



Laura Ruby is the author of some of the most acclaimed novels for children and teens in recent memory, including the National Book Award finalist *Thirteen Doorways*, *Wolves Behind Them All*, Printz Award-winning and National Book Award finalist *Bone Gap*, and the ALA BFYA *York: The Shadow Cipher* and its sequels. She is on the faculty of Hamline University's MFA in writing for children and young adults program and lives in the Chicago area. You can visit her online at www.lauraruby.com.

Dung (pronounced Dzung) **Ho** was born and raised in Hue citadel, Vietnam, where she studied graphic design at the arts university. She is the illustrator of Joanna Ho's *New York Times* bestseller *Eyes That Kiss in the Corners*. Dung lives in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, where she continues to learn and develop her art. When she's not drawing, she loves spending time cooking (eating), watching movies, and tending her plants. You can visit her online at www.behance.net/hanhdung.



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Ruby Ho

Me and Ms. Too



Me and Ms. Too



written by **Laura Ruby** illustrated by **Dung Ho**

Ages 4–8



For as long as Molly can remember, it's always just been her and Dad. Dad, who likes to splash in the pool, who likes to spin at the park, who bakes the best cookies around.

But that was before Dad married Ms. Too.

Ms. Too doesn't like to splash. She doesn't like to spin. And she can't bake anything.

"But Molly, you used to love Ms. Too."

That was before, when she was Molly's favorite librarian. Now everything has changed.

But as Molly and Ms. Too are about to discover, maybe change isn't always scary. Maybe change can be the best thing of all.



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Me and Ms. Too



By Laura Ruby
Illustrated by Dung Ho

BALZER + BRAY
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For Melissa and Jessica, who forgave me
when I didn't know how to cut the kiwis-L.R.

For Tung, my partner in crime-D.H.

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First Edition

When Dad married Ms. Too,
everything changed.



Even the wallpaper.

I liked that wallpaper.

“But Molly, you said it looked like a bunch of angry thumbs,” Dad said.

“That was before.”

“Before what?”





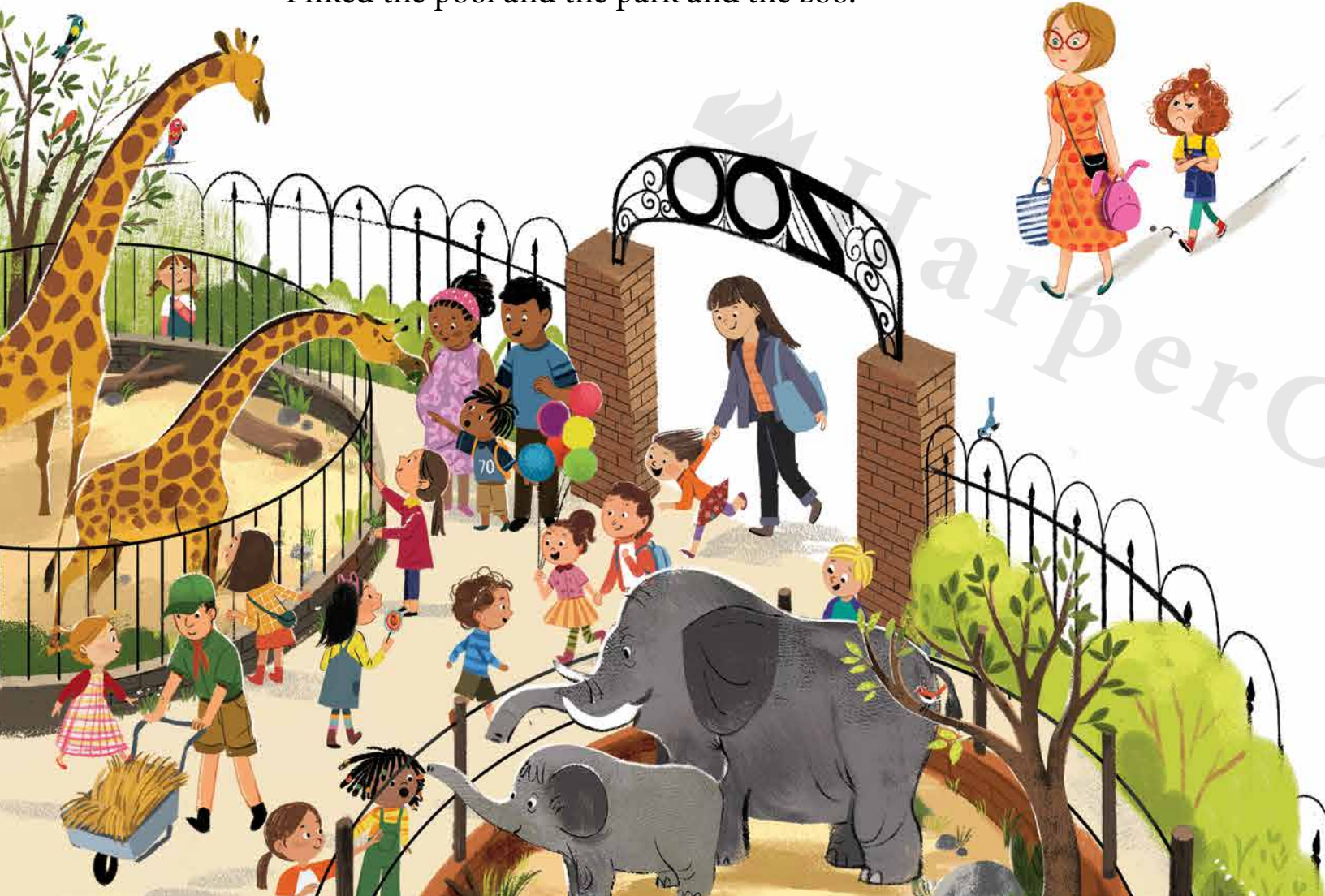
Before Ms. Too, my house looked like my house and nobody else's. My dad was my dad and nobody else's.



