



Little Explorers: An Isaan Adventure



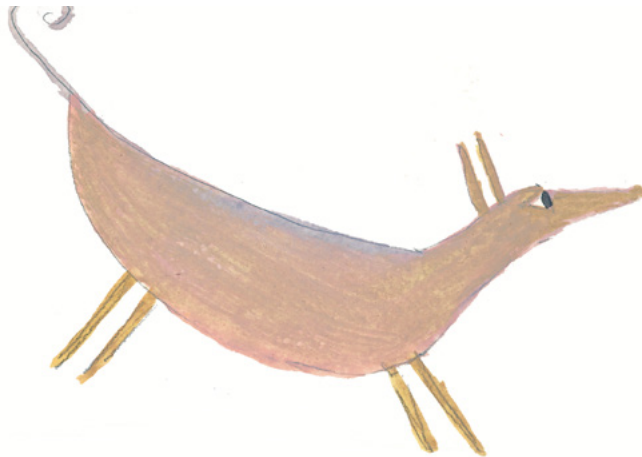
Story Sakunee Nattapoolwat

Illustrations Yuthasak Wangpaisarn

Local Knowledge Book Series



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Local Knowledge Book Series

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Preface

Thailand Knowledge Park (TK Park) important mission in society is to develop a love of reading and give people equal opportunities to experience modern learning centers which speak to their interests. Thailand Knowledge Park has been cooperating with local administrators in many regions of Thailand to build living libraries as a way to achieve its mission.

Bringing local knowledge to children, in a modern and fun way, is an important tool which could inspire them to read and explore more. The idea is to create books which reflect local wisdom, together with morality and ethics, for children aged 0-12.

The books in the Isaan Exploration Set were developed by TK Park, scholars, and local writers. Children and adults will get to know about the northeastern region of Thailand and be proud of the unique traditions found there. Moreover, the books also foster better understandings and tolerant attitudes toward others from different cultures and societies.

Thailand Knowledge Park (TK Park) hopes that the books would be another learning tool which encourages Thai people to read more and maximize their learning. TK Park aims to make the books fun and easy to read. The readers can enjoy reading them and appreciate their own hometowns, regions, and Country.

Thailand Knowledge Park



Daddy was driving and then
he stopped where we could see
the reed mouth organ from afar.
“We’re approaching the highland!”
Daddy said with a smile.





Everybody stepped out to breathe in the fresh air on the highland. They all felt refreshed. Daddy asked everybody to get in the car to see the big mountain.

“If we were lucky, we would see some wild animals.”

