



YEARLING

Judy
Blume



Freckle
Juice

I



Andrew Marcus wanted freckles. Nicky Lane had freckles. He had about a million of them. They covered his face, his ears and the back of his neck. Andrew didn't have any freckles. He had two warts on his finger. But they didn't do him any good at all. If he had freckles like Nicky, his mother would never know if his neck was dirty. So he wouldn't have to wash. And then he'd never be late for school.

Andrew had plenty of time to look at Nicky's freckles. He sat right behind him in class. Once he even tried to count them. But when he got to eighty-six Miss Kelly called, "Andrew . . . are you paying attention?"

"Yes, Miss Kelly," Andrew said.

"Good, Andrew. I'm glad to hear that. Now will you please pick up your chair and join your reading group? We're all waiting for you."

Andrew stood up in a hurry. His reading group giggled. Especially Sharon. He couldn't stand that Sharon. She thought she knew everything! He picked up his chair and carried it to the corner where his reading group sat.

"You may begin, Andrew," Miss Kelly said. "Page sixty-four."

Andrew turned the pages in his book. Sixty-four . . . sixty-four. He couldn't find it. The pages stuck together. Why did Miss Kelly have to pick him?



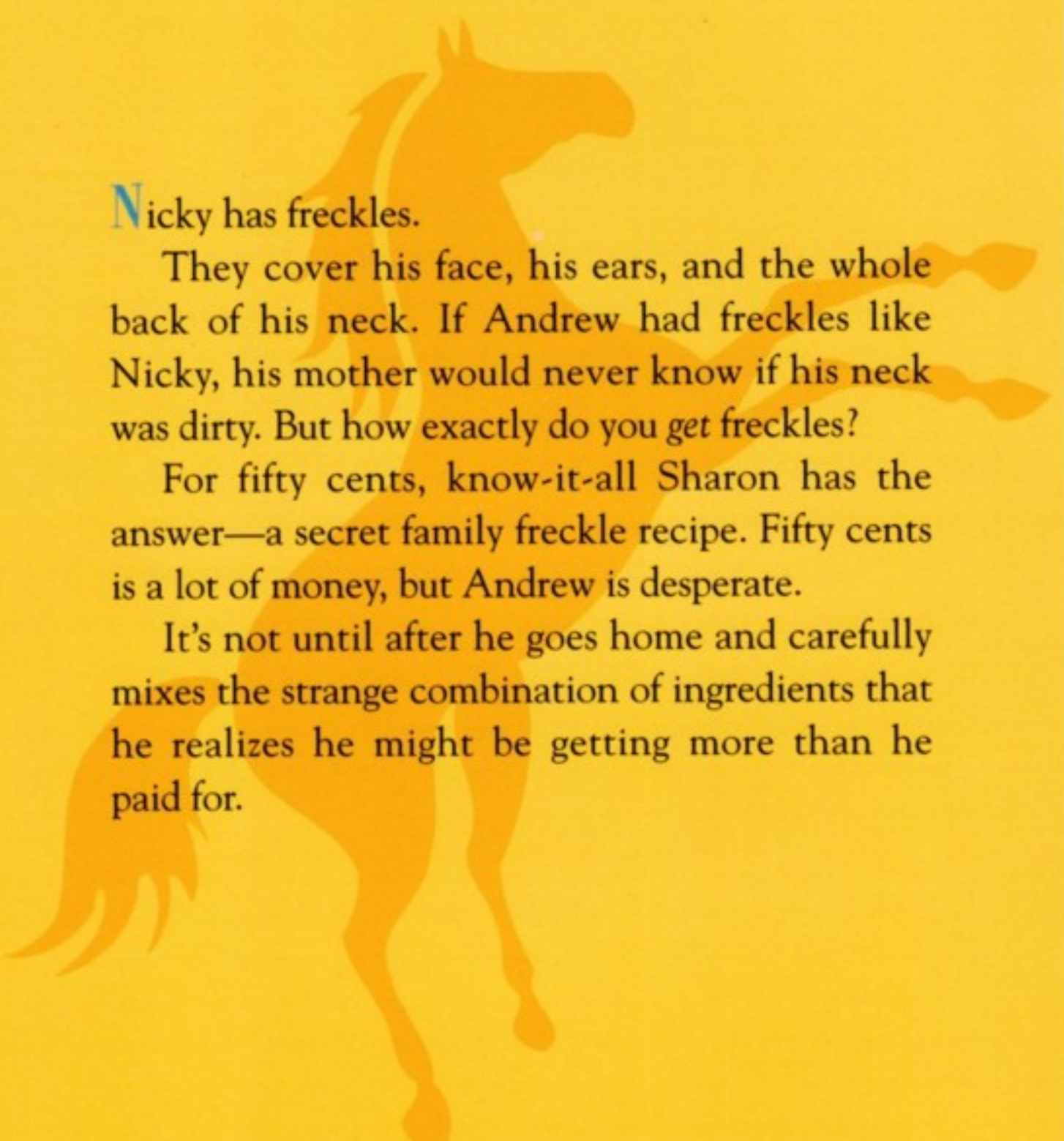
Everybody else already had their books opened to the right page.

Sharon kept giggling. She covered her mouth to keep in the noise, but Andrew knew what was going on. He finally found page sixty-four. Right where it was supposed to be . . . between pages sixty-three and sixty-five. If he had his own freckles he wouldn't have to count Nicky Lane's. Then he'd hear Miss Kelly when she called reading groups. And nobody would laugh at him.

Later, when the bell rang, Andrew poked Nicky Lane.

"What do you want?" Nicky asked, turning around.





Nicky has freckles.

They cover his face, his ears, and the whole back of his neck. If Andrew had freckles like Nicky, his mother would never know if his neck was dirty. But how exactly do you *get* freckles?

For fifty cents, know-it-all Sharon has the answer—a secret family freckle recipe. Fifty cents is a lot of money, but Andrew is desperate.

It's not until after he goes home and carefully mixes the strange combination of ingredients that he realizes he might be getting more than he paid for.

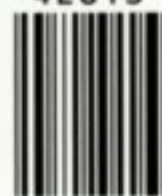
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