Ms. Too said, "That wallpaper was a little loud."
"Wallpaper isn't loud," I said. "People are loud."
"Sometimes," said Ms. Too.



After school, Ms. Too picked me up and watched me till
dinner. She took me to the pool and the park and the zoo.
I liked the pool and the park and the zoo.



But I didn't like Ms. Too.
"But Molly, I thought she was your favorite," Dad said.
That was before.
"Before what?"



Before, Dad took me to the pool and the park and the zoo.



We splashed

and we spun



and we laughed
at the llamas.

When we got home, we cooked breakfast for dinner and dinner
for breakfast. We baked cookies shaped like funny little bunnies.



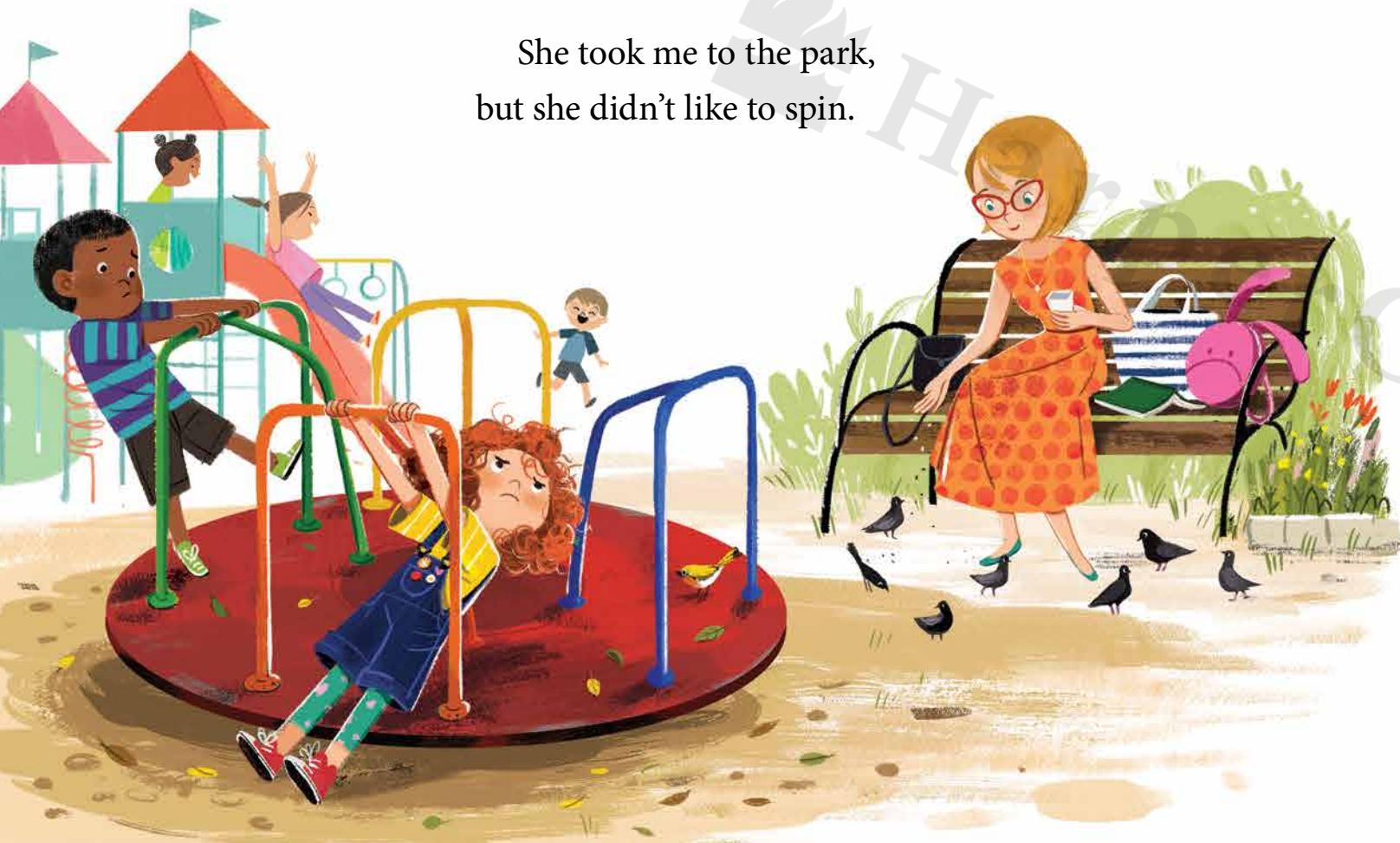
And we sang all day long.



