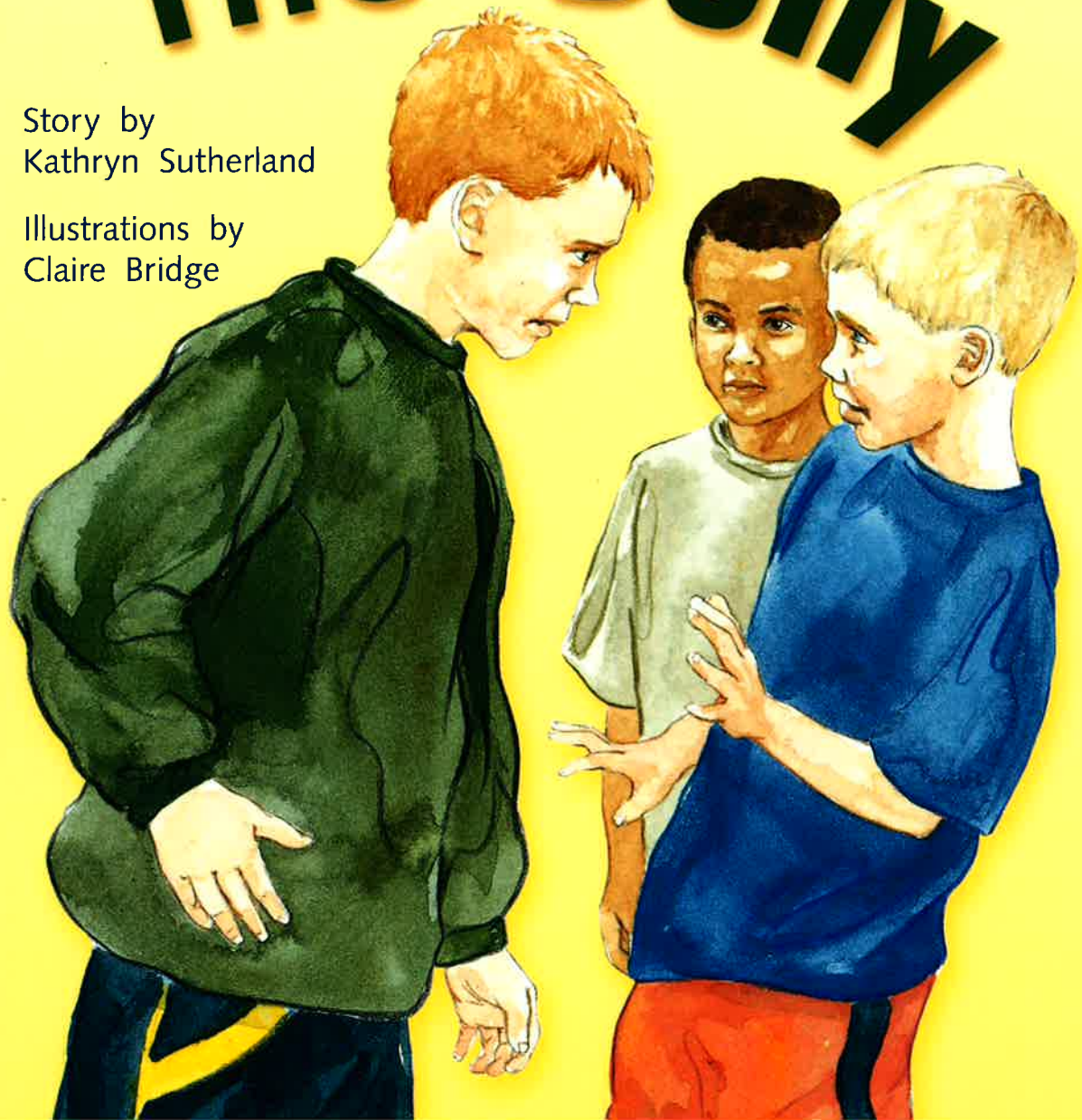
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The Bully

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Jack and I were waiting in line at the sports ground to buy our lunch.

"I'm having a hamburger, Cal," said Jack. "What are you having?"

I didn't answer him because I'd just seen the big bully from our school walking towards us. "Look who's coming, Jack," I said. "Let's get out of here!"

"No way!" exclaimed Jack. "We've been standing in line for ages. We need to buy some lunch. I'm not going to let that bully make me go hungry."

