



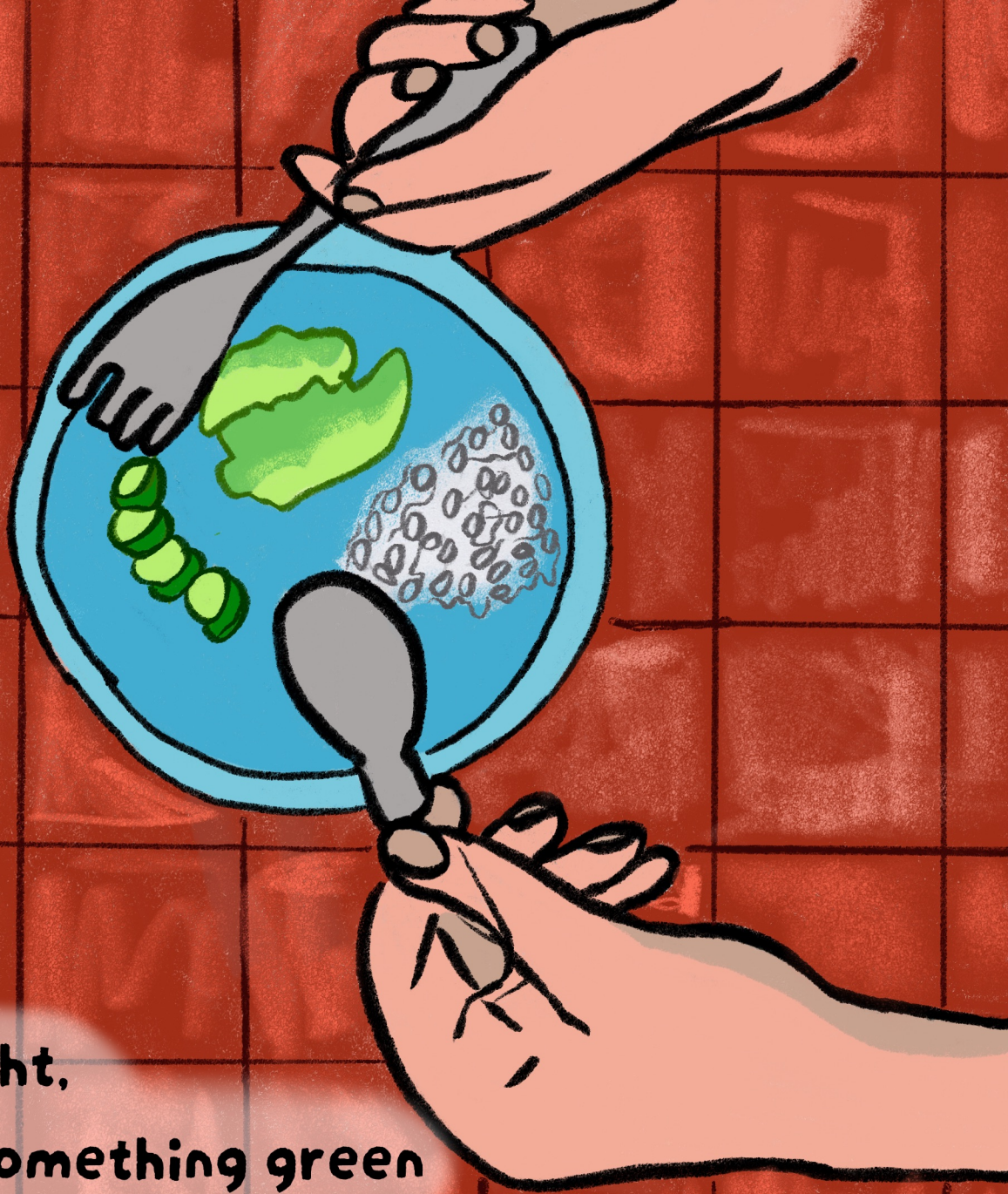
Written by : Kelland Hong and
Damacia Shang

Illustrated by : Veronica Cai
in collaboration with Britanica
Institute

*For Mariana Rueda and the students of Britanica Institute,
whose ideas helped plant the first seeds of this story.*



