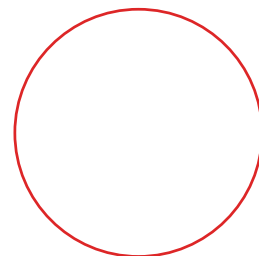


My virtual
friends



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December, 2023
Doha, Qatar

This content is produced by the team of
National Cybersecurity Excellence Management, National Cyber Security Agency.

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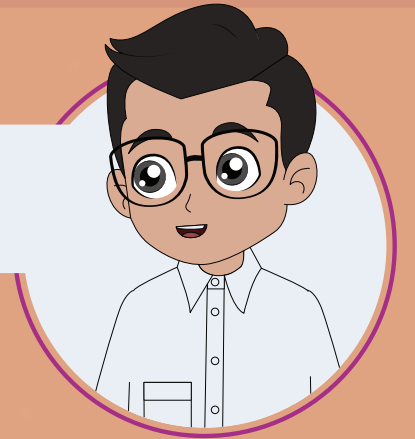
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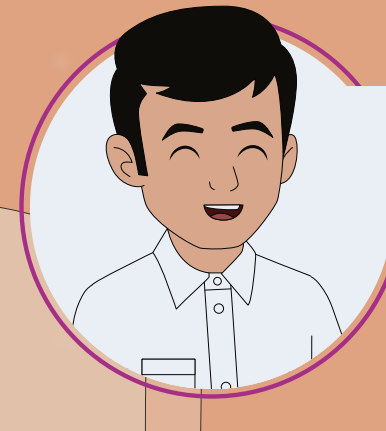
**My virtual
friends**

I love friends, and I have a great curiosity to meet new ones. However, I approach virtual friends with caution because I don't know if they are genuine or not, even if they appear friendly. I am always vigilant and alert.

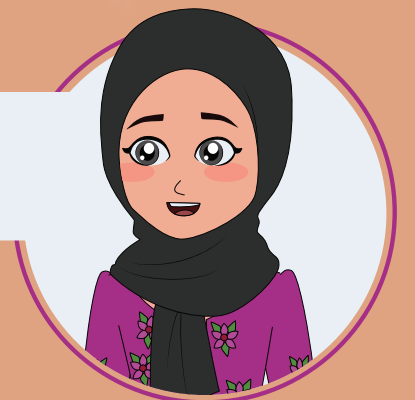
Nasser: A smart and talented child in primary school, curious and fond of pets.



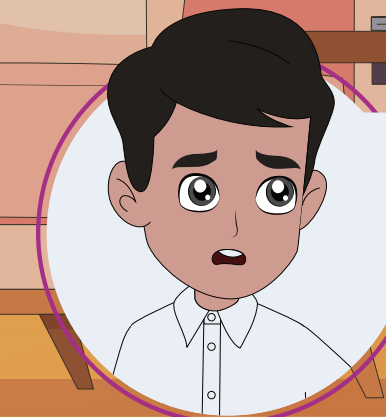
Khalid: A strong, sensible child, loving towards his friends and siblings, and very attentive to them.



Fatima: Nasser's understanding and well-mannered sister, caring for her siblings.



Mohamed: The younger brother of Fatima and Nasser, intelligent and filled with curiosity.





Nasser was sitting in his room in front of the computer screen, and he looked happy.

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A gentle knock on the door made Nasser say,

- Come in.

His three siblings entered the room: Khaled, the handsome young man whom Nasser regarded as his role model and ideal, Fatima, the intelligent, sweet, and calm girl, and Mohammed, the youngest of the siblings, and the most noisy and playful

- What are you doing, Nasser? Khaled asked his brother, who was busy with the computer screen. He replied:

- I'm browsing Facebook, look; there are a lot of interesting things.



Fatima said, as she pressed the buttons on her mobile phone:

- That's good; I'll send you a friend request now.
- Well, Fatima, I've received it and accepted it.

Fatima said happily:

- Great, I now have 500 friends.



