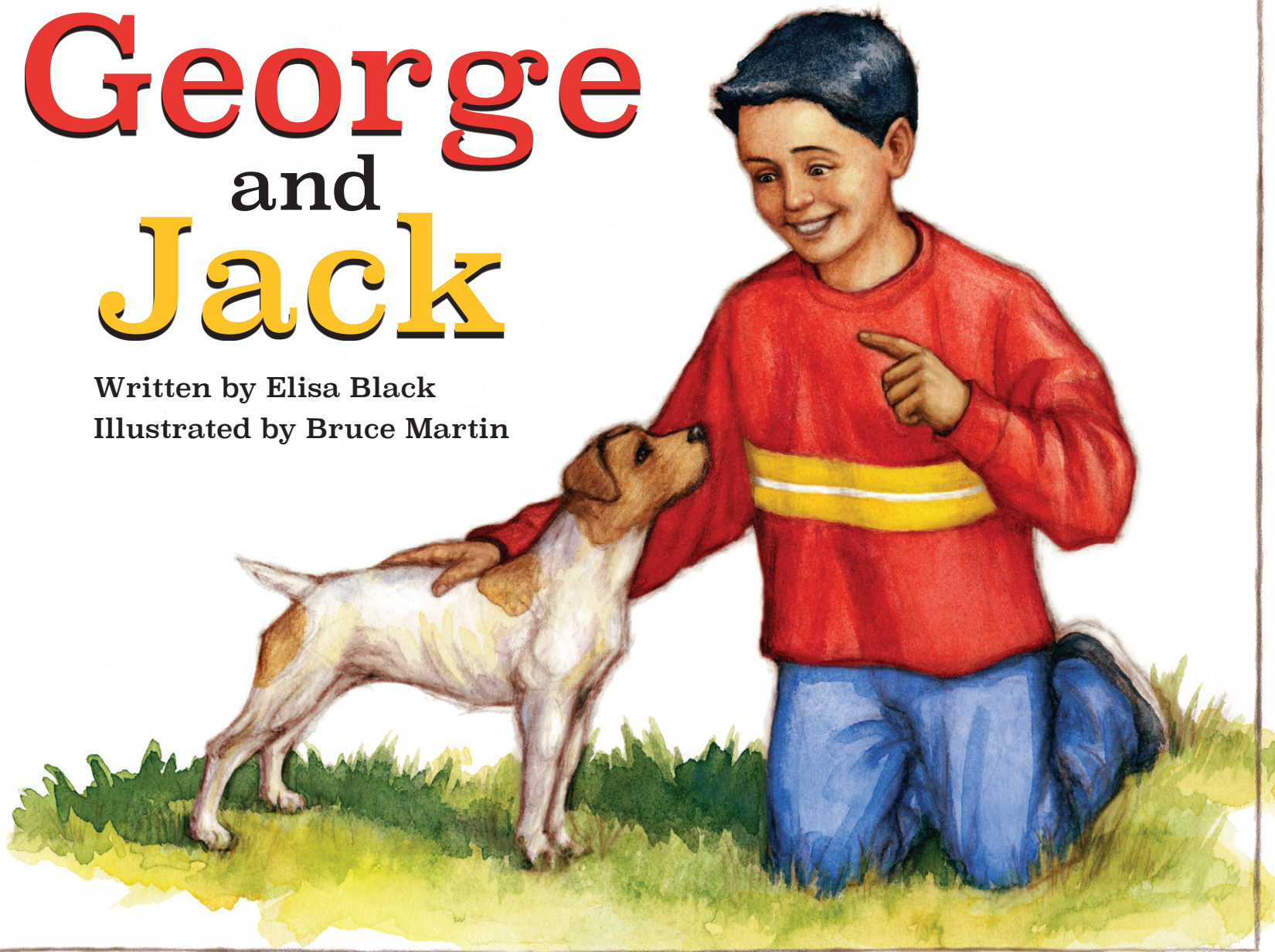


# George and Jack

Written by Elisa Black

Illustrated by Bruce Martin



“Sit, Jack. Sit. SIT!”

The puppy barked happily and wagged his tail. George sighed.

“Come, Jack,” he said, trying to push down the puppy’s hind legs. “Sit.”





A squirrel darted between the swing set and the tree, moving as fast as lightning. In an instant, Jack was off barking and chasing it.

“No, Jack! Come back!” George shouted, running after him.

George walked back to the picnic blanket and sat down by his father. “I can’t train Jack to sit, Dad. Every time he sees a squirrel, he chases it.”

“That’s because it’s Jack’s instinct,” George’s dad answered.

“What’s an instinct?” George asked.

