The wonderful and exciting stories in this short story collection were written by students from Malaysia, Russia, Bulgaria and Ukraine, as part of the Macmillan Education Short Story Writing Competition.

The competition ran from March until August in 2014. A big well done and thank you to the winners of this competition:

• Tan Ruey Fern
• Laura Ivankova
• Ican Vasilevich
• Kristiyan Todorov
• Nikolay
• Yulia Boyarkina
• Maria Koroleva
• Victor Bachin
• Olha Horobets
• Sonya
• Dasha Bastamova

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MACMILLAN READERS

Short Story Writing Competition

CATEGORY: 12 YEARS AND YOUNGER
The Macmillan Readers provide a choice of enjoyable reading materials for learners of English. The series is published at six levels – Starter, Beginner, Elementary, Pre-intermediate, Intermediate and Upper Intermediate.

**Short Story Writing Competition**

In 2014, Macmillan Education organised an international Short Story Writing Competition for schools and individual students. Students were asked to create their own fictional short story with sport as the theme. The 10 best stories in the category *12 years and younger* feature in this short story collection.

The overall winner in this category is Tan Ruey Fern from Malaysia, with her story *An Alien Captain’s Sporty Experience*. Dasha Bastamova from Russia won the prize for best illustration which features on the cover of this collection.

For more information, visit www.macmillanenglish.com/readers
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1. An Alien Captain’s Sporty Experience

By Tan Ruey Fern, Malaysia

A letter written by a faraway being, on a faraway planet. Translated into English for your reading pleasure.

The 1st Expedition to Planet Earth

Dictated to: General Foofy-Bunny-Poo

General, it is of my greatest pleasure to inform you that the survey on Planet Earth has gone successfully, and we are now ready to report back to base. On our little ‘vacation’ there, we’ve spotted a little ... anomaly occurring within the ranks of the little ‘flesh balloons’ that might be of your interest.

They call it ‘sport’.

It seems to invoke quite a bit of enthusiasm amongst them, and involves the wasting of their energy sources on completely pointless movements along with random screeching that could very well attract predators like ... well, us.

This ‘sport’ it seems is what causes the flesh balloons to become skinnier than they already are like the twigs of a Flubble-Jumble tree. Like I mentioned before – it is a waste of energy sources. Although it does, on occasion, create some form of weak armor constructed from muscle, I am quite certain this is not the reason these flesh balloons perform such a cumbersome task.

I have found a spike in their euphoric output, during this activity. However, I still am unable to fully place my nasal appendage upon what drives them to play this ‘sport’. It is not educational like our games of Dee-Dah-Doo and Boo-Boo-Cuddle-La. It does not provide them any sort of payment, and it is only a rare occurrence in which any of it actually improves their fleshy flesh balloon appearance, at least in my opinion.

One of these ‘sports’, as they call it, is named ‘basketball’. This ‘sport’ involves two teams of outrageously dressed flesh balloons bouncing a big, fat rubber ball around trying to get it into each other’s hoops. While one
of our foreign scouts was observing this activity, a ball smashed right into his windscreen and cost us at least 200 Glubber-Gloobers in repairs! It also squashed his skull, but that wasn’t that big of an issue because apparently he can regenerate his head – brains and all. It was rather disturbing. I wondered if such mishaps occur frequently amongst themselves.

As I was wondering this, however, I had not paid attention to that cadet who tagged along with us after our stop at Station 007. Thus, I am afraid to say that he had established contact with the flesh balloons by morphing into their hideous form and speaking to them in their own tongue. That particular cadet I speak of is Cadet Googla-Googlor.

He had gone up to a flesh balloon after dressing up in a replica of their gear, before simply going “Hey, could I join you?” like an idiot – and for a second there my lieutenant was worried they might smash him to bits with their basket balls. However, they surprisingly let him participate in their big, fat rubber ball activity with much enthusiasm – perhaps we should all just morph and ask to join in one of their ‘sport games’, and then conquer them from the inside out.

