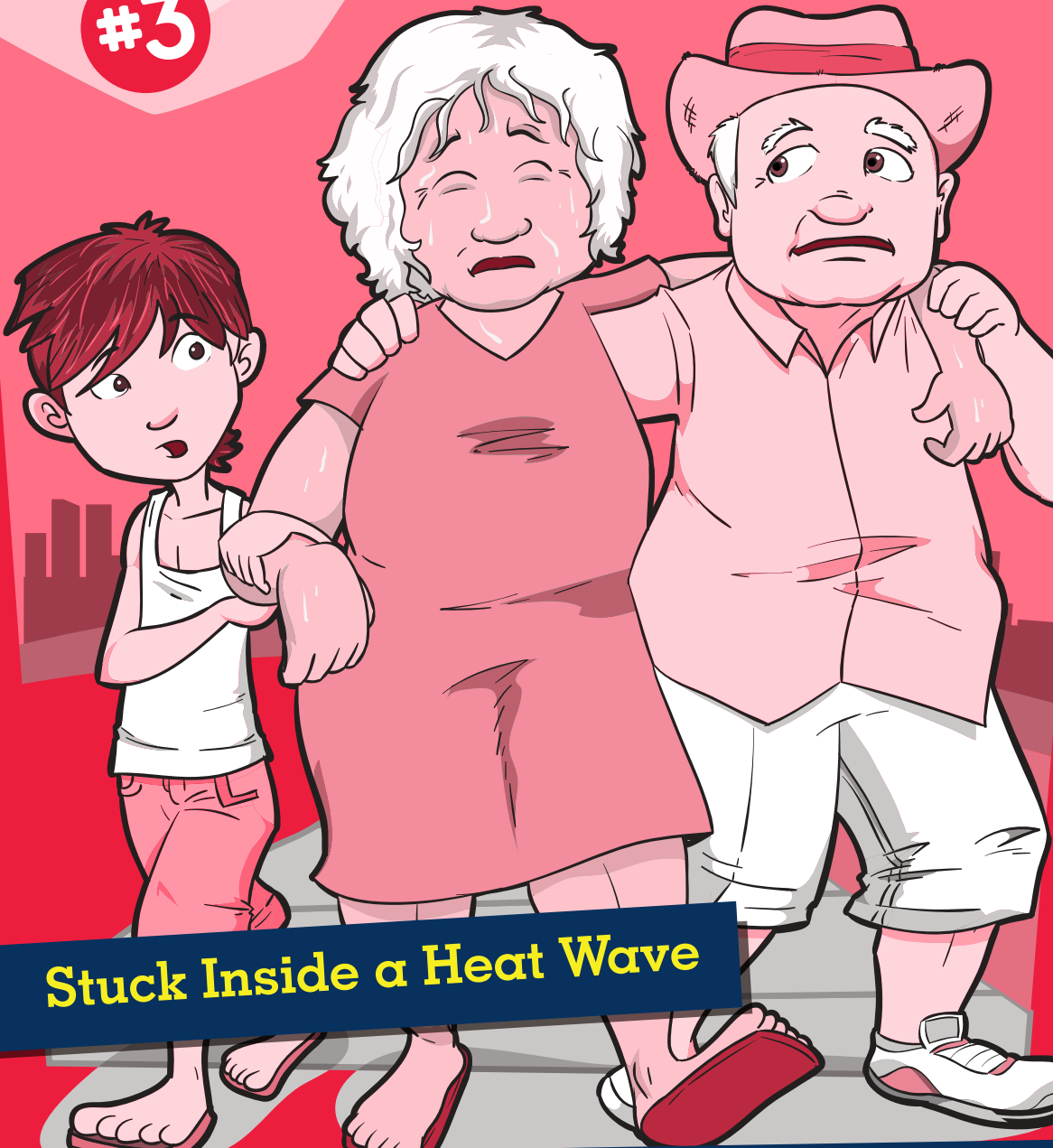




**CHOOSE YOUR OWN PATH TO  
PREPAREDNESS**



**#3**



**Stuck Inside a Heat Wave**



Office of Emergency Management  
Department of Education

Bill de Blasio, Mayor

# Stuck in a Heat Wave

The air was heavy and humid. Miguel thought he could probably wring water out of it like a wet towel. Sitting nearby in an old recliner, Miguel's grandmother slowly waved a paper fan in front of her face.

