

**\*\*\*Short Story – 6<sup>TH</sup> GRADE\*\*\***

**1st Place**

←————→  
**The Harvard Experiment**

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Teacher: Sydney Maxwell

“Aww! There you are, my favorite rat,” a human wearing a white cloak approached my tank. I squeaked and whimpered. The human slowly opened the top of my tank and used its greasy, periwinkle-colored hands to grab me.

“Let me go!” I squeaked. But of course, all the human heard was “*Wee, whet, wee!*” The human smiled and placed me on a cold table, with some other rats. He slowly filled a glass up with water and came back, smiling even larger now, at the sight of me.

“Here, climb into this glass.” He said menacingly. I crept back, but the human had already snatched me. I squeaked and cried for my friends to save me, but they were all so afraid that they tried to escape the blank white room. The human dropped me inside of the glass and water slowly filled up my fluffy ears and into my mouth. I attempted to grasp the glass to hold on but nothing worked. The human’s eyes began growing bigger, along with his ugly smile, and looked so pleased to see me in pain. I squeaked and tried to float, the overflowing water choking me. I spat out so much water, that I didn’t even know had entered me. Tears started gathering at my tiny eyes, and I knew that my life was going to end. But something incredible happened. The human tipped the glass over, so the water spilled everywhere, but no longer in me. I shivered and shook violently, terrified of the water.

The human said, “Huh. Interesting,” while he took notes. “Let’s try again for round two, eh? Now, have some hope. Maybe then, you won’t almost drown like you did just then, ok?” His voice softened and his eyes grew smaller. “*Maybe he regretted it? He might have felt bad, seeing such a pathetic rat like me drown,*” I thought whilst I nodded and prayed for some hope to come. Once I finished praying for hope, I went and crawled back into the glass, and the human picked me up to fill it with water again. This time, he went slowly so less water was in it. I, again, tried to hold onto the glass, this time, it worked. I held on for a good fifteen minutes or so before falling after the human set me down onto the table. The rats around me gathered and squeaked softly. I had to close my eyes from the water, but I gained the courage to open my eyes again, since my oxygen was running out. I swam up and higher, and the human gasped. He took notes again, writing furiously. After a long and hard 18 hours of hanging onto the glass, I felt the

need to go to sleep, but if I did, I knew that I would die, then and there. My hope kept me onto the glass, sticking onto me like how I was sticking onto the glass of water. The shiny name tag of the human shined onto me. It read, "*Dr. Richter, Harvard University.*"

A whole 1 day went by and I was still staying on. The human had to leave twice to go to sleep, so I was left alone. He had taken the other rats away. He now studied me and whispered, "Wow. You *are* my favorite rat. Heck, you make my work a *whole lot* easier." Once 17 more hours passed, I felt fatigued and sleepy. I wanted to completely die now. This feeling of dread surpassed me, and I was sort of stuck in this predicament. Either I go to sleep and drown, or I would be a failure and mess up Dr. Richter's experiment.

Once 59 minutes passed, I couldn't hold on any longer. I gasped and dropped, falling into the glass of water. Water filled my ears again, and the screams of the rats echoed in my ears. The last thing I remember seeing was Dr. Richter's face, turning from a smile to a cry.