

# OPEY HAS A BRAINSTORM

By: Deborah Azim Fleming MSW, RSW and Kathleen Matharoo RECE  
Illustrated by: Kathleen Matharoo, RECE  
Featuring: Jean M Clinton, BMus MD FRCP(C)



Tires, Wires & Brakes Series

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This is a work of fiction. With the exception of Dr. Jean Clinton, the names, characters, places, and incidents either are the product of the authors' imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

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We acknowledge that this story has been created on the Haldimand Tract, land that was promised to the Haudenosaunee of the Six Nations of the Grand River, and within the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Neutral peoples.

We thank the children, parents, educators, and Our Place staff, who helped to shape this story.

We appreciate the guidance and friendship of Dr. Jean Clinton.

We are grateful for the support of the Lyle S. Hallman Foundation.

We dedicate this book to the past, present and future Our Place family.

This book belongs to







## About Dr. Clinton...

Dr. Jean Clinton is a Clinical Professor, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences at McMaster, division of Child Psychiatry. She is a member on the MindUP Scientific Advisory Board, as well as a MindUp for Families advisor. Dr. Clinton was a Fellow of the Child Trauma Academy, as well as a Zero to Three Academy Fellow since 2013. Dr. Clinton was appointed as an education advisor to the Premier of Ontario and the Minister of Education 2014–2018.

She has been a consultant to children and youth mental health programs, child welfare, and primary care for over 30 years. Her special interest lies in brain development, and the crucial role relationships and connectedness play.

Dr. Clinton has also authored her first book, *Love Builds Brains* which can be ordered online through Tall Pines Press, on Amazon and in book stores everywhere.



Jean M Clinton BMus MD FRCP(C)

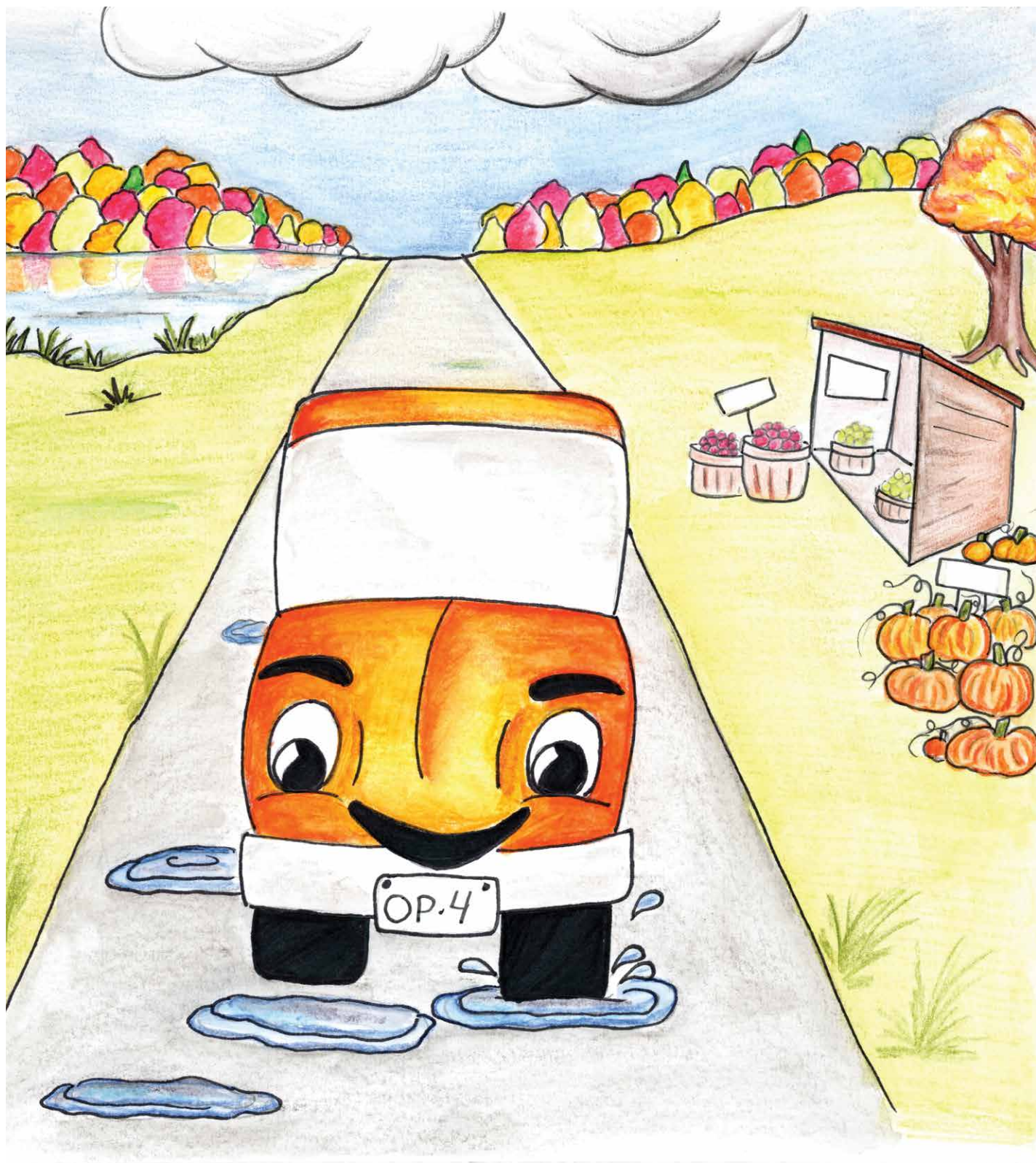
*Clinical Professor  
McMaster University,  
Department of Psychiatry  
and Behavioural Neurosciences*





"Hi, my name is Opey!"





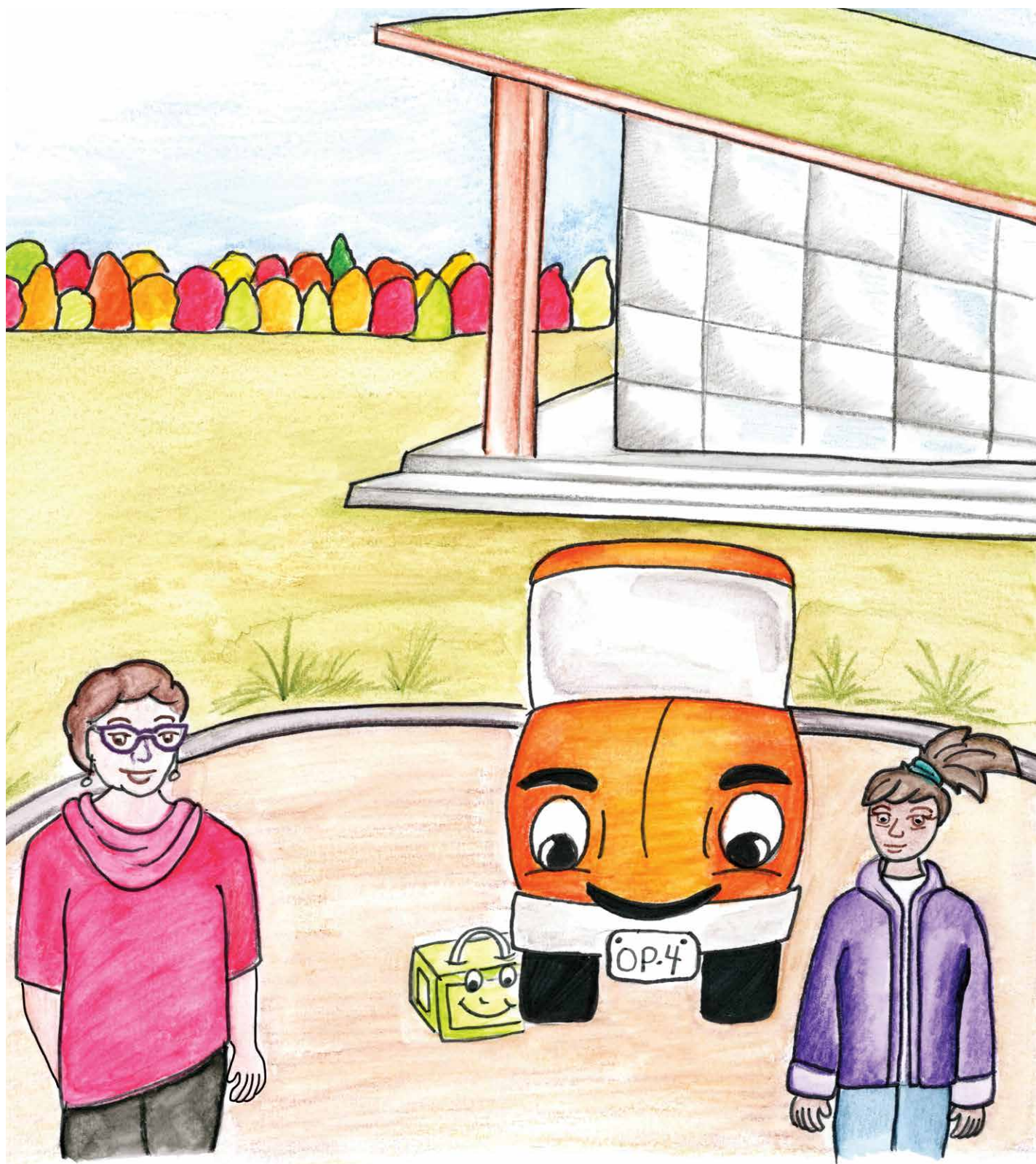
"It rained today. I like playing in the puddles.  
SPLASH! SPLASH! SPLASH!"





"Today, my friend Molly Mechanic and I are going to hear Dr. Clinton talk about the brain."

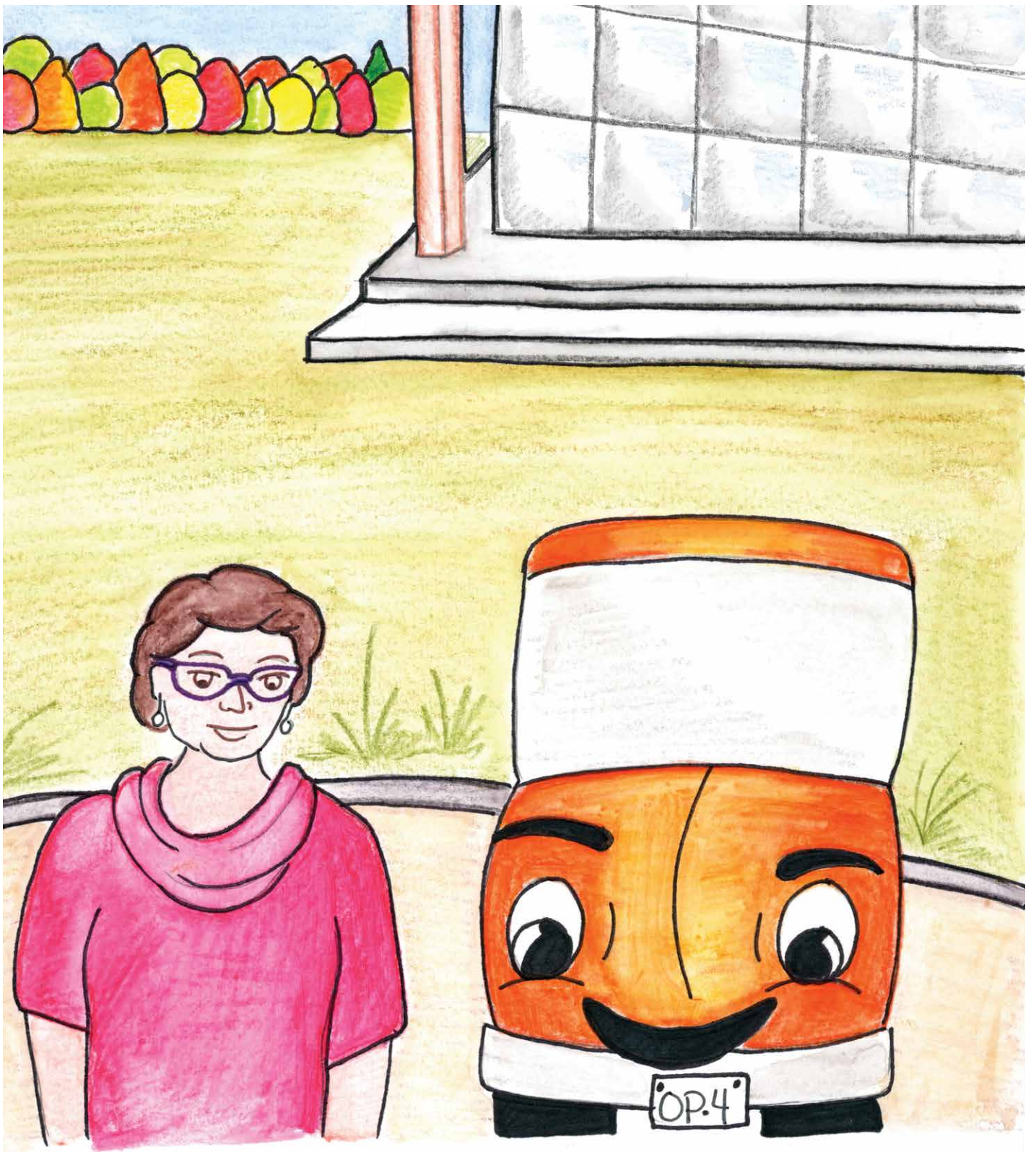




"Hi Dr. Clinton, we're here to learn about the brain."

