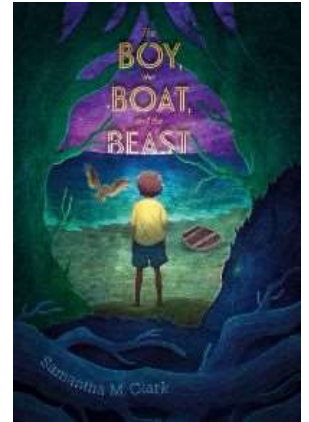


# Make Your Own Courage Art Therapy Project

Developed by Samantha M. Clark and Bonnie Thomas, LCSW

The activities in this program highlight themes related to fear, anxiety, and well-being noted in the middle-grade novel *THE BOY, THE BOAT, AND THE BEAST*. These activities are suitable to be used by parents, teachers, librarians or other child caregivers with children. For more in-depth activities that can be used by clinical professionals, see [www.samanthamclark.com](http://www.samanthamclark.com).

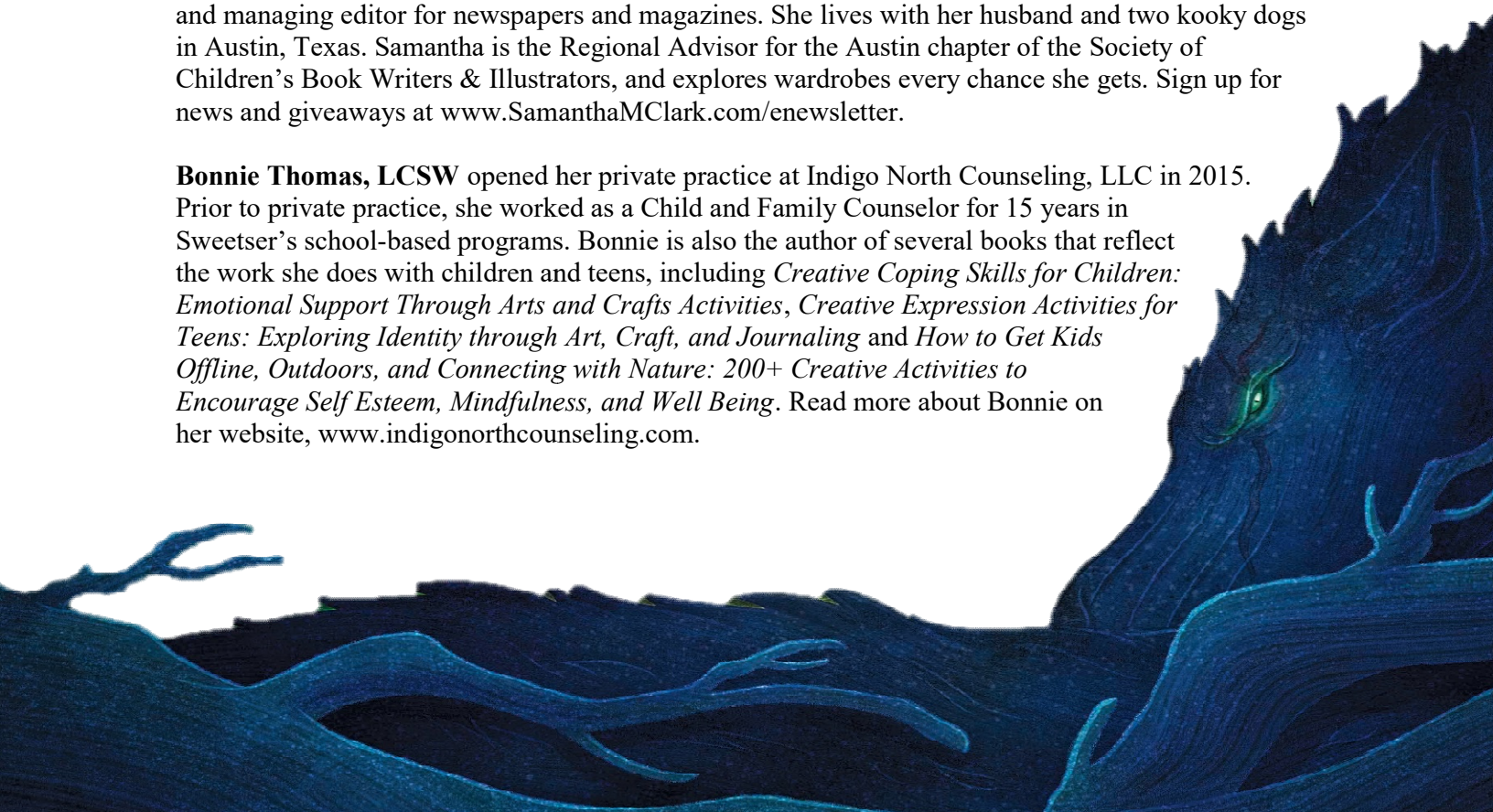
In the book, a Boy wakes up on a mysterious beach where everything's scary and he doesn't know who he is or how he got there. After a bright light shines over the Green Wall of trees, the Boy gathers up his courage and follows it, hoping to find answers and his family. But when he discovers the terrifying truth, he must face his biggest fear—going home.



