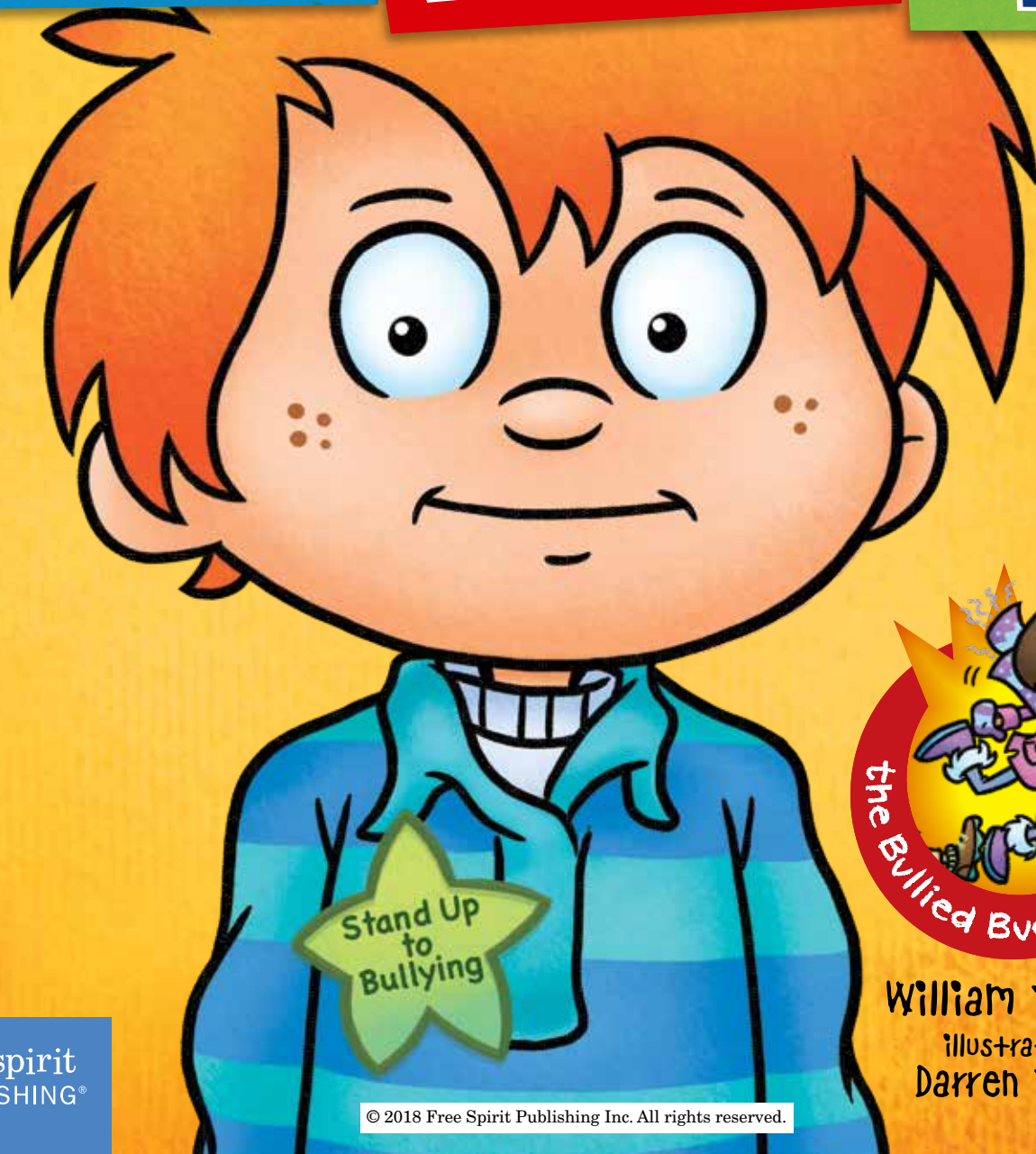


Zach

stands

Up



William Mulcahy
illustrated by
Darren McKee

free spirit
PUBLISHING®

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Dedication

To Shannon, love Dad

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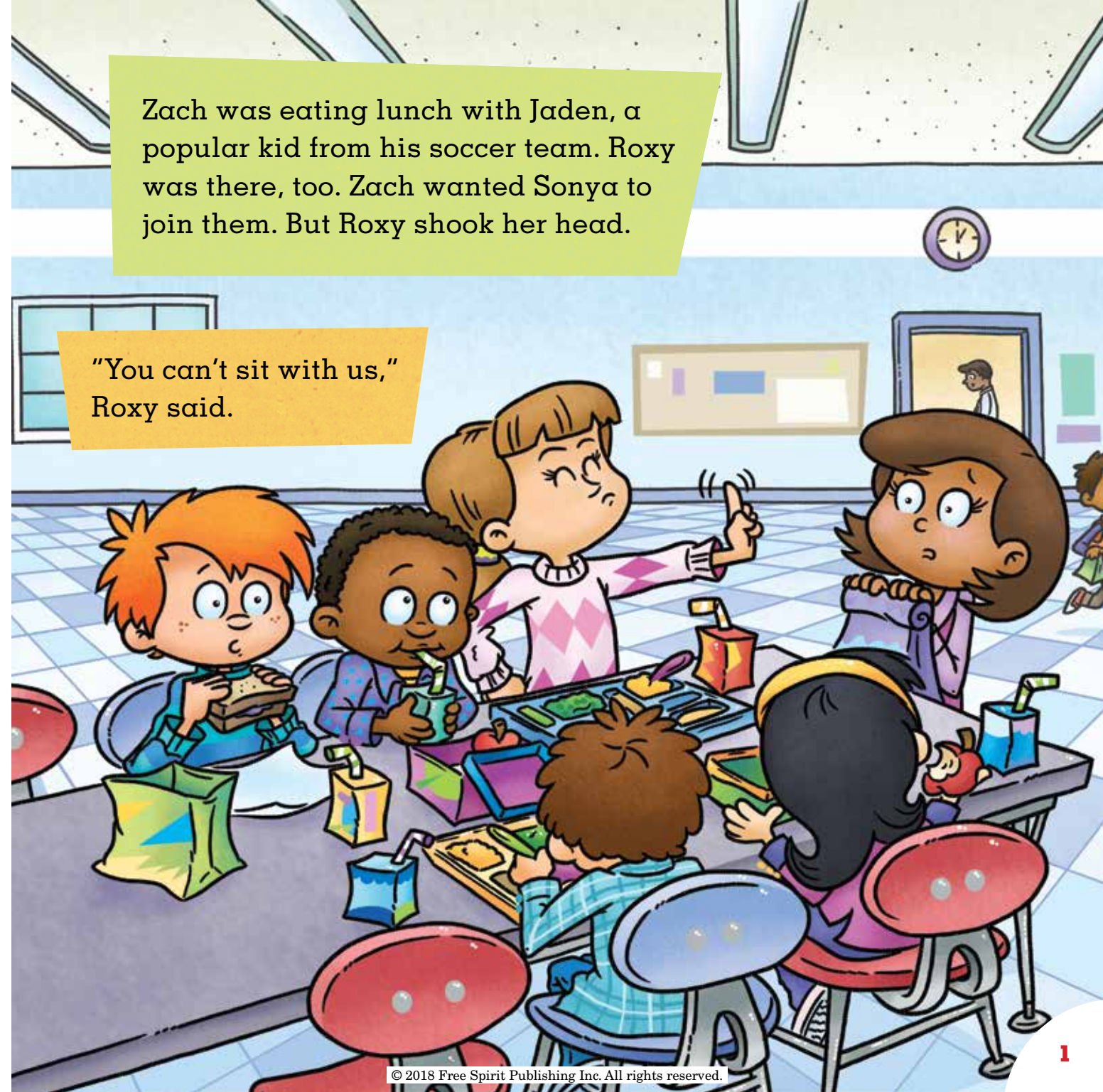
Thank you to Robert Dewitt Thompson and Larry Gierach for some important discussions on bullying prevention.

Thank you to my wife Melissa for your incredible support and our extraordinary children.

And to those people who make great differences in our world by spreading messages of peace, understanding, and courage as upstanders, thank you for your inspiration!

Zach was eating lunch with Jaden, a popular kid from his soccer team. Roxy was there, too. Zach wanted Sonya to join them. But Roxy shook her head.

