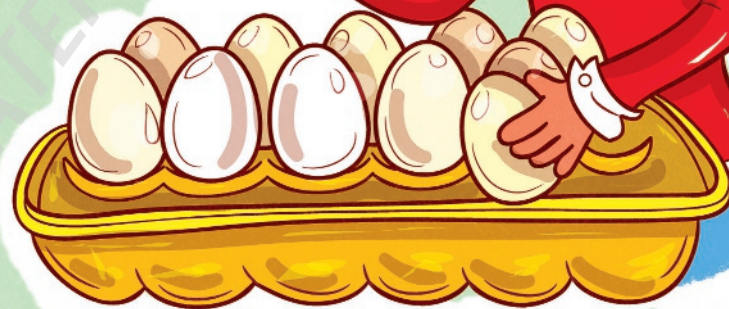


Are you a carrot



an egg



or a coffee bean?



Gavin used to love going to school, but not this year. He and his family moved to a new city and he had trouble making friends at his new school. Some of the kids also made fun of him because they said he talked funny.



As Gavin walked into his classroom, he saw his teacher, Mrs. Spring, and her smile made him smile. He liked Mrs. Spring's class and wished everyone at school was as nice as her.

When the school day was over, Mrs. Spring asked Gavin to stay after class. Gavin thought he was in trouble. His palms became cold and sweaty, and he could hear his own heart beating.



Mrs. Spring said, "Gavin, I can see that you are not happy. In fact, you look sad. You hardly ever smile, and when you do it's usually only when you say hello to me before class starts. What's wrong, Gavin?"

A few tears came trickling down his face as he told Mrs. Spring about how hard it was to adjust to this new school and make friends.

To make matters worse, his parents were fighting a lot.



Mrs. Spring gave him a big smile and said, “I’m going to share with you one of the best lessons you will ever learn. It’s also going to help you make new friends and become a leader for the rest of your life.”

Mrs. Spring went to the whiteboard and drew a picture of a pot of boiling water. Then she drew a carrot inside the pot. She asked, “What happens if you put a carrot into a pot of boiling water?”



“You get carrot soup,” Gavin said.

Mrs. Spring smiled. “You’re on the right track, Gavin, because a carrot turns soft and mushy in a pot of boiling water after a few minutes.”

Mrs. Spring then drew another pot of boiling water on the whiteboard. This time, she drew a picture of an egg inside the pot. She asked, “What happens if you put an egg inside a pot of boiling water?”



“That’s easy,” Gavin said, proudly. “My mom and I did this at Easter. You put the eggs in the pot of boiling water to make the eggs hard, like a hard-boiled egg.”

“That is absolutely correct,” Mrs. Spring said. “The soft inside of the egg turns hard after a few minutes in a pot of boiling water.”

Gavin looked confused. He asked Mrs. Spring how a picture of boiling carrots and eggs could be one of the best lessons he'd ever learned.



“You’ll see, Gavin. I have one more example for you.” Next to the pots with the carrot and the egg, she drew a third pot of boiling water. This time, she drew a coffee bean inside the pot, and asked Gavin if he knew what happened when you put a coffee bean in boiling water.

“I have no idea,” Gavin admitted.

Mrs. Spring explained, “The coffee bean—the smallest of these three things—*changes* the water into coffee. You see, the power to change is inside the coffee bean.”



Gavin looked confused. “I don’t understand what carrots, eggs, and coffee beans have to do with me fitting in or finding friends,” he said.

“Life is often like a pot of very hot water,” said Mrs. Spring. “It can be a harsh, stressful, and difficult place. You will find yourself in places and situations that test who you truly are, and can change, weaken, or harden you if you let them.”

“Like all the stuff I’m going through now?”  
Gavin asked.

“Exactly like that, Gavin. You are feeling the pressures of fitting into a new school, the difficulties of finding new friends, and your parents are fighting. You are experiencing fears over things you cannot control, and it feels like you are in one big pot of boiling water. But you do have a choice.”



“You can be like the carrot that is weakened and softened by its surroundings.”

“You can be like the egg that is hardened by the mean people of this world.”



“Or you can be like the coffee bean that transforms and changes its environment. When I look at you, I don’t see a carrot and I don’t see an egg. I see a coffee bean who will overcome challenges and change the world.”



