

Mixed Feelings

Level 6

"I can't do it, Mum!" Katie spoke with agitation. "I'm *not* going up there!"

The gymnastics presentation was in full swing. Earlier that day, the competitors had performed their routines, earnest hope in each child's heart. They had been preparing all season for this, the Grand Competition day. Now, the judges had made their decisions and the place getters had been announced.

Katie had loved gymnastics since she was just an infant, surprising everyone by somersaulting off her mother's lap! Now she was in her first year of competition and had won the Best on Beam prize, which had surprised and delighted her. That feeling of elation, however, had now unexpectedly been replaced by anxiety and dread. She could not really explain why, only that she felt she could not face the attention of being singled out and having all those eyes on her, however supportive the audience may be.

Taking Katie aside, Mum listened quietly to her child's concerns. "I can see going up on that stage is an ordeal for you. You feel scared and want to avoid it. My darling girl, there will be all sorts of things expected of us as we go through life," said Mum, her heart aching for her shy daughter. "Small things can seem like huge hurdles and just like hurdles, we need to get over them."

Katie and Mum talked for some time. Katie's panic was lessening somewhat; she knew she must try. Mum pinned a lavender sprig on Katies' leotard; lavender always reminded Katie of her mum.

"Level 4 Girls Award for Beam Katie Castella!" Applause followed.

She felt the disquiet beginning to arise. "Concentrate hard, Katie," she whispered to herself. "A journey starts one step at a time; one, two, three eleven, twelve on the stage. Look at the presenter and smile, shake hands and accept the trophy with the other hand, walk off the stage, one, two, three....."

Achieved! Katie felt shaky, but relieved. Her mother hugged her tightly and whispered in her ear, "You're a champion, Katie, in more ways than one."



Questions

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1. What was it about getting up on stage that was worrying Katie?

2. What does the word 'ordeal' mean?

3. Why did Katie's Mum pin lavender on her leotard?

4. How did Katie manage to overcome her fear?

5. What was causing Katie's Mum's heart to 'ache'?

6. What does it mean that Katie is a champion 'in more ways than one'?

7. Do you think Katie's mother gave good advice? Explain.



Answers

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1. What was it about getting up on stage that was worrying Katie?

Katie was worried about being the centre of attention.

2. What does the word 'ordeal' mean?

'Ordeal' means an unpleasant experience.

3. Why did Katie's Mum pin lavender on her leotard?

Lavender reminded Katie of her mum, and so perhaps that would give Katie the confidence she needed.

4. How did Katie manage to overcome her fear?

Answers may vary.

Katie was confident enough to perform her gymnastics in front of an audience, and so she pretended the presentation was simply part of her routine.

5. What was causing Katie's Mum's heart to 'ache'?

Katie's Mum found it difficult seeing her daughter struggle. She wanted to help her more, but knew Katie needed to face her challenge by herself.

6. What does it mean that Katie is a champion 'in more ways than one'?

Katie was a champion in gymnastics, but also because she faced and overcame her fear and getting in front of the audience for the presentation.

7. Do you think Katie's mother handled the situation well? Explain.

Answers may vary but should refer to her mum taking Katie aside, listening to her, giving advice about getting over hurdles, pinning the lavender on her leotard.