

Level 6



Back To School



By Roderick Samuel
Illustrated by Shaina Nayyar

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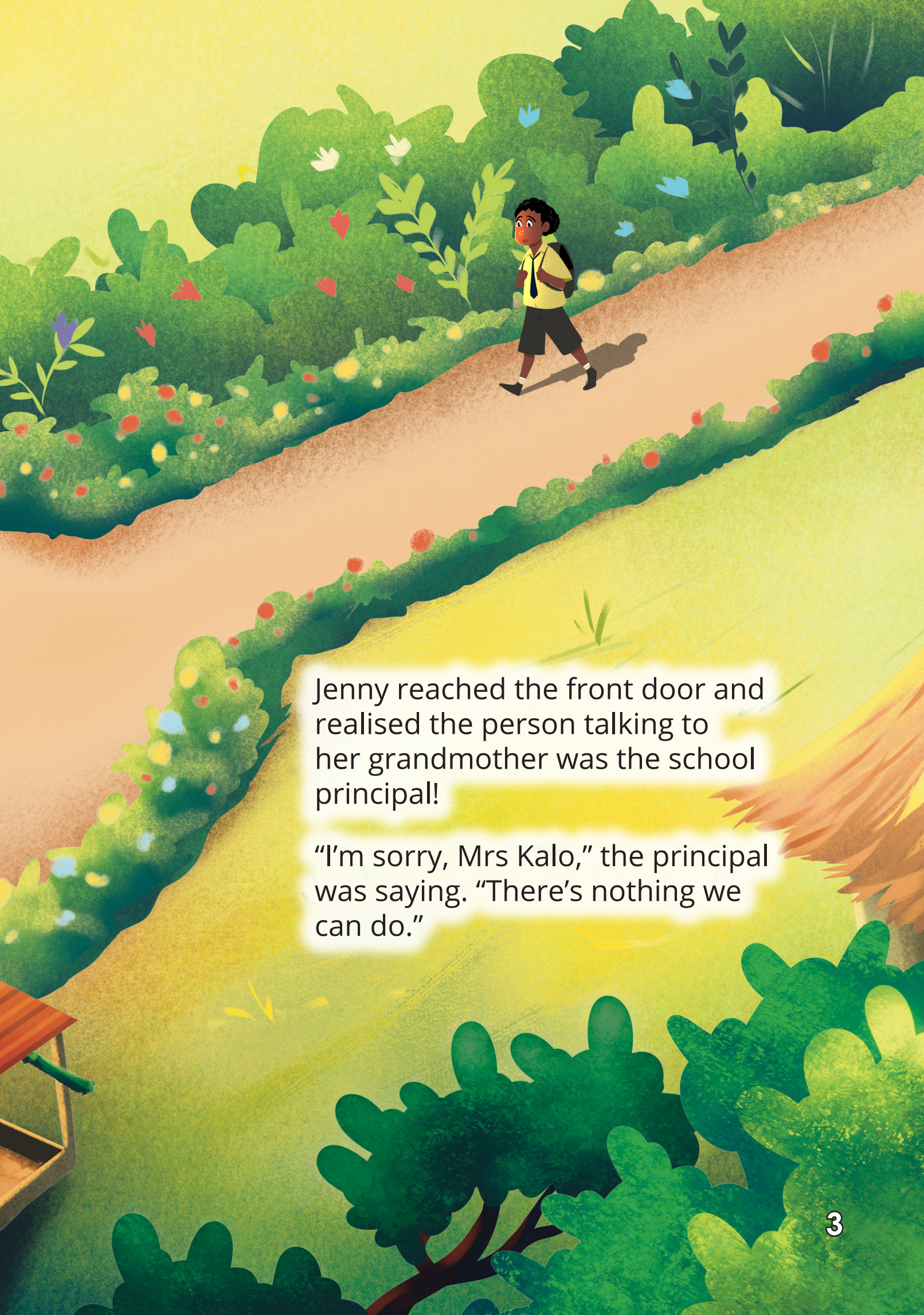


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Jenny came home late one afternoon and saw her grandmother talking to someone. She'd been doing some extra study with her friends after school, helping them understand that day's science class.





