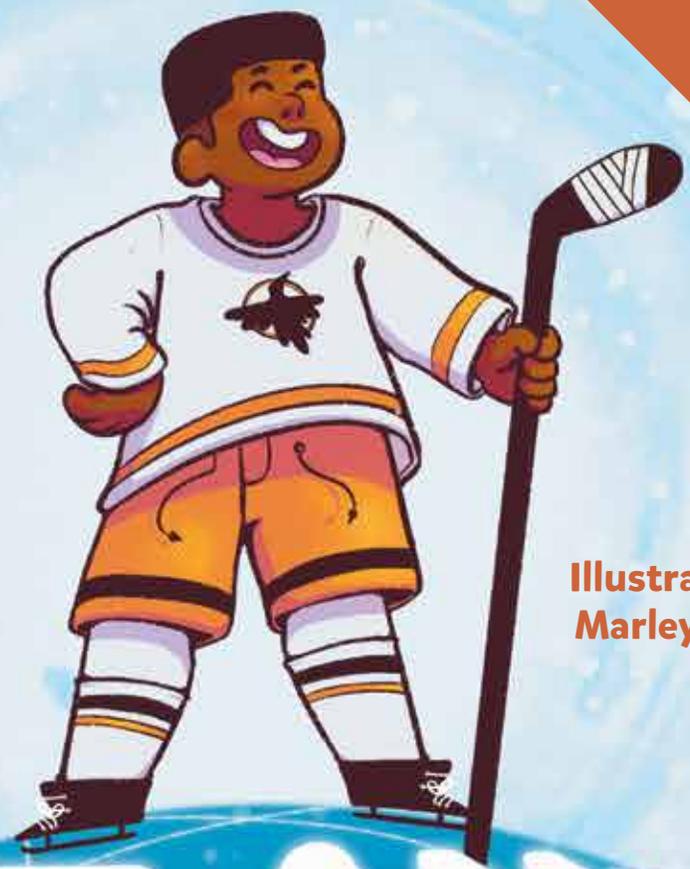


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**Written by
Itah Sadu**

**Illustrated by
Marley Berot**



IZAM BIG

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I AM BIG

Written by Itah Sadu
Illustrated by Marley Berot

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Second Story Press

I am nine years old and I
am a little kid, but I am
BIG in size.

How can you be
small and **big**
at the same time?