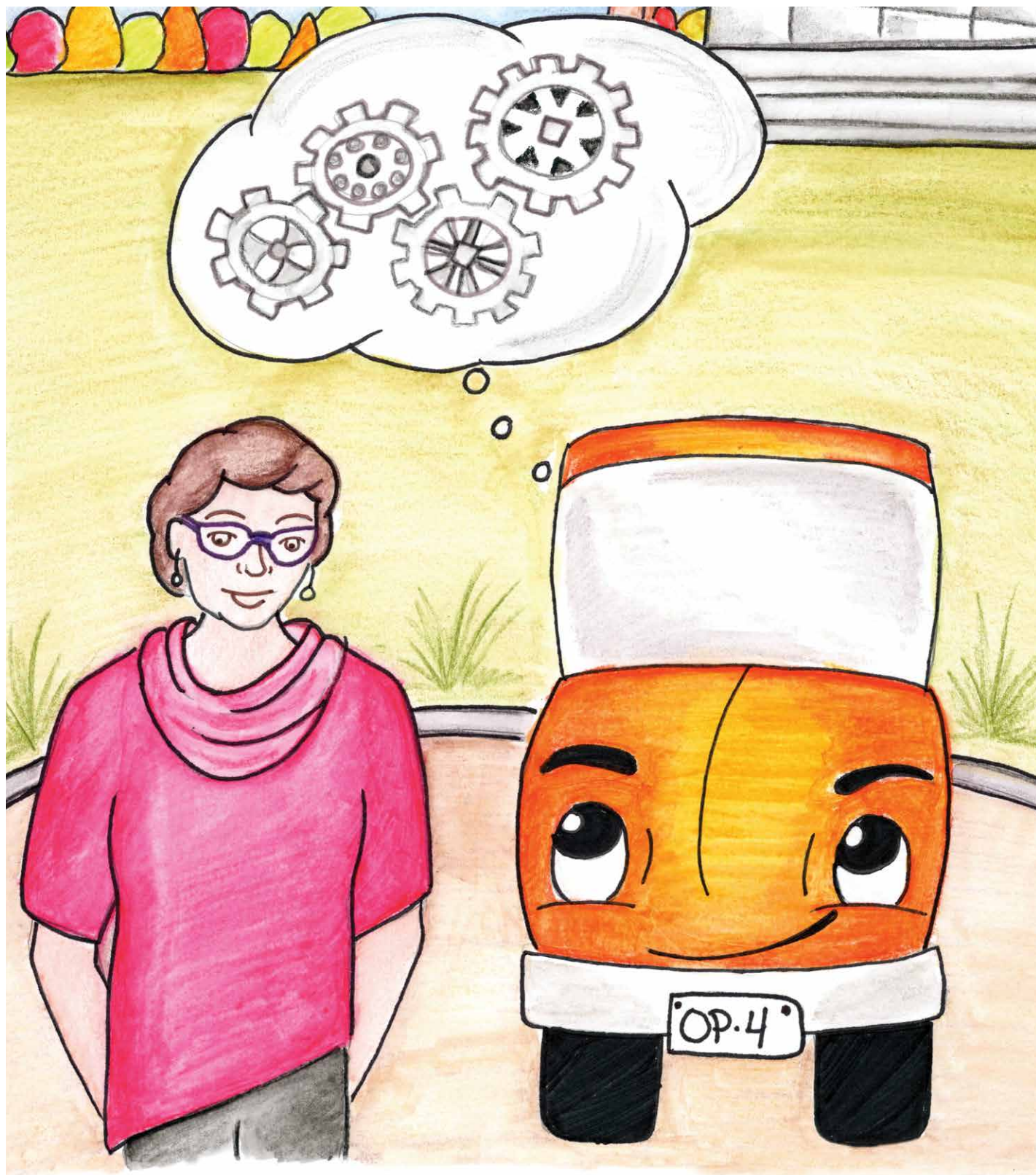
"Hi Opey, Molly and Tinker! Just call me Dr. C."





"I'm excited to talk about the brain with you!  
It's so amazing how the brain connects  
our feelings, thoughts and what we do."

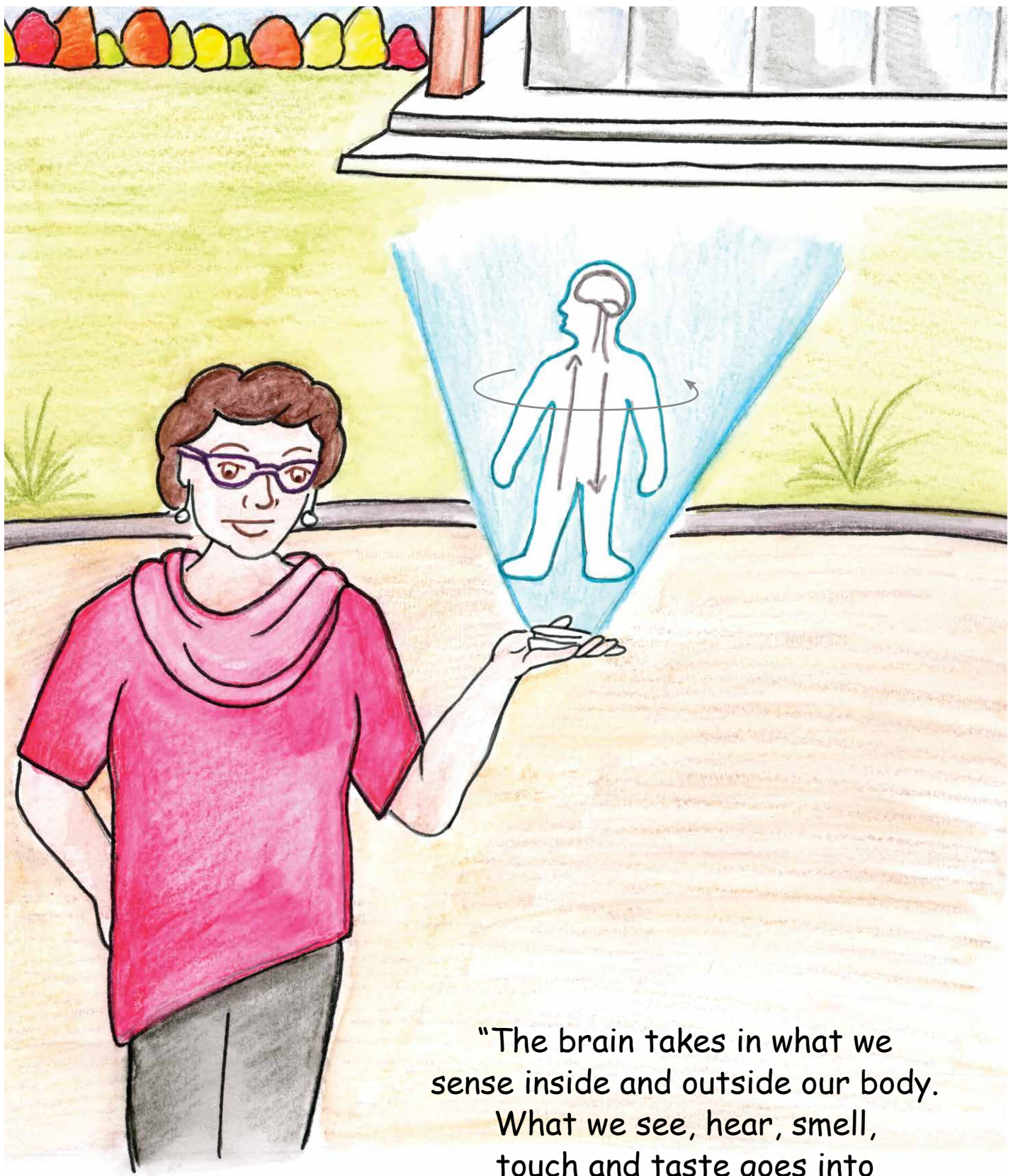




"I wonder how it all works, Dr. C?"

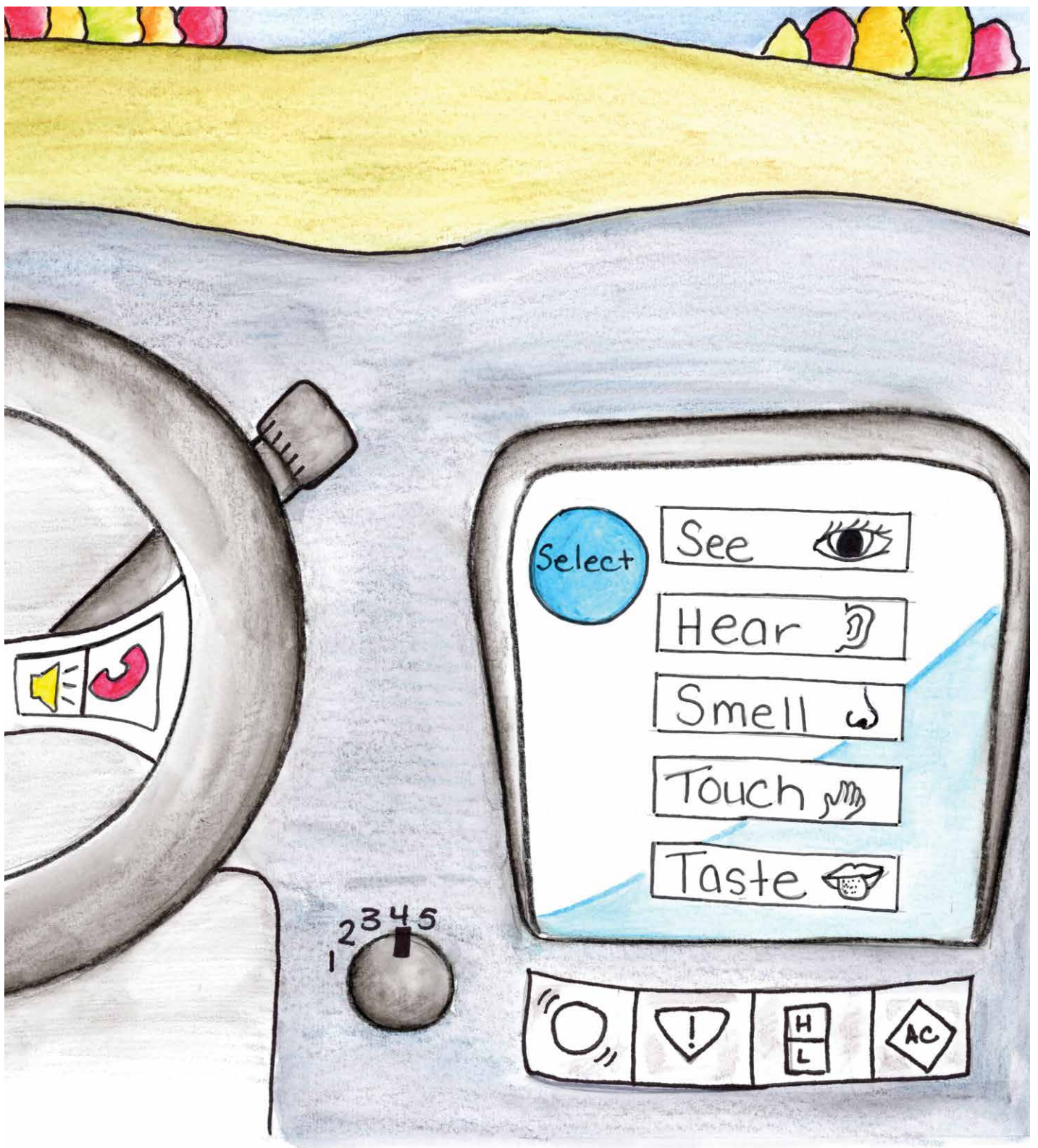
"Well, Opey, the brain is always trying to figure out the world."





