



Are you ready for our adventure?

Yes, what are we going to do today?

We need to hurry. I saw something on the way here that I want you to see.

What?

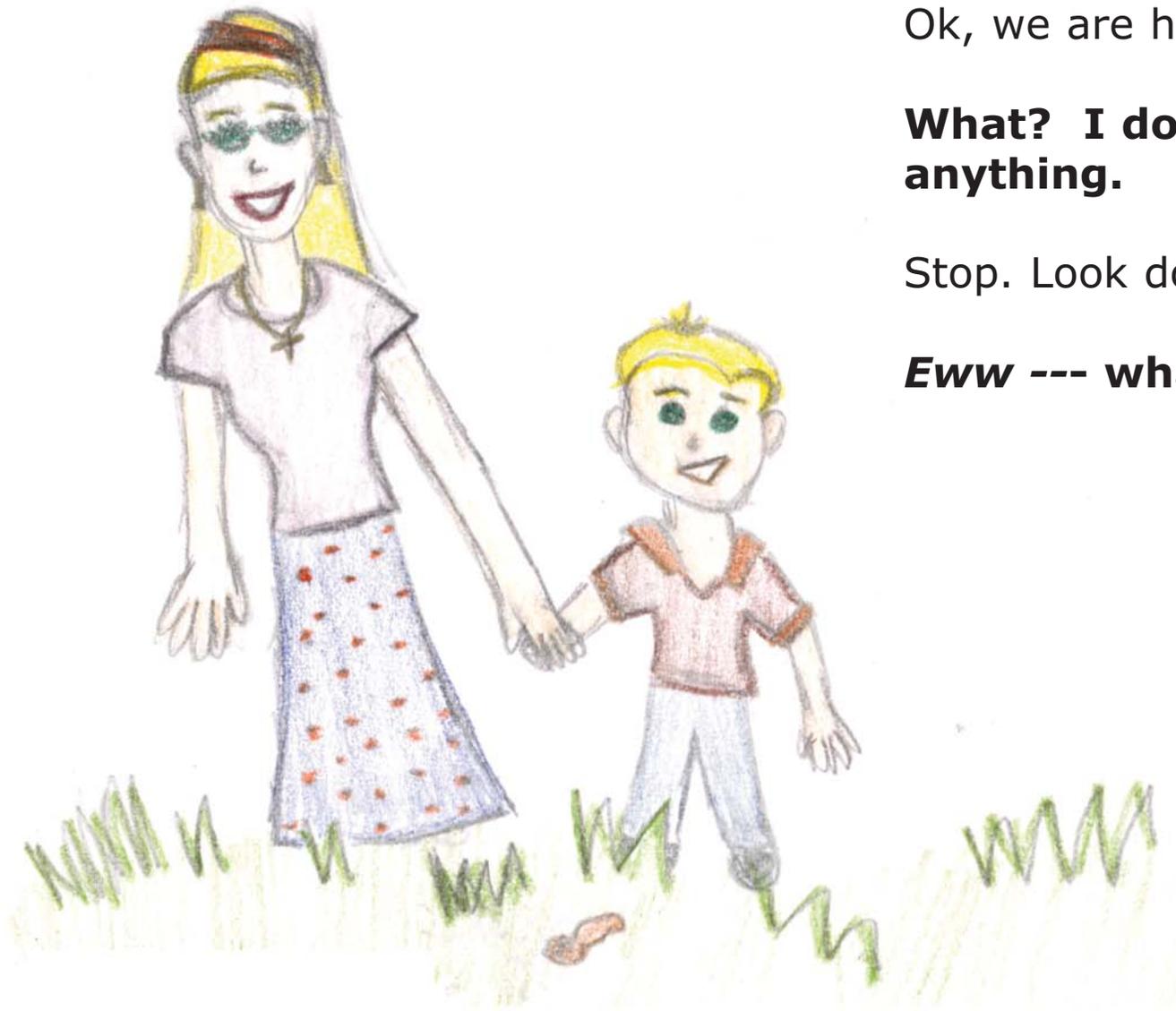
Come quickly.

