

## Mr. Al Geebrah and His Dog Numer

Many years ago, in a small school, in a small town, something very strange happened, something very strange indeed. Here's the whole story. Well, at least a fraction of it...

At this small school, none of the students ever smiled, and on sunny days nobody ran around and played tag or football, or even laughed about their favorite TV shows. No, this small school was different because the math teacher, Mr. Al Geebrah was so mean. He was mean like mean squared, or mean times mean. In other words, on the AVERAGE, he was the MEANEST! And with him around no one ever had any fun...

One morning, things were especially quiet because the students knew that Mr. Geebrah was giving a math test, and math test days were the scariest days of all! As a matter of fact, some people believed that Mr. Geebrah would sneak around town at night and take students that did not do well on tests to his evil castle of math...

At 9 o'clock the bell rang and students filed into Mr. Geebrah's class for their test. He put test papers on the students' desks and told them to be silent and start.

It was not even five minutes into the test before Suzy began to weep. First her tears soaked  $\frac{1}{3}$  of her test, then  $\frac{2}{3}$  of her test, and finally they'd soaked  $\frac{3}{3}$ , or in other words, her whole math test!! Suzy's test paper was so soggy, the numbers she'd written began to blur. All the sixes seeped into the eights, and the eights ran into the nines. After the test, Suzy continued to cry.

"What happened Suzy, what's wrong?" asked Suzy's friend Jenna.

"I couldn't remember how to add fractions. I'm gonna' fail!"

"Don't worry," said Jenna, "I'll show you tomorrow, it's easy once you practice."

But Suzy was not in school the next day and she was the only one missing from math class when the students sat down in their seats.

Mr. Geebrah said, "Here are your math tests, I expected you to do better! It's a small miracle most you passed and only a small fraction failed. That small fraction is Suzy!"

"Speaking of Suzy," called out Jenna, "Does anyone know where she is?"

Now, it was not odd for Jenna to call out in class, but it was odd that Mr. Geebrah did not yell at Suzy for calling out in class. Upon hearing Jenna, Mr. Geebrah just turned toward the blackboard and laughed an evil laugh...

After school that day, Jenna was standing in the yard with her friends, Joe and Jake. Jenna was asking them if they knew what happened to Suzy, but Joe was busy teasing Jenna about her new haircut. Jenna, who liked her haircut, was about to make fun of Joe's ears when they saw a strange bird flying through the sky.

"That's the strangest looking bird I've ever seen," said Jake. As they were staring at the bird, they saw it drop something and three pieces of golden paper fluttered down to the ground at the feet of the three students. Joe picked up a piece and looked at it. The paper had writing on the top of it. It said:

<b><i>vil Cast</i></b>	<b><i>4/12</i></b>
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Joe looked up and shrugged, "What's a 'vil Cast?" Jake picked up another piece of the paper. It said:

<b><i>Map to the E</i></b>	<b><i>2/12</i></b>
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"I wonder what the E is?" asked Jake. Jenna shrugged and picked up the third piece. It said:

<b><i>le of Math</i></b>	<b><i>6/12</i></b>
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"What's a *le of math?*" wondered Jenna "These don't make any sense..."

"Hey, maybe the 3 pieces go together! Maybe it's some sort of puzzle," suggested Joe.

"Yeah, but how would they go together?" asked Jake. The students looked at their papers again.

"Look, there are little fractions written on the papers," said Jenna, and as she said it, the bird flew over again and crowed,

**smaaalesstolarrrrrgessmallesttolargest**

"Well, there's our clue," said Jake and the students arranged the papers from smallest to largest and saw the message it contained. Write it here:

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Joe yelled, "It's part of a map to Mr. Geebrah's Evil Castle of Math!"

"Yeah, but where's the map part?" asked Jake.

"There is no map part!" yelled Jenna, "And there's no such thing as an evil castle of math either!"

"Wanna' bet?" said Joe, "My brother told me he was there for 2 months once."

