



THE ADVENTURES OF
JUMMY BOY
AND OTHER STORIES

SUSAN LING

*The Adventures of Jummy Boy
and Other Stories*

Susan Ling was born in Hong Kong in 1984. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts in English from the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2007, and had worked as an office lady mainly in the public sector after her graduation. She aspired to be a writer after reading Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield* in 2016. These are her first ever published stories.

Susan's email address: *susanling44@gmail.com*

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Cover designer by: Spacey Ho

Published by Red Publish

First Edition: December 2023

Red Publish (Green Forest)

11/F, 133 Wanchai Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong

editor@red-publish.com

<http://www.red-publish.com>

ISBN: 978-988-8868-00-1

To Small Bo and Mom

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THE ADVENTURES OF JUMMY BOY

One

Jummy was a chubby little boy living in Berkeley with his parents and elder sister, Lily. He was 10 years old, wore glasses and enjoyed reading and eating a lot. This summer Jummy's parents left for New York with Lily because she was going to read Psychology at the University of New York. Jummy was left at home with Aunt Juliana. Aunt Juliana was a lady in her mid-forties. She was very thin, and whenever she walked, her head kept moving to and fro like a bird. "Jummy! Stop eating! You ought to lose weight!" said Aunt Juliana. Jummy put a half-finished Big Bac down and his aunt shook her head in disapproval.

One early morning Aunt Juliana came across an advertisement thrown into the mailbox of the Lee's family

—
"You want your children to lose weight, gain confidence, and have broadened horizons? The School of Future is the place destined for your kids. Located in the tranquil Sceneway Plaza, Lam Tin, Hong Kong, The School of Future is now offering kids between the ages of nine and twelve an opportunity to join a four-week course on international affairs, lectured by the renowned scholar Dr Gravy Ng from Cambridge University. Students will reside in the beautifully furnished flats in Sceneway Garden, Lam Tin, Hong Kong,

just 5 minutes' walk from school. Meals will be provided and the tuition fees are only HK\$12,000. Lessons will be conducted in English, Putonghua and Latin. Interested parties please email us at school.o.f.@schoolof.edu.hk. Application deadline: 22nd June, 2014."

Aunt Juliana diverted her glance from the advertisement to Jummy, who was lying on the floor reading Jane Austen's *Emma*.

"Jum Jum, I would like to talk to you."

4 days later, Jummy and Aunt Juliana arrived in Hong Kong. It was only after Aunt Juliana had settled the payment when Mr and Mrs Lee were notified that Jummy had enrolled on the summer broadening course in Hong Kong.

Two

"Dear sister, how could you have enrolled Jummy in the course without consulting me first?" asked Mrs Lee, two days before Aunt Juliana and Jummy boarded a plane to Hong Kong.

"Calm down, Georgiana, the school was registered with the Education Bureau in Hong Kong. I have reviewed the school in detail. I will accompany Jummy to Hong Kong and stay there with him throughout the course. He will live in our mom's flat in Laguna City instead of staying at the flat recommended by the school. It's one hundred percent safe for Jum Jum, and by the way, he really ought to lose

weight,” explained Aunt Juliana.

“Can you get a refund?” asked Mrs Lee.

“Out of the question.”

“All right, sister, can you put Jummy on?”

“Hi, Mom,’ said Jummy.

“Jummy darling, how I miss you! Do you really want to join the summer programme? Tell Mom the truth.”

Jummy was a boy of few words, yet, he was also a very thoughtful kid. Knowing that Aunt Juliana had already settled all the fees, he said, “It’s okay, Mom.”

“All right. Take care and call me when you arrive in Hong Kong, okay? And listen to Aunt Juliana and grandma, my dear boy. Bye-bye.”

Aunt Juliana told Mrs Lee more about the arrangements for another 10 minutes, and then she hung up.

“Well, well, Jum Jum, let’s do the packing together!” Aunt Juliana put away the *Aerobics for Kids* DVD, and squinted at Jummy with a triumphant smirk.

Three

Jummy and Aunt Juliana were on the plane bound for Hong Kong. Jummy was going to tear a plastic bag open, which contained a tasty currant bun, when his aunt took it away, bun and all.

“Jummy Alexander Lee,” remarked Aunt Juliana while handing the trays to a flight attendant. “Let us save our buns for this afternoon. You don’t want to gain more

weight, do you?” She placed the buns inside the seat pocket in front of her. “I have to go to the washroom. Stay in your seat and fasten your seat belt, okay?”

