



NewsWeb Crawler

The Second Virtual KidLit Day Bumper Issue

Spiderweb Learning
by Missy Missy



AUTHOR VISITS HOW STUDENTS SEE THEM

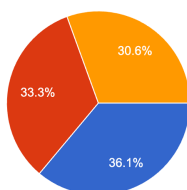
By Erza Yin, P.4, St. Joseph's Primary School, Sophie Shaw, P.6, Diocesan Girls' School

Spiderweb Learning has been organising author visits and author-led courses since 2022. It started with a simple wish to enable students to feel more connected to the books they read. With the various restrictions on entry into different venues in 2022-23 came the idea and the rather imperative need to broaden the mental and intellectual horizon of children while their physical world was fast contracting. A year on from the First Virtual KidLit Day, it is time to review how children feel about author visits.

In January, a survey was conducted among students of Spiderweb Learning to research on students' opinions on author visits. A total of 36 students responded to the survey.

When asked if they had attended an author visit at a physical venue, a staggering 61% said that they had not. Interestingly, only 36% of the respondents prefer Zoom visits. Another 33% of them prefer author visits at a physical venue. The rest have no preference between the two.

Which of the following do you prefer?
36 responses



- Author visits on Zoom
- Author visits at a physical location such as schools, bookshops, libraries
- No preference

Respondents were then asked to rank what they see as the most important element of author visits. Elements featured in the survey include finding out about their books, hearing the author read part of the story, Q & A sessions with the author, sharing of their writing experience, teaching of writing and illustration skills, the chance to see and hear from the author directly. *The chance to see and hear from the author* is ranked by the most number of students as the most important while *Q & A sessions with the author* gets the most votes as the least important.



To be continued on p. 2...

Author Visit Report

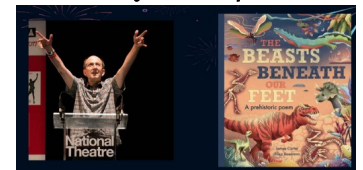


Thiago de Moraes... p.3

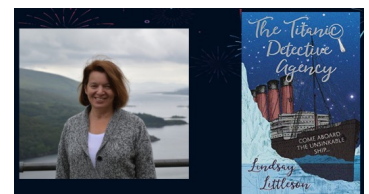
Virtual KidLit Day



Andy Seed... p.4



James Carter... p.5



Lindsay Littleson ... p.6



Lauren James ... p.7



AUTHOR VISITS

HOW STUDENTS SEE THEM

According to the survey, more than half of the students have bought book(s) because of author visits. That is an encouraging sign that author visits promote a love of reading.

To get an in-depth look at the survey results, the editorial team met up in January to discuss the survey results. Most members of

the editorial team prefer Zoom visits, citing the better chance to interact with the author afforded by the smaller audience size as the main reason. To the editorial team, *Q & A sessions* and *the chance to hear about different authors' writing experience* are the most important.

Interestingly, about half the team

have bought books due to author visits. This is in line with the survey results.

Zoom author visits have always been a big hit among students of Spiderweb Learning. They foster a love of reading and a connection with the books they are reading in the course. Simply put: Children love them!

I enjoy the Q & A session and the sharing of their writing experience the most. There is so much to be learnt from their writing experience.

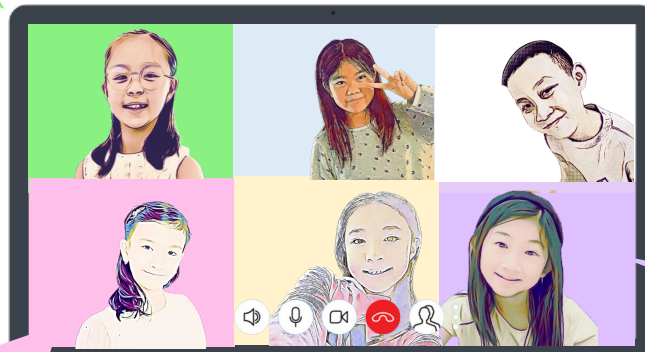
*Jamie Chan, P4,
St. Paul's Convent School*

To me, it's the chance to talk to the authors that matters the most.

