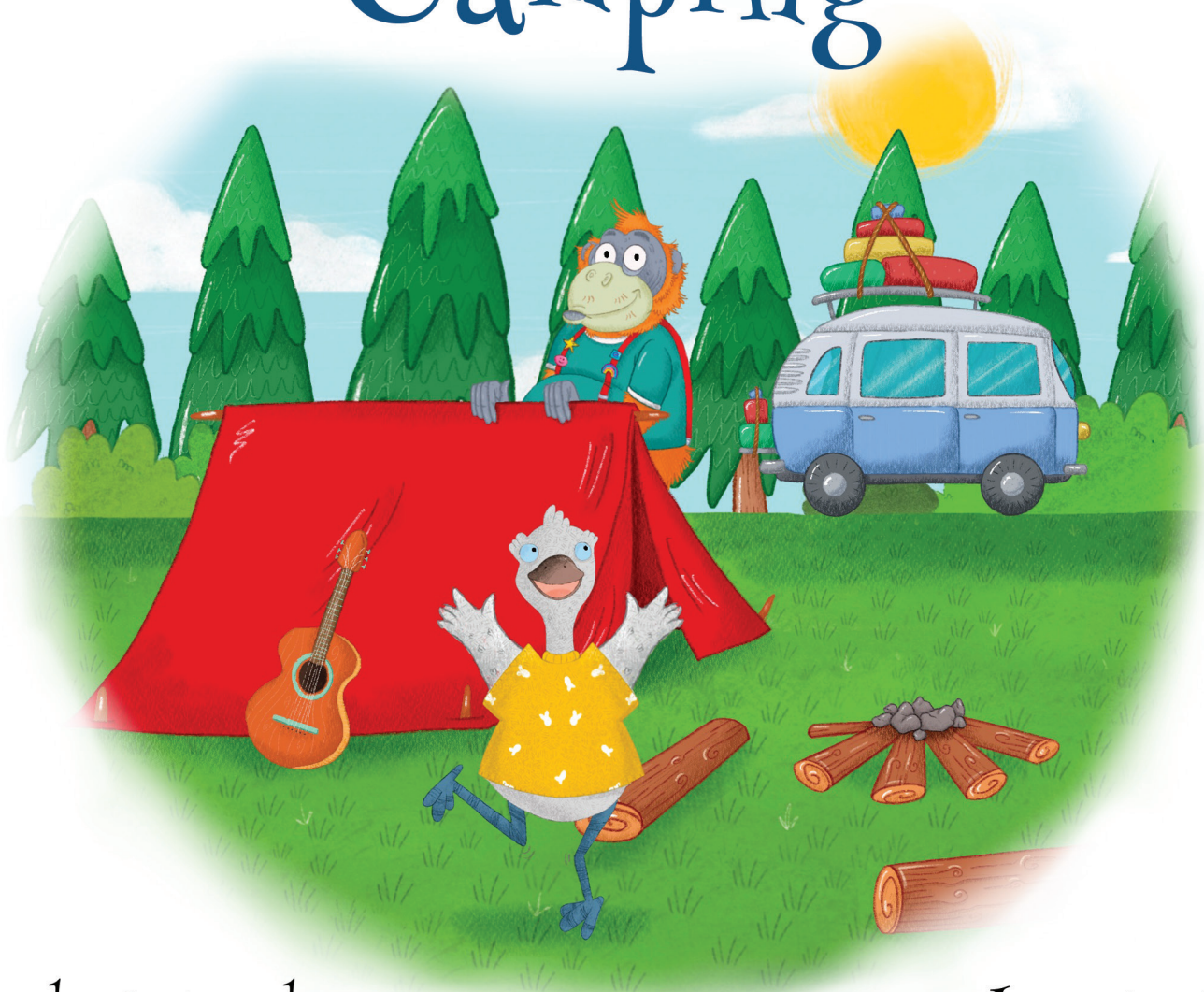


Eddy

Goes

Camping



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Eddy Emu was enjoying going to playgroup and spending time with Olly Orangutan. He was learning to read and write and although he found it difficult at times, he loved listening to stories. They took him on adventures and helped him learn new things. One book that had caught his eye was about a family who went on a camping trip. He asked Olly to read it over and over again and even took it home, so his parents Flossy and Frank Flamingo could read it to him at bedtime.

Eddy loved the idea of toasting marshmallows, climbing high up into trees and sleeping in a tent under the stars. He had pleaded with his parents for them all to go camping together, but they were nervous about saying yes. They had no experience and were a little worried about some of the creatures they may encounter in the wild woods. Flossy also had a big fear of spiders and Frank was no DIY expert and was not sure if he would be able to put up a tent.



Eddy talked more and more about camping and even started to use the table in the kitchen as a tent. He would drape his favourite blanket over the top so that it hung down. Then he would collect some sticks, stones and leaves from the garden, build a pretend fire and then hide inside with his sleeping bag. Casper the cat would often join him for a snuggle.

In the mornings Eddy would jump into bed with Flossy and Frank, grab his private eye torch and make them all hide under the covers, while singing camping songs at the top of his voice.



Flossy and Frank decided that maybe they should consider taking Eddy camping. They wanted to get some expert advice, so decided to ask Olly Orangutan for some tips. They knew he had been camping several times with lots of children and would be full of useful ideas.

Olly had loads of great advice, but even more excitingly, he kindly offered to go with them to make sure they felt more relaxed going on a camping trip for the first time. He even had all the equipment, so they would not need to worry about buying anything new.

They decided to take Eddy that weekend and invite his best friend Percy Penguin. They knew that Eddy loved surprises, but that he would also prefer to know what was happening so he could feel excited beforehand and get himself prepared and packed for their adventure.

