

LULU

and the

HUNGER MONSTER™

Erik Talkin

illustrated by
Sheryl Murray



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free spirit
PUBLISHING®



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For Mari (without whom . . .);
Ella, Felix, Lili, Hannah, Max, & Mia;
and a hunger-free future that starts today.
—E.T.

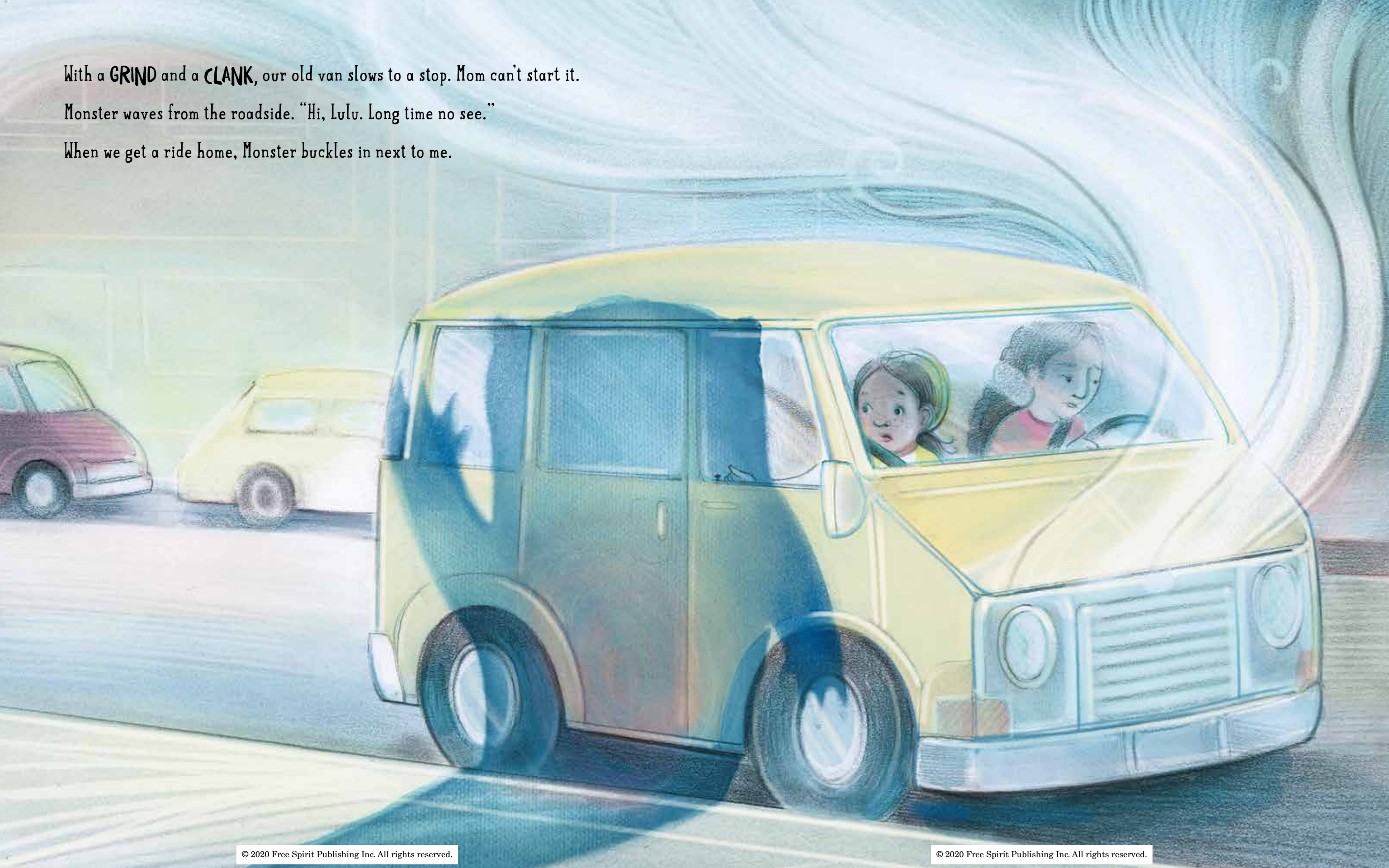
For Dad:
Thank you for a lifetime of love and support.
Always remember—the Driver is the Chief Guru.
—S.M.



