

# No, end of story!

Because smoking isn't cool

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**For all those brave young  
people who have the  
courage to maintain their  
own ideas.**



Tobacco consumption has become one of the main public health concerns.

Why do people start smoking? What lies behind this habit? Do young people know of the issues and diseases that they can expect to face in the future?

Social acceptance is the primary reason that young people are drawn towards smoking. A desire to challenge the rules, peer pressure and even living with parents who smoke, are other causes.

This book is about teenagers' initial exposure to tobacco. It is presented as a game that gradually gets you hooked until it turns into an addiction.

However, it is also about how other brave young people who apart from not smoking, are against it and fight for their friends.

The challenge facing our society is to prevent young people from starting to smoke. In order to achieve this, firstly it is necessary to provide them with information, to set them an example and, above all, to teach them to be brave and say NO.

Patient Relations Department, GSK Spain

My friends and I love Friday afternoons. That feeling of finishing school, of hanging out together without having to rush home, was amazing. Whenever we had the time, we cycled to the old wasteland. In the winter, on those grey, rainy days on which we didn't fancy doing anything, we spent time together at the hut which belonged to James's grandmother. We watched a film or played one of the games that were there.

Rarely did we miss our weekly get-together, despite ending up arguing more than once. On such occasions, we met up the following Friday as if nothing had happened.

**There are seven of us in our group: three boys and four girls, all in the third and fourth years of secondary school. Although we have known each other since we were small, it has been two years since we started going out like this, the way we like to.**



James is my best friend. He is not very talkative and keeps his thoughts to himself. He finds it hard to express his world and his feelings. I, on the other hand, love to talk. That's probably why we are so close. When we all meet up, he prefers to listen. Since the beginning of term he's been acting a bit strange, I'm not sure why, but I can just tell. He denies it, but I think he still likes Julia.

Julia is the smart one in our group, the one that never studies but always gets good marks. My parents say that she won't get away with it forever. She has also played the piano since she was little. Last year she invited us to her end of year concert and it was incredible. Since then, we admire her even more. She says that we exaggerate, that it's no big deal.

When I finally spoke to James about what was wrong with him, he told me that Julia was not the reason for the change in his behaviour.



—Honestly, it's not that, William, I don't fancy her anymore. The truth is that there is nothing wrong with me, I promise. I just want you to know that... that this summer I tried smoking a few times. That's what it is: I was cross with myself because you didn't know. So, now you know! Don't tell anyone, will you?

I was dumbstruck. I couldn't believe it. James and I had had many conversations about smoking and we had always said that we would never do it. I looked right at him and the only thing I felt able to say was:

—Well, worse things could happen.

On Fridays we talk about everything. Sometimes other friends join us, and that's

great because then there are more things to talk about. It's the afternoon when we have a laugh, share our problems and dreams and, of course, our crazy ideas...





## One Friday at the beginning of October, in a remote part of the city

—Come on guys, we're nearly there! I encouraged my friends, pedalling at the same time.

—You always say the same, William! It's not true, there's still a long way to go, you joker! my sister complained, just for a change.

—Don't you ever get tired? asked Charlie breathlessly.



Today is the perfect afternoon to go to the wasteland. Taking advantage of the good weather, I managed to convince them to cycle a little further than usual. Rachel, my sister, spent the thirty-three minutes that it took us to get there complaining non-stop. I'm used to it so I don't take much notice.

It's the third time that we have come here this term. We're still catching up on stories from the summer and on things that are happening at school. James told us what a good time he had had at the summer festival in his family's village. Charlie, the group clown and the one who goes out the most out of all of us, complained that he had got the strictest teachers. That said, he promised us that he was going to study a bit harder this year. Mary, Ruth's best friend, kept telling him that he was so lucky to have parents like his because hers were continually on her case and checking up on her all day long. All the boys fancied Ruth, but she didn't like any of them. Ruth loved painting. Julia moaned that she had got the worst music teacher in the whole music school. Rachel and I told them that lots of our friends from our family's village were now smoking and that our Uncle Tony died three years ago due to tobacco consumption.

I saw Charlie and Mary exchange a brief look.



Charlie took the opportunity to take a cigarette out of his pocket. Mary offered him her lighter. He slowly lit the cigarette and, after taking several puffs, he started to talk:

—Guys, as you can see, Mary and I also smoke. Well, truth be known, I smoke a bit more than she does, just one every now and again. That's not smoking! We haven't smoked in front of you before because we knew that you wouldn't like it.

—I only smoke a bit, okay? Someone offered me a cigarette this summer at the campsite and of course, I wasn't going to say no. What's more, I've noticed that it relaxes me, Mary justified herself in front of her friends.

—Do you want a puff? asked Charlie.

—No! I answered angrily.

—I don't know why you won't try it, William, nothing will happen, he insisted.

—**No, end of story!** I repeated. —Besides, I don't have to give you any explanation.

—It's your loss. Smoking is cool, isn't it, Mary?





Julia, Ruth, Rachel and James also shook their heads. I noticed how James, uncomfortable with the situation, blushed a little.

My resounding —no”, along with the unpleasant smoke that was filling the air, had ruined our afternoon. This time it was my sister who helped me out:

—Another thing, I suppose you know that you are also exposing the rest of us to your smoke? It's not just that you are smoking, the problem is that we are all smoking. You are contaminating us with the smoke that you exhale.

—That's a bit much! exclaimed Mary, in disbelief.

—No, Mary, I'm not exaggerating, it's the truth. I know because the doctor used to say it to my Uncle Tony. He kept telling him that air contaminated by tobacco smoke was worse than that inhaled by the smoker. He was trying to convince him to stop smoking by making him see that he was doing harm to those around him. In the end he persuaded him, but it was too late...

—Oh come on, I don't think it's that bad, said Charlie, sceptically.

Charlie and Mary insisted that we shouldn't attach so much importance to it, said that they weren't hooked and that they could give up whenever they wanted. And so, since they brushed it off, we decided to do the same.

**From then onwards, tobacco, cigarettes and smoke accompanied us every Friday afternoon. They joined the group; they were members like the rest of us and, unfortunately, one of our guaranteed topics of conversation.**





## One Friday at the beginning of January, in James's grandma's hut

—My grandfather smoked all of his life and he lived until he was ninety, said Ruth, proudly.

