

I AM FEELING SHY

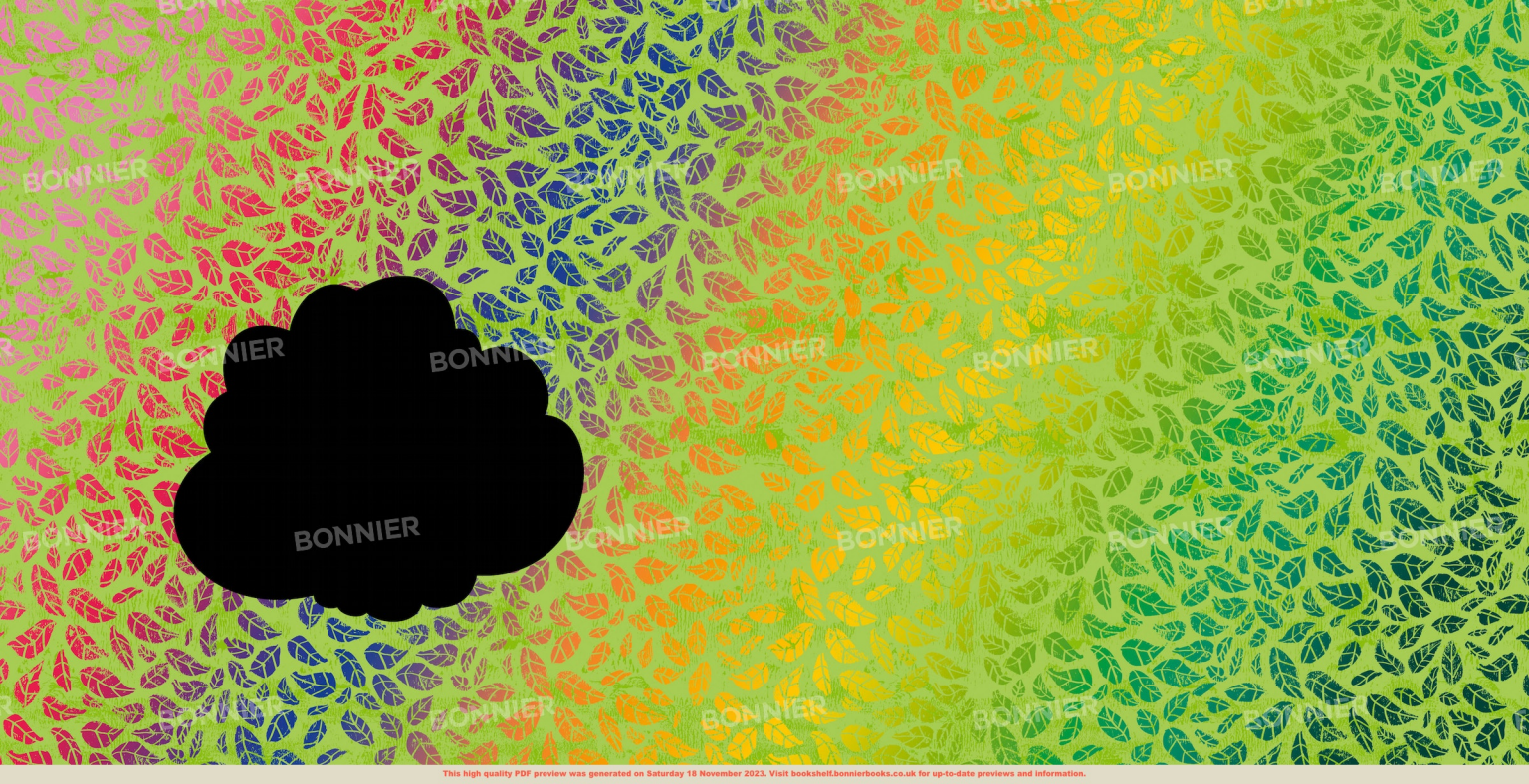
A
peek-through
book



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I AM FEELING SHY

A STUDIO PRESS BOOK

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FSC DUMMY

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Is someone hiding
behind that bush?



“Hello!
Would you like to
come out and play?”

It's a dinosaur,
and it's trying to hide!



"I have a book
we could read together,
or a ball. We could play catch!"

"Are you feeling shy? That's okay!
Everyone feels shy sometimes."



"I remember when I felt shy.
I didn't want to go outside to play."



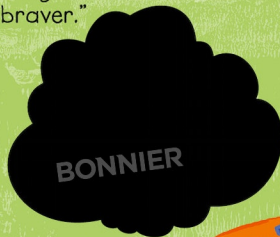
"My friends helped me by playing
in front of the window
where I could see them."