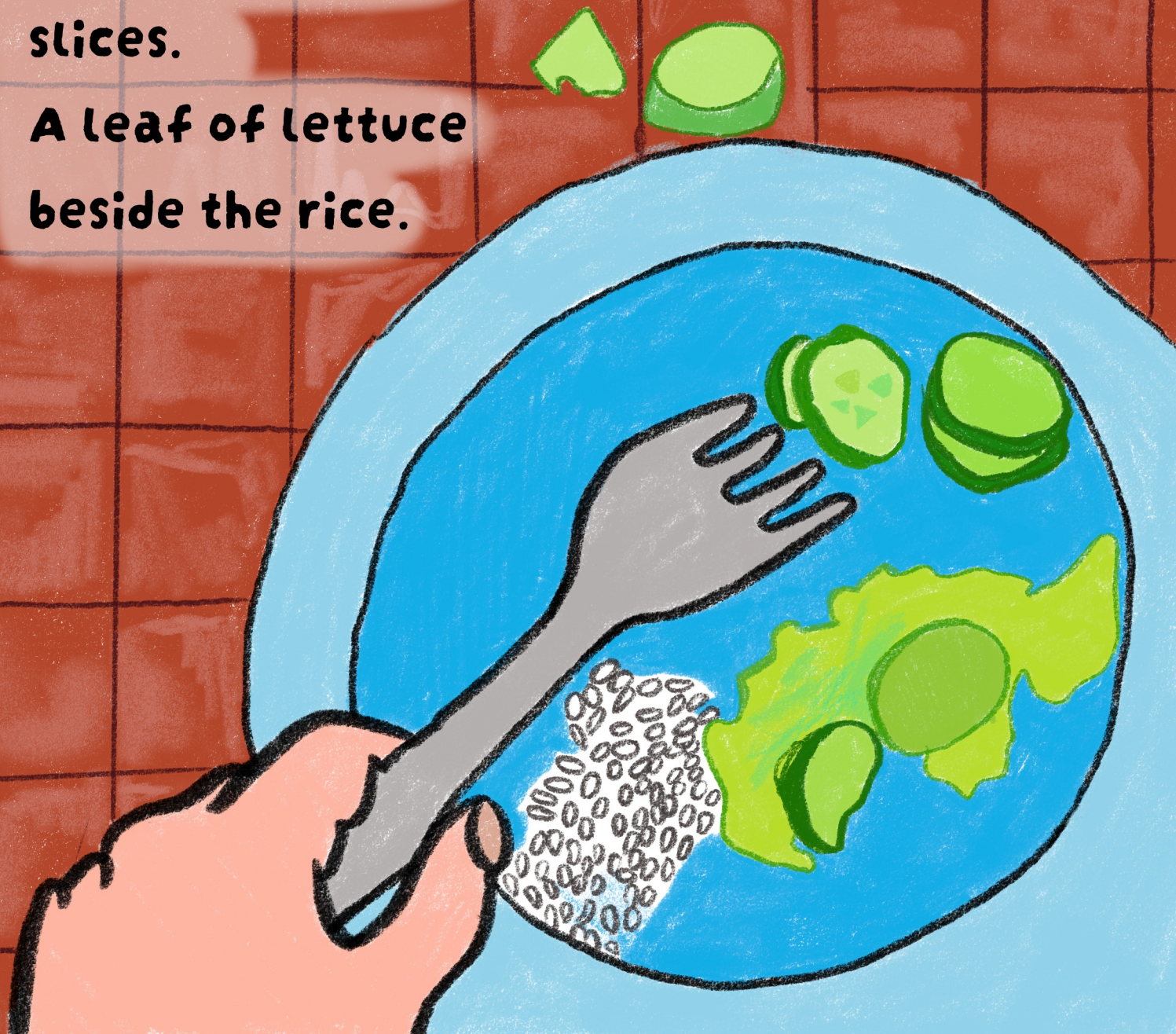
Britanica Institute students after planting their own first spinach plants. 2026.



