

CHRYSANTHEMUM

Hello, friend!

I wanted to introduce you to my own version of the end of the story “Chrysanthemum”, written by Kevin Henkes, so let’s start...

Even too Chrysanthemum didn’t enjoy going to school too much because of the children that always have to make unnecessary comments about her name, she was an excellent student for her age, perhaps the best one in the entire building.

One day, her teacher, Mrs. Brown, proposed to her to enter one of the most famous competitions about general knowledge, in which her school participates, organized internationally.

Mrs. Brown explained to Chrysanthemum that only geniuses and smart children of her age get the chance to participate in such a contest, but also told her that she is able to keep up and maybe win a prize.

The girl was so excited about the fact that she will meet new people and possible new friends, that she instantly accepted the proposal, only if her parents agreed.

After she got home, Chrysanthemum told them all the details about the international competition and they were so happy to see their daughter excited about school and learning again.

With her parents’ consent she signed up for the contest and immediately started training.

Day by day she learned even more interesting things and she was so happy about it, the only inconvenience being some of her classmates who kept laughing at her name, making jokes and saying mean things about it, that made her sad and uncomfortable.

After one week of hard training the day of the competition came... It is true that Chrysanthemum WAS happy about it but also she realized that she might be a little bit nervous. Luckily her parents were with her and encouraged her until she was confident enough.

As she expected there were a lot of other children. They were all just like her. As she saw a small group chatting somewhere near the front door of the building where the competition was about to take place, she mustered the courage to start a conversation with them hoping they could become friends.

‘This is my chance’, she thought right before starting talking.

Everything was going great until the kids asked what was her name. With a shy response she said: ‘Chrysanthemum’s my name...’ Then all the kids burst out laughing and asked her if she is joking. The girl was holding her tears at this

point. She wish she never came here. After this, she quietly left the group and went to a place she could be by herself and cry.

She was so sad that she couldn't focus on anything else, except the fact that she absolutely hated her name. But she couldn't do anything about it. All of a sudden a boy approached her. She barely even noticed him until he started talking to her:

'Are you alright?' he asked as he carefully help her stood up. The girl stopped crying and tried to speak.

'I am ok, sorry to worry you', she responded. 'Also thank you...'

'Glad to hear that. Hi! My name is Snowdrop, what's yours?'

'My name is Chrysanthemum...' 'We both have flower names, don't we' she taught.

'Let's be friends', he said. When the girl heard these words, it was almost like she couldn't believe that someone would want to be friends with a person that has such an atrocious name like hers but she was also very happy about it.

'Don't you care about my horrible name?' 'I understand if you don't want my friendship anymore. It is totally fine.'

'What do you mean by **horrible**? I think it is the priettiest name I have ever heard'

"Oh thank you... Not a lot of people have told me that. I think you have a quite unique name too."

'Are you here for the contest?' he asked. 'If yes, I can go cheer for you, only if it's okay... so do your best I am sure that you can win. You sound like an amazing person.'

Even tho these were only a few words said by a stranger, they meant the world for Chrysanthemum.

In almost 5 minutes she had to be ready for the contest. She felt that she was ready to do it and it was almost like she knew she could win this.

The competition started. 'Now it's the moment when I can shine' she thought.

All the competitors were just as skilled as Chrysanthemum. Every one of them could answer the questions correctly. The show must keep going until one of them made a mistake. After some time the only ones left in the competition were the girl and one of the boys who laughed at her name.

There was only ONE question left. The one who will answer this right will be declared the winner of the contest.

The question was displayed by the jury on the screen:

"What is the flower, that has an important role in the Festival of Joy, which is organized annually in Japan?"

In this moment she knew that she would win the contest. A long time ago, when she was just a little girl, her parents would always tell her stories or interesting facts about her name. Chrysanthemum would always pay attention

to them and after listening she would like her name even more. But in first day of school, some classmates made her feel like she should be ashamed to have this name. To cheer her up, once her mother told her about this festival. She told her that she is the special flower that symbolizes a long life and happiness and asked her how can she be unhappy with such an outstanding name? That always made her feel better.

Because Chrysanthemum had no time to waste she immediately wrote the correct answer on the paper sheet and finished first.

After the jury checked the answer, it was true. She won... She really DID won. In the end Chrysanthemum was the answer that saved her, in all the ways a person can be saved.

After the contest had ended the group of kids that she met earlier apologized to her. They really were sorry. Because she was very kind-hearted, the girl forgave them right-away and they start it over.

Same happened when she got back to school. She managed to gain the respect from all of her classmates and with the ones that used to bully her... well now they are best friends. And it is all thanks to Snowdrop. He will always be her number one friend.

EPILOGUE:

Small things can brighten one's day and they really CAN make a change for the best in someone's life.

by Ilinca Radu