



Once I Was Very Very Scared

by Chandra Ghosh Ippen
illustrations by Erich Ippen jr.

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For grown-ups around the world who help
children feel protected and cherished,
for all the children they love,
and for Raiden, our son, who is very very loved.





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Summary: Once I was very very scared, declared squirrel. The other animals chime in to share that they were also once scared. Through the story we learn what scared the little animals, ways they each respond when scared, and things that help them feel safe and calm. This book was designed to help young children who have experienced stressful or traumatic events.

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Umm...





Me too.



So scared.





*I wonder
what scared you.*





The wind.
It was so loud.
It hurt my house.
My toys were broken.
The nuts went everywhere.
The whole place was shaking.

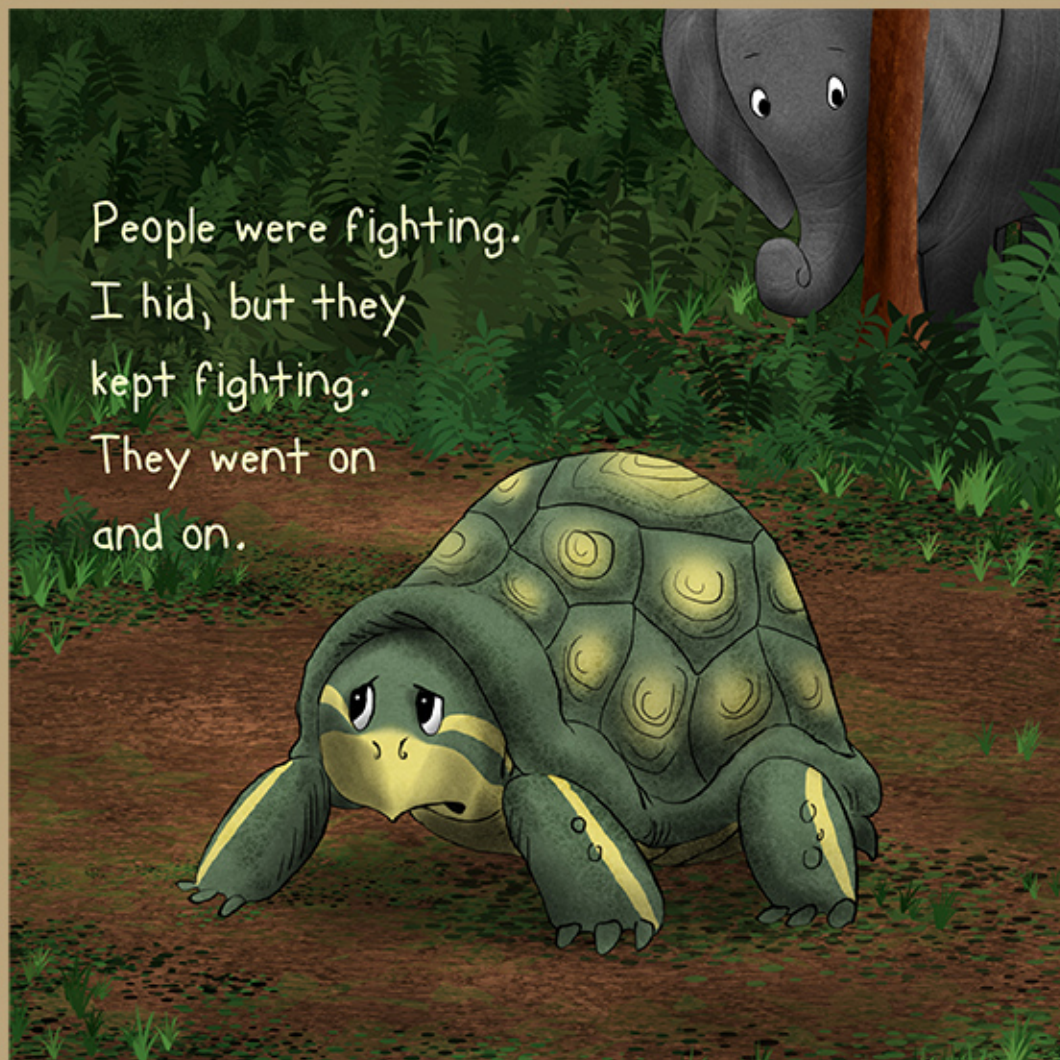


I saw someone
get hurt.

...rb..bit...



Someone I love left.
I don't like it
when people leave.
They leave a lot.



People were fighting.
I hid, but they
kept fighting.
They went on
and on.



