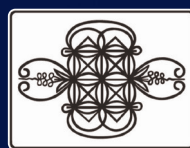


Level 5



LAST NIGHT'S REGRET



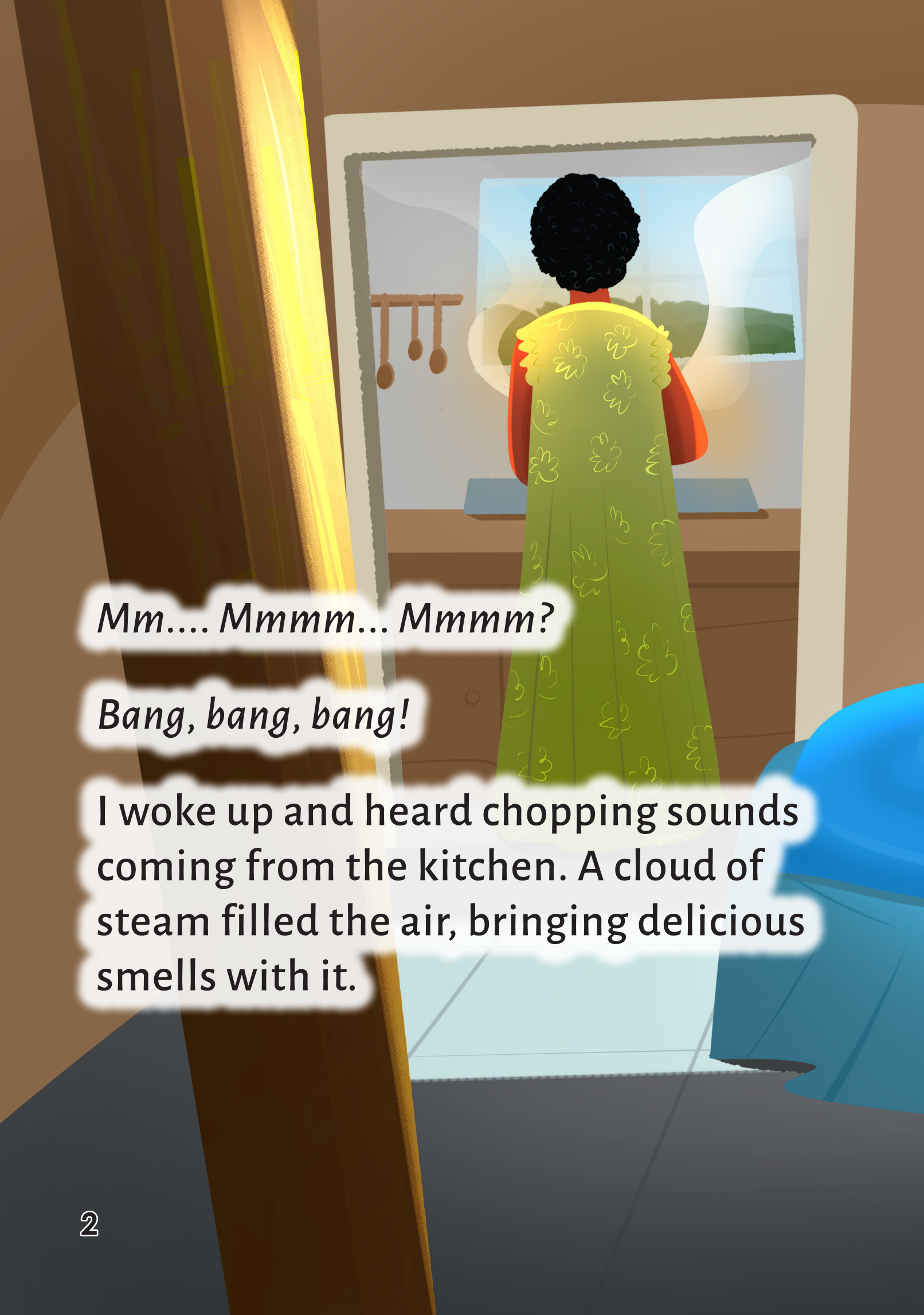
By Ruth Pakoa
Illustrated by Shaina Nayyar