"I watched them playing and I realised I wanted to play too!"



"Soon, I began to feel braver."



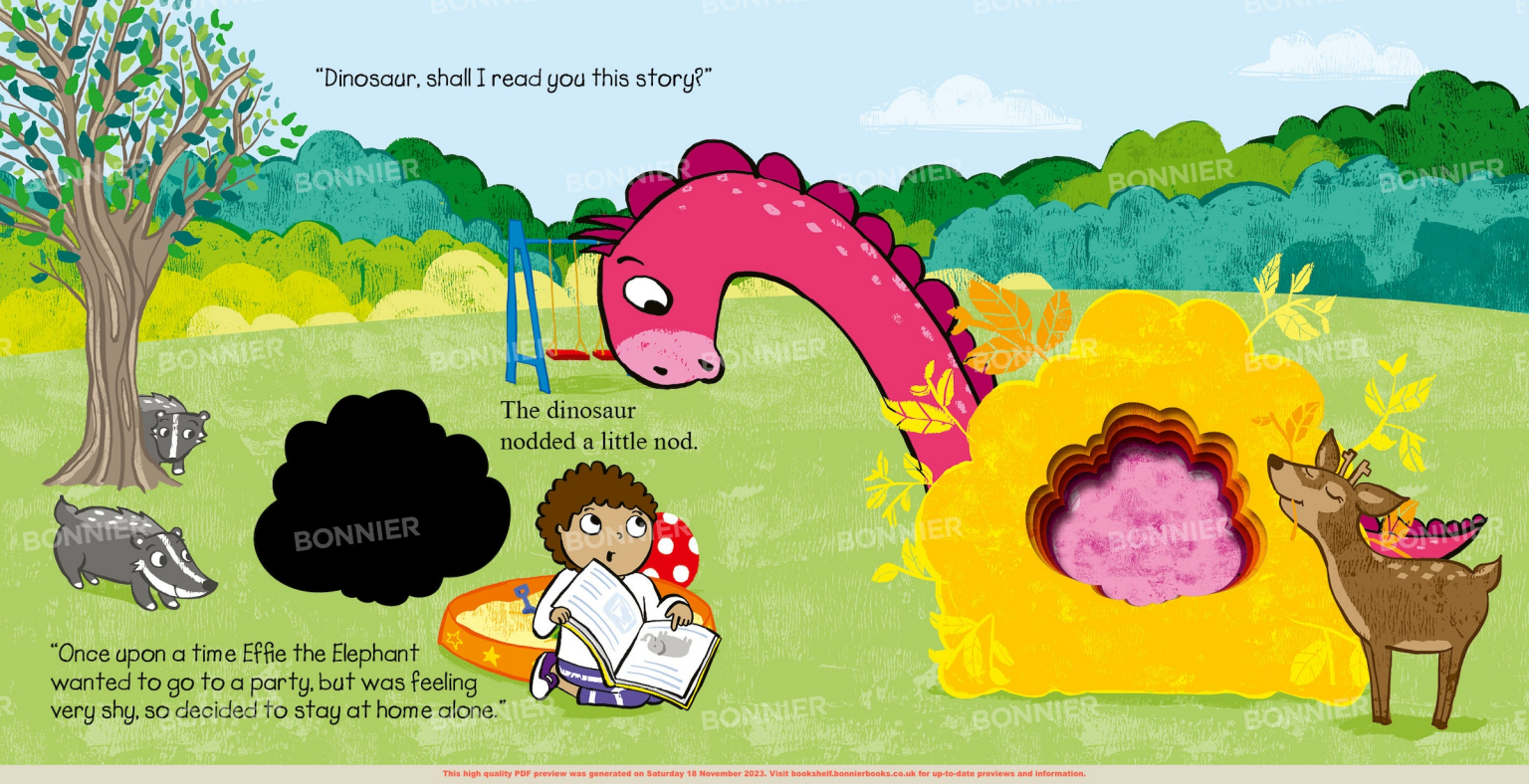
"One day I went out to play with them. It was so much fun!"



"Dinosaur, shall I read you this story?"

The dinosaur
nodded a little nod.

"Once upon a time Effie the Elephant
wanted to go to a party, but was feeling
very shy, so decided to stay at home alone."



"Dinosaur, do you think Effie might feel lonely?"

The dinosaur nodded a nod that was just a little bit bigger than last time.

"It's okay to feel shy about going somewhere new, but it's also important to go out and have fun!"



"Dinosaur, do you think it would help Effie Elephant to practise what to say at the party?"

The dinosaur nodded a nod that was a lot bigger than last time.

