



ASTRONAUT ANNIE

Suzanne Slade

Illustrated by
Nicole Tadgell



On Monday Annie ran all the way to her grandparents' house after school—without stopping!

She couldn't wait to tell them the news.

"What's new, Annie?" Grandpop called from the porch.



"We're having a Career Day at school on Friday," she said. "Everyone dresses up like what they want to be when they grow up."

Grandpop pulled Annie onto his lap. "How exciting! What do you want to be?"

"My teacher said to keep that a secret. But if you come to school Friday, you'll find out."

"I'll be there," he promised, locking Annie in a bear hug. "But give me a clue about what you want to be—or I'll never let you go!"

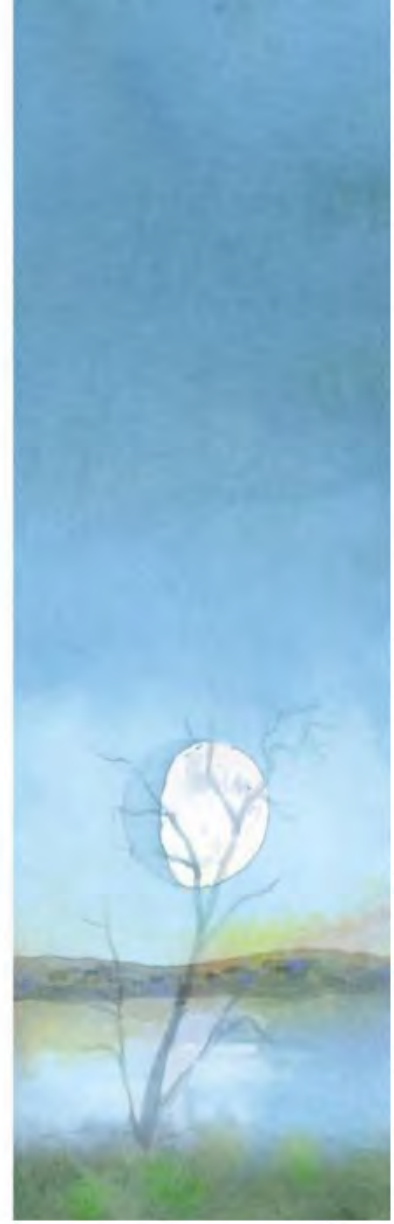
"I want," she gasped between giggles, "the whole world . . . to hear my stories."

"Of course!" Grandpop's eyes sparkled. "I have exactly what you need inside."



"I bet you want to be a reporter like me,"
he said, handing Annie his old camera.
"You can use this for Career Day."

"I love your stories," Annie said. "On
Friday you'll hear my story too."



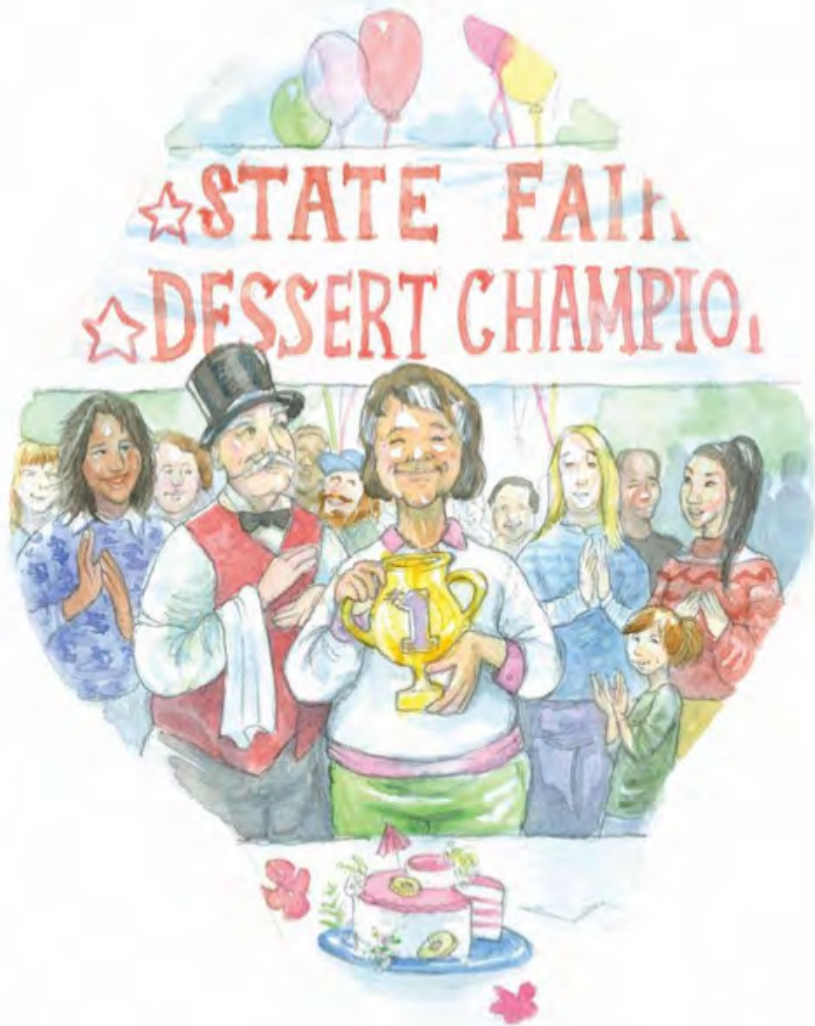
"How about a snack?"
Grandma called.

