How Do You Spell Famous?

Judy Moody marched into third grade on a plain old Thursday, in a plain old ordinary mood. That was *before* Judy got stung by the Queen Bee.

Judy sat down at her desk, in the front row next to Frank Pearl.

"Hey, did you see Jessica Finch?" asked Frank in a low voice.

"Yeah, so? I see her every day. She sits catty-cornered behind me."

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"She's wearing a crown."

Judy turned to look at Jessica, then whispered to Frank, "Where'd she get that? Burger Barn?"

"I don't know," said Frank. "Ask her. She says it's bejewelled."

"Well, it looks be-dumb, if you ask me," said Judy, though secretly she admired the sparkling ruby-like gems.

"Hey, are those real rubies?" Judy asked Jessica.

"They're costume jewellery," Jessica said.

"Who are you dressing up as? The Queen of England?"

"No, I'm the Queen Bee," said Jessica. "I won the NV Spelling Bee on Saturday."

"The envy spelling bee?" Judy asked.

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Judy didn't envy anybody who had to spell long words into a microphone with a million and one people staring bug-eyed at her. She knew those people were silently yelling *FLUB IT UP* because they wanted their own kid to win.

"Not *envy*. NV. As in Northern Virginia."

"Oh," said Judy. "Is that where you got the crown?"

"It's a tiara," said Jessica. "T-I-A-R-A. A tiara is a fancy crown like the Queen of England wears. Queen of the Bee has to know tons of definitions."

"What word did you win for?" Judy asked. "Frank wants to know," she added, in case Jessica thought *she* was interested.

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"*Artichoke*. It's a fourth grade word."

Artichoke! Judy could barely spell *meat loaf*! Give me S-C-I-E-N-C-E any day, she thought. Was that the rule? *I* before *E*? Or was it *E* before *I*?

"I have spelling posters in my room at home," said Jessica. "With all the rules. I even have a glow-in-the dark one."

"That would give me spelling nightmares. I'll take my glow-in-the-dark skeleton poster any day. It shows all two hundred and six bones in the body!"

"Judy," said Mr Todd. "The back of your head is not nearly as interesting as the front. And so far I've seen more of it today than I'd like."

"Sorry," said Judy, facing front again.

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Jessica tapped Judy and passed her a folded page from the newspaper. Right there, SMACK DAB in the MIDDLE of the newspaper for the whole world to see, was a picture of Jessica Finch. It even said LOCAL GIRL BECOMES QUEEN BEE in big fat headline letters.



"My dad says I got my fifteen minutes of fame," Jessica whispered to the back of Judy's head.

Judy did not turn around. She was green with NV. Jessica A. Finch, Queen of the Dictionary, Class 3T, was famous! Judy could not help thinking

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how stupendous it would feel to be able to spell better than *meat loaf* and be the Queen Bee and wear a tiara. To get her own picture in the paper!

But she, Judy Moody, felt about as famous as a pencil.



As soon as Judy got home from school, she decided to memorize the dictionary. But she got stuck on *aardwolf*. Three lousy words. Who ever heard of an aard*wolf* anyway? Silly old termite-eater. It had a pointy little head and beady little eyes and a pinched-up face that looked just like … Jessica A. Finch! Jessica *Aardwolf* Finch might be famous, but she was also a silly old termite-eater.

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Since Jessica had become Queen Bee with the word *artichoke*, Judy decided to skip the dictionary and spell all the vegetables in the refrigerator instead.

"Do we have any artichokes?" Judy asked her mother, opening the door of the fridge.

"Since when did you start liking artichokes?" asked Mum.

"Don't worry, I'm not going to eat them or anything," said Judy. "It's for Spelling."

"Spelling?" Stink asked.

"Mr Todd does have some creative ways of teaching Spelling," said Mum.

"Never mind," said Judy, giving up when she saw asparagus. Vegetables were

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too hard to spell. There had to be a food group that was easier.

At dinner Judy slurped up a noodle and asked, "How do you spell *spaghetti*?"

"N-O-O-D-L-E," said Stink.

"S-P-A-G-H-E-T-T-I," said Dad.

"Or P-A-S-T-A," said Mum.

"Never mind," said Judy. "Please pass the B-R-E-A-D."

"How was school today?" Mum asked.

"W-E-L-L," Judy said. "Jessica Finch won a T-I-A-R-A in a spelling bee and got her picture in the P-A-P-E-R. Even if she does look like an A-A-R-D-W-O-L-F, aardwolf."

"So that's what all this spelling is about," said Mum.

"You're W-E-I-R-D," Stink told his sister.

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"*I* comes before *E*, Stink. Except after *C*. Everybody knows *that*." What a meat loaf.

"Actually," said Mum, "your brother's right."

"WHAT?" said Judy. "How can he be right? He broke the rule!"

"Lots of rules have exceptions," said Dad. "Times when you have to break the rule."

"No fair!" Judy slumped down in her chair. She was not going to become famous by spelling, that was for sure. The three strings of spaghetti left on her plate made the shape of a mean face. Judy made a mean face back.

Dad took a bite out of his garlic bread

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and asked Judy, "You're not in one of your famous moods again, are you?"



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