



BEDTIME STORIES

TEXT BY
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ILLUSTRATIONS BY
CHIARA TOMATI



DU LAC ET DU PARC
GRAND RESORT



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Bedtime Stories

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*I would like to introduce the characters of this story
– begins the Lake.
Then, huffing and puffing...*



DUCKS ON STAGE

***I**n a world just one step away from here lives Lorely the duck, with her three ducklings: Lilly, Lolly and Lally. The little family lives in a lake within a large park. And the Lake lovingly embraces them all, holding them in its waters. The flowers, trees, and all the other animals live in harmony around its shores...*

I would like to introduce the characters of this story – begins the Lake. Then, huffing and puffing, he drags Lorely and the three little ducks out of the current..

“This way you’ll get to know them better. Come on you there, introduce yourselves!” urges the Lake. Lorely the duck is the main character of this story, but she really does not like being in the spotlight. So she steps forward, wrapping a leaf around her head like a bandana, hardly visible on her green and brown feathers, and explains: “I use this to protect myself from the sun, but I feel it also comforts me in my daily chores. I am a very busy mummy duck,

with three ducklings to look after, and I have so many things to take care of ...”.

Mummy duck does not even have the time to complete her speech, because her daughter jumps in and “My turn! My turn!” shouts Lally. She grabs a flower to adorn her head and begins: “I am the only girl in the family, and that’s why my brothers love me so much. When I grow up I want to be a singer, and then I hope one day I can leave the boring life here around this lake, and become a star!”. She then opens her wings and bows and, before turning around, bats her long eyelashes in search of consensus and returns to her place.

Two roses look at her going away from them and whisper: “A duck singer? Everybody knows that ducks are out of tune even when they speak!” “I would not worry so much about this, Roselle” comments the other rose, called Rosette “but if today she picked a tulip to dress her head, this means she’s so vain that, who knows, tomorrow she might choose one of us”. And then they both sigh: “Ah, how hard is the life of us queens of flowers”.

“Hurry up Lilly, it’s your turn, now” – calls the Lake. Lilly, a skinny and ruffled boy-duck, can hardly walk. Staggering to the left and to the right, he manages to reach the speaker’s spot. “I am Lilly, the oldest son of the family” he says, “I am not so fond of the lake

waters and I much prefer the park lawns where I can make friends with other animals and children. But I have to be very careful, because the slightest breeze can make me lose my balance and fall”.

“Okay Lilly, that’s enough. Come on, Lolly, it’s your turn.” announces the Lake.

“Lolly, Lolly! ... where is he?” asks the worried mother.

“He was here a second ago!” says Lolly.

And then in a weak voice: “Not that I have seen him, but ...” says Lilly, with a guilty air.

“But what?” say all the others at the same time. “But I bet he’s underwater again ...”.

“Lake, oh Lake, you deal with it please! Only you can fish him out!”

The Lake puffs again and here comes Lolly.

“Lolly” says his mom, telling him off, “what were you doing? It’s your turn now!”.

“Yeah mom, I’m sorry, you’re right – says Lolly apologizing. “I just felt a little peckish ...”

With his totally opposite build, the youngest of the three duck brothers is in fact the most plumpy and glutton, and he is wearing a colourful snorkelling mask to have a better underwater view.

“Unlike my brother, as you have certainly noticed, I by far prefer being underwater and play with the fish that dash here and there.”

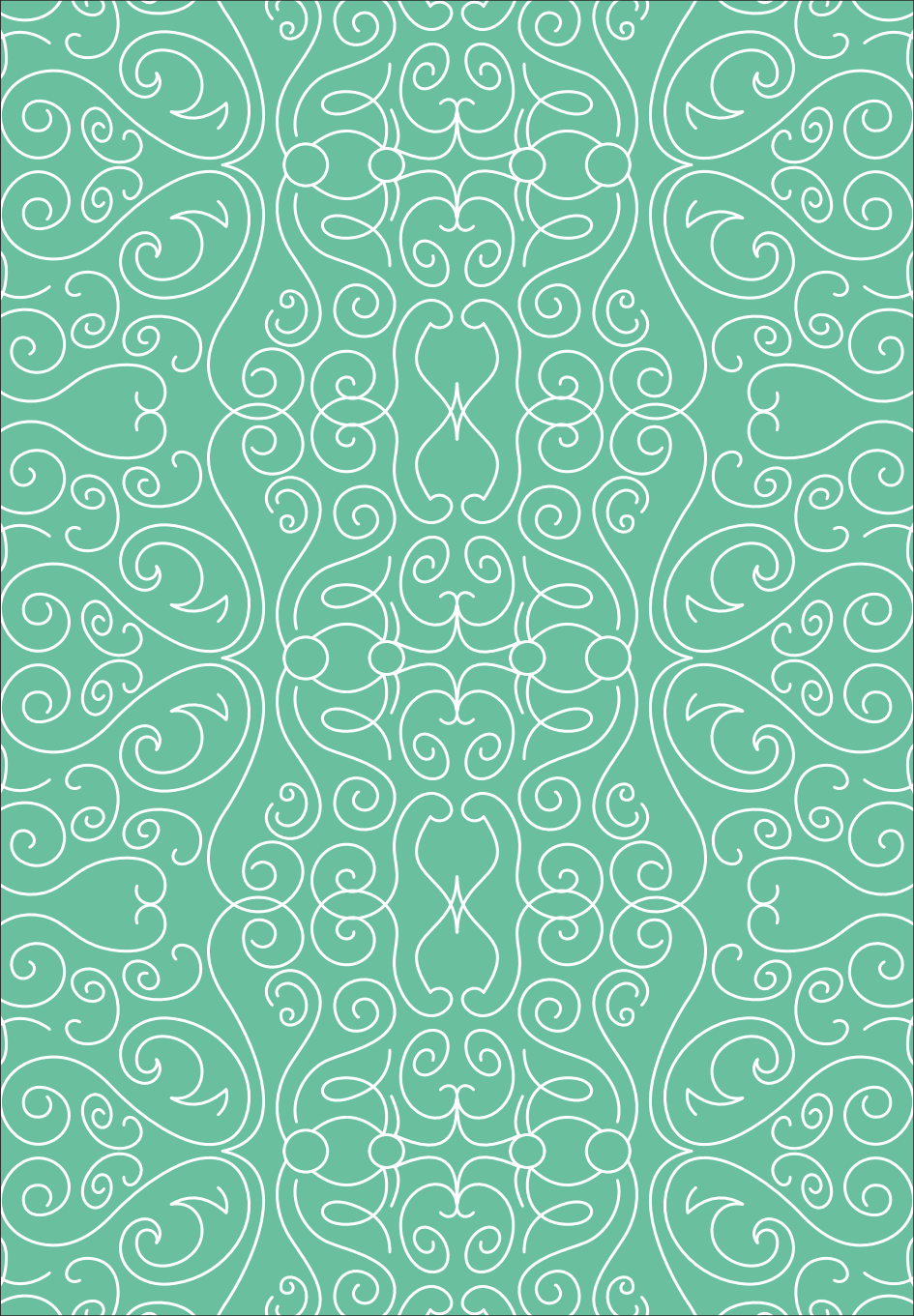
“And eat” adds Lally, with a disapproving tone,
“always eat!”.

“All right, all right” says the Lake cutting it short.

“Now, my dear ducks, we are all here.

The story can begin...

*The trees bend their branches over the Lake, the
curtain closes, to be re-opened soon.*





*"It's a black thing with two large yellow pupils,
and it is resting right on your back".*

ZIZZY THE FLY

*B*uzzzzzzzz. Buzzzzzzzz.”

“What is it? Lake, can you hear that too? Asked Lorely knocking with her wing on the water surface.

“What, Lorely?” asked the Lake, full of curiosity.
“This noise. It seems it’s coming right from here” replied the duck.

“Here! My feathers are quaky quaky quaky” quacked Lorely spinning and flapping her wings.
“Hold on!” said the Lake, “I can see it!”.

“Who? Where? What? What?” asked the duck, quite panicky.
“It’s a black thing with two large yellow pupils, and it is resting right on your back.”

“Eek!” screamed the duck, “take it off me, now!”.
And she kept flapping her wings and shaking her

head so hard that her leaf-bandana fell off. But that tickling was still there...

And then she suddenly heard a tiny little voice say:
“Please Lorely duck, don’t shake me off.”

“But who are you?” asked the duck, annoyed indeed,
“and what are you doing walking around on me?”.

“I am Zizzy the fly” replied the tiny bug “and I’m a little tired, so I was hoping I could take a lift on your back to reach the other side of the lake.”

“NO way!” said Lorely the duck, ruling out any hope for a friendly deal. “Get off, quickly!”

Then she started to shake and shake, until Zizzy the fly fell into the water and disappeared from view.

“Lorely, Lorely” admonished the Lake “poor Zizzy! You know that flies can’t swim ...”.

“Yes, it’s true, but it should not land on my back without even asking for my permission...” said the duck trying to apologise. But when she realised that Zizzy the fly was no longer in sight, she began to beg the Lake:

“Lake, oh Lake, you deal with it please! Only you can find her in your waters!”

