

Rain School



WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY JAMES RUMFORD

In the country of Chad, it is the first day of school. The dry dirt road is filling up with children.

Big brothers and big sisters are leading the way.





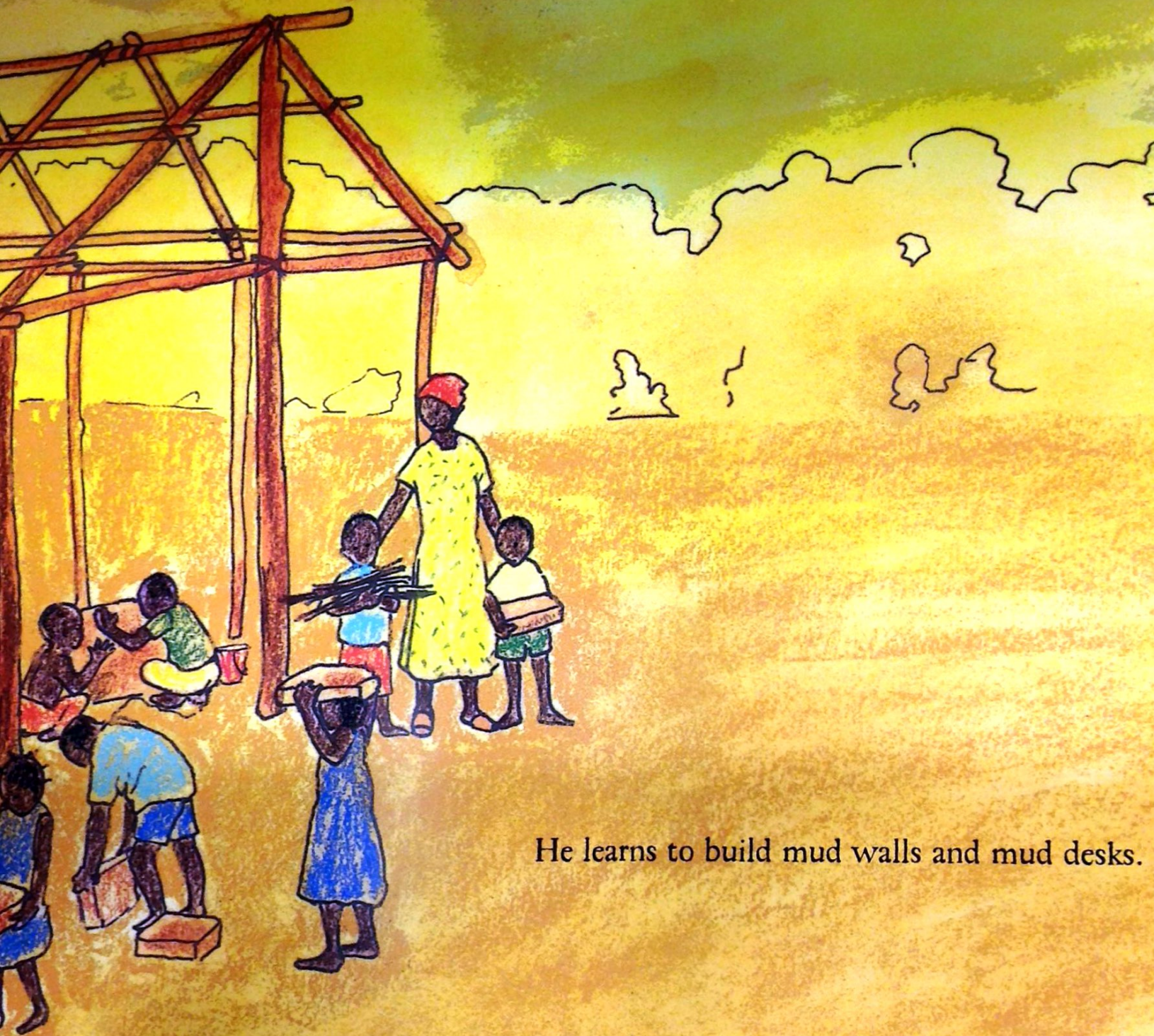
“Will they give us a notebook?” Thomas asks.
“Will they give us a pencil?”
“Will I learn to read like you?”
“Stop asking so many questions and keep up,”
say the big brothers and big sisters.

Thomas arrives at the schoolyard, but there are no classrooms.
There are no desks.



Thomas learns to make mud bricks and dry them in the sun.