**Every night,
there is something green
on her plate.**

**A few cucumber
slices.**

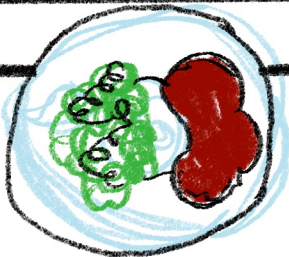
**A leaf of lettuce
beside the rice.**

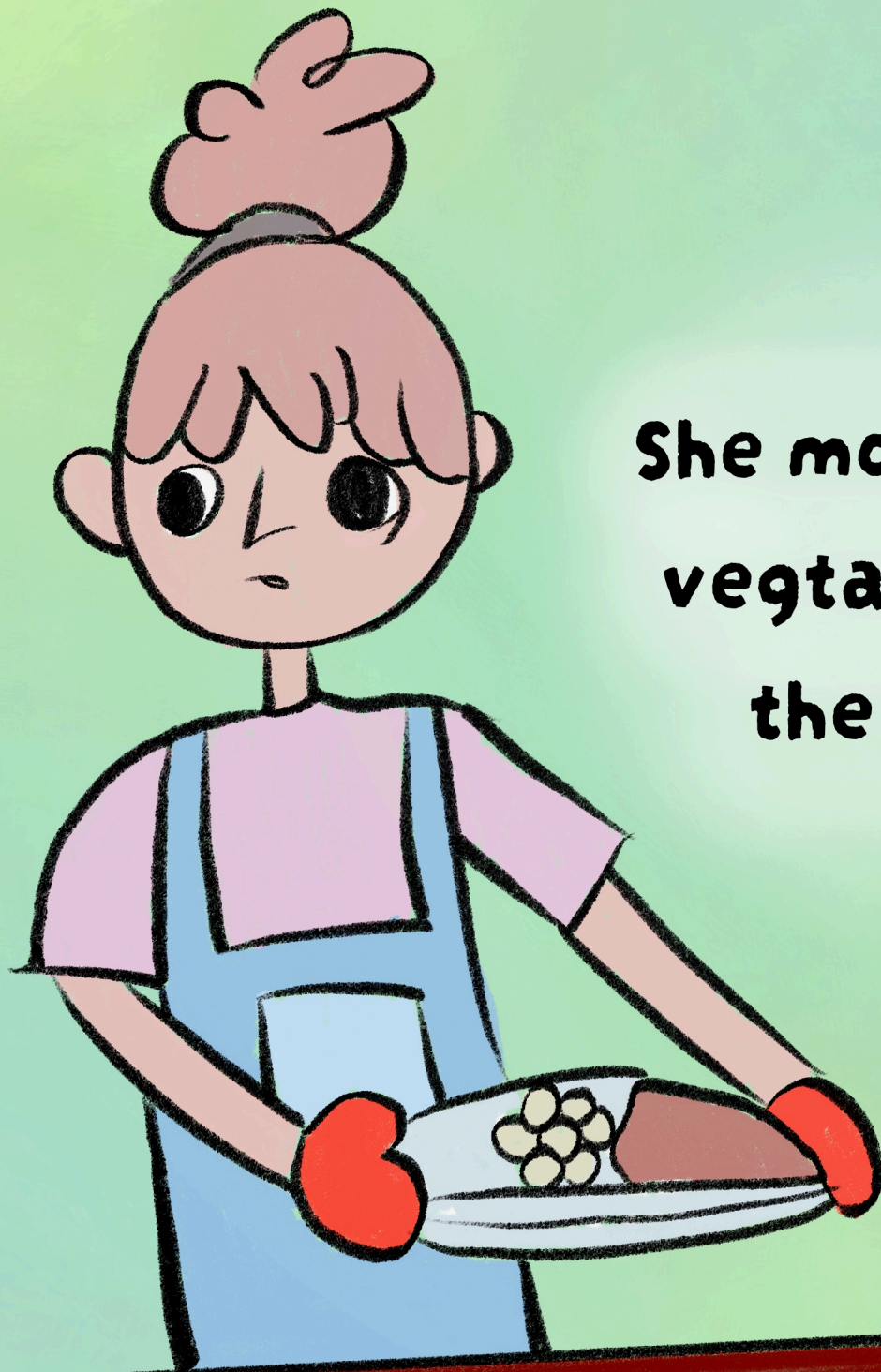


**“Just try it,”
they say.**



**She never
does.**

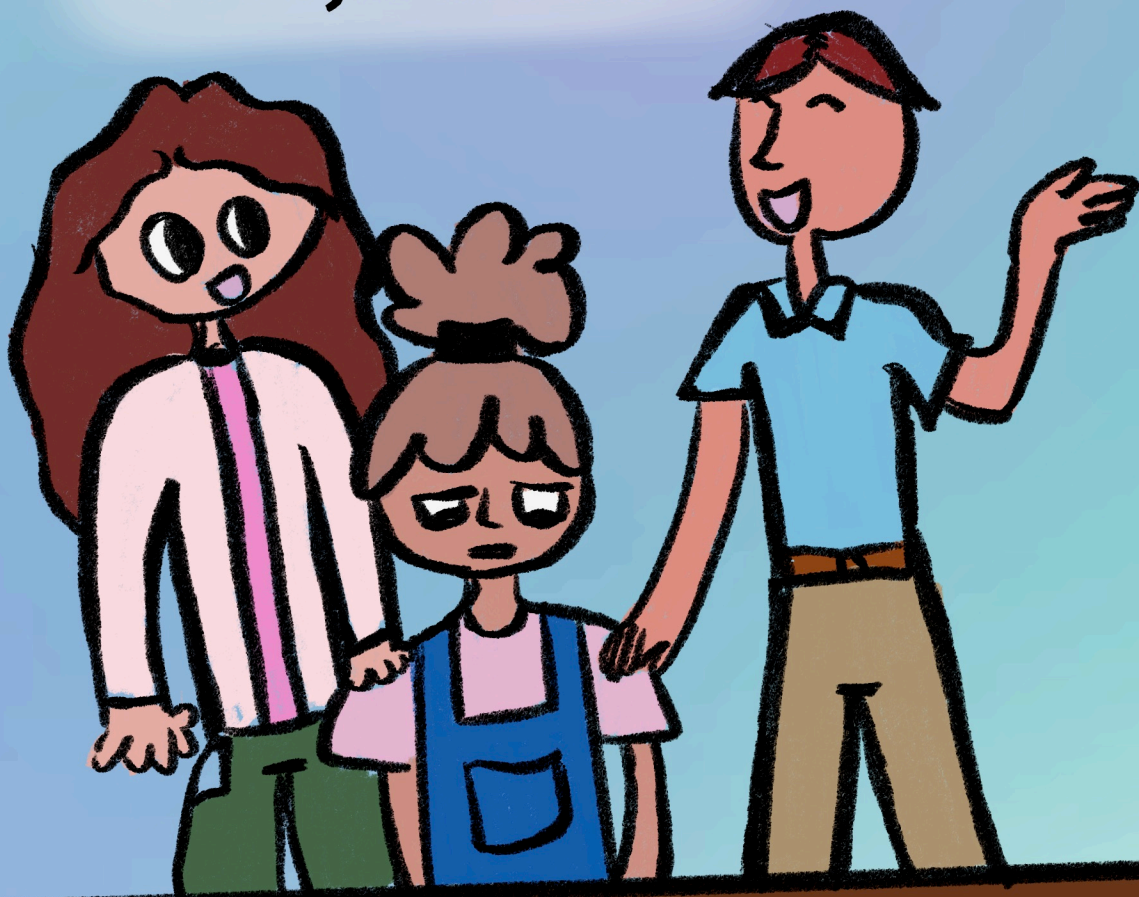




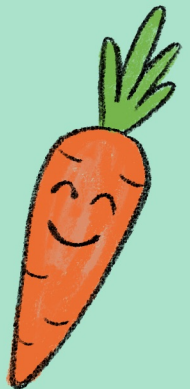
**She moves the
vegetables to
the side.**

"These are good for you."

"You might like them."



**But that is not
the point.**





