

Boo!

When My Sister Died



Richa Jha and Gautam Benegal

MEDICAL +

YAZDI BAKERY AND STORES
ESTABLISHED 1921

TONY'S GARAGE
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Boo!

When My Sister Died



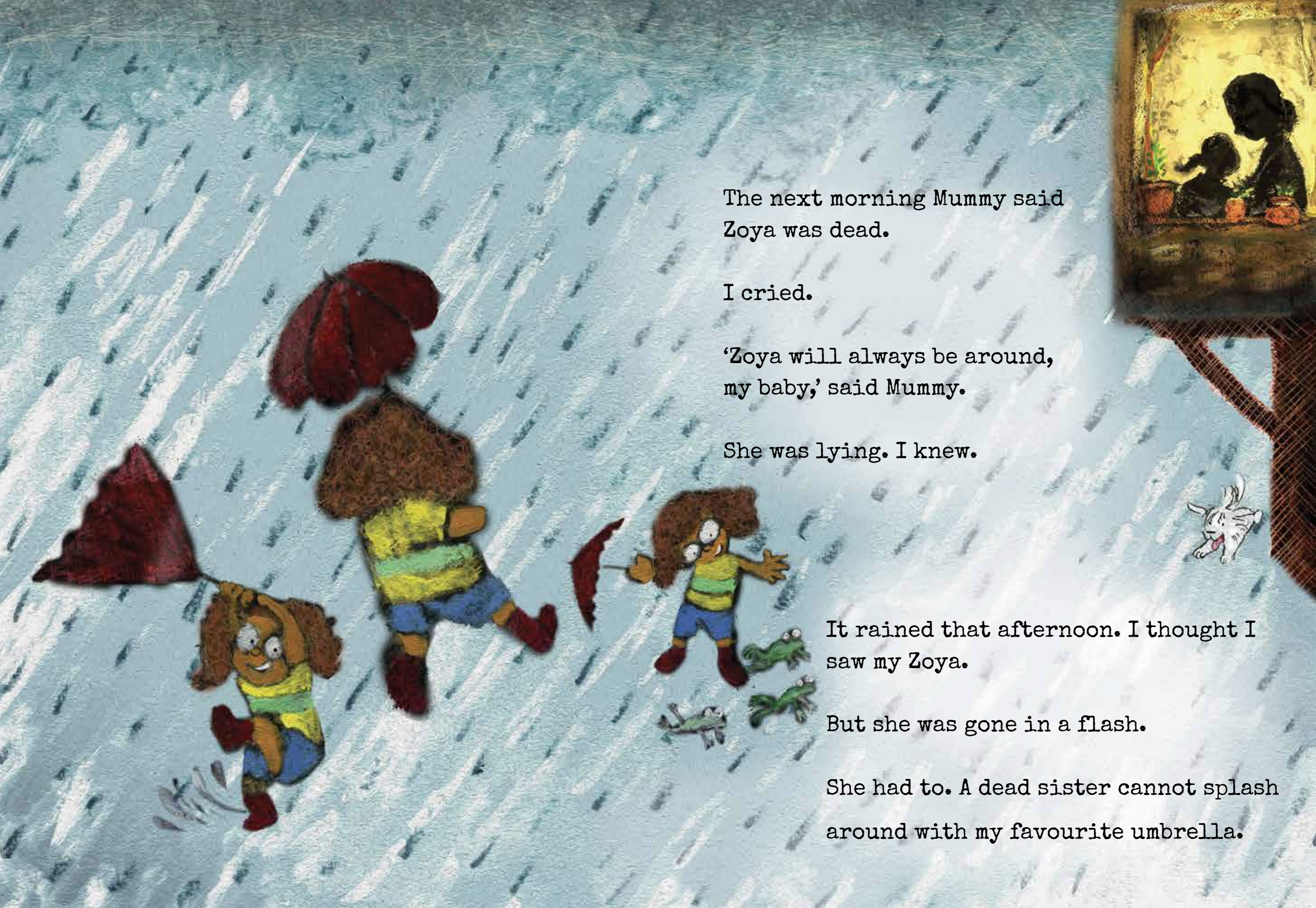
Richa Jha and Gautam Benegal



PICKLE YOLK BOOKS

The night my sister Zoya was away at the hospital, I dreamt of her.





