



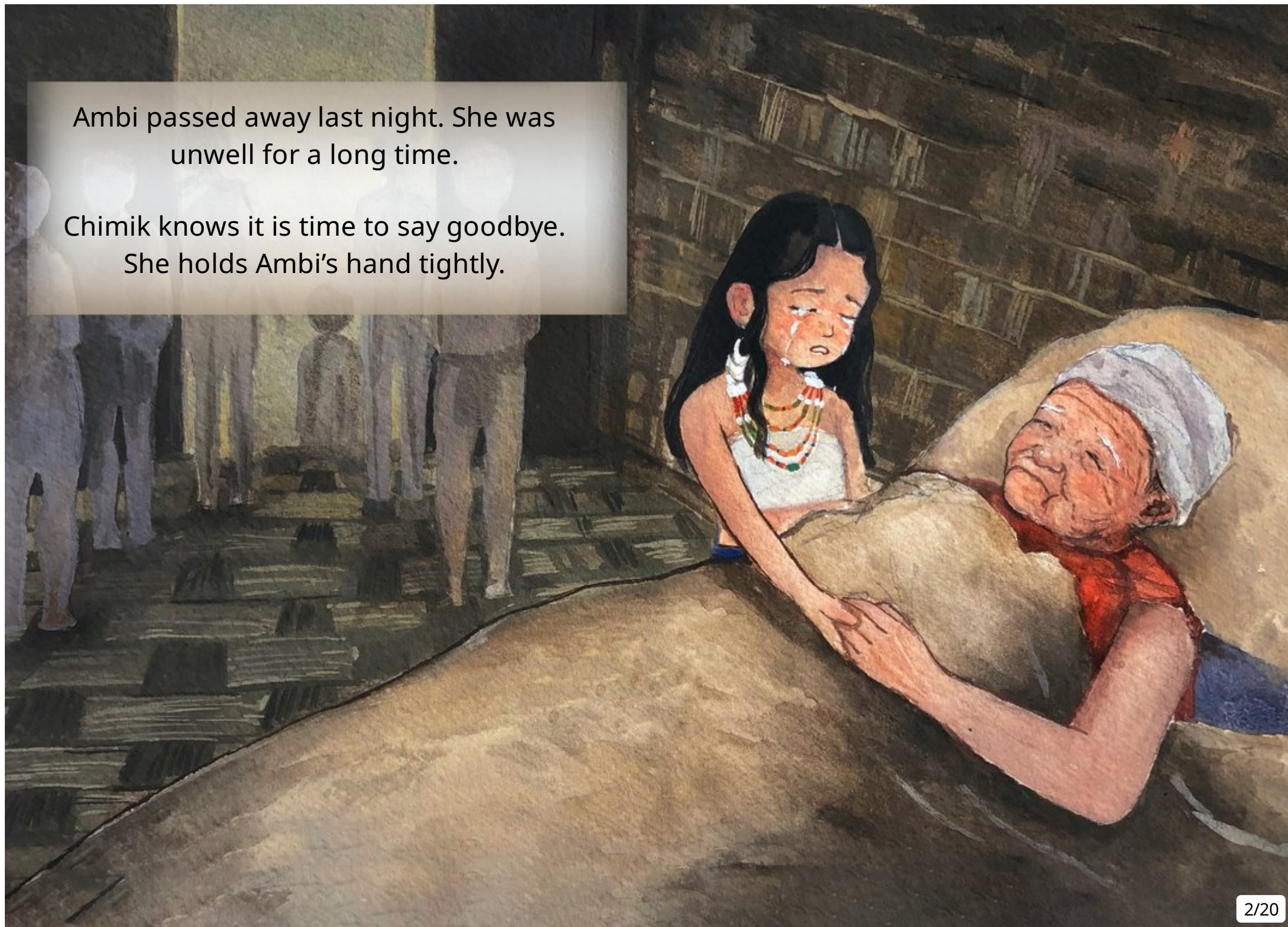
Ambi's Little Things

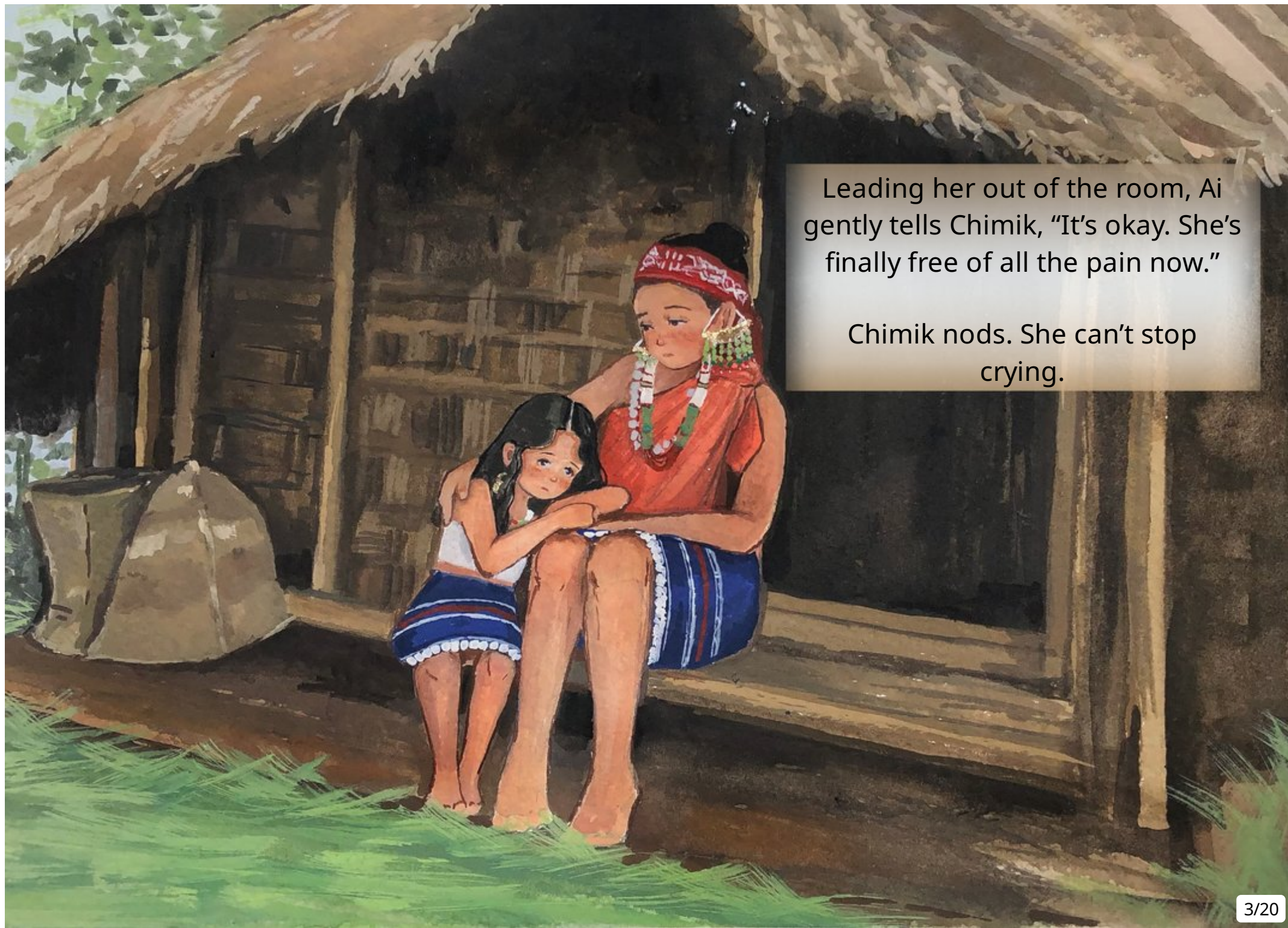
Author: Eleanor Sangma

Illustrator: Phaoniu Shio

Ambi passed away last night. She was unwell for a long time.

