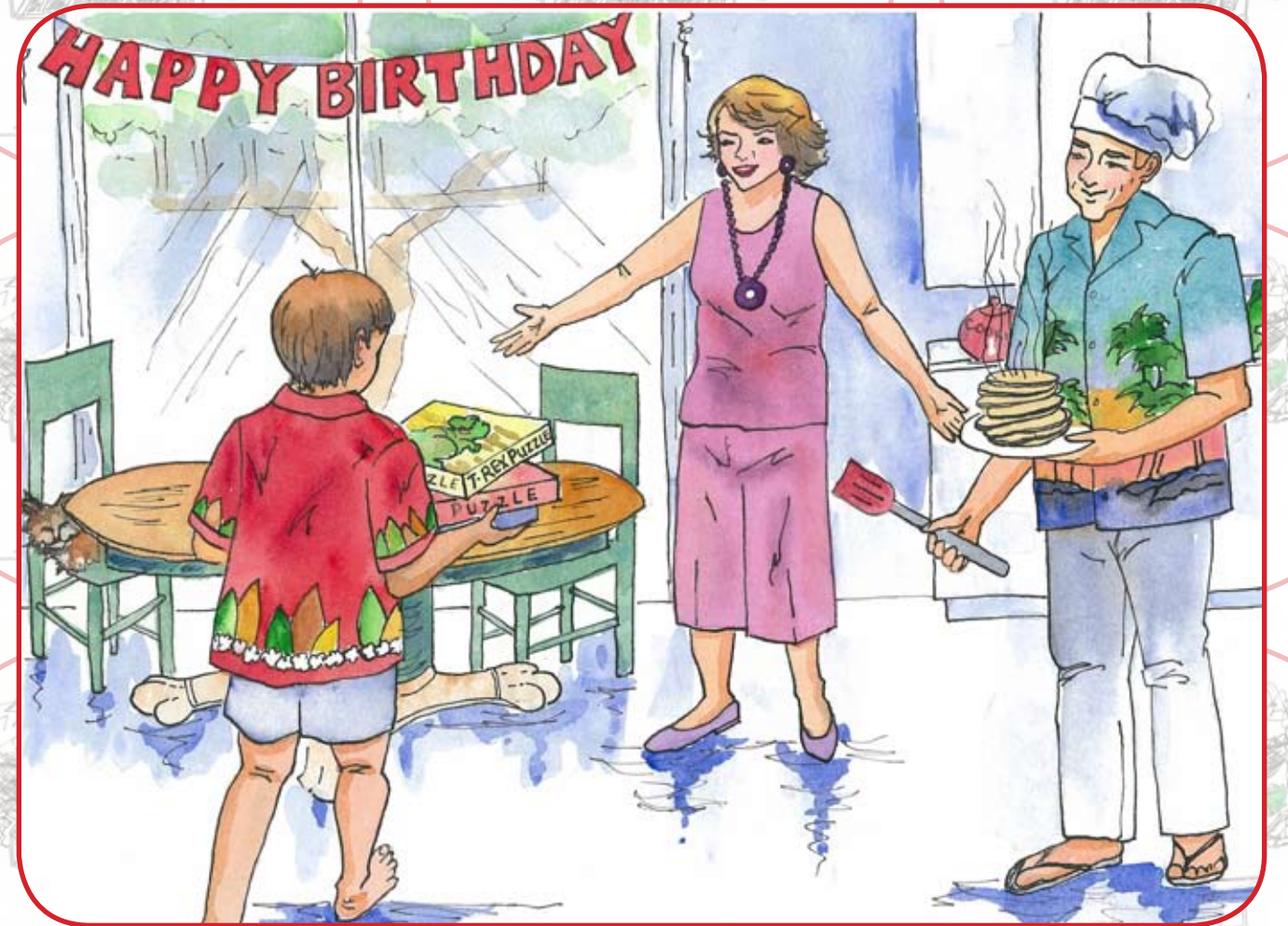
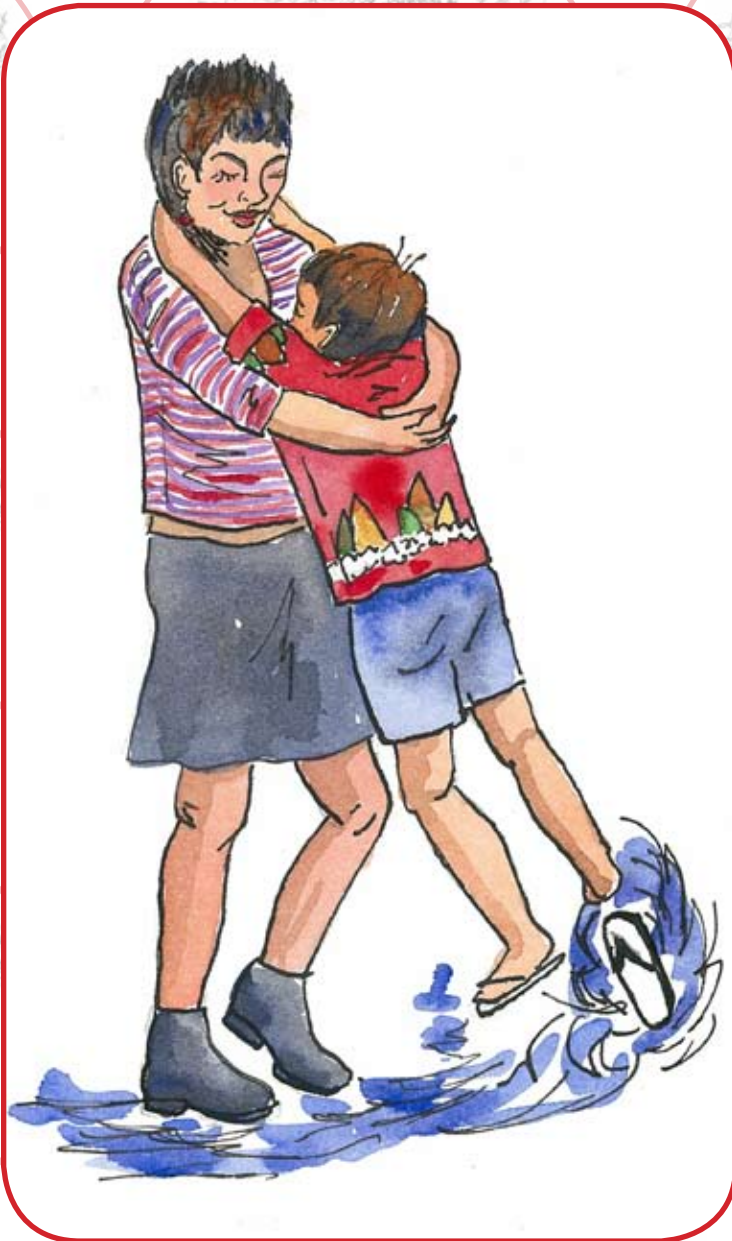


