

"My Homework Ate My Dog"

by  
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1 INT. TATE KITCHEN - LATE EVENING

1

Soaked towels lay all about the kitchen floor, like a miniature mountain range. MARINA, 38, a tired mother, sighs and sits down at the table. She sips from a glass of iced tea she poured not long before. She pulls out her phone and starts typing an email that we hear her narrate.

MARINA (V.O.)

Dear Mr. Jennings: Please excuse Ben for not having his book report.

(beat)

He *did* write it, but something happened.

DISSOLVE TO:

2 INT. TATE LIVING ROOM - HOURS EARLIER (FLASHBACK)

2

Marina is sitting on the couch, flipping through a magazine.

The door is opened. Winston, the Tates' dog, barks. TIM, the 38-year-old father, speaks.

TIM

Calm down, Winston. It's me!

The barking subsides. Marina rises from the couch and gives her hubby a peck on the cheek. He smiles at the kiss, but looks beat.

Winston barks some more.

TIM (CONT'D)

That's enough!

Marina scratches the dog behind the ears.

MARINA

He's happy to see you.

The barking stops.

TIM

He's seen me every day of his life!

(CONTINUED)

MARINA

He's only a dog.

(beat)

He has a little brain.

Marina sniffs at the air.

MARINA (CONT'D)

Is that *you*?

TIM

Afraid so.

He takes off his lightweight jacket to reveal his stained shirt.

TIM (CONT'D)

I spilled something.

MARINA

*What?*

TIM

You know I can't tell you.

MARINA

(with muted sarcasm)

Oh, that's right. Government work.  
Top secret.

TIM

You got it.

(beat)

Why else would I go in on a  
Sunday?

MARINA

Put that shirt into the hamper.  
Laundry's on my to-do list for  
tomorrow.

Their son, BEN, 9, runs into the living room. He is happy to see that Tim is home. When he notices the stain on his dad's shirt, he holds out his right hand instead of hugging him.

They shake.

TIM

How was your day?

BEN

OK. *Lots* of homework.

(CONTINUED)

TIM

It's good for you - builds character.

(beat)

I'm sorry we couldn't go to your friend's soccer game, like I promised.

BEN

No sweat. I know you didn't want to work.

Tim yawns.

BEN (CONT'D)

What did you do today?

MARINA

Benjamin!

He suddenly remembers.

BEN

Oh yeah. It's all "hush."

MARINA

"Hush hush."

BEN

Two hushes? It must be *really* important.

TIM

The government thinks so.

(beat)

Say, how about we order some pizzas for dinner?

BEN

Pepperoni?

TIM

If you like.

He turns to Marina.

TIM (CONT'D)

Sweetheart?

MARINA

Sounds good to me.

(CONTINUED)

TIM

Make it delivery, huh? That'll  
give me time to shower and put on  
some clean clothes.

FADE TO:

The three Tates are gathered at their dining room table. The boxes containing the two delivered pizzas are almost empty. Tim is wearing new clothes, having showered and cleaned up.

Winston mopes around under the table, hoping something delicious is dropped. He sees his opportunity, snatches some crust from Ben, and runs off.

TIM

Here comes crazy time!

Winston runs into every room in the house, the pizza crust hanging from his mouth. His speed is impressive.

The Tates eat the remainder of their dinner, smiling at Winston's floor show. As they are cleaning up, they hear a pained yip.

The yip is followed by a loud, guttural growl. They leap from the table. A second growl directs them to Ben's room.

They cross the threshold to the sight a living, ten-foot-tall, clipped collection of loose-leaf paper. It has somehow sprouted two clawed feet and, based on the rough mouth it is growling with, is very angry.

BEN

My book report!

There is a loud snap as the thing's mouth is brought together. Marina squints and reads the words from the top of the page.

MARINA

"A Tale of Two. . ."

(beat)

Oh, Benjamin! "Cities" doesn't  
start with an "S."

(CONTINUED)

TIM

Can we hold the spelling bee until later? We have *bigger* problems.

He looks at the thing in the corner of his son's room. It growls loudly again, but seems uncertain of what to do - at least for now.

TIM (CONT'D)

*Much bigger.*

Ben nervously looks about his room.

BEN

Where's Winston?

Tim whistles for the dog.

TIM

Winston! Come here, boy!

Marina points at the thing's "stomach." Something is moving inside, trying to get out.

BEN

Winston?

TIM

Your book report ate the dog?

The report lets go with another loud growl.

FADE TO:

Ben's desk lays tipped over on its side, the books and papers it was holding scattered all over the floor.

