

DO YOU KNOW

That Girl

SITTING OVER THERE?



I would never have guessed that following a simple prompting could lead to so much.

By Sierra H. Hess

I gazed at the girl sitting alone at the table across from mine. Her long hair hid her face, but I could sense her loneliness as she idly scooted food around her tray. I couldn't help but feel selfish watching her eat by herself when I was surrounded by friends.

One of my friends suddenly elbowed me. "Sierra! I'm talking to you. Wake up!" My focus snapped back to the conversation at our lunch table.



"Oh, sorry! I wasn't paying attention. Hey, do you guys see that girl sitting over there?" I nodded toward the young woman eating alone. "Do you know her name?"



My friends shrugged and returned to their conversation. Their laughter muddled into the noise of the cafeteria while my mind wandered back to the girl at the table. The thought came that I should do something to help her. “But what if she thinks I’m weird or if she’s waiting for her other friends?” I silently objected. But the thought returned, and I knew what I needed to do.

I shuffled nervously toward her, and she glanced up when I reached her table.

“Do you want to sit with us?” I asked.

She half nodded, gathered her belongings, and followed me as my friends scooted over to give her room to sit.

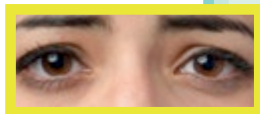
“I have two classes with you,” I said, “but I don’t think I’ve met you before. What’s your name?”

“Kelsey,” she said. Her reply was barely audible.

For the rest of lunch, my friends and I asked about her interests and school schedule, trying to help her feel welcome. I could tell she was relieved not to be sitting alone. When lunch was over, a warm, light feeling filled my heart.

In the following weeks, Kelsey continued to sit with us at lunch. While her face always made it seem like she was fine, I could see pain in her eyes. She didn’t talk much about her background, but I could sense that there was a lot of stuff she was trying to keep hidden or forget about.

Months flew by, and I grew to love Kelsey.



We enjoyed each other’s friendship. I was amazed by her lofty dreams and loving personality.

One day in our computer class, the teacher moved me next to Kelsey, who seemed to be struggling with some of the material. We spent hours working together, and I watched happily as her grade inched up to an A. For one assignment, we created time lines that included 10 major events in our lives. When Kelsey completed hers, she tapped me on the shoulder.

“Do you want to see my time line?” She grinned.

“Yeah, sure!” I looked over at her computer. Stifling a gasp, I read some of the sad events that had filled Kelsey’s life. My surprise reached its peak, however, when I read the final event on her time line: *I met Sierra*.

Stunned, I hugged her and whispered, “Oh, Kelsey. Thank you.”



Toward the end of the school year, Kelsey suddenly moved to California. About a year after that, Mrs. Cummings,* who worked at my school, told me she wanted to talk with me. She hesitantly explained that Kelsey had passed away over the weekend. Tears started pouring down my cheeks. Mrs. Cummings didn’t know—or at least couldn’t tell me—how it happened, but she did tell me some things about Kelsey that I hadn’t known before. Her life on earth was challenging. I cried for several days, but even through my tears, I was comforted because of the plan of salvation.

Back in that lunchroom, when I saw a girl sitting alone, Heavenly Father knew she was a daughter of His who needed a friend. He knows our needs and knows how we can meet the needs of others. Though it’s easy to ignore the promptings of the Spirit at times, I will forever be glad for the day I listened to the Spirit at lunch. **NE**

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* Names have been changed.