—And as you know, my dad has always smoked. He coughs a lot and has a cold now and again. He says it's nothing major. That said, he tells me that he runs out of breath when he goes for a walk with mum. My big brother has been smoking for three years. He buys a packet a day. He says that he doesn't smoke all of them, that he shares them with his friends. So the only people who don't smoke in my house are mum and me. Guess which of us goes to the doctor's the most?

— W e l l ,        your dad, of course, who else is it going to be? answered Julia immediately.

—No! It's my mum who hasn't stopped going to the doctor's recently. She doesn't even smoke!

—Perhaps it's healthier to smoke than not to smoke! laughed Charlie, sarcastically.

When he saw that his comment had fallen flat, he added:

—Don't be like that, guys, there's no need for the long faces. It was just a joke!



James, who had looked like he was about to say something on several occasions, dared to say:

—Maybe your mum goes to the doctor's so much because your dad smokes all day, don't you think? Because of the air being polluted, like Rachel said.

—It's true, that could be why, agreed Julia.

Ruth, upset by James's comment, questioned him:

—Why would she go to the doctor's for that? She goes because she gets tired easily. It's because she's getting old, nothing else. The things you come up with, James...

The conversation led Charlie to light a cigarette. He told us that since he had started smoking he felt more important, more attractive. And as a result he was having more success with the girls...

—Are you sure about that? I would never go out with someone who smoked, it makes people's breath stink, it's disgusting! Besides, a packet of cigarettes is so expensive, I'd prefer to go to the cinema, for example.

Charlie, ignoring Julia's comment, said ironically:

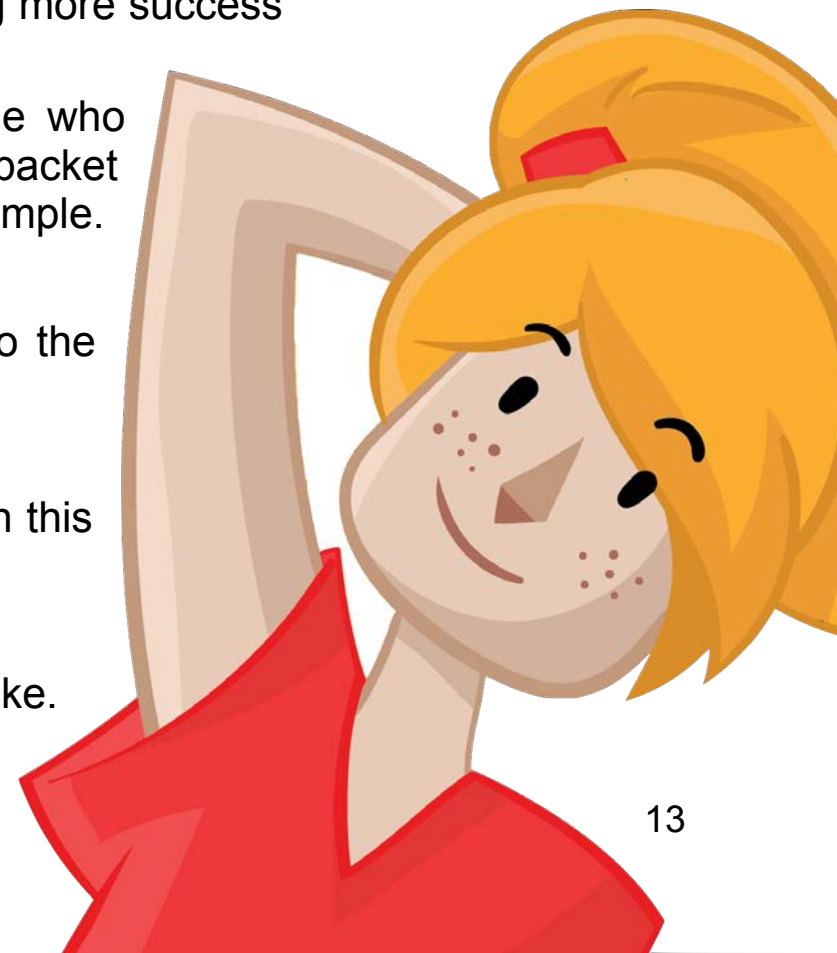
—Do you want to share one, Mary? You know, to avoid going to the doctor's!

—Alright, anyone fancy a puff?

Ruth, who had been tempted to try smoking several times, gave in this time.

—Okay, I will, but just one.

Mary explained to her what she had to do so she wouldn't choke. Ruth took offence.



—Look, I've spent my entire life watching my dad smoke, I know what to do.

Charlie took the first puff, then he passed the cigarette to Mary and she passed it on to Ruth.

All of our eyes were on her. Determined to show us how easy it was, she took such a strong puff that she choked immediately and we had to hit her several times on the back to stop her coughing. We all laughed at the face that she pulled.

—It's not so easy, actually. It must be a question of practice, she coughed.



That was how we spent the school year between the wasteland and the hut, and then the summer arrived. The worst thing about the summer was that we didn't see each other for almost three months. At the beginning we always tried to meet up, but we rarely managed it. Then, when we got fed up of trying, we all did our own thing until we went back to school in September.

## One Friday at the beginning of October, in the same remote part of the city



—I'm not sure I can make it! It seems like the wasteland is further away this year, doesn't it? complained Rachel, exhausted from so much pedalling.

—We're nearly there, come on, stop whining! I encouraged her.

The fact that my sister and I share the same friends has its advantages, but also disadvantages. I love sport, she's not so keen; that's why she complains and, naturally, we often fall out over it. Apart from that, it must be said that we get on well; she's a really good person at the end of the day.

We have only come to our wasteland twice this term so far. We caught up on our news from the summer faster than we did last year. I suppose we told each other fewer things because certain things don't need to be said.

Charlie and Mary no longer only smoke from time to time. They smoke every day. Now it's Ruth that smokes occasionally. So we now have three smokers in the group... Well, really four, as far as I know.





Whilst Ruth and Mary shared a cigarette, Charlie smoked one of his own. Between puffs, he told us about how he started smoking.

