Dreaming Under the Same Sky

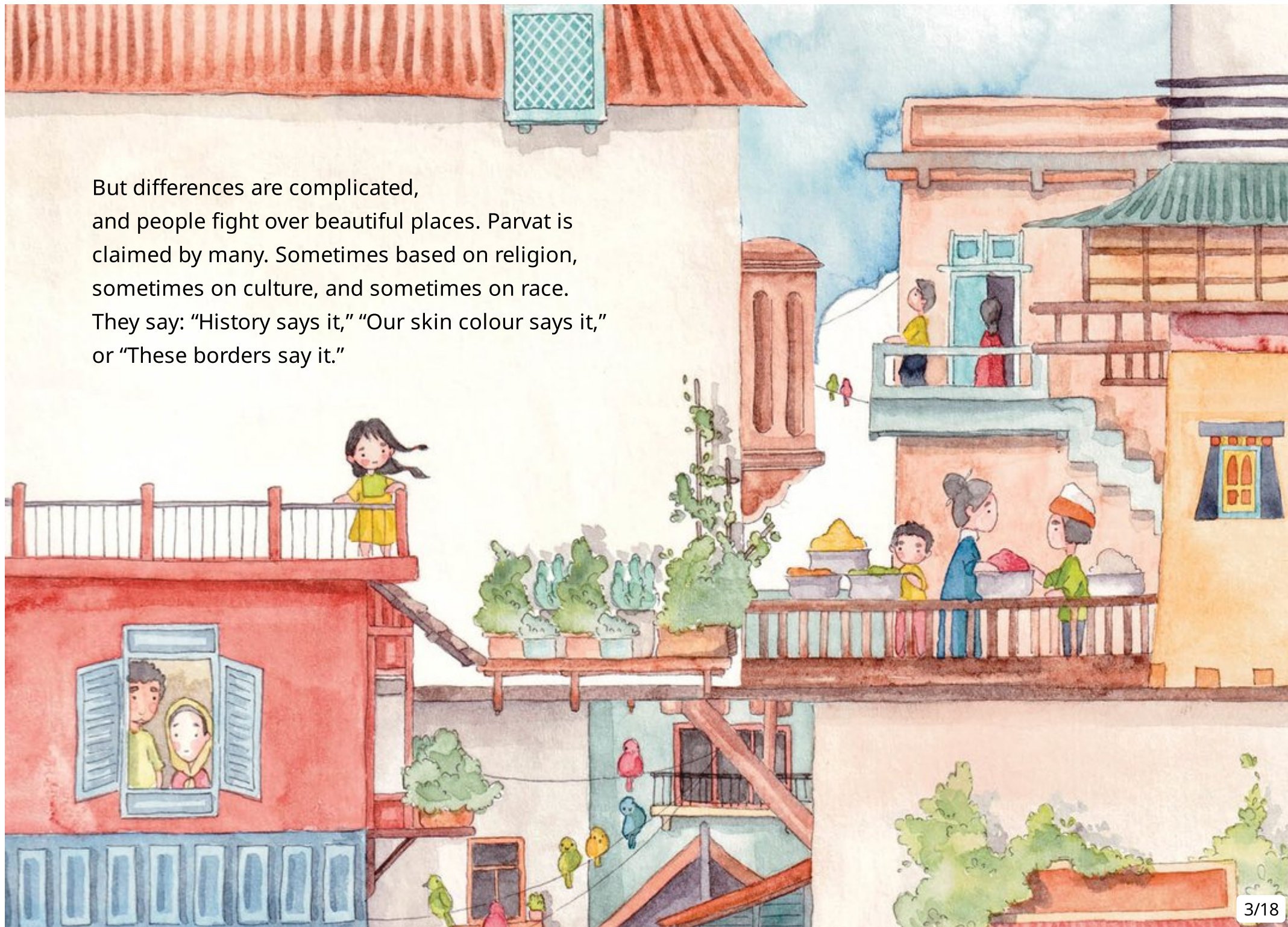**Author:** Fausto Aarya De Santis
Illustrator: Ogin Nayam

