

Divide and Subtract

By Farah Farooqi
 Illustrated by Lauren Ellis

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Chapter One

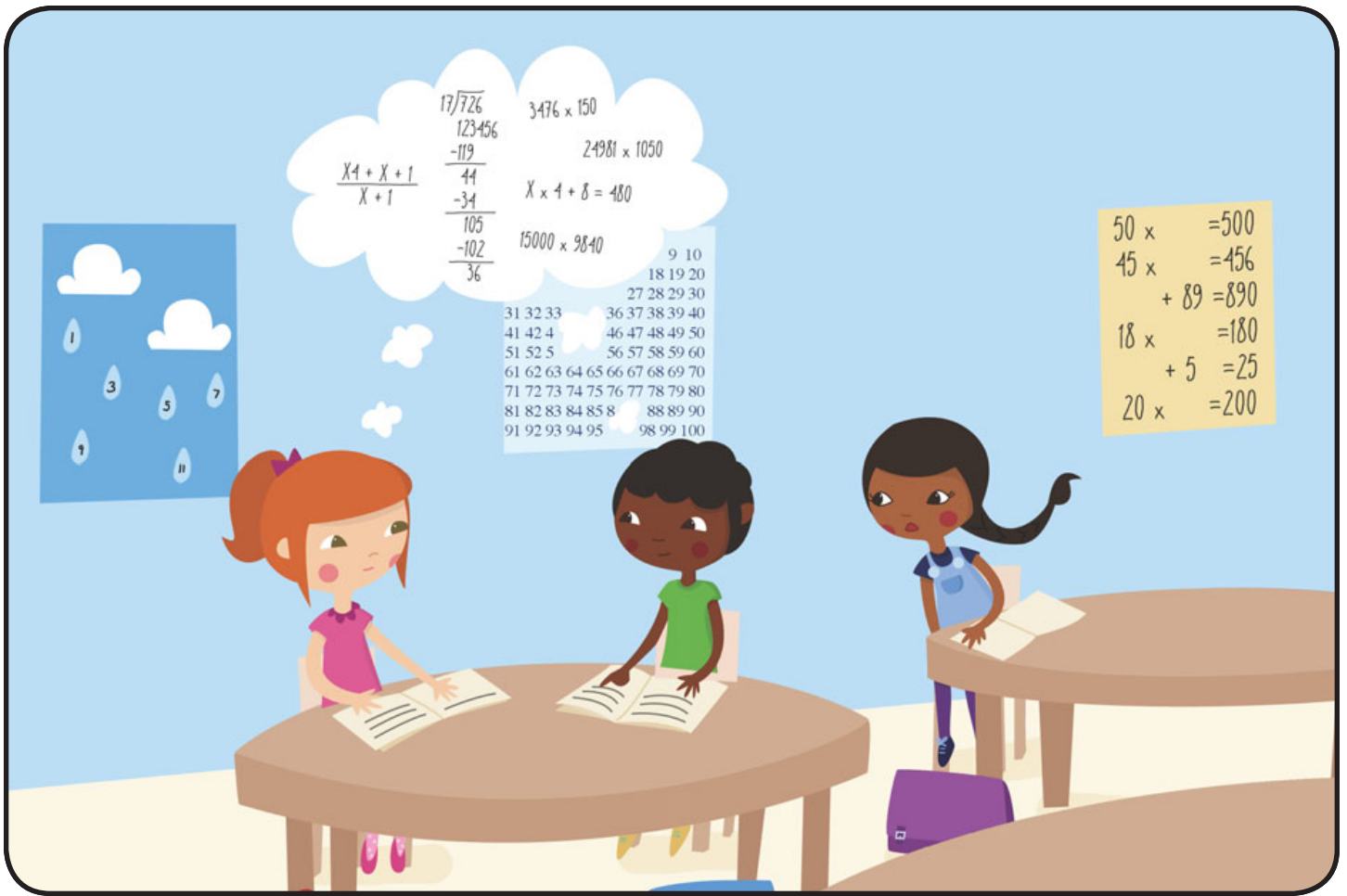
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Chapter One

I'm Telling!

It was a Friday afternoon in math class. Ann and Victor were sitting at their table in the back of the classroom.

