

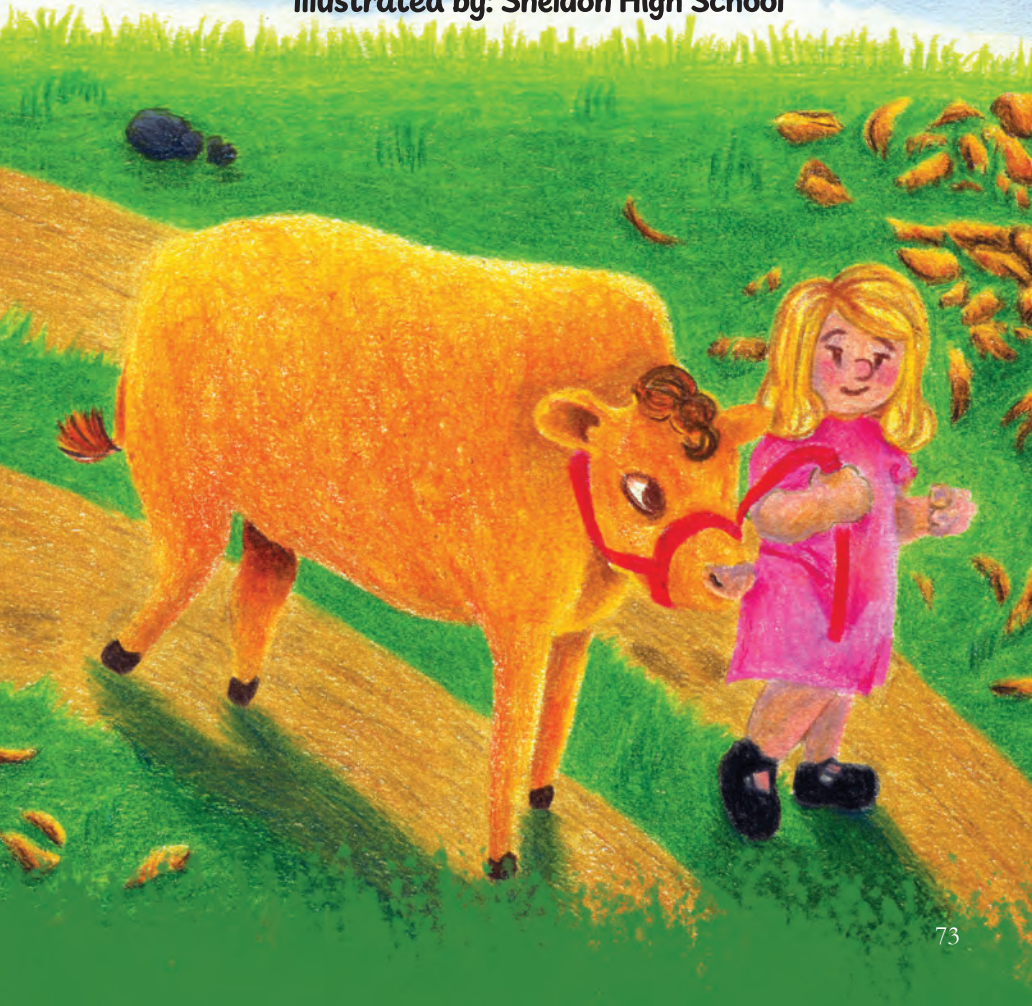
---

# The Grand Champion

By Shayna Gomes

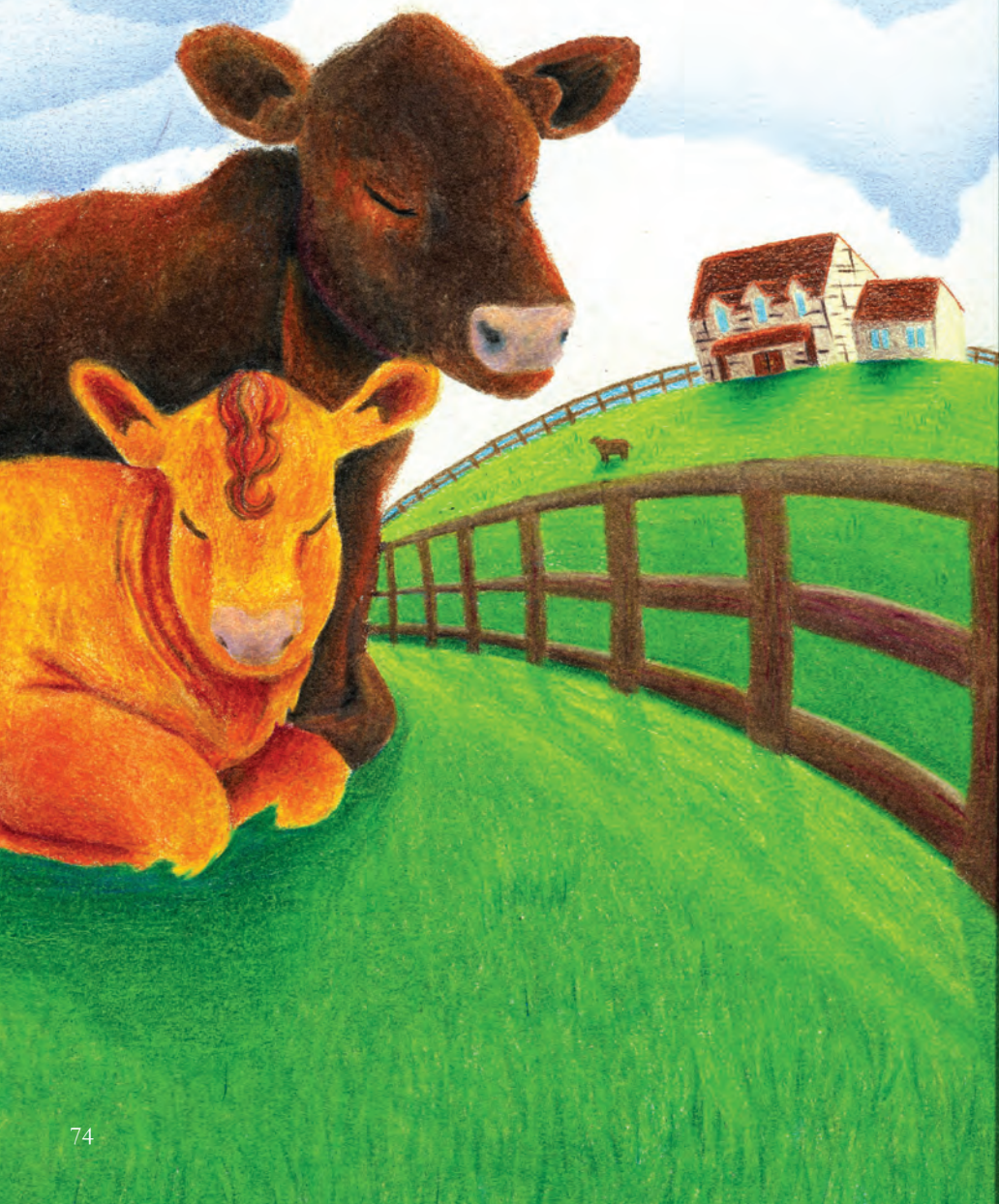
Amy Hurlimann, Teacher | Scott Valley Options  
SISKIYOU COUNTY

Illustrated by: Sheldon High School





On a small ranch in a grassy valley, Bob raised Black Angus cattle. Bob was proud to be a rancher because cattle are a food source and they contribute to the ecosystem by helping maintain topsoil and keeping weeds to a minimum. One day, a red calf was born. All Bob's cattle were surprised; they had never seen a red calf. He had long, red hair and was more muscular than the other calves.





