



Level 2

The Ugly Duckling



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The Ugly Duckling

Retold by Sue Arengo
Illustrated by Mirella Mariani



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It is summer. A duck sits on her eggs. She sits and she waits. She waits and waits.

At last the eggs open.

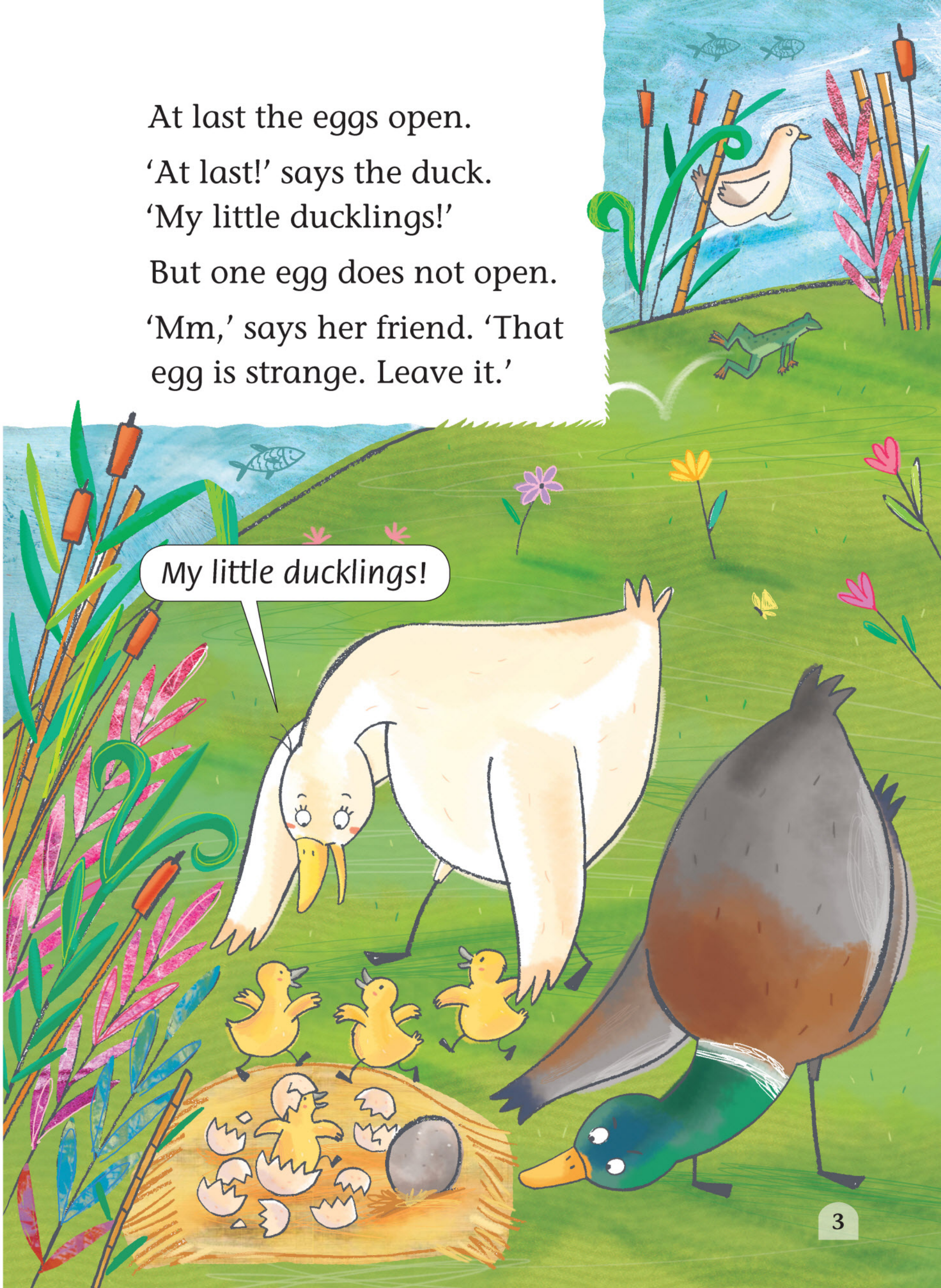
‘At last!’ says the duck.

‘My little ducklings!’

But one egg does not open.

‘Mm,’ says her friend. ‘That egg is strange. Leave it.’

My little ducklings!



'Leave my egg?' says Mother Duck.

'No. I can't leave it.'

