



This book belongs to





Iyaji, the Housegirl



Lola Shoneyin

Illustrated by KR Onimole



Iyaji lives in a village called Igede with her mother, her father and her two brothers.

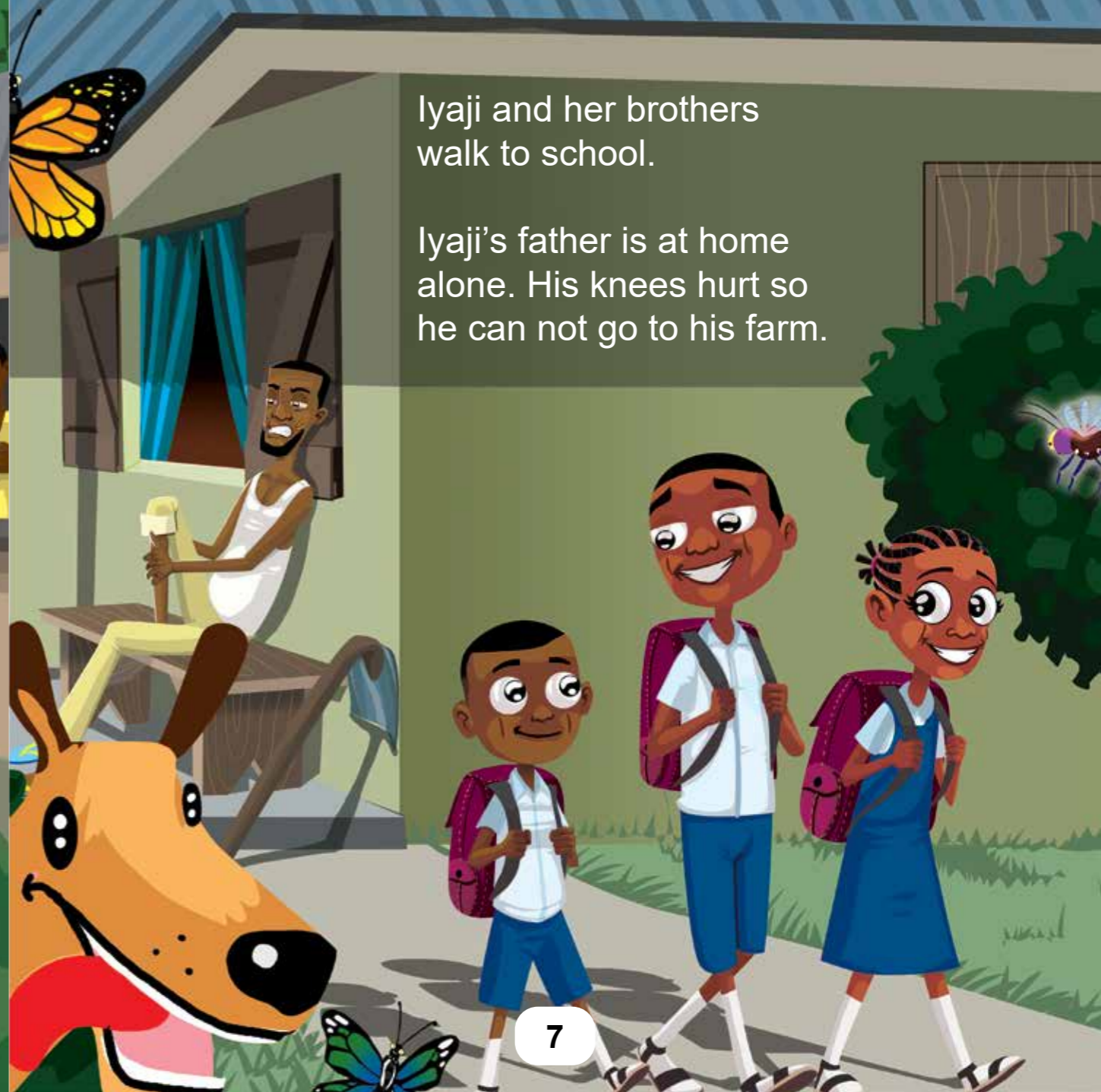
Early in the morning, Iyaji's mother heads to the market. She lights a fire and fries yam. Everybody loves her fried yam.



