

Togu and the Trees of Life



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Togu and the Trees of Life is part of the Tunza Environmental Series for Children sponsored by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

“Tunza” means “to treat with care or affection” in Swahili. UNEP hopes to inspire caring for the Earth through creative literature that sparks the interest and awareness of children, their parents and teachers.

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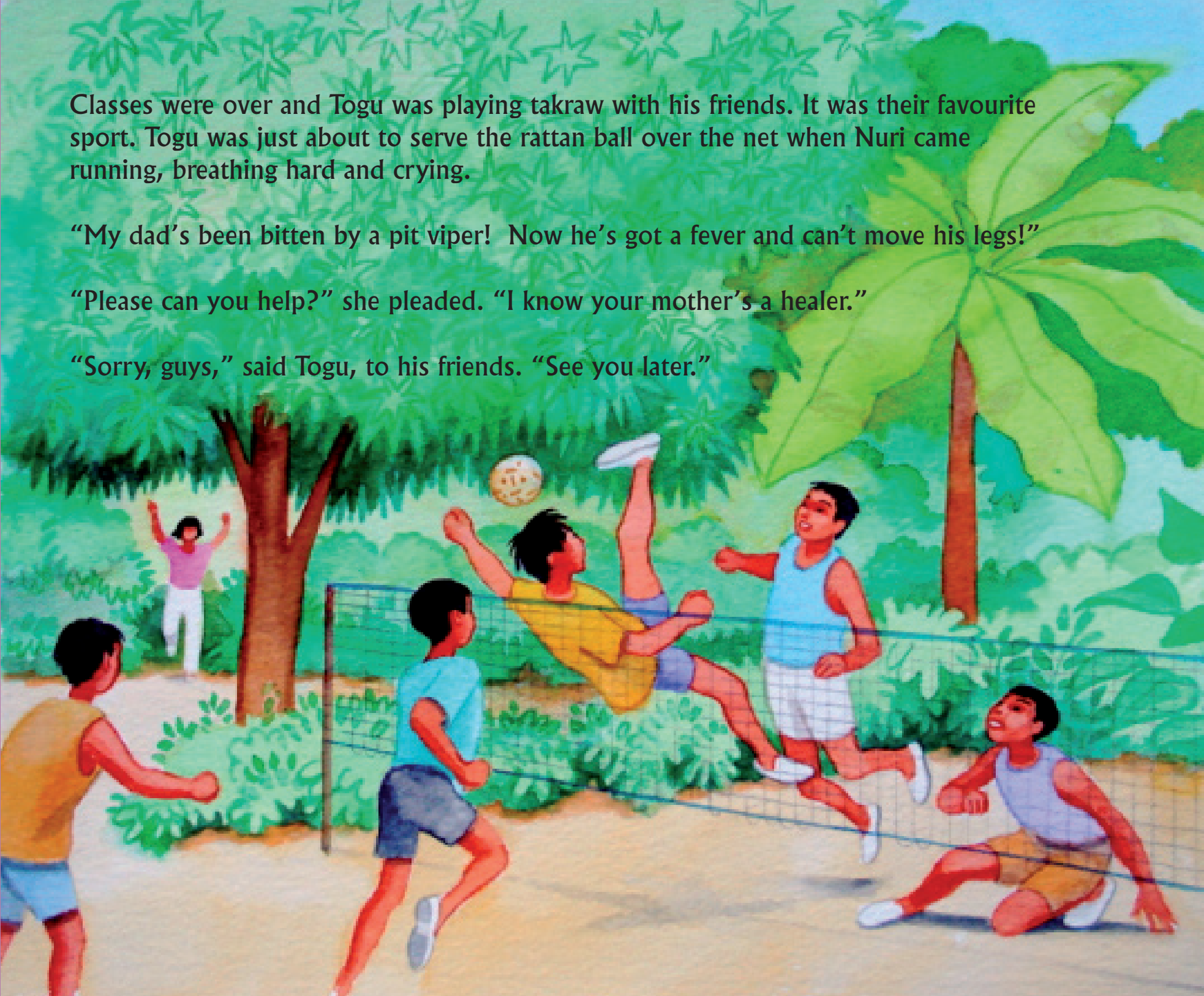
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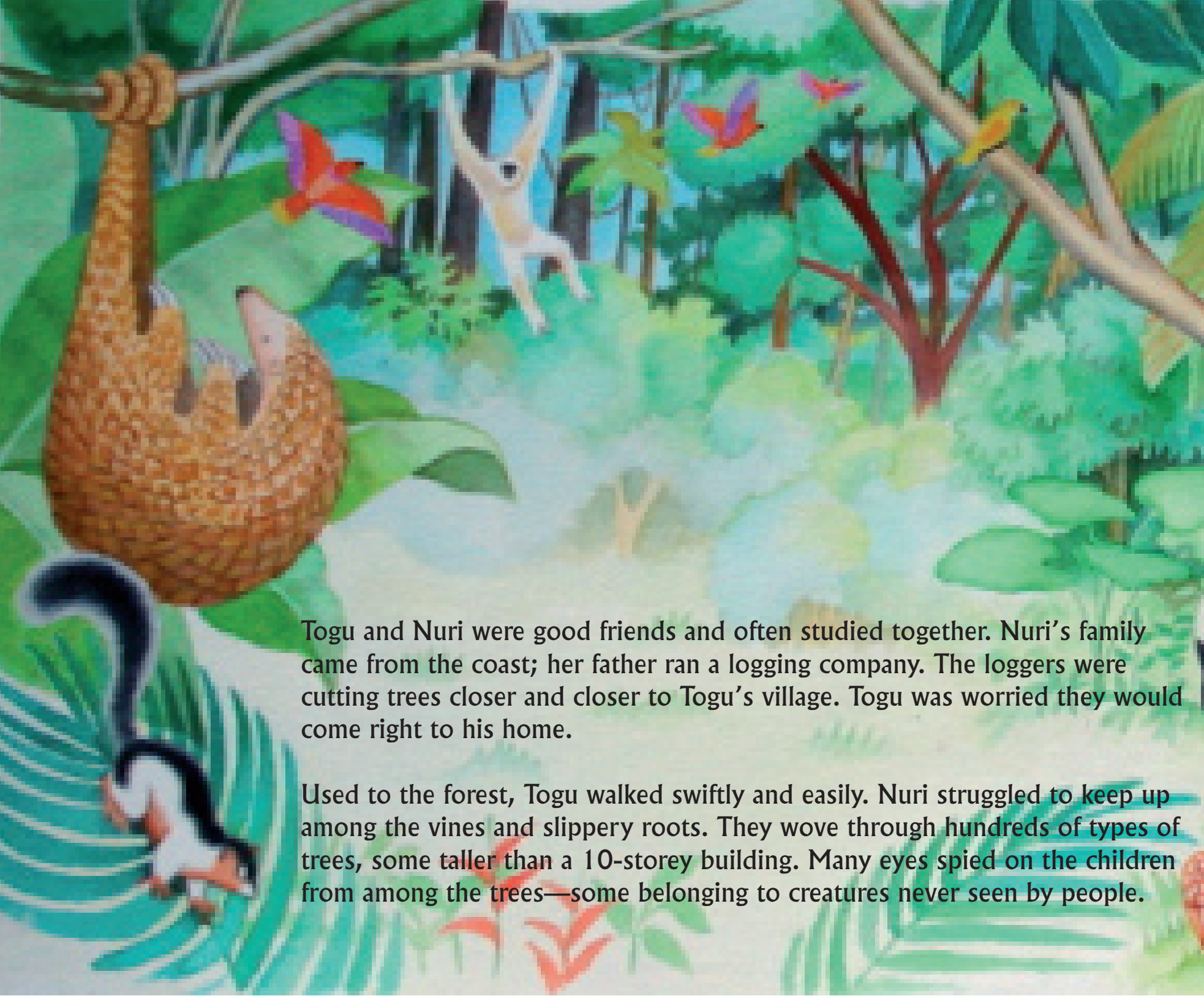
Classes were over and Togu was playing takraw with his friends. It was their favourite sport. Togu was just about to serve the rattan ball over the net when Nuri came running, breathing hard and crying.

