

BENEATH THE RUG

story by Tracy Weldon

art by Dominika Bozic

What's my favorite thing to do?
Easy!

Play with my best friend Ava!
We laugh until our tummies hurt,
we play tag until we both NEED lemonade,
and we fill my tree house with treasures.

THIS IS
AVA
my BFF

But one day while we were playing

Ava said something
that hurt my feelings.
I don't think she
meant to do it,
but the words
felt MEAN.

We were having fun
though, so I decided to
ignore it.

I just PUSHED the feelings away.

Each day we would meet and play,
but after a while I realized my hurt
feelings were still there.

I tried to ignore them, but they just
got bigger. "Maybe I should say
something," I thought. But I decided
it would be more fun if we kept playing.

I started to feel different inside.
Like my feelings were going to burst
out of me, maybe even explode. And
then I said hurtful words to Ava.
I didn't mean to, but I couldn't control
what I was saying.

[illegible]

Then, I saw her at the playground.
We started to talk about what
happened and slowly I felt
that space between us get
smaller and smaller.
We shared our thoughts for a
while and eventually things
started to feel just like they
were before our fight, in fact,
maybe even a little
BETTER.

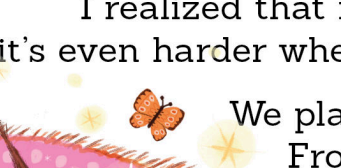


I wondered
if I should have
shared my feelings.

We pinky-promised not to push our feelings aside again.
I realized that it's hard to share your thoughts,
but it's even harder when your best friend's not around.

We play together now more than ever.
From time-to-time things come up
that we pause to talk about.
And that's okay.

We learned that when
you share what you're feeling
on the inside, the world feels
better on the outside. ★



A whimsical illustration of two chipmunks dancing joyfully on a large, pink, oval-shaped rug with a scalloped edge and a fringe of long, thin hairs. The chipmunk on the left is wearing an orange dress and has its arms raised in the air. The chipmunk on the right is wearing a green dress and yellow boots with white polka dots, and is holding the hand of the first chipmunk. Both chipmunks have large, bushy tails and are smiling broadly. The background is a soft, light blue with several small, stylized butterflies in orange, yellow, and blue. The overall style is playful and colorful.



MINI TALES
Big ideas, little stories