

# The

# Missy

# STORIES

Story Three

## Go Missy!



By Ann Packman

## **About the Author**

Ann Packman is a Professor at the Australian Stuttering Research Centre, University of Technology Sydney, Australia. She trained as a speech pathologist many years ago and has worked with people who stutter for her entire professional life.

## **Acknowledgments**

Thanks to Sarah Lam for her original illustrations, and thank you to all the people I have known, including my dad, who have helped me understand to some extent, what it is like to stutter.

Special thanks to the children, Celine, Julie, Thibaut, Charlotte, and Arnie, who reviewed earlier versions of the book and gave helpful comments; to Michelle Messenger for her special insights and support; and to Michelle Shepherd for bringing it all together!

I hope this book sends the message to children that it is OK to stutter and that people who stutter should not be defined by it. Importantly, I hope the message is clear that teachers can play a positive role in the lives of children who stutter.

A.P.

# The

# Missy

# STORIES

## **Story One**

The Apple Thief

## **Story Two**

Where's Woofy?

## **Story Three**

Go Missy!

# **Author**

Ann Packman

# **Producer**

Michelle Shepherd

# **Original Character Illustrations**

Sarah Lam



## Story Three

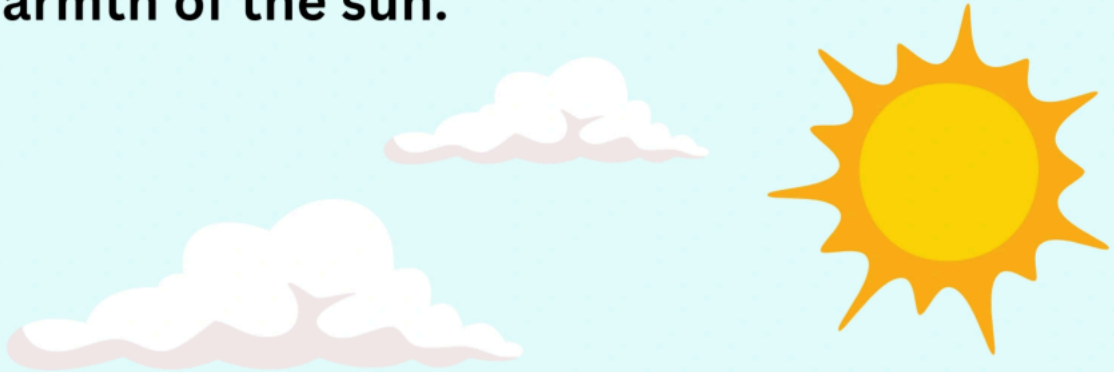
# Go

# Missy!



**It was a beautiful sunny day. The sky was bright blue, with just a few white cotton wool clouds.**

**Missy and her friends Seth and Mikey were lying on their backs on the sand beside the wide river, eyes closed, enjoying the warmth of the sun.**



**It was Saturday afternoon, and they didn't have to be back home until 4 o'clock.**

**Woofy the dog was sitting beside them, watching them with his big black eyes.**

**He wanted to play, not just lie in the sun.**



**He had been swimming, and they had laughed when he came out dripping wet and shook water all over them.**

**Missy sat up. “OK, Woofy, want to go exploring?”**

**Woofy looked at her and jumped up, wagging his tail.**



**“Seth, Mikey, want to come?”**

**“No,” said Seth. “I can’t be bothered.”**

**“Me neither”, said Mikey. “But don’t go far.  
And look out for snakes in the grass.”**

**“And take your water bottle with you,” said  
Seth.**



**Missy smiled. Her dad had given her a nice red water bottle for her birthday. He told her to always take water with her when she went walking in the bush.**

