



Tortu

The Very Worried Tortoise

Updated
version



By Victoria Burch

Lily Holland, Character Creation

Charlotte Frere-Cook, Education Consultant



Help!
I think my head
is about to fall off...

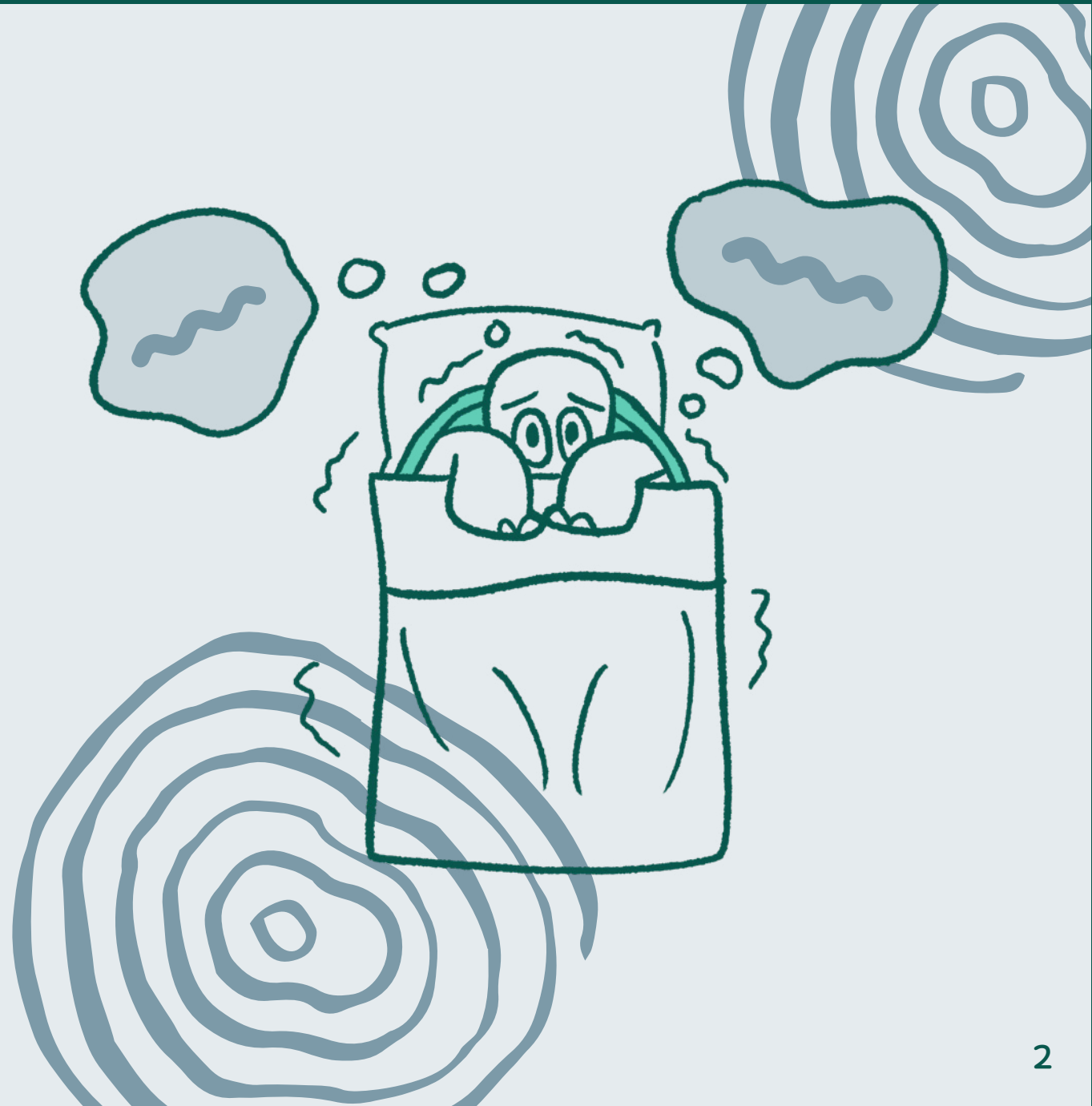
“Oh dear”, said Miss Shell,
“what’s the matter?”

