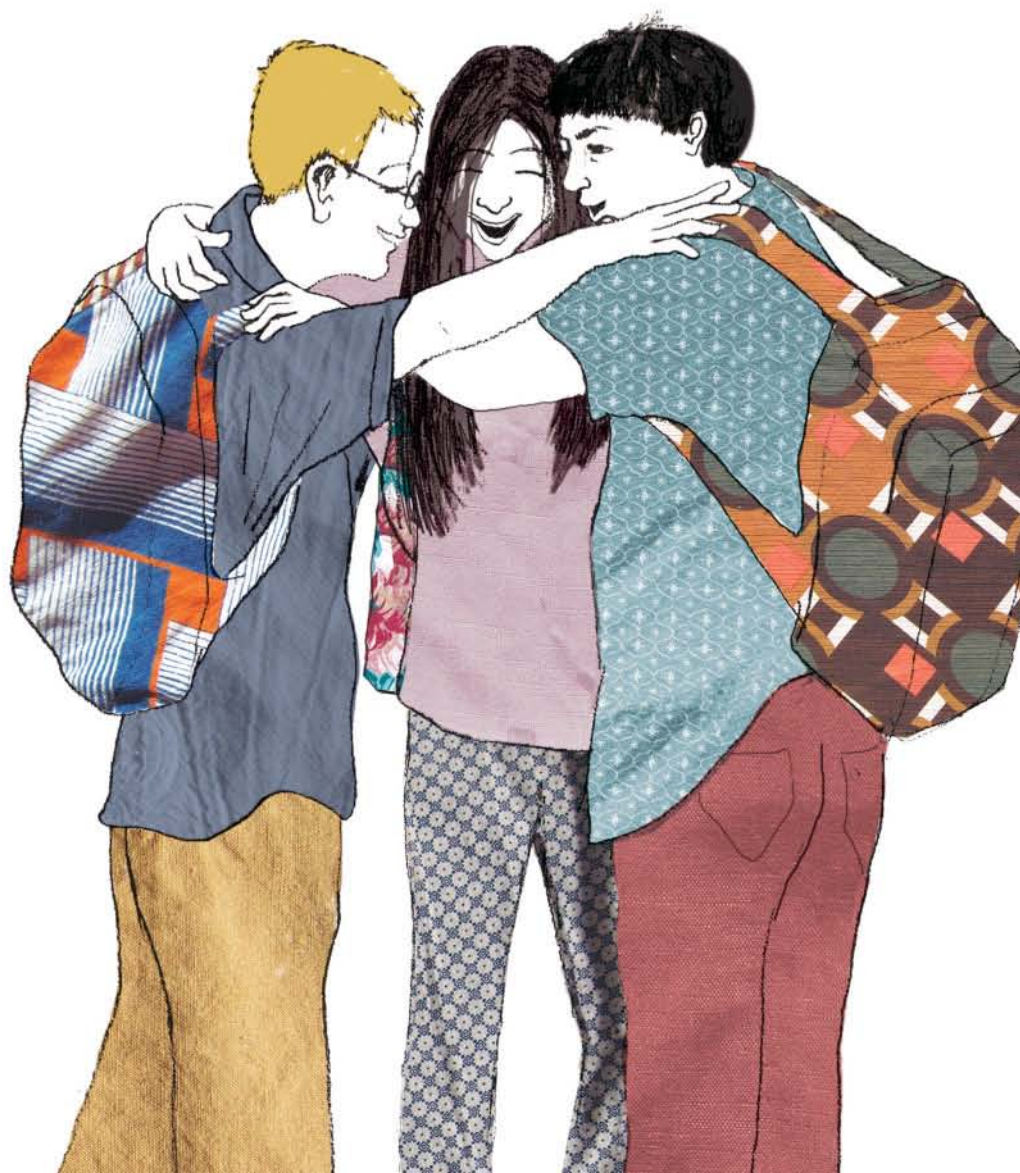


HANADI & CHRISTIAN



**Hanadi
&
Christian**

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Hanadi

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Episode 1: At camp

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This is my first time at a summer camp. I remember having heard that there are groups that organize similar activities in Morocco, but I think there are not as many as there are here, and they are not as popular.

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I have been living in Spain for two years now, but I have never been to a summer camp before. During the first year I was here, I did not know anyone and I could not speak the language very well. In my second year, I did not dare go. But this year...this year Elena and Silvia (my best friends in the neighborhood) are going and they persuaded me to go with them.

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I immediately liked the place. It is really beautiful. There is a river nearby, and the people in the village seem very nice. Judging from appearances, I am sure they really are. But the things I like best are the rolling mountains we can see from the tents. They cannot be too far away, because on the second day, I saw the older kids (mostly Ecuadorians) march off with an instructor they call Chema. They said they were going to walk to the mountains and that they would be back on the last day of camp.

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Before I got here, I thought that the most important thing about coming here was that I was coming with my friends, but now that I'm here, I think it would have been worth it even if they had not come. Can places be more important to me than my friends? I catch myself wondering this when I hear Jose and Silvia, who have walked up to me without me noticing. "I'm green with envy, imagine being

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up in those mountains all day," says Jose. "Somebody should make them disappear. Just thinking that the group of older kids could already be there.... You know, being older isn't so bad. Just look at their privileges. It's just not right! We should all be allowed to go."

5 "Well, I'm quite happy being younger. I wouldn't like to walk so much or to sleep outdoors in the mountains. That really scares me because you could get eaten by wild animals!" says Silvia. "For me, going to the mountains would be an obligation, or even punishment, instead of a right," she says, while making a funny face. Silvia likes
10 fields; well, football pitches in fact. She likes sports in general as long as a ball is involved.

Then I say, "Okay, Silvia! But we should have the right to go too, and if someone like you does not want to go, they could give up that right and stay at camp, and that's it, problem solved." My thoughts
15 are still a bit confused, though, about the mountains and my friends. "Of course," says Jose "We have paid the same money for this camp as the older kids."

"Great, José!" says Silvia. "As for you, Hanadi, now that's what I call being a good friend. But, according to you, if I was the only
20 one who didn't want to go because I was scared, who would stay behind with those of us who didn't want to go? What would you do then? And more importantly, what would I do in that case?" "An instructor would have to stay behind with me. It's his duty," José answers quickly, happy to see that what he said has been taken
25 seriously.

José, like everybody else, likes his opinion to be taken into account. "And don't they have the right to go to the mountains?" Silvia answers.

Maite, our instructor, has just arrived, and she has overheard
30 our last comments. She answers, smiling. "Rights, obligations...life is full of rights that imply obligations and responsibilities. For example, do you think it is your right that to have clean toilets? Who has the right to use clean toilets?"

We look at each other first, and then stare at her, not knowing
35 whether to nod in agreement. In the few days that have gone by



since our arrival, we have gotten to know her, and we know that she always makes jokes when we least expect it. She always makes us laugh, but the joke is on us. "Well, everybody, right? You all have that right. How could you not? So, let's go. Let's carry out your obligation with the toilets." She smiles, winks, and points at the mops and buckets, which we hadn't noticed until then. "Today, you are the team in charge of making sure they are spotless. So let's get to it! Hope you had a nice breakfast."

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Episode 2: A show for the village festival

Once we have finished our cleaning and tidying up, Maite gets us all together to give us some news. "Be quiet, kids!" she says, raising her voice. "In a few days, there will be a festival in the village, and they have invited us to take part. Each group in camp is going to prepare something. What do you think? Shall we do something as well? It must be something we can all take part in. Do you have any ideas?" "Why don't we do a mural painting or a really big banner?" Mohamed says. He has a special talent for painting and has already started painting graffiti on the walls of his neighborhood.

But the others reject the idea because they think it isn't original. "I think it's too obvious, Mohamed," says Elena. "I'm sure other groups are going to do exactly the same thing." "You're always going on and on about the same thing," José goes on the attack. "Can't you do anything else?" "Jose, just because you can't paint doesn't mean we shouldn't do it," Mohamed replies. "And just because you like painting doesn't mean it's a good reason for making a mural," Jose says. "And besides, I can't paint because I haven't practiced. Or maybe you think you came to this world as a great painter? Look, the Da Vinci of graffiti. ""All right, all right, don't argue." Maite is trying to keep things calm. "We could listen to several ideas and then choose the one we all think is best. Let's see. Does anybody else have any other ideas?"

Danilo, who has a collection of bugs and plants, says: "Since the motto of this camp is *Look after your environment*, what about creating a sort of museum with objects we collect around here? I'm sure the people in the village would be happy to have an exhibition."