That made Gavin smile. “Do you really think I can be a coffee bean?” Gavin asked.

Mrs. Spring smiled. “I know you can be a coffee bean, Gavin. In fact, I want you to remember this lesson for the rest of your life. Wherever you go and whatever you do, remember you are a coffee bean and you have the power to transform any environment you are in.”

“No matter how hard things get, or how hopeless things appear, do not ever give up. Realize that we don’t create our world from the outside in; we create and transform it from the inside out.”

“If you think you are a carrot, you will believe the forces outside of you are stronger than who you are on the inside, and you will become weaker.”



“If you think you are the egg, you will believe the mean people in this world have the power to harden your heart and cause you to become negative and angry like they are.”



“If you know you are a coffee bean, you will not allow the outside world to affect you. You will know that the power inside you is greater than the forces outside you, and with this insight, you will positively transform your world from the inside out.”



“The power is on the inside. Be a coffee bean!”

Mrs. Spring then opened a jar on her desk and pulled out a coffee bean. "Keep this in your pocket as a reminder of who you are and the power you have. The best is yet to come for you, Gavin."



Gavin took the coffee bean, told her thank you, and ran excitedly towards the door.

“Wait, Gavin!” Mrs. Spring stopped him. “There’s one more thing you need to know. Coffee beans are always smiling, even on the days they do not feel like it. Do you know why?”

“So they can be happy,”  
Gavin said.



“That’s right,” she said. “It’s also for other people to be happy. When people see you smiling, they will smile back. Then other people will see the smiles and they’ll start smiling, too. Positive energy and smiling is contagious. Just like when I greet all the kids coming in my door every morning. I’m being a coffee bean so you will all be positive little coffee beans, too. Coffee beans attract other coffee beans! So go now, Gavin. Go be a coffee bean,” she said, as Gavin ran out the door.



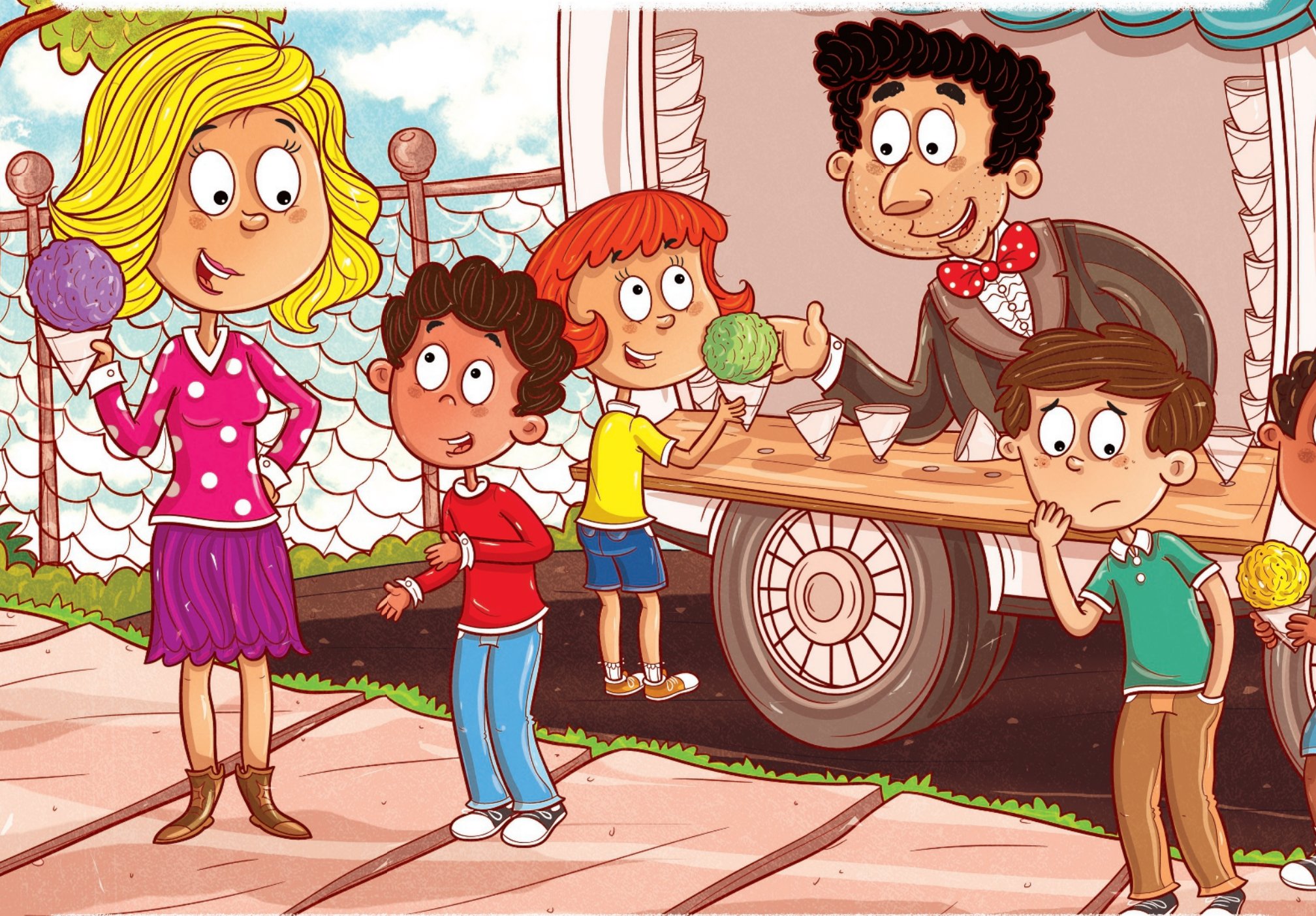
When Gavin's mother picked him up from school, she noticed how happy and excited he was. She asked him what was different, so he told her all about the coffee bean. "From now on, Mom, I am going to be a coffee bean."