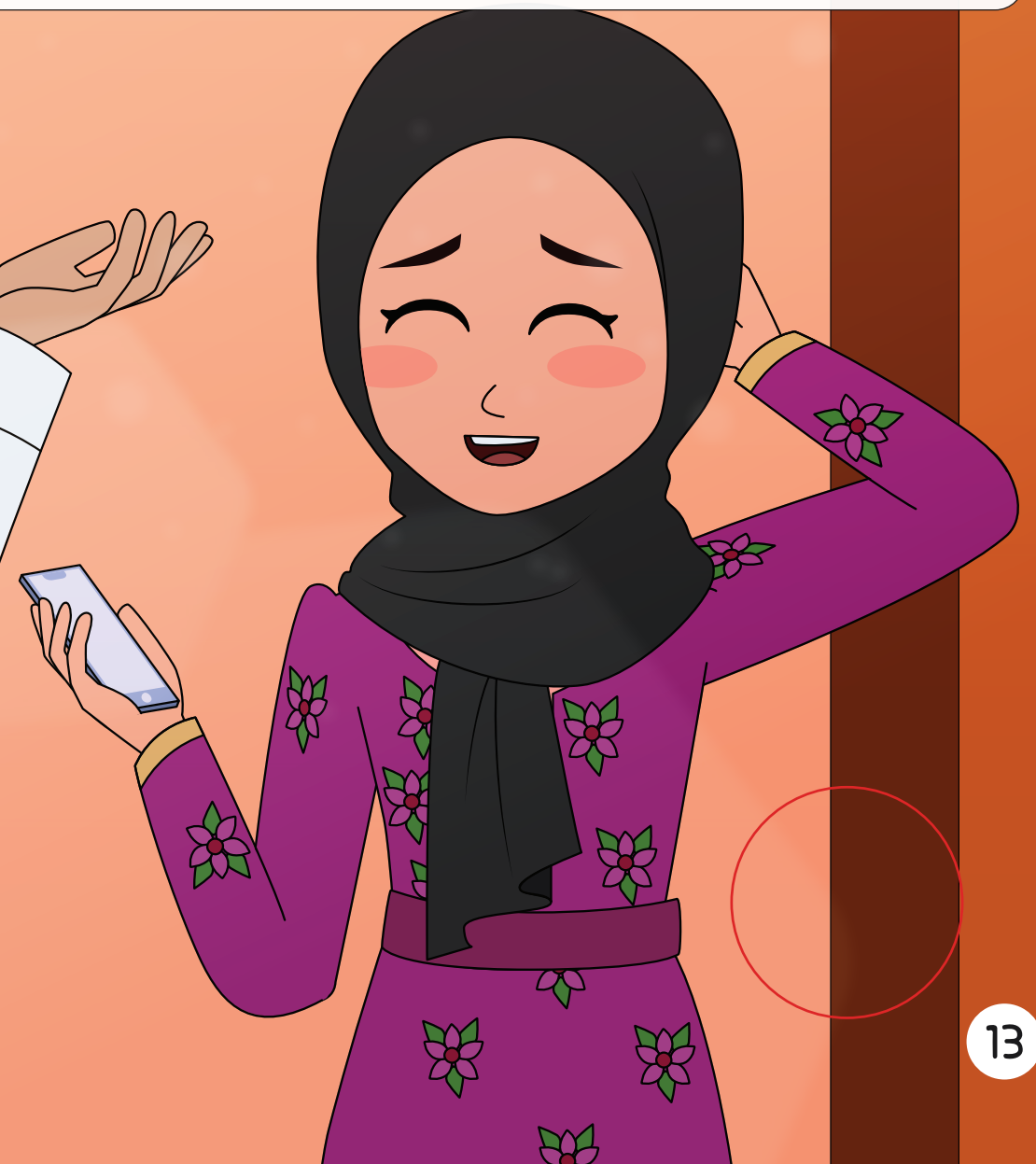
Khaled was surprised, and he said,

- That's lots of friends, Fatima. Do you know them all?
- Fatima replied, I don't know most of them. They are people from different countries and they messaged me to get to know me.
- Yesterday, I met a sixth-grade student from Kuwait named Khawla, and we became friends.



Khaled smiled and said:

- This is good. But we need to be careful when using social media.



Here, Muhammad interrupted, and he looked sad; because he don't know what his siblings were talking about, so he said:

- What are social media, Khaled? We didn't study it in grade one.

