

# Hello!

A welcoming story



Written by Gina K. Lewis

Illustrated by María José Campos

ARC  
NOT FOR SALE

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A welcoming story



© 2021 Text by Gina K. Lewis

© 2021 Illustrations by María José Campos



CrissCross AppleSauce  
A City of Light imprint



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My name is...



HABIBA



ALEKSANDER

MALEE



CELISA

DINESH

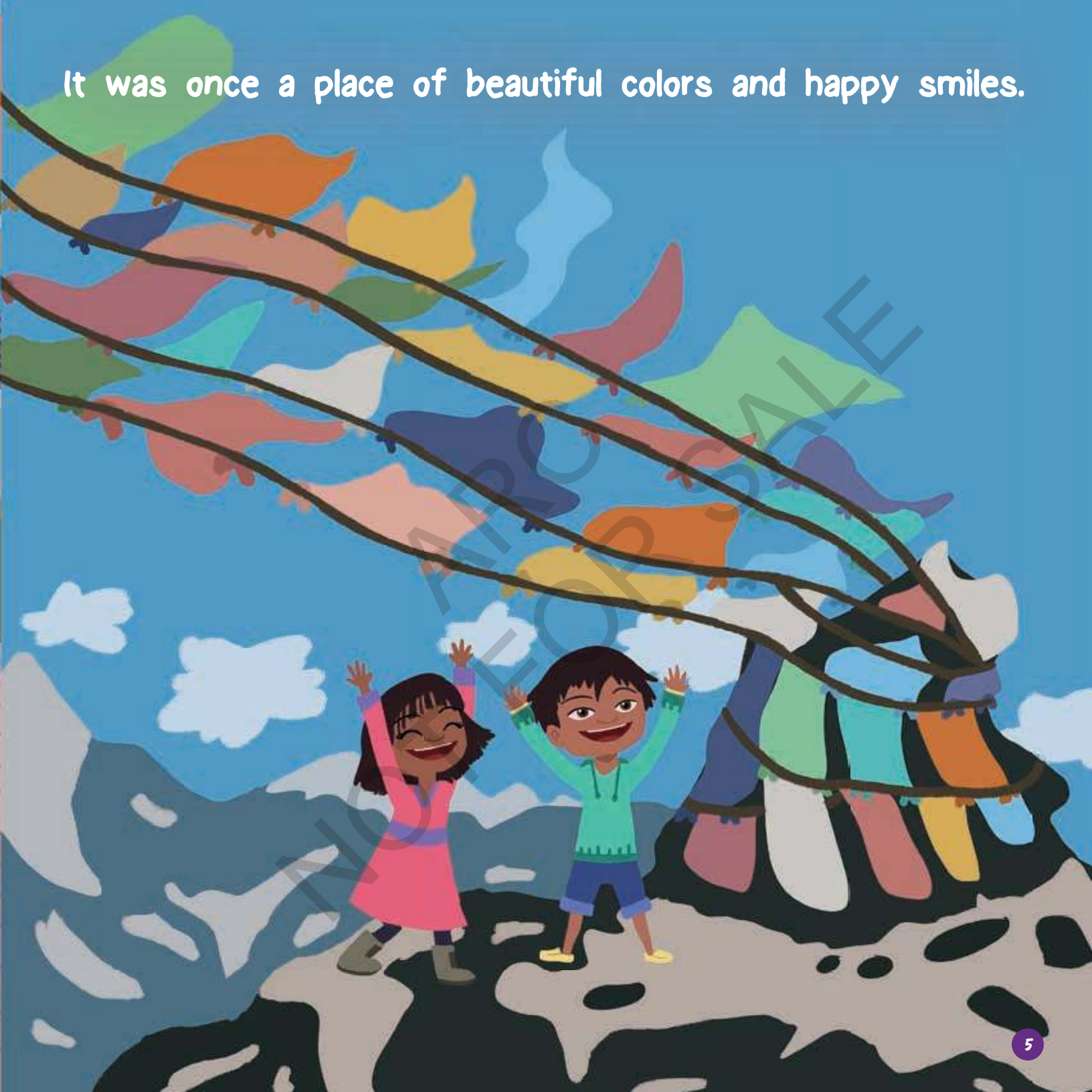




I came from somewhere far away.



It was once a place of beautiful colors and happy smiles.



The bad people came quickly and quietly.  
Soon all the colors turned to gray.



They built walls around us.  
Loud, scary noises hurt my ears at night.