**She put on her sneakers and slung the strap of the water bottle over her shoulder.**



**“Don’t worry. Woofy will look after me. He will scare any snakes away... won’t you Woofy!”**

**Woofy gazed at her adoringly. Woofy was Seth’s dog. He had brown fur, and Missy loved him.**



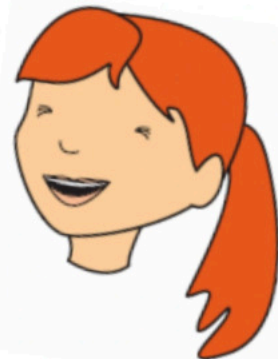


**Missy never stuttered when she talked to Woofy.**

**When she went to Seth's house after school, she would tell Woofy what had happened that day.**

**He would sit with his head on her lap and listen to her stories, right to the end.**

*This is what  
happened  
today....*



**“We’ll just go up-up the creek a little way,”  
said Missy. “I want to see what is there. If  
we’re not back in 20 minutes, come and  
look for us. Come on Woofy, let’s go.”**

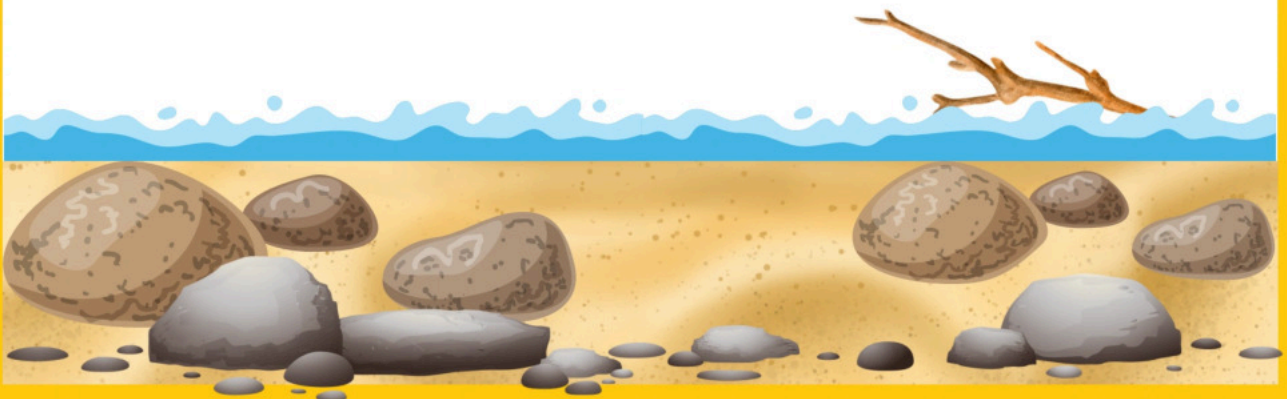
**Missy and Woofy set off along the water’s  
edge, heading to where Missy knew a little  
stream flowed out of the bush and into the  
river.**



**When the sandy beach ended, they walked on the rough dirt track, staying on the river bank.**

**“What is it, Woofy?” said Missy. Woofy was ahead of her, standing quite still and staring intently at something.**

**Missy saw an old dead tree poking out of the water. There was something on it.**



**At first, it looked like a snake, but then she saw it was a water dragon.**

**Water dragons are big lizards.**

**They live near water, and they love to swim.  
They like to bask in the sun, to warm themselves.**

**“Phew, Woofy”, she laughed, “I thought that was a snake!”**



**Missy grabbed hold of Woofy's collar and held him close to her.**

**She didn't want him to chase the dragon. It turned and looked at them and then dived quickly into the river.**

**Missy could see the dragon under the water, swimming away really fast, just like a fish.**





**“Hey, Woofy,” said Missy. “Here’s the creek. Let’s explore!”**

**The creek was narrow, and there was no dirt track beside it. They had to find their own way through the bush. Fortunately, the bush wasn’t thick.**

**“Perhaps no one has ever walked along this creek before,” thought Missy.**



**It was spring, so there were lots of wild flowers growing through the bush.**

**The red mountain devil flowers were Missy's favourite.**

**She liked how when the flower became a seed, it looked like a little devil.**





**As they walked, the creek became quite narrow. Missy was getting hot, so she sat down on a log and drank some of her water.**

**Woofy kept walking and soon disappeared through the bush.**

**“Woofy,” said Missy, “come back!” She didn’t want Woofy to get lost. She got up and started walking, calling his name.**



