Agreement Before Enthusiasm



مدارج



Karim put his blue tool bag on the end of the table at the neighborhood club. At eighteen, he had brought it along to tighten the bolts on the bicycle stand outside. He unzipped it and laid out two screwdrivers and a small wrench. His seventeen-year-old teammate Anas came over with a tin of spare washers and bolts. He slipped a washer over the loose bolt and said it fitted. Then he put it back before it could roll off the table. Could Karim leave the bag here until Thursday, when they would finish the repair? Karim pointed to a shelf under the table. There was room.

Salim, their seventeen-year-old teammate, came over with a squared notebook. He had heard two club members looking for a wrench to fix a shelf in the activity room. What if they used this end of the table for small tool loans? He opened the notebook and drew columns for the borrower's name, the tool, and when it was due back. There was room

for two more columns. He left them blank until the three could agree what to put there. Karim slid the bag back to make space for the notebook and bent to pick up a screwdriver he had dropped.

Before the club closed, Anas set the tin on the shelf and made sure its lid opened without moving the bag. Salim wrote down two screwdrivers, a wrench, and a tin of spare parts. Karim read the list as he wiped dust from the bag's handle. They could take their first request tomorrow, he said. Salim turned the notebook toward the aisle. Karim zipped up the bag and left it on the shelf.



Anas came in on Thursday with a small bag containing two washers and a new bolt. He passed the bicycle stand first and saw that its end still leaned by the door. Inside, he put the bag of parts on the table. The tin was where he had left it, but the blue tool bag was gone. He felt along

the back of the shelf in case it had slid out of sight. Then he called to Salim, who was writing a return time in the notebook. Had Karim moved the bag?

Salim turned the notebook around and showed Anas an entry that said the bag was due back on Friday evening. He had lent it to a club member the day before to fix a shelf. He'd seen it among the tools they had counted together and assumed Karim had left it for anyone who needed it. Anas showed him the washers. He had spent part of his afternoon measuring them and looking for a bolt that fitted. Could Salim get the bag back that evening? Salim checked the entry again. It gave only Friday's return time.

When Karim arrived, he heard Anas say they had agreed on today. He came over and asked what had happened. Salim said he had taken the request because the bag was listed in the notebook. Karim said he had left it on the shelf so he could finish the repair with Anas. The three looked at the empty columns. Anas pushed his spare parts into the middle of the table. Who would tell him if the time changed again? Karim put a hand on the notebook and waited for Salim to answer.



Karim pulled the notebook to the middle of the table. They could start with what each of them remembered. He pointed to the shelf and said he had brought the bag from home to fix the bicycle stand, then left it because he had promised to meet Anas on Thursday. Anas opened his bag of parts and took out the bolt. He had brought the parts from his own tin and measured them to see what would fit. Salim said he had made the list and taken the requests. He had read the entry for the bag as permission to lend it. When Karim said they had never agreed to that, Salim looked down at the empty columns.

Anas opened the notebook to the first page. He read the name of the bag and the time it was due back. The entry didn't say who owned it or whether anyone had asked him. Salim took a breath. He knew who had borrowed it and could say what he had told him at the door. Karim

wanted to hear the words Salim had used so he could understand what the borrower might have taken them to mean. They listened until Salim finished and agreed to bring the notebook to the supervisor.

They found Tariq collecting keys in the next room. He was thirty-eight and usually checked each room before closing. Karim asked if he had time to look at their record. Tariq pulled up a chair. Anas opened the notebook at the entry and explained when he and Karim had agreed to fix the stand. Salim pointed to Friday's return time and described how the bag had left the club. Tariq set down his keys and listened as Karim spoke.



Tariq turned the notebook toward the boys and pointed to the entry for the bag. What would they say if someone came in now and asked for just the small wrench? Salim said he would check when the bag was due back. Tariq asked who could decide whether the wrench could go out

after that. Salim looked at Karim and then at the blank column. If he found a name there, he said, he could ask before answering. Karim took out a pen and wrote his name beside the bag. Anas wrote his beside the tin of parts. Each read what the other had written.

Salim opened a fresh page and drew three columns next to the tool name. The first named its owner. The second recorded what needed permission before a loan. The third named the person who would check it back in. Karim could answer requests for his bag and wanted to know when it would be back before agreeing. Anas pointed to the tin. He could spare some parts if asked, and he wanted to know what remained. Salim made two separate entries and agreed to check what came back to the shelf. If anything was missing, he would tell the owner.

They went back to the first page and read Friday's return time. They left it in place until Salim could speak to the borrower. Salim wrote that he would make the call and tell Karim and Anas what they agreed. Tariq asked who would let Anas know if the repair time changed again. Salim moved his pen to the margin and wrote his name beside Thursday. Anas read the note before Salim closed the notebook.



The next day Salim came to the club before the activity began. On Thursday evening he had called the borrower and asked him to bring back the bag as soon as he finished fixing the shelf. When it arrived that afternoon, Salim set it on the table and opened the notebook to the old entry. Karim unzipped it, counted the two screwdrivers and the wrench, and turned the wrench in his hand to see whether the jaw still moved freely. Salim looked at the clock and wrote down when it had actually come back. Karim put the bag on the shelf until Anas arrived.

Anas came in with his small bag of parts. Salim showed him the tools. He should have asked Karim before lending them, he said, and told Anas when he learned the time would change. Anas opened his bag on the table. The parts were still there, along with a slip of paper on which he

had written the bolt size. He could stay for half an hour that day. Karim looked at the stand by the door and checked the time. They could fix that end if they started now.

Before they reached the door, another member asked for the small wrench. Salim opened the new page and asked when he needed it. The member could wait until the repair was done. Salim took the request to Karim and told him the proposed return time. Karim agreed to lend the wrench when he was finished with it and asked for it back before closing. Salim wrote down both times and read them to the member. The wrench stayed in the bag until Karim needed it at the stand.



Karim knelt by the bicycle stand. Anas set the bag of parts beside him and handed him a washer. Karim slipped it over the new bolt and held the bolt head with the small wrench. Anas tightened the nut, then gave

the end of the stand a push to check that it no longer wobbled. Back at the table they counted the unused parts. One washer remained. Anas put it back in his tin and left the lid open for Salim to check.

The member who had asked for the wrench was waiting near the table. Karim took it from the bag and set it down in front of him. Salim checked the return time and showed him where to bring it back. When the member returned before closing, Salim opened and closed the wrench jaw and marked the time in the notebook. Karim picked up the bag and asked if there was anything left to do outside. Anas pushed the stand once more. It held. He came back inside and closed the tin.

Before Tariq turned off the light, Salim asked what they wanted to leave for the next activity. Karim carried his bag to the door and said he would bring it back for another repair. Anas left his tin on the shelf. Salim showed him which line he would read if someone came to ask for a part. The columns they had left blank on the first day now told him whose name to look for.

Reader activity. Think of a small project you share with other people. Write down what you will contribute, whose permission you need to use or lend an item, and who will return it or follow up on what you agreed.