

## LOOK INTO A MEADOW

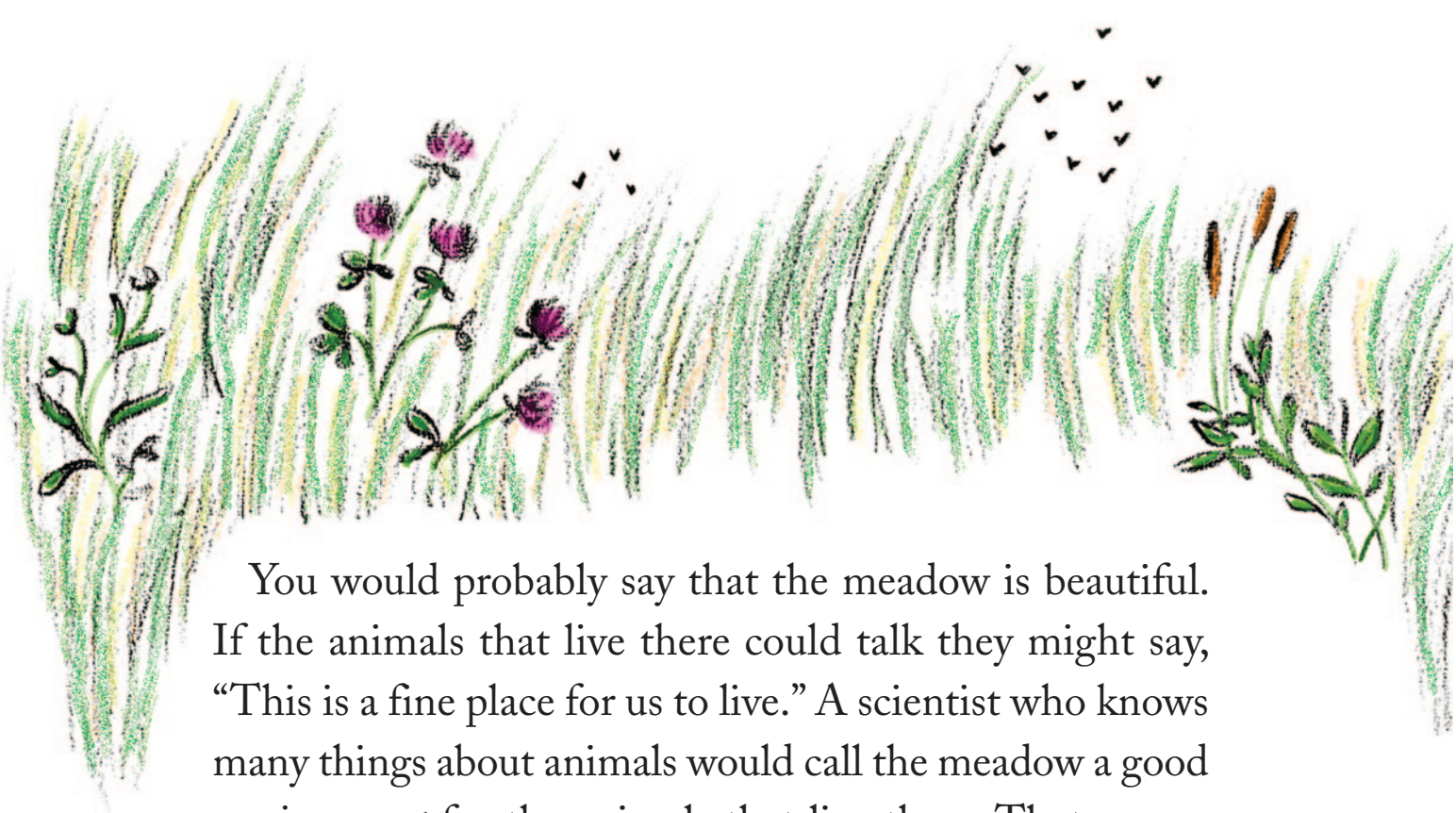
I think you will like this meadow. You can see it from the road that passes by. You can see it better if you look over the gate where the cows go in. You can see it best if you open the gate and walk in. That is the best way to explore a meadow.



A fence goes all the way around the meadow. It keeps the cows in and other large animals out. Rabbits and cats and dogs and ducks and other small animals can go right through the fence. They come in when they want to and go out when they want to.

