

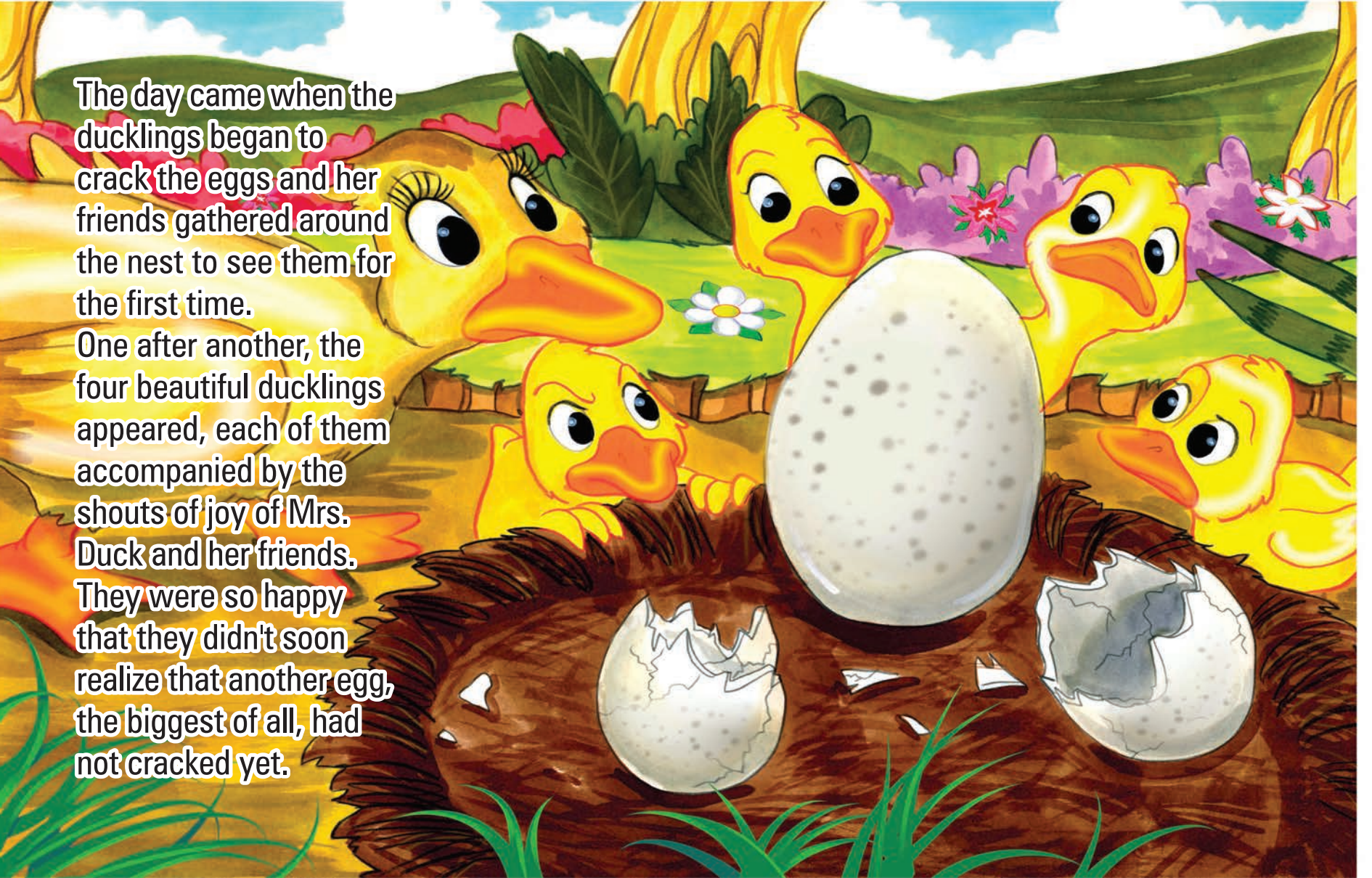


The Ugly duckling





Like every summertime, Mrs. Duck was sitting on her eggs and all her friends from the yard were eager to see the ducklings that were always the most

