

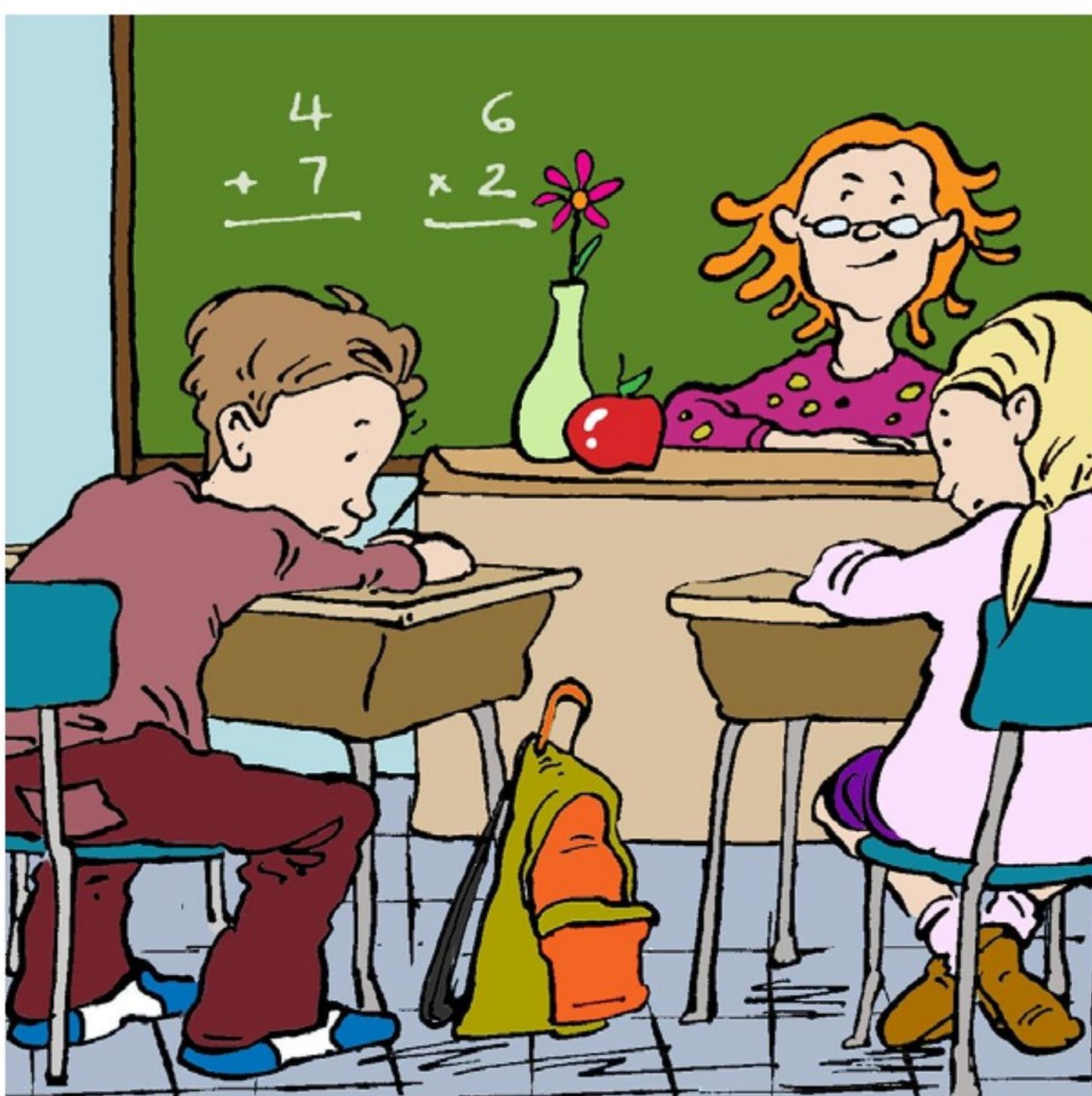
LEVELED BOOK • P

The Homework Lesson



Written by Ellen Forrest • Illustrated by Anik McGrory

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On the first day of school, Ryan found himself in Ms. Rose's fifth grade class. He was kind of nervous because he'd heard Ms. Rose could be a real monster sometimes. But when he saw her, she looked nice enough. She had a pleasant voice and seemed to be glad to see all the kids.

