

Yesterday, Trey Thompson and I were making spitballs when "Little Miss Perfect Shaina" looked at us, cocked her head, and shook it. "That Shaina gets on my ever-loving nerves," I said. Then we started to sing,

"Shaina Baina BO Baina
Me My Mo Maina."

Suddenly, Mrs. Julian stopped in mid-sentence and gave us **The Eye**. I knew we were in for it then!

"I need to speak with the two of you in the hall please," Mrs. Julian said. I felt everyone staring at me as I walked toward the door.



When Mrs. Julian came out of the room, she said, "Grass withers and flowers fade every time a bad choice is made." Trey scrunched his eyebrows and asked, "What in the world is that supposed to mean?"





“It’s like this,” she said. “Your brain is like a sponge. It has **many flower seeds just waiting to grow**. Each time you are doing your best, you are watering your seeds.



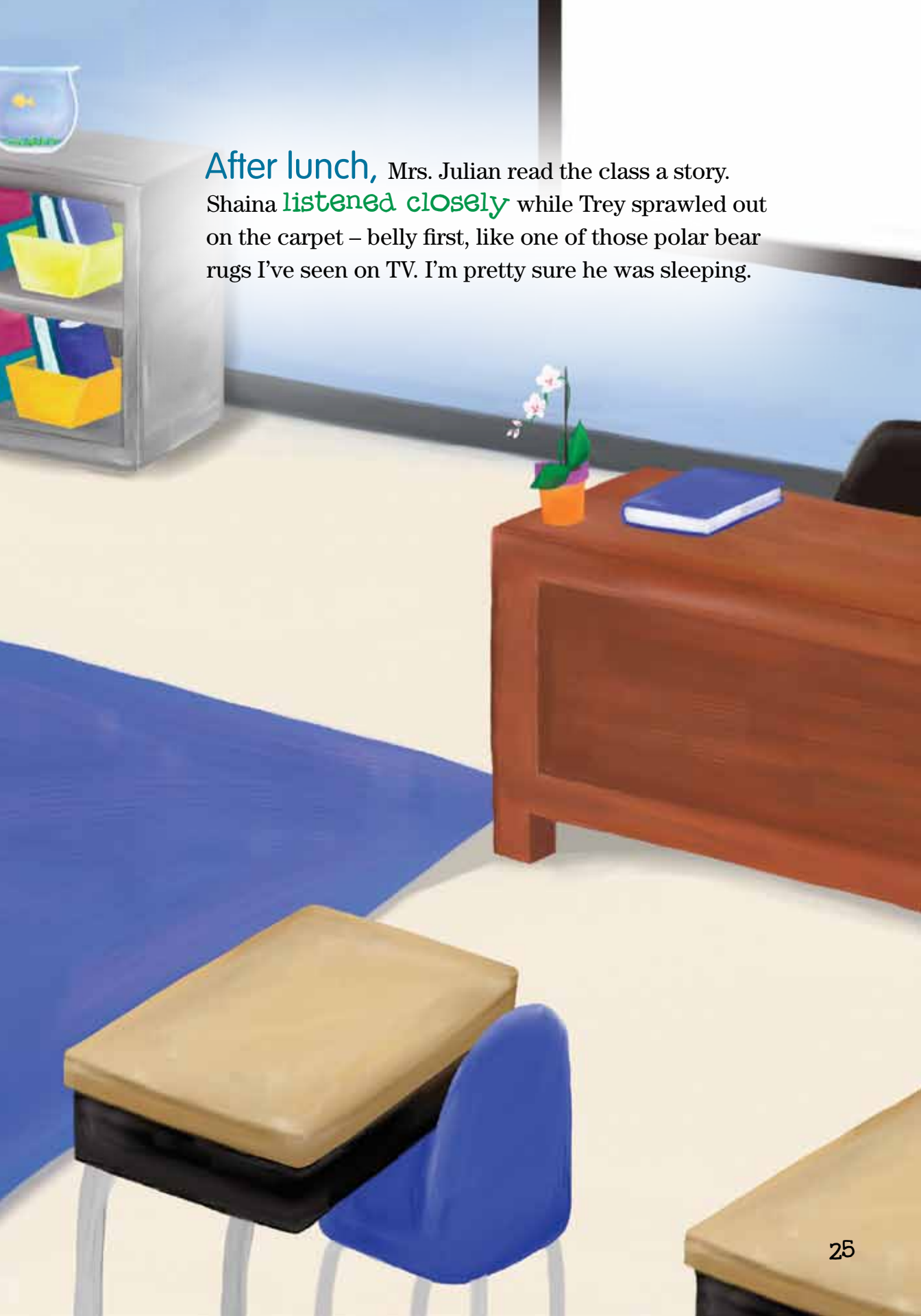
Each time you make a bad choice, your flowers begin to fade. It’s time you start to think about your choices and how they may be hurting you.”