Ms. Too didn't like to do any of those things.
She took me to the pool, but she didn't like to splash.



She took me to the park,
but she didn't like to spin.



She liked cats better than people.
She couldn't make meatballs or muffins or funny little bunnies.
She didn't cut the kiwis right.





And her books took up all the room in the house.



“But Molly, I thought you loved books,” Dad said.
That was before.



READ

Before, Ms. Too was just plain old Ms. Blue, the librarian. She read us stories. She helped me find just the right books.

Until one day, Dad heard her read a story out loud. His eyes got all watery, like he wanted to cry. Then he put his hand on his heart.

I thought I was his heart.

A
B C



The wedding was in our backyard,
right by my sandbox.



I said Ms. Too's dress looked like underwear.
I said my stomach hurt.
I said we were just a bunch of funny little bunnies.
"Maybe we are a funny kind of family, but I like
that about us," said Dad.



I didn't like it.

Every time we went somewhere, I asked: "Is *she* coming too?"

"*Ms. Blue, Ms. Blue, now you are a Too, Ms. Too,*" my dad sang.

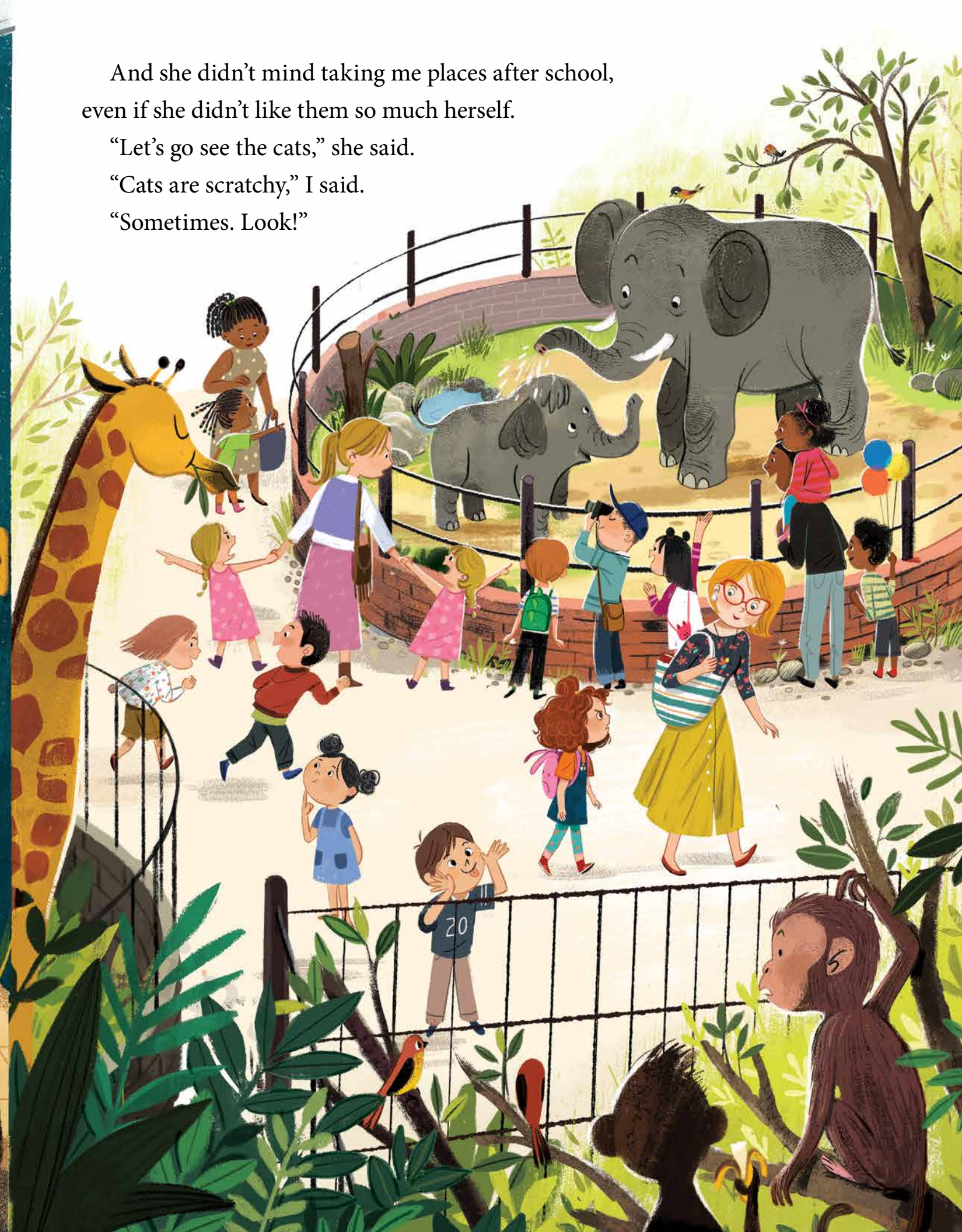
But Ms. Too didn't mind her new nickname.

And she didn't mind taking me places after school,
even if she didn't like them so much herself.

"Let's go see the cats," she said.

"Cats are scratchy," I said.

"Sometimes. Look!"



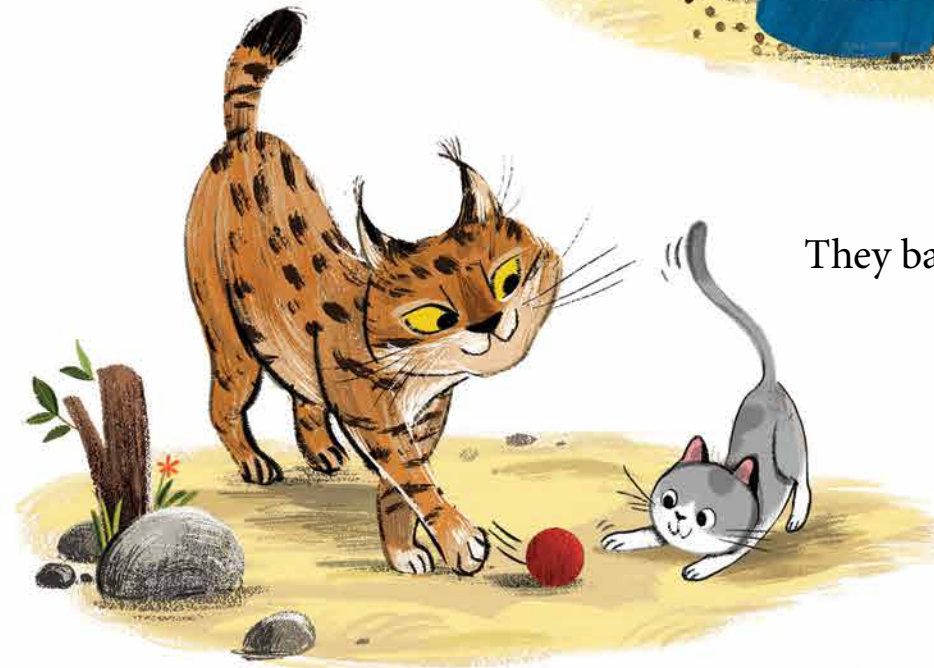
Inside an enclosure were a big cat and a little one. The zookeeper explained that the big cat was once cranky and lonely, and a stray kitten moved in to keep it company. They did everything together. We watched them for a long while.



