

National Youth Foundation *Presents:*



Written by: Elly Gia Choi

Dedicated to:
My mom

— 2023 —

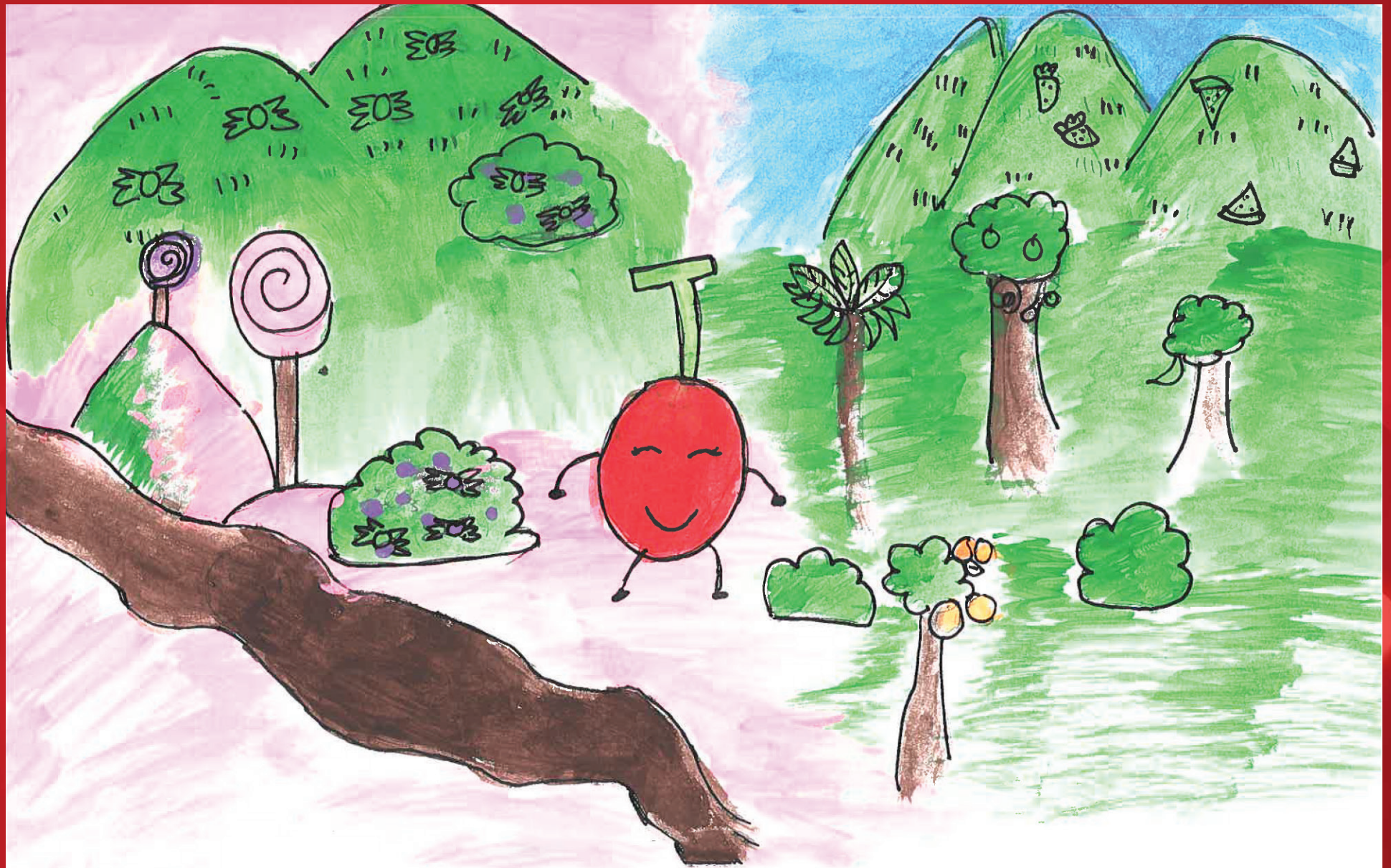
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NFL PLAYERS
ASSOCIATION



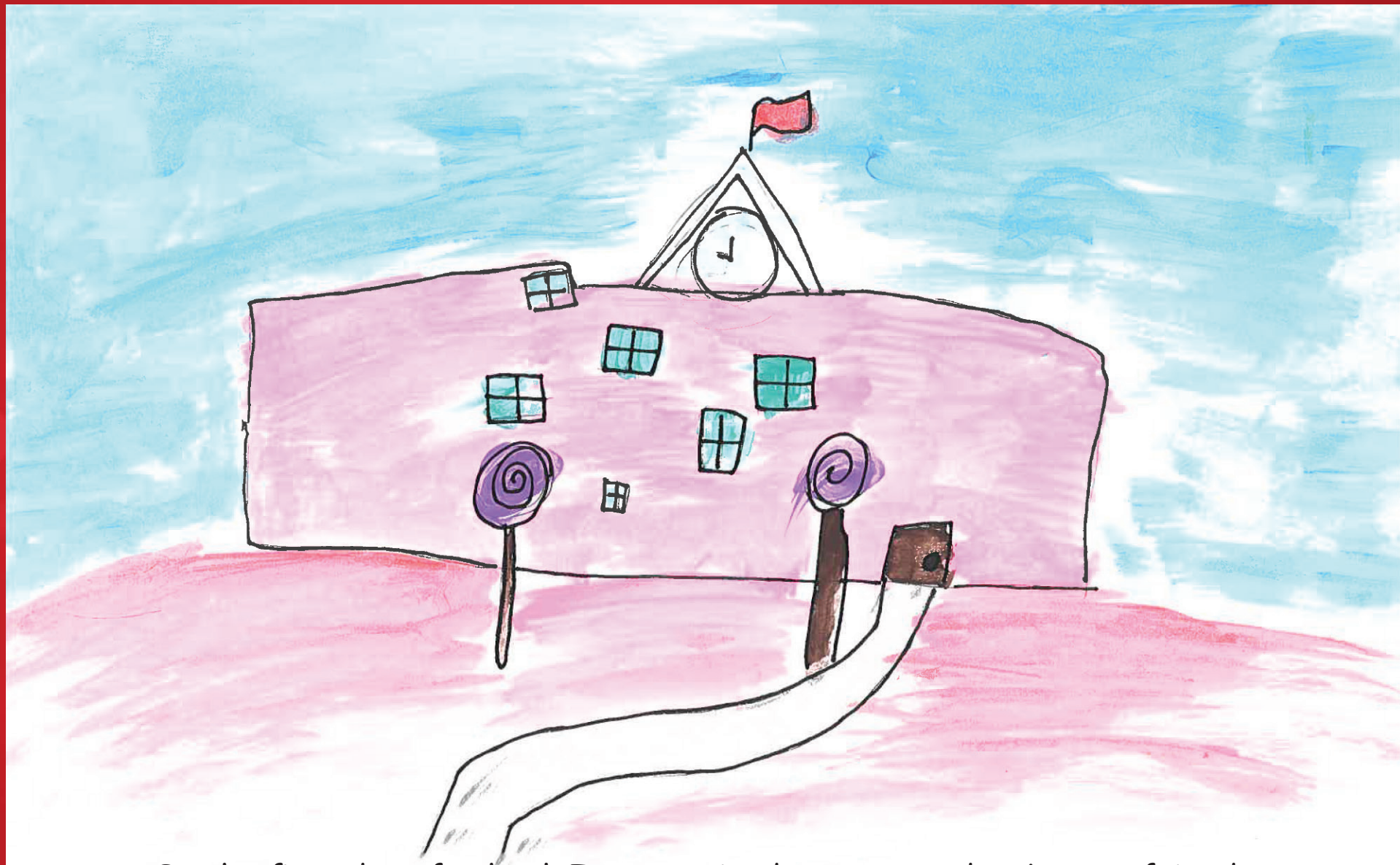
**BORN THIS WAY/
FOUNDATION**



Hello. My name is Cherry, and I am a sweet and red fruit.

