



Anything Can Happen

When Tani Adewumi was 6 years old, he and his family came to the United States. They had to leave their home country of Nigeria because of terrorist violence. They landed in Texas and eventually settled in a homeless shelter in New York City. At the shelter, Tani saw a chess board for the first time. He decided to teach himself how to play.

At school, a teacher noticed Tani's love for the game. He invited Tani to join the school's chess club. When Tani said that he didn't have enough money to pay the fees, the school let him join for free. He began studying chess with the group every Thursday.

At Tani's first chess tournament, he didn't win any trophies. He was disappointed, but he didn't give up. He kept playing and practicing. "Hard work beats talent," said Tani. With more practice, he started winning.

Tani's favorite trophy is the one he got for winning the New York State Chess Championship in 2019. He was 8 years old and had been playing chess for less than a year. At age 10, Tani became one of the youngest players to achieve the rank of national master.

Tani continues to compete in chess tournaments. His goal is to become the youngest grand master ever. But no matter how much he loves chess, he knows that winning is not the most important thing. "At the end of the day,



my rating is just a number,” he said. “It really depends how strong you are inside.”

Tani’s success has brought prosperity to his family. He has won prize money and has written a book that will soon become a movie. While the family still faces hardships because they are refugees, they now live in a house. They are saving money for Tani and his brother to attend college.

Tani says that he likes chess because “anything can happen at any moment.” His amazing story shows that this saying can be true in life, as well as in chess.



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NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. Where did Tani first start playing chess?
 - a. At a house in Texas
 - b. At a homeless shelter in New York City
 - c. At a school in Nigeria
 - d. At a club in New York State

2. Tani and his family are saving his prize money for
 - a. College
 - b. Books and Movies
 - c. Vacation
 - d. Housing

3. Why do you think Tani's 2019 trophy is his favorite?
 - a. Because it is the biggest
 - b. Because it is made of gold
 - c. Because it represents the hard work he did in a short amount of time
 - d. Because his teacher gave it to him

4. What do you think Tani feels is most important in the game of chess?
 - a. Talent
 - b. Winning
 - c. Trophies
 - d. Practice

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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