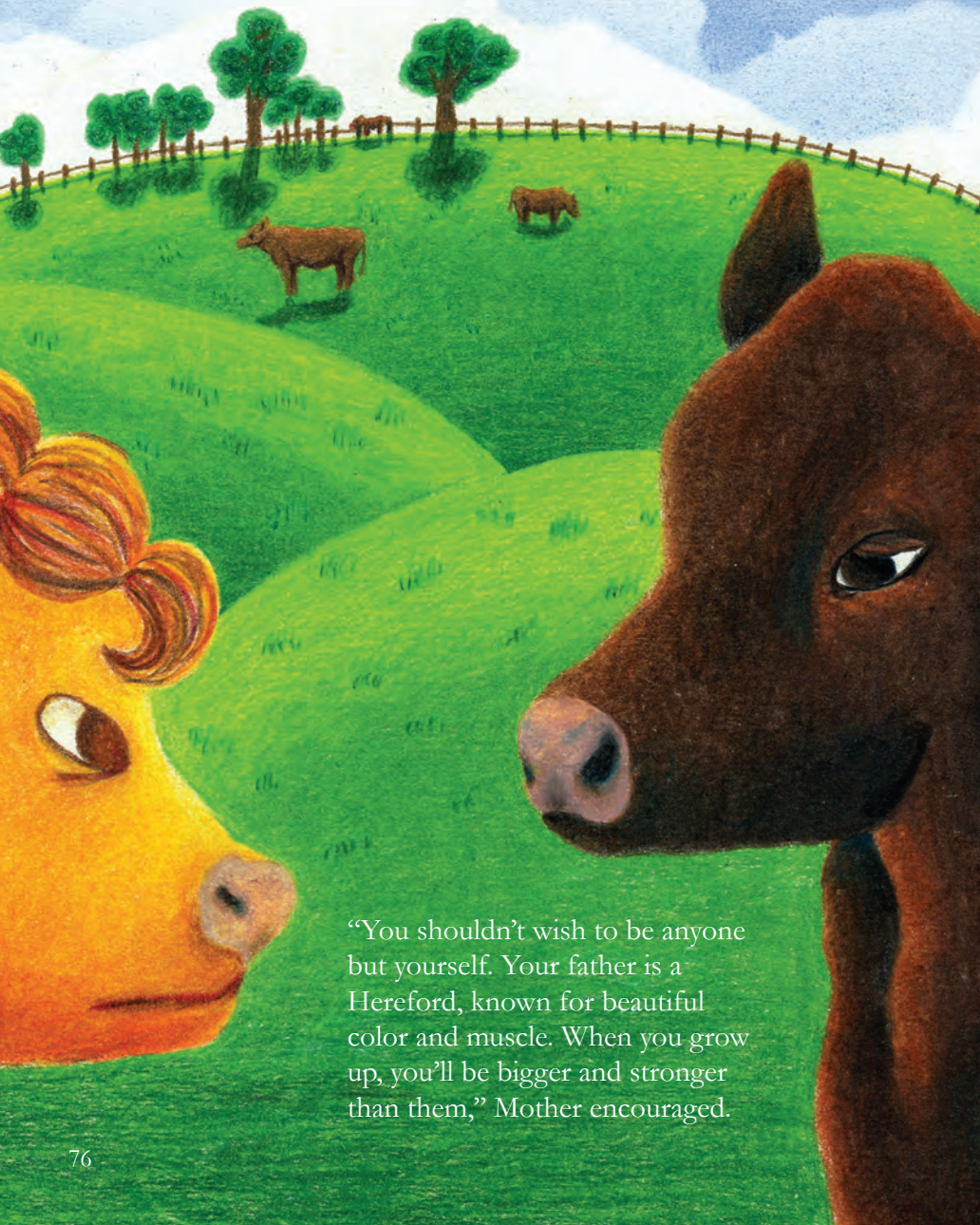
His mother named him Benson. He had a hard time because the others teased, “Why is your butt so big?” and “Why are you different?”



Duke was the meanest in the herd. While Benson napped under a tree one lazy morning, Duke snuck up and jumped on him, repeatedly chanting, “Benson’s fat.” The others laughed and chanted along.

