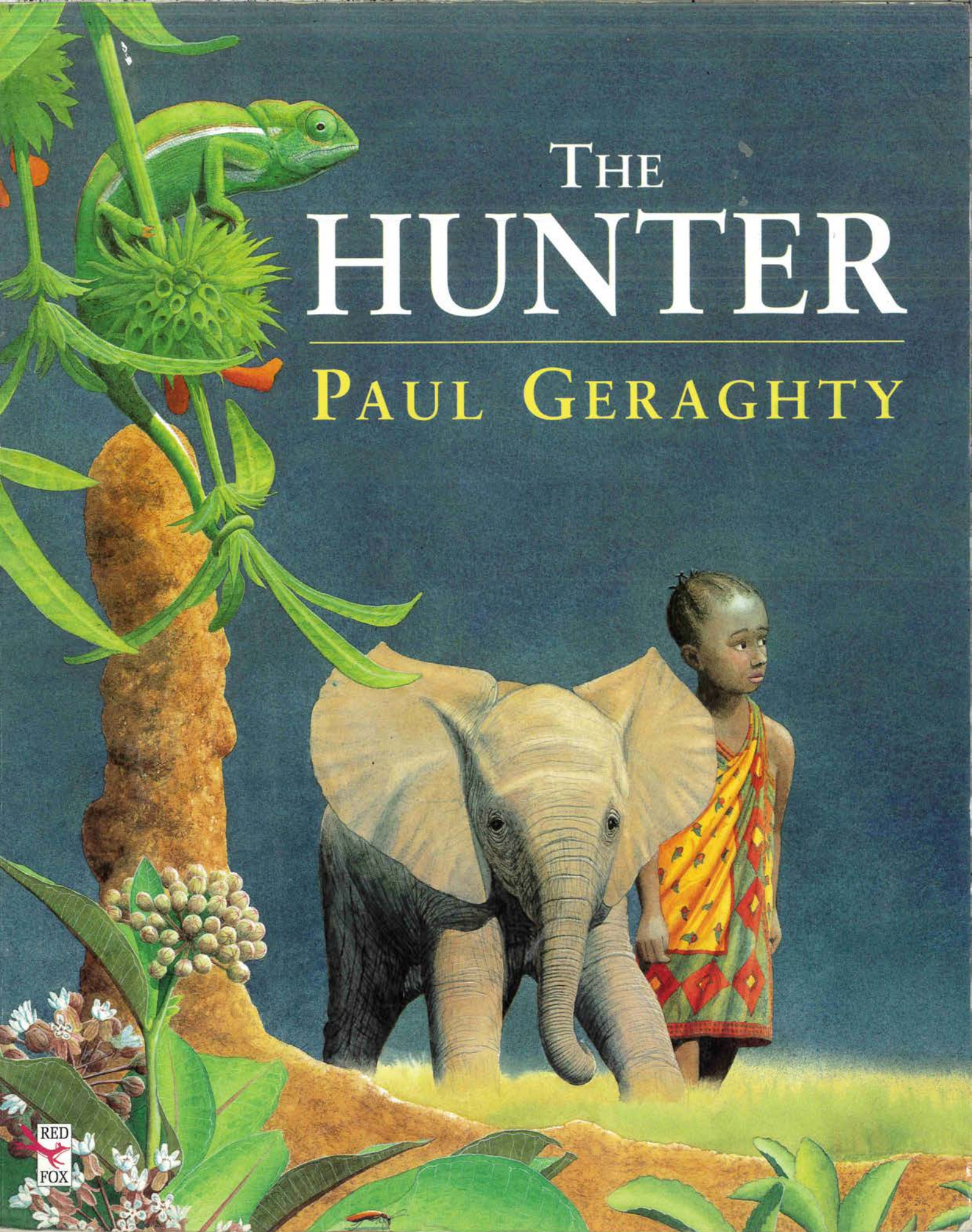


THE HUNTER

PAUL GERAGHTY



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FOX

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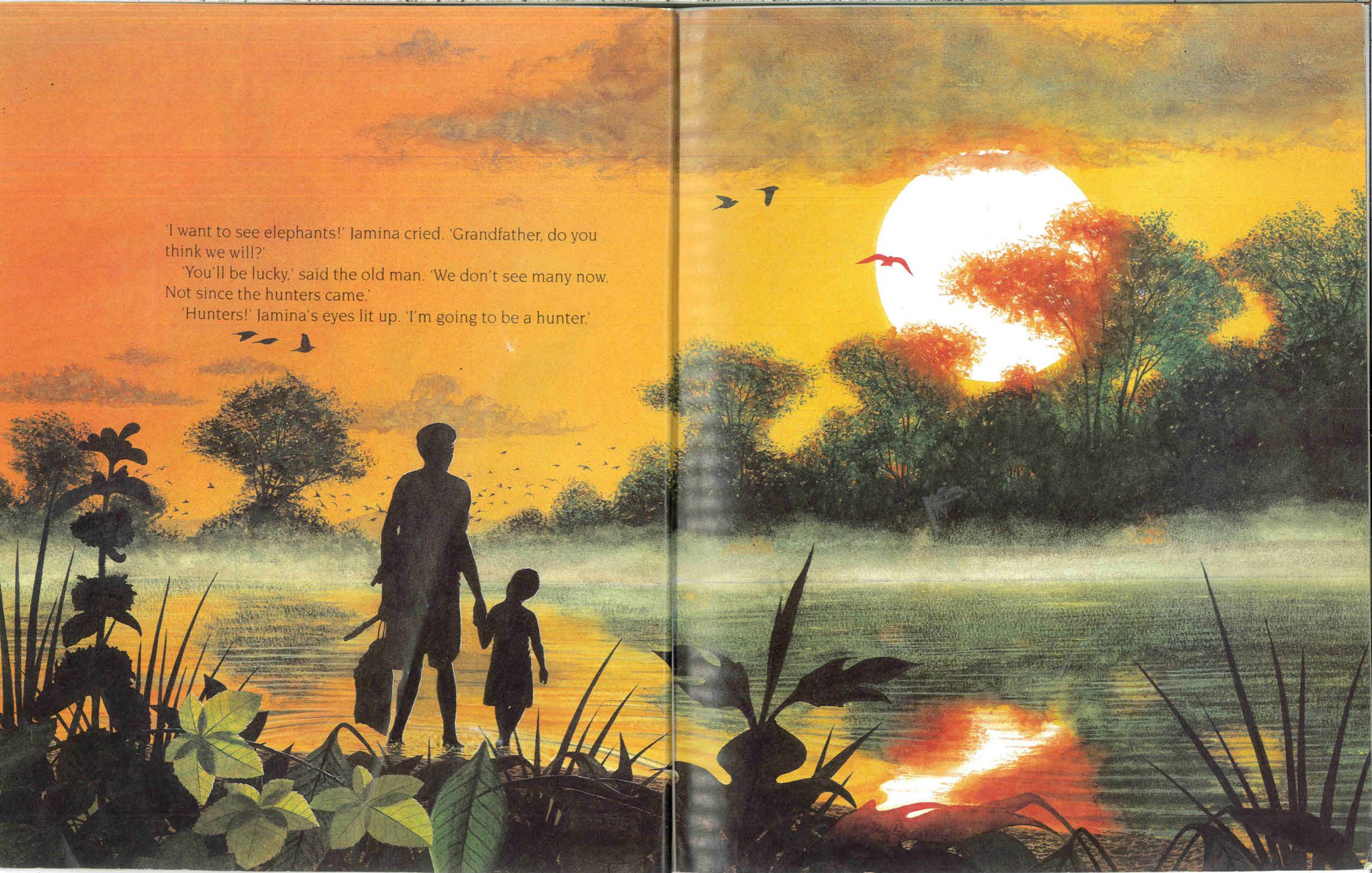


In the early morning, Jamina went with her grandfather to collect honey. They followed the honey bird far into the bush.

'I want to see elephants!' Jamina cried. 'Grandfather, do you think we will?'

'You'll be lucky,' said the old man. 'We don't see many now. Not since the hunters came.'

