

ZigZagZine

Issue 9

CREATING, THINKING, IMAGINING

March/April 2009

Becoming a Babysitter

by Jessica Chase

Many preteens choose babysitting as a first job. It's a great way to earn money, gain job experience, and have fun. Maybe you've been thinking about trying it, but aren't sure if you're old enough? Or how to get started, and where to find clients?

I've been researching babysitting and how I can become well qualified for the job. I'm 11 years old, and in the process of training to be a babysitter. Like many preteens, I started out as a mother's helper. A mother's helper takes care of the kids while mom or dad is home, but is able to get some work done, knowing their children are in good hands. It's a great way to get hands-on experience for babysitting. You take care of the kids, feeding them, changing their diapers, and playing with them, without having to be the only person responsible for them, since a parent is close by.

I've done mother's helping occasionally for three different children in the past. And, since last September, I have had a weekly job with a family across the street from us. They have a girl, Isabel, who is four, and a boy,



I am a mother's helper for two children, including Isabel, 4, who loves to do art projects.

Noah, who is two. Their dad is a cellist for the San Francisco Symphony, and their mom is a professional violinist. Often, while I take care of the kids at their house, their mom practices violin. Not bad background music!

I always have a lot of fun playing with Noah and Isabel. They know me well, and I think they look forward to my visits as much as I do. I've

also been building up their parents' trust. When I feel ready to start full babysitting, that is, being alone with the kids, my clients will already know they can trust me to take good care of their children.

I usually play with the two kids at different times, because they have such different interests. Isabel loves to draw, fold, cut, glue and do any kind of craft, whereas Noah adores trains, cars, planes, and any other kind of vehicle! I'm not a huge vehicle fan, myself, but he is, so that's what we do.

I've been doing many different activities to prepare for full babysitting. I checked out a stack of babysitting books and videos from the library. You'd be surprised how many there are to choose from! I also took a course at BabysittingClass.com. They mailed me a certificate and wallet card showing I had completed the course, which will be very useful when I look for new clients. Of course, personal references are even more important. When I approach a new babysitting client, they are likely to ask if I've had any previous experience. I believe my mother's helper client will be happy to recommend me.

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Mixed media feast

We've got a great collection of creative content for you in this issue! Photography, art (both computer and hand-drawn), poetry, riddles, fiction and non-fiction. Dive in and enjoy the feast!

If you'd like to see your work in ZigZagZine, it's easy as 123. Kids and teens can send in articles, stories, poems, and artwork for our next issue. If you'd like to contribute to our March/April issue, you can flip to page 2 for details. In the meantime, you can check out our Web site at zigzagzine.com. (All clickable links in this issue are in blue type.)

— Jessica Chase, Editor

Although you can learn a lot from books, videos, and Web sites, it's even better to take a hands-on course, especially one that includes safety training. That's why I'm scheduled to take the Red Cross babysitting course soon.

The Red Cross offers a one-day course that teaches not only basics, like changing diapers, but also covers important issues, like what to do in a fire, what to do if a child is seriously hurt, and how to perform CPR, or cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Books and videos may teach these things, but it's still important to learn them from professionals in a live class. It might seem unnecessary—after all, what are the chances something could happen? But it's always good to be prepared. Plus, a certificate from the Red Cross course is a pretty good qualification to show to a prospective client.

Here are some important babysitting tips. First: Keep an eye on the kids at all times. From curious toddlers to energetic school kids, you don't want parents coming home to find the house in pieces, or to an angry neighbor with a broken window. You also don't want them to get hurt because you weren't nearby to help them.

Another tip: Remember that no matter what happens, it's important for you to stay calm. The kids will feel a lot better if you seem to know what to do (even if you don't!).

Next: Don't let the kids make the rules! Before the parents leave, make sure you know them all: When's bedtime? Do they need to finish homework? How much TV? And so on. If you're not sure whether to let them do something, just don't let them—better be safe than sorry. When mom and dad get home, ask them so you'll know for next time. They'll appreciate your carefulness.

