

I AM FEELING SCARED

A
lift-the-flap
book



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I AM FEELING SCARED

A STUDIO PRESS BOOK

First published in the UK in 2022 by Studio Press,
an imprint of Bonnier Books UK,
4th Floor, Victoria House, Bloomsbury Square, London WC1B 4DA
Owned by Bonnier Books,
Sveavägen 56, Stockholm, Sweden

www.bonnierbooks.co.uk

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1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

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ISBN 978-17874-1-783-0

FSC DUMMY

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A CIP catalogue for this book is available from the British Library
Printed and bound in China




STUDIO
PRESS



"Come on
Little Dinosaur,
it's time for bed."

"But it's so dark,
and I can see a
big, scary monster!
I don't want to go in!"

"Don't worry, it's just a pile of toys."



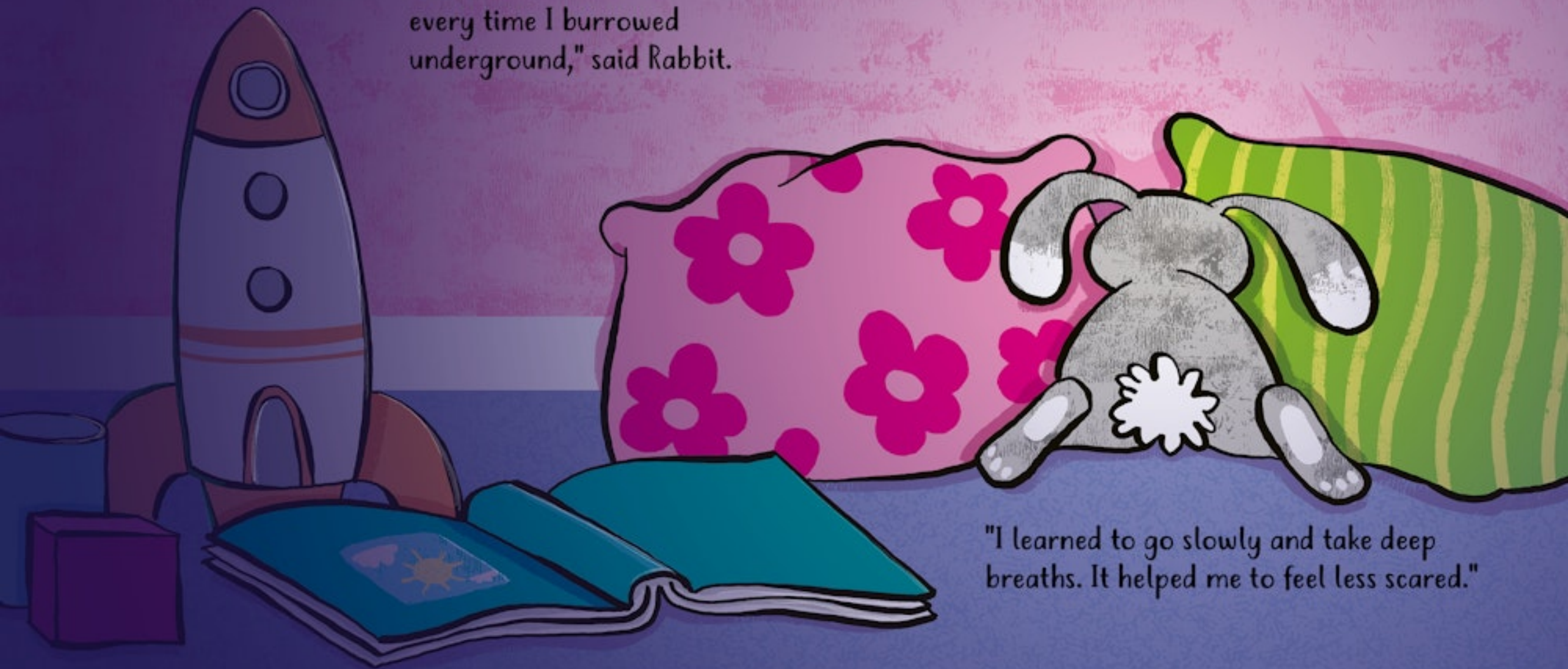
"No, it's a monster!
Look at its **BIG** horns and
SPIKY tail! It's going to eat us!"



"Little Dinosaur,
it's OK to feel scared.
Everyone feels scared
sometimes."

"I feel scared if I hear a loud BANG! My body
feels tense and I hold my breath!"

"I used to feel scared
every time I burrowed
underground," said Rabbit.



"I learned to go slowly and take deep
breaths. It helped me to feel less scared."

"I feel scared every time I climb up high," said Monkey.