—It was at that party that my handball friends invited me to, do you remember? Well, it was there, about two years ago. Almost everyone was smoking and I didn't want to be the odd one out, so I took a few puffs. They convinced me because they said that smoking wasn't that bad, that a lot of people smoke and it's not a problem. The fact is, now I think I'm hooked, I'm not sure if I would be able to give it up. My parents still don't know, they still haven't caught me. They never smoke, hardly anyone in my family smokes.



He stopped for a moment to think about what he had just said and then corrected himself:

—Ah, yes! My Uncle Juan smokes. I know he's been in hospital a couple of times recently. Bearing in mind that he smokes two packets a day, I suppose it's normal. Ever since I was little, I remember him having a cigarette between his fingers. It's as if he was born with six fingers instead of five!

The echo of our laughter rang throughout the wasteland.

—Well, talking about packets, you'll never guess what... Do you remember that we told you that our uncle had died because of smoking? Rachel cut in.

—Yes, yes.

—Well, my Auntie Marga, his wife, has been going to the doctor's because she's noticed that she's short of breath, she gets tired easily, like your mum, Ruth. She's never smoked either. My Uncle Tony also smoked two packets a day like your Uncle Juan, Charlie.



When I think of him, I remember him hidden behind a fog of smoke, smoking non-stop in his kitchen. Do you remember, William? Our auntie said to me yesterday that she had to go and see the doctor at the hospital soon. I'm thinking about going with her, if I can.

—That way you'll see that what she has has nothing to do with smoking. And as a result, I'll also have greater peace of mind in terms of my mum.

—I hope that that's the case, but I think you're wrong, Ruth.

James, who had listened carefully to Charlie's explanation about when he started smoking, asked him:

—If your parents caught you, what would you do?

—You don't say much, James, but when you do speak..., answered Charlie jokingly.

—Well, what would I do? Keep smoking obviously, but out of their sight. Besides, if they forbid me from smoking, it would be more exhilarating, don't you think? But anyway, I don't think that they will catch me, I barely see them...



Not even ten minutes had passed since Charlie had put his cigarette out when he lit another one. He took a puff, passed it to Ruth, and she offered it to us:

—Anyone want a puff?

—No! said James, Julia, Rachel and I.

We didn't give them time to ask us why. We looked at each other, silently counted to three and shouted:

—**No, end of story!**





Ruth no longer choked when she smoked. She held cigarettes with all the elegance of an actress from a popular series. She slowly exhaled the smoke from her cigarette. Naturally, Mary and Charlie joined her. After several puffs, she started to tell us:

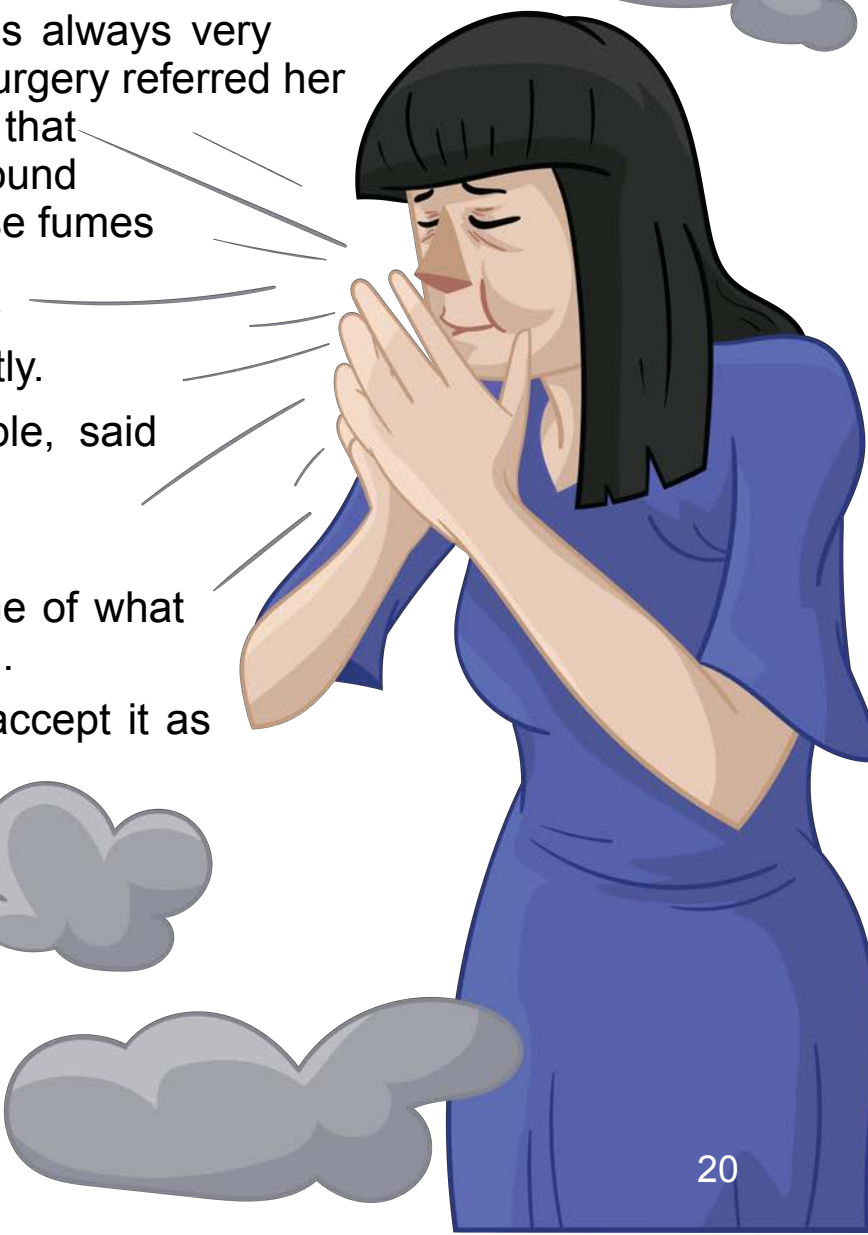
—My mum went to the doctor's again yesterday because she's always very tired and now she also has a terrible cough... Her doctor at the surgery referred her to the specialist at the hospital because she finally told him that everyone at home smokes except for her. Of course, when he found out, he threw up his hands in horror. He told her that with all those fumes at home it was hardly surprising that she was the way she is. What's more, since mum works from home, she hardly ever goes out. He urged her to convince dad to go and see him urgently.

