



# OUR HOUSE STORIES

A collection of stories written by the Our House Writing Community

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Ashleigh Barry, Amber Bennett, Belinda Bagnall, Corrie Young, Glenda Allen, Hugo Teske,  
Lisa Dean, Peter Hemsley, Ryan Bagnall, Shane Smith and Tracy Dobson.



COVER ARTWORK  
by Corrie Young



Art by Corrie Young

Welcome to our world, welcome to our stories,  
welcome to our images created by us.

As part of our regular activities, we combined creative forces,  
unleashed our imagination and created our stories.

Step into our world and enjoy Our House Stories.

## ANGEL'S DREAM

Angel loved rock climbing, the freedom, the excitement, and the danger. Then one day she lost her concentration and slipped. Swinging wildly from the rope she slammed her back into the jagged rocks. Her life changed dramatically, going from the carefree, energetic girl to being bed ridden, stuck in hospital and reliant on everyone around her.

A year in hospital could have brought her down but Angel had her sights set on one thing, she would one day go rock climbing again. She had to learn to do everything again and when she got to go home, she had two special friends who helped her and encouraged her, not letting her give up her dream.

Angel worked very hard, she had good days and bad days and needed all the help she could get from her friends and family. They had become her rock with all the support they gave her. She became extremely focused and day after day she worked hard, improving as time passed. She never gave up hope and worked towards her dream which she could see was getting closer.

Some people said she should give it more time and not be in such a hurry, but Angel could feel inside her that she was ready to go. With the help of those who supported her and with luck on her side,

Story and art by Belinda Bagnall

Angel stood for 10 seconds. Tears filled the eyes of everyone in the room. The next day Angel stood for 30 seconds, then the next day she took her first step. Each day she took more and more steps, her friends and family were so happy for her.

Six months later Angel stood at the bottom of the cliff, looking up she remembered the day that it all went wrong, but it did not put her off. Angel felt determined to conquer the rock that had nearly ruined her life. Turning around she looked at the faces of those who had helped her make it back, tears filled her eyes as she thought about the sacrifices, they had all made to make her dream possible. Angel gave them a nod, checked her harness and chalked her hands.

It took a long time for her to reach the top, she planned each move very carefully. The feeling when she pulled herself up over the last ledge and onto the summit was incredible. Standing up, she threw her arms up in the air and yelled, 'I did it, woohoo.' Cheering erupted from the dots of people below. Angel sat down and cried. She couldn't believe how far she had come in less than two years and it was all thanks to her family and friends.



## LITTLE ARROWS

Sweat poured off me  
My face glowed in the sun  
I swung the axe one last time  
The job was nearly done  
The wood crackled as it split  
Then took revenge on me  
Like little flying arrows they hit  
Not one, not two, but three  
I felt my flesh rip  
As they entered my skin  
Then a stinging sensation  
As they made their way in  
My cheek started thumping  
The pain was far too much  
I plucked with my finger tips  
It was too painful to touch  
I ran into the house  
Tripping over the cat by the door  
He looked at me with disgust  
As I joined him on the floor  
I sprung to my feet  
Apologised to the cat  
Then sprinted to the bathroom  
In 10 seconds flat  
I fumbled in the vanity  
Retrieved the tweezers from their spot  
Checked my face out in the mirror

Boy did I get a shock  
My cheek was red and swollen  
My eye half closed  
I took a deep breath  
To try to stay composed  
The tweezers were utterly useless  
So I turned to my knowledgeable friend  
Snatching my phone off the bench  
I asked Siri to recommend  
Hey Siri, how do I get splinters out?  
Then Siri's soft voice spoke,  
Dissolve Epsom salts in water  
Then give the area a soak  
Well I'll give it a go  
Anything's worth a try  
But how will I do this  
Without getting salt in my eye?  
Then I had a thought  
I wasn't a fool  
I'll put on the goggles  
We use in the pool  
I grabbed all I needed  
Then off to the laundry I went  
I will triumph over these splinters  
Well that was my intent  
I mixed up my potion  
Then squeezed the goggles on

Plunged my head into the bucket  
What could possibly go wrong  
I held my breath for ages  
Then came up for some air  
Through the spots on my goggles  
I could see someone was there  
What the heck are you doing?  
Sometimes I worry about you  
My husband was roaring with laughter  
Would you like a snorkel too?  
I've got splinters in my cheek  
I answered with a pout  
I'm soaking in Epsom salts  
To try to get them out  
You could have soaked a bandage  
Then held it in place  
But this is far more amusing  
You should see your face  
Just help me get them out  
I'm in a lot of pain  
We headed to the bathroom  
To try the tweezers again  
With great concentration  
He began to set them free  
I was just so elated  
As he plucked not one, not two,  
but three.

