

Meme Ortiz

Meme Ortiz moved into Cathy's old house after she left. His real name is Juan, but his nickname was Meme. Everyone calls him Meme but his mother.

The house Meme lives in is wooden. The floors are not good. There are no closets. In front of the house, there are twenty-one crooked stairs. Meme runs up the stairs when his mother calls him, and the dog follows.

Behind the house, there is a yard with dirt and old boards. There is also a very big tree with many branches and many squirrels. Around the tree are houses with black roofs and rain gutters full of balls.

This is the tree we used for the First Tarzan Jumping Contest. Meme won—but he broke both his arms.

Those Who Don't

Some people visit the neighborhood and feel scared. They think the people are dangerous. They believe someone might hurt them. This is not true. They are only afraid because they don't understand.

The people in the neighborhood know each other. The man with the crooked eye is Davey's brother. The tall man in the straw hat is Rosa's Eddie. The big man called Fat Boy is not dangerous. He is just another neighbor.

Fear comes from not knowing people. When we go to other neighborhoods, we also feel nervous and roll up the car windows. But people are the same everywhere. We should not judge by color or looks. We should learn to understand each other.

Four Skinny Trees

You see four skinny trees in the city. You notice they are small and thin, but they are strong. They do not look like they belong, but they keep growing.

You can see that the trees have strong roots. Their roots go deep in the ground. The trees hold the earth, and they reach up to the sky. They never stop growing.

If you forget to grow, you may fall down. But if you remember your reason, you keep standing, just like the trees.

When you feel small or weak, you can look at the trees. They show you that you can be strong too. Even with hard concrete around them, they still grow. The trees teach you: your job is to keep growing every day.