

# Little Skink's Tail



**By Janet Halfmann**  
**Illustrated by Laurie Allen Klein**

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While Little Skink hunts yummy ants for her breakfast, she is suddenly attacked by a crow! But she has a trick to escape—she snaps off her tail, and it keeps on wiggling! Little Skink is happy to be alive, but she misses her bright blue tail. Readers will enjoy pretending with her, trying on tail after tail. The first is too puffy-fluffy, and another too stinky! Then one day Little Skink gets a big surprise . . . and she doesn't have to dream of tails anymore.

It's so much more than a picture book . . . this book is specifically designed to be both a fun-to-read story and a launch pad for discussions and learning. Whether read at home or in a classroom, we encourage adults to do the activities with the young children in their lives. Free online resources and support at [www.ArbordalePublishing.com](http://www.ArbordalePublishing.com) include:

- For Creative Minds as seen in the book (in English & Spanish):
  - Footprint Map Activity:
  - Adaptations: Why do animals have tails?
  - Tail Matching Activity for:
    - Skink    - Skunk    - Rabbit    - Deer
    - Porcupine    - Squirrel    - Owl
  - Sorting by carnivore, herbivore, or omnivore
  - Animal classification activity
  - Bully or Friend?
- Teaching Activities:
  - Reading Questions    ◦ Mathematics
  - Language Arts    ◦ Geography
  - Science    ◦ Coloring Pages
- Interactive Quizzes: Reading Comprehension, For Creative Minds, and Math Word Problems
- English and Spanish Audiobooks
- Related Websites
- Aligned to State Standards (searchable database)
- Accelerated Reader and Reading Counts! Quizzes
- Lexile and Fountas & Pinnell Reading Levels

eBooks with Auto-Flip, Auto-Read, and selectable English and Spanish text and audio available for purchase online.

Thanks to Sherry Crawley, Director of Education, School and Family Programs at Zoo Atlanta for verifying the accuracy of the information in this book.

**Janet Halfmann** has been writing for children for more than 20 years, and this is her 28th book. Before becoming a full-time freelance children's writer, she was a manager, editor, and writer of coloring and activity books for Golden Books; the editor of a national children's magazine; and a reporter for a daily newspaper. A member of the Society for Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, Janet has recently published *Plant Tricksters*, *Alligator at Saw Grass Road*, *Polar Bear Horizon*, *Canada Goose at Cattail Lane*, *Dolphin's Rescue*, *Red Bat at Sleepy Hollow Lane*, and *Pelican's Catch*. Janet was inspired to write *Little Skink's Tail* while researching for one of her other books, *Nature's Predators: Lizards*, and for an article that she wrote for *Ranger Rick*, "Slinky Skinks." Another inspiration was her granddaughter, whom she enjoys watching play dress-up and pretend. As Janet wrote the book, she pictured her granddaughter putting on and showing off each tail. Janet writes from her home in Wisconsin.

**Laurie Allen Klein** has been a freelance artist for nearly 20 years. Over the last several years she has worked as the on-staff artist for a marine park where she does everything from painting life-size sea animal murals, to illustrating children's activity books. In addition to *Little Skink's Tail* (watercolor), Laurie also illustrated *If a Dolphin Were a Fish* (colored pencils) for Arbordale. Her other books include the *Out to Pasture* series, authored by Effie Wilder. Laurie paints from her home in Florida.

