



At the Crayon Table

A story for Sophie

TuckBook

The main character of this story: **Sophie**

Sophie tugged the zip of her small backpack all the way to the top. Inside, beside her favourite comfort item, a floppy yellow rabbit called Button, lay a picture book about a bear baking bread. “I’m ready,” she said. Then she held Button’s ear very tightly.

Mum knelt by the front door and smoothed Sophie’s red jumper. “You can keep Button in your backpack or carry him in your hand,” Mum said. “You may take your time saying hello.” Sophie chose to tuck Button under her arm. That felt like bringing a little piece of home along.



At preschool, the door opened onto a room full of new sounds: blocks clicking, children talking, chairs scraping softly. There were paintings on the walls and little tables everywhere. Sophie stopped just inside. Mum's hand was warm in hers, but the room seemed very big.

“Good morning, Sophie,” said Ms Patel, her teacher, wearing a green cardigan. She did not pull Sophie anywhere. She pointed to a row of low hooks. “Would you like to find your name?”





Sophie looked along the hooks. There were labels with suns, apples, and stripes. Then she saw S O P H I E beside a picture of a red ladybird. She put her backpack on the hook herself. Button stayed in her hand. Seeing her own name in the room made it feel a tiny bit less strange.

First Sophie tried the block corner. A tall tower was already wobbling between two children. One block rolled near her foot, and she picked it up, but she did not know where it belonged. Her cheeks grew hot. She set the block gently beside the tower and went back to Mum.

Ms Patel noticed the picture book peeping from Sophie's backpack. "Is that a book you know?" she asked. Sophie nodded. They sat together on a cushion while Mum sat nearby by the door. Sophie opened to the page where the bear dusted flour over his nose. She almost smiled.





Then Ms Patel said, “It is playground time. You can watch first.” Outside, Ms Patel stayed close as Sophie stood by the little climbing frame. Children pedalled trikes along a painted path. Sophie tried one step on the lowest rung, but a loud bell rang for everyone to come in. Sophie jumped so much that Button slipped from her hand into a pile of dry leaves.





“Oh!” Sophie whispered. Ms Patel crouched beside her while Sophie searched. Sophie pushed aside one leaf, then another, until she found Button’s yellow ear. She hugged him, brushed a leaf from his nose, and carried him safely back inside.

After handwashing, children gathered at a table with a box of crayons in the middle. Ms Patel placed a big sheet of paper there. “We are making a quiet garden together,” she said. Sophie saw blue, green, brown, and a bright red crayon like the ladybird on her name label.

Mum was still by the door, ready to stay if Sophie wished. Sophie looked at Button. She looked at the empty bit of paper beside a child’s purple flowers. Then Sophie put Button in her backpack, walked to the crayon table, and chose the red crayon. She drew one round ladybird, then six black spots. Another child drew a leaf underneath it. Soon Sophie added a tall green stem, slow and careful.





By pickup time, the garden picture was covered with crayon flowers, snails, and Sophie's ladybird. Sophie ran to Mum with Button tucked under one arm and her backpack bouncing behind her. "My hook has a ladybird too," she said. "And I made one at the crayon table."

At home, Sophie set Button beside her pillow and placed the garden picture on the table for tomorrow. Her small backpack waited by the door, with its zip neatly closed. Sophie stroked Button's floppy ear once, thinking of the red crayon and the children's quiet hands moving across the paper.

The preschool room no longer felt quite so big. It had a hook with her name, a book page she knew, and a place at the crayon table.





Good night, Sophie.



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After the story



WHAT THIS STORY IS ABOUT

Sophie returns to preschool after the holiday with her yellow rabbit Button close by. With gentle support, she finds familiar things, makes a ladybird picture, and comes home proud of her brave day.

TALK ABOUT IT AFTER READING

After reading, ask: “Sophie, which moment felt the warmest or bravest today?”

AND TOMORROW...

Tomorrow, Sophie wonders whether she might show another child the special page in her bear book.





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6 minutes of reading



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