When later interrogated about this phenomenon by our lead flesh balloon researcher, Cadet Googla-Googlor reported that ‘sport’ provided the flesh balloons with an addictive substance known as ‘fun’. This ‘fun’, as Googla put it, felt like ‘a bowl of ice-cool Floo-Floo mixed with Dubber-Dabber and Glegh’. He then asked that we implement it in our military forces to increase morale – I denied his request, of course – who has time for big, fat rubber balls when one has to conquer the galaxy?!

The cadet deserted us the next day, apparently preferring this toxic drug known as ‘fun’, compared to the glory of the Sheba-Shoobor race. Rest assured, sir, we do not miss his company – he was always forgetting to flush the excretion bowls after he used them anyway. Good riddance, I say.

In conclusion, we have a runaway cadet roaming Planet Earth as a flesh balloon, and we have also discovered that big, fat rubber balls are the way to a flesh balloon’s heart. It is most certainly not enough to conquer their planet, but I hope this information proves of use to you, general.

Dictated by:
Captain Hoo-Hoo-Poo-Fa
PS: Apologies for any inconvenience, sir, but my lieutenant has been infected with a craze that might have been carried over by the flesh balloons from Planet Earth. He is unable to stop watching this strange channel on our viewing screen, which involves several flesh balloons kicking an even bigger and fatter rubber ball amongst themselves. They call it ‘The World Cup’.

My lieutenant has been rendered immobilized and unable to speak, and considering the fact that he is the only one who has the code for take-off, we are currently stranded on Planet Earth’s moon.

I request your assistance in sending our code to us via Rubble-Dobble-Chat, as I have no idea where my lieutenant keeps his code books. All we managed to find in his room were undergarments and a piece of candy.
The lights went off and the sports shop was finally closed. All the people left and it got very quiet.

“Hello, everybody! I am a newcomer here!” said the football. “Hi, newcomer! Now you will hope to become an off-the-shelf”, said the racquet with displeasure, and then whispered to the shuttlecock, “I hate newcomers.” “You are right, I really want to become an off-the-shelf and I wish that some good boy liked me and bought me”, said the football, “Will you help me?” The racquet decided to help him and give some advice, “All right, I’ll tell you what you should do and I am sure somebody will buy you. First of all, you should paint yourself in some bright colour to become eye-catching and attract the customers. You’ll get the results quite soon. See what will happen tomorrow”.

The football did so and painted himself red but no one paid any attention to him the following day. When the night came the football asked the football boots to train him not to miss the goal. He practiced all night but in vain. Nobody wanted to buy him. Then he asked the goal for a piece of advice and it said that the football needed to smile more when he was at the shop window. And on that day he saw an athletic boy come into the shop. The football liked the boy very much, but the boy went past him, not even looking at him. The football was really disappointed. He asked everybody in that sports shop what to do, but no one knew what else could be done. He thought that he would stay in that shop forever.

In a week the boy came to the shop again. He saw the football, came to him, took him to try and kick him and then decided to buy him. You can’t imagine how happy the football felt at that moment. He didn’t forget to say goodbye to everyone in the shop. And the racquet and the shuttlecock wished him good luck.

So the football got to the boy’s house. It was the first time he had ever been at somebody’s place. He was a little afraid, but the boy hugged him tenderly and the football forgot all his fears. Then the boy’s dog wanted to see and play with the football. At first it tried to bite him, but then it just played with him. The football was really happy to stay there.

One day the boy heard the football talking to somebody. In fact, he was talking to himself at that moment. The boy came closer and asked in
surprise, “Wow, can you really talk?” The football decided to tell the truth and so the boy and the football became good friends.

Once when the boy and the football were talking, the boy’s parents noticed that and they asked the boy about it. And the boy didn’t deceive his parents, too. Of course, they were really shocked, but believed in their son’s story. So the whole family were the football’s friends. They really loved the football and wanted to make him happy.

So, sometime after, the football was alone at home. He saw the boy return from school. But the boy was carrying something in his hands. The football couldn’t believe his eyes. Those were the racquet, the shuttlecock and the football boots. The boy bought them and now all the friends were together again. They had a lot of fun doing sports and lived happily ever after with the boy and his family.
I can’t imagine my life without sport. Sport helps me to keep fit and to be healthy. It gives me many moments of pleasure.

