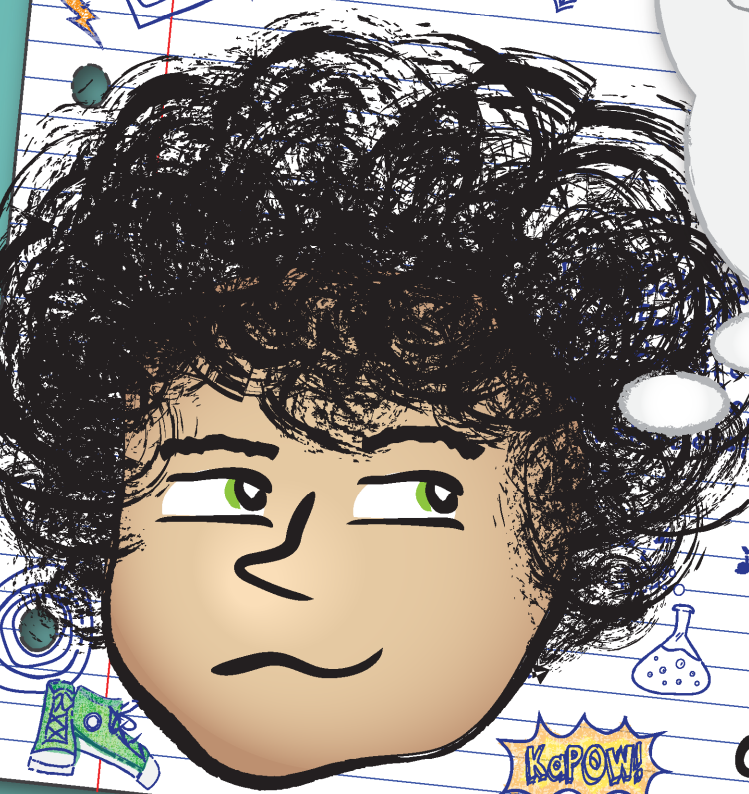
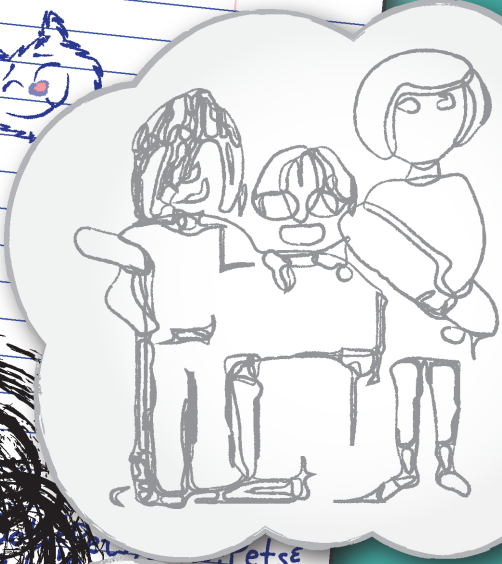


FITTING OUT

The Friendship Experiment

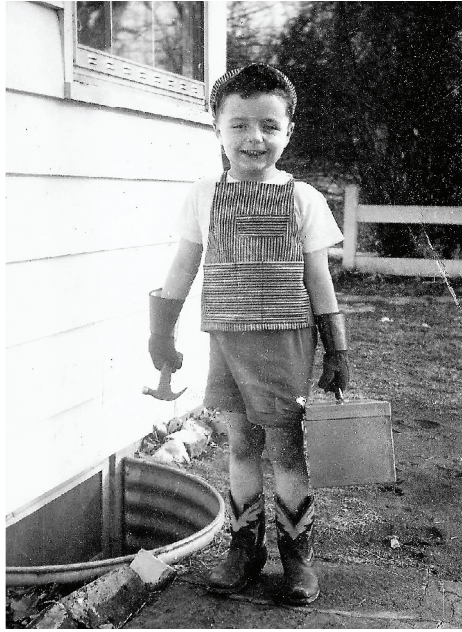


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KaPOW!

Sarah Giles



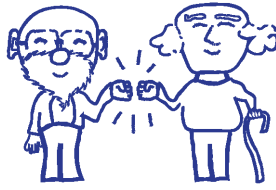
For Dad.