Poem by Tracy Dobson



Art by Corrie Young



Hugo, Glenda, Peter.

## DAYS ON THE FARM

Story by Hugo Teske

I remember when I was about ten years old, we lived on a farm. My dad was a strong man who was also gentle, although, he could fire up occasionally.

We used to go fishing at O'sheas and Somerset Dam quite often. Fishing made me feel relaxed and happy. It took my mind off bad things like when some of the kids at school picked on me and yelled nasty words to me. All that left my mind when I was fishing. Dad and I laughed a lot and I felt very close to him. We used to catch yellowbelly and perch, the fish were very heavy to reel in and sometimes the line snapped. We would take the fish home and dad would fillet them, then mum would cook them in the frying pan. They tasted delicious.

We grew orchids on the farm of all different colours, sometimes we entered them into the Toogoolawah show and won a couple of prizes.

We had a lot of chickens and we used to sell some of the eggs, I used to feed them with the help of my dad.

We had many peacocks which we bred and sold; I liked the peacocks as they were pretty. We also bred budgies of all different colours, we had about eighty. My favourite is the harlequin pied as they are the most colourful and beautiful. Kids would come to buy them off us for pets.

We also had dairy cattle which we milked by hand. I enjoyed milking the cows. Occasionally they would kick the bucket and the milk would spill everywhere.

I had a lovely black horse called Rosie, she was very quiet, and I enjoyed riding her. She went slow so I felt very safe.

When dad passed away, I felt very sad. The farm was too big for mum and me, so we moved into town. We had to sell all the animals, I got to keep six budgies which I still have today.

When I feel sad about my dad, I remember all the fun times we had, and it makes me smile.



Art by Lisa Dean

## THE LONG WAY HOME

Story by Ashleigh Barry

"Where are we? I knew we should have gone the way the camel hire man said. But no, we had to go your way and now we are lost in the desert and we are going to die!"

Graham looked at his sister. 'Don't be so dramatic Brooke, think of it as an adventure.'

'Well, it's getting late, and it will be dark soon, we'll probably freeze to death,' said Brooke.

'We'll just follow the Camel's footsteps and we'll be home.'

'What's that Graham?' Brooke pointed over his shoulder.

'What the! Brooke quick we need to tie the camels up and shelter behind that tree.'

Brooke followed her brother's instructions for the first time in her life, her eyes wide with terror. The dust storm felt like it lasted forever, when it was over Brooke spat the sand out of her mouth.

Brooke put her hands on her hips, 'Great, now the camel footprints are gone.'

Graham wiped the dust from his eyes and looked down at his feet. 'I'm sorry Brooke, I'm sure they will come looking for us, in the meantime I think we should just hang out here.'

Brooke let out a loud scream 'A SNAKE!!!'. A big kookaburra swept down and grabbed the snake then smacked it against a tree. 'Thank god that kookaburra just saved our lives.'

'I'm thirsty, we are going to have to find some water.'

Graham agreed, he took off his shirt, ripped it and tied a piece to the tree. 'I think we will let the camels lead the way.'

Graham continued to tie pieces of material to anything he could along the way. After what seemed like hours, they came across a

small soakage. Brooke splashed her face washing the dust off, then filled her mouth with water. Graham filled their water bottles after quenching his thirst. He looked at the setting sun. I think we should stay here tonight.

Brooke yawned in agreement, making themselves as comfortable as they could they both closed their eyes and drifted off to sleep.

Brooke dreamt she could hear her father's voice calling her and Graham's names. A gentle hand on her shoulder startled Brooke and she sat up with a fright. She could just make out her father's face in the moonlight. 'Dad!' Brooke screamed, shaking with excitement she jumped up and threw her arms around him. 'How did you find us?'

'We followed the trail of Grahams shirt, that was a very good idea.'

'Come on Hansel and Gretel, let's go home.'

