# LITTLE BEAR STARTS SCHOOL

Written and Illustrated by Amber Hone

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**- Note for Parents/Carers -**

Feeling worried from time-to-time is completely normal; it is a natural human response to stressful situations. The ‘flight or fight’ response to certain situations allows the mind to process emotions and figure out the best way to problem solve. However, occasionally we can experience overwhelming worry to the point that it is no longer helpful or necessary.

Children experience worry and anxiety slightly differently to adults and the signs can often go unnoticed. Communication is one of the best ways for adults and children to express how they feel and receive validation and comfort. This series of short stories are designed to focus on common triggers of childhood anxiety working alongside the stuffed animal, with the main aim to encourage the child to process their thoughts and feelings and feel heard.

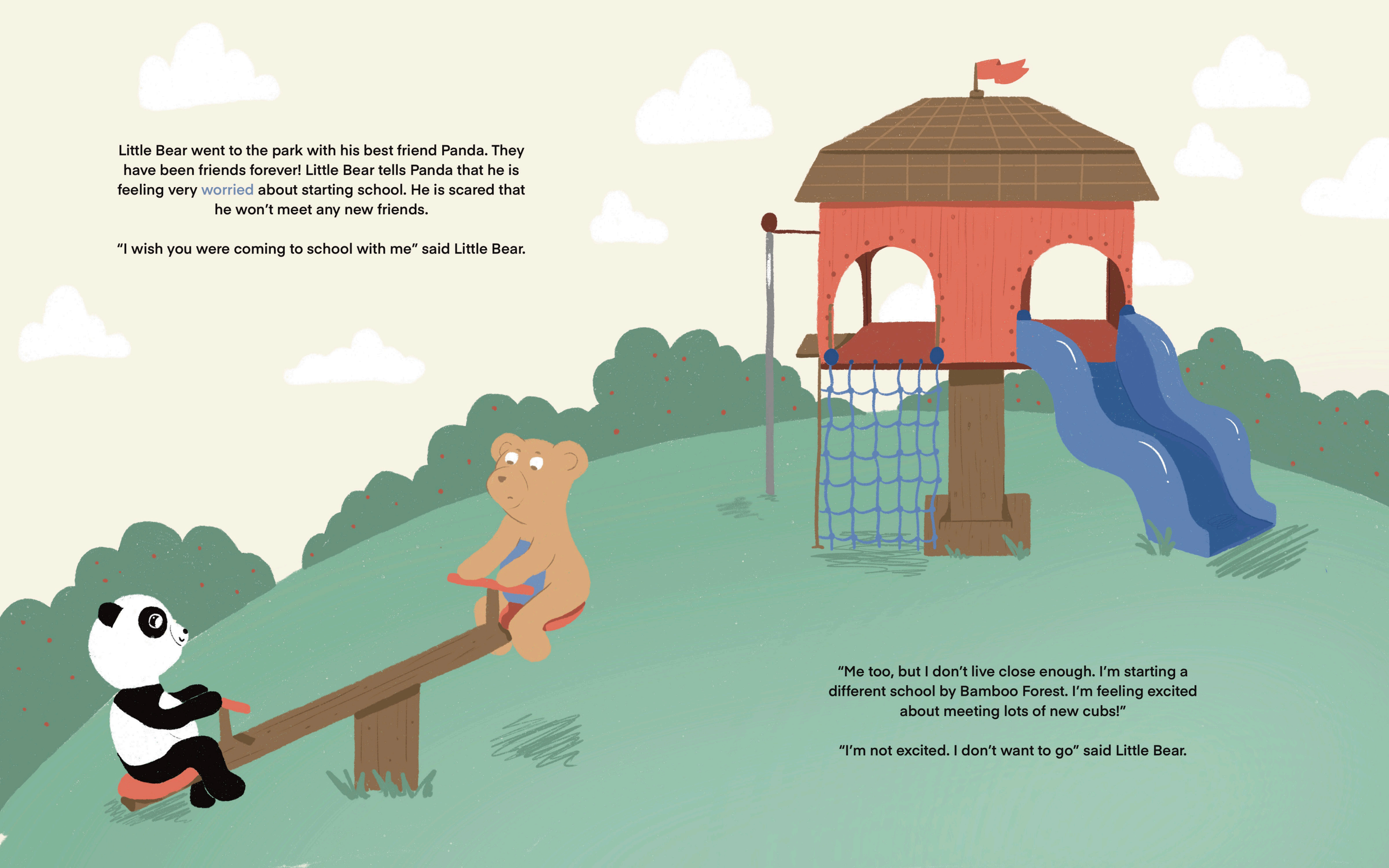
‘Little Bear’ is going through the same milestones, challenges and experiences that your child may also be facing. He can be used as a tool to help gain some insight into the thoughts and feelings that perhaps your child hasn’t previously felt comfortable sharing. Anxiety can often be very frightening for a little one, so hopefully this experience can assist them in feeling more comfortable with communicating how they feel.

