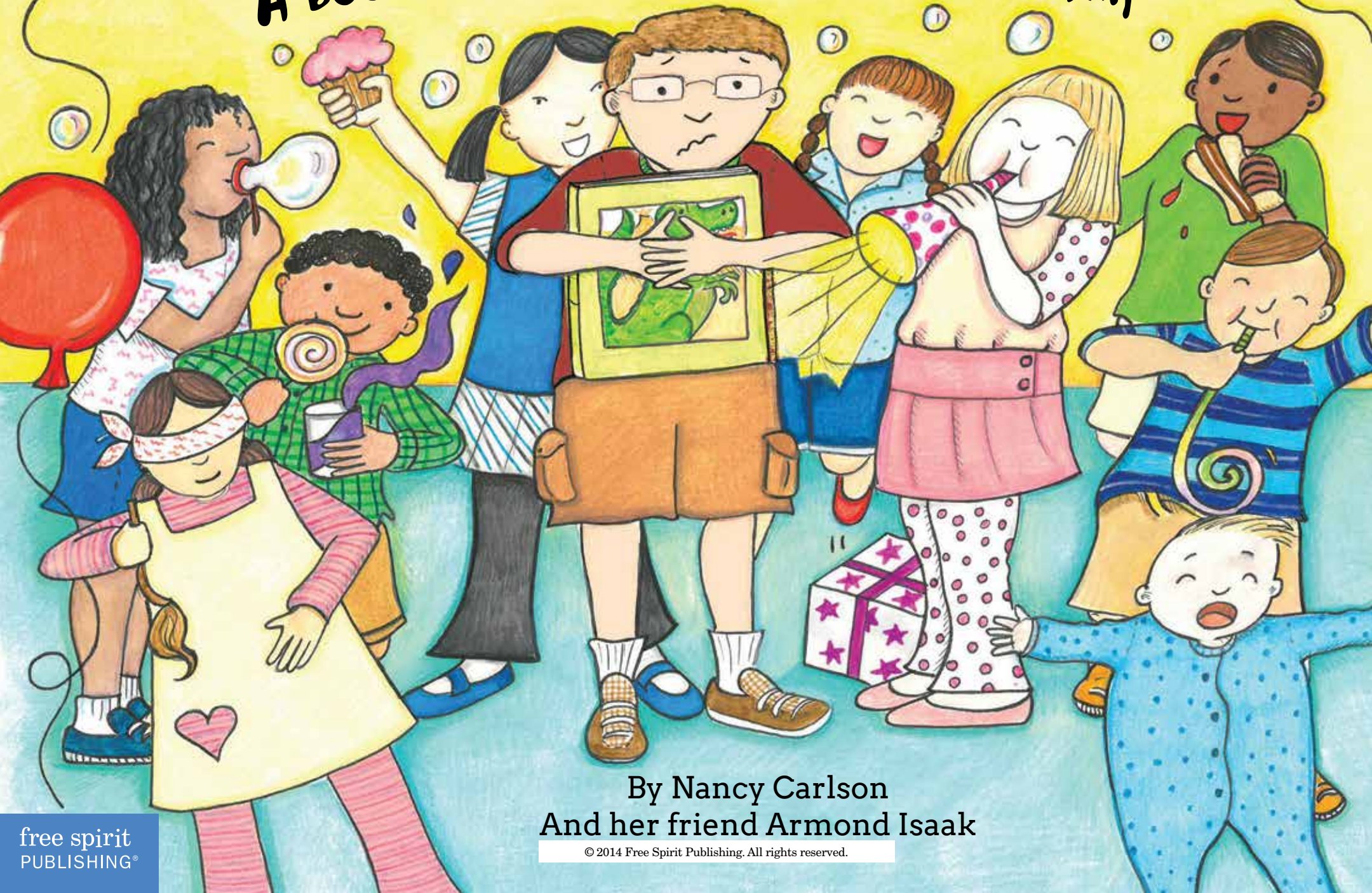


Armond Goes to a Party

A book about Asperger's and friendship



By Nancy Carlson
And her friend Armond Isaak

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