

Premise: *Sid and his grandparents tell a bedtime story to a curious, friendless, and dejected Rana during her bedtime in order to assure her she can make friends, too, and that Sid wasn't always as optimistic and social as he normally is now.*

That evening, Sid strolled down the sidewalk, humming a jovial tune to himself. He smiled at the beautiful sunset dropping below the horizon and all the pretty sparkles in the sky from above.

"Wow! What a day." He whispered.

Once he'd reached home, he skipped right up to the doormat without a hitch. He fixed up his antennae, squirrel tail, and backpack straps as he got ready to greet his family like usual. Taking a deep breath in order to get his nerves out of his system.

"Here we go," Sid whispered as he gripped onto the door handle.

He burst inside and gave his old-fashioned smile to his family.

"Hey, everybody! Long time no see." Sid beamed.

"Good evening, Sid," Sandra waved, fastening a screw on her machine in the kitchen.

"How was school?" Bob asked, sitting on the couch while reading the Sports periodical.

"Oh, you know. The usual," Sid shrugged as he hung his backpack on the rack. "My friends and I had a fun time hanging out together, though we were given a new project today, so I need to get to my room if I want to finish it."

"That sounds nice," Bob replied.

Rana sighed and cast her blue eyes away. Sid noticed her pigtails drooping as she played with her multi-colored blocks on the coffee table. She hadn't said a word to him since he got home.

"Something wrong, Rana?" Sid asked.

Her mouth didn't move. She just sat there, still fiddling with her blocks. His heart ached as he looked at her face. A deep frown smothered itself all over her lips in a way that he'd hadn't seen in a while. Rana caught him staring and replaced her drooping face with a scrunched up one.

"What?!" she shouted.

"Sid, stop bothering your sister!" Bob demanded, lowering his newspaper.

"Oh, sorry. I'm just worried about her."

"Rana, what's wrong?" Sandra asked.

"Nothing."

The others stared at each other for a few seconds while she continued playing. Sid scratched his head. He didn't get it. Why was she so upset? Did he accidentally do something wrong? Was she still depressed about that incident regarding their parents? If it's the latter, then why won't she tell them that? They all know about it and still miss them so much. Maybe we should just take her word for it and change the subject.

"Uh... Dinner's almost ready, sweetie," Sandra proclaimed.

But Rana still said nothing. Instead, her face fell as she grabbed all of her blocks. The others all stared at her with concerned faces while she got up from the floor and sauntered away. Some of them fell to the ground, prompting her to sigh and pick up after herself. She went to her room, where the lights were off.

After dropping her blocks in her pink and orange toy bin and closing it shut, Rana got in her bed and pulled the covers over her. She drowned out the muffled sounds of the others calling her name. Her eyes were watery. Her mouth trembled. She just wanted to be left alone.

But her family entered her room, anyway. The flick of the light switch came on and she held a part of her blanket close to her.

"Rana?" Sid asked. "Rana, we know you're upset, but can you at least tell us?"

"Go away," she muffled.

"Rana, sweetheart, we're your family and we just want to help you," Sandra chimed in. "But we can't do that if you don't tell us what's wrong."

"Nothing's wrong. Just leave me alone."

Sandra motioned her husband to go to her and he obliged. He strode slowly over to her and sighed.

"Rana? We know you just need some time for yourself and we understand that. But we just want you to know that we love you and we're always here for you whenever you need it, okay?"

Silence filled the room for a while. After a few seconds, Bob and the other two quietly left her alone. Finally, Rana sighed and unwrapped the covers off, prompting them to halt.

"Okay, I'll tell you."

"You will?" Sid asked.

"Yeah," she replied.

The three walked back inside and sat on the bed next to her. Working up the courage to share her feelings, she wiped her tears off her face and sighed.

"I'm just feeling a little left out," she replied.

"Why?" Bob asked.

"Because I don't have any real friends and every time I try to make some, I just feel so shy and awkward that they turn away from me."

"What about your animal friends?" Sandra chimed. "Do you still have them?"

"No. I couldn't find them and I don't know where they are or why they're gone." She explained before hanging her head in sorrow. "Maybe they just don't want to be my friends anymore."

