

Mario Makes a Friend

The Characters:

Tamara Johnson—a brave and tough girl
 Mario Cervantes—a sensitive and shy boy
 Andrea Wyatt—a dramatic and funny girl
 Nesta Chen—a very responsible and honest girl
 Iggy Lambini—a very smart boy in a wheelchair
 Mr. Dinello—the art teacher
 Coach Blank—the school's female gym teacher
 Sammy Laughton—a new boy in school
 Bob, Rob, and Todd—triplets
 Mrs. Wyatt—Andrea's stepmother, also a teacher at the school

Scene:

The playground of Vista Falls Elementary School on the first day of classes after summer vacation. Mario and his friends, Iggy, Tamara, Andrea and Nesta are just finishing up a game of kickball. They have about half an hour before recess is over and they must go to Mr. Dinello's art class. In the background, their classmates are jumping rope and playing hopscotch. Sammy Laughton stands alone off to one side. The triplets are in another corner with Coach Blank.

TAMARA: So far so good.

IGGY: (*Being pushed in his wheelchair by Andrea.*) What do you mean?

TAMARA: You know...the first day is always kind of scary.

ANDREA: I know what you mean. Usually, I'm nervous about the new teacher...

NESTA: ...and finding the new classroom.

IGGY: I see what you mean. I always worry if I got the right pencils and folders and stuff.

TAMARA: This year, I'm not worried though. (*Sitting down on a bench.*)

IGGY: Me neither

ANDREA: I'm not either. Everything seems great. (*She looks at Mario who has been very quiet.*) How about you, Mario?

MARIO: I don't know. (*He shrugs shyly and sits down next to Tamara.*)

IGGY: You don't know if you're nervous about anything?

MARIO: Ummmm...I don't know.

ANDREA: (*Giggling*) That's silly.

TAMARA: (*She smiles as she's about to tease her friend.*) I know what Mario's nervous about.

IGGY: What?

TAMARA: Talking to the new kids in our classes. You know! Mario hates to meet new people. He's so shy!

MARIO: Stop it, Tammie. I am not!

ANDREA: It's true! You don't like to meet new people.

Mr. Dinello comes up to the kids and smiles.

MR. DINELLO: Well, hello! What's this I hear about new people?

MARIO: *(He frowns at his friends before he answers his teacher.)* It's nothing, Mr. Dinello.

MR. DINELLO: Oh, I thought you were maybe talking about our new student. *(He points to where Sammy is standing alone.)* That's Sammy. He and his family just moved here from Valley Point.

NESTA: Oh really? I have a cousin in Valley Point.

MR. DINELLO: Good, good. If you know something about the town from which he came, Nesta, maybe you could talk to him. I was hoping that the five of you could make him feel welcome.

ANDREA: We'd be happy to! Right?

IGGY: We sure would!

TAMARA: You bet!

MR. DINELLO: Mario, you too?

MARIO: *(Looking down at the ground.)* I guess.

MR. DINELLO: Good! Good! I knew I could count on you five! I'll see you in class in a few minutes.

TAMARA: What are we doing today?

MR. DINELLO: *(Happily.)* We're drawing faces!

NESTA: Oh boy!

MR. DINELLO: See you later. *(He exits.)*

TAMARA: So, let's go talk to Sammy.

MARIO: You guys go ahead. I'll wait here.

TAMARA: What for?

MARIO: I want to... *(He looks around nervously, trying to find an excuse.)* Ummm...Oh! *(He smiles.)* I want to talk to Coach Blank. *(He points to Coach Blank. She's being followed by the school's triplets: Rob, Bob, and Todd.)*

TAMARA: About what?

MARIO: Ummm...the track team.

TAMARA: Okay. I'd like to talk to her about that, too. Then, we'll all go talk to Sammy together. Since you're not shy, that won't be a problem. Right?

MARIO: *(Frowning.)* Right.

TAMARA: *(Waving at Coach Blank.)* Miss Blank! Miss Blank! Coach!

COACH BLANK: *(She's still followed by the triplets.)* What is it Tammie?

TAMARA: Mario and I wanted to know when the sign-up sheet for the track team will be posted.

ROB, BOB AND TODD: *(Speaking together.)* Are you signing up this year?

NESTA: I'm not. I've got my ballet class.

ANDREA: *(Like a movie star.)* And, I've got theatre.

IGGY: I'll still go to all the meets to cheer like I did last year.

ROB, BOB AND TODD: Good! We like it when you cheer!

COACH BLANK: I'll post the sign-up sheet tomorrow. I'm glad you're interested again. *(Turning to the triplets.)* I don't suppose you three would like to stay here until the bell rings?

ROB, BOB AND TODD: No.

COACH BLANK: Are you sure?

ROB: We like to follow you around.

