

Layla

Layla stood outside the tall red-brick school building, clutching the straps of her backpack. She had only arrived in London from Japan a few weeks earlier, and everything still felt unfamiliar. The streets were busier, the weather was cooler, and the voices around her sounded different from those she had heard back home.

As she walked into her new classroom, she noticed children chatting happily with their friends. Some were laughing, while others were sharing stories about their weekend. Layla quietly took the empty seat at the back of the room and looked down at her desk.

Her teacher, Mrs Green, introduced her to the class.

"This is Layla," she said with a warm smile. "She has recently moved here from Japan. Let's all make her feel welcome."

The class smiled and waved, but Layla simply nodded. She wanted to say hello, yet the words seemed to disappear before they reached her mouth. She wasn't unfriendly—she was simply nervous. Everything was new, and she worried about saying the wrong thing.

During break time, Layla sat alone on a bench in the playground. She watched the other children playing football, skipping and chatting together. Deep inside, she wished she could join them, but she didn't know how.

For the next few days, things stayed much the same. Layla listened carefully in lessons and worked hard, but she spoke very little. Although some children smiled at her, they thought she preferred to be alone.

One rainy afternoon, Mrs Green asked the class to work in pairs on a science project. A cheerful girl named Sophie was asked to work with Layla.

At first, both girls were quiet. Then Sophie noticed the beautiful cherry blossom design on Layla's notebook.

"Did you draw that?" Sophie asked.

Layla smiled shyly and nodded.

"It's beautiful," Sophie said. "Can you teach me how to draw flowers like that?"

For the first time since arriving at the school, Layla felt a little more confident.

"My grandmother taught me," she replied softly.

The two girls spent the afternoon talking while they completed their project. Sophie asked Layla about Japan, the food she liked, and what school had been like there. Layla discovered that Sophie loved learning about different countries.

The next day, Sophie invited Layla to play with her friends at lunchtime. Soon, the other children realised that Layla was kind, funny and very creative. Before long, she was laughing with her new classmates every day.

Months later, the school held an International Day where pupils shared traditions from around the world. Layla wore a traditional Japanese outfit and taught her classmates how to fold colourful paper cranes. Everyone enjoyed learning something new, and Layla felt proud to share a part of her culture.

Looking around the classroom, Layla remembered how frightened she had felt on her first day. She realised that courage doesn't always mean being fearless. Sometimes, courage simply means taking one small step forward, even when you feel nervous.

From that day on, Layla never forgot that kindness, patience and friendship can help people feel at home—no matter where they come from.

Comprehension Questions

1. Why didn't Layla talk to the other children when she first arrived?

- A. She didn't like them.
- B. She was nervous because everything was new.
- C. She was angry with her teacher.
- D. She wanted to go back home immediately.

2. Where had Layla moved from?

- A. China
- B. South Korea
- C. Japan
- D. Singapore

3. Where did Layla sit on her first day?

- A. At the front of the classroom.
- B. Next to the teacher.
- C. In the middle of the classroom.
- D. At the back of the classroom.

4. Why did the other children think Layla wanted to be alone?

- A. She hardly spoke to anyone.
- B. She always read books.
- C. She told them to leave her alone.
- D. She spent all her time with the teacher.

5. What started the conversation between Sophie and Layla?

- A. A football match.
- B. Layla's cherry blossom drawing.
- C. A maths question.
- D. A lost lunchbox.

6. Who taught Layla to draw flowers?

- A. Her mother.
- B. Her grandfather.
- C. Her art teacher.
- D. Her grandmother.

7. What did Layla teach her classmates during International Day?

- A. How to cook sushi.
- B. How to speak Japanese.
- C. How to fold paper cranes.
- D. How to play a Japanese sport.

8. Which word best describes Sophie?

- A. Selfish
- B. Curious and kind
- C. Impatient
- D. Bossy

9. What lesson did Layla learn by the end of the story?

- A. Moving to a new place is impossible.
- B. It is better to stay quiet forever.
- C. Small acts of kindness and courage can lead to friendship.
- D. Everyone should be exactly the same.

10. Which statement best expresses the main message of the story?

- A. Winning competitions is the most important thing.
- B. Friends should always come from the same country.
- C. Kindness, patience and understanding help people feel they belong.
- D. It is best never to move to a new place.

Answers

1. **B**
2. **C**
3. **D**
4. **A**
5. **B**
6. **D**
7. **C**
8. **B**
9. **C**
10. **C**