

The Chess Game Secret

by
Saoud Ahmad Al-Kaabi

Illustrated by Celia Tian



^{the} Chess
Game Secret

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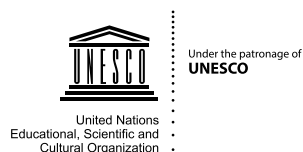
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Voices of Future Generations Children's Initiative



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Voices of Future Generations for the Middle East Region



This book is printed on recycled paper, using sustainable and low-carbon printing methods.

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dedication

Without the unwavering support of HH Sheikha Hissa bint Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum and her network, this book would not have been published. Her generous contributions aided the editing and translation processes, allowing Saoud Ahmed Alkaabi to select a professional illustrator who best represents the essence of his story.

HH Sheikha Hissa bint Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum, as Goodwill Ambassador for the Middle East, has ensured that important messages from children in the Arab world are communicated to their peers worldwide in all six UN languages.

We would also like to thank our regional partner, VoFG Arabia, as well as the Emirates Literature Foundation, that administer this wonderful initiative.



foreword

The author Saoud Ahmed Alkaabi delivers an experience filled both with promising hope and a realistic portrayal of the negative effects that arise from the behaviour of ignorant individuals. He clearly shows how a lack of appreciation of a situation and missing knowledge can result in misunderstandings and an inability to empathise with varying life situations.

The title of the book, *The Chess Game Secret*, caught my attention, and the story showed Saoud's literary skills and the hard work he put into it. He skilfully highlighted how positive environments among friends can foster more acceptance and positivity, a lesson that deserves appreciation. It heralds the author's bright future as a pioneer in the literary field establishing the principles of tolerance, peace, and humanity.

Dr. Abdalla Ibrahim Aldarmaki
Member of the Advisory Council of the Emirate of Sharjah



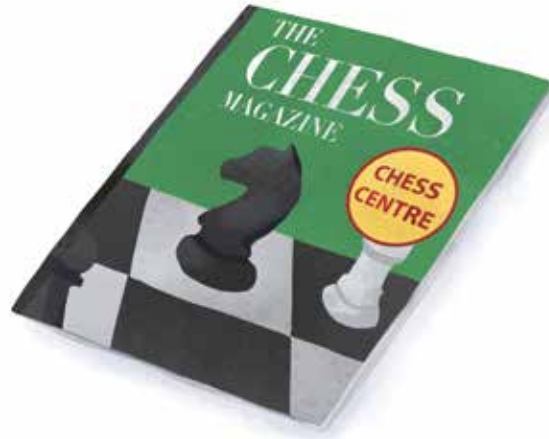
preface

We live in a challenging era of rapid technology development and change. As we work to develop and maintain our place in the global community, the United Arab Emirates supports the United Nations' collective advocacy of the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals. It is more important than ever to work to get rid of poverty, reject racism, and live together in peace and security. The global goals also stimulate creativity, knowledge development, and interest in technology, while focusing on sustainably managing financial, human and natural resources.

In *The Chess Game Secret*, Saoud focused on a subset of the Sustainable Development Goals, including reducing inequality and peace and justice. He concludes with a beautiful vision for reality that moves us away from conflict, racism, and bullying of others towards a harmonious, just, and peaceful life. Saoud skillfully educates members of the community to choose peace and eliminate hatred and racism.

Prof. Asma Mohamed Altaffag
Principal of Omair Bin Abi Waqas School,
Leader in Educational Council 3 and the Emirates Foundation for School Education





Chapter 1

Saoud was a nine-year-old boy with brown skin and wide eyes that glowed with energy and intelligence. He loved playing logic games and buying lots of books to read. He was good at using technology, and he loved watching football matches.

One day, he read about a chess centre in a magazine. He had always wanted to learn how to play chess, which he thought of as a magical game full of challenges, so he asked his father if he could join. His father promised to take him there soon to find out more. After two days, his father contacted the centre to learn more about its services and how to join.

CHESS
CENTRE





The next day, Saoud visited the centre. He felt calm and happy; he had found exactly what he was looking for. He registered for membership immediately. The coach told him that he would meet him the next day to start learning chess from A to Z.





On the way home, Saoud contemplated the grandeur of the ancient fortress of Fujairah. It was located near the charming city of Fujairah, which overlooked the Gulf of Oman. It reminded him of the castle he used in chess. Saoud then asked his father to buy him a chessboard to practice what he would learn every day.





Saoud was so excited to begin his chess journey that he browsed the internet to learn even more. He felt happy and looked forward to applying what he had learned that day at the centre.



