

STORY  
WALKER  
365

7 to 10  
YEARS

BUILDING BEAUTIFUL INSIDE

# THE SELFIE SUITCASE

A Story by Arkedelic



# STUDENT CONNECTION

## THE SELFIE SUITCASE

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## THE SELFIE SUITCASE

“Don’t!” Jane ducked behind Mario just as Nik raised his phone.

“But it’s a group shot!” Nik protested, camera still in the air.

“I said no.” Her voice was flat. Final.

Mario, now acting as a walking photo shield, gave a helpless shrug. “She’s been like this since we got off the train.”

It was true. On the first morning of their long-awaited hill vacation, Jane had already avoided two selfies, a family photo near the misty valley, and even a boomerang with Sam at the breakfast buffet. She kept tugging at her sleeves, adjusting her ponytail, and walking slightly behind everyone, like a shadow that didn’t want to be seen.

“Alright,” said Sid, always the diplomat. “Let’s click one without her. She can join if she feels like it.”

She didn’t.



That afternoon, the family gathered on the picnic lawn near the hill resort. Cousins ran across the grass, grown-ups opened snack boxes, and someone started a game of charades. Jane sat beside her cousin Anika, quietly pulling at her oversized hoodie.

“You okay?” Anika asked, passing her a handful of trail mix.

Jane shrugged. “I just don’t want to be in photos.”

Anika tilted her head. “Can I tell you a secret?” She pulled out her phone and opened the gallery. “This is me. Last year. I hated every picture.”

Jane peered at the screen. The girl in the picture looked nothing like the confident Anika beside her now. She looked stiff. Unsure. Almost like—



“Was it the way you looked?” Jane asked hesitantly.

“No,” said Anika. “It was the way I felt I looked. And the more I stared, the worse it got. My smile looked weird. My eyebrows didn’t match. I hated the mole on my cheek. But nobody else saw all that. Only me.”

Jane was quiet for a moment. “But what if other people do notice?”

Anika grinned. “Then they notice. And then they move on. People are too busy fixing their own sleeves and hiding their own moles to care for long.”

The next day, the group trekked to “Sunpoint Cliff,” a gentle trail that led to the most scenic overlook in the valley. The wind was

cold and clean. Everyone was laughing — except Jane, who hung back again.

At the top, Sid pulled out the Squad flag they always carried on trips — a hand-painted cloth with their names and a sun with sunglasses.

“Tradition,” he said, waving it.

“Group photo time!” Mario yelled, already forming a human pyramid.

Jane took a step back.

“Come on, Jane!” said Sam. “No pressure. But also... lots of pressure. We need your head to complete the sunshine!”

Jane hesitated.

Then Anika, already in position, made space with a smile. “We’re not perfect. Just photogenic in our own weird ways.”

Jane looked down at her shoes, then up at her friends — all grinning, wind-blown, muddy, mismatched, joyful.

For the first time in two days, she laughed. “Fine. One photo. But just one.”

Snap.





And just like that, the sun  
came out — both in the sky, and in her chest.

Later that night, tucked under thick blankets, Jane opened her suitcase. She took out a polka-dotted pouch she hadn't touched all trip. Inside were sunglasses, scrunchies, a lip gloss she never used, and a tiny note she had scribbled to herself weeks ago: "Smile. But only if you look nice."

She read it again. Then slowly, she tore it up and let the pieces fall into the wastebin by the bed.

From now on, she decided, her smile didn't need permission.

Not even from herself.

**THE END**

## THE MIRROR MESSAGE CHALLENGE

### What you need:

A mirror (hand mirror or wall mirror), a few sticky notes or paper slips, and coloured pens or markers.

### HOW TO DO:

- 1 Stand in front of a mirror and just look — not to check or fix, but to notice. Notice your eyes, your hair, your expressions, and how your face changes when you smile.
- 2 On sticky notes, write three messages you'd want your reflection to hear — not about looks, but about who you are.  
Examples:
  - “You make people laugh.”
  - “You try again, even when you're nervous.”
  - “You belong in every photo, just as you are.”
- 3 Stick these notes around your mirror for a week. Every morning, read them out loud (even in a funny voice if you want).

- 4 At the end of the week, remove the notes and make new ones. This time, based on things you did that made you proud.

**Reflection/Purpose:** This activity helps children move from seeing their reflection as something to judge to something to appreciate. By turning self-talk into positive truth statements, it replaces silent comparison with self-kindness. Over time, this daily “mirror talk” builds the quiet confidence that beauty begins in how you see yourself, not how perfectly you pose.

# FIVE FASCINATING FACTS ABOUT THE FASCINATING WORLD OF PHOTOGRAPHY



## 1. THE FIRST PHOTO TOOK EIGHT HOURS TO CAPTURE!

In 1826, a man named Joseph Nicéphore Niépce took the world's first photograph from his window in France. But his camera needed eight full hours of sunlight to finish the picture. No selfies possible that day!

## 2. CAMERAS ONCE NEEDED NO ELECTRICITY

Early photographers used light-sensitive chemicals on glass plates. When the lens opened, light burned the image onto the surface, like magic drawn by sunshine. Every photograph was literally made of light.

### 3. THE WORD “PHOTOGRAPHY” MEANS WRITING WITH LIGHT

It comes from two Greek words: photos (light) and graphé (to draw or write). So when you take a photo, you're not just clicking, you're actually drawing with light.

### 4. ANIMALS WERE SOME OF THE FIRST PHOTO SUBJECTS

In the 19th century, photographers captured pets, horses, and even birds before people smiled for portraits. Animals moved less during long exposures, making them perfect models. Though cats probably still refused to cooperate.



## 5. EVERY PHOTO HOLDS A HIDDEN STORY

Psychologists say that looking at old photos can boost memory, happiness, and gratitude. A picture isn't just what you see — it's a reminder of how you felt, who you were with, and what mattered most at that moment.



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### THE PHOTO THAT WASN'T POSTED

Camila scrolled through her camera roll for the tenth time that night. Every photo from the beach trip looked perfect, except the ones with her in it.



Her hair looked wild. Her smile looked crooked. Her skin looked shiny under the sun. So she deleted them.

By morning, her friends' photos were all over their school group chat. "Tag yourself!" someone wrote. Camila typed "next time" and closed the app.

Later that week, her cousin Javier came home from university, carrying an old, beaten camera. "It's ancient," he laughed, "but it takes pictures that feel real."

He aimed the lens at her. "Smile."

Camila covered her face. "No! I look weird in photos."

Javier lowered the camera. "Then don't pose — just be. That's the photo I want."

He clicked before she could protest.

When the picture printed, Camila saw herself — hair flying, eyes laughing, no filter, no perfection. Just... her.

Javier looked over her shoulder. “See? That’s someone who belongs in the frame.”

Camila blinked. For the first time, she didn’t want to delete it.

And then...

- What did Camila decide to do with the photo — keep it private or share it?
- How did her friends react when they saw the unedited picture?
- Did she start taking photos again — not to impress, but to remember?
- What might she discover about herself the next time she opens her camera?
- Could her confidence inspire others to post their “real” smiles too?

***Your turn to finish the story***

# See you next Monday with another interesting story!

Got feedback or a suggestion? We would love to hear it!  
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