

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!

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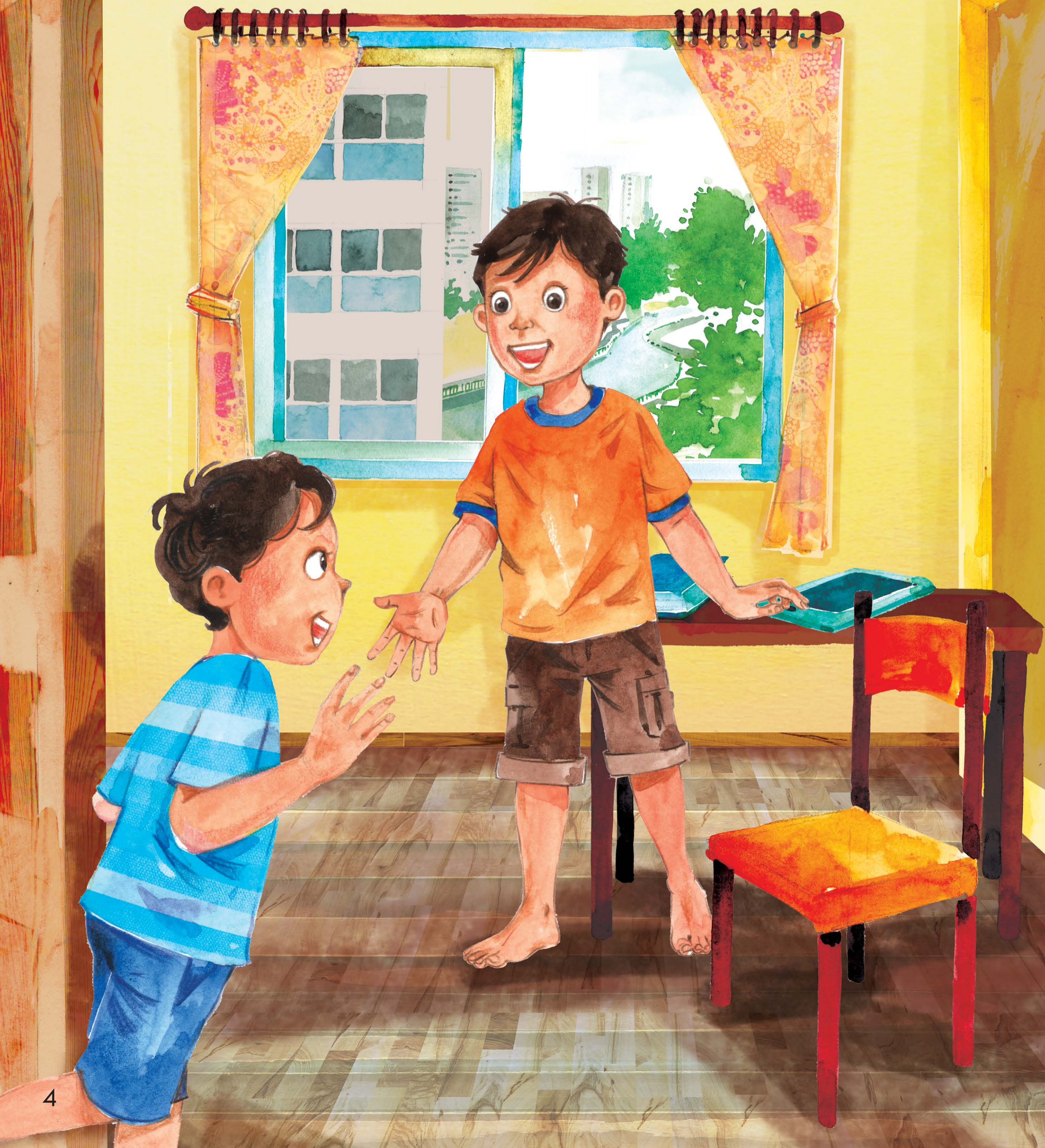
