

An «A» for Mrs B.

I was sitting next to Missy in my ninth-form world history class when Mrs Bartlett **announced** a new project. In groups, we had to create a newspaper around the culture we were studying.

On a piece of paper we wrote the names of three friends we wanted in our group. After collecting all the requests, Mrs B informed us that she would **take into consideration** the names we chose and would let us know the results the next day. I had no doubt I would get the group of my choice. There were only a handful of **sociably decent people** in the class, and Missy was one of them. I knew we had chosen each other.

The next day I anxiously awaited the class. After the bell rang, Missy and I stopped talking as Mrs B called for our attention. She started to call out names. When she reached group three, Missy's name was called. *So I'm in group three*, I thought. The second, third and fourth members of the group were called. My name was not included. There had to be a mistake!

Then I heard it. The last group: "Mauro, Juliette, Rachel, Karina." I could feel the tears well in my eyes. How could I face being in that group – the boy who barely spoke English, the one girl who was always covered by skirts that went down to her ankles, and the other girl who wore **weird** clothes? Oh, how badly I wanted to be with my friends.

I **fought back tears** as I walked up to Mrs B. She looked at me and knew what I was there for. I was determined to convince her I should be in the "good" group.

"Why...?" I started.

She gently placed a hand on my shoulder. "I know what you want, Karina," she said, "but your group needs you. I need you to help them **get a passing grade** on this **assignment**. Only you can help them."

I was **stunned**. I was **humbled**. I was amazed. She had seen something in me I hadn't seen.

"Will you help them?" she asked.

I stood straighter. "Yes," I replied. I couldn't believe it came out of my mouth, but it did.

As I bravely walked to where the others in my group sat, I could hear the laughter from my friends. I sat down and we started. Different newspaper columns were assigned according to our interests. We did the research. Halfway through the week I felt myself

enjoying the company of these three **misfits**. There was no need for pretending – I grew sincerely interested in learning something about them.

Mauro, I found out, was struggling with the English language and his lack of friends. Juliette was also alone, because people didn't understand that she was only allowed to wear long skirts or dresses because of her religion. Rachel, who had requested to do the fashion column, wanted to be a fashion designer. She had a whole barrel of unique ideas. What a **walk in another person's shoes** did for me! They weren't **misfits**, just people that no one cared enough about to try to understand – except Mrs B. Her insight, vision and thoughtfulness brought out the potential in four of her students.

I don't recall what the newspaper's headline was or even the culture we wrote about, but I did learn something that week. I was given a chance to see other people in a new light. I was given the opportunity to see in myself a potential that inspired my actions in later years. I learned that who we are is more important than what we are or seem to be.

After that semester ended, I always received a friendly 'hello' from my group. And I was always really happy to see them.

Mrs B gave us an A on that assignment. We should have handed it right back, for she was the one who truly deserved it.

By Karina Snow

Match the words and phrases with their definitions

To create	to persuade somebody to do something
An assignment	to decide definitely to do something
A request	a careful study of a subject, especially in order to discover new facts or information about it
Anxiously	to make something happen or exist
To convince	to make somebody have a particular feeling or emotion
Research	a task or a piece of work the pupils are given to do
To be determined to do something	something that you formally or politely ask for
To inspire	feeling worried, nervous, or wanting something very much

Choose the correct words from the text to complete the sentences.

1. I was sitting next to Missy in my ninth-form World History class when Mrs B a new project.
2. Mrs B informed us that she would the names we chose.
3. The next day I awaited the class.
4. I her I should be in the “good” group.
5. I as I walked up to Mrs B.
6. I felt myself enjoying the company of these three
7. I was given the opportunity to see in myself a potential that my actions in later years.
8. Mrs B was the one who truly an A on that assignment.

Choose the correct item to complete the sentences.

1. In groups, the pupils had to
 - a) clean the classroom
 - b) create a newspaper around the culture they were studying
 - c) make stories about their school
2. On a piece of paper the children wrote
 - a) their names
 - b) the assignment for the project
 - c) the names of three friends they wanted in their group
3. After the bell rang, Missy and Karina stopped talking as
 - a) Mrs B called for their attention
 - b) Mrs B came into the classroom
 - c) the lesson started
4. Karina was included into
 - a) her friends’ group
 - b) group four
 - c) the best group

5. Mrs B asked Karina

- a) to help her check up the assignments
- b) to help group four get a passing grade on this assignment
- c) to prepare an assignment for group four

6. Karina was given a chance

- a) to help other people
- b) to see other people in a new light
- c) to make a project with her friends

Number the events in order they happen in the story.

Karina learned that who we are is more important than what we are or seem to be.

Karina was included into group four.

Mrs B announced a new project.

Karina had no doubt that she would be in group with her friends.

Read and say if the statements are true or false.

- 1. Mrs B announced a new project on World Literature. **T / F**
- 2. The children had to create a newspaper around the culture they were studying. **T / F**
- 3. Karina had no doubt that she would be in group four. **T / F**
- 4. Karina was included into her friends' group. **T / F**
- 5. Halfway through the week Karina felt herself enjoying the company of her friends. **T / F**
- 6. Karina learned that the members of her group weren't misfits, just people that no one cared enough about to try to understand – except Mrs B. **T / F**

Discuss the questions.

1. What assignment did Mrs B announce?
2. How did the pupils choose the members of their groups?
3. What happened the next day?
4. Why did Karina feel tears in her eyes?
5. How did she feel through the week?
6. What did the girl understand that week?