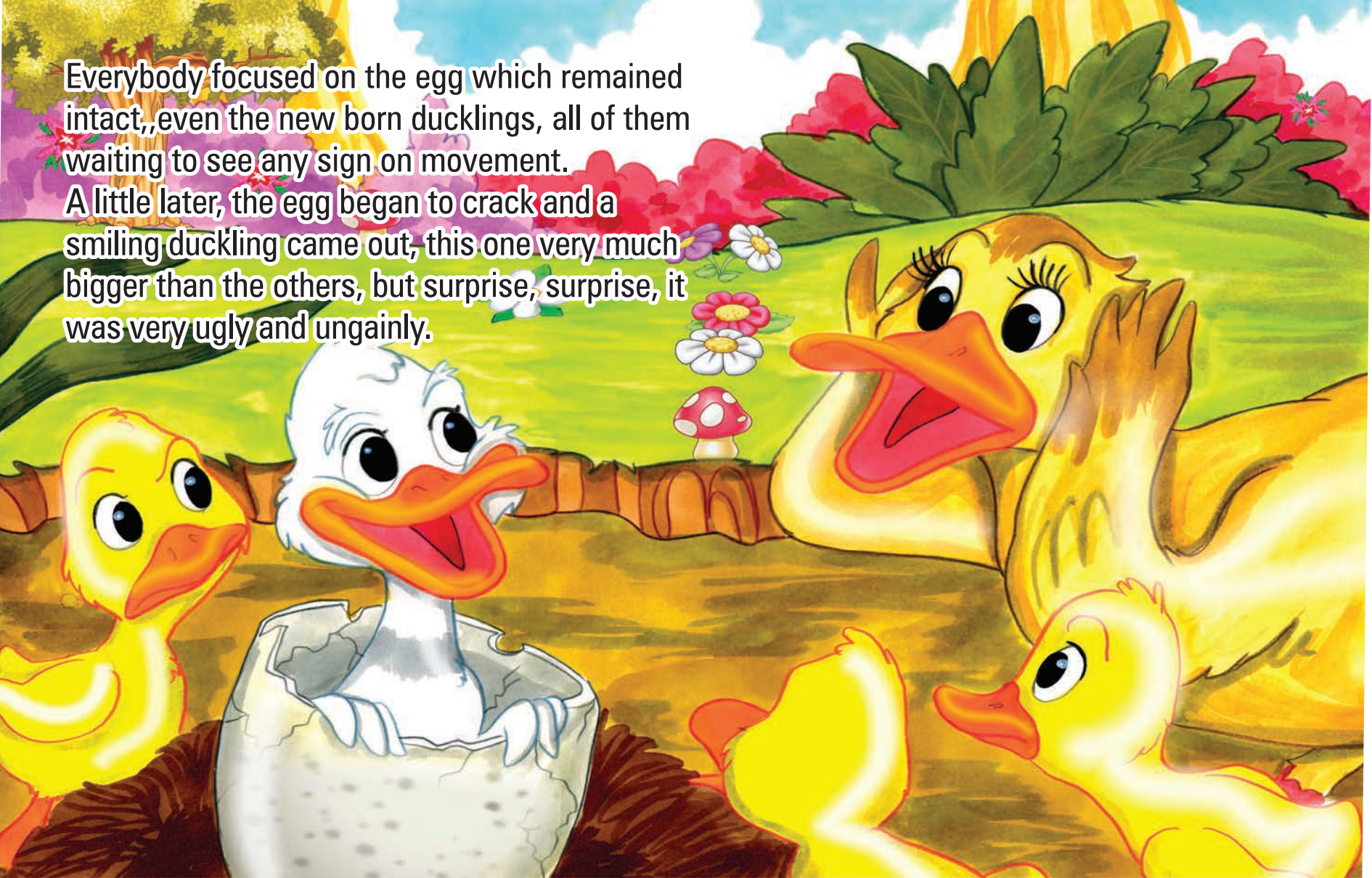


The day came when the ducklings began to crack the eggs and her friends gathered around the nest to see them for the first time.