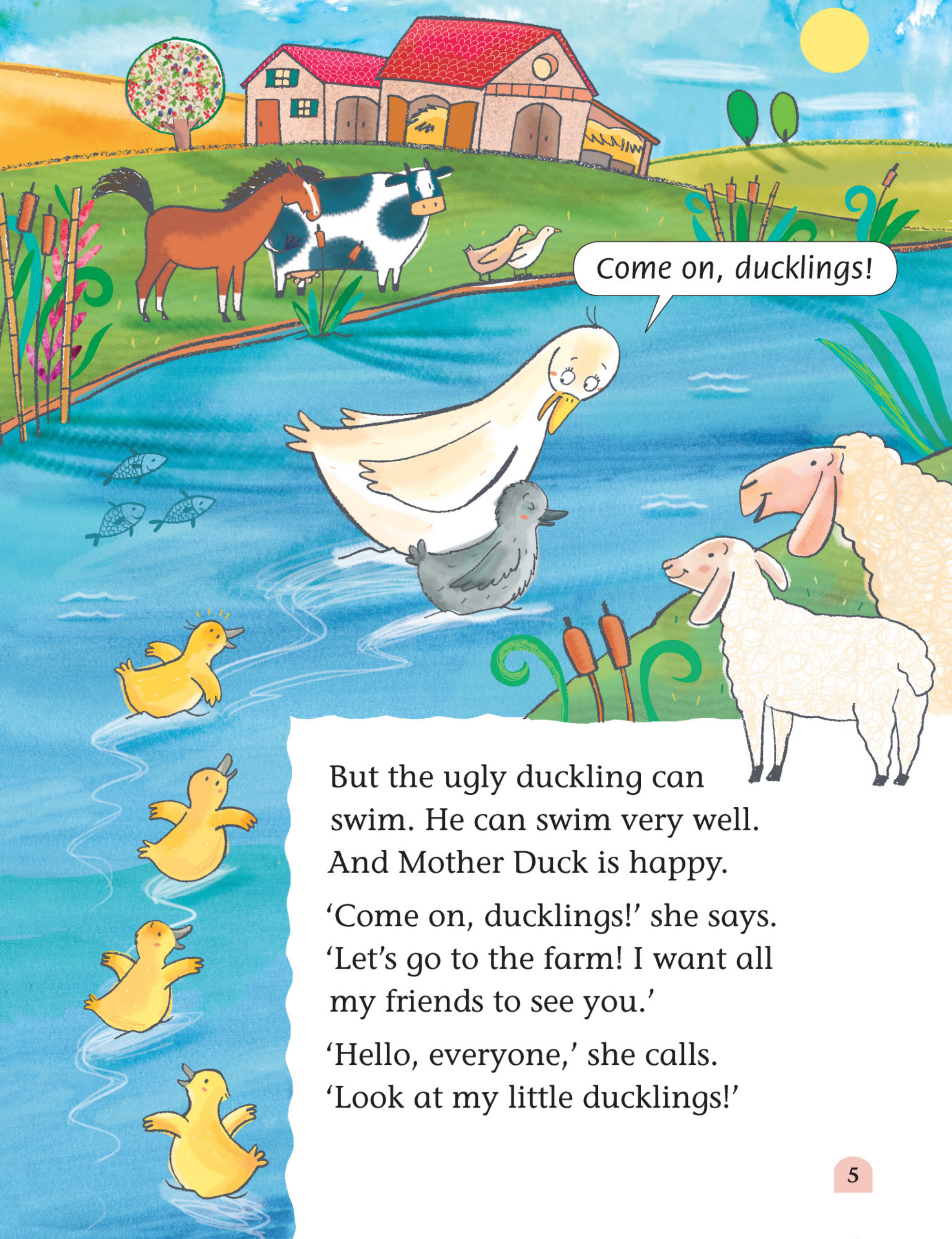
She sits down again and she waits.

At last the egg opens.



'Oh!' says Mother Duck to her friend.

'You're right. He is strange. What an ugly duckling!'



Come on, ducklings!

But the ugly duckling can swim. He can swim very well. And Mother Duck is happy.

‘Come on, ducklings!’ she says. ‘Let’s go to the farm! I want all my friends to see you.’

‘Hello, everyone,’ she calls. ‘Look at my little ducklings!’

‘This is my family,’ says Mother Duck.

‘Very nice. Very nice,’ say the ducks. ‘But that duckling is very big. He’s ugly!’

‘He is strange,’ they say. ‘He’s an ugly duckling.’

One of the ducks pecks him.





