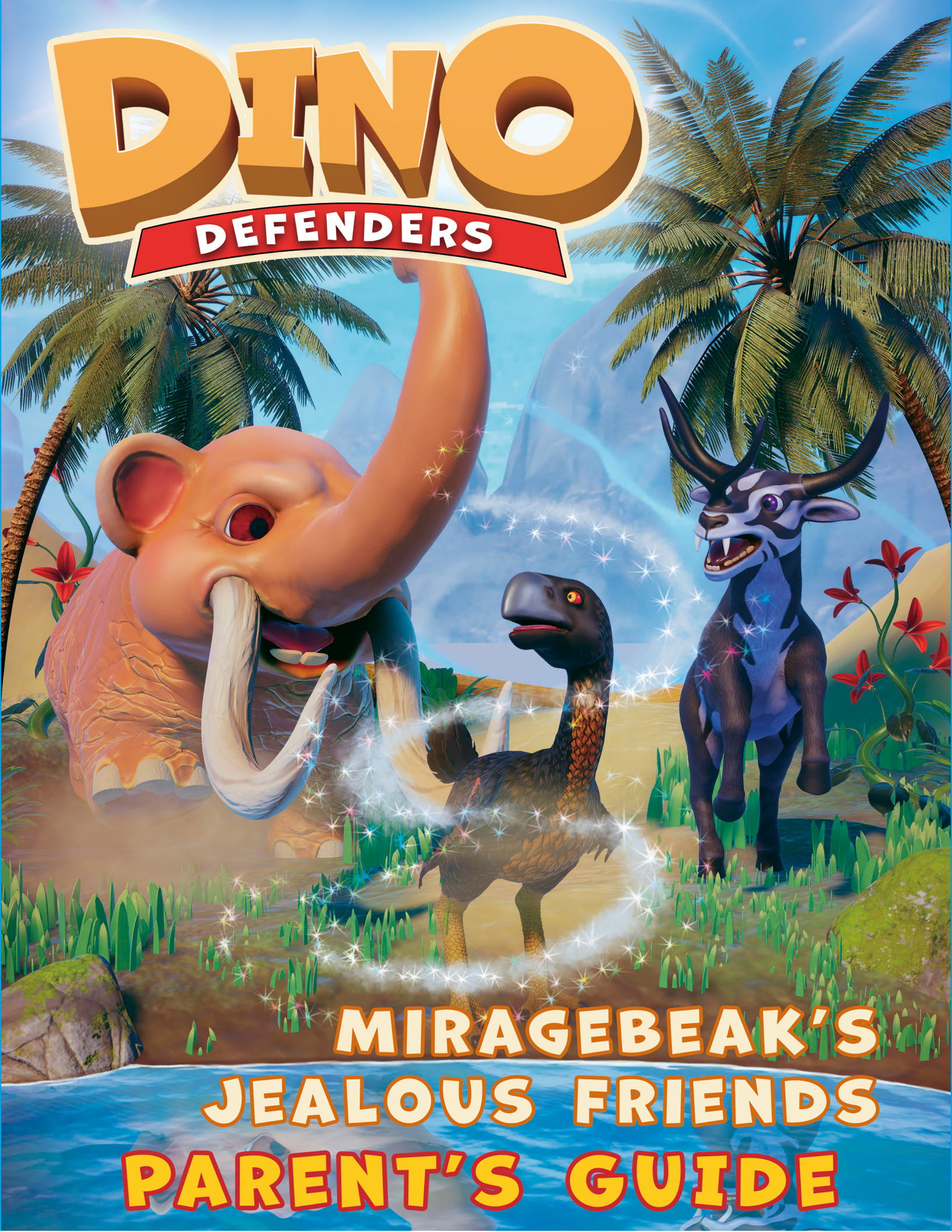

DINO
DEFENDERS
MIRAGEBEAK'S
JEALOUS FRIENDS
PARENT'S GUIDE

MirageBeak's Jealous Friends

A Parent's Discussion & Feelings Guide



A Note for Grown-Ups

Reading together is one of the simplest, most powerful things you can do with your child — and *MirageBeak's Jealous Friends* is about something that happens to almost every child eventually. MirageBeak is practicing the thing he's best at. Two friends watch, and laugh, and call it silly. And within a page he has stopped believing in his own gift.

The book is unusually honest about how fast that happens, and about what actually undoes it — not winning an argument, but working out why the teasing was happening at all. There are no right or wrong answers in this guide. The questions are invitations to talk, so follow your child's lead, and if the conversation wanders somewhere unexpected, let it.

