

Ms. Garcia Smiles at Me



By Katie Yamasaki

Every day, my best friend Rosey and I walk to school together. We play in our long shadows the whole way there.



"Good morning!" Our teacher Ms. Garcia greets us, her smile as bright as the sun we left outside.

My other best friends are also in our class,
Naomi and Lamar.

We always check our butterfly house before
going to our tables.

"Still caterpillars!" says Lamar.

"No cocoons yet," says Naomi.



Mostly, I love school. We even
have little plants in our room
that were just seeds one month
ago! Now it is fun to water them
and watch them grow.

Sometimes at my school, we have to learn how to be safe.
And we have to "Practice, practice, practice!" says Ms. Garcia.
We practice washing our hands to
be safe from germs.

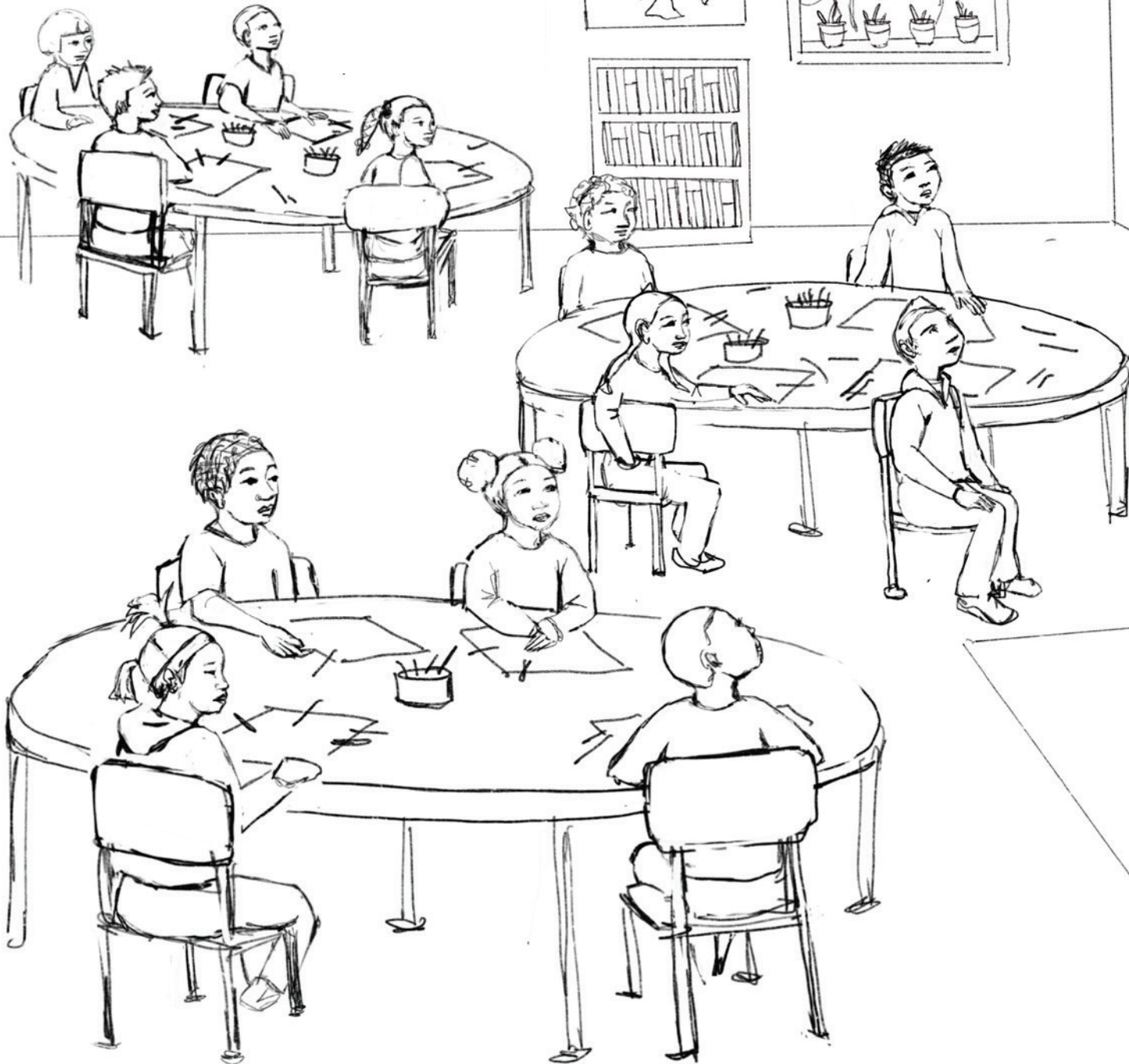


We practice going outside to be
safe in case there is a fire.

We practice being safe when we
learn how to cut with scissors.



Sometimes, we have to practice how to be safe from harm. The office makes an announcement to the teachers that says, "We are now in lockdown. Take proper action."



We know when the office says that, we have to become silent like butterflies.

