

*Vermillion Ship Academy Series*  
*Book #1*

# **What's Going on in Room 223?**



**Dain Ray Devon**

## Dedication

With every word, rhyme, and dialogue, there are people that I would like to dedicate this book to:

### **Diane Lee (Vermillion) Taylor, Miss Verma**

“Thank you for making the decision to become an educator at Ball State University and going to England where you did your student teaching! They trained you well to become not just a teacher but a mentor and light to children everywhere! Mom, you shared with me that your students called you Miss Verma. Well, thank you for sharing that name with me because that so happens to be one of the main characters in this book!”

### **Aunts and Uncles in Teaching**

“Thank you, Aunt Rhonda, Uncle Robert, Aunt Lori, and Aunt Connie! You all have passed your knowledge in your content to better future generations. Aunt Rhonda, thank you for helping me pass the Praxis II in math so that I could become a certified teacher. Without that title, there were certain duties that I could not do as a teaching assistant at Kitley Elementary School. Uncle Robert, thank you for helping Shanae pass the Math section. I think we all know that Shanae and I just don’t care about those story problems, but you and Aunt Rhonda certainly helped us both. Aunt Connie and Aunt Lori, thank you for your service as principals and teachers. I am certain that you have touched and encouraged many students and teachers to put more effort into studying, reading, teaching, and overcoming setbacks!”

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### **Choir Directors**

“Thank you, Joel Kenemore, Johanne Hanson, Alfred Taylor, Lanny Wolfe, Elizabeth Taylor, and Frances Jackson, for your love for music and teaching! I know that I was not on pitch every single note, and I did not major in music; however, it was just the joy of singing and music that you imparted to me. Music helped me through the darkest times of my life and continues to give me hope and inspiration. Music helped me become a better reader! Music helped me become a better writer and poet with the different rhythms and rhymes! Music allowed me to express myself through sign language when I could not teach or sing for six months! Music gave me the inspiration to come up with the character of Jenny Fermata and Mrs. Jackson! What else can I say? Music, simply, does it all!”

### **Past-Current-Future Students**

“Thank you to all my students, past, present, and future. If I could list all your names, I would. If I could give you one piece of advice, I would say that it does not matter if you get an A, B, or C. You are loved, worthy, special, blessed, and favored. You have a specific gift within yourself, and I encourage you to share that gift with the world! Be love and give love!”

### **My Readers**

“Thank you to all my readers and followers! Have you read my other books? If not, I highly encourage you to go to [dainraydevonbooks.com](http://dainraydevonbooks.com) to download my latest newsletter and see my current books. I am also on You tube, Facebook, and Instagram, which you can find on the back of the book. When you have time, please do a review of this book on Amazon, Goodreads, and Walmart.”

### **Educators Everywhere**

“Thank you, teachers, aides, and principals, everywhere because you all play a role in the development of children. And I hope the children are teaching you as much as you are teaching them! Taking this into consideration, every day is a moment for you to make an impact on the children and the children to make an impact on you. When reading this book, I hope that you come away with the truth that you should not go through your career living as a robot. You all have an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of children that enter your doors!”

### **L.C. Young**

“Thank you again for being a mentor to me. Well done thy good and faithful servant!”

### **Mr. Rice**

“To my high school Spanish teacher, thank you for pushing me beyond my expectations and to always move forward with the Spanish club motto “Adelante, Siempre, Adelante!”

## Speech and Music Matters

The elementary years of a child's life are essential regarding speech and language. Since not all children are the same and develop at different rates, some children may need speech services at school. These classes enable the students to become better communicators and productive members of society.

I, Dain Ray Devon, know this personally because I was one of them. During my elementary years, my parents thought it was best for me to take speech so that I could become a better communicator. Thinking back to this time, I'm glad they did because speech gave me the tools to express myself better and how to pronounce my R's. As I became more confident in speaking, I became more responsive in classroom tasks and activities.

As I moved on to sixth grade, I had the option to choose between choir, study hall, and band as electives. With me being a shy and timid person, I chose to take choir so that I could become more comfortable speaking in front of people.

So, parents, I encourage you to love your child by giving him/her the best education possible. If your school offers your child speech services, please take full advantage of them. These services will enable your child to grow as an effective communicator and student. And if you find your child may need more avenues, have him or her take choir, band, or another elective depending on your school's curriculum. Who knows what special talent your child may have growing deep inside?

I thank you for taking the time to read this, and I hope that you gained a better understanding of the type of author that I am and the services available at your school for your child if need be. I write because I love to write, but most importantly, I write because it is what I have experienced in my life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dain Ray Devon". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name "Dain Ray Devon".

## **Signatures and Notes**

“Knowledge is just knowledge, but it is what you do with it that makes the difference!”

