

FRANKIN SCHOOL

Monster Match



by Caryn Rivadeneira
illustrated by Dani Jones

FRANKINSCHOOL





*TO FREDRIK—my son, who
got the wrong inscription that
started it all many years ago.*

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Egremont, Massachusetts



RED CHAIR PRESS
BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS

www.redchairpress.com

Free Discussion Guide Available online

Publisher's Cataloging-In-Publication Data

(Provided by Cassidy Cataloging Services, Inc.)

Names: Rivadeneira, Caryn Dahlstrand, author. | Jones, Dani, 1983-illustrator.

Title: Frankinschool. Monster match / by Caryn Rivadeneira ; illustrated by Dani Jones..

Description: Egremont, Massachusetts : Red Chair Press, [2023] | Interest age level: 007-010. | Summary: While Fred is out sick, a visiting author signs Fred's book "To Frank". When Fred's desk-mate Luisa suggests Fred must really be Frank in school, this sparks an idea for Fred's creative writing assignment. Fred's What-If poem is coming together wonderfully, until--a mist fills the room and the writing assignment comes to life. Suddenly Fred--now Frankinschool--and Luisa--now Princessa Luisa--need to save the school from the mysterious potion--and the even more mysterious and devious ghost living in the school attic.--Publisher.

Identifiers: ISBN: 978-1-64371-241-3 (trade hardcover) | 978-1-64371-243-7 (multi-user ebook PDF S/L) | 978-1-64371-245-1 (ePub3 TR) | 978-1-64371247-5 (audiobook) | LCCN: 2022940257

Subjects: LCSH: Creative writing--Juvenile fiction. | Monsters--Juvenile fiction. | Ghosts--Juvenile fiction. | Friendship--Juvenile fiction. | Schools--Juvenile fiction. | CYAC: Creative writing-- Fiction. | Monsters--Fiction. | Ghosts--Fiction. | Friendship--Fiction. | Schools-- Fiction. | LCGFT: Ghost stories. | BISAC: JUVENILE FICTION / Books & Libraries. | JUVENILE FICTION / Monsters. | JUVENILE FICTION / Social Themes / Friendship.

Classification: LCC: PZ7.1.R57627 Fr 2023 | DDC: [Fic]--dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2022940257>

Main body text set in Amasis Regular 17/27

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Printed in Canada

0523 1P F23FRN

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CHAPTER 1:
THE TROUBLE BEGINS

There once was a boy named Fred. Or, at least, he *thought* that was his name. He'd been Fred yesterday as he coughed and sneezed and shivered on the sofa. He'd been Fred when his mother drizzled his name in syrup across his pancake this morning, before he came back to school after being out sick.

And he'd been Fred as he waited in line on the playground, where friends

welcomed him back and Luisa pestered him about where he'd been. "I bet you were faking, Fred," Luisa had said.

And he was still Fred as he slid into his desk that morning, sorting through the stack of worksheets he'd missed. In fact, he'd stayed Fred right up to the moment his teacher, Ms. Martinez, handed him a book and said, "Too bad you missed the author's visit yesterday." (*Had she used his name?* He couldn't remember.)

So it *had* to be Fred who smiled at the book, *Limbo Lessons*, with the picture of ruffle-shirted partygoers bending low under a limbo stick. Just like his aunt had at the family reunion last summer. (He shuddered at the memory.) It was

definitely Fred who cracked open the book and whose eyes wandered to the words scribbled in black pen across the bright white page. The words, that is, that started all the trouble.

To Frank



“Frank?” Fred said to no one in particular.
“Who’s Frank?”

“What do you mean, *Who’s Frank?*” Luisa said, leaning in close to see what Fred was looking at.

“I got somebody else’s book by mistake,” Fred said, pointing to the writing.

“Ahhh,” Luisa said with a nod. “Thing is: there are no Franks at this school. None in the whole town, I bet! Maybe you wrote your name wrong on the order sheet. Like a dummy.”

Fred rolled his eyes and shook his head. He’d watched his mom fill out the order form for the author visit. *Yes, my student would like a book.* She’d checked that box. Fred had seen her. And on the

line that read *Please inscribe the book to _____*, he'd watched her block the letters F-R-E-D. In case someone didn't know how to spell Fred.

“Or, maybe it's something else,” Luisa said. “Like, maybe the author knows something you don't.”

“Like what?” Fred asked.