Ms. Rose started with an overview of what they'd be doing during the year. It actually sounded interesting. Then in a lower voice, she warned them she would be giving them homework assignments, which absolutely, positively had to be done. They were not to be handed in late, and they were to be completed fully. No excuses! No extensions! She sounded like she meant business.





That day she assigned the class its first homework. It wasn't anything too difficult. They had to do a sheet of math problems and read a short story. It wasn't due until Thursday, but she suggested they do it immediately that night. "Homework has a way of piling up," she said, her eyes narrowing slightly. But today was only Monday! There was lots of time, Ryan thought.

So when school was over, Ryan and his friends ran off to play baseball. Ryan got home just in time for dinner, and then his favorite TV show came on. His mom asked him if he had any homework. "No, not tonight," he said, because he figured he really didn't for that night. He tossed his homework on his desk.



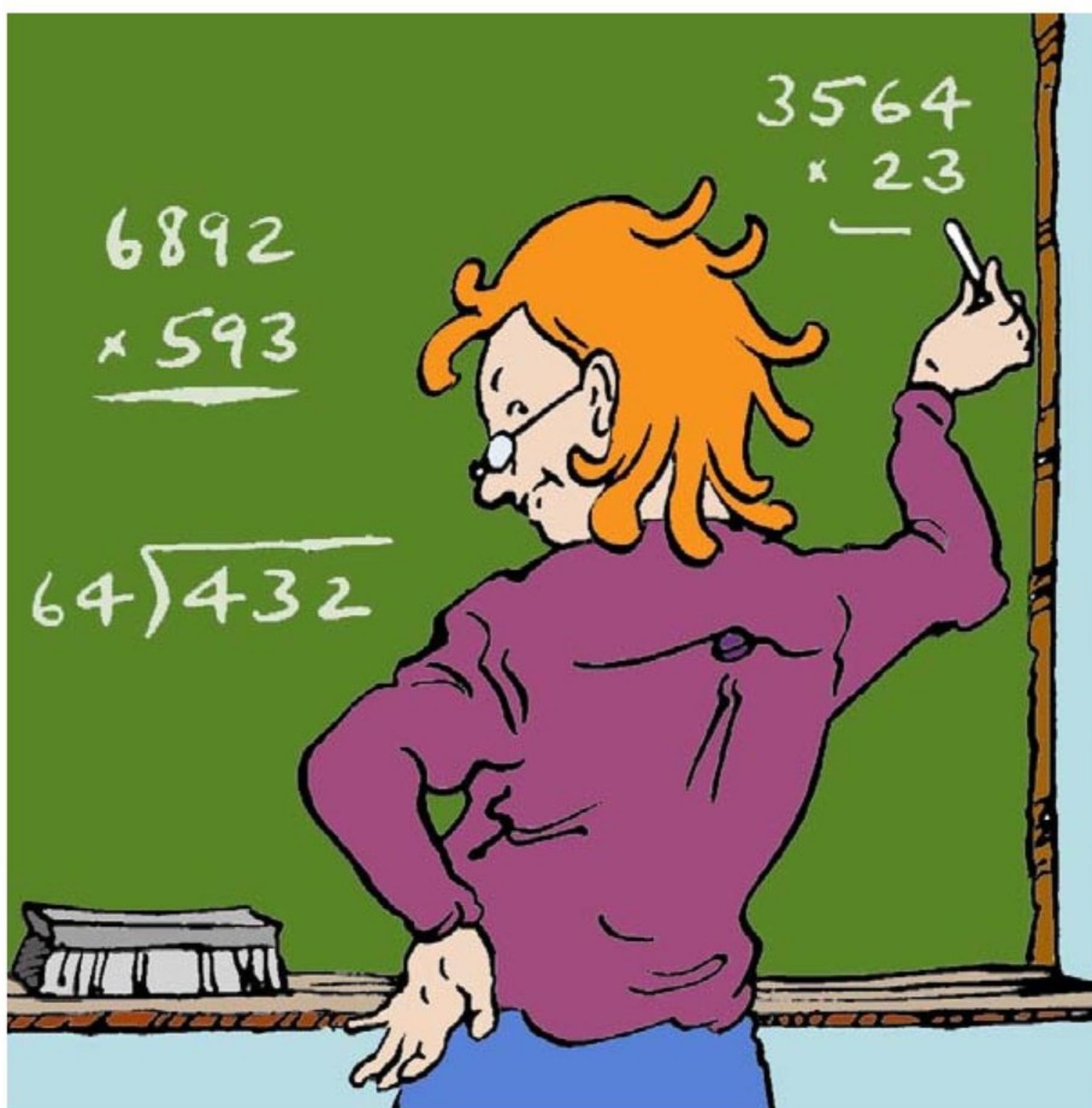


The following morning at school, Ms. Rose asked how many students in the class had finished their homework. No hands went up. She nodded but didn't say anything about it. That night she gave them a little more homework. This time they had to study for a spelling test. The spelling test wasn't until Thursday either, so Ryan didn't bother studying that night. He stacked the spelling list on top of the other papers on his desk.



The next morning, while Ryan got dressed for school, he glanced over at his desk. The pile of papers he had left there seemed taller. He shook his head and laughed at himself. That was just silly. Paper couldn't grow!

At school, no one had finished his or her homework yet. A few of the students, like Ryan, hadn't even started. Ms. Rose just smiled and reminded them that their assignments were due on Thursday, and she wouldn't tolerate anyone not having done them. Then she gave them another math homework sheet to finish for Thursday.





When Ryan got home that night, his cousin Donny had come to visit, and they played all afternoon. After dinner, Donny went home and Ryan went up to his room. He suddenly realized that it was Wednesday and that his homework was due the next day. He needed to get started!

He went to his desk and saw the most curious thing. The pile of homework really had grown taller. He was sure of it. It piled up about a foot above his desk. Ms. Rose had warned them that it could pile up, but surely she had been kidding. How could this be possible? Ryan was going to have to work very hard to get through that pile.





