

LEVELED Book • J

Why I'm Late Today



Written by Torran Anderson
Illustrated by Felicia Cano

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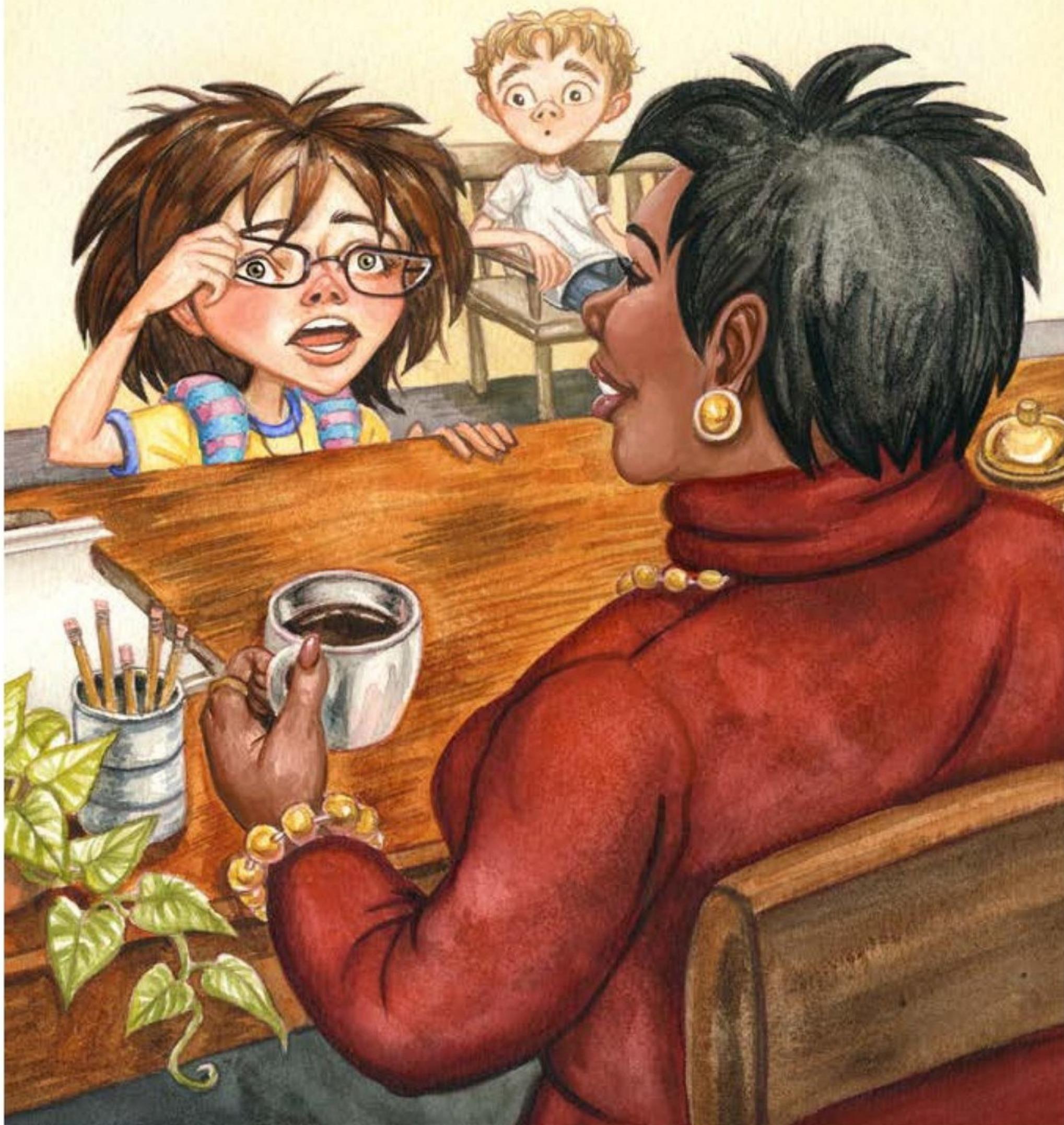
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I rushed into the school office.
“Sorry I’m late. I was having
breakfast with the Norbotians,”
I said.

“Who are the Norbotians?”
Mrs. Gage asked.





“The aliens—well, creatures—on Norbot,” I explained.
“They’re really very nice,” I added.
Mrs. Gage shook her head.
“You had breakfast with aliens?”
she asked.

“They invited us. They felt bad after I did a belly flop into their swimming pool,” I said.

“Why did they feel bad?” she asked.





“Because it was filled with green slime,” I said.

“They love to swim in green slime, but of course, they’re Norbotians,” I said.

“I see. Well, why did you jump in if it was filled with green slime?”

Mrs. Gage asked.

“Oh, I didn’t jump. I flew into it when Teresa pushed the red button—it said ‘eject,’” I explained. Mrs. Gage snorted.