I smile and interrupt him. "What are you on about? You're such a nerd! We're not at school." "We could do a dance, you know, like a musical," Silvia says as she moves her hips. 5

But the group is not convinced by her idea. "Yeah, sure, and be an embarrassment. And besides, that stuff is for girls," says Mohamed. "No way!" says Elena. "And why would it be embarrassing? We're not going on TV or anything." "I haven't got a clue about dancing," José insists. 10

Danilo, seeing that his idea about the museum is not working, has another idea. "We could do a play, like sketches or something." "But in that case, only a few of us could act, and what would the rest do? Sit with the audience?" says José. "Well, I think it's a fun idea," says Silvia. "If we do a short play, some of us can act while others write the text, build the set, and make the props or the music." "But that is working for others, for those who really participate, for the important ones" – Continues Jose, who is not convinced by the idea. 15 20

I disagree. "That's like saying the only important member of a band is the singer," I say, responding to Jose. "I like the idea a lot, and if we do sketches, we don't all have to be on stage. Those who want to act can do so, while those who might feel shy can help prepare everything." "How about making several teams so that each team takes care of a different task?" Maite says. "That way, everyone can help by doing whatever they do best: writing the script, painting the set, acting, or whatever. With all the talent we have in the group, I'm sure we'll put on a great show!" "Yes, yes, great!" Some of us are shouting and are very excited. "Okay, everyone," Maite says, trying to calm us down. "We've got to meet the other groups now because we are going for a swim, but we could discuss the topic and the story for the performance on our way to the river." 25 30 35

Episode 3: At the river

“What’s happened? The pond is nearly empty!” Mohamed shouts in surprise.

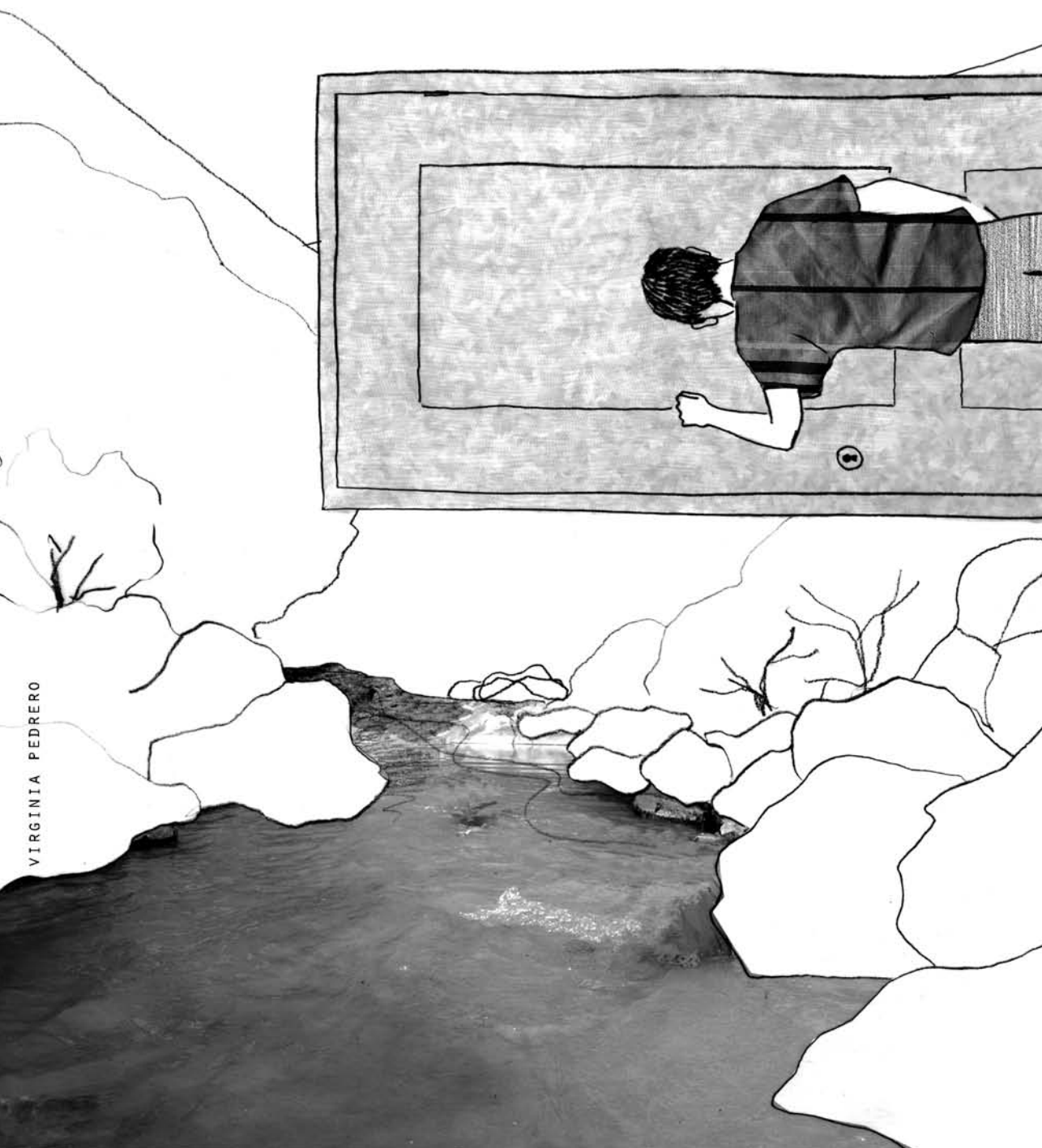
5 Mohamed is always the first one to get to the pond because he loves swimming. He says he must have gotten it from his father, who was always telling him about how he and his brothers enjoyed swimming in the sea near their house in Morocco. Mohamed was very little back then, and he doesn’t know if his memories are his
10 own or if he got them from seeing the pictures of his dad and uncles swimming in the Mediterranean.

 As soon as I reach the pond I see that Mohamed is right. I say, “It’s true! But it was full yesterday! How can you empty a pond in just one day?”

15 Some people can’t tell if they are angry or freaking out. Others feel they need to hold on to something to release the tension from seeing that they can’t go swimming. Others feel like time has stopped, and they can neither move nor think.

 As we are trying to understand the situation, Pedro arrives. He’s
20 from the village, and he’s been hanging out with us. We all like him. “That’s Rufino’s land. The river crosses his land and he has a little dam. Whenever he needs water, he closes the dam and leaves us with almost no water at all.”

 Silvia is angry. “Well, that Rufino sounds quite rude.” “Well,
25 the land is his and so is the river, right? So he can do whatever he likes, since it belongs to him,” Elena reasons. “Well, it’s not his anymore. He sold the land to some outsiders, but I don’t know to whom exactly or what for. My uncle, the shepherd, knows.” “I don’t care whose land it is!” Mohamed is getting angrier. “Just because you
30 buy the land doesn’t mean you have the right to decide about the water.” “But if you buy something you have the right to make decisions about it, don’t you? I mean, my family owns a house in my mom’s village, and no one is going to tell them what they can or cannot do there,” Elena insists, “and in the house there is a well,
35 and according to your reasoning, are you saying that they can’t make



decisions about the well's water?" "It's not the same, I think. What you do in your house doesn't affect me, but what you do with the river does. I think the water in a river is not something you can buy. The water should belong to everybody," says Mohamed. "Mmm I think I see your point Mohamed," says Silvia. "Some things should be everyone's forever; we all have the right to enjoy them. Imagine what would happen if they sold the woods, or the mountains, and whoever bought them decided to cut the trees down and burn everything so they could build houses. That would be a disaster!" "I disagree," Elena says. "Why should someone buy something if he can't do what he wants with it? If you pay for something, then you can do whatever you want with it, right?" José interrupts the conversation. "So if I buy a dog, can I do what I want with it? Or according to Mohamed, I can do what I want, as far as it doesn't affect others, right?" "Elena, would that mean that you can kill your dog because you paid for it?" Danilo says. "I'm not sure, but I think the rule does not apply to living things."

Elena looks at Danilo and says, hesitating at first, "I don't know, it isn't so easy, the truth is not so clear. Maybe we should discuss this with Maite and try to clarify all this." "Ok Elena, but stop beating around the bush." Mohamed is still angry that we can't go swimming. "The problem is, how are we going to go swimming, and who has caused this situation? If I broke into Rufino's house and got into his bathtub, what would he think then?" "I'm telling you it's not Rufino's," Pedro insists. "Ask my uncle, he'll tell you the story."

Episode 4. Planning the show for the village festival

At the end of the day, we still feel bitter about the injustice of not having been able to go swimming in the river. We get together before dinner to start organizing the performance for the village festival. It will not be a very long play, because we do not want to have to memorize lot of lines.