The next day at school, Gavin was all smiles. He noticed that it was working. Other kids were smiling back at him.




When he got to Mrs. Spring's class, he high-fived her with a huge grin on his face. Mrs. Spring knew he was feeling the awesome power of being a coffee bean.

At the end of the week, the snow cone truck came to school. Many of the kids rushed out to buy one. Gavin was standing in line for his snow cone and noticed a kid with special needs standing alone. He had an idea.



He went over to Mrs. Spring and asked if he could use his snow cone money to buy the other kid a snow cone. Mrs. Spring smiled and told him that it would absolutely be okay. "That is definitely a coffee bean thing to do," she told him.

An illustration of an ice cream truck. A vendor in a tuxedo and red bow tie stands behind a counter with snow cones. Two boys, Gavin and Michael, are shaking hands in front of the truck. Gavin is wearing a red shirt and blue pants, while Michael is wearing a green shirt and brown pants. The truck has a sign that says 'CONE' and a snow cone logo. There are three snow cones on a shelf above the counter: purple, green, and brown. The scene is outdoors with a tree and a fence in the background.

Gavin was a little nervous about meeting a new kid, but he went over to the boy to introduce himself. Before he could say a word, the boy smiled and stuck his hand out. “Hi! My name is Michael,” he said. “What’s your name?”

This was easier than Gavin thought. Michael was really friendly. Gavin shook Michael’s hand. “I’m Gavin,” he replied. “Do you want a snow cone?”

Michael kept smiling and nodded his head up and down. “I love snow cones,” he said.

Gavin and Michael walked over to the snow cone truck to buy Michael a snow cone. Gavin didn't get to eat a snow cone because he only had enough money for one, but the best treat of all was watching how happy Michael was eating his snow cone.



“Wow,” Gavin thought to himself.  
“Being a coffee bean feels good.”

A few days later, Gavin was at lunch, sitting quietly by himself like he always did. But even though no one else sat with him, he was not sad. In fact, he was smiling, just like Mrs. Spring told him to do. As he was opening his lunch kit, he noticed a girl standing next to him.

“Hi, I’m Clara. Do you want to sit with my friends and me?” she asked.



Gavin couldn’t believe it. Clara was one of the smartest and prettiest girls in fourth grade. They were in Mrs. Spring’s class together, but they had never talked to each other. Now, she was asking him to sit with her friends. “Um, sure,” he said.

