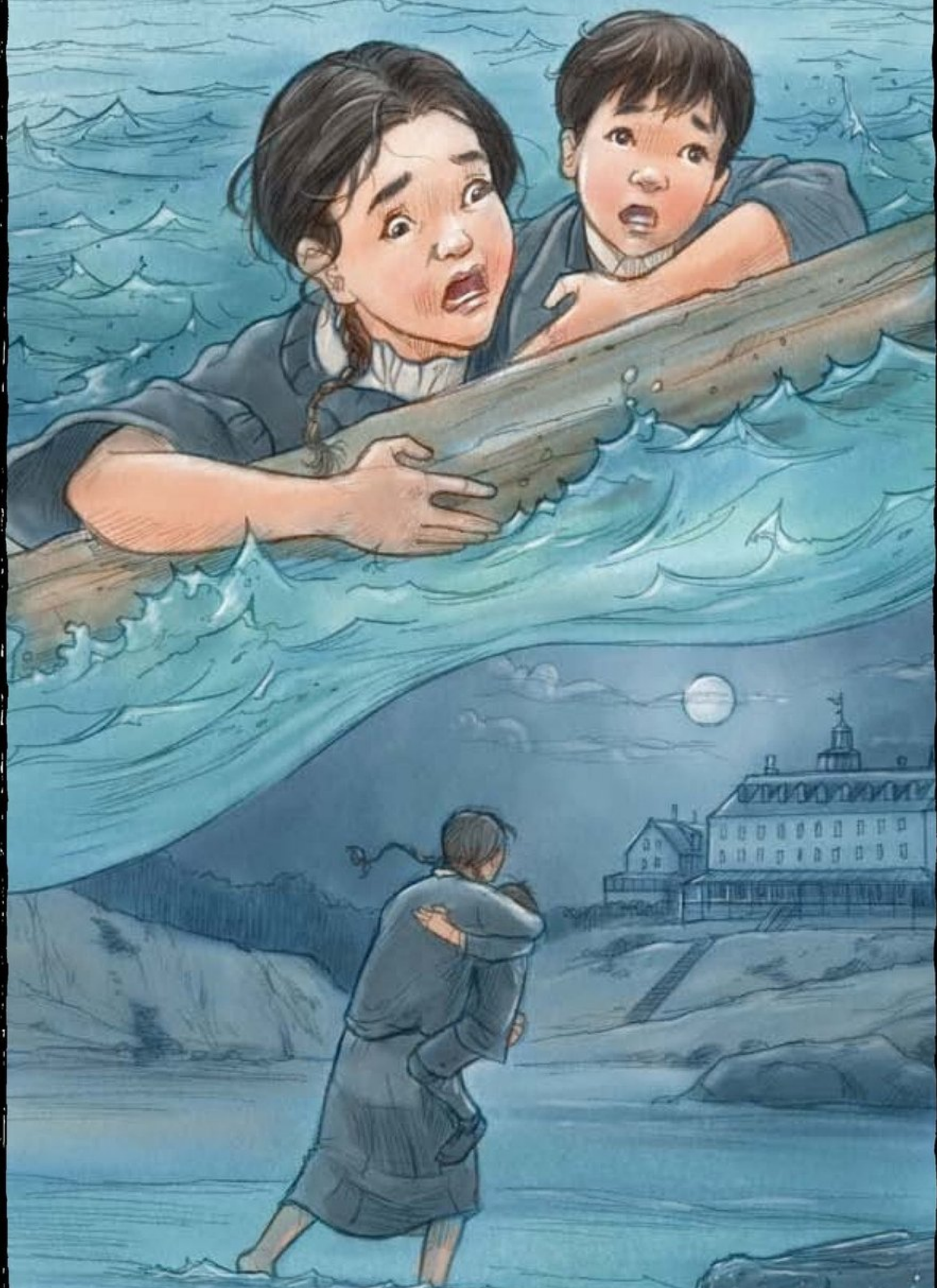


LEVELED BOOK • L

A Hero's Name



Written by Marvin Bird • Illustrated by Robert Squier

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Frank was having a perfectly good week at school.

At recess, his friends dug a hole as big as a moon crater.