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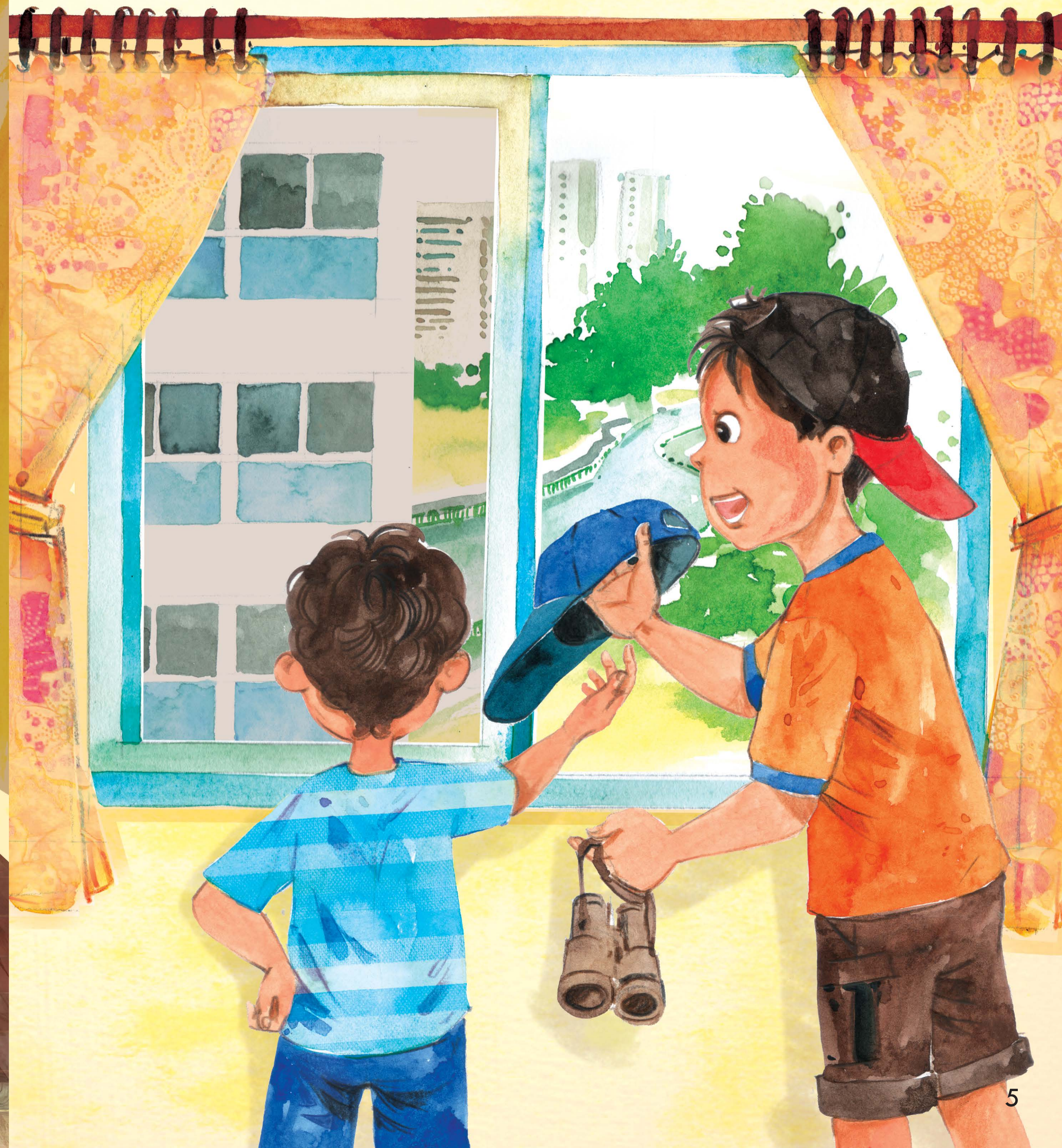
"Hello, Kaysee. Let's play games on the computer today."