The Lake crossed his currents and puffed to try to save the fly:

“Puff puff... I don’t like this story!”

Zizzy the fly jolted out of the water, and fell on the opposite shore.

Lilly, Lolly and Lally, the three ducklings, rushed to help her.

Lilly was dazed, staring at the small fly. Lolly started to hop around her: “What can I do? What can I do? Shall I go get her some food?”.

“No, Lolly” said his mother “this fly does not need food now. Let’s help her up, instead.”

The fly stood up on her legs and flapped his wings to dry them.

Lilly, hit by the water drops, swung and fell backwards.

“Oh Lilly, my darling, you can’t even stand in the breeze!” said Mom Lorely helping him to stand up.

“Zizzy, how are you, Zizzy?” asked Lolly, worried.

“Better, now” said the fly.

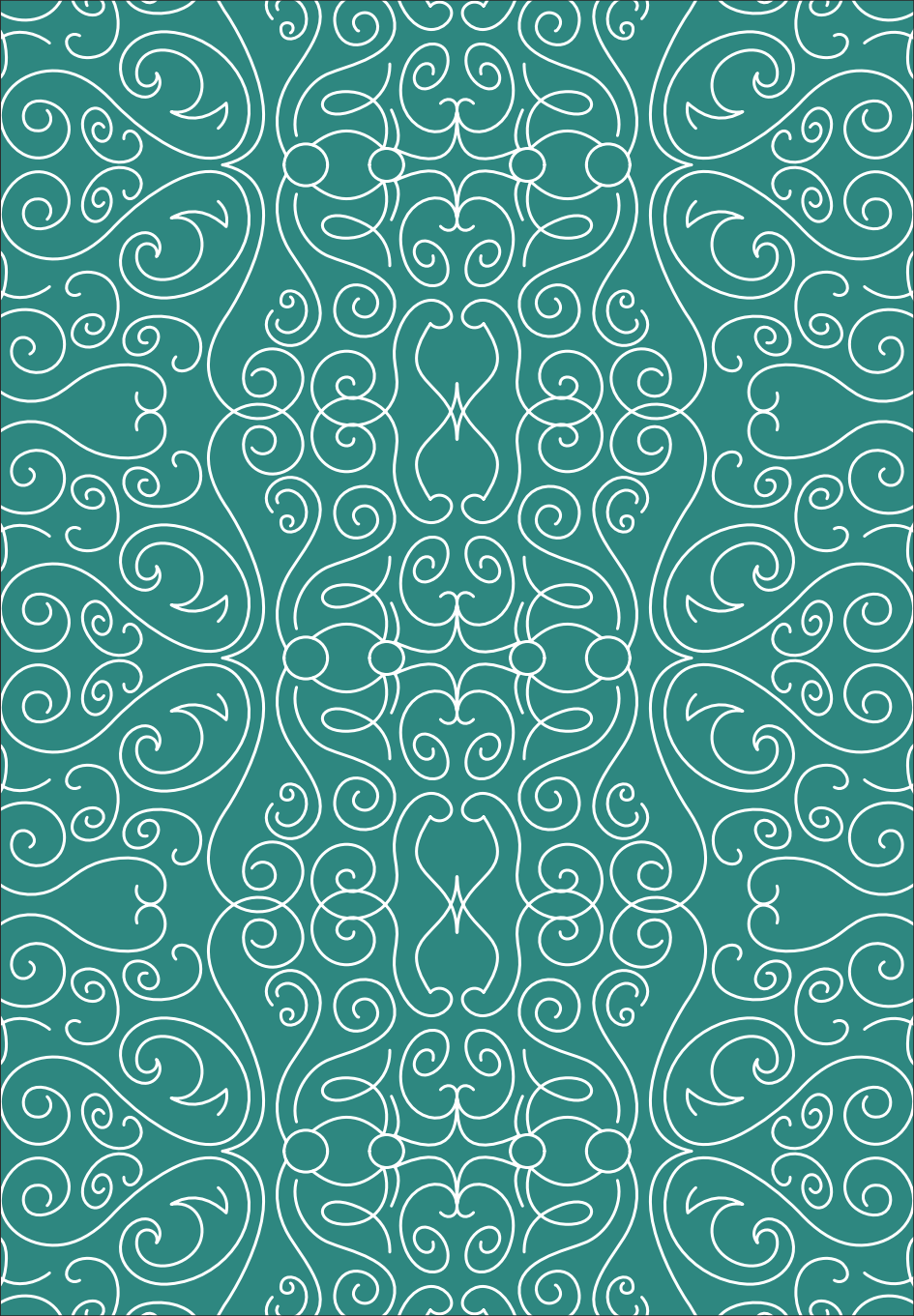
“I’m sorry Zizzy” apologized Lorely “I did not mean to hurt you, but I had never seen a fly tired of flying!”.

“Yes, you’re right, Lorely, I’m a little lazy”.

“Well, from now on” said the duck “to make up for what I did, you can land on my back every time you need. And I will carry you around with me.”

From that day Lorely and Zizzy were always together. The fly was like a big black spot on Lorely’s back, who got so used to her presence that she did not even notice her anymore! Except for that hum that she could hear every now and then, when Zizzy was tired:

“Buzzzzzz, Buzzzzzz.”





*... she dyed the sky in light green and fuchsia,
the shaded colours of her wings, followed
by a banner that said "Cindy's Travels",
the name of the airline she worked for.*

AN ARMY OF TINY LITTLE ANTS

Zig, zag, zig, zag ... “Heave–ho!” zig, zag, zig, zag ... “Heave–ho!”.

“There we go, this is mine!”

“To tell the truth, I saw this crumb first.”

“But I got it first.”

“Puff Puff...” spouted the lake “...what’s all that fuss?” Lilly, can you see something from up there?”.

As always, Lilly was hopping around on the lake shore.

“Hem... yes, Lake, it’s the ants. They are doing a competition to see who gathers more food.”

“They are so smart! We are still in the summer and they are already arranging things for the winter.”

“Yes, but it seems” whispered Lally, as if telling a big secret “that a true fight has started, after they found out that Cindy’s Travels has launched new routes for the ants! Of course they want to be paid in kind, so the ants are working hard to secure last minute travels to their anthill and avoid the never-ending ant-traffic queues”.

“Well, I bet it’s also the safest way to get there!” said the Lake.

“Of course it is” nodded the duck, “with their zig-zagging gait they keep stumbling into one another!”.

While the ducks talked about the busy ants nearby, a loud noise from above caught their curiosity.

“There she is!” said Lally pointing her wings “That’s Cindy the dragonfly.”

“Wow...” said Lolly, who had just raised his head out of the water, in amazement. “She’s so beautiful!”

With her long and slender body, Cindy the dragonfly captured all eyes on her at every passage: she dyed the sky in light green and fuchsia, the shaded colours of her wings, followed by a banner that said “Cindy’s Travels”, the name of the airline she worked for.

“Here she comes...” said Lolly while keeping his eyes on her.

Cindy the dragonfly pulled her wings backward and landed, gently touching the surface of the lake and then the ground.

In the meantime, Lorely returned from her shopping around the park.

“What are you all staring at?” she asked.

Lally immediately took the floor, making sure that this time, too, she was the first one to give the announcement: “Cindy the dragonfly is here, mom, she’s the dragonfly from Cindy’s Travels, and she has just landed here to pick up some ants.”

And then: “Those who can afford it, of course!” added the duck, sarcastically.

The ants had gathered and queued one by one waiting to get on Cindy’s shining back. But before that, of course, they weighed their supplies.

