

This book is part of the Inuutsiarniq Reading Series, developed by the Department of Health in Nunavut. The Inuutsiarniq Reading Series is a unique, Nunavut-developed literacy initiative that infuses Northern values of healthy living and self-care into a culturally appropriate reading program.

The Inuutsiarniq Reading Series was developed to support the reading level guidelines outlined in the Department of Education's Inuktut reading program, Uqalimaariuqsaniq. Uqalimaariuqsaniq is a sequential and progressive Inuktut reading program that supports students in their development as readers.

Healthy students are better learners and become healthy adults. For more information, visit www.gov.nu.ca/health and your local Health Centre.

Book details

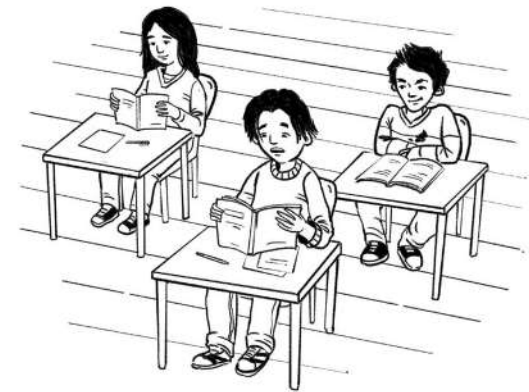
Level: 14

Text type: Fiction, realistic

Subjects: Bullying from the perspectives of a bully and the person bullied; bullying at school; change and stress in a family; being a newcomer in a community; how to ask for help; how to apologize and make positive changes

Summary: 32 pages, chapters, table of contents, spot illustrations, each chapter told from the perspective of one of the two main characters, third-person point of view, dialogue

The Bully



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Chapter I: A Full House



Mason always woke up before the rest of his family did. He would tiptoe into the kitchen and pour himself a bowl of cereal. Then he would sit on the couch and watch sports highlights with the volume on the TV turned all the way down.

Mason loved hockey. But this was the only time he could catch up on his favourite team's games. His mom let him and his twin sisters watch an hour of television after school, but Meeka

and Marie always got to choose what to watch.

It was Mason's job to help his mother in the morning. His mom would make breakfast for Mason and his sisters. Mason would feed his baby brother, Noah, and then clean up after him. Noah always made a huge mess when he ate.

As he was finishing his cereal and watching sports highlights one morning, his mom came into the living room, holding Noah.

"Mason, can you feed your baby brother? I need to get ready to go to work," she said. "And I won't be home at lunch. I have to take Noah for a checkup at the health centre. Can you help make lunch for your sisters?"

Mason sighed and went into the kitchen to put Noah in his high chair. He set down a bowl of mashed carrots for the baby to eat. Before Mason could stop him, Noah stuck his hand in the bowl and then grabbed the hockey jersey Mason was wearing.

"Argh, Noah! This is my favourite



jersey!” Mason yelled. The white logo on the front was now covered in orange carrots. Noah started to cry.

Mason grabbed a washcloth and tried to scrub out the carrot stain, but it was no use.

“Let’s go, Mason!” Meeka called to him.

“We don’t want to be late,” Marie agreed.

Mason’s mom followed them into the kitchen.

“Mom, Noah ruined my favourite jersey!” he cried.

“Oh, Mason, he’s just a baby. He didn’t do it on purpose,” his mom said. She glanced at his jersey. “You can wash it tonight.”

Mason was annoyed. But he didn’t want to be late for school, so he grabbed an apple and walked out the front door.

Chapter 2: Mason Gets Mad



Little kids are so annoying, Mason thought as he walked. Mason was in Grade 6. His sisters were only in Kindergarten.

After their mom and dad divorced, their dad moved to a different community far away. Mason missed him, but he was also angry with him for leaving. Mason had to do so many of the things his dad used to do, like taking care of his younger siblings and cleaning up after them. Mason never got to do anything he wanted to do.

When Mason arrived at school, he went straight to his classroom. He wanted to be alone and play computer games for a few minutes before class. But when he got there, someone was already at the computer. It was Sim, the new kid. Mason was annoyed. It always seemed like Sim was in his way. There was something about Sim that bugged Mason.

“Hey, I want to play. Move,” Mason demanded.

“Hold on,” Sim said without looking at him. All of Mason’s frustration from the morning was bubbling over. He just wanted his own space.

