

Finding Kitri

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In Wella's school, there was a wooden shed. It had a red door, balls, and games...and a family of cats. Mallow, the mother cat, lived there with her kittens. Their names were Jelly, Cloud, and Kitri. Wella liked Kitri best. They had many things in common.

Jelly and Cloud liked to play cat tag together. Kitri would only chase after his own tail. Other children laughed at him, but Wella did not.

'It's perfectly fine to spin, especially when it's in a safe place,' she said. 'I like spinning too.'

Wella was autistic, meaning her brain had its own special way of thinking. She didn't always do things like her classmates—and that's okay! Kitri also did things differently from his sisters.

Kitri didn't stare at people, and Wella understood why. Looking into another person's eyes felt like standing in a room that was too bright.

Kitri didn't meow like the others. He made funny yowls. Wella also had her own way of talking to people. Instead of saying hello, she often began with, 'Did you know...?'

One afternoon, there was a big sports day at school. The playground was full of children and their families. When Wella saw all these people, she felt her tummy twist. She didn't want to join in.

Mallow started meowing loudly. She did this for such a long time that everyone began to notice. They realised that she was looking for something. Kitri was gone! The children searched everywhere.

"When I have big feelings, I need quiet time," said Wella.

Her eyes lit up. The library! It was the quietest place in school. The children ran to look. Indeed, there was a stripey tail that poked out from behind a cabinet.

It was Kitri.

Wella carried him to the playground, where it was now calm and quiet. She knelt and set Kitri beside his family, right where he belonged.

"Did you know our school wouldn't be the same without you?" Wella asked Kitri.

Wella's teacher smiled at her. "Our school wouldn't be the same without you, either."

The children cheered and the cats meowed (except for Kitri, who yowled), because they all agreed.

