

Chapter 8

Amber ran at full pelt down the road towards St Augustine's School – there was no time to lose! She had to get to school and warn the children not to have the soup for lunch – luckily very few children liked soup, so this shouldn't be too difficult a task. Mr Crumb – considerably older than Amber – ran breathlessly some distance behind. Amber spoke to several children and their parents on the way. She thought it best not to scare them, so she told them a story about the soup having snail slime in it. Most of the parents laughed – they didn't take her seriously. But she hoped she had done enough to put the children off. Head down, running fast, she rounded a corner and bumped straight into Miss Vile.

"Ah! Amber Dripping! How fortunate! I was hoping I would run into you!" Miss Vile put on her sickly sweet voice to impress the parents who were chatting outside the school gates. "Come with me, sweetie! I believe I have something of yours in my office." Amber had no option but to follow – to do anything else would have given the game away. As Miss Vile led Amber down the corridor, Amber considered what was about to happen to her. Miss Vile had found her mobile and she was – no doubt – about to be severely punished. She just hoped it would be over quick, so that she could go back to warning the rest of the children. However, she was not prepared for what happened next.

As soon as she was inside the room – quick as a whip – Miss Vile slammed the door behind her. At the same time, she grabbed hold of Amber's wrist and – with a strength that belied her tiny frame – twisted her arm behind her back. Miss Vile then seized hold of Amber's hair and pulled her head back until she was able to press her mouth into her ear and spit out, "You thought you could get the better of me, did you? You thought you could stop Esmeralda Evil – you little brat!" She opened the cupboard door and shoved Amber inside. "Oh! I know all about you! You were listening to me on Friday night, weren't you? And you paid me a little visit over the weekend! What a shame that your sweet, little friend – a field mouse I believe it was – came to such an unfortunate end! And I don't want you thinking that ridiculous man, Mr Crumb, is going to save you either. We will take care of him – so to speak! It's very useful having a talking cat, don't you know?" The last thing Amber noticed before the door was locked was Lucifer – sitting in his favourite chair – smirking at her. Then suddenly everything changed! Where once there had been shelves of sweets, the cupboard was now crawling with spiders and all manner of revolting creatures – including venomous snakes!





Name: _____



I can use dashes to indicate parenthesis and mark boundaries between clauses.

Dashes have two functions. They can be used in pairs, like commas or brackets, to indicate parenthesis (to add extra information).
 Or a single dash can be used, like a colon or a semi-colon, to separate two clauses.
 The single dash can also give the impression of a dramatic pause.
The cupboard was crawling with all manner of revolting creatures – including venomous snakes!

Insert dashes in the appropriate places within the sentences.

- 1 Amber tried to stay calm a near impossibility as a snake wrapped itself around her leg.
- 2 The spiders there were dozens of them crawled all over her hands and face.
- 3 Amber breathed slowly and steadily she had to stay calm.
- 4 She kept telling herself one thing these creatures are not real!
- 5 She was convinced they didn't actually exist she would make them disappear.



Rewrite these sentences replacing the existing punctuation with dashes.

- 6 Meanwhile, Mr Crumb was hiding in the caretaker's room; he hadn't been caught!
.....
- 7 He had seen Miss Vile (before she saw him) and he had quickly made himself invisible.
.....
- 8 Somehow he had to get the sleeping potion (Potion X) before it was put in the soup.
.....
- 9 Back in the cupboard, Amber had her eyes shut tight; she was concentrating hard.
.....
- 10 When she opened her eyes the creatures had gone; she was right in thinking it was a trick.
.....
- 11 Amber's magic powers (limited though they were) occurred when she was scared or angry.
.....

Write extra information to go between or after the dashes.

- 12 And now she was so angry – – she was ready to take on those evil witches.
- 13 The locked door was no longer a barrier – !

Extension Find the sentences in the passage that use dashes and rewrite them using commas, brackets, colons or semi-colons.





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