The teacher looked at the small tortoises sitting far apart on the carpet. Two of Tortu’s friends giggled. They couldn’t come to school but they joined in sometimes from home.

'I couldn't go to sleep last night- it was too dark and I was scared!' said Tortu.

'Now my Mum has lost her job. And I so want to play with all my friends! Everything keeps changing because of Coronavirus! The grownups talk about it all the time.

And it goes round and round in my head like monsters racing about, and I feel sort of dizzy and like my head is going to BURST!'





‘Oh dear,’ said Miss Shell. ‘That’s not good. I think you are feeling anxious, Tortu.’

‘What’s that?’ asked Tortu.

‘When you are anxious, you worry and worry about things, and the feeling won’t go away. It can make you feel strange inside, and sometimes you want to hide in your shell, or run away. So many things are different still, aren’t they?’ said Miss Shell.

‘Everyone feels worried or a bit scared, or cross, sometimes. Even grown-ups. That’s normal. I expect some of your friends have things they worry about too’.

'I'm scared of going to sleep in the dark too. And I'm worried I can't remember my spellings. I don't like it when I can't come to school because someone has Coronavirus. My Mum is always too busy working' said Tortellina, talking on her Mum's laptop.

'And it was horrible when Grandpa was really ill, and I STILL can't go to see him!'





‘Oh dear’ said Miss Shell.

‘Some things have been hard haven’t they? It helps to tell a grown up if you’re feeling sad or anxious. Or do something you really like to take your mind off it!

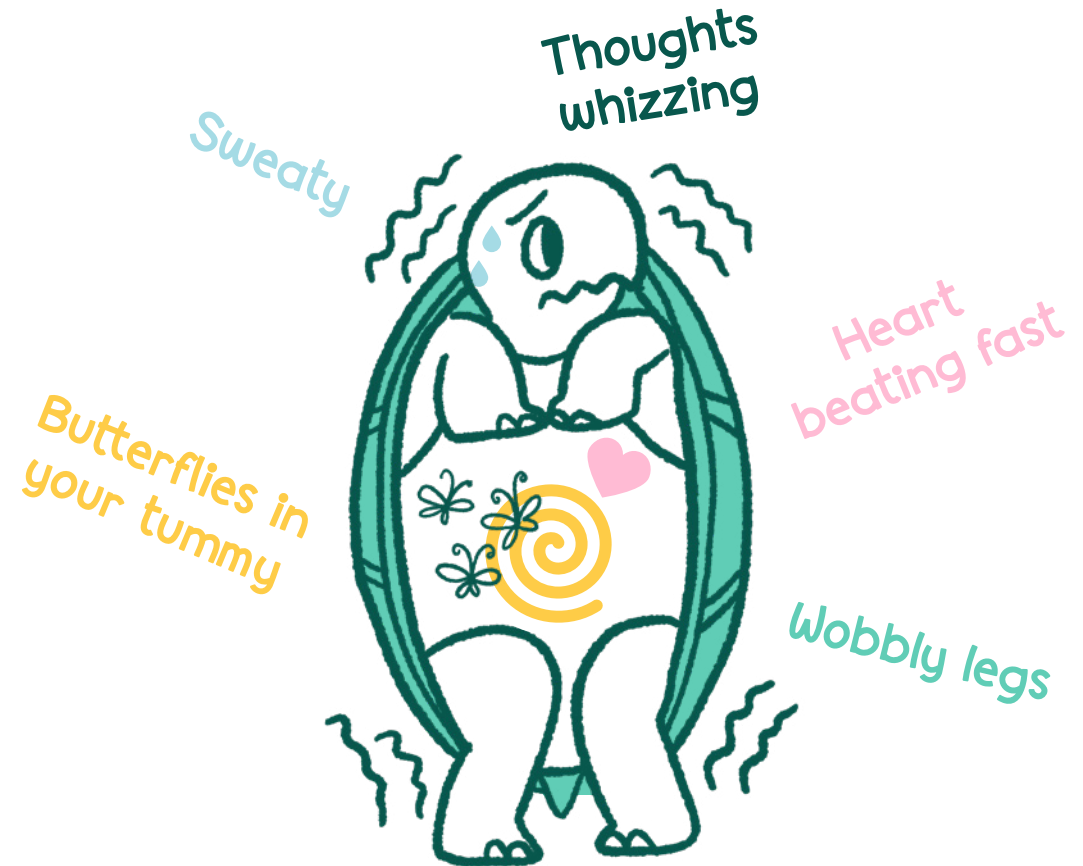
And there are some very good ways to feel better too. Have I told you about the worried tortoise?’

