

# BIG

feelings  
come and go



CANADIAN CENTRE for CHILD PROTECTION®  
Helping families. Protecting children.



NEW DIRECTIONS



# Big feelings come and go





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**CANADIAN CENTRE for CHILD PROTECTION®**  
*Helping families. Protecting children.*

The Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc. (Canadian Centre) is a registered charity dedicated to the personal safety of all children. The Canadian Centre offers a number of programs, services and resources for Canadians to help them protect children and reduce their risk of victimization. For more information visit the Canadian Centre website at [www.protectchildren.ca](http://www.protectchildren.ca).



New Directions for Children, Youth, Adults & Families (New Directions) is a non-profit organization providing a combination of services that are responsive to the changing social, psychological, cultural, educational and vocational needs of people in their communities. We offer programming ranging from family counselling to resources for youth, job training to specialized living support, community treatment homes to foster care, and a variety of resources utilized by individuals with intellectual disabilities, the Deaf community and the Indigenous community. For more information visit [www.newdirections.mb.ca](http://www.newdirections.mb.ca).

For more information about children and trauma and how grown-ups can help, please visit [www.makingsenseoftrauma.ca](http://www.makingsenseoftrauma.ca). There is a free webinar ***Making Sense of Trauma: Practical Tools for Responding to Children and Youth*** and additional resources available.

To order books visit [www.protectchildren.ca/order](http://www.protectchildren.ca/order).

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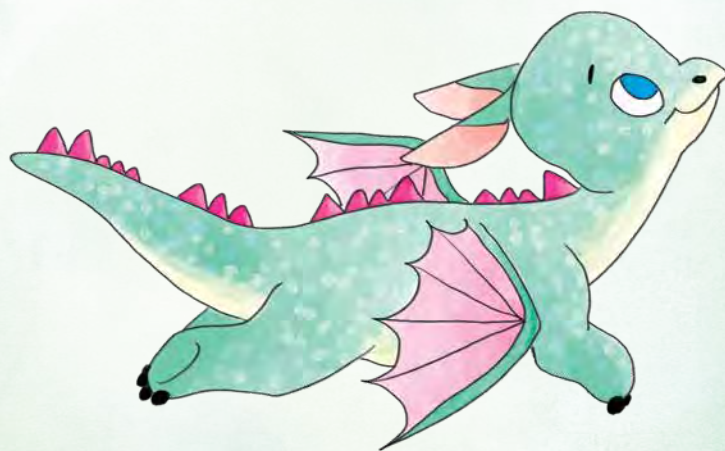
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## **For everyone reading this book**

Thanks so much for taking the time to read this story and learning about freeze, flight, and fight, our bodies' way of protecting us when our feelings get big.

Everyone gets big feelings, grown-ups and kids. Please take all the time you need to read this story. Read it all at once or a bit at a time. Pay attention to what works best for you.

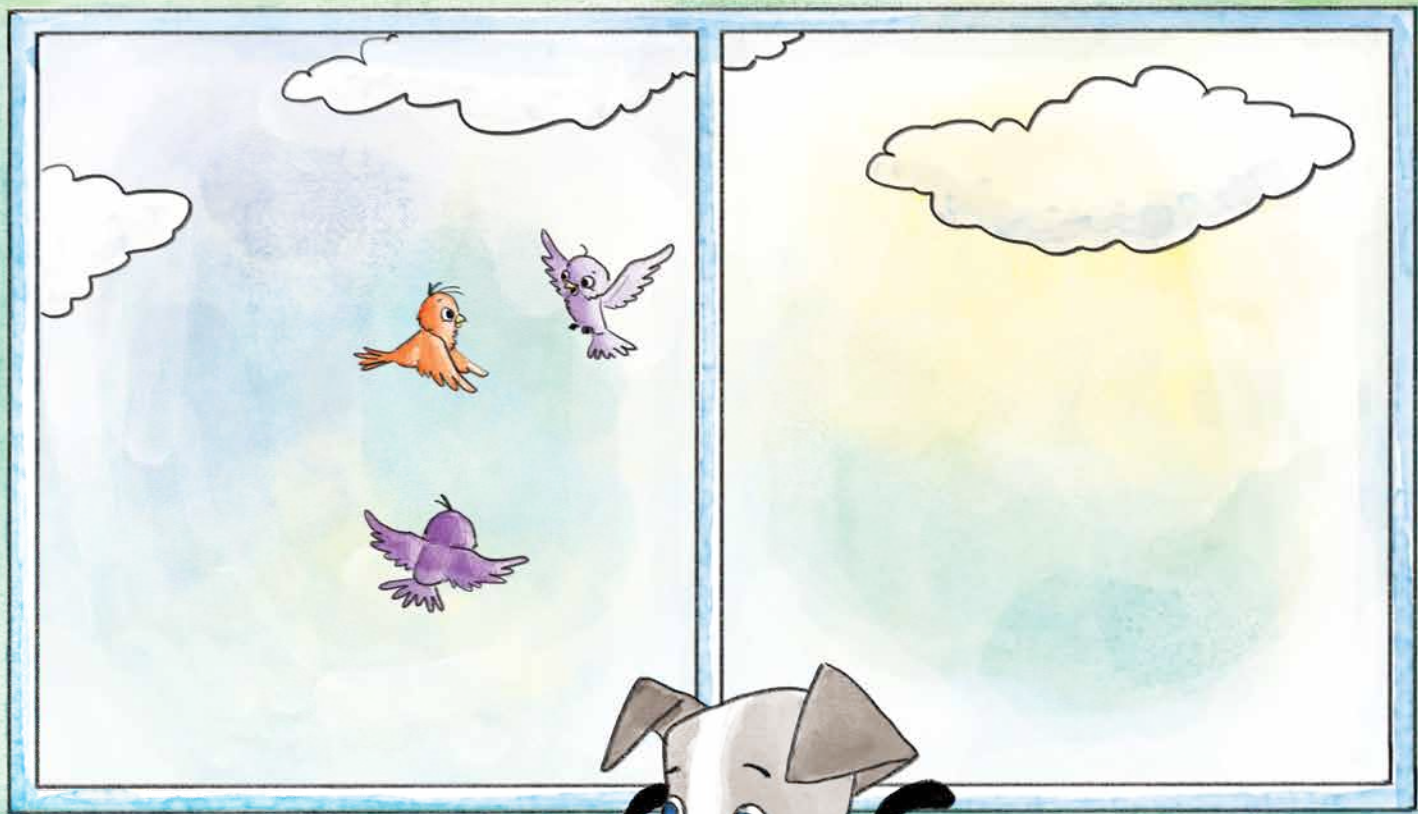




Today we are going to learn about what our bodies do when we feel worried or scared and our feelings get big.









