

ADVANCE READING COPY  
UNCORRECTED PROOF

**Written by  
Itah Sadu**

**Illustrated by  
Marley Berot**



I AM  
BIG

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

tk

Copyright text © Itah Sadu  
Copyright cover and illustrations © Marley Berot  
Edited by Kathryn Cole

Printed and bound in Canada

*Second Story Press gratefully acknowledges the support of the Ontario Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts for our publishing program. We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Book Fund.*



Conseil des Arts  
du Canada      Canada Council  
for the Arts

Funded by the Government of Canada  
Financé par le gouvernement du Canada



Published by  
Second Story Press  
20 Maud Street, Suite 401  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
M5V 2M5  
[www.secondstorypress.ca](http://www.secondstorypress.ca)

# I AM BIG

Written by Itah Sadu  
Illustrated by Marley Berot

ADVANCE READING COPY  
UNCORRECTED PROOF

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?

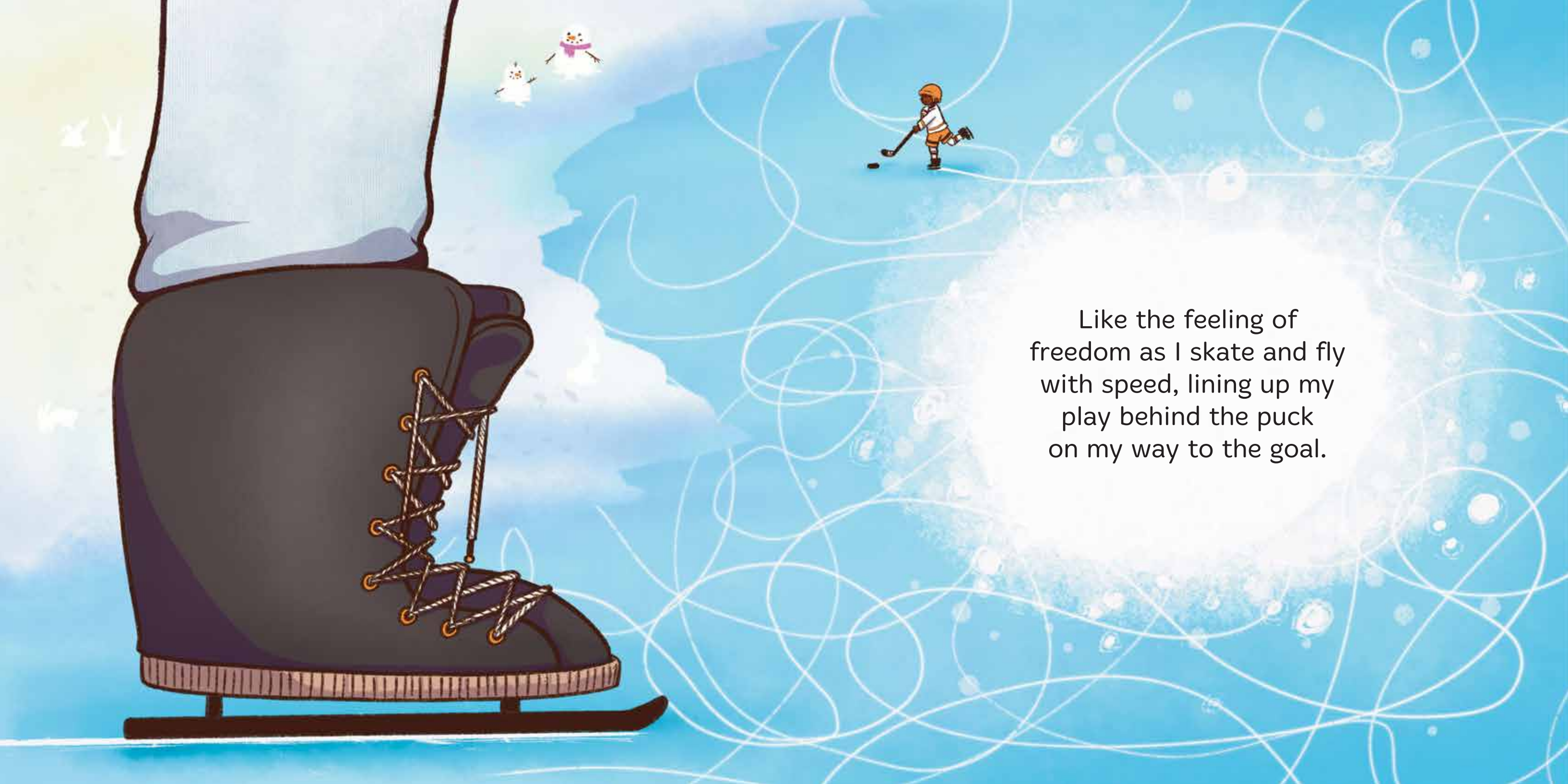




My mother says I am  
mighty. That's big.

