

CRISIS IN YELLOWSTONE

a 21st Century
Folk Tale

Created by Ms. Heimsoth's 6th Grade Class of 2010 - Spring Mountain School

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Artists: It's time to create Cover Art!

Artist's Name (That's YOU!)

CHAPTER ONE: FOOD FRENZY

“Mom, is there food yet? Is there food yet? MOM!”

Mother Grizzly Bear gritted her teeth and kept digging.

It was a scorching day in Yellowstone Park,
and the cubs would not stop whining. “It’s HOT,” moaned Boo.

“I’m so thirsty I could drink _____!”

“My tummy hurts,” cried Bubbles. “I’m so hungry I could eat
_____ or _____!”

“We want White Bark Pine Seeds! We want White Bark Pine Seeds!”

“ENOUGH!” Mother Grizzly was losing it. “Both of you, back to the cave, NOW!

I’ll be home soon with food.” But Mother Grizzly was worried.

She had dug in all the usual places, but the tasty seeds
that always broke their fast after hibernation were in short supply.

“Chitter chatter, chitter chatter!”

Squirrel was doing his morning exercise routine in the tree above.

OF COURSE! It was Squirrel’s job to bury those seeds.

So it was *Squirrel’s* fault she could not feed her family!

“SQUIRREL!” Mother Bear’s thunderous growl made the tree shake.

“EEK!” Squirrel screeched. He hung onto the branch for dear life. “What the...?”

Mother Grizzly roared, “It’s YOUR fault my babies are hungry!

Why is there no food this year? Where are the seeds?”

“My fault?” Squirrel was insulted. “You wound me to the core, Mother Grizzly.

Nobody works harder than I do. But here’s the thing:

There are not as many trees as there used to be. No trees, no seeds!

How is that MY fault? You will just have to find other food.”

“It has to be SOMEONE’S fault!” Mother Grizzly sputtered angrily,
as she headed for the pond in search of fish.

Squirrel dashed after her, ready to defend his honor.

“Take it back!” “Why should I?” “TAKE IT BACK!” “OR WHAT?”

Good thing there were no tourists close by.

BOING! BA - BOING-G-G-G, Frog bounced into the fight.

“Pipe down!” she complained. “I have enough problems
without listening to the two of you arguing.”

“Sorry, “Mother Grizzly sighed. “Being hungry makes me cranky.”

“Well, I hope you don’t expect to find food in the pond.

The water level is down and there are scarcely any fish left!

The property value on my lily-pad condo is lower than _____,

and there is huge hole in my bedroom wall.

I need to find some bark to fix it. But all the trees around here are bare.

When I find out who is responsible for that, I’ll...I’ll...I’ll...

Well, I don’t know what I’ll do, but they’ll be SO sorry!”

“Here’s a plan,” said Mother Grizzly. Let’s all go to the White Bark Pine Grove
near Heart Lake. Frog can get her wood, and with luck I will find some seeds.”

The path to the grove was familiar, but for the first time

the animals noticed things were clearly different...

WRITERS: WHAT CHANGES DID THE ANIMALS NOTICE ON THEIR WAY?

CHAPTER TWO: BLAME BEETLE

They could hear the ruckus long before they reached the grove.

CHOMP! CHOMP! CHOMP! CHOMP!

“That’s Beetle,” cried Squirrel, “I’d know his munching anywhere.”

“OW! HAVEN’T YOU EATEN ENOUGH? YOU’RE KILLING ME!”

“And that is White Bark Pine,” Frog chimed in. “She’s in trouble!”

Sure enough, there was Beetle devouring the tree’s bark,

chowing down like a champion. CHOMP! CHOMP! CHOMP!

Frog bounced up and down like a yoyo. “It’s Beetle!” she sang out.

“He’s the culprit! It’s Beetle’s fault our habitat is dying!”

Beetle stopped chewing long enough to wave his walking stick at the three animals. “Back away from my breakfast!” he ordered.

The sight of the short, tubby insect threatening Mother Grizzly almost made Squirrel laugh, But this was not funny.

