

Otto's Tales



Let's Meet

a **TEACHER**

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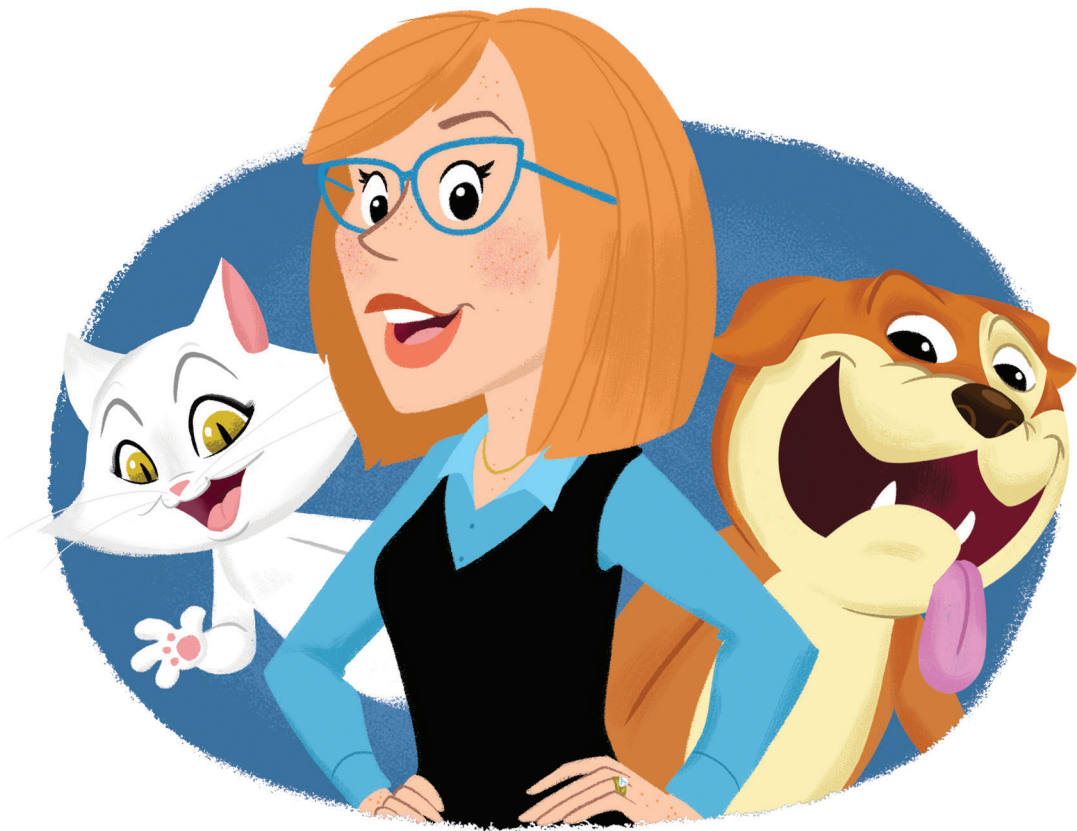
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Screeeeech!

The big yellow school bus came to a halt. Dennis grumbled as he walked into the house, right past Otto and Smidge.



“Ruff Ruff!”

Otto laughed, “You’re wearing mismatched socks!”

“Not you too!” Dennis sighed, his face turning red. “I had to give a **speech** in front of my entire class today, and everyone pointed at my socks and laughed. I was so embarrassed. I messed it all up. I need to find my lucky sock.”



“Lucky sock?” Smidge asked.

“I have a special pair of socks I wear when I have important presentations at school. I could only find one this morning,” Dennis explained.

“I’m sure you’ll find it,” Smidge assured him.



Otto studied the boy's feet. "Which one is lucky?"

Dennis pointed to his bright blue and orange dotted sock.



"Dennis!" Mrs. Prager called. "I just got off the phone with your **teacher**, Mrs. Kelly."

"Oh no." The boy's eyes fell. "Am I in trouble?"



His mom shook her head. "Not at all. Mrs. Kelly called to tell us she's chosen you to speak at the next school assembly! She loved that you picked George Washington as someone you admire."



“What? A speech?! In front of the whole school?”

Otto nudged his pal. “Wow, lucky you!”

Dennis imagined his class and the whole school pointing and laughing at him.

Mrs. Prager beamed. “You’re going to be great. Mrs. Kelly did suggest that we all

work together to bring out the best in you. Why don’t you practice your speech with Dad and me?”

“Mmm-hmm,” the boy mumbled.

“Wonderful!” his mother exclaimed.

Smidge patted Dennis’s hand. “Otto and I will help you too.”

