



Nilu and Zubeida

Author: Asuma Noor

Illustrator: Asuma Noor

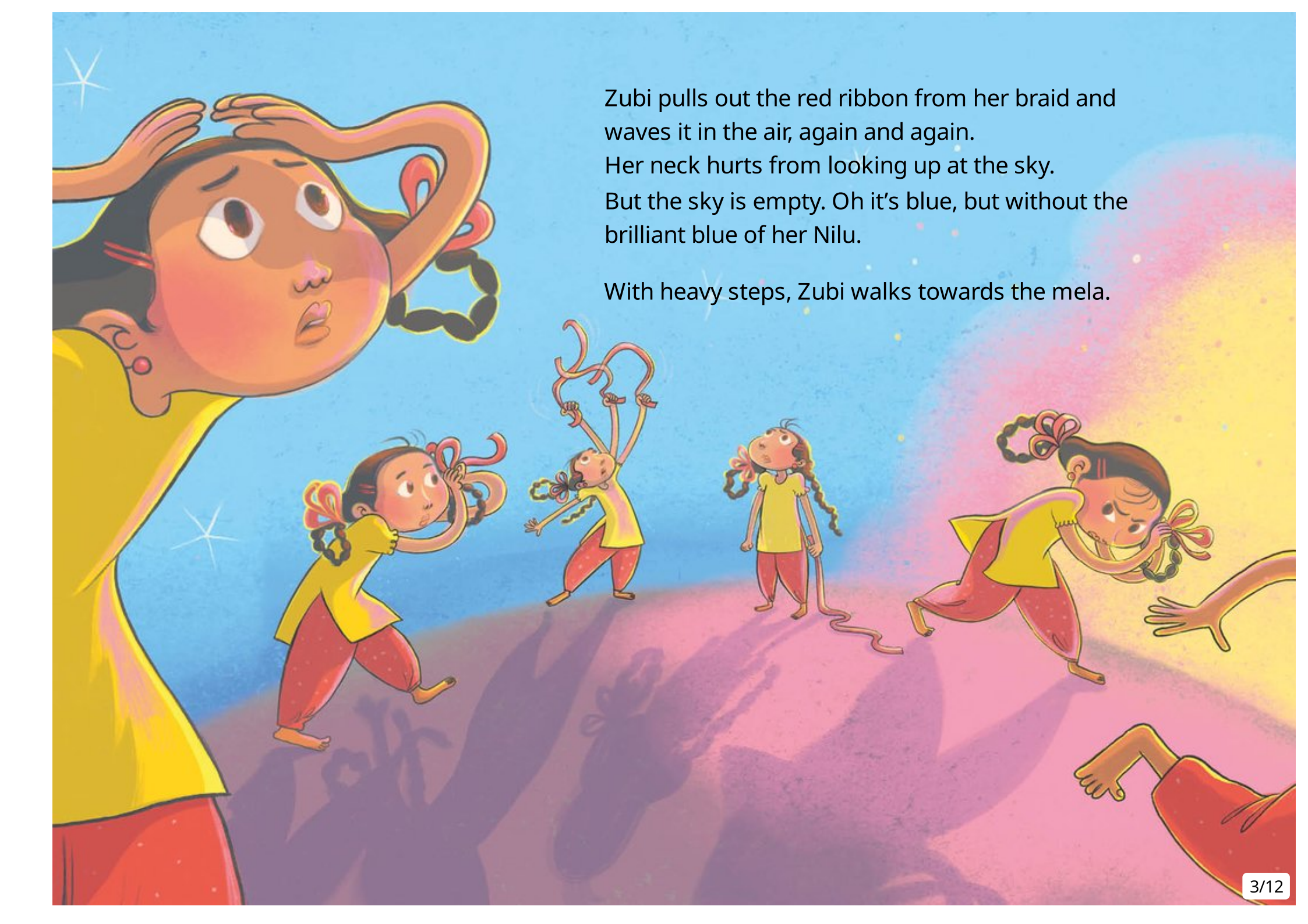
Translator: Salil Chaturvedi

Level 3

Zubeida's blue friend is nowhere to be seen, and it is the very last day of the mela! Tomorrow, Nilu leaves for another country. It is their last meeting of the season.


Has Nilu left without meeting her Zubi?
How could she do that!





