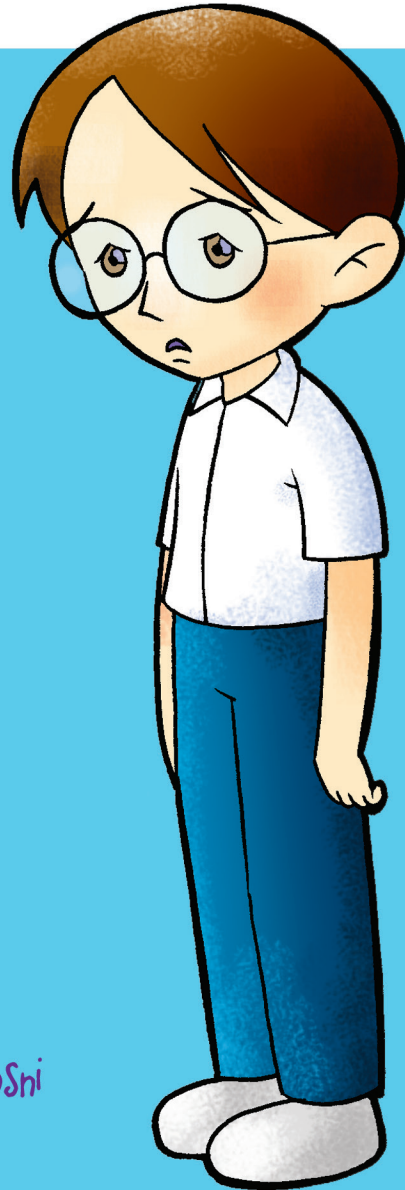


Stories of Good Values

The Birthday Party

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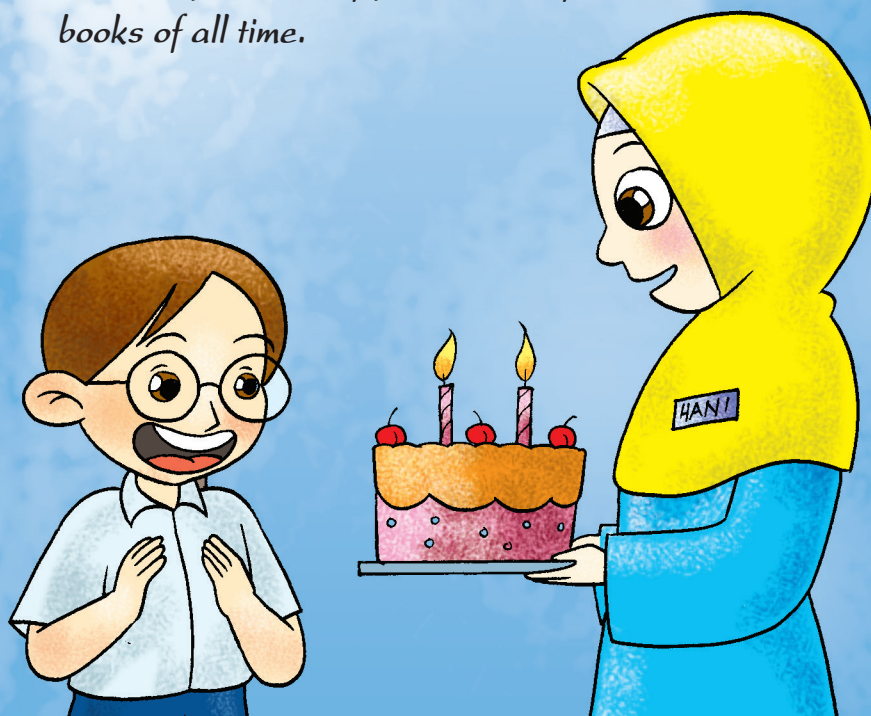
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A wonderful and exciting series of books for your children, Alice Tong's 'Stories of Good Values' takes you on a journey of everyday lives and the lessons we learn from it. The books are filled with colourful pages and brilliant illustrations which make the characters almost come to life. From this series, children can learn why it is important to share, to control your temper, to be helpful, to be friendly, to be honest, to be considerate, to listen to your parents and to be patient. Most of all, this series will surely be one of your child's favourite books of all time.



It was Tuesday morning. Hakim and Chee Meng were cleaning up their classroom. They liked to perform their duties early, before the bell rang. Hakim would arrange the tables and chairs. Chee Meng would sweep the floor. "Meng, isn't next Thursday your birthday?" asked Hakim suddenly.