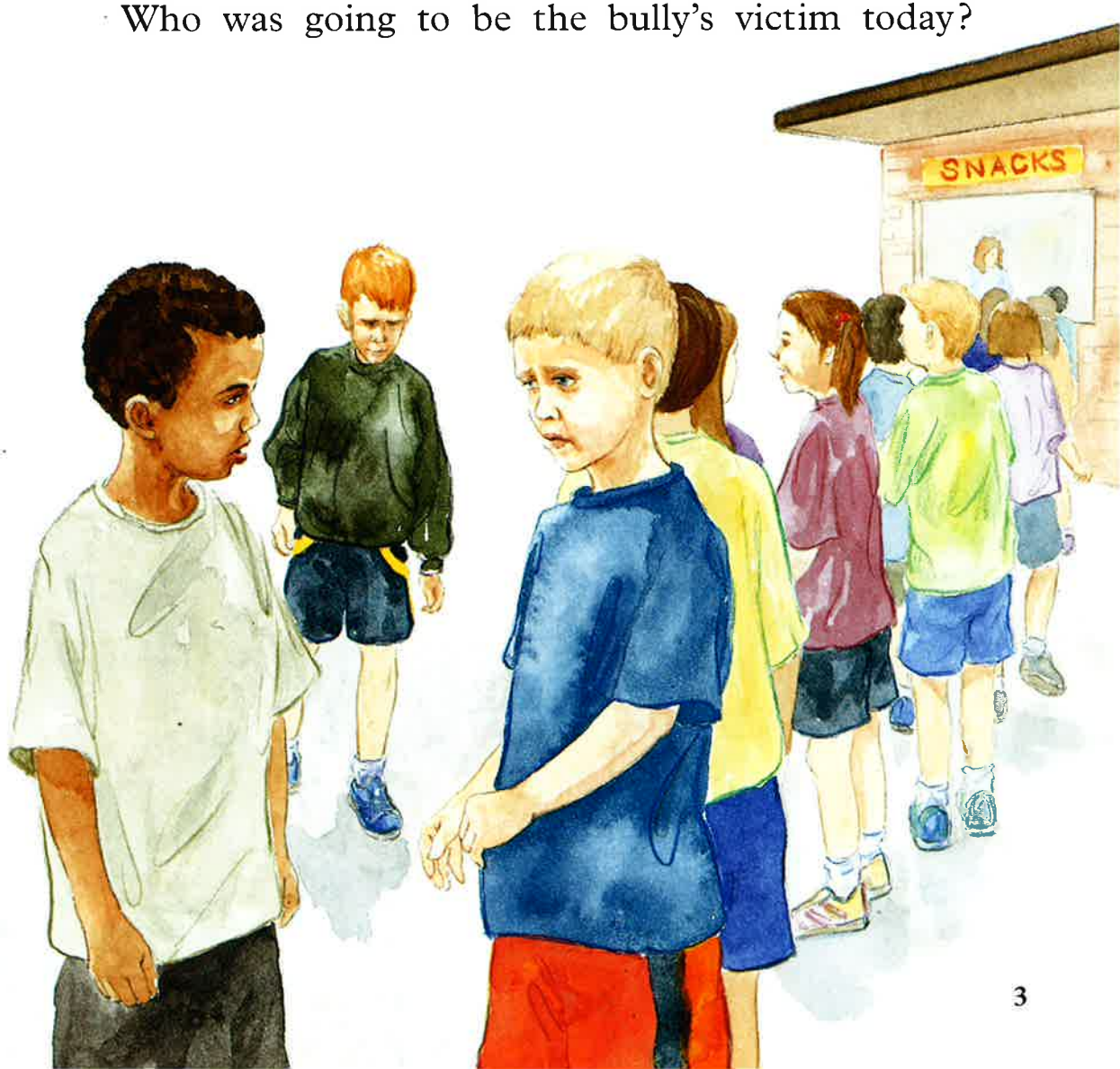
"Well, it's not you he's staring at, is it?" I muttered.

"No," said Jack. "Maybe it's the kid behind you he wants." Jack was trying to be helpful, but he sounded worried.

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"Hey you, kid!" The bully's voice was loud and mean, and his lip curled up as he spoke.

Everyone turned around. They knew that tone of voice and they knew what it meant. Who was going to be the bully's victim today?



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The bully was heading straight towards me with big heavy steps. I swallowed and looked down, pretending not to notice him. Maybe if I ignored him he'd pick on somebody else. But he stopped right in front of me. I could see his big shoes in front of mine. My shoes looked very small.

"Give me your lunch money, kid," he snarled.

My heart was thumping as I looked up into his face, high above mine. He was standing very close — too close. He was leaning right over me. I wished he would go away.

What would the bully do to me if I didn't give him my lunch money?

I took a step backwards.

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Jack grabbed my sleeve. His eyes told me to stay right where I was. I looked up to face the bully, feeling glad that Jack was by my side.

Everyone was silent. They were all watching to see what would happen next. I could feel their eyes on me, but all I could see was the bully. His big, mean face was looking right down at me. I was terrified.

"Come on, hand it over!" he bellowed. The bully looked around. He knew everyone was watching.

I thought of all the times I had seen him pick on other kids. I'd watched and had wanted to help, but didn't dare. I knew now that everyone wanted to help me, but couldn't. The bully might pick on them next if they did. Every person there was as scared as I was.

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