THE LITTLE GIRL WITH THE BIG VOICE

by Wé McDonald

Illustrated by
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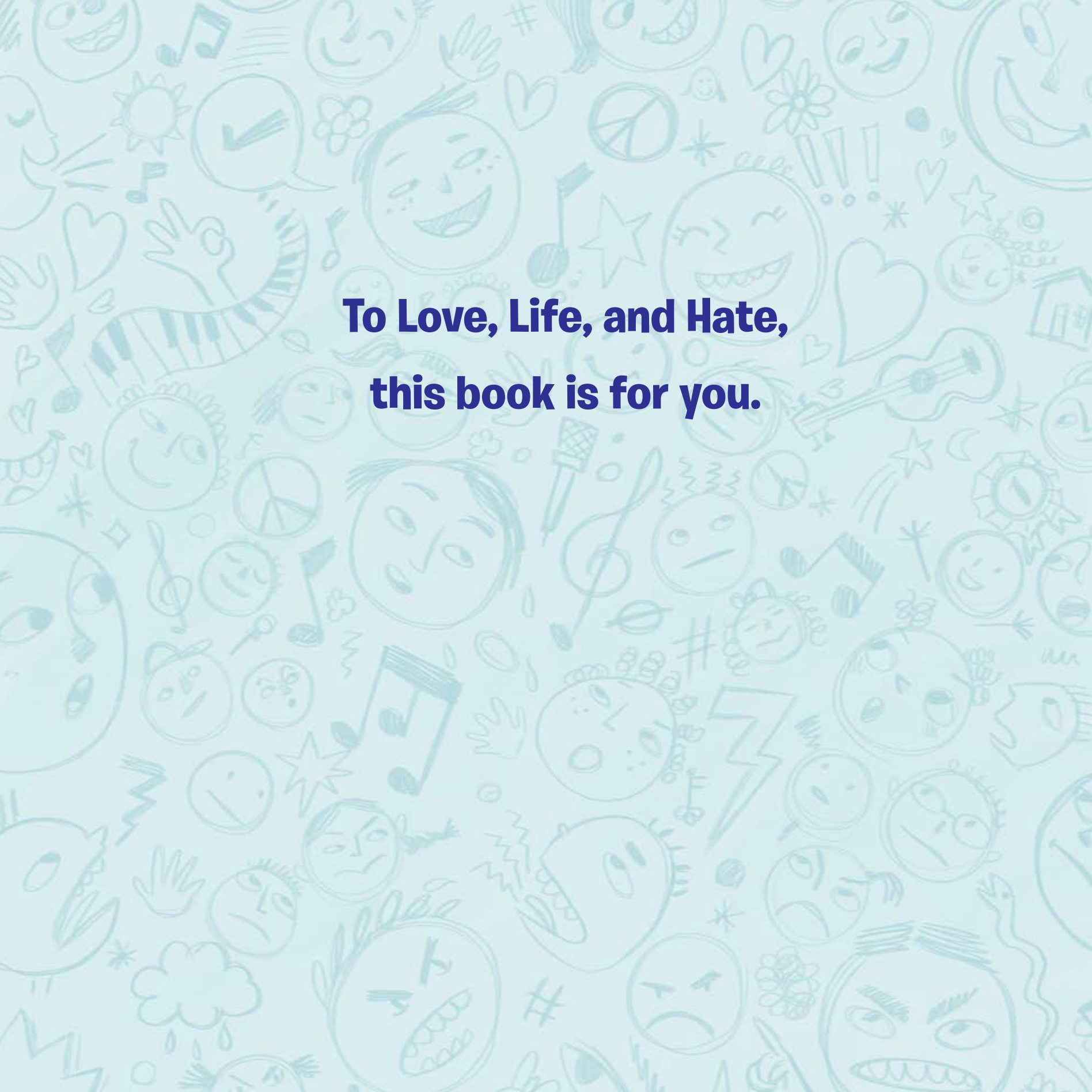
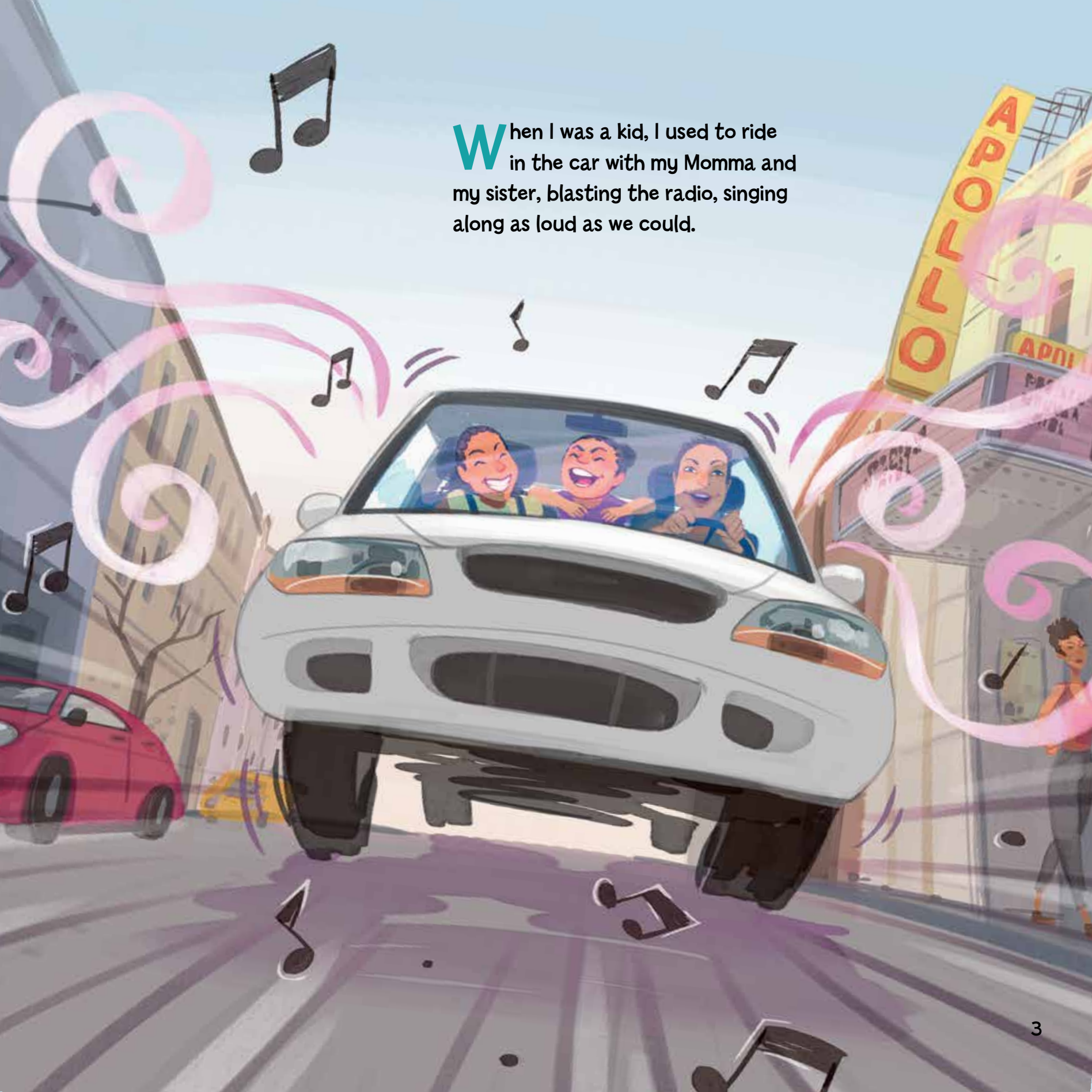

