

# 1

Victor smiled. He won the race! He always did. “Ivan, you’re getting faster!” he joked.

Ivan tried to catch his breath. His hands were on his knees. “You really think so?” he joked back.

“Yes! You were close! Wasn’t he, Carlos?”

Carlos shook his head. He bounced a soccer ball on his knee.

“Too bad you can’t handle a soccer ball, Victor. Such a waste of speed.”

“I use my speed,” Victor said.

“When the ladies chase me!”

“You got the looks, Victor. I’ll give you that,” Ivan said. He was still panting. “But not the brains.”

Victor stopped smiling. That was low. Ivan knew it. Victor grabbed the soccer ball from Carlos. He threw it at Ivan. Ivan turned quickly. The ball hit his hip and rolled away.

It was hot in the park. The September sun was strong. Victor walked to the shade. Carlos joined him. Ivan walked to the soccer ball.

Carlos lit a smoke. He passed it to Victor. Carlos always shared.

Ivan returned with the ball.

Victor handed him the smoke. It was his apology for throwing the ball. Ivan accepted.

“So it is true?” Carlos asked. “About your sister Angela and Marcos?”

“It could be true,” Victor said. “But she hasn’t told my dad. So I don’t know.”

“Who is Marcos?” Ivan asked.

“You know,” Carlos began. “That Puerto Rican. The student council guy.”

“Oh,” Ivan said. They all sat still. Ivan passed the smoke to Victor.

“Look on the bright side,” Ivan said. “It’s better than another white guy. Right, Victor?”

Victor took a long drag. “Barely,”