*Sia Kwok, Y8,
Kiangsu-Chekkiang College,
International Section*

I want to be an author one day. It is very enlightening to hear about their experience as authors.

*Erza Chiu, P4,
St. Joseph's Primary School*



I prefer Zoom author visits as I get to interact with the author more. I don't think it is important for the visits to be tied up with our courses. Author visits are enjoyable on their own rights.

*Sophie Shaw, P6,
Diocesan Girls' Junior School*

The Q & A sessions are important. We can get to ask them questions directly.

*Karina Tang, P.4
St. Paul's Co-educational
College Primary School*

I enjoy the writing workshops the most. I learned how to use colours in my setting description at our workshop with Liz Flanagan.

*Lulette Ng, P4,
St. Paul's Convent School*

Author visits are invaluable to children. Whether it is a physical or a virtual classroom, sometimes what you learn in your books seems irrelevant to the life that you lead, but being able to interact with authors enable children to experience first hand how learning a language can make their world that much bigger.

So, yes, we will continue to host author visits for our students.

Joanna Lai, Founder, Spiderweb Learning



Marvellous Myths

Meeting Thiago de Moraes Online

By Karina Tang, P4, St. Paul Co-ed Primary School

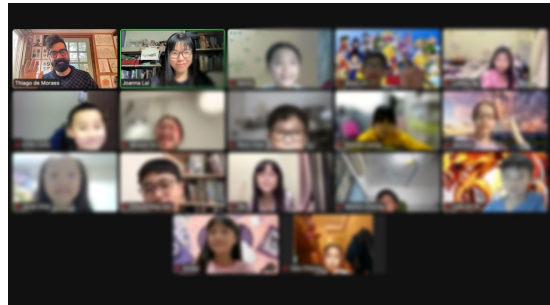


This semester, L3 students of Spiderweb Learning are studying Greek Mythology. And who better to introduce mythology to students than the best-selling author and illustrator of the *Myth Atlas* – Thiago de Moraes! L3 students got the chance to meet Thiago online on 9th January.

Thiago de Moraes is the author and illustrator behind such bestsellers as *Myth Atlas* and *Old Gods, New Tricks*. He was twice nominated for the Kate Greenaway Medal. He certainly knows a lot about myths.

Before becoming an author and illustrator, Thiago was in the advertising industry. But he later became an illustrator and writer of children's books due to his interest in mythology. "The thing that really excites me, the thing that kinda got me started in writing books is mythology," he said.

Interestingly, the inspiration behind the *Myth Atlas* is a child – Thiago's son. One day his son asked him about how the world was perceived by different people. Thiago drew the world on a napkin with people at the centre and the gods living above them. That drawing inspired the creation of the *Myth Atlas*.

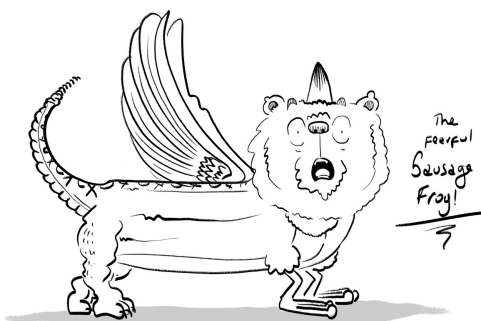
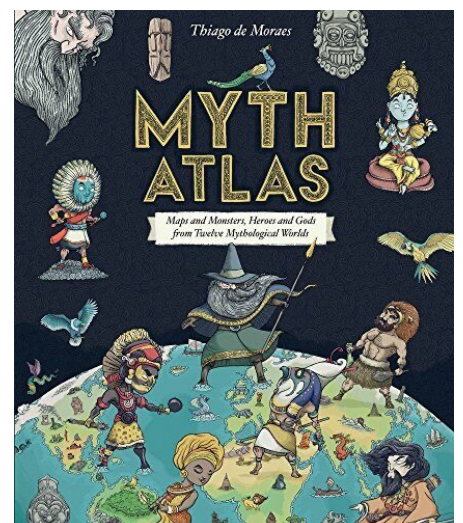


At the Zoom meeting, Thiago shared a couple of myths with the students – one disgusting and one scary. His sense of humour shone through even when he was telling the students a supposedly scary story of a gigantic baby being thrown into the sea. Students ended up laughing at the disclaimers he said rather than feeling scared. That is the magic of a great storyteller.

