

EBE'S NEW HOME

Faith Mekonnen

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To my husband, thank you for
sharing your stories with me. I love
you!





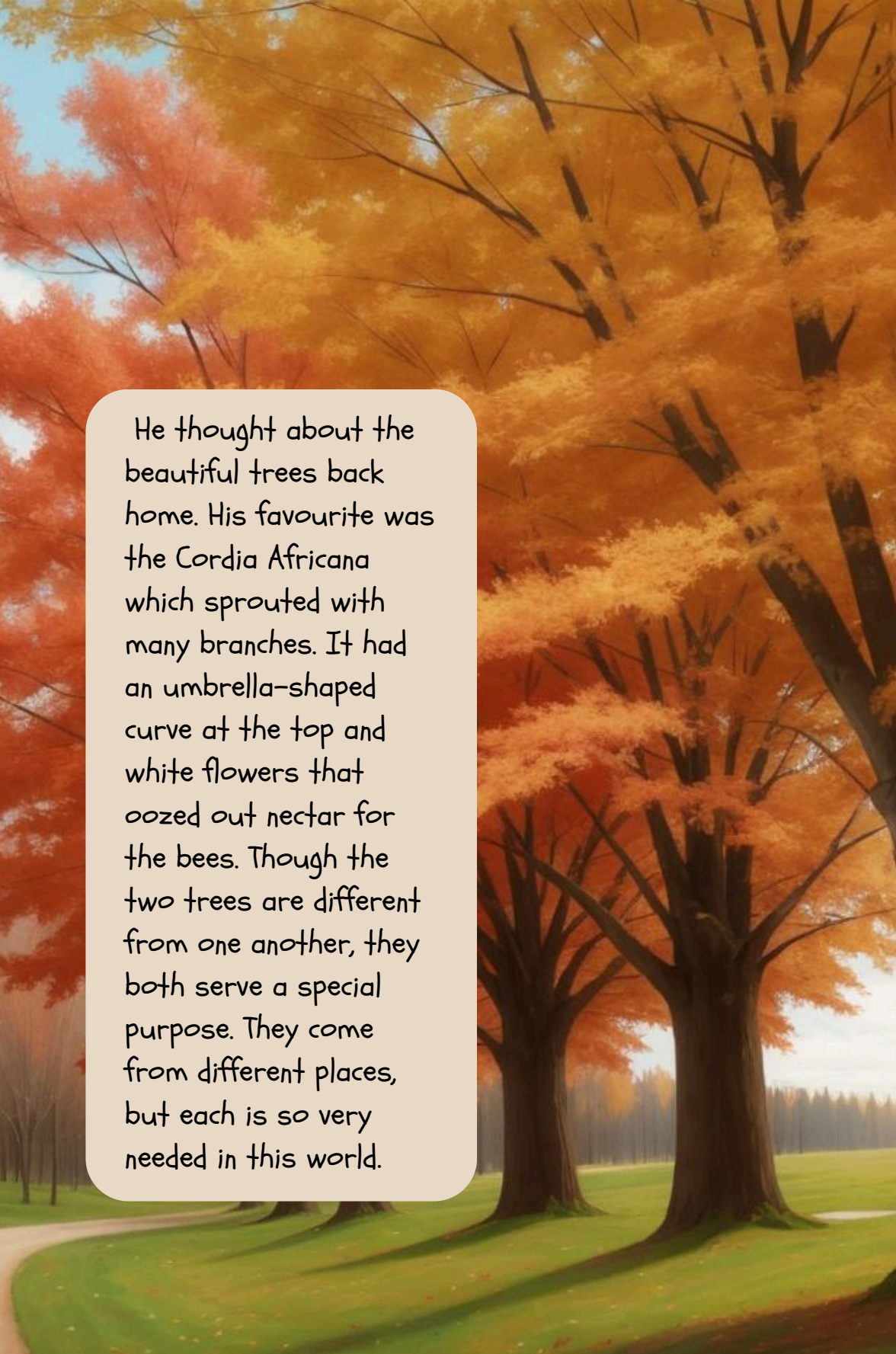
Ebe took his first step off the airplane. He looked around with his bright, brown eyes at the new place he would call home.



His heart ached as he thought about his friends back home. So, he tried to think of the new friends he would make. He had butterflies in his tummy just thinking about this new adventure. All in one moment, he felt nervous, sadness, and excitement.

Ebe looked out the window and noticed the Canadian Maple trees outside his bedroom. He loved how they fluttered in the wind. He watched the leaves fly off the branches and land softly on the grass.