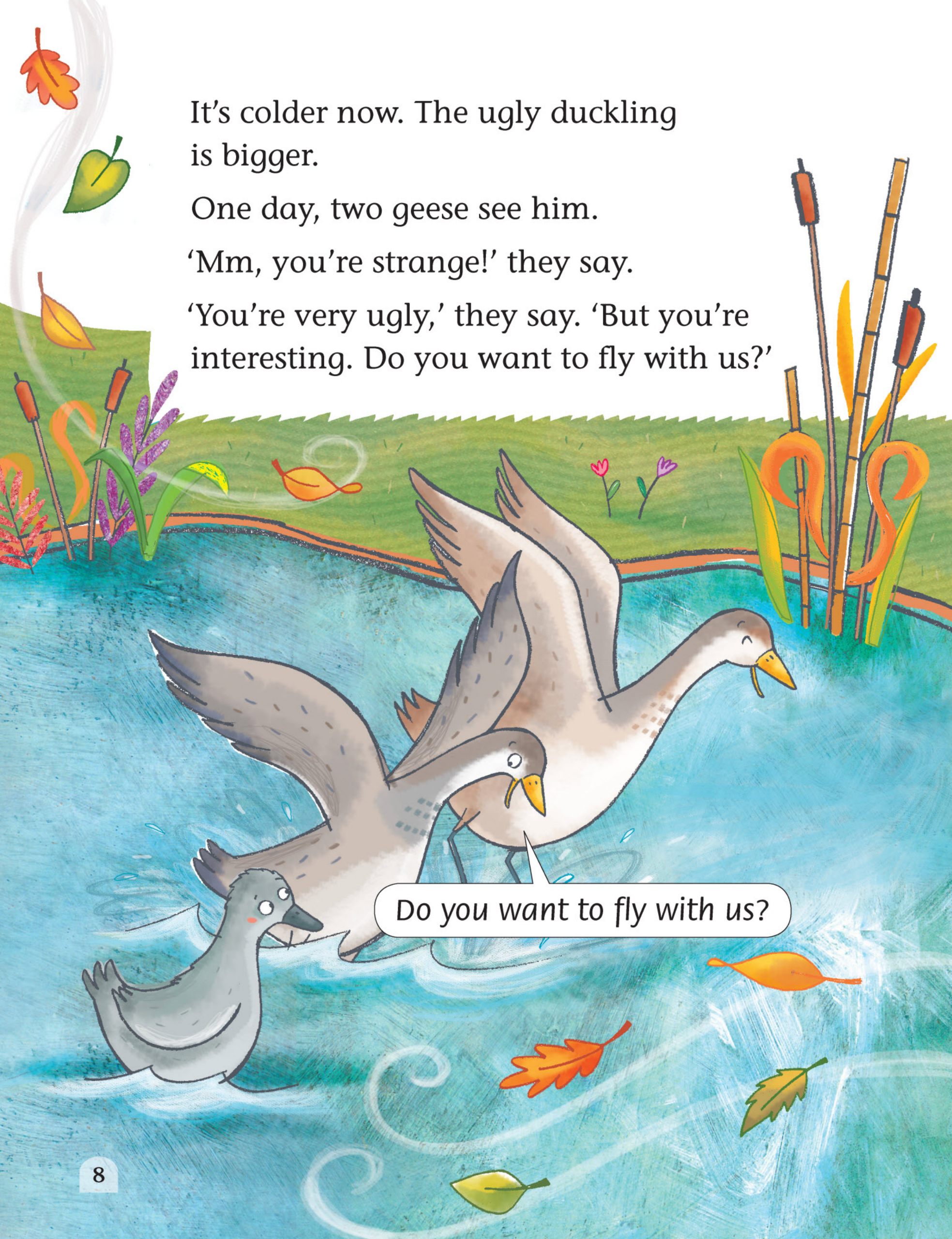
Every day the farm girl comes.
Every day she kicks him.

‘Go away, you ugly duckling!’
she says.

So one day the ugly duckling
runs away. He runs away from
the farm.

‘Go! Yes, go!’ say his brothers
and sisters. ‘You’re strange!
You’re ugly!’



The illustration depicts a pond scene. In the foreground, a small, grey, ugly duckling swims towards the left. In the middle ground, two larger, white and grey geese are swimming towards the right. The background features a green grassy bank with several reeds and cattails. Some leaves are floating in the water, and others are on the bank. The overall style is a soft, painterly illustration.

It's colder now. The ugly duckling
is bigger.

One day, two geese see him.

'Mm, you're strange!' they say.

'You're very ugly,' they say. 'But you're
interesting. Do you want to fly with us?'

Do you want to fly with us?



But suddenly there is a bang. Bang!
Bang! And the geese are dead.
There are some men. Men with guns
and dogs. The ugly duckling is afraid.



A big dog comes. He sees the ugly duckling. And he looks at him. Then the dog swims away.

‘I am ugly,’ says the ugly duckling.
‘So he doesn’t want to eat me.’

The ugly duckling runs away. He comes to an old hut and he goes in.

In the hut there is a woman, a cat, and a hen. The woman is old and she can't see.

'What's this?' she says. 'A duck? Ah! You can give me some eggs.'

