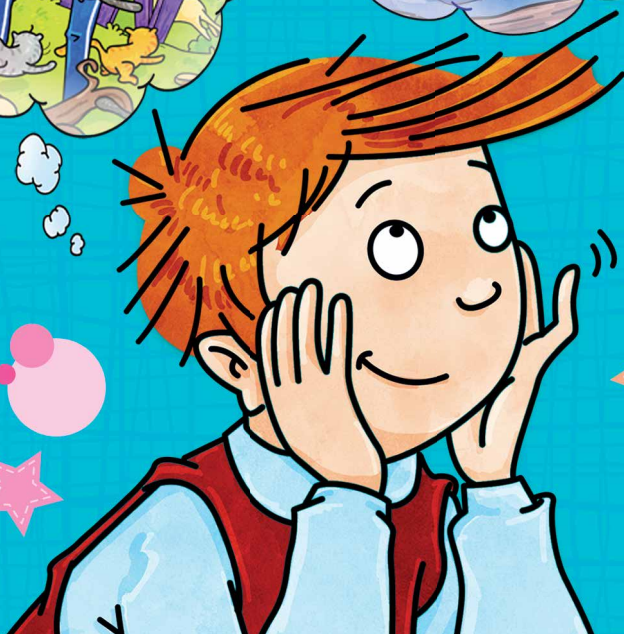


SELIM

and the First Day
of School



The First Day of School

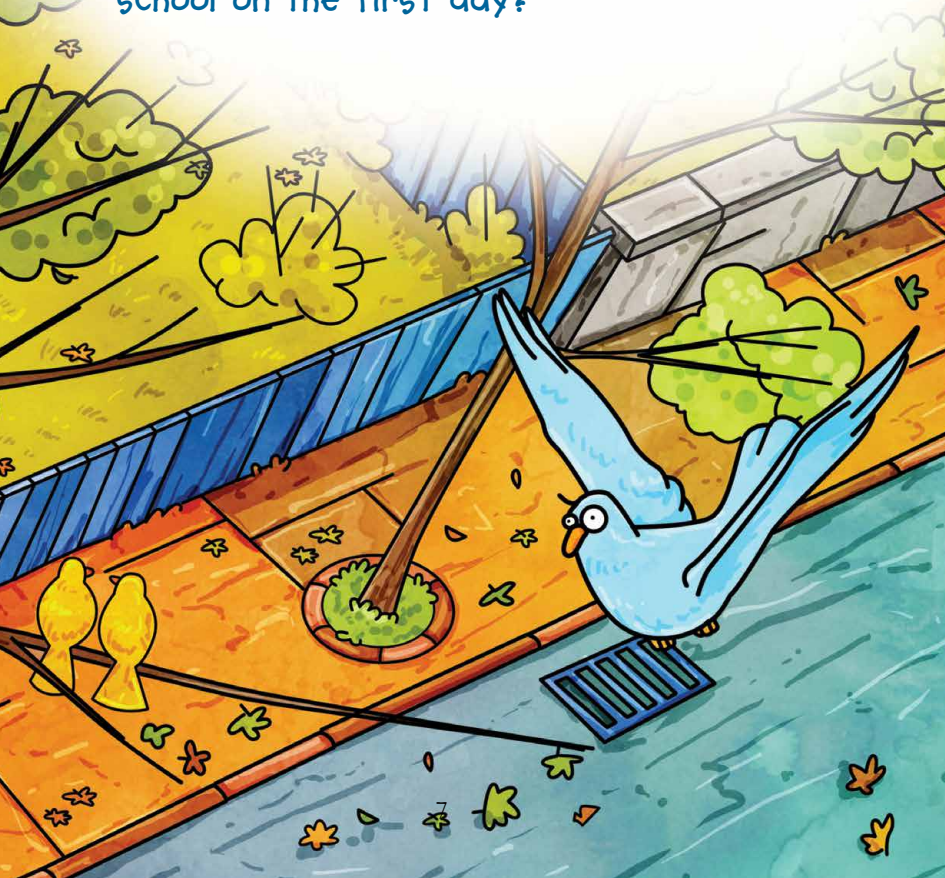
Everything started out normal on the first day of school. Nothing went wrong. Adam didn't even make a scene. Oh yeah, I forgot to introduce myself. I'm Selim. Adam is my brother. He started first grade this year. He has been bouncing off the walls all week. You should have seen him. He runs around the house singing at the top of his lungs,

"I'm done with baby school. Now I'll go to big-kid school."





