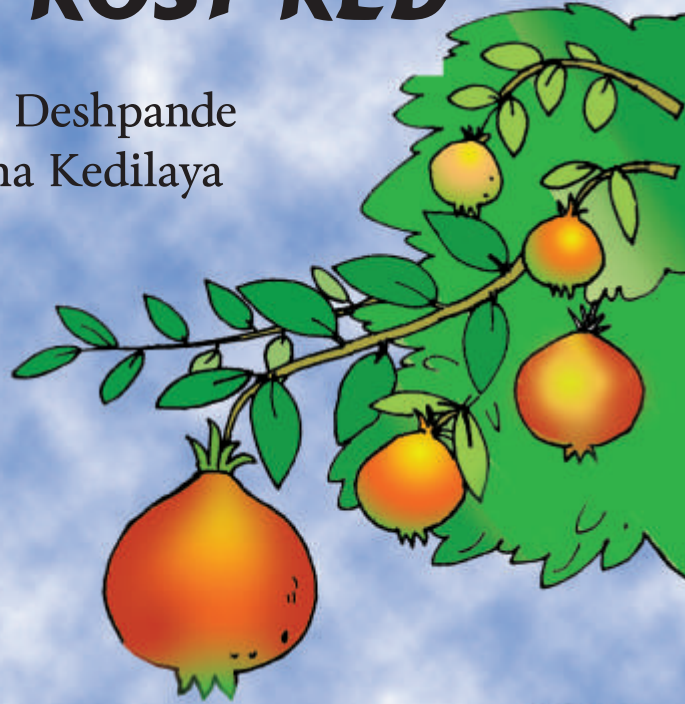




RUBY RED, ROSY RED

Jayashree Deshpande
Srikrishna Kedilaya



Original Story in Kannada ‘**Daalimbeya Ruchi**’ by Jayashree Deshpande

Illustrations & Design: Srikrishna Kedilaya

‘**Ruby Red, Rosy Red**’ – English Translation by Dr. Divaspathy Hegde

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Raju lived in the city. But in the summer, when school was out, he headed straight for his Ajja's farm in the village. One summer evening, Raju and Ajja went on one of their regular evening walks to an orchard a little outside the village. A cool breeze was blowing, and green fields lined both sides of the road.



The orchard was full of fruit trees.
Aja and Raju walked through the
orchard, admiring them.

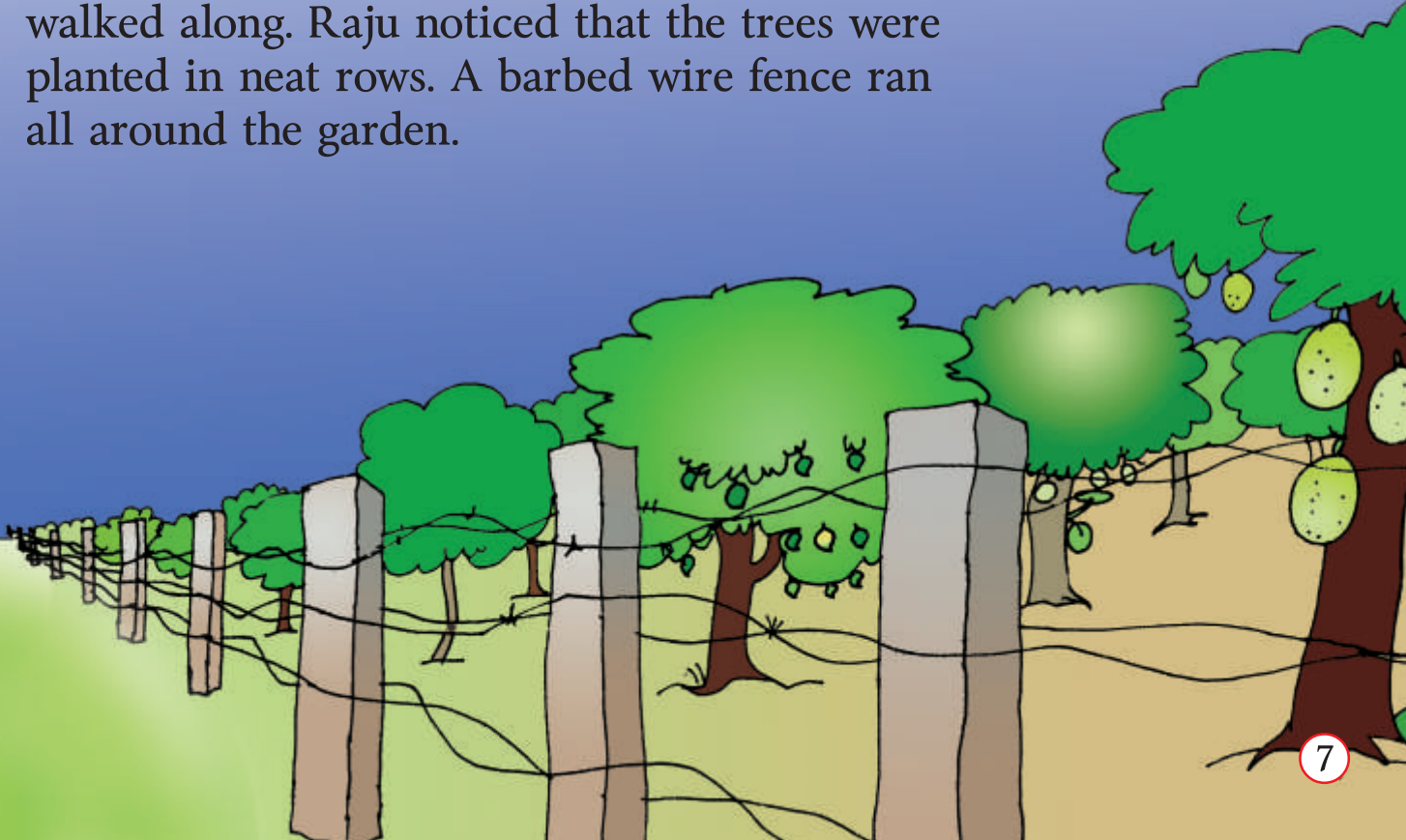


A large canal ran along one side of the orchard. Several little canals flowed out of the large one, watering all the trees. Raju could not resist stepping into the cool, crystal-clear water.