He also created two mythical creatures together with the students. Students got the chance to pick an animal for each body part of the creature and Thiago drew it accordingly.

Children even got the chance to name the mythical creatures together with Thiago. So, let's meet the Mighty Rockafly and the Fearful Sausage Frog.

It was a truly enjoyable and inspiring experience for the students. One student described it as "the best entertainment ever". The meeting has also inspired the students to find out more about myths from different parts of the world.



Second Virtual KidLit Day (8th February, 2024)

Walk Like An Egyptian

Zoom Session with Andy Seed

By Jamie Chan, P.4, St. Paul's Convent School



Our Second Virtual KidLit Day kicked off with the online session presented by Andy Seed, who is a well-known author of non-fiction books from the UK. He has written various non-fiction books about the nature and historical topics. Our session is based on his bestselling book, *The Curse of the Tomb Robbers*.

Andy started the session by telling us how the book, *The Curse of the Tomb Robbers*, came about. "One day when I was visiting the British Museum, I was asked by the Museum to write a book on Ancient Egypt," Andy said.

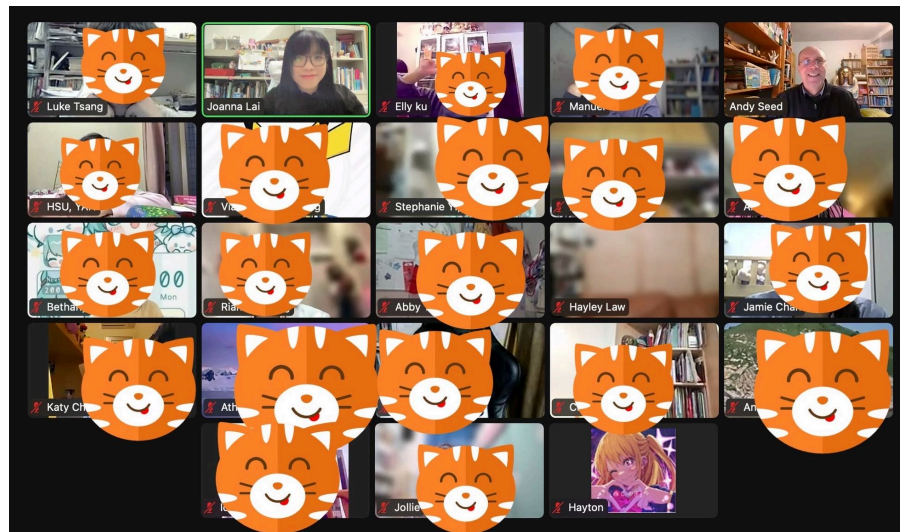
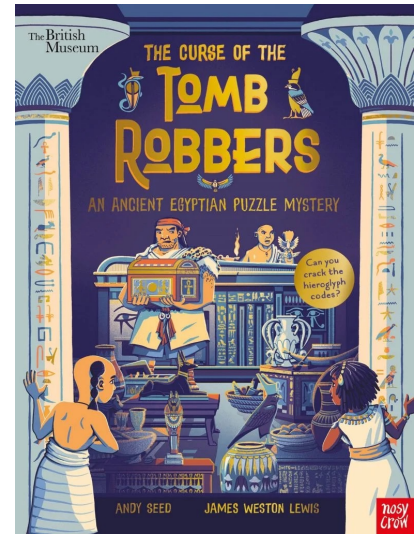
He then went on to explain to us that ancient Egyptians believed in

the afterlife, and that was why they preserved the bodies of the dead in the form of mummies and had various possessions buried inside the tomb. With gold and jewelry often buried in the tomb, tomb robbery was rather common. And this forms the backbone of the story in *The Curse of the Tomb Robbers*.

