

**7 to 10**  
YEARS

BUILDING BEAUTIFUL INSIDE

**THE CAPTAIN OF EVERYTHING**

*A Story by Arkedelic*



**Parents' Guide**

# STENZONCO

## THE CAPTAIN OF EVERYTHING

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## THE CAPTAIN OF EVERYTHING

Zara liked things just so.

Perfect pencils, neat corners, clean plans. No mess, no fuss, no surprises.

So, when Ms. Mehra tapped her on the shoulder and said, “You’ll be class captain this week,” Zara nearly beamed out of her shoes.

Finally! A chance to do things right.

By the end of Day One, the Sunshine Squad wasn’t beaming quite as much.

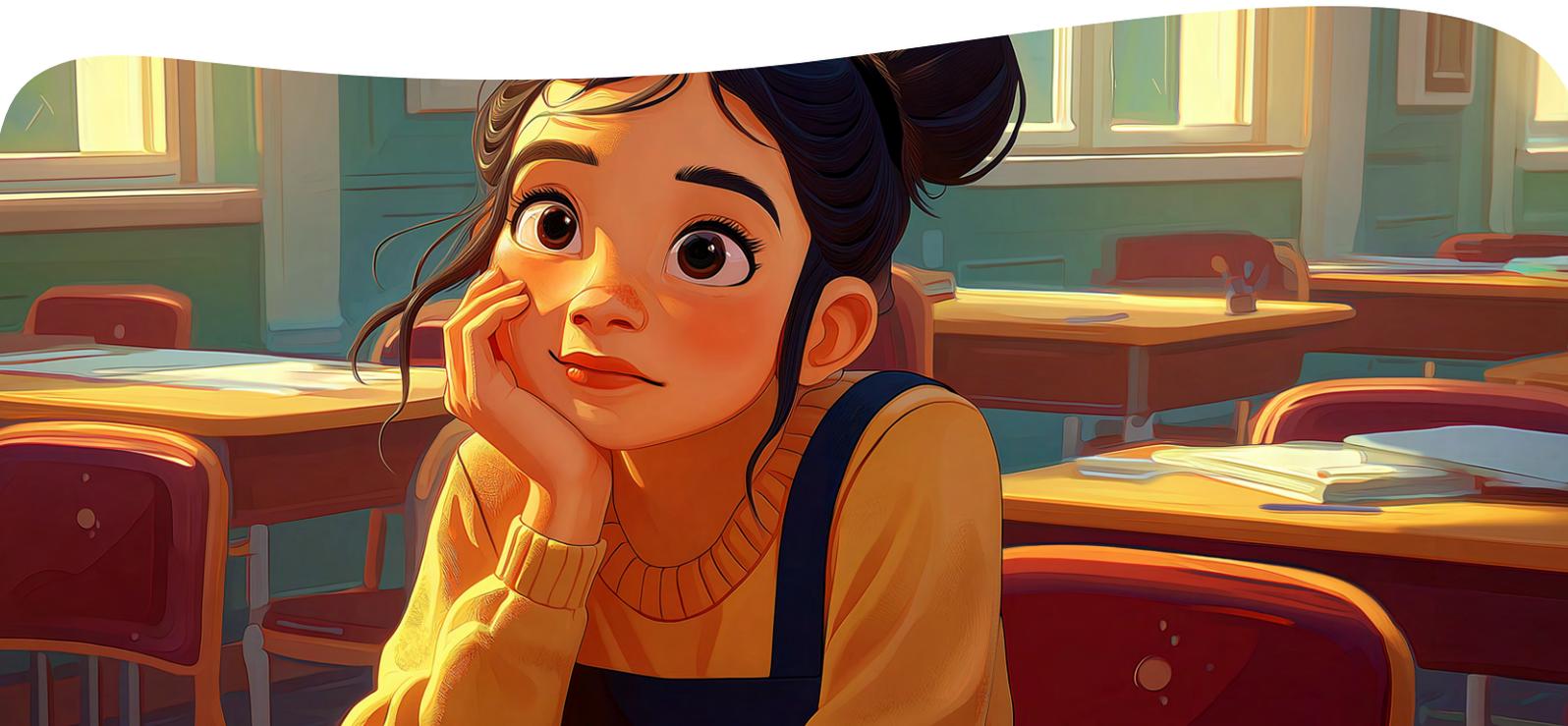
“Jane, sit up straight. You’re setting an example.”

“Sid, tuck your shirt in. Sloppy’s not cool.”

“Sam, stop humming. It’s distracting.”

She even made a list titled: Squad Suggestions for Self-Improvement. Printed. Highlighted. Laminated.

Nik whispered to Jane, “Is she trying to make us better... or smaller?”



By Wednesday, the Squad was groaning.

“Zara corrected my spelling three times,” Jane muttered.

“She told me how to tie my shoelaces!” Sid said. “Twice!”

Nik flopped into a beanbag. “She’s not class captain. She’s control captain.”

Zara didn’t hear any of this, of course. She was busy assigning roles for the group activity.

“Okay, Jane — you’re on decorations. Sid, you sort supplies. I’ll do the announcement part, obviously. Nik, just... don’t talk much. It’ll confuse the flow.”

Nik blinked.



Jane stood up slowly. “Zara... you know, we were all supposed to decide together.”

“But I’m class captain,” Zara said, holding up the badge like a shield. “This is part of my role.”

“Bossing us around isn’t,” Jane snapped.

The room fell quiet.

Zara flushed. “Fine. Do whatever you want.”

And she left the room.

Mario found her behind the reading shelf, drawing angry lines in her notebook.

“Want company?”

“No.”

He sat anyway.

“I didn’t mean to hurt anyone,” Zara muttered.

