



-THE- Pistachio Man

By Isabella Diep

- 7th grade -

Hickman Charter School

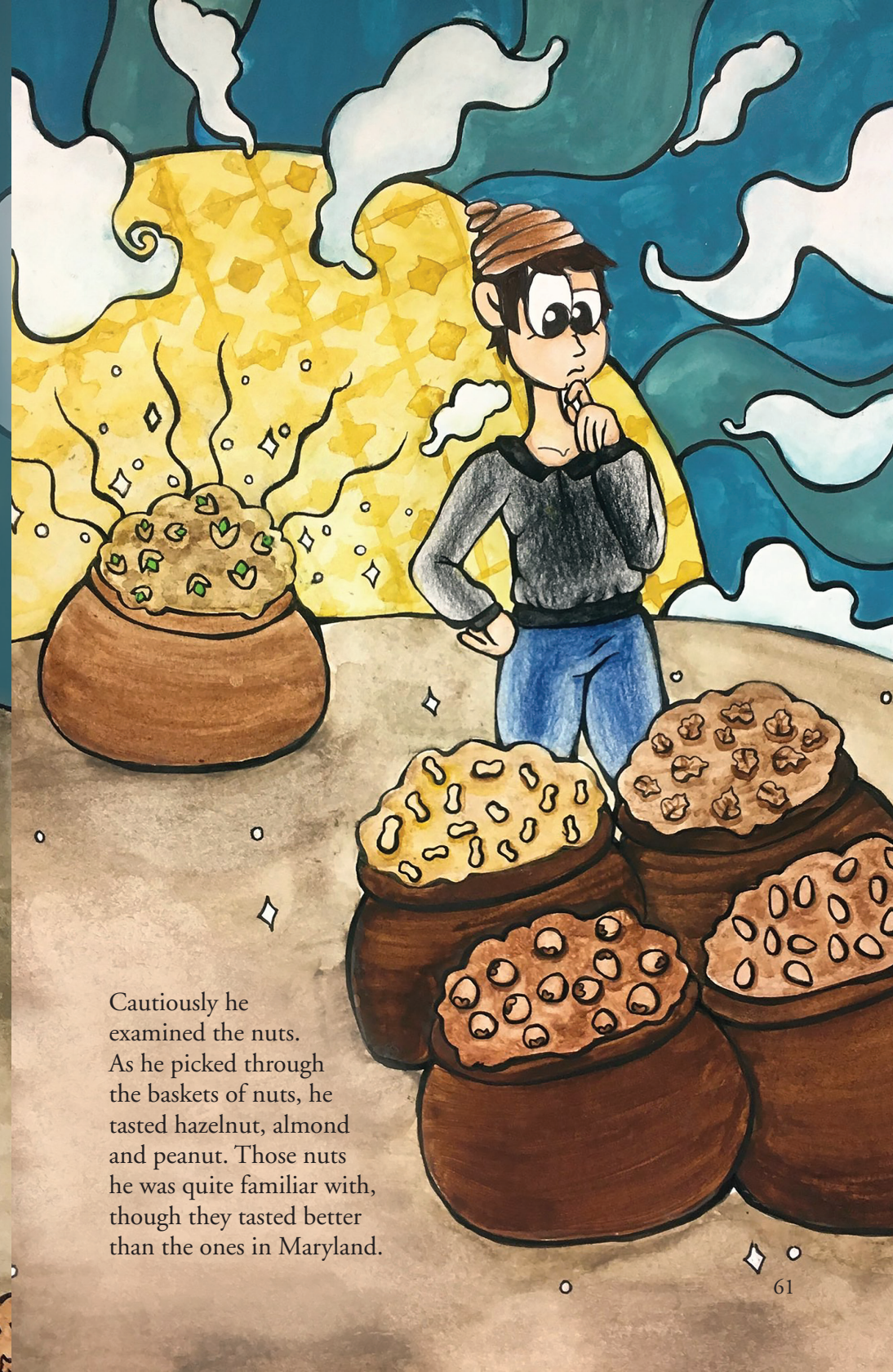
Roxanne Lemos, Teacher
Stanislaus County