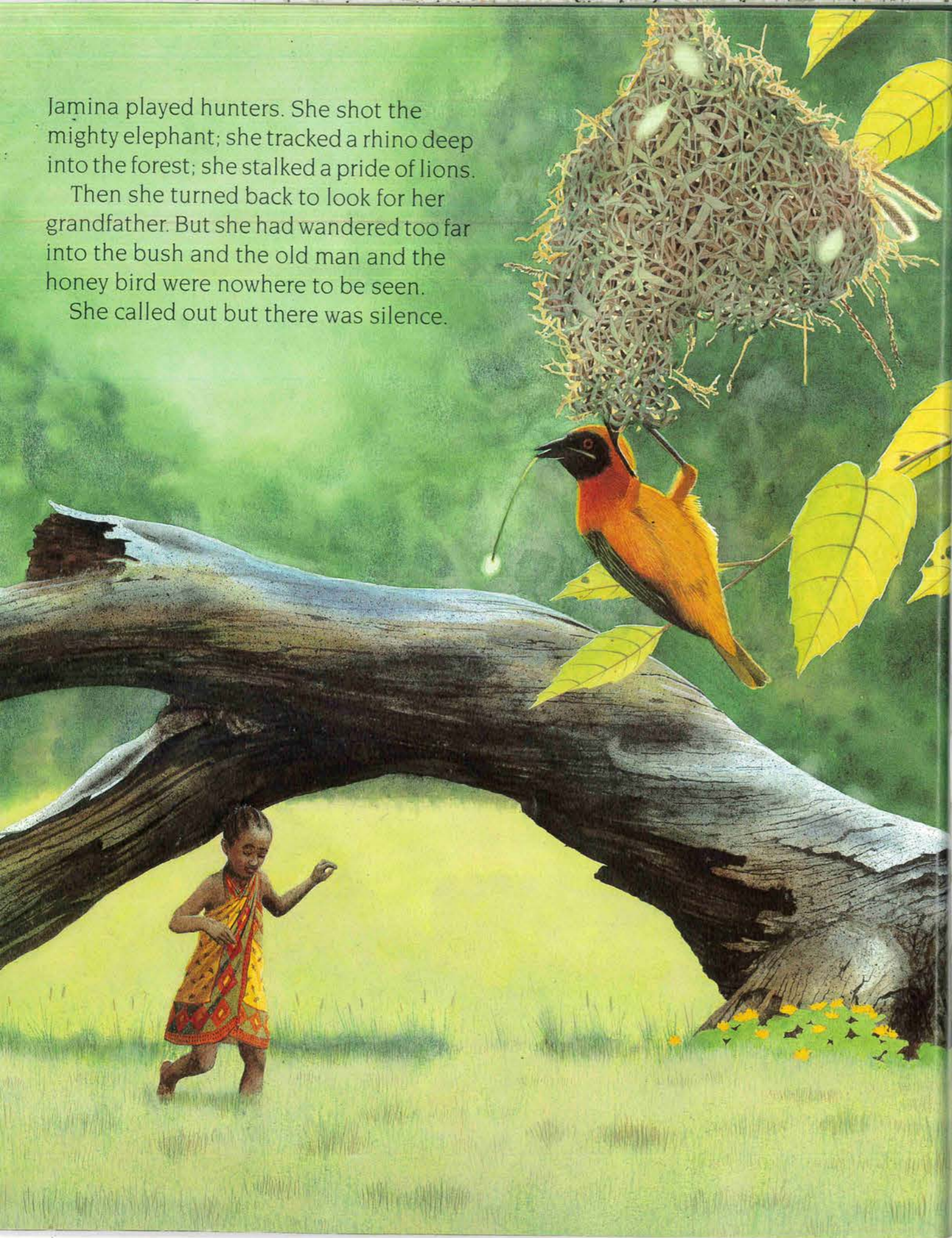
'Hunters!' Jamina's eyes lit up. 'I'm going to be a hunter.'