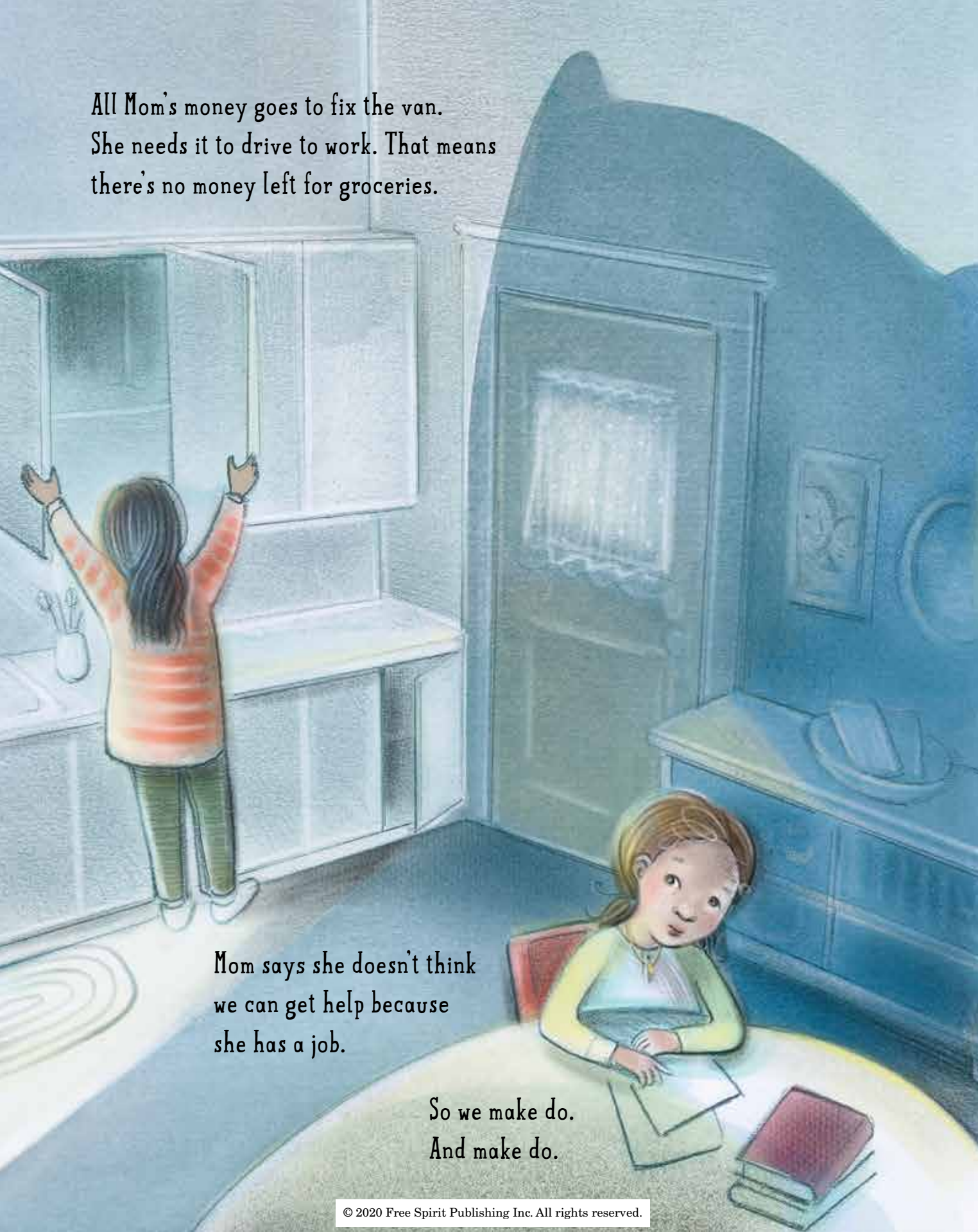
With a **GRIND** and a **CLANK**, our old van slows to a stop. Mom can't start it.