Ryan tried. He really did. But it was just too much. He finished one math sheet, and then realized he had to read a story. But then he remembered the spelling test. Oh no! What was he going to do? The pile on his desk towered even higher now. Soon it would touch the ceiling. He didn't know where to start.

Ryan did a little more here and there, but he kept getting distracted by other work waiting for him. What if he couldn't finish it? What would Ms. Rose do? Finally, he couldn't even locate the homework he'd started with. It was buried in that enormous pile of papers. He gave up and went to bed.





Ryan tossed and turned all night and had bad dreams of paper mountains burying him alive. In the morning, he complained to his mother that his stomach hurt. It wasn't really a lie, because it did hurt every time he looked at his desk. His mom took one look at the work piled up on his desk, felt his forehead, and said, "You're fine. Go to school."

When Ryan got to his classroom, he found he wasn't the only one with mysterious growing homework. His friends said that the same thing had happened to them. Ms. Rose was waiting for them. She asked them one by one for their homework, and one by one they had to whisper that it wasn't finished yet. Ms. Rose stared intently at each kid. Then she glared at them as a group. Then, as they watched her, she started to transform.





Her smile crept into a sneer and her eyes narrowed. Her face darkened with rage. Her hands clenched and her fingers curled like talons. She swept across the classroom and locked the door. Then she whipped around to face the students, who were cowering at their desks. She howled at them in a horrible, crackling voice, "I'm going

to give each of you another copy of all the homework you didn't complete this week. Nobody leaves this room until everyone is finished!"

Then she laughed a horrible cackle and started handing out their assignments. She threw papers and books until each student had a pile on his or her desk that soared up to the ceiling.

"Now, get to work!" she shrieked.



They worked and worked as hard as they could. When the recess bell rang, some students started to get up, but she hissed at them to sit back down. So they missed morning recess. Then they missed lunch. Then afternoon recess. When the final bell rang, they were desperate to go home. But no! She refused to unlock the door.