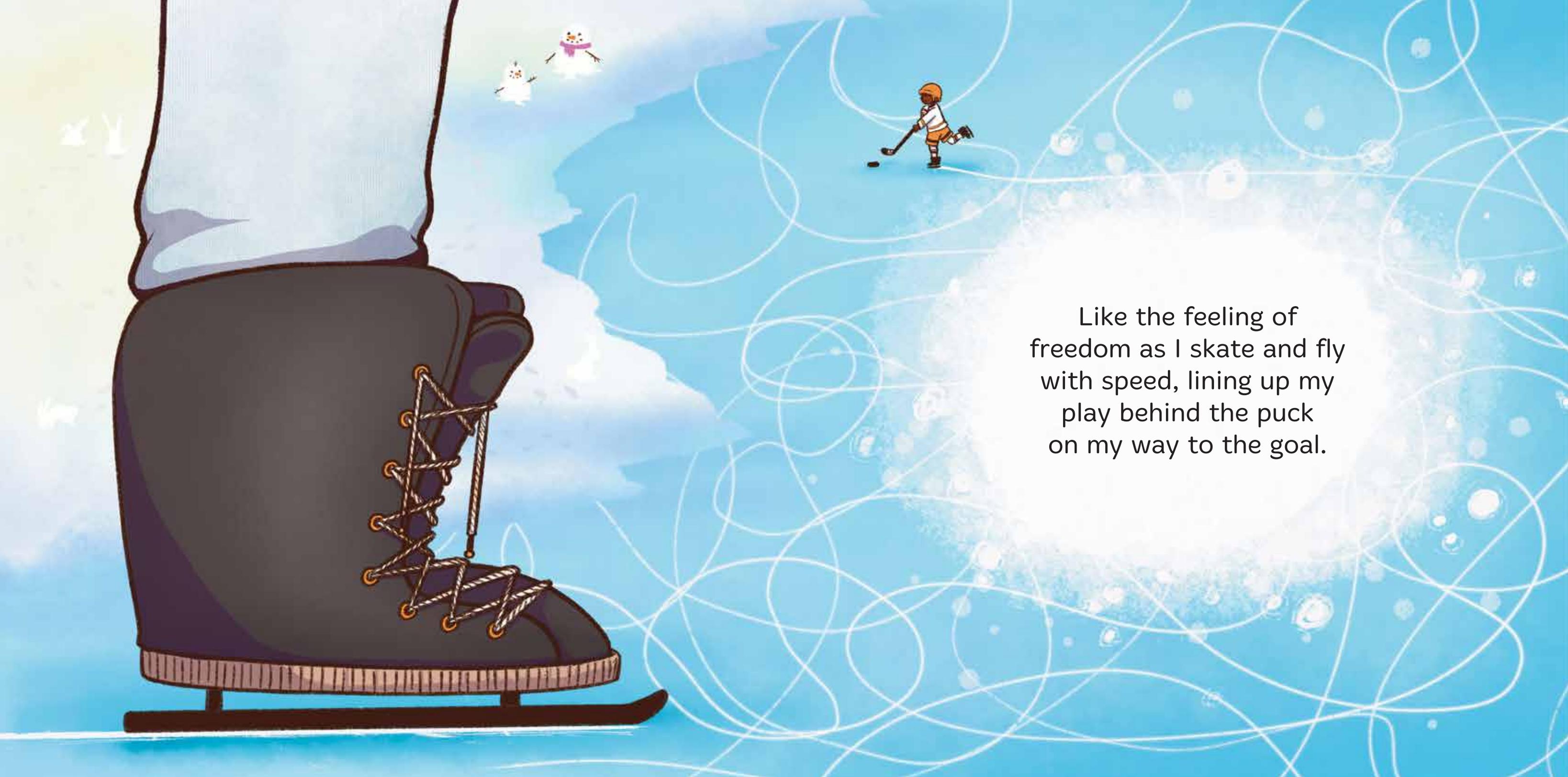
What do you see,
when you see me?

Small and **big**
or **big** and small?



My mother says I am
mighty. That's big.

