

A Stamp Told Me

“Hi, Todd,” Tess called as she walked up to his locker. “I had a gift for you.” She handed a Corn Flakes box full of empty envelopes.

“How nice of you, Sweetie,” Todd said. He had a big smile on his face. He thumbed through the box. Then he put them in his locker. Tess left to go to her French class. Todd walked with his friend, Mitch, to math class.

Mitch said, “Your girlfriend is kind of odd. I saw the gift she gave you. Eight looked like stuff to recycle.”

Todd laughed. He said, “Mitch, you don’t know a good thing when you see it. That wasn’t junk. Each envelope has a stamp on it. Every time Tess sees a different stamp, she saves it for me. Some of them could be rare.”

“I’m glad Tess isn’t just giving you junk. Maybe she isn’t so odd after all!” Mitch laughed. “I didn’t know you saved stamps. That is kind of a boring hobby, isn’t it?”

“Not really,” Todd said. “all I learned a lot about the world with my stamps. For example, I had a 5¢ stamp of a mailman from the year 1963. The stamp says ‘1863-1963 City Mail Delivery’. Did you know that letter carriers started taking mail to houses and in 1863?”

“Do I care that much about letter carriers?” Mitch asked.

“Fine.” Todd said. “What do you care about? I bet there are stamps that you would like to see.”

“What about race car drivers?” Mitch asked.

“Oh, yes, there are race car drivers,” Todd said. “I don’t have any yet, but I’m looking for the Richard Petty stamp. Maybe there will be one in that box Tess gave me.”

“There’s a Richard Petty stamp? Maybe you are right. Stamp collecting might not be boring,” Mitch said.

“My boss gave me the whole English Royal Family in stamps. She has some friends in England, so she gets English stamps. I have Princes William and Harry, Princess Diana, Prince Charles, and Queen Elizabeth. I am going to put them in my stamp album this afternoon. Would you like to come and see how I do it?” Todd asked.

“Yes, I would.” Mitch said, “I just have to text my roommate Tom to let him know I’ll be home later. Todd and Mitch took the bus to Todd’s house.

At Todd’s house, they went into a large closet under the steps. Todd said, “My parents let me keep my stamp table here all the time. It saves me a lot of time not having to put it away. So, even though it is tight in here, I like it.” Todd showed his Royal Family stamps to Mitch.

Then, Todd picked up a small piece of see-through paper. He said, “This is a stamp hinge. I will stick it to the back of the stamp and to the stamp page. That way, I can easily remove a stamp if I want to.” Todd started putting stamp hinges on his Royal Family stamps. Then he picked up a stamp album page. He said, “You have to be careful to always put the stamps on the right side of the page. I do not put stamps on the back side.” He stuck the four stamps on the page. At the top of the page, he wrote “England’s Royal Family.”

Then he put the page into his album. He looked at Mitch and asked, “Would you like to see all my stamps?”

“Sure,” Mitch said.

Todd flipped to the front of the album. “The first few pages are my animal stamps. First, I have my whole families. I have stamps with the mom, dad, and baby for cows, lions, and pigs. I have two family members for dogs, cats, and swans. You can see I left space to finish the families. Someday I will find them!

“On the next few pages, I have flag stamps. See my collection of U.S. flag stamps? And, look at the state flag of Wyoming. Isn’t that buffalo cool?”

“I like this one with the Brooklyn Bridge on it,” Mitch said pointing. “So, the Brooklyn Bridge was 100 years old in 1983. I didn’t think it was that old. But 1983 is a long time ago. How do you get such old stamps?”

“My uncle cleaned out his attic. He found a bunch of old letters and gave me all the envelopes. It took me four months to sort them all and put them in my book.”

“I think I’ll ask my parents if they have any old letters in the garage. I would like to see what those old stamps could tell me!” Mitch said. “Thanks for showing me your stamps. And, I’ll never call stamp collecting boring again!”

What do you think?

1. Mitch knew very little about stamp collecting. Why do you think he thought it was boring?
2. Mitch thanked Todd for showing him the stamp collection. Do you think he was just being nice or do you think he really meant it? Explain.

What would you do?

Mitch wanted to find stamps with race car drivers. Todd was excited about his Royal Family stamps. If you were collecting stamps what would you like to find on a stamp?