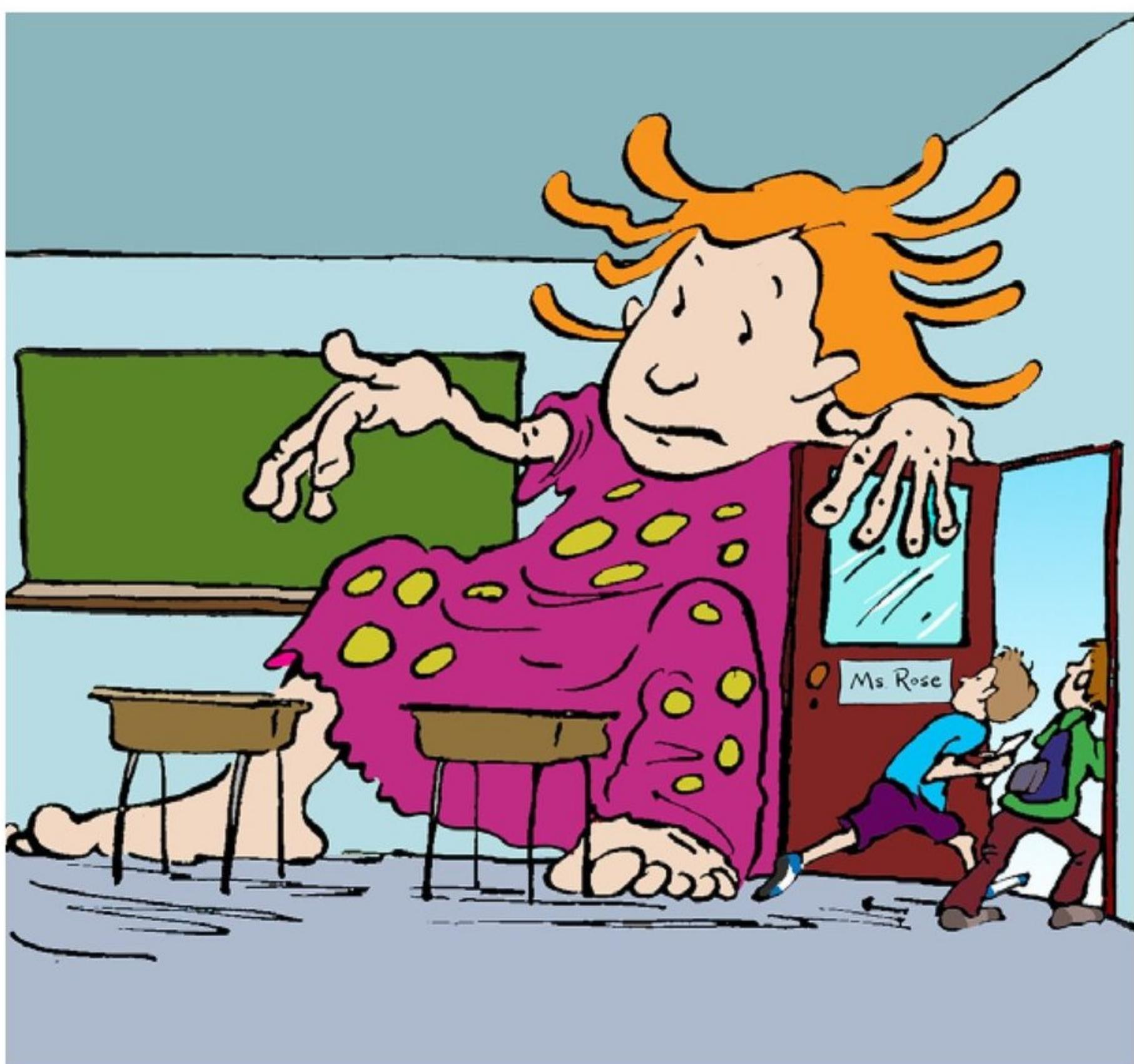


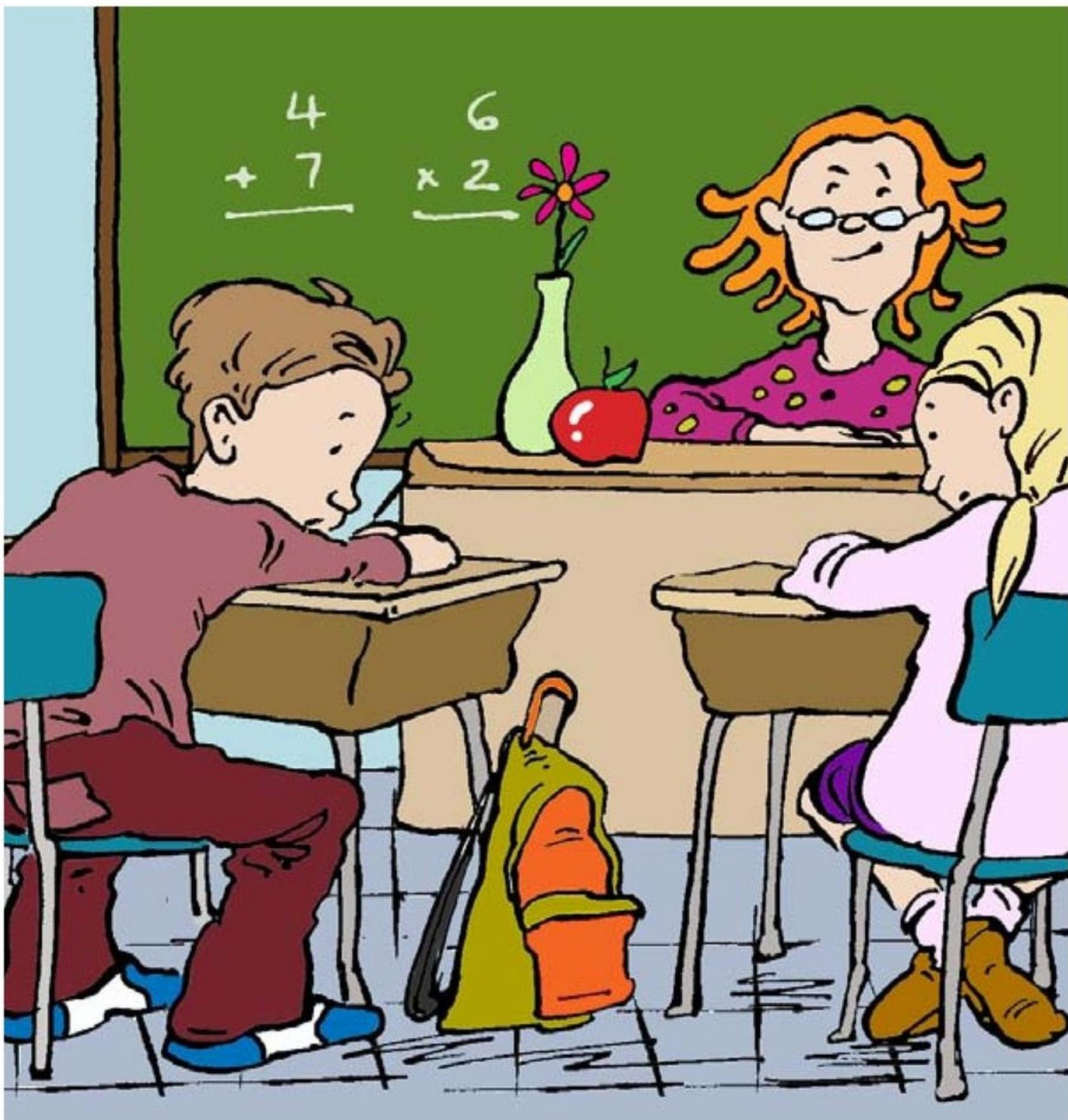


Some of the kids started to complain, and the monster screamed, “I said, nobody leaves this room until everyone is finished!”

So they stayed and they worked. The monster guarded them every minute, so there was no escape. Night fell and they were all exhausted, but the monster still wouldn’t let them leave. They labored all night and all the next day. Everyone kept working and finally, after being locked up for two days and a night, they finished.

The lunch bell rang, and the monster unlocked the door and let the kids out of the classroom. They were so glad to get out! But after lunch they had to go back to the classroom. They all tiptoed in, afraid of what the monster might force them to do next. But when they arrived in the classroom, they were astonished. Ms. Rose was sitting at her desk, looking like her happy, smiling self.





Ms. Rose taught them their lessons as normal for the rest of the day. Before the final bell rang, she assigned some homework.

"I hope you'll do your homework right away instead of letting it pile up this time," she said, a faint monstrous glimmer in her eyes.



“Oh yes,” they all promised. “As soon as we get home.”

From then on, Ryan did his homework when it was assigned, and you know what? It didn’t grow and pile up, and it didn’t take long to do. He never saw Ms. Rose turn into the monster again.

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Level P Leveled Book
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