

Hole in One

a tale from the Iris the Dragon Series

written by Gayle Grass illustrated by Graham Ross

A Children's Book Dealing with the Topic of Anxiety Disorder



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About The Iris the Dragon Book Series

Years of stigma towards mental health disorders drove the topic into the shadows where people suffered alone in isolation. While attitudes toward discussing mental health disorders have shifted in recent years there is still a long way to go. It is hard enough to talk about the topic and it is even harder for people experiencing the confusing symptoms and feelings associated with mental health disorders to put words to their experiences. To help move the world mental health agenda forward in educating people about the interconnectedness of mental health and overall wellness, author Gayle Grass of the Iris the Dragon series is starting the discussion early with youth. Reflecting the World Health Organization's sentiments that "there is no health without mental health," (WHO, 2014) Gayle has selected the vehicle of the storybook to communicate this message and hopes to change future generations' perspective.

Iris the Dragon's books address a variety of mental health disorders and stress the need for creating a supportive and understanding community to help deal with issues relating to a mental health disorder and to reduce the stigma surrounding this topic. Iris the Dragon was first created in 2000 and since then has seen a huge increase in demand for books on mental health for youth. In 2013, a study on one of Iris the Dragon's books was published by the Mental Health Commission of Canada and showed that after 20 minutes of reading the attitudes of children toward those with mental illness or towards the topic of mental health were positively changed.

Iris the Dragon Charity was created to provide educational material for adults and young readers to help facilitate a conversation between caregivers and children about issues relating to mental health and emotional wellness. The books are intended to provide comfort in talking about mental health to create a safe space for discussing and exploring the topic further.

There are currently 6 books in the series each addressing different mental health challenges and each vetted by medical experts:

"Catch a Falling Star" – Presents readers with a variety of symptoms that could be considered "red flags" in a child's emotional and social development.

"Lucky Horseshoes" – Illustrates the feelings and thoughts of an ADHD child. It gives children with ADHD an opportunity to identify with their thoughts, feelings and actions through a young character called Skippy.

"Hole in One" – Addresses anxiety disorder in children; specifically anxiety about going to school and performance. It's an opportunity for children to identify with their thoughts, feelings and actions.

"I Can Fix It!" – Focuses on Asperger's Syndrome, one of the Autism Spectrum Disorders, and the importance of a caring community surrounding children with developmental, emotional and behavioral challenges.

"He Shoots! He Scores!" – Addresses the topic of self stigma and family stigma and provides a medium to help society at large understand the challenges that a child faces with a mental health condition.

"Project: Kids, Let's Talk" – A special edition Iris the Dragon book for military families. Iris meets a young boy who is dealing with the challenges (loneliness, worry and anger) of being in a Canadian military family.

For teachers, Iris the Dragon has a curriculum-aligned, "Units of Study" program for regular classroom delivery to deconstruct bullying, develop healthy minds and learn to self-advocate.

For more information on the Iris the Dragon Book Series, the team and their resources, visit www.iristhedragon.com.

Endorsements

Gayle Grass strikes again!

Gayle is a creative and thoughtful author who has created her third book in the Iris the Dragon series. In this series, not only is she adept at accurately depicting different mental illnesses and mental health problems, but she is exceptional at making the story developmentally appropriate and enticing for young children. The goal of the series is to raise awareness, educate and also reduce the stigma of mental illness. Through her stories, she clearly underscores the importance of a total, holistic approach to dealing with mental health problems. 'It takes a village to raise a child...'

The third book in the series, 'Hole in One', is the story of a young boy who, with Iris the Dragon's help, addresses his anxiety disorder in his efforts to become a successful golfer thereby achieving his dream. As always, the mental illness is accurately depicted, the tale is enticing, the graphics exceptional and above all, I believe, Gayle has another winner.

Gayle, congratulations! Your efforts to educate, to reduce stigma and to reduce the burden of suffering for children and youth with mental health problems are greatly appreciated.

Simon Davidson, M.B., B.Ch., F.R.C.P.(C), Chair, Child and Youth Advisory Committee Mental Health Commission of Canada;
Chief Strategic Planning Executive, Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health at CHEO,
Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario; Chairman, Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Professor of Psychiatry and Pediatrics,
University of Ottawa; Chief of Psychiatry, Medical Director of the Mental Health Patient Service Unit, Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario

It has been my pleasure to have supported the creation of the Iris the Dragon Books. Time has shown that the Iris the Dragons Books have the ability to change attitudes and create awareness for the well being of children's mental health.

I congratulate Gayle and her team on their efforts in the mental health field and sincerely hope that Iris the Dragon will continue to write more books dealing with all aspects of children's mental health.

Honourable Michael Kirby,

The Honourable Michael Kirby, Chair of the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC)

Letter to Iris from a Special Education Teacher

It has been an incredible experience working with Gayle. Her knowledge, insight and passion of and for children with mental illness is so refreshing, so needed and such a gift! It is wonderful that Gayle is writing books about children with REAL issues!

Gayle approached me and asked if my students would be her "junior editors" for this - her third book. We loved her first two books in The Iris the Dragon Series and really felt that we were up to the challenge. And because some of my students have issues of their own, I felt that their input would not only be beneficial, but therapeutic as well.

My thanks go out to you Gayle, for giving my students an opportunity that they will remember forever. You made them feel special, important, worthy and so good about themselves! They loved the idea that, perhaps, they were able to help others

Miriam Silvert and students from Room 15, Yorkview Public School, Dundas, Ontario,
Board Member of OASAR – The Ontario Association for Students at Risk

Hole in One

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A Children's Book Dealing with the Topic of Anxiety Disorder



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W i n t e r

It was winter time in the Riverbank community. Many of the Riverbank animals were snuggled up warm in their homes. Some enjoyed the snowy days by playing and sliding down the riverbanks. Iris the Dragon liked to use these days to catch up on her mail and to read her books of knowledge that she had been collecting for hundreds of years.

Often, one of the Riverbank animals would drop in for tea and a nice chat in front of Iris's cozy fireplace in her cave, under the old log bridge. Today, Iris was enjoying a visit with Ottie Otter. She had just poured Ottie a cup of tea and they were discussing the weather.

"What a dreadful day it is, Iris," lamented Ottie. "It is even too nasty to slide down the riverbanks today and you know how much I love doing that!"

"We are lucky. We are nestled in our warm homes and don't have to go out," noted Iris.

"You are such a wise dragon, Iris," said Ottie. "You know so much about the world, and especially about the children in it."





“Well, I am also a very old dragon. I will be 908 years old this year. One does learn a lot from observing the world for that long,” sighed Iris.

“Iris, please tell me one of your many stories about how you helped a young child who was ill,” urged Ottie.

“I love your tales.”

“OK Ottie, but don’t fall asleep again like you did last time. It was very rude,” exclaimed Iris.

Swoosh! CRASH! Bang!

Swoosh! CRASH! Bang!

“What is that Iris?” screamed Ottie. “It sounds like the sky is falling.”

“The wind has picked up, and it must be blowing down branches,” said Iris, as she hurried to her front door.

“Wait for me Iris! I don’t want to be alone,” yelled Ottie.

Iris slowly opened her cave door and looked out. Ottie peeked around her big tail and screamed,



Swoosh!

CRASH!


BANG!

Swoosh!

CRASH!

BANG!





“Holy Cow, the pond is covered in red golf balls. Where did they come from?”

Just then, Iris heard a loud swoosh on top of the bridge and a red golf ball flew over their heads and landed on the frozen pond. Then the balls started coming one after another, faster and faster over their heads.

“I’d better see what is happening,” said Iris, as she grabbed her shawl and hurried up to the bridge.

As she reached the top she stopped suddenly. A little boy was swinging furiously at the golf balls which were scattered all over the bridge. He sent most of them far off onto the frozen pond. He had on a red toque and red gloves which matched his very angry face. On the ground were scattered an odd assortment of golf clubs.