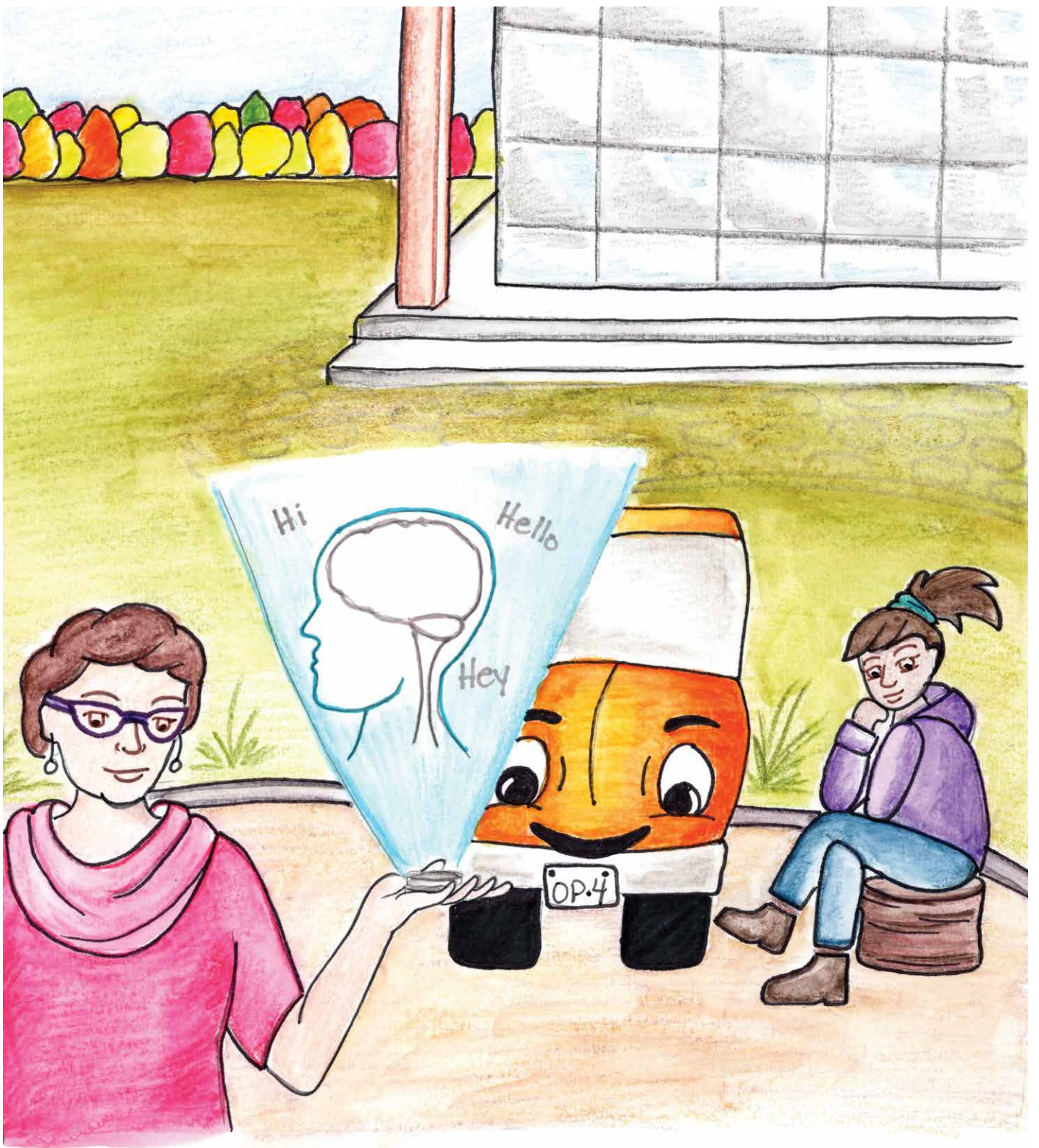
"The brain takes in what we sense inside and outside our body. What we see, hear, smell, touch and taste goes into the brain to figure out."





What can you see, hear, smell,  
touch and taste right now?

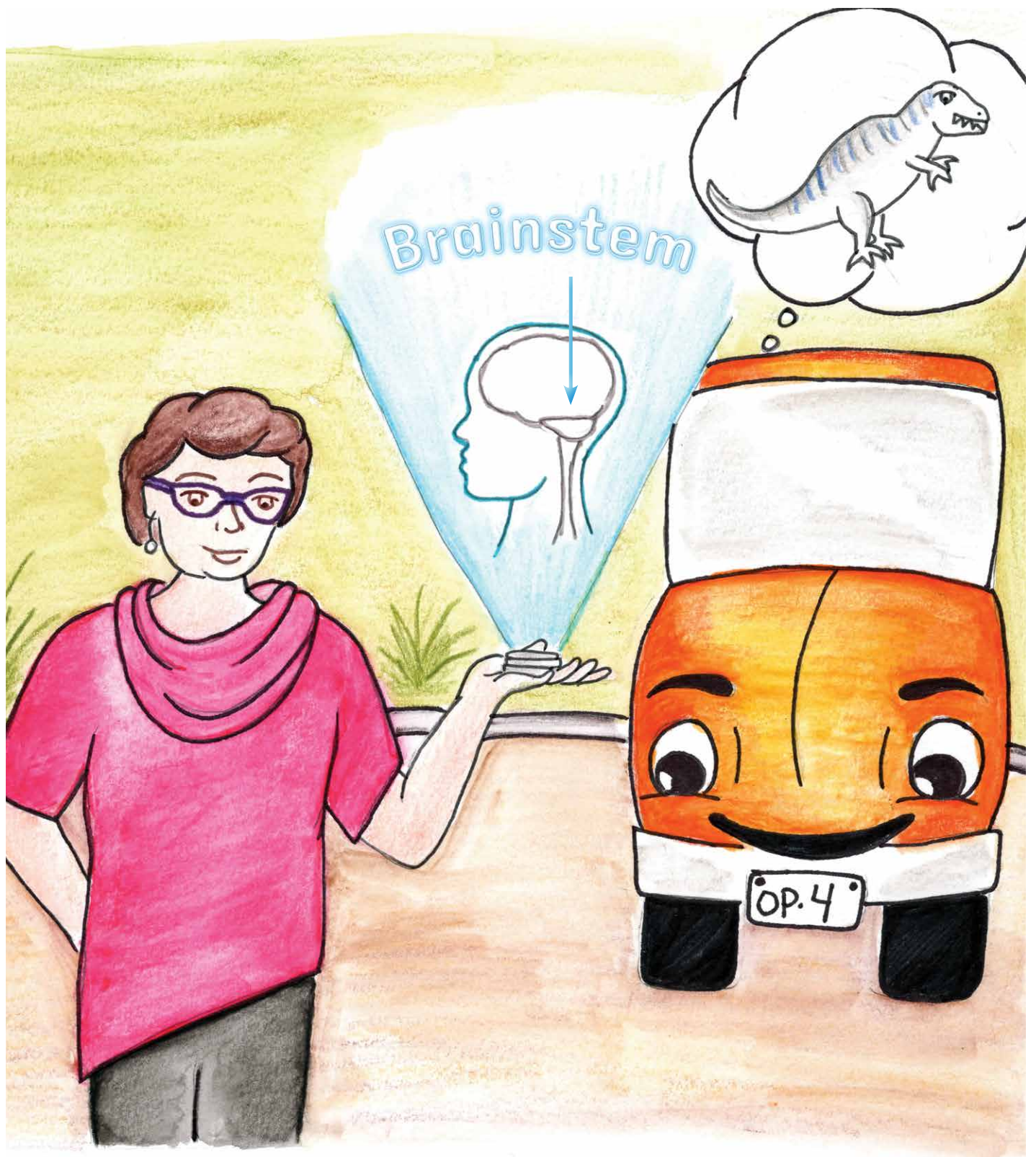




"All the different parts of the brain talk to each other to do their jobs."

"Dr. C., that's how my systems work to keep me going."





"Let's start at the bottom of the brain.  
It's called the Brainstem or the reptilian brain."

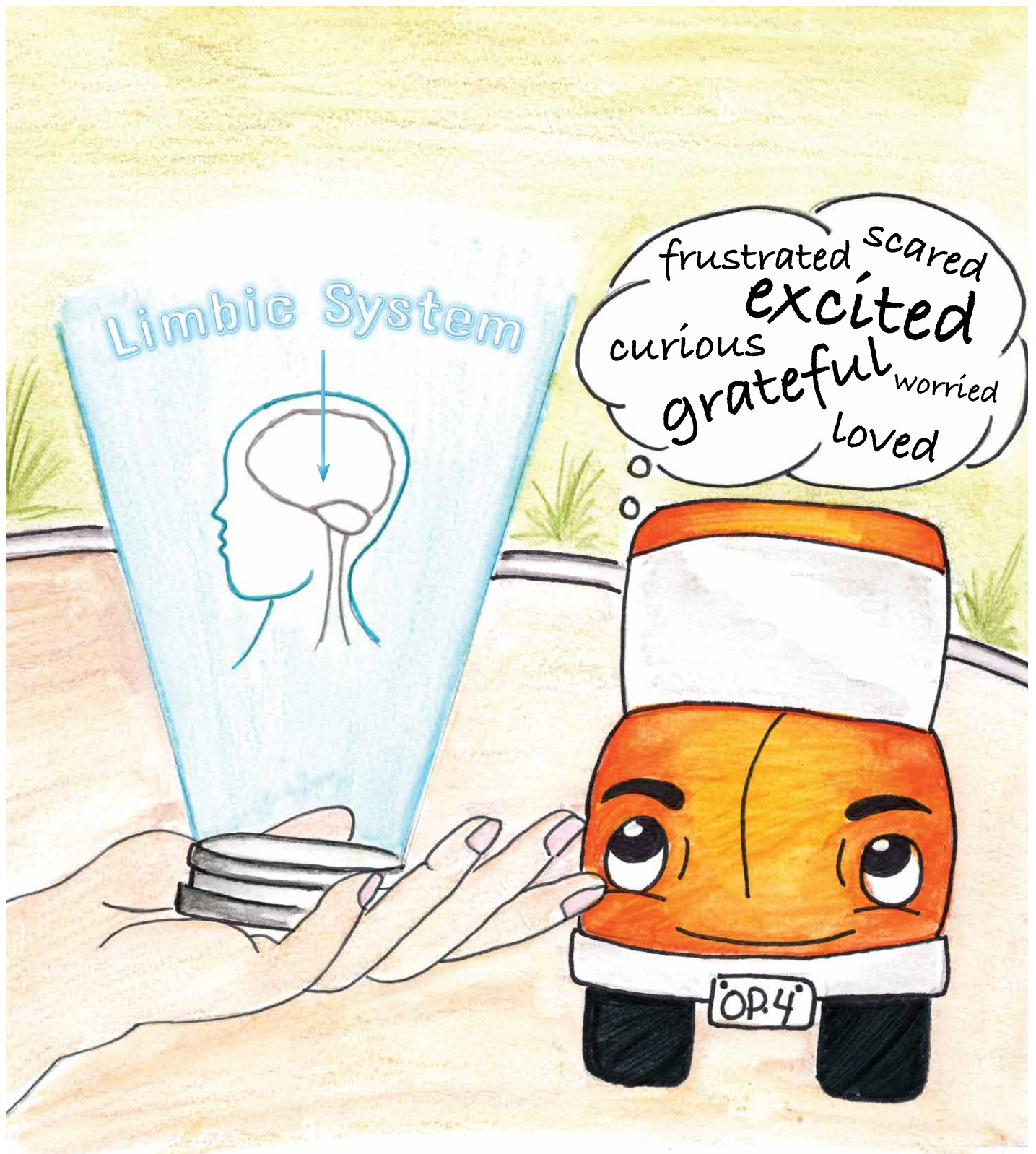
"Oh, Dr. C., my favourite reptile is a dinosaur...ROARRR!"