Illustrated by Franklin High School

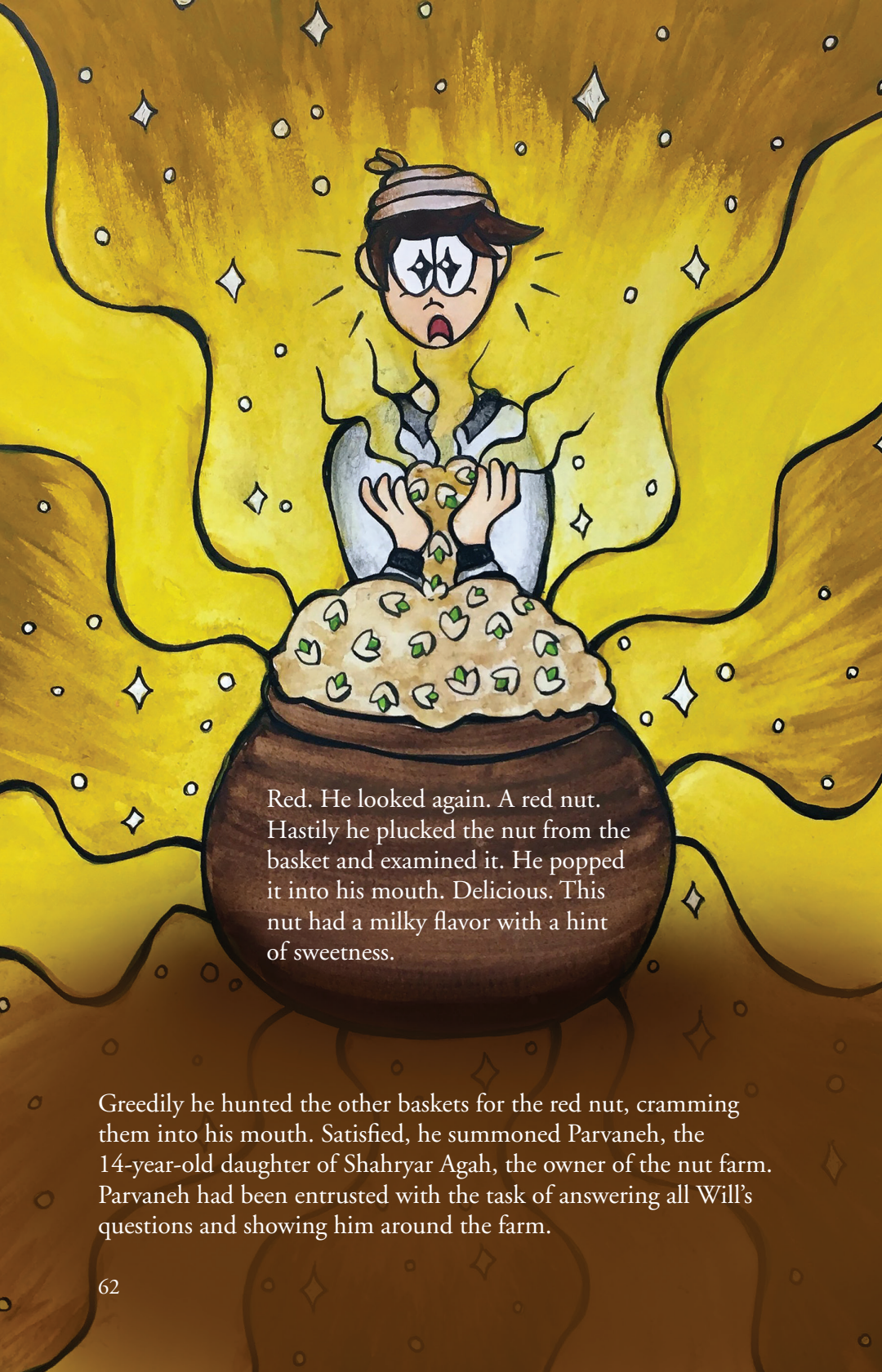
Iran, 1926

Will bent over the baskets of nuts. Dozens of baskets filled to the brim with assortments of nuts stood outside. The Persian (modern-day Iran) heat blazed down on him. The Agah family were prominent nut farmers in Rafsanjan, a city in Iran. Will had been very interested in the nut process, so the family had generously let him use their nuts for agricultural research.