I am 10 years old, and I am in middle school.

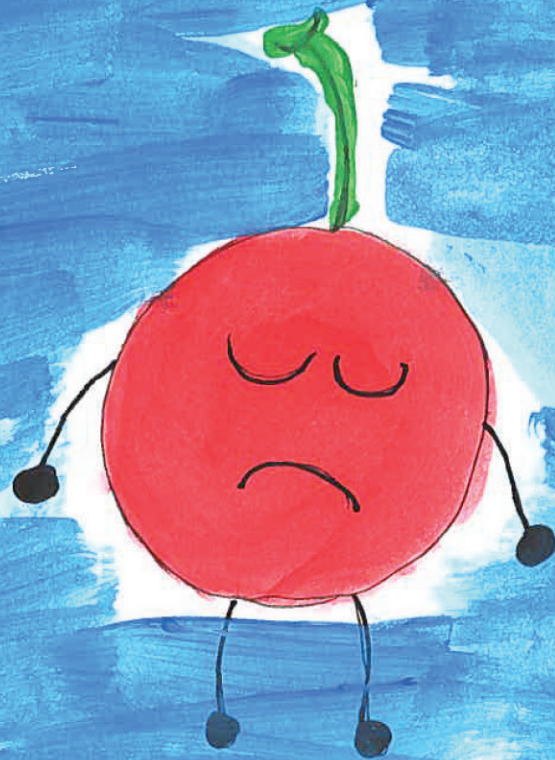
My family recently moved to Candy Land from Fruit Land.



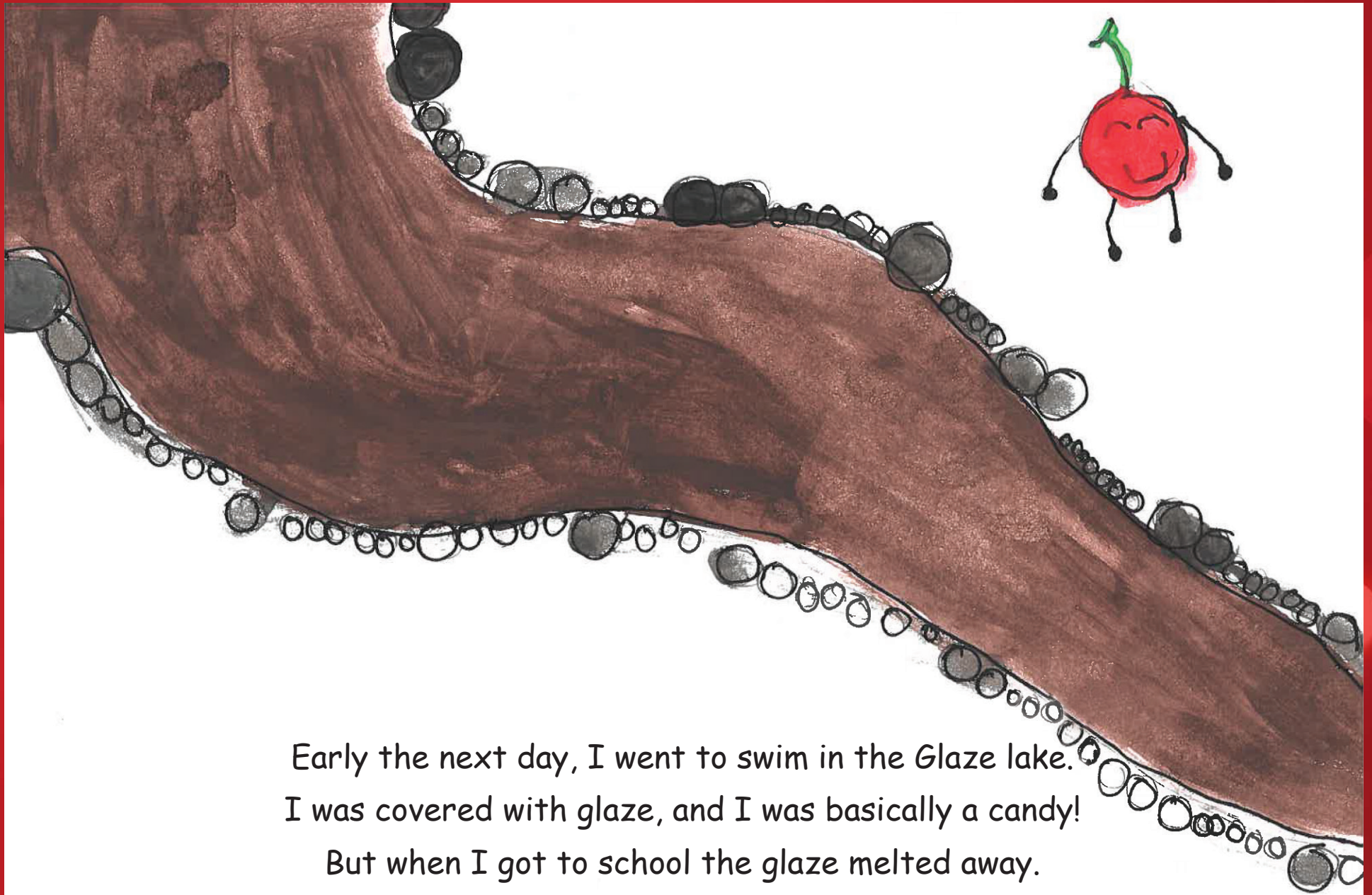
On the first day of school, I was excited to meet and make new friends.
When I got to Miss Peppermint's class, I realized I was the only fruit in the class.
Everyone else was candy!