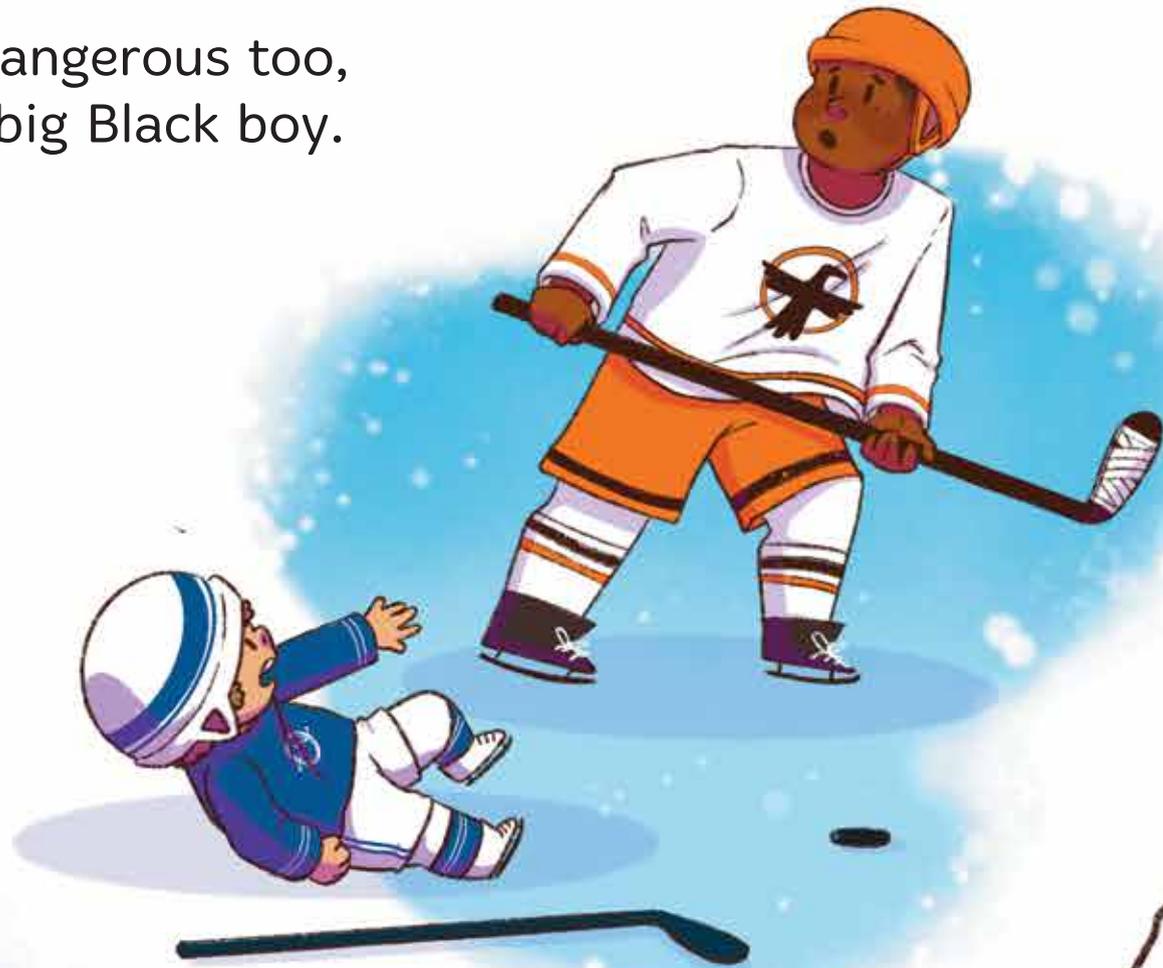
My father says I am strong,
and an awesome big feeling
comes over me.

An illustration featuring a large, detailed view of a dark blue hockey boot with gold laces on the left side. The boot is positioned on a light blue ice surface. In the background, a child in a white and orange hockey uniform is skating on an ice rink. The rink is surrounded by a bright blue sky with white clouds and two snow globes. The right side of the image is filled with a pattern of white, swirling lines and small white circles, creating a sense of motion and speed.

Like the feeling of
freedom as I skate and fly
with speed, lining up my
play behind the puck
on my way to the goal.

But, but
big can also be BAD
for a boy.
A big boy.

And dangerous too,
for a big Black boy.



“Hey you!
Don’t crush
my son.”



“Look at his size, he’s
dangerous.”



“Coach, remove
that bully!”