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

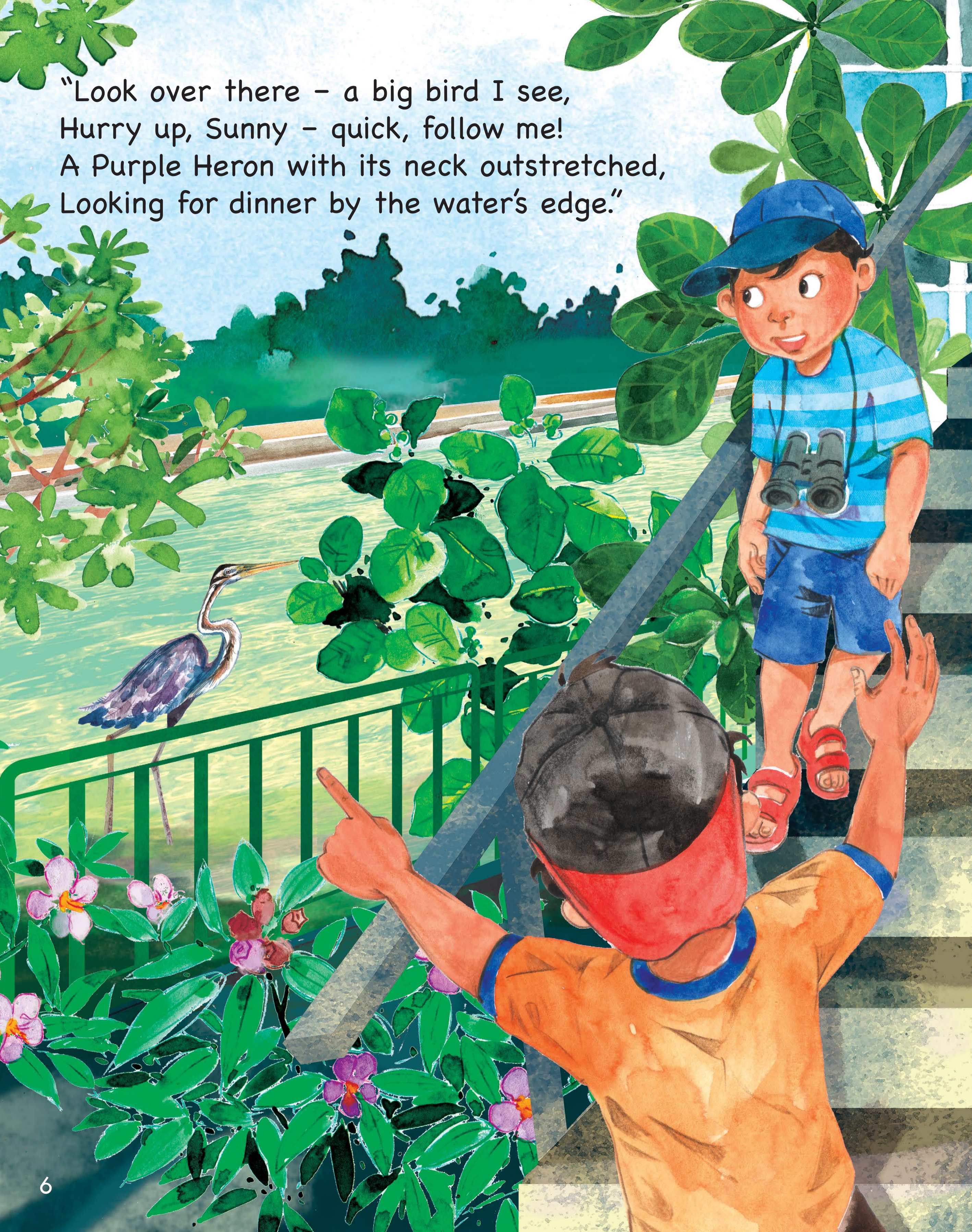


"But it's so hot with only tall buildings around."

