

# Monster Middle School

by: Lana Gillman

As I walked into my middle school, the sun was shining and the birds were chirping... Ha, I wish. It was hailing, and I took the bus. Why did it have to hail? *There is such weird weather today... Why am I going to school again?* thought one side of my brain. *Because your hoomun never took you to school!* thought the other side of my brain. But mostly, I was just hungry. I was genuinely considering eating the seat in front of me... *But they probably have good food at the school.* I thought, *I can wait.*

By the time my bus got to school, I had picked off a small bit of the seat in front of me with one of my horns and eaten it. *I'm so ashamed,* I thought. I walked off the bus, having to duck out the door frame because my horns were so tall. It was still hailing, and as I stepped off the bus stairs hail pelted my shaggy green fur. I put my hands over my head (while skillfully avoiding my horns) and ran. *Ugh this backpack is weighing me down so much. I'm hung-* I started to think, but I looked up and saw this huge, red brick building in front of me. I was in awe. *So many monsters...*

The bell rang. Luckily, I wasn't late to class. My teacher stood up. She looked hoomun! She had long green hair that covered her whole face, except for her mouth. She was not very tall, and she was wearing a normal hoomun suit with black shoes. *Man this desk is so small,* I thought. I was bulging out of the small, brown desk I was sitting at. "Hello class. I am Miss Medusa." I could imagine her eyeing us snarkily as she walked around the classroom... But we can't see her eyes so I could only tell by her tone of voice. Wait, was her hair moving? *Oh my cotton balls!* I thought, *Her hair is made out of snakes!*

By the end of the period we learned she would be teaching us science and she had a bad temper (she has already yelled at two monsters, and it's only the first day!). As I was walking down the hall to go to math class, a tiny wolf bounded up to me. He had yellow glasses, an orange shirt, and blue sneakers. "Hi! I'm Lobo!" he grinned at me, showing his sharp, yellow teeth to me. "Hi, I'm Nom Nom." I smiled. *Mmm.. I'm so hungry,* I thought, *I could just eat him up right now.*

*I would never, though!* “Hey, is it almost lunch time?” I asked. He looked at the purple watch on his front left leg. “Yup! In an hour!” Lobo replied cheerfully. *An hour? Ugh.* I thought. “So, what class do you have next?” Lobo asked as he trotted beside me. “Math,” I sighed. “Whoa me too!” he yelped excitedly, “Well let’s get to class!” *Lobo found a way to brighten math up?* I thought, *I hope we can be friends.*

I guess it’s time to get to the bad part. I have an eating problem. I’m always hungry. Always. The more non-edible things I eat, the bigger I get. Luckily, every year I shrink back to the size I am now, which is 6”2. I usually grow (or shrink) in my sleep, but if I’m awake when it happens it hurts. A LOT. More than you think. You hoomuns think growing pains hurt, but those are nothing. This never happened when I was a pet rabbit, but when I accidentally jumped into a vat of toxic waste and transformed into the monster I am now, it changed me. Internally and out.

*Finally! It’s lunch time,* I thought as I sat down next to Lobo with my maroon school lunch tray. “Hey!” someone behind me yelled. “Huh?” I turned around. *It’s Methouselah!* I thought. “What’s up?” he asked. “Nothing much.” I replied. We had been friends since I first roamed the streets. He looked a lot like me, except he was a pine green and I was lime green. He was also shorter, with small horns. “Do you have any allergies?” He asked, motioning to the chicken sandwich sitting on my lunch tray next to a carton of chocolate milk. “Yep. You?” I replied. “Yea, I can only eat bananas.” he sighed. “Don’t you get sick of them?” I asked. *I would,* I thought. “Nah, they are my favorite food after all. What are your allergies?” he asked. “All non-edible things. I grow when I eat them.” *Ugh, allergies,* I thought. “Well, I’d better get going!” Methouselah grinned and walked away. “Not to be nosy, but who was that?” Lobo asked. “An old friend of mine,” I replied. “Oh, cool! He seems nice.” He smiled and started eating. I nodded and devoured my lunch. *That was good,* I thought, *but I’m still hungry!*

The school day was almost over already! All that was left was writing, and then it was time for me to go. I was so hungry, again, and it had only been 2 hours since lunch! I was on my way to writing when Lobo came up to me, “Hey again!” he grinned and wagged his tail. I smiled back at him, “Hi!” Suddenly, I was really hungry. So hungry I could just eat him up... Suddenly, Lobo yowled in pain! What had I done?

When I snapped back to reality, I was in the principal's office. It was small, with bookshelves lining the walls full of records, and there was a wooden desk in front of me with the principal sitting in it. He was big and ice blue, with rusty orange tipped hands. Everything after biting Lobo had been fuzzy and red... *Oh no*, I thought. Lobo was sitting next to me in a plain gray chair. I was sitting in one too. I noticed he had a big, red stained bandage on his right hind leg. The principal looked at me sternly with harsh royal blue eyes. "Nom Nom, now that you are awake, what do you have to say for yourself?" he asked. "I-sir-" I stammered. "Nom Nom, why?" Lobo looked at me with more hurt and distrust on his face then I had ever seen before. I wanted to go back to the streets, away from all the pain I had created.