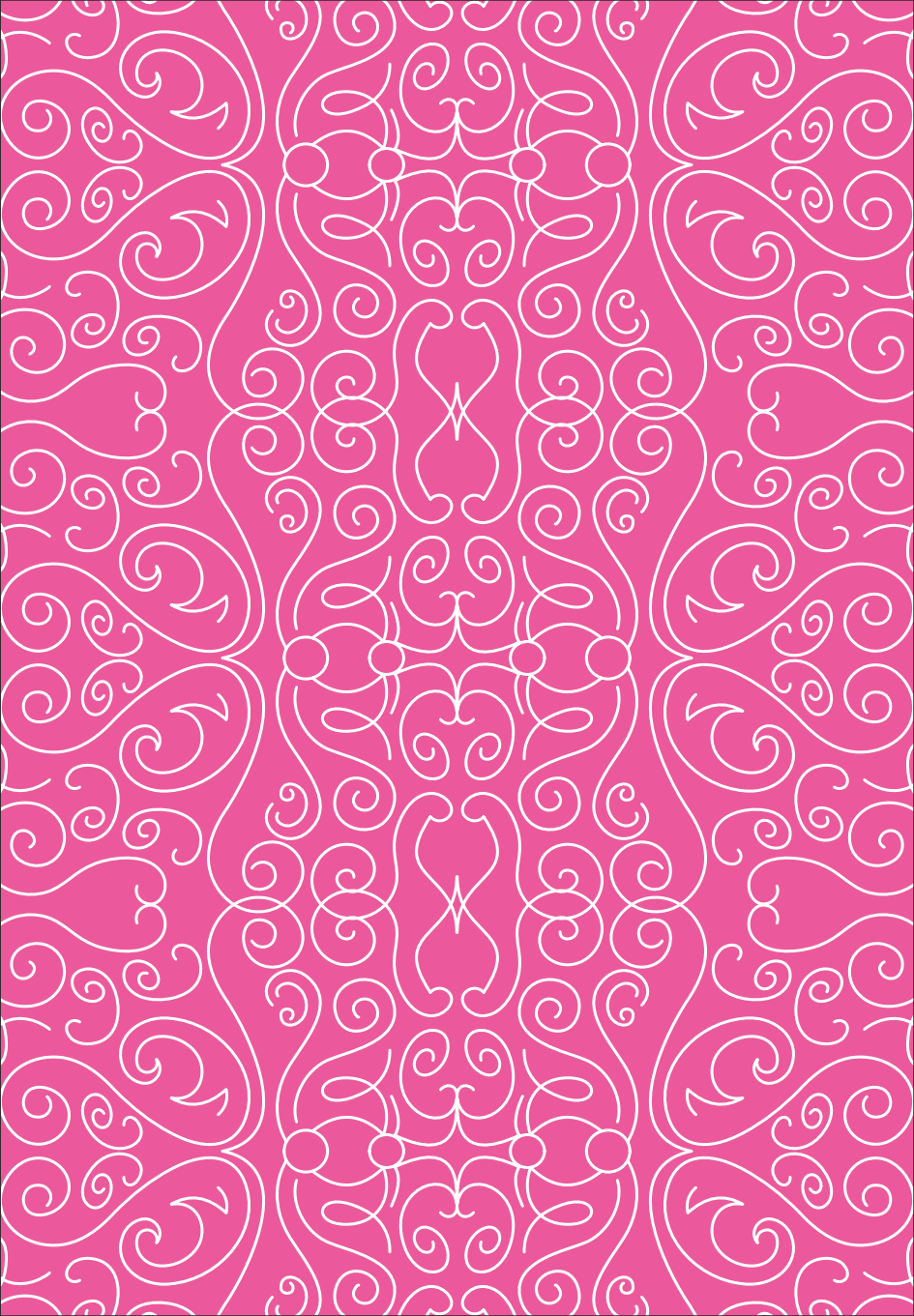
The first ant rested its crumbs and a few pieces of a leaf on one of the dragonfly’s wings, but the weight was not enough to tilt the wing by one millimetre!

The ant then explained to Cindy that she had really done her best in the search, but that some crumbs, unfortunately, were lost here and there in the tortuous journey. The dragonfly decided to reward her anyway: “Ok, this time you can come on board too!” she said. “Who’s next?”

Another ant stepped forward, quite sure of her provisions. She dropped a big lump of bread on one of Cindy's wings, and immediately the opposite wing went up because of the weight. The scales told she was right: the ant was immediately allowed onboard. The boarding continued for all the remaining ten, hundred ants. And when the queue was finished, Cindy the dragonfly took off to continue her flight.

Cindy took the tiny little ants right to the entrance of their house, they immediately got off and after saying goodbye to the dragonfly they ran and disappeared in their hidden maze of tunnels to store their stocks.

One after the other, side by side in busy parallel lines which crossed here and there, they rushed to put away their loot and search for more: another trip awaited them.



*And while the Lake was introducing himself,
Lolly kept diving in and out
in search for food...*



NINO THE LITTLE FAT FISH

“So far I’ve told you some stories about all the animals that live in this park, where I also dwell. But I have not yet told you about myself and about a whole other world, which lies deep in my waters. I am the lake and this is my story:

I’m a calm creature, and I very rarely lose my temper, if ever. Rather, sometimes I get bored, or get annoyed and I huff and puff, my waters get a bit rough but then I calm down again quite quickly. A multitude of weeds, plants, and fish live in my body. Nino the little fat fish is one of them and he’s so fat that you can hardly see his eyes. This is precisely why he is the dream–snack of Lolly the duck, who is always after him! Lucky Nino, I’m always there to make Lolly jump out of the water. Always.”

And while the Lake was introducing himself, Lolly kept diving in and out in search for food...

“Lolly, what are you doing?” asked his mother.

“Wait! I’m almost there... got it!”

“But who, Nino?”

“Nah, Nino is too difficult to catch. He’s such a fast swimmer! As soon as I think I’ve spotted him, he’s already gone. If he were not so fat, one would probably not even see his shadow dashing around in the water! But one of these days...”

“One of these days what?” admonished the Lake.

“One day I’ll manage to catch him!”

Meanwhile, Nino the little fat fish was underwater and heard everything, and started to think about a plan: “If I go through here, he’ll catch me. If I go through there, he’ll catch me too. Argh, I’m in big trouble!”.

There he was, at the bottom of the lake, trying to think of a way out, when another fish arrived and interrupted him.

“What are you doing?” asked the fish.

“I’m trying to find a solution” Nino said. Lolly and I can no longer live in the same lake: that duck won’t give up, he’s always lurking and trying to catch me! I have just heard him say to Lorely, his mum, that I’ve become his personal challenge, and that sooner or later he’ll have me! I have no choice, I have to leave, I only need to find the safest route, not to be caught while trying to escape.”

“You’re wrong” said the other fish. “There’s always a solution, and it’s almost never to run away. You should stay, instead. I’ll show you what to do.”

“But, but...” stammered Nino.

“Trust me!” said the fish. “Let’s meet here tomorrow morning, I’ll take you to an enchanted place.”

The next day the fish passed near the rock where Nino the little fat fish was taking refuge and took him to the house of Rose the salamander, the sorceress of the invisible.

“There you’ll find a magic mix that, when you take it, makes you become transparent, so transparent that Lolly won’t be able to see you even with his diving mask!”

When they arrived at the house of Rose the salamander, she stretched her short legs to reach out and give Nino a carved stone with a concoction of weeds, salt and other secret ingredients in it.

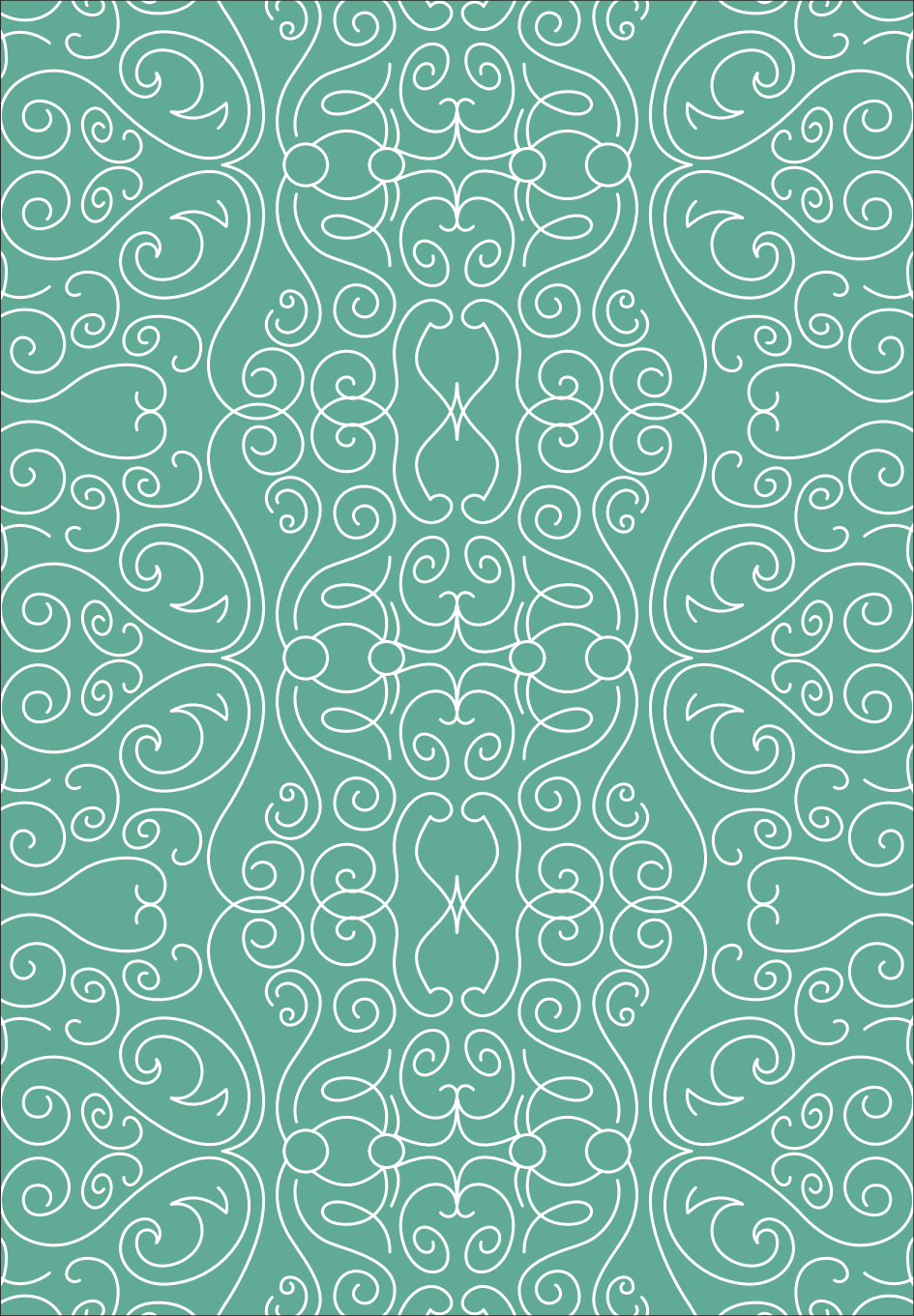
“Drink it!” she said “You’ll soon begin to lose your colour, and then you’ll always want this!”.

