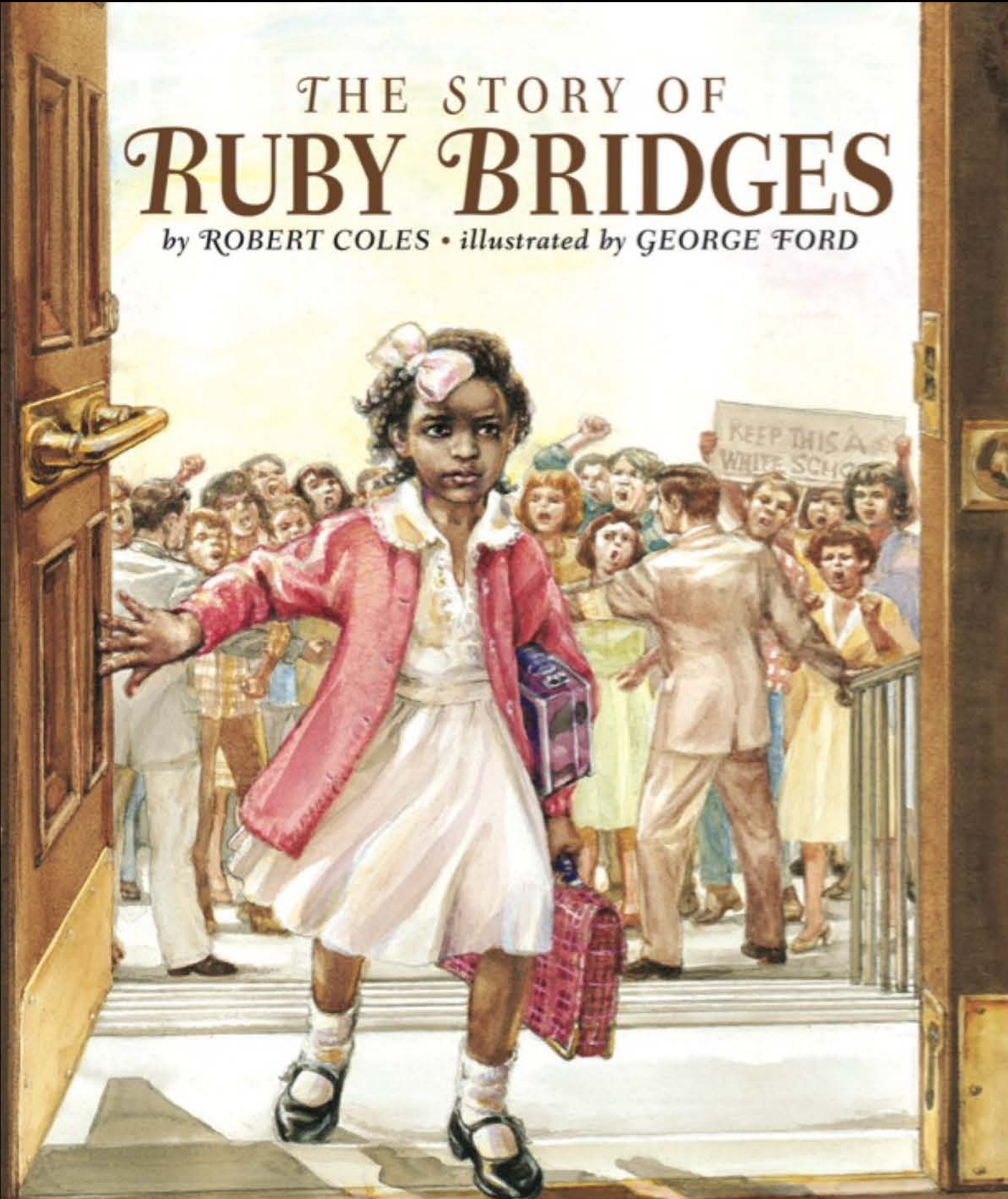


Read by Myself

THE STORY OF RUBY BRIDGES

by ROBERT COLES • illustrated by GEORGE FORD



SCHOLASTIC

George Ford



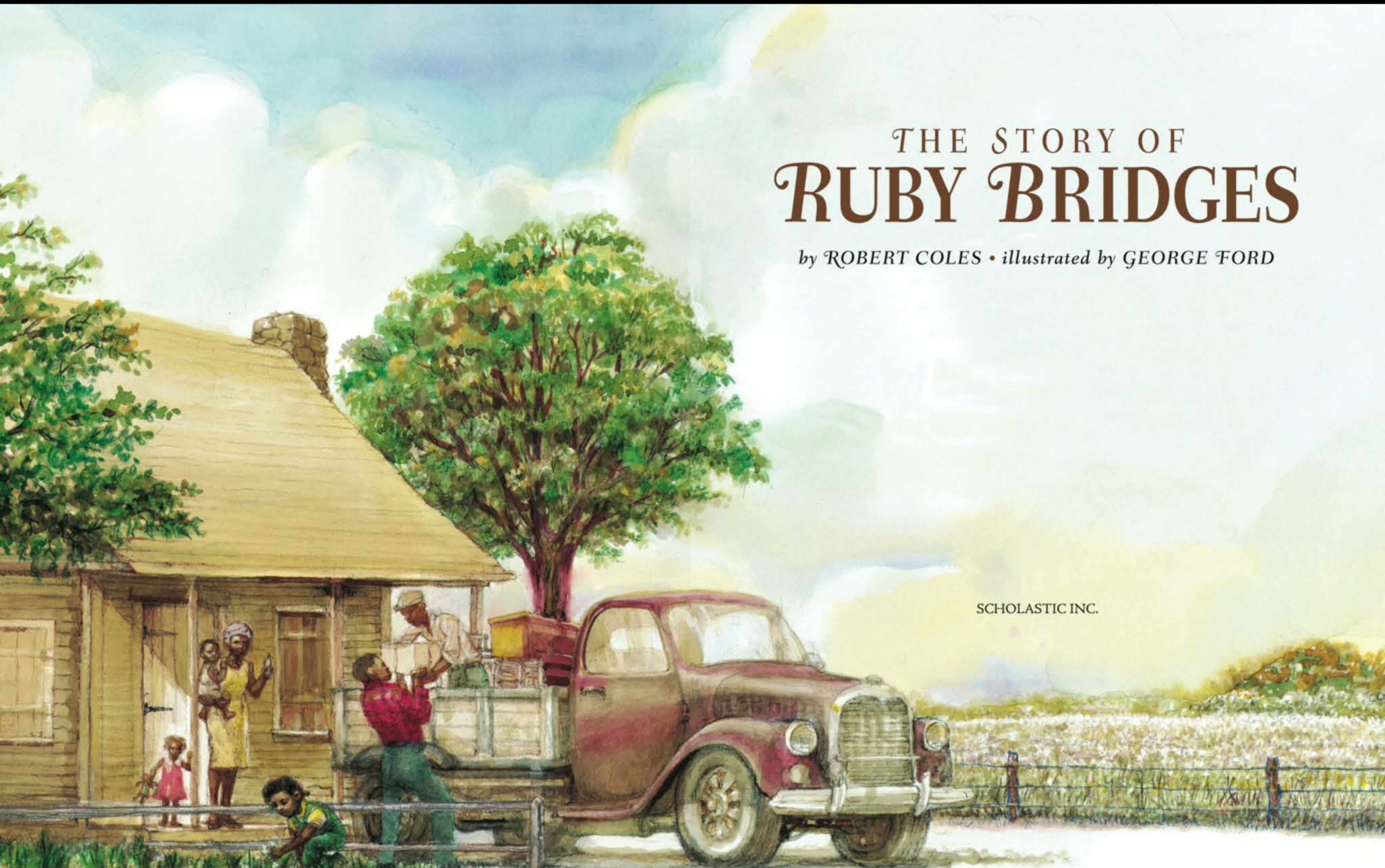
THE STORY OF
RUBY BRIDGES



THE STORY OF RUBY BRIDGES

by ROBERT COLES • illustrated by GEORGE FORD

SCHOLASTIC INC.



TO RUBY BRIDGES HALL
and to all who did as she did
for the United States of America
— R . C .

To my wife, BERNETTE,
who relived Ruby's ordeal with me
— G . F .

