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**FIRST PRIZE WINNER
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A Story of Importance

by

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Olivia gave out a loud sigh; it was hot and sticky in the hall and they had been in there for ages. Miss Haygrin and Mrs Tabell were announcing all the jobs for the year sixes this year. Olivia desperately wanted to be the girl Senior Prefect; she could be someone important for once. Someone who wouldn't just be standing in the background, someone whose name everyone knew.

"Now we will be announcing the captains of the sports teams," said Miss Haygrin smiling.

"The captain of the Netball Team is," announced Mrs. Tabell, Olivia saw her Best Friend Jackie Wisliece crossing her fingers; she was outstanding at netball unlike Olivia. "Jackie Wisliece!"

Jackie gave out a cry of relief, her smile as big as a slice of melon.

"I can't believe it," she cried clasping her hands together.

They went through another half an hour of sports captains until finally only two announcements were left. (Y.C.H's and Senior Prefects.)

"Now this year we have had quite a lot of Year "R"s join the school and so we have two Y.C.H's this year and if you don't know, YCH stands for Younger Children Helper," announced Mrs. Tabell.

“So our two YCH's this year are Olivia Jaquin and Tommy Peace,” concluded Miss Haygrin.

Olivia jaws dropped open, a Y.C.H! Okay, she loved little children but she'd never be important now and she had to work with Tommy Peace! He was very unusual for a boy. He would stay in all break time so he could help the teacher, while the other boys would be playing football outside.

“Now our Senior Prefects,” said Mrs Tabell smiling. “ They have a big year ahead of them but I'm sure that they will handle it well because they have always been hard workers.”

Miss Haygrin shuffled her papers, looked up to the children's faces and told them all what they wanted to know. “Children of Year Six, the Senior Prefects of this school year are Jeanine Hornby and Mason Zuke”

Olivia grunted. Jeanine was all right but she was always in the spotlight; winning competitions, having her picture on the front of the school newspaper, representing the school on the Television, playing Dorothy in our school play “The Wizard of Oz” and lots of other things. Mason was the same really except he wouldn't star in a school play even if his life depended on it.

The next quarter of an hour dragged. Jeanine and Mason were up at the front getting their shiny gold badges and collecting their list of duties. But finally the bell rang for home time and they were dismissed from the hot and sticky hall.

Olivia followed the crowd round to their cloakroom, muttering to herself as she went. Then she felt a nudge on her shoulder, it was Jackie and she looked as happy as ever.

“Hey Olivia, can I walk home with you?”she asked.

Olivia turned towards her coat peg and grimaced. Jackie was the best friend ever and she loved walking home with her. But Olivia wasn't really in the mood. Jackie was over the moon, she had got what she wanted but Olivia hadn't.

Olivia thought up a quick excuse:

“No sorry not today Jackie, Mum said I had to get home as soon as possible”

Jackie shrugged. "Never mind, maybe tomorrow" and she skipped off down the corridor.

Olivia felt a guilty pang. She hated lying and especially to Jackie. She was always a good friend, honest and truthful. Olivia tried to shake those thoughts away and picked up her school bag.

She walked slowly out of the junior doors and plodded out the school gates. Olivia had decided to drop off at her Nan's house first. She couldn't go home, not yet; her mum would just go on about how you can't always get what you would like. Yet her Nan was different, she would tell Olivia a story to calm her down or explain to her in words that she would understand.

Her Nan's house was only a few streets away from Olivia's school and it only took Olivia about five to ten minutes to get there. The house that her Nan lived in was a small humble bungalow the colour of fresh violets. It had two small windows and an oak door. There were pansies and marigolds growing in the garden and ivy creeping up the walls of the house.

Olivia walked up the garden path and knocked on the door. Her Nan answered with a smile on her face but her smile disappeared when she saw Olivia's expression.

"Come in Olivia dear, whatever is the matter?" asked her Nan.

Olivia stepped into her Nan's clean, immaculate house, brushing her feet on the door mat. She sighed heavily.

"Wait, tell me in a minute" said her Nan. "I will get you a biscuit and a drink first.

