



# MORRIS THE KVETCH

by Mira Reisberg

Every morning the sun rose and so did Morris Katz.  
But unlike the sun, Morris was not very sunny.

And even though he loved his Mama and little  
brother Saul more than anything else in the whole  
wide world . . .



it wasn't enough to make him happy.

As soon as he saw his Mama, Morris whined,  
"Why is the sun so bright, so early?"

Mama sighed...

Please don't kvetch  
Morris. Complaining  
is not a good way to  
start the day.



After breakfast, Morris  
couldn't decide what to wear.

He tried on his blue shirt.  
He tried on his red pants.  
He tried on his Saturn shirt

*Too big!*

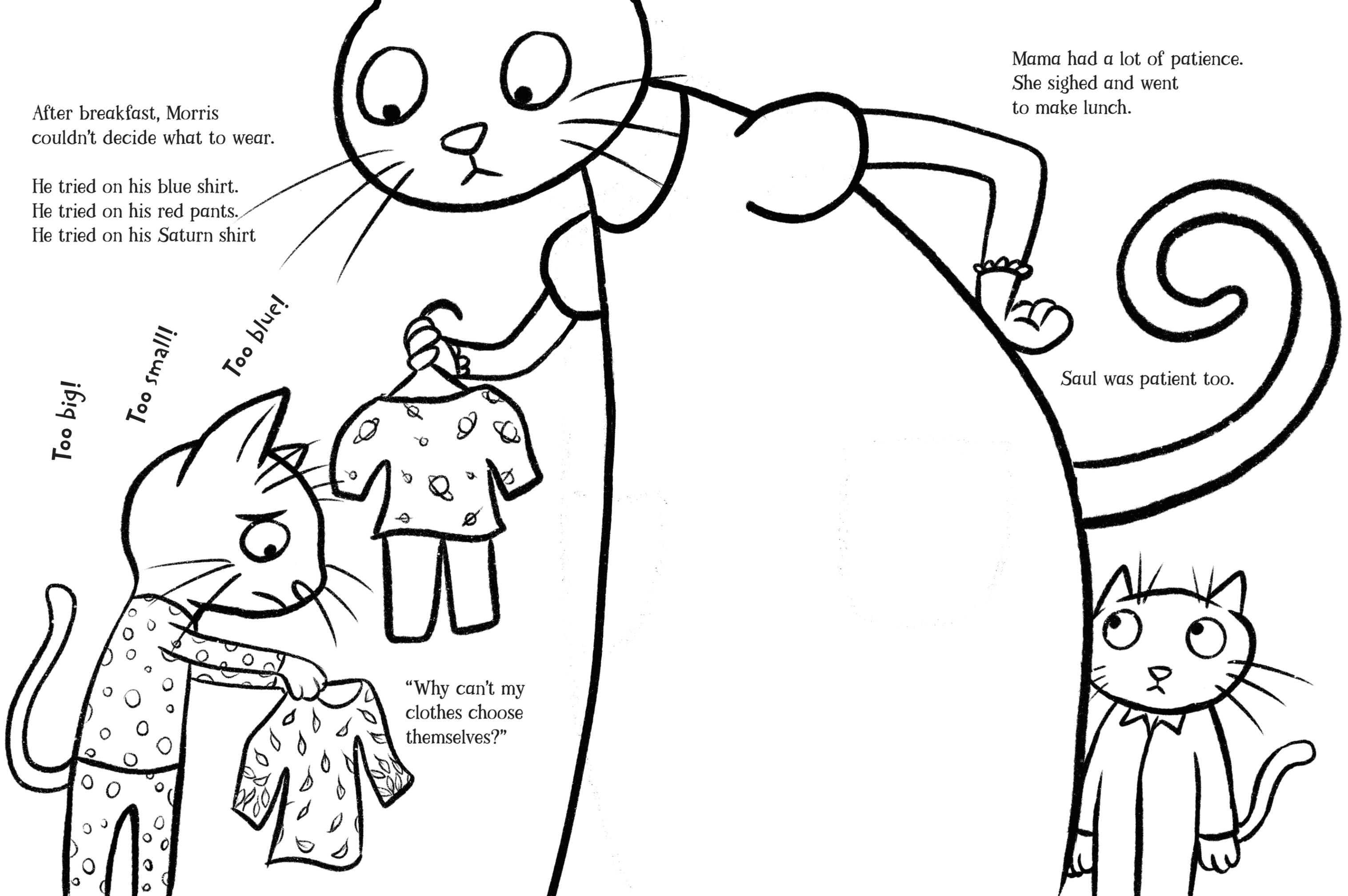
*Too small!*

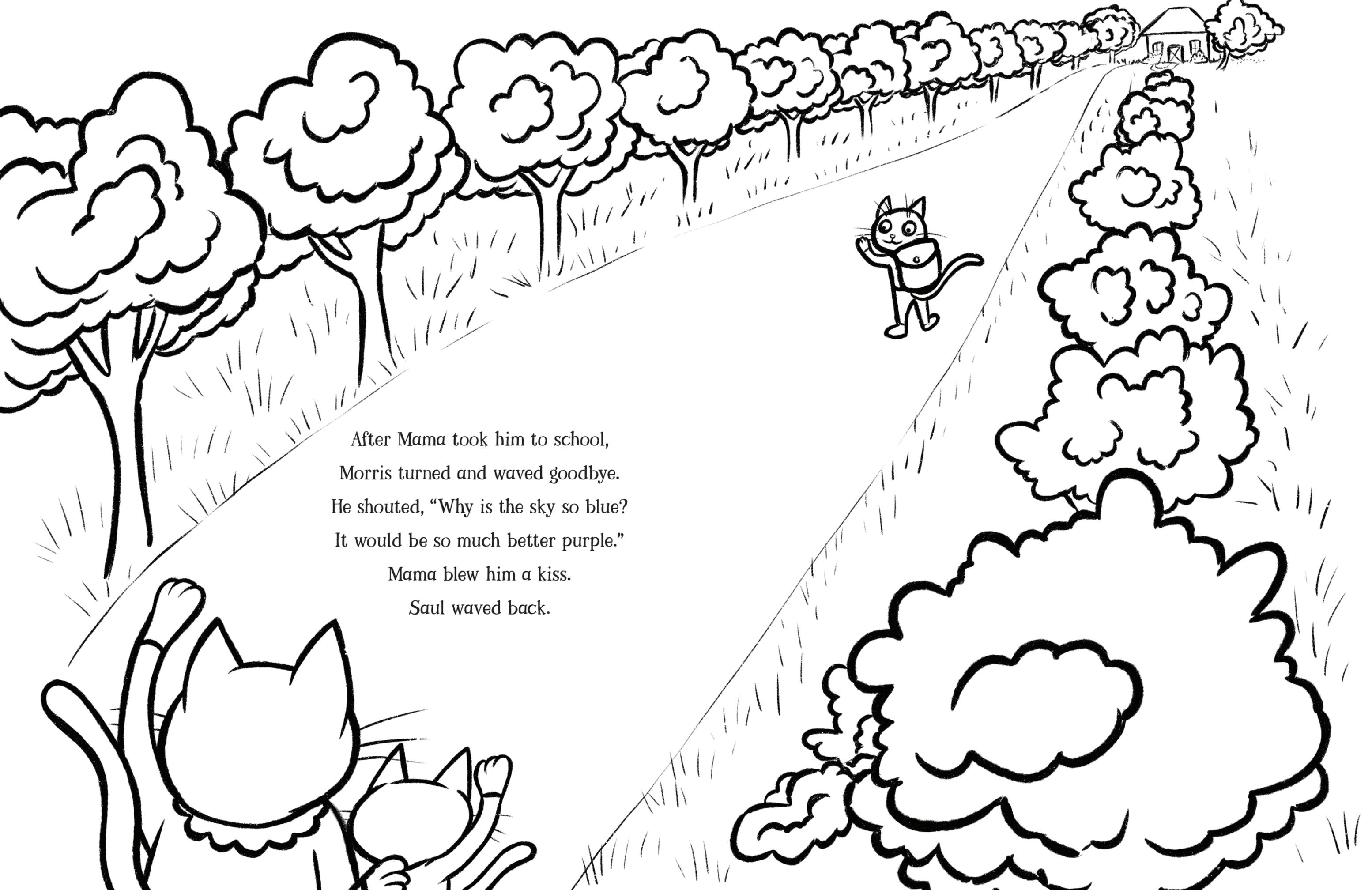
*Too blue!*

"Why can't my  
clothes choose  
