

## Gratitude Glasses

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Clara was eleven and had sharp eyes that noticed everything... or almost everything.

She had a quick gaze, a frown ready at any time, and her attention was always on alert. She spotted every little thing: a crooked picture, a loose thread on a jumper, messy shoelaces, tangled hair, forgotten homework, clumsy moves.

But what she saw most was what was missing. The missing sweet in a bag. The hello that wasn't said. The thank you that never came. The unfair slice of cake. The rules that applied to some, but not to others. Clara had a sharp memory for anything that felt unfair. It was like her brain kept an invisible list of everything that was wrong.

Even when everything seemed fine, one small thing could ruin it. A great outing — but with a soggy sandwich. A fun party — but someone forgot her favourite game. An activity she loved — but someone bumped into her and didn't say sorry. That one thing stuck in her mind and spoiled the rest.

Clara wasn't mean. Not at all. She was kind, polite, helpful. But often annoyed. And tired of being annoyed. Because when you always notice what's wrong, you start to feel like the whole world is full of mistakes — and that you're the only one who sees them.

Sometimes she whispered, "That's not fair" or "Again?" or "Why is it always like this?" without even thinking. Like little sighs slipping out. She didn't like complaining. But she didn't like pretending either.

Her parents would gently say, “You know, maybe you could look at the good things too.” But Clara would cross her arms and answer, “I just want things to be fair.” And maybe, deep down, she thought she was the only one really paying attention. To everything. All the time.

She didn't want everything to be perfect. Just... fair. That everyone got what they deserved. That no one was forgotten.

And maybe, just maybe, that someone would notice what she did right too. But she never said that part out loud.

One Tuesday, the class was given a new activity. It wasn't a worksheet, or a maths exercise, or even a seasonal craft. No, that day, the headmistress entered the room with a guest: an old lady with white hair tied back in a bun, round glasses that slid down the tip of her nose and a twinkle in her eye. Her name was Jeanne, and she introduced herself as a former schoolteacher. She had come to tell them about a strange project called The Glasses of Gratitude.

Jeanne placed a large brown, striped suitcase on the desk, resembling the ones in the old films. As she opened it, a mixture of curiosity and surprise overcame the students. Inside were about twenty pairs of glasses. Strange glasses. No two were alike. Some were big, with thick frames, others were thin. Some were red, some blue, some neon yellow. Some had tinted lenses.

Some didn't even have lenses at all. Some were shaped like stars, others looked like sunglasses from the 80s. The children laughed, whispered and pointed.

"These glasses," explained Jeanne, gently closing the case, "are not for seeing better at a distance or up close. They're for seeing differently. To notice what we sometimes forget to see. What is there, right in front of us, but which we forget to love."

The students laughed a little. Some looked at each other doubtfully. Clara rolled her eyes. Another one of those things that wants to 'change the way we see the world'...

"Every day," continued Jeanne, "you will choose a time to put on your glasses. For five minutes. And your mission will be to spot something good. Not something extraordinary. Just a little piece of good. Something that makes you feel good or that seems beautiful, fair or kind. Then you write it down in a little notebook."

She took out a stack of spiral notebooks, all different. Some had covers with flowers on them, others with geometric designs, others with papers stuck on like patchworks. She handed them out at random, like a game. Clara received a midnight blue notebook with a silver border.

When the time came to choose a pair of glasses, Clara hesitated. She didn't really want to take part. But she felt she was being watched, and didn't want to make a fuss. So, she reached out and grabbed a purple pair with slightly tinted lenses. As she placed them on her nose, she felt a little dizzy.

The world was no different. But everything seemed a little... softer. As if someone had turned down the harsh light a little.

On the first day, Clara put the glasses on with the tip of her nose, half laughing inside. She didn't like these things that had to be done 'for her own

good'. She looked around, as if a revelation was about to fall into her lap. But it didn't. Everything was exactly as usual. Paul was making noise with his feet, tapping rhythmically against the chair. Sarah chatted continuously with her neighbour without raising her hand. Louis was chewing his gum with his mouth open, something that had always annoyed Clara. Nothing had changed. She felt annoyance creeping up her cheeks. She was going to take off the glasses and close the notebook for good.

