



An adventure in a City in a Garden

Written by Hui-Ling Chua
Illustrated by Cheng Puay Koon

What fascinating plants and animals
live together with us in our City in a Garden?
Join Kaysee and Sunny on an exciting
nature adventure as they explore the park connector
in their neighbourhood.

With eye-catching illustrations and fun rhymes,
learn about Singapore's colourful flora and fauna,
and love them a little more!



Teaching Notes

Introduction to the Book

1. Read the 'Introduction to our City in a Garden' to the children.
2. After reading the introduction, ask the children if they can name some of the plants and animals that they have seen around Singapore.
3. List these plants and animals and ask the children to pay special attention during the story to see if they can find any of them.
4. Optional activity: Ask the children to look at the picture on the cover of the book. Divide them into small groups and have them choose a plant or an animal. Ask one group to come to the front of the class and describe what their plant or animal looks like, while the rest of the class guesses what they are describing. Rotate the groups until all the groups have taken a turn.

Reading and Re-reading the Story

1. Read the story once through, pacing deliberately for clear articulation, using varied tone of voice and rhythm to capture the children's interest and to stimulate their imagination. Do not pause to ask questions at this first reading.
2. After reading the story, ask the children if they can remember the plants and animals in the book. Make a list of all the plants and animals that they can remember and compare this with the list that you made previously, taking special note of those plants and animals that the children have seen themselves. Talk about the the plants and animals briefly, basing the discussion on the children's level of interest and experience with them.
3. Read the story again, pointing at the words as you read. Slow down when you read the names of the plants and animals, and encourage the children to say them along with you.

Learning about the Different Plants and Animals

1. Go through the 'Biodiversity Featured in the Story' section with the children.
2. Highlight each plant and animal, drawing the children's attention to the photographs and the illustrations. Discuss the facts with the children.
3. If there are children who have had encounters with these animals, allow them to share about their experiences.

Reading Development

Comprehension

1. Ask questions to help the children with the understanding of the events in the story. Questions may include: Why did Sunny not want to go out to explore? How do Cattails and Swamp Ferns help to keep the water clean? How do dragonflies keep the mosquitoes away? Why did the children put the caterpillar back on the tree?
2. Get the children to retell the sequence of the plants and animals Sunny and Kaysee encountered while exploring our City in a Garden.

Rhyming Words

1. Ask the children to look for pairs of words that sound alike, e.g. see and me, pair and there, seek and eek, it and sit, fro and go, grow and low, play and way, nose and rose, etc.
2. Read the story aloud again and slow down when reading the rhyming words to encourage the children to join in if they can.
3. Ask the children to give you pairs of rhyming words and together, make up silly sentences using these words. Examples of such sentences may include: What's on my head, I think it's a/an ____ ? What's in the box, I think it's a/an ____ ?

Onomatopoeia

1. An onomatopoeia is a word which imitates the natural sound of a thing (for the teacher's information only).
2. Find the words in the story that try to capture the sound of one of the animals featured (e.g. "cheep", "peep" or "squawk").
3. Ask the children to close their eyes and listen for sounds around them, and repeat the sounds as they hear them. Try to spell these 'words' together as a class (e.g. the sound of a vehicle horn heard outside might be written as "pngor-pngor", or an engine idling at a traffic junction might sound like "chugga-chugga"). You can also spell the sounds of anything you hear in the classroom, such as chairs being pulled out or pushed in.

Create an Adventure in our City in a Garden

1. Take the children to explore a park or a park connector. Bring along binoculars, caps and water bottles for your adventure. You may also consider bringing paper and colour pencils for the children to sketch what they see.
2. Ask the children to look out for as many animals as possible, especially for the ones in the story. At suitable points, ask the children to close their eyes and listen for sounds, or to smell what is around and share what they see, hear and smell. Record these with cameras or sound technology to review them together in class.
3. Write to parents to encourage them to bring their children out often to explore the parks and park connectors in their neighbourhood, or in other parts of Singapore. Ask the family to record their explorations and discoveries in writing and/or with photographs. The children can use them to share about their experience with their friends in class.

Online Resources

For information and photographs of biodiversity, visit NParks Flora & Fauna Web, florafauanaweb.nparks.gov.sg.

Photographic Credits

Page 24 Purple Heron and Long-tailed Parakeet, Cai Yixiong

Page 25 Cattail, Nelson DeBarros; Swamp Fern, Arthur Ng; Pond Skater, Bruce J. Marlin

Page 26 Forest Fighting Fish, Nick Baker, Ecology Asia

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Introduction to our City in a Garden

Singapore is known as a City in a Garden.

No matter where you go in Singapore, don't you feel like you are in a big garden? The tall buildings, houses, roads and bridges of our city are surrounded by trees, shrubs and flowers. We have four nature reserves and over 300 parks, linked by tree-lined roads and park connectors. We also have world-class gardens, like the Singapore Botanic Gardens and Gardens by the Bay. Greenery can even be found on buildings, walls and rooftops!

These green spaces not only make our city a pretty place to live in, they also provide homes for animals. We have more than 380 species of birds, 310 types of butterflies, 120 kinds of dragonflies, 100 species of reptiles and 50 kinds of mammals that live together with us in our City in a Garden.

But the beautiful greenery that we see all around us is no accident of nature. Neither did it happen overnight. It took some 50 years of sweat and toil and the efforts of many people to make Singapore the City in a Garden that we love today. Would you like to do your part for our City in a Garden too? You can start by learning about and loving the plants and animals that we have around us!

Join Kaysee and Sunny as they go on an adventure,
and let them introduce you to
some of the plants and animals that we have
in our City in a Garden.



An illustration of a thick, curved tree branch. On the left, a small bird with a blue head and yellow body is perched on the branch. A small white butterfly with orange markings is flying above the branch. In the center, a squirrel with brown fur and a bushy tail is sitting on the branch, looking to the left. On the right, another squirrel is perched on the branch, looking towards the center. The background is white with some green leaves and a cluster of white flowers with yellow centers in the top right corner.

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For more information, visit www.gardencityfund.org.