Not only people enjoy doing sports. I have got a friend. His name is Teddy. Teddy is a small black spaniel puppy. He is funny and clever and he likes sports most of all. My friend Teddy is fond of football. We often go to the stadium to play there. It’s fun! The puppy is always full of joy! He runs after the ball, jumps high to catch it and carries it in his mouth. Teddy is a fantastic goal-keeper. He kicks the ball with his nose. He is bouncy and quick.

Last week Teddy and I went to the park. The weather was sunny but rather cold. We met my classmates on our way there. They invited us to take part in a football match. We were very glad. I cried “Hooray!” and Teddy barked loudly. He was willing to be a member of our football team. My friends and I decided to play the game near the Central Pond. There were few people near it. Nobody could disturb us. Besides, there was a wonderful field not far from the pond. Everything was great, except one thing. There were eight of us, boys. My classmates didn’t want Teddy to play the game. The puppy became sad. He slowly went to the oak tree near the pond and lay on the grass under the tree. Teddy closed his eyes pretending that he was asleep. He didn’t like to be a sports fan. My friend was a real football player.

Then the match started. It was exciting. First, we scored a goal, and then our opponents’ team did it. Nobody wanted to lose the game. We did our best to win. Suddenly, a strong wind began blowing. There appeared a lot of clouds in the sky and it began to rain. Soon we all got wet, but we didn’t want to wait until the rain stopped. We were dirty and tired. Our T-shirts and jeans looked awful. Our hands were filthy. Oh, dear! Two hours passed and our captain Sam managed to reach the opponents’ gate with a ball in front of him. He tried to score the goal but slipped on the wet grass and fell down into the pond. All the boys laughed because the captain looked dirty, and nobody saw the ball rolling down into the pond. Splash! The ball fell into the water. The waves were carrying the ball further and further when little Teddy noticed it. He bravely jumped into the cold water and swam to the ball. The puppy made an attempt to
take it into his mouth but he couldn’t. Then he started pushing it with his tiny nose. The boys ran to the shore of the pond and encouraged the little swimmer shouting “Come on, Teddy!” Then they took the ball out of the water and I wrapped Teddy into my warm sweater.

My friends patted the puppy on his head. He was shivering from cold. We all were very glad that everything went fine. The match ended in a draw but we decided that Teddy was the winner because he saved our ball and proved to be a true friend and a brave sportsman. We gave the puppy a prize. Guess what it was? It was a big pack of sausages. How happy Teddy was!
4. The Football

By Kristiyan Todorov, Bulgaria

David ran out of the block of flats, his light rucksack jumping on his back, his jacket unbuttoned; his hand clenching a small pack of collectable footballers’ cards. He hurried to show them to his best friend, Ivan.

As soon as he got to the schoolyard he looked for Ivan. He was sitting on a bench, reading a sports magazine and waiting for football practice to begin. Winded from running, David stood in front of him and put the small pack of cards on the magazine.

“What’s this?” the boy asked surprised, but after a few seconds exclaimed “Oh, they are the latest!” He was eager to see all of them before the beginning of practice. There were two cards of each kind – one for him and one for his friend.

David smiled. He took a deep breath and said, “They are from the pavilion next to us. The seller said he would have new cards next week.”

“Great!” Ivan said and started to separate the doubled cards. “I will give you the money tomorrow.”

“There is no problem!” David answered and patted Ivan on his shoulder.

Both boys liked football very much. Since the World Cup started two weeks earlier they had become big fans of the sport. They joined a football club called CSKA and played football every afternoon in the schoolyard with their new Adidas brazuka ball.

They had also started collecting things connected with football: stickers, posters and football cards. They watched every match of their favourite teams. They knew every result and each of the footballers’ names.

Meanwhile, Ivan had a birthday party. He had invited all the boys in his class. His flat was full of kids that day. A lot of marvellous presents were given to him. David’s present was a big poster of the national team.

“That is great, David!” exclaimed Ivan when he saw the present. “Thank you very much! Look what my uncle gave to me!”

It was a souvenir ball with the signature of the national team’s goalkeeper. At once David liked it very much.