“Like, maybe you were *once* named Fred,” Luisa said. “But you aren't anymore. Or, or, maybe you're still Fred at home, but Frank in school.”

“Frank in school?” Fred said. “Why would I be that?”

“Kids?” Ms. Martinez snapped her fingers at the boy once named Fred and the girl still called Luisa. “Quiet please.”

“See?” Luisa said. “Ms. Martinez didn’t use your name.”

“She didn’t use yours either.”

“Because she’s not used to them. It hasn’t sunk in that you’re Frank in school and I’m *Princesa* Maria Luisa Octavia in school. Much fancier than dumb old Frank. That’s for sure.”

“Why’s Frank dumb?”

“Because *you’re* dumb. And *you’re* Frank. In school.”

Fred hung his head and huffed. He was done with Luisa’s meanness. Every day she’d sat at the desk next to his and every day she’d said something awful to him. His mom said he should be honest: “Tell Luisa it bugs you. She’ll stop.”



But Fred didn't want Luisa to think he was dumb *and* a baby. The worst part was that his mom said that no matter what—even if Luisa kept being mean and didn't say she was sorry—he should *forgive* her. Fred never liked the sound of that. He thought something better was in order. Like seeing her trip up the stairs. That would teach her who the dummy was.

“Okay, everyone,” Ms. Martinez said. “Creative writing time. Get your materials out.”

The class groaned. Fred slid the open book to the back of his desk. He fished under his desk for a pencil and reached for his journal.

“No groaning, guys,” Ms. Martinez said.

“It’s going to be fun. Our prompt? ‘What if’ stories. Just ask yourself, *What if...*? Then, imagine and write. Be creative. Discover the power of pretend. Extra credit for rhymes.”



Fred groaned alone this time. He hated rhymes. Now *they* were dumb. Besides, what on earth would he write about?

Luisa's pencil flew across her paper. She turned toward him and smirked.

Fred rolled his eyes. *What if Luisa tripped up the stairs?* How would that be as a story? Nah. Ms. Martinez wouldn't like that.

Fred slumped in his seat and looked at the ceiling for inspiration. Nothing. He turned to look out the window. Again, nothing. So he looked back to the book resting on his desk, to the words scratched out on its open pages. *To Frank.*

What if...?

Fred snatched his pencil and scooted his journal into a better position.

What if I am Frank in school? Fred wrote.
He looked at the words: *Frank in school.*
Frank-in-school. Frankinschool!

A smile spread across Fred's face. Frankinschool might not be fancy, but it sure might be fun. And so the boy once named Fred picked up his pencil and began to write.

What if I were Frankinschool?
I would not obey any rule.
I'd stomp and I'd snort,
I'd twist neck-screws for sport.
My lab would be in the attic of school!
That's the place you'd see me rule.
Creak open that door, sneak up those
stairs

If I get caught, know what? Who cares!
I'd hide under the rafters
And shake with laughter
As I tamed the bats
And trained the cats
They'd sneak around the school at night
And gobble up any homework left in sight
From up in my attic I'd say what goes
I'd still learn stuff I'm supposed to know
I'd get to know ghosts who roam these
halls
And see the critters that live in walls
I'd read about potions and work on my
spells
Writing them down, so they'd go off during
bells...

Fred paused, not sure what should

come next. Until he noticed Luisa shooting glances at his paper, before rolling her eyes and mouthing “looks dumb” at him.

Fred wrapped his arm across his paper, tucked his head down, and with a grin he added:

No Princesa Maria Luisa Octavias allowed,
of course

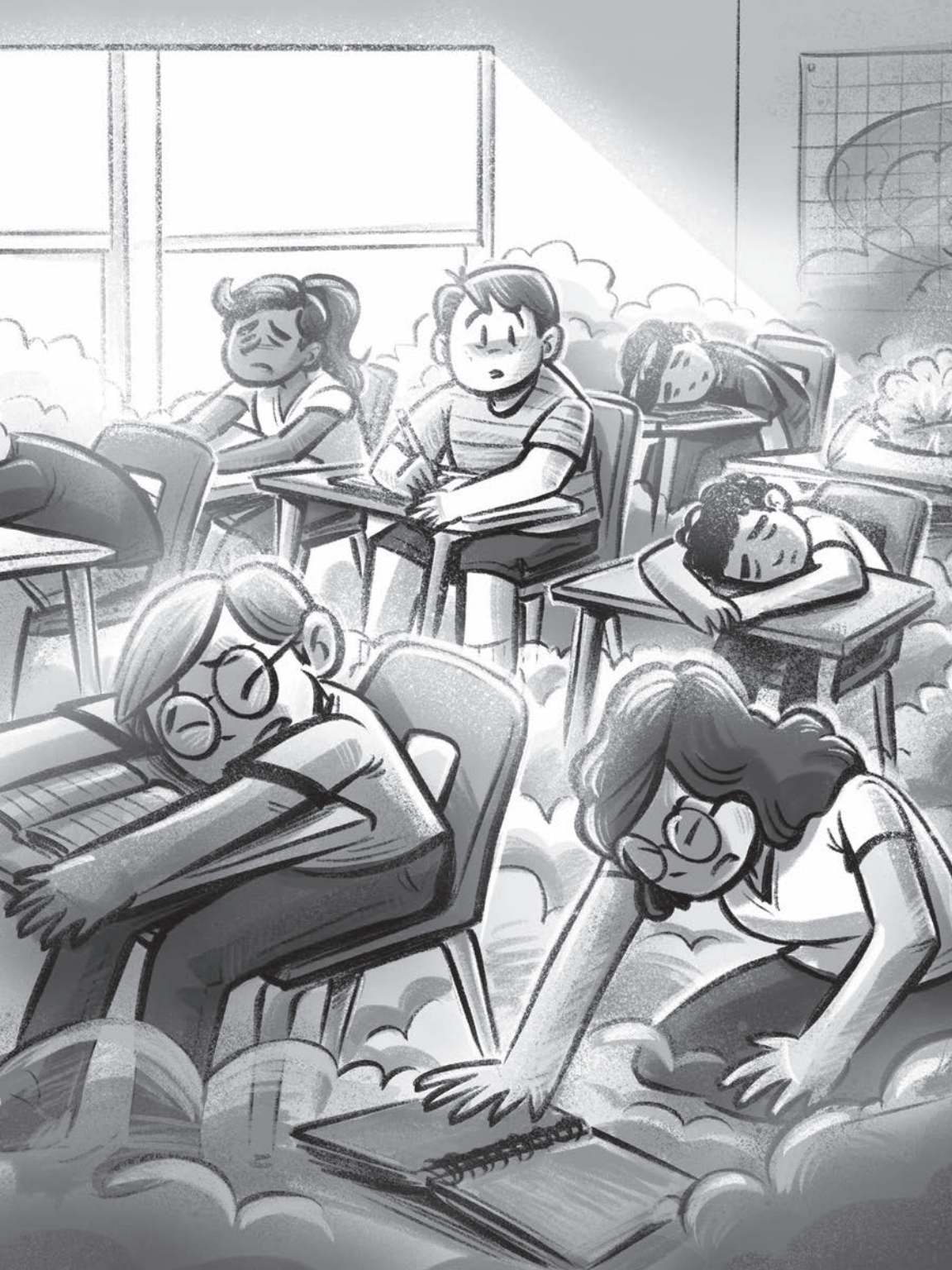
She'd get carried away on her princessy
horse...



The bell rang.

But as Ms. Martinez lifted her head to dismiss them to music class, a green mist crawled into the classroom. Fred stopped writing. His eyes lifted off the page he'd scribbled across to watch the fog's pillowy tendrils reach up desk legs and twist around students. Fred scanned the room, his mouth hanging open. One by one, the students' eyes closed and their heads drifted toward their desks, each one landing with a soft thud.

Luisa's head thudded harder. Fred wanted to laugh—normally he would have, served her right for calling him dumb—but then he saw Ms. Martinez crumple at the bookcase, her body bending and folding