The next morning Mummy said
Zoya was dead.

I cried.

‘Zoya will always be around,
my baby,’ said Mummy.

She was lying. I knew.

It rained that afternoon. I thought I
saw my Zoya.

But she was gone in a flash.

She had to. A dead sister cannot splash
around with my favourite umbrella.

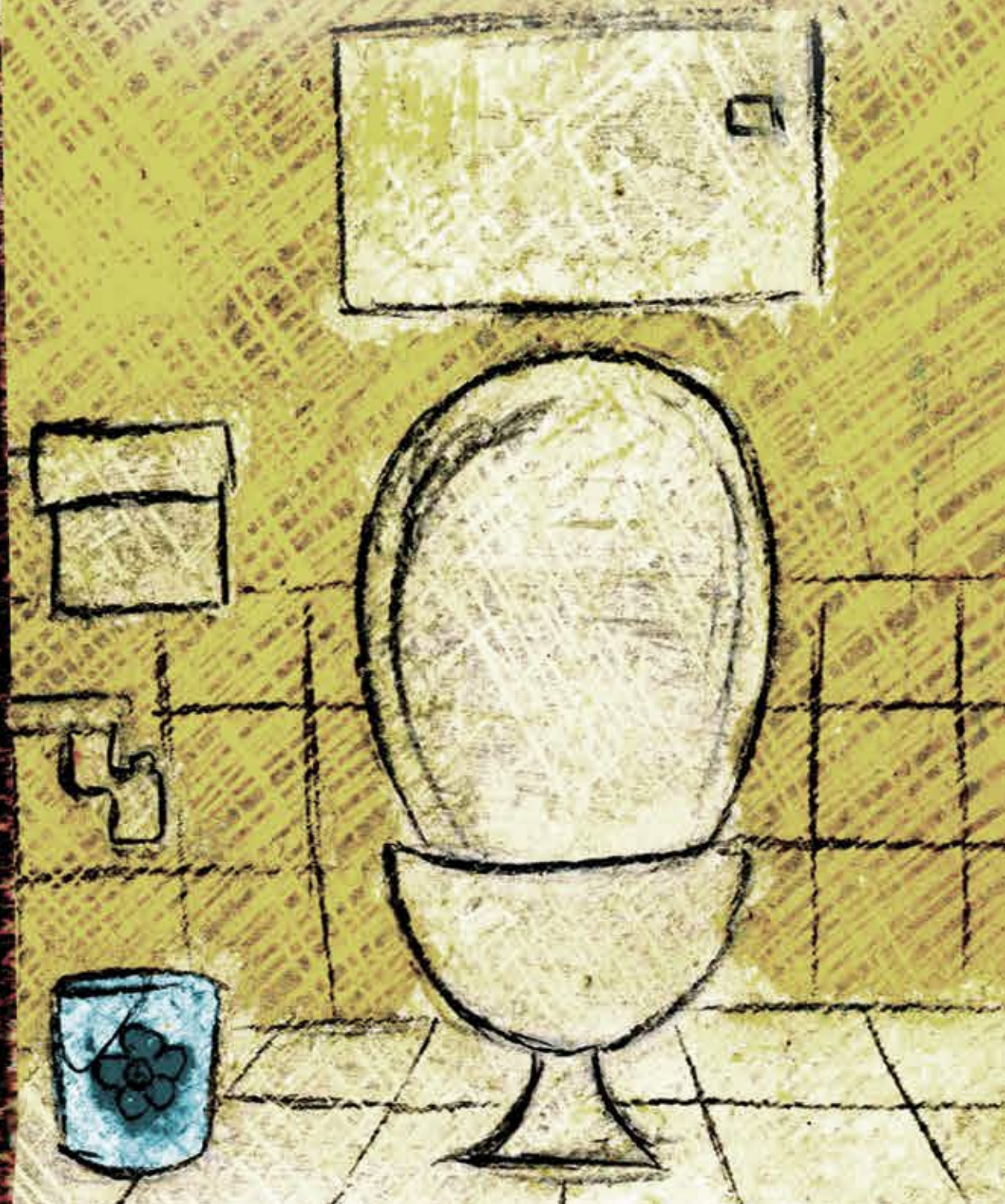
Or steal idlis from my plate.



