

This book is dedicated to all those families who are in the process of healing. Divorces can be devastating and leave everyone feeling broken. Please remember that ***love heals*** and that love begins with being patient with yourself.

Big Changes in the Crow Family

Written by: Elaine Mitchell Palmore

Illustrated by: Norris Hall

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Published in Minneapolis, MN by Rising Star Studios, LLC.

Printed in the U.S.A.

P1_0112

Publisher's Cataloging-In-Publication Data

(Prepared by The Donohue Group, Inc.)

Palmore, Elaine Mitchell.

Big changes in the Crow family / by Elaine Mitchell Palmore ; illustrated by Norris Hall.

p. : ill. ; cm. -- (Fresh fables)

Summary: The Crow family is introduced, starting with the budding romance between Mom and Dad to their now-apparent divorce. The Crow kids learn what divorce means and how it will affect their lives. In the midst of turmoil, the kids find comfort in knowing the conflict is not their fault and they are still very much loved.

Interest age group: 007-011.

ISBN: 978-1-936770-52-6 (Hardcover)

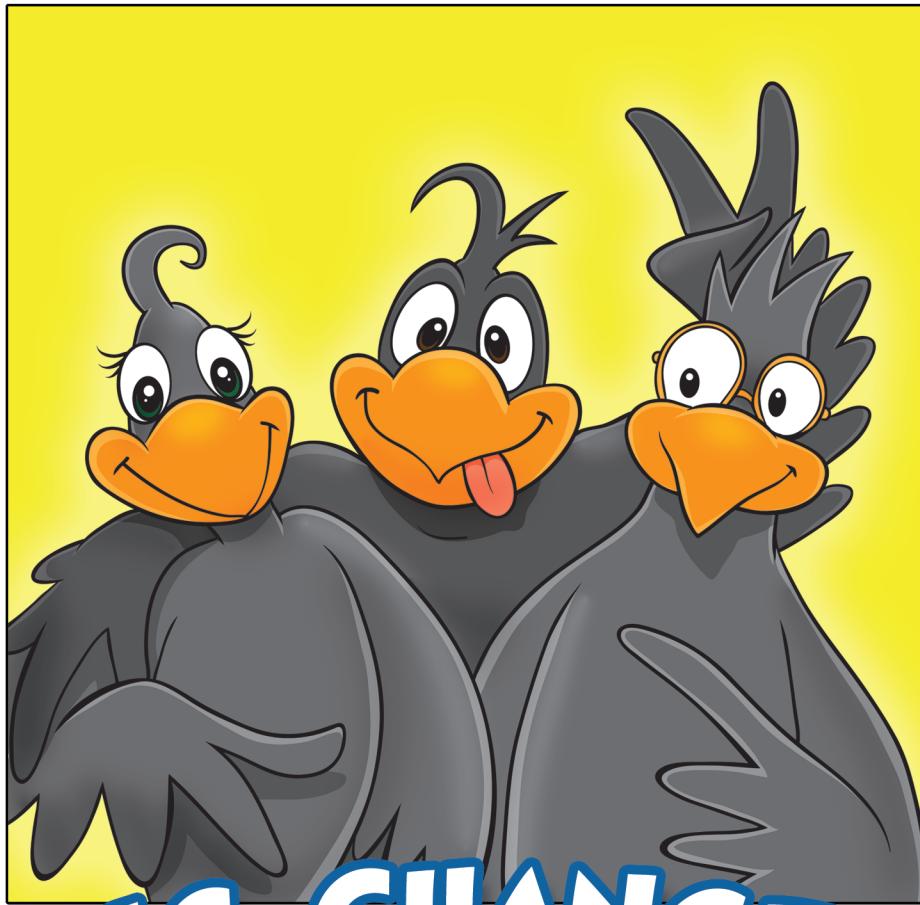
ISBN: 978-1-936770-53-3 (Paperback)

1. Children of divorced parents--Family relationships--Juvenile fiction. 2. Children of divorced parents--Psychology--Juvenile fiction. 3. Divorce--Juvenile fiction. 4. Children of divorced parents--Fiction. 5. Divorce--Fiction. I. Hall, Norris, 1953-. II. Title.