**THE BOY, THE BOAT, AND THE BEAST** is written by **Samantha M Clark**  
**Paula Wiseman Books/Simon & Schuster**  
**ISBN 9781534412552 (hardcover), 9781534412576 (ebook)**

**Samantha M Clark** has always loved stories about ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances. After all, if four ordinary brothers and sisters can find a magical world at the back of a wardrobe, why can't she? While she looks for her real-life Narnia, she writes about other ordinary children and teens who've stumbled into a wardrobe of their own. In a past life, Samantha was a photojournalist and managing editor for newspapers and magazines. She lives with her husband and two kooky dogs in Austin, Texas. Samantha is the Regional Advisor for the Austin chapter of the Society of Children's Book Writers & Illustrators, and explores wardrobes every chance she gets. Sign up for news and giveaways at [www.SamanthaMClark.com/enewsletter](http://www.SamanthaMClark.com/enewsletter).

**Bonnie Thomas, LCSW** opened her private practice at Indigo North Counseling, LLC in 2015. Prior to private practice, she worked as a Child and Family Counselor for 15 years in Sweetser's school-based programs. Bonnie is also the author of several books that reflect the work she does with children and teens, including *Creative Coping Skills for Children: Emotional Support Through Arts and Crafts Activities*, *Creative Expression Activities for Teens: Exploring Identity through Art, Craft, and Journaling* and *How to Get Kids Offline, Outdoors, and Connecting with Nature: 200+ Creative Activities to Encourage Self Esteem, Mindfulness, and Well Being*. Read more about Bonnie on her website, [www.indigonorthcounseling.com](http://www.indigonorthcounseling.com).



# Make Your Own Courage Art Therapy Program

## 1. Tell Your Own Brave Story

In *THE BOY, THE BOAT, AND THE BEAST*, the Boy uses stories to make himself feel brave, like when the lightning and thunder of the storm is scaring him on page 228, he says, “Once upon a time, there was a boy who braved the storm.”

### Activities:

- Think of something that scares you, then write your own “Once upon a time...” story about how you can be brave.
- Draw a comic strip for your “Once upon a time...” story where you are the hero.

## 2. Make a Poster Stating Something You Believe In

“The smaller something is, the more it needs protection.” (page 19)

The Boy in *THE BOY, THE BOAT, AND THE BEAST* reflects on this statement a few times in the book. It’s a statement his father told him and one the Boy believes and embraces. In the story, we see the Boy act on this belief when he helps the crab and when he helps his little brother.

### Activities:

- What is something *you* believe in? Create a poster that states something you believe in and are willing to fight for/stand up for.