But as she turned her head, her gaze fell on Anaïs. She was silently handing her eraser to a classmate. Not a word. Not a look that sought attention. Just a small gesture. Natural. Discreet. Almost invisible.

Clara frowned. It wasn't much. But it was... sweet.

She hesitated. Then, almost reluctantly, she took out her notebook and wrote in slightly hurried handwriting: Anaïs lent her eraser without expecting a thank you.

She closed the notebook quickly, as if she had written something secret. She wasn't sure why she had written it down. It wasn't a feat. Not a remarkable feat. But it was true. And she had seen it. And, somehow, it had made her day a little sweeter.

The next day, she forgot the glasses, but not the notebook. During playtime, she wandered around a bit, her hands in her pockets, her eyes distracted. She didn't really feel like writing anything down. She thought the idea of the glasses was nice, but not very useful without the glasses themselves. And then, as she passed by the playground, she saw Mr Karim, the teacher of the class next door, stop, bend down and pick up an empty can left on the

ground. He didn't frown. He didn't sigh with annoyance. He didn't look for the culprit. He just picked it up, slid it into a bin and set off again as if nothing had happened.

Clara stood still. She observed the simple gestures, the tranquillity of the movement. No reproaches. No speeches. Just an adult doing the right thing, without drawing attention to it. She felt a little pang in her chest, something like astonishment mixed with respect.

She took out her notebook and wrote, a little more slowly this time: Mr Karim picked up a can without telling anyone off.

Then she stood there for a few moments, pen in the air, as if to commit the image to memory.

On Thursday, she put her glasses back on and, for the first time, decided to turn them slightly towards her. She was drawing an autumn landscape for a presentation. Usually, she was in a hurry, wanting everything to be perfect without really enjoying it. But on this day, she found herself enjoying the colours she was mixing, finding the brown she had obtained by chance pretty, and smiling at the way her trees seemed to dance. She felt her body relax, her mind less critical. It wasn't perfect, but it was pleasant.

She wrote in her notebook: "I enjoyed colouring without trying to make everything perfect. It was pretty and I felt good.

Little by little, Clara continued. Her glasses became a discreet ritual, a moment to herself. She didn't always put them on at the same time, or for the same reasons. Sometimes she forgot, but the notebook remained there,

ready to receive anything she noticed. A compliment overheard between two students. A hand on a shoulder after a fall. A funny word that relieves tension. A door held open without being asked. A "thank you" without expecting a return. She wrote things down. Sometimes reluctantly, sometimes grumbling inside. But she took note.

And something new, she was also noticing what was good for her. The taste of her favourite fruit, perfectly ripe. A reading that had made her laugh. A moment when she had dared to speak her mind without anyone laughing. She was learning to recognise the small, invisible pleasures of everyday life.

One day, at the end of the day, she caught a classmate reading on the floor in a quiet corner of the library. She was about to say something like: "We're not allowed to be here. It was automatic, like a rule to be enforced. But she stopped. The girl was there, legs crossed, eyes plunged into her book, face relaxed, completely elsewhere. Not disturbing. Not breaking. Just sitting there.

Clara stood there for a moment without saying anything. And instead of correcting, she observed. She sat further back and took out her notebook. She wrote: Read in peace. Just read. And I liked not interrupting.

The weeks passed. Jeanne came back to ask if anyone wanted to share a reading from their notebook. Clara didn't raise her hand. But she did open her notebook to the page where she had stuck a label: What I couldn't see before.

She noted:

- One friend's hand on another's shoulder.
- The sound of rain on tiles.

- A kind word from the lady in the canteen.
- The look on the librarian's face when she talks about a book she loves.
- A snack shared without being asked.

And one day, she simply noted: I found myself smiling for no reason.

Clara hasn't changed at all. She still sees the shoelaces that aren't done properly, the words that aren't right, the things that are forgotten. But now she also sees the rest. And often, the rest is enough to make her day.

She keeps her glasses in her bag. Sometimes she forgets them. But never for very long. Because she's realised that gratitude isn't about saying thank you at the drop of a hat. It's about noticing what feels good, even when you're not expecting it.

Since then, Clara hasn't just been looking for what's missing. She also knows how to see what's there, even when it's small, discreet or silent. It's things like this that, put together, make a day more beautiful. And now, instead of carrying a bag full of annoyances, she's carrying a pocket full of little treasures. And that changes everything..