

A SPECIAL PLACE



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This work is to be utilized in conjunction with culturally relevant teaching practices. Please engage with the content responsibly and respectfully. Below are some tips for engaging with this content in a classroom context:

1. Avoid dehumanizing language. This text uses the words 'enslaved person' and other terms in the place of the word 'slave'. This language emphasizes the humanity of individuals who were oppressed by the chattel system.
2. Role model responsible attitudes. If something comes up that needs to be addressed, take the time to calmly and kindly explain why it is important to use humanizing language, reframe a question, or unlearn ideas that cause harm. Remember that these learning moments can be facilitated without shaming or embarrassing students, but still making it clear that disrespectful terms or attitudes can not be tolerated in the classroom.
3. Be sensitive to student needs and the appropriateness of content, but do not sugarcoat topics. Serious topics can bring up a lot of emotions in students. While emotional safety is essential for learning, providing misinformation is not the best way to protect students and can cause real harm.

Access the *Live Reading Companion* to this book at:

<https://h5pstudio.ecampusontario.ca/content/59583>

This tool is informed by a multiliteracies approach to the Ontario English secondary curriculum.

F.A.Q

How do I use the tool?

- This text can be read out loud to students as the *Live Reading Companion* plays in the background.
- Each page of this book corresponds with a video module, which provides relevant visuals and ambient sounds to immerse students in the story.
- Throughout the reading of the text, the *Live Reading Companion* will present prompting questions to check for understanding, and to inform meaningful discussion or reflection.

What kinds of questions does the *Live Reading Companion* ask?

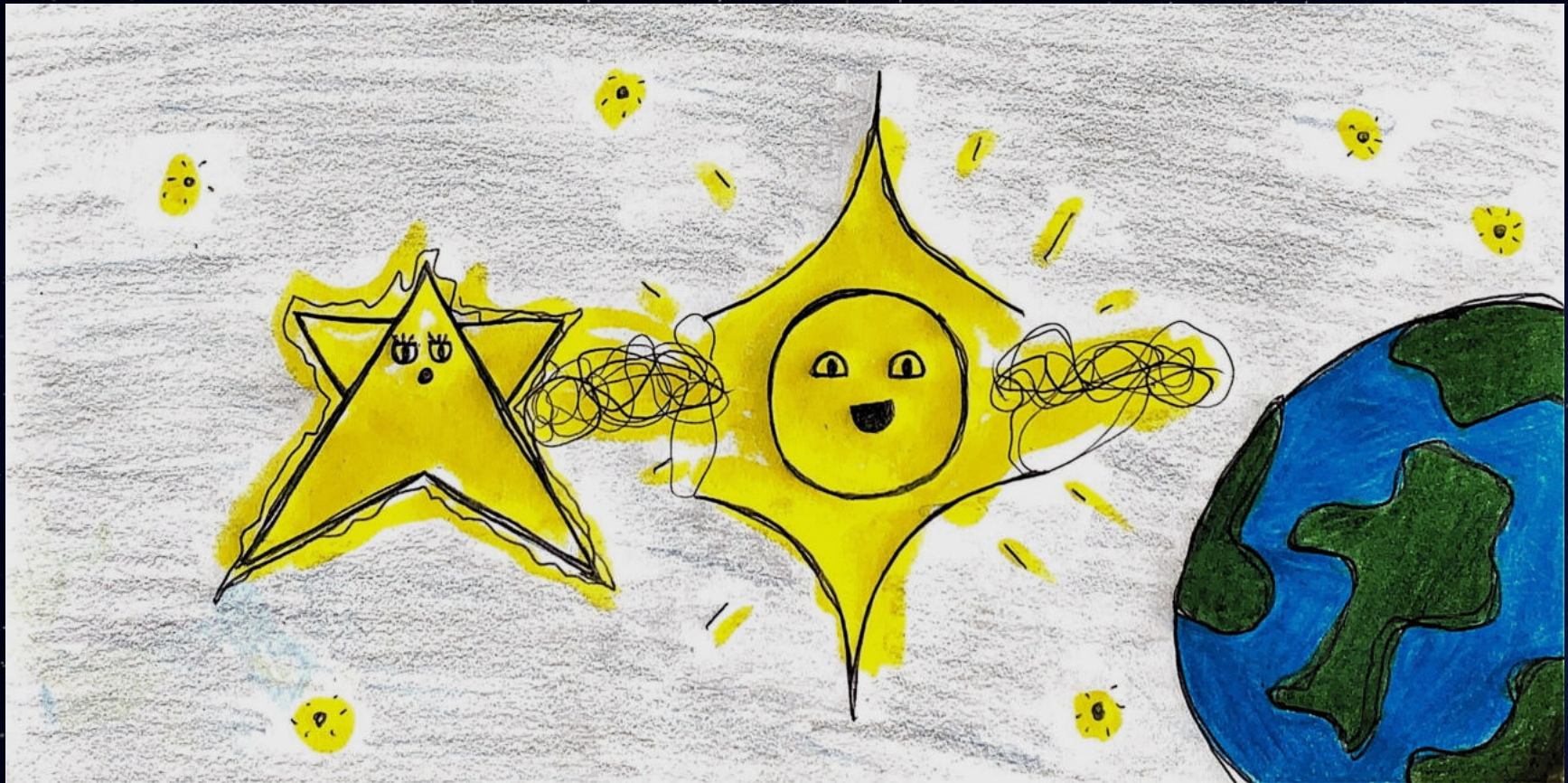
- This resource is designed to address the following Specific Expectations in the Ontario Grade 10 Academic English curriculum (as of 2023):
 - READING
 - 1.3** identify the most important ideas and supporting details in texts, including increasingly complex texts.
 - 1.5** extend understanding of texts, including increasingly complex texts, by making appropriate connections between the ideas in them and personal knowledge, experience, and insights; other texts; and the world around them
 - MEDIA
 - 1.1** explain how media texts, including increasingly complex texts, are created to suit particular purposes and audiences
 - 2.1** identify general and specific characteristics of a variety of media forms and explain how they shape content and create meaning