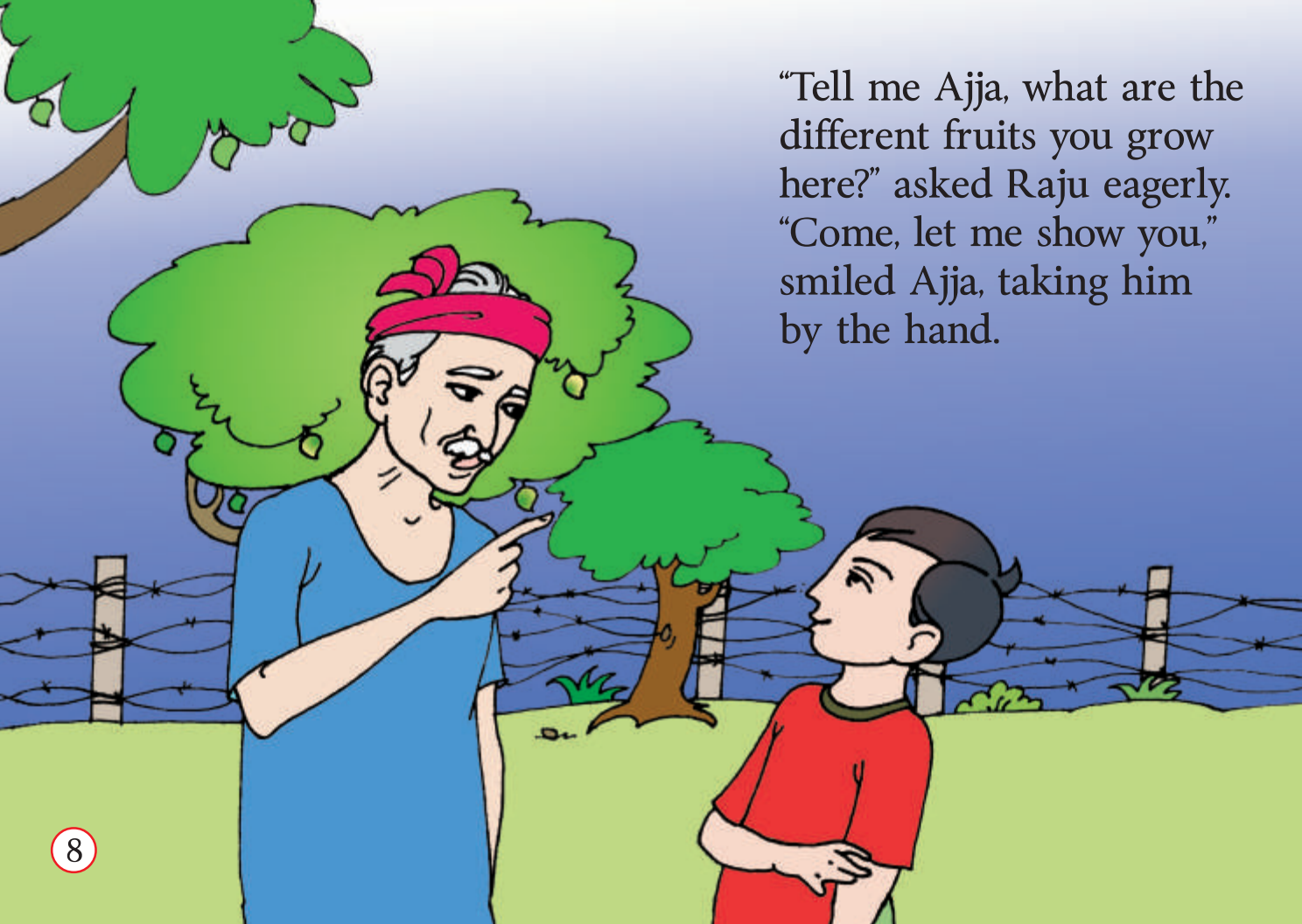




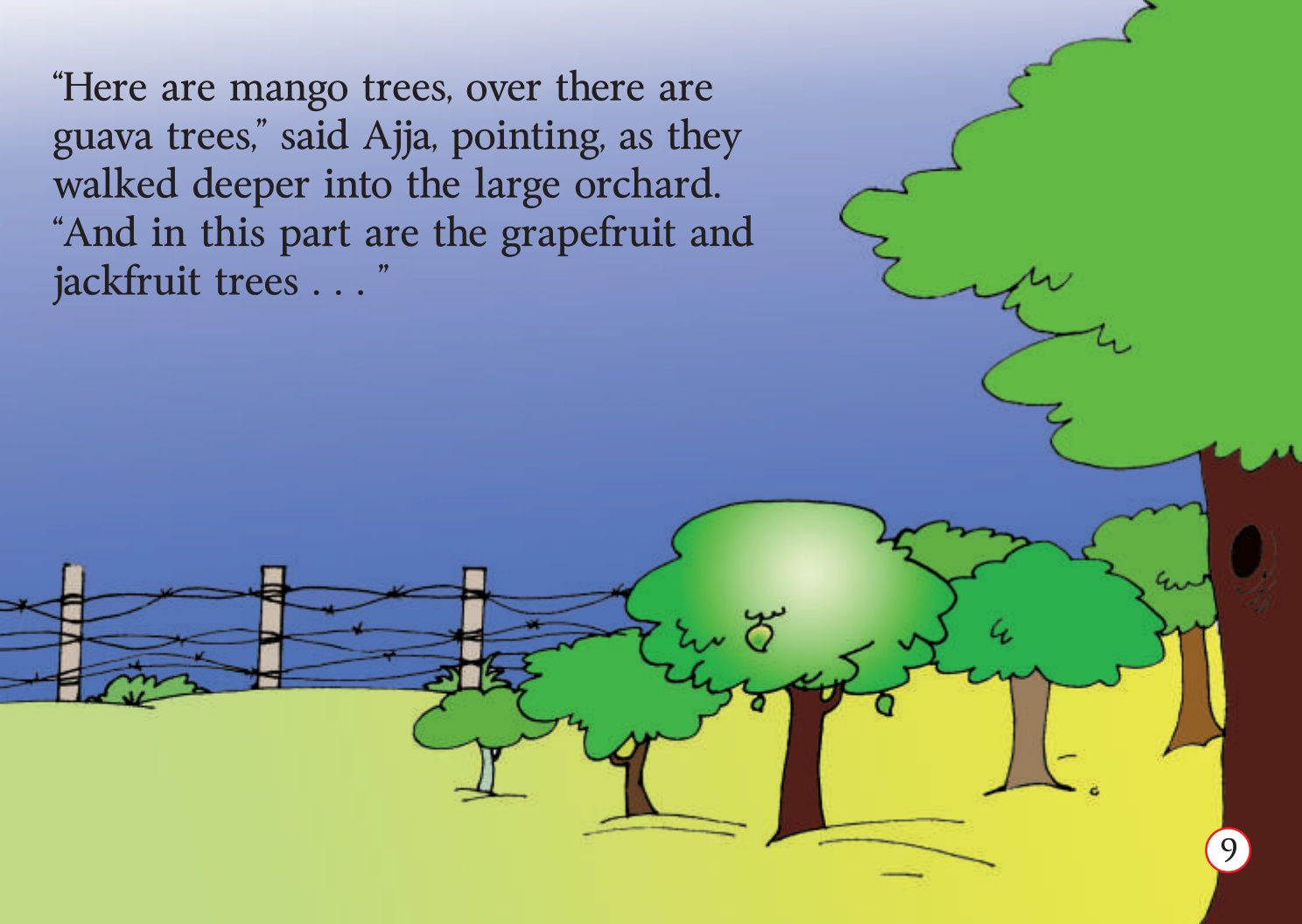
“We have grown many different kinds of fruit trees in this orchard,” said Ajja proudly, as they walked along. Raju noticed that the trees were planted in neat rows. A barbed wire fence ran all around the garden.

