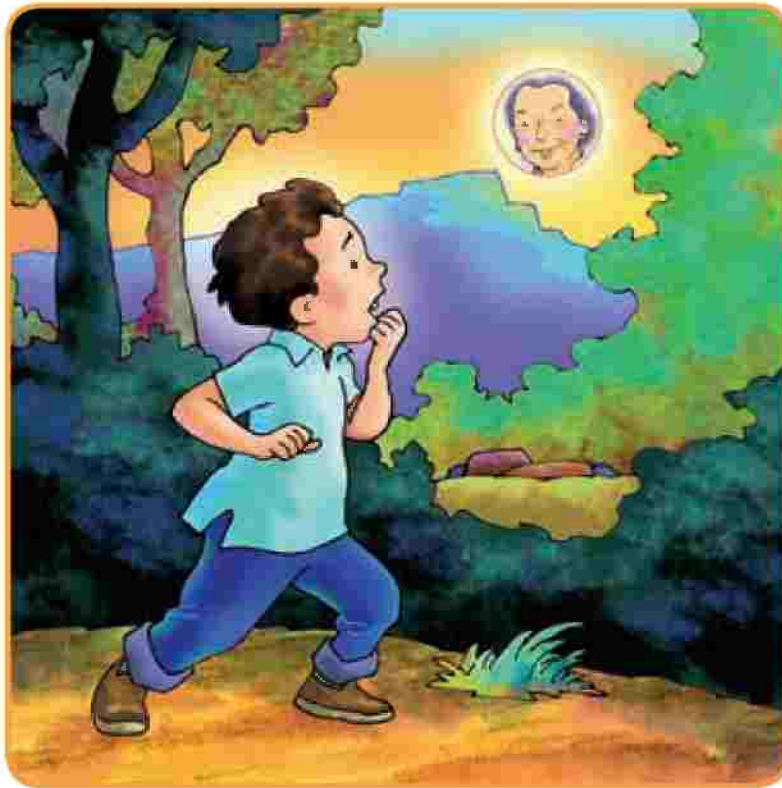




Educational stories for children

A VISIT TO THE HOUSE OF THE SUN



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Every day the sun arcs down to the west, and my grandmother says, “The sun is going to sleep.” After a while, the sun descends behind the trees and disappears. Darkness falls.



This always confused me. I'd say to myself, "My God! Where is the sun going? And how does it sleep? Is it a living creature like us? Does it have a house like ours? And why does darkness come?"



One night, I dreamt that I visited the sun in its house. The sun resembled my grandmother, with white hair and drops of prayer ablution gleaming on her forehead. She kissed me and told me the most beautiful of stories.



I became determined to visit the sun in its house. I told my myself, "I'll run after it as it descends behind the trees. I'll catch up with it before it goes in and closes the door."



The next day, I waited until the sun started arcing toward the west. I set off running after it. The farther it arced, the faster and faster I ran.



I ran and ran as the sun fell and fell. Then, darkness suddenly descended. Frightened, I stopped. I looked around, and didn't know where I was. All I could see were dark fields and barking dogs!



I was shaking, and my heart was beating fast. I sat beside a large tree and sobbed. I recited, "Say: 'He is God the One, God the eternal. He begot no one nor was He begotten. No one is comparable to Him.'"