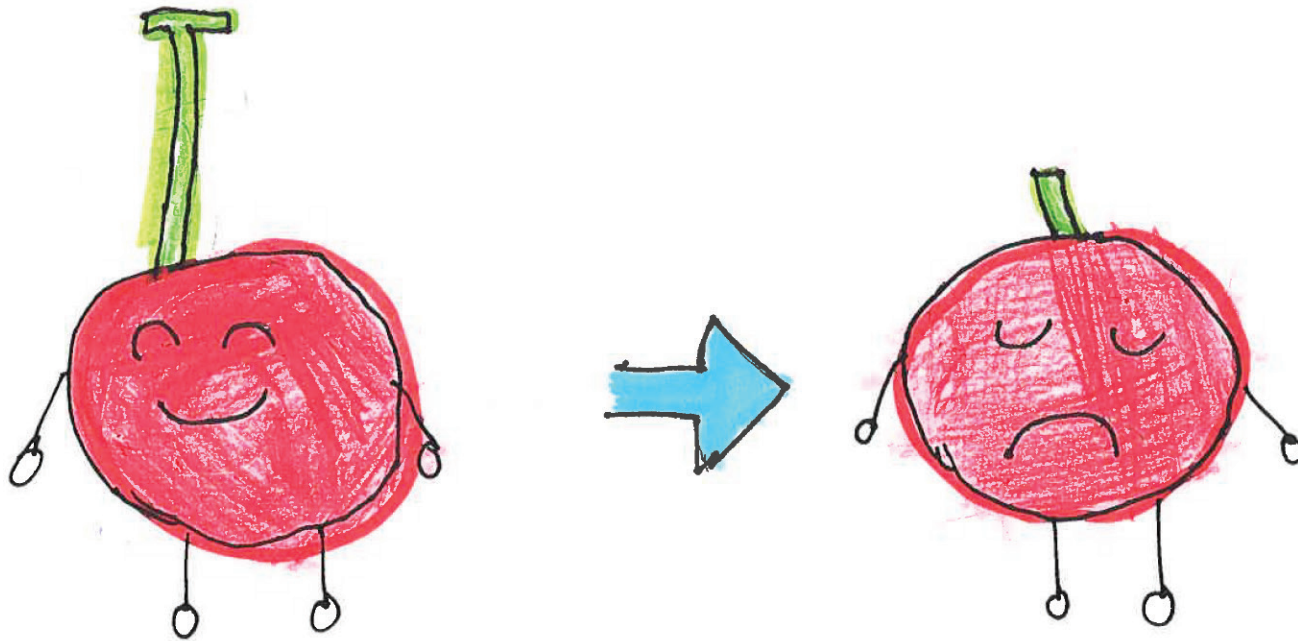
During lunchtime I tried to sit with Cookie, my classmate.
Lolly came up to us and said, "Why are you sitting with a fruit, Cookie?!"
Cookie replied, "Oh. I didn't know!!"
Cookie packed up her stuff and went to sit with Lolly.



I felt lonely and sad.
I didn't want to be a fruit. I wanted to be a candy.
So, I decided to change myself.



Early the next day, I went to swim in the Glaze lake.
I was covered with glaze, and I was basically a candy!
But when I got to school the glaze melted away.
Lolly whispered to Cotton Candy, "Why is she so sticky??"
Nobody wanted to sit next to me that day.



I had to try something else. How can I look more like a candy?

The next day, I tried to cut my stem off.

Lolly saw me and said,

"Are you trying to look like us? You know you just look like an apple now."

Nobody wanted to play with me that day.

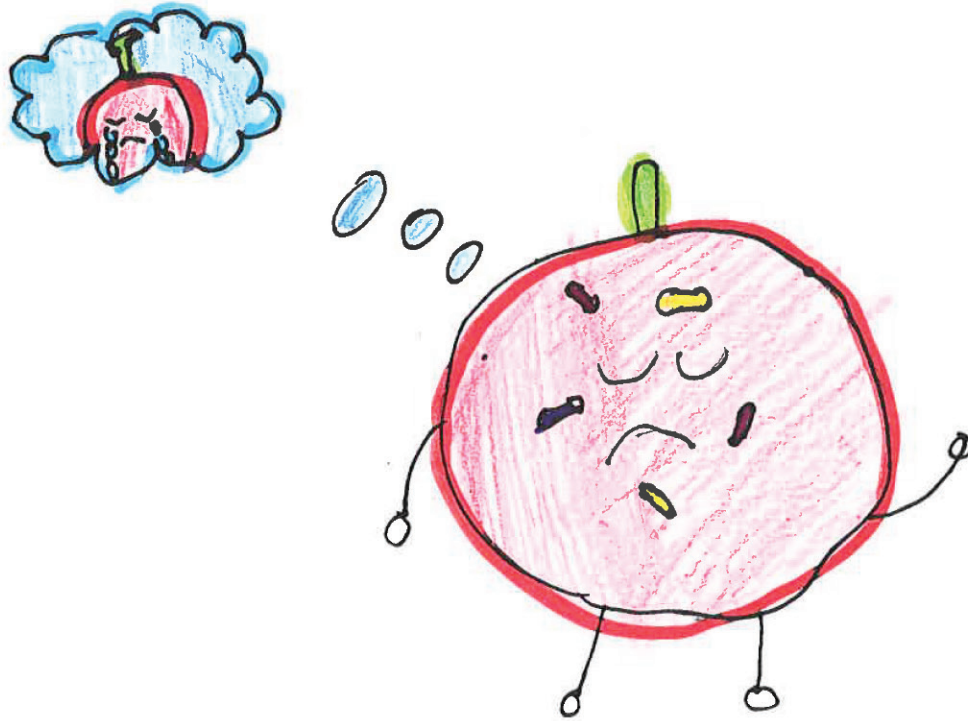


What else can I do?

I took a bubble bath in hot cocoa.

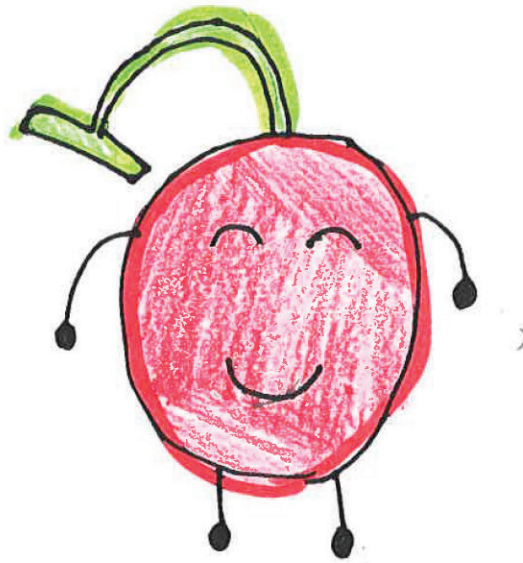
I dipped and rolled myself in rainbow sprinkles.

But by the time I got to school, the sprinkles were mostly gone!