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. No part of this publication may be reproduced, transmitted, downloaded, decompiled, reverse engineered, or stored in or introduced into any information storage and retrieval system, in any form or by any means, whether electronic or mechanical, now known or hereafter invented, without the express written permission of the publisher. For information regarding permission, write to Scholastic Inc., Attention: Permissions Department, 557 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.

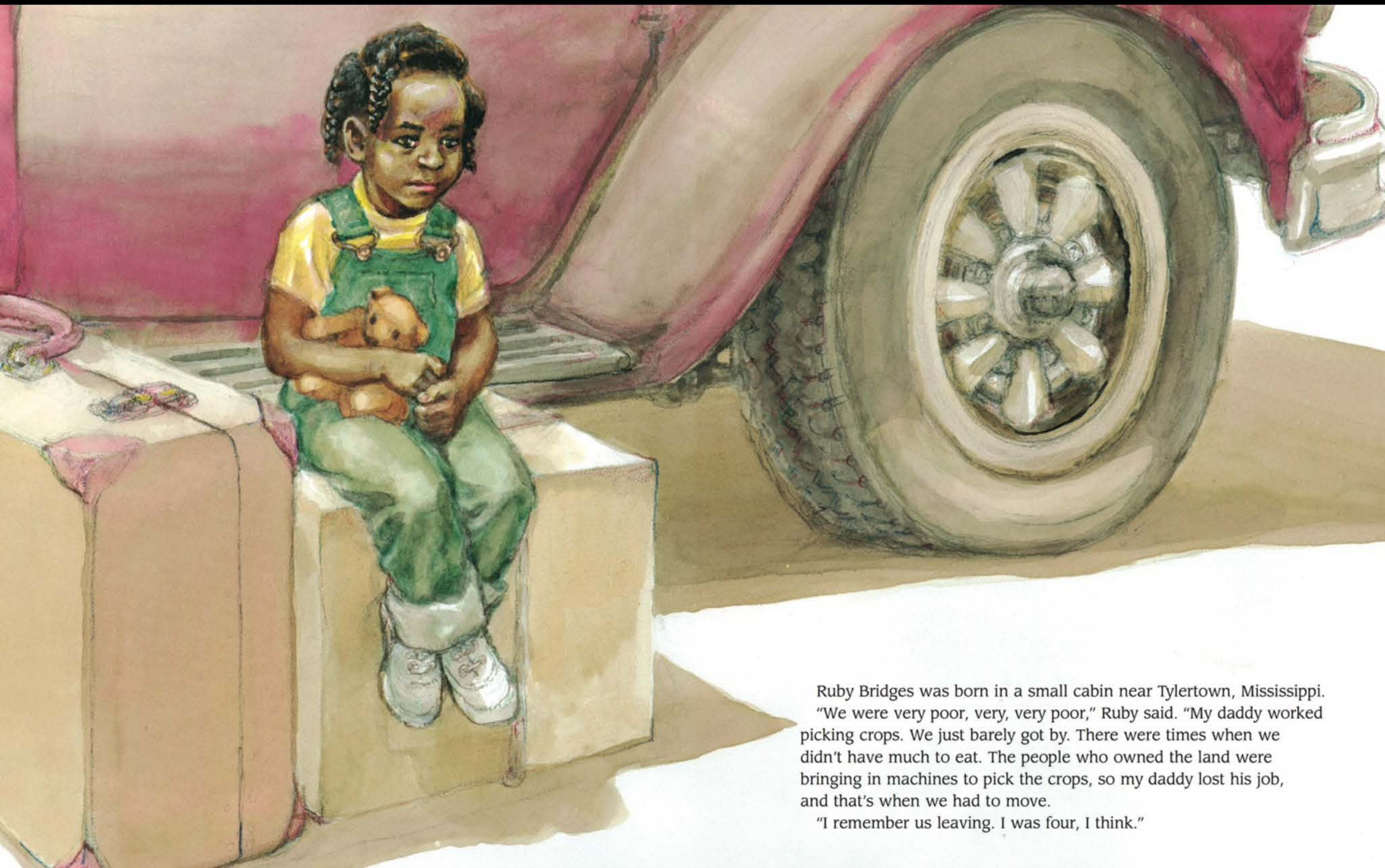
This book was originally published in hardcover by Scholastic Press in 1995.

e-ISBN 978-0-545-33767-0

Text copyright © 1995 by Robert Coles. Illustrations copyright © 1995 by George Ford.
Published by Scholastic Inc. SCHOLASTIC and associated logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Scholastic Inc.

Our Ruby taught us all a lot.
She became someone who helped change our country.
She was part of history,
just like generals and presidents are part of history.
They're leaders, and so was Ruby.
She led us away from hate, and she led us nearer to
knowing each other,
the white folks and the black folks.

— RUBY'S MOTHER



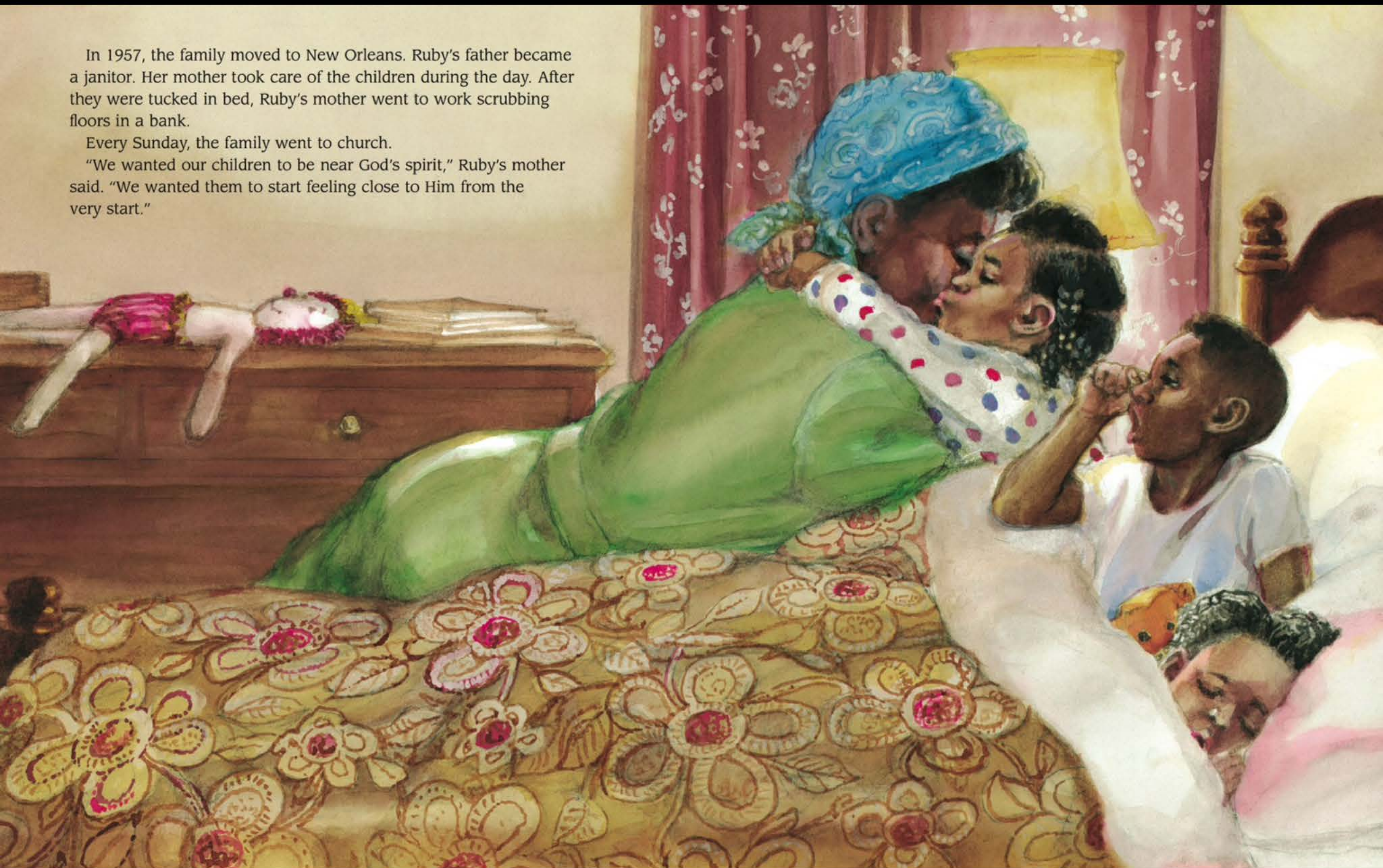
Ruby Bridges was born in a small cabin near Tylertown, Mississippi. "We were very poor, very, very poor," Ruby said. "My daddy worked picking crops. We just barely got by. There were times when we didn't have much to eat. The people who owned the land were bringing in machines to pick the crops, so my daddy lost his job, and that's when we had to move.