They ate their kibble side by side.



They batted a ball back and forth.



They curled in the sun and fell asleep.



My stomach felt funny.
"There are all kinds of families,"
said Ms. Too.



When we got home, Ms. Too pulled a book off the shelf and found a recipe for cookies. She kept looking at the ingredients and then at the instructions. She seemed cranky.

I said, "Do you want me to help you?"

"I was hoping you would ask," she said. "Thank you."



Together, we read the instructions. Together, we mixed the dough. Together, we made cookies in the shape of underwear, of a bunch of angry thumbs, of big cats and little ones.

We had a blob of dough left over. She shaped it with her hands.



After it was baked, she put it on a plate and gave it to me. "You will always be your daddy's heart, you know. And mine, too."



Now when we go to the pool and the park and the zoo,

we dive



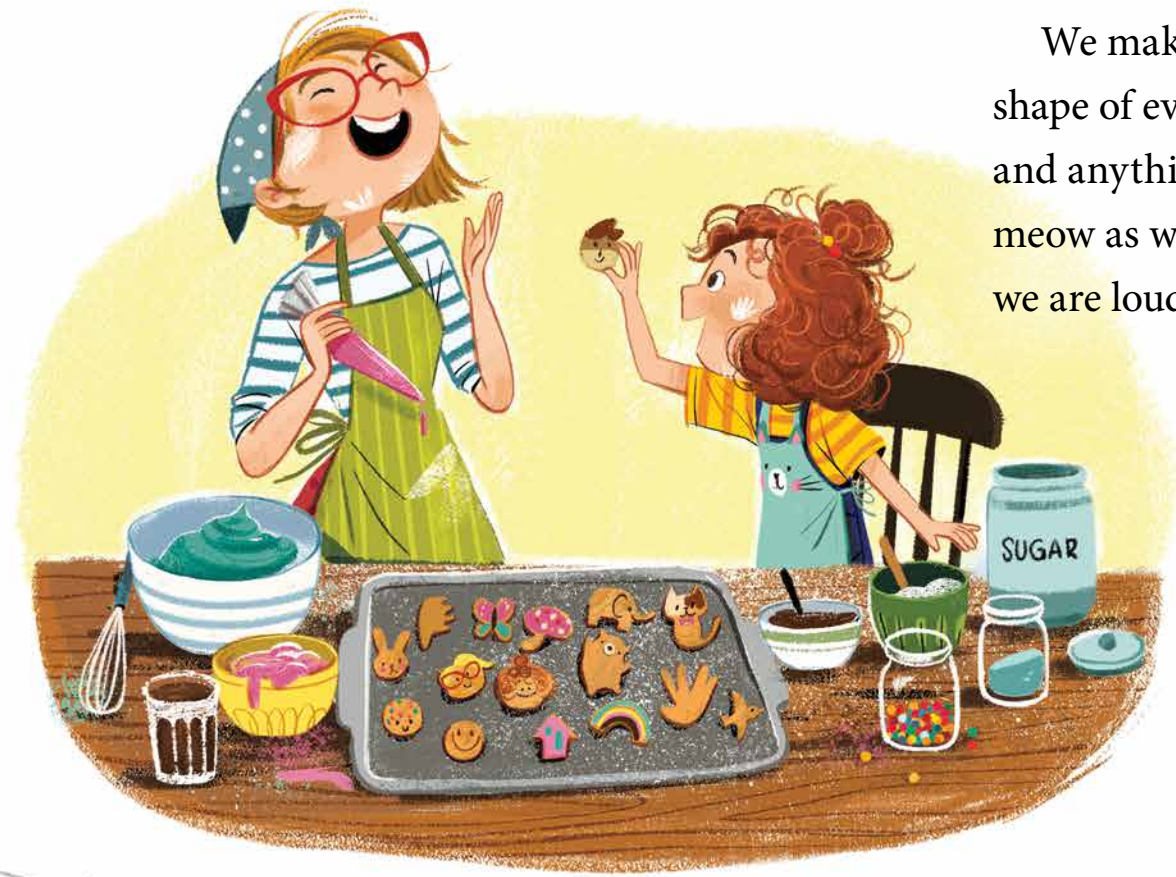
and we swing



and we purr at the cats.



We make cookies in the shape of everything we see and anything we wish. We meow as we cook. Sometimes we are loud.



And she still reads me the best stories.
Maybe we are a funny kind of family.



But I like that about us.