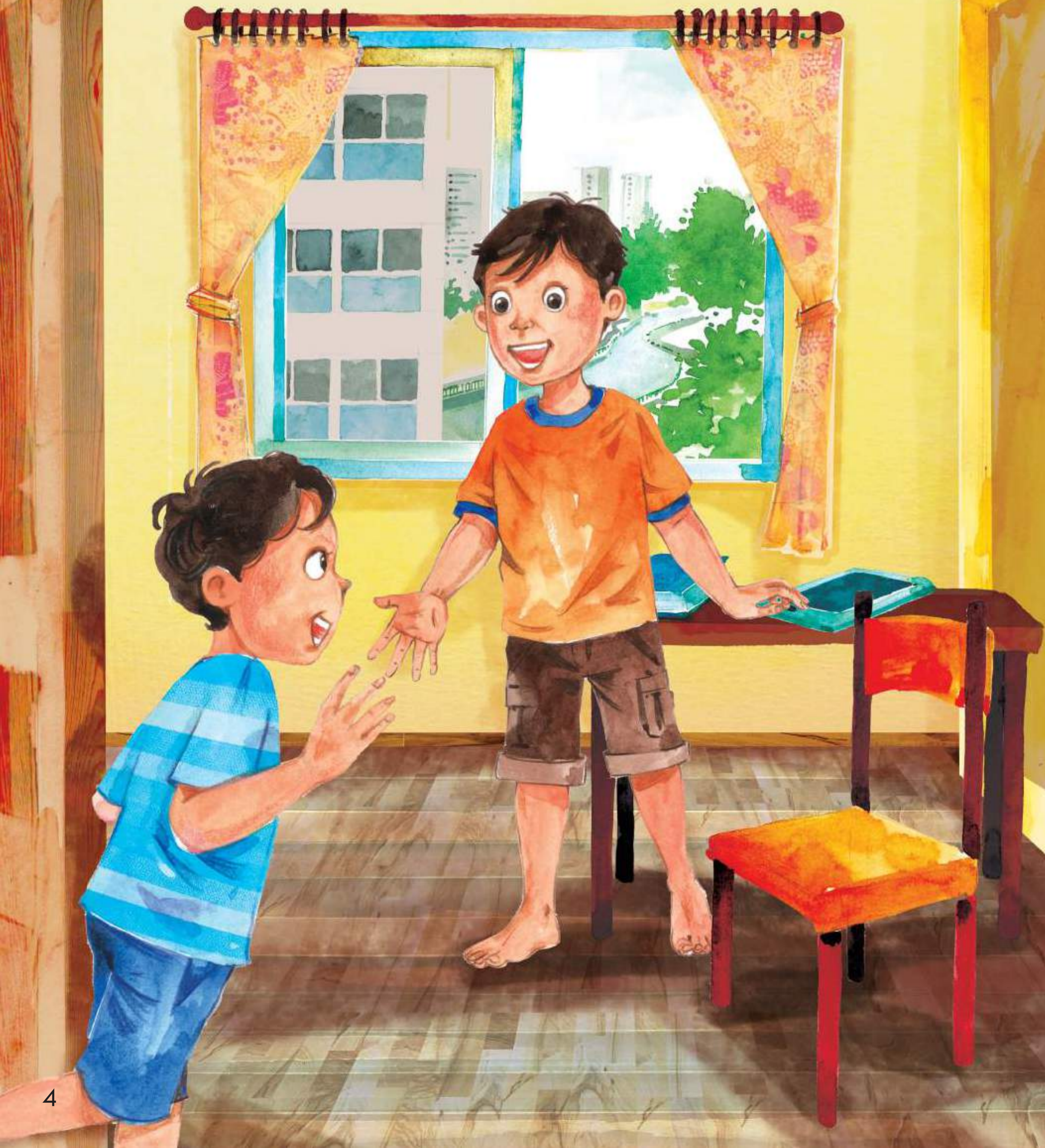
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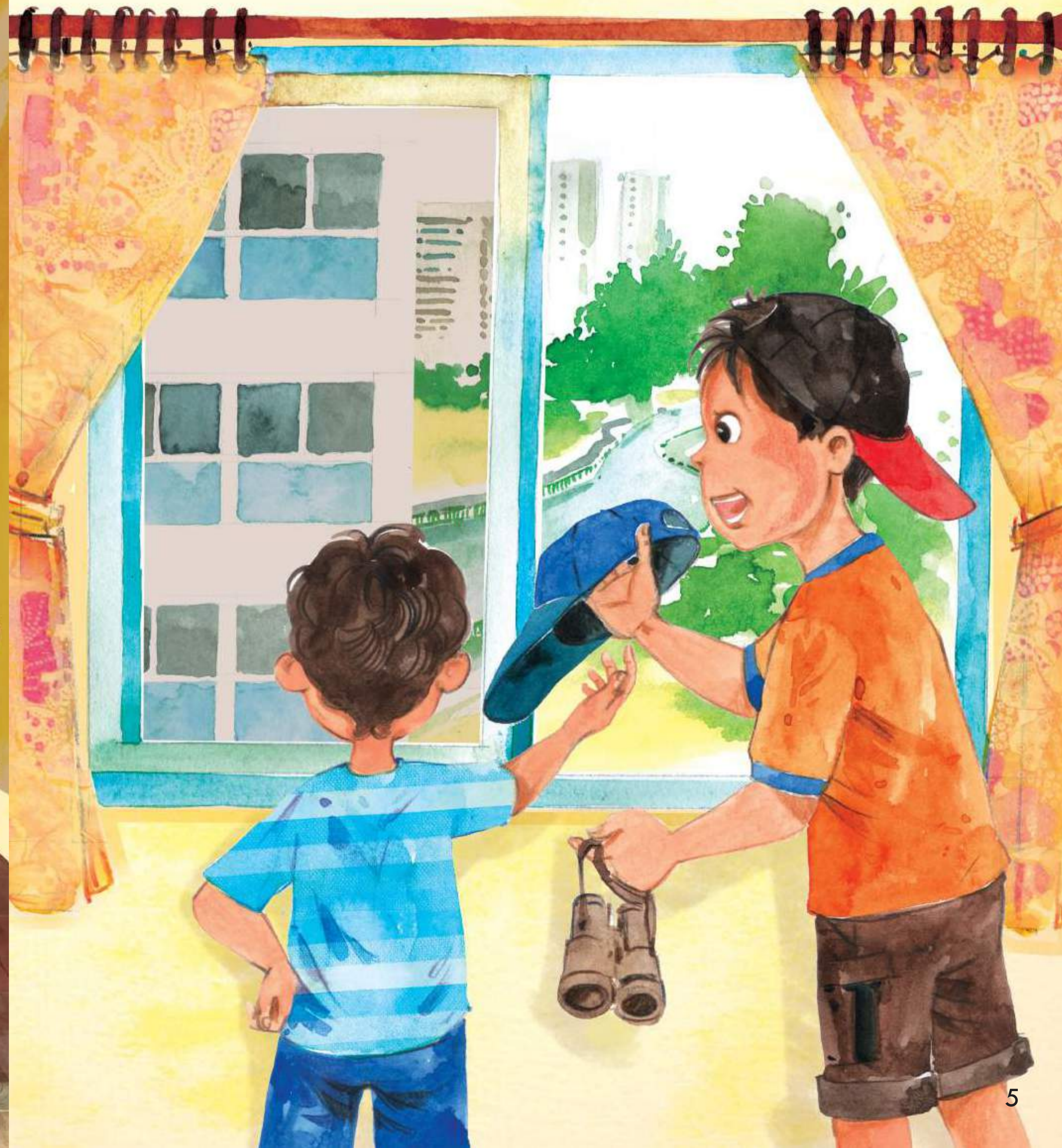
"Hello, Kaysee. Let's play games on the computer today."

