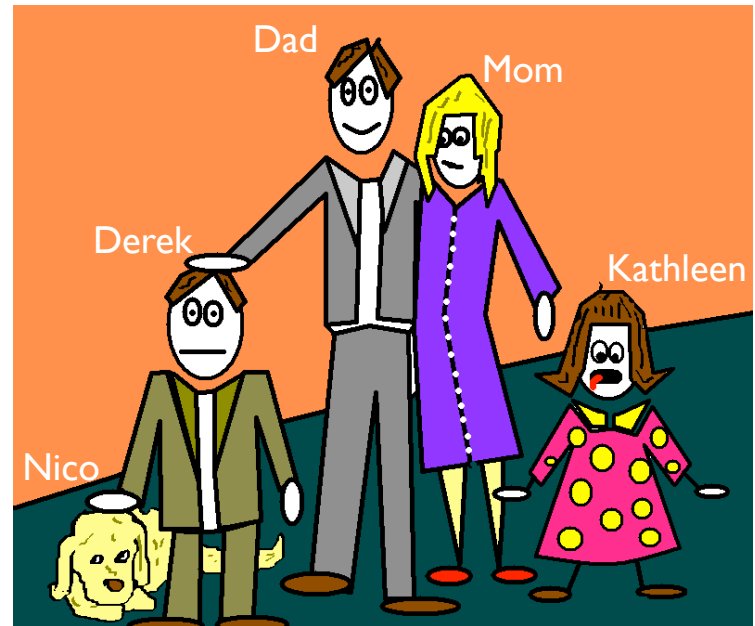


# **Derek's First Adventure**

Story by Joshua J Johnston and Nola Semczyszyn  
Illustrated by Nola Semczyszyn

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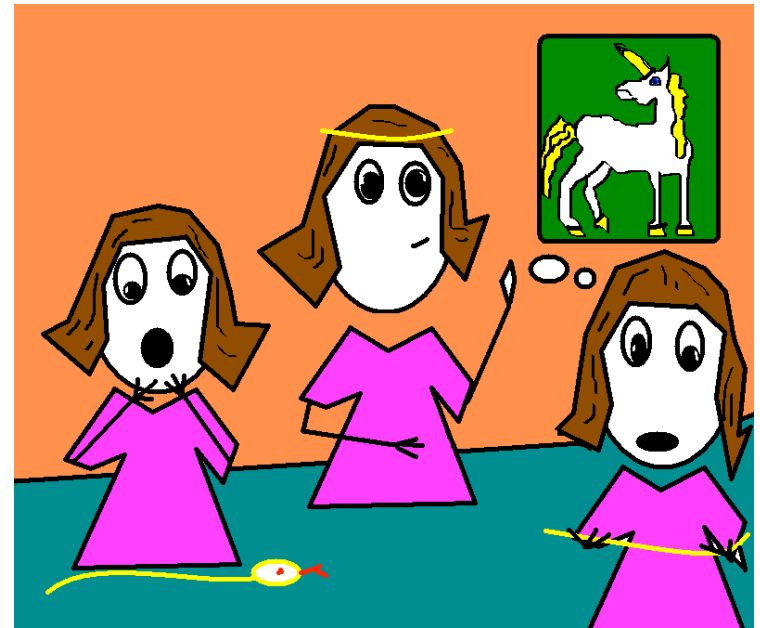
The Brown family had two children, Derek and Kathleen, and they couldn't be more different.



Kathleen had a vivid imagination, she was happy to play make-believe games with her dolls.



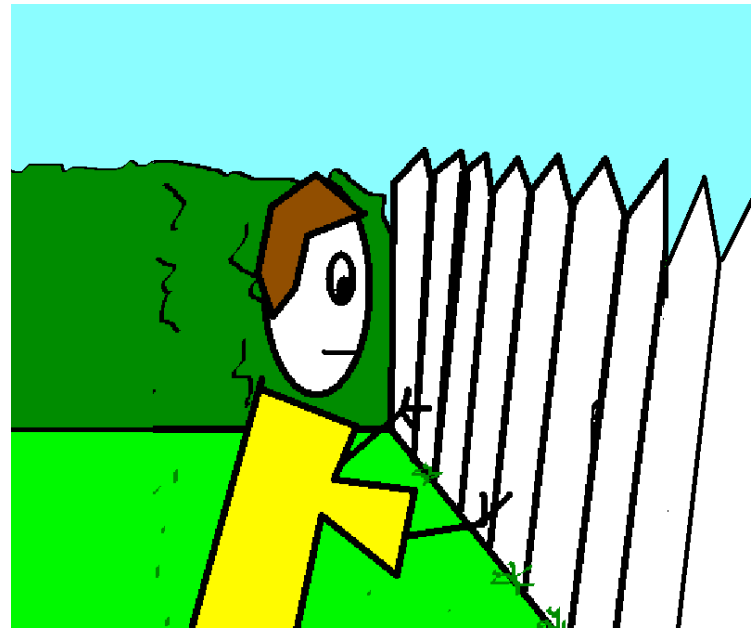
Sometimes Kathleen didn't even need to play with toys. For her a piece of string could be a snake, a crown, or a strand of hair from the tail of a lost unicorn.