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



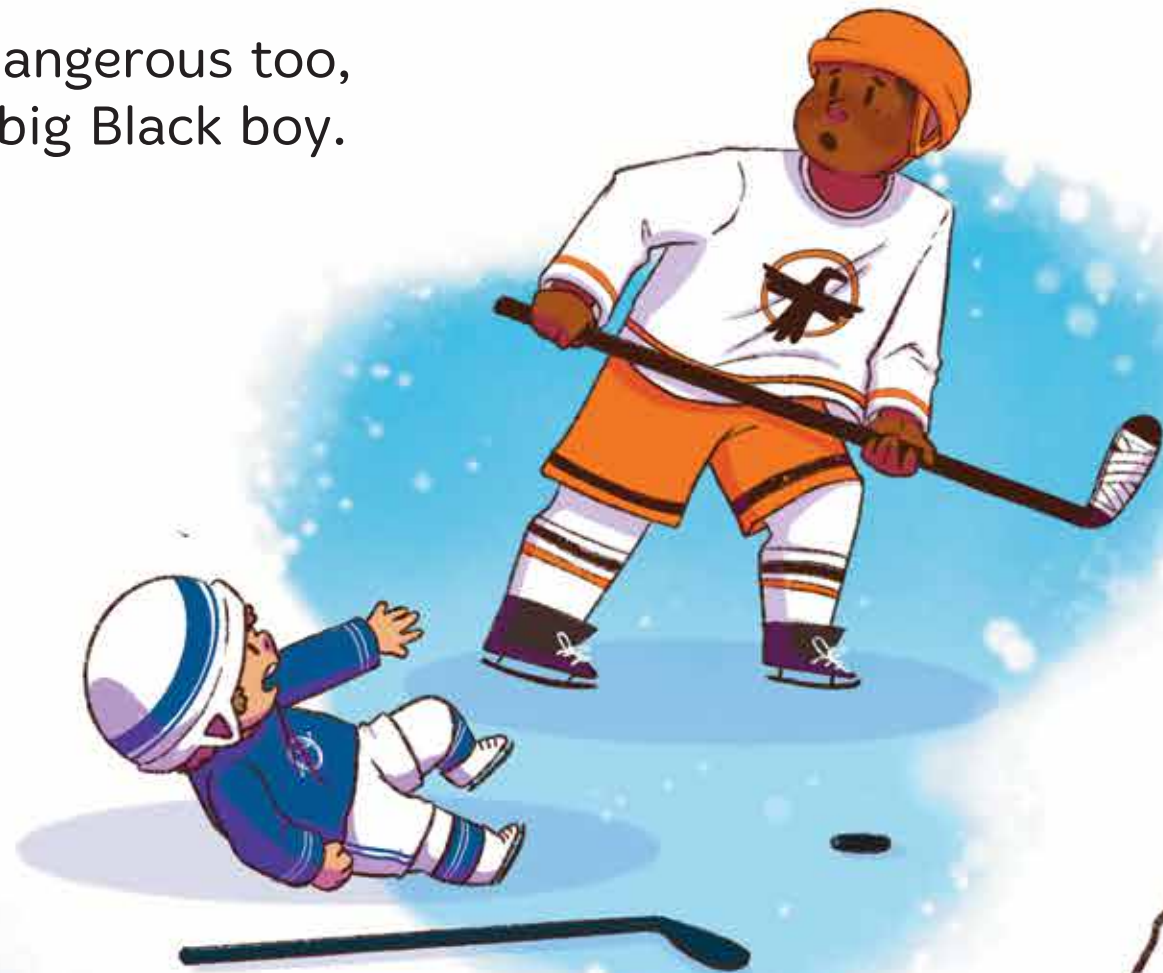


Like the feeling of  
freedom as I skate and fly  
with speed, lining up my  
play behind the puck  
on my way to the goal.



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

And dangerous too,  
for a big Black boy.





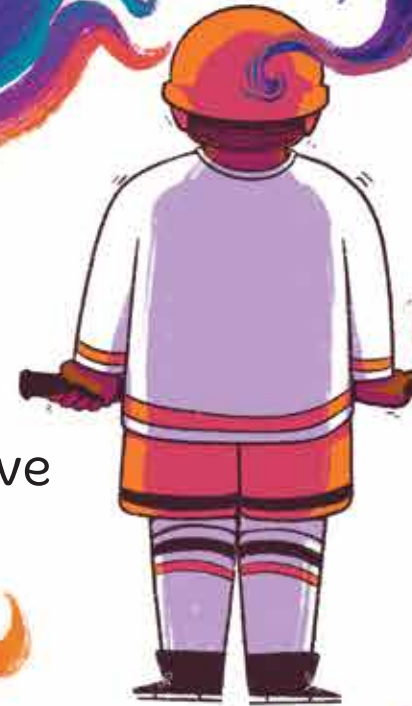
“Hey you!  
Don’t crush  
my son.”