“You can’t destroy every tree in the park.” Squirrel declared.

“Yes I can! The President of the U S of A says so!” Beetle joked.

GRRRRRRRRRR. Mother Grizzly was not amused.

“Just kidding,” Beetle gulped. “But seriously, guys, little old me, eating up the whole park? I don’t think so!”

Squirrel disagreed loudly. “I hear you gobbling night and day.

You eat the trees that are my home!”

Mother Grizzly snarled, “You eat the trees that feed my family. We’re hungry!”

Frog wept, “You eat the trees that shade my pond. It’s drying up!”

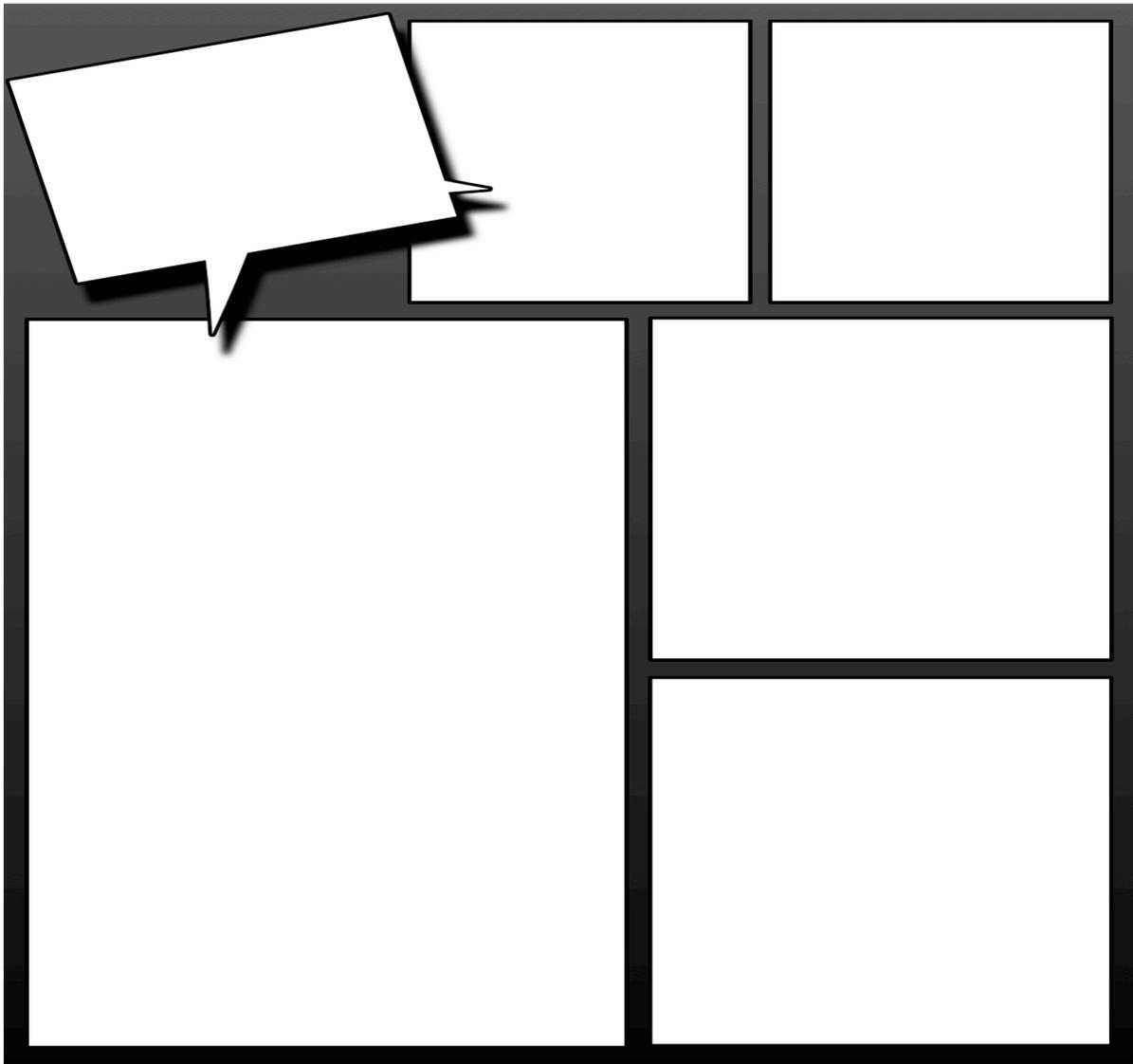
Beetle was frantic. “I can’t help it if I have a high metabolism!”