**If it is desirable to change the provided questions, educators are also welcome to adapt this resource for their own classrooms by using the “Reuse” tool available to content creators on <https://h5pstudio.ecampusontario.ca/>



In the vast, twinkling sky lived a star named Stella. Stella always felt like she did not quite belong. While the other stars danced together and formed beautiful constellations, Stella stood alone. Stella wanted to dance like the other stars, but no matter how hard she tried to move, she was stuck in the same place in the sky every night. "Every other star has a special place in the movement of the universe," thought Stella. She saw a shooting star pass by and made a wish.

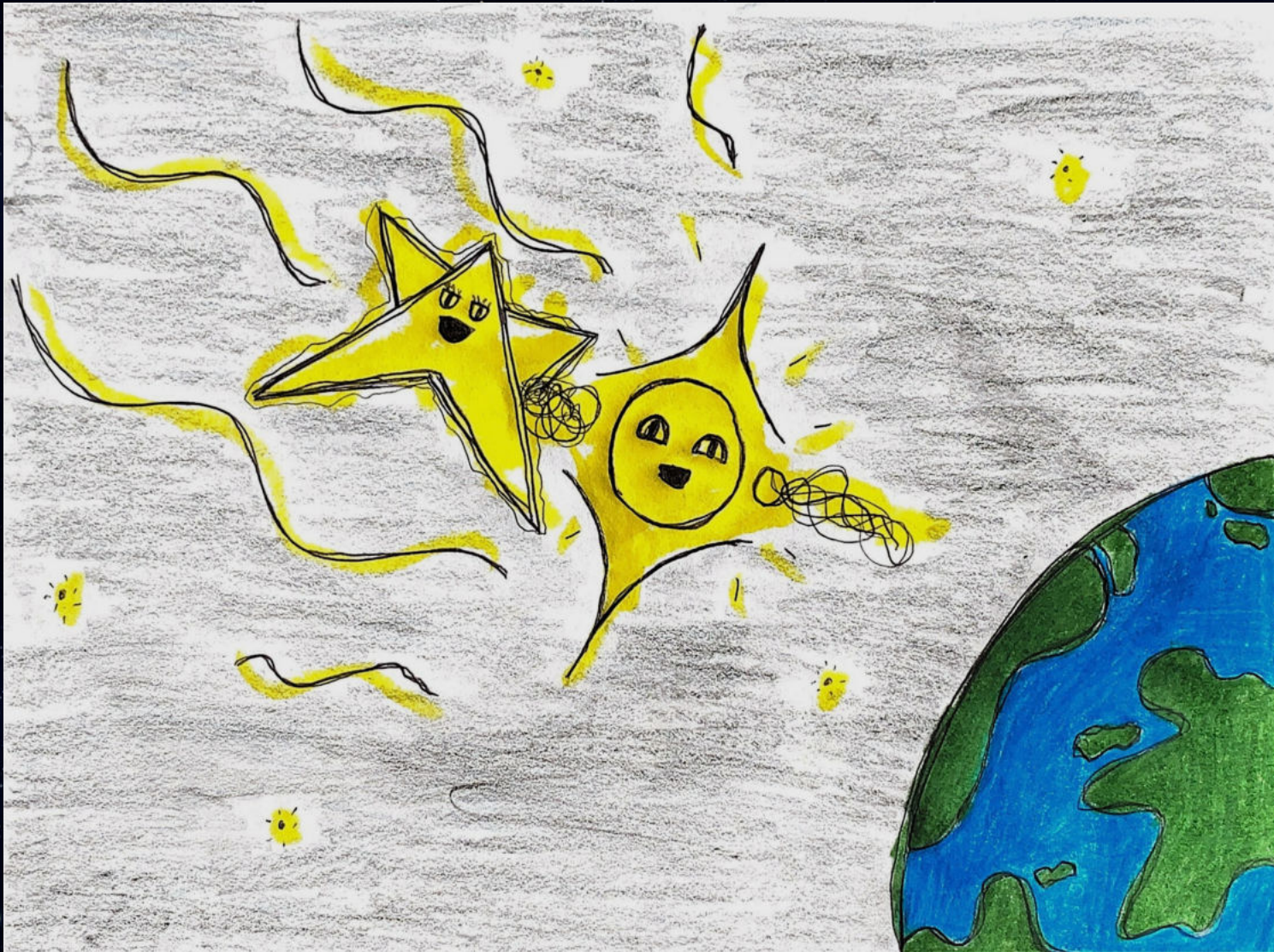
"I wish I had a special place in the universe, too."



The shooting star heard Stella's wish and carried it to Luna, the wisest star in the cosmos. Luna knew that Stella had a special place in the universe. She knew how important Stella was to the people on Planet Earth.

Luna went to visit Stella.

She said, "Stella, you might not be able to dance, but you stand out as the brightest star in the sky. Those who need you always know where to find you standing in the night sky. You play a very special role in the cosmos. Come with me and you will see!"