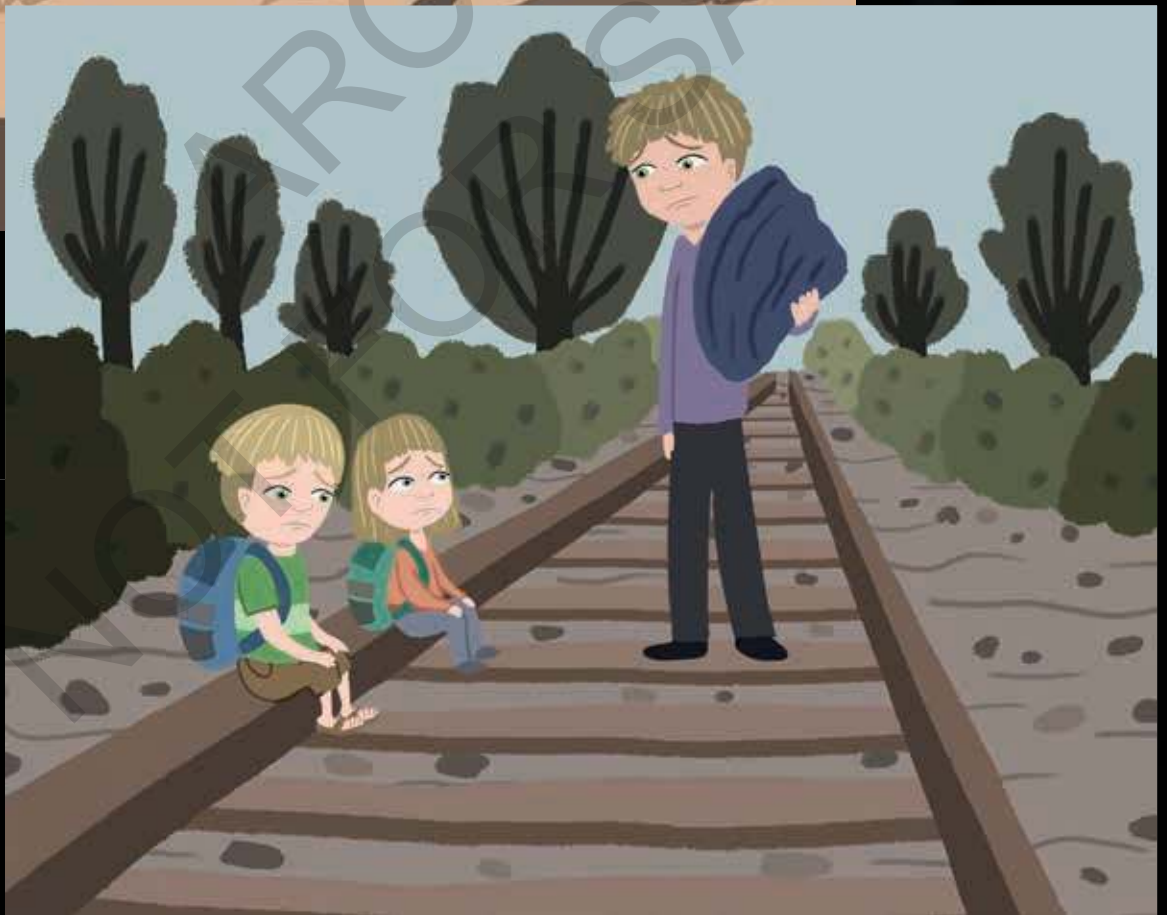




My mom said we had to leave.  
We did not have a choice.

We left everything behind.





We ran.  
We waited.



We flew.  
We waited.



Finally, they told us we were home.