PZ7.P3566 Big 2012

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BIG CHANGES IN THE CROW FAMILY

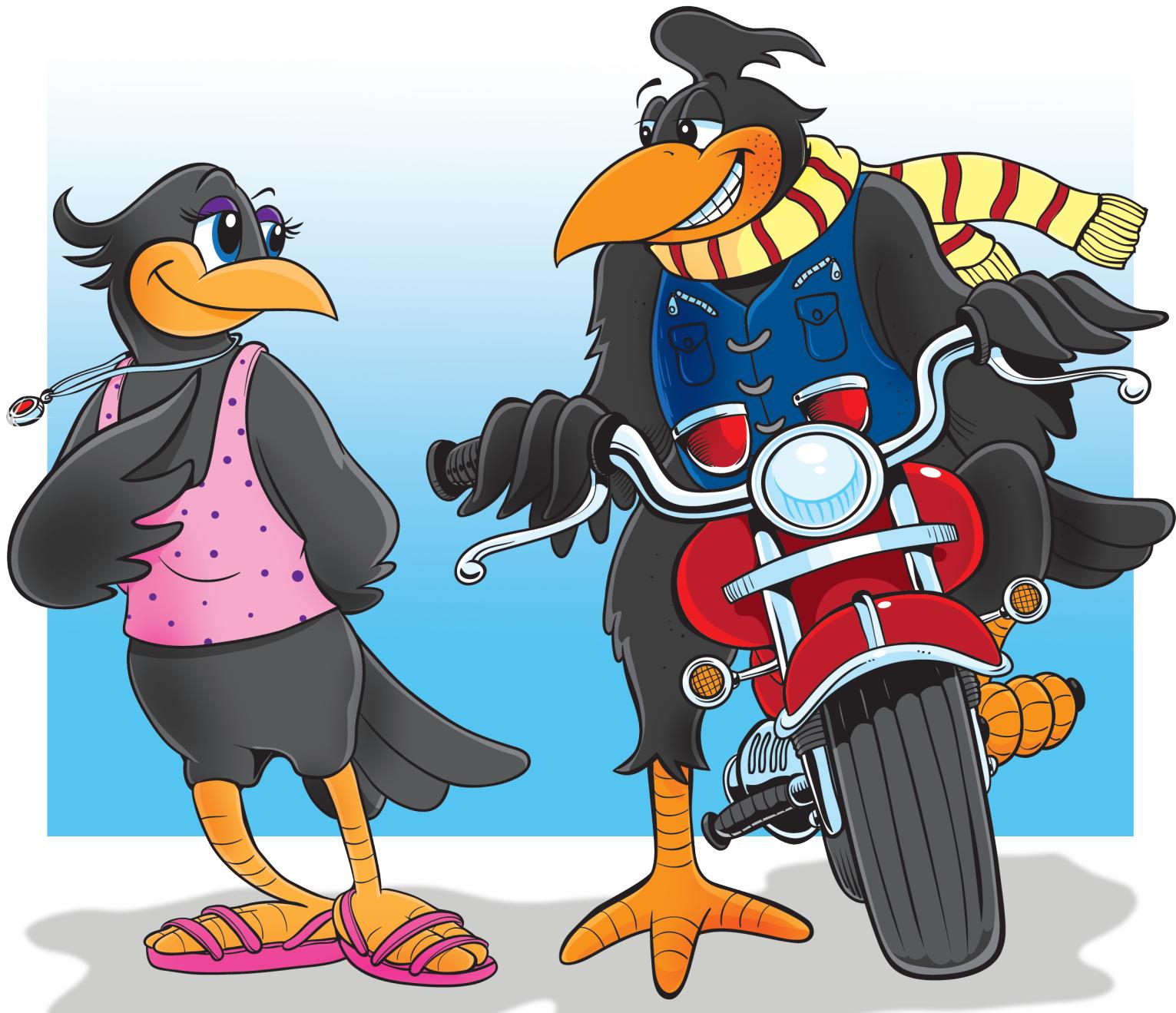
A STORY ABOUT STRUGGLING
WITH FAMILY ADJUSTMENTS

BY ELAINE MITCHELL PALMORE
ILLUSTRATED BY NORRIS HALL



When my parents first met, Mom was a petite, popular crow from a nice neighborhood.

My dad was a strong, handsome crow who was a little “rough around the edges,” according to my mom.

