Mateo and the First Sleepover

You can ask for what helps.





Mateo packed his pyjamas, his toothbrush, and his soft rabbit. Tonight he would sleep at Ellis's house. He had never stayed overnight with a friend before.



All afternoon, they played. They built a pretend shop, raced toy cars, and made funny faces over dinner. Mateo hardly thought about home until the sky began to grow pink.



After their bath and teeth, Ellis jumped onto his mattress. Mateo sat on the spare bed with Rabbit in his lap. The room smelled different. The curtains looked different too.



"Ready for a story?" asked Ellis's mum. Mateo nodded, but a small lump had arrived in his throat. At home, Dad always tapped Rabbit's nose before turning the page.



The story began. Mateo held Rabbit closer. He wanted to enjoy the sleepover. He also wanted his own lamp, his own pillow, and Dad's familiar voice beside him.



Ellis noticed. "Are you all right?" Mateo shrugged. Then he shook his head. "I miss home a bit." Saying it aloud made the lump feel a little smaller.



Ellis's mum closed the book gently. "Thank you for telling us. What helps at home?" Mateo showed her Rabbit. "Dad taps his nose. Then we choose a favourite part."



She tapped Rabbit's soft nose. Ellis giggled and tapped his own teddy's nose too. They read the next page, then paused. Mateo pointed to a tiny dog in the picture.



The room began to feel friendlier. Still, Mateo wanted to hear Dad. Ellis's mum helped him make a short call. Dad listened while Mateo described the spare bed and the story.



"You can tell us if you need anything," Dad said. Mateo took a slow breath. "I think I'd like to try staying." He waved Rabbit at the phone and said goodnight.



Ellis's mum left a soft light glowing by the door. Mateo settled beneath the blanket. "Tomorrow, Rabbit can work in our shop," Ellis whispered. Mateo smiled into his pillow.



In the morning, sunshine crossed the unfamiliar curtains. Mateo stretched and reached for Rabbit. The room was still different. Now it also held a story that belonged to him.



The end

How did Mateo explain his feelings?

What helped the room feel friendlier?

Who could you ask for help in a new place?

Little adventures. A kinder tomorrow.

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