## THE COWBOY'S PRAYER

Story and art by Shane Smith

Let us paint a quick picture and set the scene in the wheat fields of a little town call Yukon - right in the middle of Oklahoma in the USA. The date is October 12, the year is 1963. A mother gave birth to a skinny lanky boy who they named Clyde. Clyde stole his father's heart and was the twinkle in his momma's eye.

Clyde would be raised on hard workmanship and to always be thankful for what he had. At the young age of six Clyde would follow his daddy's shadow trying to keep up two steps to his father's one enormous footstep lugging hay around the two thousand acres ranch the Frost family owned. While working the cattle one day, the sun was beating down on Clyde's neck, he took off his beaten old Stetson cowboy hat, looked at his dad and said, 'One day I wanna ride the biggest and meanest bulls.' Clyde knew his dad rode the bucking broncs at the rodeos. Clyde's father looked him in the eyes and said 'I was too afraid to ride the bulls.'

Let's skip a few years. Clyde was working the ranch making his momma and papa proud when 3 friends turned up in a beat up 1978 Cadillac Eldorado, skidding sideways up the dirt track leading up to the

ranch. Chris LeDoux was jamming on the radio; they blew the horn. Clyde gathered his gear and rubbed the antique gold buckle his daddy wore in his days of rodeo. Clyde, Tuff and Cody drove away from the ranch bound for their first rodeo, to be held in Apache Oklahoma. The three friends drove up to the rodeo grounds and watched the people waving at the bull riders as they walked past. The boys hoped that one day they too would have people waving at them and wished they could shake the stranger's hands and sign their autographs.

Clyde, Tuff and Cody were standing on the outside of the bucking chutes, Clyde was worried and nervous, his body had ached so long for this one ride, it would either make him or break him. Clyde drew number 22, a bull named *Bushwhacker*, a little bull weighing under one thousand pounds. Clyde took to the chute, pulled up his chaps, pulled his hat down and wiped his palms on his pants to get a better grip on the rope. The roar of the Sunday crowd made Clyde feel more comfortable. Clyde nodded his head, the chute gates opened, and *Bushwhacker* took his body left to right. Clyde didn't know what *Bushwhacker's* next move could be, but



all of a sudden, the eight second bell rang and that's when Clyde realised this is the life he always wanted. Landing in the mud and slapping on his dirty hat he looked at his buddies and raised a hand in the air towards the crowd, smiling as a newspaper Rodeo gentleman took his picture.

As the boys followed Rodeo to Rodeo summer faded into fall. The three buddies travelled from bar to bar. Hearts were broken along the way and fights started just like John Wayne busting a huge right fist. Clyde never forgot about his parents and life on the ranch. He called his parents and told them he made the short go round. One hundred dollars turned into two hundred dollars. After weeks following the rodeos, Clyde returned to Yukon Oklahoma where his papa would give Clyde pointers on making the big bucks. Sometimes late at night Clyde and his dad would sit in the dark rewinding tapes seeing where he could do better in the hope someone would recognise him.

After months of ranching, helping and competing in local rodeos, Clyde and his buddies headed for the state line in sight of the rodeos on the west coast. Somewhere in Texas near El Paso, Clyde competed in a PRCA event that saw him draw a bull named *Tornado*. The bull went left and right, but Clyde held on tight as the bull reared up and it felt like it

jumped to the moon. Clyde came down and to his surprise met the top of tornados skull. Bumped and bruised Clyde stumbled to the fence holding onto the rails. Catching his breath, the clowns ran over to Clyde to assist him. He looked at his buddies and they bellowed, "To make it in the big league you have to cowboy up."

Rodeo to rodeo, coast to coast and everywhere in between, the travelling buddies set their sights on the big rodeos - Cheyenne, Houston and maybe even Las Vegas where they would be riding against the best of the best and meanest bulls in the countryside. Having suffered injury after injury, Clyde's body was starting to take a beating. Tuff and Cody were making the big bucks and signing autographs. Somewhere in Arizona near Prescott, Clyde met a young lady named Jennifer who barrel raced to make the dollars. Clyde thought maybe it was time to find someone special while on the road. The year was 1986. When heading to Denver Colorado, Clyde took a detour to Houston Texas to see this girl which was out of the way of the next rodeo. Tuff was not happy when he found out about this detour but blowing the horn trying to make a scene was not going so well.

