



Chapter 6

Ready? Set? School!

Zack went to bed after dinner. He tossed and turned for most of the night.

What if nobody at school likes me? he worried. *What if they think that people from Earth are weird? I wish Bert were here.*

After staring at the ceiling for hours,

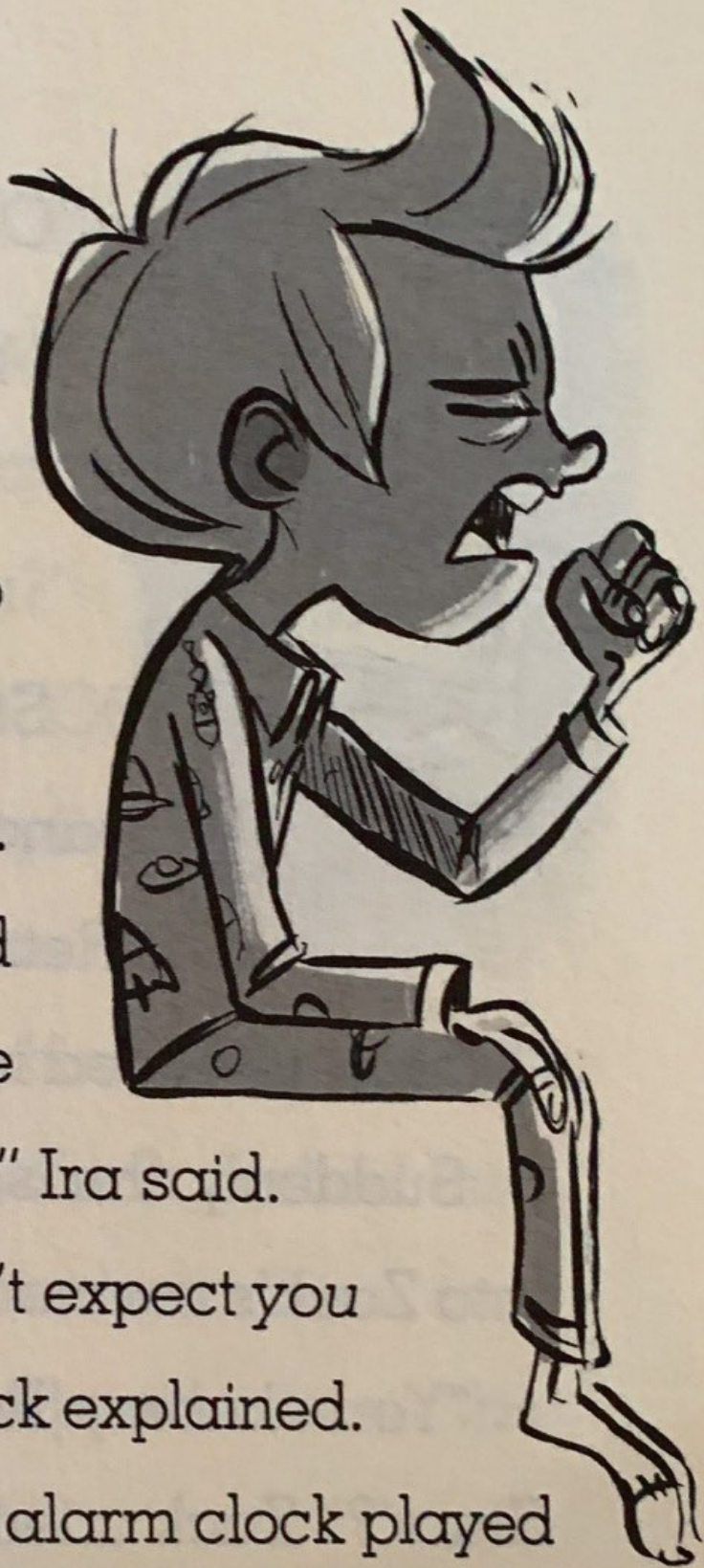
Zack sat upright in bed. "Ira, is that you?" he asked, rubbing the sleep from his eyes.