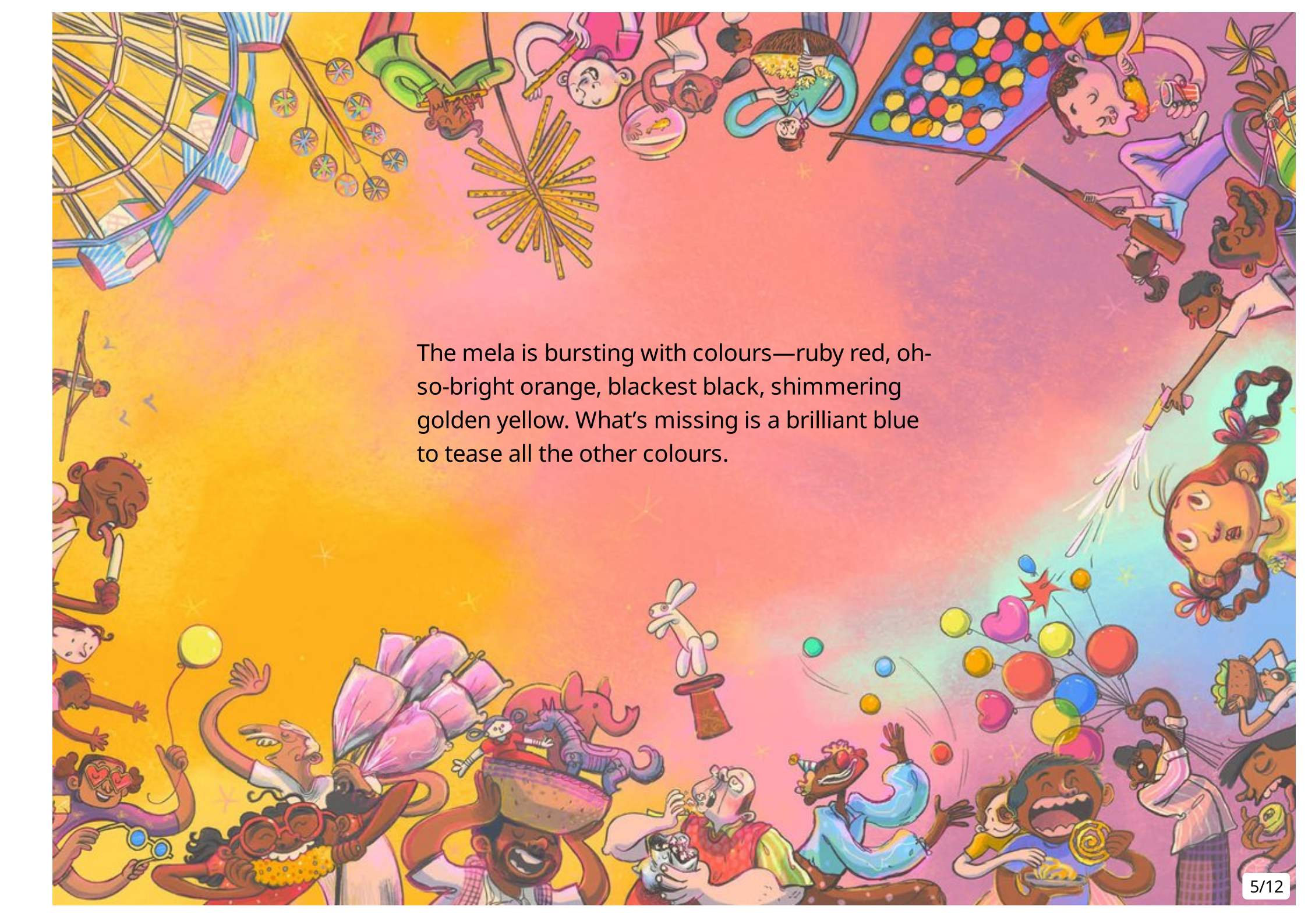
Zubi pulls out the red ribbon from her braid and waves it in the air, again and again. Her neck hurts from looking up at the sky. But the sky is empty. Oh it's blue, but without the brilliant blue of her Nilu.

With heavy steps, Zubi walks towards the mela.



Yellow jalebis, crisp imarti, new golgappa flavours, mouth-watering rabdi and kulfi, and Nilu's absolute favourite—corn, and, of course, popcorn for Zubi! They had planned to gobble it all. Then they would play the new, melodious flute and hum together tons of tunes.

But now what? The silly-billy has left her alone! Zubi's tears are bitter with rage and she's lost all taste for sweets.



The mela is bursting with colours—ruby red, oh-so-bright orange, blackest black, shimmering golden yellow. What's missing is a brilliant blue to tease all the other colours.



