

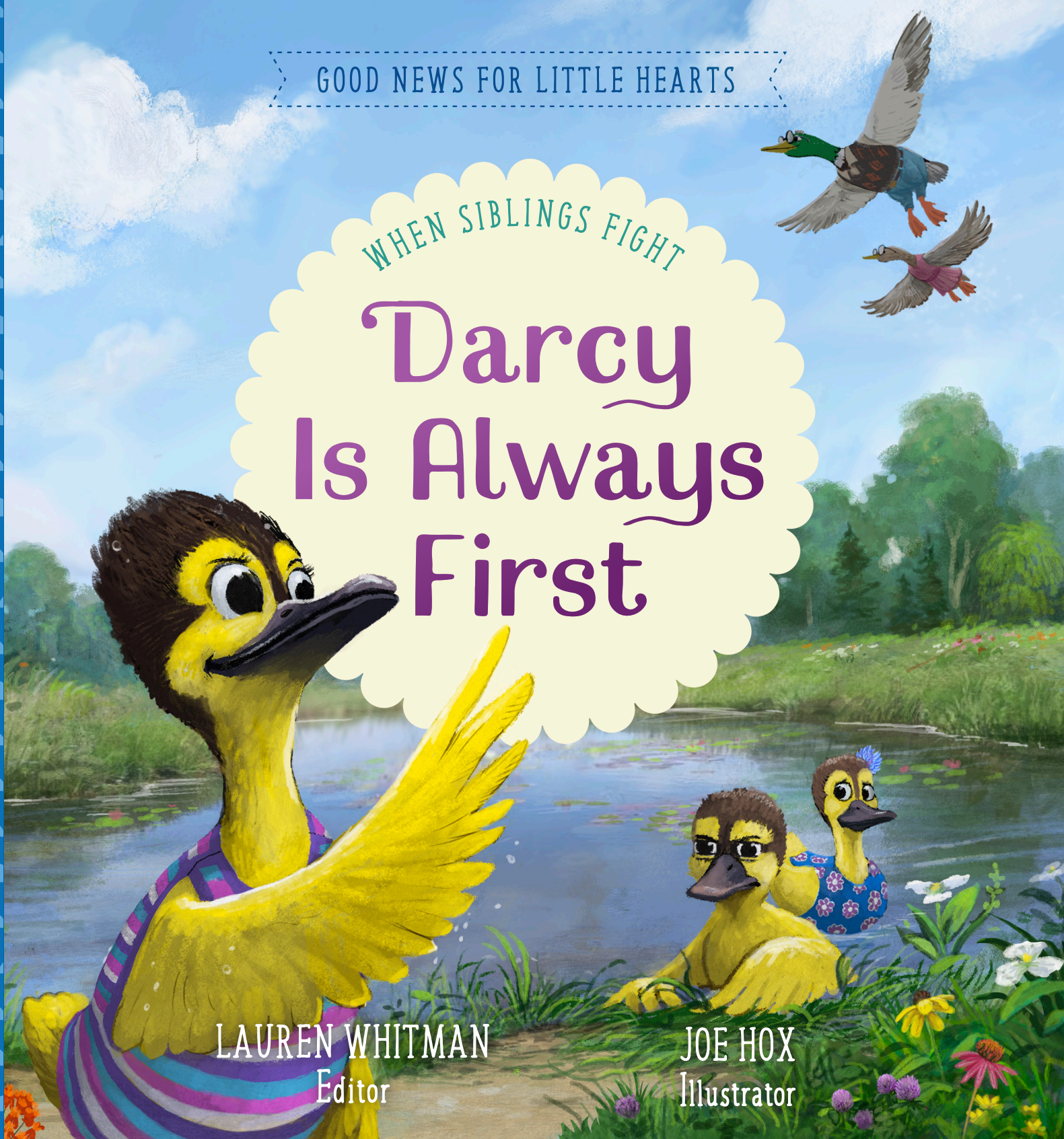
GOOD NEWS FOR LITTLE HEARTS

WHEN SIBLINGS FIGHT

Darcy Is Always First

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On Mulberry Pond, a few paddles from shore, swam three ducklings: Darcy, Delia, and Denny. After a long day of swimming, the three siblings were nearly home. Darcy was the first to take a flying leap onto shore, giving her siblings a good splash.

“First!” she honked.

“Darcy is always first,” Denny scowled, shaking water off his face and quacking under his breath.

Even though the siblings hatched on the same day, Darcy was technically the oldest, because she hatched first. Denny was the youngest, and Delia was right in the middle.

Denny was right. Darcy had the habit of hustling to the front of their little group. She had been the first to hatch, the first to quack, and the first to fly. And no matter how old the ducks grew, she still thought she should be first in everything.

Her habit of always being first was getting on Denny’s nerves.



With the ducklings in sight, Mama stretched out her wings and said,
“I have exciting news! Gram and Gramps are flying in from Woodland Pond!”

The ducklings quacked wildly. They loved when Gram and Gramps came to visit.
They told the best tales, caught the best bugs, and honked the best honks.

