

It's another Monday, time to go to school.
Gilby takes a seat next to Mrs. Applebranch
on the schoolbus.



Good morning Gilby!
Would you like me to
take your hat?

Gilby shakes his head.
He never takes his hat off.

No thank you.



Before Morning Time begins,
Mrs. Applebranch asks everyone to take a seat.
For a minute she waits for the class to quiet down.

Then she announces:

Class, say hello to our new classmate!
Namu, would you like to
introduce yourself?



A girl with two braided pigtails marches in through the door.

Yep!
Hello everyone,
my name is Namu
and I really love frogs.



There is a
red mark on her cheek,
the shape of a flower.

Everyone stares.



Gilby usually sits by himself during Morning Time.
But today, Mrs. Applebranch asks
Namu to take a seat next to Gilby.

Hi Gilby! Nice to meet you.
I like the color of your hat!
What's your favorite animal?

...Bears...

Gilby loves talking about bears.
But nothing more comes out of his mouth.

He just stares at his desk
and pulls his hat closer
to cover his face.

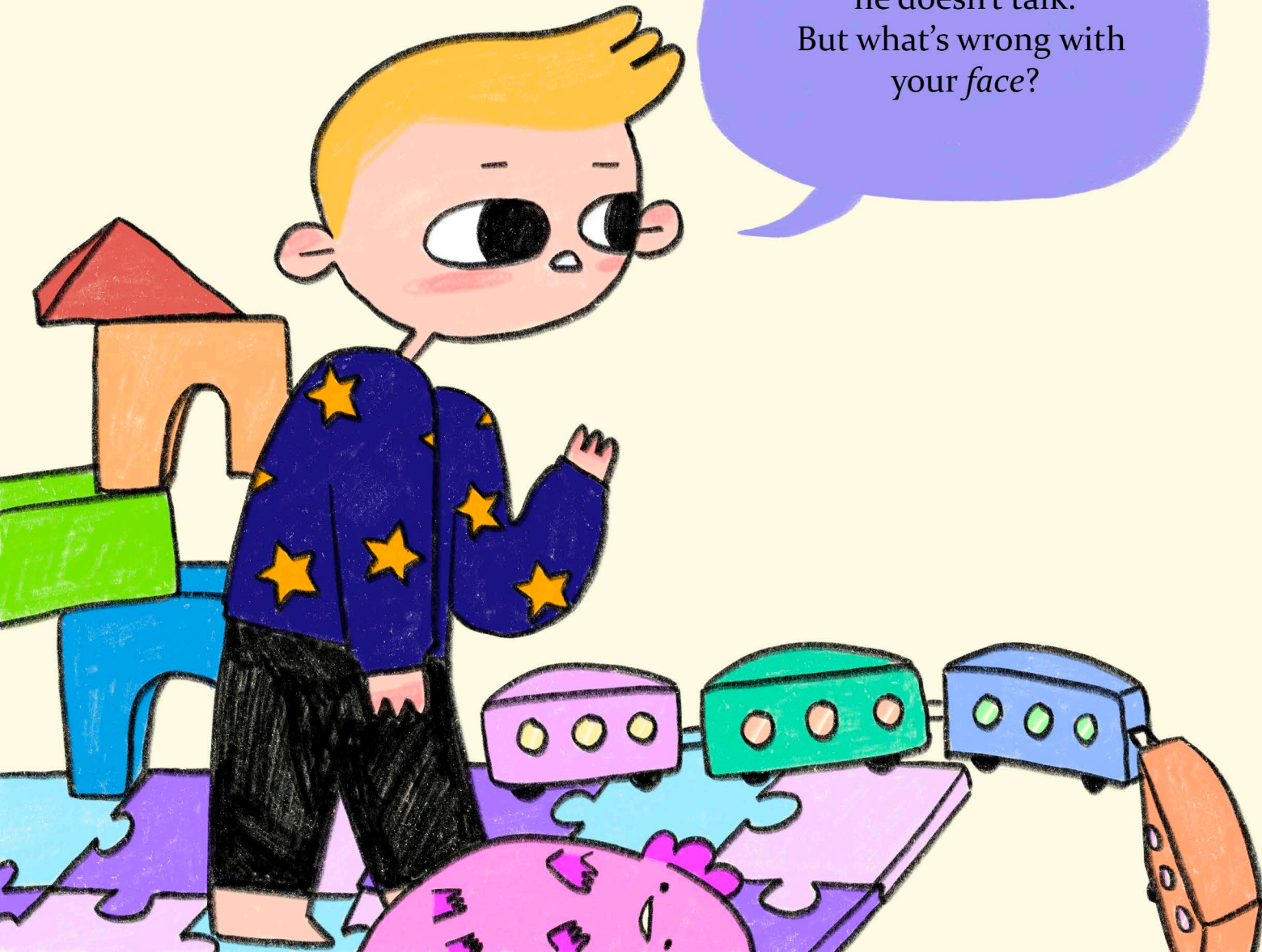



The loudest kid in class walks over to their table, another thing which usually does not happen to Gilby.

Don't mind him, he doesn't talk. But what's wrong with your *face*?

What do you mean? There's nothing wrong with it.

Gilby wants to crawl inside of his hat and hide forever.





Well, you have that weird red thing on your cheek!

Namu shakes her head.

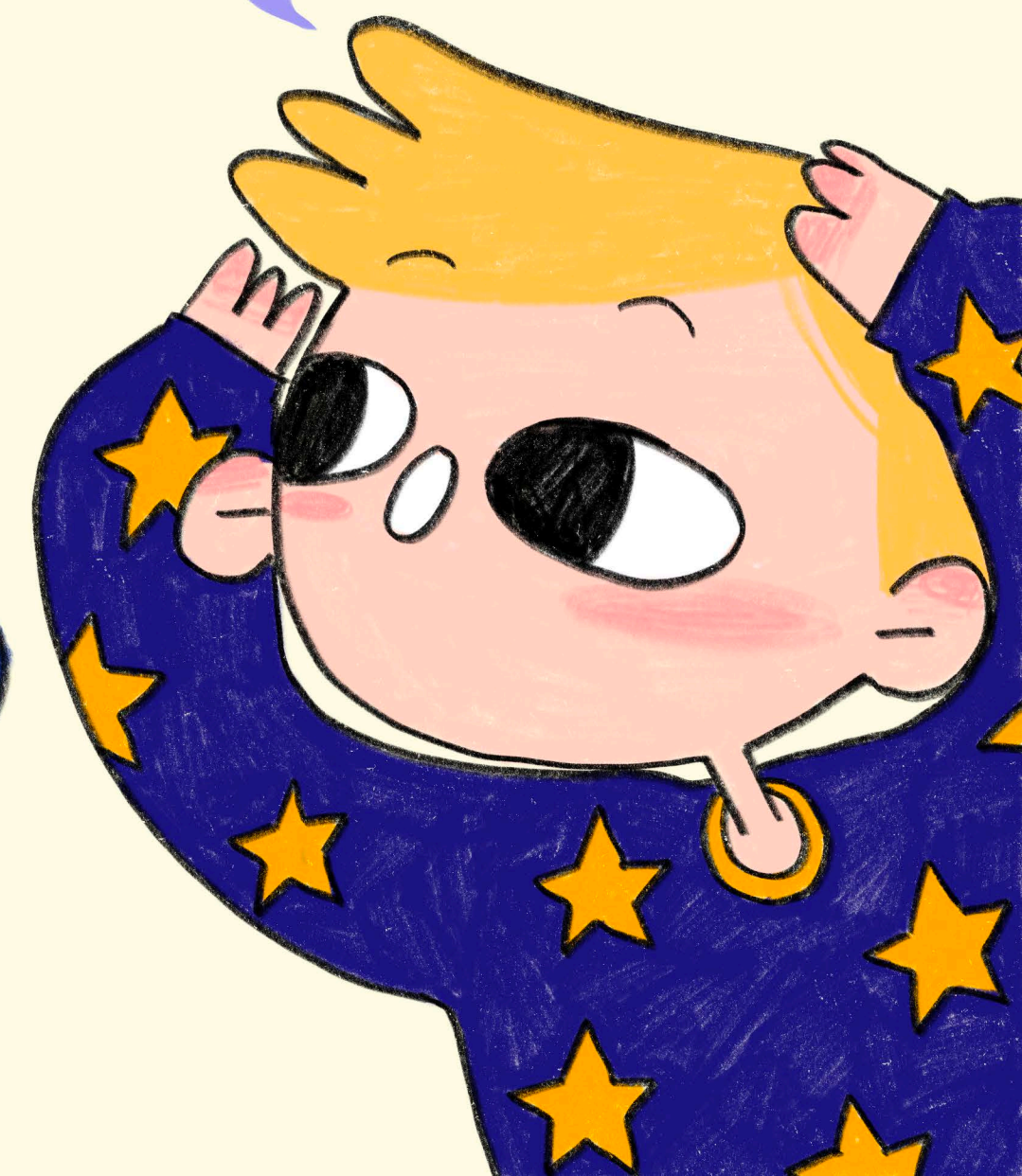
Oh, my scar!
Well, my scar isn't weird...

