

A LION ATE MY HOMEWORK

I felt the bed tremble. I gripped the side of my bed tightly. "Earthquake!" I screamed in fear. I felt something hit my face hard. "The ceiling is falling!" I yelled.

I opened my eyes and saw my sister, Sally, holding a pillow. "Wake up!" she cried exasperatedly. She shook my bed once more. "You will be late. And if you do not wake up now, I will be late too!" She screamed.

Minutes later, I was eating my breakfast. "Are you excited about your first day in school? Well, at least in Primary Four," Mum asked gently. I nodded my head slowly.

"School bus is here! Sarah, get your lazy bum off the chair!" Sally shouted at me.

Mum looked at Sally with a disapproving look. I grabbed my school bag and suddenly I realised I had not fed my pet mouse. I pleaded, "Mum, please feed my mouse for me. Thanks!" I rushed off.

The school main lobby was filled with chattering students. I felt a tap on my shoulder. I turned around and saw my best friend, Emma. She squeezed my hand tightly. "It is good to be back in school. Don't you agree?" Emma asked, grinning from ear to ear.

We walked towards the hall hand in hand. I looked at Emma's hair. It was combed neatly into a bun. My hair was sticking out untidily. I was a messy and careless girl.

Our principal stepped onto the stage. She cleared her throat and greeted us cheerfully, "Welcome back to school. I hope you had a lovely holiday. You will soon find out which class you will be in this year," she announced. I trembled in excitement. Emma squeezed my hand tightly. A teacher took her place and said, "We shall start with the Primary Fours. Sarah Lee, you are posted to Primary 4H. Emma Ng, you too." Emma and I hugged each other happily. "We are in the same class!" we cried in unison.

After assembly, we went to our respective classrooms. Our new form teacher, Miss Goh walked in. She had grey hair combed neatly into a bun. She wore spectacles that rested on her nose. She wore a dress that was neatly pressed without a single crease. "Class, I am your new form teacher, Miss Goh. Good morning," she said with a deep and stern voice.

We all stood up and bowed. We greeted her in one voice, "Good morning, Miss Goh." I sat down and continued to talk to Emma.

Miss Goh pointed her long, bony finger at me. "You! What is your name?" she demanded loudly. I froze and stared at Miss Goh. "I can tell that the two of you are best friends. You are not to sit with each other anymore!" She pointed to another girl with pigtails. "You! Switch places with that talkative girl!" She bellowed sternly, glaring at me. I felt like a dagger stabbed through my heart and I held back my tears. I picked up my bag and trudged towards my new, dreadful seat. I stared longingly at my seat next to Emma. Emma returned my look sadly.

"Now, I will run through my ground rules with you. Rule number one, no talking when I am talking. Rule number two...." Miss Goh continued listing her ten ground rules but I was not listening at all. Instead, I was looking at the new girl I was made to sit with. She was very plump with short brown hair and crooked teeth. I had to blink back my tears. "Why? Why must I be placed with this...this horrid girl?" I thought to myself selfishly.

Miss Goh started to take attendance. When she called my name, I did not say "Present" as I was still wallowing in my misery of being separated from Emma. Suddenly, Miss Goh came up to my table, holding her Mathematics "Teacher's Guide". She slammed it onto my table and shouted, "Are you in class, Sarah Lee? Or should I mark you as absent?"

I looked up at her in shock and quickly muttered, "Present".

Days passed and Class 4H quickly found out the consequences of violating Miss Goh's ground rules. Whenever Miss Goh was in the classroom, the class would be dead quiet that you could hear a pin drop. One day, Miss Goh took out a stack of paper and said, "Class, an inter-

school writing competition will be coming up in 2 weeks. Here are the forms you need to fill up to participate in the competition. Since this is the best class, I expect all of you to take part. The due date for all of your entries is 16 March. The topic is ‘Pets’. Good luck.” Once I had the form in my hand, I was so excited that I felt like exploding!

After hearing the news, the day dragged by very slowly. I stared at the clock hanging on the wall in anticipation. “Just five more minutes and I can start writing my masterpiece!” I thought. 5....4....3....2....1... Ring! “Thank you and goodbye girls,” Miss Goh said.

“Thank you and goodbye, Miss Goh!” the class replied in unison.