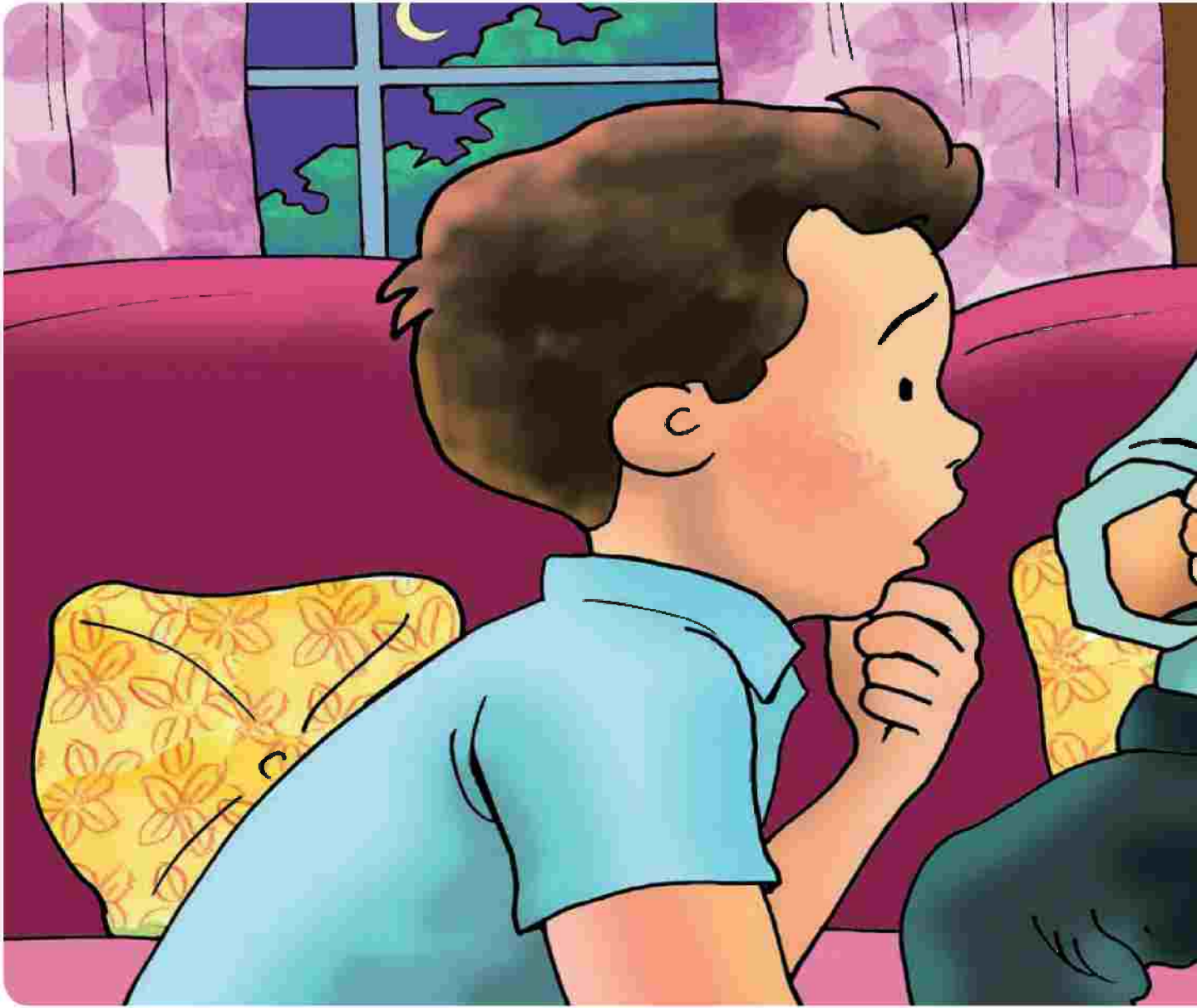
I recited it over and over and over again. Then I heard a voice in the distance calling me and drawing closer. I knew this voice! Yes, it was my father's voice. I jumped up and cried out. "Daddy! I'm here, Daddy!"



My father came running and picked me up. He patted my back and said, “Don’t worry! Don’t be scared. Why have you gone out alone and wandered so far from the house?”



When we got home I told my father what had happened. He smiled tenderly and took me by the hand and led me into his office. There he explained to me, “Your grandmother didn’t mean that, for the sun isn’t a person