**They chose them.
Not her.**

**One afternoon,
she opens
the kitchen drawer.**



The messy drawer.

Full of things no one remembers.





**Her hand .
brushes a small
packet.**



Seeds.



**They are not on
her plate.**

No one telling her what to do.

No one asking her to eat them.





**For once,
they are not a rule.**

**She closes her hand
around them.**



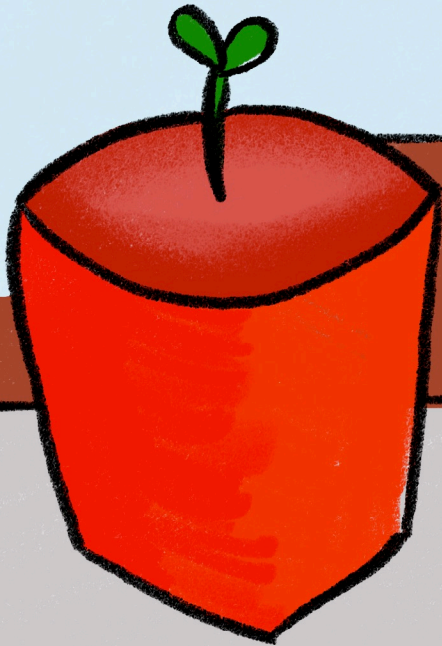
**By the window,
she fills a cup with soil.**



She presses the seeds in.