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Iyaji and her brothers walk to school.

Iyaji's father is at home alone. His knees hurt so he can not go to his farm.



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Iyaji loves to learn in school. She loves to read and she loves to write.



When Iyaji gets home, her father calls her name.

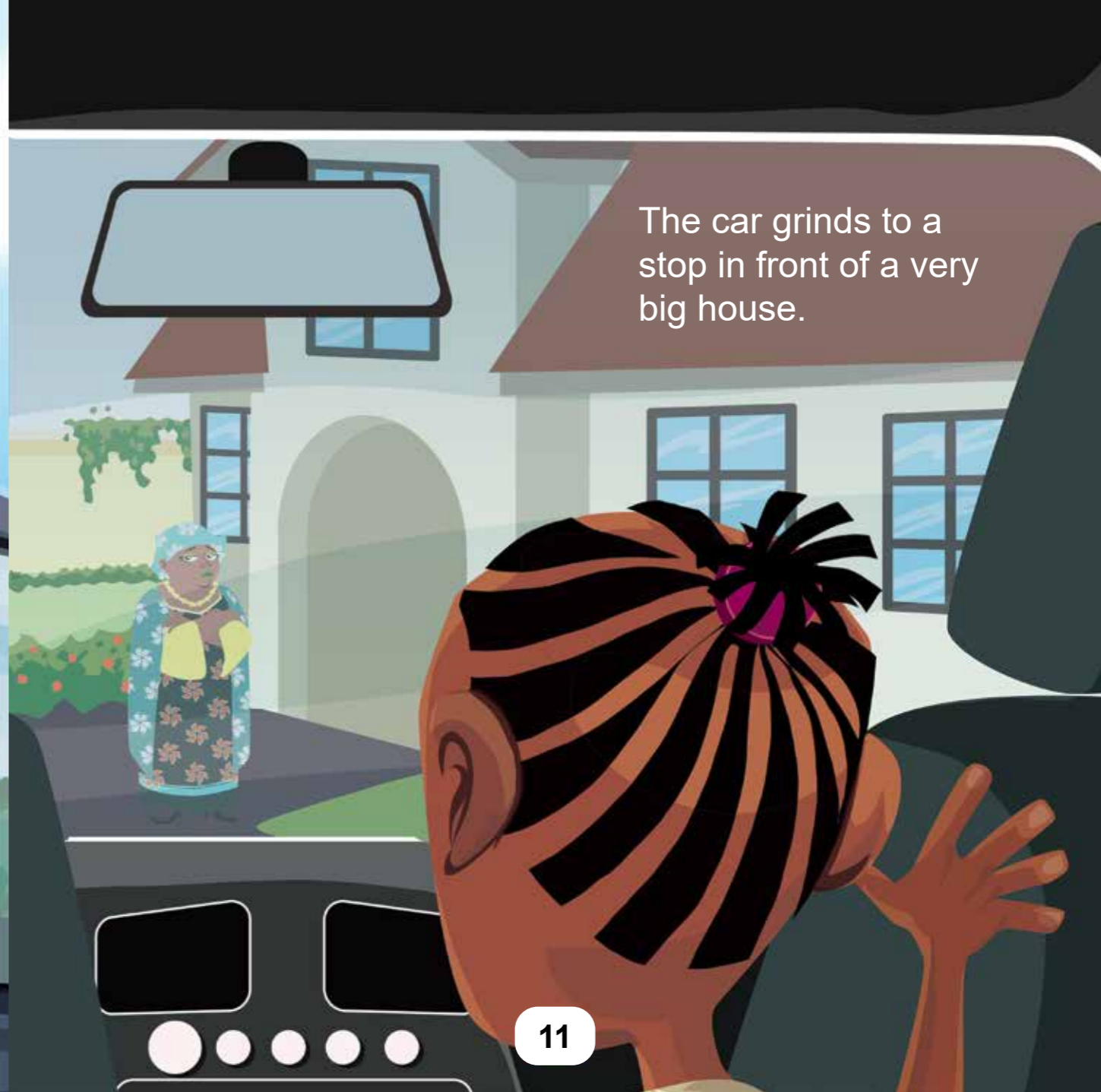
“Iyaji, I have not been able to work for three months. I don’t have the money to pay your school fees. Tomorrow morning, you are going to Lagos to work as a housegirl.”