## 3. Exploring Intuition—A Helpful Inner Voice

Intuition is an inner voice that some people call a “gut feeling,” a “sense,” or simply their “gut” (as in, “My gut tells me I should not go to this birthday party.”). In *THE BOY, THE BOAT, AND THE BEAST*, it is referred to in the following lines:

Page 11: “A tightness in the boy’s chest made him think they were familiar.”

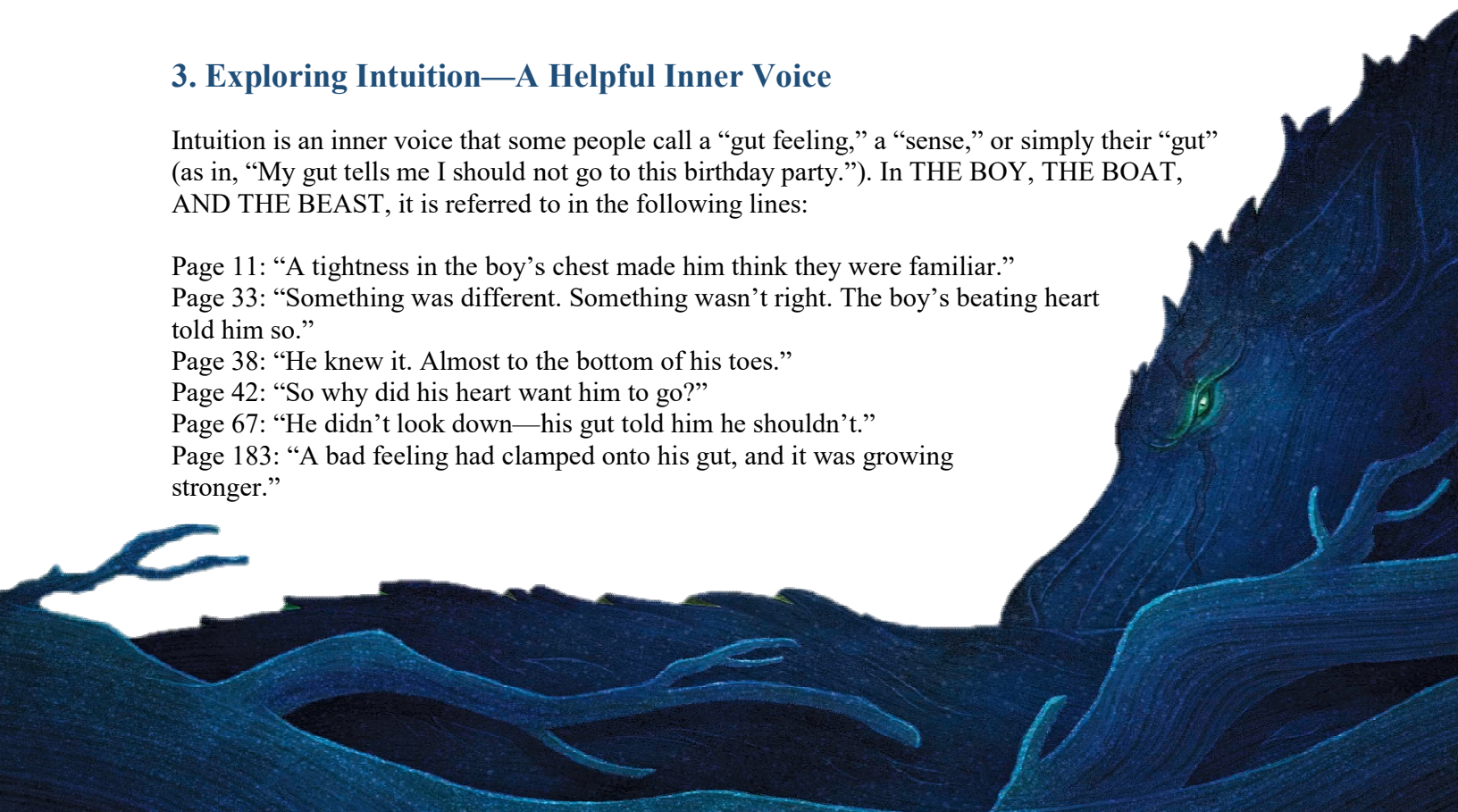
Page 33: “Something was different. Something wasn’t right. The boy’s beating heart told him so.”