At the centre, Saoud learned the basics of chess with the coach and got to know his fellow chess players.



While he was talking to them in the hall, he was surprised to discover that they were professional chess players who had been playing chess for years. He was very excited to get to know them and learn from them.

“I am lucky to have found this specialised centre!” He said to them. “This type of centre is rare in our area because it is far from the cities. I looked at the centre and the tools available, and it is an excellent place.”



Chapter 2

But while he was walking around in the centre, he noticed something strange. A dark-skinned boy was sitting in the corner away from them, and he did not participate in their conversations or play chess with them. Saoud approached him to greet him, but the boy looked away. “Let me introduce myself. My name is Saoud,” Saoud said to the boy.



“My name is Adnan,” the boy replied reluctantly, then he turned away.

Saoud couldn't understand the reason behind Adnan's behaviour until another boy named Ahmed, who was introduced to him earlier, shouted at Saoud, “Move away from him so that you don't become like him, and wash your hands with soap.”



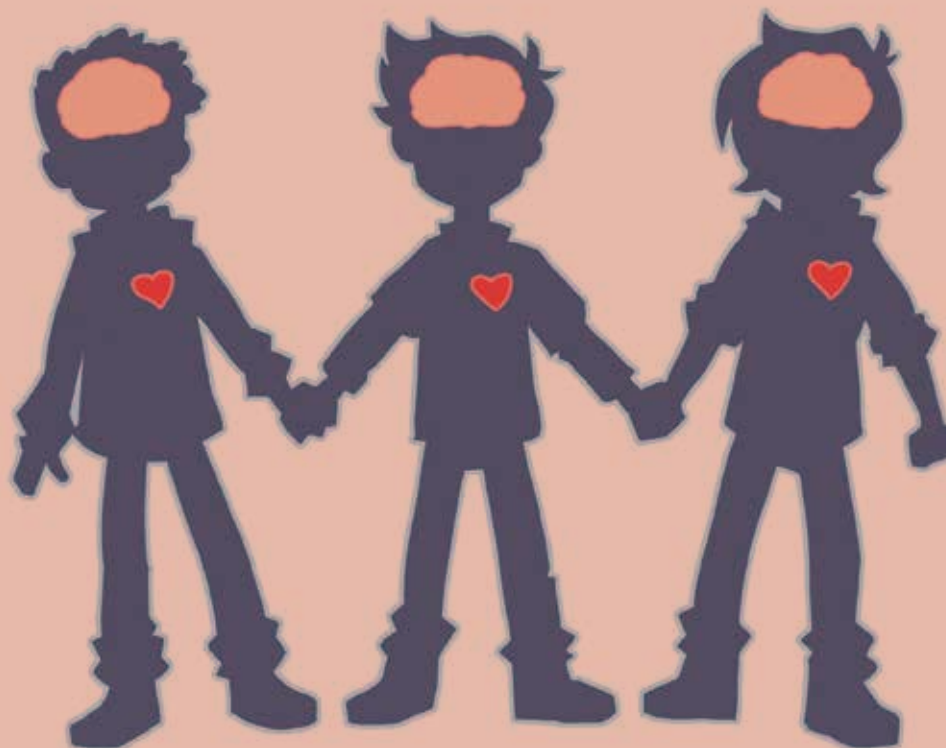
Saoud didn't understand what Ahmed meant, but he noticed signs of discontent and unease on Adnan's face. Saoud asked Ahmed what he meant by "become like him".

Ahmed said, "Can't you see that Adnan is very dark and gloomy?! If you sit next to him, you will catch germs that will turn you into his colour, and everybody will run away from you."

Saoud was upset upon hearing Ahmed's remark but didn't respond to him since he noticed everyone in the team was intimidated by Ahmed. On the way back home, Saoud thought about Adnan and how he was treated by everyone at the centre. He told his father about what happened and how it made him upset.



Saoud's father thanked him for sharing his feelings and for sharing this problem with him, then he said, "Son, did you know that our colours and appearances are God's creations and that we don't get to choose them? That's why we all have the same hearts and minds. So why do we degrade people for the colour they were born with? We all know that Allah created man in the best of stature. That's why we shouldn't comment on other people's colours or appearances; instead, we should focus on the blessings we have, like good health, well-being, and the ability to think. We have to pay attention to a person's deeds and achievements, instead of fixating on colour, race, tribe, ideology or culture."