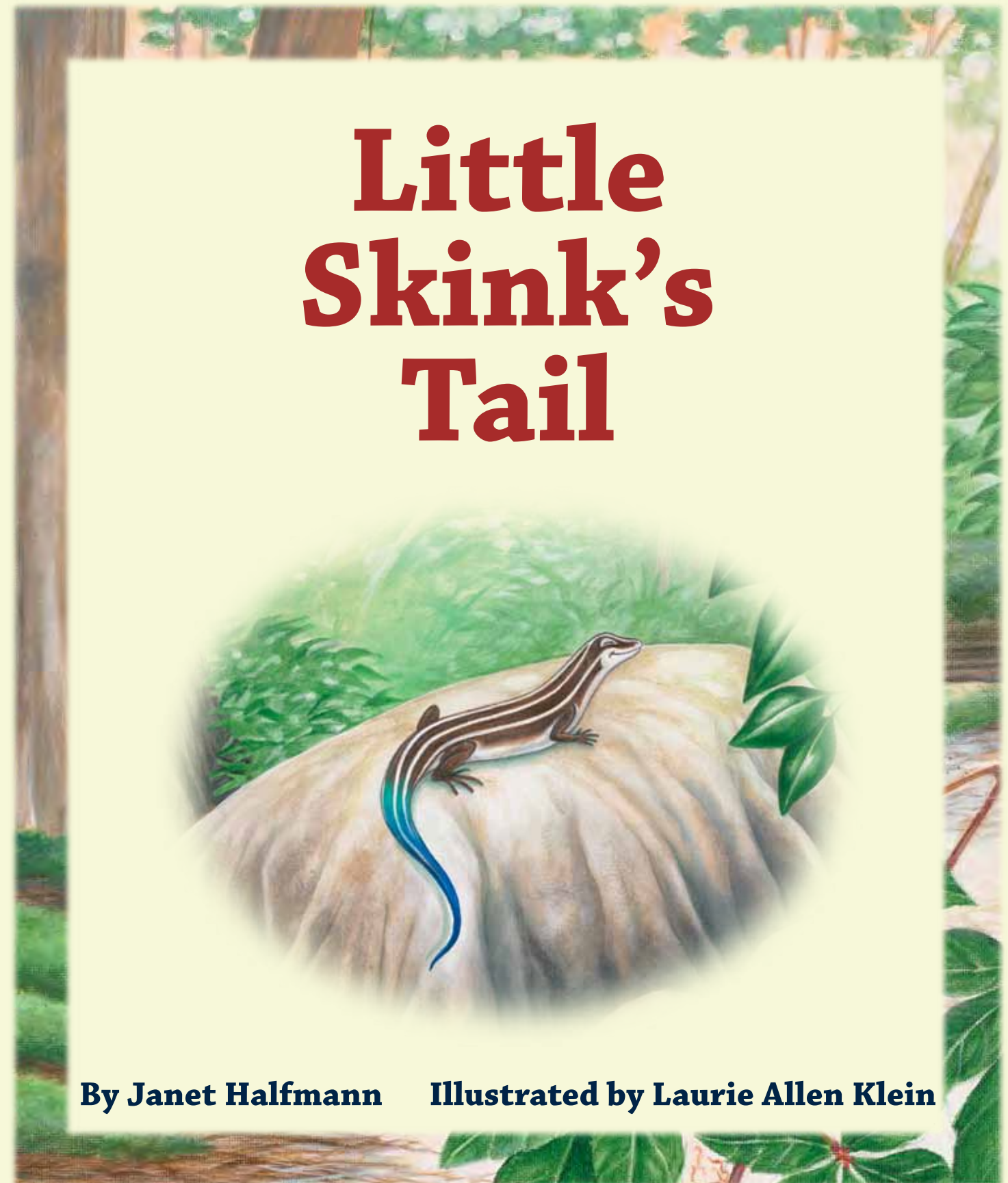


Janet Halfmann



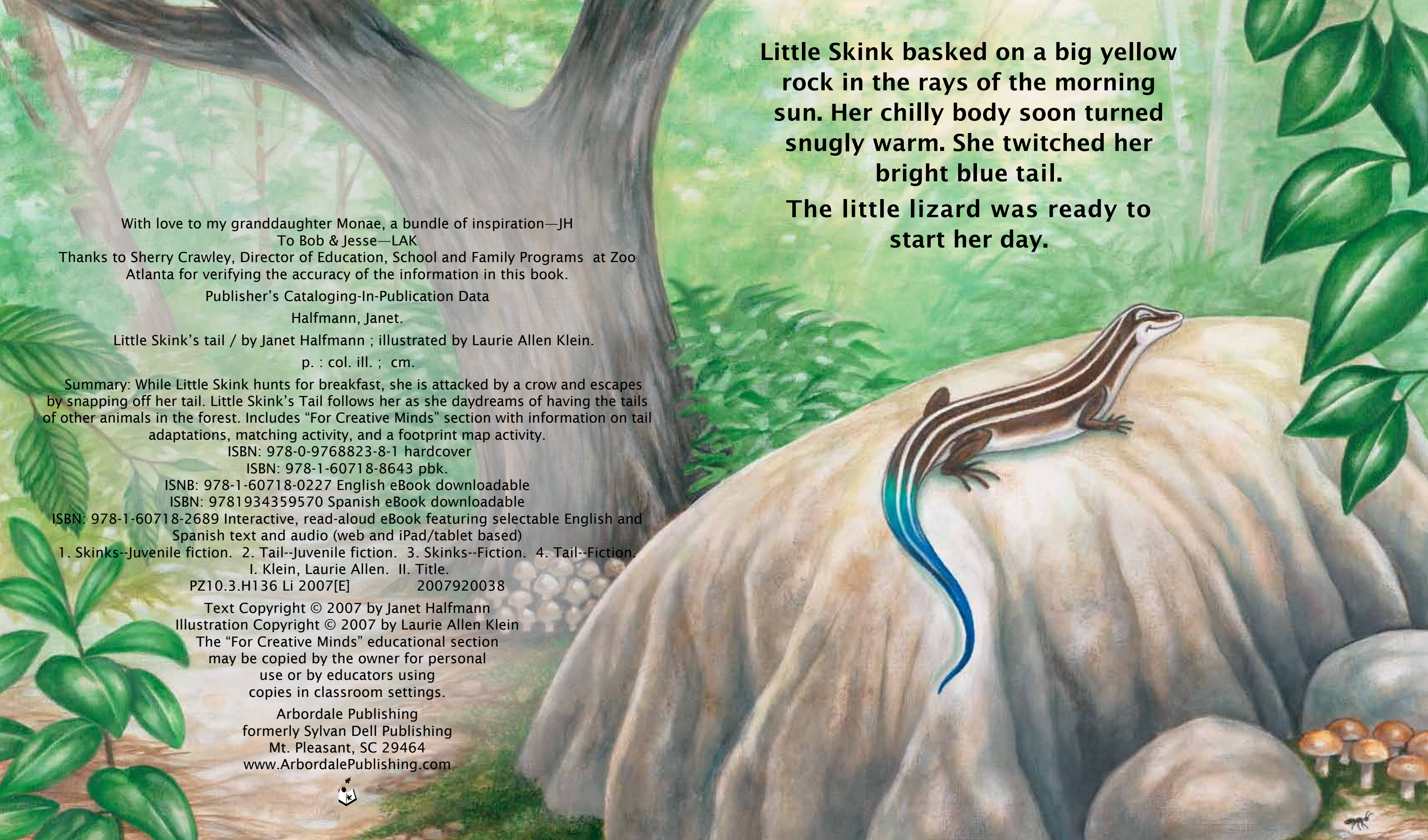
Laurie Allen Klein

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**Little Skink basked on a big yellow  
rock in the rays of the morning  
sun. Her chilly body soon turned  
snugly warm. She twitched her  
bright blue tail.**

**The little lizard was ready to  
start her day.**

With love to my granddaughter Monae, a bundle of inspiration—JH  
To Bob & Jesse—LAK

Thanks to Sherry Crawley, Director of Education, School and Family Programs at Zoo  
Atlanta for verifying the accuracy of the information in this book.

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by snapping off her tail. Little Skink's Tail follows her as she daydreams of having the tails  
of other animals in the forest. Includes "For Creative Minds" section with information on tail  
adaptations, matching activity, and a footprint map activity.