Bushes and small trees grow along the fence. The ground in the meadow is covered with green grass and red clover and white clover and a few flowers. There is a pond in the middle of the meadow and there is a large, old dead tree at the edge of the pond.

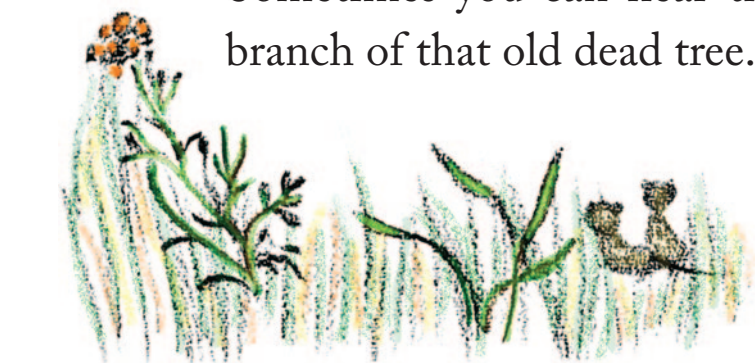




You would probably say that the meadow is beautiful. If the animals that live there could talk they might say, "This is a fine place for us to live." A scientist who knows many things about animals would call the meadow a good *environment* for the animals that live there. That means that the animals have a good place for making homes, for taking care of their families, for finding their food, and for all of the other things they do.

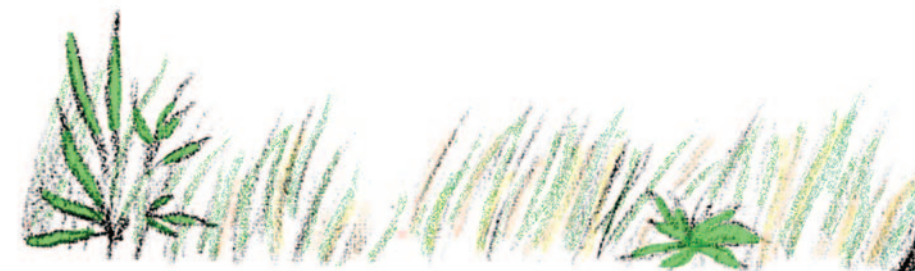
This is a book about how the animals get along in their meadow environment. When you explore the meadow you will see that the animals are built just right for living there.

The meadow is quiet except sometimes you can hear the water in the brook. It trickles. Sometimes you can hear the meadowlark that sits on the fence. It whistles. Sometimes you can hear the kingfisher that sits on a branch of that old dead tree. It rattles.



When the meadowlark sings it makes you feel like trying to whistle its song. But when the kingfisher rattles, you wouldn't think of whistling. The kingfisher is not a very musical bird. Sometimes you hear a red-headed woodpecker on that old dead tree. It goes rap-tap, rap-tap. Sometimes in spring you hear frogs croaking in the pond. They croak loud enough to be heard across the road. Except for the soft trickles, the merry whistles, the rattles and the croaks, the meadow is a quiet place.

Sometimes, if you are a good listener, you can hear the bumblebees buzzing in the red clover. You must stand very quietly and listen as hard as you can. But no matter how hard you try you can't hear the mice and the moles that live in the ground. You can't hear the fish that live in the water. They don't make sounds that you can hear. Neither do the turtles that sit beside the pond, nor the rabbits that frolic in the grass. They all live quietly in the meadow.





If the clover in the meadow is in blossom and the wind blows toward you, you can smell the sweetness in the air. When rain falls on the meadow you can see new greenness in the grass. When the sun shines you can see the drops of water sparkle.

The animals in the meadow are busy going here and there. Some of them dig in the ground. Some creep or crawl over it. Some climb trees. Some hop. Some fly through the air. And some just run over the ground to get from where they are to where they want to be.



The animals in the meadow are great eaters. Some nibble. Some gnaw. Some chew. Some sip. Some lap. And some just bite into the things which they eat when they are hungry. The animals in the meadow are great hunters too. The kingfisher hunts. So do the fish and the ducks and the moles and the hawks.

The animals live in many different kinds of environments. Some live in the water of the pond and brook. Water is a good environment for them. You will discover why this is true if you watch them.

Let's look down into the water of the pond.