With my hair flying in all directions, I dashed out of the classroom and down the familiar path home.

Upon reaching home, I placed the application form for the writing competition on the dining room table and scribbled a short note to Mum for her consent and signature. It was for her to read after she came back from work. Sitting down on my study table, I started to type my long but interesting story about my pet mouse.

The next day, during assembly, I whispered to Emma who was sitting next to me, “What pet are you writing about? I am writing about my pet mouse!”

“Oh! I am writing about my pet dog, Fluffy!” Emma replied excitedly.

We chatted endlessly about each other’s pets when the prefect stepped onto stage, signalling the start of flag-raising. When we reached our classroom, we all had the same reaction. “Uh oh!” we all thought. Miss Goh held a stack of papers in her hand and she did not look pleased. She gestured to us to take our seats quickly. After exchanging greetings, she glared at all of us one by one. “This piece of homework was not done well. Messy handwriting is unacceptable! Many of you had at least three mistakes!” Miss Goh screamed. “But the worst of all, was someone in particular, who did extremely bad. Come up to face the class,” she paused, “Sarah Lee. You scored six over twelve. I repeat SIX over twelve! Because of this, you will have to hand up your story for the

competition EARLIER than everyone else. Instead of 16th March, I expect you to hand it up to me a week earlier! That is 1 day from now, little Miss! You have one more day to the new deadline!”

I felt as if the sky had just collapsed on me. “1 day! How am I supposed to hand up my 2000 word story about my pet mouse?” I thought in distress. Everybody turned to look at me. Their eyes seemed like lasers shooting at me. After seeing my distressed look, they quickly looked away and turned their attention to the dreadful, no-nonsense, Miss Goh. The lesson continued very slowly. I was already brainstorming for ideas so that I could complete my story.

Once school ended, I darted out of the classroom like a flash of lightning. The moment I reached home, I rushed to my study table and continued my 2000 word story on “My Pet Mouse”. I sat through for three hours straight. After that I went to take a nice hot bath before spending another three hours writing. After many hours of writing, I went to bed completely exhausted.

“Wake up! Could you stop being so late?” I heard Sally shouting into my ear. Oh no! Late again! I jumped out of bed and ran to get ready for school. I went to my study table to collect my story when, “Oh no! Where did my story go?” I shouted. I started to panic. Just then, I saw my pet mouse chewing on a piece of paper. “You ate it! You ate it! I cannot believe you ate it!” I hollered. Tears started to well up in my eyes. “All my time and effort wasted. I will get a big scolding from Miss Goh too!” I thought. I heard my mother calling me. Quickly, I shouldered my school bag and trudged downstairs.

Upon reaching school, I told Emma everything that had happened. Immediately, she felt sorry for me and tried as hard as she could to comfort me. It was no use. I was doomed! We walked to the classroom together, hand in hand. Miss Goh was waiting for the class. After we exchanged polite greetings, Miss Goh pointed her long, bony finger at me. “You! Sarah Lee! Your story. NOW!” she shouted at me. Slowly, I walked towards my death.

“Where is your story?” Miss Goh demanded.

“I...I...did not bring....bring it. Lion ate...ate...ate it,” I stammered. Miss Goh looked at me straight in the eye. “Lion, huh? LION! You dare to lie to me? Miss Caroline Goh will teach you a lesson. Trust me I will. Today, I will call your parents. You will not want to know what I will do to you tomorrow! And the day after that and the day after that! It will get worse and worse,” Miss Goh growled. A shiver ran down my spine.

Just then, I realised what she meant. She thought I was lying to her. I started to laugh. “Miss Goh, I do not mean a real Lion. I mean my pet mouse. Its name is Lion. It escaped from his cage and ate my homework!” I replied. Miss Goh started to laugh too. The whole class stared at Miss Goh in bewilderment. It was the first time she smiled, let alone laughed. When she realised all eyes were on her, she transformed into her old grouchy self.

“What kind of name is that? Call a mouse a Lion. That is just stupid! Give me my story tomorrow!” Miss Goh screamed. I walked back to my seat slowly.

“Ha! That was hilarious! I had never seen Miss Goh so embarrassed before. Ha! Ha!” I thought, grinning from ear to ear. There was so much to tell my family tonight, besides the re-writing!

Grand Prize Winner : **Jodie Lee P4**