“You bet!” Otto howled.



The next day at school, Dennis approached his teacher. He cleared his throat and took a breath. "Mrs. Kelly?"

"Hi, Dennis." His teacher looked up from the **assignments** she was grading.

Dennis fidgeted. "I'm not sure I'm ready to give my speech at the school assembly."



"I understand you felt a little nervous because of yesterday," Mrs. Kelly said. "Don't worry; you'll be great. I saw something special in you when you talked about why you admire George Washington."



“Really?” Dennis raised his eyebrows.

“Yes,” she replied. “You have what it takes to become a great speaker. But remember, it’s all about the practice!”



Dennis was still worried. His other lucky sock was still missing.

After school, Otto and Smidge were waiting for Dennis.
“We’ve got ideas to help with your speech!” The bulldog
was holding camera gear.



Smidge opened a bag full of clothes. “I bought you new lucky socks.”

“I’m not sure this will help. My teacher said—”
Dennis started.



The kitten tossed him a coat,
hat, socks, boots, and...a wig.



"I'm supposed to talk about
George Washington—not look
like him," Dennis said.



Otto turned a bright
spotlight on Dennis.
Dennis blinked.

Something bonked his head. "Ouch!"

"Say something, so I can see if this microphone is working," Otto instructed.

"Stay still. I need to put the finishing touches on your outfit," Smidge ordered.



Dennis wobbled and fell flat on his face! The kitten and bulldog gasped.



"This is all too much," Dennis declared, slumping out of the room.

After dinner, Dennis and his parents gathered together, and he began his speech. “What makes a person worthy of admiration? Is it success, personality, or beliefs?” Dennis wiggled his toes. The socks Smidge got for him were itchy!



Dennis’s heart thumped loudly, his palms sweaty. “I believe it is more than trees—I mean these—things. What makes a person truly gr—great is courage, which is why I chose George Washington as some... someone I admire.”





He stopped and shook his head. "I can't do this. People are going to laugh at me no matter what."

"Laugh? You were doing fine," Mr. Prager said.

"Remember, practice makes perfect," Mrs. Prager added.

"I need a break." Dennis moaned. He went to his bedroom and closed the door.

"Oh dear. He's so worried about making a mistake," Mrs. Prager said. "I know he can do it, but how can we help him?"



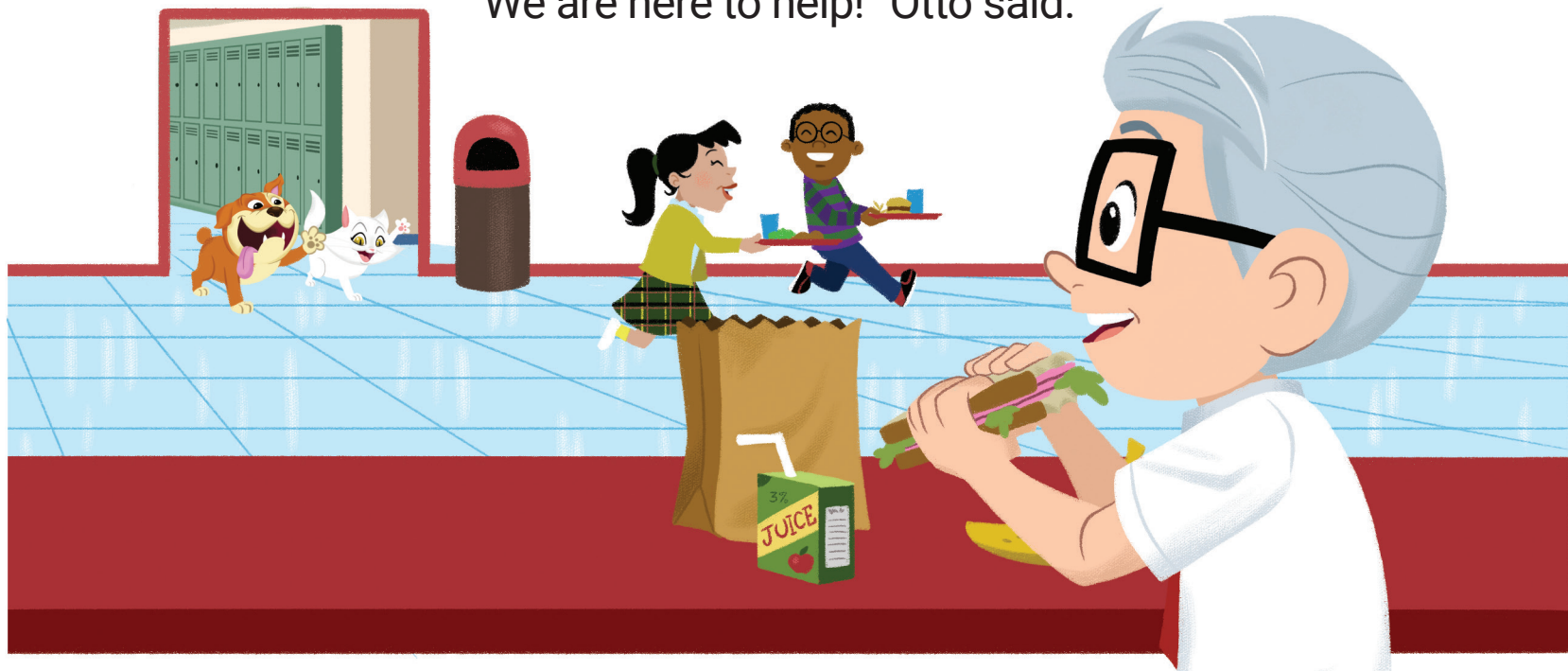
"I think we pushed him too hard," Otto whispered to Smidge.