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Leaping to the forest floor,  
she poked her pointy nose  
into a crack in a rotting log  
and looked for breakfast.  
*Sniff, sniff!* She smelled ants.

She loved ants!

*Gobble, gobble, gobble.*  
She gulped down one ant  
after another.

Her tummy was almost full  
when she felt a peck on her tail.  
It was a large, hungry crow!

Little Skink was trapped. There was no way to run.  
But she had a trick . . .



Quicker than the crow could blink, Little Skink snapped off her bright blue tail!

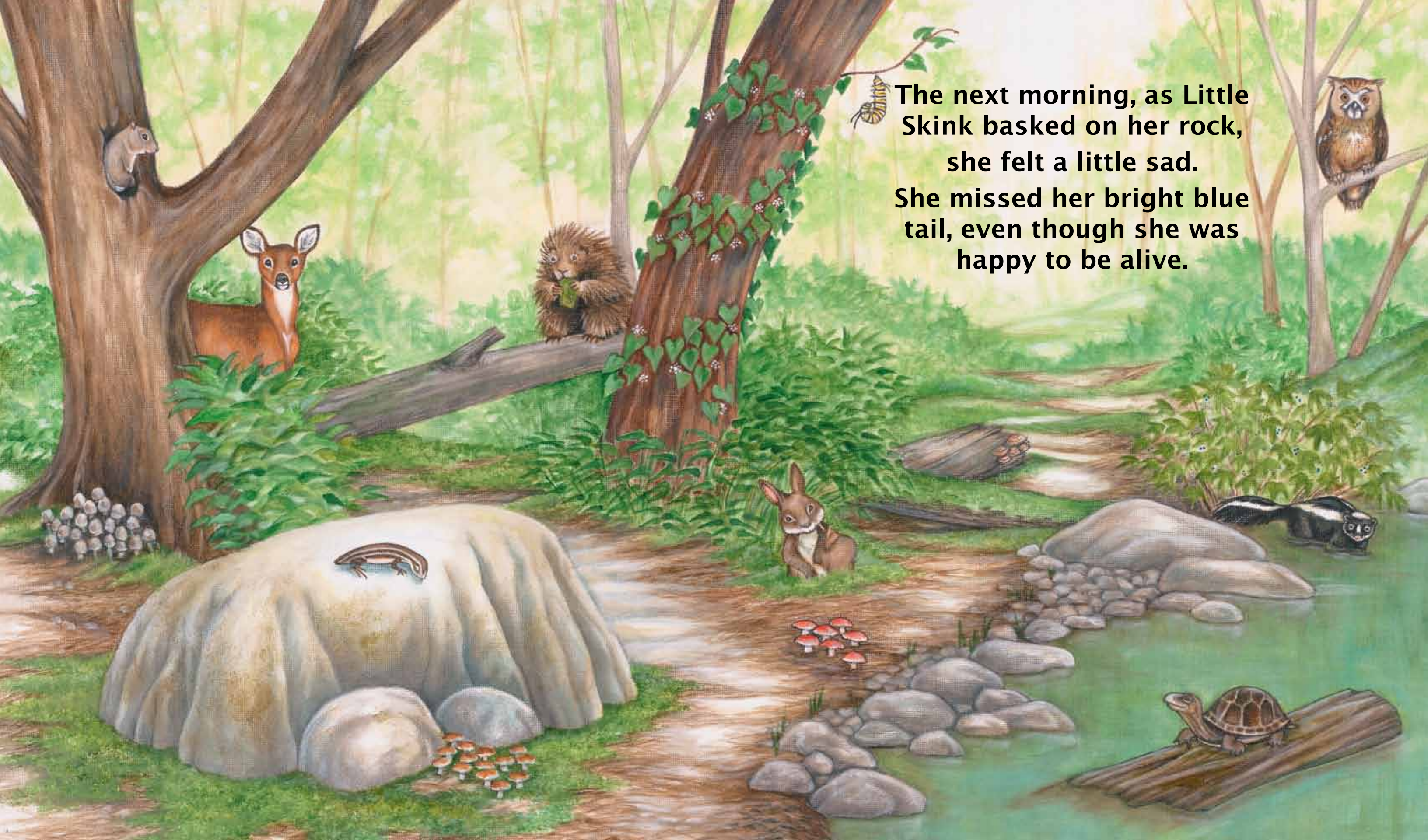
*Wiggle, waggle, wiggle*, went the tail, wriggling wildly through the fallen leaves.

