

Life is All Around Us

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Illustrated by Alexandra Black

Charlie's sister Kit woke him up early.

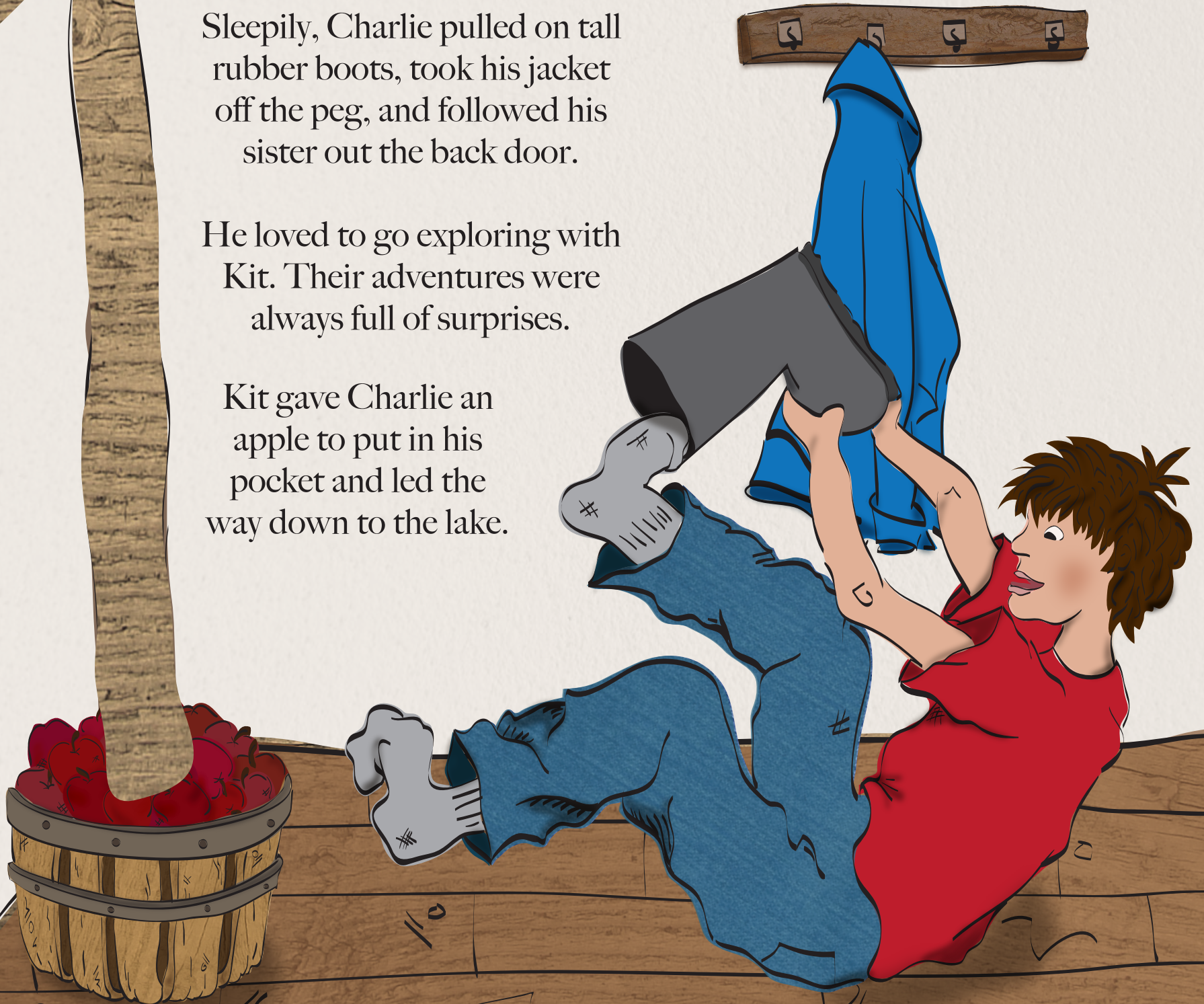
"Come on, little brother,"
she whispered.
"Let's go outside."



Sleepily, Charlie pulled on tall rubber boots, took his jacket off the peg, and followed his sister out the back door.

He loved to go exploring with Kit. Their adventures were always full of surprises.