"I remember us leaving. I was four, I think."

In 1957, the family moved to New Orleans. Ruby's father became a janitor. Her mother took care of the children during the day. After they were tucked in bed, Ruby's mother went to work scrubbing floors in a bank.

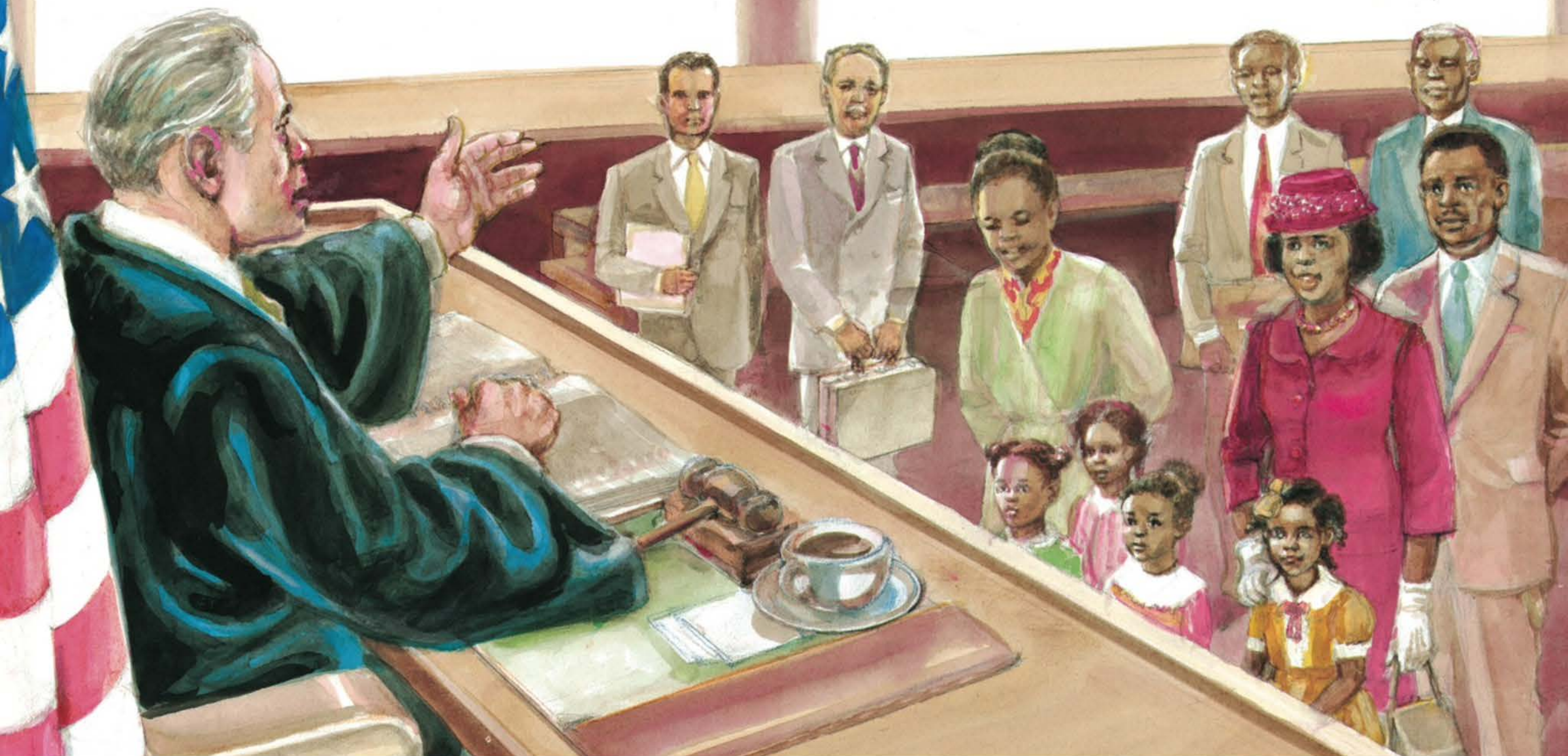
Every Sunday, the family went to church.

"We wanted our children to be near God's spirit," Ruby's mother said. "We wanted them to start feeling close to Him from the very start."



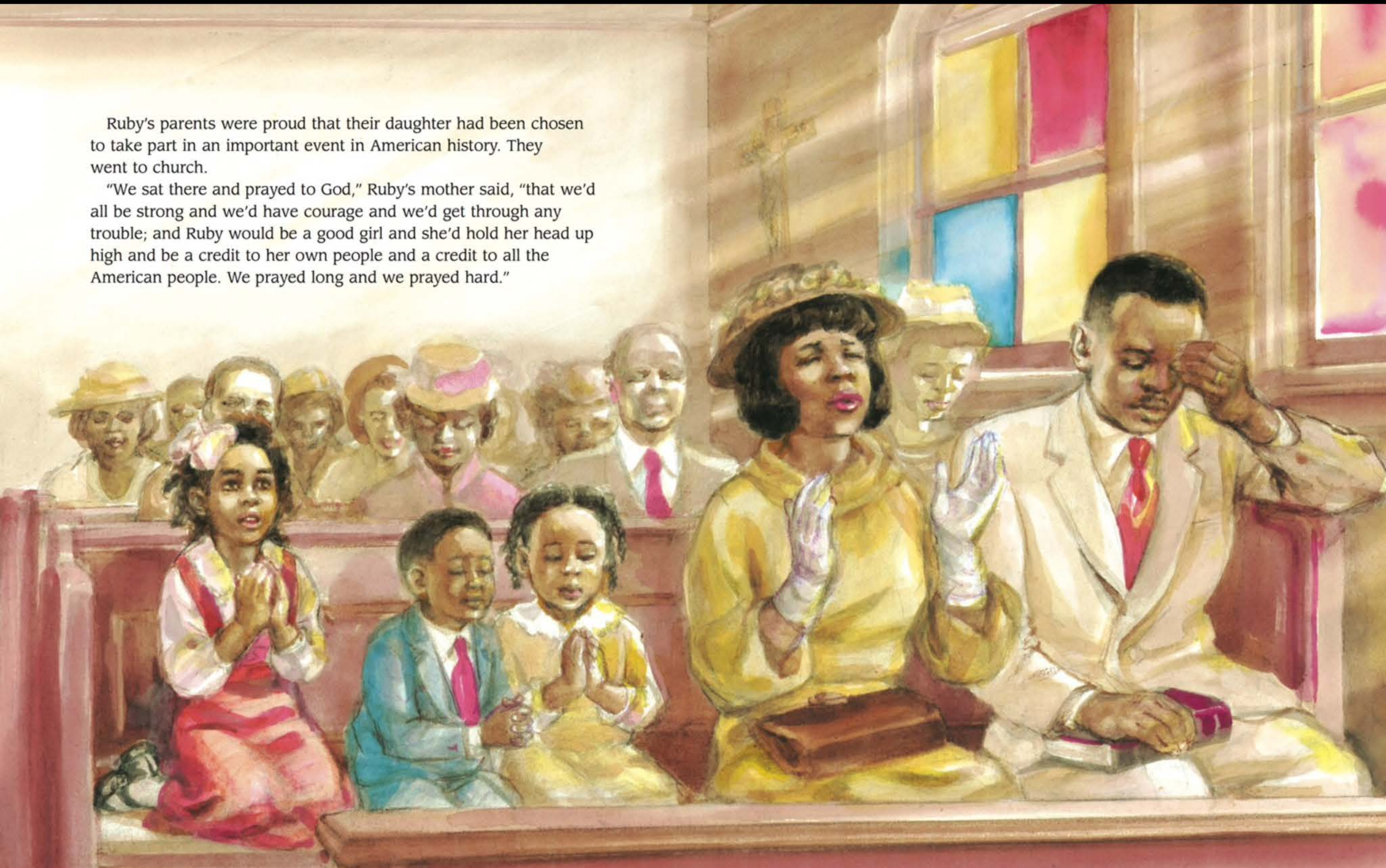
At that time, black children and white children went to separate schools in New Orleans. The black children were not able to receive the same education as the white children. It wasn't fair. And it was against the nation's law.