"Oh, honey." Sandra hugged Rana while she started sobbing.

"Don't worry. I'm sure they'll come back to you. And I know you'll make some friends. You're a sweet and beautiful girl, after all." Sid commented.

"That's nice, but what about you? You've always been so great at making friends before."

"Ohhhh..." Sid nervously chuckled.

"You'd be surprised by who Sid used to be *before* he became that." Bob said.

Rana sniffled and cleaned her eyes again. "What do you mean?"

"Maybe a story will cheer you up." Sandra answered. "Do you want to hear it?"

"Yes."

"Okay. So... it all started when your older brother was just about your age. Back when he was a regular human and your parents were still alive..."

About 9 years ago, a blue van drove through the street, passing by car after car before eventually halting at a red streetlight. Inside the car was a younger Sid, who was sitting in his booster seat, sweating. Maybe it was the sun beaming down through the window near him or maybe it could be the sense of dread filling up his mind as they waited for the light to change, but whatever it was, he didn't seem all too happy about where they were going.

"Uh... Mom?"

"Yes, sweetie?" Laurel answered.

"I don't think I feel so good. My tummy feels bad. Can we go back home, please?"

"Oh, Sid. I know it's your first day, and it's a big change. We understand that you're not ready to leave home, but once you get used to it, you'll have a lot of fun there."

"But I don't wanna go there. I don't like it. I wanna go back home."

"Don't say that. You're going to love it there. You'll make friends, learn something new and learn to appreciate your place in the world."

"But... I don't like it there. Mom, I want to go home."

"Sid, we're just about to reach the school. Please, just hold on for a little longer."

"C'mon, Sid. It's just the first day. Don't make such a big deal out of it." His dad, Stephen, insisted. "Besides, you'll probably make lots of friends."

"But if you really don't feel very good right now, we'll turn back now and try again when you're well, okay?"

"But I feel boiling. I really don't want to go there."

Sandra felt her son's forehead to see if he had a fever. She sighed when she realized it wasn't a fever, but the sun shining down on him.

"Here," she said, picking up his chair and placing it on the other seat next to him. "Better?"

He nodded. "The sun's gone. It's much cooler now."

Sandra smiled. "Much better."

The traffic light turned green, and the van continued on its way.

"Mom, I really don't want to be here. I wanna go home."

"Okay, honey. It's fine if you're not ready yet. We'll turn back."

"Yay!" Sid cheered.

"Uh, honey?" Stephen said. "I don't know if you saw this, but we're already here."

"We are?" Laurel asked, turning to see the school right next to them. "Oh."

"Aww!" Sid sighed. "But I thought you said we were going back home!"

"I just thought it'd be easier to reverse back than to drive around the block."

Sid groaned. "No. I want to go back! I want to go back home!"

"Sid, please? We're already here, so why don't you try it first and then you can decide if you like it or not?"

"Fine," He grumbled.

"I'm sorry, honey." Laurel said.

Laurel and Stephen got out of the car. Stephen opened the side door and unhooked Sid from his booster seat before helping him get down to the ground and walking him inside with Laurel.

"Hey there," the teacher waved. "My name is Mrs. Martin."

"Hi. I'm Laurel and this is my husband, Stephen."

"Hey."

"And who's this little bundle of joy?" She asked towards Sid, who whimpered as he grabbed onto his mom's dress.

"Oh, this is Sid. He's very nervous about coming here."

"I know how that feels, but this is a nice place filled with friendly students who want to learn."

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"So, did you learn anything, Rana?" Sandra whispered in a delicate tone.

Rana nodded. "Yeah," she yawned, blinking her eyes. "I learned that... that..."

Her words became muffled as she plumped down on her pillow, her body sinking into the luxurious bed. She continued talking in her sleep, but the sound was almost impossible for their ears to pick up.

Before they knew it, Rana had drifted off to dreamland. They were satisfied. "Well, she looks like she's doing better now..." Sid whispered.

"Yeah." Sandra replied. "Now, let's let her sleep."

The last of their fleet stepped out of their Rana's room and shut the door, leaving her to rest peacefully.