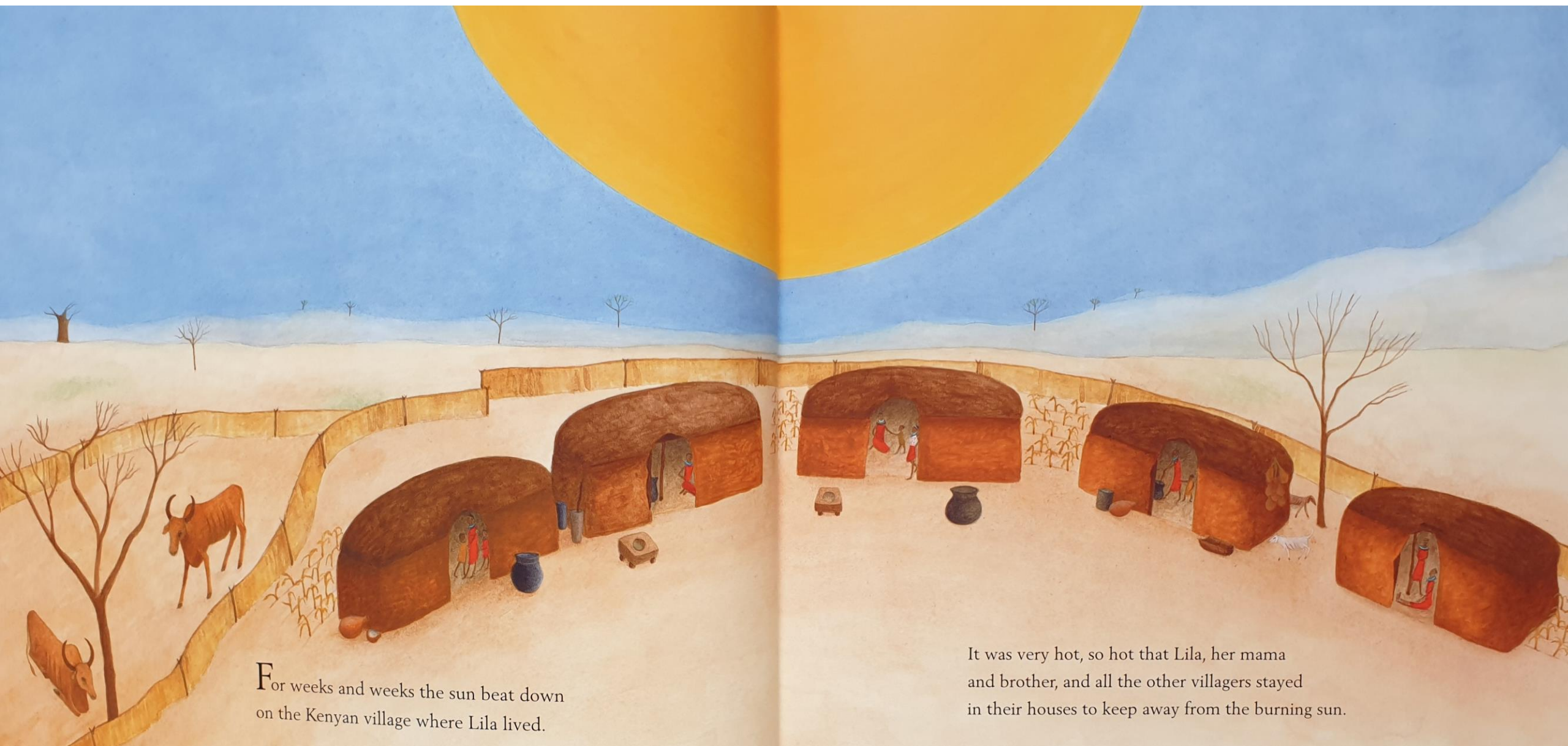


Lila and the Secret of Rain

David Conway & Jude Daly





For weeks and weeks the sun beat down on the Kenyan village where Lila lived.

