

## Discovering a new world

The new home was OK, once the lights were connected, but Alice had to go to a new school too. She was not happy about it.

Mrs. Patterson announced to her class, "We have a new girl and a new boy in school! And they're cousins!"

The students applauded. Charlie grinned. Alice looked down at her desk.

"Alice and Charlie," said Mrs. Patterson. "All the students have jobs. Since the jobs are already assigned, you can share with someone else." She winked. "It's a great way to make friends."

"Don't want to make friends," thought Alice.



Charlie looked down the list of jobs. Cleaning the whiteboards sounded good! A boy named Ron was already cleaning them.

"Hi," Charlie said to Ron. "Can I help you clean the boards?"

"Sure," said Ron.

Alice ignored the jobs list. Why should she work for this stupid school!

Outside, Charlie played with Ron. Alice was by herself. Charlie came up to her. "What's wrong?" he asked.

Alice was crying. "Oh, dry up!" Charlie said, embarrassed.

"Meanie!" said Alice, and she punched him in the arm.

Mrs. Patterson was angry. "We have rules about hitting, Alice!" she said. "Inside! Now!"

Alice went in, sobbing. Mrs. Patterson softened. She said kindly, "I remember when I was in Year 5, my kitten died. I didn't want a new one before we had given it a funeral and I cried for a long time. When we lose part of our life, it's natural to cry. We wouldn't be being very loyal if we just forgot our friends."

Alice gulped.

"Why don't you write a goodbye letter to your old classmates? Then maybe you'd be ready for new ones. Also, I think you'll be happier if you took part in the jobs. Why don't you shake out the art overalls?"

"OK," snuffled Alice.

"Now, do you know why we have a rule against hitting?"

"So no one gets hurt?" said Alice.

"Right. To get along together, we need rules. Because you're new, I'll overlook it this time. But next time, I'll treat you like the others. Now run along. There are a few minutes left of break."

Alice went and found Charlie in the playground.

"Sorry," she said.

"I'm sorry too," said Charlie. "But, Alice, why don't you join in, and have some fun, like me? There are some nice people here!"

***When in Rome, do as the Romans do.***

*This piece of advice is at least 2000 years old. It's a good way to adjust to new surroundings: to fit in and do like the others.*



After class, Alice and a girl named Susan took the overalls outside and shook each one. It was fun trying to make a breeze.

Charlie said, "Mrs Patterson's nicer than our old teacher."

"No, she's not!" said Alice loyally. "But she is nice, though." Maybe the people in this new school weren't so bad after all!