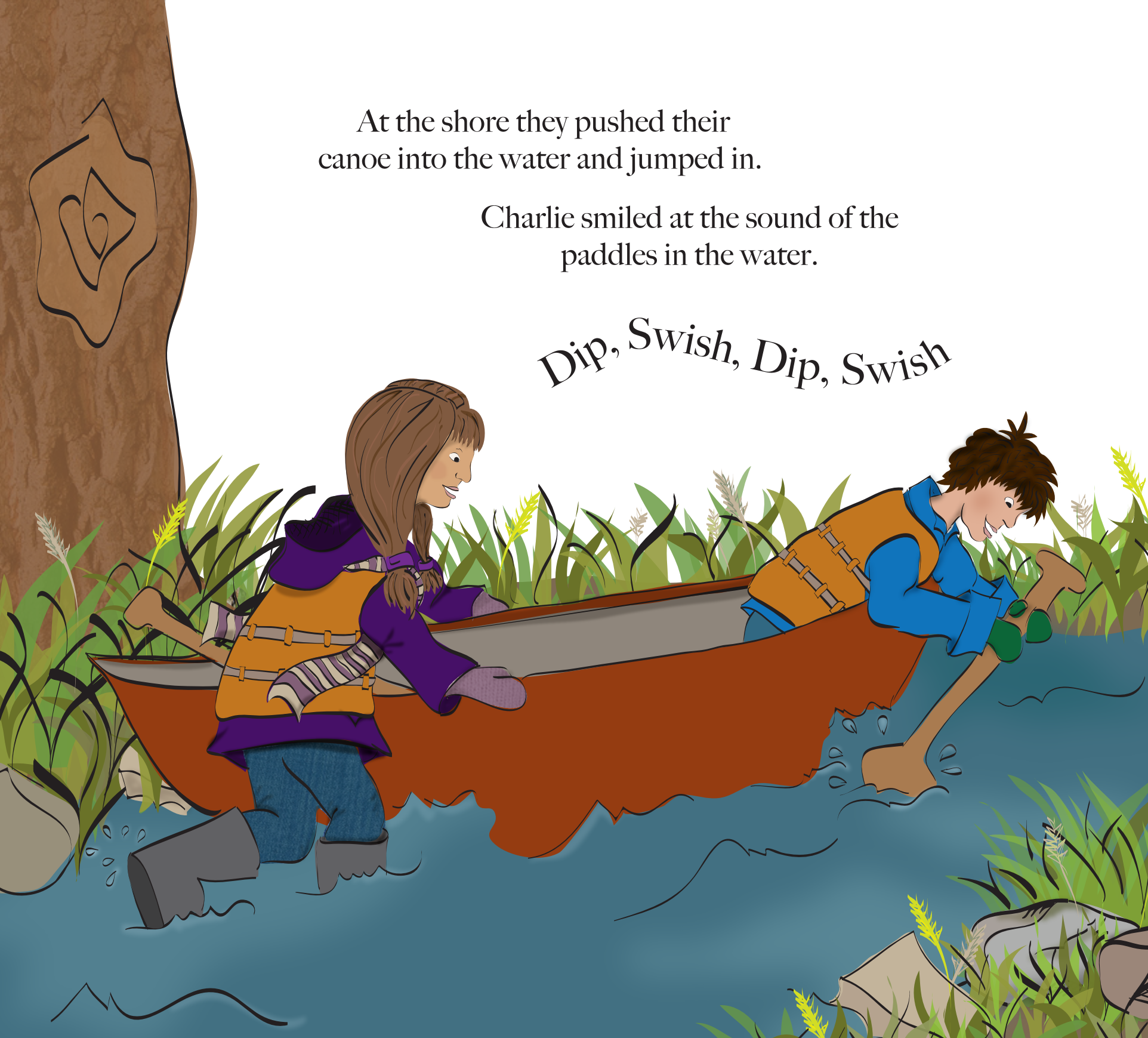
Kit gave Charlie an apple to put in his pocket and led the way down to the lake.