Chapter 4

The next evening, when it was time to set off for the chess centre, Saoud sat waiting for the arrival of the centre's bus. He couldn't stop thinking about Adnan, and how he would interact with him and convince others not to discriminate against different colours and appearances.

When he arrived, he rushed to the hall where Adnan was sitting by himself, browsing on a computer. Adnan became nervous when he saw Saoud approaching, so he turned off his computer and went to sit far away in his usual corner. Saoud noticed Adnan's demeanour but still went straight to Adnan to greet and sit next to him. However, Adnan asked him to move away.





Saoud asked him, “Why are you asking me to move away from you? I’m excited to get to know you better. I’m sure you are unique, not because of your different colour or appearance, but because of your skills and talents and what you have done and achieved so far.”

Adnan gave him a slight smile, showing his pearly white teeth. Saoud looked at him and said, “You look so friendly when you smile.”

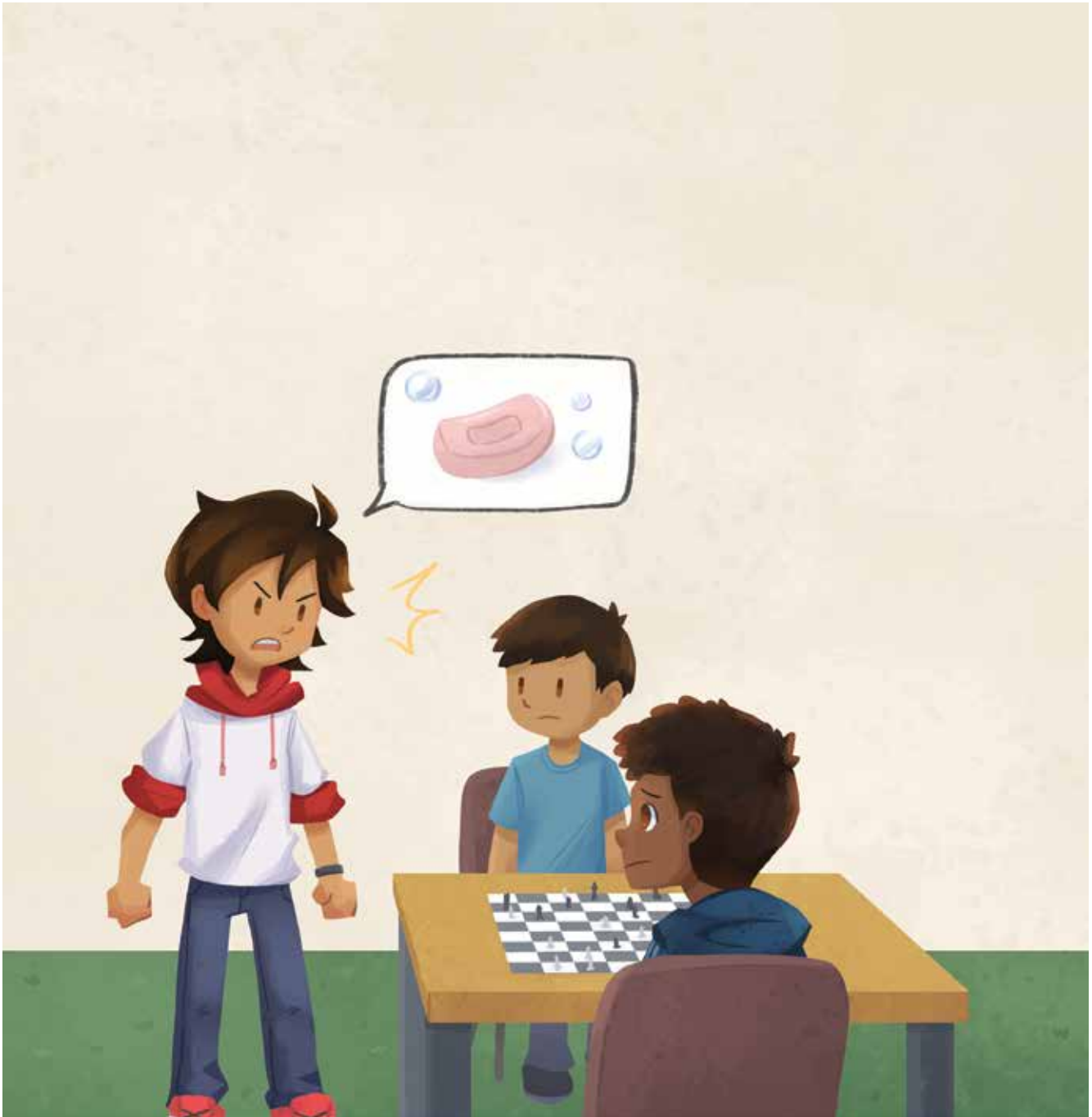




When Adnan started talking about himself, Saoud noticed that they both liked reading, technology, and football. Saoud praised Adnan for his achievements, as he had won various prizes and competitions, such as being the best-mannered student at his school.