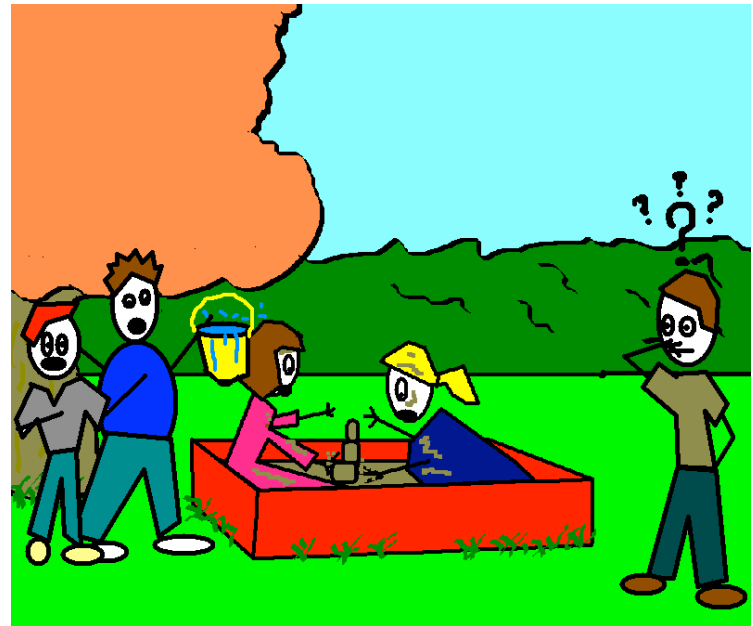
But Derek had no imagination. For him a piece of string was always just a piece of string. Instead of playing make believe Derek would just sit in his room staring at the wall...



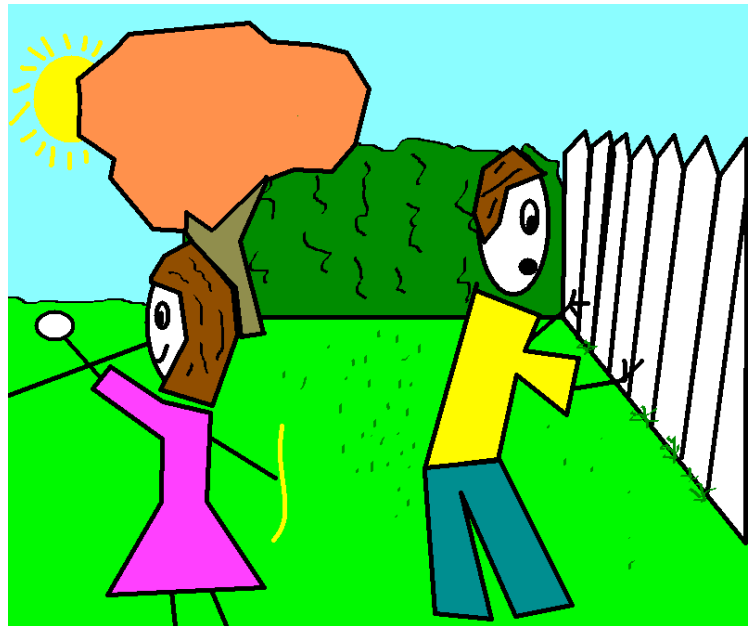
... or counting fenceboards outside. This made Derek neither happy nor unhappy though.



When their parents sent them outside, Derek couldn't understand the games Kathleen played with the neighborhood kids. He could see they were having fun, but he didn't get it. For Derek, it all looked like one big muddy mess.

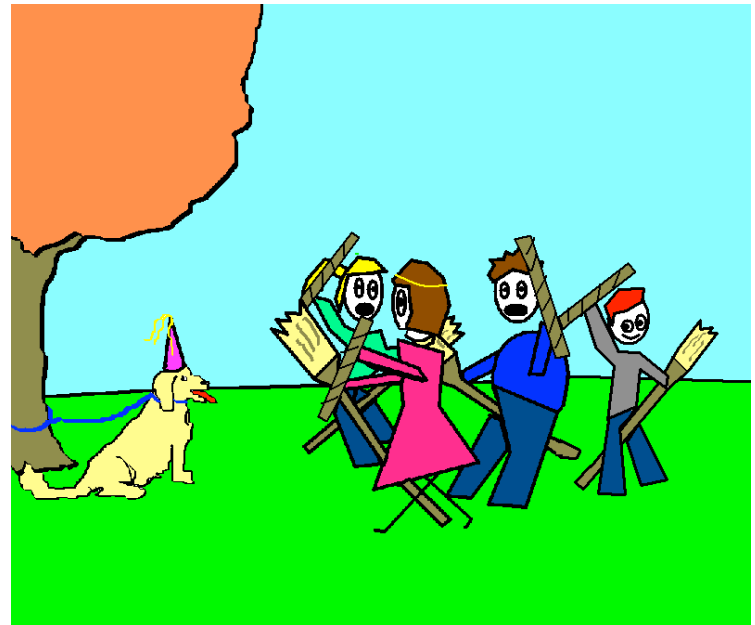


Then one fall afternoon something magical happened. Their mother had to leave to get sugar and sent Derek and Kathleen outside to play. As usual, Derek started counting fenceboards while Kathleen rounded up the neighborhood kids for a game.