Mario nodded. “Sometimes we try so hard to get things right, we forget about the people around us.”

Zara’s eyebrows knitted. “I just... I like things neat. In control. It makes me feel safe.”

“And powerful?” Mario asked gently.

Zara didn’t answer.

He leaned back. “You know, when I first joined this school, I tried being the loudest. Fastest. In charge of every game. I thought that’s what made you matter.”

“And?” she asked.

“I had zero friends for two months,” Mario said with a grin.

That evening, Zara couldn’t sleep.

Her mind kept replaying Jane’s words, the Squad’s faces, Mario’s voice.

She’d been trying to be her best.

But maybe her “best” had run people over.

Next day, Zara walked in early.

Sid was fixing the supply shelf.

“Hey,” she said.

He nodded.





“Um. Want to help me rewrite the group plan? Together?”

Sid paused. “You sure?”

“I’m sorry for the other day,” she said, surprising even herself. “You’re not sloppy. Just... fun. I forgot that’s allowed.”

Sid smiled.

Soon, Jane and Nik joined them. Zara didn’t flinch when Jane reworked her colour palette. Or when Nik added a rap-style opening to the announcement.

By Friday, the activity was a hit.

The Squad stood proud — even Zara, though she wasn’t front and center.

Later, Ms. Mehra handed Zara a note.

“Leadership isn’t being above others. It’s standing beside them.”

Zara smiled.

That evening, she passed the class captain badge to the next person with a little bow.

Then whispered, “Just don’t laminate anything. Trust me.”

**THE END**

### VALUES FROM THE STORY



#### 1. How can I raise a child who doesn't need to control or put others down to feel strong?

**Context in the story:** Zara, eager to prove herself as class captain, tries to manage everything — correcting her friends, assigning roles, and controlling the project entirely. Her need for order and control slowly isolates her from the Sunshine Squad. Only after a confrontation and quiet reflection does she realise that true strength lies not in control, but in collaboration.

**Real-world connection:** Children may often act bossy or controlling not out of arrogance, but from insecurity or fear of losing structure. They might try to feel powerful by dictating others or always needing to be right. Recognising this need beneath the behaviour helps us guide them gently toward emotional growth and social awareness.

**How parents can use the story:** This story offers an opening for parents to talk with their child about why we sometimes act overly controlling — is it to feel in charge, to avoid uncertainty, or to be noticed? It encourages reflection on how that behaviour makes others feel and what true leadership or strength really looks like. Parents can help their child notice the difference between leading and overpowering, and praise moments where they show quiet confidence instead of domination. The story also invites honest discussions around anxiety, need for order, and how to use one's voice without shutting others down.



## 2. How can I encourage my child to grow past inappropriate habits and build better social behaviour?

**Context in the story:** Zara’s over-correcting and habit of taking over tasks are patterns that alienate her friends. Though her intentions aren’t bad, the behaviours are socially inappropriate. Through feedback and reflection, she begins to notice, correct, and slowly change those habits.

**Real-world connection:** Children may unknowingly develop behaviours, like interrupting, always correcting others, or bossing friends around, that strain relationships. These habits can stem from deeper emotional needs, but left unchecked, they interfere with forming healthy social bonds.

**How parents can use the story:** This story helps parents bring up tricky topics like “social tone” or “habits that hurt” without blame. They can ask their child which moments in the story felt uncomfortable or familiar — then gently connect it to their own experiences. Role-playing, journaling, or storytelling around these themes can encourage children to observe their own behaviours and take ownership of change. It also helps children learn that social skills aren’t just about being liked — they’re about building mutual respect.





### 3. How can I help my child accept feedback and learn from it without getting upset?

**Context in the story:** When Jane calls Zara out, and later Mario gently shares his own story, Zara has the choice to either defend herself or reflect. Though hurt at first, she takes time to think it through, and chooses change.

**Real-world connection:**

Feedback, especially from peers, can sting. Children may get defensive, teary, or withdraw. Yet learning to absorb constructive feedback calmly is key to growing resilience, maturity, and stronger relationships.

**How parents can use the story:** Use this story to explore with your child how it feels to be corrected, and what can help in that moment. Parents can model how they themselves handle feedback or even share a time when they got it wrong. The story shows that feeling upset is okay, but how we respond next really matters. It opens up space for your child to reflect on moments they were corrected, and whether they grew from it. Practising ‘pause and process’ techniques at home can make a huge difference in how a child builds emotional balance.

# Assessment Questions for “The Captain of Everything”



1. Why did everyone in the Squad slowly stop wanting to play when Jane took over everything?

**Purpose:**

Why did everyone in the Squad slowly stop wanting to play when Jane took over everything?

**Follow-up:**

How can I raise a child who doesn't need to control or put others down to feel strong?

2. Why did Jane feel she had to be the boss of every game and plan?

**Purpose:**

To show that some controlling behaviour comes from fear of being left out or losing importance, not just pride.

**Follow-up:**

How do I help my child understand, and grow from, being corrected or disciplined?

**3. What did Sam and Sid do to show they weren't enjoying Jane's ideas anymore?**

**Purpose:**

To help children notice how others are feeling, especially when someone looks bored, tired, or left out.

**Follow-up:**

How can I help my child become more emotionally aware and responsive?

**4. What changed when Mario suggested everyone pitch one idea instead of just Jane's?**

**Purpose:**

To build an understanding of fairness, and how sharing decisions can build stronger teams.

**Follow-up:**

How do I raise a child who values fairness, not just winning?

**5. How did Jane stay her cheerful self but still become a better team player?**

**Purpose:**

To show that changing how we behave doesn't mean we stop being ourselves, it means we become better together.

**Follow-up:**

How can I help my child grow without shaming or discouraging their natural personality?

# See you next Monday with another interesting story!

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