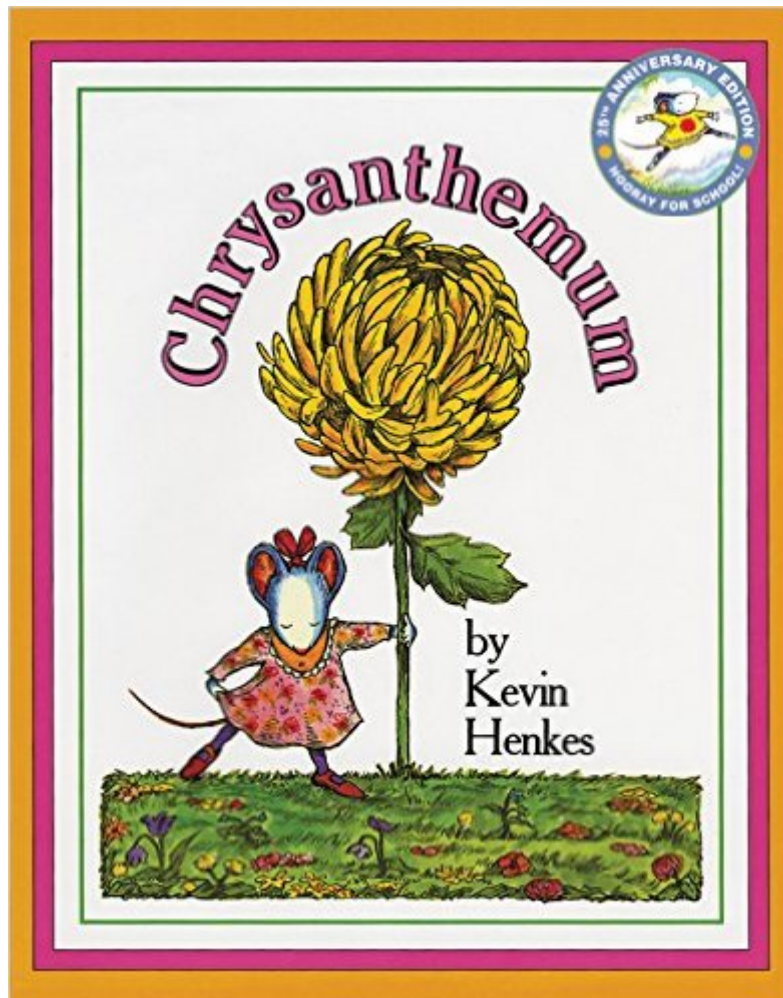


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# Chrysanthemum



## Synopsis

Written and illustrated by Kevin Henkes, the nationally bestselling and celebrated creator of Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse, Owen, and Kitten's First Full Moon, *Chrysanthemum* is a funny and honest school story about teasing, self-esteem, and acceptance to share all year round. Chrysanthemum thinks her name is absolutely perfect until her first day of school. "You're named after a flower!" teases Victoria. "Let's smell her," says Jo. Chrysanthemum wilts. What will it take to make her blossom again? This popular picture book has sold more than a million copies and was named a Notable Book for Children by the American Library Association. "Perfectly executed in words and illustration, *Chrysanthemum* exemplifies Henkes's talent for creating true picture stories for young audiences." The Horn Book Supports the Common Core State Standards

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 460L (What's this?)

Paperback: 32 pages

Publisher: Mulberry Books; unknown edition (December 30, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0688147321

ISBN-13: 978-0688147327

Product Dimensions: 0.2 x 7.8 x 9.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars See all reviews (297 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #885 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #4 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Bullies #11 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > New Experiences #16 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Self-Esteem & Self-Respect

Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## Customer Reviews

If you were to single out the one picture book author that most successfully puts their finger on the pulse of children's hopes and fears, the award for Greatest Long-Distance Therapist would go to none other than Kevin Henkes. I am a huge fan of "Lily's Purple Plastic Purse" and I found a great deal of enjoyment in "Owen" (though I feel it's not his strongest work). Even "Wemberly Worried"

