

Level 6



Be Prepared

By Daniella Kender
Illustrated by Michael Magpantay



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My grandparents and I lived in Tanmial, a village in the middle of Malo Island. I loved how we were surrounded by bush and wildlife, but we didn't always get to enjoy it because my grandparents were sick. Despite that, they looked after me really well.



One morning, my grandmother had decided to make laplap for lunch. I washed my hands and got ready to help her.



Just as we were about to start cooking the laplap, I noticed the dark clouds rolling above. The beautiful day was about to turn into something much more dangerous.





We didn't have radio stations or mobile networks to warn us about the weather, so my grandparents and I were shocked.

We saw birds frantically searching for shelter, their desperate movements signalling that something big was coming.



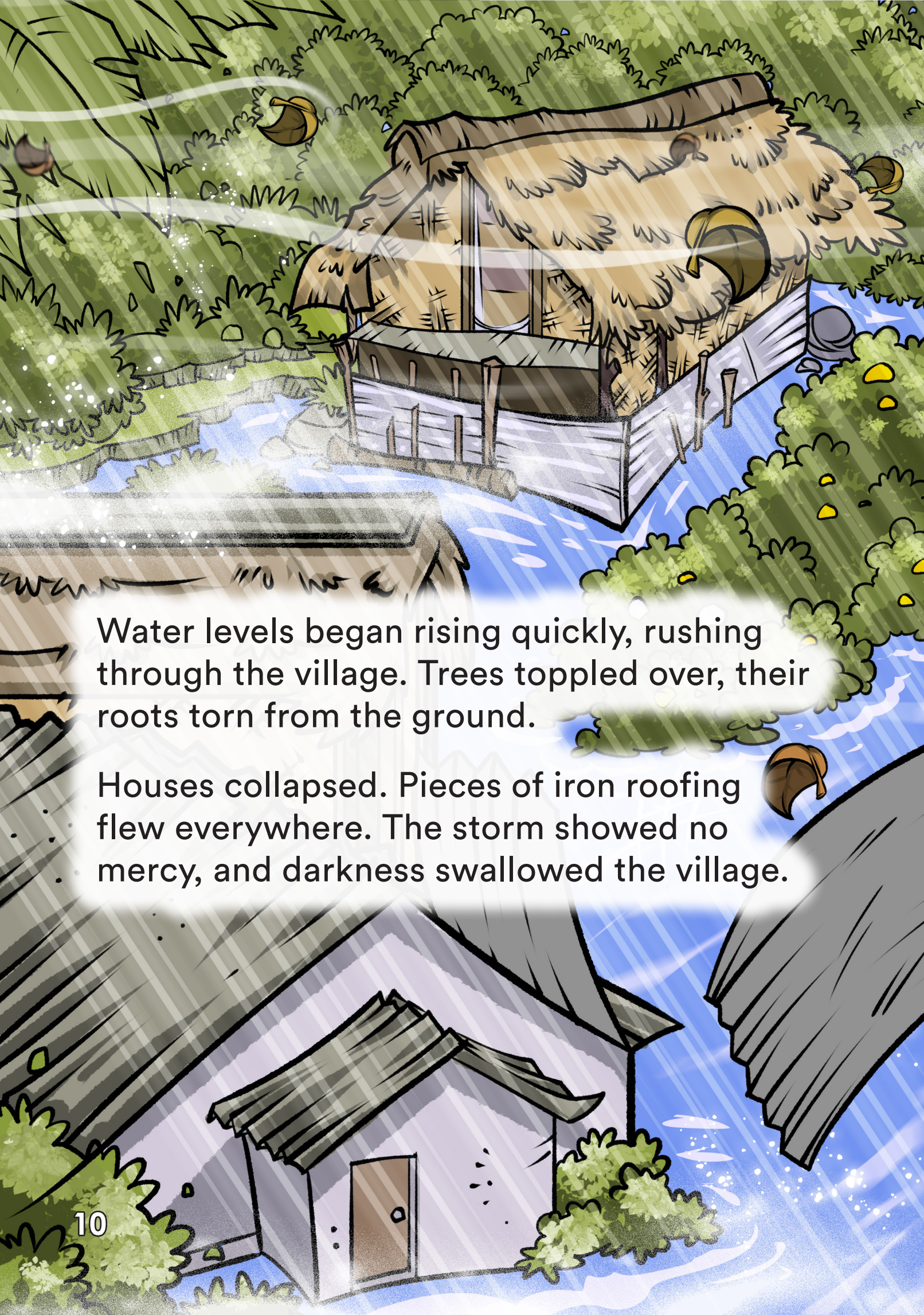




Heavy raindrops started falling. They pounded against the ground as the wind whirled, tearing plants out of the soil.