Chimik knows it is time to say goodbye. She holds Ambi's hand tightly.

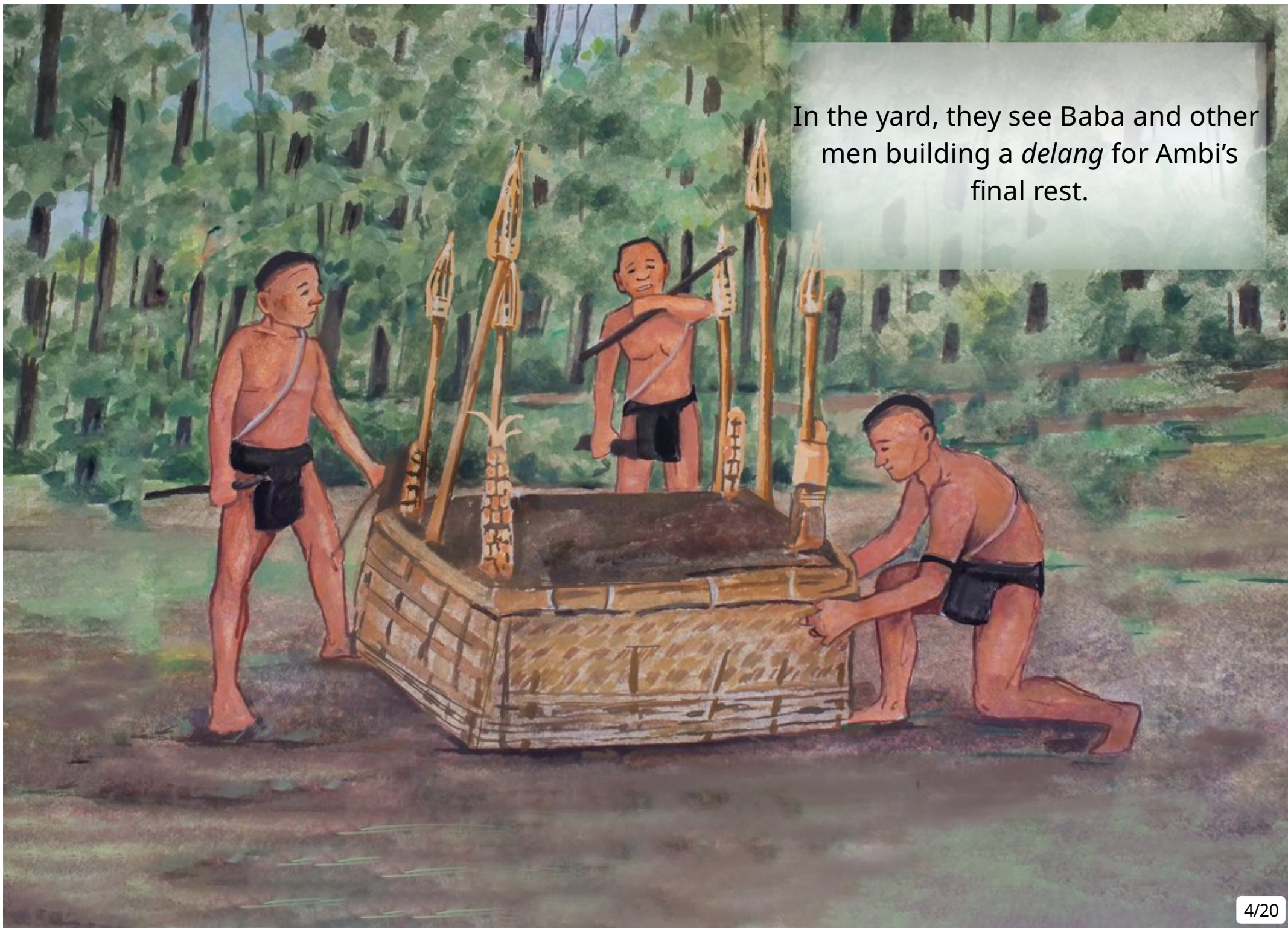




Leading her out of the room, Ai gently tells Chimik, "It's okay. She's finally free of all the pain now."