It was very hot, so hot that Lila, her mama and brother, and all the other villagers stayed in their houses to keep away from the burning sun.



It was too hot to gather firewood,



too hot to weed

the village garden,



and even too hot to milk the cow.



One night Lila overheard her mama talking about the well that had dried up and the crops that were failing. "Without water there can be no life," Lila heard her mama say.



Lila wanted so much for the sun to stop shining and for the rain to come. But the sun did not stop shining and the rain did not come.

One evening Lila's grandfather told her a story about a man that he'd met once when he was a boy – a man who had told him the secret of rain.

"You must climb the highest mountain," said the man to Lila's grandfather, "and tell the sky the saddest thing you know."

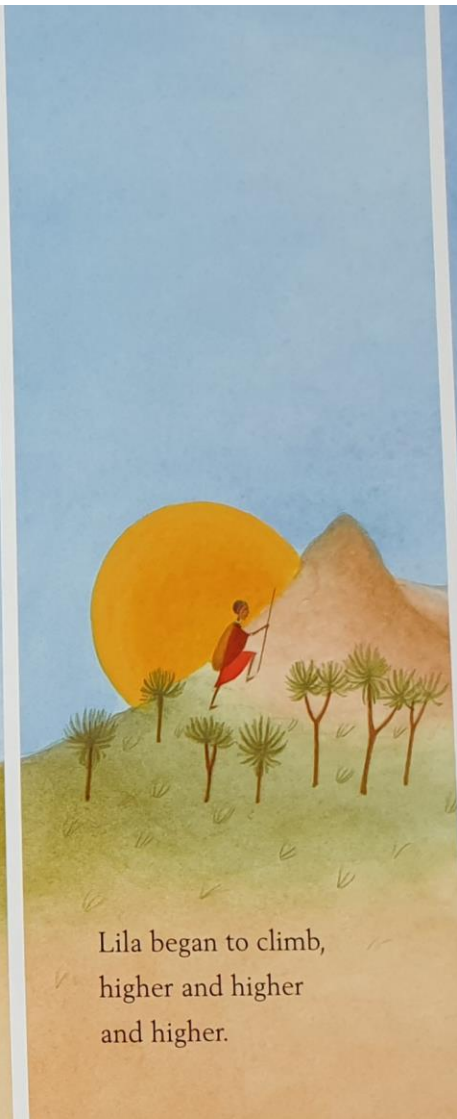




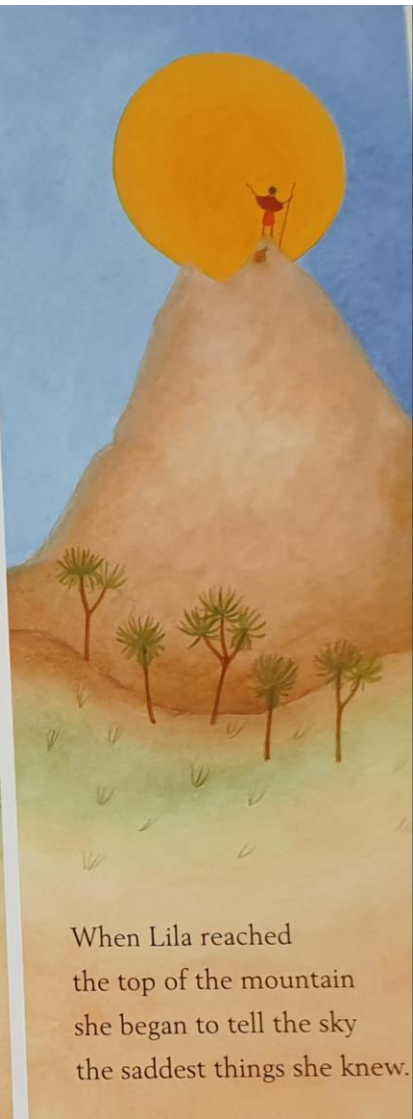
Lila listened very carefully
to what her grandfather said.
The following morning
when the sun was still asleep,
Lila left the village and
set off to find the highest
mountain she could.