People started yelling.
No one wanted me around.
I got scared, and I
sprayed. They yelled more,
and I sprayed more.



I don't remember
what happened,
but it was bad.
I worry bad things
might happen again.



Someone hurt me, but no one's ever gonna hurt me again. I can bite, and I can growl!

GRRRRR...



Stop it. I don't like
when you do that.

ARF!! ARF!!



ARF!! ARF!!
ARF!

You're
scaring
me.



ARF!!
ARF!!

He's so loud.



rrr...rrr



Hey, why'd you
do that?

Go away, or
I'll do it
again.



My heart is
beating so
fast I
want
to run.

Please
don't go.



A white rabbit with long ears is running through a dense forest of green foliage. The rabbit is looking back over its shoulder with a worried expression.

I need to run.
I need to go home
and find my family.

I hear that you want your family, and I know you want to move. Let's find a safe way for you to move around.


A brown monkey with a long, curled tail is standing in a forest. The monkey has a surprised or curious expression on its face.

Hey! Where's turtle?



Turtle please
don't go away.

Leave me alone.
My tummy hurts.



I don't like what dog
did with the barking
and the growling and
the running around
and making noise!

It's very scary, and
I don't like it. I don't
like when bad things
happen. I don't
like it at all!

rrr..rib...

I have to go
to the bathroom.

Are you OK?

I don't like this.



grrr...rr?



*Oh, it seems
like you all got upset,
but you show how you
feel in different ways.*

*Let's think together
about what might help.*



*I'm so sorry someone hurt you before.
No one is going to hurt you here.*

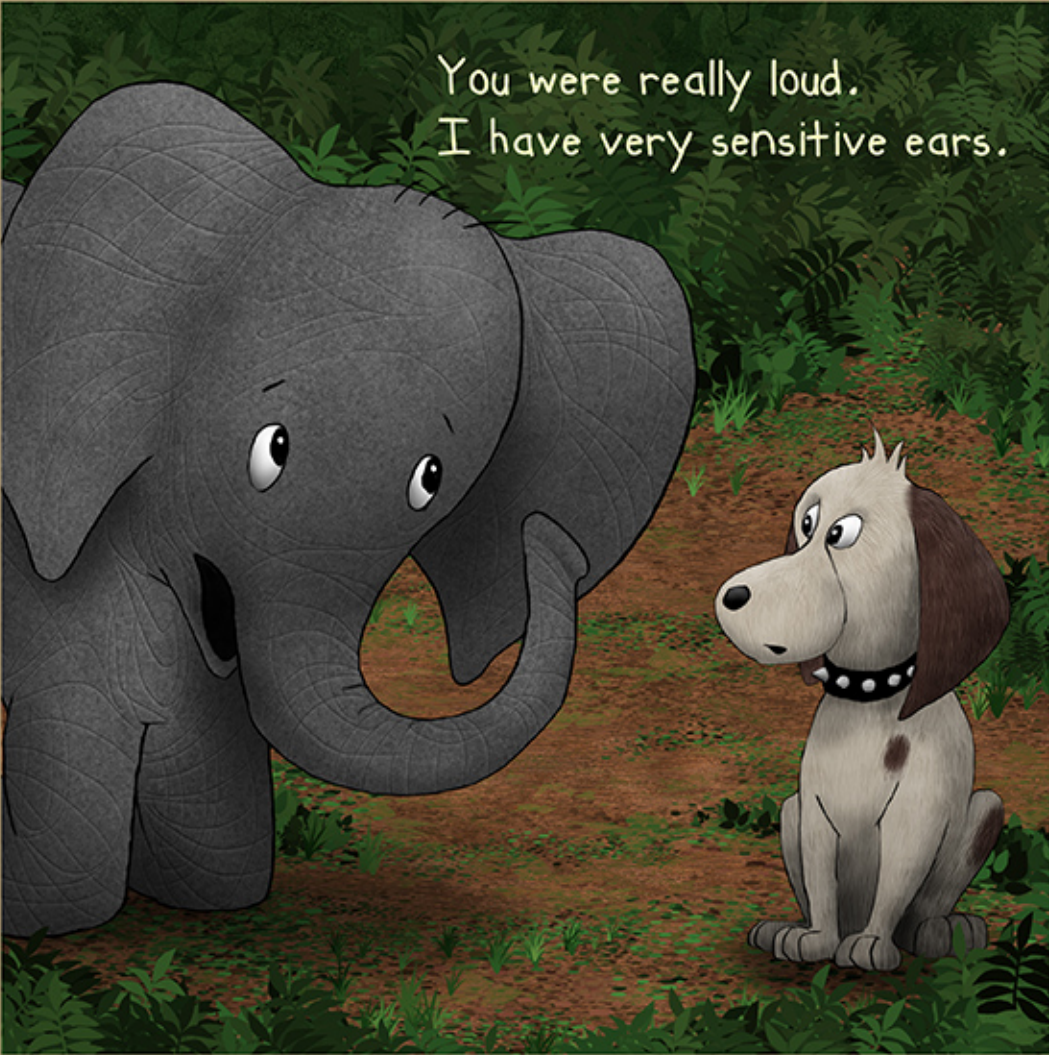
I know I look prickly. People sometimes worry that I might poke them, but I won't. I might get frustrated or a little mad because it's hard when things get crazy, but I won't hurt you.