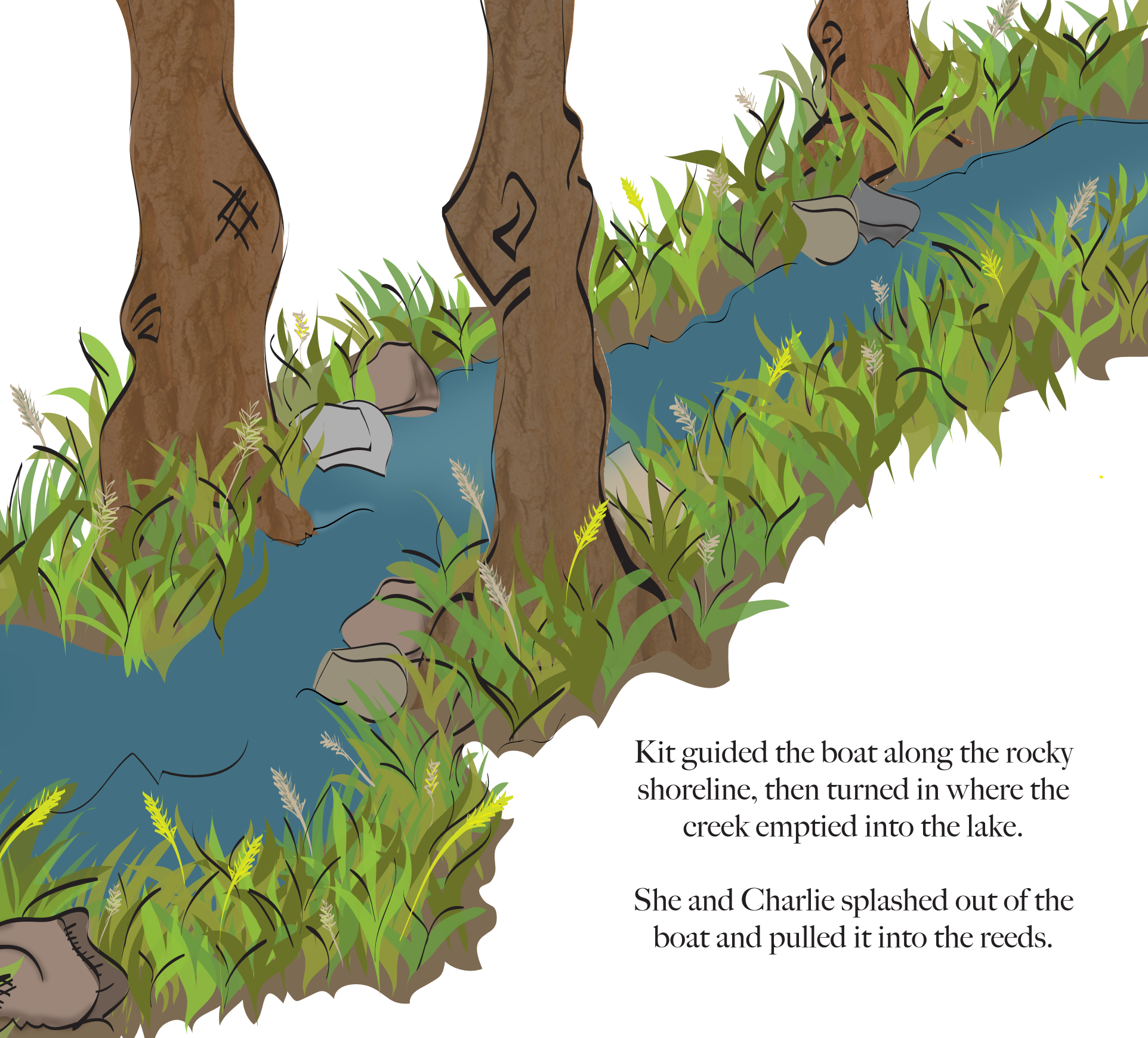


At the shore they pushed their
canoe into the water and jumped in.

Charlie smiled at the sound of the
paddles in the water.

Dip, Swish, Dip, Swish





Kit guided the boat along the rocky shoreline, then turned in where the creek emptied into the lake.

She and Charlie splashed out of the boat and pulled it into the reeds.

“I know where there’s a beaver pond,” Kit said,
heading off into the woods.

In his hurry to catch up, Charlie tripped on a on
a plastic bottle and tumbled to the ground.

“Ow!” he wailed, holding the toe of his boot.
“I tripped on a bottle. Mean bottle!”



Kit ran back and sat beside him. When she saw he wasn't really hurt, she smiled and picked up the bottle. "This bottle can't be mean," she said. "It's not alive like us."