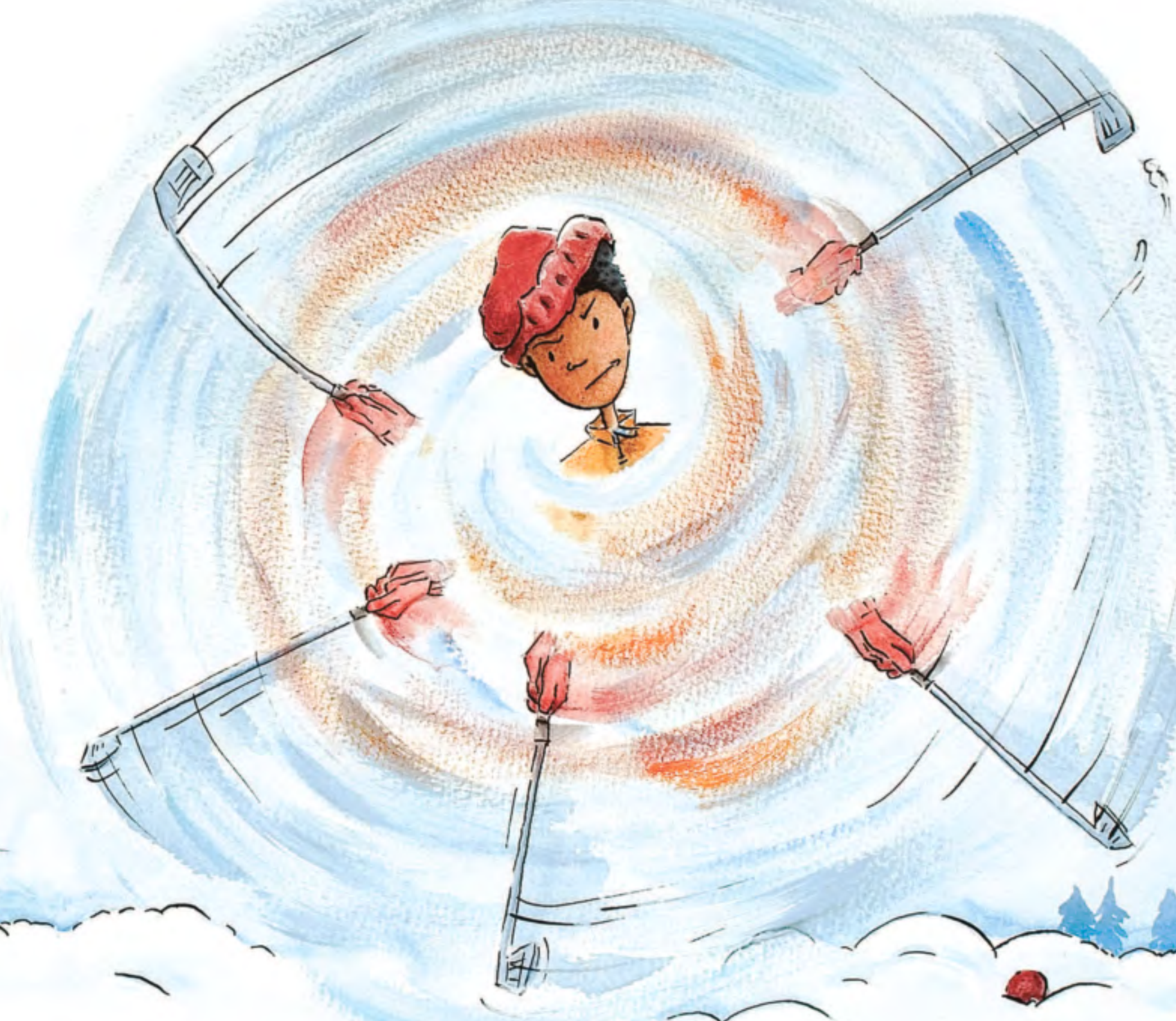
Iris did not want to frighten him so she sat down and watched till he was all out of balls.

“Oh heck,” muttered the boy. “Just my luck to run out of balls.”

“Well, I can collect them for you if you wish,” Iris said quietly.

“Who the heck are you? Some old dragon?”
grumbled the boy.





“Actually, yes,” said Iris.

“My name is Iris and I live under this bridge.” That was quite an interesting game of golf you were playing. Would you like to come down here and rest in the shelter of the trees for a while? You must be quite tired after hitting all those balls.”

“No, not really. I can hit all day if I want. I am going to be the best golfer in the world!” exclaimed the boy.

“Well, I’m sure you will be but you should take a break. Even the very best players take a break,” said Iris. “May I ask your name?”

“Teeman,” said the boy. “But who are you really? You look funny with your big nose.”

“I am a dragon. A very friendly dragon,” declared Iris.

“Well, I don’t believe you but I will sit for a minute. I can’t stop for long,” said Teeman quickly.

“Don’t worry. I will get Ottie Otter to collect your balls for you. He loves to slide across the ice on his back and he can pick up your golf balls while he is doing that,” stated Iris.





Teeman slumped down on the log and shook his head. He was very tired and confused. He had had a bad day at school and had come to the bridge to get away from everyone.

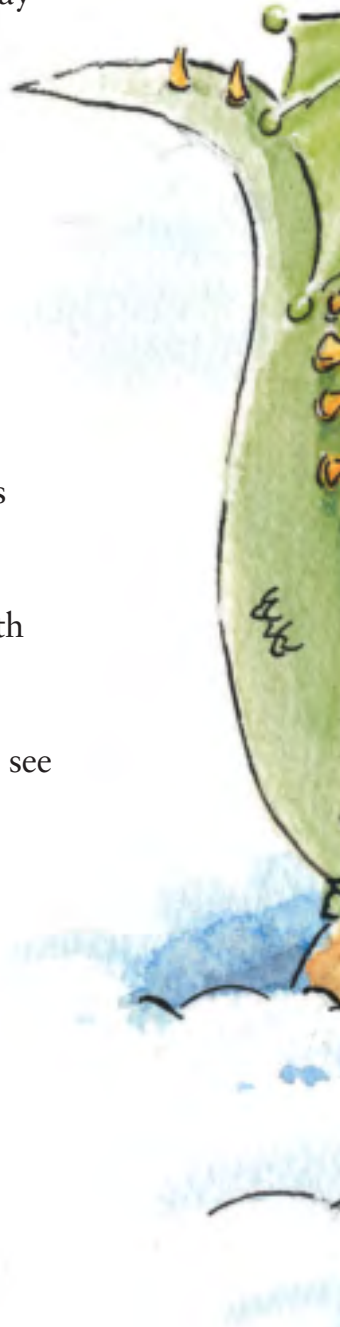
“Where do you live Teeman?” Iris said gently.

“I live with my new foster parents down the river. But I can’t stop to chat. I have to get back to practising.” With that, Teeman grabbed the basket of balls from Ottie and tore off.

“What is wrong with him Iris?” questioned Ottie. “He never stops moving, and he seems very anxious and upset about something.”

“I’m afraid that our new friend has a problem that makes it hard for him to settle down and be with people,” said Iris. “I will have to find out more about Teeman. See you tomorrow Ottie.”

Iris was very worried about Teeman. She decided to take a little trip down the river the next day to see where Teeman lived.





Next morning, the storm had stopped and all the fields were covered in a blanket of snow. It looked so peaceful and calm as Iris made her way along the riverbank. Just then she heard an awful racket and Teeman rushed by her.

“Come back here young man,” cried a woman. “You have missed the school bus again and you have to go to school. You cannot stay away from school all the time.”

Iris quickly turned and flew after Teeman. She found him huddled under a tree with tears running down his face.

“Hi Teeman, it’s me, Iris. Please let me help you.”

“I don’t want to go back to those people. They make me go to school and I hate it,” protested Teeman. I get so nervous that my stomach gets all upset and my heart beats really fast.”

Iris realized the first thing she had to do was to get Teeman to calm down so she said, “I have an idea. I have an old golf bag in my cave. Let’s go play snow golf!”





As they collected Iris's golf bag and balls, Iris gently asked Teeman some questions. "Where do you come from Teeman?"

"I'm not sure," said Teeman. "I have lived with several different foster parents most of my life but none of them liked me."

"I'm sure they like you, Teeman," exclaimed Iris. "They just need to get to know you."

"No. I've heard my foster parents talking about me and they say I am a problem child and a lot of work," grumbled Teeman.

"Well, let's play some snow golf and have some fun, Teeman. I haven't used these clubs in a very long time," said Iris examining the clubs more closely.


"They are ancient. They are all made of wood and look at the size of those crazy leather balls! Where did you get them?" asked Teeman.

"Let's see," said Iris scratching her head. "I think the last time I played with them was with a little boy called Byron. He was a very good golfer and he gave me a lot of good tips on my swing. He told me to be careful to keep my tail out of the way when I swing. But to tell you the truth, I can actually hit the ball much further using my tail. Would you like me to demonstrate for you?"

"Ya, go for it Iris,"
giggled Teeman.