Rain or Shine



story by Hilary Horder Hippely
illustrated by Margaret Godfrey



Rain or Shine



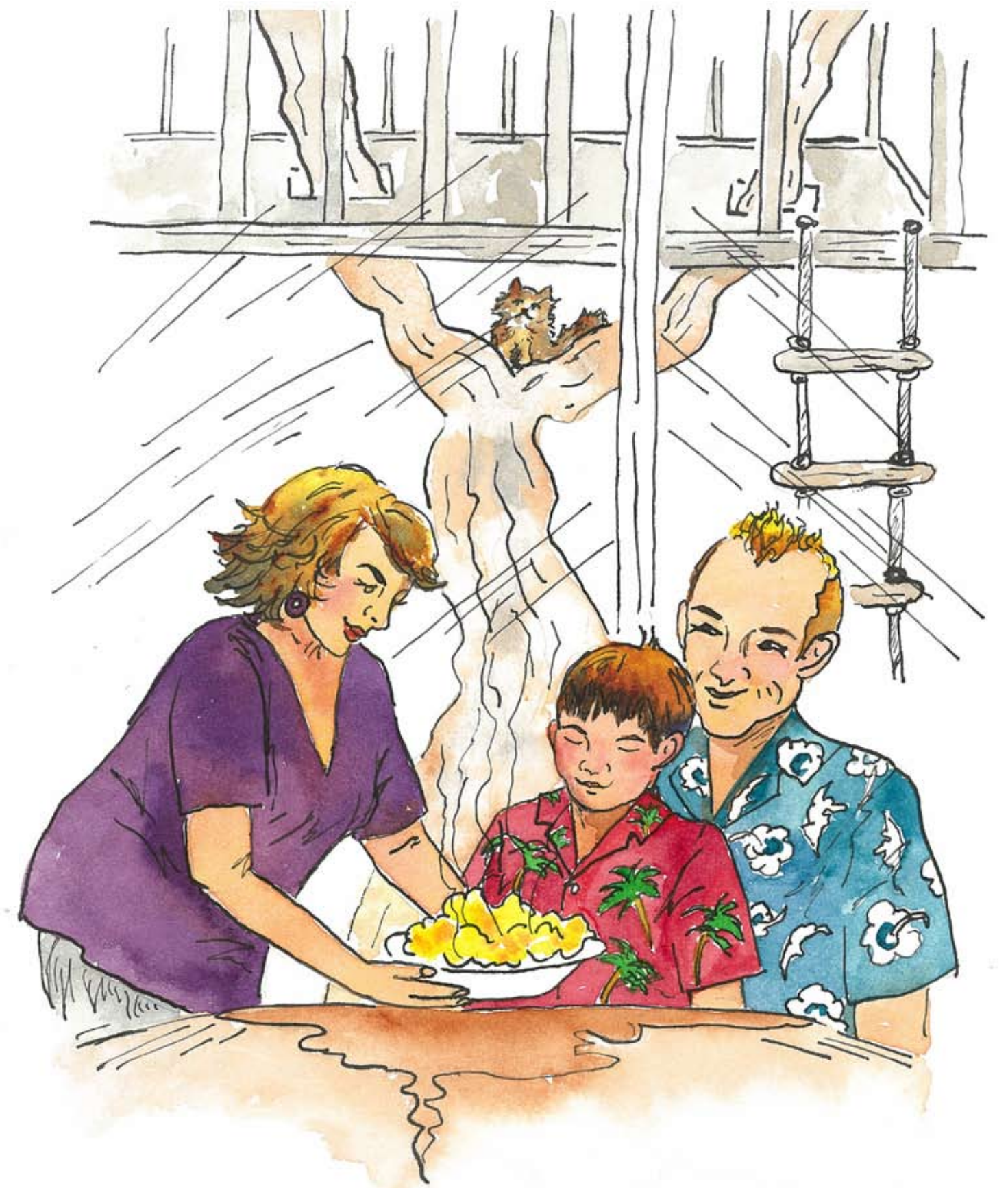
Hilary Horder Hippely
illustrated by Margaret Godfrey

Dedicated to all of the birthparents, adoptive parents and adopted children who have had the courage and conviction to form lifelong connections with each other. They already know how deeply their lives have been touched and enriched by the effort.