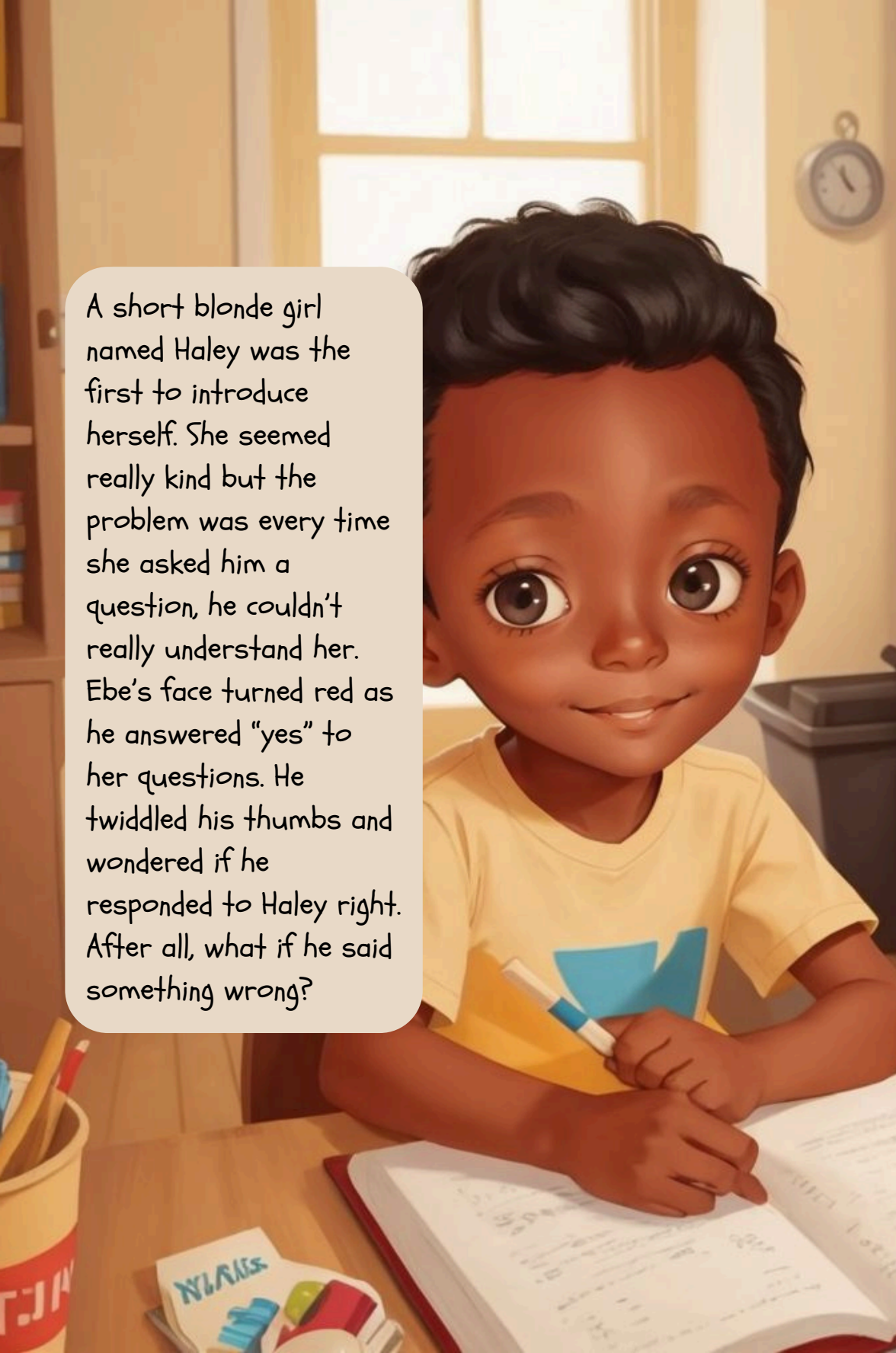


He thought about the beautiful trees back home. His favourite was the Cordia Africana which sprouted with many branches. It had an umbrella-shaped curve at the top and white flowers that oozed out nectar for the bees. Though the two trees are different from one another, they both serve a special purpose. They come from different places, but each is so very needed in this world.

On Ebe's first day of Canadian school, the air was cool. He adjusted his backpack and zipped up his coat. On his walk, he had SO MANY THOUGHTS!!! He wondered if he would meet another Ethiopian kid. What would his classmates and teachers be like?