Page 38: “He knew it. Almost to the bottom of his toes.”

Page 42: “So why did his heart want him to go?”

Page 67: “He didn’t look down—his gut told him he shouldn’t.”

Page 183: “A bad feeling had clamped onto his gut, and it was growing stronger.”





Intuition is like having a special radar that picks up on cues from people, places, and things around you. It warns you when something doesn't feel right or safe.

There are moments in the book when the Boy uses his intuition to his advantage. It encourages him to pay attention to certain clues about his history; it sways him to make choices he was otherwise afraid to make; and his intuition warns him when danger is nearby.

### **Activities:**

- If "Intuition" was a character in a book, what do you imagine the character would look like? How would this character act? Draw a picture of this character.
- Draw a comic strip titled, "Intuition Saves the Day," in which a character listens to their intuition.

## **4. Exploring "The Bully"—An Unhelpful Inner Voice**

The Boy in the book has an inner voice that he refers to as The Bully. This inner voice repeatedly gives the Boy discouraging messages about failing, shame, self doubt, danger, giving up, and other negative self talk.

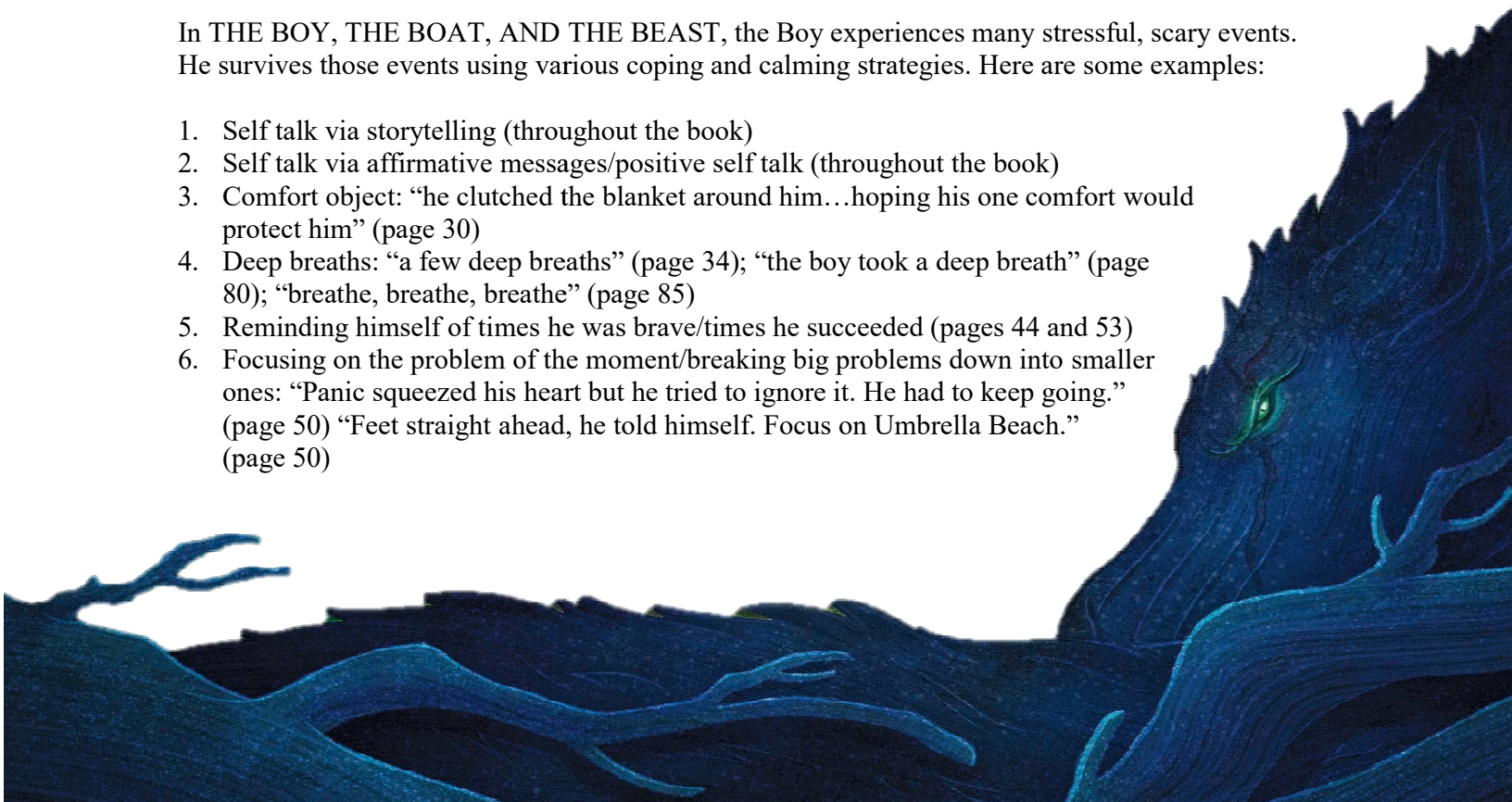
### **Activities:**

- Do you have an "inner bully"? If so, draw a picture of it saying some of the messages it tells you, then put a line through each one.
- Imagine what the bully would say if it were a friend instead of a bully. Draw a picture of yourself, then surround yourself in the picture with encouraging messages from your "inner friend."

## **5. Use Coping/Calming Strategies**

In *THE BOY, THE BOAT, AND THE BEAST*, the Boy experiences many stressful, scary events. He survives those events using various coping and calming strategies. Here are some examples:

1. Self talk via storytelling (throughout the book)
2. Self talk via affirmative messages/positive self talk (throughout the book)
