

Ripples

BUT LIFE DID SETTLE back to normal in Westfield. More leaves fell, Thanksgiving came, then the first snow, then Christmas, and more snow. Fall and winter seemed to calm everything down and drive everyone into their own houses.

Things were calmer at Lincoln Elementary School, too. Frindle-mania was over. But that didn't mean the word was gone. Not at all.

All the kids and even some of the teachers used the new word. At first it was on purpose. Then it became a habit, and by the middle of February, *frindle* was just a word, like *door* or *tree* or *hat*. People in Westfield barely noticed it anymore.

But in the rest of the country, things were hopping. Frindle was on the move. In hundreds of little towns and big cities from coast to coast,

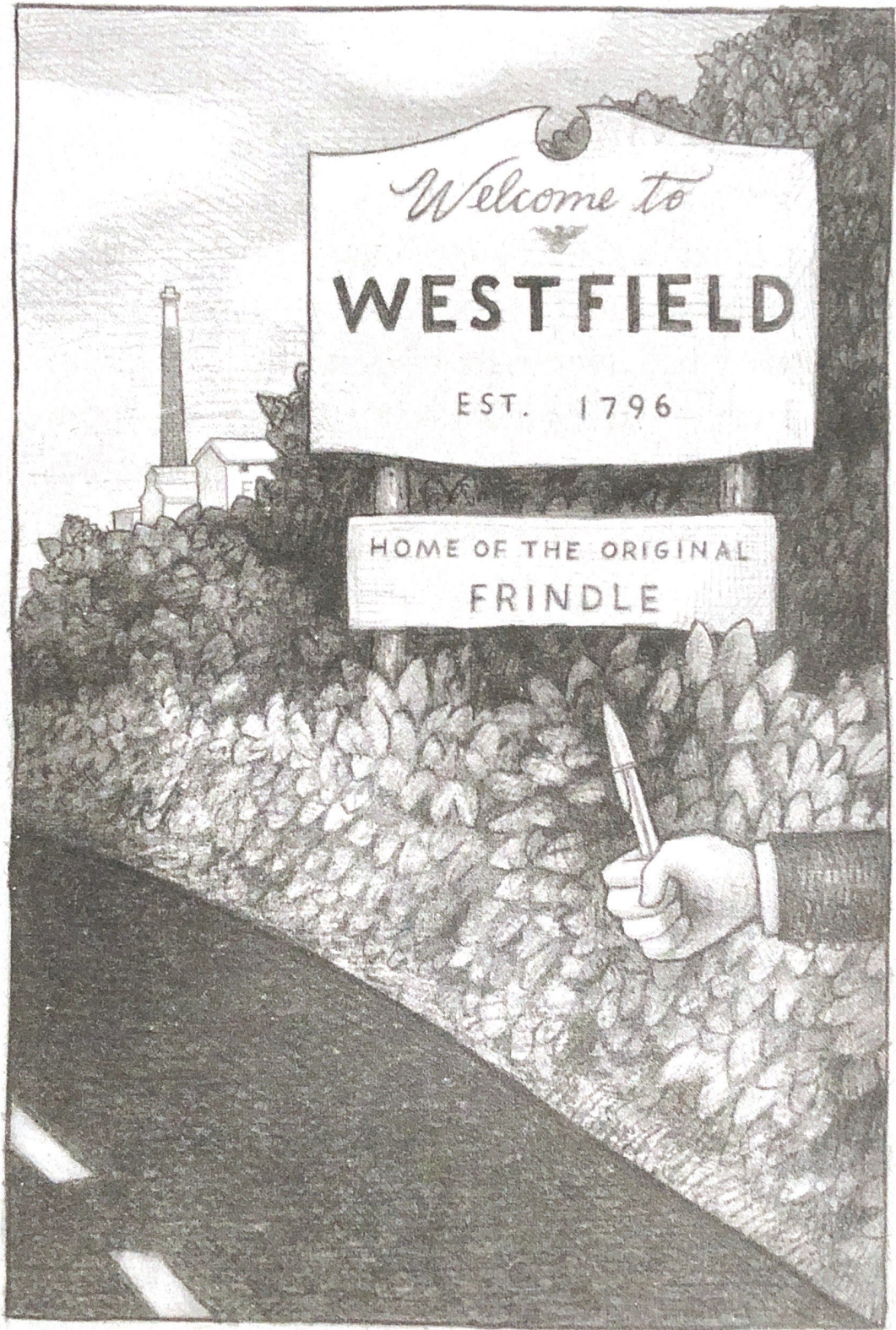
kids were using the new word, and parents and teachers were trying to stop it. What had happened in Westfield happened over and over and over again.

Bud Lawrence couldn't have been happier. There were frindle shirts and sunglasses and erasers and notebooks and paper and dozens of other items. The new line of frindles imported from Japan were a big hit, and now there was talk of selling them in Japan and Europe, as well. The checks that went into Nick's trust fund got bigger and bigger.

Bud opened his own factory in Westfield to make frindle baseball caps, which created jobs for twenty-two people. And in March the town council voted to put up a little sign on the post below the town's name along Route 302. It said, "Home of the Original Frindle."

And Mrs. Granger? She seemed to have given up, or perhaps she had been ordered to. No one knew. Her poster about the forbidden word had quietly disappeared from the bulletin board, and kids were not staying after school writing sentences anymore. It was business as usual.

Except for one thing.



But life did settle back to normal

Everyone in fifth grade got at least one word wrong on his or her spelling test each week. Every week, the first word at the top of Mrs. Granger's list was *pen*. And each Friday during the spelling test, every kid spelled it *f-r-i-n-d-l-e*.

Nick was sort of a celebrity for a while. Everyone had seen him on *The Late Show*, and on *Good Morning, America* and two or three other TV shows. John and Chris and all his friends kept asking about what it was like to ride in a limousine. After a week or two, though, it was old news, and everyone seemed to forget it and move on.

The only person who couldn't quite forget about everything was Nick.