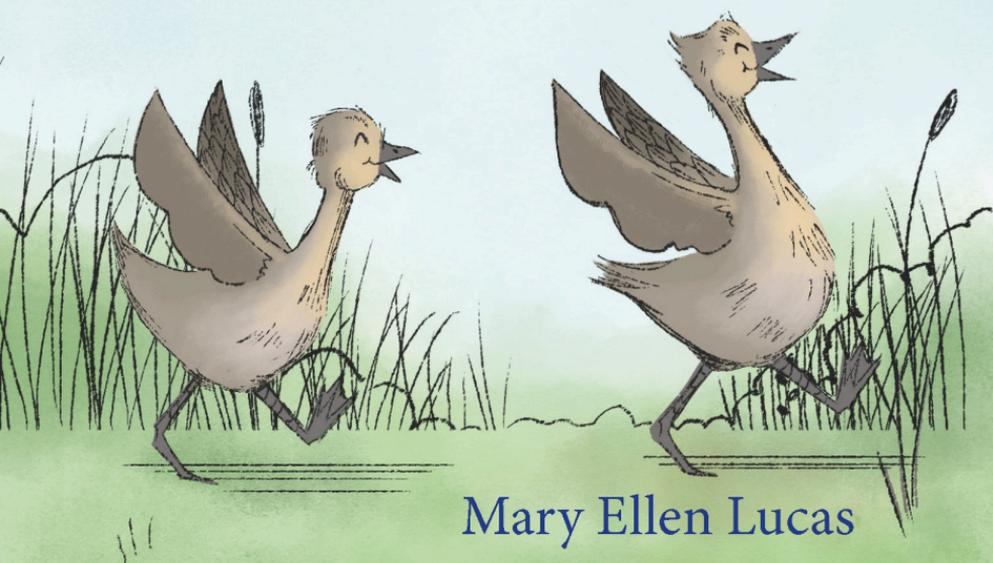




The
Goslings
Learn to
Listen

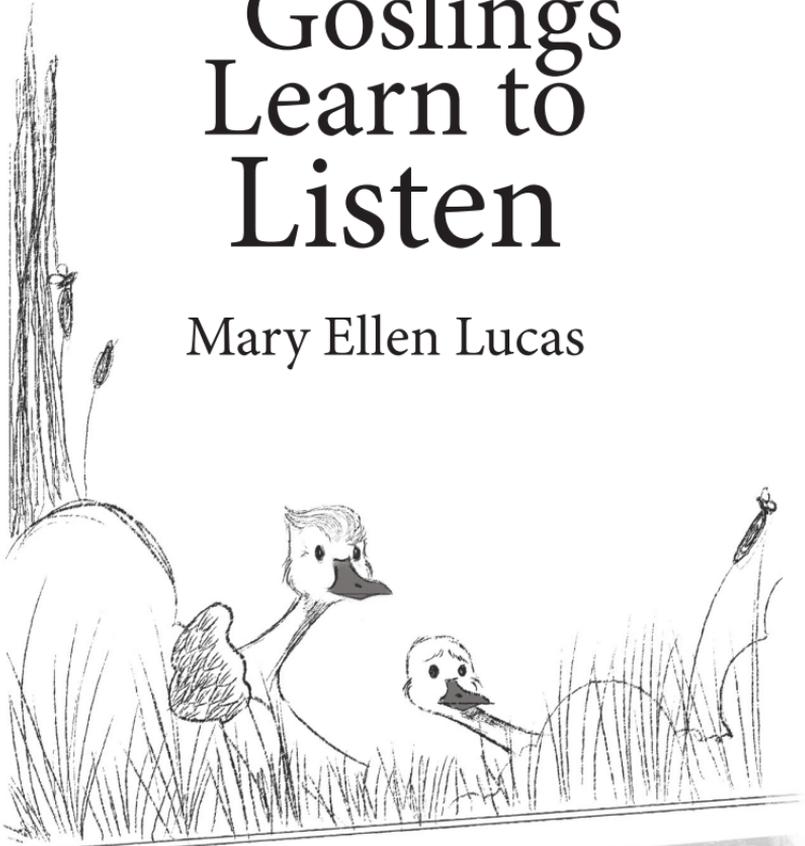




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The Goslings Learn to Listen

