

# Friendship Always Wins

By Saba Shaikh, grade 5

Errrr eeeee errrr eeeee! The sound of my very old wrench was most annoying. Here I am, in my dark, torch-lit bedroom, my heart thumping furiously. I have to finish my project for the science fair. My friend Ella had been done weeks ago. I look up on the black ceiling, full of glow-in-the-dark stars we put up years ago. A fourth grader is way too old for glow-in-the-dark stars, Ella would say.

Ella was always prepared for projects. I wish I was as organized as her. True, she sometimes rushed on her projects, but they always turned out good. She promised she would help me, but she hasn't come over yet. DING DONG! I rush downstairs and open the door for Ella.

"Hey Hannah! I'm here to help with the project!" Ella exclaims (did I mention she's always positive).

"Phew." I let out a sigh of relief. "I am so happy you're here! I was freaking out about the project!" I reply to her eagerness. She suggests we go upstairs, and I agree.

Within an hour we are done. "That's amazing! How'd you do it?" I ask Ella, examining my project. It's so nice!

“I think it’s all set for tomorrow, “she replies, heading towards the front door.

“Wait! “I shout as soon as she unlocks the door. “Where’s your project? I want to look at it for inspiration! “I exclaim.

“Oh, that old thing, “she says uncomfortably. I was stuck thinking about it. What made her so uncomfortable?

Heading towards the front door, I grab my project and hope it will be enough. I added more details last night when Ella had gone. I walk through my daily path, observing the bright green leaves, noticing that they all aren’t perfect. *Just like me and Ella*, I think.

Arriving at school, I show Ella the few more changes I added to my science fair project. Her cheeks flush, and her lip curls, but she still compliments it.

“That’s amazing Hannah, “she blurts out way too quickly to let me know something is wrong.

Calmly, I put my project onto the science fair table right next to her project.

“Oh, it looks fine,” I reply to the salty look on her face, but not looking at it myself. Eagerly, I pull her along to our classroom, hoping badly that one of us will win the contest.

Class seems to go way slower than usual. Even Ella, who is normally patient, mutters, “just get on with the class!” To herself. I want class to “get on with it” too. I am as impatient as a shark who just found dinner.

Finally, after what seems like 5 years (5 hours) the teacher says it is science (I feel relief).

“C’mon, “I say to Ella, who is rooted to the spot like a tree. “We are going to be late.”

“I don’t want to come! “She confesses determinedly and angrily. I listen to her words carefully, not knowing what to do. She gets up and starts to follow me. *I guess she wanted to come after all*, I think to myself.

We head over to the tables where we put our projects. Ella quickly picks hers up, fast as a rocket. I lean over the table to get mine, but realize it's gone. *Who took it!* I think furiously. *At least Ella’s is good*. I regret thinking about it as soon as I look at it. It had springs coming out of it, and it’s making weird noises. *Boing! Boing!*

Absorbing the thought into me, I come back to my senses that Ella is staring at me, looking annoyed.

“Are you coming or not? “She asks impatiently.

“You see! My project here is gone!” I answer, trying to figure out why she can’t see. Quick as a rollercoaster, she extends her arm with *my* project in it.

“Thank goodness you found it!” I exclaim thankfully. But she doesn’t reply, and instead extends her arm, way above our heads. It’s so weird! Ella never stays quiet after I ask her a question. I’m still thinking about her weirdness, Then SHE DROPS IT!

It falls to the floor with a BANG and parts fly everywhere. Ella runs away, horrified at what she just did. I feel my heart thumping faster, as I try to call her back.

“E-E-Ella! C-come bac-ck!” I want to shout but can’t because of my stuttering. I have no idea why she did this. I pick up the remains of my project and put them in the trash can. Just in time, the bell rings, and I make my way through the theater doors to see who won the contest.