I walked through the halls alone. It was the second day of school, and I had already gotten in huge trouble. *I'm off to a great start*, I thought. My punishment was two hours of detention after school for a week and two days. And if I did ANYTHING I would be immediately expelled. *At least they gave me a second chance*, I thought. I saw Lobo walking down the hallway. *It's Lobo!* I thought, *Maybe I can try to explain it was a huge accident and I don't know what got into me and-* NOM NOM. STOP. *It was a misunderstanding. Just go talk to him.* I took a deep breath. "Hey, Lobo. I'm-" I trailed off as he walked away and didn't even glance back.

I ran into the bathroom and locked myself in a stall. I shut the toilet seat and sat down. I took a deep breath and closed my eyes. "Nom Nom, this is not a high school drama. It's a misunderstanding." I opened my eyes and stood up, unlocked the stall, and walked out of the bathroom. Lobo was one of my only friends and I was not going to lose him.

I sat down across from Lobo at lunch. He started to get up, "Lobo, please. Can I just talk to you?" He paused and looked at me. He shook his head slightly and his eyes softened, but for only a second. His eyes suddenly snapped back to cold and merciless. He picked up his lunch and walked away. *Not even a word*, I thought. I guess that's it. I've lost one of my only friends.

*I hope I'm not in trouble again...* I thought as I walked down the empty hall to the principal's office. It was the third day of school now. I could feel 'nervous butterflies' rising in my stomach. I knocked on the door to the office. "Come in," he bellowed. I timidly opened the door, then gently closed

it behind me and sat down in the gray chair in front of him. "Hello Nom Nom, I didn't get a chance to introduce myself at our last meeting. I am Mr. Clawbeck." He stared at me grimly. *Oh no. I wonder how much trouble I'm in*, I thought. "H-hello." I stammered and I put on a weak smile. "Nom Nom, you have a serious decision to make." I didn't know what to think of his statement. Am I relieved? Am I terrified? All I knew was that I was nauseous. "You have two choices. You can either be expelled, or you can wear a muzzle around your mouth for five months. You can only take it off in the lunchroom, or when a teacher asks you a question." The small glimmers of hope I had left inside me died. I thought they were going to understand it was a misunderstanding. "After wearing it for five months, if you haven't bitten anyone you can stop wearing it."

I started at him in shock. *I can't leave school*, I thought, *But, all the monsters will make fun of me and it will be uncomfortable!* "We're sorry Nom Nom, but we have to take precautions." He stared at me, his face hard. "Is there any other way?" I whimpered. He shook his head, "There isn't, but you don't have to make your decision today. You have until Friday." It was Wednesday. *Great*, I thought, *I have two days.*

I walked into the bathroom. My hands were sweating like crazy during my conversation with Mr. Clawbeck, so I decided to wash them. I walked over to the rust and dirt stained sink and turned the hot water on. I heard the creaky, green bathroom door open and I turned around. It was Lobo. My spirits dampened even more than I thought possible. "Hey.. Nom Nom," Lobo muttered. *He's talking to me?* I thought. "Hey Lobo. Can I talk to you?" I quickly washed my hands and turned the faucet off. "Um.. Yea I guess." I took a deep breath and shook my wet hands out over the sink. I turned to face Lobo. "I don't know where to begin.. I'm so sorry and I cannot put into words how much I despise myself now for biting you." I looked at Lobo. I could practically feel the tension crackling between us. We locked eyes and he asked, "Why did you bite me?"

"I didn't mean to Lobo, I swear. I don't know what happened. I was so hungry suddenly, and then I heard you yell...Then I was in the principal's office and-" Lobo interrupted me, "I know you tried to talk to me in Mr. Clawbeck's office, but I ignored you then and also in the hallway and the lunchroom. I should've listened." I shook my head. "Nothing's your fault Lobo. It's all my fault.. and I'm really sorry." The bell rang. "I have to go.. So-" I started. "I forgive you," Lobo interrupted.

I walked out of reading class. *So it's been human all along? H-U-M-A-N.. human instead of hooman... I guess humans don't say human enough for me to know what it is! I-* My thoughts were interrupted as Lobo approached me, smiling. "Hey!" he grinned at me. "Hey! How's your leg?" I asked. He glanced down at it, "Fine. But let's just forget about all that." I nodded, "Yea. Good idea. Oh, but one thing." I explained the decision I had to make to him. He winced. "I can't make that decision for you Nom Nom. It's up to you. I don't want to decide your fate for you."

As I walked to the principal's office time seemed to slow. All I had been thinking for the past day was, *WhatdoldoWhatdoldoWhatdoldo?* And I had finally made a decision. Whatever I did would impact my life, for the worse. But there was a sliver of goodness in one decision. But was that the right decision for me? I knocked on the door to Mr. Clawbeck's office. "Come in." Mr. Clawbeck's voice sounded weary, as if he wanted to get this over with. I opened the door, slid into the office, and sat down in the same ominous gray chair. Mr. Clawbeck stood up, walked over and closed the door behind me. He slowly walked back to his seat facing me. I looked at Mr. Clawbeck. "So tell me, Nom Nom. What is your decision?" I took a deep breath and closed my eyes for a moment. "I choose the muzzle." I had so much more to learn and do, and I was not going to give it up now.