

# Egg Drop Soup

by Heather Tomasello

illustrated by Elizabeth O. Dulemba

"OK, everybody. It's that time of year," said my science teacher, Mr. Beal. "This Friday we'll have the annual Egg Drop Challenge."

A couple of my classmates groaned, but no one was at all surprised. Mr. Beal's fifth-grade Egg Drop Challenge was a tradition at my school. The goal of the Challenge was simple—you had to build a protective container to keep an egg from breaking when dropped over the stadium wall.

"Bring your containers to class on Friday," Mr. Beal said. "By the way, this year we're going to try something different. You can work alone or with a partner."

My best friend, Cassie, and I grinned at each other. We always worked on projects together. She's brainy; I'm creative. We're the perfect combination. Like peanut butter and marshmallow cream. (Which happens to be my favorite kind of sandwich.)

I made my favorite sandwich that afternoon while waiting for Cassie to come over and work on the container. Spreading the fluffy marshmallow cream gave me an idea.

"I have a brilliant design for our egg container!" I said when Cassie arrived.

"What?" Cassie asked eagerly.

"We can cushion it with some marshmallow cream."

"Huh?"

"You know, to absorb the shock of the impact," I explained.

"You've got to be kidding, Laura."

"You have a better idea?"



Go On



Cassie pointed to a sketch in her notebook. "Actually, I do. We put the egg in a basket with a parachute attached. It will simply float to safety."

"It's too easy for something to go wrong. It will never work!" I said.

"And marshmallow cream will?" Cassie rolled her eyes. "The parachute is better than *that* silly idea."

I couldn't believe it. Of course we'd had our little fights in the past, but this was different. She'd never called any of my ideas "silly" before.

"Oh yeah?" I said.

"Yeah!"

"Then I'll build mine and you build yours, and we'll just see whose is better."

"Fine!" Cassie shoved her notebook into her backpack and stormed out.

And just like that, our friendship was smashed. Like an egg dropped from the top of a stadium without marshmallow cream to protect it.

When Friday finally rolled around, I had to admit that Cassie's *Egg Force One* looked pretty good. She had used a handkerchief to create a small parachute. It was tied to a basket that held Styrofoam® packing peanuts and, in the center of it all, her egg.

My *Egg-cellent Egg Cream* didn't look quite so scientific. I had lined the sides and bottom of a small box with rice cakes. Then I'd added a layer of marshmallow cream, the egg, and a layer of Jell-O™.

This is how the competition worked: All the kids in my class carried their egg containers up three stadium steps and dropped them over the side wall. If your egg broke, you were out. If the egg survived, you had to walk up three more steps and drop it again. This went on until the last egg broke.

By the fourth launch, only Cassie and I were left.

"OK," Mr. Beal yelled. "Let 'em go on the count of three."

"Good luck, Laura," Cassie said, turning to me. "You're going to need it."

I didn't respond. I figured winning would be even sweeter.

The class called, "One, two, three!" I let go of my box.

"Ew," I heard someone say after a minute. Had my egg broken? I raced down the steps, trying to get to the bottom before Cassie did.

Go On





The sidewalk was already dotted with egg shells from previous failed drops. I finally found my brave little *Egg-cellent Egg Cream*. I didn't even have to open the box to see the results. Yolk and egg white mixed with yellow Jell-O seeped from the corner.

"That looks like egg drop soup, Laura," Cassie said. She was holding her *Egg Force One*. My heart raced. Had she won? I looked at her basket. Empty.

"My egg bounced out," she explained, pointing to a broken shell in the grass.

"I guess the pilot had an egg-jector seat," I offered.

Cassie looked at me, and her glare softened. I could see it in the corners of her eyes. She was trying not to smile. I grinned. She giggled.

"Egg-jector seat," she said.

"Egg drop soup," I said, laughing until I had tears in my eyes.

"A tie," Mr. Beal said, shaking his head.

But Cassie and I knew we'd won something more important than the Egg Drop Challenge. Maybe some friendships aren't like eggs after all. They can survive a little bouncing.

- 1 Describe Laura's MAIN problem in the story. How does she solve it? Support your answer with details from the story.
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2

In what ways are Laura and Cassie DIFFERENT? Support your answer with details from the story.

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3

One of the themes in "Egg Drop Soup" is friendship. Explain what Laura and Cassie learn about friendship. Support your answer with details from the story.

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Go On