Monster waves from the roadside. "Hi, Lulu. Long time no see."

When we get a ride home, Monster buckles in next to me.



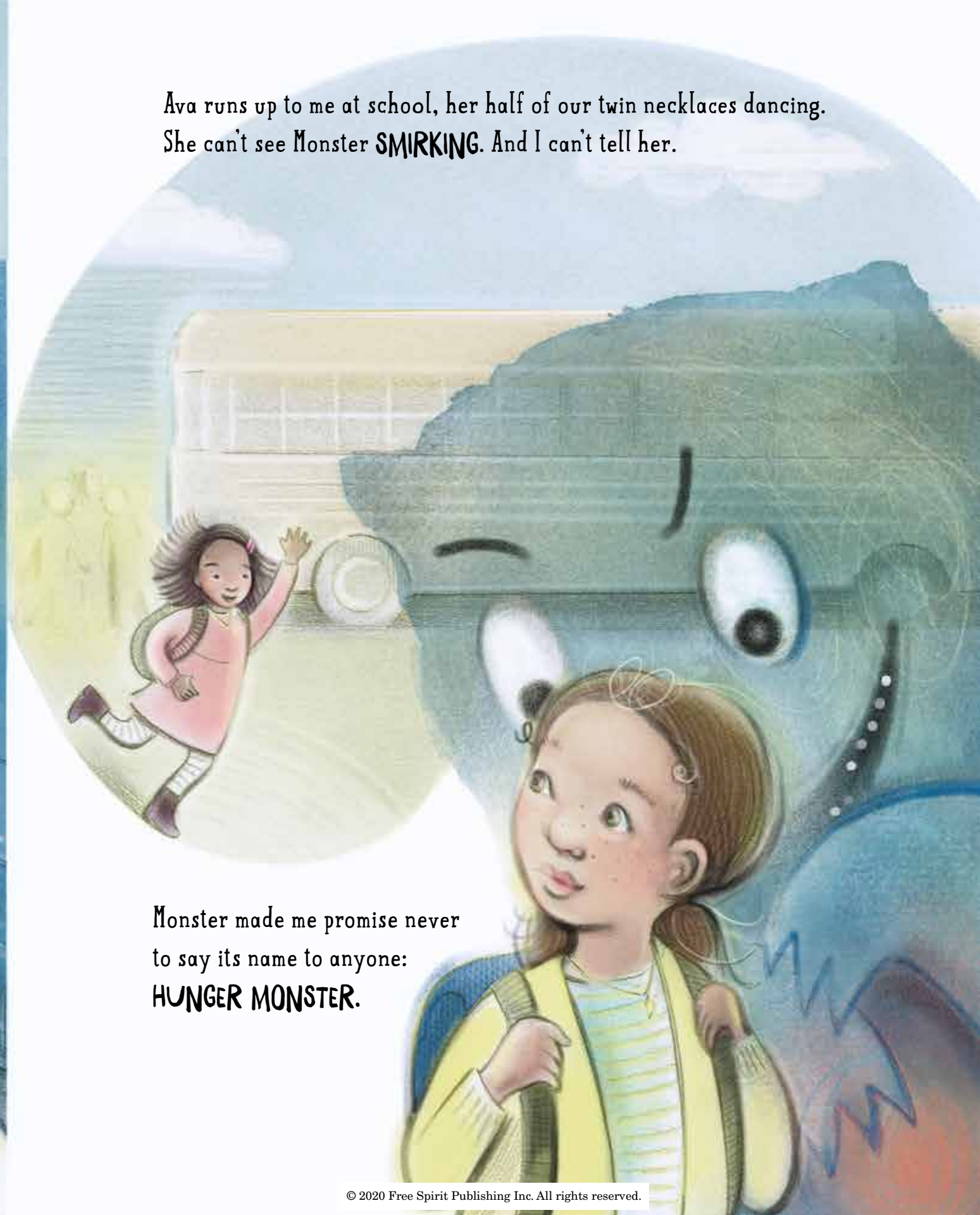
All Mom's money goes to fix the van.
She needs it to drive to work. That means
there's no money left for groceries.



