

Cinnamon



NEIL GAIMAN

Illustrated by DIVYA SRINIVASAN

BLOOMSBURY

Cinnamon was a princess, a long time ago, in a small hot country, where everything was very cold.

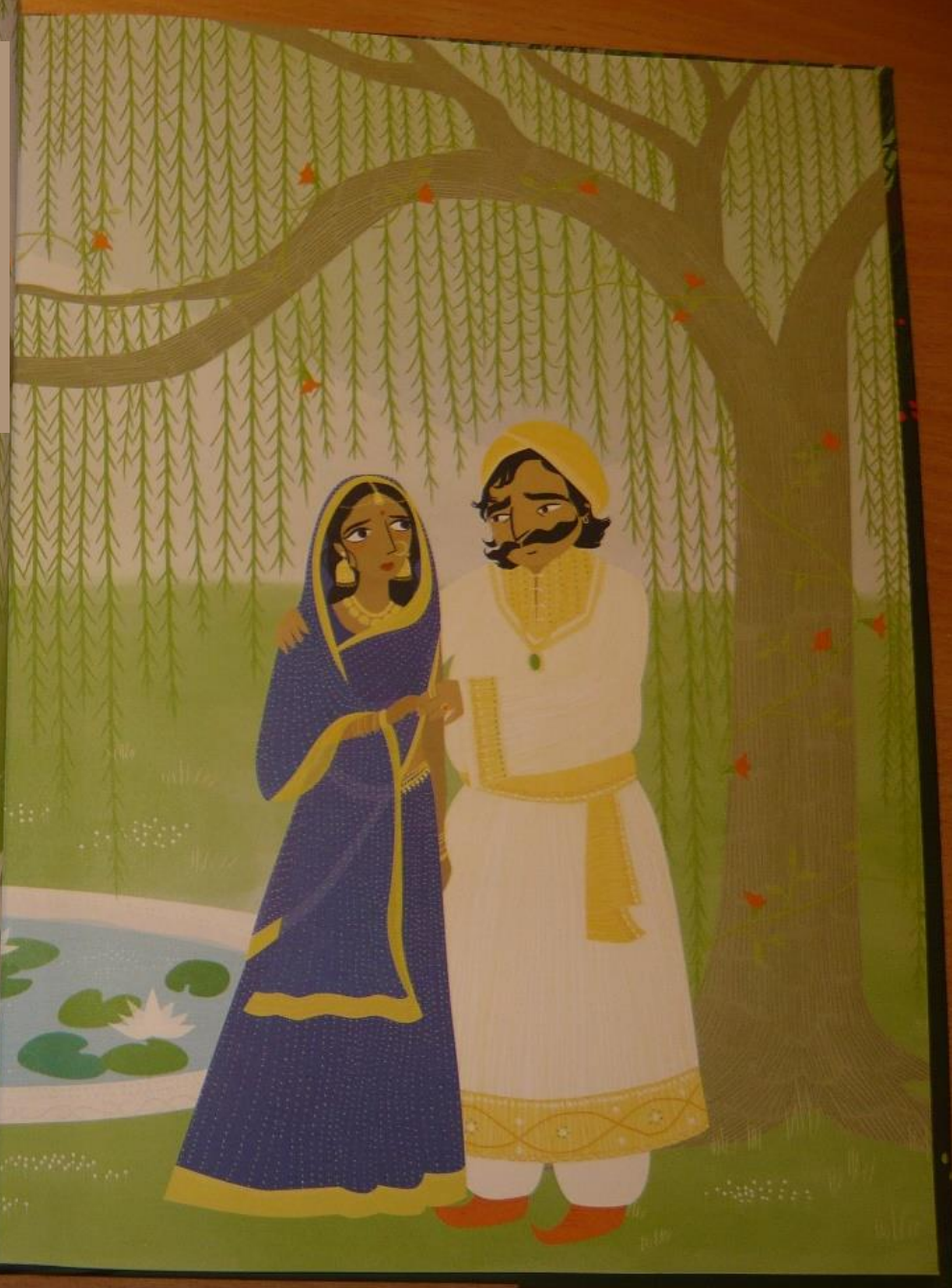




Her eyes were pearls, which gave her great beauty, but it meant she was blind. Her world was the colour of pearls; pale white and pink and they glowed softly.

