



Floating Garden

Kongkea lives with her father and brother on a floating village. She wants to join them on their fishing trips, but she is always told to stay at

home and look after her floating garden. One day, the floating garden mysteriously floats away! Kongkea decides to take a boat out for the first time in search of her garden.



Floating Garden
Iem Tithseiha

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Kongkea is 12 years old and lives with her father and brother on the Tonle Sap river. Everything floats on the water: the school, the health center, the pagoda, the garden — everything!



Kongkea's father is very good at catching fish. Her brother is very good at rowing the boat. Every morning, they go out to catch fish. Kongkea stays home to care for the garden.



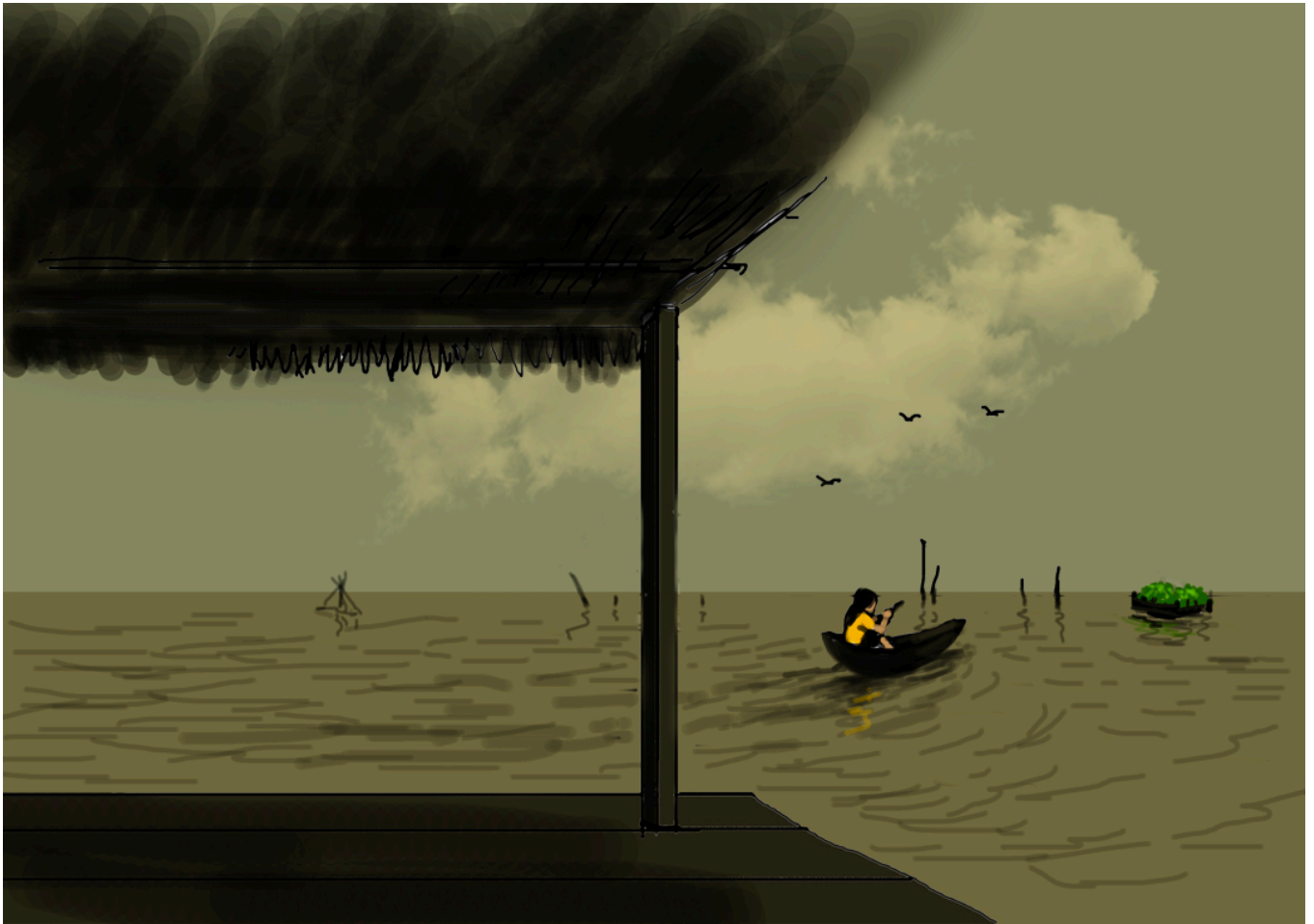
Kongkea often asks her father and brother if she may go with them on their fishing trips. But her father says no. "Fishing is a difficult task. You should stay home and water the garden. I want to eat the papayas that you grow." Her brother says: "You should stay here and take care of the tomatoes for me, Sister."



When the monsoon season arrives, rain falls almost every day. The river and nearby lake flood.



One day, after her father and brother have gone out to fish, Kongkea realizes something is wrong. "Where is my garden?" she cries out loudly. She runs around looking and finally spots it floating away from her house!



Kongkea decides to row out and rescue her garden. But it is moving away very quickly. "Oh, my garden! Please wait for me." She rows faster and faster.



In the middle of the lake, huge waves make her boat rock from left to right. Water gets into Kongkea's boat. She tries to get the water out quickly and continues rowing. The day is getting hotter, and Kongkea is tired. But the garden does not stop; it continues floating ahead.



Finally, the garden stops! Kongkea catches up to it and ties her boat to a stake in the water before jumping onto the floating garden. Suddenly, the garden begins to move away from her boat again!



Kongkea wonders what is happening. She decides she must look under the water. So she takes a deep breath and dives in.



Under the water, she sees a giant carp! It is pulling her garden. "So this fish is the one stealing my garden!" Kongkea thinks, swimming after the giant carp.



Suddenly, she hears noises above the water. She looks up and sees a group of monkeys who have been stranded by the flood. "Oh! I understand. The giant carp wants my garden to help this group of monkeys."



"Do you want to take the monkeys to the forest?" Kongkea asks the carp. The giant carp spouts water out of its mouth to say yes. The monkeys leap onto the floating garden with Kongkea. "Don't eat my papayas and tomatoes!" she shouts. But the monkeys do not listen. They are very hungry, and they eat all her fruit.



When they arrive at the forest, the monkeys climb up into the branches of the trees. Then they pick good fruits and place them in Kongkea's garden to replace the ones they ate. At last, it is time for Kongkea to row home.



Kongkea's father and brother are very happy to see her.



"Now can I go fishing with you?" Kongkea asks them. Her brother smiles. "Father! Kongkea rowed the garden all the way across the lake. She is a very skilled boatwoman!" "Yes, she is a brave girl," her father replies. "And a brave girl can do anything!"

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