Meet Our Crew

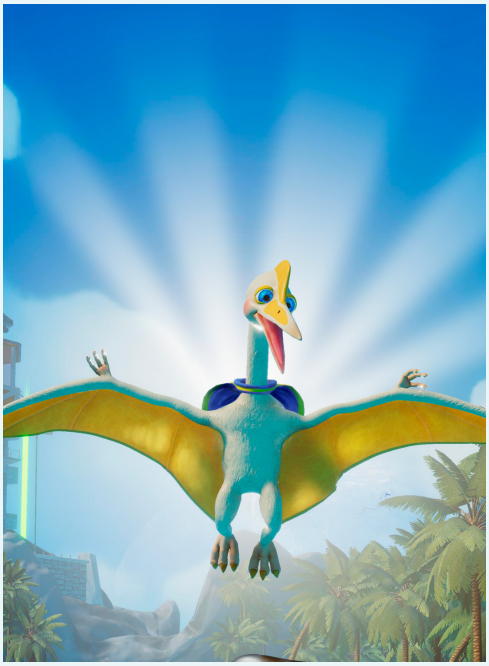
Revisit the characters together. Ask your child to point to each one in the book as you read their description.



MirageBeak the Gastornis

MirageBeak lives in the Veiled Oasis, a hidden place of mist and pools where his illusions come to life. His Shadow Scream bends mist and light — one moment he's there, and the next he's gone. He is very good at this, and he knows it right up until the moment two friends laugh at him.

Fun detail: *Look at his face across the whole book. The smile disappears on the page where they laugh, and it doesn't come back until he works out the truth for himself — not when Queso tells him.*



Queso the Quetzalcoatlus

Queso finds MirageBeak sitting alone outside Mammal Metropolis and asks what's wrong. He doesn't tell him to cheer up or to ignore it. He asks one very good question instead: if your power wasn't amazing, why do they talk about it so much? Then he waits while MirageBeak works out the answer.

Fun detail: *Queso is a Dino Defender and MirageBeak is a Mean Mammal. He helps anyway, and never once mentions which side anybody is on.*



TremorTrunk the Mastodon

TremorTrunk is the one who starts it. "What's the point of all these tricks?" he asks, and then answers himself: real power is stomping and smashing, not silly shadows. He is enormous and genuinely strong, and he cannot do a single thing MirageBeak can do.

Fun detail: *TremorTrunk is the first to apologize at the end — and he goes further than "sorry." He says the actual reason: they were jealous.*



DarkHorn the Kryptoceras

DarkHorn mostly nods along. He agrees with TremorTrunk, laughs when TremorTrunk laughs, and doesn't say much of his own. But when MirageBeak comes back and asks him a direct question, DarkHorn has no answer at all — just "Uh… well… um…"

Parent note: *DarkHorn is the one worth talking about. He never started anything, and he never stopped it either. Joining in with a laugh is a choice, and the book quietly shows it costing him.*

When Teasing Is Really Jealousy

Queso spots something MirageBeak has missed entirely. TremorTrunk and DarkHorn don't ignore the illusions — they talk about them constantly, and they came all the way to the Veiled Oasis to do it. That's the clue. Nobody spends their afternoon mocking something they genuinely believe is worthless.

For Grown-Ups: A Useful Question, and Its Limits

"If your power wasn't amazing, why do they talk about it so much?" is a genuinely good question to hand a child, because it's answerable. It turns a feeling into evidence: they keep bringing it up, so it must matter to them. Children can check that for themselves in a way they cannot check "just ignore it."

It's worth being straight with your child about the limits, though. "They're only jealous" is sometimes true and sometimes not, and even when it is true, it doesn't make unkindness acceptable or mean a child should handle it alone. MirageBeak has Queso beside him when he goes back. Make sure your child knows that telling a grown-up is part of the plan, not a failure of it.

- *Why do you think TremorTrunk and DarkHorn kept talking about MirageBeak's illusions?*
- *Queso says bullies put others down because they feel weak inside. Do you think that's always true?*
- *Has anyone ever made fun of something you were good at? What did you do?*
- *Who would you tell if someone kept being unkind to you?*

The Hardest Moment: Believing Them

The hardest moment isn't the teasing. It's the line just after it: *maybe MirageBeak's power isn't special after all*. Two sentences from two friends, and he stops believing in the thing he is genuinely best at in the world. That's the bit worth sitting with your child, because that is how it actually works.