Nino held the stone with his fins and started to sip the magic mixture. As he sipped, his colour slowly faded away, from his head to his tail, and when he had finished it, one could hardly spot his shape.

“Yes! It worked again!” said the sorceress, proud of her preparation. “Now go!” she said. “You are a little fish free to splash around your Lake without fear. When you need me, you’ll know where you can find me.”

Nino was so happy that he was shaking his tail left and right.

The following days Nino had great fun testing his invisibility: he swam just in front of Lolly and his bespectacled eyes, who, as if by magic, could not even feel his presence, to the point that he started to doubt about Nino's existence!





*“What are you doing?
Are you making fun of me?”
she asked.*

*“Not really, I’m trying to stand on my feet”
answered little Leo.*

MEETING WITH LITTLE LEO

It was a radiant sunny day and Lorely took the opportunity to do her errands on land, around the lake: there were new leaves to choose from to make her headgear, the shopping for fruit and vegetables for her ducklings and cereals supplements to help skinny Lilly to grow stronger.

And while she was shuffling around the park, a very cute blond little boy came to her, with a gait that, after all, was not too dissimilar from hers...

“What are you doing? Are you making fun of me?” she asked.

“Not really, I’m trying to stand on my feet” answered little Leo, “but who are you?”

“My name’s Lorely” replied the duck moving forward to examine him, but the little boy jumped back, frightened. Then, from behind a tree, he said: “My name is Leo and I live in the bungalow over there.

And you? How comes you are so dirty?”.

“Dirty? Me, dirty? What are you talking about? I wash my feathers every morning, one by one!”.

“Maybe so, but it seems it doesn’t work, since you’re all brown, rather, green, no, blue..., in short, whatever: you’re dirty!”

Duck Lorely’s plumage would in fact take some strange nuances in the sun, and that made her colours change and hard to define.

“In the lake nearby I saw ducks far whiter and cleaner than you” scoffed little Leo.

“You mean in the big lake?”

“Yes, there was a family of shiny white swans. But you ...”

“I’m not a swan, I’m a duck, and just as beautiful!”

Lorely, irritated by little Leo’s remarks, turned her tail on him and moved to leave.

“Wait!” said the child to stop her “I’m going to Lake Garda tomorrow with my family, why don’t you come with us? So you’ll see them your own eyes ...”. Leo tickled Lorely’s curiosity, but she proudly resisted:

“I am not going anywhere, this is my lake, and I’m fine where I am” – and she raised her feathers and walked away.

When she returned to the lake, Lorely told what had happened to the other ducks.

“There was this little boy” she said “his name is Leo, who did nothing but criticise my feathers, but he was so scared that he did not dare to come closer! He even invited me to go and see the great lake, but I of course ...”

“Yes, let’s go!” said Lally, excited., “Let’s go to the great lake, where I may finally become a star! And sing and sing, dance and dance, getting lost in the vast waters of Lake Garda.”

“I would get lost, for sure” interrupted Lilly.
“What are you talking about? It will be exciting!” insisted his sister.

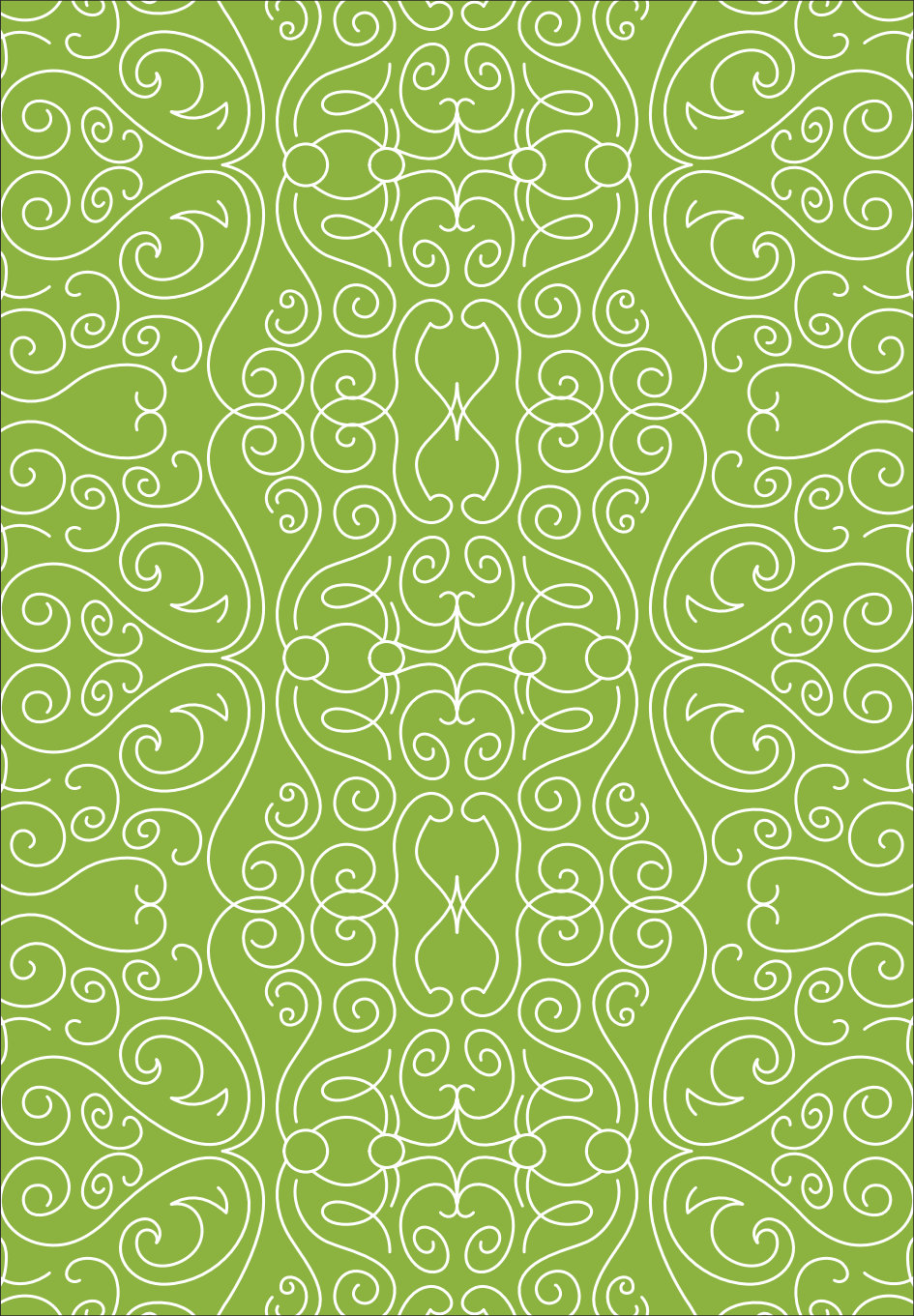
“The only reason I would go” admitted Lorely “is to meet that family of white swans”. “Puff... puff” said the lake “then go! If that’s where you want to be, just go!”.

“But Lake ...” Lorely tried to say something, with her voice broken by sorrow.

“I will not listen, Lorely, you and your ducks are curious to see what’s out there. If this is what you want, I won’t be the one stopping you from going.”

The four ducks grouped and, with their beaks touching, discussed in a low voice about what to do: Lally was quacking merrily and Lilly, scared, was shaking at the idea of such a big change, while Lolly stood still, listening, impatient and bored.

Lorely suddenly broke away from the group and started to pack: their departure was decided.



*“Lake, oh Lake,
I too wanted to say goodbye
before leaving...”
said Lorely.*



GOODBYE LAKE

And one and two and one and two, all the ants orderly queued and settled. The army of tiny bugs was getting ready to lead the ducks in their new amazing adventure. Cindy the dragonfly was flying over the area, checking from above. Everything was ready for departure. Every thing, but maybe not every body ...

“Lilly, Lilly, why are you shaking like a leaf?” said his sister when she found him all alone in a corner.

“Eek Eek... I’m scared Lally!” said the duckling, “a totally new place, so big, eek... eek...”.

“Come on Lilly” said his duckling sister to comfort him, “I’m sure you’ll love it. Who doesn’t love the great Lake Garda? ”. Lally looked at him with her most charming look.

“Well, I don’t, for example! What if I get lost?”

Lilly, not at all convinced about the journey, had started to mumble.

