

Save Me A Seat

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In the book “Save Me A Seat”, the main characters are Joe and Ravi. Joe is a boy with a disorder called APD and has lived in America his whole life, but his best friends moved away last summer. He is known to be bullied by a kid named Dillon Samreen, who, like Ravi, is also an Indian and likes to steal things. Ravi is a boy who wears glasses and just moved to America from India. It is the first day of fifth grade, and Ravi and Joe have the same teacher, Mrs. Beam. When Mrs. Beam asks Ravi to introduce himself, people in his class begin to laugh at how he stands up and speaks when Mrs. Beam calls on him. Later, in class, he sees Dillon (the person who bullies Joe) smile at him, and Ravi thinks that he wants to be his friend. At lunch, Ravi sits at the same table as Joe, but they do not speak to each other. Ravi, however, says to himself that the next day, he will sit next to Dillon. At the end of lunch, however, Dillon decides to grab Joe and ask him if the new lunch monitor (his mom) is familiar. As a result, this makes Joe mad at his mom for the rest of the day for breaking the promise that she made at the beginning of the day. However, later, Mr. Barnes, Joe’s 4th grade teacher, tells him that the world is full of Dillon Samreens, which he remembers. Meanwhile, after Ravi tells Ravi’s father about his new “friend”, Dillon, Ravi’s father encourages Ravi to tell him about his IQ of 135 and his skill at cricket. The next day, at school, Ravi is eager to show everyone how smart he is. In math, Ravi is asked to solve a math problem, but someone bangs his knee against his desk, and hits his forehead. He believes that Joe was the one who did it, when in reality, it was Dillon. Ravi calls Joe “Big Foot” and then surprises everyone by solving a very complex problem, but the teacher criticizes the way he solved the problem. As Ravi returns to his desk, Dillon trips Ravi and blames it on Joe. He then steals some of Ravi’s mechanical pencils. However, Ravi believes what Dillon says and also blames it on Joe. The next subject is social studies, and when Mrs. Beam asks someone to tell her what the meaning of “assimilated” means, Ravi tells her that it means to consume and incorporate nutrients into the body after digestion. Mrs. Beam tells him that it is correct, but it doesn’t apply to the text that they are reading, confusing Ravi. Joe is chosen to read the text, but right before he can, a teacher named Mrs. Frost asks for Ravi and Joe. Ravi, however, is offended, saying that he has a really IQ and that he doesn’t belong with Mrs. Frost and Joe. On top of that, he really wants to sit with his new “friend”, Dillon, at lunch. Ravi is asked to listen to a story, while Joe reads an article in Sports Illustrated. Ravi overhears Joe talking about M&M’s and eventually decides to leave early, and he grabs an M&M that looks like two M&M’s combined with each other, which Joe finds lucky. On the way back to class, however, Ravi is told by Mrs. Frost that his assumption about Joe not being smart isn’t true, and that he should remember that assumptions are wrong.

When Ravi gets home, he refuses to talk to his mom or grandma. Her mom advises him to give Mrs. Beam a box of naan khatais (cookies). He follows this advice, and the next day, makes Mrs. Beam happy. He reminds himself of his mom’s birth mark on her tongue, which represents magical power. During class, Joe receives a drawing from Dillon and notices that it is a picture

of a classroom and himself wearing a shirt saying "I'm Stupid". This annoys Joe. Gym happens next, and Ravi is selected to be on Jaslene's team, when he wanted to be on Dillon's team. Joe is chosen to be on Dillon's team. Ravi gets hit on the shoulder by Dillon by a flying baseball, so Ravi is taken to the nurse. The next period is lunch, and Ravi finally gets to sit with Dillon and his friends. However, Joe's mom comes to break up a food fight and breaks Joe's promise again by accidentally getting the attention of Dillon. After that, Dillon makes Ravi try some chili. However, to Ravi's horror, there is beef in the chili, as Ravi isn't supposed to eat beef. Dillon and his friends, however, find this funny, and begin to start making fun of everything that Ravi has done in the past. He calls Ravi "Curryhead" because of the food that he eats. Ravi, feeling extremely upset and betrayed, decides to leave. The next morning, Ravi does not want to go to school because of the events that occurred before. However, his parents and grandparents tell him that quitting isn't an option. They also feel that Ravi is coming down with a cold, so they make him stay home for the day and feel better. They also make sure that he gets the personal reflection assignment done. Joe also stays home since his dad has come back home. They have a discussion about Dillon and how he bullies Joe, which only makes Joe more upset towards his parents. Both of these events, however, help Ravi and Joe find out what to do for their personal reflection assignment, as Joe decides to bring a glass bowl with a blue M&M, while Ravi decides to bring a jar full of leeches. At the same time, both of them are extremely happy the next day. However, at the beginning of class, Ravi catches Dillon take Joe's M&M from the glass bowl, but Ravi helps Joe by putting the double M&M that he received on Tuesday in Joe's bowl. Joe is surprised as a result. The class decides to play a game where each person tries to guess who each postcard is referring to based on the object that each person brought. When it is Dillon's turn to pick a card, he picks Ravi's card and is confused on how Ravi's card relates to the leeches that he brought. Ravi begins explains how his grandparents had to work in the tea plantations helped Ravi's dad to go to a university and live in America, when all of a sudden, the leeches in Ravi's jar escaped, causing one classmate to throw up. Joe, remembering what Ravi did to help him, decides to help Ravi by putting a piece of paper next to Ravi's jar letting everyone know to not touch the jar. The class decides to go to the library since there are leeches in the classroom, and Dillon tells the teacher that he left his book in the classroom. Dillon uses this opportunity to try to steal Ravi's jar of leeches but makes the mistake of doing so, as the lid of the jar of leeches was loosened by Joe, thus causing Dillon to spill the mixture of water and leeches on himself. Dillon, embarrassed by this, tries to leave school early. Meanwhile, Ravi picks a notecard and reads it, as it says, "There is more to me than meets the eye." Ravi, remembering Joe talking about M&M's to Mrs. Frost, realizes that it is Joe, as M&M's are thought to have 3 layers, when they really have 4, meaning that M&M's have more to them than meets the eye. This, as a result, is the start of the friendship between Joe and Ravi.

There were a lot of things that I liked about this book. One thing that I liked was how this book was very realistic. In other words, this book followed the same feelings and emotions felt by someone who is new to a school and by someone who doesn't have any friends in school. However, this book was very short (only around 250 pages), as this book was very interesting and entertaining to read. I would recommend this book to ages 10 and up because of the confusing symbols in the book, such as the M&M's and the leeches. I would definitely recommend this book to someone else.

Recommended Titles:

A Place At The Table by Saadia Faruqi and Laura Shovan

Karma Khullar's Mustache by Kristi Wientge

Pie In The Sky by Remy Lai