



Level 3

# The Heron and the Hummingbird



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# The Heron and the Hummingbird

*Retold by Rachel Bladon*

*Illustrated by Gianluca Garofalo*



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The heron and the hummingbird lived near a big lake. They were good friends, but they were very different. Heron was tall, strong, and slow, and Hummingbird was small and very fast. Heron and Hummingbird loved to eat fish from the lake. Heron liked the big fish, and Hummingbird liked the little fish.







One day Hummingbird said to Heron, 'There are not enough fish in the lake for you and me. Let's have a race. Let's fly for four days to the old tree near the river. The winner of the race can have all the fish in the lake, but the loser must never eat fish again.'

Now Hummingbird was much faster than Heron, and he knew he could win the race easily. But Heron was a kind bird, and he didn't like to say no to anyone.

'That's a good idea,' he said.

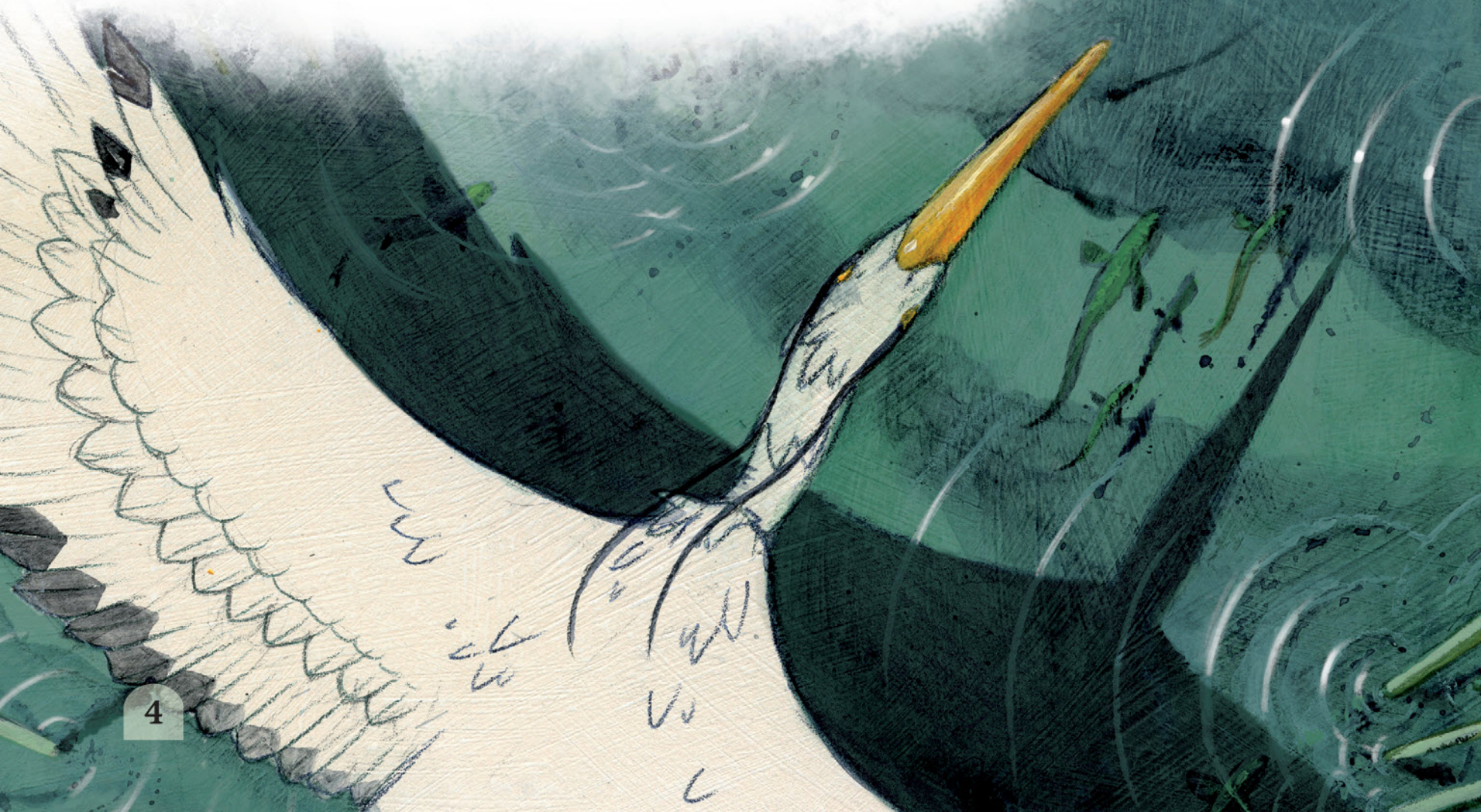


The next morning, Heron and Hummingbird met at the lake.