“Is it original?” he asked.
“Of course, my uncle waited for him in front of his hotel for a long time to get this signature, especially for me.” Ivan said.

David did not say anything. He felt that he wanted this ball a lot.

When nobody was looking he went to the place where the ball was, took it and hid it in his pocket. Nobody noticed the ball was missing. Shortly thereafter, David said goodbye and left.

When David got to his room he took out the ball and threw it aside. He could not believe that he had stolen it. He no longer liked the ball. He wanted to go back and put it where it had been. But he thought: “Maybe Ivan has already guessed who took the ball. There were many other kids who could have taken it. But it was I who touched it last. Oh, how will I look at him again?”

David could not sleep that night.

The next day he was sad. He did not want to talk to Ivan. He did not even go to football practice because he felt guilty in Ivan’s presence.

The following day Ivan called David to ask him why he had not been to practice the previous day. He told David that the coach had asked for him.

“I simply did not want to go,” David answered crossly. He worried Ivan would ask him about the ball and hung up the phone.

The friends stopped talking.

Several days passed. One day the friends bumped into each other in the street but they did not even greet each other. When David got home, he went to bed and started to cry.

His mother entered the room. She was upset.

“What’s happened? Do you want to talk?” she asked him anxiously.

David said nothing.

“Please, tell me what’s up!”

David told her everything. When he finished the story he began to cry again.

“What are you going to do?” his mother asked.

“I don’t know ... What would you do if you were me?”

“I would go to Ivan and give him back the ball. Then I would ask him to forgive me.”

“I don’t know... maybe I will try,” he said.

The next morning David went to Ivan’s place and gave him the ball. He was embarrassed. Ivan started to say something, but David interrupted him: “I did not want to ... I made a mistake. Will you forgive me?”
“Of course I will!” Ivan answered. David was very surprised to hear this. “Aren’t you angry with me?”
“No, I thought that you were angry with me.”
“I just was ashamed.”
“And all this is because of that stupid ball! Keep it if you like it so much,” Ivan suggested, and added: “When we noticed that the ball was missing, my uncle bought me some mini metal cars instead. He had seen beautiful ones in the pavilion next to your block of flats.” Ivan showed them to David saying: “Do you like them? Look at this – it’s my favourite. They are only four, but I am going to have a big collection! And you can start a collection, too.”
David liked the cars very much but he remembered the football and asked: “What about the ball?”
“It’s yours. I’m giving it to you.” Ivan said enthusiastically.
After a while the boys went to play football. On the way to the pitch they saw a little boy kicking a ball. David stopped for a moment and showed the football to the boy saying “Do you like it? It’s for you!”
The boy took the ball, looked at it and then at the friends. His face shone with joy. He watched happily as the friends walked away. Ivan told David something, David answered him. The boy could hear their happy laughter.
One day Volley, Foot and Basket met at a small stadium in a small English town. They weren’t sportsmen. They were very lifeless and sad. They didn’t know any interesting games, didn’t know what to do, they were bored.

Suddenly a bright and playful Ball appeared. He was smiling, jumping and looking very happy.

“Hey”, – he called out Volley, Foot and Basket. “Come to me and be my friends! Let’s play!”

“We don’t want to, we don’t know how to play!” – the friends answered him.

“Don’t worry! I know a lot of exciting games and tricks.” Ball began to turn and jump. The lazy friends looked at him and smiled.

He wasn’t bad. He was so funny!

The more Ball made the stunts, the more they liked him.