"Yes. It is six a.m. galactic standard time. You set the alarm for that time," Ira said.

"Yeah, but I didn't expect you to wake me up," Zack explained.

"Back on Earth, my alarm clock played my favorite song to wake me up."

"What is your favorite song?" asked Ira.





"Oh, Ira, I don't think you'd know it," Zack said. "It's called 'Rockin' Round the Stars.' It's by an Earth band called—"

"Retro Rocket," Ira said.

"It was released in 2117."

Suddenly the song came blasting into Zack's room.

"You know 'Rockin' Round the Stars'?" Zack cried.

"Certainly. My memory banks contain more than six million songs from twenty-three different planets."



"Cool. Can you wake me up with that song from now on?"

"Of course," Ira replied. "Now hurry. You will be late for school."

Zack rushed into the bathroom and stepped into the shower. "Now what?"

A blast of water startled Zack.

"YA!" cried Zack. "It's too cold!"

"Adjusting," said Ira.

The water quickly became just the right temperature.

"Shall I save that shower setting for you?" Ira asked.

"You do everything, don't you?"

"Yes, I do," replied Ira.

Zack got dressed and zoomed to the kitchen. He ate toast with boingoberry

jam, which was made from a berry that grew on Venus.

"Okay, everybody, have a great day!"

Dad said.



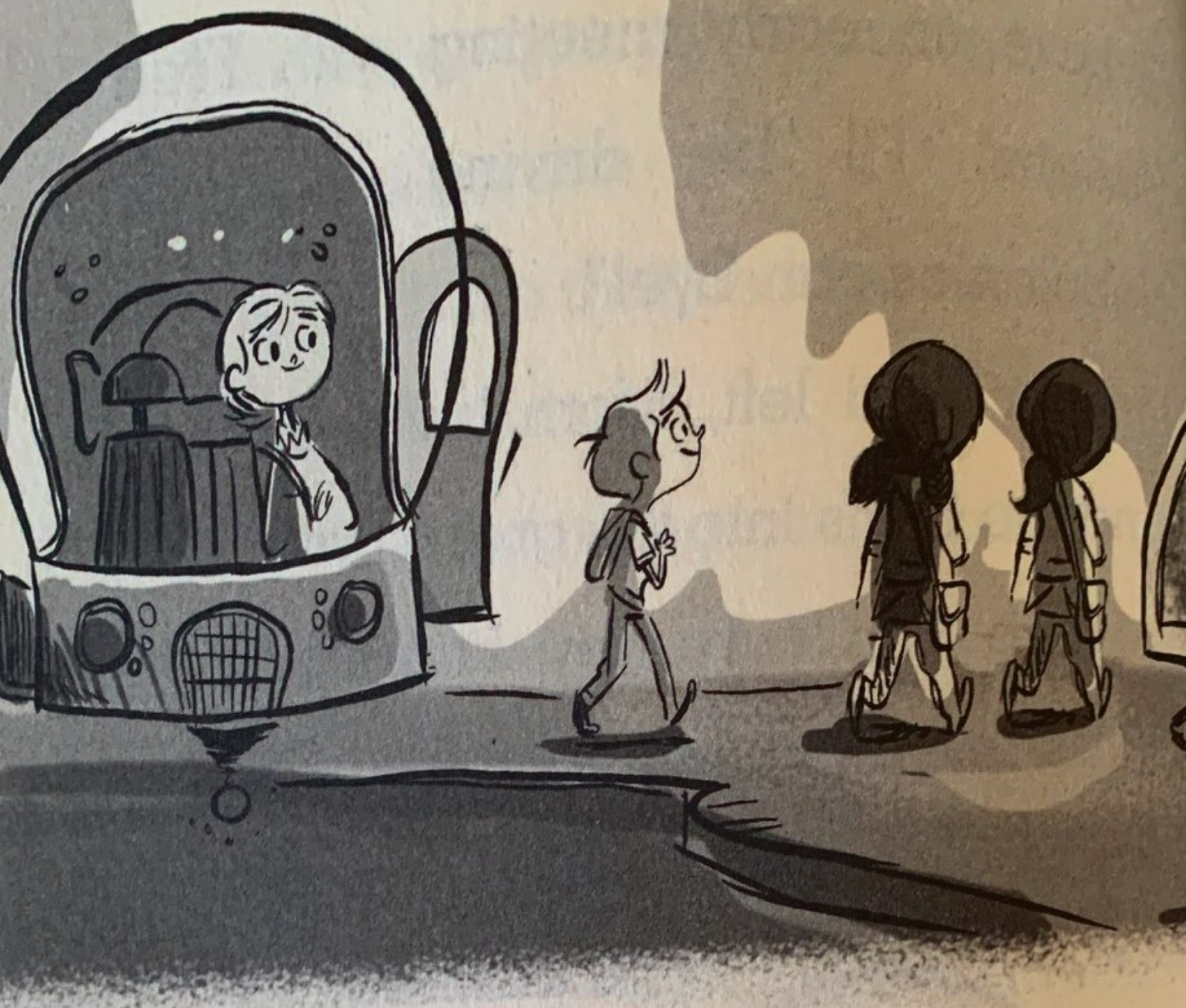
"I have an early meeting with Fred Stevens. I'll be driving the red Nebulonics car. Bye!"