We have a part in our brain that is like an alarm called the **amygdala**.





It goes off by itself when  
we feel worried or scared.

It helps protect us.





We go into freeze, flight, or fight  
when the alarm in our brain goes off.



Sometimes we feel like  
we can't move or think.

That's called **freeze**.



Sometimes we feel like  
we want to get away.

That's called **flight**.



And sometimes we feel like  
we want to hit and yell.

That's called **fight**.



We are going to learn and practice what to do when the amygdala sounds the alarm.





Grown-ups and kids all go into freeze, flight, or fight when they feel worried or scared.

This is how our bodies help us.





Let's imagine a dragon looking in the window!  
Our brain sounds the alarm and we go into **freeze**...

Freeze is when our feelings get big  
and we can't run or fight.

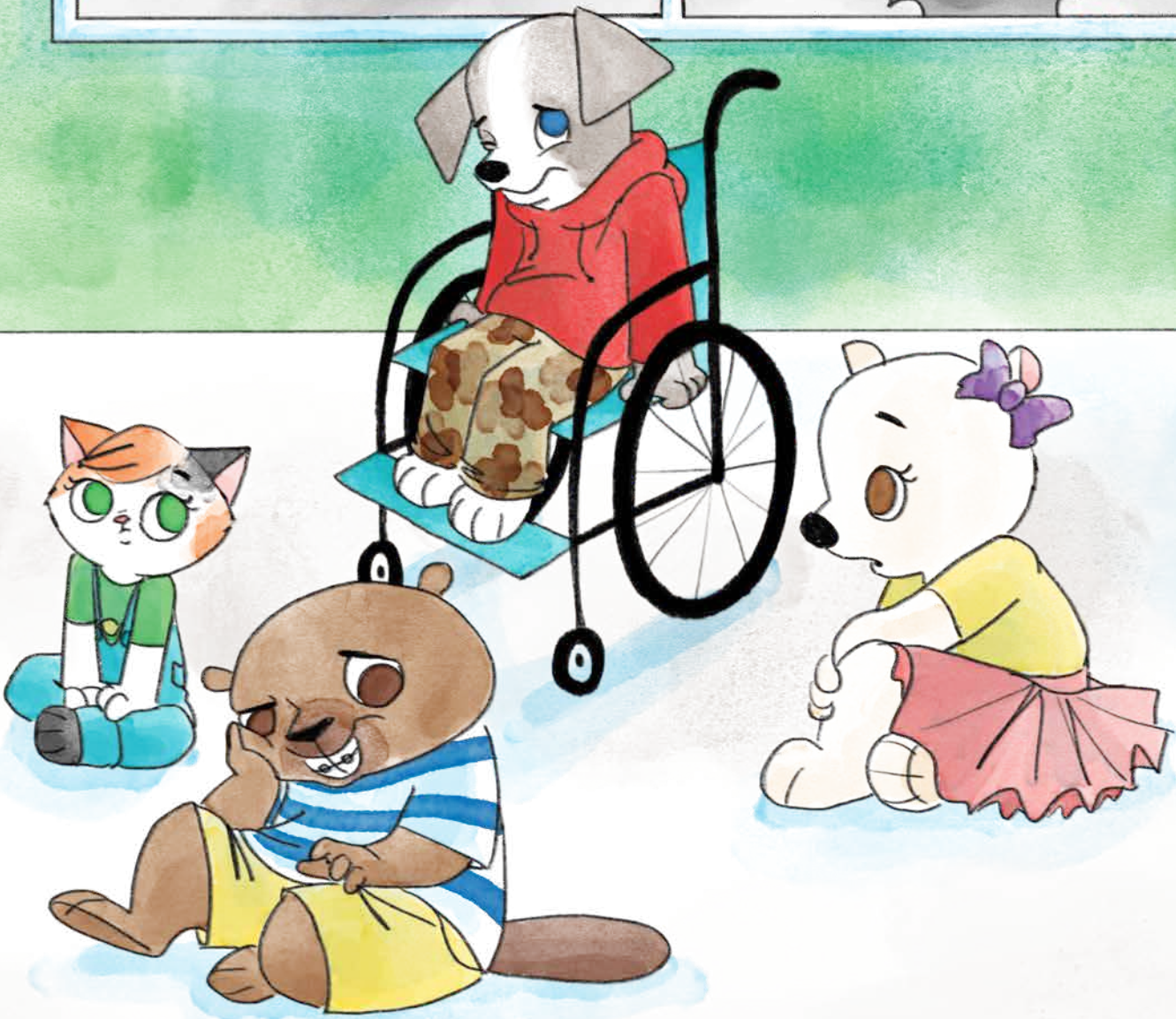
Our heart beats faster and our breathing speeds up.

Everybody goes into freeze  
a little differently.

Imagine...what does  
freeze feel like for you?









I would  
feel like...



...my head  
is floating



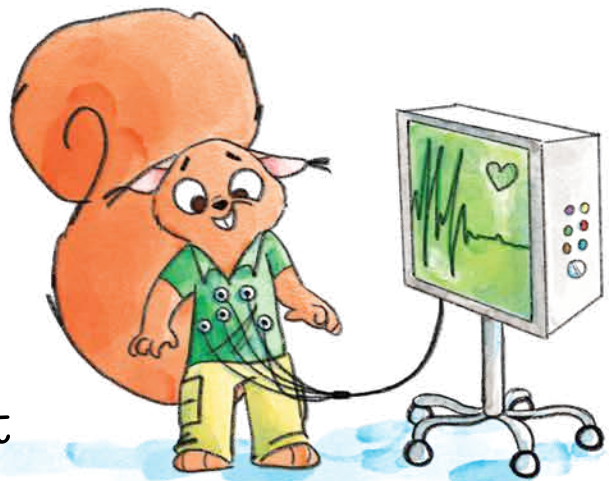
...my heart  
is beating faster  
and then so quiet  
I can't hear it



...disappearing



...I am stuck







...making myself  
very little

...I am frozen



...I am invisible



...I can't get  
my words out





We settle our bodies after feeling worried or scared.