"Maybe we should go outside and see if it's any better out there. Maybe there's a breeze or something," Miguel suggested.

His grandmother didn't seem to hear him.

"What do you think, Pops?" Miguel asked his grandfather, who had just come into the room.

"What do I think of what?"

"Of going outside to see if it's any better."

"Nine days of this heat wave is nine days too many!" Miguel's grandfather said, pointing at the window. "The boy is right. We should go out and find where the air is moving." Soon Miguel and his grandparents were on their way to the local park in search of a breeze.

The walk was just a few blocks, but everyone was hot and sweaty. As the trio stood at the park entrance, Miguel's grandmother stopped and

looked into the sky, scowling. His grandfather motioned that they would be sitting on a bench under a tree. Miguel headed off to see if his friends were there. But not long after he started playing with a few kids from school, Miguel noticed his grandfather waving for him to come over.



“What is it, Pops?” he asked.

“It’s Nana. I think we need to get her a nice cold drink, Miguel,” his grandfather said, fanning Nana with a newspaper. His grandfather handed him some money and told him to go down the street to get them all something to drink. Miguel’s grandmother was moaning a little and complaining that her muscles were cramping. She was pale despite the heat.

“I’ll be back in a flash!” Miguel said.

A few minutes later, Miguel found himself in an icy-cold convenience store, wishing he could just stay in there forever. He looked at how much money he had. He could buy a whole box of ice pops or he could buy three bottles of water.

**IF MIGUEL DECIDES TO BUY ICE POPS FOR HIMSELF AND HIS GRANDPARENTS, GO TO PAGE 6.**

**IF MIGUEL DECIDES TO BUY WATER FOR HIMSELF AND HIS GRANDPARENTS, GO TO PAGE 7.**

**MIGUEL DECIDES TO BUY ICE POPS FOR HIMSELF  
AND HIS GRANDPARENTS.**

After buying the box of ice pops, Miguel quickly walked back to the park. He was even more worried now that he saw how panicked his Nana looked. Yet he felt good about bringing the nice cold treat.

“Nana, help has arrived!”

His grandmother tried to smile.

“Oh, Miguel, Nana needs something cold to *drink*.” Miguel’s grandfather said.

“I just want to be able to pour something cold on my neck,” Miguel’s grandmother added. “This won’t do.” She seemed on the verge of crying.

Miguel’s grandfather stood and pulled Miguel away from the bench. He leaned in close to his grandson and said, “I don’t think the ice pops will work. Water is what she really needs. Quick, go back to the store and buy ice-cold water.”

Miguel took the money his grandfather handed him and ran off, back to the convenience store.

**GO TO “MIGUEL DECIDES TO BUY WATER FOR  
HIMSELF AND HIS GRANDPARENTS” ON PAGE 7.**

**MIGUEL DECIDES TO BUY WATER FOR HIMSELF AND HIS GRANDPARENTS.**

Miguel bought several bottles of cold water with the money his grandfather had given him. Exiting the store, Miguel waited for the stoplight to change. As soon as he received the signal to cross the street, Miguel ran back to the park and held up the bottles of water like a conquering hero. His grandmother struggled to smile. Miguel handed her a bottle, and she held it against the back of her neck.

“This is good,” she announced. She smiled.

Pops opened a bottle and handed it to her. She drank it while Miguel held the unopened bottle against her neck.

“Better?” asked Miguel.

“We’ll see. We’ll see.”

Miguel’s grandfather poured a little of his own water into the palm of

his hand and then gently let the cold water dribble from his hand onto Nana’s upturned face. Her smile was even more relaxed. She drank more of her water. Then she winked at Miguel.