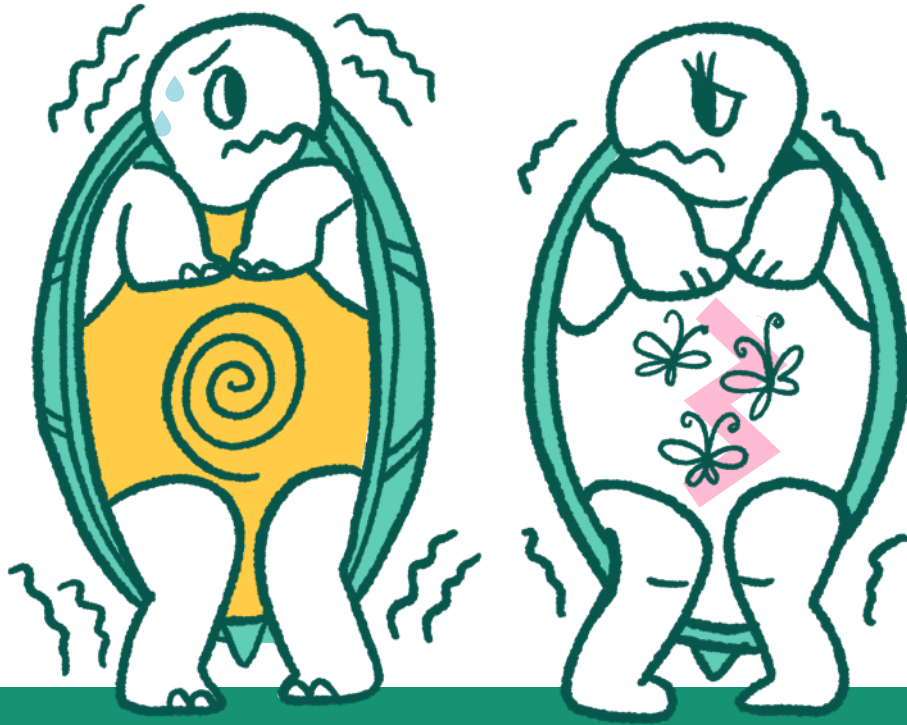
Miss Shell drew a picture of a tortoise on the whiteboard.

‘This is a very worried tortoise! He’s got lots of worrying thoughts going round and round in his head. Sometimes he gets worried about Coronavirus.

Sometimes he gets scared and worries that something is hiding in his cupboard – but when he checks, there’s nothing there. When he gets very scared and anxious, he feels like this:’

‘You won’t feel all these things - but when we feel worried, our bodies can feel strange.’





‘Yes, I feel sort of dizzy when I get worried!’
said Tortu.

‘My tummy feels funny when I get worried,’
said Tortellina.

