



The Stuttering Little Ballet Boy

Foreword

by

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Ralph Waldo Emerson famously said, “What lies behind us, and what lies before us are tiny matters, compared to what lies within us.” This quote in particular reminds me of a young man named Sohel who stutters and the qualities that he possesses. In “The Stuttering Little Ballet Boy” you will read the story about a young man who finds that there are qualities within him that are bigger and greater and even stronger than the stuttering that he was born with. I have known Sohel for over eight years since he was five years old, first as his speech therapist, then as his friend and mentor. Throughout his life, Sohel has always had dreams to shine, to stand out, and to share his talent. What he has ultimately done with this book, through the sharing of his experiences, is to become an ambassador for children who want to share their uniqueness. This author, who once struggled to be understood and have his “voice” heard, has become a strong “voice” for children who stutter.

Written by Sohel Bagai
Illustrated by Mark Cedillo
Edited by Ryan Keiser

Once there was a little boy who stuttered.
This is his heartwarming story and how he was shunned
by the other kids because of his disability. He discovers
ballet and finds himself enthralled with it. With his new
dance moves comes a new found confidence that changes
his life and speech.



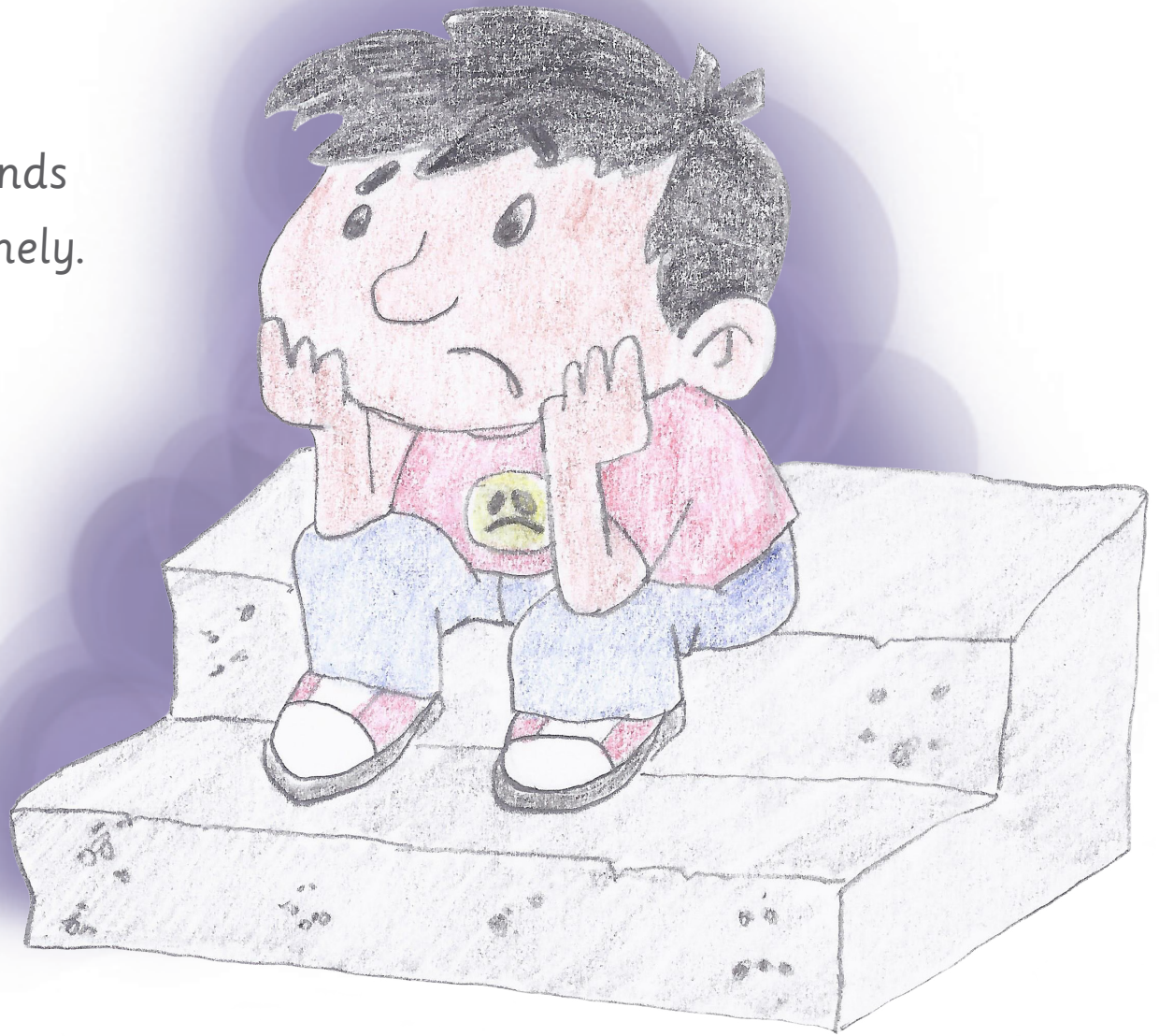
Once there was a little boy
who stuttered.