I say, "We can have a debate like they have on TV. Those programs are great." "I like that idea, Hanadi! We could impersonate some celebrities discussing the crisis or football, but in a funny way," says José. "Yeah, sure! This morning, you wouldn't let me do the dance thing because it was too much like a TV program, and now you want to copy a debate program. That's not fair!" Silvia complains. "All right, all right, Silvia is right," Danilo says. "I also wanted to do something related to collecting objects from around the village, which actually has a lot to do with the camp's theme. However, I admit that I love the idea of having a debate with important people instead of a play. And we could complain about the things we don't like, but with some humor. For example, we could complain about what happened with the water today. If we protest in a funny way, nobody should get angry, not even Rufino." "You just can't help being a nerd," José laughs. "But I like the idea. We wouldn't have to learn a lot of lines; each role could represent one perspective, and then we could improvise." José doesn't like studying very much.

I have a suggestion. "We could organize a meeting with experts, a meeting of people who know loads about things like this..." "It's funny to hear 'loads' coming from you." José is laughing again. "... and who are capable of discussing unfair things." I ignore him while giving him a stern look. "I agree with Danilo that this show is a good chance to talk about what happened this morning at the river." "Cool! Now, we've got to think about how to set things up so we can do the play in front of the whole village," says Danilo. "We'll have to be careful so they don't get angry and ban us from their pond and their village," Silvia points out. "Well," I say, "I think that talking about what happened this morning is okay, and it might serve as an opportunity to talk about more general things like the environment, the butterfly effect and..." "The what effect?" José asks "I've never heard of that. I'm not sure I want to do this debate thing, this expert discussion or whatever."

I answer him. "The butterfly effect is a way of explaining that what we do to nature in one place may have consequences somewhere really far away. The teacher explained it in class." "So, I'm

not the only one who talks about class. Right José? Hanadi also talks about things we do in class, so she's a nerd too, isn't she?" Danilo says quickly. "Or is it the other way around, and those of you who don't speak about class stuff simply don't understand anything?"

5 Danilo and José stare at each other, but Elena interrupts and diverts everyone's attention. "Well, if we are going to defend nature's rights, why don't we stand up for our own rights?" "But what rights are you talking about? We are still children. How can we have rights if we are just children? What children have are obligations." What I
10 say clearly contradicts what Elena has said. "Hanadi, you're wrong" Elena answers "My teacher talked about the Declaration of Children's Rights one day in class. She said that we have the right to have a family who looks after us, the right to a home, to be fed, to play, and some other stuff." "I like that: the right to play." José jokes to lighten the
15 atmosphere. He does not want to fight with Danilo. "We also have the right to education and to not be made to work," says Elena. "That's what I mean: I have the right to do nothing," José says. He is planning on not cleaning up after lunch. "You're getting it wrong, smartass. You have the right not to have to work in a factory or in the country, but
20 that doesn't mean you can't be made to work at school or at home," Elena replies. "And do all children have those rights?" Silvia asks. "Yes, I think so," Elena answers. "The teacher said they're like human rights for adults but applied to boys..." "And to girls," I add.

Elena confirms my idea before continuing. "And to girls. So I
25 imagine they are for all children. They are universal." "I don't think they are really universal. I don't think they are applied everywhere, because I saw some children on the news who were working in factories or selling things in the street," says José. "Well, imagine what difficult lives they must have. We should protest so that all children
30 have the same rights, not just here but everywhere," Silvia says.

I interrupt. "What I'm saying is that you don't have those rights. They are given to us. As children, everything is given to us; adults tell us what we have to do, what we should say..." "Hold your horses! You're getting carried away," says Elena. "Let's try to include this
35 thing about rights in the play and see what we get, although I think

we may already have too many issues to discuss in the sketch.. Who wants to tell Maite so she can talk to the people in the village?"

Danilo looks serious. Apparently, he did not like José calling him a nerd. I feel confused about what the other children have said about child labor, but I decide to get closer to Danilo. Once we're alone, I'll ask him if he is all right. 5

Episode 5. The mayor's visit 10

Maite was impressed when we told her about our ideas for the show. She preferred the idea of a debate between experts rather than a summit. "A debate is more like TV and there is more room for protest through humor," she said. 15

We all agreed. She also told us that it was very important for her that we respect what we had discussed at first: that whatever we did, we would all take part.

While the others stayed behind working on the set and the props, Maite asked José and me to go with her to visit the village mayor. We had to talk to him to discuss where the play would take place. Maite remembered that in the town hall, near the entrance on the right, there was a beautiful patio. She thought that would be a good place for the play. We headed off to the village hoping the Mayor would authorize our proposal. "Hello Sir Braulio," Maite says to the mayor. 20
"Hello Lady Maite, come in, come in," the mayor answers sarcastically. "Come in, Lady Maite. Don't stand at the door, Lady Maite." 25

Maite smiles at the way the mayor pronounces the word "Lady" when speaking to her. "Hello Braulio," Maite goes along with the mayor's joke," forgetting the old respectful forms of addressing a mayor "That's better. Now I'm sure we'll reach an understanding. Who are these two kids?" 30

Maite says our names and introduces us as the spokespersons for the group of younger children at camp. "Hanadi!" says the mayor, "What a beautiful name!" 35

I explain that I am not from around here, and when he asks me about the meaning of my name, I answer. "Well, now I like it even more! Not that I don't like José you know," he says looking at José. "It's just that I am more used to that name; it's a traditional name. Besides the actress, I have never known any other Hanadi. And the actress is too far away to ask her about her name. And what do you think of the name Braulio? Or Sir Braulio?" he jokes and winks at Maite.

5 The mayor starts laughing loudly when he sees we are blushing because we don't know how to answer his question. Then, he says, "All right, let's get to the point! What brings you here?"

José explains that we have come about the invitation to take part in the village festival, and together we give him some details about what we are planning on doing. "Fantastic!" the mayor says. "The people in the village will be very grateful. We don't often get the chance to attend cultural activities. It is our custom to have a band playing until late, but besides that, there's little else, really." "We'd like to know if it would be possible to do the play in the patio here at the town hall," Maite asks.

The Mayor's face changes as he listens to Maite, and suddenly he becomes more serious. "This thing you are asking me...it's impossible," says the mayor "You can't do it in the patio. I'm sorry." "And why is that?" José asks. "We aren't going to break anything. We would be really careful and we hardly need any props. I can't see the problem." "That's not the issue," says the mayor, "The thing is that we only use that patio for specific events in the village. We use it for important occasions like when we celebrate our Patron Saints Day. It's our tradition. I'm really sorry, but we can't change that." "I don't understand," I say. "Why can't we use the patio for other activities? Do you mean that traditions can't be changed? If not, how are you going to have more cultural activities?" "Look, it's not me who decides. I understand what you are saying, but the people here wouldn't accept changing this tradition. You could do your show in the main square, which is also a good place, don't you agree?"

José is on a roll. "Well, I believe traditions are made to be changed if they are not supported by good reasoning." I have never seen José

react this way. "You may be right kid, but you live in the city, and maybe things are different there. You are used to changes. Here, tradition is important and you must also be respectful of our traditions. "Anyway," says Maite who has understood that we will not be allowed to do the play in the patio, "We are not here to cause you any problems, Braulio. Children, I think the mayor has a good idea. The main square is a good place too, isn't it?" 5

Maite and I leave town hall behind José, who looks angry and has his hands in his pockets. "José, I must congratulate you on how you defended your idea in front of the mayor. But don't think you are the only one feeling disappointed," says Maite. "I too, had thought that we could have the play in the patio, but I don't think we can tell the people in the village what they should do with their traditions, right?" "No? Why not?" José says in a challenging tone. 10

Maite tells José to not talk to her like that. She tells him to calm down, that it isn't such a big deal. Then, she replies: "We can't because we are guests in this village." "Okay," says José, who seems to have calmed down. "Does that mean that Hanadi, who is a foreigner, doesn't have the right to criticize anything about our culture even though she lives here?" 15 20

Maite seems surprised and remains quiet. I am just as shocked as she is by José's reaction. But I do not feel merely surprised. For some unknown reason, I suddenly start to cry. 25

Episode 6. Meeting the shepherd

This morning during breakfast, Pedro came to the camp to tell us that the pond was full of water again. He also told us that he and some of the children from the village were going swimming, and asked us if we wanted to go with them. On our way to the pond, we came across an old shepherd who was minding some sheep. "Look! A shepherd. But he's only got a few sheep. So few, in fact, that maybe he's not a real shepherd at all," Silvia says. "Maybe it's Pedro's un- 30 35

cle," says Mohamed. "If it's him, he could tell us about the sale of Rufino's land and about that dam." Mohamed hasn't forgotten how unfair the situation with the water had seemed.

5 Without thinking twice (she might be afraid of sleeping outdoors, but she certainly isn't shy) Silvia runs up to the man and asks: "Hello Sir! Are you Pedro's uncle?"