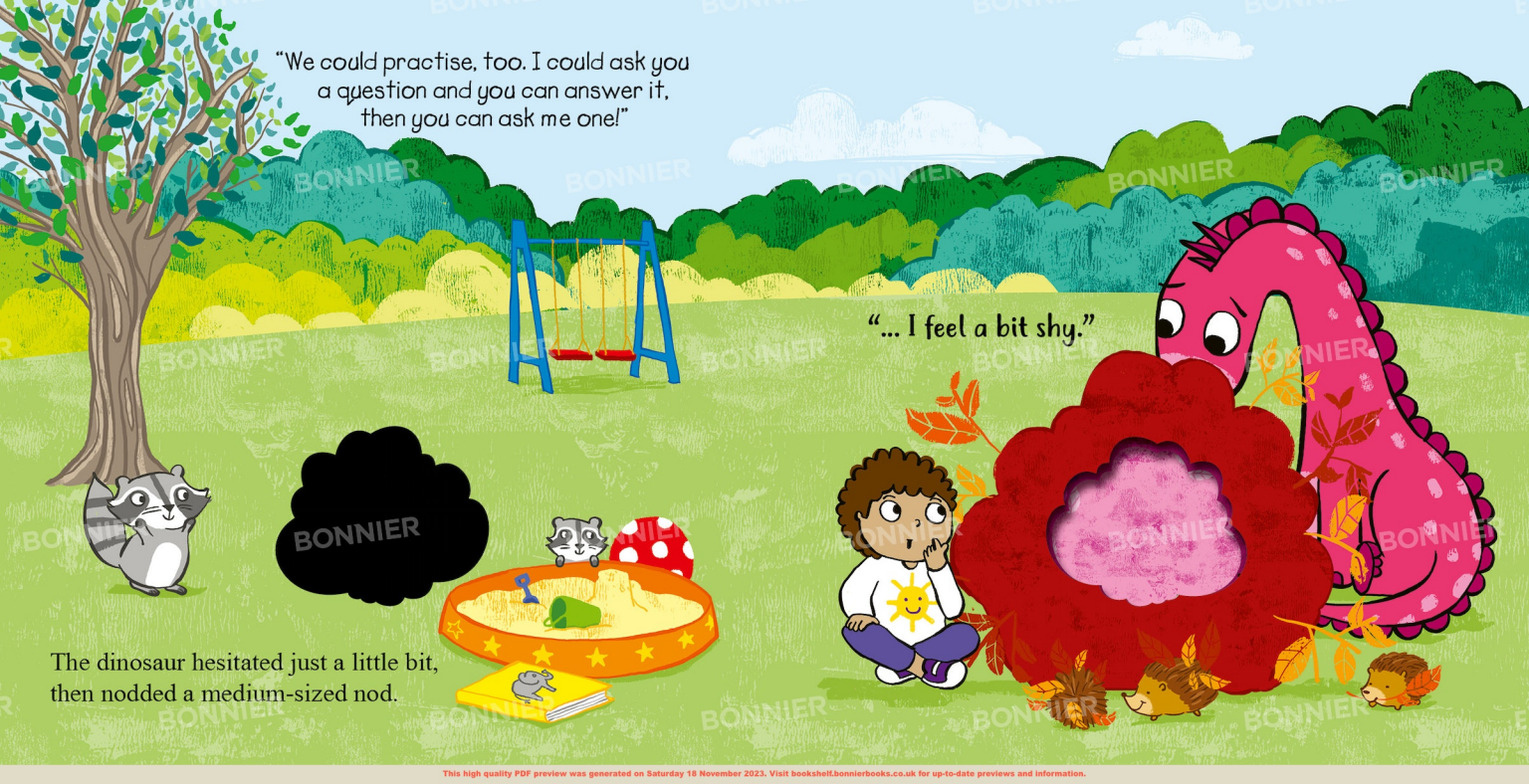
"Effie could say, Hello, my name is Effie. What's your name?"



"We could practise, too. I could ask you a question and you can answer it, then you can ask me one!"

"... I feel a bit shy."

The dinosaur hesitated just a little bit, then nodded a medium-sized nod.



"That's okay. We all feel shy sometimes.
Now it's your turn to ask me a question."

"Do you want
to be my friend?"

"Yes, I do!"



"I feel happy because I have
a new friend to play with!"

"Dinosaur, would you
like to meet some
more friends?"

The dinosaur nodded a big nod.