Here is what we can do.

Look around and count **three blue things** in the room.



Take a **breath in...** and a long slow **breath out.**

Take another **breath in...** and a long slow **breath out.**







Notice if you are **sitting** on something **hard or soft**. Wiggle **your toes**.



Take one more **breath in...** and a long slow **breath out**.





Notice how your body feels as it settles.

Your heart and your breath slow down  
as the alarm gets quieter.

Big feelings come and go,  
like clouds floating by.







Now, this time when we imagine a dragon looking in the window, our brain sounds the alarm and we go into **flight**...

Flight is when our feelings get big and we want to move and even run away!

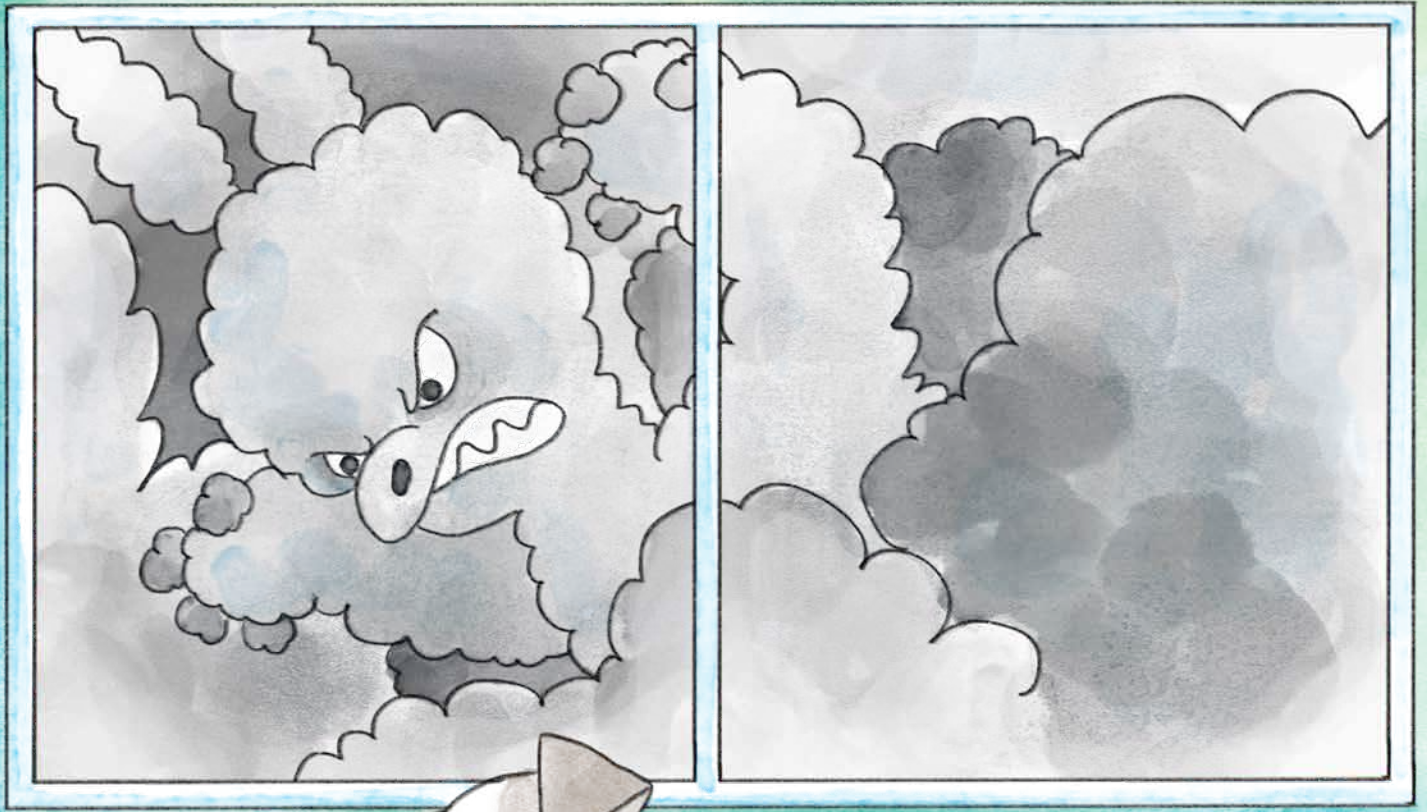
Our heart beats faster, our breathing speeds up and our legs might feel jumpy.

Everybody goes into flight a little differently.

Imagine...what does flight feel like for you?







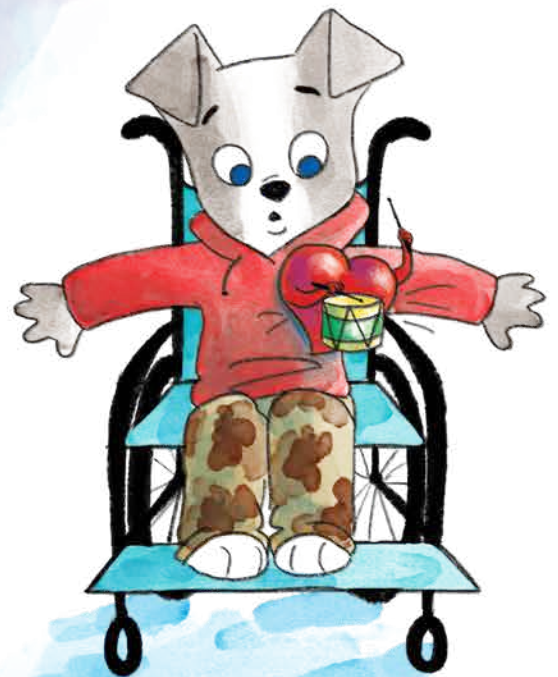


I would  
feel like...