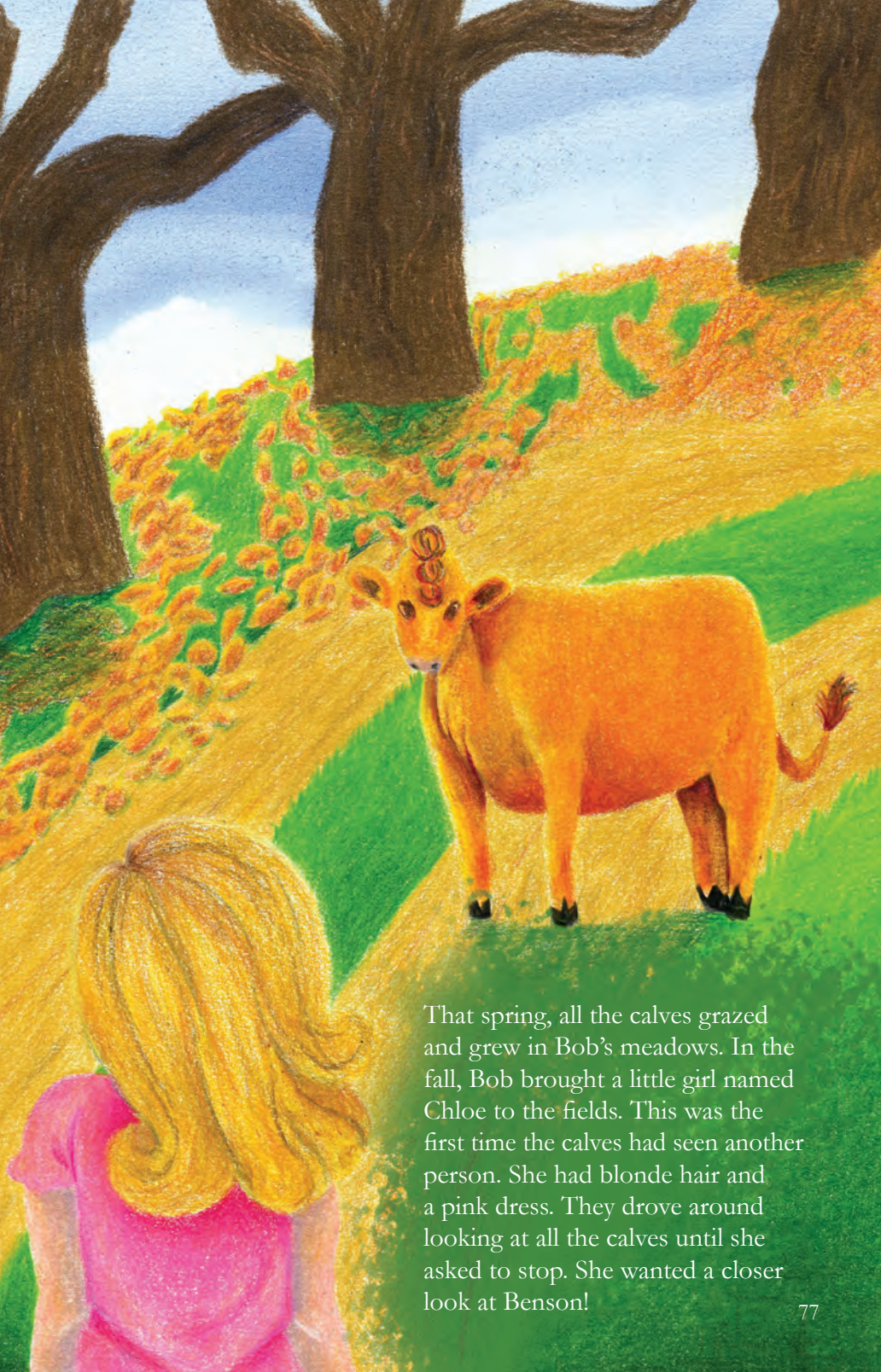


Angrily, Benson ran to find his mother. “MOM, Duke jumped on me, and they all said I was fat. I wish I wasn’t different,” Benson cried.