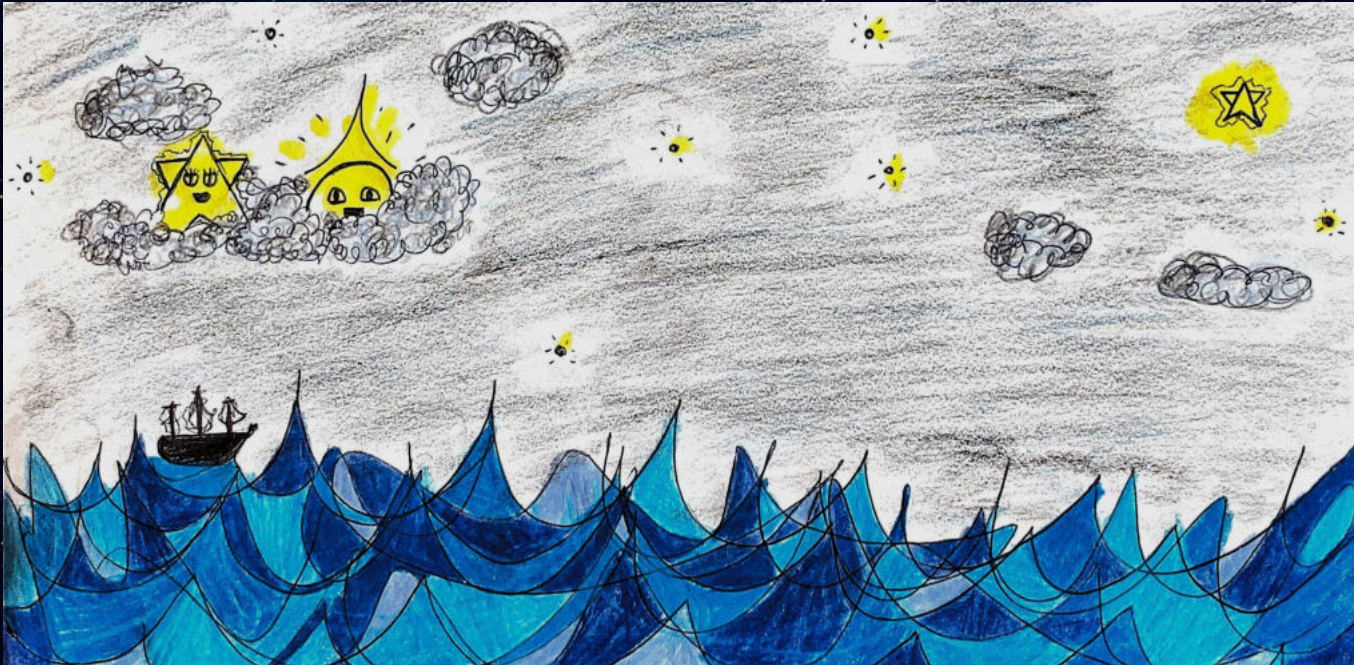


Luna whisked Stella away to Planet Earth and took her on a journey of self-discovery.

1765-

Stella and Luna are over the open ocean. A ship is navigating through the Middle Passage between Africa and North America.

“In the darkest chapters of history, there existed a group of brave souls whose spirits soared higher than the chains that bounded their bodies. These were African people, who were stolen from their homeland and caught in a cruel slave-trade. Despite this oppression, a glimmer of hope flickered in the hearts of people who dreamed of freedom.”



“This ship carries hundreds of trapped people in its cargo, and it is traveling a dangerous route. Many good people have not survived the trip across the middle passage, but this ship will be okay. They are following your bright light, Stella. You stand in the sky over the land that this ship is traveling to. They will not be lost at sea because you are their compass, and you guide them on their journey.”

Stella watched the ship for a moment. She felt sad for the people on board, but she was happy that her light could help it avoid getting lost. “Thank you for showing me this, Luna,” said Stella. “Guiding ships is an important job for a star. I feel a little better now.”

1835-

Mobile, Alabama.



Luna held Stella's hand tight and whisked her to North America. The sun was setting over a tall field of green and white. Stella looked at the sun, which cast beautiful colours across the sky. Stella said to Luna, "I wish I was as beautiful as the sun. She lights up the sky, and plays an important role helping all these plants grow."

"The sun is important," said Luna, "but you also play an important role in this place, Stella. Listen carefully. What do you hear?"