Chimik nods. She can't stop crying.

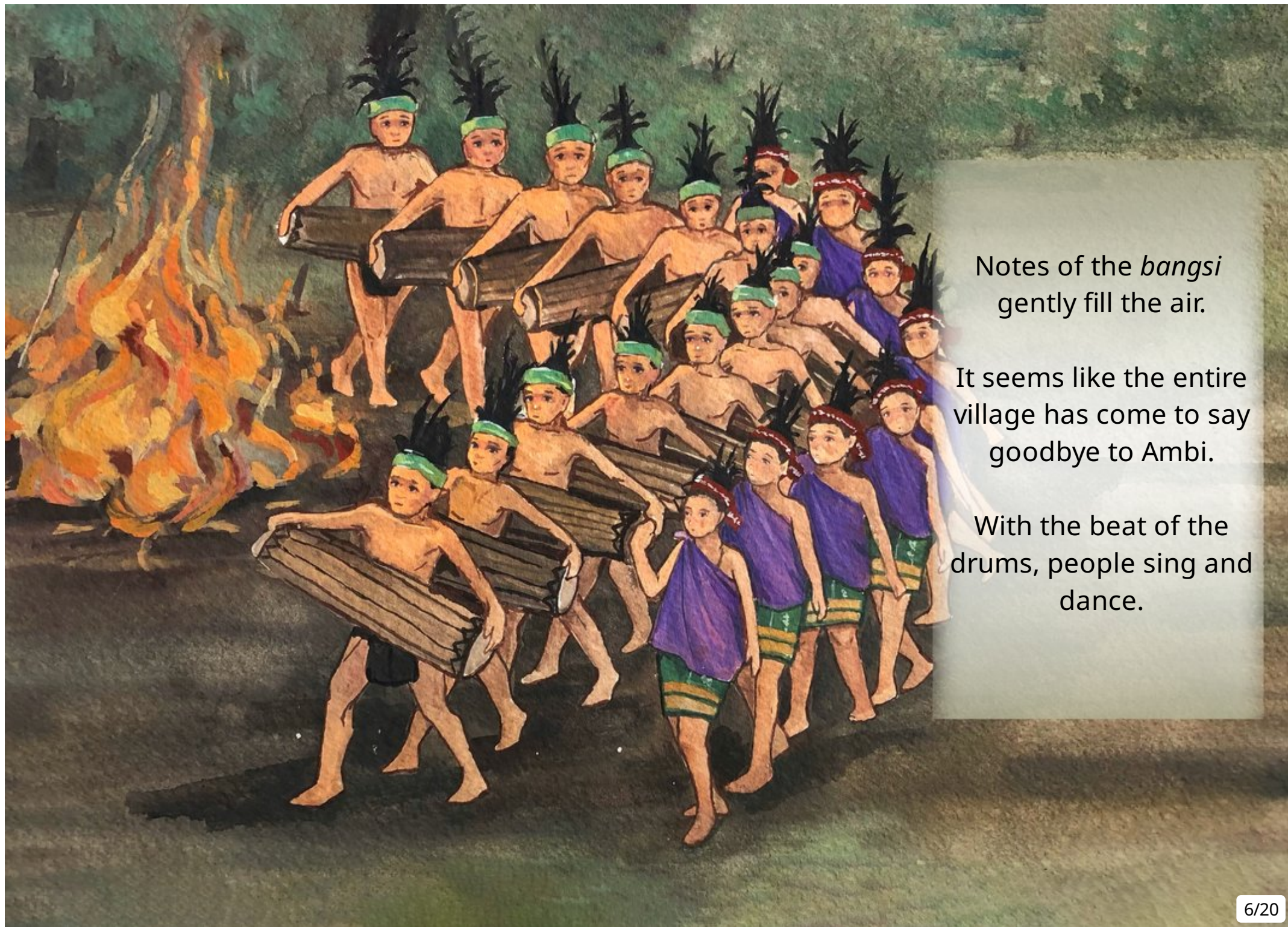
In the yard, they see Baba and other men building a *delang* for Ambi's final rest.



Baba brings out the fire as everyone gathers around the *delang*.



