



# My Best Friend Zuko

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One day I was playing cricket with my friends near a field of my house. That day the game was exciting and fun-filled but unfortunately it started raining, we had to stop playing and we took shelter under a tree.

There I saw a dog, wet with rain and trembling from cold. So I took off my jacket and covered him with it. Then I took him into my arms and took him home. I wiped him with a towel and brushed him clean. When my mother saw it at first she was a little annoyed but later she saw the dog was quiet and well-behaved.

So my mother gave me some money to buy some biscuits and milk for it. Before I went out, mother asked me what name had I chosen for him? I told her let's call him Zuko. So I took him, and went to a shop to buy food for Zuko. After coming back from the shop I gave him the food to eat then I thought where should I keep him? I thought I should make a little kennel for him. Then I arranged some wood and paint to build up a kennel for my best friend Zuko. Then I kept him in the kennel and put the kennel in my balcony.

On the next day I went to school and Zuko was looking for me, then my mother told him that I am at school and Zuko could understand what my mother said but he could not speak. After I came back from school, I took Zuko to the field and there we played with the ball. I hit the ball with the cricket bat and he helped me to bring it back. I love Zuko and he also loves me and we will be best friends forever and he will never leave me alone and I will try to keep him as many years as I can.

The writer is a grade 3 student at Sunbeams.

# 58 Kilograms

MARISHA AZIZ

Julie sat at the far end of the table, her eyes transfixed on the sundae that sat in front of me. She didn't need to speak for me to know what was going on in her mind. I could tell she was watching the dark chocolate syrup trickle down the scoops of scrumptious-looking ice cream. I also knew she would start drooling if she stared at the honey forming small pools at the bottom of the glass for much longer. So, when she reached out across the table, spoon grasped in her outstretched hand, I called out, for the fifth time that week, "58 kilograms."

My flat voice sent a jolt through her, making her drop the spoon and slump back. "You're supposed to sound authoritative," she said accusingly, "You're supposed to make me feel bad about the 58 kilograms."

"Okay, first of all: do you even know how to spell authoritative?"

"Of course I do!" She exclaimed defensively. "You're not the only one who uses big words to make a point."

I rolled my eyes before continuing. "Secondly, this goes against everything I believe in."

"This isn't about what you believe in; it's about me looking pretty, presentable, and not-fat-as-a-whale in front of general society."

"Fat as a whale?" I asked incredulously. "You weigh 58 kilograms!"

"My point exactly," she replied in a calm tone, her eyes darting back towards the sundae.

"You wanna know what I think?"

"Not really," Julie muttered without taking her wistful eyes off the sundae. I pretended not to hear her and went on.

"Here's what I think: Instead of forcing me to yell out your weight to stop you from eating anything remotely fattening, you should present yourself to general society as *yourself*."

"Myself includes love handles and baby fat and 58 kilograms!"

"But love handles and baby fat and 58 kilograms shouldn't define you! You are defined by your personality. Your likes and dislikes, your love for stuffed animals, and your ability to describe even the most disgusting of foods as ambrosia--these are what define you. And I'm glad you brought up the whole 'looking pretty in front of others' point, because really: what is beauty in the eyes of men?"

"If I'd wanted to know, I would've signed up for Professor Gerard's philosophy class."

"You see, the truth is, you can't place a definition next to beauty," I continued, turning a deaf ear towards her sardonic retort. "Because different

people have different tastes, and so, different qualities attract them. This is why you can't set up standards to separate beautiful people from ugly people! I'm sorry, but 'general society' has this unrealistic image of women with narrow waists and thigh gaps and what not and I just think it's all bull--"

"There's a kid behind you," Julie interjected. I whipped around to give the toddler a glare, making him scuttle off to the other side of the shop.

"As I was saying," I continued in a dignified way, "We're humans. I get that we have this silly need to feel accepted. But we have to draw the line somewhere! If you were morbidly obese and had serious health problems, then things would be different. All you have are plump cheeks and big bones. I don't see the point in depriving yourself from the biggest joys of the world just to appear 'pretty' to a group of narrow-minded little sh--"

"Another kid!" Julie pointed out hastily.

"I am in the middle of a powerful speech here!" I exclaimed before squinting at the little girl menacingly. She turned and ran, dropping her ice cream cone in the process.

I turned back to Julie. "Look, all I'm saying is, if you want me to do this whole 58 kilograms thing, I'll do it, because I'm just an awesome friend, but don't expect me to mean it. Because I think you're perfectly fine--"

"I am?"

"Well, maybe not in the brains department, but yes, when it comes to everything else, you're actually a great person. If other people can't see that...well, then they're just not worth your time."

I sat back after that closing statement, watching the look of disinterest on Julie's face turn to thoughtfulness. "So you're saying..."

"Yeah?" I prompted her. Maybe, just maybe, for the first time ever, I'd managed to make her understand my views. For the first time ever, one of my friends would understand how lucky they were to have someone as smart as me around, and so would stop ignoring everything I say.

"You're saying I can have the chocolate sundae?"

"What? No! No, that's not the point of my—okay, you know what? Go ahead. Have the damn sundae."

Julie squealed before dragging the cup full of half-melted chocolatey goodness towards her and gobbling down a mouthful. I slouched into my seat, having once again failed to make my peers understand—and relate to— one of my many profound statements.

"Could use a little more syrup," she commented after a few moments.

I really need to find myself smarter friends.