‘Good morning, my friend,’ said Heron.

‘You think you can fly faster than me, do you, Heron?’ Hummingbird laughed. ‘Remember, we are going to fly to the old tree near the river. The winner of the race can have all the fish in the lake, but the loser must never eat fish again.’

‘Are you ready, Heron?’ said Hummingbird. ‘Three, two, one ... Go!’ he cried, and the two birds flew up above the lake.







Flap! Flap! Flap!

Heron flew slowly, but he didn't look down.  
His long wings never stopped moving. He just  
flew and flew.

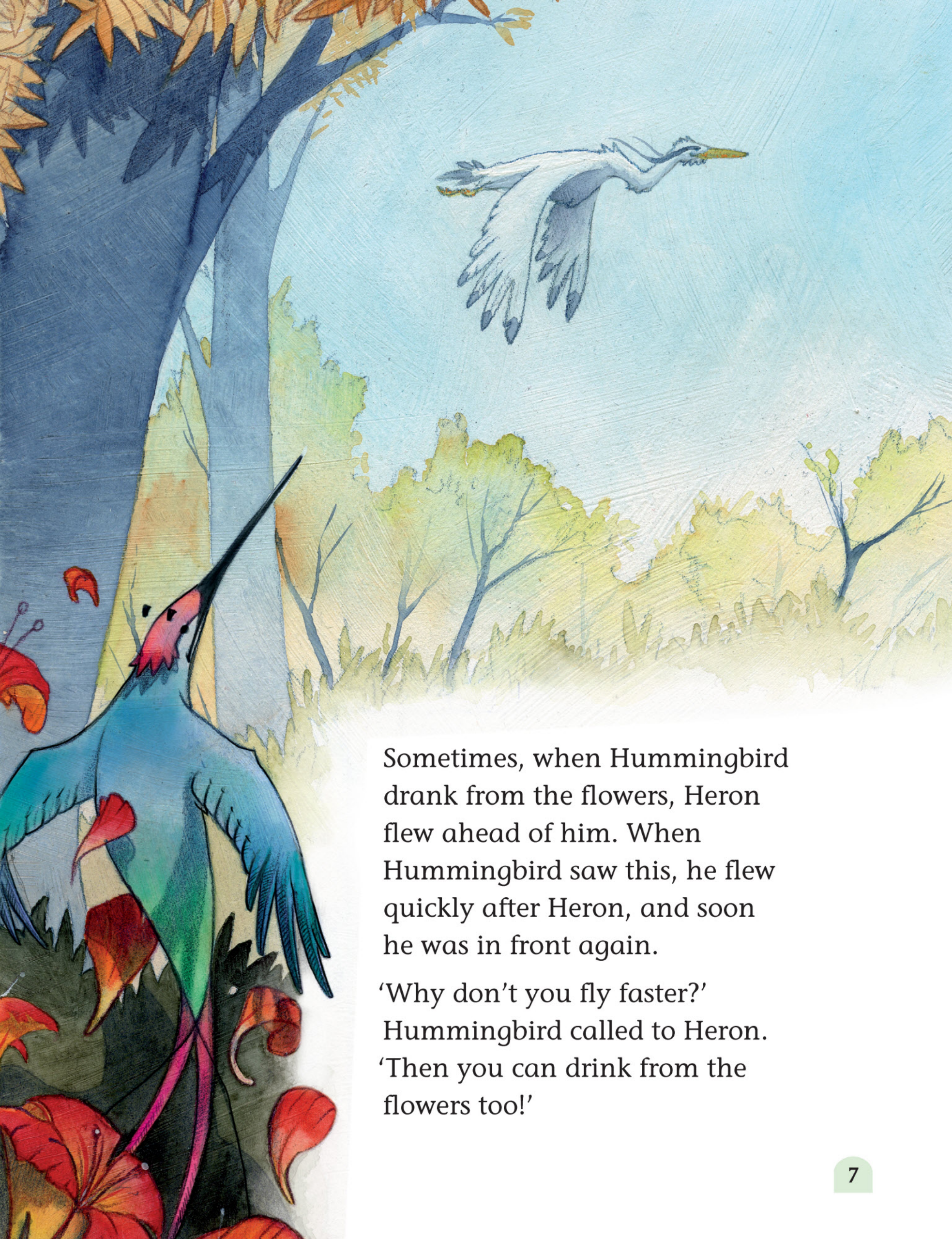


Flutter! Flutter! Flutter!