Then Saoud asked Adnan why everyone from the chess team avoided him. Adnan said that he didn't know the exact reason, but when he joined the team a few weeks ago, he tried to shake hands with everyone on his first day. Instead, they all looked at him in disgust. Ahmed then shouted at him, "Please don't come close to us. Can't you see that you're different from us? We don't want you to infect or harm us." Then he asked Adnan to sit far away from them. When the coach asked him to play with one of the other players, Ahmed told them that whoever played with Adnan would have to stay away from him and wash their hands immediately after they finished. Saoud was shocked by what Ahmed believed.



Suddenly, Ahmed entered the hall with the rest of the team and shouted in a loud voice, “Stay away from him, Saoud, so that you do not get sick or change your colour!”



Saoud looked at Ahmed with great anger and said to him, “Stop treating Adnan in this bad way! You do not have the right to abuse others because of their looks and shape, for they did not create themselves.”



“If you want to be his friend, your mind has become ill! Do not ever approach us, as we do not want to get sick either!” Ahmed replied rudely. Saoud was silent and did not continue arguing with Ahmed because there seemed to be no point in talking with him. Annoyed, Saoud told the coach about the problem. The coach informed him that he had tried many times to convince the students that their behaviour was improper, but they wouldn’t listen to anyone. “In time, they will learn their lesson,” the coach said confidently to Saoud.



One day, while the students were leaving the club, Saoud approached Khaled. Khaled was friendlier than the other team members and not as influenced by Adnan. Saoud asked him, “was Adnan always this way? Do you know why he came to hold such hatred?”

Khaled told Saoud that Ahmed had been blackmailed by a dark-skinned person he met on an online game, who had befriended him. The blackmailer then tricked Ahmed into giving him private information about his family and the location of his house. He then threatened him by saying that his family would be harmed if he did not transfer money to him. While the issue had been reported to the police and dealt with, Ahmed had turned his fear from the incident into hatred.

Saoud was shocked by what he heard and retorted, “Why doesn’t he realize that one bad person doesn’t make everyone who looks like him bad? He should stop.”

Khaled replied nervously, “Please, Saoud, do not tell anyone or everyone will get angry with me. I think this is why Ahmed hates people who have dark skin.”

Saoud suddenly understood why Ahmed hated Adnan so much. He was taking his fear from the blackmail and generalizing it to apply to everyone who looked like the blackmailer. Saoud was disappointed in Ahmed; although the situation must have been scary, it was unfair and mean for him to assume that everyone was the same based on how they looked.

Khaled suddenly asked, “why do you still treat Ahmed with decency while he treats you rudely?” Saoud replied, “because Ahmed has a good heart despite all that. He is expressing the anger that hides inside him from the blackmailer in a bad way, but he can learn.” Khaled said with confidence, “you are right, Saoud, and you are a good friend. I will make sure everyone sees they were mistaken in believing Ahmed and that they should respect you and Adnan because you both deserve that. We were all wrong to follow Ahmed’s belief and not question why he would believe such a horrible thing.”

A few days later, Saoud and Adnan noticed an apparent change in the students’ behaviour. They started talking and playing with Saoud and Adnan. When Ahmed saw this, he said with great anger, “You will regret that you chose to play and talk to them, and I will never accompany you!” Khaled grabbed Ahmed by the shoulder and calmly said to him, “Before you say more, realise that not everyone is the same and give everyone a chance. Maybe if you are friendly and speak with them, then you will change your mind as we did.” But Ahmed rudely removed Khaled’s hand from him and moved away from them. Khaled reassured the students by saying, “I am confident that he will change his mind and discover his mistake, and I will continue to try and believe that he can change.”



