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Mental Manipulation

can we think freely in the digital age?

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Chapter 1

Where Tim Has an Unexpected Encounter

It was still hot on that September day. Tim felt sweat beading on his forehead as he hurried down the shopping street, his arms loaded with two big bags. It was a Saturday afternoon, and the street was crowded with people shopping, meeting for coffee, or just lingering in the late summer sun.

Tim didn't have time to linger. He was late. Determined to make his way, he pushed forward as best he could when suddenly – whoops! He tripped over a little dog that had just leapt between his legs with enthusiasm. Down went Tim, stretched out flat on the ground, the con-

tents of his bags spilled all over the pavement, while the dog, who was called Johnson, sniffed at his pockets in search of a ginger biscuit. Tim knew Johnson well. He belonged to his grandmother's neighbour and Tim often played with the friendly little dog on his way to visiting his grandma. And if Johnson was here, his owner couldn't be far...



“Well now, young man, can’t you stay on your feet?” asked a gravelly voice. Tim looked up and found himself face-to-face with Mr. McNamara, whose usually grumpy face was, at that moment, lit by a snarky smile. Mr. Roger McNamara was accompanied by his friend, Mrs. Brill, whom Tim knew well since she was a teacher at his school.

“Are you alright?” Mrs. Brill asked, bending down to help him gather his scattered things and put them back in the bags.

“Yes,” mumbled Tim, eager to get on his way.

“What are you up to with all these sheets of paper and paint tubes?” asked Mr. McNamara, casting a suspicious glance at the bags’ contents.

“I hope it’s not more mischief!”

“Not at all,” Tim answered quickly. “It’s to help my friend Joan prepare her campaign.”



Look up highlighted words in the glossary at the end!

“Her campaign for what?” asked Mr. McNamara, intrigued.

“For school...” murmured Tim, impatient to leave.

“For the class representative elections, I suppose?” asked Mrs. Brill.

“What nonsense is this?” exclaimed Mr. McNamara, not giving Tim time to reply. “Yet another idea to distract pupils instead of letting them focus on their work,” he added disdainfully.

“Come now, Roger, it’s important!” scolded Mrs. Brill. “The representative is chosen by the other pupils. They help classmates if they have problems at school and can also propose ideas to improve school life.”