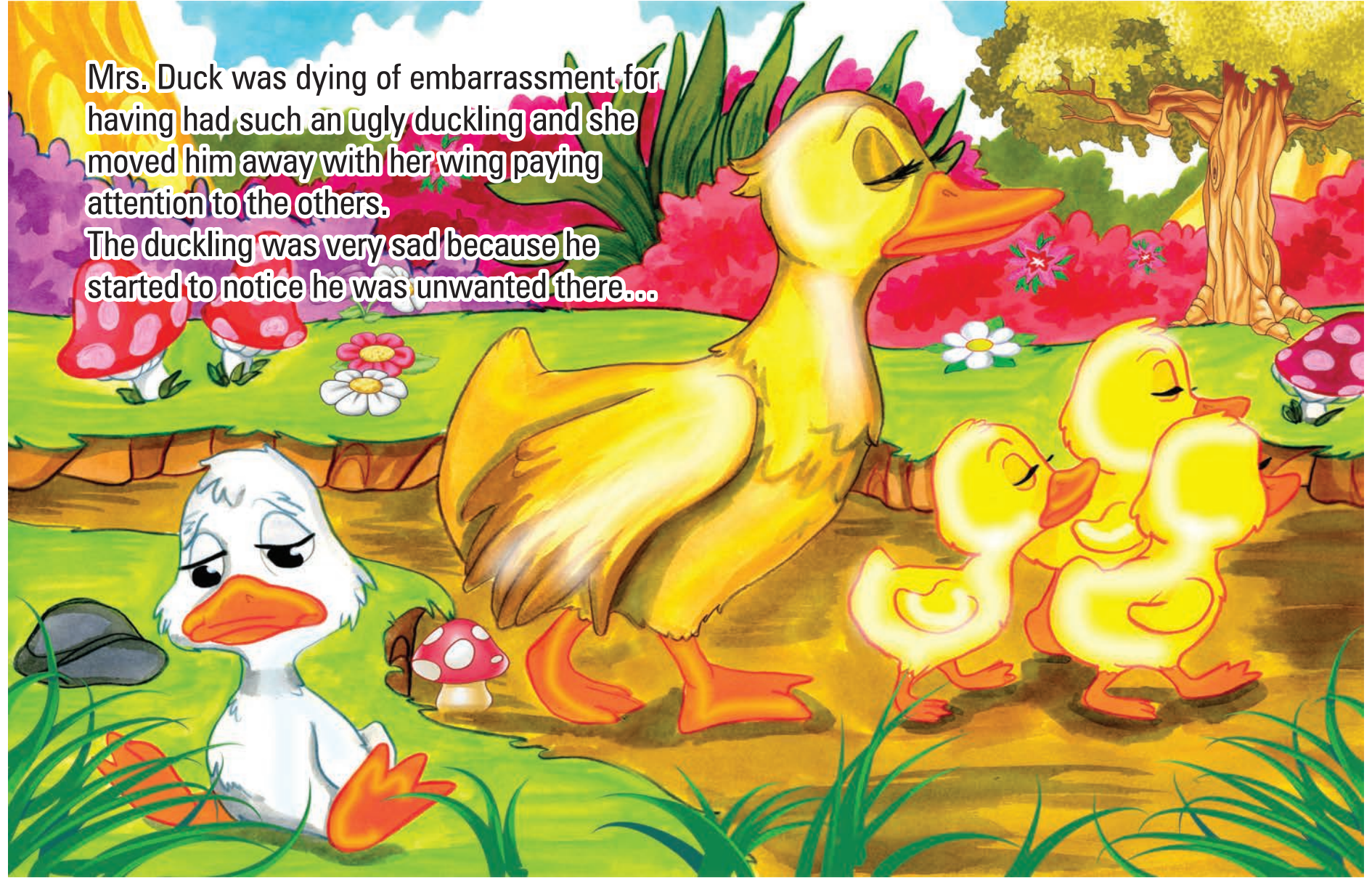
One after another, the four beautiful ducklings appeared, each of them accompanied by the shouts of joy of Mrs. Duck and her friends. They were so happy that they didn't soon realize that another egg, the biggest of all, had not cracked yet.

Everybody focused on the egg which remained intact, even the new born ducklings, all of them waiting to see any sign on movement.

