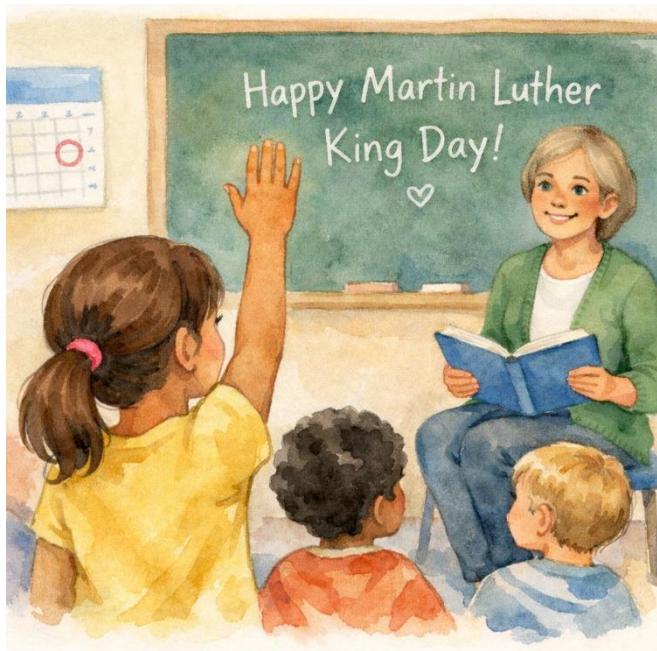


The Dream We Share

By Linda Asato

On Monday morning, the classroom felt a little different. There were no spelling tests written on the board, and the calendar had a big red circle around the day.



Maya raised her hand. “Mrs. Ellis,” she asked, “why don’t we have schoolwork today? It says *Martin Luther King Day* on the board.”

Mrs. Ellis smiled and closed the book she had been reading.

“That’s a very good question, Maya,” she said. “Today we remember a man named **Martin Luther King Jr.**”

She pulled her chair closer and spoke gently, as if the story mattered very much—because it did.

“Martin Luther King Jr. believed something very important,” Mrs. Ellis explained. “He believed that everyone should be treated fairly, kindly, and with respect—no matter what they look like or where they come from.”

The class listened quietly.

“When Martin saw unfairness,” she continued, “he didn’t yell or hurt others. He used his words. He chose peaceful ways to help people understand that kindness is stronger than hate.”

Maya thought about that as the bell rang for recess.

Outside, Maya noticed something she hadn’t before. Near the fence, a small group of kids were whispering and laughing. Another child stood nearby, kicking at the dirt, pretending not to hear—but Maya could tell he did.

Her stomach felt tight.

She remembered what Mrs. Ellis had said. *Everyone deserves kindness.*

Maya walked over slowly with her classmates. “Do you want to play with us?” she asked the child.

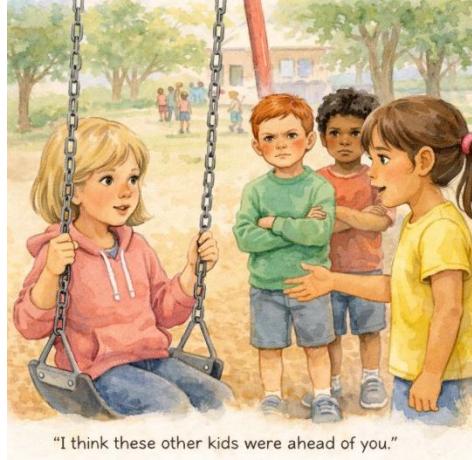
The whispering stopped. The laughter faded. After a moment, one of the boys shrugged.

“Sure,” another boy said.

The child’s shoulders relaxed, and he started to smile.

A little later, Maya and her friends stopped near the swings.

One child had jumped ahead in line. The kids waiting looked frustrated but stayed silent.



Maya took a breath. *Words can change things.*

“Hey,” she said calmly, “I think these other kids were ahead of you.”

The child on the swing paused, then hopped off. “Oh... sorry,” she said.

The line moved again, and the waiting felt easier.

Near the ball field, voices grew louder.

“It’s not fair!” someone shouted.

“You always do that!” another yelled as the game stopped completely.

Maya hesitated, then stepped closer.

“Maybe we can figure this out together,” she said. “What if we take turns being captain?”

The shouting softened. A few kids nodded.

“Okay,” someone said.

The ball game continued again.

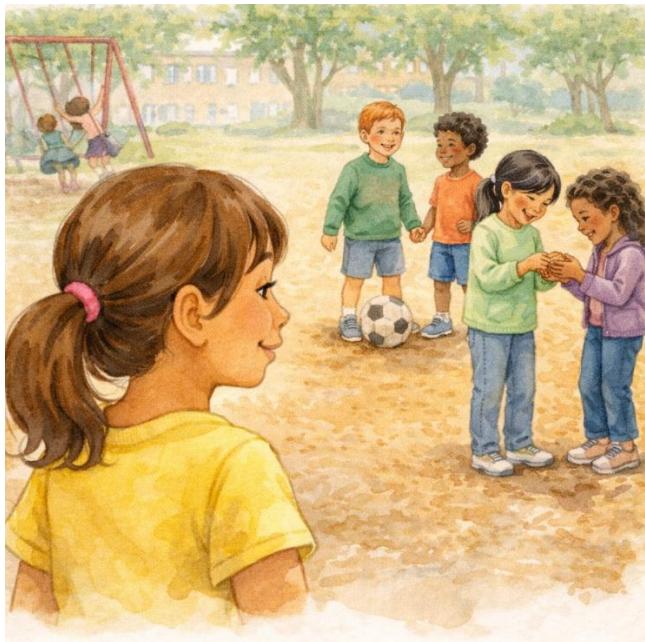
Maya stood back and watched. Nothing big had happened. No rules were changed. No one was in trouble. But something felt different. Something had changed.

Back in class, Mrs. Ellis asked, “Did anyone see kindness today?”

Maya raised her hand.

“We tried to fix something that wasn’t fair,” she said. “We remembered what Martin Luther King believed.”

Mrs. Ellis smiled. “That,” she said, “is how dreams grow.”



Maya looked around at her classmates—laughing, sharing, belonging. She realized something important. Martin Luther King’s dream wasn’t just from long ago. It was something they could live out every day—with their words, their choices, and their kindness.

And that made Maya smile all afternoon.