Chapter 4

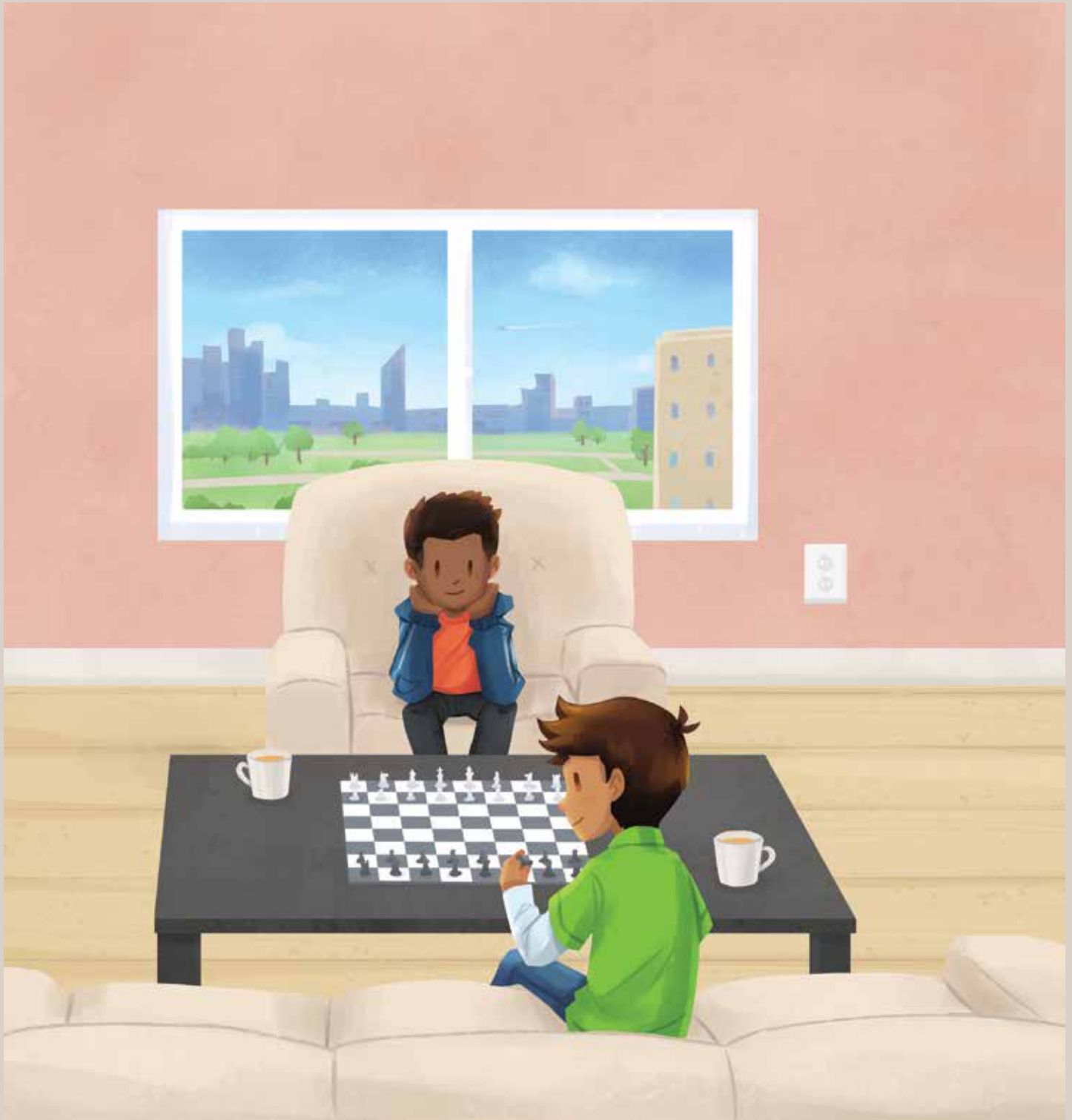
A few months passed, and Saoud became a chess master! Saoud and Adnan became good friends with many of the players at the centre as they learned chess together. The coach encouraged his team to participate in a chess championship at the state level so that they could learn from the high stakes challenges they faced there. When the list of competitors was announced, Ahmed was surprised that Saoud's and Adnan's names were called to participate in the championship alongside his.



Ahmed angrily said to the coach, “Your selection of competitors is wrong. You must choose someone else. The team has many outstanding players.”

The coach replied, “The choice was made by the team of experts who visited the centre a little while ago.” Ahmed gave Adnan and Saoud an angry look and turned away.

The coach asked the rest of the players to get ready to go to the tournament to cheer on their three chosen friends and benefit from the other players’ experiences.



Saoud and Adnan prepared for the tournament together. They constantly practised at Saoud's house after their parents met each other. They became close friends. They also trained by playing on the most challenging chess websites, earning top scores.