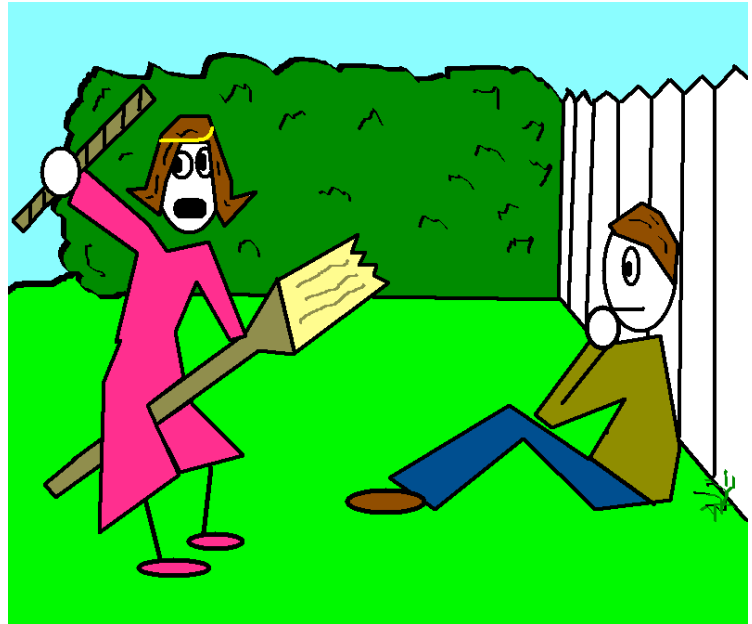




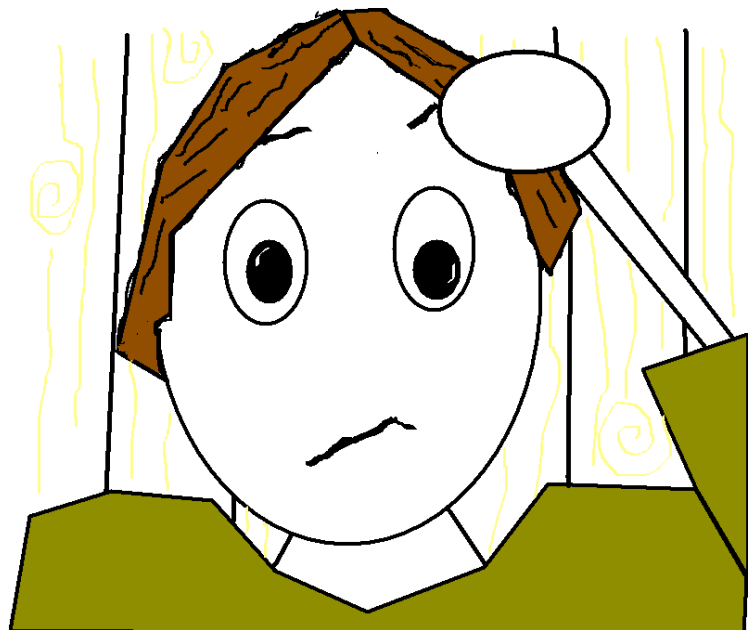
Derek watched Kathleen and the other kids playing. They were riding around on broomsticks and waving cardboard tubes in the air. Derek didn't know why they were doing that.



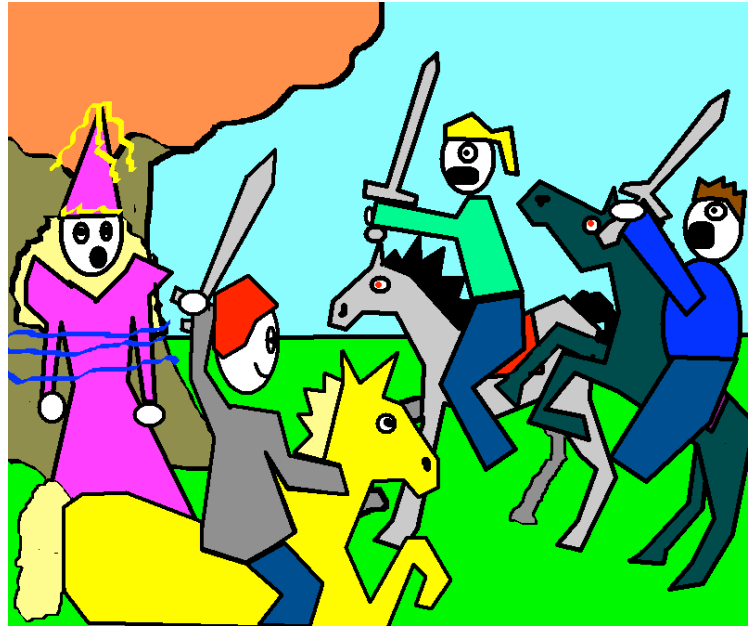
Kathleen ran up to her brother yelling  
“Derek we need your help! We must save  
the princess and break the evil wizard’s  
magical spell!”



For all her shouting about a princess being  
in danger Derek couldn't understand ...