WELCOME

ARRIVALS  
TO CUSTOMS ↑

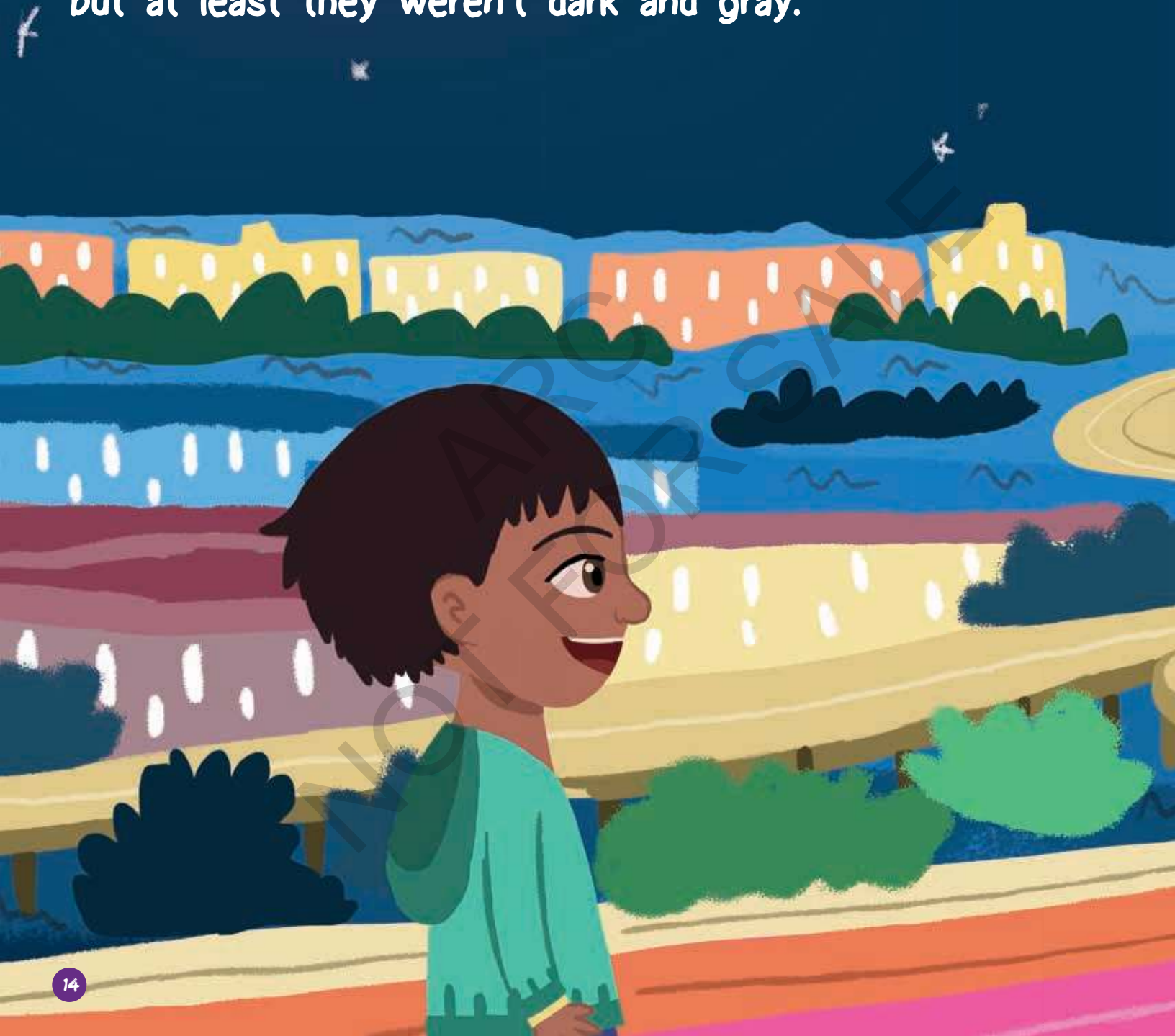


No one looked like me, but most people smiled.