Or BOO! me back.



Not even at our secret BOO! corner at school.





Everything became QUIET.

Mummy said Zoya was around, always by our side.

It was a lie, again. I knew.

Every night, I was scared Mummy and Bruno would leave me and go to her.

'Don't ever do it, Bruno,' I said to him one day.

Bruno promised.



A few weeks later, Zoya's best friend Dhara came home. I told her I was busy with homework.

I made that up; I didn't want her to touch Zoya's things.



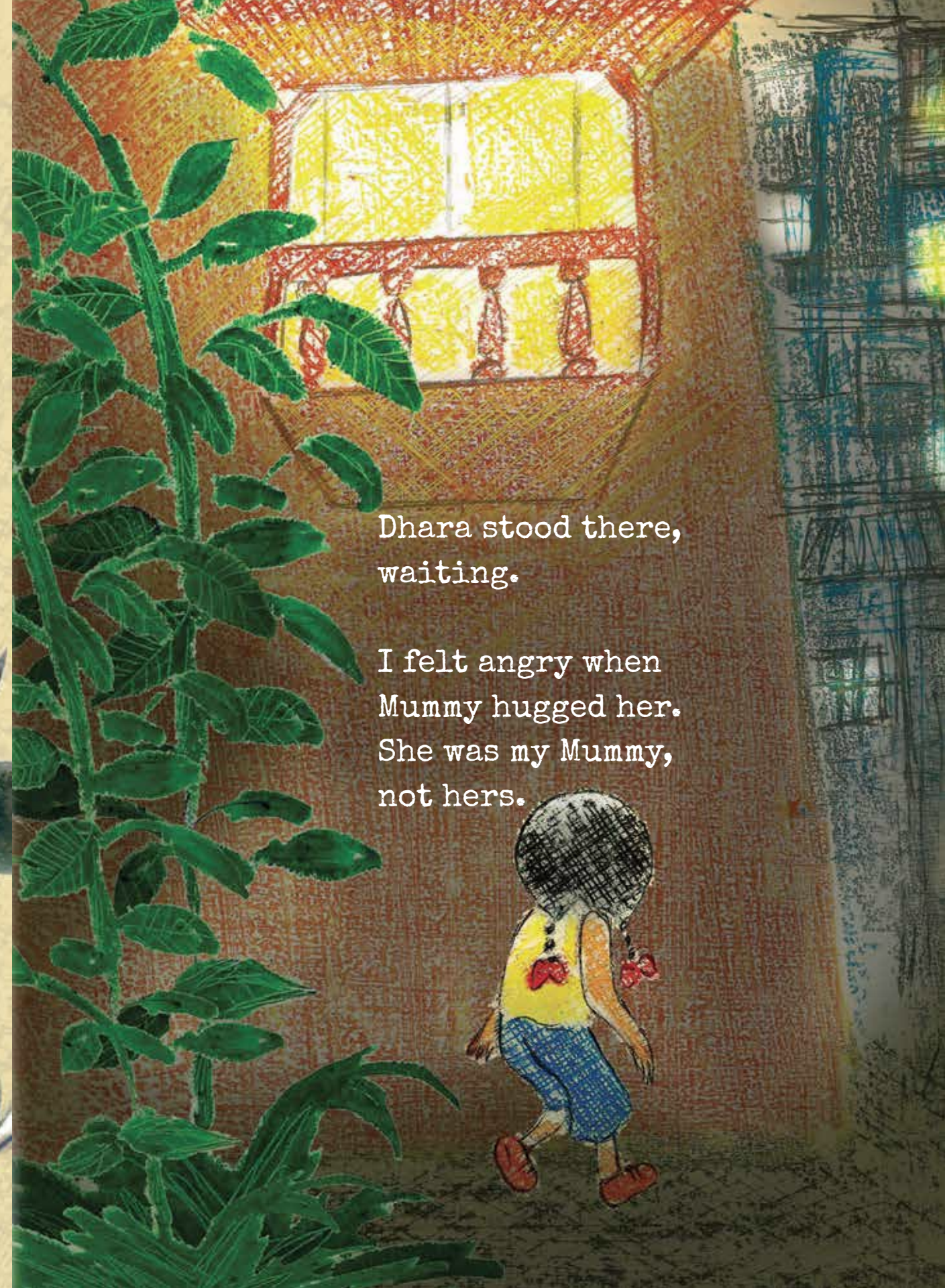
The next week, Dhara was home again.