10 The shepherd smiles back. "Yes, I am. And you must be the group from the city. My nephew told me..." "We walk past here every day but it's the first time that we've seen you. You don't usually come this way do you?" José is trying to seem interested while covertly getting close to the sheep. "No. Before, when we wanted to go from the field where the sheep graze to where we keep them at night, we would go through Rufino's land, but we can't anymore. They've blocked the path. Now, we have to go all the way around the path. 15 When I've got only a few sheep like today, I walk up past the pond. This path is narrow but it's shorter. Hey, you! Be careful and don't get too close!" he tells José. "If you get too close to the sheep, the dog might give you a fright." "But I'm not doing anything!" José says. He then turns towards us and whispers, "How did he see me? He's 20 looking the other way!" "So, what happened with this land? What are they doing there?" Mohamed finally dares to ask.

The shepherd smiles at José and answers Mohamed. "Rufino sold it to a company that will extract gas from the earth and produce energy. They get the gas by using pressurized water. That's why they 25 are testing water storage using the dam, and seeing how much they can use without bringing it from elsewhere." "And what do you think about that? Do you think what this company is doing is good or bad?" José asks. "It's complicated. The company has only just got here and the people in the village are divided. Some are for it, some 30 against it. Some people think it's good for the village, and that it will provide more jobs....." The shepherd answers warily.

Elena seems upset. "But if they block the footpath and stop the water from reaching the village, how can anyone be in favor of it?" "If they only use the dam some days and there is another way to 35 walk around the pond, it doesn't seem that bad," I say. "What do you

mean?" says Mohamed "That's just because you don't like swimming anyway." "It'd be worse if the people from the village had to move and live somewhere else just because there were no jobs here," I keep insisting, thinking about what Pedro told me the other day. He had said that if the kids in the village wanted to study, they had to go to schools in another village because there was no high school here. "Each person is worried about different things. Everything that you mention is bad, and people in the village now are discussing which option is best," says the shepherd. "I am worried because the water they put into the river after extracting the gas is polluted. It may look clean but it isn't. Bear in mind that we've always used this river to water all the fields in the valley." "Does that mean that the tomatoes you grow here will be contaminated when they reach the market?" I ask. "Probably," the shepherd replies. "If Rufino hadn't sold the land, we wouldn't run the risk of eating contaminated tomatoes. Damn this Rufino!" Mohamed is getting angry. "Are you sure this is all Rufino's responsibility?" asks Maite, who has been listening to our conversation with the shepherd. "Isn't that like saying that you are also responsible because the company came here to produce the energy that you buy? Who is responsible: you, Rufino, or the company? If Rufino had said no, would that mean that the problem was solved? What would happen if the company decides to move and do it in another place? The problem is solved? Maybe to find the solution we need to find the origin of the problem." "I don't think this only happens here. Last summer, I saw the same company logo in my country, and people were protesting. I bet it was for the same reasons," Danilo says. "It's that thing about the butterfly isn't it?" José asks. He is referring to the butterfly effect but I don't think he really understands the concept.

I have grown closer to José after seeing the way he behaved in front of the mayor the other day. In fact, I think I admire him, though maybe admiration and caring are related, aren't they? The other day, when I started crying, Maite immediately comforted me with hugs and words. However, José understood that it was better to remain silent. Later, when we got back to camp, he asked me how I was feeling.

ing. He asked me precisely when I was ready to talk to him, although I hadn't really gotten my ideas together. Talking to José helped me understand my feelings.

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Episode 7: The football match

10 Yesterday we performed the play in the main square. The audience clapped and laughed quite a lot. The children thought the people had enjoyed it. After the play, some of the people from the village were talking about the river issue, so maybe the kids had their way in the end. "Hey guys! I think they really liked the play. Pedro asked me if we would like to continue taking part in the festival," says Silvia. "What has the fact that they liked the play got to do with them asking us to continue taking part in the festival?" Mohamed asks. "And they've asked us if we want to play in the football tournament," Silvia says, ignoring Mohamed's question. She is very excited because she loves football. "Silvia, you've been asked a question," says Maite. "If they hadn't liked the play, they wouldn't have congratulated us, would they?" Silvia looks at Mohamed while answering, but she seems upset at being interrupted. "That's not a reason. If they hadn't said anything, it could have been because they thought we aren't any good at football. It didn't need to have anything to do with the play," says Mohamed. "If they thought we played really badly, that would be a good reason to invite us to the tournament, so they could beat us easily." Elena tries to help Silvia. "Who wants to play a team of strangers who play better than you? Nobody likes to lose." "I'm not sure, but this reason is better than the other; they invited us because we are bad football players, not because we are good actors... mm but maybe we were good actors, acting like bad football players!" Mohammed laughs while admitting that our reasoning makes sense. "Now, tell us about the match, I'm sure we all want to play." "There are different age groups, and the tournament is called 'From the

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pitch to the bridge' because once the tournament is over, all the players have to jump off the bridge into the river." Silvia keeps on talking. "But it will be late and the water will be very cold. I don't want to jump," says a worried Elena. "But it's a tradition. They've been doing things that way since the old people in the village were children. If you won't jump into the river, you can't play." Silvia looks worried because they might not take part in the tournament. "It's a stupid tradition. It doesn't make any sense." Elena is still annoyed because she feels that no one is backing her up on this. "I'm sure they did it because there's the dance after the tournament, and since they didn't have showers in the village, a swim in the river was the best way to make sure the boys were all clean at the dance." José laughs – this village is full of traditions. That might have made sense then, but nowadays we've got hot showers so if they want me to get clean, I'll have a nice shower. No problem." It doesn't look like Elena is going to back down. "Perhaps we could suggest that only the captains should jump into the river. We could choose a captain who won't mind getting wet. We can try to respect the tradition but adapt it to our times," suggests Danilo, trying to solve the problem. "That's not a bad idea, but it would be unfair to pick a captain just because he doesn't mind getting wet. The fair thing would be to choose the best player," says Mohamed, who hasn't really understood Danilo's intention. "Or whoever we vote for, whether he is a good player or not," says Silvia. "Come on. I bet that here, everyone will jump off the bridge, even if they can have a hot shower at home later. I'm sure they also do it because it is fun, and I don't think they'll want to change now." I add, "Come on Elena, you like the river and it could be fun to say goodbye to the river by everyone jumping in from the top of the bridge. The tournament is the last day of camp." "Mmmm, well, ok but if I get ill once I'm home, I will tell my parents that you are all responsible. All of you, the Bridge Team," Elena laughs. She seems to have overcome her anger at having to do something she did not want to do.

Everyone laughs at Elena's joke and we start impersonating her parents and how they would react if Elena got a cold.



Epilogue: Back home

Camp is over and I am back home. Everything seems strange. Even the fact that I am sad (“nostalgic” my mother says) and happy (my mother agrees on this term) at the same time.

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I am writing this story alone in my room. The last days of camp were really exciting. Everything happened very quickly: preparing the show, the actual play, when the older kids came back from the mountains and told us about their adventures there, the football tournament, and Elena pretending she had caught a cold.

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On the last day, the mayor came to say goodbye, and thanked us for our hard work in the play. He even said that if we came back next year, we could do it in the patio. I am not sure whether he was joking or if he really thought they could change their tradition. Pedro and his uncle also came to say goodbye and they said that we had been very convincing in the play. Apparently, the people in the village were still discussing the situation with the dam. Maite was very proud of us. She said she loved the way we had worked together and the way we had all contributed to the group. She said we had all contributed and learned something from the group.

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And what else? Well, on the way back on the bus, José did not ask me to sit next to him. I did not ask him either. We simply sat next to each other because it seemed the natural thing to do now that we are such good friends.

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Christian

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Episode 1: First day of class

Today was my first day. When I got to school, I felt the way my fish must have felt when I brought it to stay in my friend Atauchi's fish-bowl while I'm here, in Spain. When I went in I didn't know where to go. Nobody looked at me, and no one asked me anything or offered to help. Everyone was running around; the boys, the girls, the teachers, everybody. They all seemed happy, as if they liked school. I knew they were happy because they wouldn't stop laughing and talking, although I know you can talk non-stop and still not be happy. I didn't know anyone and I felt a bit scared. As the minutes went by and I stood still in the corridor, fear crept into me like ice cream being served into a cone. 15 20

I eventually ended up alone in the corridor, until a woman passing by spotted me. She called me by my name (Christian) and said she would take me to my classroom. As soon as I entered the room, I saw a vacant seat and headed towards it, trying not to draw attention to myself. All the children were talking, just as they had been before I came in. On the way to my chair I was lucky enough to find a photograph on the floor. I picked it up and gave it to its owner, who thanked me nicely and smiled kindly. When the teacher called our names, I found out that his name was Bocdan, Bokdam, Bochdan, or something like that. Maybe I have made a new friend thanks to that picture on the floor. 25 30 35

Episode 2: There is no pitch to train on

"Come on! Let's go to the playground." says Bochdan.

