

ZigZagZine

Issue 3

CREATING, THINKING, IMAGINING

March/April 2008

Cold, Wet, and Windy: A Great Day for Elephant Seals

by Jessica Chase

If you were wearing a couple of tons of blubber on a hot day, you would be boiling, right? That's why elephant seals prefer cooler weather.

My homeschool group recently took a trip to Año Nuevo State Reserve on the California coast, south of San Francisco, to see elephant seals during their breeding and birthing season. Though the weather was cold and wet, it was great for watching elephant seals. When the weather is warm and sunny, they just lie around and laze. When it's chilly outside for us, they're snug in their skin and blubber and they're more active.

Elephant seals are really huge! Male elephant seals can be up to 18 feet long, and can weigh 5,000 pounds. That's two and a half tons! Much smaller, the females usually



Photos by Jessica Chase

Elephant seals pile up on the beach at Año Nuevo, on the California coast. They come here every year to mate and give birth. When we visited in February, there were 475 males, 679 females, 533 pups and 1086 weaners.



Only the biggest and toughest male seals will actually mate, and are called alpha males. The losers lie alone, often with scars from battles lost in an effort to become the alpha male. The male has a large proboscis, for which elephant seals are named. Their flippers point backwards and they move awkwardly, though they can charge rapidly.

measure 10 to 12 feet and weigh a little under 1,450 pounds. The biggest known male elephant seal weighed 11,000 pounds, and was 22.5 feet long!

The elephant seal breeding season starts at Año Nuevo in December, when the first males arrive, and ends in March. In late December, the females begin to arrive and form groups on the beaches of the Reserve, called harems. Once female seals mate, they go out to sea and delay their fertilization for 3 months!

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Spring is Here!

Well, at least it is in California, where some of our readers and contributors live, but some who live in the northeast will have to wait a little longer!

Readers from around the country can send in articles, stories, poems, and artwork for our next issue. If you'd like to contribute to our May/June issue, see page 9 for details. In the meantime, check out our Web site at zigzagzine.com. — Jessica Chase, Editor



Awww! This is a weaner, a baby seal that has already been left on its own by its mother.

The next year, the females come back to the same place, have their babies, and mate again before leaving once more.

Baby elephant seals, while still nursing, are called pups. After their mothers abandon them and go to sea, they are called weaners. Mothers nurse their pups for 25 to 28 days before leaving. In that time, the pups grow from 75 pounds to 250 to 350 pounds on the mother's rich milk (55% fat)! Some pups even nurse from several different females. They can weigh up to 600 pounds, and are called "super weaners."

When the weaners are four to six weeks old, their original coat of black fur molts and is replaced by a shiny new silver coat. Soon, they begin learning to swim in the shallow offshore waters or ponds formed by rainwater. They're curious, slightly awkward, and afraid of the water at first. But they learn quickly, spend more and more time swimming about, and then, during the last three weeks of April, they go to sea and head northwestward. They feed off the coast of northern Washington and Vancouver Island in British Columbia, not appearing on land again until September.

Females give birth for the first time at age 3 or 4 and, on average, live about 20 years. Males mature at five years, and their prime breeding years are between ages 9 and 12. Males usually live 14 years.

Hundreds of thousands of elephant seals once thrived in the Pacific Ocean. They were nearly wiped out in the 1800s, being killed for the oil from their blubber. By 1892, only 50 to 100 seals were left! The only ones left were on the coast of Baja California.

Fortunately for the seals, Mexico's government passed a law in 1922, protecting the elephant seals. The U. S. government did so as well a few years later, when elephant seals started appearing in Southern California waters. Today, there are roughly 160,000 elephant seals, and when we visited, there were 679 females, 475 males, 533 pups and 1086 weaners at Año Nuevo. That's a whole lot of seals! **zzz**



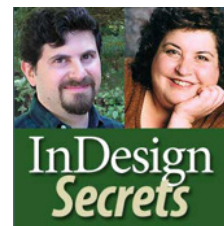
Pile O' Seals: Elephant seals are more active when the weather is cool.

