



Malik's Golden First Day

Ashley Livingston



Malik steps off the bright yellow school bus into the warm afternoon sunshine, clutching his backpack with a proud grin. His mother stands waiting at the end of the driveway, opening her arms wide to welcome her brave big boy home.



Inside their sunlit living room, Malik unzips his bag to reveal all the day-one treasures he collected. His big sister Maya kneels beside him with a proud smile as he shows off his bright red paper star crown.



At the kitchen island, Grandmama serves up cool glasses of milk and warm, homemade cookies. Malik bubbles over with excitement as he describes meeting his new friend Jamal and building a towering block castle at recess.



Upstairs in his room, Malik carefully tapes his hand-drawn self-portrait onto the wall right next to his bed. He admires the bold crayon lines of his huge smile and fresh sneakers, feeling a glowing sense of pride.



Before dinner, Malik and his father head into the backyard under a canopy of golden leaves to shoot hoops. As they pass the basketball back and forth, Malik talks through his morning nervous jitters and how quickly they melted away.



The whole family gathers around the dining table for a delicious home-cooked meal filled with laughter and stories. Malik raises his juice box to toast a great first day, wrapped in the warmth of everyone's praise.



During bath time, Malik happily splashes in the warm bubbles, washing away the chalk dust and playground sand. He hums the catchy new counting song his teacher taught the class, tapping out the rhythm against the tub.



Dressed in his favorite soft pajamas, Malik sits comfortably between his mother's knees on the rug as she gently combs and oils his neat coils. He breathes in the lavender aroma, feeling relaxed, safe, and deeply cherished.



Tucked snugly under his space-patterned blanket, Malik listens as his parents read a gentle story together. They praise his kindness, bravery, and big heart, reminding him how proud they are of the boy he is becoming.



As the pale moonlight streams softly through his window, Malik hugs his favorite teddy bear and curls up under the covers. With a gentle smile on his face, he drifts off into sweet dreams, ready for whatever wonderful adventures tomorrow holds.