On the first day of the new school year, Antonio and his six friends who called themselves “the seven amigos” were excited to be together again after an enjoyable but long summer break. While hugging and talking about all the exciting things they did during their vacations, they suddenly realized the importance of grabbing a table at lunch that would be close to the food and where all seven friends could sit together. Fortunately, the lunch tables had 8 seats. Everyone pledged that the first person to arrive in the cafeteria would save the best table they could find. The tradition in the lunchroom held that the table or seat you got on the first day of school would remain yours for the entire year.

With great pride, Antonio got to the lunchroom first and saved the table right next to the food line for his friends. They all high-fived him as they approached the table. The “seven amigos” grabbed every seat at the table and had one to spare.

As the days passed, new students continued to arrive at school. One day at lunch, Antonio saw a boy standing near his table with his lunch tray in his hands. The boy looked lost. Antonio asked him if he needed any help. The boy told Antonio that his name was Stephen and that this was his first day at the new school. He was not sure where he should sit. Antonio explained that there was an extra seat at his table and invited Stephen to join his friends to become their “eighth amigo.” Stephen thanked Antonio and his friends for their kindness.

It did not take long for Antonio and his friends to find out that Stephen was going to be a very popular student at school. Stephen was tall, handsome, very funny, and excelled at everything he did. Moreover, his family was rich and invited Stephen’s friends to all sorts of parties and recreational events. Antonio and his friends felt VERY lucky to have Stephen sitting at their lunch table.

One day, however, when Antonio and his friends arrived for lunch, Stephen was already sitting at their table with two new friends who were not part of the “eight amigos.” Antonio and his friends decided not to make a big deal out of the incident since it was the first time something like this had happened and Stephen was still pretty new to the school. The next day, however, Stephen had brought 4 more new friends to the table. When Antonio and his friends arrived at the table, they stood over Stephen and politely explained that the table was theirs. Stephen explained that, at his old school, people were free to sit wherever they wanted and could change from table to table every day. Stephen asked if there was a school rule that said one group of people had the right to a lunch table every day of the year. If not, he explained, Antonio’s friends should look for another table if they all wanted to sit together.