

WELCOME



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AL Publishing

Welcome

A pedagogic family book for new arrivals
about life in Sweden

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In Sweden, friends and family often meet to have “fika” together. It means that we meet for a while and drink coffee or tea; children drink cordial or juice, and we eat “fika” bread — something baked or sweet. Some people eat fruit or drink a smoothie.

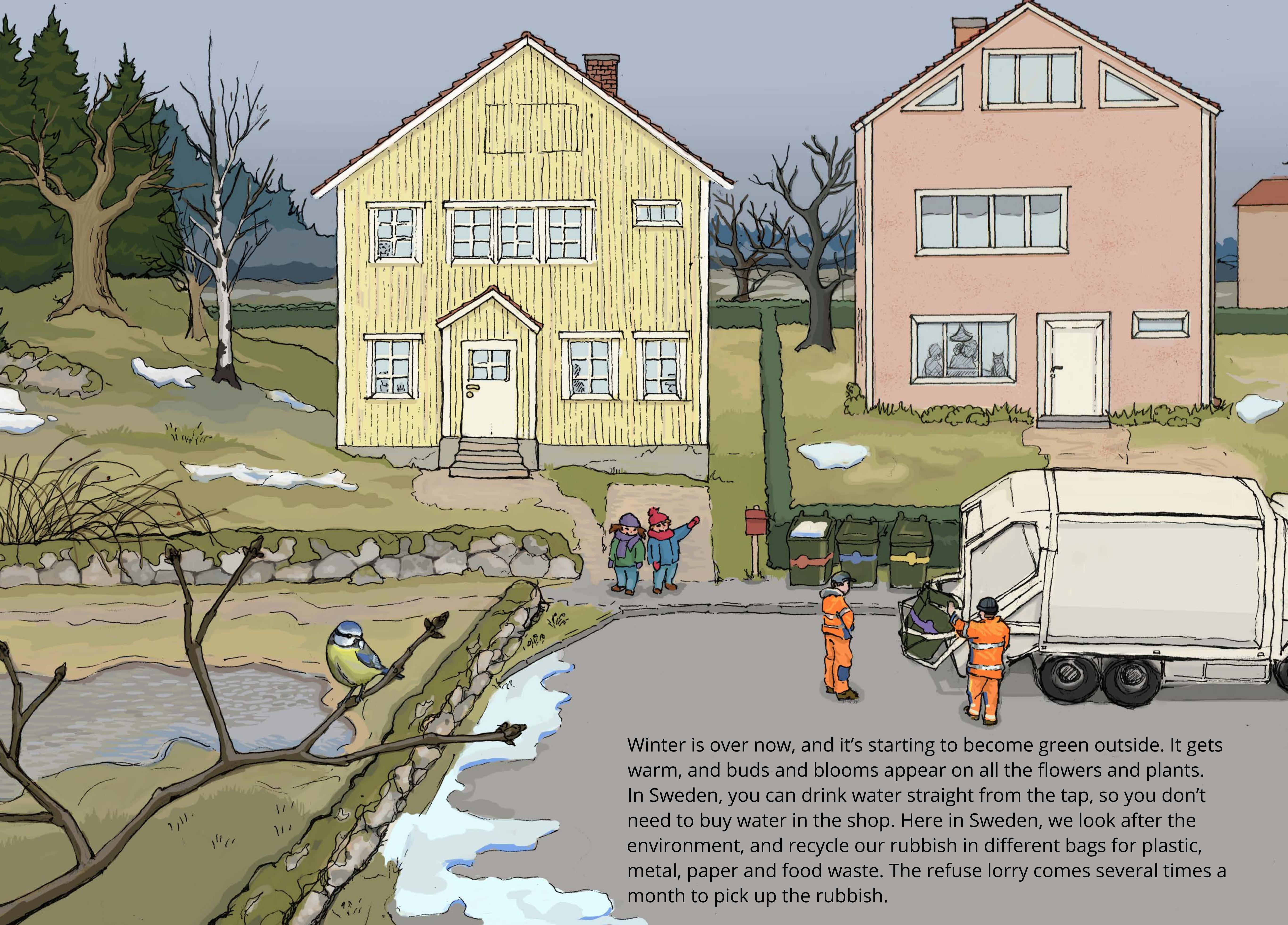
My name is Emma, and I’m going to show you what things are like in Sweden. I live in the yellow house with my family; it’s called a “villa”. You can also live in terrace houses, which are several small houses that are attached, or in a flat. Then, you live in a big house with several homes in each house.