Clara walked with Gavin to the table where she ate with her friends. She introduced Gavin to each one of them. “Gavin, these are my friends, Peter, Maya, and Priya. Everybody, this is Gavin.”



Everyone smiled and said hello. As soon as Gavin sat down, all the kids took turns talking to him. He barely had a chance to eat his lunch because there was so much conversation. Gavin could not believe his luck. Until today, he had no friends. Now, he had a table full of new friends.

When the table got quiet, he asked Clara, “Why is everybody being so nice to me?”



All the kids at the table looked at Clara. She smiled and said, “We noticed you’ve been smiling a lot, and looking for ways to help others. Like the other day, when you bought Michael a snow cone. That was very kind. My mother tells me all the time that being kind is the best thing you can be and that it’s a choice. We are always looking for other kind kids to be our friends.”

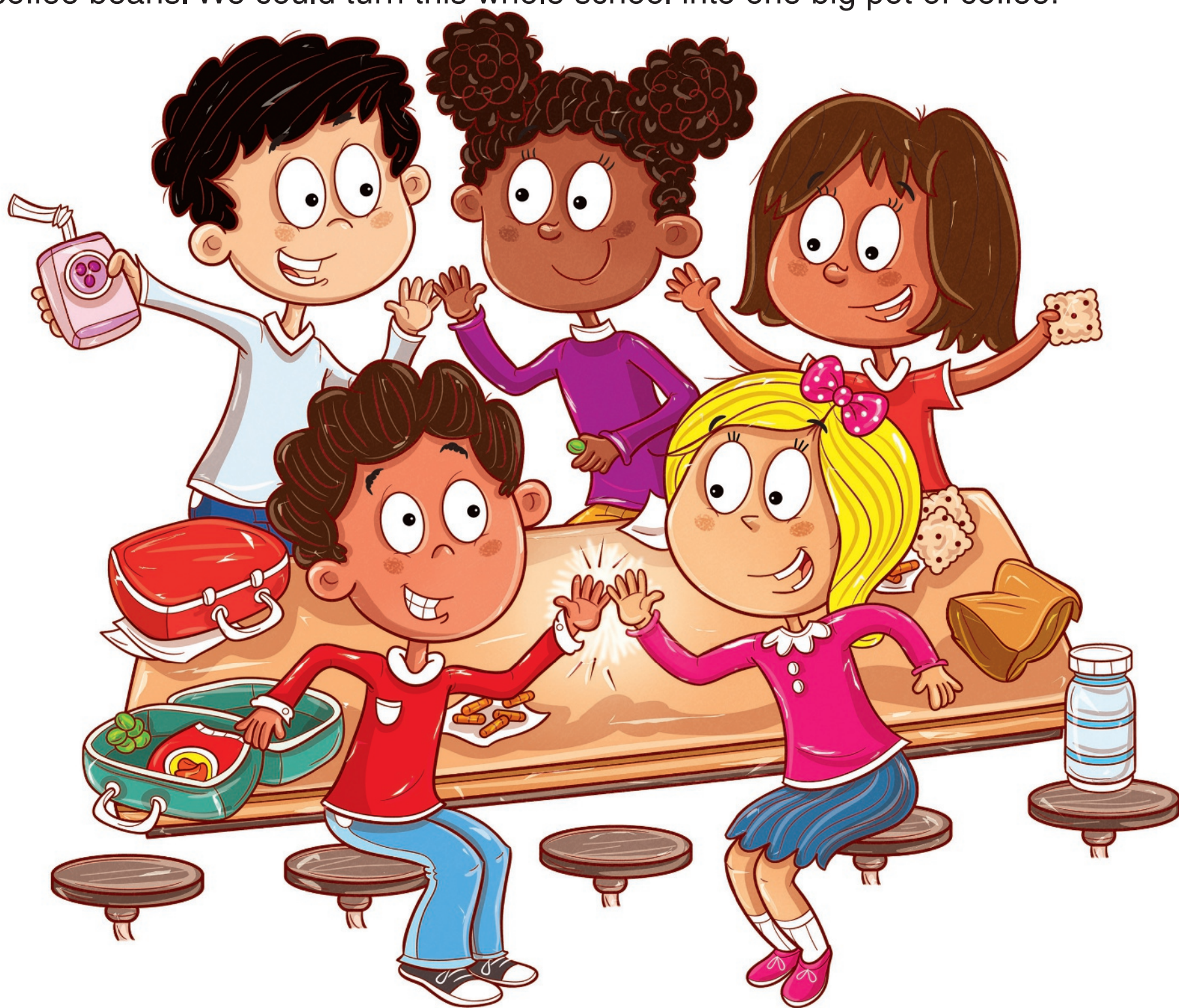
Gavin knew he had made his new friends because of his choice to be a coffee bean. “I’m a coffee bean,” he said. “It sounds like you are all coffee beans, too.”