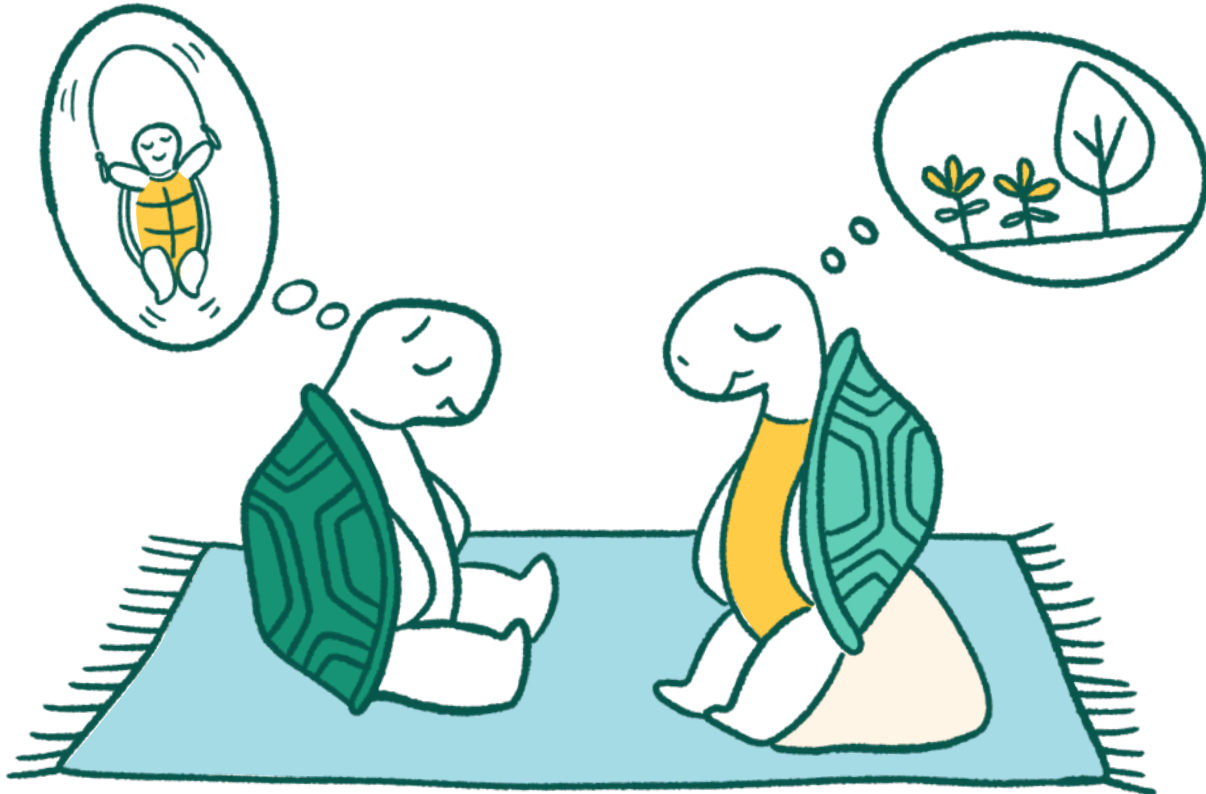
‘Sometimes I get a bit shaky when I get
worried,’ said Tonki.

‘There are some really good things we can
do to help those anxious feelings go away,’
said the teacher. ‘Shall we learn some of
them now?’

'The first thing you can do when you have lots of sad or worrying thoughts in your head is to say 'STOP'! It's really important to tell those thoughts to just 'STOP'! Let's practise that now,' Miss Shell said.

The little tortoises all shouted 'STOP!' together.





‘And you could try some slow breathing, and think about something really nice instead. Let’s try that now’ the teacher said.

The little tortoises got comfortable, closed their eyes and listened....

Miss Shell told them how to relax.

Grown-ups: Please read the script for ‘Special Place, Deep Breaths, and Relaxation’ from the notes here



Then the tortoises sat up on the carpet, yawning and rubbing their eyes.

‘How was that?’ asked Miss Shell. ‘How was your special place?’

Tortellina’s face appeared on the screen. ‘My special place is whizzing through space with my friends and Superman, and we can see all the stars!’ she said.

‘My special place is by the tree near my house. The grass is all soft and green. I love playing there with my sister and friends, and eating my favourite flowers,’ said Tortu, licking his lips.

