

Still Water Adventure

by Janet Gingold 🐸 Art by Julianna Swaney





“Daddy!” Sophie shouted. “Look! There are clouds in the water!” “Yes,” Daddy whispered, “the lake is so still it’s like a mirror. When you jump on the dock it makes ripples.”

The spreading ripples rumbled the cloud pictures. Sophie stopped jumping. The ripples vanished. Perfect clouds reappeared.

“Can we go in the canoe? Can I paddle?” Sophie whispered.

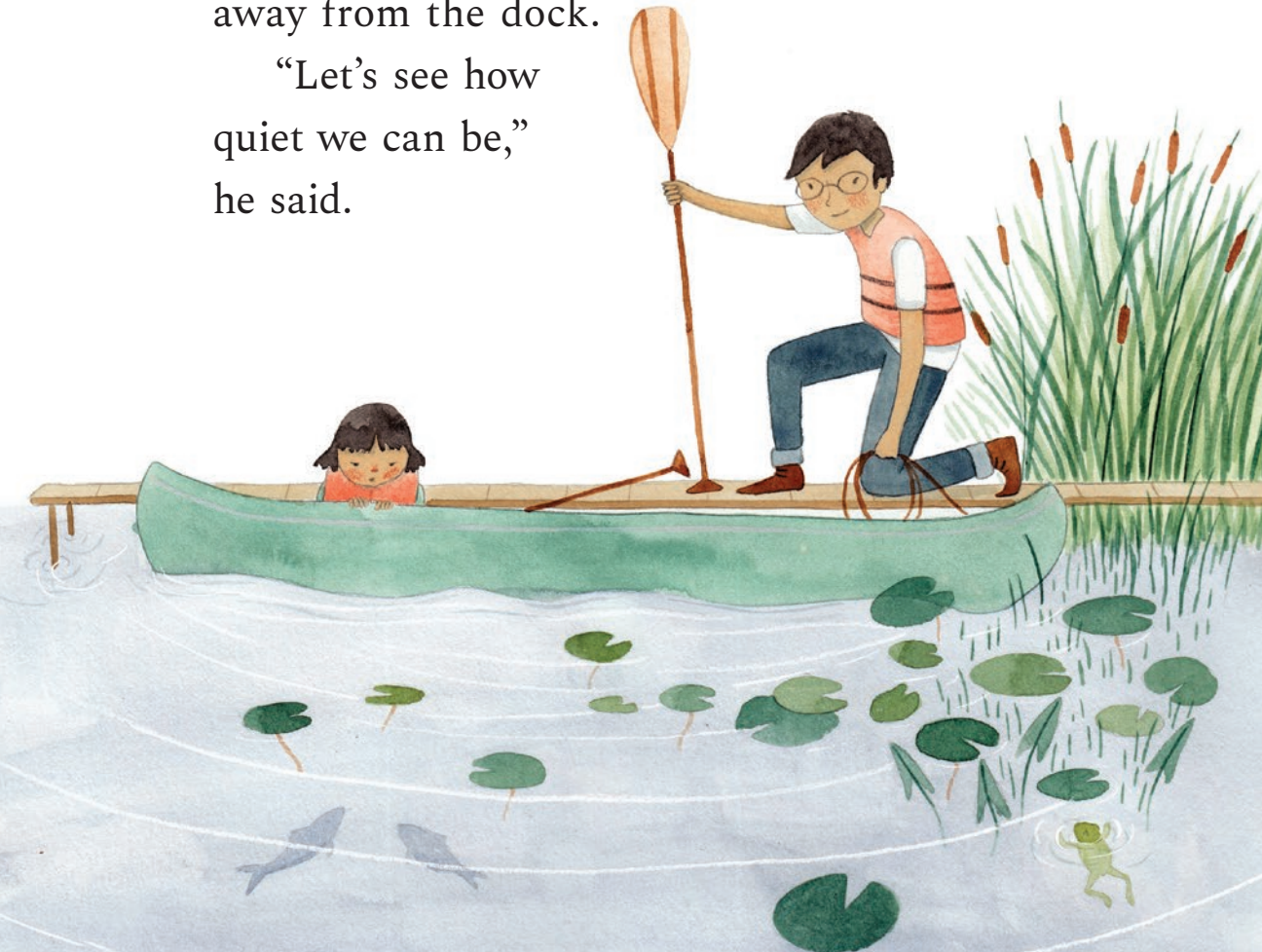
“Yes.” Daddy smiled. He held out the life jacket for her.

Sophie put on her jacket. Daddy clipped her straps together.

“You get the front seat,” said Daddy.

The canoe wobbled when Sophie stepped in, sending new waves across the lake. Sophie sat quietly. The water was still again. Daddy handed her a paddle and showed her how to hold it. Smoothly, he sat in the back seat and pushed the canoe away from the dock.

“Let’s see how quiet we can be,” he said.



Sophie dipped her paddle in the water. It gurgled and splashed and banged against the canoe.

“Oops. Too loud.” Sophie giggled. She watched her father slice the water silently with his paddle. Tiny ripples spread out behind them as the canoe cut through the water. With a silky rustle, the canoe slid over a crowd of green, heart-shaped leaves. They swirled in gentle circles when she dipped her paddle. Peering over the side, Sophie saw stringy stems tying each heart to the pebbly bottom. Among the leaves, yellow blossoms smiled at the sun.





The canoe glided away from the lilies. A dragonfly landed on Sophie's paddle. "Hello, Rainbow Wing," she said. It wiggled its tail and flew away.