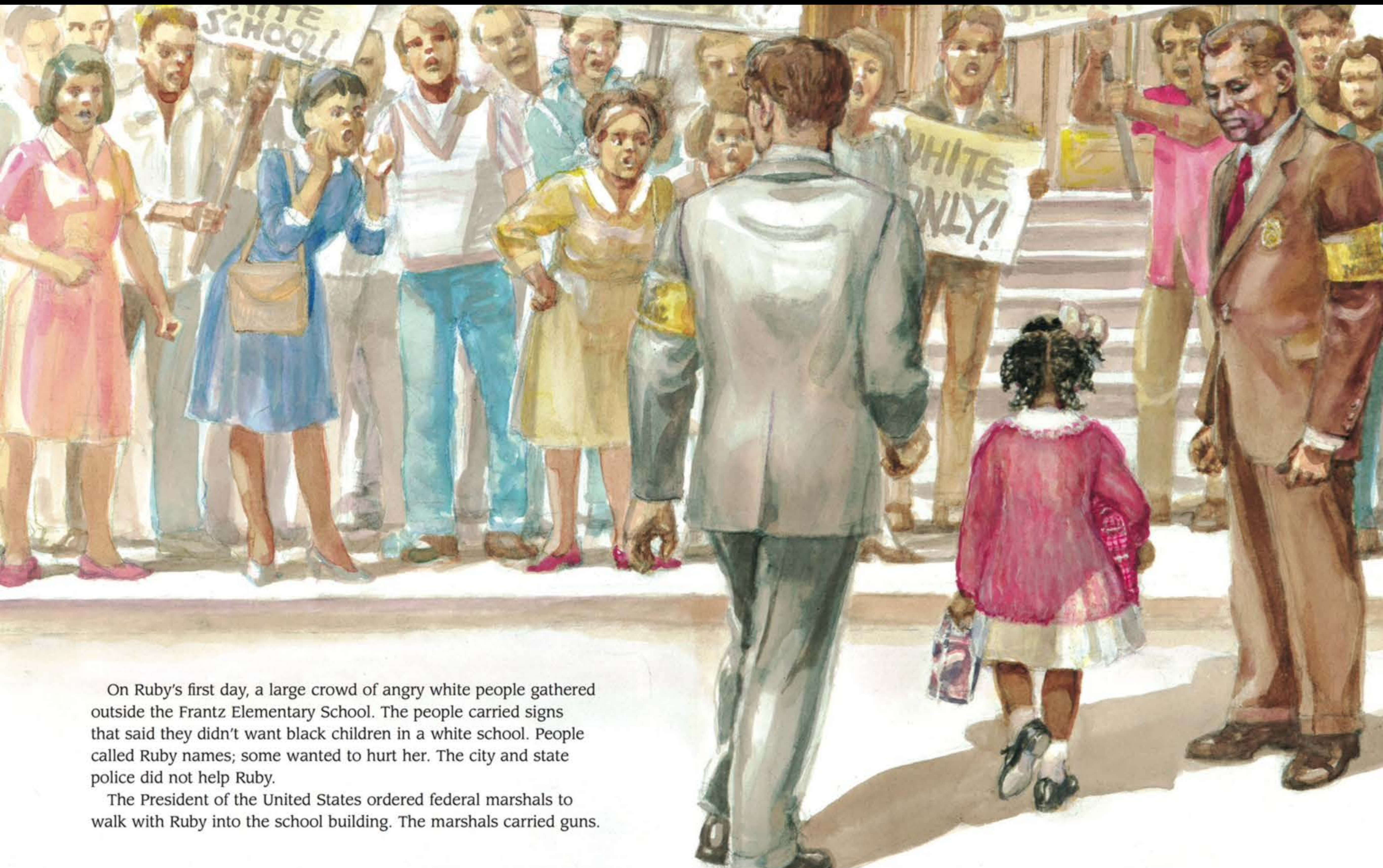
In 1960, a judge ordered four black girls to go to two white elementary schools. Three of the girls were sent to McDonogh 19. Six-year-old Ruby Bridges was sent to first grade in the William Frantz Elementary School.



Ruby's parents were proud that their daughter had been chosen to take part in an important event in American history. They went to church.

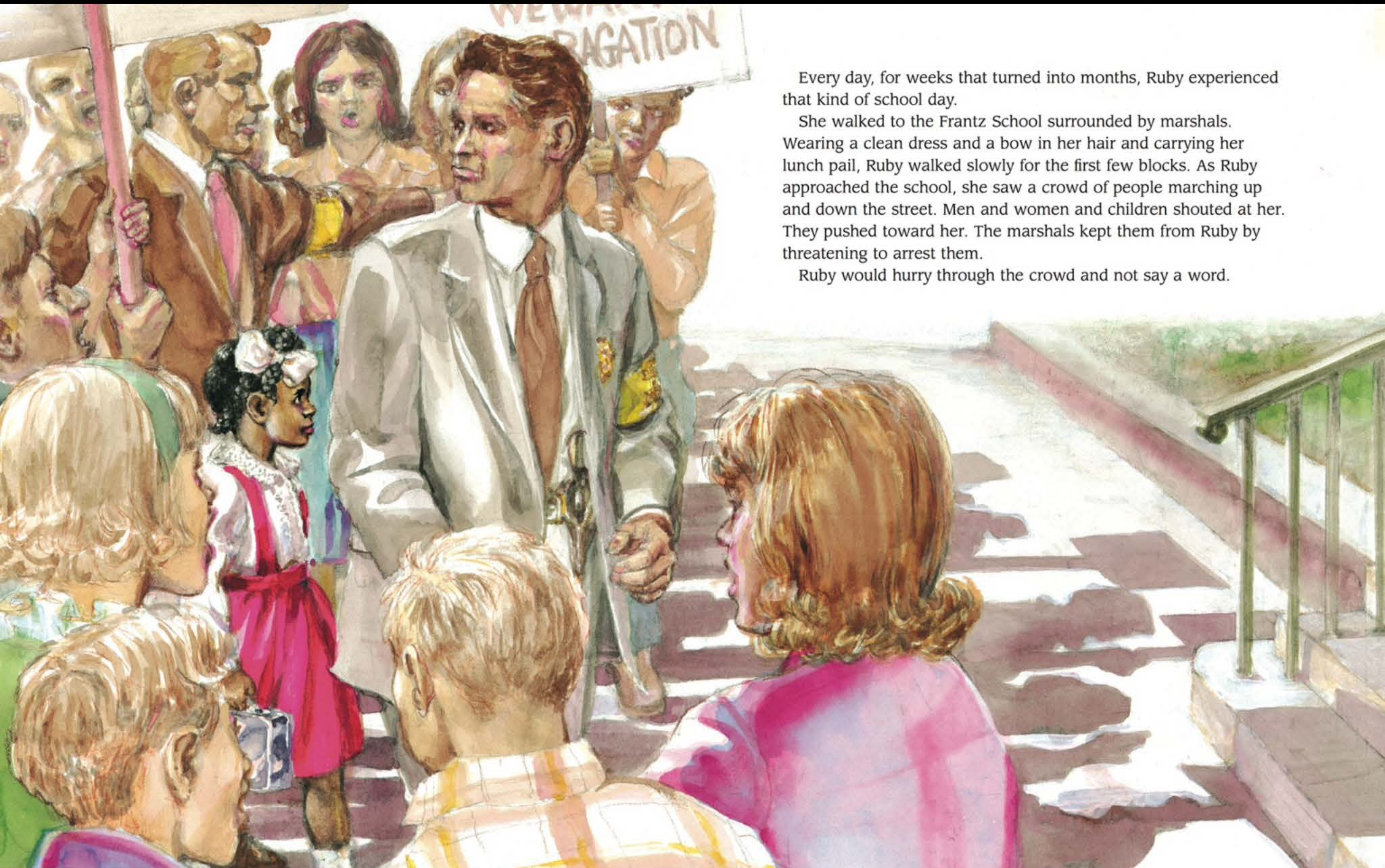
"We sat there and prayed to God," Ruby's mother said, "that we'd all be strong and we'd have courage and we'd get through any trouble; and Ruby would be a good girl and she'd hold her head up high and be a credit to her own people and a credit to all the American people. We prayed long and we prayed hard."