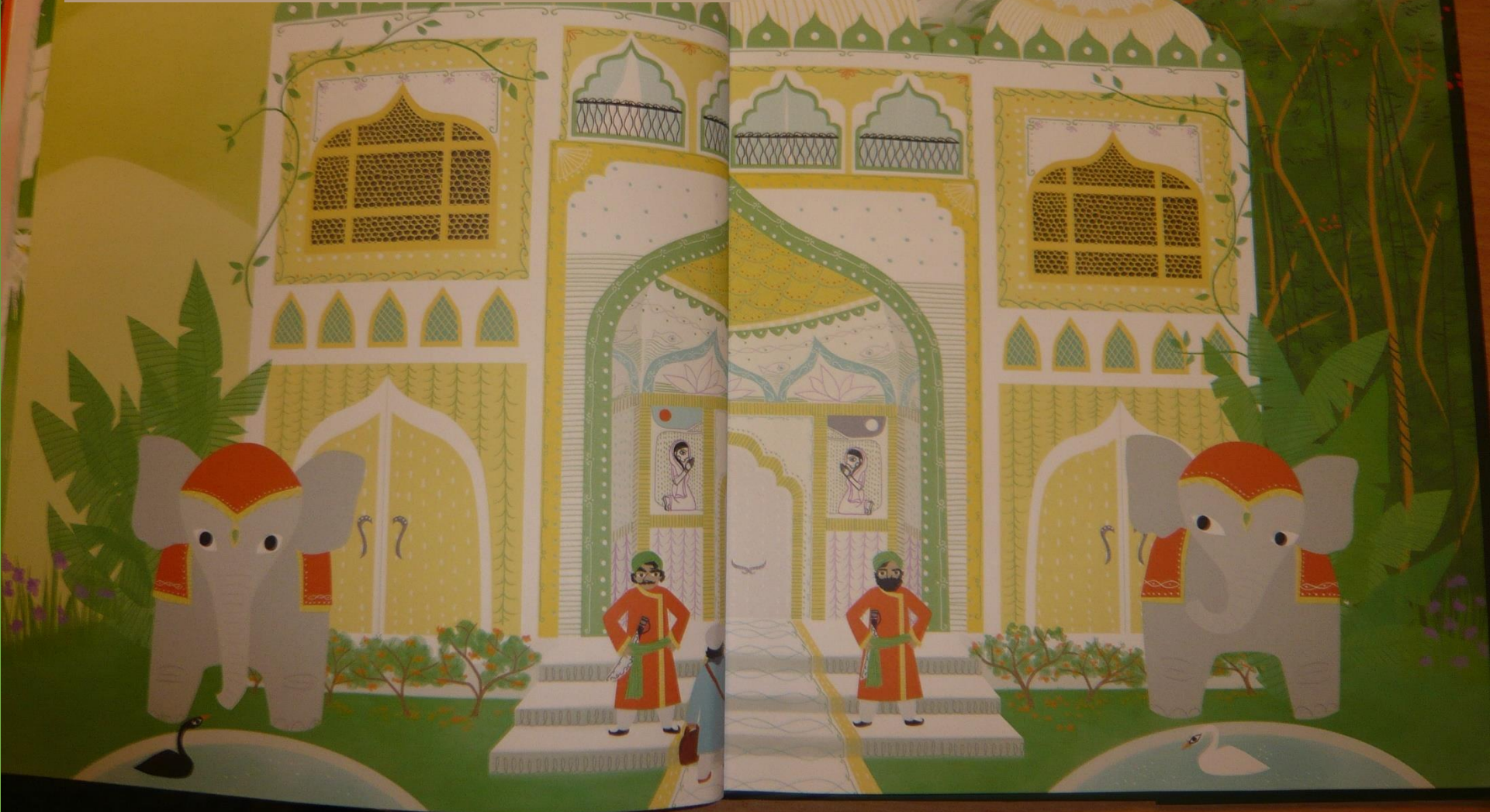
She did not talk...