Stella listened. She heard the hum of the cicadas and rustling of leaves. At last, the wind carried another sound to her ears. A man was singing in a low tone as he worked in the field. He was teaching the song to a young boy who was with him. Stella listened to the lyrics:

*When the sun comes back and the first quail calls,
follow the drinking gourd.
The old man is awaiting for to carry you to freedom,
follow the drinking gourd.
Now the river bank makes a mighty good road,
the dead trees will show you the way.
Left foot, peg foot, traveling on,
follow the drinking gourd.*

Stella was confused. "They are singing about the sun," she told Luna.

"No Stella," said Luna, "This song is about you. The 'drinking gourd' was a special name that African people used for the Big Dipper constellation, which points right at the place where you stand in the night sky. These people are trapped on this land, and they are forced to work. Although the sun is beautiful, it is hot on their backs and faces, and it makes them tired. Music helps uplift their spirits, and they sing it as the sun sets. The song is telling its listeners about you, Stella. You inspire these brave souls, and night comes, they dream of freedom."

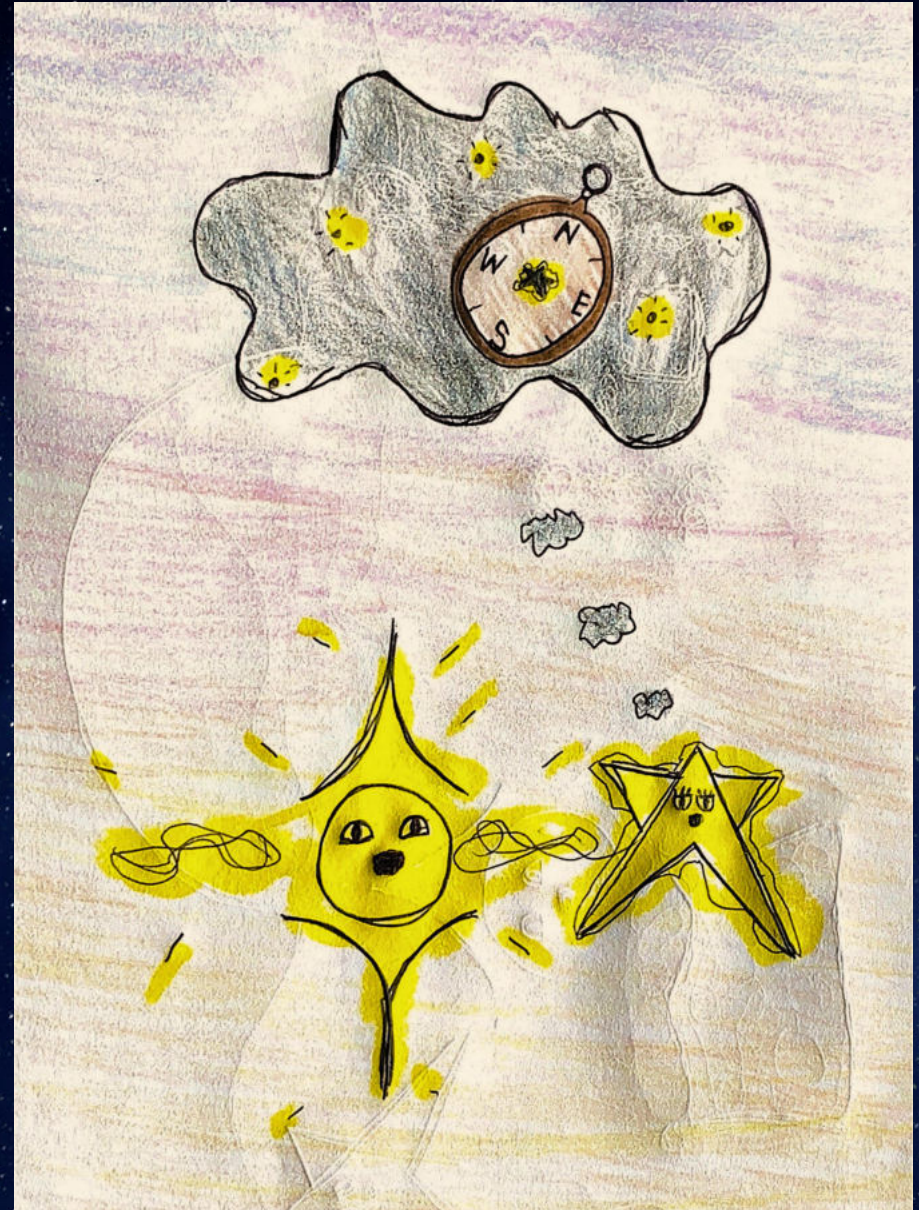


“Many of these dreamers heard about a guiding light that appears in the same place in the sky every night. The light was said to be a compass pointing the way to freedom. Can you guess who this guiding light could be, Stella?”

Stella looked at Luna with wide-eyes. “It couldn’t be me, could it?” she asked.

“Yes, it was you. You were a promise and glimmer of hope that was used to show many of these souls the way to freedom. You became a guide for many people as you illuminated the path to liberation.”

Stella was silent for a moment. She thought, “Helping people is important to me. If I moved and danced with the other stars, then I wouldn’t be able to be a compass for the ship we saw, or for these people who need my help. I guess, in a way, it is good that I can not dance.”



1845-

A forest along the Ohio River.



Luna whisked Stella into a moonlit forest, where shadows danced with the rustling leaves in the night. In the darkness, Stella could see the outline of people, hidden by the shadows of the moon.

“The moon is so powerful and beautiful” whispered Stella.

“Stella, look closer.” prompted Luna.