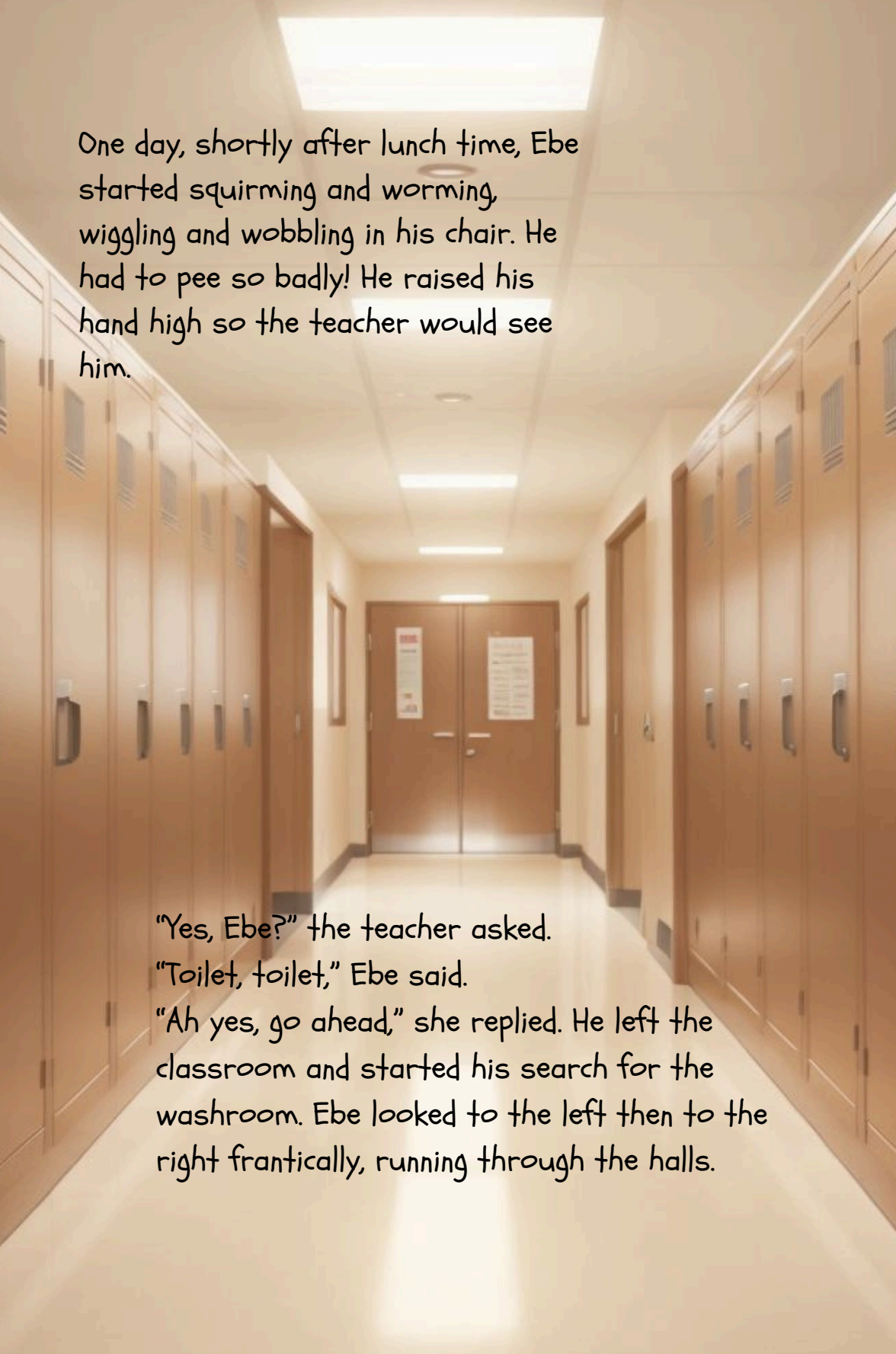


A short blonde girl named Haley was the first to introduce herself. She seemed really kind but the problem was every time she asked him a question, he couldn't really understand her. Ebe's face turned red as he answered "yes" to her questions. He twiddled his thumbs and wondered if he responded to Haley right. After all, what if he said something wrong?





Ebe thought about all the things he would say and ask the other kids if he could speak English better. He enjoyed talking and making jokes.

A perspective view of a school hallway. The hallway is lined with wooden lockers on both sides. At the end of the hallway, there is a double door with a sign on it. The floor is light-colored and the ceiling has recessed lighting.

One day, shortly after lunch time, Ebe started squirming and worming, wiggling and wobbling in his chair. He had to pee so badly! He raised his hand high so the teacher would see him.

"Yes, Ebe?" the teacher asked.

"Toilet, toilet," Ebe said.

"Ah yes, go ahead," she replied. He left the classroom and started his search for the washroom. Ebe looked to the left then to the right frantically, running through the halls.