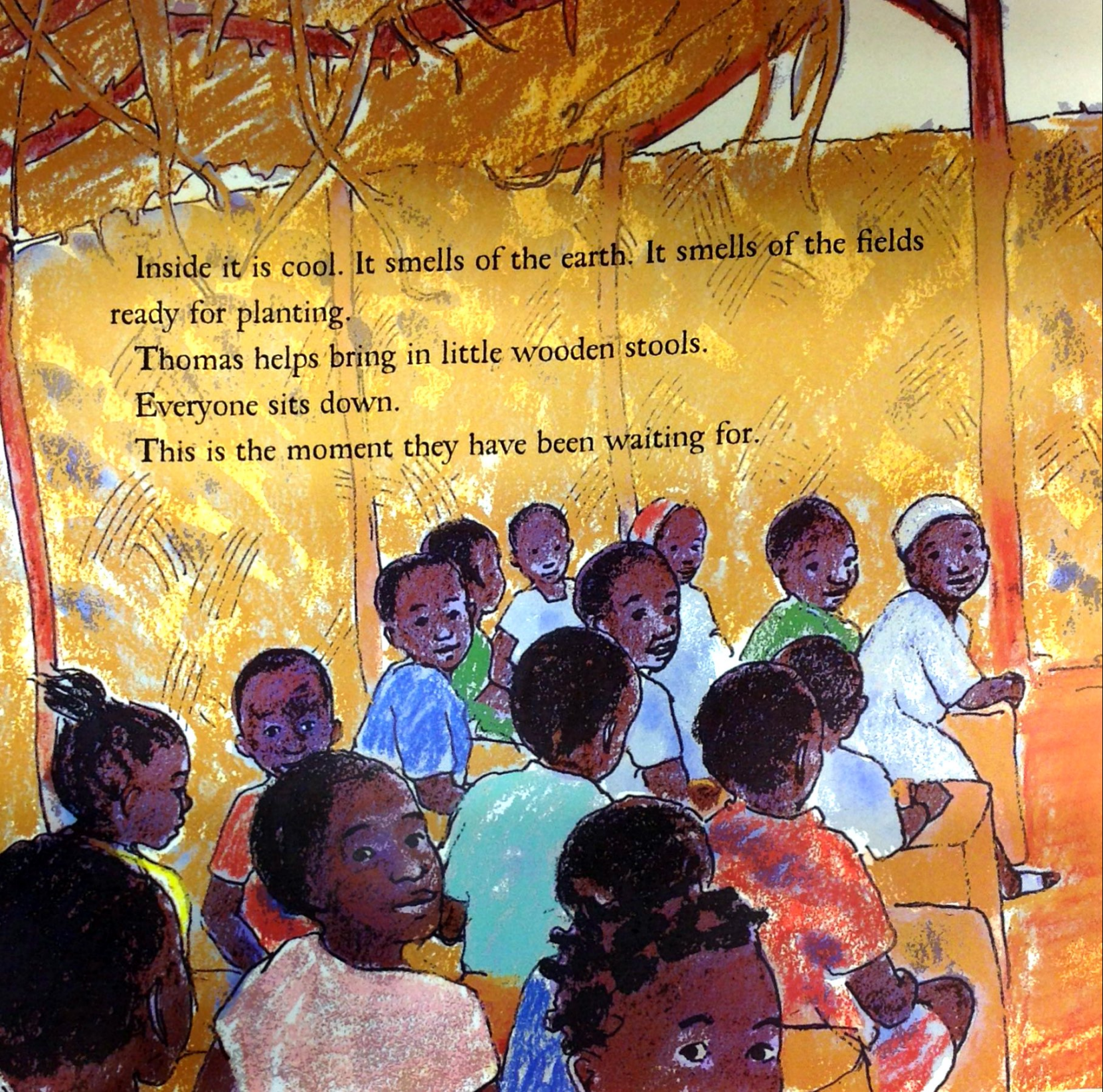




He learns to build mud walls and mud desks.

He gathers grass and saplings with the other children,
and they make a roof.