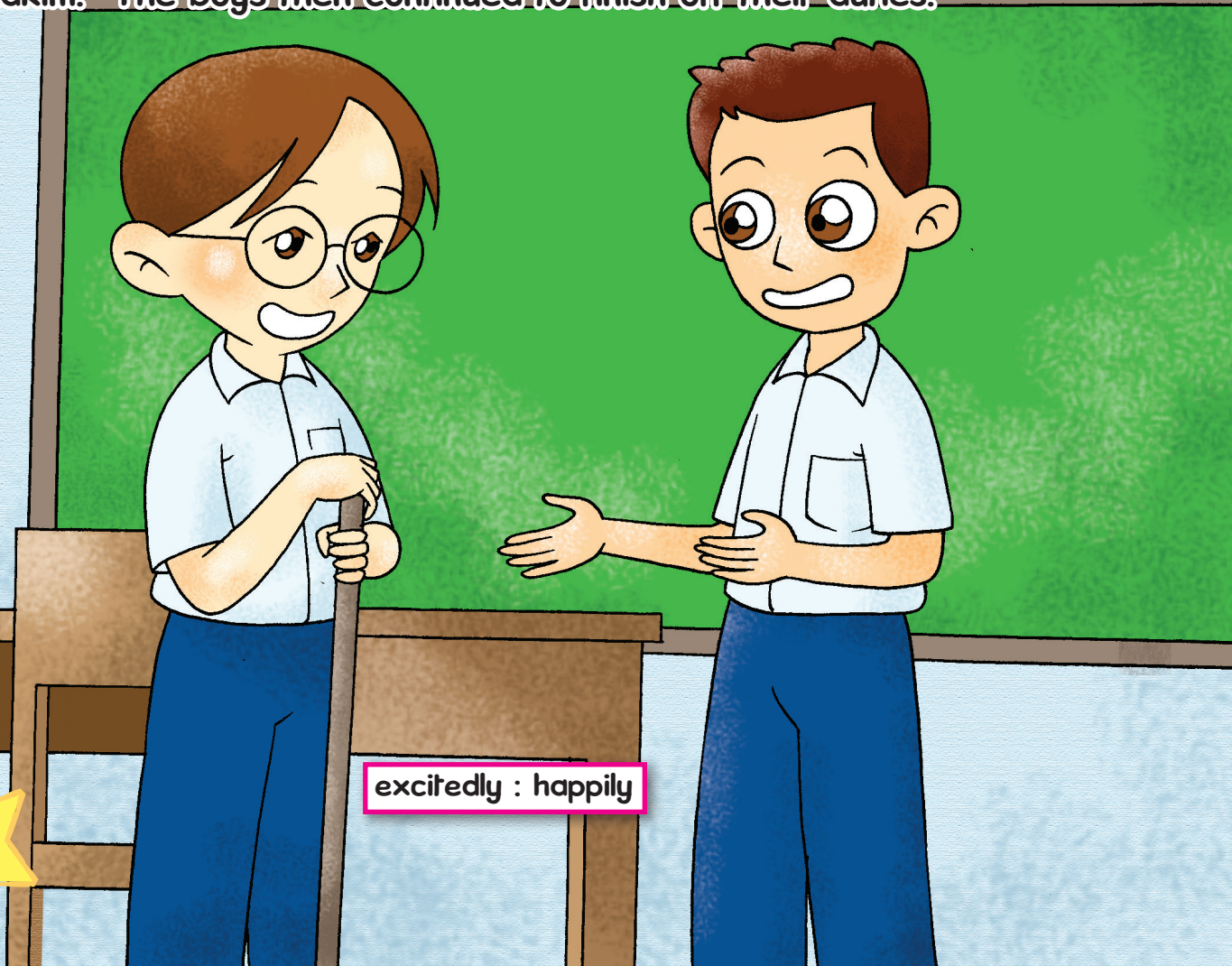
Chee Meng's eyes **twinkled**. He **smiled**: "Yes. It's so nice of you to remember my birthday."

Hakim smiled back and replied: "You are my best friend, aren't you? So, have you made any plans yet?"



Chee Meng replied **excitedly**: “Mummy promised to throw a party for me in the evening. I can invite all of you to my house. There’ll be cakes, cookies, ice cream, and other types of food. My uncle said he bought me a remote control toy car. Can’t wait to see that!”

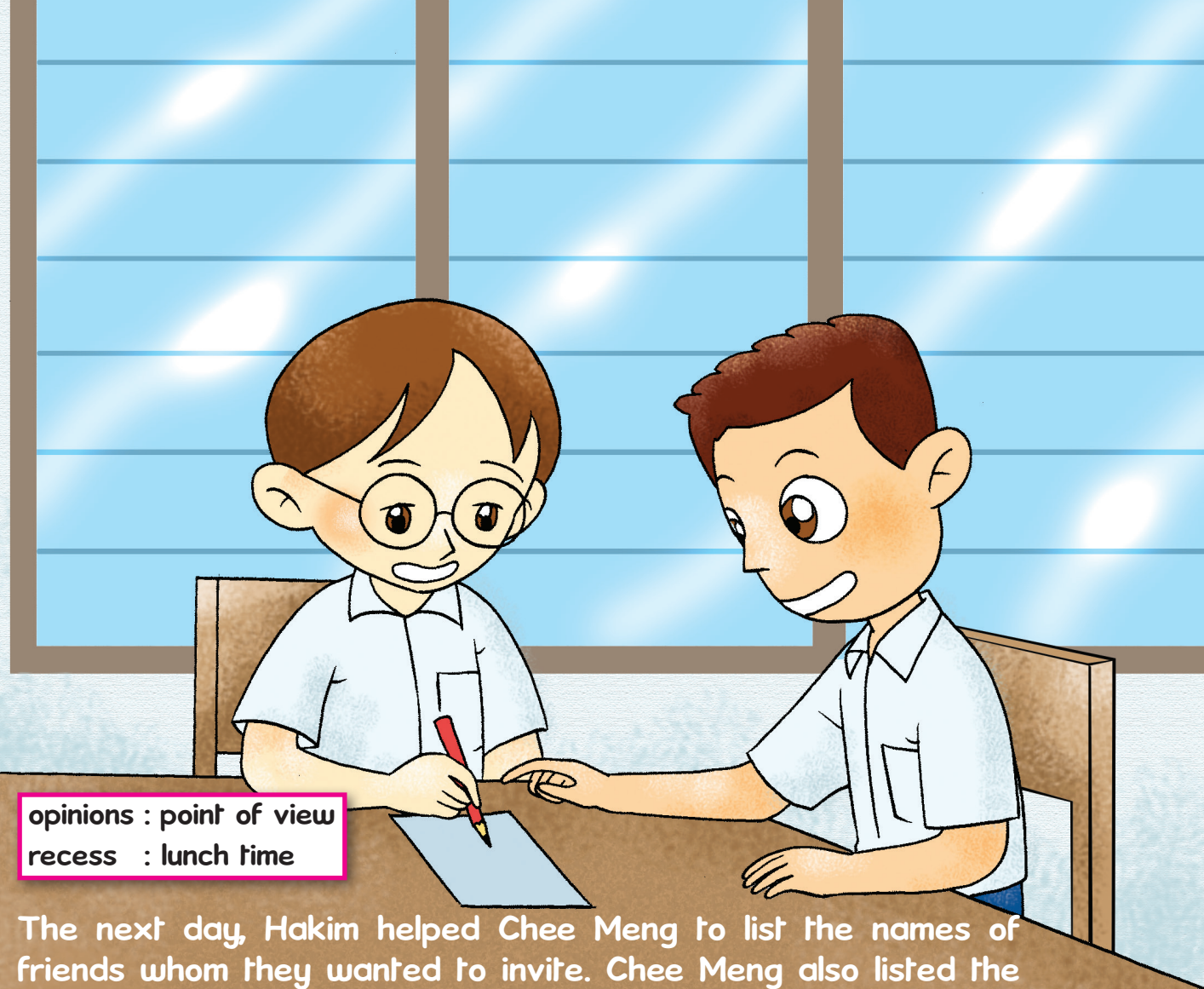
“**Really?**” Hakim’s eyes widened in disbelief. He loved going to Chee Meng’s house. Chee Meng always shared his toys with Hakim. The boys then continued to finish off their duties.