After the rodeo season ended a rodeo newspaper man and a stock contractor approached Clyde

in Oklahoma and organized a three chance bull rider Vs bull championship in a small arena not much bigger than a sardine container. The bull named Red Rock had bucked off one hundred riders and had a bad attitude which twitched with every moment. The bull could sense something and as Clyde lowered himself on the backbone of this terror he shuddered as the rope was pulled tighter and tighter. He looked at the small crowd of newspaper reporters and stock contractor. Spotting a familiar face in the crowd he saw the girl of his dreams. Clyde gave Jennifer a wink and pulled his hat down lower, so his ears were touching the brim, he nodded his head, and the chute gates flew open. Disappearing in jumps and dust Clyde fell to the ground, all 246 pounds, and his six-foot body landed with a thud.

The first ride only lasted a couple of seconds and prize money was disappearing slowly. Clyde knew to make the ride he had to focus, two more rides were scheduled for Clyde and Red Rock to meet face-to-face. On the second round Clyde made the seven second ride, he knew he would conquer the next ride. Two weeks later the third and final ride was the toughest. Again, Jennifer was there for support. Clyde winked and pulled his rope tighter and tighter till his fingers went numb. Chutes blew open, he closed his eyes and crunched his teeth. He heard his

travelling buddies yelling and screaming, 'RIDE HIM.'

The bell rang, Clyde was over the moon, he had conquered Red Rock. Looking at the crowd he raised his hands in the air and waved. Jennifer ran through the crowd of spectators and flung her arms around his neck, their lips met. Clyde had been waiting for the perfect moment to ask the biggest question of his life and that moment had arrived.

Summer 1986 was around the corner. Clyde and Jennifer were looking forward to Rodeo season. Their relationship was going strong and Clyde had made plenty of money working in the off season. Cowboys usually must sell everything and are left with broken homes and broken bones. Clyde's wounds had almost healed after conquering Red Rock. He was known coast to coast and rodeos were becoming popular, so Clyde bought a plane. Travelling was a lot faster now.

Flying into Cheyenne, Tuff, Clyde and Cody were focusing primarily on big bucks and signing autographs. They were getting all amped up and when Clyde drew a massive bull named Bodacious. The last person to ride this mammoth beast busted every bone in face but that did not faze Clyde and as he was standing on the chutes, he could feel the ground rumble underneath the gates. Clyde lowered his body upon the beast. The mammoth

bull moved and bucked in the chutes. Clyde tipped his head below his hat and yelled, 'Come on boys!' The chutes busted open, one jump to the left, Clyde didn't move an inch, next jump went right and that's when Clyde sensed trouble. He went down hard hitting the dirt at full speed. Bodacious turned and had Clyde in his sight. He headed towards the stunned Clyde and in the blink of an eye Bodacious had stabbed several ribs with the back of his horns. Clyde tried to make a move towards the rails and landed on his knees. The crowd silenced in the stands as Clyde passed away in the middle of Cheyenne rodeo grounds. Clyde was later buried at the ranch.

While in Las Vegas at the NFR Tuff, the greatest bull rider of all time, had drawn a bull called Takin Care of Business. With a score of 95 and the world championship in his sight he knew what had to be done. With a full house, he scanned the crowd and spotted Clyde's parents and Jennifer. Tuff lowered his hat and nodded his head, with Cody screaming to make a successful ride Tuff leaped out of the chutes and rode that bull to become a world champion. He dedicated his ride to Clyde and rode the bull for a further eight seconds. Clyde's parents looked at the special girl and the diamond on her finger, 'Is Tuff hung up?'

'No.' Jennifer said, a single tear slid down her cheek. 'He's riding for Clyde now.' After dismounting the bull Tuff through his hands in the air and waved like Clyde would do.

Years later when Tuff met the girl of his dreams, they had a son. The name was simple to pick. They named him Clyde so the legend would live on.

Art by Corrie Young



## WE ARE GOING

'Far out they're missing again! That's it, I'm finding out what's behind that door!'

'But Brooke, Grandma and Granddad said we are never to open that door!'

Yeah well, we're not little kids anymore and my gut tells me that door has something to do with them disappearing all the time, I'm looking for the key!'