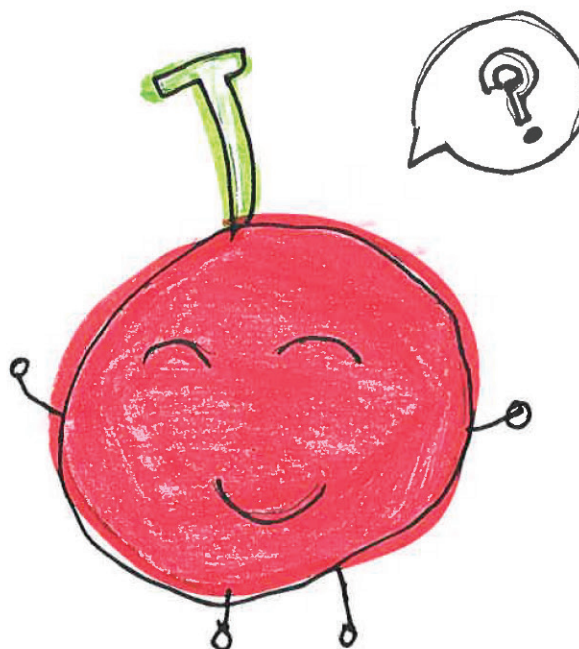


"Why do you smell like hot cocoa? You are supposed to smell like a fruit,"
said Lolly.

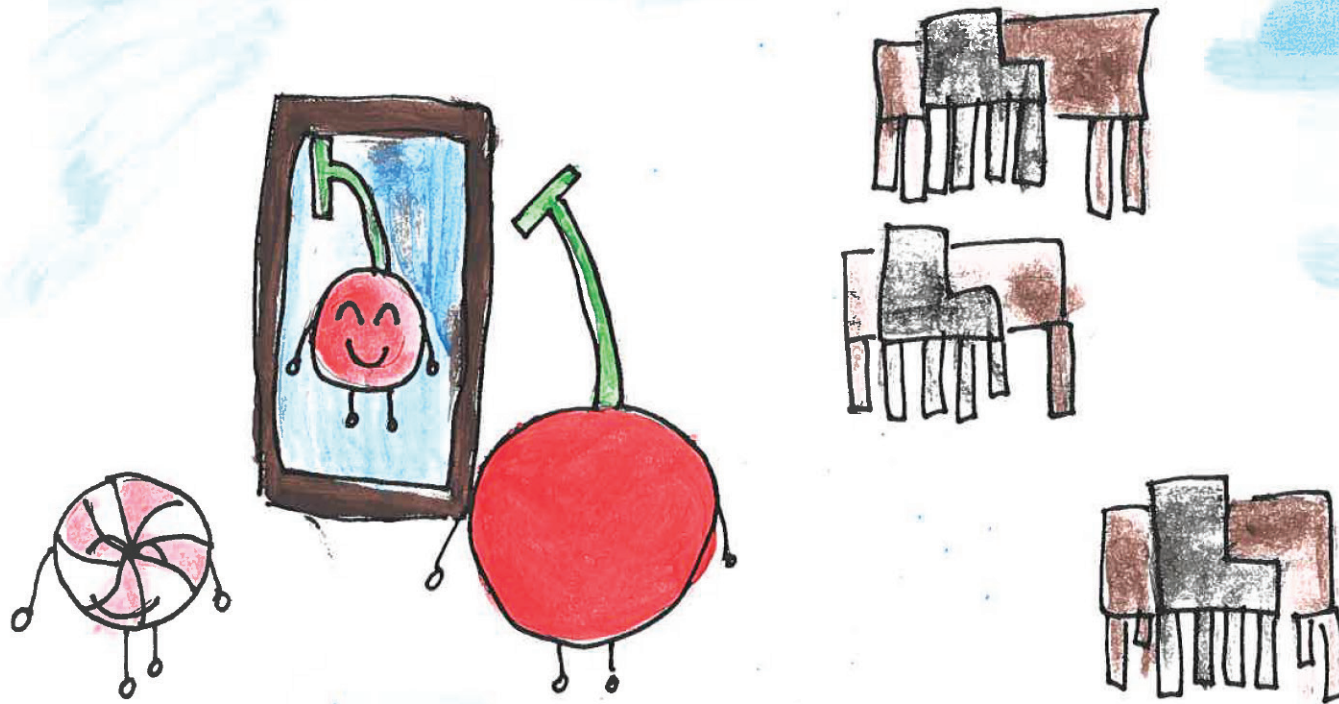
"And you have something on your face," said Cotton Candy.
I was so sad and upset I wanted to cry.



During recess, I went to see Miss Peppermint.
I told her that I was having a hard time in this school. I said,
"I'm the only fruit in the school, and everyone is being mean to me."
"Why don't you like being the only fruit in the school?"
asked Miss Peppermint.
"Because I want to make friends," I replied



Miss Peppermint asked me, "Why don't you like being a fruit?"
I responded, "It's not that I don't like being a fruit, I want to make friends."
"Why don't you show the best parts of you?" Miss Peppermint asked me.
'How?' I thought.



Miss Peppermint smiled and looked at me. "What makes you, you?"

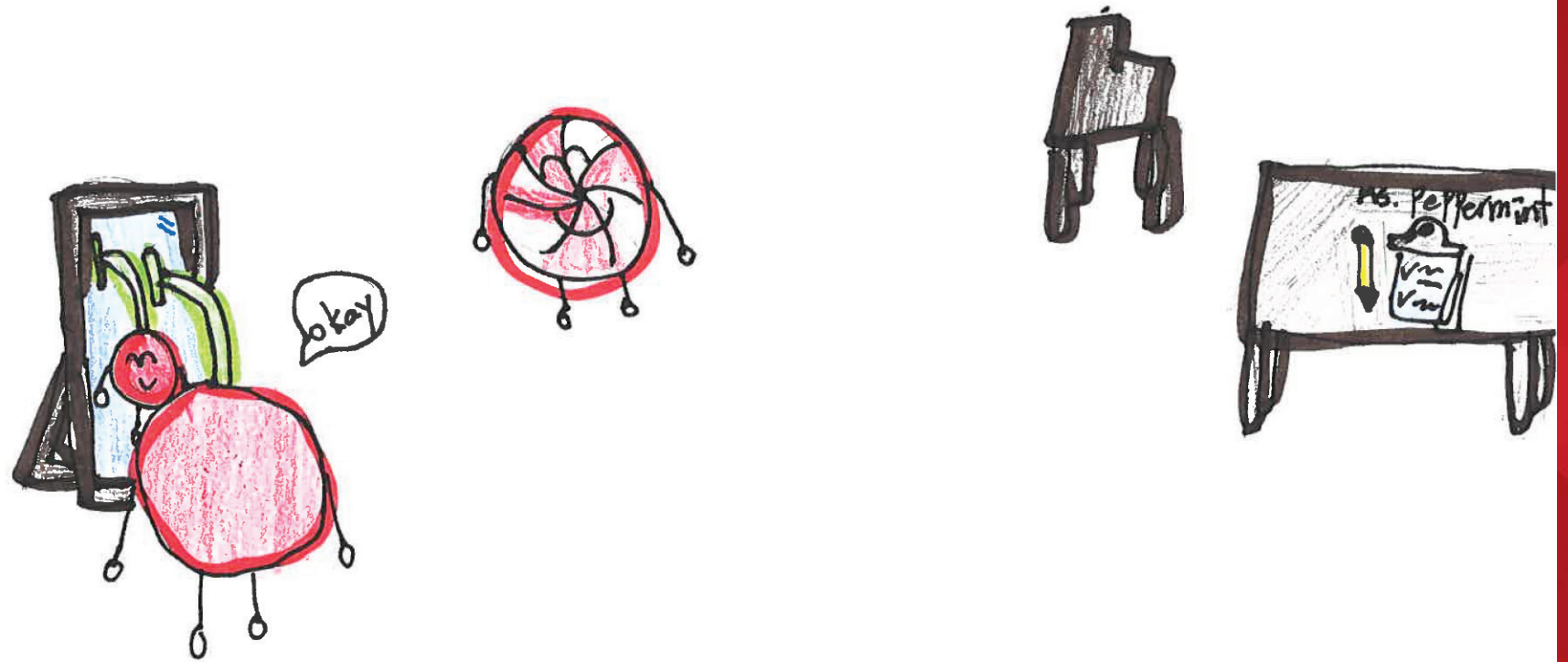
I thought about it, but I couldn't answer.

