It's Perfectly Normal

CANDLEWICK PRESS

I Am Jazz

by Jessica Herthel
& Jazz Jennings

pictures by
Shelagh McNicholas

I have a girl brain but a boy body.

This is called transgender.

I was born this way!

When I was very little, and my mom would say, "You're such a good boy," I would say, "No, Mama. Good GIRL!"

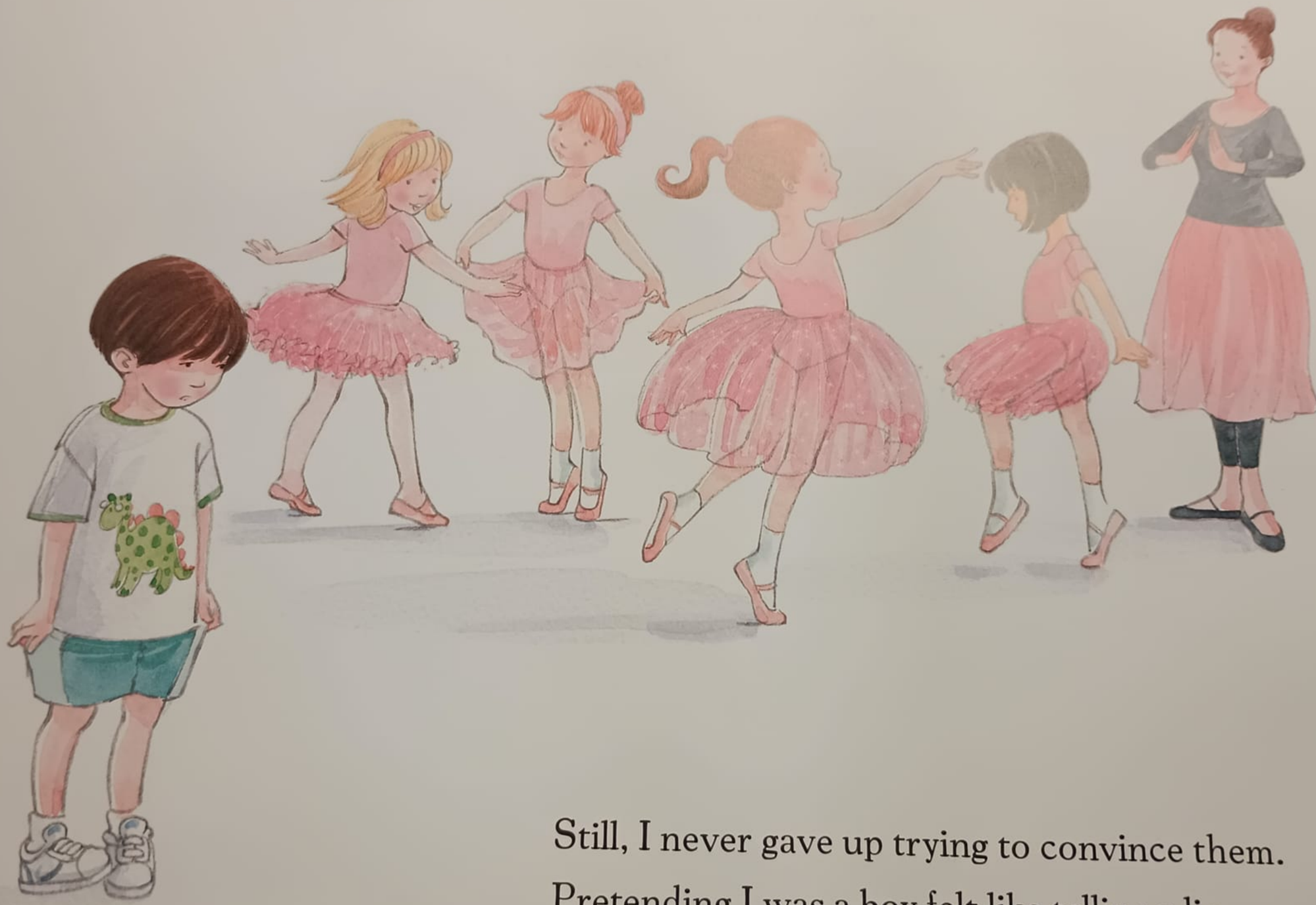
CANDLEWICK PRESS

At first my family was confused. They'd always thought of me as a boy.