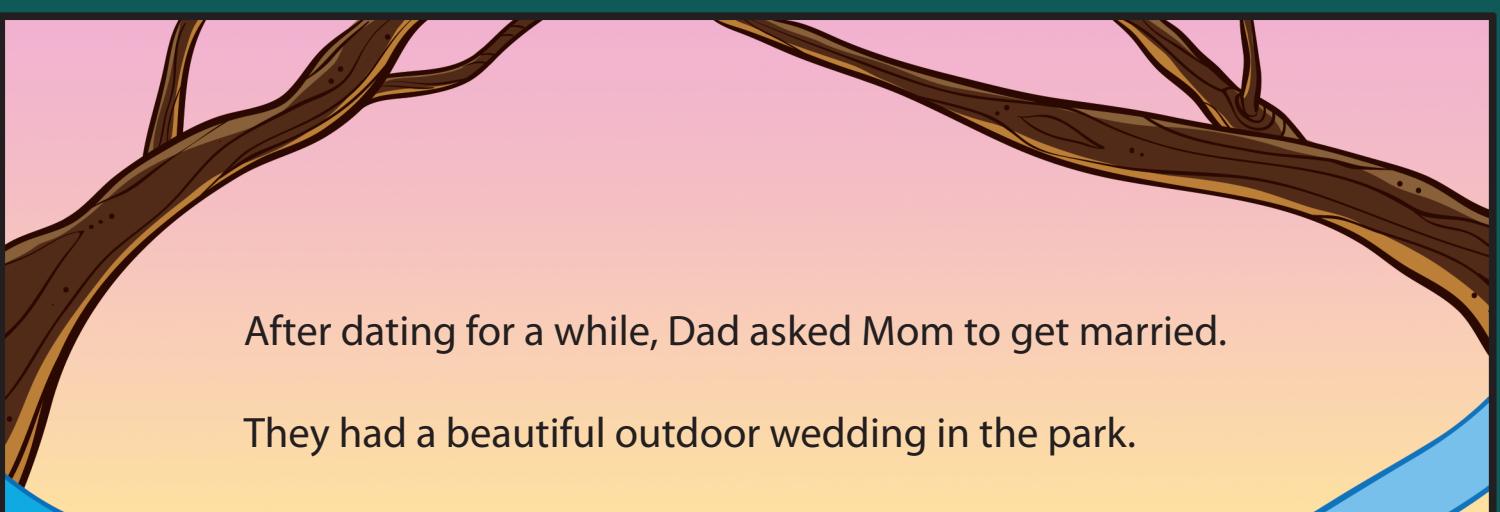




Dad worked as a nest builder. He always rode a motorcycle that smoked and made a lot of noise.

My mom says that she fell in love with the “whole package” that was my dad -- motorcycle, muscles, and all.





After dating for a while, Dad asked Mom to get married.

They had a beautiful outdoor wedding in the park.





Mom sometimes shows us these pictures
and cries while she tells us the story.

When they were first married,
Mom and Dad lived with my
grandparents.

Every weekend they would look
for a building site they could
afford. They wanted to live in a
respectable neighborhood and
have a family.

FOR SALE

Prime Nesting Site

Mature Tree • Near Pond

BLUE J REALTY





But Mom soon got the happy news they were going to have baby birds. With us coming along, they knew they would need a place of their own. Our grandparents helped pay for the new nest.

