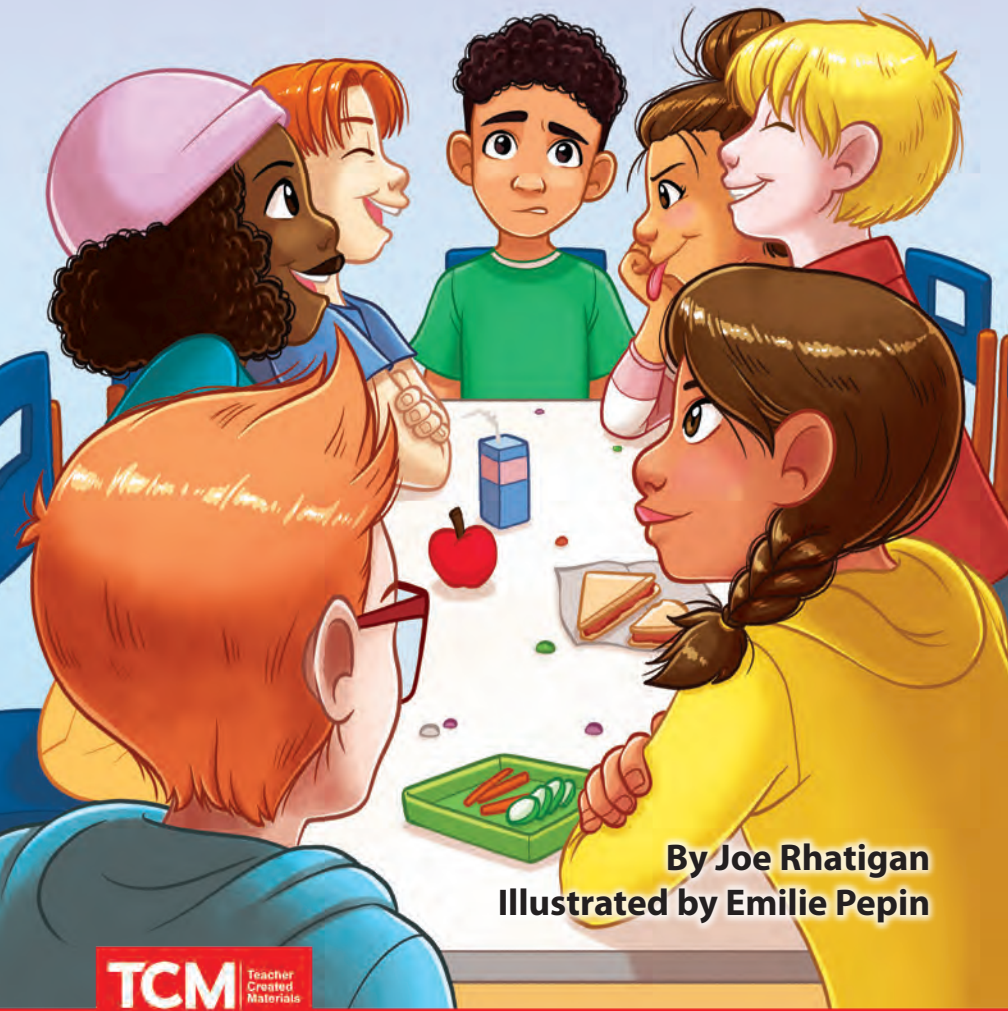
The Egg Salad Sandwich Incident



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TCM Teacher Created Materials

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CHAPTER ONE



Kooser the Loser

Jesse's family moved around a lot, so he was used to figuring out new schools. However, he was a little confused that Janet B. Malone Elementary let the fifth and sixth graders sit wherever they wanted at lunchtime instead of with their classes. Eating lunch with your class kept kids, especially new kids,

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from having to eat lunch alone. So, for the first day in his new school, Jesse ate alone.

It felt like an experiment concocted by the school's science teachers: "Let's study what happens when we let kids choose their own seats at lunch! It will be fascinating."

About midway through his first lonely lunch, a boy sat across from Jesse. The boy took a hand wipe out of his backpack and wiped down the table in front of him before putting down his lunch box. Without even introducing himself, the boy said, "I'm sensitive to germs, OK?"

"Yeah, no problem," Jesse said.

"OK. The cool table is over by the windows. You want to be out of throwing range of them. Otherwise, you may end up in the middle of a potato-puff storm."

Jesse introduced himself, and the boy said, "I'm Timothy Kooser, otherwise known as Kooser the Loser. You'll probably get invited to sit at

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the cool table one day. If you do, just remember—I was the first kid to say hi to you."

"I won't get invited," Jesse insisted.

"If someone asked me, I'd go in a heartbeat," Timothy replied. "It must be fun to be popular."

Jesse knew there were cliques at every school, and he always tried to avoid them. He found that it was easier to keep your hand down in the classroom and your head down everywhere else. *Don't stand out* was his motto.

He spent the next few days sitting with Timothy at lunch. Jesse got used to him wiping every surface with disinfectant. Timothy also cleaned his hands a lot and talked incessantly about diseases. After a few minutes, Jesse would stop listening and sneak glances over at the cool table. Those kids spent a lot of time making strange mixtures with their milks and juices and iceberg lettuce salads and daring each other to drink them.

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CHAPTER TWO



Life at the Cool Table

About a week and a half later, Jesse got too close to the cool table, and before he knew it, someone yelled, "Tater storm!" Potato puffs rained down on him, but instead of running, Jesse used his empty lunch tray as a bat and whacked the tots back at the cool table.

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After lunch, in social studies, a boy sitting next to Jesse said, "My name is Tobias, and that was awesome what you did with the potato puffs."

"Thanks, I guess," Jesse said.

"You should sit with us tomorrow."

Jesse said, "Sure. Why not?"

The next day, Tobias introduced Jesse to the cool table kids.

Tobias named a bunch of kids, each with a rhyming nickname, including: Lucy Goosy (because she's silly), Red Ted (because he has red hair), Too-Tall Paul, and Maria Diarrhea.

Jesse took a seat at the end of the table next to No-Nickname Laurie. He asked her, "Where's your rhyming nickname?"

"I guess Tobias can't think of one."

"What about 'Laurie Lavatory' or 'Gory Laurie'?" Jesse suggested.

"Keep *those* names to yourself…if you know what's good for you," Laurie teased.

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