“No more excuses!” the three shouted.

“WE’RE TAKING YOU TO COURT! THIS IS A CITIZEN’S ARREST!”

The Yellowstone rescue team sprang into action.
Squirrel had flying skills, so he was sent to alert Grey Wolf.
Once the drummer in a garage band called _____,
Grey Wolf was in charge of park communications.
His drumming would signal everyone to gather at Bear's cave for the trial.

Meanwhile, Frog and Mother Grizzly secured the "prisoner"
in a discarded Coke bottle, so he would not escape.
This was not easy. The opening was small and Beetle was VERY chubby.



ARTISTS: DRAW THE COMIC OF HOW FROG & GRIZZLY
CAPTURED BEETLE IN THE COKE BOTTLE!

BANG! BANG! duh DA. BANG! BANG! duh DAH!
BOOM chuck-a BOOM! BOOM chuck-a BOOM! CALLING ALL CREATURES TO COURT.

One by one the animals joined the procession.
Squirrel and Grey Wolf led the way. Then came Owl
and Deer and Beaver and Woodpecker.
At the very end marched Mother Grizzly and Frog with the perp.
Beetle pounded hysterically on the sides of the Coke bottle,
But this jury of his peers did not seem to notice or care.

Wise Judge Eagle watched silently from above.
“They mean well,” he thought. “But poor Beetle is just a scapegoat.
I hope this trial helps everyone see the big picture.
If they don’t, I fear for the future of our beautiful home.”

ARTISTS: BEAR’S CAVE IS ROUND OPEN SPACE WITH A CENTER AISLE.
THERE IS A HIGH PERCH FOR THE JUDGE, AND EVERYTHING IS GRIZZLY-
SIZE. ILLUSTRATE THE SCENE AS THE ANIMALS PREPARE FOR THE TRIAL.



CHAPTER FOUR: LET THE TRIAL BEGIN

The courtroom was noisy and crowded.

Frog, the Prosecutor, seemed to be everywhere at once:

BOING! She huddled with Squirrel to discuss strategy.

BOING! She leapt from one witness to another, building her case against Beetle.

BOING! She collected signatures on a pile of leaf documents.

Beetle watched from inside the bottle, with growing panic.

He was so nervous he started running in circles, but that just made him dizzy. Then he found himself licking the coke syrup at the bottom of the bottle. Mmmmmm. It was kind of comforting.

Suddenly a rattle sounded and Judge Eagle flew in through the skylight.

“All Rise.” Grey Wolf growled sternly. Eagle’s voice rang out.

“Release the prisoner so he can face his accusers.

“Thank you, Judge,” Beetle gasped. But he was so wired from the Coke syrup he could not stay still.

Frog read the charges, following the words with her tongue.

“BEETLE, YOU ARE ACCUSED OF OVER-EATING THE BARK OF THE WHITE PINE, CAUSING THE LOSS OF HABITAT ALL OVER YELLOWSTONE PARK. THIS MUST STOP.”

“That is SO BOGUS...so completely WRONG!” Beetle was beside himself.

“Young man, control yourself!” Judge Eagle was serious.

“You will get your chance to speak. But first things first. How do you plead?” “NOT GUILTY!” Beetle bellowed.

“You have the right to an attorney,” Eagle continued.

“I’m going to declare a five minute recess so you can find yourself a lawyer to represent you.

And try to calm down while you are at it.”

Beetle scrambled around the cave, eager to find a lawyer.

“Owl is a brainiac,” he said to himself. “I’ll ask Owl.”

“Whoo me? Are you kidding?” Owl hooted. “No way.”