Level 4

In the lanes of Parvat, markets flourish and life is seasoned with spices. Different religions, cultures and races come together in this town.
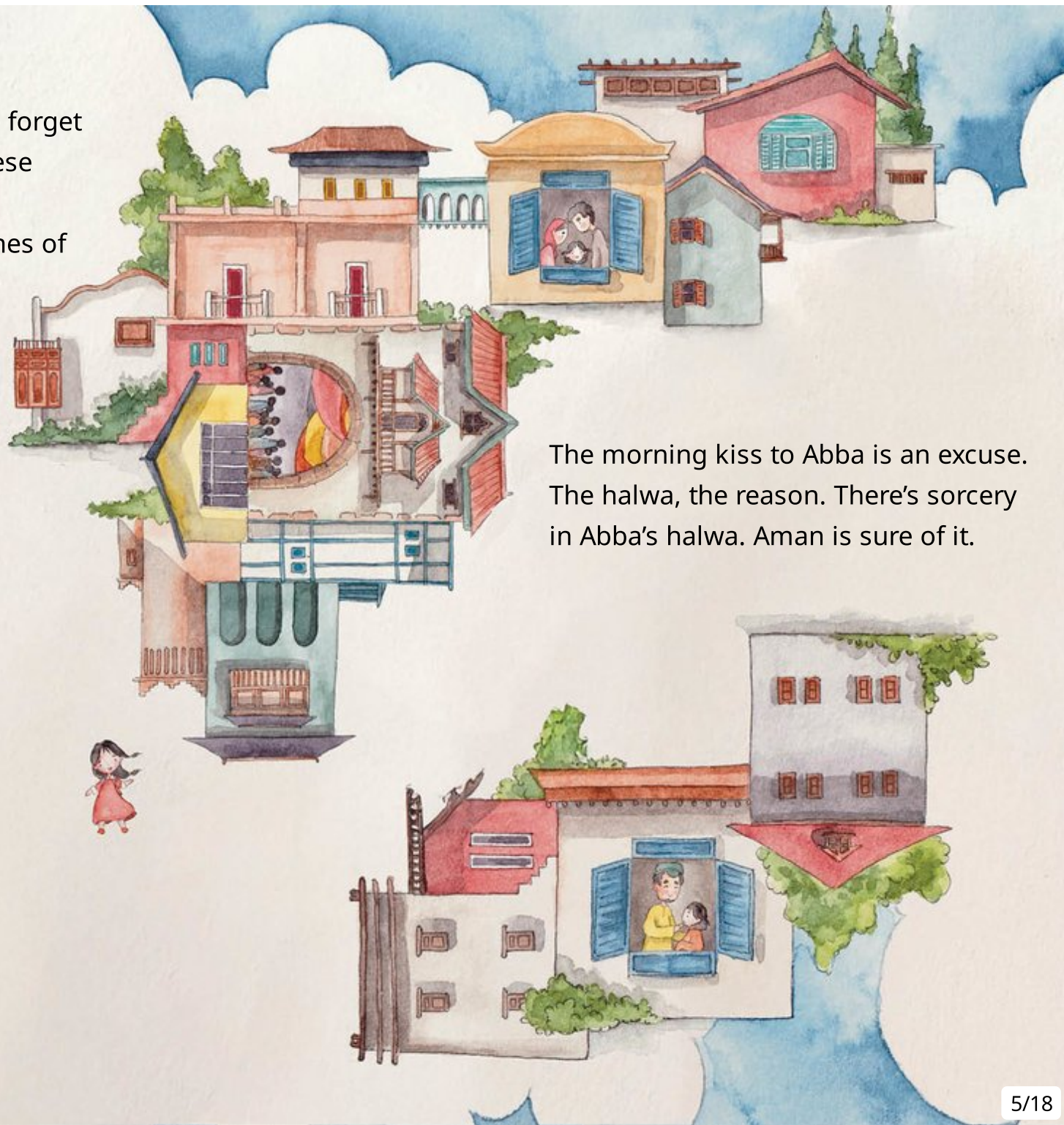
But differences are complicated,
and people fight over beautiful places. Parvat is
claimed by many. Sometimes based on religion,
sometimes on culture, and sometimes on race.
They say: "History says it," "Our skin colour says it,"
or "These borders say it."