LAST NIGHT'S REGRET



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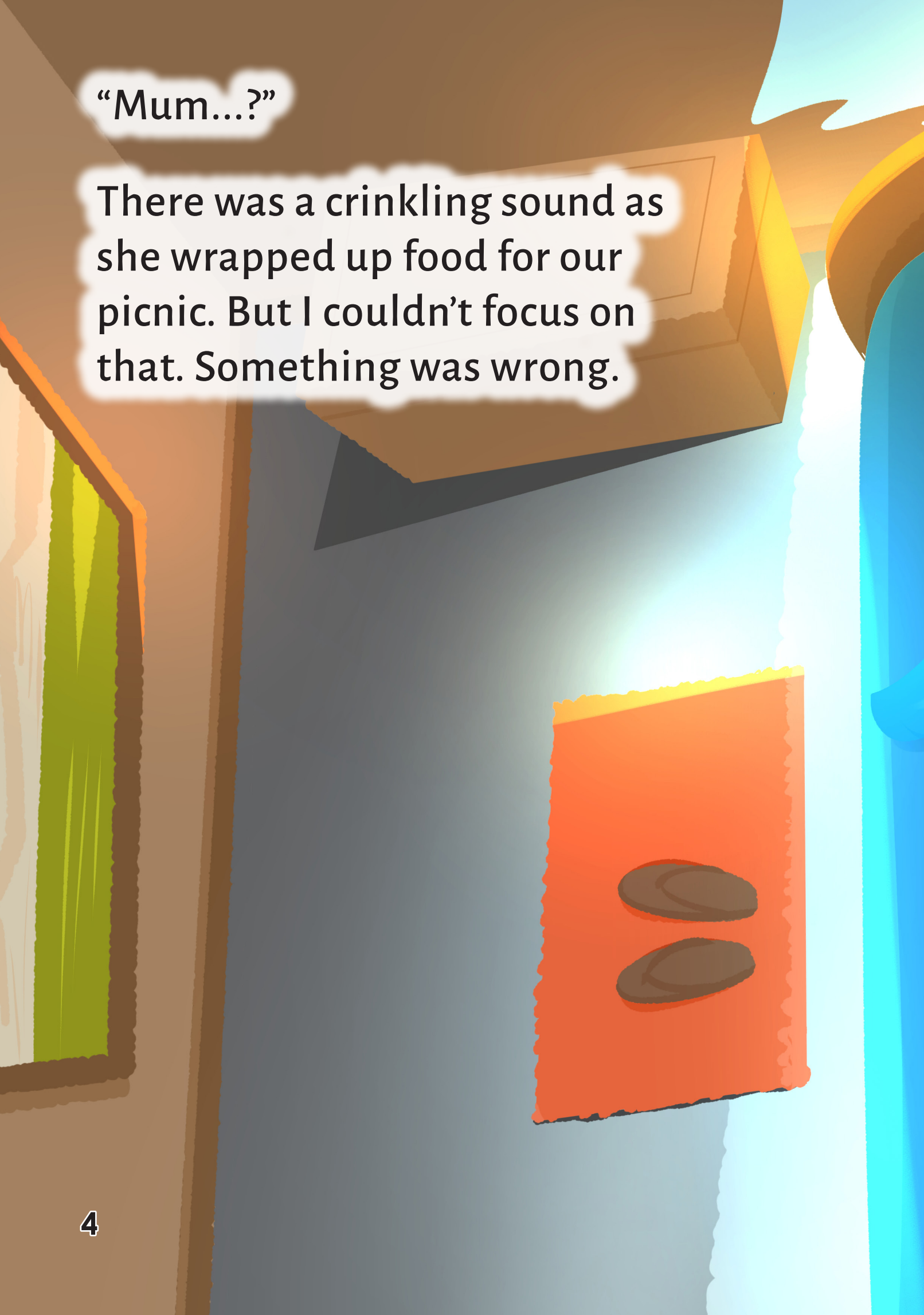


Mm.... Mmmm... Mmmm?

Bang, bang, bang!

I woke up and heard chopping sounds coming from the kitchen. A cloud of steam filled the air, bringing delicious smells with it.





“Mum...?”

There was a crinkling sound as she wrapped up food for our picnic. But I couldn't focus on that. Something was wrong.





“Mum!” I screamed.

She rushed into the room, but I couldn't do anything. I was busy rolling and folding in bed, trying to relieve the pain in my stomach.