The next day at school, Dennis spotted Otto and Smidge across the cafeteria.

“What are you two doing here?” The boy was surprised.

“We are here to help!” Otto said.



Mrs. Kelly noticed them. “Who are your friends, Dennis?”

“Hi, Mrs. Kelly. Please meet Otto and Smidge. They’ve been helping me with my speech.”

“Great!” the teacher exclaimed.

“How are you feeling about it?”



The boy stared at his food. "I'm still nervous. I've been getting a lot of **advice**, but it just seems to make things worse."



"I see," the teacher nodded thoughtfully. "Why don't you three come with me...I want to show you something."





Mrs. Kelly led them to her classroom and showed them a photo that was sitting on her desk.

“Is that you?” Smidge pointed.



“Yes. This was my first day as a teacher. I remember feeling so nervous and was afraid that students wouldn’t like me, just like you feel now, Dennis.”





The boy was shocked. “Not like *you*? That’s crazy! Everybody loves you, Mrs. Kelly. You’re a great teacher. You’re always so patient and kind.”

“Thank you.” Mrs. Kelly’s eyes twinkled. “Whenever I felt like I wouldn’t say the right thing, I remembered why I decided to teach in the first place—to encourage and help my students. I became a teacher to bring out the **talent** in each one of you.”



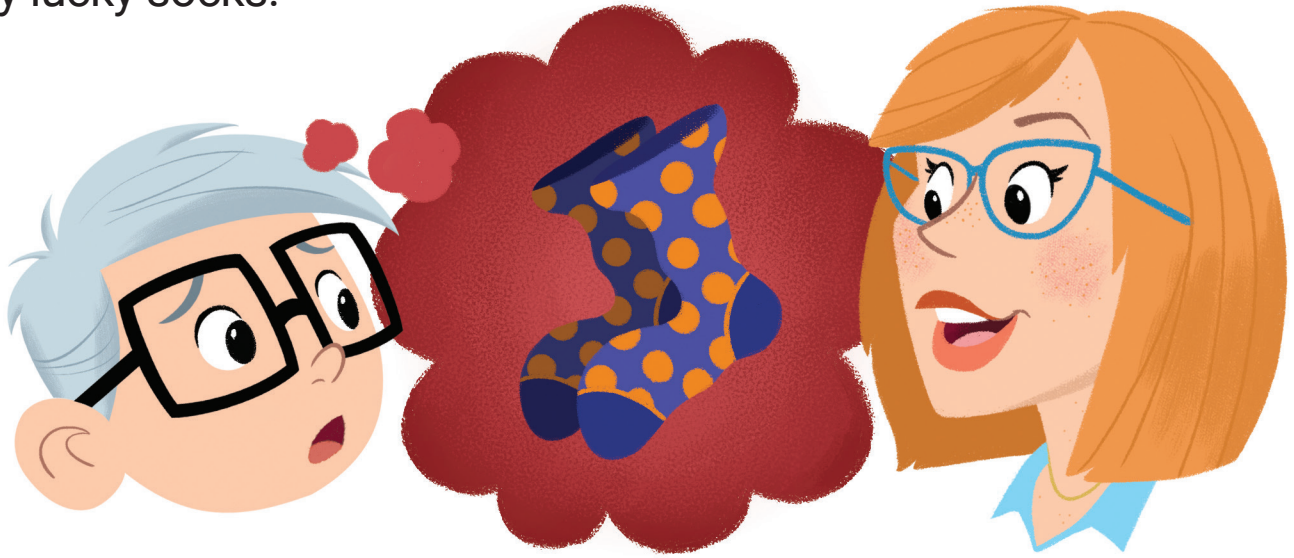
“Are you ever afraid of messing up?” Dennis asked.