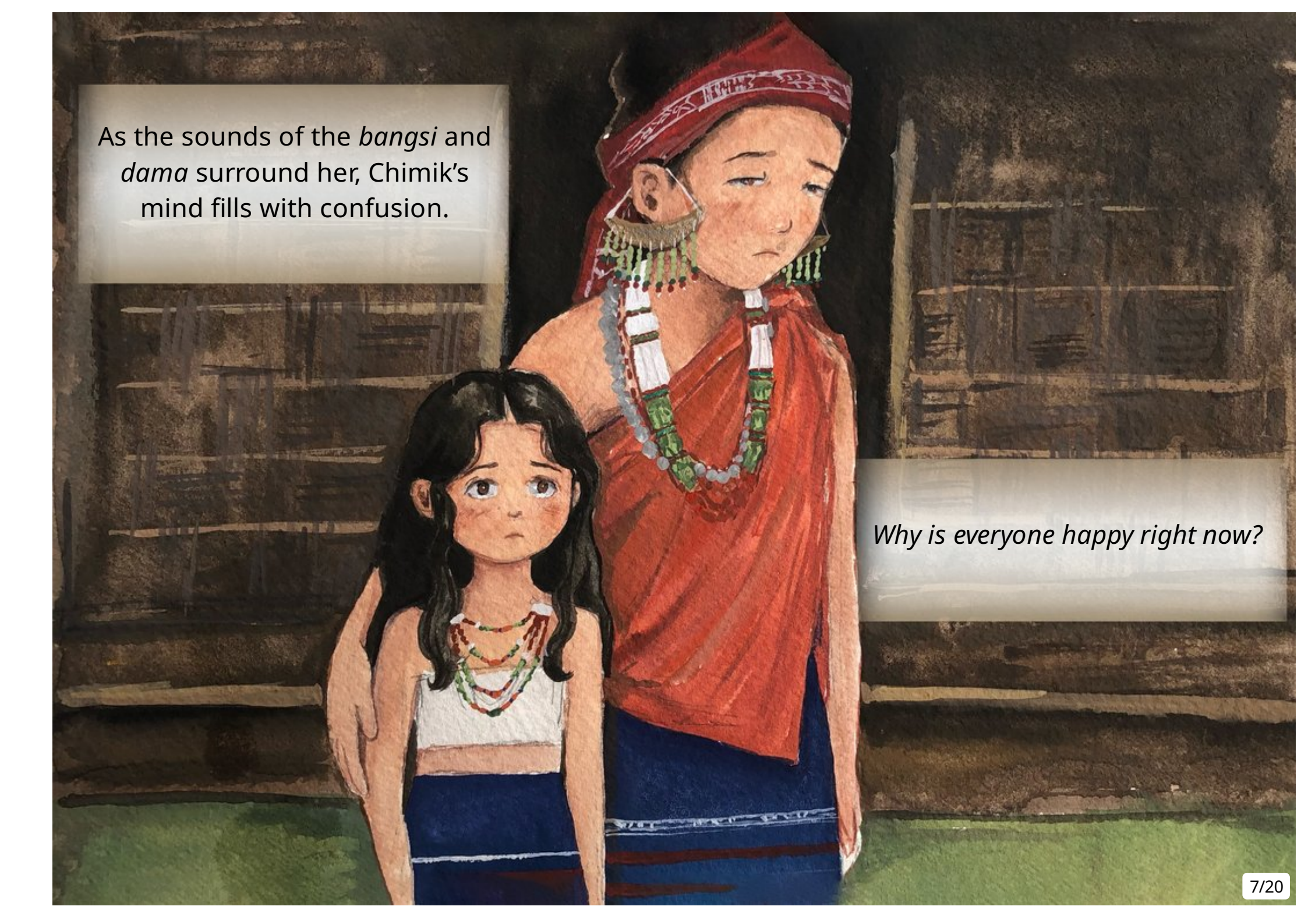
As the *delang* starts burning, Chimik holds Ai's hand tightly. She whispers, "Goodbye, Ambi."



Notes of the *bangsi*
gently fill the air.

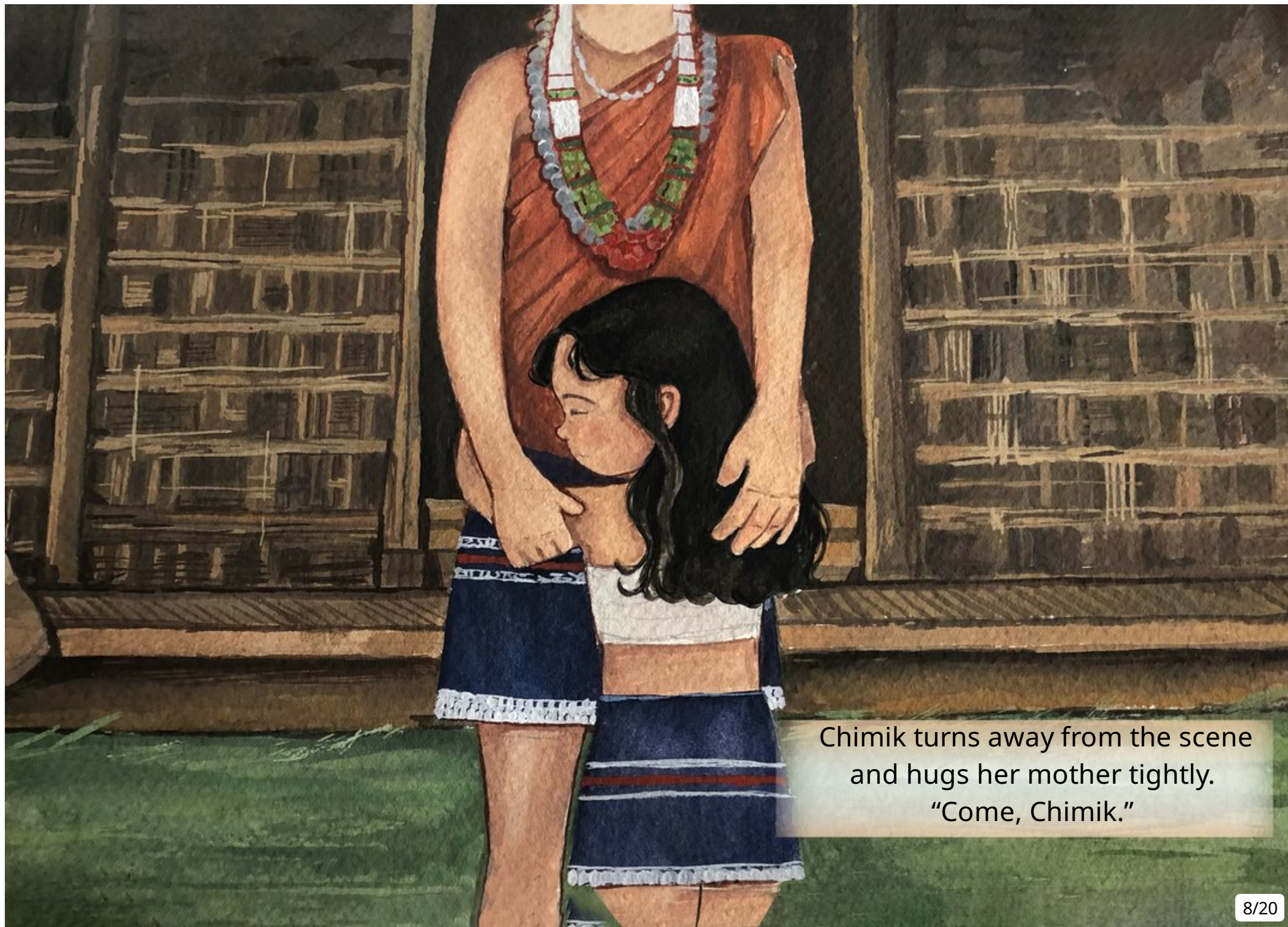
It seems like the entire
village has come to say
goodbye to Ambi.