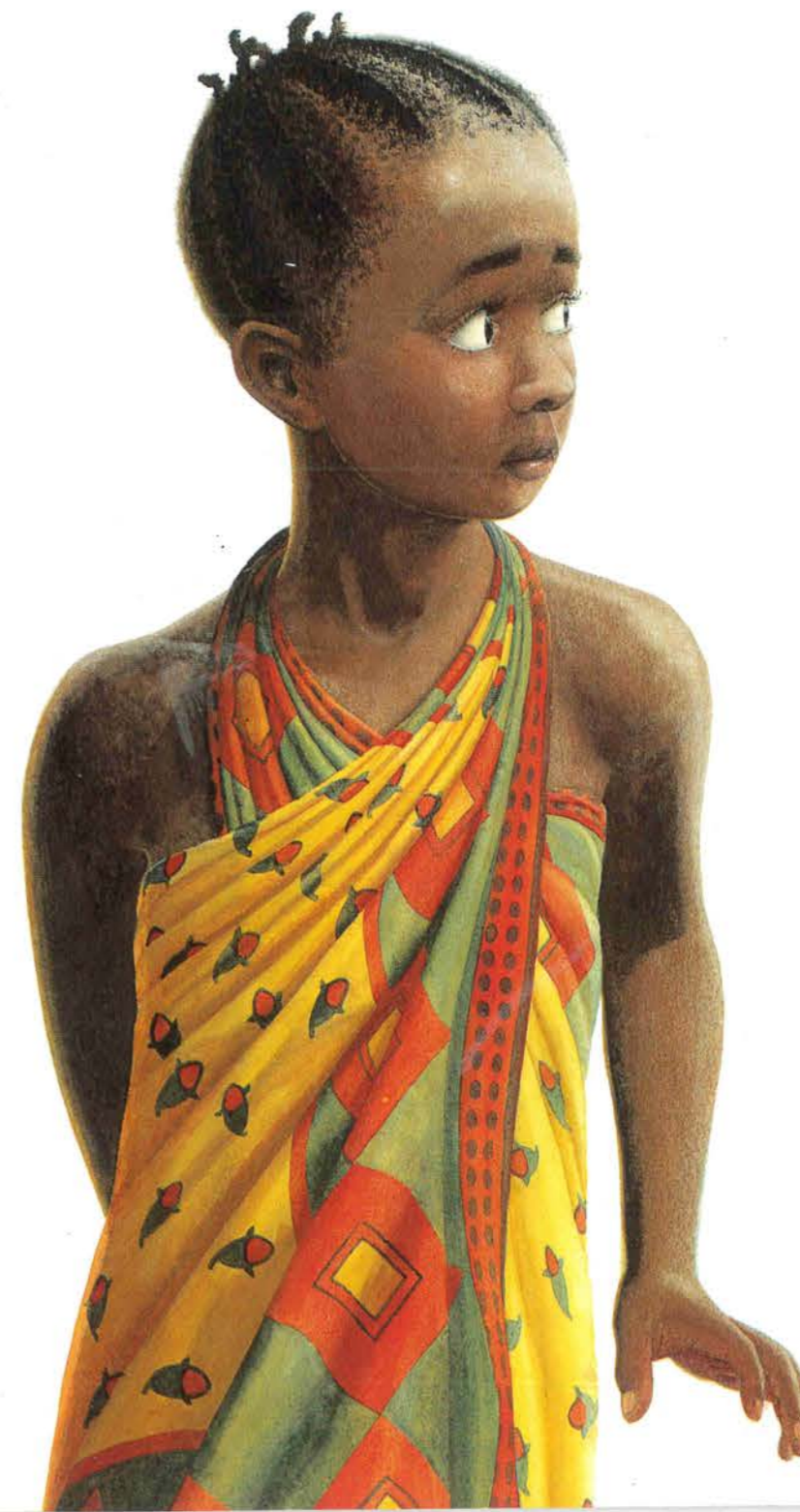
Jamina played hunters. She shot the mighty elephant; she tracked a rhino deep into the forest; she stalked a pride of lions.