“I suppose this eject button was inside your **spaceship**?” she asked.





“That’s right. The eject button is only for emergencies,” I said.

“Teresa freaked out, though, when the Norbotians came to say hello,” I explained.

“I thought you said they were nice,” said Mrs. Gage.

“They’re very nice. It’s not their fault they look . . . like they do,” I replied.

“And they came to say hello because . . . ?” she asked.

“A spaceship doesn’t land in their backyard every day,” I said.

“What were you doing in a spaceship?” Mrs. Gage asked.

“How else would we get to Norbot?” I replied.

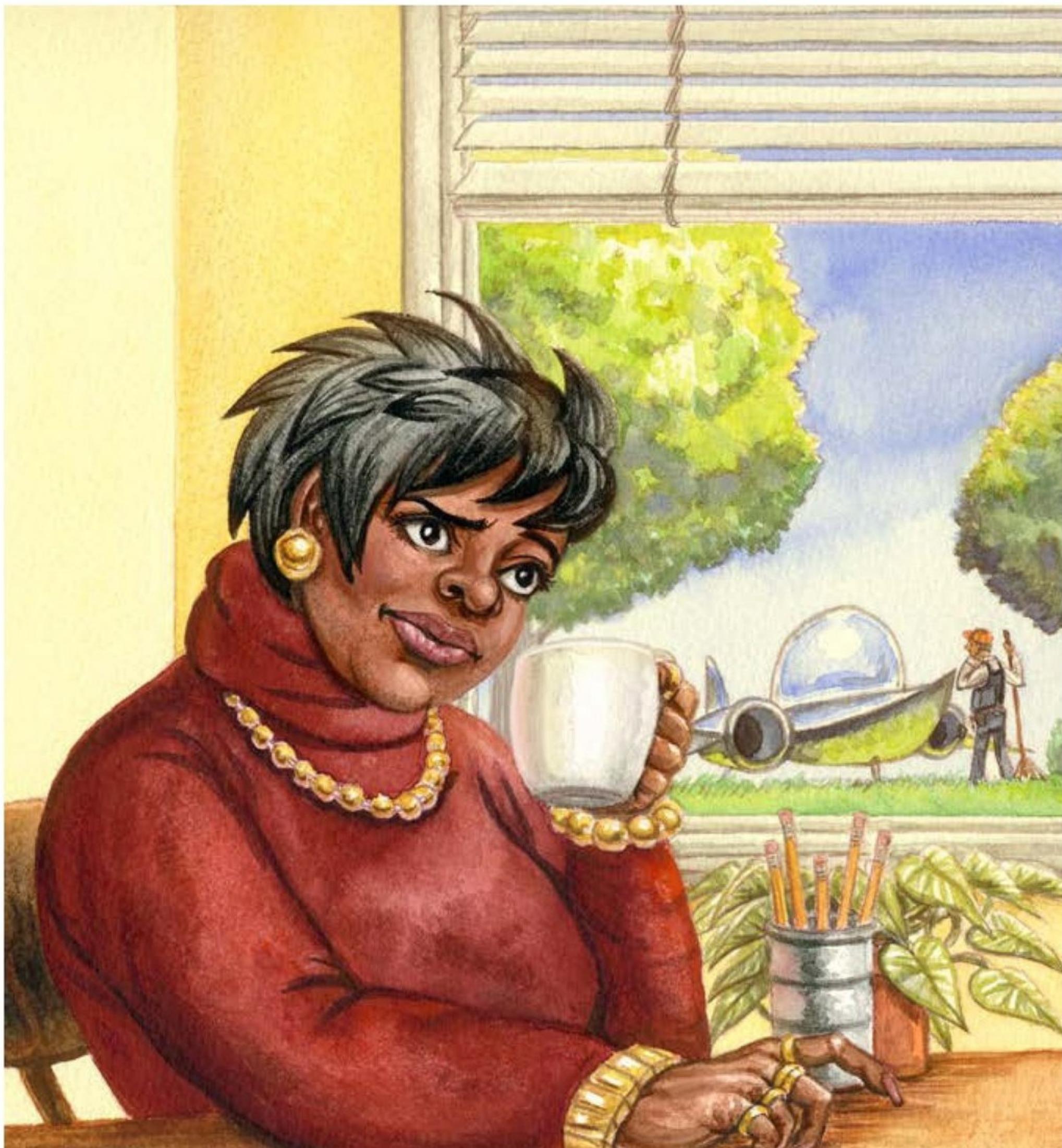


“But where did you get this spaceship?” Mrs. Gage asked.

“Teresa built it in her backyard,” I said.

“Where is the spaceship now?” Mrs. Gage asked.





“It’s out on the grass. I had to either land there or on the school roof,” I said.

“So where is Teresa?” Mrs. Gage asked.