Her mother – the Rajah and the Rani – offered
Her father and mother – the Rajah and the Rani – offered a room in the palace, a field of stunning mango trees, a portrait of the Rani's aunt and an emerald parrot to any person who could get Cinnamon to talk.



...the country on one side, the jungle

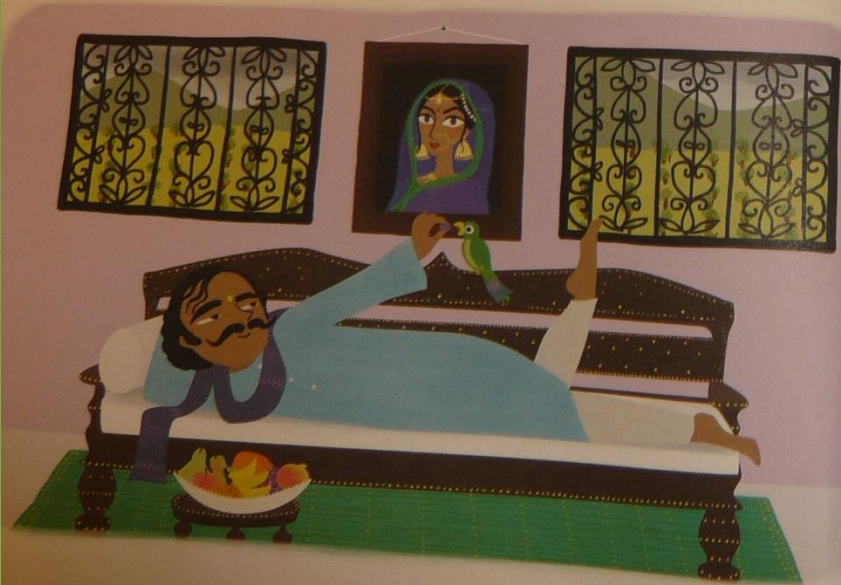
The Himalayas ringed the country on one side, the jungle on the other; and few and far came the people to try and teach Cinnamon to speak.



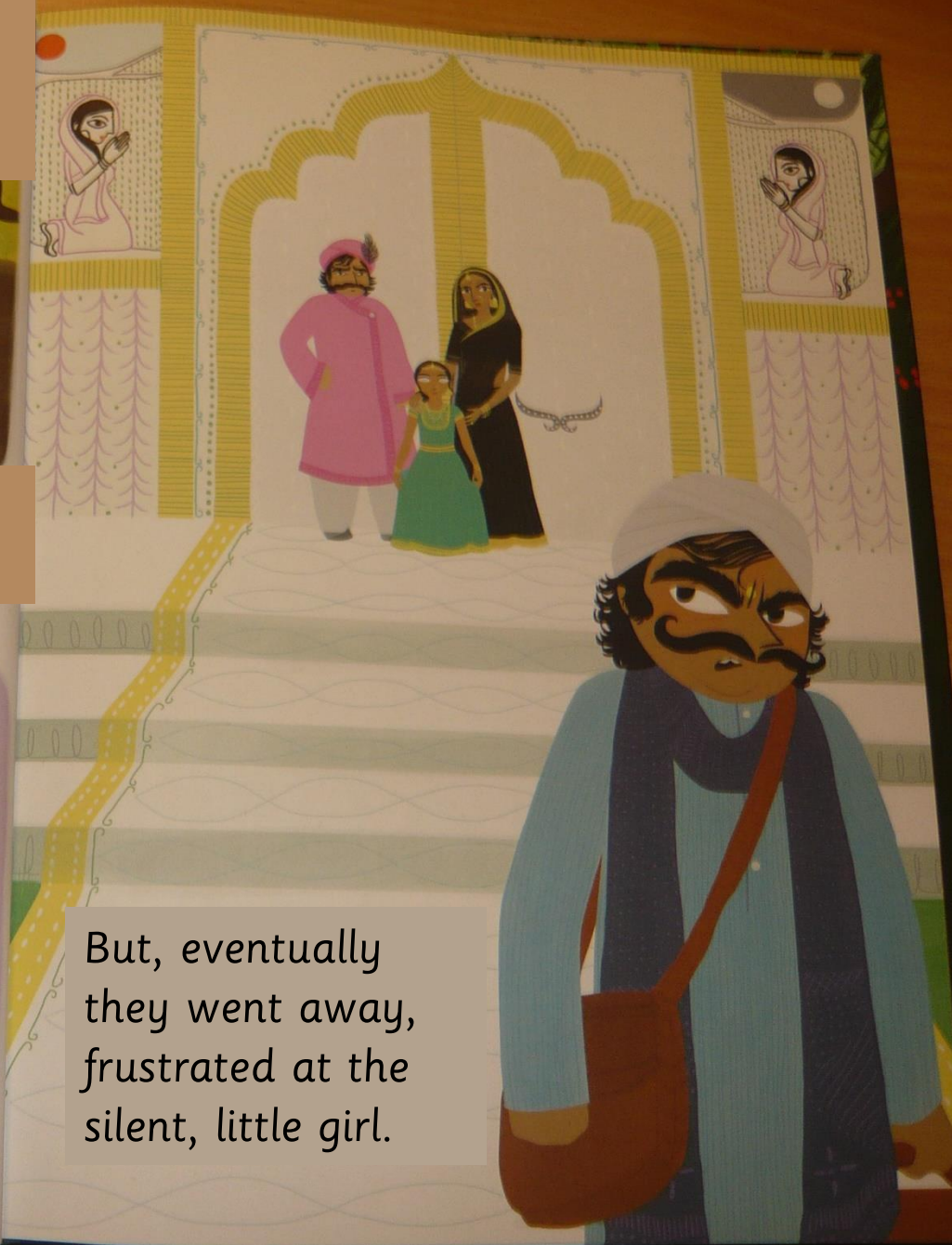
But come they did and they stayed in the room in the palace and feasted on the field of mangos.