Hummingbird flew very fast, but he was soon bored. Every time he saw a pretty flower, he flew down and drank from it.



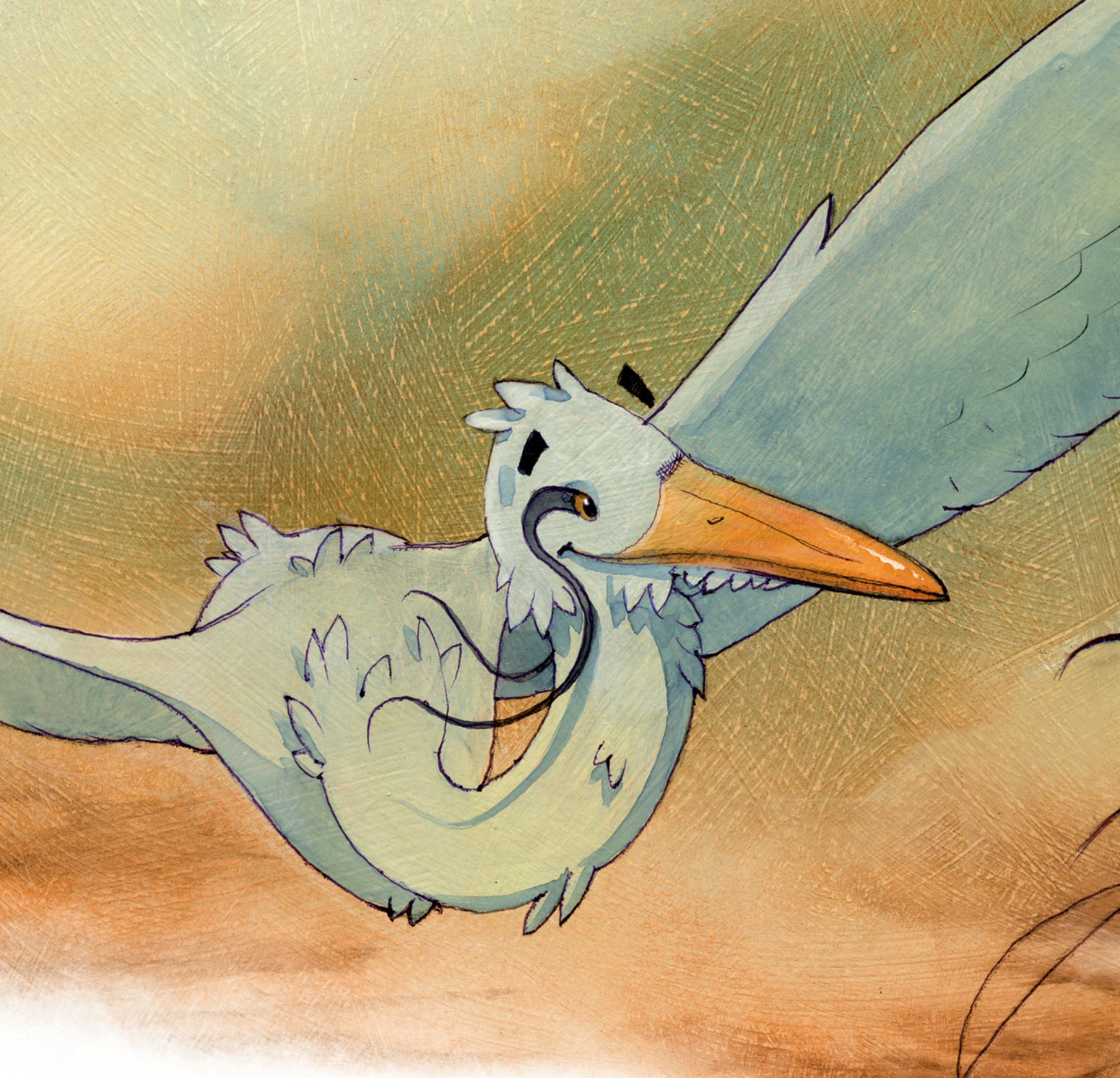




Sometimes, when Hummingbird drank from the flowers, Heron flew ahead of him. When Hummingbird saw this, he flew quickly after Heron, and soon he was in front again.

