

LEVELED BOOK • Q

# On Eagle River



Written by Ruth Siburt • Illustrated by John Kastner



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Devon helped Grandpa maneuver the canoe into the river. He climbed onto the front seat to steady the boat with his paddle while Grandpa stepped into the rear. As the canoe rocked gently from side to side, Devon clung to the sides, until it stopped.





Grandpa gingerly pushed them away from shore with a shove of his paddle against the bank. From overhead, in a towering sycamore tree, an eagle screeched at them and took off with a strong beat of its wings.

“I guess he’s going fishing, too,” Grandpa said.

Devon nodded.



Grandpa's canoe slipped through the water as silently as a leaf falls through the air.

This was Devon's first time going fishing with Grandpa, but his older brother Clay had told him all about it.

"Listen to what Grandpa says to do," Clay had warned him, "and watch out for snakes!"







Devon listened carefully to Grandpa's instructions. Sometimes Grandpa wanted him to paddle on the left side of the canoe, and sometimes he wanted Devon to paddle on the right. Sometimes he didn't want Devon to paddle at all.

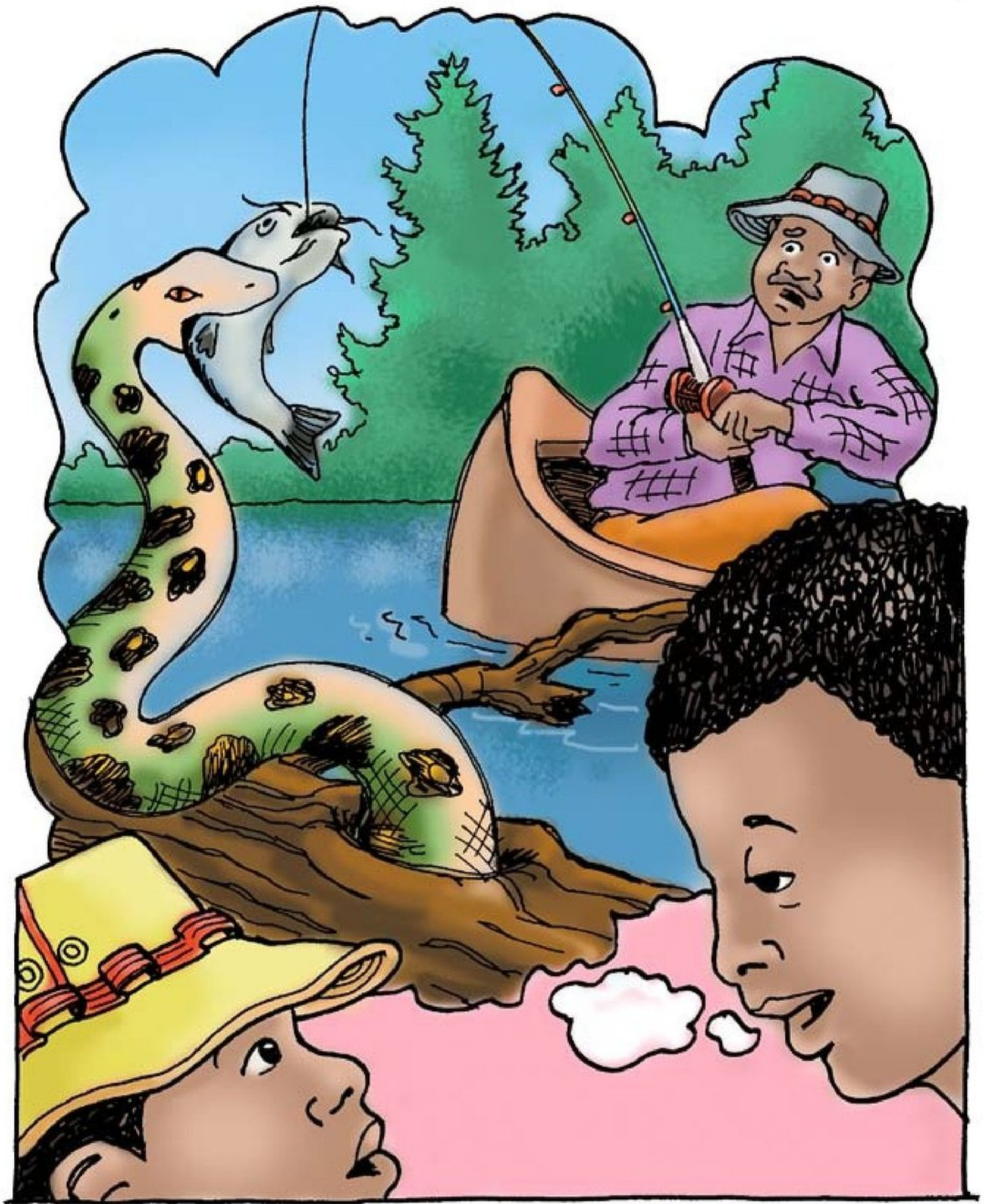
"Lift," Grandpa said.

