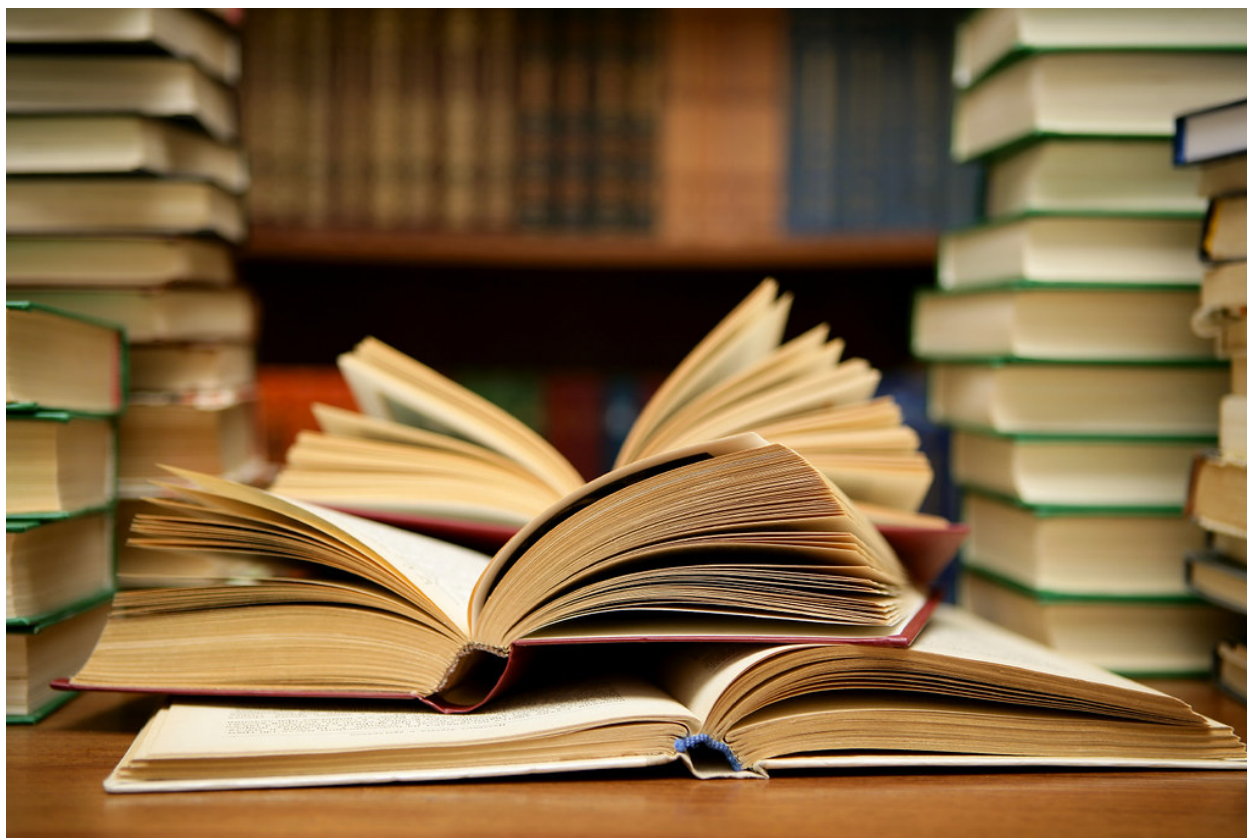


# Cedarburg Library Writing Contest

By: Susannah Orchofski



## Esther, Prologue:

What's the definition of a friend? And why's it so important? I've lived my whole life without one. So I didn't really understand "friendships", until I had one of my own.

Esther:

First day of 5th grade...started out as a bummer. I woke up with a headache, and a reminder of another school year to come. Mom made Eggo waffles. With no syrup.

I walk to school, against all of Dad's protests of driving me, and see Dannie and Michelle walking together ahead. I speed up, hoping to catch them. In the past, Dannie has been nice to me. "Um..hey, Esther." Dannie spoke in a whisper as if she was embarrassed by me.

"Hey."

"Come on, Dannie! Let's go!" Michelle glared at me. She muttered something to Dannie and the pair hastily walked away. What do I do wrong to deserve this?