‘Why don’t you fly faster?’  
Hummingbird called to Heron.  
‘Then you can drink from the flowers too!’





Hummingbird looked at Heron  
behind him, and laughed.  
'I'm going to win this race  
easily!' he thought.



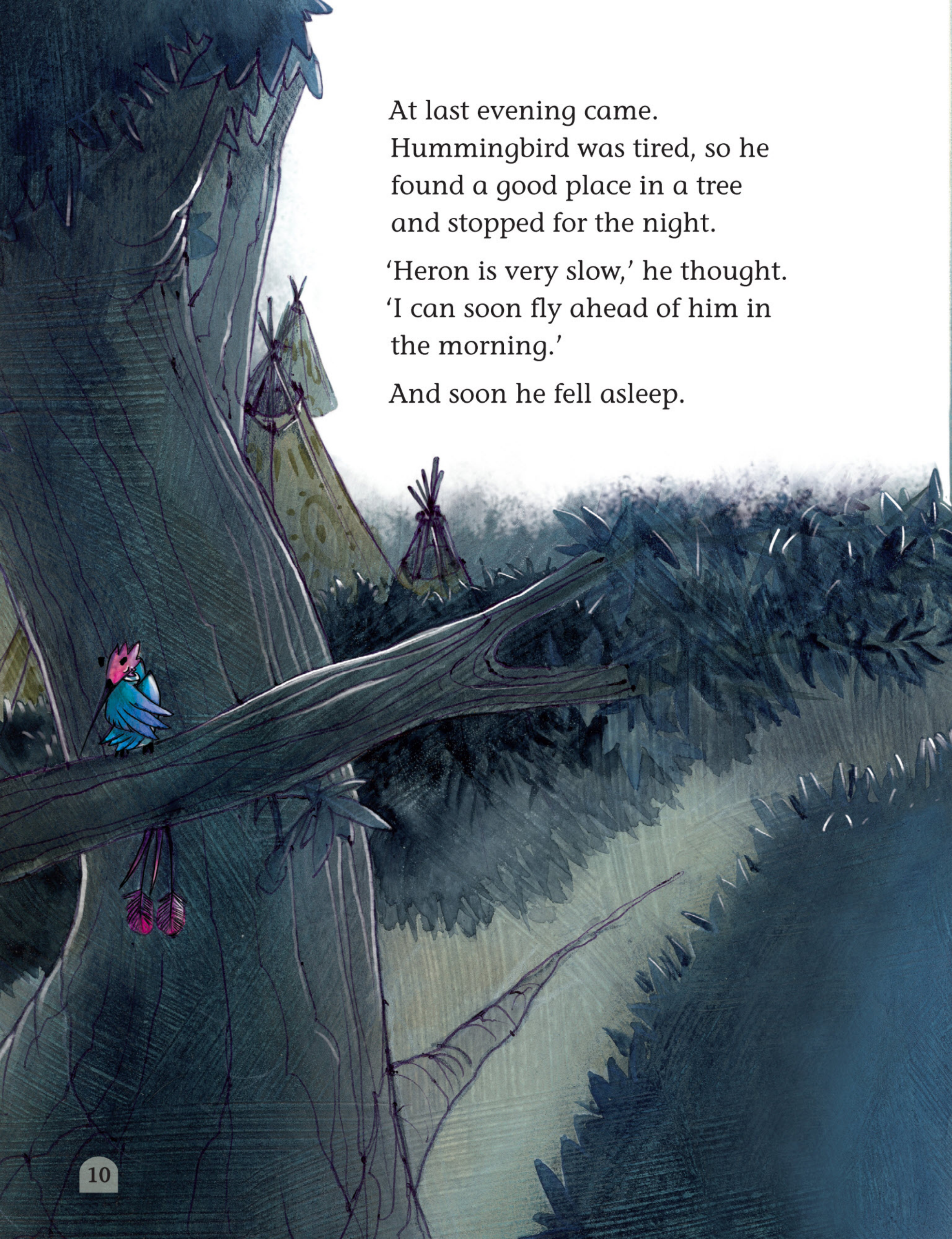


Flap! Flap! Flap!

Flutter! Flutter! Flutter!

All day the birds flew. Heron flew slowly,  
but he was strong and he never stopped.  
Hummingbird flew fast, but he went up  
and down, up and down.



A detailed illustration of a hummingbird with a pink head and blue body perched on a thick, gnarled tree branch. The bird is facing left. The background is a dark, misty forest at night. In the distance, two teepees are visible, illuminated from within, casting a warm glow. The trees are dark and silhouetted against a lighter, hazy sky. The overall mood is quiet and contemplative.