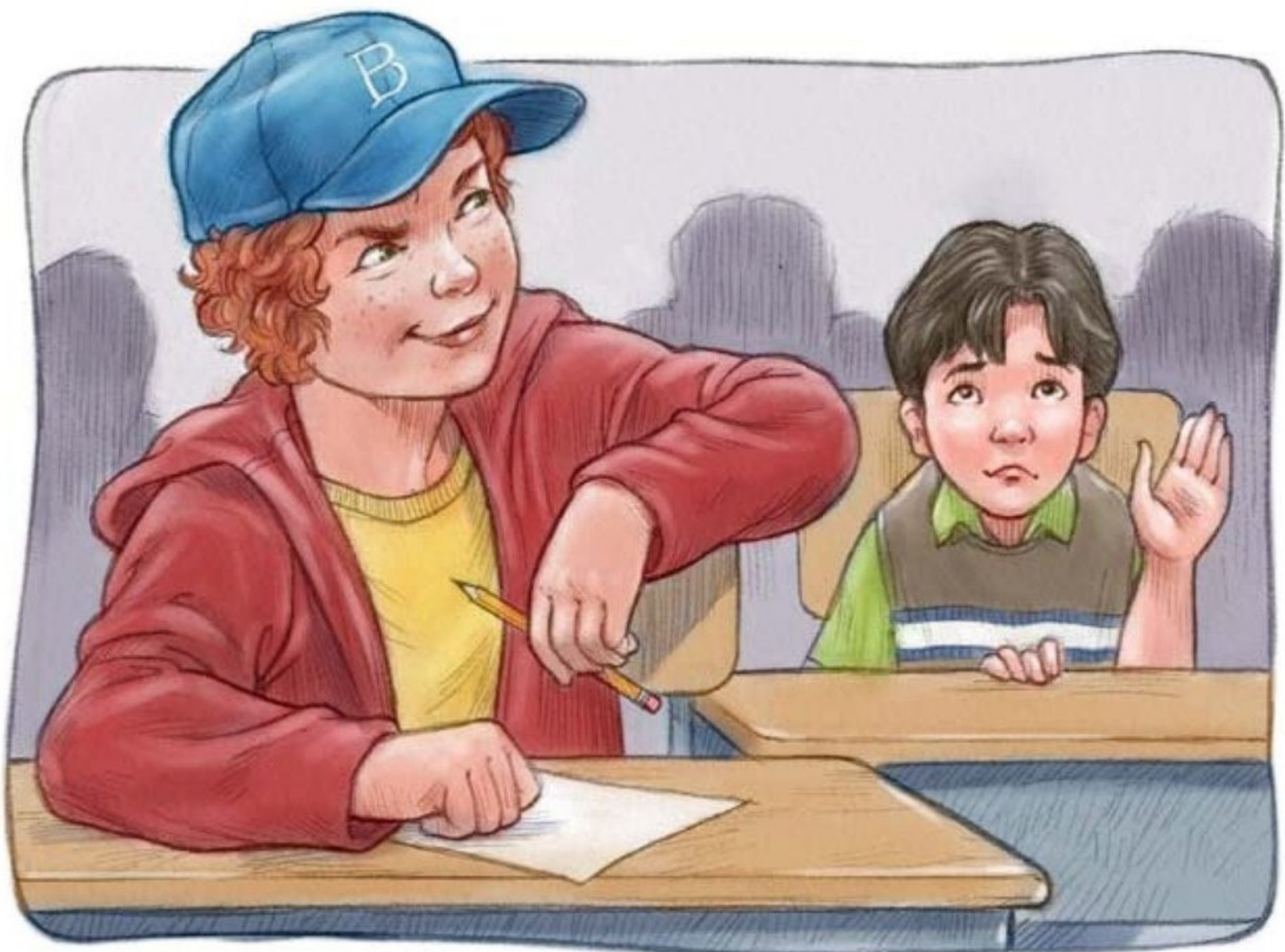
In class, they were learning about dinosaurs.

Bobby hadn't picked on him even once.

Yes, Frank was having a perfectly good week at school.

On Thursday, his teacher stayed home sick. A different teacher called the class roll. “Francis . . . is there a Francis Smith here?” he asked.

Of course Frank knew his name was *Francis* and that *Frank* was just his **nickname**. His parents called him *Frank*, and all his friends did, too. Bobby, though, who was new in school, yelled out to the whole class that *Francis* was a girl’s name!





At recess, Bobby made fun of Frank. “*Francis* is a girl’s name, *Francis* is a girl’s name,” he called.

Frank didn’t care what Bobby thought, but he didn’t like to be made fun of.

At home, Frank asked his mother about his name. His mother explained that *Francis* with an “i” was usually a boy’s name. *Frances* with an “e” was usually a girl’s name. She was just about to say something else when the family dog, Dino, limped through the back door.