3. Comfort object: "he clutched the blanket around him...hoping his one comfort would protect him" (page 30)
4. Deep breaths: "a few deep breaths" (page 34); "the boy took a deep breath" (page 80); "breathe, breathe, breathe" (page 85)
5. Reminding himself of times he was brave/times he succeeded (pages 44 and 53)
6. Focusing on the problem of the moment/breaking big problems down into smaller ones: "Panic squeezed his heart but he tried to ignore it. He had to keep going." (page 50) "Feet straight ahead, he told himself. Focus on Umbrella Beach." (page 50)



7. Negating/rejecting internal thoughts: “The boy set his jaw, shooed away the bully’s words.” (page 53)
8. Humming and singing familiar music to self (page 68)
9. Humor, laughter: “The boy and the mirror laughed together.” (page 95)

### Activities:

- What do you do to help yourself through difficult moments? What do you do to calm your fears? How many of the above strategies have you used?
- Make a portable calming kit: Find or purchase a tiny portable container such as a small mint tin, a sliding box that matches come in (the kind of box with a tray that slides out), or a box from a deck of cards. Think about small objects that you find comfort in or ones that are calming to you. This could include a small worry stone, a crystal or gemstone, a worry doll, an encouraging note from someone who cares about you, a positive message you want to remind yourself of (i.e. “I can do this—I believe in myself”), a good luck charm, a prayer bead, a piece of soft fabric like the Boy’s, etc. Decorate the box as you like, and keep it nearby for times when you need extra support and/or courage. Portable calming kits can be put in spaces such as a backpack, a desk drawer, a locker, the glove compartment of a car, or on a shelf.

Know that you are brave, you are enough, you can beat your beasts, just like the Boy.



**Buy THE BOY, THE BOAT, AND THE BEAST wherever books are sold.**