“You’re a good boy,” she told him.

Finally, Miguel opened a bottle of water for himself. He thought about how refreshing the icy-cold water was. He felt cooler, too.

“Don’t drink too much too fast,” Miguel’s grandfather told them both. Then, turning to Nana, he asked, “Feeling any better now?”



“A bit better.”

“We will have to go home, Miguel, when Nana is ready. This heat is just too much for her today.”

“Okay, Pops,” Miguel said. He looked back at his friends. Although he would have liked to hang out with his friends, Miguel understood.

After another few sips of water, Miguel’s grandmother stood up. Pops and Miguel held her arms, but Miguel could see immediately that she was unsteady on her feet. She sat back down on the bench.

Just then, Miguel saw his friend Annette and waved. She was sitting with some other girls in the shade. Miguel watched as she poured water from a bottle onto a small towel, which she then rolled up and put around her neck.





“I just need to cool down a little more,” Nana said.

“Miguel, we’re either going to get going or we need to find another way to cool your grandmother down,” Pops said.

**IF MIGUEL DECIDES WITH HIS GRANDFATHER THAT THEY SHOULD IMMEDIATELY WALK HOME, GO TO PAGE 10.**

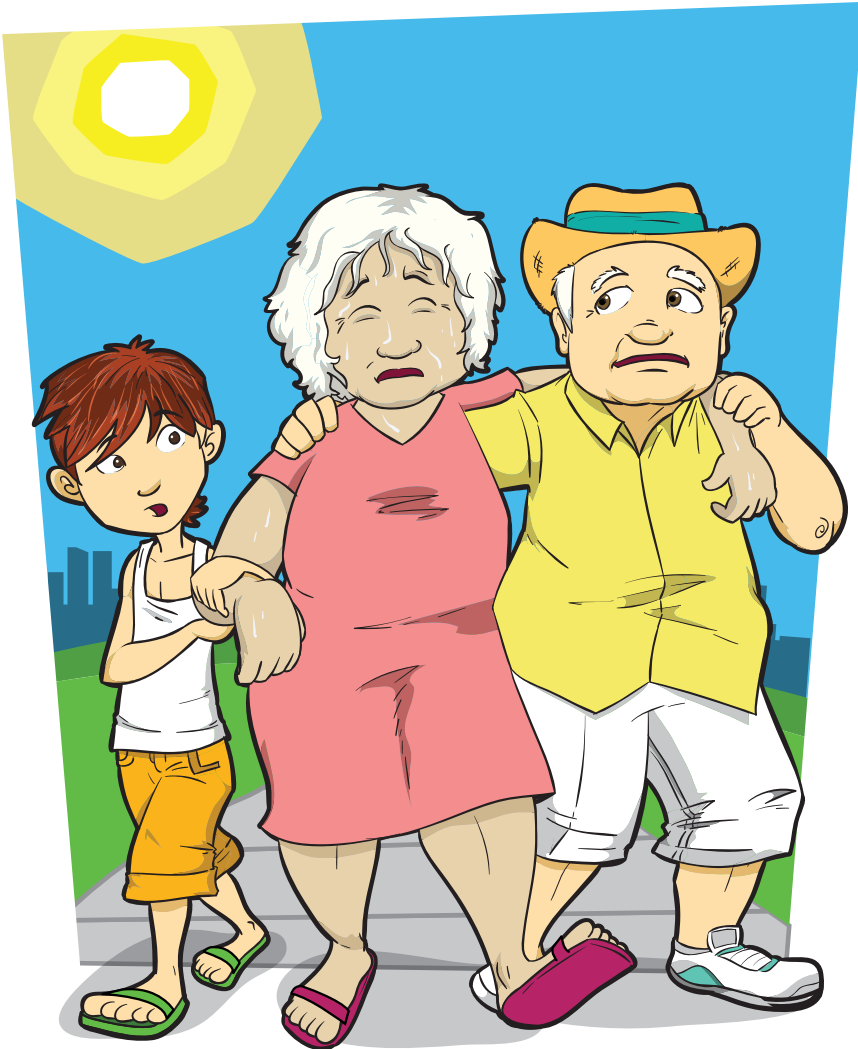
**IF MIGUEL DECIDES WITH HIS GRANDFATHER THAT THEY SHOULD TRY TO HELP HIS GRANDMOTHER COOL DOWN MORE, GO TO PAGE 12.**