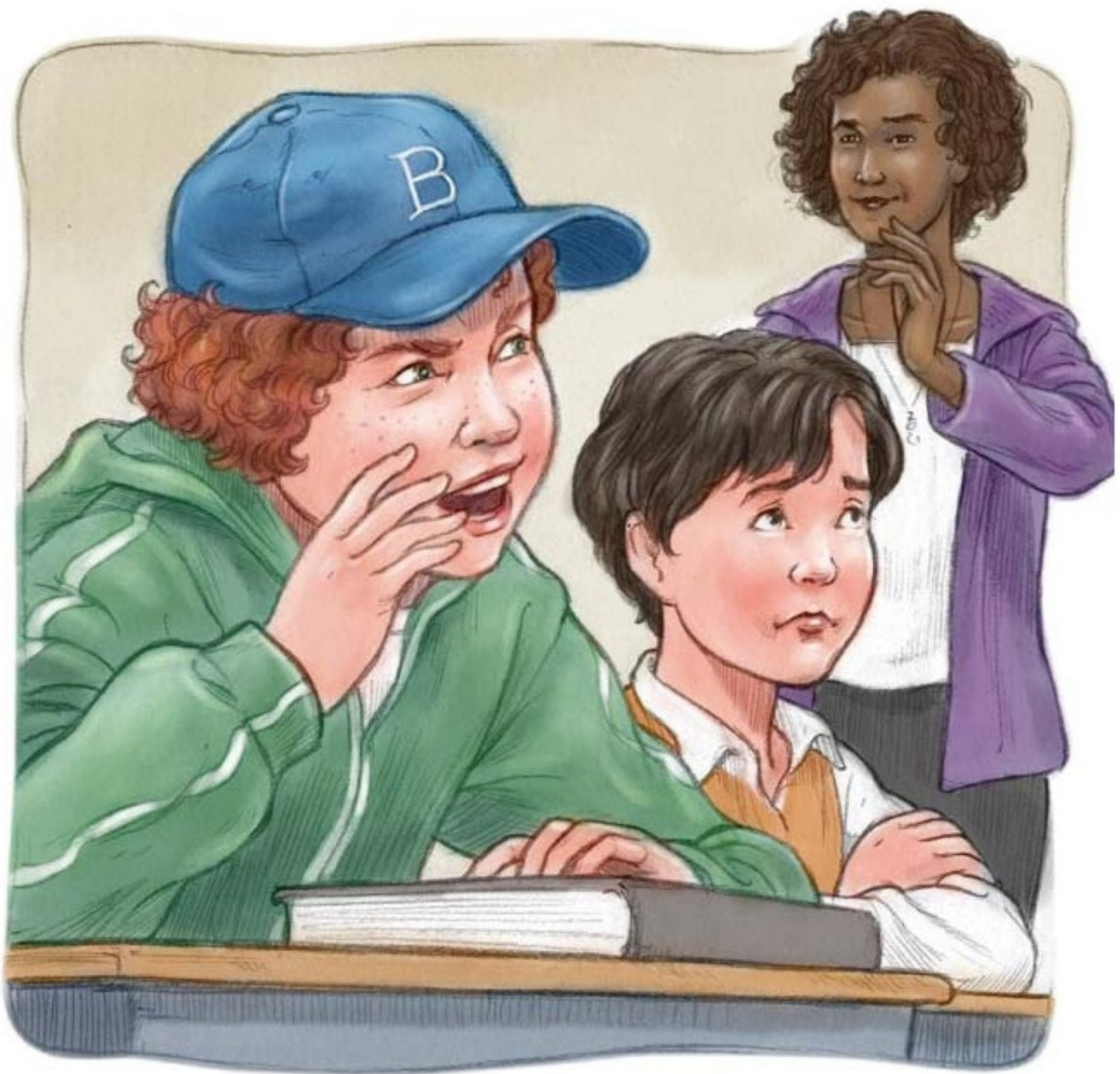




Dino lifted his paw. Frank found a thorn and pulled it out. By then, he and his mother had both forgotten about his name.