Stomach rumbling, Annie
ran to the kitchen.

"Did I hear something about Career
Day—and a secret?" Grandma asked.
"Can you give me a hint?"

"I want to be brave!" Annie said.

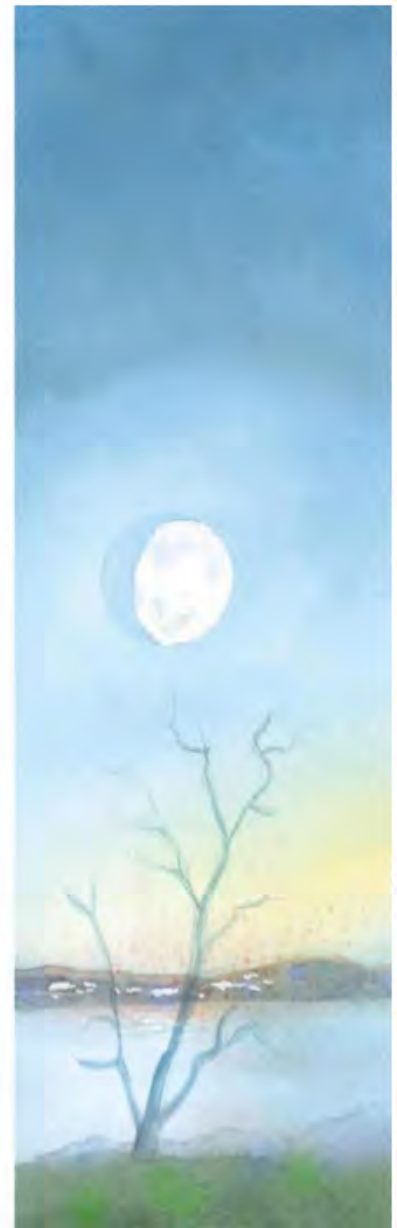




"Aha!" Grandma hopped to her feet.
"You want to be a bold, fearless cook
like me. Everyone loves my daring desserts!"

Grandma handed Annie her mixing
bowl and oven mitts. "You can use
these for Career Day."

Annie kissed Grandma's cheek. "You're
the bravest cook I know. On Friday,
you'll see how I can be brave too."





That evening Annie told her parents the news.

After dinner Dad called her into the garage. "Could you give me a clue for Career Day?" he whispered.

Annie smiled mysteriously. "I want to explore far-off places."

"I knew it!" Dad began digging through a pile of boots, maps, and water bottles. "You must want to be a mountain climber."



"I've dreamed of climbing Mount Everest for years," he said, handing Annie a large backpack. "You can't keep a secret from your old dad!"

"I enjoy our hikes," Annie said, "but wait till you hear about the places I want to explore."





Later, Annie went outside to shoot hoops. Soon Mom joined her.

"It's so dark out here," Mom said. "Can you see the net?"

Annie stared up at the sky. "I can see lots of interesting things at night."

"How about a hint for Career Day?" Mom asked. "Just between us girls."

"I want to soar high through the air." Annie jumped and shot the ball.

Swish!



"I thought so! Wait till you see what I bought." Mom ran inside and returned with high-top sneakers. "These were on sale—and just your size."

"They're awesome," Annie said.

Annie's mom dribbled down the driveway and made a perfect layup. "I had the best time playing ball in school."

"I love basketball too," Annie said. "And on Friday you'll really see me fly."