Everyone laughed, and Khalid said:

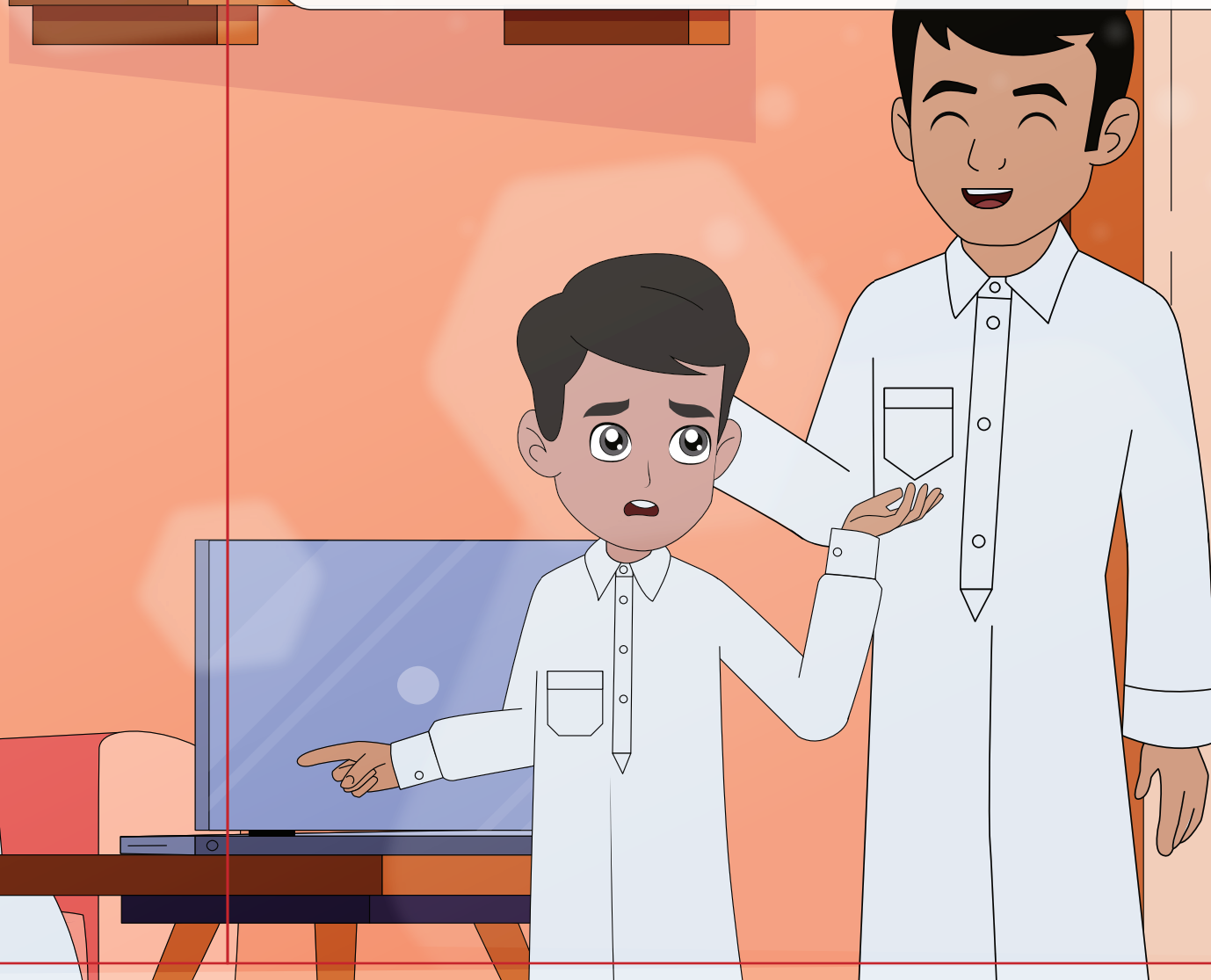
- You will study it later, Muhammad, when you are old enough to deal with it.
- But I am old now; I will soon be in grade two.

Everyone laughed again, and Khaled said:

- Okay, Muhammad, if you think you are old enough, I will explain it to you.

Muhammad cheered with joy, and said:

- Thank you, Khaled. Tell me about it, please.



- Social media are electronic applications that we can use to communicate with others.

Muhammad asked:

- Can I communicate with my mother and father through it?

Fatima laughed and said:

- You don't need it to communicate with them, Muhammad. They are in the living room. You can communicate with them directly.

Khaled continued, saying:

- That's right. Although we can communicate with anyone who has an account on social media, it is better to sit with our family and friends face-to-face, so that we can express our feelings to them, and tell them what we want without the need for electronic means.



Nasser asked:

- Why, Khaled?

Khaled replied:

- Because spending a lot of time with electronic devices keeps us away from our reality and our natural life. It might lead to sadness and laziness.

- Nasser said:

- Sadness?! I feel great joy when I communicate with my virtual friends.