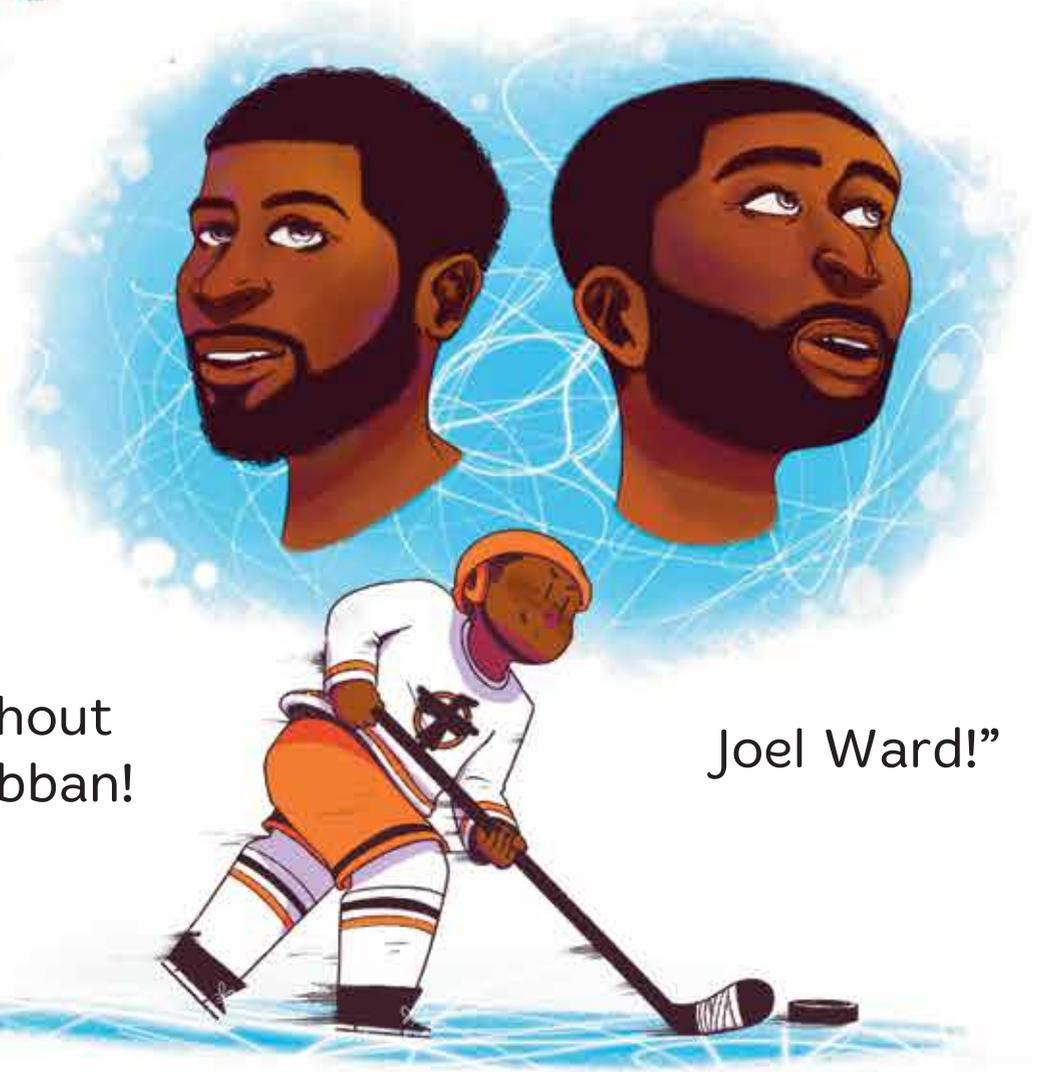


I skate and I deke,
avoiding the boards
and the hits.

And I shout
“P.K. Subban!

Joel Ward!”

How did you make big cool?





Hey you! People in
the arena!
What do you see?