“O.K. tee up the ball and keep out of the way,” said Iris as she prepared to hit the ball. “It is all about moving the hips Teeman. You make sure they are turning back, as you bring your tail up in a wide arc over your hip, take a deep breath and then release your hips and follow through.” Iris expelled her breath as she whacked the ball with her mighty tail and it took off into space.

“**That is amazing,**” exclaimed Teeman.

“That is so cool. Wow, I wish I had a tail like yours.”

“Unfortunately you don’t, but I still have some good tips I can teach you,” laughed Iris.

“Would you Iris?” questioned Teeman. “I need to be really great so people will like me.”

“**Well, let’s get started,**” said Iris.

“These may be old but they are mighty clubs.”

Iris and Teeman had a wonderful morning hitting balls, and trying really neat practice skills. Iris had Teeman put his feet together and practice hitting the ball. This, she explained, was for balance. We always must be in balance. Whatever you are doing it is important to stay balanced. Another skill that they practiced was keeping his eyes closed and feeling the movement of his body when he swung the club.

Then Iris showed Teeman another of her unusual shots and Teeman laughed so hard he fell into a snowdrift.

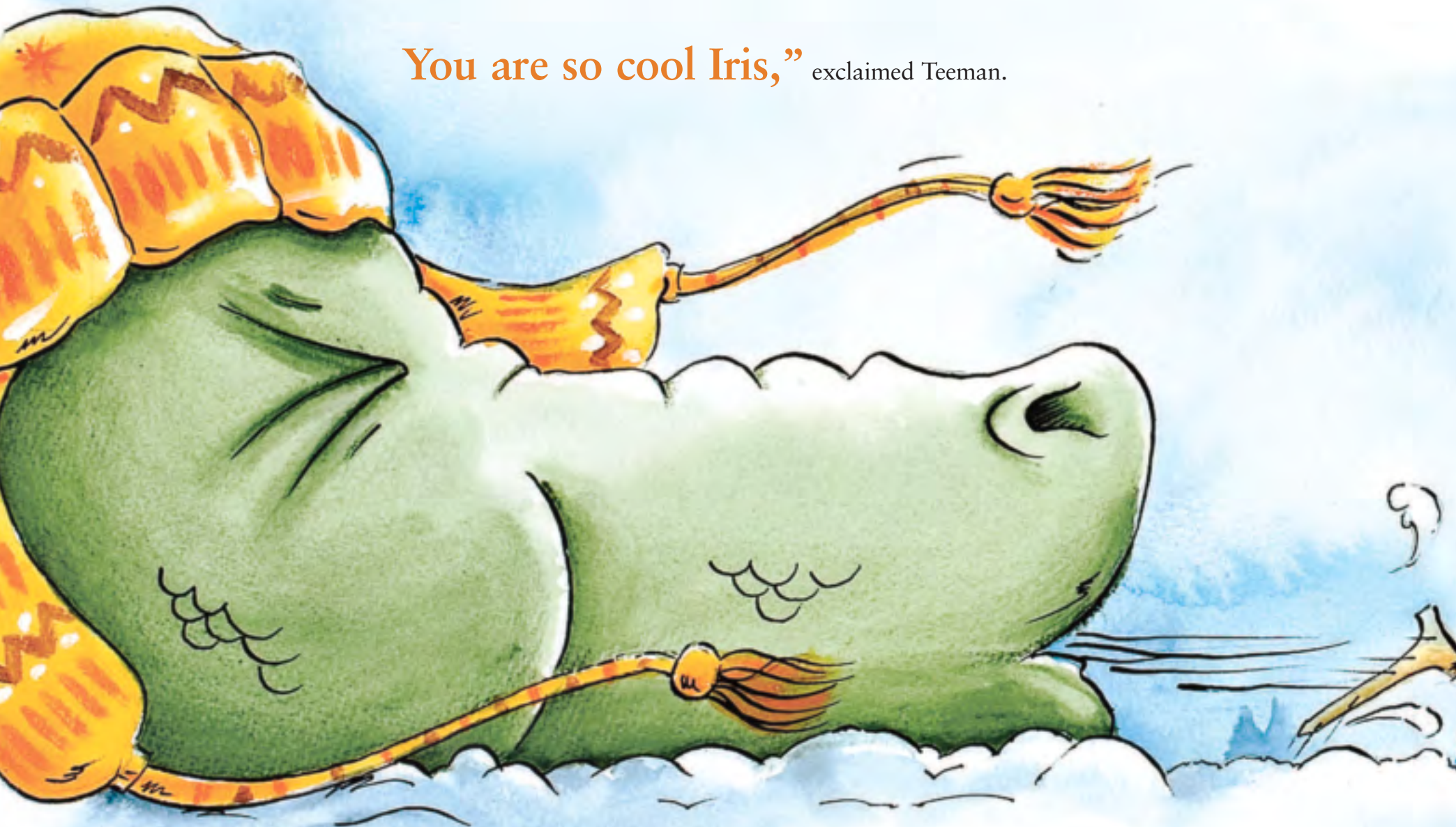


“That was **MEGA FANTASTIC!**” shouted Teeman.

“Do it again, Iris!”

So Iris teed up the ball once again and, taking a deep breath, she blew on the ball with all her might. The ball took off at a hundred miles per hour over the tree tops and out of sight.

“You are so cool Iris,” exclaimed Teeman.



“And you are too, Teeman,”

smiled Iris, as she gave Teeman a pat on the back.

Teeman and Iris had a fun afternoon. Teeman felt so much more relaxed around Iris that he gradually confided in her that he felt something was wrong with him. He said he felt nervous and scared around people, especially at school. He hated to go to school so much that his hands would get cold and his stomach felt like he was going to throw up and he would often get bad headaches and feel dizzy. He didn't know what to do or how to change how he felt. He knew it got him into a lot of trouble and people got very upset with him.

“Why can't I feel relaxed like this all the time?”

he asked Iris.





“You can feel better, Teeman. There are many ways to help you get over your anxious feelings. I’ll show you one of my favourites now. I call it Dragon Breathing and it is a way of deep breathing that helps your body to relax. Let me show it to you now and then tomorrow we will practice it along with some other relaxation techniques,” said Iris.

So Iris demonstrated her dragon breathing for Teeman and when she was finished he said, “I do feel calmer Iris. Well, I guess I better get back now. My foster mom will be looking for me.”

“Teeman, I have a suggestion. I have a friend whose name is Harvey. He is a golf pro and he might let you practice at his driving range in exchange for doing a few jobs for him around the golf course. He and his wife, Laura, live in a lovely little house by the course.”