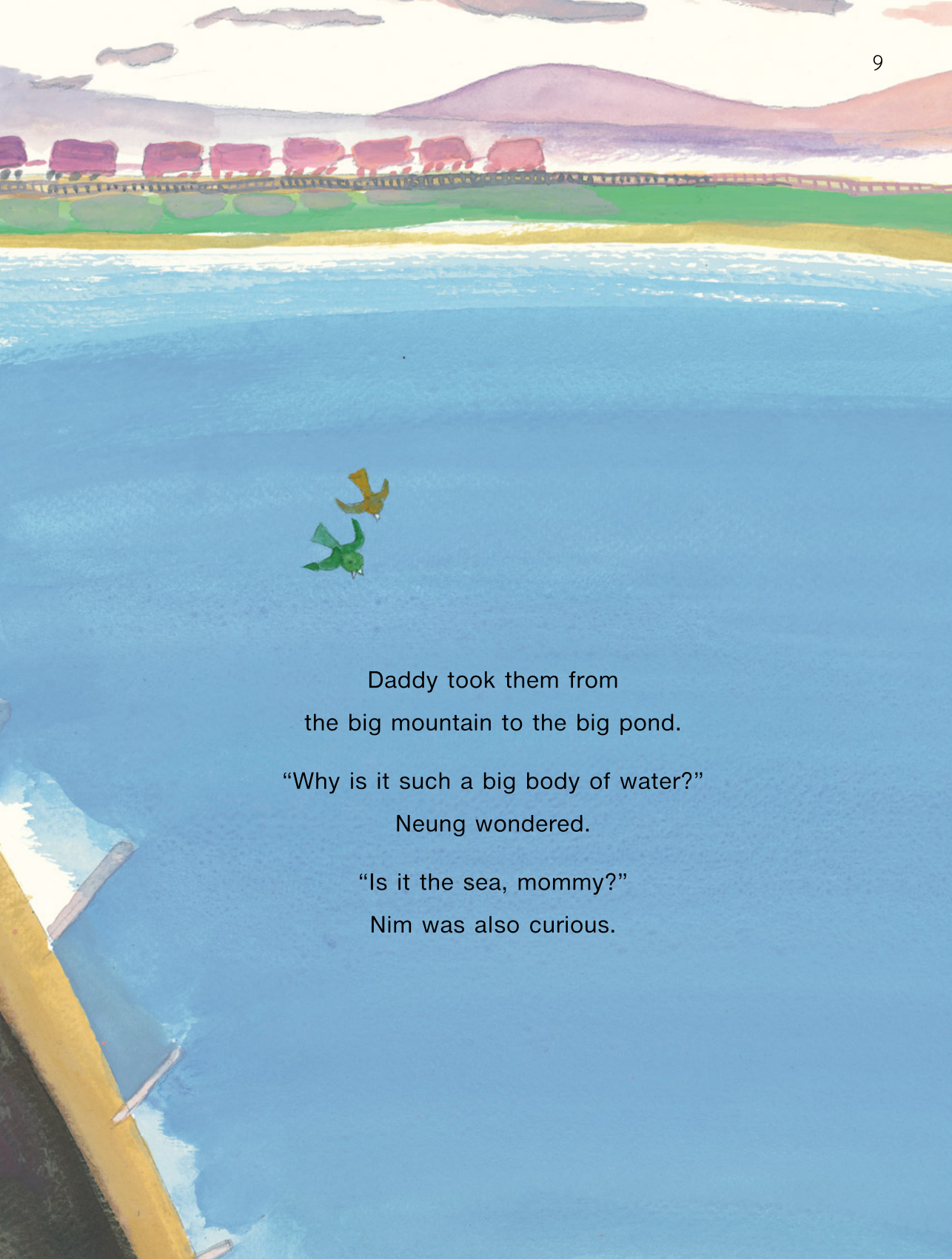


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Daddy took them from
the big mountain to the big pond.


“Why is it such a big body of water?”

Neung wondered.

“Is it the sea, mommy?”

Nim was also curious.



A watercolor illustration of a landscape. In the foreground, there is a large, soft wash of green and yellow, representing a field or grass. In the background, there are several stylized trees with thin, dark branches and small, light green leaves. The overall style is soft and artistic, typical of children's book illustrations.

When they arrived at Uncle Chai's house,
Jeud and Joi were already waiting for them.

They met up with their relatives

Now it's time to have fun!



Soon the children were leaping in the rice field.
Neung, who was from Bangkok, loved the stretching field most.
He could see his relatives plant the paddy sprouts in the field.



In the northeastern region farmers plant rice annually, which means they plant rice once a year in season. The rice growing season is from June to August.

There were not only rice sprouts
in the field. Jued and Joi, the hosts,
asked Neung to look for food in the field.

“Really? Is there food here?”