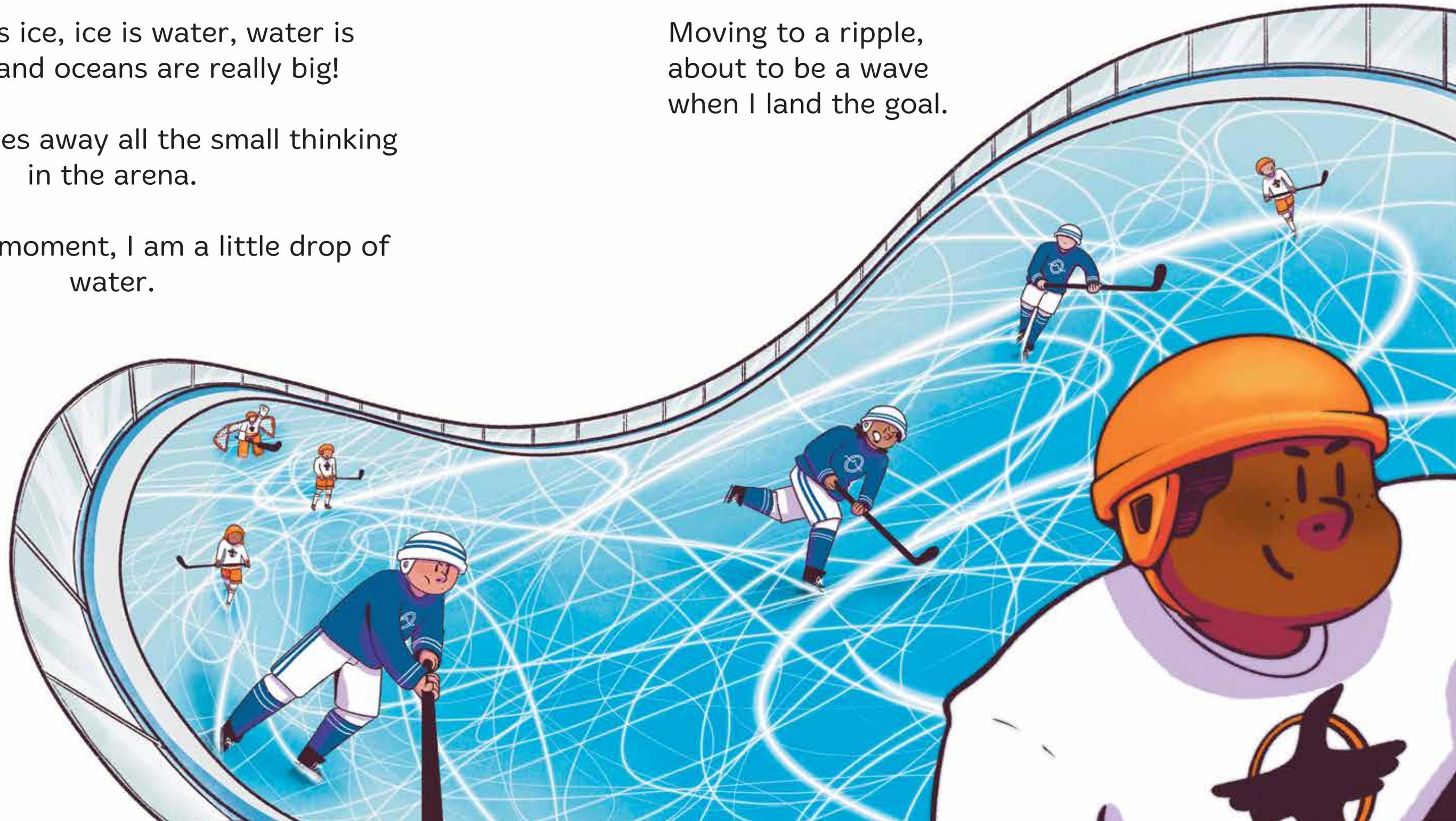
Do you really see **me**?
Small and big. Big and small.
Big Black boy.