themselves?"

Mama had a lot of patience.  
She sighed and went  
to make lunch.

Saul was patient too.

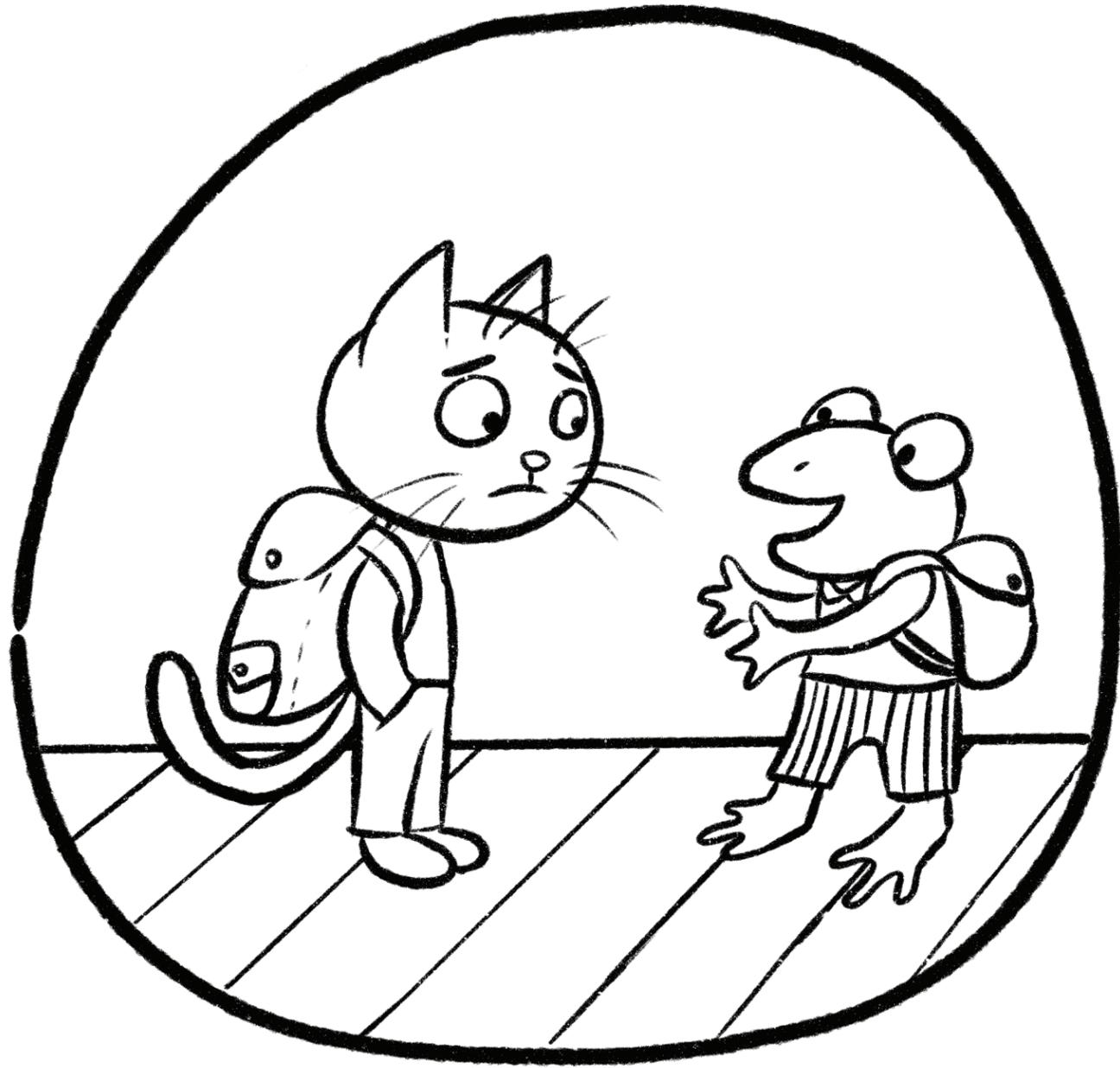




After Mama took him to school,  
Morris turned and waved goodbye.  
He shouted, "Why is the sky so blue?  
It would be so much better purple."

Mama blew him a kiss.

Saul waved back.



Then he saw Zshaba. "Hullo Morris," she said.  
But Morris just kvetched, "Why aren't I taller and  
why isn't my tail made of cheese?"  
Zsaba looked confused and hopped away.



When he saw Foygle, she greeted him warmly.  
"Hullo, hullo," she said, flapping her wings.  
But Morris just complained, "How come I can  
see you but not my eyes?"  
Foygle looked flummoxed and flew away.

In class, Morris moaned about Mrs. Mumenloschen's homework.