**Days later,
a tiny green
shoot appears.**



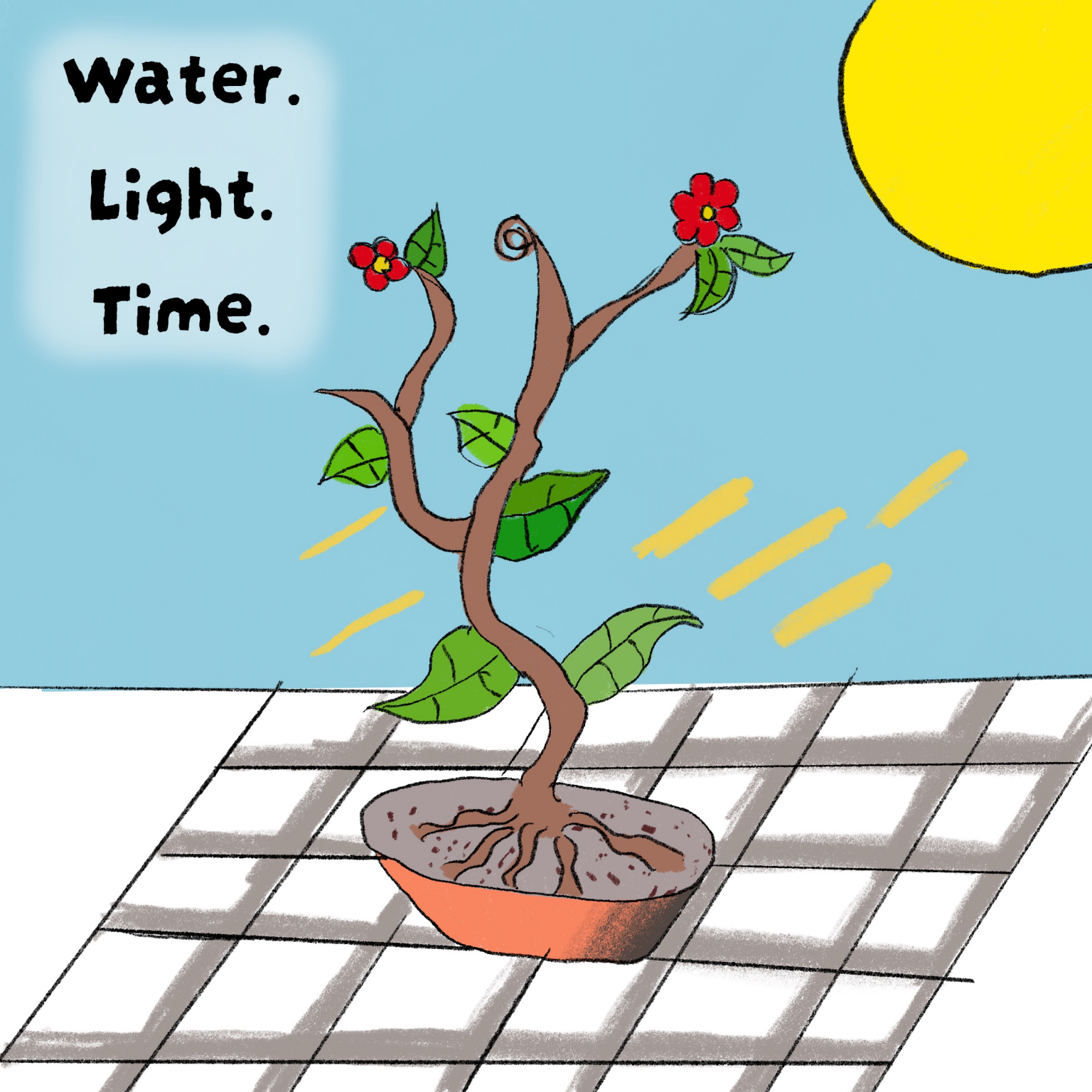
**It grows because
she gives it what
it needs.**

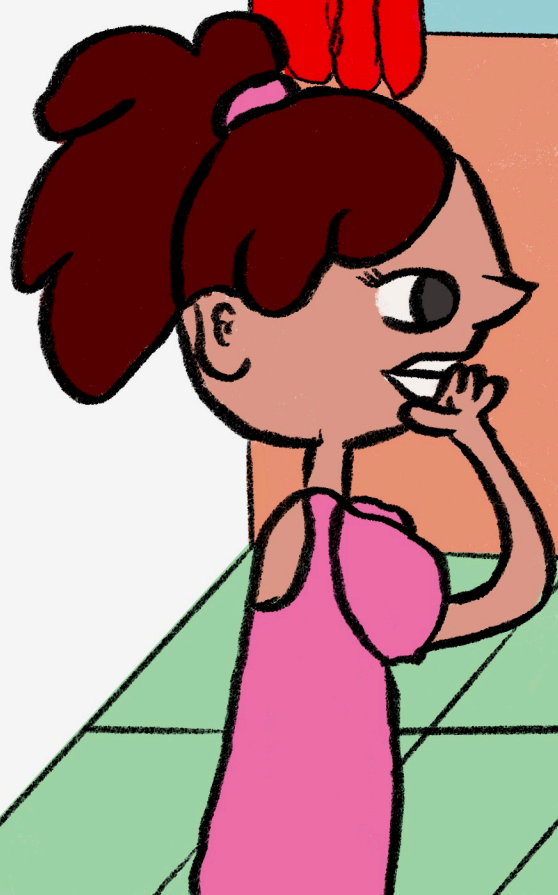


Water.