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Illustrations By
Mikaela San Pietro

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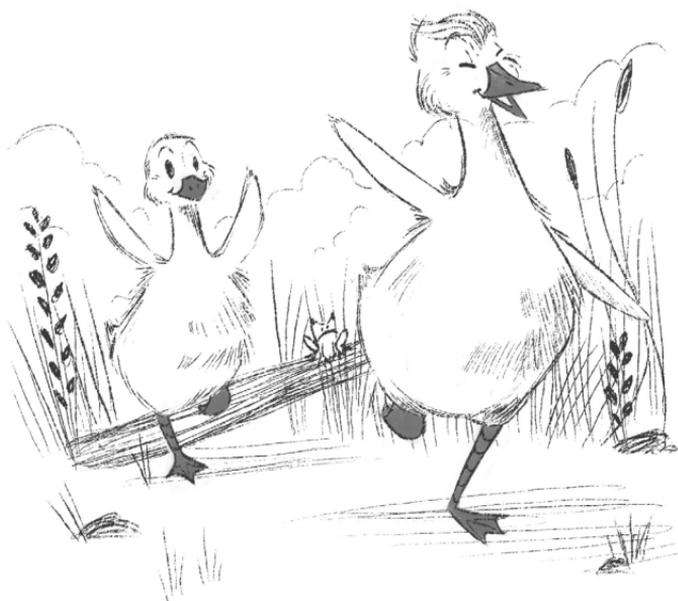
For my family



Chapter One



During last year's spring, on the day when the goose squabble stopped, Nellie and Willie, once formidable foes, forged a friendship. Their friendship blossomed into romance as a smitten Nellie swooned



over Willie, and Willie fell head over tails in love with Nellie. They became life long mates, and within a year their eggs hatched and out sprang their goslings, Glossie and Flossie. Nellie and Willie, overjoyed to become a mother and father, now swam around Little Puddle Pond as a family of four.

Flossie thought Glossie was the best big brother ever and followed him everywhere! Despite being smaller in size than Glossie, Flossie glided easily after her brother. Wherever Glossie paddled, Flossie

was only a wing's reach away. If Mother Nellie and Father Willie couldn't find Flossie, all they had to do was find Glossie.

Glossie, on the other hand, wasn't a follower. He was a leader or so he thought! Glossie did everything he was told *not* to do. He glossed over the word "no" as if he never heard it before. Trouble glommed onto Glossie so often Mother Nellie and Father Willie wondered if Glossie's Goose-Pause-Setting, better known as a GPS, had a loose wire. A haywire GPS sure could explain why Glossie veered off track.