Sophie paddled as quietly as she could.

"Let's just float near the shore," said Daddy.

Sophie took a big breath when a turtle plopped off a log into the lake. Its short legs stroked through the clear water.

When its head popped up beside the canoe, Sophie saw red and yellow stripes on its neck. She looked deep into its shiny black eye.

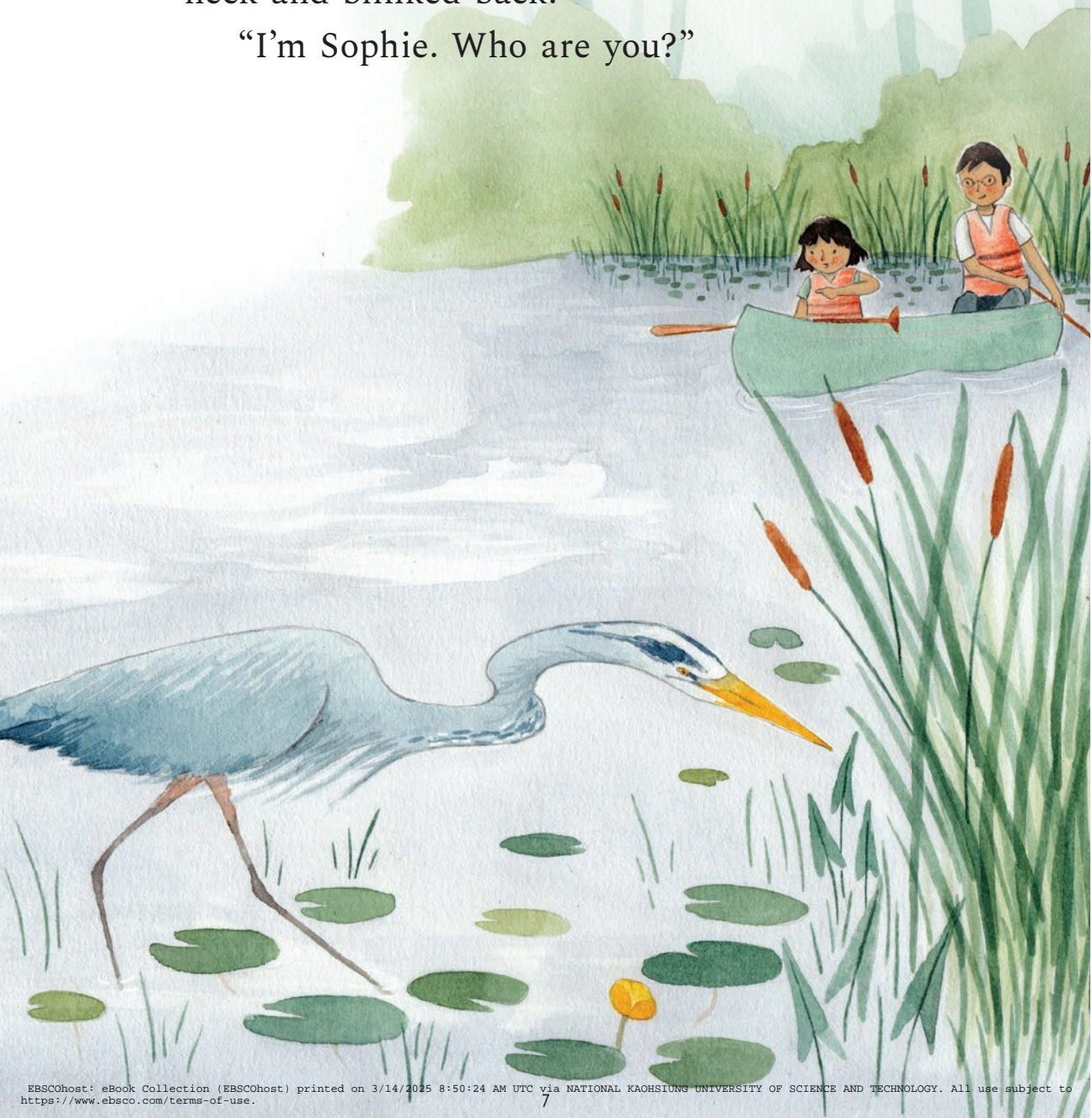
“You have four paddles. We just have two,” she said. She leaned closer to look at its toes. The turtle disappeared beneath the still surface.



“Look!” Daddy whispered. “A heron!”

The tall bird in the shallows stretched its long, curved neck. It blinked a clear yellow eye at Sophie. Sophie stretched her neck and blinked back.

“I’m Sophie. Who are you?”



With powerful flaps of its great, grey wings, the heron rose above them. It folded its neck between its shoulders. Its long legs pointed straight behind. Too soon, it disappeared over the trees on the far side of the lake.

“Oh, Daddy, was I too loud? Will it come back?”

“Maybe it was time for it to go home. It’s time for us to go home, too. We can come again tomorrow.”

Sophie placed her paddle in the water and pulled. She watched little whirlpools float away. Water dripped from her paddle, drawing tiny circles inside the big circle carved by the canoe when they turned homeward. The clouds glowed pink and golden.

Sophie’s mother waved from the shore. Daddy guided the canoe back to its place beside the dock.

“Mommy! We saw clouds and flowers
and a dragonfly and a turtle and the hugest
heron, all in one day! Tomorrow, you can
come, too. But,” she whispered, “you have to
be very, very quiet!” 🐸





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ISBN 978-1-64262-184-6