

5<sup>th</sup> GRADE STATE WINNER

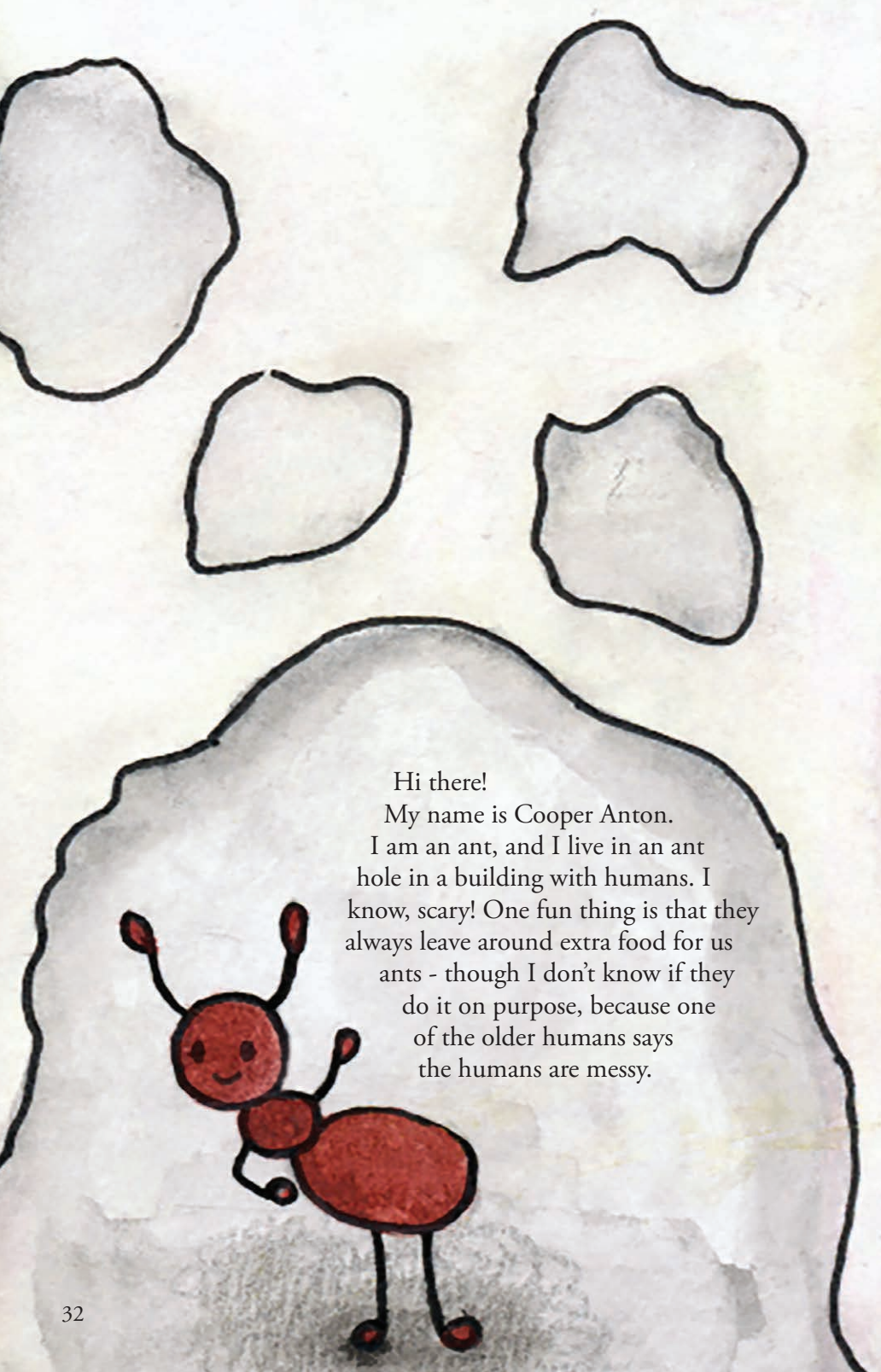
# Cooper and the Peachy Adventure

By Ally Samulski

Cassie Acuna, Teacher | Our Lady of Fatima Catholic School  
STANISLAUS COUNTY

Illustrated by: Florin High School





Hi there!  
My name is Cooper Anton.  
I am an ant, and I live in an ant  
hole in a building with humans. I  
know, scary! One fun thing is that they  
always leave around extra food for us  
ants - though I don't know if they  
do it on purpose, because one  
of the older humans says  
the humans are messy.



