

Grades 5–6: 2nd Place
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The Puddle World

Vianca Limon strolled up the winding road to her house on Deciduous Road. Tree branches draped over the road, shedding golden leaves that glistened when sunlight hit them. Blonde curly hair hung next to her dark Mexican skin. She felt out of place in her all-white family neighborhood.

Vianca closed her eyes for a single moment to smell the aroma of crushed leaves. She, however, did not realize that she had made a massive mistake. Her dark brown eyes opened to find three teenage boys standing around her in a stifling circle. Before Vianca had time to scream for help, a pasty-skinned boy grabbed her and clamped his hand over her mouth.

“Go back to your own country, you nasty dark skin,” he snarled into Vianca’s ear.

“I’ve never known that one of you had our color hair,” a blond-haired boy sneered, seizing a lock of Vianca’s hair. “Why do you have dirty skin, huh? You a mutt or something?”

The boy who grabbed Vianca finally took his hand off her mouth. Vianca stood there speechless; her body trembled as the boys glared at her.

“Say something,” the blond commanded.

“Enough of this talk. Do you have it Red?” the pasty-skinned boy asked Red.

“Yeah, the parents of this filth are going to pay for taking our jobs,” Red spat, revealing a silver pocketknife from his leather jacket.

“Any last words?” he hissed at Vianca.

Vianca thrust her body at him and ran towards the trees. Safely hidden in foliage she collapsed into a kneeling position. A puddle was in front of her reflecting her face. The knife had scratched her cheek; a drop of blood trickled down her face into the shimmering water. Vianca crawled over the puddle and saw the beauty of her face. Her lips looked like a Delicious apple; they were a vivid shade of red. She had long eyelashes, which made her look quite elegant.

Vianca leaned closer to the puddle to admire her exquisiteness. She kept on leaning until her head followed by her body fell into the puddle. Vianca screamed, but air bubbles came out and icy water filled her mouth. Her legs and arms tried to fight the water, but then dangled helplessly to her sides. She was drowning and she could not do anything about it. When Vianca was about to breathe her last breath; she dropped onto land. She looked up and saw the puddle suspended in the sky.

On the ground where she landed there were black rocks. The rocks were scorching hot and made her feet blister. As she walked Vianca did not know where she going, but her instinct told her it was the right direction. A young transparent boy approached her holding out his hand for her to grasp.

“Take my hand,” he commanded her in a soothing voice.

The boy’s soothing voice made Vianca want to hold his hand and never let go. His hand was solid even though he was transparent. He led her to a tropical garden. The garden’s grass was soft against Vianca’s blistered feet. Exotic flowers covered the moss-covered oversized trees.

“Where are we?” Vianca asked in a distant voice.

“The Garden of Life,” he told her.

“I see the wrong-doers are already here,” he added in a whisper of disgust.

She stared at where he was looking. The three teenage boys sat under an oak tree.

“Please, help me!” Vianca cried out fearfully.

“Child, they can’t harm you with me at your side,” he said in a calm voice.

“Stand up,” the boy, still holding Vianca’s hand, barked to the boys.

The three boys stood up, but looked as though they were in pain. Two of the boys had terrified expressions on their faces.

“Why are they here?” Vianca asked frightfully.

“They have done an injustice to you,” he answered.

“Approach me Luke,” he directed.

The pasty skinned boy strode confidently up to the boy. He did not look petrified like the other two boys.

“You have to make a choice. One choice is going back to your own worlds and living a life of forgiveness and love. The other is living eternally, but in pain and sorrow.”

Luke’s beady eyes looked greedily at the boy when he mentioned eternal life. When the boy mentioned the pain and sorrow Luke was not listening. He was relishing the thought of living life eternally.

“You would have to live in the Garden of …” the boy started.

“I shall have eternal life!” Luke shouted triumphantly.

The transparent boy silently led Luke towards two gigantic puddles. One puddle was full of the colors of the rainbow. The other was an aqua blue and had a sense of life.

“Jump into the rainbow puddle and have eternal life,” the boy said, with a faint smile on his face.

“ETERNAL LIFE!!!” Luke bellowed pumping his fist in the air as he leaped into the puddle.

The blond-haired boy and Red had horrified expressions on their faces.

“He will not have eternal life,” the boy whispered after Luke was gone. “The puddle takes the person back to their own world. As their punishment, their skin turns to rainbow colored stripes.” Red went timidly up to the transparent boy.

“Sam and I,” Red said gesturing to the blond boy, “want to go back to our world.”

“You shall, if you swear an oath to never hurt anyone again,” the boy replied.

Sam, Red, and the boy made a circle and held hands. The boy murmured a slur of unrecognizable words. The three boys let go of each other’s hands.

“They will take you back home,” the boy told Vianca.

“Remember my words,” he told the two boys.

With those last words the boy walked behind an evergreen and disappeared. Red gently took hold of Vianca’s hand and walked her over to the blue puddle. Sam followed. The three of them hopped into the puddle. Warm water quickly went over Vianca and then she softly landed on the floor of the woods. The two boys landed closely by her, Red still holding her hand. The three of them walked up the winding road. Sam and Red forgot about Luke and enjoyed the cool fall breeze brushing across their necks. When they got to Vianca’s house both Red and Sam patted Vianca brotherly on the top of her head.

“I forgot to tell you, your blonde hair makes you look very unique,” Sam told Vianca.

“Yeah, it looks great with your skin color,” Red added.

“Thanks,” Vianca said as she hugged both of them.

The next day the front page of every newspaper in the city read:

“Parents Come Home To Find Their Son’s Skin In Rainbow Colored Stripes”

Nancy and Thomas Davidson come home to find son in stripes. Their son, fifteen-year-old Luke Davidson, still will not tell the police what had happened. Nancy, his mother, tried to scrub the stripes off, but the stripes would not come off. The police still are questioning Luke. They suspect that Luke is still in shock about what happened to him.