“Look at his size, he’s  
dangerous.”



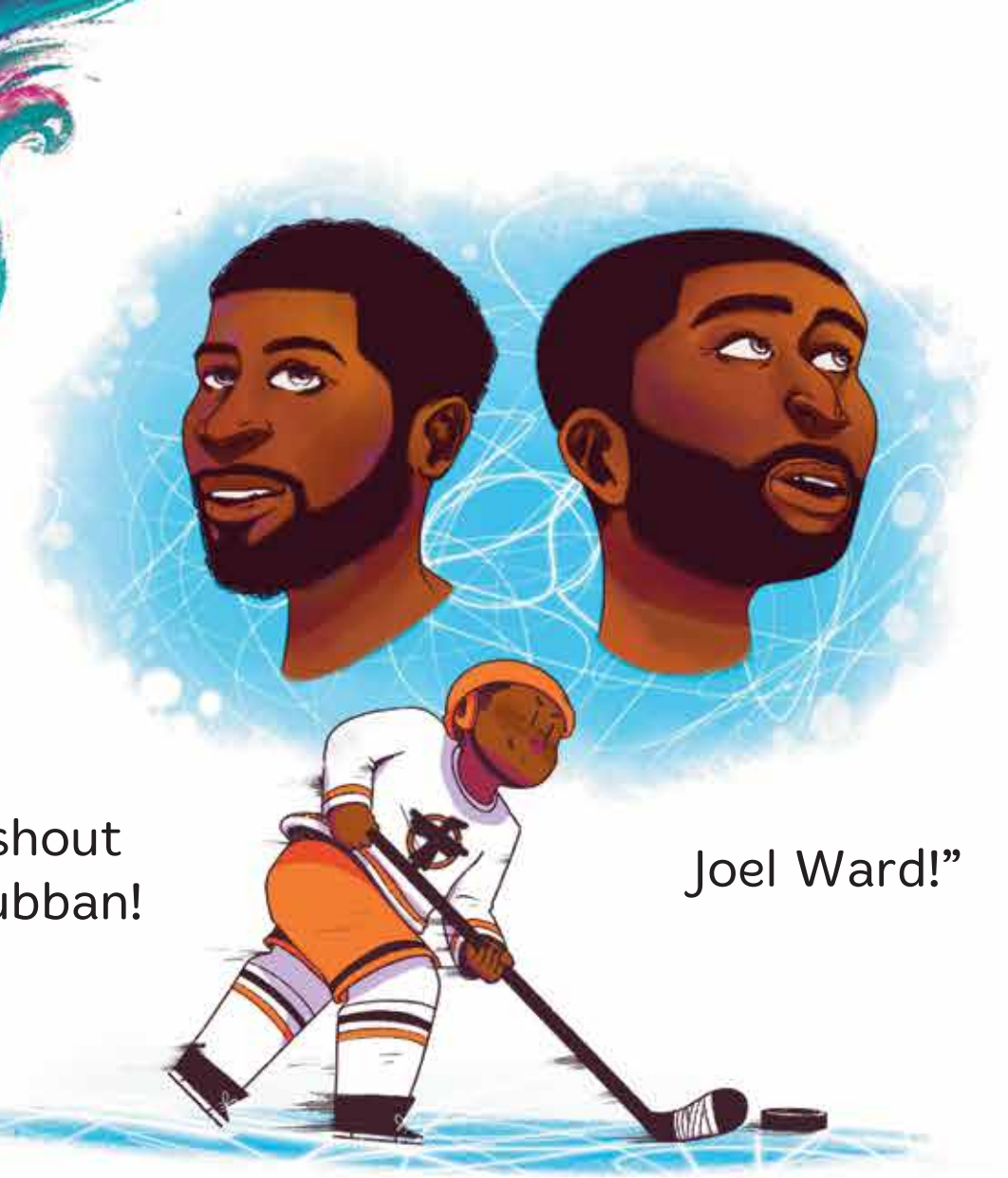
“Coach, remove  
that bully!”







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.