**When she found him, Woofy was standing very still beside the creek, staring at the water.**

**“What have you found this time, Woofy? A little tortoise perhaps?”**

**Woofy didn’t move. As Missy scrambled over some rocks to reach him, she saw bubbles coming up to the surface of the water. The bubbles were red.**



**“Woofy, why is the water red!”**

**Of course, Woofy didn’t answer. He just stood still, sniffing the bubbles as they burst.**

**“This water is toxic!” cried Missy.**

**She noticed the red water was coming from a small pipe in the bank of the creek, under the water.**

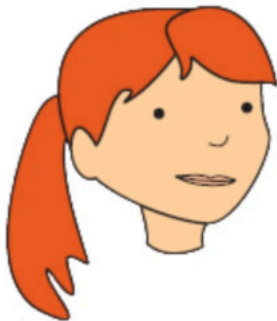


**“It will kill the fish and the water dragons and all the other river creatures!” said Missy.**

**Missy wondered what to do. She had to tell someone.**

**“I know,” she thought, “I’ll take some of the toxic water back and show it to Dad. He will know what to do.”**

**She took her water bottle off her shoulder and emptied out the rest of her water.**





**She leant over the bank and lowered the bottle by the strap into the creek until some of the red water ran into it.**

**Then, she carefully lifted the bottle back up and screwed on the cap, making sure none of the red water got on her hands.**

**“Come on, Woofy, let’s go back! Seth and Mikey will be worried about us.”**



**Missy and Woofy walked back along the creek to where it joined the river. She could hear Seth calling her name.**

**“Coming!” she called back, loudly. “We’ll be there in a minute.”**

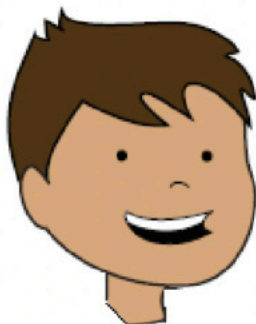
**Missy told Seth about the red water coming out of the pipe into the creek.**



**“People must be emptying toxic waste somewhere and draining it into the creek,” said Seth. “We need to stop them.”**

**“My dad will know what to do,” said Missy.  
“Let’s go home now.”**

**“Here, give me the bottle”, said Seth. “Go and rinse your hands in the river in case any of the toxic water spilled on them.”**

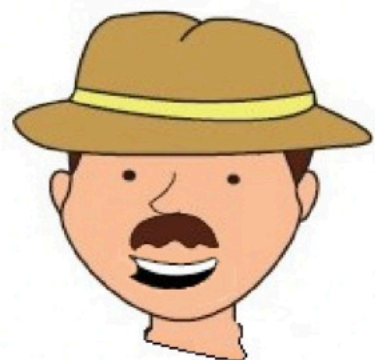
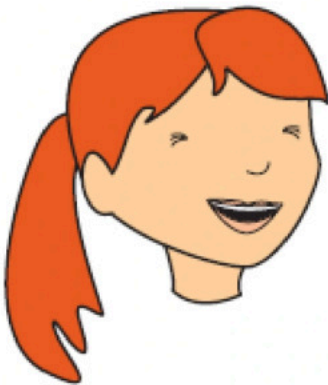




**When she got home, Missy told her dad about the toxic water and about how she had brought some back in her water bottle. He looked worried.**

**“It’s OK, dad, I didn’t touch it, and anyway, Seth made me wash my hands in the river,” said Missy.**

**“Seth is a good friend,” said Missy’s dad with a smile.**



**“I will take the water to school on Monday and give it to Mrs Scatterhouse, the science teacher,” said Missy. “She will know what it is.”**