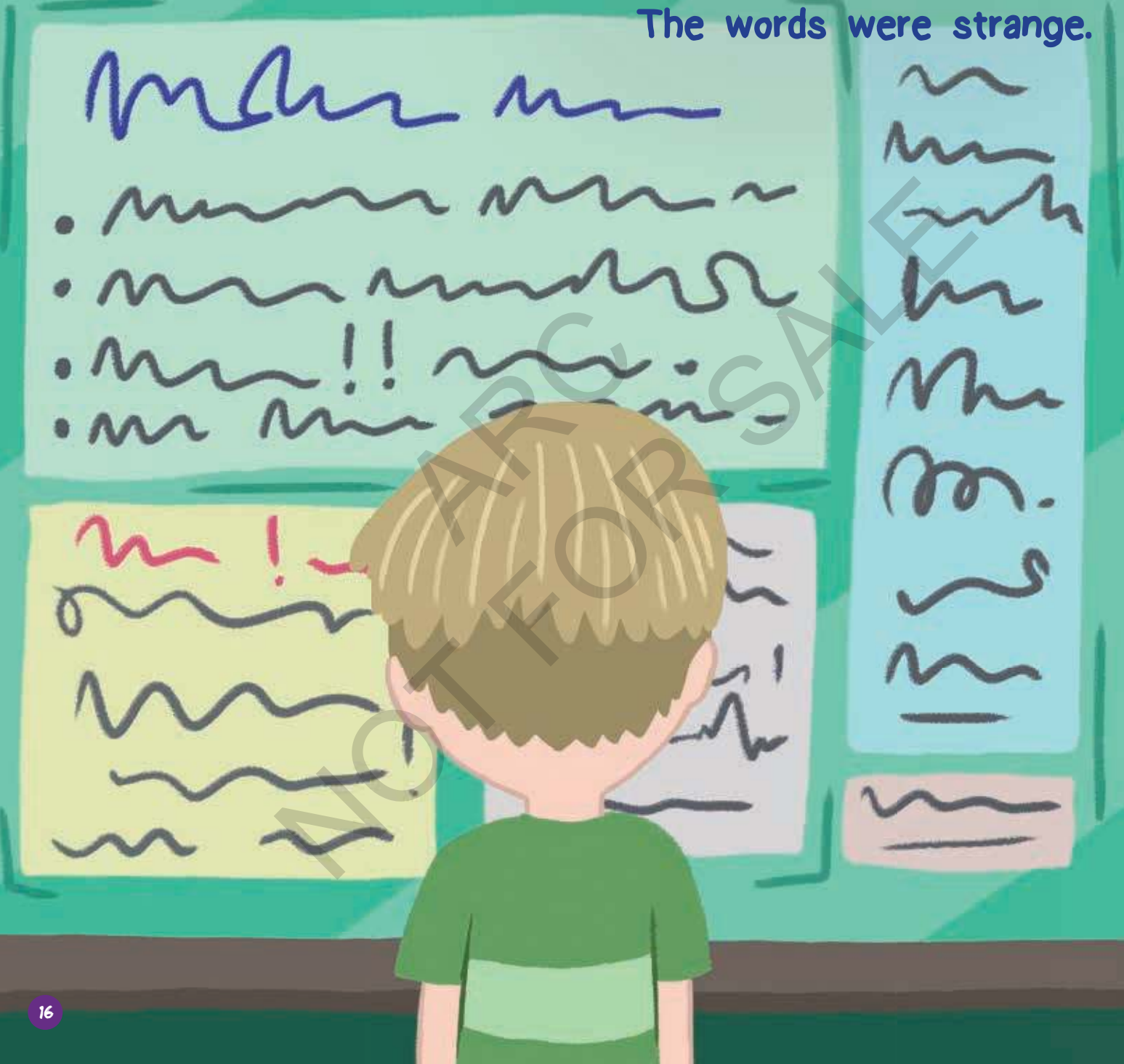


The colors were different,  
but at least they weren't dark and gray.





I started going to a new school.  
The words were strange.







The classroom was noisy.  
The kids were nice,  
but they knew I was different.

I was afraid to wear my real clothes to school.  
The other kids didn't dress like me.



My mom made my lunch for me.  
I felt like everyone was staring at my food.  
It wasn't like theirs.





"Can I have some clothes like the other kids wear?"





"Please don't make my lunch anymore."

Then you asked me why I changed the way I dressed.  
You said you liked how I looked before.





You asked me why I stopped bringing lunch from home.  
You said you wanted to try some because it looked so good.



We play together.



We dance together.







We paint together.





I came from somewhere far away.



This place is new and different.  
I am new and different too!







This is my journey's end.  
I am finally home.  
In my new home, we don't build walls.





ARC  
NOT FOR SALE





*For those who seek a new home,  
those who help them find one,  
and those who welcome them to it.*



## Meet the Author

Gina Lewis learned many of these stories from her students, who inspired her to tell them. She is an English as a New Language teacher in the United States. She loves hiking and building forts with her favorite guys—Ryan, Easton and Kieran.

## Meet the Illustrator

María José Campos lived these stories and is thrilled to draw them for you. She was born in Perú and lives in Denmark. An artist, she illustrates children's books and makes animated cartoons to tell fun stories. She likes to eat popcorn and play the piano.



An Educator Guide and Activities for use with **Hello! A Welcoming Story** are available for download at [www.CityofLightPublishing.com](http://www.CityofLightPublishing.com)

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My name is...