"There it is!" He rushed over to the toilet, pulled down his pants and started to pee. All of a sudden, a girl with white skin and hazel eyes screamed at the top of her lungs.

"A boy! A boy is in the bathroom!!!!" Ebe's eyes widened, and he quickly turned his head around to see. He used the girls bathroom by mistake! He quickly finished up, and dashed out the bathroom door so nobody else would see him.





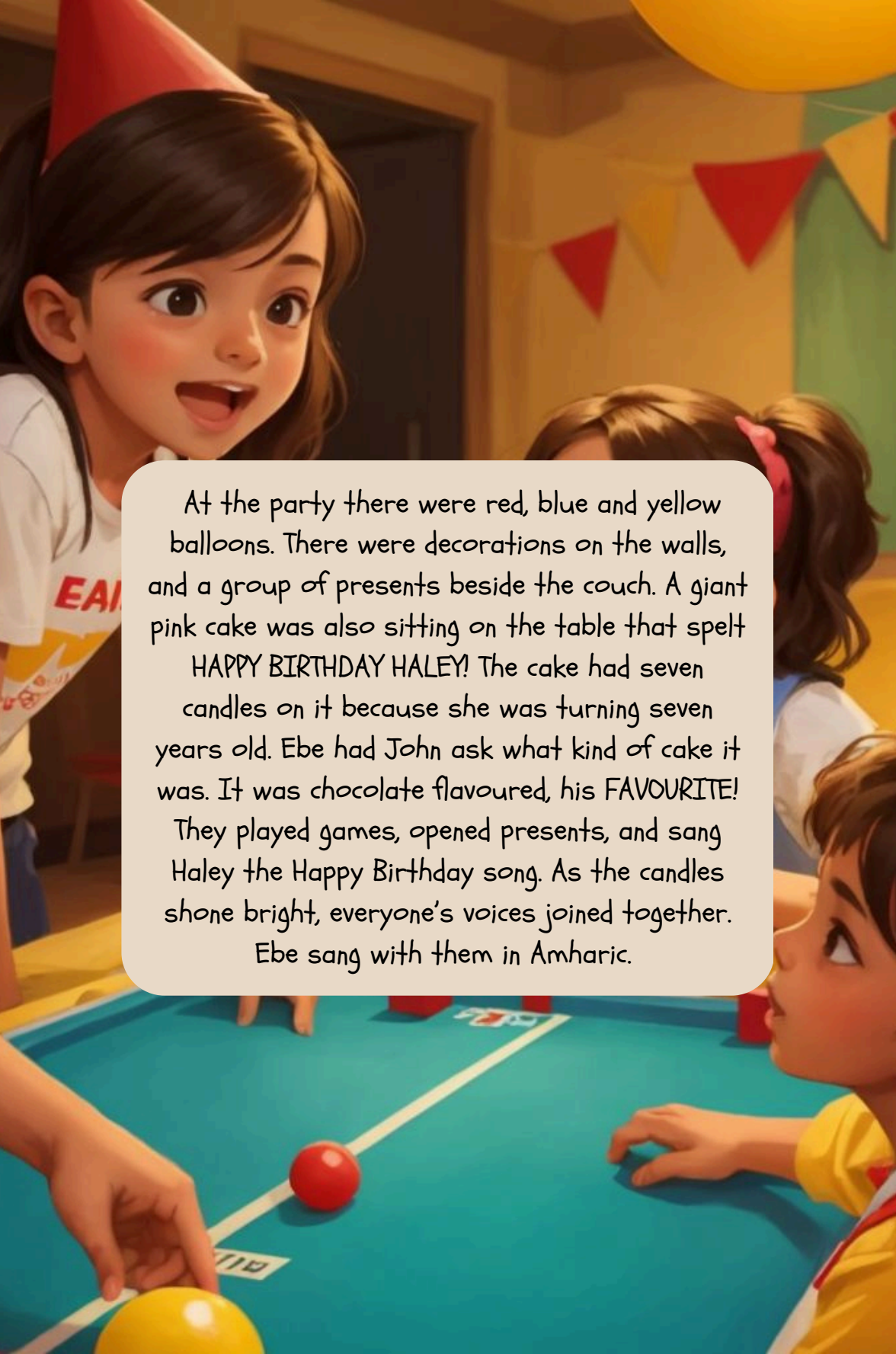
A few weeks later, Haley invited Ebe to her birthday party! He held up the invitation to his ESL worker, John. He helped Ebe read what it said. The invitation read:

"EVERYONE is invited to my 7th Birthday Party this Saturday at 1pm. I hope to see you there." Ebe was so excited to go, but he was unsure of himself. His shyness made him re-think going. But he knew this was a chance to make friends, so he decided to...