Acknowledgements

This book would not have been possible without the passion and dedication of Open Adoption & Family Services. A special thanks to Shari Levine, Executive Director, Kim Heavener, Development Director and Tara Wilkinson. We would also like to thank the many wonderful families whose contributions were invaluable to the creation of RAIN OR SHINE.

library of congress info etc. library of congress info etc. library of congress info
etc. library of congress info etc. library of congress info etc. library of congress
info etc. library of congress info etc. library of congress info etc. library of con-
gress info etc. library of congress info etc. library of congress info etc. library of
congress info etc. library of congress info etc. library of congress info etc. library
of congress info etc. library of congress info etc. library of congress info etc.
library of congress info etc. library of congress info etc. library of congress info
etc. library of congress info etc. library of congress info etc. library of congress



My friends all think I have a little family. That's because when they come over, they find just Mom and Dad and me.



But actually I have a big family. I don't see them very often, but everyone tries to come for my birthday. Mom and Dad say it's a good thing I was born in the summertime, because that way we can have my party in the backyard. After dinner, we play tag until the sun goes down.

At breakfast we make a list of everyone who's invited.

"Holy cannoli!" says Dad. "Our family gets bigger every year. What are we going to do if it rains?"

Mom looks around. "I suppose we'd fit inside if we had to, though we'd be sitting on each other's laps."

I think for a second. "I get Grandma Mimi's lap!"

Mom laughs. "Grandma Mimi can't wait to see you, Finn. She just sent an email saying she's bringing her best cake ever. And Lisa."



Lisa's my birthmom. That night, when it's too hot to sleep, Mom says maybe we should look at my birthday book, and, of course, the first picture is of me and Lisa.

I'm lying on her stomach because I had just been born. Once Lisa told me that was the happiest day in her whole life. "I couldn't believe I had made such a beautiful baby," she said.

"Beautiful?" I stared at her. "I look like a frog."

Lisa laughed till I thought she was going to burst. And since then she's called me Frog.



Every year Lisa calls before my birthday so we can talk about what she's going to bring me. One year she got me a slip-n-slide. The next year she brought me a Tyrannosaurus rex puzzle.

But last year she called to say she couldn't come.



"I'm so sorry, Frog," she said. "I really wanted to see you."

"Then why can't you come?"

"I'm having a hard time right now," said Lisa. "Next year will go better for me."

