

LEVELED BOOK • J

Why I'm Late Today



Written by Torran Anderson
Illustrated by Felicia Cano

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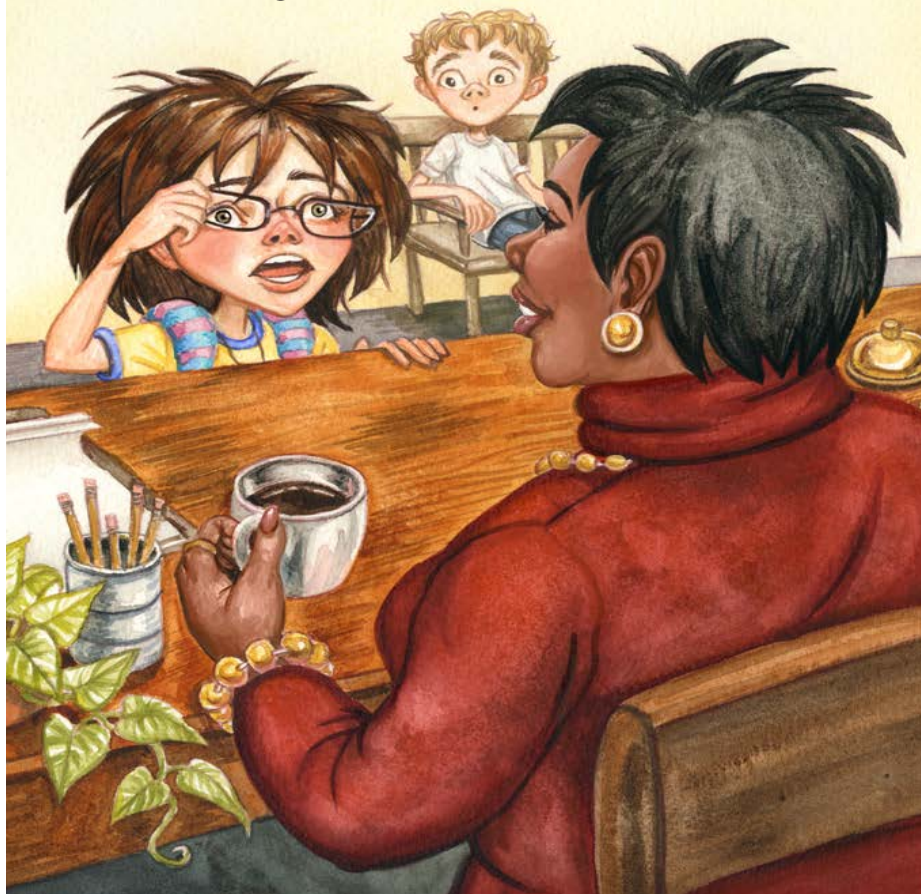
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I rushed into the school office.
“Sorry I’m late. I was having
breakfast with the Norbotians,”
I said.
“Who are the Norbotians?”
Mrs. Gage asked.





“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.