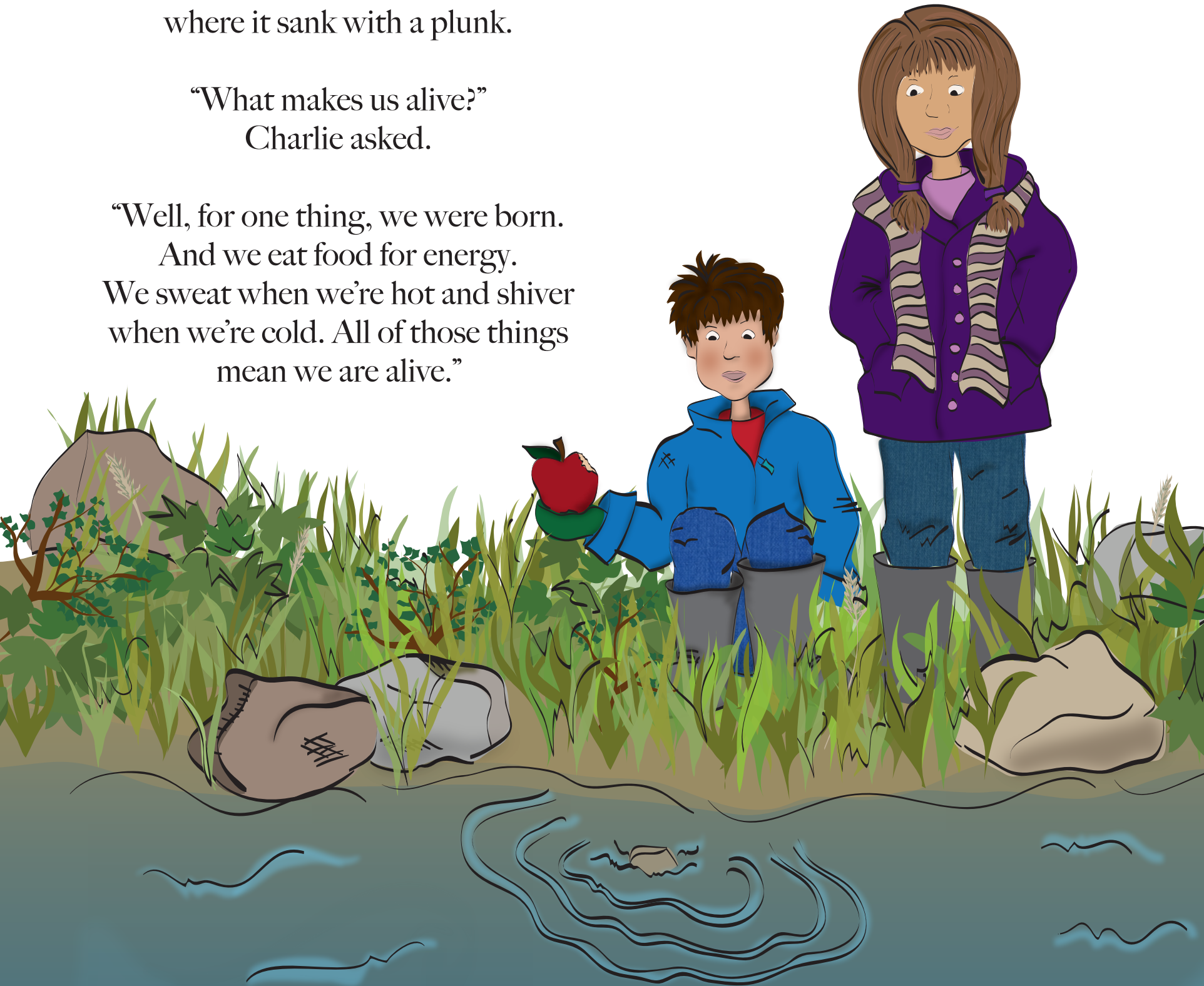
Charlie had never thought about that before. "Let's take it so we can recycle it," Kit said.



Kit chucked a rock into the water
where it sank with a plunk.

“What makes us alive?”
Charlie asked.

“Well, for one thing, we were born.
And we eat food for energy.
We sweat when we’re hot and shiver
when we’re cold. All of those things
mean we are alive.”



Charlie fished the apple out of his pocket and took a bite, pondering what his sister had said.

