

FROM SMALL ACORNS GROW MIGHTY OAK TREES

BY SOPHIE ALAM

Sadie and Bree were adversaries ever since they were within eye contact of each other on the first day of school. And when Bree chose to shove Sadie on purpose and bullied her, it only made things worse and increased their animosity towards each other. The only thing that worried Sadie when it came to school—other than doing well in exams—was getting bullied by Bree. But as February drew on, Sadie was more focused on the upcoming swim meets she had.

The only bad thing about the swim team was that Bree was on it. However, her friend Lucy was also on the team, which had taken Sadie by surprise. Nevertheless, Sadie was glad for Lucy’s solace for the times Bree bullied her.

Sadie bit her nails as she walked down the hallway that day. Her next meet was Saturday. As she passed Bree, Sadie looked down and braced herself for incoming insults that didn’t come, perplexing her. Bree was probably nervous about the swim meet too.

But . . . Sadie had never imagined Bree to be . . . *scared*.

Before Sadie knew it, Saturday had come and she was at her first race, 100 IM. This was 25 meters¹ of every stroke in the order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle. Sadie had done decently in this event at the last meet; she came in second. But the people she was competing with were very fast. Sadie anticipated that she would perform poorly, but Lucy kept assuring her she wouldn’t.

One minute later, Sadie proved Lucy wrong as she climbed out of the pool under the watchful eyes of all the other contestants.

“Sorry,” Lucy whispered with a grimace as she hurried past Sadie for her upcoming race.

Sadie sighed and headed back to the gym to wait for her next event.

¹ 25 meters = 1 length of the pool.

The swim meet seemed to pass by quickly. By the end of the meet, everywhere Sadie looked everyone had medals. "I'm sorry you couldn't get one," Lucy sympathized. "You tried really hard. I'm proud of you."

"Thanks," said Sadie, forcing a fake smile.

"Alright, everybody, gather around for the group picture!" Coach Grace called. Everyone formed a sort of semi-circle and showed off their badges at the camera. Everyone except for Sadie.

As the cameras flashed, Sadie felt a pang of sadness. If only she could get a medal.

After the picture, Sadie grabbed her bag to head into the locker rooms without Lucy. She felt like crying. But then she bumped into someone.

It was Bree.

Shaking, Bree trembled, "I—" before Sadie intervened.

"Please don't bully me about my performance," she pleaded. Bree, to Sadie's surprise, shook her head. She held out her medal. "You did a good job."

Sadie stared at the medal, then pushed it back into Bree's hands. "No."

"Yes."

Sadie couldn't believe it. Was Bree being . . . nice?

Bree blurted, "I bullied you because I was lonely. C-can—you—f-forgive me?"

"Oh," Sadie said, shocked. "S-sure—I-I . . . didn't know."

"Friends?"

"Friends."

"Isn't this great now?" Bree asked.

Sadie couldn't agree more.