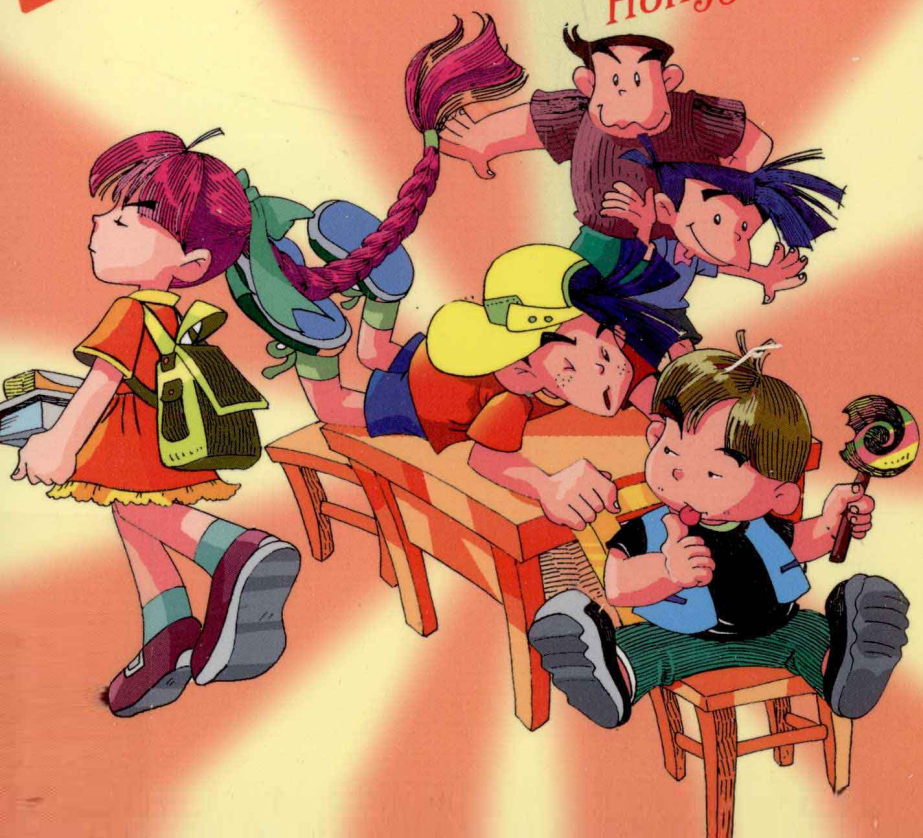



MOMO'S MISCHIEF

Best Friends
Hongying Yang





MO'S MISCHIEF

Best Friends

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Other titles in the Mo's Mischief series:

Four Troublemakers
Teacher's Pet
Pesky Monkeys
You're No Fun, Mum!
Super Cool Uncle



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BEST FRIENDS

Mo Shen Ma was the most mischievous child in Ms Qin's class. With so many other pupils, Ms Qin couldn't always keep an eye on Mo, so she asked Man-Man to be Mo's desk mate. Man-Man enjoyed telling tales on Mo. She kept a little notebook, and any time Mo did something mischievous, she made a note of it for the teacher.

With Man-Man watching him all the time, Mo couldn't get away with *anything*. So he was determined to sit next to someone else at school – and that someone was Lily.



Lily had perfect posture: her back was always straight and her chin was always held high. And it was no wonder – she'd been going to ballet class since she was five years old!

Man-Man and Lily were friends, but Man-Man was a bit jealous of Lily because she was so beautiful and graceful. So just occasionally she would say something unkind about Lily behind her back.

One day Mo heard Man-Man say that Lily was so 'full of herself' that she didn't notice what anyone else was doing.

That gave Mo an idea! If Lily was his desk mate, instead of Man-Man, she wouldn't notice any of his pranks because she was so full of herself! He would never get in trouble again.

Every day Mo imagined what it would be like having Lily sitting next to him. But how could he make it happen? Mo had another idea! He would ask his friends what they thought.

First he went and found Hippo.

"Guess who I want to sit beside, Hippo?"

Hippo didn't think about it, he just answered straightaway: "Monkey, of course. You talk to him all the time during lessons."



"Wrong. I don't want to be Monkey's desk mate."

"Then it must be Penguin," said Hippo. "You want to eat the food he keeps in his desk."

Mo pulled a face. "Wrong again. Penguin's mean. He never wants to share anything, especially not his food. I certainly don't want to be his desk mate."

Hippo started to smile and went a bit red. "Do you want *me* to be your..."

Mo scowled. Hippo didn't have a clue. "Give up guessing, Hippo. I'll tell you. I want *Lily* to be my desk mate."

"Oh... oh...I don't believe it!"

Mo was confused. "Why can't I have Lily as a desk mate?"

"You just can't, that's why!"

Mo just didn't know what he had said to make Hippo so upset. So he went to find Monkey and Penguin.

Mo found Monkey first and told him straightaway that he wanted to sit next to Lily.

Monkey laughed. "Really? You don't want to sit with Angel instead?"

Angel was Mo's neighbour. Mo thought she was a bit of a pain because she was always hanging around when he was with his friends.



"Is it because Lily's so pretty that you want to be her desk mate?" asked Monkey.

"No, it's because Lily isn't interested in other people. So she won't notice when I get up to mischief, and she won't tell on me to Ms Qin," answered Mo.

Monkey snapped back at once. "Angel won't snitch on you either. Why don't you want to be *her* desk mate?"

Huh, thought Mo. What's the point of having friends if they won't help you when you need it the most?

So Mo placed all his hopes on his *really* good friend, Penguin, who was Lily's desk mate. He hoped Penguin would swap seats with him. He knew just how to get round Penguin!