One day, we ants (I live in a colony) were out scouting for food when I saw a large slice of something juicy. "It might be fruit!" I thought excitedly. I went over and took a nibble of it. It was AMAZING! Sadly, I only had enough time to take a small part of it, because we were heading back.



“What was that fruit?! It was super good! Could I go out and get more?” I asked an older ant.

“That was a peach. Sorry, but it would be too dangerous to sneak something so big when there are humans roaming around,” he said. I was disappointed, because the peach was really good, and it might not be there the next time we go scouting for food!





“Hmm.... What if I could just sneak out to get the peach,” I thought. “I’m sure no one would notice. I will just be away for a bit.” So I snuck out and cautiously made my way to the peach. I climbed up to the peach and started to pick it up. All of a sudden a huge hand reached for the peach! I scurried to a large lump and hid on it. I saw an opening in the lump and quickly crawled inside.





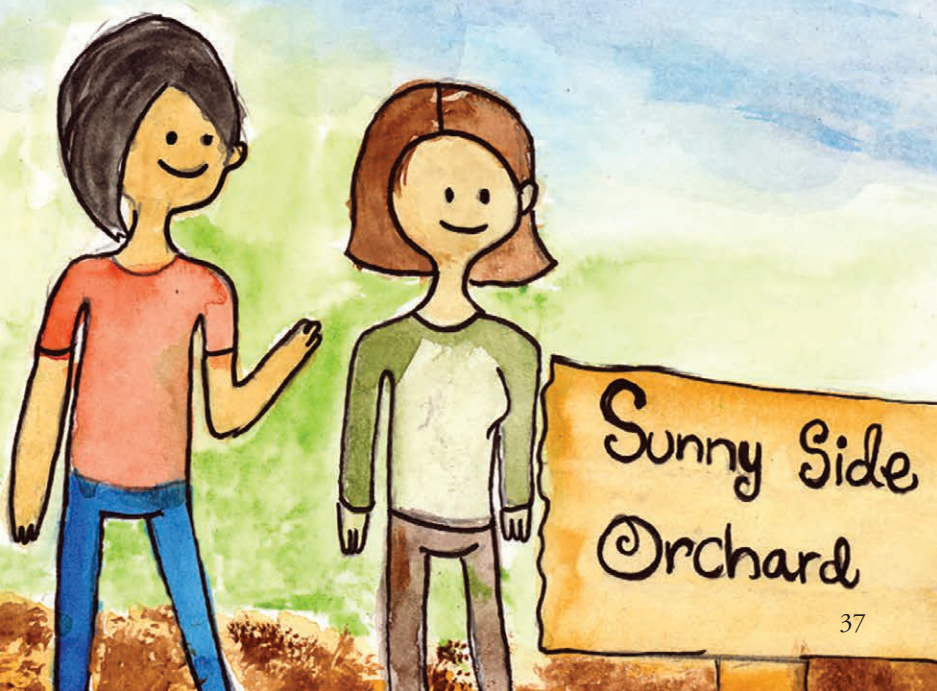
“Phewph!” I thought. “That was a close call.”  
Then, the lump flew up! I held on for dear life.  
It turns out it was a kid’s school bag!



Several minutes later light shone into the bag.  
I crawled out and found myself in an orchard!  
“It must be a field-trip day!” I thought.

“Welcome to Sunny-Side Orchard! On this field trip I’m going to tell you about how we harvest and grow peaches,” said a man. “Follow me.”

I felt a jolt as the bag moved.



We headed to the middle of the orchard where some other humans were picking peaches.

“Back in the winter we planted small bareroot trees. Then we pruned them,” said the guide. “Peach trees are pruned twice a year. Did you know that the gold miners were the first people to commercially farm peach trees? You can see our workers picking peaches. They usually start picking at dawn, and the average picker picks about 4 tons, or 8,000 pounds of peaches daily. After the picking, we sort the peaches here at the orchard and place them into large bins. We then send them to a cannery, which is a place where food gets canned.





“Fun fact: California produces 99% of the USA’s cling peach production. Let’s go to the cannery where our peaches get canned.”

All the students clambered back onto the bus, and I held on tight to the bag. A few minutes later we arrived at the cannery. It was huge! The guide led the students inside. There, I saw huge conveyor belts with peaches on them.

