

AHLAN SIMSIM

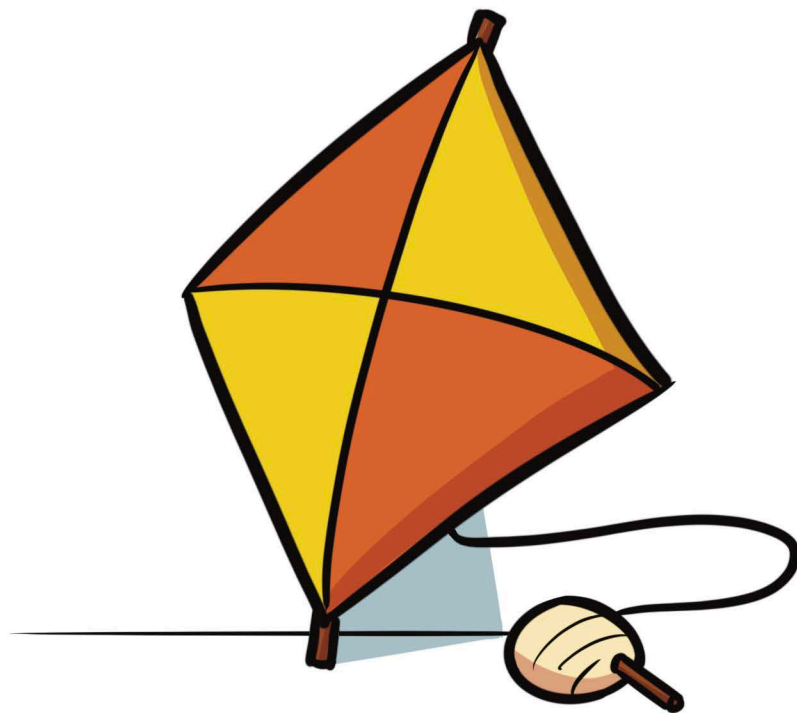
# Room for One More





# Room for One More

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Illustrated by Amy Diack



Firas is new in town and he is very excited to make some new friends. He loves to run, ride his bike, and fly kites.



He wants to go to the park today to join a running club with other kids.





He puts on his favorite running shoes  
and heads out the door.

At the park, a group of kids are getting ready. A tall girl named Nadine is writing down everyone's name. Firas introduces himself.





"Hello! I'm Firas and I'm very excited to join the running club! I love to run. I practiced a lot last year and won a medal at my school! " he says excitedly.



Nadine looks at Firas and a big feeling comes over her. She feels like there is a knot tying itself in her stomach. She is worried and thinks to herself, "what if this new boy is faster than me? Being a fast runner is my thing! What if he takes my place?"



She looks at Firas and says, "You can't join the club! Your shoes are all wrong!"





Firas feels very upset as he walks away slowly. He sits on a nearby bench, looks down at his shoes and whispers sadly, "but these are my favorite running shoes. They've always felt right to me."





Ameera goes over to Firas and introduces herself. She asks what's the matter and Firas explains what happened with Nadine.



"Hmmm," replies Ameera. "Your shoes look just fine. Why don't you come and play with my friends and me? We're about to fly a kite."





The next day, determined to join the club, Firas gets dressed. At the park, Nadine is writing down names again. Firas walks up to her and smiles.





"Hi! I have another pair of shoes today and I'm very excited to join the running club."