5 A tanned boy named José asks my new friend, "Are we going to set up a football team to play in the school league this year?"

"I don't think so. We don't have anywhere to train." answers a boy named Mohamed.

"What do you mean *we don't*? We could train on the courts at the sports center." says Bochdan.

10 "You can forget those courts, you know they won't let us in." says Mohamed.

"You're wrong, we can use the courts. Those courts are for all the kids in the neighborhood and we are kids from this neighborhood, so those courts were built for us. The problem is the Ecuadorians are always there and there are more of them than us. And they are stronger. They are the ones who won't let us train there, but it's just not fair." says José.

"But they are from our neighborhood too, so they could say that it's their right to play on the courts too." Bochdan replies.

20 "They are foreigners," says José, "because they weren't born here."

"I wasn't born here either and I feel like this is my home," Mohamed answers, slightly annoyed, "and the same thing goes for Raul who is from another neighborhood. I'm both Moroccan and from this neighborhood - and don't you talk about your 'village' in Extremadura? I think we can be from several places at the same time."

25 "Do you remember Pedro and his cousins at school? The ones who lived in my building? Their parents were one of the first people to come to the neighborhood when there were just a few houses. When we started our first year in school they had to leave the neighborhood. What would happen if they came back and wanted to play on the courts? According to José, because they were born here they are from the neighborhood more than Mohamed, they could come back and say they had the right to play there. Isn't that so, José?" Bochdan smiles and gives José a little shove to ease the tension. "What
35 would we do then? "

"And why is this different than what happened at summer camp? There you didn't say the same when we were the foreigners, the outsiders." Silvia says in loud voice. Silvia has been listening all the time, playing with a football.

"You're confusing me again." says José, as he moves away from Bochdan. "I know what I'm saying is right, and forget Pedro. He's not coming back. Our problem is the Ecuadorians." 5

Episode 3: How to form teams 10

A few days later, José, Silvia and Mohamed are kicking a ball against a wall. Bochdan and I are sitting on a bench next to them.

"Hello!" says another boy who is not from our class. 15

"Hi Raul!" says José. "We are thinking about whether or not we can set up a football team this year. Mohamed says we can't train on the courts at the sports center, but Bochdan and I don't agree. We have to do something so they will let us play there for a while."

"And we have another problem besides the courts. We don't have enough players." says Raul. 20

Raul is in the same year as us but at a different school in our area. He knows José because their parents are friends. He seems relaxed and nice. I'm glad he is part of the group.

"Well, maybe Christian could play on our team." says Bochdan while looking at me. I suddenly get very nervous because I haven't said anything yet. 25

"No! Are you joking?" says José. "He's one of them."

"Me?" I ask. I'm surprised that someone who has never seen me thinks he knows what I'm like. 30

"No, he is not one of them. He's just new at school and in this neighborhood. Can't you see that?" says Bochdan.

"I know, but that doesn't matter. In the beginning all of them are new but, once they meet the rest, they get together and don't let us play on the courts." says Mohamed. 35

"Come on! You can't say that about Christian, you don't know what somebody is like until you get to know them." says Silvia.

"I bet you that by the end of the week he will already be playing on a team, while we will still be here trying to work out a way to start training."

"But how do you know, José? How can you be so sure?" asks Bochdan.

"I just know." replies José.

"That's not exactly a good reason." says Bochdan.

"I've been through this a hundred times." says José.

"But you have never seen me before." I manage to say.

"Yes, you are right. But you are an Ecuadorian and, as soon as you meet the rest, you will join up with them and use the courts night and day." says José.

"Not all Ecuadorians are the same. Are all you Spaniards the same?" I don't know how my voice came out so quickly and so brave.

"Let's see. I've got an idea." says Raul, who hasn't spoken yet. "We'll let Christian play with us. Right now, we don't have enough players anyway. And what's more, if he stays on the team, that will mean one less Ecuadorian against us. We've got nothing to lose and a lot to gain"

"Why do you want to give him a chance when it's going to be useless?" asks José.

"I've just explained all that. And besides that, Christian already asked you, do you think all Spanish people are the same?" says Raul.

"No, not us." says José.

José stares at Raul as if saying *"You know me. Why are you questioning me like this?"* José is hot-headed. He has a strong personality, but Raul knows that when he understands something he can change his mind. That is why he continues questioning José.

"And why would all Ecuadorians be the same? Bochdan is right. How can you be so sure that Christian will end up with them on the courts?" Raul asks.

"Because I know them, and I saw a lot of Ecuadorian kids when they first came to the neighborhood. Face it! All the kids on the courts were newcomers once." says José.



VIRGINIA PEDRERO

"How many Ecuadorians do you have to meet before you can say that they all behave the same way? I think you're taking it too far." says Bochdan.

5 "You're right. We all deserve a chance. Put yourself in his place. He's alone here." Mohamed has been silent for a while but he seems to have changed his mind about me.

"Oh, all right. We'll let him play for the time being." says José.

"So, what are we doing this afternoon? Shall we go to the courts?" Silvia asks the other boys.

10 "Okay. We'll meet there at six. We have a team now, so we have to do something. We need a place to train." says Raul stubbornly.

On the way home, Bochdan realizes that they forgot something very important; nobody asked Christian if he wanted to play football with them. But if he didn't want to, he would have said something,
15 right?

Episode 4: Getting the pitch

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It is nearly six o'clock and we are about to go to the courts and try our luck at convincing the Ecuadorians to let us play, but first we stop to decide how we are going to arrange everything.

"Hi boys."

25 "Hi Mohamed. We are thinking about what we can do to get some training time on the courts." says Bochdan.

"It's pretty clear to me. We should fight, show them what we are made of... whoever wins keeps the courts." says Mohamed.

30 "I don't think that is a good way to get time on the courts. Firstly, we would surely lose, since there are a lot less of us and they are stronger. And besides, if we somehow managed to beat them, they would be back tomorrow with more friends and we would have to fight again. Nobody can keep the courts through force forever." says Raul.

35 "I agree with Raul. I think the best idea is to talk to the Ecuadorians, explain that we also want to play on the courts and it is unfair

that they always use them. I think if we discuss things with them we can reach an understanding." Bochdan says.

"You can't talk to those people. They just won't listen. That's what my dad says. He says they are all stupid." says José.

"José, remember what we talked about this morning in the playground. Maybe the reason we haven't trained for a year is just because we assumed the Ecuadorians wouldn't share the courts, and because of that, we haven't even asked. How can we be so sure? I think maybe our first impression was wrong. This morning we all reached the conclusion that if we don't know Christian we don't know how he will behave. Can't that be true for the other Ecuadorians? Maybe we don't really know how the Ecuadorians would react because we have never talked to them." says Bochdan. 5 10

"That's your conclusion, not mine" says José.

"Anyway, if you are not sure about talking to them, we could ask someone else for help." Silvia says. 15

"Who are you thinking about?" I ask, and I try to forget what José said. I don't want problems so early.

"I've got a lot of cousins who could help us." Mohamed says.

"I think Silvia wasn't talking about asking people to come so we could outnumber them. Why would we want to outnumber them? We could ask someone who doesn't belong to either group to help us find a fair way to share the courts. As far as I know, the Community Center is in charge of the courts. Maybe we could ask there." says Raul. 20 25

"That sounds like a good idea, but I still think it would be better to talk to the Ecuadorians, because, if we reach an agreement, we will have found a definite solution. If we get time on the courts through the people at the Community Center, maybe the Ecuadorians won't stick to the rules if, one day, the staff from the Center are not there." says Bochdan. 30

"So, first we talk to them and try to convince them. If that doesn't work, we ask the staff at the Center for help, and if neither of those work then we fight?" Mohamed asks.

"That's what I suggest." says Bochdan. 35

"Sounds good to me." Raul adds.

José doesn't answer, but thinks for himself, "Why can't Christian talk to them? Isn't he supposed to be part of the team and, at the same time, one of them?"

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Episode 5: Sharing the court evenly

10 At the courts, a few meters away from the Ecuadorians:

"Who will start talking?" José asks. "Christian could, he talks like them."

I am surprised by José's suggestion. Maybe he is right, but I just got to the neighborhood and I feel divided. I don't know the other
15 Ecuadorians who play in the courts, and I don't know how they will react if I start talking. I don't want to have problems with them, or with my new friends.

"It was Bochdan's idea. Let him start." says Mohamed. I don't know if it's because he thinks it would not be a good idea to let me
20 speak, or because he can guess how I feel, and he understands how it feels to be conflicted.