Ann and Victor were the shyest kids in class. They were also best friends. Their favorite subject was math. In fact, they loved doing the hard math problems at the back of their math workbooks. Ann and Victor worked on these problems secretly during math class. The teacher would not be happy if she knew. The rest of the class worked on problems in the front of their workbooks. No one ever knew Ann and Victor's secret. That is, until Christine Vega joined the class.

Christine was nosy. She loved math, too. She also knew about their secret math activities. She always wanted to work on the hard math problems with them. This made Ann mad. She thought Christine was just too bossy.

One day, while the rest of the class was on page 54, Ann and Victor were on page 254. They were working together on the long division problems.



Christine looked on. “Let me help you solve those problems,” Christine said. “I’m great at math.”

“We don’t need any help!” Ann snapped.

“You’re being mean,” Christine said loudly. “In fact, I should be the only one doing those problems. I’m the smartest one in the class!”

“No, you’re not. I’m the smartest one!” Ann replied angrily.

“Maybe we’re all really smart,” added Victor, still working on his math problem.



“Well, I still don’t need your help!” shouted Ann.

“I’m telling,” whispered Christine.

Ann glared at Christine. Christine raised her hand. “What is it, Christine?” the teacher said.

“Miss Rose, Ann and Victor are doing hard math problems,” Christine said. “They are working at the back of their math workbooks, and they won’t let me join in!”

Everyone in the classroom gasped. Miss Rose sighed.

The Principal's Office



The teacher called Ann, Victor, and Christine up to her desk. She looked stern. “I am sending all three of you to the principal’s office.”

“What did I do?” asked Christine.

“The three of you need to get along,” said Miss Rose. “Please head over to her office now.”

Ann and Victor were so scared they could hardly walk.

Christine looked calm. She had gone to the principal’s office a few times already.

“Hi, Mr. Applegate!” she said happily to the principal’s assistant.

“Back again, Christine?” Mr. Applegate asked. “What have you done now?”

Christine shrugged.

Mr. Applegate looked at Ann and Victor. “And who do we have here?” he asked kindly.

Ann and Victor just looked down at their shoes.

Mr. Applegate smiled. “I see. Please sit down. I’ll let the principal know you are here.”



Ann, Victor, and Christine sat down on a sofa. Ann's eyes filled with tears of shame. Victor felt the same way. He bit his fingernails. Christine just sat humming to herself happily.

Ann stared at Christine. *This is all Christine's fault*, she thought.

"The principal will see you now," said Mr. Applegate. Ann, Victor, and Christine went into the principal's office.



The principal made a serious face. “I hear that you are not getting along. Is that true?”

Victor looked at his shoes. Ann did not know what to say. Christine jumped right in.

“Ann and Victor are mean to me,” she said. “They do the math at the back of our workbooks, but they won’t let me work with them.”

Ann and Victor began to tremble. Now even the principal knew about them breaking the rules.

Chapter Three

Formula for Friendship

The principal looked at them kindly. She gave them each a lollipop.

“Ann and Victor, I’m glad that you like math so much,” the principal said. “However, you should really try to be nicer to Christine. She just moved here. She could use some new friends. Can I count on you to be nice to her?”

Ann and Victor nodded.

“Especially you, Victor,” the principal said.

Victor looked up suddenly. “Why me?” he asked.

“After all, Ann won’t be here next year. So you will need a new friend in class,” replied the principal.

“What?” Ann asked. She was shocked. “What do you mean I won’t be here next year?”

“Oh, dear,” the principal said, “I thought your parents had told you. Your family is moving. You will be going to a new school next year.”



Ann felt her heart breaking. She was going to be without her best friend. She was so shy. How would she ever make a new friend?

Christine tapped Victor's arm. "I'll still be here next year, Victor. I can do math problems with you."

Victor smiled weakly at Christine.

He told Ann, "I'm really going to miss you."

Ann could not help it. Tears poured down her face. She thought she'd never have a best friend like Victor again.



“Don’t worry, Ann,” said Victor. “You’ll find a new friend to do math problems with at your new school.”

Ann wiped her eyes.

“The day started out right. We divided hard numbers. Now it’s ending in a sad way. I’ll be taken away from here,” said Ann.

“You mean, taken away, like in subtraction?” Victor joked.



“I guess it always comes back to math for us,” Ann sighed.

“The year’s not over yet. We still have lots of math to do. After all, two plus one equals three pretty smart kids,” smiled Christine. “Lollipop?” she asked, offering her candy to Ann.

Ann smiled.