M-m-y

Nobody understood him,
though he kept on trying.



He had no friends
and he was lonely.





He would be under the table and he would make up games in his head and play all day.



Everyone thought he was weird, but the little boy knew he wasn't.
He tried to be happy, but secretly he was unhappy.



Then one day, somebody dropped a flyer and forgot about it.

The little boy under the table
picked it up and started playing with it.





He saw a picture of a dancer.

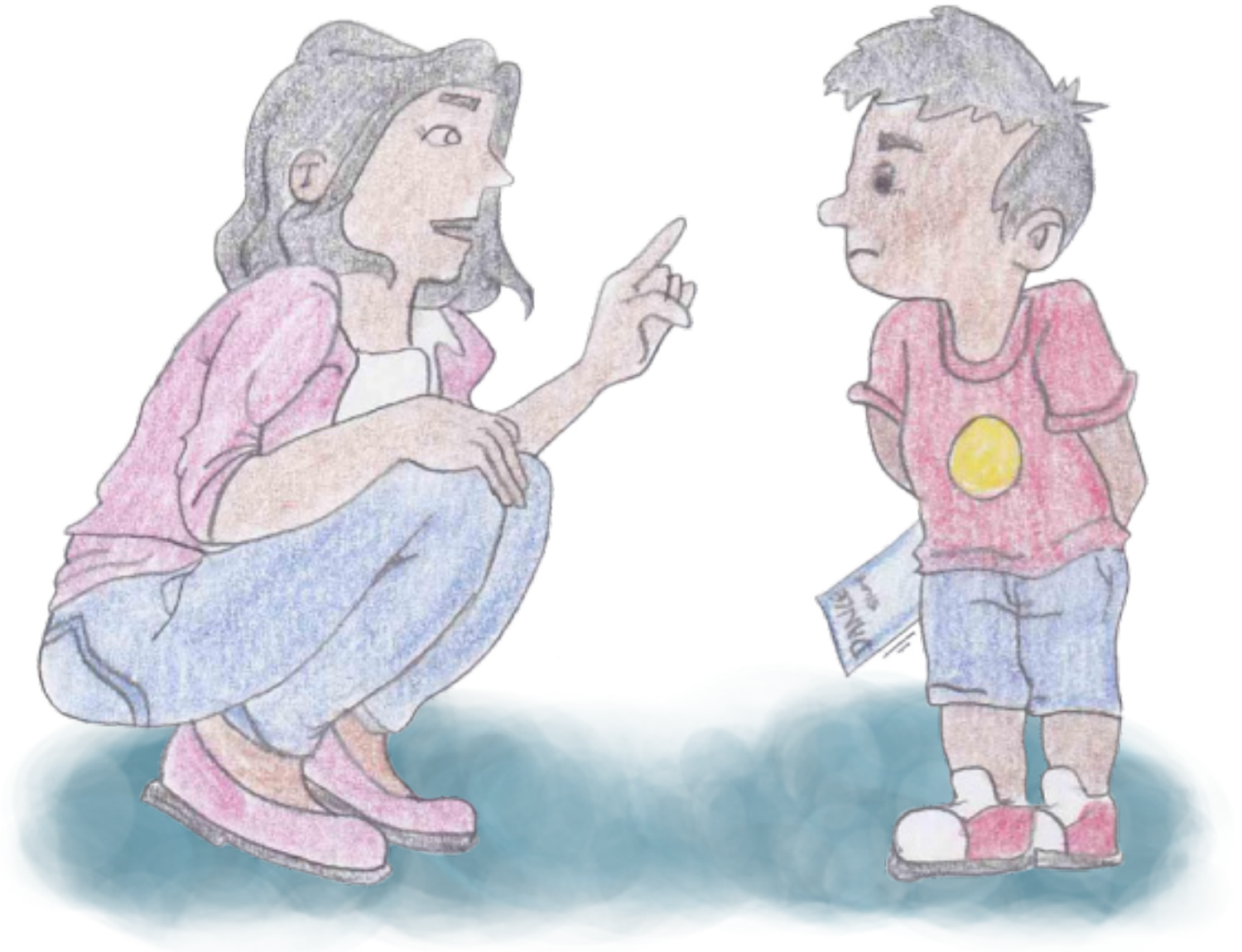
He could not stop thinking about it.