Iyaji waves goodbye. She will miss her mother, her father and her brothers. She will miss going to school.



The car grinds to a stop in front of a very big house.





“Good afternoon. My name is Iyaji.” Iyaji whispers.
“You are the new housegirl. You better work hard,” the woman in green says.



The next morning, the woman in green shouts, “Iyaji, sweep the floor!”



“Iyaji, cook some food!”



“Iyaji, wash the dishes!”



“Iyaji, scrub the floor!”



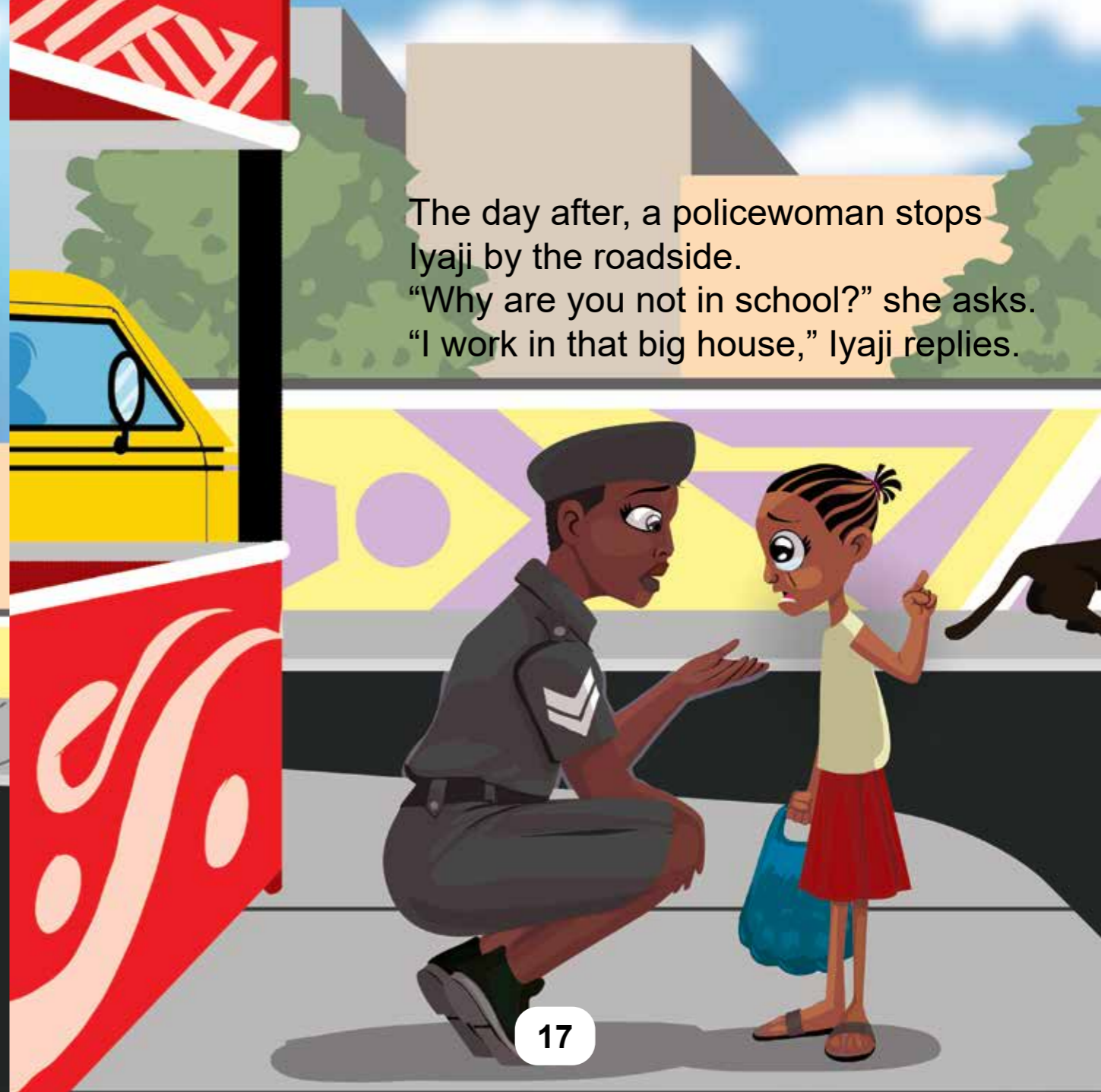
That night, Iyaji is so tired, she quickly falls asleep on the cold, hard floor.