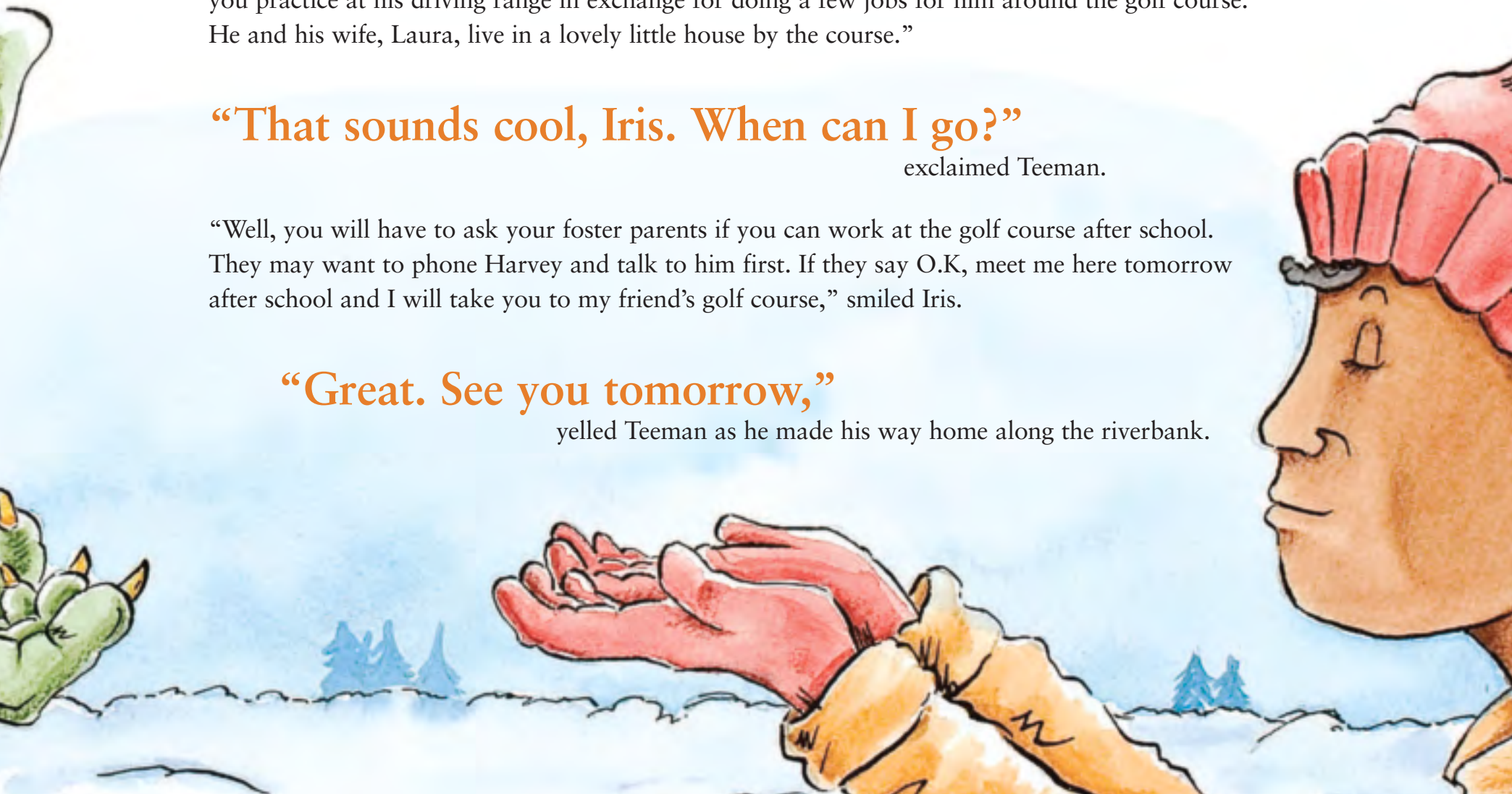
“That sounds cool, Iris. When can I go?”

exclaimed Teeman.

“Well, you will have to ask your foster parents if you can work at the golf course after school. They may want to phone Harvey and talk to him first. If they say O.K, meet me here tomorrow after school and I will take you to my friend’s golf course,” smiled Iris.

“Great. See you tomorrow,”

yelled Teeman as he made his way home along the riverbank.





The next day Teeman worked hard to get to school on time. He tried to relax by remembering what Iris had taught him. He really wanted to see the golf course and meet the pro. After school, he ran as fast as he could to meet Iris. She was sitting on an old log by the river and she had a new set of golf clubs on the ground beside her.

“Whose clubs are those Iris?”

inquired Teeman.

“They are yours,” laughed Iris. “I think we have to start you off with the right tools to be successful. I had this set in my cave.”

Teeman looked amazed that someone would give him such a wonderful present. “Thank you Iris,” he said. “I will try my best to do well.”

“I know you can, Teeman, but you need a few tools to help you. Every day I am going to give you a new tool that will help you feel less anxious and more confident about yourself. Yesterday you learned Dragon Breathing. I have lots of other exercises to help you understand your thoughts, why they make you anxious and what you can do to change them. We will start tomorrow but now let’s go to the golf course. Don’t forget your new clubs,” reminded Iris.



As they came near the golf course, Iris pointed out a large building. “That is Harvey’s indoor practice range. I have spoken to him and he is waiting to show you around and tell you what jobs need to be done. I’ll wait here for you Teeman.”

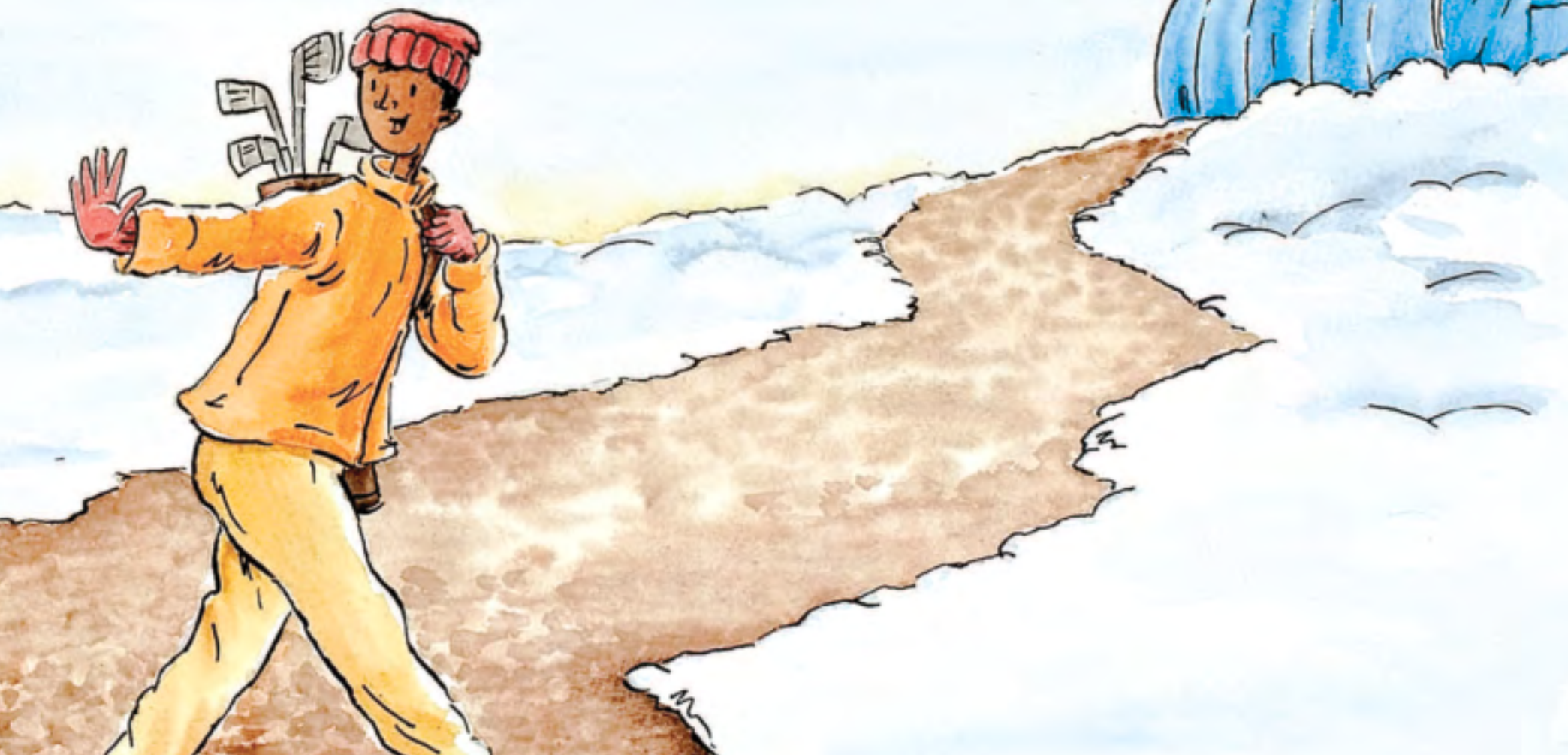
Shortly, Teeman came out and ran up to Iris with his face beaming. “Harvey is really nice and is going to help me with my golf. I can come three times a week after school and help him do chores and then use the practice range. He is also giving me a locker to keep my clubs in.”

“That is great, Teeman.