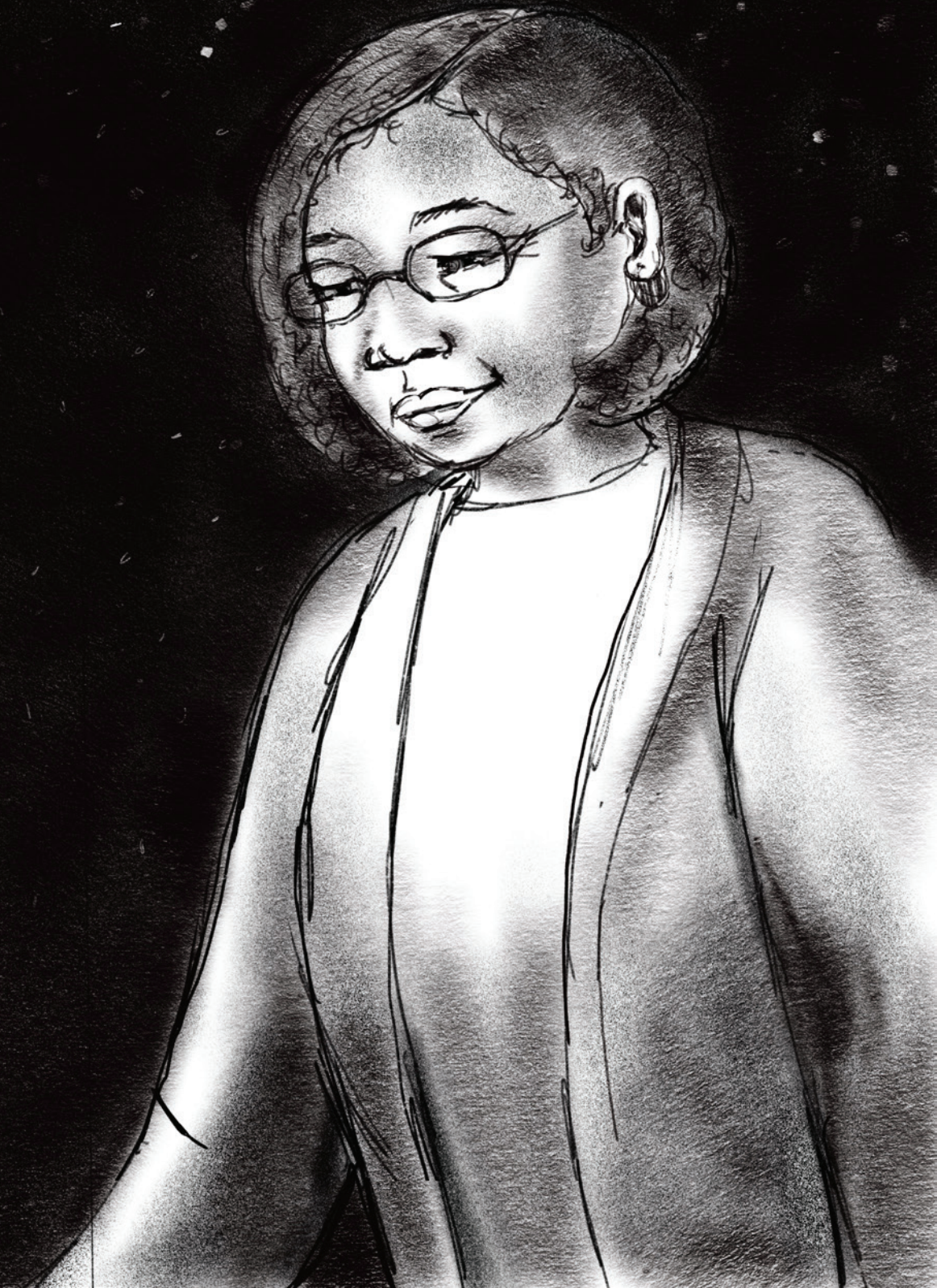
We know when the office says that, we have to watch Ms. Garcia and follow her instructions very closely.

She tells us in a whisper, to walk quietly and sit on the floor. We are silent butterflies landing on flowers.

Ms. Garcia turns the light off and quickly checks the hallway before locking the classroom door. If there are any friends in the hallway, no matter their grade, they quickly come into the classroom and silently join us on the floor. Then she comes and stands by where we are sitting, silent butterflies on their flowers.



When the classroom is dark I look at Ms. Garcia. She is smiling at us, so I smile back at her. The classroom is dark like the night. I imagine twinkling stars on the ceiling. The silence is a big soft blanket hugging us gently.



Sometimes, when we have to sit so still and so silently, my butterfly legs feel like they want to move. I look at Ms. Garcia, and see that she is taking deep breaths.

So I take a deep breath too, and I feel my butterfly legs relax.





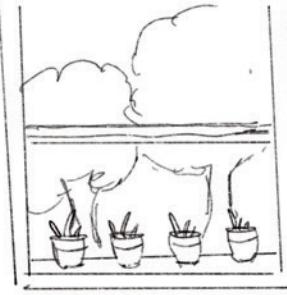
Sometimes, when I hear the School Safety officer jiggle the classroom doorknob, to make sure it is locked, my wings quiver.

Then I imagine how a butterfly feels when a big wind blows that jiggles its wings and peaceful flower post. I take another deep breath and my wings stop quivering.

When I look at Ms. Garcia, she is still smiling at us. I feel Rosey next to me, her wing touching mine. I think we will play on the swings at recess today with Naomi and Lamar.



When the office makes another announcement that says, "the lockdown has been lifted," Ms. Garcia tells us that we can go back to our tables.



As I float like a butterfly back to my table, I pass my smiling teacher. I pass my best friends.

My wings flutter as I think of recess, and my heart is peaceful.

