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Come in...and be captivated...

[Writers' Contest!](#)

By Denise Bouchard

Our local newspaper ran an article a few years ago about college entrance exams. Parents and children alike were voicing complaints about the new format. The new format consisted largely of essays which families found to be very difficult.

They were comprised of a few very disparate words which had to be put into a short but succinct, coherent and interesting story.

We thought it would be a fun challenge to run a contest this month with our own set of words. We'll choose 1st prize, 2nd prize, and 3rd prize winners whose stories using the assigned words we list, will appear here. Also, the 1st prize winner gets to design the next contest!!!

Here are our set of words/terms that you must

use in a short fiction story (word limit, 1,000 words) Good Luck!!!

- *Three wisemen
- *Leather pants
- *Gettysburg Address
- *Petit Fours
- *Orthodontist
- *Madagascar Vanilla Beans
- *Easter
- *Dragon

All words/terms must be in the story! Send your story to contests@thewriteplaceatthewritetime.org

To give an example of how this exercise works, I'll share with you my own crack at using all of the given words and opening sentence featured in the newspaper article. The words/terms were as follows: new pair of socks, a domestic animal, spork, historical landmark, and Complete Works of William Shakespeare. I have no idea if my humble story would have gained me entrance to an Ivy League, but I found it to be a fun exercise all the same and hope you'll enjoy our version too!- D.B.

Many years later, he remembered his first experience with ice. He had grown up in Florida, well, at least for the first ten years of his life. His parents had just divorced and his mom moved back to New England

with him and his younger brother.

He hated leaving his friends and it was hard being on their own. He was the man of the house now and he had to help out. It wasn't as though his father had ever made life easy for them, it was simply that now he had even more responsibilities.

His first task of the day on that long ago Sunday morning was to scrape the snow and ice off of the car. His mother handed him a broom. It was all she had lying around. He swished off the magical white powder. He liked the snow and the possibilities it held. He'd build a fort later with a snowman sentry. He did not, however, like how cold he was getting nor how hard it was to scrape the ice off the windshield with this poor excuse of an ice scraper.

Back into the house he went; he knew they hadn't the time or money to buy everything they needed yet, so he would have to improvise. He'd use his brand new pair of red socks for mittens and he'd devise his own ice scraper.

After a few minutes of looking through the packed boxes in the kitchen, out he came armed with what he deemed a "spork". It was a large fork and a spoon ladle tied in the middle with thick rubber bands. 'Yes,' he thought, 'this will do nicely.' He was quite proud of his innovation.

Sometime later, his mom called him in for hot chocolate and introduced him to his new neighbors; a prissy boy and his braggart of a mother who lived on the third floor. This woman, he mused, could have

the time soon. The woman, the mother, could have won an award for bragging. "My son, Daniel, plays the piano like Mozart- a real prodigy if I ever heard one... My son can recite the complete works of William Shakespeare..."

All he could think of was 'how do I get rid of this geek?', whom his own mother was now smiling upon as though she was so happy that he graced her kitchen with his presence while her own beast of a burden son, her little jackass, stood there with bright red socks on his hands, holding up a strange weapon which he called a spork of all things.

"Lord have mercy!" his mother cried out. "That's my sterling silver ladle and fork..." She caught herself in front of their guests and quickly added, "...I've been looking for those...", but not before giving an icy look toward her son that said she'd deal with him in private.

Ah yes, she looked between him and the neighbor's son that afternoon like he must be the lowliest creature on Boston's South side.

He hatched an idea then; perhaps Daniel would like to build a snow fort with him. After all, he and his little brother needed an adversary if they were to build a fort. He could see it then...two forts and his would be stocked with ice balls. He imagined the many ways he could use this new cold glassy substance on his new "friend."

Suddenly, his mother's sharp voice snapped him out of his reverie, announcing that he best get dressed for

church; then they and their new friends would be given a tour, including Paul Revere's actual house. 'Big deal', he thought.

He tried to wriggle out of it. "You've seen it already, haven't you, Mom?"

Again the look.

Daniel piped up and asked if he'd like to see where the Red Sox played at "The Green Monster".

Immediately, he found himself answering, "Are you kidding?"

Daniel then gave him a high five and hand to sock they smacked high in the air.

It was that winter that he realized that maybe New England wasn't so bad.

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