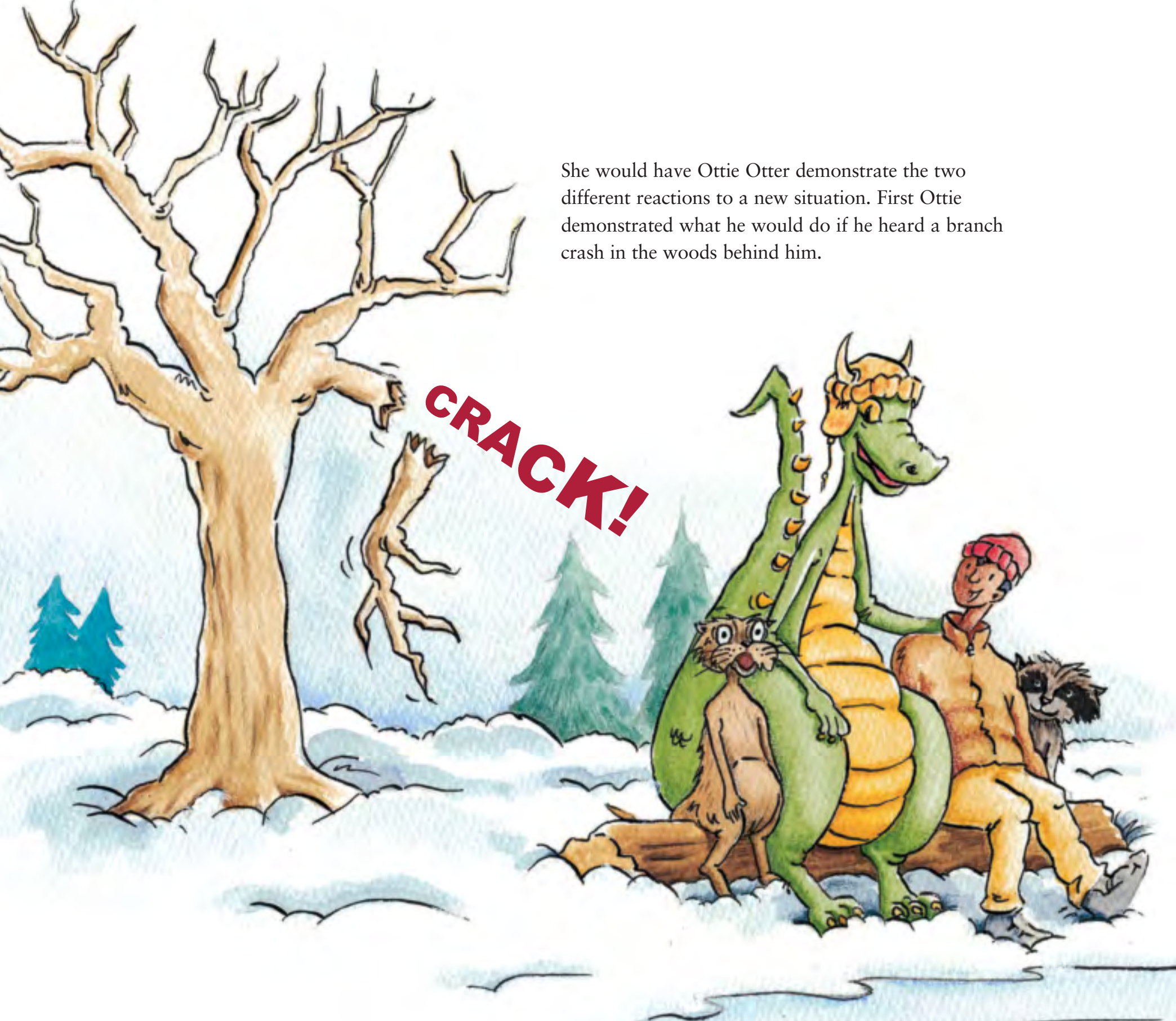
Now you had better get home and do your homework,” stated Iris. “But come to the Riverbank as often as you can and we can practice skills to help you with your anxiety.”

Throughout the winter months, Teeman did come regularly to visit Iris at the Riverbank. Iris would set up a little classroom at her special log and Ottie Otter and Rosie Raccoon would join them to take part in teaching Teeman special skills to overcome his anxious feelings.

One skill Iris taught Teeman was how to identify the thoughts that made him nervous. She explained that if you understand what thoughts you are having when you are feeling anxious, then you can learn how to replace bad feelings with good feelings.



She would have Ottie Otter demonstrate the two different reactions to a new situation. First Ottie demonstrated what he would do if he heard a branch crash in the woods behind him.

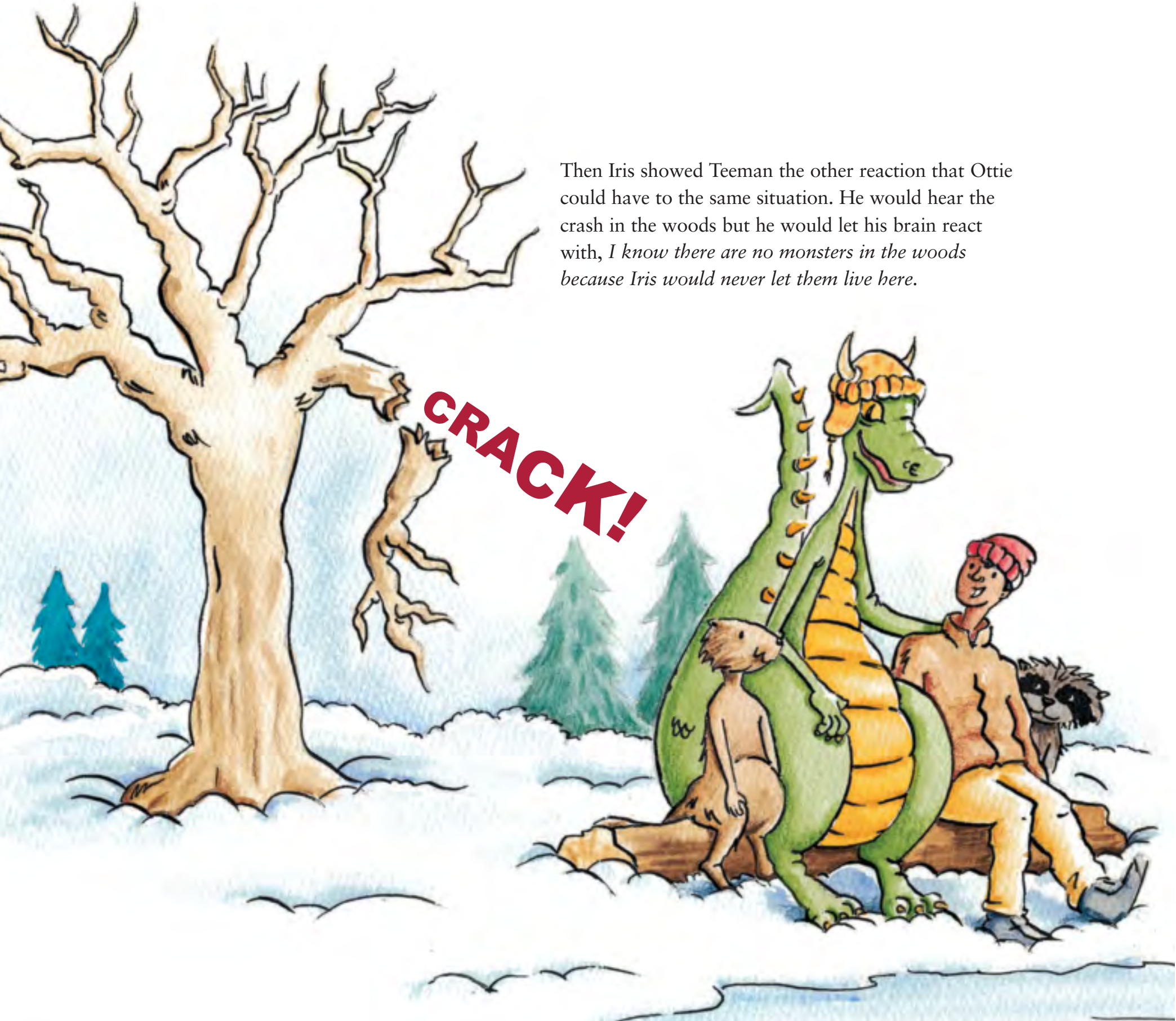




His first reaction was to think – *a monster is going to get me* – and he would feel very scared. His heart would beat fast and he would feel weak and dizzy, then he would run as fast as he could down the riverbank.



Then Iris showed Teeman the other reaction that Ottie could have to the same situation. He would hear the crash in the woods but he would let his brain react with, *I know there are no monsters in the woods because Iris would never let them live here.*



Then he would take a deep breath to calm his heart and relax his body and sit back down on the log and continue his studies with Iris, Teeman and Rosie Raccoon.

Iris explained to Teeman that there is always a choice of ways to react in any situation. Teeman slowly began to understand that he could change how he felt by changing what he thought. Ottie was very good at demonstrating the different choices that Teeman could make and Teeman thought Ottie, running from an invisible monster was very funny.



On other days, Iris would teach Teeman muscle relaxation techniques and lessons on the benefits of good eating habits and lots of exercise to help him feel better.

As the winter months slowly came to an end, Teeman seemed to be getting less anxious. He had been using everything Iris had taught him and was really enjoying his afternoons at the golf course with Harvey.