The next day, the woman in green sends Iyaji to the market. Iyaji sees children on their way to school.



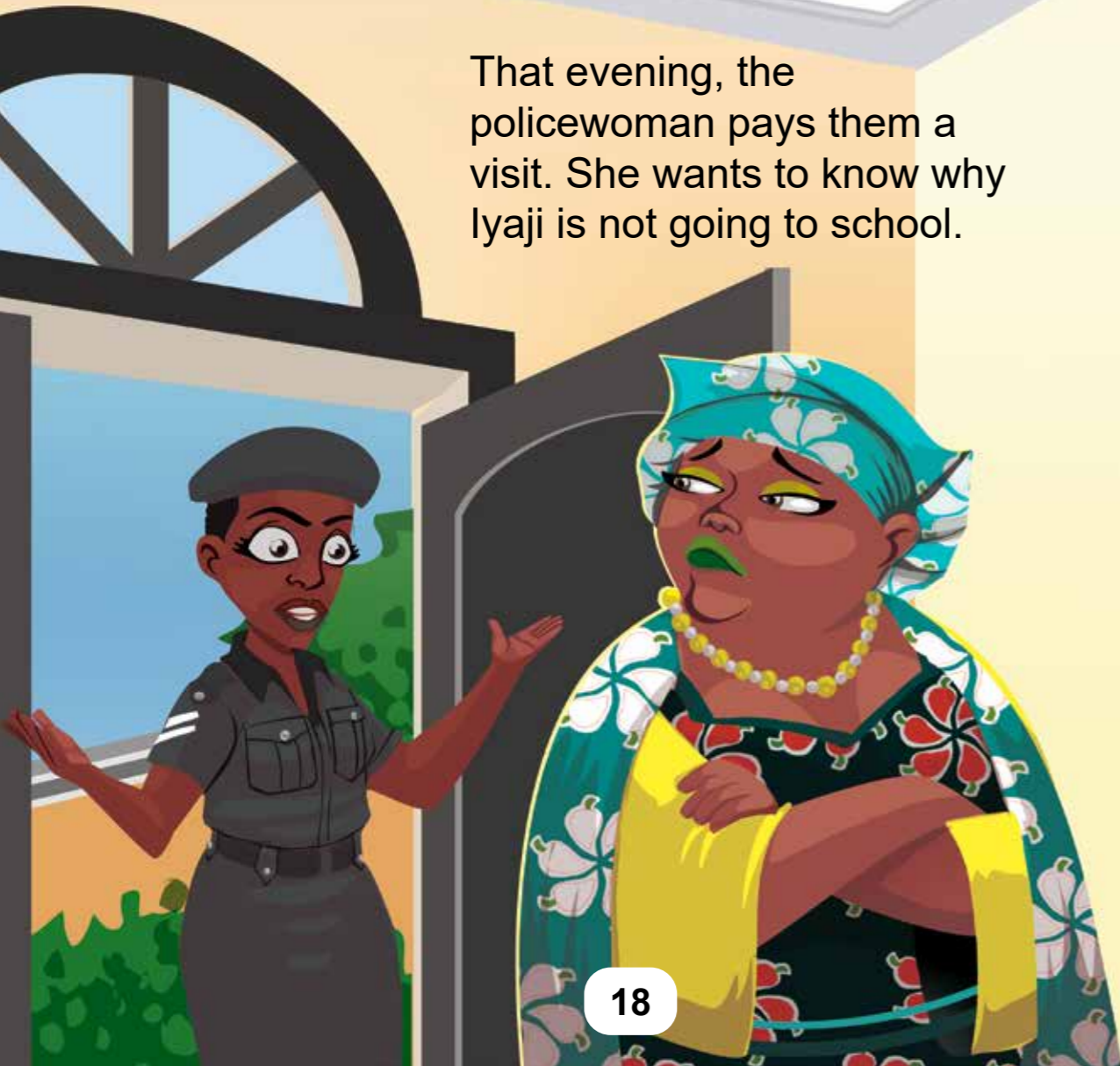
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The day after, a policewoman stops Iyaji by the roadside. "Why are you not in school?" she asks. "I work in that big house," Iyaji replies.