~Dain Ray Devon

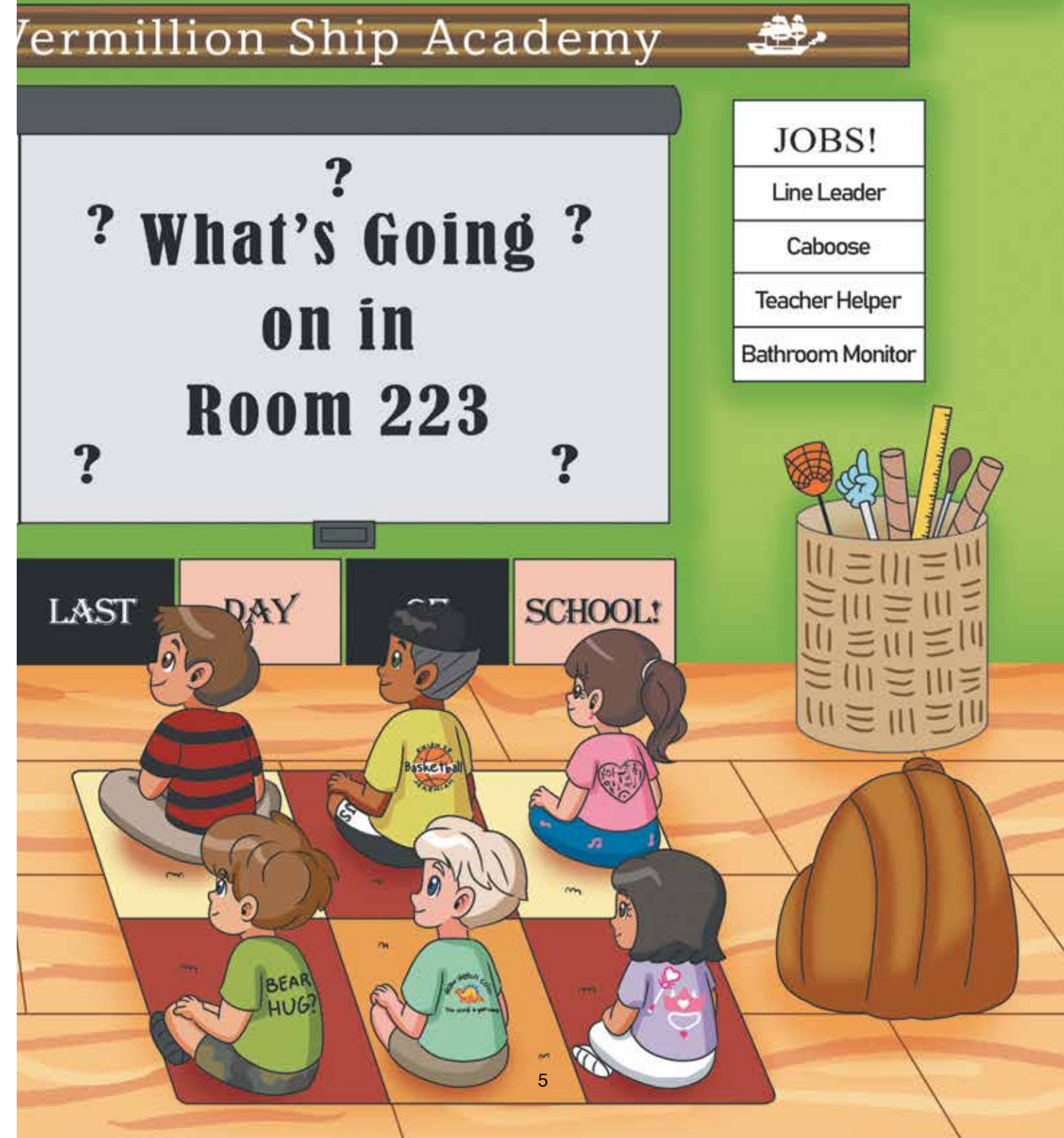
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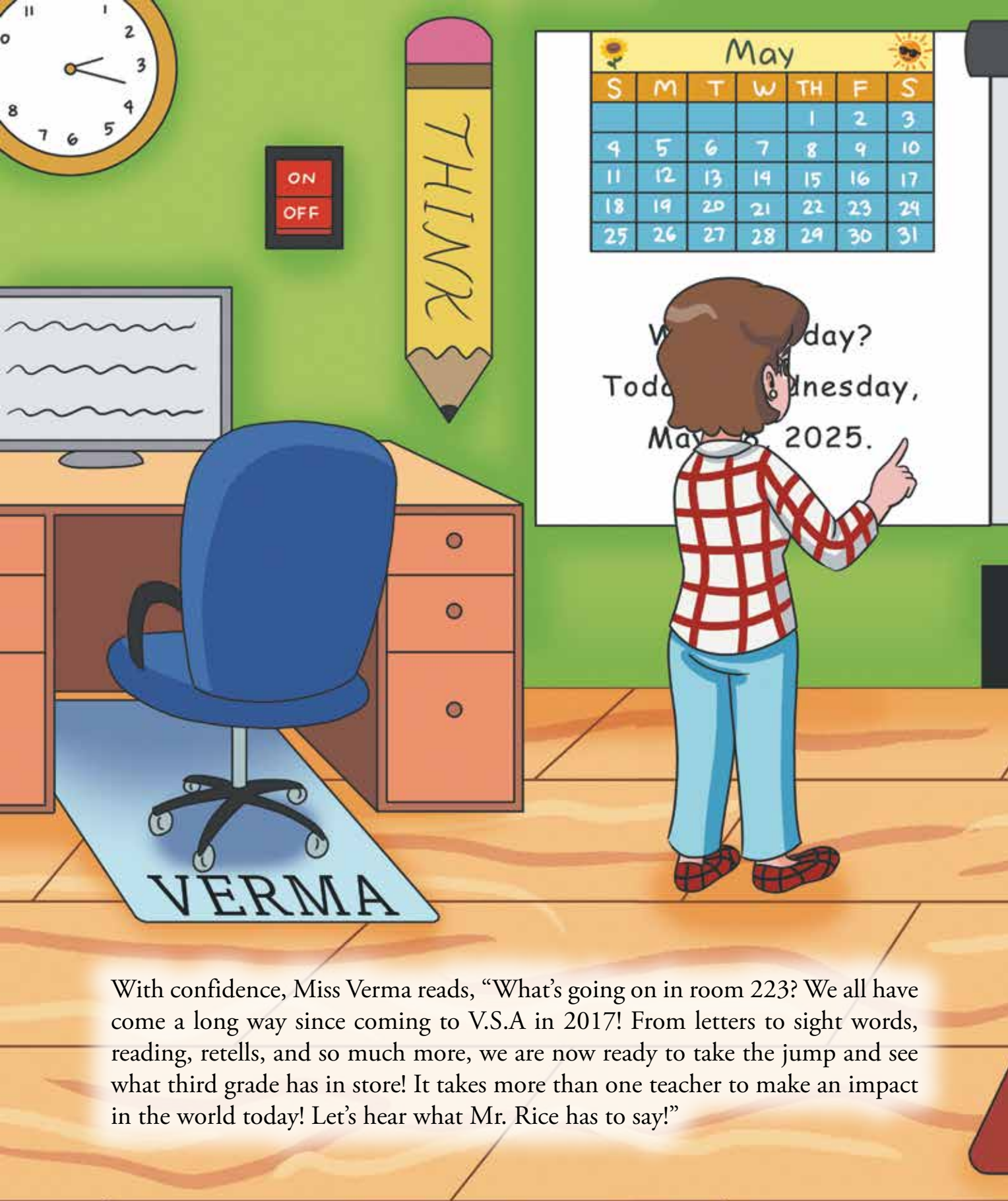
What's today?  
Today is Wednesday,  
May 13, 2025

*It's the last day at Vermillion Ship Academy, and Miss Verma is ending the day with a poem for her second-grade class. "Okay guys! Are you ready to end the school year with our last poem?" "Yeah, let's do it!" said the students. "Okay, well let's do it! Now I know it's the last day of school but just remember to use whole body listening like Billy and Santiago! Turning on the projector, Miss Verma informs the class, "Now guys, the poem I have for you today is called "What's Going on in Room 223"; I am going to read it out loud the first time and I want you to watch and listen. All the kids look and listen carefully as Miss Verma reads the poem.*

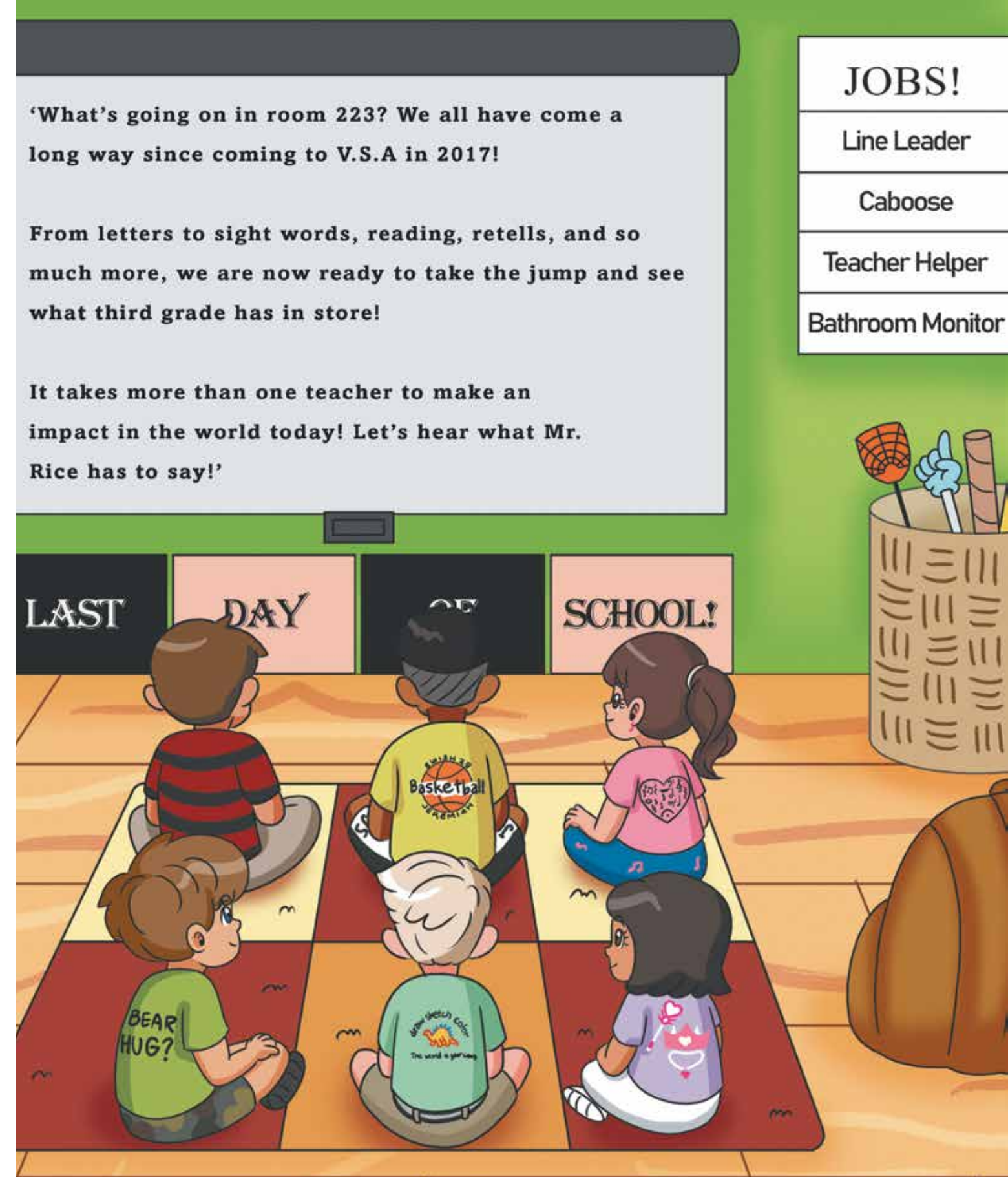


- JOBS!**
- Line Leader
  - Caboose
  - Teacher Helper
  - Bathroom Monitor

LAST DAY OF SCHOOL!