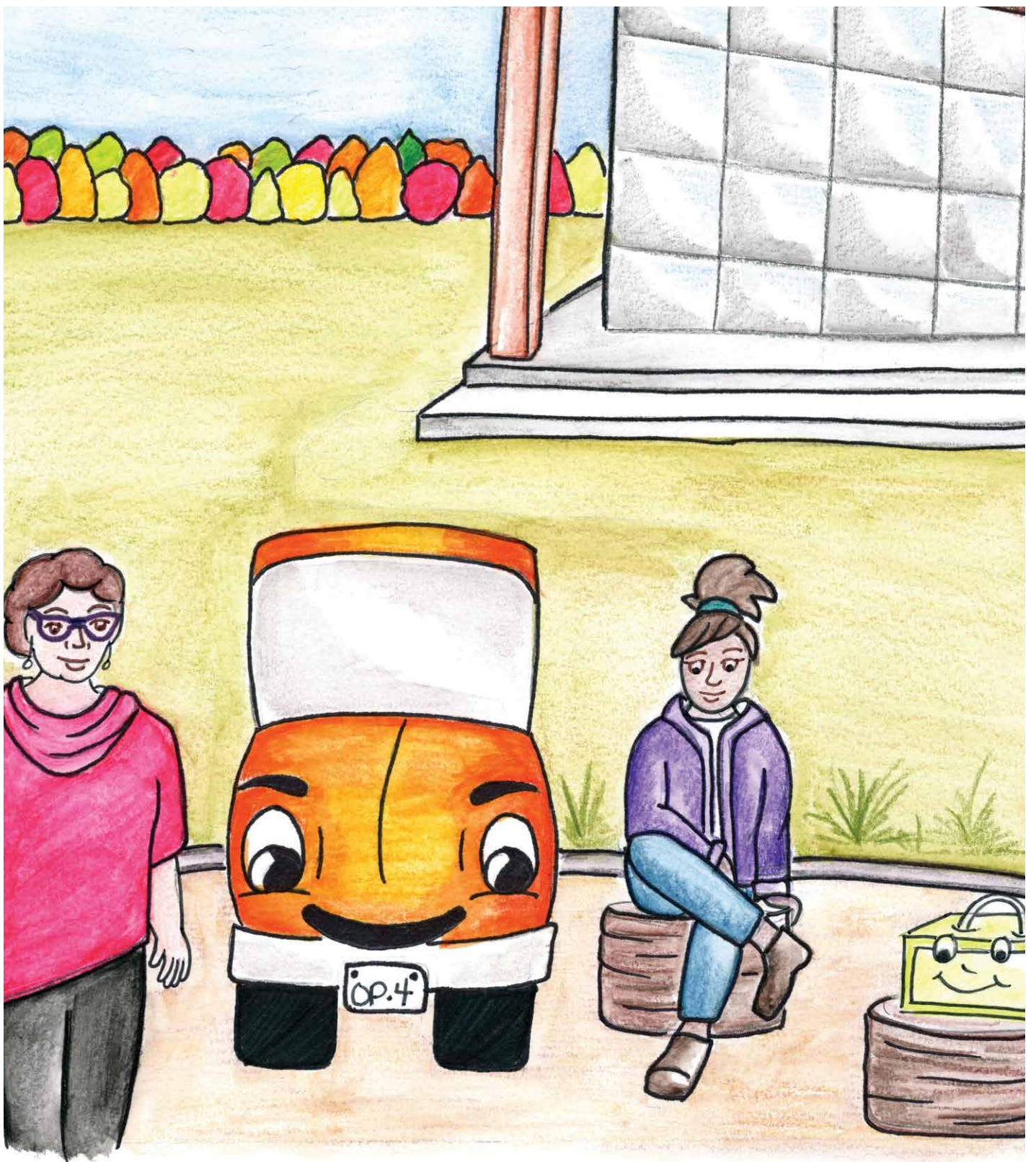
"The Brainstem is where everything first  
comes into the brain.  
It makes our heart go...Lub-dub, Lub-dub, Lub-dub  
It makes our breathing go...Ahhh."





"Next, in the middle part of the brain, is the Limbic System. It sorts out our feelings and emotions and what to do with them."





"I have lots of feelings, Dr. C!"  
"Yes, and it's good to name those feelings  
and to listen to your body."

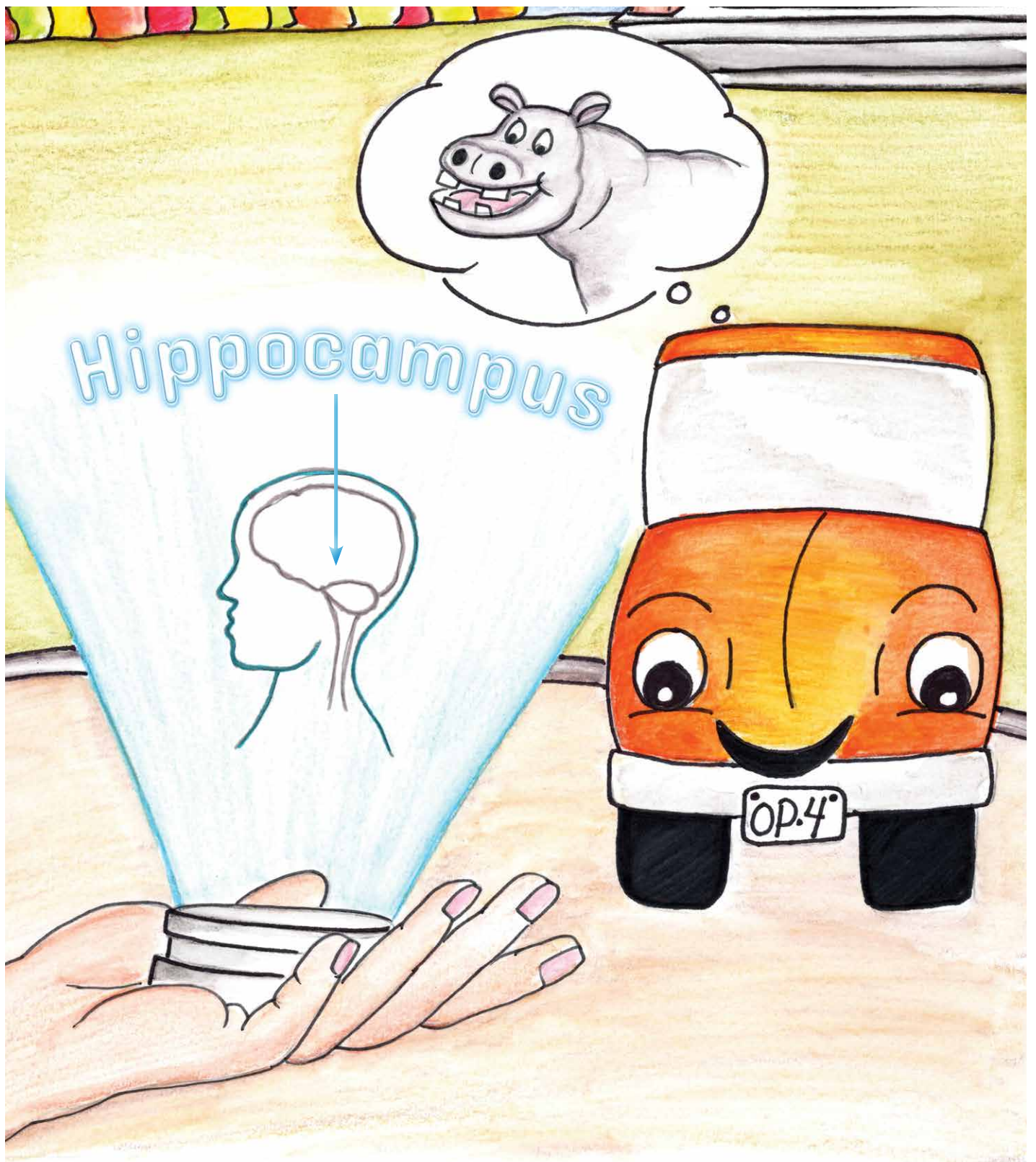




"How are you feeling now, Opey?"

"I am feeling revved up, and my computer sensors are firing."

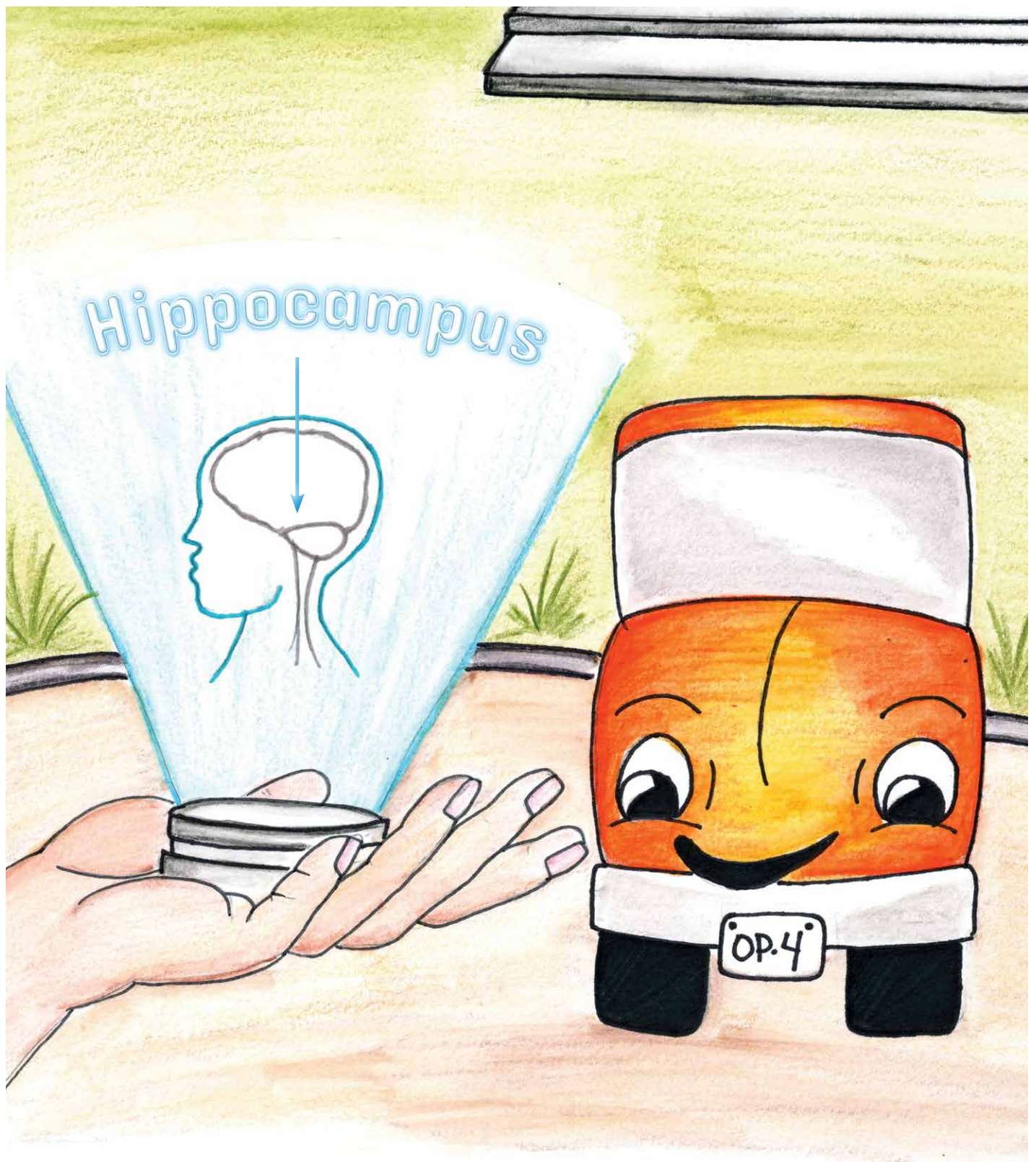




"Oh, there's a part of the Limbic System we can't forget, called the Hippocampus."