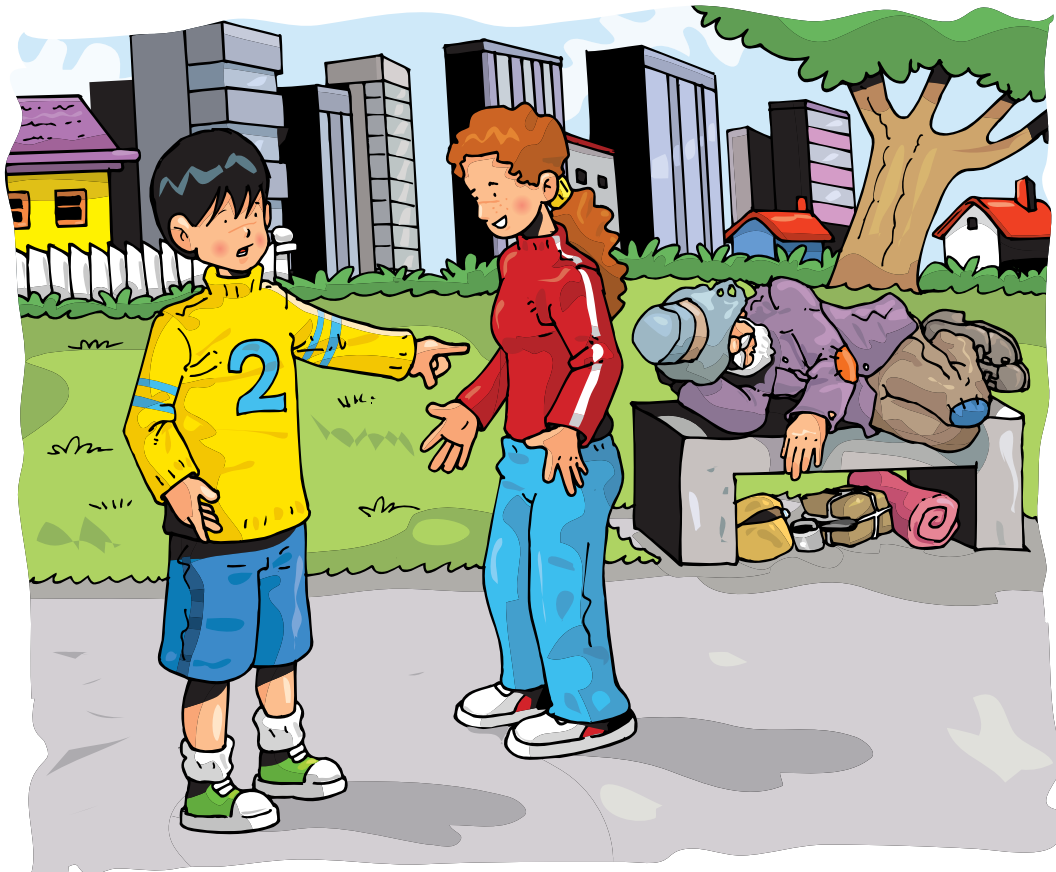
## The Rough Diamond

"Who is that guy?" Charlie asked Noelita, one of their park friends. An old, shabbily-dressed man was dozing on one of the benches.

"Oh, that's Crazy Murphy," she said. "He comes to the park a lot. He watches the kids!"

Charlie shivered, "He gives me the creeps."

Noelita said, "He's just old and shabby, that's all."



Charlie and Alice's house was right by the park, so their mums either watched them from the windows or came out and sat on the benches. Charlie usually felt very safe that way. Still, Crazy Murphy made him uneasy. He looked like he might drag you into a dark place and chop you into pieces—or even eat you, like the witch in Hansel and Gretel!

"Oh, he's harmless," Alice said.

How could such a dirty, unshaven old man be harmless? Bet his house is full of rats, thought Charlie.

Just then, a red car pulled up outside the park. Its well-dressed driver leant out of the window and a man waved to the children.

"Can any of you tell me where Town Road is? Or maybe take me there? There's a reward if you can help me!" he called.

Charlie knew the area quite well now, so he proudly went up. He wanted that reward!

Crazy Murphy's sleepy eyes opened.

The man was well turned out. His face was clean-shaven and he looked pleasant. And his car was nice! Charlie went up to it and the man opened the door.

"So where did you say Town Road was?" the man asked. Charlie was confused to see the man's hand moving towards his arm.

"I'll tell you where it is," said a gruff voice. "It's right by the police station."  
"Now, be off!"

#### WISE OLD SAYINGS

There are several old sayings that people use to show that you can't judge by appearances - you have to see what kind of a person someone is inside. Here's one:

"All that glitters is not gold."

How might this old saying apply to the man in the red car?

"You can't judge a book  
by its cover."

How might this apply to  
friends who are cool and  
fun but who aren't really  
true friends?

