



Also by Adeline Foo

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- 1 **WHOOPIE LEE**
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The Big Spell Off

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Whoopie Lee

THE BIG SPELL OFF

Written by
ADELINE FOO

Illustrated by
STEPHANIE WONG



EPIGRAM BOOKS/SINGAPORE



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I'm Whoopie, named after the Big Oreo Pie! I'm the middle child, the sweet, creamy vanilla frosting stuck between two boring brothers. I like to think I'm special, but well... maybe only in my parents' eyes.

My brothers are really the centre of Mum's attention! I'm always the good one, the one who doesn't get into trouble, the one who studies and does all her homework without being nagged at. But that means I don't get much notice, do I?

At school, I'm not exactly the most popular girl either. Not when your best friend is a big star who gets all the attention, because she has acted in two shows! TWO! One was directed by Oliver Stone (err, who's that?) Anyway, the second one was a local production called *The Pooplitzer Choice*. But even though I acted alongside her, no one remembered ME.

I've even tried to do some really silly things, like train a HUMAN POODLE. That's right, not just any poodle but one that can sing, dance and twirl the hula hoop beautifully. I made my best friend, Morticia, the one that starred in the two shows, act as my poodle. But still, that hasn't made me famous! So I've been thinking really, really HARD. I want to do something to make people notice me.



Chats **Whoopie Lee** Online 

2 January

I want to be famous!

Morticia
So do I!

Let's do something.

Morticia
Like win something?

Singing contest?

Morticia
Lame.

Dance contest?

Morticia
Naaah.

A feat?

Morticia
That's exactly what ALL Singaporeans think of when they want to be famous. I want to be special!

Think of something then, GENIUS.

Morticia
Win a contest that will make us famous!

Oh okay. The Math Olympiad?

Morticia
Is that a sport?

No, silly. What about the Science Olympiad?

Morticia
It's not a sport? What is it?

I know! I know! The Spelling Championship!

Morticia
Er... wazzat?

I saw it on TV last year! Kids get to spell words.
The winner is the last one standing!

Morticia
Let's do it! How do we train?

LEARN ALL THE WORDS in the dictionary!

Morticia
WHAT! There must be an easier way! What about last
year's contest? We can learn all the words that appeared!

GENIUS! We must get that list!

Morticia
You go find out.

And you will help me to learn the words?

Morticia
YOU help me to learn the words! I want to be Spelling Bee champ!

But there can only be ONE winner.

Morticia
And it will be ME!

But you are my best friend! And it's my idea!

Morticia
But I don't want to fight with you. Why don't you join next
year? You help me first!

Morticia
Hellllllloooo... are you there?

I'm not sure about this.

Morticia
You're doing this for me! Now I must pick my winning dress to wear.
Got to go. Bye!

I never expected our conversation to turn out this way. I couldn't describe the feelings that I went through. Hurt? Resentment? But I shouldn't be feeling this way! Morticia is my best friend. I should be thrilled for her, right? I was really disappointed when I turned off my handphone.

I thought we would both be having fun, training to be the champions of Singapore's greatest Spell Off! Guess I was wrong. But maybe I can still persuade her to let me join. Best friends always look out for each other, right?



WEEK
01

BACK TO SCHOOL



It's good to be back at school. I was still a little upset with Morticia, so I refused to take the seat beside her. But by the end of the day, we were back as friends. Thanks to a new English teacher who had taken our class. Of all the names in the world, his mother chose to name him Noah Webster! After the dictionary! We thought he was joking when he told us his mother was crazy about collecting dictionaries. That really got us cracked up. Then someone asked if he was married to Miss Oxford or Miss Cambridge. He just chuckled and said he was pleased we are a clever bunch. Morticia and I really like him! He's sooooo cool!

FACEBOOK

 **Whoopie Lee**
Tuesday

My teacher. A modern-day Einstein with slick back hair.



Like • Comment • Share 60

I love his trousers! I could have sworn they are bell-bottoms. I've seen the same style of trousers hanging in Grandpa's cupboard. Imagine that, a teacher named after the *Webster's Dictionary*.

I told Mr. Webster after class that I'm training with Morticia to enter the Spelling Championship. He was thrilled when he heard that! He offered to train us immediately. This is FANTASTIC! We are sooooo going to need all the help we can get!



I did some research on famous movies and books that were written about Spelling Bee Champions. It was AWESOME to read about these stories. Here's a list:

Whoopie's Spelling Bee Champs' List

1. *The Girl Who Spelled Freedom*

This story is based on the real life events of Linn Yann, a Cambodian refugee who became a National Spelling Bee finalist in the United States. The story was made into a Disney film!

2. *Spellbound*

A documentary about eight children in a National Spelling Bee finals. It was even nominated for an Academy Award! (Imagine that, these kids must be so FAMOUS!)

3. *Bee Season*, a movie starring Richard Gere and Juliette Binoche

The story is about a family on a downward spiral when the father becomes obsessed with training his 11-year-old daughter to become the

about the author



Adeline Foo is an MFA graduate of New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, Asia.

She has 20 published children's books, including five national bestsellers. *The Diary of Amos Lee: I Sit, I Write, I Flush!* won the inaugural Red Dot award for 'Best Junior Fiction' presented by the International School Libraries Network (Singapore) in 2009. *The Diary of Amos Lee* is also published in India, Indonesia, China and now, the Slovak Republic. It has also been adapted for a 10-part TV series on Singapore's MediaCorp children's channel, okto.

Adeline is currently developing an inane iPhone game, "Are You A Dodo?" Slated to launch in March 2013, it is zany and obsessive, but the best part? It's a FREE game that all MOTHERS would APPROVE of!

Visit www.amoslee.com.sg for more details.

about the illustrator



Stephanie is a designer at Epigram, a local design house. Epigram started Epigram Books, a publishing arm dedicated to producing well-designed and thought-provoking books (www.epigrambooks.sg).

She is also the illustrator for *The Diary of Amos Lee* series. Stephanie is currently obsessed with her newfound interest, creating GIF animations.

For other adorkable projects and random musings, visit www.steffatplay.blogspot.com.





THE BIG SPELL OFF

Whoopie's now 10. She's smart and sassy, but hardly famous. So she's decided to do something about it: join the National Spelling Championship!

But wait, there's a problem. Her best friend, Morticia, wants to compete too. Now, that really is a BIG complication! There can only be ONE Spelling Bee champ!

In their fight for fame, will the two girls have to sacrifice their friendship?



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