"I know what a Hippopotamus is Dr. C!"

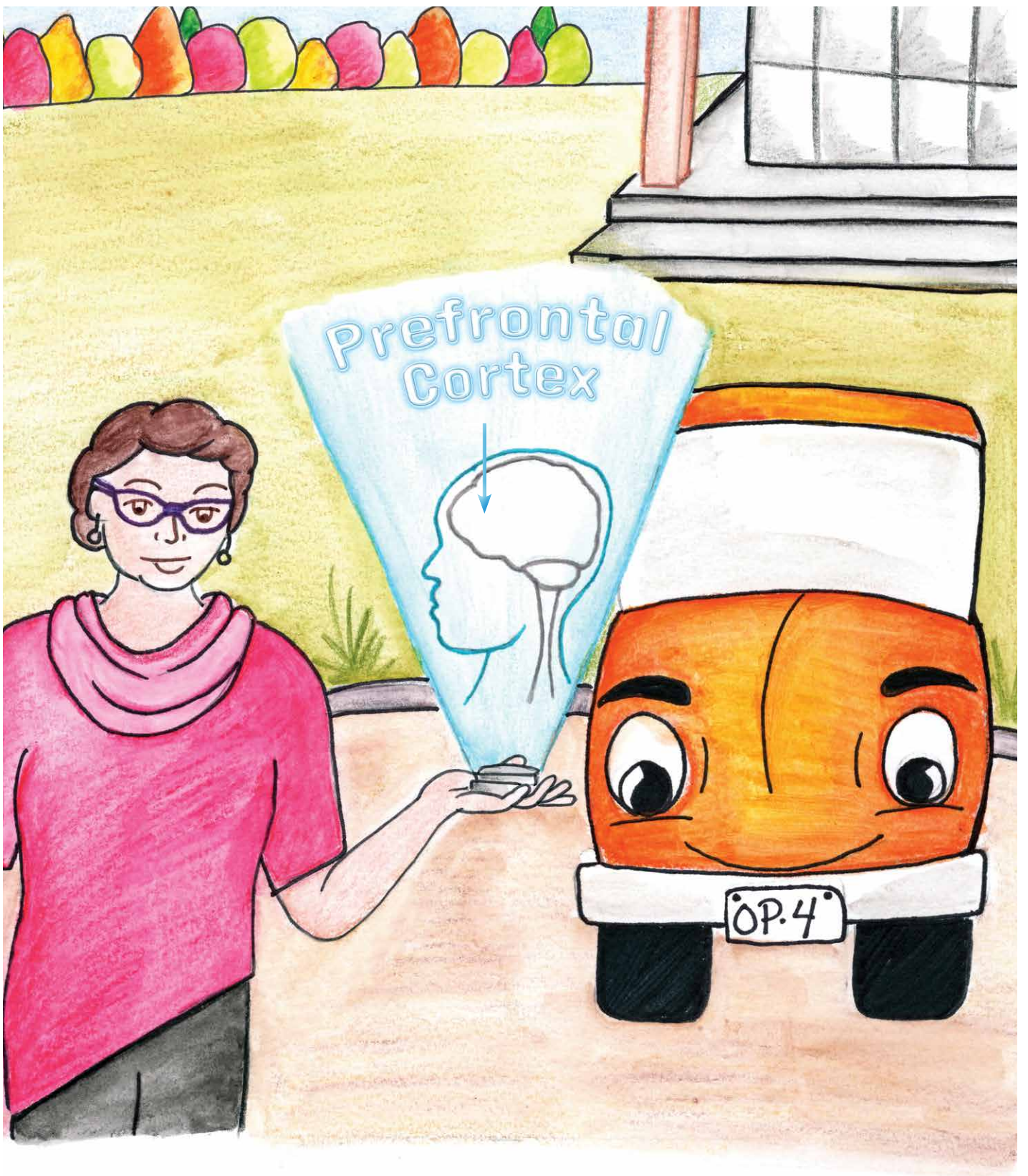




"Yes, it's fun the words sound alike.  
The Hippocampus helps us with our memory."

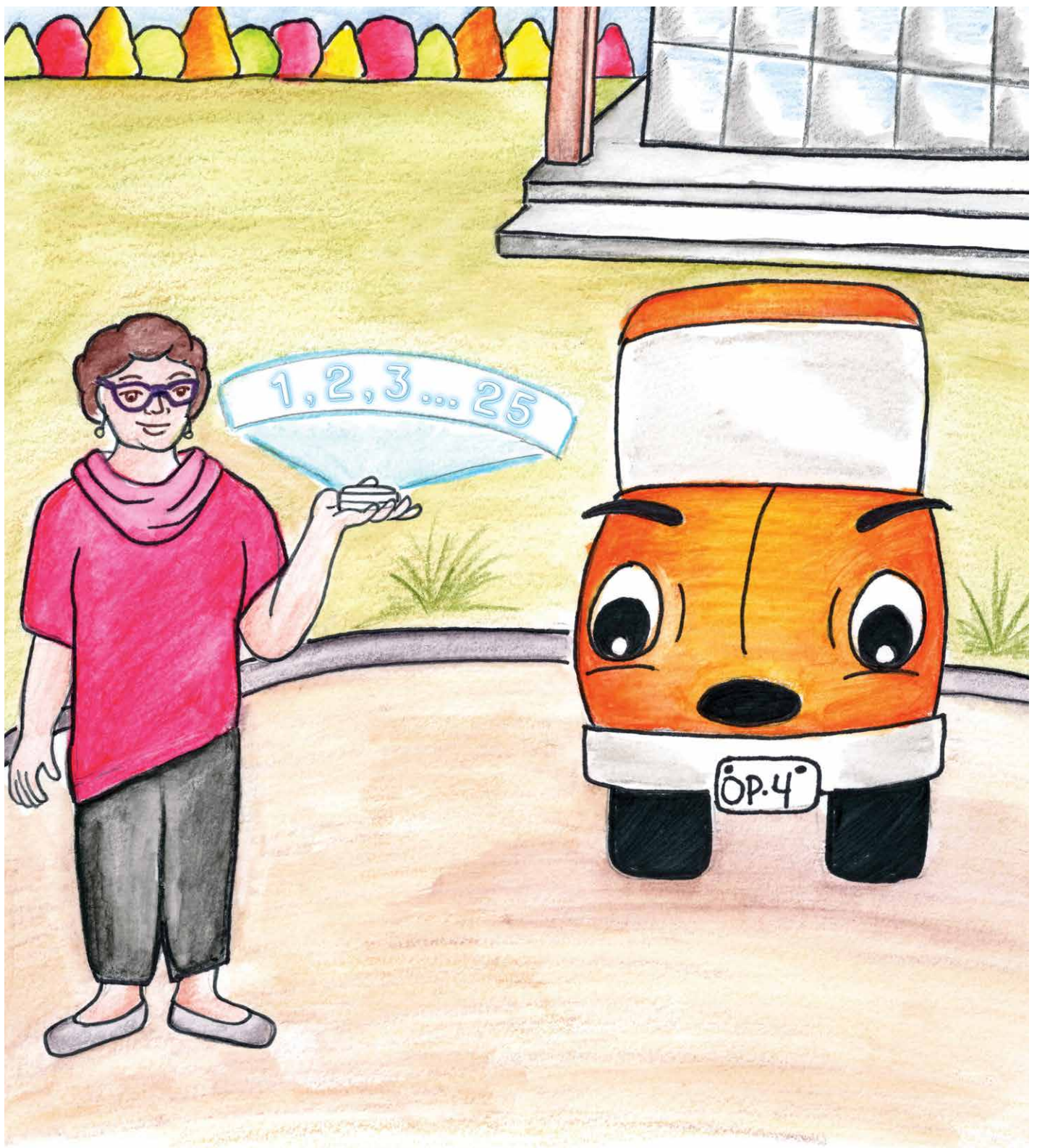
"Dr. C., I'm going to remember that."





"At the top of the brain is the Prefrontal Cortex.  
This is the thinking part of the brain."

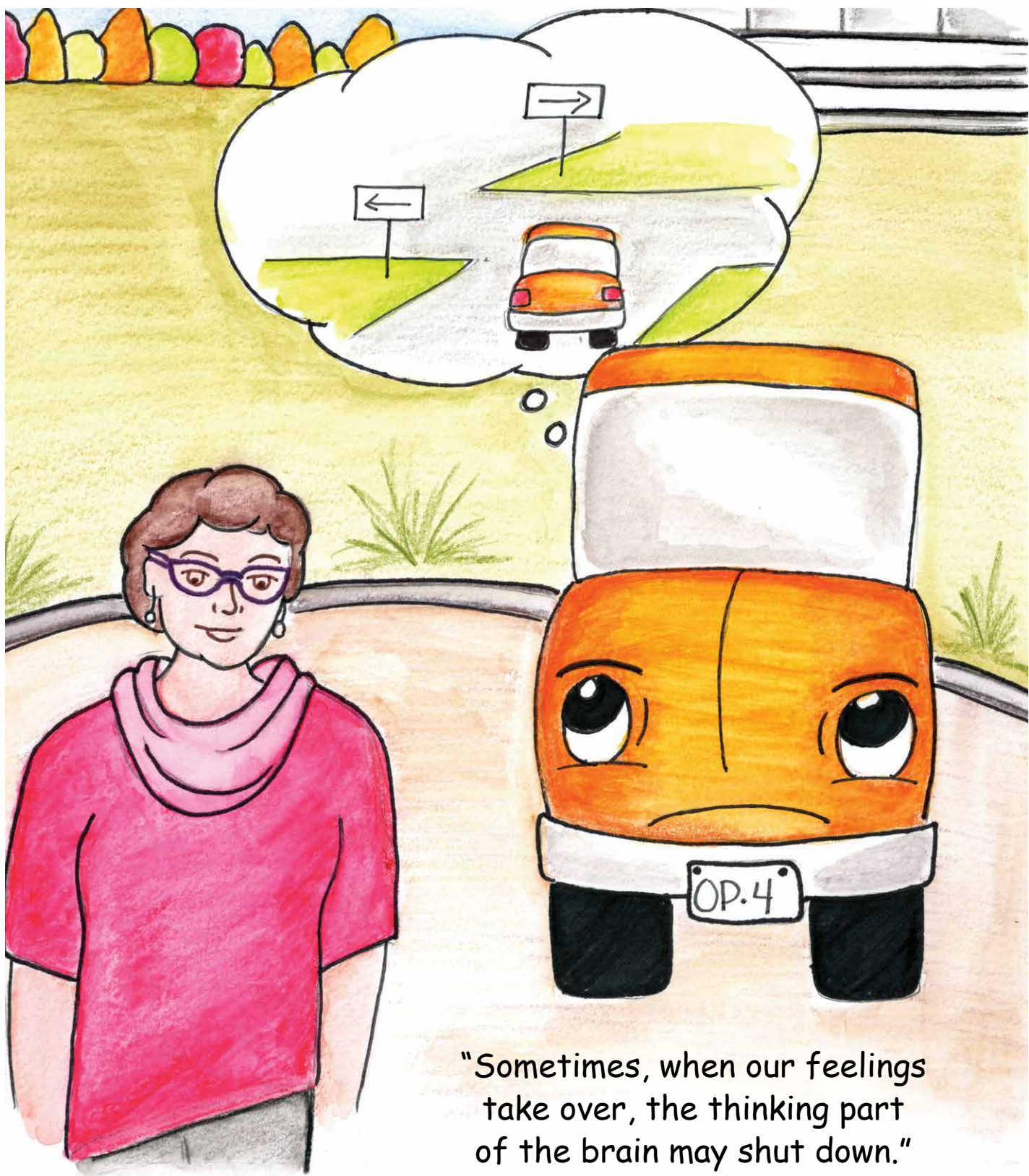




"I love that the Prefrontal Cortex grows and changes until we're more than 25 years old."

"Wow, Dr. C., that's so old!"