...I want to get  
far, far away



...I want to run  
like a racehorse



...my heart is pounding  
like a drum



...jumping out  
of my skin



...I can't catch  
my breath



...I am dizzy



...talking as fast  
as a runaway train



...I want to escape  
as fast as I can





We settle our bodies after feeling worried or scared.

Here is what we can do.

First, **curl your toes**. Notice how the muscles in your legs tighten.



Let your toes **relax**.



Take a **breath in...** and a long slow **breath out**.



Now take another **breath in...**  
and a long slow **breath out.**

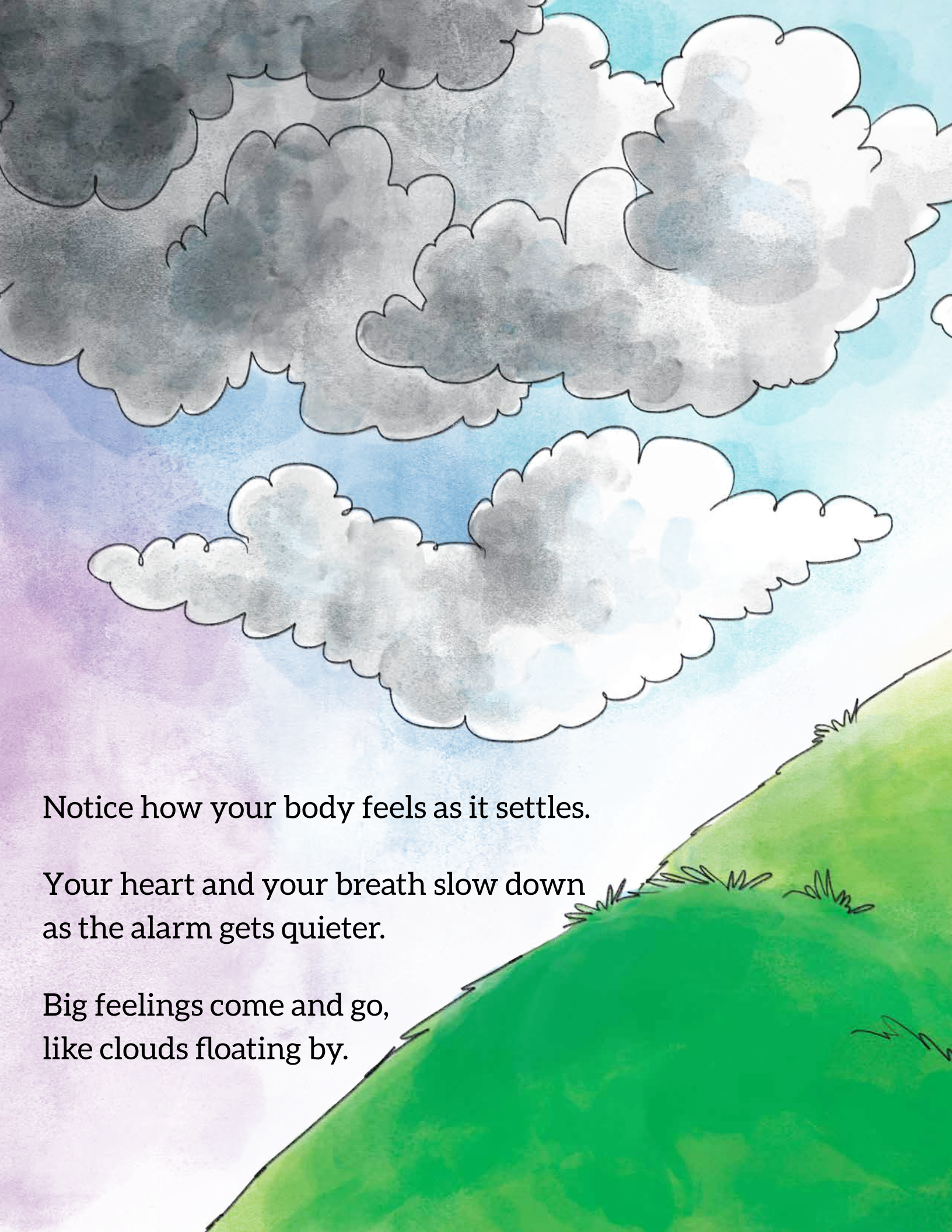


Notice if you are **sitting** on something  
**hard or soft.** Wiggle **your toes.**