MirageBeak practices his illusions. The mist bends, and he vanishes.	› *How do you think MirageBeak felt before anybody said anything?*
"Real power is stomping and smashing. Not silly shadows."	› *Why do you think that hurt so much, coming from friends?*
MirageBeak leaves Mammal Metropolis on his own.	› *Was leaving the right thing to do? What else could he have done?*
Queso asks his question, and MirageBeak's eyes widen: "They're the weak ones!"	› *What changed — MirageBeak's power, or what he believed about it?*

MirageBeak's Turn: "I Gave It to Them"

Near the end, MirageBeak says the truest line in the book. Not that he beat them, and not that they were wrong — something much sharper. They never had any power over him. He handed it to them, and he can stop.

> **"They never had power over me. I gave it to them."**
>
> **— MirageBeak**

For Grown-Ups: Whose Opinion Gets a Vote

This is a big idea in a small sentence, and it's the one to carry out of the book. Nothing about MirageBeak changed between the page where he's miserable and the page where the mist swirls around him. The illusions were always that good. What changed is whose opinion he had decided counted.

Notice what he says when he goes back: "I don't need your approval." He doesn't demand an apology and he doesn't argue — he simply stops asking them to agree with him. The apology arrives anyway, afterwards, unprompted. Worth pointing out to your child: he didn't wait for it before feeling better.

- *What did MirageBeak mean when he said he gave them the power?*
- *He said "I don't need your approval." Whose opinion about you really matters, do you think?*
- *Is there something you're good at that you'd keep doing even if somebody laughed?*

Feelings Check-In

Ask your child to point to or act out the face that matches each question.

😊 **HAPPY** 😕 **WORRIED** 😡 **FRUSTRATED** 😮 **SURPRISED** 😢 **SAD**

- *How did MirageBeak feel while he was practicing, before anybody laughed?*
- *How did he feel walking out of Mammal Metropolis on his own?*
- *How did he feel when DarkHorn couldn't answer his question?*
- *How did TremorTrunk and DarkHorn feel at the end, when they said sorry?*
- *How do YOU feel after hearing this story?*

Getting to Know MirageBeak

10 Things MirageBeak Wants You to Know About Him

1. The Veiled Oasis is his. Mist, pools, shadows — he knows every corner of it.
2. He practices his illusions the way other people practice an instrument. Every day, alone.
3. The first illusion he ever made lasted about half a second. He still remembers it.
4. He heard the laughing before he saw who it was, and he knew straight away.
5. He has never told anyone how long he sat on that rock before Queso landed.
6. He thought about not going back. Going back was the hardest part.
7. "That's what I thought" is the only thing he said out loud that day that he rehearsed first.
8. He accepted the apology. He just did it quietly, and from inside the mist.
9. He doesn't think stomping and smashing is a bad power. He thinks it's a different one.
10. He still likes TremorTrunk and DarkHorn. That surprises people, and it surprises him too.

MirageBeak's Believe-It Plan

What MirageBeak gets back isn't his power — he never lost that for a second. It's his opinion of it. This page gives your child a way to hold onto theirs when somebody is being unkind, and a couple of questions to ask before they hand their opinion over to anyone else.

For Grown-Ups: How to Use This Page

Fill this in on a calm day, before it's needed, so the words are already there when they are. Then keep it somewhere findable. Print it, write on it, or just talk it through. The point isn't the perfect answer — it's that your child has decided in advance whose opinion of them gets a vote.

MirageBeak's Believe-It Plan

Their words don't change what I can do.

When somebody laughs at something I'm good at…

1. Right now I feel:

☐ Hurt ☐ Embarrassed ☐ Angry ☐ Small ☐ Confused

2. The thing they laughed at is:

3. One true thing I know about it is:

4. Somebody who likes it when I do this is:

Before I believe them…

I can check by asking myself…

☐ Do they keep bringing it up? Why would they?
☐ Would I still like doing this if nobody was watching?
☐ Whose opinion about me actually gets a vote?
☐ Is this something I chose, or something they decided for me?
☐ Which grown-up should know this is happening?

Draw it: Draw the thing you are best at — as big and bright as you can make it.

Bring DinoTopia Into Your Day

- **Ask Queso's question.** Next time someone is unkind about something your child does, try it: why do you think they keep talking about it? Let them answer.
- **Name everyone's different power.** TremorTrunk is strong, DarkHorn works in the dark, MirageBeak bends light. Go around the family and name what each person is good at that nobody else is.
- **Talk about DarkHorn.** He didn't start it, he just laughed along. Ask whether that's the same as being unkind, and what he could have done instead.
- **Practice the quiet comeback.** "That's what I thought." Talk about answers that end things calmly rather than starting a fight.
- **Draw your own Dino Defender.** What species? What power? And what would they say if somebody called it silly?

Thank you for reading MirageBeak's Jealous Friends!

MirageBeak is back in the mist of the Veiled Oasis, practicing. The apology has been made and accepted, and the illusions are exactly as good as they always were.