Lila walked and walked
and walked, and at last
she found herself at the foot
of a very tall mountain.



Lila began to climb,
higher and higher
and higher.



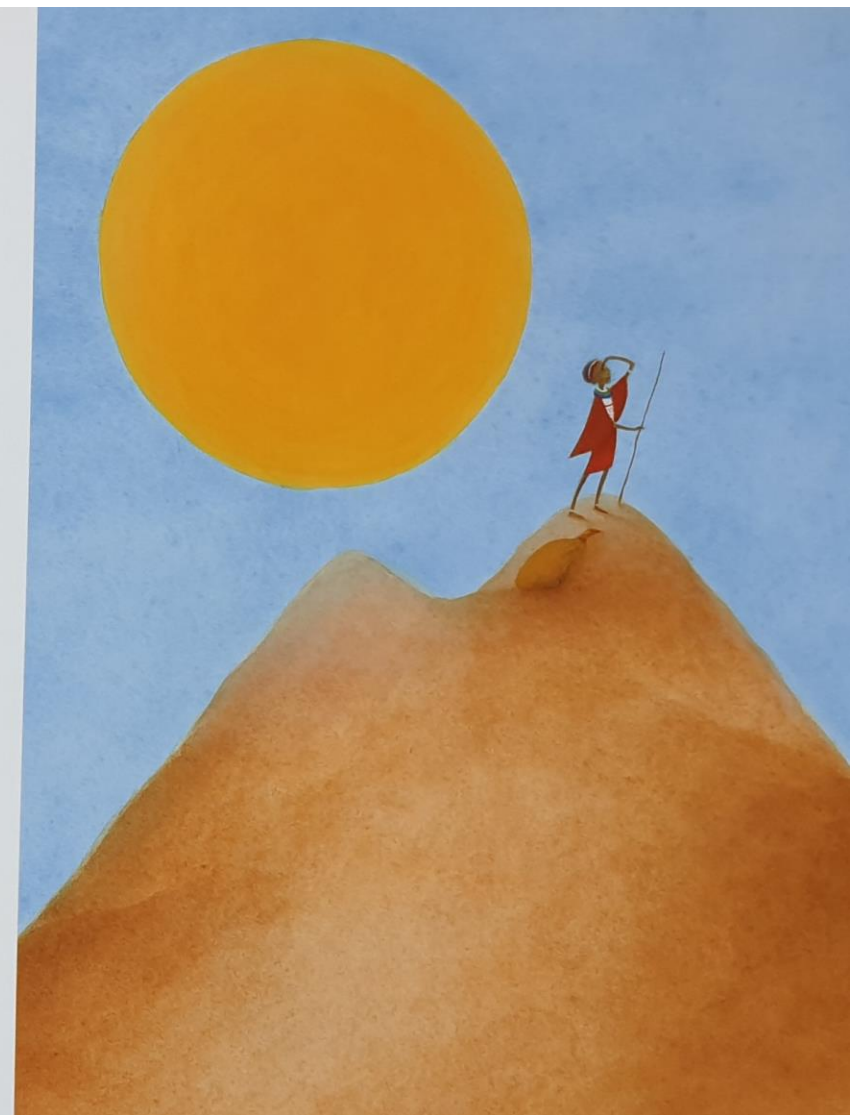
When Lila reached
the top of the mountain
she began to tell the sky
the saddest things she knew.



First, she told of the time her brother cut his leg
while chasing a chicken in the village.
Then she told of the time she burned her fingers
while helping her mama to cook.



On and on Lila went,
telling the sky the saddest
things she knew. At the end
of each one she looked
to the sky for a sign of rain,
but the sky remained blue
and the sun still shone
very brightly.