Monday was the first day of school. I woke up Monday morning to the sound of my mom calling, "Breakfast is ready!" I leapt out of bed and flew out into the hall. Adam came to my mind. I thought, "I should wake him up." And went to his room. I stopped in a moment of doubt. I was worried. Was Adam going to cause problems today? Who wants to be late for school on the first day?

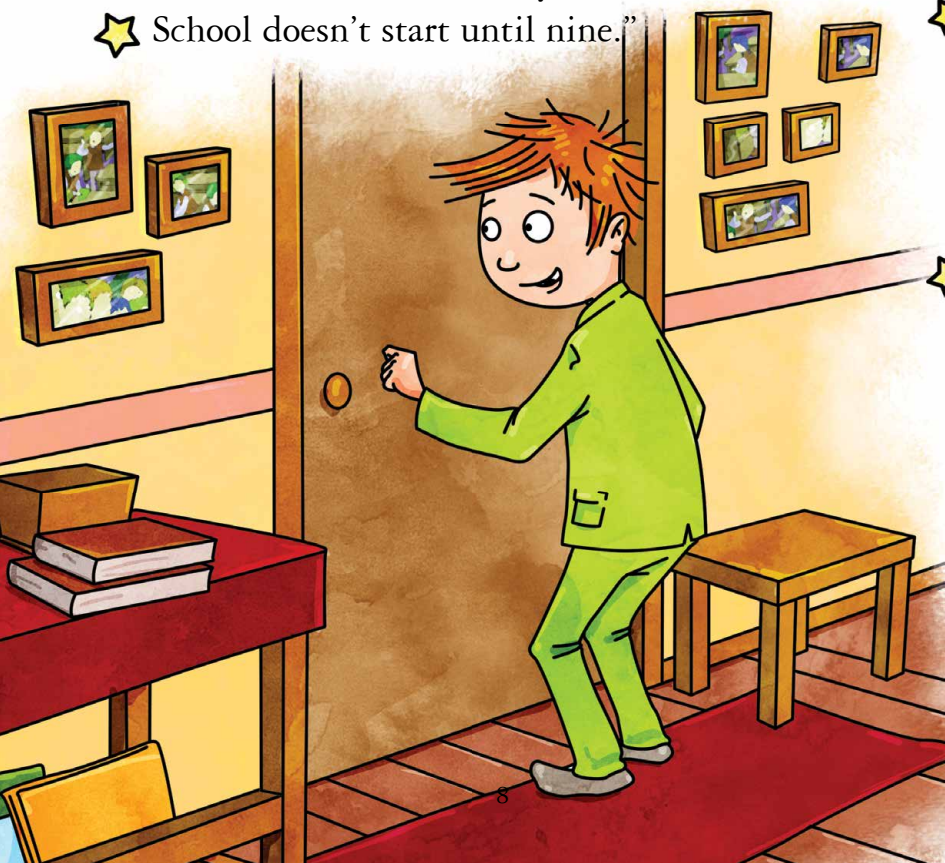


I knocked on his door and called,
“Adam, wake up. It’s time for breakfast.”

Then the door opened and what I saw left me speechless! Adam was dressed and all ready to go. The little guy had woken up, put on his uniform, packed his backpack all on his own and was waiting when I knocked.

“Selim, you’re still in your pajamas!
Why aren’t you ready yet?”

“But Adam, it’s only seven o’clock.
School doesn’t start until nine.”





“So what? We can leave now anyway. We’ll beat the rush and wait on the playground.”

