

Name: _____

New Boy

Jeremy is a big boy, and he loves to play football. His family has moved around a lot because of his dad's job. This means Jeremy has to change schools a lot too.

Jeremy finds it hard making new friends only to leave them again and again.

When Jeremy came to our school I could see that he was a bit sad about changing schools again, and he seemed to be a bit grumpy with everyone on his first day. At recess we all went out to the playground. Jeremy hung back and watched as my friends and I grabbed a football from the sports basket and started to kick. Jeremy just sat on the edge of the field and watched that first day, and we carried on playing.

The next day at lunchtime, Jeremy came out to the playground again. This time as one of my friends, Shaun, ran to catch the ball, Jeremy leapt up and ran to where the ball was coming down. As Shaun caught the ball, Jeremy tackled him and slammed him into the ground face first. Jeremy jumped up with the ball and kicked it as far as he could, then turned his back to us with a big smile on his face. Shaun staggered to his feet, and I could see he was trying not to cry, but I didn't want to say anything because it might embarrass him.

The boys at the other end got the ball back and kicked it down our end again. The game continued for a while but I could see that every time Shaun went for the ball, Jeremy would push him and punch his arms.

As the ball came back another time, Jeremy ran up next to Shaun and blocked him. Jeremy pushed Shaun and he fell down hard.

This time Shaun did cry, and I helped him up and walked him to the recess aide.

Jeremy was called over to the recess aide, and we were all asked to explain what had happened. Shaun wasn't the sort of person to try to get others into trouble, but he was clearly upset. He explained to the teacher that Jeremy was being way too rough and was picking on him. I also said that Jeremy seemed to be picking on Shaun.

We all looked at Jeremy, and I was surprised to see that he had tears in his eyes. He just stood there and said nothing. The recess aide sent Jeremy to the time-out area, and we didn't see him for the rest of lunchtime.

After lunch, Jeremy came back to the class from the

office with our teacher, Mr. Brown. Mr. Brown asked all of my football friends and me to come outside the classroom door. Jeremy went inside and sat down to silent reading with the rest of the class.

Mr. Brown explained to us that Jeremy had been to many different schools and didn't get the chance to make good friends before he had to move again. But this time his father had a new job that would allow the family to stay for a few years in one place. Mr. Brown said that Jeremy was a pretty shy boy who didn't really know how to make new friends. He explained that Jeremy loved football and had noticed our group did too. He wanted to join in, and he was hoping that if we thought he was really good at football we would want to be his friend.

Jeremy had watched us play on the first day and noticed that Shaun was a really good player, so Jeremy thought that if he could beat Shaun to the ball and kick it a long way we would all think he was really cool.

It all began to make sense. We had actually become a bit afraid of Jeremy and thought he was bullying because he was big and rough, when all he really wanted was to make friends and play football.

Mr. Brown told us he had explained to Jeremy what he had done wrong and suggested some better (more positive) ways of joining in with us. He said that he had told Jeremy that he would speak to us and ask us if we would give Jeremy a second chance.

We all looked at each other and then at Shaun, because he had been the one getting hurt. Shaun smiled and said, "I'm willing to give him a chance if you are," and we all agreed.

As we walked back into the classroom, we all walked past Jeremy's desk, and he looked up at us nervously. As Shaun walked by, he patted Jeremy on the shoulder and said, "See you out at football tomorrow?"

Jeremy looked so relieved, and he smiled and said quietly, "Yes, please, and I promise I will play by your rules."

So it just goes to show, sometimes you have to get to know someone to see what he is really thinking.

Jeremy has been at our school for two years now, and we are all friends. We started playing football on the weekends together. Jeremy and Shaun are our best players and have a great friendship.