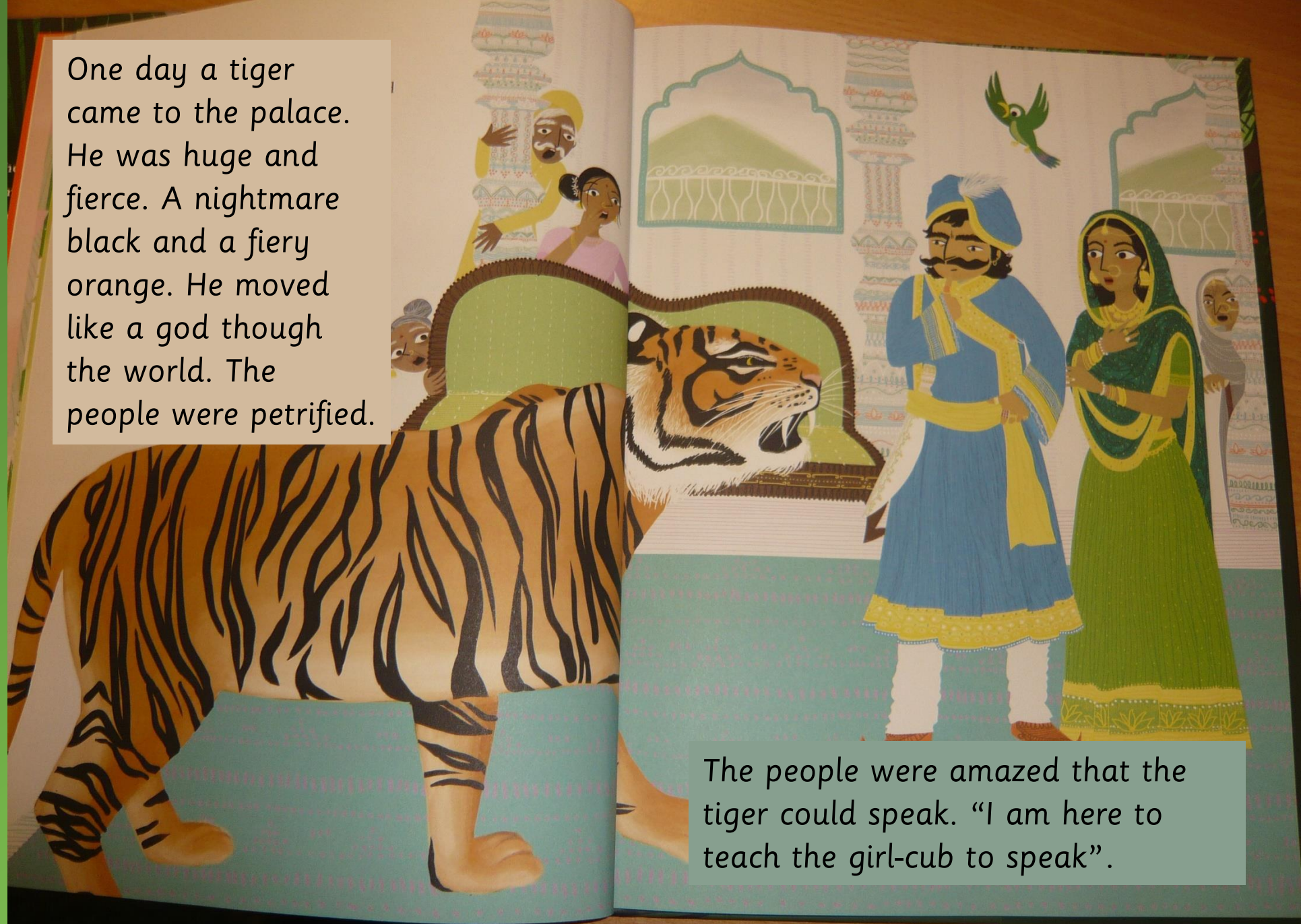
They fed the parrot and admired the portrait.