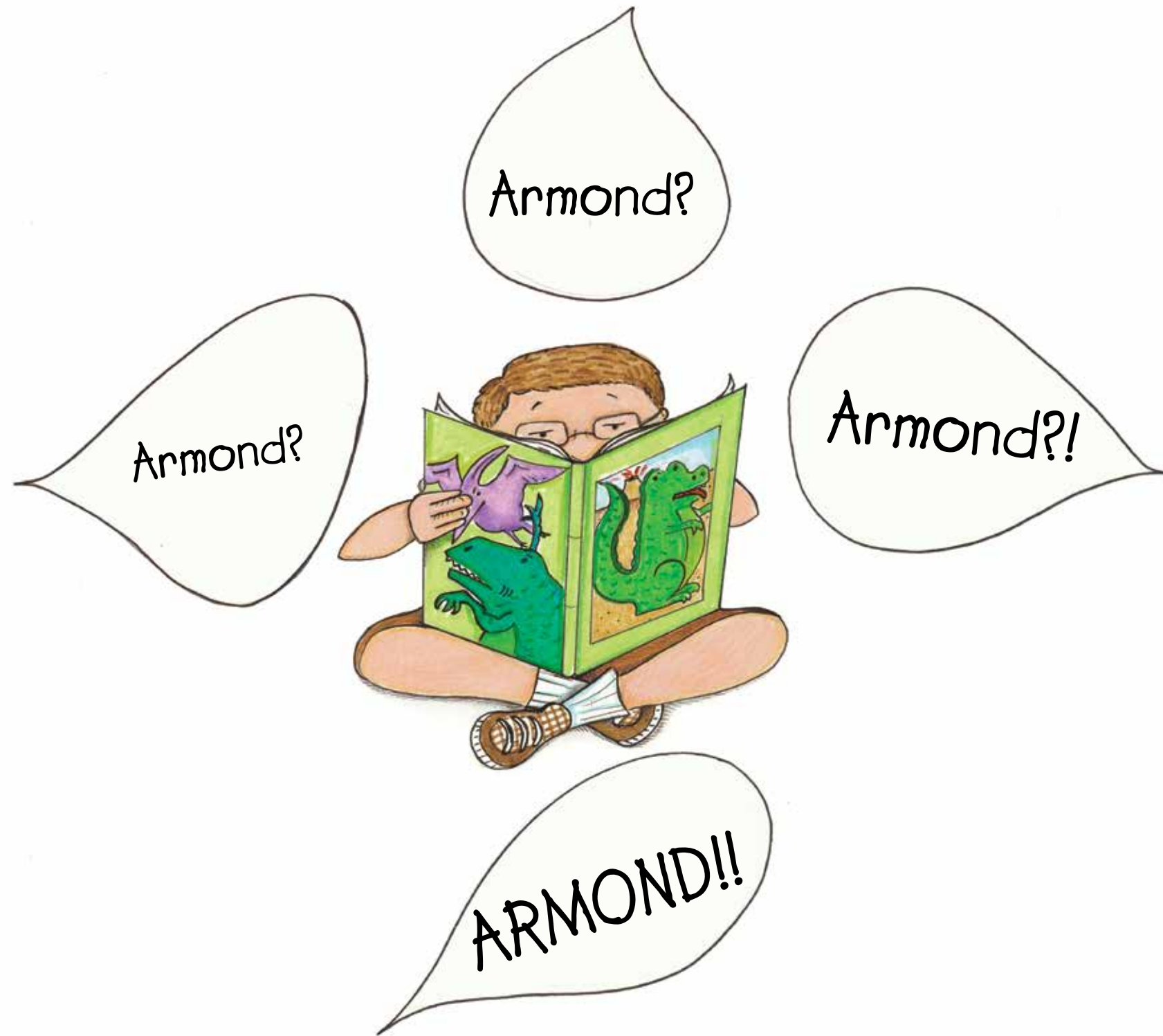
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To Armond—
So glad you took my class at the Loft!





"It's time for Felicia's party!"
Armond's mom said.



