Hood and the Invitation That Never Came

A story about hurt... and a heart that knows its worth

For ages 5 to 9



Child Protection Office

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Yousef came into class carrying colorful envelopes: **“My birthday party is on Thursday!”**

And he began handing out invitations.



Sami got an invitation... the boy next to him got an invitation...

And Yousef walked right past Hood... **and gave him nothing.**



At break time, Hood sat alone.

He felt as if his heart had a little scratch on it.



At home, Hood hid under his blanket and didn’t eat his dinner.

“I won’t talk to anyone! They’re all mean!”



Mama Jumana sat on the bed, picked up his teddy bear, and put a small bandage on its red heart.

“I think your heart is hurt, Hood. It hurts when we feel that someone has left us outside the circle.”



Hood peeked out from under the blanket and said:

He should have invited me! It’s not fair!

He didn’t invite me because I don’t deserve it... nobody loves me!

I’m never talking to anyone again!



Mama said: **“There are two ways to hurt, Hood. Healthy sadness says: I wish he had invited me, and I’m a little sad.**

And a sore, stinging hurt says: I don’t deserve it... and I’ll punish everyone with silence.

The first one heals... the second one keeps on hurting.”



Hood put on his detective hat. Question one: **Does nobody love me?**

He drew a big circle, and inside it he drew everyone who loves him:
Mama, Qamar, Sami, Ayoub, his teacher... and the circle was full!

He said: **“Lots of people love me!”**



Question two: **Did he not invite me because I don’t deserve it?**

They thought about it together: maybe his house is small… maybe his mom said only five friends… maybe he invited his neighbors.

Hood said: **“I don’t know the reason… but one invitation doesn’t say who I am.”**



Question three: **Must everyone invite me?** Hood laughed: “No… I can’t invite the whole class either!”

Then he said calmly: **“I’m sad he didn’t invite me… I wished he had. But I deserve love, and I have friends who love me.”**



In the morning, Hood went up to Yousef and said calmly: **“I felt a bit sad that you didn’t invite me.”**

Yousef scratched his head and said: **“My mom said only five friends, so I invited the kids on my street. Sorry, Hood! Come and play now!”**



At break time, Hood, Yousef, and Sami played soccer together...

and they laughed a lot.



On the weekend, Hood and Mama baked little cupcakes,

and Hood made invitation cards by hand: **“Cupcake Party at Hood’s!”**



Sami and Yousef came, ate cupcakes, and laughed.
Hood took the bandage off his teddy's heart and said:

"One invitation doesn't decide what I'm worth... and my heart still knows how to love."

A Guide for Parents & Educators

The eighth story in the series. Emotional hurt is what a child feels when they are left out or treated unkindly. REBT distinguishes unhealthy hurt (withdrawing, sulking, punishing others with silence, feeling unworthy) from healthy sorrow (feeling sad about what happened while keeping one's self-worth and staying connected to others).

1. Signs of unhealthy hurt

Hiding, refusing food, and "I won't talk to anyone." Punishing silence isolates the child further instead of protecting them. pp. 3–4

2. Hurt thoughts

- **Absolute demand:** "He should have invited me."
- **Jumping to conclusions and self-rating:** "I don't deserve it, nobody loves me."
- **Punishing with silence:** "I won't talk to anyone." p. 6

3. Disputing

- **The circle of friends:** real evidence of being loved. p. 8
- **Other explanations:** being left out can have many reasons that have nothing to do with the child's worth. p. 9
- **Disputing the demand:** "Must everyone invite me?" p. 10

4. Self-worth

"One invitation doesn't say who I am." Unconditional self-acceptance protects the child from tying their worth to other people's approval. pp. 9–10

5. Speaking up instead of sulking

Hood calmly says how he feels, which opens the door to understanding. p. 11

6. Taking the first step

Instead of waiting for an invitation, Hood makes his own. pp. 13–14

Questions to talk about after reading

- Why did Mama put a bandage on the teddy's heart?
- Who is in your circle of friends?
- Why might Yousef not have invited Hood?
- What do you say when a friend makes you sad?

Tips for parents

Don't brush off your child's pain ("it's nothing"), and don't attack the other child in front of them. Listen, and help them see other explanations and say how they feel. If a child is left out repeatedly and on purpose, it may be bullying and calls for contacting the school. If withdrawal lasts for weeks, consult a mental health professional.