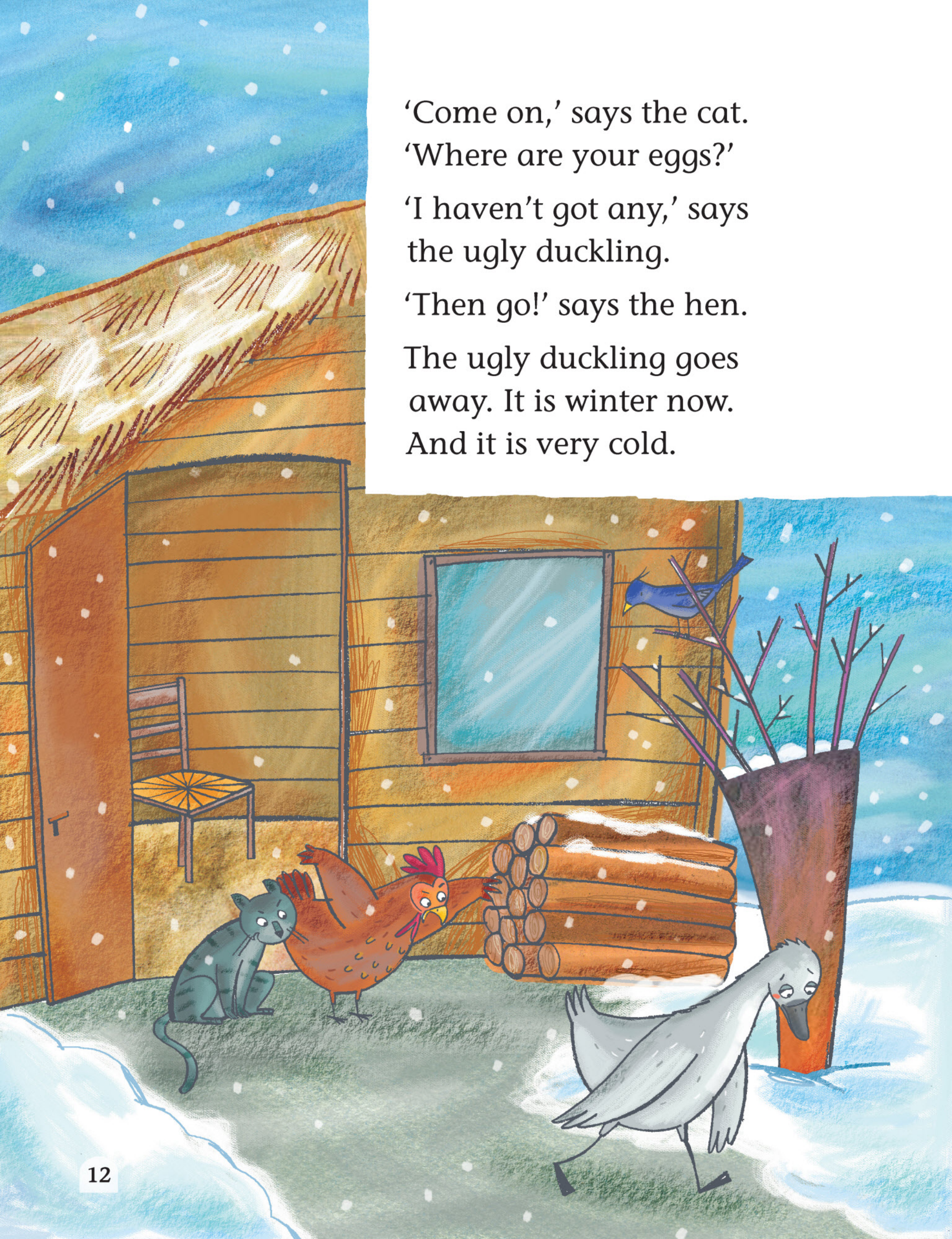


‘Come on,’ says the cat.
‘Where are your eggs?’

‘I haven’t got any,’ says
the ugly duckling.

‘Then go!’ says the hen.

The ugly duckling goes
away. It is winter now.
And it is very cold.