The next morning, Eddy climbed into bed with Flossy and Frank and pretended he was off camping again in search for bears and racoons under the covers.

"Would you like to search for real bears?" Frank said to Eddy. "In a real tent?"

"Are you joking?" said Eddy not believing what his daddy was saying.

"Would you like to sleep in a sleeping bag and see the stars?" Flossy said with a smile.

"You are just winding me up," said Eddy, although he was starting to feel excited.

"Maybe Percy could come along as well?" Flossy said.

"That would be the best thing EVER!" Eddy shrieked.

"WE ARE ALL GOING CAMPING TOMORROW!"
Flossy and Frank honked as loudly as possible.



"Yippppppppeeeeeee!! This is the best surprise I have ever had. How are we going to get all the things we need?" Eddy said, starting to panic. "We need a tent, sleeping bags, a camping stove, woolly socks, walking boots, marshmallows for the fire, a whistle, a torch..."

"Don't worry - we have it all packed and ready to go," Flossy explained.

"We have even bought the special camping backpack you wanted," Frank said as he pulled out a big green box from under the bed. Eddy's jaw dropped open at the sight of his present.



"Thank you, thank you. I just can't wait to go on an adventure tomorrow," said Eddy.

Eddy then started to sound a little nervous, "What if we get lost?"

"Don't worry...Olly Orangutan is coming along to make sure we are looked after," said Frank.

"Phew!" said Eddy. "I was worried for a second...you are useless with maps, Daddy!"

Olly arrived at their house in a campervan. Percy had stayed with them overnight, but they had both been awake for hours bouncing around the living room. Eddy had written a list of everything needed for the trip and checked it off with his parents. They were ready to go.

They set off on their camping trip singing at the top of their voices.

Frank had booked them a camping spot and it took them less than an hour to get there.

They bustled out of the van. Eddy and Percy jumped up and down excitedly. They offered to help put up the tent and pulled out the instructions. It seemed fun as they disappeared underneath the canvas, but they soon got tangled and had to be rescued. Olly explained it was important the main frame of the tent was put up first, so they needed to start with the poles and work from there. Frank and Olly held a pole while Percy and Eddy took turns hammering in the tent pegs. It was going well, until Percy swung the hammer a little too high and managed to hit Frank SMACK on the head! Frank had to sit down...



Flossy offered to take Eddy and Percy for a walk, so that Frank and Olly would have a chance to get the tent up before it got dark. She was good at reading maps as she used to be a girl guide when she was young. And she also loved being out in nature, so wanted to explore.

They decided to head for the lake, which looked to be a mile away. Percy and Eddy ran ahead and kept playing hide and seek in the trees and bushes. Flossy had purposely dressed them in bright clothes so they would stand out in the forest, to make sure they would not get lost.

Flossy could see that the boys were enjoying themselves. It was wonderful to watch them.

"Look Mummy, it's pink grass. It looks like you," Eddy said.

Flossy laughed, "It's called Muhly Grass and it is unique to Florida."

"Wow! That is very special," said Eddy.

"I love this pretty flower," said Percy. "What's it called?"

"That's an orchid," said Flossy. "They come in all different colours."

"I have never seen one of those before. Can I pick one?" asked Percy.

"Sorry Percy, but we aren't allowed to pick wildflowers in national parks," Flossy explained. "We have to make sure they are left to grow, so that everyone can enjoy them."



They had been walking for a fair while, but there was still no sign of the lake.

The boys were happy enough. They swung on small trees and laughed and laughed.

Flossy did not want to alarm the boys, but she thought they may have taken a wrong turn. She looked at the map and could not seem to figure out where they were. She checked her phone, but it did not have any signal. Luckily flamingos can fly, so she decided to soar above the trees to see the best direction to go in. She was determined to find the lake.

She told Eddy and Percy to stay put for a short time, while she flew above the trees.

Flossy spotted the lake straight away, glistening in the sunlight. She honked down to them and they followed her guidance until they reached the lake below. Eddy and Percy did not hesitate, they were both confident swimmers, so stripped off to their pants and dived in.

"The water is so warm," said Percy.

"I love lying on my back and relaxing," said Eddy.



Suddenly, they heard a loud noise in the forest. Flossy looked worried.

"What is that?" said Eddy.

The bush nearest to the lake rustled and a big shadow appeared.

"I'm scared," said Percy. "I don't want to be eaten by a bear."

The shadow got closer and they all froze with fear...

"ROARRRRRR!" said Olly and Frank as they came charging out of the bushes laughing.

"That's not funny," said Flossy.

"It was, from where we were hiding," said Frank.

"We have been doing all the hard work, so we wanted to come and join in the fun," said Olly.

"Have you finished putting up the tent?" said Eddy.

"Of course, we have! Everything is ready to go," said Frank.

"Yay!! That's so exciting!" said Percy.

"Can we go back and see. And cook some dinner. I'm starving," said Eddy.

They all laughed loudly and took a nice stroll back to camp.

They cuddled up with blankets, sang songs round the campfire and had delicious, toasted marshmallows. They even got to lie out in their sleeping bags and watch the night sky.



"I love watching the stars," Eddy said as he snuggled into Flossy.

"It is very special watching them with you," said Flossy.

"You can even say you have seen bears today, after all!" said Frank.

"Where?" said Eddy, feeling scared again.

"The Great Bear and Little Bear are star constellations, and they are shining brightly."

"Wow! That's so magical," said Percy and Eddy together.

They both smiled and closed their eyes, under the wonderful night sky.