On Ruby's first day, a large crowd of angry white people gathered outside the Frantz Elementary School. The people carried signs that said they didn't want black children in a white school. People called Ruby names; some wanted to hurt her. The city and state police did not help Ruby.

The President of the United States ordered federal marshals to walk with Ruby into the school building. The marshals carried guns.



Every day, for weeks that turned into months, Ruby experienced that kind of school day.

She walked to the Frantz School surrounded by marshals. Wearing a clean dress and a bow in her hair and carrying her lunch pail, Ruby walked slowly for the first few blocks. As Ruby approached the school, she saw a crowd of people marching up and down the street. Men and women and children shouted at her. They pushed toward her. The marshals kept them from Ruby by threatening to arrest them.

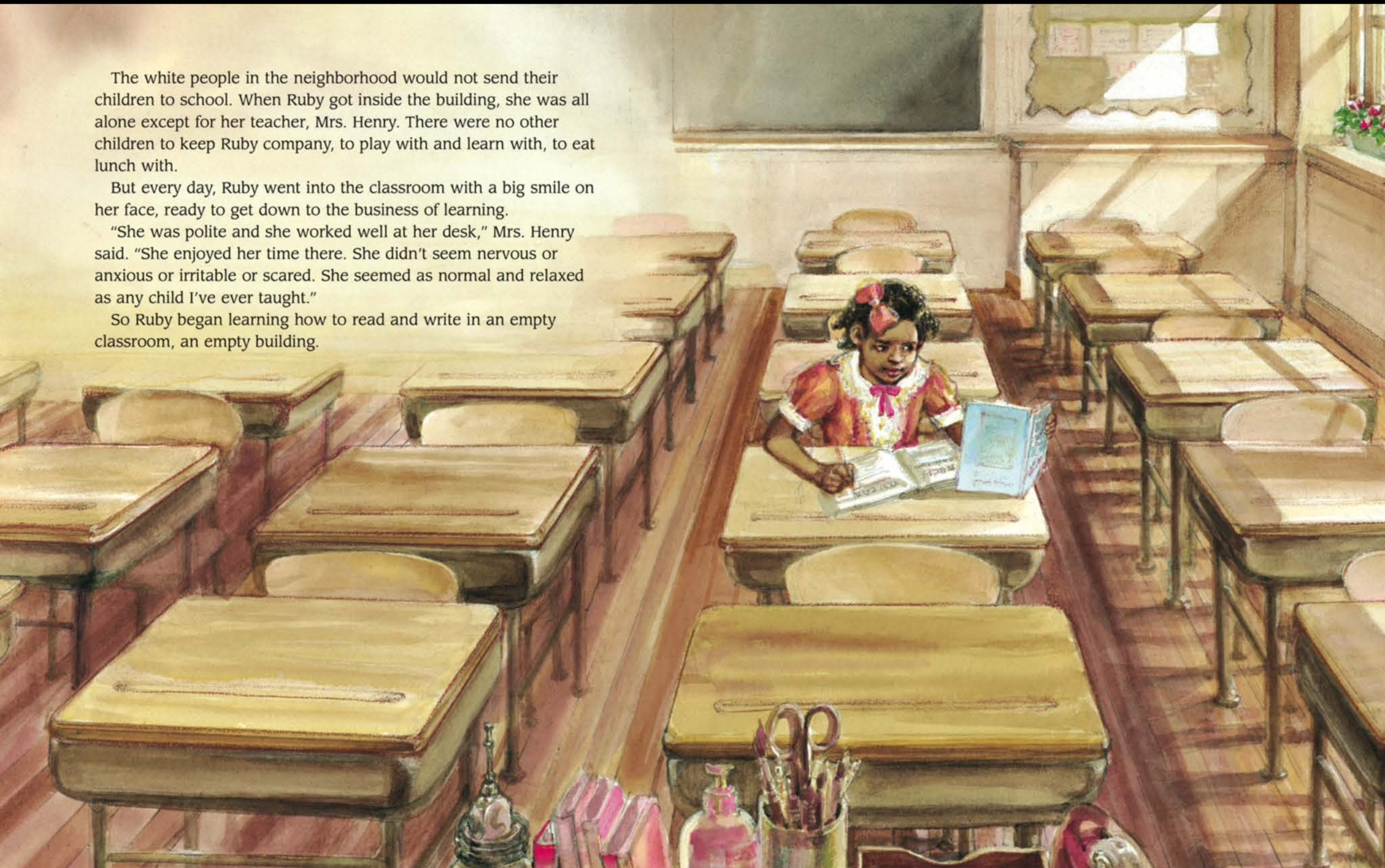
Ruby would hurry through the crowd and not say a word.

The white people in the neighborhood would not send their children to school. When Ruby got inside the building, she was all alone except for her teacher, Mrs. Henry. There were no other children to keep Ruby company, to play with and learn with, to eat lunch with.

But every day, Ruby went into the classroom with a big smile on her face, ready to get down to the business of learning.

"She was polite and she worked well at her desk," Mrs. Henry said. "She enjoyed her time there. She didn't seem nervous or anxious or irritable or scared. She seemed as normal and relaxed as any child I've ever taught."

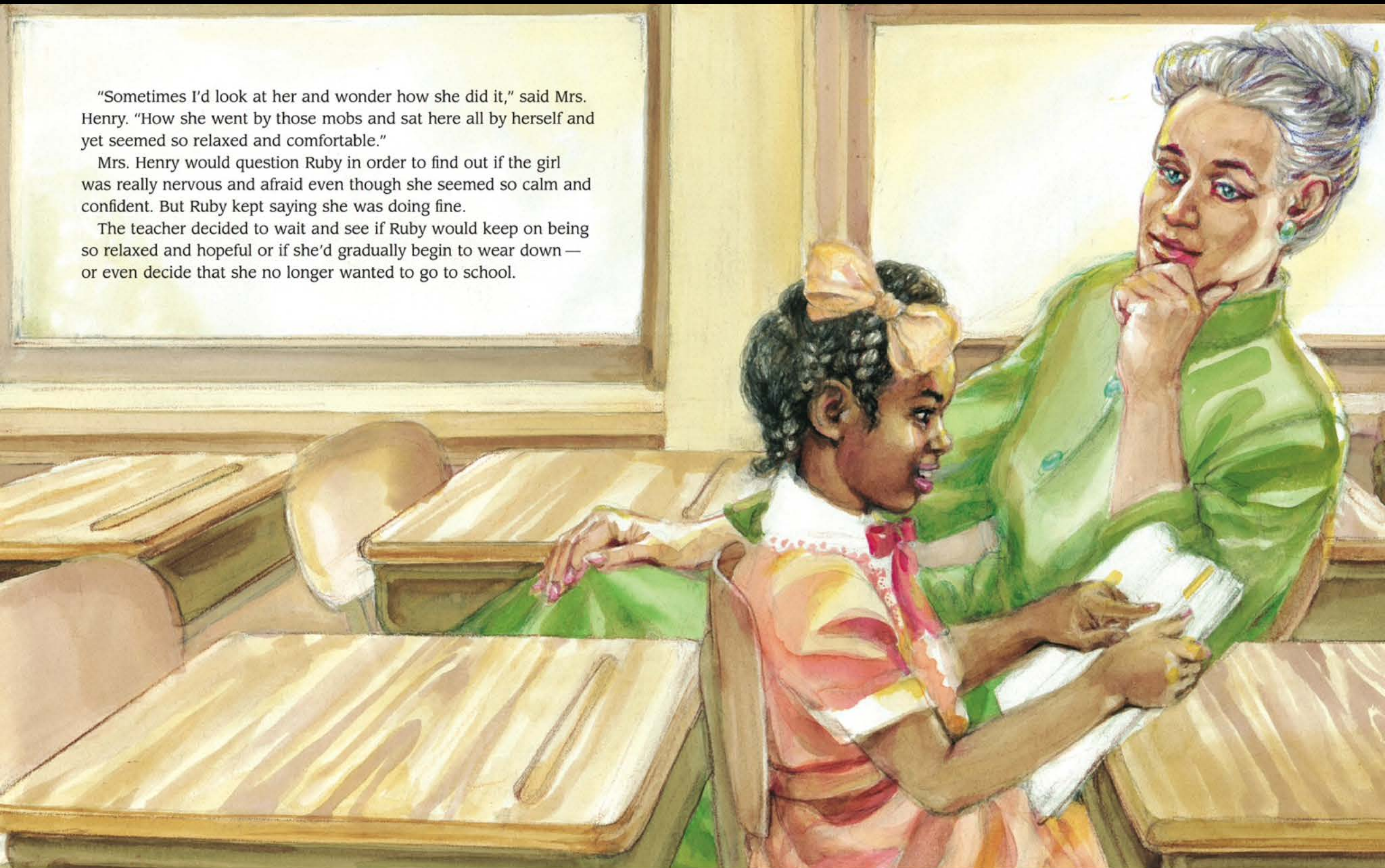
So Ruby began learning how to read and write in an empty classroom, an empty building.