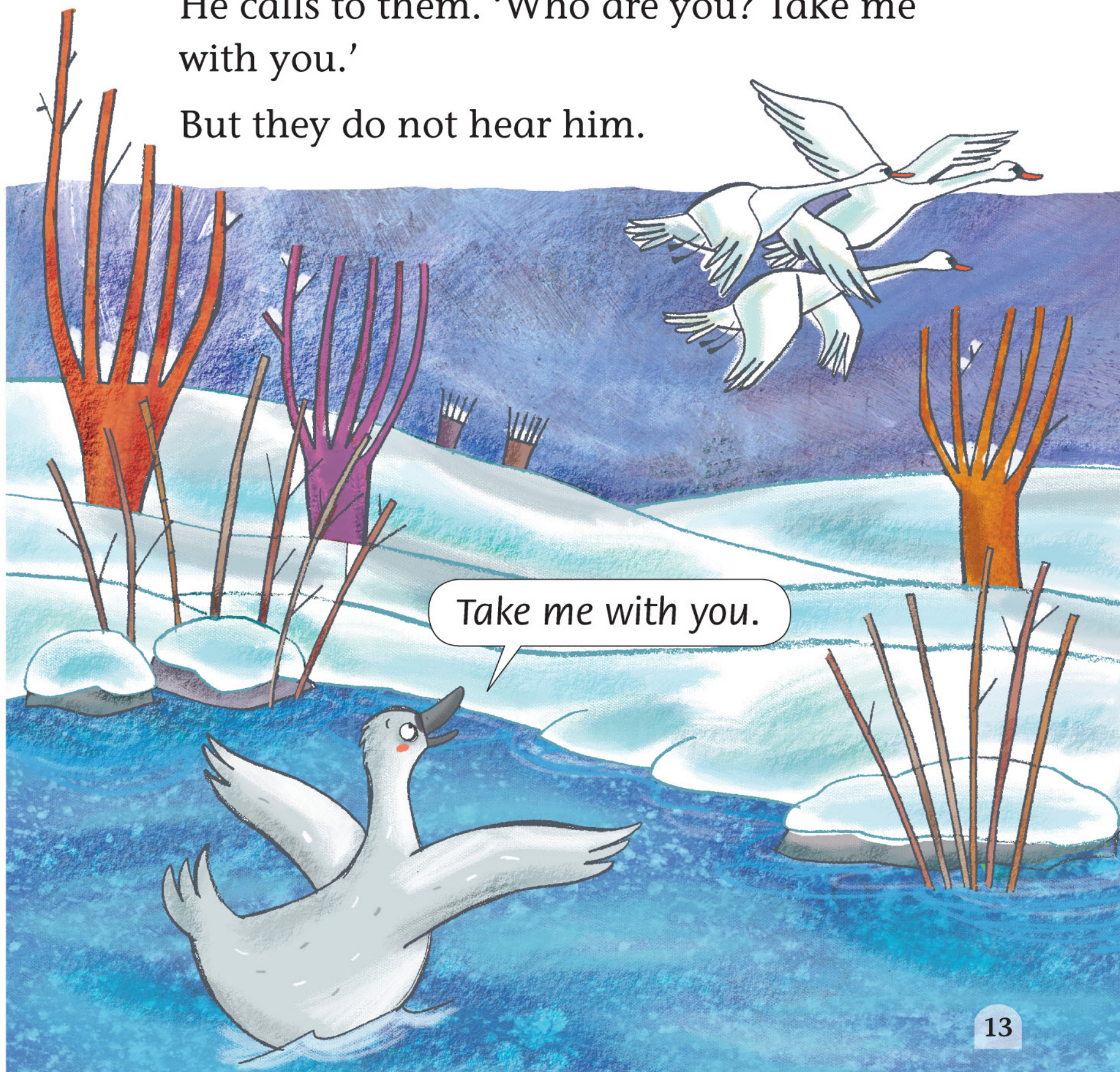


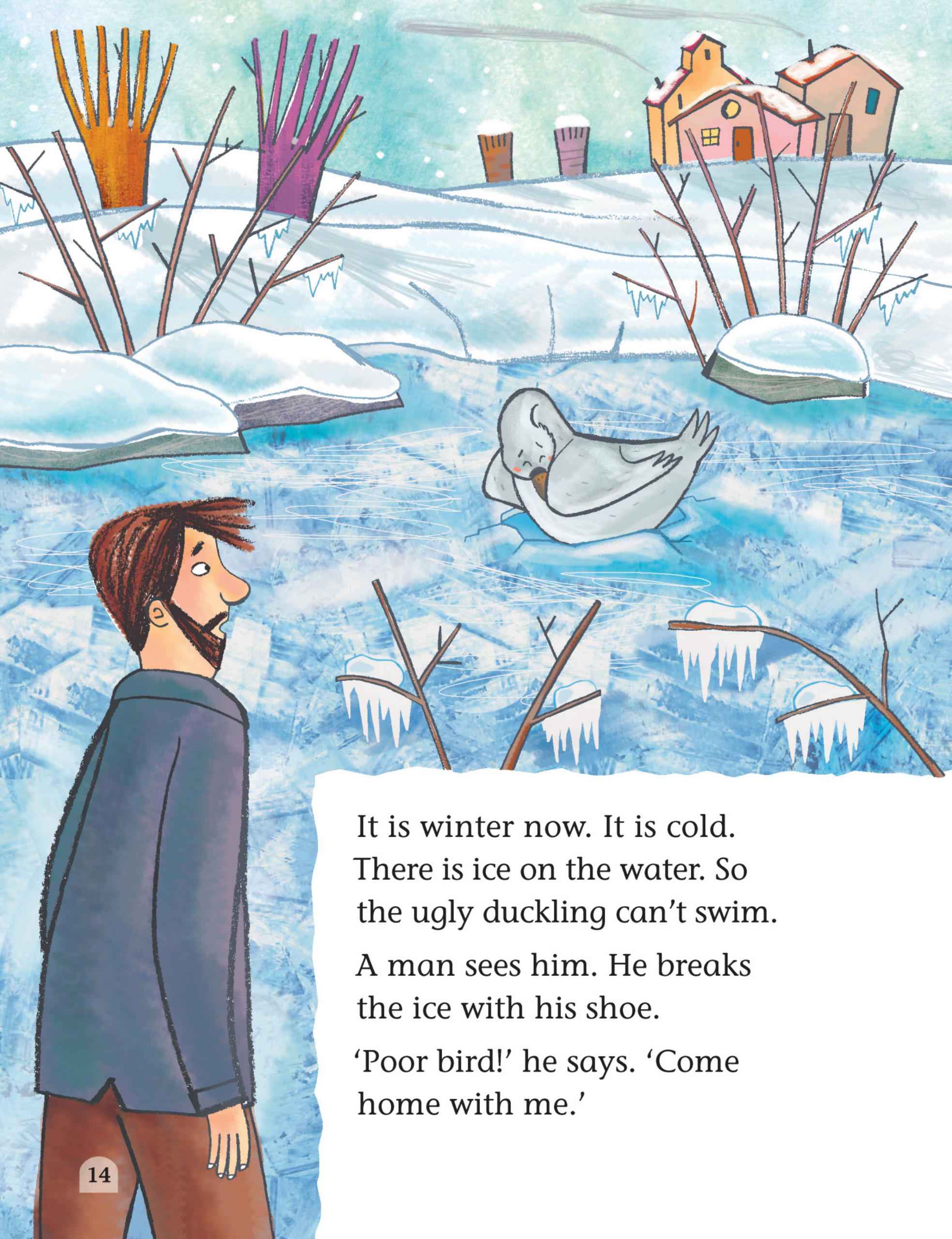
One evening the ugly duckling sees something wonderful and strange. Three swans! Three big, beautiful swans.

‘Oh,’ he cries. ‘What beautiful birds! Big, beautiful, and free.’

He calls to them. ‘Who are you? Take me with you.’

But they do not hear him.





It is winter now. It is cold.
There is ice on the water. So
the ugly duckling can't swim.
A man sees him. He breaks
the ice with his shoe.
'Poor bird!' he says. 'Come
home with me.'

The man's children want to play.

'Come here!' they say.

But the ugly duckling runs away. He falls into the milk. The children laugh.

'Come here!' they say.