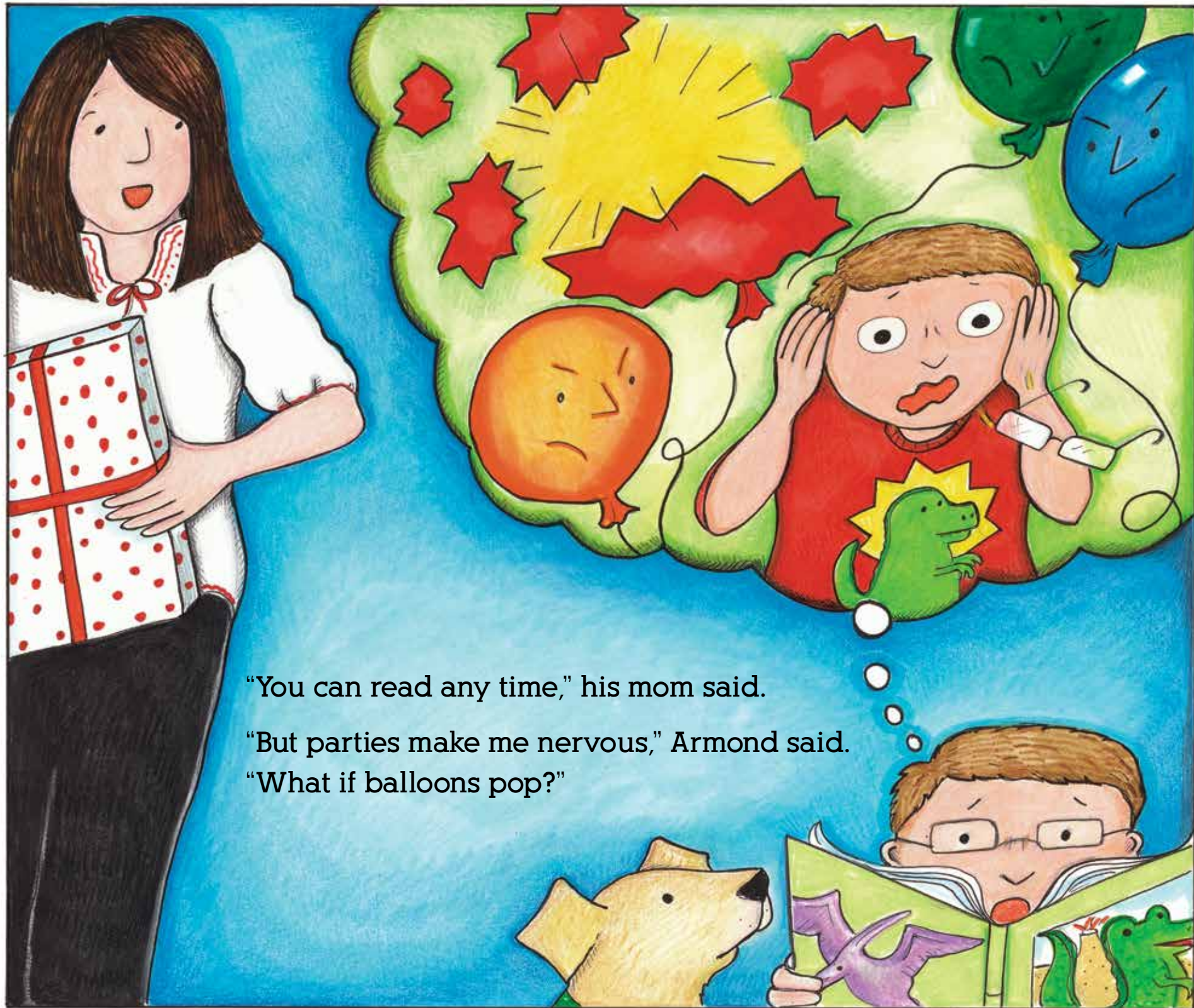
"Armond, are you listening to me?"



"It's time for the party.
Are you ready to go?"



"I can't go to a party!" Armond said.
"I'm reading."



"You can read any time," his mom said.

"But parties make me nervous," Armond said.

"What if balloons pop?"



"And parties are disorganized.
I don't like when things are disorganized."

A Note to Grown-Ups About Asperger's Syndrome and Friendship

Armond Isaak and Nancy Carlson teamed up to write this book so more kids and grown-ups can learn about autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and Asperger's syndrome. They want to help kids with autism or Asperger's make friends.