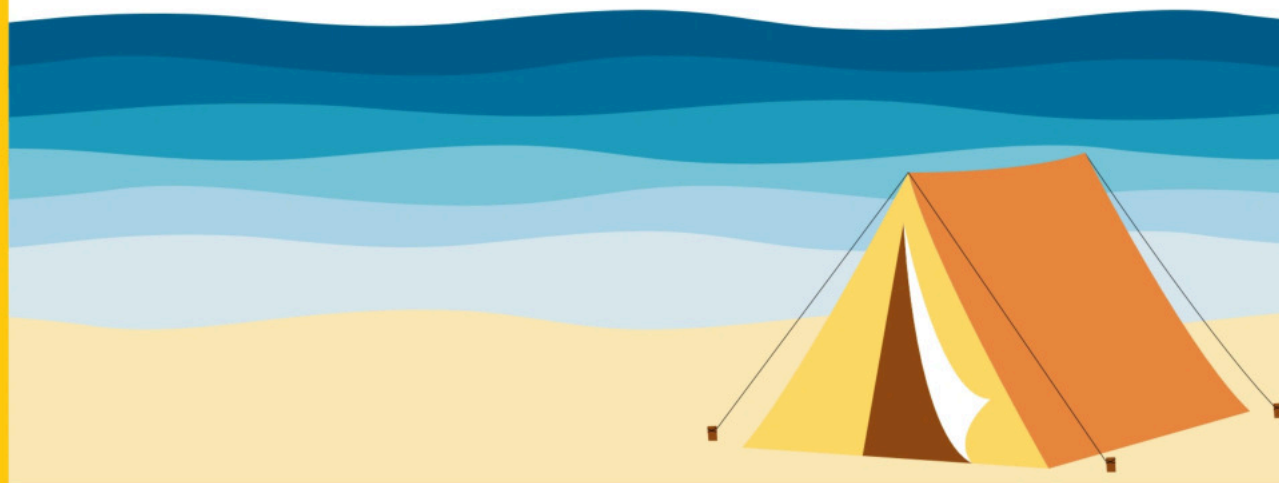
**It was December, and school was closing down in a few weeks for the summer holidays.**

**HELLO  
SUMMER!**



**Missy was looking forward to it. Her dad was taking Missy, Seth, and Mikey camping by the ocean at Tambara Beach.**

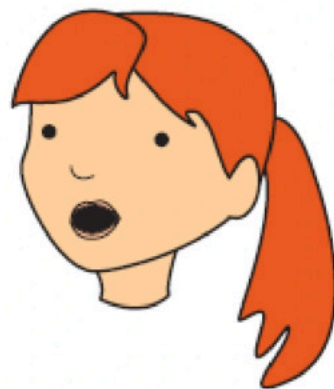
**Missy's uncle and aunt and her cousins were going too. They lived in the city, a long way from Missy. Missy loved camping by the beach. It did make her miss her mum though.**



**At school the next day, Missy's teacher Mr Picklewit told her to stay back after class.**

**"Melissa," he said loudly, so all the class could hear, "I have been instructed to take you to the Principal's office."**

**Melissa was Missy's real name, but only the teachers called her that.**

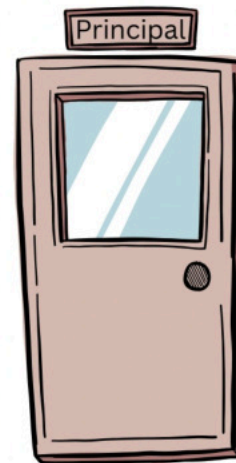


**Once all the children had left, Missy  
whispered, “Am I in trouble?”**

**She had never been in the Principal’s office.  
All the children called him Mr Principal.**

**“I don’t know. Just come with me,” he said.  
Mr Picklewit was such a grouch.**

**Mr Picklewit knocked on Mr Principal’s door.**

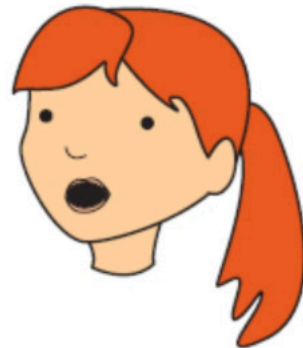




**“Ah, Melissa, come in,” said Mr Principal.  
“Thank you, Mr Picklewit. You can go now.  
Leave the door open please.”**

**Missy walked into the office, eyes wide.**

**“Sit down, Melissa. I want to talk to you.”  
Mr Principal sat down behind his desk and  
looked at her. Missy’s heart beat fast.**



