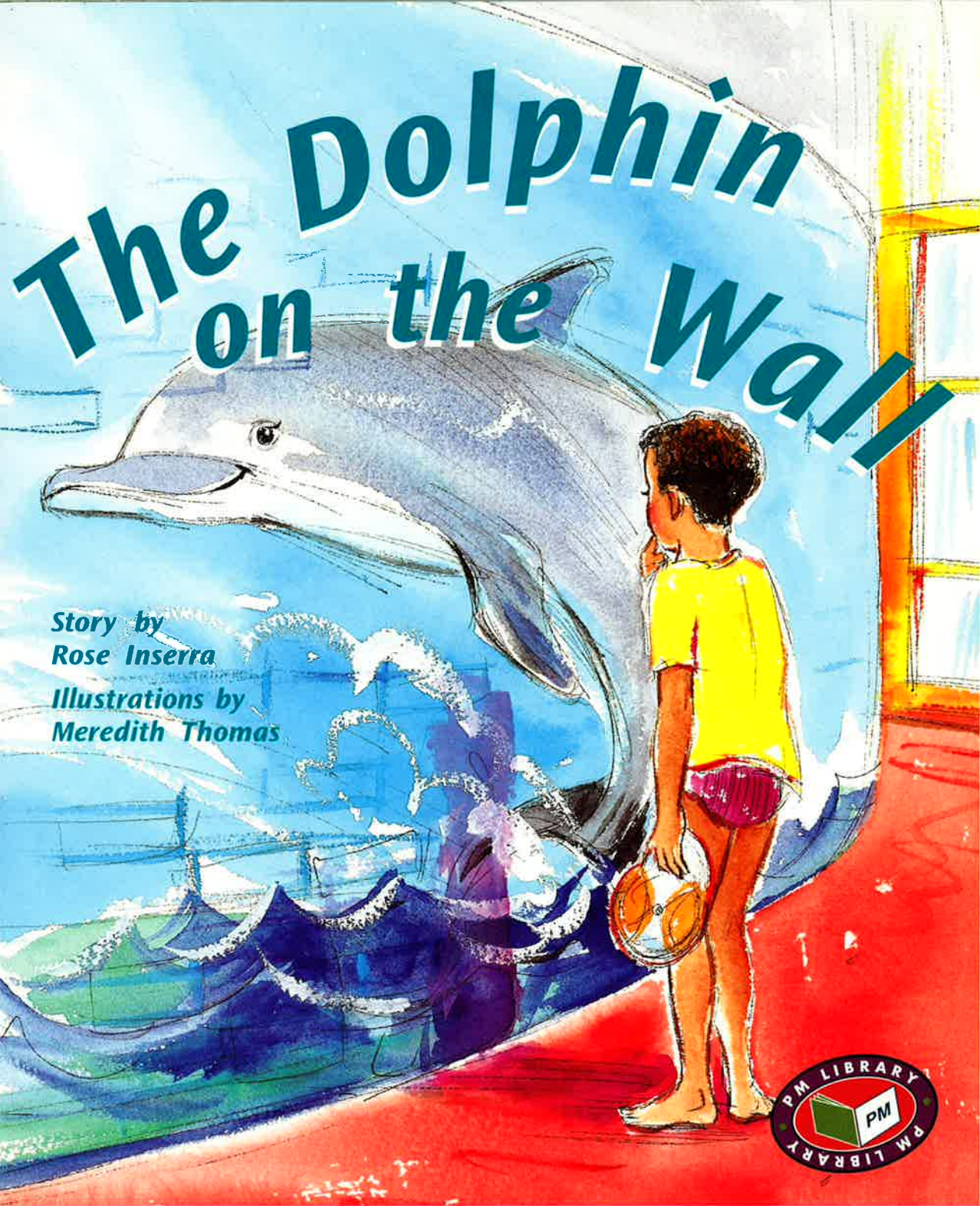

The Dolphin on the Wall
Story by
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Meredith Thomas
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Jason felt excited when Miss Scott chose him for the school swimming team. For months he had been going to swimming lessons, and practising in Ben's pool. Ben was his best friend, and a very good swimmer.

"I'm very proud of you, Jason," said his mother, when he told her. "I know you've worked hard for this. Just do your best. I'll be cheering for you."