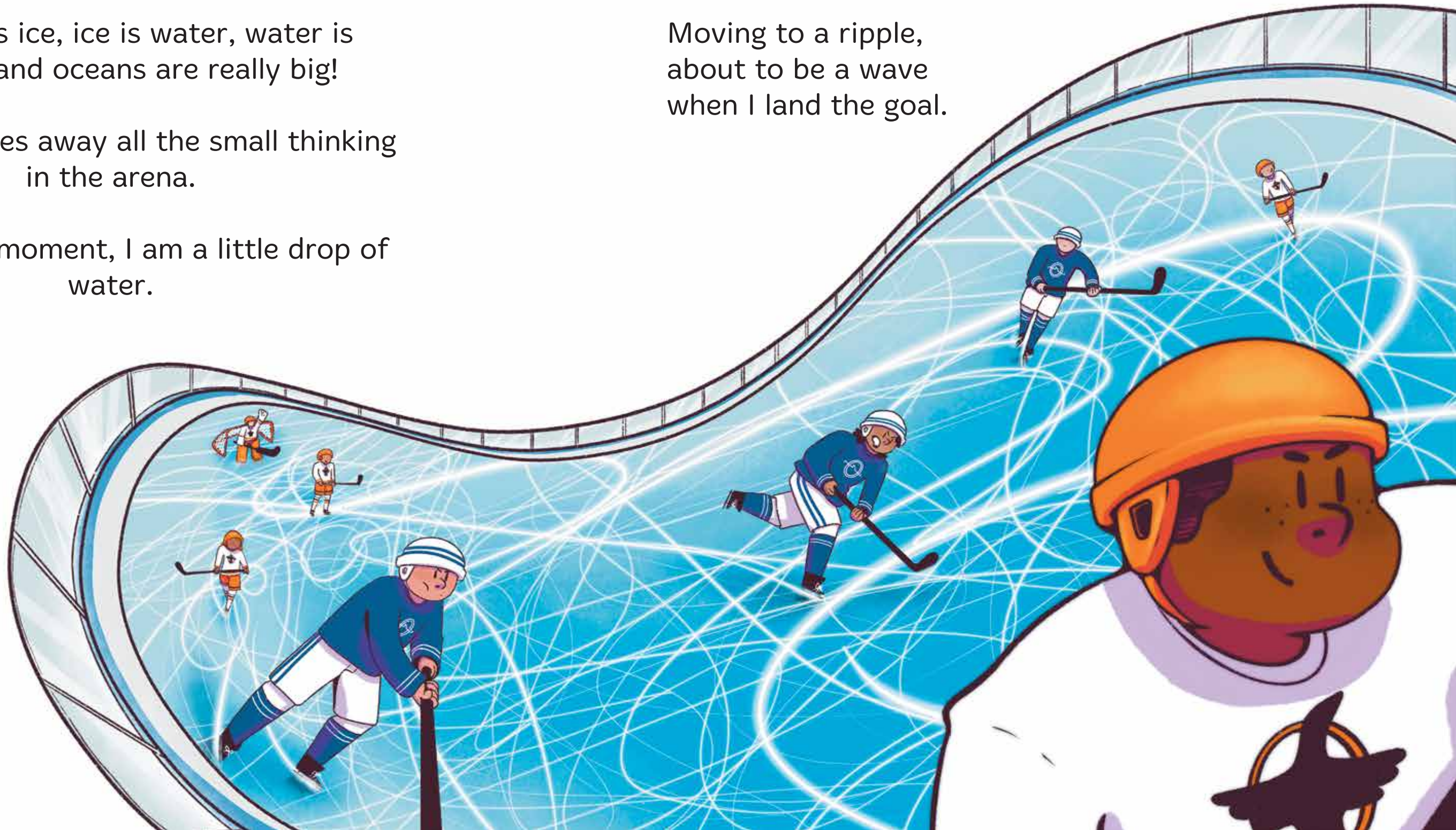


The rink is ice, ice is water, water is  
oceans, and oceans are really big!