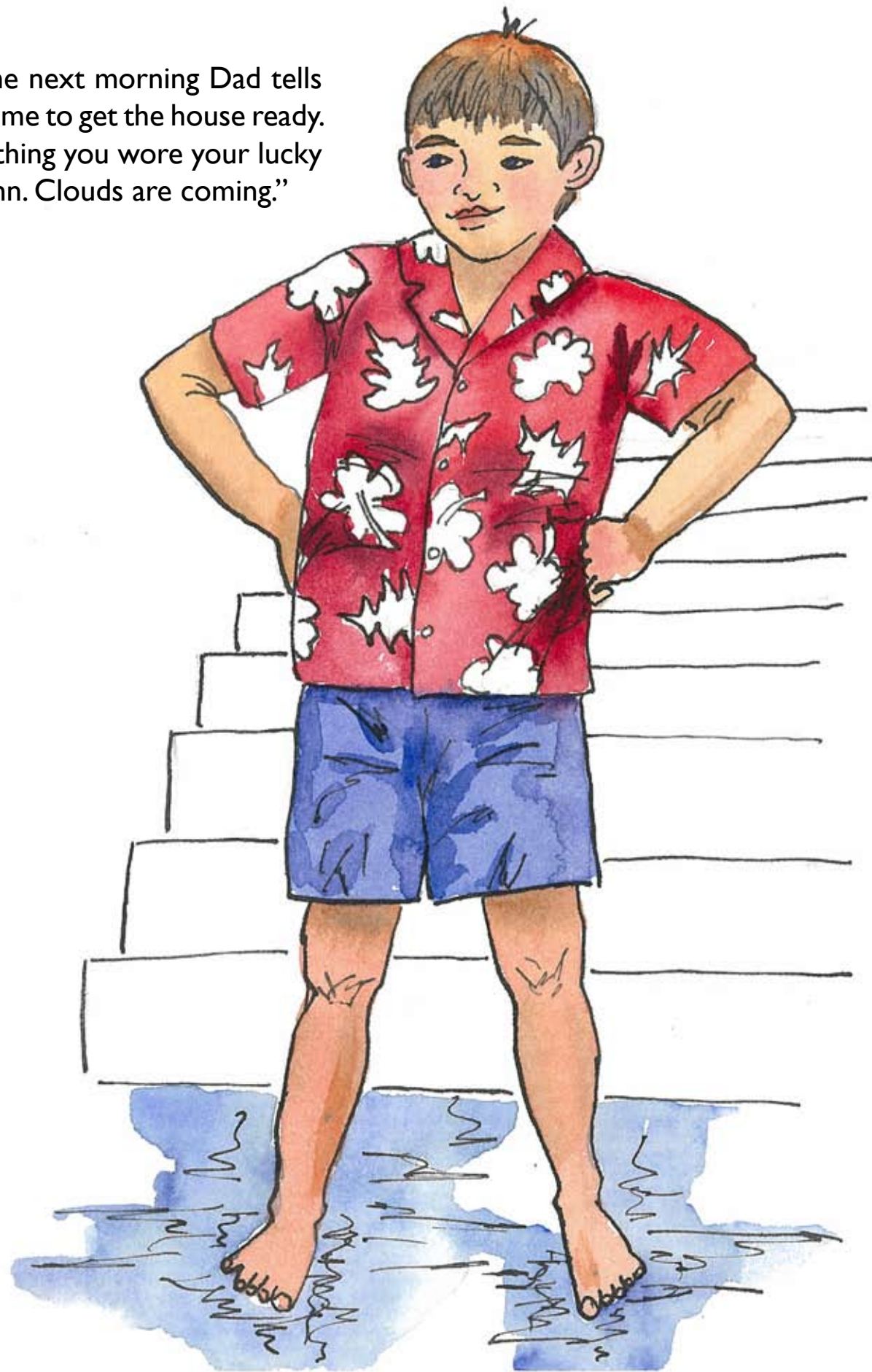


Now I look at Mom. “I’m glad Lisa’s coming this year.”

Mom smiles in the darkness. “I’m glad, too, honey.”

The sky is full of stars. I choose the brightest star of all and wish that this year’s gone great for Lisa.

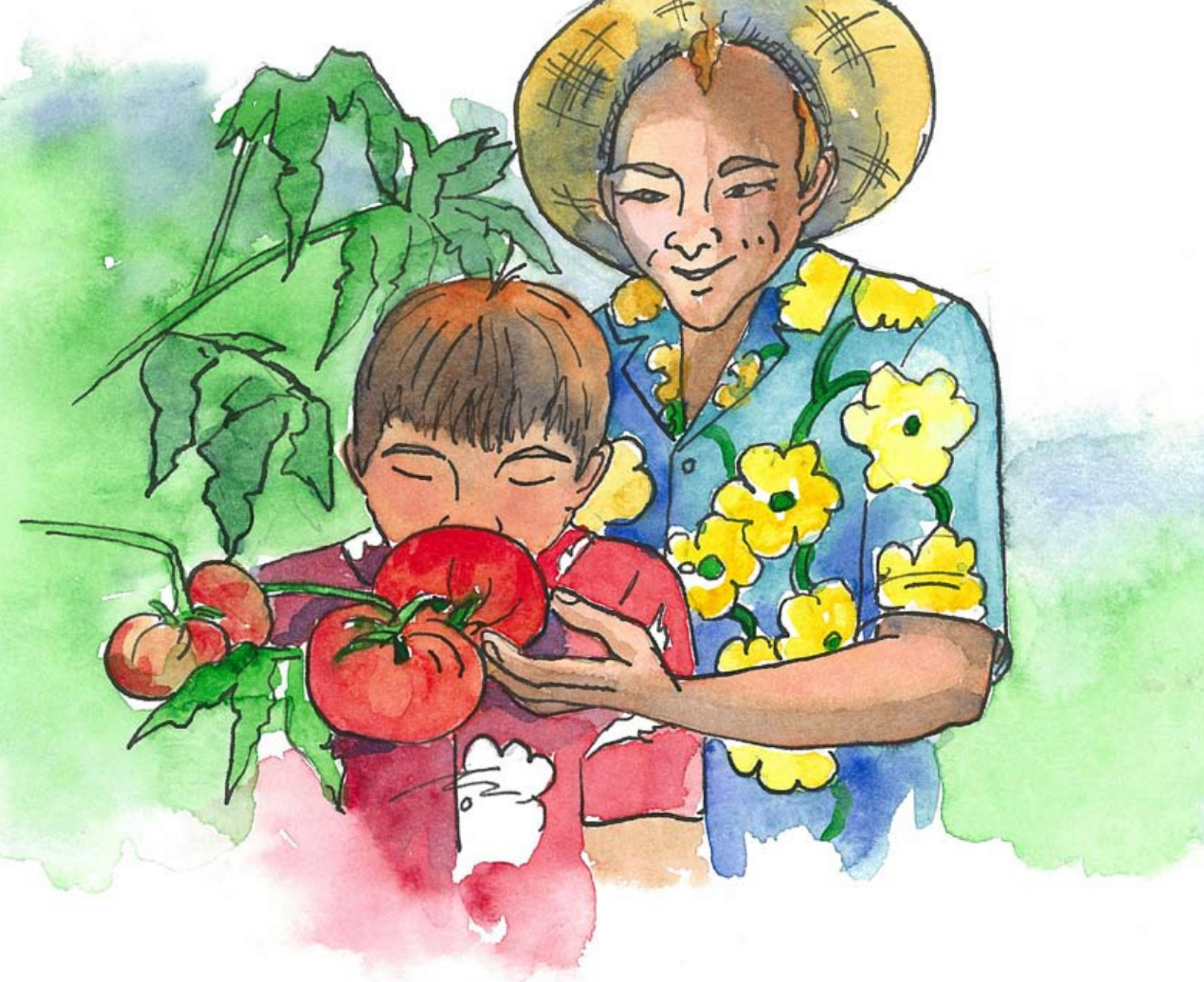
The next morning Dad tells me it's time to get the house ready. "Good thing you wore your lucky shirt, Finn. Clouds are coming."



I shake my head. "But it never rains on my birthday!"

"There's always a first time, Finn," says Dad. "But let's not worry about it."