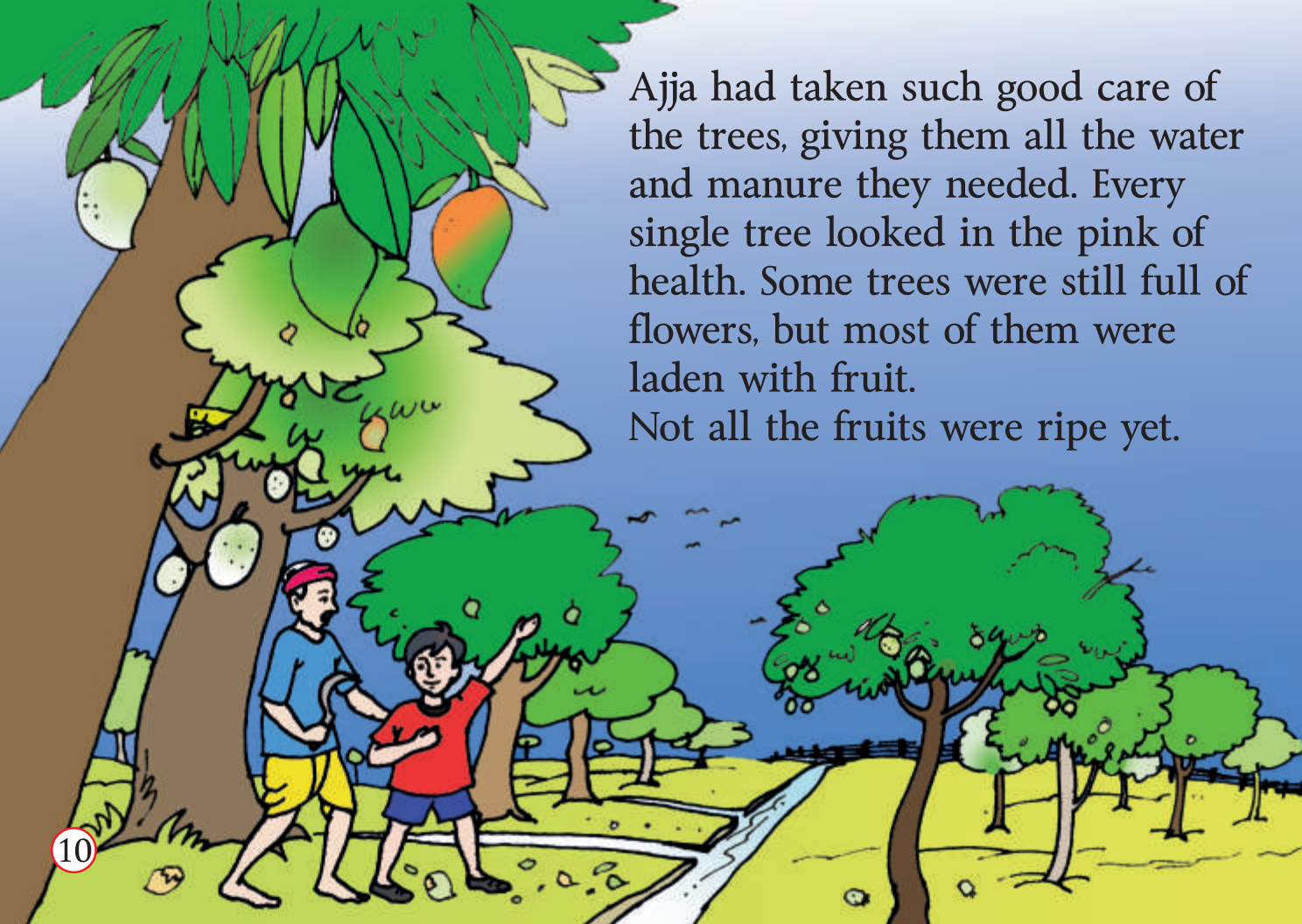


“Tell me Ajja, what are the different fruits you grow here?” asked Raju eagerly. “Come, let me show you,” smiled Ajja, taking him by the hand.



“Here are mango trees, over there are guava trees,” said Aija, pointing, as they walked deeper into the large orchard. “And in this part are the grapefruit and jackfruit trees . . .”





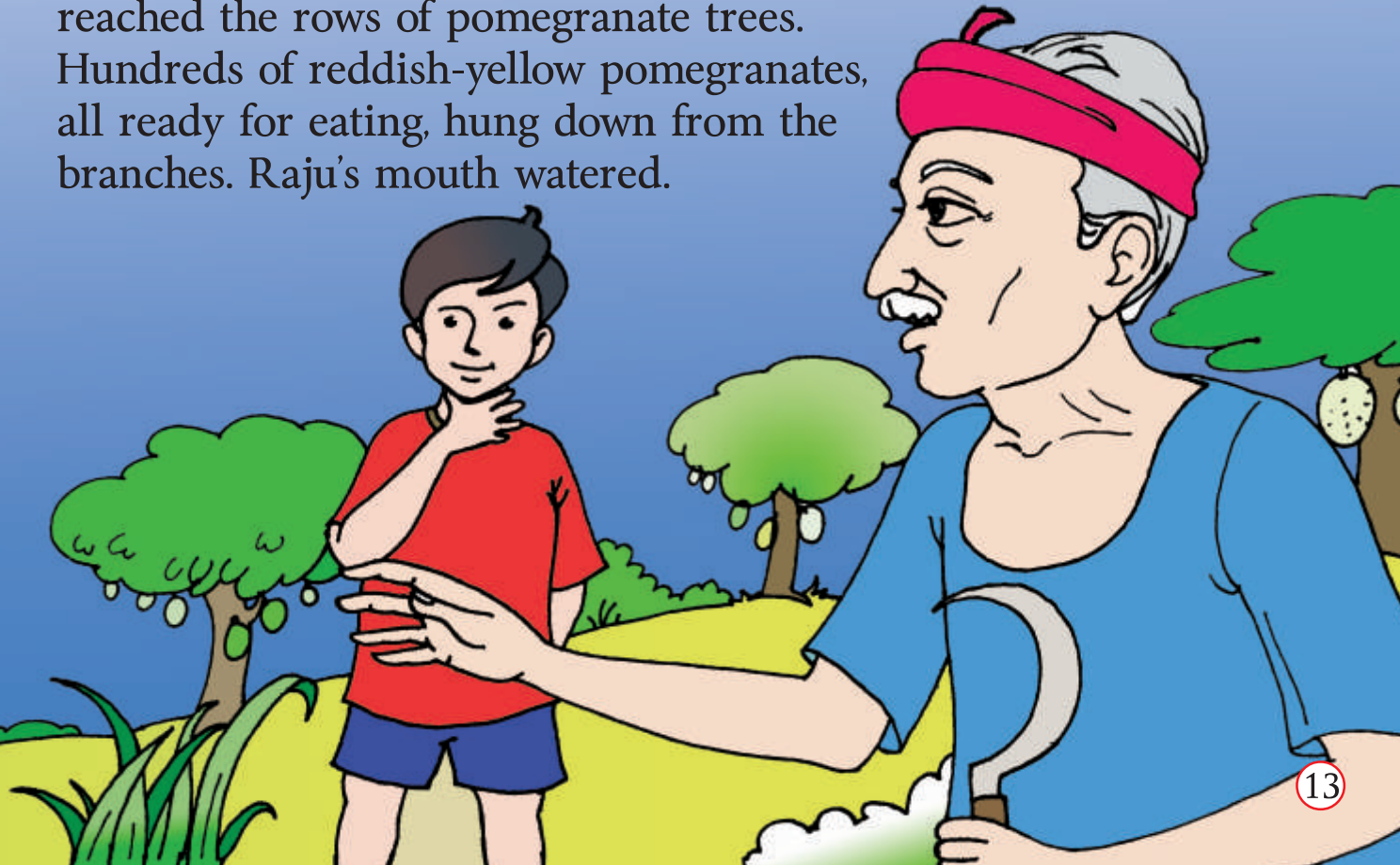
Ajja had taken such good care of the trees, giving them all the water and manure they needed. Every single tree looked in the pink of health. Some trees were still full of flowers, but most of them were laden with fruit. Not all the fruits were ripe yet.