But, eventually they went away, frustrated at the silent, little girl.

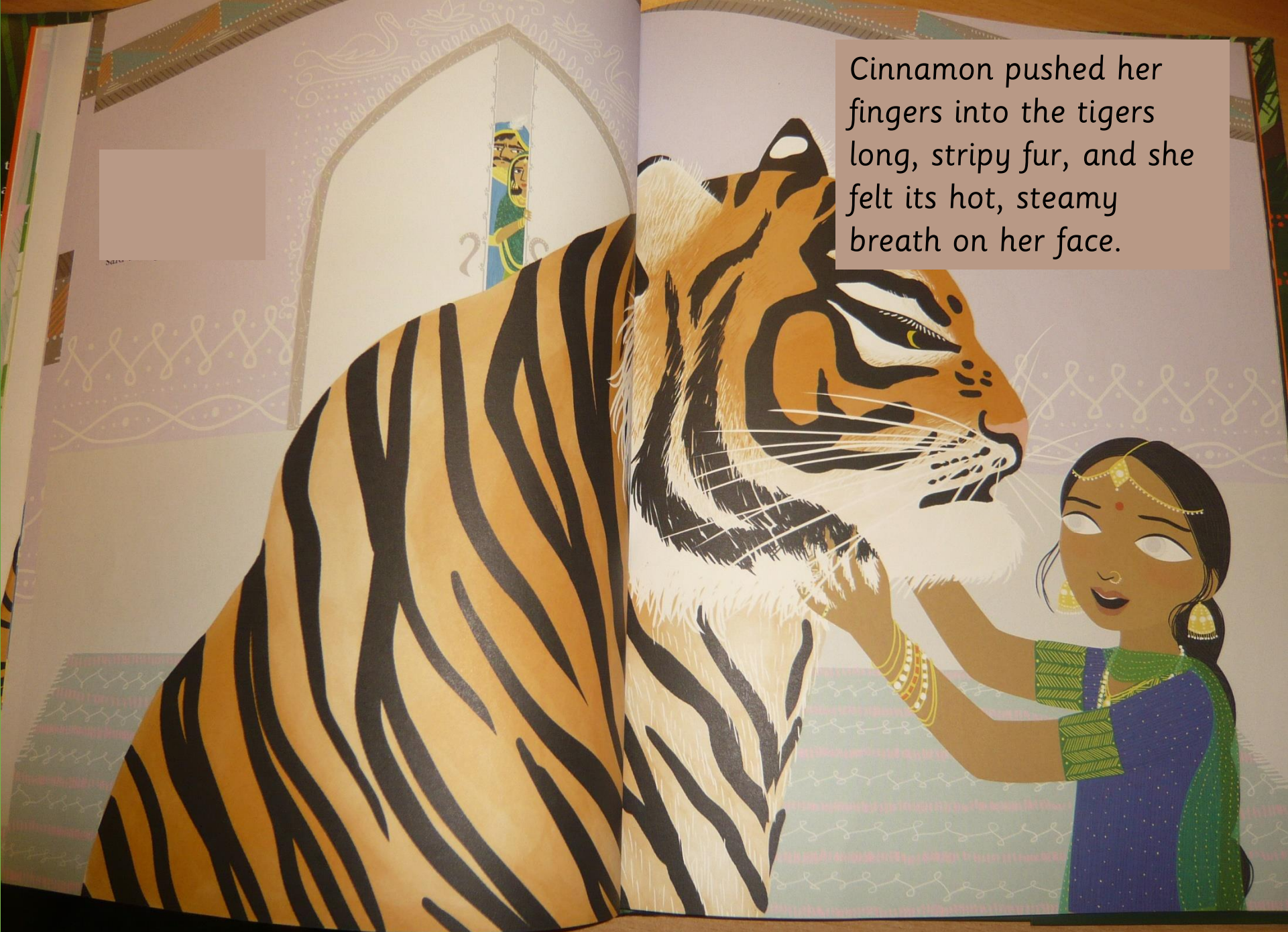


One day a tiger came to the palace. He was huge and fierce. A nightmare black and a fiery orange. He moved like a god though the world. The people were petrified.



The people were amazed that the tiger could speak. "I am here to teach the girl-cub to speak".

Cinnamon pushed her fingers into the tigers long, stripy fur, and she felt its hot, steamy breath on her face.



The tiger taught Cinnamon about emotion. He taught her fear, pain and finally love. He licked her brown, soft face.

Suddenly, Cinnamon whispered in a husky dark voice, "Love?"



The tiger opened his mouth grinned like a hungry snake.



The moon was full that night.

It was a bright morning when the child and the tiger came out of the room together. Cymbals crashed and bright birds sang, Cinnamon and the tiger walked towards the Rajah and the Rani.