But I do worry. I worry while we vacuum and sweep, because Mom says she just heard the weather report and it looks like we're going to be stuck inside. I want to cry. "But what about playing tag?"



“Hmmm,” Mom shakes her head. “I guess we’ll have to come up with something else to play.”

“Let’s leave that up to Finn,” Dad tells Mom. “He gets his creativity from your side of the family.”

“What did I get from your side of the family?” I ask Dad.

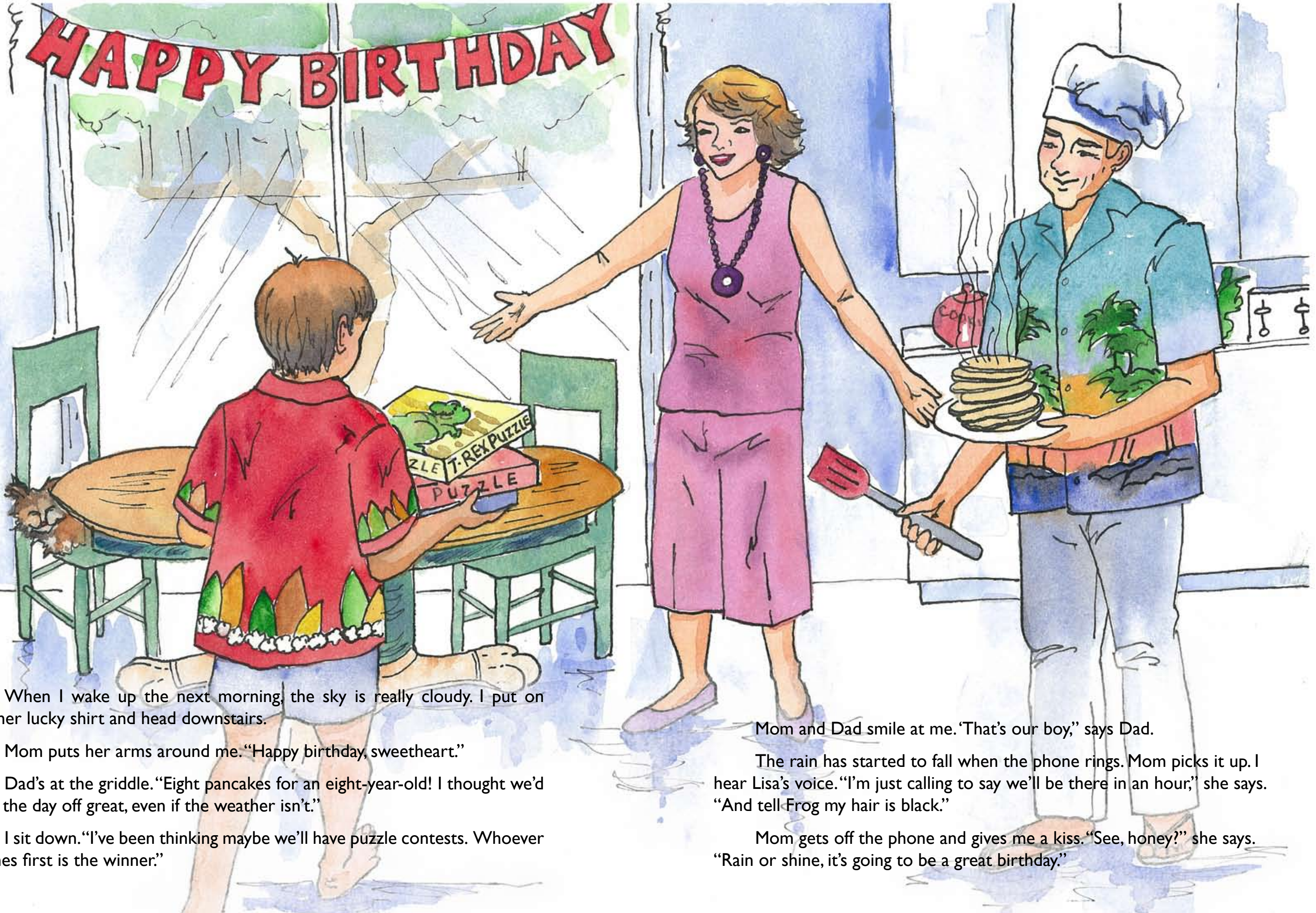
He thinks. “Your wild outfits?”

“And your big heart,” says Mom. “Though maybe that comes from Lisa.”

Dad nods. “Probably from both sides. But your smile is definitely from Lisa. Now, who’s going to help me with these tomatoes?”



I don’t answer. My mind is far away, trying to think up something my family can do while it pours outside.



When I wake up the next morning, the sky is really cloudy. I put on another lucky shirt and head downstairs.

Mom puts her arms around me. "Happy birthday, sweetheart."

Dad's at the griddle. "Eight pancakes for an eight-year-old! I thought we'd start the day off great, even if the weather isn't."

I sit down. "I've been thinking maybe we'll have puzzle contests. Whoever finishes first is the winner."

Mom and Dad smile at me. "That's our boy," says Dad.

The rain has started to fall when the phone rings. Mom picks it up. I hear Lisa's voice. "I'm just calling to say we'll be there in an hour," she says. "And tell Frog my hair is black."

Mom gets off the phone and gives me a kiss. "See, honey?" she says. "Rain or shine, it's going to be a great birthday."



Grandpa Donny comes early with my two little cousins. “We stopped at the store to get puzzles,” he says.

Then all my aunts and uncles arrive, and my teenage cousins with their headphones on.