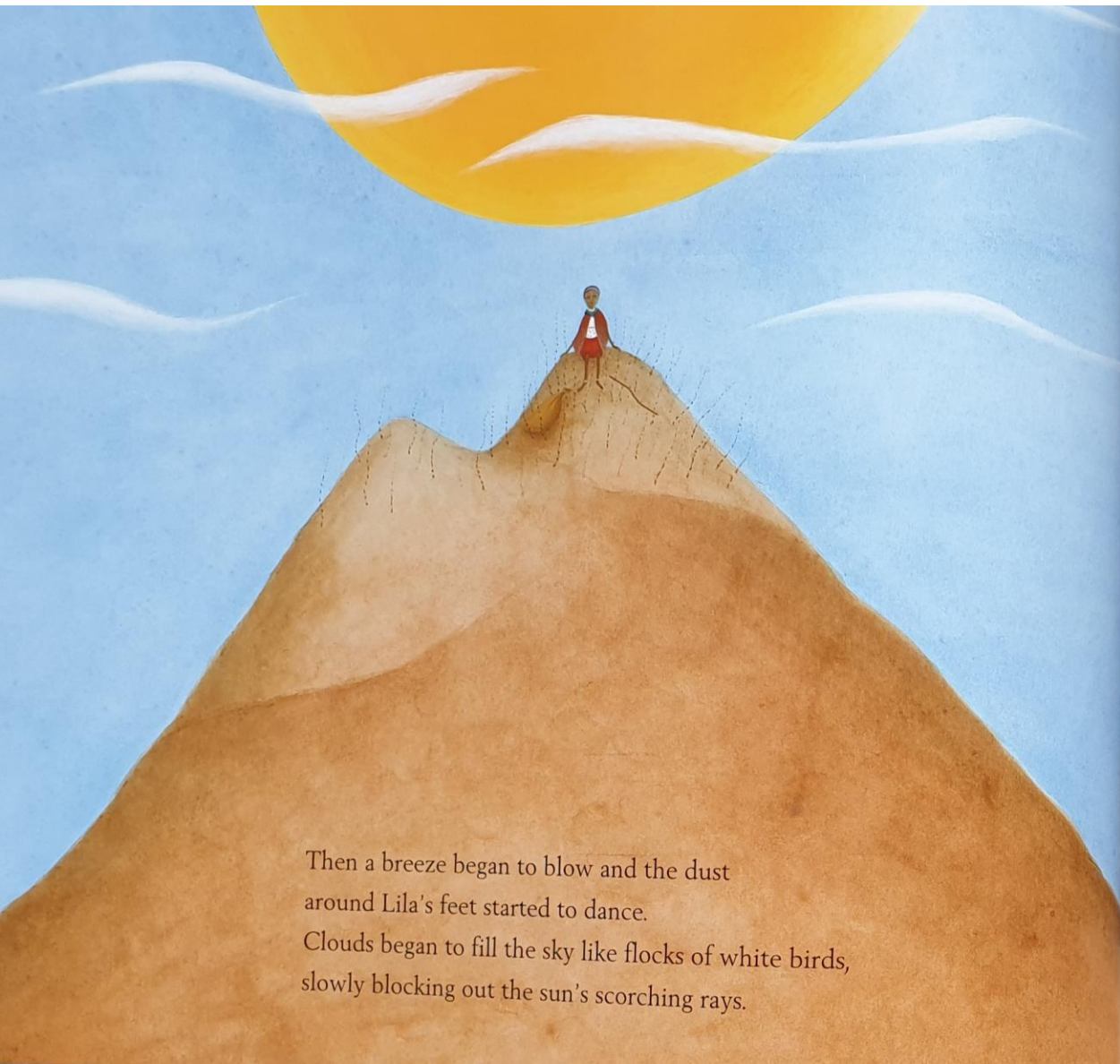




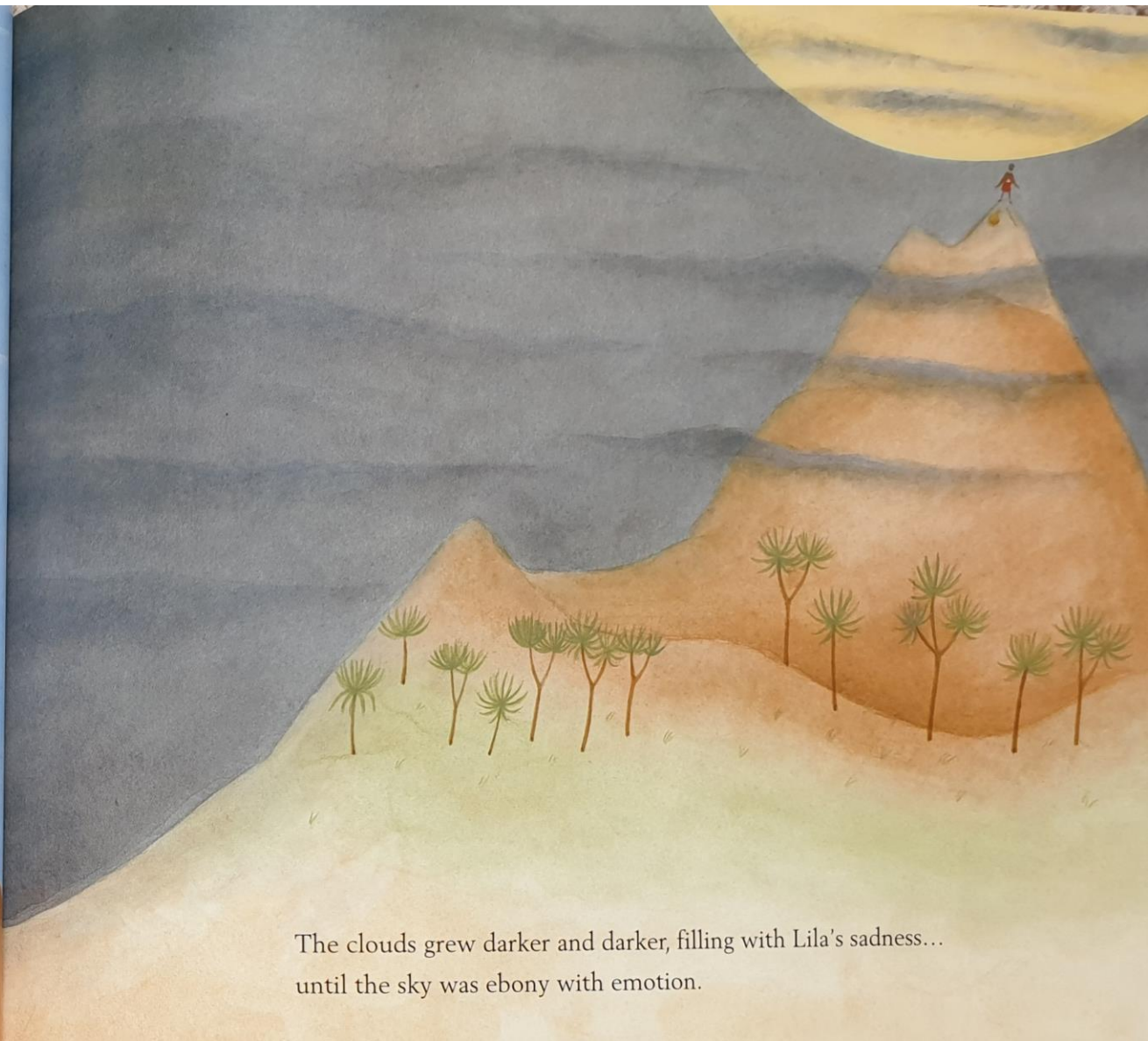
Lila began to cry.
"What can I do?" she said to the sky.
"It is too hot to collect firewood,
too hot to weed the village garden,
and too hot to milk the cow.
The well is dry and the crops are failing.
Without crops there will be no food,
without food the people in the village
will become sick, and without water
there can be no life."