“Why not to make friends with him? Maybe he will teach us to be so funny, merry and active?” the lazy friends thought. We agree. Let’s be friends!
Ball came to Foot.
“I know such an amusing game. I think you will like it. Kick me, aim at the gate, and my task is to get there. It is very simple.”
“I understand you. I’ll try,” Foot agreed.
He missed the first strike and the second strike, but the third strike was lucky, goal!
“Hooray!” Foot cried. He was happy.
“I liked it! It’s a good game! Thank you, Ball.”
Then Ball rolled to Basket.
“How about you play with me? I will teach you to play one fascinating game.
I’ll get into you, and you will catch me,” Ball explained the rules of the new game.
“OK!” Basket agreed very fast.
Ball jumped and missed the mark. He jumped again and missed the mark. Then he jumped and was caught by Basket.
“Wow! Hooray!” Basket cried. He was happy now too.
“What an exciting game! I liked it! Thank you, Ball.”
Then Ball ran to Volley. He looked very unhappy and depressed.
“Don’t be melancholy! Let’s play together one sport game. It is very swift. I hope you will like it. You should stretch across the stadium and I’ll jump over you. If I get into you and you catch me you will win, if I don’t do it and you don’t catch me I’ll win.” Ball told the simple conditions of the new game.
“Well. Let’s try it!” Volley agreed to play.
Ball flew into the air and Volley caught him. The next jump was unlucky too. At last Ball jumped very high and flew through Volley.
“2 to 1!” Merry friends Foot and Basket cried now.
“I liked it very much. It is such a lively and interesting game!” Volley said loudly and joyfully. “It was fun. Thank you, Ball.”
“Let’s play!” Three friends Volley, Foot and Basket asked their new friend Ball.
“Let’s play!” Ball winked. He was very glad to have new friends because they were nice and kind. Four happy friends were a good sporty team.
And they play still together.
And we play football, basketball, volleyball with them all over the world.
6. How James did Sport

By Yulia Boyarkina, Russia

James was an ordinary English boy. His parents were simple people. His father ran a small shop in the neighborhood selling newspapers and magazines, his mother was a housewife who took care of the family. They weren’t rich but tried to raise their three children with love.

However, James wanted to be different from them and even despised the family for its quiet and rather modest lifestyle. Every day he saw many famous, successful and wealthy people on the telly and was eager to be one of them. Glamour and luxury became his only dream. But how could he achieve all that? He wasn’t good at school, so he couldn’t invent anything useful for people. He didn’t have any talent for singing or performing. So, he couldn’t become a well-known actor or singer. But one day he watched a documentary about David Beckham, the football star who owned houses all over the world and earned millions. What was so hard about running after a ball in the field? Nothing hard, decided James and the next day he joined the football club located not far from his home.

But after the first training he had a bad pain in his legs and was short of breath. Very reluctantly he went to have one more training where he was made to run, jump, do exercises for three hours. After it James felt dead tired. Besides the pain in his legs, he had a backache. Football turned out to be not so easy.

But James was not at a loss. He remembered Anna Kournikova who was so gracious at tennis court, wearing a white skirt and shirt. Just waving her racket from time to time she could afford living in a luxurious house with servants, stayed in the best hotels, went to the most expensive restaurants and was recognized by everybody. Well, James made another decision – he would be a tennis player.

A few days later he attended his first training at a tennis court. He was wearing snow-white shorts and a shirt and felt like a star. But after half an hour he wasn’t so enthusiastic. The racket didn’t obey James at all and sent the tennis ball anywhere but not the right place. Very soon the pain in his right arm began to be intolerable but the coach demanded more and more. It was worse than football. And it could take years to become the best. No, lawn tennis was not good for James.
This time James felt slightly upset. What else could he try? But very soon he watched horse-racing on TV. It was gorgeous: beautiful horses carrying their riders graciously. The riders wore very elegant uniforms and nice helmets. The sight was eye-catching. And what is more, one shouldn’t run, jump, wave a racket and get strained at all. It seemed not to demand any efforts. Just sit on a horse and that’s it.

James didn’t waste much time and announced to his parents that he wanted to do horse-riding. His parents sighed in disbelief, but bought him the necessary uniform and gave him money to join a horse-riding club.

James came to the stables wearing his new clothes and feeling very important. But the first thing he was told to do was to feed his horse, to clean and wash it. James was indignant. Why should he do all that stuff? He wanted to be a jokey winning numerous prizes and smiling at TV cameras, not a groom! He ignored the coach who tried to explain that it was very important for every horse-rider to become friends with his horse. James didn’t want to hear him. Nonsense. If so, he would find some other sport where he wouldn’t have to work like a stable boy. There is athletics, golf, cricket, rowing, swimming and many more. He could try any. And James tried them all. And failed.