"My friend told me feeling scared helps us to stay safe. I've learned to keep my balance, but I sometimes still feel scared."



Sometimes I feel scared of the dark, and I
use my magic torch.

You can use it too.








"But I'm too scared
to sleep."

"It's OK to feel scared.
It helps to keep us safe."

"Me too!"

"Let's all take a deep breath
together. In... and out..."

A cartoon illustration of a child with dark skin and short brown hair lying in bed. The child is wearing a brown long-sleeved shirt with white stars and is holding a grey magic torch. A bright yellow beam of light from the torch illuminates a grey rabbit toy on a yellow dresser. On the dresser is a large yellow star. The child is also holding a green dinosaur and a brown monkey toy. The bed has a blue blanket with white polka dots. The room has purple walls with four framed pictures: a sailboat, a girl, a tree, and a flower. On the floor are a yellow toy horse, a grey saddle, a blue rocket, and two small blue cars.

"Shall we use the magic torch
to look at the monster again?"

"Is this what was scaring you?
Do you see my Viking helmet?
And my teddy?"



"I see your teddy
and your toy snake!"





"If you ever feel scared of
the dark again, you can use
the magic torch."

"It will help us
feel less scared!"

"Do you see how different
the toys look without
the torch on?"

"We can all feel safe and sleep tight tonight."



"And when we wake up we can play with all of our favourite toys!"

NOTES FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

Feeling scared is one of humanity's most innate and necessary responses. For hundreds of thousands of years, feeling scared helped us to stay safe and alert to the world around us. There are many instances in which feeling scared is the natural response. Let's take total darkness, or feeling like you are alone and lost. In both scenarios, the feeling of being scared is both a learnt and natural response – your brain is trying to keep you safe.

Now, let's explore these examples in a little more detail. Perhaps the total darkness is because it is night-time, and the lights have been switched off. You might feel scared because everything around you looks different. Your breath might be quicker, your body tense and your eyes wide as you are alert and ready for your worst nightmares to appear. Perhaps in time you can manage this feeling – slowing your breath, relaxing your muscles and softening your gaze until you feel calmer. But if you can't, then that feeling of being scared might grow and grow until it overwhelms you.

By ages two and three, children are typically beginning to engage in pretend play and explore their imagination. This is a really important stage of learning and development as we gradually begin to make sense of the world around us. By age five or six, we are likely to have developed a vivid imagination along with a wealth of experience to inform it. We are beginning to understand what it means to feel scared, based on our experience of feeling it. We might even be able to name some of the sensations of feeling scared, such as tightness or shortness of breath. You can help your child to develop this understanding by modelling. For example, if you feel scared you can share that with your child. You could say, "I feel scared. Look – my body is very tense." Alternatively, if your child seems to be feeling scared, you can label the feeling for them. You could say, "You feel scared." Remember that feeling scared is natural and important in many situations. We do not want to get rid of the feeling entirely, but we do want to understand it and be able to control it.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

You can use this book to support your child as they learn to manage the feeling of being scared. You can read it together and discuss the actions and responses of the characters. When the dinosaur hides because it is scared, you can ask questions such as, "Why does the dinosaur do that? Does it actually make the dinosaur safer?" Alternatively, you could discuss why the child in the story suggests a quick peek over the covers together. By engaging in such conversations, you and your child can begin to develop a shared understanding of what it means to feel scared and what we can do to help ourselves and others to overcome it.

If your child does not have a solid understanding of the word 'scared', that does not mean that they do not feel scared. Words such as scared are complex and take time to learn and generalise. You can help your child by labelling the feeling in different instances – you could say, "You feel scared". This is a great first step in the process of de-escalating the feeling for the child as, together, you begin to explore why the child is feeling scared. Remember, the aim is to name the feeling and find a way to manage it rather than allowing it to manage you. You could also try re-enacting the story with your child. Together, you can decide which of the characters you want to be. Let your child help you with your fear, or switch things up and act out the process of helping your child. In this way you can further develop that shared language. You might also encourage your child to re-enact the story with a toy.

Some children are more scared than others. Whilst the feeling of being scared is both learned and natural, it is only useful when it is appropriate. In instances where it is not appropriate it might grow into something overwhelming that impacts on quality of life – anxiety or paranoia, for example. If you believe that this is the case with either yourself or your child, you may need to seek some professional support. Research indicates that we learn or adopt many of our fears from our parents and carers when we are young. Therefore, if you feel that you may have a chronic fear, it's important to seek help. Once you have had the experience of working through your feelings of being scared, you may also be more likely and able to support your child to do the same.

Haja Ironside and Leslie Ironside