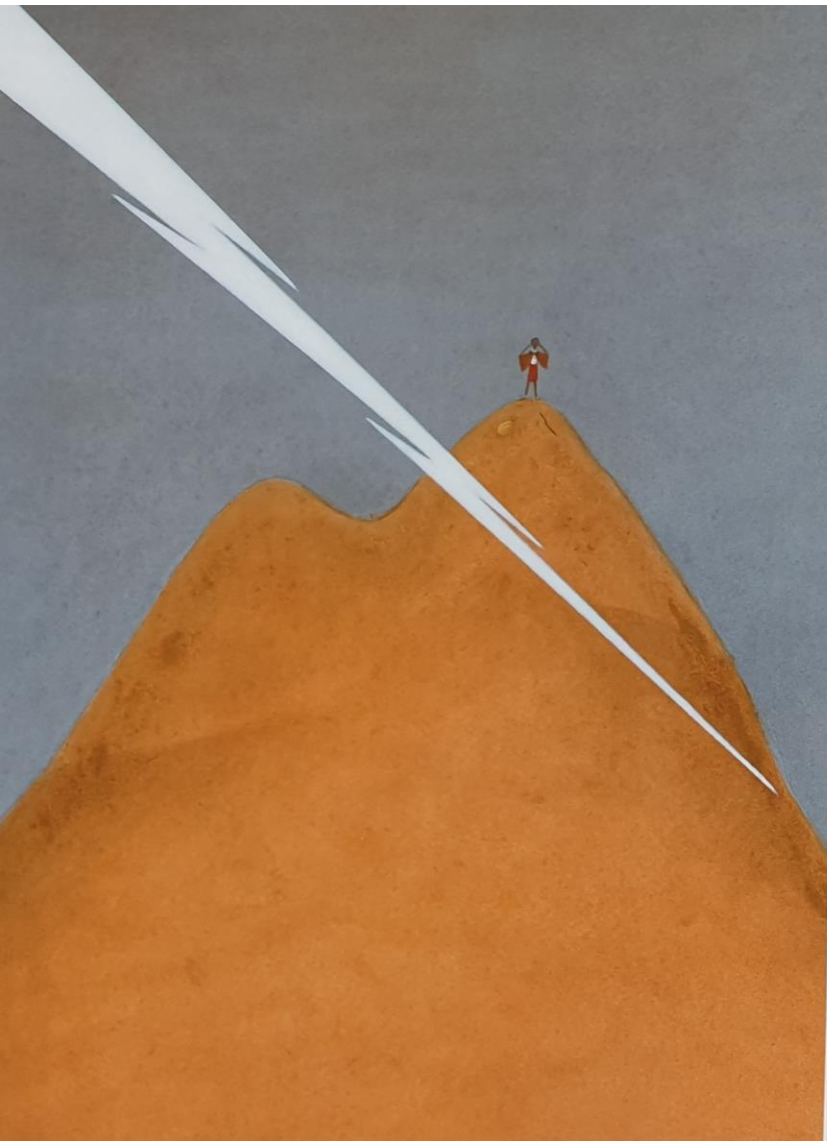
Everything on the mountaintop was silent.
Nothing could be heard except the sound of Lila weeping.



Then a breeze began to blow and the dust
around Lila's feet started to dance.
Clouds began to fill the sky like flocks of white birds,
slowly blocking out the sun's scorching rays.



The clouds grew darker and darker, filling with Lila's sadness...
until the sky was ebony with emotion.



Suddenly a flash of lightning
tore across the sky and
a loud roar of thunder
echoed around the mountain.



Lila felt the gentle touch
of a raindrop on her foot...