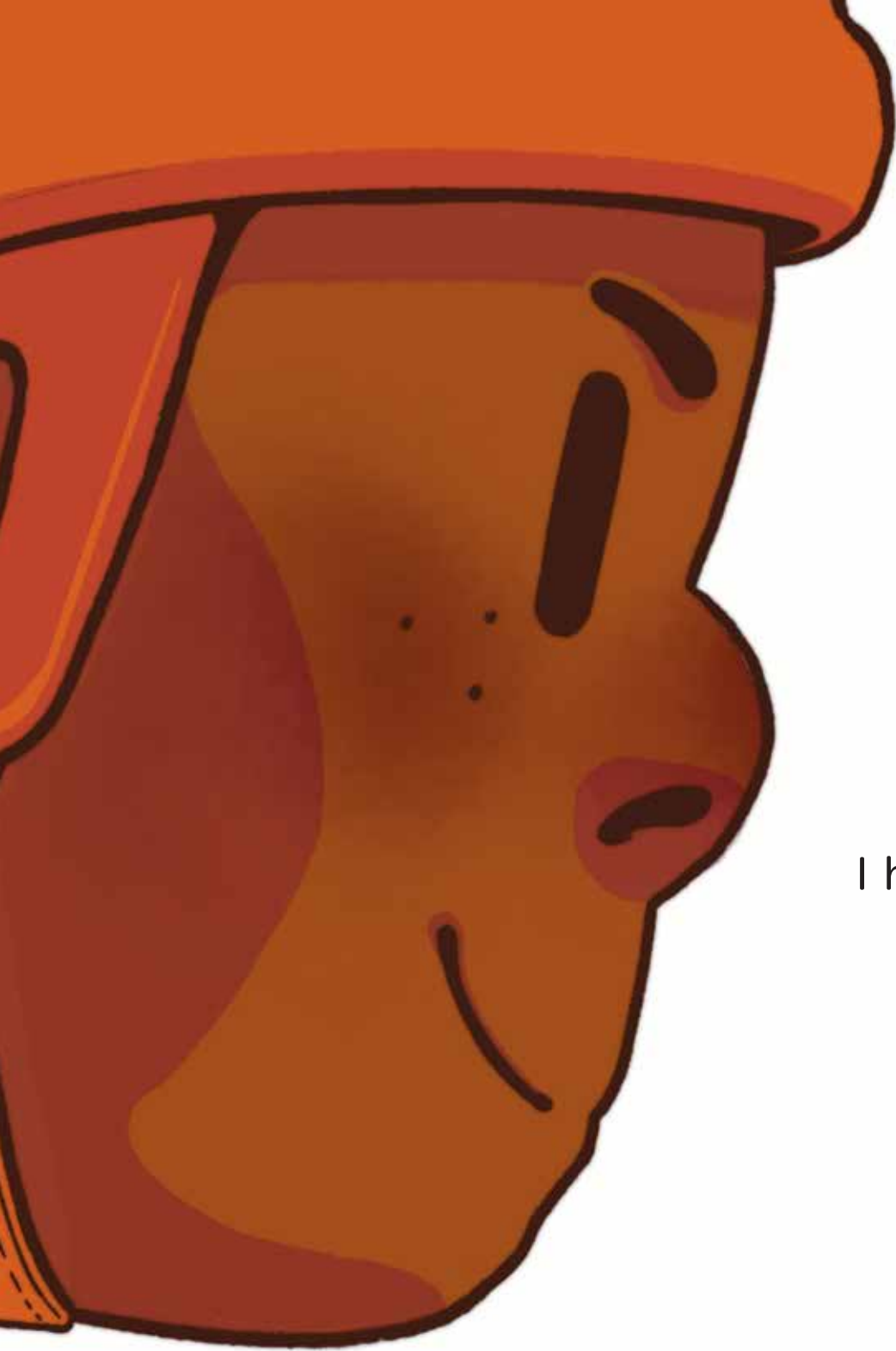
The ice washes away all the small thinking  
in the arena.

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.