—Fumes! It's true, when you're fuming mad, you're intolerable, said Charlie.

—You're not even funny!

—Seriously, I don't want to worry you, Ruth, but it reminds me of what happened to my Uncle Tony and to my Auntie Marga, I said.

—So, your family now knows that you smoke and they accept it as normal? You're so lucky! exclaimed Mary, enviously.





Ruth sat there thinking about what I had said about my uncle and auntie, but she didn't say anything. She chose to answer Mary instead.

—You can come to my house whenever you want and we can smoke in peace. You'll see how cool it is not having to hide from anyone. I'll show you my latest paintings, okay? Then we can watch a film, if you like?"

—Great! exclaimed Mary, excited by Ruth's suggestion.

—Since they caught me last summer, my parents constantly drive me up the wall. The other day they even came home with several cigarette packets belonging to their work colleagues and they read them to me as if I were a four-year-old girl: Smoking kills, Smoking damages your lungs, Smoke is bad for your children, family and friends, Smoking increases the risk of blindness...

—Seriously? What annoying parents you have! You're right, I am really lucky, acknowledged Ruth, proudly.



—To be honest, I don't know..., I don't understand why you all smoke, stated my sister.

—Why do we smoke? Well, in my case, for example, smoking a cigarette after a meal or when I'm stressed with exams, it relaxes me, like it does Mary. I think it even helps me to concentrate.

—That's what professional smokers say, Ruth, that smoking relaxes you. Congratulations! said Rachel, sarcastically.

—What's more, if smoking was as bad for our health as your parents say it is, Mary, there wouldn't be so many films and television programmes in which smoking is portrayed as cool, would there? added Charlie.

—Exactly, exactly, Ruth said in support.





—My parents tell me that the nicotine in tobacco creates an even bigger dependency than other drugs, stated Mary.

—That's a bit much, I don't believe it! scoffed Charlie. — Actually, as well as having yellow teeth, Uncle Juan is very wrinkly. He's the same age as my father but looks like he's ten years older. He says that he has no sense of smell or taste, that he cannot distinguish smells or flavours. And talking about films, he's an actor, although truth be known, he doesn't work much now because he's in hospital so frequently, he continued.

—No doubt all of that is also because of smoking. The thing about having yellow teeth is one of the few things we do know. There are so many negative effects, stated Julia.





—I have an idea! Since my uncle is a doctor and he works at the hospital, I could ask him if we could go and see him one afternoon. That way we can ask him all of the questions that we want. What do you think?

—It's not a bad idea, Julia, replied Ruth.

—Okay, let's do it, said Charlie and Mary.

—Perfect! I'll tell you when I've spoken to him.

What a great idea Julia had had! In that instant, I thought about the possibility of my friends giving up smoking one day. In films they always say that dreams come true, don't they?





When we said goodbye to each other that afternoon, James asked me whether he could come back to our house for a while. I told him that of course he could.

James secretly continued to smoke a bit. Nobody knew that he smoked and he didn't want them to find out. I think it was better that way. Of course, I kept his secret and I hadn't even told my sister.

—Before, when Charlie was talking about his Uncle Juan, I was curious about what he said about his wrinkly skin. Do you think smoking also ages people? What do you think, William?

—Well, let's find out, shall we look on the internet?

—Perfect!

We cooked some pizzas and made some other snacks and went to my room with the laptop. My Uncle Charlie, who knows a lot about the internet, pointed us in the direction of several pages where the information would be reliable. The more we read about tobacco, the less we liked it and the more horrified we became...



—Look, William, read here, it's true what Mary said!

**Tobacco use is an addictive illness. Tobacco is a drug that causes a greater dependency than other drugs.**

And we continued reading:

**There is a little-known disease, called COPD. COPD is a chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, which in many cases remains undiagnosed. The main cause of COPD is exposure to tobacco smoke, be it by active or passive smokers. It evolves slowly. One of the most common symptoms is dyspnoea, in other words, breathing difficulties and a chronic cough.**



James and I looked at each other terrified by what we had just read. We now understood what was happening. We sensed why my Auntie Marga was as she is and why Ruth's mum was going to the doctor's so much.

**There are more than 4000 chemical substances in tobacco smoke, of which more than 50 are carcinogenic, cause heart disease... Furthermore, tobacco causes the skin to wrinkle, stains teeth and nails, and robs people of their senses of smell and taste...**

—Oh no, the thing about ageing is also true. Do you know what, William?

—No, no idea.

James stopped looking at the laptop screen and, without any hesitation, he started to tell me:

—I'm done! I'm not going to smoke any more cigarettes. I knew it was bad for me, but now I know that bad doesn't even come close. So...

I didn't let him finish, I couldn't wait to say it together. I knew that from that moment on, James would never blush again. So, with a smile on our faces, we shouted:

—**No, end of story!**

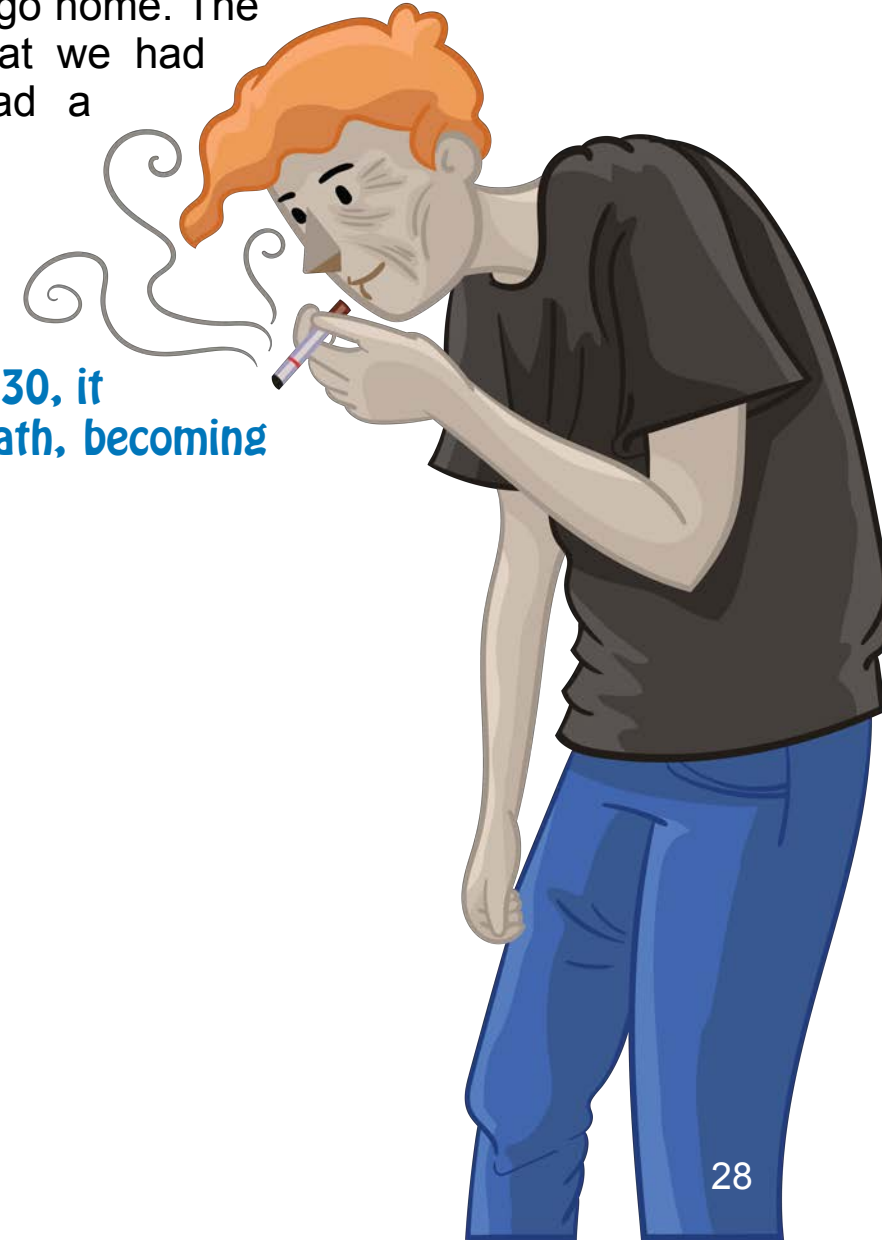
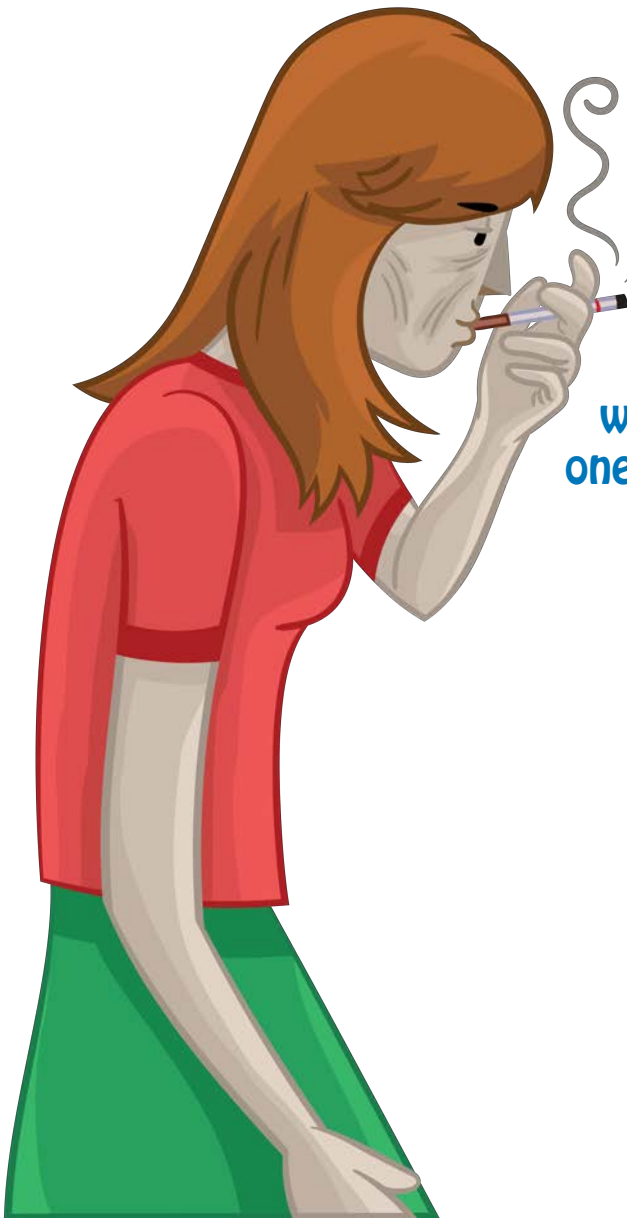




We decided that we would tell our friends what we had found out the following Friday, despite being convinced that they would not take much notice.

The time had flown past. James had to go home. The last piece of information that we had read about COPD had had a huge impact on us.

**Today the disease affects men and women equally. In 2030, it will be the third biggest cause of death, becoming one of the most life-limiting diseases.**

