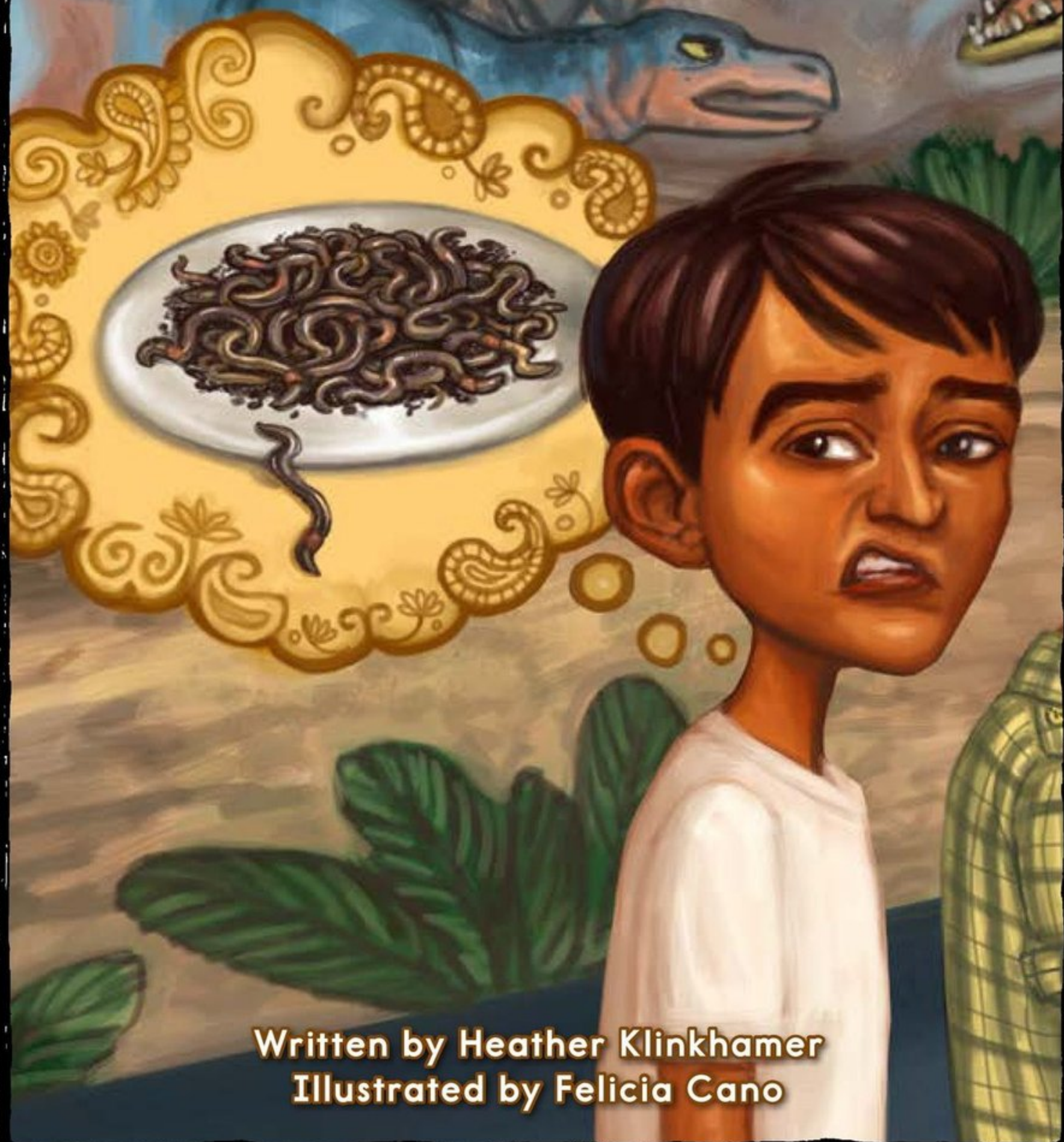


LEVELED BOOK • M

A New Way of Speaking



Written by Heather Klinkhamer
Illustrated by Felicia Cano

www.readinga-z.com

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Table of Contents

