

## Who Makes It Best?

“I definitely make the best cookies,” Adam said proudly in front of his friends. It was break time, and with Ms. Perez not in the room, everyone was talking. “Me and my mom add so much chocolate, and that’s the best part! I make sure all my cookies are covered in them.” Many of them nodded and agreed; chocolate was really good.

“No way! I have the best cookies around here,” argued Ben, who was standing up now. “I tell my dad to add a lot of sugar, and sugar is the best! When I eat them, I’m always full of energy after!” A few of them also agreed with his claim, sugar rush was no joke, and they remembered being able to stay awake past bedtime just cause of the energy.

“Mine’s better than all of yours,” Chloe said, and all eyes went on her. “I bet you all still use flour in yours, don’t you?” They all looked at her, confused. They all had the same question, but Adam asked it first.

“Uhhh, what’s flour?” he asked.

“It’s like, the white powder thing you put in your cookies,” Chloe answered back.

“Oooohh, like chalk? The one Ms. Perez has?” asked one of their friends.

“Yeah! Exactly like that!”

A chorus of “ooooohhs” went up from the group as they realized what it was, before quickly becoming “ewwwwss” as they connected what was going in Adam and Ben’s cookies.

“You put chalk in your cookies? Ewwwww!” shouted one of the friends.

“Noooo! It’s not me who puts it, it’s my dad-” argued Ben.

“You can’t even see it, there’s a lot of chocolate-” said Adam.

“See! My cookies don’t have any flour in them, at all! And since both of yours have,” Chloe smiled triumphantly. “Mine are the best!” She had the class divided, and all 3 had their own fans, asking for the recipe or even for free samples. What came next was expected: they started chanting.

One corner of the room started it: “Chloe! Chloe! Chloe!”

They were answered back by another: “Ben! Ben! Ben!”

And a final one joined in: “Adam! Adam! Adam!”

“Chloe! Chloe! Chloe!”

“Ben! Ben! Ben!”

“Adam! Adam! Adam!”

“Class! Class! Class!” Ms. Perez hit the doorframe with every shout, and the whole class went completely silent. “I told you, not to make too much noise! I could hear you from the other classrooms. What’s all this noise about?” No one dared to answer the angry-looking teacher.

“No answers, huh? If no one comes forward, the whole class gets detention,” she threatened. “5 seconds. 5... 4... 3... 2... 1-”

“It was my fault, Ms.,” said Adam, stepping forward.

Ben stood up. "And mine."

Chloe followed right behind. "Me too. Sorry."

Ms. Perez stared at them for a moment. "Come outside with me. The rest of you, quiet!" She stepped outside into the hallway, and the trio followed suit. Outside, she looked at the 3 guilty-looking students, and she softened. "Can anyone explain what happened?" she began. All 3 immediately started talking over each other.

"I said I make the best-" Adam began.

"He's lying, I have the best cookies-" Ben interrupted.

"They put chalk in theirs, mine has none-" continued Chloe. They went on like this for a few minutes, before Ms. Perez silenced them.

"No talking over each other, right?" The 3 nodded. "Good. Give time to each other. So what I understood was, this is about... cookies?" The 3 nodded again. "And you don't know who has the best recipe? Well then, I have a special punishment for you 3, for all the noise you caused."

"Detention?" Chloe asked softly.

"No. Tomorrow, you will do research. Each of you will bring in a batch of your cookies, enough for the whole class. And we will all share in breaktime. Do you all understand?"

The 3 kids looked at each other, confused. "So... no detention?" Adam asked.

The teacher smiled. “Only if you don’t bring cookies. Now, back in the classroom, all of you. Break time is over.” She brought them all back inside, and the *DING! DING! DING!* of the bell signalled the start of class.

The next day, Adam, Ben, and Chloe, had all stuck to their word. They brought in cookies, more than enough for the 20 of them and Ms. Perez. And as promised, when breaktime began, Ms. Perez stayed put in the room, watching the 3 distribute a cookie to each classmate. When they had finished, she announced to the class: “I heard Adam, Ben, and Chloe were arguing about who had the best cookie. Is that true?” The class answered “yes” in agreement. “Well, now, we will decide that! You all have 3 cookies, right? Please, all of you take a bite out of Adam’s cookie.”