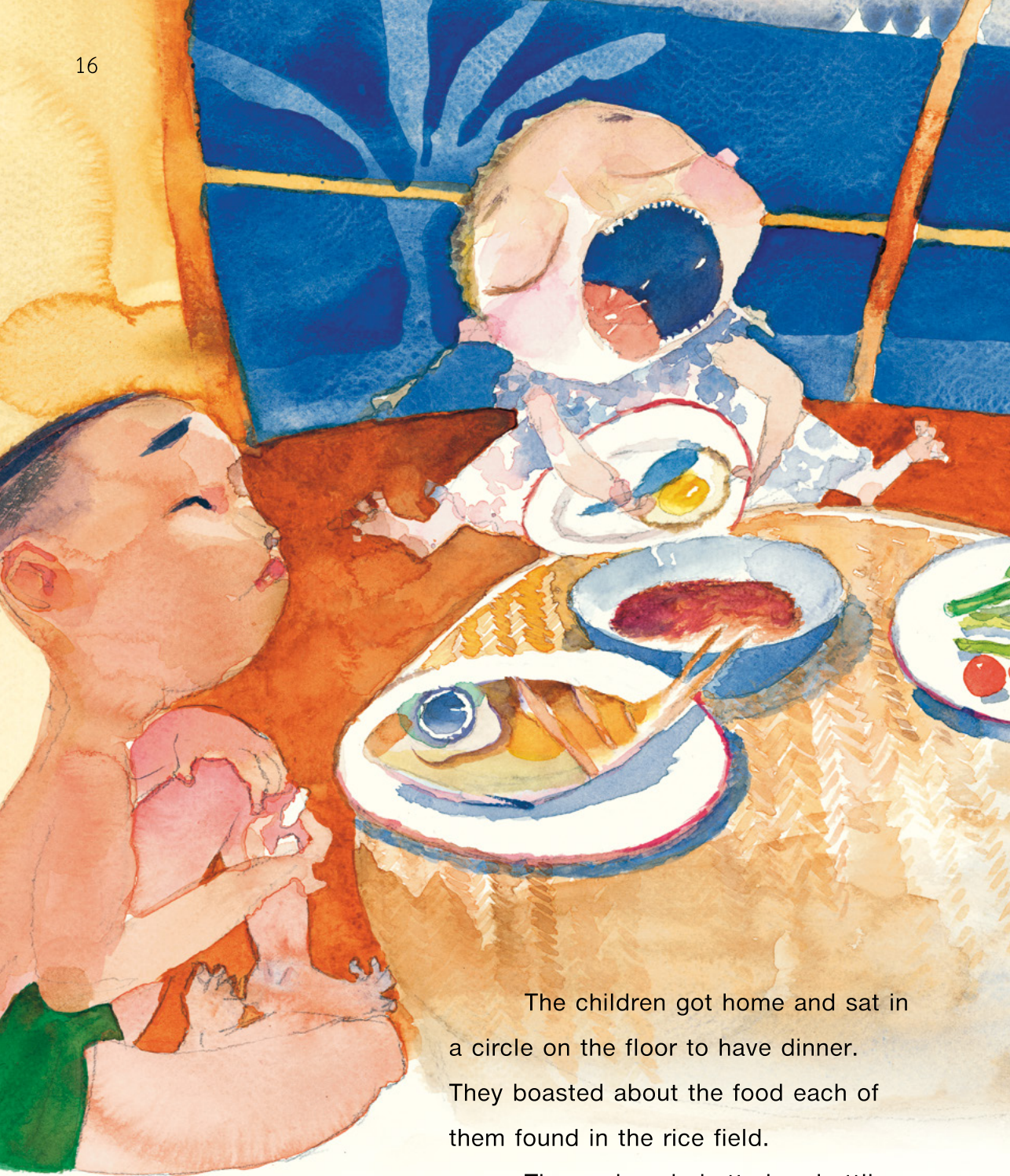
Neung was amazed.





“I wanna go with you.”
As always, Nim followed
them everywhere.





The children got home and sat in a circle on the floor to have dinner. They boasted about the food each of them found in the rice field.

They enjoyed chattering, battling against the sound of the rain.



In the next morning Daddy took the kids
to his friend's factory.

They enjoyed squashing the soil.

Nim liked it best because the soil was cool and sticky.

