

# Essay on My Class at School and Two or Three of Its Interesting Characters

This year I am in the fourth form, Form Four A to be exact. My class is a mixture of 20 boys and 15 girls occupying the first classroom on the first floor of our school's new building. We are a very active lot, much to the despair of our form teacher, Miss Ponnudural. She says, in her strange accent, that we are a bunch of uncultured brats. Perhaps she has a point there, for I admit we are a bit mischievous sometimes.

At the top of the list of mischievous brats must be 'Gurkha'. Gurkha is actually Goh Kah Heng. He is a short, stout, hyperactive teenager who actually looks like one of his namesakes. The first two parts of his real name ensured that he be called Gurkha forever.

Gurkha has a voice like a machine-gun. What I mean is that when he speaks the words come out like the staccato chatter of a machine-gun. When he is excited, and that is not uncommon, the speed at which his words come out would put any M15 to shame. When that happens no one knows what he is talking about. We just cover our faces with our hands to avoid the spray of his high-speed saliva.

Gurkha IS mischievous. He is always frightening the girls by showing an insect or a frog in front of them. The girls always scream in unison when they get the Gurkha treatment. He even plays tricks on the teachers. Many men teachers have got the seat of their pants covered with chalk when they sit on the booby-trapped teacher's chair. Many women teachers have screamed when they see a dead frog on their chair. Actually some men's teachers did scream louder than the women.

Gurkha leaves most of the boys alone. He tried some tricks before but

all he got was some rough stuff in return. Gurkha is not a big fellow, so he cannot be too physical with most of the boys. They are usually too big for him. However, he does pick on skinny little Sivalingam.

Sivalingam, or Siva to his friends, is one of the late developers. He still has the body of a pre-adolescent boy. So he is the smallest of us all. He is even smaller than the girls. Gurkha sometimes takes advantage of this fact. Often I can hear Siva utter a weak cry when Gurkha suddenly sits down on his lap. Then almost always Gurkha will receive a cuff on the head from Hamidah who sits next to Siva.

Hamidah is big as Siva is small. This vast difference in size seems to work very well with them. Siva gets some protection from Hamidah and Hamidah gets to exercise her muscles whenever Siva is threatened. A strange kind of symbiosis, I would say.

Actually I suspect Hamidah's motherly instinct is prematurely developed, thanks to Siva. Siva, on the other hand, appears to enjoy being mothered. If he keeps this up his fatherly instinct may be greatly hampered. A change of place next to a bigger boy could do him a lot of good. Perhaps Miss Ponnudurai can see this and make the necessary change.

I heard from the other classmates of mine that Gurkha's mother passed away a long time ago. So he has been brought up by his father. Come to think of it I am sure that Gurkha actually wants to be reprimanded by Hamidah. This is something he never got from his mother.

Anyway, these are three interesting characters in my class. There are many others of course. Azlan, who sits next to me, says I am another character too. Ah, well, we will just leave it at that.