



James frowned at the mirror and tried to smush his hat further down on his head. He was trying to cover his bright orange hair. He hated it. All of the other kids made fun of him for it, and his parents never let him cut it. Any why not? His mom thought it was cute. Well, she was crazy! It was ugly, and everyone knew it.

As he packed up his bag for baseball practice, he mentally prepared himself for seeing his teammates. They only ever made fun of him. Every year, his mom would sign him up for a team. And every year, they would tease him for being short, for having red hair, for being bad at batting. He could never even get to first base. This year wouldn't be any different.

The only thing that gave James any hope was that he had grown a lot over the school year. He was one of the tall kids in his class now. Maybe the other kids on the team wouldn't make fun of him as much. But then, he thought, the kids would all be new because they had moved towns again. So none of them would even know how much he had grown.

James sulked all the way to practice, and dreaded getting out of the car. But when he finally walked down to the field, he was surprised- nobody pointed at him or avoided him. Another kid showed him where to put his stuff, and somebody else tossed him a baseball for warm up catch. He wondered how long it would last before somebody saw his hair and teased him.

But by the end of practice, James was thrilled. Nobody had teased him once the whole time. In fact, some of the other boys had even invited him to come have burgers with them. As they sat eating, James couldn't help but say something.

"Are you guys being nice to me because I'm tall?" he said. The other boys looked at him, curious.

"Why does it matter if you're tall? You're on the team, just like us," one of the boys said.

James couldn't believe it. "You want me on the team? Even though I'm new? Even though," he paused, and frowned, "I have red hair?"

The others boys laughed.



“We don’t care what color your hair is, James. We’re all going to have fun this year.”

James smiled and ate his burger. He was so happy to finally be a part of the team.



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