**Grandma, you sound so serious,
is there a problem?**

Oh yes, Gregory, a matter of life
and death.

Life and death? Wow.





Ok, we are here.

What? I don't see anything.

Stop. Look down.

Eww --- what is that?

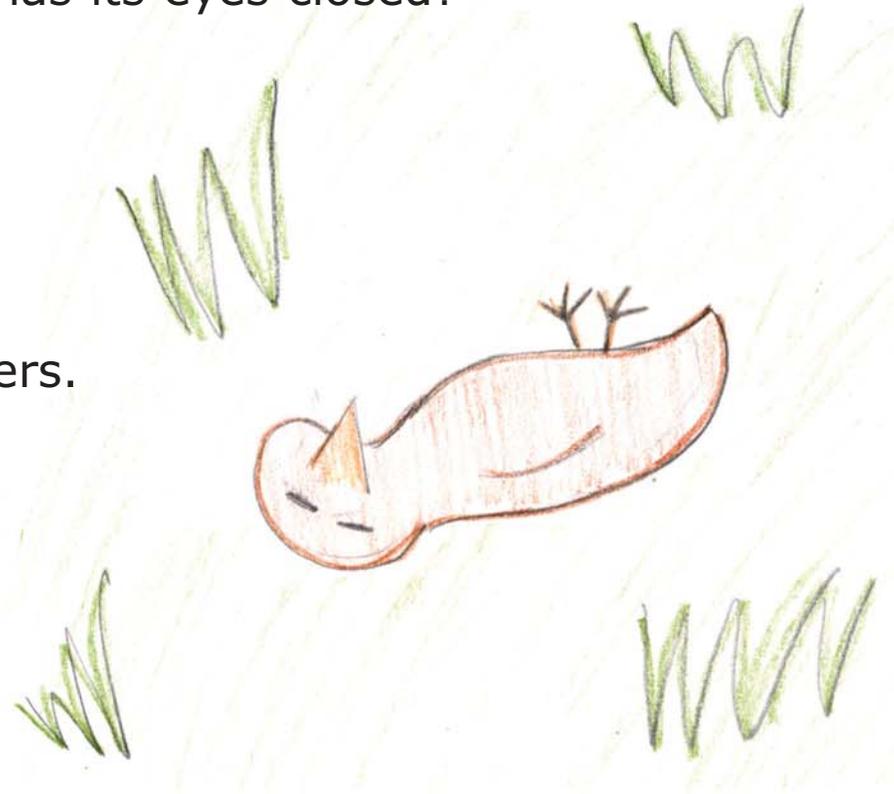
It's a baby bird. A very, very little baby bird.
It's called a hatchling.

But, Grandma, it doesn't have any *feathers*.

I know. That's why it's called a hatchling. It's probably less than a week old. See how it has its eyes closed?

Hatchlings don't usually open their eyes. Pretty soon it will open its eyes and it will be called a nestling. Then it will start to get feathers.

Hatchlings and nestlings do not have any feathers.



Wow. What's it doing on the ground?

It probably fell out of the nest.

Fell?

Yes. Some people think that the parents push the weak birds out of the nest and that's why some hatchlings and nestlings end up on the ground. That's simply not true. Mother and Father birds are very careful about their children. They care for them and would never intentionally push one of their children out of the nest.



Oh, so it fell? Why don't they put it back?

They can't. They don't have any arms to pick it up. They could grab it with their beak much like a tiger picks up his baby cubs with his teeth, but the bird's pointed beak would hurt the baby.

Also, the parent birds don't have enough strength and control in their beaks to pick up the bird.



What happens if the hatchling doesn't get back into the nest?



Well, the hatchling does not have any feathers so it has a hard time regulating its body temperature. If the hatchling doesn't get back into the nest where the nest can protect him and the parents can keep him warm and feed him, he will die.

I wouldn't want that to happen.

No, Gregory. Neither of us would want that to happen.