This is why Owl said no: _____

_____.

Then Beetle thought, “I’ll ask Deer. She is known to be

_____ and _____.

Deer will gain the sympathy of the jury.” But Deer turned him down too.

This is why: _____.

When Beaver snorted his refusal, Beetle grew desperate. He fell to his knees, making wild, rash promises. “Please help! Please oh please oh please!

“I’ll give you _____,” he ranted.

“I’ll do _____!” he raved.

“I THROW MYSELF ON THE MERCY OF THE COURT!”

“Oh, for heaven sakes, cut the drama!” (Owl was really a softy).

“I’ll take your case. But in return you must give me Dutch lessons and PROMISE that you will never eat my tree, not matter how hungry you get.”

“Anything!” Beetle sobbed with relief.

Owl put on her glasses and approached the bench.

“Are we ready to proceed?” the Judge asked.

“Defense is ready,” said Owl. “Prosecution is ready,” said Frog.

Eagle turned to Grey Wolf. “Bailiff, swear in the witnesses.”

“Everyone, repeat after me: I will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. And as a predator, I promise I will not hunt or eat my prey in this courtroom.”

Judge Eagle nodded. “Court is officially in session. We will now hear testimony in the Case of the Yellowstone Rescuers versus Beetle.”

CHAPTER FIVE: WHOSE FAULT IS IT?

“We will hear from the prosecution first,” Eagle instructed.

“I OBJECT!” Beetle shouted. “THAT IS NOT FAIR!”

The Judge gave him the hairy eyeball.

Owl tried to calm her client down by hypnotizing him with a piece of bark, but Beetle couldn’t resist -- he started to eat it.

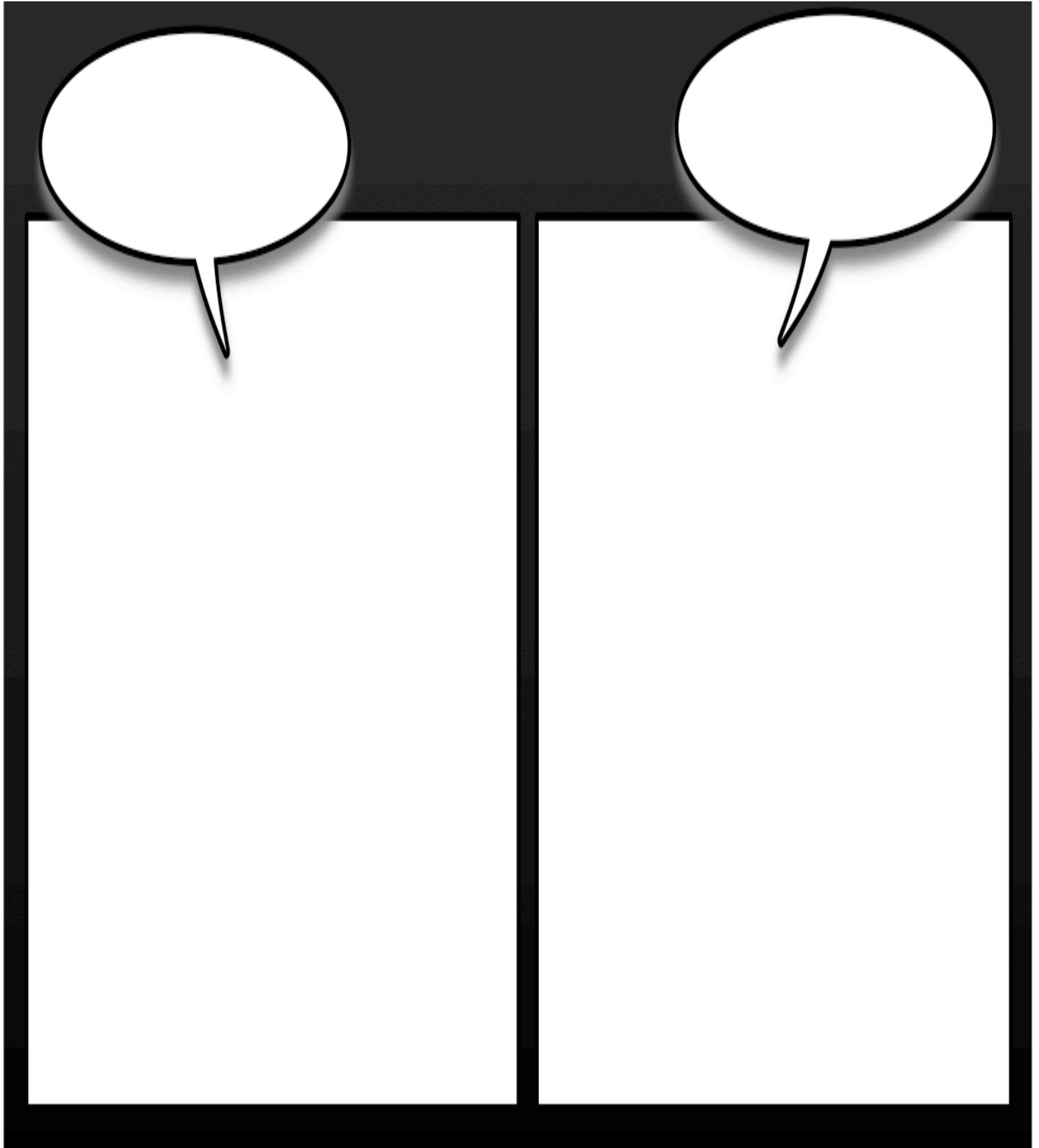
“Your Honor, the defendant is destroying evidence!” Frog yelled.