My scar is a sign of **bravery!**
It proves I survived a great battle
of *galactic proportions.*



Battling my illness was like a laser duel against penguin pirates in outer space. It was dangerous and hard, but now I have a cool battle scar to show for my bravery!

Whoa, that's *epic!*
I'm sorry for calling your scar weird.
I hope I get to fight space penguins one day,
and get an awesome scar to remember it by!



After Morning Time, it's time for Math on the Mat.
Mrs. Applebranch hands out two cards to each student.

Gilby usually sits outside of the mat.
But he sits next to Namu this time.

Today we are playing Trading Cards!
Let's trade cards in a circle
until everyone has two cards
that add up to ten.



Namu turns to her neighbor.

Hello! Do you want to trade a card with me?

I would, but...
Is your condition not
contagious?



Oh, absolutely not!
Scars aren't contagious, so you can't get the same one as mine.
But that's what makes me **unique**!

No one has a scar exactly like mine -

Even the craziest mad scientist
couldn't recreate it!

That's very impressive!
Sorry for my rudeness.
I'd be honored to trade cards
with someone with a
one-in-a-million signature!




After Math on the Mat, it's outdoor playtime.
Gilby usually stays in the library.
Today, however, he goes to the sandpit with namu.

At the pit, Namu walks up to the girl on the swing.



Hi!
When you're done,
can I get a turn?



Well, this swing is
for princesses only.
Are you sure *princesses*
can have scars
on their face?

Of course!
My scar is a sign of **resilience**,
a key quality of any fine princess.



Even the most careful of princesses can suffer a tea party mishap - what makes a princess a princess, is the ability to recover with grace!

