

Grace Jeong

Age: 16, Grade: 10

School Name: Northridge High School, Tuscaloosa, AL

Educator: Lauren Smith

Category: Short Story

The Greens of Grass

The scruffy orange and beige color of the furry tail revealed the soft and now scratched pink skin of the family dog. My machine growls for air as it is suffocated with the fluff. The dog howls for help by jumping into the air twice the height of its weight. Silently, I just watch the tragic incident of the canine animal with my arms crossed and perched on the black rubber handle. After a few seconds pass by, I realize that the canine is heading toward the mansion with its crimson blood falling to the floor every few seconds. Hurriedly, I snatched the pelage and stuffed the pelage into my polyester apron. I know that the sneaky dog would bring the self-centered millionaire mansion owner to the Brobdingnagian backyard. Shoot. What should I do? The owner would forgive me, right? I'm sure they know about the difficulties of being a professional Poaceae tonsorial artist. A lawnmower.

Am I scared? Certainly not. Leaving my beloved machine behind, I set foot for the dreadful doorbell of the vintage and spooky dungeon-like house. As if the grass was sensing the future, the blades of grass parted the green with round splotches of dry brown grass; the lightly crusty dirt path revealed the helpless worm alarmed by the sudden appearance of the dusty breeze. Seconds later, the worm was more helpless with its cylindrical figure replaced with a flat squiggle of pink. I went along to the mansion to find the door slightly cracked open. Unanswered after doorbells, I crept into the house. One room in the hallway was awaiting. Step. Step. Closer. Closer. Whispers of people consumed my manners. The gloomy grey marbled hallway led to the dirty brown and scratchy carpet of the master bedroom. Whisper. Whisper. The peeling wall of tan paint surrounded four faces of the room. Shards of glass glistened the floor like seaweed in the goopy swamp. Brown drops polka-dotted the floor; one particular spot was particularly smudged on the carpet. Whisper. Whisper. The bed frame was scratched as if something was trying to hold on to it before. Bed sheets hid in the rightmost corner in a jumbled mess. I tiptoed closer and closer to the closet. The whispering stops. Swinging the closet doors, I found three pairs of eyes trembling with fear at my sight in the confined area. The mother of the children had scars and bruises on her lovely face. The children, a young boy and an older girl, had put their hands together. All of the hands were a dark red filtered by a film of pale skin with knife marks on the girl's wrist.

"Hh...hhoney," the mother of the children stuttered.

Honey? Who? Me? Funny. I'm just a lawnmower. It's hard to get me mixed up with a millionaire. The stereotypical views on lawnmower jobs include lower class, uneducated, dirty boots, white windowless truck, sketchy, poor, and smelling like grass. Discrimination was a continuous friend. This is the opposite of a millionaire, who is rich, a role model for some, and has a positive vibe surrounding the name. Setting this aside, I decide to converse with the mouse-like mother.

"Ma'am, are you okay?" I asked. I stuck my hand out offering help. She ignored. Perhaps my pale hands covered with green stains and dirt particles were not approachable.

"Pppleasee... dd...ddon't hurt usss." She whispered.

"I won't..." Bold of her to assume I would hurt her. I am offended. Flashbacks of my childhood haunt the scarred heart. Grown under divorced parents, I hid in the closet numerous times whenever mother and father bickered. The loud pointless fight of egos disrupted my mornings to nights often. I find myself sympathizing with her. Wow. But why? Is it because of my traumatic experiences? Discrimination? A job involving more labor than money? Although I have never done this before, I felt as if I should help them. But how? I could call the domestic violence hotline at 1-800-799-7233, as I had done under my dad's dictatorship. Although he was not punished after investigations were executed, I was. Also, I want to help these people somehow. The millionaire mistreated them. Reminded of my high school days, I lifted my head.

"What can I do for y'all?"

Asking for my phone, the mother dialed the abuse hotline. She trembled and stuttered her words, whispering for a few then talking for a few. After she was able to settle down, she started to order a pizza through my phone. Then

she suggested if I could go down and collect the pizza.

No pizza. I'm in a chair. A black metal chair with a hard cushion and thin legs that can't hold me any longer in the Police Station.

"Mr. Prep? Your wife, Mrs. Prep, would like to have you under investigation." The Officer stated coldly.

"I am not Mr. Prep. I am a lawnmower." I stated bluntly.

"Sir, your fingerprints prove that you are Mr. Prep."

As I looked at my fingers, I noticed a luxury smartwatch on my left wrist covered in dirt and dust. The swollen skin of my ring finger was a bright red mixed with dark scarlet. I was wearing navy blue suit pants hemmed to the exact measure of the heel of my dark chocolate brown dress shoes.

Blinded by the toxic mindset, I forgot.

I am the millionaire.