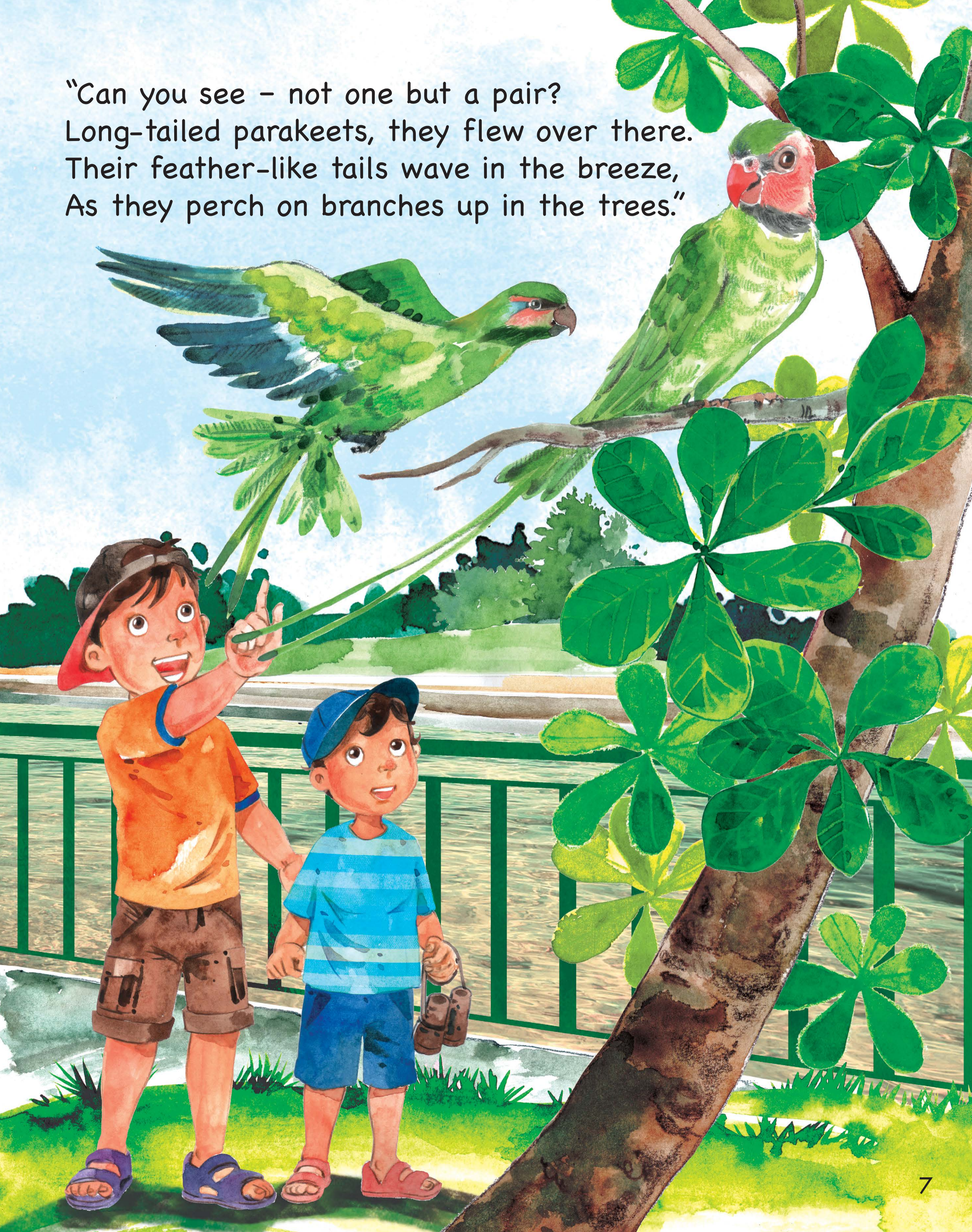
"Put on a cap and let's see what's abound."



"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?"