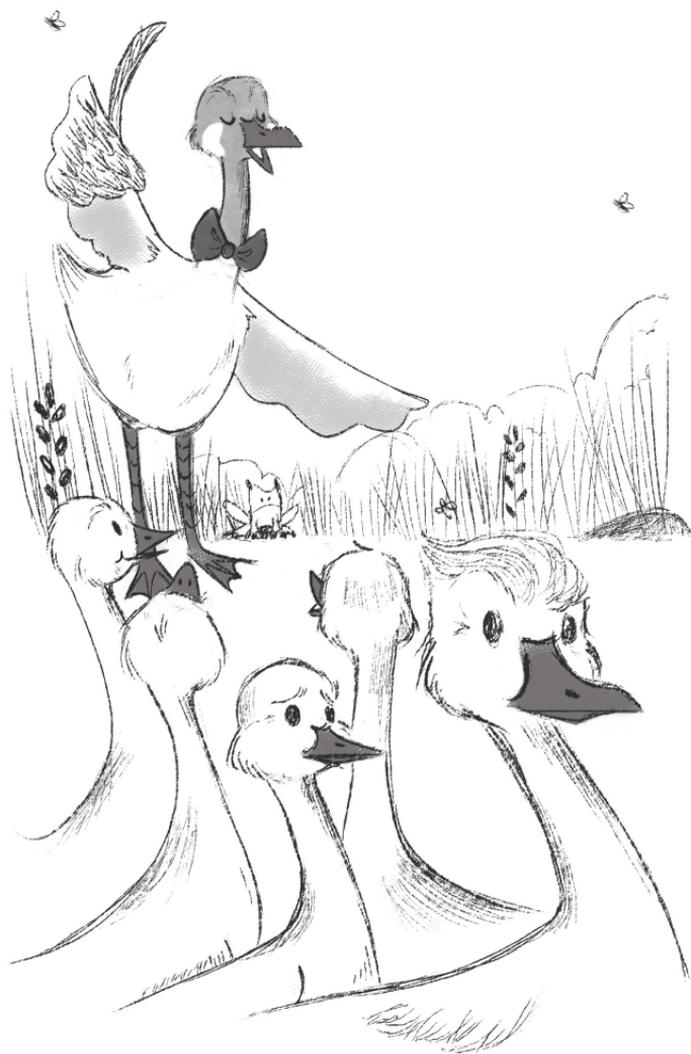


Chapter Two



Little Puddle Pond was quiet and peaceful, just the way Nellie and Willie liked it. From the pond, a mere hop, skip and puddle jump away, was the park. Peaceful Point Park was known for its beautiful flowers, plentiful picnic tables and a large playground. With summertime in full swing, the park was a hubbub of activity. Parents liked their children to play outdoors. Nellie and Willie could understand. They got the willies just at the thought of being cooped up indoors.

Every morning Glossie and Flossie attended school at Goose-a-Garden Grove. They walked to the grove, the halfway



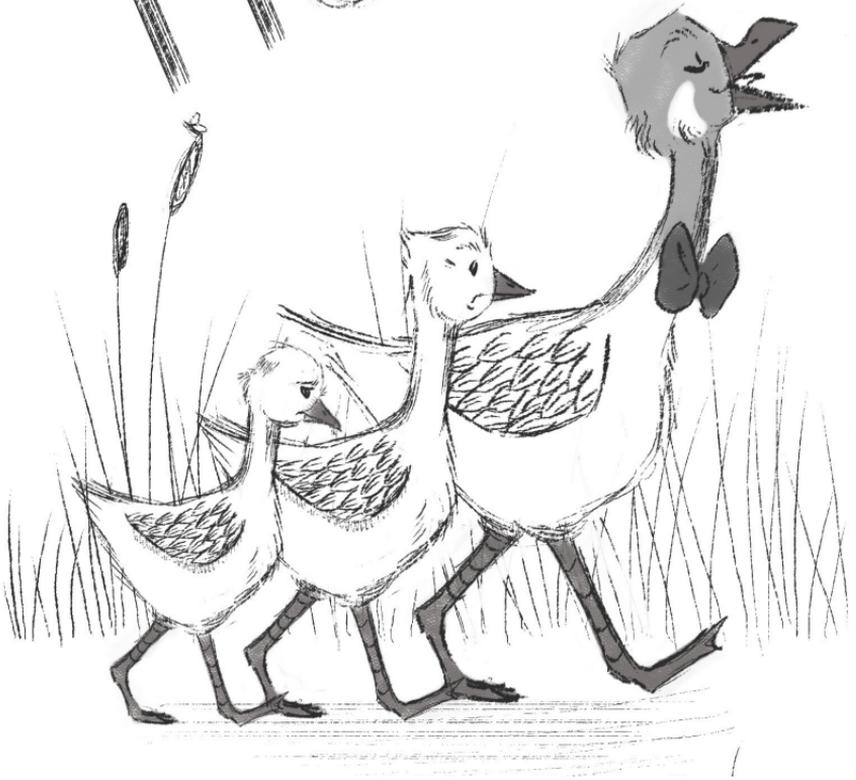
point between the pond and the park, where all the goslings gathered. Their favorite teacher, Harry Honker, had the task of teaching the goslings how to satisfy their ferocious appetites.