I push open the doors to a ***Ring, ring, ring*** of the first bell. I speed-walk to my locker, and twist the lock with 01-36...I rush to Mrs. Mulberry's room. I sit down in my assigned seat, last bell, and...there's a rattling on the door knob...

Imogen:

I unpack the last of my boxes just in time to hear Mom's screams. Another needle in her finger. She sews, and it's how we make a living. We're happy on our own, but we need help. Dad won't, and nobody else we know will. Mom kinda has a rough patch with her family and

divorced husband, but that doesn't mean they should hold out on us, especially when we need it.

I don't think I'll be getting a ride today. That scream seemed genuine.

"Mrs. Mulberry.Room 31." I read from the welcoming letter I found in one of the boxes.

I ran to school. Last crosswalk...**Ring, ring, ring.** The bell! In the doors...room 12...16...23...29...room 31!**RING!** Last bell! I try to fling open the door, hoping it isn't too late.. It's now sealed. "Yay me." I mutter, to an fuming Mrs. Mulberry.

Esther:

Mrs Mulberry shuffled a new girl into the center of the class, right behind the chalkboard and Smartboard. "Um..Hi,my name's Imogen Monroe." From the back, I can't see her very well, but the class seems **VERY** interested in her. Even the boys are rapidly firing questions, and she answers them fine. I grin at Imogen. I know she'll be a popular girl. Mackenzie and her gang of girls are eyeing her up. They eyed *me* up when I was new last year. I guess I just wasn't their material. And look at where **I** ended up. I'm happy for her. Not for me though.

Class started and ended smoothly, except class itself. Math is too easy!! But social studies was interesting. We're learning about natural medicines. Medicines, to me, are very cool! Everybody else was bored out of their minds, though. Except the new girl. She seemed uncomfortable. She looked up, and smiled a delicate smile my way. It made me want to stand up and hug her, but my hands were planted on the desk.

The bell rang, signaling lunch. "Thank you, Mrs. Mulberry!" I say as I line up first. It's french toast sticks today! Don't wanna miss it!

In the lunchroom, I grab my special: an empty lunch table, and it stays like that. I'm alone, but that doesn't mean I'm lonely.

Imogen:

"Mrs. Mulberry", is it(?), practically DRAGGED me to the center of my new classroom. Although, the classroom itself is nice. At my old school we didn't have a Smartboard *OR* a chalkboard! And there's a whole wall lined with bookshelves! Sweet!

"Say your name and answer the follow-up questions your class-mates ask you." She hissed into my ear. I look around at my new classmates. They all have the most expensive stuff! I'm wearing my best dress, but I don't have anything else like that in my wardrobe! The dress is blue with hints for green in the pink abstract flowers embroidered on it. It cost my mom a fortune, but she said it was worth it for church, and other special occasions. She bought it 4 years ago, so it's REALLY tight, but mom can't afford to get another one.

All my other clothes are black and green with sayings like "Keep Moving Forward" and "Smile". But it looks like people wear stuff like my best dress EVERY day!

My fellow classmates shoot questions at me so quickly they could be rockets; I answer them as rapidly. It feels good for people to genuinely talk to me and ask me questions. At my old school, my "friends" were other girls who guessed what the sayings would be on my shirt that day. It was fun, for a little while, but they weren't really *friends*; if *I* even know what I'm talking about.

During class, I loved history! Learning about Shakespeare and his work is very interesting. Nobody

else seemed attentive, except Esther; and she only appeared interested in medicine class. That whole time, I was fidgeting in my seat. It got me thinking how much we have in debt with doctor visits.

Mom's gotten infections and scars on her hands from sewing, but sewing's how we make a living. I've gotten odd jobs here and there, like tutoring little kids in elementary, and gardened for some neighbors. Mom and I have always gotten through it together on our own. But that doesn't mean we don't need help. We really do.

I got my food and was about to sit down with some girls who asked me to, but then I saw Esther sitting alone. I knew how that felt.

I sit down next to her, against all of Danielle and Michelle's protests. "Hey, is this seat taken?" I ask.

"Do you want to come over tonight? Maybe you could have dinner at my place?" Imogen asked. First friend, she thought, here I come.