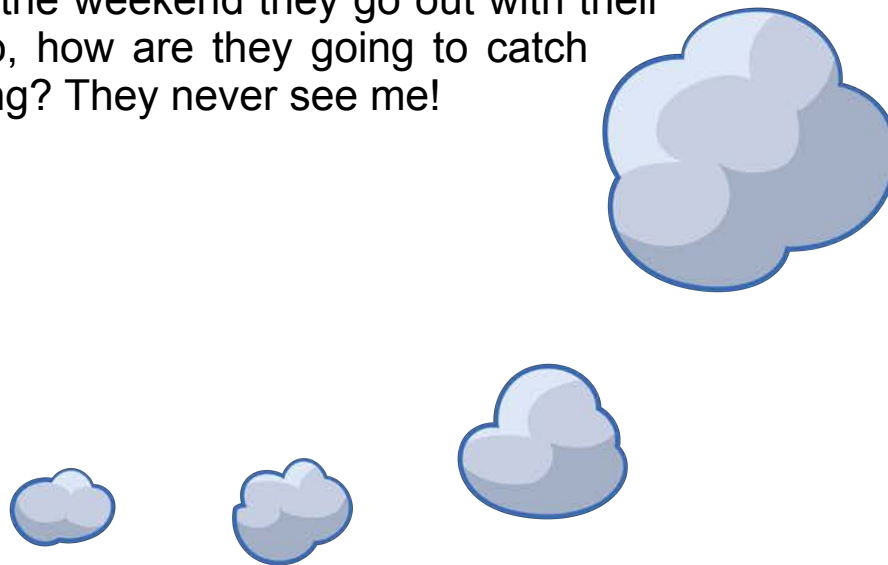


## One Friday at the beginning of January, in James's grandma's hut

—Do you know what, guys? The other day my parents told me that when we were little, people were allowed to smoke everywhere, but then they passed an anti-smoking law in Spain. This banned smoking in places where it had previously been allowed: at work, in bars, in museums...

—Wow, that would be cool! Your parents are a great source of information, Mary! You could ask them what's going to be in the maths exam on Monday! laughed Charlie, ironically.

—I wouldn't mind it if my parents told me more things. They're never at home. During the week they work non-stop and at the weekend they go out with their friends. So, how are they going to catch me smoking? They never see me!



—It's not how you think it is, I'm fed up with them. The topic of that strange tobacco-related disease even came up at my grandparents' house, COPD or... something like that, said Mary, not entirely sure.

—Cee...what? asked Julia, surprised.

—COPD, confirmed Rachel. The day that my brother and James told us about it, you weren't here, Julia; that's why it doesn't sound familiar to you. Basically, COPD is a chronic respiratory disease that slowly consumes people who smoke. That's not it though; the worst thing is that it also kills non-smokers who live with people who smoke.





Ruth had not been herself for a few weeks. She wasn't speaking much and the strange thing is that she wasn't smoking much either. She didn't like my sister's summary. She kept quiet until she couldn't help herself any longer. Tears poured down her face and, turning to Rachel angrily, she shouted:

—It doesn't kill non-smokers, Rachel, it doesn't kill them!

Nobody knew what to say. We had never seen Ruth like that before. Mary calmed her down, hugging her tightly. When she had recovered slightly, she told us that she was anxious because her parents were due to receive their test results the following Thursday.

—What a coincidence, Ruth! I'm going with my auntie to the lung doctor, the pulmonologist, next week too. She's going to have a test done called a spirometry, said Rachel.



—What is that for? asked Julia intrigued.

—Well, my auntie explained to me that it is a very simple test that lasts about ten minutes. It involves filling your lungs with as much air as possible before exhaling it into a tube as quickly and forcefully as you can. This makes it possible to check whether the person's lung capacity is as it should be. This test is used to diagnose COPD.

Julia, trying to play it down, said:

—At least it doesn't hurt, right?

We all tried to hide our concern. In reality, we were very worried about what might happen. We decided to spend the rest of the afternoon playing that game that we loved. That way, Ruth would calm down and we would all forget about the situation for a while.

The best thing about the afternoon was that, for the first time in ages, we all went home smelling less of smoke than other Fridays. Charlie had smoked three cigarettes; Mary, two, and Ruth, just one.



## One Thursday in the middle of January, at the hospital

—Ruth, what a surprise! exclaimed Rachel.

My sister was leaving the pulmonologist's with my Auntie Marga and there was Ruth, waiting with her parents.

—What a coincidence, the same pulmonologist and the same day!

—How did everything go? Ruth asked us, concerned.

Although Ruth's parents and my auntie didn't know each other, my auntie, who is very talkative, told them openly:

—Well, I had a spirometry and Doctor Sebastian told me that I have COPD, but that with treatment it will get better and I won't feel so tired. I'll start with an inhaler and then we'll  
see . . . What an inheritance my husband has left me!





She was going to continue talking, but the door opened and the nurse called the next patient. Ruth and her parents quickly went in. My sister suggested to my auntie that they waited until they came out of the consulting room. My auntie agreed.

Forty-three long minutes passed until the door opened again. When my sister saw Ruth's face, she imagined the worst. They had not even realised that she and my auntie were there, waiting for them. Her father, looking glum, with a very serious face and a huge sense of guilt, held Ruth's mum affectionately around the waist. Her mum, who was very pale, was holding two tissues, both full of tears and broken dreams. And Ruth, her eyes red and full of anger, could not take in what she had just heard and was about to run down the stairs. Then my sister called out her name:

—Ruth, I'm here, waiting for you. Tell me what happened!

Ruth, without saying a word, started to cry uncontrollably. They hugged for a good while, crying their hearts out. When she could finally speak, her voice cracking, she said:

—It's not fair, it's not fair! My father has severe COPD and my mother has breathed in so many fumes that she has lung cancer!