But no one knows where truth really lies.
Each is convinced by their story.
Parvat is divided. Some divisions you can see. Others you can only feel with your heart. Behind every smile, no one really trusts the other.

Years of peace have made people forget the pains of war. It was during these years that Aman was born. Aman, who loves to swirl through the lanes of Parvat towards Abba's shop.

The morning kiss to Abba is an excuse. The halwa, the reason. There's sorcery in Abba's halwa. Aman is sure of it.

"Abba! Can you please give me a bigger piece of halwa?" asks Aman. "We have a maths exam. The addition of halwa will subtract my chances of disappointing you."
"If your calculated arguments are as good as your numbers, then letting me down is an illusion," says Abba, handing Aman a piece of halwa as big as her smile.

Off she goes to school.

Suddenly there's a clap of thunder.

Aman falls. The sound shakes the earth and tears the sky.
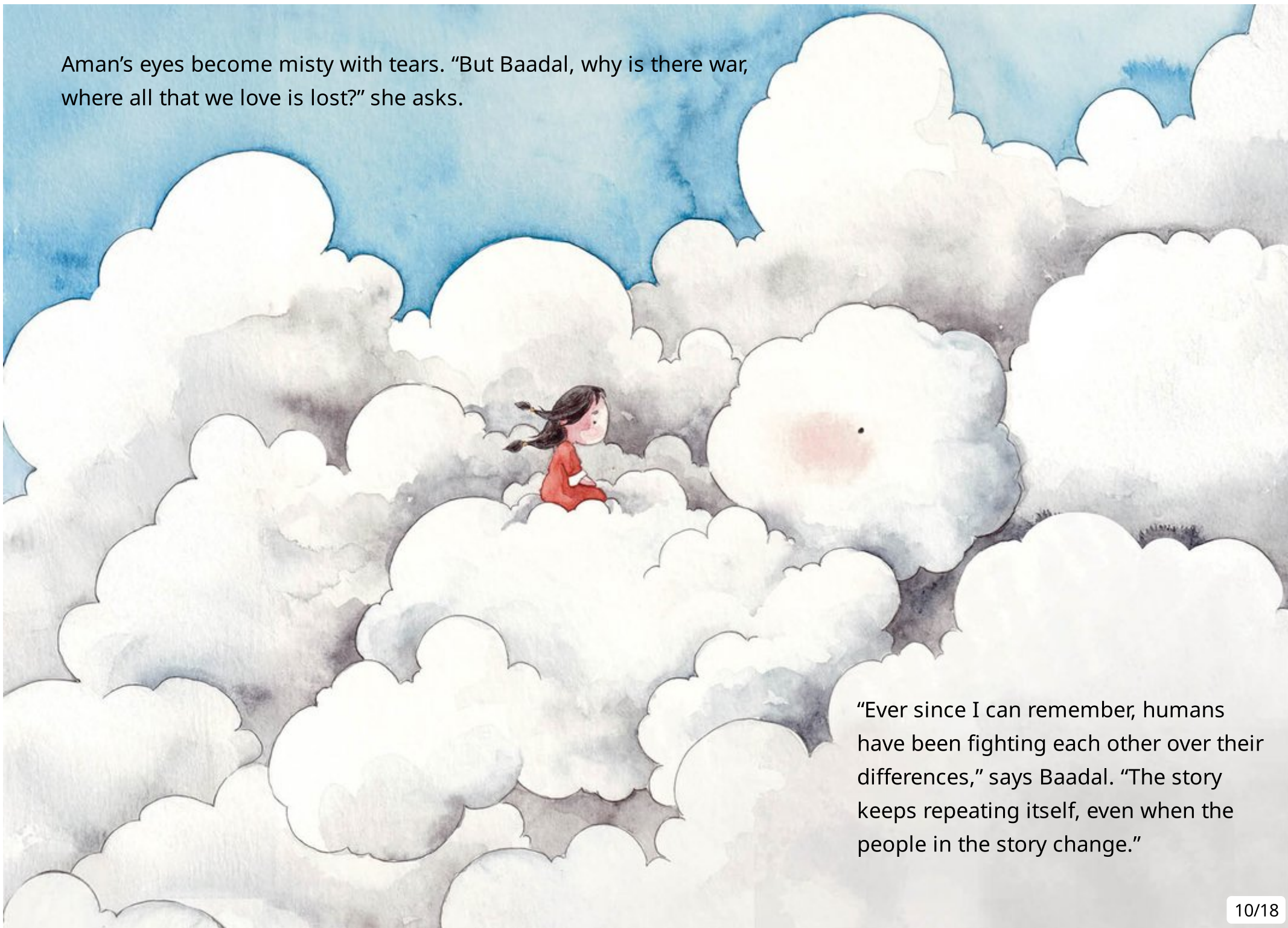Then, silence.

