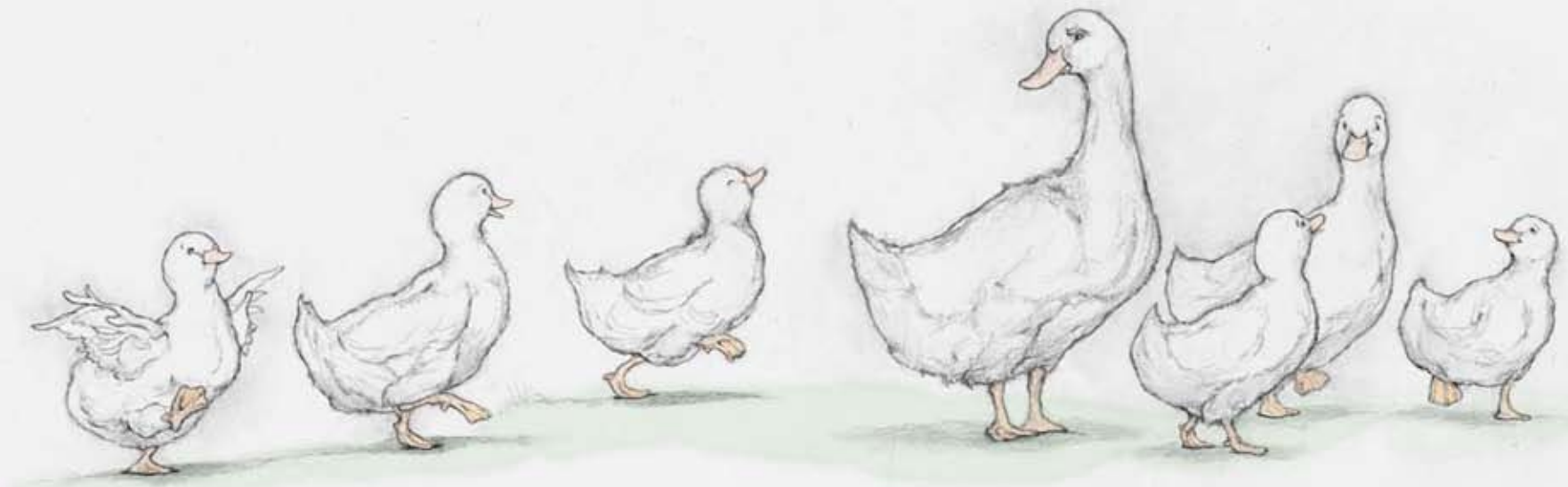


# DUCKHAMPTON



Written by Christian McLean • Illustrations by Amelia Haviland

On a warm spring morning, Mr. and Mrs. Gadwall, of the Gadwalls of Central Park, called their young ducklings in from the Lake. First came Bitsy, then Margaret, followed by Kenneth III, Francis, and finally, trailing behind, was Robert, the smallest of the five. The baby ducks were the spitting image of their parents, with bright white feathers and little turned-up bills.







**W**hen the five gathered round, Mr. Gadwall spoke.  
“To be a Gadwall,” he began, “is to do as Gadwalls do. All birds are different and they must be treated so. The swans are the Kings and Queens of the Park, so you must always show them respect. You can speak to ducks like us, but Gadwalls never talk to pigeons and geese. They are dirty, dangerous, and will steal your feathers.”





**W**ith that said, the Gadwalls spent the rest of the spring swimming in the cool lake of Central Park and dining at the Boathouse in proper Gadwall fashion.





By late May, it had become too warm in the city and Mr. and Mrs. Gadwall called the ducklings together again.

“Children, it is much, much too hot to stay in Manhattan,” Mrs. Gadwall said.

“Tomorrow we will be flying east to Duckhampton for the summer,” Mr. Gadwall added.

“What’s Duckhampton?” Robert asked.

“Well, I heard from Mrs. Rockefeather that the pond in Duckhampton is the perfect temperature and there are no geese or pigeons. Only swans and ducks like us,” said Margaret.

“The Vanderbills say it’s better than Boca!” Kenneth added.

“Where’s Boca?” Robert asked.

“It’s in Florida, honey. It’s where we go when it’s cold,” Mrs. Gadwall said.







That night, the Gadwalls went to bed early so they would have enough energy to fly to Duckhampton in the morning. But Robert stayed up, wondering what Duckhampton would be like. He pictured giant ponds, fresh bread, and hundreds and hundreds of ducks.

Before he knew it, the sun had started to rise and Mr. and Mrs. Gadwall had awakened the rest of the ducklings for the flight to Duckhampton.





Robert followed behind his family as they flew east over Manhattan toward the Brooklyn Bridge, but because he hadn't slept all night, he became tired. No matter how hard he flapped his little wings, he flew slower and slower, until he could no longer keep up with his brothers and sisters.



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