Contributors to this issue

- ◆ Jessica Chase, 10, lives in San Francisco, Calif.
- ◆ Riley Price, 12, lives in Aptos, Calif.
- ◆ Donny Hampton, 10, lives in Ogden, Utah.
- ◆ Jack Wooldridge, 12, lives in Great Meadows, New Jersey.
- ◆ Hailey Joy Scandrette, 13, lives in San Francisco, Calif.
- ◆ Rochelle Litchfield, 10, lives in San Jose, Calif.
- ◆ Ian Garrison, 11, lives in Sparta, New Jersey.
- ◆ Olive Lopez, 10, lives in San Francisco, Calif.

ZigZagZine Featured on Podcast!

Jessica Chase, editor of *ZigZagZine*, has been interviewed by Anne-Marie Concepcion and David



Blatner of the podcast "Indesign Secrets," about creating

the zine in Adobe Indesign. Go to their Web site and have a listen: indesignsecrets.com/indesignsecrets-podcast-071.php (the interview starts about one-third of the way into the podcast).

Where Did the California Academy of Sciences Go?

by Olive Lopez

Let's say you and some friends want to visit the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco. But when you arrive, it looks like it's permanently closed. Which it is, though only temporarily. The museum, which houses a science center, an aquarium and thousands of specimens, will be moving back to Golden Gate Park this September, across from the De Young Museum. While the museum building in Golden Gate Park was completely rebuilt over three years, starting in 2005, part of the museum's collections have been available to the public at a temporary warehouse location on Howard Street in San Francisco.




Photo by Jessica Chase

The green roof of the new Cal Academy building, with three large domes.

The new building cost \$484 million, and according to David Pearlman and Kevin Fagin at the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "It was easy to see where those \$484 million dollars went." The new building includes a 2.5-acre living dome (with plants on it) and an installation made entirely out of recycled jeans. It's the only "green" museum in the world.

At the old building's last day, visitors were allowed free admission if they brought "house warming" gifts, like whiffle balls for the penguins and blankets for the baby penguins. Now Cal Academy has already started to move all the reptiles, fish and specimens back to Golden Gate Park. To carry the penguins, they'll use cat/dog carriers filled with shredded newspaper. You can go to their Web site, calacademy.org, to name the new baby penguins.

A friend of mine, Ashley Walker (owner of a tortoise and dog, as well as a former owner of a bearded dragon) moved from San Francisco to nearby Pacifica, on the California coast, last summer. She put her tortoise, Atlas, in a barrel and then put it in the back seat of her van. Ashley says, "Atlas has been digging this amazingly deep hole and spends time out there when the weather is mild. This is something she'd be doing in the wild, so we take it Pacifica feels more like home to her."

The Academy will use the same kind of techniques to move their reptiles. They displayed stretchers that they said will be used to transport the crocodiles. If you live in or near San Francisco, and you want to visit a natural history museum, you can visit the [Randall Museum](#), the [San Francisco Zoo](#), the [Aquarium of the Bay](#), or, a little farther away, the [Monterey Bay Aquarium](#). Don't worry though, the Academy will be back in September. For more information about the California Academy of Sciences and its new location, see calacademy.org. 

Google Lets Kids Design Their Logo

"Doodle 4 Google" is a competition that Google is holding for K-12 students to play around with their home page logo.

A panel of judges will select 40 finalist doodles, from which the public will help select a favorite



to be featured on the Google home page on May 22, 2008. Three national finalists will win a trip to the Googleplex (Google headquarters), a laptop computer, and a t-shirt printed with their doodle. To learn more, visit google.com/doodle4google/.