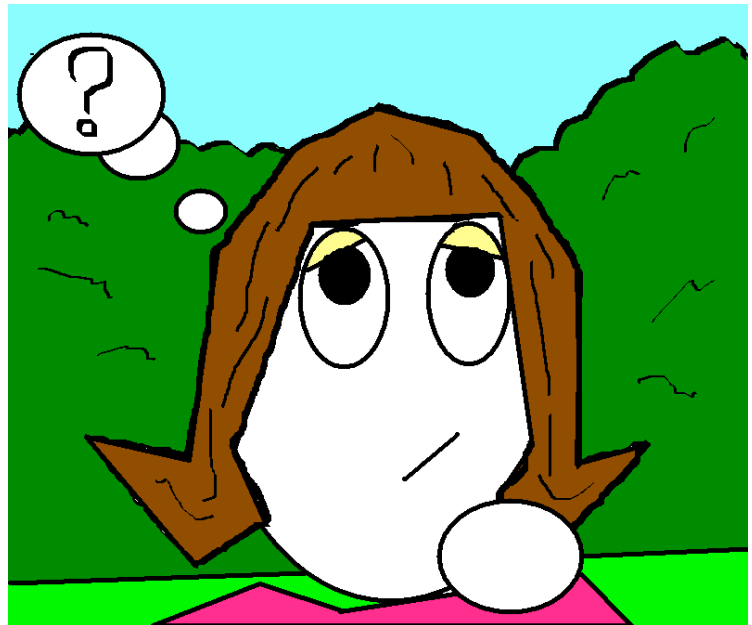
“I don’t see any princess” Derek said.  
“Look! She’s right there!” Kathleen shouted  
and pointed “she needs our help!”



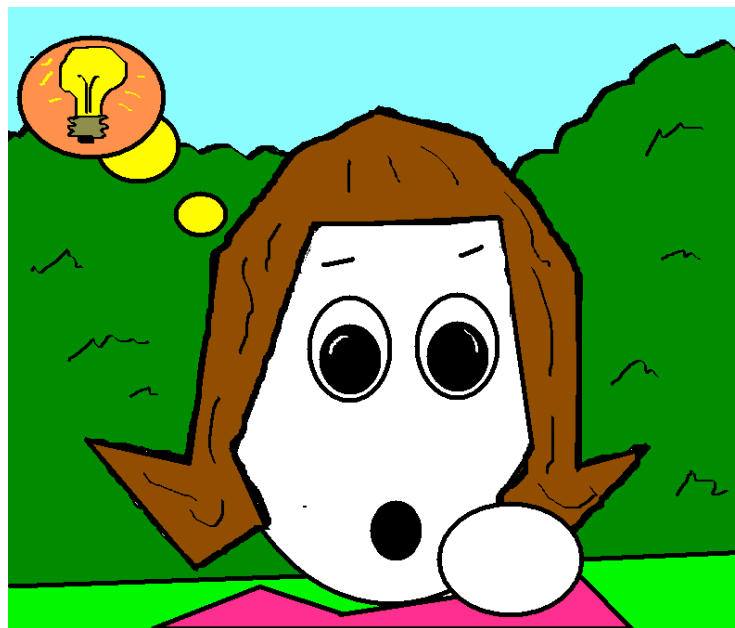
But all he saw were kids riding around on broomsticks waving cardboard tubes, with Nico, the family dog, tied to a tree.



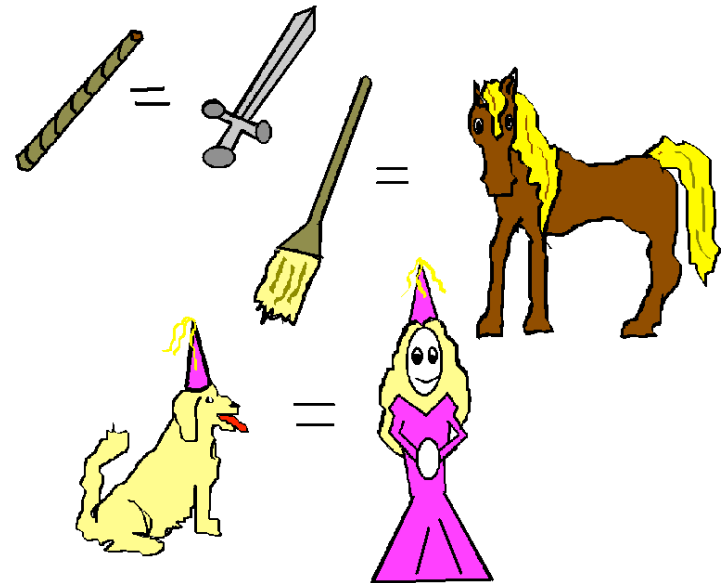
How could Derek not see the danger the princess was in?



Then Kathleen had an idea. Derek didn't know how to use his imagination!