Then he falls into the butter. Oh dear!
What a mess!



Then he falls into the flour.

‘Get out!’ cries the man’s wife.

‘Get out of my house!’

The ugly duckling runs. Suddenly
he starts to fly.

The door is open. He flies up into
the sky.





He can fly! He can fly!

‘I can fly!’ says the ugly duckling.

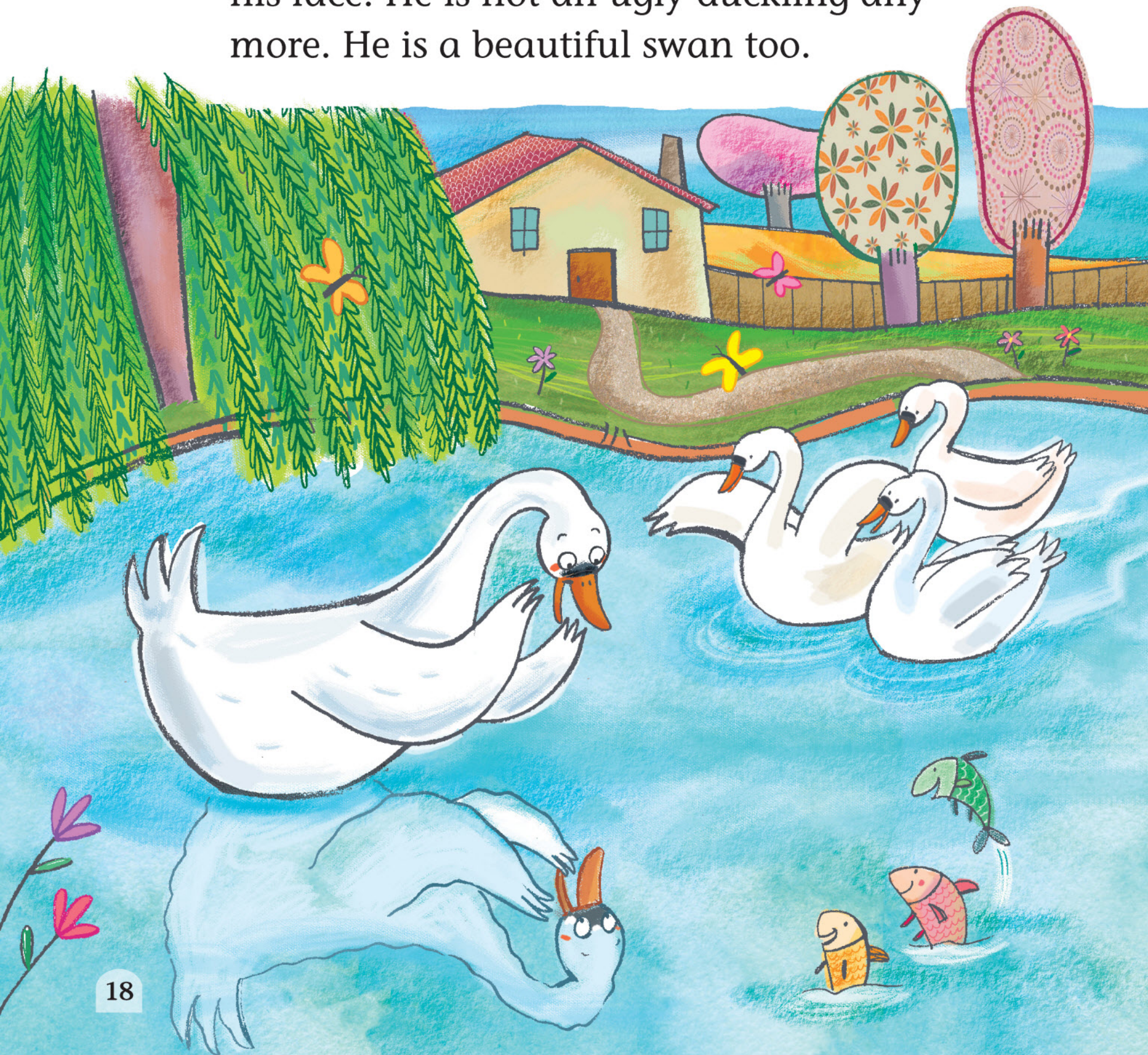
And now the sun comes out. It is spring.
Then he sees a garden. A garden with
a river.

‘What a beautiful garden!’ he says.
And he flies down.

He sees something. He sees the swans.
He sees the three swans.

‘Oh! They are beautiful!’ he says. ‘I must
speak to them.’ But he is afraid.

He looks down at the water and he sees
his face. He is not an ugly duckling any
more. He is a beautiful swan too.



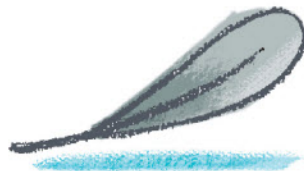


It's true. It's true! He's not a duckling.
He's not a duck. He's a swan. He's a
swan too.

Some children run down to the river.