excitedly : happily

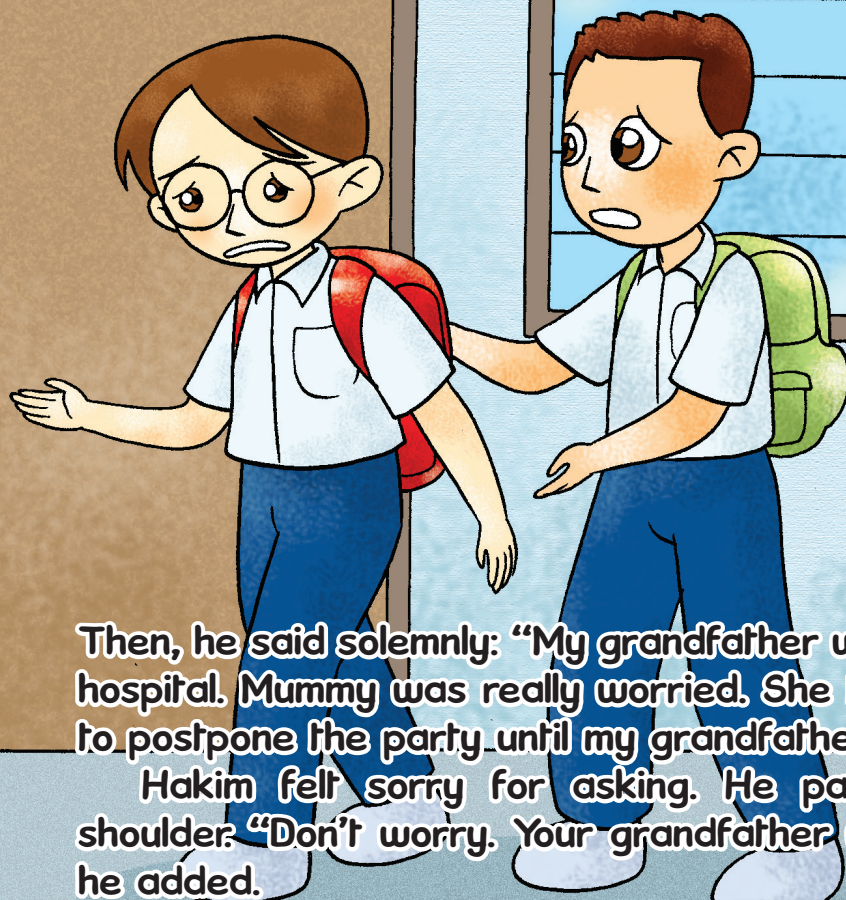
opinions : point of view
recess : lunch time

The next day, Hakim helped Chee Meng to list the names of friends whom they wanted to invite. Chee Meng also listed the type of food that his friends liked. He was going to tell his mother to prepare the food. Hakim suggested that they get their other friends’ opinions. Soon, Haizam and Rahim joined them. They discussed Chee Meng’s party together and helped him think of interesting games. They got together during recess for the next few days.



3

Next Monday, Hakim asked Chee Meng : “Meng, how are your birthday preparations? You want me to help with?” Chee Meng-looked-down **sadly**.



Then, he said solemnly: “My grandfather was admitted to the hospital. Mummy was really worried. She told me that we’ve to postpone the party until my grandfather gets better.”

Hakim felt sorry for asking. He patted Chee Meng’s shoulder. “Don’t worry. Your grandfather will get well soon,” he added.

solemnly : in a serious way
admitted : taken in

Puan Hani, their class teacher overheard the conversation. She then came up with an idea of holding a small party for Chee Meng. So, she asked Hakim to help her.

“Hakim, I heard about Chee Meng’s birthday party. It’ll be so disappointing not having it on his birthday after it was planned. So, I plan to surprise him with a party in class. What do you think?” asked Puan Hani.

Hakim was excited about the idea. **“WOW!”** It’ll be great having it in class!” he exclaimed.