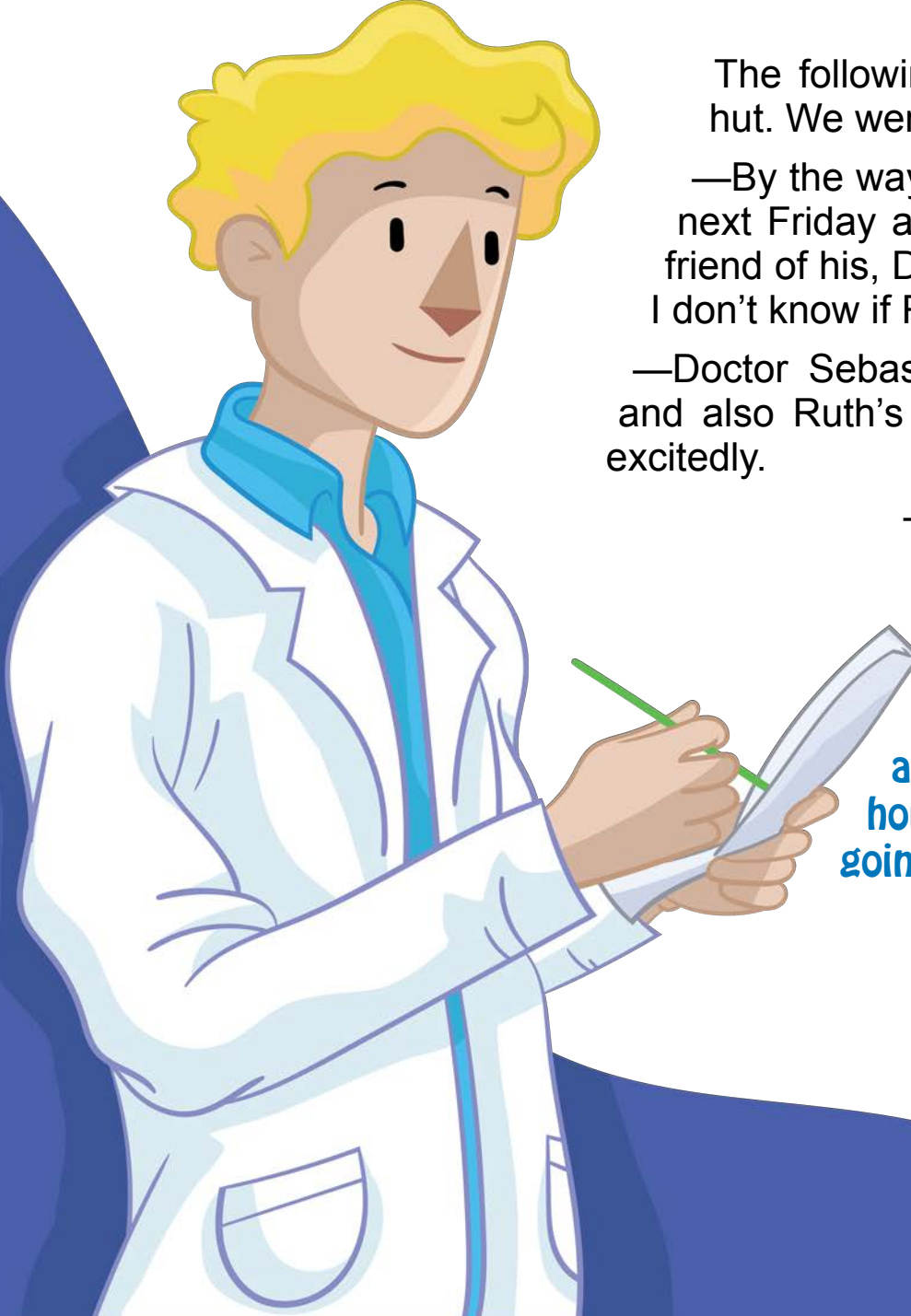
My sister was speechless, she didn't know what to say. She said only four words:

—I am sorry, Ruth.

And Ruth ran down the stairs to catch up with her parents.







The following day, Ruth didn't come to James's grandma's hut. We were all very worried about her.

—By the way, my uncle told me that we can go to the hospital next Friday afternoon. He will be on call and a pulmonologist friend of his, Doctor Sebastian, will also be there that afternoon. I don't know if Ruth will come...

—Doctor Sebastian is the pulmonologist that treats my auntie and also Ruth's parents, he is really nice! exclaimed my sister, excitedly.

—What a coincidence! At least we won't be too embarrassed to ask him questions!

**Charlie and Mary no longer enjoyed smoking like they used to. It was clear that they were affected by what Ruth was going through at home. Deep down, they weren't very sure about going to see Doctor Sebastian...**

## One Friday at the end of January, at the hospital

We arrived at the hospital at five minutes to five. We had arranged to meet Julia's uncle by the entrance at five o'clock. Only Ruth was missing. Julia's uncle met us on time and, just when we were about to go up, Ruth appeared in the distance.

We went up to the second floor, where we had to meet Doctor Sebastian. Julia's uncle introduced us to him. He remembered Ruth and perfectly; especially Ruth. He asked us whether anything about COPD. When he saw that we informed, he asked us:

—And which of you smoke, all of you?

Charlie, Mary and Ruth answered him.

—I have smoked a lot, but I'm smoking less now.

—I'm also smoking less.

—I'm trying to give up, but it's hard, I can't do it.