"But Raul is a better speaker, he always convinces people," says Bochdan. "but never mind, I'll start. Hey!"

"Hi, what do you want?" one of the boys playing on the court
25 answers in a seemingly friendly way.

"My name is Bochdan and I'm here with my friends because we would also like to use the courts. We have started a football team and we'd like to train here."

"Guys! Come here!" he calls to the other boys. "This boy, Boch-
30 dan, right? and his friends want to play on the courts"

One of the boys who seems to be in charge says "But these courts are ours."

"Actually, the courts belong to all the kids in the neighborhood, and we all live around here, so we have the right to use them too."
35 says Bochdan.

"Sure, but why can't you play somewhere else? You are quite young. We train here because our league is more important than yours, that's for sure. And we are better players than you, so we need better facilities. You can play in the park." says one of the other boys.

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"Maybe that's exactly why we need the better facilities, because we aren't as good, and we need to improve. You are so skillful that you can adapt to playing anywhere." Raul says bravely.

An older boy approaches us with a smile on his face. He is wearing a T-shirt with a message that reads "We play better if we play together." He interrupts the conversation.

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"What's going on? Are you starting a new league with all the kids in the area?" he asks.

I feel relieved after seeing the message on his T-shirt, though sometimes such messages mean nothing to the people wearing them. In any case, his mere presence makes me feel good. Maybe he can help. I'm not sure we can reach an agreement on our own.

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"No, Chema, these kids want to play on our courts." says the boy who seems to be in command.

"You really like that word 'our', don't you? You're not paying for them yourself, are you?" The older boy addresses the other one warmly. The boy in charge doesn't seem bothered. They seem to be friends, which might work against us if Chema prefers his friends over us.

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"Well, that's ok, isn't it? The little kids are getting bigger and playing better. Maybe they could even teach you a thing or two, and perhaps, if they watched you play, they could learn a few things about the more serious leagues. And we could even use this as an opportunity. If you all train here, we could organize a league to liven up the courts and the neighborhood, and show everyone that you are nice people and you don't bite." The older boy looks at us, amused and calm.

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"Anyway, first things first. My name is Chema and I'm the community worker from the Center. Their names are Kevin, Luis Alberto, Juan Carlos, Cristobal and Lautaro."

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"Hi everyone!" says Raul. "This is Bochdan, José, Mohamed, Silvia, Christian, and my name is Raul. We think starting our own league is a great idea, but we would need to use these courts."

5 "No way! This is our court, you know that, Chema. It's always been that way." says Juan Carlos.

"Up to now, you have usually played on your own. This is true so far. However that doesn't mean that, if other children want to play here, you can prevent them from doing so. Since nobody else wanted to play, we haven't had to adjust our timetables, but from now on
10 what we'll do is to share the pitch: when both teams are training we will split the pitch in two, and when you both play a match you will use the whole pitch. Does that sound all right?" Chema asks.

"If that means we can use the courts, then it's fine with us." says José.

15 "If that's the way you want it, it's ok with us too." Juan Carlos doesn't seem convinced. He trusts Chema but he doesn't seem to agree completely. "And when is the tournament starting? We already know we'll beat you."

"Nobody said the tournament would be only between your two
20 teams. Perhaps it would be a good idea if you mixed the teams. Maybe other kids want to play too." says Chema. "I'm going to put up a sign explaining the new league so other kids can sign up. Once we know how many people want to join, we can decide about the teams. How does that sound?"

25 We all think it's a good idea. Raul winks at Bochdan and the others. They are happy about the way things have gone. Who knows what might have happened if Chema had not shown up.

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Episode 6: Forming the team. The girls want to take part

The summer is now far behind us and we have all forgotten our holidays as we are well into the school year by now. It is still not very
35 cold and we spend a lot of our time on the streets. We train at the

courts several days a week and while our relationship with the older Ecuadorians is not the best, it's okay. We haven't had any big problems. These past few days, we have been trying to figure out how to organize the local league with the new kids, and to see if we can take part in the borough league.

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"But what are we going to do?" Kevin asks.

Kevin is on the older boys' team. They call him 'Peru' because his family is Peruvian, but he always hangs around with the Ecuadorians (if nobody called him 'Peru' we would all think he was from Ecuador. It is really hard to tell Peruvians and Ecuadorians apart). At first, he wasn't very interested in football, but since we all started playing on the courts, and as more and more people (especially girls) came to watch, he signed up too.

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"What's up?" asks Chema.

"Two girls have signed up for the league." Kevin answers nervously.

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"And? What's the problem?" Chema responds.

"What do you mean? The probleeeeeeeem?" His words don't come out well. Or maybe, the ideas don't come out. "It's one thing is to have them as an audience, watching the game, but it's a different thing to have them playing with us!! "

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"And me?" says Silvia, angrily. "Do you have any problem with me? Either you don't know what you are saying, or you've had a problem with me since I started playing, and you didn't want to tell me."

"With you it's not the same ... you're different," answers Kevin, a little unsure of himself, "you are one of us, and you've been here since the beginning.

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"Ok "says Chema "As Kevin just said, two girls and two boys have signed up for the league. That makes a total of fifteen, which means three teams. We've been really lucky with the numbers, because, like this, you all get to play. And, if you are good enough and our little league helps you train seriously, we could organize an eleven-a-side team for the borough league in spring. By then, all the youngest players will be eleven years old, and all you older players will still be thirteen, so we could sign you all up on the same team.

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We'll show them how we play football over here. It's been a long time since we had a team in the borough leagues." says Chema.

"With the girls?" asks Kevin, looking at Silvia out of the corner of his eye.

"Of course." I say, supporting Silvia. She supported me at the beginning so I feel like I owe her something. With the players we have now, we can only play amongst ourselves, and we're always playing the same people. If we wanted to have two five-a-side teams for the borough league, we would need 16 players since the rules establish a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 10 players per team. Without the girls, there would be 13 players. So, if we set up just one five-a-side team, we would be leaving three players out and we wouldn't be able to play eleven-a-side because each team must have a minimum of 15 players. I think it would be better if we created one team with the different teams you have now." 5
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"But then we wouldn't have our own team anymore." says Kevin.

"No," says Silvia, looking at me in a strange way, somehow both grateful and nervous. "we don't have to get rid of our team in the internal league, but we can form a new team that includes all of us, and then we can participate in the borough league." 20

"But we can't be on both teams." Juan Carlos says.

"Why not?" I ask. "When we play in the internal league, we will all play on our own local teams, but when we play in the borough league, we will all play on the same team and contribute our different playing styles." 25

"Sure." says Chema. "That way you can all learn from each other. If you only play on your local teams, you will always do the same things, but when you join up in the global team, we'll have more possibilities."

I walk home happy. It looks like I will be able to play with my friends and with the rest of the Ecuadorians. But even though I agree with Chema and Silvia, I am not sure that even they really believed what they said. 30

Even though I'm happy, I still wonder if having bigger teams might bring more problems. 35

Episode 7: Who has the right to play? The girls do

A few weeks have gone by, it's raining cats and dogs and we can't train. All fifteen of us are waiting under a porch together to see if the rain stops. Peru and Juan Carlos have been talking about the problems they foresee in the eleven-a-side team, and now they are sharing their thoughts with us.

"If the girls play, we are going to lose for sure, so I would have them as substitutes at all times..." says Kevin.

"Well, the same goes for the Spaniards. If they play, we will also lose. So as for the rest of you, don't you dare miss a game" says Juan Carlos.

"I think the best way to decide who will be playing and who will be a substitute is to see who the best players are, regardless of birthplace or gender." says Silvia as she tries to hide her anger at what has been said about the girls. Silvia loves football and she wants to play.

"I'm sure that if we include girls and boys, Ecuadorians, Spaniards, Ukrainians and Moroccans, our team will be stronger." says Bochdan. He seems really excited at the prospect of having such a varied team.

"Are you mad? It's impossible to agree on anything with people who are so different!" says Juan Carlos.

"It doesn't have to be that way." Says Elena, one of the girls who has signed up for the league. "We all have a right to play and try our best. The rules for the league say that anybody who lives in the neighborhood can play on the team. The rules don't say anything about gender or about belonging to a specific group. They just say you have to live here. That is the only limit: if you live in the neighborhood, you have the right to play."

"Oh, come on! What does that mean? *The right to play?* Are you comparing the right to play with the right to life or the right to go to school? I can't picture myself going to court to defend my right to play football. What is important is that we play to win, and we will never win if you girls play." Juan Carlos shouts.