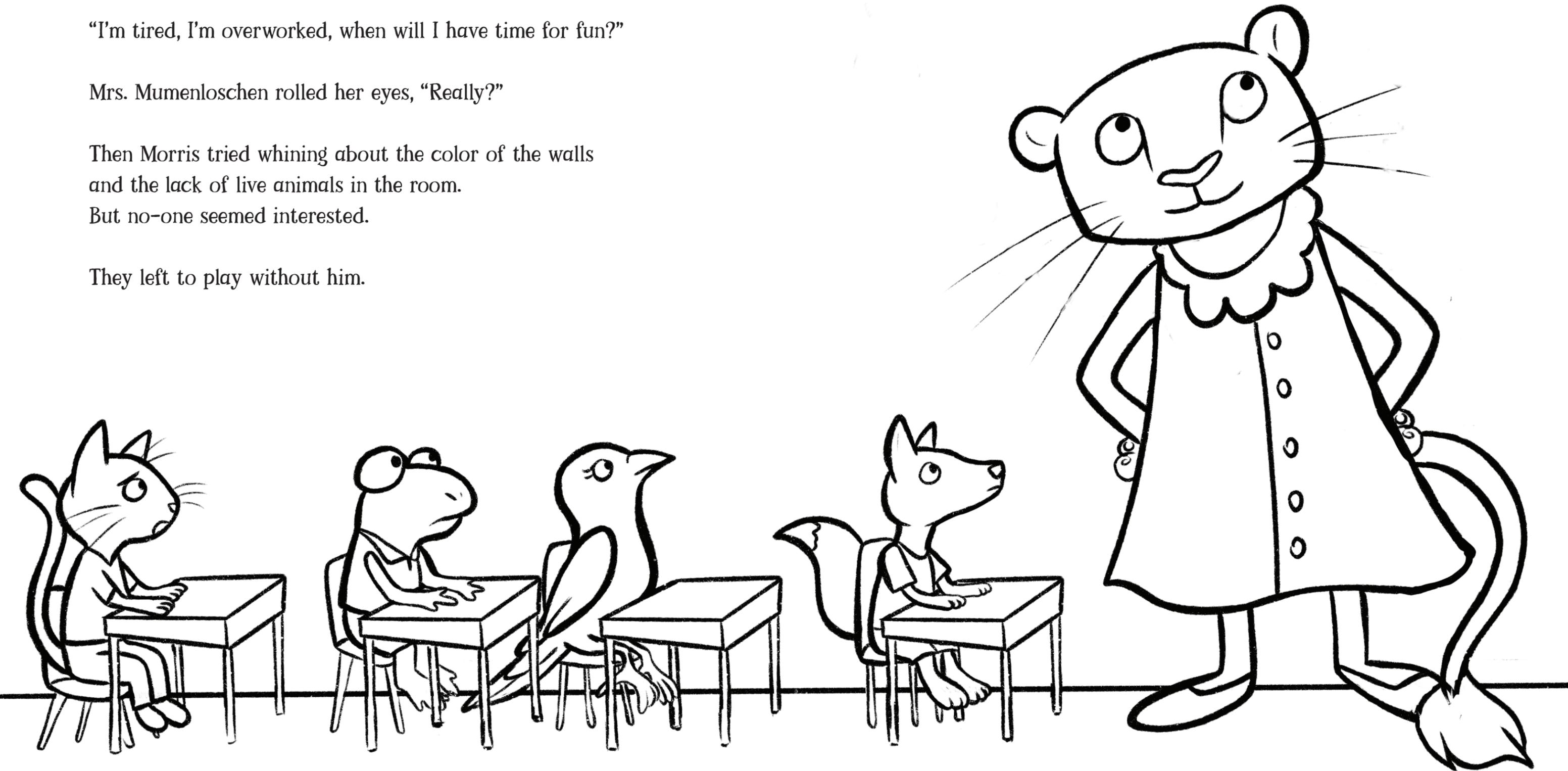
"I'm tired, I'm overworked, when will I have time for fun?"

Mrs. Mumenloschen rolled her eyes, "Really?"