The Giant Wheel is turning. Zubi's stomach is churning, with worry. Nilu is her best friend, so why hasn't she come?

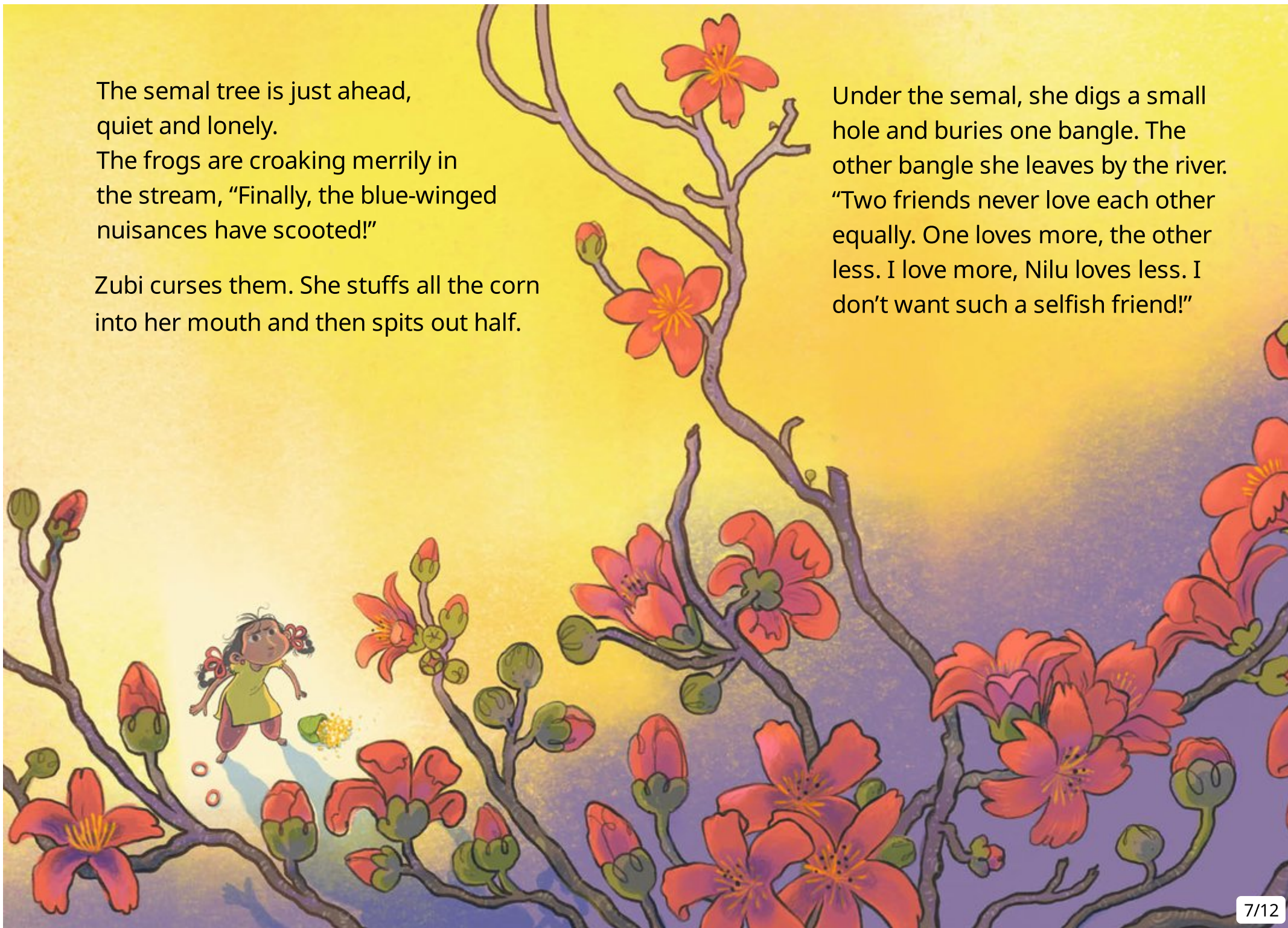
Is she anxious about going away? Did Nilu's uncle stop her from making friends with humans? Or did a hunter... oh no!

Zubi gets off the Giant Wheel and runs. She wraps corn in a leaf and buys two red lac bangles. A bangle for her and a bangle for Nilu.

The semal tree is just ahead,
quiet and lonely.
The frogs are croaking merrily in
the stream, "Finally, the blue-winged
nuisances have scooted!"