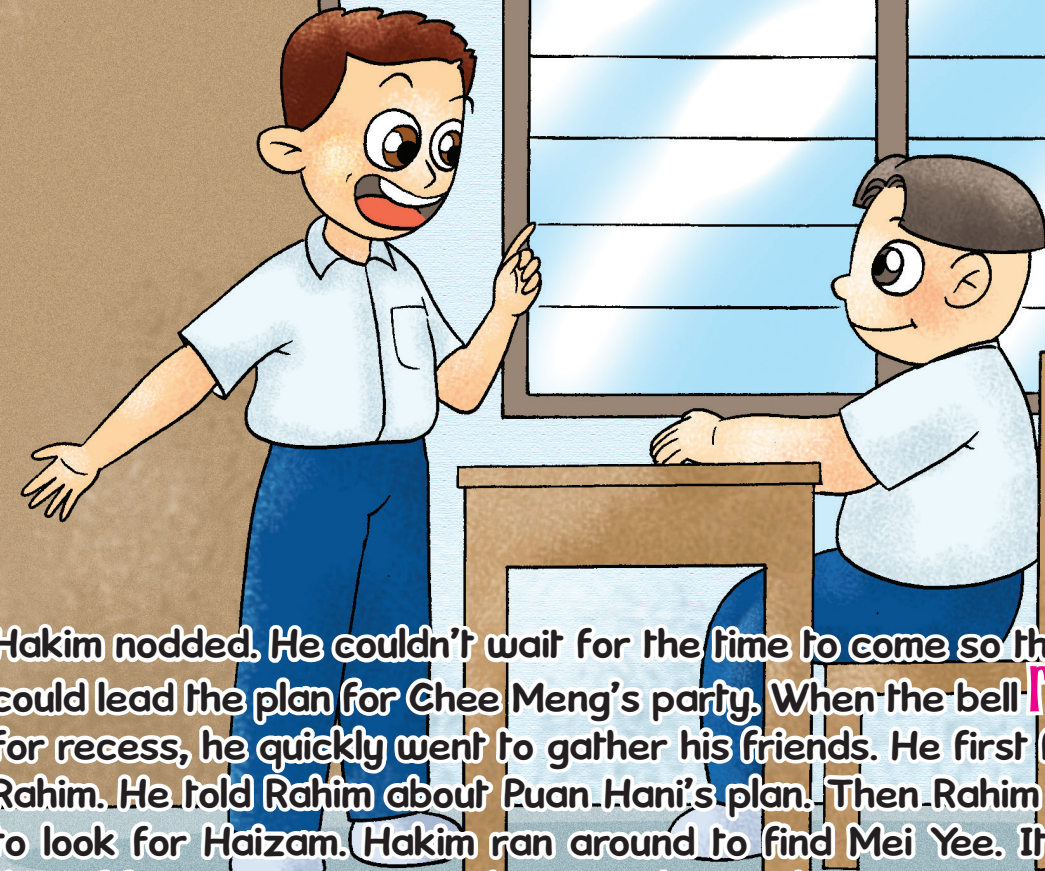
conversation : talk between two or more people
disappointing : upsetting

Puan Hani smiled. Then, she continued with her plan: "But I need your help, Hakim."

Hakim was **jolted** from his excitement. "**OH, ME?**" Yes, how can I help out, Puan Hani?"

"First, go get Haizam, Rahim and Mei Yee during recess. We need their help as well. Remember to ask all of them to meet me in the office after school," answered Puan Hani, "and remember, don't let Chee Meng know about our plan. After all, it's supposed to be a surprise."

jolted : surprised



Hakim nodded. He couldn't wait for the time to come so that he could lead the plan for Chee Meng's party. When the bell **rang** for recess, he quickly went to gather his friends. He first found Rahim. He told Rahim about Puan Hani's plan. Then Rahim went to look for Haizam. Hakim ran around to find Mei Yee. It took them fifteen minutes to gather together in the canteen.

nodded : to move the head up and down

Hakim was panting but he smiled from ear to ear when seeing the four of them were together. “**Huh!** Wa...it...,” said Hakim, still panting. He was trying to relax before he started to talk. Everyone was very patient with him. After he caught his breath, he explained to them: “This Thursday will be Chee Meng’s birthday. However, his grandfather is sick. So, his mother cancelled his birthday party. Puan Hani thought that we might help out by holding a small party for him in class.”

panting : breathing very quickly
explaining : to tell about something

“Well, it’s ok with me,” said Rahim almost immediately.

“**Good!**” Hakim said. Then he turned to look at the rest.

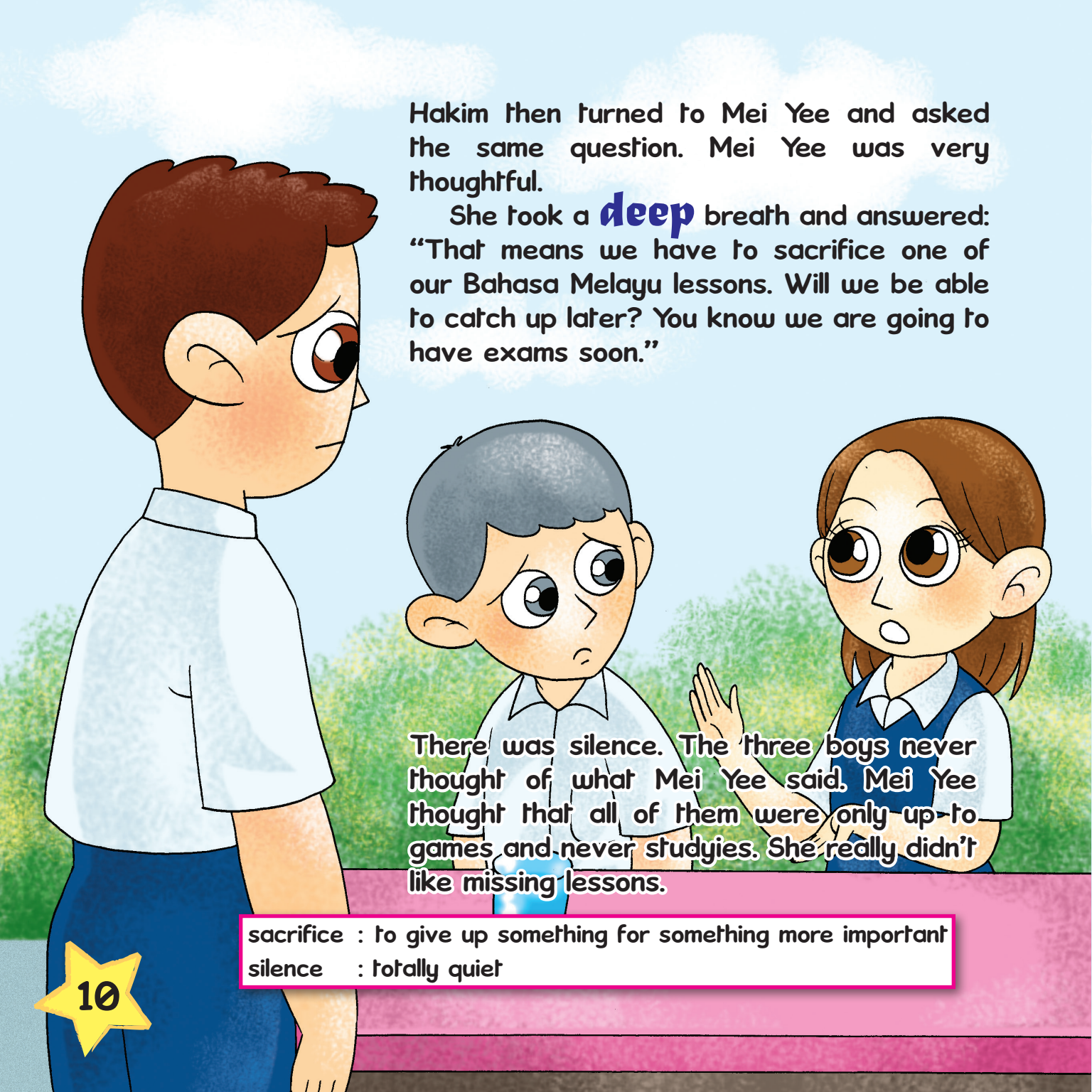
“What do you think, Haizam?”