At last evening came.  
Hummingbird was tired, so he  
found a good place in a tree  
and stopped for the night.  
'Heron is very slow,' he thought.  
'I can soon fly ahead of him in  
the morning.'  
And soon he fell asleep.





Heron didn't stop.

Flap! Flap! Flap! He flew all night.

The big white moon shone on the trees  
below, but Heron didn't look down. He just  
flew and flew.





Hummingbird slept well, and in the morning he felt good. He flew fast and he soon saw Heron.

‘Good morning, my friend,’ said Heron.

Hummingbird flew ahead and looked back.

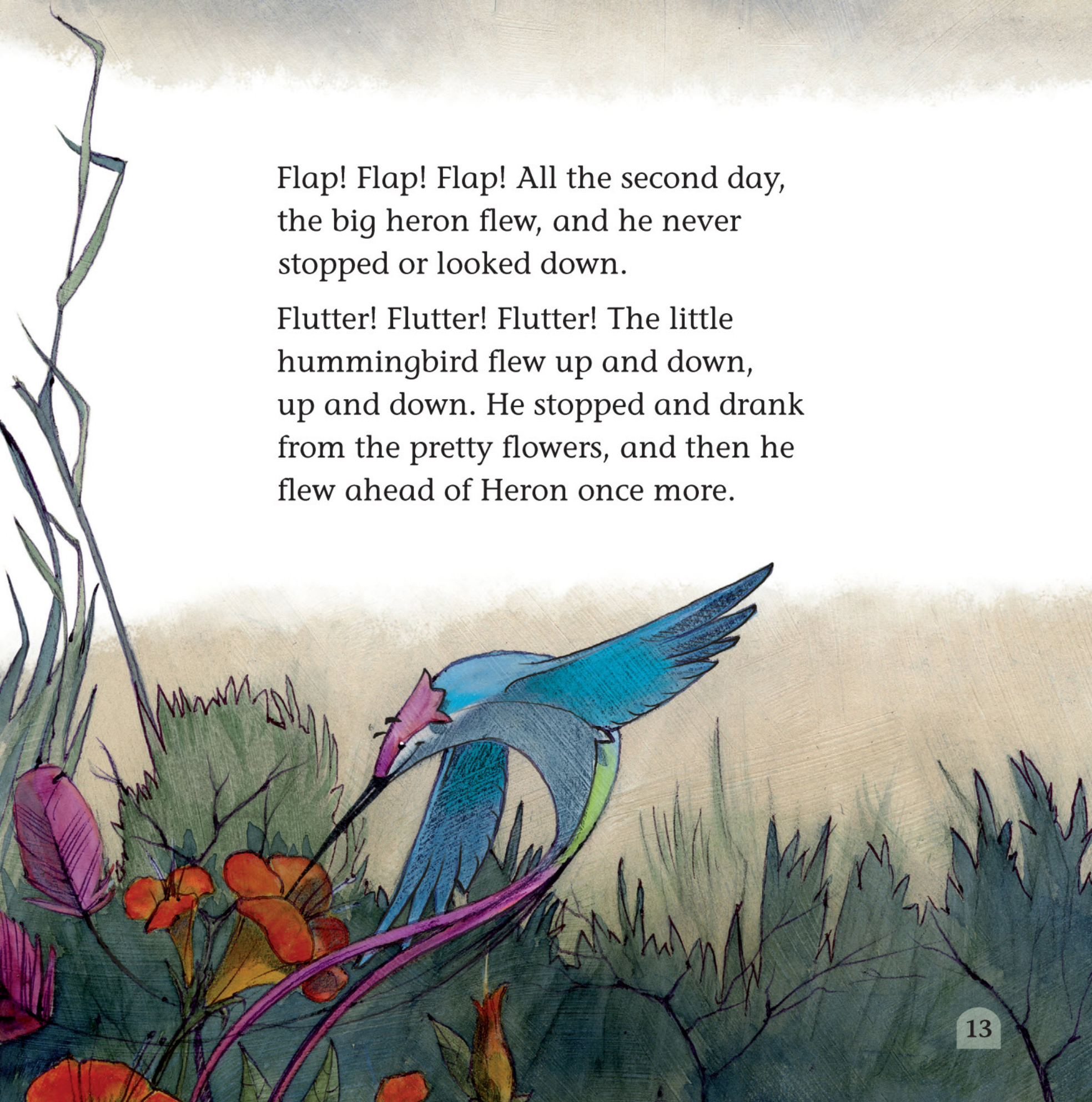
‘Aren’t you tired, Heron?’ he laughed. ‘I had a very good sleep – and I’m in front of you again!’