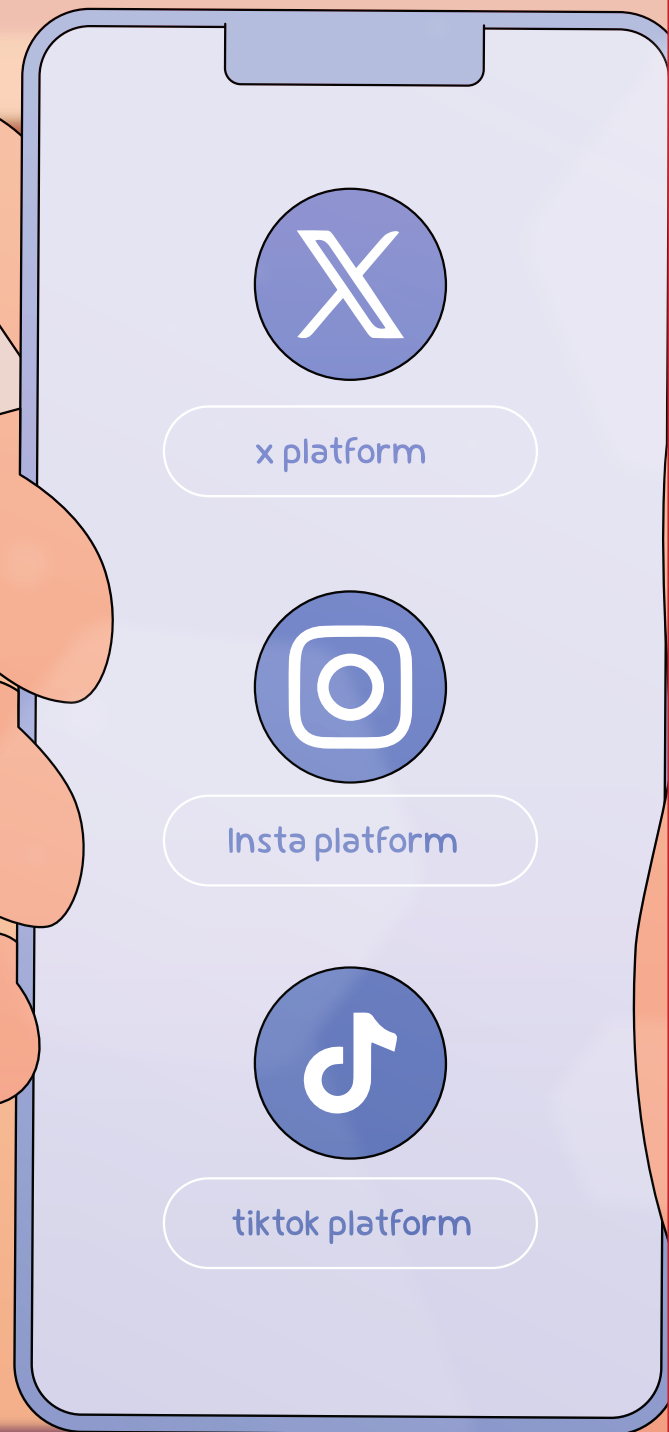
Muhammad felt even more curious about what was going on and asked,

- Who are your virtual friends, Nasser?

- They are the friends I communicate with electronically (online).

Fatima said:

- Like my friend Khawla.



Khaled said:

- That's right, like all of the friends on Facebook, and other social media platforms.

Muhammad asked:

- Are there other ways besides Facebook that can introduce us to friends?

Khaled replied:

- Yes, Muhammad, there are many electronic applications, such as the platform of X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and TikTok. Therefore, we must be careful in dealing with virtual friends; because we cannot know if they are good or not.

Fatima said:

