

The Seat Facing the Window

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Every morning, Solana chose the same seat. It was the one beside the classroom window, where sunlight slipped through the curtains and painted a thin rectangle across her desk. While her classmates hurried to their usual places, Solana quietly placed her books on the wooden table, adjusted her chair, and looked outside for a moment before opening her notebook.

Solana was a Grade 11 student, quiet and observant, often mistaken for someone who was easily distracted. From her seat, she could see the school gate, the road beyond it, and the people beginning their daily routines. Vendors pushed their carts along the street, tricycles passed through the narrow road, parents accompanied their children to school, and workers hurried toward their destinations.

To her classmates, Solana seemed more interested in what happened outside than in what happened inside the classroom. Her teacher, however, thought otherwise. Solana listened carefully. She simply had a different way of learning. Whenever a lesson was discussed, she tried to connect it to something she had seen through the window. A discussion about economics reminded her of the vendors outside the school. A science lesson made her wonder about the plants growing along the roadside. Mathematics made her curious about the distances between buildings and the movement of vehicles on the street. The window was not a distraction. It was her first textbook.

Solana's curiosity became more apparent as the school year progressed. Her notebooks were filled not only with lessons but also with questions. She wrote about why some families could afford private transportation while others walked to school. She wondered why some children had new books while others shared old ones. She noticed how small businesses survived despite rising prices and how people found creative ways to earn a living.

She did not always have answers, but she had learned that asking the right questions was sometimes the beginning of understanding. Her grades reflected her curiosity. She consistently performed well in class, particularly in subjects that allowed her to analyze problems and propose solutions. However, she rarely raised her hand. She preferred writing her thoughts down rather than speaking in front of everyone.

One afternoon, their teacher assigned a community-based project. Each student was asked to identify a problem in their surroundings and propose a practical solution. While her classmates immediately began discussing ideas, Solana returned to her seat beside the window.

She watched the street for several minutes. She observed the vendors outside and noticed that some of them struggled to keep their products organized while attending to customers. Others had no proper place to record their daily sales. Some simply relied on memory to determine whether they had earned enough for the day.

Solana began writing. She designed a simple system that could help small vendors record their daily sales, expenses, and remaining products using an inexpensive and easy-to-understand format. It was not complicated, but it was practical. Her teacher was impressed. What surprised the class was not only the quality of Solana's project but where the idea had come from. It had started from a seat beside a window.

For years, Solana had been told in subtle ways that she needed to look forward rather than stare outside. Yet she realized that looking outside had taught her to notice things that others often overlooked. Education, she discovered, was not limited to the pages of a textbook or the four walls of a classroom. It was also found in observation, in questions, and in the ordinary lives of people passing by.

As the school year approached its end, Solana continued to sit in the same place. The classroom had become familiar—the worn desks, the whiteboard marked by countless lessons, and the faint sound of footsteps in the hallway. But the view outside had changed. The students who once walked slowly through the school gate now hurried toward their next destinations. The vendors had learned to recognize her. The trees outside had grown new leaves. Even the sunlight seemed to fall differently across her desk.

Solana realized that she had changed too. The girl who once looked through the window simply because she was curious now looked through it with purpose. She no longer wondered only about what was outside. She wondered how she could become part of it. On the final day of Grade 11, Solana packed her books into her bag and remained in her seat for a few moments longer. She looked through the window at the road, the people, and the world beyond the school grounds.

The window had never been an escape from learning. It had been an invitation. It had taught her that knowledge did not end when the lesson ended, and that the world itself could become a classroom for those willing to observe. Solana stood from her seat and picked up her bag. The following school year would bring new subjects, new challenges, and perhaps a new classroom.

She did not know where she would sit next. But she knew one thing: wherever she went, she would keep looking beyond what was immediately in front of her. Because sometimes, the most important lessons begin when a student dares to look through the window.

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