“Of course,” Mrs. Kelly nodded. “We all make mistakes, but **learning** is about trying again and **correcting** our mistakes. That’s how we get better and learn new skills.”

“Yeah,” Smidge chimed in. “I wasn’t very good on my bike when I first learned to ride it, but I got better.”



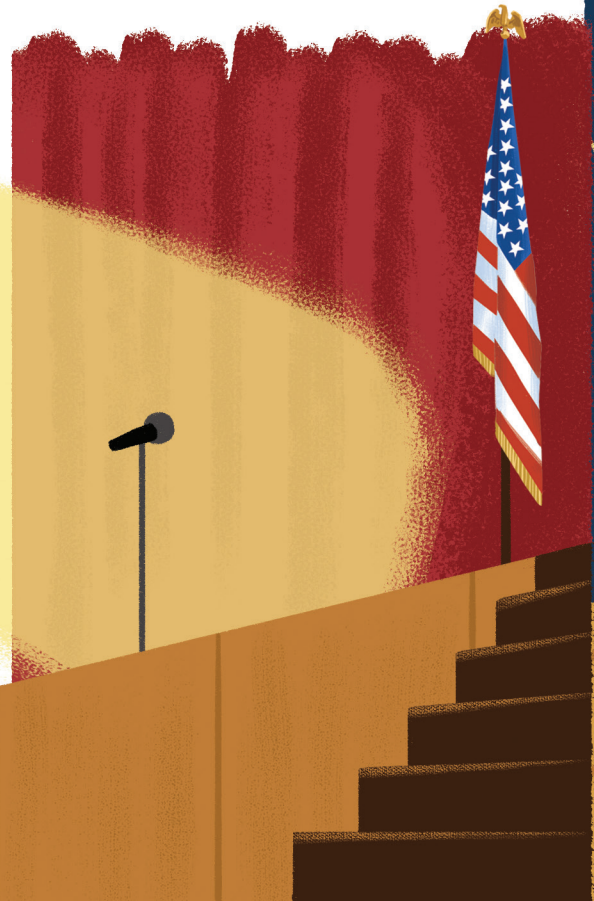
“I’m ready to try again,” Dennis decided. “I just really wish I had my lucky socks.”



Mrs. Kelly smiled. “Lucky socks or not, you have what it takes to give this speech. When you talk, focus on the people you care about—your parents, your friends, and me. We’re all rooting for you, so pretend you’re just having a **conversation** with us.”



The day of the big assembly arrived, and the lucky sock was still missing. Dennis clutched his notecards. The auditorium was packed, and butterflies danced in his stomach.



“Please welcome Dennis Prager!” Mrs. Kelly announced.
“**OOF!**” Dennis tripped up the steps to the stage.
Notecards flew everywhere!



Students started laughing. Dennis scrambled and gathered his cards.



He stood up again and walked to the center of the stage. He began speaking, but the words rushed out of his mouth quicker than he'd practiced. He realized his cards were all out of order!

"Umm..." Dennis paused and tried to find his place. The lights were bright, and it was suddenly quiet. His face felt frozen. And then he heard a small whisper.



"Which is why I chose George Washington..." Mrs. Kelly was in the front row, reminding him where he left off. Next to her were his parents, Otto, and Smidge.



Focus on the people you care about, Dennis reminded himself. He noticed they were all wearing mismatched socks! Dennis smiled.



With new confidence, he finished his speech. "I hope you all appreciate the courage of this great man. Washington inspired everyone to do their best, as a great leader should."