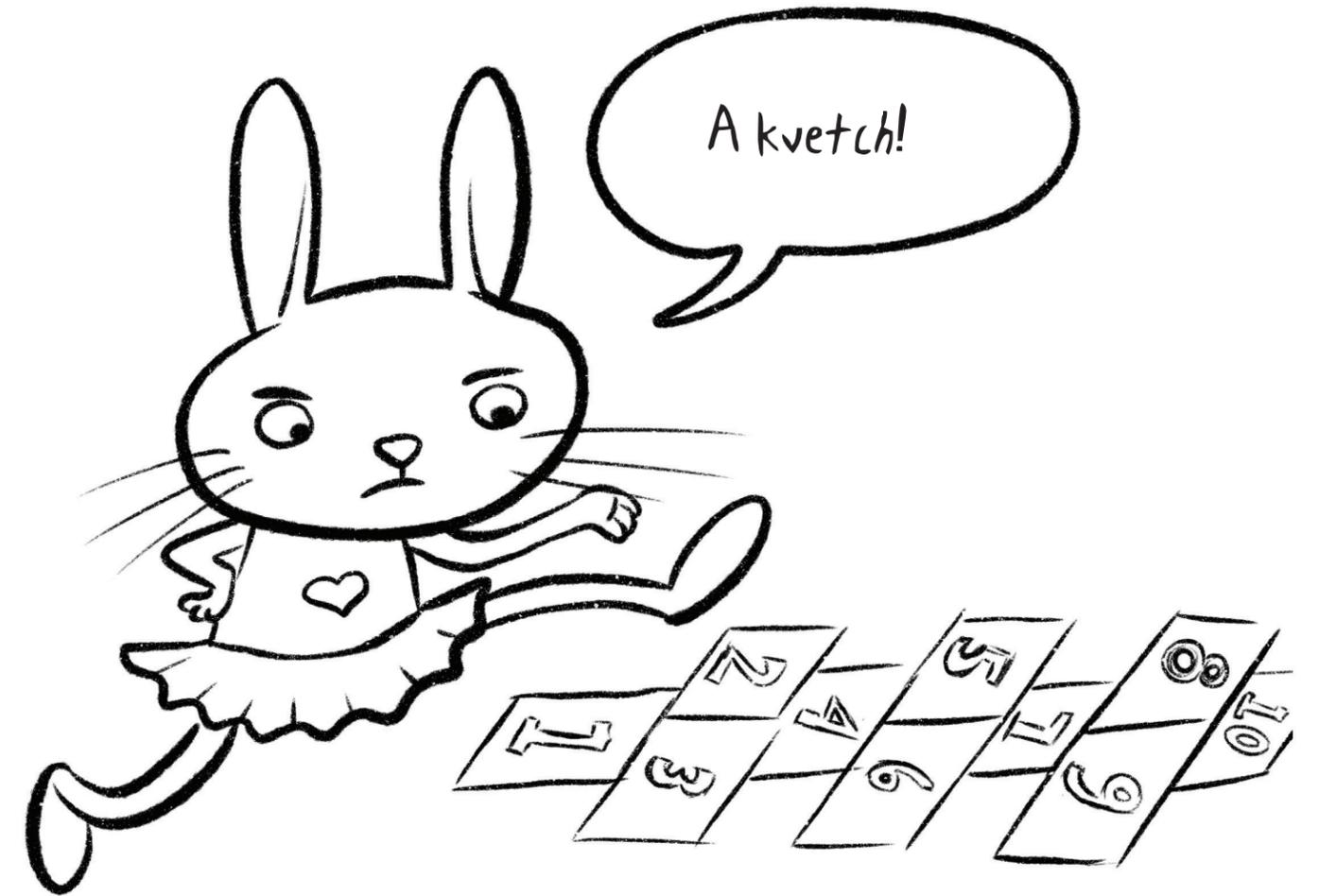
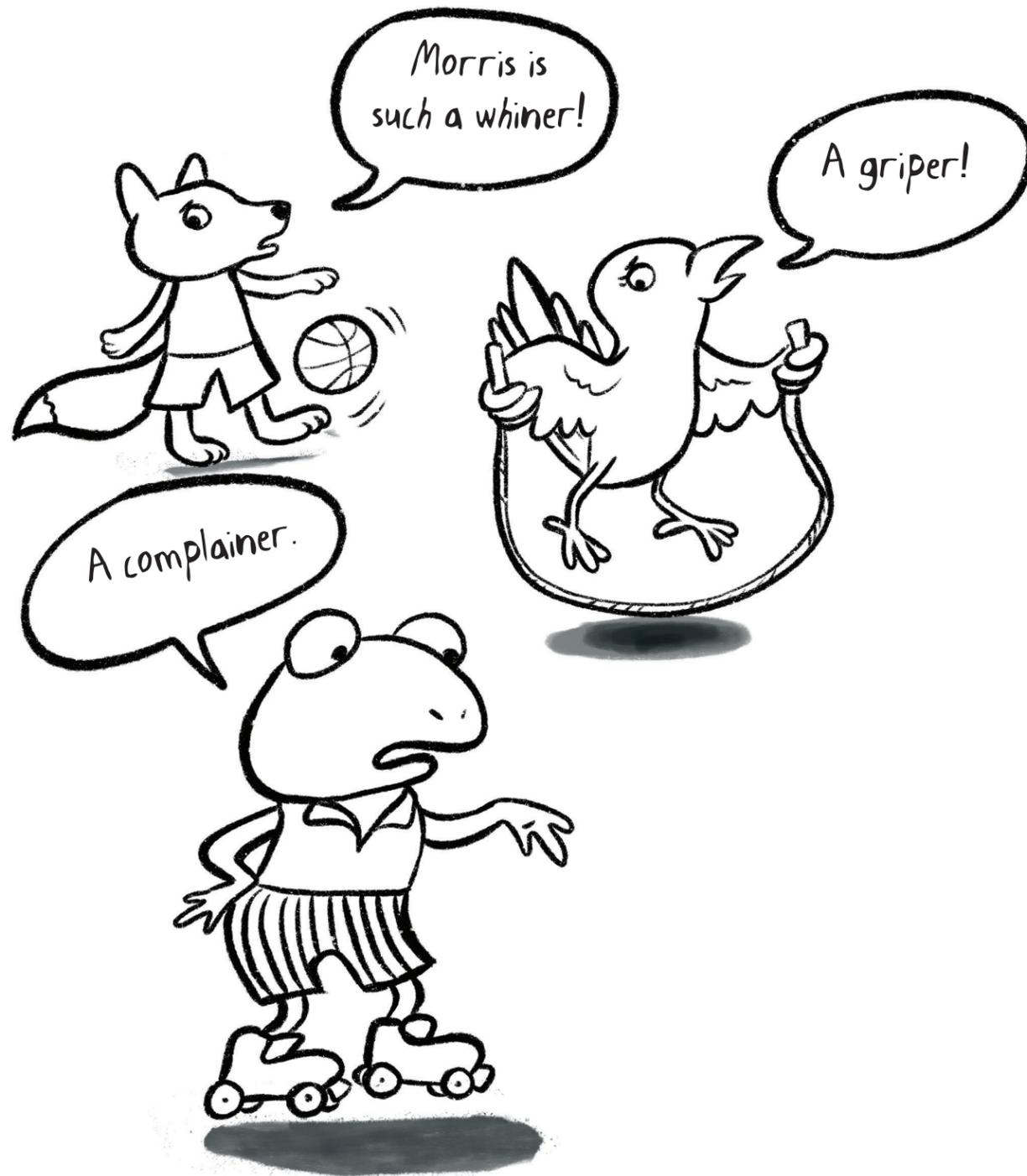
Then Morris tried whining about the color of the walls  
and the lack of live animals in the room.

But no-one seemed interested.

They left to play without him.



After school, Morris heard the other kids talking.



Morris shouted, "I don't care," and stomped off.