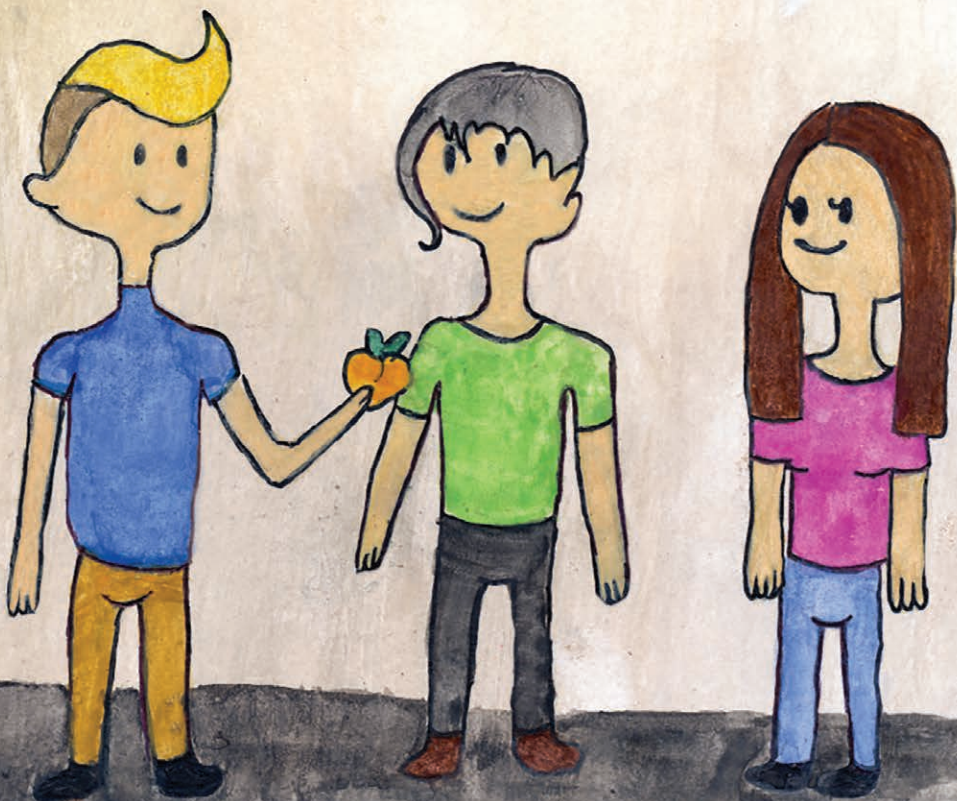
“Here at the cannery, our peaches get sorted on the conveyor belts. The peaches are sent through an electronic sizer that has cameras in it. The cameras take pictures of the peaches, and those pictures are sent to a computer that determines their size. Then, depending on the size, the peaches are sent to different places.



“The peaches are gently dropped into boxes that are put onto another conveyor belt. It leads them to an area where they get stacked and put into storage until a shipment truck gets here,” explained the guide.

I personally was amazed that the peach I ate went through all of that hard work!

“You can all take a peach to eat. They have vitamins A and C, and they’re delicious!” the guide said as he passed out peaches.





At the end of the day, I got back safely to the nest.  
Everyone was rushing up to me to see if I was OK.

“Cooper! What happened? Where were you? Are you  
OK?” one of them asked.

Even though I did not get more peaches to enjoy, I  
couldn't wait to tell them my story!



## About the Author



### \\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\ **Ally Samulski** \\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\

11 years old

Ants, picnics, and peaches prompted Ally's idea for her story. Her favorite aspect of writing the tale was coming up with the main character, Cooper, the ant. She also enjoyed researching how peaches are grown, harvested, and canned. Ally wants to be an author, and getting published and recognized at the state Capitol during the *Imagine this...* ceremony is a dream come true.



## About the Illustrators



### **Amaris Fernandez and London Simmons**

**Florin High School**

*Alexandra Pease, Art Teacher*

Amaris and London, high school sophomores, discovered it takes a lot of patience to illustrate a story! They embraced the process and especially enjoyed learning about ants and peaches, and working as a team.

Their goal was to make the story come to life with color, character design, and backgrounds. One student drew the characters and added the line art and background while the other student colored the illustrations and added more to the background imagery. The artists used watercolor and bold point pens.