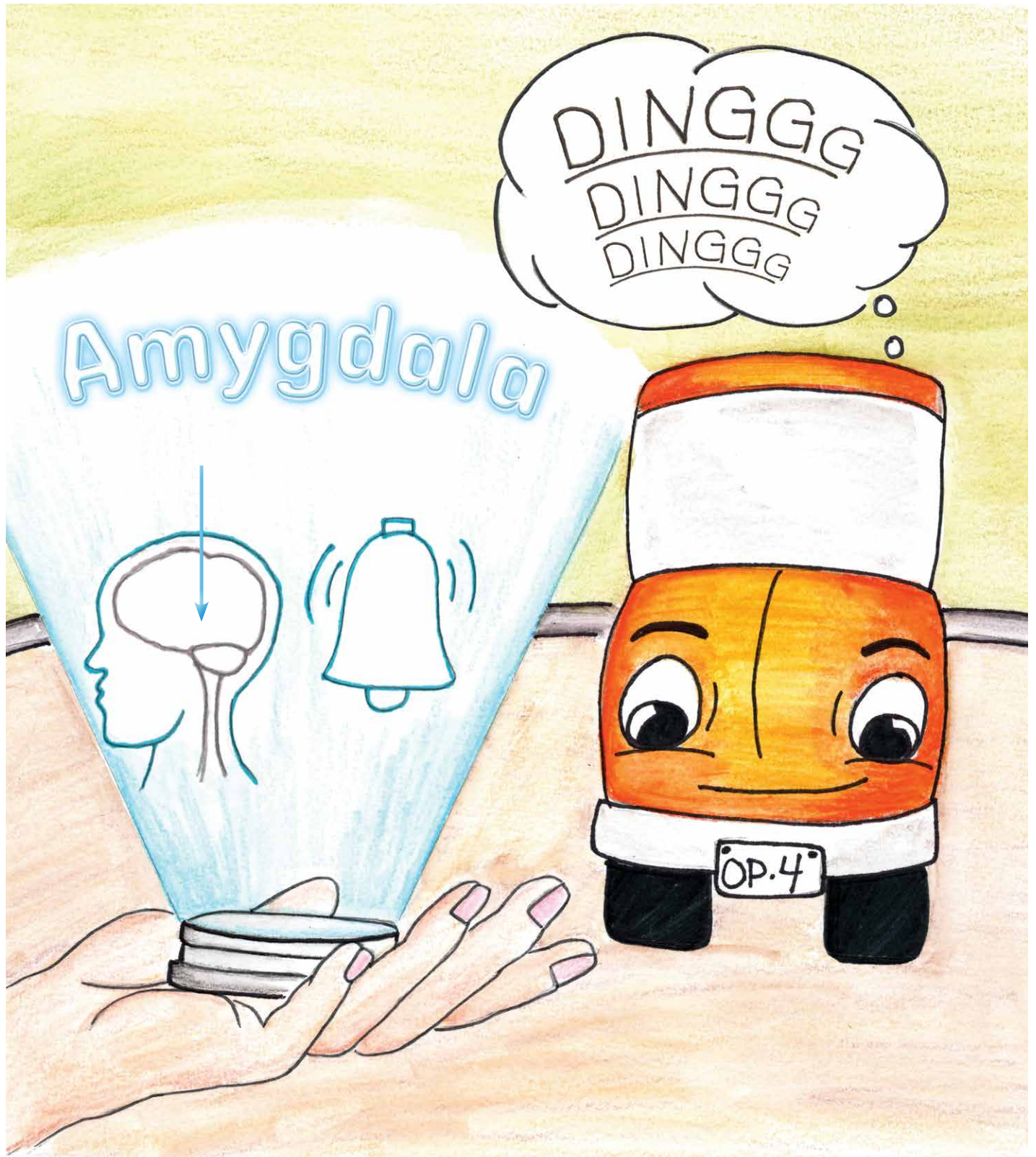




"Sometimes, when our feelings take over, the thinking part of the brain may shut down."

"Dr. C., that happened when I got upset going to the beach and I didn't know the way."

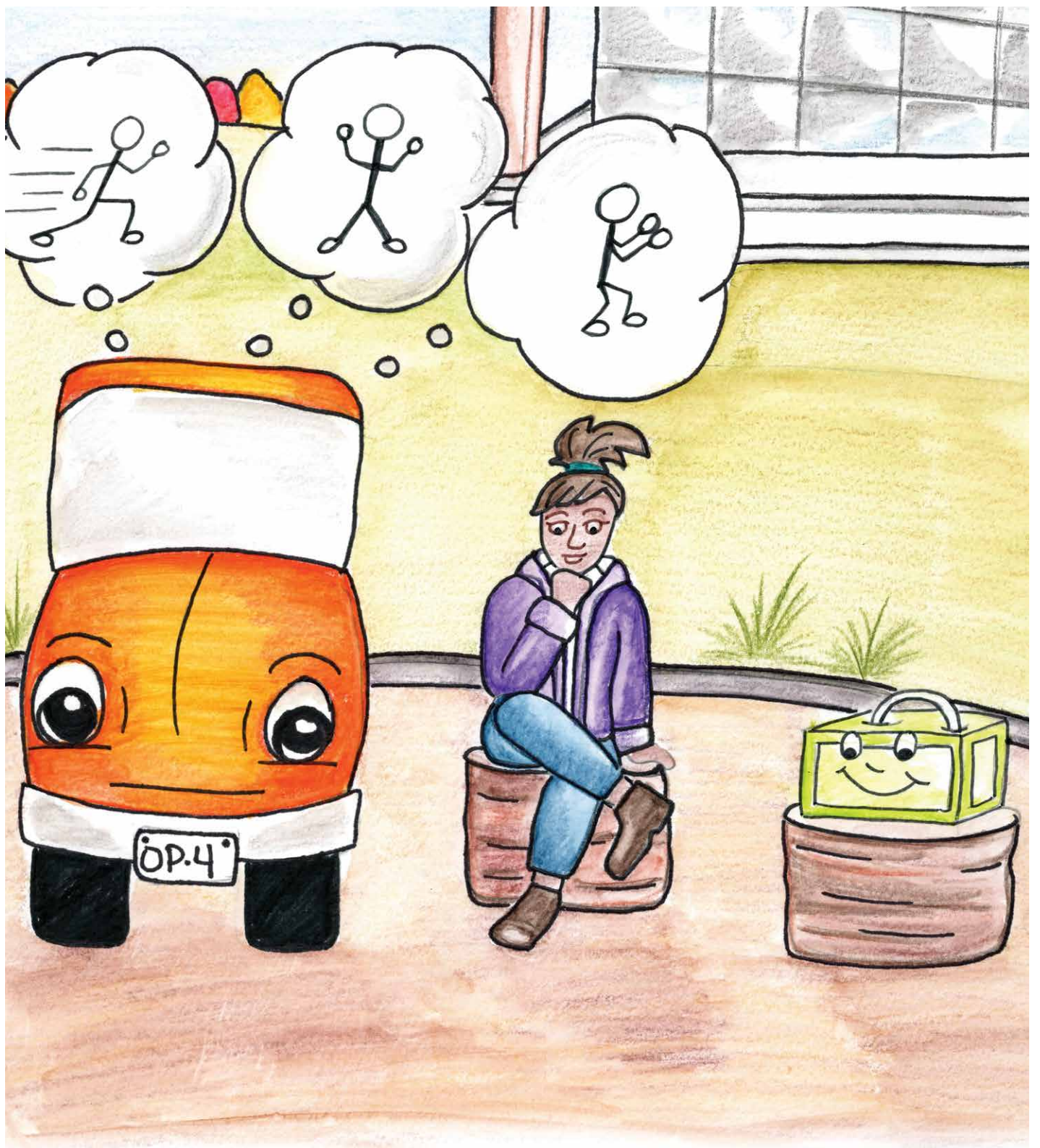




"When we don't feel safe, a part in the Limbic System called the Amygdala, sends out a big alarm."

"Dr. C., my alarm goes Dinggg... Dinggg... Dinggg."





"Yes, Opey, the Amygdala alarm tells us to do something to be safe. We can... run away or take flight, freeze like a statue, or stay and fight."

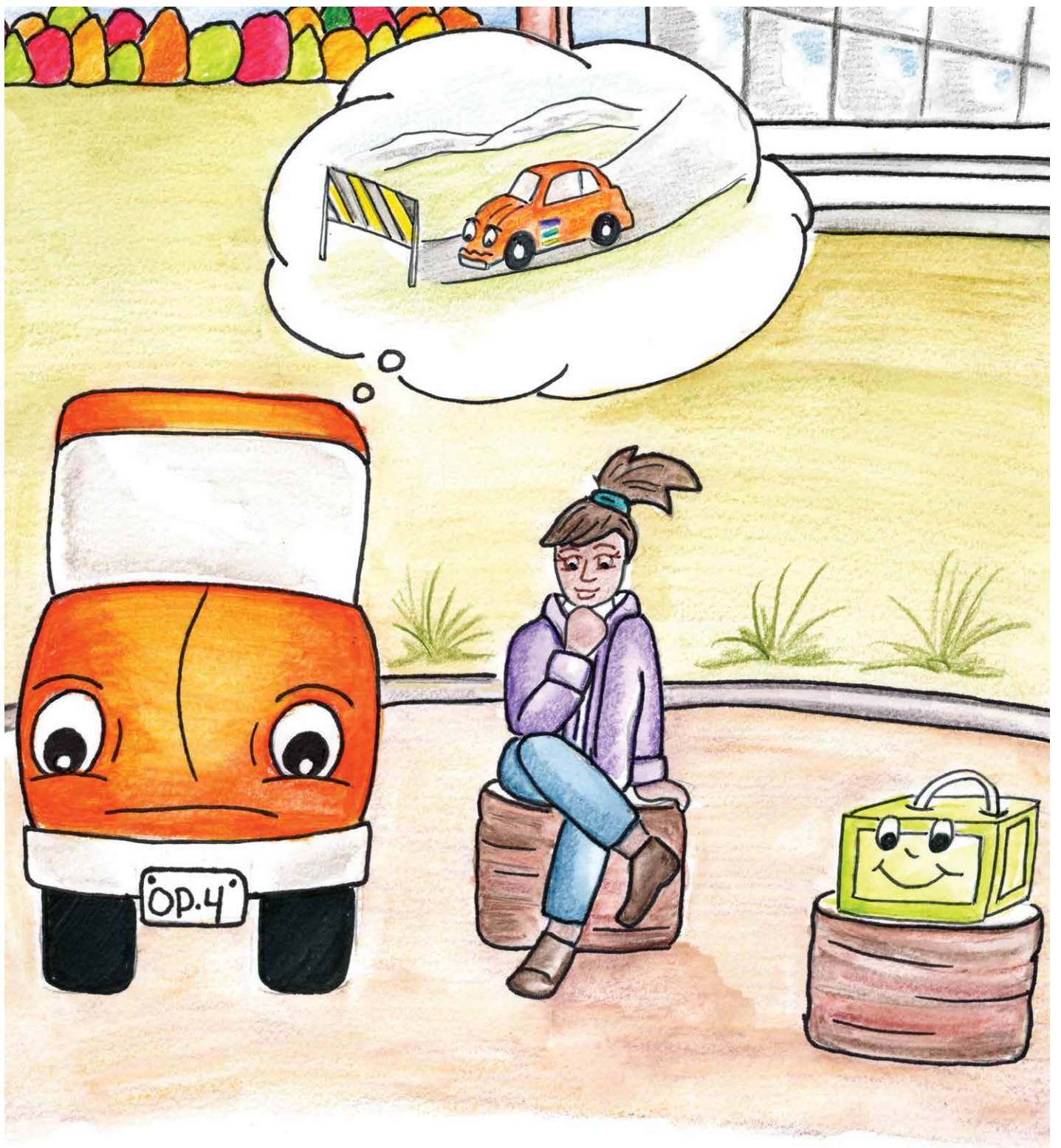




"Opey, was there a time when you wanted to run away or take flight?"

"Yes, when I was getting tired driving and I wanted to go home."