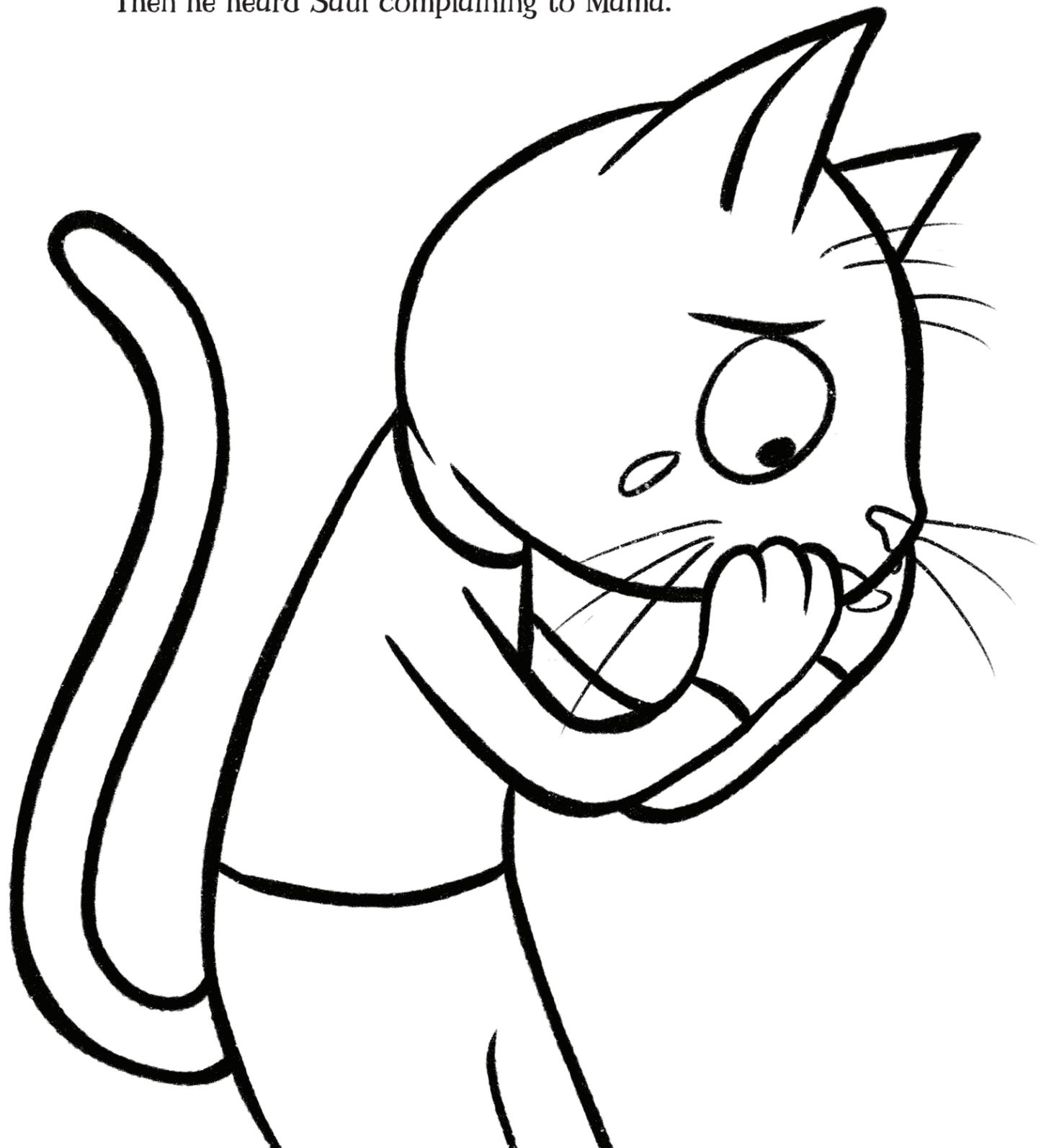
When Mama arrived Morris asked,  
“Why do we have to walk so far?  
Can’t we just fly?”

Mama was feeling tired.  
“Why are bears grumpy?” she answered.

Morris just shrugged and took Saul’s hand.

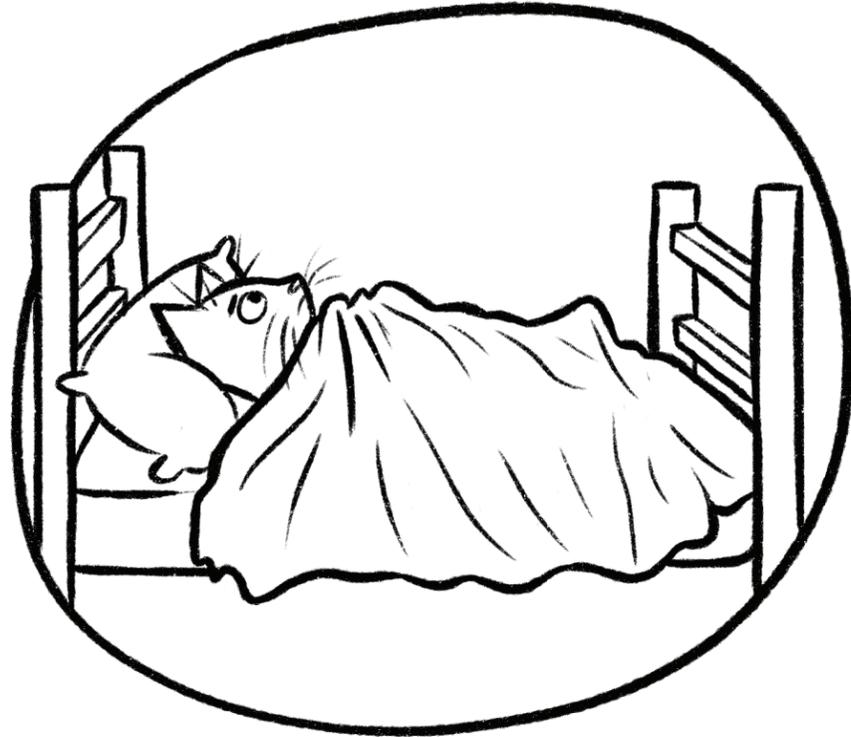
Back home, Morris went straight to his room.  
He looked through his books to find the  
gloomiest one he could find.

Then he heard Saul complaining to Mama.



Was this how he sounded?

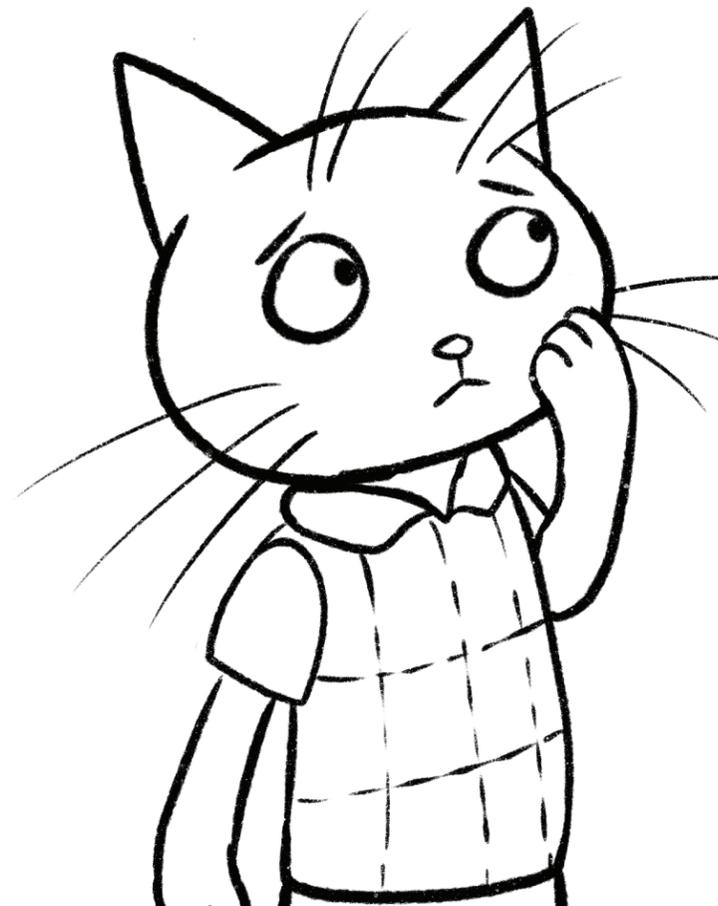
Morris became quiet.



When bedtime came, he couldn't sleep.  
He tossed and turned all night.