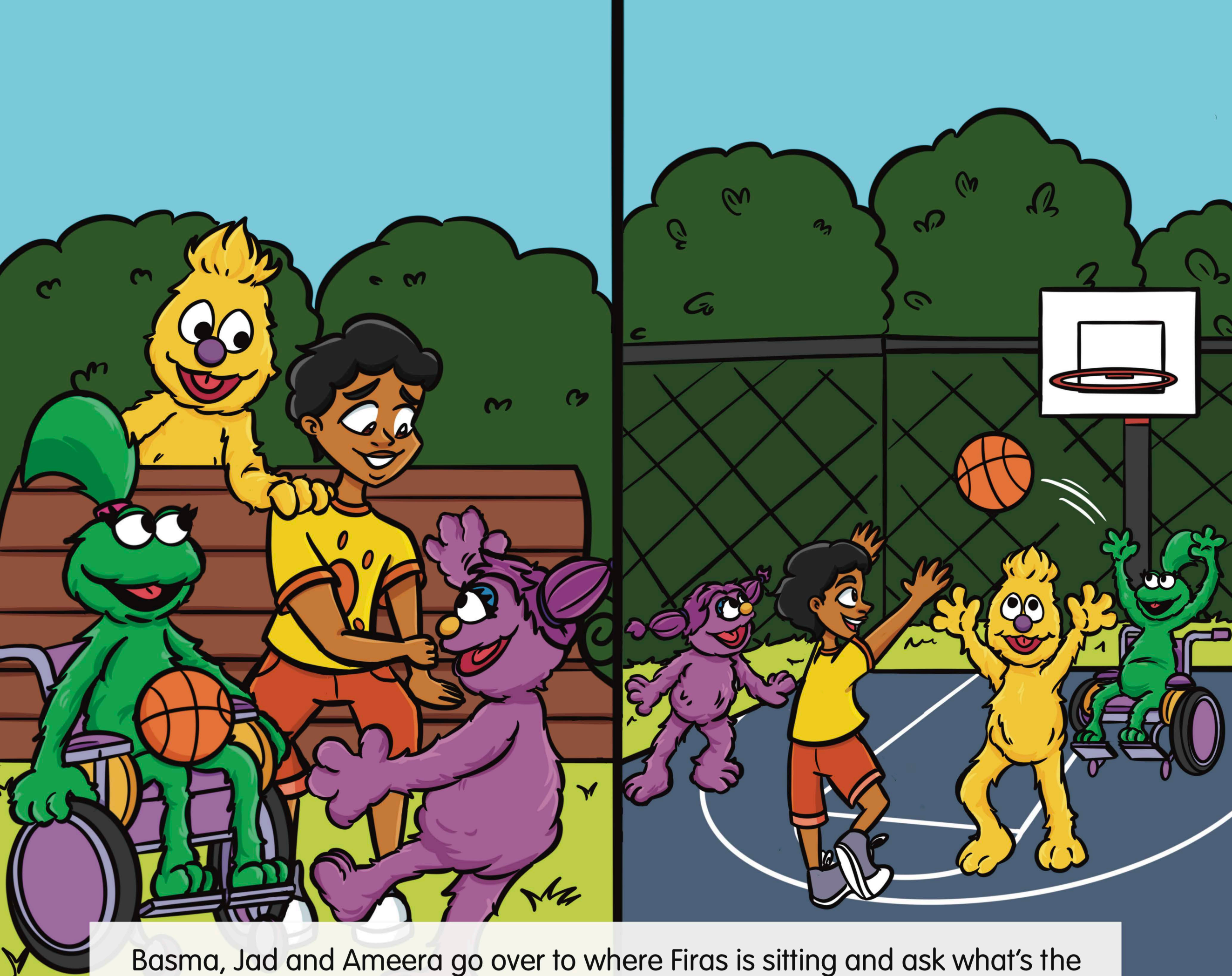
Nadine feels the same knot tying itself in her stomach again. Her forehead wrinkles. She is still worried that Firas will be faster than her and will take her place as the best runner in the club. She replies, "you can't join the club. **Your shirt is all wrong!**"





Firas feels very upset and confused as he walks away slowly. He sits on the nearby bench and says to himself, "but I changed my shoes! And, this is my favorite shirt. My cousin gave it to me so we would match!"





Basma, Jad and Ameera go over to where Firas is sitting and ask what's the matter. Firas explains what happened with Nadine again. "Nadine is not being very nice," says Basma. "Come and play with us again," says Jad.







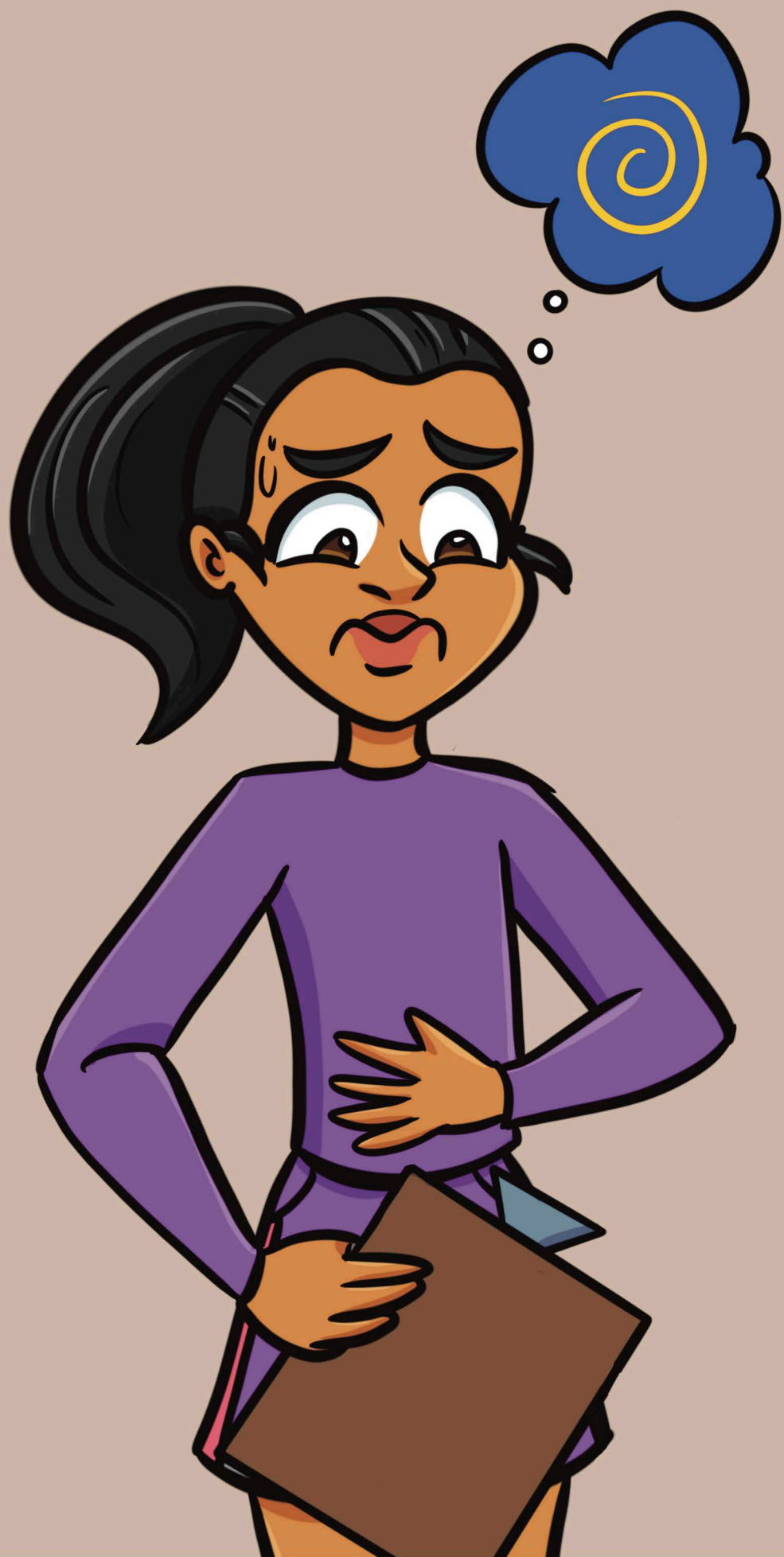
Firas is still determined to join the running club. The next day, he puts on a new shirt, his running shoes, and a pair of long stripped socks. He walks up to Nadine at the park.