"Not now, Sunny. Let's explore the waterway!"

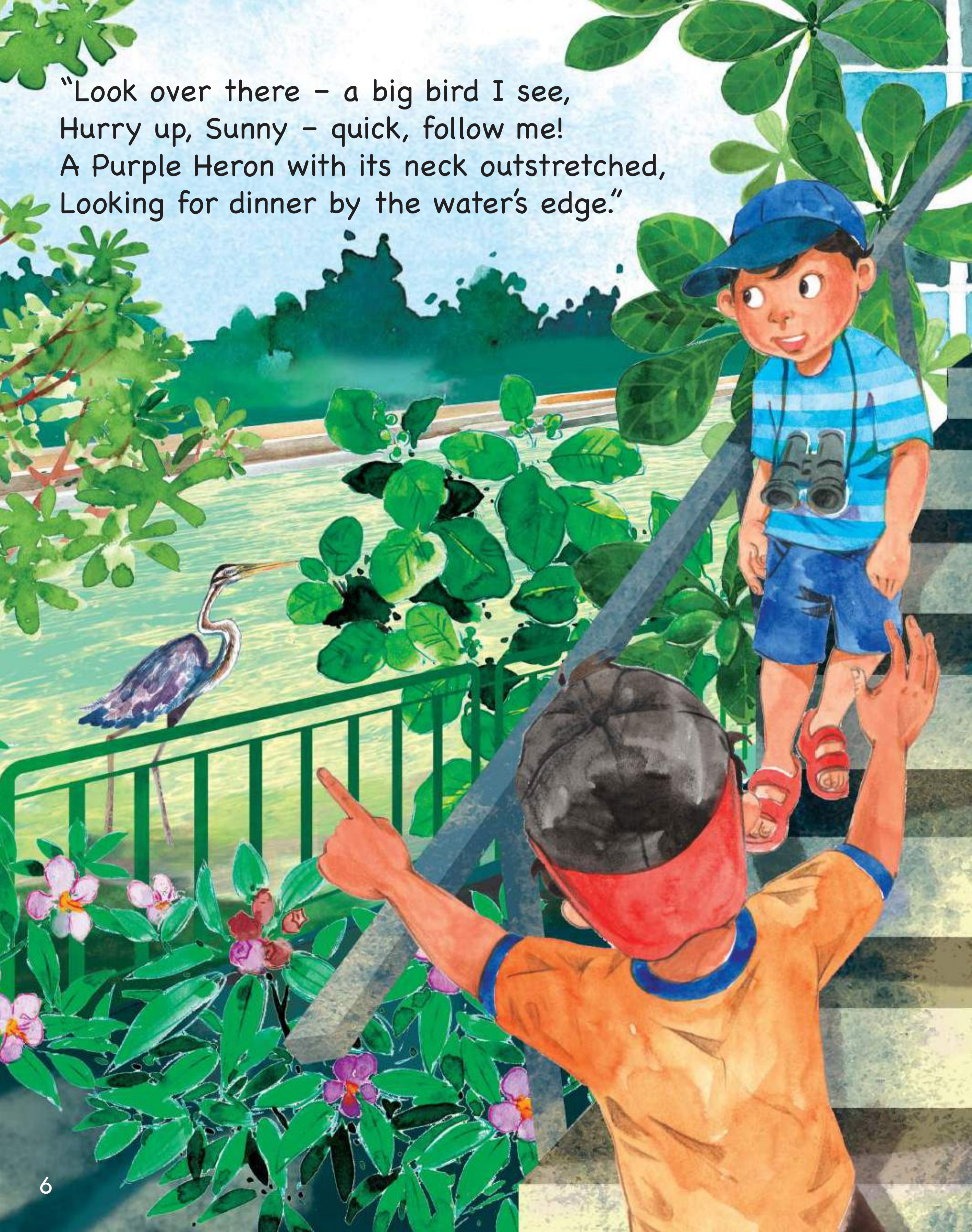


"But it's so hot with only tall buildings around."

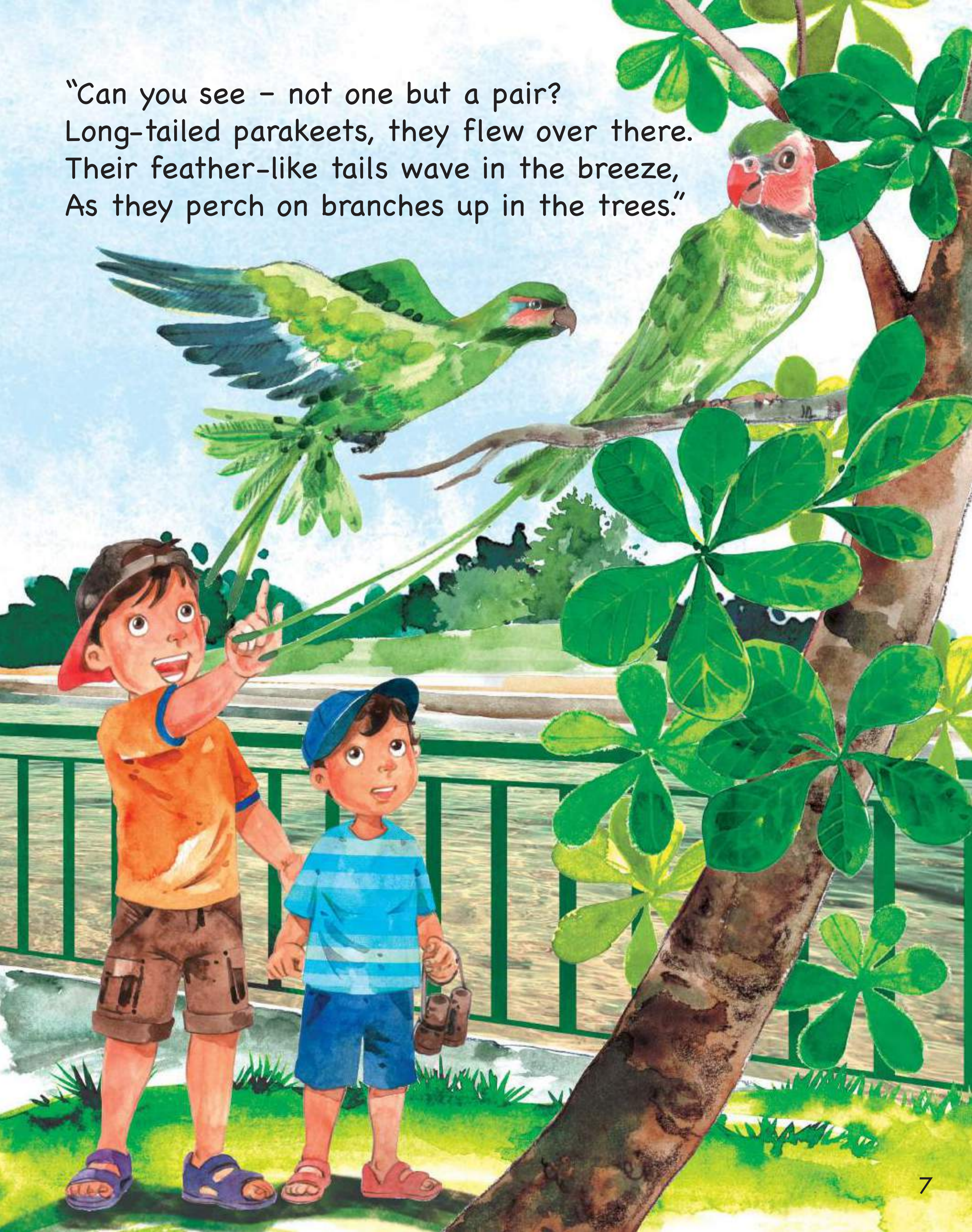
"Put on a cap and let's see what's abound."



