

“William aka Bill,” by Tonya Sousa, illustrates that is possible for people to change.

In the beginning, William started off as an unhappy bully. For example, in recalling when William was in her class in fifth grade, the author states that when she would walk to the front of the classroom that he would stick out his foot to trip her. She also notes that he would often sit in class with a smug grin on his face, a look that said he knew other were fearful of him and were worried about what he might do next. His unhappiness was shown when he reacted to his teacher calling him “William” by responding, “I hate William.” This emotional and angry response further intimidated classmates. They must have thought about how he would react to something they might say or do if he was yelling at the teacher for calling him his name.

In the middle, William begins to change. This change is initially brought on by the actions of his teacher, who refuses to treat him like a bully. Mr. Sandy believes in Bill, as he does all his students, and therefore included Bill in all classroom activities, gave him jobs and responsibilities, and constantly praised him for his positive contributions. As a result, Bill began to participate in class and would raise his hand to share answers or to be included in discussions. Not only was Bill changing, but so were his classmates. They started inviting him to join them in playing games, and feeling like he was part of the group, Bill stopped tripping them when they walked in class.

By the end, Bill was no longer a bully and was someone who was kind and helpful. Mr. Sandy, again seeing the best in Bill, commented about his leadership abilities, after which Bill began to be a leader on the playground. When the author needed help with baseball, Bill taught her how to swing a bat, and when she fell and broke her nose, Bill was there to assist her. Because of how much Bill had changed the way he conducted himself, Tonya Sousa completely changed the way in which she viewed him, no longer seeing him as a bully, but rather as someone who she respected and admired. In fact, when Bill didn't return to school the next year, she was sad and wished for him to come back.