

James and the New Kid

I always thought I was the nice kid who was genuinely accepting of everyone, and I was, until a certain kid walked into my classroom one day.

“Class! Listen! Stop talking this instant!” Mrs. Peterson said, and the class started to quiet down. After the chatter had died down completely, Mrs. Peterson returned to the class.

“Class, we have a new student. His name is Jacob. Say hello Jacob.” I looked but could only see his shoulders, because he was behind a desk. As he came out I realized he wasn’t short. He was in a wheelchair.

“Hello Jacob,” he said and a few kids snickered. She continued, “Class, say hello to Jacob.” We all said, “Hello Jacob!” and then our teacher pointed at the empty desk near me and told Jacob, “You will be sitting next to James.” I gasped a little. “Lets see how this turns out...” I thought. “I just need to make it through this day.” I needed to talk to my mom.

“That’s great honey! You get to make a new friend!” My mom said after I got home and explained the situation to her. “No mom! It’s ok I guess, but he can’t play any of the games my friends and I want to play! Also, Nobody else wants to play with him. I could lose all my friends!”

“Do you remember that story I used to tell you when you were little?” My mom asked. I shook my head. “Well, I used to say, once upon a time there was a little boy who’s middle name was danger.” I smiled. Danger was *actually* my middle name. My mom continued. “He was brave enough to do things no one else would do. He helped the kids no one else would help, defend the kids no one else would defend, and befriend the kids no one else would befriend. This made his parents very proud.” She stopped and looked at me with a look somewhere between sadness and pride. Befriending a different student couldn’t be that hard...could it?

The next day I walked into class to find that Jacob had already sat down in his chair. I walked over and sat beside him. “ummm.. Hey,” I said awkwardly. He looked at me and replied casually, “Hi.” I looked down for a bit, working up some courage. I slowly turned my head to face him, “So.. Uh.. I mean.. Do.. if you want to.. Be.. Friends?” He looked at me with a slight grin, “Yeah. Do you want to talk at lunch?” I didn’t want to say no or hurt his feelings, but I always talked to my friends, Gavin, Cooper, and Ryan at lunch. I hesitated, and his smile died a tiny bit. “Sure,” I finally said. We went back to our work.

That’s how the day went. We’d talk, work, talk work. At lunch, it wasn’t as bad as I’d expected. He was actually kind of funny! I realized the longer I talked, laughed, and played with him, the more I realized that I genuinely wanted to be his friend. Towards the end of lunch, I asked him to come over to my house.

When I got home, I was actually excited. “What’s got you so happy?” My mom asked with a laugh. “You know that kid I was talking about? He’s coming over!” I said. I couldn’t stop smiling. **DING DONG!** “HE’S HERE!” I yelled. I ran to the door and opened it. A woman was standing there “Are you James?” she asked. I nodded. “Oh good! I’m Jacob’s

mother. Jacob told me all about you. He's in the car. Could you help him get his wheel chair out of the trunk?" I ran to their car and opened the trunk. I got out his wheel chair and unfolded it. I went around to the side of the car and opened the door. I helped him lower himself into his wheelchair. We went into my room, and I handed him an X-BOX controller. I was scrolling through the games I had, he said, "You have NBA 2K? I love Basketball! I would play it, but," He gestured to his wheelchair. "You know you can play basketball, right? You just need a special wheelchair." I said. "Yeah, I know, but my family just can't afford it." I started thinking. I knew what to do.

After Jacob left, I got on the computer and started creating my plan. I'd raise the money to buy that wheelchair. Every weekend I would sell lemonade, have a garage sale, and sell baked goods. I'd ever have a nightly hot chocolate stand. After a month, between tips, money from my relatives, and my allowance, I was almost there. I had \$479.50. I needed \$750. After a little bit of consideration, I decided to use my own money to get all the way. I had \$300 in savings. I bought the wheelchair and put it in my room facing the door. The next time Jacob came over, he'd have a nice big surprise.

“Jacob! Come on!” I said. Jacob had just arrived at my house and I couldn’t wait! Christmas was just around the corner and this was Jacob’s present from me.

“James! Wait up! I’m coming!” He replied with a chuckle. We got to my room and the door was closed. I stood in front of the door and then when he got to me, I said, “MERRY CHRISTMAS!” and then I opened the door and stepped back into my room to reveal the wheelchair. He was so happy. “What? You...how..what..who’s..huh?” He stammered. “It’s yours Jacob. Merry Christmas!” I helped him into the wheelchair. I had never seen him so happy, just rolling around and pretending to shoot baskets. When I looked at the door, our moms were standing there. Jacob’s mother was crying, and my mom looked proud. I smiled. I felt proud too.