"Look over there - a big bird I see,
Hurry up, Sunny - quick, follow me!
A Purple Heron with its neck outstretched,
Looking for dinner by the water's edge."



"Can you see - not one but a pair?
Long-tailed parakeets, they flew over there.
Their feather-like tails wave in the breeze,
As they perch on branches up in the trees."



"What's in here playing hide-and-seek?
Something with big eyes I see. Eek!
Oh, it's a toad with bumps all over it."
"It's an Asian Toad. Let it quietly sit."

"Cattails are plants that keep the water clean,
Just like the Swamp Ferns growing in between.
Dragonflies and birds fly about each day,
To eat mosquitoes and keep them away."



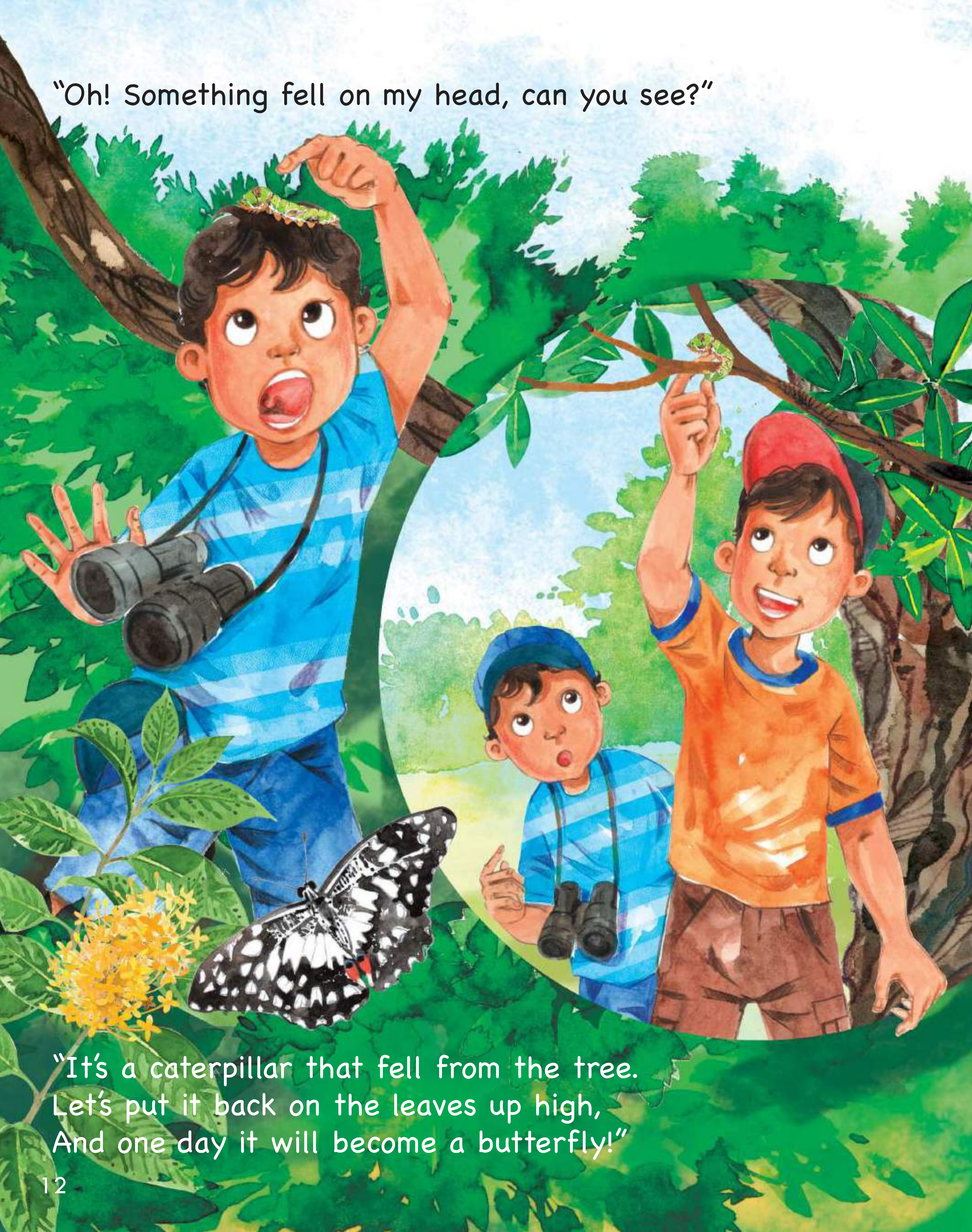
“Here is an animal with long legs I see,
It moves across water so quietly.
It’s a Pond Skater looking to play,
Let’s take a peek as it skates away.”

“There are fish over here, Kaysee!”

“Those are Forest Fighting Fish that you see.
Their tail fins swish quickly to and fro,
See how fast they can go.”



"Oh! Something fell on my head, can you see?"