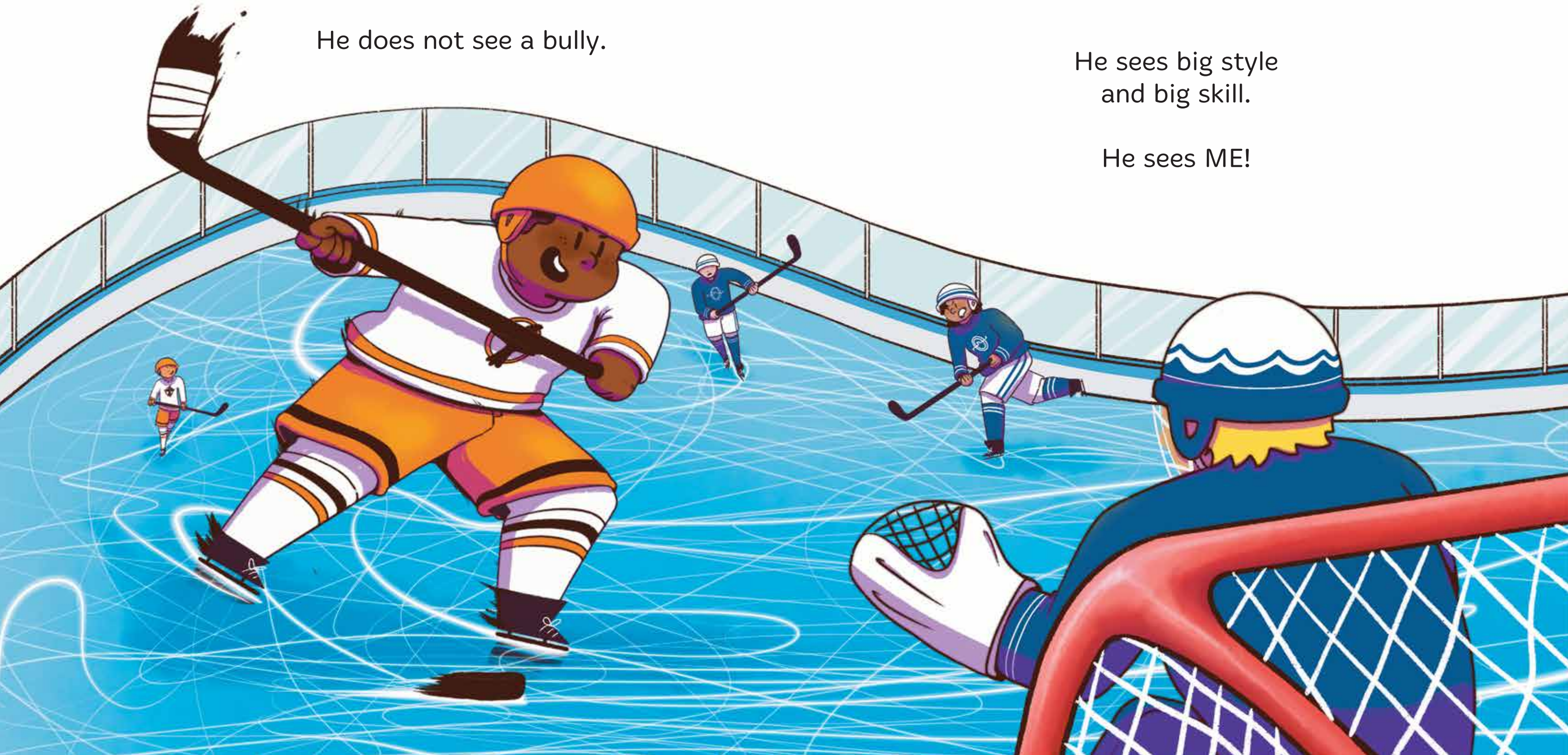




He does not see a bully.

He sees big style  
and big skill.

He sees ME!