Their mother called them: "Are we all ready?"

"More than ready!" replied Lally, dragging her little brother.

"Ok, only Lolly is missing. Lolly? Lolly? I'm sure he's underwater, as usual..."

"I'm here, Mom. I'm sorry but I was catching up on energy for the trip."

"You mean eating, right?"

"Well, of course, who knows if there... oh mummy, what if I were no longer able to feed myself?"

"Lolly, my dear duckling, how can you come up with such ideas?"

"And what if the lake is too big? So big that I can't stay underwater that long?" "You would simply eat less, Lolly, which would just do you good! Come on, let's go! The ants are waiting for us. Say goodbye to the Lake."

"Bye Bye Lake, goodbye Lake!" chorused the ducks. And the Lake replied, spluttering:

"Gurgle gurgle.. I don't like this!"

“Go now, my beloved ducks, we’ll miss you here!”

“I don’t think so!” said a voice in the background. It was Rosette the rose, much relieved, who sighed “We’ll no longer risk to be cut off and used as accessories: Lally is leaving...”

Overjoyed, the two roses intertwined to hug each other, and so did the tulips and all the other flowers: at last they no longer had to hold their breath, trying to spread as little scent as possible not be chosen by Lally.

The air suddenly filled with floral scent. It was a feast of colours and scents.

The duckling party, led by the army of ants, set off for their journey. The troop of little animals did certainly not go unnoticed when they crossed the park. All the guests turned around and looked at them.

Before leaving the gate behind, Lorely turned back one last time. She realised that, caught by the excitement of their departure, she had not said goodbye to her Lake. So she ran back, really fast, and trotted to the shore, panting.

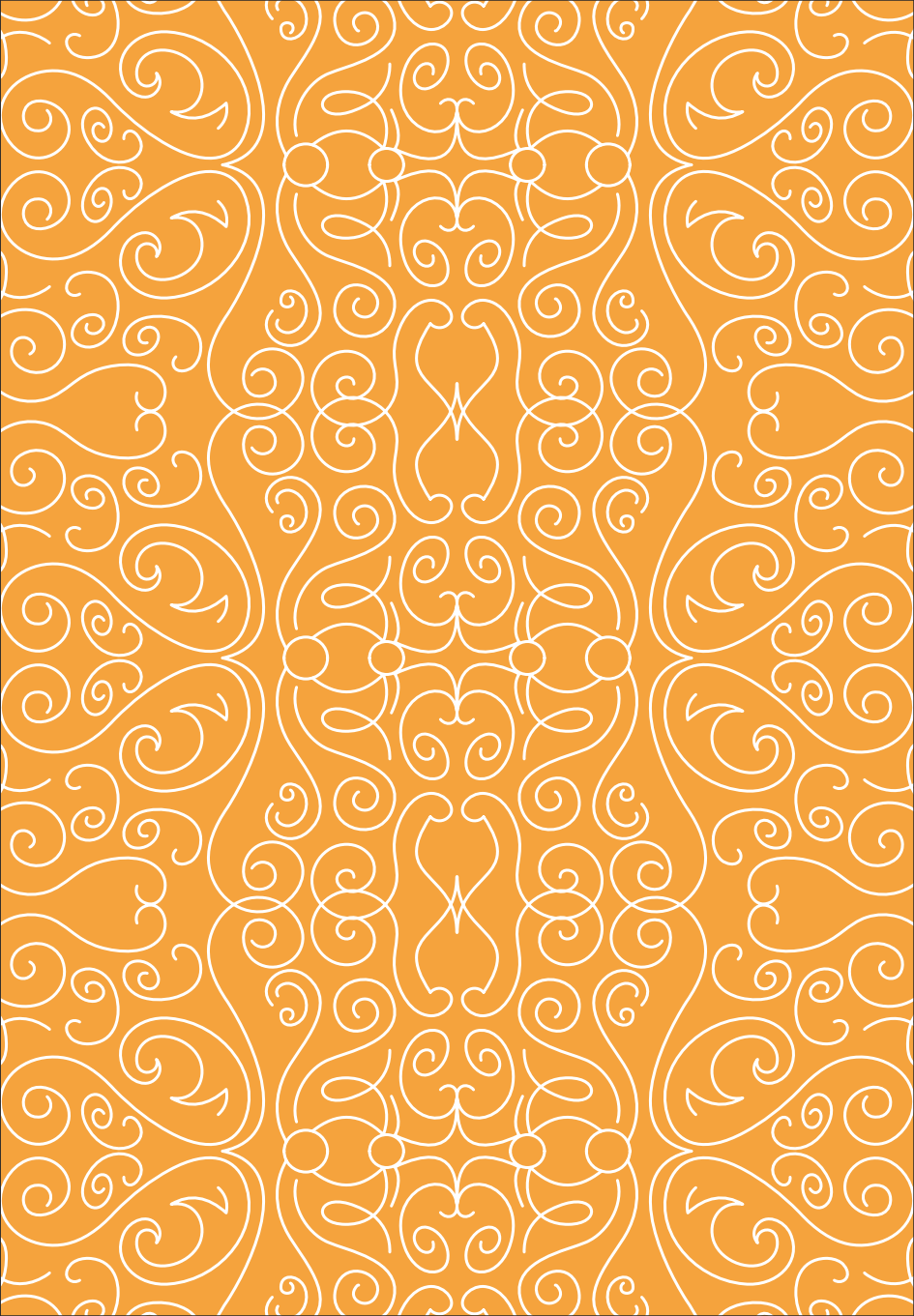
The Lake stood still and silent.

“Lake, oh Lake, I too wanted to say goodbye before leaving...” said Lorely.

The languid eyes of the lake surfaced to look at the duck. His mouth had a sad expression and did not utter a single word.

Lorely the duck lowered her head and remained silent too, stroking the water surface with her feathers.

*The trees bent their branches on the two characters.
The curtain closes. But it will reopen soon. In a new
scenario...*





*They were Chin, Chon and Chun,
all following their mother, Cynthia.*

AT LAKE GARDA

*“Come on, ducklings, we’re almost there”
says Lorely in an exhausted voice.*

Lilly, by then, was about to faint, but when it seemed he was going to give up, Lolly came to his rescue and told him: “Cheer up, my brother, one last effort! See, you should do as I do, stuff yourself up with food not to run out of energy!”.

“Mom, Mom, when will we get there, Mom? Are we there, Mom?” asked insistently Lally who could not wait to arrive. To keep herself busy during the trip she had counted every step that separated her from her dream: become a star.

“I can see it” she suddenly screamed, “the great, immense lake Garda! There it is, right here, in front of us.”

The ducklings, who had never seen anything like

that, were all there with their beaks dropped. They walked slowly to reach the shore and look at their own reflection on the water surface, and then, in the distance, they saw some dancing shadows...
“Is it them, Mom? The family of white swans we were looking for: let’s go and see!”

They went nearer, intrigued, trying to see the contours of those figures that became clearer and clearer.

“Yes, it’s them” said Lorely, nodding.
They were Chin, Chon and Chun, all following their mother, Cynthia.

The four white swans were practicing a choreography. Cynthia stood before them to show them the dance steps. So Chin stretched his wing to the right, and Chun did the same to the left, while Chon ruffled his feathers in the middle of the scene and all eyes were on him.

“Lally? You are stunned!” said Lolly to bring her back, “you look as if you had seen...”

“I just saw the most beautiful swan in the world. Come on, let’s go, I want to meet him! Together, we can put up a great show: I will sing, he will dance. It will be perfect.”

Enthusiasm had made her lose her mind and her brother, though younger, realised it was better to get

her away from that sight.

In the next days, the ducks tried to familiarize with the white swans, but things did not go exactly as they hoped...