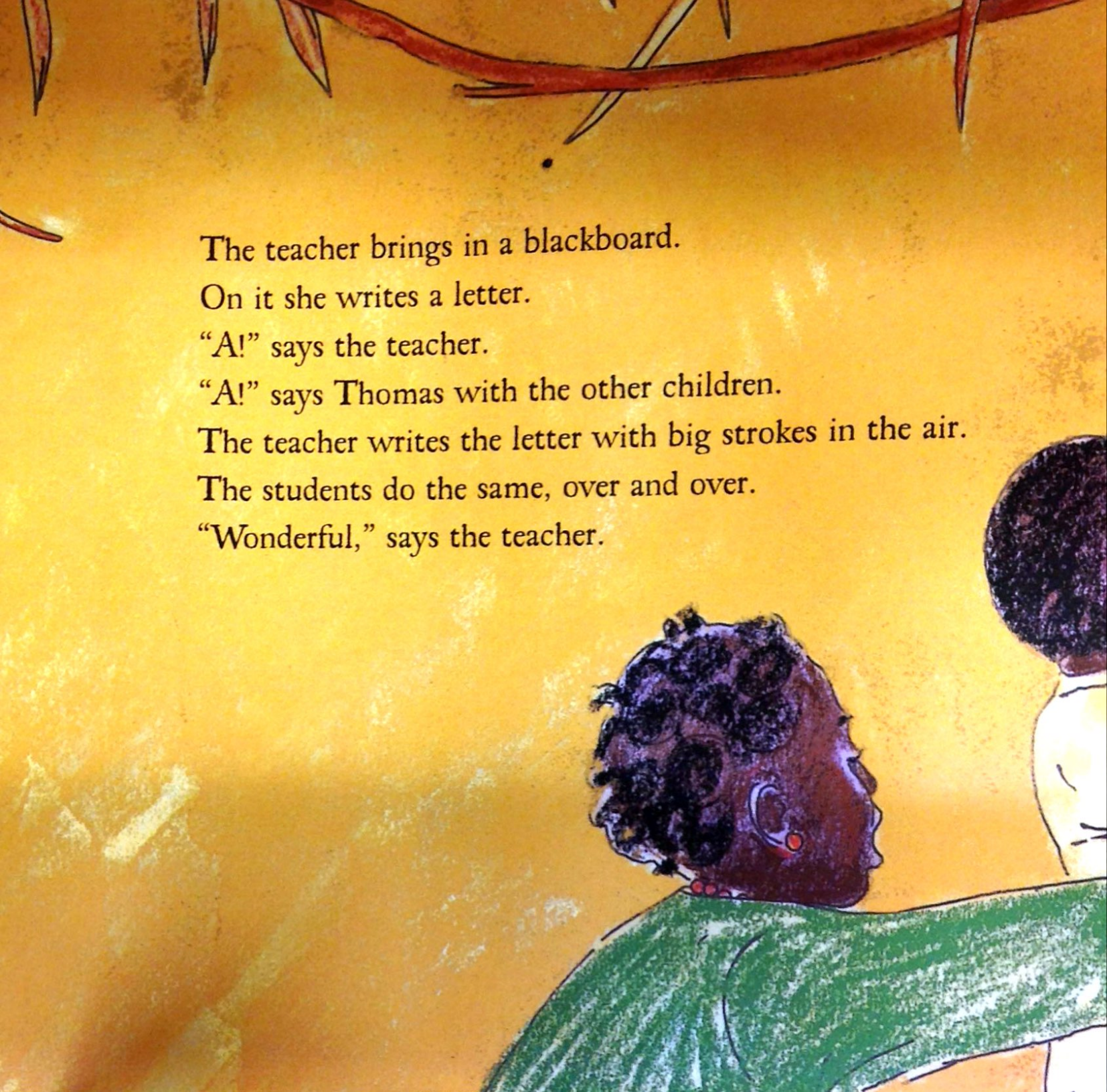
A group of approximately 15 children of African descent are gathered inside a structure with a thatched roof. They are sitting on small, simple wooden stools. The children are dressed in various colorful clothing, including white, blue, green, and red. The background is a warm, golden-yellow color with some darker, textured areas, suggesting an interior space. The overall style is that of a children's book illustration, with bold outlines and a rich, textured color palette.

Inside it is cool. It smells of the earth. It smells of the fields ready for planting.

Thomas helps bring in little wooden stools.

Everyone sits down.

This is the moment they have been waiting for.



The teacher brings in a blackboard.

On it she writes a letter.

“A!” says the teacher.

“A!” says Thomas with the other children.

The teacher writes the letter with big strokes in the air.