My Dad and the Goldfish Pond

An epic tale of adventure and drama

By Hailey Joy Scandrette

One cold winter day, shortly before my dad turned six, his mom took him and his sister, Robin, to the mall to do some shopping. In the mall there was a large irregularly shaped goldfish pond, with fountains in it and rocks bordering the edges. It was a perfect place for my dad and his sister to play while their mom went into a nearby bookstore. As they were crawling around on the rocks looking at the goldfish, my dad turned to his sister, who was seven, and asked,

"Robin, what would you do if I fell in?"

She promptly answered, "I'd run and scream and go tell Mom."

A few minutes later he asked her again, "What would you do if I fell in?"

"I'd run and scream and go tell Mom."

After a couple minutes more he asked her yet again, "What would you do if I fell in?"

"I'd run and scream and go tell Mom!"

Shortly after that he fell, snowsuit and all, right into the goldfish pond. But Robin did not need to run, nor scream or go tell anyone, for as soon as my dad stood up soaking wet to the skin, a terrified goldfish swimming down his pant leg, he began to scream at the top of his lungs! His mom came rushing out of the bookstore with some of the staff following her. Her expression was a mixture of worry, annoyance and embarrassment.

Many interested shoppers stared at them as they helped my dad, still screaming, out of the pond.

The staff of the bookstore offered to let him sit in the manager's office while his mom went to buy him a new pair of clothes, with money that she'd been planning to use to buy him one more birthday present. She told him that since he fell in, she'd have to spend it on new clothes instead.

"I refuse to buy you new socks and underwear though, so you'll just have to go without." She stated as she left him and Robin in the bookstore manager's office, where they'd been seated in chairs and given a book to look at. My dad's mom came back in a few minutes carrying a pair of green pants and a yellow, orange and brown striped shirt.

That afternoon my dad had made plans to go to a hockey game with his friend, Bobby, to celebrate his birthday. So my dad and his mom and sister left the mall and got into their '72 Volkswagen van (which incidentally had no heat) and drove straight to Bobby's house. Before she left him, my dad's mom asked Bobby's mom (much to the embarrassment of my dad) if my dad could borrow some of Bobby's socks and underwear. He did, and they had a great time at the hockey game after all.

A few years later my dad's younger cousin Laura did the exact same thing, at the same mall in the same goldfish pond! *zzz*

Riley's Tech & Science Column

by Riley Price

I am an aspiring scientist, and in this new column, I will be mixing computer technology and science to make a column that I hope you will enjoy.

Open Source Software

Have you ever seen a shiny new piece of software, something you'd been wanting for a while? Did you consider purchasing it, then look at the price tag and recoil with disgust? If so, then this article is for you.

I will tell you a secret that very few American computer users know. Quite simply, the secret is, "You can get the equivalent of software you would normally pay for, for absolutely free!" This is what open-source software is all about. Not all open source software is free, or "freeware," but a lot of it is.

Open source software is made by individuals or small cyber-communities completely dedicated to making this incredible software available for free (usually only for personal use, though not always). There are a few reasons why people who are new to computing may not know about open source. First, there are no advertisements about open-source software—you have to find out about it from a place like this column. Secondly, humans tend to associate things they pay for with better quality.

If you are interested in open-source software, Sourceforge.net is the best place to download and install it. For beginners, I would recommend visiting [PCWorld Downloads](http://PCWorld.com) and searching for "open source."

For more information, see the wiki page "What is Open Source" and "Open Source Initiative." *zzz*

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receive an email every time a new issue comes out.

Sign up at groups.google.com/group/zigzagzine

Our Trip to the Museum of Chinese in America

by Jack Wooldridge

Our homeschool group recently took a trip to the [Museum of Chinese in America](#) (MOCA) in New York City, and the first thing we did was go for a walk around Chinatown. The lady who led our tour was very good. We learned about one big area in Chinatown that has so many banks and shops it has become the business and commercial district. Two statues grace this area, one of Confucius and one of Lin Zexu, who fought in the first Opium War (1839-1842) between China and the United Kingdom.

