

Words Unspoken

Chapter 1: Eyes

They call me "the special"

For reasons.

Reasons that

I cannot

Explain

In words

Because I cannot

Speak.

Most do not tease,

Or make fun of,

Or laugh

At me.

They just stare.

Eyes.

Many Eyes.

Dozens of eyes.

All.

Staring.

At.

Me.

stare

ster/

verb

1. look fixedly or vacantly at someone or something with one's eyes wide open.

Chapter 2: Teaching

It's hard to learn

For I cannot

Express myself

In verbal words.

Instead,

My teachers tell me to

Write them down.
 It's not the same though,
 Having words on a paper.
 The sad words on my paper
 Aren't *loud* and *colorful*
 As I wish for them to be.
 Teaching one who cannot speak
 Is often thought of as
 Difficult.

It is, at least,
 For me.

dif·fi·cult

'difəkəlt/

adjective

1. needing much effort or skill to accomplish, deal with, or understand.

Chapter 3: I've dreamed of more than...

I've dreamed
 Of more than
 My dreadful
 fourth grade
 Life.
 I've dreamed
 Of more than
 Having so many
 Feelings;
 Feelings that I
 Cannot voice.
 I've dreamed
 Of more than
 Sadness,
 Hopelessness,
 Loneliness,
Darkness
 That creep inside of me.
 I've dreamed of all that,

And yet today
I dream about
A spelling bee.

dream
drēm/
noun

1. a series of thoughts, images, and sensations occurring in a person's mind during sleep.

Chapter 4: My Dream

Putting on the
Shiny medal,
And chants
Of

My name

From the crowd

Feels amazing.

First place 2018 4th Grade Spelling Bee,

The medal reads.

The crowd chants

At me. *At me.*

It feels so much better

Than stares.

dream
drēm/
verb

2. indulge in daydreams or fantasies, typically about something greatly desired.

Chapter 5: School

The day of the spelling bee

Is less comfortable

Than any other day.

My teacher, Ms. Richmond,

Announces the candidates of

The competition.

“Mike Stevens, Lucie Vera, Nora Bells, Nick Felt,

And Rose Knowles," she says,
 "Will participate in
 The spelling bee."
Rose Knowles, I think. That's my name.
 Then it dawned on me: I'm in the competition.

All I do is look down, for I know that if I look up,
 Everyone will turn to glance at me.

I look up.
 I am right.

I will prove them wrong,
 I think.
I will prove them wrong.

dis·prove
 dis'proov/
verb

1. prove that (something) is false.

Chapter 6: The Spelling Bee

The spelling bee
 Takes place
 In the multi-purpose room.
 In a room,
 With five other opponents,
 And a large audience,
 Is not
 My definition
 Of comfortable.

com·fort·a·ble
 'kəmfərdəb(ə)l, 'kəmfərbəl/
adjective

2. free from stress or fear.

Chapter 7: A Small Doubt

My small sheet
 Of paper and my
 Pencil
 Says I will not succeed.
 But will
 I choose to
 Listen?

lis·ten
 'lis(ə)n/
 verb

1. give one's attention (to a sound).

Chapter 8: The First Word

The principal
 Clears his throat
 And calls to the crowd,
 “Good evening, my fellow students.
 This 2018 4th Grade Spelling Bee will kick off
 With our first contestant,
 Mike Stevens.”
 The crowd claps, and
 Whistles, even.
 I imagine people whistling,
 Cheering,
 For me.
 “Mike, your first word is...competent.
 As in, *A highly competent athlete.*”
 “C O M P E T A N T,” Mike answers
 Confidently.
 I wish I had that confidence.

Poor Mike
 Was eliminated,
 For his spelling
 Was wrong.

con·fi·dence

'känfədəns/

noun

1. the feeling or belief that one can rely on someone or something; firm trust.

Chapter 9: My turn

The competition went on and on
And on and on,
Eliminating everyone before me,
Until
It was my turn.

Only one other person was
Standing here,
With me,
Facing the same troubles as I am.

Except,
It's more special for me,
For my dream is
To win the spelling bee.

The principal seems scarier than ever
Mainly because I am
Scared.

He clears his throat,
And declares,
"Our fourth contestant,
Rose Knowles,
Will now spell the word
Succeed.
As in, *He will succeed in a test.*"

I hold my breath,
Slowly

Pick up my pencil,
And write the letters as neatly
As I can.

I write the letters
S U C C E E D
On my paper,
Hoping, believing, trusting,
That I am correct.

I hand my paper to the principal, and
His generous smile says *thank you*,
Even when he doesn't have to say it.

He reads the paper, slowly
And carefully, and says,
"S U C C E E D."
This spelling is correct."
Cupping my hands over my mouth, I
Was surprised.
Out of all the people who got their word wrong,
Mine is right.
I am right.

Chapter 10: A Problem
There's only one problem.
My competitor, Nick Felt,
Got the dang word right, also.

Darn it.
The winner is still unknown.

Chapter 11: My Turn (Again)
After Nick answered *his*
Word right, I have another turn
Waiting for me.
But I'm not waiting
To lose.

“The next word is,
Efficient, as in,
He was efficient with his schoolwork.”
I write on my paper, the letters, E F F I C A N T.

It turned out to be wrong.

Chapter 12: An Ending

The spelling bee ended
With Nick’s win.
Shoulders shrugged, looking at the floor,
I understand how I lost.

But there was one thing I don’t understand.
The crowd is clapping for me,
Loudly,
For me. *For me.*

suc·ceed
sək' sēd/
verb

1. achieve the desired aim or result.

*But was winning the spelling bee
Really what I wanted?
Looking at what was right in front of me
Was what I really wanted;
My dream.*

I see a crowd of people,
Clapping for me,
Generous smiles saying, *good job*,
Even when they don’t have to say it.