‘Good!’ said Miss Shell. ‘If you feel worried, you can go to your special place in your head, and take deep breaths and relax. And when you go to bed, going to your special place can help you get to sleep. Getting enough sleep is really important: if we sleep well, that helps us feel good.’

‘I’m going to try it tonight before I go to sleep!’ said Tortu.



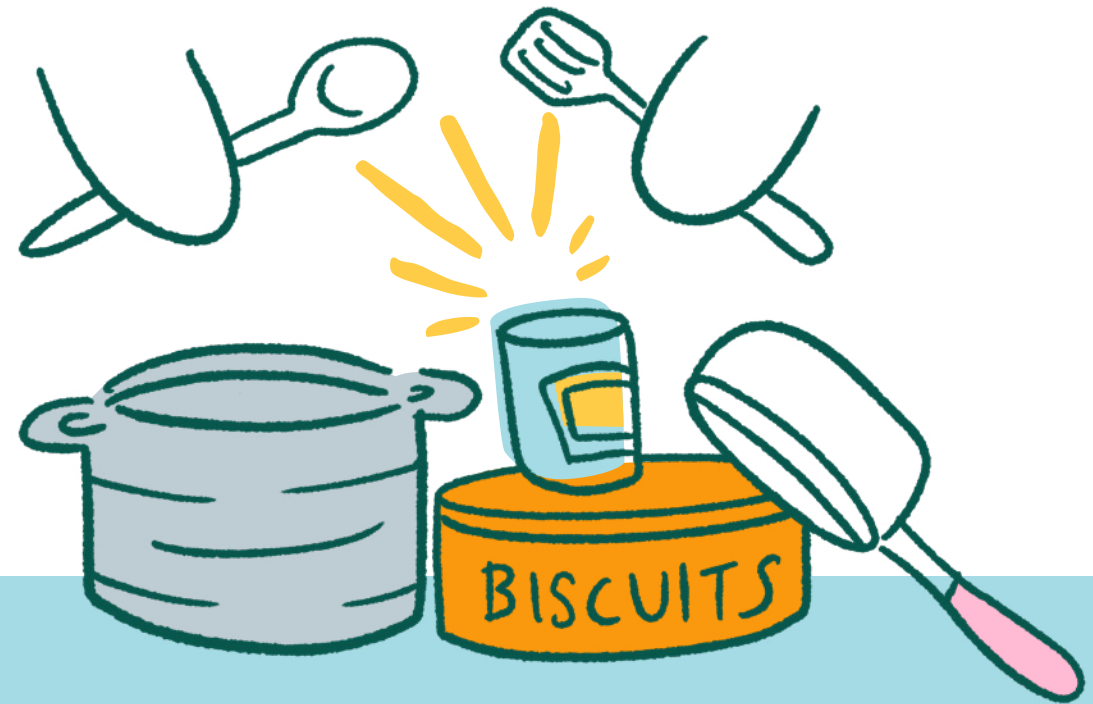


‘Another good way to feel better is doing something fun,’ said Miss Shell.

‘I know there have been lots of changes because of Coronavirus. Some things, like not seeing our friends and families, have been very hard. But I bet you’ve all done some fun things too. What’s the best thing you’ve done at home?’

‘We made a band! I made a drum kit out of pans and my sister made a box guitar,’ said Tonki.

‘We have treasure hunts! My big sister hides toys in the house and we have to find them,’ said Tortellina.





‘I jump up and down as high as I can, and I fight monsters with my sword like this,’ Tortu waved his arm in the air.

‘But Mum got cross because I knocked over the custard and it got all over the carpet!’ The tortoises giggled.

