

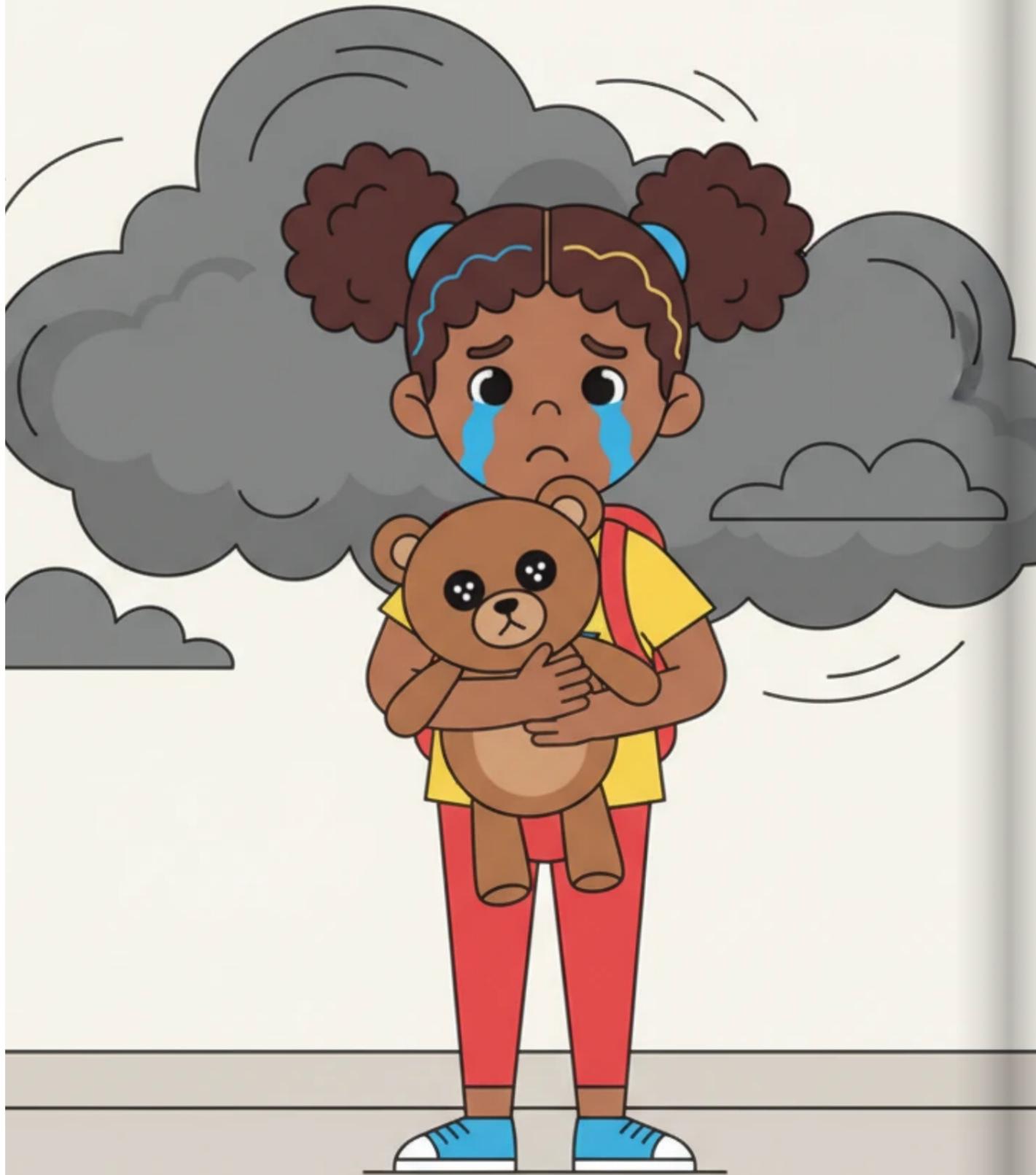


# Gracie and the Jellybean Worries

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The morning sun peeked through Gracie's window, but a tiny flutter started in her tummy. She pulled her cozy blanket closer, wishing the day wouldn't begin. Preschool felt like a big, unknown place, and her tummy felt wobbly just thinking about it.



Gracie hugged Barnaby, her soft worry bear, tightly. Barnaby usually helped, but today the worries felt too enormous, like big, grey clouds. Even Barnaby's kind, button eyes couldn't make them disappear entirely.



Mama sat beside Gracie, her smile warm and gentle. "Worries are like tiny, wobbly jellybeans, sweet pea," she explained. "They can feel big and bouncy inside, but we can learn to make them small and quiet."



Gracie imagined her worries as bright, colorful jellybeans, wiggling and jiggling. She carefully scooped each one up in her mind and tucked them into Barnaby's special, secret worry pouch. Instantly, they became tiny and still.



At the preschool gate, a little jellybean worry tried to pop back out. Gracie squeezed Barnaby, remembering her jellybean trick. She took a deep breath and imagined the worry shrinking back into the pouch.



Inside, Gracie saw her friend Lily building a magnificent tower of blocks. A small smile appeared on Gracie's face. The jellybean worry in Barnaby's pouch felt even smaller, almost silent.



Soon, Gracie was laughing, helping Lily stack blocks, and painting a bright purple dinosaur. The wobbly jellybean worries were completely gone, replaced by giggles and happy sounds. Preschool was actually fun!



That evening, Gracie told Barnaby all about her wonderful day, her eyes sparkling. Barnaby sat proudly on her bed, his worry pouch feeling light and empty. Gracie knew tomorrow would be just as much fun, with no wobbly jellybean worries in sight.