With the beat of the
drums, people sing and
dance.

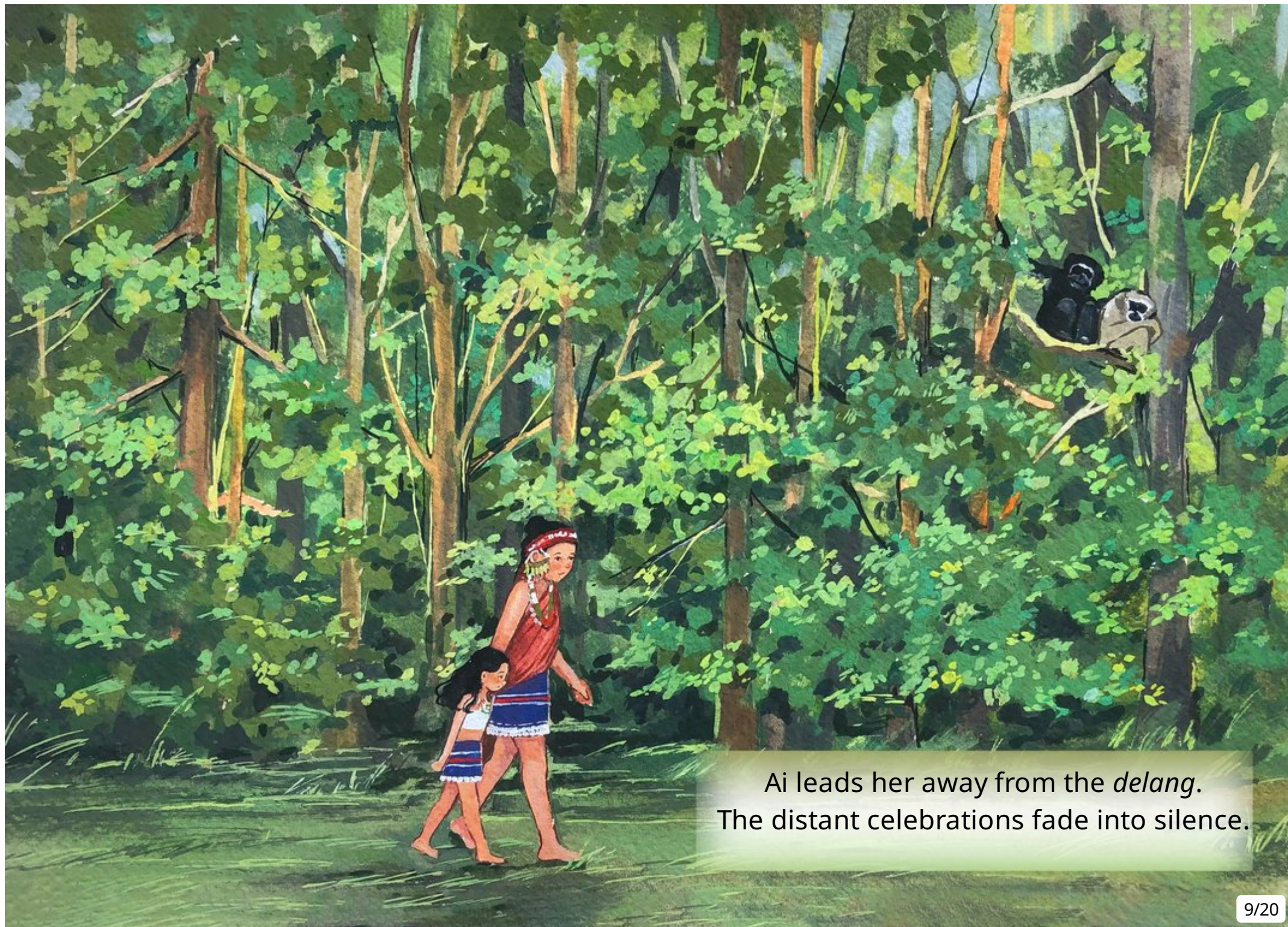


As the sounds of the *bangsi* and *dama* surround her, Chimik's mind fills with confusion.