Miss Peppermint took me to the mirror in the back of the classroom.

I looked at myself.

"What do you see?"

"I see my long stem."

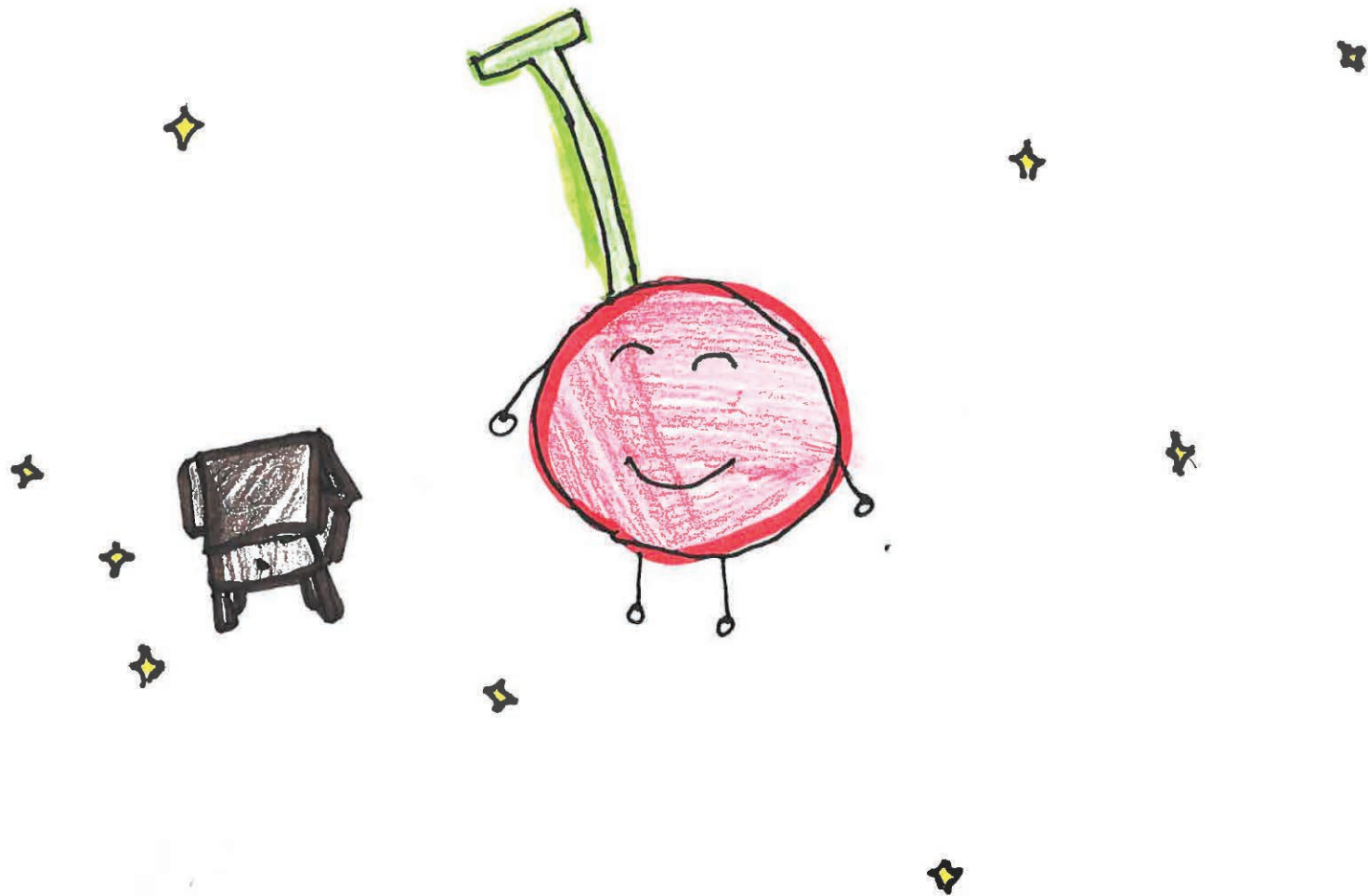


Miss Peppermint asked, "What else?"

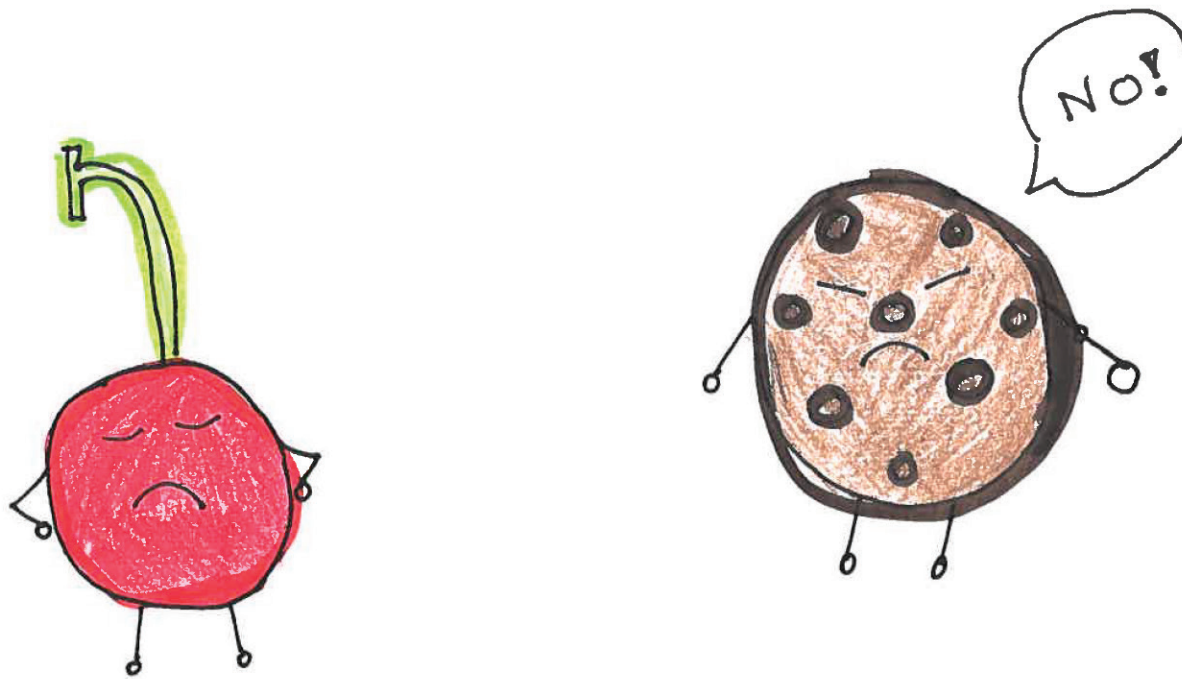
"I also see that I'm red and shiny. And I am a fruit."