A second sound. She feels it pass through her body.
She closes her eyes as she lies on the ground. Stillness. Darkness.

Finally, Aman opens her eyes. She's afraid. She feels confused.
"Where am I?" Her words are fragile.
She is on something soft and fluffy. It is a cloud!
"My name is Baadal," says the cloud. "I was crossing over your city, which was destroyed by war. I saw you under the rubble, and brought you here with me."

Aman's eyes become misty with tears. "But Baadal, why is there war, where all that we love is lost?" she asks.

"Ever since I can remember, humans have been fighting each other over their differences," says Baadal. "The story keeps repeating itself, even when the people in the story change."

As they sail across the uncharted sky,
Aman looks down at Earth.
She sees nature change, towns
change, and people change.

Aman watches waves crashing into a shore. A little further, she sees them unite into an ocean.
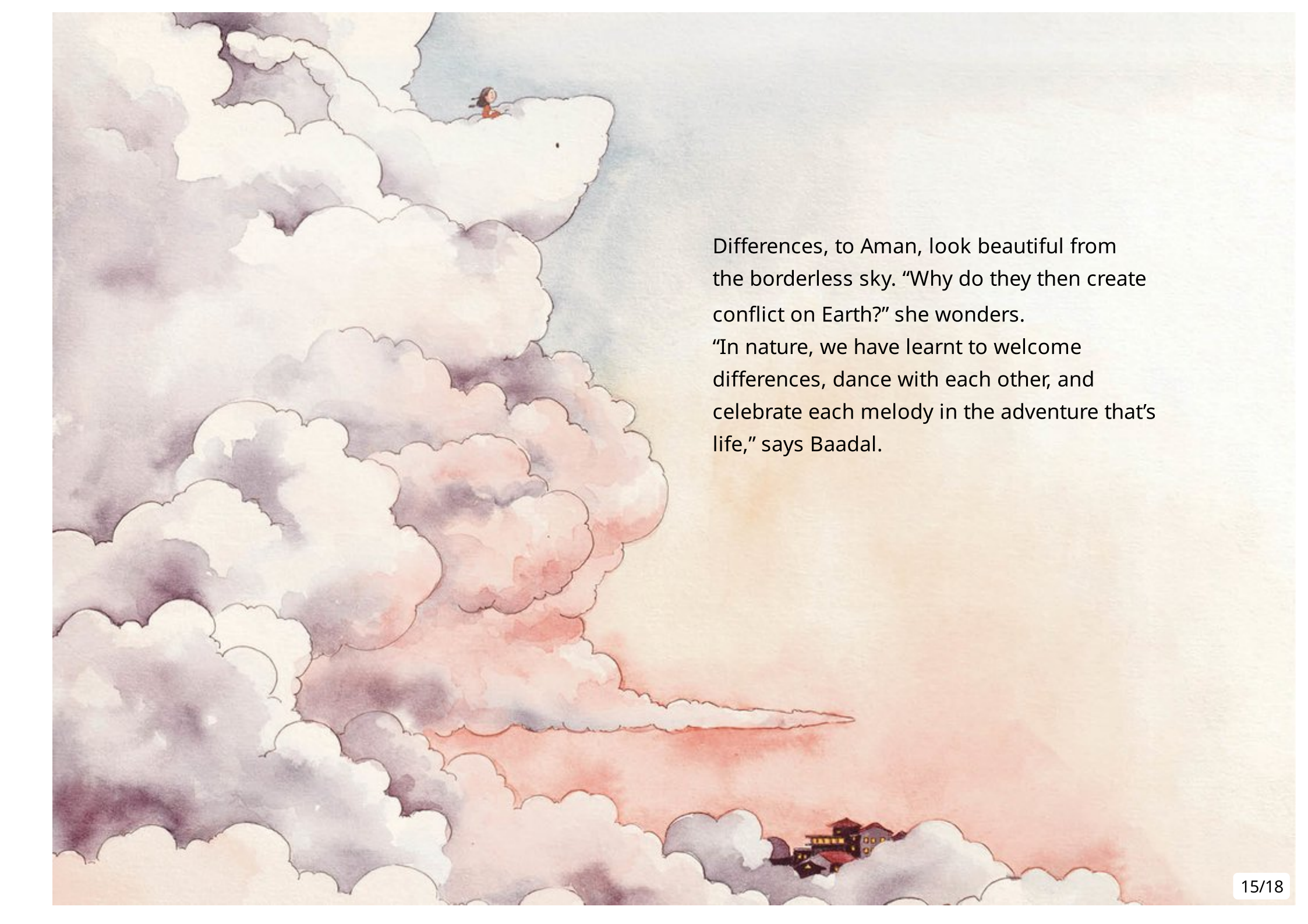
Rivers cut through mountains and valleys.
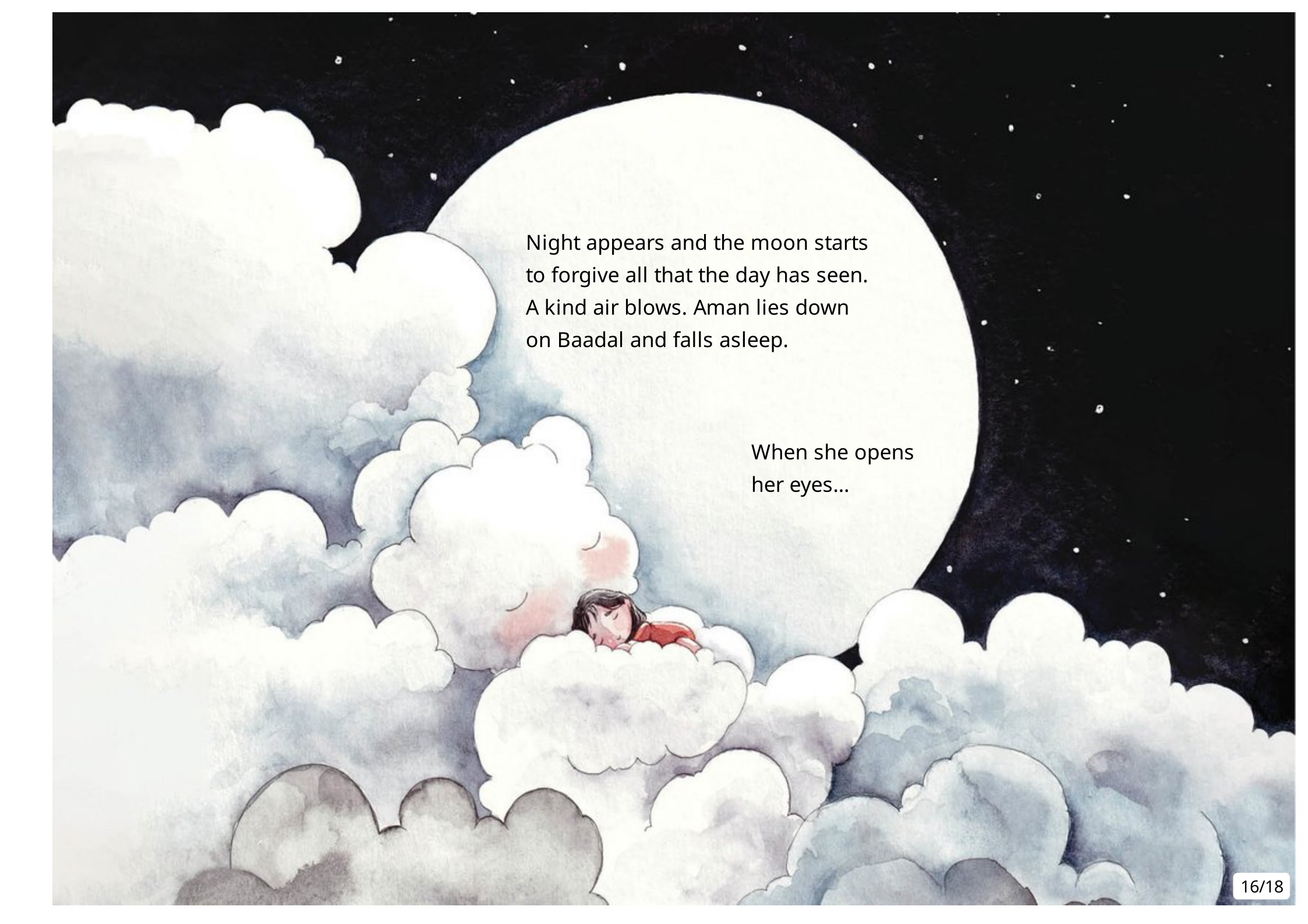But they generate life everywhere they flow.

