

AURNDEA EVANS

I Am Loved



INSPIRED BY ASHTON WILLIAMS
ILLUSTRATED BY LATASHA N. LOUIS

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The background of the entire page is decorated with a pattern of simple line drawings of crayons and hearts. The crayons are in various colors including blue, green, yellow, and purple, and are oriented in different directions. The hearts are drawn in a sketchy, hand-drawn style, with some filled in with a textured pattern of small lines. The overall aesthetic is clean, modern, and child-friendly.

I am Loved

Written by Aurndrea Evans
Cover Page Inspired By Ashton Williams
Illustrated by Latasha N. Louis

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Dedication Page

This book is dedicated to my sons, Ashton and Austin Williams.
As you journey through life I pray that you always remember your mom
and dad loves you both very much!

It was the first day of school, and our teacher asked us to draw a picture of our family. At first I was thrilled because I love showing off my amazing art skills!

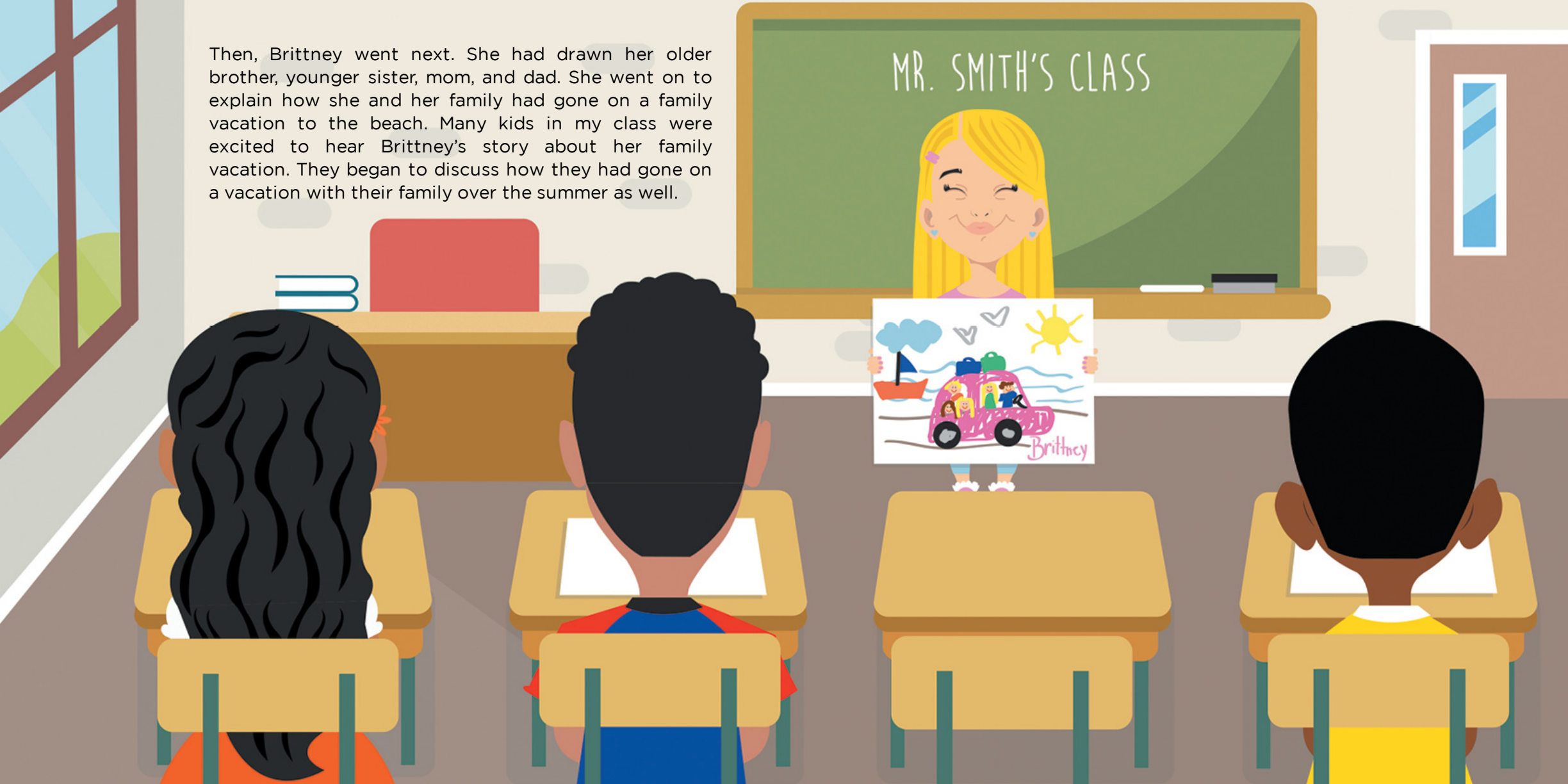


It wasn't until Mr. Smith said that we had to present our picture to the class that I became nervous.

James went first. In his picture he described his younger brother, new puppy, mom, and dad. His dad looked super cool because in the picture he had really big muscles! All my classmates agreed that his dad looked cool.



Then, Brittney went next. She had drawn her older brother, younger sister, mom, and dad. She went on to explain how she and her family had gone on a family vacation to the beach. Many kids in my class were excited to hear Brittney's story about her family vacation. They began to discuss how they had gone on a vacation with their family over the summer as well.



I began to feel a little sad knowing that my family was different. I took a deep breath because it was now my turn.



I began to describe our home and neighborhood, which I had drawn in the background. Mr. Smith interrupted, "Tell us about your family AJ."



"Oh yes, right," I replied. "I live with my mom and little brother," I said with a sigh.