After that we continued on to a tourist area. There were some shops there and a very good restaurant where we stopped for lunch. There was lots of delicious food to eat. I've never been so full! After lunch, we went back to MOCA and learned about the Chinese in America through objects and pictures, and we were given a box of questions to answer.

One thing we learned about was how the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882) forced Chinese laborers to be sent home and no more allowed in because they were causing unrest, but it seems to me like the Chinese were the ones mostly being attacked. We talked about persecution and the largest Chinese Catholic church in the city for a bit, and then it was time to leave. I had a really good day.

!!!



Puck

Drawings

by Rochelle Litchfield

I started with the thought of drawing the girl to the right as a warrior, but she looked so miserable that I decided to draw her hauling salt to market.

Above is is a sketch of my cat Puck. I drew him while he was sleeping on a chair. !!!



The Three Gold Bands

by Jessica Chase

"I'll be handing out the results of yesterday's math quiz now, class," droned Mr. Edmund. He slapped a paper face down on Josie's desk. "Stay after class please, Miss McConnell," he said coldly, without looking at her. She peeked at the front: F. A big red F.

The bell rang. Josie slunk down in her seat as people hurried past her, chatting and laughing. Soon she was the only person left in the classroom. Mr. Edmund sat down at his desk. For a moment he just looked at her as she fiddled with a pencil. Then he sighed and looked out the window.

"Why can't you just do the math problem like the instructions say, Josephine?" he said finally.

"Because I know a shortcut that is easier," Josie replied abruptly.

"Can't you do it the long way around, to show your work, just for school?"

"It isn't logical."

Mr. Edmund sighed deeply. "You're dismissed then."

Josie grabbed her backpack and hurried out. She was glad to be out of the torture zone.



"I'm home!" called Josie as she walked in the door and into the kitchen.

"Jo!" cried her little brother Teddy, who had just turned four.

"Hi, Honey," said her mom, who was making dinner.

"How was school?"

"The usual," Josie replied. "I'll be in my room."



Josie threw her backpack on her bed, and then flopped down beside it. What a long day. She grabbed a book from her nightstand table. She had just started reading, when suddenly, there was a bright splash of light! A silhouette emerged from the light, and a voice called out, "Don't be afraid!"



"Don't be afraid!" called the creature again.

"What-who-" stuttered Josie. The light was slowly fading, and she saw the creature more clearly. It was as big as her bed, and had at least thirty long tentacles sticking out in all directions. It had to bend over to fit into her room. Josie's mouth fell open.

"Who—and what—are you?" She gasped incredulously. She was clinging tightly to the edge of her sheets.

"I am Kaltialosonto Teboonskuallee," said the creature in a strange, almost distant, voice.

"Kol—Kal—what?" stammered Josie.

The creature emitted a musical laugh. "You may call me Kaltia."

"But—what are you?"

The creature seemed to groan, and roll its eye...yikes! It had only one eye!

"I am a Chielir. Singular, Chielir, plural, Chielira," it said in a bored way. "And stop thinking of me as an 'it.' I am Kaltia, and a she."

Josie gaped at the creature. How could it—how could Kaltia know what she was thinking?

"Why are you here? And where did you come from?" asked Josie, shaking herself.

"I come from a world called Querta," said Kaltia impatiently.

"From another world? Is it in another galaxy? Are you an alien?" asked Josie, surprised at the calm in her voice.

"An alien!" snapped Kaltia in a disgusted voice.

"Certainly not! Querta is in another universe, completely different from yours— except we have human creatures like yourself there, too."

"Oh," said Josie in a small voice. "But I still don't know why you're here."

Kaltia sighed, suddenly becoming gloomy.

"There is a great problem on Querta at the moment. You see, the ruler of Querta is determined by whoever possesses three sacred rings, known as The Three Gold Bands."