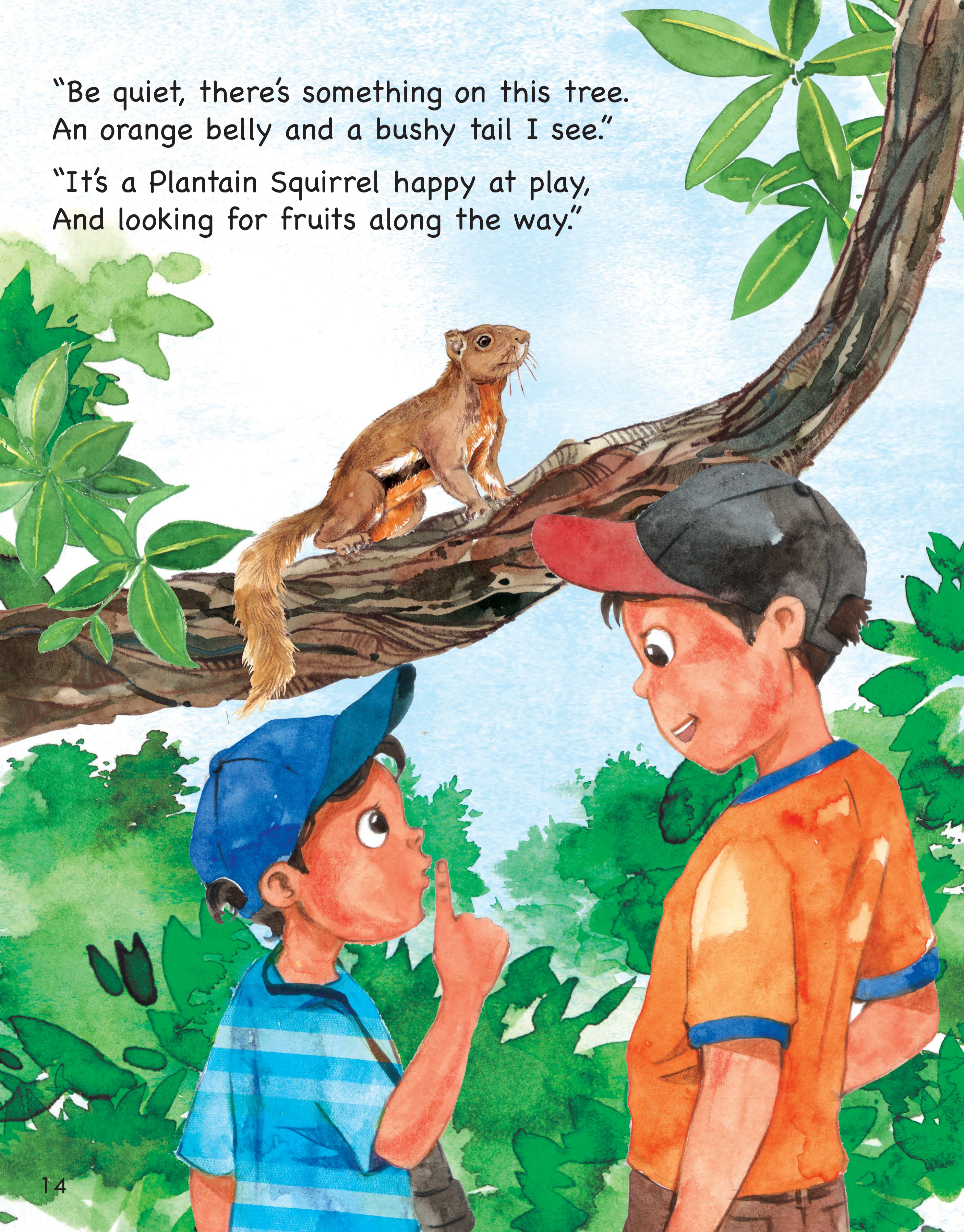
"It's a caterpillar that fell from the tree.
Let's put it back on the leaves up high,
And one day it will become a butterfly!"

