



STORIES OF WONDER

George and the Magic Pen

by Bronson Chadwick

Paprika held her tray and searched around anxiously for a place to sit in the lunchroom. The cafeteria that day seemed busier than usual. As a new student to Locklin Elementary School she still felt very shy and hadn't made very many friends. After all, the fifth grade was a tough place! Paprika tried her best to not make it obvious to everyone else that she didn't have a place to sit.

At the end of a long table near the back of the room sat a boy all by himself. It was George, a rather odd kid in Paprika's class who didn't talk to others much. He wasn't rude to anyone but didn't go out of his way to make friends, either. His hair was a little messy and his blue t-shirt had a small toothpaste stain on it. He sat alone in a corner, but he didn't seem to mind. He had already finished his food and seemed to be fidgeting with something. Paprika didn't want to be seen as desperate but she didn't have anywhere else to sit.

Slowly Paprika made her way down an aisle to an empty seat near George. She hoped that along the way some kind stranger would invite her to sit with them. It didn't happen. Finally, she sat down in front of George avoiding eye contact. Paprika overheard some snickers coming from across the room. Undoubtedly, she had been spotted sitting with the class weirdo.

"Don't mind them." Said a friendly voice across the table. Paprika looked up from her tray at George. "You can sit here with me." said George back. "We don't have to talk or anything. I know what it's like to not have a place to sit."

"Thank you." replied Paprika. She felt awkward to talk with George, but she also felt at peace about having just made a new friend. Paprika looked back down at her food

so others wouldn't see her face turning beet-red from anxiety.

"Want to see something cool?" said the scratchy voice across the table again. Paprika looked back up at George. "Uh, sure?" replied Paprika.

"This is an ink pen." Said George.

"Umm, okay?" Replied Paprika.

"No, no, that's not the cool part." Said George. "Watch closely!"

Suddenly the pen began to float between George's fingertips. It was floating in the air! Paprika turned to look around to see if anyone else had noticed but she was the only one seeing the ballpoint pen levitate between his fingertips and around the arms. George caught the pen in the air and placed it on the table. Paprika picked up the pen. It was a perfectly normal pen, much like the ones she had in her backpack.

"How did you do that!?" whispered Paprika in excitement.

"Well, I'm not supposed to tell you, because it's magic." Said George.

"Oh. Okay never mind," said a disappointed Paprika.

"Well, I guess I can tell you if you really want to know and promise not to tell anyone! It's kind of a beginner magic trick anyway. My name's George! What's yours?" said George smilingly.

"I'm Paprika! It's nice to meet you." she responded.

Quick-Quiz!

1. In what grade are Paprika and George?
2. What is the name of the school where Paprika and George attend?
3. Take a pencil and underline at least three *nouns* in the passage.
4. Take a pencil and underline at least three *verbs* in the passage.
5. Based on what you've just read, would this passage be considered a work of fiction or nonfiction? Why?
6. Is the following statement true or false? "George has lots of friends that sit with him at lunch."

Let's Learn Magic!

THE FLOATING PEN

Just like in the passage you've just read, you can do the same magic trick that George did! Read the instructions closely to learn how to do it.

Effect: The magician shows the audience a pen. The magician brings his hands close together to show that the pen can now defy gravity and float in between the hands. The pen then begins to move and dance around in the air levitating back-and-forth up-and-down and behind the arms. The pen then seemingly attempts to fly away and the performer catches it and then passes it out for examination before returning it to his pocket.

Supplies You Need: A standard ball-point pen with a clip. Cheap plastic pens work best. You could also use a mechanical pencil or something similar as long as it has a clip.

Method: To begin, you will pull the pen out of your pocket. You will hold the pen perpendicular against the fingers so that it's pointing up and down. Allow a small fatty part of the flesh of the thumb next to the fingernail to slide up and under the pen clip.

Now you have a ball point pen pinching the skin of the thumb. This will feel awkward the first few times you do it! Make sure you are using a pen with the clip snug enough so that the pen will not fall off your thumb during the performance. With practice, you'll be able to do this right in front of people without them noticing that you slide the pen onto your finger.

Now you will touch together the fingertips of the left and right hand leaving the thumb and the pen in between the cupped hands. Wiggle your thumb and the pen will appear to be dancing. The audience will not see your thumb and pen attached behind your fingertips touched together.

You can turn to the side and allow the pen to dance from different angles to help convince your friends that the pen is not in any way touching your body. You can also bend the hand holding the pen at the wrist and extend the thumb with the pen behind the left arm to make the pen look like it is traveling down behind the arm.

To end the trick simply "catch" the pen and then allow the clip to come off the thumb and then pass the pen around for examination!

TRICK TIPS

When doing magic tricks, remember the following tips for better presentations!

- ◆ Don't tell anyone the secret to a trick! If you tell them the secret, the feeling of magic is ruined. If they really want to learn the trick, they can read it just like you did!
- ◆ Practice in front of a mirror. Don't do the trick until you're 100% confident!
- ◆ If your class ever does any kind of show and tell type of activity, offer to do a trick!
- ◆ Don't forget to talk while you perform a trick! What people hear is just as important as what they see!

WRITER'S CHALLENGE!

Using at least three paragraphs (about nine sentences) write a funny story of something that actually happened to you or someone you know. Trade papers with a friend to see if you can make your friends laugh with your story!

Wonder Word to Remember

Short story - a brief passage of text that contains a beginning, middle, and end. Short stories sometimes appear in newspapers and magazines or in a large volume (book) with other short stories inside. Unlike a novel, a short story is designed to be read all at one time. Short stories can be works of either fiction or nonfiction.

Don't Freak Out!

It's easy to get nervous if the teacher asks you to read out loud in class, but don't panic if you think it may be difficult. Everyone has trouble reading out loud sometimes. Just go slow and ask for help. Remember, everyone else is probably just as nervous to read aloud as well!



KNOWLEDGE IS POWER!

For more amazing magic tricks and to see if Magic in the Library is coming LIVE to your school, library, or city event center, visit www.MagicInTheLibrary.org Be sure to share the video you see with your teacher!