During the session, Andy played a few decoding games with the students featuring hieroglyphs. He even showed the students giant replica of the Tutankhamun coffin made by himself.

It was a fun session packed with information on both ancient Egyptian history and Andy's experience as a writer.

Actually, some students have already become interested in Ancient Egyptian history. The session was THAT inspiring!



Poetry and Prehistoric Animals



Zoom Session with James Carter

By Jamie Chan, P.4, St. Paul's Convent School

James is an author, a poet and an ambassador for the National Poetry Day in the UK. He has published 50 books already and his 51st book is set to be published later this year.

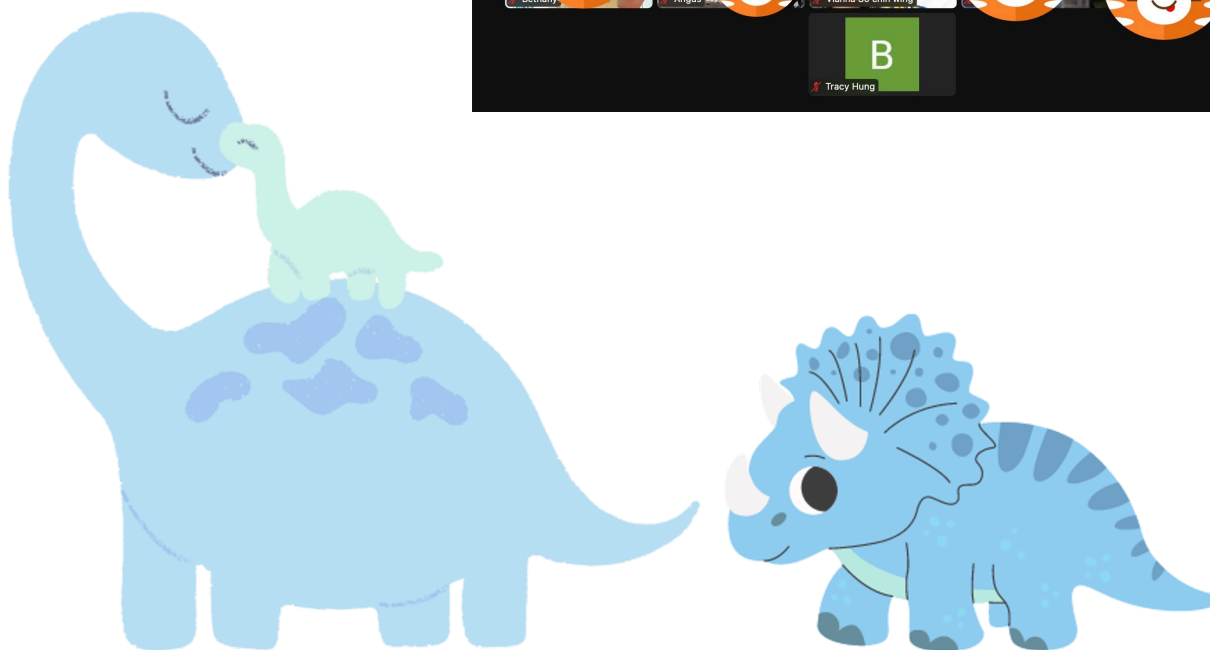
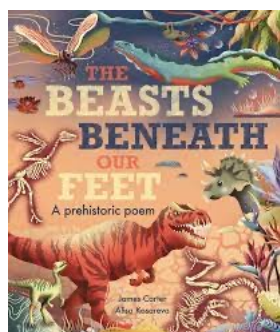
James' session is a combination of musical performance and poetry. Each section of the author visit started with a short tune on his ukulele. Funny enough, all his musical instruments have a name!

During the session, James got the students to perform some of his poems together with him. It was great fun.