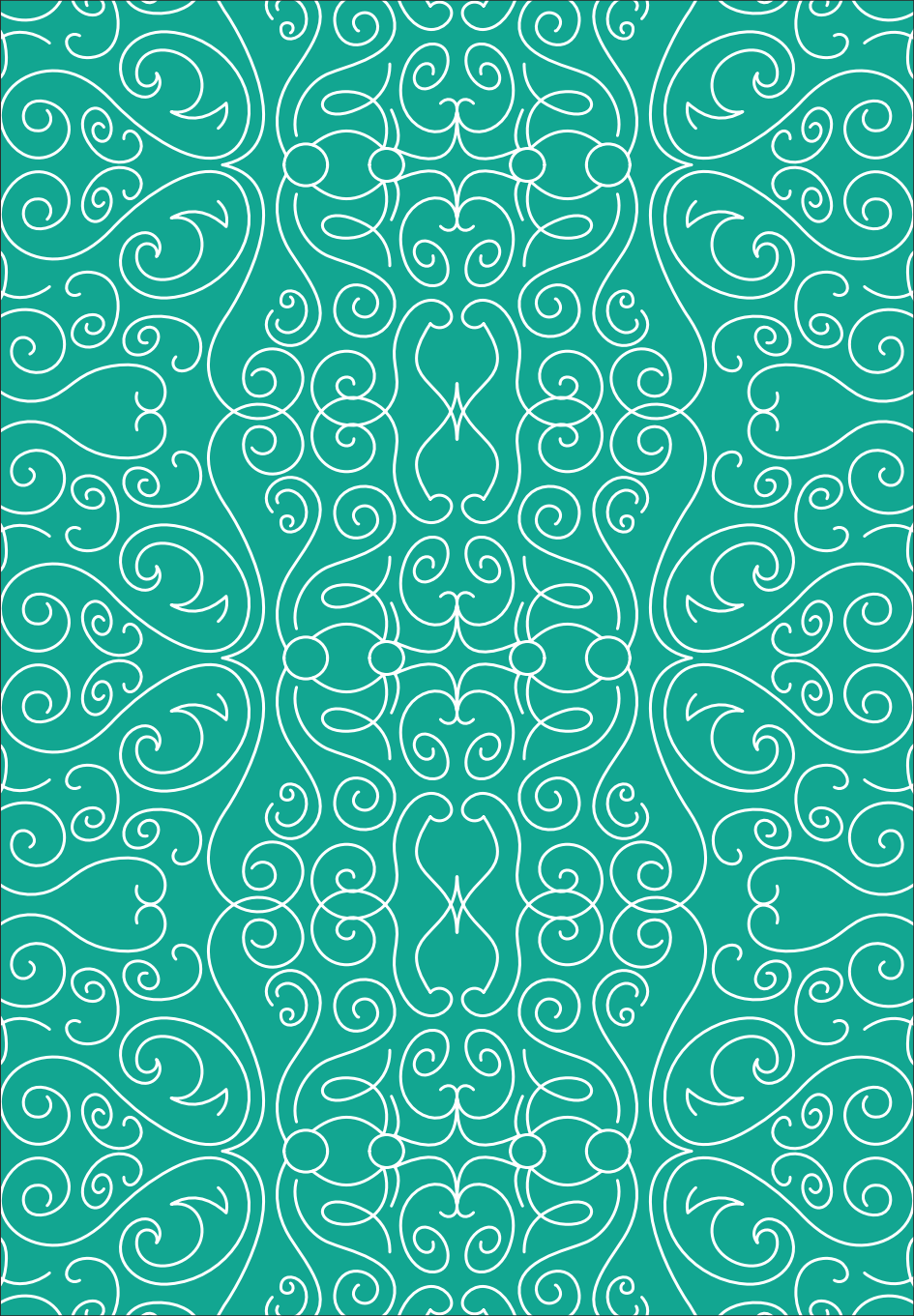
“There is nothing to do, Mom” smartly concluded Lolly, “these swans are too different from us. They dance, they dance, they train every morning, while we...”

“From now on, we will exercise with them!” said Lorely. “Enough is enough, we’ve been here for a week and no one came to introduce themselves...” The next day the duck family plunged into the great lake. The swans were already there, warming up their wings and legs. The ducks slowly approached and, as soon as the choreography started, they began to imitate the movements of the swans. But, even then, things did not go exactly as they had hoped...

After a few minutes Lilly was a soaked duck, tired and ruffled;

Lolly had tried to stretch his wings as he saw the swans do, but he only managed to look very funny. Lally was the only one able to keep the rhythm and in this way she hoped Chon, the beautiful swan, would notice her.. But he was so concentrated in following the dance steps that he did not even take a look at her.

Watching each other from afar as they had always done, swans and ducks continued to keep a distance. The Orientals, as the white swans were called at the great lake because of their almond shaped eyes, did not have an open attitude towards newcomers. And then necessity made them meet...





*“Oh my dear son” said the duck
“what a fright you gave me!
Never get away again”.*

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF LILLY

One morning like many others, Lilly, just as he had feared from day one, and even from the day before arriving at the big lake, got lost. Of course the ducklings did not know the place as well as the swans, so finally they found the courage to go ask them for help...

“Excuse me” said Lorely, shyly approaching them, “I’m sorry to bother you, but I need your help. I understand you don’t know me, and you don’t know who I am, so you must be wondering why, why, I ...”

“Shush!. Just tell me,” said the swan silencing her “what do you need exactly?”.

“I’m desperate, Mr. Chon, desperate. My son Lilly, the most fearful of my ducklings, the very skinny one, who cannot even stand in the wind and hates water, yes, water, he has disappeared. This morning he went for his usual walk on the lake shore, but

never came back. And I know, I know, I can feel it: he must be in trouble.”

“Now, calm down, madam ...”

“Lorely, Lorely the duck.”

“Calm down Lorely the duck, Lake Garda is very big, that’s for sure, but it has never swallowed anyone: we will find him. We need to get organised, though! This has to be a team’s job, and together we’ll succeed.”

And immediately Chon the swan went and called his brothers, his mother, and all the other swans of the lake to take part in the search for the unlucky Lilly. Just like a fleet of ships getting ready for a storm, they lined up in a compact formation. And next to them in line were the ducks. They all wore yellow and orange safety caps and hovered on the water surface. Lilly would soon return home.

They began to patrol the lake, far and wide, underwater and on the surface.

Lolly led the rescuing team from bottom, along with other diver swans and ducks. And when all hope seemed to be lost, they finally spotted him! Lolly immediately popped out of the water and yelled: “I saw him, I saw him, I found him, Lilly is here! Hurry! Let’s go!”.

Everyone rushed in and yes, it was him, Lilly: more ruffled than ever. But after all, those untidy feathers looked cute on him.

They quickly took him out of the water and dragged him on land, to his safe place. Lilly quickly regained his breath and, scared to death, warmly greeted Mummy Lorely and his siblings.

“Oh my dear son” said the duck “what a fright you gave me! Never get away again”.

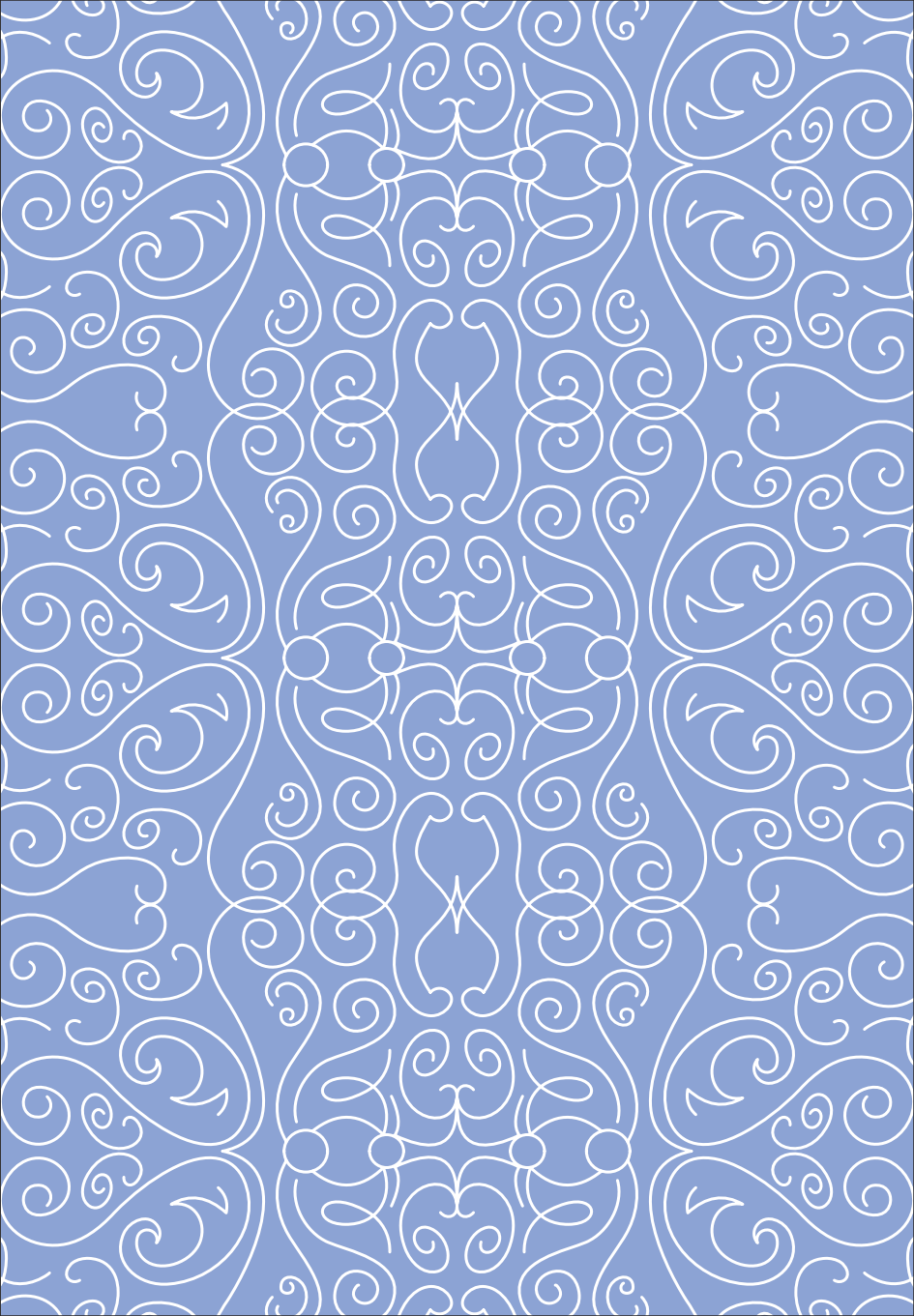
The ducks thanked the swans, with whom by then had made friends.

