

OK, so Mo and Terry have fallen out. But should Mo tell a teacher about her friend's cheating?



Mo was waiting in the corridor with her class on Friday morning. She felt sick and her knees were shaking. She always felt sick during exam week. She had two more exams that day and physics was first. She really hated physics. But after today there were no more exams until next year! Terry glanced back at her from the front of the queue and then looked away quickly. She didn't have a problem with physics. She didn't have a problem with anything... Little Miss Perfect!

"Hi, Mo, are you looking forward to your favourite exam?" said Nima, laughing, as she joined the end of the queue, late again as usual. She was really bad at physics too, but she didn't care. Terry was looking back at her again. "So what's wrong with her?" Nima had noticed Terry looking back at them. "I thought you were friends." "Yeah, so did I," said Mo. "but she's been treating me like I don't exist for a fortnight now. She'd promised to help me revise for the physics exam too, and then just ignored all my calls and texts. And when I rang her house, her mum just told me she was busy and hung up." Nima was trying to look sympathetic. "You shouldn't forget who your friends are!" said Mo bitterly. "Are you listening Maureen Quinn?" Mr Reed had been talking to the class and the other students were already going into the exam room. Mo gave Nima a worried look and followed them.

She had been staring at question number five for at least ten minutes, hoping she'd remember what the difference between a quark and an electron was, when she looked up. Terry was sitting a few rows in front of her to the right and Mo couldn't believe her eyes! She had her phone on her left knee and she was reading from it. Mo didn't know what to think. Is that how Terry always got good grades? It was even harder to concentrate on the exam after that. She just felt really angry at Terry. What should she do? She almost put her hand up to tell the teacher, but then what would everyone else think of her? It wasn't fair! Mo never cheated and she was often in trouble for failing exams, while Little Miss Perfect had been cheating all this time. Terry had already put her phone away when Mo looked up again. She looked back over her shoulder at Mo and smiled sadly. "OK, stop writing and put your pens down." Mr Reed was starting to collect the exam papers. Oh no, Mo hadn't even answered two of the questions. She was going to fail again!

There was an hour for lunch before the next exam, which was history. That was Mo's best subject but it didn't help her feel any better at that moment. She was furious with Terry. She wanted to talk to her but she'd left as soon as the exam had finished and now Mo couldn't find her. She wasn't in the dining hall or the library. She would have talked to Nima but she went home for lunch and Mo hadn't been able to talk to her before she left. Mo was sitting in the library with her book open, trying to revise. She didn't know what to do. Should she tell a teacher? Everyone would hate her if they knew she'd done that. But then she was so angry with Terry. Why should she get such good grades if she was cheating all the time. "We were supposed to be friends!" thought Mo. Just then, Mr Reed walked past her table on his way out. "Mr Reed!" called Mo before she could stop herself.

Mo made sure she was sitting behind Terry again in the history exam. They were half way through, but Terry hadn't taken her phone out yet. Maybe she didn't need to cheat at history. Mo felt bad. She wished she hadn't told Mr Reed but it was too late now. He had said he couldn't do anything if he didn't actually see a student cheating and so he'd asked Mo to look up and nod if she saw that Terry had her phone out. Mo had no problem with the exam this time, She was good at history. She was already on the last question, when she noticed a movement. She looked up to see Terry with her phone under the table. Before she'd had a chance to think, Mo looked up and nodded to Mr Reed. Terry was so busy with her phone, she didn't even hear him as he walked silently up the row of tables. He didn't say a word as Terry looked up from her phone with a frightened expression. He just took her exam paper, tore it in half and pointed to the door, to tell Terry to leave the room. Terry started crying as she walked to the door. Everyone was staring at her and now Mo felt terrible. What had she done?

Mo was walking towards the school gate when she heard footsteps behind her. It was Terry. "Mo, wait!" she called as she caught up with her. "I wanted to talk to you." Mo could see that Terry had been crying, her face was pale and her eyes were red. Mo couldn't say anything. "Listen, I'm really sorry I've been avoiding you lately but it's been the worst two weeks of my life. My dad had a heart attack and he's been in hospital. I haven't felt like talking to anyone about it. He had an operation today and I was really worried. I know it was stupid, but I was trying to text my mum to see how the operation was going, then Mr Reed caught me. He thought I was cheating. He believes me now, but I have to take the exam again. I wish I'd told you what's been happening. I know I shouldn't forget who my friends are. Please, will you forgive me?"

Brendan Dunne