“An instinct is a behavior or an ability that Jack was born with,” Dad explained.





“Jack is a terrier. Terriers are born with the ability to hunt down small rodents like rats and squirrels. You didn’t have to teach Jack how to chase squirrels, did you?” said Dad.

“No,” said George. “He just does it automatically.”

“That’s right,” said Dad. “Instinct is something you are born with.





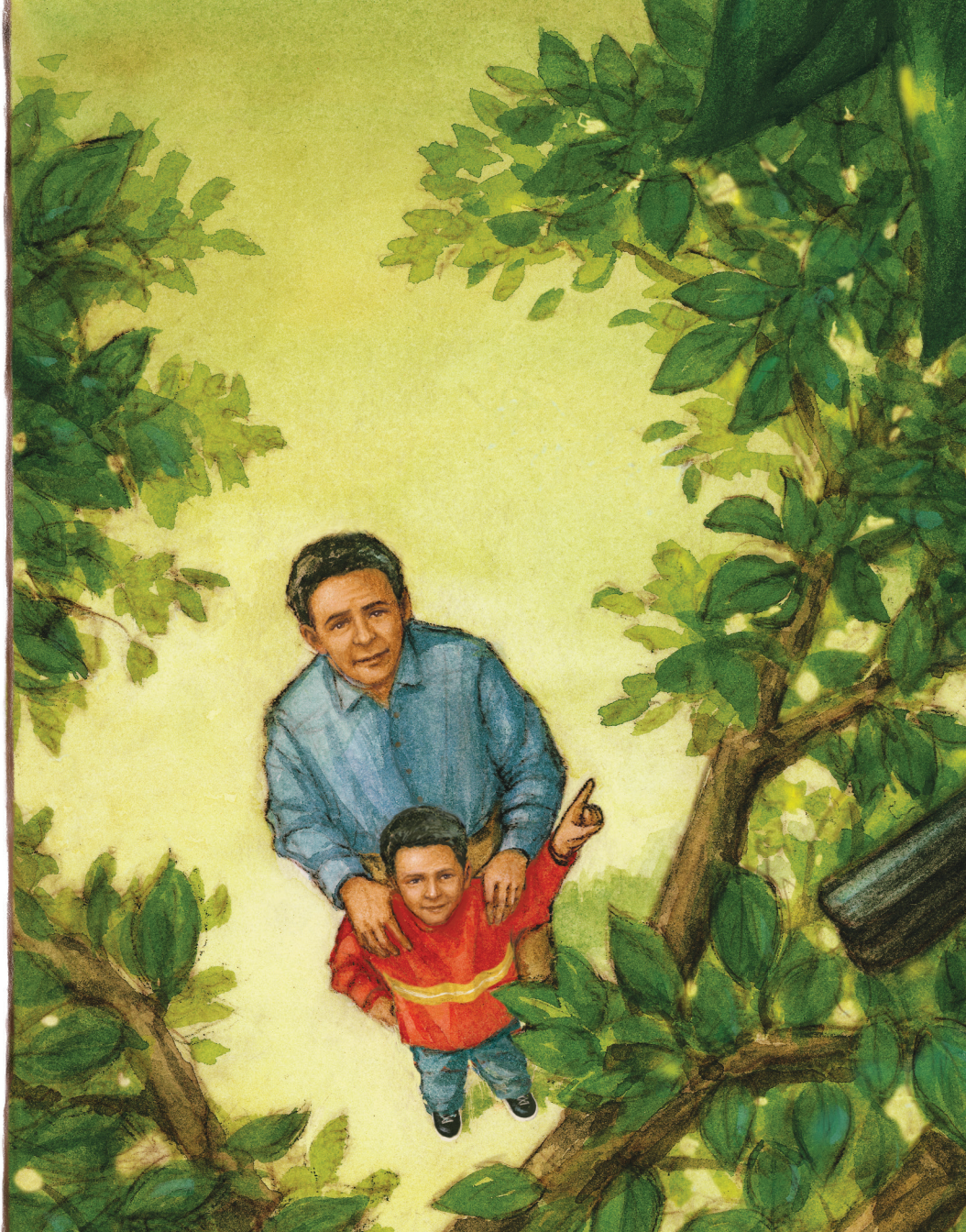
“Look at those birds up there. Birds hatch knowing how to build nests.”

“Because it’s instinct?” George asked.

“Yes. It’s also called inherited behavior.”

“Inherited?”

“Yes, you inherited my brown eyes. You were born with them. Building nests is an inherited behavior that birds hatch with.”







“Do you think birds hatch liking worms?” George asked. His dad made a face, and George laughed.