This Site
SOLD

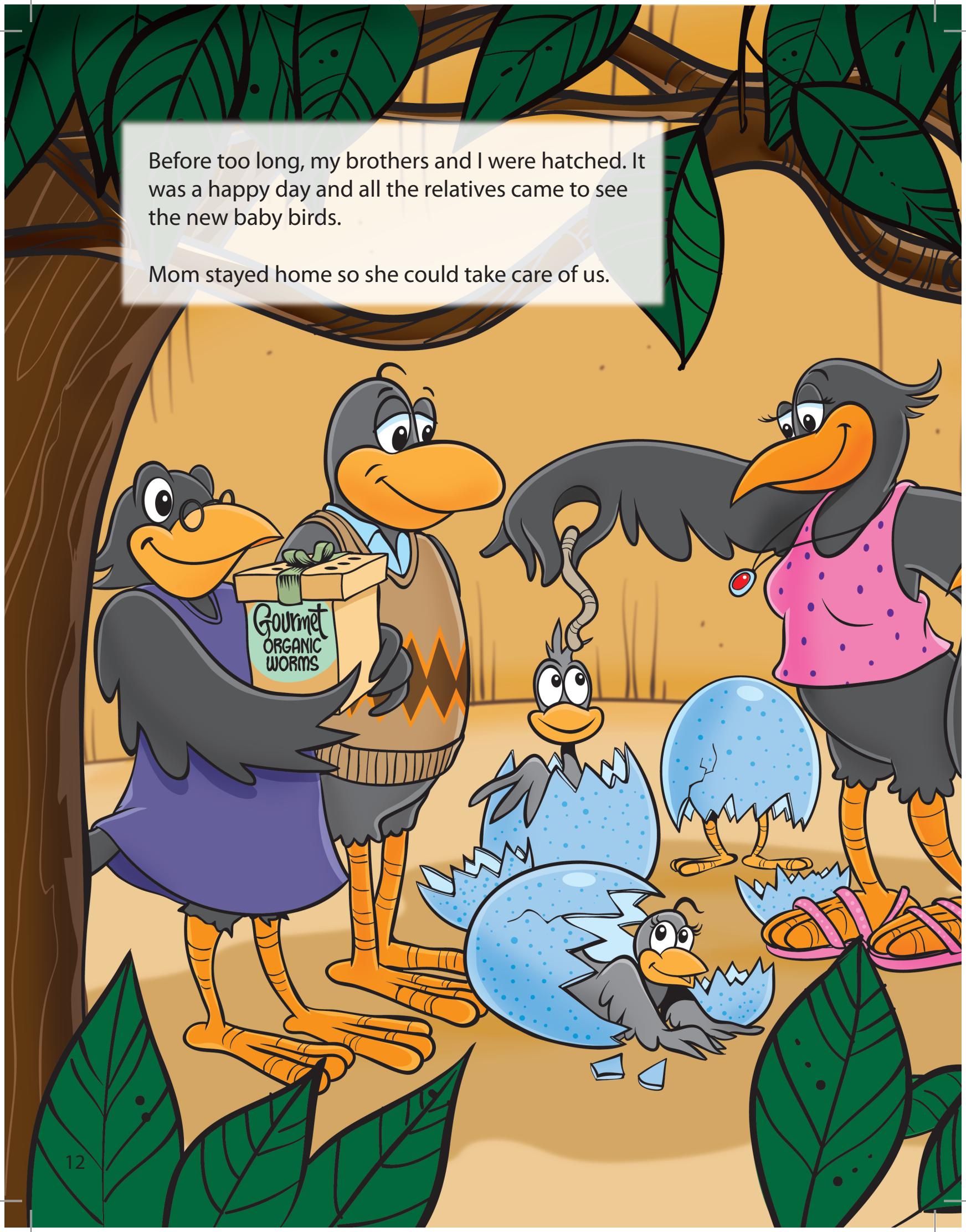
Our parents found a good tree nearby. Dad and his crew started work on our home. It would be small, but it would be a place they could call their own.



Soon, our new nest was complete. Mom, Dad, and their three eggs were carefully moved in.



Each morning, Dad left early for work on his motorcycle. Mom made his lunch and kissed him good-bye.



Before too long, my brothers and I were hatched. It was a happy day and all the relatives came to see the new baby birds.

Mom stayed home so she could take care of us.







Even though they were both happy with their new babies, Dad began to worry about how they were going to pay all the bills.

One day, our neighbors surprised us with a nest warming and baby bird shower to welcome us to our new home. They brought food, drinks and even gently used baby clothes for us.

It upset Dad to have to accept gifts and help from others.



Time went by and we were growing up fast.



Mom taught us about gathering healthy food and taking care of ourselves.

Dad taught us about nest building and how to fix things. He even let us tighten the bolts on his motorcycle.