"A long time ago," Kaltia continued, "Querta was ruled by a great female human who possessed The Three Gold Bands. As time passed, however, the creatures of Querta, and even the woman who ruled, forgot the significance and importance of the rings. When the woman died, the rings were buried with her instead of being passed on to her descendants. Through centuries, the rings were stolen one by one from the woman's grave, and transported to your world. They found their way to three important women throughout history. They have a magnetism—and so they found their way to other great women."

"Who ruled Querta if the rings were gone?" interrupted Josie. Kaltia gave her an annoyed look, but continued.

"No one ruled. Tribes of Chielira with separate chiefs formed. To this day, no one leader has ruled Querta. Having no leader was never a problem before. But now wars are breaking out between tribes, Quertans against Quertans. I decided I must set out to find the one true descendant of the first ruler."

"What do I have to do with all this?" Josie asked.

Kaltia laughed. "Isn't it obvious, child? You are the descendant."

"But you said the one descendant. If I'm a descendant, the rest of my family are, too," said Josie, flustered.

(continued next page)

"Do you think I don't know you're adopted, Josephine?" said Kaltia gently.

Josie gulped. There was a long pause. She began to feel in her heart that she must go with this strange creature, and embark on this mission.

Josie said quietly, "What do we have to do?"



"The first ring is with Queen Elizabeth the First," said Kaltia busily.

"You mean the first Queen Elizabeth of England?" Josie asked. Kaltia nodded impatiently.

"But—she's dead," said Josie, confused. "And we can't break into her coffin. She was buried at Westminster Abbey. Her crypt is made of stone."

"Why should that matter?" asked Kaltia, looking equally confused. For a moment, they just stared at each

other. Then Kaltia opened her mouth—and started laughing hysterically!

"What? What?" asked Josie, still confused.

"I—ha ha—forgot to—he he—tell you," said Kaltia through her laughter.

"Tell me what?" replied Josie exasperatedly.

Kaltia caught her breath, and calmed down. "Chielira can travel through time!"

Josie's eyes widened. "But how can I..."

"I can take you with me," said Kaltia.



"Are you sure this disguise is believable?" said Josie uneasily.

"Of course it is! You look just like a sixteenth-century

(continued next page)

Avian Art

by Ian Garrison



Bald Eagle



Trumpeter Swan



Common Tern



Northern Caracara

handmaiden!" replied Kaltia cheerfully. "Now, come here, for we must be on our way."

The great Chielir wrapped her many tentacles around the trembling thirteen-year-old. Then, in an instant, Josie saw that bright splash of light again, except this time she was in it.

Then for just a moment, there was complete darkness. Josie could see nothing, feel nothing, hear nothing. Then there was another splash of light, and her senses functioned once more.

She looked around. "Where are we?"

"Shhhhh," whispered Kaltia. "The question is not where, but when."

"Well then, when are we?" replied Josie.

"1592," came the whispered answer.

"Where in 1592?"

"Now you've got the hang of it!" Kaltia laughed quietly. "We are in Queen Elizabeth's palace, in a wardrobe."

Josie's mouth fell open. "A wardrobe!"

Kaltia seemed to blush. "I am still a young Chielir. I have not yet perfected my steering."

"How old are you?" asked Josie.

"6,435 years," replied Kaltia. "But as I said, I am still young."

Josie started to ask more, but Kaltia shushed her. They listened for a moment. No footsteps outside. Kaltia signaled Josie, and, ever so quietly, she stepped out of the wardrobe. Kaltia stepped out as well, and whispered, "I will be invisible." Then she was gone. Josie gulped, but made her way down the hallway.

"Left, dear, left," came Kaltia's voice in her ear, as she steered Josie through the hallway. They soon came to a grand set of doors. "This is the room," whispered Kaltia's voice. Josie slowly turned the knob and entered. It was a grand bedroom, with a huge four-poster bed, and a large wardrobe. There was a wide vanity with a large heavily jeweled box resting on it.

"The actual bedroom of Queen Elizabeth," she breathed. Off in the distance she heard what sounded like the music of a lyre being played.