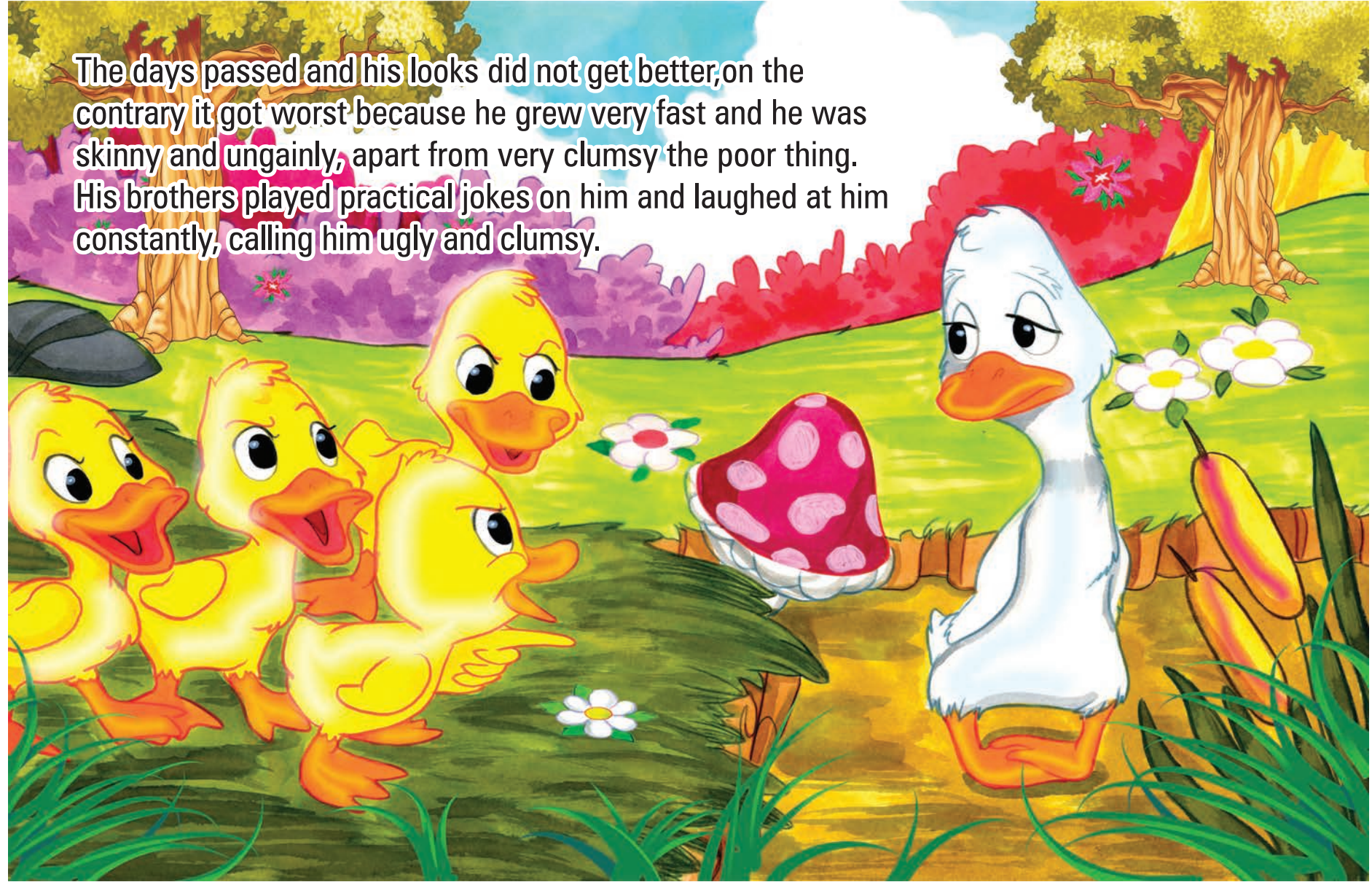
A little later, the egg began to crack and a smiling duckling came out, this one very much bigger than the others, but surprise, surprise, it was very ugly and ungainly.




Mrs. Duck was dying of embarrassment for having had such an ugly duckling and she moved him away with her wing paying attention to the others. The duckling was very sad because he started to notice he was unwanted there...



The days passed and his looks did not get better, on the contrary it got worse because he grew very fast and he was skinny and ungainly, apart from being very clumsy the poor thing. His brothers played practical jokes on him and laughed at him constantly, calling him ugly and clumsy.