"I know you don't want to let me play because I'm a girl, but I can play better than most of the boys I know, so I can't see why I can't play. I'm going to continue fighting for my right to play football. Imagine that we decide that you can't play because you are too short. If we had eleven short players, we would concede a lot of goals from corner kicks. How would you feel about that?" says Hanadi, the other girl who wants to play. 5

"Well, we'll see how we can solve this problem. Right now, what we have to do is train hard because Chema has already signed us up for the borough league and we want to be ready for the first match. If we train hard and practice a lot, we will see who the better players are." says Kevin. 10

Episode 8: Losing a Match 15

We have trained hard all winter, sometimes all together, sometimes each group by themselves. The local league has worked out fine and we've had great fun. Finally, the day has come. This morning we all were very enthusiastic about playing our first game in the borough league, but we were thrashed. I think we played quite well, but it seems we are not a team yet. 20

"We lost because the girls played for too long." says Juan Carlos.

"I don't agree. We lost because we only had forwards and nobody wanted to stay back in defense. It's not about three girls playing on the team." Bochdan answers. 25

"I'm very sorry you lost the match. You've played better than other days but you've been a bit unlucky." Chema tries to get our spirits up.

"I don't think it's a matter of bad luck, that's not why we lost. I think we haven't trained together enough." says Kevin. "We all still play on our own, individually. If we train more often, maybe we won't be such a bad team." 30

"I think Bochdan is right. We all wanted to score but nobody worried about the other team scoring." says Hanadi. "And it's a 35



shame because I think we do have good defenders, but we all have different playing styles. We all played like we normally do with our local teams, and we still haven't learned to play together. We need to work on playing as a team."

"I agree with Kevin." says Raul. "We didn't play as a unit because we are not a real team yet." 5

"What do you mean?" asks Juan Carlos.

"I don't know how to put it. Being a real team means a lot more than just signing up, getting our licenses and training together, but I don't really know what. How can we make the best of the way we play in our local teams when we play together? How can we get the best out of each player's style when we are playing with the big team? And how can we combine the way we train with our local teams when we are training as a big team? How can we do all that and reach a better understanding when we play together? Could somebody help me explain it better?" Raul asks. 10 15

Episode 9: Birthday celebration and the ablution rite 20

The next week, it was Mohamed's birthday and he was going to have a party at his house. Mohamed wanted to invite his friends, so he had asked his parents. They agreed, but they told him to tell his friends about some rules and rituals that had to be respected. Mohamed knew they were referring to food and the ablution before eating on feast days. "Ablution" was a word he always had trouble pronouncing. 25

When Mohamed got to the park, we were all waiting for him on our bench. Raul and Silvia were playing with the ball as usual, José and I were throwing stones at an empty plastic bottle, and Bochdan was sitting in silence next to Elena (Bochdan had been sitting with Elena quite a lot recently). 30

"Hey *parses* (mates)! What are you up to?" says Mohamed. "Guess what? I'm celebrating my birthday at home on Sunday, and I'd like you to come." 35

"Great!" Raul and Bochdan shouted. They seemed to already know how good the food was at Mohamed's.

5 "So, it's your birthday. You were keeping quiet about that! You're like one of those old ladies who doesn't want to talk about her age so nobody can tell how old she is." says José.

"It's not like that. My father never had birthday parties when he was little. Nobody did in his city, so he only started celebrating when he came here." Mohamed explains. "Thank God I've celebrated mine."

10 "I understand that it's very important for you, but if nobody had birthday parties, then they wouldn't be so important." says Bochdan. I listen to him and I know that Bochdan always speaks like this. If I didn't know better, I would think he was trying to impress Elena. I think Bochdan fancies Elena.

15 "Okay, but don't tell my father that, or else he might change his mind and cancel the party." says Mohamed.

"And what will your party be like?" Elena asks.

20 "Well, you know," says Mohamed. "the family and some friends get together, we thank Allah and share a supper. Oh! And there's something really important, before we eat we have to wash..."

"Hey, what's wrong with you? Do you think we are pigs? I always wash my hands before eating." José says.

"You didn't let me finish. How do you know what I'm going to say if you won't let me finish?"

25 "Because I know you. It's the same as when we talk about football. If I say something bad about Barcelona, I know you are going to stick up for them, and if I say something good about Real Madrid, I know you are going to criticize them. You don't have any secrets for me, mate." José answers with a half smile on his face, which makes him seem important.

30 "All right. So, sometimes it's easy to know what I'm going to say because we've already talked about a topic many times and you know where I stand. Maybe you're right, but I've never told you about the rituals we have at home. Can you guess what I'm going to say about that just by knowing what I think about Real Madrid

and Barcelona?" Mohamed answers. "And what if I've changed my mind about Real Madrid?" he adds with an ironic smile.

"That is impossible." Elena laughs. "And maybe we didn't know what you were going to say about the ritual you have at home, but the way you started the sentence, and with your obsession with hygiene, we all thought you were going to draw our attention to our lack of hygiene." 5

"Mohamed *the Clean*." Says José.

"Well, here's another one like Bochdan." Mohamed smiles at Raul, who has also noticed something going on between Bochdan and Elena. "Driving us crazy with her arguments. In fact, I was only going to tell you that we have a special ritual where first you wash your hands, then your head and then your feet. In fact it's more of a symbolic cleansing, so you can stop the *Mohamed the clean* business." 10

We laugh at what José and Mohamed were just saying. With all the laughter, it seems that the issue is over and resolved, but it still doesn't make sense to me why someone would simulate washing hands when he is not actually doing so. If you are not really washing your hands, why do it? 15

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Episode 10: Eating pork

There's only one day left before Mohamed's birthday, and while we are eating our sandwiches during the break (some kids only eat sunflower seeds) José remembers the party and asks Mohamed about it. 25

"I know you are a bit strange and you don't eat pork. What are we going to eat tomorrow?"

"A lamb tajin" Mohamed answers. 30

"A what?" says José.

"A lamb tajin. It's a traditional dish made with vegetables and lamb. You can also have it with couscous. It's a special dish for celebrations." says Hanadi, who came to Spain not as long ago as Mohamed. 35

"Just like at home. Whenever we have a birthday, my mother always makes paella. It's a custom of hers." says Silvia.

"Really? Every birthday? That's boring." José says.

5 "Why do you care?" says Bochdan. "Why are you always criticizing? I wouldn't like to be criticized because I have paella on Sundays or on my birthday or because I put ketchup in my paella. If I like it, what's it to you?"

"Well, my mother does." says José.

"Does what? Puts ketchup in her paella?" Silvia seems surprised.

10 "No, of course not. She criticizes me for putting ketchup on my paella." José says.

"I don't understand why she criticizes you." says Silvia. "The other day, I saw a programme on TV where they said that people in Mexico eat fried grasshoppers the same way we eat peanuts. If it's
15 normal for them, I suppose they don't like being criticized for that. It's a custom for them."

"Yes." I add. "It's like the lamb with couscous at Mohamed's, or the paella at Silvia's."

"I don't think it's the same thing." says Elena, who has kept
20 quiet up to now. "Mohamed's family does it because it is a Muslim tradition, not just one person's custom. Right? "

"Who cares, anyway?" says Silvia.

"Exactly. Who cares as long as it's tasty?" says José. "And it would taste better if it were pork."

25 "Well, I'm sorry, but tradition says it has to be lamb." Hanadi says.

"How boring. Why are things like that? Why not change things and put pork sausage instead of lamb? Have you ever tried it? How can you know you don't like something if you don't try it? You're so strange." says José.

30 "I don't really know why, but is not a matter of taste. We've always done things that way, but if you want I can ask my parents." says Mohamed.

"There must be a reason." Bochdan adds.

35 "I'll ask my parents and let you know, but are you coming to my party or not?"

"Of course." We all said. All except José. "And we'll eat the lamb tajin."

"And you José? Are you in?" Mohamed insists.

"All right but I'll be bringing my dog, so when we finish don't give him lef-overs. Lamb doesn't agree with him, and I would have to take him to the vet" says José, laughing. 5

Episode 11: Trainers versus leather slippers 10

The next day, Raul and I meet up with Bochdan, José and Hanadi, and we walk together to Mohamed's house.

"Happy birthday Mohamed!" we all shout at the same time.

"What did you get?" I ask. 15

"A pair of football boots, so we don't get thrashed in the next matches." says a proud Mohamed.

"You got some great boots!" says José. "But shouldn't you have got a pair of leather slippers? I thought that's what everybody wears where you come from." 20

"What are you talking about?" says Mohamed, "Have you tried playing football in slippers? Do you play in flip-flops when you have a serious game? There's a time and place for everything."

"In fact, hardly anybody uses Baboush (traditional Moroccan slippers) nowadays, except at big parties or celebrations, though my grandfather says we should always wear them. He says we are forgetting our customs." says Hanadi. 25

"That's exactly what my grandfather says about hats. He says we are losing our good customs. We are losing our good customs... as if wearing a hat were a good custom." says Raul. 30

"People now wear sandals or flip-flops instead of slippers, and caps instead of hats. Tell your grandfather to swap his hat for one of your caps." says Elena.

