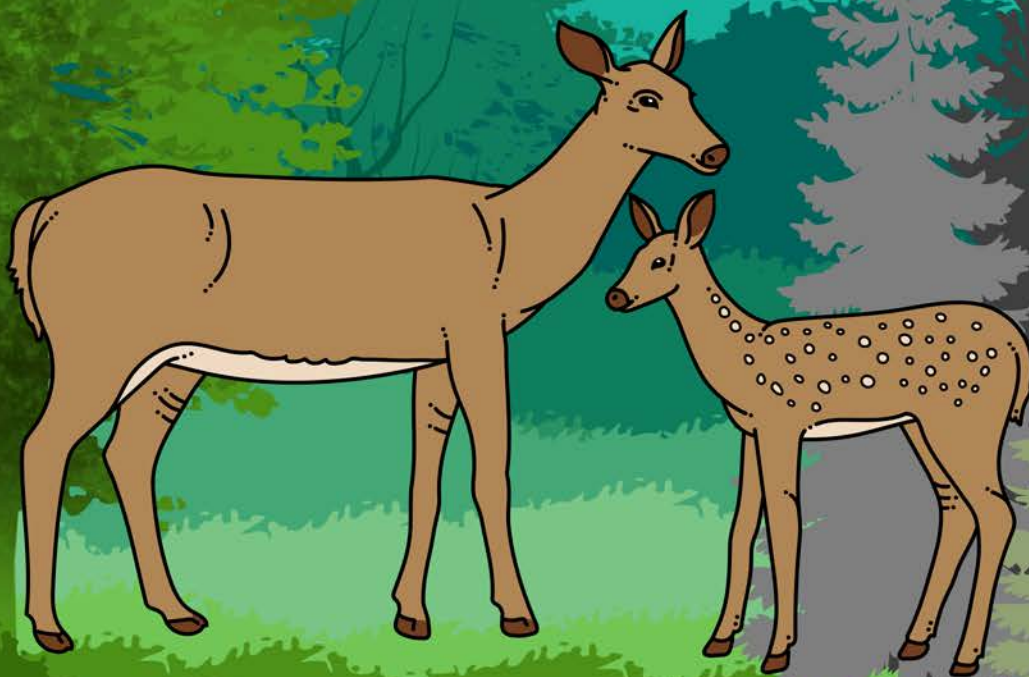



Mama Deer and Baby Deer

BY ERICA TOUSIGNANT



The background of the page is a soft-focus illustration of a forest. Large, rounded green trees with thin brown trunks are scattered across the top and sides. At the bottom, there are green bushes and small yellow flowers. The overall style is gentle and illustrative.

It was a spring day, and the warm sun was peeking through the clouds above. Baby Deer managed to open her eyes and the first thing she saw was Mama Deer, kindly offering to feed her.

Once Baby Deer was full, she tried to stand. At first, she was quite wobbly.

