

LEVELED BOOK • N

The Fishing Derby



Written by Dolores Kleinholz
Illustrated by John Kastner

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Luis leaped out of bed and yanked on his clothes. He had been impatient for this day all year—today was the Deer Lake Fishing Derby! Last year, other kids had caught fish and received prizes, but not Luis. Not one fish had nibbled on his line, and he had gone home disappointed.

But this year Luis was determined to win, and he had a secret plan—a plan that was so super-secret, he hadn't told a single soul, not even his dad.



“Hurry up, Luis!” Dad hollered. “We don’t want to be late!” Dad perched a tall, white chef’s hat on his head, his red apron flapping like a superhero’s cape as he hurried to the car. Every year, Dad cooked hot dogs and hamburgers at the derby picnic.

At Deer Lake, it was a superb day for the fishing derby. There were so many kids, big and small, ready to fish. Would Luis's totally secret plan help him win a prize?

Police Chief Dugan was the announcer and would measure all the fish that the kids landed. "Third prize is for the smallest fish," Chief Dugan announced over a bullhorn. "Second prize is for the first fish caught, and the grand prize is for the biggest fish caught today. Good luck, kids, and no running with your fishing poles. Ready, set . . . GO!"



The Deer Lake Derby had begun! All the kids, except Luis, scrambled to the lake and began to fish. Luis walked along the water's edge, away from the noisy crowd, until he found a secluded spot where he could fish alone.

He put a fat worm on his hook, tossed it into the water, and waited. Most of the kids had crowded onto the fishing pier, their fishing lines crisscrossing and getting tangled in the water.





“Look, I caught a fish already,” Miyuki yelled. “The grand prize is mine!” She jumped up and down with excitement as Chief Dugan measured the fish and then quickly released it. “It’s an impressive fish, Miyuki,” he said with a grin, “but remember, the derby isn’t over yet.”

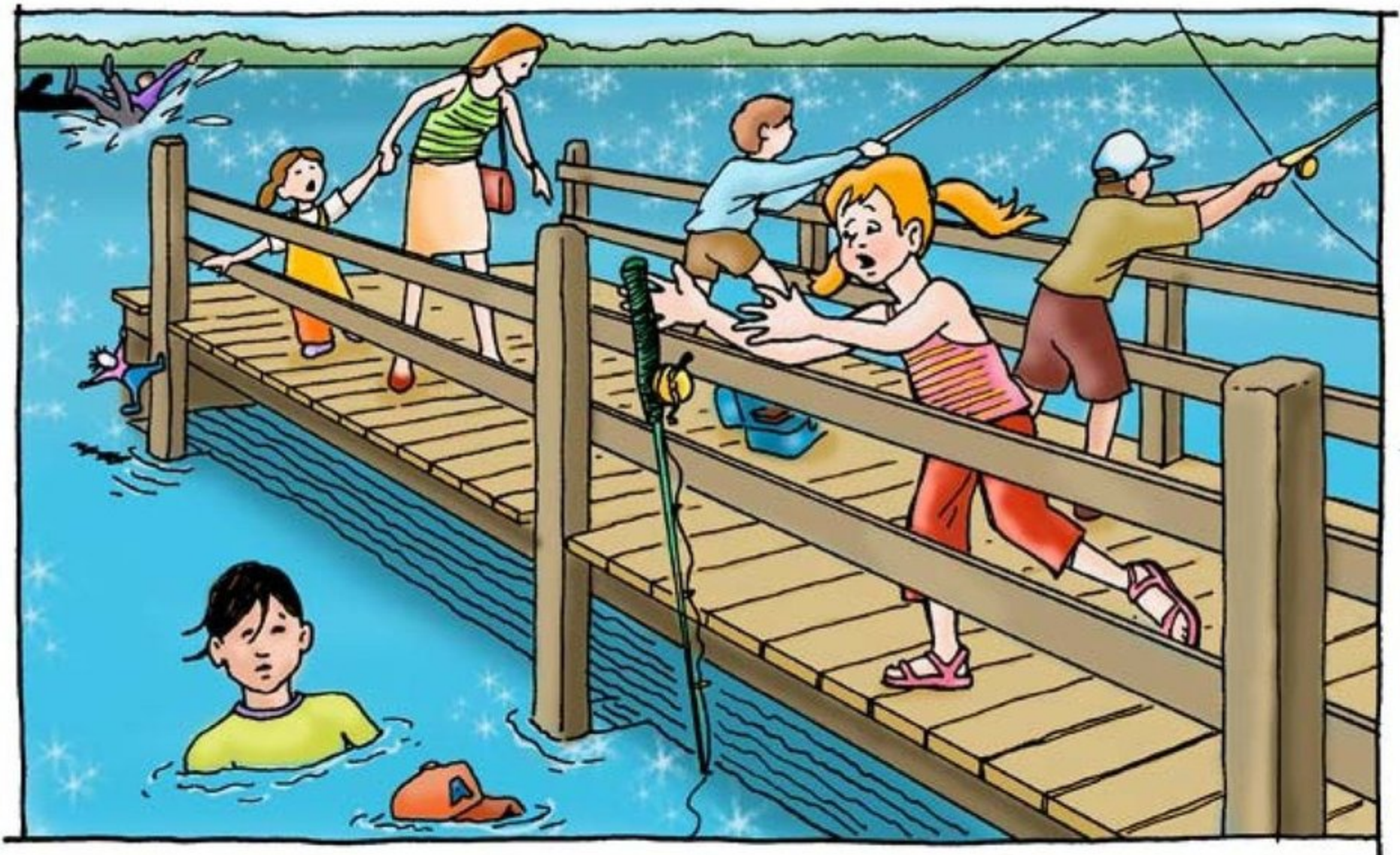
Fishing far from the others, Luis stood quietly. SPLISH, SPLASH! What was going on? Curious, Luis looked over toward the other kids.