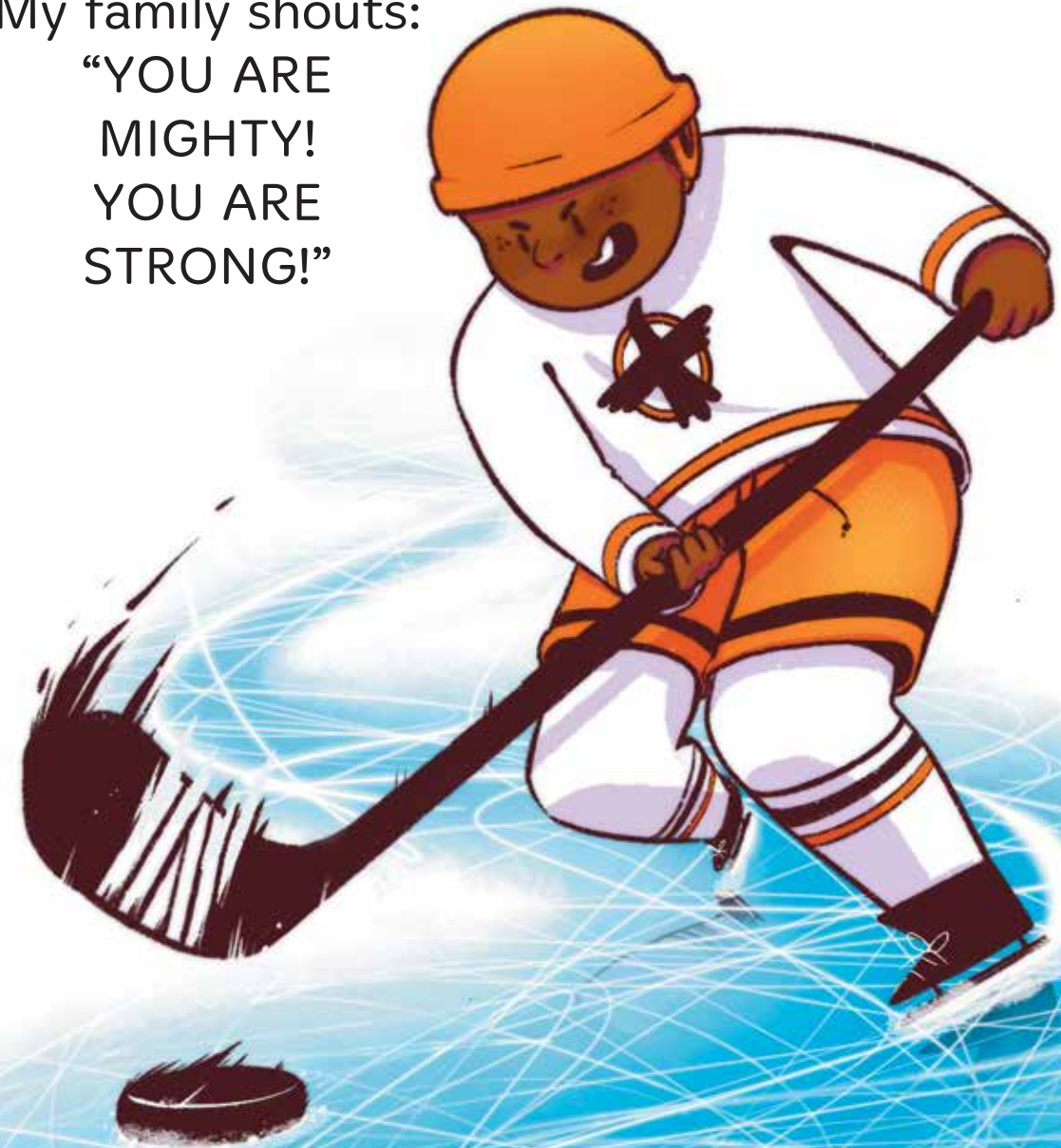




I hear Coach yell,  
"YOU ARE THE BIG IDEA!"



