



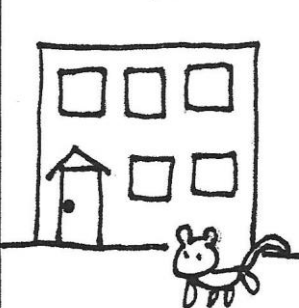




Motoko's Story Family

	<p>Hi, my name is Motoko, and I'm in fourth grade at Kensington Elementary School. My favorite thing is science. My dream is to be a geologist and study volcanoes.</p>
	<p>This is my sister Naomi. She is only 5, but she can be very annoying. She goes to kindergarten at Kensington. She is obsessed with teddy bears.</p>
	<p>This is my mother. Her name is Lisa and she is 39. She is a real estate agent. My parents are divorced and my dad lives in California.</p>
	<p>This is my grandma, Fusa. She is 61. She works as a lunch lady at Berlin High School. She also has her own catering business.</p>
	<p>This is where we live. It's a three-bedroom apartment on North Street. My sister and I share a bedroom. We also have a cat. His name is Marmalade.</p>



Motoko's Story Trouble

(1)	One day I had a very important event to attend.	<p>My important event was <i>The Science Fair</i></p> <p>Where was it? <i>The school auditorium</i></p> <p>When was it? <i>Right after school</i></p>	<p>The event was important to me because <i>If I won, I could enter the State Science Fair.</i></p>
(2)	I had to go to the important event without my parents, but with my sibling.	<p>It was because <i>My mom had a meeting with her boss, and my grandma had to work overtime.</i></p>	
(3)	My sibling ruined my event by doing something terrible.	<p>What did s/he do? Why? <i>Naomi wandered off, and I had to go and find her. (She was looking for her teddy bear.) I missed my turn to do my science presentation.</i></p>	
(4)	When I tried to fix the problem, it only got worse!	<p>What did you do, and how did it get worse? <i>I argued with the judges because I really wanted to do my presentation. They got mad, and I got disqualified!</i></p>	



Motoko's Creative Writing Residency
Our Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing
Part 1 of 8

Describe a routine morning scene at home among the family. Choose one of the following:

- waking each other up
- fighting over the bathroom,
- eating breakfast
- getting ready for school

Include the following information in this section

- MC's name
- Sibling's name, age/grade, and what s/he is like.
- How the MC feels about the sibling
- Introduce the Parents, and what they do for work. (Show that they are loving and caring.)

It was a bright and sunny morning in April. I was finishing my breakfast, chocolate chip and banana pancakes my grandma made for me. She is the head lunch lady at the High School, and she loves to cook. My mom came running down the stairs, dressed in her power business suit. She is a real estate agent and has to meet important clients every day.

Then there's Naomi, my little sister, Ugh! Naomi is in kindergarten at my school, and she is obsessed with teddy bears. She has 52 of them, and Pinky, a foot-long fuzzy pink bear, is her current favorite. Every morning she spends half an hour brushing the bear and putting baby clothes on it. I cannot believe that her teacher, Mrs. Williams, lets her bring it to school every day!



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Part 2 of 8

Explain your Important Event by talking to the Reader. Include:

- What the Important Event is
- Why it is important.
- How the MC felt about it, and what s/he hoped for.

Then explain that the Parents have made the decision that puts the Sibling in a position to ruin the MC's Important Event. Also explain the reason for their decision. Choose one of the following:

- Parents decided that the Older Sibling must take the MC to the Event
- Parents decided that the MC must take the Younger Sibling to the Event

But I had better things to worry about that day. The Science Fair! I had been looking forward to it for months. Back in February when we studied earthquakes and volcanoes, my clay model of Mount St. Helens was voted number one in my fourth grade class. My teacher, Mrs. Brown, suggested that I enter the Science Fair. I worked hard doing extra research about the ten major volcanic eruptions in the 20th century. Only fifteen kids from the third through fifth grades were allowed to enter. If I won, I would get to go to the State Science Fair in May!

There was only one thing I didn't like about this. I had to watch Naomi during the Science Fair. My mom could not make it because of an important meeting at her work. My grandma had to work overtime, too, but she had promised to come as soon as she could.

"You'd better be good this afternoon," I told Naomi, as we climbed onto the school bus. Naomi looked up at me and grinned. Little did I know how much trouble she would put me into!



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Part 3 of 8

Move the MC and the Sibling to the site of the Important Event. Describe the set-up.

- Where was the Event?
- What time did it start?
- Who were there?
- What did the MC see/hear/smell/taste/feel?
- How did the MC feel about the Event?

When the school ended at 3:30, I went and picked up Naomi from her kindergarten room, then went to the auditorium to set up my clay volcano on the display table. All the other kids were there already, some with their parents. At the Fair, each person would make a 3-minute speech about their display, and answer questions from the judges. My presentation was scheduled at 5:15.

I told Naomi to stay by my side and not to touch anything! She just nodded.

Finally, the judges and other guests arrived. The principal, Mr. Young, made a short speech, and the Science Fair started. I walked around and watched the other kids do their presentations and defend their research or inventions. They were fascinating! One fourth grade boy presented a gigantic terrarium. A fifth grade girl had invented a talking Lego robot!



