

To all the students I have been honored to teach.
Helping you heal your hearts finally healed mine.

– Amie Dean

DUPLICATION AND COPYRIGHT

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopy, video or audio recording, or otherwise without prior written permission from the publisher, except for all worksheets and activities which may be reproduced for a specific group or class. Reproduction for an entire school or school district is prohibited.

NCYI titles may be purchased in bulk at special discounts for educational, business, fundraising, or promotional use. For more information, please email sales@ncyi.org.



P.O. Box 22185
Chattanooga, TN 37422-2185
423-899-5714 • 866-318-6294
fax 423-899-4547 • www.ncyi.org

ISBN: 9781937870560
E-book ISBN: 9781953945112
Library of Congress Control Number: 2018966097
© 2018 National Center for Youth Issues, Chattanooga, TN • All rights reserved.
Written by: Amie Dean • Illustrations by: Susan Keeter
Published by National Center for Youth Issues • Softcover
Printed at Starkey Printing, Chattanooga, Tennessee, U.S.A., February 2019

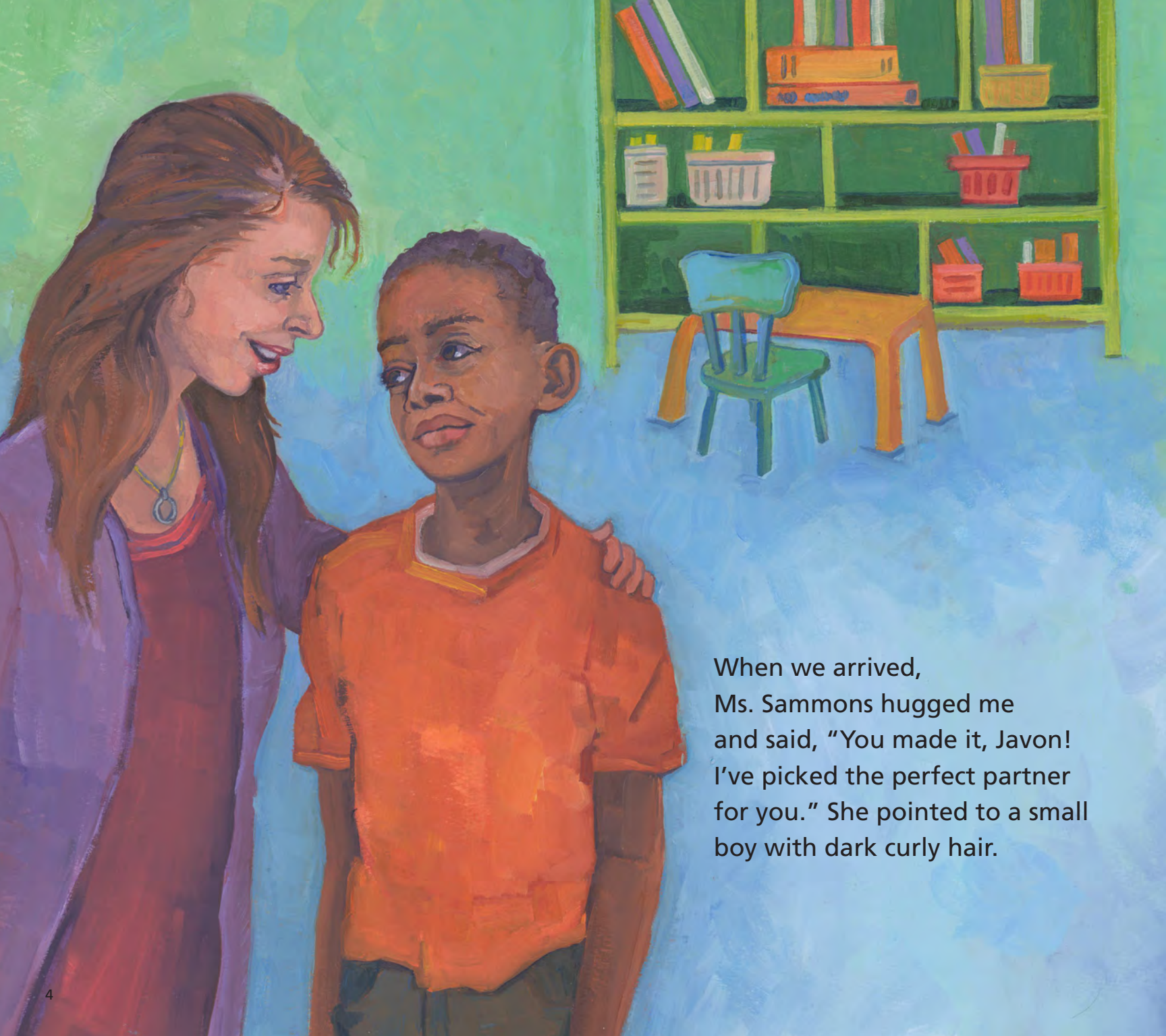
The information in this book is designed to provide helpful information on the subjects discussed and is not intended to be used, nor should it be used, to diagnose or treat any mental health or medical condition. For diagnosis or treatment of any mental health or medical issue, consult a licensed counselor, psychologist, or physician. The publisher and author are not responsible for any specific mental or physical health needs that may require medical supervision, and are not liable for any damages or negative consequences from any treatment, action, application or preparation, to any person reading or following the information in this book. References are provided for informational purposes only and do not constitute endorsement of any websites or other sources.