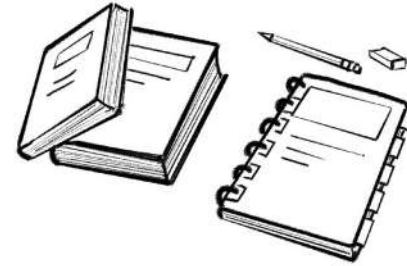
Mason looked around. He could hear his teacher, Maata, talking to someone in the hallway.

“I said get out of here, nerd,” Mason growled. He shoved Sim aside in his chair and grabbed the mouse from him.

As Sim stood up, he glanced at the orange stain on Mason’s jersey.

“What are you looking at, loser?” Mason asked, scowling. He lunged at Sim, and Sim flinched and hurried to his desk.

Chapter 3: Still the New Kid



Sim sat down at his desk as the bell rang. He sighed.

He didn't know why Mason was always so mean to him. It had been that way ever since Sim had moved here. He made fun of how Sim threw a basketball or kicked a soccer ball in gym class. Mason laughed at Sim whenever he volunteered in class, and he teased Sim when he sat by himself at recess. Mason picked on Sim for everything.

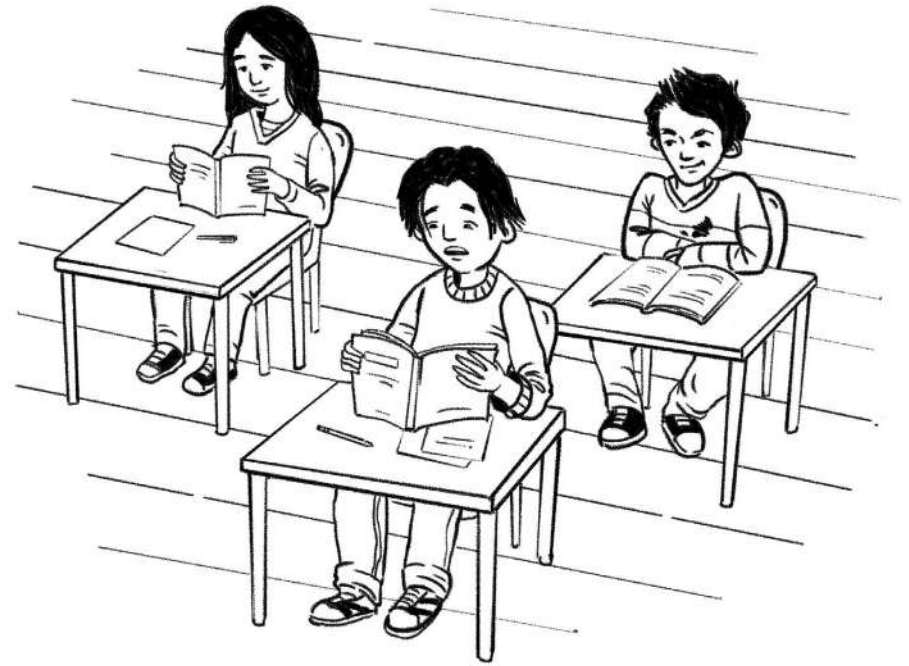
Sim just wanted to make some friends, but no one wanted to be friends with him because Mason was always making fun of him.

The morning passed slowly. At recess, he sat alone reading a comic book. After recess was language arts class. The whole class was reading a chapter book together. Sim was really enjoying it. It was a great story about legends of giants in the Arctic.

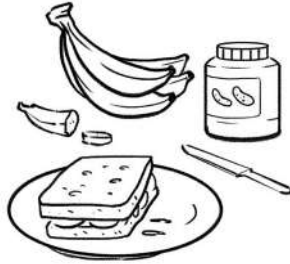
“Does anyone want to read out loud?” Maata asked.

Sim loved to read. But when he raised his hand, he heard Mason’s voice from behind him. “Loser.”

Maata called on Sim before he could put his hand down, so he started to read out loud. But Mason had made him nervous, and he stumbled over so many words. Every time he did, he heard Mason snort with laughter. Mason was ruining everything that Sim liked to do.



Chapter 4: The Hockey Game



At lunchtime, Mason walked home with his sisters. He was still feeling frustrated, and he was angry that his mom wouldn't be home to make lunch for them. He had to do everything himself.

Mason made three sloppy peanut butter and banana sandwiches. He ate his in a few bites and impatiently watched his sisters as they chewed their sandwiches slowly.

"Hurry up, I want to get back to school so I can play ball hockey," Mason said.

Finally, his sisters were ready to go. As they were putting on their jackets, Meeka started to tease Marie.

"I'm taller than you!" Meeka said, laughing.

"No, you're not! We're twins!" Marie cried.