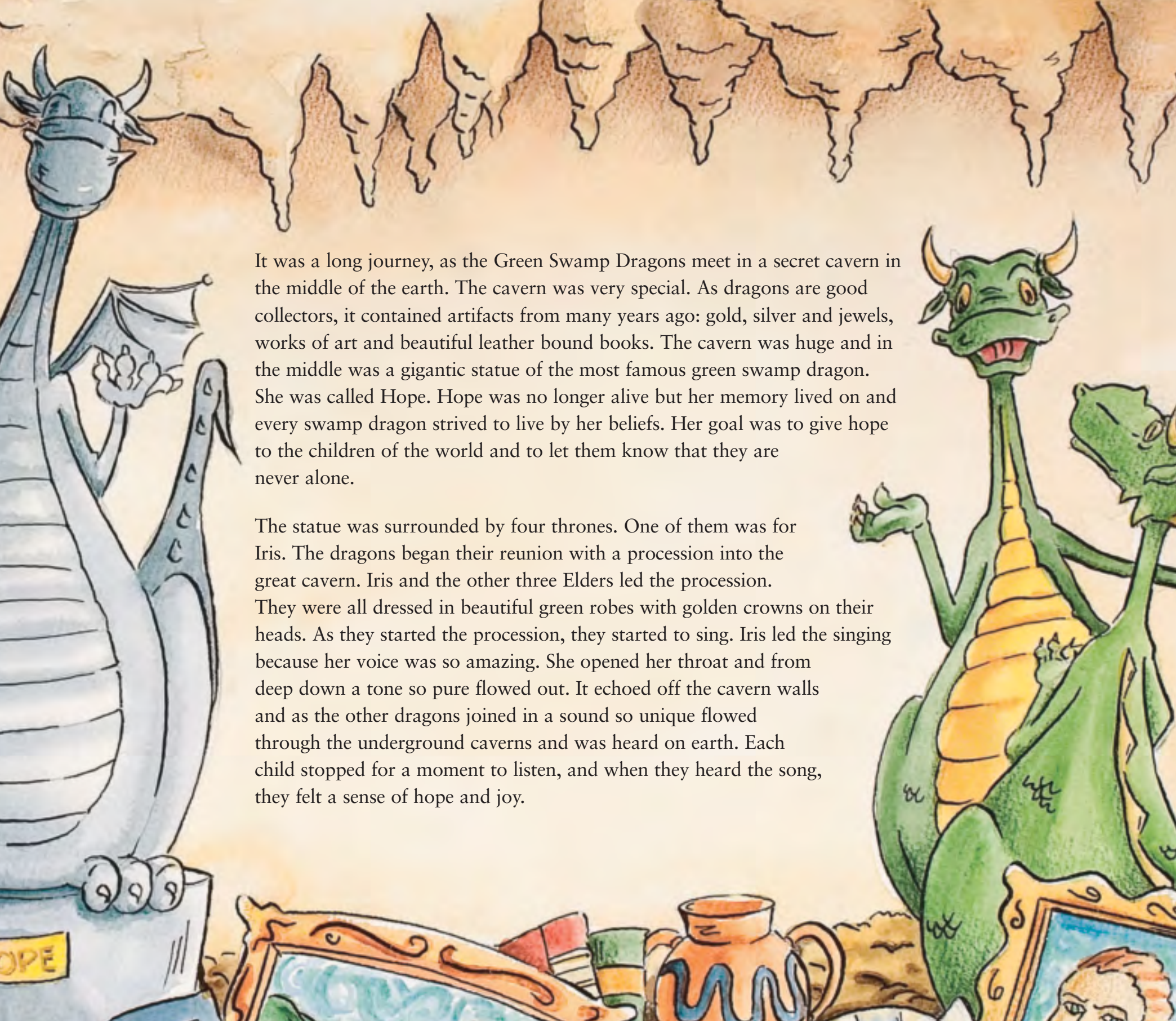


S pring

Once every 10 years, the Green Swamp Dragons of the world would have a reunion to exchange information and visit family and old friends. Iris, being one of the oldest, was one of the Elders of the tribe and she performed special duties. Iris knew she had to go but was a little worried about leaving Teeman. He seemed to be doing so much better and he had settled into a good routine at home with his new foster parents who were very supportive. After school, he would go to the golfing range and Harvey would give him a lesson and then he would do some chores for him and Laura would often drop by with a little snack for Teeman.

Teeman really liked Harvey and Laura and in addition he was using the relaxation techniques and other skills that Iris had taught him to stay less anxious and he was more positive about himself. She explained to Teeman that she had to go to her reunion but would come back quickly if Teeman needed her. So Iris packed her knapsack and took off along the riverbank. She left Ottie in charge and to call, if Teeman needed her.

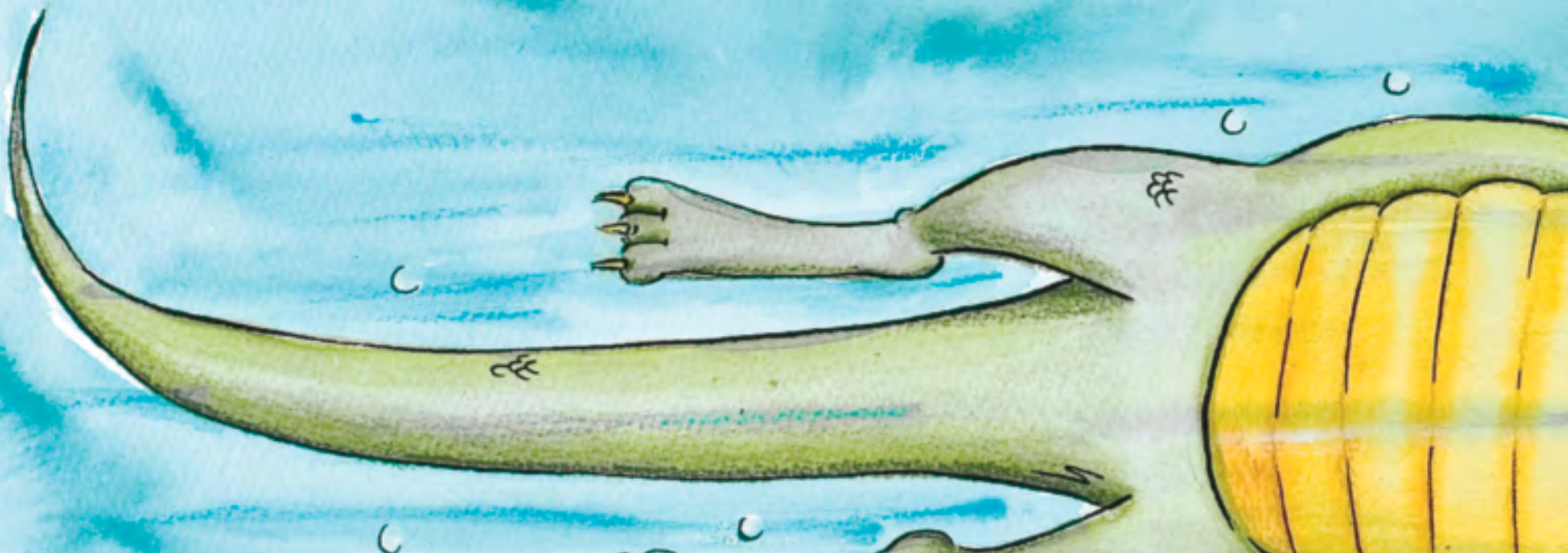




It was a long journey, as the Green Swamp Dragons meet in a secret cavern in the middle of the earth. The cavern was very special. As dragons are good collectors, it contained artifacts from many years ago: gold, silver and jewels, works of art and beautiful leather bound books. The cavern was huge and in the middle was a gigantic statue of the most famous green swamp dragon. She was called Hope. Hope was no longer alive but her memory lived on and every swamp dragon strived to live by her beliefs. Her goal was to give hope to the children of the world and to let them know that they are never alone.

The statue was surrounded by four thrones. One of them was for Iris. The dragons began their reunion with a procession into the great cavern. Iris and the other three Elders led the procession. They were all dressed in beautiful green robes with golden crowns on their heads. As they started the procession, they started to sing. Iris led the singing because her voice was so amazing. She opened her throat and from deep down a tone so pure flowed out. It echoed off the cavern walls and as the other dragons joined in a sound so unique flowed through the underground caverns and was heard on earth. Each child stopped for a moment to listen, and when they heard the song, they felt a sense of hope and joy.