“**Uh...** I always liked parties, but I never thought we could hold it in class,” said Haizam, quite hesitantly.

Hakim tried to convince Haizam by saying: “Well, if Puan Hani said we could, why worry?”

Haizam **sighed** and then nodded, agreeing to what Hakim had said.

immediately : very fast and
without delay
hesitantly : unsure



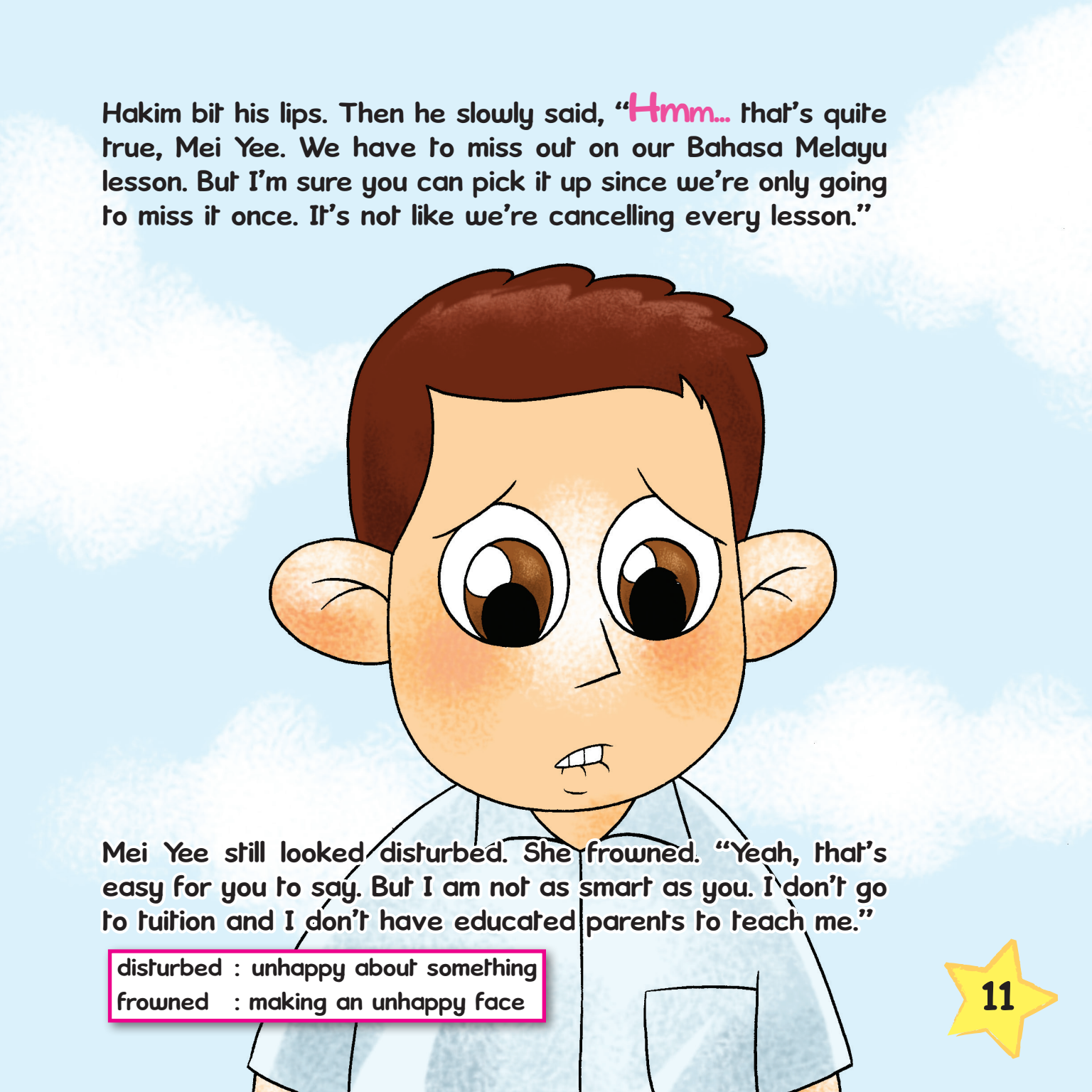
Hakim then turned to Mei Yee and asked the same question. Mei Yee was very thoughtful.