Charles put his head down and followed his sister to the study.

'It's got to be somewhere in here, it's the only room that's off bounds. You check the shelves and I'll check the desk.'

Charles' jaw dropped as he watched his sister tossing everything out of the drawers.

'Aha,' Brooke held up two long brass keys with a look of triumph on her face. Taking off like an athlete she reached the basement door in a flash. Brooke took a deep breath then carefully put the key into the hole, she glanced at Charles with one eyebrow raised.

'Here goes,' she said. Click, she slowly opened the door, then they carefully walked down the stairs.

'I've got goose bumps, Charles.'

'Yeah, I've got hairs on my body I didn't know existed; this is freaking me out,' Charles said as he scanned the room.

'Brooke there's nothing down here but dust and old stuff, look there's your old doll house!'

'Charles look!' Brooke pointed to the back of the room. 'There's another door, that's strange there's no door on the outside of the basement. I'll try the other key.'

Not hesitating this time, Brooke slipped it into the lock and turned. The handle felt cold and uninviting. Ignoring her rapid heartbeat, she swung the door open before she could change her mind.

Brooke's eyes bulged as she took in the scene. 'Charles, you've got to see this. The trees are pink, and they have these weird looking crystals hanging from them.'

Charles poked his head around the door. 'There are giant mushrooms too! I don't like this; I say we shut the door right now and forget about it.'

Brooke grabbed her brother's arm and yanked him through. 'We are going Charles! Toughen up a bit.'

It will be an adventure. Besides how bad can it be?' she said as she kicked the door shut.

The grass suddenly shadowed, Charles head shot up, his eyes widened, gulping he could hardly get out his words. 'Brooke run! There's a snake with wings!'

The red and yellow creature was at least 10 metres long, its wings sounded like thunder as it chased them. Brooke felt the heat on her back, the crackling of fire and the smell of smoldering grass. It was enough to make her wish she had listened to her brother. They zig-zagged as they ran trying to avoid becoming the dragon's next toasted humans.

'Charles, I don't think I can run for much lon.... Aaaaah!'

The ground disappeared beneath them, their arms and legs flung around as they fell. They both landed softly on a spongy object. Charles pulled out his phone and put the torch on. 'What is this? It looks like a mine, there are heaps of those crystal things that were hanging in the trees.'

'Um Charles - I think we landed in giant spider eggs,' Brooke pointed over her brothers' shoulder. 'I don't think the mum is really happy either!'

Charles spun around and shone his torch in the spider's direction, its fangs were dripping with saliva, its purple eyes were focused on its prey. It backed off when the light shone directly in its eyes, giving Brooke and Charles a moment to figure out an escape.

'Charles! We can climb up the webs, they are huge, they should hold us!'

'Yeah, I'll try anything right now!' his breath rasping as they climbed the sticky web to safety.

Gathering their breath, they hid behind a tree, minutes later they were astounded to witness an angelic creature saunter towards them, its single golden horn sparkling in the sunlight. They were both lost for words when it softly spoke to them.

'Don't be frightened, I am not going to hurt you, my name is Celestia. I will take you to Princess Augusta who will help you, but first I want you to both pick some crystals from a tree, they will protect you from the dragon snakes. If you throw them at the dragons it will kill them. But only do it if necessary as they aren't bad really, they are controlled by the evil wizard Chernobog, who controls them with his mind. The Princess is out with who I assume are your

grandparents, trying to banish him. The crystals will erase him from here and send him back to his world, but he has the power to stop them hitting him if he sees them coming.'

'How far away are they? I'm exhausted and my brother probably is too, I want to see our grandparents desperately, but I think we need to rest first.'

Charles nodded in agreement.

Celestia let out a neigh, 'I've just called Tobin, he will give you a ride.'

Brooke squealed as the huge red dog came flying towards them, drool dripping off his tongue, onto his fluffy coat of fur. The ground shook as he landed, his slobber creating a puddle at Charles' feet.

'He is the friendliest dog in the kingdom, there is no need to be afraid. Climb on his back and he will take you to the princess and your grandparents. Don't forget the crystals.'

Doing as instructed, Brooke and Charles settled onto Tobin's back almost disappearing into his thick fur. They gripped tight as he took off, looking down they could see Celestia galloping below them, her beautiful white mane dancing in the wind.