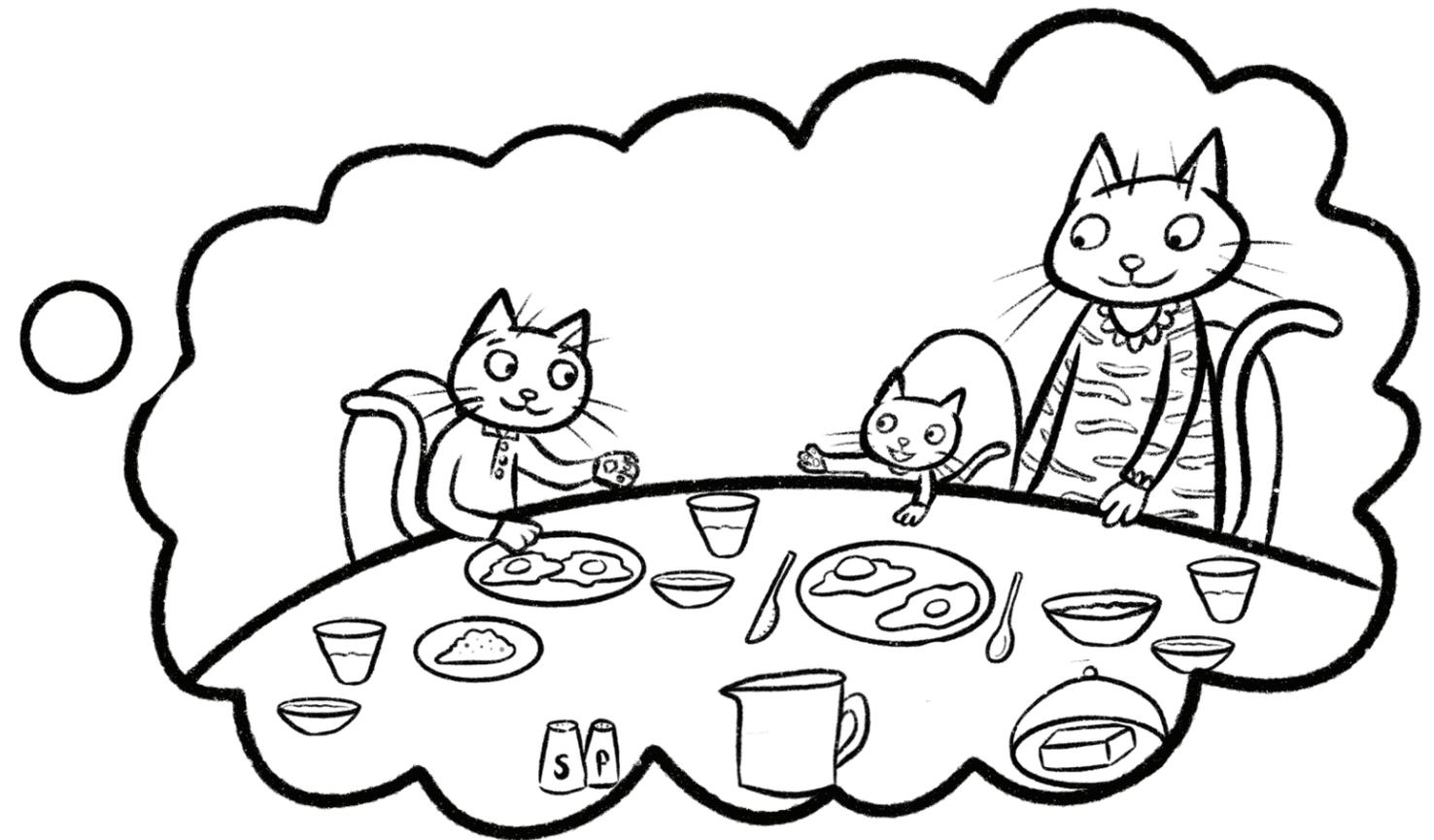


The next day, Morris stayed quiet.



He listened to everyone being  
kind to each other.

That night Morris imagined being the kind of cat  
he really wanted to be.



In the morning, Morris woke up with a new mission..  
He wished his Mama and brother a hearty good morning!  
Mama was surprised.  
Morris picked up the burnt toast

