The Bridge That Didn't Carry My Name



مدارج



Nadir, Omar, Saad and Hazim were four seven-year-old boys. Nadir placed the eraser in the middle of the paper bridge. The bridge sagged. His three friends bent down to watch. Then the eraser dropped between the two cups holding up the ends. “Right,” said Omar. “A bridge for feathers only!” They laughed. But their presentation was tomorrow, and their bridge needed fixing.



Nadir tried folding another sheet. He turned up both edges until it looked like a little channel. Omar steadied the cups. Saad helped Nadir put the paper in place. Hazim brought the eraser. They set it in the middle. It stayed! “Don't touch it yet,” Nadir said. “Let's wait.” They counted to ten. The eraser stayed on the bridge. They recorded what had worked in their notebook.



Next morning, Nadir came into the classroom carrying a box to move the bridge in. The display board was ready. At the top, big letters said: OUR PAPER BRIDGE. Underneath were three names. He read them once. Then again. Omar. Saad. Hazim. His own name wasn't there.

“Where's my name?” he asked Hazim. Hazim turned towards the board. “Oh! I missed it when I copied the names. I'll add it.” He looked for a pen. Just then, their male teacher, aged thirty-five, asked each team to move its project to the display table. “Come on, Nadir,” said Omar. “Hold the other end.” Nadir didn't move. He put his box on his chair. “You carry it. It's got your names on it.”



Saad picked up one cup. The paper tilted. Nadir stepped forward and caught the edge before it fell. “Don't lift just the cup. Let's put everything in the box.” They carried it together. But Nadir wasn't smiling. Their male teacher came over and asked what had happened. Nadir pointed at the board. “I helped make it, and my name isn't there.” “Your contribution should be included,” he said. “Let's correct the board before the presentation.” He gave Hazim a pen and a piece of paper.



Nadir sat beside him. His voice was quieter now. “I don't want our bridge to fall down. But I want my name with yours.” “I'm sorry,” Hazim said. “I won't write the names from memory next time.” He wrote all four in one row. Each child checked the names before they attached the paper. Then they agreed on what to say. Everyone would explain one step. Nobody would claim the whole project as their own.

“Do we tell them the eraser fell at first?” Saad asked. Nadir almost said no. He wanted the project to look as though it had worked first time. But he opened their notebook to the drawing of their first attempt. “Yes. And show them what we changed. Otherwise, how will they understand why we folded the paper?”



During the presentation, Nadir explained the fold. Saad showed how they supported the ends. Hazim placed the eraser. Omar started counting. On their second demonstration, the bridge tilted a little. They stopped, moved a cup and tried again. The bridge stayed up. All four names stayed in view.

After the other children left the table, Nadir noticed a scrap of paper underneath it. He picked it up and put it in the paper bin. That job didn't need a name card. He did it hoping to please Allah, then went back to help his friends carry the box. “Now,” Omar said, “can it hold a book?” Nadir moved the book away from the bridge, laughing. “Let's build another bridge for that!”

Source and limits

This is contemporary fiction: characters, stated ages, dialogue and the paper-bridge incident are fictional, not historical reports or engineering standards. Ethical themes drawn from Madarej, Lillah Wahdah: al-Ikhlas, actual physical PDF pages 169, 195 and 196, visually compared: sincerity, contribution rights and redressing wrongs. No direct Quran or hadith quotation. Selected author commentary is not full transcription or authentication of traditions.

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