She took a **deep** breath and answered: "That means we have to sacrifice one of our Bahasa Melayu lessons. Will we be able to catch up later? You know we are going to have exams soon."

There was silence. The three boys never thought of what Mei Yee said. Mei Yee thought that all of them were only up to games and never studies. She really didn't like missing lessons.

sacrifice : to give up something for something more important
silence : totally quiet

Hakim bit his lips. Then he slowly said, "**Hmm...** that's quite true, Mei Yee. We have to miss out on our Bahasa Melayu lesson. But I'm sure you can pick it up since we're only going to miss it once. It's not like we're cancelling every lesson."



Mei Yee still looked disturbed. She frowned. "Yeah, that's easy for you to say. But I am not as smart as you. I don't go to tuition and I don't have educated parents to teach me."

disturbed : unhappy about something
frowned : making an unhappy face

The three boys felt a sudden guilt. They gulped. Hakim thought he might have hurt Mei Yee's feelings. So, he apologized. So did Rahim.

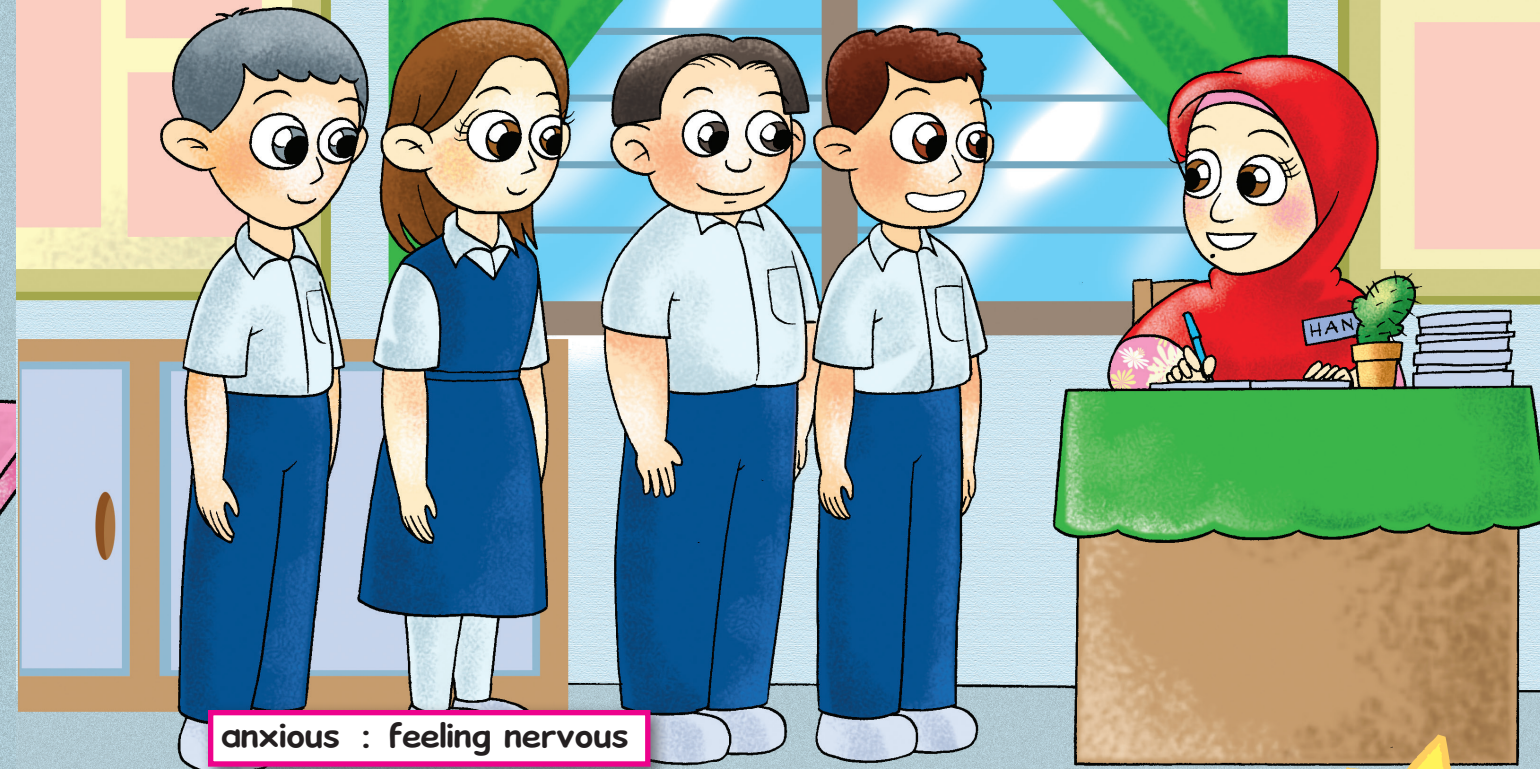
Then Rahim suggested: "I think we should voice this out to Puan Hani. Or get the whole class to vote on this."

They nodded. They agreed to meet up at Puan Hani's office after school. The bell **rang** and it was time to go back to class.



guilt : an uneasy feeling after doing something wrong
apologize : to say sorry

Hakim was very anxious. He wanted to have a party for his best friend. However, he had to think of his other friends' need as well. They waited until the last bell rang. Then, the four of them went to look for Puan Hani. Their teacher was at her place, marking books. The four of them walked to her place and stood quietly. Puan Hani looked up and **smiled**: "So? All of you know about the plan already?"



anxious : feeling nervous

All of them seemed wordless. Puan Hani frowned. "What happened, Hakim?"

