

CHAPTER 1



Happy Holidays

“Have a great holiday, everyone!” said our teacher, Mrs. Wushy, as we ran out the door.

I raced out of school, jumped on the bus, and plopped down in my seat. My best friend Robbie sat down next to me.

“This is going to be the best Christmas ever!” I said to Robbie.

“Why?” Max butted in. “Are you going to dance in *The Nutcracker* ballet?” Then Max stood up and announced to the whole bus,

“Guess what, everybody? Freddy is going to wear a tutu and dance in *The Nutcracker!*”

The whole bus started laughing, and my face got hot. I sank down in my seat.

“Really?” said Chloe. “I’m going to wear a tutu and dance in *The Nutcracker*. What color is your tutu, Freddy?”

“Yeah, what color is your tutu, Freddy?” Max said, imitating Chloe.

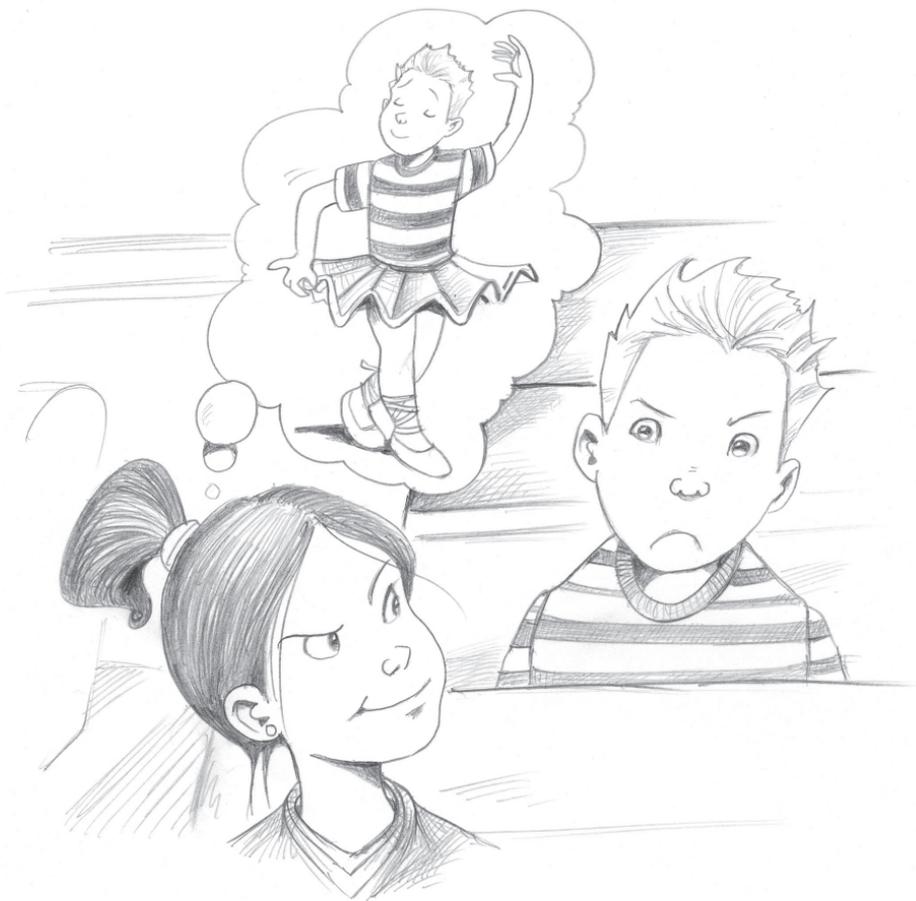
I sank lower in my seat. “I wish I could disappear,” I whispered to Robbie.

Just then my other best friend, Jessie, looked right at Max and said, “What color is *your* tutu, Max?”

For a minute Max couldn’t say anything. Then he stammered, “I-I-I don’t have a tutu.”

“Yes, you do,” said Jessie. “It’s pink and has sparkles on it.”

The whole bus burst out laughing. Max’s cheeks got red, and he quickly sat down in his seat.



“Thanks, Jessie,” I said. Jessie was so brave. She was the only one brave enough to stand up to Max, the biggest bully in the whole first grade.

“No problem,” said Jessie, giggling.