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That evening, the policewoman pays them a visit. She wants to know why Iyaji is not going to school.



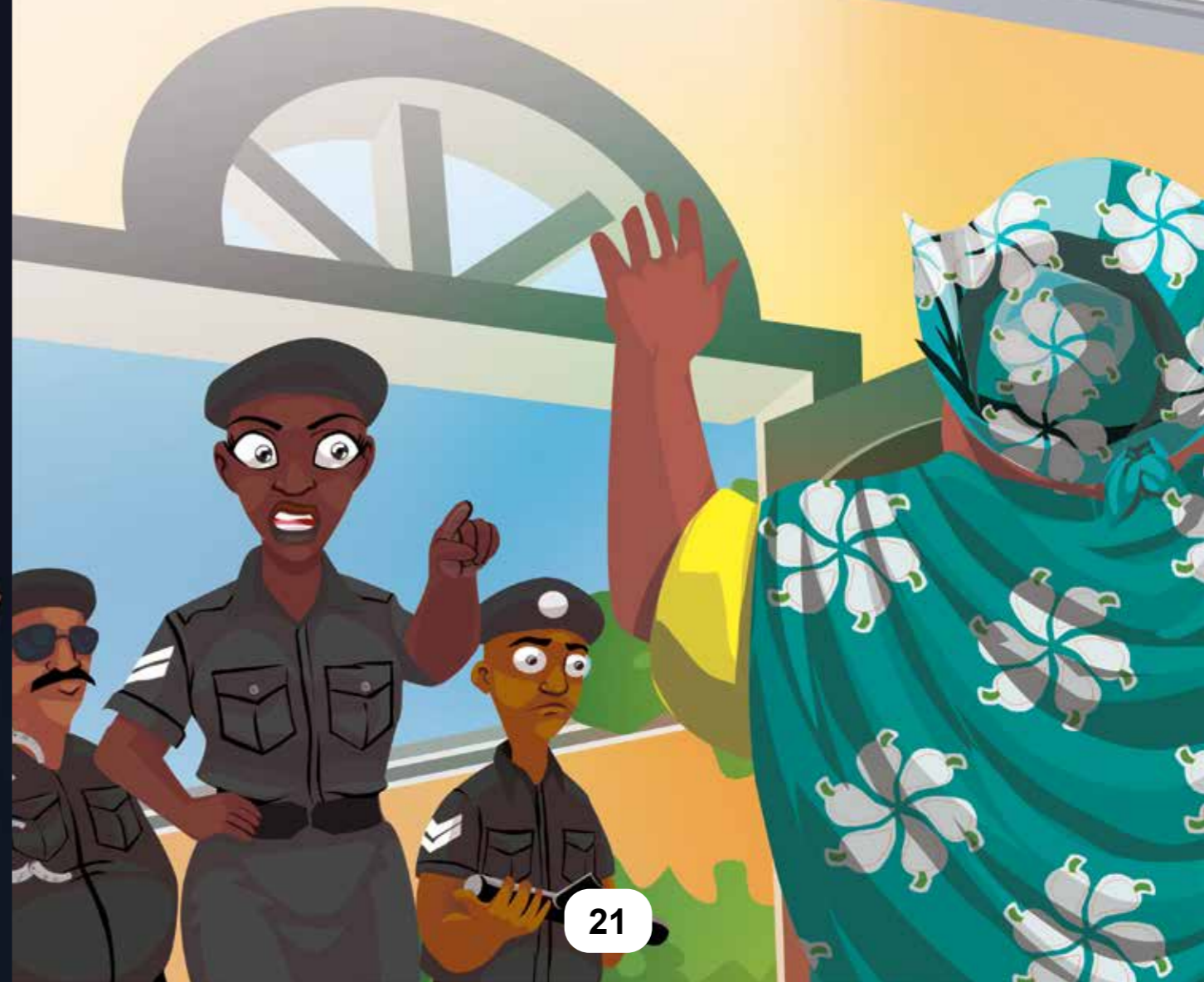
“What did you tell the policewoman?” asks the woman in green. She is very angry. Iyaji is frightened.