With confidence, Miss Verma reads, "What's going on in room 223? We all have come a long way since coming to V.S.A in 2017! From letters to sight words, reading, retells, and so much more, we are now ready to take the jump and see what third grade has in store! It takes more than one teacher to make an impact in the world today! Let's hear what Mr. Rice has to say!"



## JOBS!

Line Leader

Caboose

Teacher Helper

Bathroom Monitor

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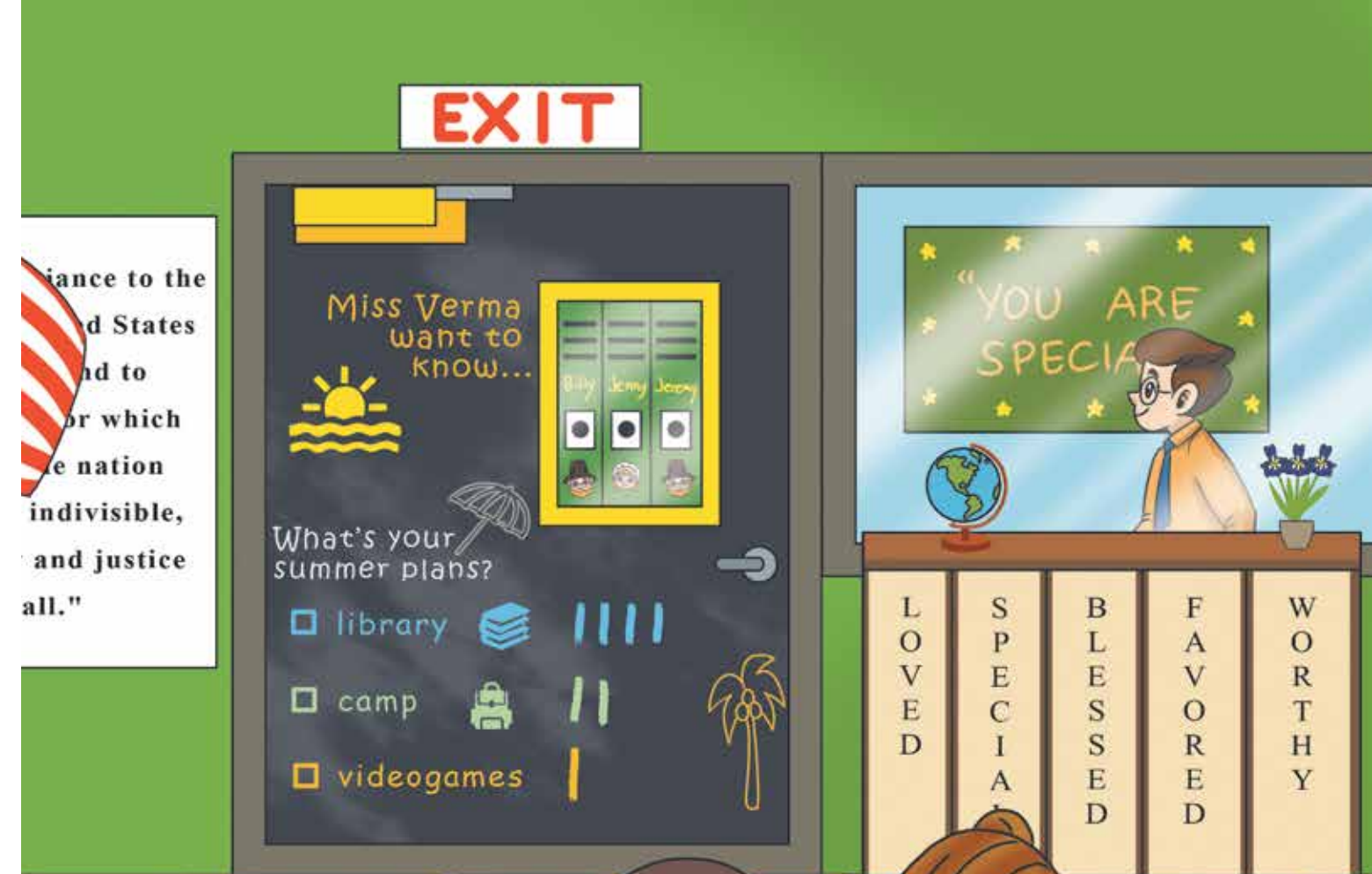
LAST

DAY

OF SCHOOL!



As I was listening, I thought I saw Mr. Rice outside the window. I just had to say something, so I raised my hand. “Miss Verma, Miss Verma! Where’s Mr. Rice? Is he not here yet?” “Billy, Mr. Rice will be here! I know that you all like working with him!” “You betcha Miss Verma!” said Markeeta. In fact, Mr. Rice let me use his big blue glasses one time!” Turning over his left shoulder, Santiago chimed in, “Well Markeeta, you might have gotten to wear his blue glasses, but I got to wear his bug glasses!” Whipping her head around, “Oh yeah Santiago, well Mr. Rice chose me to read to a student in kindergarten!” “Oh yeah Markeeta...!” Things started to escalate between Markeeta and Santiago over Mr. Rice, who seems to be the most popular aide at Vermillion Ship Academy. “Santiago and Markeeta, let’s get back to the lesson!” Looking at their teacher with respect, Santiago and Markeeta responded, “Yes Miss Verma!”







