

STUNG *by the Spelling*

By Linda Davies
(Based on a true story)

P-O-R...

Allie could see the word clearly in her mind—*portion*. Easy. Just a few more words to go, and she'd be the school spelling-bee champion for sure.

Allie and her parents had come from another country and had to learn a new language. Her parents encouraged her to do her best in school. Allie didn't want to disappoint them.



But she knew she'd do well. She loved words. That's how she had learned English so quickly. She even translated for her parents a lot. Winning the spelling bee was another way to show them she was doing her best.

Broccoli, exaggerate, mischievous, separate.

She spelled all those words correctly. Now it was just Allie and two other students on stage.

"P-O-R-I-T-I-O-N, *portion*," Allie finished. She opened her eyes and smiled at the judge.

The judge frowned. "I'm so sorry, Allie. The correct

spelling is P-O-R-T-I-O-N."

Allie gasped. What had she done? She'd added an extra *i*! Her face flushed and her heart pounded. How could she have missed such an easy word? She couldn't believe this was happening after all her hard work.

Coming down from the stage, Allie could barely see the stairs as tears welled up in her eyes. She just wanted to be invisible. How would she face everyone?

"May I go home?" she asked her teacher.



Bee



"I'm not feeling very well."

"Of course, Allie," Mrs. Bauer said.

Allie grabbed her books and ran straight home.

Soon Mom tapped on her bedroom door. "Are you OK, Alexandra? How was the spelling bee?"

Allie sniffled. "I missed a word, Mom, a dumb, easy word," she answered, tears streaming down her cheeks.

"OK," she heard her mother say, but Allie imagined how disappointed Mom probably felt.

Lying on her bed, Allie thought about how bad she felt. It wasn't so much about misspelling an easy word, although that was really hard. But she felt she had failed her parents and herself.

The next day was Saturday. Mom made Allie her favorite breakfast to cheer her up. But Allie stayed in her room most of the day. Her best friend, Lindsay, called to see if she wanted to play, but all Allie could do was lie on her bed and think over and over about that awful moment at the spelling bee.

Finally Sunday came, and Allie wondered if she should even go to church. When Allie had first moved in, Lindsay had invited her to come to church with her family. Allie's parents weren't members of the Church, but they agreed to let her go. When Allie turned eight, her parents had even let her be baptized!

Allie was still sad today, but she still wanted to go to church. When Lindsay came to the door, Allie kissed her parents goodbye and headed outside.

Allie's heart began to feel lighter as she walked into the chapel. What was that feeling?

When it was time for Primary, Allie and Lindsay were talking happily as they sat down. Then Allie heard a familiar song. She'd sung the words many times before, but she'd never really thought about what they were saying until now.

*I am a child of God, and He has sent me here,
Has given me an earthly home with parents kind and dear.*

Suddenly it seemed like *these* words were just for her. They were a gift from Heavenly Father. They reminded her that her parents wanted her to do her best because they loved her. Her Heavenly Parents loved her too. And she felt the Spirit telling her that as long as she was trying to do her best, that was good enough.

These are the best words ever! Allie thought. ●

The author lives in Utah, USA.