Wiping beads of sweat off his brow, he selected a knobbly beige nut with hazel lines running here and there across the nut, like veins. He tasted it. Good, he thought, but not what he was looking for.




Cautiously he examined the nuts. As he picked through the baskets of nuts, he tasted hazelnut, almond and peanut. Those nuts he was quite familiar with, though they tasted better than the ones in Maryland.




Red. He looked again. A red nut. Hastily he plucked the nut from the basket and examined it. He popped it into his mouth. Delicious. This nut had a milky flavor with a hint of sweetness.

Greedily he hunted the other baskets for the red nut, cramming them into his mouth. Satisfied, he summoned Parvaneh, the 14-year-old daughter of Shahryar Agah, the owner of the nut farm. Parvaneh had been entrusted with the task of answering all Will's questions and showing him around the farm.



Parvaneh appeared a few moments later with her younger brother, 4-year-old Farrokh, in her arms. "Parvaneh, what is this nut?" William asked. She answered in her heavily accented English,

"It is the pistachio nut."



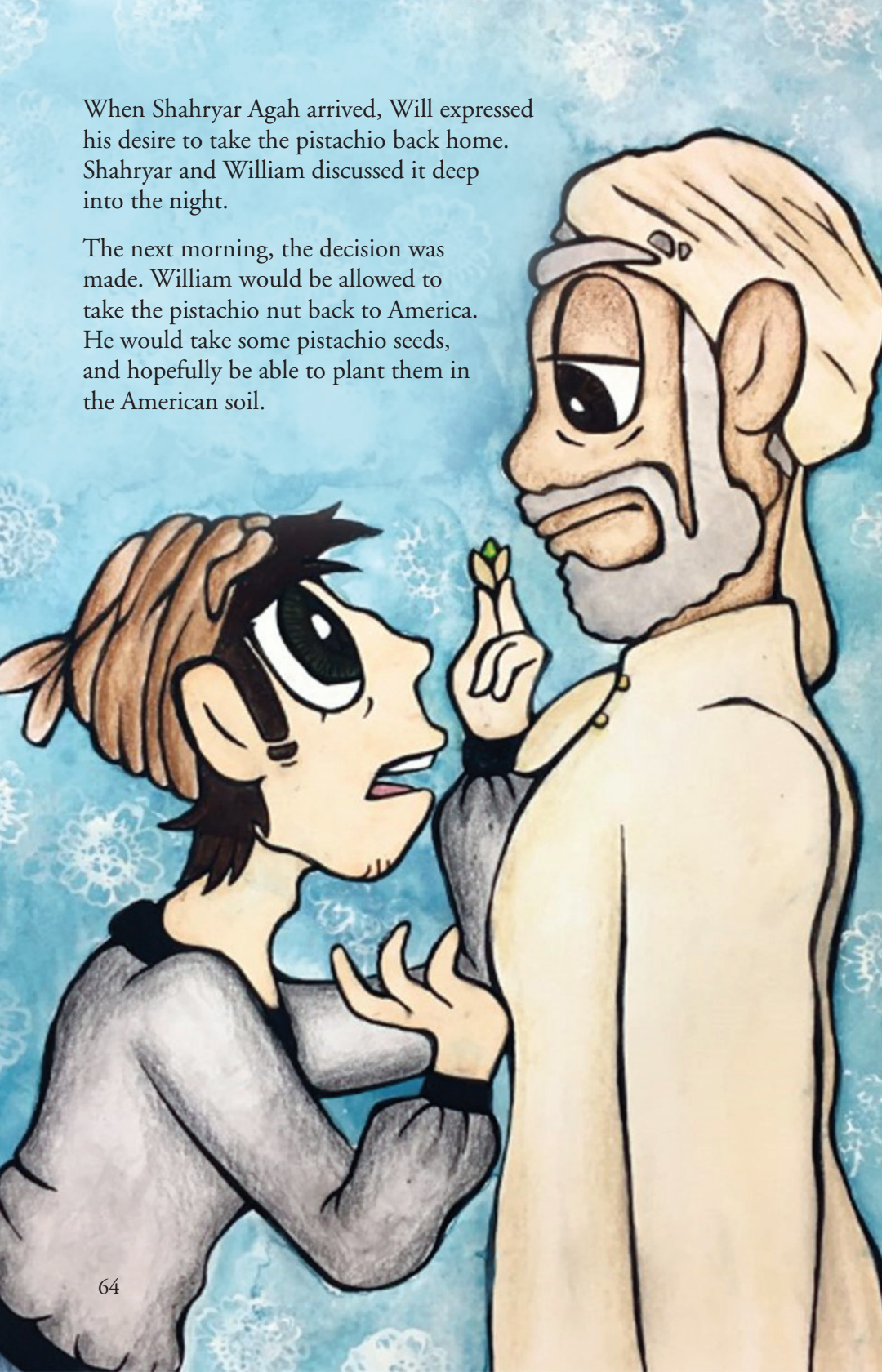
"The pistachio nut is new to me. Would your family allow me to take some home with me?"

