After the Small Lie



مدارج



Salim and his friends Faris and Majid were seven-year-old boys. Their teacher, Mr Nabil, was a thirty-five-year-old man, and the school caretaker was a forty-year-old man. Their classmates were seven-year-old boys too.

Salim had been keeping an observation sheet for the bean plant his class had grown. Each day, he measured its stem and drew each new green leaf.

On the morning of the class display, he opened his folder. The drawings were there. So were his ruler and the empty seed packet. The observation sheet was not.

He remembered taking it out the day before to finish the chart, then slipping it into his coat pocket. Now the pocket was empty.



“Where is your sheet, Salim?” asked Mr Nabil.

Heat rose into Salim’s face. He could have said, “I don’t know. I lost it.” Instead, a quicker sentence escaped.

“The wind came through the window. Maybe the paper blew away.”

Mr Nabil closed the window. Faris looked beneath the cabinet. Majid lifted the paper basket, and their teacher searched behind the plant pots.



The wider the search grew, the tighter Salim's chest felt. This was no longer only about a missing paper. His friends were searching for something he knew the wind had not carried.

When break began, Salim stayed in his seat. He watched Faris brush dust from his sleeve after checking under a shelf. He heard Mr Nabil say, "I'll ask the school caretaker whether a sheet was found in the corridor."

Salim wished he could return to the moment when Mr Nabil had first asked him. That moment was gone.

Then he remembered something he had learned: after a wrong choice, the useful question is not, "Am I finished?" It is, "How do I return?" Allah's mercy does not turn a lie into truth or erase

another person's right. It opens the way to repent and repair what can be repaired.



Salim walked to his teacher. His steps were slow.

"Mr Nabil, I did not see the paper fly away," he said. "I said that because I wanted to hide that I had lost it. I'm sorry."

His teacher was quiet for a moment. Then he said, "Thank you for telling the truth now. Do not let the excuse grow longer than the mistake. What can you repair?"

Salim looked around the classroom. "I can apologise to everyone who searched. I can tell the caretaker not to look for it. Then I can rebuild the chart from my notebook."



Before the class went outside, Mr Nabil gathered them together.

“I lost my sheet,” Salim told them, “and I said the wind carried it. That was not true. I am sorry you searched because of what I said.”

The lie did not vanish as if it had never happened, and Salim did not feel completely comfortable at once. But the search stopped, and everything had its true name again.



During break, Salim sat beside the bean plant. He opened his notebook and began copying the measurements. Faris sat down next to him.

“I’ll read the numbers,” Faris offered, “and you can write them.”

Salim looked up. “And I’ll clean the shelf that left dust on your sleeve.”

By the end of the lesson, the new sheet was not as neat as the old one. One line leaned sideways, and a tiny speck of soil marked the corner. But every number on it was true.

When Salim placed the sheet beside the plant, he saw its small stem bending towards the light. Returning could not remake yesterday, he understood. But it could change the next step in front of him.

Source and limits

This is contemporary fiction. Salim, Faris, Majid, Mr Nabil, the caretaker, their stated ages, dialogue and the lost sheet and plant incident are invented, not historical reports from the source.

Ideas are drawn from Madarej, Wa Ma Qadaru Allah Haqqa Qadrih, volume one of Husn al-Zann billah. The source actually reviewed is the retained original 117-page PDF: physical and printed pages 24, 32 and 34. The selected author commentary concerns truthfulness, returning after a mistake, repentance, repair and others' rights. Neither immediate removal of all consequences nor acceptance of an individual deed is guaranteed. The story quotes no Quran verse or hadith verbatim.

These page references apply only to that retained original. The current public PDF has 182 pages and differs; the page numbers above are not assigned to it.

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