As I got a little older, I hardly ever played with trucks or tools or superheroes. Only princesses and mermaid costumes.

My brothers told me this was girl stuff. I kept right on playing.

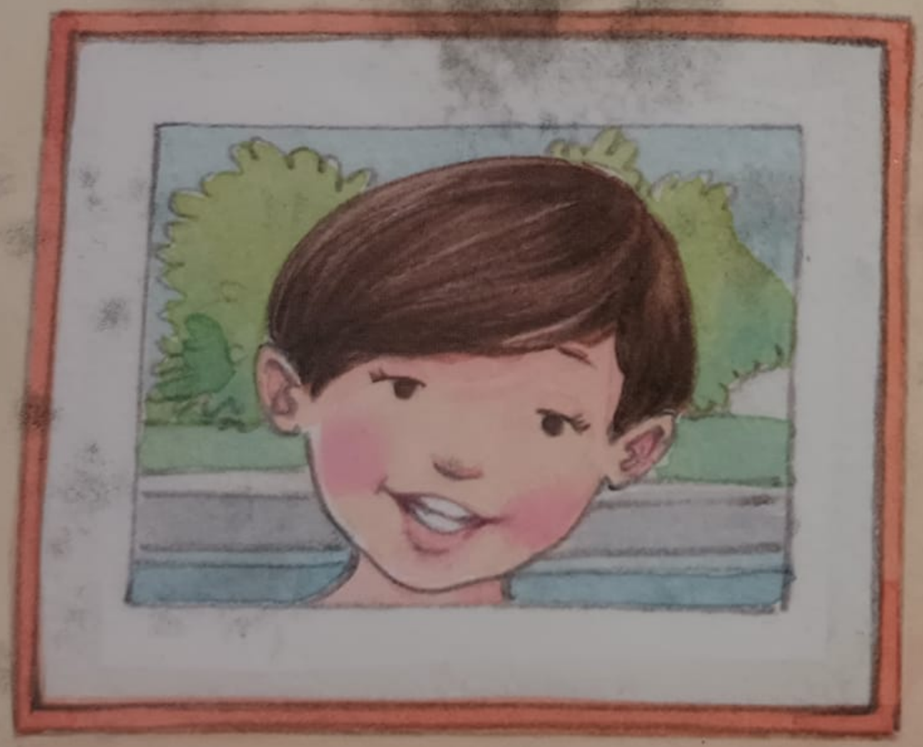
Still, I never gave up trying to convince them.
Pretending I was a boy felt like telling a lie.



Still, I never gave up trying to convince them.
Pretending I was a boy felt like telling a lie.

Then one amazing day, everything changed. Mom and Dad took me to meet a new doctor who asked me lots and lots of questions. Afterward, the doctor spoke to my parents and I heard the word "transgender" for the very first time.

Jazz always knew she was different from other kids.
She had a girl's brain and a boy's body.
This is her story.



"Jazz is a sensitive and courageous young woman. Her story is inspiring and important to read. By sharing her experiences and view she has added

That night at bedtime, my parents both hugged me and said, "We understand now. Be who you are. We love you no matter what."

Mom and Dad told me I could start wearing girl clothes to school, and growing my hair long. They even let me change my name to Jazz.

Being JAZZ felt much more like being ME!

Mom said that being Jazz would make me different from the other kids at school, but that being different is okay. What's important, she said, is that I'm happy with who I am.