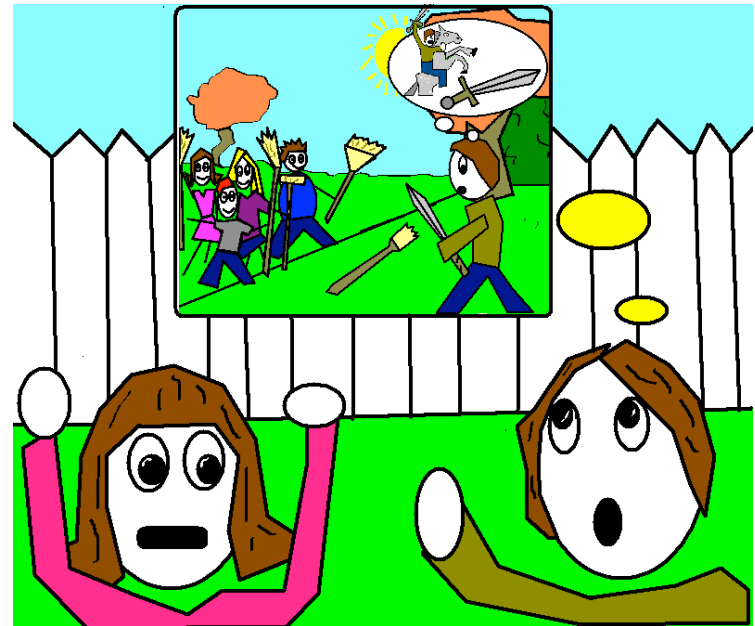


“Derek,” Kathleen said, “we aren’t really knights but we know knights have swords, ride horses, and save princesses. We don’t have those things, but we do have cardboard tubes, broomsticks, and Nico makes a pretty good princess.”

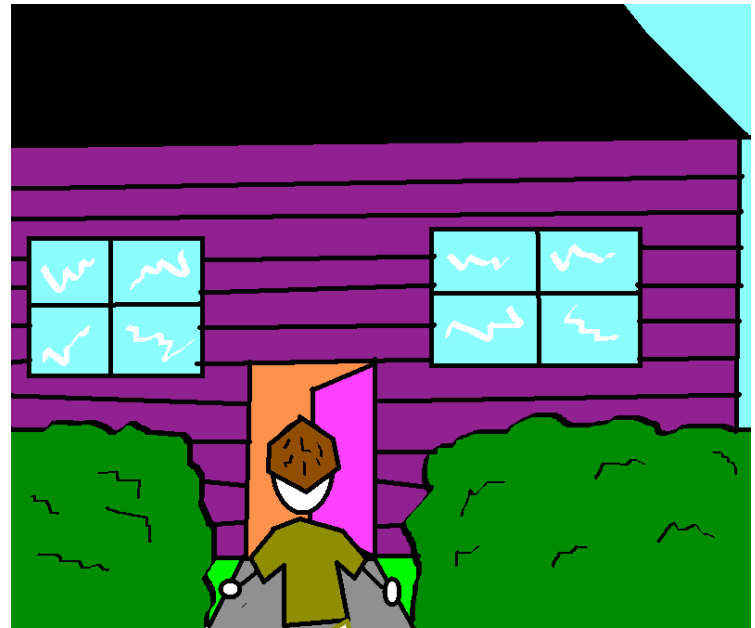




“You just have to start playing the game Derek,” said Kathleen, “and when you see the tubes, broomsticks, and Nico you think about swords, horses, and a beautiful princess!”



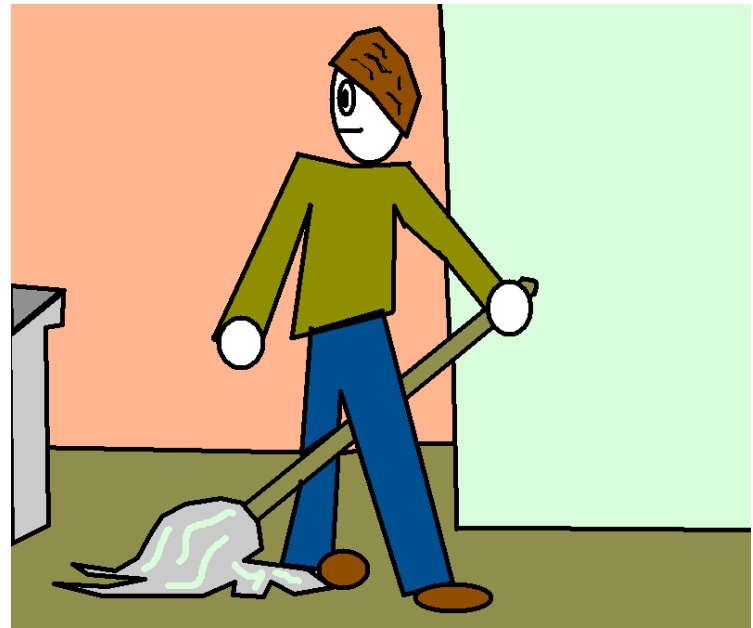
Derek still couldn't understand though. Sad and more confused he went back into the house.



To make himself feel better, Derek poured a glass of orange juice. He spilled some on the floor, and thought he should clean it up so his mom wouldn't be angry.



While mopping up the juice Derek thought about what Kathleen had said. Alone in the house, with nobody watching, he decided to try riding the mop as a horse.



