



Ervin's Great Big Next Step

Ervin Lopez



Ervin sits in his brightly lit bedroom, humming a cheerful tune while meticulously arranging his books by color and sweeping the floor. He loves the peaceful feeling of a freshly tidied room, but his mind is already bouncing with questions about what exciting thing he should do today.



At the sunny neighborhood park, Ervin dashes across the grass during an energetic game of soccer with his best friends. He scores a goal and breaks into a goofy victory dance, though for a brief second, he secretly wonders if his friends thought his dance was too silly.



Later that afternoon, the group gathers at a bustling night market filled with glowing lanterns and mouthwatering aromas. Ervin enthusiastically suggests trying a spicy street food dish nobody has ever heard of, laughing as his eyes water while his friends cheer his bravery.



Back at his desk, Ervin unfolds a giant world map and decorates it with bright sticky notes on places he dreams of visiting. He gazes at the distant mountains and oceans, marveling at how big the world is and how many paths he could explore.



Ervin and his closest friends board an early morning train bound for the coast, watching green hills whisk past their window. During the ride, Ervin shares ridiculous ideas for futuristic inventions, keeping everyone giggling and chatting the entire journey.



Arriving at the golden beach, Ervin boldly steps onto a paddleboard for the very first time. He wobbles dramatically on the gentle ocean waves before splashing headfirst into the cool water, emerging with a giant grin and a loud laugh.



As sunset turns the sky into shades of orange and purple, Ervin starts wiping down the picnic table and picking up stray wrappers. While organizing the camp spot, he softly confesses to his friend that he worries about not knowing what career he wants when he grows up.



His friend smiles gently and reminds Ervin that nobody has to figure everything out right away. Sitting around a glowing campfire and roasting marshmallows, Ervin realizes that enjoying the present moment with people he cares about matters far more than having every answer.



The next morning, Ervin sits by the shoreline with a small watercolor set, painting the vibrant waves and the cozy campfire from the night before. He mixes bold splashy strokes with neat, careful lines, realizing his blend of playfulness and organization makes him uniquely special.



Returning home with a heart full of memories, Ervin packs his school bag with newfound confidence and joy. He still does not know exactly who he will be in ten years, but he knows that today is an incredible place to start.