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Rita and the Royal Palace

Rita lived in a very old building. It should have been torn down, but many families were living in it. Rita's home was on the fifth floor. Just outside the window was a fire escape. It had a steel balcony. Rita enjoyed sitting out there. She pretended she was in a tree house deep in a jungle.

One day a boy named Eduardo moved next door to Rita. "Want to see my tree house?" Rita asked him. "Come along," she added, leading Eduardo out to the fire escape. "How do you like it?" "Fine!" said Eduardo. "Where's the tree house?" "This is it!"

Eduardo laughed at first, but after a while he said, "We've got some cake and lemonade. Let's have a picnic here." Eduardo went to get the cake and lemonade. When he came back, they had a picnic. "This is a very pleasant old tree you've got here," Eduardo commented, drinking his lemonade.

"I knew you'd like it," Rita replied. Just then Eduardo heard a noise, and he looked down towards the alley. "I see an elephant!" he announced. "Look down there in the jungle." Rita looked down. A huge grey van was in the alley. "You're right," she said. "We get many elephants here."

When they had eaten, Eduardo said, "We should do this again." "Okay," Rita said. "Next time I'll bring the cake and lemonade." That's just what they did. Eventually another girl moved to the fifth floor. Her name was May and she was new to the city.

"Want to see my tree house?" Rita asked May. "You couldn't have a tree house!" "Why not?" asked Eduardo. May smiled. "No trees." "Come along," said Rita. "This is a tree house in a jungle in a jungle-nut tree." "Well, thanks for inviting me," May said uneasily, as she climbed back into the building.

"She's thinking about a couple of jungle nuts," Rita said. "Jungle nuts?" Rita laughed. "Yeah, you and me!" A few days later Rita asked Eduardo, "Want to see a royal palace?" "You bet!" Rita led Eduardo to the street. They started walking. After a while they saw May. "May doesn't look very happy," Eduardo remarked.

"Probably hasn't made any friends yet," Rita said. Then Eduardo called: "Hey, May! Want to see a royal palace?" May shrugged her shoulders and walked over to them. The three walked down the street for several minutes. Then they turned into a large park. "Here we are," Rita said. "What!" Eduardo said. "Have we come to the palace already?"

"Not to it," Rita said. "We're on it. We're on the roof of the palace of the Cave King! Look down!" At that moment, they were on a steel grating in the pathway. They looked down. Through the grating, they could see cars going by. "Now, I understand!" Eduardo said. "There's a parking lot down there."

"I think it's a palace down there," Rita said. "It's the palace of the Cave King." "Look at that!" Eduardo shouted. "There goes the Cave King himself. He's in his royal chariot." May frowned. "That's just a man in a red convertible!"

Rita and Eduardo looked at each other. Then they sighed and slowly turned to May. After a moment, May smiled. "Hey, you're right!" she said. "It is a royal chariot. Look at that Cave King drive!" The three looked at each other for a minute. Then they walked on, smiling. At last they all understood one another perfectly.