**MIGUEL DECIDES WITH HIS GRANDFATHER THAT THEY SHOULD IMMEDIATELY WALK HOME.**

Miguel and his grandfather looked at each other.

“We’re going to get you home, Nana. We’ll take our time,” Pops said.

Miguel and his grandfather waited for Nana to signal that she was okay to stand up. However, she looked lost. She was looking around the park, watching people come and go, as if she did not recognize a place she had been to so many times. Again, she held a cold water bottle to her forehead and rolled it along her cheek. Finally, she looked at Miguel and his grandfather and then tried to stand. She moved in slow motion. They held her arms as she steadied herself.



Miguel was worried. His grandmother walked very slowly, and each step seemed to be more uncertain than the one before.

“Doing okay, Nana?” Miguel asked.

She stopped, straightened up, and then looked at her companions.

“I don’t think so,” she said.

Nana wobbled. Miguel and his grandfather struggled to keep her standing.

“Hold her, hold her,” Pops told Miguel. “I think she’s fainting. Hold her steady.”

The two of them lowered her onto a nearby bench. Nana was conscious but she seemed dazed and weak.

“I have an idea, Pops,” he said. “Wait here. I’ll be right back!”

**GO TO “MIGUEL DECIDES WITH HIS GRANDFATHER THAT THEY SHOULD TRY TO HELP HIS GRANDMOTHER COOL DOWN MORE” ON PAGE 12.**

**MIGUEL DECIDES WITH HIS GRANDFATHER THAT THEY SHOULD TRY TO HELP HIS GRANDMOTHER COOL DOWN MORE.**

Miguel ran over to Annette. She jumped up to say hello.

“I have a huge favor to ask you,” Miguel said quickly. He explained the situation, pointing to the far side of the park where his grandparents were waiting. Annette had an extra towel with her, and she gave it to Miguel.

“I owe you, Annette,” Miguel said. “I’ll text you later!”



A moment later, Miguel stood before his grandparents and folded the towel into a long, narrow rectangle. Then he poured water on it to get it nice and soaked. He had his grandmother put the towel around her neck. Her smile was bigger than it had been all day.

“So much better,” she said. “This is just what I needed.”

Then, after a few minutes, she said, “I think I am almost ready to go home. I can do it this time.”

It occurred to Miguel that going back to the sweltering apartment might not be the best idea. The old window unit air conditioner hadn’t been working all summer. No breeze stirred through the open windows. With his grandmother having suffered so much from the heat, Miguel thought it was time to make another suggestion.

“Maybe going back to your place isn’t such a good idea,” Miguel announced to his grandparents. “I mean, think about it, Pops. It’s so hot in there. Don’t you think Nana needs someplace really nice and cool?”

“Where do you suggest, Miguel?”

“Can I borrow your phone, Pops? I’ll call 311 and find out where the nearest designated cooling center is.”



After speaking to an operator, Miguel announced, “We can walk one block to the library or three more blocks to your apartment.”

“What is at the library? Why would we go there?” his grandfather asked.

“It’s the closest cooling center—a public building where we can beat the heat, Pops.”

“The library?” his grandfather asked.

“Or we could just go home,” his grandmother suggested.

**IF MIGUEL AND HIS GRANDPARENTS  
DECIDE TO GO HOME, TURN TO PAGE 15.**

**IF MIGUEL AND HIS GRANDPARENTS DECIDE TO  
GO TO THE COOLING CENTER, GO TO PAGE 17.**

**MIGUEL AND HIS GRANDPARENTS DECIDE TO GO HOME.**

“Let’s go home,” Miguel’s grandmother said. “I’ll feel better in my own house.”