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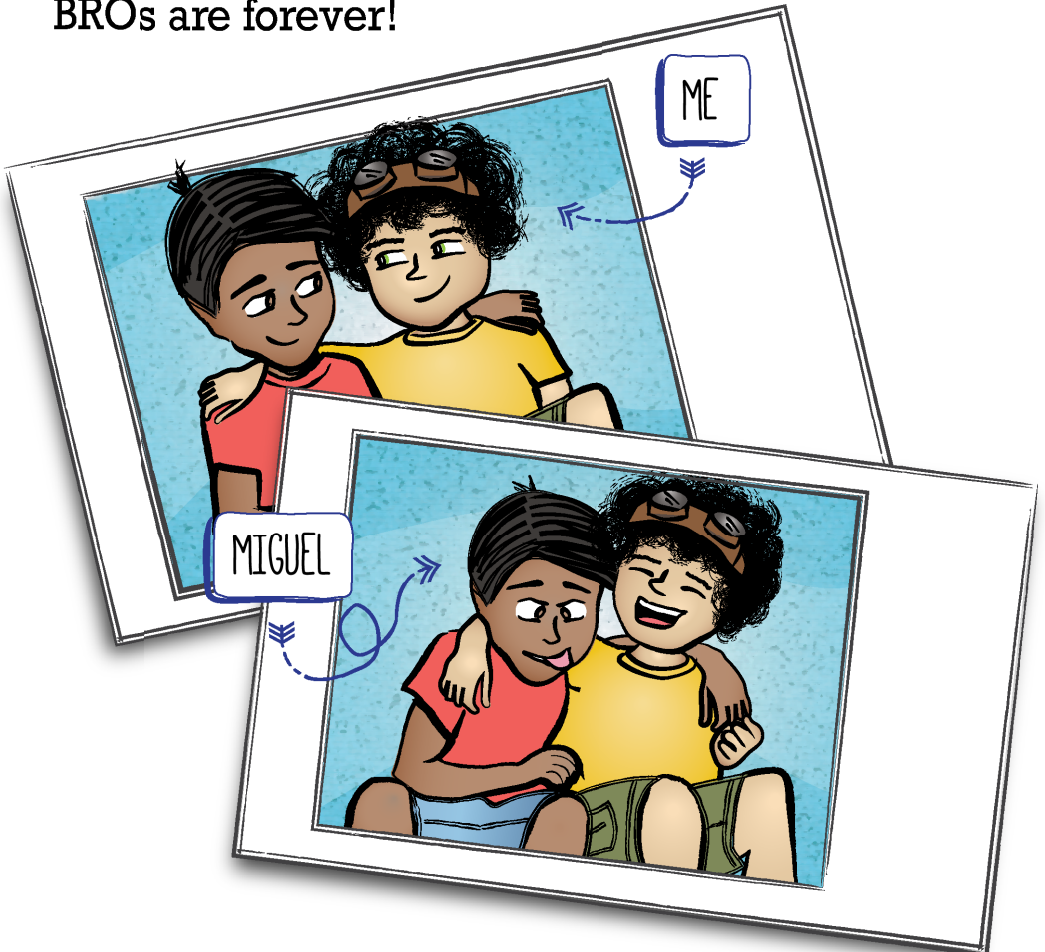
First Edition 2019



CHAPTER 1: DAY ZERO

UGH! This can't be happening! Miguel, my best friend for pretty much my entire life, just moved away! Miguel is my **BRO!** Sure, I have a real *brother* at home, but that's not the same.

BROs are forever!



Mom always says that Miguel and I are like two peas in a pod, but I like to say we are as tight as last summer's T-shirts.