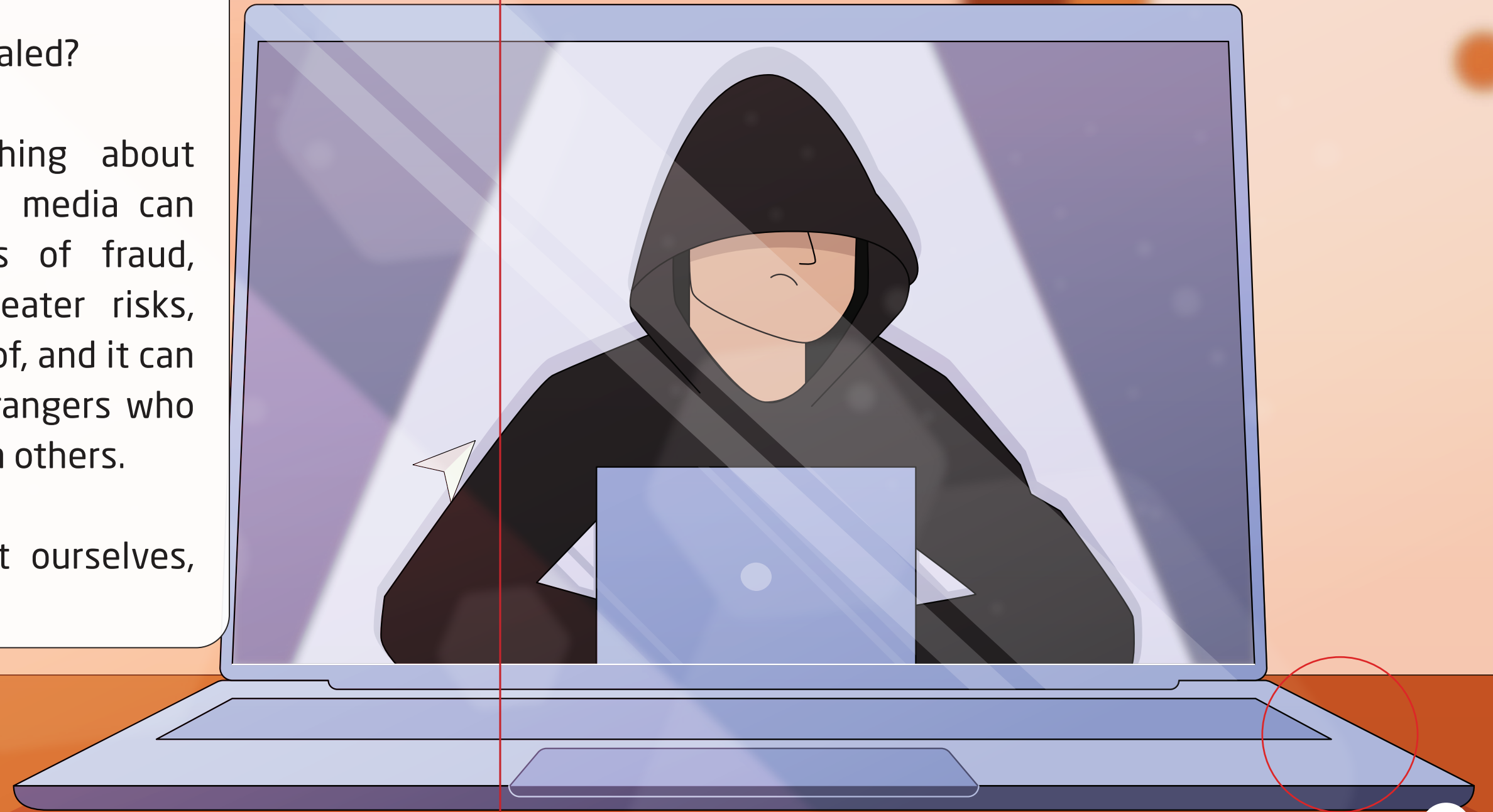
- How can we be careful, Khaled?

Khaled said:

- By not sharing everything about ourselves, because social media can expose us to the risks of fraud, deception, and other greater risks, which we are not in need of, and it can make us vulnerable to strangers who exploit these sites to harm others.

Nasser asked:

- And how can we protect ourselves, Khaled?



Khaled replied:

- It is very important that we share our posts carefully. Not everything is suitable for sharing, such as home address, school, phone number, times of leaving home, current locations, or personal photos. Also, we shouldn't share other people's pictures without their permission, nor post anything inappropriate that could cause psychological harm to others.

Muhammad said:

- Okay, Khaled, I know everything about social media now, so can I create my own Facebook page?

