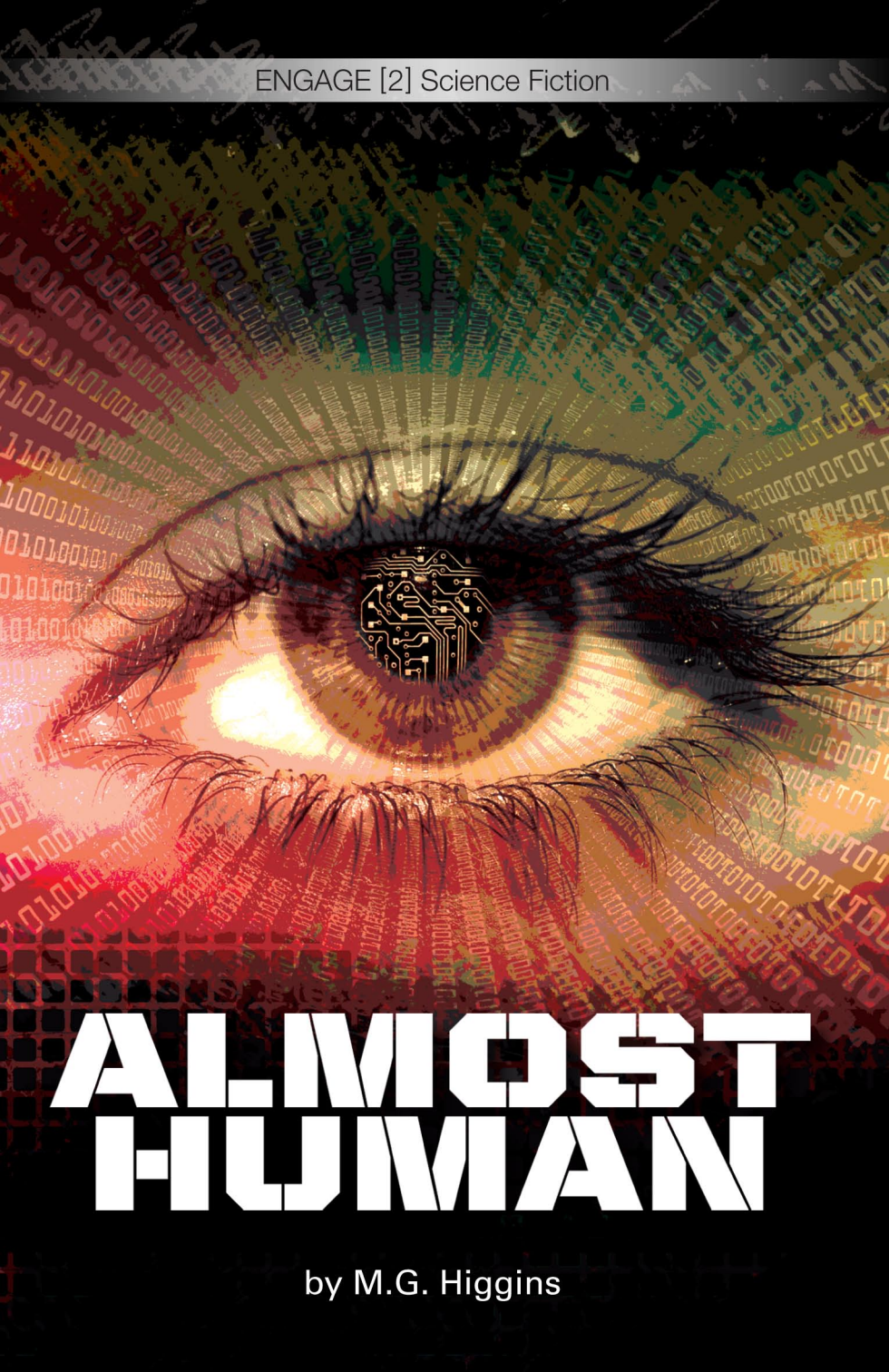


ENGAGE [2] Science Fiction



# ALMOST HUMAN

by M.G. Higgins

I stare at the sun. It is bright.  
It is warm. Is it me who thinks  
this? Or is it my skin chip?