Welcome to Sweden!

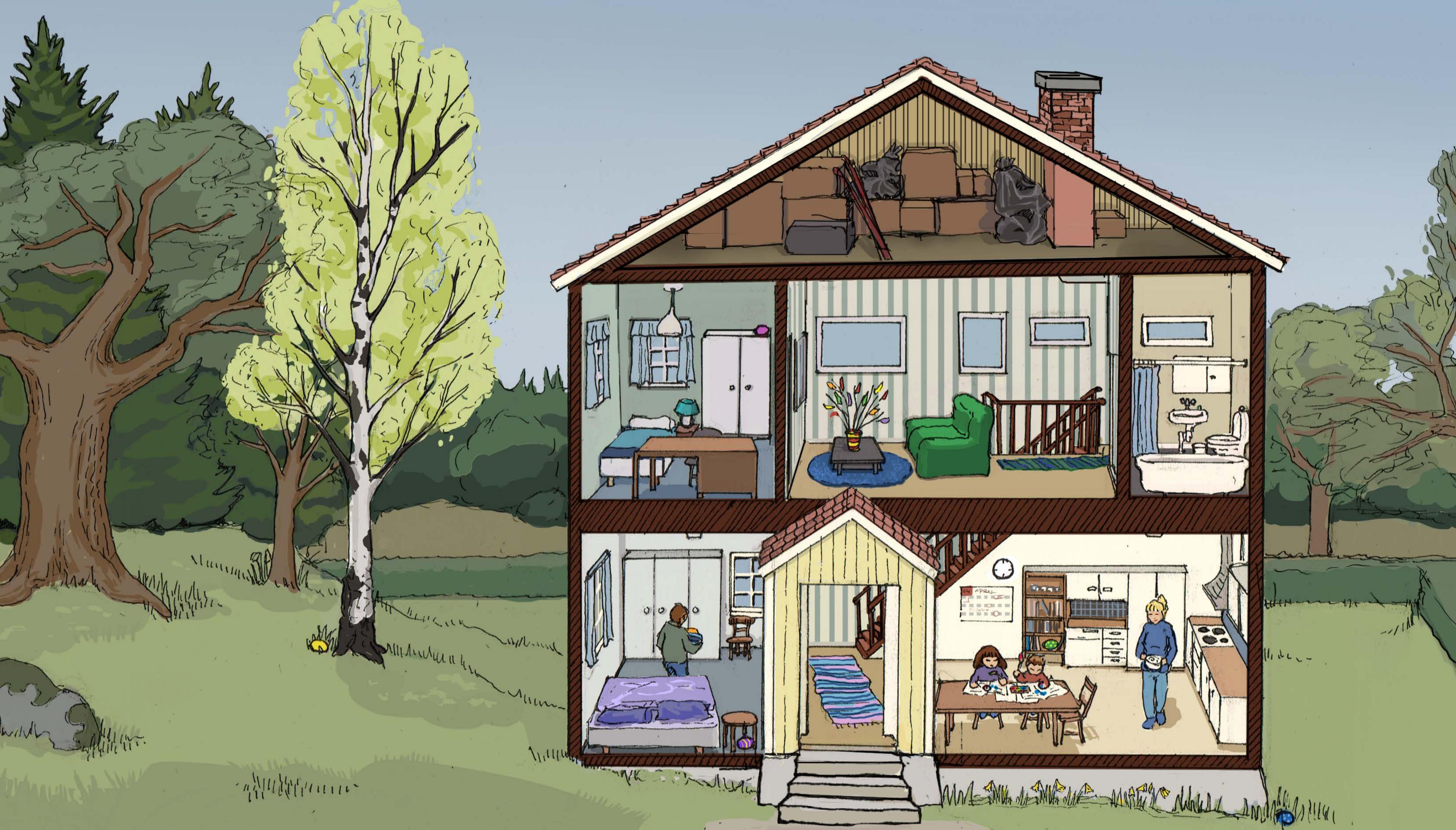
Sweden is a long, narrow country with many lakes, thousands of islands, forests and fields. There are animals like elks, deer, foxes, rabbits and squirrels. Some people think that polar bears walk the streets, but that’s not true. But there are brown bears in the forests of northern Sweden. Sweden is in Scandinavia, and our closest neighbours are Norway, Denmark and Finland.

