The Easy or the Right Choice

‘Ben, you can sit next to Chris.’ The teacher smiled and gestured towards a table in the corner. Sitting there was a small weedy looking boy with dark scruffy brown hair, thick rimmed glasses and freckles. He smiled eagerly and waved franticly at me. I rolled my eyes at the prospect of sitting next to the least cool boy in the entire world. Although, it did not seem to faze Chris as he slid the chair out next to him and patted it, beckoning me to sit down next to him. Reluctantly, I slowly made my way towards the table whilst glancing at the rest of the children in the class. Sniggering at the back were a group of hooded boys. Great! My chances of making friends with ‘normal’ boys had now been destroyed.

‘Hello, nice to meet you! How are you feeling on your first day of school?’ Asked Chris, peering through his thick glasses. ‘I can imagine you are rather nervous… here have a sweet.’ Chris delved into his pocket spilling tissues and other scraps onto the floor. Eventually, Chris revealed a rolled up bag of Haribo and offered me one. A warm sensation filled my chest. I was feeling nervous – he was right. And the gesture of offering me a sweet was very kind and made the nerves somehow disappear. Through the lesson, Chris helped me settle into school life. He went and found me my new books and equipment; he showed me where the toilet was and even helped me complete some rather tricky maths problems. Once the break time bell rang, both me and Chris made our way towards the playground. Stood at the door were the hooded boys who were blocking the exit.

‘Hi, I’m Darren!’ One boy announced and put out his hand to shake mine. For some reason, Chris’ head was bowed and he was refusing to look at Darren. ‘What are you doing with this loser?’ Darren continued nodding towards Chris. ‘Fancy coming with us?’ Darren asked smiling at me. The urge to be liked, the urge to be popular and the urge to make friends was too much. This was my chance! This could be my only chance to make friends with these boys…and they looked so cool.

‘Sure!’ I said, stepping towards Darren.

‘Nice one! You don’t want to hang around with Chris the scruff bag…he’s dirty!’ Cackled Darren. As I stepped out into the playground, Darren gave Chris one huge push and he fell crashing to the ground. Walking away with Darren and the rest of the giggling gang, I glanced back over my shoulder. Chris lay sprawled out on the floor, whimpering and staring at me. A gut wrenching feeling filled my whole body. Chris had been so pleasant to me and made me feel so welcome. Had I really just brushed him off just to be popular and make friends? Darren seemed so cool yet he had been so nasty. There was still this magnetic pull towards Darren. Darren was the easy choice. Choose him and I would become popular however that would mean becoming a horrible person…

Thoughts and choices buzzed through my brain... My heart beat faster and faster… What should I do?

‘…Actually…’ I took a gulp ‘I think… I think I’d rather play with Chris’ I announced, looking at Darren. Before he could say anything, I had turned away and was making my way back towards Chris, who was sat dusting himself off. ‘Are you ok?’ I asked and Chris nodded wiping away his tears.

‘Yes…thanks, I’m ok!’ He replied, smiling up at me. I hauled him up off the ground. ‘Thanks for standing up for me’ he said. Looking back across the playground, Darren stood glaring at us both but I was not bothered because I knew I had done right thing.

I had made the right choice…not the easy one.