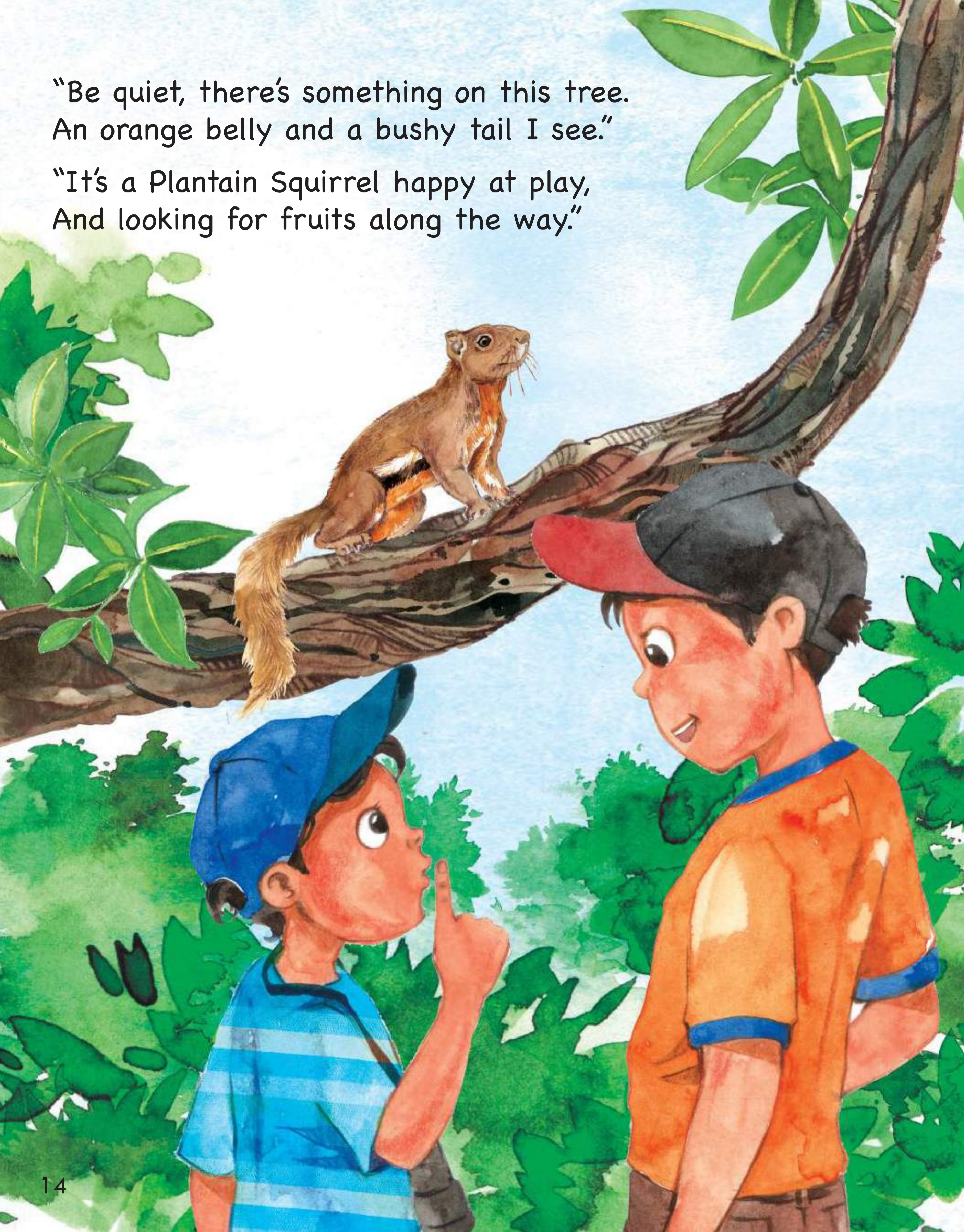
"It's a caterpillar that fell from the tree.
Let's put it back on the leaves up high,
And one day it will become a butterfly!"

"Butterflies visit the flowers that grow,
Some fly up high, some fly down low.
The Painted Jezebel has stripes of black,
And yellow and orange on its wings at the back."

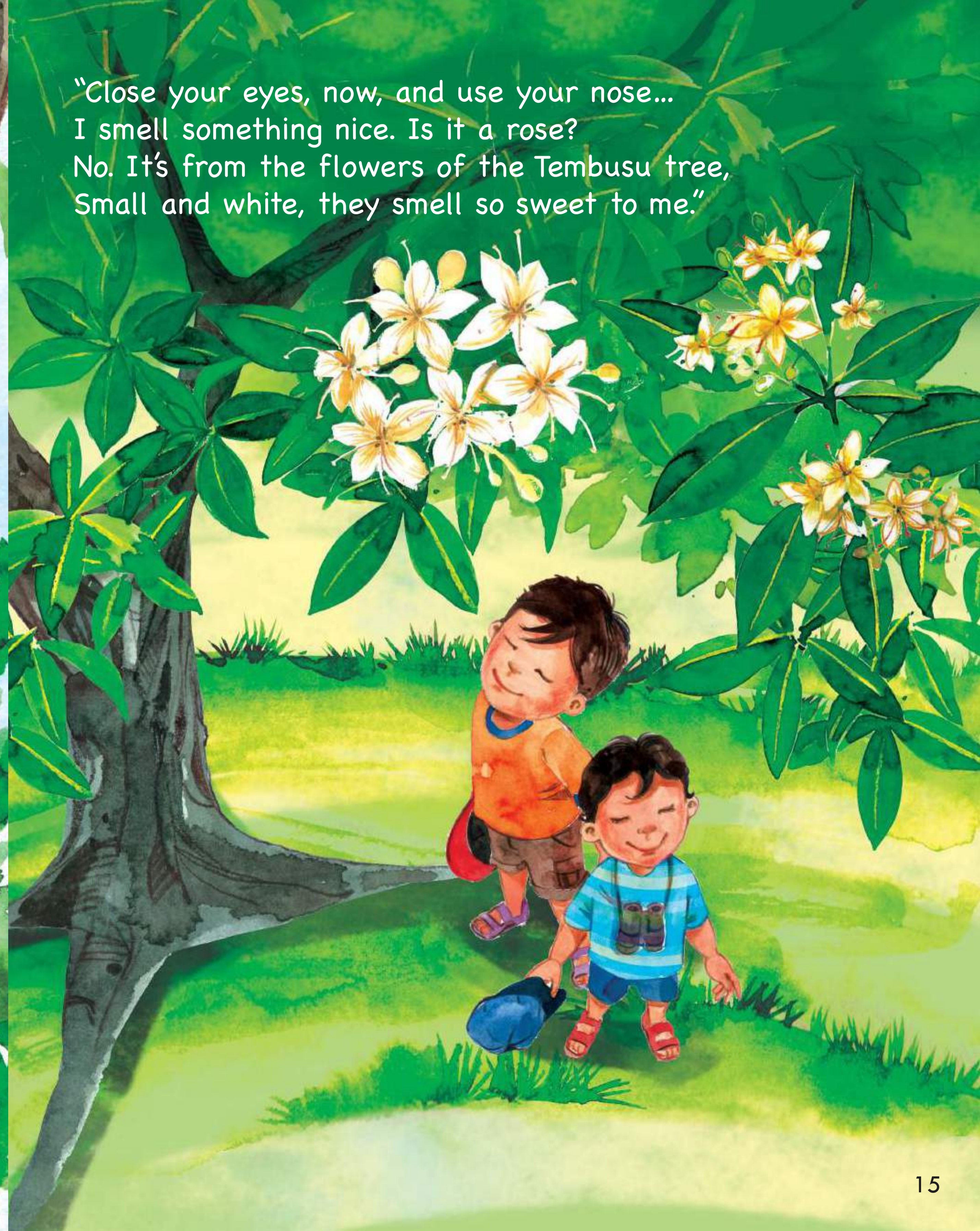


"Be quiet, there's something on this tree.
An orange belly and a bushy tail I see."