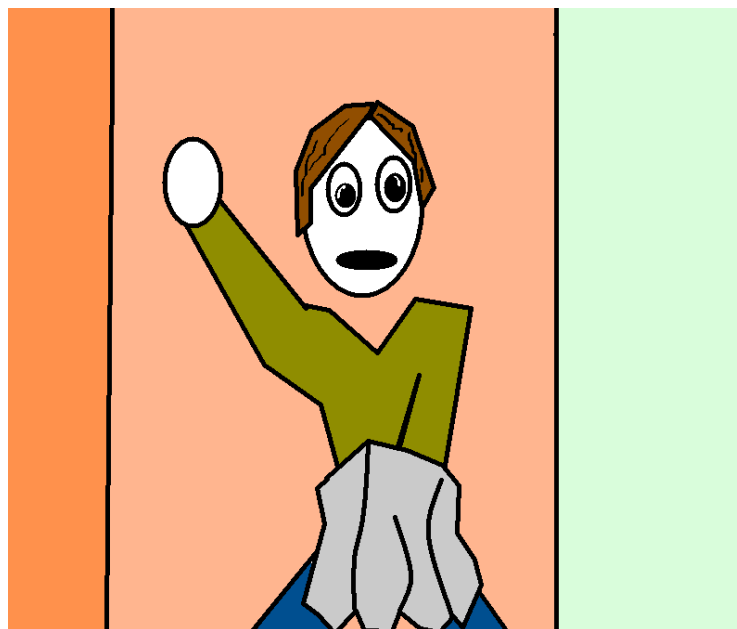
“Wow!” thought Derek, “the mop does kinda look like a shaggy horse head.”



Derek started galloping around the house.  
For him it was like riding a marvelous and  
fast horse.



Galloping faster and faster Derek burst through the front door ...

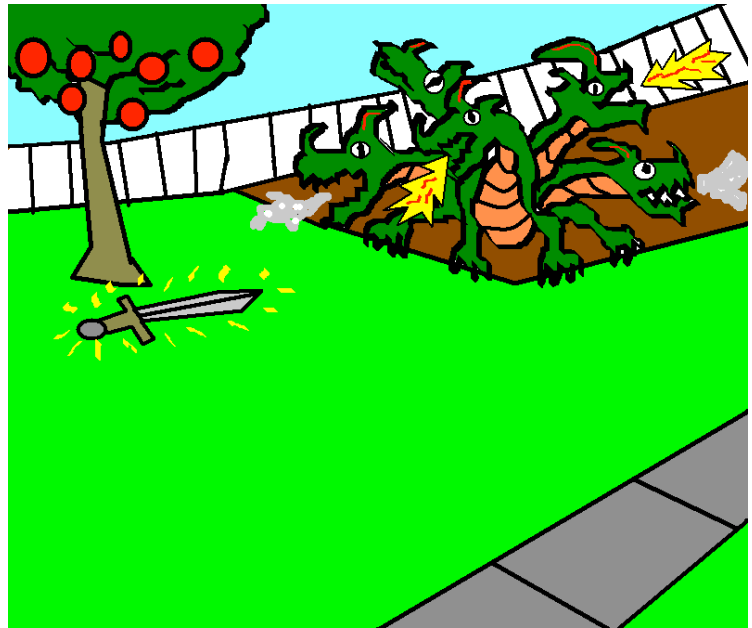


... and was shocked to find that in his own front yard ...