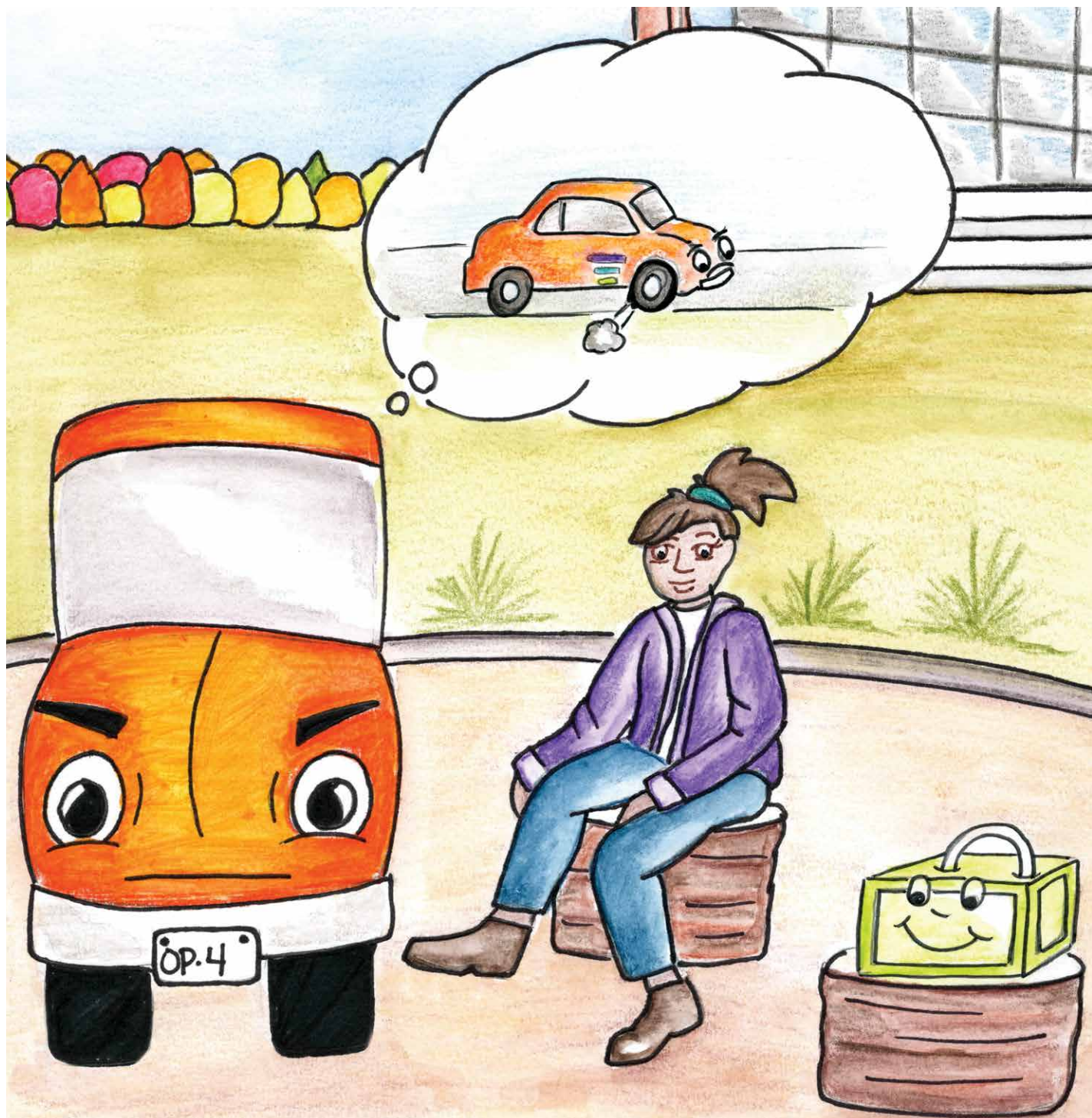




"Was there a time when you wanted  
to freeze like a statue?"

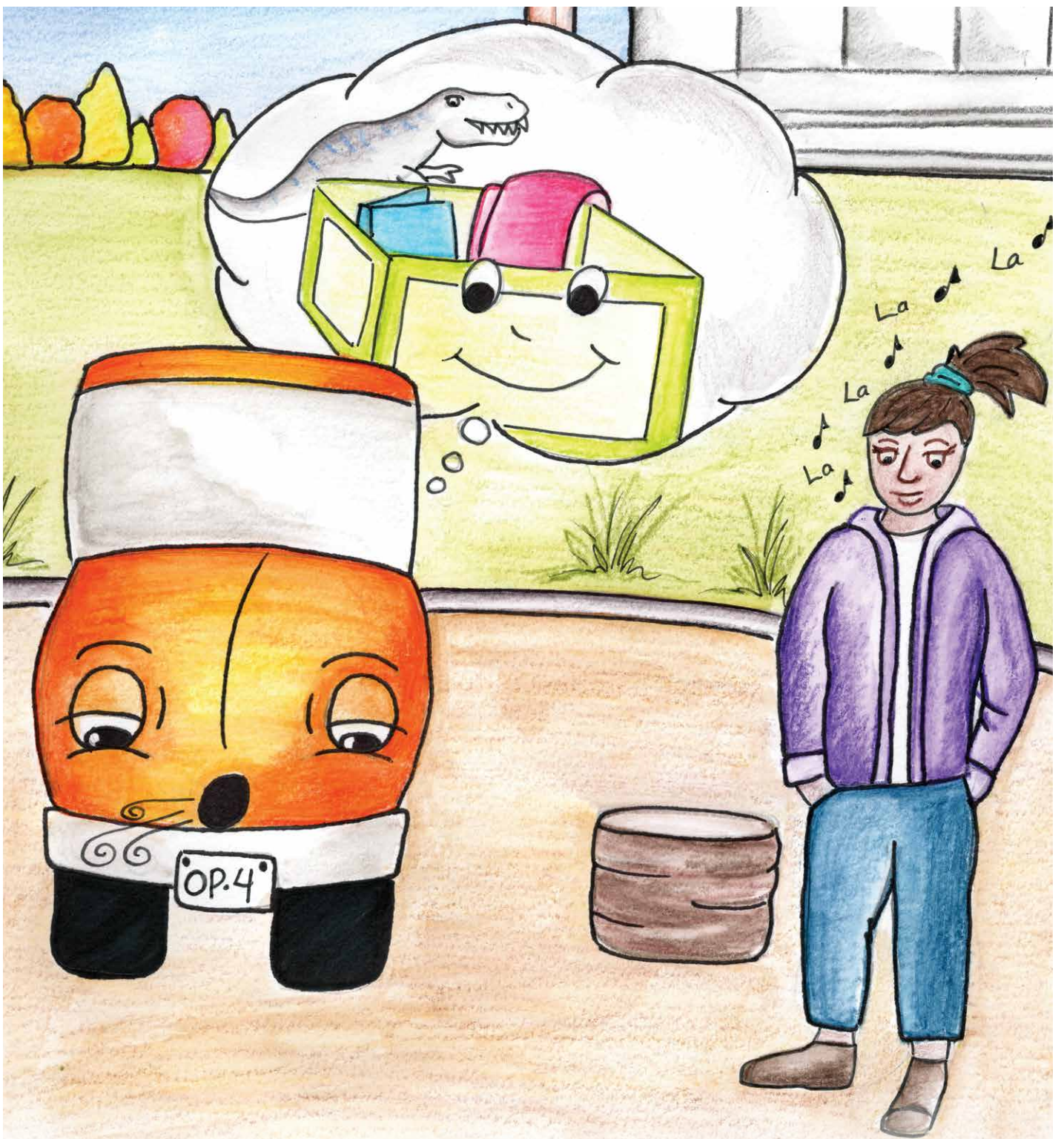
"When I was scared to go down the hill  
and I couldn't move."





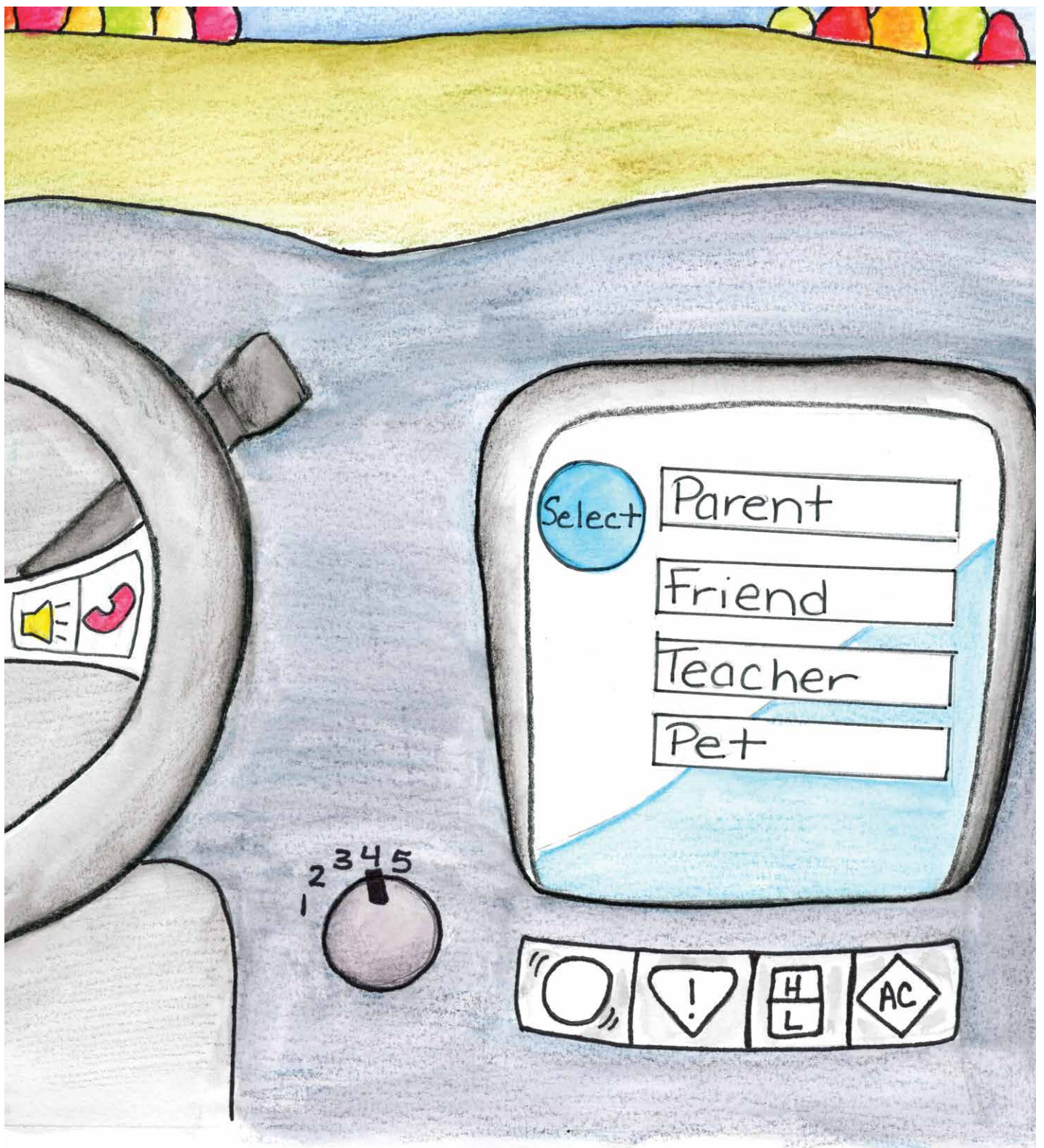
"Was there a time when you  
wanted to stay and fight?"  
"When I got a flat tire in the city  
and I was angry."





