Can we be friends
Story Characters

- Choti
- Samir & Saira’s grandfather
- Saira (Samir’s sister)
- Samir (Saira’s brother)
- Azam
- Fish
- Bird
'Tell us a story, tell us a story grandfather.' The children all crowded around Samir and Saira's grandfather. They loved it when he came to visit because he knew the best stories ever.
‘Well,’ said grandfather, stroking his beard. ‘let me see now.’
The children settled on the mat and waited.
Once upon a time there was a beautiful bird flying low over the sea.
She looked down and saw something silver jump out of the sea and back down again.

The bird flew lower still. The fish jumped out again shining bright and silver. He saw the bird.
He had never seen such a beautiful creature! The blue, green wings, the pointed beak, the legs! The fish tried to stay on the surface but he had to go under to breathe.

‘It’s no good,’ he thought, ‘I can never be friends with the bird. She flies in the skies, I swim in the water. She lives in the trees, my home is in the mud at the bottom of the sea.’
The fish swam deep in the sea. But he could not forget the bird. The bird was sad. She did not understand why the fish would not stay to talk.

‘We can’t be friends’ she thought, ‘I can’t swim and he can’t fly. What’s the use?’ And she flew far away to the trees. But she could not forget the fish.
The next day the bird flew out towards the sea. There was a boat on the sea and suddenly the bird saw the fish on the boat. He had been caught in a net.

‘He will die,’ thought the bird, ‘he can’t breathe out of the water. What can I do?’
She flew close to the net and pecked at it. She pecked and she pecked till she had made a hole big enough for the fish to come out. But he was too tired to try. He could not breathe and had no strength to do anything.
‘Now what should I do?’ the bird thought in a panic.
‘Carry me in your beak’ said the fish.
‘I know you won’t hurt me. I trust you. Quick!’
The bird put her head close to the fish and lifted him gently. He was heavy and her beak hurt but she dragged him to the side of the boat and dropped him back into the sea.
The men in the boat suddenly saw her. ‘Hey,’ they shouted, ‘get off.’ And they threw a stone at her. She flew up but the stone hit her wing and tore it and she dropped down, down into the water.
‘I’m going to die’ she thought,  
‘I can’t fly and I can’t swim.’
Then she felt something underneath her. 
It was the fish. He carried her on his 
back and rose to the water’s surface.

He swam close to a tree. 
The bird caught the branch and 
pulled herself up into it. 
Now she was safe.
The fish came to see the bird each day. She sat on the branch and he jumped from the water. Then one day, she flew over his head as he jumped. Her wing was better and she flew high, high in the sky.
But each day, the fish swam to the tree in the morning and the bird watched for him and flew low above him. Then he swam under the water and she flew up into the sky. ‘You see,’ said Samir’s grandfather, ‘they could not live in each other’s worlds but they were still friends.’