"Javon, please line up," Mr. Hirsch, my fifth-grade teacher, called.

I had finally made it into the special reading group! We were going to meet our kindergarten Book Buddies today, and I was going to see my favorite teacher, Ms. Sammons. Win-win.

Ms. Sammons was really nice to me when I had all my troubles. She helped me get control of my anger, so I knew she was going to be proud to see I had been picked to be a Book Buddy.





When we arrived,
Ms. Sammons hugged me
and said, "You made it, Javon!
I've picked the perfect partner
for you." She pointed to a small
boy with dark curly hair.

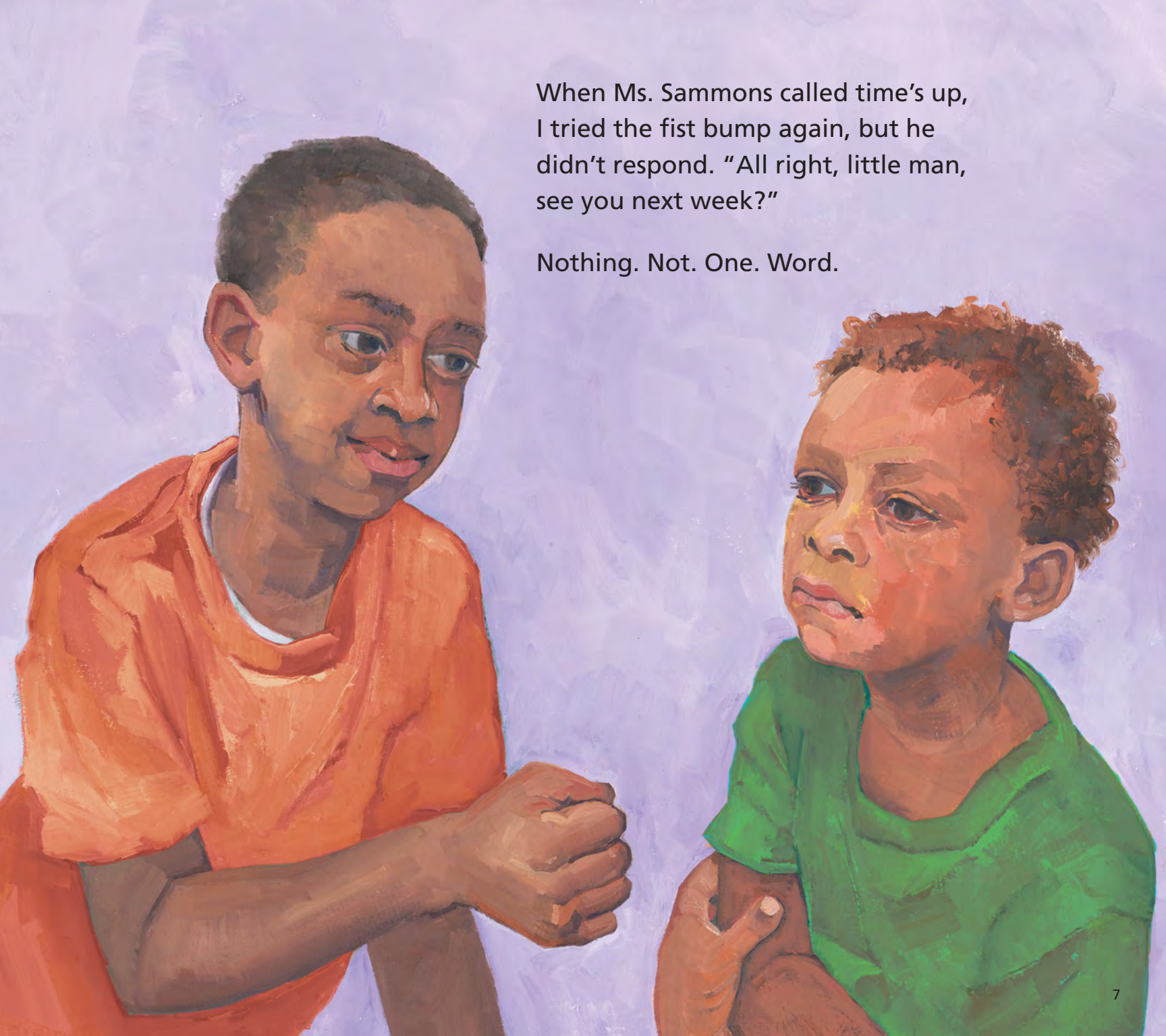
“Richard, this is Javon, and he will be your Book Buddy. You’re going to love him.”