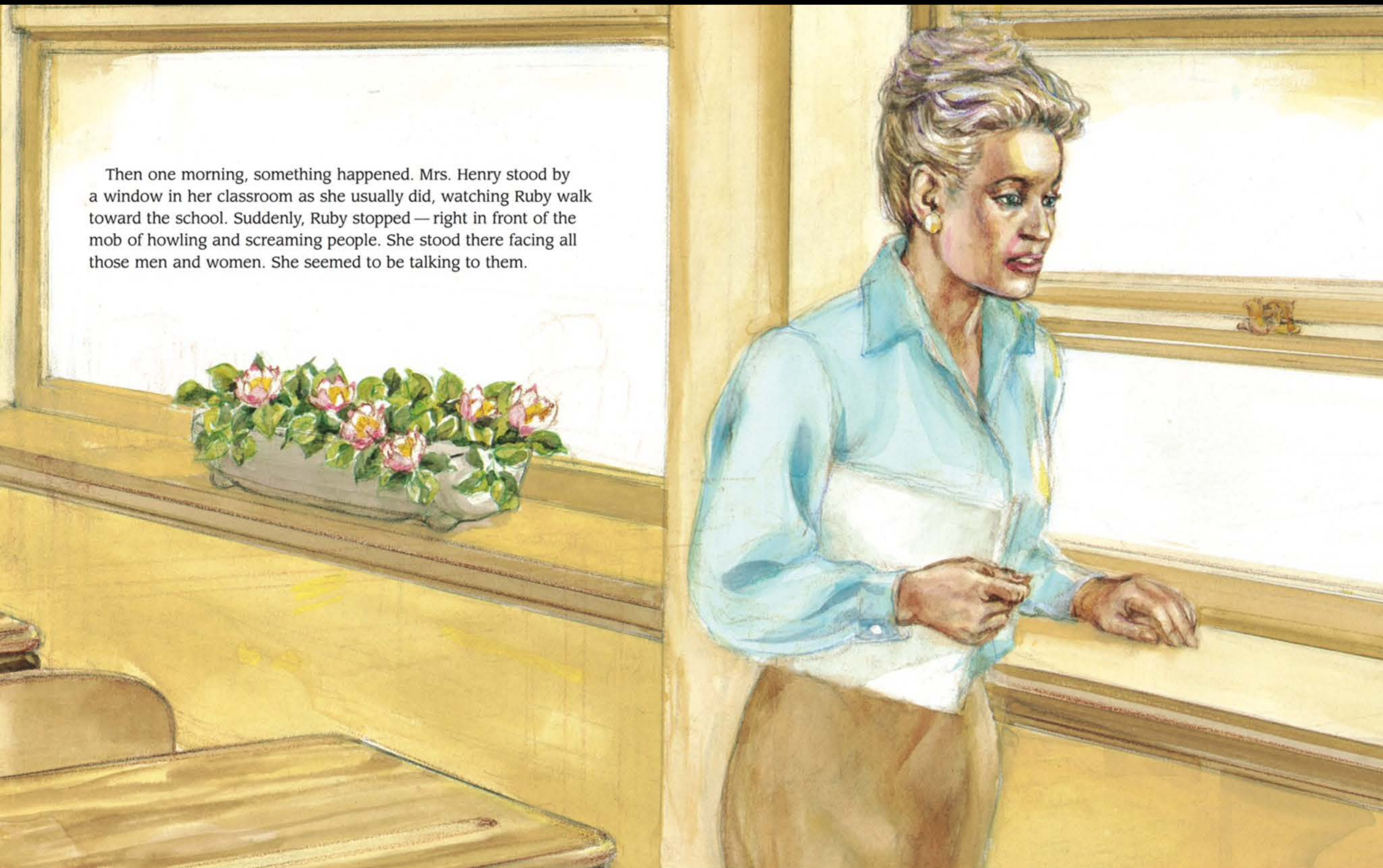
"Sometimes I'd look at her and wonder how she did it," said Mrs. Henry. "How she went by those mobs and sat here all by herself and yet seemed so relaxed and comfortable."

Mrs. Henry would question Ruby in order to find out if the girl was really nervous and afraid even though she seemed so calm and confident. But Ruby kept saying she was doing fine.

The teacher decided to wait and see if Ruby would keep on being so relaxed and hopeful or if she'd gradually begin to wear down — or even decide that she no longer wanted to go to school.



Then one morning, something happened. Mrs. Henry stood by a window in her classroom as she usually did, watching Ruby walk toward the school. Suddenly, Ruby stopped — right in front of the mob of howling and screaming people. She stood there facing all those men and women. She seemed to be talking to them.

