

Name _____



Kindness Counts

At Mica High School, kindness wasn't something students often talked about. They focused on fitting in, following trends, and being liked. But then Stargirl Caraway arrived, and everything changed.

Stargirl was different in many ways, but one of her most special qualities was her compassion. She cheered for both teams at basketball games, left small gifts for strangers, and sang "Happy

Birthday" to students who thought no one remembered their special day. She didn't do these things to be popular or to get attention—she did them because she truly cared about others.

At first, her kindness fascinated the students. They admired her ability to brighten people's days. But over time, their feelings changed. Some students felt uncomfortable with her generosity. They weren't used to someone being so openly kind without expecting anything in return. Instead of appreciating her, they saw her as strange. When she cheered for the other team, they turned against her, believing she was disloyal.

Leo Borlock, who cared deeply for Stargirl, struggled with this. He loved her kindness and how she made the world feel magical, but he also wanted to fit in. He saw how people at school treated her and feared that if he stayed by her side, he would be an outsider too. His internal conflict showed how difficult it can be to stand by what is right when the world pushes against it.

Not everyone rejected Stargirl's compassion. Archie, the wise, retired professor, understood her and reminded Leo that true kindness is rare and valuable. Even though Mica High didn't appreciate her in the moment, Archie believed that Stargirl's kindness would leave a lasting mark.

By the time Stargirl left, she had changed Mica High forever. Even those who had ignored or mocked her would later remember her acts of compassion. Through Stargirl's story, Jerry Spinelli teaches readers that kindness isn't always easy, but it is always important. Some may not appreciate it right away, but true kindness has the power to change hearts—even if it takes time.