SPLASH! Carlos had slipped and fallen into the water.

SPLASH! Amelia had dropped her fishing pole.

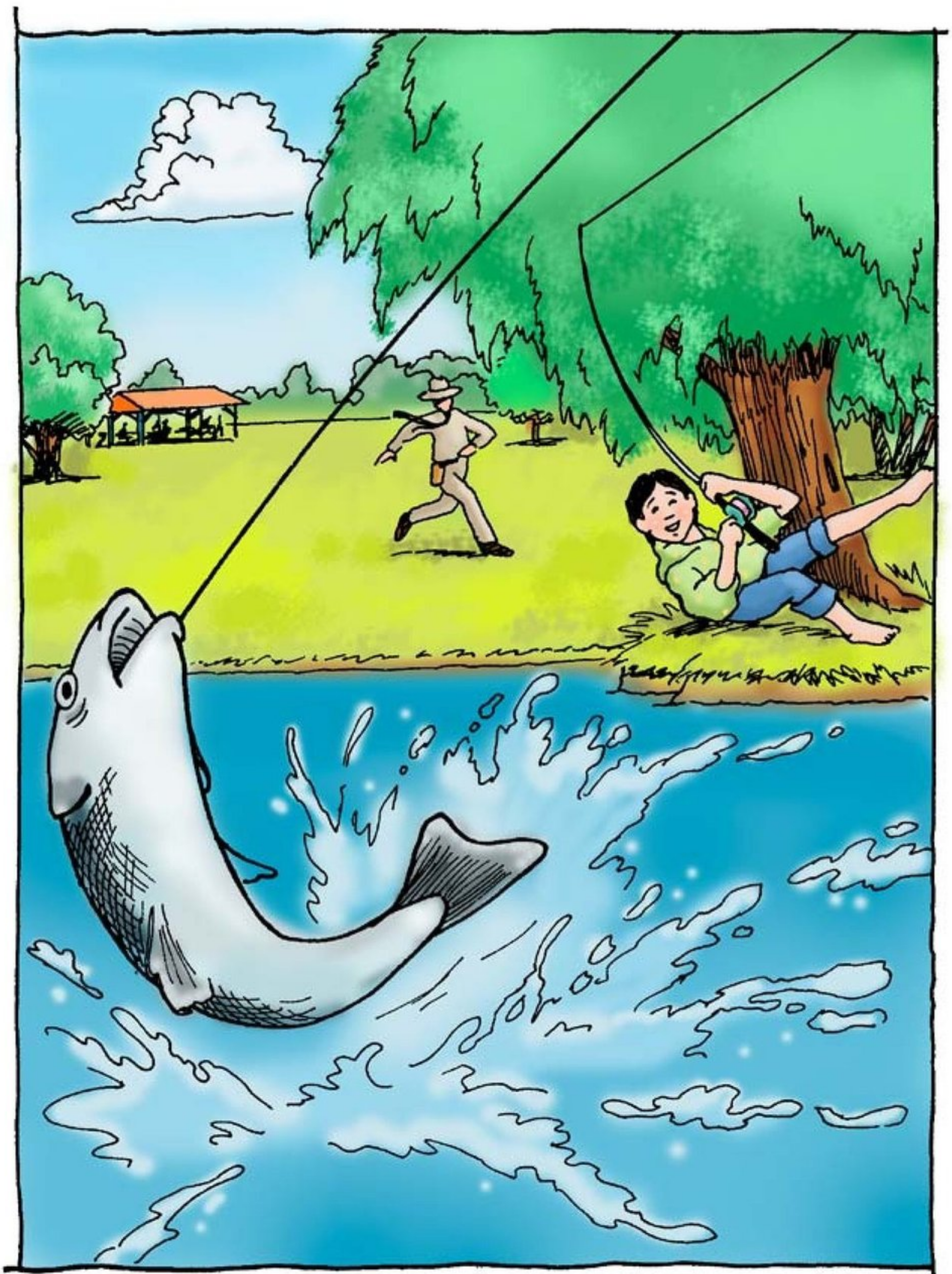
SPLASH! A crying toddler had thrown her doll into the water.

