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Fourth Grade: Unit 3/ From Mystery to Medicine  
Anthology 2002 Stories

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Medicine: Past and Present

By: André W. Carus

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Imagine you are living in Italy a few hundred years ago.	19
One day, your friend next door gets sick. His mother and	30
brother become ill the following day, and that night all three of	42
them die. Neighbors all around you are sick- and dying. You don't	54
know who might be next. It could even be you or your parents.	67
In those days, this nightmare is what life was like. In the	79
middle of the fourteenth century, an epidemic called the Black	89
Plague swept across Europe, Asia, and Africa. It killed about 75	100
million people, wiping out more than a third of Europe's	110
population. While the disease spared some towns and villages, it	120
killed nearly everyone in others. There was little warning, and	130
those who caught the disease were dead within a few days.	141
Getting sick was always scary, not just during epidemics	150
like the Black Plague. Death was never far away. People could	161
fall ill and die at any moment, and no one would know why. Most	175
people did not live to be very old. The average life expectancy	187
was only thirty or forty years, about half what it is now in the	202
United States.	204
For most of human history, people did not know what	214
caused diseases. They could not see germs, so they didn't realize	225
germs existed. Even after germs were discovered, it took a long	236
time to connect them up with various diseases. It took even	247
longer for people to understand how to keep germs from making	258
people sick.	260
Before people know about germs, they had other ideas	269
about what caused diseases. Mostly, these ideas involved some	278
kind of magical powers. It is easy to understand why people	289
would believe in such ideas. Diseases were terrifying and	298
mysterious. Often there seemed to be no pattern to them. Why	309
did some people die young and others get old? Why did some	321
wounds get infected and others heal? Why did epidemics kill	331
some people and not others? Without knowing about germs, it	341
was easy to believe anything that might make a difference and	352
possibly save a life.	356

Sewed Up His Heart

By: Lillie Patterson

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July 9, 1893, was hot and humid in Chicago. The scorching heat wave wrapped the city like a sweltering blanket and blistered the sidewalks. Rising temperatures sent thermometers zooming towards one hundred degrees.	18 28 35 40
The heat and high humidity took a heavy toll on young and old, animals and people. Horses pulling carts and streetcars dropped in their tracks. People fainted from heat prostration and sun strokes. No relief was in sight.	52 61 70 78
Doctors and hospitals were kept busy. The new Provident Hospital was no exception. Dr. Dan kept close watch on his patients. Making his rounds, he looked as immaculate as always, despite the heat. After his late-afternoon rounds were over, he retired to the closet-like room he used for his office.	87 98 108 119 130
Suddenly, a young student nurse burst into the room, her long starched skirt rustled as she ran.	140 147
"Dr. Dan!" she gasped. "An emergency! We need you!"	156
Without a word Dr. Dan dropped the report he was reading and hurried to the room set aside for emergency cases. The lone hospital intern, Dr. Elmer Barr, came running to assist.	167 179 188
The emergency case was a young man. He had been brought in by his friend, who gave sketchy information. The patient's name: James Cornish. His age: twenty-four years. His occupation: laborer. The illness: he had been stabbed in the chest.	198 208 218 228 229
The frightened friend tried to explain what happened. James Cornish has stopped in a neighboring saloon on his way home from work. The heat and a few drinks caused an argument among the customers. A fight broke out. When it ended, Cornish lay on the floor, a knife wound in his chest.	237 248 260 270 281
"How long was the knife blade?" Dr. Dana asked as he began his examination. This would give a clue to the depth and seriousness of the wound.	292 304 308
The victim had not seen the knife blade. Nor had his friend. Action in the fight had been fast and furious.	319 329

The Bridge Dancers

By: Carol Saller

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Mama give the comb a yank through the mess of Callie's long, wild hair, and Callie gives a yell like you've never heard before. That's not to say I've never heard it before; I've heard it plenty. Callie says when she grows up she's going to the city to live, where she'll start a new style. All the ladies will come to her and pay a lot of money to get their hair tangled up in knots, and she'll get rich and never comb her hair again.

I'm not a lot like Callie. My hair doesn't fly around much, and I like it combed, and I don't often think about leaving this mountain. Callie's going to be thirteen soon. I'm only eleven, and I've never even been across the bridge.

When Callie's all combed, we go down the path to the bridge. It's our favorite place to play when our chores are done. The dirt path is steep from our house down the twisty old hill. We like to run down fast, bouncing off the little trees in a crazy zigzag, but when we reach the edge of the gorge, the path levels off and we run alongside it. To folks way down below on the river we must look like two little pokeberries, up high on a mountain's edge.

What we call the bridge isn't the real bridge, where horses and buggies can get across, that's a few miles off along the path. Our bridge is just a shaky old skeleton, a tangle of ropes and boards that ripples and swings in the breeze. Our house is the closest one to this bridge. The next nearest is the Ketchums' place, another mile up the mountain. Most of our neighbors live across the gorge: Mama says there are seven houses within the first half hour's walk. Mama often has to cross the bridge but we're not allowed.

On this day, the wind is strong and the bridge is rocking like a boat in a storm. We make clover chains and toss them into the gorge, watching them blow away and then down, down. We count the seconds till they hit the water far below. Callie stays by the edge, but I spy some yellow-eyed daisies growing up the hill a ways, and I know Mama will want them because once you boil them, you can use them for coughs, or a lotion for bruises and sores. I pulled the best ones and put them in my apron pocket.

