‘The Empty Seat’

It was a normal Monday morning. The classroom was noisy, as usual. Some students were talking about their weekend, some were finishing their homework, and a few were simply waiting for the teacher to arrive.



Then our class teacher walked in with a boy I had never seen before.

“Class, this is Rohan. He has recently joined our school. Please make him feel welcome,” she said.

Rohan gave a small smile and said, “Hi.”

He looked a little nervous. He quietly walked to the last bench and sat down.

At lunch, I noticed that he was sitting alone. I thought about going and talking to him, but my friends were already calling me over.

I looked at him once more and then went to my friends.

The next day, it was the same.

For some reason, I started feeling bad about it. I knew how strange it must feel to enter a new class where everyone already has their own friends.

A few days later, we had a group activity in English. Ma’am asked us to make groups of four. Within a few seconds, everyone had found their groups.

Everyone except Rohan.



He was standing near his desk, looking around.

I do not know what made me call him that day, but I did.

“Rohan, you can join our group if you want.”

He looked at me for a second.

“Yeah, sure. Thanks.”

At first, he did not say much. But when we started discussing the activity, he suddenly came up with an idea that made our presentation much better.

“That is actually a really good idea,” I said.

He smiled. “Thanks.”

After that, we started talking more. I found out that he liked football and chess, just like me. We even argued about which football team was better.

The next day at lunch, I moved my bag from the empty seat next to me.

“Sit here.”

Rohan smiled.

“Thanks, bro.”



It was a small thing. I did not think much about it at the time.

But a few weeks later, Rohan had completely changed. He was talking to everyone, laughing with us, and joining our games during lunch.

One day, I asked him, “Were you nervous when you first came here?”

He laughed. “Very. I thought nobody would talk to me.”

I did not know what to say.

I remembered seeing him alone on his first day and choosing not to go over.

That made me realise something.

We usually think that respecting others means being polite, listening to them, or accepting their differences. Of course, those things matter. But sometimes, respect can be much simpler.

It can be noticing someone who is being left out.

It can be asking someone to join you.

It can be moving your bag and making a little space.

I had only moved a bag that day.

But for someone who felt like they did not belong, maybe that little space meant much more than I realised.

By :