“She’s going to school on Norbot today,” I said.

“We’re doing a student exchange,” I explained.



Mrs. Gage looked at me and laughed.

“That’s the strangest **excuse** I’ve ever heard,” she said.

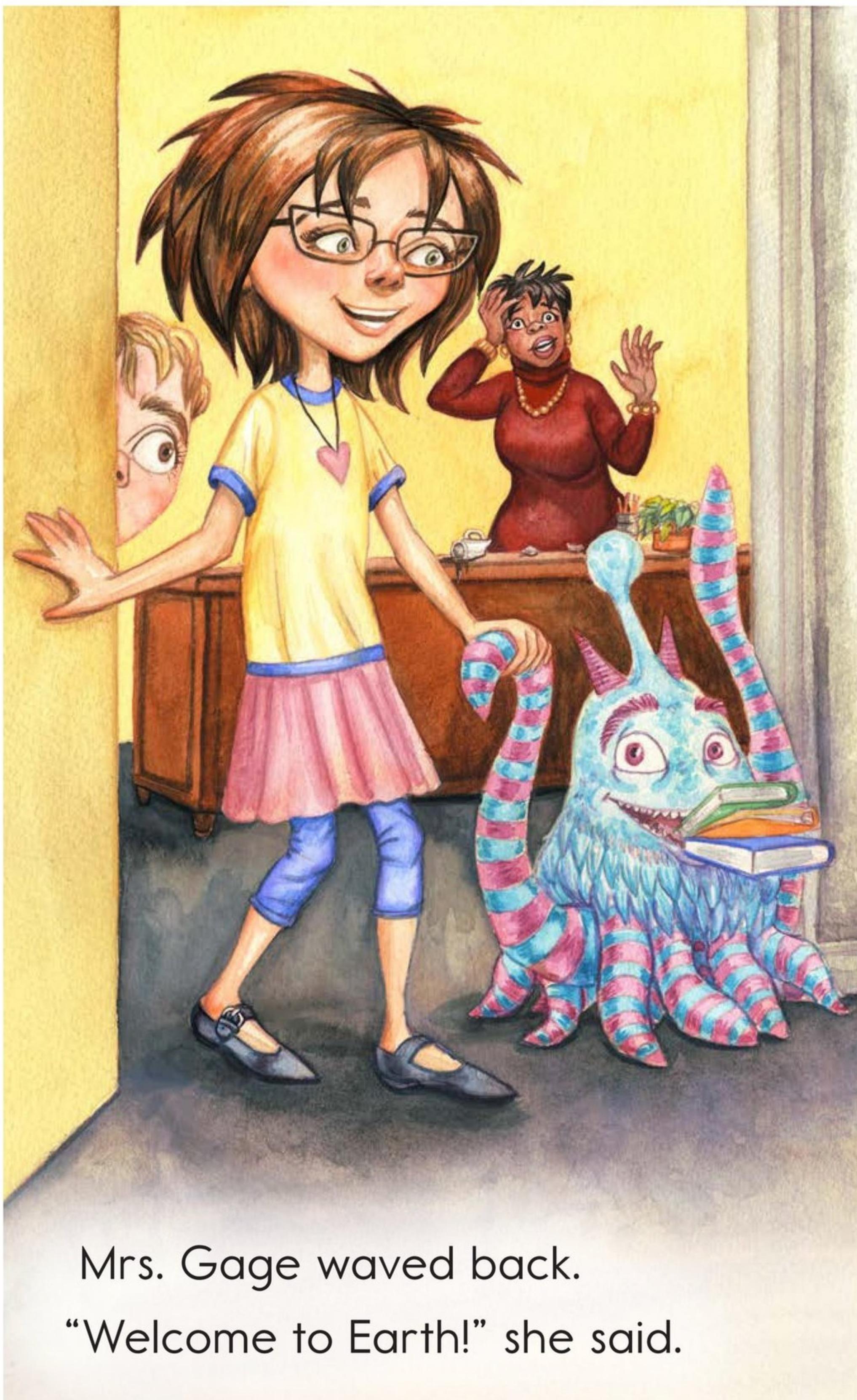
Then Mrs. Gage jumped up and spilled her coffee.

“Your backpack is alive!” she screamed.



“Oh, that’s not my backpack,” I said.
I smiled and waved at Mrs. Gage.
So did Norby.





Mrs. Gage waved back.

“Welcome to Earth!” she said.

Glossary

aliens (n.) beings from a place other than Earth (p. 4)

creatures (n.) animals, especially ones that are strange or unusual (p. 4)

eject (v.) to throw or force out of (p. 7)

exchange (n.) the act of giving something and receiving something in return; a trade (p. 12)

excuse (n.) a reason for a fault or mistake (p. 13)

spaceship (n.) a vehicle used for traveling in space (p. 7)

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