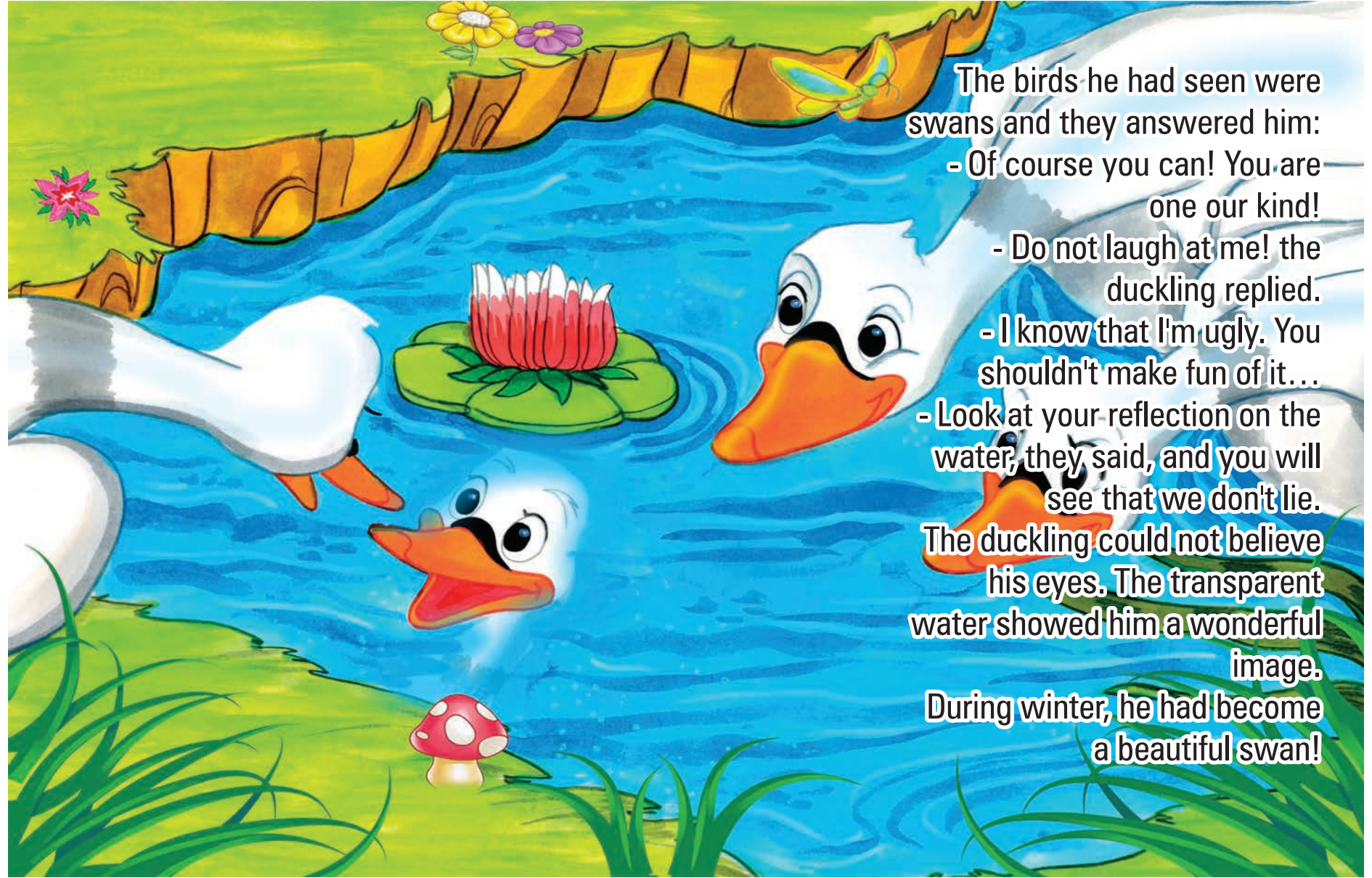




The duckling decided to look for a place where he could find friends who really love him despite his disastrous appearance, and one morning, very early before the farmer got up, he escaped through a hole in the fence.

The spring came, and the duckling went through a pond where he found the most beautiful birds he had ever seen. They were elegant, graceful and moved with so much distinction that he felt very sad because he was clumsy. Anyway, he approached them and asked them if he could bath too.





The birds he had seen were swans and they answered him:

- Of course you can! You are one our kind!