That evening, to celebrate Lilly’s rescue, they decided to throw a dance party, where Lally could finally see one of her greatest dreams (after becoming a star, of course) come true:

Chon the swan had finally noticed her, and invited her to dance. That evening, the swan and the duck were inseparable. An amazing duet, just as Lally had imagined it in her daydream the first time she saw Chon; a show made of dance steps and top notes from Lally, the future singer. The duck girl was madly in love and did not want to leave: “I will come back soon to see you” she promised waving her wing to the shiny white swan.

Their holiday, in fact, was over, and the next day the ducks would be gone...

*That was not their home.
That simply was not their Lake.*





*“What are you talking about, Lolly?
I’m sure we must go this other way”
disagreed Lally.*

RETURNING TO THE LAKE

The ducks made again preparations for their departure.

This time, though, the army of ants would not be there to guide them. So they were talking and discussing in a low voice about the direction they should take, but their quacks were heard anyway. Their journey back was going to be tortuous...

“Does anybody remember the way?” asked Lorely.

“Mmm...” hesitated Lilly.

“Mmmm... maybe... we should go that way.” said his brother.

“What are you talking about, Lolly? I’m sure we must go this other way” disagreed Lally.

Lorelly, who was watching the scene, wetted her bandana and tied it tightly around her head: that indecision was giving her a headache.

“Are you telling me none of you paid attention to the way we took to come here? What were you thinking about?”

“The future, Mom, my extraordinary future...which disappeared at the blink of an eye.” said Lally, tilting her head down.

“And you, the duck family males?” insisted Lorely. “I was busy trying to stand on my feet, Mom, what else!” replied Lilly.

“And I was busy trying to hold him up, Mom, what else!” said Lolly.

“And you, Mom, what were you thinking about?” asked her three ducklings in unison.

Lorely kept silent, and hesitated before answering.

“So...? What was on your mind?” they insisted.

“Ok, I’ll tell you. I was thinking of our Lake! When I went back to say goodbye, he did not even answer me. He was so sad...”

“Then he’ll be very happy to see us back! reassured her Lally. “Now the important thing is to find our way back.”

The duck family, unable to rely on any support, gathered their courage and started their journey back.

When they left the sun was shining, but at dusk they were lost.

All roads looked the same: every corner, every house, every garden – they could not tell where they were. They were so confused, nervous, disoriented that they risked to be run over by a car that stopped just in time.

The driver rushed out of the car to make sure everybody was ok, while from inside the car a mass of blond curls was watching the scene.

“Daddy, Daddy!” said a voice “I know them! They are the duck family that lives in the park!”

“And you must be Leo!” said Lorely.

“Yes, it’s me, Lorely! What are you doing out here? Why don’t you go back to your small lake?”

“That’s what we’re trying to do, Leo, if only we could remember the way...”.

“Oh I see, you’re lost! Don’t worry, my father and I will take you back home, won’t we Dad?” asked the little boy in an imploring voice, and his Dad could not but accept. So, escorted again, the four ducks were able to find their way back to the Lake following the car with little Leo. And as soon as they arrived, they ran to the shore.

“Lake, oh Lake, we’re here! We’re back!” shouted Lorely.

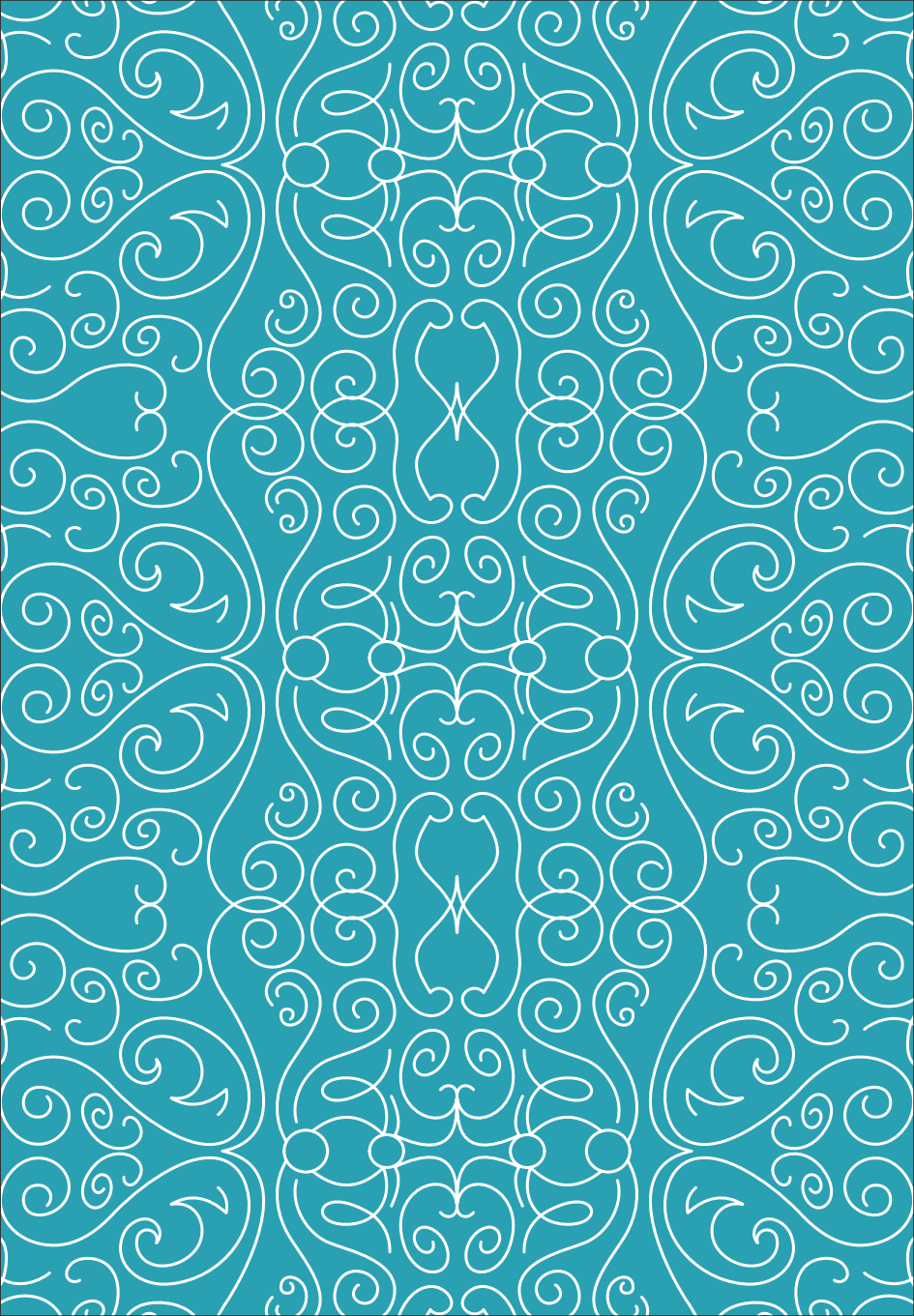
And out came his voice: “Huff... Puff...” he grumbled, “so you’re back!”.

“Roselle , they’re back” said Rosette, with a very sad face. “Yes, yes, yes and yes! We’re back, quack quack quack!” honked the ducks.

Lolly dived into the water, Lally began to caress every single flower, Lilly started to run all around, while Lorely kept staring at her Lake.

“I’m glad you’re back, let me hug you!” sighed the Lake.
And the ducks jumped in the water.

The trees shook their branches cheerfully. The story is near the end, but with a very happy ending.





*“Leo, wake up, Leo... wake up,
it’s morning already!”*

WAKE UP LEO...

WAKE UP!

***I**t was a bright sunny day at the small Lake and everybody, and I mean everybody, was back in place:*

Lolly was snorkelling: with his mask on, he went back to his usual search for Nino the little fat fish who, after the effect of the magic potion vanished, gradually regained his colours, from head to tail, and once again visible, was immediately spotted by Lolly's bespectacled eyes. The two resumed their chase: Nino was flapping his tail to the left and to the right, in fear, and Lolly persistently kept chasing him, again and again.

Lilly, instead, was hanging around out of the water: at the small lake he felt more at ease shuffling around the park. He made friends with the many children who wanted to come close to him, full of curiosity. Lorely was floating on the water: unlike the big Lake Garda, silent and motionless, the little Lake with his

constant huffs and puffs was making her life less dull, and the gentle rolling was even soothing her headache.

Zizzy the fly was sunbathing lying on Lorely's back: when the duck was away she had to fly all the time and she felt more exhausted than ever!

Lally, believe it or not, was busy exchanging tips and secrets with her two new friends, Roselle and Rosette. Yes, the two roses! After letting go of her passion for singing she had discovered that fashion was her true talent and the two roses were undisputed experts in accessories and style!

