

A RUMOR ABOUT ME AT SCHOOL

A Friendship Story About Rumors, Hurt Feelings & Speaking Up

Mason noticed something felt strange as soon as he walked into school. Usually, a few classmates said hello or waved at him in the morning, but today some kids looked at him and whispered to each other. One person even stopped talking when he walked by. At first, Mason tried not to think about it. Maybe I am imagining things, he told himself.

By lunchtime, the strange feeling had grown stronger. When Mason sat down near his usual group, two classmates suddenly stood up and moved to another table. His stomach dropped. Across the cafeteria, he heard someone whisper his name. Then he heard another sentence that made his whole body freeze: "They said Mason cheated during the science fair."

Mason stared down at his lunch. He had not cheated. He had worked hard on his project for weeks, and now people were acting like he had done something wrong. His chest felt tight, and his face felt warm. He wanted to stand up and tell everyone it was not true, but another part of him wanted to disappear and pretend nothing was happening.

For the rest of the day, Mason felt upset, embarrassed, and confused. At recess, he sat quietly by himself and kept replaying the same thought in his mind: What if everyone believes this?

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Story Continued

That afternoon, Mason's teacher noticed that he seemed quieter than usual and asked if something was wrong. At first, Mason shrugged because talking about it felt embarrassing. But after a moment, he quietly explained what he had heard in the cafeteria. His teacher listened carefully and said, "That sounds really hurtful. Rumors can spread quickly, but that does not make them true."

The next day, Mason found out that Tyler had repeated the rumor. Mason felt nervous, but he walked over before class and asked, "Did you tell people I cheated?" Tyler looked uncomfortable and stared at the floor. "I heard someone else say it," he admitted. "I thought it was true."

Mason felt frustrated. "But it was not," he said. Tyler nodded. "I know," he said quietly. "I am sorry. I should have checked before repeating it." For a moment, Mason stayed quiet. He still felt hurt, but he also felt relieved that someone had finally listened. Things did not feel perfect right away, but Mason learned something important: rumors can hurt people, and words matter more than we sometimes realize.

Big Idea

Before believing or repeating something, it is important to stop and think.

HOW DID MASON FEEL?

Understanding Big Feelings

CHECK THE FEELINGS MASON MAY HAVE FELT:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ☐ Hurt | ☐ Embarrassed | ☐ Angry | ☐ Worried |
| ☐ Confused | ☐ Lonely | ☐ Sad | ☐ Nervous |

What clues from the story helped you decide?

WHAT WAS MASON THINKING?

Mason may have been thinking:

- | |
|--|
| "What if everyone believes this?" |
| "Why would someone say this about me?" |
| "Maybe people think badly about me now." |

Have you ever worried about what people were saying?

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ☐ Yes | ☐ No | ☐ Sometimes |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|

FACT OR RUMOR?

Sometimes people hear things that are not true.

Which is safer?

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| ☐ Believe it right away | ☐ Ask questions first | ☐ Check the facts |
|--|--|--|

Big Idea

Words can spread fast, so it is important to think before repeating something.

WHAT COULD MASON DO NEXT?

Problem Solving Skills

When something hurtful happens, it can feel hard to know what to do.

1. PAUSE BEFORE REACTING

Big feelings can make situations feel even bigger.
A calmer thought: "I can slow down before reacting."

2. TALK TO A TRUSTED ADULT

Mason could:

☐ talk to a teacher

☐ talk to a parent

☐ ask for help

3. SPEAK UP CALMLY

Mason could say:
"That rumor is not true."
"I want to explain what happened."

4. THINK BEFORE REPEATING THINGS

Ask yourself:
"Do I know this is true?"
"Could this hurt someone?"

Friendship Reminder

Words can hurt people, even when we do not mean them to.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Reflection Worksheet

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD A RUMOR?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Sometimes

HOW WOULD YOU FEEL?

☐ Hurt

☐ Embarrassed

☐ Angry

☐ Worried

My feeling:

What is one kind thing you could do?

What could make the situation worse?

What could help solve the problem?

HELPFUL THOUGHTS FOR BIG FEELINGS

When Rumors Happen

When something unfair happens, try a helpful thought:

- ☐ I do not have to believe every rumor.
- ☐ I can speak up calmly.
- ☐ I can ask for help.
- ☐ Other people's words do not define me.
- ☐ Kindness matters.
- ☐ I can choose not to spread rumors.

WHICH THOUGHT HELPS YOU MOST?

Circle one.

MY HELPFUL THOUGHT

ONE THING I WANT TO TRY NEXT TIME

Friendship Reminder

Kind words build trust. Rumors can hurt feelings.