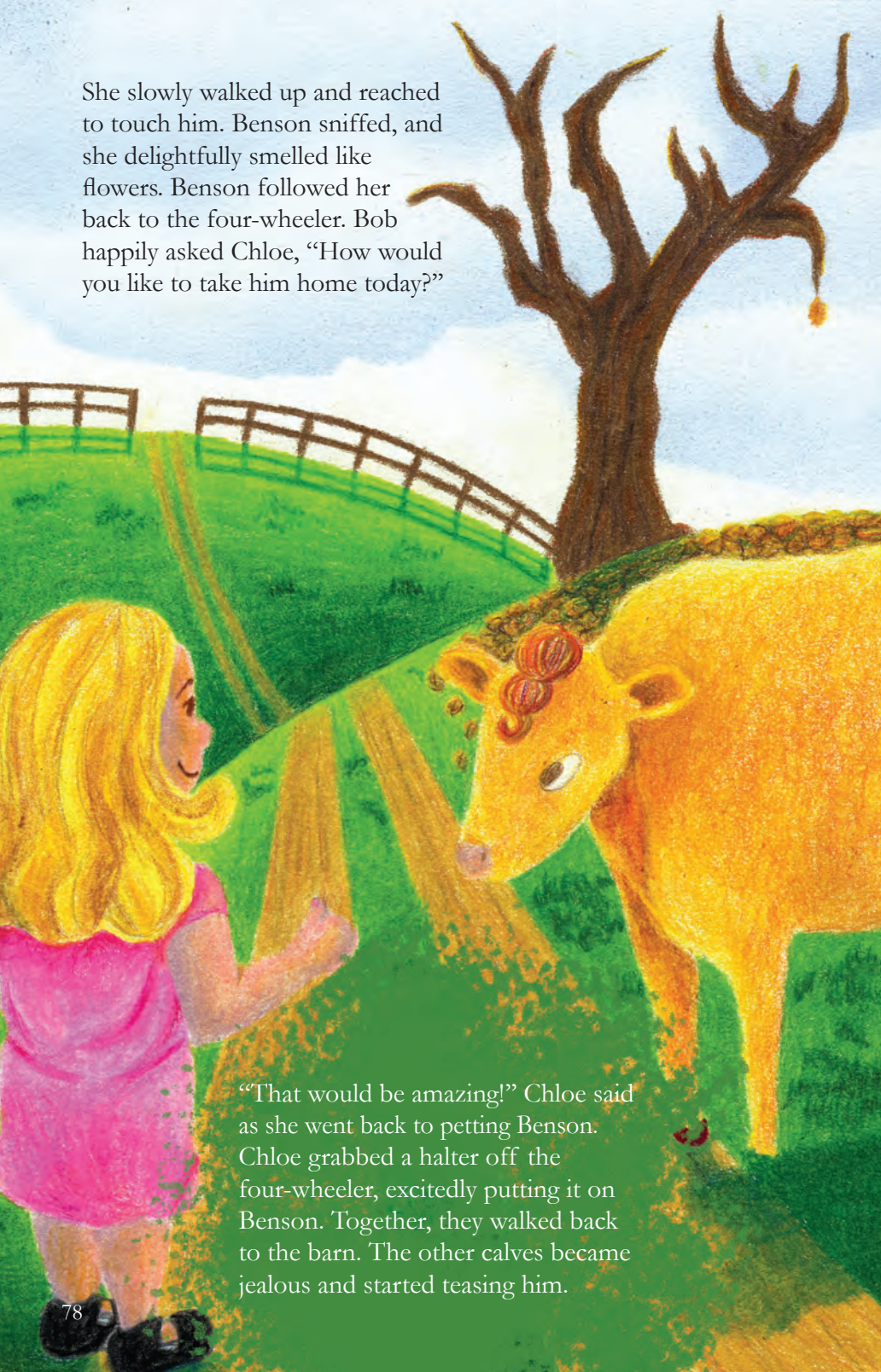
“You shouldn’t wish to be anyone but yourself. Your father is a Hereford, known for beautiful color and muscle. When you grow up, you’ll be bigger and stronger than them,” Mother encouraged.