**“What have I done, sir?” she whispered.**

**The Principal smiled. “You have done something very good!” he said. “Mrs Scatterhouse told me that you found toxic water emptying into the river.”**

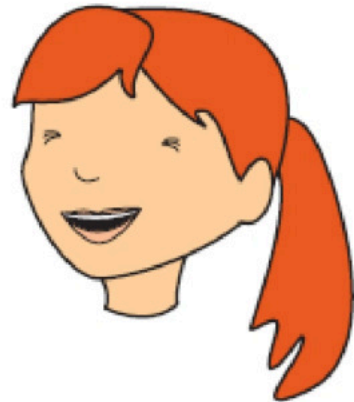
**“The council inspectors have now stopped people dumping their waste in the bush and letting it run into the river.”**



**“We all love our river, and you have saved many river creatures and plants from dying.”**

**Melissa let the air out of her lungs with a whoosh. “Oh, Mr Principal, I am so pleased I could save them. Imagine if the fish and the water dragons had all died!”**

**She smiled at Mr Principal, and he smiled back.**



**“Now Melissa, the teachers and I have been talking, and we have decided to create a school award called the Save Our River Award.”**

**“It will be given at the end of each year to a student who has done something to help keep our river clean.”**

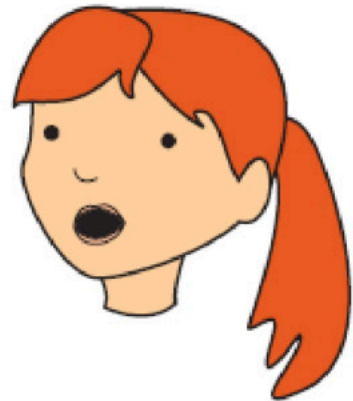
**“And you, Melissa, will be the first student to receive it.” Missy beamed with delight.**



**“I will present it to you at our special assembly, on the last day of school. Parents will be there.”**

**“You will be called up to the stage where you will receive your award, and then you will give a short speech.”**

**“It is important for other children to hear what you did to help save the river. It will inspire them. Isn’t that good news, Melissa?”**

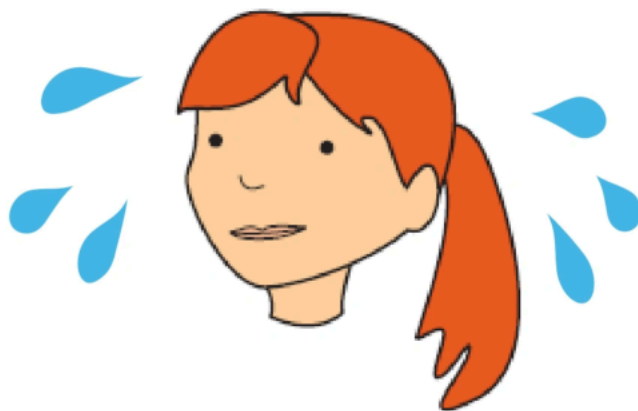




**Missy froze. Oh no! She couldn't possibly make a speech in front of the whole school, and parents as well. She would stutter, and the words would never come out!**

**"Oh, no, Mr Principal. I can't do that," she cried.**

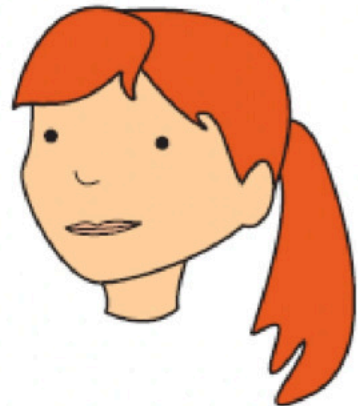
**"Of course, you can," said Mr Principal. He looked at her for a moment. "Are you worried you will stutter?"**



**“Yes,” said Missy. “I will stutter, and I will look stupid. Everyone will think I am stupid.”**

**“Well,” said Mr Principal, “you do stutter sometimes, but you are not stupid. Everyone knows that. So why does it matter if you stutter?”**