Jenny reached the front door and realised the person talking to her grandmother was the school principal!

"I'm sorry, Mrs Kalo," the principal was saying. "There's nothing we can do."

"Hello, Mr Nicholls!" Jenny exclaimed. "What are you doing here?"

Mr Nicholls and Jenny's grandmother looked at her, surprised, before grandmother took a deep breath. Jenny watched in dismay as tears fell from her eyes.



"I'm sorry, Jenny," Grandmother said. "I haven't been able to pay your school fees, so we'll have to take you out of classes."







Jenny froze.

"I'm sorry, too," Mr Nicholls said. "I wish this wasn't happening, especially since Jenny is such a bright student."

Jenny's chest felt tight as she looked between her grandmother and the school principal. Her own eyes started prickling and she ran inside to hide her tears. She heard Mr Nicholls leave with another quiet apology.

"Jenny?"





Grandmother had come inside and put a hand on Jenny's back.

"Don't worry, my dear," Grandmother said. "I'll ask around for some work, then put you back in school as soon as possible. You're so clever, you'll be able to catch up quickly."

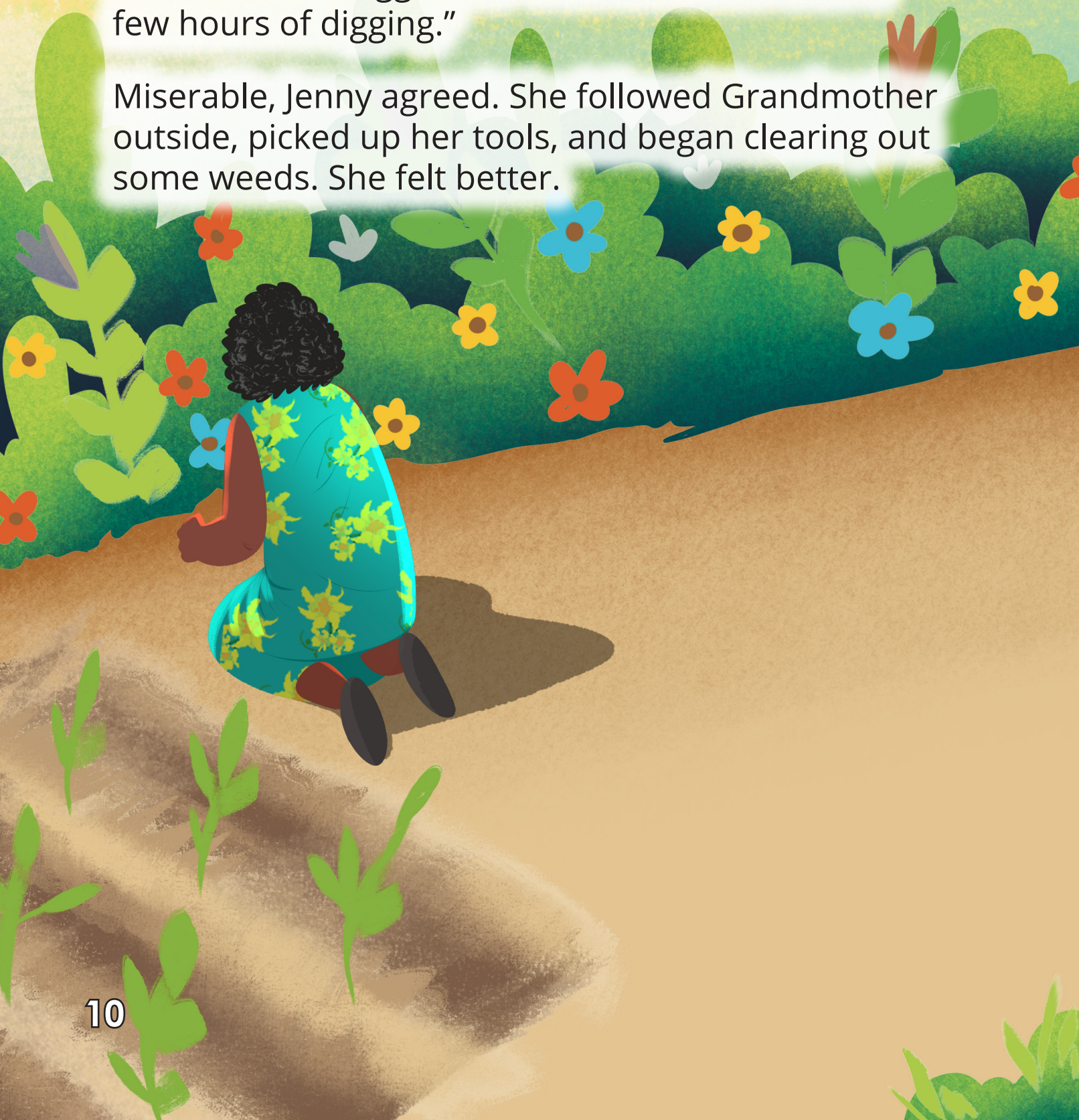
Jenny sobbed and hugged her. "No, Grandmother! That's not fair, you should be resting. I'll do the work instead."