'Go away, Dhara!' I said. 'You'll never be like MY Zoya.'



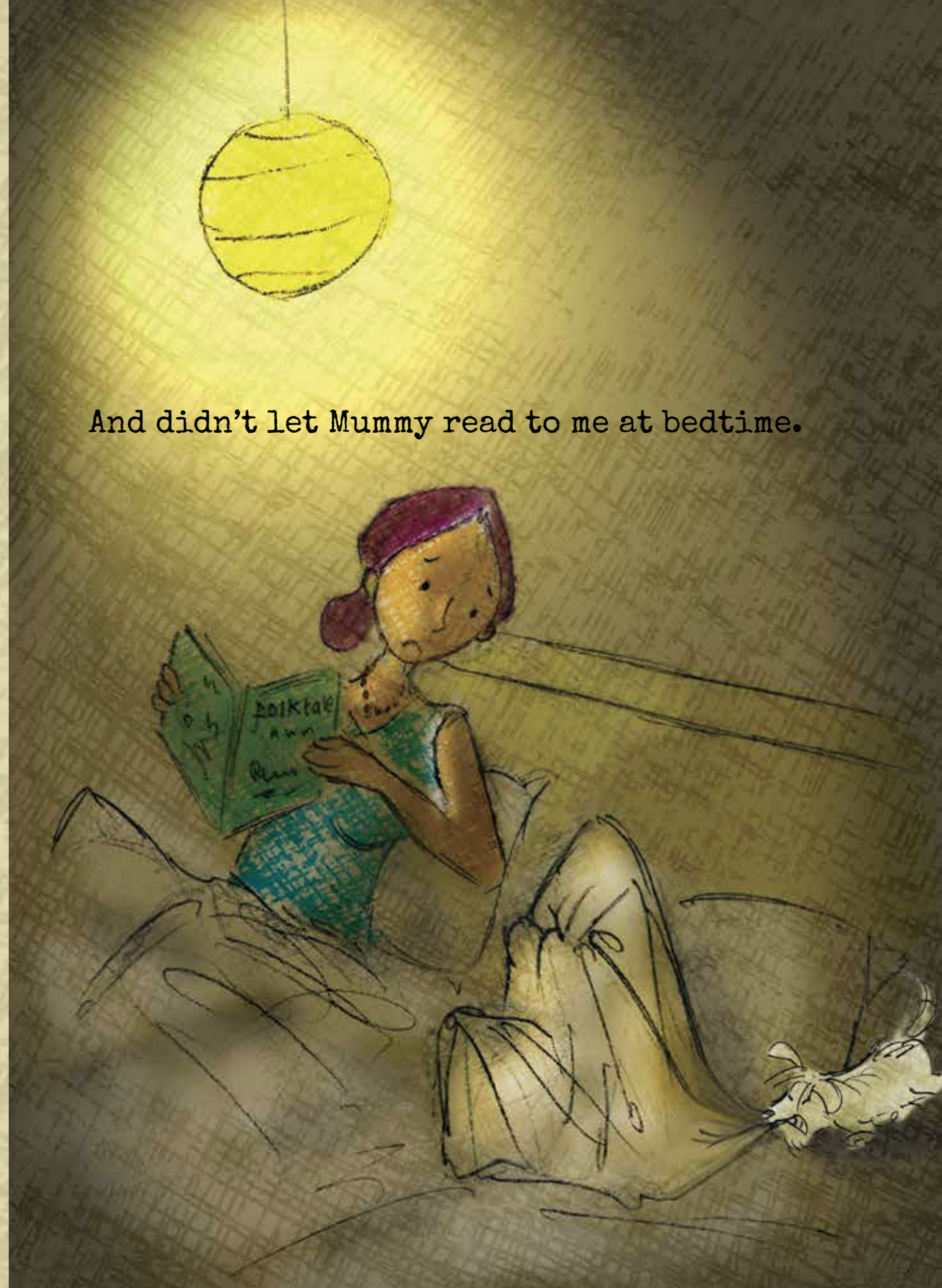
Dhara stood there, waiting.