**“It just does!” said Missy, loudly.**



**“Anyway, I think Seth should get the award. He helped me carry the water back in the bottle. He would make a very good speech.”**

**“Rubbish!” said Mr Principal, smiling. “You can’t fool me. I know what you did. You are the hero of this story, Melissa.”**

**Missy looked down at the floor. She felt like crying.**



**“Tell you what,” said Mr Principal. “Go and see Ms Blenko, our speech therapist. She can help you prepare your speech, and she will practise it with you.”**

**“And remember, it will be OK if you stutter. The important thing is to tell your story.”**

**“No one will ever think you are stupid once they have heard it. Off you go now!”**



**Missy walked slowly back into the playground, feeling like she was in another world.**

**She didn't hear all the children playing noisily around her.**

**She was thinking about how much she wanted to get the Save Our River Award but how much she would hate making a speech in front of so many people.**





**The bell rang and Missy went slowly back to her classroom with the other children.**

**She sat down at her desk, next to Seth. She didn't say anything but did her spelling quietly, thinking about what Mr Principal had said.**

**By the end of the lesson, she had made a decision. She would go and see Ms Blenko the next day.**



**Missy really liked Ms Blenko. Missy had been to see her a few times when she was in first grade.**

**Ms Blenko didn't tell Missy what to do exactly. Rather, she showed Missy ways to talk that made her stuttering almost go away.**



**SMOOTH TALKING**

**Missy didn't think it helped her much back then because she couldn't be bothered to talk like that all the time.**

**But she knew she really needed Ms Blenko now!**



**Ms Blenko was cool, too. She wore vintage-style dresses, and she once told Missy that she made them all herself.**

**She also told Missy that she designed clothes for movies.**

**“Hey, Missy, how are things going?”**

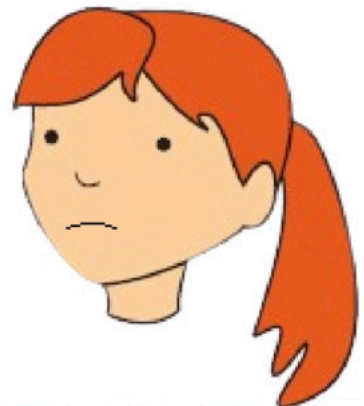
**“OK, I suppose,” said Missy. “I need some help with my stuttering.”**



**“I heard how you saved the river from toxic waste, Missy. Everyone is talking about it.”**

**“Yes,” said Missy, “and now I have to get up and make a speech in front of the whole school! I can’t do it. I can’t!”**

**Ms Blenko sat down beside Missy and waited till she calmed down before talking to her.**





**“It’s tough having a stutter,” she said, “but we can work together so you can talk more smoothly when you give your speech. Just like when you came to see me before. But the most important thing is that everyone will love your story.**

**And tell me this, Missy, what is the worst thing that would happen if you stuttered a bit?”**



Missy thought about this. It was exactly what Mr Principal had said. And Seth had told her once that he thought she was cool, and she knew that her stuttering didn't matter to him. She cheered up a bit.

“Hey, maybe I can do this,” Missy said quietly, to herself.

Ms Blenko smiled.

“Yes, I think you can,” she said.



**Missy met with Ms Blenko a few more times,  
and they planned what Missy would say in her  
speech.**

**Missy wrote it down.**

**That way, if she got really stuck, or she forgot  
what she was going to say, she could read that  
bit aloud.**



**Ms Blenko showed her how to talk a bit more slowly and to speak with more rhythm. This helped her stuttering a lot.**

**Ms Blenko also gave Missy some coaching on how to deliver her speech.**

**“It is important to look at your audience, Missy. Then you will see your dad and all your friends who love you and who think you are cool.”**



**“If you look away, you won’t see their smiling faces.”**

**“Thanks, Ms Blenko. I don’t feel so nervous now.” Missy smiled at her.**

**“And remember, Missy, it is OK to stutter.”**





**It was the last day of school, and children and their parents were filling up the assembly hall.**

**Mr Principal was up on the stage getting the awards ready.**

**Missy was feeling nervous, but she had practised her speech with her dad and with Seth, and she knew it off by heart.**