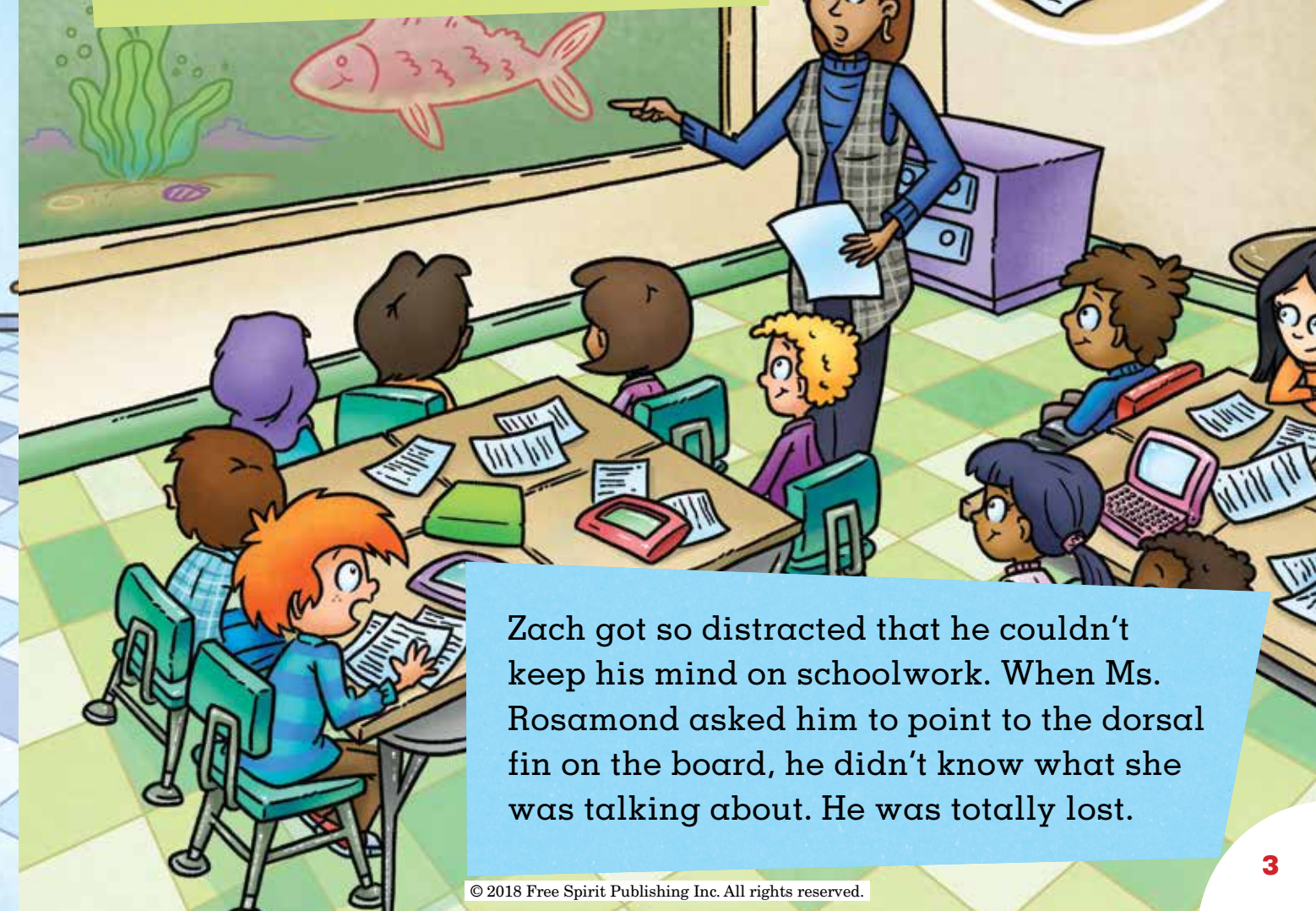
"You can't sit with us,"
Roxy said.



Sonya's smile turned down. "Why not?"
Jaden said, "It's reserved for people who don't smell."
"I don't smell!" Sonya said. "And I can sit wherever I want!"
Roxy waved a hand in front of her face. "Not here, you can't—P.U.!"
Zach didn't know what to do as he watched Sonya walk away. For the rest of lunch, he sat in silence while Sonya ate alone.