In the dense undergrowth, a family of freedom seekers moved through the shadows with a purpose known only to them and a star shining brightly above. There was a faint sound of crunching beneath their feet, marking every cautious step. The sound of a dog barking reached them from a distance, and the family paused for a moment, turning to be sure they were not being followed. The people’s eyes, reflecting a mix of fear and determination, were fixated on the sparkling star that guided their path.

“That big bright star is you, Stella,” said Luna.

“I am helping them find freedom,” said Stella. “I hope they will make it there safely.”

“Let’s go see,” said Luna. “We have one more place to visit.”



2023-

Windsor, Ontario, Canada.



Luna brought Stella to a home with beautiful gardens. A young girl was looking out of her window at the night sky. As she watched the stars, she was inspired to create a song from her heart. She began to sing:

*North Star, North Star
You feel close but are so far
I am thankful for your constant glow
You always show us where to go*

*Always in the same place each night
My wish goes to the North Star tonight
In your light and shining beams
Deliver me some happy dreams*

*Of health and love and all good things
Of resilience and songs to sing
Watch over me while I rest my eyes
Light up the freckled midnight skies*

*My best friend from outer space
You have a very special place
In history and amongst the stars
What a precious light you are*





Stella smiled as she listened to the girl's wish. She turned to Luna.

"I have to get home!" Stella said. "What if someone is looking for me tonight and I am not in my special place! Please bring me back, Luna."

"Right away," said Luna, as she lifted Stella back up into the night sky.

When Stella got back to her spot in the sky, she looked down at Planet Earth. She felt proud of the people she had seen on her journey because they were good people and showed resilience. Stella felt that helping those people was a very important role; Possibly even more important than dancing with the other stars. She promised to always be there for the people of Planet Earth.

The End!

RESOURCE PAGE

A Special Place: Live Reading Companion

Online link: <https://h5pstudio.ecampusontario.ca/content/59583>

Instructions to embed this resource on a website or LMS:

1. Go to the link <https://h5pstudio.ecampusontario.ca/content/59583>
2. On the bottom left side under the resource, click the grey text that reads 'Embed'
3. Using the settings or advanced settings, adjust the embedded resource to the size you would like to fit your site.
4. Copy the embed iframe code
5. Paste in embed code in the appropriate area to add media to your website

A Special Place (Online viewing options for the text)

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