



Brian

“If only Bob would come today, it would be great!” thinks Brian.

He’s been running back and forth across the South London estate where he lives. He’s wearing cords and a slightly stained red winter jacket. His curly hair sticks to his forehead because he’s been sweating. Brian is eight years old and small for his age. His family recently moved to the estate. There are a lot of people living there and it’s noisy! Nobody seems to like him.



Brian likes it when his brother Bob comes to visit him and his family. He can talk with Bob.

Lost in thought, Brian doesn't notice the group of children reading books on a blanket spread on the grass.

"Oh, not him, not him." says William.

"Go away Brian!" shouts Michael, *"you are always looking for a fight!"*

"Wait" says Karen, *"leave him alone! He can stay."*

Some children are drawing or painting. Others are looking at books which Karen has brought.

Each week, she comes to run a street library on the estate. She hands Brian a book.

"Books are stupid!" shouts Brian, throwing the book down and starting to run off.

He can't tell them that he can't read very well..

An older kid, seeing what happened, comes over to Brian and starts to intimidate him by pushing him with the wheel of his bike.

Brian suddenly turns and grabs the bike saying, *"You shouldn't take on kids half your size."*

The older kid is so surprised that he leaves Brian alone.

"Hey, Brian, come back!" Karen calls again.

"I'll read you a book or we can draw together." But Brian just keeps on going.



The following week, Brian goes back to where the street library takes place. At first, he watches from a distance.

When Karen suggests painting he comes over because he really likes to paint.



Later, William says to him, *“Your paintings are great!”*

Before leaving, Brian reads one more book with Jane. It is a book about dogs. Brian loves dogs.



But Brian can't always come to the street library to see his new friends.

Sometimes, he has to run errands for his mother, or to look after his little sister so that his mother can rest because she works nights. She always looks so tired!

The baby often cries when his mother tries to sleep, but Brian has found a way to calm the baby down.

He walks her around the flat until she stops crying.

When she gets too heavy he puts her down in the pushchair for a while, stopping it from rolling away from him with his foot.

One day, Michael goes to Brian's house to ask him to come and play football.



He knocks several times but there is no answer. A neighbour tells him, *“They moved. Brian's mother lost her job and they moved to his aunt's.”*

All the children are sad when they hear that Brian has moved.

“I hope he will like his new neighbourhood.” says Michael.

“I'm sure he will make new friends there.”

says Hassan.

“Maybe he'll tell them about us and the stuff we did together.” adds Jane.



What did you learn about in the story?

What does it make you think about?

Imagine the place where Brian is going to live now.

What do you think he would like to find in this new place?