



Federico's Map to Friendship

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In a bright classroom filled with the scent of crayons, Federico sits with his group as they begin to build a grand cardboard castle. While the others whisper and plan, Federico feels a nervous energy buzzing in his chest, making it hard to sit still. He suddenly reaches out and grabs the tallest tower, shouting that he is the king of the construction.



As his classmates discuss where the drawbridge should go, Federico jumps up and interrupts, his voice drowning out their ideas. He moves around the table constantly, accidentally knocking over a pot of glue that spills across their careful sketches. The other children look at each other with furrowed brows, their excitement turning into quiet frustration.



Federico snatches the golden markers from the center of the table without asking, hiding them behind his back with a defiant smirk. When a teammate asks for them back, he crosses his arms and says it doesn't matter because the project is boring anyway. Inside, however, he feels a sharp pang of worry as he sees his friends moving their chairs further away from him.



The teacher gently asks Federico to take a break from the group since the tension has become too high for them to work. He sits at a small desk by the window, watching the others continue their castle from a distance. Instead of opening a book, he starts making loud tapping noises and humming, trying desperately to make his classmates look back at him.



From his lonely spot, Federico watches the group laughing as they finally get the drawbridge to work. He feels a heavy lump in his throat, realizing that his 'commanding' hasn't made him a leader, but has left him on the outside looking in. He realizes that his bossy words were just a shield to hide how much he wanted to be noticed and valued.



The teacher approaches Federico with a kind smile and a special golden badge that says 'Master of Materials.' She explains that every great project needs someone to manage the supplies and ensure everyone has what they need at the right time. She offers him a clear set of steps on a colorful card to help him know exactly what to do.



Federico returns to the group, but this time he stays in his designated spot with the supply tray neatly organized. When a classmate needs a piece of tape, he waits for them to finish speaking before handing it over with a shy smile. He discovers that being helpful feels much better than being the loudest person in the room.



The group starts to notice the change, and the tension in the air begins to melt away like morning mist. When Federico suggests adding a small flag to the highest tower, the others listen and agree that it's a wonderful idea. For the first time, Federico feels like a vital piece of a puzzle rather than a storm cloud over the table.



By working together, the cardboard castle becomes more magnificent than any of them could have built alone. Federico experiences the quiet joy of shared success, realizing that following the rules and taking turns actually makes the game more fun. He no longer feels the need to shout to be seen; his hands and his help speak for him.



As the school bell rings, the group stands proudly around their masterpiece, and Federico high-fives his teammates. He has learned that friendship isn't about who is in charge, but about how well you hold the pieces together for one another. He leaves the classroom with a light heart, knowing he truly belongs.