



Stefan's Bridge of Bricks

Виолета Бързова



Stefan sat quietly at his school desk, tracing the intricate lines of a giant maze he had drawn in his notebook. Around him, the classroom buzzed with the loud chatter and bright laughter of children sharing stories, but Stefan felt like he was watching them from behind a thick glass wall.



Later that afternoon, Stefan visited Sophia, the school psychologist, in her cozy room filled with colorful beanbags and soft lighting. Stefan looked down at his shoes, softly admitting that he wanted to play with the others but his tongue always felt tied whenever he tried to speak.



Sophia smiled gently and handed him a small box of wooden building blocks, explaining that making friends is a lot like building a bridge. You do not have to build the whole thing in one day; you just start by placing one small brick of conversation at a time.



Together, they played a game called The Observation Detective, where Stefan practiced looking for clues about what his classmates enjoyed. Sophia showed him how noticing a classmate's favorite lunchbox or drawing could be the perfect first brick to start a conversation.



For his first detective mission, Stefan looked around the classroom the next morning and noticed a boy named Maya wearing a shirt with a giant, glowing rocket ship. Stefan loved outer space more than anything, and his heart gave a little flutter of excitement as he recognized a shared interest.



During recess, the schoolyard was a whirlwind of running feet and shouting voices, making Stefan want to shrink back against the brick wall. He squeezed his notebook tightly against his chest, remembering Sophia's encouraging words about taking just one brave step.



Taking a deep breath, Stefan walked over to the bench where Maya was sitting alone, looking at an astronomy book. With a trembling hand, Stefan opened his notebook and showed Maya his detailed drawing of a silver starship floating through a nebula.



Maya looked up, his eyes widening with surprise and delight as he pointed to the drawing and asked if it had warp drive engines. Stefan felt the heavy knot in his chest loosen, and he proudly explained how the fictional engines worked, placing his very first brick.



By the time the recess bell rang, the two boys were sitting side by side, eagerly designing a cosmic space station together on a single sheet of paper. Stefan realized that his voice did not need to be the loudest in the yard to be heard by someone who truly shared his passion.



The next week, Stefan returned to Sophia's cozy room with a bright, confident smile warming his face. He told her that the bridge was still small, but he and Maya were planning to build a giant cardboard rocket ship together this weekend.