GO!!!

Since everyone seemed to be invited, Ebe asked both his mommy and John to come along so that he felt more comfortable.



A young girl with dark hair and a red party hat is looking towards the camera with a wide, excited smile. She is wearing a white t-shirt with the letters 'EAI' visible. In the background, there are red and yellow triangular bunting decorations hanging from the ceiling. To the right, another girl with a pink hair tie is partially visible. In the foreground, a boy in a yellow shirt is looking towards the left. They are gathered around a table with a blue surface, where a red ball and a yellow ball are visible. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting an indoor party setting.

At the party there were red, blue and yellow balloons. There were decorations on the walls, and a group of presents beside the couch. A giant pink cake was also sitting on the table that spelt HAPPY BIRTHDAY HALEY! The cake had seven candles on it because she was turning seven years old. Ebe had John ask what kind of cake it was. It was chocolate flavoured, his FAVOURITE! They played games, opened presents, and sang Haley the Happy Birthday song. As the candles shone bright, everyone's voices joined together. Ebe sang with them in Amharic.

The next day at school, Ebe's mommy packed him a fluffy sandwich in his lunch. It was peanut butter and jelly. Yum!

His stomach rumbled as he unzipped his lunch pail and pulled out the delicious sandwich. When the teacher noticed, she gasped and took the sandwich out of his hands.

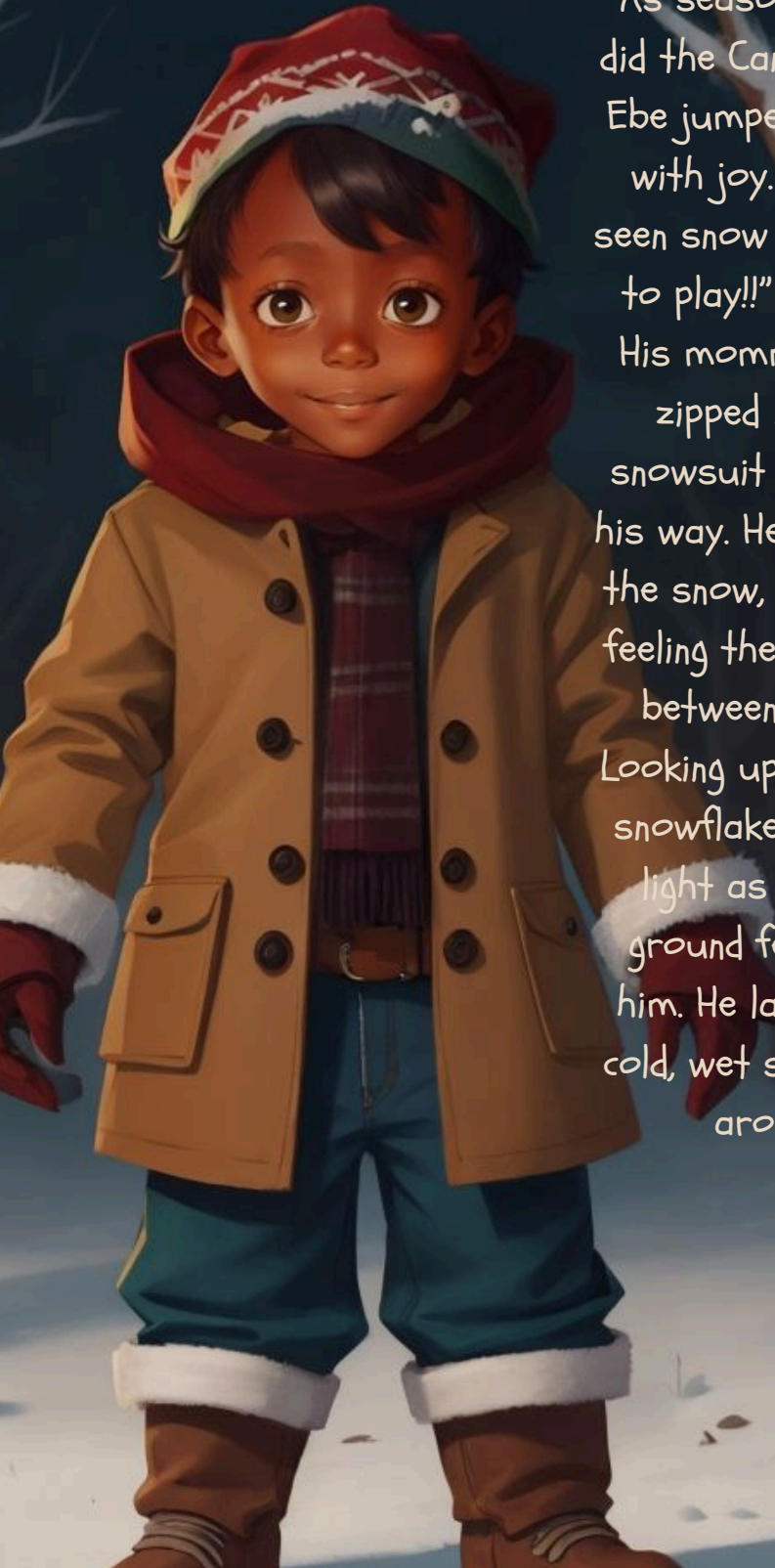
Confused, Ebe looked up. The teacher then pulled him aside.