“They must be, because I can’t imagine they could learn to like them,” Dad said, laughing.

Jack came bounding back towards the blanket. When he saw the birds, he started barking and jumping excitedly.





“But why is it so hard to get Jack to sit when I tell him to?” George asked.

“Sitting on command is a learned behavior,” Dad said. “It’s something Jack has to learn with your help. It’s just like your learning how to read or ride a bike.”





“How is it the same?”  
George asked.

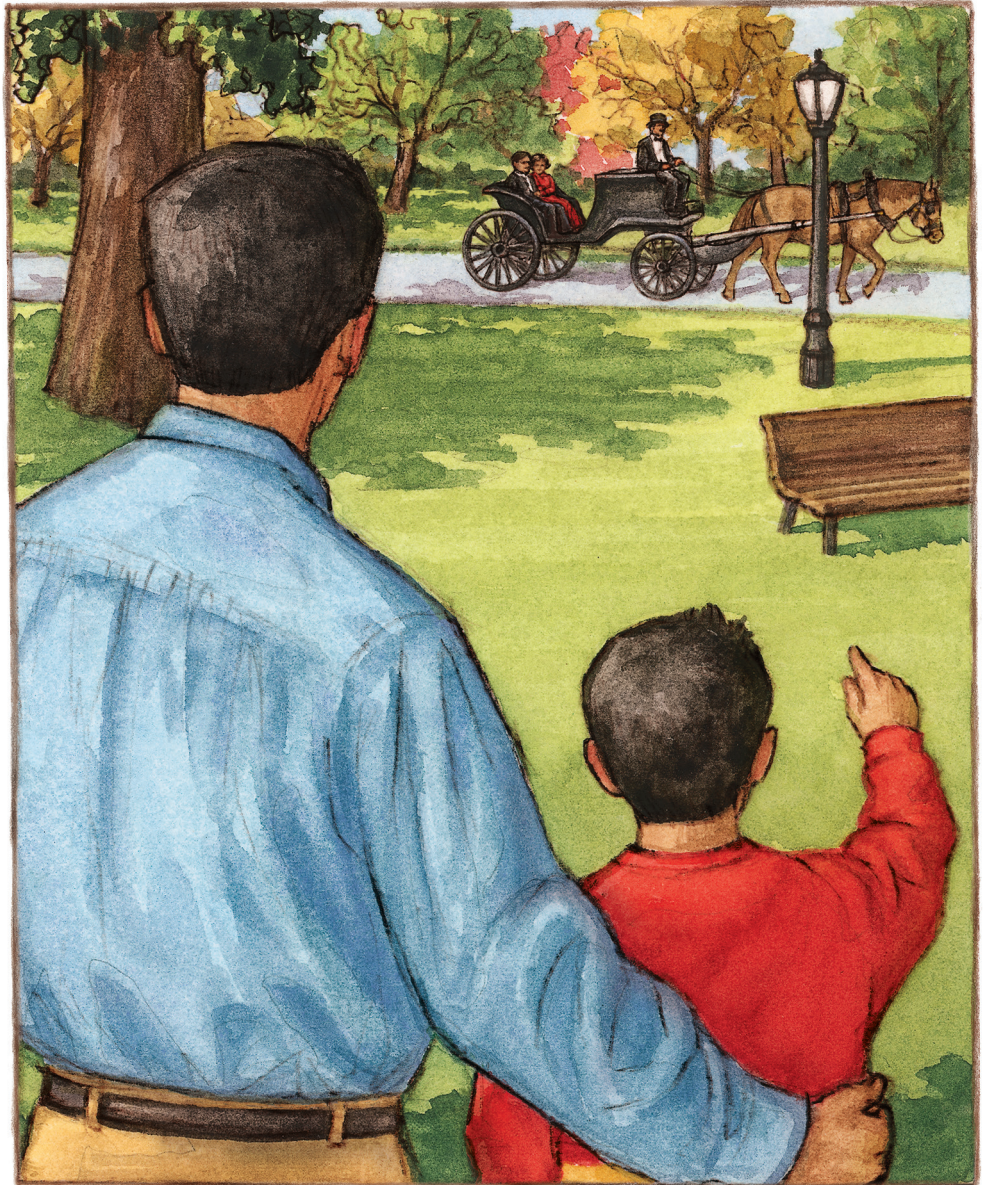
“Well, were you born  
knowing how to read?”  
Dad asked.

“No,” said George. “I had  
to learn.”

“Exactly,” said Dad.  
“That’s a learned behavior.  
Just as you had to learn how  
to read, Jack has to learn  
how to sit when you tell  
him.”