"And you believe him?" said Jenna, "You're so gullible," she added as she looked at the back of the paper. "Hey, there's something on the back of this," said Jenna. The students put the papers together and saw this message:

## *I'm near Numerator*

"Whaterator?" asked Jake.

"Somethin' ate-her?" asked Joe.

"No, numerator is part of a fraction," said Jenna, "It has nothing to do with eating!"

"Hey, doesn't that look like handwriting. I think this is her message," said Jake.

"You're right! That's totally Suzy's handwriting! We have to find the map!" cried Jenna. "Maybe there is a castle of math!"

"Told you so!" said Joe.

"Can you guys stop fighting? We have half the map already!" yelled Jake, who realized that  $\frac{6}{12}$  is the same as  $\frac{1}{2}$ . "We only need  $\frac{6}{12}$  more!"

Just then, the strange bird flew over again and dropped three more pieces of paper. The trio ran and collected them.

"Yes!" cried Jenna, "I have  $\frac{8}{12}$ ."

"I have  $\frac{10}{12}$ !" yelled Joe.

"And I have  $\frac{12}{12}$ !" said Jake.

" $\frac{12}{12}$  is the whole map!" yelled Joe, "Let's put it together to see how we can save Suzy!" The students put the map together and saw that it was not your average map. As a matter of fact, it was a little puzzle.

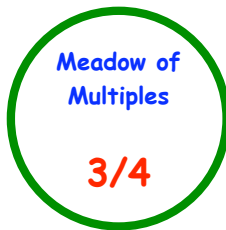
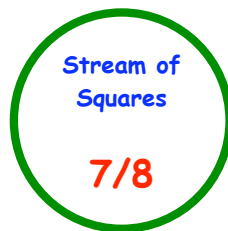
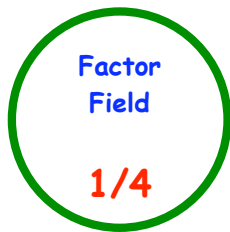
"Guys, it's getting late, and I have to get home for dinner. Let's meet here later to solve it," said Jake. The three agreed.

That evening, after they all had dinner, Jake, Jenna, and Joe met outside school. The school looked empty and quiet and a little bit scary. Luckily, they all had flashlights and shined them on the map. The map was strange indeed. It looked like this:

## THE MAP TO THE EVIL CASTLE OF MATH

Here are the points on the map. To get to the castle, you must travel in correct order or you will never arrive!!

Travel by fraction size from smallest to largest!!!



Can you show the route that they had to take?

After they had discovered the route to take, they got ready for the journey. They promised that whatever happened, they would stick together and save Suzy. The trip was long and hard and seemed to take days. They were exhausted and about to turn back when they arrived at the Meadow of Multiples.

Jake yelled, "Finally, we're at the Meadow of Multiples. Only 1/4 of the way to go!" Soon, they saw the castle in the distance. It was a horrible looking castle covered by a dark cloud. As matter of fact, it was the most horrible thing the three of them had ever seen, but they kept going. Finally, the map told them they were 8/8ths of the way there.

"Here we are," said a worn down Joe, "finally!"

"I'm not going in there! I'm at least 5/6 scared and 1/6 terrified!!!! yelled Jenna.

"Well, I'm 4/8 horrified, and 4/8 petrified!!!" added Joe.

"Finally you two agree on something," observed Jake. "I'm scared squared, but we have to go in to save Suzy!"

"You're right," said Jenna as she banged on the big wooden door of the castle. There was no answer, but the door slowly creaked open. The trio kept looking into the darkness behind the door, but couldn't see anything.

Although they were terrified, they entered the castle. It was dark and they shined their flashlights into the big room they were in. The first thing they saw was Suzy's math notebook lying on the floor in front of two large cages. Inside the cages were Mr. Geebrah's pets, the nametags on the cages said, Numer, the Dog, and Denomin, the cat. Numer the dog was in a cage on the top, and Denomin was in a cage on the bottom.