Can you guess why?
I enjoyed listening to my mummy reading me books about horses and princesses. I pretended to be a real princess on a beautiful horse riding across beautiful meadows breaking through the air. It was my magic wish which I kept dreaming about.

I spent my early years in Spain because my parents were working there. Once, when I was 7 my parents took me to see ‘corrida’. One of my Dad’s friends was a real professional ‘toreador’. I saw him riding a horse on the arena and fighting a buffalo. It was a very exciting and even frightening event. I was watching it holding my breath. I couldn’t stop looking at the horse which was very strong, brave and graceful at the same time.

After the performance our Spanish friend showed us the horses in the stable. I immediately fell in love with one little horsey. It was very beautiful. I gave her the name Carrot because of her hair being as orange as a carrot and besides, she enjoyed eating fresh carrots which I always brought for her.

Since that day I started having my horse riding lessons. I was very happy to see my Carrot almost every day. It was not easy to follow all the commands of my coach. Both Carrot and I were beginners but it seemed to me we became friends and soon started to understand each other. One day I found out that we were both born on the same day. For her birthday I grew carrots in my little garden. On the days that I couldn’t see my horsey I was really missing her. Therefore I had lots of pictures and photos of my Carrot to look at.

Day by day, I started to feel confident on the back of my friend. Carrot was getting stronger and stronger. We both were trained by a good coach.

One day, my coach told me that I could take part in a competition among the horse riders of my age. I agreed without a doubt. We worked hard. When the day of the competition came I was a little bit nervous. But when I saw my Carrot I calmed down and cheered myself up with the Olympic motto in mind. There were eight riders. Some of them had already taken part in the race before. It was the first time for my horsey and me! Before the start of the competition I hugged my Carrot and kissed her. She licked me back. So, we were together, my friend and I!
While Carrot was galloping I felt the gusts of air on my face and thought about nothing but my coach’s instructions and his main advice to stay calm and keep a correct posture on a horseback. My Carrot did everything well. She was perfect! As a result we won the bronze medal. The first competition and the first victory at the same time! Everybody was happy!

I started to work harder and more frequently. I had a great desire to win a gold medal!

After a few years of persistent hard work my Carrot and I took part in ‘The Gold Cup Championship’. It was a more advanced competition. All I can say is that dreams come true if you believe in them and aim towards your goal! There is a big portrait of Carrot and I with a gold medal around my neck in our living room.

It is not a dream anymore that from time to time I’m riding on the back of a beautiful horse across beautiful meadows breaking through the air. It is a reality!
“You are a real fighter!”, My Mum said to me and my Dad shook my hand and whispered in my ear: “Thank you, son. I’m very proud of you. I saw you wanted to help that boy”. Even my younger sister told me looking at my gold medal that I was really cool and asked me to take her with me every time I go skiing.

Shortly before The Winter Olympic Games, our family decided to go to the main Olympic city. It was during my winter holidays. I was very glad that I would see the Olympic city before the event that everybody was desperately waiting for. Therefore my Dad told us to get ready and take our skis with us as we would get a chance to enjoy skiing where the real Olympic sportsmen would be competing. We all like skiing.

Being on board the plane I saw the ski slopes from the window. They looked very inviting! As soon as we arrived at the hotel, I started asking my Dad to go to the ski track. He was eager to do the same. Then my younger sister wanted to join us. As for Mum, she didn’t want to stay alone and had nothing left to do but join us.

When we came to the ski slope we saw that everything was ready for the great international event. There were a lot of people and lots of kids. I was almost ready to put my skis on when I heard a loud and cheerful voice inviting boys from the age of eight to twelve years old to take part in a ski racing competition which was running along the route where in a few weeks’ time really strong and famous sportsmen from the whole world would be competing. Great! Cool! I want it! I really want to take part in it! My Dad supported me, but my Mum said that it was not the right time. She said: “We have just arrived to the place. You are tired after the flight and not ready for the competition. You have to prepare better.” My little sister was dragging me to sledge and eat ice-cream. One minute later and I would have been ready to become a spectator. But I looked at my Dad who said: “A race is in many ways a social event. There is a sense of community. The spectators are as much a part of the race as the runners. However, why watch other boys taking part in a race along the Olympic champions’ track?! Join in!” He sighed and added “I wish I were your age!”
“Great, Dad! Thank you very much for the support! I love you very, very much!” I shouted and rushed towards the starting point of the race. There was a lot of cheering at the start of the race to relax and support the runners. A minute later the referee shouted: “Ready, steady, go!” The race began.