To Love, Life, and Hate,
this book is for you.



When I was a kid, I used to ride in the car with my Momma and my sister, blasting the radio, singing along as loud as we could.

In our house, music was everywhere. Momma was a singer, and Daddy played the drums.

Music made me come alive!

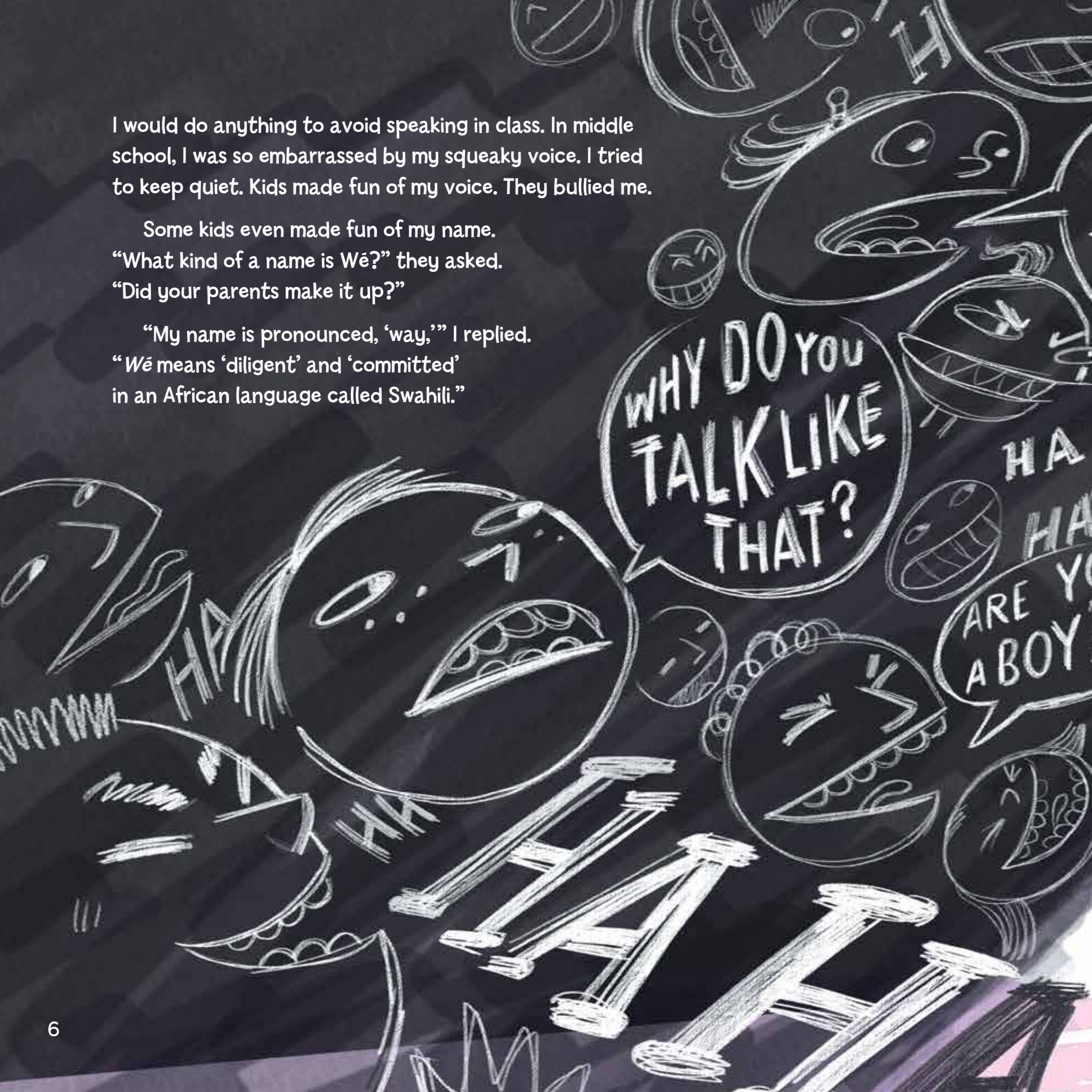
I dreamed of being a singer just like Momma. When she sang, she sounded like a beautiful bluebird—soft but strong.

But when I opened my mouth to speak, a little girl's voice came out. I sounded like a tiny, tiny squeaky mouse.

I would do anything to avoid speaking in class. In middle school, I was so embarrassed by my squeaky voice. I tried to keep quiet. Kids made fun of my voice. They bullied me.

Some kids even made fun of my name. "What kind of a name is Wé?" they asked. "Did your parents make it up?"

"My name is pronounced, 'way,'" I replied. "*Wé* means 'diligent' and 'committed' in an African language called Swahili."



Sometimes, I ignored the bullies. Other times, I just walked away.

Bullying comes in many forms. It's not always pushing and hitting someone. Words can really hurt you, too.

My name gave me the strength and confidence to survive each day. I was committed to not letting people's words hurt me. I wanted to be strong and not give in to the bullies. Still, I was so sad.