Zach was still upset in class that afternoon. He couldn't stop thinking about what Jaden and Roxy did to Sonya. He knew he should have stuck up for his friend, but he was too scared. Everyone was watching.



Zach got so distracted that he couldn't keep his mind on schoolwork. When Ms. Rosamond asked him to point to the dorsal fin on the board, he didn't know what she was talking about. He was totally lost.

After school, Zach sat on the bus waiting to go home. When Sonya came down the aisle, Roxy stuck her foot out, and Sonya tripped. Everyone laughed—everyone except Zach.

He scooted over to make room for Sonya on the seat. But she walked past him to the back.



Helping Children Stand Up to Bullying

Bullying is a repeated pattern of hurtful behavior done by a person who has more power (physically or socially) than the person being targeted. Because of that inequity of power, many children are not equipped to deal with the emotional and social challenges that bullying presents. The situation can seem very scary and uncomfortable not only for targets but also for kids who witness bullying. But it's these witnesses, or bystanders, who often hold the most important power of all—the power to stop bullying. Studies show that the most effective thing a bystander can do is support the target of the bullying—by helping or being kind, not by directly confronting the aggressor. Thus, in order to help kids who are bullied and create environments where bullying is not tolerated, it is important to show children how to move beyond being a bystander to being an *upstander*, someone who stands up when they see bullying happen.

The **Stand Up to Bullying STAR** is a four-part process that gives children a specific plan for being an upstander that keeps everyone safe and helps them stay in charge of their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. It helps them find the courage to include and support kids who are being bullied, help those kids get away from the bullying situation, and continue to encourage targeted kids by listening to them. It also includes perhaps the single best strategy for helping kids who are targets of bullying: getting support from an adult at school.

Kids are most successful standing up to bullying when families, schools, and communities work together to guide and coach them. Help kids by practicing the **Stand Up to Bullying STAR** with them.

The **Stand Up to Bullying STAR** has the power to:

- Increase self-esteem and self-worth
- Increase sense of self-efficacy
- Help children stand up to their fears
- Help them feel empowered
- Help kids realize that neither the bullied nor the bystander are to blame
- Restore self-respect
- Build confidence
- Increase a sense of empathy



Here is more information about the four parts of the **Stand Up to Bullying STAR** and some tips to help guide your child.

- 1. Speak up.** The most important thing a child can do in the moment he or she witnesses bullying is choose *not* to do nothing. Doing nothing is allowing the bullying to continue. Instead, the upstander can actively intervene by talking to or adjoining with the person being bullied. Speaking up has the power to show kids who are mistreated that someone cares about them and seeks to understand what they are going through. Never underestimate the power of empathizing. A common misconception is that speaking up means verbally challenging the person who is doing the bullying. In fact, this type of challenging behavior can escalate the bullying situation and cause further harm. It can be helpful to try to distract the people who are mistreating others, to find a way to change the subject or shift the focus to something else.
- 2. Take off.** In this step, the upstander helps the person being bullied get away from the situation. Make sure kids know that this is not “being chicken” or running away from the problem; rather, it is the wisest and safest action to take. It helps stop the bullying. Coach kids to ignore any verbal attacks the bullying person might make when they take off and to stick to their exit strategy.
- 3. Actively listen.** Once safely away from the bullying situation, upstanders listen to the concerns of the child being bullied without judging. Ask questions, be attentive, and reflect back what the other person might be feeling. This type of listening builds trust, teamwork, and a sense of belonging. Compassionate listening also is a powerful way to acknowledge someone and often increases self-esteem. Make sure to provide spaces and time where children can talk and listen without fear of being overheard. Be a good model by practicing good listening yourself.
- 4. Report.** In this step, children tell an adult. Be sure to establish a culture in which children know they will never get in trouble for coming forward to inform about bullying. It is hard enough to watch or be the target of bullying. We don't want to further traumatize kids by shaming them or disapproving of their having the courage to come forward. Bullying thrives when kids believe they can't tell an adult because they will be labeled a tattletale. This is one way those who bully maintain their power and control over others.