Devon pulled his paddle out of the water and rested it across his knees, watching drops fall into the still water. Grandpa steered the canoe around a snag in the river.



“One time,” Clay had told Devon, “a big snake came slithering off a log and stole a whole catfish, smack off Grandpa’s fishhook! Snakes love to hide in logs.”

Devon hoped Clay was teasing about the snakes.





“Right,” Grandpa instructed.

Devon dipped his paddle in on the right side of the canoe, and they glided on past the log.

“We’re almost there,” Grandpa said as they rounded a bend. “When we get close to the bank, Devon, I want you to jump out, and I’ll throw you the rope to pull the canoe up on land.”

“Okay,” Devon said.

Grandpa steered the canoe toward the shore. “This is the best catfish hole on the river,” he said.







“Scree, scree!” cried the eagle from the top of a willow tree.

“So you followed us, huh, eagle?” Grandpa called. “Well, you’re welcome to join us, but you have to catch your own fish.”

Devon laughed, watching the land draw closer as green whirlpools swirled past the canoe’s bow. Grandpa aimed the canoe straight for a big log—a log that looked like the perfect hiding place for a big snake. Was that where Grandpa wanted Devon to jump out?



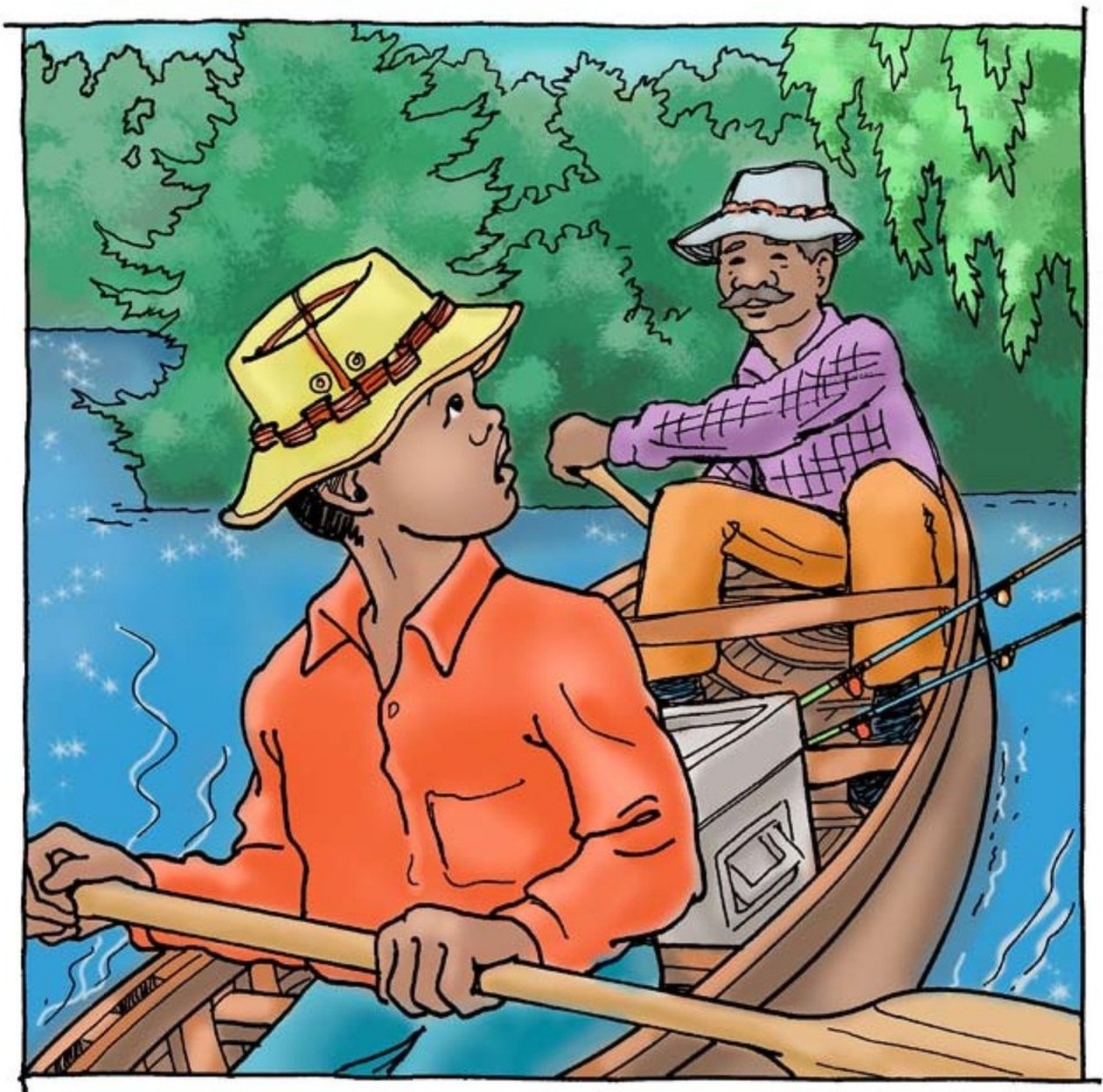
Devon swallowed hard. "Um, Grandpa?" he asked.