Take one more **breath in...**  
and a long slow **breath out.**





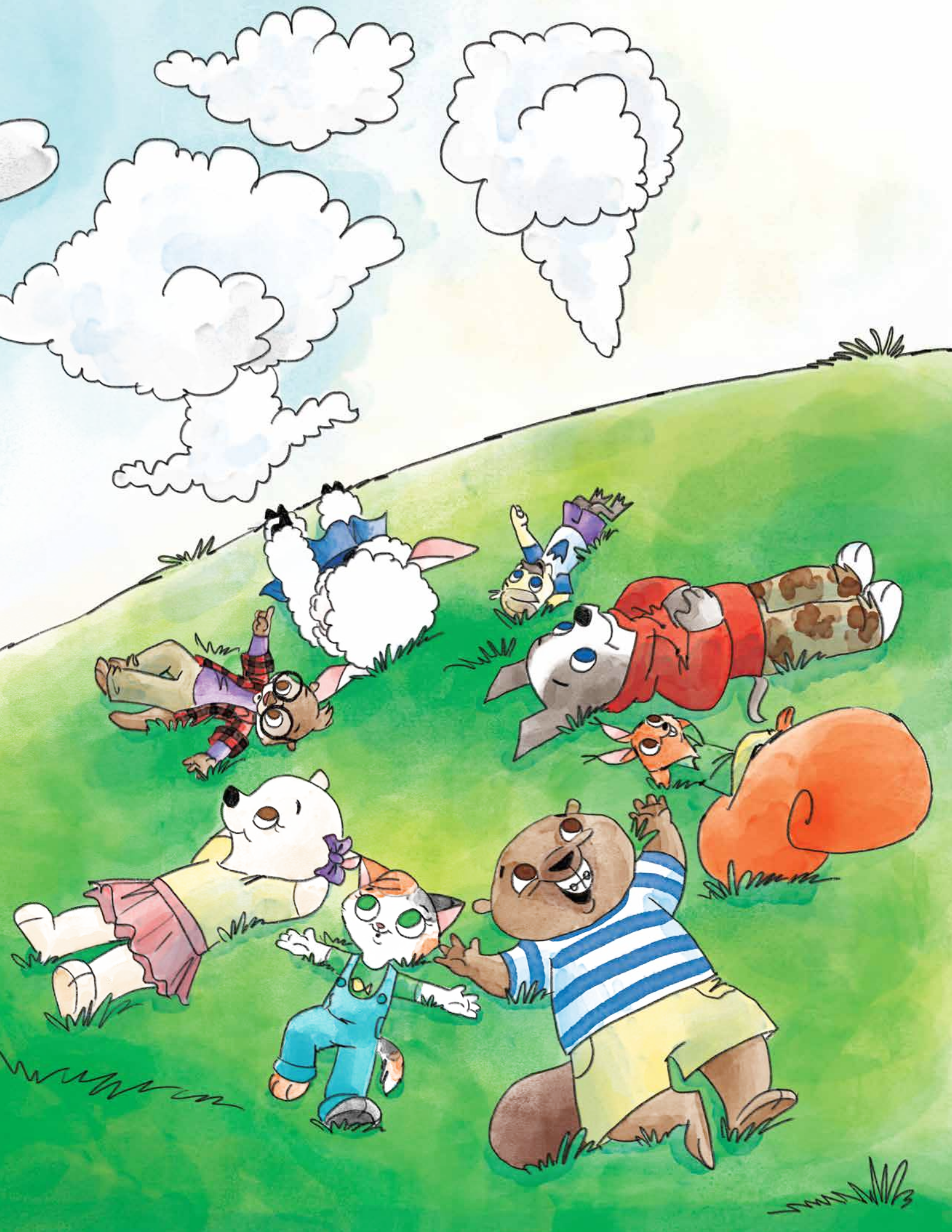


Notice how your body feels as it settles.

Your heart and your breath slow down  
as the alarm gets quieter.

Big feelings come and go,  
like clouds floating by.







Again, this time when we imagine that dragon looking in the window, our brain sounds the alarm and we go into **fight**...

Fight is when our feelings get big and we want to make a fist or stomp our feet!

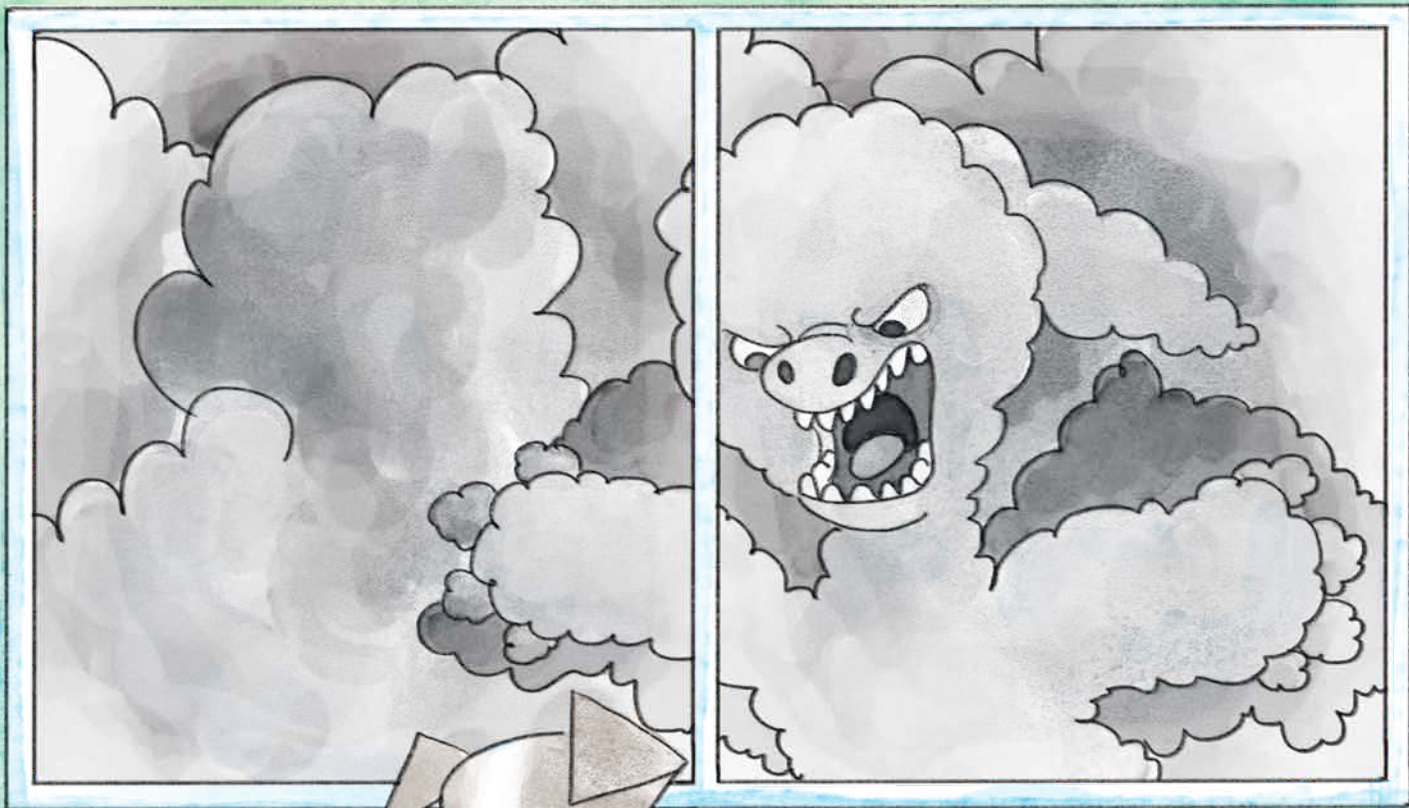
Our heart beats faster and our breathing speeds up.