That spring, all the calves grazed and grew in Bob's meadows. In the fall, Bob brought a little girl named Chloe to the fields. This was the first time the calves had seen another person. She had blonde hair and a pink dress. They drove around looking at all the calves until she asked to stop. She wanted a closer look at Benson!



A colorful illustration of a young girl with long, wavy blonde hair, wearing a bright pink dress and black sandals. She is standing in a green field, reaching out her hand towards a large, yellow cow. The cow has a decorative red and orange floral headband. In the background, there is a wooden fence, a dirt path, and a large, leafless tree with a single orange fruit hanging from one of its branches. The sky is a pale blue with soft white clouds.

She slowly walked up and reached to touch him. Benson sniffed, and she delightfully smelled like flowers. Benson followed her back to the four-wheeler. Bob happily asked Chloe, “How would you like to take him home today?”

“That would be amazing!” Chloe said as she went back to petting Benson. Chloe grabbed a halter off the four-wheeler, excitedly putting it on Benson. Together, they walked back to the barn. The other calves became jealous and started teasing him.



On the way to the barn, Benson asked, "Why would you want me? I am not like everyone else."

"I chose you because you are special," she said joyfully.

"What did you pick me for?" asked Benson curiously.

"I picked you for the county fair. There will be sheep, pigs, turkeys, and cattle all over. The whole town will come to see the animals. The best part is, everyone is able to show their animals, and everyone will see how beautiful you are," Chloe exclaimed.



Every day after their first meeting, Chloe would take him for walks, bathe him, give him grain, and teach him how to be a show steer.



# COUNTY FAIR

Many months later, Chloe and Benson are ready for the fair. They are excited, nervous, and a little scared. Upon arrival, it is busy with lights, noises, people, and animals. Chloe leads an apprehensive Benson into his spot in the show barn; the other steers are big and strong, just like him.





They both woke up early the next day and started to fit Benson, which means styling his hair and body. Chloe bathed him, blew his hair dry, and brushed his legs. It was now their turn in the show ring.