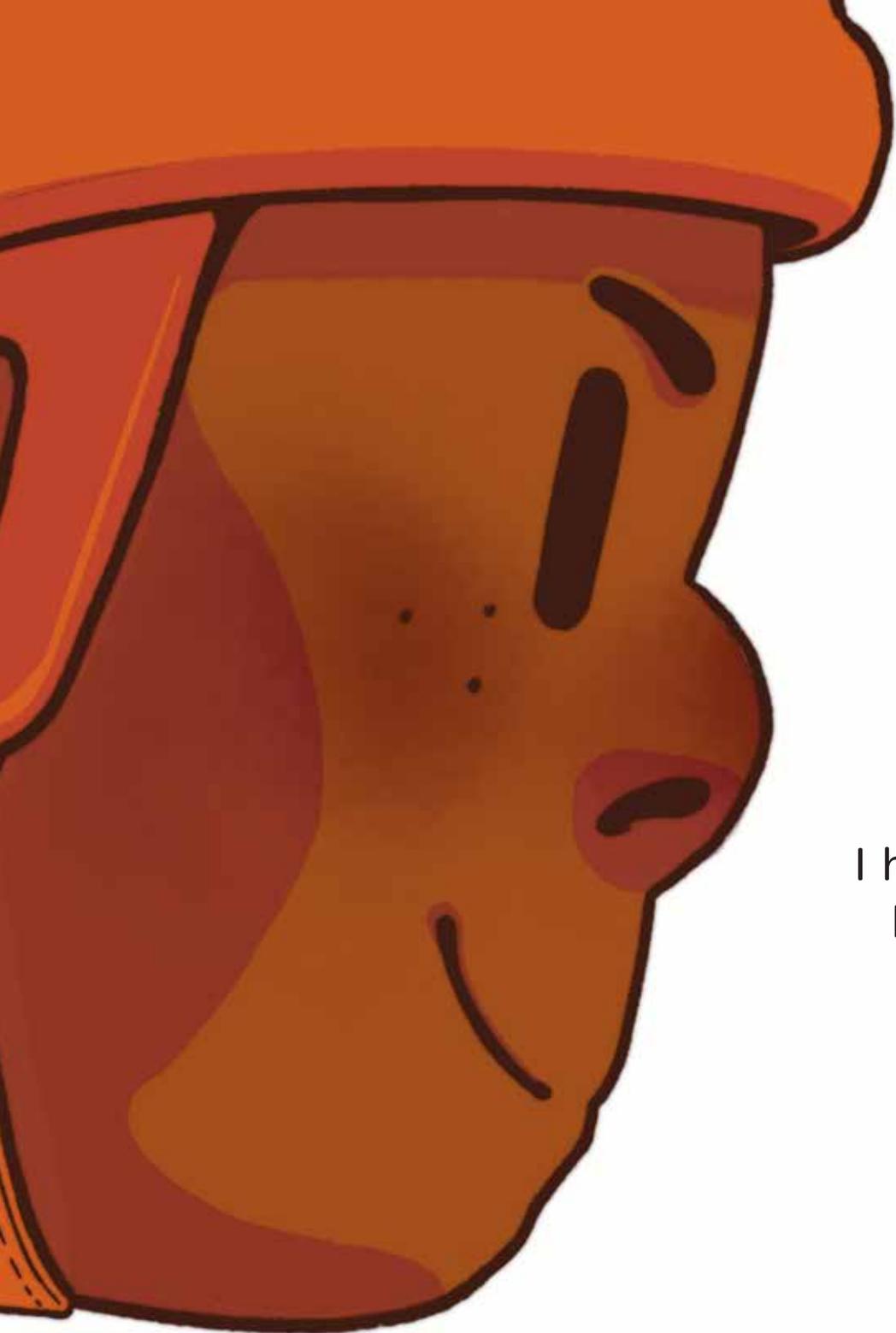
The rink is ice, ice is water, water is oceans, and oceans are really big!

The ice washes away all the small thinking in the arena.

And in that moment, I am a little drop of water.

Moving to a ripple, about to be a wave when I land the goal.





A player skates
across my path.
He is bigger,
but everyone is
quiet.

I have seen him
before.
I have seen his play.
I know his game.

What happens
when big meets
bigger?
Everyone stays
quiet.



Never once taking my
eyes off the target.
I look to the goal.
Time to score.