Mom says she doesn't think
we can get help because
she has a job.

So we make do.
And make do.

Ava runs up to me at school, her half of our twin necklaces dancing.
She can't see Monster **SMIRKING**. And I can't tell her.

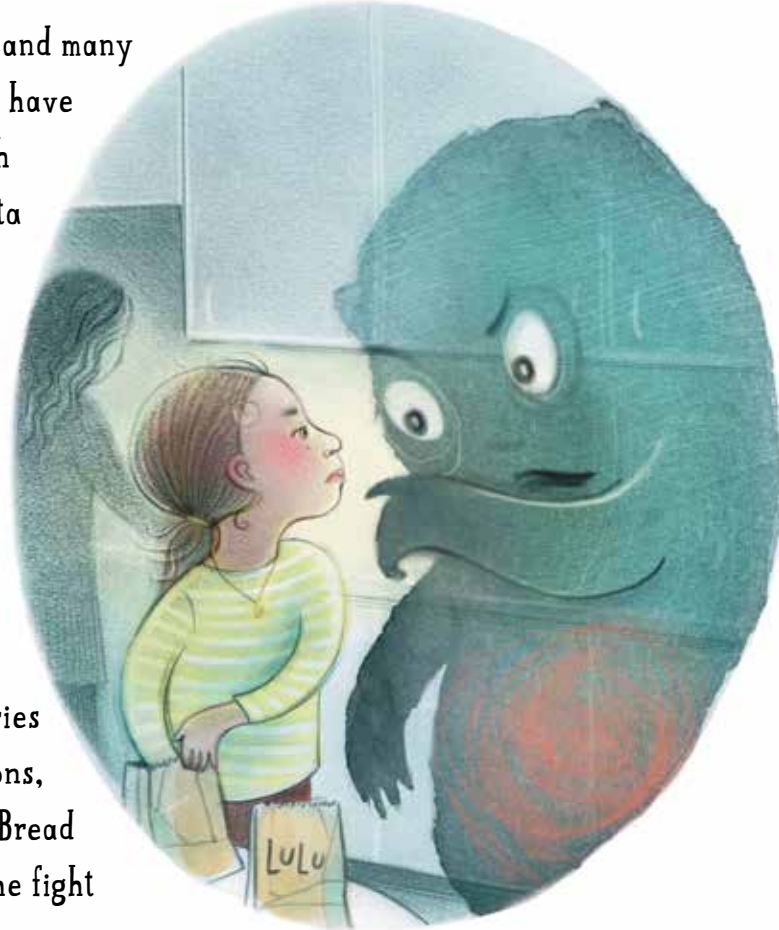


Monster made me promise never
to say its name to anyone:
HUNGER MONSTER.

You Can Stand Up to the Hunger Monster

Lulu's story is that of many kids and many families. In my own community, I have helped families like hers through my work at the Foodbank of Santa Barbara County. A food bank is a big warehouse that stores food and provides it free of cost to people who are hungry. The organization Feeding America has food banks all over the country that store and supply fresh and healthy food for tens of thousands of local food pantries and programs. Other organizations, such as Share Our Strength and Bread for the World, are also part of the fight against the Hunger Monster.

According to Feeding America, one in seven children in the United States lives with hunger. After families pay bills or deal with emergencies—like Lulu's broken-down van—they don't always have enough money left for healthy food. People can feel too awkward, embarrassed, or ashamed to ask for help. And so the Hunger Monster can stay invisible.



Your family might face hunger sometimes. You probably go to school with kids who don't always have enough to eat at home—even if you don't know it. And in your community, there are always people who need help.

What can you do to help? Whether it's you, someone you know, or a stranger facing hunger, you *can* stand up to the Hunger Monster—and you don't have to do it alone.



- The first thing to do is remember that this is a tough issue, and that you can help by simply being sensitive and caring toward people who you think might need more food. For example, rather than waiting for someone to ask for help, you could offer to share food with someone who might not have enough so they don't feel awkward about accepting it.
- You could help plan, organize, or run a food drive at your school to collect canned goods and other food.
- You and a friend or family member could volunteer at a food pantry.
- You could talk to your teacher about starting a school garden.