A New School 4

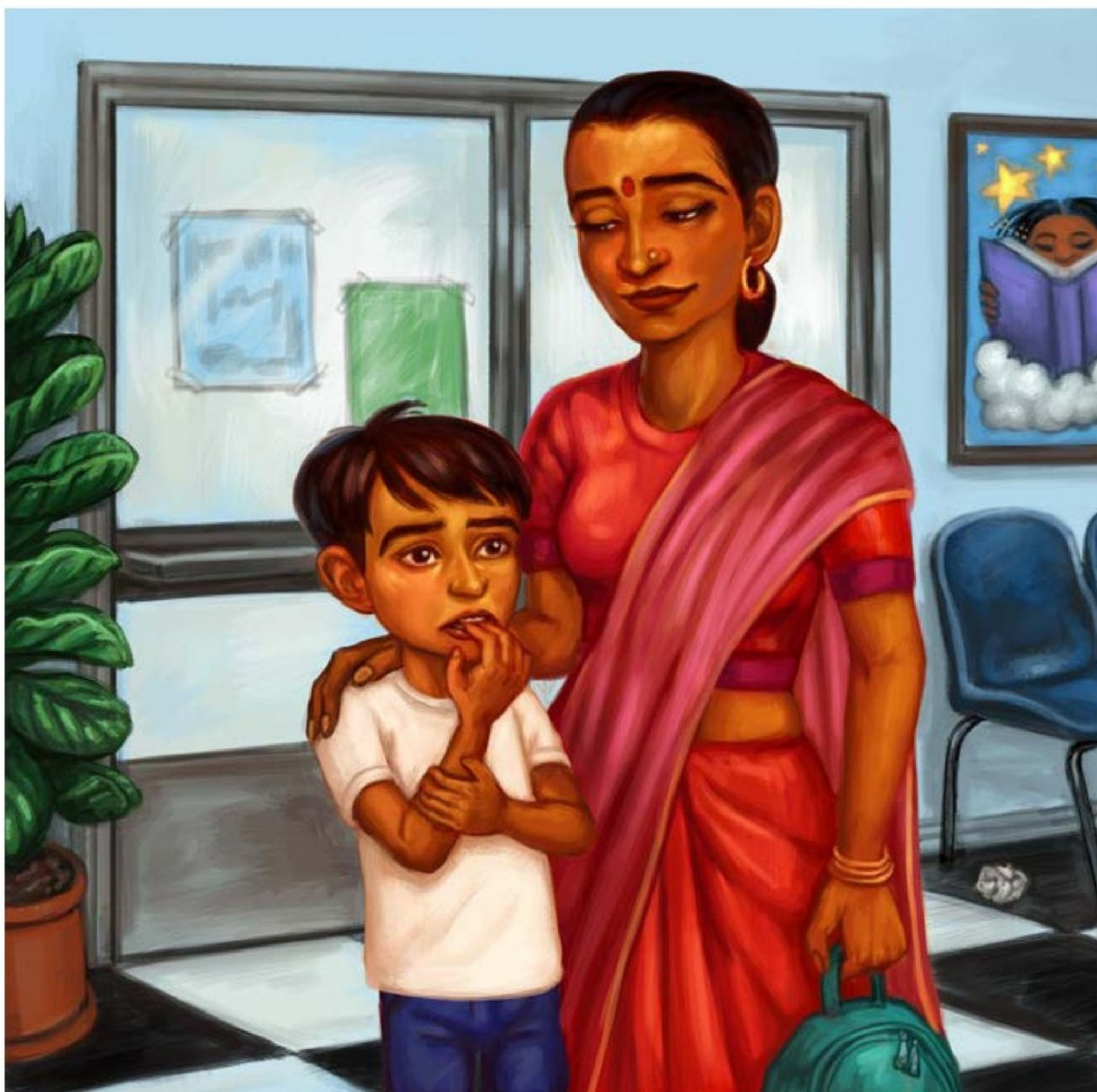
A New Friend 7

A New Classroom 9

A New Lunchroom 11

Rivers of Milk 13

Glossary 16



A New School

Raj bites his nails as he and his mother wait in the school office.