She tilted her head, while little, tired Farrokh fussed.

"I will go ask my father," she responded at last.

When Shahryar Agah arrived, Will expressed his desire to take the pistachio back home. Shahryar and William discussed it deep into the night.

The next morning, the decision was made. William would be allowed to take the pistachio nut back to America. He would take some pistachio seeds, and hopefully be able to plant them in the American soil.



California, 1926

Lawrence eagerly ripped open the envelope. He was sitting on his kitchen stool, a pile of mail in front of him. Sorting through the mail, he came across an envelope from William.



William Whitehouse and Lawrence Wilson were best friends. They trusted each other, and told each other everything. Lawrence had been a bit hurt when Will had left without a trace, but here was something from Will. A letter tumbled out of the unsealed envelope. As fast as an arrow whizzing through the air, Lawrence speedily snatched up the letter. Unfolding it he read,

1926 Dear Lawrence,
My most cherished friend, I sincerely apologize for not telling you about my trip to Persia. I went because I'd heard about their famous nut farms, and as you know, since I was studying agriculture,

I thought it would be fun to take a trip to the Middle East. I hoped to learn about the subject more. I found a unique nut. The nut growers call it the pistachio nut. I've never tasted it before, so I have decided to take some seeds back to California and grow them. I hope you approve of my plan because you are the first one I've told beside the nut farmers who gave me the permission. See you soon.