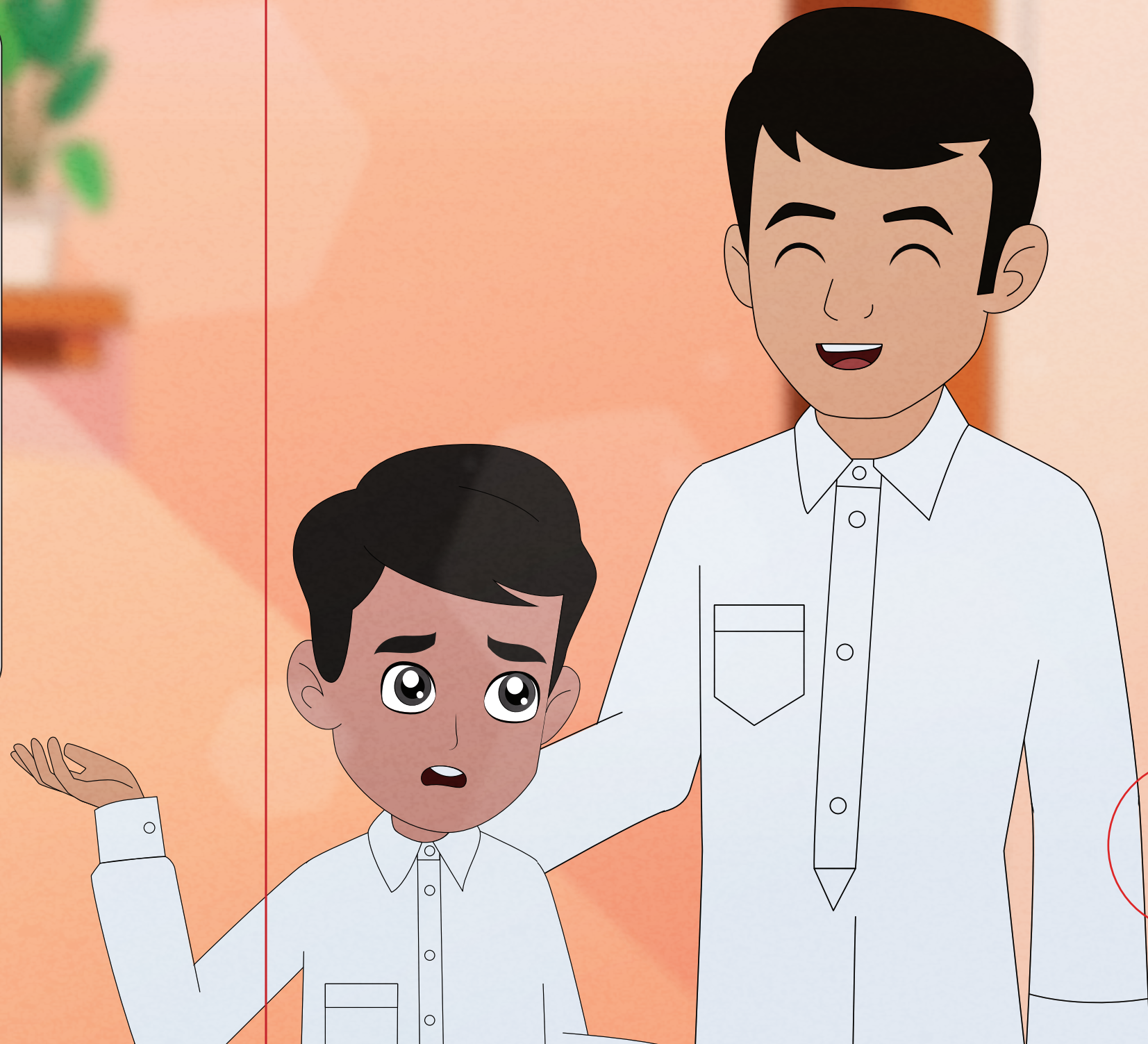


Khaled laughed and said:

- My dear, I have only given you very little information about these means, and you are still young. I will help you create your own page when you are old enough, I promise you that.

Muhammad was not convinced by Khaled's words, so he said to him:

- But you all have virtual friends, and I want to have some too. I want a virtual friend to have fun with