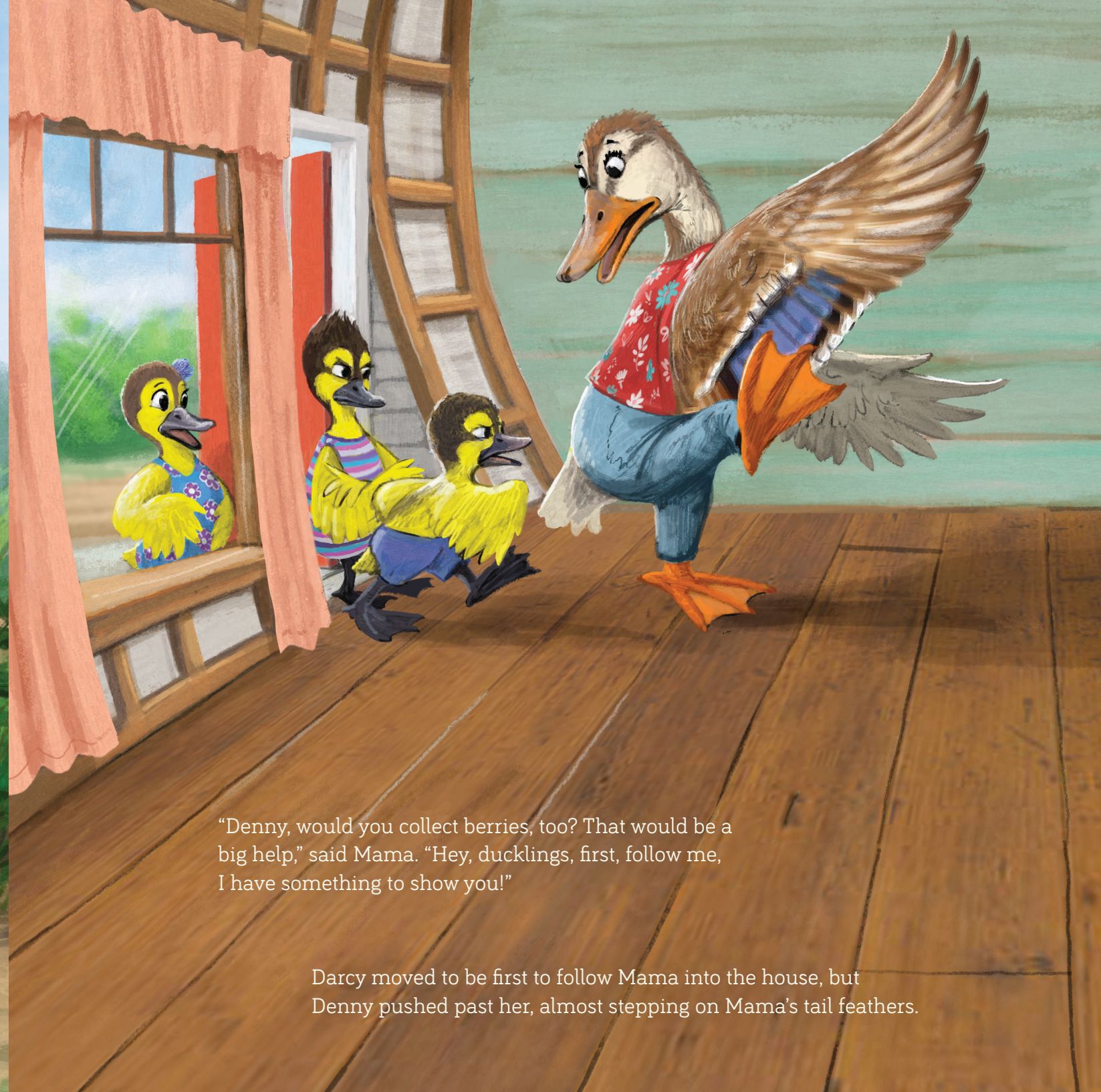
They were so much fun!



“I’ll collect some berries for dinner!”
said Darcy.

“I’ll make a welcome sign!”
shouted Delia.

“Hmm . . . I don’t know what to do,” said Denny. But really he was wondering how he could
be first to greet Gram and Gramps. He just knew Darcy would try to be the one to do that.



“Denny, would you collect berries, too? That would be a
big help,” said Mama. “Hey, ducklings, first, follow me,
I have something to show you!”

Darcy moved to be first to follow Mama into the house, but
Denny pushed past her, almost stepping on Mama’s tail feathers.

On the kitchen counter was a big, heavy box from the market. The ducklings eyed it eagerly.
"Who wants to guess what I found?" asked Mama.

"Bugs!" honked Darcy.

"Nope," said Mama.

"Worms!" cried Denny.

"Closer!" said Mama.

"Slugs!" shouted Delia.

"That's right!" quacked Mama.



She opened the lid to reveal a box full of slimy slugs slithering in soil.



As Denny stretched his beak toward the box, Darcy shoved him aside, and said,
"Me first!"

"Hey!" cried Denny, "Stop butting ahead of me. Why do you always get to be first?"

"Because I'm the oldest," said Darcy matter-of-factly and slurped a long, slimy slug.

"Then forget it. I don't want any dumb slugs anyway," Denny sulked. He left the kitchen.

"Hey, what's going on here?" Mama exclaimed. Delia shrugged and looked at Darcy.

Darcy grinned, "Don't know and don't care. I'll take Denny's slug!" She grabbed it and both girls went outside to get ready for Gramps and Gram's arrival.