The trio moved ahead, stopping at a crosswalk. The heat from idling cars wafted over them. A piercing glare bounced at them from every car and truck windshield. In another lane, a huge cement mixer rumbled by, spilling diesel exhaust across the intersection.

Miguel looked at his grandmother. After another block, she seemed ready to double over and once more surrender to the heat wave.

“Nana?”

“I think I need to sit. Where can I sit?”

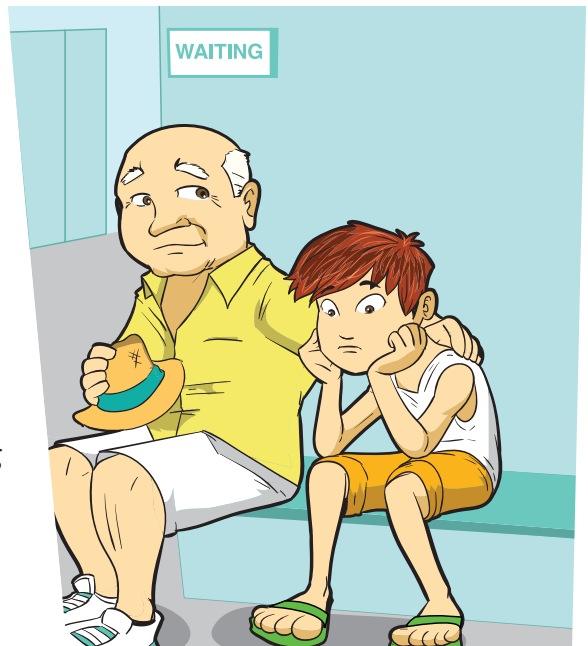
“Come. Come. There’s a bench down here,” Miguel’s grandfather said, holding his wife’s arm. Nana sat and immediately put a freshly soaked towel to her forehead. It looked like she was ready to cry.

Miguel’s grandfather looked very concerned. Nana was no longer sweating, and her skin had reddened. She held her head and complained of being dizzy and having a headache.

“I think it is time we get you to a hospital,” he said. Handing over his phone, he said, “Miguel, call 911 for an ambulance.”

Nana was speaking to them, but she wasn’t making much sense. A stranger sitting on another bench had been watching and walked over to hold a large umbrella over Nana so she was shaded from the sun.

At the hospital, Miguel and Pops spent hours waiting for Nana to be treated, to feel better, and finally to be discharged. While sitting in



the waiting room, Miguel saw the weather forecast for the coming week: a cool front was coming. That was one piece of good news!

As they finally returned to the apartment, Miguel, Nana, and Pops were pleasantly surprised to find Miguel's father there. He was holding a drill and a screwdriver and had a big smile on his face. The usually quiet apartment was humming.

"What is that sound?" Pops asked.

Miguel could barely contain his excitement.

"I think it's the air conditioner!"

Manuel's father stepped closer and said, "It's not the air conditioner. It's the air *conditioners*! I just installed two new window units. They've been out of stock for weeks, but today they arrived. It's about time!" Miguel's father said.

Miguel, Pops, and Nana exchanged looks — and smiles. They couldn't have agreed more.

**WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF MIGUEL AND HIS GRANDPARENTS HAD GONE TO THE COOLING CENTER? GO TO PAGE 17.**



**MIGUEL AND HIS GRANDPARENTS DECIDE  
TO GO TO THE COOLING CENTER**

“Yes. Yes, the library, I think that’s a good idea,” Miguel’s grandmother said.

And so the trio turned at the next corner and made it across the street right before the signal turned. The heat from idling cars wafted over them. A piercing glare bounced at them from every car and truck windshield. In another lane, a huge cement mixer rumbled by, spilling diesel exhaust across the sidewalk they’d just left. Miguel looked to his grandmother. She appeared to have some new life in her step. She smiled at him and then pointed ahead of them.