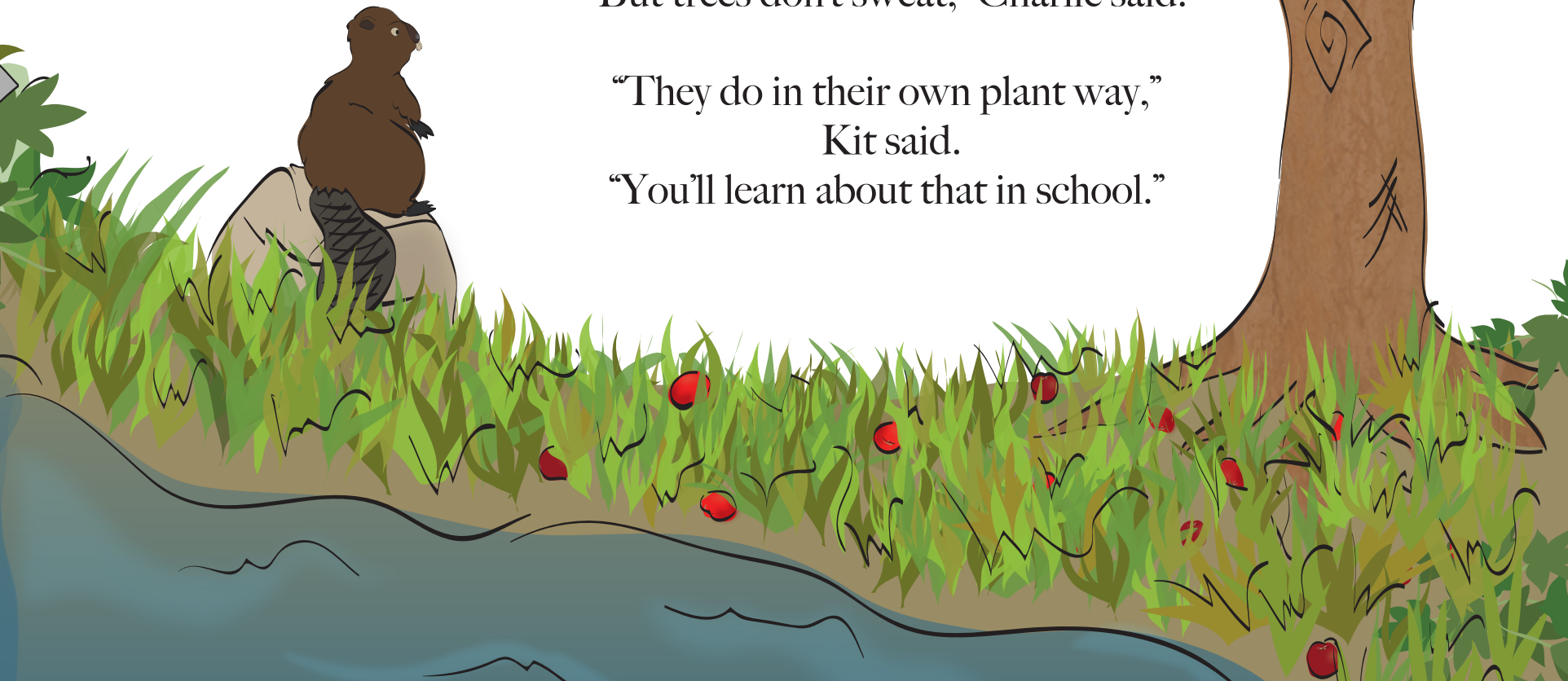
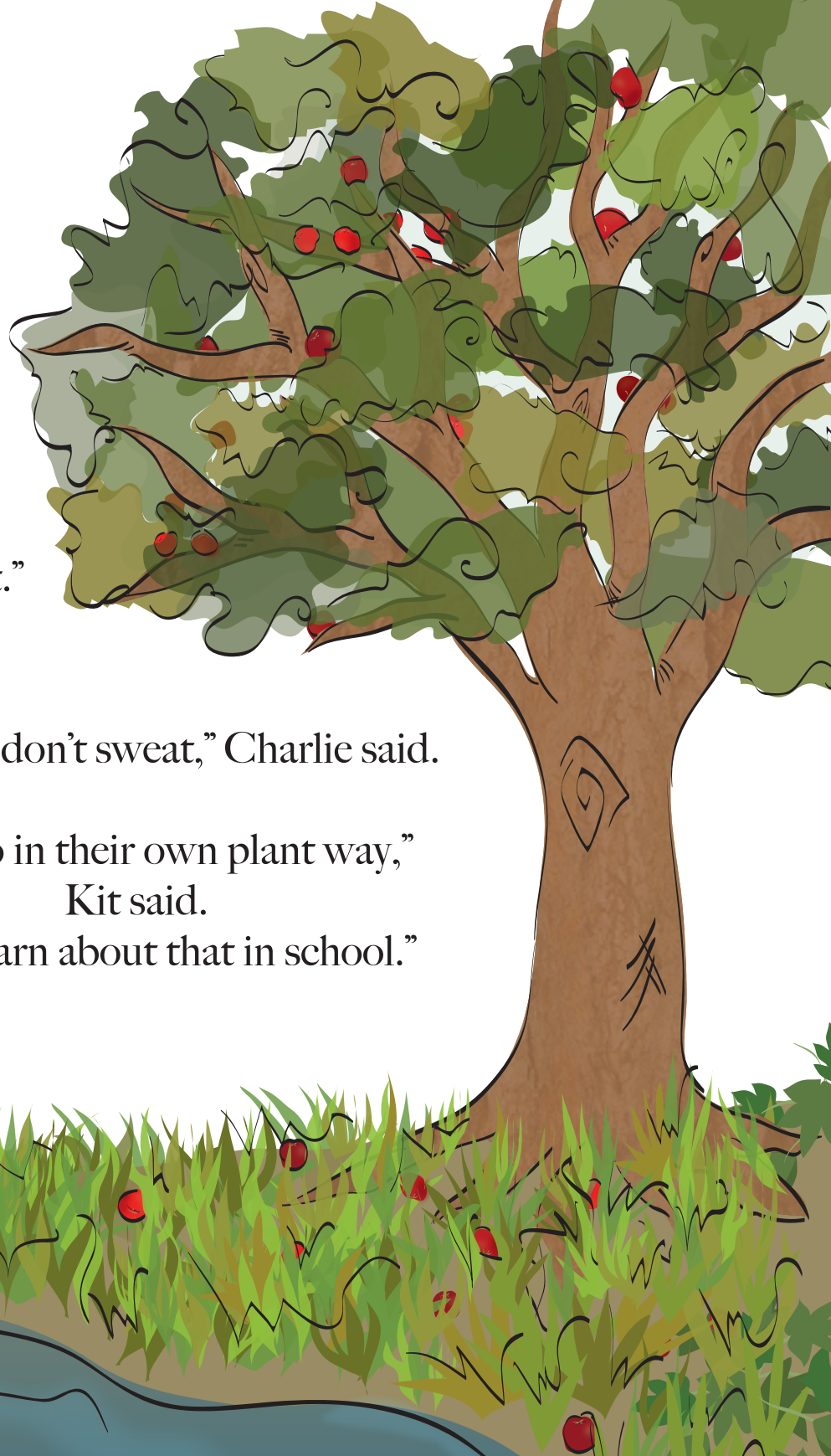
“Is this apple alive?”
he asked, munching.