## JOBS!

Line Leader

Caboose

Teacher Helper

Bathroom Monitor

**'What's going on in room 223? We all have come a long way since coming to V.S.A in 2017!**

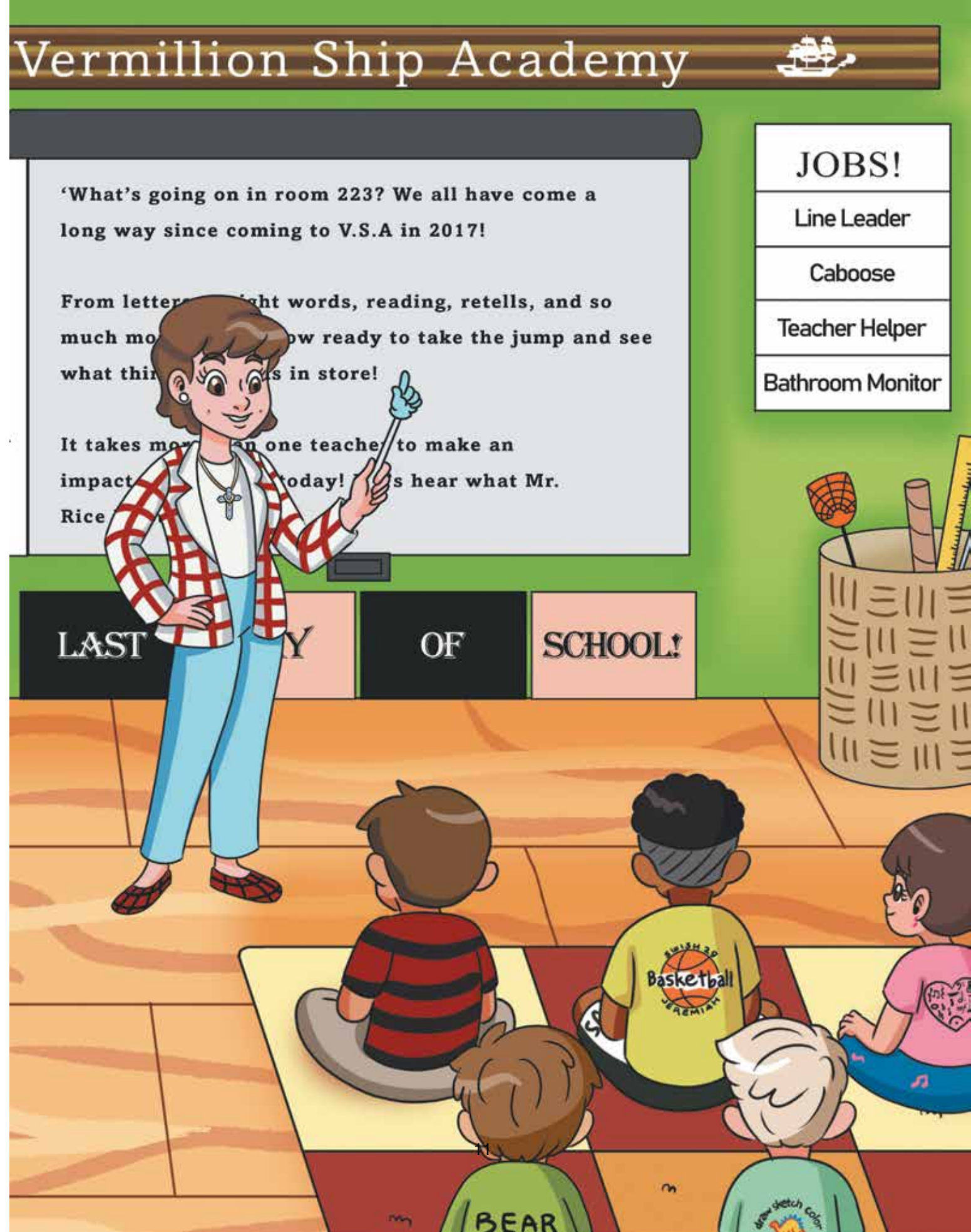
**From letters to sight words, reading, retells, and so much more, we are now ready to take the jump and see what third grade has in store!**

**It takes more than one teacher to make an impact in the world today! Let us now hear what Mr. Rice has to say!**

**LAST DAY OF SCHOOL!**

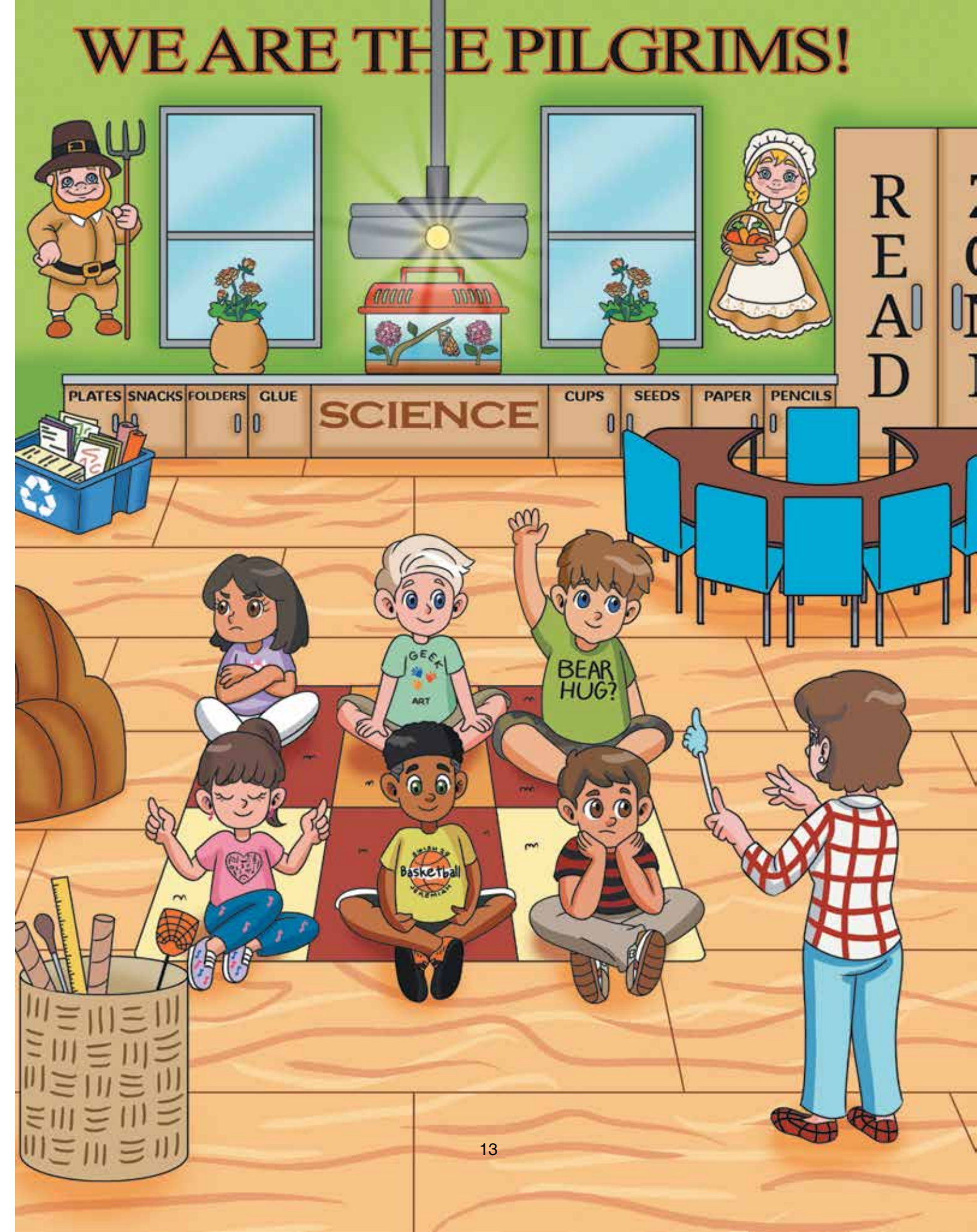
Miss Verma walks over to the basket and takes out the blue finger pointer. I wonder what she is going to do with that, thought Santiago. With the finger in her left hand, Miss Verma said, "Okay class all together now! I will be looking around to see who gets to be the teacher helper! The teacher helper will have the honor to point at the words with this finger! I will do it first so that you can see." Miss Verma waves the finger pointer and says, "Now three, two, one!" Miss Verma points to each word and reads the poem aloud with the students.

"What's going on in room 223? We all have come a long way since coming to V.S.A in 2017! From letters to sight words, reading, retells, and so much more, we are now ready to take the jump and see what third grade has in store! It takes more than one teacher to make an impact in the world today! Let us now hear what Mr. Rice has to say!"