All children go to school, and you can believe in whatever God you want and celebrate your own holidays. You can be who you are and have your own opinions. Grownups are not allowed to hit other grownups or children, or they may go to prison. Sweden is a fairly big country, but there’s still only around nine and a half million people living here. So it can feel a bit empty and lonely outside.





Winter is over now, and it's starting to become green outside. It gets warm, and buds and blooms appear on all the flowers and plants. In Sweden, you can drink water straight from the tap, so you don't need to buy water in the shop. Here in Sweden, we look after the environment, and recycle our rubbish in different bags for plastic, metal, paper and food waste. The refuse lorry comes several times a month to pick up the rubbish.



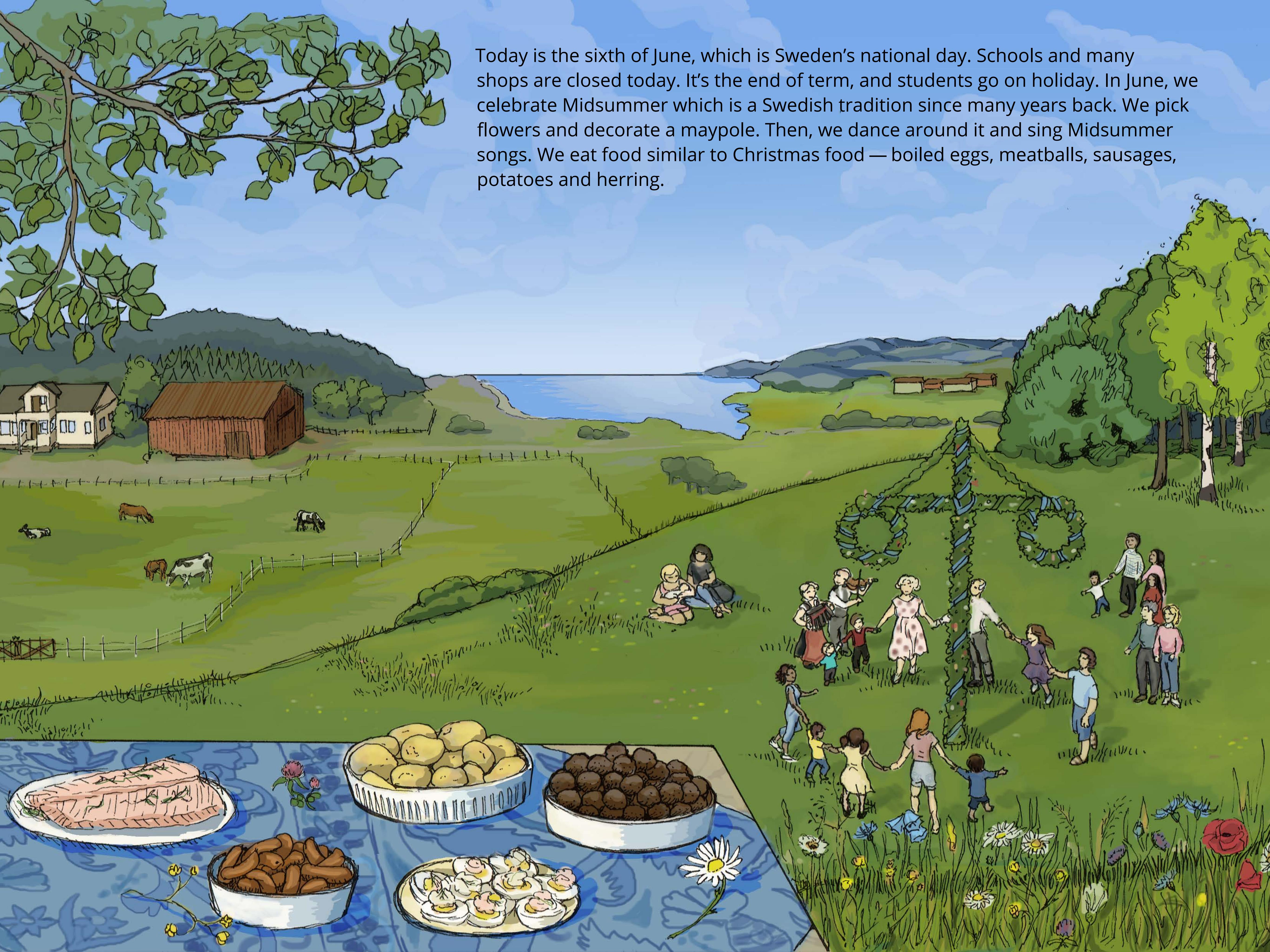
It's spring now, and I have a break from school during Easter that I spend with my family. We boil eggs, paint them with pretty patterns, and eat them. Then, I get to hunt for Easter eggs that my parents have hidden in the garden; that's fun! There are sweets in the eggs. How many eggs can you find in the image?