Then trees appear. Different shapes.
Different colours. Different histories.
Yet together, they become a forest.

Differences, to Aman, look beautiful from the borderless sky. "Why do they then create conflict on Earth?" she wonders.
"In nature, we have learnt to welcome differences, dance with each other, and celebrate each melody in the adventure that's life," says Baadal.

Night appears and the moon starts
to forgive all that the day has seen.
A kind air blows. Aman lies down
on Baadal and falls asleep.

When she opens
her eyes...

Abba is in front of her. "You are awake!
I've been so worried."
Aman is in a hospital and there are many others,
just like her, all hurt from that horrific sound.
"Here, have some halwa, my wandering princess,"
says Abba. "There is no wound that these gentle
layers of kindness cannot heal."
Aman looks out of the window. A cloud passes by.
She bites into the halwa. It melts in her mouth,
but she can feel it in her heart.

"Abba, it's time for change," Aman says.
"Don't we all live under the same sky?
It is time we learnt to dream and
dance under the same sky,
and write our shared stories
under the same sky."

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Dreaming Under the Same Sky
(English)

Parvat, Aman's home, is sometimes at war, sometimes at peace. After an attack, Aman is taken to safety by Baadal. Together they embark on a journey to discover what the many meanings of peace could be.

This is a Level 4 book for children who can read fluently and with confidence.