“FREEZE! DON’T MOVE,” said Claudia. Her friend Marcus stood perfectly still as Claudia knelt down on the sidewalk in front of him. “What’s the matter?” he asked. “I don’t have

a bug on me, do I?”

“No,” said Claudia. “I found a feather. I didn’t want you to step on it.”

“A feather?” said Marcus. “Big deal. Come on, we’re going to be late for school.”

It was a big deal to Claudia. She was a collector. When she was four years old, her grandpa had given her a tacklebox full of fishing lures. She loved sorting all the lures by color and shape and putting them into separate compartments. After that, she started collecting all kinds of things. Her room was filled with interesting objects she picked up during the day: rocks, coins, string, even paper clips. She had shells from trips to the beach, leaves and pine cones from the trees in her neighborhood, and leftover beads from her mother’s craft projects. Everything she found she put into labeled shoeboxes.

“What are you bringing for Hobby Week?” asked Marcus.

“I don’t know,” said Claudia, as she picked up a brightly colored rock.

“What do you mean, you don’t know?” said Marcus. “Bring one of your collections. You’ve got a million of them!”

Claudia sighed. She wanted to bring one of her collections, but she couldn’t decide which one. The night before, she’d gone through all of her boxes twice. She wanted to bring

something really special for Hobby Week.

When they got to school, Mrs. Wilson said, “O.K., who has a hobby to share?”

Claudia kept her hand down. She watched as Katie brought a big box up to the front of the classroom. “This is my money collection,” said Katie. “My dad travels all around the world for his job, and he brings me money from the different countries he goes to.” She opened the box and took out the coins and paper money. There was money from Canada, Japan, and even Australia! The class looked at all the pictures on the coins. They were surprised that paper money came in so many different colors. Claudia frowned. She really wanted to be in front of the class, sharing her hobby. But which collection should she bring?

The next day, before school, Claudia looked over her shoeboxes again. Claudia’s mother poked her head in the doorway and looked at the rows and rows of shoeboxes that lined Claudia’s room. “If this keeps up, we’re going to have to move your bed out into the hall,” she said smiling.

“I have plenty of room,” Claudia said. “I can stack them all the way to the ceiling if I have to.” She noticed she was running late, so she just decided to bring her biggest collection: her rock collection.

At show-and-tell time Claudia raised her hand, but Mrs. Wilson called on Joseph first. He brought a giant wooden case to the front of the class and opened it up. Claudia groaned. It was the biggest rock collection she’d everseen! The class oohed and aahed at all the pretty and unusual rocks. Claudia did not raise her hand again. She hid her shoebox in her backpack until school was over.

The next day, Claudia brought her prettiest collection: her seashells. At show-and-tell time she raised her hand in the air and waved it around, but Mrs. Wilson called on Annie. Claudia watched as she brought up a big piece of poster board. Annie had glued different shells to it and labeled each one. Claudia slid down in her seat and shoved her box of shells under her desk. The night before the last day of Hobby Week, Claudia emptied her pockets and looked at all of the things she had collected that day. She began to sort everything into several

different piles. Suddenly, she had an idea. She went into the garage to find her old wagon.

The next day, Marcus brought his telescope and his book about the planets. Then Marissa showed the class all the different tricks she could do with her jump rope. “Does anyone else have something to share?” asked Mrs. Wilson. Claudia raised her hand. “Go ahead, Claudia,” said Mrs. Wilson.

Claudia wheeled her wagon to the front of the class. She brought out all of her shoeboxes and laid them on the table. The class murmured. There were so many boxes they barely fit on the table! Claudia opened each box. Everyone stared at the rocks, seashells, leaves, rubber bands, fishing lures, feathers, and beads.

“Wow! Look at all that stuff!” said Joseph.

“I don’t get it,” said Annie. “What’s your hobby?”

“I collect collections,” said Claudia proudly. Everyone laughed.

“Well,” said Mrs. Wilson. “This is definitely the best—and the first—collection of collections I’ve ever seen!”