

THE SPELLING BEE

by

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FADE IN:

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

A large banner reads: "3RD GRADE SPELLING BEE"

SALLY, 8, stands nervously on stage in front of a microphone.

A few feet behind her, to the side, stands DOUG, also 8. Doug's MOTHER and FATHER massage his shoulders, keeping him loose.

Sally looks over at her PARENTS, who are a few feet away from Doug. Her parents smile and give Sally a big thumbs up.

JUDGE (O.S.)  
 Alright. We have reached the final round. Are you ready to spell, Sally?

Sally nods.

JUDGE (O.S.)  
 Your word is...  
 (beat)  
 "Red".

Beat.

SALLY  
 "Red". R... E...  
 (beat)  
 Could I please hear the word used in a sentence, please?

JUDGE (O.S.)  
 Of course, Sally.  
 (beat)  
 The fire truck was "red".

Sally thinks for a moment. She looks a little nervous.

JUDGE (O.S.)  
 Please Sally, take as much time as you need.

Sally thinks some more. A light suddenly comes on:

SALLY  
 "Red". R-E-D. "Red".

JUDGE (O.S.)  
 Correct! Great job! How about a  
 big round of applause for Sally  
 everybody!

JUBULENT APPLAUSE FILLS THE AUDITORIUM.

Sally smiles and heads back to where Doug is.

SALLY  
 Good luck, Doug.

DOUG  
 You're going down.

Sally shrugs innocently and joins her parents at the side of  
 the stage. Sally's parents hug her warmly.

BACK TO THE FRONT OF THE STAGE

Doug steps forward, looking supremely confident.

DOUG  
 Alright! Let's do this!

A FEW SYMPATHETIC CLAPS FROM THE AUDIENCE.

JUDGE (O.S.)  
 Alright Doug, your word is...  
 (beat)  
 "Vixeotrunquiplicate".

DOUG  
 Ex-squeeze-me?

JUDGE (O.S.)  
 "Vixeotrunquiplicate".

DOUG  
 Sally's word was "red".

JUDGE (O.S.)  
 And your point is?

DOUG  
 "Vixeotrunquiplicate" isn't even a  
 real word!

JUDGE (O.S.)  
 Quit stalling and spell the word.  
 You have thirty seconds.

DOUG  
I'm being timed? Sally wasn't  
timed!

JUDGE (O.S.)  
(mimicking)  
"Sally wasn't timed!" Twenty  
seconds.

Doug is beside himself, but does his best to deal with  
adversity. He clears his throat.

DOUG  
Fine. Could I at least hear the  
fake word used in a sentence?

JUDGE (O.S.)  
Maybe if you say "please".

DOUG  
May I "please" hear the fake word  
used in a sentence?

JUDGE (O.S.)  
No.

DOUG  
But you said if I--

JUDGE (O.S.)  
I said "maybe". Do you know how to  
spell "maybe"?

DOUG  
But this isn't fair!

JUDGE (O.S.)  
Life isn't fair. Ten seconds.

HECKLER (O.S.)  
Quit whining and start spelling!

OTHER HECKLER (O.S.)  
You suck!

JUDGE (O.S.)  
Alright everyone, settle down. Let  
the little shit try to spell it.

DOUG  
Oh my God! You just swore during  
a spelling bee!

JUDGE (O.S.)

Blow me.

DOUG

And now you just propositioned me for sex! Nice. Real nice.

JUDGE (O.S.)

Are you gonna spell the word or just stand there looking ugly?

Beat.

DOUG

Fine.

(can't even pronounce it)

"Vixeo-trun-quip-li-cate".

CLOSE ON THE INDEX CARD IN THE JUDGE'S HAND

"Vixeo-trunquuplicate" is written on in it in magic marker.

PAN with each letter as Doug spells it out:

DOUG (O.S.)

V-I-X-E-O-T-R-U-N-Q-U-I-P-L-I-C-A-T-E.  
E.

Holy shit! Doug actually got it right!

JUDGE (O.S.)

Is that it, Doug?

DOUG

Well it's not a real word. But I'm pretty sure I nailed it.

JUDGE (O.S.)

You're sure that's your final answer?

DOUG

Oh, I'm sure. So how about YOU quit stalling and give me my frickin' trophy.

A Long beat as the tension builds.

DOUG

Alright already, did I spell it right or not?

JUDGE (O.S.)  
 Wrong! You spelled it wrong!  
 Sally wins! Sally wins! Sally  
 wins!

Sally leaps into the air. Her parents hug and kiss her.

THE ENTIRE AUDIENCE GOES FUCKING APESHIT.

Doug, dejected, look over at his parents:

Doug's Mother takes a knife out of her purse and SLITS HER THROAT. Her lifeless body collapses to the stage.

Doug's Father shakes his head at Doug, extremely disappointed with him, then puts a shotgun in his mouth and pulls the trigger.

BLAM! BLOOD SPLATTERS ACROSS THE SPELLING BEE BANNER.

Doug's tough facade finally cracks. He starts to CRY.

JUDGE (O.S.)  
 Awwwww... little Douglas is crying.  
 Boo-hoo.

HECKLER (O.S.)  
 Get off the stage retard!

OTHER HECKLER (O.S.)  
 You suck!

Doug stomps off the stage in TEARS...

... but in passing the JUDGES'S TABLE he gets a glimpse of THE INDEX CARD. Doug turns around angrily.

DOUG  
 Hey! I spelled it right! You  
 lied! This competition is rigged!

JUDGE (O.S.)  
 That's preposterous!

DOUG  
 It's right there on the card! I  
 saw it!

JUDGE (O.S.)  
 You stupid shit! You spelled it  
 correctly but you forgot to repeat  
 the word after spelling it!

Doug goes to say something but stops. The judge is right. Doug starts walking off, knowing he's been beaten.

JUDGE (O.S.)  
That's right. Run home and cry to  
mommy and daddy. Oh wait...  
they're here... And they're dead!

THE ENTIRE AUDIENCE BURSTS INTO LAUGHTER.

Doug stops, turns around, holds up his two little middle fingers and spells...

DOUG  
FUCK! F-U-C-K! YOU! Y-O-U!

... and then storms out of the auditorium, kicking over a folding chair on his way out.

FADE OUT.