**Warning** my mind chip  
tells me. I look away. I am like  
people in that way. The sun can  
hurt my eyes.







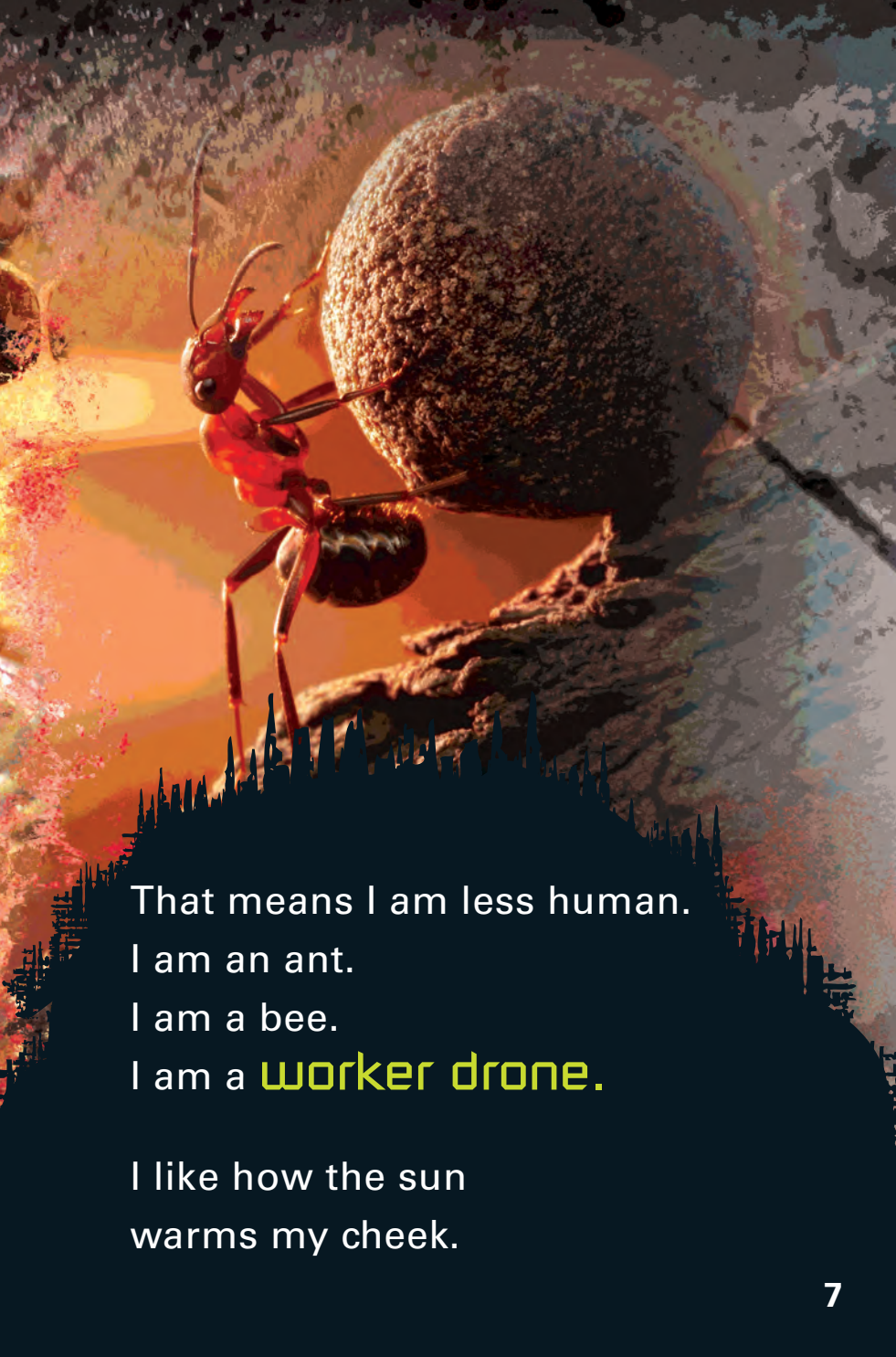
"Ten-nine-one!"  
The boss calls my name.  
I turn. He frowns.  
"Get to work."