I felt angry when Mummy hugged her. She was my Mummy, not hers.





I tore the book that Dhara had
gifted Zoya on her birthday.



And didn't let Mummy read to me at bedtime.

I dug my face and sobbed.

Mummy's wet saree rubbed against my cheeks.
'Noorie, my baby,' she said. 'Your sister will
always be with you.'

The next day, I thought I heard my Zoya. But she
was gone in a flash, again.

Mummy said Zoya will always be around, by our
side, in our hearts. We need to feel her.

'SILLY Mummy,' I screamed. 'You're lying. The dead
CANNOT ever be with us.'





I knew she won't. She CANNOT.



'Noorie! Noorie! Noorie!'

Was that Zoya calling out my name?

It was still dark outside.



And there in the living
room I saw Zoya!

My Zoya!



We laughed and we tumbled and we
danced and we stumbled. Bruno
bounded.

Zoya chuckled when Dhara made
her clown face.



'Boo!' I thought I heard Zoya.

I was afraid she would be gone in a flash,
yet again.

But she didn't!



I felt her warm fingers slip into mine.

And we rolled and rolled until it was time
for school.

I didn't want to go but Mummy said I would
find my Zoya there too.

By the time the video ended, the
sun was up. It was raining.

And there was a rainbow!
I dashed out.



I ate fifty thousand idlis that morning. And packed many more in my lunch box.

But those were not for me.

Dhara sat by herself.

I wanted to hide.

'Don't,' I felt my Zoya whispering and pushing me on.

'I'm sorry, Dhara,' I finally said.



Dhara did not look at me. She sat still for some time, then started to cry. 'I miss Zoya,' she said.

'Me too,' I said.

And we cried and cried. Did my Zoya cry too?

That evening, Bruno and I hid together for
hide-and-seek as Dhara looked for us.

I knew Zoya was there too, by my side. We
giggled in silence.



When Dhara got tired of looking, she made
her clown face. I tried not to laugh.

‘Boo!’ said Dhara, suddenly springing from
behind.