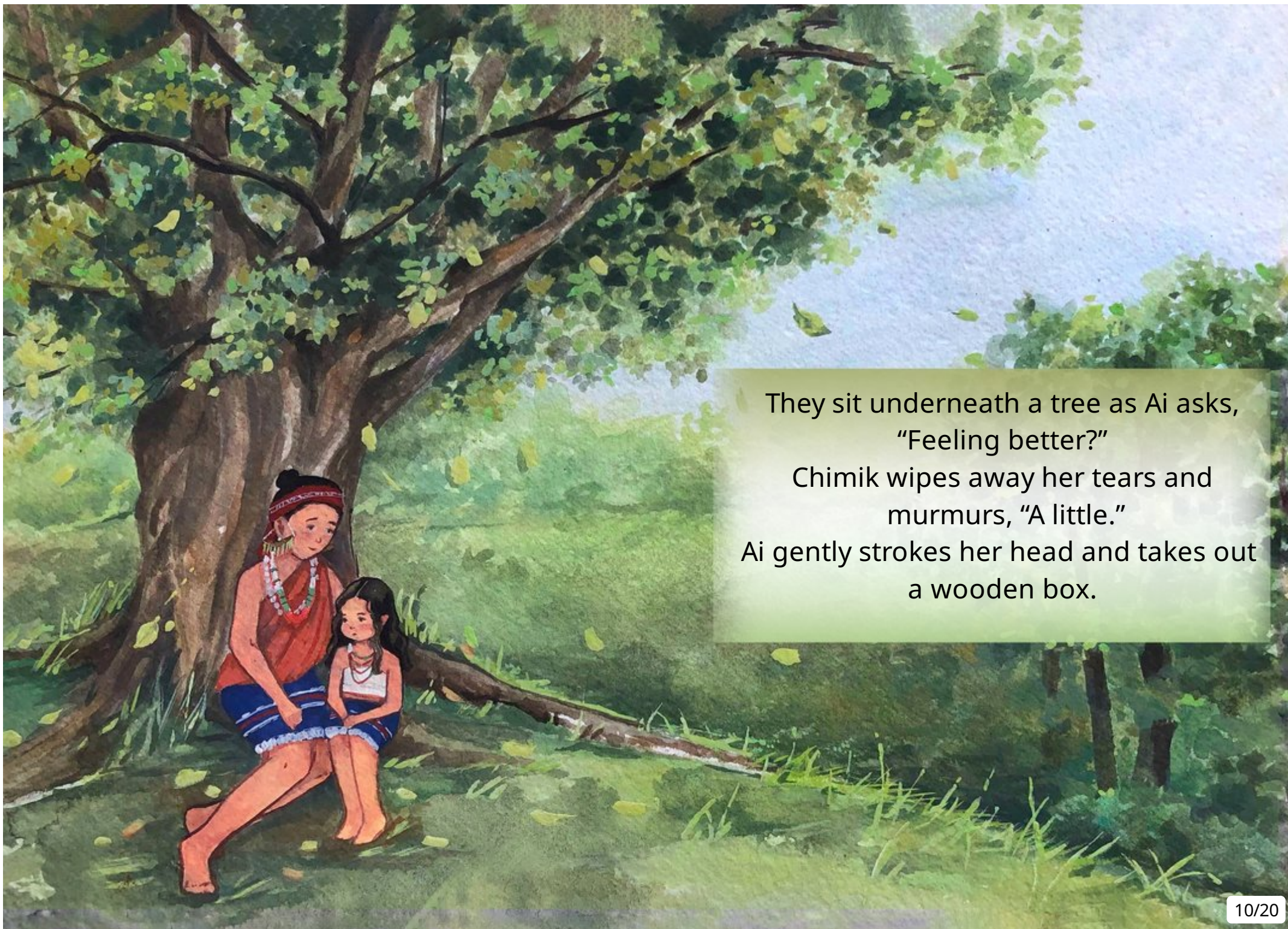
Why is everyone happy right now?



Chimik turns away from the scene
and hugs her mother tightly.
“Come, Chimik.”



Ai leads her away from the *delang*.
The distant celebrations fade into silence.




They sit underneath a tree as Ai asks,
"Feeling better?"
Chimik wipes away her tears and
murmurs, "A little."
Ai gently strokes her head and takes out
a wooden box.




Ai opens it and says, "Look what I got!"

Chimik looks inside the box curiously.


"Ambi's little things!"



"Ambi wore these bangles everyday!"




"These earrings were a gift from Atchu!"



Chimik unfolds a cloth. She is surprised to find clipped nails inside.

"Are these Ambi's nails?"



"Yes," Ai says. "Keeping Ambi's nails is a special way for us to remember her. We have done this since our great-great-grandmother's time!"

"But what are we going to do with them?"
"We're going to take them to the riverside so Ambi can be with nature before her spirit flies away," Ai gently says.

"We are keeping the rest, right?"

"Yes, we are. Ambi's little things will help us remember her."