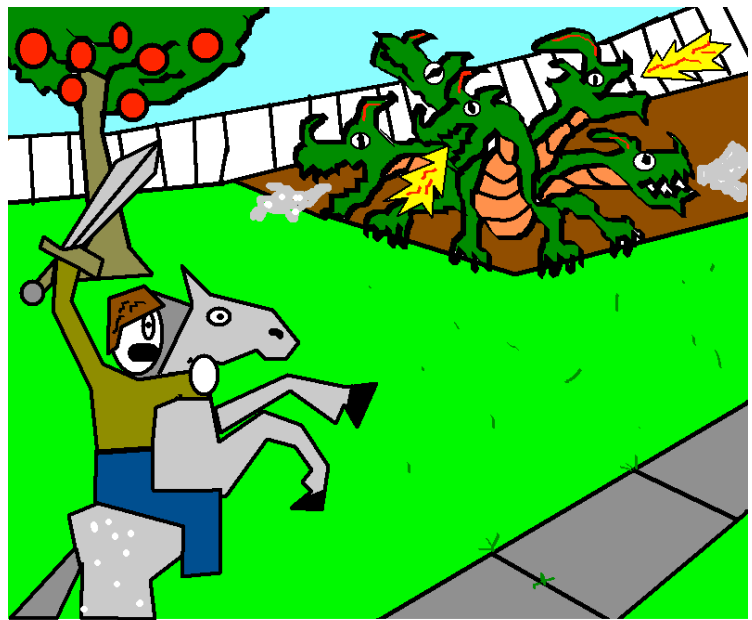




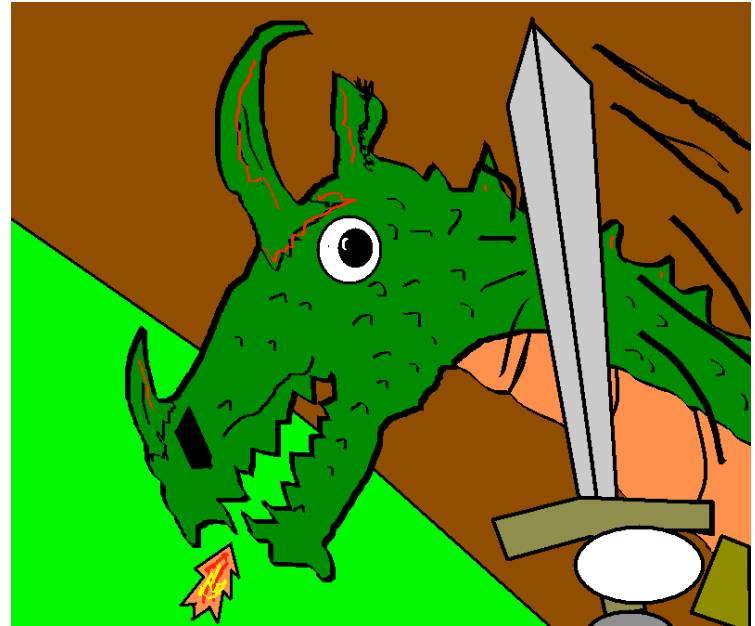
a fierce five-headed, fire-breathing dragon  
had taken over the garden!



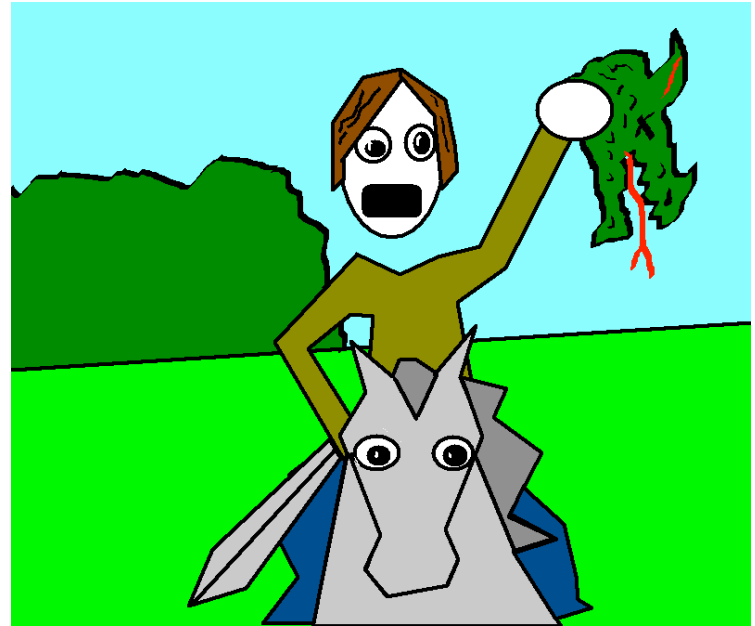
Seeing a sword laying under the apple tree,  
Derek knew what he had to do.



Charging bravely into battle, Derek and his mighty horse rushed in and chopped off one of the dragon's heads.



“I must warn the others!” Derek yelled.  
Scooping up the dragon head, he rushed to  
the backyard where the other kids were  
playing.



Derek raced into the backyard screaming “there’s a dragon in the garden!” The other knights were surprised by Derek’s discovery, but they knew that the princess must be saved.



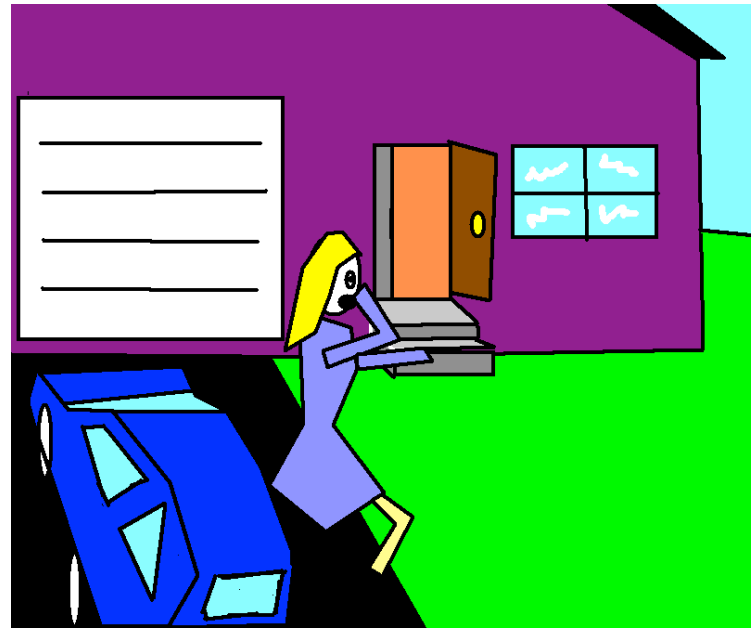
The knights quickly rode through the house while shouting battle cries, knowing that this fight would test their strength and bravery.



With swords held high, the bold knights attacked the dragon, dodging both its fire and its teeth. They chopped away until all its heads were rolling across the yard. The knights were victorious!