The crow forgot all about Little Skink. It wanted that wiggling, wagging tail!

As the crow bounced this way and that, Little Skink slinked under a log. She was safe.

Her wiggling, wagging tail had saved her.





**The next morning, as Little Skink basked on her rock, she felt a little sad. She missed her bright blue tail, even though she was happy to be alive.**

# For Creative Minds

For easy use, the "For Creative Minds" educational section may be photocopied or downloaded by the owner of this book from [www.ArbordalePublishing.com](http://www.ArbordalePublishing.com). Please do not write in the book.

## Footprint Map

Using the animal footprints as hints, can you identify where Little Skink saw the animals in the woods? Find the number and the letter of the box that identifies the animal tracks. For example, Little Skink is located in box 7, D.



Deer



Turtle



Squirrel



Owl



Back Foot Rabbit

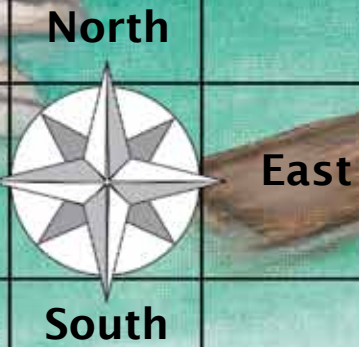


Back Foot Porcupine

1. If Little Skink starts at her rock (7, D), how many squares would she have to walk to find turtle and in which direction?
2. How many squares would turtle go to find porcupine and in which direction?
3. Which animal is to the northwest of Little Skink?

Answers:  
 Deer: 1, J; Turtle: 7, G; Squirrel: 5, A; Owl: 3, K; Rabbit: 4, E; Porcupine: 2, G;  
 1. 3 squares to the north; 2. 5 squares to the east; 3. the squirrel

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
1											
2											
3											
4											
5											
6											
7											
8											
9											





## Why Do Animals Have Tails? A Tail Matching Activity

Animals use tails in many different ways: to protect themselves, to balance or steer, to talk to other animals, or to attract other animals to them (either a mate or prey). Some animals can even store food in their tails or can use tails like a hand to hold onto things (prehensile). *Can you match the animal to its tail?*



1. \_\_\_\_\_

### a. Skink

*Little Skink's tail came off but kept wriggling in order to confuse the crow. That gave Little Skink a chance to get away: she used her tail to protect herself.*



2. \_\_\_\_\_

### b. Cottontail Rabbit

*A cottontail rabbit's tail is dark on top and light on the bottom. A rabbit raises its tail when trying to tell other cottontails that there is trouble.*



3. \_\_\_\_\_

### c. Squirrel

*A squirrel uses its tail to balance as it runs and jumps from one tree branch to another.*



4. \_\_\_\_\_

### d. White-Tailed Deer

*A white-tailed deer raises its tail to warn other deer of danger.*



5. \_\_\_\_\_

### e. Skunk

*If scared, a skunk will protect itself by raising its tail to release a stinky spray.*



6. \_\_\_\_\_

### f. Porcupine

*A porcupine will rub its tail against an animal and release quills into the animal.*



7. \_\_\_\_\_

### g. Owl

*An owl uses its tail to help balance and steer as it flies.*

Answers:  
1. b; 2. f; 3. c; 4. g; 5. a; 6. d; 7. e

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