“Yes, apple trees are born from the seeds that come from inside the fruit.”

“But trees don’t sweat,” Charlie said.

“They do in their own plant way,”
Kit said.

“You’ll learn about that in school.”





“But I've never seen a tree eat.”

“Put out your hand,” Kit said. “Do you feel the heat from the sun?”

Trees use the energy of sunlight to make their own food.”

Charlie wondered if a tree could feel the sun's warmth like he could.

When he asked Kit, she smiled and said she didn't know everything.

At a muddy patch in the trail, Charlie saw animal tracks.

He counted the toe prints
—one, two, three, four, five—
and pressed his own hand into the soft mud.

Kit bent down to look too. “A beaver walked here.”



“Beavers are alive,” declared Charlie.

Kit grinned. “How do you know?”

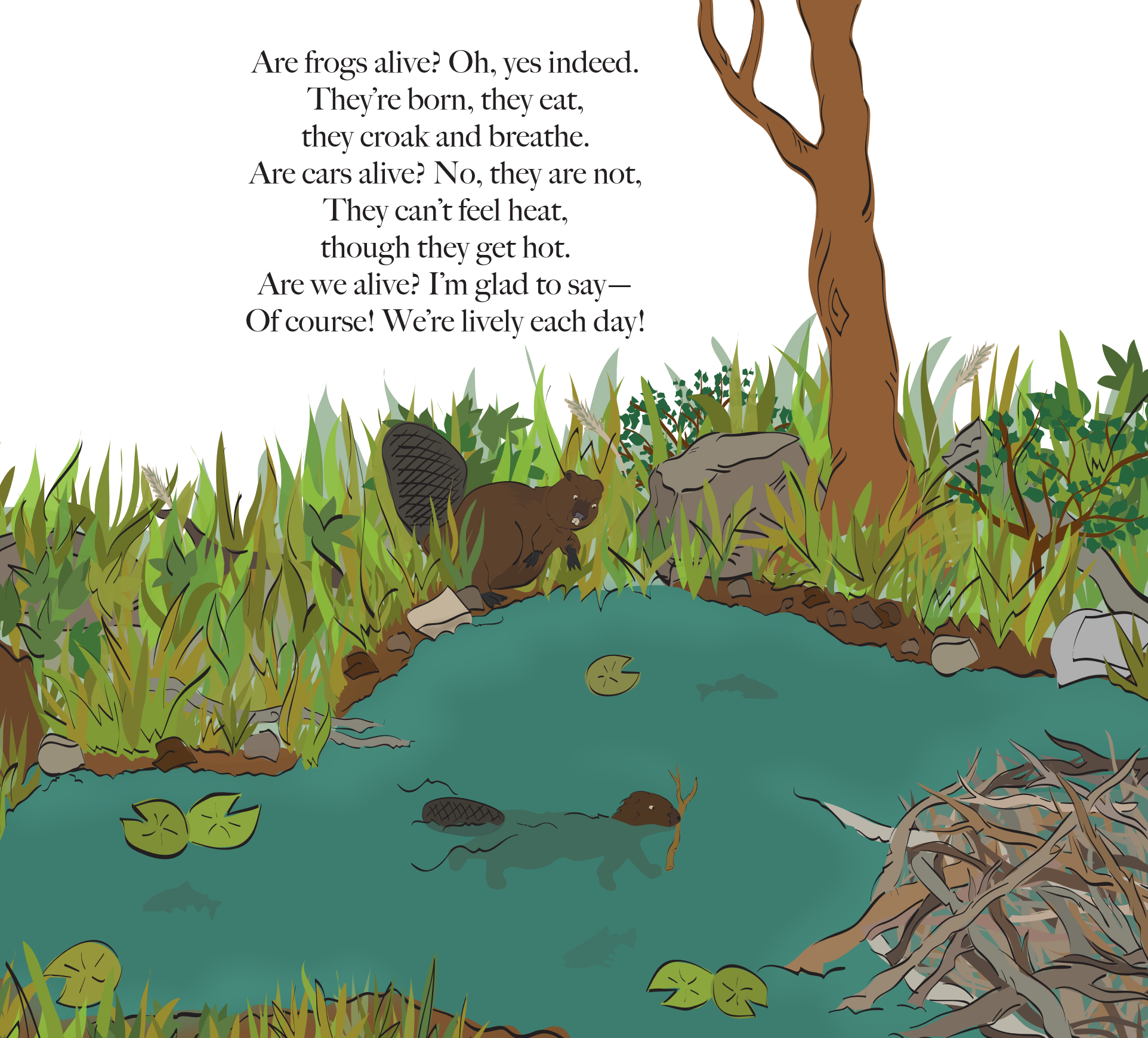
“Because they are born and they eat,” he said.

“Yep. And they have babies that grow from little to big.”

They found the beaver pond and Kit made up a poem
as they peered into the green, rich-smelling water.



Are frogs alive? Oh, yes indeed.
They're born, they eat,
they croak and breathe.
Are cars alive? No, they are not,
They can't feel heat,
though they get hot.
Are we alive? I'm glad to say—
Of course! We're lively each day!



Charlie and Kit climbed up a rocky hill and looked down on the woods and the lake. They could see all the way back to their house.

“What about the lake?” Charlie asked. He was still thinking. “Is that alive?”

“Things in the lake are alive,” said Kit. “Fish and water lilies, and other animals and plants too tiny to see.”





“Sort of like we can’t see stars in the daytime, even though they’re there?”

“Sort of like that!”
Kit nodded.

Charlie’s eyes got big. “Is there anything alive out in space?” he whispered.

“I don’t know everything, remember?” Kit put her arm around Charlie’s shoulders and they watched the clouds drift by.

After a little while, Charlie said, “I’m glad we’re alive.”
“Me too,” said Kit. “I’m hungry. How about you?”