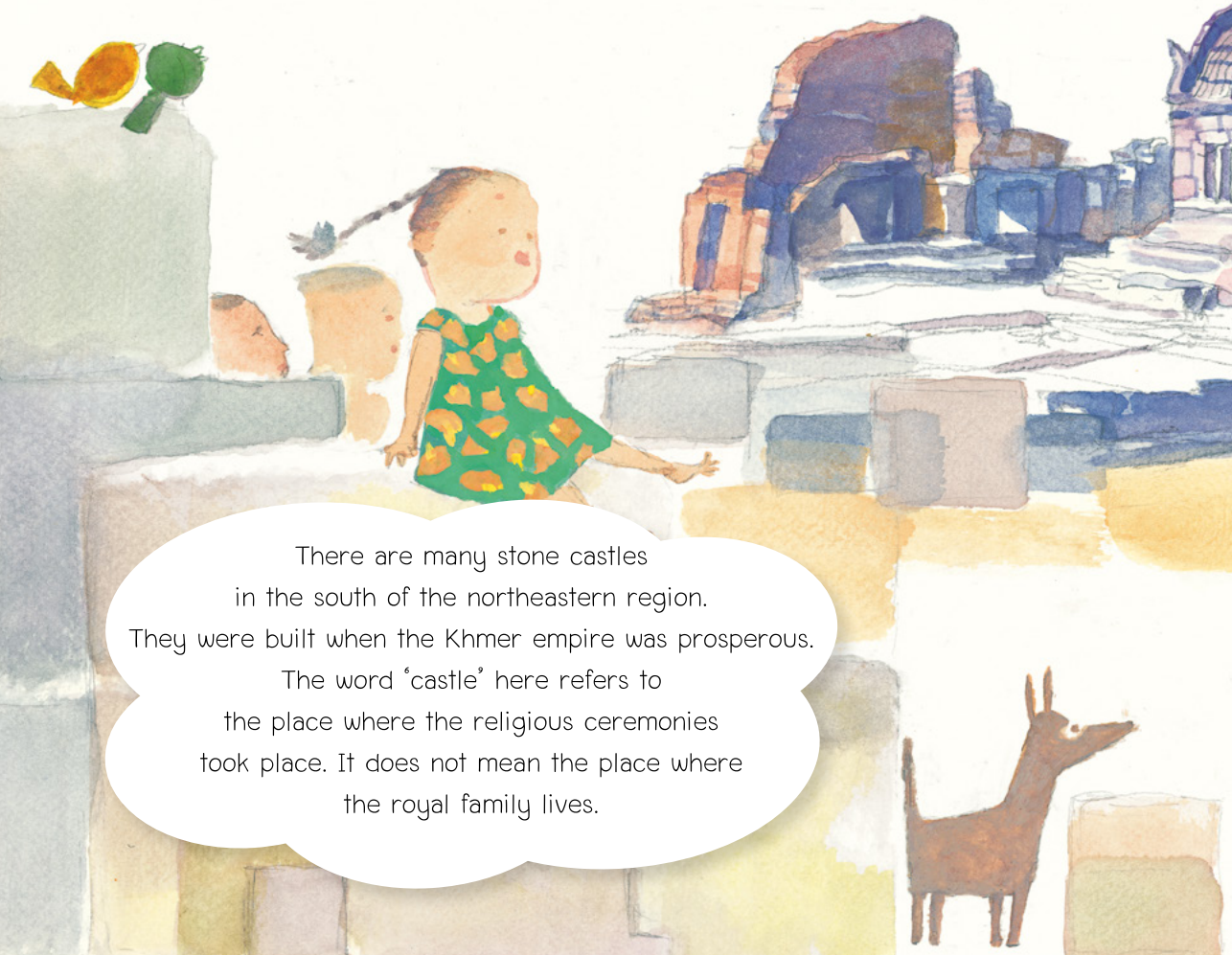




Dan-Kwien pottery uses soil from the underground pond in Dan-Kwien district. The pottery products; therefore, have high quality and beautiful colors. They are famous products of the district.

“Yesterday you played with the soil,
so today I’m taking you to see the stones,”
said uncle Chai as he was driving the kids
to the stone castle.

“Oh! I wonder why there’re so many stones here!”
“Where were they from?”



