



Kahani's Fourth Annual Young Writers and Illustrators Contest

1ST PLACE WINNERS — AGE GROUP 6-8

PUJA AND THE PEACOCK

Written by Maya Fiore
Illustrated by XYZ

One nice warm day, a little girl named Puja was walking around.

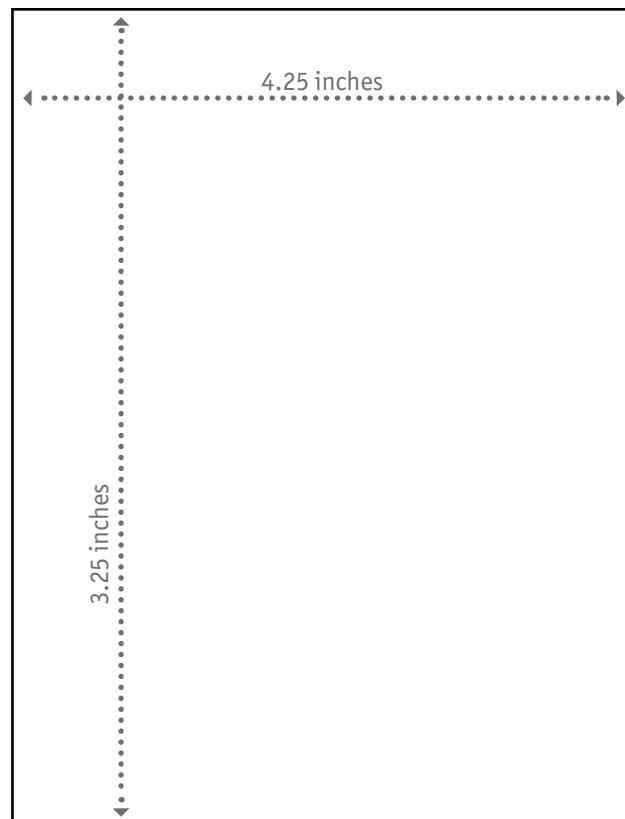
She was staying with her grandparents in India for summer vacation. They lived at the top of a mountain. The monsoon rains came in the summer, but Puja still loved visiting. She loved walking around and sometimes if she was lucky, she would see a peacock and stop to watch it!

One night, she was going to the village to buy some bread for Aji and Bapaji because the news reports were predicting heavy rain and they needed to store food. On the way to the shop, Puja saw the most beautiful peacock! She stopped and gazed at the beautiful creature. After that she kept walking, bought the bread, and returned to the house.

The next morning when she went for a stroll, she saw the peacock again. It was always near the honeysuckle tree, so it must really enjoy the fragrance of flowers! Was it following her?

One morning, she noticed the peacock was not in its usual spot. Puja searched everywhere. Finally, she found it, lying down as if it was hurt. Puja touched the beautiful bird and felt its skin; it was burning. The peacock had a fever. Puja decided to bring it home.

"What are you doing with that!?" Aji said.



Puja explained that the peacock was sick and so Aji said, "OK, you can keep it here, but only for a few days."

The next day, Puja called a veterinarian. The nearest vet, Dr. Shah, was three towns away and he told Puja it would take him three days to get to her home.

"Do you know how to treat peacocks?" Puja asked.

"Yes, I've taken care of a baby peacock who was sick. But they are delicate birds and have to be treated in less than three days."

"Oh no! What should we do?"

"Maybe you can be a vet for a day and help your animal," Dr. Shah suggested.

"How?" asked Puja.

"I will give you directions over the phone," said Dr. Shah. "What do you know about your peacock?"

"I think she loves flowers," Puja said.

"OK then. Pick some beautiful, fresh flowers," said Dr. Shah. "Then hide them in the room where you are keeping your peacock. See if she perks up a bit."

Puja hung up the phone and went into the room to hide the flowers. After Puja finished, the peacock opened her eyes and sniffed around. Her delicate nose lifted high into the air. Puja felt excited. The peacock found the flowers immediately and sat next to them. She started to spread her feathers; it looked like a rainbow of colors. The peacock bent its long neck to touch the flowers.

Puja called Dr. Shah immediately. "My peacock loves the flowers. She is standing up and sniffing the air."

"Does she still have a fever?"

Puja didn't think of that. She ran into her room. The bird rubbed its long soft neck against Puja's face. It felt cool

and smooth. Puja ran to the phone.

"Dr. Shah, no fever!"

"I think your peacock is alright!" Dr. Shah said. "Good work Puja!"

"But I have a question," said Puja. "Do all peacocks feel better around flowers?"

Dr. Shah answered. "Well, everyone has different tastes, and everyone has something that makes them feel better. Maybe your peacock is like that too. Maybe she missed her flowers during the monsoon rains."

Puja thanked him. She was proud she helped the peacock but also sad that she had to let the peacock go. Most of all, she was happy to be here at the top of the mountain. 🌸

Written by Maya Fiore, 8, Massachusetts Text about Maya Fiore to come here. Text about Maya Fiore to come here. Text about Maya Fiore to come here.

Illustrated by XYZ, 0, State To Come Here Text about the illustrator to come here. Text about the illustrator to come here. Text about the illustrator to come here.