And suddenly, the classroom was a mess! Adam’s cookies were so full of chocolate, that just holding them covered their hands in it. When they bit into it, it leaked, and soon all their lips were covered in black. Many only took one bite, before immediately drinking water or grabbing napkins. When all had settled down, and the mess was cleaned, Ms. Perez began once more.

“Now, onto Ben’s cookies!” The class bit into Ben’s cookies, and many made sounds of happiness. They nodded and smiled, and some even finished them whole!

“Ha!” Ben said loudly. “I told you, lots of sugar is the key!”

“Did you say sugar?” Ms. Perez interrupted. “Sugar can cause a lot of cavities, you know.”

“What are cavities?” he asked. Ms. Perez responded by quickly drawing a tooth on the board.

“See this?” she asked, pointing to it. Ben nodded. “It’s your tooth, right? Cavities are when...” she paused, and erased a small black area into the tooth, “...are when your teeth get holes.”

What she said took a moment to settle in, but when it did, the whole class became a mess again! The few who hadn’t finished the cookie dropped them in fear. The rest quickly drank water, or started panicking that their teeth would fall apart! It took awhile for Ms. Perez to calm down the class again, but eventually, all were back to their seats.

“Now, class. Time for Chloe’s cookie, please.” Many still looked at the last cookie in fear.

“Don’t worry!” Chloe announced. “I put healthy sugar in there! No cavities from my cookies, unlike *someone else’s*.” That seemed to help the class, and they took a bite out of it. Or at least, they tried too. Her cookies were a lot tougher than the others, and the kids were struggling with it. The few who managed to get a bite seemed to like it, but the rest soon gave up with only a few crumbs in their mouth for their efforts.

“Now, you 3, time for the next part of your research,” said Ms. Perez. “You need to go around the room, and ask your classmates what they did or didn’t like about your cookies. Write them all down on these papers.” She handed them each a paper.

“But, Ms., my cookies are already perfect!” Adam said.

She smiled. “I thought so, but your friends might say something else. And tomorrow, you will all come back again with new batches of cookies! Improved with all the comments of your friends. Do you get that?” The 3, after a moment, all nodded, and went their separate ways.

At the end of the day, the 3 were all looking at each other's papers, when Ben noticed a pattern.

"Hey! Chloe, it says on yours that... there was too little sugar," he began. "That's the exact opposite of mine, mine says there's too much."

"Yeah... and Adam, it says yours had too much chocolate, while mine had too little!" Chloe continued.

"Wait, that's it!" Adam exclaimed, a lightbulb turning on in his head. "I have an idea! How about," he started, as Ben and Chloe leaned in to listen...

The next day, during breaktime, the class was excited once more. Even if the cookies were too sweet, or too messy, or too dry, they were still getting free cookies! Ms. Perez watched as Adam, Ben, and Chloe, stood in the front, only for them to only pull out one batch of cookies. "Surprise!" they shouted, and they started handing out all the cookies.

"Why is it only one batch?" Ms. Perez asked.

"Well, Ms., when we took down all the comments," began Adam.

"We saw that we had a lot of things in common," continued Ben.

"So Adam said, why don't we just combine everything to create..." Chloe paused, as she held a cookie up high.

"The perfect cookie!" the 3 shouted together, before handing it to their teacher.

"Kids, I'm very proud of all of you," Ms. Perez began. "Do you realize what you've been doing the past few days?" The 3 kids shook their heads.

“You’ve been researching! You did experiments, you got comments, and you realized what was wrong. Then, you used the comments to improve! I’m very, very proud. Of all of you,” she finished, addressing the whole class.

And as the kids cheered and celebrated, Ms. Perez took a bite out of the cookie in her hand. She could taste everything: Chloe’s base cookie, sweetened by Ben’s sugar, and topped with Adam’s chocolate. She couldn’t help but smile.

*It really is the perfect cookie!*