The kids looked confused, so Clara asked Gavin what it meant to be a coffee bean.



Gavin told everyone at the table about the lesson Mrs. Spring taught him, about the carrot, the egg, and the coffee bean, and about how being a coffee bean would attract other coffee beans and create positivity.

That gave Clara an idea. “Gavin, this is something we should share with all the kids in school. In fact, we could start a coffee bean club, and go find other coffee beans. We could turn this whole school into one big pot of coffee!”



After school, Clara and Gavin talked to Mrs. Spring about the Coffee Bean Club. Mrs. Spring thought it was a great idea and they agreed the club would meet before school started.

Clara, Gavin, and their friends began telling everyone about the first Coffee Bean Club meeting. They made flyers and went around telling kids in every grade about the carrot, the egg, and the coffee bean.



At lunch the day before the first meeting, they even made a coffee bean song.

When the morning for the first meeting finally arrived, Clara and her mom, Mrs. Kendell, arrived at Mrs. Spring's classroom extra early with some healthy snacks they had made the night before. When the kids started arriving, Mrs. Spring was all smiles, as usual.



Everyone was surprised by how many kids showed up for the first meeting of the Coffee Bean Club. Gavin was so excited to see Michael show up, too.

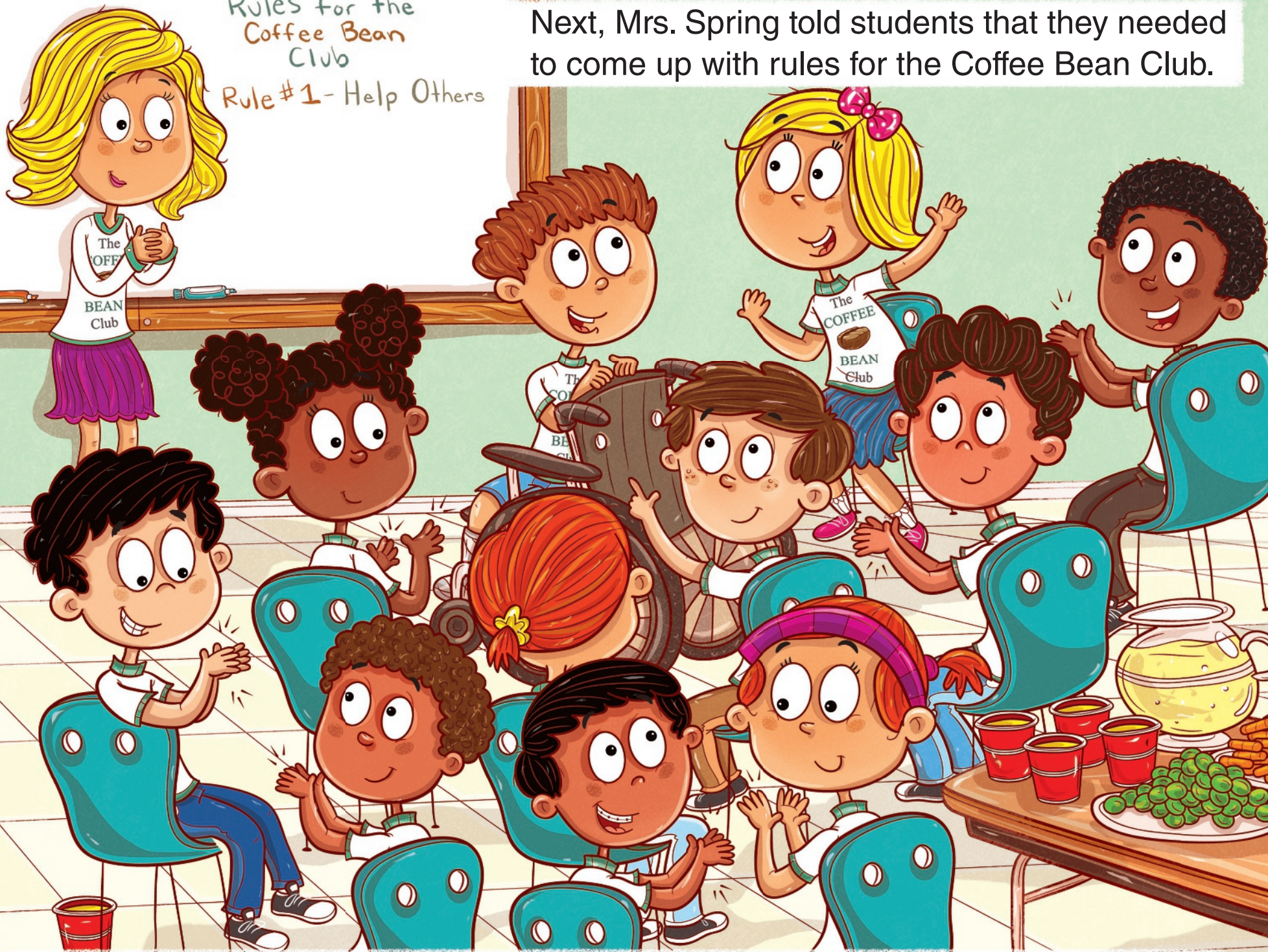
“Hey, Gavin. My mom said I could be a coffee bean, too,” Michael said, proudly.