You smell OK.



Thank you. I'll try hard to earn your trust, but I know it might take time.

An illustration of a grey elephant with large ears and a trunk, looking towards a small white dog with brown spots and floppy ears. The dog is sitting on a dirt path in a lush green forest. The elephant's trunk is curled slightly.

You were really loud.
I have very sensitive ears.

An illustration showing a grey elephant in the background, a white dog with brown spots in the foreground, and a grey porcupine on the right. A white rabbit is running away in the upper right corner. The scene is set in a forest with green foliage and a dirt path.

Yes, that's true.
You don't like it
when things are loud.

When dog barked,
I don't think he
meant to scare you.
He was just trying to
show what he would do
if anyone tried to
bother him.

Well, here if anyone bothers you, it's my job to help them learn not to bother you. It's my job to keep you safe. Here you don't need to growl or bark. You can just tell me what's happening, and I will listen to you. Then we will decide what to do.



Can we try that?



Yes, but I might forget.



That's ok. You are learning, and we will help you learn. We want this to be a safe place where you don't need to bark or growl.

Or bite.



That's true. Biting is not safe. Sometimes it is hard for us to talk about what is going on inside us or figure out how we can calm down.

When you feel scared, or when you have other hard feelings like

sad, angry, frustrated, embarrassed, or ashamed, what do you do?



Scared



Sad



Angry



Frustrated



Embarrassed



Ashamed

I hide...

...and my tummy hurts.



I lose my voice, and all I can say is croak croak. I want to say more. I want to yell and say how scared I am, but all that comes out is croak.



I remember what my Mommy says. She says we should share our feelings and talk about what scares us.



Oh, and sometimes I eat. Nuts make me feel better...

Oh, and I don't sleep very well.

...and sometimes I talk too much.

I jump up and run fast...

...and sometimes I get hurt.





I become a
real stinker.

I find someone to
hold onto and hug.
Some people don't
like it when I
do that.