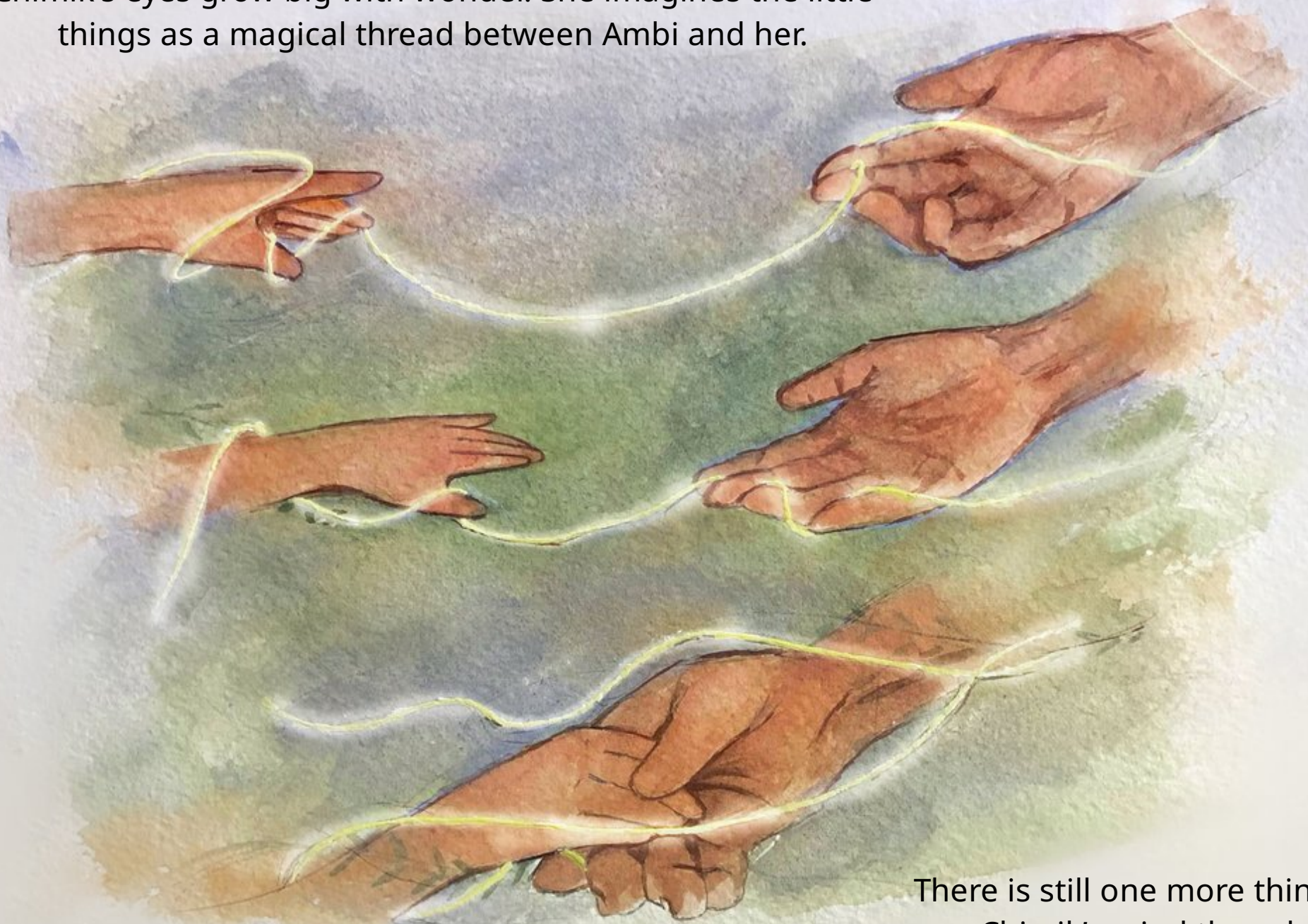


"But I'm not going to forget her!"

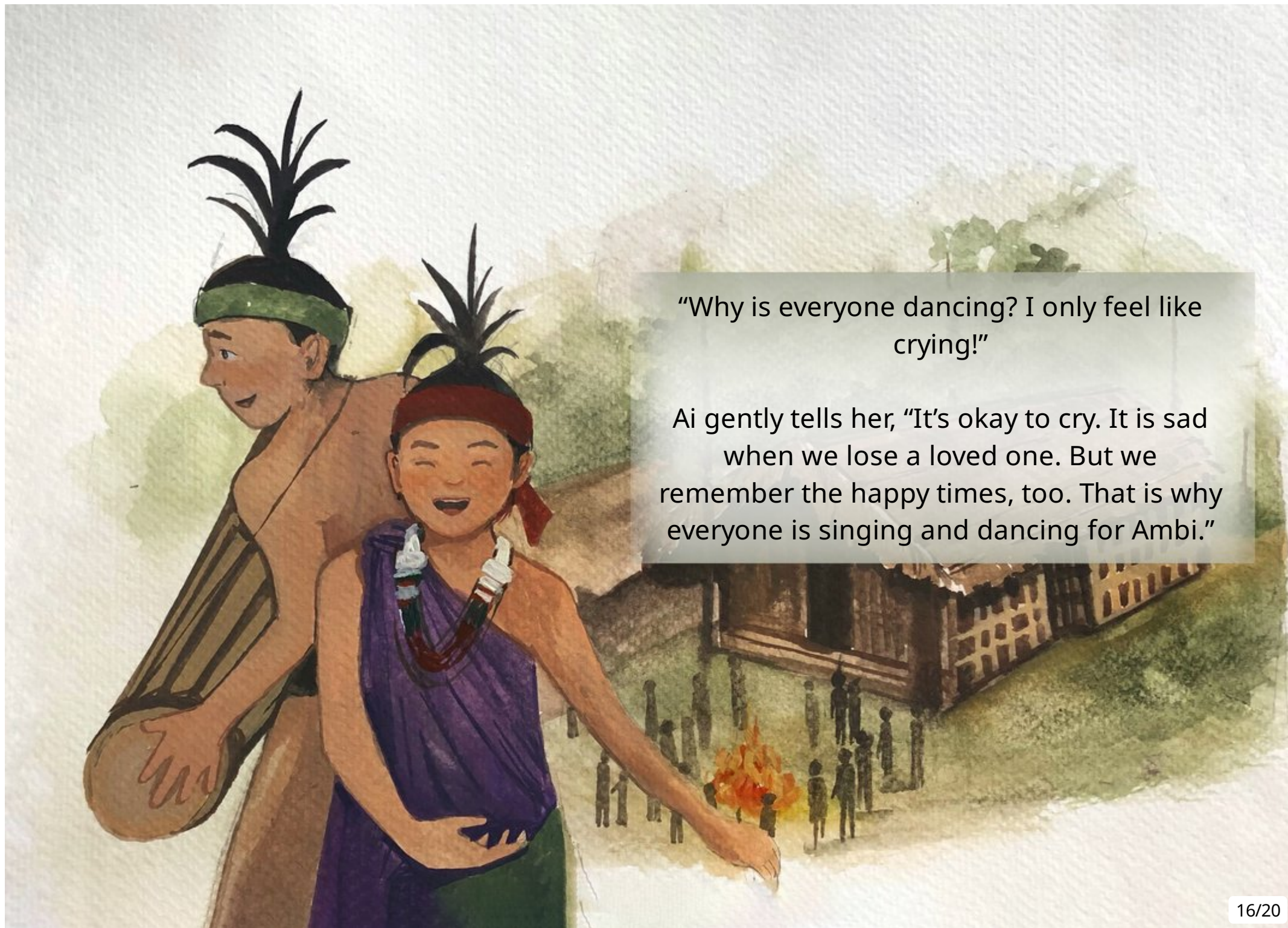
"I know, Chimik. But when we cannot see her or hug her, Ambi's little things will make us feel she's close to us."