Light.

Time.





**She watches it
grow.**

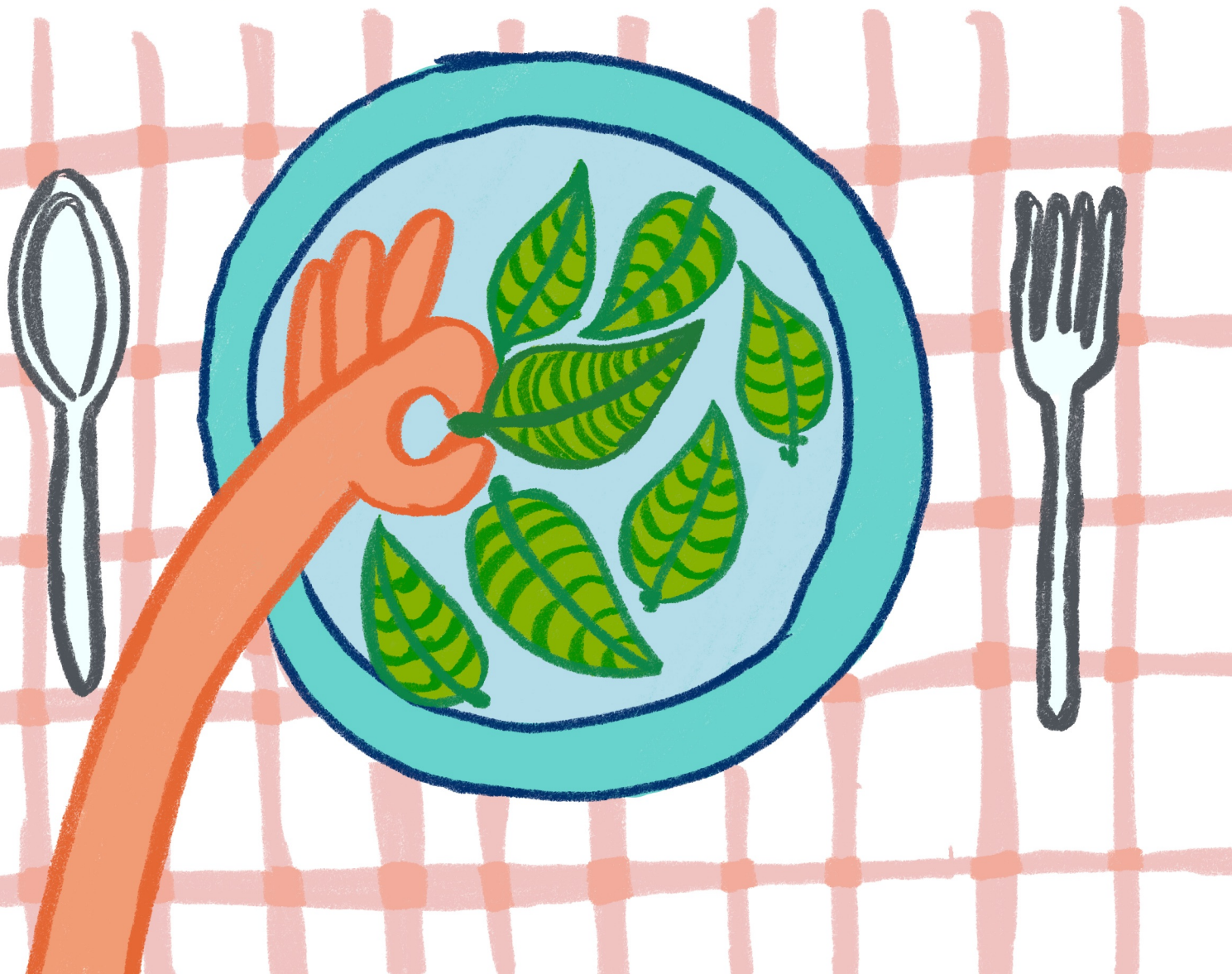


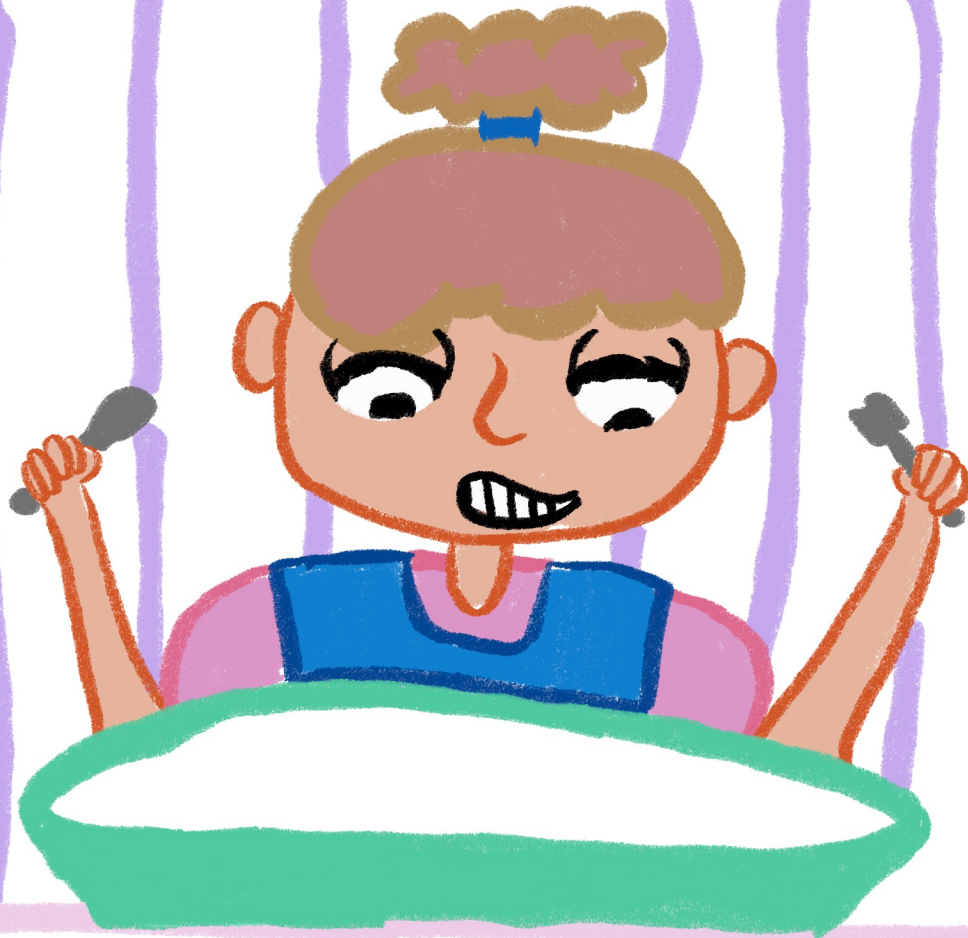
**She does not
move it to