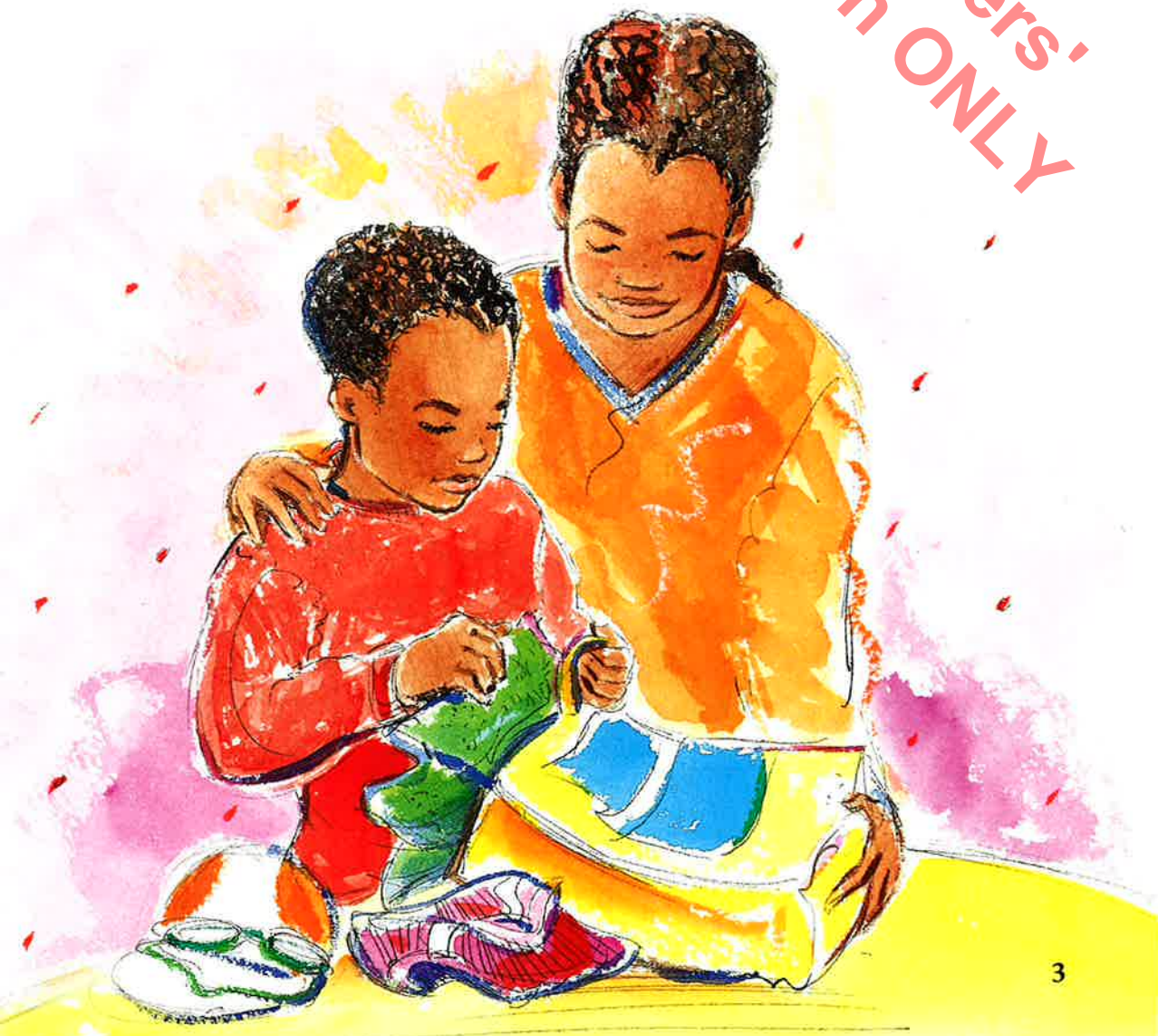
The day before the sports, Bradley, who was really fast at backstroke, was away from school. "We might need you to take his place, Jason," Miss Scott said.

On the day of the swimming sports, Jason felt nervous.

"What if I hit my head at the end of the pool in the backstroke race?" he wanted to know. "I can't see where I'm going."

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"Watch for the row of flags above the pool," Mum told him. "The end of the pool is just two more strokes after the flags. You can do it."