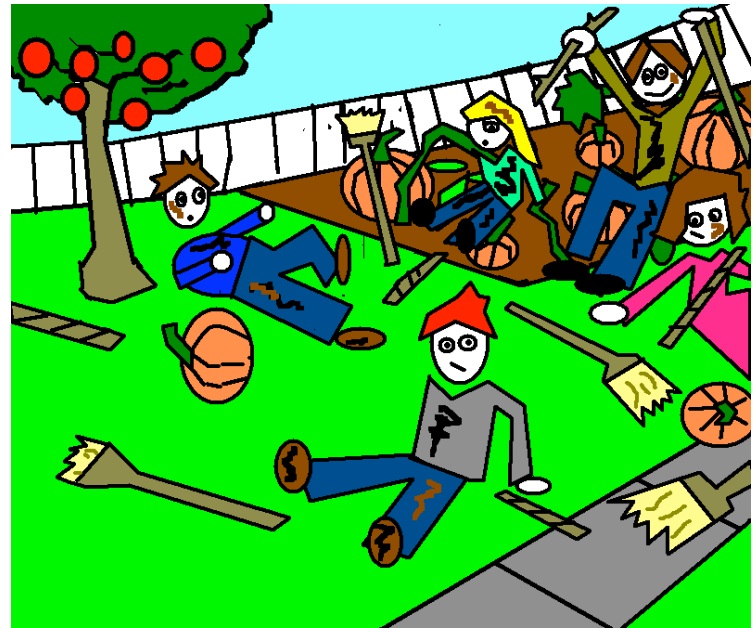


Just as the last head rolled onto the lawn, they heard a car door slam. Their mom had returned home. "My Pumpkins! What did you kids do to my pumpkins!" she yelled.

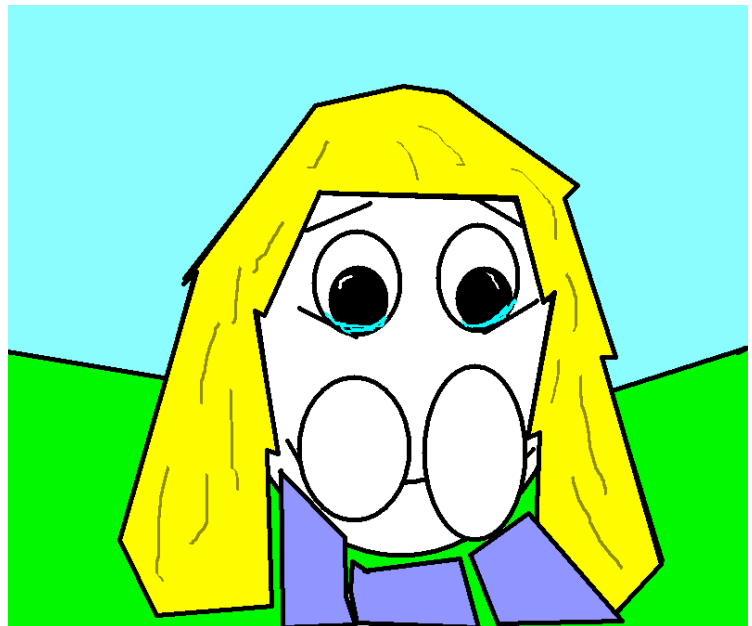




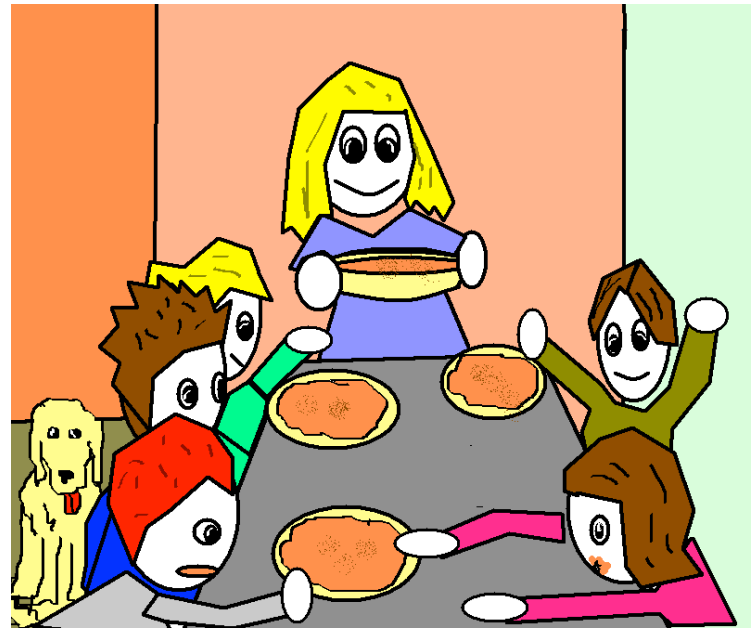
Kathleen was worried that they were going to get into trouble. But then, with the biggest smile his mom had ever seen, Derek yelled out “Mom! We killed a five-headed dragon!”



Their mom couldn't be angry anymore.  
Derek had finally learned how to use his  
imagination.



Plus, those pumpkins needed to be turned into pies anyway. And so, tired from their battle, the brave knights ate hot homemade pumpkin pie.



The End