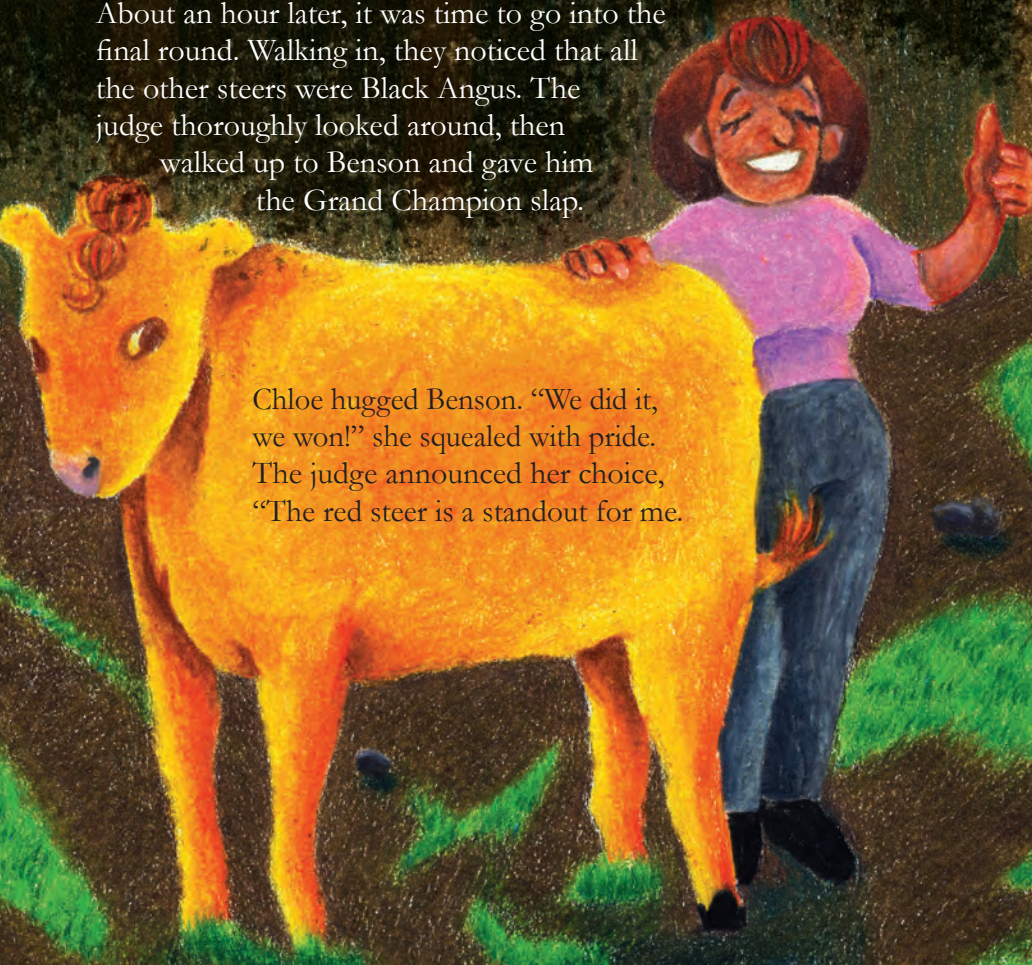




The judge approached them and asked questions while admiring Benson's muscle confirmation. The judge talked to all the competitors and chose Benson the winner of his class. Everyone clapped, and Benson looked at Chloe hopefully and asked, "Did we win?"

"We won our class, but there is still the final round to determine the grand champion," she informed him.

About an hour later, it was time to go into the final round. Walking in, they noticed that all the other steers were Black Angus. The judge thoroughly looked around, then walked up to Benson and gave him the Grand Champion slap.