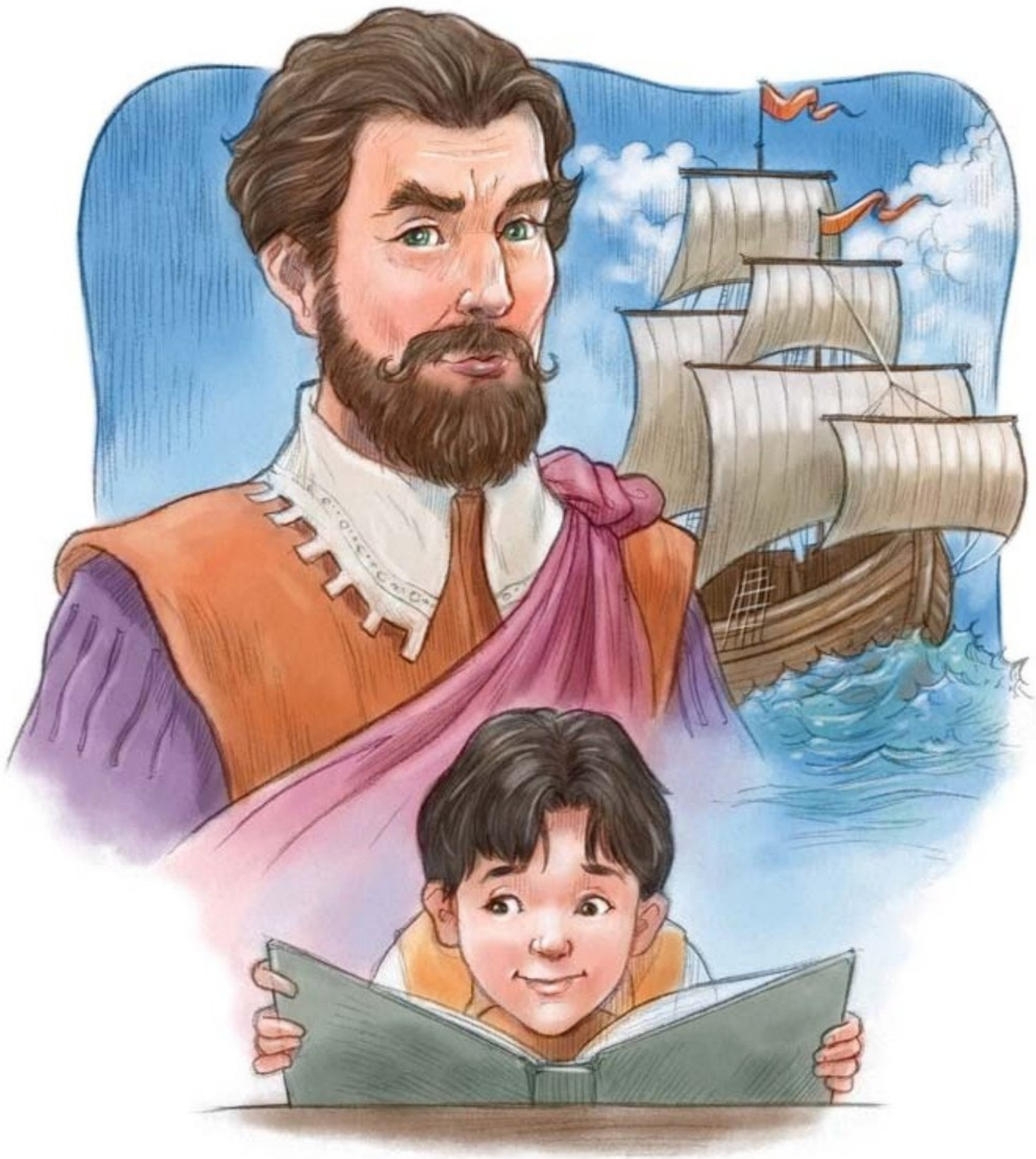
On Friday, Bobby kept at it: “*Francis* is a girl’s name, *Francis* is a girl’s name.”

Their regular teacher, who was back at school, told Bobby to apologize. Then the teacher had an idea. The students would present oral reports about their first names.



At the library that afternoon, Frank found out that many **famous** people had the name *Francis*. There was a young man from Italy who gave up his family's money 800 years ago. He went on to become **Saint Francis**, who was famous for talking to animals.





There was a famous explorer
named Sir Francis Drake. He sailed
around the world more than 400
years ago!

There were many kings named
Francis, too.

Over the weekend, Frank's mother said something else about his name.

"Do you know you were named after a hero?" she asked. "Long ago, your great-great-great-grandmother's ship sank. She was just a kid.

But she grabbed a piece of wood and swam five miles to shore while holding on to her little brother. She

saved his life. Her name was Frances Hightower."



Francis might not be a girl's name, but he was named after a girl—an awesome girl!



On Monday, Frank told the story of his name. He talked about the saint and the kings. He talked about the famous explorer. Then he said he wasn't named after any of those people. He was named after his great-great-great-grandmother, the hero.

When he finished the story about Frances Hightower, the whole class clapped—even Bobby.





Sometimes, during the perfectly good week that followed, Frank's friends called him *Francis*. Frank liked having two names, one of them from a real hero. It made him want to be **heroic**, even if that just meant being kind or helping a dog. From then on, whenever he did heroic **deeds** or even thought heroic thoughts, Frank **signed** his own name as *Francis* . . . a perfectly good name.

Glossary

deeds (<i>n.</i>)	actions done on purpose, often ones that are kind, noble, or brave (p. 15)
famous (<i>adj.</i>)	well known (p. 10)
heroic (<i>adj.</i>)	showing great courage (p. 15)
nickname (<i>n.</i>)	a name given to a person or thing in fun or affection, or to shorten a real name (p. 5)
saint (<i>n.</i>)	a person who has been formally recognized for having lived a holy, devout, or virtuous life (p. 10)
signed (<i>v.</i>)	wrote one's name on something (p. 15)

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