

THE KIDS OF THE POLK STREET SCHOOL

The Candy Corn Contest

YEARLING

by two-time Newbery Honor-winning author

Patricia Reilly Giff

Chapter 1



Ms. Rooney gave out the drawing paper. “All eyes on me,” she said.

Richard Best put his hand into his desk.

“This is the way to make a Thanksgiving turkey,” said Ms. Rooney. She picked up a fat piece of brown chalk.

Richard fished around for his lunch bag. He watched Ms. Rooney trace her hand on the chalkboard.

He had made a turkey just like that last year . . . and the year before. Now he was making another one.

A left-back turkey. Just like him.

He started to open his lunch bag.

It made a crackling noise.

Matthew Jackson turned around. He pulled on his stick-out ears. “Hi, Beast,” he whispered.

Richard made a beast face. He smiled at Matthew.

Matthew was a great kid, Richard thought.

But he wet the bed.

And he probably hadn't taken a bath since last summer.

Sometimes Richard wished Ms. Rooney would change everyone's seat. But then he might end up sitting right in front of her desk.

He pulled a piece of bread off his cheese sandwich and looked at it.

There was a little piece of cheese stuck to the bread.

He scraped the cheese off and flicked it on the floor. Then he sneaked the bread into his mouth.

Ms. Rooney stopped talking. She frowned.

Richard stopped chewing.

Then Ms. Rooney put a round red eye on her turkey.

Richard wished she'd hurry up. He couldn't wait for show-and-tell.

He had some great news.

It was about a sleep-over party the day after Thanksgiving.

Beast's friend Emily Arrow put her hand in the air. "You forgot the turkey's feet," she told Ms. Rooney.

"So I did," said Ms. Rooney. She drew two yellow stick legs. She drew a bunch of claws.

Then she wiped her chalky hands on a piece of paper. "I have exciting news," she said.

Richard hoped she didn't know about his party. He wanted to tell everyone himself. He picked up a brown crayon and began to trace his hand for his turkey.

Ms. Rooney went to the closet. She took out a huge jar. She brought it over to her desk.

It was filled with Candy Corn.

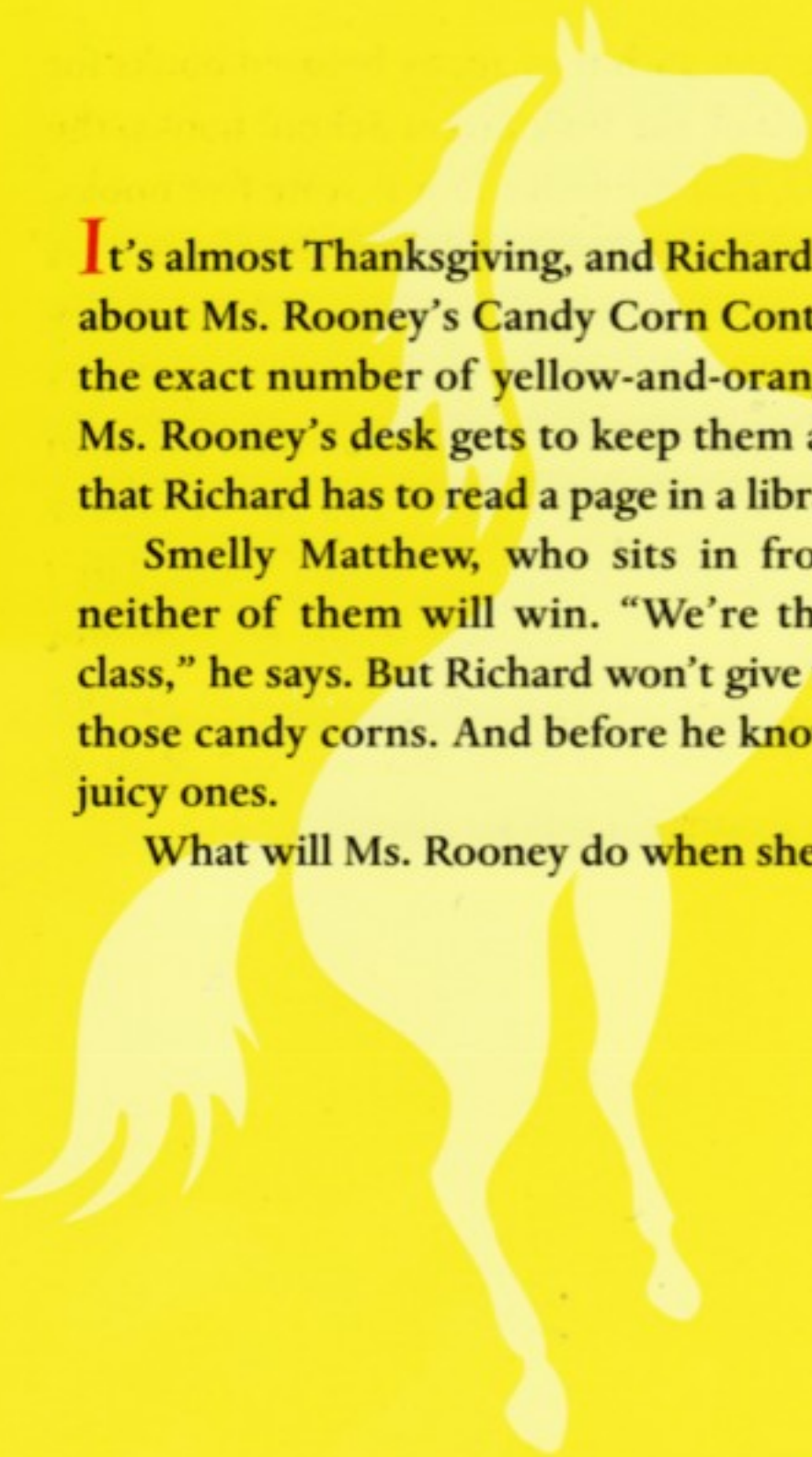
Richard felt his mouth water.

"We're going to have a contest," Ms. Rooney said. "Guess how many pieces of Candy Corn are in this jar?"

"Two hundred thousand," Emily Arrow called.

"That's not right," Dawn Bosco said. "Maybe a hundred."

"What's the prize?" Noah Greene asked.



It's almost Thanksgiving, and Richard Best can't stop thinking about Ms. Rooney's Candy Corn Contest. Whoever can guess the exact number of yellow-and-orange candies in the jar on Ms. Rooney's desk gets to keep them all. The only problem is that Richard has to read a page in a library book for each guess.

Smelly Matthew, who sits in front of Richard, knows neither of them will win. "We're the worst readers in the class," he says. But Richard won't give up. He can already taste those candy corns. And before he knows it, he has. Three fat, juicy ones.

What will Ms. Rooney do when she finds out?

www.randomhouse.com/kids

US \$4.99 / \$6.99 CAN

ISBN 0-440-41072-X



50499



YEARLING

A Yearling Book

New York

RL: 1.9

006-009

Cover art © 2002 by Joanne Scribner

COVER PRINTED IN THE USA