



2nd Place - Category: Age 7-9

“The Jackal Mouse” - Miki, age 8

Hidden in the African savanna, under the shadow of Mount Kilimanjaro, lived a creature so strange and weird you might not believe it existed at all! Half jackal, half mouse, with electric blue fur and bright green eyes... it was the Jackal-Mouse. Each day lots of tourists would tear through the savanna trying to find this mysterious beast. Their safari jeeps spewed horrible, smelly fumes into the air, causing a thick smog to hang over the mountain so that no snow covered the top.

To save her mountain, for she really did think it was *her* mountain, the Jackal-Mouse would try to scare the tourists away with pranks and tricks – she would howl near their camps at night and bite holes in their mosquito nets. But nothing seemed to work...

Then one night as the Jackal-Mouse lay under the stars, thinking up new pranks, there was a sudden flash across the sky and a heavy thump as a meteor crashed into the ground. She rushed to find it and was amazed by what she saw... a meteor, the size of a pebble, surrounded by star dust of every colour imaginable. It would have been the most beautiful thing the Jackal-Mouse had ever seen if it wasn't for the awful smell of rotten eggs and mouldy cheese! She knew immediately what her next prank would be and as quickly as she could, the Jackal-Mouse gathered all the star dust into a bag and dragged it to the camp. She poured the star dust into the fuel tank of the first jeep but noticed that the bag was still full. She poured star dust into the next jeep, and again the bag was full... over and over the bag never emptied. Barely able to contain her excitement, she crept back home and waited to see what horrible smell would greet the tourists the next day.



She woke early the next morning to the rumbling sound of the jeeps and ran to the road to watch the effects of her latest trick. But as the jeeps sped past, the Jackal-Mouse knew that something wasn't quite the same... at least it was not what she was expecting... the tourists acted like nothing had happened at all, the jeeps left no fumes behind, and there was no sickly smelly smog! Somehow, the star dust had cleaned all the pollution from the jeeps and the air had started to clear.

The Jackal-Mouse knew, at long last, this was her chance to save *her* mountain! From then on, every night when the tourists slept, the Jackal-Mouse would fill the fuel tanks of the jeeps with the never-ending star dust and every day as they raced through the savanna, the air became cleaner. One year later, for the first time in her life, the Jackal-Mouse saw snow on the top of Mount Kilimanjaro and the sky was almost as blue as her. The Jackal-Mouse thanked her lucky stars for the day that changed her world.