

The Teacher from Planet Puddle



Yavuz DEMİRKIRAN

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On Monday morning, the children of Room 9 were ready for a substitute teacher. They had no idea what was coming. When the door opened, in walked a tall, lanky man with pale blue-green skin and wispy silver hair that floated upward. He wore enormous shiny green rubber boots that squeaked with every springy step. The whole class gasped and stared. Toby whispered, "Whoa!"



The strange teacher set down a battered suitcase that clinked and clanked. "Greetings, earthlings! I am Professor Plip from Planet Puddle," he announced cheerfully. His large round amber eyes twinkled. He adjusted the brass goggles on his forehead and smiled. "Where I come from, lessons float in the air and equations sing!" Maya, the class leader, wrote everything in her red notebook.



From his suitcase, Professor Plip pulled out a long, curly tube and a shiny metal box. He pressed a button, and suddenly diagrams floated up like soap bubbles. He hummed a tune, and numbers sang back! The children clapped and laughed. Toby's hand shot up. "Can we try?" he asked. Professor Plip nodded. "Of course! Learning is an adventure!"



Professor Plip taught math by making numbers dance in the air. He showed science with bubbling flasks that changed color. The floating diagrams spun and glowed. "This is the best substitute ever!" Toby cheered. Maya noticed that Professor Plip's giant green boots left little puddles wherever he walked. She wrote that down too. The class loved every minute of his extraordinary experiments.



At lunchtime, Professor Plip told the children about Planet Puddle. "It's a world of puddles and rainbows," he said. "We learn by splashing and singing." The children asked a hundred questions. Toby asked, "How did you get here?" Professor Plip pointed out the window. "In my spaceship, of course! It's parked in your gymnasium." The children's eyes went wide.



After lunch, the class went to the gym for a special demonstration. In the middle of the gym sat a silver spaceship shaped like a giant puddle. It hummed softly. Professor Plip pressed a button on his remote, and the spaceship's lights blinked. "Oops," he said. "I think I woke it up." The spaceship started to vibrate. The children stepped back, startled.



The spaceship's engines roared to life, and it began to rise off the floor. Professor Plip jumped up and down, his silver hair floating wildly. "Oh dear! It's on automatic launch!" he cried. "But the gym roof is closed!" The children gasped. Maya quickly opened her notebook. "We need to stop it!" she said. Toby ran to help.



Maya shouted, "Professor, how do we turn it off?" Professor Plip fumbled in his coat pockets. "The manual! I can't find the manual!" Toby spotted a small hatch on the spaceship. "Maybe there's a control inside!" he said. But the hatch was too high. The spaceship rose higher, its engines humming louder. The children had to act fast.



Maya thought hard. She remembered the science lesson about simple machines. "We need a lever!" she said. "And a pulley!" Toby added. They found a long pole and a rope in the gym closet. Mrs. Hall, the principal, rushed in. "What's going on?" she asked. Then she saw the floating spaceship. "Oh my!" she said, adjusting her glasses.



Mrs. Hall quickly took charge. "Children, let's work together!" she said. "Maya, you're organized—you lead the plan. Toby, you're brave—you climb up and reach that hatch. I'll call the janitor for more tools." Maya drew a diagram in her notebook. "We'll use the rope as a pulley to pull the hatch open," she explained. Everyone nodded.



Toby climbed onto a stack of mats and reached the hatch. He pulled it open and found a big red button. "Now what?" he called down. Professor Plip shouted, "Press the button three times quickly! That should turn off the launch!" Toby pressed it three times. The spaceship sputtered and slowly sank back down to the floor. Everyone cheered!



Professor Plip beamed. "You did it! Earthling teamwork is magnificent!" He hugged Maya and Toby. "But now I must return home. My spaceship needs a special code to open the roof." Maya said, "We can help!" She remembered the school's morning announcement code. Mrs. Hall nodded. They entered the code, and the gym roof slowly opened.



The spaceship rose gently and floated out through the open roof. Professor Plip waved from the window. "Thank you, friends!" he called. "You've taught me that teamwork is the best lesson of all!" The children waved back until the spaceship disappeared into the clouds. Maya smiled and wrote in her notebook: "Teamwork + space technology = success!"



The next day, a package arrived at school. It was from Planet Puddle. Inside was a note from Professor Plip and a small jar of sparkling puddle water. "Thank you for your help. Remember, differences make us stronger. Keep learning!" The children passed the jar around. Toby grinned. "Best. Substitute. Ever."



Mrs. Hall announced that they would have a new science unit: "Learning from Planet Puddle." The children cheered. Maya opened her notebook and drew a picture of Professor Plip with his floating diagrams. She wrote: "Friends from different places teach us wonderful new things." The class agreed that this was the best lesson they had ever learned.



From that day on, Room 9 always worked as a team. They remembered Professor Plip's singing equations and floating diagrams. And whenever it rained, Toby would look at the puddles and wonder if his friend from Planet Puddle was watching. The children knew that no matter how different someone seems, they can become a great friend and teacher.