When you begin to look for a first client, it's best to search among people you know: relatives, neighbors, and family friends. Putting up flyers with all your information for anyone to see is not a great idea for preteens, and if you stick to people you know, they're more likely to live nearby.

Finally: Always put the kids as first priority, and yourself as close second. Their parents are entrusting their most prized possessions to you—take good care of them. And try to keep the kids happy, and have fun! As for me, I love being around and playing with younger kids, and I think that makes them have fun too.

There's a lot more to learn about babysitting than I can even begin to touch on. Check out the resources below for more information on becoming a babysitter. *zzz*

- [What to Expect Babysitter's Handbook](#), by Heidi Murkoff.
- [Babysitting 101: Your Complete Guide to Becoming the Best Babysitter](#). VHS video by Julie Hunt, Production 101.
- [Babysitting.com](#) — online interactive course with tests leading to a certificate.
- Red Cross Babysitter's Training Course — visit the [Red Cross Web site](#) to find your local chapter, for babysitter training classes in your area.

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CONTRIBUTE!

We accept stories, poems, articles, and artwork from kids and teens. The deadline for our May/June 2009 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!

Sign Up for Our Mailing List!



If you'd like to receive announcements about new issues of *ZigZagZine*, you can sign up for our mailing list. You'll receive an email each time a new issue comes out.

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

POETRY

Happiness

by Kaavya Jayram

What is true happiness?
True happiness can never be reached,
For when you are happy,
You are still a bit melancholy;
But shivering in the wind;
True happiness is no object,
All infinity's reach,
That you keep getting closer,
But never reach;
True happiness is at the end of a path,
That goes to infinity;
That you keep walking on.
Everything is going smooth,
But oh!
You stumble on a stone,
And down you go.
True happiness can never be reached, you see,
For where is it?
At infinity.

Mathematics

by Kaavya Jayram

What is math?
No one can define it,
As it has a life of its own.
Merging, diverging, changing,
Math is never the same twice.
From the diversity comes beauty,
Pure and pristine.
Math is not stiff;
Math is creative.
Math is like the conductor of an orchestra,
The instruments being the sciences.
Without math,
There is nothing.
Thus:
Math is everything.

Hermit Crab Haiku

by Mara Hughes

Little crab in shell
Wee feelers waving wildly
Coenobita



Rafi's Art

by Rafi Overton



P is for Pirate



Funny Animal



Alien

Riddles

by Calvin Price

What herb cures all ailments?

Thyme

The whiter I get the dirtier I get.
What am I?

A chalkboard

I run too fast and then too slow,
but always the opposite of what
you want me to go. What am I?

Time

My life begins
deep in the ground,
Then I spin round & round,
Once in my life I get a trim,
Some of my friends
take a dip on a whim,
They go in headfirst
but their feet stay dry,
When people see us
they say "Oh my!"
What am I?

Pottery

I'm witty & smart
I can be cunning & cruel
With an oath I made
I have to duel
My author was
weak in spelling, it's true
and while he was alive
he received many a boo
My life's true love
is coming soon
around me she spins
a love cocoon
Three of my friends
took the same oath
they tried to keep
as I did but had
the same result
and as I tell you these things
you must have pondered
once who I am
The answer is out there
and once you find it
you will know more than I
if you do happen to find it tell
me Who am I?