"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."



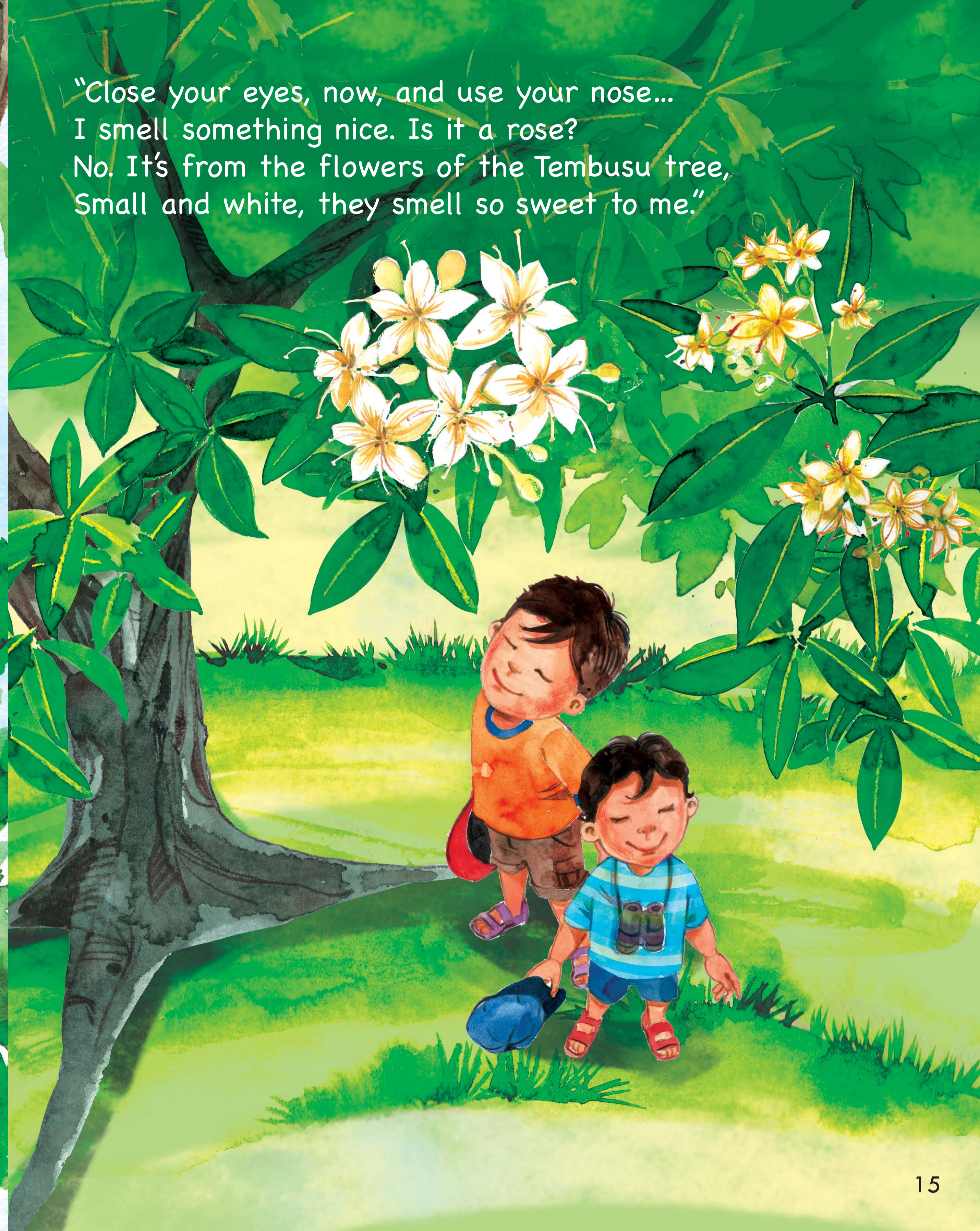
"Be quiet, there's something on this tree.
An orange belly and a bushy tail I see."