Marina looks at Tim. She holds his dirty work shirt in the air on the end of a ruler.

TIM

Isn't that a little far fetched?

MARINA

Winston *loves* to dig in the dirty laundry.

TIM

And he just *happened* to grab my work shirt?

(CONTINUED)

MARINA

Probably because of the smell.

(beat)

Do you have any better idea of how  
it got into Ben's room?

TIM

Well. . . no.

MARINA

You did put it in *our* hamper,  
right?

TIM

Of course I did.

BEN

Something hush hush on dad's shirt  
landed on my book report and  
created. . . that?

The thing growls loudly.

MARINA

Looks that way.

BEN

And it swallowed Winston!

Marina turns to Tim.

MARINA

What's that stuff on your shirt?

BEN

He can't tell you that, Mom.  
Remember?

TIM

He's right.

MARINA

You'd *better* spill the beans  
before the three of us join the  
dog in the belly of the beast!

FADE TO:

MARINA

To make things grow larger?

(CONTINUED)

TIM

Fruits and vegetables, for instance.

(beat)

It could solve world hunger.

BEN

It works.

TIM

We have to destroy that thing while it's still contained in the house. If it gets out -

MARINA

How?

TIM

(beat)

Fire?

MARINA

(incredulously)

You want to start a fire *inside* the house?

BEN

You can't do that. Winston's in there!

MARINA

Can we telephone for help?

The thing takes a couple of steps forward and emits a piercing growl.

BEN

*Wow!*

TIM

I don't think it likes that idea.

BEN

Would we call the police?

TIM

I doubt *that* would go over well:

(beat)

"Hello, Sergeant. We have an angry ten-foot-tall book report that we need you to come over and subdue."

(beat)

*Click!*

(CONTINUED)



MARINA

We don't want to put any officers  
in danger.

(beat)

How about people from your job?  
They should -

TIM

On a Sunday? I'm the only fool who  
works on a Sunday! Besides, Two  
Cities there would probably eat  
the phone before I could dial.

Another loud growl.

MARINA

Then we'll have to think of some  
other -

BEN

Mom, look!

He points near the bottom of the giant report: A yellow  
wet spot.

TIM

Winston must have *peed* in there.

The report becomes very still. The yellow stain spreads.  
A corner of the report tears open slowly, and Winston's  
tail pops out.

TIM (CONT'D)

C'mon, boy!

MARINA

*That's* it!

BEN

You want us. . . to *pee* on it?

MARINA

No. *Water*. If we get it wet -

TIM

That won't kill it.

MARINA

No, but it could *disable* it long  
enough for us to save Winston and  
get help.

Tim turns to his son.

(CONTINUED)

TIM

Do you still have your Super Soaker?

BEN

In the hall closet. It's all loaded and ready.

TIM

Let's get it.

The three of them turn to leave.

MARINA

Are you a good shot?

BEN

I hit Billy Smithers in the right eye the other day, and I wasn't even *trying*.

FADE TO:

Ben takes aim with his fully loaded Super Soaker, and fires rapidly.

BEN

Give me back my dog!

The thing growls to let Ben know it doesn't like what's happening. After a minute or so, the tear along the bottom lengthens, and Winston, soaked and covered in gunk, drops out onto the floor. After shaking his head a few times to gather his senses, he barks at Two Cities with mock bravery, and runs to his humans.

Ben keeps firing. The thing's cries become more frequent, but less energetic. It finally slowly crumbles to the floor, a sodden mess.

FADE TO:

The Tates, including Winston, watch as four men in white hazmat suits struggle to lift Two Cities onto a wheeled gurney. It lands atop it with a loud *squish*.

One of the men approaches Tim.

(CONTINUED)

MAN

You know I'm missing the game.

TIM

I know.

MAN

Not exactly the way I thought I'd be spending my Sunday.

TIM

Me either, but look on the bright side: The stuff works.

MAN

Maybe *too* well.

He turns to leave.

MAN (CONT'D)

See you tomorrow.

The man walks to his three companions. They wheel the drenched book report from the house and, as the Tates see through the window, into an oversized white van.

They drive off.

DISSOLVE TO:

Marina is sitting at the table, drinking some iced tea and finishing her e-mail. We hear her speak as she types on her phone.

MARINA (V.O.)

Because of the classified nature of my husband's work, I can't mention too much. Just know that the four of us are safe.

She starts to rise, and then, remembering, sits back down for one last sentence. She speaks this one live as she types it.

MARINA

Can Ben please get an extension on his book report?

FADE TO BLACK.