Mrs. Spring started the meeting by telling everyone, “The main goals of our club are to be kind to everyone and always to be positive.”

Rules for the  
Coffee Bean  
Club  
Rule #1 - Help Others

Next, Mrs. Spring told students that they needed to come up with rules for the Coffee Bean Club.



Clara raised her hand. "I think the first rule should be 'Help others,'" she said. "This means that you look for carrots and eggs and try to help them become coffee beans, too."

The kids clapped in approval, so Mrs. Spring wrote on the board:

Gavin raised his hand next. "Include everybody," he said. "This means that anyone who wants to be in the club can join. It also means that when someone wants to join in and play a game or sit at your lunch table, then they can do that, too. More coffee beans make our pot of coffee stronger."

Coffee Bean  
Club

Rule #1 - Help Others

Rule #2 - Include Everybody



Again, the kids clapped in approval. They added a second rule to the board:

*Rule #2. Include everybody.*

Maya was called on next. “The third rule should be to smile, because smiles are like boomerangs,” she said. “When you smile, it always comes back to you. You smile at someone and they smile back.”



After the three rules of the Coffee Bean Club were on the board, Clara raised her hand.

“Mrs. Spring, we made a song for the club. Can we sing it?” she asked.



“Of course you can,” Mrs. Spring said. “How exciting.”

Clara, Gavin, Peter, Maya, Priya, and Michael all went to the front of the room and began to sing.

I'm a coffee bean.  
You'll see what I mean.



Carrots are good for your sight.  
But get soft when things don't go right.



Eggs are a great source of protein.  
Boiled in water, they get hardened and mean.



I won't be a carrot or an egg.  
I'll just be a coffee bean instead.



I may be the smallest of the three.  
Put me in water and you'll see ...



That I'm a coffee bean.



The room erupted with cheers and clapping.  
Then the kids started chanting,

“Cof-fee Beans!”

“Cof-fee Beans!”

“Cof-fee Beans!”



The Coffee Bean Club made it their mission to find coffee beans all over their school. They wrote positive notes to students who seemed to be having a tough time and they engaged in random acts of kindness. Over the course of the rest of the school year, it was clear to all that the Coffee Bean Club positively changed the school. In fact, the club became so big that they had to hold their monthly meetings in the gymnasium.

Everyone wanted to be in the Coffee Bean Club.

Everyone wanted to be a coffee bean.



It was no longer cool to be negative or mean. Instead, it became cool to be a coffee bean and help others.

**THE END**