He also read part of *The Beasts Beneath Our Feet*. He had a way of getting the children engaged in his reading, and that made the session so much more entertaining.

Students also got the chance to create a kenning together with James!

The session was highly interactive, with students encouraged to unmute themselves and take part in James' performance. His unique blend of music and poetry also made the session so much more fun and entertaining.



Second Virtual KidLit Day (8th February, 2024)

Developing Relatable Characters

Writing Workshop with Lindsay Littleson

By Lulette Ng, P.4, St. Paul's Convent School



Lindsay Littleson is a famous children's book writer based in Scotland. Her novels are often based on myths or real historical events. Her writing workshop was based on her novel, *The Titanic Detective Agency*.

After a brief introduction, Lindsay shared some slides with the students, showing them the research that she did before she started writing *The Titanic Detective Agency*. As the publication house had requested a Scottish twist to the story, the first thing that she had to do was to look for passengers on board the Titanic that were children from Scotland. She was excited when she found her two main characters, Bertha and Johan.

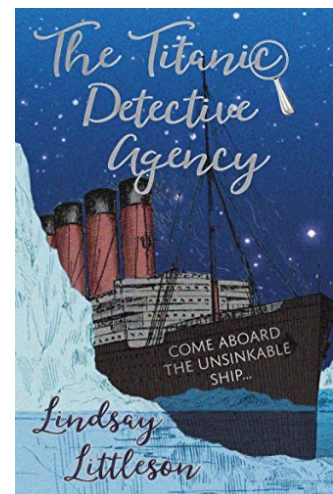
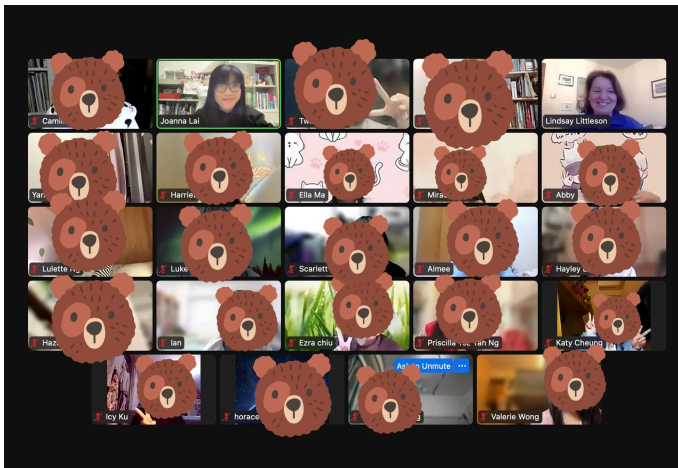
She added, "Sometimes when the character is fictional, I need to draw them out to decide on their looks and personalities."

Lindsay then showed a slide with some background information on two other children who also were on board of the Titanic. Students were then asked to draw one of them and add some keywords around the picture to describe the character. The students' next task was to write

a brief character introduction based on one of these two passengers.

Lindsay read out each and every piece written by the students and gave them valuable comments before the session ended.

It was a great session for students to learn how to create three-dimensional and relatable characters in their story.



Science in Writing

Zoom Session with Lauren James

By Sia Kwok, Y8, Kiangsu-Chekiang College, International Section



Lauren James is an internationally acclaimed YA novelist from the UK. Her novels feature a wide range of topics such as climate change, time travel and the afterlife. She has also taught Creative Writing for Coventry University. Her writing is not limited to novels as she is also the story consultant of the hit Netflix series, *Heartstopper*.

Lauren's background is rather interesting for a YA novelist as she has a Masters degree in Chemistry and Physics. She has always been an avid reader. By the age of 13, she had already finished reading everything in the local library. That drove her into writing her first book. She wanted to write a book herself so that she would have something to read.



A scientist at heart, she often goes into great lengths to research on the scientific foundation of her story. During the session, she shared a spreadsheet she did in order to calculate the probable meet-up times of her time-travelling protagonists. That is exactly how meticulously she always researches for her books. With such impressive dedication to her craft, it is no surprise that she got her first book published at the young age of 22.