"Oh no!" whispered Joe, "I think Mr. Geebrah fed Suzy to his pets. I think Numer ate her!"

"No, I think Denomin ate her!" argued Jenna in a soft voice.

"No, Numer ate her. Look how full he looks," replied Joe.

"No, I'm certain Denomin ate her!! She's sleeping soundly, and cats always sleep after they eat," hissed Jenna.

"Poor, poor Suzy," said Jake, "If we'd only been here earlier to save her."

As Jenna and Joe continued to argue about which pet had eaten Suzy, they heard a voice whisper.

"No one ate me. I'm right up here. Now help me before Mr. Geebrah comes back."

They looked up and saw Suzy sticking her head through the bars of a small room that was on top of the two cages.

"It's me guys, now come help me get out!" Suzy pleaded.

"Just hold on," yelled Jake, "We'll get you out of there."

Jake and Jenna helped Joe climb on top of Numer's cage. When he was on top he saw the door of Suzy's room had three locks on it!!!

"I don't know how we're gonna' unlock these," said Joe, "These are the strangest locks I've ever seen. They all have little fractions on them. There's one with  $\frac{4}{6}$  one with  $\frac{45}{108}$  and one with  $\frac{134}{208}$  on it."

"Where are we going to find the keys for those?" asked Jake.

"I don't know, but we have to hurry," cried a terrified Suzy, "Mr. Geebrah's coming back soon!"

"Hey look," yelled Jenna, pointing to a key ring she saw hanging on the wall, "Lots of keys!" Jenna ran over, grabbed the key ring and looked at the keys. "There are fractions on these too. Let's try to find keys that match the locks. They searched for a key with either a  $\frac{4}{6}$ ,  $\frac{45}{108}$  or a  $\frac{134}{208}$  on it, but there were none.

"What are we gonna' do now?" asked Suzy.

"I guess we just have to try every key in every lock," said Jake.

"No, that'll take too long," pleaded Suzy. "I don't want Mr. Geebrah to come back before we can escape!"

Just then Numer, the dog started barking. He barked 3 times. And then Denomin, the cat started meowing, she meowed three times.

"That was strange, do you think they're trying to tell us something?" asked Joe.

"Yeah, but what?" asked Jenna.

"Well," said Jake, "3 barks and 3 meows. It's the same amount, but they sound different.

"What does that have to do with keys and locks?" asked Joe.

"I have an idea. Maybe we have to look for fractions on the keys that are the same amount but look different!"

"Good Thinking," said Joe, "Let's look for equivalent fractions on the keys!" and they started looking for fractions that were equivalent to the ones on the locks. Help the students find the keys that would fit the locks:

Match the keys to the locks!!



$4/6$



$45/108$



$134/208$



Finally the three locks were unlocked and Suzy stepped out onto Numer's cage.

"Now I see why you sent us that note that said you were near the numerator!" said Joe.

"Yeah, laughed Suzy, "Numerators are on the top! Lucky Numer and Denomin helped me send that map with the bird! Now let's get outta' here!"

"And quickly!" yelled Jake.

"But first we have to save Numer and Denomin!" cried Suzy, "They helped save me, so we have to save them." They unlocked the cages, and Numer and Denomin jumped out and started licking the students' faces.

Suzy laughed, "No time for that now. We have to get away before Mr. Geebrah comes!"

The students ran out through the door. They were  $\frac{1}{4}$ , then  $\frac{2}{4}$ ,  $\frac{3}{4}$ , and finally  $\frac{4}{4}$  of the way to school. When they got back, it was already the next morning, and they saw the other students happily playing in the schoolyard.

"What happened? Why is everyone so happy?" asked Joe.

"Mr. Geebrah decided to become an English teacher!" yelled Alex.

"Yeah" said Jenny, "He's so cool now. Numbers made him so confused and angry, but he's really good at spelling!"

The students joined their friends playing in the yard, and even Mr. Geebrah came out to play a quick game of tag. The sun was shining, there wasn't a cloud in the sky, and everyone had a big smile!!!