"Don't be silly," Grandmother scolded, but she was smiling. "In that case, how about we both work?"

Over the next few days, Jenny and her grandmother tried finding some work around the village. But no one needed any help. Everyone was kind and understanding, but Jenny went home feeling defeated.

“Let’s go work in the garden for a while,” Grandmother suggested. “We’ll feel better after a few hours of digging.”

Miserable, Jenny agreed. She followed Grandmother outside, picked up her tools, and began clearing out some weeds. She felt better.





Footsteps stopped outside their garden. Jenny looked up and saw an old man looking appreciatively at the hard work they'd done. She recognised him as one of the other villagers.

"Hello!" he said.

"Hello, Mr Grett," Grandmother said. "How are you?"



"I'm well, but not as young as I used to be," Mr Grett laughed. "I heard you and Jenny were looking for some work and thought you might be able to help me with my garden, clearing it out and planting new crops. I can't bend over much anymore."



Jenny jumped up, grinning excitedly. "Really, Mr Grett!?"

Mr Grett laughed. "Of course! Can you come by tomorrow?"

Jenny and her grandmother did so, meeting Mr Grett bright and early the next day. They got to work, pulling weeds, tilling the soil, and planting new crops.



Mr Grett asked them to come back the next day, and the next, and the next. He kept finding more things for them to do, and their savings for Jenny's school fees gradually grew.



Jenny met up with her school friends as often as she could and they shared their notes with her. She was determined to catch up quickly once she got back to school.

Finally, after long weeks of garden work, Grandmother opened the money box and counted it.



"Is there enough?" Jenny asked. She was too nervous to count it herself.

Grandmother let out a huge sigh and turned, smiling. "There is," she said.