Then, Carlos spoke out of turn while pointing to my picture and said, "Who is that person you drew away in the corner?" I replied reluctantly, "Oh, yeah that's my dad. He no longer lives with us." The room got so quiet, and I could hear a pin drop. I quickly returned to my seat.



When I got home my mother could tell I was upset. “AJ what is wrong?” my mother asked. I told her about the assignment. I told her how I was the only kid that didn’t live with both parents. My mom reassured me that I was exaggerating and that there are a lot of single-parent homes.



I went to my room and video called my dad. I told him about what happened at school.



There was a long pause and then he finally said, "Son your mother and I love you as well as your little brother very much even though we aren't both in the same home."

Even though I knew my father loved me already, it still felt good to hear him say it because deep down inside I blamed myself for their divorce.



Finally, I gathered all the courage I had left and said, “Dad would you and mom still love me even if I wasn’t on honor roll?” He quickly replied, “Yes, you would still be our amazing and intelligent boy.” Then I quickly interjected again, “What if I lied about something or tried to keep something a secret, would you still love me?” Dad replied, “Of course because deep down you are good and honest.”



“Dad what if I was secretly angry, I mean FURIOUS that you and mom were no longer together and that it bothers me every day?” Dad explained, “AJ I knew you secretly carried resentment and for that I am truly sorry. Sometimes adults can’t get along and it is best that they are apart. However, that doesn’t change the fact that I am your father forever and always.” All of a sudden mom and dad simultaneously said, “We still love you!”



I went to school that next day feeling a little more confident and eager to see the rest of my classmates' family portraits.



Maria described her family. She said she lives with her grandma and cat.



Kim went next. She drew her dad and older sister.



Then, Ethan began to describe his family. He mentioned how he lives with his aunt, uncle, cousins, and mom.

To my surprise others like myself live in single-parent homes too!