While reading the poem the second time, Miss Verma sees Jenny closing her eyes and waving her hands in the air as if she was conducting music like Mrs. Jackson. She then looks at Markeeta and sees that her eyes are only on the bean bag. Miss Verma then looks at Jeremy and sees that he is looking at his shirt daydreaming about basketball and swimming. *Gazing over at Francisco and Billy, Miss Verma thought, Francisco and Billy, hmmm? They have been the teacher helper many times! I think it is time for somebody else!*

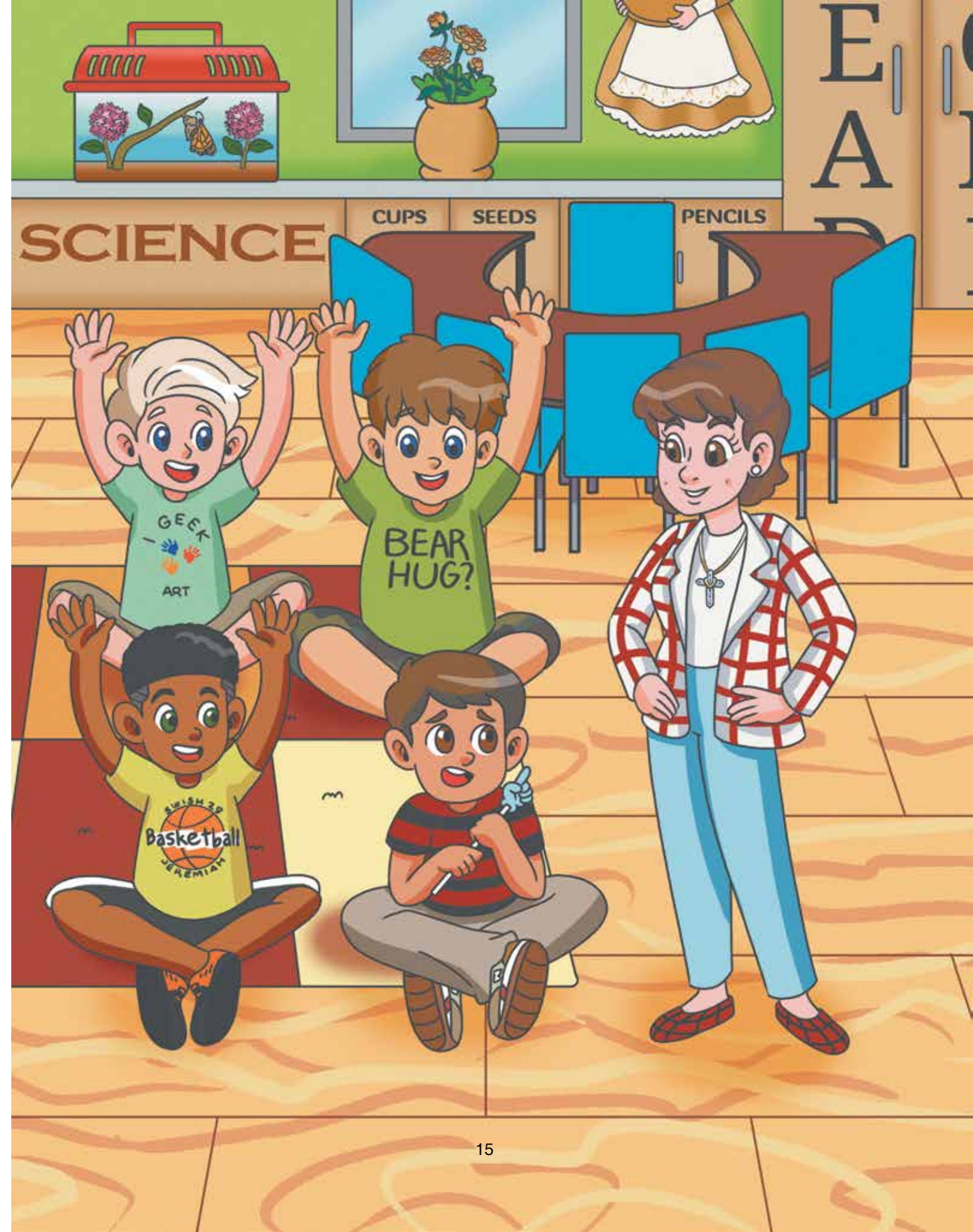
*Looking at Santiago, Miss Verma thought, well, he is sitting correctly, his eyes are on the screen and is paying attention, but is he ready? Miss Moon did tell me that he had struggles in first grade. It took him longer to do in-class work and homework. In fact, he repeated first grade, and Miss Moon informed his parents to enlist Santiago in speech classes with Miss Brown. I know that I have done my best, but that Mr. Rice has done a lot for him also. Well, let's find out!*



Miss Verma walks over to Santiago and hands him the pointer. “Oh! Miss Verma, thank you so much! I will do the best that I can!” “Good Santiago, do I need to show you?” “No Miss Verma, I think I can do it, but I’m very nervous!” “Santiago!” replied Miss Verma. “You got this! You have come a long way! Class, why don’t we all root for Santiago! This is his first time as the teacher helper!” “Come on Santiago! You can do it!” yelled Markeeta. Billy chimed in, “Santiago, you are worthy!” “Yes! Billy’s right!” said Jeremy. “You are worthy, but you are also special and have a future!” “Guys, guys, guys! said Miss Verma. I have an idea! Let’s raise our hands for Santiago and yell, “Sí se puede three times!” “Miss Verma! That’s a great idea!” claimed Jenny. With all their minds in one accord, Miss Verma and the class yelled, “Sí, se puede! Sí se puede! Sí, se puede!” Feeling the hairs on his skin rise, Santiago stood up, walked to the front of the class, and gave a nod to Miss Verma. *With the baton in her hand, Miss Verma said, “Okay class for the last time!”*

“What’s going on in room 223? We all have come a long way since coming to V.S.A in 2017! From letters to sight words, reading, retells, and so much more, we are now ready to take the jump and see what third grade has in store! It takes more than one teacher to make an impact in the world today! Let’s hear what Mr. Rice has to say!”

*Suddenly, there were three hard knocks at the door.* “Well class!” said Miss Verma. “I wonder who that could be!” “It’s Mr. Rice!” Yelled Billy. Miss Verma calmly retorted, “Well, Billy how do you know? It could be Mr. Phillips.” Looking at Miss Verma with his shoulders shrugged and a big smile on his face, Billy said, “I just know!” Seeing the excitement on her students’ faces, Miss Verma asked. “Class, should we let our guest in?” With their hands raised, the class yelled, “Yeah!”



With her heart racing a mile a minute, Miss Verma rushed to the door, opened it, and saw that it was Mr. Rice. “Why hello Mr. Rice! What brings you to room 223?” “Well, Miss Verma I happen to have letters for your kiddos! Do you mind if I put them in their mailboxes?” Miss Verma responded, “No Mr. Rice, I don’t mind, but did you have anything else you wanted to share?” “Well, Miss Verma I wrote a letter to the class, and I wanted to read it to them. If it is not a problem.” “No Mr. Rice! Not at all, but I do have to start my writing lesson in five minutes. The class is all yours.”