"Exactly, changing a hat for a cap wouldn't change the essence. What matters is protecting yourself from the sun, so it would still be 35

a good custom." says Hanadi, while she imagines her grandfather and Raul's grandfather together with caps and football boots.

"You are assuming that covering is what really matters, right?" says Raul. He looks like he is not sure if he could say this to his grandfather.

"Well, well, let's not beat around the bush. Where's the food?" José jokes. "I hope we get some ham. Oh, no. We can't have pork. Mohamed You still haven't told us why you can't eat pork. Did you ask your parents?"

"I asked my dad and he told me that the prophet told us not to eat pork. In the old days, pigs caused several diseases so they were considered impure animals. We have to look after our bodies as well as our souls. In fact, it's not just us Muslims who don't eat pork. Neither do Jews, and other religions also think it is impure meat."

"Okay, then it was a good reason, but could we say that is still a good reason with all the modern techniques we have that can help us make sure meat is safe to eat?" says Bochdan.

"And having more cultures or religions doing the same, could that be a good reason to keep it?" adds Elena.

"Well, if it was decided by voting, having many people who agree would be reason enough, right? That's how democracy works." answers Hanadi "I think health is not the main reason anymore, or not everywhere.

"So, what you do now is out of respect for your beliefs." Elena says while looking at Bochdan.

"These two like each other more and more every day." I think to myself while I watch how they look at each other.

"Well, if we place body and soul on the same level, we could keep on saying that it's a health issue and not only a custom, don't you think? Pigs represent impurity, and the same goes for animals that eat carrion or animals that have been killed in a violent or inappropriate way." says Mohamed.

"So that's why there are special butchers for Muslims. In my country, there are also people who follow certain rules and rituals before killing an animal, like apologizing to the animal, and thanking it." I say.

“And do we have to follow a ritual when we eat it too? How long is this explanation going to take? I’m getting really hungry and to keep my soul calm I vote to start eating!”

We all laugh at José’s little joke.

5

Episode 12: To buy or not to buy, that is the question

A few days after Mohamed’s birthday I went to the sports center, where I knew I would find most of my teammates. 10

“Hi. What are you doing? Shall we play a match?” I ask.

“Okay, I want to try out my new football boots.” says Mohamed.

“Well, if they are Zike, they are rubbish.” says Juan Carlos, who uses every opportunity to shoot off his mouth and bother us. He never really accepted having to share the courts. 15

“And how would you know? You’ve never had a pair.” I answer.

“What do you mean? My brother had a pair and they didn’t last a month. Those boots are rubbish; all Zike shoes are useless. And they are really expensive.” says Juan Carlos. 20

“Just because a pair of Zikes didn’t work out right, that doesn’t mean they are all rubbish.” I say. After one year I think I have caught onto the way Elena and Bochdan speak.

“Don’t you think that if they are so well known, they must be good? If everybody buys them, does that mean that everyone is stupid for buying rubbish shoes?” says Bochdan, as if he knew that I was thinking about him. 25

Hanadi says “Well, I am not sure if they are well made, but my father told me they’re made in India or Pakistan in factories where kids our age work. They have no training or experience and they are very badly paid. In fact, they are exploited!” 30

“And we are accomplices right?” says José. “I don’t think it’s that bad. And anyway, if we buy the shoes, the kids and their families get money and then they can buy food, right? They also have the right to eat.” 35

"So, according to your argument, to respect one right we have to reject other rights, like, those kids' right to study. Aren't there ways to respect both?" Raul asks. "Believe it or not, the manufacturers and salespeople take advantage of those kids, and people who are out of
5 work, to make those shoes on the cheap and sell them to us at really expensive prices. So, in a way, we are accomplices."

"Raul is right," Silvia says. "I watched a documentary on TV in which they said that the shoes you buy at your local shop are possibly made of leather from African cows, which is then treated in
10 China and finally made in factories in Pakistan or Korea by children and teenagers...it's terrible!"

"Isn't this a way of dividing up all the work?" José asks.

"You can't believe everything you see on TV," says Mohamed. "And even if it were true, my buying or not buying a pair of shoes
15 isn't going to affect the children in India. What I do here is not so relevant to what is happening there. And shouldn't my responsibility be more related to how it really affects what is happening here? Anyway, it's done. What can I do? Ask my parents to give them back?"

"That would be a good idea. People should stop buying that brand. That would make an impact on the businessmen who are profiting so much from those sales." "Elena says.

"Hmmm... what Mohamed says is somehow true," I say, "his responsibility as an individual is not much, but as part of a group I
25 think it could be big." I keep being surprised by my own reasoning. "It's like when we lose a match, and none of us have played especially poorly, but each of us did make mistakes, and somehow the sum of our individual mistakes made the group lose. And the same goes for what Elena is saying; Mohamed's impact as an individual
30 might be small, but if everybody stopped buying those shoes, maybe the company would notice and stop exploiting children."

"Are you sure?" asks Silvia. "That's like saying that if you ignore a boy because he said something you didn't like, he'll immediately understand why you stopped talking to him. But without
35 explaining it to him, he could just think you like another boy."

"You mean that if they don't know why you stopped buying them, perhaps they would think they are too expensive and just drop the prices. In the end, they would be exploiting the children even more," I say. Now I know that I definitely talk like Elena and Bochdam. "I wouldn't like to be in their place, having to work instead of being here with you." 5

"I'm confused. What can we do? Does anybody have any bright ideas?" asks Mohamed, looking very confused.

10

Episode 13: Starting anew

Afternoon classes are over. Most of the kids in sixth form are going away to a summer camp with Chema. They're not using the courts as much because they are all preparing for camp. Chema is really busy with preparations so we also see less of him. 15

Raul, Silvia, and I are not going to the camp, so we go to the pitch every day. Most of the kids from first year of high school (Juan Carlos and his gang) are usually there too. 20

"Have you noticed? Bochdan hardly ever comes round here anymore since he spends all day getting ready for camp with Elena and her friends." says Raul, who feels a bit neglected because he is not seeing Bochdan very often. "He seems different."

"I see him in class, and the truth is he's crazy about Elena." I laugh, "But it's also true that we were talking about designs for the team shirts for next year with José and Hanadi, so I don't think he's changed that much. He's still part of the group. And besides, let him stay with those girls. If I'm lucky, he'll introduce me to that girl who's always hanging out with Elena. She's so beautiful I can't even look at her." 25 30

"Raul, Bochdan is going through the same situation as you, only the other way around. You have your friends from class, and you have us. And although you may not be exactly the same person with each group, you are always you, right? If you have a bad day in class 35

or you're going through a rough patch, we'll notice, but you will always be the same person." says Silvia while she passes Raul the ball.

5 "And the other way around, too. You should have seen me in class or at home on Mondays after getting thrashed at football. At first, I didn't want to talk to anybody." Raul laughs, "Maybe you're right."

10 "Hey! What are you doing here?" Juan Carlos shouts as he approaches from the other goal posts. "The borough league is over, you don't have to train anymore, so we're not letting you play here anymore."

"It seems he's also had a bad day." Hanadi says without Juan Carlos hearing her.

"Leave them alone, Juan Carlos," Kevin says.

15 "We had agreed to share the courts." Raul says. "And it's not something you can lend because it's not yours. Remember when we talked to Chema."

"Those rules don't apply anymore. I'm setting my own rules now." says Juan Carlos. "And anyway, Chema isn't here now."

20 Juan Carlos suddenly sees something that catches his eye outside the courts and leaves hastily, but calmly. As he is leaving, he shouts,

"I don't want to see you here tomorrow unless you're on the stands."

25 "Ignore him," "says Kevin. "We don't all think like him in our group."

Kevin had been playing on the same wing as Raul during the spring league and they had reached quite a good understanding. That left wing was one of our strong points.

30 "Several of us don't mind sharing the courts. It hasn't been that bad, and if the league had lasted a bit longer, Raul and I would have become unstoppable. But if we sometimes find it hard to share with our brothers...it was always going to be harder with other people. Right?"

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The emphasis of the PEACE project is on designing, testing and validating a new P4C curriculum focused on cosmopolitan engagement and intercultural dialogue.

PEACE aims to impact educational practices by giving educators specialized professional development and new teaching strategies and materials, and by improving the reasoning and relational skills of children. Through creating and disseminating the new pedagogical strategies, curriculum and educational resources, the PEACE project intends to promote a cosmopolitan awareness to the widest possible section of society, that is spreading the idea that it is possible to contribute to the development of a cosmopolitan orientation and engagement amongst future citizens through dedicated educational tools and practices.

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