



AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

Katie Cottle is an illustrator and picture book maker who lives and works in Bristol. Originally from Swansea, she moved to Bristol to study illustration and hasn't left since graduating in 2017. Her own books include *The Green Giant* (Farshore, 2019) and *The Blue Giant* (Farshore, 2020). Other books include *Omar, the Bees and Me* by Helen Mortimer (Owlet Press, 2021); *What Goes in the Ocean* by Dori Elys (Little Simon, 2024) and with Raquel Martin & Rekha Salin Wiggle *Wonderful: Poems to Share* by Catherine Barker (OUP, 2024).

WEBSITE

<https://www.katiecottle.com/>

LINKS

<https://littletiger.co.uk/coming-out-of-your-shell-the-inspiration-behind-the-tortosaurus-by-katie-cottle> Author's blog about the book's development.
<https://usborne.com/gb/quicklinks/quicklink/my-first-book-all-about-friends>



THE TORTOSAURUS

Younger Children Shortlist 2026

INTRODUCTION

The subtitle to this engaging picture book story is 'it's not always easy coming out of your shell' which is exactly what Dot realises when she starts a new school and is desperate to fit in. She mistakenly thinks that she has to be different in some way and claims that she has a pet 'tortosaurus' (who is actually her pet tortoise Monty dressed up). Eventually she starts to understand that **being true to yourself** is much more important. Although a simple story, this could result in discussions about starting a **new school**, building **self-confidence**, making **friends** or **pets**.

ACTIVITIES

Read another book about new friendships (see below for suggestions) and compare what happens in *The Tortosaurus*.

Write and illustrate Make a survey of the pets owned by your child's friends, the book group, class or year group. Choose an effective way to present the findings - as a bar chart, a pie chart or an infographic, for example.

Create your own tortosaurus <https://littletiger.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Tortosaurus-activity-sheet.pdf> Or following Dot's lead, challenge your child, group or class to transform their own pets (or animals of choice) into weird new animals using simple crafts.

NOW READ ON

The Fastest Tortoise in Town by Howard Calvert & Karen Obuhanych (Walker Books, 2023) Shortlisted for the Younger Children category of the CBA in 2024

Perfectly Peculiar Pets by Elli Woollard & Anja Boretzki (Bloomsbury, 2019) An alphabetically arranged collection of poems about pets. A Book Trust list of books about friendship:

<https://www.booktrust.org.uk/book-recommendations/booklists/8-favourite-picture-books-about-friendship/>

All About Friends by Felicity Brooks & Mar Ferraro (Usborne, 2020) An illustrated guide about having and being friends (see Links).