"That's right. Let's show your classmates who you are."

Not glazed, and not sprinkle covered."



The next day, I woke up early, and scrubbed myself squeaky clean.
I was shining and glowing. Then, I tried to grow my stem longer.
I didn't look like a candy. I looked like a sparkling cherry.



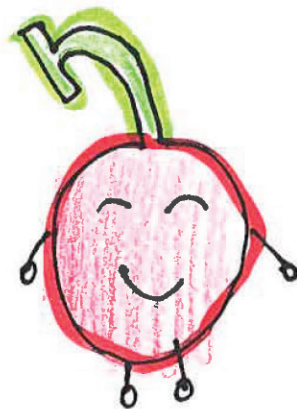
Still, nobody wanted to sit with me during lunchtime.

I asked Cookie if I could sit with her.

Cookie said, "NO!"

I frowned and replied, "That's not very nice of you, Cookie."

Cookie looked embarrassed. I sat on the next table and ate lunch by myself.



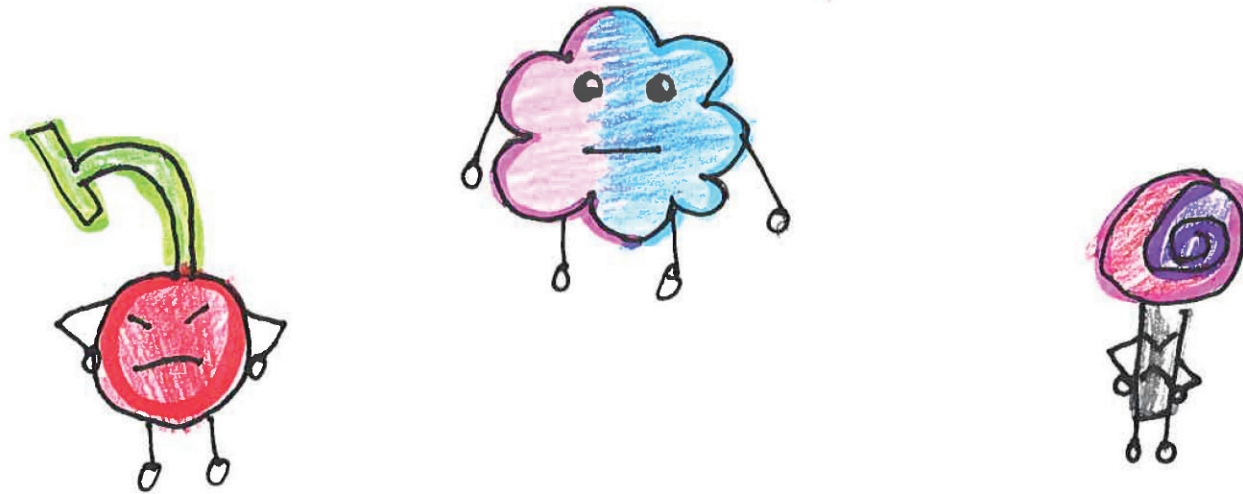
The next day, I asked Cotton Candy if I could play dodgeball with her during recess.

Cotton Candy said, "But you are a fruit."

I replied, "Yes, I am a fruit."

Cotton Candy looked confused and surprised.

"I guess you can join my team, but I have to ask Lolly first."



Cotton Candy asked Lolly if I could join them and play.

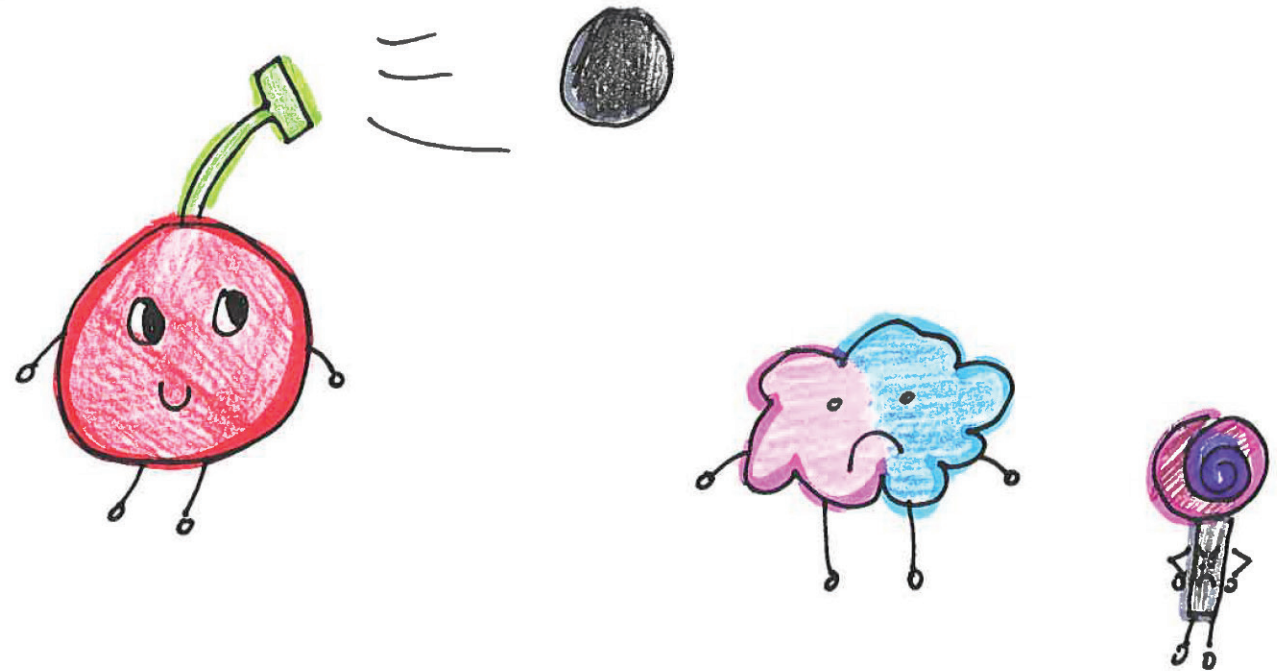
Lolly said, "NO! I don't want fruit in my team."

I asked, "What's so wrong with being a fruit?"

