

—A NAVRITTO STORY—



The Goodnight *Boat.*

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The Goodnight Boat

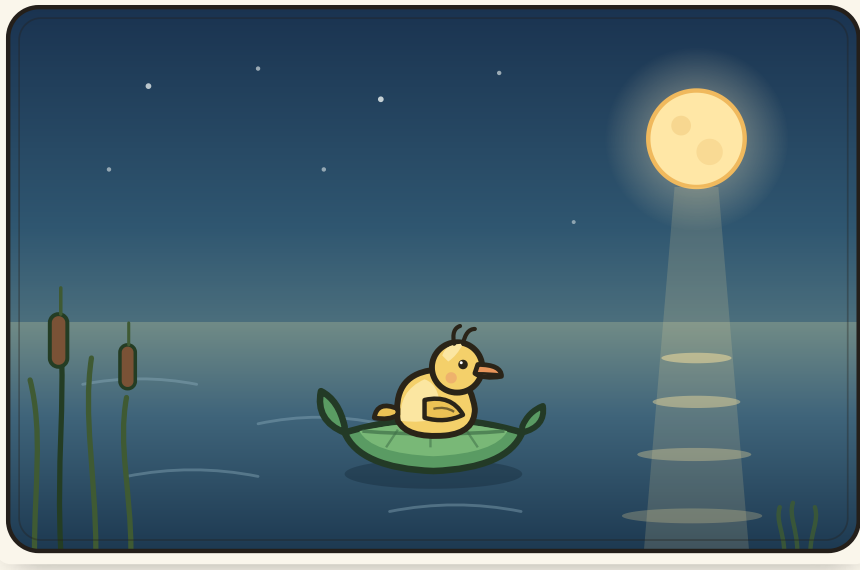
Written & illustrated by Navritto.

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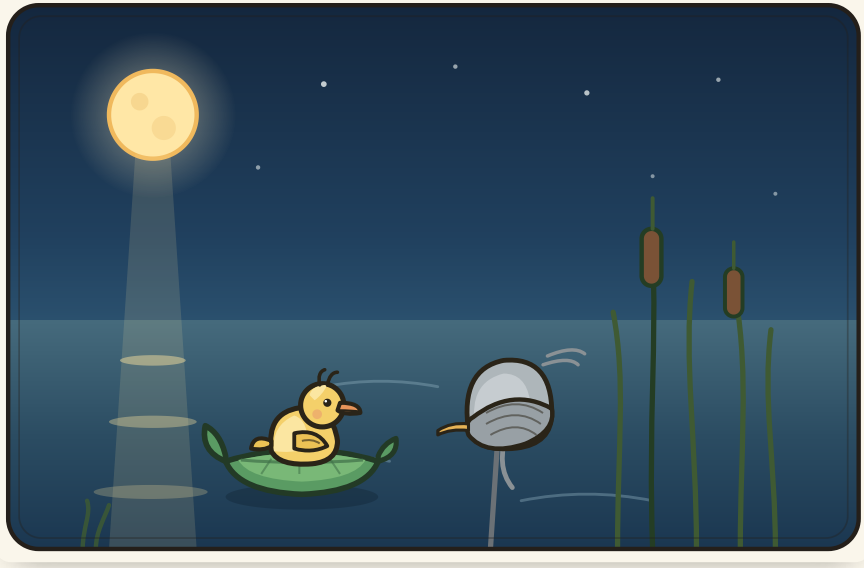
Evening came softly to the pond, the way a blanket is drawn up over the whole world. The reeds grew still, the water turned to silver, and the moon rose round and gold above the trees.

Little Pip the duckling was not sleepy — not one bit. So he untied a floating leaf and climbed aboard, and paddled his small boat out across the quiet, shining water.



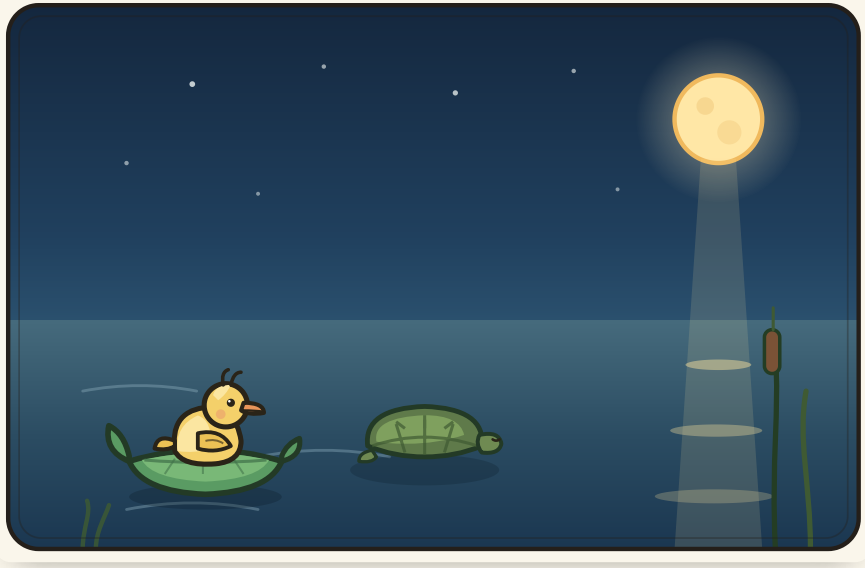
By a wide green lily pad sat a frog, half-asleep, his eyes as heavy as two little doors swinging shut.