The New Doctor

By: Paula G. Paul

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Manuelita's house seemed unusually quiet as Lupe	14
approached it. She wasn't sure why at first, then she realized	25
that it was because she did not hear Noche screeching, cawing,	36
and chattering. Maybe Manuelita was not at home. Lupe ran the	47
last few steps up to the front and knocked on the door.	59
Still no sounds came from inside the house, but soon the	70
door opened noiselessly, and Lupe saw Manuelita standing in front	80
of her. Noche was perched on her shoulder, his long tail hanging	92
down her back. Manuelita said nothing, but stepped aside for	102
Lupe to enter.	105
"I thought you weren't home," Lupe said.	112
"In a few more ticks of the clock, we would not have been,"	125
Manuelita said.	127
As Lupe walked into the kitchen, she saw several small	137
cloth bags lying on the table and a large knapsack beside them.	149
Manuelita began gathering up the bags and putting them inside	159
the knapsack.	161
"You're going to gather herbs," Lupe said. She had seen	171
Manuelita make these preparations before.	176
Manuelita nodded. She turned toward the cupboard to	184
check the contents of a glass jar. Noche almost lost his balance	196
with the turn and fluttered his wings to keep his position on	208
Manuelita's shoulder. He seemed to know that Manuelita was	217
going out and was making sure he stuck close beside her so that	230
she would not leave him behind.	236
Manuelita said she needs to collect more osha. There is	246
nowhere else in the whole country that osha is as plentiful and as	259
strong as it is in the mountains.	266
Lupe wondered why Manuelita thought she would need so	275
much of the herb. She thought of all the things it was used for.	289
The root could be boiled for upset stomach and headaches, or	300
ground to a powder and mixed with flour to paste on the chest of	314
someone who has a cold, or placed on a sore spot on the body to	329
aid healing. The green leaves could be cooked with meat or beans	341
and eaten regularly, just to stay healthy.	348

The Story of Susan La Flesche Picotte

By: Marion Marsh Brown

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Susan La Flesche Picotte was the first female Native-	20
American doctor in the United States. After completing medical	29
school she returned to her home and began work as the doctor at	42
the reservation school.	45
Susan wrote a letter of application on the very night that	56
she told Rosalie, her sister, she wanted the position of	66
reservation physician. Then she waited anxiously for a reply.	75
At last the letter arrived. She tore it open eagerly.	85
"Well, finally," she sighed. She carried it to the kitchen	95
where her mother was preparing supper. "I got the	104
appointment," she said. "I don't get any more money though."	114
Her mother looked up. "So much more work and no more	125
pay?" she asked.	128
"That what the letter says: 'As there are no funds	138
available except for your present salary as physician to the	148
government school, we will be unable to pay any additional monies	159
for your additional services as reservation physician.' Well,	167
anyway I have the title. Now to see what I can do with it."	181
That same night, the first snow of the winter fell. Susan	192
was soon inundated with a siege of colds, grippe, and pneumonia.	203
It was as if the first snowstorm had been a signal for winter	216
illnesses to attack.	219
She had laid her plans carefully before entering into the	229
new contract to do two jobs for the price of one. She would	242
spend mornings at the school and make house calls in the	253
afternoons. The only problem, she soon discovered, was that	262
there weren't enough hours in the day.	269
"I don't know why babies always want to get born in the	281
wee hours of the morning," she said to Rosalie, stopping at her	293
sister's house one day on the way to school. She'd been up since	306
midnight and would not have time to go home before she was due	319
at school. She was glad to have a place to clean up and get a cup	335
of coffee.	337
"Sue, you can't go on this way," her sister said. "You'll ruin	349
your own health."	352
"Susan sighed. "But what else can I do, Ro?"	361

Shadow of a Bull  
By: Maia Wojciechowska

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Manolo Olivar is the son of Spain's most famous bullfighter. Although his father died after being gored by a bull, Manolo is expected to follow in his father's footsteps. Everyone expects him to be Spain's next great bullfighter. But, Manolo lacks <i>afición</i> , or desire. He knows he does not want to be a bullfighter, but he is unsure what he will become.	16 27 37 47 60 69
On the way to the gored boy's house, Manolo listened to them tell about how bulls can hurt.	80 87
"The horn enters cleanly. If only it would exit that way. But either the man or the bull or both are moving at the time of the goring, and that's why the wounds are so bad."	98 113 123
"The horn tears into the body, ripping the muscles."	132
"And there is always the danger of infections. The horn is dirty, and before penicillin, it was almost always either amputation or death from infection."	143 152 157
"As far as the bullfighters are concerned, penicillin was the greatest invention of man."	166 171
"Poor devils! When they get gored in small towns there is never a doctor."	182 185
"And that's where they usually get gored."	192
"Even here in Arcangel, there is only one doctor who will touch a horn wound. Only one who knows anything about them, and he is getting old; when he is gone, maybe there will be no one."	203 214 228 229
"If you must get gored, be sure it's in Madrid."	239
"In Madrid they have a dozen doctors."	246
"I knew a doctor once who got rich on bullfighters. And then one day, he took his money and went to a printer and had millions of pamphlets printed. The pamphlet was called 'Stop the National Suicide.'"	257 271 281 283
The men had never said anything before about pain, the amount of it a bullfighter had to endure. And Manolo had never thought before about pain. Now, listening to them, he thought that it would not be of dying that he would be afraid, but of the pain.	293 305 315 330 331