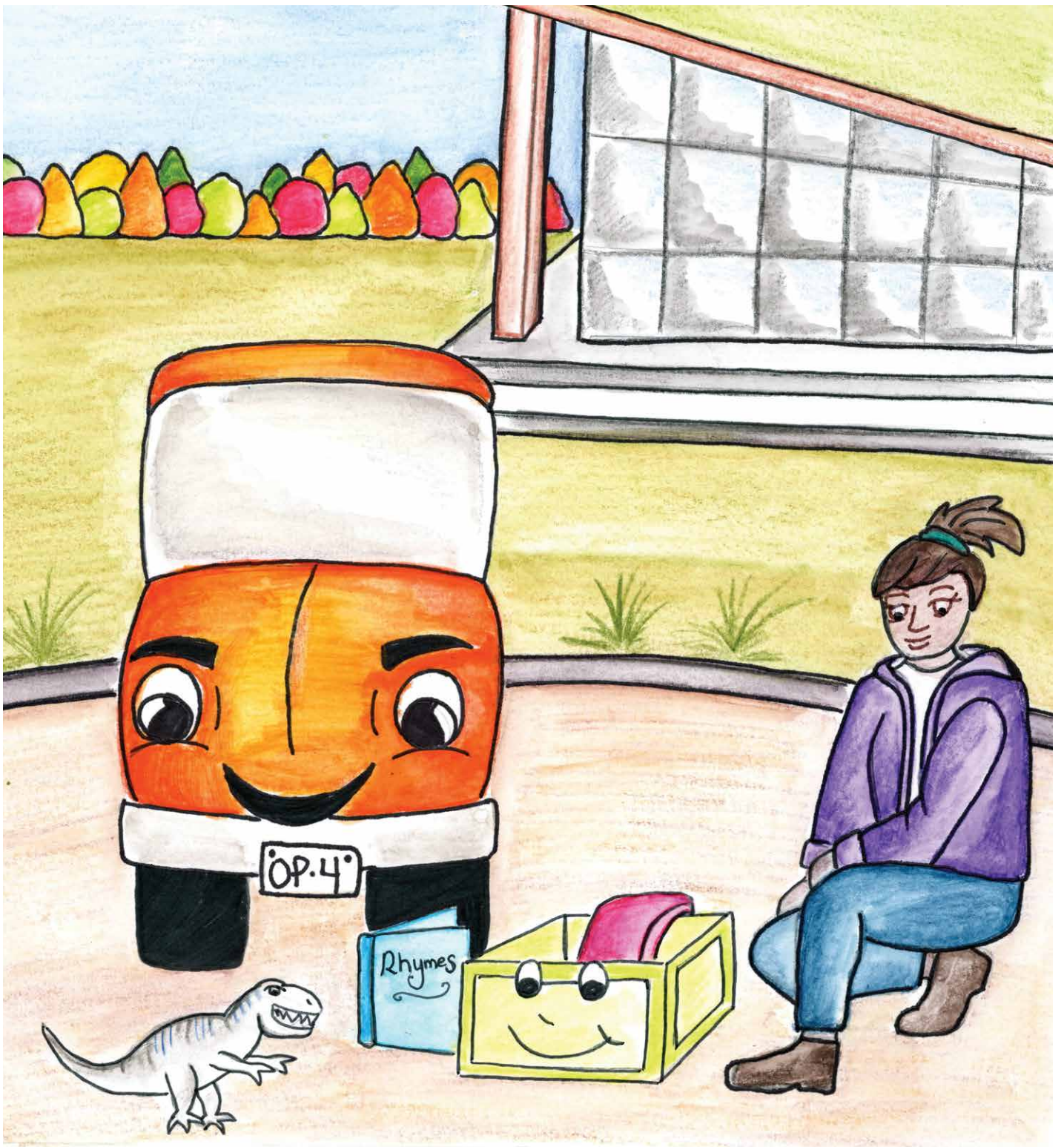
"Those are great examples, Opey. We can help turn the Amygdala alarm off by breathing, singing, and thinking of our favourite things."





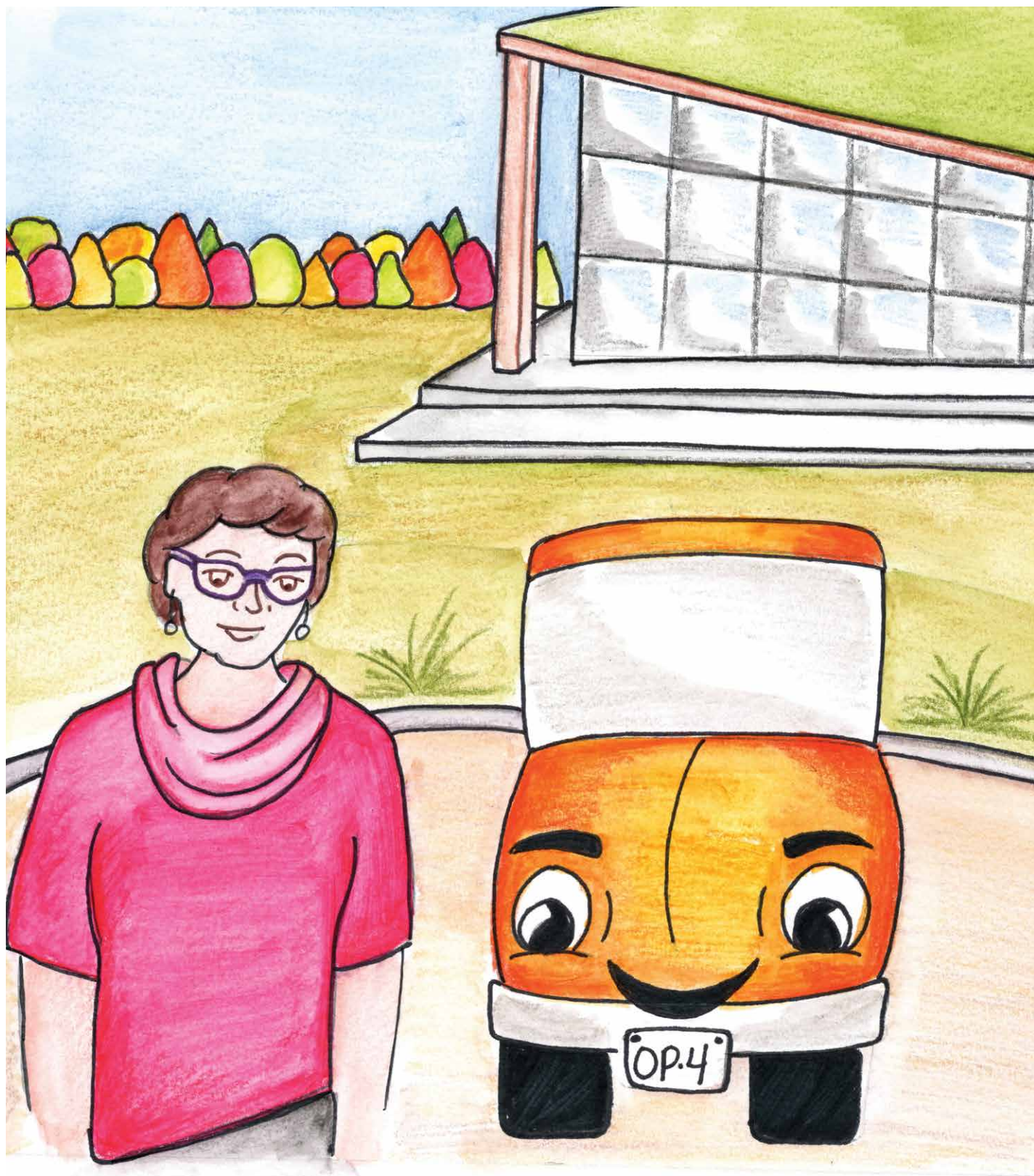
"We can also connect with someone  
who helps us feel calm."  
Who helps you feel calm?





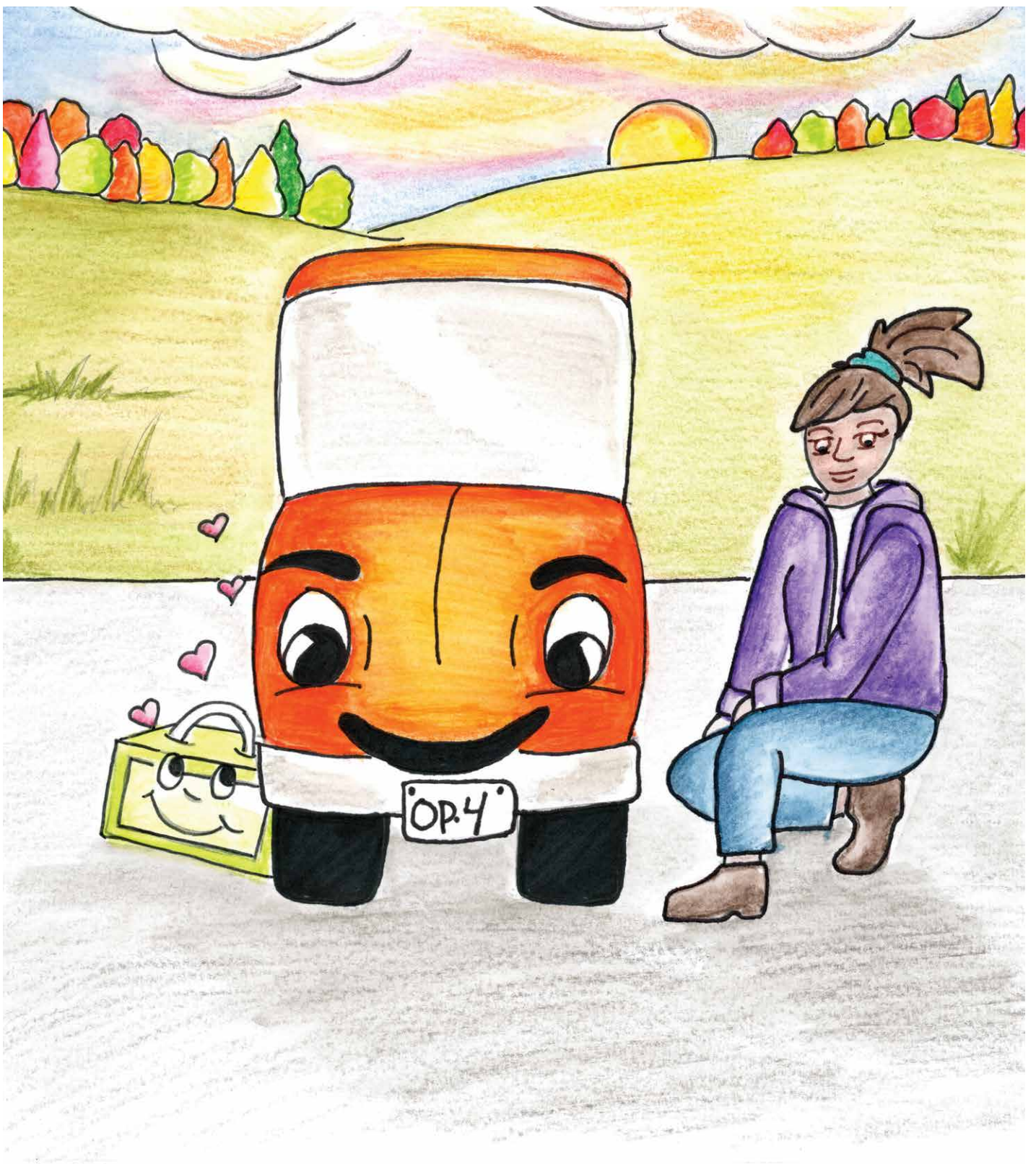
"Dr. C., when Molly looks and smiles at me, I feel safe and calm. I'm also happy to have Tinker, my blanket, book, and T-Rex...ROARRR."





"Opey, that's great!  
It's connecting with others and  
love that builds brains."





"It's been fun to learn about the brain, Dr. C.  
When we see how the brain works,  
we see the whole me!"



We hope you have enjoyed  
this ride with Opey.





Check out the full series!



This book series, was initiated by Our Place Family Resource and Early Years Centre, in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada. Our Place offered innovative child and family centered programs for over forty years.

Find out more about the book series:  
[opeybooks@gmail.com](mailto:opeybooks@gmail.com)

[www.opeybooks.com](http://www.opeybooks.com)



## About the Authors...

Debbie thanks her mother for sparking a love of reading, in her early years in Guyana; she recalls eagerly anticipating library trips with her sister to find their new favourite stories. After immigrating with her family to Canada, Debbie's path took her to Waterloo, Ontario where she studied Psychology and Social Work and now lives with her spouse.

Debbie has been committed to supporting the health of children and families throughout her career. She currently practices as a trauma informed Registered Social Worker, and is an Adjunct Assistant Clinical Professor in the Department of Family Medicine at McMaster University. Debbie has enjoyed joining Our Place to bring this book series to life, and to share about the importance of relationships in keeping us connected and whole.



Kathleen spent her childhood years asking for paper and crayons, spending a lifetime practicing her love of drawing and painting. During her 25-year career as an Early Childhood Educator, she enjoys sharing and reading books to children, learning how to tell a story to invite children in with their imaginations. Kathleen is deeply grateful to her family and ancestors for guiding her on her journey to co-author this book series, to fulfill a life long dream.

Illustrations drew inspiration from her two shining stars, her greatest teachers. As the illustrator of this book series Kathleen has worked from her heart to create a story that could be told beyond the words on the page.