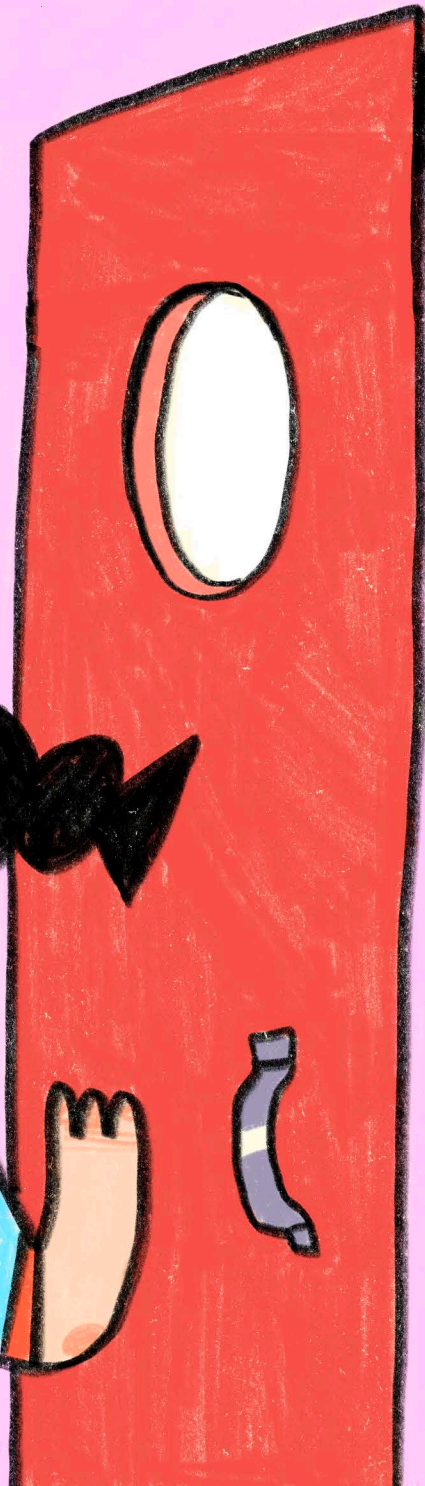
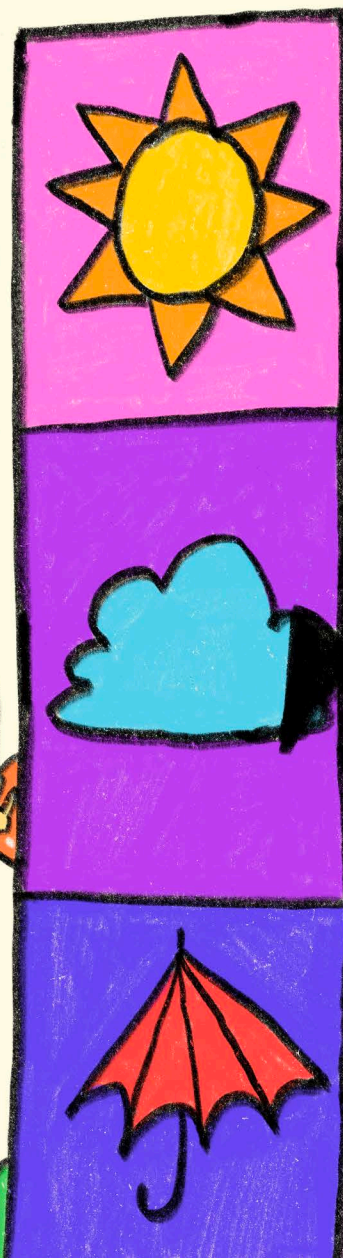
Ah, I understand. Pardon me, *m'lady*, for failing to recognize your noble perseverance. Here, it's your turn to ride the carriage!




After outdoor playtime, everyone heads inside for lunch.
Gilby jogs up to Namu and taps her on the shoulder.

H...Hi, Namu!
Could I ask you a question?
It's about a skin condition,
not quite the same as your scar..

Definitely!
What's on your mind,
Gilby?