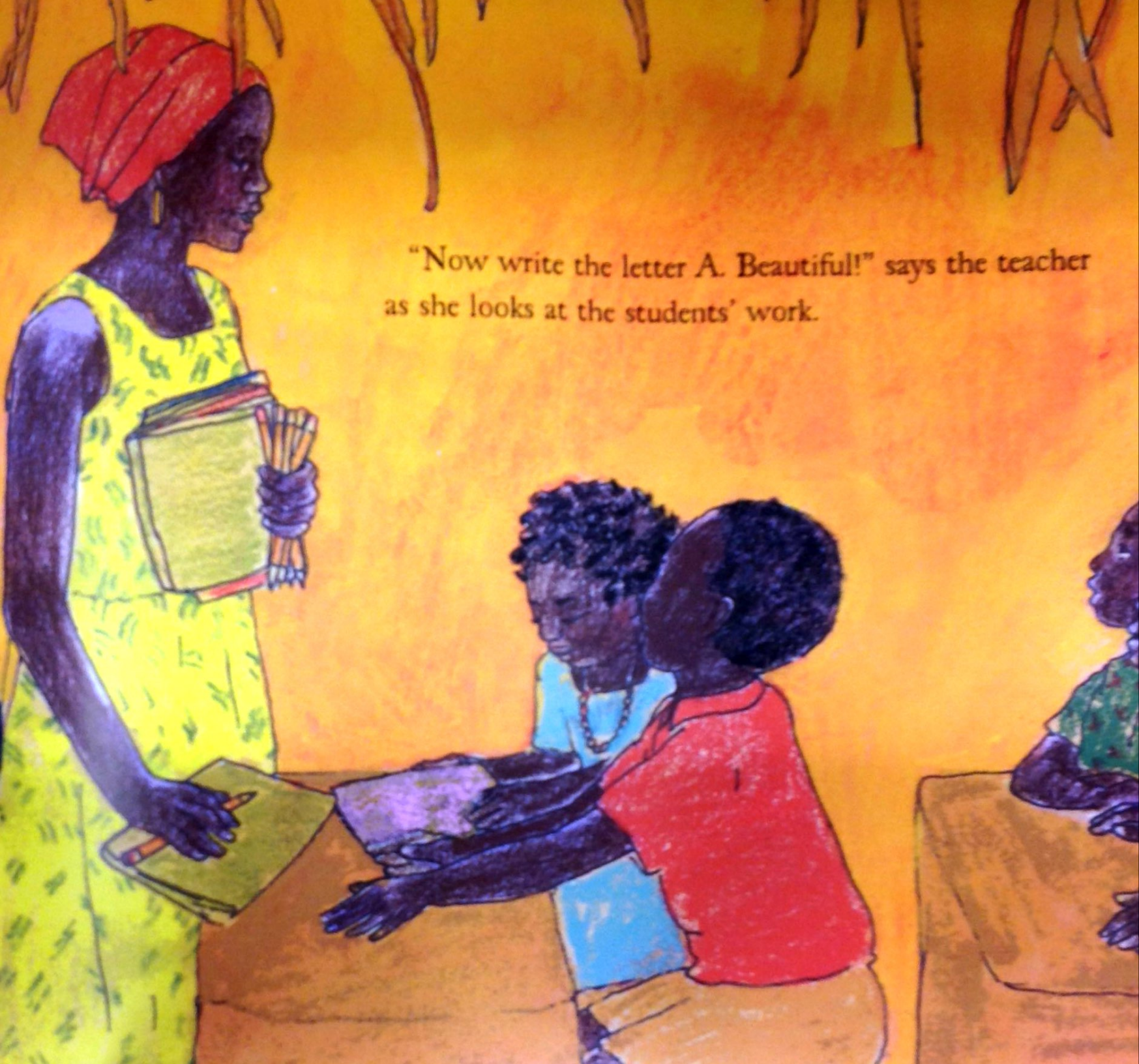
The students do the same, over and over.

“Wonderful,” says the teacher.



She hands out notebooks and pencils.

“Page one,” says the teacher. Thomas opens his notebook to the first page and holds his pencil ready and waiting.

An illustration of a classroom scene. A teacher, a woman with dark skin wearing a red headwrap and a yellow patterned dress, stands on the left. She holds a stack of books and a bundle of pencils. She is looking towards two young students sitting at a wooden desk. One student, a girl with curly hair wearing a blue shirt and a necklace, is looking down at a book. The other student, a boy wearing a red shirt, is also looking at the book. To the right, another student is partially visible, wearing a green patterned shirt. The background is a warm, textured orange-yellow wall with some hanging plant-like shapes at the top.

“Now write the letter A. Beautiful!” says the teacher as she looks at the students’ work.

Every day Thomas learns something new.
Every day the teacher cheers him and the
other children on. "Excellent job," she says.
"Perfect, my learning friends!"



The nine months of the school year fly by.
The last day has come. The students' minds are fat with knowledge.
Their notebooks are rumped from learning.
Thomas and the other children call out, "Thank you, Teacher."
She smiles and says, "Well done, my hard-working friends!
See you next year."
Thomas and the other children race home.



The school is empty, and just in time. The big rains have started.
The drops come down hard and fast.



Strong winds tear at the grass roof. The rain finds its way inside.
The school's mud walls are soaked and start to slump. The mud desks, too.



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Slowly, the school disappears until there is almost nothing left.
It doesn't matter. The letters have been learned and the knowledge
taken away by the children.

Come September, school will start over. Thomas will be a big brother then, leading the children on their first day to school. They will all stand in front of their smiling teachers, ready to build their school again.