

Helping your children choose books they will love



Lovereading4kids.co.uk is a book website created for parents and children to make choosing books easy and fun

Opening extract from
A Year in the Life of a Total and Complete Genius

Written by
Stacey Matson

Published by
Andersen Press Ltd

All Text is Copyright © of the Author and/or Illustrator

Please print off and read at your leisure.



Scholastic Canada Ltd.

604 King Street West, Toronto, Ontario M5V 1E1, Canada

Scholastic Inc.

557 Broadway, New York, NY 10012, USA

Scholastic Australia Pty Limited

PO Box 579, Gosford, NSW 2250, Australia

Scholastic New Zealand Limited

Private Bag 94407, Botany, Manukau 2163, New Zealand

Scholastic Children's Books

Euston House, 24 Eversholt Street, London NW1 1DB, UK

www.scholastic.ca

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Matson, Stacey, author

A year in the life of a total and complete genius / Stacey Matson.

Issued in print and electronic formats.

ISBN 978-1-4431-3317-3 (bound).--ISBN 978-1-4431-2867-4 (pbk.).--

ISBN 978-1-4431-2868-1 (html)

I. Title.

PS8626.A839Y42 2014 jC813'.6 C2014-901831-2
C2014-901832-0

Text copyright © 2014 by Stacey Matson.

Illustrations by Simon Kwan © 2014 by Scholastic Canada Ltd.

Comic panel page 202 copyright © 2014 by Stacey Matson.

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced or stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording, or otherwise, without written permission of the publisher, Scholastic Canada Ltd., 604 King Street West, Toronto, Ontario M5V 1E1, Canada. In the case of photocopying or other reprographic copying, a licence must be obtained from Access Copyright (Canadian Copyright Licensing Agency), 1 Yonge Street, Suite 800, Toronto, Ontario M5E 1E5 (1-800-893-5777).

6 5 4 3 2 1 Printed in Canada 139 14 15 16 17 18 19

OCTOBER

The Next Great Canadian Novel
(Title to be announced)

By Arthur Bean

~~Once upon a time there was~~

~~There was once a~~

~~A long time ago~~

~~Yesterday~~

~~Today~~

~~America is awesome! This is because~~

~~The USA is nothing like Canada~~

~~A boy and his unicorn sat on the grass and
the unicorn could talk and said~~

~~Murder! There's been a very violent murder!~~

Dear Ms Whitehead,

As you know, I haven't been in class yet, but my next door neighbour Nicole suggested that I write you a letter since I will be starting soon. I don't really know what to write to you. Maybe I will tell you a little about myself so that you feel like I started school at the same time as everyone else.

My name is Arthur Aaron Bean, but I normally just go by Arthur. I spent the summer at my grandparents' house in Balzac. It was a long summer. I actually live in one of the apartment buildings pretty close to the school. I like to knit and watch movies, sometimes at the same time. I'm a very good multi-tasker. I like creative writing, so I hope that we will do that and that I didn't miss it. I was probably the best writer in my elementary school, and I plan on getting rich as a novelist when I'm a grown-up. I don't have any siblings, but my cousin Luke is kind of like my twin brother.

My most profound work so far is the heartwarming story called "Sockland." In this short story, a little boy climbs into the dryer during a game of hide-and-seek with his older brothers. He is accidentally shrunk and crawls through the dryer vent into Sockland. Sockland is a land where missing socks go to live. He enjoys it for a

while, but then finds that single socks are very boring, and needs to find a way to get home. He then gets the socks to help him by promising to send their partners through the tunnel, and he crawls back up into the dryer to rejoin humanland. Mrs. Lewis said it was highly original and that I showed real promise of becoming the next J.K. Rowling.

The secretary told me that I'm in a class with some of the people from my elementary school so that I would feel more comfortable. Actually, she didn't say people, she said some of my friends. This seems weird, because I wasn't really friends with a lot of the people in my elementary school. Actually, most of my friends went to the Catholic school next door to our school, and so I saw them all the time. I did have a couple of friends like Oliver, but mostly I wasn't friends with people in my elementary school class. Besides, who would want to be friends with guys like Robbie Zack? I'm not friends with people who spell thoughts as thots. Good luck with that one. He's what my mother called "a handful of trouble with a capital T."

Yours truly,
Arthur Bean

Dear Arthur,

Thank you for your letter, and welcome to Terry Fox Junior High! I'm so pleased to welcome you to both my homeroom and my English class! I was also sorry to hear about the sad circumstances that delayed your start of grade seven. Please know that I am available to discuss anything with you anytime you may need.

I'm so pleased that you will be in my class. I hope we can explore and create some wonderful and imaginative spaces together this year. Since you've painted such a good picture of yourself, here are a few things I'll share with you so that we can get to know each other!

In my spare time (when I'm not marking homework) I like to canoe, cross-country ski and take my dog Bruno for walks. My favourite book is *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck, and my favourite play is *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Shakespeare. I hope that it will soon be your favourite play also, since we'll be studying it this winter!