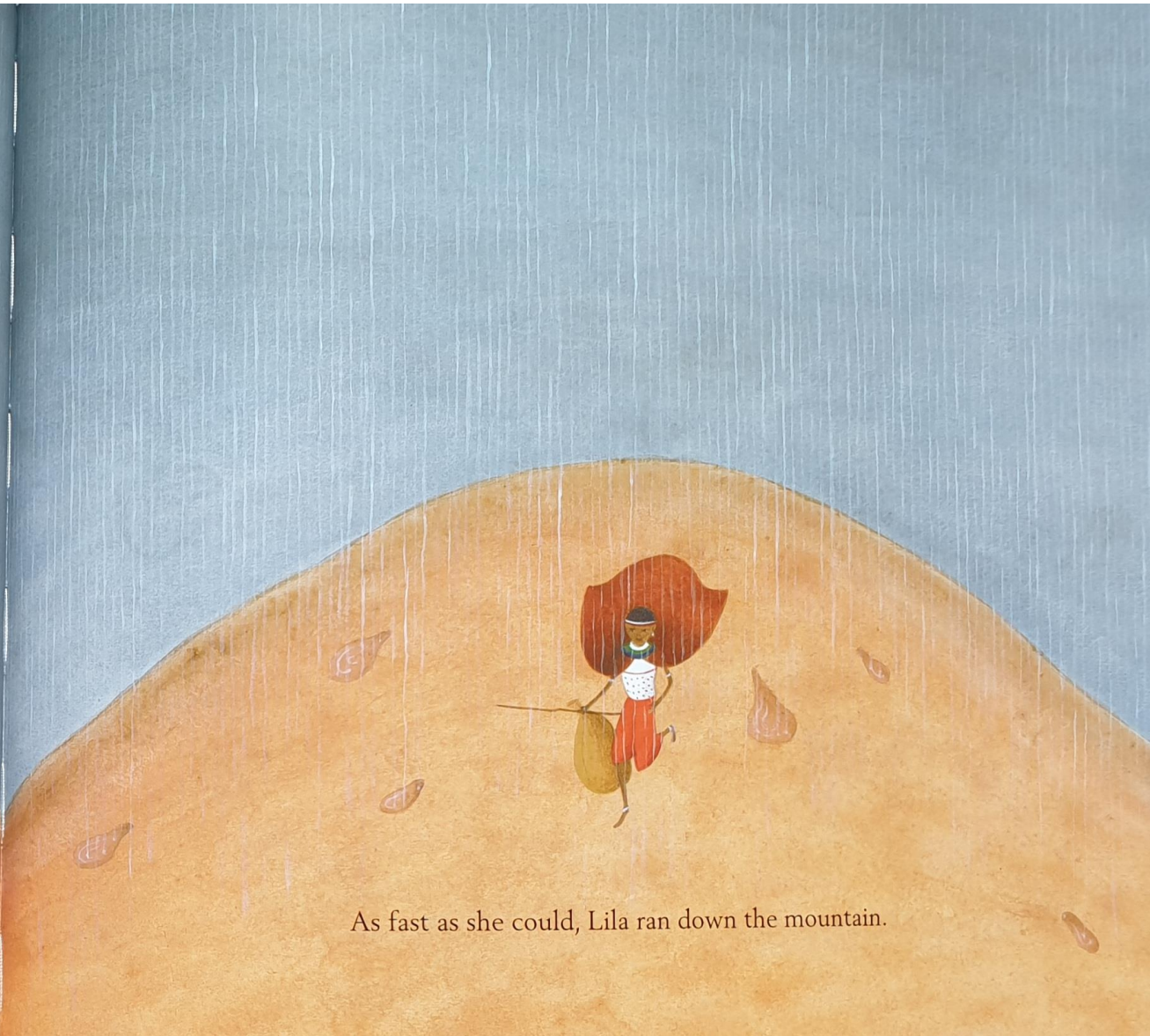
then another
and another and another



until the ground was awash
with tears of rain.