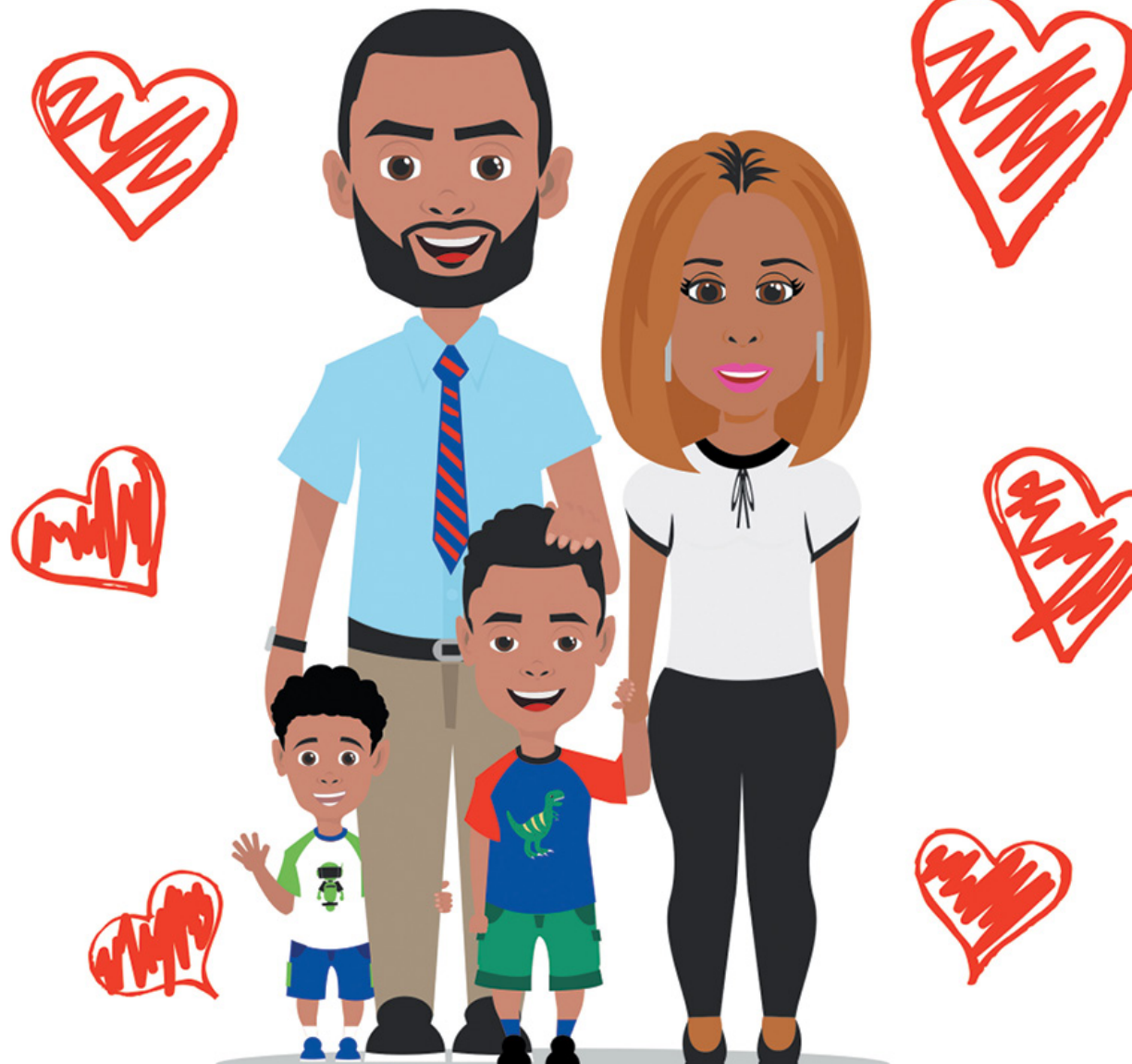


Afterwards, Mr. Smith put our pictures up in the hall, and I was no longer embarrassed or ashamed.

To my surprise when I got home my younger brother, mom, and dad were there to greet me. In that moment I learned a valuable lesson. Family is family no matter how big or small, or in my case where the mom and dad live apart in separate homes. But, do you know what is most important?



*I am
Loved*



My Family Portrait

Directions: Illustrate a Picture of Your Family.

The background of the entire page is a repeating pattern of simple line drawings of crayons and hearts. The crayons are in various colors: blue, green, yellow, purple, and orange. The hearts are orange with a textured, scribbled interior. The pattern is scattered across the white background.

About the Author

Aurndrea Evans is from Augusta, Georgia. She holds a bachelor's degree in early childhood education and a master's degree in curriculum and instruction. Her passion for education has also lead her to pursue a specialist degree in education with an emphasizes on reading. She has devoted her life to the development and education of children. She has currently been teaching in Richmond County for the last eight years. Her goal is that this books provides a reminder that no matter what your family looks like, you are loved and the possibilities for your life are endless.