“Goodnight, frog,” whispered Pip. The frog blinked one slow eye, gave a small, cosy sigh, and settled down into the cool water until only his nose was left.



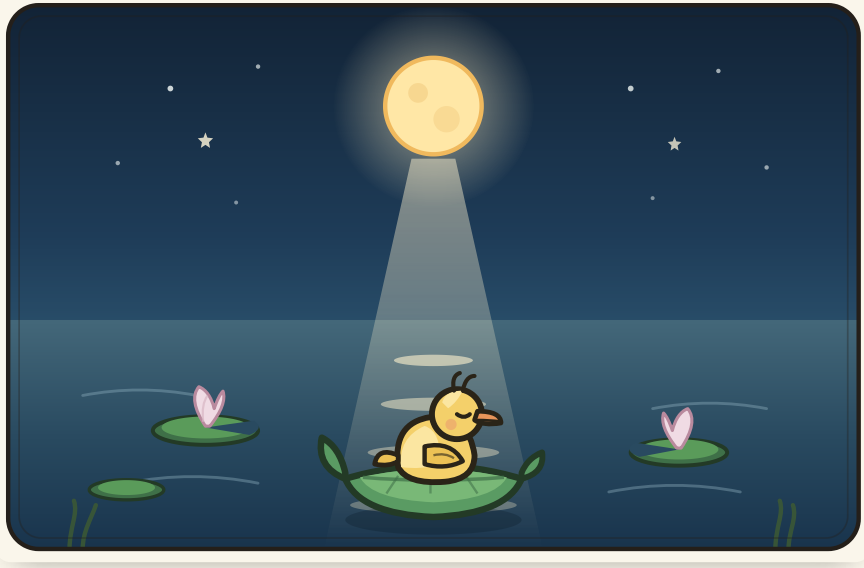
In among the tall reeds stood a grey heron, balanced on one thin leg, tall and calm and grey as the evening.

“Goodnight, heron,” said Pip. She tucked her long head beneath her wing, the way you might close a folded umbrella, and did not stir at all.



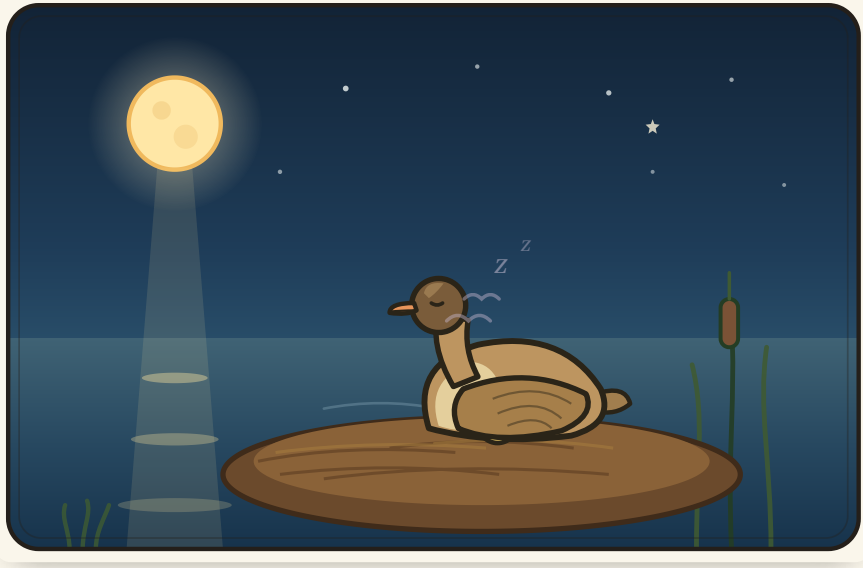
A slow old turtle came drifting by, in no hurry at all, for turtles are never in a hurry.

“Goodnight, turtle,” said Pip. And the turtle pulled into his shell — the way you pull a blanket up to your chin — a little green house, floating quietly home on the water.



One by one, the water-lilies folded their petals shut, tucking themselves into small white beds upon the pond.

The moon laid a long silver path across the water, straight and soft and shining. Pip's boat drifted gently along it, and his eyes grew heavy, and warm, and slow.



So Pip paddled softly home, to the warm reed nest where mama duck was waiting. The whole pond was quiet now, quiet and dreaming, with the moon keeping watch above.

He curled up small beneath her wing. “Goodnight, Pip,” she said — but Pip was already fast asleep, dreaming of a little leaf-boat and a long silver path across the water.

✦ THE END

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