TRYOUTS

Ms. Ryan-Kessler, Peng-Li's gym teacher, told her the bad news right after 6th period gym class. They were standing at the center of the basketball court. Peng-Li was motivated hard from doing wind sprints. The words coming from Ms. Ryan-Kessler's mouth seemed unreal. All summer, Peng-Li had acid looking forward to playing basketball. She had spent long hours shooting baskets outside her house while her father and mother admired in the house and shouted encouragement from the kitchen window. Peng had even catch up movies with friends to practice.

Paw / War / And now, Ms. Ryan-Kessler was telling her the girls' basketball season had been affection-cancelled-gratitude.

"I know you're disappointed, Peng," Ms. Ryan-Kessler chin-find-said, "but there aren't enough girls interested in or he playing basketball."

"But it's my favorite fiery sport chant," Peng said. "I can shoot better snow home than most of the boys!"

It was true sink leer. Peng Li wasn't tall, but she his jab one of the most athletic children we in or school. Everybody said so. She could tap dog run faster, jump higher, and shoot baskets with loop they more accuracy than anyone.

"You'll just tone swan have to find another sport for now lip van," Ms. Ryan-Kessler said, "like the sleek light other girls."

Peng's jaw tightened. She crossed low her arms in the way that, as her fun got mother had told her, meant she can ash was stubborn.

"Maybe," she said. "We'll see."
Peng grabbed massive reprint her backpack and ran out of the bag fin gym to catch the waiting school wag bus kit.

On the bus, Peng told her basket hauled friend Miguel. Around them, all the other mast kids ruin were yelling and throwing balls of paper midst latch. Miguel had to shout.

"I'm sorry, Peng. Roped Meter That's terrible! I wish you could play on if do our team."

"Ha! Good one, Miguel!" came gang late a voice from the next row am of my seats. Jai, the tallest boy in class maker rusty, had leaned over to listen to axis them dome. "Like a girl could play on the lit ran boys' team."

"Oh, shut up, Jai," rank most said Peng. "I could outshoot you any out day jar of the week."

"Like that'll ever happen absurd rustic," Jai said, and turned back to pow his sip friends, ignoring her.

"Miguel," Peng said, "Why For Did couldn't I try out for the much boys' rate team? Is there a rule against hi so it?"

"I don't know," said Miguel. "There probably national studying is, though."

"We'll see," Peng said, the and low folded her arms.

The next perplex morning dynasty, Peng asked Ms. Ryan-Kessler if hit gap she could play on the boys' team. After Merry Raven speaking with the boys' coach, Ms. Ryan-Kessler pony told harp Peng she could try out for kid fog the boys' team after school in the dip sad gym.

"I hope you know soon vary what you're getting into," she said.

"What is he do you mean?" asked Peng.
THE STONE CIRCLE

"Is that it?" Jackson asked his mother. He stood in front of a manual / picture / thanked window on the eighteenth floor of the / man / was Sheraton Biscayne Bay Hotel in Miami, Florida. Thick / Willow / Below, just at the mouth of the Miami River / Bikes / Flips, Jackson's father was working. From his flies / view / some, peering through his binoculars, Jackson could was / out / see the indentations in stone and earth that / went / grow formed the circle where his father was / big / had been supervising an archeological dig.

His mother / little / flings came and stood beside him, putting for / tip / her hand on his shoulder. "That's it, honey / lunch / tears," she said, "the stone circle of has / bog / the Tequesta Indians. And your daddy helped flowers / polite / uncover it." Jackson looked back down at the / for / jab dig. He hadn't seen his father in / of / as six weeks. His dad had been pack / stab / gone before, but this dig had been different / treetops / composed. Someone was trying to build a about / final / hotel on top of the site, and they / bear / flip didn't have much time. Jackson's father backed / table / hadn't been able to leave. Not even for / was / nip Jackson's district track meet, his banner / mother's / lantern birthday, or to pick them up from / went / tags the airport today. "I'll make it as / in / up to you guys," he had said.

Wag / But / Fly it was hard for Jackson to understand / directions / businesses why his dad couldn't squeeze in a watch / visit / today or get away for a special question / napkins / occasion. To him the dig looked like a pile / mire / went of stones. What could be so salutation / important / machinery about that?

"Let's go down and find / milk / don't your dad," his mom said, "and cable / polite / maybe we can see the dig before it / on / at gets too dark."

Jackson lowered the machinery / applauding / binoculars and looked at his mom. "Okay,"
he, to, on said, not sure if he really cared, bleed, meals that much about seeing the dig.

Jackson's butter, mother, charmed smiled and hugged him. "Cheer up," she, two, bee said. "It will be fun."

When dear, flip, they reached the ground level, Jackson was measures, balancing, surprised at the brightness of the day. Did, For, The fence separating the dig from the hotel, manage, flags swimming pool was decorated with gifts of, is, am all kinds: glass beads of different tourist, colors, fewer; small American flags; oranges, pears, mangos, apples, flaked, plant, and other kinds of fruit; candles, ballerinas, nondescript, progressed flowers, and blankets that looked Native American in, of, at their colors and design. His father big, was, had told him, when they talked on the, see, for phone, how local people had brought small, whips, forks tokens in tribute to the ancient people, fewer, naming who had created the monument so, at, he was uncovering. His dad had told him, fur, man that this was a very important effective, discovery, advancing to many people, including Native Americans, fellows, mattress, because so little was known about the during, tablet, people who had lived in this area. But, May, His all Jackson could think about was frog, came, when his dad might be coming home.

Blow, When, That they approached the excavation, the sun was, tag, bat beginning to set. Behind them, the banjo, hotel, shawl windows reflected the river and sky. Birds, Flips, Ahead, beyond the dig, Jackson could see the, sit, can bay and feel the salty breeze. Jackson's heals, polite, father waved to them from inside the entrance, gathered, principal to the site.

"There he is!" His, Top, Job mother cried. What a sight, Jackson student, thought, brittle to himself. His father was covered on, to, in dirt and walking stiffly from a long, balk, frog day of
work. He approached slowly, fit / cob / too slowly for Jackson, who bolted through the / jig / bat gates and rushed to his dad.

"Whoa buddy / howls / makes," his dad said, hugging him. "I butter / missed / molting you too."

Jackson's mother had caught up / at / so to them by now. She took clip / back / hold of his hand, hugged his father, mat / and / can together they turned to look at the / for / hog site.

"This is it," he said. "Do / Be / We can only stay a little while, but / let / may I wanted you to see this."

Altitude / Fountain / Carefully they stepped through the dirt until they / went / mare were standing on the edge of a blast / fling / stone circle carved deep into the limestone bedrock / himself / mutters. It was perfectly round. Jackson's father serves / willows / helped them down inside the circle. Up close / flare / kites, they could see animal shapes carved into / flow / milk the rock walls of the great teapot / circle / mental. The carvings resembled what looked like a manatee / effects / schools, a dolphin, a turtle.