COACH BLANK: I see that.

BOB: It's fun.

TODD: Yes!

COACH BLANK: But, don't you want to talk to people your own age? *(She points to Tamara and her friends.)* Of course, I like talking to you, too. But, sometimes, it's nice to talk to kids.

TAMARA: Yeah. (*She looks at Mario.*)

ROB: It's hard to talk to new people.

BOB: That's why we talk to you all the time, Coach.

TODD: We know you.

MARIO: They're right. It's scary to try to make new friends.

COACH BLANK: Scary how?

MARIO: Well, what if they don't like you?

ROB, BOB AND TODD: Yeah! What if?

COACH BLANK: Oh, I see. But, maybe it's best to think that there's no reason they wouldn't like you.

ROB, BOB AND TODD: Huh?

COACH BLANK: What I mean is that you have to believe that you're likeable before other people can like you.

TAMARA: Everyone likes me.

COACH BLANK: (*Laughing.*) And, there's no doubt that Tamara likes herself. That's a good thing, Tamara. You're very sure of yourself. And, still, you're kind to everyone you meet. You have no problem making friends because you know that people will like you.

TAMARA: That's right.

NESTA: I understand.

ANDREA: You do?

NESTA: Yeah. I used to worry that people wouldn't like me.

ANDREA: You? But you're so friendly. You talk to everyone.

NESTA: Now. But, a couple of years ago, I used to think that I was just dumb and boring.

COACH BLANK: But, you know you're not.

NESTA: I learned that I'm not—mostly because I saw that I am a good and interesting person. And, then I felt better about talking to other people.

IGGY: I was shy, too. I used to worry that kids would make fun of me because of my wheelchair.

TAMARA: But, people didn't.

IGGY: Well, some people did. But, I learned not to care. I like who I am. So what if people tease me because I'm different? The funny thing was that once I stopped worrying about it, those people stopped making fun of me.

ROB, BOB AND TODD: Kids tease us, too.

COACH BLANK: They do?

ROB: Yes.

BOB: They say we're weird.

TODD: Because we're triplets.

ANDREA: I don't think you're weird.

NESTA: Neither do I.

IGGY: I don't either.

ROB, BOB AND TODD: You don't?

IGGY: No! We think you're cool. You three are the fastest runners in the school.

NESTA: And, you always help out at our ballet performances when you pass out the programs.

ANDREA: And you sing so well in the church youth choir!

ROB, BOB AND TODD: We do?

COACH BLANK: Looks like you three have a lot to talk about with Nesta, Andrea, Tamara and Iggy.

TAMARA: Yeah! Will you show me that trick you did on the monkey bars a few minutes ago?

ROB, BOB AND TODD: Which one of us?

TAMARA: Well...I'm not sure.

Everyone laughs...except Mario.

ROB, BOB AND TODD: Well, come on, let's all go over to the monkey bars and see what we can do!

NESTA: Okay!

IGGY: Andrea, will you push me?

ANDREA: Sure

COACH BLANK: Mario, are you coming?

MARIO: (*Shaking his head.*) No, I'll stay here.

COACH BLANK: All right. But, if you change your mind, come and find us.

MARIO: Thanks, Miss Blank.

Coach Blank, NESTA, Tamara, Iggy, Andrea, Rob, Bob and Todd all exit leaving Mario alone on the bench.

Mrs. Wyatt enters and motions for Sammy to follow her.

MRS. WYATT: Oh! Mario! Have you seen Andrea? I wanted to introduce her to Sammy, our new student.

MARIO: (*He's too shy to look up.*) No, ma'am.

MRS. WYATT: Oh well. I can introduce you at least. Mario, this is Sammy Laughton.

SAMMY: Hi.

MARIO: Hi.

MRS. WYATT: Sammy, Mario is one of our best students. He won first place in the essay contest last year. What was it that you wrote about?

MARIO: Nothin' special. Just my old baseball card collection.

SAMMY: Baseball cards?

MARIO: Yeah, pretty dumb, huh?

SAMMY: No way! I collect baseball cards.

MRS. WYATT: Mario, don't you have some that are almost thirty years old?

SAMMY: Really?

MARIO: (*Finally looking at Sammy and smiling.*) A few.

SAMMY: Cool! Who do you have?

MARIO: You want to talk to me about it?

SAMMY: I sure do!

MRS. WYATT: Well, then, I'll just leave you two to your chat. Mrs. Wyatt starts to walk off.

MARIO: Sammy, wait here, please. I'll be right back. (*He runs after Mrs. Wyatt.*)

MARIO: Mrs. Wyatt! Thanks!

MRS. WYATT: For what?

MARIO: For introducing me to two new friends.

MRS. WYATT: Two?

MARIO: Yeah. Sammy. And me.

END SCENE.