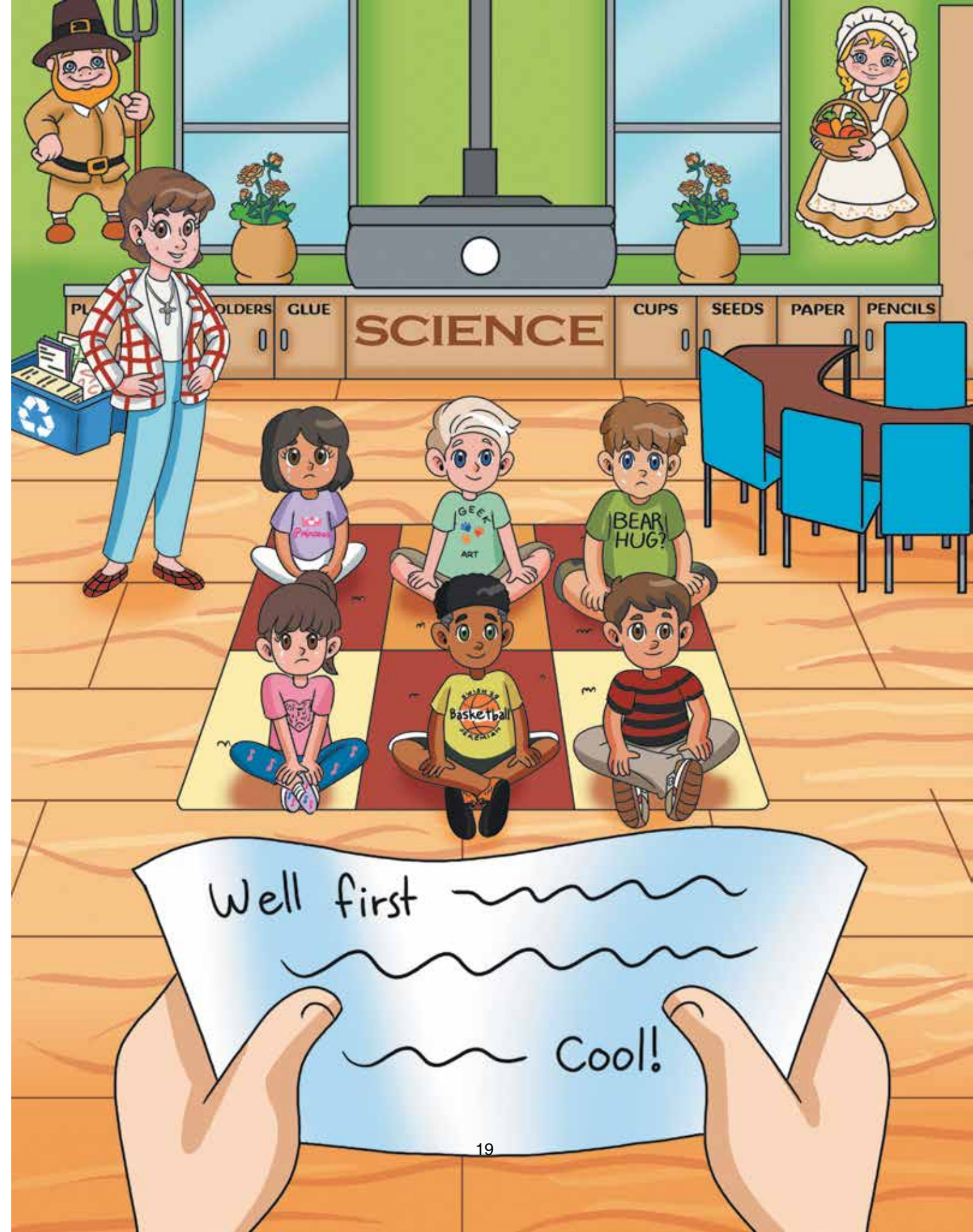
Thinking to himself, okay Mr. Rice. You got this! It is the last day of school, and you will miss these students; however, you are getting a teaching position next year; it’s just at a different school. Also, look at the names of important teachers and mentors on the floor. Each one of those names has made an impact on children’s lives. Think of the lives you will be able to touch with this new teaching position. Maybe you will find your name Jaime Luis Rice on the floor one of these days! Just go in front of the screen, read your letter, and put the letters in the children’s mailboxes!

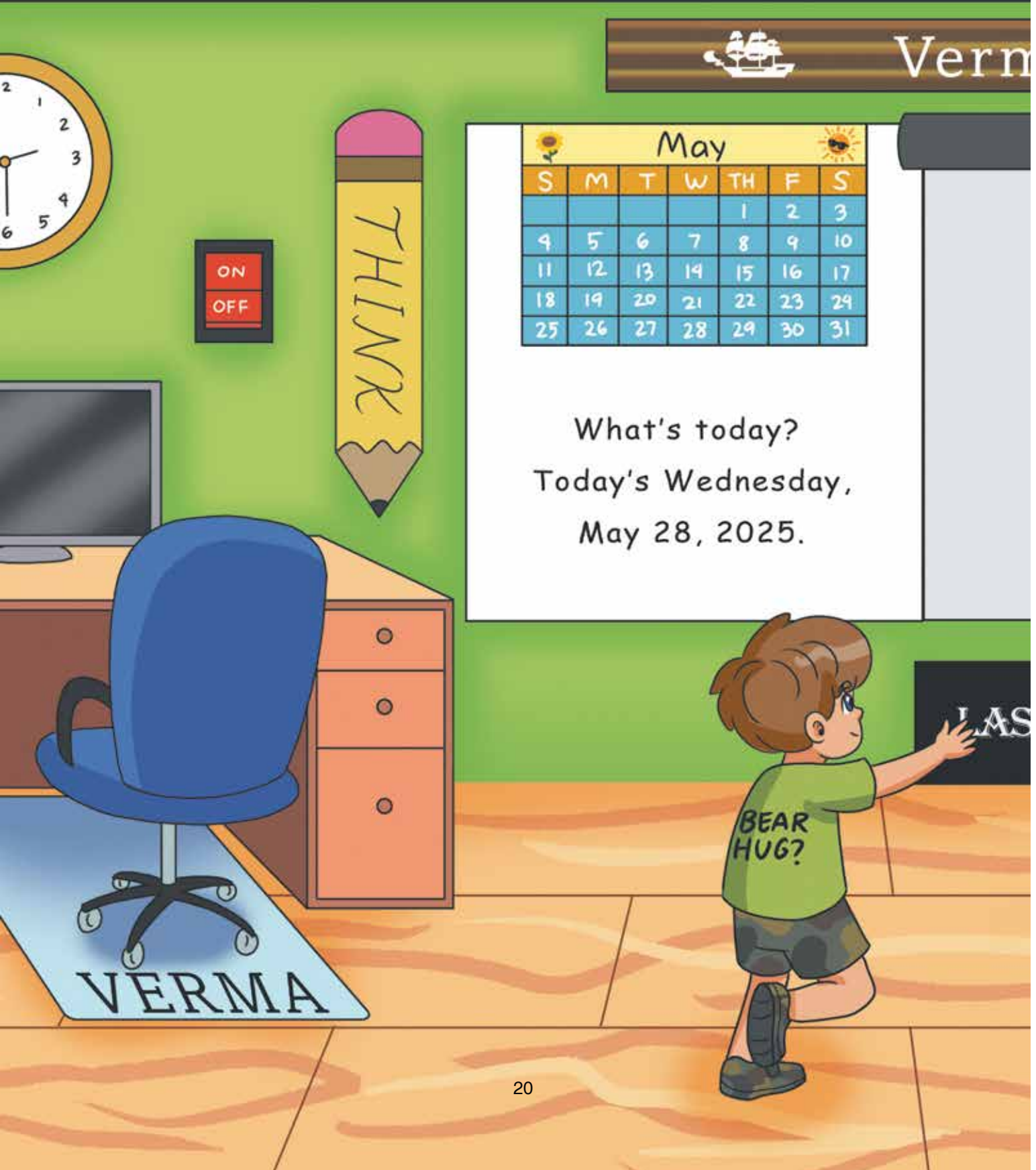


With these thoughts going on in his mind, Miss Verma stepped aside as the children waited with anticipation as Mr. Rice walked in front of the white screen. “Hey class, I have some letters just for you! I will put them in your mailboxes. But before I do this, I want to share something!” Mr. Rice takes out a piece of paper and starts reading.

“Well first, I would like to say this class has been the best! You have made strides, made friends, and passed your tests! But now, this is the last day of school; in which, we all must depart! Please do not forget about me and keep everybody in your heart! Do not forget that each of you will get a letter! Read and cherish it and make it last! Read it out loud many times, but please do not read it fast! And when you read, do not forget about your reading tools! Don’t forget about the five-finger retell or you might just lose the power to understand and the power to solve problems in this world! You all can have an impact everywhere you go, my boys and girls!

Just remember to love everybody as you love yourself! I will keep a mental picture of all of you as I remind myself about the purpose of teaching and the purpose of why I care! It has nothing to do with fame or money! Teaching is just being there for those who are confident and for those who feel lost! Having an impact on just one child is all worth the cost of time and planning spent away from home! I will keep you all near to me like you will never know! I know this is the last day that I will set foot in this school. Miss Verma and I love you all! Have a rad summer and keep it cool!” Tears started to roll down some of the students’ cheeks.