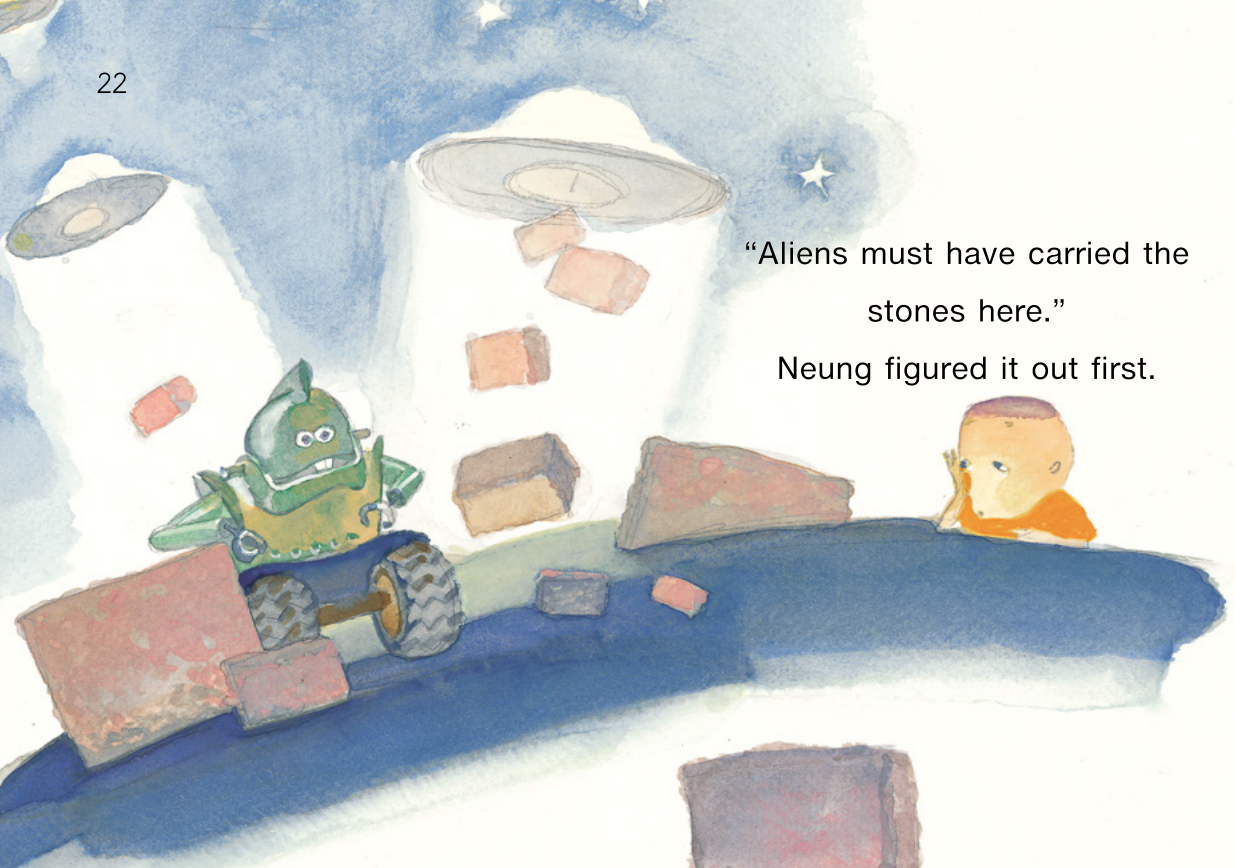
There are many stone castles
in the south of the northeastern region.
They were built when the Khmer empire was prosperous.

The word ‘castle’ here refers to
the place where the religious ceremonies
took place. It does not mean the place where
the royal family lives.



“Aliens must have carried the stones here.”

Neung figured it out first.



“Aliens don’t exist!”

“It must have been muscle men.”



"I think it's the elephants."

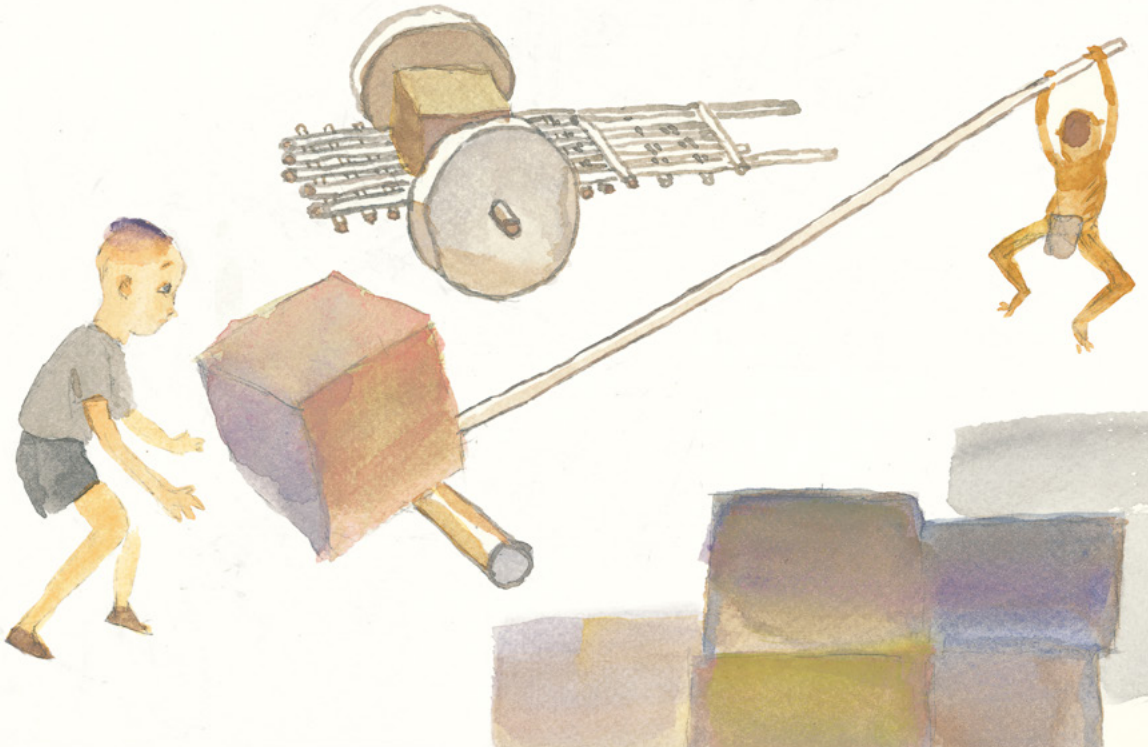
Nim pondered

Joi had seen some pictures.