“Always begin with gratitude,” Harry Honker said as he bowed his head. “Be thankful for the providence of Mother Nature’s plentiful buffet.” Harry Honker would then hunker hungrily over the grass. With a swift tug of his big, black beak, out came a fresh clump of clover which he gobbled down in one giant gulp.

Glossie hadn’t been listening to his teacher. His attention was drawn to the juiciest patch of clover grass he had ever seen. Glossie sprinted off to get there first so he could lead the others to the best snacking spot ever. Flossie, of course, followed Glossie despite knowing it was wrong to do so. Whenever she didn’t follow the rules, she felt queasy in her tummy. A honking “halt” by Harry Honker stopped Glossie and Flossie in their tracks.

“Come back here,” Harry Honker commanded. “You know the rule, stay with your class,” Harry Honker said as he scolded the wayward goslings. “You must not ever run off by yourselves.”

HONK!

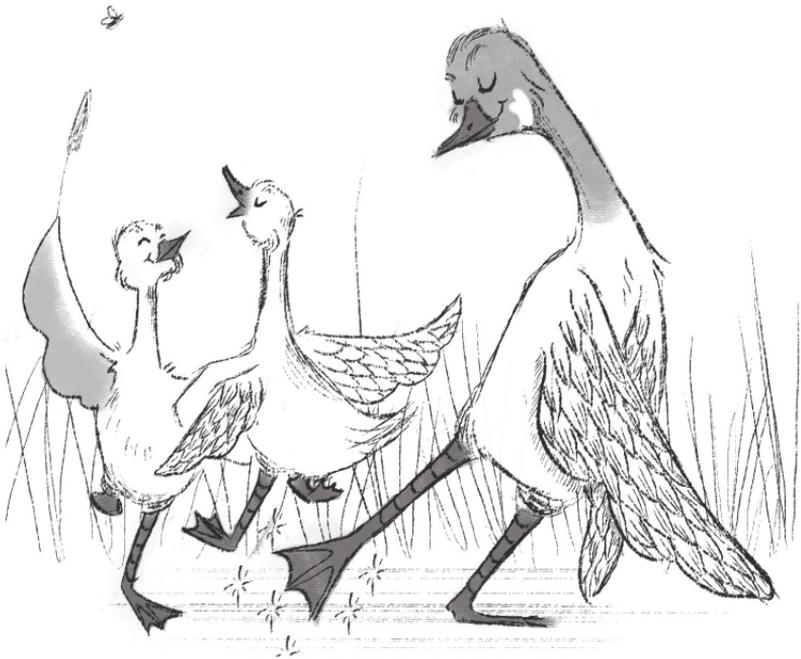


The most important rule their teachers emphasized was never, ever to go into Peaceful Point Park's parking lot. Goslings were allowed to graze in the grass alongside Little Puddle Pond. However, the grass nearest to the park led into the parking lot. This area was especially off limits for goslings because of the danger the cars presented. Harry Honker watched warily for any gosling roaming off the grass. If that happened, Harry Honker hurried into action. Thanks to his big honker of a beak, he would holler a humongous honk. The alerted goslings would then form a line behind him and follow him to safer ground.

Another favorite teacher, Twinkly-Toes Tootsie, was a famous Do-Si-Do dancer. The goslings were awestruck by Twinkly-Toes Tootsie's sassy swish and sway.



“Once you learn to dance the Do-Si-Do, you’ll be able to side-step away from children.” said Twinkly-Toes Tootsie. “Children will want to pet your soft, fluffy feathers,” she warned them. “Everyone knows geese aren’t for petting! Silly children sometimes do silly things just like silly geese do.”



End of Excerpt

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