Berowne, from Shakespeare's
Love's Labour's Lost



The Robo-Thinker

by Jack Wooldridge

I started this picture by doing a sketch, then scanning it into the computer. After that I inked it in a program called GIMP (GNU Image

Manipulation Program) and colored it there, too. I have used this technique for several other pictures. I hope you enjoy it! *zzz*



[GIMP \(GNU Image Manipulation Program\)](#) is a free raster graphics editor used to process digital graphics and photos. It's used for creating graphics and logos, resizing and cropping photos, altering colors, combining multiple images, removing unwanted image components, and converting between different image formats. It can also be used to create basic animated images in GIF format. It is often used as a replacement for Adobe Photoshop; however, it is not designed to be a Photoshop clone. The project's mascot is named Wilber. - Wikipedia

Shadowgraphs

by Nishanth Jayram



Kids and the Pole



Grass Painting



The Lonely Bench



The Prayer

Unusual Pets: Toads

by Mara Hughes

I now have more than ten pets. One of my former pets was a toad, the animal I'm featuring in this issue's column.

Let's say you're somewhere close to a swamp or a marsh, when suddenly, you hear a rustling noise coming from the brush! A startled-looking creature clumsily hurries out. It's brownish, with lots of bumps and beautiful golden eyes. You point it out to your younger brother. It's a wild toad!

Facts about Toads



It's not true that toads give people warts; but still, don't try to handle them! Besides having semipermeable skin, which means they breathe through it, which could poison the toad if your hands

aren't clean enough, they also have glands behind their eyes that secrete an irritating substance that can give you a rash.

- Toads make good pets, partly because they'll eat all sorts of insects, including crickets, mealworms, and ants. Just make sure bugs you catch outside for a pet toad to eat haven't been sprayed with pesticides or chemicals of any kind.

- Toads aren't as good at swimming as frogs; make sure that your pet toad's water dish has shallow enough water that he or she can sit in the dish without being completely submerged.

- Toads hunt by sight. Toads have great eyesight, but make sure that you don't shine a light in their eyes constantly, because this irritates their eyes, and most toads enjoy darkness.

Get the scoop on my creatures

My family had a pet California Toad (*Bufo boreas*) named Kalah. We got him for free, as a tadpole that had only his back legs, from PetSmart last May. He had gotten in with the feeder fish at the place they were bred!

His whole name was King Arthur Lynch Alouwishious Hughes, so you can see why we used the acronym for his

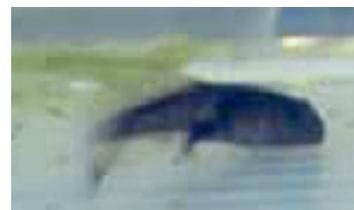
name—KALAH. When he was a tadpole, we mostly fed him boiled lettuce, but when he first turned into a toad we had no idea what to feed him.

We knew he needed live food, so first we tried feeding him bloodworms, but he didn't eat them. But then, a few days later, ants started to attack the live peacock fern in Kalah's vivarium, and I saw Kalah eat an ant! After the ants had finally left, we tried feeding him crickets, and then mealworms, and so that's how we ended up feeding him crickets most of the time, and when we didn't have them, we fed him three mealworms from our colony every few days. I guess that's why he was so plump.



Kalah after turning into a toad.

Unfortunately, Kalah recently died. He swallowed two mealworms at once. Mealworms have a substance in their exoskeletons called chitin, which can be hard to digest. Crickets should make up most of a toad's diet, with other items being offered once every couple of weeks, says Amphibi-anCare.com. And now we know—only one mealworm at a time. *zzz*



I got Kalah when he was a tadpole.

For more information about the California Toad:

- [California Herps - Bufo boreas halophilus](#)
- [CalPhotos - Bufo boreas halophilus](#)
- [AmphibiaWeb - Bufo boreas](#)

The California toad is normally a wild toad and not available in pet stores. Here are articles about the more commonly available American toad:

- [American Toad Care & Husbandry](#)
- [How to Care for an American Toad](#)
- [How to Find a Pet Frog or Toad That's Right for You](#)
- [How to Create a Habitat for a Toad](#)
- [AmphibianCare.com - American Toad](#)

The Nov./Dec. 2008 ZigZagZine featured the story "The Wizard of Dissenter City." We learned how the young man, Zarvanor, became a wizard. In this continuing story, we follow his adventures in the strange place called Dissenter City.

