



Emma's True Colors

sheryl nissi



Emma is playing happily alone, building a tower of colorful blocks, when a new girl, Lily, approaches her with a confident smile. Lily has bright, attention-grabbing clothes, instantly drawing Emma in. Emma feels a spark of excitement, imagining all the fun adventures they could have together.



Soon, Lily becomes Emma's constant companion, but things start to shift. Lily insists on only playing her games, pushing Emma's ideas aside with a dismissive wave of her hand. Emma feels a strange mix of flattered by the attention and a little bit small.



One sunny afternoon, Emma's old friends invite her to build a giant fort in the park. Lily pulls Emma aside, whispering that the fort builders are 'boring' and they should just play with her. Emma, wanting to please Lily, sadly tells her other friends she can't join.



Emma often finds herself waiting for Lily, feeling anxious about their plans. Sometimes Lily would show up late, or not at all, leaving Emma alone and confused. Other times, Lily would suddenly be cross with Emma for no clear reason, making Emma's stomach clench.



During a school art project, Emma excitedly showed Lily her colorful drawing of a magical forest. Lily took a dark crayon and scribbled a large, messy X over Emma's favorite glowing tree, saying it 'needed improvement.' Emma's heart sank, and tears welled in her eyes.



That evening, Emma felt a heavy cloud over her, making her feel quiet and withdrawn. She sat silently at the dinner table, pushing her food around her plate. Her mom noticed Emma's unusual silence and gently asked what was wrong, offering a warm, understanding hug.



Emma's mom listened carefully to her worries, explaining that real friends make you feel good, not sad or small. She drew two simple circles, one showing how true friends lift each other up, and the other showing how some friendships can feel like a heavy weight. Emma began to understand the important difference.



The next day, Lily invited Emma to play a game where Emma always lost and felt silly. Emma took a deep breath, politely suggesting they try a different game or that she'd like to play with others today. Lily's face hardened, but Emma stood firm in her decision.



Lily angrily stomped away, muttering unkind words as she walked. For a moment, Emma felt a pang of sadness and doubt about her choice. But then, a surprising feeling of lightness washed over her; she realized she had chosen herself and her own happiness.



Emma spent her afternoon laughing and creating with her other friends, building the most magnificent fort ever imagined. She discovered new joys and felt truly appreciated, understanding that true friendship blossoms when everyone feels safe, respected, and genuinely happy.