Vermillion Ship Academy

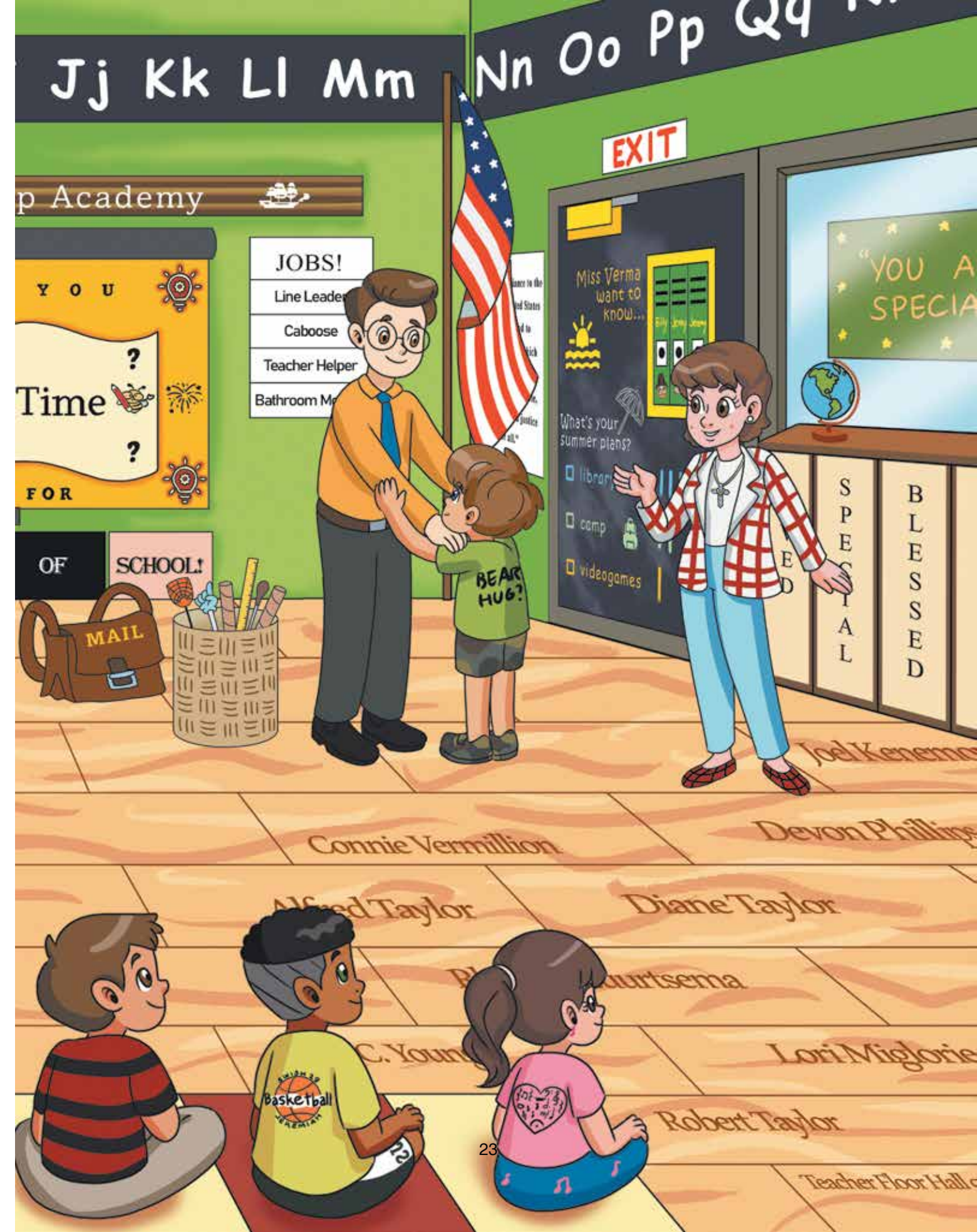
Miss Verma could not hold herself together and yelled, “Okay, class! It’s time to give Mr. Rice a big, BIG bear hug!” First came Santiago, Jeremy, and then Jenny. Next came Francisco and Markeeta. Last came Billy. Soon all the students were around Mr. Rice. While waiting, Miss Verma thought ‘Oh! I need to get a picture!’ So, she moved to a good spot, moved the bean bag out of the way, and took one with her cell phone.

- JOBS!**
- Line Leader
  - Caboose
  - Teacher Helper
  - Bathroom Monitor



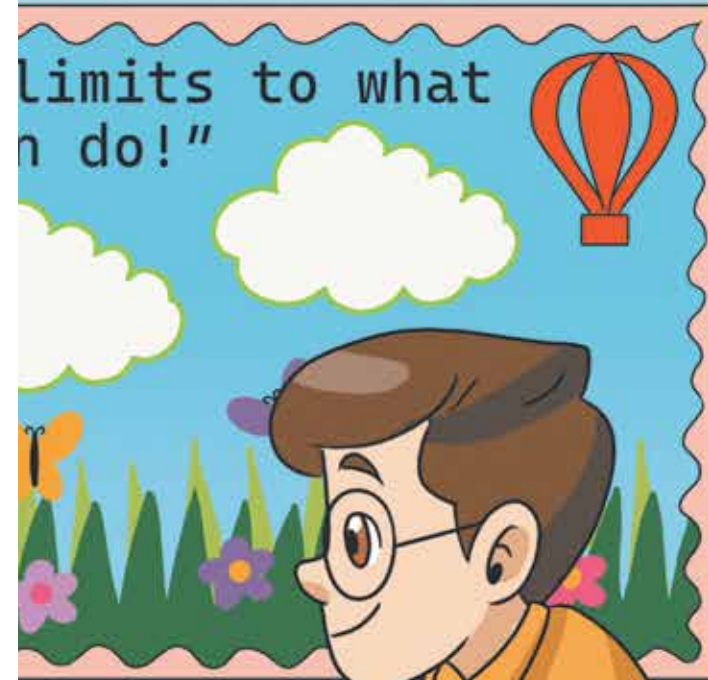
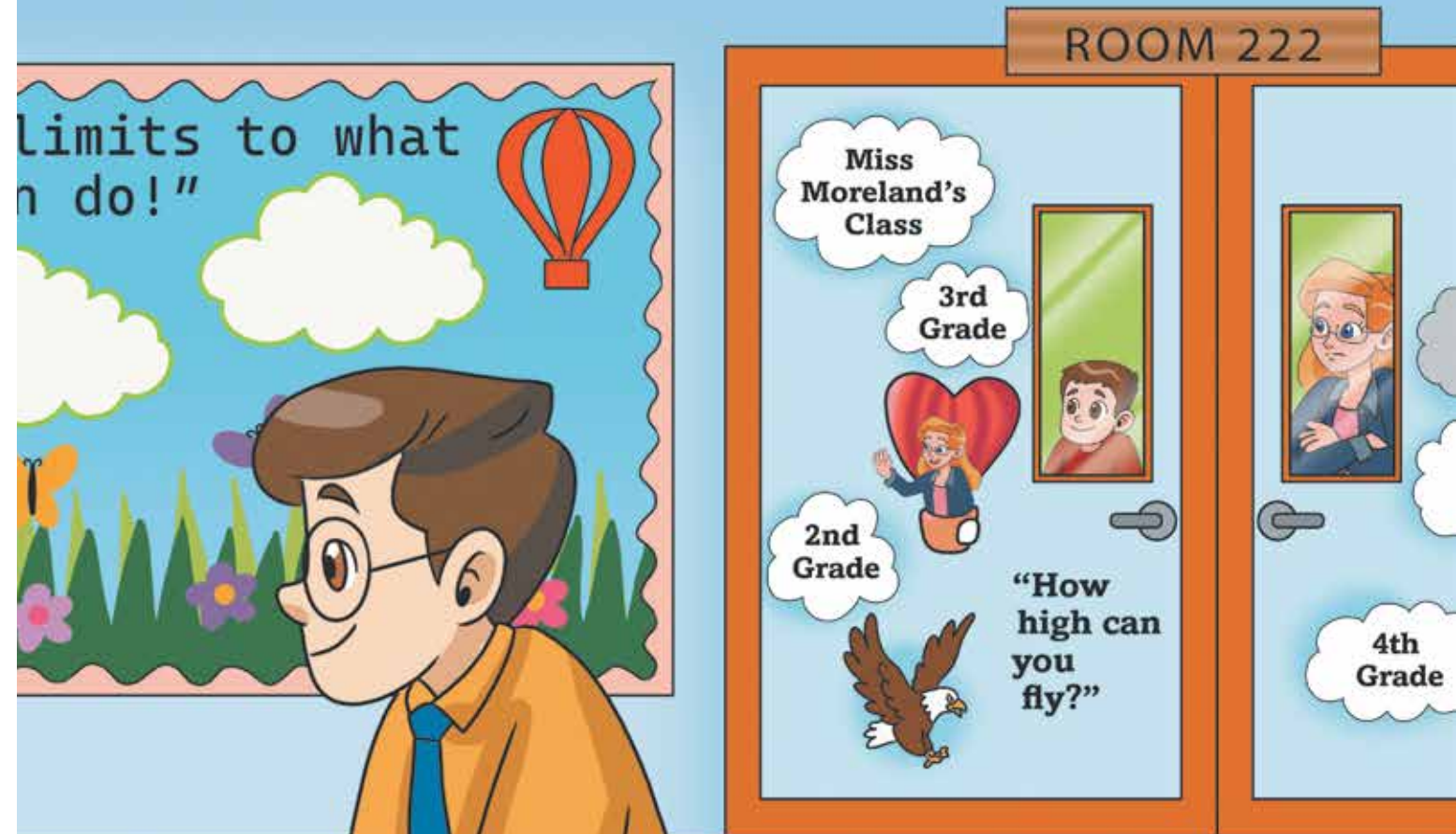
Looking at her cell phone and seeing that it was 2:30, Miss Verma told her students, "Okay guys! It's time to go back to your spots for writing!" The students went back, but Billy was still hugging Mr. Rice. "Hey Billy! It's time!" "No Miss Verma! I was the last one, and I want more time!" "Billy, Billy! It's time!" "No Miss Verma! I want Mr. Rice!"