Did he do something wrong? The teacher then explained some kids have allergies to peanut butter, so nobody is allowed to eat it at school. He put his head down.



The teacher made Ebe eat his lunch in a separate classroom. Still looking down, a tear rolled down his cheek and fell onto the table. He wished he could sit with Haley and the other kids. The teacher sent a letter home with Ebe so that his mommy would be aware of the peanut butter rule. John translated the letter for them. The next day, mommy packed him a turkey sandwich instead. Ebe was able to rejoin the class and be with his new friends again.



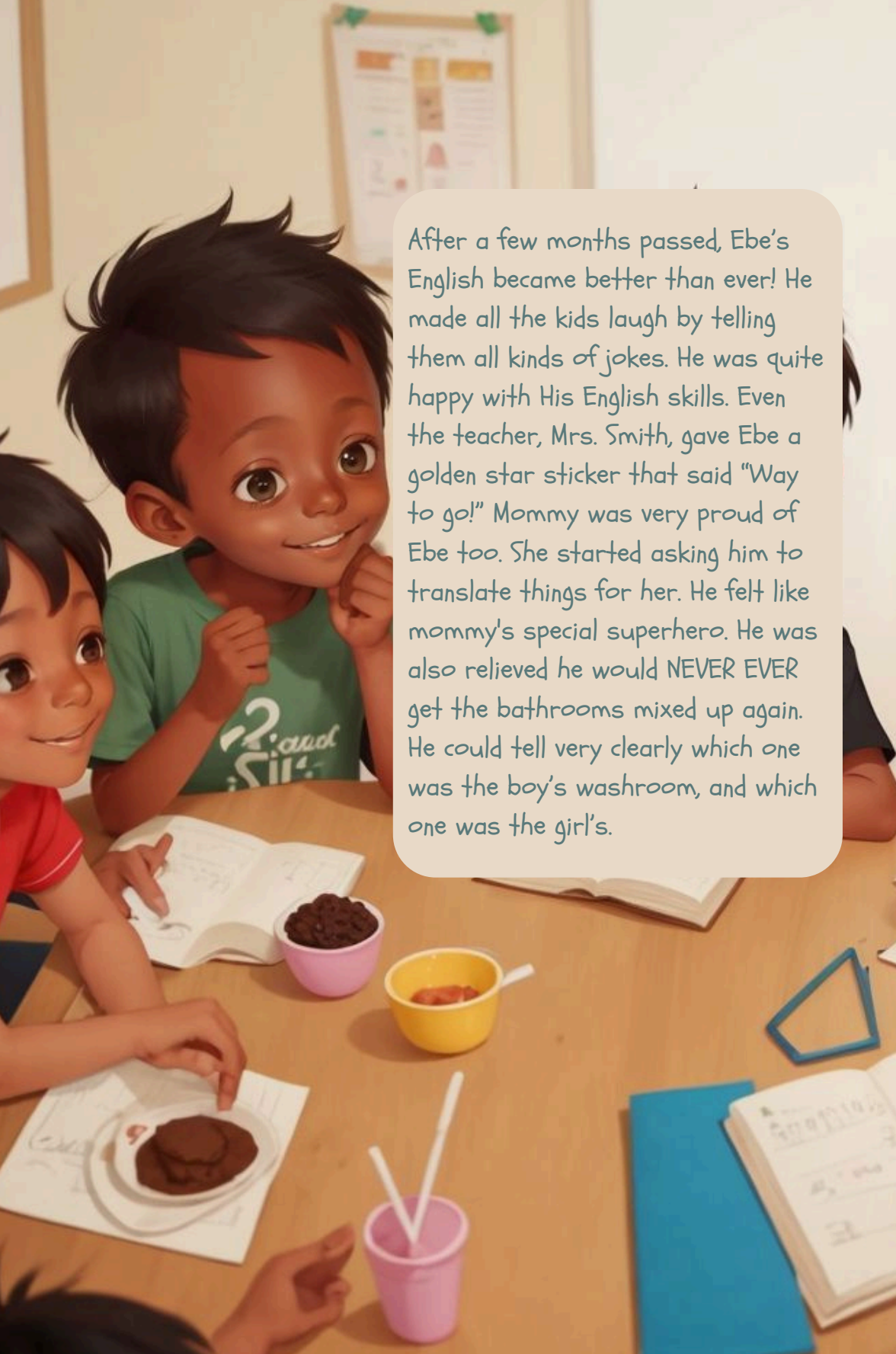


As seasons changed so did the Canadian weather. Ebe jumped up and down with joy. He had never seen snow before. "I want to play!!" Squealed Ebe. His mommy smiled. She zipped him into his snowsuit and he was on his way. He raced through the snow, grabbing it and feeling the softness of it between his mittens. Looking up, watching each snowflake twinkle in the light as it fell to the ground felt magical to him. He laid down in the cold, wet snow and rolled around in it.

Not much time had passed before he started to feel very cold. His toes started to get numb and his fingers felt all tingly. His nose was all red from sniffing. He ran back to the house and knocked on the door loudly.

When Mommy opened the door, Ebe fell flat on his face and tumbled into the house. "I guess I should have worn some extra socks," They laughed.