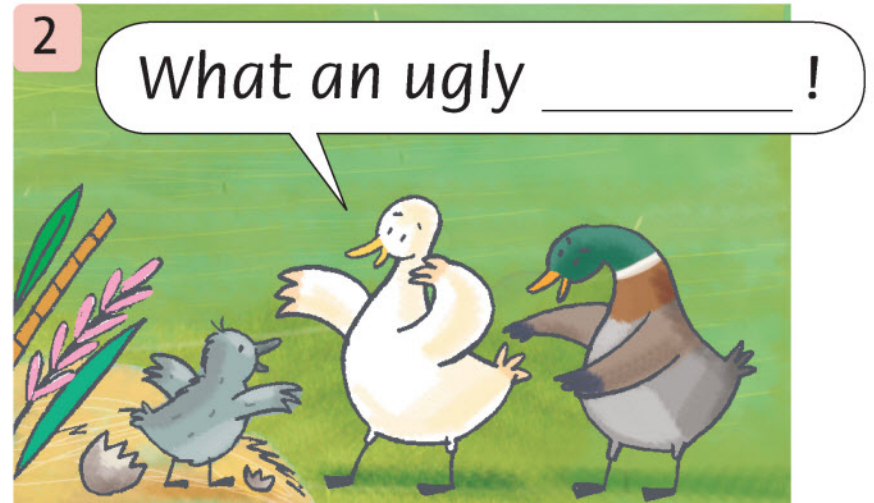
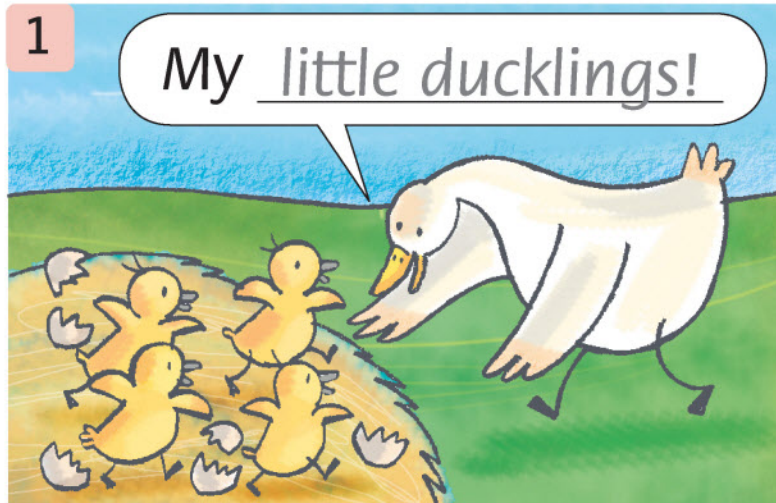
'Look, Mother!' they say. 'A new swan!
Look! Oh, look! Look at the new swan!'

'Yes,' she says. 'Isn't he beautiful!'



Exercises

1 What do they say? Write the words.



2 Where is the ugly duckling? Write the words.



1 in the egg



2 in the _____



3 in the _____



4 in the _____



5 in the _____



6 in the _____

3 Make sentences about the story.
Then write them in the correct order.

He looks down in a river ...

A man takes him home ...

The ugly duckling runs ...

One day the ugly duckling
runs away ...

He comes to an old
woman's hut ...

The ducks say, ...

but the man's wife says,
'Get out!'

'That duckling is ugly!'

but the old woman's hen
says, 'Go!'

and he sees a beautiful swan.

and suddenly he starts to fly.

from his brothers and sisters.

1 The ducks say, 'That duckling is ugly!'

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

4 Put the words in the correct order.

1 me eggs You give can some.

You can give me some eggs.

2 falls Then butter into the he.

3 more ugly any He not duckling an is.

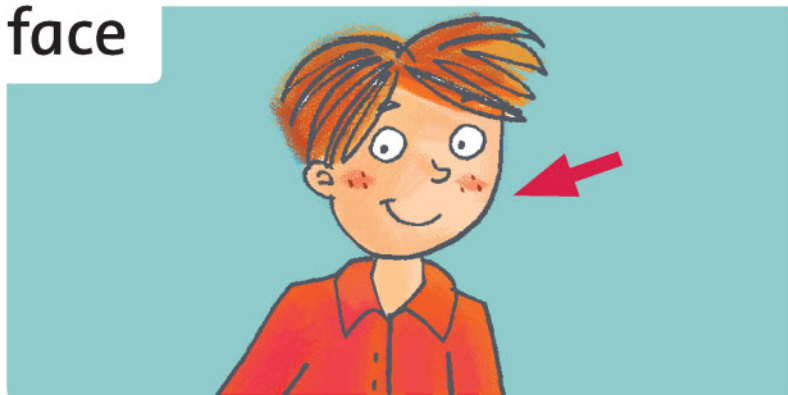
4 ducks him One pecks the of.