The Continuing Saga of the Wizard of Dissenter City

by Atticus Shaindlin

I had just arrived at Dissenter City. I wasn't quite sure where to go. Elves and shapeshifters were running up and down the street. Main Street, I believe. I walked towards the castle. A queen lived there. Obviously.

As I was walking toward the castle, I felt a cold hand on my arm. I looked, and there was somebody grabbing me. He shouted, "Give me that wand of ruby!" "No way!" I yelled. All of a sudden, he took a cloth and put it on my face.

I fell asleep. (I now realize that it was chloroform—a chemical that knocks you out if you get too close to it.)

Then about a minute later, I woke up. Well, at least it felt like a minute; it was probably more like half an hour. I looked up, and noticed that there was a hawk right above me. It must've woken me up. It looked like a very kind hawk. I thought that maybe I could make it a pet. All of a sudden, the hawk came down onto my shoulder. So I took it as my pet. I decided to name it Ruby. No, Diamond. No, Sapphire. No, Emerald! That's it. I decided to name it Emerald! I heard something. It sounded like something scraping against the metal of a sword. I got up and went into the other room.

I was as quiet as possible. I was right! It was a sword being sharpened. I pulled out my wand and turned the man sharpening the sword into stone. I walked into the next room. There was a man dressed up in shiny gold. He looked like an elemental of metal.

I told Emerald to go up to him and distract him. The man noticed her. I slowly crawled over 'til I was next to him. Then, I stood up, and pulled out my wand. "Who are you, and where am I?" I asked him. He moved back." The answer to question one is: I am Mozarvia. The King of the Metal Elementals. The answer to question two is: You are in my chamber. I have kidnapped you so that you would give me that wand you're pointing at me."

"Why do you want it?" I asked.

"Because, it's made of pure ruby," he said.

I told Emerald, my hawk, to go over to Mozarvia and peck at the back of his neck. She flew over to Mozarvia,

and started pecking. "Ow!" he yelled. Then he grabbed Emerald by her legs. She was trying to escape.

That's when I made three tornados at the same time. But the tornados were so powerful, one of them knocked my wand right out of my hand. I started to run away. The hideout was falling—or at least getting pretty torn up. Mozarvia lunged forward to pick up my wand.

But I didn't go back to get it. Mozarvia started chasing me. When I ran out the door of the horrible lair, I realized it was the stadium. But Mozarvia was still after me. Then, somebody else came out the stadium doors.

He looked like he was also after me. I looked more carefully, and realized he was the man who had shot my Grandfather Amavor! I was so mad at him. I turned around and started going straight the other way, toward both of them! "Arghh!" I yelled. I knocked down Mozarvia as he tried to stop me, and quickly snatched my wand. I aimed it at the man, and suddenly—whoosh! My wand made the most amazing sound. As the air cleared, I saw that I had turned him into a pebble. Shocked, I picked him—up, and threw the stone into the currents of the river. That was the last anybody ever saw of him.

Suddenly, a beautiful woman with a golden crown on her head came out from behind a bush. "You have proved yourself worthy of five crylls," she said regally. I thought that she must have been the Queen of Dissenter City. "Thank you, Queen... Queen..." "Queen Daemona," she said. "Thank you, Queen Daemona," I said. She walked away. I sat down and started to pet Emerald. "Are you hungry after all that?" I asked. "I don't know what you eat."

I gave her a head of a dead snake, but she didn't eat it. She flew over to an apple tree, and started eating apples. "A hawk that's a vegetarian?" I wondered. Then I saw a very familiar face. It was the teenager who had pointed me to a clothing store! I am just a teenager myself, so I went over to him to ask where the stables were. It seemed like he knew where everything was. Well, most things at least. *zzz*



Photo by Mark Wood Ward, Stock.XCHNG

"I told Emerald, my hawk, to go over to Mozarvia... he grabbed Emerald by her legs. She was trying to escape."