I heard what Mrs. Julian said loud and clear. The problem was, **I wanted to make good choices.** I really did. But I wasn't sure I knew **hOw.** When she let us back in the class, I returned to my spot on the floor. Finally, the bell rang.

I was not sure if Mrs. Julian was telling the truth or not, but I started to think about what would happen if she was right. Sometimes I guess **I just don't stop and think.** At least that's what my mom told me.



A classroom scene featuring a wooden desk with a blue book and a small potted plant. A blue chair with a tan seat is in the foreground. In the background, there is a grey bookshelf with yellow and blue bins, and a window with a blue sky view.

After lunch, Mrs. Julian read the class a story. Shaina **listened closely** while Trey sprawled out on the carpet – belly first, like one of those polar bear rugs I’ve seen on TV. I’m pretty sure he was sleeping.

Mrs. Julian finished the story and asked the class to write a summary. Trey used his eraser caps to build an imaginary army. He asked me to play, but I ignored him and began writing. Something different was happening right away.

I felt little flowers
popping up
on my sponge.



It wasn't long until I had finished and was able to go to recess. They had to stay inside and finish his work.



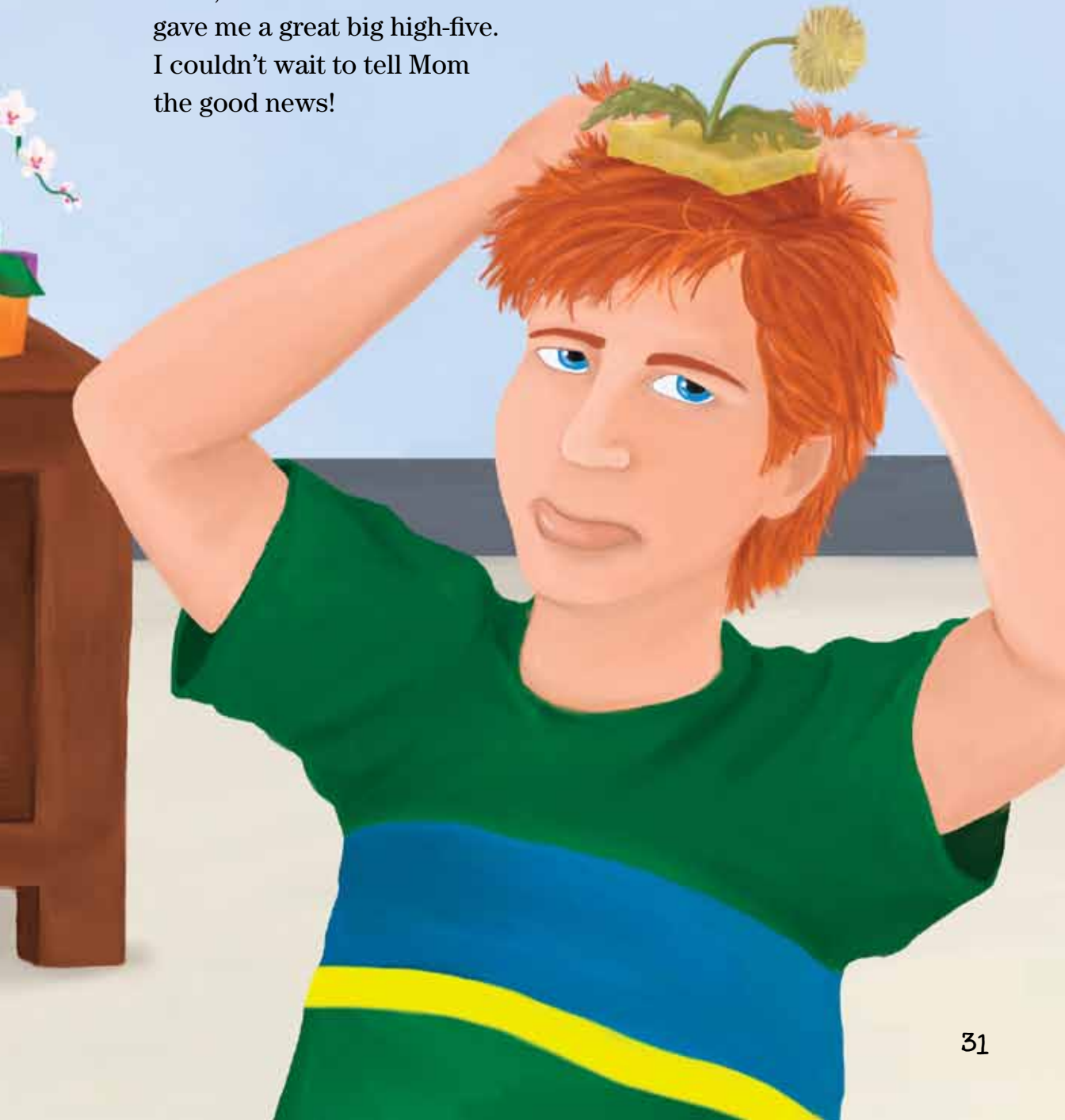
At last, it was the end of the day.