At the end of each story, ‘Little Bear’ will encourage the child to write down how THEY are feeling about that current trigger and invite them to ‘post’ it into his belly. Each emotion that the bear experiences is represented by a different coloured belly; feel free to match how your child is feeling to the fabric pouch on the bear during this exercise.

Little Bear feels it too.

Little Bear went to the park with his best friend Panda. They have been friends forever! Little Bear tells Panda that he is feeling very worried about starting school. He is scared that he won't meet any new friends.

"I wish you were coming to school with me" said Little Bear.



"Me too, but I don't live close enough. I'm starting a different school by Bamboo Forest. I'm feeling excited about meeting lots of new cubs!"

"I'm not excited. I don't want to go" said Little Bear.

Little Bear is starting school tomorrow.
“I am feeling so angry today” thought Little Bear.
“why are you making me go to school Mama Bear? I don’t want to go” shouted Little Bear

“Everyone has to go to school Little Bear” Soothed Mama Bear
“If you don’t go to school, you won’t learn anything new! There must be something you would like to learn about?” asked Mama Bear.

“Well...I suppose I would like to learn to read a book all by myself... I’m sorry for shouting.” said Little Bear.

“That’s ok. Give me a big hug, everything is going to be fine”

Mama Bear and Little Bear had a big hug which made him feel less worried.

"Good Morning Little Bear! Time to wake up for school!"

All of a sudden, Little Bear started to feel very upset.
"Please don't make me go Mama Bear...I have a tummy ache" cried Little Bear

"Sometimes we get a tummy ache when we feel a little bit nervous. Try to imagine that there are lots of very excited butterflies in your belly fluttering around. That's all the belly ache is darling" Said Mama Bear

Once caterpillars are all grown up, they turn into butterflies. That's what you are doing today! You're not a caterpillar anymore, you're a butterfly!"

Little Bear stopped crying and imagined all the butterflies inside his belly. This made him feel much better.

Once Little Bear got to school, he noticed there were little drawers with everyone's name on. Little Bear opened his drawers and found a new pencil and an exercise book.

"Good Morning everyone!" said Mrs Koala.
"I'm your new teacher! Please take your seats at a desk and we can start having some fun!"

"Hmm, I'm still feeling a little unsure and confused..."
thought Little Bear

"I had a pretty good day yesterday" thought Little Bear
"But I only made one new friend... I am still feeling very shy..."

"Try to be brave, Little Bear. I'm sure all the little animals are feeling shy too. Why not try to make a few more friends today?" Said Mama Bear

At lunch time, Little Bear noticed that Foxy was sitting all by herself. She looked very sad.

"Hello, my name is Little Bear, would you like to be friends?" asked Little Bear bravely.

Foxy nodded and gave him a little smile!

Little Bear was very proud of himself for cheering up his new friend! "Muma Bear was right! Everyone is feeling shy" thought Little Bear.

They ate lunch together, talked a little, and shared some of their snacks with each other! Little Bear told Foxy about the butterflies in their bellies, and this made Foxy feel much better too.

It was the last day of the school week for Little Bear.

By the end of the day, Little Bear had learnt the names of everyone in his class and made a lovely group of friends!

When Little Bear got home from school, Mama Bear had stuck all the work that little Bear had made at school on the fridge which made him feel very proud and happy.

“I can’t wait for next week!” thought Little Bear!

“Why don’t you write down how you feel about starting school and place the note into one of my belly pouches? This will help me understand how you are feeling” Said Little Bear.

“Don’t worry... I feel it too”

See how Little Bear gets on with his first experience at his new school. Do you feel the same as Little Bear? Watch how his Tummy changes colour based on how he is feeling.

Feel free to match the coloured pouches to how YOU are feeling on the cuddly toy included. You can also write a little note and place it into his tummy to let him know how you feel.

Little Bear feels it too.