Back on the Riverbank, things were not going too well. Teeman was having trouble in school getting his lessons done on time and this increased his anxiety. He was getting more and more frustrated and worried each day. Then on top of all this, he overheard his foster parents, who he really liked, talking about him going to a new home. He was so upset that after school, he wandered down to the bridge to look for Iris. He couldn't find her, and he felt so lonely. He stood on the very edge of the bridge and looked down into the icy water below.





Ottie saw Teeman standing there and was very worried. He sent a message to Iris who had sensed that something was wrong with Teeman. She could feel his sadness. She knew that she had to get back to the bridge immediately. Jumping into the nearest river, she sped towards home. Now, Iris can swim faster than any one on earth and she made it home in a few minutes. Lifting her head above the water at the bridge she felt a tear touch her cheek. With a gigantic burst through the water, Iris shot through the air and grabbed Teeman in her arms.



She flew over the treetops and landed gently at the log beside her cave door.

“What is it Teeman?”

asked Iris.

“I heard my foster parents saying that I would be going to another home, Iris. I can’t leave here. This is where I can play golf, and have you and Harvey and Laura as friends. I have been really trying to be good and to use the tools that you have been teaching me, but sometimes I still feel anxious,” cried Teeman.

“Oh dear, Teeman. We have a surprise for you but we didn’t want to tell you until it was all confirmed. You must have overheard your foster parents talking about the surprise. Harvey and Laura would like to adopt you as their son. They would like to be your parents. Would you like that Teeman?” smiled Iris.

“You mean they want me forever and ever?”

sniffled Teeman.







“Yes,” said Iris. “Harvey did not want to ask you until he was sure that they could adopt you and then he wanted to ask you if this would be O.K. with you. They really want to be your parents and they also want to help you with your anxiety disorder and to make sure you get the proper help and support that you need.”

Teeman’s face began to light up as he realized that he would now have a home and parents forever. He had felt so alone at times and moving around so often had made him more anxious.

Just then, they heard Harvey rushing through the bushes. Ottie had called him to let him know that Teeman was at the Riverbank.

“Teeman,” he cried as he hugged him and knelt down beside him. “Are you alright? We were so worried when no one could find you. I want to ask you something very important. Laura and I would like to be your parents. We promise to love you and take care of you the rest of our lives.

Will you be our son?”

Teeman hugged Harvey back with all his might and said,

“I would really like that. I will try very hard to be good.”

An illustration of two young boys hugging. The boy on the left has brown hair and is wearing a red shirt. The boy on the right has dark, curly hair and is wearing a grey shirt with orange trim. They are both smiling and looking at each other. The background is a light blue sky with some green foliage at the bottom.

Harvey looked at Teeman and said,

“you are always good, Teeman.

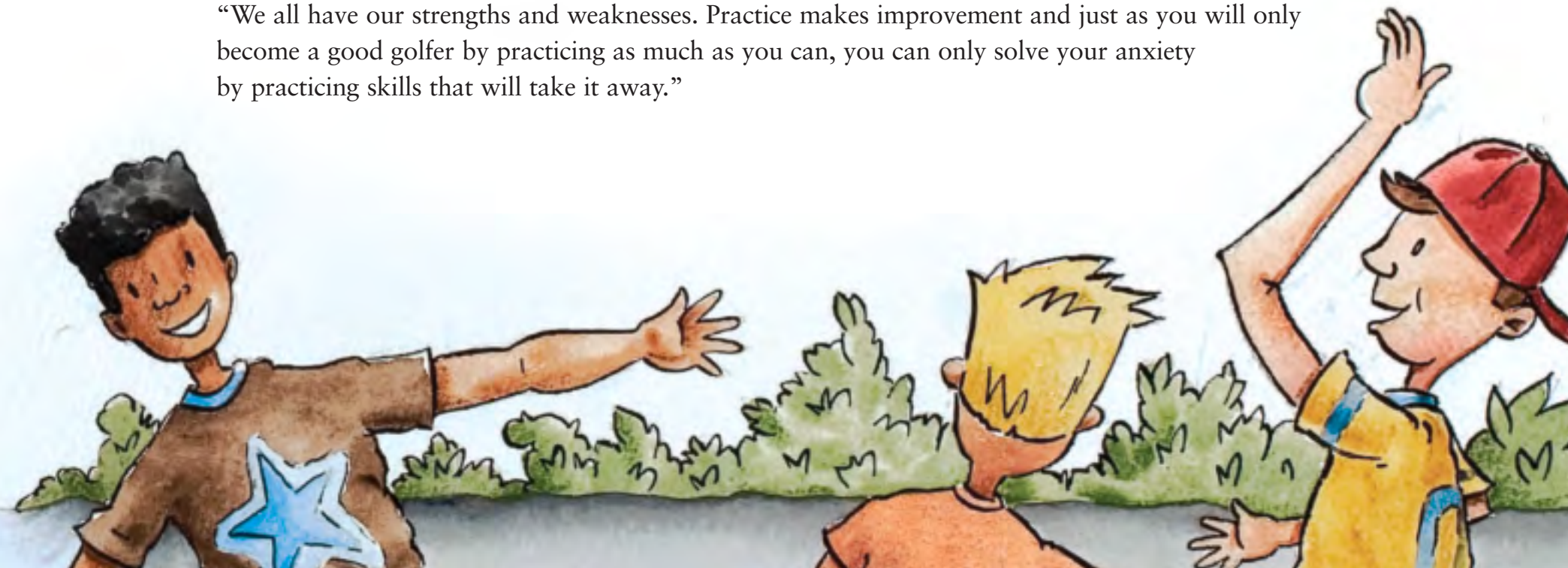
Sometimes, though, your anxiety disorder makes it hard for you to make good choices or decisions. We are going to help you make better decisions. Now let’s go and tell Laura the good news.”



Teeman moved in with Laura and Harvey and started to adjust to his new life. They all went to see a psychologist who specialized in assessing and treating anxiety disorder and he taught Teeman small steps for managing fears and worries. He explained to Teeman that the goal is not to talk himself out of his fears but to learn how to talk himself through his fears. As the doctor explained, don't remove the hurdle but learn to jump over it. This approach was called Cognitive Behavioural Therapy or CBT and it involved understanding the relationship between your thoughts, feelings and behaviour.

He had many ways to show Teeman how to alter his thinking which helped to reduce his anxiety and result in positive behavior. Some of them were similar to what Iris had taught him on the Riverbank. The school was notified and Teeman was put on a program that would assist him and help him to keep up to date with his studies. He was worried that the extra attention would make him seem different to his classmates but as Harvey told him:

“We all have our strengths and weaknesses. Practice makes improvement and just as you will only become a good golfer by practicing as much as you can, you can only solve your anxiety by practicing skills that will take it away.”



S u m m e r

With the special help that Teeman was receiving, he was beginning to feel much better. Harvey and Laura provided a very stable routine for Teeman and rewarded him with extra golf lessons and playing golf with Harvey. He still loved to visit Iris whenever he could.

One warm day as they were sitting on the Riverbank, Teeman said to Iris, “I am so glad you are my friend, Iris. You helped me when I needed it most. You taught me that I have a disorder and you showed me that I could feel better.

**And best of all,
you found my new parents for me.”**



Iris replied, “Knowing what the problem is, always helps. Doing something about it is the most important part. You were brave enough to listen to the people who were helping you and you worked hard to get better. It is not easy, but it was the only way to make a change. I am very proud of you, Teeman. Harvey also told me he thinks you are ready to be in your first golf tournament in the fall. What do you think of that?”

“That’s really cool!”

exclaimed Teeman.

“I will work hard all summer at my job and practice in my time off.”