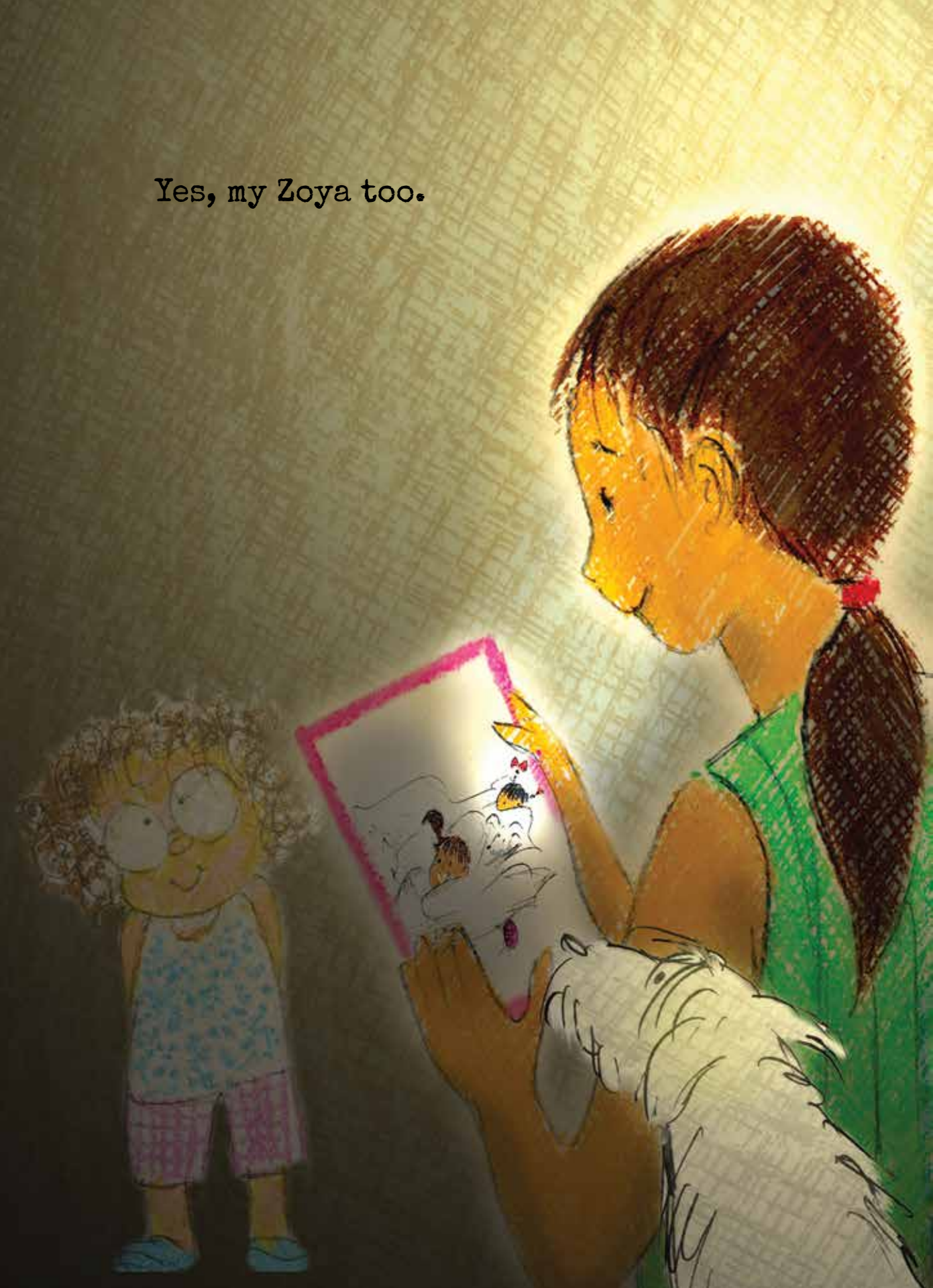
‘You are a TERRIBLE boo-er!’ I groaned. ‘But
the BEST clown in the world!’

And we laughed and we tumbled and we
danced and we stumbled.

Zoya too.



Yes, my Zoya too.



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She was lying. I knew.

When Noorie's sister Zoya dies, everything in Noorie's world becomes silent. She knows her sister has gone forever.

But what's with Mummy's silly lies that Zoya will always be around, by their side? And what is she to do about Zoya's best friend Dhara, who just won't leave Noorie alone?

Boo! is a tender tale of finding strength in love and loss.



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Catch the creators of this book in their elements at www.richajha.com,
www.gautambenegal.wordpress.com and www.facebook.com/AtonAllIndian