the side.**



**She picks a few herself.
Leaf by leaf.**

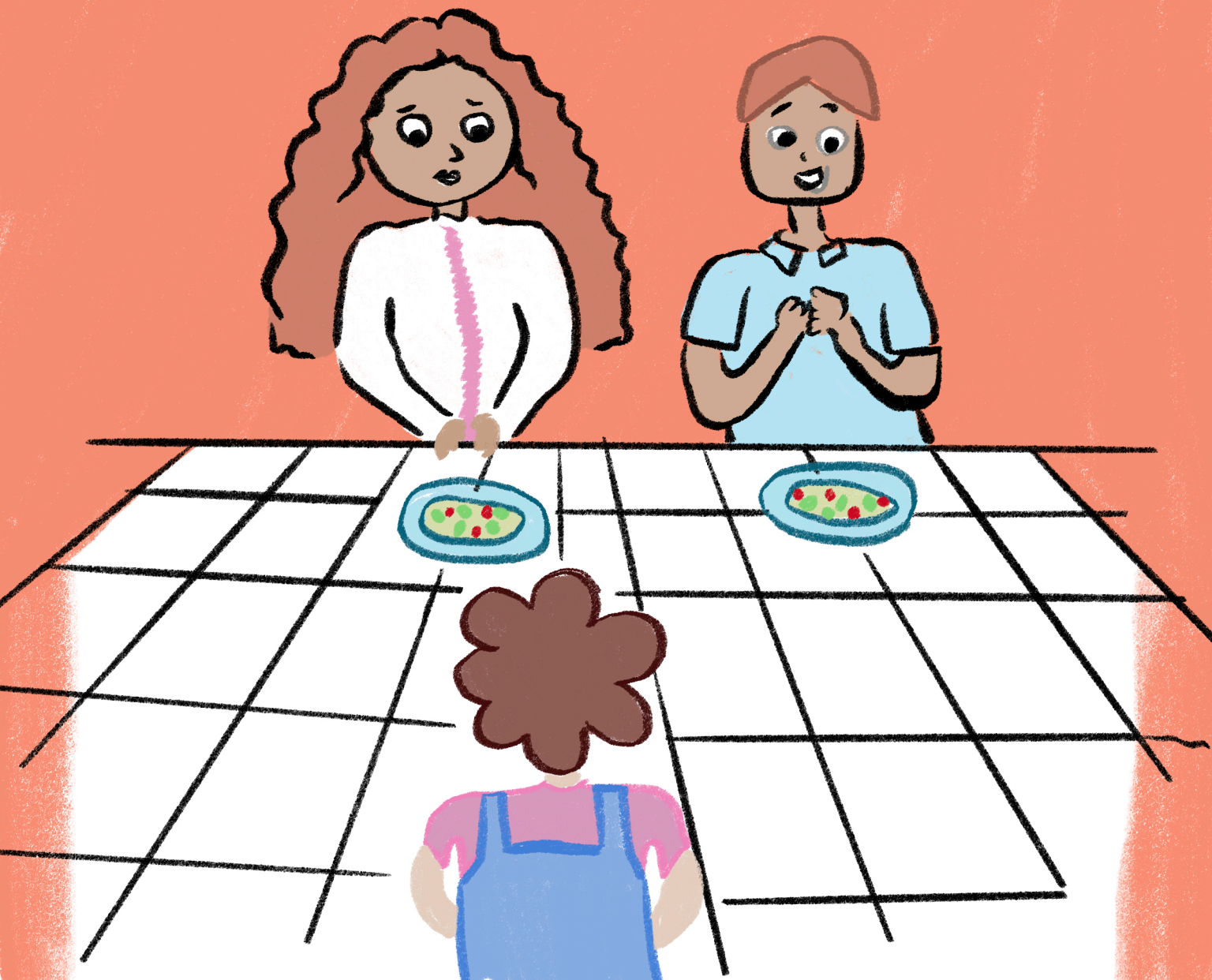
**That night,
she places them on her plate.**

