



Dassi and the Mixed-Up Message

Ages 6-9
A story and 9 activities



Dassi and the Mixed-Up Message

On Wednesday, Dassi's best friend Naomi walks right past her in the hallway without saying hello.

Dassi stops. She stares. "Naomi?"

Naomi doesn't turn around. She keeps walking, with her head down, her braid swinging.

Dassi's stomach drops. What do I do? she thinks. Is she mad at me? She tries to remember if she's said something wrong. Nothing comes to mind.

At lunch, Naomi sits at a different table. Dassi sits alone with her sandwich, watching Naomi laugh with two other girls.

Dassi's mind starts to spin. She never told me she was upset. She's making new friends. She doesn't like me anymore. I bet she heard something and believed it.

By recess, Dassi's eyes are stinging. She sits on a bench and kicks her feet. She starts rehearsing what she'll say. I can't believe you ignored me. I thought we were best friends.

Her teacher, Morah Pesha, notices. She sits down on the bench. "Dassi? You're a million miles away."

"Naomi's mad at me," says Dassi. "She walked right by me and didn't even say hi."

"Hmm," says Morah Pesha. "Did she say she's mad?"

"Well, no."

"What do you know for sure? Only the facts."

Dassi thinks. "She walked past me. She sat somewhere else at lunch."

"Those are facts. And the rest, that she's mad, that she doesn't like you, what are those?"

Dassi shifts. "Guesses, I guess."

"And do you know any other reasons she might have walked past you?"

Dassi frowns. "Maybe she didn't see me."

"Maybe. What else?"

"Maybe she was upset about something else. Or she was in a rush."

"All possible. So what could you do to find out?"

"Ask her?"

"That's a very good idea. How would you ask?"

Dassi practices under her breath. "Hi, Naomi. I noticed you didn't say hi today. Is everything okay?"

At the end of the day, she finds Naomi at the cubbies. Her heart pounds.

"Naomi," she says. "I noticed that you walked past me today. I was wondering if everything's okay."

Naomi's eyes go wide. She drops her bag on the floor. Then they fill with tears.

"Oh, Dassi," she says. "I'm so sorry. I wasn't ignoring you. My grandmother is in the hospital. I was thinking about her all morning, and I didn't even see anyone. And I sat at another table because I didn't want to talk."

Dassi feels like she's been holding her breath for three hours. She lets it out.

"I'm so sorry about your grandmother," she says. "Can I do something to help?"

"Just sit with me," says Naomi. "Please."

They sit on the floor by the cubbies and don't say anything for a long time. Dassi holds her hand. After a while, Naomi leans her head on Dassi's shoulder.

"Thank you for asking," she whispers. "I wasn't sure you'd want to talk to me after I was so rude."

"I would always want to talk to you," says Dassi.

Naomi's grandmother comes home from the hospital on Friday. Naomi brings Dassi a note that says, Thank you for being my friend when I need one. And a slice of her grandmother's famous honey cake.

Dassi reads the note three times. The honey cake is still a little warm. She splits it with Naomi at lunch, at the same table, in the same spot. She decides that next time her mind starts spinning guesses, she'll remember: ask first.



Activity 1 of 9

Remember the story

1. What does Naomi do in the hallway?

2. What does Morah Pesha ask Dassi to separate?

3. Why is Naomi quiet that day?

4. What does Naomi bring Dassi on Friday?



Activity 2 of 9

Fact or guess? (circle one)

1. Naomi sits at a different table at lunch. Fact / Guess
2. Naomi doesn't like Dassi anymore. Fact / Guess
3. Dassi asks Naomi if everything is okay. Fact / Guess
4. Naomi's grandmother comes home Friday. Fact / Guess



Activity 3 of 9

Think and write

1. What guesses does Dassi's mind make?

2. What does Dassi do to find the facts?

3. How could you check in with a friend who seems upset?



Activity 4 of 9

Word search (find all 6)

Words: FACTS, GUESS, NAOMI, HALLWAY, ASK, FRIEND

I	E	Y	K	S	C	S	M	F	N	V
H	V	N	O	S	J	U	W	E	K	Y
A	V	W	D	E	A	G	W	I	A	A
L	M	N	N	U	S	S	E	N	E	J
L	A	B	E	G	K	B	V	J	D	A
W	V	R	I	B	B	I	R	A	E	F
A	Y	O	R	L	H	M	C	A	G	S
Y	I	P	F	A	E	O	G	D	F	T
B	V	M	H	G	G	A	V	S	H	C
K	H	A	U	D	Y	N	T	I	K	A
H	W	N	B	K	N	J	T	F	J	F



Activity 5 of 9

Scrambled words (from the story)

1. TFACS = _____

2. YLAHWLA = _____

3. FENDIR = _____

4. MAHGEODNRRT = _____

5. IEBSBCU = _____



Activity 6 of 9

Say it out loud

Practice each line in a calm, steady voice:

"I noticed something. Is everything okay?"

"Can I sit with you?"

"Thank you for telling me."

Activity 7 of 9

My chart

My Facts and Guesses Chart

#	What I know for sure	What I'm guessing	What I can ask
Time 1			
Time 2			
Time 3			



Activity 8 of 9

Draw it

Draw two girls sitting on the floor by the cubbies, one leaning on the other.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a drawing. It occupies the central portion of the page below the instructions.



Activity 9 of 9

Answers

Remember the story:

1. Walks past Dassi without saying hello
2. Facts and guesses
3. Her grandmother is in the hospital
4. A note and a slice of honey cake

Fact or guess: 1 Fact; 2 Guess; 3 Fact; 4 Fact

Scrambled words: FACTS, HALLWAY, FRIEND, GRANDMOTHER, CUBBIES

Think and write: answers will vary; talk them over together.