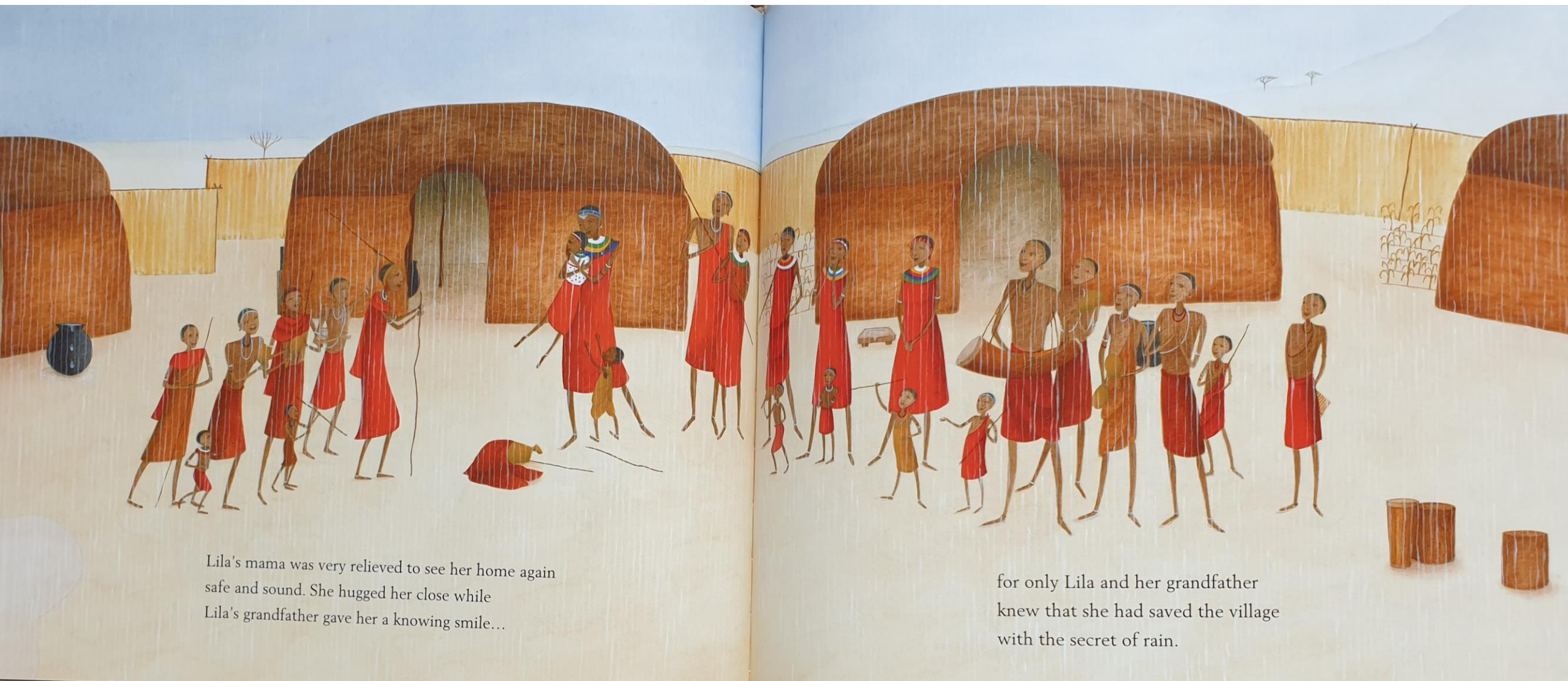
Lila joyfully lifted up her hands to the crying sky,
for each raindrop felt like one of her mama's kisses.



As fast as she could, Lila ran down the mountain.

By the time she reached home,
all the villagers were celebrating
the rain with music and dancing.





Lila's mama was very relieved to see her home again
safe and sound. She hugged her close while
Lila's grandfather gave her a knowing smile...

for only Lila and her grandfather
knew that she had saved the village
with the secret of rain.



For months the sun
has burned down on Lila's village.
It is too hot to gather firewood, or weed the garden.
It is even too hot to milk the cow.
Without rain the well will run dry and the crops will fail.
Lila is so worried that when her grandfather
whispers the secret of rain to her, she sets off
to talk to the sky herself.

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