I'm glad that creative writing excites you, and it sounds like you are ready to challenge yourself in my class. I look forward to reading some of your work and I hope to learn more about your hobbies as the year progresses.

One more note: Please be respectful of your classmates. Everyone has different strengths, and bad spelling doesn't mean that someone is not creative. Agatha Christie was a terrible speller and look how famous her books are!

Ms Whitehead

Dear Ms Whitehead,

Who is Agatha Christie?

Yours truly,
Arthur Bean



ATTENTION: ALL FUTURE AUTHORS!

Terry Fox Junior High is pleased to be participating in a city-wide Junior Authors Short Story Contest.

Winners of the contest will be published in a national Junior Authors issue of *Writers Write Now (WWN)* magazine. You can also win \$200!

Deadline for Stories: April 1st

Watch this board for more details!



Assignment: Personal Letters

Write a letter to your future self. The time is up to you: you can write to yourself at the end of this school year, when you are graduating high school, when you get married or maybe when you are retiring! Imagine what your life will be like, and ask yourself some questions. Be sure to tell yourself about your life now too! Please ensure that you use the proper letter structure we covered in class.

Due: October 8



October 8

Arthur Bean
Apt. 16, 155 Tormy Street
Calgary, AB

A.A. Bean
1 Park Avenue
Penthouse
New York, NY

Dear Future Arthur,

Hello. How are you? I am fine, thank you for asking. I was surprised to find out that you live in New York, although a penthouse on Park Avenue sounds nice. It's one of the most expensive places in Monopoly, so you must be very famous and very rich. Does your cousin Luke still live next door? It's so nice that you guys get to share a pool and see each other every day. How is your wife, Kennedy? It seems so funny to me to think that it was only this year that you met this blond goddess. Remember how you saw her every day in class and never said anything to her, but then you asked her to dance at the Halloween Dance? It was so nice the way she fainted in your arms and you were so manly, picking her up and carrying her out of the dance. From then on, she called you her prince. Does she still call you Prince Arthur? I can't wait until this actually happens, since it's only October here. I bet the Halloween Dance was the same night Robbie Zack got rabies and died. May he rest in peace. How is your most recent famous novel coming along? I only just started part one of our autobiography, and I am still working on the greatest novel ever. Plus, now I'm starting a story to win the story competition, but of course you know that because you won it! I'm so glad you were able to finish it *and* your novel in one year,

and then write forty-five more books. Which book did you sell to become a movie first? I hope it was a good one. In case you were wondering about me, I guess things are OK. Pickles has run away again. She was a terrible cat anyway, and her hair was falling out. I think she is sad. Or maybe she ran off with the tabby two doors down to start a new cat family. Whatever. I have almost finished knitting my first sweater. Nicole from next door says that my stitches are very even. I hope it's finished by the time it's cold outside, which might be tomorrow. HAHAHA. My next project will be a sweater for Pickles if she ever comes back. Please tell Kennedy that I love her, and write back soon. HAHAHA.

Sincerely,
Arthur Bean



Arthur,

Your letter flows well from one topic to another, and you've done a nice job of creating a new world for your famous self! Remember to use different paragraphs for different ideas; this will help to separate and organize your letter. Your use of humour is great; however, please (again) refrain from killing off your classmates. Respect goes a long way.

Ms Whitehead



Ongoing Reading Journal

As we move through the year, we will be reading and discussing books in class and in small groups. I would like you to keep track of your thoughts about these books and other books you read this year in an ongoing reading journal. You may want to write about how the book made you feel, what you like or do not like about the book, or what the book means to you. Feel free to write about any books you read in your journal; this is *your* space! I will be marking these with a participation mark, meaning that you will not be judged on your writing style or your feelings about the books, but on how you respond to the work overall. Hopefully writing down your thoughts about what you read will elevate the in-class conversations.

October 12th

Dear Reading Journal,

Do you mind if I call you RJ? I've always wanted to have a friend who only goes by his initials. There was a kid named PJ in my elementary school, but he wasn't very nice to me. He used to hang out with Robbie Zack, and together they would pick on kids who were smaller than them. It's not my fault that I'm short. PJ used to laugh when Robbie Zack would put mouldy sandwiches in my gym bag every morning after the bell rang. Robbie would tell people that I smelled like farts because my last name was Bean. But I smelled like farts because he put mouldy food in my backpack. Like I try and tell my dad, it ain't easy being Bean.

So I think maybe Robbie is like the jerk kids in *Word Nerd*. Or maybe like the whole school

in *The Chocolate War*. Although Robbie never beat me up, so I guess it's not as bad as in those books.

Speaking of books, I thought *Word Nerd* was good, but *The Chocolate War* was boring, and I didn't get the ending. Did the guy die? I can't tell. Anyway, RJ, I've been reading a lot of books because I am a writer too. In fact, there's a writing competition at school and I'm going to win it. Good night, RJ.

Yours truly,
Arthur Bean



Assignment: Elegies and Odes

Write an elegy or an ode like the ones we studied in class. Your poem must be at least three stanzas long. Perhaps you would like to write a funny elegy (maybe about the death of your favourite pair of shoes) or an inspirational ode. Have fun with it!