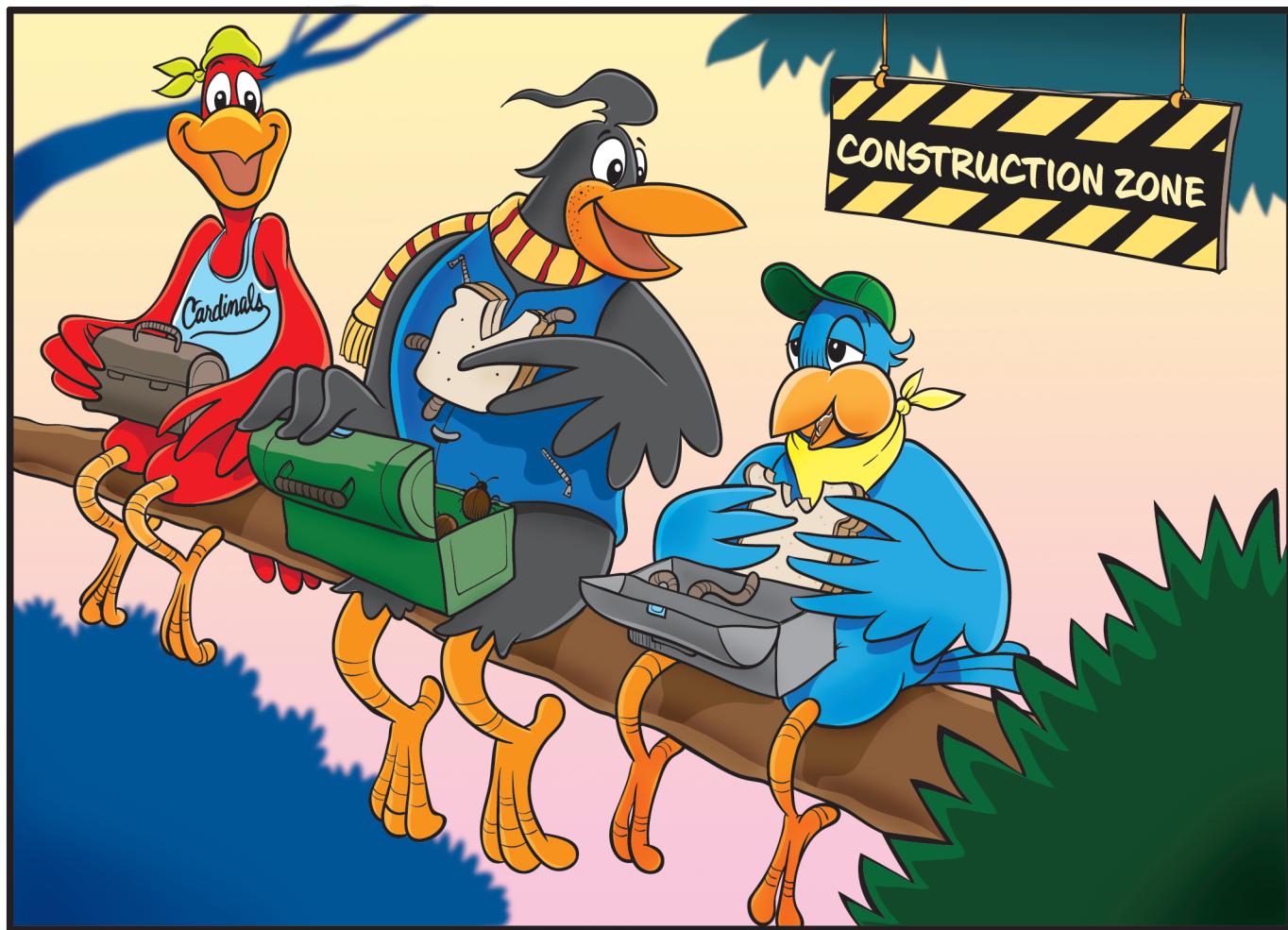
Since we were older and could take care of ourselves, Mom decided to go back to college to be a teacher.



Mom was learning a lot at college and studying hard to make good grades.

Dad got promoted to supervisor and had to work long hours.

They were both working hard to make better lives for us, and I was sure things would get back to normal soon.



Then one afternoon, Mom and Dad asked us to come inside for a family meeting. Mom explained to us that she and Dad had grown apart and no longer had anything “in common.”

Mom and Dad told us they decided not to be married anymore.

They were getting...





... a DIVORCE!





We did not know what to do. What did it mean that our parents didn't have anything "in common"?