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Our Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing
Part 4 of 8

Now the Sibling causes the Problem. Consider the following possibilities:

- The Sibling breaks a rule, or an important object
- The Sibling gets lost
- The Sibling gets into trouble with a person of authority
- The Sibling causes the MC to miss an opportunity to do something important.

Include the following information.

- What does the Sibling do or say?
- How does the MC find out about the problem?
- How does the MC react?
- What is the consequence of the Sibling's action?

I was about to show my sister the cool robot, expecting her to be right behind me. But she wasn't there.

I knew she would get me into trouble! I quickly walked around the auditorium, looking for her. But she was nowhere to be seen! Did she just wander off, or did she get kidnapped?

"Naomi! Where are you?!" I rushed out of the auditorium and ran down the hallway. Where could she be? I checked the bathrooms, but she wasn't there. I went to the gym and the library, but the doors were locked. Then I passed by the kindergarten room and saw that the lights were on. Naomi was sitting on the floor.

"There you are! What are you doing here?!" I yelled.

"I forgot to bring Pinky," Naomi said, holding her bear, "I had to come back and get her."

It was that stupid bear again! I brought her back to the auditorium. Then I glanced up at a clock on the wall. It was 5:28! I had missed my turn for presentation!



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Our Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing
Part 5 of 8

The MC, by trying to fix the Problem or by over-reacting to it, makes it worse.
Consider:

- The MC gets kicked off the team or the team gets disqualified.
- The broken object is rendered beyond repair.
- The other people involved in the Event are angry at the MC.

Make sure that no one gets killed or hurt.

I yanked my sister's arm, and dashed back to the auditorium. My grandma was there. She had been looking all over for me.

I looked around frantically to find the judges. They were asking questions to the boy whose presentation was scheduled right after mine. I hurried toward them.

As all the judges turned and looked at me, I pleaded with them to let me give my presentation. But they said I was too late.

I tried to explain that I had to go and find my sister but they wouldn't even listen.

Mr. Young, the principal, said their schedule was too tight. They didn't have any extra time. At least he tried to be nicer about it, but I still could not do my presentation.

"This is not fair! You have to give me a chance!" I shouted, even though I didn't mean to.

The Science Teacher from the Middle School was one of the judges. I did not know her name but she was mean. She just looked down her nose at me and said that I was disqualified.

Tears welled up in my eyes. My grandma came up behind me and put her hand on my shoulder. I shook her hand off and walked out of the auditorium.



Motoko's Creative Writing Residency
Our Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing
Part 6 of 8

Move all the Characters (including the parents) back home. The Family talks about the Important Event around the dinner table. What do they say to each other? The MC has a big emotional blowout. What does the MC say/do to end the scene?

I walked out into the parking lot, trying to blink away my tears. Grandma and Naomi followed me. Grandma opened the door of her van and told me to get in. She put Naomi in her car seat. Then she drove us home without saying a word. Naomi was quiet, too.

When we got home Grandma made spring rolls, my favorite, for dinner. But I had no appetite. Then my mom came home and joined us at the dinner table.

Mom asked, "How was the Science Fair?"

I just said that it was fine, without looking at her face.

Then Naomi blurted out, "Motoko yelled at Mr. Young!"

Grandma shushed her.

"What do you mean? Tell me what happened." my mom looked confused.

"Oh Naomi, why don't you just shut up!" I screamed, "It was your fault! If you hadn't disappeared, I could have done my presentation! You and your stupid bear!"

Naomi started to cry. Mom said, "Motoko, stop saying mean things," but I couldn't stop. It felt as if I turned into Mount St. Helens, erupting with anger.

"I hate you! I wish I didn't have a sister! I wish you were never born!" Tears streaming down my face, I ran upstairs to my bedroom and slammed the door. I threw myself on my bed and stared at the ceiling, breathing hard.



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Our Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing
Part 7 of 8

Reconciliation--Finally something causes the MC and the Sibling to make up. Consider the following possibilities:

- Something the Parents say or do softens the MC's heart
- The Sibling apologizes by saying or doing something
- The MC realizes something important.

After a while Mom came upstairs to put Naomi to bed. I pretended to be asleep. Mom tucked Naomi in her bed next to mine, kissed me quietly on my cheek, turned off the light, and left.

Naomi was mumbling something. She wasn't talking to me, but to her teddy bear. She does that sometimes before she falls asleep. I heard her say, "You are a stupid bear. I hate you. I wish you were never born." Soon she fell asleep, and I heard her snoring softly.

I got up and turned on my desk lamp to look at Naomi. In her sleep she looked sad, with a streak of a teardrop on her cheek. My heart softened. Pinky lay on the floor at the foot of the bed. Naomi had pushed it off. I picked Pinky up and tucked it in next to Naomi, and went to sleep.



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Our Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing
Part 8 of 8

Resolution---Describe how the MC overcomes anger and frustration, and in his/her heart achieves forgiveness and understanding for the Sibling and the Parents.

The next morning my mom said, "Your grandma told me what happened at the Science Fair. You did the right thing. I am proud of you for taking good care of your sister. It was unfortunate that the teachers didn't give you another chance. Do you want me to speak with Mr. Young?"

"That's okay, mom. I wouldn't have won anyway," I smiled, "I bet that fifth grade girl with the talking robot won. Maybe next year I'll try again with a talking volcano."

"If you do, we will all help you in every way we can," Mom promised.