Richard barely turned his head around to look at me and then slowly faced the wall again. I felt kind of disappointed. Most of the other little kids jumped up and ran to their Book Buddies.



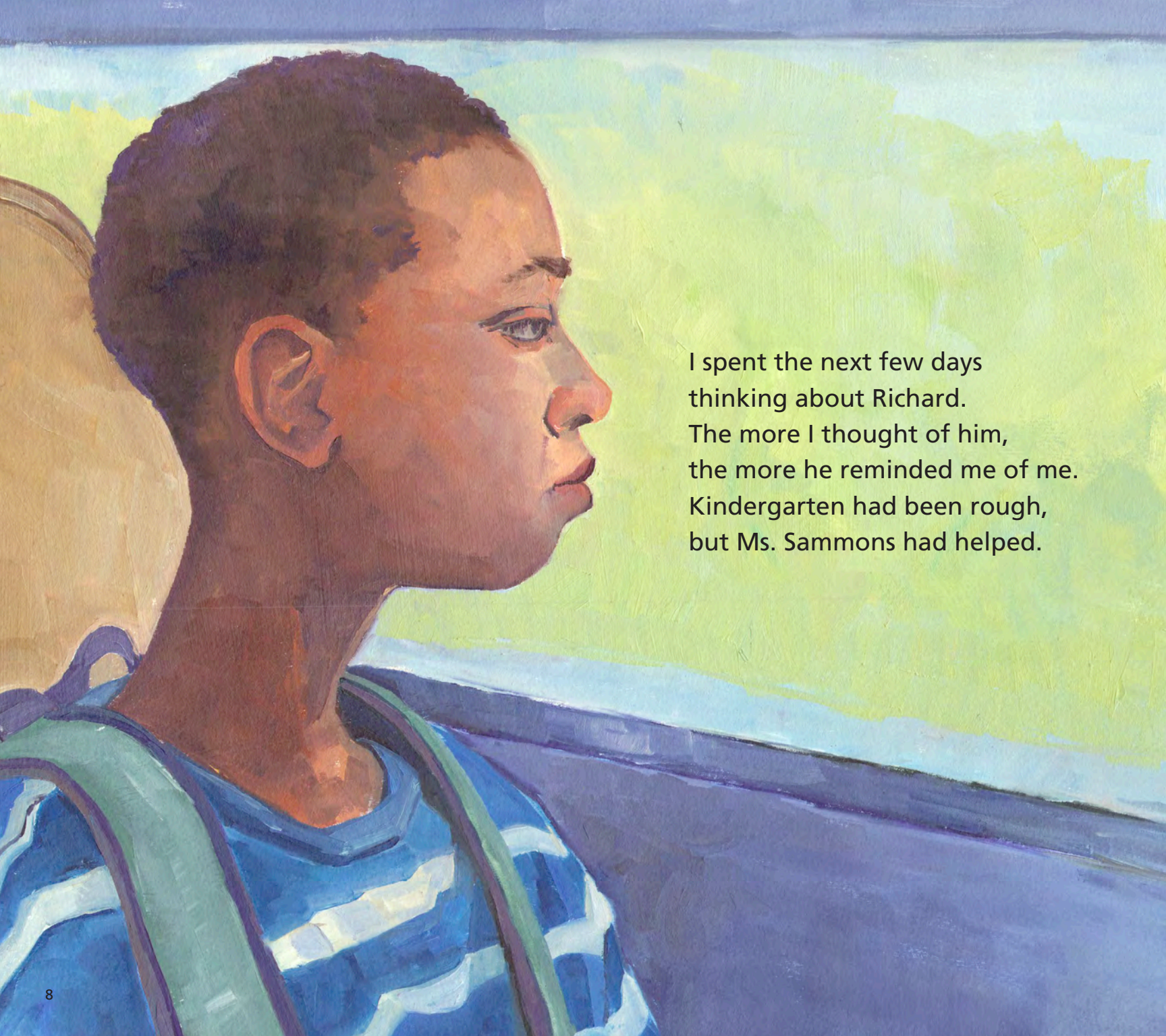
I sat down next to Richard and stuck out my fist for a bump. He was not having it. I asked him about his favorite book and favorite superhero, but no answer. He kept his head down, so I stopped asking questions and told him a few things about me.

"Ms. Sammons was my kindergarten teacher," I said. "I love to play football and basketball." "What do you like to do?" Still no answer, so I read him a book about animals.



When Ms. Sammons called time's up,
I tried the fist bump again, but he
didn't respond. "All right, little man,
see you next week?"

Nothing. Not. One. Word.



I spent the next few days
thinking about Richard.
The more I thought of him,
the more he reminded me of me.
Kindergarten had been rough,
but Ms. Sammons had helped.