While everyone was lining up, Mrs. Julian called me over to her desk. "Maci, you have been a great gardener today," she said.

"I love the way you stayed focused on your work and didn't distract others. You're one day closer to a blossoming garden."

Then, she raised her hand in the air and gave me a great big high-five.

I couldn't wait to tell Mom the good news!





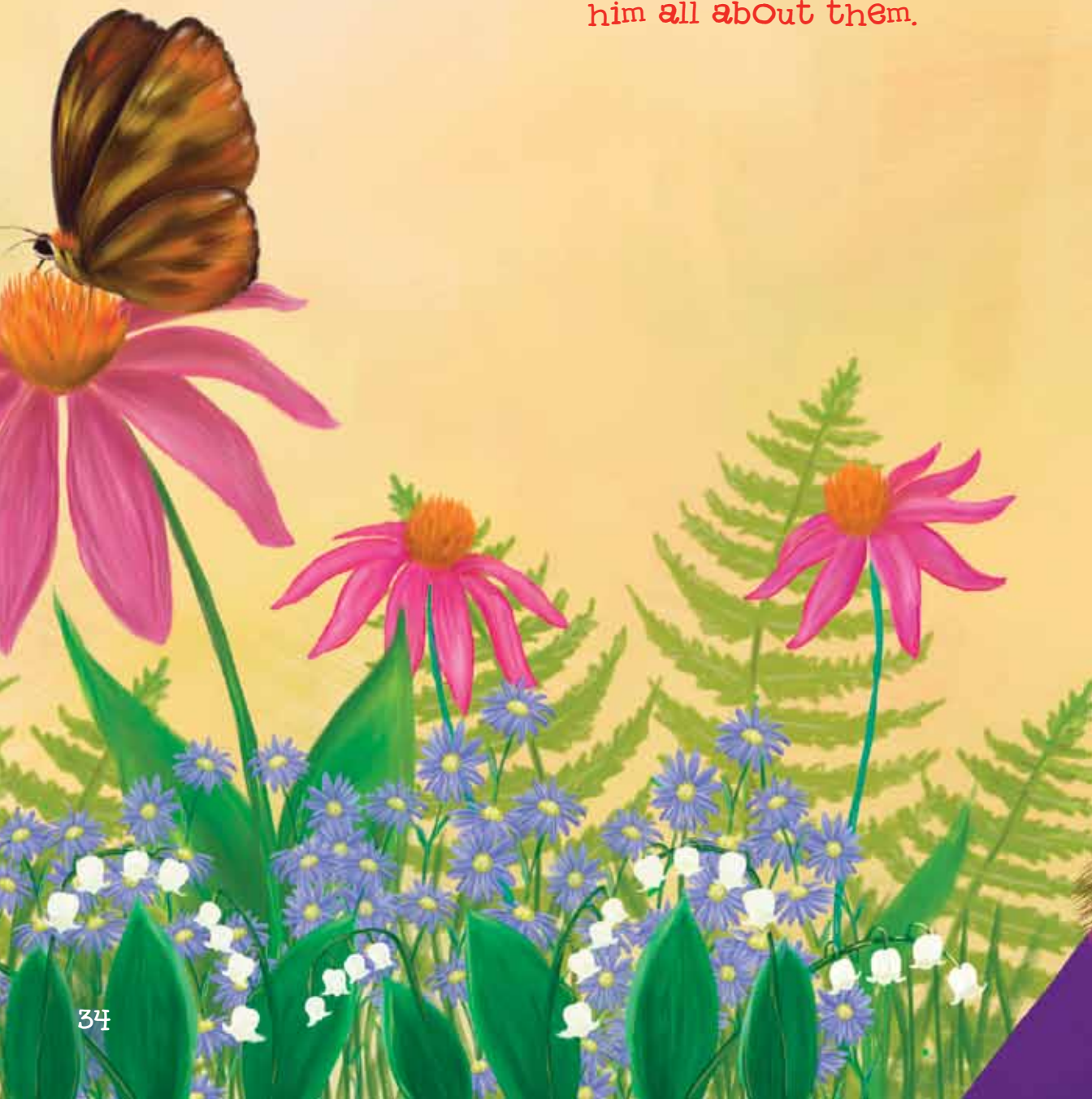
I looked over at my new friend Shaina; her big spongy garden hat with all the flowers had disappeared.

I don't know what happened that day, but I was really glad it did. My brain helped me see choices as they happened in a way I will never forget!

I even felt a little sorry for Trey.
He couldn't see how his choices were hurting him.
Luckily for him,

**I know about
the secret tips.**

Tomorrow I plan to tell
him all about them.



Gardening 101

Maci's Tips

Give your full attention to the task you are doing.

Refocus yourself if distractions are brewing.

Observe "gardeners" whose good choices help their gardens grow.

Work together to create your best flower show.

