

Chapter 1

Amber hurried down the deserted corridor, her feet slipping on the recently polished floor, leaving ugly black marks from the soles of her shoes. She wanted to go quicker, but her progress was hindered by the bulky wicker basket full of the ingredients that were needed for the day's lessons. She was late – as always! Miss Canning appeared from her office at the end of the corridor before Amber could turn the corner and disappear from view.

"Dripping!" she called down the length of the corridor in her rasping voice.

"Is that you?"

Amber stopped in her tracks and reluctantly turned round to face her headmistress.

"Well, come here, Dripping. I don't propose to carry on a conversation at fifty paces."

Amber sighed and struggled back down the corridor with the cumbersome basket rubbing against her sore calves.

"Shouldn't you be in your lessons?" Miss Canning enquired when Amber eventually reached her.

"Yes, miss. I'm on my way," Amber nervously replied.

"Lessons started ten minutes ago. Why are you not in your class?" Miss Canning asked.

Amber looked up at the imposing figure of Miss Canning and found herself unable to speak. She couldn't think of any reason that would satisfy her headteacher. She had been in this position before and knew that it was wiser to stay quiet!

"Where should you be?" The headmistress looked at her severely, her sharp features contorted in disapproval.

"Concoction class, miss."

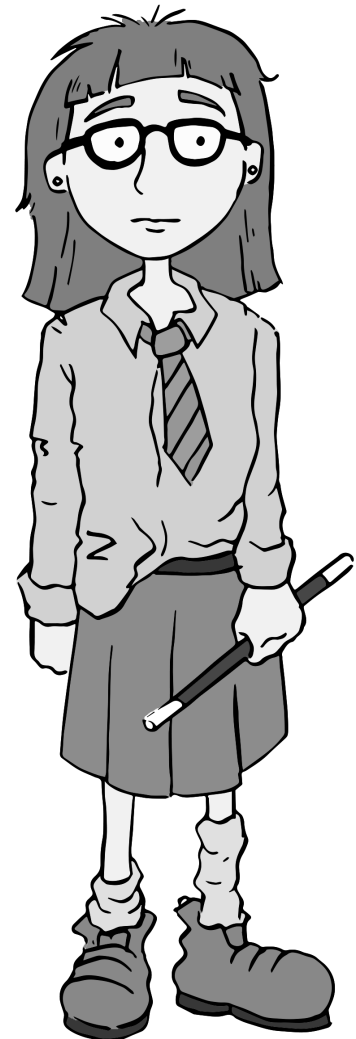
"With Mrs Ledbetter?"

"Yes, miss."

"Your results have been slipping recently, Dripping. You need to pull your socks up, girl!"

Amber instinctively looked down at her legs and the red patch on her calf that the rubbing basket had made. She realised immediately that this was the wrong thing to do, as it would only further confirm Miss Canning's already low opinion of her abilities.

"I am seriously doubting your suitability for Spellcaster Academy," Miss Canning said. She turned towards her office. "You had better come into my room for a chat."





I can punctuate sentences using speech marks.

Miss Canning led Amber into her room and indicated that she should sit down. She then went to her filing cabinet where she removed some official looking papers. She thumbed through them and tutted to herself several times before finally speaking.

The dialogue below has some punctuation missing, including speech marks. Write each sentence underneath inserting the appropriate punctuation. (The speech in the first few sentences has been written in italics to help you.)

1 *i have your school report here, dripping,* she said

.....

2 *there has been a sharp decline in your grades this term,* she added

.....

3 *you appear to have Ds or below in every subject,* she said

.....

4 *i like studying the history of magic with mr broom,* amber replied

.....

5 *dear mr broom sees the good in everyone,* miss canning sighed wearily

.....

6 *he gave me a B+,* amber said proudly

.....

7 *is there any other subject that you are good at?* miss canning asked

.....

8 *no not really,* amber admitted

.....

9 *go back to your classroom and concentrate on your lessons,* miss canning instructed

.....

10 *this is your last chance,* miss canning warned her

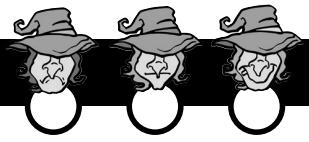
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11 *and don't forget to clean up those dirty scuff marks you made down the corridor,* she said.

.....

Extension Write some dialogue of your own to continue the conversation.





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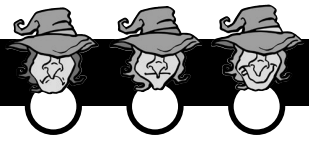
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