"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."



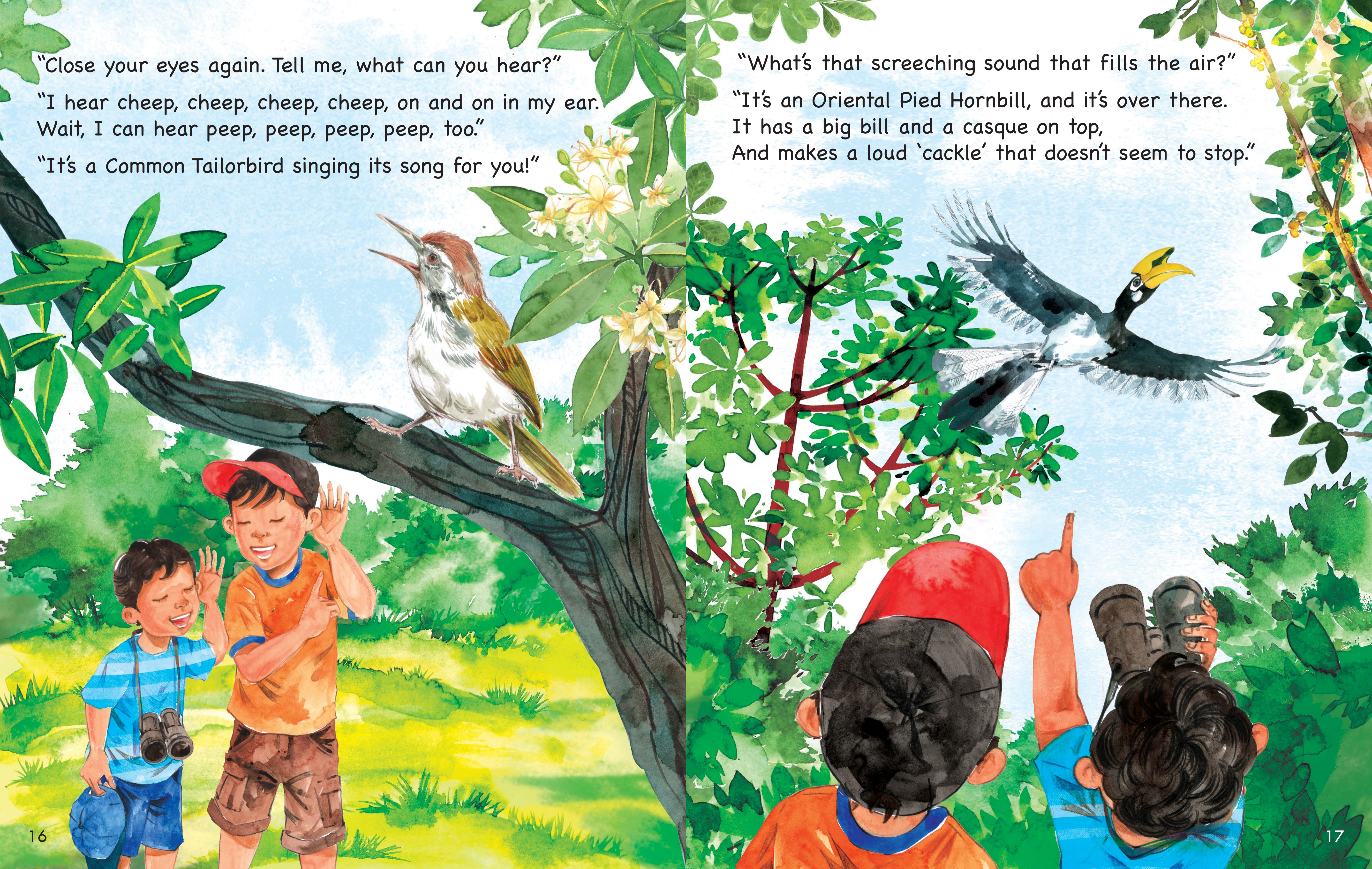
"Close your eyes again. Tell me, what can you hear?"