Everybody goes into fight a little differently.

Imagine...what does fight feel like for you?









I would  
feel like...



...breathing fire



...I want to  
hammer something

...I'm as big  
as a giant







...I want to  
kick and stomp

...fighting  
like a knight



...roaring  
like a lion



...I'm hot  
like a volcano



...wrestling  
like a gorilla





We settle our bodies after feeling worried or scared.

Here is what we can do.



**Push your hands together**  
like you are squishing a ball...  
**breathe in...** and then **let go.**

Now take a **breath in...**  
and a long slow **breath out.**







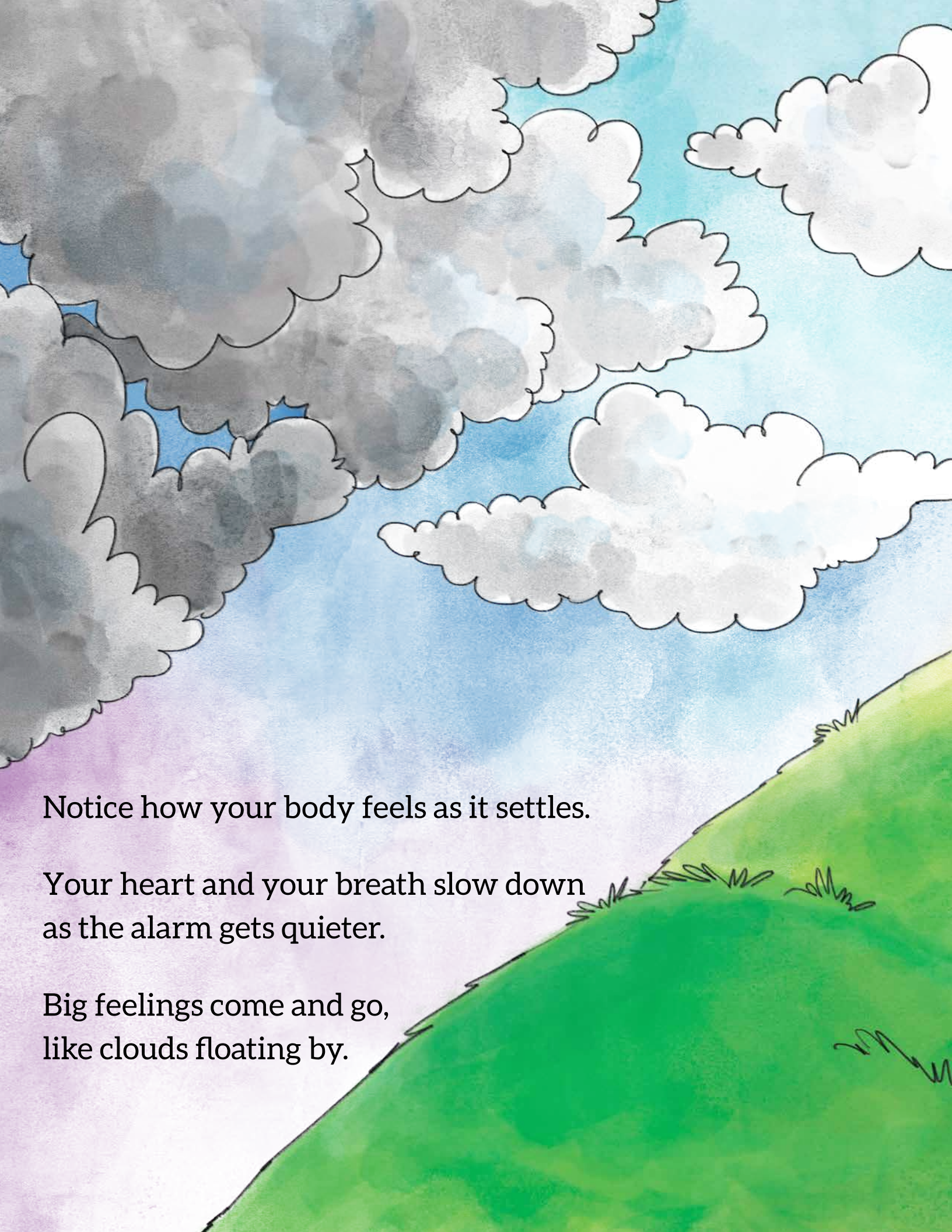
Now take another **breath in...**  
and a long slow **breath out.**

Notice if you are **sitting** on  
something **hard or soft.**  
Wiggle **your toes.**



Take one more **breath in...**  
and a long slow **breath out.**





Notice how your body feels as it settles.

Your heart and your breath slow down  
as the alarm gets quieter.

Big feelings come and go,  
like clouds floating by.