Mo took a bag of crisps from his backpack and went and found Penguin.

"Penguin. Will you swap places with me so that I can sit next to Lily?" asked Mo in his most friendly voice. He handed the bag of crisps to Penguin. "Is that OK, Penguin?"

"It doesn't matter whether I say it's OK or not," Penguin said, while tossing the crisps into his mouth. "Ms Qin isn't going to agree anyway."



Mo pleaded. "But if you told Ms Qin that you'd like to sit next to someone else, you could let me sit next to Lily..."

"No, I'm quite happy sitting next to Lily myself," said Penguin, stuffing more crisps into his mouth.

Mo was fed up. Here was another friend who wouldn't help him, and it had cost him a bag of crisps. He gave Penguin a shove and Penguin shoved him back.



Unfortunately for both of them, two senior pupils saw everything and Mo and Penguin were sent to stand outside Ms Qin's office.

It's not fair, thought Mo. What's the point of best friends if they won't stick up for you?

"It's not fair," said Penguin. "Now my crisps will be confiscated."



MS QIN FINDS OUT

Ms Qin frowned when she saw Mo and Penguin standing outside her office. "What have you two been up to now?" she said.

They didn't want to tell Ms Qin that they'd argued over Lily. The two boys stood there, looking down at the ground.

"Aren't you going to tell me? OK, then you can stand here while I phone your parents. They'll have to come and pick you up."

Penguin couldn't wait that long. He would miss his favourite cartoon if he had to wait for his dad to finish work.



“OK, Ms Qin, I’ll tell you,” Penguin spluttered.

Mo didn’t expect Penguin to betray him so quickly. He gave Penguin a warning glare.

But Penguin thought the cartoon was more important than Mo, so he ignored Mo’s look. “Mo wanted me to let Lily sit with him, and I refused. He shoved me and I shoved him back.”

Ms Qin was flabbergasted. “Is that true, Mo?”

Now Mo may be the most mischievous boy in her class, but Ms Qin knew he always told the truth.

Mo admitted that what Penguin had said was true.

Ms Qin said, “You may leave now, Penguin.”

Penguin scuttled off. He could only think about getting home to his cartoon.

After he’d gone, Ms Qin asked Mo to sit down. Then she said, in a gentle voice, “Now Mo, why do you want to sit next to Lily?”

Mo was about to tell Ms Qin that he wanted to sit next to Lily because he didn’t want to sit next to Man-Man any more because she wrote down all his mischief in her notebook. But he stopped. He knew Man-Man was Ms Qin’s favourite pupil, and that she had asked her to keep an eye on Mo.

Mo said nothing and just looked down at the floor.



"Why won't you tell me, Mo? Is it because you like Lily?"

He nodded but then shook his head.

"What do you mean by that? Do you like her or not?" asked Ms Qin.

"Sometimes I do, and sometimes I don't," was Mo's reply.

"Come on Mo," Ms Qin said, "When do you like her? And when don't you like her?"

"If she talks to me, I like her. If she doesn't, I don't."

"So... you want her to notice you?"

Mo nodded.

Ms Qin frowned. "You shouldn't be thinking about Lily so much, Mo. You should be concentrating on your school work," she said.

Mo couldn't help his reply, it just slipped out. "But it's natural for a boy to like a girl, isn't it, Ms Qin?" he said, cheekily.

"Not at such a young age, Mo!"

"At what age can I like her then, Ms Qin?" asked Mo.



Ms Qin knew that Mo didn't mean to make her cross, he was just being mischievous.

"Mo, stop being silly. I'm not wasting any more time with you. Lily will stay sitting next to Penguin and you must start behaving sensibly."

Then she took out a piece of paper from the drawer and began to write. When she'd finished, she folded the paper and put it into an envelope, but she didn't stick the envelope down.

She passed the envelope to Mo and said, "Give this to your father for me. Can I trust you to do that, Mo?"

"Of course, Ms Qin." Mo remembered the time that Ms Qin had told him she trusted him, and he felt a warm glow. He liked doing things for his teacher, but she didn't often ask him. Ms Qin always asked teacher's pet Man-Man or smarmy Wen to help her. Mo knew he would never be teacher's pet – there was no chance of that at all.

Mo took the letter and hurried home.



A FEATHERED LETTER

Mo was longing to see what Ms Qin had written in the letter. He knew the envelope wasn't sealed so he could easily sneak a look. But he knew it was wrong to read something that was meant for someone else. So Mo decided to stick the envelope down with glue so he wouldn't be tempted to open it. Then he decided to decorate the envelope, by sticking feathers on it. Then it would look really important, as if a bird had delivered it urgently!

Mo went on to the balcony of his flat, but no passing birds had dropped any feathers there.



He looked around his flat to see what else he could use, and there in a vase was a beautiful peacock's feather that his mother had found on holiday once.

The feather was a bit too long, so Mo cut out the most beautiful eye parts of the feather to stick on to the envelope – three bright blue eyes to attract attention.

Mo placed this letter inside the showcase in the hall, just below his father's gold cup, the one he'd won for his toy designs. It was Mr Ma's proudest possession – one he looked at every day when he came home from work.

When Mr Ma came home, he looked at the golden cup in the showcase. Then he noticed the letter with the peacock-feather eyes.

"What's this I spy, Mo?" he asked.

"Ms Qin has written you a letter." Mo answered, "It's quite important! It flew here! That's why it has a feather on it."

Mr Ma didn't open the letter, but held it high, and said jokingly, "Did Ms Qin decorate the envelope, or did you? It looks suspiciously like your mother's favourite peacock feather – we will have to get her another one."

Mo confessed.