That night, Iyaji wonders if she will ever sit in a classroom again.



The policewoman returns one week later. "Iyaji is a child. She should be in school," the policewoman warns.



The woman in green sends Iyaji back to Igede in Benue State.

Iyaji sees her father playing football with her brothers.

Iyaji's mother is very happy to see her daughter again.

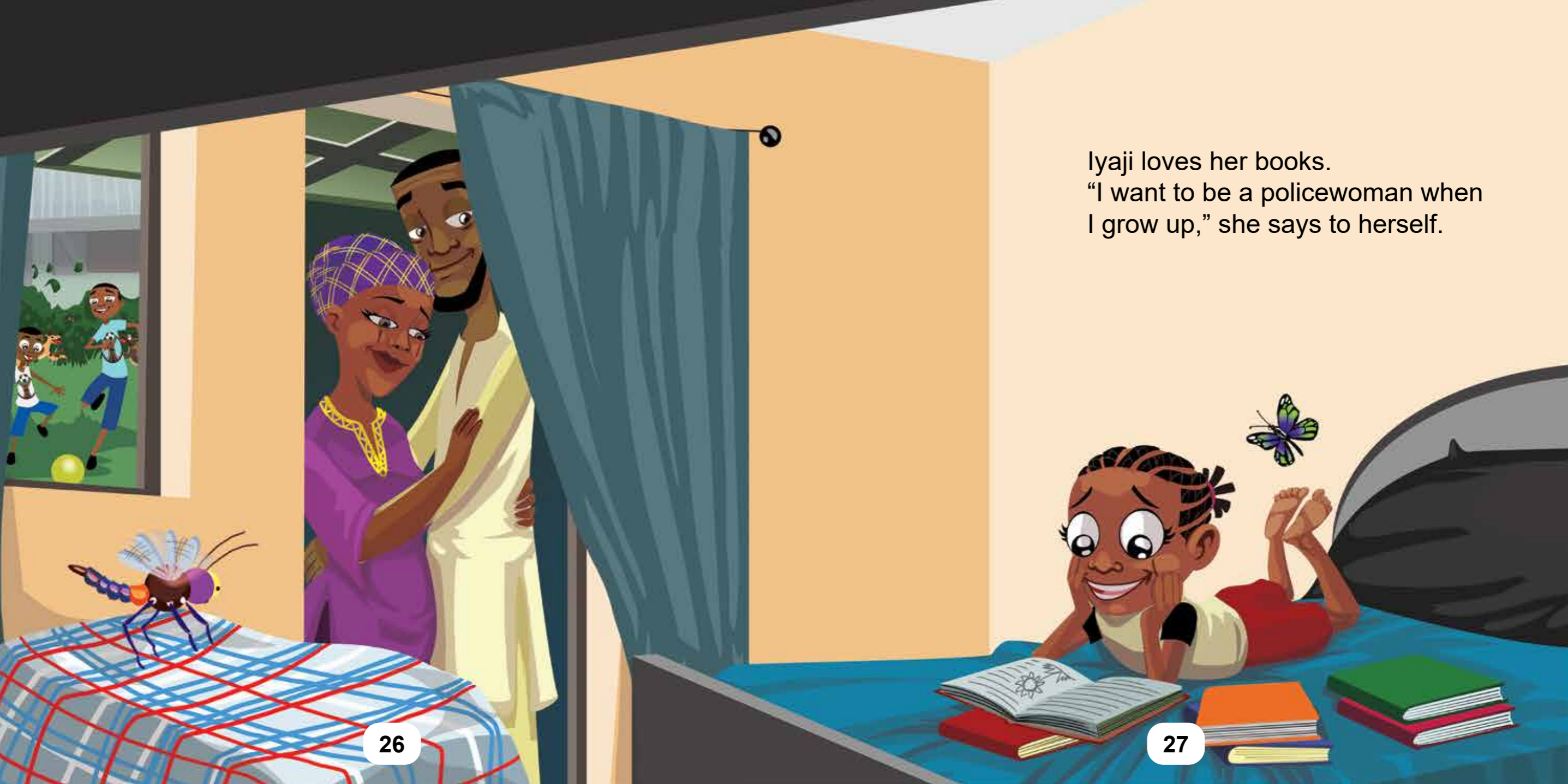


Iyaji's father brings her a special present. It is a box full of books!