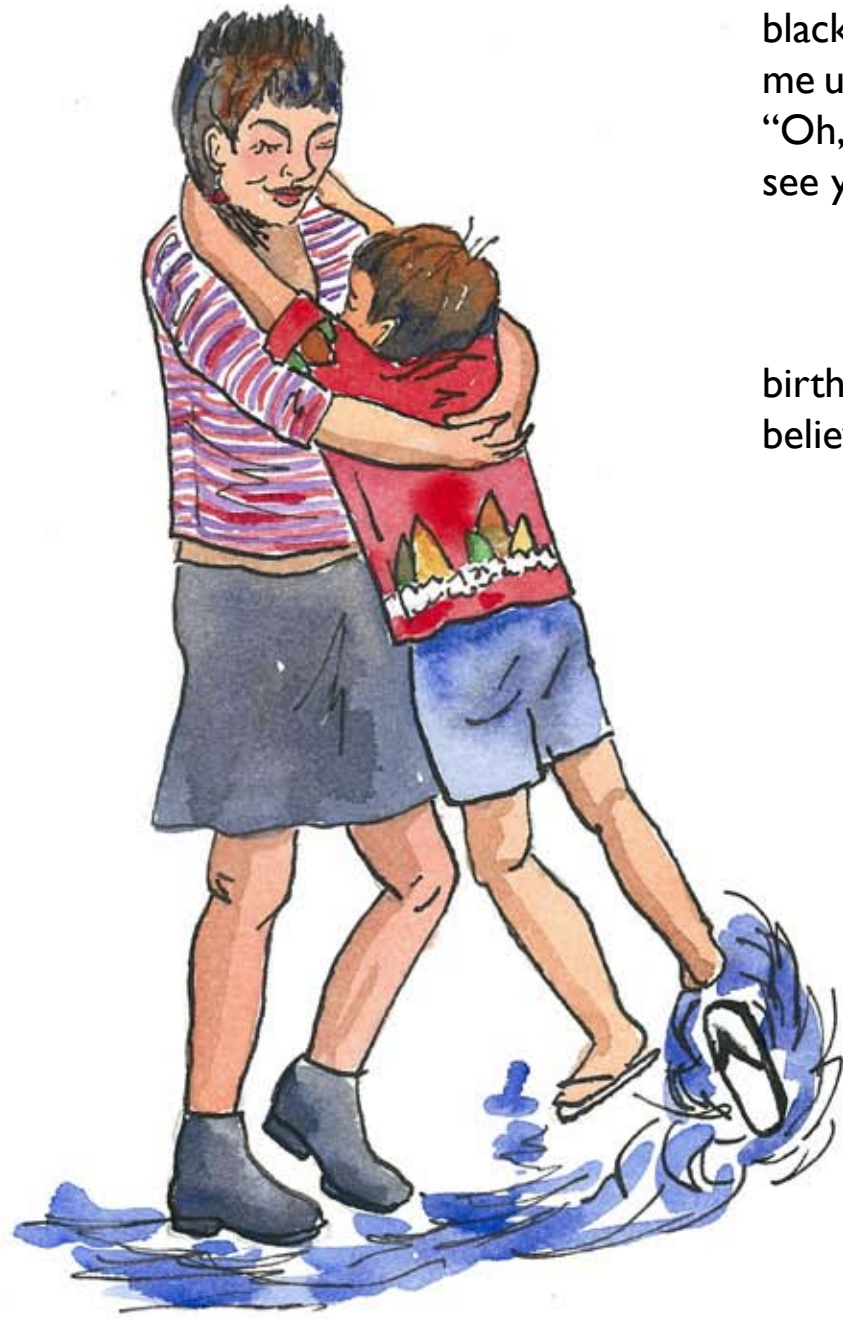
Finally I see Grandma Mimi’s big yellow car pull up. I run outside in the rain.



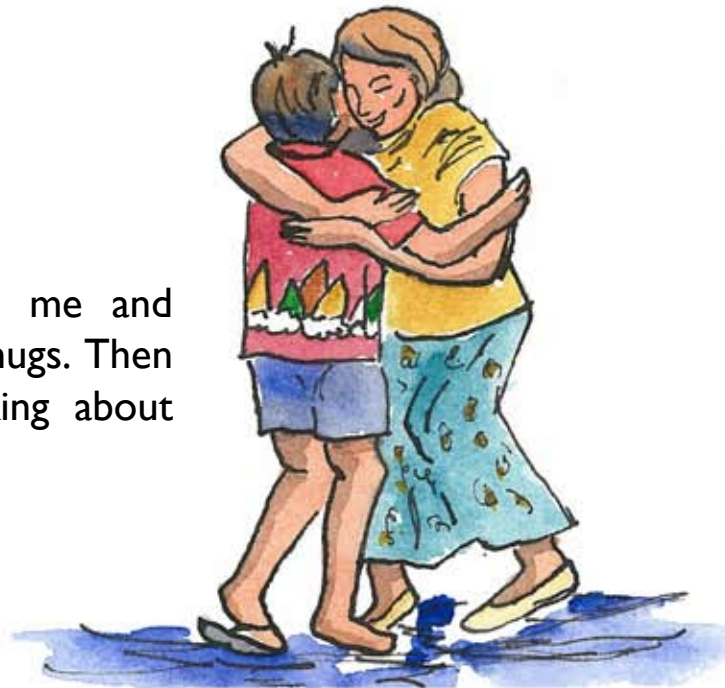
Lisa's hair is short now, too—little black spikes all over her head. She picks me up and spins me around and around. "Oh, Frog," she says, "it's so good to see you."