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

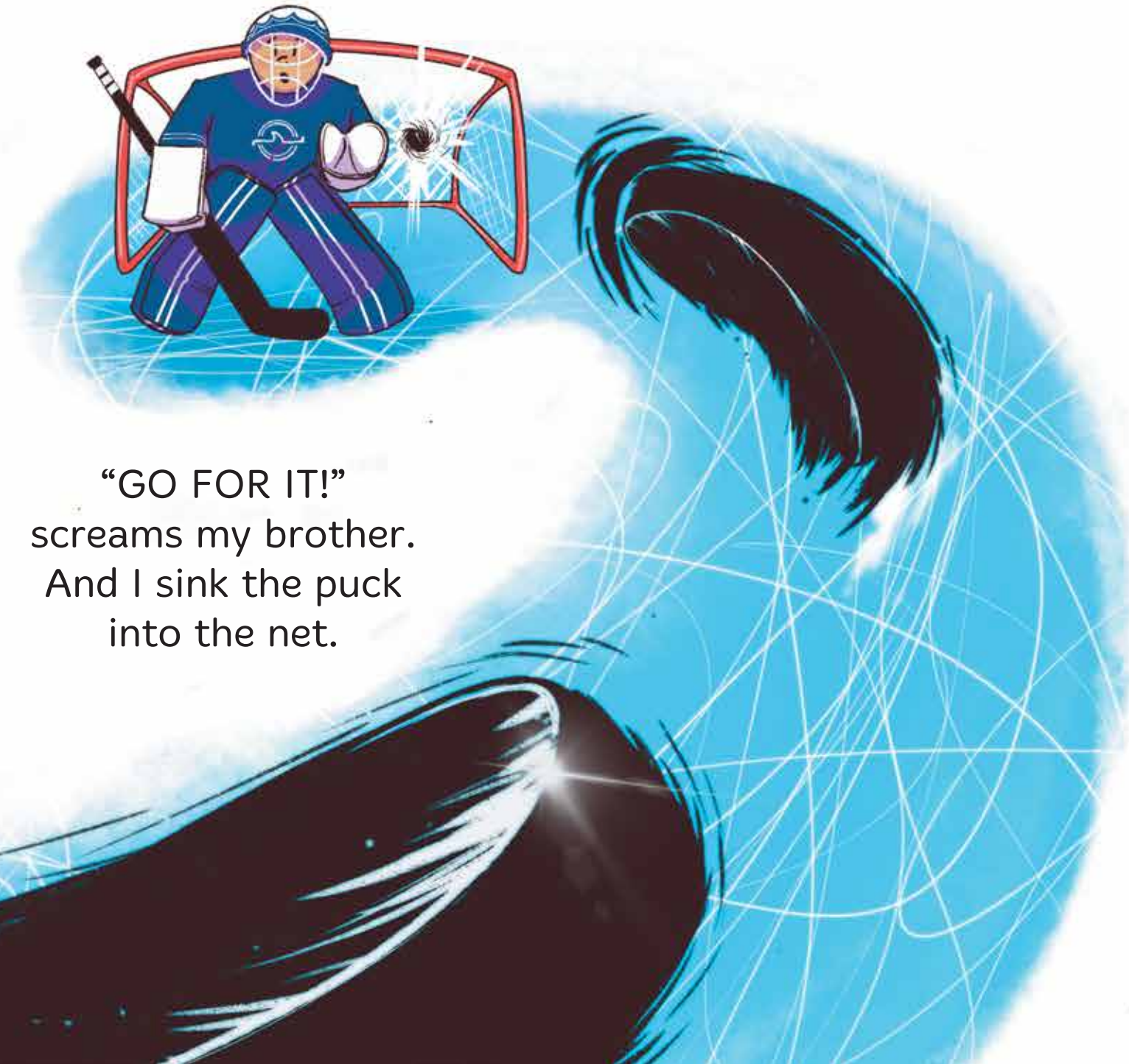
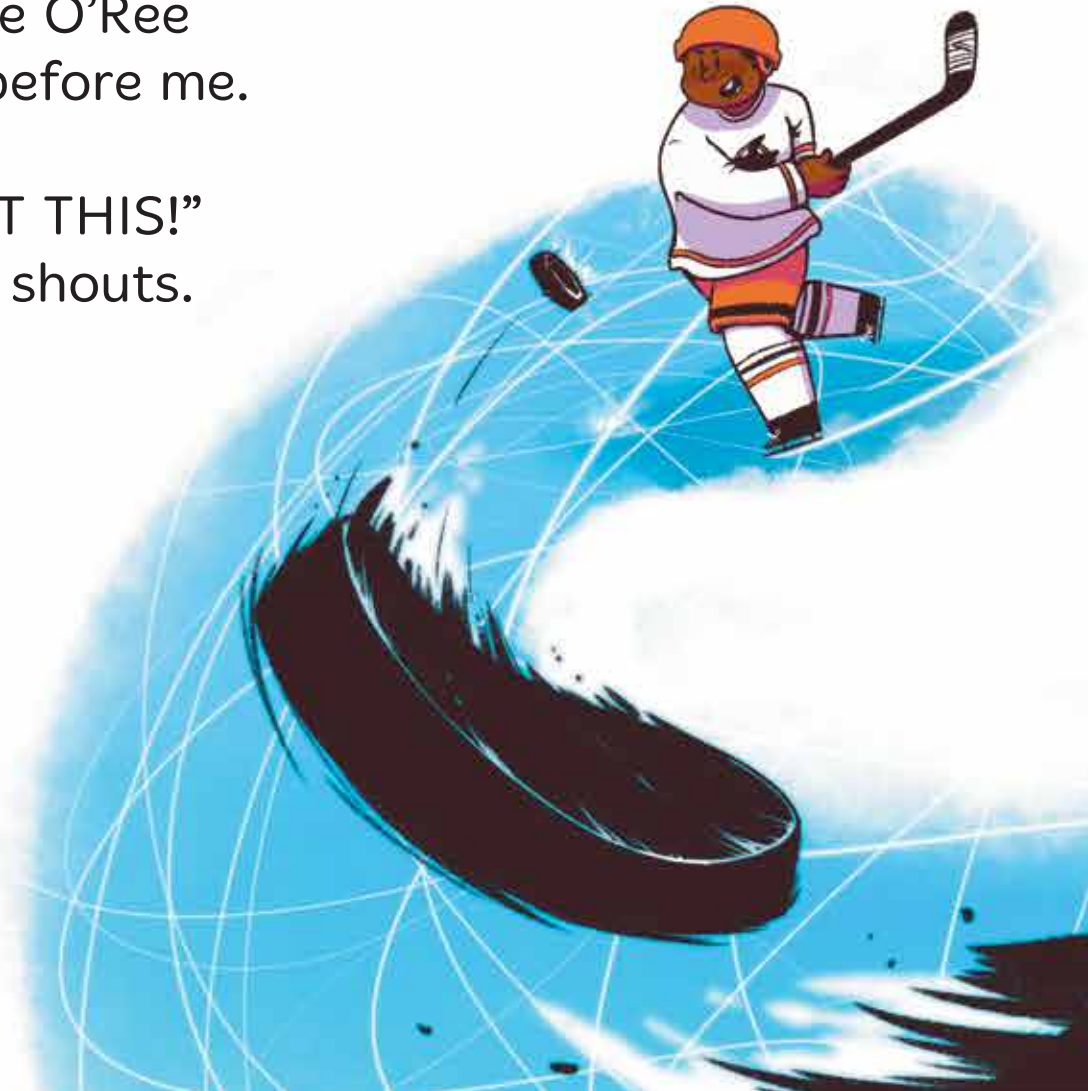




Their voices grow louder.  
They fill me up.  
I feel unstoppable.  
I am in a dance with the goalie,  
never once letting my eyes waver.

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.



Second Story Press  
[www.secondstorypress.ca](http://www.secondstorypress.ca)

**May 2023 For ages 6-8**

Publicity contact: [marketing@secondstorypress.ca](mailto:marketing@secondstorypress.ca)

For Canadian orders: UTP 1-800-565-9523

For US orders: Orca Book Publishers 1-800-210-5277

ISBN: 978-1-77260-312-5

**\$21.95**



9 781772 603125