Under the bodhi tree
a Story of the Buddha

Deborah Hopkinson
illustrations by Kailey Whitman
In a long-ago time and a faraway place, a baby boy was born.

His name was Prince Siddhartha.
Before his birth, his mother dreamed of a beautiful white elephant. The wise men said it was a sign the baby would be special. And he was. Just like babies then and now, and everywhere. And just like you.
The baby grew to be a kind and gentle child.

Once, he found a wounded swan and nursed it back to health so it could soar across the sky again.

The little prince wanted to spread his wings, too.

But his father said, “You must stay here, away from the world, where I can keep you safe from any pain or sorrow.”
And so Siddhartha grew up behind the garden walls of a rich and splendid palace. He had new, fine clothes, a grand white horse, the softest rice to eat.

But like children then and now, and everywhere, and just like you ...
At last, when Siddhartha was a young man, his father let him visit the great city.

The king ordered the mayor: ‘Hold a festival in the market with flowers, song, and dance. My son must see only happy sights.’