

Special Invitation

"Hi, sweetheart." Ms. Jenny smiled brightly at the little girl. It's been a couple of months since they've last seen each other. Anna had visibly grown up, and had a different aura about her.

She seemed more.
Kid like.

Happier.

and most importantly,
safe.

Anna ran into the arms of the woman, hugging her tightly. The two girls had caught up with each other talking about how they were doing.

Jenny was happy to know that Annabella was doing wonderful.

"Okay, Anna, we have one more surprise for you." Anthony had said, reaching for something in his pocket.

Anna could barely contain her excitement.

"Close your eyes and put your hands out."

Anna hesitated, she put her hands on her hips, eyeing her older brother suspiciously. "are you just saying that so you can just hand me trash."

Tyler covered his laugh with a cough.

Anthony rolled his eyes, "I'm not anything like tyty baby girl. Now close your eyes."

This time she complied. She felt some paper being placed on her hands.

She frowns; she opens her eyes looking down at the blue square-looking paper.

"Read what it says, Anna." Anthony urges.

She holds the strange item closer, trying to sound the words out in her head.

"OH MY GOSH!" she screams; she looks up at her brother, who has a big grin on his face.

She starts jumping around happily, chanting, "WE'RE GOING TO THE AQUARIUM!"

She gasped, "Is miss Jenny going too?!"

Ms. Jenny smiled at my hyperactive girl, "No--"

"Yes." Anthony glances at the woman, "only if you want to."

Jennie smiled, "I'd love to."

The De la Cruz family and Jennie spent an eventful day at the aquarium. Throughout the day, Anna had never stopped smiling. She had felt like the luckiest little girl in the world.

After a wonderful weekend, school starts up again. She couldn't wait to tell her friends about it.

"Good morning, everyone!" Anna says as she enters the classroom full of her classmates and friends.

Everyone looked over at Anna and looked away right after.

That's weird.

Anna had shrugged it off, keeping a smile on her face, slightly giggling at the memory of the silly sea otter she had seen at the aquarium.

Putting her lunch in her cubby and hanging up her backpack, she makes her way towards the back of the classroom where her friends were.

"Your fourth member has entered the party!" She twirls, then plops herself in front of them.

"I have so much to tell you guys! I went to the--"

Her friends had suddenly gotten up without a word and left. Leaving the building blocks they were playing with behind and the girl.

"Where are you guys going?" Her smile falls a bit.

Anna looked around noticing that everyone in the room had stood and played on the opposite side where she was.

Earlier everyone was scattered around, and now...

She was alone.

I took a bath this morning.

"Good morning, friends!" Emily enters, and every greets her with a good morning.

Including Anna.

Everyone has done their own thing while Anna played with the building blocks alone, thinking of ways to give the most sincere apology to her friends for making them sad.

Soon after, the teacher had entered, and everyone had sat down in their seats.

"Miss! Can I say something?" Emily raised her hand during break time as we were all about to leave.

"I'm having a birthday party this weekend, and you are all invited!" She says, pulling out a stack of glittery invitations.

Anna's eyes widen in excitement.

I've never been to a birthday party before!

She bounces in her seat, excited to receive the pretty paper. The people who received invitations talked with friends and gave ideas on what to get as a present.

Anna waited patiently in her seat.

Very patiently.

Until she had stopped handing them out, Anna looked around, confused. Everyone but her received one.

"Um, hey Em. I didn't get an invitation." Anna said shyly when everyone stopped to look at her.

"She doesn't have to invite you if she doesn't want to, Anna," Jayla said, next to Emily, very meanly.

Anna was taken aback by her shy friend's behavior.

"Oh! I know, I just thought since she said she was going to invite everyone..."

"Boohoo, Anna, stop being so selfish. She already feels bad." Dani speaks up suddenly.

Anna frowns, "Oh."

"Not everything is about you all the time. You're just not cool enough to be invited." Karol says, turning her back away from her former friend.

"Now now, guys, be nice." Emily finally spoke up. She walks up to Anna and hands her a different color invitation.

This one was plain white with an address and some lettering that said birthday party. It wasn't like the other pretty glittery ones that everyone else got.

"I'm sorry I couldn't get you the pretty ones. But my mommy couldn't afford to buy more." She frowns.

But Anna.

Does something that no one else expected her to do.

Anna's eyes welled up with tears; she silently cried. Everyone stares at her with different emotions.

