speech at Yankee Stadium in which he said, "Fans, for the past two weeks you have been reading about the bad break I got. Yet today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of this earth."

He went on to thank the crowd for their support, and to speak of the pleasure he had had in 17 years of baseball.

In his autobiography, Hawking admitted that, when he was first diagnosed with ALS, his reaction was "I felt it was very unfair — why should this happen to me?"

But later, his attitude changed, despite his needing a wheelchair to get around, and a voice synthesizer to speak.

"I try to lead as normal a life as possible, and not think about my condition, or regret the things it prevents me from doing, which are not that many," he wrote, and, indeed, he not only was married, had children, wrote books and got to experience zero gravity in a special NASA jet, but appeared on "The Simpsons" and "Big Bang Theory."

One difference between Stephen Hawking's experience and Lou Gehrig's was that Gehrig, who was diagnosed when he was 36, died in 1941, just two years after he was diagnosed.

Hawking was diagnosed at 21, and was 76 when he died last week.

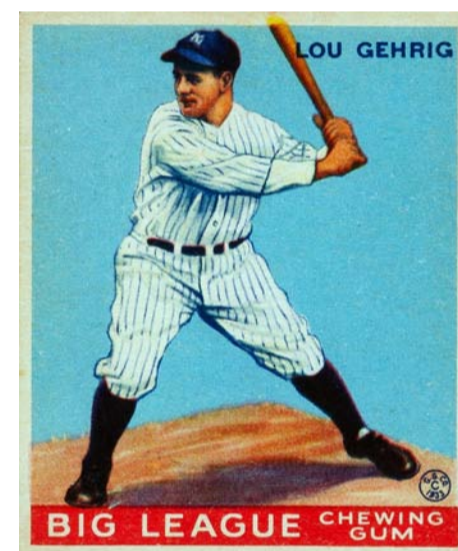
Unfortunately, Gehrig's experience is much more typical than Hawking's, which is why so many people give to help find a cure for ALS.

ALS destroys motor neurons, the nerves that connect the brain to parts of the body that can move voluntarily, like arms and legs, but also your vocal chords and lungs.

Most people with ALS die within 10 years of being diagnosed, but Hawking shows that it isn't always that way.

And, no matter what your health, life is always more pleasant when you and the people around you have a positive attitude.

Stephen Hawking's family released a statement about how much they valued him, while, after Lou Gehrig died, his wife said, "I would not have traded two minutes of my life with that man for 40 years with another."



What did Stephen Hawking and Lou Gehrig have in common?

First of all, they were among the very best ever at what they did.

Hawking, who died last week, was considered the greatest living scientist in the world and is ranked among the best ever.

And Gehrig was a New York Yankee

Sudoku

	6	2			
			2		3
		3	1		
	2	5	4		
4		1			5
				4	

Rules: Every row across, every column down and each of the six smaller boxes must contain numerals 1,2,3,4,5 and 6, one time and one time only.
The solution to this week's puzzle is on Page 4.



Brainteaser

On this date in 1852, Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was published. The best-seller made average people more sympathetic to the evils of slavery, so our answers this week will begin with "A" for "abolition."

1. The mountain range that stretches across Europe from France to Slovenia
2. The last runner in a relay race, or the teammate at the end of a tug-of-war rope.
3. The brother of Moses
4. Able to use both your left and right hands equally well
5. Tall, slender dog with long, thick hair, similar to a greyhound and named for the Asian country in which it was bred.
6. San Antonio, Texas, landmark, a mission used as a fort during the War with Mexico
7. The first person to walk on the Moon
8. The Roman goddess of the dawn, or a Colorado city that is in Arapahoe, Adams and Douglas counties
9. American painter and naturalist known for his paintings of birds; a conservation group specializing in birds is named for him.
10. A digging, ant-eating animal found in South Africa and very early in the dictionary

(answers on Page Four)

There are no magic toothpastes to protect your tooth enamel

Various brands of toothpaste make different claims and promises about protecting your teeth.

But a study from Europe says you shouldn't believe those claims, and, more important, that you shouldn't expect toothbrushing alone to help keep your teeth healthy.

The big issue is erosion: The danger of wearing down the enamel, especially at the gum line where the enamel is thinner than on the top of the tooth.

If that enamel gets worn down, the dentin underneath is exposed.

That's when you'll feel pain from ice cream or perhaps simply breathing through your mouth when

it's cold out.

And it's how serious damage to your teeth begins. Researchers used donated teeth and mechanical brushing with a variety of toothpastes, some that claimed to avoid erosion, some that didn't.

While some abrasive toothpaste scrubbed hard enough to cause damage, most toothpastes were equally helpful regardless of their claims.

But brushing is only part of the answer, researchers said. You need to visit your dentist regularly, and also avoid too many acidic foods and drinks.

So pick any toothpaste, but listen to your dentist, and think hard about the number of soft drinks you swish over your teeth.

photo/Jonas Bergsten



Beyond These Pages!

Hot Links to Cool Sites!