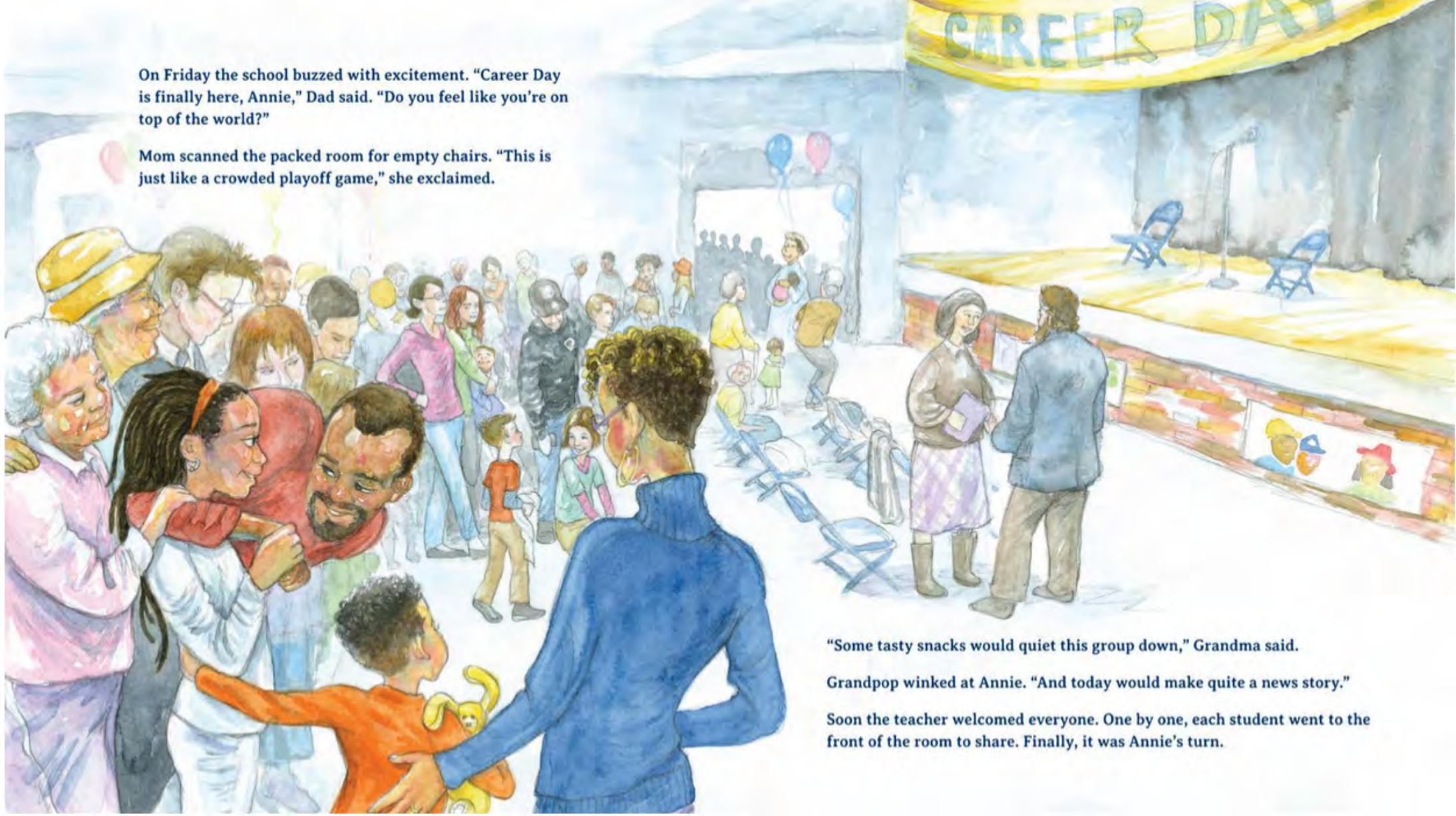


That week
Annie worked
on her costume
every night.



On Friday the school buzzed with excitement. "Career Day is finally here, Annie," Dad said. "Do you feel like you're on top of the world?"

Mom scanned the packed room for empty chairs. "This is just like a crowded playoff game," she exclaimed.



"Some tasty snacks would quiet this group down," Grandma said.

Grandpop winked at Annie. "And today would make quite a news story."

Soon the teacher welcomed everyone. One by one, each student went to the front of the room to share. Finally, it was Annie's turn.

"When I grow up, I want to soar high through the air," she said, pulling on her new sneakers.



Mom flashed Annie a game-winning smile.



"And explore faraway places." She slid Dad's backpack over her shoulders.



Dad gave Annie a thumbs-up.



"I'll be brave and bold,"
Annie said, pulling on
her oven mitts.



Grandma's cheeks
grew round as ripe apples.



"And the whole world will hear my exciting
stories." Annie slipped the camera
around her neck.



Grandpop's eyes
sparkled like stars.



And Astronaut Annie jumped high off her chair,
explored far-off places and soared through the air.



Then Annie stood up on her chair,
put the mixing bowl firmly on her head,
and shouted, "Five, four, three, two, one . . .

BLAST OFF!"



A famous space traveler, she was fearless and bold,
and the world loved to hear all the stories she told.