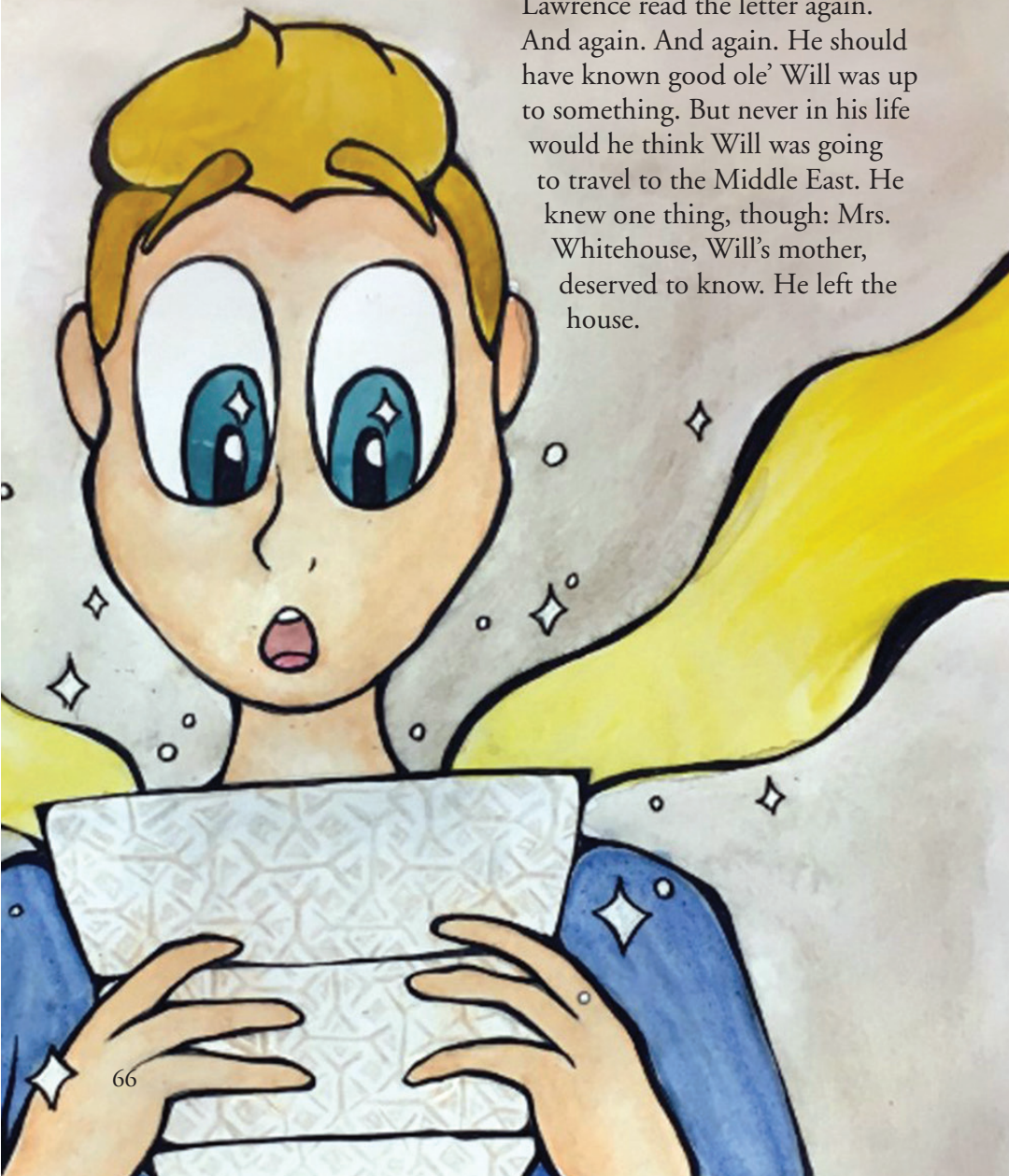
Yours truly,

William E. Whitehouse

Lawrence read the letter again. And again. And again. He should have known good ole' Will was up to something. But never in his life would he think Will was going to travel to the Middle East. He knew one thing, though: Mrs. Whitehouse, Will's mother, deserved to know. He left the house.

