

Maska The Powerful



I've always wanted a dog, but my parents hate them. They say they're too messy and loud. Then, I say that I'll bathe him and keep him under control. They don't believe me.

Since my thirteenth birthday is coming up, I've been cleaning the house and acing my grades. They'll soon realize that I *deserve* a dog.

"Look! Disaster Dahlia turned into Dirt-Free Dahlia!" Jade, my sister, sneered. Dad chuckles while I steer the vacuum towards her.

I glance at Dad. "I bet Dirt-Free Dahlia is more capable of having a dog than Disaster Dahlia!" Dad's smile fades.

"Those Dahlias are also known as Dog-Free Dahlias." He shakes his head, grabs his newspaper and steps out onto the front porch.

Jade snickers and pats my head. "Nice try."

Two weeks later, my thirteenth birthday *finally* came! Throughout the day I scanned every room, closet, and bathroom for a box filled with puppies. My search went on for about an hour before I gave up. I plopped on my comfy, tickle pink, circle wicker chair. I sigh. You could only imagine how disappointed I was.

“How is your birthday, kiddo?” Mom barges through my door carrying an oversized blue basket full of toys.

“Not so good.” Mom laughs as I eyeball the toys. There is a tennis ball, a red braided rope, a bone printed blanket, and an ivory bone chew toy. Dog Toys! “What are those for?” Mom stares at the toys and then back at me. She automatically drops the toys and seizes my hand. When I look back at her, she’s grinning like a maniac! She races out of my room with no intention of stopping. We glide into the hallway, around the stairs, and through the kitchen. “Mom, where are we-?” My eyes fill with happiness as we enter the living room. In the middle of our plush rug is a box about the size of a desk. I rush towards the box and act like it’s a holy object. I feel so fudgelicious right now! I think I imagined it, but I heard a bark come from the box. Oh Nelly, it’s really happening! I lift the lid. *Hssssss!*

“AHHHHHHHHH!” I yank back my hand and skid backwards. Inside laid a long furry sock with dagger-like teeth. This isn’t a dog! I reminded myself. Tears swell in my eyes as I stare at its hideous face. Instead of an adorable puppy, I saw a masked rat. “A RAT! You got me a stinkin’ rat?” I couldn’t believe it! After years of begging, I got a rat!

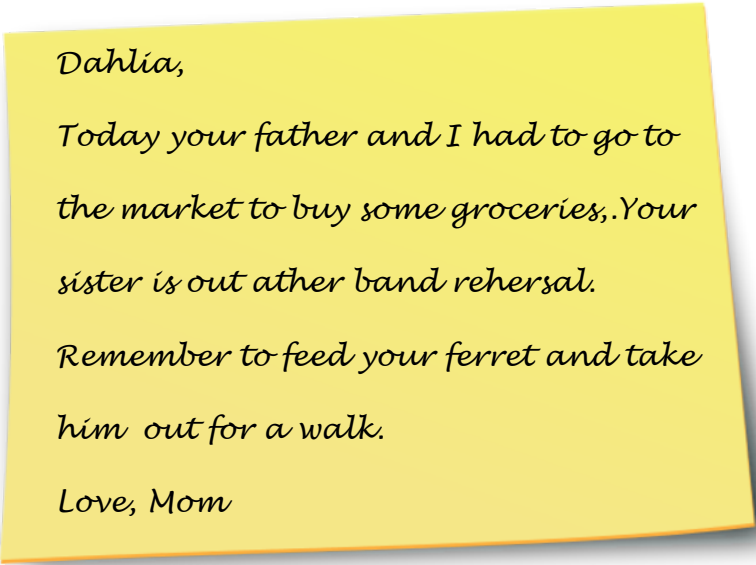
Mom frowned. “Dahlia, calm down! It’s a ferret, not a rat! We were going to get you a dog, but you all of a sudden acted so mature. We realized that you could handle a more serious pet.” My amber eyes widen. Well, all that hard work backfired.

I still hated it, though. “Same difference! All I know is that it’s not a dog!” More and more screams erupted from me. I wanted to dropkick the ferret all the way to Antarctica!

Mom raises her voice even louder. "And all I know is that you should be thankful!" Her fist is as red as the sun itself. Jade appears out of nowhere and runs to Mom. She completely ignores me and calms down Mom. My cheeks burn as I storm to my bedroom. I kick my door shut with one solid blow. *BAM!* Worst birthday ever.

The next morning, I flopped out of my bed and gave a giant yawn. Then, I see that basket full of toys. My anger rises up to a whole new level of mad. I stroll out of my room with a whole new attitude. I stop in my tracks as I enter the kitchen.

"What the what?" On the refrigerator laid a sunny yellow sticky note. I peered at it in disbelief.



*Dahlia,
Today your father and I had to go to
the market to buy some groceries. Your
sister is out ather band rehearsal.
Remember to feed your ferret and take
him out for a walk.
Love, Mom*

The color yellow reminds me of smiley faces, but I'm anything but happy.

Next thing I know, I'm taking the most humiliating walk of my life. Neighbors giggled, kids pointed, even dogs gave me the stink eye! I scoffed at everything that judged me and held my head high.

"Haven't you people ever seen a ferret?" I finally yelled. My hair is a mess, my feet hurt, and I'm sweating like crazy. Let's just say I'm not in my finest form.

All of a sudden, the ferret stops in his tracks. I tug at the rope, but he wouldn't budge!

"Look, I don't want to walk either, but could you at least make it around the block?" *Hsss*. I turn around to find out that the hiss wasn't from the ferret.

"SNAKE!" I scream at the top of my lungs. Thump! I trip over the leash and kiss the grass. "Blech!" Grass does *not* taste good! I whip my head around to find my ferret twirl *towards* the snake. The cold-blooded reptiles' fangs rose through the air like swords. But Mr. Ferret copied the snake, except his time with a *lot* more teeth. He bit the snake over and over again. The snake has no chance of winning! I face the ferret. This time I see something different. Instead of seeing a gift I despise, I see a brave warrior who is protecting me! And for the first time since yesterday, I grin.

Finally, after five minutes of battle, the snake slithered away in defeat. The ferret leaps to me as tears flood my eye. His warmth comforts me in a way I never knew was possible. Wait a minute, something is off about the little guy. Then, I wipe my tears and realize that he doesn't have a name! I think about what just happened, and it hits me. He's powerful, brave, and courageous!

“Maska!” I shout with joy. “Maska means powerful in Native American.” I bounce back up and twirl. Now, he is perfect! With Maska in my arms, we head home. “Wait till Mom, Dad, and Jade hears about this, Maska!” I held my head back and laughed. “You know, ferrets *might* be better than dog.” I think I’m imagining it, but Maska nodded his head and agreed.