Hakim cleared his throat and said: "We talked about the plan. **But... but...** we are afraid to miss out on our Bahasa Melayu lesson. Besides, examinations are just around the corner."

Puan Hani looked at them: "**Hmm...** I see. That's what bothering all of you, huh? Actually, we've almost finished our semester's syllabus. It won't be a problem to miss out a lesson. We should be able to pick it up soon. Any other problems?"

wordless : don't know what to say

syllabus : a list of subjects that students should study

Hakim smiled. The rest of them nodded their heads. Upon seeing this, Hakim said: "Then there should be no problem, Puan Hani."

Puan Hani said: "Why, of course. Anyway, I need all of you to go and tell your other classmates to bring one pack of dry food, such as popcorn, potato chips or peanuts on Thursday. They can bring sandwiches here too. However, do not let Chee Mena know about it. It's a --"

"Surprise party!" Hakim snapped before Puan Hani could even finish her sentence. Everyone laughed.

snapped : interrupted



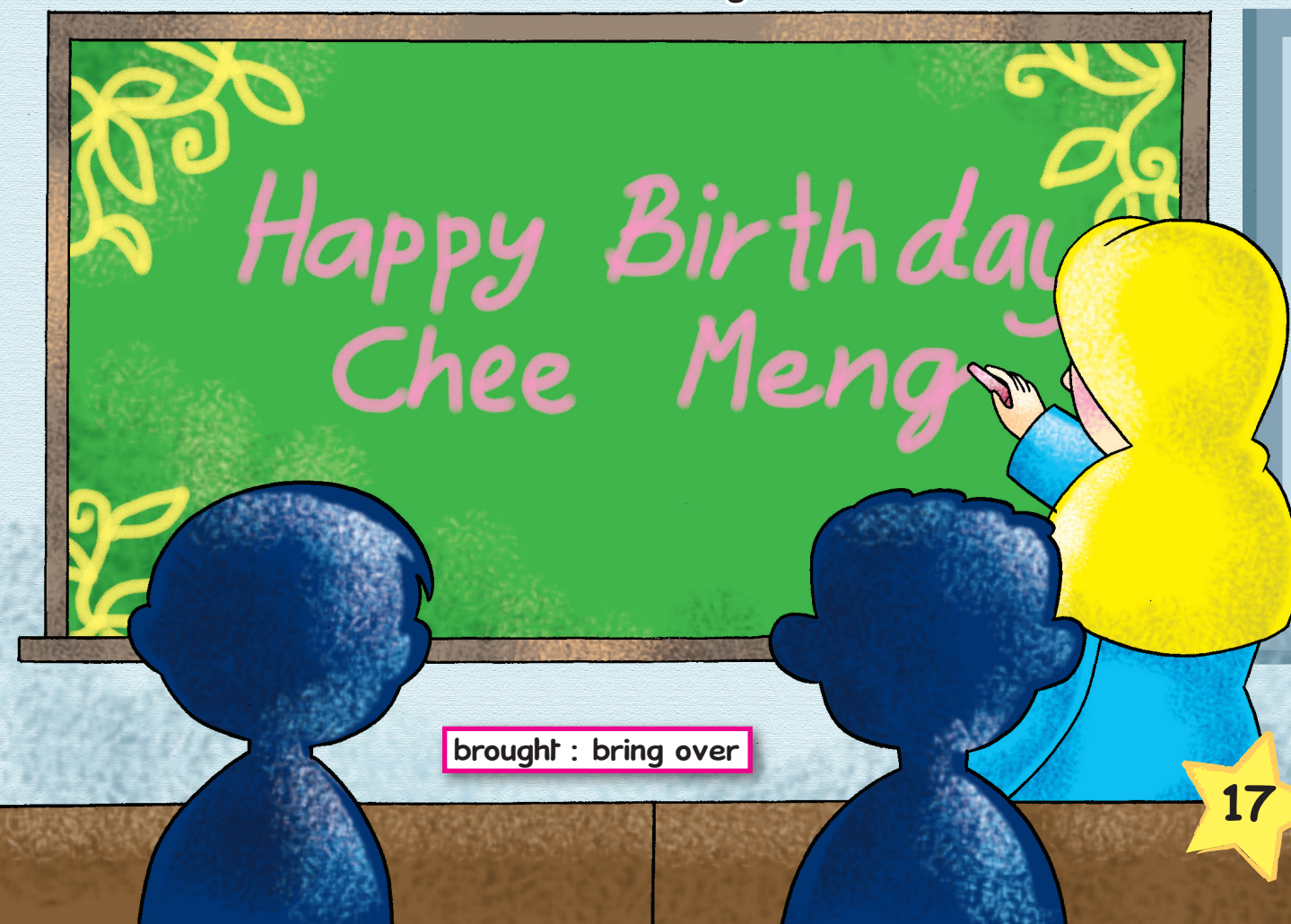
Before they left, Puan Hani asked: "By the way, who is the one that suggested that we should not skip our BM lesson?" The three boys looked at Mei Yee. She looked down and **blushed**. Puan Hani took a deep breath and said: "I am proud of all of you. This shows that you all did not discriminate an opinion that goes against yours. It's always good to be open to other people's needs. Now, go home and have a nice day."

suggested : to give idea

discriminate : to show difference towards something

On Thursday, most of the classmates brought dry food as told. They kept the food inside their bags without letting Chee Meng know. Then, Puan Hani came with a big plastic bag. She entered their classroom and wrote on the blackboard, '**Happy Birthday Chee Meng!**'

Chee Meng was really surprised. The class clapped and took out the packets of food from their bags. They piled the food on the teacher's table and asked Chee Meng to stand in front of them all.



brought : bring over

Puan Hani took out a box from inside the plastic bag. It was a birthday cake. Chee Meng was in awe to see such a **BEAUTIFUL** cake. It had a drawing of Spider-Man on it. They sang a birthday song to Chee Meng. Then, they started to eat the food happily. Puan Hani cut the cake. She gave out the cakes to the children. Hakim had borrowed his father's camera. So, they took turns to take photographs with Chee Meng.

