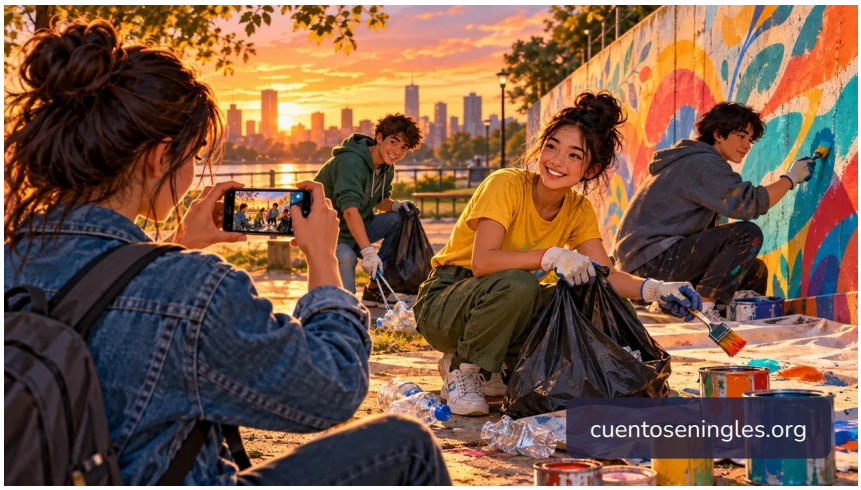
The Photo Outside the Frame



The park wall was finally blue, orange and green. Ellie stood in front of it and lifted her phone. She moved left, then right. Behind the beautiful new mural were three bags of rubbish, two paint tins and her friend Jack eating a very large sandwich.

"Move a little, please," she called. Jack moved. Ellie took the photo and looked at the screen. The colours were bright. The wall looked perfect. She posted it with the words "A perfect afternoon" and put her phone in her pocket.

Her friends were still cleaning. Ellie picked up a paintbrush and washed it at the park tap. When she returned, Jack was looking at her photo. "Where is everyone?" he asked. "Outside the frame," she said. "The bags looked terrible. I wanted a nice picture."

Jack put his phone away. "We spent two hours collecting that rubbish before we could paint. Those bags are part of the afternoon too." Ellie looked at his yellow shirt. There was blue paint on both sleeves. She had asked him to move because of that shirt.

For a moment, she felt angry. It was only a photo. Everyone chose what to show. Then she opened it again. Without the bags, the paint tins or her friends, the wall looked like something she had simply found. Nothing in the picture showed what they had done together.

"Can I take another one?" she asked. Jack lifted his sandwich. "Only if I can finish this first." They laughed. Ellie stepped back and waited. This time, she included the bags, the brushes and her friends. One person was still painting a small orange corner.

She added the new picture beside the first one and changed the caption. "First photo: the finished wall. Second photo: almost finished, still cleaning, very hungry." She named the team and thanked the park workers. Then she put her phone away and helped carry the bags.

On Monday, a girl from school asked about the project. "I saw your photos. Can I help next time?" Ellie gave her the date. She still liked her first picture. But now she liked the second one more. It was less perfect, and there was much more to see. Next time, she would still choose a good angle. She would just make room for the people beside her.



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