After Dad left, Mom hurried Zack and the twins into the green car.

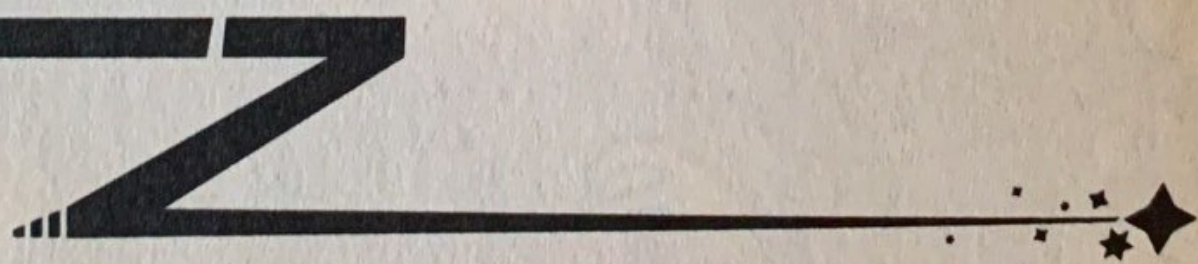
"Are you sure you know how to work this thing, Mom?" asked Zack.

"Dad showed me," Mom replied. "I just push this button and say 'Sprockets Academy.'"

