

250 Mango Gummies

Like a chemical compound, any friend group has to start with elements and chemistry, and no two people with random traits can form a bond together. On a rainy day in August, petrichor permeated the sky, providing the only source of comfort as five acquaintances from PE awkwardly stood in a circle. Instead of words, only strained looks were passed around as we tried desperately to ease the tension over lunch, thinking to ourselves about what to say without notable common ground.

But, just like magnificent cakes begin with small ingredients, my grand friendship with Chen, Max, Eunbi, and Viaan began with a single phrase as I held out a handful of mango gummies: “Do you want a gummy?”

Their eyes lit up as the phrase left my mouth, yet their responses contrasted from what their faces said. On the first day, there was a collective “No, thank you.”

The next time we left PE for lunch, we sat down on some benches to wait for our other friends, laughing about how we were let out so early. But as nothing gold can stay, especially without effort, the laughter died down. So once again, I popped the question: “Do you want a gummy?” They looked at each other, then at my hand, holding enough gummies for everyone. Reluctantly, they each mumbled a thank you and took one out of my hand. Only the sound of wrappers remained. Until one by one they expressed how delicious the gummy was.

“Wait, this is so good, what??” Viaan chewed.

“Mmm,” Chen agreed with bright, wide eyes.

“Where’d you get these? They’re nice,” Max asked.

“Mm, they’re from a store next to my dentist...” I recalled.

“Hah, the dentist?? That’s ironic,” Max chuckled.

“ Bro, these are so mouthwatering,” Eunbi swallowed.

The following weeks after this interaction, we got to familiarize ourselves with each other’s habits and personalities. Us two girls created a routine of waiting for the guys to come out of the locker room, as the gift of mango gummies leading to engaging conversations became the usual too. Day after day, We felt increasingly comfortable with each other, eventually bringing up the idea of spending a day together outside of school.

When a long weekend presented itself on the calendar, we immediately planned to buy a shared meal, then hang out. We ventured to my house to fly drones and play pingpong, but all four of their mouths dropped in awe when I brought out five bags of goodness. Five ginormous bags filled to the brim with 50 mango gummies each. Viaan laughed hysterically, shoveling gummy after gummy out of the bags as the other three followed.

Those gummies acted like a catalyst, speeding up the chemical reaction that resulted in the friendship of five people with differing lives. Now, on any day, we will be together, glued to each other under the blue sky, just chatting away, as we play with the empty wrappers of more mango gummies.