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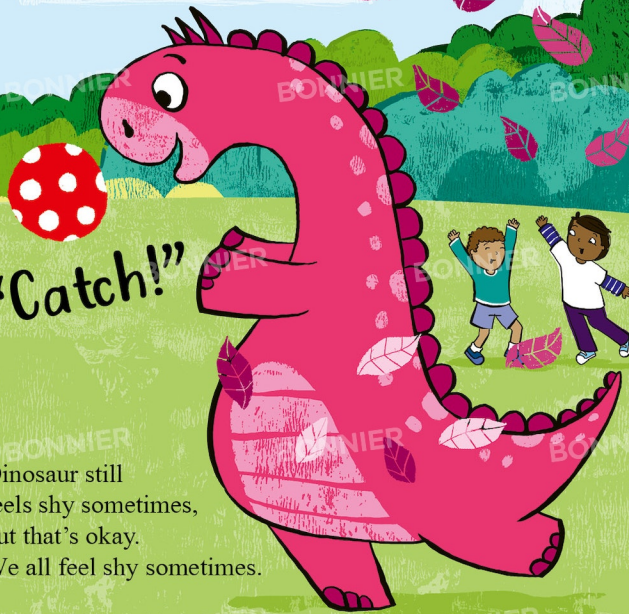
"They might be feeling shy too."
"Hello! Would you like to play with us?"



The new friends nodded a little nod,
and the little dinosaur smiled a big smile.

"Catch!"

Dinosaur still
feels shy sometimes,
but that's okay.
We all feel shy sometimes.



NOTES FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

Occasional shyness is an appropriate adaptive response that most people will experience at some time in their lives. Shyness in children is part of their natural development. To feel shy is a normal response, if or when a child feels anxious in a social situation. Many children will naturally manage the challenges of feeling shy – it will not impede them in play or in other forms of social interaction. But for other children, the feeling of shyness may be overwhelming and inhibit aspects of their lives. This can lead to the development of certain behaviours or coping mechanisms, such as:

- Hiding away and refusing to leave the hiding place
- Not making eye contact and instead looking around or at the ground when faced with people, whether they are familiar or unfamiliar
- Refusing to speak voluntarily in a social situation
- Watching but not joining in with other children playing together
- Feeling hot and uncomfortable in the face of what feels like an awkward situation
- Being overwhelmed with dread about something in the future
- A sense of self-dislike or hatred
- Feeling envy towards others

In some cases, this feeling of shyness and the consequent behaviours can cause a lot of concern for parents and carers – it can be difficult to understand it and know how to manage it.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The story in this book is about shyness, written to reassure readers that shyness is an acceptable feeling and not something to be ashamed of. The thinking behind the story is simple: name it to tame it. By naming the feeling of being shy, the characters are able to better understand and manage the feeling, rather than the feeling managing them. In the story, the little dinosaur is gradually able to move away from feelings of being alone with a difficult and potentially shameful feeling, towards a state of being content with its shyness.

The story was purposefully written in the first person to encourage a sense of self-agency, awareness of how others are feeling and how we respond to them. The aim of the story is to help children with shy feelings acknowledge and accept these feelings and recognise that others may also have these feelings. This can help the reader feel less alone, and to find a path through the difficulties without being overwhelmed by the obstacles along the way. Shyness can also often be misconstrued as rudeness and lead to a child being ignored or actively rejected by other children. This can trigger a negative spiral of difficult interactions as the child may then feel that the others do not like them or want to play with them.

We recommend that you read this story with your child, using the story to support your child with their feelings of being shy. We encourage you as a parent or carer not to label the child as a 'shy child', but to name the feeling as a 'shy feeling', and to empathise with this feeling. It is important, if possible, to connect to such a feeling and reflect on times in your own life when you might have also felt shy, rather than immediately trying to correct the behaviour. You can then move forward slowly, exposing your child to new and different social situations but never pushing them into more overwhelming social situations that they may not yet be ready for. Keep a dialogue going with your child to enable them to manage their feelings and face the challenges of social interactions.

You might also prepare your child, for example, by acting out a meeting with friends first. Rehearse what you might say and how you can respond especially with the initial hellos and 'breaking the ice'. This is often the most difficult and shocking moment for a person who feels shy. Liken the experience to that of jumping into a cold swimming pool and the likely initial response to the temperature of the water. After a period of time, the body adapts and the water gradually feels less cold. Draw your child's attention to the appropriateness of the initial feeling of discomfort alongside the determination to stick it out and adapt, until they are able to manage and overcome the challenge.

Shyness is a very common feeling that most children experience at some point in their development. It is important to remember that it is generally a temporary issue which can gradually be managed and overcome with appropriate support. Extreme feelings of shyness can make it difficult for some children to develop friendships and navigate social interactions. If not addressed, this can become problematic, triggering behaviours which may persist into adulthood. Sometimes, as a parent or carer, you might need to seek additional professional advice.

We hope that you find this book useful.

Leslie Ironside and Haia Ironside