A New Friend

I probably don’t have to explain to you that it was a little peculiar seeing someone on the playground during recess sitting still with a book. Mostly recess was—and, I guess, still is—a few minutes to be free from your desk and the need to pay attention to everything. I wondered about the new girl’s immobility, though I knew it would be rude to just ask about it.

I offered a smile and she showed me the book she was reading, which was called *The Arabian Nights*. The cover looked interesting, with an illustration of a magnificent castle on a hill. She handed me the book, but when I flipped through it, it looked less appealing. Back then, I despised books with lots of pictures and only read animal stories, because I wanted to be a vet.

When I handed back the book without saying anything, the girl just smiled and put it down. “My name is April Moon,” she said. I started to introduce myself, but she stopped me.

“You’re Sue Choi,” she said quietly. “You weren’t in class yesterday, and the teacher explained why. I’m so sorry.”

I knew she was talking about my trip to St. Louis to attend my grandmother’s funeral, so I just nodded. Suddenly, I wanted to tell her all about my weekend, about how it was the first time I felt connected to that side of my family. Recess was almost over, so I made the story short and April listened attentively.

“Your story reminds me of my grandmother,” she said, “and how she didn’t know anyone when she first came to America.” She paused. “I can tell you about it tomorrow, if you like.”

“Sure thing,” I said. We were moving toward the big double doors, and that was the first time I noticed April’s limp, which seemed to slow her down a little. I didn’t want to stare or make her feel awkward, so I slowed my pace and walked beside her.