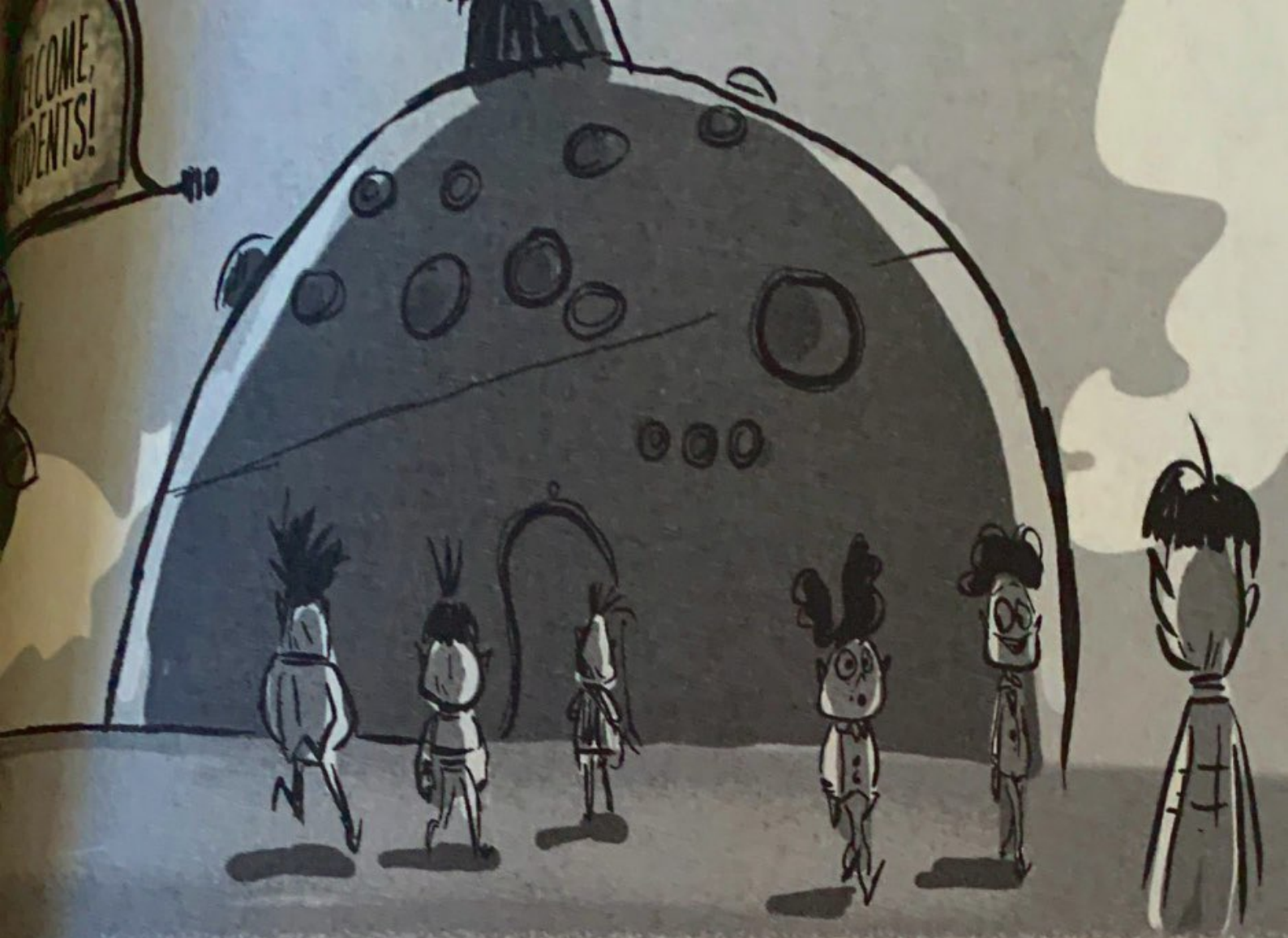




As soon as she did that, the car zoomed into the air.