"Yes, Devon?"

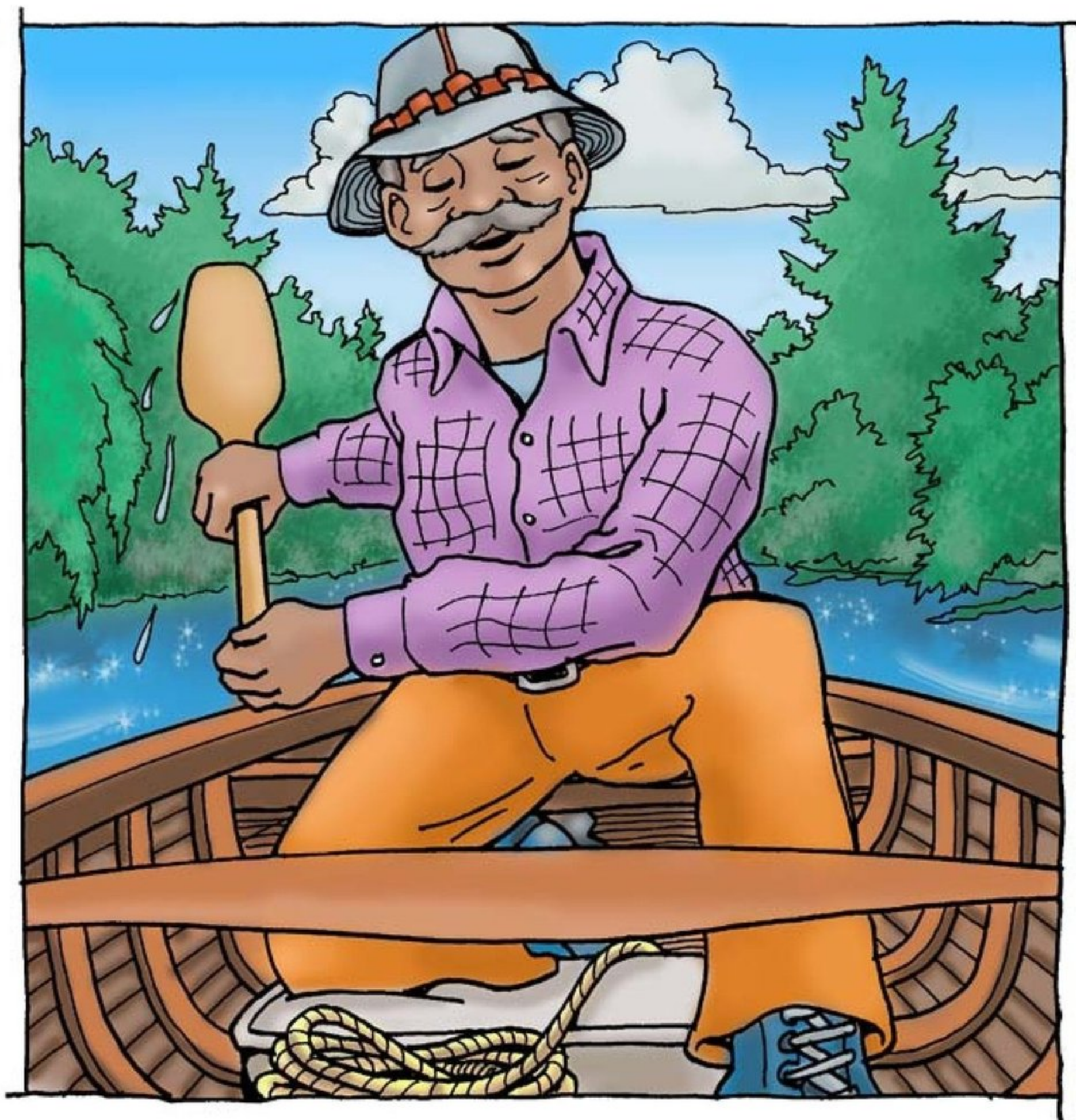
"Did a big snake really grab a catfish right off your hook?"

Grandpa stopped paddling. "Who told you that story?"

"Clay," Devon answered.







“Well, you don’t have to worry about that old snake,” said Grandpa.

“Whew!” Devon whistled.

“No sir,” Grandpa went on, “that old snake is long gone.”

Devon jumped out of the canoe, Grandpa threw him the rope, and Devon tugged the boat onto the riverbank.



“How do you know the snake is gone?”  
Devon asked, helping Grandpa onto the land.

“I saw it with my own eyes,” Grandpa  
said. “The ‘gators got him.”

Devon froze for a moment, staring at the  
green water all around them. But then  
Grandpa winked.

“Grandpa!” cried Devon.

“Scree, scree!” cried the eagle.

Grandpa handed Devon his fishing pole.  
“Let’s catch ourselves a big catfish.”





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