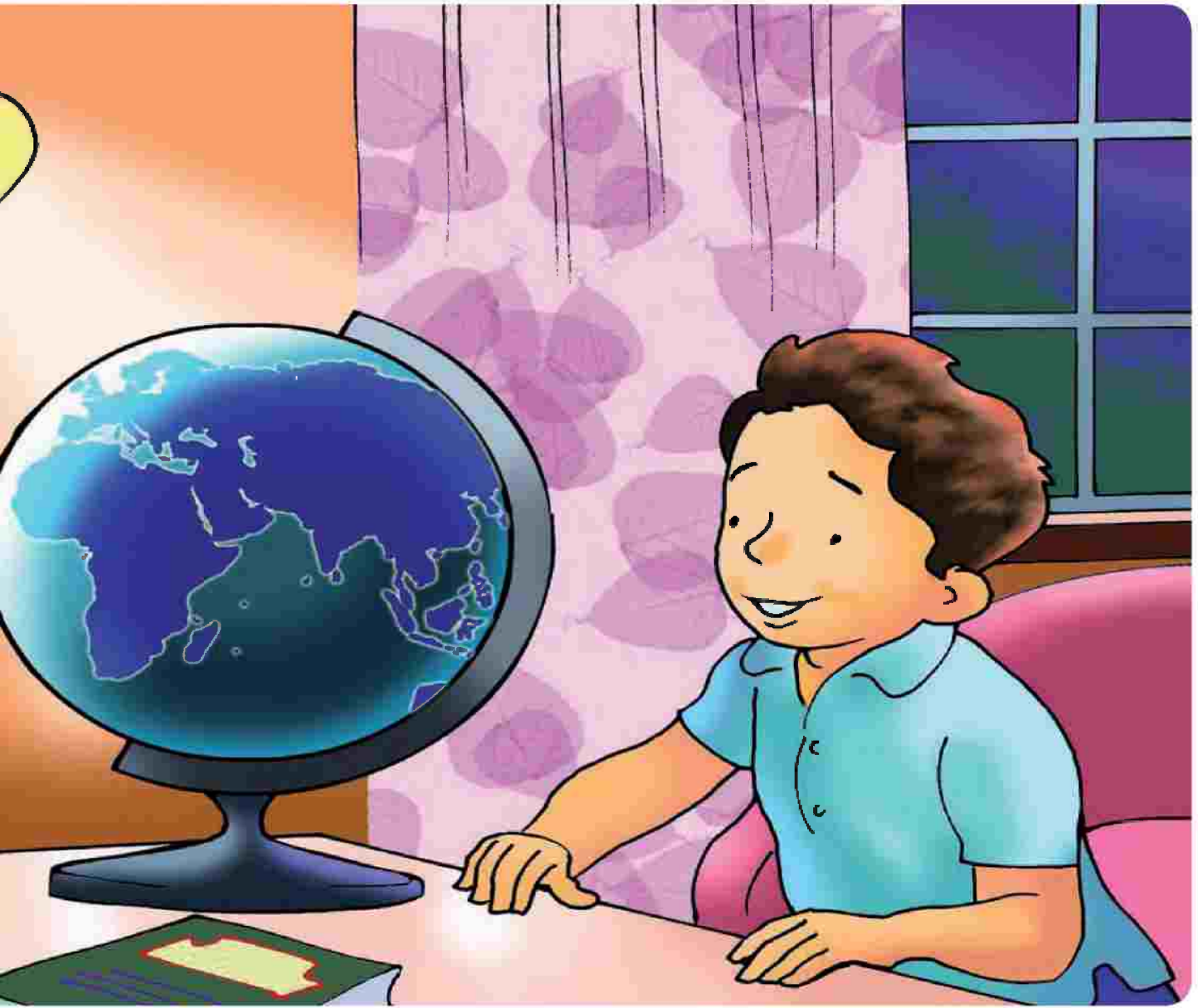
or a living creature. The sun is a huge star, just like an enormous lightbulb that God created to give us light and warmth.” Confused, I asked, “Then where does the sun go? Why does night fall and then day rise again?”



My father smiled and said, “Look, this globe on my desk represents the Earth we live upon, and this lamp represents the sun...



Now look, the Earth rotates around its axis, like this, so that half of it is facing the sun during the daytime and is lit up, and the other half remains in darkness throughout the night. The Earth keeps rotating like this,



so that the dark half becomes lit and the lit half become dark, day after day without stopping. This is why you see the sun as though it's moving, although in fact it's the Earth that's moving, as you've just seen."



"I got it," I told my father, "I got it!" I ran out and my father laughed. "Where are you going?" he asked. "To my grandmother," I told him, "so I can explain to her and she doesn't keep saying that the sun has a house to sleep in!"