“Being at school can be hard,” Armond says. “But not because of the schoolwork. It is hard to find friends. Sometimes I feel like no one likes me. Most of the time, I don't fit in with the other kids my age, and this makes me sad. I act younger compared to other kids my age.”

Kids with autism or Asperger's often struggle to make friends. Their behavior seems out of sync with that of other kids their age, and they have difficulty reading social cues and understanding others' feelings.

You can help kids make friends and learn social skills by starting a friendship group. Invite kids with and without autism and do social skills activities such as figuring out and discussing facial expressions, telling social stories, and role-playing social situations. Keep it lighthearted by including other games.

Encourage empathy by teaching all kids about the characteristics of autism and Asperger's.

“Big parties make me feel left out,” Armond says. “They are loud and noisy with kids running everywhere. I try to talk to kids but no one seems to hear me. Even with my family, I don't like big parties or lots of people around me. When we go to my Grandma and Grandpa's house, I always go downstairs to be alone. I am happy being away from all the noise.”

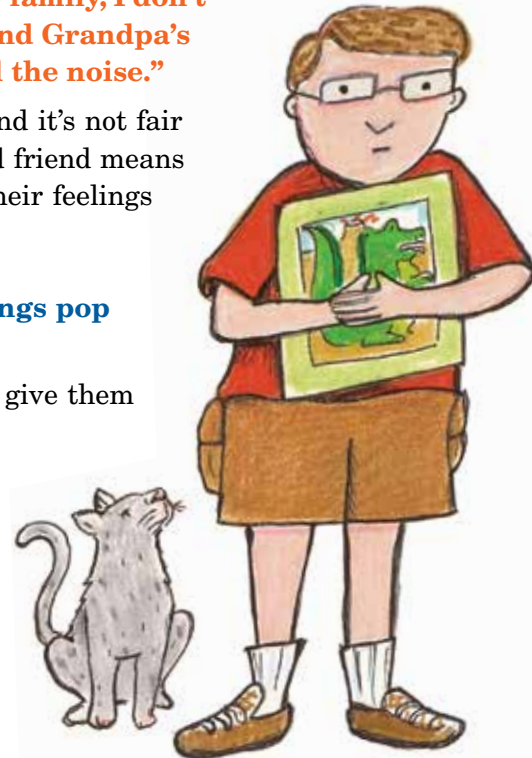
Many kids with autism or Asperger's are uncomfortable in crowds and at parties, and it's not fair to force them to do something that's painful for them. However, sometimes being a good friend means socializing. You can help encourage kids to spend time with friends by acknowledging their feelings and providing breaks, like Felicia and her mom did in the story.

“I get upset when things don't happen as I am expecting,” Armond says. “When things pop out of order, it is hard and frustrating for me.”

Kids with autism or Asperger's generally thrive on routine. If you need to change a routine, give them ample notice.

“Lots of things come easy for me,” says Armond, who has played lead roles in plays. “I can focus really easily, which is good when I want to memorize my lines. I love being onstage. Schoolwork also comes easily for me. I love to learn.”

Many kids with autism or Asperger's are very smart. Acknowledge their strengths, whatever they are, and encourage them to develop their talents. Provide them opportunities to do the things they like to do.



About the Authors



Nancy Carlson is an accomplished children's book author and illustrator who has published more than 60 books. A lifelong Minnesotan, Nancy graduated from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design with a major in printmaking. She believes that life should be fun for everyone, but especially for children. This optimistic message permeates her picture books and provides a positive counterpoint to much of what children are influenced by in today's society. Her characters convey positive messages without being “preachy.” They gently remind children what is right.

Nancy is also a guest author and illustrator at over 150 school classrooms each year and has touched the lives of thousands of children across the country. She lives in Minneapolis. Contact Nancy at www.nancycarlson.com.



Armond Isaak taught himself to read when he was three years old and hasn't stopped since. Besides books, his loves include Legos, playing the trumpet, and acting, and he is a proud Boy Scout. Now in middle school, Armond has been learning to embrace his uniqueness instead of fight it, and he has a small circle of friends with similar interests. He reached out to Nancy to do this book because he wants to help every young boy or girl with Asperger's realize they are not alone in a world where they often feel lonely and out of place.

Armond lives with his mom, dad, sisters Emma and Mary, cat Tigger, and dog Piper in New Hope, Minnesota.