Olivia smiled; her Nan always gave her a biscuit when she came to see her. Her Nan walked in the kitchen while Olivia took her coat and shoes off. A few minutes later Olivia's Nan came out of the kitchen holding a plate of Chocolate Digestives, a cup of tea (for herself) and a glass of lemonade (for Olivia.) "Goodness me Olivia, don't stand there looking like a little lost puppy dog, come into the living room and sit down!" She exclaimed.

Olivia obeyed and shuffled into the living room, then sat down on the leather sofa.

"So whatever is the matter?" asked her Nan offering her a biscuit.

Olivia took one. "Well, you know I wanted to be a Senior Prefect, the announcements were today and I really had my hopes up but I was picked to be a Y.C.H . . ."

"What's a Y.C.H?" her Nan asked.

"Y.C.H stands for Younger Children Helper" Olivia explained.

"Well that's all right, you love little children"

"Yes but that's not all, I have to work with Tommy Peace!"

"Who? Oh! Is it that boy that played the Lion in your Wizard of Oz production at school?"

"Yes Nan, that's the one"

"Well what's the matter with him, he's alright isn't he?"

"Well.....no, he always stays in at break time to help the teacher, brings in his homework two days early and he is never any fun!"

"You will just have to make an effort to get to know him....."

"YES NAN BUT I WILL NEVER BE IMPORTANT WILL I?" Olivia shouted.

"Darling" her Nan said soothingly. "I think I need to tell you a story"

Olivia settled back into the cushions on the sofa. Then her Nan began...

"It was a long time ago that I saw them last, the McKenzie Twins, but I remember them clearly. Rosette, the calm and helpful one and Nina the one who was always the centre of attention. They were with me through the whole of my school life and they were both nice in their different ways. I remember the production we did in the juniors, "Annie". Nina got the part of Annie but Rosette was just happy to help backstage with the scenery and the music.

Rosette would always help you with your work or pick you up when you had fallen over whereas Nina was the type to tell you that you had to do your own work or walk straight past you when you had fallen over. It did make me think sometimes about twins, how they both looked exactly the same but acted completely different.

Anyway, we moved on to Senior School and Nina became even more popular than ever, poor Rosette was pushed to the back even more but she

was still friendlier than ever. I remember when we got into our last year at school Rosette chose Biology as one of her exam subjects, everybody laughed and said "Biology why did you pick that?" She wouldn't tell them but we know why now.....

We all grew up and went our separate ways but I still kept in touch with the twins. Rosette became a MacMillan Nurse which is probably why she studied Biology for her exams. She made loads of friends and always kept a smile on her face. As for Nina she did very well and set up her own restaurant business which was excellent. She made loads of money but not any friends, only acquaintances'.

The years went on and on until we saw each other again. I got an invitation to go to their thirtieth birthday and it was from Rosette. It had a note attached to it saying:

Dear Marie,

Nina and I are having a Thirtieth birthday party and I thought it would be nice if you came. Nina disagreed with me and said you wouldn't come but I knew you would. It will be nice to see you again and catch up on what's happened over the years.

Hope you can come

xxxx ROSETTE xxxx

Luckily I could go to the party and I remember really looking forward to it. The night of the party finally came and I arrived five minutes early. Rosette greeted me at the door of the hall and showed me the way in.

Ha, you should have seen the look on Nina's face! Surprised! Very surprised! Anyway the party carried on and lots more of Rosette's friends arrived. But none of Nina's friends seemed to. I saw Nina sitting on a chair in the corner, her head drooped. I walked over to her and asked her.

"What is the matter?"

Nina replied. "Well none of my friends have turned up"

"Your friends?" I said. "Are they really your friends?"

"Well not really, just acquaintances."

"Exactly....."

“What do you mean exactly? I am a very important person I SHOULD HAVE FRIENDS”

“Unfortunately the world does not work like that. You are important and you have no friends, your sister is nice and she has lots of friends...”

“So your point is...”

“That it is nice to be important but it is more important to be nice.”

Her Nan finished and looked up at Olivia.

“Oh” gasped Olivia. “I see now, that you don't have to be important to be known by everybody, but it is more important to be nice to everybody than be known by everybody, right Nan?”

“My point exactly” answered her Nan.

Olivia smiled. She said to her Nan “ This year I am going to be the best Y.C.H ever and I will say right to Jeanine's face. You may think it nice to be important but I think that it is much more important to be nice!”

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