

Grade 5–6: 1st Place
Kate Semmler
Grade 5
Christ the King School

The Nightmare on Broccoli Street

I hate vegetables, thought Tina as she sat staring at a plate of broccoli. “Why do I have to eat a whole plate of broccoli?” Tina asked her parents.

“Because they’re good for you and you need to stop eating junk food,” her mom said.

“And you have to eat every last piece of broccoli before you can have some dessert,” her dad added.

Tina madly stormed off to her room. “Why are they so mean?” Tina asked her stuffed animals. Of course, Tina knew that they wouldn’t reply. Tina slowly drifted off to sleep with her dog stuffed animal.

The next morning, Tina heard her mom call, “Wake up, Tina. Wake-up. Come and look at our broccoli plant!

Tina quickly grabbed her pink robe and white slippers and ran outside to find her mom’s broccoli plant all torn and trampled on. “Who did this?” Tina asked.

“We think Max did it,” her dad said.

“Max is a good dog. He would never do that,” Tina thought. “It couldn’t be Max,” Tina said.

“Then who else could have done it?” her mom asked.

Tina didn’t know what to say.

“That’s what I thought,” her mom said. “Now go inside and get ready for school.”

Tina didn’t know what happened to her parents’ garden. It was their prize possession, aside from her, of course. Tina hurried to get changed, feed the dog, brush her teeth and hair and grab a quick Pop-tart and chocolate milk as she ran out the door to catch the bus. When she got to school she hurried in so that she could grab a seat next to her best friend Lexi.

“What’s wrong with you?” asked Lexi as she looked at her friend’s face. “You look really upset.”

“I am,” admitted Tina. “Someone trampled my parent’s broccoli plants last night. My parents think that Max did it, but I think it was someone else.”

“That’s weird,” said Lexi, “but we’d better get out our L.A. stuff before we get in trouble. Class is about to start.”

After school, Tina hurried home only to find that the snack her mom had laid out for her was carrots. Yuk. There wasn’t even any ranch dressing to dip them in. And as she sat down to dinner two hours later, there were more carrots on her plate. Mom must have used the ones from my snack, Tina thought. Again, Tina stormed off to her room with an empty stomach. She fell asleep with her stuffed bunny on her arm.

Again her mom woke her up in the morning with a yell to look at the garden. This time the carrots had been torn out of the ground and trampled on. “At least we know it wasn’t Max this time,” said her mom. “We had him sleep in his kennel last night so that he wouldn’t do this again. Tina, do you have any idea who did this?”

Tina told them that she thought it might be rabbits because they like carrots. Her dad said that he would get some rabbit repellent at the hardware store on his way home from work.

When she got to school, Tina told Lexi everything that had happened. “Wow, I wonder who or what is destroying your parents’ garden,” said Lexi.

“I don’t know, but the ‘veggie cruncher’ is keeping me from having to eat all those vegetables,” said Tina. “I’d like to thank whoever it is.”

Things went from bad to worse at her house. Every morning for the next week the vegetables that she had refused to eat the previous night were destroyed in her parents’ garden. Tina couldn’t concentrate at school. She spent most of the school day trying to figure out who was destroying all of their vegetables.

Finally, late one night she got an idea. Going into her closet she took her stuffed animals from their shelf and looked at the bottom of their feet. All of her animals had dirt on their feet!

How could this be, she thought? Were her animals alive?

“Bunny,” she asked quietly, “can you talk?”

“Of course,” came a squeaky reply.

It took a moment for Tina to answer. “Why did you guys do that to my parents’ garden?” Tina asked shakily.

“We wanted to help you,” replied the stuffed rabbit, dusting his paws. “If there are no vegetables for you to eat, you can be happy again.”

“That’s so nice of you,” said Tina, “but it makes me sad that my parents’ beautiful garden is wrecked. Will you stop wrecking the garden if I eat my vegetables?”

“Of course, we just want you to be happy. We love you,” said the rabbit.

“Well, I’ll start eating them tomorrow. Good night, bunny,” said Tina, as she climbed back into bed and fell asleep.

When her mom woke here in the morning, Tina ran to her closet. She was sure that it had all been a bad dream. Her stuffed animals could not possibly be alive. And sure enough, the animals were sitting just where she’d left them and their feet were clean. There wasn’t a speck of dirt on them. Tina went to school thinking about her weird dream.

At dinner that night, her mom served her a hearty helping of asparagus. Just to be on the safe side, Tina quickly ate them down.

“Wow, honey, you sure ate those vegetables fast,” said her mom.

“I’ve decided that I like vegetables,” said Tina. She skipped dessert and hurried to her room.

“Bunny,” she called as she took the rabbit from the shelf. “Can you talk?” Tina was a bit disappointed when there was no answer but she knew it had just been a dream. But as she turned to take the stuffed animal to her bed, she noticed dirty little paw prints on the carpet leading into the closet.

With a smile, she clutched her bunny closer. Lexi would never believe this.