Under the trees were plenty of half-eaten fruit that monkeys and birds had feasted on before throwing to the ground.

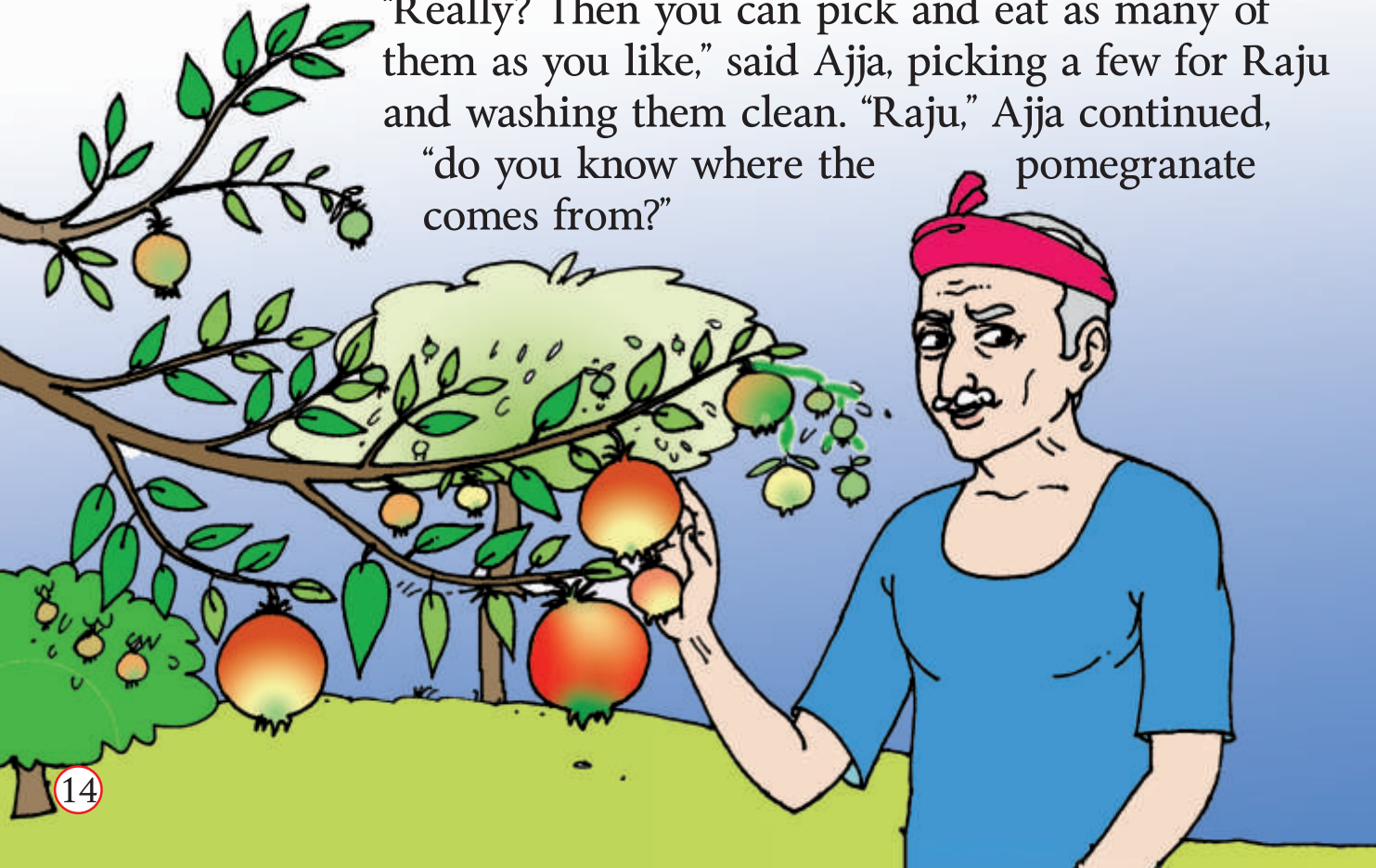




Ajja and Raju kept walking until they reached the rows of pomegranate trees. Hundreds of reddish-yellow pomegranates, all ready for eating, hung down from the branches. Raju's mouth watered.



“Oh, Ajja, this is my most favourite fruit in the world!” said Raju.
“Really? Then you can pick and eat as many of them as you like,” said Ajja, picking a few for Raju and washing them clean. “Raju,” Ajja continued, “do you know where the pomegranate comes from?”



“No, Ajja, tell me,” said Raju eagerly.
He loved his Ajja’s nature lessons.