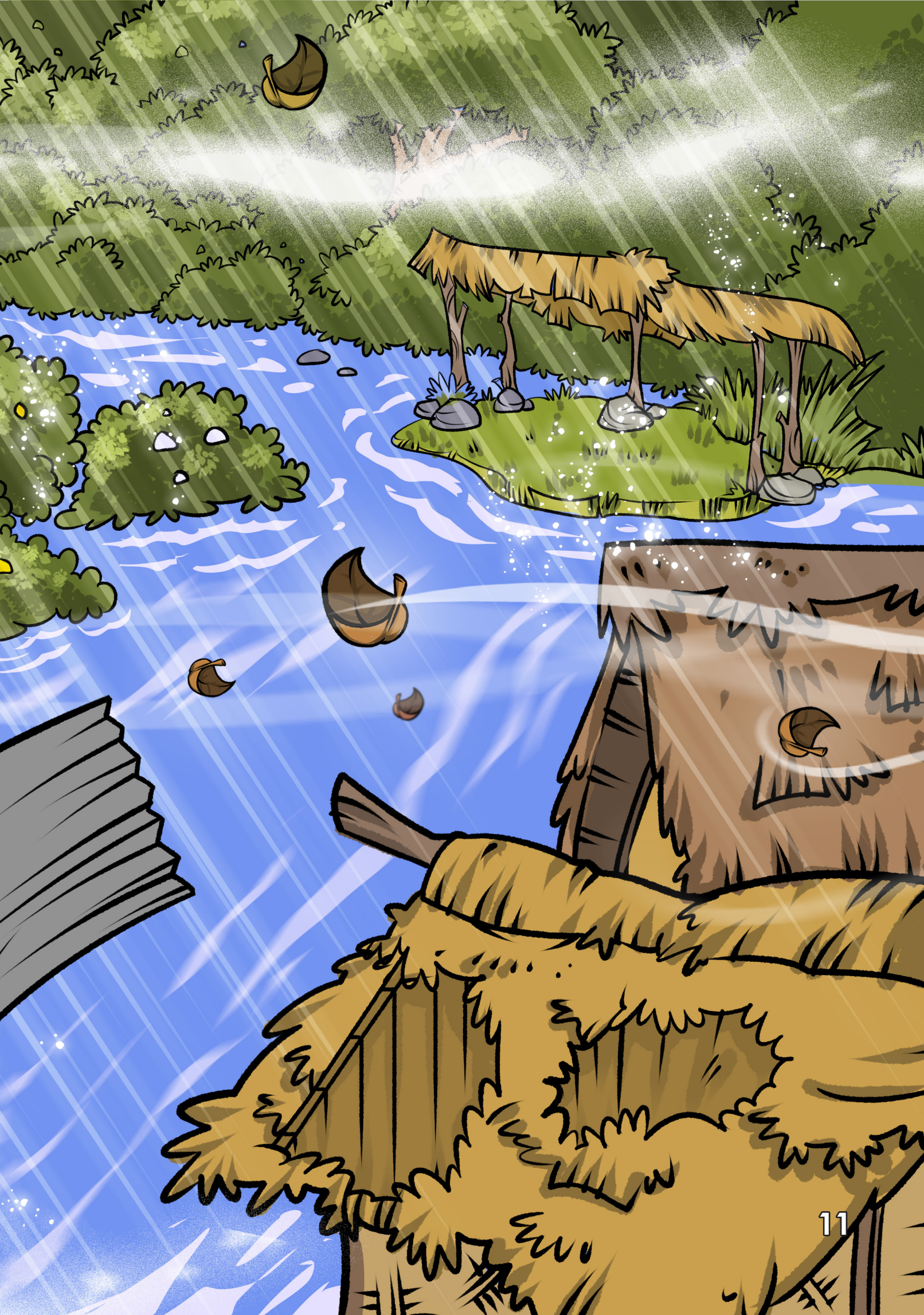
“Quick!” I cried. “We have to find somewhere safe to stay!”

My grandparents followed me through the heavy rain towards the hill near the village. Others had already gathered there, undercover.



Water levels began rising quickly, rushing through the village. Trees toppled over, their roots torn from the ground.

Houses collapsed. Pieces of iron roofing flew everywhere. The storm showed no mercy, and darkness swallowed the village.



I checked that my grandparents were okay and warm enough. We held on to each other tightly, keeping safe as we watched the storm destroy our village.

It took all night, but the winds began to weaken. The rain slowed, and the storm retreated.





When the sun finally rose over Malo, I helped my grandparents and some other villagers down the hill. All our eyes filled with tears at the overwhelming destruction.