Today is Raj's first day of school in a new country, and he's **nervous**. His family just moved to the United States from India.

The principal, Ms. Alvarez, comes out of her office. Raj wonders if he should stick his hand out as his father taught him. “This is how you **greet** someone in America,” his father said.

“You must be Raj,” Ms. Alvarez says. She doesn’t extend her hand. Raj feels some **relief**—he doesn’t want to get his first handshake wrong!



His mother tells Ms. Alvarez that he earned high **marks** in English. Ms. Alvarez smiles and says, “I can tell he is the apple of your eye.”

He wonders what Ms. Alvarez means. He has seen no apples in his mother’s eyes. “You are wonderful like a juicy, sweet apple!” his mother says to him. Raj feels a smile spread slowly across his face.





A New Friend

Ms. Alvarez escorts Raj to his new classroom and introduces him to his teacher, Mr. Washington.

Mr. Washington reaches out his hand. Raj shakes it as his father showed him.

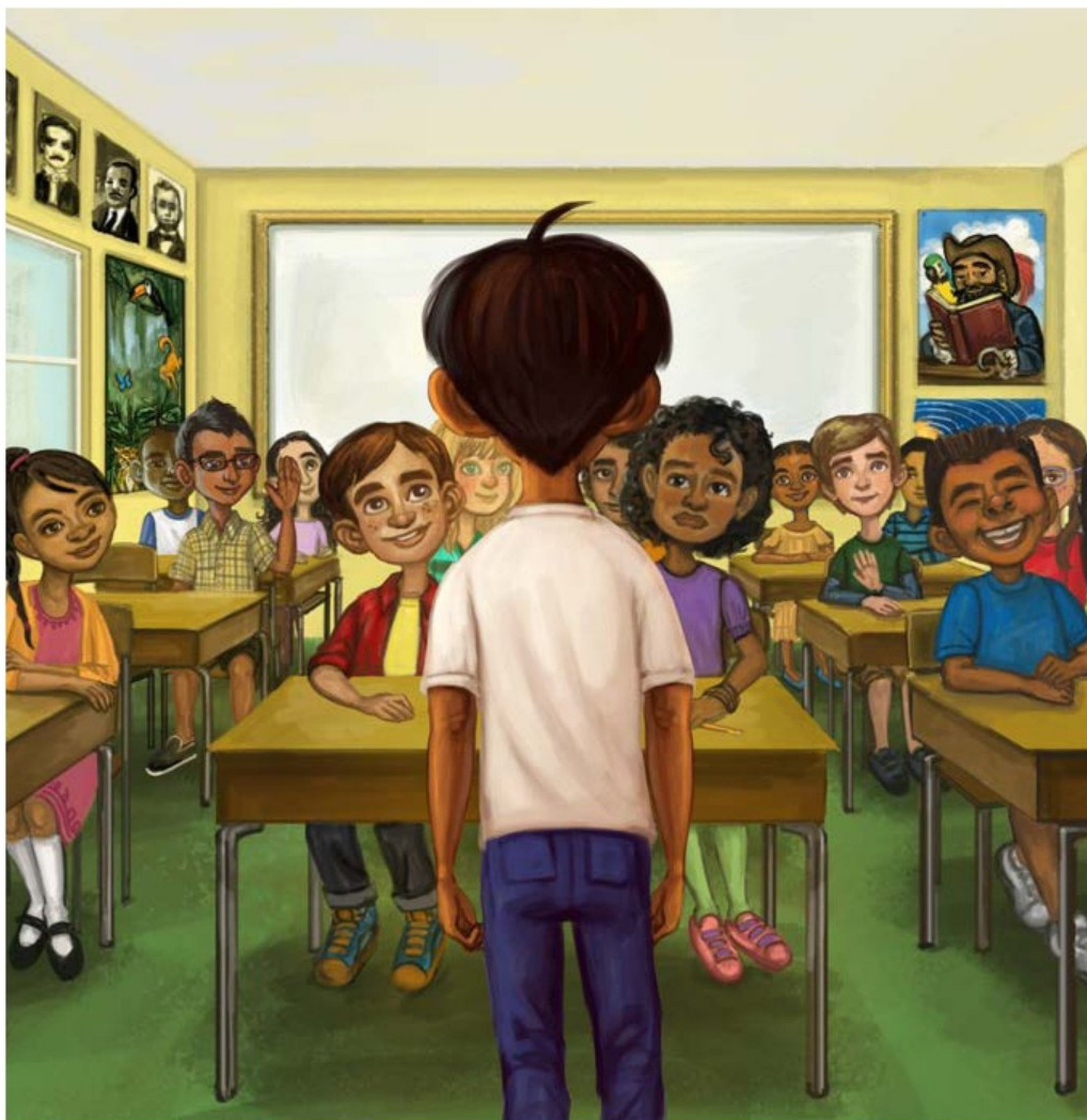
“Welcome!” Mr. Washington says. Raj smiles. His first handshake in the United States is a **success**.