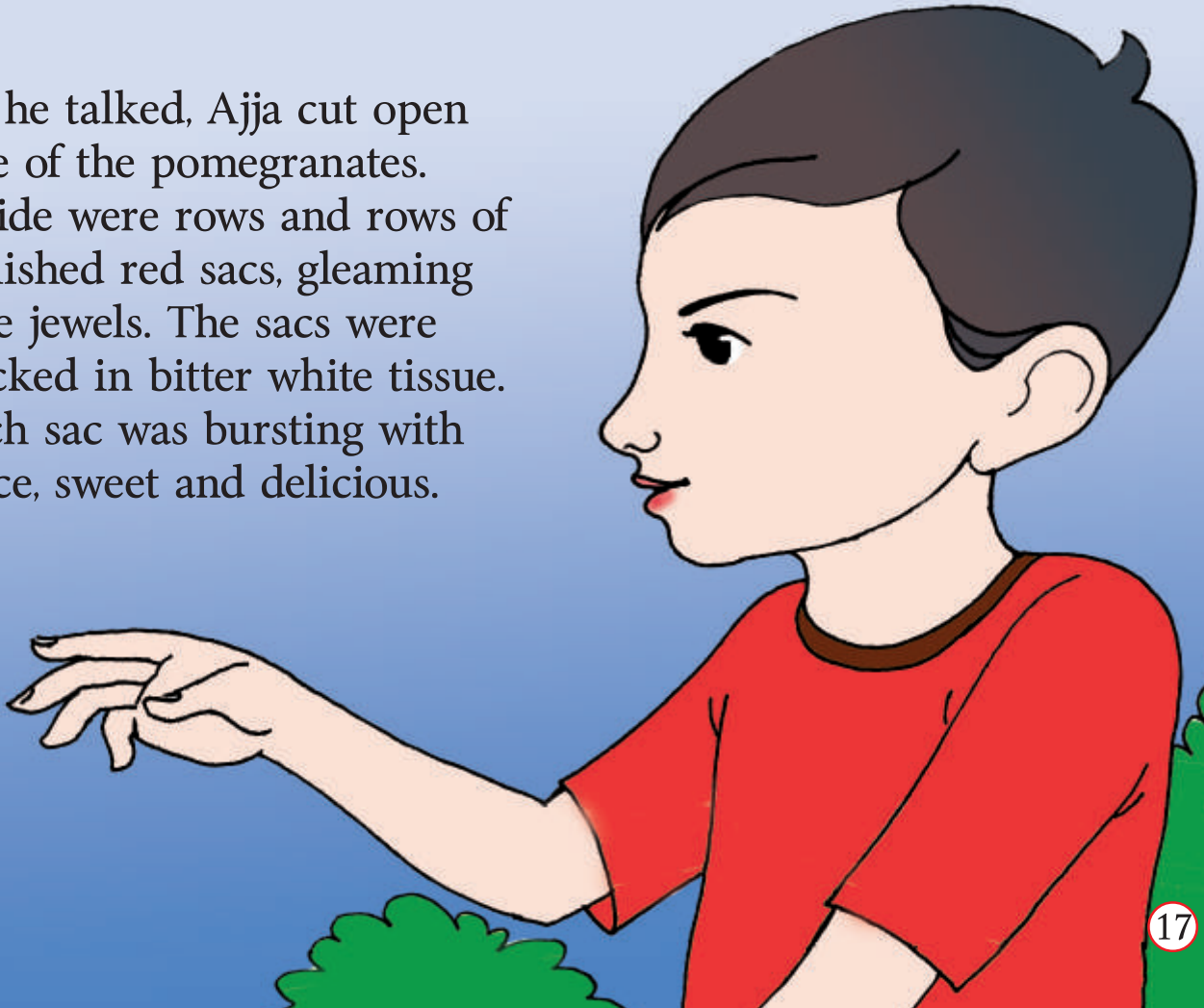
“Well,” replied Ajja, “the pomegranate was first grown in countries like Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan before it made its way to India.”



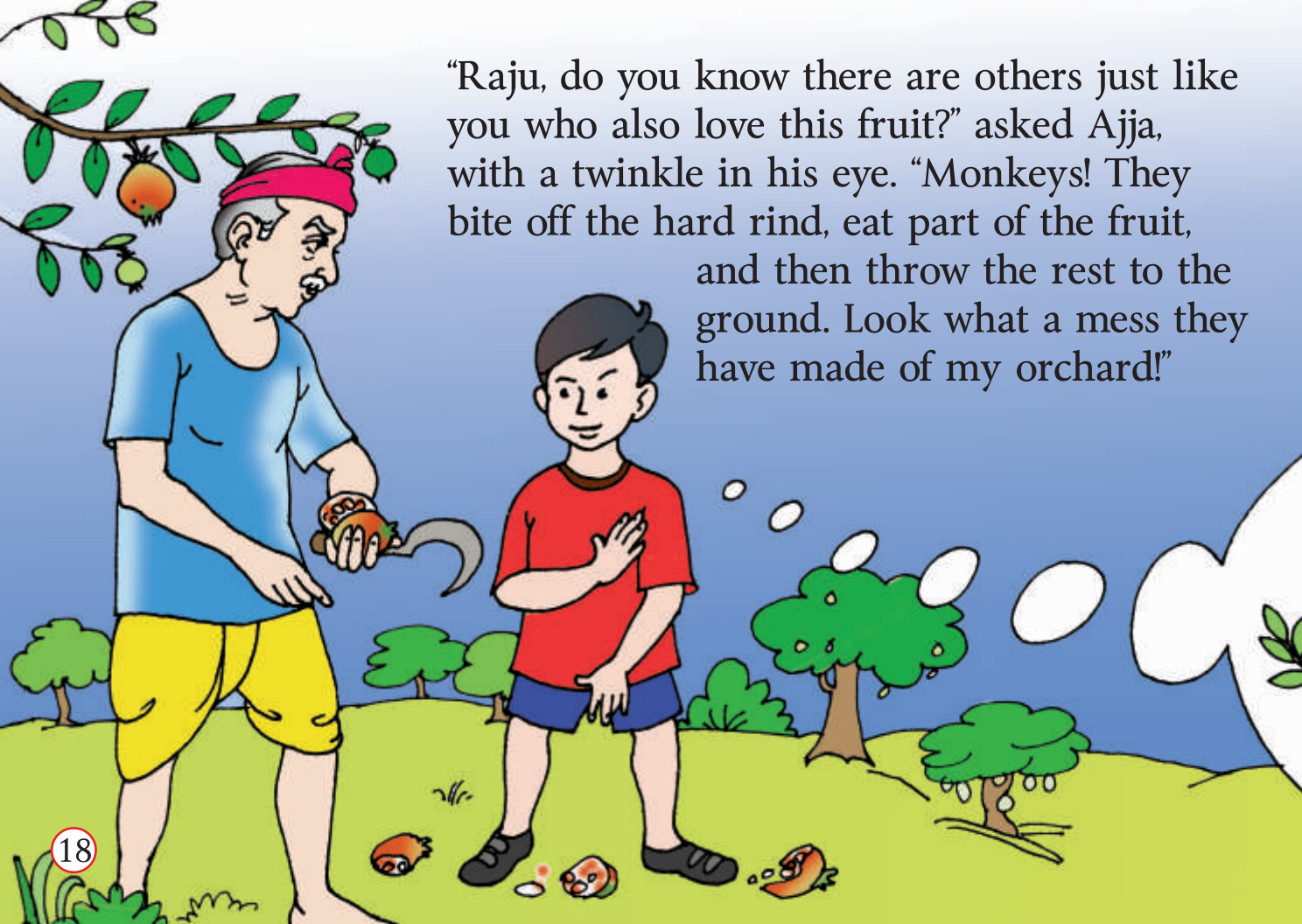
“People here loved it so much that they started growing it themselves. Now you can buy pomegranates anywhere in the country.”