Picture Dictionary

afraid *He's afraid.*



face



birds



farm



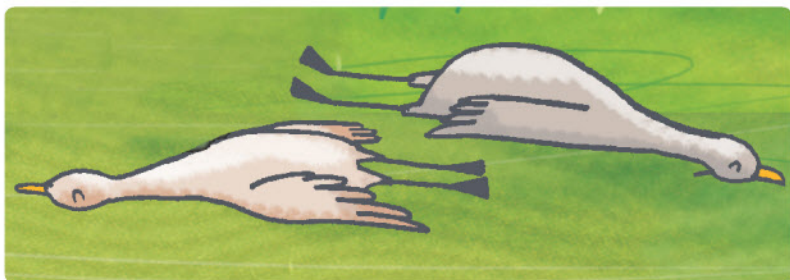
cold *He's cold.*



fly



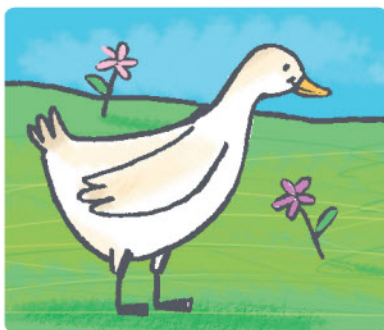
dead *They're dead.*



garden



duck



duckling



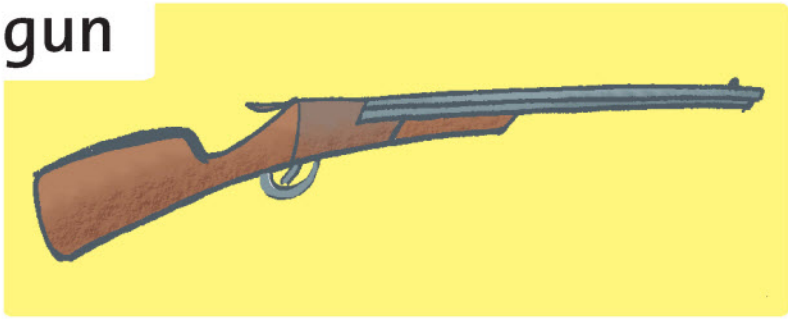
goose



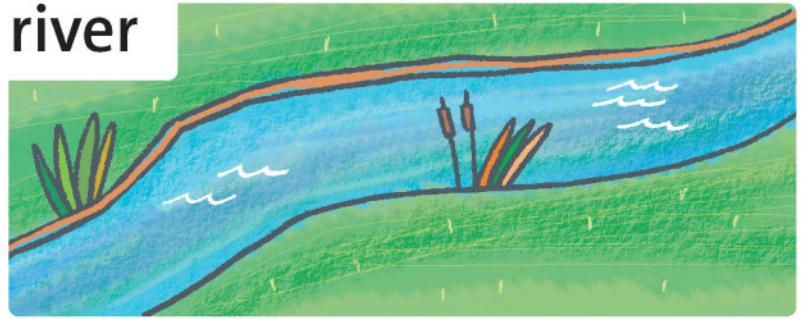
geese



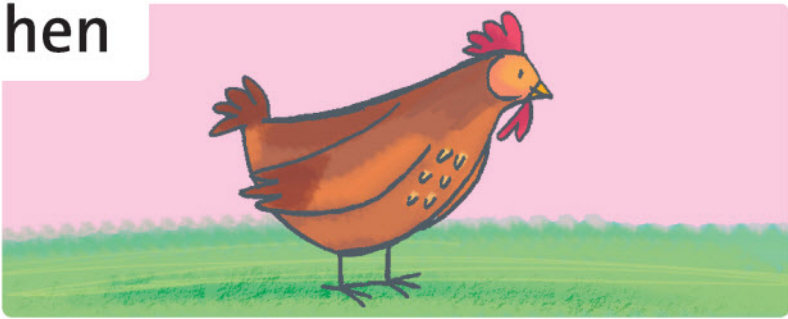
gun



river



hen



spring *It's spring.*



ice



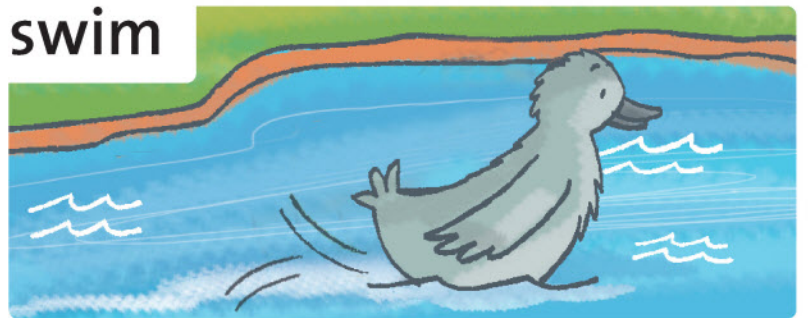
swan



kick



swim



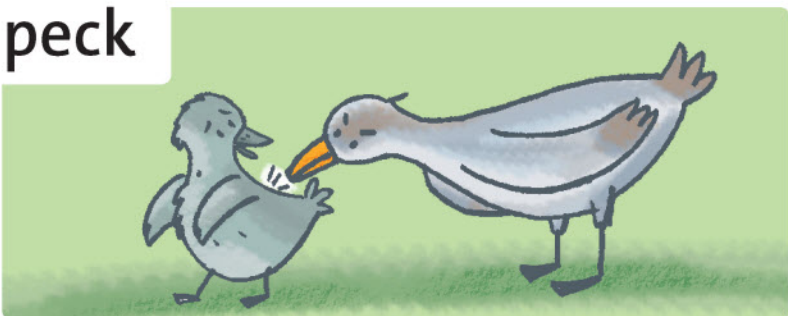
laugh



ugly *He's ugly.*



peck



winter *It's winter.*



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- Three Billy-Goats

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Level 2

The Ugly Duckling

Follow the adventures of the famous duckling.
Why is he big, strange, and ugly?

A retelling of the classic story for learners of English

Retold by Sue Arengo
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Word count for this story: 689

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