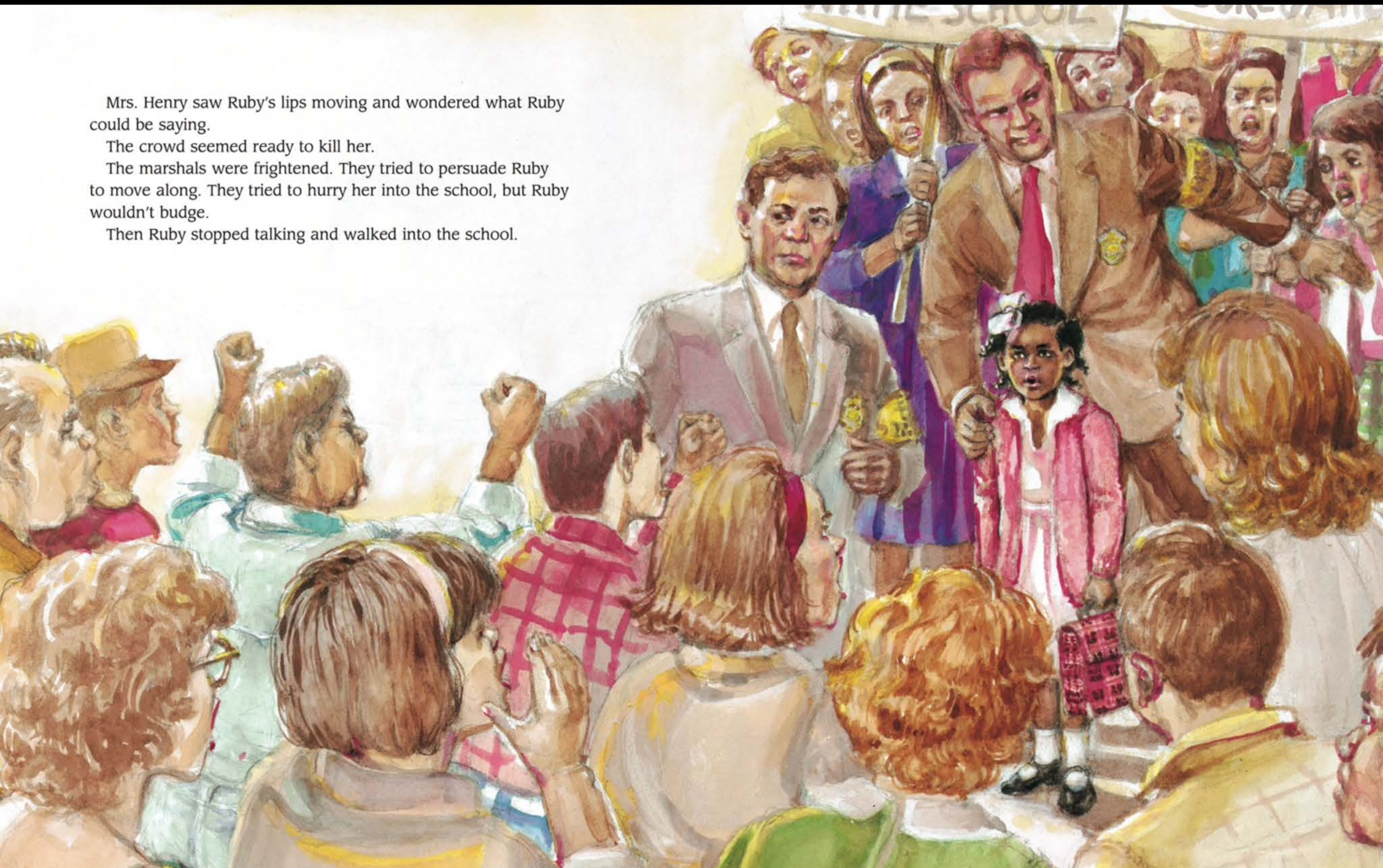


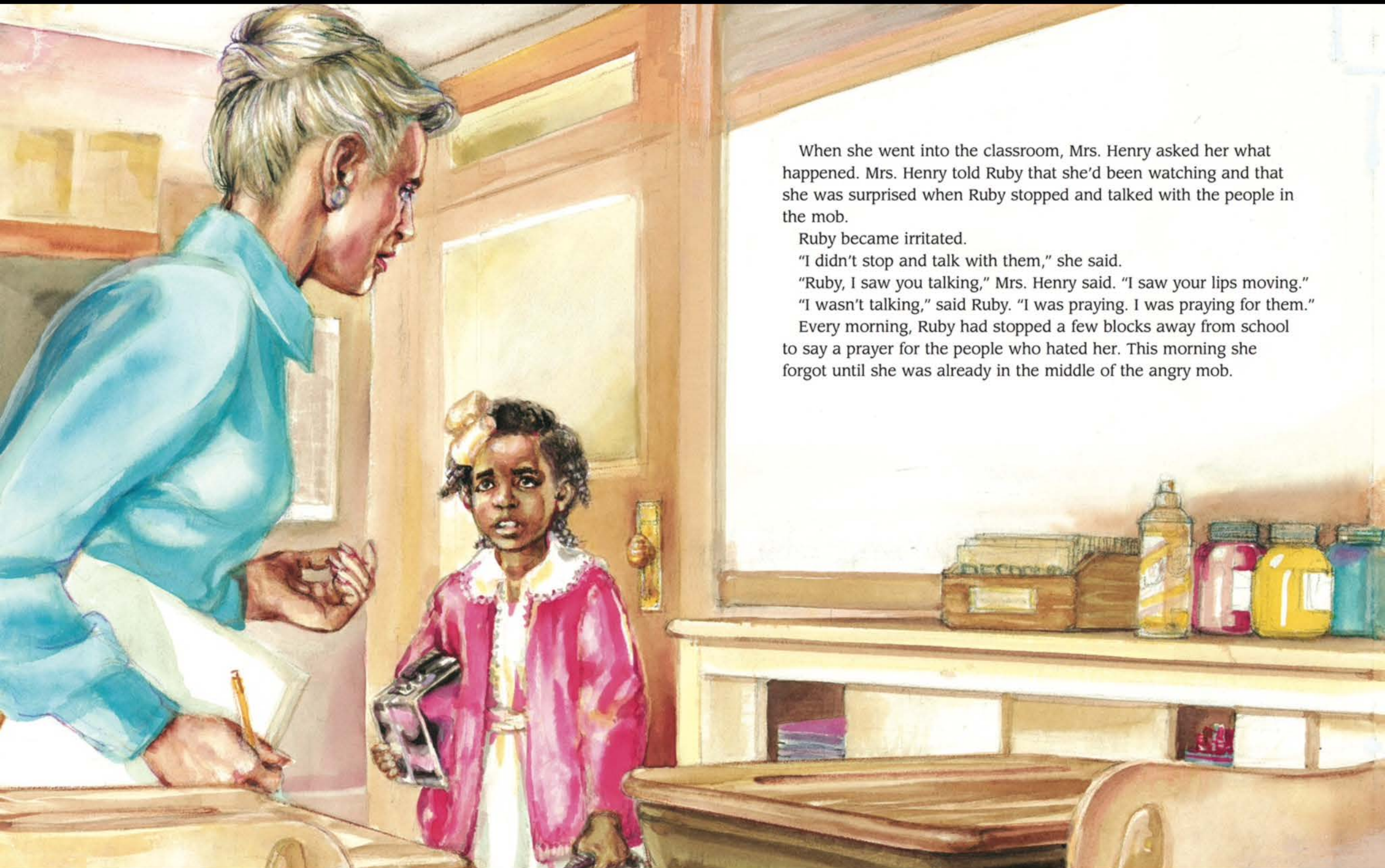
Mrs. Henry saw Ruby's lips moving and wondered what Ruby could be saying.

The crowd seemed ready to kill her.

The marshals were frightened. They tried to persuade Ruby to move along. They tried to hurry her into the school, but Ruby wouldn't budge.

Then Ruby stopped talking and walked into the school.





When she went into the classroom, Mrs. Henry asked her what happened. Mrs. Henry told Ruby that she'd been watching and that she was surprised when Ruby stopped and talked with the people in the mob.

Ruby became irritated.

"I didn't stop and talk with them," she said.

"Ruby, I saw you talking," Mrs. Henry said. "I saw your lips moving."

"I wasn't talking," said Ruby. "I was praying. I was praying for them."

Every morning, Ruby had stopped a few blocks away from school to say a prayer for the people who hated her. This morning she forgot until she was already in the middle of the angry mob.

When school was over for the day, Ruby hurried through the mob as usual. After she walked a few blocks and the crowd was behind her, Ruby said the prayer she repeated twice a day — before and after school:

*Please, God, try to forgive those people.
Because even if they say those bad things,
They don't know what they're doing.
So You could forgive them,
Just like You did those folks a long time ago
When they said terrible things about You.*



AFTERWORD

Later that year, two white boys joined Ruby at the Frantz Elementary School. Their parents were tired of seeing the boys get into mischief around the house when they could have been in school and learning. The mob became very angry when the first white students went back to school. But those boys were soon joined by other children.

"We've been sitting back and letting our children get cheated out of an education because some people have tried to take the law into their own hands," one parent said. "It's time for us to fight for the side of the law and for our children's right to go to a school and get their education."

They all did get their education, Ruby and a growing number of boys and girls who went to school with her. By the time Ruby was in the second grade, the mobs had given up their struggle to scare Ruby and defeat the federal judge's order that New Orleans schools be desegregated so that children of all races might be in the same classroom. Year after year, Ruby went to the Frantz School. She graduated from it, then went on to graduate from high school.

Ruby Bridges is married to a building contractor and has four sons. Now a successful businesswoman, she has created the Ruby Bridges Educational Foundation. With its focus on education, community, and the future of our nation's children, the Foundation is especially dedicated to revitalizing the William Frantz School, which is located in the heart of the Ninth Ward in New Orleans. Ruby is once again stepping to the forefront and embracing an opportunity to make history by contributing to the challenge that our nation is facing in the recovery efforts following Hurricane Katrina.

There is also a special exhibit featuring Ruby's story at the Children's Museum of Indianapolis in Indianapolis, Indiana, called *The Power of Children: Making a Difference*.