Today, I'm visiting my cousin who lives in town. From his window, we can see cars, buses, ambulances, fire engines and police cars driving on the street. The police officers can look a bit scary with their uniforms and weapons, but they're nice and happy to help. There is a law that says that you have to wear a seatbelt when you're in a car. Children shall sit on a child's seat or a booster seat. If you don't have your own car, you can travel by bus, both in town and in the country. When walking in traffic, it's important to hold a grownup's hand and to stop at pedestrian crossings.



It's finally summer, which means I get time off from school! On weekdays, the postman comes on a bike with newspapers and letters. All children who cycle must wear a helmet until their fifteenth birthday. Sometimes, cats pass by my garden to see how we're doing. It's common to have a dog or cat as a pet in Sweden. Dogs should be on a leash, but you should be careful with approaching animals you don't know. The animals are nice most of the time, but can get scared and bark or hiss.

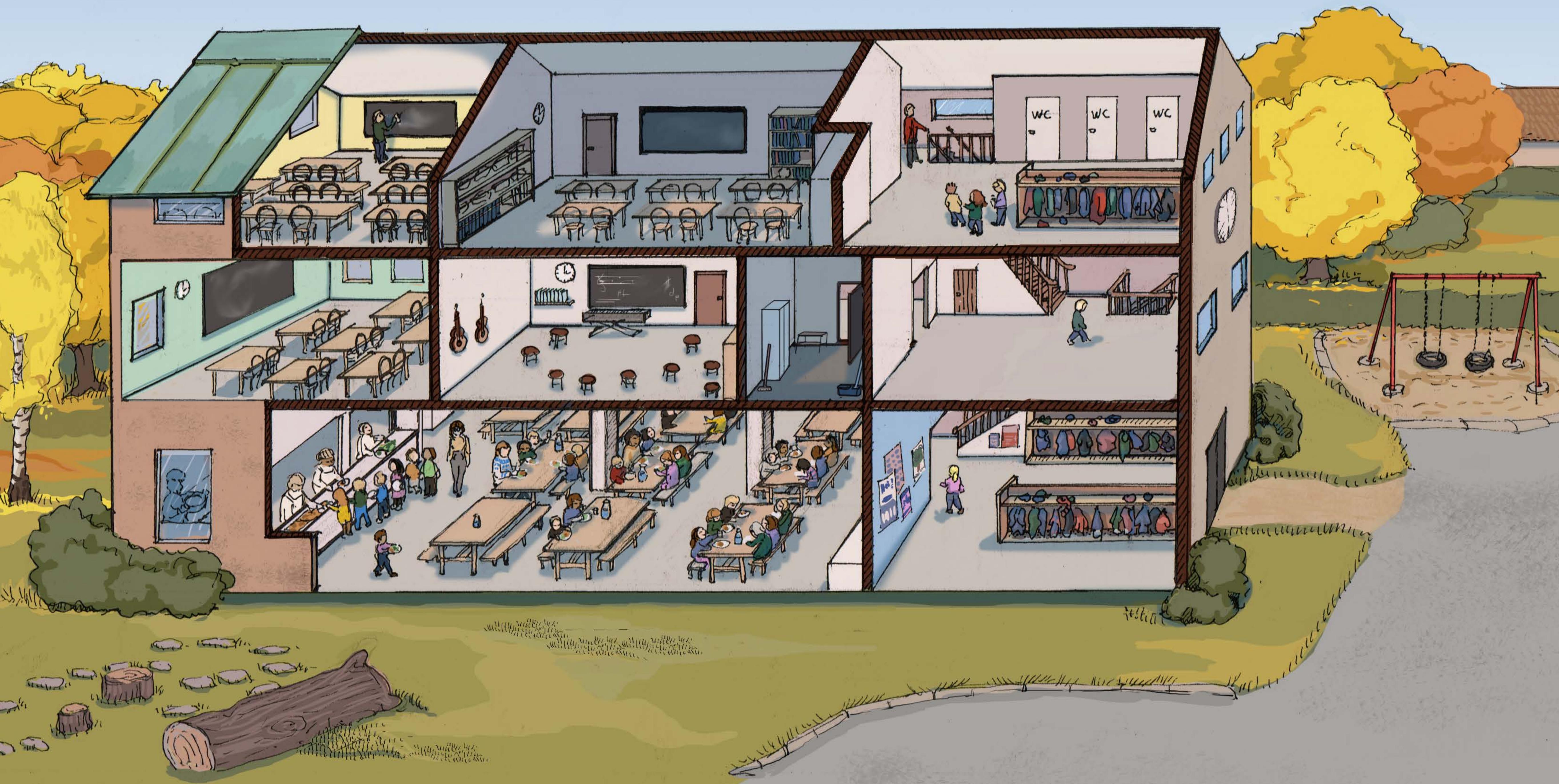


Today is the sixth of June, which is Sweden's national day. Schools and many shops are closed today. It's the end of term, and students go on holiday. In June, we celebrate Midsummer which is a Swedish tradition since many years back. We pick flowers and decorate a maypole. Then, we dance around it and sing Midsummer songs. We eat food similar to Christmas food — boiled eggs, meatballs, sausages, potatoes and herring.

Today, mum and dad are off work, so we're going to the country to stay at our summer house. There, we're going to swim and sunbathe, go in the boat and fish. It's important to wear a life jacket when you're on a boat, and it's also important that you know how to swim. Children learn how to swim at school. I look at cows and horses in our neighbour's meadow. In the summer, there are many mosquitoes that can bite you, but they're not poisonous. If you are bitten, there is a sting, and you'll get a bump that will itch for a while. If there is an accident or if you get really ill, you have to call the ambulance. It takes people who need help quickly to hospital. If you have a headache or a small sore, you can call the care centre to book an appointment instead.