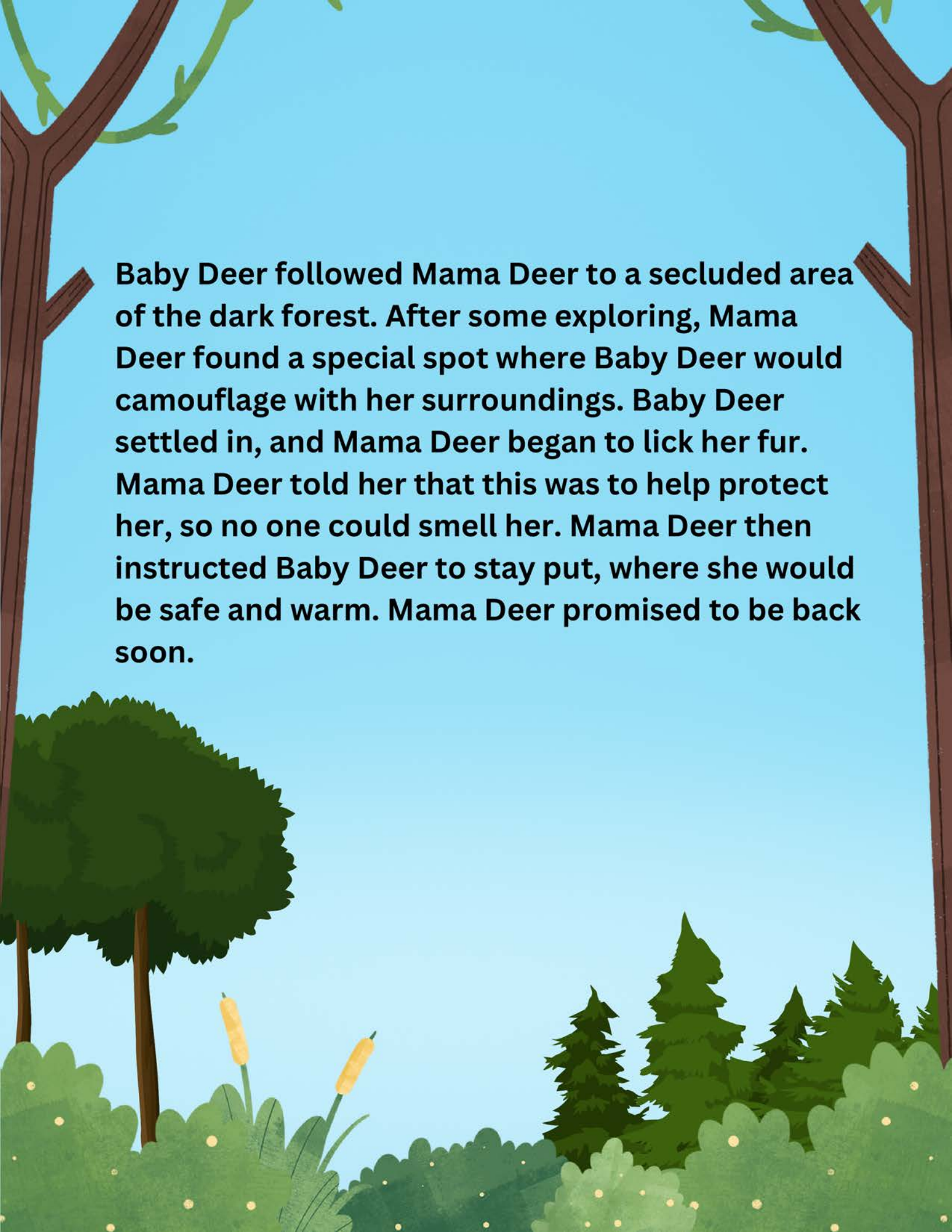


Mama Deer gently nudged her with her nose and whispered, “You are stronger than you think, Baby Deer. Go ahead, try to stand. What is the worst that can happen? You may fall and then you can try again.”



**Baby Deer tried several times,
and each time she collapsed on
the grassy area below. She began
to get frustrated, but Mama Deer
was next to her, urging her.
Eventually, she stood on her own
four feet! She was amazed by her
own strength!**





Baby Deer followed Mama Deer to a secluded area of the dark forest. After some exploring, Mama Deer found a special spot where Baby Deer would camouflage with her surroundings. Baby Deer settled in, and Mama Deer began to lick her fur. Mama Deer told her that this was to help protect her, so no one could smell her. Mama Deer then instructed Baby Deer to stay put, where she would be safe and warm. Mama Deer promised to be back soon.

It had been hours since Mama Deer had said goodbye and Baby Deer was starting to get nervous. The sun was setting, and the forest was getting dark. Baby Deer started to hear scary and unfamiliar noises. Baby Deer stayed very still but the cacophony of sounds surrounded her, growing louder and louder.



All of a sudden, Baby Deer saw many threatening, six-legged creatures, hopping and jumping nearby.

Baby Deer stood on her own two feet, towering over the loud insects and asked, with a tremble, “Who are you and what do you want?”

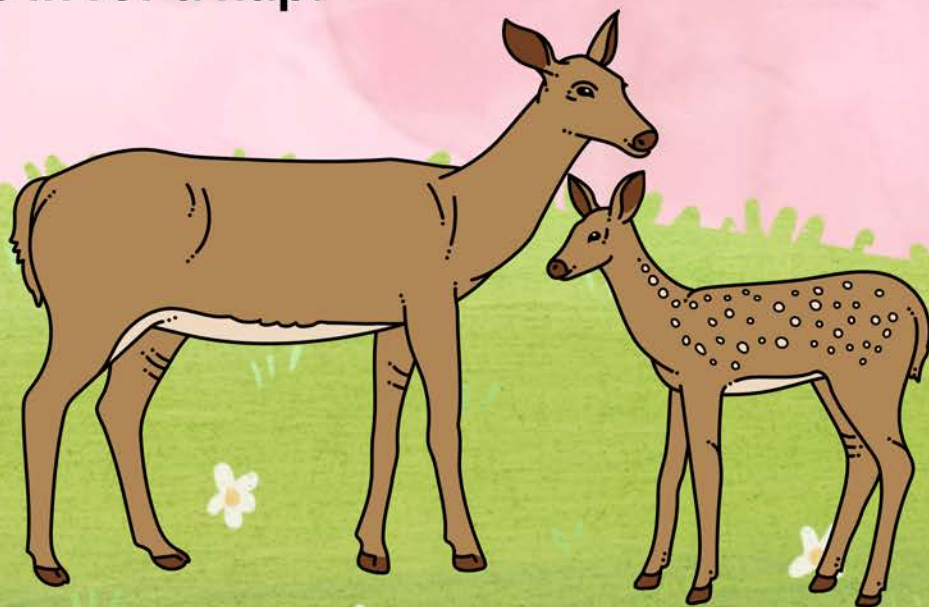
The creatures answered, “Do not fear -- we make scary sounds, but we are just little crickets!”