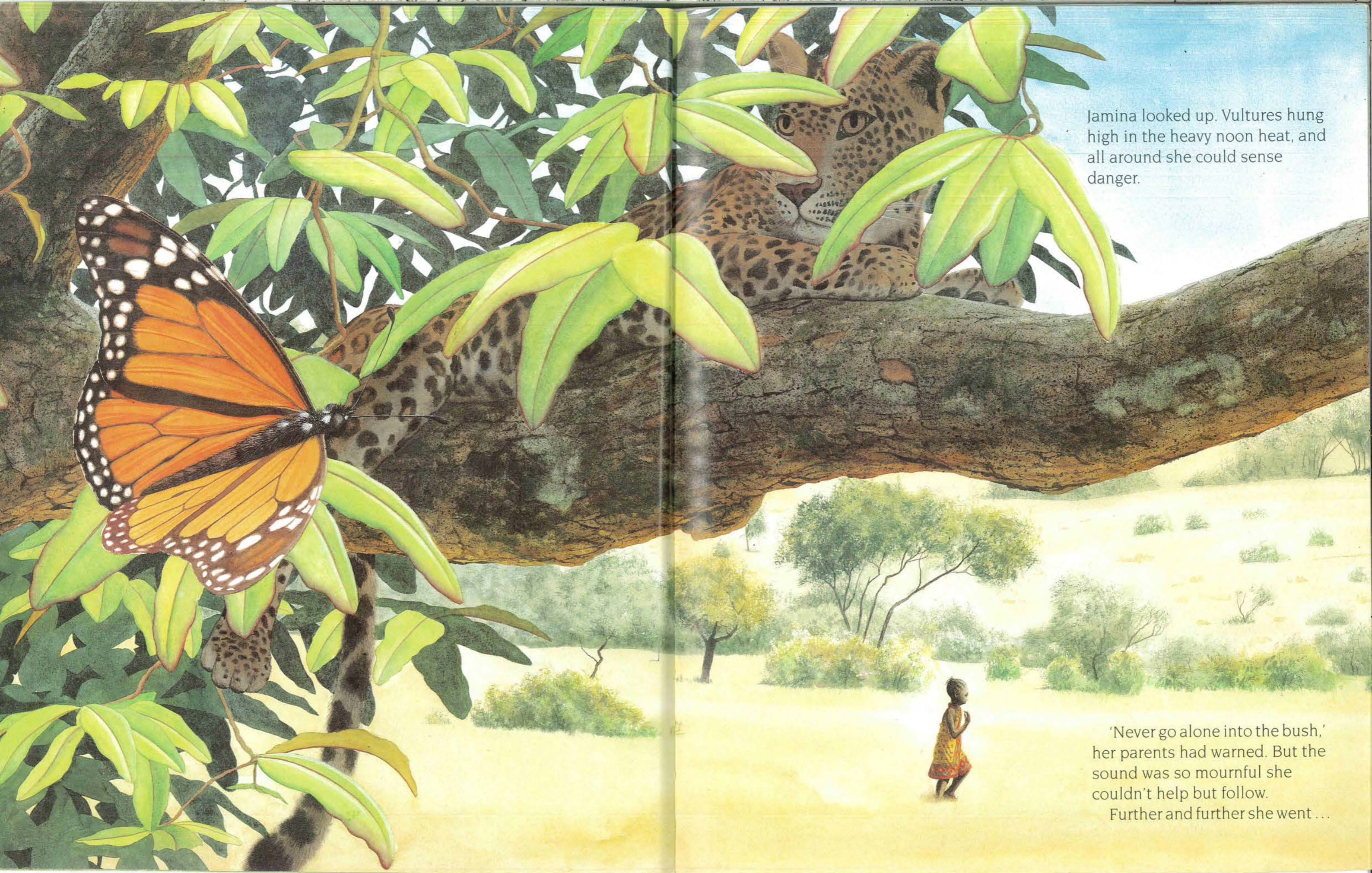
Then she turned back to look for her grandfather. But she had wandered too far into the bush and the old man and the honey bird were nowhere to be seen.

She called out but there was silence.