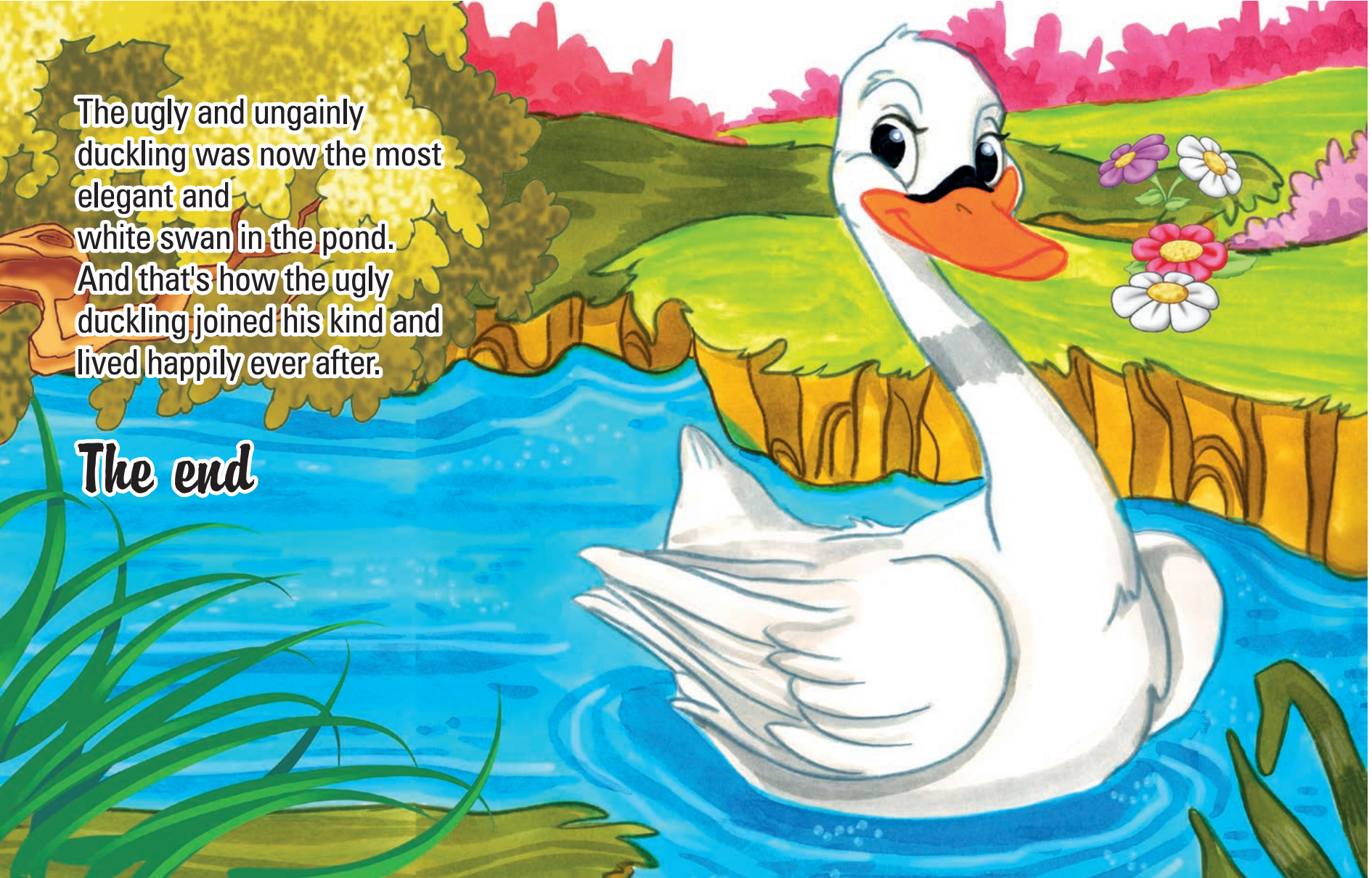
- Do not laugh at me! the duckling replied.

- I know that I'm ugly. You shouldn't make fun of it...

- Look at your reflection on the water, they said, and you will see that we don't lie.

The duckling could not believe his eyes. The transparent water showed him a wonderful image.

During winter, he had become a beautiful swan!



The ugly and ungainly duckling was now the most elegant and white swan in the pond. And that's how the ugly duckling joined his kind and lived happily ever after.

The end