“My dad’s been bitten by a pit viper! Now he’s got a fever and can’t move his legs!”

“Please can you help?” she pleaded. “I know your mother’s a healer.”

“Sorry, guys,” said Togu, to his friends. “See you later.”






Togu and Nuri were good friends and often studied together. Nuri's family came from the coast; her father ran a logging company. The loggers were cutting trees closer and closer to Togu's village. Togu was worried they would come right to his home.

Used to the forest, Togu walked swiftly and easily. Nuri struggled to keep up among the vines and slippery roots. They wove through hundreds of types of trees, some taller than a 10-storey building. Many eyes spied on the children from among the trees—some belonging to creatures never seen by people.



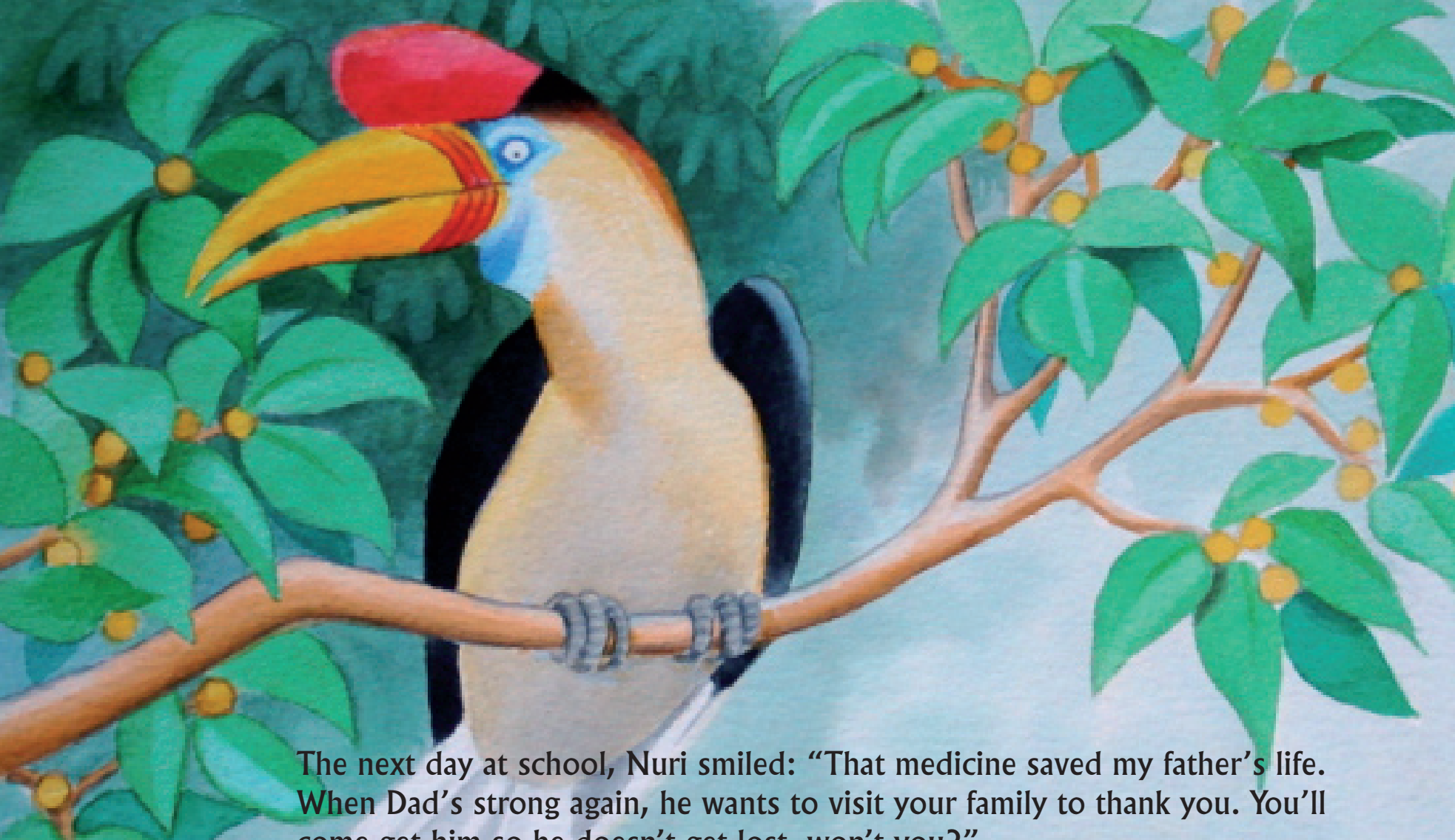


When the friends finally arrived at Togu's home, Togu's mom lost no time.

"Boil this root to make a strong tea," she told Nuri. "And pound these leaves to place on the bite."

Togu walked Nuri back to the logging camp, then slipped silently home.





The next day at school, Nuri smiled: “That medicine saved my father’s life. When Dad’s strong again, he wants to visit your family to thank you. You’ll come get him so he doesn’t get lost, won’t you?”

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