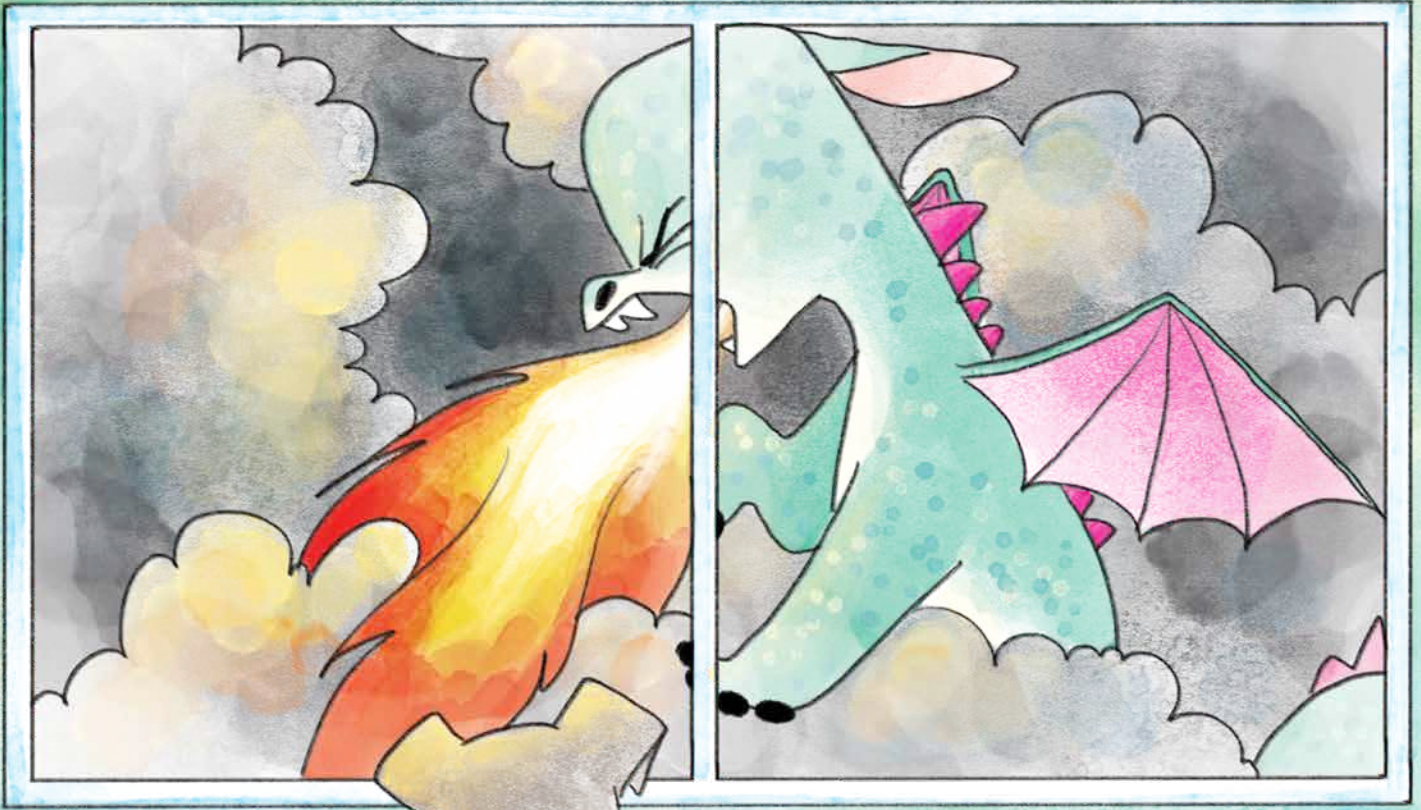




Look,  
there really is  
**a dragon**  
at the window!



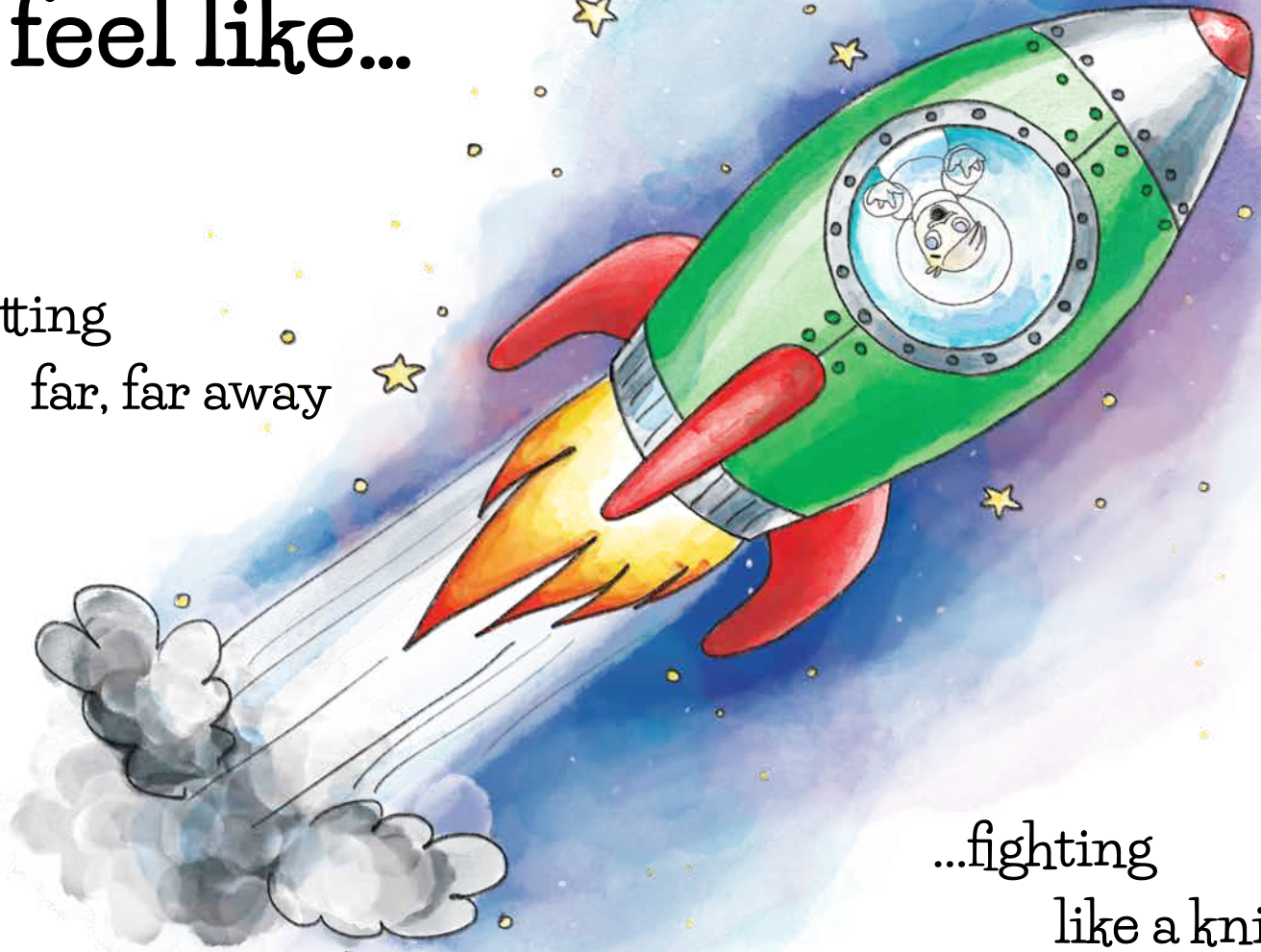






# I feel like...

...getting  
far, far away



...fighting  
like a knight

...being invisible



...I can't get  
my words out







...running  
like a racehorse



...my head  
is floating



...I'm hot  
like a volcano

...I want to escape  
as fast as I can





It's okay. It's a lost dragon.  
The Dragon Keeper  
will call its parents.