Eagle grew impatient. “The ONLY voices I want to hear are Squirrel and Mother Grizzly. Proceed.”

So they presented their case against Beetle.

First they showed pictures of the park - the way it used to be and the way it was now.

ARTISTS: DRAW THE CONTRASTING PICTURES OF THE PARK
BEFORE AND AFTER THE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES



Then Grizzly spoke about how she could not feed her family.
Squirrel brought the jury to tears as he read this statement from
White Bark Pine Tree about her pain and the death of her tree friends:

Frog shivered with indignation. "The chain of evidence is clear:

The bark is eaten, the trees die, there is no shade,
the food chain is broken and habitat is destroyed.

"WE KNOW WHO IS RESPONSIBLE."

She silently pointed his finger at Beetle. "I rest my case."

"Beetle was busting a gut. "What about MY side?

First of all, I'm HELPING, not hurting.

I clean up the dry bark that falls off the trees. I PREVENT FOREST FIRES."

Frog broke in. "Objection! Calls for a conclusion, your Honor."

"Overruled," Eagle responded. "Continue, Beetle."

"OK Judge. I admit the trees are dying. I've got eyes.

But how come I am the only one on trial here?

"He makes a good point, your Honor," Owl observed.

"Woodpecker drills holes in every tree in Yellowstone."

Frog jumped in again. "OBJECTION! Woodpecker is not on trial here!"

"Maybe he should be," shouted Beetle. "And what about Beaver?

He eats wood -- lots more wood than one puny insect.

He chops down trees to make his lodge! If I am to blame, he is too!"

"Objection sustained! Owl, control your client," Eagle hollered.

Beaver spoke passionately about his work as a builder,

and blamed Global Winds for the heat that was

drying up the ponds and killing the creatures who lived in the water.

Global Winds was sure that Sun was responsible. Sun blamed the Humans.

CHAPTER SIX: CHAOS IN COURT & SURPRISE WITNESSES

Eagle sighed. “Clearly I have to step up,” he said to himself.

“Sometimes a Judge must be a teacher too.”

He spotted the grizzly cubs playing in a corner.

It was hard to think with all the noise, but a plan came to him.

“Bubbles! Boo! Both of you get over here right now!

This is a courtroom, not a mosh pit!”

Eagle sounded angry, but he was only pretending so that

no one would realize he had an important job for the cubs.

“Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is this,” he whispered.

“Hurry to the campground near Old Faithful.

There you will find two human children: Zak and Lily.