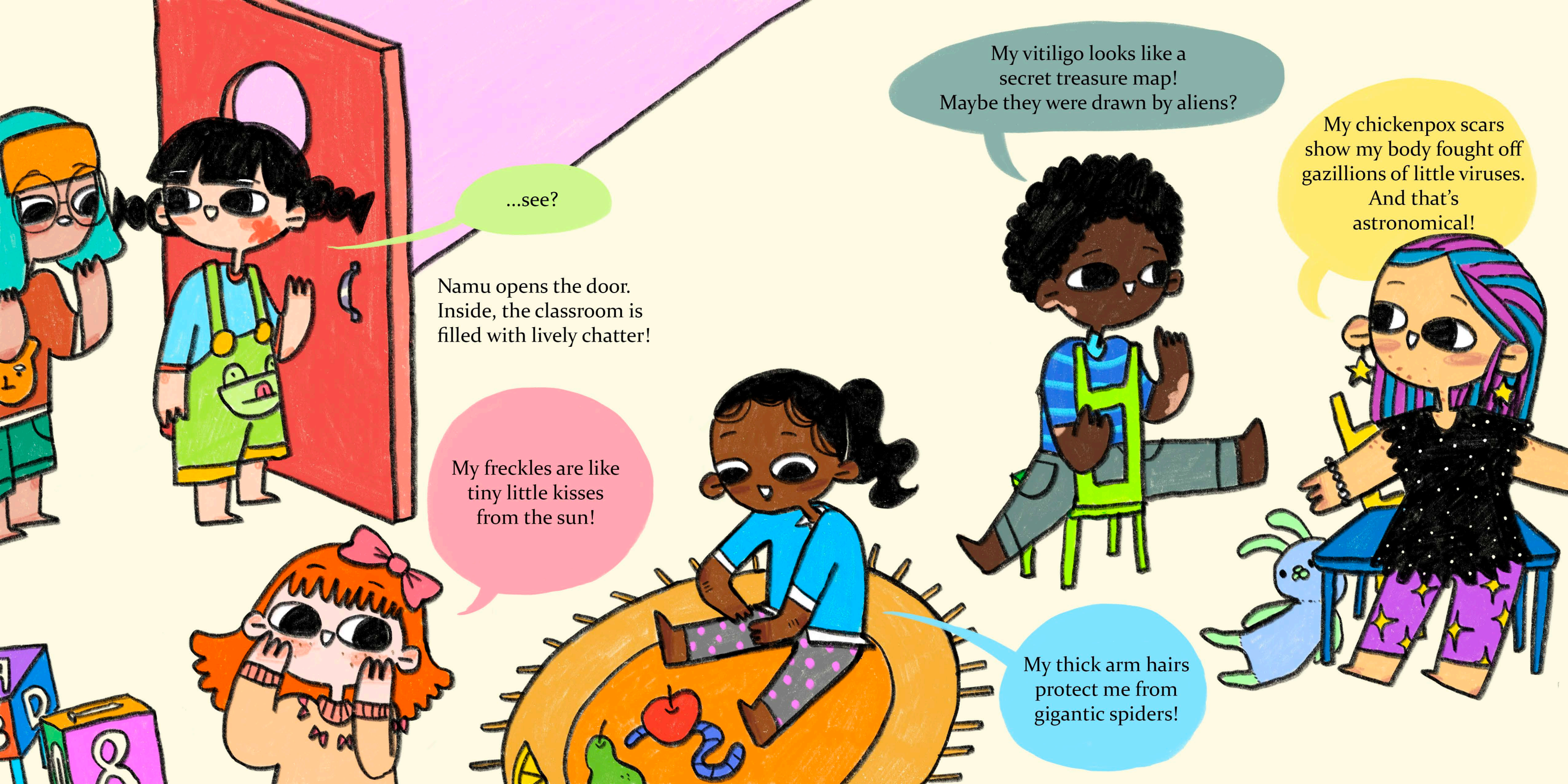


Gilby swallows hard, and lifts up an earflap so Namu can see.
There are little dry patches of red all across his neck!

Nobody knows.. but I have **eczema!**
Do you think people will think it's *weird* and *gross*?



No way! As long as you know you are **brave, unique, and resilient** because of your skin differences, everyone else will see it too...



...see?


Namu opens the door.
Inside, the classroom is
filled with lively chatter!

My freckles are like
tiny little kisses
from the sun!


My vitiligo looks like a
secret treasure map!
Maybe they were drawn by aliens?

My chickenpox scars
show my body fought off
gazillions of little viruses.
And that's
astronomical!

My thick arm hairs
protect me from
gigantic spiders!



Wow, I guess looking different isn't all bad!
Do you think... maybe my eczema makes me like *my favorite animal*?
Bears are very dry under their water-repellent fur!



That's the spirit!
So bears are your favorite animal?
What about your favorite color?

And so they walk to grab their lunchboxes, talking about their favorite colors and shapes and candy flavors.

Gilby is so enthusiastic about bear-shaped lollipops that he forgets his hat behind!