Flap! Flap! Flap! All the second day,  
the big heron flew, and he never  
stopped or looked down.

Flutter! Flutter! Flutter! The little  
hummingbird flew up and down,  
up and down. He stopped and drank  
from the pretty flowers, and then he  
flew ahead of Heron once more.





On the second night, Hummingbird slept  
in a tree again, but Heron flew all night.

And on the third day, Hummingbird flew  
in front of Heron again. He drank from the  
flowers and then fluttered near the big bird.

‘Aren’t you tired, Heron?’ he called. ‘Don’t  
you want to stop?’







On the third night, Hummingbird stopped in another tree.

‘We’re nearly at the river now,’ he thought. ‘In the morning I can fly ahead of Heron. I can fly to the old tree and win the race. Then I can eat all the fish in the lake!’

Heron was tired. But he felt a little wind on his wings, and he didn’t stop. He just flew all night.

Flap! Flap! Flap!



Hummingbird slept well again, and the next morning he felt good.

‘I’m going to win the race today!’ he laughed, and he flew after Heron.

But it was very windy, and Hummingbird couldn’t fly well. He fluttered his wings faster and faster but the wind pushed him back.

‘Where’s Heron?’ he thought. But he couldn’t see Heron anywhere.





Then Hummingbird saw the old tree. The old  
tree near the river.

And at the top of the tree, he saw ... Heron.  
Heron was the winner!







‘I am much faster than you!’ Hummingbird said to Heron. ‘How did you get here? How did you win?’

‘I flew all night,’ said Heron. ‘You drank from the flowers and you slept. But I felt the wind coming and I never stopped. This morning I arrived at the old tree. I’m tired and hungry, but I’m the winner.’





So after that, Hummingbird never ate fish again. He flew around the pretty flowers all day, and drank from them.

He and Heron were still good friends. But now Heron had all the fish in the lake. He was very happy.

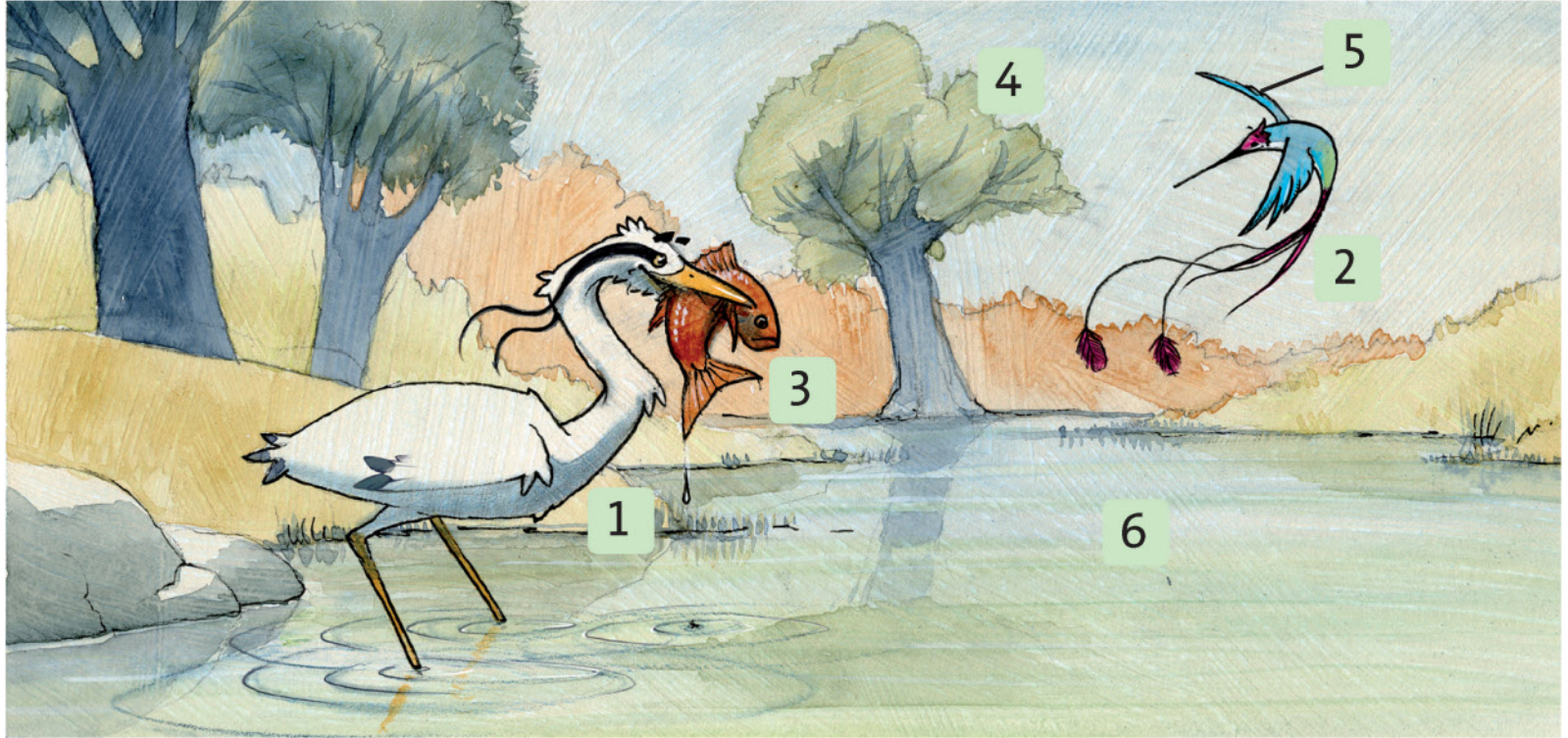
And this is why now, herons everywhere eat fish, and hummingbirds drink from flowers.