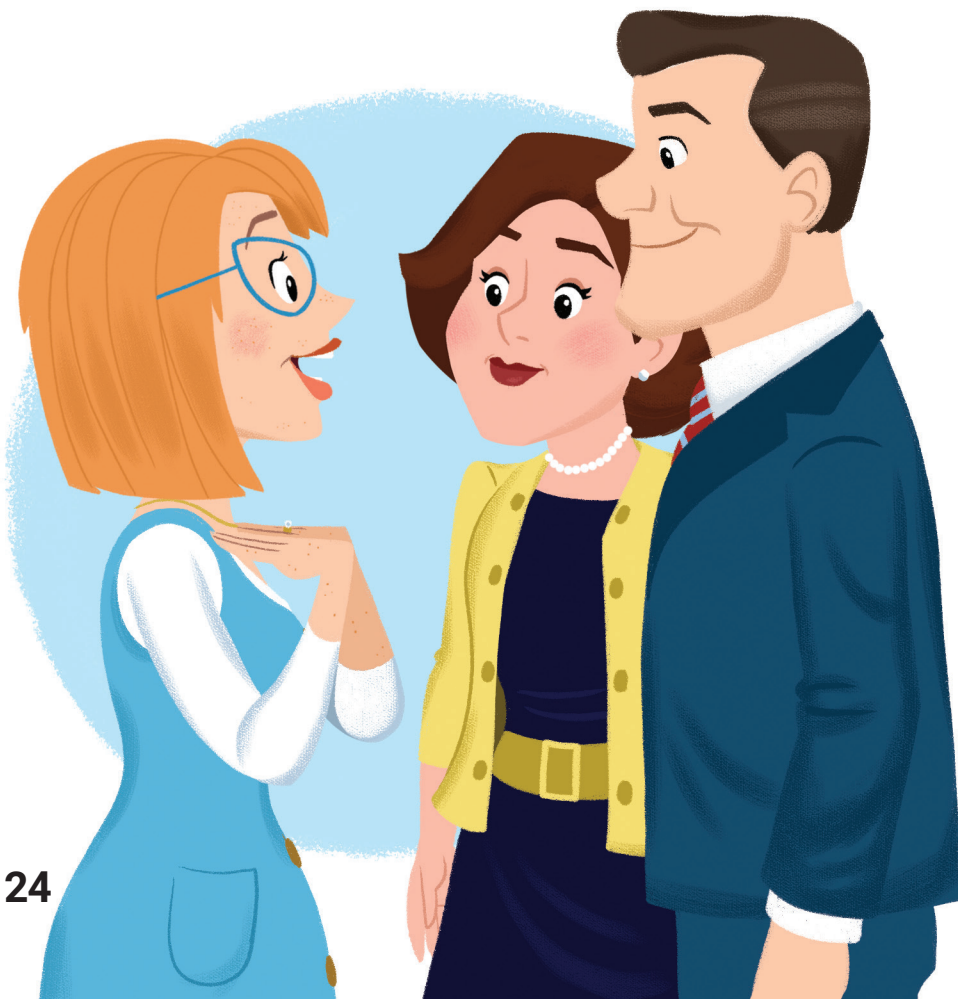


The audience clapped and cheered.

“We’re so proud of you!” Mrs. Prager exclaimed.
Otto and Smidge hugged Dennis.
Mrs. Kelly beamed. “Well done, Dennis!”



She turned to Mr. and Mrs. Prager. “It’s an honor to have your son in class, and I appreciate all of your help and support, too. Nothing makes me happier than parents who are active in their children’s learning.”



“I couldn’t have done it without all of you!” Dennis said proudly. “I didn’t even need my lucky socks!”



“That was my favorite adventure yet!” Otto howled.



Smidge grinned. “You say that every time, Otto...”

Dennis and his friends walked through the school's hallway. "You two can help me write Mrs. Kelly a thank you note for all her encouragement."

"Ruff Ruff!"



"Hey, look!" Dennis stopped and pointed at the Lost and Found. "It's my missing sock!"





Let's Meet

a **TEACHER**



We Love Our Community

Speech: A verbal presentation of one's thoughts, opinions, or ideas to an audience.

Teacher: Someone dedicated to educating others, often in school, helping them gain knowledge and skills.

Assignments: Activities or projects that a teacher gives to students to help them understand and practice what they are learning.

Advice: To give someone a recommendation about what to do or how to do something.

Talent: Something you are naturally good at or can learn to do very well.

Learning: The ongoing process of gaining knowledge, skills, and understanding through experience, study, or instruction.

Correcting: To make something right after an error or mistake.

Conversation: A casual exchange of ideas, thoughts, or feelings between people.



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**See you in
our *next* adventure!**

- Dennis, Otto,
and Smidge

ABOUT

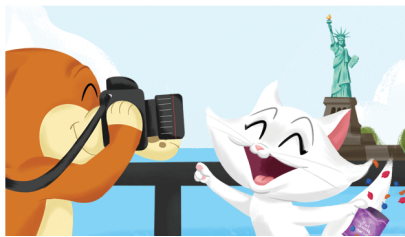
Otto's Tales

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TODAY IS
Celebrating American
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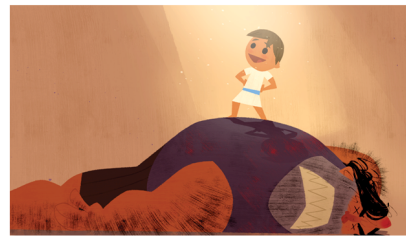
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