covers a lot of ground by directly confronting the fears of worrywarts everywhere. With "Chrysanthemum", Henkes discusses originality and how being different (even if you're different in name alone) can single you out in both good and bad ways. As a Henkes fan, I consider this book to be amongst his strongest. Chrysanthemum feels that her name is absolutely perfect. She likes how it looks and she likes how it sounds and she likes that it is her name alone. Everything's going great until Chrysanthemum starts school. Suddenly everyone's making fun of her name. She has a class full of Sams and Eves and Victorias. There doesn't seem to be a place for a girl with as wildly original a name as Chrysanthemum. One student in particular, Victoria, makes it her goal to continually ridicule poor little Chrysanthemum day in and day out. Talking about it with her parents helps a little, but the next day the same thing occurs. It seems that Chrysanthemum is doomed to be unhappy until she meets the music teacher Mrs. Twinkle. Mrs. Delphinium Twinkle. And suddenly everything in Chrysanthemum's life is a whole lot better. I liked the moral of this lesson and the way in which Chrysanthemum learns that it's okay to be original. I also liked the epilogue in this tale wherein the leader of Chrysanthemum's tormentors abruptly forgets her lines in the school play and our little heroine is vindicated. Call me shallow, but I always enjoy it when the villains in a piece "get their's". This is probably indicative of a singular shallowness on my part. Just the same, the fact that the similarly tormented Molly of the children's book, "Molly's Pilgrim" never receives any vindication has always bothered me. So kudos to Kevin Henkes for punishing the bad guys mildly! Hear hear! There are other less personally petty things I like about this book too. I always love a good Henkesian drawing. I love that the parents in these tales are always caring, available, and attentive to their children's needs. In this book I was especially amused by Chrysanthemum's father running to child psychology texts (like "The Inner Mouse Vol. 1: Childhood Anxiety" and "A Rose By Any Other Name...Understanding Identity") to help his daughter. I loved the extraordinarily cool Mrs. Twinkle with her hugely pregnant stomach, ballet shoes, and tail that twists into a musical staff. I loved it all. If you have a child being teased by fellow classmates for being a little off, this may not be THE best book to offer, but it's pretty darn good. Give it a shot and see what you think. If you love Henkes, you won't be disappointed.

When Chrysanthemum was born, her parents thought that she was absolutely perfect and felt that her name must fit that. Chrysanthemum loved her name until she went to school and all her classmates teased her about it. One day, by the help of a teacher, Chrysanthemum and her classmates realize that her name is not all that bad. The text and illustrations in Chrysanthemum blend together to form a delightful book for both kids and adults. The story also explains a valuable

lesson, and that is, to be nice to others, no matter how different they are. The language is simple, but also involves some complex adjectives: "precious", "priceless", "fascinating" and "winsome". Repeated verses in the text can also be found throughout the story. "She did not think her name was absolutely perfect. She thought it was absolutely dreadful." This sentence is repeated several times and is like the chorus to a song. The repeated lines provide consistency throughout the book. Another repeated line is "Chrysanthemum, Chrysanthemum, Chrysanthemum." The repetition of this line aids in the concordance of the story. Kevin Henkes also makes the print of the story life-like at one point. "Chrysanthemum grew and grew and grew." As the font grows larger, it grabs the attention of the reader. This is a singled out event, which makes it even more memorable. Another instance of language playing an important part in this story is when Chrysanthemum is teased. Her reaction is the same every time; "Chrysanthemum wilted." This is a brilliant metaphor for a children's book. It gives a human flower-like characteristics. In addition, the illustrations fit well with the text. The pictures actually add to what the text is trying to get across to the reader. The drawings in Chrysanthemum are very simple but effective. Some books rely just on illustrations to tell the story, some just rely on text, and others rely on both. The author of Chrysanthemum relies mainly on text to tell a story, although the illustrations do help the story to be more appealing. The text alone may seem to be boring and monotonous, but Kevin Henkes makes it exciting and produces the central focus of the book.

Chrysanthemum loves her name but when she started school she thought her name was dreadful! Her name was spelled with thirteen letters, and she was named after a flower. The wicked Victoria even said she looked like a flower. After the class was introduced to Mrs Twinkle, everyone thought her name was perfect! Chrysanthemum was happy. I think this book is good for 3~8 years old readers, it is very interesting and has special names. I am 8 years old and I like to read story books to my 3 years old sister.

Do you like flowers? Well Chrysanthemum is a little girl who is named after a flower. She loved her name until she went to school. Chrysanthemum is the main character. Chrysanthemum has a problem with her classmates. They hate her name. But that's not the end of the book. And I won't tell you the end. But I will tell you that it's a great book. Also it's a 3.9 reading level and it is worth 0.5 points on accelerated reader. I made a 100% on the test and you'll love it. So don't come crying to me if you don't meet your reading goal. Because you're missing out on a great book. Go to your school library and check the book out.

I think that this story is one that will inspire children. It deals with the elements of peer pressure that all children will face at one point or another and shows how easily views are swayed. This story also does a good job of demonstrating that everyone has ups and downs. I would recommend reading this story to your child or class at the beginning of the school year as a model for inappropriate behavior and ways to handle bullies. I would also recommend other stories by this author because they include good use of voice as well as life situations with which almost all children can relate.

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