When the bus travelled to the championship location, Ahmed sat distantly and alone, playing on his tablet. On the other hand, Saoud and Adnan were chatting away and laughing. Saoud passed candies out to the whole team, including the coach and Adnan. When he reached Ahmed, he refused to even look at Saoud. When they arrived, the coach got off first, then Saoud.





As Adnan was getting off, Ahmed pushed him from behind. Adnan was hurt and, although he was given first aid, it looked like his leg was broken.



Khaled and the players were angry at Ahmed's behaviour. Khaled went angrily towards Ahmed and said to him, "Not everyone who has dark skin is evil and extortionist. Pay attention to your actions. The blackmailer you were afraid of is not like Adnan. Despite the problem going away, you are still horrible to innocent people based on things they cannot change." Ahmed was shocked by what he heard, and the colour of his face changed. He looked ashamed of what he did, and he went away without uttering a single word.



The coach told Adnan to rest and forget about the tournament, and that he could take part in the next one instead. However, Adnan insisted that he would play despite the pain. Adnan played in the first round and won. He moved to the second and won as well. He won every round easily.



At the award ceremony, everyone was surprised by the presence of the President of the Sharjah Cultural Chess Club and the President of the Arab Chess Federation, who would honour the winners and take photos with them. Adnan deservedly took first place. Saoud took third place as he lost in one round. Ahmed won just one out of five rounds. He did not get a high ranking. Adnan unexpectedly asked Ahmed to come up on stage with him and Saoud so that all three members of their team could take a picture together with the Federation's President. He considered all of the winners.





Ahmed's eyes filled with tears, and he apologised profusely to Adnan for his behaviour. He held onto his hands tightly and said, "Our morals and accomplishments represent us, not our colours or appearances."



“You are right! Even the chess we are playing and enjoying has black and white colours. Both are equally important to the game. We cannot afford to spare either of them to play the game,” Saoud said enthusiastically.

Ahmed later decided to form a team called the Champions of Tolerance and Peace, and all the chess club players and some friends from school joined him. The initiative included some of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals like SDG 10: reduced inequalities and SDG 16: peace and justice, encouraging peace, love, and tolerance to eliminate bullying.







about the author

Saoud Ahmed Alkaabi is from the charming city of Kalba in the United Arab Emirates. He studies at Omair bin Abi Waqqas School and loves the intellectual challenge of playing chess, for which he has won medals in nationwide tournaments.

Saoud also likes to read and write and is an outstanding student. He holds the Hamdan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Award for Distinguished Academic Performance as an exemplary and hardworking student.

Saoud has many hobbies, such as graphic design and public speaking, and aspires to become a policeman to one day promote safety and security. He dreams of becoming an ambassador for humanity and peace to eradicate violence and bullying. He believes that the world can be accommodating to all and that everyone is equal and deserves to live together in peace.



about the illustrator

Celia Tian is an illustrator and comic artist based in Ontario, Canada. She has graduated from the Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD) University in Toronto with a Bachelor of Design degree in illustration. Her work consists of a variety of styles, focusing on colour and lighting and the dynamic movement of lines. These elements are combined to express ideas and tell compelling stories.

Celia has collaborated with authors to create illustrations for children's books and comics. She actively values good communication and creating content geared towards an audience and always keeps them in mind while thinking of and creating concepts.



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The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

All children are holders of important human rights. Twenty-five years ago in 1989, over a hundred countries agreed on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. In the most important human rights treaty in history, they promised to protect and promote all children's equal rights, which are connected and equally important.

In the 54 Articles of the Convention, countries make solemn promises to defend children's needs and dreams. They recognize the role of children in realizing their rights, which requires that children be heard and involved in decision-making. In particular, Article 24 and Article 27 defend children's rights to safe drinking water, good food, a clean and safe environment, health, and quality of life. Article 29 recognizes children's rights to education that develops personality, talents and potential, respecting human rights and the natural environment.

— *Dr. Alexandra Wandel*
World Future Council



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Sustainable Development Goals Statement

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are a bridge from the previous Millennium Development Goals adopted by the international community in 2000 to the future. Construction of this bridge began in 2012 at the United Nations Rio+ 20 Conference on Sustainable Development. At this Conference, countries agreed that it was time to take concrete action for the present and the future by acting on issues such as climate change, poverty, inequality and biodiversity. This resulted in The Future We Want, a global statement of priorities and responsibilities for countries toward the people, environment, biodiversity and future.