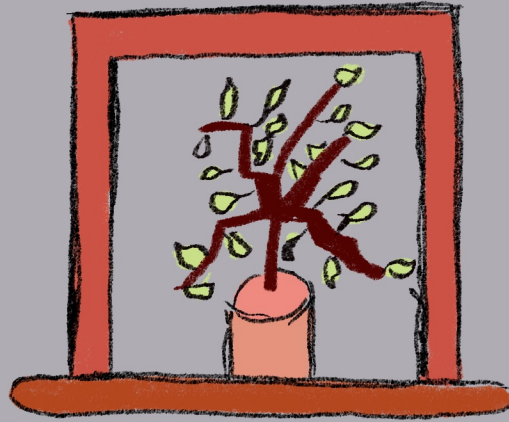




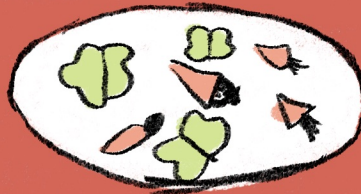
**She looks at them
for a moment.**

No one says anything.

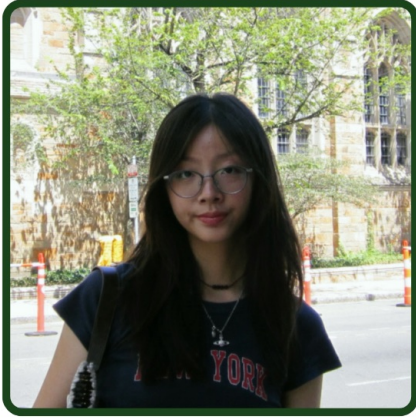




She takes a bite.
She chose this.



About the Creators



Qilan (Kelland) Hong

Co-Author

Kelland is a student who aims to spread nutritional and environmental awareness simultaneously for students globally.



Damacia Shang

Co-Author

Damacia is a student who hopes to share her passion for nutrition and the environment with students everywhere.



Veronica Cai

Illustrator

Veronica Cai is an Irvine-based artist who creates vibrant acrylic paintings that explore her relationship with beauty standards.



She never wanted the green things on her plate until one day, she found a packet of seeds. Leaf by Leaf is a gentle story about choice, growth, and discovering healthy eating one tiny leaf at a time.

ABOUT LEAF BY LEAF

Leaf by Leaf is a youth initiative helping children to build healthier relationships with food and the environment by turning learning into something they can touch, grow, and choose for themselves.

ABOUT LEAF BY LEAF & BRITANICA INSTITUTE

Leaf by Leaf partnered with Britanica Institute, an after-school English program in Humahuaca, Argentina led by Mariana Rueda, to host a remote workshop on the environment and planting. After learning about our mission and growing their own spinach plants, the students created the initial drawings that guided the illustrations for our children's book.

