



## Finn's Quiet World, Bright Smiles

Nicoletta M



Three-year-old Finn stands at the edge of the vibrant kindergarten playground, his bright red curls bouncing in the wind. While the other children run and shout, Finn watches in complete silence, feeling like there is an invisible wall between him and the rest of the world.



During circle time, the kids laugh and point at a colorful picture book the teacher is reading. Finn sits quietly at the back, unable to hear the story or the jokes, wishing someone would turn around and smile at him.



At the toy blocks station, Finn tries to build a tall tower alongside two classmates. When he accidentally knocks a block over, the other children frown and move to another table, leaving Finn sitting all by himself in the quiet room.



The next morning, a new girl named Molly walks into the classroom holding her mother's hand. She has straight black hair, a warm smile, and two shiny, bright pink hearing aids nestled just behind her ears.



Molly spots Finn sitting alone with some playdough and walks right over to him with a cheerful wave. She taps her chest and forms a gentle sign with her hands, instantly letting Finn know that he is not alone in his quiet world.



By afternoon recess, Finn and Molly are inseparable, sitting side-by-side on the green grass. They share their bright red strawberries and communicate through a beautiful dance of fingers, giggles, and shared glances.



The two friends hold hands as they walk down the sidewalk with their families under a canopy of golden autumn leaves. Finn points excitedly at a furry squirrel, and Molly laughs, her shiny pink hearing aids catching the afternoon sunlight.



On the playground swings, Finn and Molly pump their legs together, soaring high up into the bright blue sky. For the first time, Finn does not feel secluded or invisible because his world is full of Molly's bright energy.



Back in the classroom, Finn confidently builds a magnificent castle out of wooden blocks while Molly happily helps him place the final pieces. The other children watch them play and communicate, looking on with curiosity and admiration rather than judgment.



Looking at his reflection in the hallway mirror, Finn touches his curly red hair and smiles a big, proud smile. He realizes that being deaf is just a part of who he is, and with a true friend by his side, his world is perfectly loud with love.