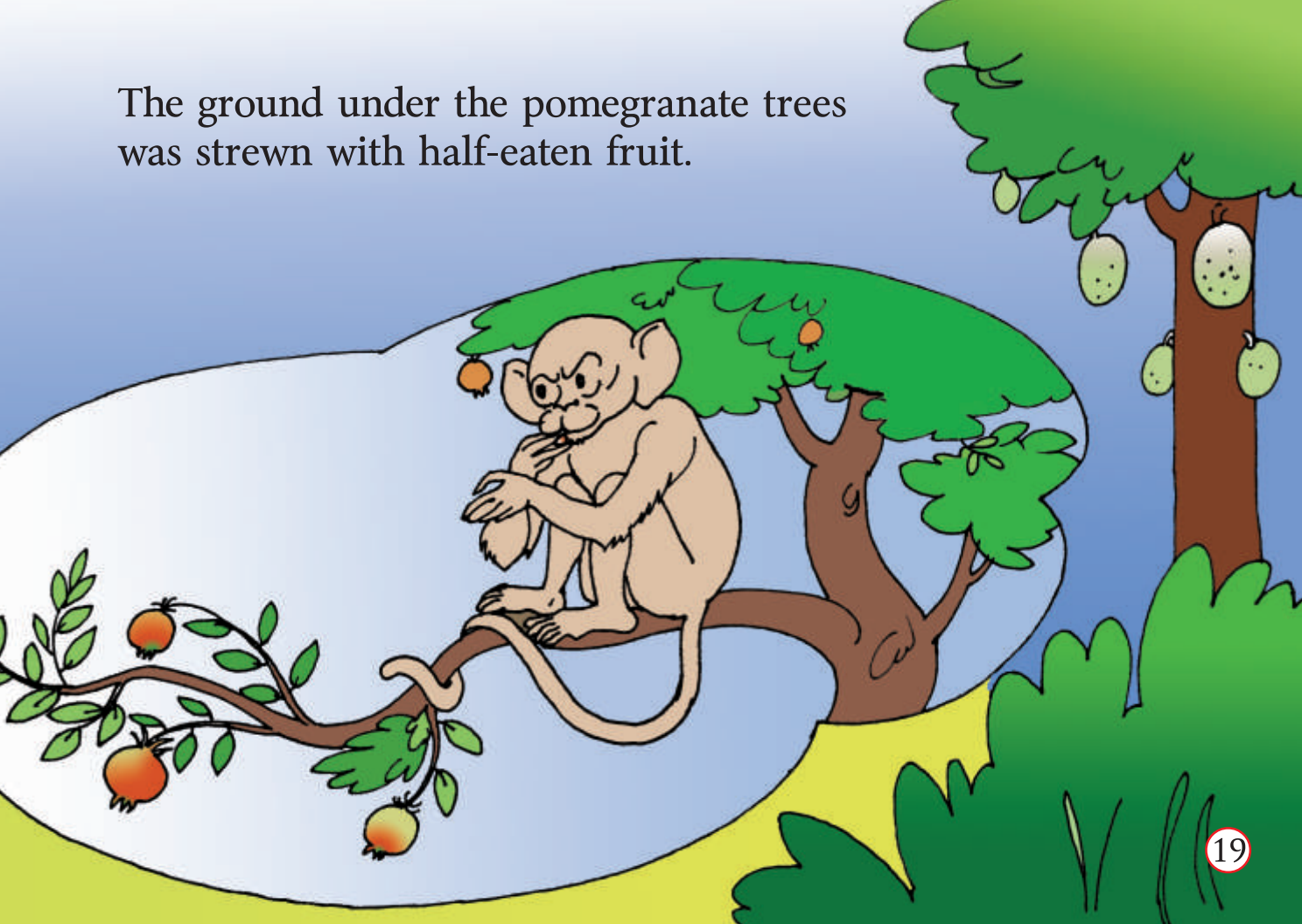
As he talked, Ajja cut open one of the pomegranates. Inside were rows and rows of polished red sacs, gleaming like jewels. The sacs were packed in bitter white tissue. Each sac was bursting with juice, sweet and delicious.



“Raju, do you know there are others just like you who also love this fruit?” asked Ajja, with a twinkle in his eye. “Monkeys! They bite off the hard rind, eat part of the fruit, and then throw the rest to the ground. Look what a mess they have made of my orchard!”



The ground under the pomegranate trees
was strewn with half-eaten fruit.