A quick review:

An ode is a poem that compliments someone or something that inspires the poet.

An elegy is a mournful or sad poem, usually written as a funeral song or a lament for the dead.

Due: October 14



**Elegy for Bobby Mack, a totally
made-up bully who is not based on
any person in my real life**

By Arthur Bean

Your father's football jacket
That never fit you anyway
Lies empty on your floor
Since I doubt you put your clothes in the closet

What an embarrassing thing
To die like Elvis did
But not to be famous
So it's not even cool

Your dreams of working
The night shift at McDonalds
Were flushed down the toilet
That night

I'm sure Tyler and Richie
Will miss you on the bus
But I will not, since I could smell you
And I sat three seats ahead of you

Never again will I be forced to listen
To your dumb, stupid insults
About my knitting and my looks
Both of which are cool, by the way

Your voice, once louder and
More obnoxious than 1000 screaming chimps
Will yell stupidities no more
The world breathes a sigh of relief.

Arthur, please see me after class.

Ms Whitehead

An Ode to Knitting

By Arthur Bean

Oh the sound of the needles
Clicking and clacking away
They sound like a pair of beetles
Mating on a pile of hay

My sweater is practically finished
There's only one arm left to do
But I've run out of wool that will match
Don't think that I feel diminished
I'll just knit in a few rows of blue
And hope that my new fad will catch

Most people say that it's geeky
That a boy who makes sweaters should quit
But that's when I say something cheeky:
I tell them, "It takes balls to knit!"

Arthur, this is much better use of your talents! A good use of humour and rhyming; a proper ode to your unique hobby!

Ms Whitehead



October 15th

Dear RJ,

Today I was reading a book in class, but I don't really remember anything I read. This is for two reasons. One reason is because the book was dumb and seemed to involve cowboys and horses, which seems very outdated since no one is really a cowboy anymore. The second reason has to do with class. Ms Whitehead decided to pair us up for the creative writing contest. She said that it would be good to have a "second set of eyes" for our work. I pointed out that the people who wear glasses already have a second set of eyes, but apparently that's "impertinent." Anyway, you'll never guess who my partner is, RJ . . . it's Kennedy! Kennedy Laurel is going to be my partner for creative writing. This will be difficult, I think, since I want to be supportive of her work, but I also want to win the competition. I'm so glad that we're paired with kids from other classes. It makes it more professional. I mean, I would hate to have her see my work in class and be intimidated by how good it is. I bet her story is a love story. I heard from Oliver yesterday that Kennedy has a boyfriend, AND he's in grade eight. So her story will be all kisses and true love, which is total crap. My story will be way better. I still think she's awesome, so I hope she's not too sad when she comes in second.

I think that I'm supposed to say something here about the book I'm reading too — I'm not really sure. It's a book for class. It's OK, because the author is pretty good about explaining how

it feels when your mom is gone. It's like my life is the same as the dumb cowboy in the book who is not crying. Except I'm not a cowboy, and I'm definitely not going to be crying after I win \$200. So now all I need is the greatest idea ever for the greatest story ever. Not like it will take me long to do that.

Yours truly,
Arthur Bean



From: Kennedy Laurel (imsocutekl@hotmail.com)
To: Arthur Bean (arthuraaronbean@gmail.com)
Sent: October 23, 9:21

Hi Arthur! I'm really excited that you are my creative writing partner!!! LOL!! I LOVE writing stories, and it's gonna be really fun sharing ideas with you! I didn't even know you liked writing! You should join the newspaper! We have a lot of fun reporting on stuff! And it's GREAT practice for writing!

So far, I think my story for the contest is going to be a VAMPIRE story! It will be something about a guy who is locked in a mental institution because he sees VAMPIRES and keeps telling people that they are coming for him, but people think he's crazy. Of course, the vamps will be real LOL! I'm not sure how it will end yet, but probably something GORY! Do you have any ideas?!

Kennedy ☺

From: Arthur Bean (arthuraaronbean@gmail.com)
To: Kennedy Laurel (imsocutekl@hotmail.com)
Sent: October 23, 10:04

Dear Kennedy,

I love you

From: Arthur Bean (arthuraaronbean@gmail.com)
To: Kennedy Laurel (imsocutekl@hotmail.com)
Sent: October 23, 10:09

Sorry, Kennedy! I accidentally hit send before finishing that sentence. I meant to say I love your idea! I don't know how your story should end, but I will think about it. I also will join the newspaper with you. That sounds good. I'm not sure how much time I will be able to spend on it, since I write a lot already. I plan on becoming a world famous author, so I need to practise. I think my story will be an epic story. I've been thinking that maybe it will be the story of a poor man who thinks he's a knight. He lives in a village and thinks that windmills are dragons, so he tries to kill them. It sounds funny, but it will be very sad. He will think that a peasant in the next village is a princess for him to save. At the end, he will die of heartbreak. That's sort of the main storyline so far.

Yours truly,
Arthur Bean