“Sandeep, come here, please,”

Mr. Washington says. A boy with a big smile walks over. “Raj, this is Sandeep. He will assist you during the school day.”

“**Namaste,**” Sandeep says. He places his hands together as he bows slightly. The greeting feels like a little bit of home. “It is nice to meet another person from India.”





A New Classroom

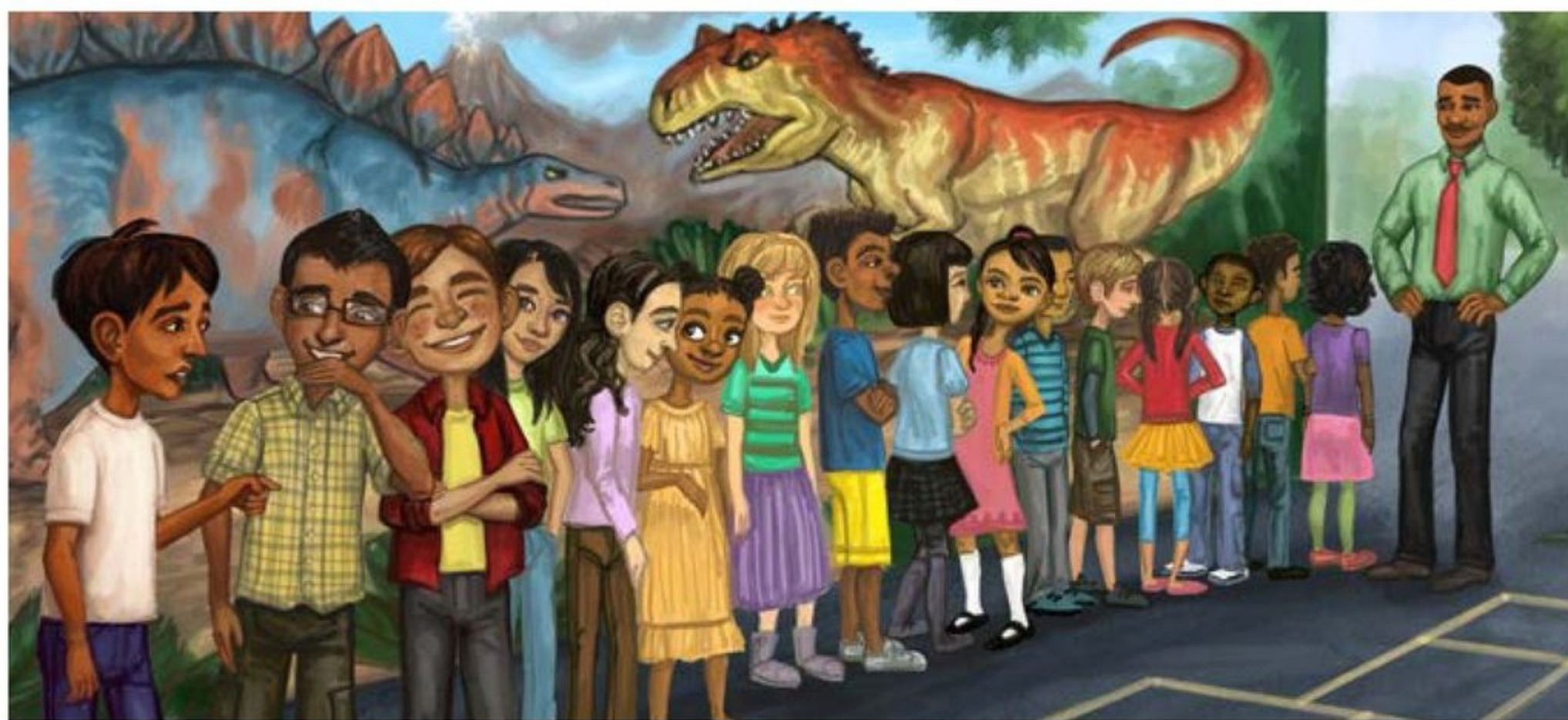
Next, Mr. Washington introduces Raj to the class. The students smile and call out, “Hello, Raj!” Raj is suddenly nervous again. Will all these new people like him? Can he make new friends?