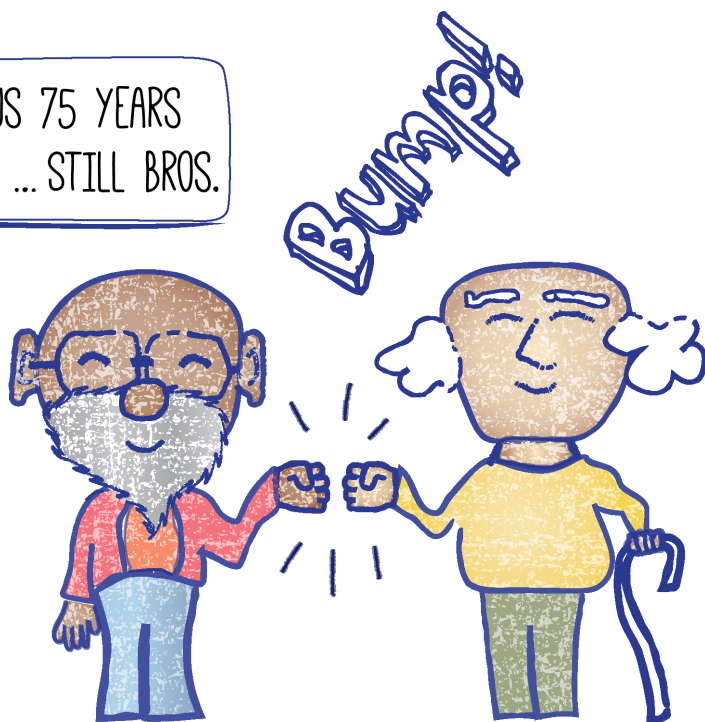
Since I was three years old, it was Miguel and me against the world. Well, not really *against* it; maybe just him and me *in* the world. Anyway, it was always him and me. Now it's just me.

Miguel is now living in a town more than three hours away. I used to be able to ride my bike to his house in under ten minutes. To get to his *new* house, I would need to ride my bike, two city buses, and a ferryboat (and Dad won't let me go by myself).

So now who will I **BRO** out with every day? Who will laugh at my hilarious but sometimes weird jokes? Miguel seems to be the only person who realizes how funny I am. When will I get to talk to him again?

I guess we will just have to figure out how to be long-distance friends **FOREVER**.

THIS IS US 75 YEARS
FROM NOW ... STILL BROS.



But while he is gone, I still want someone to build forts with, play speed chess with, and sit with during lunch period. School starts in just one month, and without Miguel there, I'll be totally alone! It seems that I'll have to ... **GULP!** ... make some new friends, and I only have a month to do it!

Aaaaahhhh!!

The last seventeen times that I made a new friend, Miguel was standing right by my side, AND he did all of the talking. The time before that was when I met Miguel, and he did all of the talking that time too.

I met Miguel in preschool. In our classroom, the cubbies were arranged in alphabetical order. Miguel's cubby was right next to mine, since we are both M's.

On Monday, Miguel said, "Hi!" I just stared at him. On Tuesday, Miguel said, "Hi, Max!" I smiled nervously and ran over to the train table. On Wednesday, Miguel said, "Hey, cool ninja shirt!" I looked down at my shirt, looked back up at Miguel, and just nodded my head in agreement.

On Thursday, Miguel pointed to my lunchbox and asked, "Hey, buddy, what's for snack today?" (His dad told him that if he asked me a question, he would be able to get me talking.)



I very quietly answered, “Um, artichokes” and I opened my bear-shaped container to show him.

Miguel’s eyes opened wide. “Arti-WHAT? AAH! WHAT THE HECK IS THAT?” We both started laughing, and the rest is history.



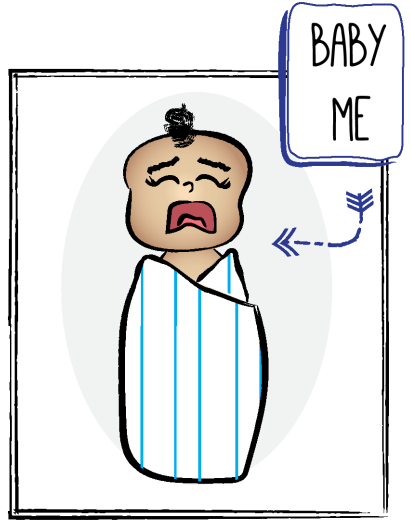
So you see, I am not totally shy all of the time, just at first. Once I know you, I will talk, sing, tell you about all five stages of the life cycle of a star, but it takes me a while to warm up to *new* folks.