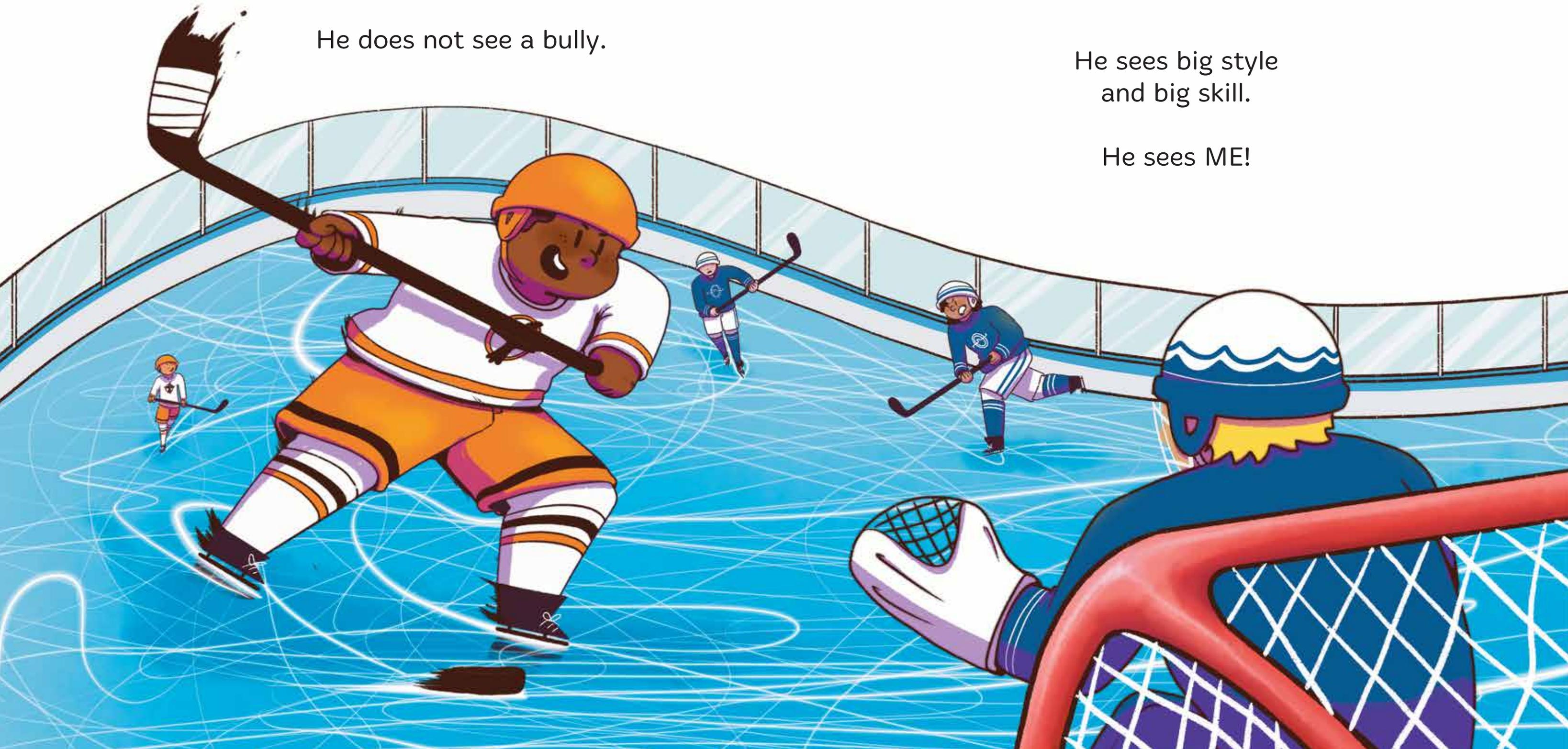
I skate with grace
straight at the goalie.
His eyes are clear.



He does not see a bully.

He sees big style
and big skill.