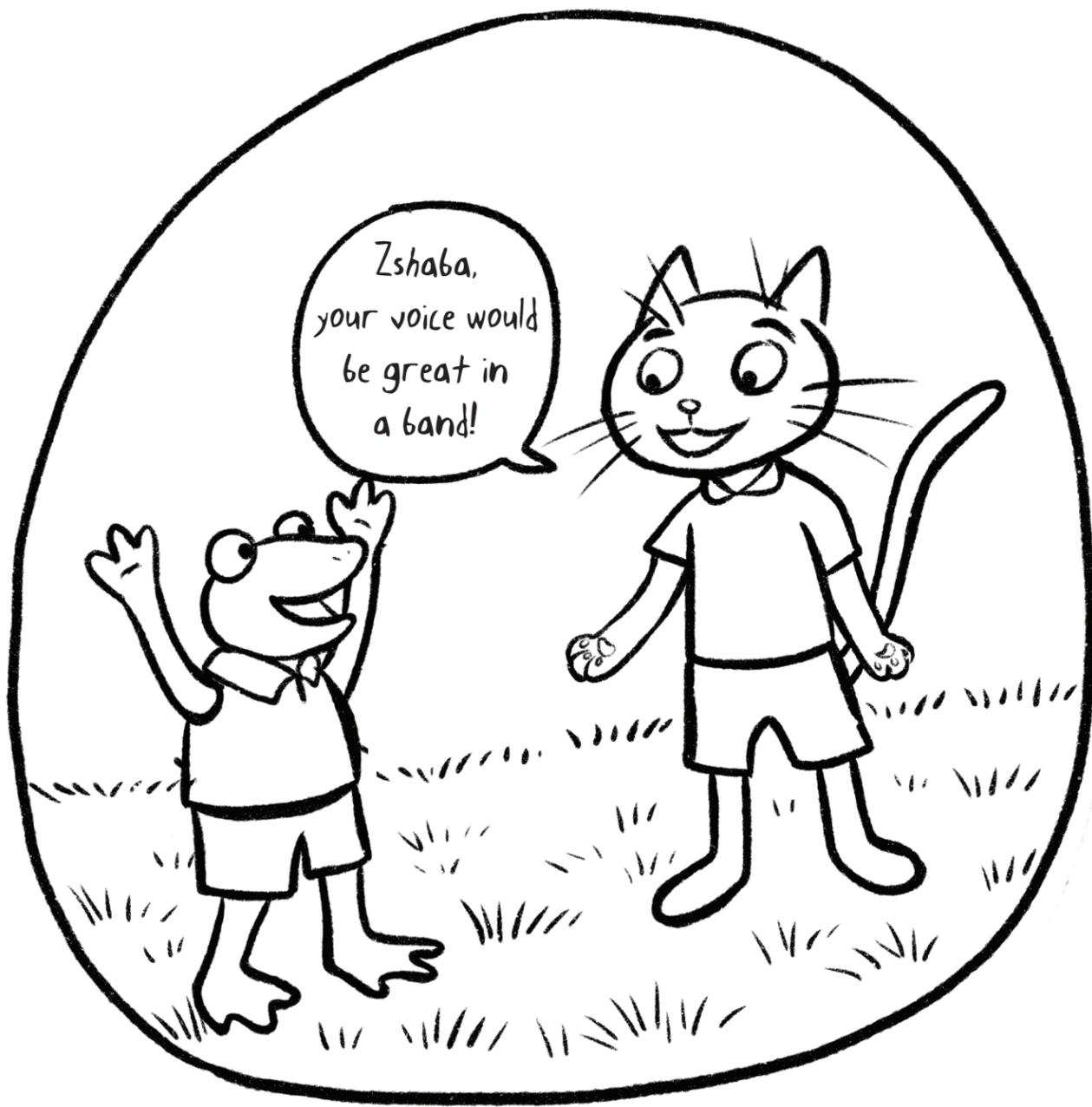
Then he turned to Saul,

Saul repeated.

Mama kissed them both.

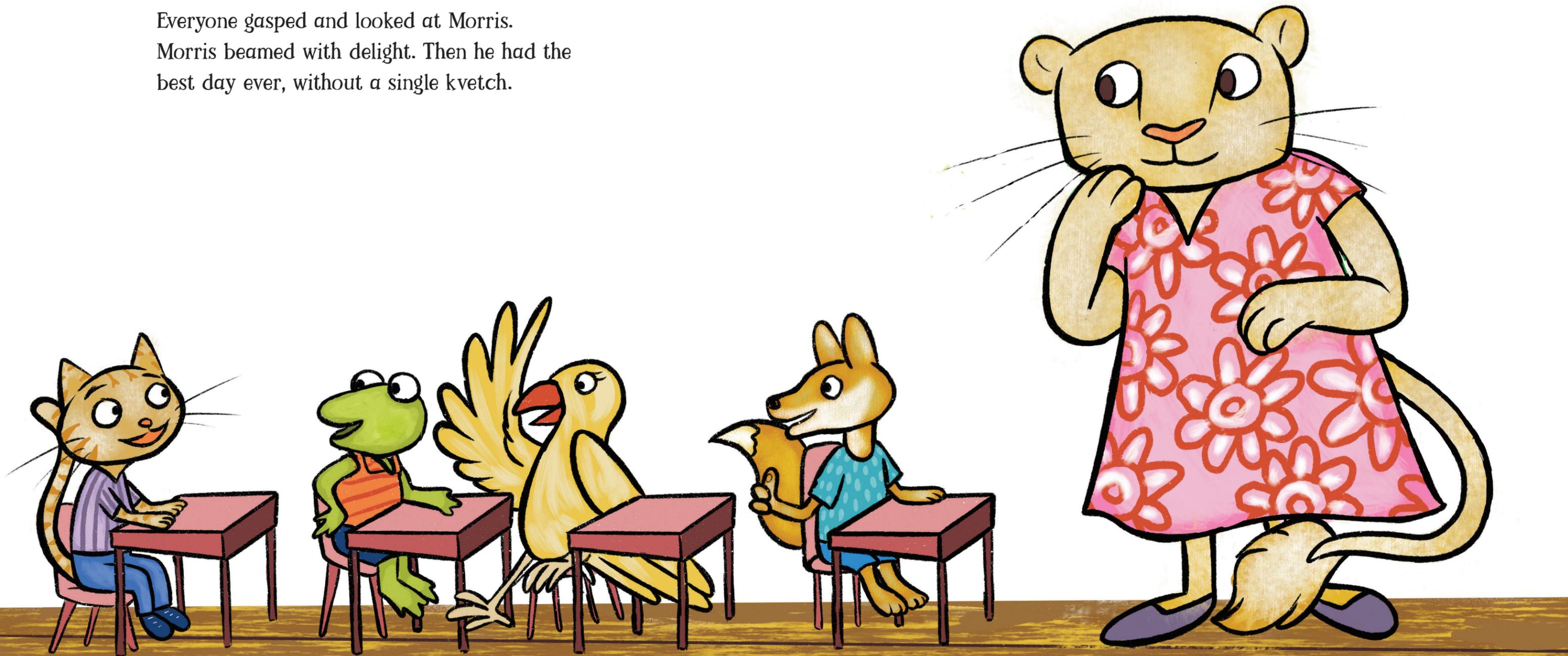


At school, as soon as Morris saw Zshaba and Foygle he apologized for being such a kvetch and said something nice to each of them.



And then most shocking of all,  
when Mrs. Mumenloschen said,  
“For today’s homework, I’d like you to interview a  
family member,”  
Morris said, “That sounds great. I’ll interview Saul.”

Everyone gasped and looked at Morris.  
Morris beamed with delight. Then he had the  
best day ever, without a single kvetch.



