At recess, Emily ran over to the swings where Jamie and Stacey were playing. She didn’t know Jamie or Stacey very well, but there was one swing left open, and Emily wanted it.

“Hi,” Jamie said, as Emily sat down on the swing.

“Hi.” Emily smiled.

“Want to see who can swing the highest?” Stacey asked.

“Okay,” Emily said, thinking that sounded like fun.

The girls talked and laughed as they swung. Emily was excited to have made two new friends. But then she saw Melinda coming toward her with her arms crossed. She didn’t look happy.

“What’s wrong?” Emily asked her.

“Come talk to me by the jungle gym,” Melinda said, walking away.

Emily followed her. “Are you upset?”

“Yes. You’re playing with Stacey and Jamie.”

“So?” Emily wasn’t sure why that was a problem.

“I don’t like them. They hog the swings every day.”

“Well, they were really nice to me,” Emily said.

“Either you’re friends with them or you’re friends with me,” Melinda said. “So which is it?”

Emily looked back and forth between Melinda and her two new friends, not knowing what to do.

Things to Discuss:

1. Is Melinda acting like a bully? Explain.

2. Melinda said, “Either you’re friends with them or you’re friends with me. So which is it?” How do you think this made Emily feel?

3. If you were Emily, what would you do in this situation?

4. What could Emily say to Melinda?
Teacher's Discussion Guide

Unfriendly
Written by Kelly Hashway

Read and discuss.

1. Is Melinda acting like a bully? Explain.
   
   Yes, because she is putting Emily in an uncomfortable position. She is forcing her to choose between her and the other girls.
   
   She is also judging two people she does not know.

2. Melinda said, “Either you’re friends with them or you’re friends with me. So which is it?” How do you think this made Emily feel?
   
   Emily probably felt conflicted, unsure of who to choose.
   
   She may have felt confused, because she didn't understand why Melinda would make her choose.
   
   She may have been upset or annoyed with Melinda because Melinda is trying to dictate who she is friends with.

3. If you were Emily, what would you do in this situation?
   
   Emily should probably tell Melinda that she will choose her own friends. She should encourage Melinda to continue their friendship, but let Melinda know that she should not put someone in a position to choose between friendships.
   
   Also, there are three swings, so Emily could offer to share the third swing with Melinda. This would allow Emily and Melinda the opportunity to become friends with the other two girls.

4. What could Emily say to Melinda?
   
   She might say, “Melinda, you’re a terrific friend, and I want to continue to be friends with you. However, Stacey and Jamie are very nice, so I want to be friendly to them as well. We can talk to them about sharing the swings, if you’d like.”