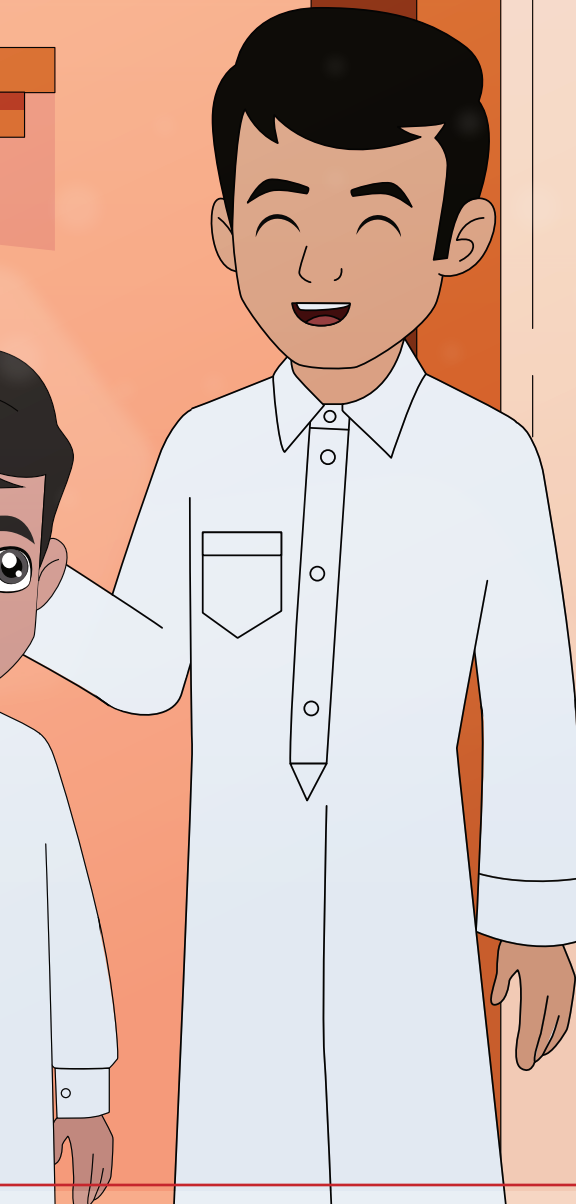
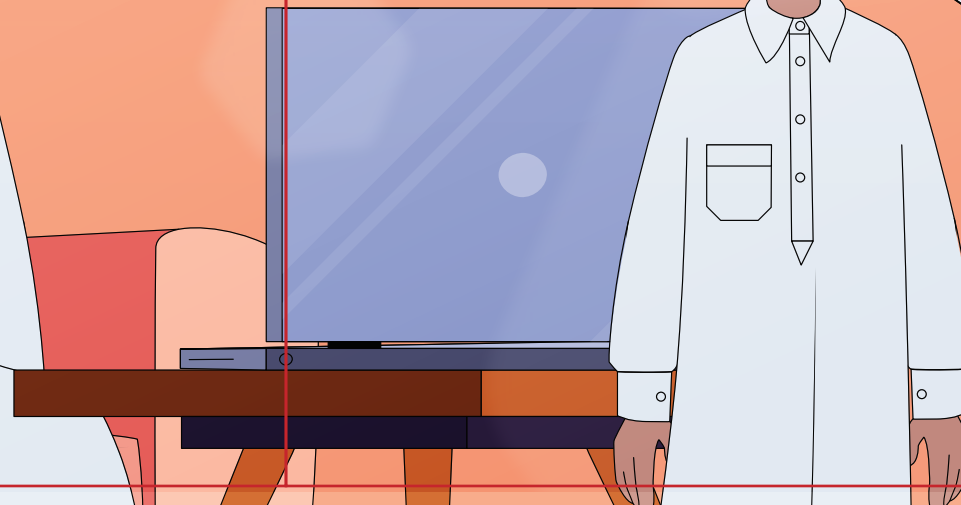
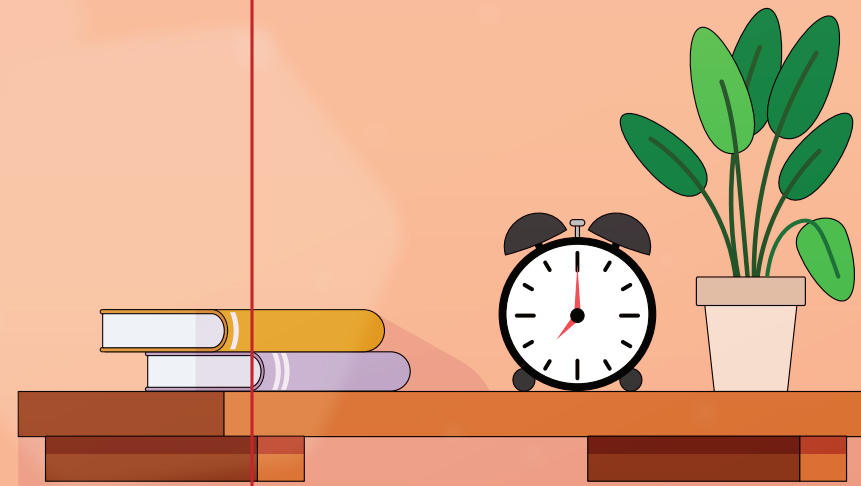


Khaled said:

- You can have enjoyable moments with your family members, and with your friends at school, and when you grow up, you will spend more time with virtual friends, to exchange information and news, and you will get to know new countries and cultures through these friends.

