

## The Rowdy 5th Graders

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It was Friday morning, the last day before winter break and the halls of Emerson Elementary were popping! The bell hadn't rung yet and everyone seemed joyful - kids passed out candy canes, some were eating gingerbread men, some were carrying gift bags with small gifts for their teachers. It was clear that teachers, staff, and students were all excited to have a two-week vacation from school. The bell rang and everyone gleefully hustled to their classrooms.

The intercom buzzed, jarring everyone to order, and the principal, Ms. Snodgrass, invited each grade, one by one to come to the auditorium for the monthly assembly, starting with first grade. After five minutes of patiently waiting, the fifth graders were dismissed. They filed through the hall in a straight line, trying to contain their enthusiasm - in addition to the big vacation coming up, they knew that the fourth graders were going to present a talent show during the assembly and they were very excited to see their friends and siblings perform.

The auditorium was filled with fourth grade parents and the rest of the students at Emerson Elementary. Even the superintendent was there to see the show. The fifth graders walked into the auditorium and found their place on the floor in three straight rows, right in front of a row of parents, some with their toddlers and babies. Of course there was some jostling among the students as they maneuvered to sit near their friends, but it didn't take them long to get settled in for the festivities.

Just after Ms. Snodgrass began to welcome everyone, one of the babies in the row behind the 5th graders filled his diaper. This wasn't a stealthy act - it was loud enough for a handful of students who surrounded the child to hear and smell what had happened in the diaper. The students erupted with laughter and some disgust. Their teacher, completely unaware of what the baby did, sat at the end of the row giving them a confused and stern look that said, *What are you doing? You better be still and quiet or there will be consequences.*

Johanna and Byron, two of the students directly in front of the baby, didn't want to get in trouble, but they couldn't keep from laughing. They were both new to the school and had kind of struggled to fit in, but as they broke out in giggles they looked around and saw the whole class laughing together. The funniest kid in the class gave them both a friendly look that said, *I feel for you two, having to sit that close to the diaper bomb.* They felt like they had a sort of strange (and stinky) bonding experience with their new classmates.

The principal who also had no idea what had happened, stopped the assembly and addressed all of the 5th graders, "I need ALL of the 5th graders to settle down and act respectfully. You are the oldest kids in the school and I expect you to set an example. If I hear any more of this outburst you will all lose ten minutes of recess," then she shot the class' teacher a look that implied that she better get her class under control.