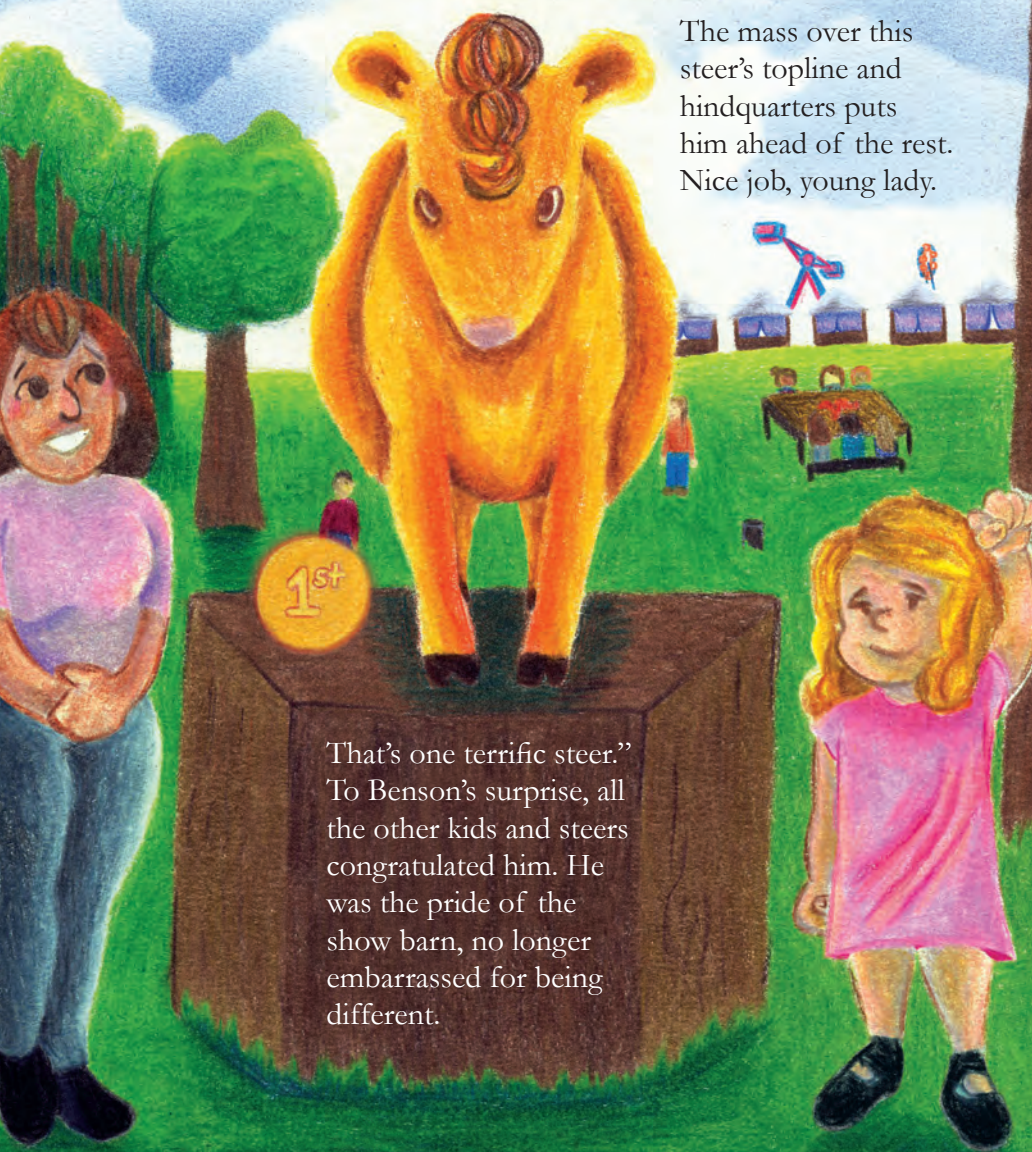
Chloe hugged Benson. "We did it, we won!" she squealed with pride. The judge announced her choice, "The red steer is a standout for me."

He is a little different than the black ones in this group; he travels more freely with his movement and clearly converts feed to pounds well. The Hereford breed naturally marbles fat through its musculature, making it a popular consumer product.



# SHOW BARN WINNER

The mass over this steer's topline and hindquarters puts him ahead of the rest. Nice job, young lady.



That's one terrific steer." To Benson's surprise, all the other kids and steers congratulated him. He was the pride of the show barn, no longer embarrassed for being different.



## ABOUT the AUTHOR



### **Shayna Gomes**

Scott Valley Options

Amy Hurlimann, Teacher

Show steers inspired this story! Shayna noticed that very few red calves are born each year on her family's Siskiyou County ranch, in the northernmost part of California. She hopes readers embrace the message that everyone is different and should be celebrated. Shayna also hopes this tale will spark people's interest in agriculture and the cattle industry. The writing process taught Shayna a lot about grammar and punctuation. She also learned that writing can be fun!



## ABOUT the ILLUSTRATORS



### **Iris Pichardo & Celina Ring**

Sheldon High School

Theresa Nguyen Tran Vo, AP Art Teacher

Before reading this story, neither Iris nor Celina knew a lot about Angus cattle. Through illustrating “The Grand Champion,” these high school seniors learned about agriculture as well as the artistic process that is needed to make a story sing.

After devising a production schedule including when the artists should exchange panels and when they needed to be completed, the art students started creating! Celina drew characters such as cows and humans, and Iris illustrated the backgrounds, such as the grass, paths, and buildings. They learned how to maintain a consistent art style throughout the story for synthesis and even consulted an FFA teacher on campus for advice on the accuracy of their panels.

Iris and Celine think this story is very inspirational and sweet—a good message. They especially enjoyed interpreting the cow’s fur color artistically, a fun detail to portray. They hope the colored pencils and airbrush brought this vibrant story to life!