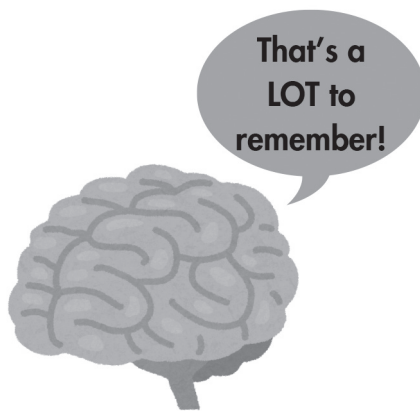


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## Characters

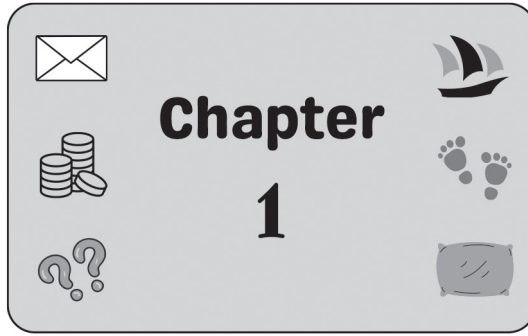
1. Nine-year-old Rumaisa
2. Aisha (also called Apa) – Rumaisa's sixteen-year-old sister
3. Mommy and Daddy – Rumaisa and Aisha's parents
4. Dada and Dado – Rumaisa and Aisha's paternal grandparents



## Before You Begin...

Here is *A LIST OF IMPORTANT TERMS* used in this text and their meanings:

1. **Apa:** A respectful title for an elder sister where Rumaisa lives (Karachi, Pakistan)
2. **Eidi:** Money received as a gift on Eid
3. **Rupees:** Pakistani currency. It is also referred to as PKR (Pakistani Rupees). 280 rupees are roughly equal to 1 US dollar.
4. **Shalwar Qameez:** Shalwar is like a very breezy form of trouser. It is half of Pakistan's national dress – the other half is a Qameez or long shirt.
5. **Water heater:** The boiler that heats up the water, which is then stored in a tank and comes in the tap.
6. **Water pump:** The machine that draws water from the main line to ensure water supply in the taps.



One hundred. Two hundred. Two hundred fifty.  
Three hundred. Three hundred ten.

Suddenly, I hear a **familiar** voice, "**RUMAISA!**"  
**ARGH!**

I don't want to be **INTERRUPTED** right now – not  
in the middle of my **careful** counting.

Now, where was I? Three hundred ten. Three  
hundred twenty. Three hundred thirty.

"Rumaisa! **WHERE ARE YOU?**"

"I'm here!" I call out and **PROMPTLY** go back to  
my counting. **Only...**

I've lost track! Was I at three hundred twenty  
or three hundred forty?

**UH-OH!**

Now I hear footsteps. **QUICKLY**, I shove my Eidi  
inside the envelope. I barely have enough time to

push the envelope under my pillow before the door opens.

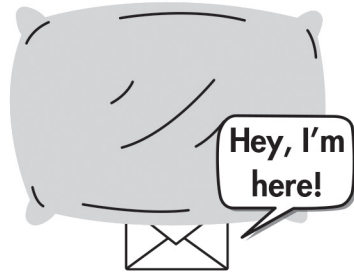
It's Apa, my elder sister. Her real name is **Aisha**, but it's Apa to me.

"Rumaisa!" She sounds **cross**. "Couldn't you hear me?"

"Er, yes, Apa. I could."

There is silence.

"So?" Apa raises her eyebrows.



"So what?" I ask

**CAUTIOUSLY**.

"Why weren't you answering?" Apa looks **SLIGHTLY INCREDULOUS**. I think she's wondering if I am being **slow** on purpose today.

"Actually, I did answer. I said I'm here," I say as **POLITELY** as I can. I don't want her to think I'm being **cheeky** in addition to **slow**.

Apa looks even more **amazed**. "I was expecting that you would at least come outside and ask me why I was calling you," she says **FINALLY**.