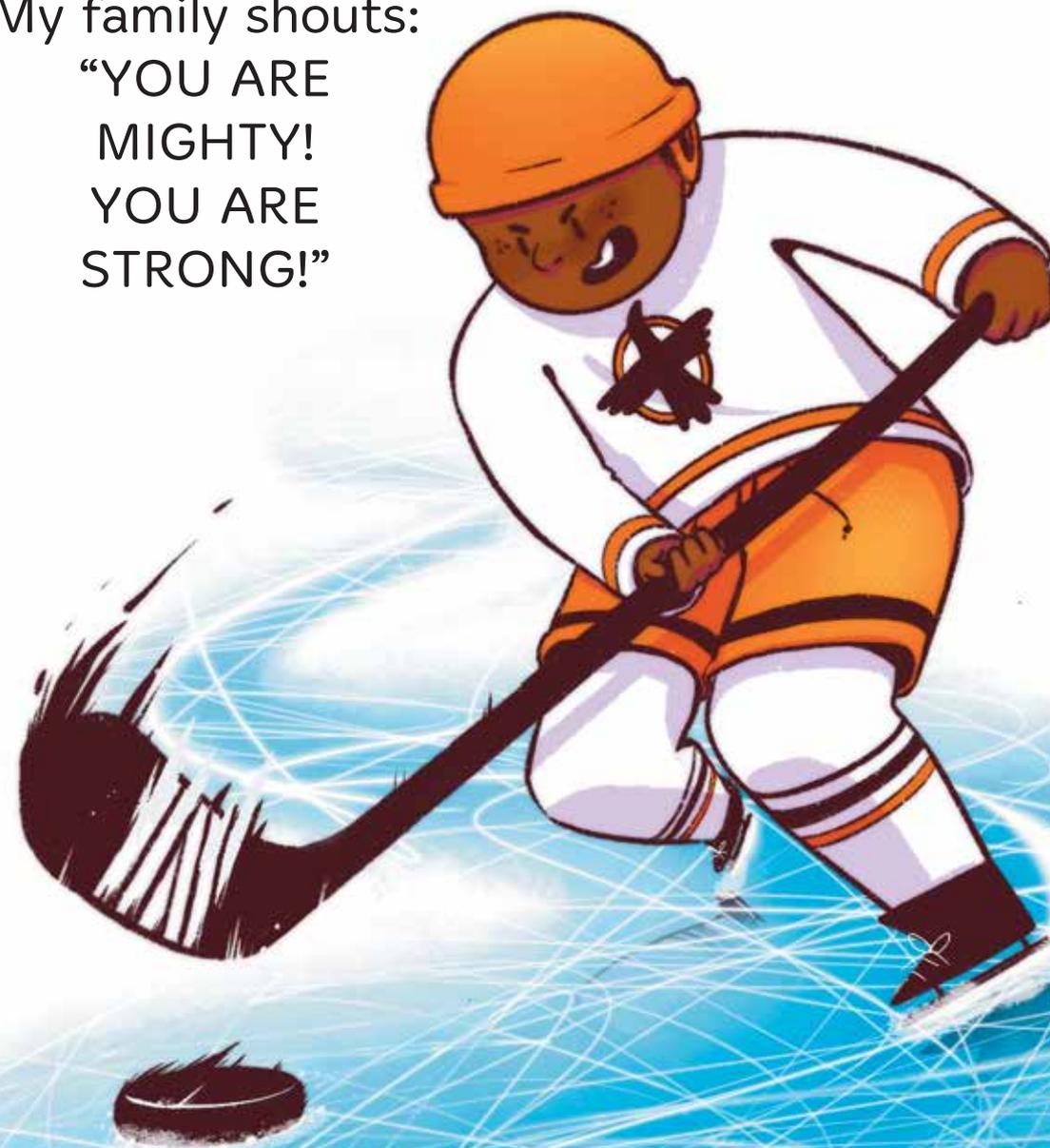
He sees ME!



I hear Coach yell,
"YOU ARE THE BIG IDEA!"



My family shouts:
"YOU ARE
MIGHTY!
YOU ARE
STRONG!"



Their voices grow louder.
They fill me up.
I feel unstoppable.
I am in a dance with the goalie,
never once letting my eyes waver.

Like Willie O'Ree
who came before me.

“YOU GOT THIS!”
my sister shouts.



“GO FOR IT!”
screams my brother.
And I sink the puck
into the net.

“SCORE!” my family shouts.
“GOAL!” my team cheers.

The arena erupts and in that moment I
feel truly beautiful.

I AM **BIG AND BLACK!**



Itah Sadu is an award-winning storyteller and children's author. She is the co-owner of the iconic Toronto bookstore A Different Booklist, specializing in African and Caribbean Canadian literature. Itah is the Managing Director of the Blackhurst Cultural Centre—The People's Residence. She is a founding member of the annual Toronto Emancipation Day Underground Freedom Train Ride. Itah lives with her family in Toronto.

Marley Berot is an illustrator with over ten years of combined personal and professional experience. Her portfolio includes cover art for *Neuron*, graphic design work for the Toronto International Film Festival, logo design, and book illustration. She runs her own online store called MarleysApothecary.com. Marley is very passionate about her work as an artist, and this can be seen in every piece she creates. She lives in the Toronto area.

**Hey you! People in the arena!
What do you see?
Do you really see me?**

In the middle of the ice, a young Black hockey player finds joy in his talent and confidence in the cheers of his family, his coach, and the other players. Their support gives him the power to face down those who see him as a threat and to focus on the thrill of the game.

A celebration of size and Blackness
and the magic of sport.



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