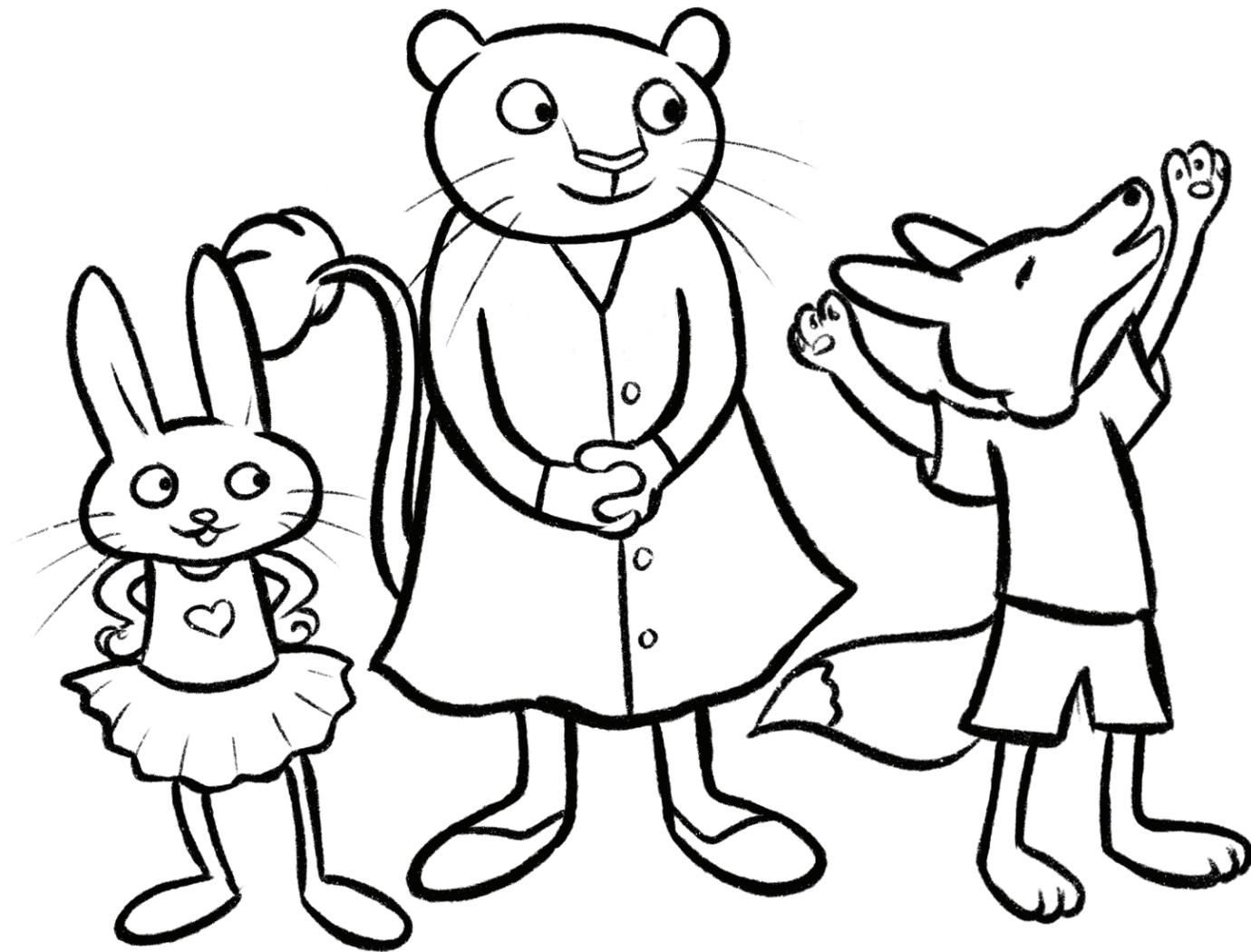
### Author's Note

Complaining can be a good thing when it comes to righting wrongs but when it happens too often it becomes a drag, a Donnie Downer, a feeling of being nagged or brought down for those hearing the constant complaining.

Because “kvetch” is a Yiddish word that means complain, but without quite as much negative connotation, all the character's names are also Yiddish.

And while just about all cultures complain, I love that Jewish people have a somewhat affectionate name for it.

Growing up, Yiddish was my first language, my mamenloschen. It wasn't until I started school that I started learning English. Yiddish still holds a special place in my heart.



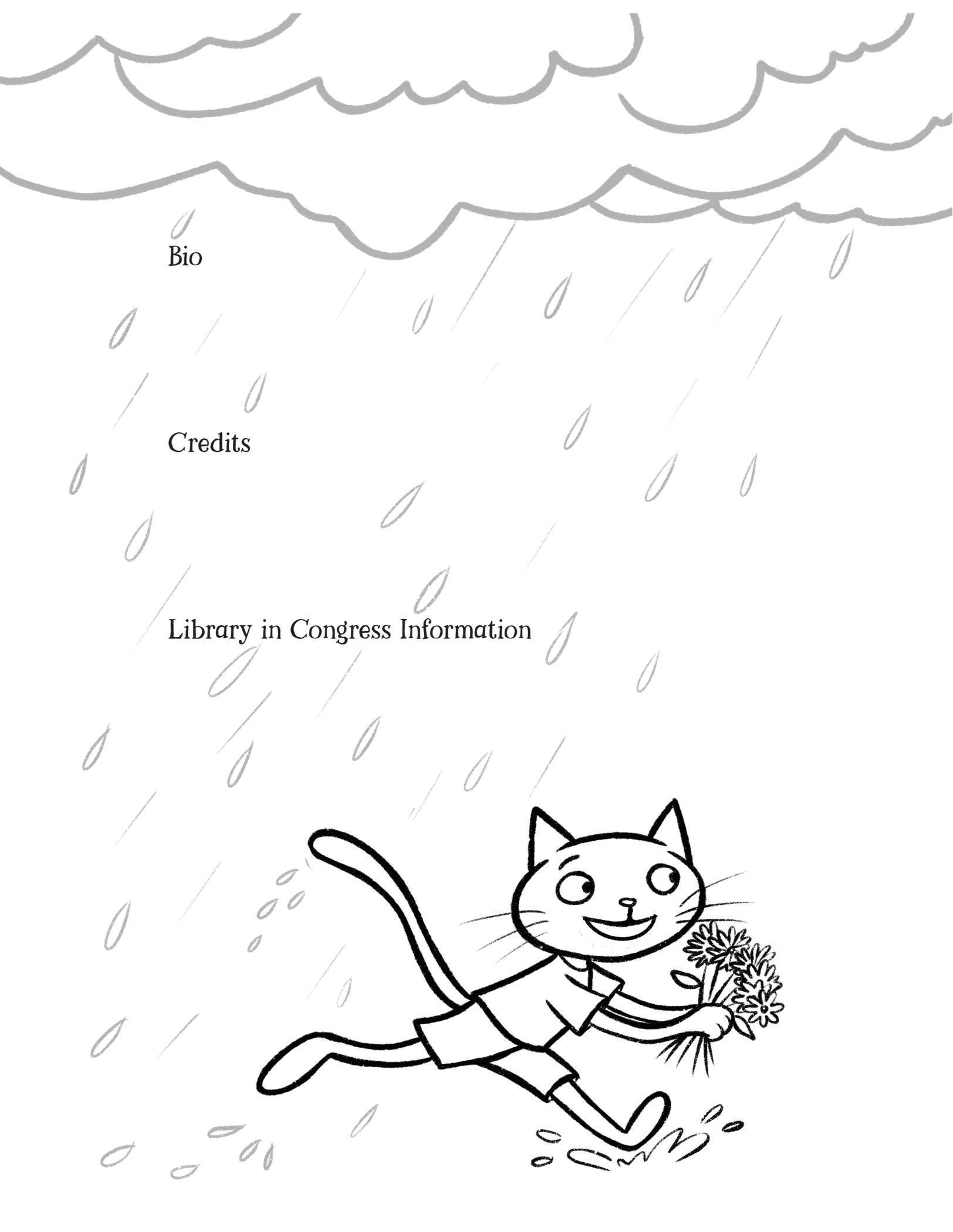
Mamenloschen (pronounced-mummenloshen) means mother tongue



Katz means cat

Foygle (pronounced-foygel) means bird

Zhsaba (pronounced-shubha) means frog



Bio

Credits

Library in Congress Information