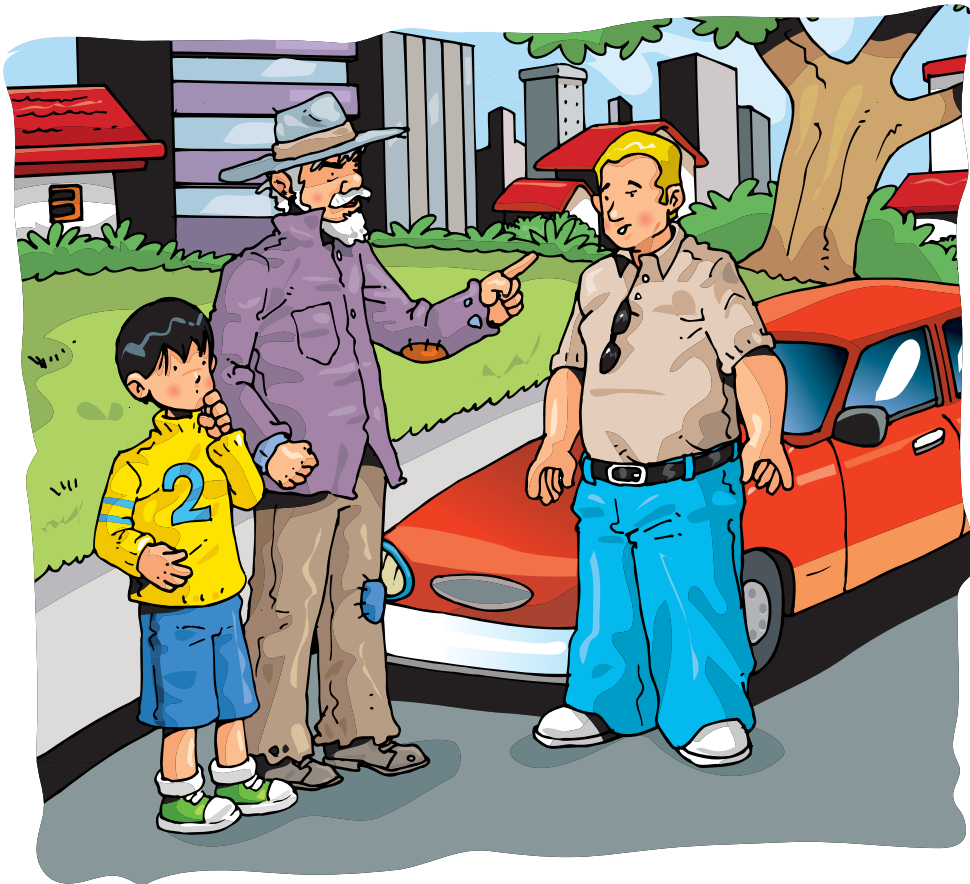
What is a true friend?

Charlie turned. It was Crazy Murphy. He didn't look old and sleepy and bent any more. He looked angry and wiry and strong. Alice's and Charlie's mums ran up to the car and stared at the stranger.

"I didn't mean any harm," said the man. And he drove off very fast.

"I'll report his registration number to the police," said Crazy Murphy. "I memorised it."

"Thanks, Crazy," said Charlie's mother.



"Thanks," said Alice's mum. "The mothers in the neighbourhood told us we could trust you to watch out for our children."

"He might have been harmless," said Crazy. "But offering the kids a reward to help him? I didn't like that at all. You kids just remember," he said. "Don't trust adults who offer you something—sweets, money, a good time. And don't trust adults who need something from you." The mothers nodded.

When they started playing ball again, Charlie asked Elena, "How did everyone know Crazy Murphy was good? He looks so shabby!"

"Can't judge a book by its cover," said Elena. "You have to look inside."

*"He is a rough diamond."*

*Diamonds, when first mined, look like dirty stones until they have been cut, cleaned, and polished. It takes an expert to know which stone will be a valuable diamond.*

*People use the expression 'rough diamond' to describe someone who has good qualities but is not very smooth or polished.*

*Who in this story is a "rough diamond"?*

### *Safety Tips...*

*Here are some tips for keeping safe from people who may not mean well. Remember, you can't tell by looks whether a person is dangerous or not. They may even seem kind, offering sweets and inviting you to play with their puppy or to go and play video games in their house. Don't accept offers of sweets, money or a good time. Remember: "All that glitters is not gold."*

- 1. Have a secret code word you agree upon with your parents. If someone tries to pick you up from school or from the street saying your parents told him or her to, that person should know the secret code word. If the person doesn't know the secret code word, do not go with them, even if they say it is an emergency.*
- 2. You've probably been told not to talk to strangers. But sometimes children think someone they've seen around the neighbourhood is not a stranger. Even if it is someone you 'know', don't get into their car, don't go into their house, don't walk away with them somewhere unless your parents have given permission.*
- 3. Grown-ups should not ask children for help. If a grown-up asks you for directions, or to help him or her find a lost kitten, puppy, or balloon, **do not do so**. Go and find your mum or dad.*
- 4. If you get separated from your parents in a market area or play area, go straight to a shopkeeper or park-keeper and ask for their help.*



5. *Always tell your parents or the adult in charge before you go anywhere with anyone, whether you are leaving the garden, the play area, going to someone's house, or accepting a ride with anyone other than your usual driver.*
6. *Once you have permission from your parents to go somewhere, make sure they know exactly where you are going, how you are getting there, who you will be with, and when you will be back. Then get back on time or call to let them know when you will be back.*
7. *If someone follows you on foot or in a car, stay away from him or her. You do not need to go up to a car to talk to the people inside. Walk in a direction opposite to where the car is facing. Run to a house or shop that you know to be safe.*