"Hurry!" came Kaltia's voice again.

Josie walked, calmly but quickly, over to the vanity. While pretending to dust it off, she slowly opened the box just a crack—just enough so some light shone into it—and there it was! The first of The Three Gold Bands! Very carefully, she removed it from the box. Suddenly, they heard footsteps outside!

"Quickly, dear!" whispered Kaltia urgently. She reached out her many invisible arms and pulled Josie close. With nowhere else to put it, Josie jammed the ring on her finger. Then the same splash of light came, and then the darkness. Then another splash of light—and they were back in Josie's bedroom.

"Now can I take off this stupid costume?"



Josie looked around, sinking back into reality. "Oh, no! Mother will probably have supper ready by now! She'll be wondering where I am!" said Josie worriedly.

Kaltia laughed. "Only a few seconds have passed since we left. I doubt anyone will have noticed."

Josie heard little footsteps running down the stairs.

"Jo?" It was Teddy. Uh oh.

"Come now," whispered Kaltia, pulling her close. "He will still be coming down the stairs when we return. You don't need a disguise for this trip anyway."

"Who is the next woman?" asked Josie as the light erupted around them. And just before the darkness engulfed her, she heard Kaltia call out, "Abigail Adams!"



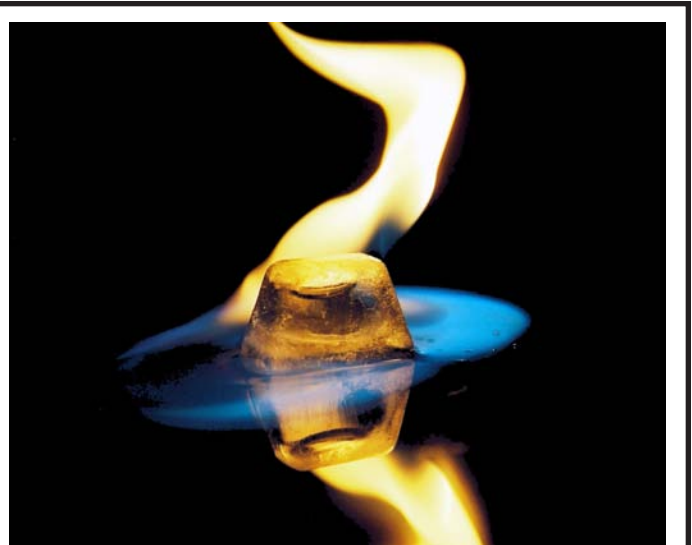
"Where—I mean when are we?" asked Josie.

Kaltia's face colored. "1764, in the Adams' house—and unfortunately, in a linen closet."

"A linen closet? Boy, Kaltia, you really do need to work on your steering."

"Well, it's quite close to Abigail and John's room,"

(continued next page)



"Fire and Ice"

This photograph by Donny Hampton of Ogden, Utah was one of 27 pieces nationally selected for a student art exhibit at the U.S. Department of Education's national office in Washington, D.C. Donny created "Fire and Ice" with the help of his father, Darrel Hampton, and their photographer friend Paulina Michaud.

"I like photography because of all the things you can take pictures of," Donny told a reporter for his local newspaper. "You can go somewhere and take pictures, and then you never forget it."

"Fire and Ice" was created using a thin sheet of shiny, black metal, an ice cube doused with lighter fluid and a propane lighter. *zzz*

replied Kaltia defensively. "Even if that room is occupied by only Abigail at the moment."

"Why? Where's John Adams?" asked Josie.

"The two just married a month ago, and already John had to go away on a business trip," replied Kaltia. "The tricky thing here is that the ring we're looking for is her wedding ring. But I have a decoy, so we'll switch them." She handed Josie a ring that looked almost exactly the same as the one she had taken from Queen Elizabeth's jewelry box. "It is night, so we must keep quiet. Come on."