And then there was the Lake, embracing them all, again, with his waters:

"Huff... Puff... NOW I truly like this story!"

From above, Cindy's Travels dashed around before landing where the ants were lined up waiting for her. Everything was back to normal.

But then, as it often happens when everything is perfect,... a voice from the background broke into that peaceful moment:

"Leo, wake up, Leo... wake up, it's morning already!"

And Lorely, her ducklings, the fly, the little fat fish, the dragonfly and all the ants seemed to fade away, blur, lose colour, disappear... smaller and smaller, fainter and fainter: gone.

“Come on Leo, get up, we’re going to the great Lake Garda today, hurry up, or we’ll be late!”

“Where is Lorely, Mom?” asked the little boy, opening his eyes.

“Lorely? Who is Lorely, sweetheart?”

“Lorely the duck, she lives one step from here, on the lake shore, with her three ducklings: Lilly, Lolly and Lally!”

“I don’t know Leo, there are many ducks living in that little pond...”

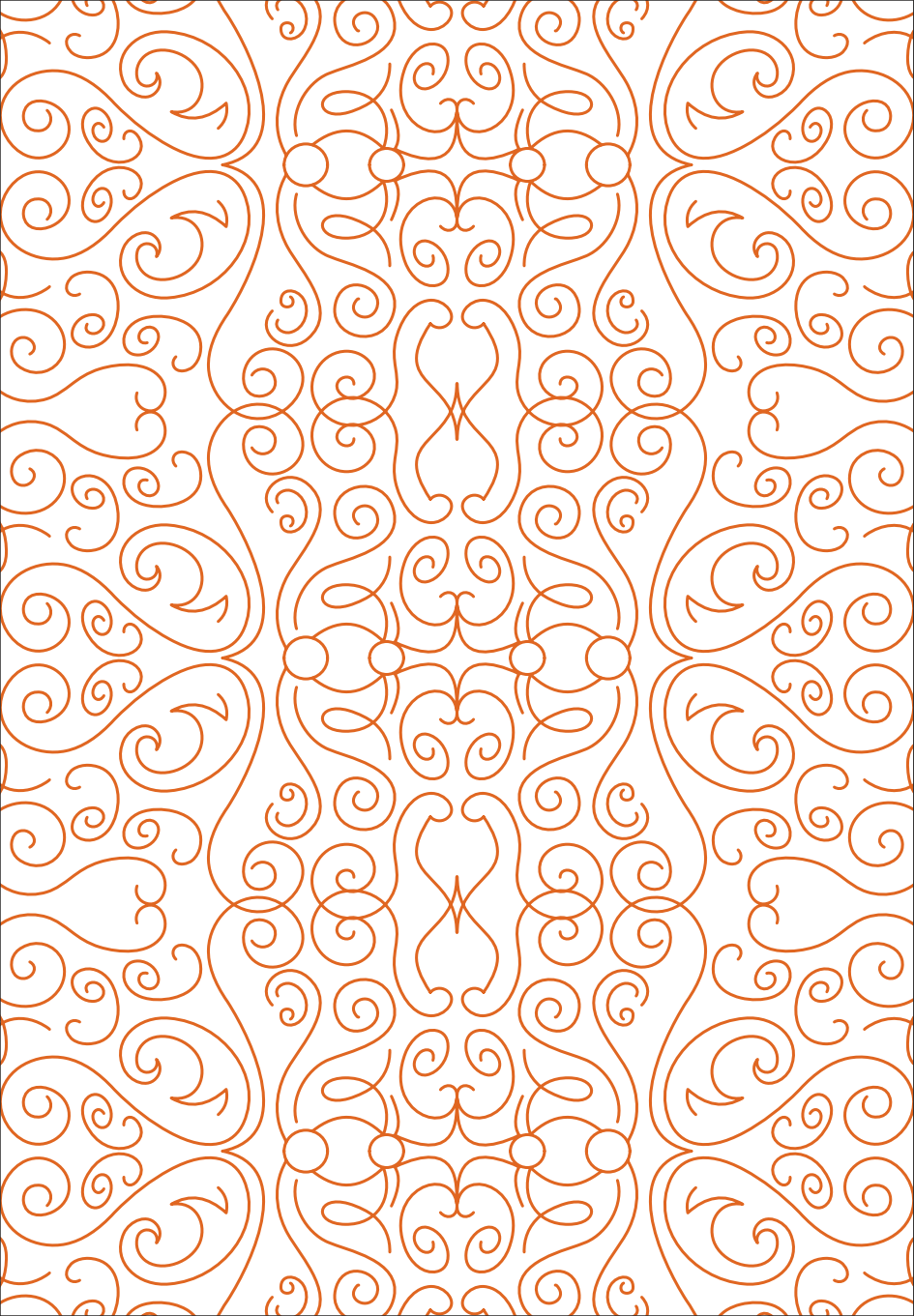
“Yes, but I must find Lorely!”

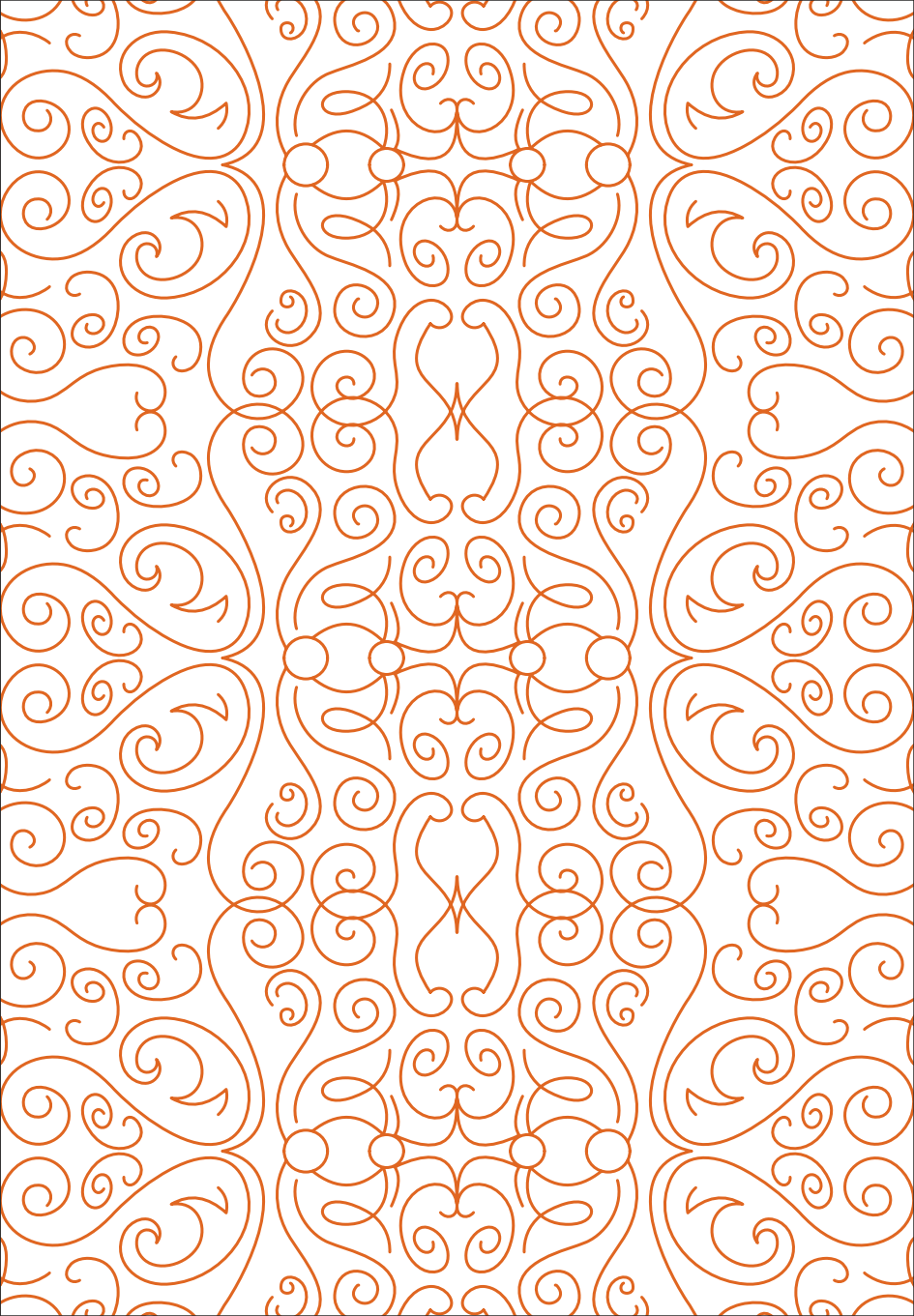
The child dressed up quickly and ran in search of his favourite duck. They had become friends, now.

The trees bent their branches on the Lake. The story is over, but life at the small lake at Du Lac and Du Parc goes on...

“Well, my dear ducklings, you’ve been really good! But after this long story, to tell you the truth, I’m a little tired:

“Huff.. Puff... goodnight everybody!”







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