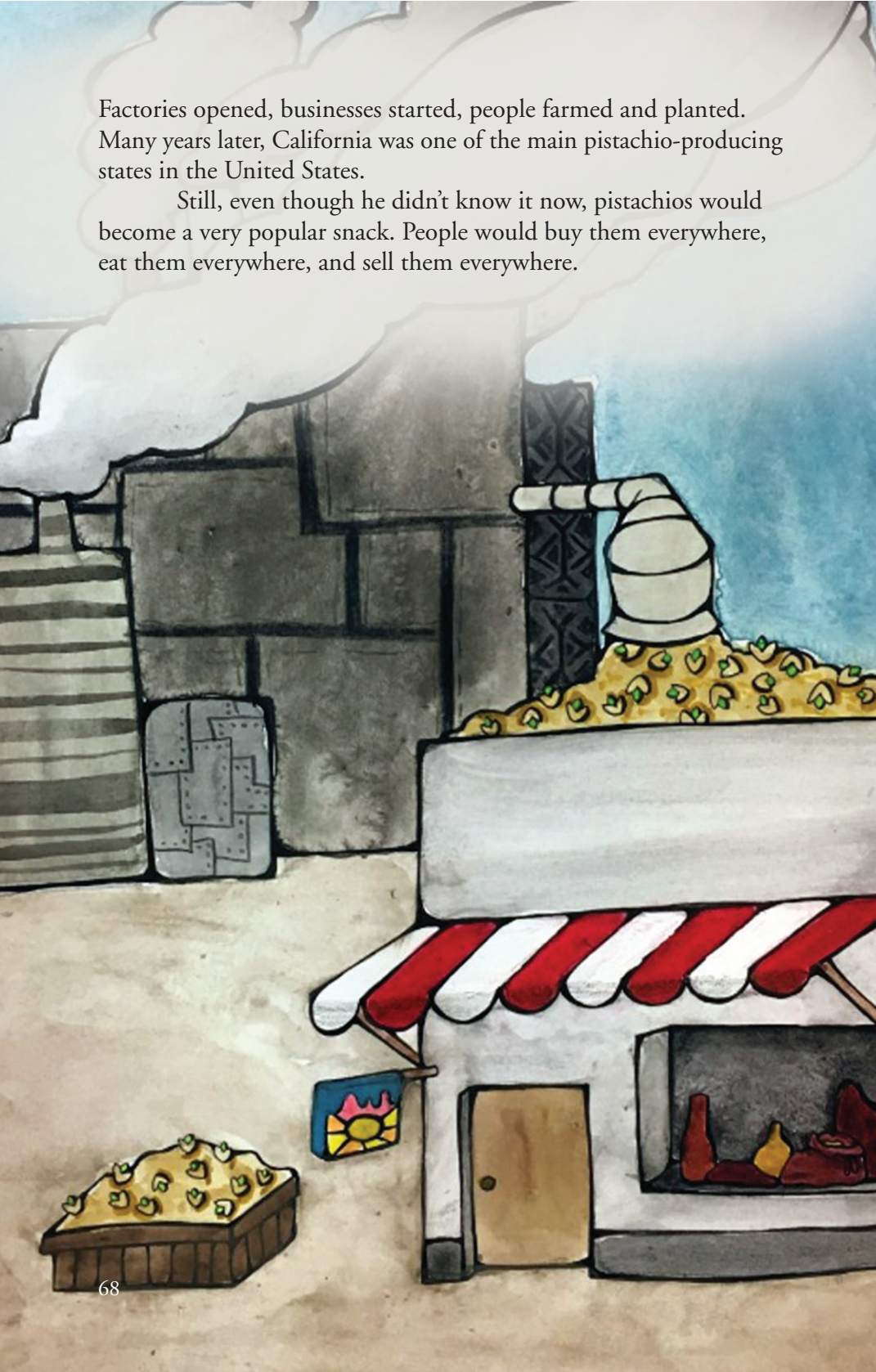
California, 1929

News of Will's return spread like wildfire. Everywhere in his hometown, people wanted some of the pistachio seeds. They planted them. They watered them. The seeds grew. In people's yards and farms, many pistachio trees were planted. People loved the pistachios and harvested many.