She also talked about her work on the Netflix series, *Heartstopper*, describing it as a fast paced job that requires a lot of teamwork.

This session provides valuable insights into the hard work required in the writing process. Being an author is not an easy job at all.





Lost & Trapped in Tokyo

By Lulette Ng, P.4, St. Paul's Convent School (with a little bit of help from MissyMissy)

Back in December, 3 pieces of AI-generated artwork were posted on Padlet. Students were invited to create a rough storyline based on any of the 3 illustrations. A winner was chosen to write out the proposed story / a scene of the proposed story within 600 words. Lulette Ng, P.4, St. Paul's Convent School won with her story about shapeshifters, based on artwork No. 3. And below is the story written by MissyMissy, based on the initial plot proposed by Lulette.

Lulette Ng 2mo

Name: Lulette Ng

Grade: Primary 4

School: SPCS

Shapeshifters, are most fond of their cat form with their glowing yellow eyes and fierce claws. They are stronger than anything. They live in Japan, in Spring, always sitting near the cherry blossom trees where neon signs glow behind them.

Shapeshifters love their cat form and use it to easily fight and collect grub, to then feed their Shapeshifter Clan.

They were trapped in a portal where they are still finding their rightful home.

Using AI they have gotten shapeshifting powers that connects to one computer.

So if the computer dies, they all die.



reminding people of the hustle and bustle that once lit up these maze-like alleyways. With the declaration of a state of emergency in Tokyo, these back alleys now were almost completely empty.

Three triplets, Jessie, Josephine and Joyce, all aged 15, were wondering in the alleyways. They were not supposed to though. They were supposed to stay at home. But being stuck at home was never something 15-year-old teenagers would like to do. So, they had sneaked out of their home without their parents knowing.

"Click! Zap!"

The alleys suddenly turned pitch black. All the neon lights that were flashing just seconds ago were now off.

"Must be 7 already," Jessie muttered. She got her smartphone out of her pocket. "Yep, 7 it is."

With all the neon lights gone, it was impossible for them to find their way around these back alleys. It was truly like a maze.

Jessie turned on Google Map on her smartphone, hoping to find a way to get home. "I think we should head right," Jessie took one look at her phone and started pointing to the right. "And then... What? Not now..." Jessie muttered as she started moving around, pointing her phone at different directions.

"Don't tell me that the signal is gone..." Josephine sighed.

Joyce and Josephine all got their phones out, hoping for better luck with the reception.

"Vroom! Zap!"

A light flashed further down the alley. They all turned towards the light. A huge neon billboard on top of a hotel had just lit up, displaying a street map with the arrow mark saying, "You're here!"

The girls quickly took a picture of

13th May, 2022, Minato-Ku,
Yokohama

"Not him too..." Aiden's mum said, trying to keep calm. But she wasn't calm; she was enraged. Tears were streaming down her cheeks uncontrollably.

13th November, 2020, Kabuki-
Cho, Tokyo

It was the time of the pandemic, but the neon lights in Kabuki-Cho still glowed and flashed like multi-coloured lightning,

Lost & Trapped in Tokyo

By MissyMissy & Lulette Ng, P.4, St. Paul's Convent School



the map. Once they had clicked on the button to take a photo, the neon billboard went dark again.

“We must have got lucky!” Josephine said with a smile as she looked at the screen of her phone.

“Guess we have,” the other two girls echoed and looked at the screens of their phones with a smile.

Their smiles all suddenly turned into a look of despair and disbelief, followed only a second later by screens of pain and then a look of fear.

The screen of their phones went black all in a sudden. The whole alley was pitch black again. The girls screamed as they felt a piercing pain on their legs. Their phones then lit up again with the selfie-camera turned on.

They saw their own reflection on their screens.

They were no longer average teenage boys. Their chestnut pupils were now amber in colour; their teeth grew and grew and got pointy; fur started to sprout out around their faces; their ears shrank and disappeared as a pair of cat's ears popped up on the top of their heads.