"Yeah, I am! Look!" Meeka stood on Mason's skateboard and peered over Marie's head.

Marie shoved Meeka, and Meeka tumbled to the ground, bursting into tears.



“Marie! That wasn’t nice,” Mason said sternly. Marie started to cry, too. “And Meeka, you shouldn’t have been teasing her!” Mason shouted.

Both of his sisters sniffled. They pulled on their jackets and all three siblings walked slowly back to school without saying a word to each other.

When they arrived at school, there were only a few minutes left of lunch hour. Some of Mason’s classmates were still playing ball hockey on the playground. As he ran up to join the game, he suddenly realized something.

Argh! Mason thought. My stupid sisters made me forget my hockey stick!

Mason spotted Sim playing in the game. He was holding a brand new hockey stick.

What is Sim doing playing hockey? Mason wondered. And why does he have such a nice stick? Sim isn’t even good at hockey! Mason felt even angrier. Why did Sim always get in his way?

Chapter 5: Sim Gets Hit



Sim had been nervous about joining the game at lunchtime. But his stepdad, Panuk, had given him a hockey stick for his birthday on the weekend. Panuk was a hockey coach, and sometimes Sim wondered if his stepdad wished that Sim liked sports instead of computers and comic books.

So Sim had decided to take his hockey stick to school that day. He thought maybe if he played hockey, he could make some new friends. And best

of all, Mason was nowhere to be seen.

As Sim was running across the playground chasing the ball, he felt someone tug on his stick. He turned and saw Mason holding on to it.

“Give me that, loser,” Mason growled at Sim. “You suck at hockey, anyway.”

Sim tried to hold on to his stick, but Mason ripped it away from him and ran to join the game.

Why does Mason pick on me? Sim thought angrily. I didn't do anything to him!

Sim was tired of being picked on. He chased Mason into the middle of the hockey game. As he caught up, Mason shot the ball into the net. The next thing Sim knew, the blade of the stick smacked him under his chin.

Sim cried out and fell to the ground, holding his chin. He couldn't believe how much it hurt. There was blood dripping between his fingers, and he started to cry.

Mason looked shocked. He stood over Sim but didn't move or say



anything. Another classmate ran over and helped Sim stand up.

“You did that on purpose!” one of their classmates yelled at Mason. “You stole his stick and then you hit him with it!”

“We all saw you!” someone else yelled.

Sim watched through his tears as Mason dropped the stick and ran off the playground.

Chapter 6: Home Alone



Mason ran all the way home. He felt sick to his stomach and couldn't think clearly. He hadn't meant to hit Sim. He had been throwing his arms in the air to celebrate his goal. He hadn't even seen Sim beside him. He kept seeing Sim's face over and over as the hockey stick connected with his chin. He felt guilty, angry, and very confused.

Why did I do that? Mason asked himself.

He burst through his front door.

He wanted to be alone for a while, and he knew the house would still be empty. His mom was at work, and his little brother was at daycare.

Mason sat at the kitchen table and tried to catch his breath.

Why am I so mean to Sim?

Mason hadn't talked to Sim much. He knew that Sim was very smart. He was always answering questions in class and reading comic books at recess. And he knew that Sim's mom had married Coach Panuk, which meant Sim was going to learn to be a good hockey player and get all the best gear.

Everything seemed so easy for Sim. Mason felt hopeless and angry all the time. He didn't have someone to coach him.

Ever since Mason's parents had divorced and his dad had moved to a different community, he had felt alone. His mom only ever paid attention to Noah, and Meeka and Marie were so annoying.

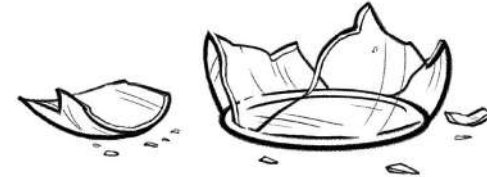
He had to spend all his time

taking care of them. He never had time to do what he wanted.

He wished his dad would come back so things would go back to normal.

He missed his dad so much it hurt.

Chapter 7: The Bully



Mason didn't go back to school that afternoon. When his sisters came home, he ignored them.

"Mason, why didn't you walk home with us?" Marie said.

"I'm hungry, Mason. Can you make us a snack?" Meeka asked.

"Leave me alone for once!" Mason yelled. He stomped to his room and shut the door.

He heard the girls talking, and then he heard a loud crash!

Mason jumped up from his bed and ran back to the kitchen. There, he found a big glass bowl shattered on the floor. His sisters were crying.