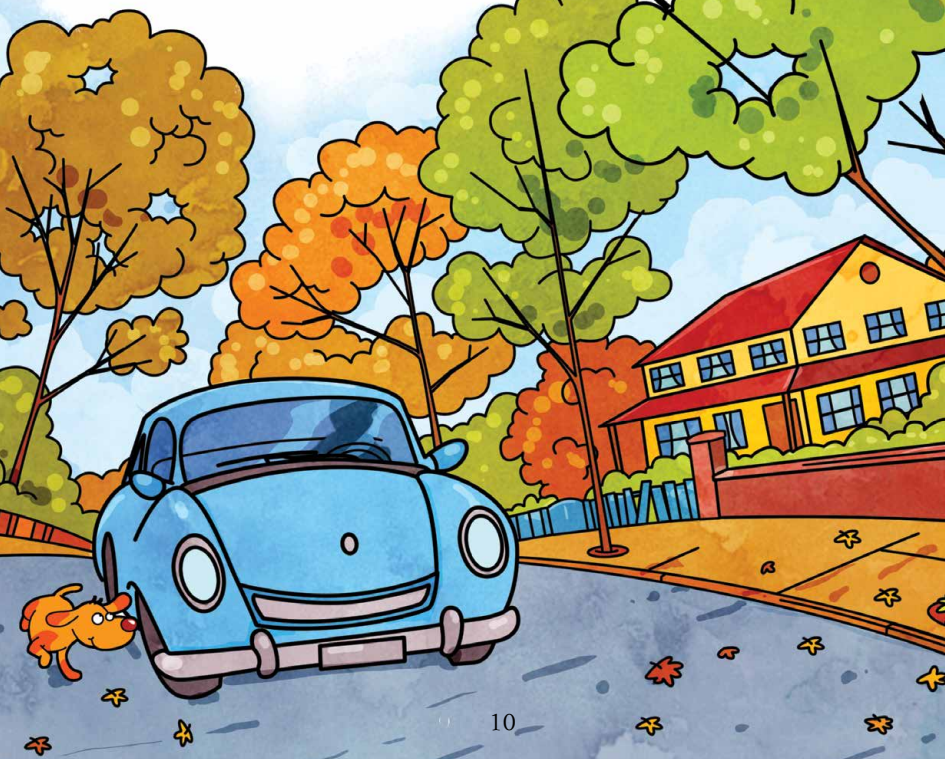
“We have to eat breakfast, first, Adam. It’s not healthy to go to school without eating something first. Take off your backpack and we’ll get something to eat.”

“I’ll eat my breakfast with my backpack on.”

“You can’t eat breakfast wearing your backpack.” “Sure I can. Why not? I’ll sit down for breakfast just like this.”

“Whatever. I am not going to argue with you. Do whatever you want.”

You would have thought the President had put that backpack on him the way he wanted to keep it on. “We’ll see how you like it after a few months,” I thought to myself. But I kept my mouth shut. I didn’t want to douse his enthusiasm. After all, support is what being a brother is all about. After breakfast, my parents gave Adam some advice since it was his first day. Then we were off. As soon as the door had closed behind us, Adam was practically dragging me down the road to school.

