

An illustration of a sad-looking alfalfa plant with a red face and large green leaves in the foreground. A black magpie bird with a white patch on its chest is perched nearby. The background shows a green field, brown mountains, and a bright yellow sun in a blue sky.

Illustrated by  
Sheldon High School

# Alissa Alfalfa's Big Journey

Honorable Mention

By Ellie Gomes

8th grade - Scott Valley Junior High

Amy Hurlimann, Teacher

On a warm spring morning in the middle of May, there was a field of alfalfa sprouts on a farm in Scott Valley. All of the sprouts were happy to be out of the ground and looking around, all except one. Her name was Alissa Alfalfa and she did not feel special. Alissa wanted to be unique; she did not like that there was a whole field of alfalfa that looked just like her. A bird that often visited happened to notice the sad little alfalfa plant.

"Hi, my name is Maggie, the magpie. I come to visit this alfalfa field often, and I can't help but wonder why you are sad," inquired the bird.

"I am sad because I want to be unique. I don't want to look like everyone else. I feel like no one wants me because there are so many like me," Alissa explained sadly.

"Are you kidding? You are California-grown alfalfa!" Maggie exclaimed.

Alissa looked up at the bird. "What do you mean?" she asked curiously.

"Do you not know how important you are not only to the U.S. but the whole world? You are what feeds the world, and you are extra special because you are a very beautiful kind of alfalfa that only grows in California!" the bird explained.

"Wow! I really am important!" Alissa happily replied.

"Soon enough you will be cut, dried and grouped together with



all your friends, then shipped on trucks and boats to see the world! The hay you make is so special that it is wanted all over this country and many others,” Maggie told Alissa.

This made Alissa really happy; she must be unique after all. Now she was so proud to be an alfalfa plant and wanted to share what she had learned from the magpie with all her friends.

“Everyone, guess what?” Alissa asked excitedly.

“What?” asked the alfalfa sprouts.

“We are going to travel! My friend Maggie says that California alfalfa is wanted all over the world!” she beamed.

All the other young alfalfa plants looked around at each other in awe. Many said things like, “Wow!” but most said nothing at all because they were speechless. The young plants were all amazed.

After about 50 days of growing, the alfalfa sprouts became big, beautiful plants that were ready to be cut, dried, and baled. All the alfalfa plants were excited and a little nervous to see where they were going to be sent. Their friend Maggie came to visit often and was there all day when they were being cut. When all were on the ground, they were raked and left out in the sun to dry. Then one day, a loud baler came and grouped them together, making bales. The bales were loaded on a truck that drove many hours down to the Bay Area, occasionally stopping to deliver alfalfa bales. The whole journey, Maggie stayed by Alissa’s side.

“Wow! What is that, Maggie?” all the alfalfa plants would ask when dazzled by things they had never seen before.

Usually Maggie would say things like, “That is a town where people live” or “That is a place where the trucks fill up the diesel tank, so they can keep driving us.” When the truck full of beautiful Scott Valley hay finally arrived at the Port of Long Beach, it was sorted and loaded onto ships that would cross the Pacific Ocean. They had never

seen such tall buildings! Maggie told Alissa the ships would travel to Japan, China, Arabia, Korea, and other countries needing them.

“Wow!” they exclaimed.

“Now our ship will be going to Japan!” Maggie told them.

After they said goodbye to their friends, the ship started its journey to Japan. Along the way, Alissa was amazed by the many ocean animals Maggie pointed out. After 30 days, they docked in the Port of Tokyo and were loaded into trucks once again. Alissa watched as some of her friends were unloaded on a dairy farm, others on a beef ranch, and a few at a feed store. Finally, Alissa and Maggie arrived in a fancy stable yard. Maggie took to the sky to look around.

“Oh my goodness! Alissa, you won’t believe it! We are at the Tokyo Racecourse. The Japan Cup is next week, and you have been sent to help the beautiful horses prepare for the race.” Maggie sang with delight.

Alissa beamed with pride. Never in her life had she been so happy.

**Author**  
**Ellie Gomes (8th Grade)**



**Illustrator**  
**Ovava Tonga**

