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#103 Arizona, Feb 2014 (with a few extra words :)

Dear Arizona,

I whispered something that I overheard to my friend and she said spreading rumors is bad. But I think telling one friend is ok. What do you think?

Whispering in Wisconsin

"Ugh!" I said, at lunch. "Is anyone besides me nervous about the test today?"

"I could definitely use a little more time to study," said Emma. "How about you, Mareya?"

"Shh," she said, putting her finger to her lips.

Emma and I hushed up and tried to listen, but the lunchroom was so noisy, it was next to impossible to hear.

"Oh my gosh," said Mareya. "You won't believe what I just heard!"

I'd been listening my hardest and hadn't heard a single thing. So all I could think of was that Dr. Seuss story Horton Hears a Who, about the elephant who hears a whole little village in a tiny speck of dust. But I decided not to start up a whole new conversation about how Mareya was like Horton with her extra super hearing powers, cause I was so curious to find out the amazing news.

"Okay," she whispered. "I just overheard Max and Marco and JD's conversation at that table behind us."

Emma and I started to turn around.

"Don't look!" Mareya snapped. "I don't want them to know we're talking about them!"

"Okay, go on already," said Emma. "Tell us!"

"Well," said Mareya. "Marco just said he really wants to get this really expensive bike for Lexi's birthday!"

"No way!" I said. "Are you sure that's what he said?"

Just then, this girl named Sarah turned around and said, "Hey, did I just hear you say what I think I heard you say?"

"Yeah, but don't go spreading it around," said Mareya. "That wouldn't be cool."

I'm not sure if Sara just didn't get what 'don't go spreading it around' meant, or if she just instantly forgot. But I am sure she said something to somebody, because less than one hour later, I heard this conversation at the drinking fountain:

"Did you know that Marco likes Lexi?"

"Really? How do you know?"

"Cause he got her a really expensive bike for her birthday!"

I wanted to say, "Hold on! He didn't get it for her yet. He just wants to get it. And we don't even know that for sure, because Mareya just thinks that's what he told Marco and JD in the lunchroom." But I had to rush back to class to take my stressful test.

I ended up being so focused on the whole Marco/Lexi rumor thing that my stressful test became my impossible test cause I could barely concentrate at all. Then, I got even more distracted by a note that was getting passed around.

As soon as recess came, everybody was talking about the note, and just as you might guess, the rumor had gotten even bigger and crazier than before.

"Woah!" Said Justin. "I had to lend Marco a dollar for a bag of chips just last week. How'd he all of a sudden get rich enough to get Lexi a bike and a puppy for her birthday?"

"A puppy?" I said, with surprise.

Just then, Lexi showed up.

"What about my birthday?" She asked.

"Haven't you heard?" Said Noah. "Marco bought you a bike and a puppy!"

"Huh?" Lexi said. "That can't be right. I hardly even know Marco."

"Well," said Lilly. "It's common knowledge that he really, really likes you!"

"This whole thing is beyond confusing," said Lexi.

And that's when Marco showed up dribbling a basketball.

"What are you guys talking about?"

Lexi looked so nervous, I was sure she was going to run away without saying a word. But she took a deep breath and calmly said, "Marco, it's incredibly thoughtful of you to be so generous, but I'm so sorry to say I can't accept such big gifts."

"Uh, this is weird," said Marco. "I have no idea what you're talking about!"

"You know," said Lilly. "The really cute puppy and the really expensive bike you bought for Lexi's birthday!"

"Um, still no idea," said Marco.

"I don't know about the puppy part," I said. "But at lunch today, Mareya thought she heard you say you were getting Lexi a really expensive bike for her birthday."

"Not exactly," said Marco. "I said I wished I could get this really expensive bike for *my next* birthday!"

"Ohhh!" Lexi smiled with relief. "I guess Lexi does sound close to next. But where did the puppy part come from?"

"Beats me," said Marco. "Maybe from somebody's humongous imagination?"

"Speaking of humongous imaginations," said Lexi. "Just think of what that rumor might have turned into if we hadn't stopped it when we did!"

"No kidding!" Said Marco. "Instead of just a bike and a puppy, I'd probably be giving you an airplane and a castle and your own private island!"

"I hate to say it," Lexi laughed. "But after all this big birthday present talk, the back pack and bracelet I asked for are starting to sound kind of boring!"

So Dear Whispering, that's my example of one slightly misheard sentence turning into a completely different thing. Luckily, nothing really bad came out of the Marco/Lexi birthday confusion. But you can see how easily words can get mixed up and added, and how perfectly harmless rumors could easily spread and grow into rumors that end up hurting people's feelings. To sum it up, it's amazing how fast that one little whisper can turn into a bunch of big whispers, and basically, the only time the whole pass it on thing is a good idea is when you're playing that party game called telephone!

Ciao for Now,

Arizona

(Might be fun to describe the game if we had the room?)

