Elsie and the Borrowed Umbrella

One kind act can brighten a rainy walk.





Rain began while Elsie and Mum were walking home. It tapped their hoods, then splashed their sleeves. They hurried beneath the flower shop's little striped awning.



Mr Sol looked out from the doorway. "Take my umbrella," he said. It was turquoise with big white dots. "You can bring it back when the weather is kinder."



Mum thanked him. Elsie held the curved blue handle with both hands while Mum helped above her. Beneath the umbrella, the rain sounded like fingers drumming on a table.



The next morning, the pavement shone in sunshine. Elsie stood the dry umbrella by the door. "We must take it back," she said. "Mr Sol might need it."



At the flower shop, the door was locked. A small sign said he would be back soon. Mum read it aloud. Elsie looked at the umbrella. What should they do?



They could not leave it outside where someone might take it. The bakery next door was open. Mum asked whether Mr Sol was nearby. The baker smiled and nodded.



"He's helping bring plants to the little garden behind our shops," he said. Mum and Elsie walked around together. Beyond the gate, they heard cheerful voices and a scraping pot.



Mr Sol was moving a leafy plant with another grown-up. Elsie waited until they set it down. Then she held up the umbrella. "We brought your rainy roof back!"



Mr Sol laughed. "And just in time." He pointed at a few clouds gathering over the roofs. Elsie looked up. They were still small, but they were growing darker.



A woman arrived carrying a paper bag of bread. She had no umbrella. The first drops began to fall. Mr Sol opened the turquoise umbrella and offered it to her.



Elsie watched the white dots disappear down the lane. "It's going on another walk," she said. Mr Sol nodded. "A useful umbrella likes to be useful."



Mum took Elsie's hand. Their raincoat hoods were up, and home was close. Elsie smiled at the soft tapping above her. Somewhere nearby, another person was staying dry.



The end

Why didn't Elsie leave the umbrella outside?

How did Mr Sol help again?

How can we care for something we borrow?

Little adventures. A kinder tomorrow.

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