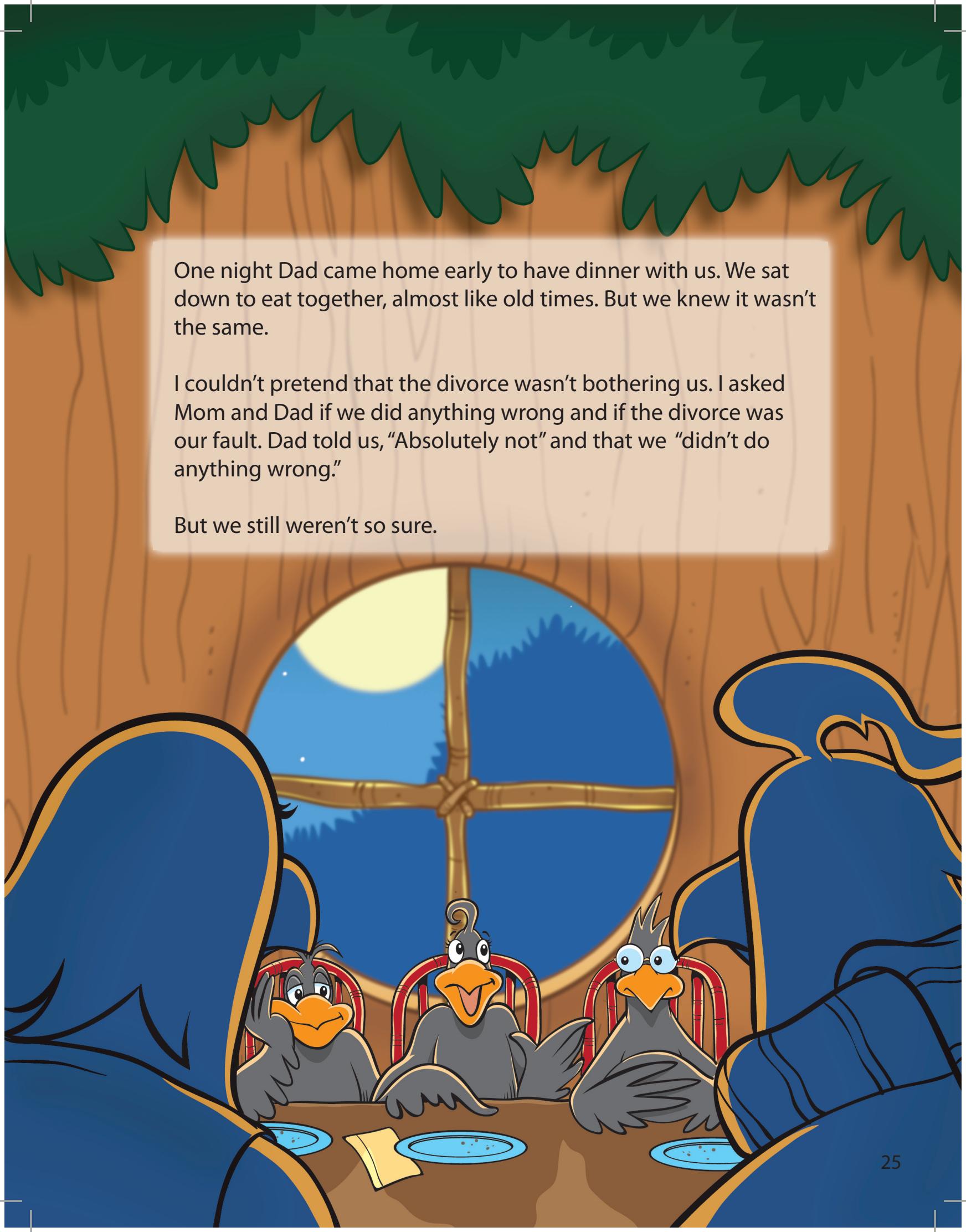


Weren't we something they had in common?



At school, the counselor said when parents decide to get a divorce it was painful and difficult for everyone involved. She told us we could come to her office any time we needed to talk about our feelings.