Blech! Just thinking about having to make new friends makes my hands sweaty (which won’t make the whole thing any easier).

Mom says, “C’mon, Max. Kids will love you. Just show them that winning smile!”

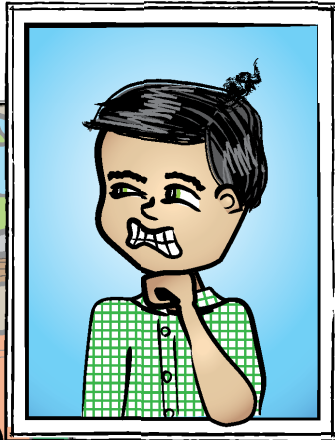
MY SMILE IS A
WORK IN PROGRESS,
BUT I *THINK* IT
IS GETTING BETTER...

Day 1

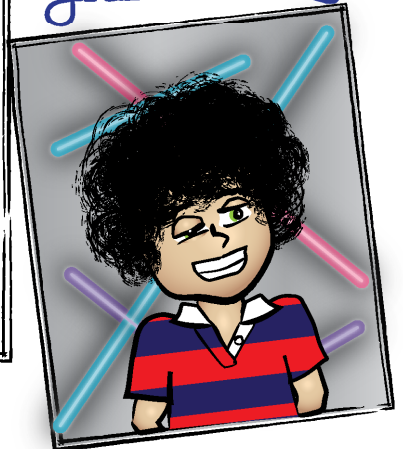


1st Grade

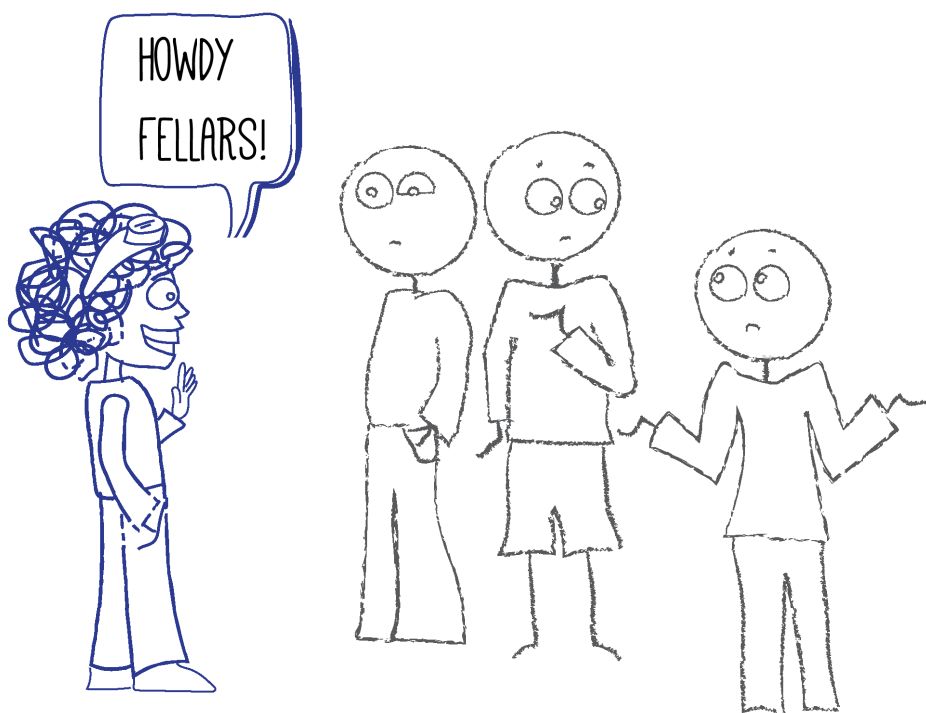
Preschool



Last Year



So, there are tons of kids all around where I live: there are kids in my neighborhood, at the park, at the pool ... everywhere. It seems like it should be easy to find kids to hang out with, but fitting in isn't easy for dudes like me.



I'm just ... **different**. You might be wondering, "How different could he *really* be?" Well, buckle up, Buttercup, you're about to find out! (See? Do you know anyone else who says stuff like that?)



OK. I think it's time to give you the full Max
experience ...