“What’s something else animals have to learn?” George asked. “What about that horse?” He pointed to a horse and carriage across the park.

“That horse learned to pull the carriage carefully so the people inside have a nice, safe ride,” Dad told him.





“Wild horses wouldn’t pull that carriage safely. They’d run like crazy.” George laughed.

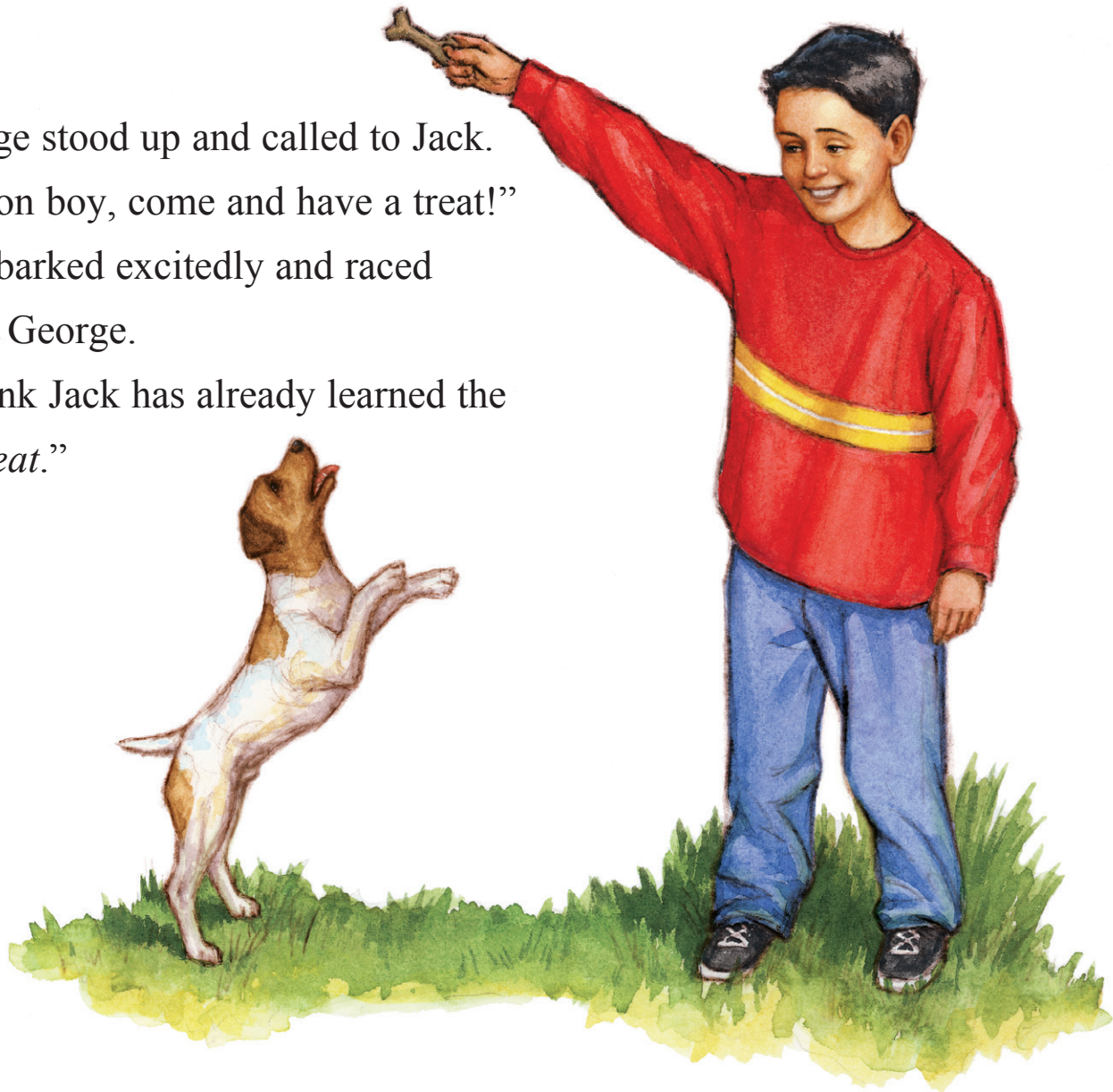
“That’s true,” Dad replied. “Horses are born with the ability to run really fast. But horses can learn new skills just as people can.”

“Like pulling a carriage or a cart slowly,” George said. “Exactly.”

George stood up and called to Jack.  
“Come on boy, come and have a treat!”

Jack barked excitedly and raced  
towards George.

“I think Jack has already learned the  
word *treat*.”





# Math & Science

## Animal Traits

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