Puan Hani watched them as they had fun. When they had finished the cake, they cleaned up the classroom together. Then, they waited until Puan Hani was ready to teach. "I **thank you** for the cooperation. But there's something that we should not forget," said Puan Hani.

"What is it, teacher?" asked Hakim.

"We must not forget about Chee Meng's sick grandfather," reminded Puan Hani.



borrowed : to use something and return it back



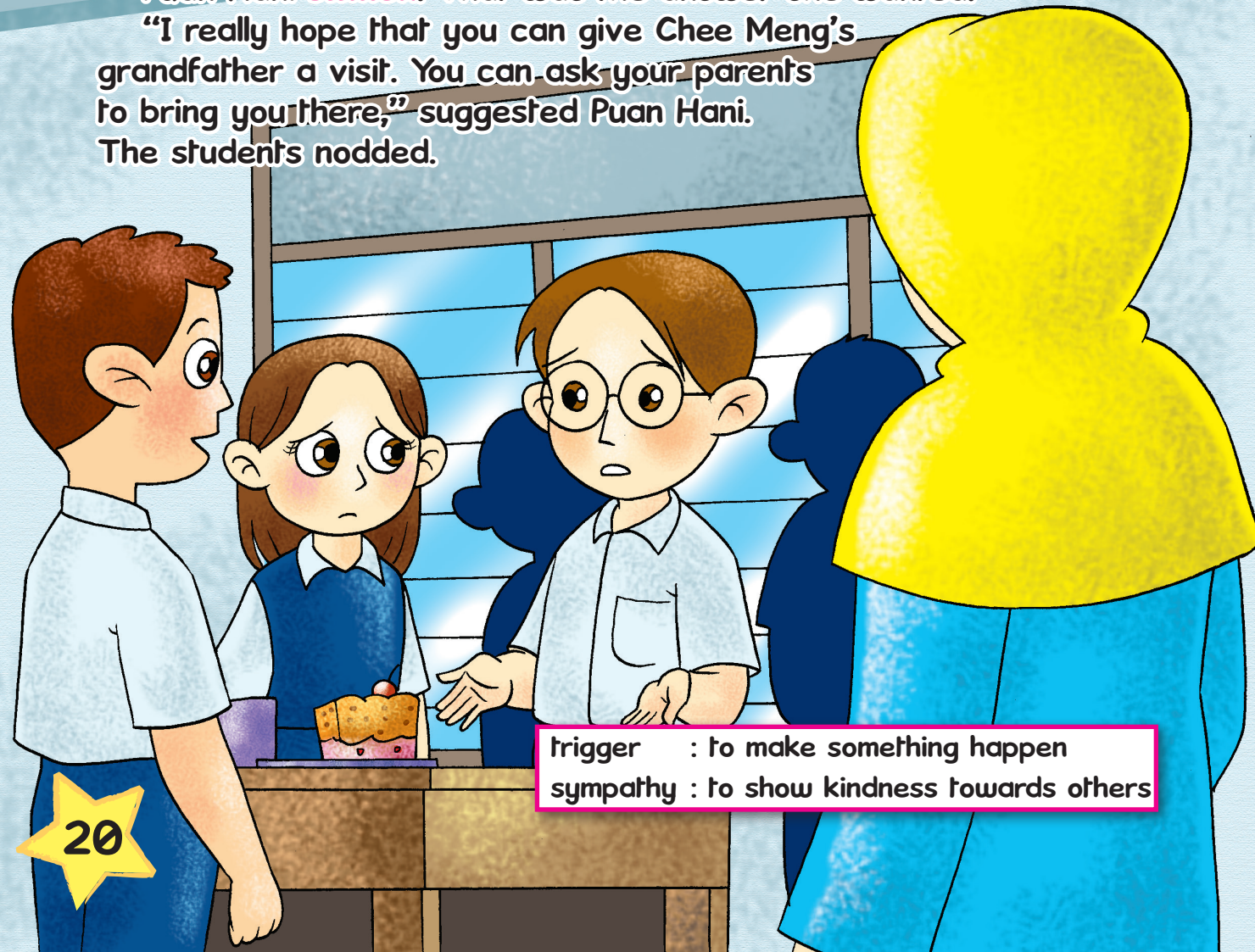
cooperation : doing something together

Everyone looked at Chee Meng. "My grandfather is still in the hospital," said Chee Meng.

"What do you think we should do?" asked Puan Hani. She was trying to trigger the students' sympathy.

"We can visit Chee Meng's grandfather," said Rahim. Puan Hani *smiled*. That was the answer she wanted.

"I really hope that you can give Chee Meng's grandfather a visit. You can ask your parents to bring you there," suggested Puan Hani. The students nodded.



trigger : to make something happen
sympathy : to show kindness towards others

The very next day, many of Chee Meng's friends went to visit his grandfather. Some of them brought *FLOWERS*. Some brought fruits. Some brought cards. Chee Meng's grandfather was very grateful to see them. Chee Meng too was very grateful to see them. He was very touched when he saw Hakim come with his parents.



"Thank you *so much* for coming," said Chee Meng, almost in tears. Puan Hani went to visit his grandfather as well.

grateful : thankful

Chee Meng's friends often asked Chee Meng about his grandfather's progress. Puan Hani, who listened and saw everything felt very proud of her students.

"I am very glad that all of you are so **caring**. This is what friends are for. We help each other during hard times. Everyone in this class is very cooperative. All of you cared for your friend and I am so proud of you. A friend in need is a friend indeed."

Everyone **clapped** and **cheered**. They felt proud of themselves too.

