

A YEAR IN THE
LIFE OF A *Total
and
Complete*
GENIUS

by Stacey Matson

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For Mom and Dad

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