In 2015, the bridge took shape in the form of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which countries agreed to implement between 2015 and 2030. The SDGs, as they are commonly called, comprise a set of 17 specific goals, over 160 targets within these goals, and hundreds of indicators to measure if the goals and targets are being met. The SDGs address the key issues that face our world community now and that will define this community in the future, such as poverty, climate change, education rights, gender equality, discrimination, health, food and water access and safety, and the promotion of justice for all members of society. Since 2015, children around the world have joined in efforts to incorporate the SDGs in their countries and communities, adding their voices and perspectives as future leaders. The SDGs show the power of all people, including children, to create positive and lasting change that addresses the needs of local and global society.

— *Dr. Alexandra R. Harrington*
Centre for International Sustainable Development Law



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Thanks and Inspiring Resources

'Voices of Future Generations' International Commission

Warmest thanks to the International Commission, launched in 2014 by His Excellency Judge CG Weeramantry, UNESCO Peace Education Research Award Laureate, which supports, guides and profiles this new series of Children's Books Series, including Judge Marcel Szabo (Hungary), Prof. Marie-Claire Cordonier Segger (CISDL), Prof. Kirsten Sandberg (University of Oslo), Isobel Abulhoul OBE (Emirates Literature Foundation), Dr Kristiann Allen (New Zealand), Ms. Irina Bokova (Former Director-General UNESCO), Ms. Alexandra Wandel (WFC), Ms. Emma Hopkin / Ms. Hannah Rolls (UK), Ms. Julia Marton-Lefevre (IUCN), Prof. Carey Newman or Hayalthkin'geme (University of Victoria), Dr James Moody (Australia), Dr Christina Voigt (Norway), Dr Alexandra Harrington (CISDL).

'Voices of Future Generations' Goodwill Ambassadors and VoFG Team

Most sincere appreciation to HH Sheikha Hissa bint Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum (ELF / Middle East), Dr Ying-Shih Hsieh (EQPF / Asia), Dr Gabrielle Sacconaghi-Bacon (Moore Foundation / North America), Ms. Melinda Manuel (PNG), Adv. Neshan Gunasekera (VoFG), Dr Odeeth Lara-Morales (VoFG), Ms. Chiara Rohlfs (VoFG), Ms. Sarah Sanders (VoFG), Allison Lalla (VoFG), Hyfa Azzez (VoFG).

The World Future Council consists of 50 eminent global changemakers from across the globe. Together, they work to pass on a healthy planet and just societies to our children and grandchildren. (www.worldfuturecouncil.org)

United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO) strives to build networks among nations that enable humanity's moral and intellectual solidarity by mobilizing for education, building intercultural understanding, pursuing scientific cooperation, and protecting freedom of expression. (<https://en.unesco.org/>)

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the body of 18 independent experts that monitors implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and its three Optional Protocols, by its State parties. (www.ohchr.org)

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) provides leadership and encourages partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations. (www.unep.org)

International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) envisions a just world that values and conserves nature, working to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable. (www.iucn.org)

Centre for International Sustainable Development Law (CISDL) supports understanding, development and implementation of law for sustainable development by leading legal research through scholarship and dialogue and facilitating legal education through teaching and capacity-building. (www.cisd.org)

Environmental Quality Protection Foundation (EQPF) established in 1984 is the premier ENGO in Taiwan. Implementing environmental education, tree plantation, and international participation through coordinating transdisciplinary resources to push forward environmental and sustainable development in our time.



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World's Largest Lesson (WLL) World's Largest Lesson brings the Global Goals to children all over the world and unites them in taking action. Since it was launched in September 2015, the World's Largest Lesson has reached over 130 countries and impacted over 8 million children each year. (<https://worldslargestlesson.globalgoals.org/>)