Brooke gasped at the beauty of the kingdom, an explosion of colours awakened her senses. She suddenly felt exhilarated and fearless.

Charles was aware of the three dragon snakes tailing them, he held up a crystal and they backed off, but did not leave. He was so busy watching them that he nearly missed another one careering towards them on the left. Without hesitation Charles hurled the crystal only just hitting it on the top of its head. The dragon snake exploded sending sparks flying all over them.

Brooke snapped out of her dream and quickly removed her jacket slapping it on Tobin's back but there were too many embers and she could not get them all out. 'Tobin, you're on fire!' Brooke screamed.

Tobin flicked his tongue around to his back, frothy drool flowed dousing the fires. Brooke was blinded, wiping her hand across her face she dry retched as she spat the warm slobber out of her mouth. She could hear Charles roaring with laughter, so she ignored the impulse to say anything, concentrating instead on the unusual land.

Brooke spotted two figures sitting on a branch, she called out when she realised it was her grandparents.

Their grandfather's brows creased. 'What on earth are you two doing here, you have broken the rules, you could get killed here!'

Charles and Brooke climbed off Tobin and joined their grandparents on the branch. Brooke took a



Art by Amber Bennett



Art by Amber Bennett and Shane Smith

deep breath then her words flowed like lava. 'We could get killed, what about you disappearing all the time, no explanation, you could get killed. I don't think you have a right to point a finger at us, you have some explaining to do, both of you!'

Their grandmother interrupted. 'Now now, this isn't the place for this, you are here now so you might as well help us. We have to send that nasty wizard back to where he belongs, he's been causing trouble for thirty years now and it ends today. We must surprise him and trick him so we can hit him with a crystal. Charles, have you been attending your archery classes?'

'Yeah why?'

'If we distract him and you hide higher up in this tree, you can use a bow to shoot a crystal arrow that the princess has gone to collect. Your grandfather was going to shoot it, but his eyes aren't what they used to be. So, in a way it's probably good you broke the rules. Here she comes now.'

A stunning blue lady with golden hair ascended the tree with a silver bow and crystal arrow on her back.

Brooke put out her hand, then whipped it

away again choosing instead to curtsy.

'Hi, I'm Brooke and this is my brother Charles.'

'It's lovely to meet you both, your grandparents are always talking about you.'

'That's funny, they never say anything about you,' Brooke blurted.

Charles frowned at his sister. 'Brooke!'

Brooke's face reddened. 'Sorry, but it's true.'

'That's okay Brooke, I understand. So, I guess I'm passing this over to you Charles.'

Charles took hold of the bow and arrow with shaky hands, unsure if he really wanted to take on the responsibility let alone if he could save an entire kingdom.

Brooke looked at her brother, little beads of sweat had formed on his forehead, his eyes were wide, and she could see his hands shaking. 'You can do this Charles! You are top in your archery class, just take a couple of deep breaths and have some faith in yourself, you've got this.'

Charles reluctantly agreed, then began climbing up to a higher position. He called out when he was settled and the four people down below started calling out Chernobog's name, yelling abuse and

calling him names to taunt him.

It didn't take too long for Chernobog to appear on a dragon snake, he lined up the four people and sped towards them with bad intentions. Charles closed his eyes, took a deep breath, and positioned the bow. He imagined he was in a competition and lives did not depend on him. Charles drew back the arrow, the bowstring stretched tight. Focusing on his target he restrained from shooting too early. At the very moment that Chernobog ordered his dragon snake to attack, Charles let go, the crystal arrow flew towards the wizard at phenomenal speed. Chernobog didn't have a hope of seeing it coming. It hit him hard in the chest, and he vanished immediately.

Charles blinked a couple of times and shook his head unsure if all of this was really happening.

Cheering erupted from the branches below. Beaming, Charles climbed down to meet them.

'On behalf of our kingdom I would like to thank you, what you just did will change all of our lives forever,' Princess Augusta said as she hugged a blushing Charles. 'Tonight, we celebrate at the castle, with you all as our guests of honor.'

Story by: Ryan Bagnall, Belinda Bagnall, Corrie Young, Lisa Dean, Ashleigh Barry, Amber Bennett, Shane Smith, Hugo Teske and Tracy Dobson.

Thank you to each and every single writer  
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Thank you for reading our stories.

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