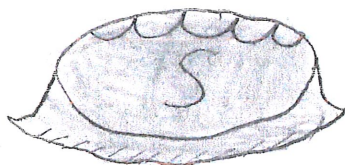


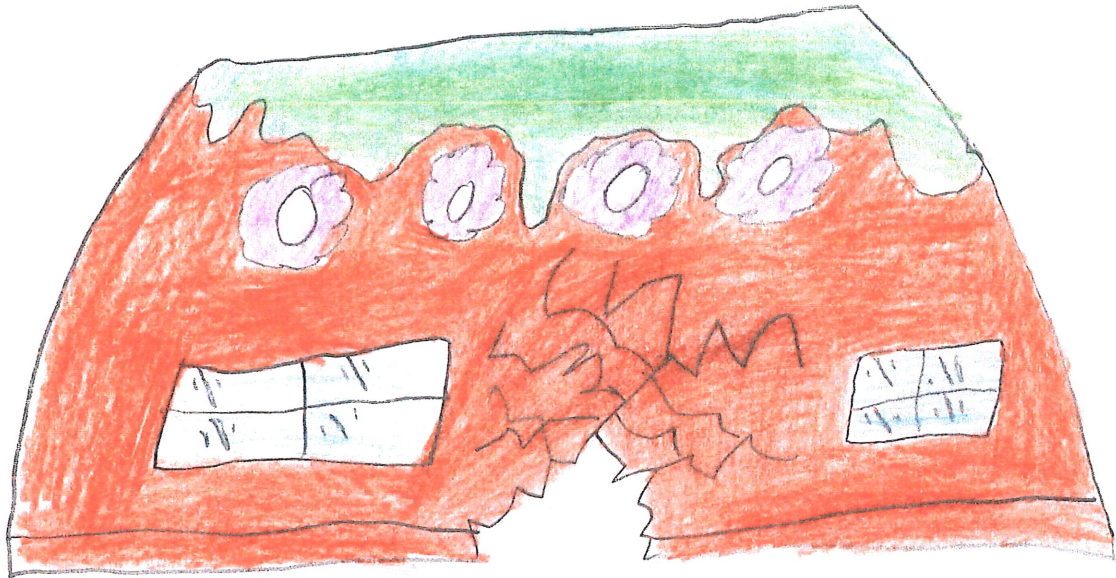
The Lucky Bottle Cap



By Jennicka Klepac



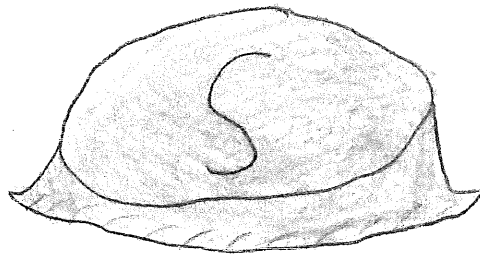
Stacey Mouselittle lives in a cracked flower pot at the edge of a meadow. She loves it there and she wears a pink apron, where she keeps her lucky bottle cap. She lives with her brothers, Max and Alex, who tease her a lot.



Stacey wants to race her brothers. She hopes the bottle cap will help her run fast. Max and Alex are faster than her and tease her about being too slow. She really hates to lose to them.



On the day of their race, Stacy was excited. They scurried to the middle of the meadow and lined up. Stacey runs as fast as she can but her brothers were faster. Stacy finishes the race disappointed. She reaches into her pocket and finds her bottle cap missing. *No wonder I didn't win, she thought. My luck ran out because I lost my lucky bottle cap.*



"You lost again," Max said.

"Yeah," said Alex.

Max and Alex chuckled.

"Who cares!" Stacey cried, frantically looking for her lucky bottle cap.

First, she looked around the compost bin but found only bits of straw and dirt. Next, she looked around the gazebo, nothing there. She checked the garden but still nothing. That left the tall grass. She walked over to it.

Her brothers chanted, "You're too scared to go in there."

Stacey said, "No I'm not," but she really was. There could be anything lurking there. Snakes could eat her or a wild cat could pounce on her.



Stacey walked up to the tall grass. *I can do it*, Stacey thought. Stacey took a deep breath to calm down. Is it worth going for? *Yes*, Stacey thought. She scurries into the tall grass! She grabs her cap and runs. Max and Alex were impressed!

Max said, "Race time! Bet you still can't beat me."

Stacey said, "Yes I can!"

They raced to the flower pot and this time Stacey's lucky bottle cap helps her win.