# Exercises

## 1 Write the words.



1 heron

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_

5 \_\_\_\_\_

6 \_\_\_\_\_

## 2 Write the words.

at the top of ~~near~~ in front of above ahead below

1 Hummingbird and Heron lived near a big lake.

2 'Go!' cried Hummingbird, and the two birds flew up \_\_\_\_\_ the lake.

3 Hummingbird was very fast. He soon flew \_\_\_\_\_ of Heron.

4 The moon shone on the trees \_\_\_\_\_, but Heron didn't look down.

5 'I'm \_\_\_\_\_ you again!' laughed Hummingbird.

6 Heron was the winner. He was \_\_\_\_\_ the old tree.



### 3 Make sentences about the story.

Heron

Hummingbird

was tall and slow.

flew up and down.

liked little fish.

was the winner of the race.

liked big fish.

was small and fast.

didn't look down or stop.

was the loser of the race.

1 Heron was tall and slow.

2

3

4

5

6

7

8



### 4 Find the page and answer the questions.

1 Where did Heron and Hummingbird live?

page 2 Near a big lake.

2 How many days was the race?

\_\_\_\_\_

3 Where did Hummingbird sleep on the first night?

\_\_\_\_\_

4 Why couldn't Hummingbird fly well on the fourth day?

\_\_\_\_\_

5 Who had all the fish in the lake after the race?

\_\_\_\_\_



# Glossary

**ahead of** *ahead of Heron*



**at the top of** *at the top of the tree*



**below** *below the moon*



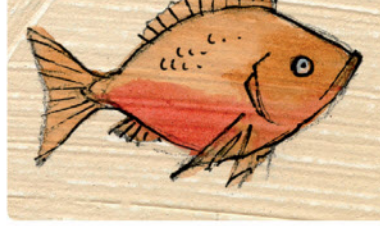
**bored** when you have nothing interesting to do

**enough** no more / less than you need / want

**fast** moving quickly; not slow

**fell asleep** past tense of  
**fall asleep:** to go to sleep

**fish**



**fish**



**flap** to move up and down

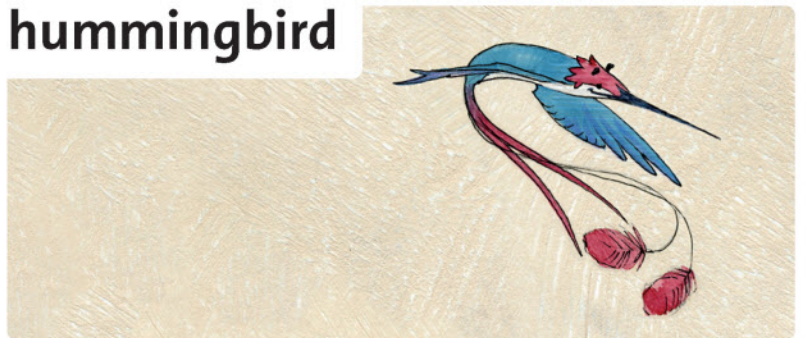
**flutter** to move very quickly, like a small bird