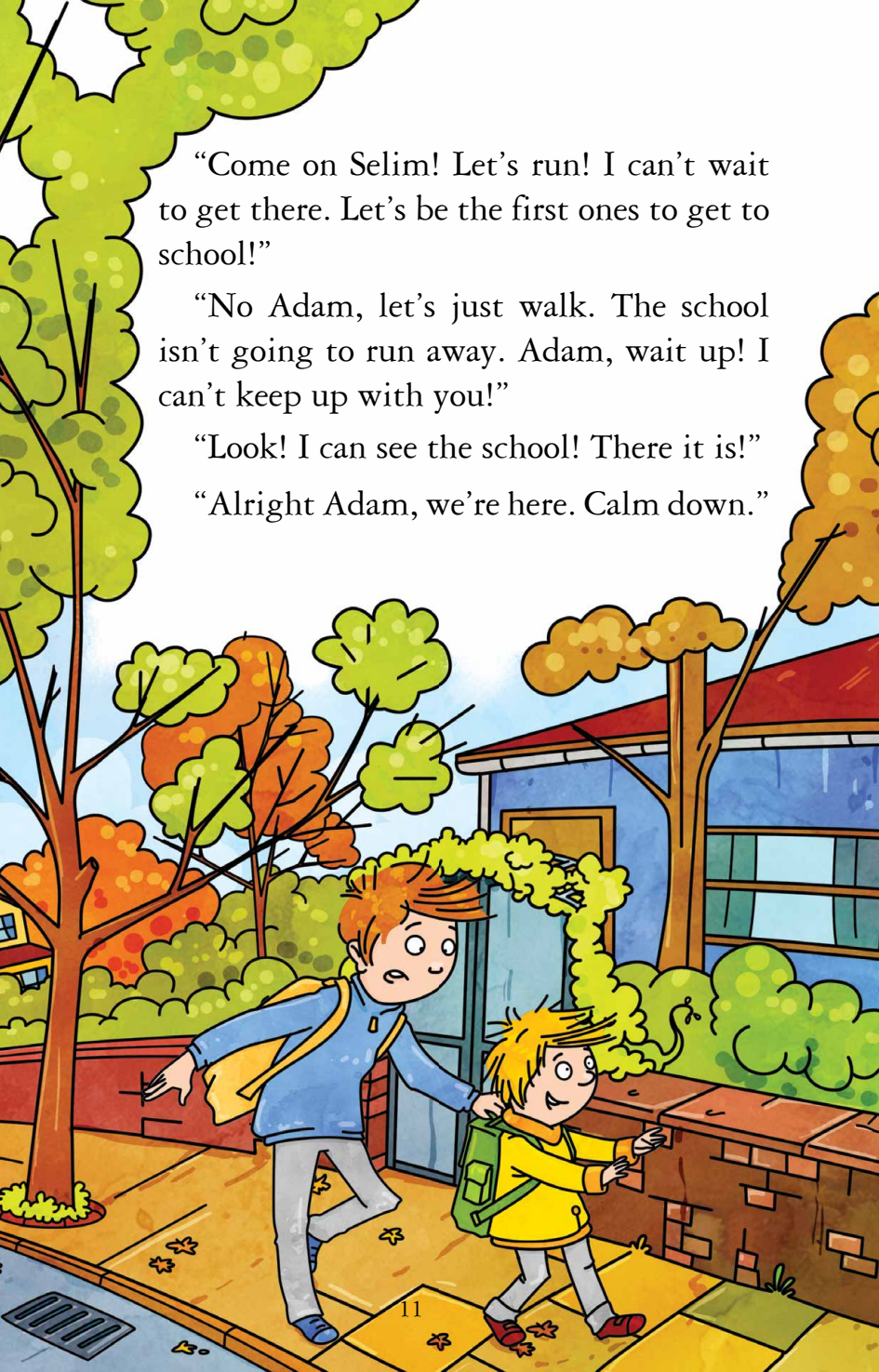


“Come on Selim! Let’s run! I can’t wait to get there. Let’s be the first ones to get to school!”


“No Adam, let’s just walk. The school isn’t going to run away. Adam, wait up! I can’t keep up with you!”

“Look! I can see the school! There it is!”

“Alright Adam, we’re here. Calm down.”








When we arrived at school, the bell had rung. The students were lined up in their places where they had stood last year.

Adam's class would be lined up in the row farthest to the left. I brought him to his place and spoke to his teacher.


"Mr. Andrew, I brought Adam."

Mr. Andrew said,


"Okay Selim, thank you. You can join your class now."



Finally, I could get away from him for a few hours. You might think that's a terrible thing to say, but you don't know what it's like to be Adam's brother. Especially after you've spent the entire summer with him, you really need a vacation. Who would have ever thought that you could get a vacation by going back to school at the end of summer! With a sigh of relief, I went and found my friends. We talked some and then got in our line. They did the ceremony for the beginning of school. It was the ceremony they did every year. It was always the same.



