

Case Study: Rowan and Daniel

Rowan and Daniel are best friends. They're in the same class at school. They're both on the basketball team. They both love playing chess. They have a wide circle of friends, but they're both really glad when each other is at school, because they seem to get along the best. Rowan's family doesn't have a lot of extra money, but they do fine. Daniel is an only child and he usually has new things. In fact, because he's a bit taller than Rowan, he often gives Rowan his hand-me-downs. Rowan loves getting Daniel's shirts and sweaters.

Today, Daniel showed up at school with a new green backpack. It was the kind that he and Rowan had been messaging each other about for weeks. Rowan really liked them, too, but he knew his parents would never buy him one. They were just too expensive. Plus, as his dad said, "You already have a perfectly good backpack!" That morning, Daniel showed up to class with the new backpack. All the other guys crowded around him. "Wow!" "Nice!" Rowan didn't say anything. He didn't know why, but he felt his head pounding a little bit. He stared at Daniel, smiling while the other guys crowded around him. Rowan didn't know why, but he almost felt like he couldn't talk. When Cole, one of their buddies, said to Rowan, "Man, Daniel always has the best stuff!" Rowan didn't know what to say. He just said "Hmm" and walked away, back to his desk. He didn't want to look at Daniel any more. In fact, he felt like he didn't want to talk to Daniel at break or at lunch either. But why? He was so confused. Daniel gave him a nod from across the classroom, then smiled. Rowan could tell he was really pleased with his new backpack. Rowan quickly pretended like he didn't see Daniel. He sank down into his seat. Rowan looked up to see Daniel turn away. The lesson began and Rowan felt like his stomach was empty.

What do you think is going on here?

What is Rowan feeling?

Why?

What should he do?

What should he not do?