That was scary seeing the  
dragon outside the window.

Our bodies did what  
they needed to do.





Let's practice settling  
our bodies after feeling  
worried or scared.



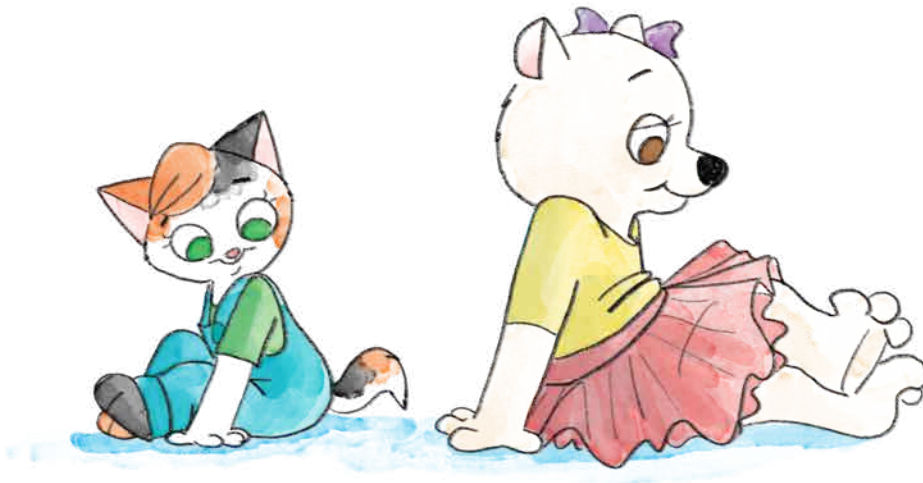
Take a **breath in...** and  
a long slow **breath out.**

Take another **breath in...**  
and a long slow **breath out.**





Notice if we are **sitting** on something **hard or soft**. Wiggle **our toes**.



Take one more **breath in...**  
and a long slow **breath out**.





What does your body want to do now  
when you feel **settled and safe**?









# I notice that I...



...laugh  
like a monkey

...want to play



...can take  
a big breath



...am in charge  
of my feelings

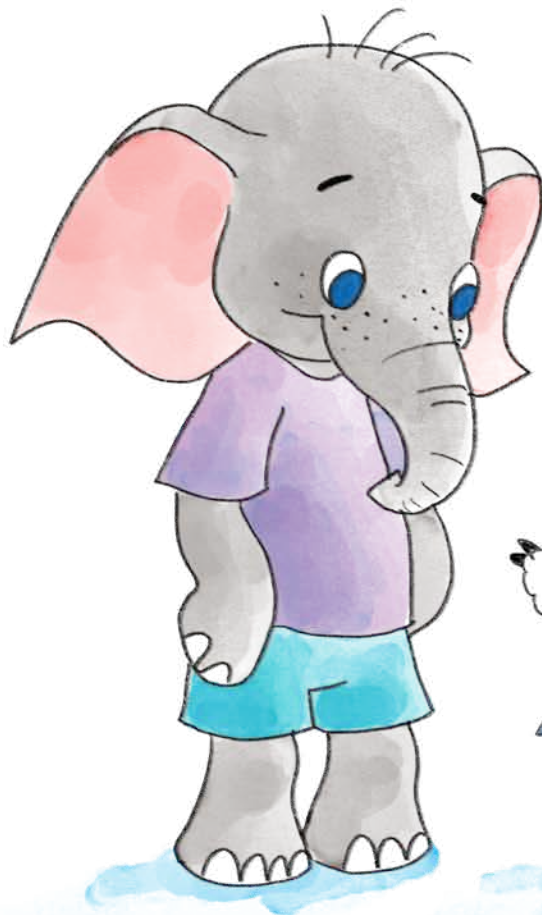


...am curious  
like a detective

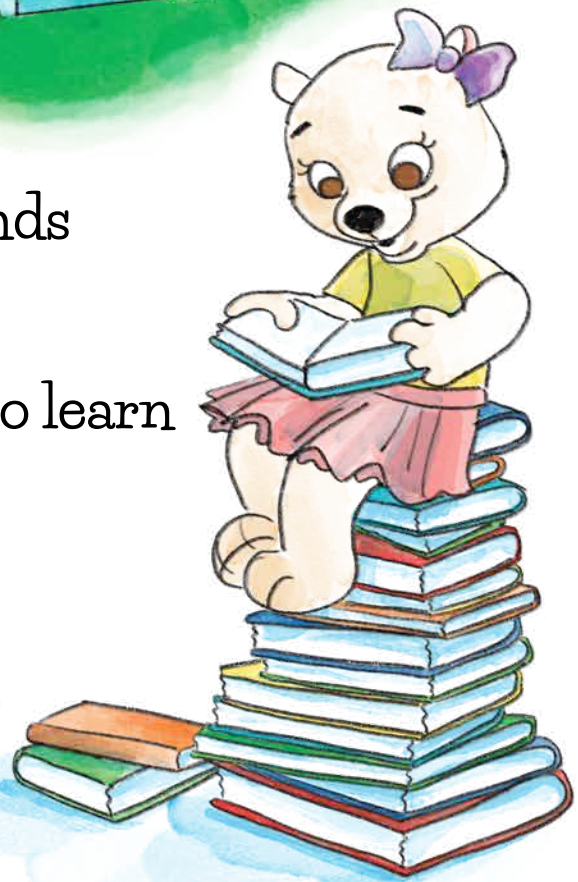




...am silly  
with my friends




...want to learn



...can speak so people hear  
and understand my words





Aren't you proud you know  
how to settle your bodies  
and turn down the alarm?

We know we can manage our  
feelings when they get big.





Now let's go out and play!