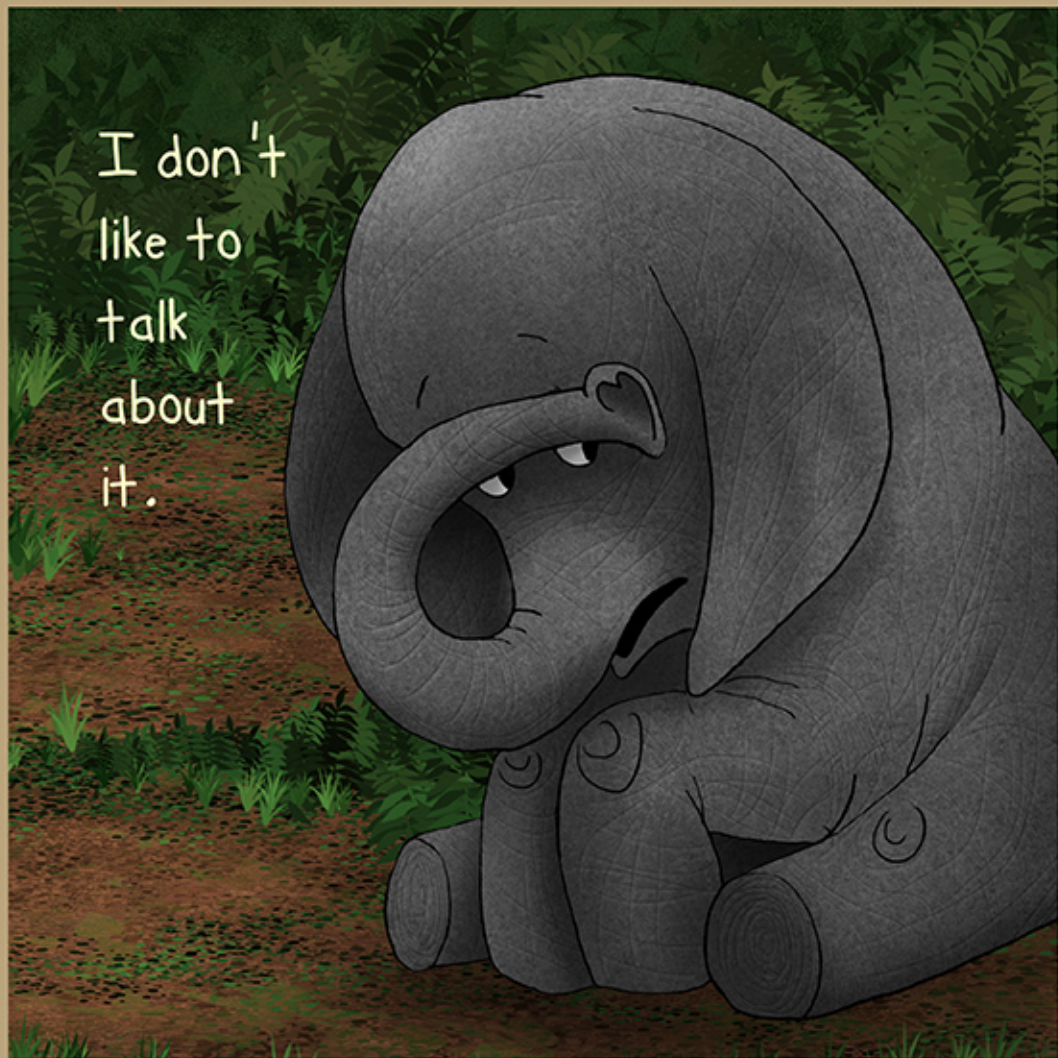


I pretend I'm not here,
but pretty soon I'm not
pretending. I really feel
like I'm not here, and
I don't know where I am.




What about you?

I growl,
and I bark.
When I do,
people don't
bother me.



I don't
like to
talk
about
it.



That's true. You don't like to talk about it. Maybe it's scary to talk about bad things that happened.

MmmHmm.

Even though you don't like to talk about it, I wonder if you think about it.



Often?

Almost all the time.

You have all been through a lot, and it makes sense that you feel this way, but it also seems like you need help, so you don't keep feeling this way.

Maybe we can learn new things to do that help us when we feel scared or mad or sad.





That year, all the little animals learned lots of things. They learned how to write their names. They learned how to play fun games.

And very, very importantly, they learned what they could do when they were scared, angry, sad and feeling bad inside.



Music helps me calm down.



I still like to run, but I also found a safe place where I can be calm and snuggle.

I talked to my mom, and she said she was very sorry that someone hurt me.

This makes me feel much better.

I will keep you safe and make sure no one ever hurts you again.



I play water ball with friends and that makes me feel so good.



My dad said that bad things don't usually happen and that makes me feel better.



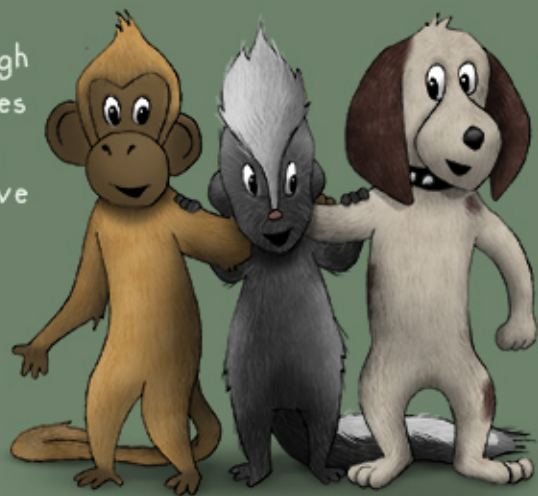
ahhh...whhhh...

I learned to breathe. When I get scared, I pay attention to the air going in and out of my body and that helps me calm down.



I learned I'm really a cool skunk
and not a little stinker, and
I have friends who care
about me and want
me around.

I learned
that even though
people sometimes
go away, there
are people I love
who always
come back.



I learned I
can trust
some people.

I find that a cup of tea and a little support helps me.



And I learned that it's good to talk about things...

...sometimes.



Thanks for watching!

for more information visit



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