Zubi curses them. She stuffs all the corn
into her mouth and then spits out half.

Under the semal, she digs a small
hole and buries one bangle. The
other bangle she leaves by the river.
"Two friends never love each other
equally. One loves more, the other
less. I love more, Nilu loves less. I
don't want such a selfish friend!"



At home, Dadi asks, "Did you eat something at the mela, Zubeida?"

Zubi wipes her tears, rubs her nose and darts straight into her room.

She flies, like Nilu, and falls on her bed, so no one can see her tears and her swollen face.



The pillow turns into a lake of Zubi's tears. She lifts her nose.

Nilu is sitting at the window! She is holding something red in her beak. She has come for Zubi.

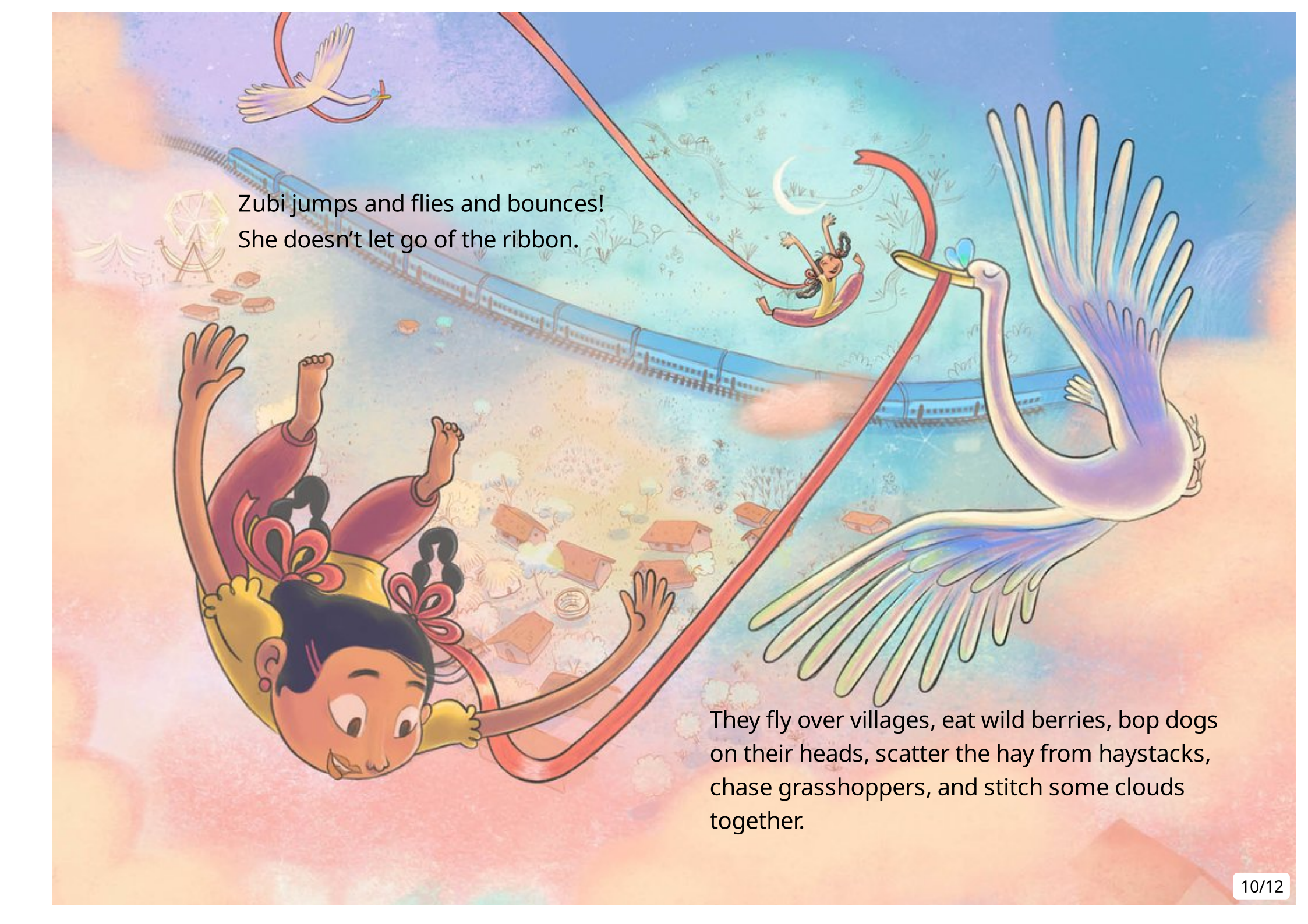




Zubi leaps, Nilu flies!