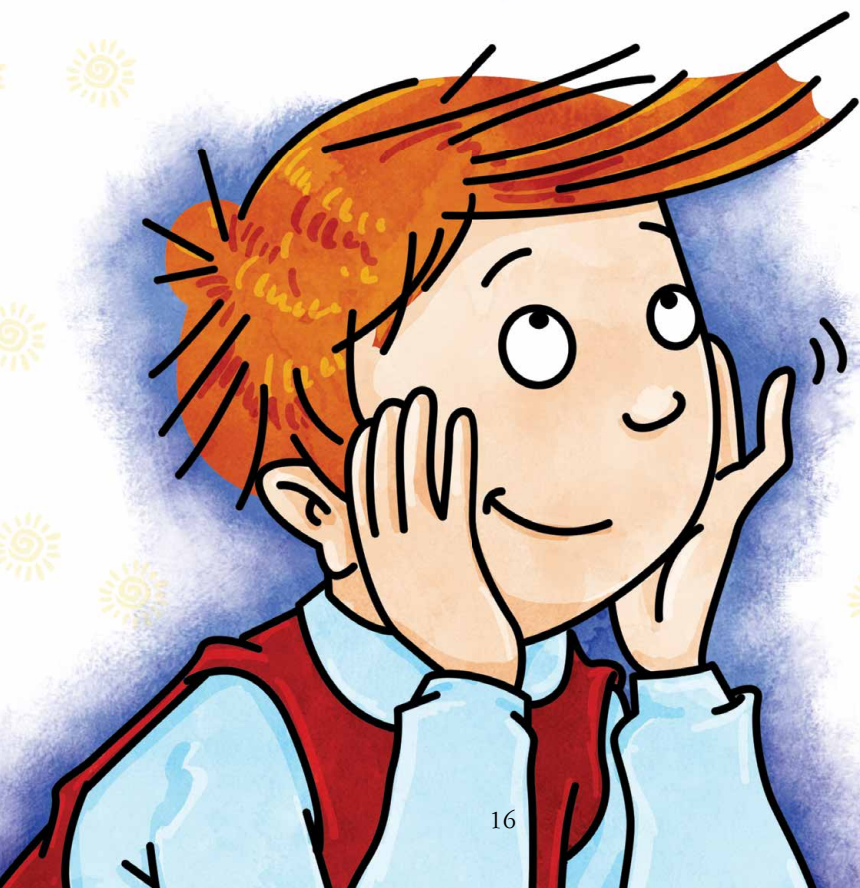
But it wasn't like that for everybody. I looked over at Adam. His eyes were glued to the ceremony and he didn't move a muscle. He was obviously very excited. I remembered that I was the same way on my first day of school. Then the ceremony was finished and we went to class.





When I got into the classroom, I realized how I missed my friends and school. I had missed everything about it, those dusty desks, the smell of the classroom. The classroom was dusty, but I had spent the whole summer with Adam and a barnyard would have been beautiful for me as long as he wasn't in it.

We were all a year older. At our school, being in fourth or fifth grade means independence. You get some extra privileges. You get first dibs on where to play at recess, and you sit on the best hills for lunch. We were the big dogs now.



Our teacher called us “class”
instead of “children”.

The first day of school is always a flurry of story telling and conversation. Everyone talks about everything that they did over summer break. This year was no different. Everyone had stories to tell and they were all so exciting! I didn't have much to talk about. I had spent most of the summer taking measures to keep Adam from putting gum in my hair while I was sleeping, or some other stupid thing like that. While I was thinking about our summer, he came to my mind. I wondered how he was doing. It was nice to be away from him, but I promised my parents that I would check up on him during breaks. To be honest, I was even a little worried about him. But don't tell him I said so.

As soon as the bell rang, I ran out of the room. I slowed down when I heard Mr. Andrew yell my name.

But I was at school,
and that was good
enough. Over the
summer I had even
missed teachers yelling at
us to stop running. I said
quietly to myself, “It’s
great to be back.”

“Selim! Don’t run on
the stairs!
You’ll fall.”



The first-graders were on break as well. I looked at Adam. Everything was okay. He was talking with a few kids. I was glad he had found friends.

“Selim, aren’t you coming?”


I turned back. My friend Nick had called my name.

“We have to go now if we don’t want to lose the basketball court.”

“Count me in, I’m coming.”

The first day was great. Our classes were





easy and we had an extra long recess. After school, Adam and I walked home together. He said that he had made friends, drawn some pictures and played on the playground. He beamed as he told me.

“And what’s not to like? School is great. You learn things and you get to play with your friends.”

I thought it would go on like this, but how wrong I was! Like rain clouds that come around after the sun, bad days rained on us. Adam was fine as long as he was drawing pictures and playing games, but his lessons were a different story.

One morning when we were in class, the door opened. A student came in.

“Mr. Brown, I am sorry to bother you. Mr. Andrew wants Selim.”

The teacher and the whole class turned to look at me. I was the center of attention in an instant.