“The library!” she said. “It’s getting cooler already. And besides, I’m ready to be surrounded by books!”

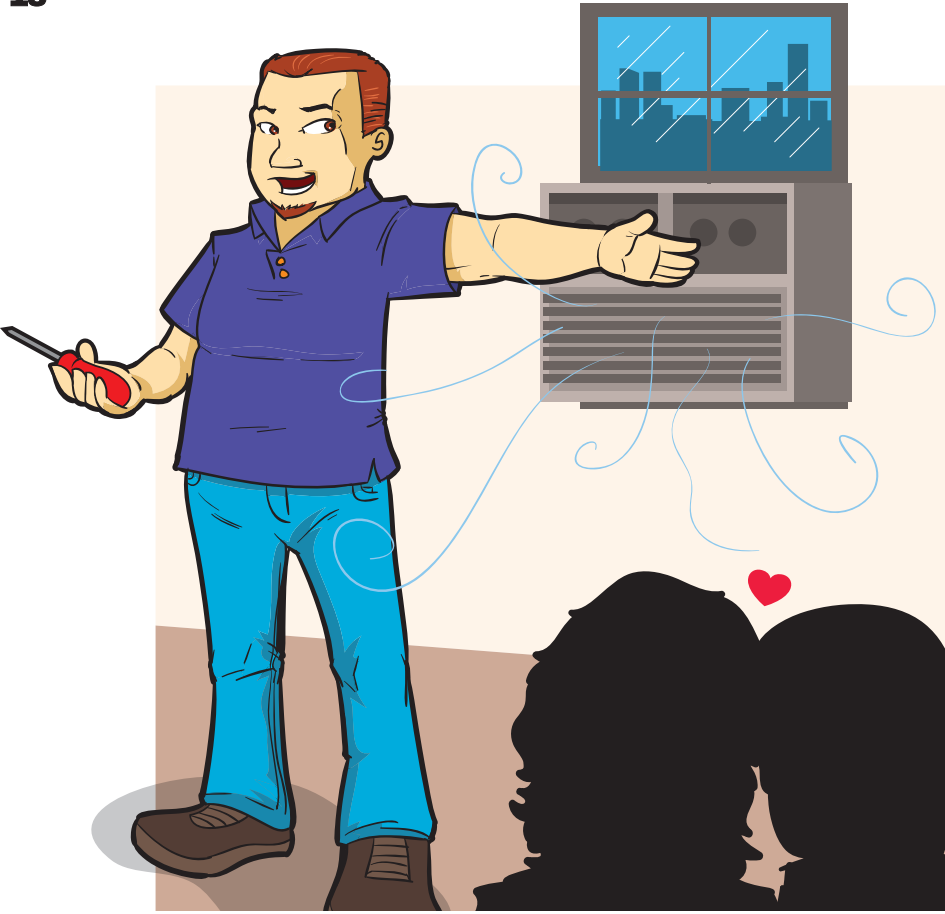
Miguel laughed. It had been a while since he’d been to the library. As soon as they walked inside, the familiar smell made him feel at home. But best of all, the library was quiet and cool!

Taking a seat at an empty table, they rested a while. Feeling confident that everyone was now okay, Miguel stood and walked over to look at a book that was on display. Then he headed to the DVDs to find a few movies they could watch at home. Pops stood up next and went to see if the newest Western novel from his favorite author was on the shelf. And Nana? Looking like herself again, she headed to the travel section, coming back to the table with photo books of the Dominican Republic.

“We’re going to find photos of the places where your grandfather and I grew up, where we met,” she said. “Today, you are going to learn about the old country.”

Miguel and his grandparents looked through just about every book they could find with photos of the Dominican Republic. There was one book that showed the very church in Santo Domingo where Nana and Pops were married.

With her hand resting on her husband’s hand, Nana closed the book and announced it was time to go home. She was smiling, and so was Pops.



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