The red ribbon in her mouth, Nilu chases
Zubi for one last game.

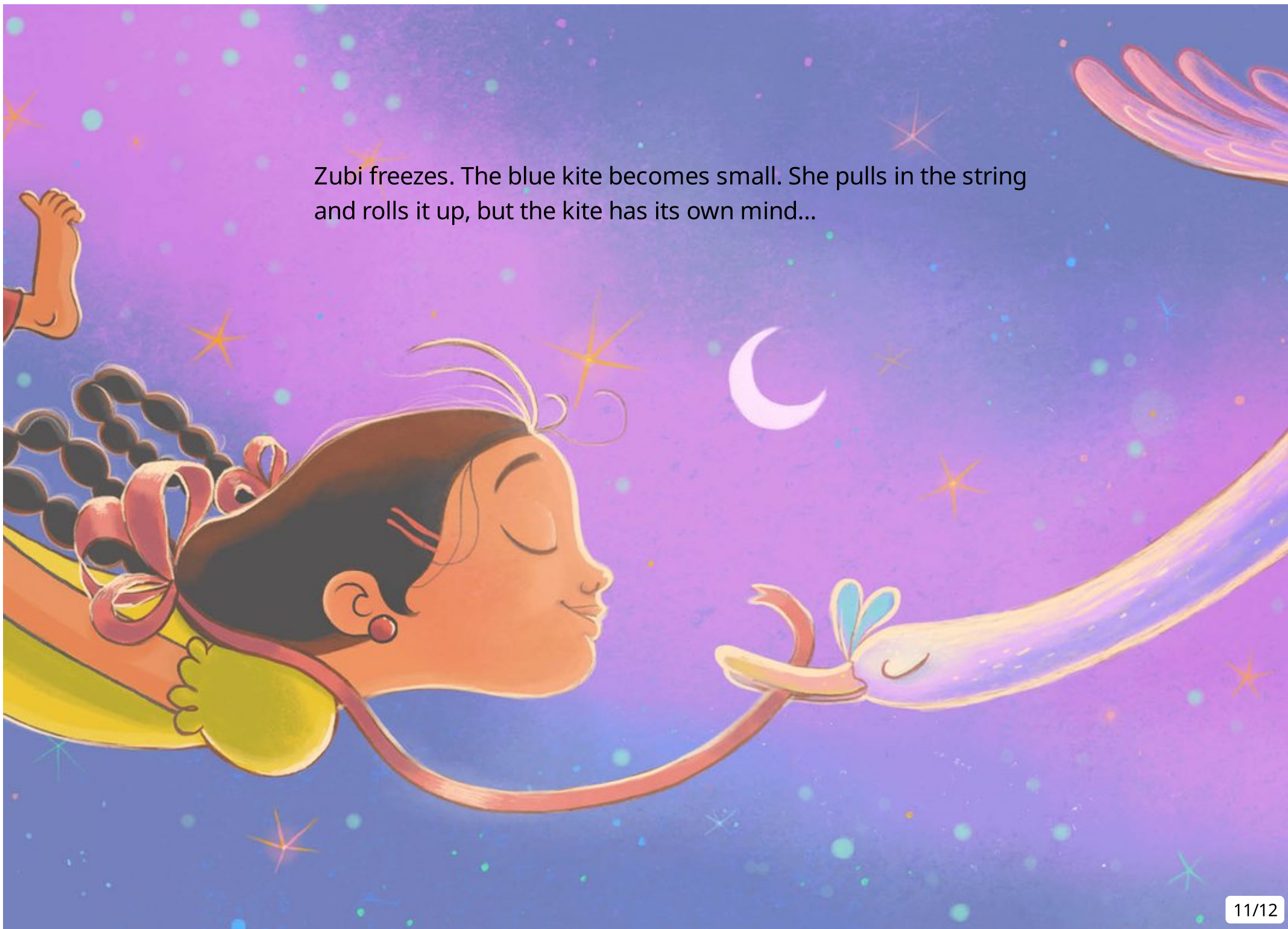
In the pale blue sky, a brilliant blue, a long
dangling line of such a red hue, and on the
ground, laughing, Zubi yoo-hoo.



Zubi jumps and flies and bounces!
She doesn't let go of the ribbon.

They fly over villages, eat wild berries, bop dogs
on their heads, scatter the hay from haystacks,
chase grasshoppers, and stitch some clouds
together.