CAMERON

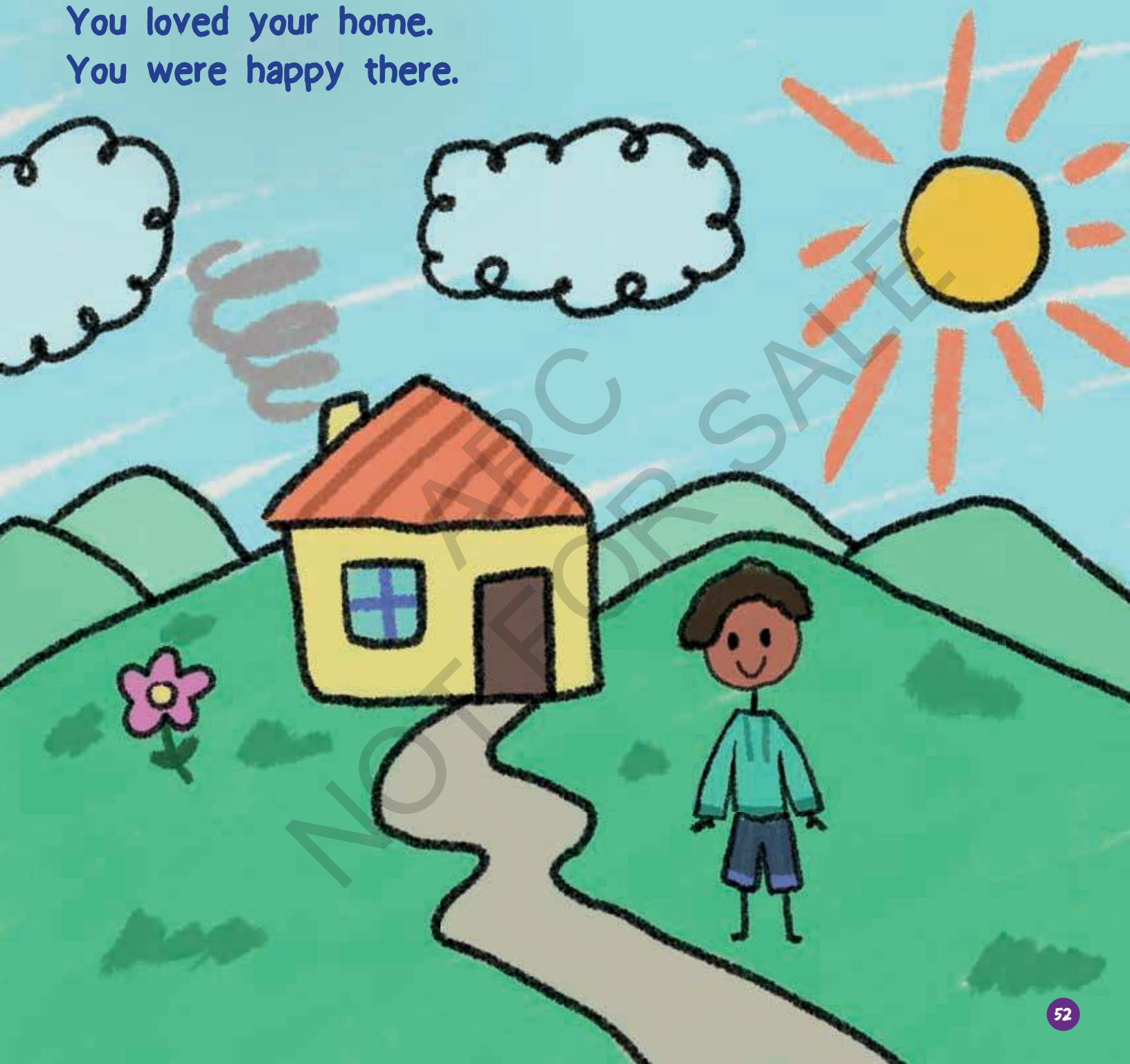
MIGUEL

YU

I know you came from far away.



You loved your home.  
You were happy there.





Bad people came and ruined everything.  
The place you loved became dark and scary.



You said they built walls around you.  
Were you really trapped inside?



I can't imagine how it felt to escape.  
What was it like when you ran away?