The boss is part human. So am I.  
But he has more human parts.  
I have **less.**





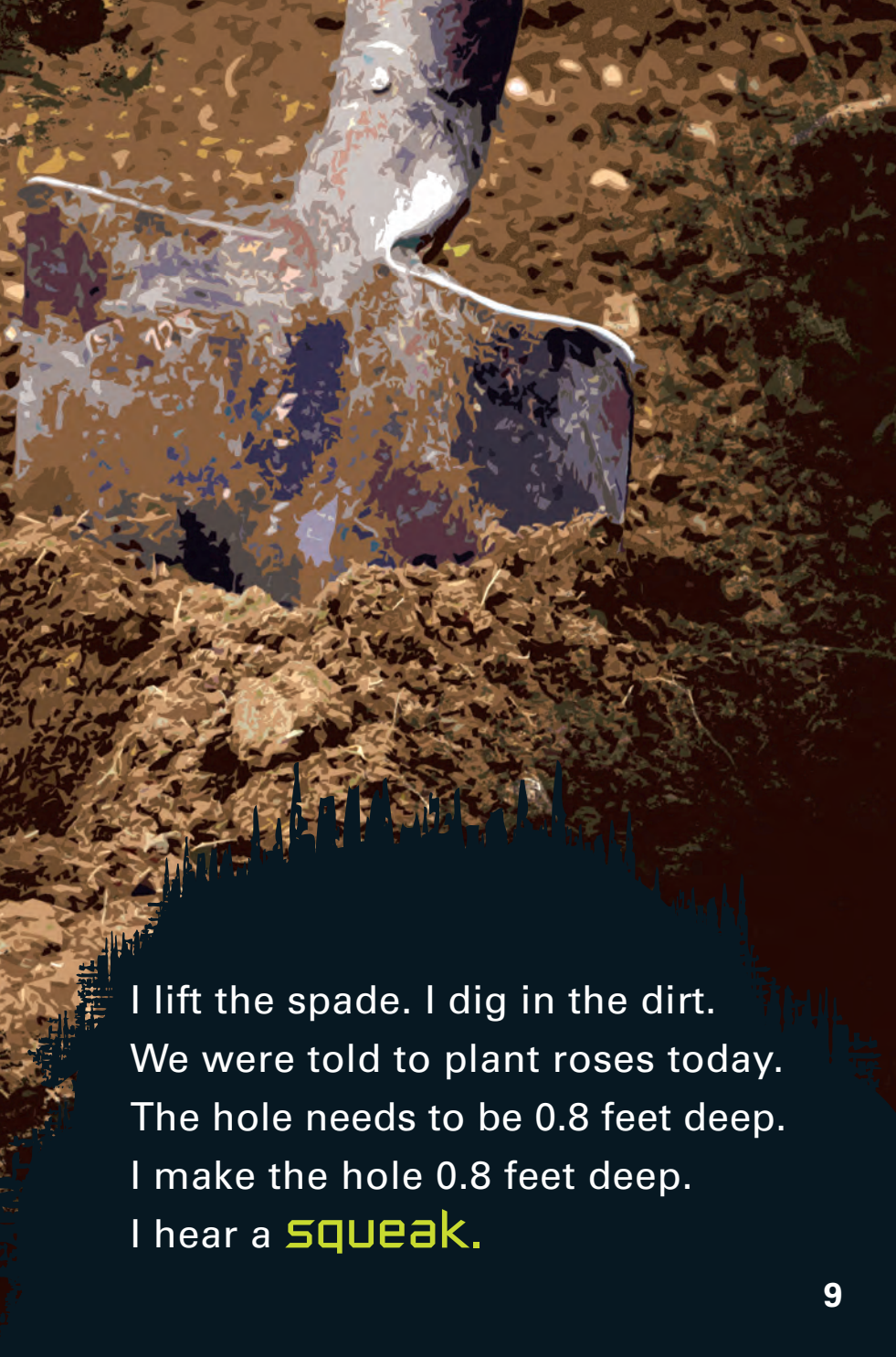


That means I am less human.  
I am an ant.  
I am a bee.  
I am a **worker drone.**

I like how the sun  
warms my cheek.