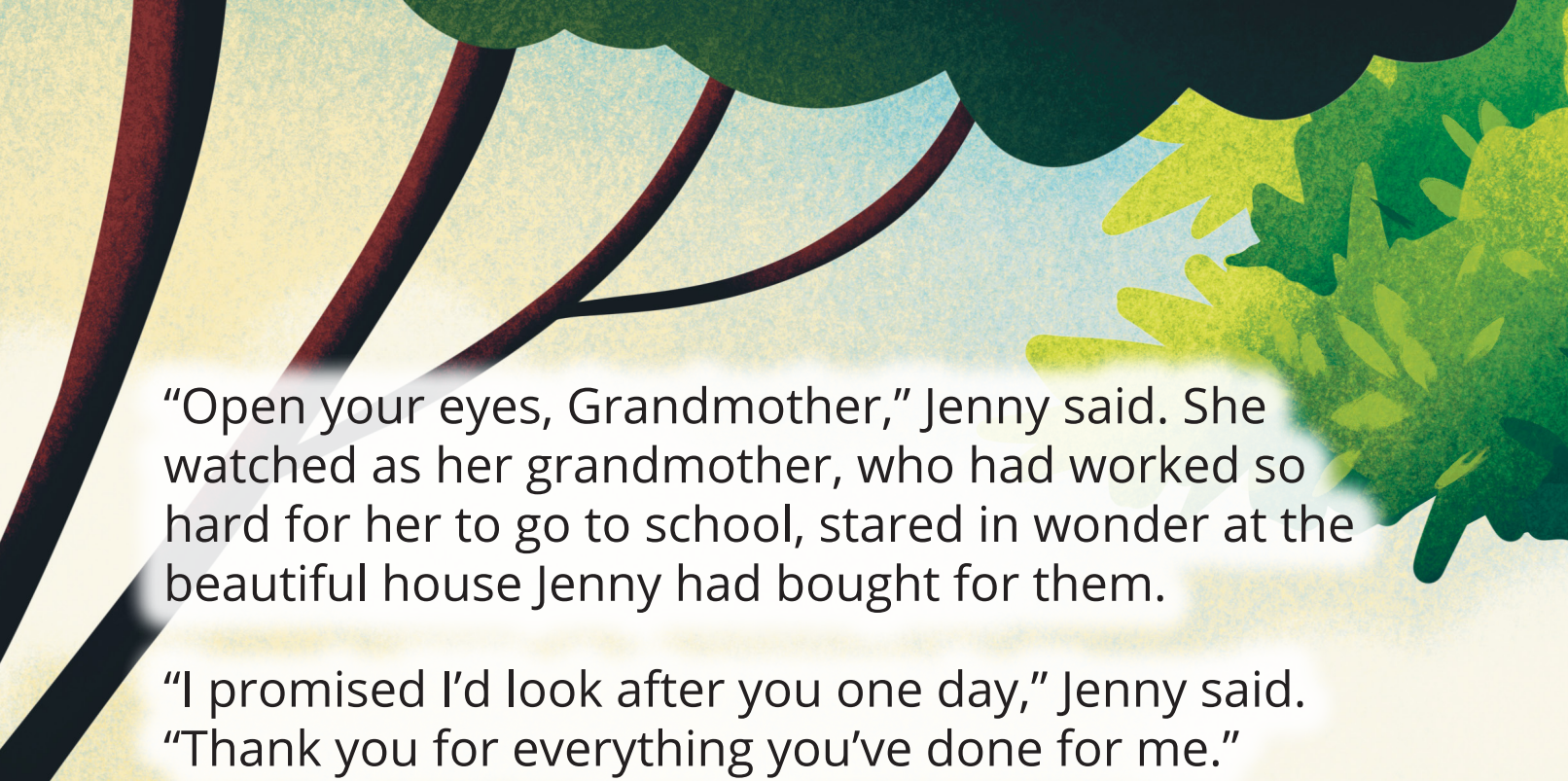
Jenny finally went back to school. One afternoon, she realised that Grandmother was still working for Mr Grett as a gardener.

"I'm going to keep working hard too, and one day I'll be able to look after you," she promised her grandmother that night. Her grandmother smiled.



As the years passed, Jenny graduated and earned a scholarship, going overseas to study medicine at university. She returned home to get a job at the largest hospital in town.





"Open your eyes, Grandmother," Jenny said. She watched as her grandmother, who had worked so hard for her to go to school, stared in wonder at the beautiful house Jenny had bought for them.

"I promised I'd look after you one day," Jenny said.
"Thank you for everything you've done for me."





**You can use these questions
to talk about this book with
your family, friends and
teachers.**



Why did Jenny have to leave school?



**How did Mr Grett know Jenny and
Grandmother were good gardeners?**



**How do you think Mr Grett learned that
Jenny and Grandmother needed work?**

**Have you ever worked or done chores to
save money for something?**



Try making your own savings box!

About the author

Roderick Samuel was born at the Norsup Hospital and now lives in Brenwei Village on Malakula Island. He wanted to write a children's story to help young children learn new things. As a child, his favourite stories were custom stories. When spending time with family and friends he also loves to tell stories.



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Save the Children



Original illustrations by Shaina Nayyar

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