

# What Real Friends Are



Christmas is coming. This winter, the school was organizing a second-hand book charity sale. They were going to donate the proceeds to charity groups.

The teacher said, "If there are books you no longer read, bring them to school. If you don't have any second-hand books to donate, just bring some pocket money to buy books. Let's all contribute what we can. The proceeds will be donated to the animal shelter."



An-cheng arrived home and stared at his bookshelf. He didn't enjoy reading. There were only fashion magazines and school textbooks on the shelf.

"Ugh, I hate this. Every year there is a charity sale. Last year it was a flea market. This year it's a second-hand book sale. But I've got no books to donate!" An-cheng complained.

Mom said, "You should read more books. Every time I take you to a bookstore, you buy toys or stationery. Why not take this opportunity to buy some second-hand books from the charity sale? Here, take the money. Don't throw your money around."

An-cheng happily took the money and immediately forgot about what his mother had just said.

After school the next day, An-cheng walked home with his friend, Ali.

An-cheng said, "Let's go shopping and get some food. It's my treat."

An-cheng and Ali had a great afternoon buying a lot of snacks and toys.

The following day, the teacher announced, "Please bring your second-hand books tomorrow. We need to start organizing the books before we can sell them."

An-cheng suddenly remembered the money his mom gave him was meant to buy second-hand books.



He was in trouble because he had spent all the money. He also had no books to donate. His mom was going to be so mad at him.

An-cheng walked home and sat in his apartment building's public library, staring into space. He was trying to find an excuse to tell his mom why he had spent all the money.

Just then, Ali came into the library.

"Hi, An-cheng. Why aren't you home yet?" asked Ali.

"It's all because of you!" An-cheng said angrily.

"Me? What did I do?" asked Ali.

"My mom gave me money to buy second-hand books, but I spent it all on snacks and toys. What am I going to do now?"

"What? I didn't know the money was meant for books! Plus, I didn't force you to do anything. You can't blame me for that. You should just be honest and tell your mom the truth!" Ali shrugged his shoulders and shook his head.



An-cheng made a funny face at Ali. "Whatever! I will figure it out myself!"



The next day at school, Ali tried to check on An-cheng, but An-cheng refused to talk to him. He was still mad at his friend.

When the teacher collected the second-hand books, An-cheng took out several books that appeared to be new.

He told his classmates, "My mom bought these new books for me to donate."

However, Ali noticed that An-cheng's new books looked familiar. He looked closely and found traces of the library's stamp on the back cover. An-cheng had ripped off the corner of the page.



At recess, Ali confronted An-cheng. "An-cheng, did your mom really buy those books?"

An-cheng said, "Of course!"

Ali asked, "But I've borrowed those books from our apartment building's library before, and I noticed there are library stamps in the books. Why did you take books from the library?"

An-cheng felt embarrassed and got angry.

He said, "If you dare to tell anybody, I will say that you forced me to treat you. That's why I didn't have any money to buy books. I will make everyone hate you. I'll tell everyone not to be friends with you."

Ali really wanted to report what happened to the teacher, but he was afraid of An-cheng's threat. He felt troubled the entire day.

On the weekend, Ali was still worried.

He said to Meow and Fuzzy, "I feel sick. I think I ate too fast during lunch. "

Fuzzy said, "Do you want some yogurt to help your digestion?"

Meow put her hands out and said, "And I can give you a massage."

Ali hesitated and said, "It's okay. I'll go out for a walk. I'll be back soon."

After a while, Meow glanced at the clock and realized it was 3 o'clock in the afternoon. She nudged Fuzzy who was sleeping and snoring loudly.



“Wake up! It’s late and Ali isn’t home yet!”

Fuzzy jumped up and said, “Let’s go find him!”

Meow and Fuzzy went downstairs but didn’t see Ali. Meow remembered that Ali and An-cheng were in the same class this semester. She said, “Maybe Ali went to play with An-cheng.”

Fuzzy asked Meow to go look for An-cheng while he went searching for Ali nearby.

Fuzzy sniffed every corner around the apartment building. Then he went from the library into the garden. There was only one more place to look, the playroom!

Meanwhile, Meow went to An-cheng’s home but didn’t find Ali.

An-cheng suggested they check the playroom.



Meow and An-cheng ran into Fuzzy on their way to the playroom. Together, they pushed open the playroom door.

When Ali saw everyone, he bursted out crying. They hugged him and he cried in their arms, letting out all the frustration, the pressure, and the fear he had bottled up throughout the entire day.

An-cheng saw how much pain his mistake and his threats had caused his friend. He felt extremely guilty.

An-cheng said, "I'm sorry. I know I made a mistake. Please forgive me."

An-cheng decided to tell his mother about spending the money and confess to his teacher about stealing the books from the library.



### Think About It

- An-cheng dared not tell his mom about spending the money she gave him. Have you ever been through something similar? How did you handle it?
- An-cheng threatened Ali not to tell anybody about his mistake. If you were Ali, what would you do?

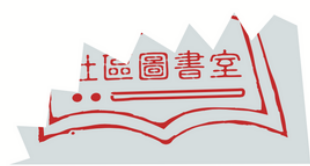


## I'm a Little Detective!



In the public library of the apartment building, all the books have a special stamp in the corner on the last page.

After An-cheng took the library books, he tore off that corner. There are eight torn corners on the left side. Please find and circle which corner was torn off by An-cheng.



## Think About It

### Why shouldn't An-cheng take and sell books from the library?

1. It is against the spirit of second-hand book charity sales to donate books that aren't yours.
2. Taking public property without permission is considered stealing.
3. People who live in the same building won't be able to borrow books.