They stepped quietly out of the closet, and Kaltia became invisible again. "The third door on the left," she whispered in Josie's ear. Josie snuck down the hallway and opened the door Kaltia had indicated, just a crack. Then she crept in. It was a simple room, with a double bed, two nightstands, and a writing desk. She could see a sleeping figure in the bed with a lacy nightcap on her head.

"The ring's on the desk," Kaltia whispered.

Josie went over to the desk. Ever so quietly, she removed the real ring and replaced it with the substitute. She slid the ring onto her finger without even thinking about it. While doing this, she noticed an unfinished letter to John that Abigail had been writing. But before she had a chance to read it, Kaltia's arms wrapped around her. Then in a flash of light, a spell of darkness, then bright light again, they were back.

"Jo?" called Teddy again.



Kaltia quickly became invisible as Teddy appeared at the door.

"What is it, Teddy?" asked Josie.

"Mommy says dinner is soon."

"Tell Mommy I said I'll be up in a minute. Okay?"

"Okay!" the four-year-old replied happily. He muttered the message over and over again to himself as he climbed the stairs: "Jo says she'll be up in a minute. Jo says..." His voice faded slowly.

Josie turned around to see Kaltia reappear.

"The next woman is Eleanor Roosevelt. I'm not too sure how we're going to get her ring, but I'll bring a decoy in case we need it," Kaltia said, in a business-like way.

"Let's go, then," said Josie.

Kaltia gathered her in her arms, and they were gone.



"Well? When did we end up?" asked Josie.

"Let's see. We're in a migratory workers camp, in 1936. Eleanor Roosevelt is going to be speaking to the workers. We're in the back of a tent, hidden behind some—oh no—hanging clothes."

Suddenly, Eleanor Roosevelt stormed in! Josie watched from in between some tattered coats. The First Lady had an angry expression on her face, and tears in her eyes.

"The poverty of these people!" she cried. She tore off all the jewelry she was wearing: a watch, pearl earrings, a bracelet—and a gold band! She flung the jewelry down

on a small, flimsy folding table. Then she dried her tears and straightened her shoulders, and went back out to speak to the crowd.

Josie felt her heart fill with admiration.

"Perfect," whispered Kaltia, who had also been watching. "Quick, switch the rings."

Josie hurried out from behind the coats and switched the real ring for the substitute. As she hurried back behind the coats, she felt Kaltia's arms closing around her, and instinctively stuffed the third ring on her finger. Then, in a flash, they were back in Josie's room.



"Gosh, I'm glad to be back," said Josie, as she flopped down on the bed.

"We should probably go ahead and go," said Kaltia.

"Where now?" asked Josie.

"Why, to Querta of course! It is your time to rule!"

Josie sighed. "Kaltia... I don't know if I can."

"Of course you can!" she retorted indignantly. "You are the true descendant."

"I cannot leave my family behind. They might not be my biological family, but they are my family, and I love them all the same."

"But—who will lead Querta if you do not?" asked Kaltia, looking crestfallen.

"I think you can," replied Josie.

She removed The Three Gold Bands from her fingers, and slid them onto the ends of three of Kaltia's tentacle-like arms. The rings somehow fit snugly. Kaltia just stared at the rings, then at Josie. Then Josie embraced her.

"Rule well, Kaltialosonto Teboonskuallee," she whispered. Then she stepped back, and nodded to Kaltia.

Kaltia bowed to Josie. "With these Three Gold Bands, I will carry out the traditions of great leaders—like you will be someday, here on your world."

With another splash of light, the new leader of Querta was gone. *zzz*

Jessica Chase wrote this story for a summer camp writing workshop in July 2007.

CONTRIBUTE!

We accept stories, poems, articles, and artwork from kids and teens. The deadline for our May/June 2008 issue is April 15.

If you'd like to see your work in *ZigZagZine*, please send submissions to info@zigzagzine.com.

Check out our Web site at zigzagzine.com for details!