NASA's Space Place

<http://tinyurl.com/ckspace>

NIE Special Report

<http://tinyurl.com/ckniereport>

Headline Geography

<http://tinyurl.com/ckgeography>

Pulse of the Planet

<http://tinyurl.com/ckpulseplanet>

How to become a NextGen Reporter!

<http://tinyurl.com/colokidsreporter>



To read the sources for these stories

Archaeopteryx

Hawking and Gehrig

Toothpaste

go to <http://www.tinyurl.com/ckstorylinks>

Sudoku Solution

3	6	2	5	1	4
5	1	4	2	6	3
6	4	3	1	5	2
1	2	5	4	3	6
4	3	1	6	2	5
2	5	6	3	4	1

Brainteaser Solution



(see Page Three)

10 right - Wow!

7 right - Great!

5 right - Good

3 right - See you next time!

1. Alps 2. anchor 3. Aaron 4. ambidextrous 5. Afghan hound
6. the Alamo 7. (Neil) Armstrong 8. Aurora 9. (John J.) Audubon
10. aardvark

I Will Come Home

Chapter One: The Letter

Jimmy's letter was on the kitchen table again.

The lantern on the table was turned down low, making a golden glow in the dark room.

Betsy went to the cabinet by the sink, reached up and dropped the two quarters from her hand into the shaving mug that sat next to the clock. They fell with a soft clink onto the other coins.

She untied the string of her cloak, gathered it from her shoulders and went out the kitchen door to hang it on its peg in the lean-to.

It was early enough in the fall that she didn't need it during the day, but she was happy to have its warmth in the morning, walking to school, and at night, coming home from Mrs. Baxter's.

She went back inside for the lantern and walked across the dark yard into the small barn.

The cow turned in her stall to watch as Betsy came in and went to the ladder.

She hung the lantern on a nail, climbed into the hayloft, took the fork from its pegs on the wall and pitched down several generous forkfuls of hay. Then she clambered back down and used the rake to gather it up by the wall for Pa to find in the morning.

Pa could pitch hay or do any other work around the house, but his busted-up foot made it hard to climb ladders.

Betsy went back to the kitchen and turned the wick up on the lantern until the flame burned almost white.

If Ma had gone to bed first, Pa would have blown out the lantern before he went to bed. It didn't matter; there was a glow from the coals in the front room fireplace and it wasn't that dark anyway.

But it was nice to come home to the lantern's welcoming glow. It was as if Ma had stayed up to give her a hug.

Jimmy's letter was another thing. It made her sad to think of Ma sitting at the kitchen table, alone after Pa had gone to bed, looking at Jimmy's letter and reading it slowly, yet again, again.

Ma had not had much schooling as a girl, and it was hard for her to read. She didn't like to, if she could get Betsy or Pa to read for her.

But she knew Jimmy's letter by heart. It had come in late March, nearly seven months ago.

Betsy stood by the table and read it once again herself.

"Dear Ma and Pa and Betsy:

"By now I am sure you know I am not with the Army and I suppose you are worried but I am alive and I am all right. Some of us got cut off in the fight at Knoxville and was captured by Longstreet. I was at Libby but now am at a prison in Georgia that they just opened called Andersonville. I got shot but just in the calf of my leg and it went right through. I could not run away but it is pretty much healed up and I won't even limp anymore when I come home. I hope it is soon. Ma, I remembered how you cared for Pa's foot and so I kept it draining like you did and it is going to just be two round scars one on each side. I do not know that I can send more letters. I would have from Libby but was sick from the wound. I am fine now, but there is not a lot of mail here. If you send some paper and an envelope I might get it but don't worry because I might not. Also money, same thing. Charlie Stout is here tell his folks and he said John Kelley but I have not seen him. Tom Baxter was wounded bad and died. Tell Martha he got her letter and knew about the baby and was glad for it. I will come home. Pray for me. I will come home.

*"Your loving Jim
Andersonville, Georgia, March 10, 1864"*

Betsy read the last part again, the part about him coming home, as she always did.

Then she folded the letter carefully, carried it into the front room and tucked it back into the Bible where it belonged.

They had all heard that the boys were missing, and then Charlie Stout wrote his parents a letter from Libby Prison in January. But they knew nothing about the others until Jimmy's letter came.

First Baptist Church took up a collection for Martha Baxter, who had a tiny baby to care for, and Mr. Jones, the sexton, told Betsy that, if she would help Mrs. Baxter with the baby and the house, the church would give her 50 cents a week.

Pa asked Ma if it was charity, but Ma said they didn't need charity before and they didn't need it now but somebody needed to help Mrs. Baxter and why shouldn't it be Betsy? She was 11 years old and already did most of the chores that Jimmy did before he went to the war.

Betsy opened the warming shelf over the oven and took out the plate with her dinner: A piece of last Sunday's ham with fried apples-and-onions.

The first fall apples were ripe but tart, better for cooking, especially with onions and a touch of brown sugar.

Betsy got a fork from the drawer and sat down to eat.

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For a teaching guide, go to <http://tinyurl.com/ckserial>

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