I lift the spade. I dig in the dirt.  
We were told to plant roses today.  
The hole needs to be 0.8 feet deep.  
I make the hole 0.8 feet deep.  
I hear a **squeak**.



ENGAGE [2] Realistic Life

A black silhouette of a person with long hair, wearing a short-sleeved shirt and pants, walking away from the viewer down a brightly lit hallway. The person is holding a cane in their right hand. The hallway has a yellowish-gold glow, with an 'EXIT' sign visible in the distance. The background is a textured, painterly style.

# *Include Me*

by Evan Jacobs

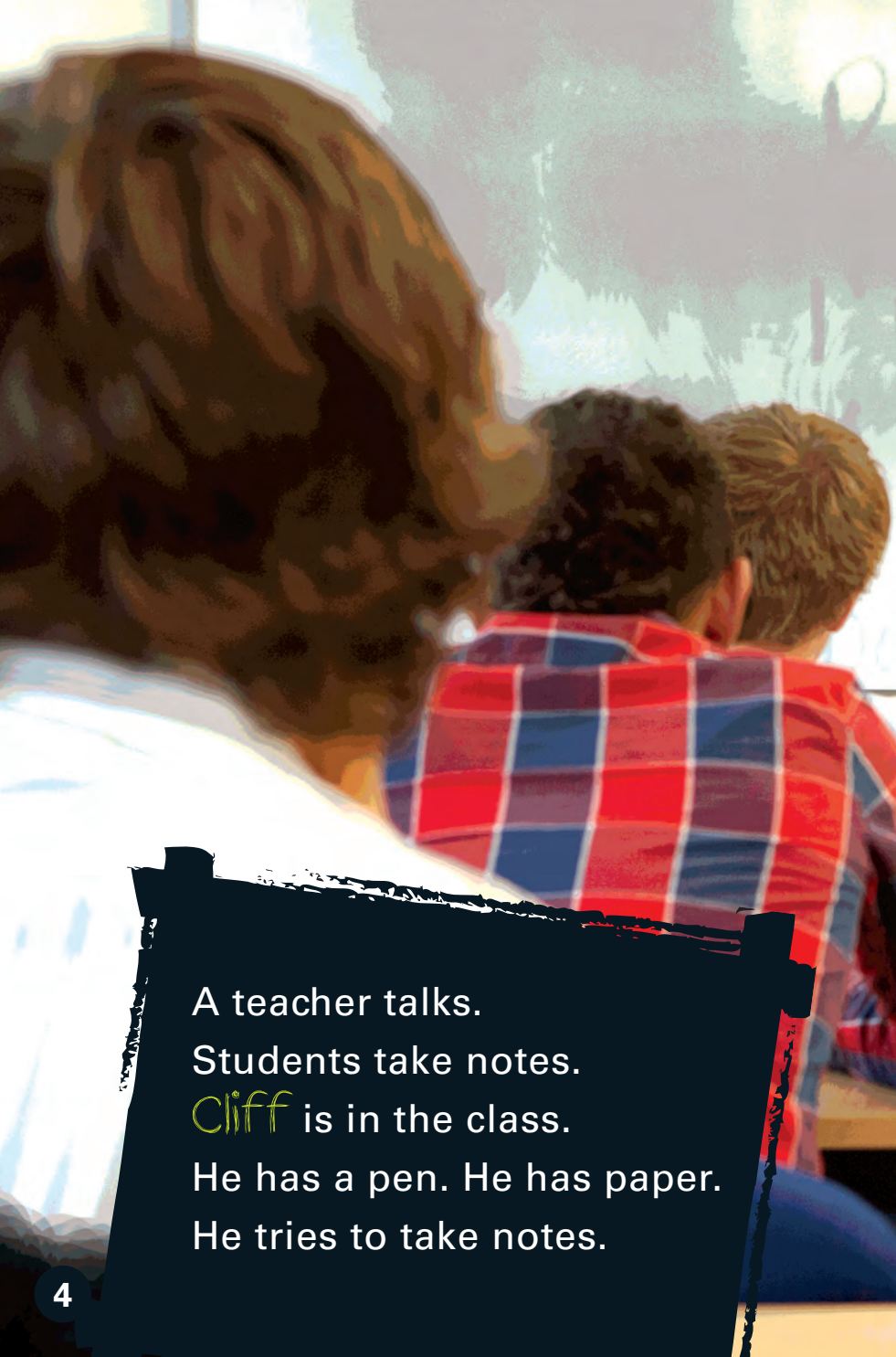
A photograph of a classroom. In the foreground, the back of a student with long brown hair is visible. The background is filled with other students sitting at desks, all of whom are out of focus. In the upper right corner, there is a black rectangular sign with a torn edge, containing white and yellow text.