He took it home and asked his mother what it was.



She told him it looked like a girls' dance class.

"C-c-can I join?" asked the boy.



“But boys don’t dance,” said his mom. “Why?” asked the little boy.
“Because that is something girls do,” mom said.

His mom encouraged him to play soccer,
but he did not want to.

PLAY SOCCER!!!



I WANT
TO DANCE..

He could not understand why boys don't dance.



PLEASE!!!
PLEASE!!!

He begged and pleaded and cried.
Mom could not get his mind off it.

Mom was afraid he would be bullied even more.
Mom was afraid other moms would not understand.
Mom was afraid it would make him less of a boy.





He begged and pleaded and cried.
He wanted to dance so bad.

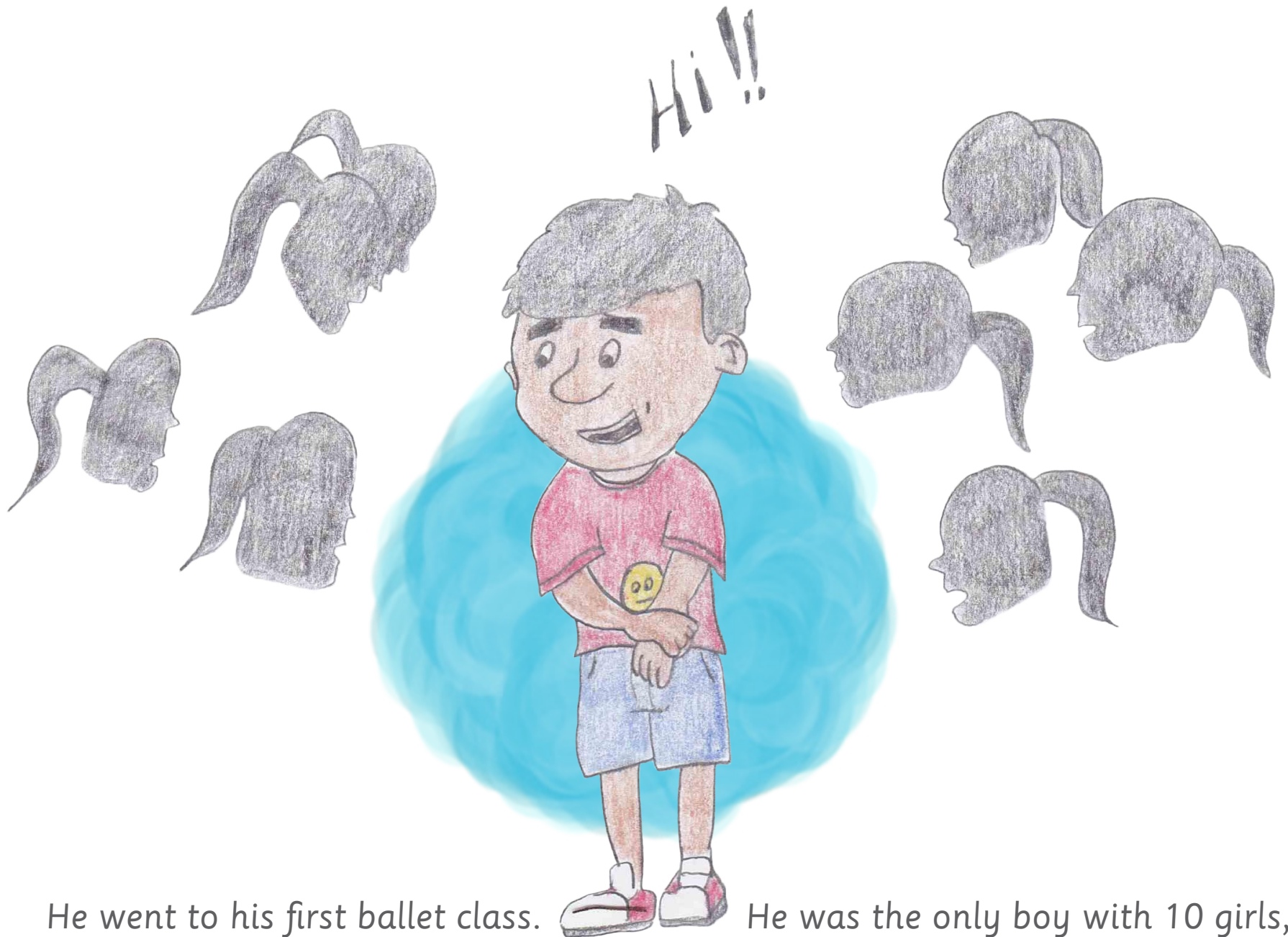
He made up moves in his head
and pranced around the house.