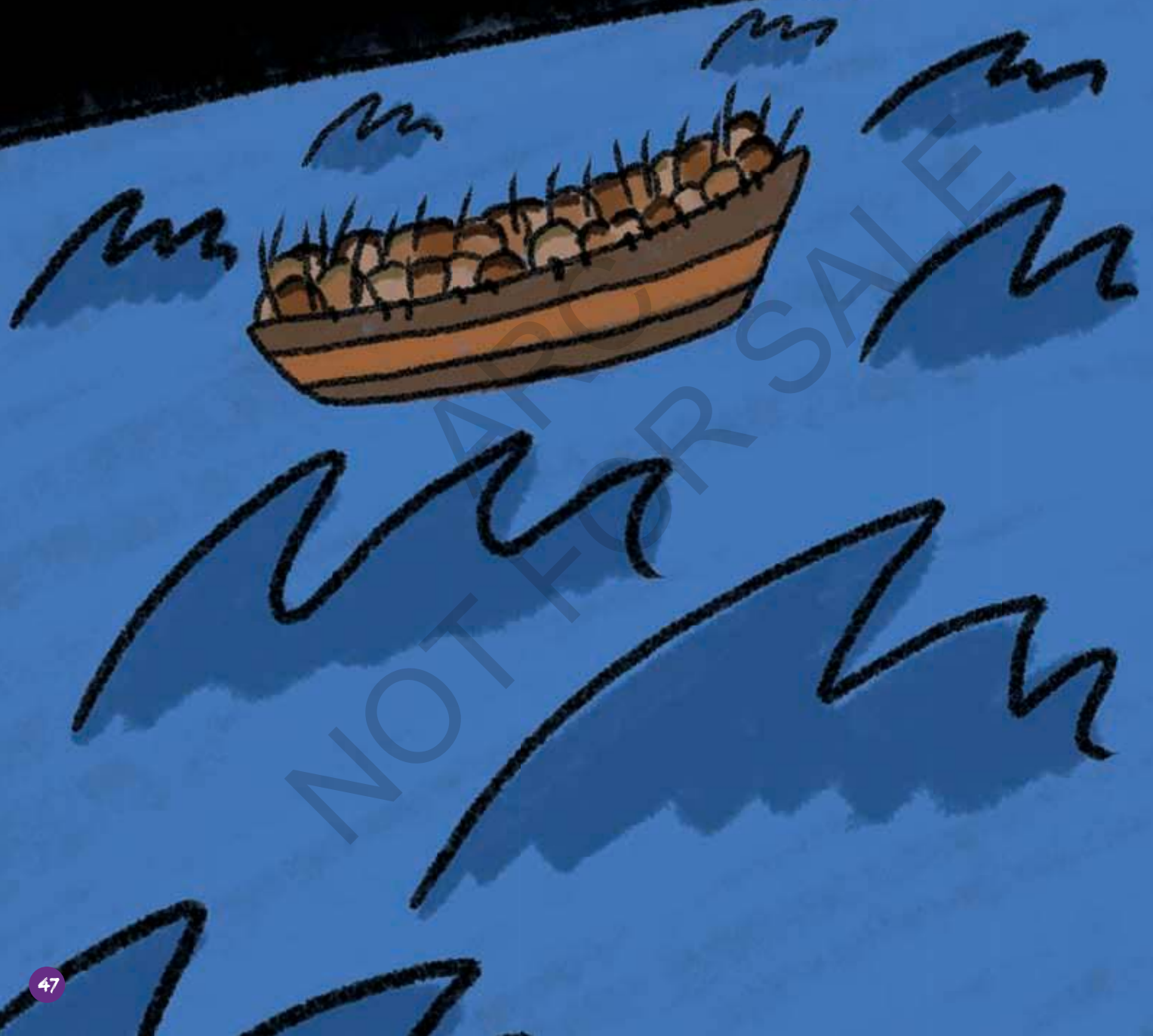






Could you take anything with you?

It must have been a long and scary journey.  
You are very brave.







I know this place feels strange to you,  
but we are so happy that you are here.





We have so much to share with you.  
You have a lot to share with us too.





"This is my favorite place in the world.  
Isn't it beautiful?"



We are very lucky that you came to our school!

Welcome TO OUR  
classroom!





Don't worry about being different.  
We're all different, and that's okay.



At first, you wore clothes from your country and brought a special lunch from home.



Why did you stop?  
Were the kids mean to you?



Some people are afraid of what they don't understand,  
but they shouldn't be.









**"You should dress the way you want to. My favorite clothes are kind of different—that's why they're my favorites!"**

"The lunches your mom makes look delicious!  
Can I try some?"





We play together.



We dance together.





We paint together.





You came from somewhere far away.





This place is new and different,  
but you are welcome here, just as you are.







This is your new home.  
Here we don't build walls.





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