“Argh! What happened? You are so stupid!” Mason shouted, which only made his sisters cry more. And worse, they looked scared of him. Their faces reminded him of Sim’s scared expression after Mason had hit him with the hockey stick.

He felt terrible. He didn’t know why he was so angry about everything. He should have been there to help his sisters reach the bowl from the cupboard. It was his fault the bowl had broken.

“Are you both okay?” Mason asked his sisters. They sniffed and nodded. He gave them both a big hug.

The front door opened and their mom came in, carrying their baby brother.

“What happened? Is everyone all right?” their mom asked when she saw the broken glass and the crying twins.

“Everyone is fine, Mom,” Mason

said. “I should have been watching the girls, but I was in my room. It’s my fault.”

All of a sudden, Mason started to cry. He didn’t know why he was crying, but he couldn’t stop.

Mason felt his mom wrap him in a big hug.

“Mason, it’s okay,” his mom said. “What’s wrong? Let’s go talk.”

Mason followed his mom into the living room. He sat next to her on the couch and laid his head on her shoulder. No one was hurt, and his mom wasn’t upset with him. But he cried and cried. His baby brother looked at him curiously.

“Mom, I did something really bad today,” Mason began.

“Why don’t you tell me about it?” his mom replied. Mason sniffled. Then he told his mom everything that had happened that day.

“I think I have been a bully,” Mason said at last. “I pick on Sim all the time, not just today.”

“Thank you for telling me,” his mom said. “I know that things have

been very hard since your father left. You have taken on a lot of responsibility, and I know that you don't get a lot of time to just be a kid."

Mason wiped his eyes. His mom really did understand.

"It's okay to feel angry or frustrated," his mom continued. "But it's not okay to take your anger out on other people. And it's definitely not okay to hurt people or take things that don't belong to you."

"I know, Mom," Mason said quietly. "What should I do?"

The next morning, Mason's mom drove him and his sisters to school. When they all climbed out of the truck, Mason watched his sisters run off to the playground. Then he saw Sim. Sim had a big bandage on his chin. Mason felt his mom put her hand on his shoulder, and he looked up at her. He took a deep breath and walked over to Sim.

"Um, hi," Mason said.

Sim didn't say anything. He looked frightened and kept his eyes on the ground.

"I'm really sorry I hit you yesterday," Mason said. "I honestly didn't mean to, but that doesn't make what I did okay. And I shouldn't have taken your stick, either."



Mason saw Sim glance at him quickly and then look back at the ground.

“And I’m sorry I’ve been such a bully,” Mason continued. “I get so angry sometimes, but I’m trying to work on it. I shouldn’t take it out on you. I guess I’m jealous. You’re really good at a lot of things. And your stepdad is so cool. My dad moved away.”

The two stood quietly for a moment. Mason was worried that Sim wouldn’t accept his apology. After all, Mason had been really mean to Sim.

Chapter 8: Back on the Playground



Sim was surprised when Mason came over to talk to him. He was even more surprised when Mason apologized. It was strange to see Mason so nervous. Mason was usually so confident, especially when he was laughing at Sim.

“Thanks, Mason,” Sim said. “I didn’t know that about your dad. My stepdad is nice, but sometimes I miss my dad, too.”

Then Sim noticed that Mason was carrying a comic book. He recognized

the monster on the cover. It had long, scraggly hair and a mean smile.

“Hey, I love that series,” Sim said.

Mason looked down at the book.

“Yeah, it’s one of my favourites,”

Mason replied. “I’ve seen you reading the other books at recess. I thought you might want to read this one.”

“I didn’t know you liked comic books,” Sim said hesitantly.

“Yeah, I do,” Mason said. “I wish I had more time to read them. I take care of my sisters a lot. I don’t get to do much fun stuff since my dad moved away.” Mason kicked at a rock on the ground.

Sim suddenly felt bad for Mason. He realized that maybe Mason needed a friend as much as he did.

“Hey, do you want to come over after school? I can show you my collection of comic books,” Sim suggested.

“That would be really cool, Sim. I didn’t think you would ever want to hang out with me,” Mason replied, looking surprised and happy. “But I

can’t. I usually take care of my sisters after school.”

As they talked, Mason’s mom walked over.

“Mason, you should go to your friend’s house tonight,” she said. “I will get a babysitter for your sisters.”

Mason smiled at Sim, and Sim smiled back. Sim felt better knowing that maybe he had made a new friend, and he hoped Mason felt better too.

“Come on,” Mason said. “Let’s go see if there’s a computer game we can both play before class starts.”

Together, the boys walked into the school.



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