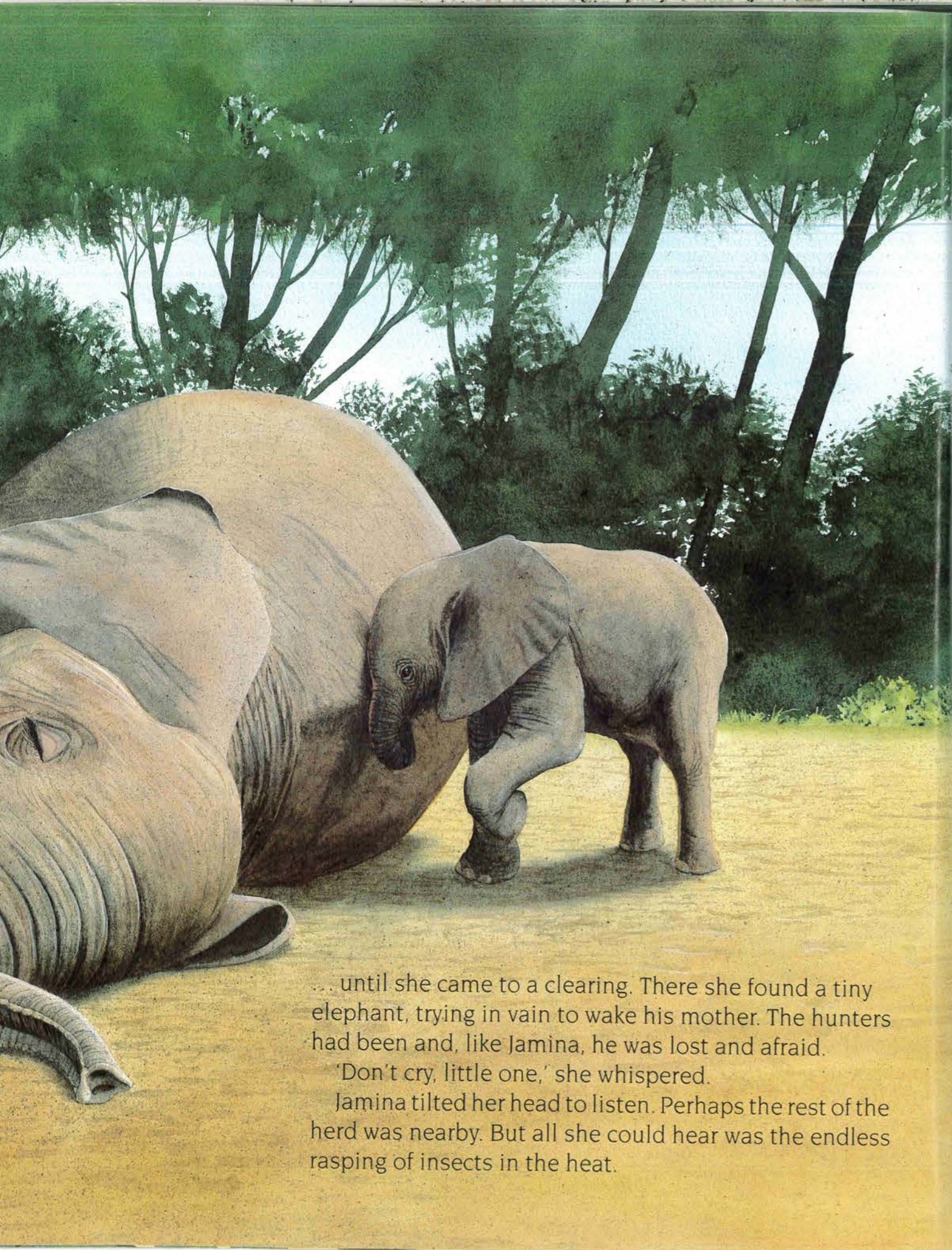
Then, far away on the wind, Jamina heard a sound. A sad and desperate cry that tugged at her heart. She held her breath and listened.





Jamina looked up. Vultures hung high in the heavy noon heat, and all around she could sense danger.

'Never go alone into the bush,' her parents had warned. But the sound was so mournful she couldn't help but follow. Further and further she went ...



... until she came to a clearing. There she found a tiny elephant, trying in vain to wake his mother. The hunters had been and, like Jamina, he was lost and afraid.

'Don't cry, little one,' she whispered.

Jamina tilted her head to listen. Perhaps the rest of the herd was nearby. But all she could hear was the endless rasping of insects in the heat.

She knew the baby would not survive alone. She could try to lead him home with her and perhaps they would find his family on the way.

But the baby was frightened.

'I am not a hunter,' she said softly. For a long time she spoke to the elephant until he grew calm and nuzzled her with his trunk.