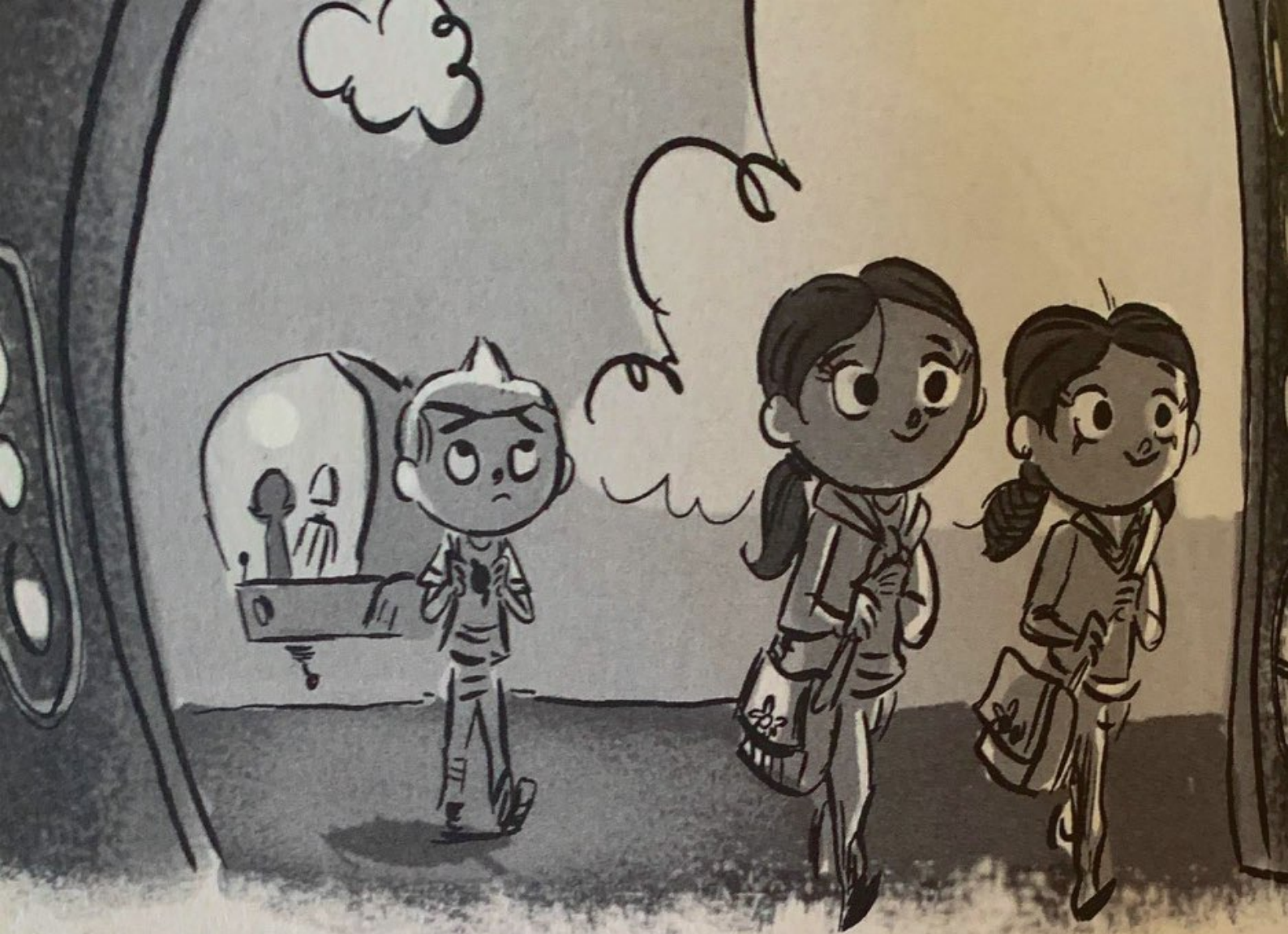


When they arrived at Sprockets Academy, a Nebulite man stepped



up to the car to greet them. "Welcome to Sprockets Academy," he said. "My name is Mr. Spudnik. I am the principal."

"Nice to meet you," said Mom. "This is Zack, Cathy, and Charlotte." The three kids got out of the car.



"Cathy and Charlotte will be in phase five," Mr. Spudnik explained. "And Zack will be in phase two. I will show you the way."

"Bye, kids!" Mom shouted as Zack and the twins followed Mr. Spudnik. "Have a great day!"



They dropped off Charlotte and Cathy at their classroom. Then Mr. Spudnik and Zack reached Zack's classroom.

"Ms. Rudolph, this is Zack Nelson. His family just moved to Nebulon from Earth,"

Mr. Spudnik said. "Zack, this is your teacher, Ms. Rudolph."

"Welcome, Zack," Ms. Rudolph said. "You know, I'm from Earth too."

"You are?" Zack asked.



"I moved to Nebulon about a year ago," Ms. Rudolph explained. "At first I missed Earth terribly. But now I can't imagine living anywhere but Nebulon. I think in time you'll feel the same way."

Zack found a seat and sat down. Ms. Rudolph seems really nice, Zack thought. And Nebulites speak English. That'll make things a little easier.

"Class, I would like you all to meet Zack Nelson," Ms. Rudolph said.

The students turned to face Zack. Every eye in the room was staring right at him.