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STARTER STORY • ENGLISH • A2

The Forgotten Umbrella

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It was a gray afternoon in October. The rain fell softly on the streets of the small town. Daniel was walking home from work. He held his coat closed and looked down at the wet ground. He was a little tired, but he liked the sound of the rain.

On his way home, Daniel stopped at a small café. He often went there. The café was warm and it smelled of coffee and cake. He sat by the window and ordered a hot tea. Outside, the rain kept falling, and people hurried past with their umbrellas.

Daniel watched the street while he drank his tea. A man ran past with a newspaper over his head. A mother and her child shared one big umbrella. The shop lights were warm and yellow in the rain. Daniel felt calm and glad to be inside.

After a while, Daniel finished his tea. He stood up and put on his coat. Then he saw something on the chair next to him. It was a small umbrella. It was blue with little white flowers. Someone had forgotten it. Daniel looked around, but the table beside him was empty now.

He picked up the umbrella. It was old but very clean, and someone clearly cared about it. Daniel did not want to leave it there. He thought, "Maybe the owner will come back. Or maybe I can find them." So he walked to the counter and asked the young woman who worked there.

"Excuse me," said Daniel. "Someone left this umbrella by the window. Do you know whose it is?" The young woman thought for a moment. "Oh, yes," she said. "An older woman sat there before you. She comes here every Tuesday. Her name is Mrs. Walsh. She lives on Garden Street, I think."

"Do you know which house?" asked Daniel. The young woman shook her head. "I am not sure," she said. "But it is a small street. Someone there will know her. She is very kind. She always asks about my family." Daniel smiled and thanked her again.

Daniel decided to find Mrs. Walsh and return the umbrella. Garden Street was not far. The rain was lighter now, so he opened the blue umbrella and used it himself. He smiled. It felt a little funny to carry such a small, flowery umbrella, but he did not mind.

On the way, Daniel passed a baker who was closing his shop. "Excuse me," said Daniel. "Where is Garden Street?" The baker pointed down the road. "Take the second street on the left," he said. "The one with the big tree." Daniel thanked him and walked on.

Garden Street was a quiet street with old houses and green doors. Daniel was not sure which house was the right one. He saw a man washing his car and asked him. "Mrs. Walsh? Yes, she lives there," the man said, and he pointed to a white house with a red door and roses by the gate.

Daniel walked to the white house and knocked on the red door. After a moment, an older woman opened it. She had kind eyes and gray hair. She looked surprised to see a young man with a small blue umbrella. "Hello," said Daniel. "Are you Mrs. Walsh? I think this is yours."

Mrs. Walsh looked at the umbrella, and her face lit up. "Oh, my umbrella!" she said. "My husband gave it to me many years ago. I was so sad when I could not find it. Thank you, young man. Thank you very much. Please, come in. You are wet from the rain."

Daniel did not want to be any trouble, but Mrs. Walsh was very kind, so he came inside. The house was warm and cozy. She made a pot of tea and put some biscuits on a plate. They sat by the fire and talked. She told him stories about her husband and about the town long ago.

"My husband and I walked in the rain on our first day together," she said. "He bought me this umbrella the next morning. He said I should never get wet again." She smiled at the umbrella in her hands. "It is old now, but I love it very much."

Daniel listened and drank his tea. The fire was warm, and the rain tapped softly on the window. He told Mrs. Walsh a little about his work and his day. She laughed at his stories. For a short while, the cold afternoon felt very far away.

Before Daniel left, Mrs. Walsh gave him a small gift. It was a little jar of honey from her garden bees. "For your kindness," she said. "Most people would have walked past the umbrella. You did not." Daniel thanked her and promised to visit again one day.

At the door, Mrs. Walsh held his hand for a moment. "Come back next Tuesday," she said. "I will make a cake. And bring your appetite." Daniel laughed and said he would. He stepped outside, and she waved at him from the red door until he turned the corner.

He walked home in the soft evening light. The rain had stopped, and the streets were shiny and clean. Daniel held the little jar of honey in his pocket. He thought about Mrs. Walsh, her warm fire, and her kind smile. It had been a small thing, but it made him feel very happy.

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