Muhammad sighed and said:

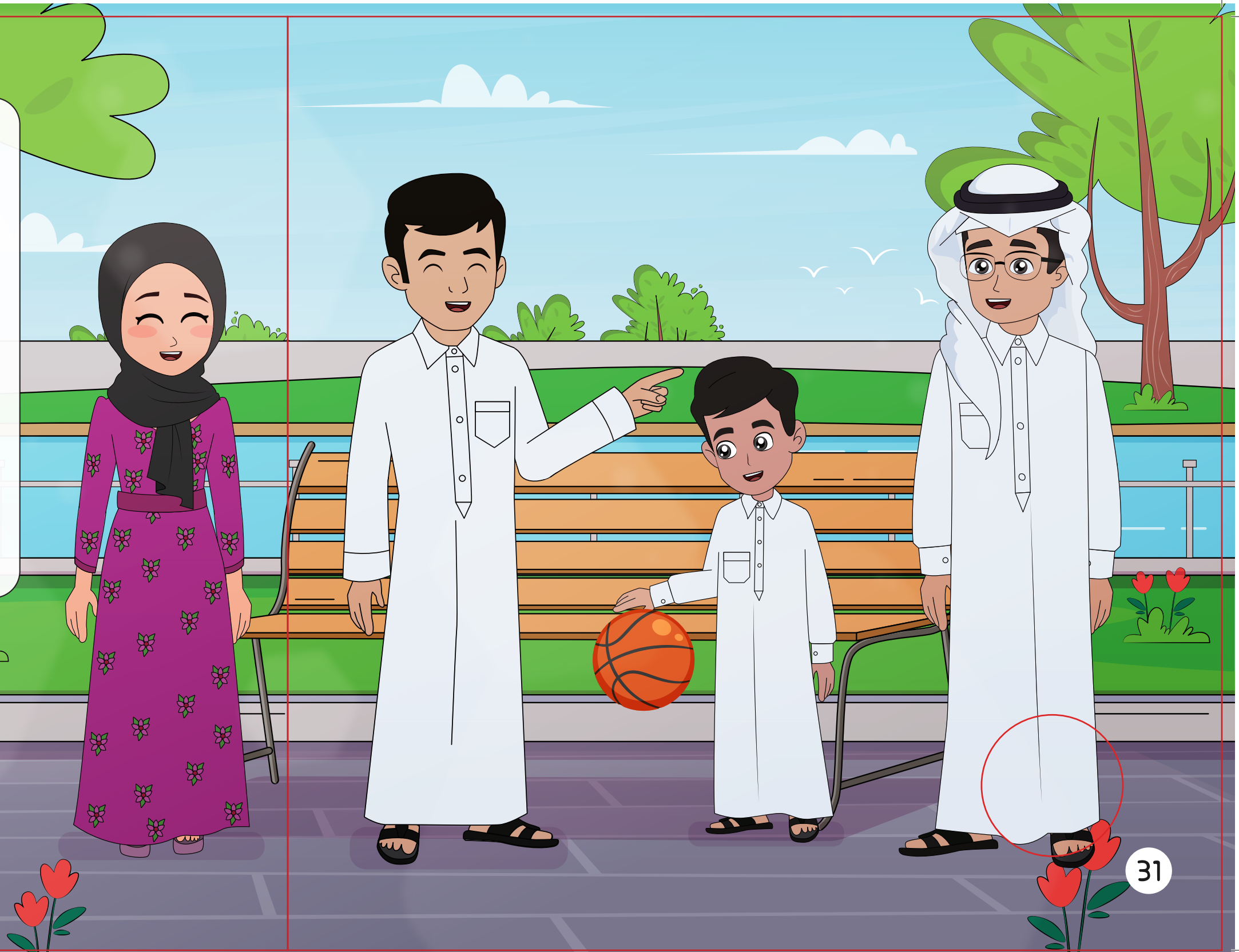
- I wish I would grow up quickly.



Everyone laughed, and Fatima said:

- Come on, Nasser, close your computer, and let's go out to the garden. We will all play there, the weather is beautiful, and we have to practice some sports.

Nasser closed his computer, and everyone went out to the garden, to breathe in the fresh air, and run between the flowers happily.



My virtual friends