The boy wears at-shirt that says _____,

and the girl has purple pigtails. Figure out a way to bring them here safely.

“We’re on it!” the cubs cheered.

“We’ll be back before anyone even notices we’re gone.”

They charged out of the cave and raced through the park.

Old Faithful was trying to blow as they passed by,

But the puny spurt of water that came out was more like a burp than a geyser.

“That’s Beetle’s fault,” said Boo. “Yup,” Bubbles agreed.

“Shhhhhhh,” she added. We’re close. Do you see our targets?”

They saw a _____ granny reading _____.

They saw a _____ teenager sneaking _____.

Then, success! They saw Zak and Lily struggling to set up an orange tent.

“T-shirt writing, check,” Bubbles crowed.

“Purple pigtails, check,” Boo grinned.

“Now how do we convince them to come with us?

I’m sure the Park Rangers have warned them about wild animals.”

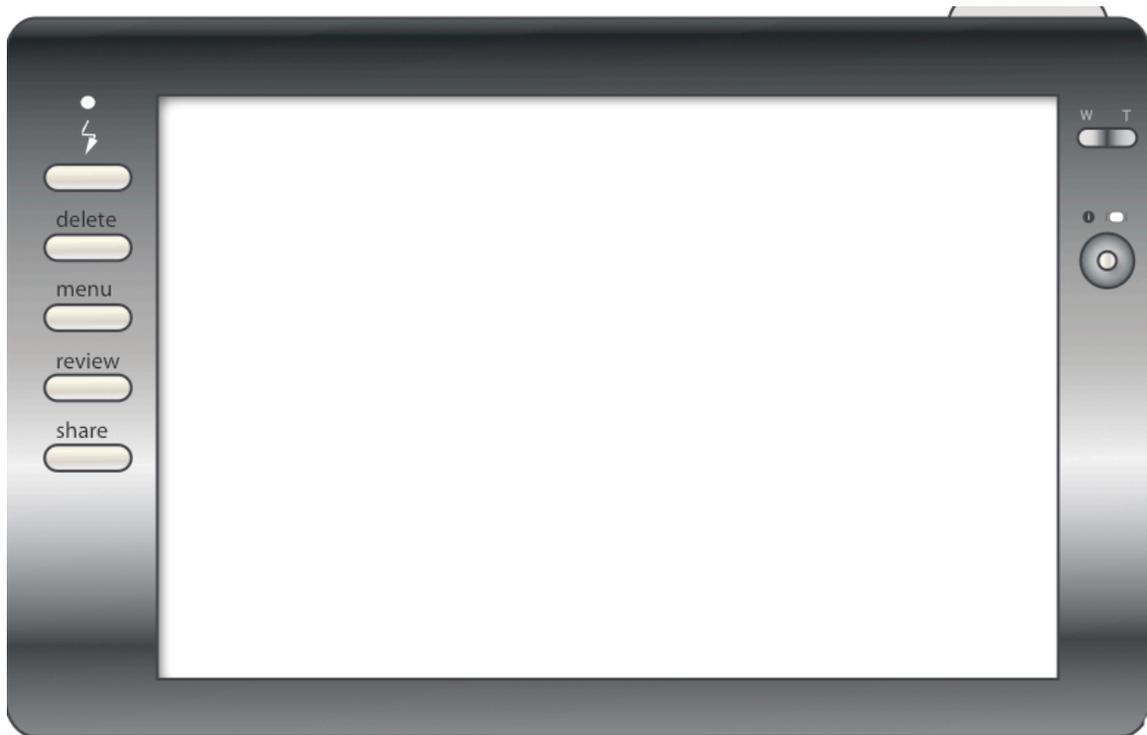
“Piece of cake,” said Bubbles. “We’re too cute to resist.
Besides, look how much trouble they are having with that tent.

ANY distraction will be welcome.”

“Plus, there is always the fear factor if we have to,” added Boo.

“Let’s do it!”