F all

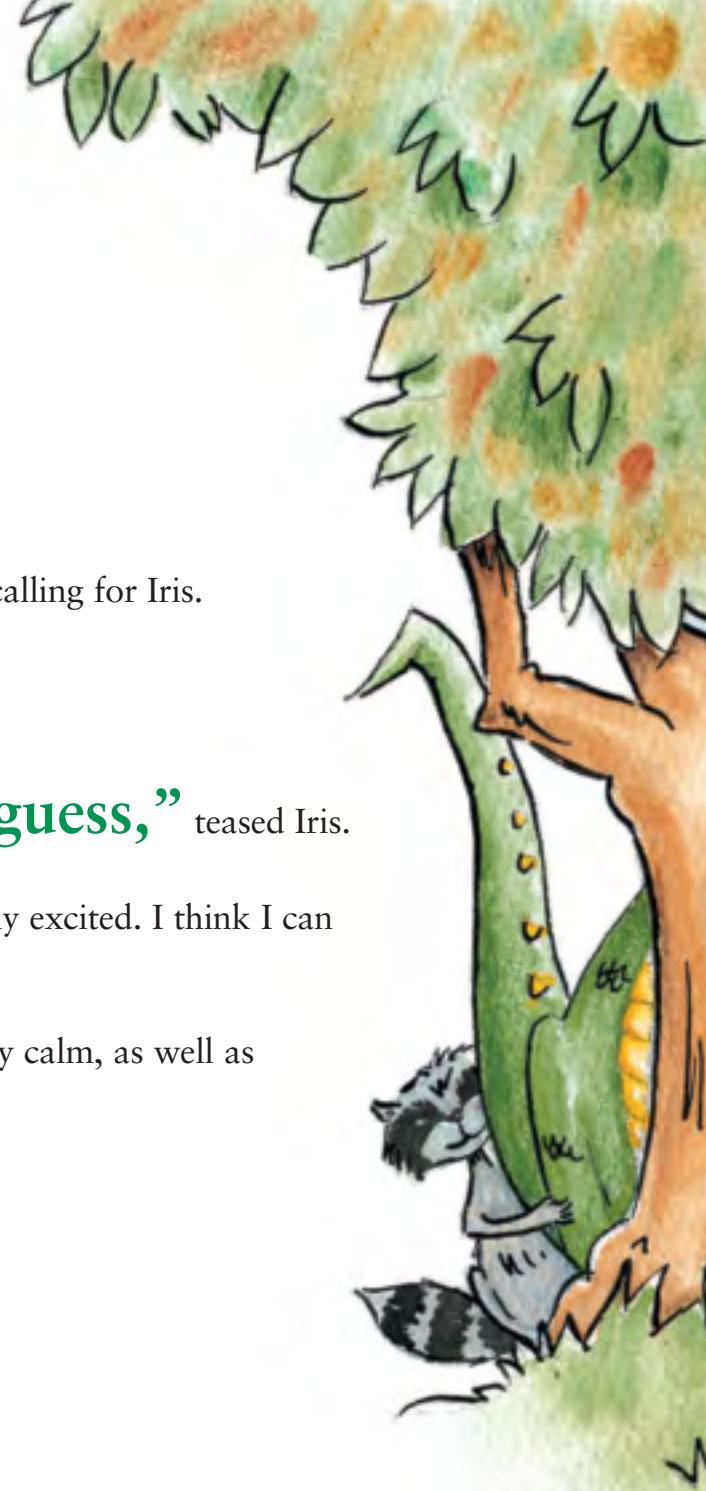
One lazy fall day Teeman came hurrying down to the riverbank calling for Iris.


“Iris, guess what?” yelled Teeman.

“Well, I don’t think I can guess,” teased Iris.

“Harvey is putting me in a local golf tournament next week and I am really excited. I think I can do well,” said Teeman.

“I know you will and you know that you have tools that will help you stay calm, as well as good friends to encourage you when you need it,” assured Iris.





The day came for the junior golf tournament. Iris put on her golf hat and set off to watch Teeman. As she followed him around, she was amazed at how well he could now control his anxiety. He was able to focus and not let the crowds bother him. Every now and then Teeman would look over at Iris, who was hiding behind the trees so she would not surprise anyone. When Teeman saw Iris he felt more relaxed, and when he did feel anxious, he would take a deep breath as Iris had taught him to do.

He played well and, although he was not in the lead, he felt good about himself. As they approached the last hole, a “par three,” he let himself think about all the good things that had happened to him. His new parents were really cool. He was doing better in school and he understood his illness better. He had tools to deal with his anxiety and, with practice, he would get better.

As he stood on the tee, he smiled to himself and thought of Iris. What a wonderful friend she was. He addressed the ball and let his thoughts focus on the shot he wanted to make. The club moved in a beautiful arc around his body and hit the ball square on the head of the club. It soared into the air and as Harvey, Laura and Iris watched, it hit the flagstick and dropped right into the hole.

There was a moment of complete silence and then the crowd screamed and applauded as Teeman dropped his club and shouted,





*“I did it!
I got a
hole in one!!!”*

Epilogue to: “Hole in One – A Tale from the Iris the Dragon Series”

Dr. Anand Prabhu

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Fears and worries are a very normal part of life for children and adults. However, when these become too challenging and begin affecting daily functioning to a significant extent, we begin to refer to these fears and worries as anxiety. Anxiety disorders are the most common psychiatric disorder in children and adults. It is estimated that roughly 13% of children and youth suffer from anxiety disorders with more girls than boys receiving this diagnosis. Anxiety disorders do not remit of their own accord. The good news is that anxiety disorders have been shown to be very responsive to treatment.

In our story, Teeman appears to be responding to a number of stressors. He has had multiple caretakers, moving from one home to another, and may be experiencing issues of abandonment. He is unsure about how long he is going to continue living with his current foster parents. He feels a strong need to belong and may be trying to prove himself by excelling at something. His goal is to be the best golfer in the world but he finds himself frustrated and angry while practicing his golf stroke, as things are not working out as he had planned. He feels restless and irritable during golf practice. He is hitting the balls furiously and they are not going where he wants them to go. Teeman also experiences considerable anxiety in relation to being around people at school, which results in various bothersome physiological symptoms such as nervousness, a rapidly beating heart, an upset stomach, headaches and dizziness. As well, his mood is sometimes low in relation to his performance at school. He does not know how to alter his negative emotions and this causes him to experience feelings of helplessness as well. Teeman responds by trying to avoid school, as he feels better while he is not there. His inability to do well at school as well as in his extracurricular activities such as golf, combined with his issues related to the need of belonging in a family, are likely all conspiring to make him feel very distressed. Teeman might best be described as experiencing Social Anxiety. He also has many other features of anxiety including physical symptoms, perfectionism, and strong performance related anxiety.

Teeman is very fortunate to have the support of Iris who has managed to establish good communication and a strong rapport with him. Teeman opens up to her and she begins to give him tools that will help him to learn how to relax, and better manage his anxious thinking style. With the help of Ottie Otter, Iris shows Teeman how to challenge his worry thoughts by problem solving his way through them thereby making him feel less anxious. In doing this, Teeman is able to bring his worry down to a manageable size and he feels an increased ability to cope with his challenges. Iris also teaches him methods of relaxation such as breathing techniques and muscle relaxation. In essence, Iris is teaching Teeman techniques used in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).

With respect to treating anxiety disorders, CBT is the first-line treatment of choice. Simply put, it addresses the relationship between cognitions (what we think), affect (how we feel), and behaviour (what we do). Its effectiveness is empirically supported and gains have been shown to continue well after treatment has ended. The therapy is based on a model of active collaboration between client and therapist. It is time limited, objective and structured, and focuses on current problems. It is a skill-based learning approach and encourages self-discovery and experimentation. Children who are as young as seven years of age are able to participate in CBT. The challenge for the therapist lies in pitching the concepts to the cognitive-developmental level of the child, where abstract concepts are translated into simple, concrete, everyday examples to which the child can relate. CBT can be provided individually as well as in groups. Group therapy has the advantage of helping children realize that they are not alone in their experience of anxiety. As well, they benefit from learning different kinds of problem solving strategies from their peers.

Author-Gayle Grass

Gayle Grass is the author and publisher of the Iris the Dragon Children's Book Series. Her decision to write illustrated children's books came from the sincere belief that this medium could be used to educate and break down the stigma and fears surrounding emotional, behavioural and neurodevelopmental conditions and encourage a dialogue between children and their caregivers. The Iris the Dragon Series recognize the importance of family, school and community in promoting the potential of every child and youth, regardless of their mental health challenge. Today, Gayle lives with her husband and family on a hobby farm near Perth, Ontario.

Illustrator-Graham Ross

A graduate of the illustration program at Sheridan College in Ontario, Graham began his career as a book designer for Canadian publisher McClelland & Stewart. He then returned to his hometown of Ottawa to work as senior designer for a local firm. It was in Ottawa that Graham began his freelance illustration and graphic design career. Through his career Graham has completed illustrations for such publishers as Scholastic Canada, Orca Book Publishers and Meadowside Books of the United Kingdom, as well as the Canadian government. He lives in Merrickville, Ontario in a little log home amongst the trees and Iris' friends.