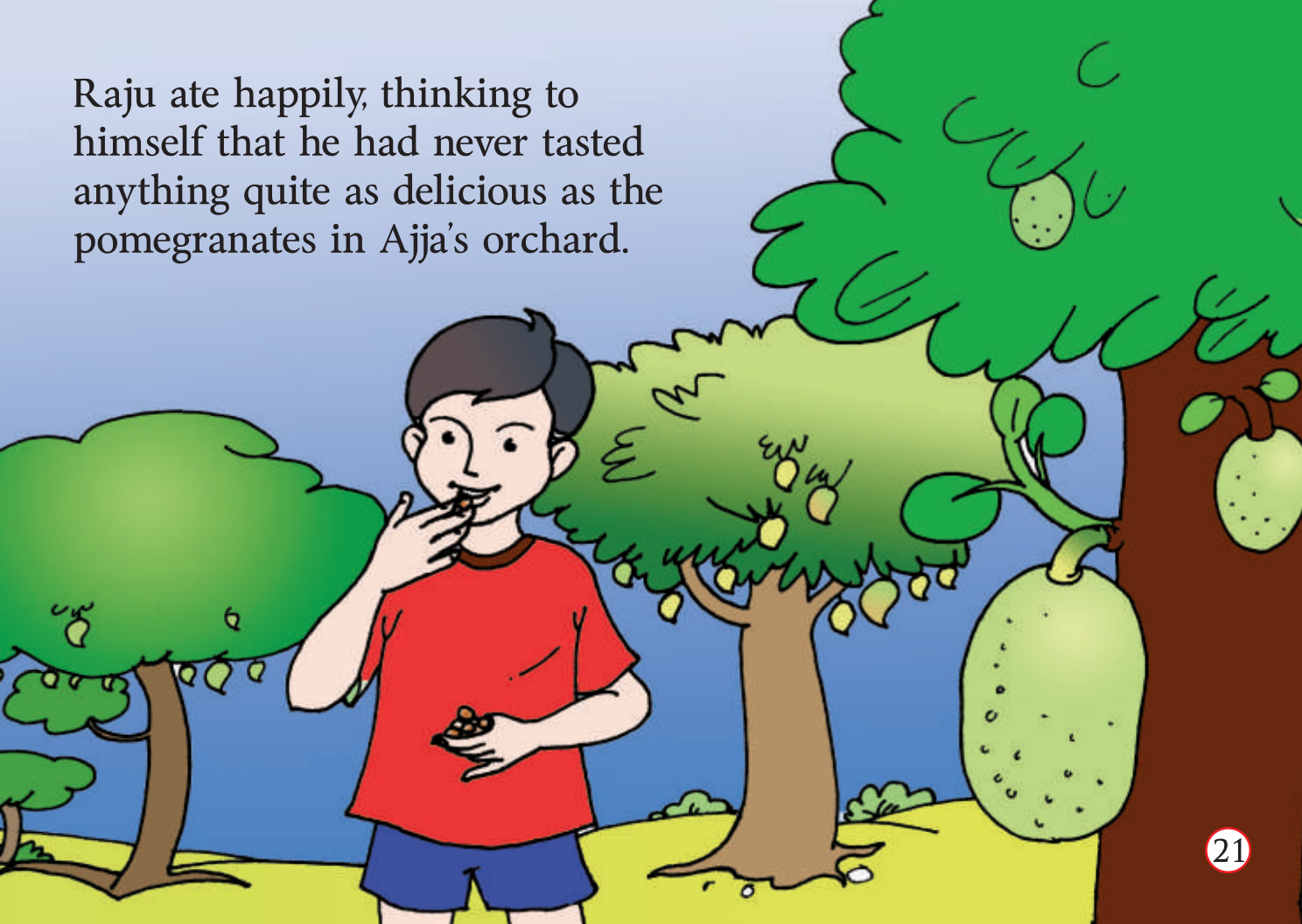


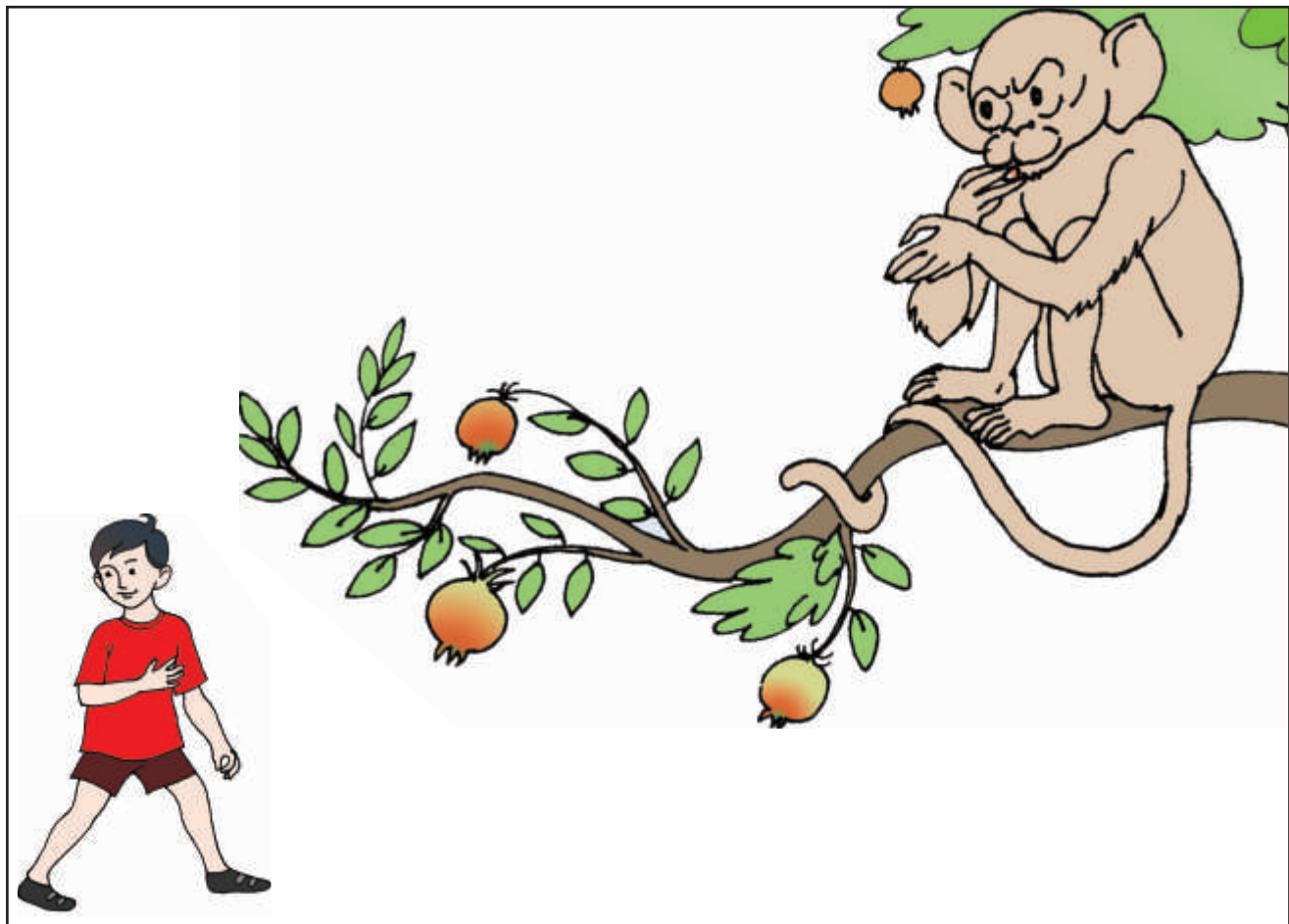
“Come, eat the pomegranate now,” said Ajja, separating the fruit from the bitter white tissue and handing it to Raju.

“It is really good for your health, and it increases your appetite.”