"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!"

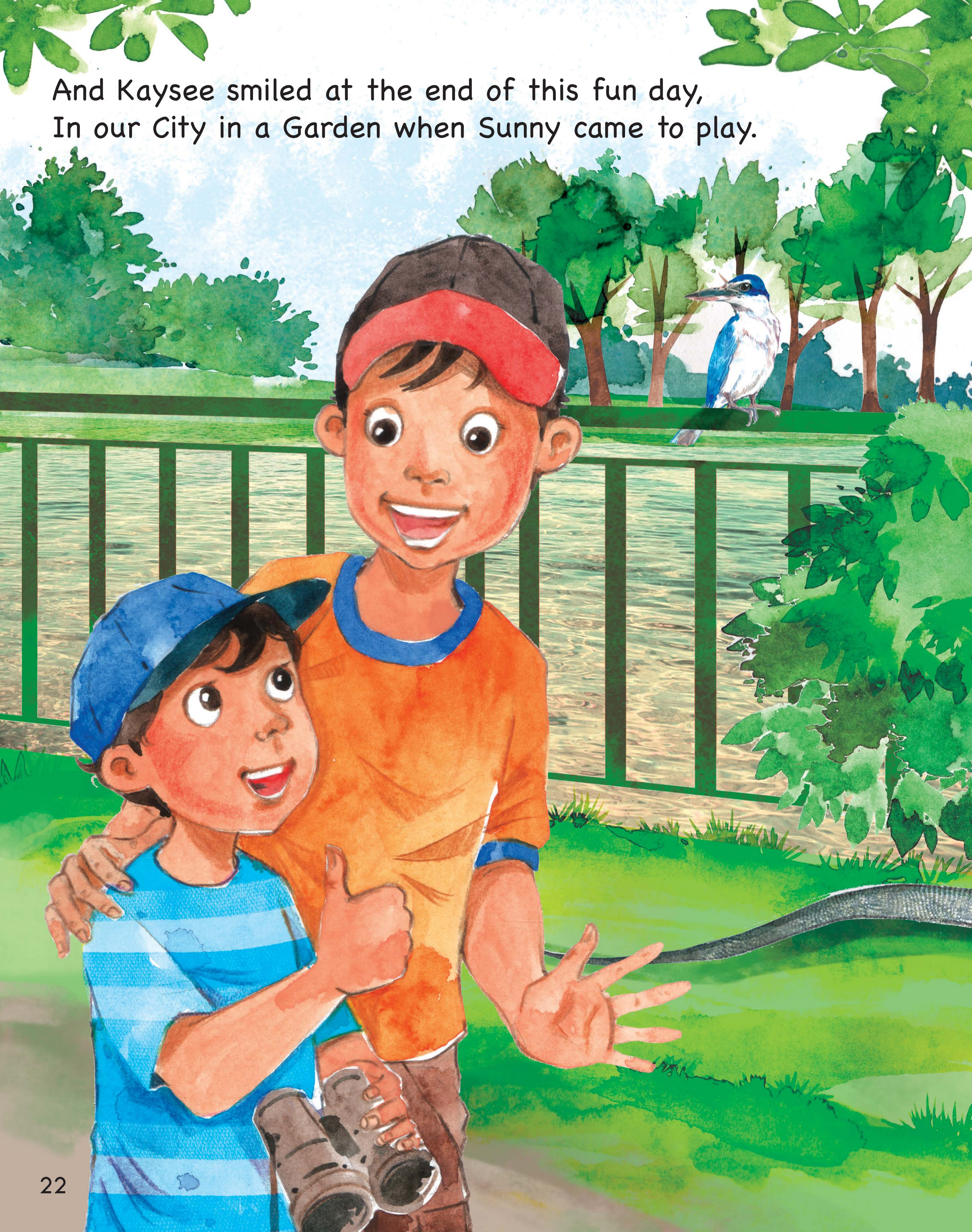


"It was fun to explore but now it's time to go,
Wait, is that a crocodile? I really don't know."

"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.

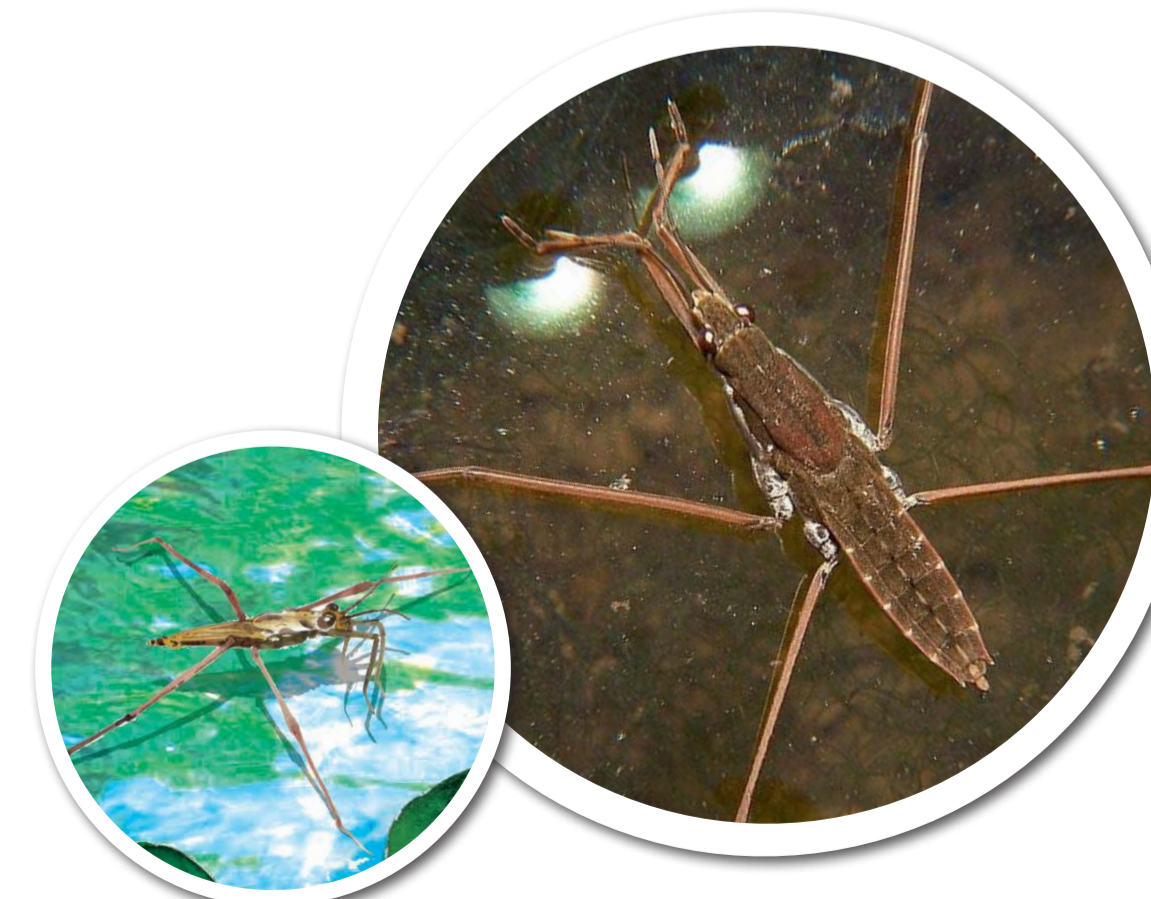
Swamp Fern

- 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.