



Puteri's Messed-Up Day

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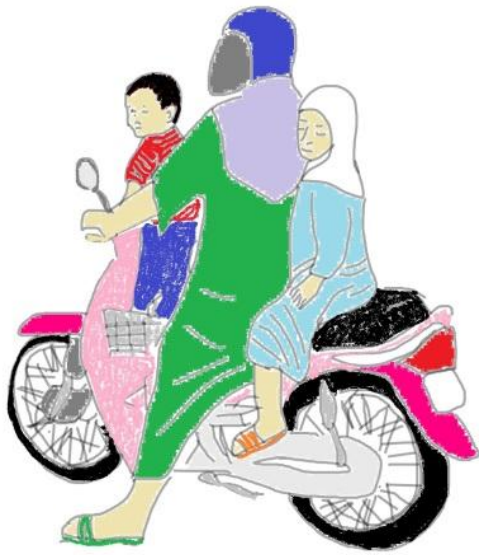
A warm breeze through an open window tickled her face and gently woke Puteri. It was just beginning to get light and the birds were already calling outside. It was one of those days that felt like it should be a holiday.



picture by Puteri

Reluctantly, Puteri climbed out of bed and started getting ready for school, because it really was not a holiday. For some reason it just didn't feel like a normal day.

“Come on, Puteri, time to go!” She climbed onto the back of the motorcycle while her mother lifted her little brother into the basket at the front. She made sure that she sat close to her mother, and she held onto the edge of her scarf so that it wouldn’t blow around too much.



They set off carefully into the stream of traffic on the main road. Puteri pressed her face into her mother’s back, trying to ignore the dust, noise and fumes from the cars and trucks that were roaring past so close to the motorbike.

As they got to the front of the school there were cars and motorbikes everywhere, with parents dropping off their children and then hurrying away to go to work. She didn't really see what happened next, but her little brother suddenly flew through the air, landing on the ground next to a group of students.



Puteri was lying on the ground too, with the motorbike on top of her leg. Her mother was further away on the ground. Another motorbike was lying nearby, with its wheels still spinning, and a startled-looking man was sitting on the ground with one leg trapped under his bike.

In the back of the ambulance she held tight to her mother's hand and kept staring at her little brother lying with his eyes closed as the nurse attended to him. Her arm and her leg were hurting and her head throbbed, but much worse than that was how frightened she felt. Was her mother's unborn baby still okay? Would her little brother be okay? What if ...



Suddenly she started to tremble all over. The nurse turned to her and made her lie back in her seat. She closed her eyes, and then she couldn't help it and she started to cry.

Her dad showed up to take them all home. They were all a little bruised and sore, but they were okay, and her mother had not lost the baby. They might need to buy a new motorbike, and maybe she and her brother would have helmets.



“Let’s go and have dinner at KFC”, suggested her dad, trying to take her mind off what had happened. “At least you didn’t have to go to school today, Puteri.”

“But I like school, I like learning, I *want* to go to school!” replied Puteri.

After eating some delicious chicken, the family walked slowly down the city street together. Puteri looked longingly at the pretty clothes in the shop windows. Her little brother stopped to look at some toy cars in saw in another shop.



“Window shopping is fun, and very relaxing,” said her mother. “We should do it more often.”

When they finally got back home, Puteri noticed two of her friends waiting near her house.

“Maisarah, Lily, what are you doing here?” she asked.

“We were worried about you,” said Maisarah.



“We brought you some presents,” said Lily. “Here you are. We are so glad you are okay.”

Puteri was very tired when she went to bed that night. “That was a really messed-up day. I hope tomorrow will be just ‘normal’,” she thought.