"Hi! Today, I have the right shoes and a new shirt. I would like to join the running club," says Firas.







Again, Nadine feels the same knot in her stomach. Her cheeks feel hot. She thinks to herself, "Why does my stomach feel like this when I talk to Firas? ..."



"...I don't want him to join the running club!" She looks at Firas and says, "**Your socks are all wrong.** You just can't join the club!"



Firas feels very sad.  
He sits on the nearby  
bench again.





Basma, Jad and Ameera join Firas. He explains what happened. "When someone repeatedly does something hurtful to you or someone you care about, it's a good idea to talk to a grown-up you trust," says Ameera. Everyone agrees.





Sammy is glad that everyone came to talk to him. He explains that when someone acts in a hurtful manner, it's often because they have big feelings that are hurting them but they don't know how to handle them. They then take it out on someone else.



"You should never feel like you have to change something about yourself to be friends with someone," says Sammy. "Now, why don't the five of us come up with some ideas about what to do?" Everyone thinks this is a great idea.







The next day at the park, Firas walks over to Nadine and invites her to join a kite flying club he started with his new friends. "Everyone is welcome!" he exclaims.



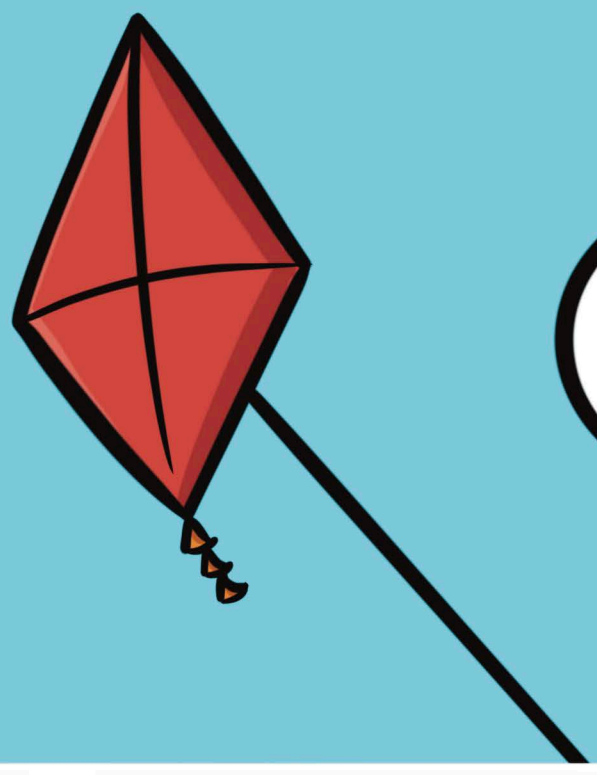
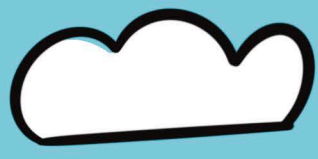
The knot that had tied itself in Nadine's stomach slowly begins to loosen. Maybe Firas doesn't want to replace her after all. Maybe he just wants to make new friends.



Maybe she is wrong and there is room for more than one fast runner in the running club. Maybe there is room for everyone to join more than one club...

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