SPLASH! Keenan had fallen off the log he had been perched on.





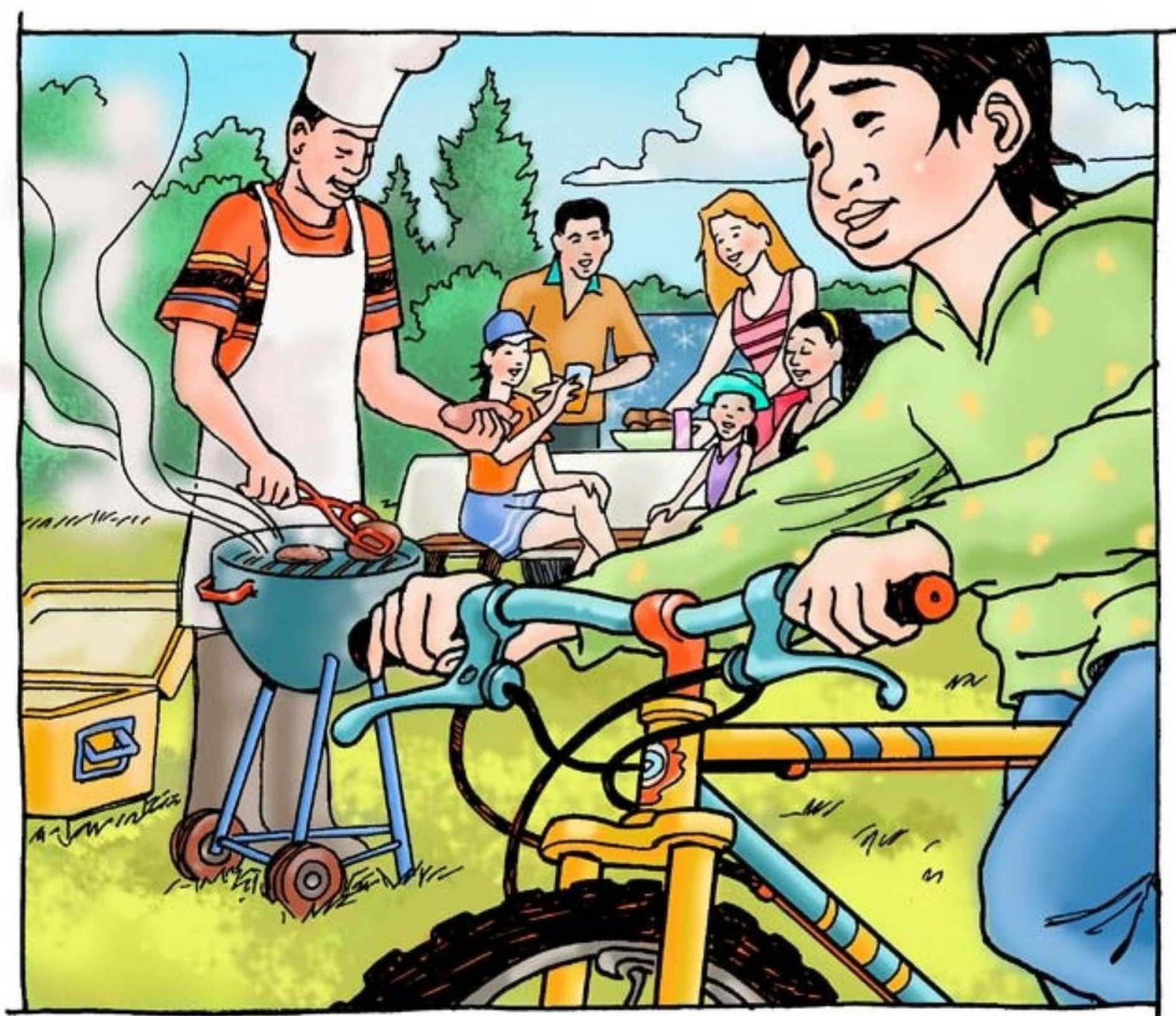
Luis ignored the uproar and focused his attention on his fishing pole. No fish yet. Luis waited quietly and patiently for a long time. Still no fish. What if his unbelievably secret plan didn't work?



Tug, tug, tug! A huge fish bit and tugged at the worm on Luis's fishing line. Very carefully, Luis reeled in the most enormous fish he'd ever seen.

Chief Dugan raced over and measured the sleek silver fish, and then slipped it back into the water. Over the bullhorn, he declared the Deer Lake Fishing Derby over and announced the lucky winners. For catching the biggest fish of the day, Luis won the grand prize . . . a new bike!





Dad was so happy. “What was your plan, Luis?” he said, flipping hamburgers on the hot grill. “Did you use a lucky worm or your special fishing lure?”

Luis grinned and climbed on his shiny new bike. “I waited for the noisy kids to frighten all the fish over to me,” he said. “And they sure did. My super-secret plan worked great!”

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