"I am so happy to see you. I will never send you away again," her father says.

"Does this mean I can go back to school?" Iyaji asks. He father nods.

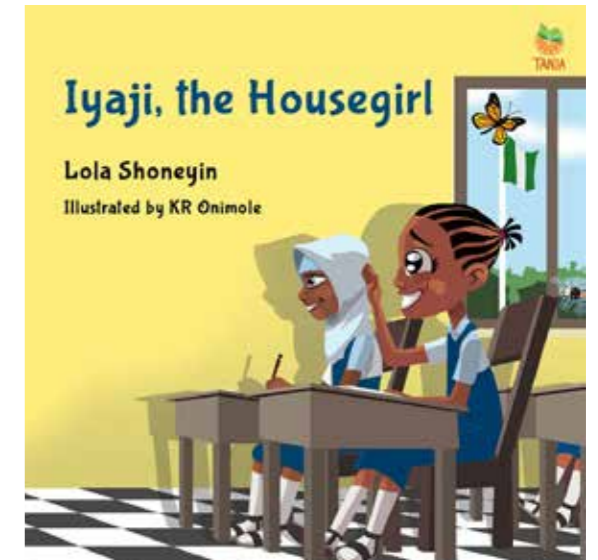
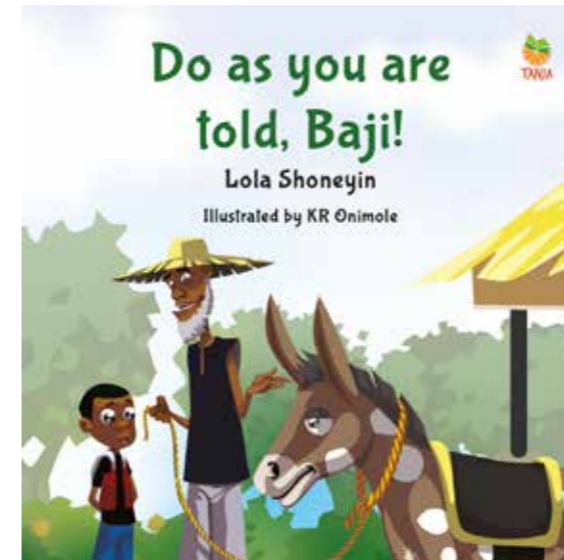




Iyaji loves her books.
“I want to be a policewoman when
I grow up,” she says to herself.

Books in this Series

*For Agnes Iyaji Omua,
and all the out-of-school children in Benue State.*



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