Finally his mom gave in
and let him try.

The little boy was happy
and he danced with joy.





He went to his first ballet class. He was the only boy with 10 girls,
but he did not care.

YAY!!



YAY!!

He danced and danced and could not stop.
He could turn the fastest in class and jump
higher than all.



The teacher said he could be “Fritz”
in the Nutcracker show.

Fritz!!

The little boy had never been
happier.

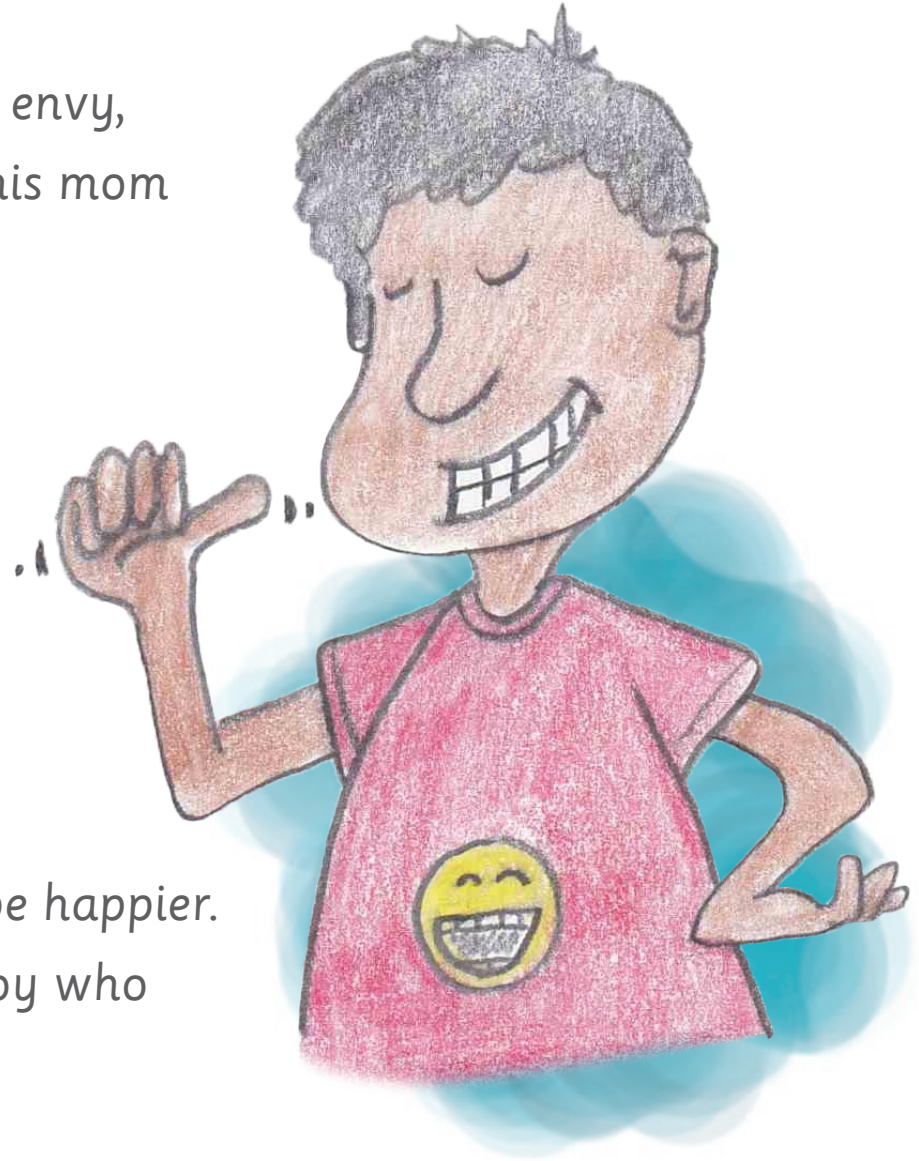
His picture was on the flyers and
magazines.