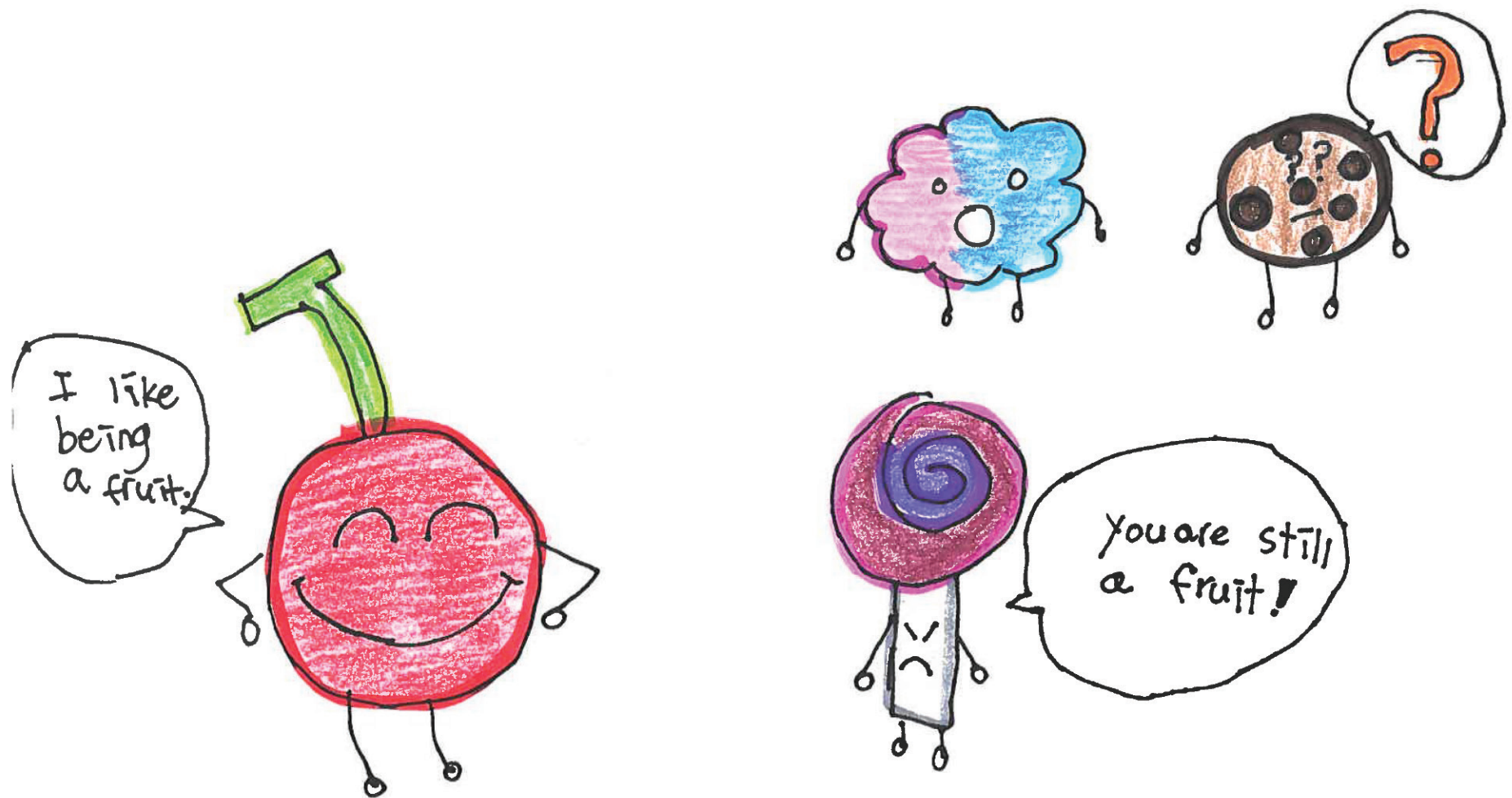
Lolly looked flustered and whispered, "I don't know."

Score

LOLLY	CHERRY
1	10



So, I joined the other team for dodgeball.
I used my long stem to toss the ball high.
I curled up and rolled to not get hit by the ball.
At the end of recess, my team won!
Lolly and her friends looked upset.



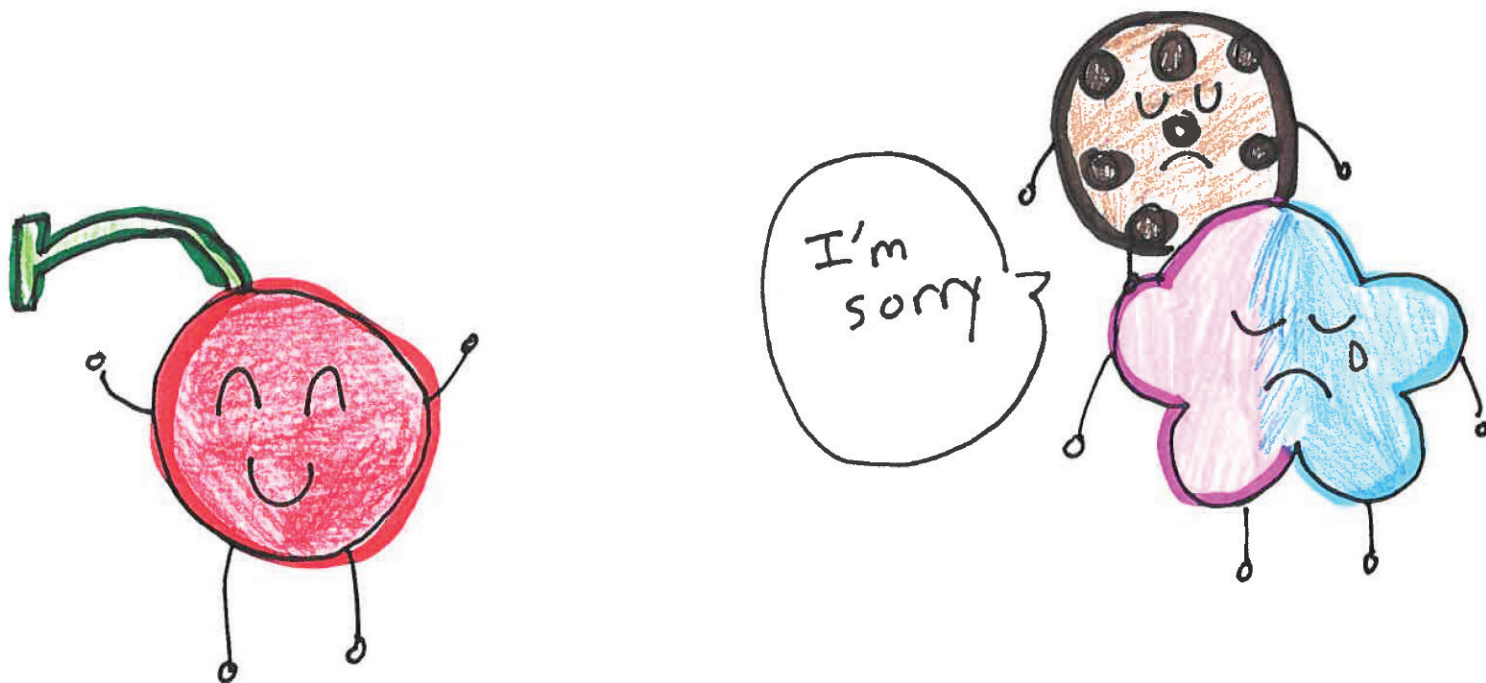
The next day at recess, everyone wanted me to be on their team.

