

The Brave Little Apology



Yavuz DEMİRKIRAN

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Ben lived in a small blue house with a crooked chimney and a garden full of sunflowers. Every morning, he ran next door to play with his best friend, Mia. Mia had a big smile, two puffy hair buns with red ribbons, and a laugh that sounded like bells. They did everything together, from building forts to chasing butterflies in the warm afternoon sun.



Mia owned the best toy in the whole neighborhood: a wooden robot named Bolt. Bolt had shiny silver arms and a button that made him beep. Mia loved Bolt more than anything, and she always let Ben play with him. 'Bolt is our captain,' she said. 'We are his crew!' Ben nodded, feeling proud to be part of the team.



One windy afternoon, Ben and Mia built a tall tower of blocks in her room. Mia ran to the kitchen for juice. Ben picked up Bolt to make him guard the tower. Suddenly, his foot slipped on a red sock, and the little robot flew out of his hands. Crack! Bolt landed on the floor, and his shiny arm snapped right off.



Ben stared at the broken toy on the floor. His heart thumped like a drum. He heard Mia humming in the kitchen, coming back. If he told her, she might be angry or sad. His hands shook. Quick as a rabbit, he scooped up the pieces and stuffed them into his small green backpack. He sat on the rug, pretending nothing had happened.



Mia came back with two cups of juice. She looked at the tower, then at the empty floor. 'Where is Bolt?' she asked. Ben's face turned hot. He shrugged and looked at his red sneakers. 'Maybe under the bed?' he mumbled. Mia searched on her hands and knees, lifting pillows and peeking behind books. Ben's stomach twisted into a tight, heavy knot.



All evening, Ben could not eat his dinner. The pieces in his backpack felt heavier than stones. At bedtime, he heard Mia's voice through the open window. 'Bolt, where are you?' she called into the dark. Ben pulled his blanket over his head. He wanted to be honest, but the words stayed stuck in his throat like glue.



The next day, Mia searched the garden. She looked under the sunflower leaves and behind the watering can. 'I miss Bolt so much,' she said, wiping her big dark eyes. Ben stood very still, holding his backpack. Guilt grew inside him like a balloon, bigger and bigger. He wanted to tell the truth, but fear kept his mouth closed.



At home, Ben found his grandmother in the kitchen. Grandma Rose had curly silver hair in a low bun, round glasses, and a lavender cardigan. She was stirring honey into her tea. She looked at Ben over her glasses. 'You have been quiet all day, little one,' she said softly. 'What is sitting heavy on your heart?'



Ben took a deep breath. 'Grandma, I broke Mia's toy,' he whispered. 'And I hid the pieces.' Grandma Rose set down her spoon and patted the chair beside her. 'A mistake is a spilled cup,' she said. 'You can wipe it up. But hiding it only makes the puddle spread.' Ben nodded slowly, feeling a little braver.



Grandma Rose held his hand. 'Honesty is hard, but it is the first step to repair. A real apology says, I was wrong, I am sorry, and I will make it right.' She smiled gently. 'Mia may be sad, but your honesty will help her trust you again.' Ben looked at his backpack. His heart still raced, but he knew what he had to do.



Ben walked next door with his backpack on his shoulders. His knees felt wobbly, but he did not stop. Mia was sitting on the porch steps, hugging her knees. Ben opened the bag and pulled out the pieces of Bolt. 'I broke him,' he said, his voice shaking. 'I was scared, so I hid him. I am so sorry, Mia.'



Mia looked at the pieces, then at Ben's worried hazel eyes. For a moment, she was quiet. Then she took a deep breath. 'I am sad about Bolt,' she said. 'But thank you for telling me the truth. Hiding him made me feel worse.' Ben nodded, and a small tear rolled down his cheek. 'I will help fix him,' he promised. 'Together,' Mia said.



They carried the pieces to the kitchen table. Mia found strong glue and a roll of silver tape. Ben held the broken arm while Mia pressed it into place. 'Careful,' she said. 'There!' The arm stuck. Bolt could stand again, but one piece was still loose. Ben had an idea. 'What if we make him something new?'



Ben and Mia built a small wooden cart from the leftover pieces. They taped a button on top, and now Bolt could ride in style. 'He is a captain with a ship!' Mia laughed. Her bright smile was back, and Ben's heart felt light as a feather. They painted the cart red and blue, and Bolt beeped happily as they rolled him across the floor.



That evening, Grandma Rose brought them warm cookies. 'It takes courage to say sorry,' she told Ben. 'And it takes kindness to forgive,' she told Mia. They all sat together on the porch, watching the sunflowers sway. Ben felt warm and safe. Honesty and forgiveness had repaired their friendship, and now it was stronger than ever before.



Ben learned that everyone makes mistakes, but hiding them only makes them hurt more. A sincere apology, with honesty and changed behavior, can fix a friendship like new glue on a broken toy. Mia forgave him, and together they made something even better than before. 'Best friends forever?' Mia asked. 'Forever,' Ben said, and Bolt beeped in happy agreement.