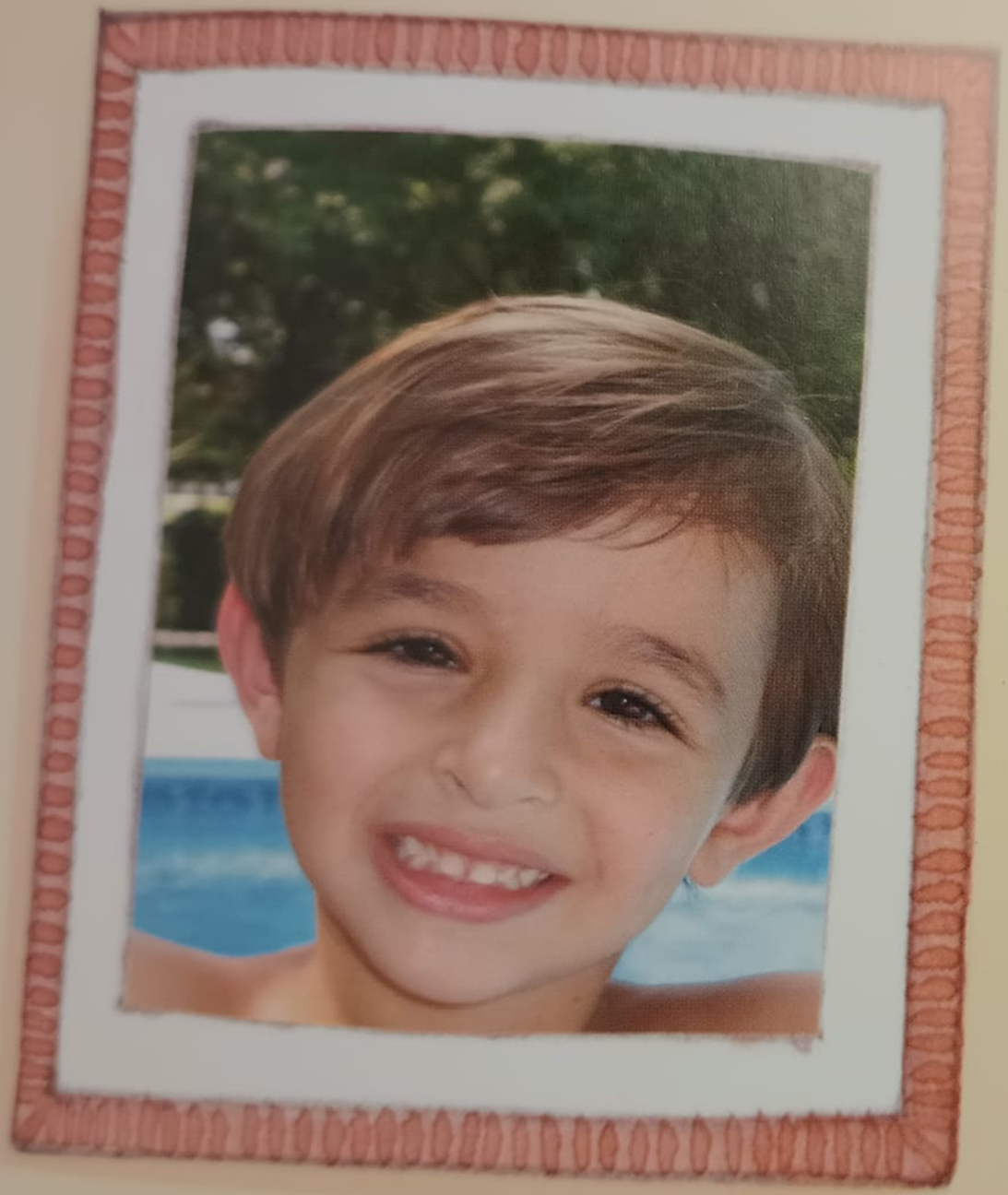
At the beginning of the year they wanted me to use the boys' bathroom, and play on the boys' team in gym class, but that didn't feel normal to me at ALL.

I don't mind being different. Different is special! I think what matters most is what a person is like inside.

And inside, I am happy. I am having fun. I am proud!

I am Jazz!

I was so happy when the teachers changed their minds. I can't imagine not playing on the same team as Casey and Samantha.

Even today, there are kids who tease me, or call me by a boy name, or ignore me altogether. This makes me feel crummy.

Then I remember that the kids who get to know me usually want to be my friend. They say I'm one of the nicest girls at school.