Monica’s Choice

Monica always got ten out of ten on her spelling tests at school. Each week, she would collect a house point and cheerfully add it to the collection in her tray. She absolutely loved to see that pile of little yellow discs building up.

At home, Monica had a special routine that she followed every night to ensure that she got 100 percent on her test that week. While she was playing out with her friends, she would say the spellings to herself under her breath. At tea time, Monica’s mum would ask her to spell the words to her in between mouthfuls.

“Remember, it’s an E A spelling pattern this week Mon, not a double E!” Mum was ever so helpful when it came to learning spellings and, as a result, Monica continued to get full marks, over and over again.

One Monday in May however, Mum made what Monica considered to be a devastating announcement. They were going to be going swimming every single night that week!

“Every night?” yelled Monica, “But when will I learn my spellings?”

“You’ll be fine! I’m sure you don’t need to practice as much as you do,” replied Mum, confidently.

Monica was not so sure.

All that week, Monica was worried about her spellings. She felt sick every time Mr Smith, their teacher even mentioned them. She tried asking her friends to help her practice but they all said they’d rather play football or practice their dance moves. Monica started to panic.

Friday came around and Monica did the spelling test along with her classmates. She knew she hadn’t done well at all. She knew Mr Smith and her mum would be so disappointed with her for not getting full marks. What could she do?

Then, at playtime, an idea suddenly came to Monica. It was a risky plan and she wasn’t certain that it was the right thing to do. Nevertheless, she asked Mrs Baker, who was on duty, if she could inside and she put her plan into action.

Slowly and stealthily, Monica crept into the classroom. She looked around. There it was, Anthony’s spelling book. Anthony was the only other person in the whole class who never failed to get ten out of ten. If she copied his spellings, Monica would get 10 out of 10 too and her record would not be broken. No one would ever know, the plan was fool proof! She reached for the book and collected her own spelling book from her place. Perspiring slightly and with shaking hands, Monica set to work.

Later that day, Mr Smith called Monica over to his desk. He did not look pleased. Monica was confused. Surely all of Anthony’s spelling had been correct? She couldn’t have got less than 10!

“Monica, I am extremely displeased,” said Mr Smith, shaking his head. He held out Monica’s spelling book, “I cannot believe that someone who is as well behaved as you would cheat on a spelling test!”

“But sir, I didn’t cheat! I never cheat!” said Monica. She felt her face flush red.

“Monica, do you think I was born yesterday? You have changed your answers in a different pen!” he said, angrily.

Sure enough, when she looked closely Monica could see that she had used a handwriting pen to do her spellings the first time and then, because she was in such a rush, she had grabbed a biro off the teacher’s desk to change them with. She hung her head in shame.

“Go to the Headteacher’s office Monica,” said Mr Smith, pointing at the door.

Monica shuffled off with her shoulders hunched, not daring to imagine what might happen when she reached the door of that dreaded office.