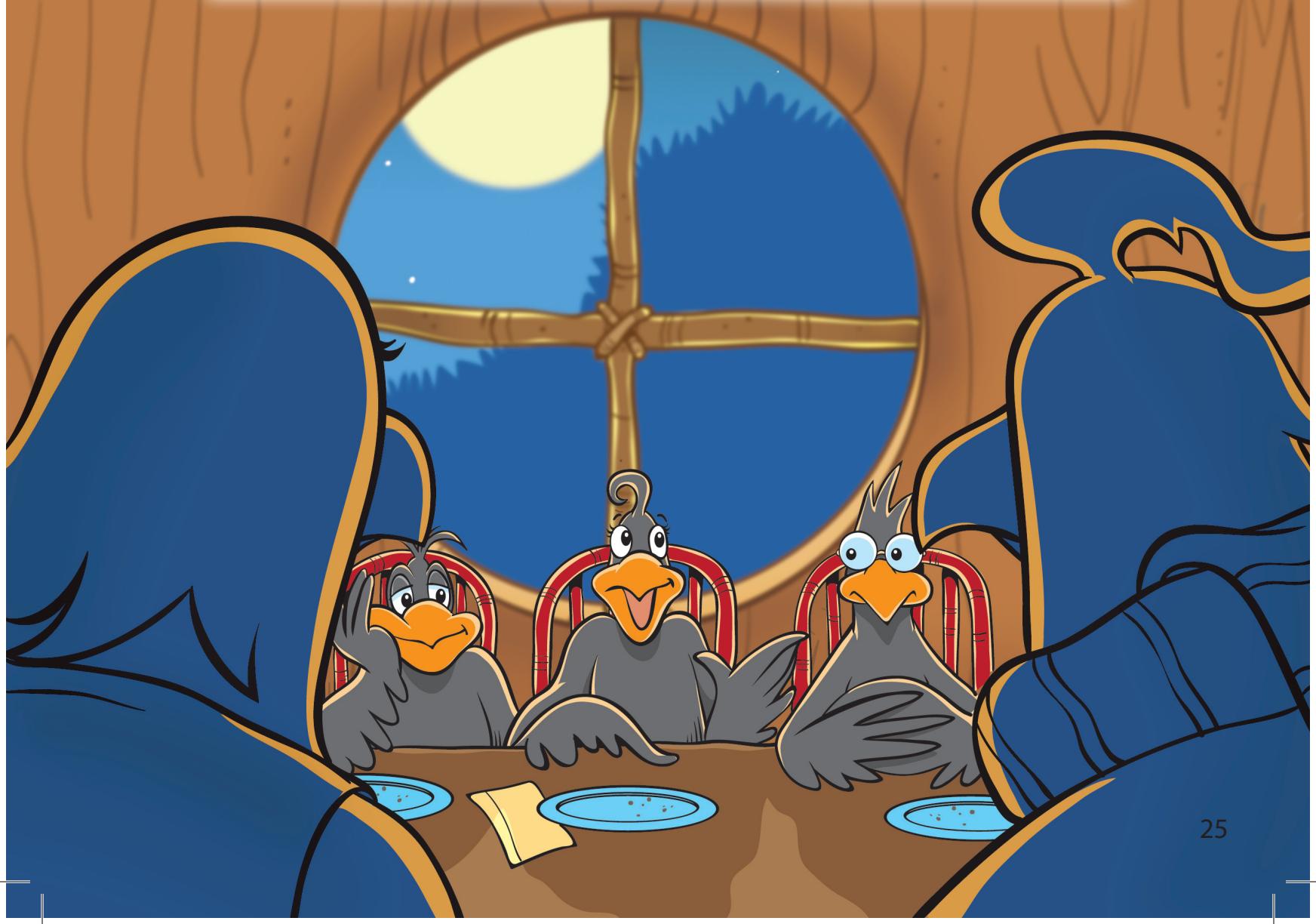
I went to talk to her a few times and so did each of my brothers.