"It's good to see you, too," I say.

"I hated like anything missing your birthday last year. Hey, Mom, can you believe how big he's gotten?"



Grandma Mimi grabs me and gives me one of her big hugs. Then everyone's kissing and talking about the cake she made.



"You've outdone yourself, Mimi," says Mom.

"I'm getting an umbrella," says Dad. "Not a drop is touching this creation."



Inside it's so crowded you can hardly move.

Lisa looks around. "How about you and me working on the T-rex, Frog?"





Afterward, everyone said how great it was that our puzzle won. Lisa just looked at me and smiled. We knew we'd won because we'd done the T-rex before, even if it was two years ago. We'd taken it up to the tree house so we could spend some time together.

And that's what we do now, with a tarp and a blanket, while everyone inside is laughing and talking. I had worried it would rain, but it's cozy listening to the drops fall. I had worried Lisa wouldn't come, and now we're snuggling under the blanket.

Suddenly she feels so close I wonder if I should tell her my secret, the one that only Mom and Dad know.

"I still suck my thumb," I finally say.



“Oh, Frog.” Lisa hugs me tight. “You’ve got such an awesome mom and dad. You’re part your Mom, part your Dad, and part me, you know. You’re part Danny, too. You’ve got his eyes.”

Danny’s my birthdad. He came to visit me once, but I was a baby so I don’t remember. “Too bad Danny isn’t here,” I say.

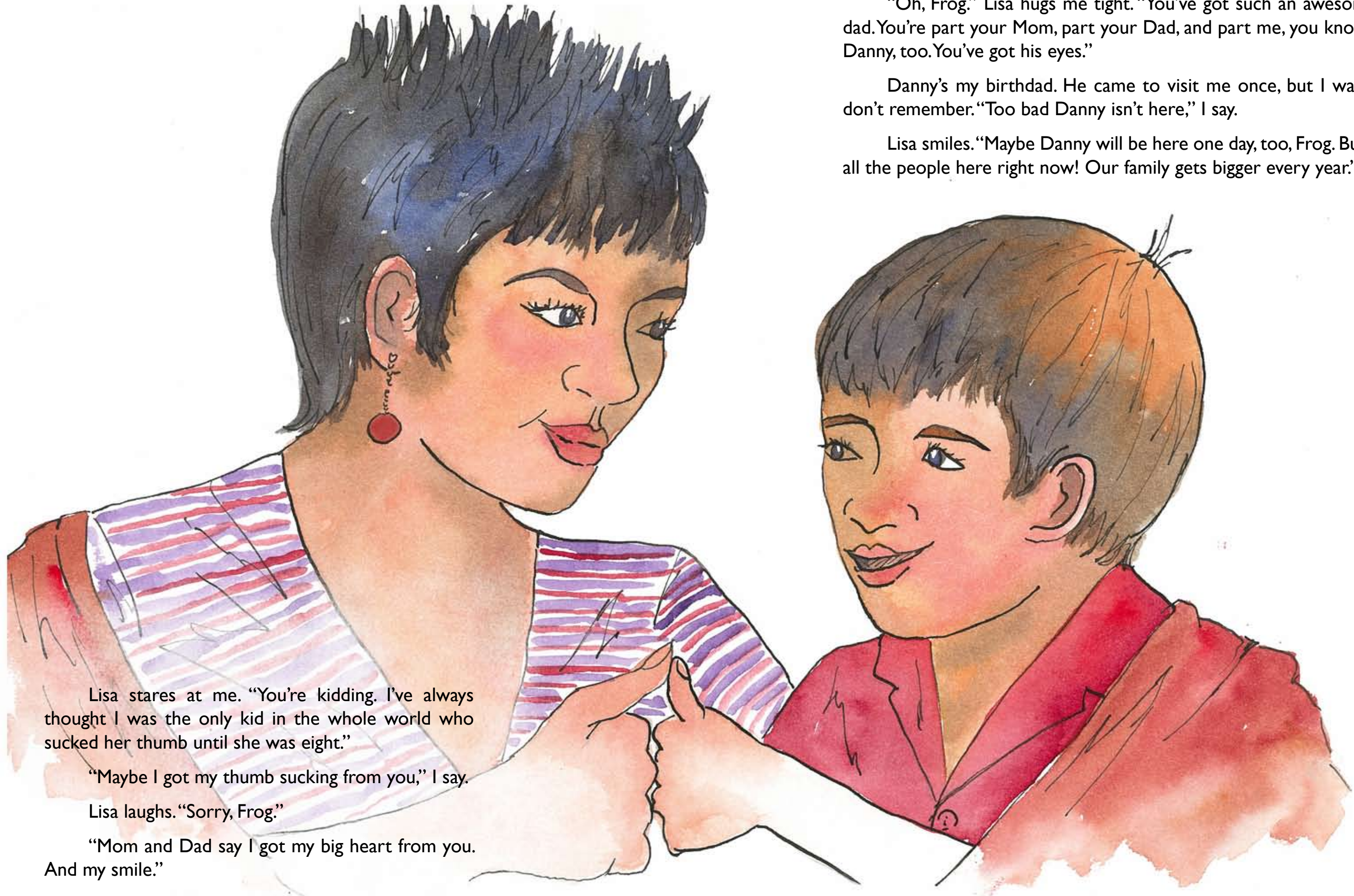
Lisa smiles. “Maybe Danny will be here one day, too, Frog. But hey, look at all the people here right now! Our family gets bigger every year.”

