



Here, two awesome fourth graders, inspired by Ralph Fletcher’s “First Pen” chapter in *Marshfield Dreams*, wrote about special gifts they had received. As they wrote and revised these narratives, they tried hard to include writing skills they saw Ralph Fletcher using in his final draft. Re-read Mr. Fletcher’s “First Pen” chapter after reading these two samples. Where do you see Lauren and John imitating the skills of the original author as they wrote about their own gifts? Be prepared to share your ideas with the whole class!

The Heart Necklace

by Lauren, fourth grade writer

When I was eight years old, my dad gave me a necklace. The necklace had a crystal in a shape of a heart attached to a sterling silver chain. The crystal was tinted red and pink.

My dad was getting married to my step mom Nicole. Nicole had short golden blonde hair no longer than her shoulders. She had caramel brown eyes that lit up when she smiled or laughed. I helped her pick out her wedding dress. The dress was a sleeveless top that had little crinkles for decoration. My dad and I picked out the cake. The cake had three layers of vanilla cake. For decoration it had strawberries dipped in chocolate.

At the wedding, I wore the necklace. It matched my white dress and cooperated with the pink sash. I thought Nicole looked beautiful and after the wedding my dad said, “You look very grown up.” After he said that, I thought about looking grown up and the more I thought, the more I felt grown up.

Every time I wear that necklace I feel grown up. I love that necklace so much. I feel special every time I put it on. I can’t wait until I wear it again.



Getting my Knife

by John, fourth grade writer

On my 8th birthday, I got a present that I still have now, and it’s very useful to me. It was my first pocketknife. It was a big steel, shiny knife and it could unfold into a pair of pliers. The brand was Leatherman. I opened it up to see what tools it had. There was a sharp, shiny blade, two screw drivers (one flat head and one I’m-not-sure-what-it’s-called head) and a ruler. Last but not least a circular thing that I still don’t know what it is.

I went outside to try whittling something. I got a stick and started carving the end of it. *Scrape, scrape, scrape...*the knife worked perfectly. I stopped whittling when the stick was as sharp a pin. I got up and a pile of shavings fell off of me and onto the rocky path.

I closed my new knife and walked back up the stairs to tell my mom how much I liked it. Then I walked up to my room and put it in a little wooden box on top of my dresser. I use that knife for a lot of things and I don’t want to give it up.