An illustration of two young boys sitting at a wooden table. The boy in the center has dark skin and spiky black hair, wearing a green t-shirt with '2nd Sil' visible. He is looking towards a text box on the right. The boy on the left has dark skin and short black hair, wearing a red shirt, and is also looking towards the text box. On the table are an open book, a pink bowl of chocolate cookies, a yellow bowl of red fruit, a pink cup with a white straw, and a blue folder with another book. A blue triangle is also on the table. In the background, there is a whiteboard with some papers pinned to it.

After a few months passed, Ebe's English became better than ever! He made all the kids laugh by telling them all kinds of jokes. He was quite happy with His English skills. Even the teacher, Mrs. Smith, gave Ebe a golden star sticker that said "Way to go!" Mommy was very proud of Ebe too. She started asking him to translate things for her. He felt like mommy's special superhero. He was also relieved he would NEVER EVER get the bathrooms mixed up again. He could tell very clearly which one was the boy's washroom, and which one was the girl's.



As Ebe grew more familiar with his new home, he met lots of friends with different skin tones. For example, Caleb is from Europe and Chen is from China. He also met a friend named David who is from El Salvador. David taught Ebe how to skateboard! Almost every day after school, Ebe would meet the boys for a bike ride.

By June, when the sky was clear and blue. The grass lush green. Ebe had lots of new memories. Some memories were good, some bad and other memories were downright silly. A good flashback was when Haley introduced him to pancakes with maple syrup and BeaverTails! (A BeaverTail is not actually the tail of a beaver; it is a desert!)