Lisa stares at me. “You’re kidding. I’ve always thought I was the only kid in the whole world who sucked her thumb until she was eight.”

“Maybe I got my thumb sucking from you,” I say.

Lisa laughs. “Sorry, Frog.”

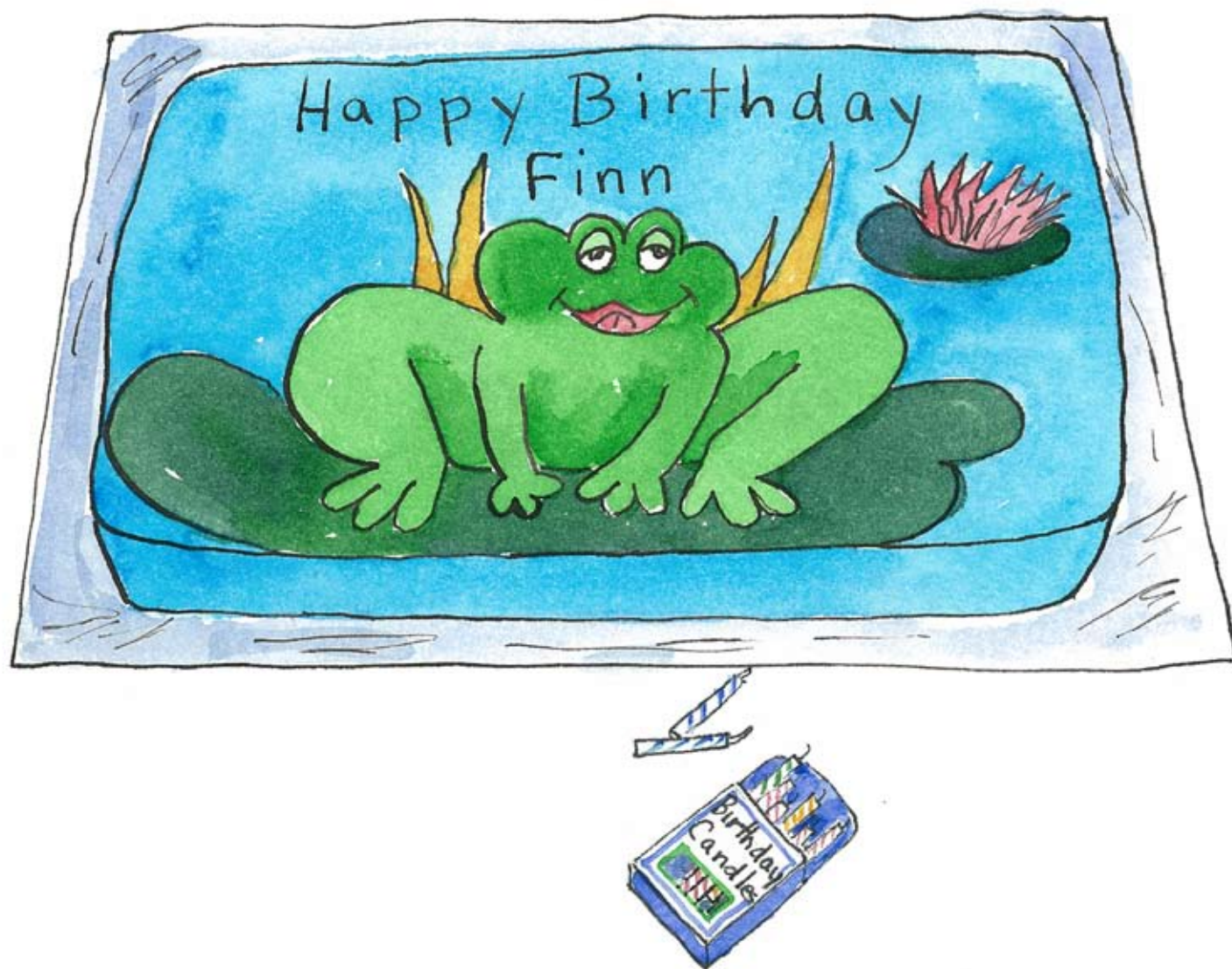
“Mom and Dad say I got my big heart from you. And my smile.”





The back door opens, and Mom comes outside holding Grandma Mimi's cake. Everyone is following her, and when I stick my head outside the tarp, it's not raining anymore.

"They're waiting for you, Frog," says Lisa. So I climb down, into the fresh night air, as my family starts to sing.



About Open Adoption & Family Services, Inc.

Open Adoption & Family Services, Inc. is a nonprofit adoption agency licensed in Oregon and Washington. Since their founding in 1985, they have completed over 1,000 child-centered open adoptions.

Child-centered open adoption begins with a close and trusting relationship between birthparents and adoptive parents. This unique partnership acknowledges not only the parties' mutual respect and shared love for the child, but also their separate and distinct roles. Birthparents and adoptive families create healthy long-term relationships addressing the ongoing needs of the child. Ongoing contact enables birthparents to see for themselves that the child is thriving in the adoptive home. This helps them feel at peace with the adoption. Secure in the knowledge that the birthparents fully support the adoption, adoptive parents are free to welcome birthparents into their lives. Most importantly, open adoption gives the child direct access to information and support from the birthparents, allowing for the healthy development of identity and self-esteem.

For more information about Open Adoption & Family Services, check out their website at www.openadopt.org.