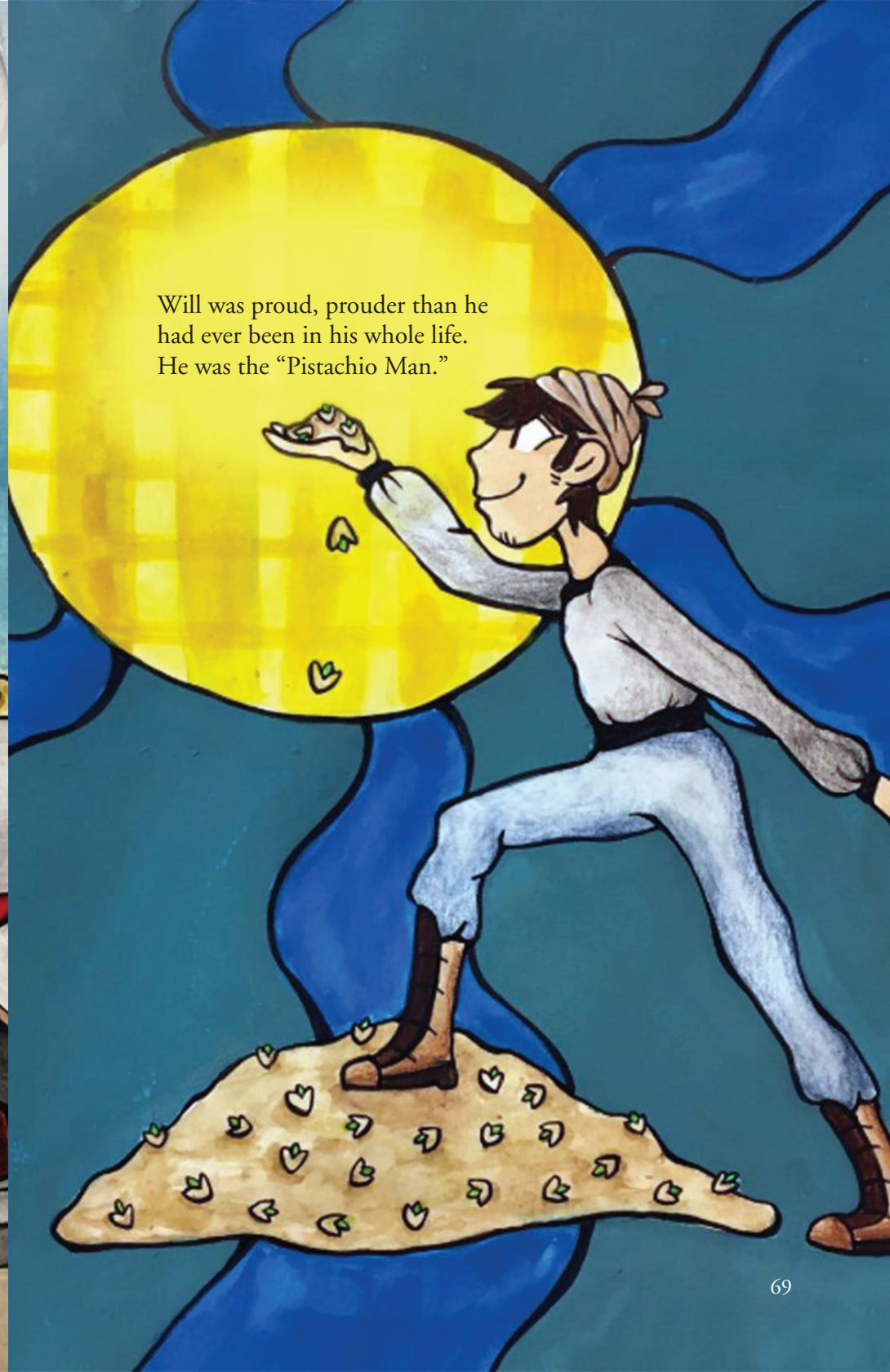


Factories opened, businesses started, people farmed and planted. Many years later, California was one of the main pistachio-producing states in the United States.

Still, even though he didn't know it now, pistachios would become a very popular snack. People would buy them everywhere, eat them everywhere, and sell them everywhere.



Will was proud, prouder than he had ever been in his whole life. He was the "Pistachio Man."



About the Author:



Isabella Diep, age 12

Isabella's story was inspired by her love of pistachios! Through her research, she learned about the man who brought pistachios to America (The Pistachio Man) and the idea for her story was born. She started her writing process by free-writing based on her idea. Then, she started adding a plot, characters, details and dialogue. Her favorite part of writing the story was the character profiles. She really enjoys brainstorming names, ages and all of the details surrounding the characters.

Isabella hopes that readers will learn how pistachios came to California and that many different commodities have come to California from other countries through a similar process. Isabella has always really enjoyed writing and is really looking forward to being a published author and seeing her story in print!

About the Illustrators:



Liv Bryant, Connie Weng, Samantha Jang

Franklin High School | Derek Bills, Art Teacher

Before illustrating *The Pistachio Man*, Franklin High School Art Department students Liv, Connie and Samantha knew very little about the history of pistachios. Through the story, they learned the origin of pistachios and how they became a popular snack in the United States. All three students started by brainstorming ideas for the illustrations and then Liv, the head illustrator, started producing the layout of each piece. Samantha then inked the drawings and Connie added the color to finish them. The students used watercolor, ink and colored pencil for the illustrations. They really enjoyed seeing the story come to life and working together as a creative team.