

vcCASE 11

The Reflection in the Window

Eight-year-old Jason seems to be staring out the window of his second-grade classroom. “Jason,” Ms. Brown whispers, “you need to get back to the story you’re writing with your spelling words.” He nods, looks at the clock, then writes one more sentence on the paper in front of him. Within minutes, he is gazing out the window again. Ms. Brown sighs when she sees him off-task once again. She walks over to him and asks, “Do you think you need to move closer to my desk, where there won’t be any windows to distract you?”

“Maybe that would be a good idea,” Jason whispers.

Jason’s response surprises Ms. Brown. She had expected that her threat would entice him to finish his work. But instead, she now has to follow through with the threat and find a place for him at the front of the room.

Midway through the morning, as his classmates enjoy recess outside, Jason remains in the classroom to work on assignments that he could easily have completed before recess began. While he works at a table at the back of the room, Ms. Brown moves his desk so that it is just a few feet away from her own.

“Jason, this is the fourth time in a row that you’ve missed out on morning recess, yet every day you spend even more time looking out the window than you did the day before. These consequences-missing recess and sitting next to me-are the only things that I can think of to get you back on track.”

“Oh, I don’t mind, Ms. Brown. I’d rather be sitting near you than looking at your reflection in the window.” He is grinning from ear to ear.

Ms. Brown is both stunned and flattered. After thinking for a moment, she approaches Jason, stoops down to look him in the eye, and asks, “Why have you been staring at me?”

“Cause you’re beautiful. I like to watch you.”

“Oh, I see.... Tell me, Jason, have you been staying in from recess on purpose?”

Jason looks down at his feet. “Yes,” he whispers. “I love you, and it’s the only time I get you all by myself.” He then looks up at his teacher and asks, “Will you marry me, Ms. Brown...I mean, when I get big and everything?”

Ms. Brown smiles. “Jason, I would love to marry someone like you, but you see, I’m just not ready to get married.”

“So when do you think you’ll be ready?”

“Well, I’ll tell you what-if you still want to marry me when you get big-bigger than me and old enough to grow a mustache-then we’ll discuss it. Okay?”

He smiles. “You know, I *will* marry you. I won’t change my mind about that.”

“Jason, you will always hold a special place in my heart. In the meantime, I like for my guys to fulfill their responsibilities. One of your responsibilities is to do your work when I assign it. Okay?” Jason nods. “I wonder if we can think of another

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time-besides recess I mean-when you and I could spend a little time together each day.”

“Just me and you?” Jason asks.

Ms. Brown nods yes, then suggests, “How about if you become my morning helper since your mom drives you to school every day, and most of the time, you’re here at least 15 minutes before the first bell rings? Maybe you could help me get things ready in the classroom before school starts.”

“Wow, that would be great! Can I start tomorrow, Ms. Brown?”

“Sure, if it’s okay with your mom. How about if I call her this afternoon?”

Jason’s eyes light up, and he nods his head in enthusiastic agreement.

“But,” Ms. Brown says, “there’s just one little catch, Jason. I will let you be my morning helper *only* if you finish your work on time so that you can go to recess with the other children.”

Jason offers his hand and replies, “It’s a deal. Let’s shake on it to make it official.”

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NOTE: After three weeks of being “morning helper,” Jason decided that it was more fun playing ball with his peers on the playground before school started than spending time with his teacher.

Possible questions for “The Reflection in the Window”:

- 1. Use a behavior & perspective to explain why Jason isn’t getting his work done.*
- 2. Ms. Brown makes at least two mistakes when she threatens to move Jason’s desk near her own. What are they?*
- 3. Is it appropriate for Ms. Brown to give Jason extra attention each morning before school starts? Why or why not?*
- 4. It isn’t at all unusual for students to develop crushes on their teachers. What might you do if one of your students develops a crush on you?*