“Please, take a seat,” Mr. Washington says as he points to a chair. Raj picks it up.

“Where would you like me to take it?” Raj asks.

“Mr. Washington wants you to sit down,” Sandeep says with a kind smile. Raj puts the chair next to Sandeep and sits. His face flushes, and suddenly he feels very warm.





A New Lunchroom

The morning passes quickly. The other children are kind and helpful. Raj is quiet. He is frightened that he might say or do the wrong thing again.

A bell sounds loudly, and Raj looks around, confused.

“It’s time for lunch!” Sandeep says. They join the class as it forms a line by the door.

“The early bird gets the worm!” Mr. Washington says.

“Are there other things to eat?” Raj asks Sandeep. “I don’t think I would like worms.”

“It’s an **idiom**—a saying,” Sandeep explains. “He means that the first to arrive get the best choice of food.”

Raj shakes his head in dismay. This new way of speaking English **confuses** him.

Raj chews his nails as they walk to the lunchroom.





Rivers of Milk

In the lunchroom, they all fill up their trays—with noodles, not worms.

As they walk to the table, a boy drops his milk on the floor. The milk flows like a white river. Raj begins to laugh uncontrollably.

“What’s so funny?” the boy asks.

“You pour away rivers of milk!” Raj says. Sandeep starts to laugh, too.

“That makes no sense,” the boy says.





“This is an Indian way of saying you are very **giving**,” Raj explains. “It’s an idiom.”

“Oh,” the boy says. “I guess that is pretty funny!”

“I’m Raj,” he says, suddenly feeling better.

“Mike,” the boy says.

They shake hands.

Glossary

confuses (<i>v.</i>)	to make something harder to understand (p. 12)
giving (<i>adj.</i>)	kind and generous (p. 15)
greet (<i>v.</i>)	to offer polite words when you meet someone (p. 5)
idiom (<i>n.</i>)	a phrase that has a meaning beyond the actual words (p. 12)
marks (<i>n.</i>)	grades given by a teacher to show how well a student is doing in school (p. 6)
namaste (<i>excl.</i>)	a common greeting used by some people in parts of Asia (p. 8)
nervous (<i>adj.</i>)	edgy or tense; afraid (p. 4)
relief (<i>n.</i>)	the state of being free from worry or suffering (p. 5)
success (<i>n.</i>)	someone or something that achieves a desired result (p. 7)

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Level M Leveled Book
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DRA	24