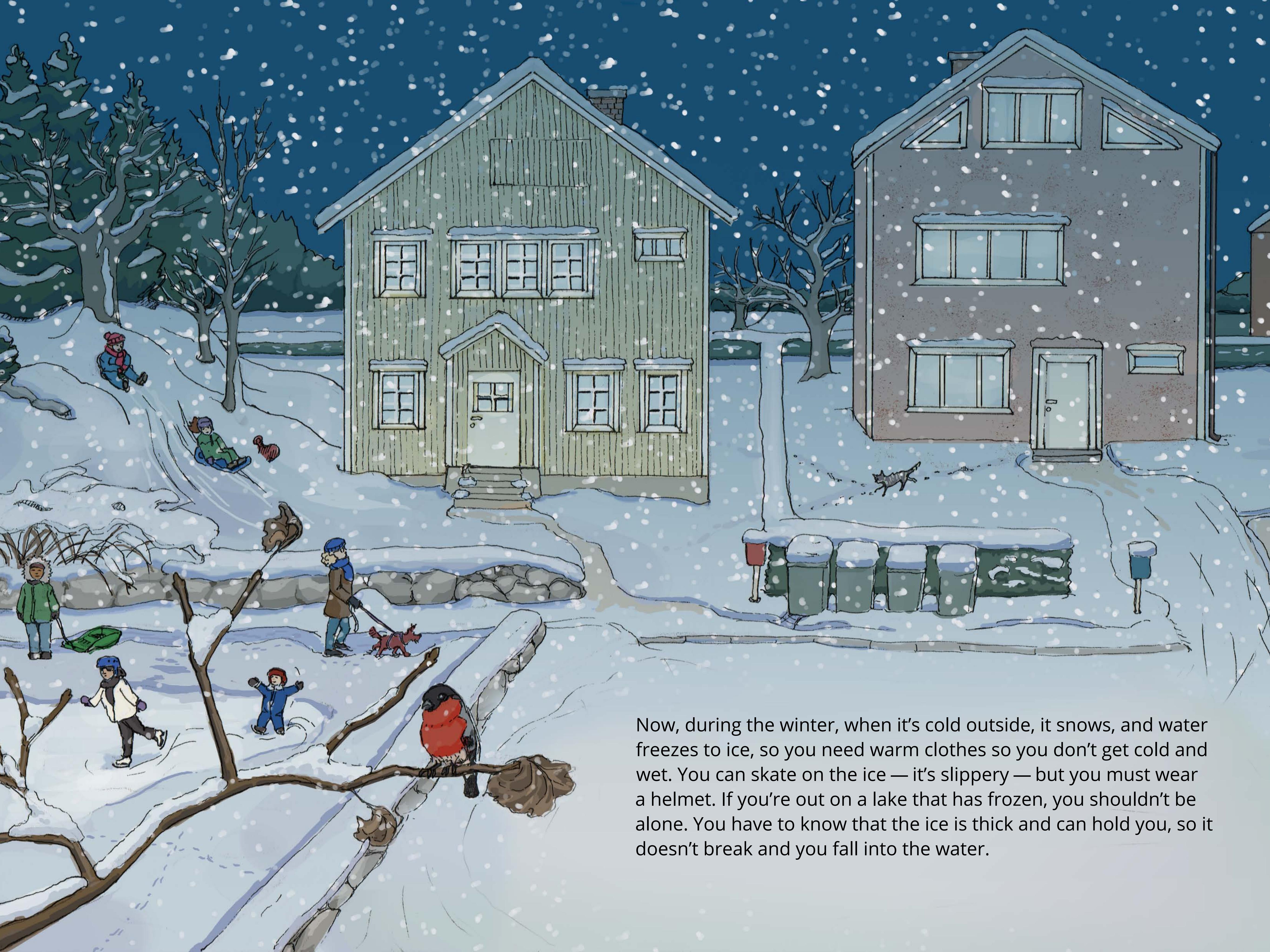


When children are little, they go to preschool. Now, it's August, and school starts. All children in Sweden between 6 and 15 go to compulsory school, and then, they start upper secondary school. At school, boys and girls study together. You'll learn to work with everyone in the class, and both men and women are teachers. It's important to listen to and respect your teachers and classmates, so that everyone has the same chance to learn. The teacher can get angry and tell people off when it's necessary, but they are absolutely not allowed to hit us! At school, you'll get a hot meal, you can eat until you're full, and there is food for everyone. If you're allergic to anything or don't eat something for religious reasons, you can let the school know, and you'll be given food that you can eat.