Chimik's eyes grow big with wonder. She imagines the little things as a magical thread between Ambi and her.

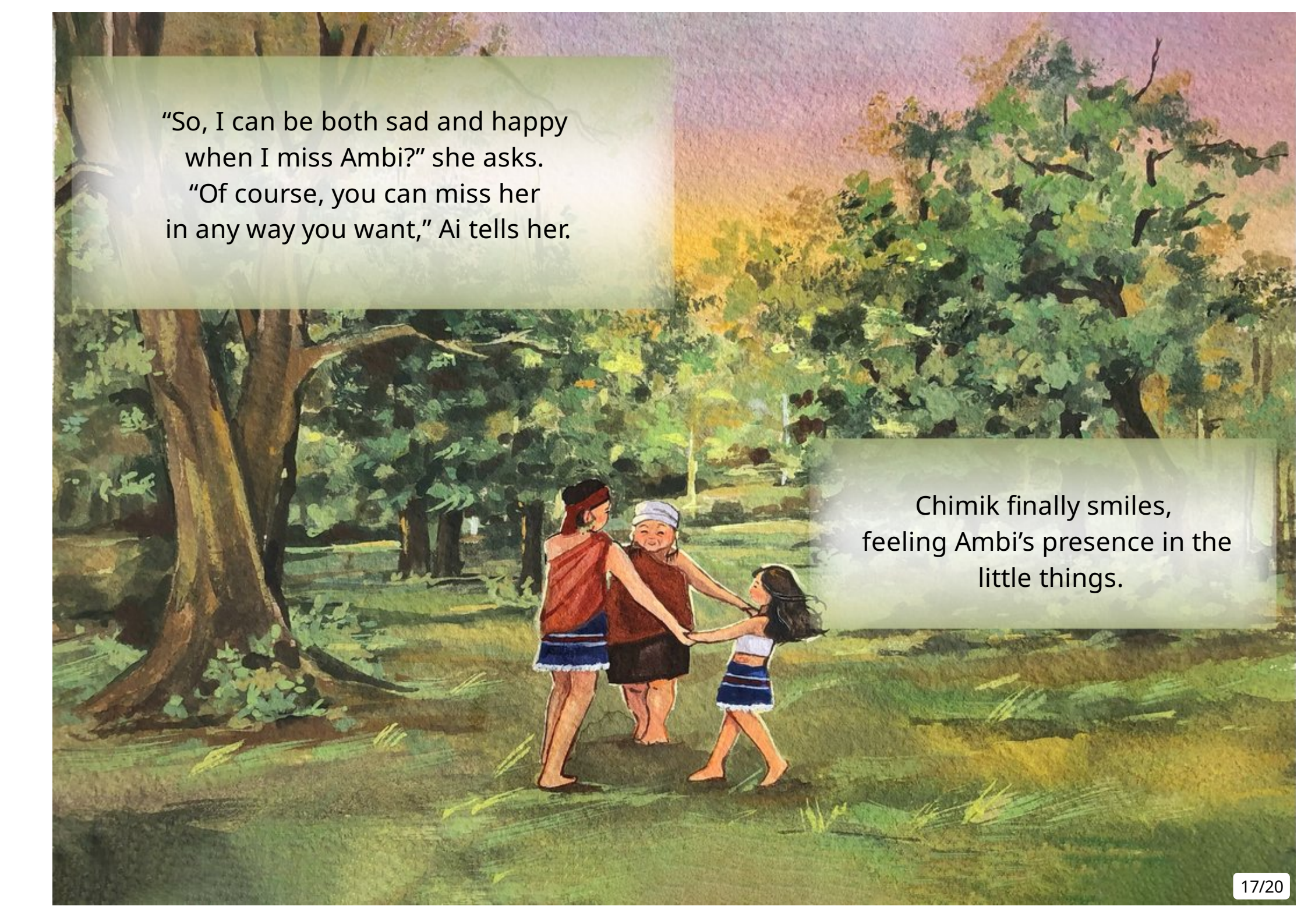


There is still one more thing on Chimik's mind though.



"Why is everyone dancing? I only feel like crying!"

Ai gently tells her, "It's okay to cry. It is sad when we lose a loved one. But we remember the happy times, too. That is why everyone is singing and dancing for Ambi."



"So, I can be both sad and happy
when I miss Ambi?" she asks.

"Of course, you can miss her
in any way you want," Ai tells her.

Chimik finally smiles,
feeling Ambi's presence in the
little things.

Activity



Happy



Surprised



Confused



Excited



Bored



Angry



Sad

How Do You Feel Today?
Could you point to the expression
that describes your feeling?
Would you also like to share
what's making you feel this way?

Glossary

Ambi: A Garo word for grandmother.

Delang: A wooden altar constructed during a funeral.

Baba: A Garo word for father.

Bangsi: A traditional Garo wooden flute.

Dama: A traditional drum of the Garos.

Atchu: A Garo word for grandfather.

About the Story

Ambi's Little Things is based on a special tradition that helps guide the spirits of loved ones to a peaceful rest. When someone passes away, their nails are lovingly trimmed, wrapped in a soft cloth or placed in a box, and taken to the riverside. This heartfelt act is believed to make the spirit happy and helps them find their way to eternal rest.

This fictionalised story is based on a tradition that was practised at Emangre Village in the Garo Hills, Meghalaya. Special thanks to Dezhilbarth R Marak for narrating this almost-forgotten practice.

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Ambi's Little Things

(English)

Join Chimik and her mother on a heartfelt journey of love, laughter, and tears. When they lose someone dear, they find courage and joy in the smallest things. Together they dance, sing, and celebrate life, even as they say goodbye.

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



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