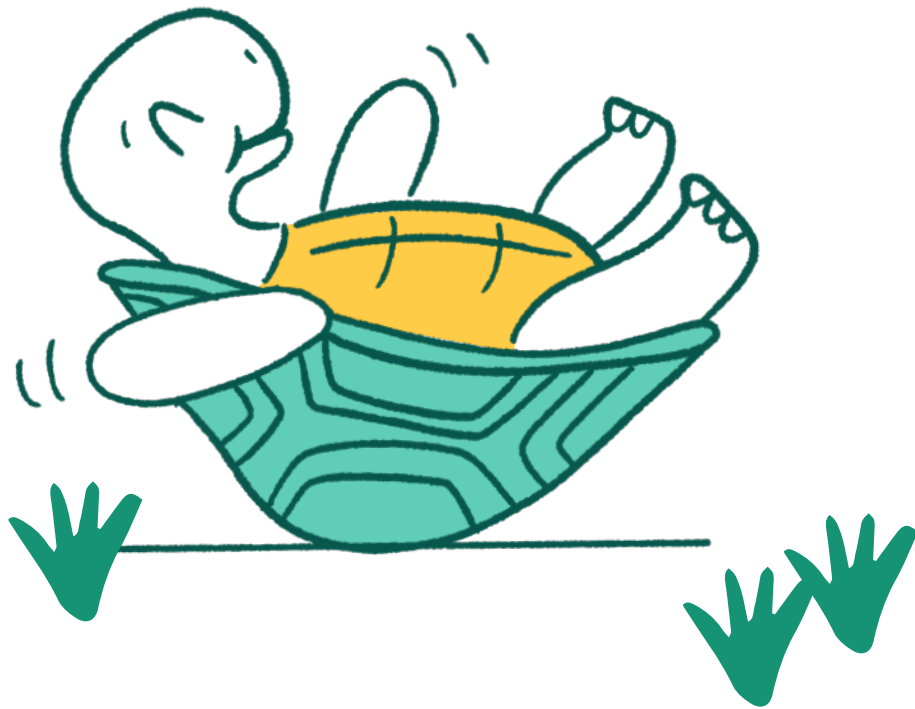
‘Oh dear!’ said Miss Shell. ‘You all have so many great ideas! And it’s a very good idea to do exercise- that really helps you feel good. But maybe not when there’s custard around.’

‘So remember, everyone can feel anxious or sad and worried sometimes. But there are lots of things you can do to feel better,’ said Miss Shell.

‘And, soon, we’ll have really good vaccines to beat Coronavirus, and medicines to help too. Then you will all be able to get together again, and play football and go to dance class and do all the other things that you are missing. And we’ll all hug and kiss our friends and family again, as much as we like.’



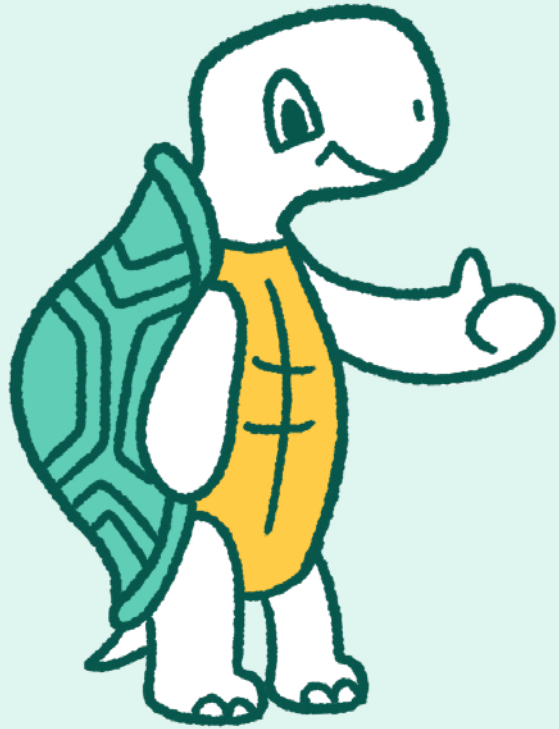
Hahaha
Hahaha
Hahaha



Tortu

‘I’ll be so happy! I will jump so high, like this!’ said Tortu. He jumped up as high as he could, then he tripped over his feet, and rolled onto his shell with his legs waving in the air.

‘Oh dear!’ said Miss Shell. And as Tortu rolled over and sat up again, he and the other tortoises all laughed.



The End