Zubi freezes. The blue kite becomes small. She pulls in the string and rolls it up, but the kite has its own mind...



Who knows, maybe Nilu will come again next year to celebrate the summer holidays with Zubi?



Story Attribution:

This story: Nilu and Zubeida is translated by [Salil Chaturvedi](#). The © for this translation lies with Pratham Books, 2024. Some rights reserved. Released under CC BY 4.0 license. Based on Original story: 'नीलू की जुबैदा', by [Asuma Noor](#). © Pratham Books, 2024. Some rights reserved. Released under CC BY 4.0 license.

Other Credits:

'Nilu and Zubeida' has been published on StoryWeaver by Pratham Books. The development of this book has been supported by 'P.A.N.I. Foundation'. www.prathambooks.org.

Images Attributions:

Cover page: [Girl jumping in the sky with an imaginary bird in the background](#), by [Asuma Noor](#) © Pratham Books, 2024. Some rights reserved. Released under CC BY 4.0 license. Page 2: [People enjoying a fair](#), by [Asuma Noor](#) © Pratham Books, 2024. Some rights reserved. Released under CC BY 4.0 license. Page 3: [A girl looking up in the sky while untying her ribbon](#), by [Asuma Noor](#) © Pratham Books, 2024. Some rights reserved. Released under CC BY 4.0 license. Page 4: [Scenes from a crowded fair](#), by [Asuma Noor](#) © Pratham Books, 2024. Some rights reserved. Released under CC BY 4.0 license. Page 5: [Scenes from a crowded fair](#), by [Asuma Noor](#) © Pratham Books, 2024. Some rights reserved. Released under CC BY 4.0 license. Page 6: [Girl looking worried, holding a pack of popcorn and bangles](#), by [Asuma Noor](#) © Pratham Books, 2024. Some rights reserved. Released under CC BY 4.0 license. Page 7: [A girl looking up at a silk cotton tree](#), by [Asuma Noor](#) © Pratham Books, 2024. Some rights reserved. Released under CC BY 4.0 license. Page 8: [A sad girl looking at an imaginary bird waiting for her at her bedroom window](#), by [Asuma Noor](#) © Pratham Books, 2024. Some rights reserved. Released under CC BY 4.0 license. Page 9: [Girl running after an imaginary bird holding a ribbon](#), by [Asuma Noor](#) © Pratham Books, 2024. Some rights reserved. Released under CC BY 4.0 license. Page 10: [A girl and an imaginary bird happily flying in the sky among the clouds](#), by [Asuma Noor](#) © Pratham Books, 2024. Some rights reserved. Released under CC BY 4.0 license.

Disclaimer: https://www.storyweaver.org.in/terms_and_conditions



Some rights reserved. This book is CC-BY-4.0 licensed. You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, all without asking permission. For full terms of use and attribution, <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



This book was made possible by Pratham Books' StoryWeaver platform. Content under Creative Commons licenses can be downloaded, translated and can even be used to create new stories - provided you give appropriate credit, and indicate if changes were made. To know more about this, and the full terms of use and attribution, please visit the following [link](#).

Images Attributions:

Page 11: [A girl and an imaginary bird looking at each other](#), by [Asuma Noor](#) © Pratham Books, 2024. Some rights reserved. Released under CC BY 4.0 license. Page 12: [A girl looking out of her window for an imaginary bird](#), by [Asuma Noor](#) © Pratham Books, 2024. Some rights reserved. Released under CC BY 4.0 license. Page 15: [Scenes from a crowded fair](#), by [Asuma Noor](#) © Pratham Books, 2024. Some rights reserved. Released under CC BY 4.0 license.

Disclaimer: https://www.storyweaver.org.in/terms_and_conditions



Some rights reserved. This book is CC-BY-4.0 licensed. You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, all without asking permission. For full terms of use and attribution, <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Nilu and Zubeida

(English)

It's the last day of the mela. Nilu and Zubeida had plans to feast on jalebis, imarti and popcorn. But Nilu is nowhere to be seen. Did she really leave Zubi without saying goodbye?

This is a Level 3 book for children who are ready to read on their own.



Pratham Books goes digital to weave a whole new chapter in the realm of multilingual children's stories. Knitting together children, authors, illustrators and publishers. Folding in teachers, and translators. To create a rich fabric of openly licensed multilingual stories for the children of India and the world. Our unique online platform, StoryWeaver, is a playground where children, parents, teachers and librarians can get creative. Come, start weaving today, and help us get a book in every child's hand!