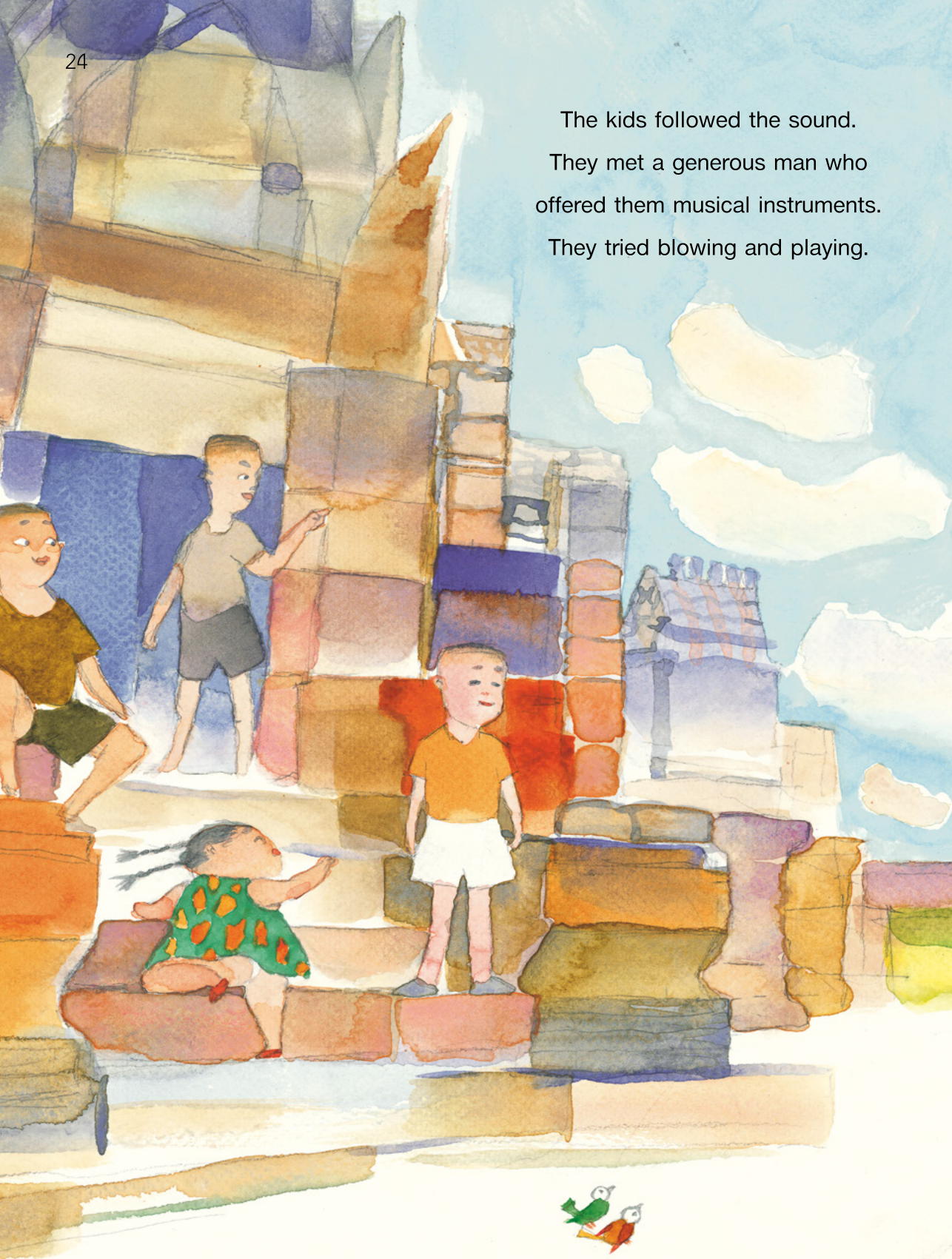
"The stones were
dragged here in carts."