**fly** to go through the air

**heron**



**hummingbird**



**idea** something you think of; a thought about what to do

**lake**

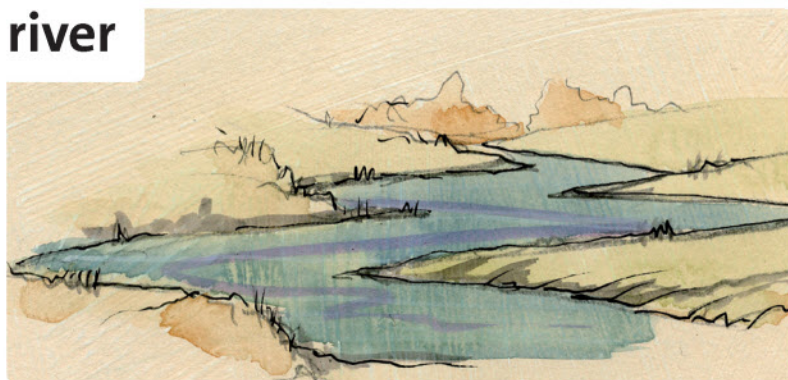




loser



river



moon



shone past tense of shine:  
to give light

tree



near *near the river*

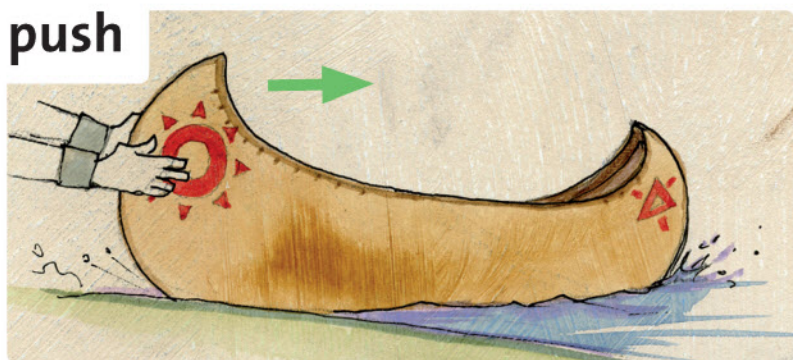


wind

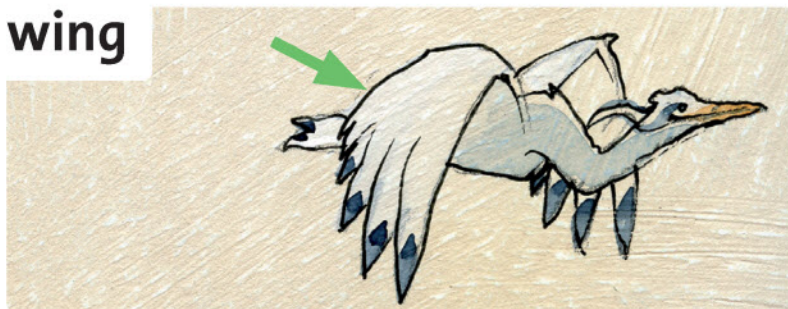


pretty nice to look at

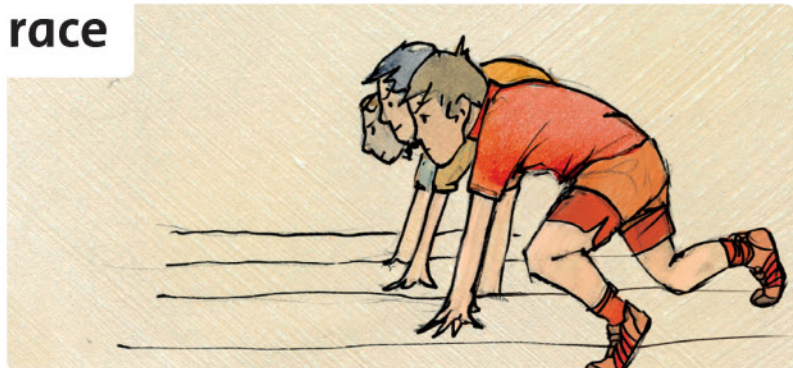
push



wing



race



winner





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## Level 2: 150 headwords

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'Let's have a race,' the hummingbird said to the heron. But who was the winner?

A retelling of the classic story for learners of English

Retold by Rachel Bladon  
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**Word count for this story: 862**

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