

Mr. Buttons

Comes to Preschool with Mia









Mia sits on her bed in the morning light, holding Mr. Buttons tight against her chest. He is a brown teddy bear, soft from many hugs, with a round button sewn right at the center of his chest.

Mia looks down at him and whispers, 'I don't want to go. What if nobody likes me?' That is her biggest worry, and she says it out loud so Mr. Buttons can hear every word.

Mr. Buttons peeks up at her from the crook of her arm. The button on his chest catches the light and glints, just for a moment.





Mia makes a plan. She tucks Mr. Buttons carefully into her backpack so that his head peeks out over the zipper. He can see everything from there.

She stands at the front door with her backpack on, and her feet feel stuck to the mat. She does not want to go. She is afraid nobody will want to play with her or sit beside her.

She takes one slow breath. 'Okay, Mr. Buttons,' she says quietly. 'Here we go.' And she opens the door.





The preschool entrance is covered in colorful handprints, reds and blues and yellows, all the way around the door. Mia stops on the path and stares at them.

Noise and laughter spill out from inside. It is loud, and there are so many voices. Mia steps back and presses close to the wall beside the door.

Then she feels something. Mr. Buttons is peeking higher out of the backpack, his head lifting above the zipper. Mia notices and pulls her shoulders back, standing just a bit straighter.





A teacher steps outside and kneels down so she is at Mia's level. Her name tag says Miss Rosa, and her smile is calm and easy. 'Good morning,' she says. 'Who is peeking out of your bag?'

Mia holds the backpack forward and whispers, 'That is Mr. Buttons.' Her voice is so soft it is almost no sound at all.

Miss Rosa looks right at Mr. Buttons and then back at Mia. 'He looks very brave,' she says. 'I think you are brave too.' Mia says nothing, but her chin lifts, just a fraction.





Miss Rosa leads Mia inside to the cubby area, a row of little shelves each with a name on it. Mia finds hers and loops her backpack strap over the hook so Mr. Buttons still peeks over the edge, facing the room.

He can watch from there. He can see the whole classroom, the tables, the window, the big rug with its circle of colors.

Mia glances back at him twice as she follows Miss Rosa toward the art tables. Each time, his button chest catches the light from the window. She walks on.





Two children are already at the art table,
drawing with crayons and making big wobbly
suns on their papers. Mia stops at the edge of the
table and watches them. Her own hands are
empty.

She looks back across the room at Mr. Buttons in
his cubby. He is watching. She thinks of the word
she said to herself this morning: brave.

She thinks, 'One small dare.' Then she walks
around the table and sits down in the corner
chair.





A girl across the table holds up a yellow crayon and says, 'Do you have orange? I can't find orange.' Her name is Priya, and she is looking right at Mia.

Mia unzips the front pocket of her backpack and pulls out a fat orange crayon from her own set. She slides it across the table without a word.

Priya beams. 'Thank you! I'm Priya.' Mia picks up a blue crayon and says softly, 'I'm Mia.' She starts to draw.





Mia draws quietly, and her picture grows into something she did not plan. It is a sleeping teddy bear, round and peaceful, with stars dotted all around it.

Priya leans over to look, eyes going wide. 'Wow, that looks just like a real bear!' she says.

Mia stares at the paper. She did not know she could draw like that. A warmth spreads through her chest, the kind that comes when something good surprises you.





Miss Rosa rings a bell, and everyone moves toward the outdoor play yard. Mia walks outside and stops.

At the far end of the yard stands the big slide. It is tall and shiny and catches the sun. A boy named Leo zooms down it, laughing, and lands with a thump in the wood chips. He jumps up and shouts, 'Come on, someone else go!'

Mia looks at the slide. Then she looks back toward the classroom, toward the cubby where Mr. Buttons waits.





Mia walks back to the cubby doorway and peeks in. Mr. Buttons is right where she left him, head above the zipper, facing the room.

The button on his chest catches the light from the window and seems to wink at her. She has seen that glint before, back home on her bed this morning.

'I'll try the slide, Mr. Buttons,' she whispers. 'Just watch.' She turns around and walks across the play yard, and her steps get steadier with each one.





Mia reaches the slide and grabs the ladder with both hands. She climbs one rung at a time, holding tight.

Behind her, she hears Priya's voice. 'I'll go right after you!' Priya is on the ladder too, grinning up at her.

At the top, Mia sits down and looks out. The whole yard spreads below her. The children look smaller from up here, and the handprints on the school door are just visible around the corner. It feels enormous up here, and her heart beats fast.





Mia counts under her breath. 'One, two, three.'

Then she pushes off.

She flies down and lands with a soft thump, feet
sinking into the wood chips. For one second she
just sits there.

Then she bursts out laughing, a big real laugh
that surprises even her. Leo cheers, 'You did it!'

Priya comes flying down right behind her and
reaches out for a high five.





The three of them line up to go again. And again.
They take turns, and every time Mia reaches the
top she shouts, 'Here I go!' before she pushes off.
Priya starts saying it too, and then Leo, and it
becomes their chant for the whole afternoon.

Between turns, Mia glances across the yard at
the cubby doorway. She can just see Mr. Buttons
peeking out. She grins at him each time.

'Here I go!' she shouts, and down she flies.





Miss Rosa gathers everyone inside for a goodbye circle on the rug. She asks each child to share one thing they did today.

Mia sits between Priya and Leo. When it is her turn, she does not whisper. She says clearly, 'I shared my crayons. I went down the big slide. And I made friends.'

Priya squeezes her hand. Leo gives a thumbs up. Miss Rosa smiles and moves on to the next child.





The circle ends and children collect their things.
Mia goes straight to her cubby, lifts Mr. Buttons
out, and hugs him against her chest, just like she
did this morning on her bed.

She holds him up so his button chest faces the
classroom, the art table, the cubbies, the rug.
'We did it, Mr. Buttons,' she whispers. 'We really
did it.'

His button glints in the afternoon light.





Mia stands in the doorway with Mr. Buttons tucked in her arm, waving to Priya and Leo. 'See you tomorrow, Mia!' Priya calls out. Leo adds, 'Bring Mr. Buttons!' Mia laughs and says, 'He always comes.'

On the walk away from school, Mia talks without stopping. She tells Mr. Buttons about the orange crayon, and the sleeping bear she drew, and the way the yard looked from the top of the slide. 'Here I go,' she says softly to herself, and smiles.

Mr. Buttons peeks out from the crook of her elbow, his button catching the last of the sun, while Mia says, 'I can't wait to go back tomorrow.'



The end



The more that you read, the more things you will know



Mia is shy and worried that nobody at preschool will like her, so she tucks her beloved teddy bear Mr. Buttons into her backpack for company. One small dare at a time, Mia shares her crayons, makes a new friend named Priya, and slides down the big slide with a shout of 'Here I go!' By pickup time, Mia has two new friends and a heart full of stories to tell Mr. Buttons all the way home.