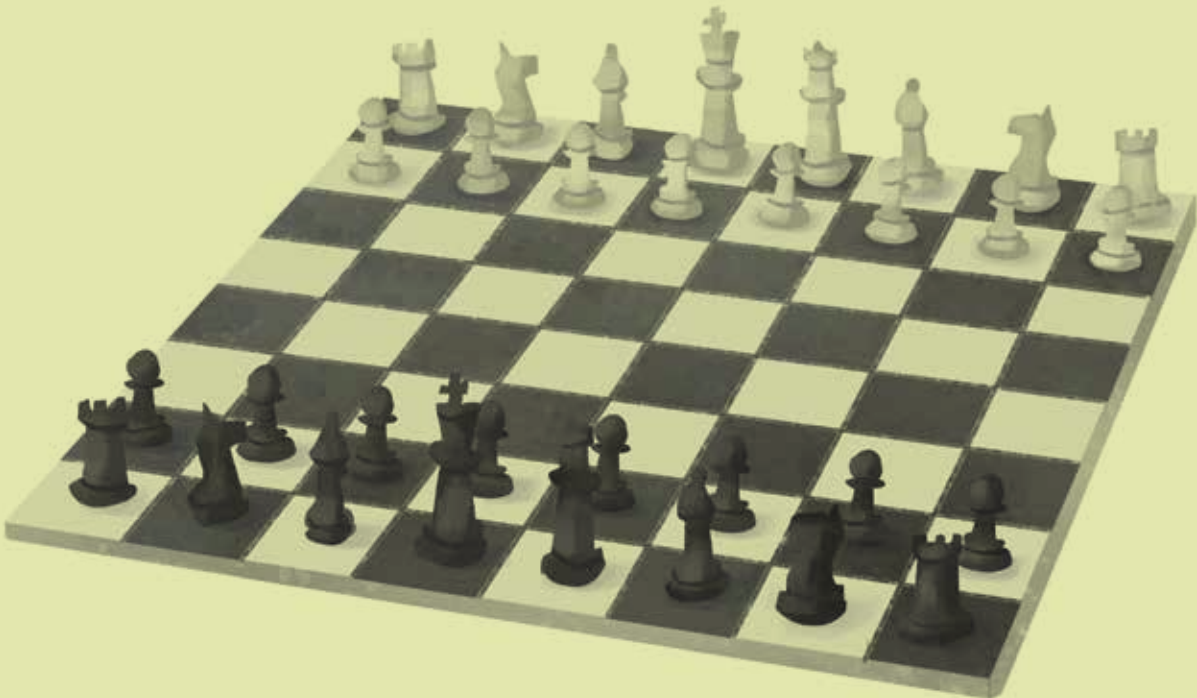
Emirates Literature Foundation, home of the Emirates Airline Festival of Literature, is a not-for-profit non-governmental organisation that supports and nurtures a love of literature in the UAE and across the region through a programme of varied cultural initiatives. Recognising the distinctive contribution that literature makes to children's lives, the Foundation focuses on introducing and cultivating a spirit of reading while acting as a catalyst for writing and cultural exchange. (<https://www.elfdubai.org/en/home>)

About the Voices of Future Generations Children's Initiative

To celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Voices of Future Generations Children's Book Series, led by the United Nations and a consortium of educational charities including the World Future Council (WFC), the Centre for International Sustainable Development Law (CISDL), the Environmental Quality Protection Foundation (EQPF), the Fundacion Ecos and the Trust for Sustainable Living (TSL) among others, as well as the Future Generations Commissioners of several countries, and international leaders from the UN Division for Sustainable Development, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the UN Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and other international organizations, has launched the new Voices of Future Generations Series of Children's Books.

Every year we feature stories from our selected group of child authors, inspired by the outcomes of the Earth Summit, the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) and the world's Sustainable Development Goals, and by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) itself. Our junior authors, ages 8-12, are concerned about future justice, poverty, the global environment, education and children's rights. Accompanied by illustrations, each book profiles creative, interesting and adventurous ideas for creating a just and greener future, in the context of children's interests and lives.

We aim to publish the books internationally in ten languages, raising the voices of future generations and spread their messages for a fair and sustainable tomorrow among their peers and adults, worldwide. We welcome you to join us in support of this inspiring partnership, at www.vofg.org.



Saoud is a smart child with an innocent heart and common sense. Untouched by the poisons of racism, he informs and reminds us that we, regardless of our colours and race, remain the same as the teeth of a comb. An enjoyable adventure that brings us back to our shared humanity, something that we often forget.

Amna Abdullah Rashid Zayed
Principal of Al-qudwa School

The story *The Chess Game Secret* was very enjoyable to read. It is realistic and very distinctive. The story presented a heavy subject in a light and appropriate manner for its audience while integrating important values and lessons that must be learned and acquired. I congratulate Saoud for this distinctive achievement and for his creativity.

Haya Alqassim
Child literature writer and creative thinking trainer

Saoud's story is fun and full of exciting events that touch on reality and encourage the rejection of racism and bullying. The choice of characters, the sequence of the story and the escalation of events show that the writer carefully planned his writing to deliver its message easily to the reader. I am proud of my distinguished student Saoud Ahmed Alkaabi, and I wish him a bright future in the world of writing.

Halima Khalfan Alnaqbi
Learning Resources Specialist

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