"N-No, no, it's okay." She wipes her eyes; she then hugs Emily, surprising the girl. "I'm just happy you invited me!" She releases her and sends her a big smile.

A mutual feeling rang throughout the room. These children had experienced something they had never had before, guilt.

That day, Anna came home beaming. And when her brother gave her permission to attend her little friend's party she practically burst with happiness.

Throughout the week, her friends seem to turn their back on her. When she would speak to them, they would ignore her.

When she tried to play with them, they went inside instead. And when she followed them in, they would yell at her for being annoying and to stop following them.

Anna tried not to let this bother her; her main mission was to enjoy the party this weekend and find the best present for Emily.

Friday morning, Anna came to school excited with an envelope in her hands. When she entered the room, she heard some strange things.

"I didn't want to invite her; she's just so annoying. But there is a reason I gave her a different invitation."

"And she's kinda ugly too."

"Why is her hair so long too? It makes her look creepy."

"I didn't even want to be friends with her, but I just felt bad for her. She doesn't have a mommy or a daddy."

Anna didn't want to assume they were talking about her, so she had strolled in as nothing had happened.

"Here you go, Emily! This is your pre-gift!" Anna smiles, handing the handmade envelope with a special letter inside.

"Oh..Um. Thanks..." Emily takes the gift from Anna. Anna smiles again right before leaving to put her stuff away.

Without Anna realizing it, Emily had thrown away the gift.

"Hurry, Tyty!! I'm going to be late!" Anna stood by the door with a gift bag in her hand, and a rose in the other.

"Shut it, brat; I'm doing you a favor." Tyler rolls his eyes, grabbing his keys.

"You're only going because you think Emmy's sister is pretty." She teases.

He roughly pulls her cheeks, "Better watch your mouth."

"Be nice, Tyler." Joshua scolds, walking in with a very much half asleep Oliver.

"Yeah yeah."

The two siblings set off for the location.

Anna sat in the backseat excitedly; she could not wait to participate in a party.

"Are you sure you have the right location?" Tyler looks around the park, which does not indicate a birthday party.

"Yes! I do. I'll wait a bit; maybe they are running late." Anna got out of the car and decided to wait at a nearby park bench. It has a view of the entire park.

10 minutes passed.

20 minutes.

30.

40.

She checks the time on the invitation at 2:30, then looks at her tiny pink watch. 3:10.

An hour passes.

And Tyler's pissed.

He grabs her arm to drag her back in the car. "Let's go, Anna, no one is coming." He grumbles under his breath wondering if it's illegal to pay some kids to beat up another.

"No!" She pulls back, "I don't want Emmy to think I didn't go to her party! even after she gave me a special invitation!" She says angrily at her brother.

He sighs, "Anna, there is no party."

"THAT'S NOT TRUE! THERE IS A PARTY; SHE INVITED ME!" She cries out, "S-She invite me..." Anna wipes away the tears.

"Let's wait a few more minutes...Please tyty." She begs.

Tyler was conflicted; he knew this little girl had given Anna a fake invitation. He knew there was going to be no party here. He knew it was all a mean prank.

But the look on his sister's face.

"Fine, 10 minutes. And if not, we are going home."

Anna's thoughts drifted; I don't understand; she said there was a party. She wouldn't lie to me; we were friends, right? I don't understand why everyone at school doesn't like me anymore. What I mean? Did I say something? Even when I try to apologize, they walk away.

What did I do?

And with that, 10 minutes had passed.

Tyler looked over at his little sister, her head was down, and her fists clutched the gift bag. Tears fell from her face; she shook slightly, trying to hold back her sobs.

"S-She said, 2:30."

"S-She said the park."

"She told me, that there were going to be bounce houses and face paint." she looks up at her brother with confusion and sadness.

Tyler himself wanted to cry.

"She invited me, Ty; she gave me a special invitation. Her mama couldn't buy another pretty so they gave me this. I felt so special, but why."

She broke down, throwing herself onto her big brother, needing some comfort.

"But why am I so sad? Why is no one here?" She cried out.

All the excitement and all the planning she had done this week disappeared in an instant.

"Why does everyone hate me, tyty?" She sobbed, "What did I do wrong?"

Am I a bad kid?

A/N

My heart goes out to the people who've had to experience this. I want to say I love you all, and none of you deserve the hate you get. You all are beautiful, and I wish I could take away your pain. Keep your head up because soon, you'll be the only one standing.

sincerely,

-Author.