“Can she talk yet?” asked the Rani

“Why don’t you ask her?” the tiger growled loudly.

Cinnamon nodded.

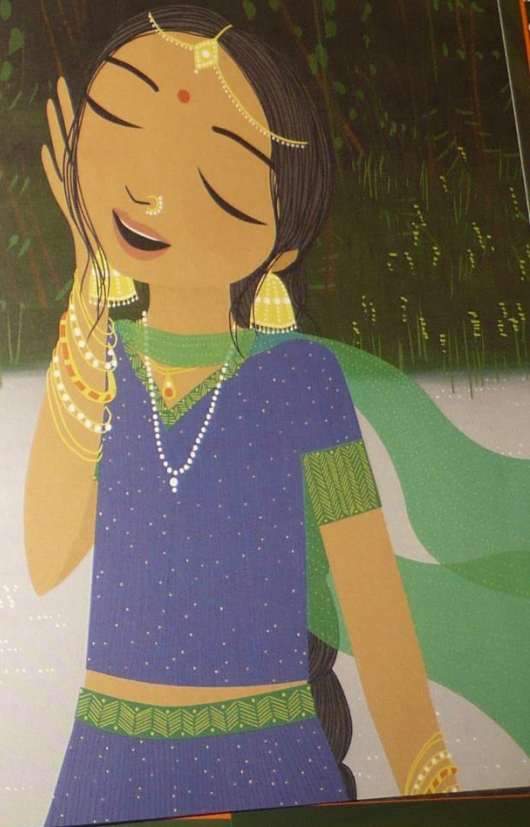


The Rajah asked "Why have you not said anything before?"

"Because I have had nothing to say..."



"...the tiger has told me all about the jungle, he told me about the chattering monkeys and the smell of the dawn and the shimmer of the moonlight and the splashing of the vibrant flamingos.



“I have decided I want to go with the tiger!”



Her parents wanted her to stay but they knew she would be happier there.



A crowd gathered and the grand palace doors opened. Cinnamon emerged riding the back of the fierce but friendly. Tiger. She held his scruffy fur and they disappeared into the overgrown jungle.