"Cherry should be on MY team!"

"No, she should be on MY team!"

Lolly said, "Too bad that you are still a fruit." I didn't understand why that mattered.

I replied, "And I'm okay with that. I like being a fruit."



Cookie came up to me and said, "Cherry, I am sorry I said I didn't want to sit with you before."

Cotton Candy also said, "I am sorry, too."

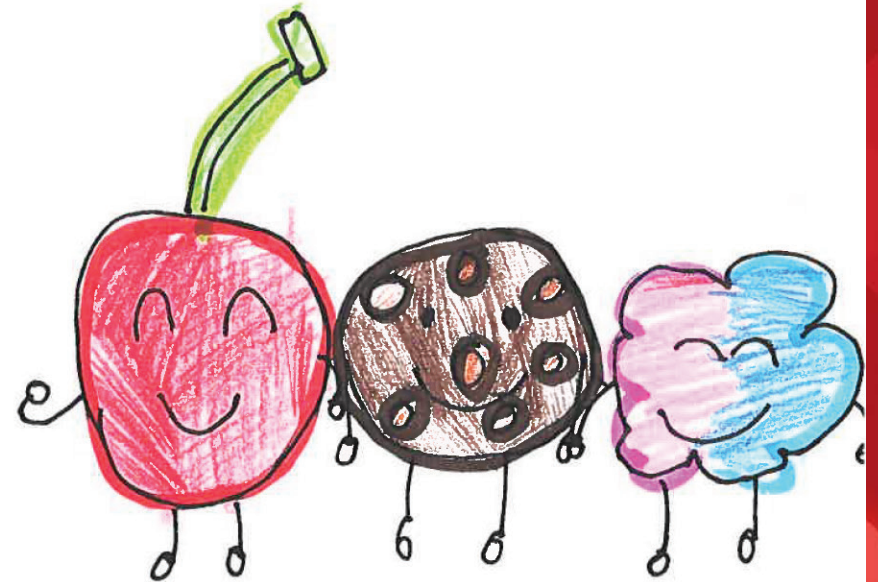
I wasn't sure what to say first. "Thank you for apologizing. Your words and actions did hurt me.

But, I think we should all be friends- candy or fruit!"

Lolly said, "But you are so different from us."

I responded, "We may look and be different. But at the end of the day, we are all sweets!"

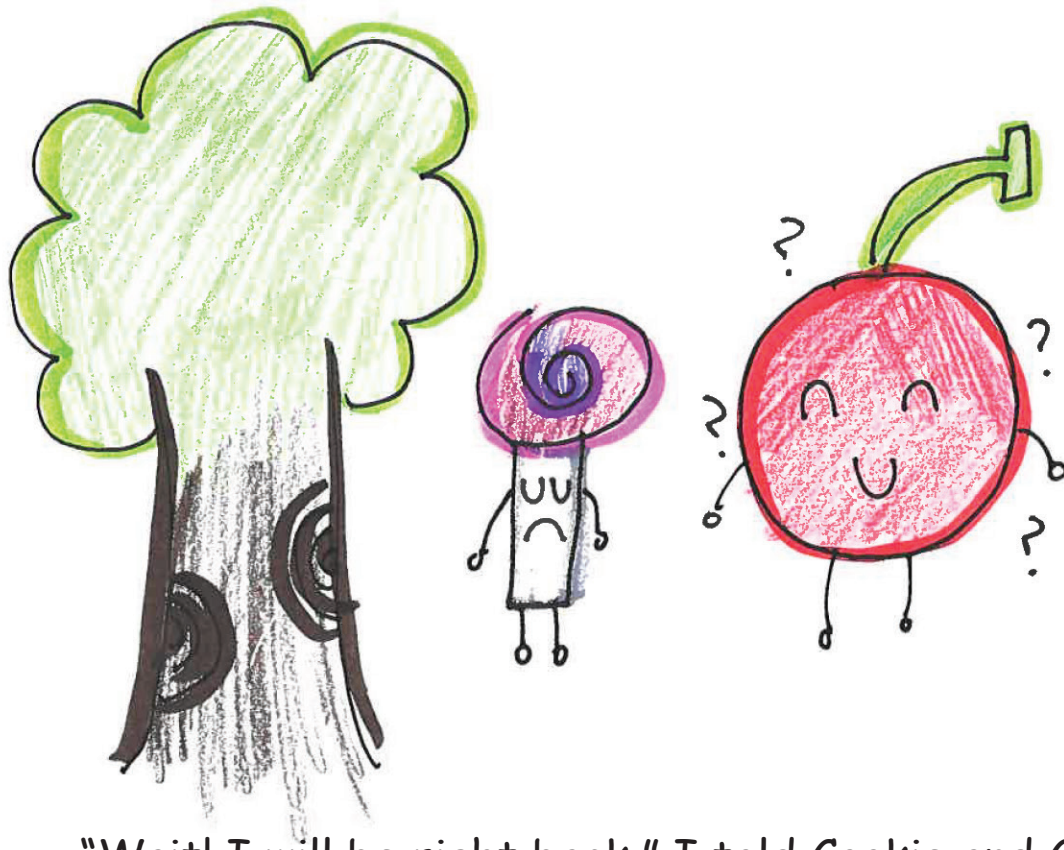
Everyone agreed. Lolly looked down on the ground, then walked away.



The next day at school, Lolly saw me with Cookie and Cotton Candy.
"Hi, Lolly! We are going to the playground to play tag. Want to join?"

Lolly looked at us and said, "I don't want to."

We went outside to play tag and Lolly was sitting under the tree watching us.



"Wait! I will be right back," I told Cookie and Cotton Candy.
I walked over to Lolly and asked, "Are you sure you don't want to play tag?"
Lolly shook her head. "No, I don't want to."
"When you want to, come join us!"
But, Lolly stayed under the tree until the end of recess.



After school, someone tapped on my shoulder. It was Lolly.

"Hey Cherry. I wanted to say I am sorry for making fun of you.
And I wanted to thank you for being nice to be even when I was mean.

... Thank you for asking me to play today."

"Thank you, Lolly. I hope you will join us tomorrow during recess." I smiled.

"I would like that," Lolly smiled, too.



Nobody was left alone anymore.
We all ate lunch together and played during recess.
It didn't matter if you were red, green, sticky, or shiny.
We learned that fruit or candy, we are all sweets!

Judges



Rob Covington
NBA



Joe Mixon
NFL



George Springer
MLB

No Bully Zone



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