

*11<sup>th</sup> A, SP International School, Lovedale.*

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The only happiness in a teenager's life is the weekends. And it was the same with me. I loved Friday evenings. I excitedly wait for the school to get over. Once the school is over I can enjoy my weekend of plans. Plans that other kids think as childish for a boy of my age. I don't fit into the popular crowd. There are 2 types of student groups in this school. One was the rich kid group who are very popular for many reasons and other was the farm kid group who are considered boring. I was a farm kid and hence the popular kids were not interested in me or talked with me. That never bothered me though, those rich kids had a fake and pretentious life about which I was not interested. But the problem right now was entirely different. Today was my favorite Friday but I have to face a big problem before the school was over.

SEMINAR, our botany teacher has assigned every student a topic for seminar for each day. And today was my day. 'Taxonomy of Plants', I don't have any problem with my topic. I like it actually and have prepared very well for it but the prospect of standing in front of the class scared the hell out of me. The Rich kids will get a reason to make fun of me for the entire month and anyway I don't think any of the student is interested in listening to my seminar. With a lot of nervousness, I got up from my place to proceed to the front.

Here I stand in front of 34 kids who are busy talking, shouting and sleeping. Ajay was busy sighting the girl sitting in the front row left end. My cousin Chandru was as usual sleeping in the last bench. I think nobody is going to listen to me except our teacher, so my nervousness vanished. As I started with my speech our principal Perumal entered the class.

'Sorry to interrupt the class, I have to introduce your new classmate who will be joining you from today. Meet Miruthula, she is from Chennai and has shifted to this place recently.' our principal finished.

All the 34 heads shifted to the door to look at the new student. We don't get to see new students in our school. People rarely settle in Lovedale so it's very rare to have a new student. Every student in my class knows each other from childhood whether we like each other or not. So coming back to the girl, she entered the class with a smile. She walked past me and occupied a seat in the front bench. While I was wondering which group will she belong to rich or farm, Ajay whistled from his seat. So Ajay's focus has shifted to the new girl I think. Ajay was a handsome boy like the actor Surya so girls liked him a lot. Every girl wanted a boyfriend like him and he is the son of our School founder. But the new girl seemed angry about his whistling, she was uncomfortable.

'Ajay, which flower do you like?' I have no idea why I asked him that, I just didn't like to see the new girl uncomfortable. The question was a big mistake. All the 35 head was listening to me now.

'Rose, I like Red rose.' Ajay said from his place looking at the new girl. Other students were smiling and giggling.

'Do you know there is a species of Black rose?'. I asked him and he stared back at me without any answer.

'Black rose are only found in Turkey because of the country's soil condition, it cannot be found anywhere else in the world'. I said, everyone was listening to me keenly, I think they are interested in

this seminar. And then the seminar went for about 1 hour until the bell rang. Nobody made fun of me, nobody was laughing instead everyone was clapping for me. I did well I guess.

I always had lunch with my cousin Chandru and friend Divya in the ground. Chandru liked Divya a lot but he never had the guts to tell her. Puppy love kind of thing. So as usual we were having our lunch.

‘Can I sit here?’

I glanced up to see the new girl. This was unusual. ‘Yeah sure.’ I said. She sat next to Divya.

‘So my name is Miruthula.’ She introduced herself. ‘And that seminar you took in the class was fantastic, I am not saying it for namesake, it really was awesome’.

‘Thanks. I am Raghuvaran’ I said.

‘I am Divya.’ Divya said. ‘So why did you shift to this place? Any particular reason? I know Chennai has better Schools’.

‘This is my father’s native place and he has business here also which was not going well, so he himself had to come to save the business’. She completed. ‘What is that fruit?’ she asked pointing my tiffin box.

‘Rambutan, you never ate this?’ I asked.

She shook her head. ‘This fruit is very famous here, we also grow this in our farmland’. I said.

‘Their farmland grows the best Rambutan in the entire Coimbatore district, people are willing to buy it for double the price’. Chandru praised about our farmland which was not entirely true.

‘Can I taste it, if you don’t mind?’ She asked very politely which was cute. Other kids never spoke to me with that politeness.

I gave her one and explained how to eat.

‘This is delicious; he was right’. She said pointing to Chandru. ‘Now I know why you are so good in Botany; you are practically a farmer yourself.’ This time she pointed me.

‘What business does your father have in this place?’. Chandru asked.

‘He has a resort named ‘Hillside’ in this place.’ She went back to eating while we were all shocked.

‘You are the daughter of Krishna Naidu? The owner of chain of hotels and resorts?’ Divya asked.

She nodded her head. So this girl is rich but she is eating lunch with us farm kids. I felt like laughing. This is temporary I thought in my head. She will join the rich kids group soon and consider us boring like they do.

'You make it sound like a big thing, It's not a big thing. Raghu here has a big farm that's a big thing, we don't get to see farm lands in city but hotels are everywhere'. Miruthula said with utmost sincerity, she really thought having a farmland is a big thing.

'So what do you do in weekends for fun in this place?'. She asked me.

'We have one theater in town, a bakery nearby where all the students' hangout.' I thought for a while and then continued. 'You should ask Ajay and Usha, they always plan hiking and trekking with their gang every weekend. You will like it.'

'Noted I'll ask them later, so what will you be doing this weekend?' She asked me again.

'This may sound really boring to you, I cycle around the town for most of the time and then we three go for a picnic to the lake nearby my house. And the remaining time, we spend in farm doing whatever we can. 'I completed.

'Cycling huh?' she said.

'Told you we don't plan fun stuffs; you should ask Ajay'.

'I like Cycling and who said cycling is not fun'. She questioned.' So can I join you on Cycling?'

'Ok, I don't mind'. I nodded.

'And you can join us on the picnic too'. Divya invited.

'Thanks'.

We all went back to eating silently. When there was sudden noise behind me.

'Hello Miruthula, I am Usha, if you are free I can introduce you to all our classmates.' She was talking only to Miruthula as if we are not in that place.

'Ok I'll meet you after lunch' Miruthula replied with a smile and Usha went back to her gang. Miruthula finished her lunch and was getting up to go meet Usha, 'When shall we meet tomorrow for cycling?' she asked.

'11 am behind the school' I said and with a smile she waved bye to go meet the rich kids gang who will woo her with their weekend plans and change her mind. This is temporary. Even if she is a good person I don't think we'll be friends. And I felt bad about it. How can I like a person with one meeting? I shook my head and went to back to class. School will get over soon and my favorite weekend is coming, I shouldn't be sad.