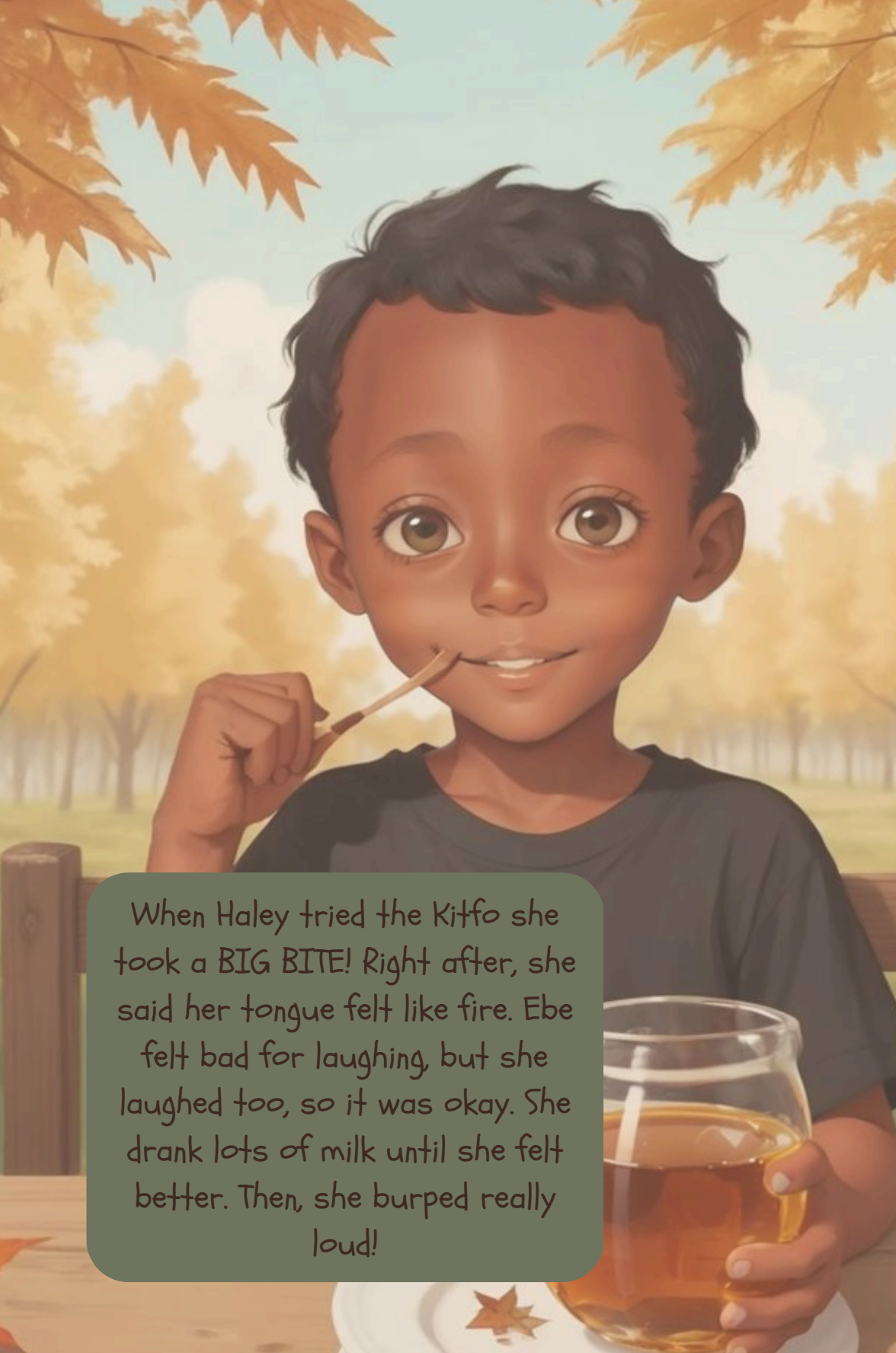
Ebe showed Haley how to flip Injera (that is an Ethiopian food). He told her that Injera is like a big pancake but instead of maple syrup, you put other toppings on it like potatoes. Then, he explained, you eat it together on one big plate! When she flipped the injera, she kept missing the pan by accident. She just needed some practice!



Although Haley and Ebe look different they had become better friends each day. She learned about Ethiopia and Ebe learned about Canada.

Ebe learned that maple syrup is sweet, and Haley learned that some Ethiopian dishes are too spicy for her. For example, Kitfo burnt her tongue.





When Haley tried the Kitfo she took a BIG BITE! Right after, she said her tongue felt like fire. Ebe felt bad for laughing, but she laughed too, so it was okay. She drank lots of milk until she felt better. Then, she burped really loud!

Sometimes when Ebe thought about going back home, mommy would give him a big hug. She missed Ethiopia too. That feeling was called being homesick. Ebe does not like that feeling. Maybe they will visit, and take a plane again someday. But for right now, they would stay in this new place, and make more memories there.



Ebe's old home will always be in his heart.
It's never really far. After all, it's in his blood.



He looked down at his hand with a grin. He remembered a time back in Ethiopia where he fell and hurt his little hand. Instead of grabbing the First Aid Kit, he bent down and grabbed some dirt and filled the little hole in his hand. When the skin healed, it left a little dark circle. That way, he will always have a piece of Ethiopia, right in the palm of his hand.

"Even though I miss and love Ethiopia, I have accepted my new home here." Ebe said, placing his hands in his mommy's hand's.

"I know we will go back one day." Ebe declared, while he and his mommy shared a big hug. They knew deep down that home was much more than a place; it was being with each other.



To newcomers to Canada,

First, welcome to your new home.
My prayer is that you and your
families will feel loved and cared for
in your settlement journey.

The purpose of this book is to help
kids navigate what they are feeling
and experiencing.

My hope is that this book provides
an up-close view of what moving to
a new country could look like and
give children a resource that they
can relate to.

May God bless you in your
settlement and give you peace.

About The Author

Hey, my name is Faith! It's nice to meet you! I am very passionate about serving children and families. I have travelled to 14 countries, 10 of those for cross-cultural work! From ESL teaching in Asia to traveling in Europe, my FAVORITE place was working in El Salvador, where I was involved in gang prevention programs for kids.

After receiving my degree in Intercultural Studies & Theology, I worked at an Ethiopian Church for four years and am still serving there today.

I am a wife to Samir, and together we pastor in Edmonton, Alberta!

In my free time, you'll probably catch me baking cookies and drinking out of fancy tea cups.