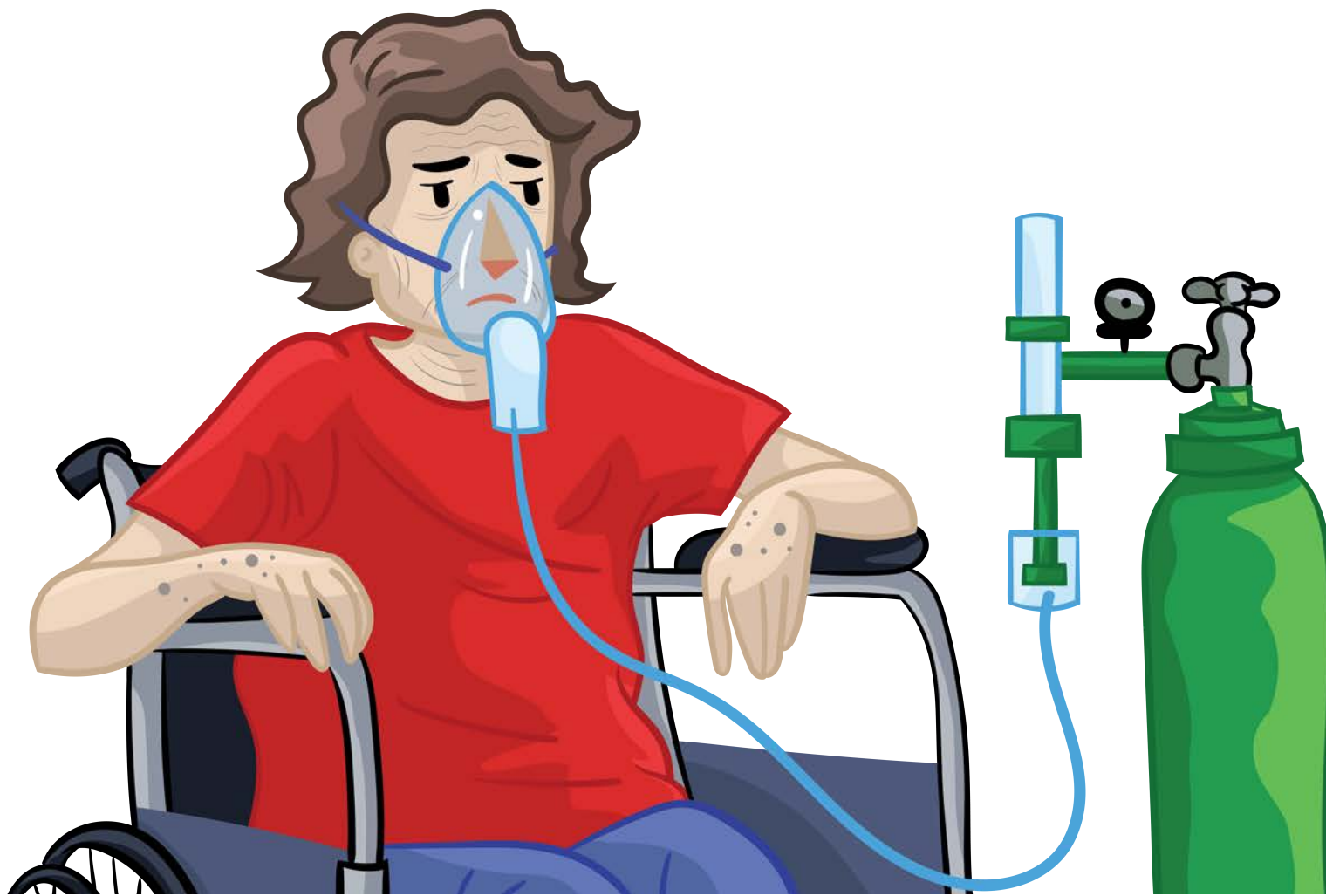
—Of course you can, Ruth! Everything is possible. You just have to want to do it: that's the first step to achieving anything, Doctor Sebastian encouraged her.



—Guys, I've had an idea. What if instead of asking me your questions first, you ask me them later? I thought that maybe we could go and visit the COPD patients on this floor and then you can ask me what you want.

We all liked his suggestion, so we started to walk along the second floor of the hospital, that floor on which the majority of the patients suffering from shortness of breath had COPD.

We were making our way down the long corridor in silence when, suddenly, the doctor stopped. There was a wheelchair with an oxygen cylinder and a mask. The doctor pointed to Charlie and said:



—You, Charlie, sit down in this chair. You are going to visit the floor as if you were a COPD patient, okay?

Charlie, although not exactly taken by the idea, agreed and sat in the chair, with the oxygen cylinder and the mask. Julia pushed him. Despite the fact that we only visited four patients, it was more than enough to understand the seriousness of the disease and the difficulty of the patients' everyday lives. One of the patients told us that he was scared to go out because he started choking and didn't have enough oxygen to breathe. Another told us not to be stupid, that we should never smoke because when a smoker becomes sick, so does the rest of the family.

I didn't take my eyes off Charlie. He was whiter than the hospital walls. He didn't say a single word during the forty-five minutes that our visit to the second floor lasted.

**We were all sad, very shocked, speechless... Doctor Sebastian asked us if we had any questions. Since none of us felt like speaking, I spoke for us all:**







—I don't think that we have any questions, doctor. You know how 'a picture is worth more than a thousand words.' We are all... speechless. Thank you for letting us see COD first hand.

—You're welcome, guys! It's been a pleasure. I hope that you have learnt something. Do you know what? The twentieth century was called 'The century of the cigarette'. I just hope that in the future, the twenty-first century will be remembered as 'The century of NO cigarettes'. I just want to say one thing to you all: you have your whole lives in your hands. Please don't let smoking stop you from living the life that you dream of...

—Thank you, Doctor Sebastian, we answered gratefully.

We said goodbye to him and to Julia's uncle. When we left the hospital, we turned a corner and Charlie bumped into two of his handball friends.

They were both smoking. They were surprised that Charlie wasn't, and one of them said to him:

—A cigarette?

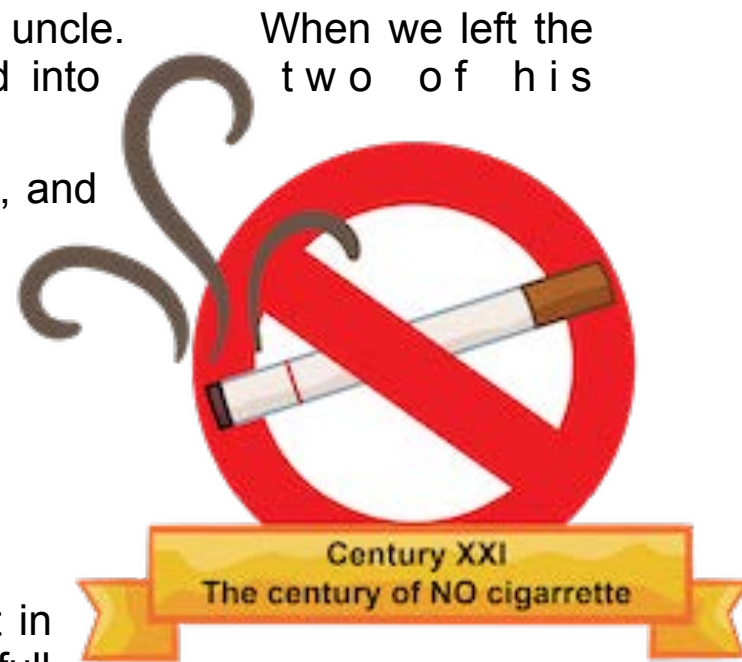
We were curious to see how Charlie would answer. He shouted:

—No!

His friends, surprised by the rejection, asked him:

—Why, Charlie?

Then came the moment that I had been longing for; that moment in which, finally, one of my dreams was going to come true. All of us, full of hope and a desire to live smoke-free lives, answered in unison:



**No,  
end of story!**





# The end



Mary



Ruth



Charlie



Rachel



James



Julia



William

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