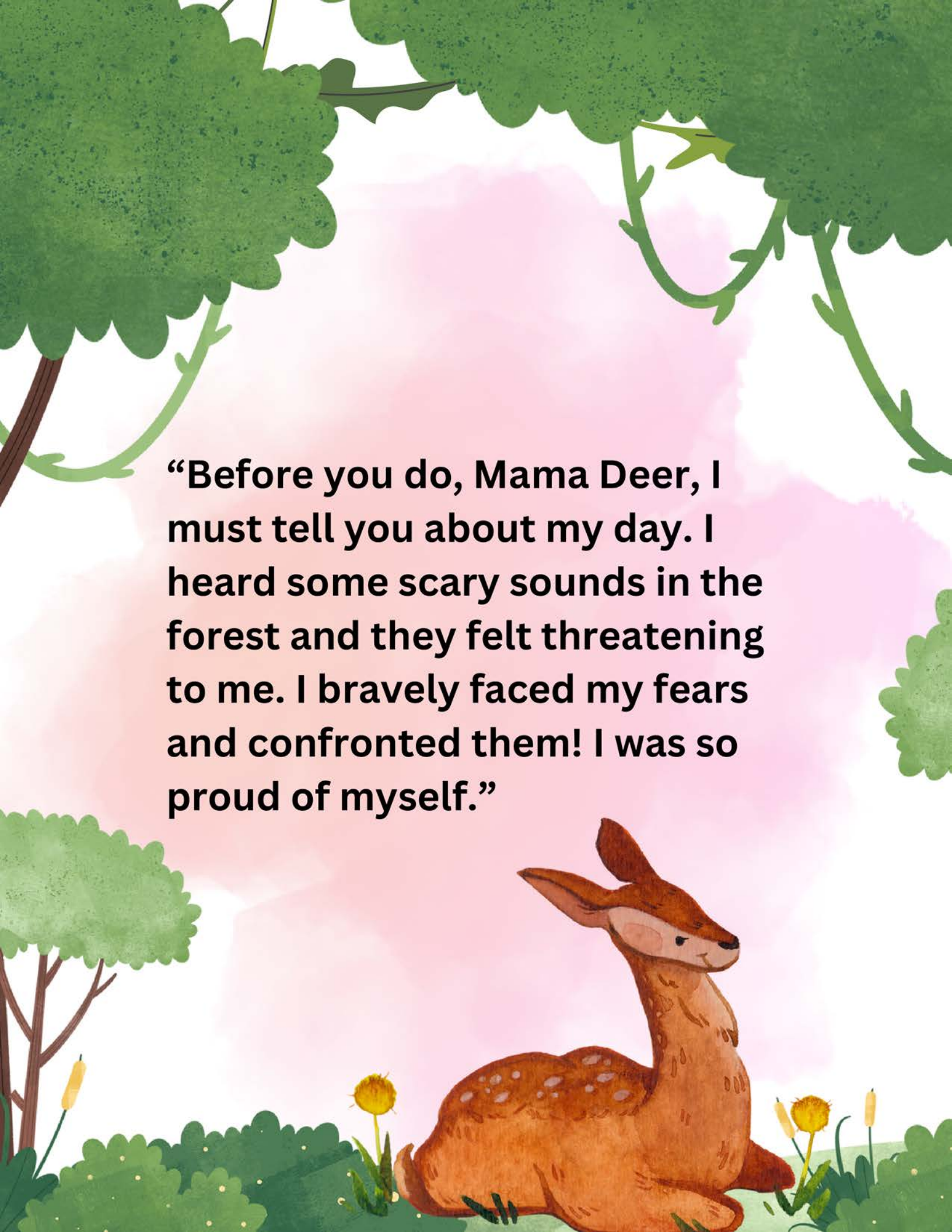
Baby Deer felt a wave of relief as she realized she was bigger and stronger than those little crickets. They soon went on their way and Baby Deer fell asleep.



Baby Deer woke to the scent of her mother and, as she opened her eyes, she saw that Mama Deer was nestled next to her.

“I have had a busy few hours, Baby Deer. After I left you here, I went exploring to find food to eat. Giving birth to you was tiring for me. While I was snacking on leaves and acorns, I heard rustling behind me. I turned around to see a mean wolf staring at me, ready to attack. I quickly ran in the other direction, through the grassy field, over the big hill, and along the edge of town. I did not stop until I was sure he was far behind me. Now I wish to settle in for a nap.”



A young brown deer with white spots is sitting in a forest clearing. The deer is looking towards the right. The background is a soft pinkish-purple wash. There are green trees and bushes around the deer. The text is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font, centered in the upper half of the image.

“Before you do, Mama Deer, I must tell you about my day. I heard some scary sounds in the forest and they felt threatening to me. I bravely faced my fears and confronted them! I was so proud of myself.”

As Mama Deer fell asleep, Baby Deer felt a deep sense of love and admiration overcome her.

She quietly whispered, “Mama Deer, thank you for teaching me how to be brave and strong. I am learning that there are ways to handle small threats like crickets and big threats like the wolf you encountered. As I navigate through life, I will learn how to be a Mama Deer, just like you.”