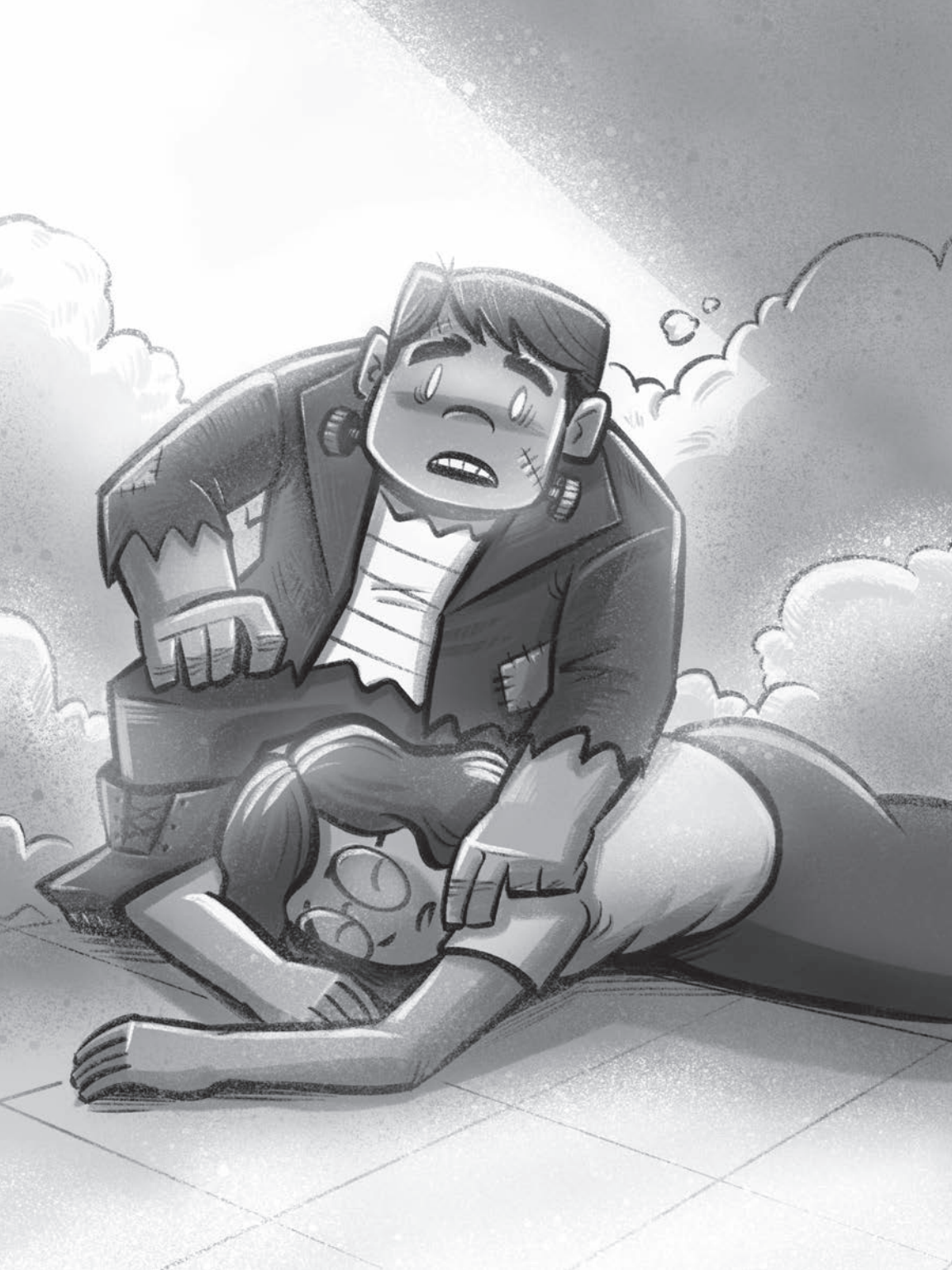




neat as a dancer's.

Fred stood up, tried to race over, but his feet stuck to the ground. He looked down and gasped. Fred shot his hands out in front of him. They were as he suspected. He clutched his hands to his neck. Again, just as he thought.

Heavy-booted feet. A gray jacket, two sizes too small. Pea-green skin. A knobbed neck. The boy once named Fred was Fred no longer. He had become Frankinschool.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Caryn Rivadeneira has spent her life imagining what's up every roped-off twisty staircase, what's behind every creaky, sneaky door, and what's lurking in every spooky space she's ever passed (and it's possible she even snuck into a few of these places!). Caryn is the author of more than 20 books for children and grown-ups, including *Edward and Annie: A Penguin Adventure* (Tommy Nelson) and the award-winning *Helper Hounds* series (Red Chair Press). Caryn lives in the near-west suburbs of Chicago with her husband, three kids, and her rescued pit bulls. There may or may not be a ghost laboratory in her attic.



ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Dani Jones is an artist, writer, children's book illustrator, and comics creator. She is the illustrator of the *New York Times* bestselling PopularMMOs graphic novel series from HarperCollins and creator of the picture book *Monsters Vs. Kittens* from Stan Lee's Kids Universe. You can learn more about her and her work at danijones.com.





ISBN: 978-1-643712-41-3
51699



9 781643 712413