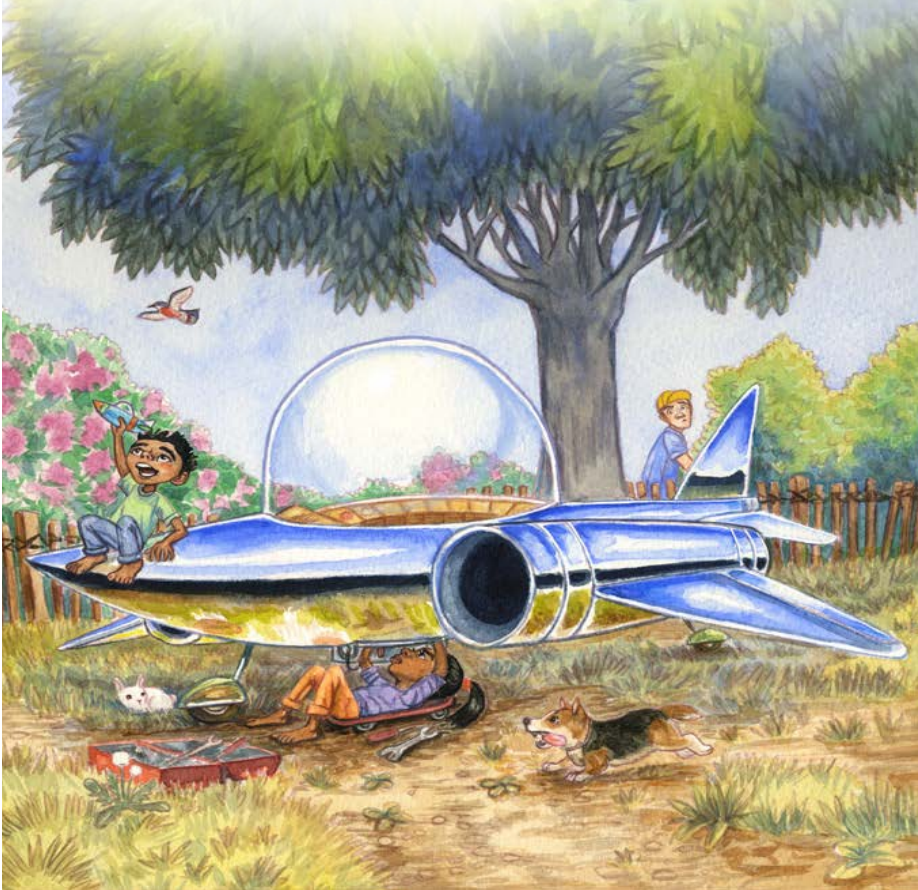
“A spaceship doesn’t land in their
backyard every day,” I said.

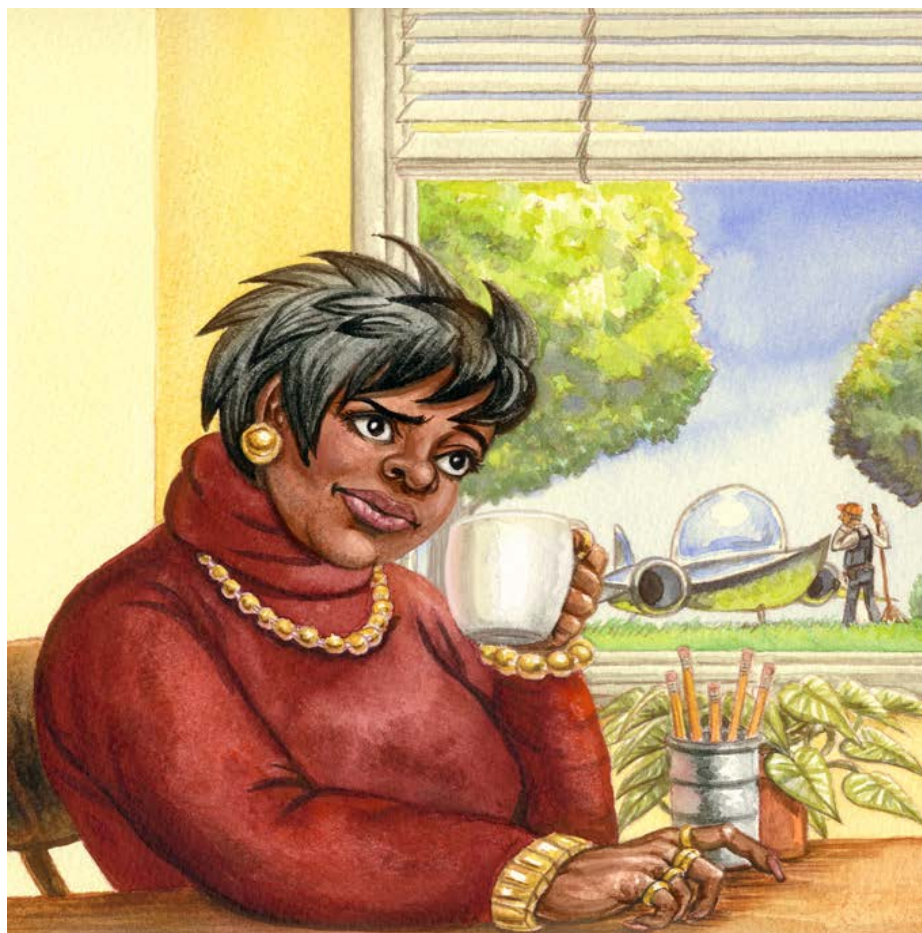
“What were you doing in a
spaceship?” Mrs. Gage asked.

“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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