Words.

They come fast.

Too fast.



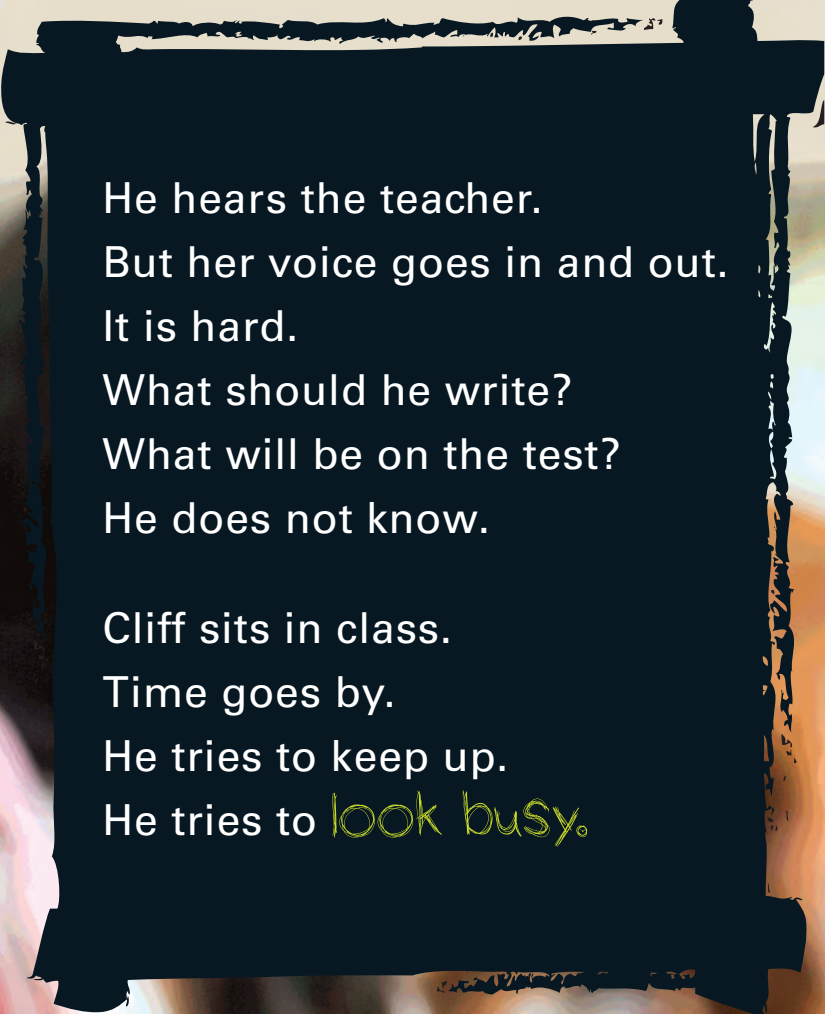


A teacher talks.  
Students take notes.  
Cliff is in the class.  
He has a pen. He has paper.  
He tries to take notes.










He hears the teacher.  
But her voice goes in and out.  
It is hard.  
What should he write?  
What will be on the test?  
He does not know.

Cliff sits in class.  
Time goes by.  
He tries to keep up.  
He tries to look busy.







The bell sounds.  
Cliff stands up.  
Time for his next class.

Cliff walks down the hall.  
He sees Ben.  
He does not talk to him.  
No one does.