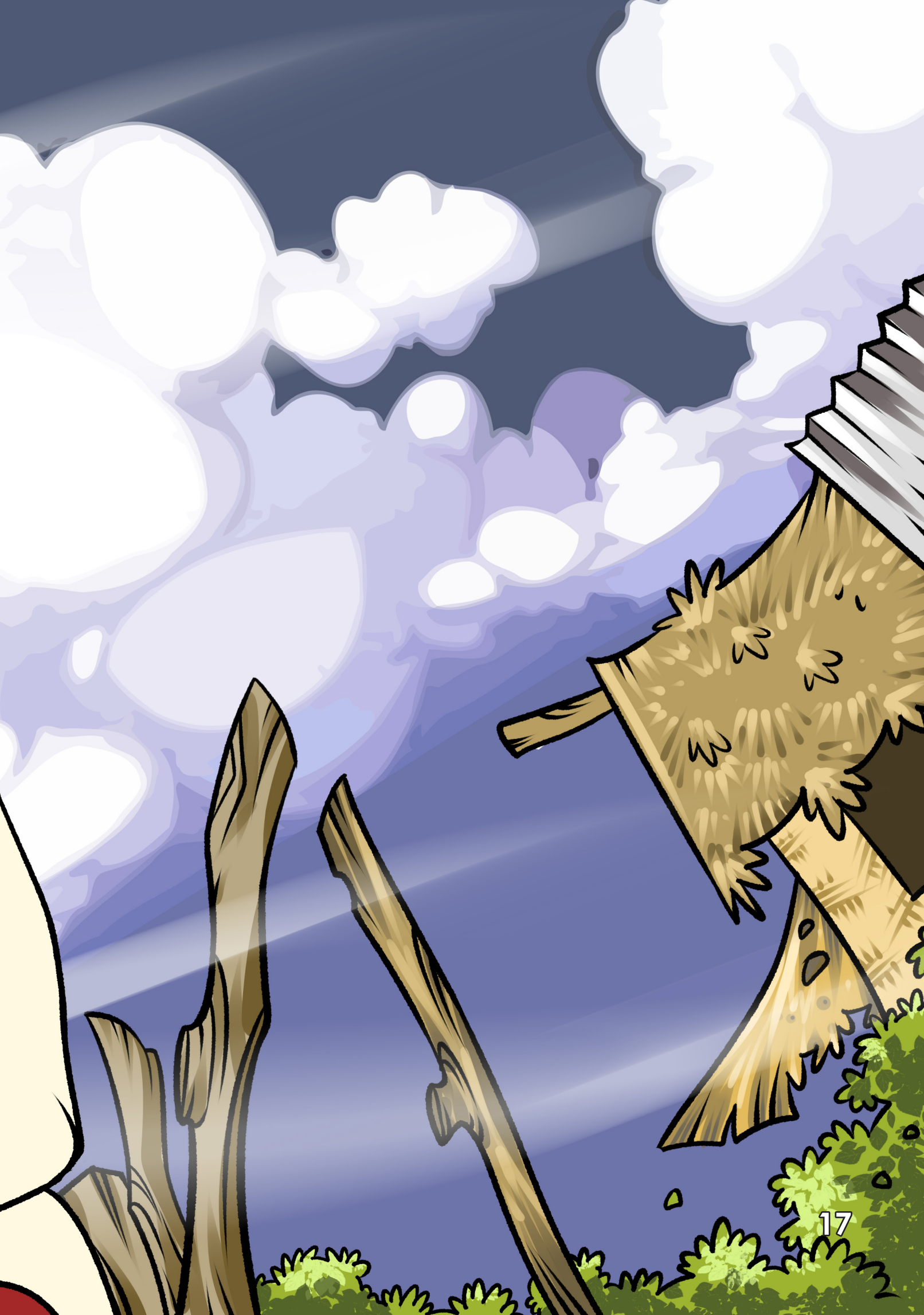




Our home had been torn apart, and our plantation was destroyed. Parts of the village were scattered across the whole bush.

Though it was devastating, we were grateful to have survived the cyclone.







“When nature speaks, there is no turning back,” my grandmother said softly. I turned to her, and she smiled grimly at me. “Next time, we will be more prepared.”

Her words stayed with me. I wouldn't be caught off guard like this again.



Even though they were ill and weak, my grandparents had made it. When more help arrived from outside the village, we learned that we had escaped a Category 5 cyclone!



“Thank you for helping us,” my grandfather said later. “We survived because of you.”

I hugged them both tight. I was thankful, too.



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



Where is the village of Tanmial located?



How did the birds flying away warn the villagers of the storm?



What did the grandmother mean by “preparing” for a storm?

What other things could the narrator and her family have done to stay safe?



Draw a scene from the story. It could be the peaceful village before the storm, the birds flying in warning, or the aftermath of the cyclone.

About the author

Daniella was born in Santo and now lives in Luganville. She wanted to write a story because she loves to read children's stories and she enjoys helping children with their reading. As a child, Daniella's favourite story was about a clever mouse and a stupid tiger. When she's with family and friends, she enjoys sitting down together and sharing stories.



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Tanmial Village is suddenly hit by a Category 5 cyclone. A young girl quickly gets her grandparents to safety, keeping them warm and together while the storm rages.



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