The young man sitting on the left of Aunt Juliana left his seat to let her get to the aisle. He winked at Jummy when the boy looked towards him. The man was a Caucasian. He was so tall and thin that he looked like a bamboo. He wore a moustache and a cowboy hat. The man leant sideways against Jummy, who was sitting next to the window-pane, and whispered to him in a confidential tone, “Look here, young man, I haven’t had any meals for two days, and the meal on the plane was like a sushi to me. In short, may I?” The man nodded in the direction of the two buns.

Jummy was so scared by the man’s appearance that he nodded in return.

“Thankee, young man! You will go to heaven after 102 years!” He placed one bun underneath the hat on his head and devoured the other one ravenously.

Just then Aunt Juliana had returned to her seat, and noticed that the buns were gone. She fastened her seat belt and asked, “Jum Jum, where are the buns?” Jummy was about to say something but took a glance at the strange man who appeared behind his aunt. The man was winking at him continuously under the brim of his cowboy hat, and he kept on pursing his lips as if he wanted to kiss Jummy.

Jummy was so startled by his singular appearance that he lowered his head and said nothing.

“Jummy, mark my words, if a person can’t control his appetite, he is not going to succeed in anything at all! Now, continue reading *David Copperfield!*” said Aunt Juliana, shaking her head.

After a quarter of an hour, the strange man fell asleep and was snoring loudly. Just then there was a severe turbulence and the “fasten your seat belts” sign was on. After asking the passengers to fasten their seat belts, the flight attendants returned to their respective seats.

Two minutes later, the plane descended vertically for thirty feet in three seconds. Some of the passengers screamed. The strange man bounced against the ceiling of the plane and fell down again.

“Oh my! Sir, are you all right?” asked Aunt Juliana when the “fasten your seat belts” sign was off. A flight attendant was also walking towards the strange man to see if he was okay.

The man opened his mouth in astonishment, removed the cowboy hat from his head and took out the flattened bun. Then he stood up and pointed at Jummy, “This young man is my savior! He gave me this bun and save me from a head injury!” He tore the plastic bag open and devoured the bun after saying this. Jummy was so embarrassed that he blushed and lowered his head.

Aunt Juliana diverted her glance from the strange man to Jummy. Then she whispered, “Little Jum, why didn’t you tell me the truth?” And she patted her nephew on the head.

ARABELLA

One

“Why there are so many Maths problems for me to solve?” grumbled Arabella, an 8-year-old girl, to her tutor.

“I know it’s unreasonable, but you still have to solve them all the same,” said Miss Penny Chui. “Come on, Arabella! Three plus seven equals...”

“Chipmunks!”

“No, Arabella! Pay attention! Three plus seven equals... You may count your fingers.”

“Okay!” Arabella sat staring into space for a few seconds, reflecting on something. Then she looked at Miss Chui and said reluctantly, “It’s eleven, oh no, it’s ten! Oh! Homework is really boring! I’d rather be a chipmunk, sailing for Africa!” And she began playing with a fluffy toy on the table.

“Arabella! Do your homework! It’s almost 7:15p.m.! Don’t waste Miss Chui’s time! Don’t you remember what I’ve told you before?” said Mrs Law, Arabella’s grandmother.

“Grandma, only 1.5 pieces of homework left!” cried Arabella.

“Why did you say that at the top of your voice? Everyone was scared to death!” said Mrs Law, shaking her head.

Arabella laughed and Miss Chui smiled, because Mrs Law looked very funny by being extremely serious.

Forty-five minutes later Arabella finally finished all her homework. She cried “Finally!” and hopped towards her 3-year-old brother Little Tom in the living room. They began singing and dancing together.

“Mrs Law, I think it’s time for me to go. Arabella has finished all her homework,” said Miss Chui, putting on her trainers.

“Thank you, Miss Chui. Here is the money,” Mrs Law gave \$360 to the tutor.

“Thank you and see you next time,” said Miss Chui, putting the money in her wallet. “Goodbye, children!”

“Goodbye, Miss Chui!” cried Arabella and Little Tom in unison.

Fifteen minutes later, Arabella and Little Tom’s parents, Mr and Mrs Ko, returned home from work. The family then had dinner together, which was prepared by their domestic helper Leah.

Two

“Do you like my sister?” Nicole asked Arabella after they got off the school bus one day. Nicole was Arabella’s classmate and best friend. They lived on different floors in the same building in Mei Foo.