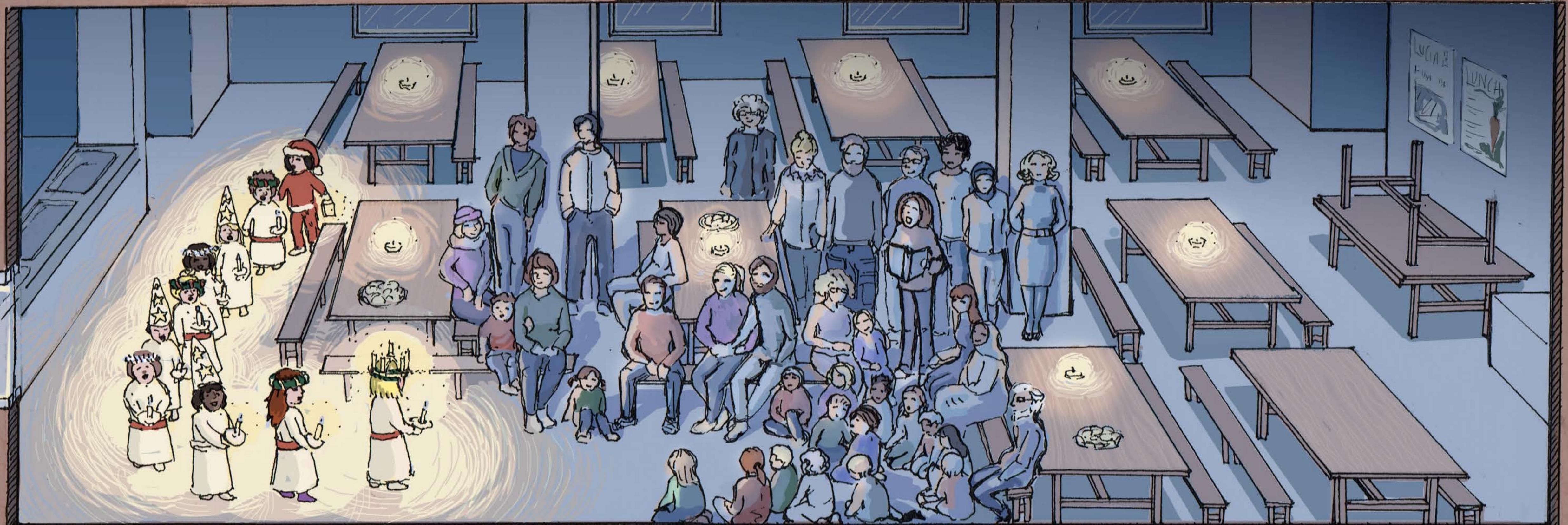




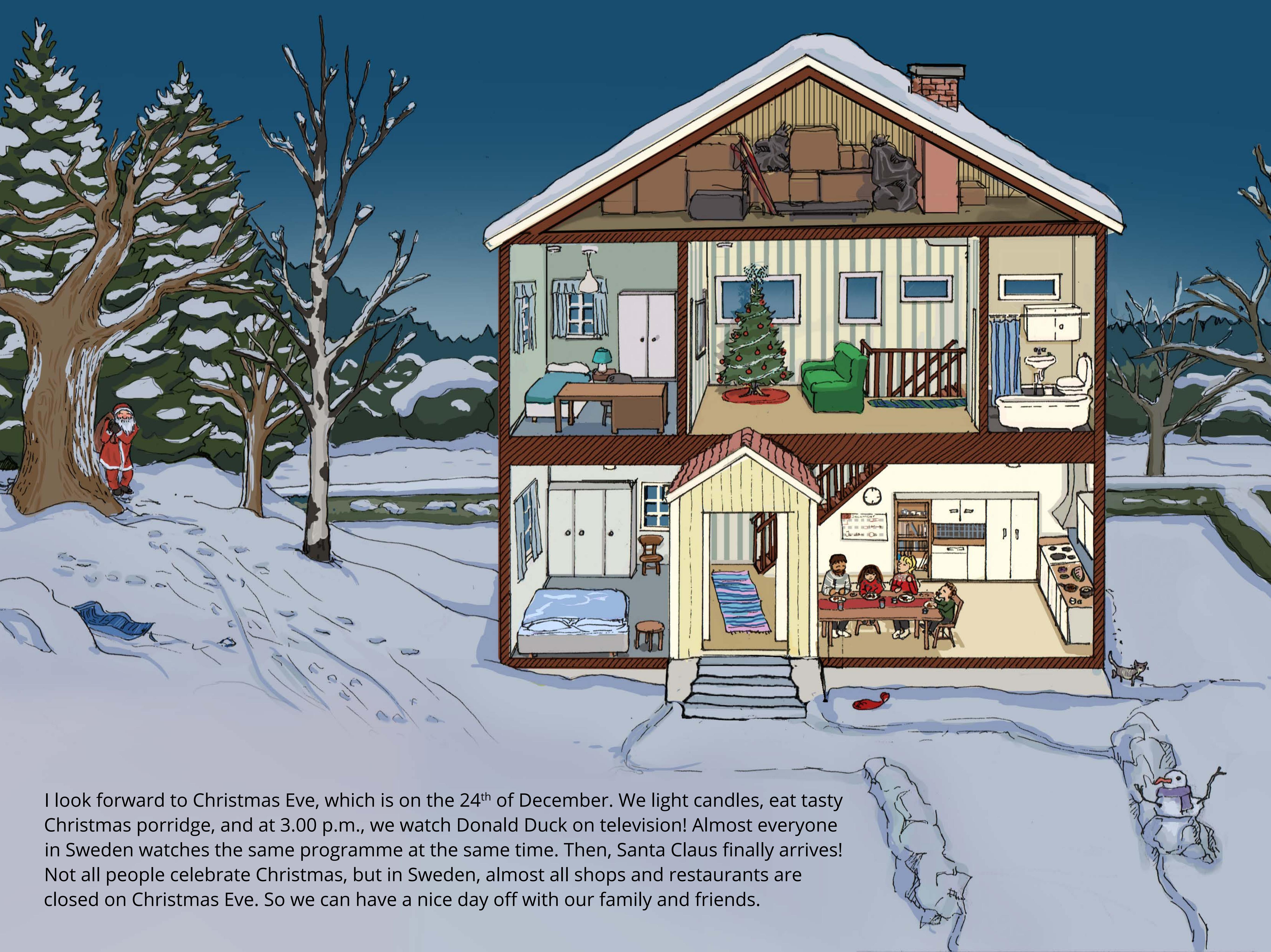
Now, it's autumn, and students get a week off school. During the autumn and winter, it gets dark outside early in the afternoon, and the days feel shorter since we don't get as much sunlight. It's very important to wear a reflector. It's necessary for cars and cyclists in traffic to be able to see you. If cars can't see you, you could get run over by mistake, and there can be horrible accidents. You can use the autumn break to read a book. You can borrow books at the library. You can take them home and read them, and then give them back and borrow new ones. There are books in many languages.



Now, during the winter, when it's cold outside, it snows, and water freezes to ice, so you need warm clothes so you don't get cold and wet. You can skate on the ice — it's slippery — but you must wear a helmet. If you're out on a lake that has frozen, you shouldn't be alone. You have to know that the ice is thick and can hold you, so it doesn't break and you fall into the water.



Now it's December, and I count down to Christmas with a Christmas calendar you can buy in the shop. It has one window to open for every day until the 24th of December, which is Christmas Eve. On December 13th, we celebrate Lucia. We practice songs that we sing at school, dress in white and wear a crown of candles or tinsel in our hair. There are four Advent Sundays, and we light one candle every Sunday while waiting for Christmas. Remember to blow out all lit candles, so that other things aren't set on fire. There is a fire alarm in the ceiling, which is an important, white little box that beeps if there is a fire indoors. If there is a fire, you have to call the fire brigade and get outside to safety! The number is 112.



I look forward to Christmas Eve, which is on the 24th of December. We light candles, eat tasty Christmas porridge, and at 3.00 p.m., we watch Donald Duck on television! Almost everyone in Sweden watches the same programme at the same time. Then, Santa Claus finally arrives! Not all people celebrate Christmas, but in Sweden, almost all shops and restaurants are closed on Christmas Eve. So we can have a nice day off with our family and friends.



Today is the last day of the year, which is New Year's Eve. Almost everyone celebrates it, so it's a party! You celebrate it how you like, and wait for the new year which starts at midnight. Then, there are colourful fireworks! They're beautiful to watch, but are quite loud. Both animals and people can be scared of fireworks, and find it unpleasant when they go off. We don't do it to scare anyone, but because it's pretty and festive to watch. Happy New Year!

Special thanks to Karin Eklind for help with text adaptation!
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