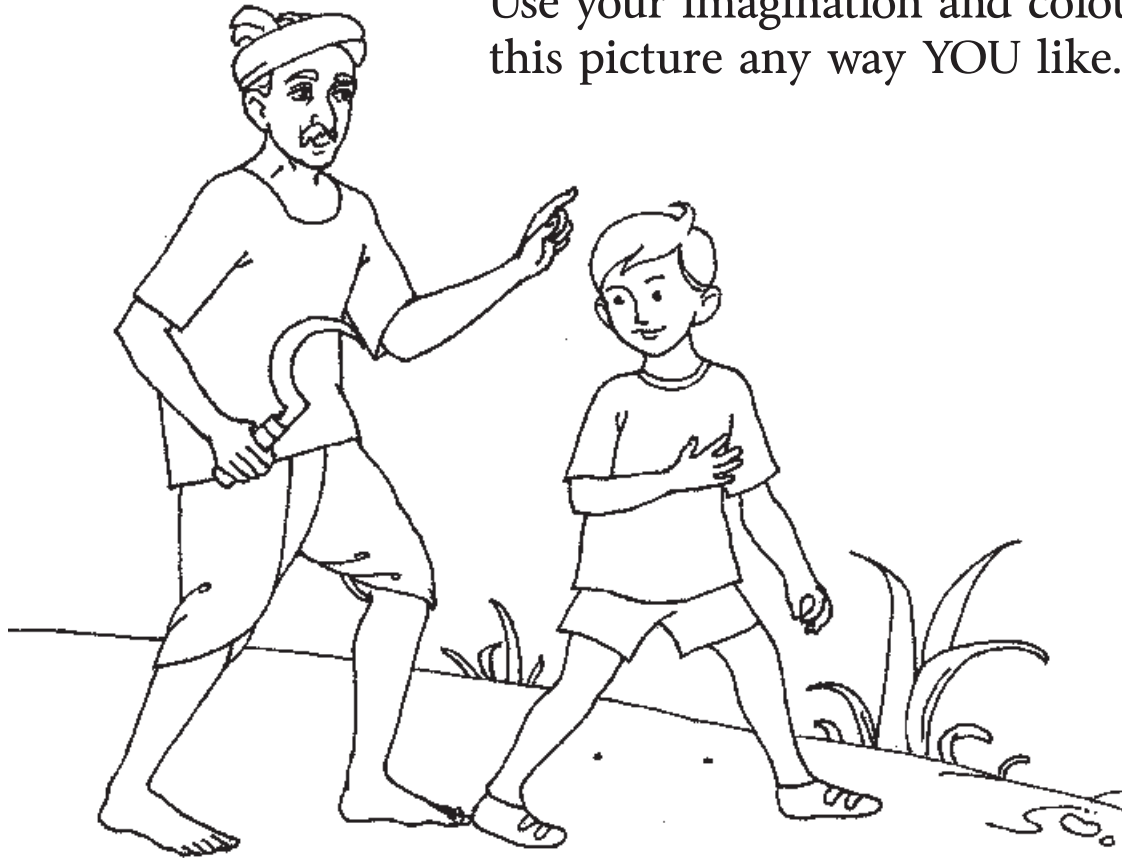


Raju ate happily, thinking to himself that he had never tasted anything quite as delicious as the pomegranates in Ajja's orchard.

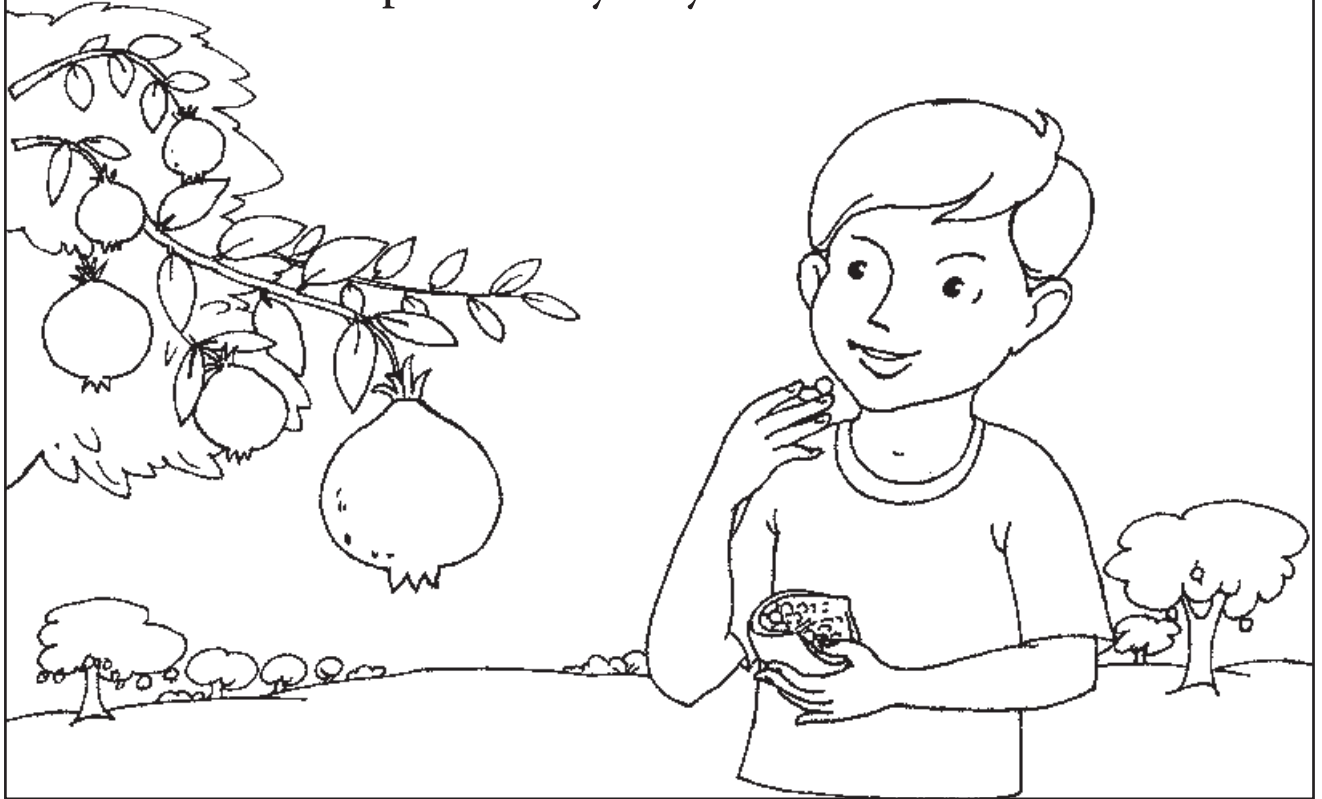




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Jayashree Deshpande is a prolific author of short stories, essays, humour and novels in Kannada. She has been writing for nearly fifteen years. Her stories have been published in all leading magazines and publications in Kannada. Jayashree has travelled widely across USA and Europe and loves writing travelogues. Her hobbies include travel, photography and reading literature.



Srikrishna Kedilaya is painter and graphic artist. He has been working in an advertising agency for nearly a decade. He has done the artwork and cover design for several books in Kannada.

Raju is a city kid who gets most of his fruit out of juice cartons and jam bottles. One day, he gets a chance to visit his grandfather's orchard, where all the trees are full of fruit. Join him on his exciting journey of discovery inside this book!

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