I was fourteenth at the beginning. I was getting more and more fierce. Soon I started to overtake other runners. Oh! I am already the second! But my opponent was really very strong and skillful. I followed him. After a while I caught up with him and we were running neck and neck. I could hear nothing, neither the shouting of my parents and my little sister nor the cheering voices of the spectators. I thought to myself: “Mum was right! I was not ready to compete today. I think I will not win”. When my power was leaving me, I started to think that the competition was a real Olympic race for my victory, for the victory of our team, for the real gold Olympic medal! And oops! My opponent fell down! What a shame! I glanced behind me. All the racers fell far behind us. I felt sorry for that boy. I couldn’t leave him and gave him a hand. I continued racing afterwards.

What I could see in a few seconds was the finishing line! All spectators were shouting and congratulating me. My sister was licking an ice-cream and holding another one, my favourite one, for me. Mum kissed and hugged me. Only my Dad was calm. But there was no time to talk.

Everybody was invited for the award ceremony. I was the winner. I felt I was a real Olympic champion. A great feeling! I was very happy. Thank you, Dad!
This story happened on planet Neptune. On Neptune’s surface it was very cold and there wasn’t any air to breathe. But underground there was a city called Extreme. It was hidden under hundreds of kilometres of ice and soil.

Clever creatures lived in Extreme. They looked like humans and they were called Neptunians. Neptunians were tall and they had blue skin. These creatures had funny faces and long dark blue hair. They could talk and read each other’s thoughts.

Besides Neptunians there were other creatures who lived on the surface of Neptune. These creatures were snow giants and they were
made of snow and ice. Neptunians called them Warriors. Warriors had long sharp spears and big stone shields. They had to protect Neptune from meteorites. Warriors were very big, tall and strong.

Neptunians were very good at making clothes. Neptunian women could cook very well. Technology was on a very high level. They made lots of new inventions every day. Neptunians made mobile phones, TVs, ovens, blenders, printers, and other things. But these creatures couldn’t run or jump, because they lived underground. There weren’t any sports on planet Neptune.

One day a Neptunian Wizard had a dream. In his dream Wizard saw that Warriors shouldn’t break the meteorite that was about to fall on Neptune. Wizard woke up and walked to the King and told him about the dream. King went to the main bells and started to ring. All the Neptunians and Warriors heard the alarm and woke up. Neptunians came to King and asked what happened. King told them everything. Inhabitants went outside on the planet’s surface. Snow giants and Neptunians met and started to wait for the meteorite. One Warrior saw the meteorite and all creatures hid in snow, behind stones and in different shelters.

After five seconds a meteorite fell on Neptune. There was dense smoke from the meteorite. Five minutes later, when the smoke was gone, Neptunians gathered around the meteorite. They saw a baby inside the meteorite. It looked like a human from Earth. Wizard took him and called him Victor. No one wanted to adopt the boy. But finally they found a kind woman. She agreed to take Victor. The woman was called Rina. She looked after him for ten years. When Victor was ten, he had many talents. Boy could run fast and jump. Inhabitants were very surprised. King was kind with Victor.

When the boy was eighteen, he made a wooden ball. Victor started to kick this ball. All Neptunians were shocked. They didn’t realize what this ball was for. Victor ran in his yard with his ball and then he scored the ball into the fishing net. Inhabitants couldn’t understand what the boy was doing and started asking him. Victor told them that this game was called football. No one told him about football, he just knew it.

Then Neptunians wanted to learn how to play this game. Victor taught them how to run fast, jump and also kick the ball. It was very cool! After few days Neptunians could play football. All the inhabitants were very proud of him. Football became a very popular game on the planet Neptune.
My name is Sonya. I have got a lot of friends. They are Varya, Masha, Nina, Nastya and Ira. We are very friendly and cheerful. We like to play different games. One day a magic story happened to us.