"It's a Plantain Squirrel happy at play,
And looking for fruits along the way."



"Close your eyes, now, and use your nose...
I smell something nice. Is it a rose?
No. It's from the flowers of the Tembusu tree,
Small and white, they smell so sweet to me."



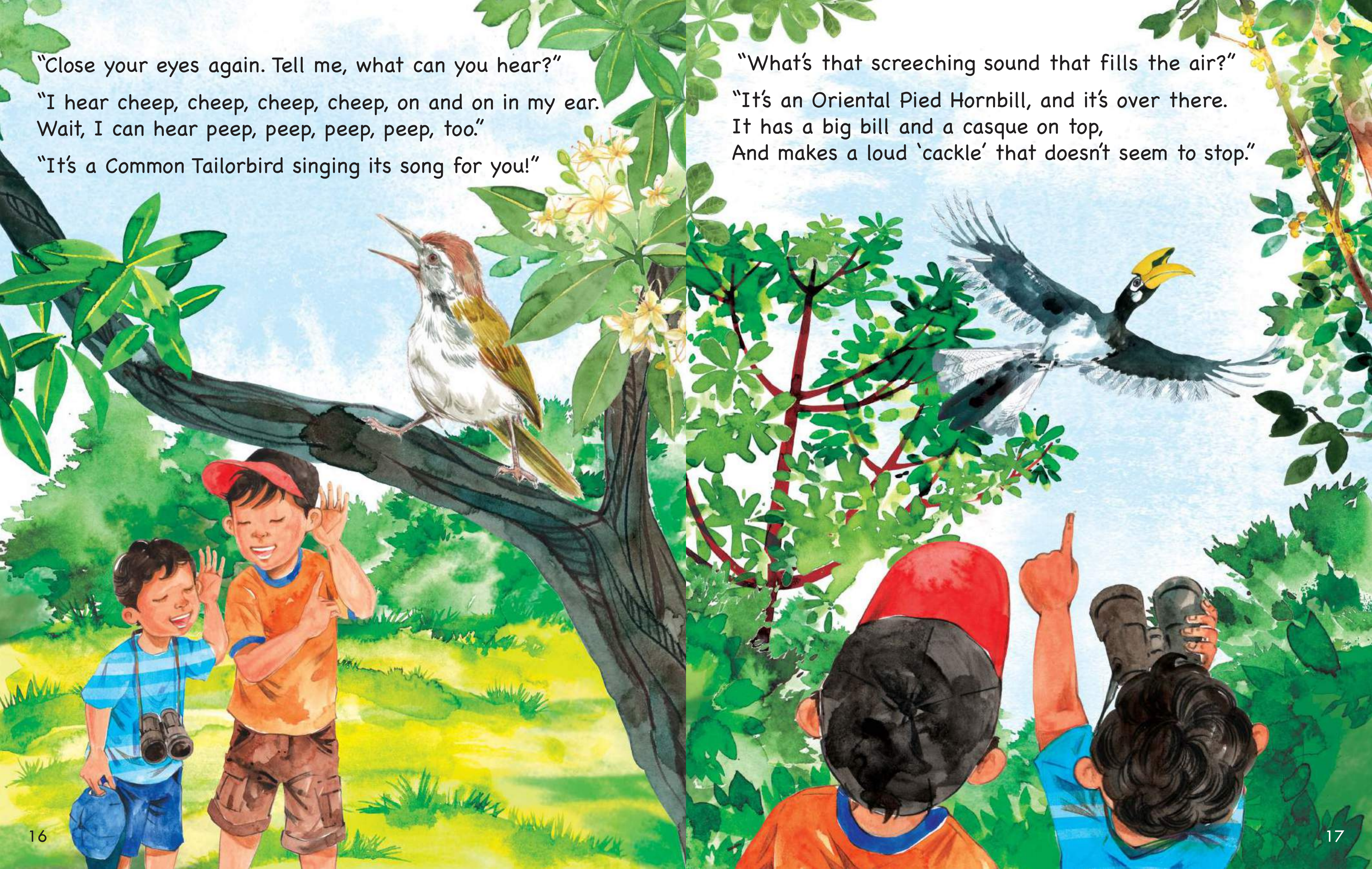
"Close your eyes again. Tell me, what can you hear?"

"I hear cheep, cheep, cheep, cheep, on and on in my ear. Wait, I can hear peep, peep, peep, peep, too."