He was “Fritz” in the most famous
ballet production.

He was performing in the largest theater.
His classmates were buying tickets to watch him perform.



He secretly enjoyed their envy,
but best of all, he loved his mom
looking on with pride.

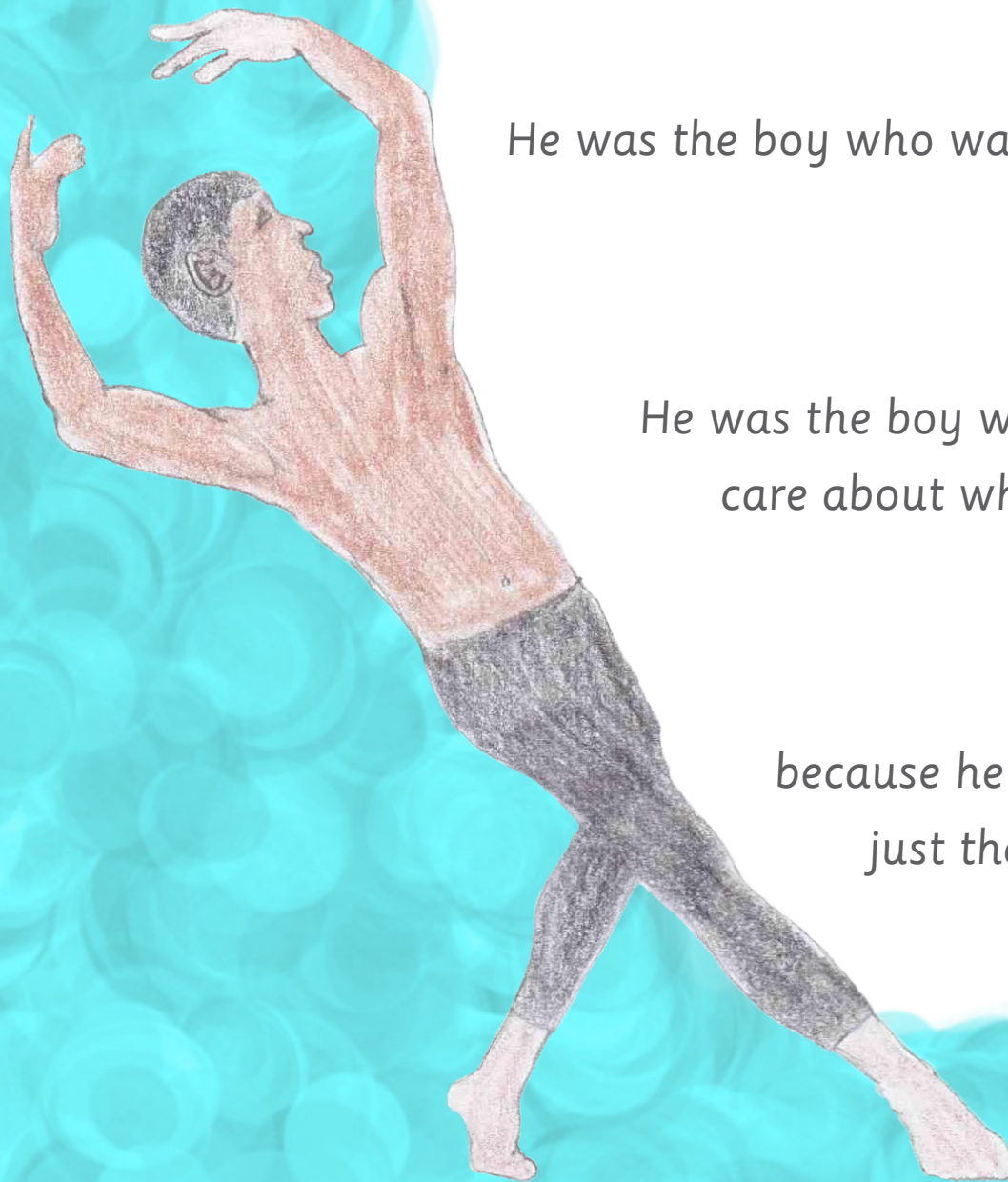


The little boy could not be happier.
He was no longer “the boy who
stuttered.”

He was the boy who could dance.
He was the boy who could fly higher than high .



He was the boy who did what his heart desired.



He was the boy who was happy.

He was the boy who did not
care about what others said,

because he knew he was perfect
just the way he was.



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