

“Where's John?” said Mrs. Osum. The class looked frantically around the room, but John was nowhere to be found. The class then heard a “poof” noise and Mrs. Osum was gone, too. There was another “poof” and an envelope drifted down onto John's desk.

There was an eerie silence as time stood still. Sameer stepped up, and with his trembling hands, he cautiously opened the letter. It read:

*Hocus Pocus, you gotta focus
If you want to find John, before he's long gone
Head to room 402, to find the next clue
But you must be careful, and very awareful
That dangers preside, along your ride
Tic tock, you're on the clock
So travel with haste, before John goes to waste.*

That chilled Sameer to the bone. He took a deep breath and said, “Let's go get John back.”

The class was filled with petrifying mystery as they approached room 402 - the spelling room. *Poof*. Another envelope fluttered into Sameer's hands. It read:

*To bring John to where he belong,
you must spell each word and not get it wrong.
On the board you must write the words all right,
but if you get one wrong John will be long gone.*

“That gave a crystal clear message,” said Sameer. He carefully stepped up to the board.

“Sarcophagus,” like a booming echo, he heard words floating in the air like inevitable stormclouds.

S-A-R-C-O-P-H-A-G-U-S, he wrote. A checkmark appeared next to the word.

“Spinach,” the voice boomed.

S-P-I-N-A-C-H, he wrote. Another check mark appeared next to that one.

“Nauseous,” the voice thundered.

“Oh no, I only know N-A-U,” Sameer cried helplessly. “S-E-O-U-S,” his friend Esa chimed in.

“Thanks,” Sameer was relieved . The third checkmark appeared.

The voice returned with a hint of vanity:

*You’ve almost found John, you got to be strong
Head to room 303, to find dear Johnny
You better be good at math, or face my wrath.*

Now that Sameer had a moment to think about it, something sounded quite familiar about that voice. But right now, he had other problems to deal with.

He led his class to room 303, which was the math room. The voice roared again, “Let’s see if you remember what you were taught this year: what is 1212 divided by 3?

Lucky for Sameer, he was good at math. “Well, 3 times 404 is 1212, so 1212 divided by 3 equals 404.”

“Correct,” the voice said. “Now you know where to go.”

“Maybe we should go to room 404,” Sameer said

“Wait, that's our classroom,” said Esa.

“Strange, but great idea,” Sameer agreed.

As they briskly walked back to where it had all begun, they saw Mrs. Osum and John in front of them. “We decided to test how much you’ve learned this year, and you all passed with flying colors,” smiled the proud Mrs. Osum.

“Sameer,” another voice echoed from a distance. "You'll miss the bus.” “Huhhuuuh,” he moaned. “Sameer, you don’t wanna miss your last day of school,” my mom exclaimed.