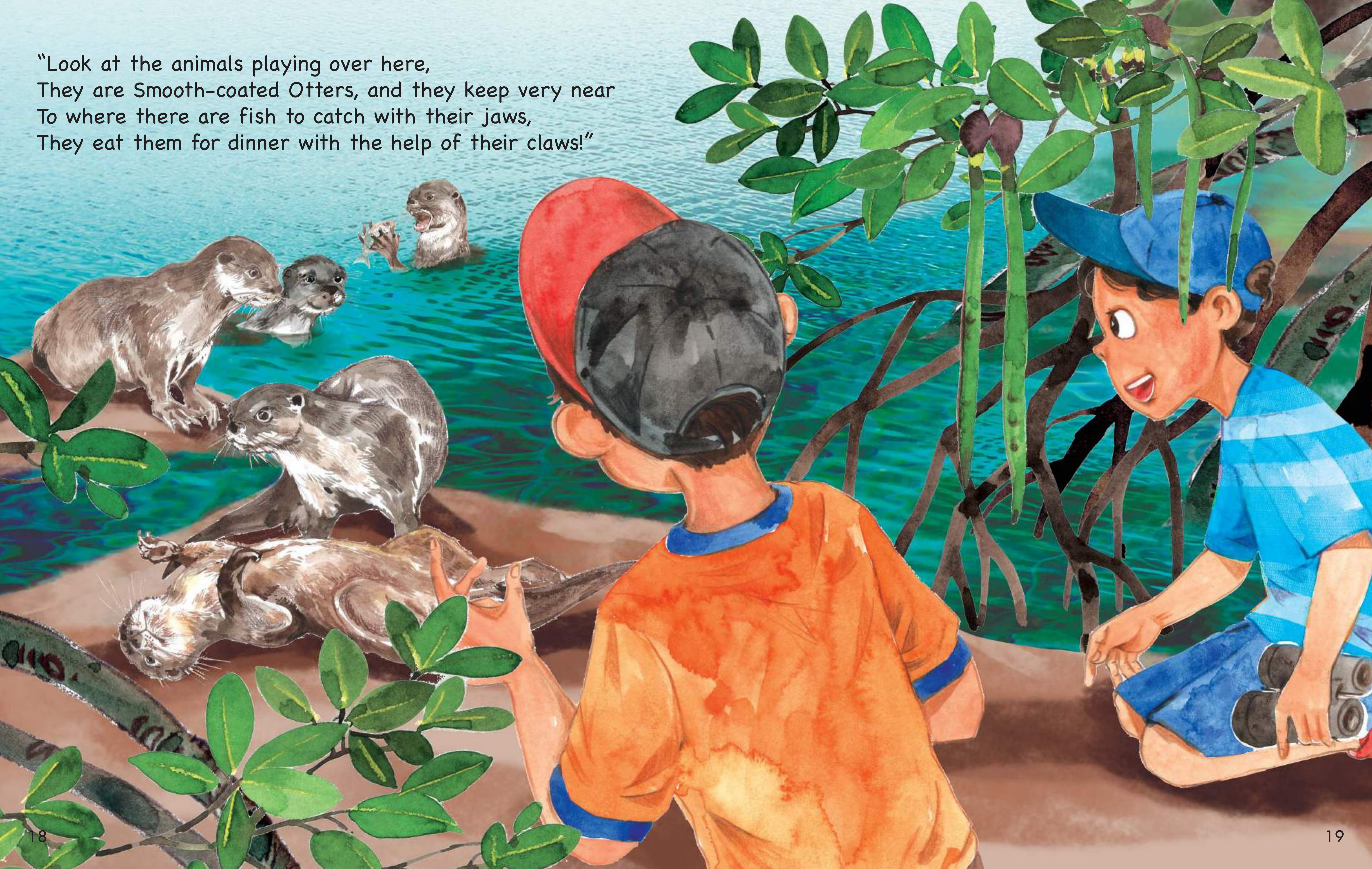
"It's a Common Tailorbird singing its song for you!"

"What's that screeching sound that fills the air?"

"It's an Oriental Pied Hornbill, and it's over there. It has a big bill and a casque on top, And makes a loud 'cackle' that doesn't seem to stop."



“Look at the animals playing over here,
They are Smooth-coated Otters, and they keep very near
To where there are fish to catch with their jaws,
They eat them for dinner with the help of their claws!”



“What is that flying way up high?
Is it a bird or a kite in the sky?”

“Ha, ha, it’s both a bird and a kite.
It’s a Brahminy Kite – oh, what a sight!”

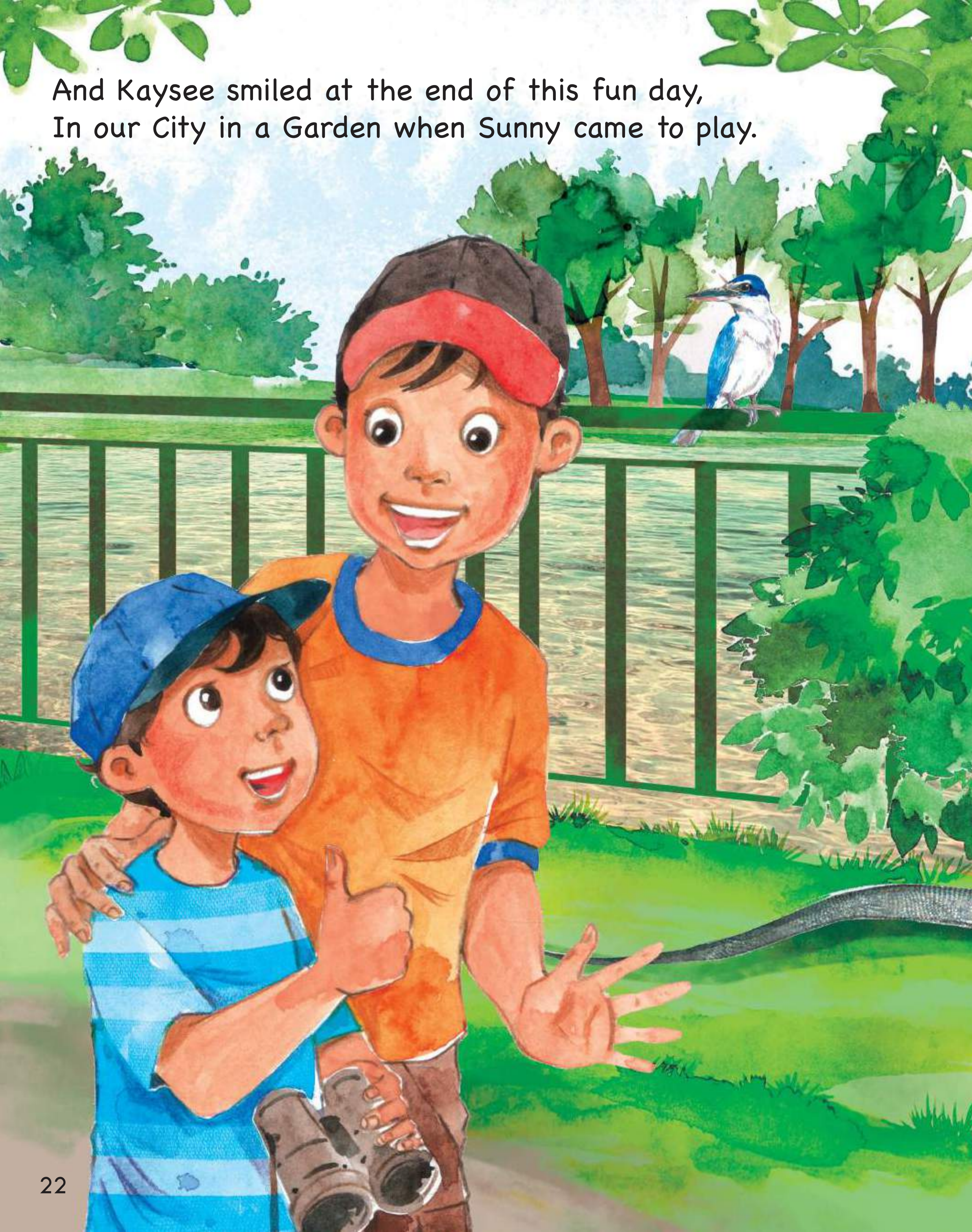


“It was fun to explore but now it’s time to go,
Wait, is that a crocodile? I really don’t know.”