They were now shapeshifters.

13th November, 2020, Aoyama-ku, Tokyo

“Come on, Jessie, you know we have to do it. It's not like we have a choice!” Josephine said sternly to her sister.

The thought of sinking her teeth into someone's bone was too daunting a task for Jessie. But the sisters knew that this was the only way for them to survive as shapeshifters. They had to bite into someone's bone every Black Friday night and turned that person to a shapeshifter just like them. That was their only way to survival; average food for humans no longer sufficed.

13th August, 2021, Minato-ku, Yokohama & Kabuki-Cho, Tokyo

Aiden was once a happy 17 years old high school student, living a happy life. That all changed on 13th November the year before when his dad went missing. Most people said that he was kidnapped, but he believed his dad was safe. After all, he needed that belief, that faint hope to keep him going. Aiden and his dad were close and losing him was just devastating.

He had to get his summer holiday project done before the end of August and his computer had broken down last night. With a tight budget, he headed down to a secondhand computer store in



Spiderweb Learning
nightcafe.art/u/SpiderwebLearning

NightCafe



Lost & Trapped in Tokyo

By MissyMissy & Lulette Ng, P.4, St. Paul's Convent School

the back alley of Kabuki-Cho. The store looked so rundown that it looked almost like it was from another era.

The shopkeeper was a beautiful girl, almost the same age as him. Aiden looked at the different secondhand computers on the shelves but all of them were too expensive for him. But then he spotted one on the bottom shelf.

"Excuse me, this one works fine, right?" he asked. The price was so low that he felt that he had to ask.

"Of course, it does." Aiden swore that he saw a glint in the girl's eyes when she saw him walking towards that computer. He guessed that business had not been exactly good for this tiny shop.

He bought the computer without thinking anymore about that glint in the girl's eyes.

Once home, he switched it on. A map popped up on the screen. It showed a small arrow marked

with "You're here!" and then at the other corner, a cherry blossom tree with a lot of cats and girls with cat's ears sitting beneath it popped up. The arrow moved across the screen to the cherry blossom tree. Now marked,

"Your dad is here!"

Lulette has been my student since P.2 and her writing flair has been flourishing since the end of P.2.

I would never have imagined the girl in the picture as a shapeshifter myself. The artwork actually was due to a glitch on the AI art platform which merged the black-haired girl with a cat.

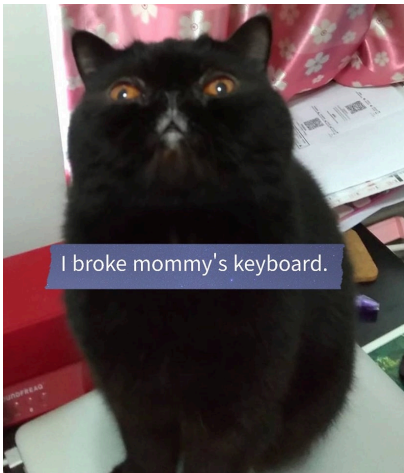
Her idea of the girl being a shapeshifter has a lot of potential. It could well be developed into a series with a lot of dramatic plot twists and intense emotions. It is an idea for a novel of epic proportions requiring an equally epic amount of research and should definitely go way beyond the 600 word limit I gave her. I have amended part of her writing to make it flow more logically but the idea is hers.

I am confident that one day she will mature into a young author with the time and the tenacity to research on the topic to make the story so credible that it will send a shiver down her readers' spines.

Joanna Lai, Founder, Spiderweb Learning



A Message from the Headmaster



All I can say is that it was not intentional. I just love supervising mommy's teaching and she always uses her keyboard in class. A lethal combination, I would say. Definitely not my fault.

Meet The Editorial Team

Editorial Board

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Editorial Committee:

Erza Chiu (P4, St. Joseph's Primary School)

Jamie Chan (P4, St. Paul's Convent School)

Karina Tang (P4, St. Paul's Co-educational College Primary School)

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