**First, she would thank Mr Principal for the award.**



**Then, she would tell the story of how she found the toxic water in the creek and how Seth had told her to rinse her hands afterwards, just to be safe.**

**Then, she would say how she brought the toxic water to school and gave it to Mrs Scatterhouse.**



**Ms Blenko suggested to Missy that she end her speech by saying how much she loved the river and how everyone must do their best to keep the water clean.**

**So many creatures and plants could die if the river became sick.**

**Missy liked this bit the best.**

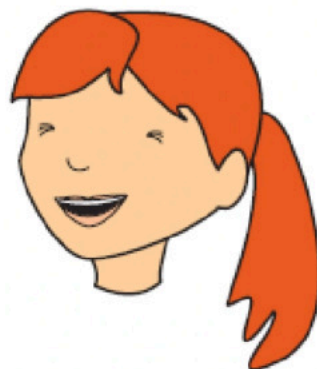


**Missy went up on to the stage to receive her award.**

**She was excited and scared all at once.**

**She was the last student to get an award.**

**Then, she went over and stood in front of the microphone, holding the plaque with Save Our River Award engraved on it.**



**She looked out at all the people in the hall, and she could feel her heart beating.**

**Then, she saw her dad sitting in the front row with a big smile on his face. Oh, how Missy wished her mum was here.**

**Next to her dad in the front row were Seth and Mikey.**





**They were making victory signs with their fingers, and Seth winked at her.**

**Missy's friend Lily was there, too, waving both hands.**

**Right at the end of the front row was Ms Blenko. She was wearing a wonderful red dress with big white spots and a purple bow perched on one side of her head.**

**Missy could read her lips as she whispered, "Go Missy!"**



**“I can do this,” Missy said to herself. “I can do it.”**

**Half way through her speech, Missy noticed the two older girls who always teased her, sitting near the back of the hall.**

**They always called her “Miss-Miss-Missy” in the playground and laughed at her.**

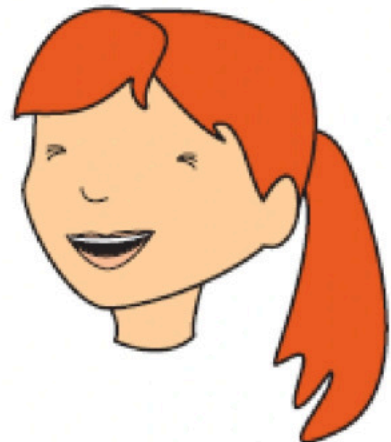


**Today their mouths were wide open in astonishment as they watched Missy giving her speech.**

**Missy gave them a big smile.**

**When she finished her speech, everyone clapped loudly.**

**“I did it!” she said to herself as she walked off the stage.**

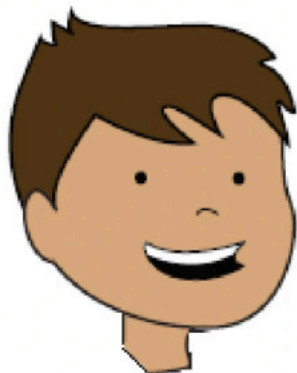


Her dad gave her a big hug, and her friends swarmed around her, patting her on the back.

She could hear some kids down the back chanting, “Save Our River! Save Our River!”

Ms Blenko gave her the thumbs up sign as she went out the door.

“Cool speech, Missy,” said Seth.



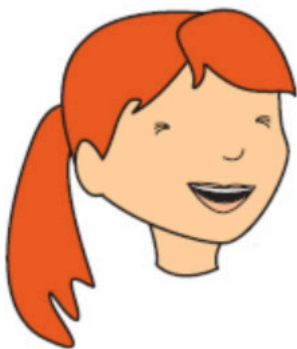
*Cool speech,  
Missy!*

**“And...?” said Missy, looking at Seth, waiting for him to say something really, really nice.**

**“And... now it’s holiday time!” said Seth. “No more school for a month. Tambara Beach, here we come!”**

**Missy laughed.**

**This was going to be the best summer holiday ever.**





**The End**





