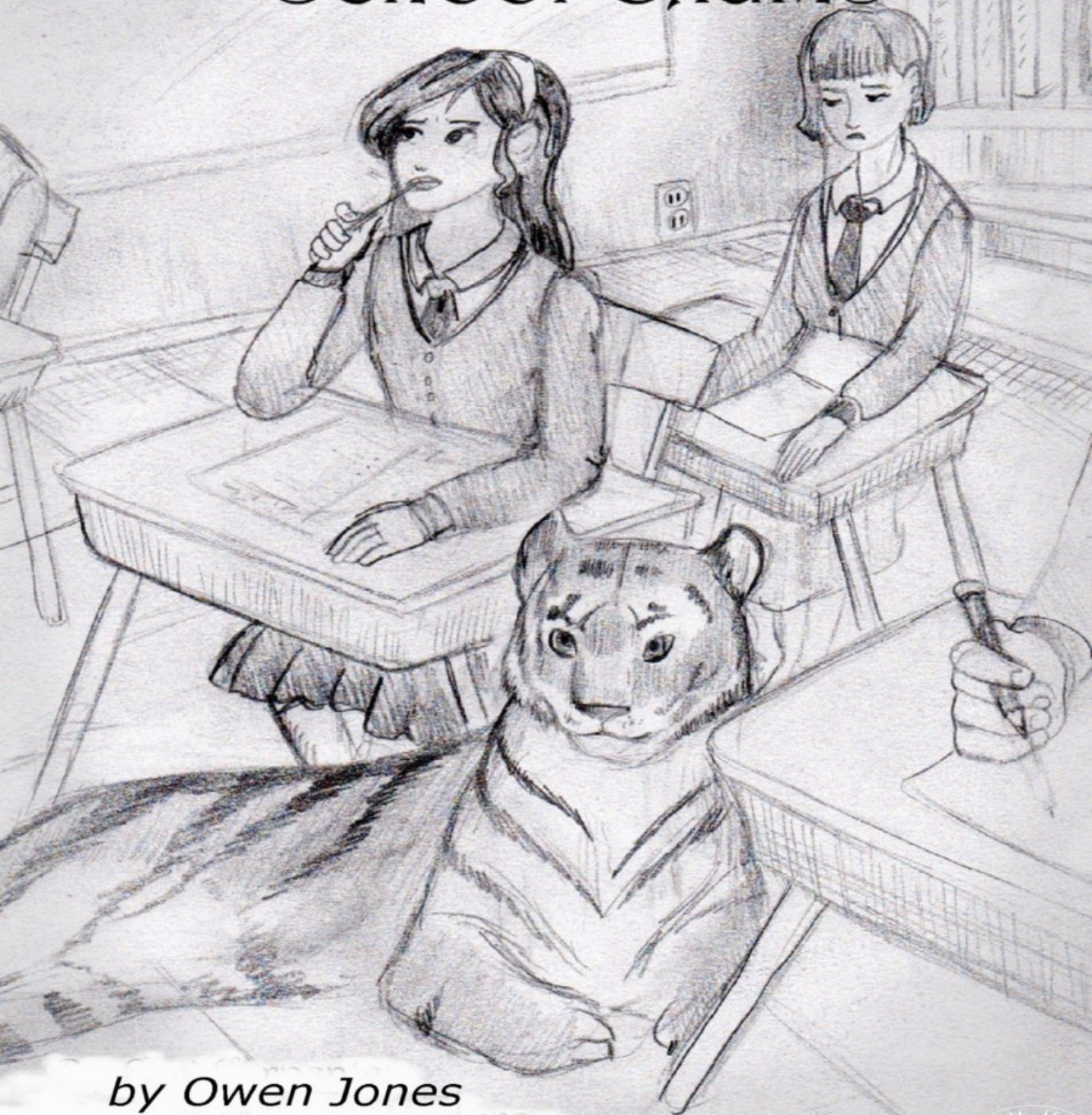


Megan's School Exams



by Owen Jones

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By Owen Jones

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1 THE PEP TALK

Megan woke up in bed, still thinking about what she had been told in school the day before.

There would be exams before the Christmas holidays. These would be the first ‘real’ examinations that she had ever sat, as far as she was concerned, because the others were ‘just tests’, for school kids, but now she was in a real school – one for adults, or teenagers – near-adults – anyway.

This time she would not be testing herself against a bunch of local kids, but against all and the best in the town and it was scary.

Megan wanted to talk to someone about it, but she knew not whom. Despite the fact that Wacinhinsha knew about most things, she somehow doubted that he would know about 21st Century exams in her local school.

Still, time ticked on, so she patted Grrr, who was lying beside her as ever, got up, showered, put on her school uniform and went downstairs to greet her parents and have breakfast.

“Good morning, how are you?” she said to anybody who was listening. Her father was reading the paper and her mother was frying something in the kitchen.

“Good morning, darling,” said her father, lowering the paper for a moment.

“Morning, Megan, here’s your breakfast. Did you sleep well?” asked her mother as she put two plates down, one for Megan and one for herself.

“Yes, thanks. And you?”

“Oh, like tops, as always. Your Dad and I always just fall fast asleep, as soon as our heads hit the pillow. You know what they say: ‘No sleep for the wicked!’ and that is not us, is it, Robert?... Robert!...”

“What’s that, my dear?”

“I said ‘No sleep for the wicked is there?’ and that is not us.”

“No, of course not, that is not us. Why, who can’t sleep now?”

“I’m not talking about anyone in particular, Robert, it was just a general observation.”

“Oh, I see, dear, yes, a good point.”

Megan had witnessed these morning non-conversations almost every day of her life, and sometimes, just to stir things up a bit, she threw a wobbly in.

“Well, I must be wicked then, because I didn’t sleep very well at all.”

That got their interest. Her father put the paper down and actually folded it up and her mother put both her knife and her fork on her plate.

“Why? What have you got troubling you so much that you cannot sleep? Please don’t tell us that it’s that boy from the party, will you?” asked her mother.

Megan was quite taken aback. She had thought about Rod quite a few times since that night, but she could not yet imagine why her mother might think that that could be a problem.

“I don’t know what you mean, Mam! It’s nothing like that! I’m not interested in boys. It’s just that Mrs. Henshaw told us in school yesterday that we will be given written and verbal exams in four weeks time.”

“I’m not sure what that means... I’ve only had ‘tests’ before.”

“Yes, I see,” said her father, “well, I have to go to work now, but if you want to talk about it when I get home, we can do so... no problem, but for now, don’t worry, there is no difference between tests and exams. ‘Examinations’ is just a posh word for tests.”

Robert put his paper in his briefcase, kissed them both on the forehead and left.

“Your father is right, love, exams are only tests, but let’s talk about this tonight when you get back from school and your Dad gets back from work.”

Her parents’ advice did ease Megan’s mind and she even had the confidence to explain the same to some of her friends who had also been worried, but did not have the benefit of a mother or father who cared enough to explain it to them.

When they sat down to tea ten hours later, the first item on the agenda was food, but when the eating was over, Megan’s father said to his daughter:

“How was school today, my dear? Any more news about your exams?”

“Yes, Dad, they said that there would be five days of exams and that they would be held every afternoon next week. It is all very official and very scary. Why can’t they just give us the tests and be done with it?”

“Well, my dear Megan, it is to do with your preparation for the real world. Mmm, that is not a good way of saying it, you are already in the ‘real world,... I mean the ‘adult world.

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