Everybody got indulged in their imagination.
Suddenly they heard a sound blowing in the wind.



The kids followed the sound.
They met a generous man who
offered them musical instruments.
They tried blowing and playing.



A watercolor illustration of a landscape. In the foreground, a grey dog is walking on a path. In the middle ground, several people are sitting on a grassy area, some playing instruments. A large tree with orange and yellow leaves stands in the background. The sky is blue with white clouds. The overall style is soft and artistic.

A **Wod** is a wind instrument without a reed. When you blow it, you move it in circle to generate different sounds.



Beep beep!

Uncle Chai beeped the horn instead
of calling the kids.

Neung, Nim, Jued, and Joi hurriedly
said goodbye to the generous man.

They ran to the car.

They wanted to go home as soon as possible.

They played hard. They talked loudly.

When they all realized they were hungry,

they also knew how much
they loved the northeastern region.





“Let’s come back here next semester break.”

“Count me in!” Nim said out loud.

Daddy was putting the car in gear
while uncle Chai, Jeud, and Joi
were waving them goodbye.





Further Explanation

Little Explorers: An Isaan Adventure is a picture book for children aged 7 and up. Although many children can read on their own by 7, it is suggested the teacher read to them first and encourage them to explore more by themselves. The teacher should realize that an adult reading for children is more fun and exciting for the children than reading alone by themselves. If the teacher would like the children to have fun, be interested, and love reading, the teacher has no other choice but read to their children.

Reading books with primary school kids is fun. They have a lot more experience than the kids in kindergarten. Moreover, they have developed many interests. Therefore, reading from beginning to end may not be enough. After the teacher has finished reading, the teacher should motivate students to share their experiences—whether the experiences are the same or different from those of the characters. For example, when daddy takes Neung and Nim to the mountains, the teacher may ask: where are they?—to elicit the location in the picture. Daddy mentioned ‘the highland’ and students may be able to guess where it is; some of them might even have been there. Then the teacher can encourage them to share their personal stories with class. When the train goes past the dam, the teacher may ask where it is and why it is important. Moreover, the teacher might trigger their imaginations by asking them how it would feel to be on the train and see people pass by and how it would feel if we were people walking, seeing the people on the train. Students can discuss their ideas with their classmates. When the characters are discussing how the castles were built, the teacher can take this opportunity to motivate students to think creatively.

There are many ways to use picture books with primary school students. The teacher may start by reading or telling stories. Then the teacher can link it with true stories, tell related anecdotes, or even create some things as the characters did in the story. That way the book can ultimately play its role as an important learning tool.

Profiles

Author

Sakunee Nattapoolwat previously wrote a children's book called 'Everyday Is a Fun Day' telling stories of the children of southern Thailand and their toys. She explored and collected data from both adults and children in Yala province. She fell in love with children's books during that project and 'Little Explorers: An Isaan Adventure' is her another expression of her love. Sakunee now writes documentaries, travel articles, and interviews. Her interests include plants, trees, and all things related to gardening and she loves reading, writing, and persuading people to read more.

Illustrator

Yuthasak Wangpaisarn was born in Bangkok and grew up in Nakhon Sawan. Now he teaches art at Rajamangala University of Technology Suranaree. He loves to inspire his students to do good work and to be happy with their work. His favorite media are water colors, chalk, and oil paints on paper and canvas. He takes good care of his health, likes to draw, and loves to read picture books. That is why he is the illustrator of this book.





Translators

Peeriya Pongsarigun got a master's degree in English linguistics from the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University. She teaches English at the University and is also the deputy head of the extracurricular activities unit. She leads her students to play and to learn English outside of the classroom. She has a passion for children's books. She wrote one book called "**Chan ja keb bang na**" (I'll take some too!) and now she writes for "Realparenting Magazine/Thailand" and it's one of her favorite hobbies.

John Viano first came to Thailand as a Peace Corps volunteer in 2006. Since then he has used his passion for the Thai language to communicate with Thai people via English language training. He has used his Thai skills to write a short grammar textbook for Thai English language teachers. John has taught English at most levels of the Thai education system and at Thai businesses. He was a coach at the creative writing camp and has been an editor of the Children's Day book for two years. He has experience translating many kinds of documents from Thai to English and vice versa.



Local Knowledge Book Series