“She’s very nice and I like her,” replied Arabella. Her tutor Miss Penny Chui was Nicole’s elder sister. Nicole’s family had been living in London until they returned to Hong Kong one year ago, in 2015. In that same year, Penny

graduated from the University of Kent and couldn't find a job here. Since Arabella was looking for a tutor, Nicole's mom recommended her elder daughter to Mrs Ko and in the end Penny landed the job.

"She's not that nice at home, though. Never mind," shrugged Nicole.

"I wonder how you manage to do all your homework on your own? You know, there are loads of them every day. All these Maths exercises are killing me!" sighed Arabella.

"I'm used to doing all my homework by myself. I usually think of how happy and free I'll get after finishing all the homework. Besides, I like Maths a lot. I want to be a Maths teacher in the future," explained Nicole.

"I'd rather be a hawker than a Maths teacher!" exclaimed Arabella, rolling her eyes upwards. "By the way, I once heard an elderly lady pronounced 'Maths' as 'Mups'! It's really funny!" And the two girls burst out laughing.

"I also heard an anchorman pronounced 'spy' as 'spun' last week. How weird their pronunciation was!" said the laughing Nicole.

"We've reached the fourth floor. Say bye-bye to your friend!" said Sally, the domestic helper of Nicole's family.

"Bye-bye, Arabella! Bye-bye, Leah!"

"Bye-bye! And don't forget bringing your Hello Patty stickers to school tomorrow!" cried Arabella.

"Okay!" cried Nicole, still laughing. And the door of the lift closed.

NATHAN THE CHUBBY GHOST

One

Jackie had moved into a nanometre flat in Sham Shui Po for three months. She used to live with her mom and her mom's boyfriend, Colin Ng, in a spacious flat in Happy Valley. However, Jackie quarrelled with Colin all the time. Right after her graduation, she rented a flat and began to live on her own. Mrs Tsui was too much in love with her boyfriend, and said nothing against it.

Mrs Tsui was now in her early forties. Her husband had died in a plane crash six years ago, when Jackie was only sixteen. The deceased had left his wife a fortune, and she didn't need to work anymore after his death. Mrs Tsui met her current boyfriend during a trip to Japan three years ago. The latter was her junior by seven years, and was very handsome. They became lovers instantly, and Colin moved into Mrs Tsui's flat after the trip. From that moment on, Jackie's nightmare began. She and Colin never really got along well. In Colin's eyes Jackie was a spoilt brat. In Jackie's opinion, Colin was after her mom's money and was an idle good-for-nothing. Mrs Tsui adored both of them and foolishly believed that the two would be on speaking terms eventually. In the end Jackie came up with a solution – she locked herself in her own bedroom whenever Colin was at home, and tried to spend as much time as possible in the university library after class. She was relieved that

she had found a full-time job in September 2017, three months after her graduation so that she could finally move out.

Being a teller, Jackie wasn't earning a lot and she needed to be as thrifty as possible. She spent \$10,000 monthly on the rent for her 186-square-foot flat. Luckily the flat was furnished and she only had to bring her belongings from her old home. She worked in Mong Kok and had sandwich for lunch every day.

It was an icy Saturday in December. Jackie was returning home from work. She was heading towards the MTR station when she came across an old lady selling used items in the street. Among them were boots, trainers and a pair of yellow furry slippers. The slippers were small and apparently belonged to a child. There was a Bikachu sewn on each of them. They were so lovely and brand-new-looking that it caught Jackie's attention.

"You like these slippers? They're about your size," said the old lady. Jackie wasn't tall and her feet were tiny like her mother's.

"How much are they?" asked Jackie.

"Only \$20. They're made in Japan."

"Okay, I'll take them."

And Jackie took the Bikachu slippers home.

Two

That night Jackie wiped the Bikachu slippers with a wet

“Jummy, mark my words, if a person can’t control his appetite, he is not going to succeed in anything at all!”



10-year-old chubby Jummy travels to Hong Kong from the US with his aunt to attend a four-week summer course to lose weight. During his stay in Hong Kong, he encounters all sorts of funny and weird people, and becomes friends with his fellow classmates. Among them are the funny Adrian who always craves food, and the lovely and shy Jummy Girl who blushes all the time. Will Jummy succeed in losing weight in the end?

In this and six other short stories, each of the protagonists runs into difficulties of his or her own. Yet their goodness prevails and the endings are mostly interesting and happy.

ISBN 978-988-8868-00-1



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Price
HKD\$108