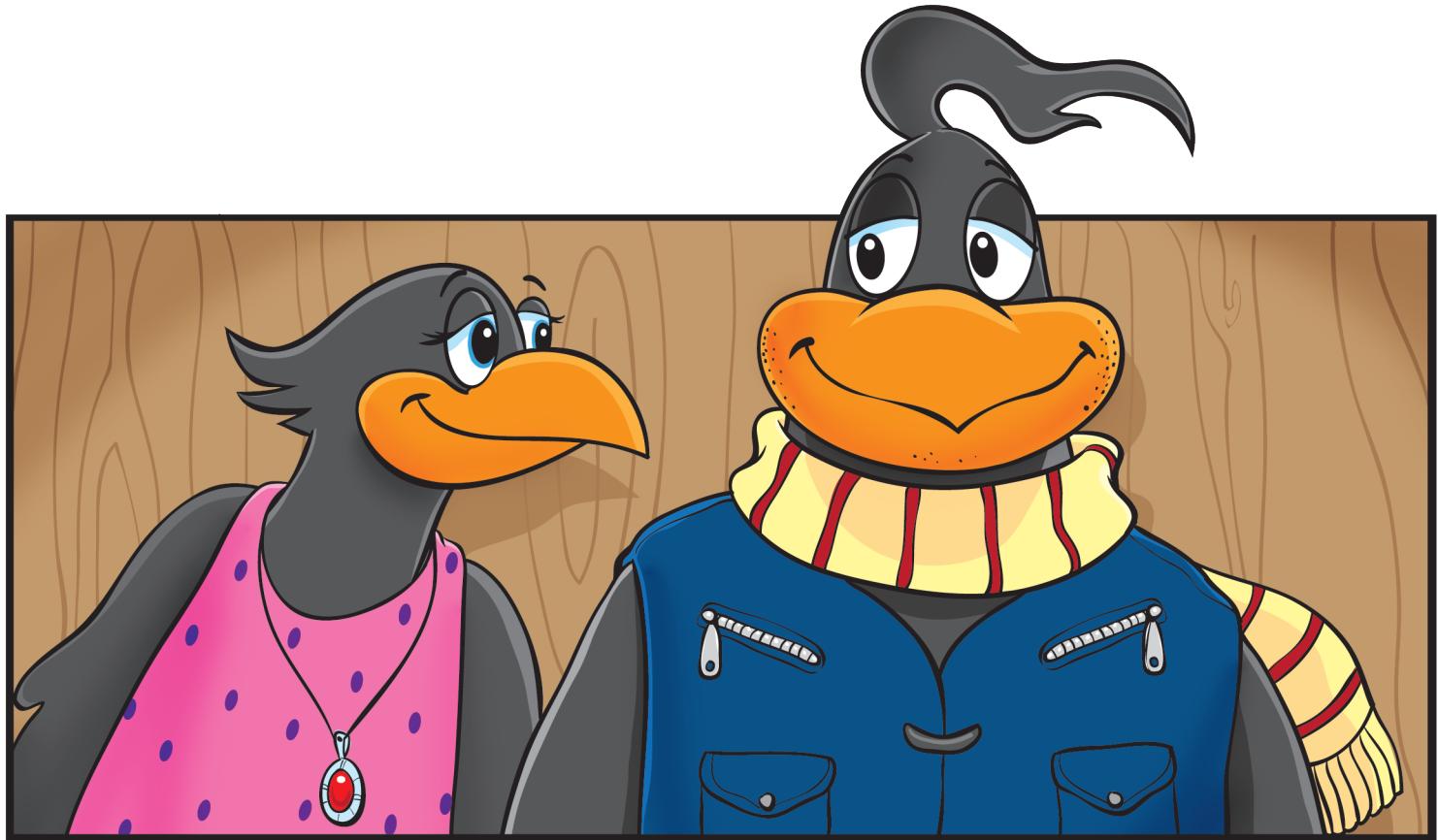


One night Dad came home early to have dinner with us. We sat down to eat together, almost like old times. But we knew it wasn't the same.

I couldn't pretend that the divorce wasn't bothering us. I asked Mom and Dad if we did anything wrong and if the divorce was our fault. Dad told us, "Absolutely not" and that we "didn't do anything wrong."

But we still weren't so sure.





We wanted to know if we would still be a family after the divorce.
“Families live together, don’t they?” I asked.

Dad said, “Even though we would no longer be living in the same nest, we will still be your parents.”

“And we will always be a family, just different than we were before,” Mom told us. “And you know your dad and I will always love you.”

We still didn’t like the divorce and didn’t know what would happen next, but knowing we were loved made us feel better.

While our parents were working out the divorce details, we went to spend some time with our grandparents.

We asked our grandparents why they never grew apart or why they never found different interests. They looked embarrassed and said that, "We will understand all this when we were older."





The day came when Mom and Dad had to go to divorce court. They met with their lawyers to decide who we would live with. Then the judge made the divorce final.

After that, Mom and Dad were not married anymore.

We lived with just our mom from then on. Dad found another nest and said we could visit anytime we want.

We called him a lot on his new phone number, but it was not the same as having him in the house.



We still missed his feather gel and his noisy motorcycle. We missed the “whole package” that is our dad.



We visit our dad in
his new nest a lot.

We play tag in the
yard and he helps us
with our homework.

Mom finished school
and is a teacher now.

We're very proud of her.

That's our story.

Life is not the same without our mom and dad together. We still need to adjust to these changes, but we are learning to live with our parents' choices.



Afterword

It is important for all of us to realize that divorce is a process, not an event; there is a beginning, a middle, and an end. In our story, "small issues" of the parents began to pile up and turn into "larger issues," the largest of which was neglect and carelessness about their relationship. Although this is a generic story about divorce, it is applicable to many divorce situations. There is usually enough responsibility and guilt to go around, but assigning blame and feeling guilty is not the solution for the adults involved, or for their children. The children in a divorce are literally caught in the middle between two people whom they love but who can no longer live together.

For those of you whose vocation or profession is helping children, you have our absolute admiration and respect. We hope this book will help you in your journey with children facing divorce in their family.

-Elaine Mitchell Palmore

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