ARTISTS: SHOW US THE PICTURE ZAK & LILY SNAPPED OF
THEMSELVES JUST MINUTES BEFORE THE CUBS APPROACHED THEM



WRITERS: YOU ARE THE JOURNALIST WHO INTERVIEWED THE
CUBS ABOUT THEIR MISSION FOR THE YELLOWSTONE ANIMAL
NEWS. GIVE US THE DETAILS IN YOUR ARTICLE. HOW DID THEY GET
THE KIDS TO THE COURTROOM?

...MEANWHILE BACK IN THE CAVE

No matter how many times Grey Wolf hollered,
“Order in the Court! Order in the Court!” chaos ruled.
The animals would not stop their arguing. Eagle sat back,
munched on his lunch of Gummy Worms,
and watched the two attorneys go at it.

Owl & Frog were beak to nose, eyeball to eyeball.
“Uh Uh!” “Uh Huh!” “UH UH!” “UH HUH!”
“SEZ WHO?” “SEZ ME!” “I OBJECT!” “I OBJECT MORE!”
In Eagle’s opinion this was way better than anything on TV.

But Mother Grizzly grew weary of arguing.
Most of the animals in Yellowstone were not aware
of her little-known secret: she much preferred
storytelling to fighting. So she sat herself down
in the middle of court, and started a story:

“This reminds me of the time...”

But we will never know how Bear’s story ended,
because suddenly Owl screeched, Squirrel growled, Beetle fainted,
Frog blubbered, Beaver gnashed his teeth,
and the two kids standing in the cave entrance screamed.
“TA DAI” Bubbles and Boo shouted. “MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!”

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE EARTH WE ALL SHARE

“Back up very slowly,” Lily whispered.

“Not an option,” Zak’s voice wobbled. “How come?” she pressed him.

GRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR. Grey Wolf blocked the door.

“I get it now,” Lily said, her voice wobbling too.

Mother Grizzly could not believe her eyes.

“Bubbles! Boo! How many times have told you not to play

with human children? “ “But MOM,” they chorused...

“No buts,” she grumbled. “We’ll discuss this later.”

Then Eagle raised his wings and spoke with grave authority.

“These human children are here under my protection.

Do not be afraid, young ones. No predators can harm you here.

But I need you to listen, and carry a message back into your world.”

Zak and Lily stared, too shocked to say a word.

Eagle continued: “Here in Yellowstone we are facing a crisis.

The trees are dying and our ponds are drying up.

Food and water are becoming scarce. Our habitat is dying.

And without the things we need to live, we animals will die too.

Do you know about the chain of life?” Eagle asked.

“A little.” Zak kind of remembered it from school.

“Everything is connected?” Lily wasn’t really sure either.

“Yes,” Eagle went on, “even humans are part of this amazing chain.

It is the law of Nature that we all must do things to survive.

Everyone has to eat. Everyone has to live. So it goes.

But the world is out of balance. Do you know the biggest reason?

POLLUTION CREATED BY HUMANS.”

“I’m guilty!” Zak broke in. “ I didn’t recycle my Coke bottle!
Send me to jail! Dock my allowance! Take away my I Pod!”

“Zak, stop joking around,” Lily snapped. “This is real.
Human pollution is causing Global Warming.”

“See?” cried Beetle. “It is not my fault after all!
It’s the humans’ fault!” The animals echoed his words.
“IT’S THE HUMANS’ FAULT! THE HUMANS ARE TO BLAME!”

All at once the ground began shaking. Startled into silence,
they heard the powerful voice of Grandmother Earth.
It is the Earth we all share. Together we are life.
It is the Earth we all share. We must act as one.

There will be no verdict in this court, today.
All of you who call this planet home,
you are wasting time blaming each other.
If you do not work together to restore balance, it will be too late.

Animals of Yellowstone, begin to share what you know.
Help these children see what they can do to help you.

Grey Wolf suggested, “You could _____.”

Frog chimed in, “You could _____.”

Mother Grizzly spoke up, “You could _____.”

And as for you, my human children, you are not powerless.
You have two gifts unique to your species:
CREATIVITY and SOCIAL NETWORKING.
Use one to write the next chapter of our story,
and the other to share that story.
Our future depends on it.