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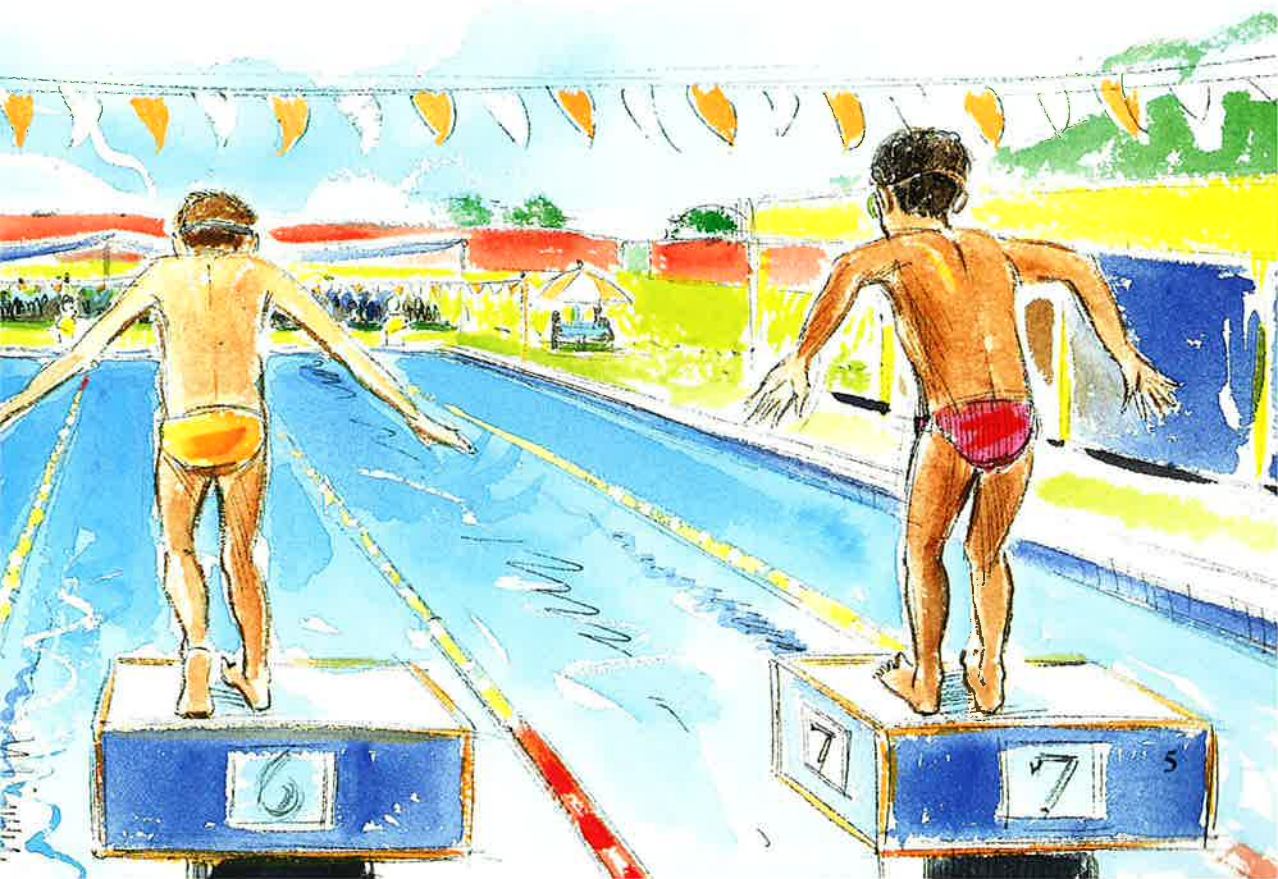
When it was nearly time for his first race, the freestyle, Jason was still worrying about the backstroke. His stomach was in knots. Then Miss Scott came over to him and said, "Jason, I hope you won't be disappointed, but Bradley is here, so we won't need you for the backstroke after all."

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"That's a relief!" thought Jason.

Miss Scott led the children to the starting point. Jason stood above his lane and adjusted his goggles. When the starter blew his whistle, Jason took a deep breath and dived in. He heard his own splash as his head went underwater. The water fizzed up his nose and made bubbles.



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But when Jason came up again, he couldn't get enough air. Something was blocking his mouth and nose. He put his hand up and discovered that his goggles had slipped down when he dived. He tried to push them back into place.

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