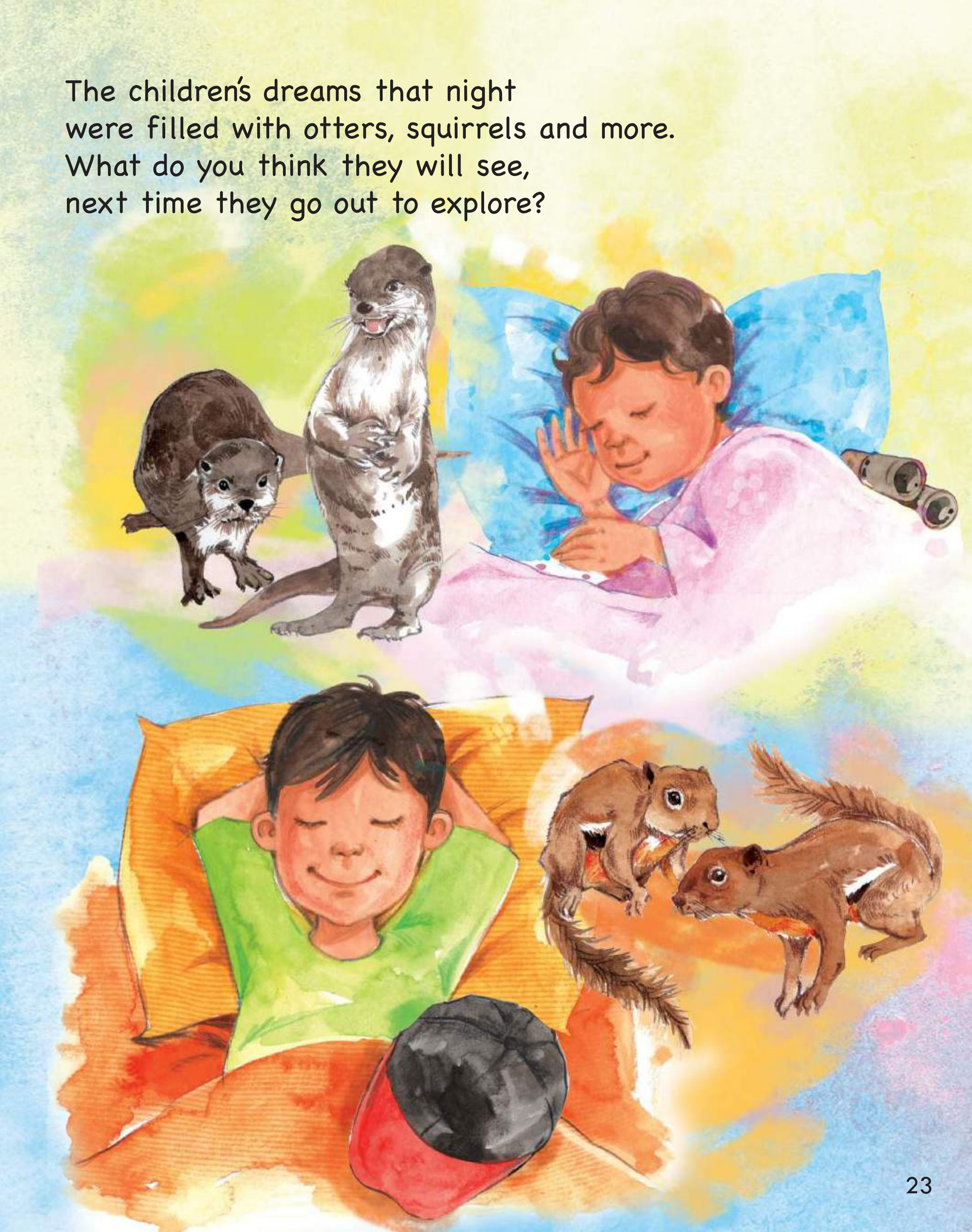
“No, it’s a Malayan Water Monitor looking for prey.
Let’s leave it alone and it’ll go away.”



And Kaysee smiled at the end of this fun day,
In our City in a Garden when Sunny came to play.



The children's dreams that night
were filled with otters, squirrels and more.
What do you think they will see,
next time they go out to explore?



Biodiversity Featured in the Story



Purple Heron

- This is a large bird. It can be as tall as a small child!
- It feeds on fish, frogs, insects and even snakes.
- It can often be found next to rivers, coastal areas and mangroves.

Long-tailed Parakeet

- This bird can be easily identified by its long, pointed tail.
- It has beautiful, emerald-green feathers.
- It makes a high-pitched screech.



Asian Toad

- This toad has bumps on its sides and back which are called warts.
- It feeds on insects.
- It sleeps during the day and is active at night.



Cattail

- This plant can be found growing along river banks.
- The sausage-like part on the top of the stalk is actually a cluster of flowers.
- It is called 'cattail' because when the flowers open up, the flower cluster looks like the tail of a cat.

Swamp Fern

- This plant can grow up to 3 m tall.
- Its new leaves are orange to red in colour.
- As its leaves grow older, their colour changes to green.



Pond Skater

- This bug can walk on water!
- It likes water that is still or slow-moving, such as the kind found in ponds and streams.
- It uses its front legs to catch small insects to eat.



Forest Fighting Fish

- This fish can be found in fast-flowing forest streams.
- Sometimes it will fight with other fishes for territory.
- The babies live in the mouth of their father, until they are big enough to take care of themselves.



Painted Jezebel

- This butterfly is commonly seen in Singapore.
- It can fly rather high, even up to tree-top level.
- It feeds on nectar from flowers.



Plantain Squirrel

- This squirrel is commonly seen in Singapore.
- It is easily identified from the cream and black stripes on its sides.
- It feeds mainly on fruits.



Tembusu

- This tree has fragrant, cream coloured flowers.
- It bears little red berries.
- Its wood is very strong, and can be used to make chopping boards.



Common Tailorbird

- This bird is called a 'tailorbird' because it can sew!
- It builds its nest by sewing large leaves together.
- Using its beak, it makes tiny holes along the edges of the leaves, then threads plant fibres or spider web silk through them.



Oriental Pied Hornbill

- This bird is easily identified by the horn-like casque on top of its beak.
- It nests in tree holes.
- It feeds on fruits, insects, lizards and sometimes small birds.





Smooth-coated Otter

- ▶ This otter is covered in fur that is short, smooth and sleek.
- ▶ It is a very good swimmer.
- ▶ It feeds mainly on fish.

Brahminy Kite

- ▶ The Brahminy Kite is a large bird of prey.
- ▶ It is mostly covered in chestnut brown feathers, and has a white head and breast.
- ▶ It sometimes rides on spirals of hot air, so that it does not need to flap its wings so much. When it does so, it looks like it is circling in the sky.



Malayan Water Monitor

- ▶ This is one of the largest lizards in the world.
- ▶ It has a forked tongue.
- ▶ It is a good swimmer.