

THE PERIOD
A Punctuation play
By Carole L. Cooney

Setting: The Study Floor

Characters:

Narrator

Word

Ball

Narrator: There was a loud banging sound coming from the Black Box of Words. As the box tipped over, a word jumped out only to be pushed and shoved by a small black ball.

Word: Hey! HEY! What's going on?

Ball: Whew! I was so tired of rolling around in that box, I just had to get out.

Word: (attitude) Well, *excuse* me! You just rolled over me and that hurt!

Ball: (sadly) I'm sorry. I just don't know what I'm supposed to do. Can you help me?

Word: Let me take a look at you. You sure are different. Ahhh... I know what you are! They call you a period.

Ball: A period? What does that mean?

Word: It means you have a lot of power! You have the power to STOP a bunch of words from running on and on and on. And, you have other uses, too. I'll show you.

Narrator: Word called some of his friends to jump out of the box and join together to make a sentence.

Word: Okay, line up words and make a great, big, long sentence! Now I'll read it. We went to see Avatar the book I bought cost \$950 we had lunch at E Z Smiles Restaurant I went to work, I found out I was getting a 21 percent raise my boss, Mr G Howe said he was happy with my work.

Ball: That's a nice long sentence.

Word: Yes, but it is too long. It has too many ideas, too many words. It just keeps running on and on and on. Here's where you come in. YOU can STOP those run on words. Put yourself, a period, after the word Avatar to make a complete thought or sentence. Now read it.

Ball: Okay. We went to see Avatar. Wow! I did it! Putting a period at the end of a complete thought or sentence sure stopped all those other words! What's next?

Word: For the next complete thought or sentence put a period after the amount \$950.

Ball: Okay. The book I bought cost \$950. That's not right. That book cost *too much!*

Word: That's easy to fix. You see, when you've got money in a sentence, you can use a period to separate dollars and cents, so just put a period between 9 and 50 and see what happens.

Ball: Okay! Here's that sentence. The book I bought cost \$9.50. Wow! Now that makes sense! What's next?

Word: In the next sentence, put a period after the word restaurant.

Ball: Hey! I'm getting the hang of this. Here's the sentence: We had lunch at E Z Smile restaurant. How's that? Uh... Why do you have that questioning look on your face?

Word: Because something is missing. Ahhh...I know! You have to use a period after abbreviations, like E and Z. You see, the E stands for Eliza and the Z stands for her husband, Zeek. Okay? So, put periods after those letters.

Ball: Wow! There sure are a lot of ways to use a period. Here goes: We had lunch at E. Z. Smile Restaurant. There are three periods in that sentence. Hey, hey! I'm pretty popular!

Word: Well, you're not done yet! There are two more sentences to go.

Ball: Let's see if I can get this one right all by myself: When I went to work, I found out I was getting a 21 percent raise. Okay? I put a period at the end of the sentence. Wow! That's a huge raise!

Word: Yes, it is and it's huge because you still have a job to do. A period can be used as a decimal point, so now you've got to put a period between the 2 and the 1.

Ball: Here goes: When I went to work, I found out that I was getting a 2.1 percent raise. Okay, that's much better.

Word: Great! Here's the last one! Let's see what you do with it.

Ball: My boss, Mr. G. Howe said he was happy with my work. Did I do it correctly?

Word: You sure did! How did you know to put three periods in that sentence?

Ball: Well, Mr. is an abbreviation, so I had to put a period there. Then I wasn't sure about the G, but I figured it was part of a man's name, so I put a period there. I, of course, put a period at the end of the sentence.

Word: Great thinking, Ball. G is an initial. You figured correctly that a period is used after an initial. I'm proud of you!

Narrator: As the words cheered, Word jumped onto Ball's back and they bounced into the black box.