It’s surprising to see Ella standing on the stage, guilt spread over her face, and the teacher handing her a trophy. I know I should feel happy for her, but I don’t. Finally, I have to run away. I can’t handle all this. I am humiliated at what Ella has done.

I don’t want to upset Ella. But after what she did, I can’t, not want to upset her. Running back in the theater, it’s so surprising to see it

empty. The trophy teacher is stacking up the chairs and putting them in a corner of the room.

“Miss...why is it empty?” I ask quickly looking around.

“Hey Hannah! How are you? Ella? She ran away right after I gave her the trophy,” the teacher replies. *What’s with Ella and running away today?* I think furiously again.

“Thanks,” I mutter and go to the direction the teacher pointed at. As soon as I go outside the theater, I think of all the times Ella seemed weird to me. Suddenly, a light clicks in my head, like a flame springing up.

“She was jealous! “I realize right then. I keep walking, thinking it’s hopeless. Walking rather quickly, I pass the computer room. I feel something different about it, as I’ve gone past it many times. Curiously, I look more closely at the door. I see a paper stuck in the doorway.

I try to ignore the paper and knock on the door. But curiosity always gets the better of me. Looking around, I pick the paper up, and start to read:

THIS IS FOR MY FRIEND HANNAH. I AM SO  
SORRY ABOUT WHAT I DID TO HER. IF  
YOU SEE HER SAY ELLA IS SORRY.

The paper says. I would recognize that handwriting anywhere.

DON'T COME IN!!!

It finishes quickly. Breathing, I think filling up with relief. *Ella wanted to apologize.*

My heart is beating strongly. I grasp the doorknob, tight as a knot. Turning the knob, I expect it to open. IT DOESN'T OPEN! I know there's someone in there, it's possibly and probably Ella.

Quickly, I go into the theater again. I actually want some alone time right now. Taking a deep breath, I am relieved to see no one is there. I really want to be quiet and not talk right now. I'm hoping my teacher isn't wondering why I'm not in the cafeteria like everyone else. I wish I could do this day all over again.

Hesitating, I walk back to the project table, and peer slowly into the trash can. Roots are pulling me to the ground. My project isn't there, I'm sure of it. Doing a backflip, my heart starts beating at full speed.

I'm sure Ella never wanted any of this to happen. *But how can she prove that,* says that tiny voice in my head. *After what she did...*

"NO!" I shout. "ELLA DOESN'T DESERVE THIS! SHE'S SUCH A GOOD FRIEND! *But is she...* I can't take it anymore. Even my inner voice doesn't believe in Ella.

Rushing, I make my way to the computer room *again*. Holding the doorknob tightly, I turn it. Surprisingly, the door is open. Taking a deep

breath (I'm taking so many deep breaths today), I step in. *But why would Ella do that to me*, I can't stop thinking. *Her projects are always so good.*

Just at that moment, the booming voice of the principal comes through the loud speaking speakers.

"Hannah Brown! Please proceed to the theater," it says. Putting my hands over my eyes, I slowly walk to the theater. *Oh great*, I think. *Now I'm in trouble!*

Surprisingly, the whole school is there. Keeping my eyes on the ground, I walk to the stage, where the trophy teacher is calling me. I see my project on a table nearby all fixed. *This is so confusing*, I think. Walking up the marble steps, I see Ella on the stage smiling. The teacher is holding the trophy.

"We have gathered here again, to reselect our winner for the science fair!" Booms the voice of the principal again. I could hardly believe my ears. *Reselect?*

"Both of the winners tried hard and worked together. They cared about the other project, as much as they themselves wanted to win. The winners are... Ella Smith and Hannah Brown!" Cries the principal.

I really couldn't believe it. The roar of applause sounds like thunder. *Me and Ella?* We grasp the handles of the trophy together,

and smile at the teacher. This is a big moment for us. More stuff would come and go, but Ella and I would always be best friends.

“Hey!” I shout to Ella after the theater. “Want to meet at the park after school?”