Seeing that she was getting nowhere with Billy, Miss Verma asked, "Mr. Rice, do you mind if you take Billy out in the hallway so that we can get to writing?" Mr. Rice responded, "No problem!" "Billy, go ahead and go with Mr. Rice!" "Okay Miss Verma!" Mr. Rice and Billy go into the hallway while Miss Verma starts the writing lesson.

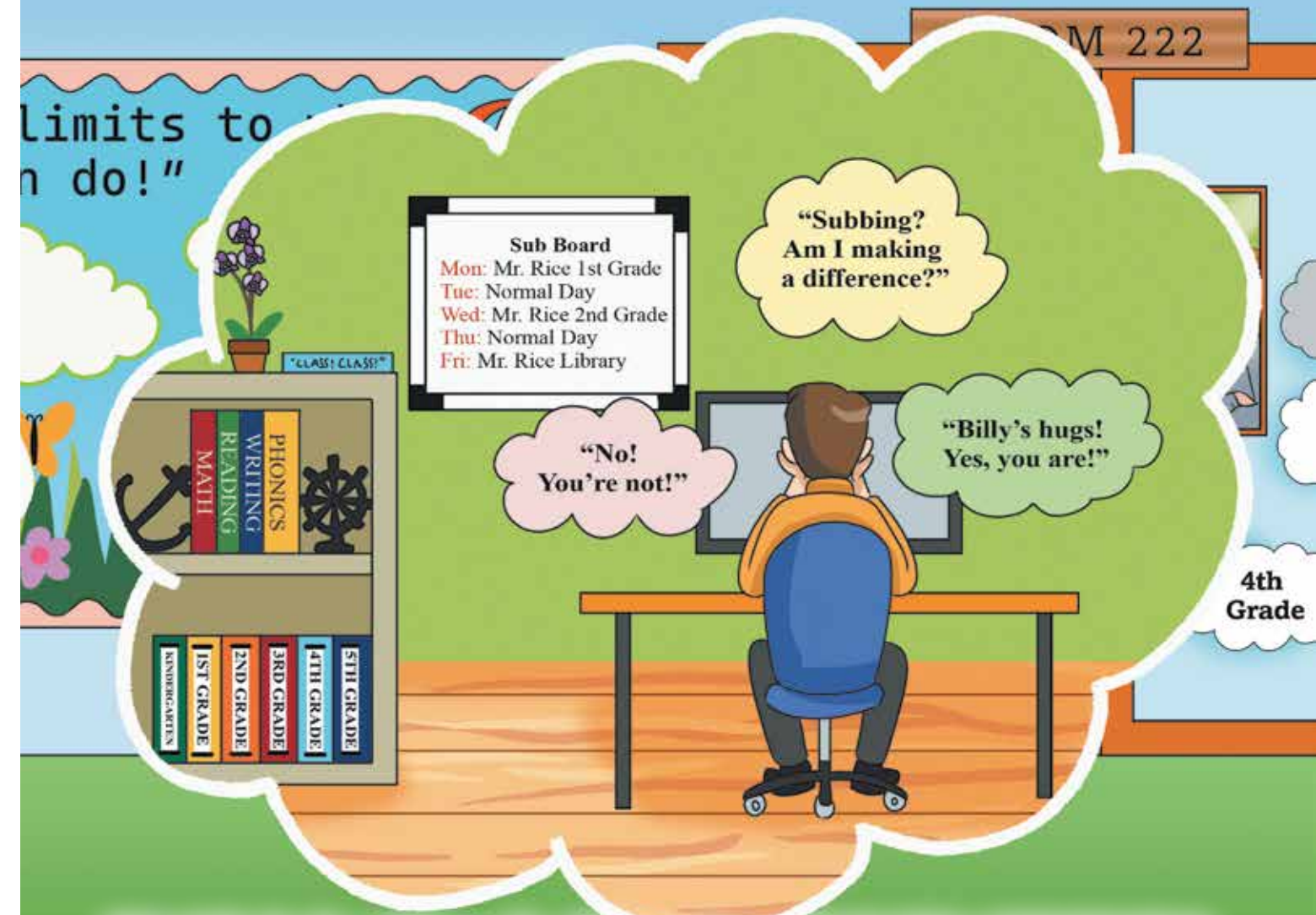




Thinking about how to calm Billy down, Mr. Rice got down on one knee and said, "Billy, take a deep breath!" "Okay, hummm!" "Now Billy, I have gotten to know you well for three years at V.S.A. And I want to tell you that you're very special! I wrote a letter just for you! Do not forget that you will always hold a place in my heart and that you have a future! I want you to be strong and do great things in your life!" Wiping his tears from his eyes, "Mr. Rice, I will do my best! Thank you for being you and making a difference in my life!"







“No, Billy thank you! You made a difference in my life also! “How?” “Well, Billy I had to do a lot of subbing this year and I could not help you and the other kids when I wanted to. When subbing I asked myself if I was making a difference at all since some of the students in the other classes were giving me a hard time. You, however, kept giving me hugs when you passed me through the hallways.” “Wow Mr. Rice! I did not know that made a difference!” “Well, Billy it did! It showed me that I was not alone and that I have value. Now Billy, do you think that we can get back to the classroom? I know that Miss Verma has writing next, and you are an expert at it!” “Yes sir, Mr. Rice!”

## About the Author



**DAINRAYDEVONBOOKS.COM**

Email us at [dainraydevonbooks@gmail.com](mailto:dainraydevonbooks@gmail.com)

Dain Ray Devon is a Sunday School teacher, poet, and children's author from Shelbyville, Indiana. His books focus on the impact that parents, teachers, and guardians can have on just one child. And one of the main ways is through words.

Words can either build a child up or tear him or her down. When it is the last day of school, will a teacher have the right words to say to a student for the next year? This is the reason why Dain writes. He wants to empower those in need of encouragement and to model what a great conversation between an adult and a child should be like.

Dain Ray Devon captured this well in his book *What Does Christmas Really Mean to You* and now is ready to sow that seed in his children's series about the students of Vermillion Ship Academy. Of course, none of this would be possible without God, his parents (Alfred and Diane) and church family.

If one was to come to Trinity United Methodist Church, one would find Dain Ray Devon helping out at the food pantry on Tuesdays, parking cars at the Shelby County Fair in the summer, and purchasing toys for children at Vacation Bible School. When it all comes down to it, there is one thing that Dain is trying to achieve, and that is hearing "well done thy good and faithful servant" from the lips of his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

To learn more about Dain Ray Devon, turn to the next page to access his author website, Instagram, and Facebook.



Dain Ray Devon Books



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