

# No Big Deal

by Bill Nagelkerke

When the signal beeped and the light changed, Alex and Cody crossed the road to school. Gemma was waiting for them on the other side.

“Hi, guys,” said Gemma. “I wonder what our room’s going to look like?”

During the holidays, some of the older classrooms had been repainted. The painters had used bright colours.

“Wow! It’s like a rainbow,” said Alex. “We might need sunglasses!”

“It’s no big deal,” said Cody. He couldn’t really see what all the fuss was about.

There were other changes in the classroom as well. The art materials were now in coloured boxes.

“No excuses for untidiness,” said Mr Marlow. “A place for everything, and everything in its place.”

Builders had been at the school, too, building a new toilet block.

“Are the new toilets working?” asked Gemma.

“Yes, they are,” said Mr Marlow. “But there are no signs on the doors yet.”

“Then how will we know which ones to use?” asked Alex.

“The girls’ toilets have a green door, and the boys’ toilets have a red one,” said Mr Marlow. “Green for girls. That’s easy to remember.”



In the morning, they drew pictures of things they'd done during the holidays. Cody had been to the beach, so he drew a picture of that. He made his sky purple.

Later on, Mr Marlow discovered that some of the crayons had been returned to the wrong boxes. "Who did this?" he frowned.

No one owned up. Gemma, who was sitting next to Cody, gave him a careful look.

"A place for everything, and everything in its place," Mr Marlow repeated. "We don't want to go back to having a messy classroom."



At lunchtime, Cody headed for the new toilet block.

"Where are you going?" Gemma called after him.

"Where does it look like?" said Cody.

"You can't go through that door," Gemma said.

"Green is for girls, remember?"

"Oh, I thought ...," Cody muttered.

"Your door is the red one, on the right. It's the same colour as your face," said Gemma.

"I just got mixed up," said Cody. "I didn't hear Mr Marlow properly."

Cody was glad that Alex hadn't seen what had almost happened! At least Gemma would never tell. Cody was looking forward to eating lunch and then playing cricket with Alex, but when he came out of the new toilet block, Gemma was still there. "I've got some questions for you," she said.

"Why didn't you own up before?" she said. "I saw you putting your crayons in the wrong boxes."

"No, I didn't," said Cody.

"How did you know when to cross the road this morning?" Gemma asked.

"The signal beeped," said Cody, surprised. "And I saw the running man, of course."

“Hmm,” said Gemma. “One more question. What’s in your lunch box?”

“Huh?” said Cody. “Sandwiches and an apple, I think.”

“What colour is the apple?”

“Red, of course,” said Cody, showing her.

Gemma took an apple from her lunch box. “What colour is this one?”

“Red,” said Cody.

“No, it isn’t,” said Gemma. “Mine is a Granny Smith. It’s green.”

“Green? So what does all that mean?” asked Cody, looking worried.

“I think you might be colour-blind, like my brother,” said Gemma. “He gets some of his colours mixed up, especially reds and greens. And he draws purple skies instead of blue ones, just like you do. It’s no big deal,” she added. “Lots of people are colour-blind.”

“I didn’t know I was,” said Cody.

“Not everyone does,” said Gemma. “But you should tell your mum and dad *and* let Mr Marlow know. Otherwise he’s going to wonder who’s messing up the art materials!”



“Cody, are you coming?” Alex called out to him.

“Lunchtime will be over by the time you get here!”

“I’ll be there soon,” Cody called back. “I just have to see Mr Marlow.”

“I’ll come with you,” said Gemma. “One of us had better tell Mr Marlow to hurry up and put some signs on the toilet doors!”



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