About the Author

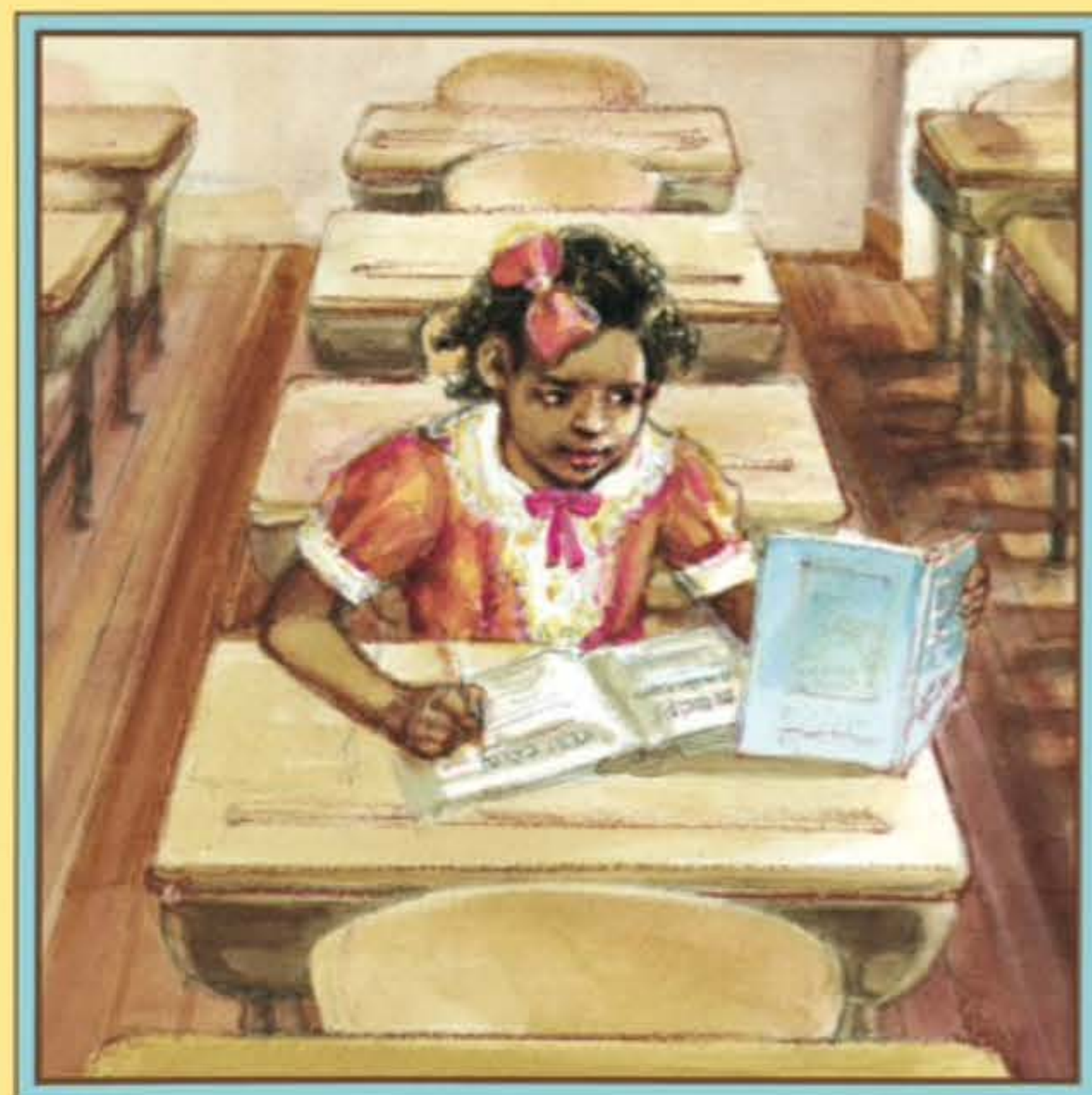
Awarded the Pulitzer Prize for volumes two and three of the five-volume work *Children of Crisis*, Robert Coles is the author of many distinguished books for adults, including *The Call of Service*, *The Call of Stories*, *The Moral Life of Children*, and *The Spiritual Life of Children*. A research psychiatrist at Harvard University, Dr. Coles lives outside Boston, Massachusetts.

About the Illustrator

George Ford has illustrated many acclaimed books for children, including *Ray Charles* by Sharon Bell Mathis, winner of the Coretta Scott King Award, and *Paul Robeson* by Eloise Greenfield, winner of the Jane Addams Children's Book Award. Mr. Ford lives with his wife and daughter in Brooklyn, New York.

Celebrate Ruby's story of courage, faith, and hope with this special anniversary edition!

It's 1960, and Ruby Bridges and her family have recently moved from Mississippi to New Orleans in search of a better life. When a judge orders Ruby to attend first grade at William Frantz Elementary, an all-white school, Ruby must face angry mobs of parents who refuse to send their children to school with her. This moving picture book captures the spirit of a little girl standing alone in the face of racism.



"Ford's moving watercolor paintings . . . capture the physical warmth of Ruby's family and community, the immense powers against her, and her shining inner strength." —*Booklist*

An ABC Children's Booksellers Choices Award Winner
A South Carolina Children's Book Award Winner

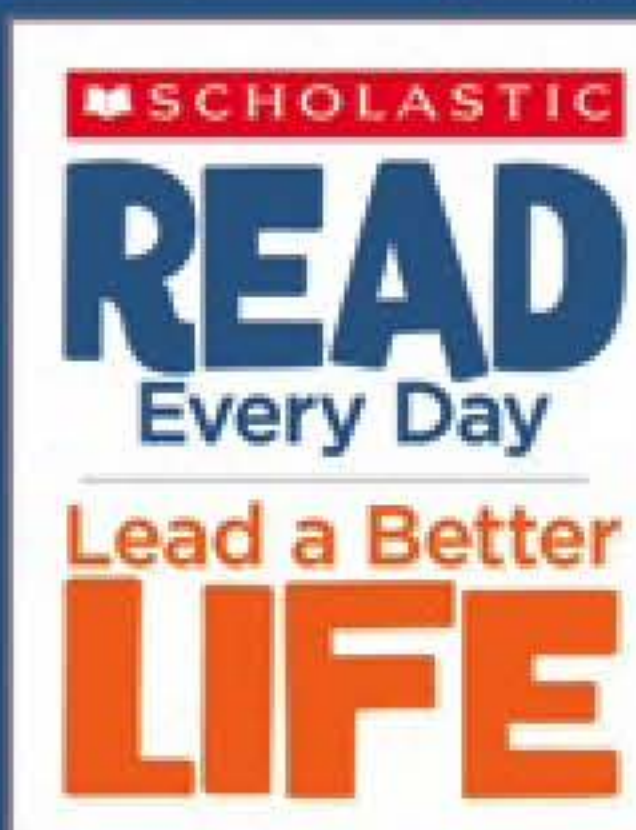
Library

Read Again

The Reading Bill of Rights

A Child's Right to Read

We believe that **LITERACY** - the ability to **READ, WRITE** and **UNDERSTAND** - is the **BIRTHRIGHT** of every child in the world as well as the pathway to **SUCCEED** in school and to realize a complete life. Young people need to read **NONFICTION** for **INFORMATION** to understand their world, and **LITERATURE** for **IMAGINATION** to understand themselves. • We believe that the massive amounts of **DIGITAL** information and **IMAGES** now transmitted daily make it even more important for a young person to know how to **ANALYZE, INTERPRET** and understand information, to separate **FACT** from **OPINION**, and to have deep **RESPECT** for **LOGICAL THINKING**. • We believe that literature and **DRAMA**, whether on printed pages, screens, on stage or film, help young people **EXPERIENCE** the **GREAT STORIES** of **EMOTION** and **ACTION**, leading to a deeper **UNDERSTANDING** of what it means to be **TRULY HUMAN**. Without this literacy heritage, life lacks **MEANING, COHERENCE** and **SOUL**. • We believe every child has a right to a "textual lineage" - a reading and writing **YOU ARE** is in part developed through you've experienced. This textual lineage **READING AND WRITING IDENTITY** they are and how they can **MAKE "YOU ARE WHAT YOU READ."** **ACCESS** to books, magazines, text on phones. Whatever way you read, **FACTS** are or what the **STORY** tells you, to **IDEAS**, you will need the **SKILLS** yourself and **YOUR WORLD**. • We believe **FLUENTLY** will give children the **CHALLENGING** texts they will meet in every child should be able to **CHOOSE** that choice builds **LITERACY CONFIDENCE** - the ability to read, **WRITE** and **SPEAK** about what they know, what they feel, and who they are. • We believe that every child has the right to a great teacher who will help them **LEARN** to read and **LOVE TO READ**. Children need teachers who provide **INTENTIONAL, focused INSTRUCTION** to give young people the skills to read and **INTERPRET INFORMATION** or **UNDERSTAND GREAT STORIES** they will encounter throughout life. • We believe that in the 21st century, the ability to read is **NECESSARY** not only to **SUCCEED** but to **SURVIVE** - for the ability to **UNDERSTAND** information and the **POWER** of stories is the key to a life of **PURPOSE** and **MEANING**.



the **STORIES** and **INFORMATION** will enable all young people to have a which helps them understand who **THEIR LIVES BETTER**. In short, • We believe every child should have newspapers, computers, e-readers, and you will need to figure out what the No matter how and where you get access of **READING** to **UNDERSTAND** that reading **WIDELY** and reading reading **STAMINA** to deal with more college, at work and in everyday **LIFE**. And and own the books they want to read, for