It was the summer holidays. It was a hot, silent day. We called each other and went for a walk. There was a sports ground next to our house. We liked to play different sport games on it. This time we took our rackets and decided to play tennis. We divided into pairs and began the game. It was very cheerful and interesting for us.

At one moment I strongly struck a ball and it flew over fencing and started moving along a path. There was a forest next to the field. It was unusual beautiful and there were unusual, very beautiful trees. The forest seemed strange to us at once. But it was necessary to get the ball. We walked along the magic footpath which was shiny and we felt that we were in a fairy tale. The footpath led us to a huge oak. It seemed that its branches touched the sky and it required five minutes to go round it. We
didn’t know what to do. Suddenly, the girls saw a small sparkling door in
the oak and there was a gold keyhole in the door. It was awfully curious
for us what or who hid behind that door. We wanted to open it and go
in. But the door was closed. Suddenly, we heard someone’s thin voice: it
squeaked to us that if we wanted to receive a key from the door in the tree
it was necessary for us to recollect and name as much as possible kinds of
sport. As we were athletic girls and were fond of many kinds of sports we
started to list different kinds of sport. There were swimming, gymnastics,
running, figure skating, football, tennis, volleyball, basketball, skiing and
many others. Suddenly, a small chest fell to our feet from dense foliage of
the oak and we found a gold key inside it. We took the key and rushed to
open the door. The door was opened and we glanced inside but we saw
nothing because there was only continuous darkness. We simultaneously
stepped inside of the oak with joined hands and started to fall downwards.
Out of the blue, it became absolutely bright around us and we felt on a
soft heap of mattresses, which usually are in gymnasiums.

Having looked round we saw that we appeared in a fantastic small
athletic town in the forest, and its inhabitants were different unusual
animals. All of them were able to talk and were engaged in different kinds
of sports. Having seen all these things, we could not believe our eyes. It
was a magic city and there were different wonderful things. It seemed that
sweets from all over the world grew on trees instead of fruits. Animals
received different beautiful toys for sport victories. This was no place for
lazy persons at all. All animals, having seen us, were delighted very much.
They greeted us at once and started to play and to have fun with us. It
was very unusual, interesting and cheerful to play and communicate with
small hares, foxes, wolves, hedgehogs, squirrels, bear cubs and other forest
animals. All of them were skillful sportmen. Small hares and wolves
were excellent football players. Small foxes skated masterly, as real figure
skaters. Varya and Masha were able to skate well too. Two small foxes ran
up to them and brought two superfluous pair of skates. Having put on
skates, the girls started to dance on ice together with the other animals.
Small hares and wolves were the fastest runners, but Nastya liked to run
quickly too. They arranged competitions because they wanted to find out
who would be faster in a distance on hundred meters. Nina, who was the
tallest of us, jumped in height very well. Small squirrels decided to check
up, who would jump higher. All of them jumped well, but small squirrels
were more skillful jumpers and jumped higher than Nina, but nobody
took offence. All of them received gifts and prizes for participation in competitions. Ira and I liked to ski very much, and hedgehogs, small tigers and bear cubs liked it too. We were given out two pairs of skis, ski boots and sticks and we started to ski.

Big clumsy bear was the strongest in the fantastic forest. He kept up order, helped and protected all animals.

In general all animals in that small sport town were very kind, affable and friendly. Nobody was offended. All animals were united because they were fond of sport. It was not important who won and all participants of competitions were very amicable.

We liked to participate in athletic competitions with the magic animals in the fantastic small athletic town in the forest. Animals told us that we were good because we were engaged in sports; we were not lazy and could do different things.

At the end we were handed prizes and a lot of tasty sweets. We did not like to leave this wonderful world but suddenly we heard a bell and it meant that it was time for us to go back home. Having said goodbye we started to run to the magic door. Having come in the door we found ourselves on our athletic field.

We are talking about our adventure frequently. In fact having visited the magic forest we understood, that sport is very important as for people, as for animals. Doing sport is always cheerful, interesting and useful for your health.
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