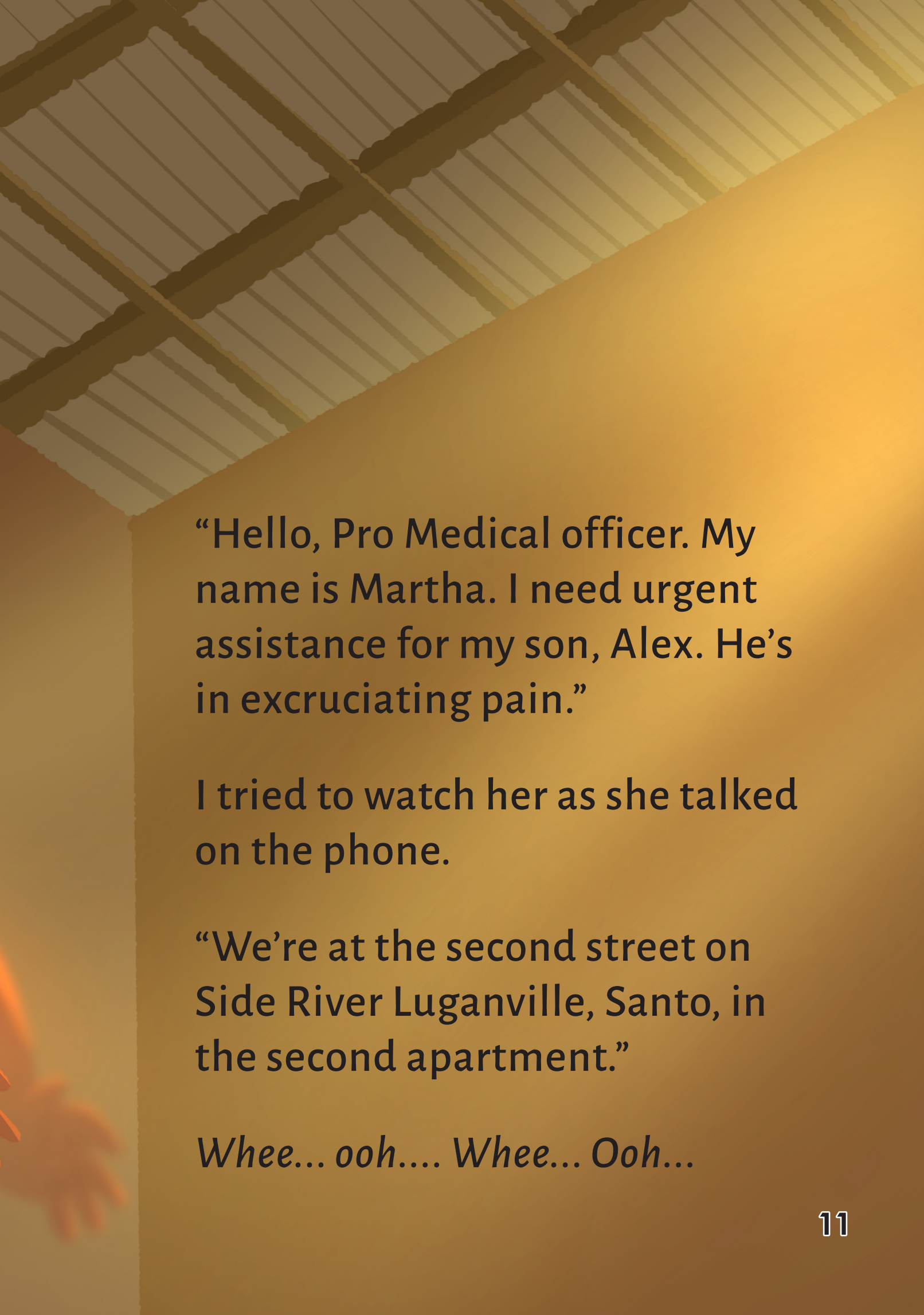
“Alex? Alex!” Mum cried, her voice shaky. I couldn’t reply, I was struggling to breathe. There was sweat everywhere and wheezing filled the room.

Ring... ring...







The background features a warm, golden-yellow gradient. In the upper left, there are dark, diagonal lines representing a corrugated metal roof. On the left side, a hand is partially visible, reaching out towards the center.

“Hello, Pro Medical officer. My name is Martha. I need urgent assistance for my son, Alex. He’s in excruciating pain.”

I tried to watch her as she talked on the phone.

“We’re at the second street on Side River Luganville, Santo, in the second apartment.”

Whee... ooh.... Whee... Ooh...

Before long, the Pro Medical officers had arrived and were loading me into their vehicle on a stretcher. They laid me in the recovery position and helped me breathe through the pain.





*Whee... Ooh... Whee.... Ooo,
Whee... Ooo.*



The background is a stylized illustration of a hospital room. On the left, a dark teal bed frame is visible. In the center, a person is lying down, covered by a light blue blanket, with their head resting on a dark blue pillow. To the right, there is a window with a dark teal frame and a light blue pane. The walls are a light teal color, and the floor is a darker teal. The overall style is simple and modern.

When we got to the hospital,
the nurse helped me out and
onto the emergency bed.

“Mum? Mum?” my voice
sounded weak and
breathless, but I had to
know she was still there.

“Alex. Alex, I’m here.” A hand
held mine tight.

I closed my eyes as the doctor came in.

“It’s okay. We’ve checked his symptoms, and he has food poisoning. It can be treated, so please don’t worry,” the doctor said to my mum.



I groaned as my stomach
heaved again.



“What did you eat yesterday?”
the doctor asked Mum.

“We ate dinner last night, but
I made it fresh! It couldn’t
have been contaminated or
rotten,” Mum said.



The doctor hummed before saying, “Did Alex wash his hands before he ate?”

Mum paused. I gasped. “No, I hadn’t washed my hands.” I’d been playing outside all day, and they had been filthy.







“That will be why you’re sick, Alex,” the doctor explained to me.

I promised both her and my mum that I would always wash my hands from now on before I eat.



**You can use these questions
to talk about this book with
your family, friends and
teachers.**



Why did Alex get food poisoning?



**Why would not washing your hands
give you food poisoning?**



**Why did Alex's stomach only start
hurting the next morning?**

Have you ever had food poisoning?



**Before you next wash your hands,
have a close look at them. What
could be hiding there?**

About the author

Ruth Pakoa was born in Malekula and now lives in Luganville on Santo Island. By writing this story, she wants to help children develop their language skills. Ruth loves playing outside with her friends and family, and her favourite stories as a child were those from the Bible.



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Last Night's Regret

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Original illustrations by Shaina Nayyar

Last Night's Regret

Pakoa, Ruth

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Alex wakes up in terrible pain, prompting his mum to call emergency. In the hospital, they find out what's wrong with his stomach.



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